

SHOW OPEN

[*🎵 "DEFY" by Of Mice & Men 🎵*](#)

San Francisco welcomes DEFIANCE as the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium is hyped for DEFtv 176! Pyro explodes from the top of the rampway. There's a giant FIST logo to walk out from and the DEFatron above the entrance.

Signs and excitement, as always, are everywhere!

PUT DETECTIVE CHRIS CHICKENTENDERS ON THE CASE OF THE MISSING :Mikey_Unlikely: :bobbydean: :jfk: :trash: :scottdouglas: :nateye: :GageBlackwood: :bostevens: :caylemurray: :guardian: :jayharvey: :perfection: :scottstevens:

^AND THE MISSING REZIN EMOJI

IF WE DON'T GET A REZIN DEFMOJI BY ACTS OF DEFIANCE, WE RIOT

SHAKE HANDS AND FORM VAE VICTIS

I'M HERE FOR VAE VIC, WHO I HAVE TO ASSUME, HAS THE STICK

LET'S TOUCH MIC TIPS

DEACON IS A SINNER AND WE WANT DETAILS OF EVERY LAST SIN

VAE VICTRASH

I BELIEVE IN DEACON

MORE JACK HARMEN PLEASE

CONOR BEAT TYLER IN MORTAL KOMBAT AND HE HASN'T BEEN THE SAME SINCE

VAE VICTIS IS A LESS ENDEARING 24K

HANKERIN' FOR HARMEN

I STILL BELIEVE IN DEACON

REZIN IS THE FOOT OF DEFIANCE

REZIN NEEDS TO WRITE FOR THE HARD TIMES

OK BUT WHEN WAS 24K EVER ENDEARING, I HAVE QUESTIONS

VAE VICTIS SHOULD SAY "BRUV" MORE. THAT'S ESSENTIALLY MY ARGUMENT

SHARPIES FOR SALE FOR YOUR LIVE SHOW SIGN ARGUMENT NEEDS

24VV

NO MORE WIREHANGERS

HENRY KEYES WOULD EAT PERFECTION

HENRY KEYES IS PERFECTION (THE CONCEPT, NOT THE WRESTLER)

THE KABAL WAS SCARIER

MALAK GARLAND HAS TURNED ME OFF OF ALL THINGS PAPER

I WASH MY ASS IN THE SINK THANKS TO MALAK

WATER BEATS PAPER

YOUR WHITEBOARD IS TINY

MORE SIGNS ABOUT BUILDINGS AND FOOD

HEY ELISE I HEARD THAT A CONFERENCE TABLE HAS A CRUSH ON YOU

FRIENDSHIP MEMBERS LEAGUE OR SIMULATION?

After the fireworks and signs, DEFtv switches to outside the arena parking lot with an "EARLIER TODAY" tag underneath the feed. Elise Ares, The D and Klein all exit their rental car to a large cheer from the San Francisco Faithful. The D pops the trunk while it's clear Ares was finishing her conversation from inside the car.

Elise Ares:

Hey D, don't you totes think it's weird that Darren Quimbey sometimes announces that matches are for ONE FALL but sometimes he doesn't? And sometimes the crowd yells ONE FALL back and other times they barely acknowledge that he spoke at all? What's up with that?

The D doesn't break stride while rummaging through the trunk.

The D:

It's all part of the simulation.

Elise Ares:

Say what now?

D peers upwards.

The D:

Oh, I've been waiting for someone to talk about this! I've watched a lot of YouTube and did you know this entire thing is a simulation and we're all being controlled by forces beyond our control that we've never met before and we'll always be unable to meet because we live in different realities?

Ares raises an eyebrow.

Elise Ares:

Oh, shit. That explains a lot! Like that one tim-

Klein:

Don't believe everything you see on the internet.

Elise thinks about adding a counter argument but stops as she hears something, or someone approaching. The scene spins around to catch a jolly, yet tentative Conor Fuse walking towards his former FML 2.0 friends with an offbeat wave.

Conor Fuse:

Hey!

The gamer's voice trials. He reaches the trio and watches The D distribute the rightful duffle bags to Klein and Elise.

The D & Elise Ares:

THE SIMULATION!

The duo exclaim pointing back at Conor, who smiles awkwardly while scratching the back of his neck. The Power-Up King, however, doesn't catch on. It's clear he has something on his mind.

Conor Fuse:

So, uh, I just wanted to say...

Fuse snaps his head to the left, then the right, as if he's on the lookout for activity in the parking lot. Seeing none, he eyes each member of PCP, one after the other.

Conor Fuse:

Sorry about the whole Malak thing. I mean, it's great you signed the ACTS contract for a tag team match against Malak and I. I really feel like the four of us can give the LA crowd an excellent battle. Might even steal the show! Anything to take the spotlight away from Lindsay Troy. You know, she used to be so cool. Her and I, actually, **we** used to be so cool. We worked together in a different wrestling promotion BTW. But then she gets all 'big ego', runs her own Vegas wrestling company and brainwashes some of my other friends...

Conor lowers his head. He mumbles to himself, perhaps trying to pump himself up before awkwardly grinning to the trio.

Elise Ares:

Yeah, what a bitch. Don't ever trust a girl who spells her own name wrong.

There is a second of awkward silence before Conor continues.

Conor Fuse:

Anyway, the whole Malak thing...

Conor's eyes bounce around, all over the parking lot again, on the lookout. He speaks while lowering his voice.

Conor Fuse:

Like I think Malak's cool with me. Like I think he actually wants to be my friend. I wasn't sure at first but now, uhhh, it seems like it? And if that **is** the truth then I know he will struggle with how to do "the right thing", ya know? So sorry if he offended you guys two weeks ago...

Ares attempts to rebut but Conor is in such deep thought he doesn't realize it and cuts her off even before she begins.

Conor Fuse:

I promise you there will be no shenanigans come ACTS.

He nods to Klein.

Conor Fuse:

And none during our match tonight either Mr. Solid Snake Cardboard Box Guy.

Klein gives an honorary nod in return, tipping his box head as one would their ball cap.

Conor Fuse:

Malak, like, hates you or something. A safe space box? I dunno, he was trying to tell me all about it and then he started crying but-

Finally, Fuse's rambling ends as D raises a finger and then points it at Ares.

Elise Ares:

What? Are you trying to shoot me? Did you think the simulation gave you that weird Japanese cartoon finger gun or something? What was that called, Klein?

Klein:

Anime.

The D & Elise Ares:

ANIME.

Klein does a boxpalm but The D continues on.

The D:

Yeah, that's partly our fault, too. Maybe Malak is right. Maybe we weren't very good friends to you. We probably could've hung out and done more stuff together. Maybe we could've played Pac-Man or whatever video games kids play these days.

Elise Ares:

No offense, we do like you BBY, but I just don't know what we really have in common outside of hating the same people. You seem like a nice kid, and if you ever want to come by and drink sometime my flask is always open to you, but I wouldn't know what to do with a Mortal Kombat or whatever a GTA is.

Conor Fuse:

Grand Theft Auto.

Ares tilts her head.

Elise Ares:

Oh shit, I can steal things in video games? Maybe I would be good at that.

The Ultimate Gamer smiles warmly.

Conor Fuse:

To your point... I guess this makes sense. We don't really have a lot in common. I only drink orange juice, chocolate milk or Mountain Dew. But we can still try to be acquaintances.

Conor sees they are ready to enter the arena.

Conor Fuse:

I'd offer to carry your bags but you have them already.

Awkward pause.

Conor Fuse:

Walk and talk?

Ares eyes The D. The D eyes Klein. The three of them shrug.

The D:

Sure. We can Sorkin it.

Fuse smiles, this time with much more confidence as he pats D on the back and the four of them travel through the parking lot. Ares picks up where she left off from the car drive over.

Elise Ares:

So as I was saying, when I was a teenager I used to steal things ALL. THE. TIME. But now that I know I can get into big trouble and stuff, I stopped because jail is gross. So you're telling me that now there is a video game where my job is to steal things and I won't go to jail because of it?

Conor Fuse:

Eh, kind of. I can teach you the controls.

Elise Ares:

Controls?

The four of them enter through a backstage door, with Conor holding the door open for PCP before entering himself. The door closes behind Fuse and then the camera pans to the empty parking lot.

...

...

...Where Malak Garland is seen crouching behind an SUV in the far off distance, stone faced, likely a witness to everything.

THE AMBULANCE

Lance:

Late last night, after the crowd had dissipated, we had an incident that I must report. Let's get to the video.

The video cuts to the backstage area. The camera shakes as the cameraperson tries to get their shot. Red flashing lights reflect and fill the area as the cameraperson finally gets into position to find an ambulance, and someone being loaded into it.

Lance:

Magdalena, the FIST of DEFIANCE's manager, was found by DEF Sec in a backroom. She was only on a small segment of Night 1.

DDK:

Opposite two members of Vae Victis, I might add.

Lance:

Agreed. However, the San Francisco Police Department has not made any accusations, though we are told they are reviewing the tape and speaking to witnesses.

DDK:

Of whom there are none.

Lance:

Unfortunately, that is my understanding. One bit of good news. The ER was able to stabilize Magdalena's condition, though she remains in intensive care. We will let you know more when we know it.

FACEOFF

DDK:

We're told that Matt LaCroix and Henry Keyes are scheduled to exchange some words tonight before their clash at ACTS of DEFIANCE!

Lance:

This has potential to be one of the bigger powderkegs we've seen in recent months, I can't WAIT to see what these two gladiators have to say!

DDK:

Let's take it to Christie Zane on the stage.

Lights out.

The guitar rings out over the arena to the cheers of the Faithful. Smoke rises from the entrance with a pulsating red light behind it. In the red light appears the silhouette of a man on a knee. The man slowly rises to his feet as the beat kicks in.

It begins with them, but it ends with me...
♪ "The Dark Sentencer" by Coheed & Cambria ♪

Matt LaCroix bursts through the smoke with his head down before pulling the hood down off his head. The crowd chants to the music as Southern Strong Style locks eyes with Christie Zane, but instead continues down to the ring ignoring the interview stage to the surprise of everyone in attendance.

Lance:

Or... not?

With his black denim vest still on, LaCroix enters the ring and calls for a microphone from ringside. Once it's handed to him the music cuts and DEFIANCE's First Favoured Saint looks out at the Faithful, taking a deep breath before he begins and glancing over at Zane.

Matt LaCroix:

I'm sorry, cher, but I ain't neva been one ta feel comfort on a stage. As a matter of speakin, tha only place I eva felt joie de vivre is on tha mat. Between tha ropes. Right here in tha ring. Every moment I spend in tha gym or out with dis shoulder is spent in agony that I can't be right here in dis ring.

