



[We start on a black screen as most shows do. We fade up into a royal blue screen with a glittering silver Fox Sports logo in the center of it. A fanfare plays in the background as a voiceover begins.]

"Home to the World Series. The NFL. The GFC. The Daytona 500. The US Open Championship."

[A quick clip from each sport flashes by during the voiceover.]

"The world's biggest events are on Fox Sports."

[The logo and fanfare fade...

...as a giant robot appears, holding up a different version of the Fox Sports logo with the audio bug...]

"WE ARE... FOX SPORTS!"

[The shot fades from the graphic to another black screen with the AWA logo splashed across a starry field. A barrage of lasers flash in from all sides of the screen, etching along the borders of the letters, illuminating the plain white text into glowing and glittering gold. A deep voiceover begins. The words "American Wrestling Alliance" come up one by one at the bottom of the screen.]

"The recognized symbol of excellence in professional wrestling."

[The logo fades to black...

...and then we fade up on a black screen with a pulsing synth beat. It opens on Brian Lau and Brian James. James stands in the back, a white towel over his head, covering his face. James' arms are crossed over his bare chest, and the front of the towel rises and falls with each growl and snarl that comes from the Engine of Destruction. Lau is in a dark suit, wearing his usual designer sunglasses.]

BL: Tonight, we are LIVE on Fox, and tonight, the Axis dies.

Williams and Hunter, you think you're the future, but the only thing in your future is pain and agony.

Everyone wants to talk about the Axis. Everyone wants to jump on that bandwagon. Everyone thinks that the Axis are on top of the World.

Well, unless you're a King of Wrestling, you're not the best.

And tonight, we prove it.

Williams, that stupid grin is going to be wiped off your face after its been driven through canvas courtesy of a Wilde Driver. And Hunter? The Blackheart Punch is going to bring you crashing back to earth.

Isn't that right, big man?

[James pulls the towel off his head and stares intently into the camera.]

BJ: Hunter, Williams, you two like to talk big. But when I look at you two, all I see are victims of their own hype.

And me? Well, I'm not a victim at all.

I'm the perpetrator!

[Lau nods approvingly.]

BL: When the Axis dies tonight, the world will know that I was right all around. The Kings of Wrestling are the premiere organization in professional wrestling.

And the Kings are just fine...

[Lau slides the sunglasses down to the tip of his nose, looking over them for the final line as we fade to another shot - this one of the Axis of Derrick Williams and Riley Hunter]

DW: The Kings are fine? That my friends, is what we in the Axis call Fake News! Tonight, Ri and I prove that the Kings are far from fine, and their fall starts tonight!

RH: Maaaaan, I've seen the greatest wrestlers of our generation destroyed by kings and underhanded politicians. Bee Jay, John Detson... On All-Star Showdown, Duke and I are putting the good of the AWA... FIRST.

[Williams and Hunter cross forearms in solidarity.

Wipe to Lauryn Rage and Erica Toughill.]

ET: Spitfire, don't think that I quit on you. The Great Lakes Original Women don't pick fights we intend to run away from. And Da Kid and I... we got a surprise for you and Lady Lightning.

[Toughill blows a pink bubble as Lauryn Rage speaks.]

LR: When we're through with you, y'all gon wish you never messed with Ricki and Da Kid. We're gonna make you our personal whipping girls, ya dig. Ah ha! Team GLOW so relevant!

[Toughill's bubble pops and both extend their knuckles to the camera, showing each with knucks with the word "GLOW" written across them...

...and then to Julie Somers and Lori Wilson. The two are dressed in their wrestling attire.]

JS: At Homecoming, I proved that I could find ways to counter the Shrew's Fiddle, and we all know what happened after that. Erica Toughill, you can deny it all you want, but deep down, you were scared to death that I could come away with that win, and that's explains everything about what you did from there. Well, I've been working with my friend and mentor here [hooks a thumb to Wilson], and believe me, I'm going to show you I know more ways to counter what you try to throw it .

LW: Julie, I'm glad you took my advice seriously, but remember, you've got a lot more ahead of you. But I'm looking forward to teaming with you tonight, not just to find out if you keep applying the things I've taught you, but because I've got some unfinished business of my own. Lauryn Rage, I haven't forgotten what you did back on the European tour -- it wasn't enough that you won, but you had to attack me after the match. Believe me, you'll find out tonight why you don't press your luck against Lady Lightning.

[We wipe again, this time ending up on a shot of Juan Vasquez, dressed in a blazer over a black Axis t-shirt and jeans.]

JV: For months, you've witnessed The Axis wage war against the evil and corruption that infests the AWA. But tonight...

[He chuckles.]

JV: ...tonight that war ends!

[A big grin forms on Vasquez' face.]

JV: Tonight, right here in Sin City, I wash away the sins of the AWA and drag us kicking and screaming from the darkness and back to the light!

[He throws his head and arms back, his voice a triumphant roar.]

JV: Tonight, Juan Vasquez becomes your AWA World Heavyweight Champion!

[As Vasquez lowers his arms and head, the camera zooms in right into a close-up of the sinister smirk on Vasquez' face.]

JV: And the AWA will be great once again.

[Fade to the AWA's World Heavyweight Champion, Jack Lynch. The King of Cowboys is standing in front of a Lynch family logo – a white cowboy hat over a sheriff's star, with a pair of crossed six shooters beneath. Lynch has the World Title belt slung over his shoulder.]

JL: Juan Vasquez, you've tellin' everyone that you're gonna make the AWA Great Again. Well, I'm here to tell ya Vasquez, that the AWA has always been great.

But tonight, I'm gonna make the AWA even greater.

`Cuz I'm gonna take this hand...

[Lynch lifts his right hand in the air.]

JL: ...and slap it across your face and when I do...

[All five of Lynch's fingers curl forward.]

JL: I'm gonna squeeze until you beg me to stop.

Tonight ain't your night for glory, Vasquez, tonight is the night I take ya out, once and for all.

And that'll make the AWA better than it's ever been!

[And with that, the synth surges into Animotion's "Obsession" as we get footage of some of the competitors on tonight's show. Each sequence begins with the action in full speed and then freezes before impact...

...and on one final shot of Jack Lynch lifting the Iron Claw hand skyward, we freeze and jump cut to a live shot of the T-Mobile Arena crowd.

The building setup is a little different from your usual Saturday Night Wrestling affair. Yes, the ring still has red, white, and blue ropes from top to bottom. Yes, there are still black mats covering the floor and the matching black barricade surrounding the ring. Yes, our announcers and timekeeper are still seated at ringside tables.

But as we cut to a different angle, we see that FOX has spared no expense. An elaborate steel elevated stage has been set up at one end of the building, a giant video wall hanging over the entryway. A matching metal ramp extends from the stage, leading the distance down the aisle at an incline, ending shortly before ringside. There is no sign of the elevated interview platform or the illuminated ten foot tall AWA logo. This is prime time television, jack!

And with one more cut, we end up back down at ringside with our announce team. One face familiar... the other not as much.

On the right stands former AWA National Champion and current Combat Corner trainer, Marcus Broussard. The San Jose Shark is dressed to the nines in a custom-made black suit with white dress shirt and a deep crimson tie.

By his side is a man in his early 30s dressed in a similar black suit, white dress shirt, and black tie. His jet black hair has been expertly styled as well and when he speaks, you feel like you've heard his voice before.]

?: Greetings and salutations, sports fans, and welcome to the brand new T-Mobile Arena on the Las Vegas Strip for what promises to be a thrilling night of action known as the All-Star Showdown! For those of you who don't know me, my name is Matt Manning, and I've called sports action from the Hexagon of the GFC to the ice rinks of Canada to the futbol pitches of Central America but tonight, for the very first time, I will call the action here for the King of all Sports, the squared circle of professional wrestling. And by my side tonight is the Robin to my Batman, the one and only... former AWA National Champion, Marcus Broussard! The San Jose Shark himself! And Marcus, this is something else.

