

Weeks ago

[Atlanta, Georgia.]

[Weeks ago.]

[Before the Pre-Season.]

[Inside the Southeastern Office of the ESEN Television Network, to be more specific, inside of the office of the newly re-hired head of regional production, a Mr. Elijah Goldman, esquire. Goldman, who'd had to kiss more ass than a tranny hooker to get his job back, sat behind his not so big desk in his not so comfortable chair and he smiled the smile of a man who knew something that nobody else knew.]

[Sitting across from him in a very uncustomary position for a man of his reputation was the former Defiance Boss, Eric Dane. He did not look pleased to be sitting here, not one little bit.]

Elijah Goldman:

What is it that I can help you with, Eric? Can I call you Eric? I figure, after all, we're old buddies, business partners and all that.

[Eric ground his teeth and forced a smile.]

Eric Dane:

Call me whatever you want, Goldman.

Goldman:

Alright then, Eric, what can I do for you?

Dane:

Television.

Goldman:

Excuse me?

Dane:

I need television.

Goldman:

DEFIANCE is dead, Bronson Box saw to that. If you remember, I recommended his termination several times months ago, you know, when he was busying himself by kidnapping children and assaulting anything with a pulse. What could you possibly want to put on TV?

Dane:

I have an idea.

[Elijah's eyebrows raise to ludicrous heights on his forehead. He leans in, an interested glare plastered across his face.]

Goldman:

I'm listening.

[!~FLASH~!]

Press conference

[The Mobile County Courthouse.]

[Time has passed, but the Pre-Season is still a ways off.]

[The large double doors open and out comes Eric Dane flanked by lawyers and security. Behind his own entourage comes a flood of Mobile's Finest, each man with his eyes glued to anything and everything at once.]

[Dane trots down the steps as far as possible before he's enveloped by local and national press. Well, wrestling press, but press just the same. Microphone's aplenty are thrust in his direction. The Only Star smiles and does what he's always done best.]

Eric Dane:

Ladies and Gentlemen, it appears as if myself and my company have been cleared of any and all involvement as it pertains to the lawsuit filed by Amy Estracado against myself, Defiance, and Bronson Box.

[Questions are shouted and ignored.]

Dane:

As it stands, DEFIANCE is free to continue operating, provided that I personally cut a check to Ms. Estracado to cover her lost wages, hospital bills, and the ensuing physical therapy that she'll need in light of her current situation.

I can only say that of course I'm more than happy to help Ms. Estracado in any way that I can, she's a member of the DEFIANCE family, and will be sorely missed on the road.

Furthermore, Bronson Box is going to go back to work for DEFIANCE, and he's going to pay me back every single dime of lost profits that I've incurred since his little temper tantrum that almost cost me everything I've worked my entire life to build. He's better thank his God that he's bankable enough that I don't mind letting him work off the debt, otherwise I'd have had him buried under the jail until that ridiculous mustache of his turned grey and fell off of his ugly face.

[More questions are fired in his direction. The lawyers step in, allowing Dane to be escorted the rest of the way down the steps and into the door of a waiting limousine.]

[!~FLASH~!]

In the back of a limo

Jeff Andrews:

So, you're seriously sure this is how you want to do this?

[In the back of a red velvet upholstered limousine, Jeff Andrews adjusts his leather jacket. He's not really comfortable with all this opulence.]

Eric Dane:

If I'm going to be able to bring Defiance back, I need two things. Money, and television time. If I wanted to try to get onto another national wrestling network, and it's not like there are a whole bunch of national wrestling networks out there, I'd be in for years of paperwork. Sending show previews, sending applications, waiting for review, promising a good product, signing paperwork. ESEN could put us back on Television in a matter of days rather than months.

Andrews:

I don't trust ESEN much more than Elijah Goldman himself.

Dane:

Doesn't matter. The risk is worth it.

Andrews:

You remember how much of an idiot Goldman is, right? Adrien Cochrane as the next big thing? Derailing Jake Donovan's career and making the fans turn on him? After putting up with Goldman for a couple months everyone was tearing apart the arena. Literally.

Dane:

As I recall, you were encouraging them. Doesn't matter anyway. Goldman is a problem that I - we - are going to have to deal with, but he's less of a problem than any of the alternatives.

Andrews:

Look baws. What's wrong with going back down to Alabama and running shows for the 'Defiance Faithful' again while we rebuild? Or if there's something getting in the way of using the Defiance name, I've still got every last right to Old Line Wrestling. We could hang out in Maryland, capitalize on OLW's name recognition while calling it, I dunno, New Line Wrestling or something.

Dane:

Jeffro, there's not enough money to be made in the small markets, either the Defiance home market or OLW's old stomping grounds. Please don't tell me that the reason Heidi came back to work for me didn't have a lot to do with the fact that I could pay her five times what you could. And that same goes for a dozen big name wrestlers I've been working on bringing in.

[A twinge of disappointment flitted across Jeff Andrews' face.]

Dane:

Look. We get ourselves back on ESEN. We solve the Goldman problem. And we're good to go.