He pauses as the Faithful show their support.

Matt LaCroix:

I ain't neva been good at talkin, but bein tha best in da world is my life. My purpose. My destiny. When I came home they told me that tha Southern Heritage Championship was the workers title. That was my goal and it ain't changed. I'ma be proud to bring the Southern Heritage Championship back ta someone who is proud of DEFIANCE, whateva it may be. I ain't here ta judge how otha people make there livin, I just care about myself, and I'm here ta take back what's mine, shoulder be damned. So if...

♪ "Stranger Fruit" by Zeal & Ardor ♪

As red and white beacons flood the arena, we first see Henry Keyes emerge from the back, eye locked onto LaCroix, Southern Heritage Championship strapped around his waist, and microphone in hand. We get a somewhat unusual Big Boy Pop from the crowd.

DDK:

I'm a little shocked, Lance, listen to this place erupt for the Kraken!

Lance:

As much as we've all come to loathe Vae Victis in recent months, it's San Francisco! Keyes's hometown! It's clear that they love him here, at least for the moment!

The cheers turn to heavy boos as the rest of Vae Victis follows suit - Lindsay Troy, Kerry Kuroyama, and their latest addition, Oscar Burns. Like a metaphorical pair of hyenas licking their chops, Keyes and Burns make their way towards LaCroix as Troy and Kuroyama stand guard at the top of the ramp.

Henry Keyes:

Things have changed around these parts, LaCroix. DEFIANCE no longer means the same thing it did when you left. This man right here could tell you ALL ABOUT what DEFIANCE means now.

Keyes pats Burns twice hard on the chest to more boos. He continues.

Henry Keyes:

But if Mr. DEFIANCE doesn't mind, I'd like to spell it out for you myself. The days of shaking hands and saying "aw shucks I sure am glad to be here wrestlin'" no longer cut it. It's about TAKING. It's about Vae Victis taking, and taking, and taking until we have it all. The Southern Heritage Championship will NEVER leave my grip, and soon, after FAR TOO LONG, Miss Troy will finally restore some order at the top of the food chain by taking back the FIST. We are the sharks, and you standing here? Shoulder looking like a Big Ol' Mess-uh Shrimp Gumbo? ...you're *chum*, and it's high time that your million dollar heart and your two cent brain have a nice long discussion about what you intend to do next.

The crowd did NOT like those barbs and all sense of hometown love is out the window. Burns and Keyes take another menacing step forward.

Matt LaCroix:

Well if y'all are lookin fo some fun, I don't care how many of ya come out here, I say laissez les bons temps rouler!

♪ "Apocalyptic Havoc" by Goatwhore ♪

The Faithful pop loud, and on the stage, the remaining members of Vae Victis ready themselves for anything. They turn to the curtain, waiting for someone to emerge...

...but nobody comes. Instead, the camera catches Rezin sneaking out from under the edge of the stage and stealthily making his way onto the ramp. By the time Troy and Kuroyama notice his presence, he's already halfway down to the ring, cackling in triumph.

DDK:

Well how about this? For a moment, it looked like LaCroix would be facing down the might of Vae Victis on his own, but now "The Escape Artist" Rezin is looking to join the party!

Lance:

Rezin went the limit in a hellacious battle against Lindsay Troy in the final round of the ACTS Tournament, but after the surprise reveal of Oscar Burns being added to the ranks of Vae Victis and the beatdown that occurred right after that match, the Goat Bastard likely still has a score to settle.

Rezin calls for his own mic before slipping under the ropes and coming to his feet to stand aside LaCroix. He looks between Keyes and Burns, a bit unimpressed.

Rezin:

Well what do we got here, fellas? I thought it wasn't like you to be gangin' up on anyone.

He tsk-tsks at the Kiwi grappling legend.

Rezin:

And Burnsie... really, dude? I mean, don't get me wrong, you fit in great along with the Super Kool Kids, but it's a little after the fact, don't ya think? Like, I get how it benefits *them*... but how does it benefit YOU?

Oscar raises the mic to answer.

Rezin:

Ya know what, nevermind. I don't really care one way or the other. But what DOES concern me is how this cancer keeps on growin', and too many back there in that locker room just keep stickin' their heads in the sand, hopin' the storm will blow over.

He shakes his head.

Rezin:

But I ain't hidin'. I'm gonna face that storm head on, until my last damb breath!

Big cheers from the San Francisco Faithful, as Rezin slaps LaCroix on the shoulder.

Rezin:

But YOU got some balls on ya, Matty! And ya clearly ain't afraid to stand alone! Which is why I'm here! To tell ya that as long as ya intend to be bringin' the fight to these elitist SCUMBAGS, this OL' DOPESMOKER's got your back!

More cheers. LaCroix nods respectfully. Across from them, Henry and Oscar exchange a smirk. Rezin points at the two of them.

Rezin:

So here's what I'm thinkin'... mind you, I'm blazed as fuck right now... but since there's two of you, and two of us, why not just go with the obvious here and make ourselves a little tag outing! Eh? EHH??

The crowd cheers supportively, clearly liking the idea. Keyes and Burns take an aside to discuss things to each other before coming to some sort of agreement.

Oscar Burns:

Rezin... you're the worst kind of scum there is. Someone like me comes along. Moves halfway across the world to leave his old life behind to start a new one with barely a penny to my name. I spend five years, GC, making something of myself. Working my ass off. Working to become not just a supreme talent, but becoming what this very promotion stands for! Hard work! Sacrifice! Training! Living an honest life! I had to work to get the success I have and I earned every bit of it. Then someone like...

He looks nauseated just referring to the man he's talking to.

Oscar Burns:

YOU. You just roll out of a dumpster, show up at my place of employment, start doing what I'm doing and then you think you're my peer? We're supposed to just accept you as a big star in this promotion? THAT'S what offends me. THAT is part of the reason I joined Vae Victis. Cause as good as I am. As GREAT as I am... even DEFIANCE needs help.

Burns steps forward.

Oscar Burns:

Vae Victis... IS DEFIANCE!

BOOOOOOOOOOOO!

Oscar Burns:

The gutter trash needs to be cleaned up in MY promotion and Vae Victis are the ones to do it. So, GCs... if it's a tag

team match you want? That's exactly what you'll get. Rezin and Matt LaCroix against YOUR Southern Heritage Champion Henry Keyes...

Burns starts to make another step... then moves backwards.

Oscar Burns:

...and my star pupil! My wrestling understudy... Butcher Victorious! BUTCHER, GET OUT HERE NOW!

Rezin and Matt LaCroix look confused... but out from the ramp, runs Butcher Victorious. With a sort of makeover... he's wearing an EXACT look of Oscar Burns' gear and holds out a red colored microphone!

DDK:

What the...?

Butcher runs on down to the ring and slides into the ring, excited as a school kid drinking his first soda.

Butcher Victorious:

BUTCH VIC... HAS THE STICK! AND HE'S GONNA SCHOOL THESE PRICKS!

Burns points at them.

Oscar Burns:

You take care of these two and you become a full-time Vae Victis member, GC. I'll put in a good word, yeah?

He bumps fists with an overeager Butcher, who for his part, looks ready to scrap. He wants one from Keyes as well... but Keyes' eyes are not on him and aren't being taken off of Matt LaCroix, the man gunning after his Southern Heritage Championship.

VAE VICTIS (HENRY KEYES & ???) vs. MATT LaCROIX & REZIN**DING DING**

Off the bell, Rezin and Henry Keyes come out of their respective corners. The Kraken is poised to grapple, but the Escape Artist tells him to hold up a moment before offering his hand for the shake. Henry balks. Rezin insists upon it. The Faithful cheer.

DDK:

What's this? Rezin wanting a handshake to start things off?

Lance:

Seems like an odd choice for an opening move in a match against a member of Vae Victis, but we can't discount the history between these two.

DDK:

Rezin is perhaps telling his friendly rival that he still hasn't lost respect... but Henry doesn't look keen on this offer.

Keyes sneers at the open hand of the Goat Bastard. Rezin intensely stares back, demanding he accept. Not just any handshake; *THE* handshake. The secret salutation known only to those who earn the distinction of being in Henry Keyes' inner circle of friends.

Lance:

Keyes doesn't look like he wants to bite on this childishness, but the crowd is egging him on!

DDK:

So is Butcher!

Oscar admonishes Vic on the apron. Finally, after a few more moments of deliberation, Keyes' single eye rolls and he takes the hand to an uproarious ovation from the San Fran Faithful.

Clapback. Clapback. Twist.

Double high. Double low.

Around the world and back again for a--

DDK:

GOOOOOD GAAAAWWWD WHATALARIAT!!!

Rezin does his own secret handshakes with gravity as his body contorts through the air and smacks painfully into the mat.

BOOOOOOOOO!!

Lance:

Damn him!

Keyes puts boots to Goat Bastard on the mat. Rezin is eventually able to scramble to the ropes, forcing the ref to intervene; after a brief pause, Keyes lurches forward and gains head control on Rezin, tossing him high into a vertical suplex! Boos rain down from the crowd as Keyes surveys the scene.

DDK:

You can't fake that handshake with Keyes, but it's clear that the sense of a Forever Rivalry is real between these two.

Lance:

I miss the days where they would have those fun moments after big shows together...it really feels like they're not so different, if they would just take a moment to get on the same page.

Keyes drags Rezin by the arm to his team's corner and slaps hands with Butcher, tagging him in. Butcher Victorious takes to the ring (to a mild ironic pop) and whips the Escape Artist around the ring like a rag doll with a series of arm drags.

DDK:

Surprisingly sharp form on those armdrags from Butcher Victorious!

Lance:

Could it be that a bit of Oscar Burns is rubbing off on him?

Rezin's mouth hangs agape while he writhes on the mat, clutching his back in agony. Butch Vic lays on even more when he runs in and lands a kick to the spine. Butcher keeps the pressure on by snagging Rezin by the arm and rolling him over into an Oklahoma Roll!

DDK:

Butcher Victorious with the Oklahoma Roll-up!

One!

Two!

Kickout!

Rezin rolls out, but as he recovers on his hands and knees, Butch Vic pounces on his back and tucks the head.

DDK:

Now with the GEDO CLUTCH!

One!

Two!

NO! Another kickout!

Butcher scrambles to his feet again, catching Rezin by the arm when he attempts a punch and rolling him to the mat again with a La Magistral.

DDK:

Butcher Victorious with ANOTHER pin!

One!

Two!

SHOULDER UP! Is he only going to do pin holds through this match?

Lance:

Can't say, Keebs. On one hand, Rezin is putting further strain on his back with every kickout. In another, I imagine he's like a child imitating a new trick that's been taught to him, in this case by Oscar Burns.