MB: The Robin to your Batman? More like the Doc to your Wyatt, chief. But I'll agree with you on one thing, Manning - this IS something else. The atmosphere when the AWA comes to Las Vegas is always exciting but tonight, there's an electricity in the air because the AWA World Title is on the line, the Steal The Spotlight contract is being cashed in, and the heavens themselves only know what else happens here tonight.

MM: They say what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas but on this night, what happens in Las Vegas will be instant headline news all over the world. I am so very honored to be here tonight and I simply cannot wait to see the greatest wrestling action in the world firsthand! But the Shark and myself aren't the only members of this announce team because right now, we are headed backstage where Mark Stegglet is standing by with one of the teams in one of tonight's feature matchups! Lou?

[We fade backstage to Mark Stegglet, standing between two Axis members: Derrick Williams and Riley Hunter. Hunter is in his usual gear, mirrored John Lennon shades over his eyes under a mop of black, blue, and dirty blonde hair. Williams is in a black satin jacket with his initials embroidered on the right breast and you can see shiny silver trunks on camera.]

SLB: Thanks, Matt, and welcome aboard! Derrick Williams and Riley Hunter, in only a few short minutes, you two gentlemen will be facing former AWA World Champion Johnny Detson and the winner of Battle of Boston, Brian James. You've got to think that as skilled as you both are that this is daunting opposition for the both of you.

RH: Steggy, I look around, I look around, I see a lot of doubting faces. Man, I've seen the most gifted and athletic wrestlers who have ever lived come through the AWA. I see all this potential...

...And I see it squandered. Gosh darn it, Duke: an entire generation of wrestlers more concerned with putting smiles on the fans' faces than tears in their opponents' eyes.

DW: Wrestlers who are adrift in an ocean of mediocrity, like you and I were lost, Ri.

RH: And then we found our commission. We found our crusade, Steggy. You've got the future of this industry right here beside us, Louie. No one is going to light that torch but Mr. Derrick Williams. And I? I'm the Seven Star Athlete. I am the pinnacle of wrestling evolution.

DW: You see, it's simple, Mark. Ri and I, we're changing the world. And we're doing it as one unit, of like mind. What you won't see here is contention.

RH: No you won't!

DW: What you won't see here is dissension.

RH: No no!

DW: What you'll see here, is one complete unit, focused on our task, our mission. We have a goal and we will keep on until we achieve it. Let's look at tonight. We all know why Lau got this match signed. So his bickering "brothers" can have some good feels. But unlike the "Fine" Kings, you look at the results pages over the past few weeks, and it's interesting. Phoenix, Arizona... live event, Williams and Hunter...

RH: Win.

DW: Albuquerque, New Mexico...

RH: Win.

DW: Corpus Christi, Texas...

RH: Win, win, win, win, win, win... The Axis is MADE of Win!

DW: Because we, we have our charge, spread the word. This isn't the Kings, where Detson can't get it done without someone doing his dirty work, whether it be James, or like Juan did when Detson won the World Title. Yeah Johnny, we all know, if it wasn't for Juan, you wouldn't even BE a former World Champion. And James, yeah, he's got talent and potential, but he's never going to reach it if he lets Lau keep him as...

[Williams smirks.]

DW: ...Kawajiri's favorite catch phrase.

RH: Don't miss the message, Steggy: this isn't just some way for Duke and myself to fill time between other engagements. What the Axis has tasked us to do is nothing short of a wrestling In-qui-sition! Root out the heretics in the AWA... Burn 'em at the stake if we have to!

DW: And first off, we put the final nail in the coffin. Tonight, we end the story of the Kings of Wrestling. Nothing personal, just business. There's only room for one future of the AWA.

RH: It's all for the greater good of the AWA...

... isn't it, Juan?

[We then see Juan Vasquez enter the scene, still in his street clothes, all smiles.]

JV: That it is, boys...that it is. The Kings of Wrestling were good for what they were: a group of useful idiots doing exactly what I wanted them to.

MS: What do you mean by that?

JV: Isn't it obvious, Mark? The only reason The Kings of Wrestling were allowed to co-exist with The Axis for so long was because I allowed it!

[Juan cackles.]

JV: I couldn't have asked for a better set of pawns to divide and distract the army that would've united against The Axis, while Hunter and I set all our plans into motion. But now that our destiny has begun to take shape, now that The Axis' goal is within reach, now that we are OH SO CLOSE to making the AWA great again...it's become very clear to all of us that The Kings have outlived their usefulness. And as sad as it is to say, their time...

[He grins.]

JV: ...is up.

[Vasquez' grin twists as he looks off-camera.]

"Well, well, well... what have we here?"

[The camera shot pulls back to reveal Wes Taylor and Tony Donovan, the AWA World Tag Team Champions, walking into view. Taylor and Donovan are in street clothes with the World Tag Team Titles draped over their shoulders.]

TD: Oh, I know, Wes... I know what we've got. The Axis... of Evil!

[Donovan gives a mocking shudder as Taylor does "spooky fingers" in their direction.]

WT: I'm quivering in my custom-made shoes... but hey, nice New Balance, "Duke."

[Williams starts to step forward but Vasquez slides an arm across his chest.]

JV: What do you two want?

[Taylor smirks, looking at his partner.]

WT: "Want?" I wouldn't say we "want" anything, Juan. We're not here to take anything from you guys... we're here to GIVE you something. And that's a reality check.

TD: That's right. Because I could've sworn I just heard something about the Kings only existing because YOU allowed it to happen.

[Vasquez nods.]

TD: Right, well... Wes and I thought that was kind of funny because it's the Kings who've been doing... over and over again... what you COULDN'T do! Ain't that right, Wes?

WT: Absolutely. Let's take a short stroll down Memory Lane, shall we? Because it wasn't long ago that Juan Vasquez made a big return at SuperClash, standing alongside two big brawling legends in their own right... and they were going to be the first team to beat the Dogs of War in six man tag team action. Did it happen?

TD: Goodness, no!

WT: No, it didn't... because WE were the first team to beat the Dogs of War and we did it so bad, they scurried off out of sight to Japan and haven't been heard from since.

TD: This is the part where you say "arigato," Juan.

[Silence.]

TD: No? Okay, well... let's talk about Travis Lynch... because Lord knows you couldn't beat Travis Lynch. Another Juan Vasquez SuperClash choke job. But you know who beat Travis Lynch, Juan?

WT: That would be us.

TD: That's right. And you know who else was on that team when we beat Travis Lynch? Your opponent tonight... Jack Lynch. And I'm guessing that in just about two hours, we can have this same conversation and include him on the list of people that you couldn't get the job done against... that we could.

Which brings us...

[Donovan locks eyes with Riley Hunter.]

TD: ...to you two. Look, I'm all for confidence... heck, I'm even all for ego. But what I'm not up for, boys, is delusion. And delusion is what you two are packing in spades if you actually think you're going to get in the ring with Johnny Detson and Brian James and come out the other side the winner.

WT: Your boy Vasquez here's got you two thinking you're on top of the world... but that's where the fall is the hardest from. And when Johnny and BJ get through with you...

[Donovan chuckles.]

TD: It's truly gonna be a dead man's party here in Vegas, boys.

[Hunter steps forward, extending an accusing finger at Donovan.]

RH: That's a place you don't want to travel, my friend.

[Vasquez shakes his head, sidestepping in front of Hunter.]

JV: They're not worth it. You've got more important business here tonight... and so do I.

[Williams though speaks up again.]

DW: Hey! I want you two to sit back here and watch real close... because what we do to your boys out there tonight is a sneak preview of what's in YOUR future.

[Taylor chuckles.]

WT: It's more likely to be a repeat of what BJ did at the Battle of Boston when he won the whole thing... you remember that night, Juan? The night where Brian James BEAT the guy that you couldn't?

[Vasquez grimaces, stepping towards Taylor.]

JV: I'd love nothing more than to shut your mouth for good right now...

[Vasquez rates his clenched right hand.]