[He smiled, and after a short hesitation Andrews returned one in kind.]

Andrews:

Well, I'm sold. You chart the course and I steer the ship, just as it damn well should be.

Dane:

No reason to mess with what works, right?

[!~FLASH~!]

The night before

[The night before the Pre-Season.]

[Eric Dane has already sequestered himself inside his offices in New Orleans. He looks up from his paperwork as a rapping knock comes to the door.]

Eric Dane:

Come in.

[The door opens inward and Elijah Goldman stands across the threshold, a Cheshire grin plastered all over his face. He saunters through the door and takes a seat across from the recently newly minted DEFIANCE boss. A manila drops a manila envelope across Eric's desk sending papers flying. Dane glowers up at him.]

Dane:

Have a seat.

[He does.]

Elijah Goldman:

It's all there, all it needs is your signature.

Dane:

It's legal?

Goldman:

Signed, sealed, and delivered. Everything you asked for is there. Primetime Timeslot, Pay-Per-View contracts, no more bullshit podcasts, and your Specials will simulcast on iPPV and XM Radio. DEFIANCE, with the help of Elijah Goldman, has finally reached the Big Time.

[Eric picks up the envelope, opens it, begins flipping through pages.]

Dane:

You know what happens if you try to screw me, right?

[Elijah nods.]

Goldman:

I have an elephant's memory, Eric. Believe me when I tell you, I'd much rather go against you with everything on the line than to ever try to subvert you again. Apparently I seriously underestimated you in the past.

Dane:

Grossly.

Goldman:

Now, if you'll just go ahead and sign on the dotted line, I'll get back to my office and have it faxed to all of the appropriate parties.

[The boss comes to the final page of the document, clicks open a pen, and scrawls his signature across said dotted line.]

Dane:

There, it's done. If you win, DEFIANCE is **yours**. Legally. Completely.

[Goldman smiles as he collects his papers.]

Goldman:

I have to ask, why? Why me? After all, I did try to take your company away already.

[Eric doesn't answer. Instead he reaches into the bottom drawer of his desk and brings out a bottle of Johnny Walker Blue and a rocks glass, pours himself a tall drink, and drains it with one swallow. He pours another before addressing Goldman again.]

Dane:

It's just like you said, we've got history. That shit-storm I landed in with Box, it started with you, much like I'm sure if I did a little digging I'd find out that my contracts with ESEN getting nulled started with you, too. Much as I hate to say it, I may have underestimated you, too. You may be a sniveling little corporate weasel, but you've got your uses. That, and I need ESEN. Without TV, real TV, none of this is possible.

Besides, a good gambler knows how to play the averages, and he knows when to put it all on a long shot. It's all or nothing, Goldman, everything's on the line now. The hands have been dealt, now it's just a matter of who's got the skill to get it done.

Goldman:

This is all a big game to you, isn't it? Well, frankly I think you're an idiot, but you've already done all the legwork for me. All that's left is for my Evolution League to win this whole thing, and DEFIANCE will be mine to do with as I please. And believe me, I've got some ideas I think you're just going to love.

[He smiles wide. Dane matches him.]

Dane:

That's if you win, Goldman, it's gonna be a long season. And you just keep in mind what happens if Cito wins...

[Goldman's smile fades as he chokes something back, fear maybe.]

Dane:

...you and me, alone, inside of a Steel Cage, for five minutes.

[Dane's own grin widens, his eyes gleam with foul intent.]

Dane:

I'm gonna take you apart, Goldman.

[Wink.]

[!~FLASH~!]

Last minute plea

[This morning.]

[The Mitchell Center is teeming with life. A stage is being set up, a miniature DEFIatron and sound system are being installed in the main staging area while various other parts of the venue are being transformed for broadcast.]

[Eric Dane has been inside of the lower level office since 6:00 a.m. working out contracts and making final adjustments for the Draft. He's only just now being joined by the Commissioner of the Heritage League, Cito Conarri.]

Cito Conarri:

This was the only way?

[Dane sighs, he'd asked himself this very question a thousand times over the Pre-Season.]

Eric Dane:

I had to get the TV deal, Cito.

Conarri:

Did you have to put it all on my shoulders?

[Conarri already looked tired. Eric could almost see a last minute plead for clemency etched on his face.]

Dane:

I don't trust anybody else.

Conarri:

What about Angus?

Dane:

Too reckless.

Conarri:

Jeff?

Dane:

Too brash. One unexpected 'surly episode' and he'd deliberately scuttle his own work.

Conarri:

...Kai Scott?

Dane:

At this stage in my career? Not a chance in the world.

[Cito slumped in his chair.]

Conarri: (defeated)

It had to be me.

Dane:

It had to be you. If it helps, I have nothing but faith in you, Cito. You've been in this business your entire life, you bleed this business. Goldman wrote the book on "flash in the pan," he hasn't got a chance.

Conarri:

I suppose we'll see about that.

[!~FLASH~!]