DDK:

I think I get it. Now that he knows how to do these maneuvers, he can't help but put them to use.

The Goat Bastard is breathing heavily off the frequent kickouts, but Butcher Victorious is on a roll. As soon as Rezin is up, he goes back-to-back and hooks the arms for a backslide... only the Escape Artist rolls through onto his feet, catching the unsuspecting Butcher with a front-faced dropkick!

DDK:

Reversal made by Rezin when Butch Vic goes to the well too many times... and the tag is made to Matt LaCroix!

LaCroix is firing on all cylinders when he steps through the ropes and catches the rising Butch with relentless knife-edge chops that back him up into the corner. Matt takes him the arm and sends him running across the ring, leading to a hard impact with the opposite corner.

DDK:

Irish whip leaves Butcher Victorious reeling... and here comes LaCroix off the ropes with the SLINGBLADE to put him to the mat! LaCroix makes the cover!

One!

Two!

Kickout!

LaCroix quickly gets back to his feet and lands a STIFF kick right to the chest that stuns Butcher. The original Favoured Saint follows it up with several more that leave Butch Vic groaning in a way that doesn't require a stick to be heard. While clutching his reddened chest, LaCroix snatches him by the head and brings him back to his feet.

DDK:

SNAP DDT drills Butcher Victorious into the canvas! Now he makes another cover!

One!

Two!

Thr--BROKEN UP by Henry Keyes!

Lance:

And back to the apron he immediately goes, before Matt can do anything about it.

Henry ignores the ref giving him an earful, and instead smirks in LaCroix's direction. Matt glares back at the SOHER,

but quickly puts his focus back on his opponent, leading him back to his corner before making the tag back to Rezin.

DDK:

LaCroix tags out... and Rezin with a SPRINGBOARD MISSILE DROPKICK to enter the ring drops Butcher Victorious hard to the mat!

Butcher instinctively rolls to the floor, scrambling for his mentor Burns while clutching his foot-stamped face. Rather than offering consolation, the self-proclaimed epitome of DEFIANCE insistently demands that Butch get back into the fight... but during the aside, neither take notice of Rezin going into motion.

Lance:

Heads up!

DDK:

Rezin in motion off the ropes... TOPE from the smoker of DOP-E! Burns got clear, but Butcher Victorious took a flying forearm to the mush that knocked him into the barricade!

Rezin riles up the ringside fans before rolling Butcher Victorious into the ring. A second later, he's on the canvas after a blow to the head... with Henry Keyes standing over him.

DDK:

Keyes hauls off his frenemy... former frenemy? He slugged Rezin!

Keyes returns to his corner at the behest of Benny Doyle. And as he goes back to his corner... Burns grabs the leg of Rezin and then tosses the Goat Bastard back-first into the ring apron!

Lance:

Oscar Burns taking advantage of Doyle's positioning! He throws Rezin back inside!

Burns points at Butcher and signals for him to make the tag to Henry Keyes after the SoHer returns to the VV corner. Butcher nods and rolls over to make the legal-eagle tag to Henry Keyes. The Kraken CRACKS Keyes with a stiff chop that's sure to clear out whatever Rezin smoked up the night prior! The chop sends him back to the corner when Keyes SMASHES him with another one of his Propellor Edge Chops!

DDK:

Keyes doing a number on Rezin! Sends him off the ropes... OOOH! Tilt-a-Whirl Backbreaker!

The Dopesmoker gets dropped with a huge power move from Keyes and then he goes right into a cover.

ONE...

TWO...

NO!

But instead of being deterred, Keyes drills Rezin with a hard forearm while Matt LaCroix looks on! Keyes gives him a cold stare, then pushes Rezin back to the corner. He tags Butcher.

Henry Keyes:

Don't screw this up.

Butcher nods... then leaps over the ropes. With Rezin trying to use the middle rope to pull himself up, The Wrestling Understudy steps on Rezin's back and pulls on the top rope to strangle him!

DDK:

Butcher taking Henry's warning to heart! Less messing around from him than I thought.

Lance:

Keyes threatening him might have been a great motivator.

He continues to choke him out until Doyle starts counting. At the count of four, Butcher leaps off of Rezin. He then runs off the other side of the ropes and SMASHES right into Rezin with a cannonball while's he's against the ropes!

DDK:

Victory Landslide by Butcher! Is that it?

He covers Rezin looking for a huge win under his belt!

ONE...

TWO...

TH... KICKOUT!

Lance:

Kickout by Rezin! I thought that might have been in!

Rezin's shoulder gets up, then Keyes demands a tag from Butcher immediately. Burns nods to give it to him and Butcher grabs Rezin by the arm before doing just that. Butcher holds up the arm of Rezin, allowing Keyes to plant a huge boot into his rib cage! He doubles him over, then pulls The Escape Artist by the neck before slugging him with a European Uppercut on the chin!

Lance:

Keyes and Butcher working well together! Rezin hasn't gotten anywhere near LaCroix to even get the tag.

Henry picks up Rezin again and tries another European Uppercut, but Rezin moves! He hooks the arms of Keyes and then tries a backslide. He struggles with it, but Keyes is too strong and lifts Rezin up and over his back! He doubles over Rezin with a knee and then snaps him over with a huge double arm suplex!

DDK:

Double arm suplex! Rezin dodged that uppercut and tried a backslide, but Keyes reversed it by sheer force! And another cover!

ONE...

TWO...

TH... NO!

The crowd pops when Rezin throws a left shoulder up! Keyes stares a hole right into Benny Doyle, then looks up at Butcher, ready for another quick tag. He does it and then Butch Vic climbs in again.

DDK:

Rezin keeps kicking out, but he has to find an opening somewhere. Keyes and Victorious have done a great job closing those gaps.

Butcher picks up Rezin and then slams him down near the buckles. He looks up and then gets jeers from the crowd as he starts jumping around for his corner moonsault. Keyes flashes him a look from the corner to suggest he better hurry his ish up... so he does it. He leaps to the middle, then the top... NO! Rezin rolls out of the way of the oncoming triple jump moonsault! Butcher is able to land on his feet... then Rezin knocks him off with the Cloven Hoof Kick!

DDK:

Cloven Hoof Kick! Rezin finally found a chance to strike back! He's down and so is Butcher!

Keyes is in his corner, shaking his head while Oscar sighs from the outside. Rezin is in dire straits and looks over to Matt LaCroix. The First Favoured Saint of DEFIANCE holds a hand out while the crowd claps for Rezin to make it over!

Lance:

Can Rezin make it to his partner?

Keyes gets the tag first and then tries to grab Rezin's leg. He tries to drag him up, but The Escape Artist catches him in the chest with a rewind enzuigiri! He kicks him away... TAG TO LACROIX!

DDK:

LaCroix is in!

The San Francisco Faithful come alive when both SoHer champion and SoHer challenger come forward and start laying into one another, exchanging knife edge chops! The stings can be felt all the way in the nose bleeds of the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium as they continue the fireworks show!

Lance:

They're going at it tooth and nail! LaCroix wants that title back while Henry Keyes is looking to prove himself as the rightful champ!

The current Southern Heritage Champion eats a chop from LaCroix, but fires back with a knee to the chest and an uppercut to put him into the ropes. He tries to whip LaCroix across the ring, but he puts the brakes on and sends him across the ring. Off the rebound, he snaps Keyes over with an overhead belly-to-belly suplex! When he gets up, Butcher tries to jump into the ring and grabs LaCroix from behind. LaCroix uses a standing switch and then shoves Butch Vic into the ropes, then back into a snap release German suplex!

DDK:

Look at LaCroix go!

He stands up and boots Butcher out of the ring to focus on Keyes while Oscar Burns watches the action. He goes to pick Keyes up... only to take a surprise uppercut and then a big spinning back elbow!

DDK:

Keyes catches him with that uppercut and elbow combination!

With LaCroix doubled over in the corner, he pulls out LaCroix and then tries to hook him on the shoulders for a big move but when he least expects it, LaCroix elbows his way out with his good arm then slides back... HIGH TIDE!

Lance:

High Tide! The Half Nelson Suplex! Cover by LaCroix! Can he pin the champion?

ONE...

TWO...

KICKOUT!

DDK:

Close one, but a kickout by the Southern Heritage Champion!

Keyes is hurt while Matt LaCroix wants to tag out to Rezin. Butcher is on the ring apron trying to yell at the ref.

Butcher Victorious: *(over the house mic)*

REF! HEY! DOYLE! LOOK AT ME! BUTCH VIC... WITH THE STICK!

Doyle yells at him to get down... but while that happens, LaCroix is seconds away from tagging Rezin when Oscar pulls him off the apron! The crowd jeers while Oscar calmly walks away, whistling like nothing happened!

DDK:

Oh, come on, Doyle!

Butch Vic ditches the stick and returns to his corner with the quickness. LaCroix turns to deal with him, but gets rocked from behind with a big forearm by The Kraken! The pro-Keyes crowd gives him a mixed reaction as he hurries over to tag Butcher.

DDK:

Here comes the tag!

Butcher tags in and he and Keyes both go to pick up LaCroix. They whip him across the ring, but on the return, he slips behind!

Lance:

No! Matt pushes Butcher into Keyes!

Keyes goes tumbling and to his surprise, Rezin is already up! Burns looks over in shock as The Escape Artists grins and pulls the ropes down, sending the Southern Heritage Champion out of the ring!

DDK:

Where did Rezin come from? Burns just dumped him!

Oscar yells and stomps his feet outside while inside, Butcher kicks Matt in the chest and then grabs his arms to try and set up for the Fruit Roll-up, but Southern Strong Style breaks his grip and then locks in a Dragon Sleeper! He pulls Butcher to the mat with both legs wrapped around his waist!

DDK:

FTW! He's got Butcher locked in... YES! He's tapping!

DING DING DING

Darren Quimbey:

Here are your winners... **REZIN AND MATT LACROIX!**

The bell rings and LaCroix releases the hold... but before he can do anything more, he gets pulled out of the ring by Henry Keyes! He fires a right hand, but Matt LaCroix is already fighting back and the two continue to fight on their way up the ramp!

DDK:

Rezin and Matt LaCroix take this one... but Keyes doesn't care! He wants to finish this now!

The two men continue fighting! And as they disappear up the ramp, The Escape Artist watches on and celebrates the win...

But not for long! Burns jumps and FLOORS Rezin with a vicious Hard Out Headbutt, then jumps down and throws elbow after elbow into the side of Rezin's head!

DING DING DING DING DING DING

DDK:

Oscar Burns is going mad right now! He's pissed that Rezin got the win in spite of his interference!