JV: ...but I'm afraid your old man would get mad at me right before our big meeting.

[A chuckling Vasquez lowers his hand, backing up.]

JV: Come on, gentlemen.

[Vasquez continues backing away, leaving a seething Hunter and Williams glaring at the tag champs as Vasquez disappears off camera.]

WT: Good luck, boys... but remember... you're nothing without Vasquez behind you.

[Williams seems set to jump at Taylor when Vasquez' voice rings out again.]

JV: Guys!

[Williams holds up, shaking his head as he starts to back away. Taylor laughs loudly as Donovan mockingly waves at the duo.]

WT: Daddy's calling.

[Hunter grumbles under his breath as Williams claps him on the back with a "let's go," leaving a smirking Taylor and Donovan behind as we fade to another part of the backstage area where "Sweet" Lou Blackwell is standing, flanked by two men. On his right is Brian Lau, stylish as ever. On his left is the hulking form of the AWA's Engine of Destruction, Brian James. James is bare chested, and wears his ring gear, while a white towel covers his head.]

SLB: Tonight is the night that you asked for, Mr. Lau. The night when your men attempt to prove that the Kings of Wrestling are the dominant force here in the AWA.

BL: Blackwell, were you born this stupid, or is it a recent phenomenon?

SLB: I beg your pardon!

BL: I bet you beg for a lot of things, Blackwell.

But listen, we are not ATTEMPTING to prove anything. Tonight is about showing the world what they already know to be true. When you're on top of the world, people will look for reasons to doubt you. And that's all that's been happening, Blackwell.

People are so terrified of the Kings of Wrestling that they imagine that they've fooled themselves into thinking that a chump like Derrick Williams is the future!

Well, if Williams and Hunter are the future... someone invent a time machine quick, because its time to go back to the past.

SLB: Be that as it may, there is no doubt that your house isn't in order. How can you possibly expect Johnny Detson and Brian James to prevail when the Axis are all clearly on the same page, and your men are not.

BJ: Blackwell...

[James pulls the towel off his head, showing that he's sporting a fresh buzz cut and has gone back to being clean shaven.]

BJ: Why don't you ask me that question? Why don't you look me in the eyes and tell me that you doubt that I'm capable of beating Williams and Hunter?

[Blackwell pales and gulps.]

SLB: I only mean...

BJ: You only mean that you've done the same thing everyone else has done. You've allowed yourself to be blinded by the hype, and you've allowed yourself to imagine that there is even one single possibility that the Kings of Wrestling will not be standing tall by the end of the night.

Let me explain this to you in terms that you, and every fat, lazy, nothing happening, no account couch potato listening to my voice can understand.

In the world of combat sports, there's only one thing that matters. Can you step into that ring, night after night, and beat your opponent so badly that they would rather let you lay across them and pin their shoulders to the mat for three seconds than let you continue taking them apart?

Can one man impose his will upon another, and break his victim, not just physically, but mentally?

If you can do that, and you can do it better than any other men, then you will be the best. And all the talk, all the glitz, all the glamor, it all falls away, Blackwell. Nothing matters but what happens between those ring ropes.

And when you talk about the Kings of Wrestling, you're talking about World Tag Team Champions, you're talking about CAGE champions. You're talking about winning the Battle of Boston... and yeah, I'll say it, you're talking about the World Heavyweight Champion.

None of that came by accident, Blackwell. It came because we are the Kings of Wrestling. We are the premier organization in combat sports. We represent the elite of combat sports, and are recognized worldwide as being the men who set the standard of excellence in professional sports today.

So when you take into account all of our accolades, then you find that it doesn't matter what people say, because it'll never outweigh what we can do. And it doesn't matter how much blue hair dye Riley Hunter steals from little old ladies, or how many suits Derrick Williams steals out of Juan Vasquez' bags. You two will never be in my league.

SLB: Your league. What about your partner's league?

[James grows silent for a moment.]

BJ: Detson, I don't know where you are, but I'm sure you're listening. And let me tell you something about what's going to happen tonight...

JD: We're going to win!

[Detson suddenly walks into the shot smile on his face taking everyone by surprise especially James and Lau. Detson is dressed to wrestle in his long gold tights with black boots, and he's wearing his purple Kings of Wrestling jacket.]

JD: You're talking about leagues, Blackwell? The fact that you think this is comparable shows your obvious lack of intelligence.

[Detson points at James.]

JD: Engine of Destruction, Battle of Boston winner.

[Detson points to himself.]

JD: World Champion. Versus two lackeys who had to grovel to get their spots? There's no league, there's no comparison, there's no contest! The only thing to debate is how fast they get beat and how bad they get beaten.

SLB: Very well - then I'll ask the same question of you. How can you possibly expect the two of you to prevail when the Axis are all clearly on the same page, and you are not?

[Detson glances over at James.]

JD: Look, I'm not going to lie and say a conversation doesn't need to happen between the two of us. Goals... thoughts... visions... have become skewed...

[Detson glances at James again before turning his focus to Blackwell.]

JD: But we're still the Kings of Wrestling, we're still the top, we're still the measuring stick and we're all still the standard of this business. And we're not going to let Juan Vasquez...

[Detson's face contorts in a rage we very rarely see as he speaks the name.]

JD: ...who I might add is doing a very poor Johnny Detson impersonation. But I can't blame him - he's a loser and he's trying to emulate the most successful thing in this Company. The guy that brought this place to heights he never could.

[Detson smiles and points at himself.]

JD: Anyway, we're not letting the guys that carry Juan's bags think they're on our level. Not Derek Williams, not Riley Hunter, not Zangief, not Mr. Jiffy Lube Jackson Hunter, and not Juan Vasquez...

[Again, a strange contorted face of rage after saying the name.]

JD: And after we... how do you put it, Brian? Leave them as a grease stain on the canvas... after this match you'll know where things stand. And then?

[Detson turns to James.]

JD: I guess we'll need to sit down and have that talk.

[With that, Detson turns and leaves.]

BL: Did you hear that, Blackwell? I bet you feel real stupid now, don't you?

The Kings stand tall! The Kings stand together! And tonight, the Axis goes the way of the dodo. And for those of you who look at fifth grade as the worst seven years of your life, the dodo died out a long time ago.

SLB: Well certainly, everything seems fine as far as Johnny Detson is concerned. And you, Mr. James? What do you make of all this?

[James' expression is clearly skeptical, but he nods his head slowly.]

BL: If Detson learned his lesson, then that just makes my life easier.

[James turns to Lau.]

BJ: He did learn his lesson, didn't he?

[Lau is quick to nod.]

BL: You heard the man yourself!

[James still looks dubious, but finally nods his head.]

BJ: All right then.

BL: Now, step aside Blackwell, the Kings of Wrestling have business!

[With those words, Lau and James exit, ready to join Detson in battle.]

SLB: Rebecca Ortiz, my dear, this promises to be one heck of an explosive encounter. Take it away!

[We fade back up to the ring where Rebecca Ortiz is standing in a red curve-hugging dress with a diamond shape cutout on the chest.]

RO: Tonight's opening contest is a tag team match set for one fall with a thirty minute time limit!

[Ortiz lowers the mic as "Duel of the Fates" by Galactic Empire begins to play.]

#KOR-AHHHHHH

#MAH-TAH

#KOR-AHHHHHH

#RAH-TAH-MAAAAH

[The crowd immediately ROARS with boos at the sight of Riley Hunter, Derrick Williams, and Jackson Hunter striding out onto the elevated stage.]

RO: Being accompanied to the ring by Jackson Hunter... at a total combined weight of 473 pounds...

"THE FUTURE" DERRICK WILLIAMS...

"THE AMERICAN NINJA" RILEY HUNTER...

THEEEEEEEEEEEEE AXXXXXXXXXXISSSSSSSSSS!

[The boos pour down for the trio as they make their way down the ramp, arrogant smirks all around. Jackson Hunter is walking slightly in front of his team, running his mouth at the barricade-side fans.]