The Draft: lead-in

[Flash.]

[Black.]

[Numbers begin pulsing on the screen.]

[5]

[4]

[3]

[DEFIANCE continues with the Masters of Wrestling: Grand Champions League Draft in...]

[2]

[...]

[1]

[...]

[1]

[...]

[1]

[...]

[There can be only...]

[**ONE**]



[The Mitchell Center on the campus of the University of South Alabama in Mobile, Alabama is the site of the most serious business to hit the wrestling universe since the invention of the arm-bar. The Center, which plays host to USA's Sunbelt Conference conquering Jaguar and Lady Jaguar basketball teams has been converted for the occasion, allowing for the most possible press, a ton of free student seating, and a couple of good old fashioned theatrics.]

Angus Skaaland: [voice-over]

It's been a long coming, but DEFIANCE is officially BACK! And not just back, but in a HYOUGE WAY! We're LIVE tonight on ESEN TV, coming to you from the heart of DEFIANCE Country in Mobile, Alabama for what can only be the beginning of the re-emergence of Eric Dane's promotion as one of the top contenders across the board in the wrestling landscape!

[Cut to the main entrance, a bay of glass doors stand swing open and the shot swoops into the building, past ticket-holders and students alike. Past the merchandise table, hocking everything from the infamous CHOOSE DEATH t-shirts of the Faces of Death to the customized Eugene Dewey DON'T MESS WITH THE GINGERS NEWB! X-Box 360 controllers to the personalized Heidi Christenson blackbelts. Past the hotdog vendors. Past everything and into the venue proper. Usually there would be a basketball court with bleachers on either side, but today there were a bevy of chairs leading all the way through the room to a stage. Set to either side of the stage is a ten foot high LED Display of the logos for the EVOLUTION and HERITAGE leagues behind a mini-stage setup with a microphone stand. The main stage has steps leading down both sides and into a makeshift tunnel. Where the tunnels lead is anybody's guess at this point.]

Angus: [v/o]

We've survived the World Wrestling Alliance, riots, corporate espionage, more riots, kidnapping, Bronson Box, and being thrown off of Network Television, and now like a Phoenix from our own ashes we will once again rise to the occasion and take the wrestling world by MOTHERFUCKING storm!

[The centerpiece of the stage itself is a podium with the tournament logo etched on the front, and a table and chairs set up on either side. Behind the podium is miniature DEFIAtron showing a looped highlight package of previous Defiance TV events. Conveniently absent are any highlights involving Bronson Box in any capacity whatsoever.]

Angus: [v/o]

We're gonna be doing shit just a little bit different this time around, too! For starters, we're denouncing the notion that there are matches in this industry that "don't matter" in the big picture. Everything matters in DEFIANCE, and the only way to become the first ever Master of Wrestling is to make sure that you never phone it in, you never take a pass, and you never drop your guard! Matches will be worth POINTS, and points is the end all be all on the leaderboards! When it comes down to it, the top points-getters from each League will be seeded into a Playoff, with that tournament-inside-a-tournament crowning the winner of the Grand Champions League, the MASTER OF WRESTLING!

[The room is already crowded, assorted international wrestling press line the first few rows of floor seating, while the Defiance Faithful surround them on all sides in the bleachers and upper deck. Security is everywhere, meaning site security provided by Event Operations Group, DEFsec security provided by DEFIANCE, and the odd off-duty police officer staged at various choke points throughout the building. You never can be too careful]

Angus: [v/o]

Ladies and gentlemen, DEFIAfans worldwide, pull your jaws up off the floor, put your special parts back in your pants, and get ready to have your preconceived notions about how a wrestling company works blown out the back of your head like a basket full of red lettuce!

[The camera turns hard left and heads through another door. Behind this one is the DEFIANCE Commentation Station, the talk show set replaced with something out of a SportsCenter nightmare. Angus Skaaland and Jeff Andrews sit behind a desk with replicas of the various title belts the promotion has offered. Behind them is a massive blue-screen, the television audience at home is treated to an oversized DEFIANCE logo with an ESEN TV logo splashed over the top corner. Jeff is trying to do the 'professional' thing in as much as a half-redneck can, in a leather jacket over a DEFIANCE tee and crisp blue jeans, while Angus has taken the simpler route of a DEFIANCE polo shirt and Dickies pants.]

Jeff Andrews:

If y'all wrestling fans out there in TV land didn't catch the Defiance Preseason, shame on you, you missed out on some damn fine wrestling. But you also missed out on a little bit of the, ah, exposition about what this is all about. This time around, Defiance is gonna have two leagues - Heritage League, headed by Cito Conarri, and Evolution League, headed up by Elijah Goldman. And as for who on the roster is gonna be in which league? That's what we're here to find out, son! It's DRAFT NIGHT in Defiaville, and we are just about to get started!

[The bluescreen pans around the auditorium again, this time giving the stage a careful go-over. There are two podiums near each other at the center of the stage, and two seating sections on either side of the stage. An overhead screen hangs over either seating section.]