Lance:

And now... OOH! Head-Drop-O-Matic!

The wrist-clutch exploder drills Rezin into the mat! LaCroix is long gone, so there's no one to help with the assault. Butcher Victorious sits up AND holds his neck in pain as he watches Burns go wild with more elbows! When Oscar sees him, he yells at Butcher to get him a microphone, so his pupil does just that. He hands Burns the microphone as he stands over a beaten Rezin.

Oscar Burns:

!! AM! DEFIANCE! VAE VICTIS! IS! DEFIANCE!

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

He looks down at Rezin.

Oscar Burns:

You took my Golden Shovel! You almost won a tournament that was never yours to win, GC. At ACTS of DEFIANCE... You're finished.

Oscar shoves the microphone back in Butcher's chest and then rolls out of the ring to loud jeers from the crowd. His pupil follows behind him, neck still sore.

DDK:

And there's the challenge by Burns! He's taken real umbrage with Rezin and his rise in the company over the last few months and now he finally wants to do something about it.

Lance:

We'll see if that match is made official, but no doubt Rezin is going to let the elitist attitude of Oscar Burns and Vae Victis tell him what he can and can't do.

Rezin is barely able to get his head up to see Burns and Butcher taking their leave as the show rolls on.

COMMERCIAL: ON THE ROAD AGAIN

HOW MIGHT I DIRECT YOUR CALL?

Somewhere amidst the labyrinth of corridors, halls, and backstage locker rooms and closets of the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium is a private, hidden space. Tucked away from wandering feet, prying eyes, and anything that might be attached, the space is dimly lit by an olde fashioned lamp on a carved oak end table. Besides it sits a high backed leather couch, aged but finely cared for. Seated upon said chair, sits the stately bottom of Lord Nigel Tricklebush.

Bowler cap off his head and resting regally next to the lamp, his white hair is tousled and troubled. Eyes narrowed and engrossed in the worn green leather-bound book in his hands, it's impossible from this distance to make out its title but the seriousness of Nigel's gaze implies the import of its contents.

The camera cuts closer on his angular, sharp face, twisted as it is into a grimace. An eyebrow arches. The other twitches. He licks his finger a little too slowly before impatiently turning a page. His intense gray eyes scan both pages. Another turn of the page. Another furious scan. Then another.

Lord Nigel Tricklebush:

...reveal your secrets, blast you!

More angry flipping. And more. All interrupted by the ancient ringing of an equally old telephone. Nigel slowly lifts his head and focuses his steely eyes across the room. Our camera follows that gaze... to find another carved oak table with an old-timey black telephone seated atop it. It vibrates with every **RIIIIIIIIIIIING**, demanding attention.

It has Lord Nigel's. Rising to his feet with curiosity, he floats across the room - hesitates long enough for one last **RIIIIIIIIIIIING** to complete - and lifts the receiver off its cradle and brings it to his ear.

Lord Nigel Tricklebush:

Who troubles me?!

His angry eyes soften almost immediately. His posture relaxes. A sickeningly sweet smile spreads like unchecked plague across his face.

Lord Nigel Tricklebush:

...Ah...

He listens.

Lord Nigel Tricklebush:

Is that so?

He stifles a chuckle, covering the receiver with his hand as whoever is on the other end makes clear their intentions.

Lord Nigel Tricklebush:

I see. Well... I had a feeling you might call.

A moment hangs.

Lord Nigel Tricklebush:

No, no, it's no bother. None at all. I... Why, yes... I think I can serve.

Lord Nigel's eyes spy the camera, finally. He locks eyes with it.

Lord Nigel Tricklebush:

My boy needs a project. And, yes... this will do.

CONOR FUSE vs. KLEIN

DDK:

Folks, we have a great one coming up. Conor Fuse against Klein, a few weeks before ACTS of DEFIANCE where Conor will team with Malak Garland to go against PCP in what is being called a “friendly”.

Lance:

A friendly?

DDK:

Yes.

Lance:

Can you add context to this?

DDK:

Malak Garland told me earlier today this is called a friendly, meaning it's a friendly match between all parties. BUT it's also an opportunity for Garland to show Conor who his REAL friend is. Mainly, him.

Lance:

You spoke to Malak Garland this afternoon?

DDK:

Yes.

Lance:

I'm sorry.

The scene switches to ringside.

Darren Quimbey:

This match is for one fall!

The crowd screams “ONE FALL!” for further proof Elise Ares may be right from her earlier today comments.

Darren Quimbey:

Introducing first... from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania... weighing two-hundred-sixty-three pounds... KLEIN!

Klein's theme plays and he's accompanied by Elise Ares and The D, who trail behind the Box Man as he makes his way down to a significant amount of fan fare.

DDK:

Folks, I have some late breaking information being relayed into my headset this very second. I'm told Arthur Pleasant has been dealing with an injury and is forced to give up the Favored Saints Championship. I'm told we will have a FS Title match on UNCUT this coming week and Klein will be a part of that match. No additional words yet on who he will face but a very interesting development!

Lance:

Absolutely. Tune in next week! ...Uh, but also stay tuned in now!

Klein enters the ring as his theme song comes to a close and is replaced by Conor Fuse's upbeat Kirby's Dreamland Remix.

♪ “King DeDeDe Remix Theme” from Kirby's Dream Land ♪

Darren Quimbey:

And his opponent... from Toronto, Ontario, Canada... weighing two-hundred pounds... CONOR FUSE!

The crowd gives a massive cheer as Conor walks out from behind the FIST logo to massive fan fare. He pops and jumps around as he makes his way down the rampway.

DDK:

Conor is going alone here and-

Almost as if on cue, Conor's theme song comes to an end and it's replaced by a familiar tone...

♪ "Tap In" by Saweetie ♪

The Faithful boo wildly. Malak Garland strolls out onto the stage, alongside the massive, hulking Game Boy.

DDK:

We haven't seen Game Boy for a few weeks.

Fuse has stopped in the middle of the ramp with a confused look on his face. However, Garland is all smiles and warm and fuzzies as he saunters on down to his newest best bud.

The two converse, although the camera mics aren't able to pick it up. Fuse points at Game Boy and Malak Garland simply nods with a smile and a pat on Conor's back. The Ultimate Gamer rolls his eyes but realizes there's a match at hand. He turns to ringside and finishes walking down the rampway as Garland allows The Game Boy to catch up to him, whispering in the giant's ear and then they follow Fuse to the squared circle.

Conor jumps onto the apron and leaps over the ropes as Garland's theme comes to a close. Looking to get this thing going as quickly as possible, Conor gives a thumbs up to referee Hector Navarro and the bell is signaled.

DING DING

Fuse goes on the attack almost right away. He sprints at Klein but the Box Man has it well scouted and steers Conor Fuse into a turnbuckle pad. Fuse hits, sticks but then pops out the second Klein comes running in. Using the top buckle as leverage, Conor leaps over Klein and this time it's the Southtown Star who hits the padding and sticks to it. Fuse gathers momentum off the ropes, then flies towards the corner with a diving clothesline into the back of Klein's shoulders. Conor lands on the middle rope beside Klein, jumps onto the top buckle and takes the box head along with him...

DDK:

Conor with a huge swinging DDT from the top rope!

Fuse hooks a leg.

But only gets a one count.

He's right back to work. Conor spins Klein to his feet and Irish whips the Philly native into the ropes before hammering Klein under the box with a superkick. Then another. Followed by an Irish whip, Conor lowers his head...

And Klein smacks Fuse to the mat with a running knee! Klein hits the ropes now... and lands a powerslam. He, too, hooks a leg.

But only gets a one count.

Klein spins Conor onto his feet and looks for a belly-to-belly suplex but Conor performs a standing switch, pushes Klein into the ropes and then leaps in the air, attempting a hurricanrana.

It's caught!

DDK:

Powerbomb by Klein! He's going for the pin!

ONE.

TWO.

KICKOUT!

On the outside, PCP shout encouragement to Klein while Malak Garland hugs his Game Boy, thinking Conor lost the battle right at that moment. The much bigger Klein peels the scrawny, yet surprisingly muscular gamer off the canvas, drilling forearm smash after forearm smash into the side of Conor's head. Klein hurls Fuse into a corner and comes bursting in... but Conor gets a knee up. Fuse props himself on the second rope, leaps off and tries for a tilt-a-whirl DDT that Klein locks his legs on and does not fall to the canvas. Fuse's eyes go wide, realizing he's stuck on Klein right now... the Box Man lifts Conor higher and crushes the gamer with a sidewalk slam!

Another pin.

ONE.

TWO.

KICKOUT!

DDK:

Malak looks like he's going to have a heart attack out here! Does he have no confidence in Conor's abilities!?

Klein is up first and hammers boot after boot into Conor's head and neck, working the gamer into a corner before dragging Fuse up to his feet and draping him across the turnbuckle padding.

Chop.

WWWWWOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!

Chop.

WWWWWOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!

Chop.

WWWWWOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!

After three hits, the pasty gamer's chest is red. Klein whips Conor into the corner across the way, races in and hits a big splash!

Fuse looks to be out. His body is draped over but his arms are still around the turnbuckle padding. With PCP encouragement on the outside, Klein decides to go for another massive splash...

Fuse moves!

Conor rolls out of the way, kips to his feet and rifles three HARD superkicks under Klein's box. The big man falls to a knee and this time it's Fuse's turn to stomp away at his opponent... with the HAPPY STOMPS of DOOM!

Klein is exhausted and so is Conor Fuse as the crowd !RANKS along with each thumbing blow. Garland is overjoyed on the outside, acting like he almost won the Super Bowl.

DDK:

When Klein was in control you didn't see Ares and The D act like this.

Lance:

I don't think Malak has any true emotional regulation. The phrase "act like you've been there before" clearly does not apply to him.

Conor Irish whips Klein to the corner across the way. Garland is so happy he leaps onto the apron and screams into the rafters.

Malak Garland:

CONOR FUSE IS THE BEST!!!!

Klein, who happens to be right beside Malak, becomes alert and shoves Garland lightly. By no means is the push meant to knock Malak off the apron but the second The Superstar Snowflake spins around to see what's happened, he has tears in his eyes. It's almost as if candy was stolen from him.

Meanwhile, Conor Fuse stands in the middle of the ring, shouting for Malak to get off the apron and for Klein to get back to the wrestling "game".

With help from The Game Boy, a very disgruntled and rattled Malak Garland hops off the apron and Klein meets Conor in the middle of the ring. Klein cracks Fuse across the chest with another chop... and Conor, albeit hurting, shakes his head. Conor straightens his chest for another...