MM: Derrick Williams and Riley Hunter... apparently going by the Axis name here tonight but from what I understand, Marcus, we could just as easily refer to them as the Betrayal Brothers!

MB: That's got a nice ring to it, Manning... and is pretty fitting considering that Jordan Ohara has matching stab wounds in his back from where his good friend Derrick Williams buried the blade and then Riley Hunter did the same two weeks later, both joining the Axis in the process.

MM: Tonight, this Axis of Evil is looking to make a statement. They've got this big clash with the other biggest faction in the AWA - the Kings of Wrestling - and then later tonight, Juan Vasquez is going to try to wrest the World Heavyweight Title from around the waist of Jack Lynch.

MB: That's right and as someone who has been in the spot of being in the Main Event many times, I'm guessing that's why Juan Vasquez isn't out here for this one. Now, the fans at home are probably wondering where Maxim Zharkov is... where MAWAGA is... so it seems like a good time to mention that there's an AWA live event elsewhere tonight so we're here in Vegas with the wrestlers on All-Star Showdown and few others so Zharkov and MAWAGA are back down in San Antonio, Texas at that live event.

MM: That has to be good news for the Kings of Wrestling who - as we saw moments ago - are here in full force tonight.

[The American Ninja gets a running start, leaping into the air over the bottom rope in a front roll up to a knee as Williams ducks through the ropes, striking a pose behind him as Jackson Hunter applauds gleefully from out on the floor. Their music begins to fade as Rebecca Ortiz speaks once more.]

RO: Annnnnnnnnnd their opponents...

[The sounds of AC/DC's "Evil Walks" rings out over the PA system to jeers from the Las Vegas crowd.]

MM: How about that, Shark? These fans don't seem too fond of either team tonight.

MB: No shock to me, Manning. Both of these groups have done plenty of things to make the AWA faithful despise them... but I kind of like that. I've got a soft spot for the dastardly and immoral.

MM: I don't know that I've ever heard anyone admit that but somehow I'm not the least bit surprised, Shark.

MB: I think we'll get along just fine, Manning.

[Ortiz continues.]

RO: Being accompanied to the ring by Brian Lau... at a total combined weight of 543 pounds...

BRIAN JAMES...

JOHNNY DETSON...

THE KIIIIIIIIINGS OF WRESSSSSSTLINNNNG!

[Brian Lau is the first one through the curtain, a big grin on his face as he beckons his team through with a wave of his arm. The former World Champion is the next one through, a wide grin on his face as he pumps a fist. The Engine of Destruction is the final one out onto the stage, his face mostly covered by a towel hanging over his face.]

MM: The Kings are en route and Johnny Detson seems pretty happy to be out here for this tag team showdown, Marcus.

MB: And Brian James seems less than convinced.

MM: Are you convinced?

MB: Hey, the former World Champ is an honorable guy so far be it from me to doubt him.

MM: A less than resounding testimony there, Shark.

[Detson climbs the ringsteps, pausing to shake Brian Lau's hand before he ducks through the ropes, shouting across the ring at Williams and Hunter who are huddled up in their corner with their manager.]

MB: Two of the most brilliant managerial minds - not only in the AWA - but in the history of this business are out there tonight, Manning. You're in for a real treat.

MM: I've seen some of the greatest coaches and managers in the world in action over the years so I'm looking forward to see the gameplans these two have cooked up.

[James slowly follows Detson into the ring, arching an eyebrow at an enthusiastic Brian Lau who urges him on.]

MM: Brian Lau seems incredibly pleased at recent developments that have Detson and James agreeing to work together here tonight, Marcus.

MB: Absolutely. This is an ego thing for Lau - make no mistake about it. From all his years managing the Syndicate, you know that Lau will NOT accept anyone thinking he doesn't manage the top group in the business... and there's certainly an argument to be made that the Axis is right up there with the Kings. He put this match together to squash that buzz before it ever gets going, Manning.

MM: Which motivates Jackson Hunter, Juan Vasquez, and the rest of the Axis even more to be certain. But tonight, it's Brian Lau and Brian James who are like the Chainsmokers and Daya hoping that Johnny Detson don't let them down!

[Lau calls the two men into a huddle in the corner, going over some final instructions as James glares across the ring. Detson, however, is attentive, nodding and listening to the Hall of Fame manager as he speaks.]

MM: Some final pre-match conversations going on between Detson and Lau but Brian James seems to be a million miles away.

MB: He's got a big weekend ahead of him, Manning. He's got this big tag match live on prime time network television and then he's hopping a private jet to Japan where he'll be defending the Tiger Paw Pro CAGE Championship at the big BURNING GLORY event that'll be broadcast on Sunday night on Fox Sports X.

MM: And for our fans who may be new to the world of pro wrestling, Tiger Paw Pro is the biggest promotion in all of Japan and they have a biweekly show on The X as well.

[The pre-match conversations come to an end as Jackson Hunter and Brian Lau drop off their respective aprons, taking their spots in the corner as referee Andy Dawson takes to the middle of the ring.]

MM: The time for talk is over and... there seems to be a bit of a disagreement going on in the Axis corner.

[Riley Hunter is talking to Derrick Williams, pointing across the ring insistently but Williams is defiantly shaking his head.]

MB: Good call there, Manning. What in the world are they...?

MM: Hunter on the move!

[The American Ninja suddenly breaks free from the corner, dashing across the ring, leaping into the air...]

...and Brian James just flattens the flying Hunter with a straight right hand to the jaw, snapping his head back and putting the American Ninja down on the canvas as the bell sounds!]

MM: The best laid plans of mice and men have gone awry here in Sin City as James takes Hunter right off his feet with a punch that would make Mike Tyson's liver quiver!

[Lau shouts to Detson, ordering him out of the ring as Brian James stalks towards Hunter who props himself up over the ropes, mumbling "it should have worked this time" to himself as James grabs him by the back of the tights, lifting him to his feet.]

MM: The battle has begun here on All-Star Showdown!

[James shoves Hunter towards the ropes, sending him chestfirst into them where he stumbles back into a vicious forearm shank into the lower back!]

MB: James taking aim at the small of the back with that one, really driving the forearm bone into it.

[Grabbing the top rope, James snaps off a roundhouse kick to the small of the back that echoes throughout the T-Mobile Arena as Hunter arches his back, sliding down to his knees near the ropes.]

MM: The striking prowess of Brian James is the stuff of legend already in his young career. Even in the locker rooms of the Global Fighting Championship, you hear people marveling at his flurry of fists and explosions of elbows that he unleashes on his hapless victims.

[With Hunter down on his knees, James grabs a handful of hair, hauling him to his feet and pushing him back against the ropes. The referee orders him to back off but James instead squares up, throwing a right hook aimed at Hunter's head that the smaller Seven Star Athlete manages to duck under, front rolling away from the ropes and right to his feet where he dashes to the ropes.]

MM: Riley Hunter, blending blinding speed with dazzling agility...

[Hunter hits the far ropes, rebounding back towards James who extends his arm, taking a wild swing for a clothesline that Hunter baseball slides under, popping up to his feet behind James who turns around into the American Ninja throwing a quick leg kick followed by an elbowstrike to the jaw.]

MM: Hunter's a blur of motion, ducking and dodging...

[James throws a left hook this time but Hunter ducks that one as well, popping right back up and snapping his boot off the back of James' head with an enzuigiri!]

MM: Lands the enzuigiri! Right on target!

[With James reeling, Hunter dashes back to the ropes behind him, rebounding back towards James...

...who throws himself forward with a front kick to the sternum that wipes out Hunter, putting him back down on the mat, grabbing at his chest!]

MM: Brian James with the rally-killing kick to the chest to regain control of this matchup!

[From outside the ring, Lau can be heard shouting, "TAG! TAG!" to his charge. James glares at Lau for a moment, pulling Hunter to his feet and shoving him back into the ropes before he aggressively slaps the outstretched hand of Johnny Detson.]