Jeff:

What we're gonna do is this. Cito Conarri and Elijah Goldman will step up to them there podiums, and between them they're going to take the first 12 draft choices. Elijah's got first pick because politics, then Cito's got the next two, then they alternate. We got all the wrestlers waiting in the backstage area, and as they're drafted, they can have the option of making a short little speech, and then they go sit down in the respective waiting area. And by the way, to make sure they don't attack each other like wrestlers usually do, as Vice President of Defiance, I have made the proclamation that any wrestler who provokes another wrestler will be fined the amount that they would have been paid for tonight. So expect no scraps.

[A quick look backstage at where the wrestlers are clustered. Some of them are standing apart from the group, but

most are sort of milling around and talking at least borderline amiably. Some of them got all dressed up to do this draft thing, some of them are in their ring attire, and some just dressed casually.]

Jeff:

And after the draft, we're going to select the rest of the leagues via lottery. You know, so none of the wrestlers are humiliated by being the last ones drafted. We've got a neat little hi-tech thing set up for that, it's what that screen on the stage is there for. Luckily enough we've right now got exactly 26 wrestlers available, and so the leagues are gonna be evenly sized at 13 each. If you heard that Defiance will continue to accept free agents into the league throughout the season, well, free agents will be assigned to leagues based primarily on keeping them the same size, and after that on who got the last agent.

Angus:

And in case one League just sucks and we need to balance it out.

Jeff: [deadpan]

Way to pull those punches.

Angus:

What? It happens.

Jeff:

Either way, we've been building to this moment for what seems like (and actually has been) months now, so now without anymore hullabaloo, let's swing it out to the stage and get this mamajama started!

[Smooth fade.]

The Draft: Team selection

[Applause ripples through the auditorium as Eric Dane, Cito Conarri, and Elijah Goldman step out onto the stage. Goldman, as per the usual, is dressed up in a retina-gouging seafoam green suit that clashes horribly with his tortoiseshell glasses. Eric Dane and Cito Conarri sport better sense and proper black suits.]

[Conarri and Goldman step behind the two podiums on the stage. Cito takes right, Goldman takes left. Dane heads off to the mediator's booth.]

Eric Dane:

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the official Defiance Draft!

[Louder applause.]

Dane:

Without further adieu, we will begin. Elijah Goldman will be granted the first pick, Cito Conarri the next two picks, and then they will alternate.

[Elijah Goldman taps his microphone as the applause again rings out.]

Elijah Goldman:

And my first draft choice is Heidi Christenson.

[Shock.]

[Silence.]

[Cito's jaw drops a bit, and Dane raises his eyebrows.]

Goldman:

I am making no bones about the fact that I am less than 'sold' on Heidi Christenson as the face of Defiance. However, there are two reasons I want her in my league, even though she does not enter it with any points to her name. The first, of course, is because she is, deservedly or not, the Defiance World Champion, and I'd quite like to have the Champ in my league. And the second is that if she is working for me - that means I can prevent Cito and Jeff Andrews from protecting her, which I'm personally sure is the only reason she made it out of the lower midcard in the first place.

[There isn't much of any response from the press in the front section, but boos trickle down from the back where the students were given free seating.]

Jeff:

I want it known to the world that Elijah Goldman is a fuc---

Angus: [interrupting]

Can it, Andrews, the guy's got a point! Let's see what the Almighty Queen of the Ring can do without Daddy an' Grandpappy pullin' the strings!

[Andrews tries to kill Skaaland with hatedaggers from his eyeballs.]

[Heidi Christenson walks onto the stage. She's one of the wrestlers who wore her ring attire - in her case the gi pants and tight shirt one. And the Defiance World Title is belted around her waist. Looking quite serene for someone who was insulted so, she walks to the podium as Goldman backs away.]

Heidi Christenson:

If Elijah wants to draft me specifically because he doesn't want me, it just goes to show what a fool he is and what little

business he has being involved in wrestling. I'll be looking forward to continuing to work for Defiance once it belongs to Eric Dane properly once again, and until then I'll just take all the prettyboy sports entertainers Goldman tries to vomit up and turn them into human origami.

[Heidi takes her seat in the section set out for the wrestlers for Goldman's league.]

Jeff:

She's gonna do just fine.

Angus:

You're probably right.

Jeff:

Probably my ass, she's gonna kill whatever overblown moron that Goldman tries to stick in front of her. Come on, you think she couldn't maim Adrien Cochrane and weed her garden at the same time?

Angus:

Yeah, well... yeah.

[Back to the main stage.]

[Cito Conarri clears his throat.]

Cito Conarri:

My first pick is Eugene Dewey. He may not often look like a top athlete, but he's scored two victories over Bronson Box and has demonstrated that, however he does it, he can compete successfully in the upper echelon of Defiance wrestlers.

[Eugene Dewey, in his usual slacks and dress shirt, walks out followed by his brother Wayne. He holds up his hand, declining to make a speech, and takes a seat.]

Angus:

Aww, he's embarrassed! What a fag.