But the chop turns to a SWOOSH as Conor ducks, bounces off the ropes, leaps in the air and hits a head-scissors takedown into a missile dropkick!

Realizing Klein is in the center of the ring, Conor sprints to a turnbuckle (the same buckle Klein was in when he pushed Malak Garland) and leaps onto it. Garland SCREAMS for joy. He's back on the apron and starts dancing around.

Malak Garland:

YOU'RE GONNA DO IT, CONOR!!! YESSSSSSS!!!

The Ultimate Gamer's eyes bug out of his head.

Conor Fuse:

Dude, bloody chill.

Fuse leaps off but changes direction in mid-air, seeing Klein has moved. Conor lands on his feet as Klein gets on his... and the Box Man annihilates the former Tag Team Champion with an inside out clothesline from hell!

Not to be outdone, and likely a little annoyed at Garland's "never been there before" celebrations, this time Elise Ares claps loudly for the Klein offensive maneuver.

Garland jumps off the apron, runs into The Game Boy's hands... and doesn't take his eyes off Ares. He's fuming.

Klein drags Conor to his feet and places Fuse onto his shoulders.

DDK:

Klein could be looking to end it here!

Klein tosses Conor into the air but the gamer shows his aerial ability as he adjusts in the air, catches Klein's head and connects with that long awaited tilt-a-whirl DDT!

Garland ups the ante. This time he cheers even LOUDER than before for Conor Fuse. The Character Formerly Known as Player Two rolls his eyes in the middle of the ring but tries not to let Garland's antics get to him. Fuse perches himself in a corner and waits for Klein to stand...

Fuse charges.

Klein moves out of the way and Conor runs into the buckle.

Ares cheers back, louder than the last time.

Klein looks for a splash on Conor but it's avoided when Fuse collapses like an accordion in the middle of the ring on purpose. So Garland cheers.

Klein spins around, readjusts the box on his face and chops Conor across the chest. Ares cheers.

Conor returns the favor with a leaping knee. Garland cheers.

Double axe handle chop by Klein. Ares cheers.

Another leaping knee by Conor, Garland cheers.

Back and forth they go... but Garland finally has enough since Klein is getting the advantage on Fuse (because The Box Man switches to forearm smashes). Garland taps his Game Boy... and the hulking henchman has the crowd on their feet now because he's making his way over to the PCP side of the ring.

DDK:

Oh all hell is going to break loose!

Hector Navarro is known for having control in chaotic tag team matches and he is not going to put up with shit in a singles contest, either. He leans over the top rope and before The Game Boy even approaches the side PCP is on, he starts to scream orders for The Halo From Hell to return to his side of the apron.

Meanwhile, inside the ring, Klein has Conor propped up for the airplane spin and potential Think Outside finisher. Conor is trying to wiggle free... wiggle free...

And Malak Garland runs into the ring RIGHT as Conor Fuse is tossed into the air. But once again, Fuse readjusts and avoids the TKO hit from Klein, although he does crumple to the mat rather quickly.

Garland hits Klein in the side of the head with what looks to be the broken box Klein gave him over a year ago, the one Malak Garland ruined last DEFtv.

And Klein is OUT.

DDK:

What the!?

Garland quickly surveys his surroundings. He sees The Game Boy imposing himself (but not physically) on Elise Ares and The D. He sees Conor Fuse hasn't noticed him inside the ring yet. Garland grins sadistically and scampers back to where he came from, trying to hide the broken box piece in his hands.

DDK:

I have no doubt there's some foreign object wrapped around that ripped cardboard...

Fuse gathers himself. He's a little unclear if he hit Klein on the way out of the airplane spin hold but sees Klein is stirring. Fuse quickly sprints over to Hector Navarro, pulling him back from the ropes and shouting at The Game Boy to fuck off onto his own side of the floor. By now, Klein is on a knee and Fuse sprints towards The Box Man...

HEAD STOMP.

DDK:

That has to do it!

ONE.

TWO.

THREE.

DING DING DING

Darren Quimbey:

The winner of this match-

Quimbey's mic is taken away from him by Malak Garland.

Malak Garland:

The winner of this match... MY BEST FRIEND... THE BEST DUDE IN DEFIANCE... HE SHOULD LITERALLY BE THE FIST OF DEFIANCE RIGHT NOW... BY THE WAY, I FUCKING HATE FWO... CONORRRRRRRR
FUUUUUUUSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSEEEEEEEEEEE!!!

The gamer's theme song plays as Elise Ares and The D are dumbfounded on the outside.

DDK:

I don't think anyone saw Malak get inside that ring!

Lance:

They will eventually, Keebs, when they arrive backstage. Or when Klein wakes up and tells them.

DDK:

Right. But for now, Malak's gotten away with it.

Ares and The D enter the ring, only to roll Klein out of it while Conor Fuse's hand is raised...

And Malak Garland enters, along with The Game Boy. Conor is still extremely apprehensive when the giant henchman is near him but Malak continues to tell Conor it's okay.

Conor isn't buying it but allows for his hand to be raised and for them to occupy the ring with him. Momentarily.

The Ultimate Gamer eventually exits the squared circle to slap hands with some fans in the front row. Malak acts like 'of course he would allow for Conor to do this, what a great idea and that they are totally, definitely, absolutely, on the same page'.

PCP make their way up the ramp as DEFtv goes to commercial.

BREAKING NEWS - INJURY UPDATE

MULTIPLE BURSTS OF STATIC.

This logo flies into frame in a complicated rendered motion graphics sequence.

We fade to High Flyer IV standing in front of the Amoeba Music record store in Haight-Ashbury. Passerbys walk in and out of frame. One wrestling fan waves in the background.

High Flyer IV:

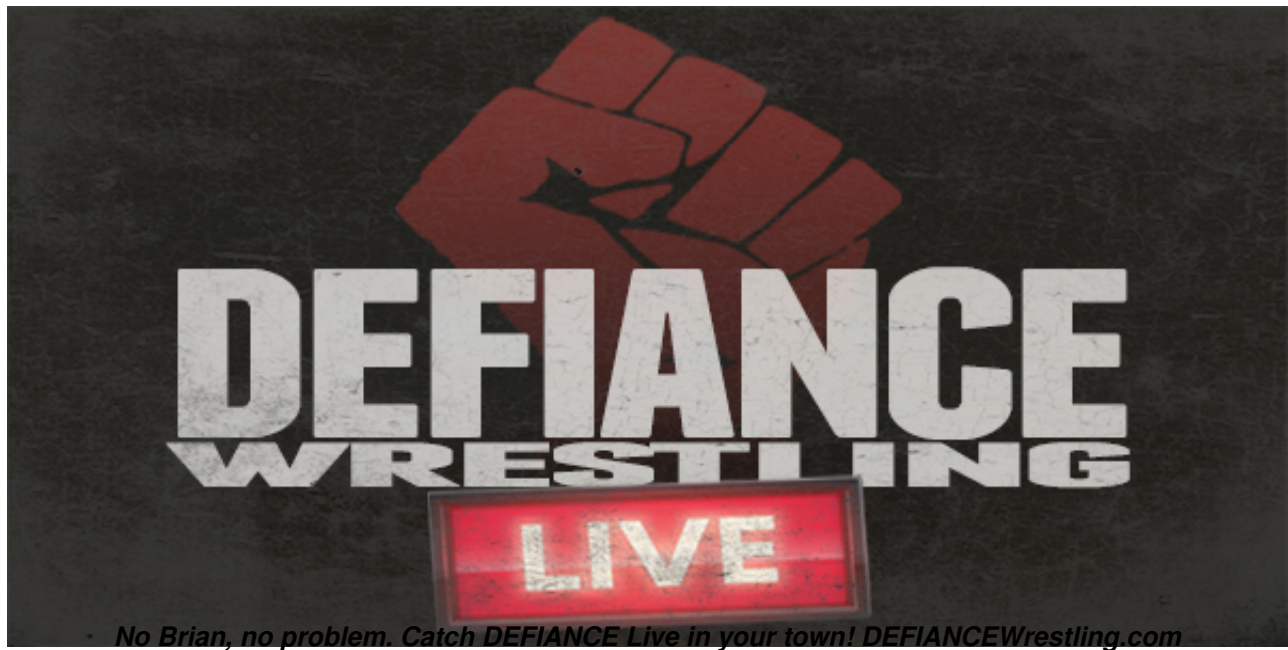
Breaking news! Medical update! My arm has healed 23 percent from the vicious attack by Tyler Fuse. I can now hold a grape without feeling immense pain. I can almost eat it too. But that's up six percent from this morning, so I know I will be back out there entertaining with L.E.T in no time. I just wanted to thank all the Faithful that have reached out. I must have received at least four hundred tweets and like, twenty instagram stories wishing me well from the Faithful, plus all the Tik Toks and my AMA on r slash Squared Circle. You all, you give your Faith to me and I'll do my best to flip and fly once more!+ Continue sending your support on Social Media and tell the Favoured Saints, you Favor Me. F-4 OUT!

High Flyer IV smiles. There's a hint of genuineness. There's a hint of falsehood. Neither feeling prevails.

Back into the arena, as Darren and Lance exchange confused looks at one another.

DDK:

... Let's just go to the planned commercial.

COMMERCIAL: DEFIANCE LIVE

FIX IT RIGHT NOW!!!

The broadcast feed goes to the backstage interview area with Jamie Sawyers.

Jamie Sawyers:

Folks, I'm here with Conor Fuse, fresh off his victory against Klein!

The Faithful cheer as the camera reveals a sweaty Conor Fuse with a Comments Section branded towel over his shoulders, littered in hashtags about how fWo sucks and Lindsay Troy is a b00b.

Conor Fuse:

Thank you, Jamie. It was a hard fought-

Fuse is cut off by a celebratory Malak Garland.

Malak Garland:

YES! There he is! Conor Fuse! The winner and the next great FIST of DEFIANCE! My best friend!

Garland is not alone, The Game Boy is beside him.

And all the energy has been knocked out of The Ultimate Gamer.

Conor Fuse:

Yes, Malak?

Garland snatches the mic right out of Sawyers' hands and shoves the interviewer as hard as possible out of the picture. Malak smiles with glee as if he just didn't assault someone nowhere near his physical level.

Malak Garland:

Did I hear things right? Arthur Pleasant is injured and Klein is wrestling for the Favored Saints Championship on UNCUT!?

Garland trembles with a short-lived anxiety.

Malak Garland:

Klein shouldn't be in this match. Conor Fuse should be in this match!

Garland nudges The Game Boy and on cue, The Game Boy claps. Only once.

Malak Garland:

I am gonna talk to the Favored Saints and get that match switched RIGHT NOW.