MM: Brian James didn't seem too happy about it but the tag has certainly been made.

[Detson doesn't acknowledge the hard tag, ducking through the ropes to grab Hunter by an arm. He gestures to the other arm. James hesitates for a moment before grabbing the other arm, using it to execute a double whip.]

MM: The Kings working in tandem, firing him across...

[A double back elbow up under the chin takes Hunter off his feet again, putting him back down on the canvas. Detson grins, offering a high five to James but the Engine of Destruction ignores the former World Champion, ducking through the ropes to the ring apron.]

MB: Nice execution on the double team which just goes to show that even if the Kings of Wrestling aren't on the same page, they're still the Kings of Wrestling and do this sport better than just about anyone else.

MM: A fact that Riley Hunter could certainly vouch for right about now. Hunter, for our new fans, signed with the AWA back in early summer after a period where he was the hottest free agent in the entire sport. He debuted for the company at the

Battle of Boston event where he went on a hot streak and was the talk of the town all weekend.

[Detson pulls Hunter off the mat, lifting him up and slamming him down.]

MM: The former World Champion asserting himself physically, driving Hunter down hard into the mat. Of course, Detson will always keep one eye open for an opportunity to hit that Wilde Driver of his that spells almost certain defeat for any opponent he encounters.

[Winding up his arm, Detson drops an elbow down across the sternum once... twice... and three times before he rolls into a lateral press.]

MM: Our first pin attempt of the match gets a one count and that's all. Tell me, Shark, what's the point of a pin attempt so early? Did Detson really think he could win already?

MB: Going for a pin doesn't always have to be about winning the match at that moment, Manning. It can be about causing an opponent to expend energy by kicking out. It can be a way to get yourself a breather. It can be a "heat check for your opponent - seeing how fatigued they are. Sometimes it's just a psychological ploy to get in your opponent's head... and yeah, Manning, sometimes you get lucky and end the match just like that.

MM: Marcus, they tell me that you were the King of the pinning predicament - the sensei of the small package if you will.

MB: Oh, I will. Keep talking, Manning.

[Detson climbs back to his feet, pulling Hunter to his feet where he grabs the arm, whipping him the short distance to the turnbuckles where Detson walks across, slapping the hand of Brian James.]

MM: To the corner and another tag is made between James and Detson, bringing the son of the Blackheart back in...

MB: I'm surprised the brass is letting us mention Casey James after what went down this past Monday in Dallas.

MM: On that note, we'd like to take a moment to send our best to Emerson Gellar who is resting at home, recuperating from the damage done by James and Tiger Claw. Take care, Emerson, and we'll see you real soon.

[The former World Champion pushes Hunter's upper body back against the buckles as James steps in, a slightly puzzled look on his face as Detson implores him to act. James obliges with a front kick to the midsection before Detson exits the ring.]

MM: Detson out, James in.

[James grabs Hunter by the hair, dragging him away from the turnbuckles. He winds up his right arm, throwing a ferocious elbowstrike to the jaw!]

MM: Elbow on the mark by the Engine of Destruction!

[A second blow lands before James quickly spins back the other way, landing a spinning back elbow on the other side of the head!]

MM: James with dangerous accuracy and incredible impact behind those strikes!

[Hunter sinks down to a knee as James dashes to the ropes, rebounding off towards the Seven Star Athlete...

...who EXPLODES off his knee, leaping into the air, and DRIVING his knee up under James' chin!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

MM: HUNTER LANDS THE LEAPING KNEE HE CALLS INSTANT KARMA!

[James' eyes flutter as Hunter grabs him by the arm, whipping him towards the ropes before he can recover.]

MM: Hunter shoots him to the ropes, slides into position...

[Hunter hoists the rebounding James into the air, flipping him over and sitting out in an impactful hiptoss slam...]

MB: Innovative offense by the Seven Star Athlete... and he's not done yet!

[Nudging James into a seated position, Hunter dashes to the ropes, rebounding back and driving both feet into the face with a basement dropkick!]

MM: You've gotta be impressed with this young man, Marcus.

MB: It's easy to see why Riley Hunter was the hottest free agent in the world and I'm glad to have him as a part of the AWA roster.

[Hunter gets back up, dashing towards the ropes where he leaps to the middle rope, springing back with a quebrada moonsault!]

MM: The moonsault splash in on the mark! He cradles the leg!

[A two count follows before James kicks out. Detson shouts his approval from outside the ring, clapping and shouting "COME ON, KID!" as Hunter regains his feet, sneering in Detson's direction before backing into the corner where he slaps the hand of Derrick Williams.]

MM: The Axis makes a tag and in comes the Future.

MB: We'll see about that.

MM: Not a fan of Derrick Williams, Shark?

MB: On the contrary, I think the kid's got all the potential in the world... but I also think he's got a climb ahead of him to be considered "the future" of anything.

[With Williams in the ring, Hunter leaps up, driving his feet down into James' midsection with a double stomp, forcing the Engine of Destruction to sit up on the mat...

...which is Williams' cue to hit the far ropes, rebounding back with a sliding elbowsmash to the skull that flattens James and leaves him prone for another pin attempt!]

MM: Williams makes a cover this time! But again, Brian James muscles out from under it.

MB: Williams just made a big mistake there. You gotta hook that leg if you want to keep someone down for a three count at this level. You might get away with that

kind of sloppy cover out on the indies at the local American Legion Hall but not here in the big time, Manning.

[Williams climbs to his feet, looking out at Jackson Hunter who shouts some instructions in.]

MB: And right there is the biggest advantage that Derrick Williams adds to his career in joining the Axis. Williams came in to the AWA with some hype behind him but has spent a lot of time drifting aimlessly. Jackson Hunter will give him focus. The Axis will surround him with guys with more experience than him. All of that is going to help Williams develop into the type of competitor he's always wanted to be.

[Pulling James off the mat, Williams straightens him up with a European uppercut, sending James wobbling back towards the ropes near the Axis' side of the ring. Riley Hunter shouts something at Williams, getting a nod in response as Williams grabs James by the hair...

...and DRILLS him with an elbowstrike to the temple!]

MM: Williams gives James a taste of his own fine cuisine there with that elbowstrike to the skull! That'll send you in search of the Tylenol for sure.

[Williams tees off, landing four more elbowstrikes to the skull before the official steps in, forcing Williams to back off...

...which allows Riley Hunter to slink down the apron, using the top rope to leap up and snap his foot off the back of James' head!]

MM: Oh! Hunter using the referee's distraction to his advantage, striking behind the official's back!

MB: And Lau and Detson didn't like that, shouting at Andy Dawson right now.

[A smirking Williams moves back in, grabbing James by the arm...]

MM: Brooklyn whip sends James across...

[But as he hits the ropes, James hangs on to them, blocking the rebound.]

MM: ...but no return trip for one of the Kings of Wrestling as he hangs on to that top rope strand.

[Williams charges across the ring, looking to strike...

...but James ducks his shoulder, elevating Williams up and over the ropes, but the Brooklyn native hangs on, landing on the apron.]

MM: Williams hangs on as well!

[Williams reaches out, driving an elbowstrike into the side of James' head as he turns around. James staggers back...

...and then snaps off an elbowstrike of his own right on the jaw, staggering Williams!]

MM: These two are notorious like Biggie Smalls but instead of being hip hop legends, they're striking legends!

[With Williams stunned on the apron, James points at him and then breaks into a dash across the ring to the far ropes to build up momentum...

...which is where Riley Hunter grabs the top rope, dropping down and pulling it so that James goes tumbling over the ropes, crashing down to the floor in a heap as the crowd groans!]

MM: OH! And the evil Axis strikes again, wrestling fans! Brian James was looking to strike hard but Riley Hunter had other ideas, saving his partner from certain doom by pulling down the rope!

[Jackson Hunter flashes a gleeful smile, clapping loudly for his cousin's dastardly actions. The Seven Star Athlete highsteps down the length of the apron, strutting his stuff to the jeers of the crowd as Williams comes back into the ring, walking across to make the tag.]