Andrews:

Ten to one it's the first time Dewey's been picked first for anything that didn't involve computers.

Angus:

No way I take that bet. Not a single, solitary chance in hell.

Conarri:

My second pick is Adam Waterman, as the preseason winner and current points leader with 10 points to his name.

Andrews:

Honestly, I'm amazed Goldman didn't want those ten points for his league.

Angus:

Nobody has yet accused him of having even half a clue how wrestling works. He probably can't count without fourteen interns and a scientific calculator.

[Beat.]

[Adam Waterman does not appear. That is because he and Kengoro Sugamoto are off in Japan competing for Pro-Wrestling: FURY, and so they aren't here.]

Goldman:

It may be true that I haven't had the greatest success trying to bring young wrestlers up in the business. However, I look at Jonny Booya and I see an enormously talented wrestler with all the wrong friends listening to all the wrong people, and I am drafting him to Evolution League for his own sake.

[More applause, but Jonny Booya doesn't show himself, and after about 30 seconds an image pops up on the screen.]

[Jonny is currently enamored with his own reflection. There's also a red mark on his cheek, and for probably not unrelated reasons, Nakita DuBov looks pissed the hell off.]

Dane:

JONNY!

[Jonny jumps, takes a running start, comes flying out of the backstage area and skids across the stage on one knee, flexing his arms and pointing at himself. He's wearing the most bodacious tuxedo, with the arms cut out to show off his rippling biceps. Yes, whereas normal men have biceps, Jonny has biceps.]

Booya:

OH YEAH!

[Elijah Goldman facepalms.]

Andrews:

That's my cousin man, right there. But seriously, dude probably improved his stock more than anyone 'cept maybe Waterman during the preseason. Also, I think Kai Scott's smart enough to make sure Jonny don't listen to Elijah Jewpants.

Angus:

Kai Scott and Elijah Goldman, on the same show... that's not gonna end well.

Jeff:

Not even a little bit.

Conarri:

Since we appear to be drafting in order to deny the other league, my third pick is J Stevenson. It's not that I particularly admire his work in the ring, but he has made it clear that winning points is his only goal in participating in Defiance, and I'd rather not have that attitude working for Elijah Goldman.

[J Stevenson walks out without fanfare and steps straight up to Cito's podium.]

J Stevenson:

For what it's worth I don't admire your work or your whole nice guy routine either one, 'boss', but you're right - winning the Defiance season is the only reason I decided to get involved with this popsicle stand in the first place, and so I guess in the long run it doesn't matter to me one way or another who I work for.

[Nearly pushing Cito out of the way with his shoulder, Stevenson heads to the Heritage seating section and sits down next to Eugene Dewey.]

Angus:

You know, I'm starting to like this Stevenson guy.

Jeff:

That makes one of us.

Goldman:

In our re-envisioning of Defiance, we decided to market the promotion to big names, from outside the former 'Defiance Circle', wrestlers that would never have looked at Defiance twice when it was still under the regional yoke. One of these is none other than the owner of Empire Pro Wrestling, former holder of more World Titles than Eric Dane, and the next big thing in DEFIANCE, "The Egobuster" Dan Ryan. And rather than allow Mr. Ryan to fall into Heritage League, which is a counter-point to everything he embodies in wrestling, I am selecting him as my 3rd pick.

[Dan Ryan, clad in shades and an impeccable suit, steps onto the stage. He looms over E-Gold and the podium alike, bigger than life and twice as cocky.]

Dan Ryan:

You people have no idea what you've gotten yourselves into...

[And with a smirk, Ryan heads off towards the Evolution seating area.]

Angus:

Wait a minute, did he just say more World Titles than Eric Dane? I mean, I know I hyped the hell out of this guy, but Goldman's got to be sick in the head.

Andrews:

It's my understanding that he held four relatively prestigious World Titles at the same time a few years ago. If nothing else, that alone makes him worth the price of admission.

Angus:

Yeah, that and I can't wait to see him break Heidi's foot off when she tries to kick him in the head.

Andrews:

We'll see about that.

[Back to the stage.]

Conarri:

When I started my Wrestling Inferno training camp, it was due to the belief that rookies need a proper start in the business. And so my next pick is Michel LaLiberte. In some ways I'm less than impressed with his arrogance thus far - but he's shown tremendous potential in his Defiance outings, and for his own sake he needs to be kept as far from Elijah Goldman as possible so that he may continue to be impressive in the future.

[Michel LaLiberte slowly walks up to the podium and adjusts his blazer.]

LaLiberte:

It es encouraging to know t'at my efforts thus far 'ave been recognized.

[With that short speech, LaLiberte takes his seat with Dewey and Waterman.]

Andrews:

I... wasn't expecting LaLiberte to get picked so quickly.

Angus:

Yeah. Well, um... I follow Cito's logic but I'm not sure why he'd pick LaLiberte over some of the other guys who're left. I mean, does he really think LaLiberte can compete with the likes of Dan Ryan and Heidi Christenson, or hell, Adam Waterman?