Garland snaps his fingers. He and TGB exit the scene, leaving Conor Fuse standing there with an empty expression.

DEFtv goes to ringside.

TYLER FUSE vs. SHO NAKAZAWA

The scene shifts to ringside.

Darren Quimbey:

This match is for ONE FALL! Already in the ring... from Tateyama, Japan... weighing one-hundred-eighty-five pounds... SHO NAKAZAWA!

The crowd cheers as Sho bows to them.

Darren Quimbey:

And his opponent... from Toronto, Ontario, Canada... weighing two-hundred-eight pounds... TYLER FUSE!

♪ "Machinehead" by Bush ♪

Tyler appears, methodically walking out from behind the FIST logo as he makes his way down the ramp.

DDK:

Two weeks ago, Tyler Fuse broke High Flyer IV's arm. It wasn't on purpose, exactly. But it was the result of HFIV not tapping out and spending too long in the arm bar submission.

Lance:

Yes. We received word of Harmen's broken arm after we went off the air. It's a clean break and this is actually good news. It means we may see the Flyer back early next year.

Fuse strolls up to the apron and slides into the ring. He nods at the referee Carla Ferrari and she calls for the bell.

DING DING

Nakasawa is quick on the attack. He charges at Tyler and knocks him back with a shotgun dropkick. Fuse stumbles into a turnbuckle pad as Sho races in, jumps onto the second rope and hammers down punches to Tyler's forehead. The crowd counts along...

Until FIVE, when Tyler lifts Nakasawa from the ropes and hits him with a powerbomb.

Fuse rolls to his feet. He kicks Sho in the chest a couple of times before dragging the former BRAZEN talent to a vertical base. Tyler attempts an exploder suplex but Nakasawa pulls away, kicks Fuse in the side of the leg three times and then takes to the ropes.

THUMP.

Fuse with a hard back elbow into Sho's jaw as Nakasawa ran across the canvas. Tyler takes Nakasawa's legs and flips him into a modified Texas cloverleaf.

Nakasawa reaches out... he can't get to the ropes just yet but he can most certainly push himself up and off the canvas mat. Inching closer and closer... finally, the luchador reaches out and grabs the bottom rope.

In a rather surprising manner, Tyler breaks the hold.

Only to drag Nakasawa back to the middle of the ring. The OG Player punts Sho in the side of the head and then takes hold of his arm.

DDK:

Nakasawa better adjust!

He does. Sho rolls Tyler into an inside cradle.

ONE.

KICKOUT!

Fuse whips himself upright and fast. A rare show of frustration crosses his face, as he knees Nakasawa in the temple. Tyler drags Sho to his feet...

And connects with an exploder suplex.

Fuse props Nakasawa to his feet once more, this time measuring a snap suplex, placing Sho in the middle of the canvas.

Tyler grabs the arm again...

He's got it. Fuse wrenches back on Nakasawa's arm in an arm bar submission.

Lance:

Similar to what HFIV just found himself in!

Tyler grits his teeth. He looks up and sees pain rushing across Sho Nakasawa's face, even if the wrestler's full facial expressions are covered by a mask, Tyler knows he has him.

The EX gamer smirks. He leans back as hard as he possibly can.

CRACK.

Nakasawa screams. He taps out immediately.

DING DING DING

Tyler Fuse drops the submission. He kicks Nakasawa's dead arm for good measure before Carla Ferrari shouts towards the back and DEFSec comes running.

Darren Quimbey:

The winner of this match is Tyler Fuse.

Quimbey's voice is hollow and lifeless but it doesn't matter to Tyler. He doesn't even ask Carla to raise his arm. He stands there, in the middle of the ring, with Sho Nakasawa to the side of the squared circle, being attended to.

DDK:

I think I heard Sho say "it's broken".

Lance:

His English isn't great, we can only hope you heard wrong, Keebs.

DDK:

I don't think I did.

A CLEAN BREAK

Fuse breathes heavily as he strolls around the ring, soon demanding a microphone. Once received, The OG Player walks to the center of the canvas.

Tyler Fuse:

Jack.

The crowd cheers Harmen's name.

Tyler Fuse:

I didn't mean to break your son's arm...

The Faithful boo this comment, remembering what happened two weeks ago.

Tyler Fuse:

But I promise you, I meant to break his.

Tyler points to Nakasawa being attended to by DEFSec.

Tyler Fuse:

So when I-

"ALL ABOARD!"

The roof is blown off as Jack Harmen's Crazy Train theme song plays. Everyone's attention turns to the stage, Tyler's included.

DDK:

I think this is what Tyler wanted, and we're going to see it a few weeks early!

Lance:

I'm told Harmen agreed to Tyler's request for a match at ACTS earlier today, but he's not going to wait for ACTS, Darren!

DDK:

IT'S HARMEN! From the crowd! Tyler doesn't see him!

Harmen appears in the ring with some magical camera work. Undetected, Tyler is still looking up at the entranceway and goading Harmen to come get him. Then, like a sixth sense, Fuse turns only to get rocked with a right hand!

RRRRRAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!

Jack just keeps rocking Fuse with rights and lefts that send a stunned Tyler backpedaling into the corner. Once in the corner, Harmen's assault is unrelenting. A brawl that sends Tyler falling onto the second ropes and then seated in the corner. The punches turn to stomps as Harmen takes special care to kick Tyler square in the head with each blow.

Properly stomped, Harmen goes to check on Sho, who assures Jack he's trying to manage. Sho slips out of the ring with help, as Harmen walks back over to the elder Fuse.

DDK:

LOW BLOW by Tyler!

Lance:

Cheat code entered.

Quick jab from Tyler to the throat of Harmen and hooks Jack in a side-headlock. Tyler charges up the turnbuckle and spins but Harmen shoves Tyler off. Tyler lands on his feet, turns and narrowly avoids a charging Locomotive, just falling to duck under the blow. Harmen dives, trying to hit a double ax handle/dual elbow drop to the prone Tyler, who takes the opportunity to roll out of the ring entirely. Fuse takes a few steps back that allow DEFSec to slip between Tyler and Sho and Tyler and Harmen in the ring.

Jack paces like a caged animal, beat red and huffing and puffing like the big bad wolf.

DDK:

At ACTS, there's nowhere for Tyler to run.

Lance:

You can see the scouting both men are already doing for this match, Darren. Harmen was able to slip out of Tyler's CQC and Tyler was able to avoid the Locomotive.

DDK:

But this match might not be about wins and losses Lance. These two might be looking to outright hurt one another.

Lance:

And when things get personal, they get final. Could be the last time we see either of these men Darren! By their own hands!

Fuse eyes the legend inside the ring as Jack Harmen goes to fire up the SF Faithful some more. DEFtv goes to commercial.

COMMERCIAL: THIS IS DEFIANCE!

BEAUTY AND THE BUILDING

Teresa Ames struts her stuff as Shawn Steele carries a camera from a few feet behind her. They are outside the Billy Graham Civic Auditorium, circling around it by foot.

Teresa Ames:

Make sure you get all of my bootylicious self in the shot, Shawn.

Shawn Steele:

Yes, ma'am. Anything to win your kind hearted soul back.

Her hips don't lie as they turn a corner. She is captivated by the old school architecture of the building.

Teresa Ames:

Sure, it's nice but this place is a bit outside my age scope. It would be like dating a seventy year old just for his money and let's face it, I'm not all about that. Plus, fuck Billy Graham. Fuck him right in his cooter.

Shawn Steele:

Whatever you say!

It's clear Steele isn't trying to make waves. Teresa continues her walking examination of the building that DEFtv calls home to this week.

Teresa Ames:

Allegiant Stadium still has my heart, Shawn but this place will do for a romp tonight.

Suddenly, a notification dings on her bedazzled phone. She holds it up to her face as an evil grin breaks across it.

Teresa Ames:

Get in the car, Shawn.

Shawn looks around, perplexed.

Shawn Steele:

What are you talking about? There is no car here.

A black sedan comes ripping up to them from out of nowhere. It nearly jumps the curb before screeching to a halt at their feet. The Tasty Gurl grabs the door handle and swings it open.

Teresa Ames:

Get in. We're ten minutes away from a much younger, more supple suitor for tonight's festivities. Leave this place to the unwashed wrestling fans. Momma has a hot date tonight.

Once in the car, Teresa decides it's an appropriate time to undo her pants belt and let the people in on exactly how she is feeling.

Shawn Steele:

So where are we going exactly?

Teresa Ames:

My dear Shawn Steele. So fucking inquisitive. Just shut up and enjoy the ride. Record this shit and stop talking AND NO, we won't be making a stop at our hotel, Signature in downtown San Francisco.

They drive in an awkward silence for a few moments until Ames speaks up once more.

Teresa Ames:

For the love of buildings, I surely adore San Francisco. Lots of suitors to pick from, lots indeed. So lucky to be in the land of free love and no discrimination. I like it here. I could see myself moving here for sure.

The nondescript driver slams on the brakes once more. They've arrived. She pays the driver before both her and Steele exit the vehicle. It doesn't take Shawn long to refocus his camera at the arena in front of them. Ames' eyes are LiT up.

Teresa Ames:

Welcome to the Chase Center. It's a quiet night here, just how I like it. I can always rub up on the Billy Graham brothel during the day tomorrow or something. Shit guy, shit. Look at the curvatures of this place. I want them in me immediately!

She skips towards the special season ticket holders entrance. Of course, the doors are locked and closed but that doesn't stop her from placing her nose gently against the glass windows to have a look inside.

Teresa Ames:

Is that a funnel cake stand? Oh and over there! Look! I can see diamond plated stairs! YES! I never thought I'd get to see those up close and personal.

However, Ames sighs as she is once more on the outside looking in at one of her heart throbbing beaus.

Teresa Ames:

I know what you're thinking, Shawn and don't worry. I won't pull the same stunt I did back at Allegiant. Shit guy, shit. I just wish I could sink my nails into that diamond plate. I bet they have water fountains in each locker room for sure. I'd like to wrap my tongue around that shit all day long.

Shawn Steele:

Hey ummm.

Teresa snaps her fingers instantly.

Teresa Ames:

Did I or did I not tell you to STFU back in the cab? Why are you trying to talk?

Steele sighs into the camera's microphone as Ames goes back to gaze longingly at the Chase Center, home of the Golden State Warriors.

Teresa Ames:

I'd like to lay-up on all those accessible wheelchair ramps!

Shawn Steele:

Hey Teresa, I can get us in here.

Ignoring his information, Teresa licks the window in front of her like a meager cat needing milk.