MM: The Axis makes the exchange, making Riley Hunter the legal man here in Las Vegas...

MB: Watch this, Manning.

MM: Hunter approaching the corner... he's got a reputation for flying higher than Snoop Dogg and Willie Nelson combined...

[Hunter steps to the second rope... then to the top as James starts to stir out on the floor. The Vegas crowd rises to their feet, roaring with anticipation as Hunter sets himself to fly...]

MM: With the entire world watching, Riley Hunter is set to show why he's considered by many to be a human highlight reel!

[...and Hunter HURLS himself from the top rope, catching big air as he flips backwards, landing on a stunned Brian James and wiping him out on the barely-padded floor of the T-Mobile Arena as the Vegas crowd roars in response!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[Jackson Hunter sprints around the corner to check on his cousin.]

MM: Jackson Hunter making like a bread truck and hauling buns to check on his family after that daredevil dive to the floor!

[But it isn't long until the Seven Star Athlete is on his feet, soaking up a decent amount of cheers from the AWA faithful.]

MB: They may not like Hunter's actions, Manning, but these fans respect what he's capable of inside... or outside... the squared circle.

[Dragging James off the floor, the American Ninja shoves him under the ropes, rolling him back inside the ring. He grabs the ropes himself, pulling up onto the ring apron...]

MM: Hunter's outside of the ropes, measuring his target...

[And as James climbs to his feet, Hunter leaps into the air, springing off the top rope, and driving his feet into James' chest, sending him right back down to the canvas!]

MB: Springboard dropkick and he got every bit of that one, Manning!

MM: Hunter crawls to cover - one! Two!

[But the powerful James escapes at two, breaking the pin attempt and shoving Hunter back up to his feet. Hunter looks down at James for a moment before leaping into the air, driving his feet down into the midsection with a double stomp...

...and immediately jumping back up, flipping forward, and crashing backfirst down on the same midsection!]

“OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!”

MM: Quite the combination there on the part of the American Ninja, flipping forward with that senton splash and- another cover! Again he gets one! Again he gets two! Can he get- no! James kicks out at two!

[Hunter sits up on the mat, frowning slightly as Williams claps his hands and shouts, “LET’S GO, RI!” Jackson Hunter echoes the statement as Hunter climbs off the mat, staring down at James for a few moments...

...and then it’s like a light bulb goes off for him as he snaps his fingers, quickly moving to pull James up to his feet...]

MM: Hunter pulling the Engine of Destruction to his feet... what’s he doing here, Shark?

MB: I could be wrong but- no, I’m not! He’s setting up for James’ own finishing move - the Blackheart Punch!

[The crowd grumbles as Hunter tucks James’ arm back behind his head, completely exposing his chest...]

MM: Stealing his opponent’s finishing maneuver takes some real guts, doesn’t it, Shark?

MB: That’s one way to put it. Some guys consider it the ultimate insult and unfortunately, Hunter’s got a history of doing it.

[Hunter turns to the crowd, mockingly pumping his right fist in the air before turning back to James, drawing back his arm...]

MM: Here it comes!

[...and throwing a punch aimed at James’ heart!]

MB: BLACKHEART PUNCH!

[But James yanks his trapped arm free in time to shift his body enough, trapping Hunter’s right arm under his left armpit!]

MM: Uh oh! Hunter got caught!

[A frantic Hunter throws the left hand as well... and it too ends up trapped in Brian James’ iron grip.]

MM: The other arm is caught as well! James has got him in his clutches!

[And the crowd groans as James lashes out with a devastating headbutt right to the cheekbone!]

MM: Oh! Holy smokes, what a headbutt that was!

MB: Illegal in the GFC where you called so many fights over the years, Manning, but perfectly legal here in the AWA.

MM: Absolutely brutal!

[Hunter slumps backwards but James doesn't let go, keeping his grip on the arm with his left arm as he reaches out with his right, hooking Hunter around the back of the head...]

MM: Now THIS looks familiar to myself and fans of the GFC all over the world! James hooks a Muay Thai clinch and- look out!

[With his hands locked behind Hunter's head, James pulls it down and drives his knee up into the face... and again... and again... and again...]

MB: KNEE FURY!

[Detson pumps a fist from the apron, shouting his encouragement to his Kings of Wrestling partner.]

MM: He's chopping the Seven Star Athlete down to a two!

[Using the Thai clinch, James hurls the dazed Hunter into the ropes, burying a rolling sole boot into his midsection on the rebound, causing Hunter to slump down to all fours...

...into perfect position as the crowd roars and James arches an eyebrow!]

MM: James has got something in mind, I think!

[The son of the Blackheart dashes to the ropes...

...which is when Derrick Williams slides down the apron, swinging his knee up into James' lower back!]

MM: Oh! Another cheap shot by the Axis of Evil!

[James recoils in pain as Williams taunts the crowd...

...and then the Engine of Destruction wheels around, throwing a big elbowstrike to the jaw of Williams, sending him flying off the apron to the floor!]

MM: James sends Williams to the floor! And-

[The crowd buzzes with confusion as Johnny Detson suddenly drops off the apron, slapping his hands down on it as he charges around the ring, bashing a rising Williams with a right hand to the jaw!]

MB: Detson's going after Williams! I can't believe it!

[The former World Champion breaks out into a brawl on the floor as the Vegas crowd ROARS!]

MM: And we've got a Pier Six brawl out on the floor, fans! Brian James is watching from inside the ring and I think even he's in shock at this development!

[But James' shock soon shifts to anger at himself as Riley Hunter regains his feet, charging in from the blind side with a running dropkick that knocks James chestfirst into the buckles!]

MM: Hunter strikes from behind! He caught James in a distracted moment and made him pay the piper for it!

[Spinning James around, Hunter ducks down and somehow muscles the larger man up into a seated position on the top turnbuckle...]

MM: Hunter sets him dow-

[...and then ducks down low, leaping up to drive his palm into the chin of James!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

MM: -OHHH ME OH MY OH!

[With James reeling on the top rope, Hunter spins around, reaching back to grab James by the wrists...

...and HURLS him off the buckles, throwing him down to the canvas with a thunderous slam, sitting out with it and reaching out to pull James' leg back into a pin attempt!]

MB: DYNAMITE DREAM SLAM!

MM: HUNTER SCORES ONE! HE SCORES TWO! HE SCO-

[And from outside the ring, Johnny Detson reaches between the ropes, digging his fingers into the eyes of Riley Hunter to break up the pin!]

MM: And Johnny Detson breaks up the pin from the floor!

[Hunter writhes in pain on the mat, rubbing at his eyes as a smirking Detson walks away, heading back to his corner, shouting "COME ON, BRIAN! LET'S DO THIS!"]

MM: A near miss there for the Axis, coming so close to victory but Johnny Detson had other things on his mind.

[Hunter pushes up to his feet, vigorously rubbing his eyes as he stumbles across the ring, slapping his partner's outstretched hand.]

MM: Another exchange for the Axis as we near the fifteen minute mark of this tag team battle.

[Williams marches into the ring, yanking Brian James off the mat, throwing him back into the neutral corner.]

MM: Williams asserting himself on James, elbow after elbow in the corner, switching back and forth from right to left, battering the big man back and forth!

[With James in a daze and the referee protesting, Williams shoves James from the corner, sending him staggering towards the middle of the ring. Williams "cocks" the arm to jeers as he goes into a spin...]

MB: NEURALYZER!

[But as he throws the rolling elbow, Williams suddenly finds himself flat on his back as James blindly reaches back, snatching the arm, and uses tremendous leverage to flip Williams over with a judo throw!]

MM: The master class level judo skills of Brian James on display right there! And that creates an opening for him to escape.

[Down on his knees, James looks up at the corner where a cheering Johnny Detson awaits him, arm outstretched and at the ready...]

MM: Detson's waiting for the tag - the former World Champion looking to get back into this considerable clash!

[James crawls on all fours, looking to make the exchange as Detson waits for him.]