Andrews:

Sometimes you gotta take a gamble man, is all I can say.

Goldman:

My next pick is Jack "The Ripper" Cassidy. He may not have had a greatly successful preseason, but I understand he was on the very cusp of 'making it' a few years ago, and at any rate he showed me something on the Preseason 3 show. If Cito's willing to take a chance on Michel LaLiberte, I'm willing to make a bet that Jack Cassidy can succeed where Adrien Cochrane failed.

[Jack Cassidy is dressed in khaki pants and a Hawaiian shirt. He steps up to the podium, looks at E-Gold and furrows his brow.]

[There are NO words.]

[And so he goes and quietly sits down.]

Angus:

So wait, what's Jack ever done that's mattered within the last 4 years?

Andrews:

What's Jay Stevendon done that's mattered within the last 4 years?

Angus:

Scored three points. Fag.

Andrews:

...well anyway, pity Jack being compared to Adrien. He may have some attitude problems sometimes, but he's a good kid, deserves better than that.

Angus:

I'm no fan of Jack, but I've got to agree with you on that one.

Conarri:

My next pick is Justin Brooks. Brooks was given a very raw deal during his Defiance run, put in a situation no one should be forced to tolerate in front of some of the only fans in the nation who would cheer for it. He's a former world title contender, he deserves better, and he is my fifth pick.

Angus:

Pssh. What he deserves is the rope that Jimmy Kort hung him with.

[...]

Angus:

What?

Jeff:

Are you trying to get us kicked off of TV already?

Angus:

What? It's true! Justin Brooks has been the "next big thing" for ten years. Kid shoulda stuck to firefighting, less dangerous and the insurance is better.

Jeff:

You're insufferable.

Angus:

Good. Keeps you on your toes.

Goldman:

And my next pick will be Chris "THE" Cannon. Cannon almost failed to get accepted into Defiance when he first applied, and yet he came through for me in a big way even if he did plateau towards the end of his run.

[The Cannon, flanked by his "associates" Adrien Cochrane and Vincent Chell, swaggers himself up to the podium. He's wearing his wrestling trunks and ring robe, and he thinks pelvic thrusting at random women in the audience is a good idea for a speech. Rich Mahogany is filing for gimmick infringement as we speak.]

[Chris Cannon thrusts in Heidi's general direction. Heidi sits up straight with a deathglare on her face, and Vincent Chell jumps in between them way, way, way, way too eagerly. Lord knows it doesn't come easily to Adrien to be the voice of reason, but somehow he gets Cannon into his seat and Chell off the stage before someone gets kicked in the head.]

Angus:

Those three are going to get themselves killed.

Jeff:

We can only hope...

Conarri:

My final draft choice will be Kevin Cage. I admit to not being overly familiar with Cage's career, but it seems to me that I could do worse with a pick than a veteran who knows how the game works and who's a former World Champion to boot.

[Kevin Cage, who's wearing jeans and a T-shirt, walks up onto stage. He doesn't even bother looking at the podium or his new boss, instead he stares daggers into Justin Brooks.]

Cage:

Time's up, Uncle Tom!

[Brooks is quick to his feet. Bad things are about to happen when The Baws intervenes.]

Dane:

Gentlemen, save it for the ring. Don't make me fine the two of you before we even get officially started.

[The two grapplers stare one another down.]

Dane:

Kevin, Justin, if I have to get involved there's going to be consequences, understood?

[Cage's face breaks into a sneer/smile. He takes a seat far enough away from Brooks to keep things safe, but close enough to keep the tension. Eric Dane motions for the draft to continue.]

Goldman:

And my final draft pick will be Troy Matthews. Although I'm not thrilled with the attitude, it's statistically proven that fans love fresh faced young cruiserweights, and I'd rather have both Devil Rippers in my league than just one. Also, a legitimate martial arts background is always good for a promotion's credibility, and Matthews has that in spades.

[Troy Matthews steps up, accompanied by Saori Kazama. He's wearing khaki pants much like Jack's and the most kickassitudinal letterman's jacket EVAR EVAR. Saori is wearing slacks and a T-shirt because she's a liberated woman and a fully qualified manager, not a valet.]

Matthews:

Nice to know that my little message got through, and I am glad to be in the same league as Jack, but I'm gonna warn you before I even go sit down over there, Elijah - I don't do what I'm told, and I won't do what you tell me.

[Troy walks over to the Evolution League section, slaps hands with Jack and sits down next to him.]

Jeff:

Well, that concludes the Draft portion of the evening.

Angus:

I can't decide who got the better deal here.

Jeff:

I like what Cito's building here. I'm not gonna lie, I'm biased, but I like it none-the-less.

Angus:

Yeah, and I fully expect Goldman to completely fuck up in every way he possibly can with everyone he's drafted. Somehow he's gonna make Adrien Cochrane the World Champion and put Dan Ryan in some kind of fagtarded gimmick.

Jeff:

He'd better hope nobody kills him before we get to the playoffs.