Shawn Steele:

Did you hear me? I said I can get us in here. I'm from Seattle and I used to wrestle a ton of indie shows up and down the west coast and we would hit up this area lots of times. The Chase Center didn't exist back then but a buddy of mine started a security firm around here after he got hurt and couldn't wrestle anymore. They work in this arena now. Let me text him and see if he can get us in. They don't call me "The Real Deal" for nothing, you know?

The Keyboard Queen acts as if Shawn isn't saying anything. She starts to sob as she walks away from the building, dragging Steele by his collar.

Teresa Ames:

It's no use. I'll never get in there. I'll never get to romanticize Chase Center in the way I want to, touching it in weird, unconventional ways.

Shawn continues to get dragged away as the door to the arena opens. It's none other than Shawn's old wrestling friend waving at them to come back but it's no use. Teresa is in her own zone.

Shawn Steele:

Hey! We can go in there and explore uninhibited! The Allegiant Stadium incident won't even happen again! They will let you run wild! They will let you touch whatever you want! They don't care! I know the guy!

Ames is numb to his voice at this point. They reach the street where Teresa relinquishes her grip. With mascara running down her face, she looks up at Shawn and whimpers a few words.

Teresa Ames:

Let's go to Levi's Stadium where it's real and comfortable.

The footage cuts as everyone will have to see if they make it there another time.

SCROW vs. CRISTIANO CABALLERO

DDK:

Cristiano Caballero looking to get back on the winning track, after not lasting very long in the Ascension Battle Royal, being eliminated by Massive Cowboy. He will have a tough challenge here tonight as he takes on the former SOHER Scrow!

♪ "Prefiero Ser Su Amante" by Maria Jose and Cartel de Santa ♪

The music plays and out comes the long-time BRAZEN star, Cristiano Caballero.

Darren Quimbey:

Coming to the ring from Barcelona, Spain....Cristiano Caballero!

As he approaches the ring, he teases handing over a rose to a fan before he pulls it back and mouths an obscenity before climbing into the ring. He struts down the aisleway, climbs inside, and then poses with the flower in his mouth.

DDK:

Still as arrogant as ever Lance.

Lance:

Indeed Darren.

♪ "Welcome 2 Hell" by Eminem and Royce da 5'9 ♪

Scrow's DEFTRON video plays as the Raven's Eye steps from behind the curtain about a couple of moments later. His wet black hair draped over his right eye, his monocle now with an etched Raven's eye in the glass. He is in orange ring gear with yellow trim and blackbirds on the shin pad and on the side of his trunks. His new logo is of a bird trying to escape a puddle of ooze on the front of his trunks. That same logo is on the back of his black leather coat.

Darren Quimbey:

Coming to the ring from the Fields of Torment...."The Raven's Eye" SCROW!

Scrow is laser-focused on Caballero, not paying much mind to the surprising cheers for the Raven's Eye now.

DDK:

Scrow hasn't been too accepting of the response he has been getting lately. Week by week though he seems to be winning over the fans. Whether he chooses to or not.

Lance:

To think just a couple of months ago, this man couldn't be even bothered to be wrestling as much as he has these last few weeks. It has been a one-eighty in his commitment to wrestling.

Scrow enters the ring.

DING DING**DDK:**

It could be he realized his mistake, that cost him the SOHER and has spent those last few weeks trying to refocus and get back on the path to gold once more.

Lance:

Unfortunately for him, The House of the Harvest has made his last few weeks a nightmare. He sees that Hive is nothing more than a prisoner forced to obey Crimson Lord and his house. His only objective as of late is to find some way of freeing her of that burden.

DDK:

Not very villain-like of him.

Lance:

Does he see that though, he has lived long enough as a villain, that eventually he may be turning into a hero without him even realizing it?

Scrow and Cristiano lock up, and CC is quick to throw Scrow over in a hip toss headlock takedown. Scrow fights to a vertical base, pushing Caballero's arms in front of his head, he quickly ducks into the front of Cristiano, locking him in his own headlock. Caballero quickly pushes Scrow into the ropes and sends him off the ropes, Caballero hits the deck and then rushes into the ropes and uses the second rope to leap back catching Scrow in a leaping stunner!

The Faithful:

Ooooooooo!

DDK:

Nice leaping stunner there by Cristiano. Perhaps the Brazen star has been trying to refocus his own career as of late.

Lance:

I have never seen him do such a move before.

Caballero quickly charges and tries a clothesline over the top rope but Scrow manages to duck under it and hits a neck breaker just as quickly. Scrow rubs his jaw, while he gets to his feet. Cristiano gets to his feet and charges and Scrow quickly drop-toe holds him to the mat, he quickly leaps to the front and locks in a bulldog choke!

The Faithful cheer on the possible submission.

DDK:

Scrow has been incorporating a lot of chokes as of late. Seems his go to as of late has been a guillotine chokehold. Now he has a bulldog choke.

Lance:

Scrow has always been adding to his moveset. The sign of a student of the game trying to absorb as much knowledge as he can to improve.

Scrow tries to arch his back and apply as much pressure as he can muster. Caballero struggles to fight the hold, reaching frantically for the ropes, after three times he manages on the fourth. Scrow releases the hold, and Cristiano gets out of the ring. He puts his hands on his knees coughing trying to get his breath back. Scrow hits the ropes and Caballero never sees an incoming Raven's Eye in a suicide dive crashing him into the rampway. Scrow hops to his feet and gets on the apron and climbs the turnbuckles.

The Faithful:

Turn Back! Turn Back! x5

DDK:

Scrow has been using this moonsault to the floor now for the last couple of weeks. So much like you were saying Lance he defiantly has been trying to improve his arsenal in the ring.

Lance:

Caballero has not had an answer as of yet. He better find some way to turn the tide here. Or he will continue to stay on the wrong path in his career.

Caballero gets to his feet only to see Scrow mid-air with a moonsault crashing on top of him. Although the former SOHER lands on his feet and hits his scarecrow pose for a second. Scrow picks up Caballero and tosses him in the ring. Scrow slides into the ring, he tries to get to his feet, and Scrow looks poised for Raven's Call...

The Faithful with highly anticipated type cheers.

DDK:

Just like you said Lance, Scrow looking to end Cristiano's night early!

Lance:

Cristiano sees it!

Scrow misses just barely as Cristiano bails out of the ring. Checking to see if his precious babyface was even remotely hit. Scrow looks down at Caballero with a smirk, he backs away for a moment pacing back and forth. Cristiano takes his sweet time getting in the ring. He walks up the stairs and walks to the apron and shouts at Brian Slater.

Cristiano Caballero:

Tell him no face kicks!

Brian Slater:

Are you serious?

The Faithful:

You are ugly.

CLAP CLAP

Cristiano shouts at The Faithful to "Shut up" as they start to get under his skin real quick.

The Faithful:

You are ugly.

CLAP CLAP

The Faithful:

You are ugly.

CLAP CLAP

Cristiano enraged by the response grabs Slater by the shirt, this lures Scrow in, and Cristiano quickly grabs the back of Scrow's head and slingshots Scrow's throat across the top rope as he drops to the floor!

DDK:

Caballero drew Scrow in with that but is he serious he doesn't want to be hit in the face. This is not patty cake this is professional wrestling.

Lance:

Arrogant to a tee, why are you surprised it's Cristiano Caballero.

Caballero rushes into the ring and mounts Scrow and unloads with clear closed fists! Slater continues to warn him! Caballero quickly pulls Scrow from the mat and locks in a hangman facebuster! He quickly goes for a cover!

ONE

TWO

KICKOUT!

The Faithful clap.

Caballero quickly stays on the offense, he picks up Scrow and drives a few knee lifts into the gut, before flipping

Scrow over in a gut buster suplex! He quickly goes for another cover!

ONE!

TWO!

KICKOUT!

Once more The Faithful clap at the kick out.

DDK:

Cristiano is not giving Scrow any sort of chance to get a second wind here.

Lance:

It's a sound strategy, and the constant pinfalls only drain Scrow's stamina.

Cristiano lets a few more haymakers on the prone Scrow, before lifting him up. He sets him up in the corner and looks for a superplex!

DDK:

Caballero is trying for a superplex, but Scrow is blocking it!

Lance:

Cristiano is taking some shots to the stomach. Ooooo Scrow with a headbutt!

Cristiano falls to the mat grabbing his head. You hear him off mic scream "My face, my face" Scrow is still a bit groggy on the top rope. As he gets his footing, Caballero in a fit of rage rushes the turnbuckle and climbs it, and manages to catch Scrow off guard in a Modified Super Hangman Facebuster off the top rope!

DDK:

My GOD! What a move by Cristiano Caballero!

The Faithful:

HOLY SHIT! HOLY SHIT! HOLY SHIT!

Lance:

We talk about Scrow adding to his moveset, that is a new one from Cristiano right there amazing height as well!

CC wastes no time and goes for the cover...

ONE!

TWO!

THR.....

The mere presence of Nigel Tricklebush invokes a response of boos from The Faithful!

DDK:

Brian has been pulled out of the ring ...by NIGEL TRICKELBUSH!

Lance:

What the hell is he doing out here?

Cristiano is slamming his hands on the mat waiting for the three count. He gets up and looks around finally noticing Nigel outside. He begins to jaw jack with Nigel outside...

DDK:

Scrow is on his feet!

The Faithful are on their feet.

Lance:

Cristiano doesn't see him!

Just as he turns around....

DDK:

RAVEN'S CALL!

The Faithful roar in excitement.

Caballero falls back into the ropes the only thing holding his unconscious body vertically.

Lance:

Why is Nigel helping Scrow?

Scrow still feeling the effects of that Super Hangman Facebuster from the top falls to his hands and knees not facing Cristiano.

DDK:

Hang on a second, what the—

A telltale blur races across our screen and into the ring.

Lance:

Is that—? It's CORVO ALPHA?!?!

DDK:

What is he doing here?!

The Faithful:

Booooooooooooo!

We don't need long to figure it out. In a flash, he has brutally clotheslined an exhausted and exasperated Caballero over the top rope and out of the ring. The shocked Faithful groan as Scrow rises to face him.

Lance:

Alpha just clobbered Caballero and— OHH! Charging BOOT to Scrow! Nearly took his head CLEAN off!

DDK:

What IS this?!

DING DING DING

As Alpha pulls Scrow back to his feet by his hair, we suddenly spy Lord Nigel Tricklebush standing on the apron, face dour and ultra-serious, arm pointing towards a far turnbuckle. He barks at his dog, issuing equal parts encouragement and directives.

Lance:

I don't know what this is about but— Alpha sends Scrow HARD into the turnbuckle chest first! Scrow stumbles backward and right into Corvo's arms — OVERHEAD THROW SUPLEX!

DDK:

Scrow lands HARD on his head but... He is back up! Charges at Alpha!