MM: Detson's at the ready - can James get there in time?

[Out on the floor, Lau is repeatedly slamming his hands down into the apron, cheering his man on...]

MM: Lau rooting for the tag as well! The Kings need to make this exchange, fans!

[...but Williams rolls over, grabbing James by the ankle, preventing him from getting close enough to make the tag. He drags James back to the middle of the ring, surging forward to drop an elbow down on the back of the head!]

MM: And that'll cut off any attempt to make that tag - for now at least.

[Williams rolls to his knee, taunting Detson by clapping his hands and mockingly shouting "LET'S GO, BRIAN!" Detson steps through the ropes, looking to get physically involved but the referee jumps in his path, shaking him off as Williams gets up, whipping James across the ring into the Axis corner.]

MM: Williams sends him to the corner and now he's coming in after him!

[A running clothesline finds the mark, snapping James' head back as Williams connects with a solid blow.]

MM: The clothesline is on target - like a heat-seeking missile - and now Williams is looking to finish the job,

[Williams snatches a three-quarter nelson on James in the corner, smirking at the jeering crowd...]

MM: And it looks like Williams is setting up for the move he borrowed called the Blackout.

MB: I spoke to him earlier tonight, Manning, and he's now calling this the Future Shock.

MM: Call it what you will - I call it certain defeat for the Kings of Wrestling if he connects with it!

[Williams starts to dash out of the corner, running towards the middle of the ring, leaping into the air...]

...but James shoves him skyward, throwing him the rest of the way across the ring where Williams' 270 pound frame comes crashing down on the canvas!]

MM: But Brian James wasn't going down that easy, tossing Derrick Williams halfway across the ring!

[James falls to a knee, breathing heavily as Detson again insistently sticks out his hand, shouting for his partner to make the tag as Williams tries to recover near the Kings' corner...]

MM: Williams trying to get up! James trying to get up! Both men's partners eager to get into the fray as we count down the seconds to the halfway point in the time limit for this - our opening match here at All-Star Showdown!

[On cue, the timekeeper's voice rings out.]

"FIFTEEN MINUTES! FIFTEEN MINUTES! FIFTEEN MINUTES GONE BY!"

MM: And there it is - fifteen minutes elapsed, fifteen minutes still to come potentially as Brian James is again looking to the corner... again looking for a chance to tag out of this matchup!

MB: More importantly, he's looking for a chance to tag IN Johnny Detson which could flip the switch on this one.

MM: James crawling across the ring, Williams trying to regain his feet as well...

[James pushes up to his feet, wobbling towards Detson's outstretched hand as Williams crawls the other way towards a shouting Riley Hunter.]

MM: Both men looking for the tag! Who's going to get there first?

MB: I think it's gonna be James! He's almost there!

[James falls forward towards the corner, grabbing the ropes to stay on his feet. He extends his arm, reaching out towards Johnny Detson...]

MM: And there's the-

[...and Detson drops off the apron, pulling his hand out of James' reach as the Engine of Destruction slumps against the buckles, a dejected look on his face. The crowd jeers as Detson defiantly crosses his arms, mocking the same gesture James did just days earlier when depriving him of the World Title.]

MM: -WHAAAAAT?!

MB: I knew it! I knew it, Manning! I knew that Johnny Detson wasn't just going to forgive and forget what happened at Homecoming!

[And with James' back to them, Williams makes a lunging tag to Riley Hunter. Hunter slips into the ring as Brian Lau can be heard shouting "WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!" at Detson as James stays slumped against the buckles, arms stretched out towards Detson who takes two more steps back, smirking as he stares up at James.]

MM: This was a setup! Detson set this whole thing up, Shark!

MB: I'm pretty sure you're right about that, Manning. This was a Johnny Detson plan from the outset here tonight. He waited... he bided his time... and then he pulled the rug out from under Brian James!

[With James' back still turned, Hunter dashes across the ring from his blind side, leaping up to drive an Instant Karma bicycle knee strike into the back of James' head!]

MM: KNEE TO THE HEAD!

[James stumbles backwards out of the corner as Hunter sizes him up, leaping high into the air, scissoring the son of the Blackheart's head between his legs...

...and SPIKES him on top of his head with a reverse rana!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

MM: WHAAAAAMMMMOOOO!

[James rolls through onto his knees, looking to be completely out of it as Detson looks on - a satisfied expression on his face. Hunter strides quickly across the ring, slapping the hand of Derrick Williams.]

MM: The Axis makes the switch...

[Hunter slips in behind James, pulling him to his feet where he applies a double chickenwing. The 203 pounder shows strength beyond his size as he muscles James up into an elevated version of it - just for a moment... just long enough for Hunter to shove James out towards Williams who catches the three-quarter nelson...

...and DRIVES James skullfirst into the mat!]

MM: FUTURE SHOCK!

[Hunter takes up a protective stance, keeping an eye on Detson as Williams rolls onto James' chest, throwing his arms in the air and thrusting them along with the count of one... two...]

MM: THEY GOT HIM!

"DING! DING! DING!"

[Jackson Hunter crawls under the ropes, lunging into an embrace of his cousin as Williams climbs off the canvas, still holding his arms in the air. Hunter spins away to embrace Williams as well, jumping up and down a few times as dejected Brian Lau looks up at the ring with disbelief.]

MM: It was a heck of a battle, wrestling fans, but in the end, the Axis comes out on top and... well, does that answer the question, Shark? Is the Axis the Number One faction in all of pro wrestling?

MB: Maybe they are, Manning... maybe they are... but the result of tonight's Main Event may go a long way to answering that question as well.

MM: The Main Event pitting Juan Vasquez challenging Jack Lynch for the World Title - cashing in his Steal The Spotlight contract - is still to come later tonight but right now, fans, as the Axis celebrates their triumph here in Las Vegas, we've got to take a quick break. Don't forget that we've got a lot more to come here on Showdown and-

[In the aisle, Lau is shouting at Detson who doesn't seem to care at all as he backs down the aisle, keeping his eyes locked on the ring where Lau climbs in to check on his fallen charge.]

MM: Wow. What a way to kick things off here in Vegas. There's plenty where that came from so we'll see you right back here in a few moments!

[Lau kneels next to Brian James who is on his back, holding his head in pain as we fade to black...]

We fade up on the logo for the television network known by its fans as "The X" - Fox Sports X. Standing next to it is Terrence Howard of "Empire" fame.]

"They tell me that Lucious Lyon ain't the toughest man on Fox anymore. Hah! I'll believe that when I see it!"

[Cut to a shot from SWLL's LUCHA LUCHA LUCHA where El Caliente snaps off a death-defying dive over the top rope, over the corner ringpost, and onto a prone figure. A voiceover not belonging to Terrence Howard provides the hype.]

"Enter the world of lucha libre!"

[Then to a shot of the GFC - a recent shot with Ivan Petrov knocking Rufus Harris out to win the GFC Heavyweight Title.]

"Or maybe you prefer a little bit of MMA!"

[On to Tiger Paw Pro's WrestleGalaxy as Yoshinari Taguchi exchanges stiff slaps with the man AWA fans would know as Nenshou.]

"Travel to the Land of the Rising Sun for some puroresu action!"

[A highlight reel level head kick from a European looking kickboxer drops a Japanese one.]

"The hottest new action on The X belongs to SKB - Super K Boxing!"

[And finally to a shot of Ryan Martinez lighting up Supreme Wright's chest with a series of machine gun chops.]

"Saturday nights bring you all the action of the American Wrestling Alliance!"

[We cut back to Terrence Howard, wincing and rubbing his own chest as if he could feel Martinez' chops.]

"Alright, alright... those boys are pretty bad too. But can they sing?"

[Howard laughs as we cut back to the logo for The X. Howard delivers the closing line.]

"Fox Sports X. Come get some."

[The "come get some" slogan fills the screen as we fade to black...]

And then fade up to a shot of the locker room area where Theresa Lynch is standing.]