Angus:

And on that wonderful note, we're gonna throw it back to my old broadcast partner and boss, "Downtown" Darren Keebler, who's stepping back in front of the camera for the first time since the close of Cascadia!

Jeff:

Yeah, and I hear he's with everybody's favorite cancer...

Angus:

Take it away Keebs!

Mister Jiles nonsense

[Cut to the backstage waiting area, various undrafted wrestlers are still milling about, waiting to find out their fates via the lottery. Standing front and center with a microphone in hand is Keebler, dressed for success in a black tuxedo.]

DDK:

Thanks a lot, Angus-

“HOLD! THE FUCKING! PHONE!”

[Cancer Jiles, the Crown Prince of COOL, is not a happy man.]

CCJ:

Twelve picks? TWELVE PICKS? And not a single one of them was the COOLest of the Cancerous COOL? I demand a recount!

DDK:

Well, Mr. Jiles-

CCJ: [cutting in]

DO NOT GIVE ME THAT MISTER JILES NONSENSE! I demand answers! Where is Eric Dane? Where is my agent? Where's my lawyer? GAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAWD Where is Edward freakin' White?

DDK:

It would appear that-

CCJ: [interrupting again]

There's gonna be EGGS to pay for this insult, Mr. Microphone Holder Man. THERE WILL BE EGGS!

[Jiles storms off screen.]

DDK:

Well, ah, back to you guys in the booth!

[Cut.]

The Draft: The lottery

[Up.]

[Jeff Andrews smiles a Cheshire smile.]

Angus:

What do you know?

Jeff:

Something you don't know.

Angus:

What?! I DEMAND ANSWERS!

Jeff:

I'll tell you later, after the Lotto.

Angus:

I hate you.

Jeff:

Join the club. There's a waiting list.

[As the lights fade back up, one Ms. Kelly Evans walks her way across the stage. She's wearing her own take on a Vanna White sparkly turquoise hostess dress. Vanna's, you see, is a full length skirt rather than a micro-mini, it isn't slit all the way up the side, and it doesn't let her sideboobs hang out. In front of her she's pushing a little gold-gilded hand cart with one of those round cages with a crank on the side. A much less sparkly looking Wyatt Bronson is pushing some sort of slide projector designed to look so high tech as to pretend it isn't a slide projector. Once it's in place, he disappears backstage.]

Dane:

As previously announced, rather than subject any of the Defiance wrestlers to the embarrassment of being a low pick, the remaining members of the initial Defiance 2.0 roster will be divvied up between the leagues via lottery. As Cito Conarri received the 12th pick, Elijah Goldman will be given first draw.

[Dane gestures at the little ball cage.]

Dane:

Inside each of those balls is a slide. When one is drawn, Kelly will place it in the slide projector to reveal who will be selected for which league.

[Kelly bends over the table to turn the crank. She's hanging out all over the place. After turning the crank for about 15 seconds, she withdraws what looks like an oversized ping-pong ball. It unscrews in the middle, and she withdraws the slide.]

Kelly Evans:

The first lottery selected member of Evolution League will be...

[As Kelly inserts the slide, a large picture appears on the Evolution League's projector screen.]

Kelly:

Yoshikazu YAZ!

[YAZ is one of those wrestlers who chose to dress up, and his Yakuza-esque suit and mask look odd, but surprisingly intimidating, juxtaposed. Lisa Loeh, who's wearing something that does to those Chinese dragon-lady dresses what

Kelly's does for hostess dresses, leads YAZ to his seat.]

Kelly:

Next, for Heritage League... Darren Michaels!

[Darren Michaels, in jeans and an old T-shirt, slouches up on stage and down in a chair in the Heritage League section.]

Kelly:

For Evolution League... Rohan Maholtra!

[Maholtra, in a T-shirt and his wrestling trunks, walks on stage without fanfare and sits down in his chair.]

Kelly:

For Heritage League... Clair St. Sure!

[Clair St. Sure steps up onto stage. She's wearing a black dress, and... damn, girl cleans up real good, let's leave it at that.]

Kelly:

For Evolution League... Dragon Jones!

[When Dragon's name is called, he leaps to his feet and runs through the auditorium and out the back door in a flailing panic.]

[This is par for the course. Some of the students in the free seating area start to get loud, but none of the press or wrestlers even turn an eye.]

Kelly:

For Heritage League... Kengoro Sugamoto!

[Kengoro doesn't do anything because he's in Japan and can't.]

Kelly:

For Evolution League... The Phoenix!

[The Phoenix is dressed up in his ring attire. Complete with facepaint. He walks up onto the stage, flips everyone off, and slouches down into a chair.]

Kelly:

For Heritage League... Mr. Destruction!

[The Money Man, the Manager of Champions, Murray Monroe, bounds onto the stage yelling. But lottery wrestlers aren't getting speech time, and Mr. Destruction doesn't look like he has anything to say behind that mask of his.]

Kelly:

For Evolution League... Nakita DuBov!