Lance:

Alpha ducks a wild clothesline from Scrow! Scrow springboards out of the corner, SPRINGBOARD CROSSBODY! Wait!

DDK:

NO! Alpha catches him! Adjusts him! URANAGE BACKBREAKER over one of Alpha's knees!

DING DING DING DING DING

DDK:

What's the meaning of all of this?!

Lance:

Look at Scrow! Crawling! Still alive! There's still a fight in him! Using the ropes to pull himself to his feet!

Lord Nigel catches the stark, wild eyes of Corvo and nods grimly. Alpha wastes no time. Stalking Scrow, he clenches him from behind in one motion.

DDK:

Alpha Clutch! Locked on! Cinched in! There's nothing Scrow can do!

The camera captures the moment when Scrow's eyes flutter shut and the fight fades from his body.

DING DING DING DING DING

Lord Nigel enters the ring, careful to keep his bowler cap atop his head. When he lays a hand on Alpha's shoulder, his monster releases. In an instant, there is more commotion. This time, it is atop the entrance way.

A PRIMAL AND A RAVEN

The Faithful:

Boooooooooooooo!

♪ "See you... in Hell" by Christopher Drake ♪

DDK:

Ravenna?!? Scrow has been decimated by Corvo Alpha and now this evil woman is back. Why is this not enough you want your goon to add more punishment?

Lance:

Why is Nigel smiling? You don't think Darren...?

DDK:

That phone call we saw Lord Nigel receive earlier... was that from Ravanna?

Lance:

Had to be.

Ravanna and RG are dressed in normal business suit attires both in gray. Scrow is face first on the mat with Corvo foaming at the mouth standing over him.

Ravanna:

So I have had a chance to think over your little demand Scrow, and The House accepts your demand. However, the consequence is you have to beat Corvo Alpha at Acts of DEFIANCE!

The Faithful:

Boooooooooooooo!

DDK:

Are you kidding me?

Lance:

Alpha has been in a foul mood since losing to Conor Fuse, this is not a good thing for Scrow at all.

Ravanna:

Mr. Tricklebush, do me a favor when our little birdie manages to wake up. Let him know Minerva Hive's future is now in his hands. I sure hope he doesn't buckle under the pressure.

RG laughs hysterically, Ravanna has a devilish smirk on her face.

The Faithful:

Boooooooooooooo!

♪ "See you... in Hell" by Christopher Drake ♪

DDK:

Scrow is going to literally have to walk through hell, to win back his sister-in-law's freedom.

Lance:

How can Scrow possibly overcome this monster Corvo Alpha?

COMMERCIAL: ACTS of DEFIANCE 2022



FIST of DEFIANCE

Deacon (C) vs. Lindsay Troy

SOHER

Henry Keyes (C) vs. Matt LaCroix

UNIFIED Tag Team Championships

The Lucky Sevens (C) vs. Titanes Familia

Dex Joy vs. Kerry Kuroyama

Malak Garland & Conor Fuse vs. PCP

For The Deed to 3212 Tulane Ave

SNS? vs. The Honor Society

ADV vs. MD1

Loaded Glove Match

The Dangerous Mix vs. Gentleman's Agreement

Titanes Familia (Minute & Dan Leo James) vs. Aaron King & Aleczander The Great

Tyler Fuse vs. Jack Harmen

IT'S TIME FOR ACTS

DEFTv returns from commercial with the crowd screaming and the FIST of DEFIANCE standing in the middle of the ring. The only piece of his "wrestling attire" on his body is the mask, the wrestling tights and boots replaced with jeans & work boots. With a mic in his left hand, he reaches up with his right hand to slowly remove the mask, the crowd's noise crescendoing in response, increasing even more as he moves the microphone closer to his mouth.

Deacon:

Troy.

The crowd pops again. Maybe it's because he said something, anything. Maybe it's because he mentioned the Queen of the Ring. Definitely, he doesn't care which. He gives the crowd a moment to die down before continuing.

Deacon:

T'is could have been easy.

Deacon moves the microphone again, letting his thoughts push their way through the anger.

Deacon:

It could have been you wit' your arrogance verse me wit' my fait'.

Another pause.

Deacon:

T'is could have been two veterans meeting for only second time, and first time since many people born. It could have been someone who fought her way t'rough so many to try to claim trophy. (Deacon holds up the belt.) It could have be t'e FIST of DEFIANCE stopping Vae - - whatever you call yourselve.. It could have been t'e FIST stopping you and your dogs, just as I had to against 24K. Against Kabal.

Another pause.

Deacon:

It could have been.

Seething, Deacon yanks the microphone away.

Deacon:

Instead, you, your dogs, had to fight Magdalena.

Another pause as he tries to control his breathing. He fails.

Deacon:

COULD YOU NOT FIND ME? I SEVEN FEET TALL! THREE...HUNDRED... POUNDS! COULD! YOU! NOT! FIND! ME?!!

DEA-CON

DEA-CON

DEA-CON

The (not-so) Mute Freak stares out into the crowd, but before he can speak again...

♪ "Stranger Fruit" by Zeal & Ardor ♪

Two words occupy the super-sized DEFIATron:

VAE VICTIS

♪ *Stranger fruit, how it grows and grows,
We all saw the shoot, but we tend to the rose...* ♪

The entirety of Vae Victis saunters through the curtain and onto the stage, led by the Number One Contender to the FIST, Lindsay Troy. Her eyes, narrowed and hostile, are locked on Deacon, who glares back at her.

“Stranger Fruit” fades out and Sonny Silver hands Troy a microphone. She waits a moment to keep the Faithful in suspense then, finally, speaks.

Lindsay Troy:

Color me shocked, the human equivalent of “womp womp” found his voice after all.

Troy places a hand on her hip. Her sneer deepens while her voice drips with contempt.

Lindsay Troy:

None of us hurt DEFIANCE’s Resident Birther, you bloviated dipshit, and before you cry any more about what happened to her last night, on the advice of LLB and Lawyer Plague Doctor we’re not talking to the fuzz because All Cops Are Bastards.

This does not seem to assuage the FIST of DEFIANCE any, who seems to be getting angrier by the second.

Lindsay Troy:

But you *are* right about one thing, Deac: this could’ve been a whole lot easier than it has been. What *should* have happened was Favoured Saints outright giving me the FIST shot that I’ve rightfully earned over the last year instead of making me go through the ACTS Tournament. The tournament that I called a joke from the start because it never should have taken place. And while it *was* going on...while I was forced to rampage through the competition to win it all, you know what happened? The losers still got a chance to get a FIST shot anyway because (*mockingly*) dEaCoN nEeDeD sOmEtHiNg tO dOoOoOo.

A pause. A scoff.

Lindsay Troy:

Pathetic. Pathetic, disrespectful, and arrogant.

Boos rain down around her, but the ACE pays them no mind and continues on.

Lindsay Troy:

You want to talk about arrogance, Deac? Arrogance is refusing to acknowledge our name in one breath while outright accusing us of something we didn’t do in another. As if there aren’t dozens of people in DEFIANCE who think Magdalena is a sanctimonious killjoy who needed her ass kicked. As if her being carted out of here on a stretcher wasn’t cause for celebration. Arrogance is being the champion of this company while in competition with Stalker, Scott Stevens, and Curtis Penn for the Worst FIST of All Time. Arrogance is thinking your “Faith” is gonna save you in two weeks when you’re too stupid to realize Jesus is dead and I’m your God now. This is the Gospel according to Troy, big man. I’m going to make you a footnote in my history at ACTS of DEFIANCE, and you and everyone else will finally realize just who the Saviors of DEFIANCE really are.

DDK:

Notice something, Lance. Troy said removing Magdalena from the equation was a cause for celebration while simultaneously claiming innocence. I’m not buying it.

Lance:

Her lawyer won't be putting you on a jury then.

Deacon:

T'en Troy, why not get in t'is ring and prove your ... Godhood.

A massive crowd pop follows as Deacon sits on the middle rope, holding the top rope up. The Queen of the Ring laughs darkly.

Lindsay Troy:

Your funeral.

She drops the mic, says something indistinguishable to her teammates, and heads toward the ring, Vae Victis staying behind on the stage.

Deacon:

I t'e only one of us ready to die.

Deacon tosses his mic out of the ring. Each step closer to the two veterans contact garners a louder and louder pop from the crowd.

DDK:

Here we go! We're gonna get a preview for ACTS right now!

Troy gets near the ring, staring up, WAY up, at the 7 foot FIST of DEFIANCE in the ring. Rather than take Deacon up his invitation to enter at the foot of the ramp, she waves him off before continuing her circle, jawing at the champ the entire time. The usually Mute Freak shakes his head and beckons her in as the cheers start to turn to boos.

DDK:

COME ON! SHE BAITED EVERYONE!

But it wasn't a bait as much as a feint. Lindsay finally slides between the apron and bottom rope, popping up to charge and-

DDK:

MONSTER BOOT BY DEACON!

Cheers erupt from the crowd. The Queen pulls herself back to her feet, the Deacon cascading lefts and rights, staggering her into the corner. He backs away. Troy stumbles forward.

DDK:

BOOT TO THE GUT. The DEACON HAS GOT HER UP!

Altar Call incoming.

But so is Sonny Silver, who has darted the ring area and jumps onto the apron. The Deacon catches sight of him and drops the Queen, throwing a world-ending haymaker at Silver who avoids the blow, hopping down to the ground a split second before Troy crashes into Deacon's knee with a diving chop block.

Lance:

Deacon is down!

And Lindsay Troy knows exactly how to take advantage. She leaps over the top rope to the apron, then reaches below the rope and grabs Deacon's leg, dragging his body to the corner. She slams it against the post once, then twice, before hooking his leg around the metal cylinder and dropping down into a Figure Four.

DDK:

That's completely unnecessary!

Lance:

The Deacon is writhing in pain!

Lindsay holds on as the crowd showers the ring with boos, and Vae Victis cheers her on.

DDK:

She could permanently injure the Deacon! Someone has to stop this!

She holds on until DEFSec comes down, grabbing her leg and forcing her to break the hold. But Troy isn't finished. She slides back into the ring, throws a few boots to the Deacon, and notices the belt laying in the middle of the ring. A smile crosses the Queen of the Ring's face. She saunters to the middle of the ring and reaches down, grabbing the belt in one hand and lifting it into the air, looking every bit the FIST of DEFIANCE.

Lance:

Lindsay Troy has held this before. And come ACTS of DEFIANCE, she could once again be called the FIST of DEFIANCE.

DDK:

Let's certainly hope not, Lance. Let's certainly hope not.

THIS.

IS.

DEFIANCE.