[Nakita DuBov, to date the only jump from the WWA, steps up. Girl's got a lot of leg, in two meanings of the word, because she's 6'4". Things being what they are, she and Heidi make cat eyes at each other until she takes a seat.]

Kelly:

For Heritage League... Fishman Deluxe!

[Fishman Deluxe waddles his way up onto the stage. Dude's more professional than you'd think, he manages to

refrain from hitting on any young boys on his way up, but that doesn't excuse the hairiness combined with the lack of shirt-wearing-ness.]

Kelly:

For Evolution League... Alceo Dentari!

[Newcomer Alceo Dentari stands up. Or tries to. Dude's short. Like, 5'7' or something. He stalks his way to a chair and slams himself down in it.]

Kelly:

For Heritage League... Gabriel Grimm!

[Gabriel jogs onto the stage, tags hands with Darren Michaels, and takes his seat.]

Kelly:

For Evolution League... Jimmy Fitzgerald!

[Fitzzy uneventfully takes his seat.]

Kelly:

And finally, for Heritage League... Nick Regan!

[The last man up, Nick Regan takes his time walking across the stage and into the seating area.]

Andrews:

And that is IT, ladies and gentlemen! We got 2 leagues, 13 wrestlers per league, and next week we'll be ready right off the starting block with the finest wrestling that professional... wrestling has to offer!

Angus:

Defiance is BACK, son!

Andrews:

For once, Angus, we are in agreement. Defiance is indeed back.

Angus:

Just one question though, Jeffman. Are you gonna tell me what it is that you were smiling about earlier yet?

Andrews:

Haha... oh yeah. Hey...

[Jeff Andrews reaches to the inner pocket of his leather jacket and fishes out... a lottery ball, and he tosses it in his hand.]

Andrews:

Let's just say that Cancer Jiles wasn't COOL enough not to get outsmarted by a drunken redneck.

[Angus Skaaland, Cancer Jiles fanboy extraordinaire, is apoplectic.]

Angus:

BuhbuhbuhbuhBUT! THE DRAFT! AND THE PICKS!

Andrews:

You think E-Gold would draft Jiles after he dropped the n-bomb on Juice Campbell in downtown Baltimore? You think Cito would draft Jiles for any reason imaginable?

Angus:

Bwuh... awgh!

Andrews:

Eyeah-yepyepyepyepyeah. Jiles may, allegedly, be cool, but I really, truly, am The Man. Thank you.

Angus:

I hate your face, I hate your life, I hate your girlfriend, I hate your catchphrase, I hate your entire surlitarded existence.

Goldman:

Ahem.

[He taps on his microphone, and the jolting sound brings a sudden silence to the auditorium.]

Goldman:

With the initial draft and lottery taken care of, I'd like to take this time to announce that Evolution League has already signed its first free agent!

[Confusion.]

Dane:

What? We haven't even opened the free agent drafting process yet...

[The video walls both flicker at once.]

[Cue up June Carter Cash.]

♪ Well there's a dark and a troubled side of life ♪
♪ There's a bright and a sunny side too ♪
♪ But if you meet with the darkness and strife ♪
♪ The sunny side we also may view ♪

["Keep on the Sunny Side."]

♪ Keep on the sunny side, always on the sunny side ♪
♪ Keep on the sunny side of life ♪
♪ It will help us every day, it will brighten all the way ♪
♪ If we keep on the sunny side of life ♪

[On screen a burned out schoolyard passes by, all sepia-toned and post-apocalyptic. A single plastic swing teeters back and forth on what's left of a set on the playground.]

♪ Oh, the storm and its fury broke today ♪
♪ Crushing hopes that we cherish so dear ♪
♪ Clouds and storms will in time pass away ♪
♪ The sun again will shine bright and clear ♪

[A hulking figure walks through the newly minted graveyard, his shoulders are broad, proud, and on his face is no doubt a smile. He causes all of this, you see. He and his Fiery Right Hand.]

♪ Keep on the sunny side, always on the sunny side ♪
♪ Keep on the sunny side of life ♪
♪ It will help us every day, it will brighten all the way ♪
♪ If we'll keep on the sunny side of life ♪

[And a massive "Oh shit" from everyone in attendance, as a new face appears on the screens.]

[The camera cuts in on a closeup of a familiar, mustachioed face.]

[Bronson Box.]

[Smiling his knowing, loathing smile.]

Goldman:

That's right! The former Defiance World Champion, the Scottish Strongman. Bronson Box, is contracted directly to Evolution League!

Dane:

Absolutely not! That man is banned, fired, suspended, black-listed, low-balled, and GODDAMNED _NOT_ _IN_ _THIS_ _PROMOTION_!

[Da Baws is livid. Everyone else is in shock.]

Goldman:

My League, my contract, my deal. There's not a damned thing you can do about it, either.

Dane:

I'll have your head on a pike for this.

Goldman:

Maybe you will, but before it's over, I'll have your Defiance!

[The DEFIANCE logo flashes in the corner of the screen.]

Angus:

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN WE'RE OUT OF TI-

[End.]