TL: Welcome back to All-Star Showdown and I've got some big news to report backstage here at the T-Mobile Aren-

[Lynch stops short, staring off-camera.]

TL: You. What do you want?

[The camera pulls back as Tony Donovan stands before her.]

TD: No need to be hostile, Theresa.

TL: No? Your father helped make it so my brother might not ever wrestle again! He brutalized and terrorized my father! He-

[Donovan raises a hand.]

TD: Relax, girlie. I've got no love for the old man either. So, whatever Robert Donovan did to your family - that's got nothing to do with me.

[Lynch arches an eyebrow.]

TL: I'll ask again - what do you want?

[Donovan looks around a bit, like he's looking over his shoulder.]

TD: Look, Blackwell's been slipping lately and Dane's gone a bit nutty so I'm betting that you're the one with all the scoop around here... am I right?

[Lynch continues to stare wordlessly.]

TD: All I want to know is that I heard a rumor that Lauryn Rage is bowing out of tonight's tag match because of a certain staple gun being used on a certain part of her anatomy.

[Lynch almost smiles. Almost.]

TL: What's that got to do with you?

[Donovan looks around nervously again.]

TD: Just... tell me. Is it true?

[Lynch pauses for a moment and then sighs.]

TL: Yes, it's true. That's what I was just about to announce.

[Donovan's eyes go wide with excitement as he nods a few times.]

TD: Great! Okay... uhhh... okay, thanks. One other thing... do you know who's running things with Gellar gone?

TL: You're pushing your luck.

[Donovan again raises his hands.]

TD: Alright, fine... I'll figure that out myself. Okay... thanks, Theresa. I mean it.

[And with that, Donovan turns and makes his exit, leaving Theresa Lynch alone as we fade to another part of the backstage area where Mark Stegglet is standing.]

MS: Ladies and gentlemen, Ryan Martinez - who, to the surprise of many, is not booked to compete on this show - is in the building anyways... and quite frankly, I want to know why. So, right now, I plan on-

[Stegglet's gaze drifts off-camera. The shot pulls back to reveal former EMWC owner and current AWA co-owner Chris Blue walking into view. Blue is in an olive green suit.]

CB: Excuse me, Mark.

[Blue brushes past the announcer to Martinez' door. He puts a hand on it like he's going to push it open and then pauses. A moment passes as Blue removes his hand from the door, giving his fingers a wiggle before he balls up his fist and knocks.]

CB: Ryan?

[He knocks a second time.]

CB: Ryan, are you in there?

[A third time.]

CB: Ryan, come on... there's some stuff we need to discuss and-

[And suddenly, the door swings open. But it's not Ryan Martinez standing in the door frame. It is a hulking seven footer dressed in jeans, a black t-shirt, and a leather jacket that is quite familiar to the man knocking on the door.]

CB: Alex.

[It is indeed the Last American Badass himself who has a bit of a gravelly tone to his voice as he speaks - a remnant from being caught in the Tongan Death Grip earlier in the week.]

AM: Blue.

[The two longtime... friends? Acquaintances? Rivals? stare one another down for a moment.]

CB: Is Ryan in there?

[Martinez nods.]

AM: He is.

[Blue tries to look past the intimidating seven footer to no success.]

CB: I need to talk to him.

[Martinez chuckles.]

AM: I don't think so.

[The seven footer steps forward, allowing the door to close behind him and forcing Blue to take one very large step backwards.]

CB: Alex, look-

[Martinez shakes his head, interrupting.]

AM: No, you look, Blue. You and I have known each other a long, long time and we've gone through a lot together. But if there's one thing I know about you is that the only person you're ever looking out for is yourself.

[Blue doesn't deny the charge as Martinez continues.]

AM: So, I don't know what you're doing hanging out with my son, offering him advice, trying to get him fired up to go on some damn fool idealistic crusade but-

[Blue interrupts.]

CB: That's not it, Alex. Not at all. I'm trying to-

AM: You can stop right there because I couldn't give a damn what you're trying to do. All I care about is that you don't do it around my son. He's got more important things to focus on... like Vasquez... like the Axis...

[Blue sighs.]

CB: Like son, like father.

[Martinez continues to glare at Blue.]

CB: Fine. I'll stay out of his way until he deals with Vasquez.

[Blue nods.]

CB: Yeah, there are other things I need to deal with anyways. Okay, fine. You win.

[Martinez takes another step forward, towering over Blue.]

AM: When it comes to you and I, Blue... I always do.

[Blue backpedals again, looking up at the former World Champion... and with a nod, he backs away and exits the camera's view, leaving Martinez to watch as we fade to another part of the backstage area where Sweet Lou Blackwell is standing, the slightest of smiles on his weathered face.]

SLB: We are moments removed from the Axis of Evil triumphing over the Kings of Wrestling here on All-Star Showdown and I want to talk to the man himself, Brian Lau. I'm camped out right here in front of the Kings' locker room and-

[Brian James storms past Blackwell, not even acknowledging him as he angrily shoves the door open, entering the room. Blackwell watches him and then turns back the other way.]

SLB: Brian Lau, a word? A quick question?

[A frustrated Lau pauses, one hand on the door... and then slowly turns towards Blackwell.]

BL: You are the last person I want to see right now, Blackwell.

[He pauses.]

BL: Well, maybe second to last. What is it? What could you possibly want?

SLB: Obviously, you were hoping that tag match tonight would settle the issues between Brian James and Johnny Det-

BL: The Kings are fine, Blackwell!

[Blackwell arches an eyebrow. Lau sighs.]

BL: Fine. Whatever. What's your question?

SLB: Well, I guess it's simply this - now that Plan A failed, what's Plan B?

[Lau humorlessly chuckles.]

BL: I guess there's only one way to settle this, isn't there?

[And with that, Lau shoves open the door, disappearing from view.]

SLB: One way to settle it? What's that? What could that possibly be?

[Blackwell looks puzzled at the camera as we fade back out to the interior of the T-Mobile Arena where The Chieftains' "Brian Boru's March" is met with jeering mixed in with some cheers.]

MM: It looks like we're about to have some unexpected company, Marcus.

MB: Hey, when you're the champion of all things Television, you can come out here whenever you want. We're on FOX! This guy's the champion of Homer Simpson... of Jack Bauer... of Dr. House!

[Manning chuckles as the newly-crowned World Television Champion, Callum Mahoney, sandy-haired with lightly-tanned skin and dressed in a black studded leather jacket, with metallic spikes covering the shoulders and lapels of the jacket, over his wrestling attire, which consists of a black singlet, with the image of a brown bear, standing on its hind legs, across the front, black knee pads and black boots, strides through the entranceway. Draped over his right shoulder is, of course, the World Television Title. Mahoney grabs the belt by the strap and holds it up, to a mixed response from the crowd.]

MM: Six nights ago, Callum Mahoney captured that title by defeating his fellow cohort in crime, Kerry Kendrick, for it.

MB: And now he's here in Vegas on top of the world... of television.

[As he makes his way down the aisle, Mahoney, who normally regards the fans with disdain, actually has a smile on his face. Reaching the ring, he climbs the steps, wiping the soles of his boots on the canvas before stepping through the ropes. Mahoney stands in the center of the ring and holds the belt aloft. He then motions for a microphone and is handed one by a member of the crew at ringside, as the music fades.]

CM: Can you believe it? Can you believe that this show was going to go by without an appearance by the new World Television Champion?

[Mixed in with the boos, we hear large sections of the crowd yelling "NOOOO!!!"]

CM: Can you believe that All Star Showdown was going to go down without the World Television Championship being defended? You see this belt?

[Mahoney holds up the belt.]

CM: Do you know what this means? This means that I am the man that the AWA's worldwide television audience wants to see on their screens week in, week out defending his championship! I am the new face of AWA global TV!

[Someone starts drunkenly yelling "MA-HO-NEY! MA-HO-NEY!" and it is picked up by some others in the crowd.]

CM: And it sounds like it's something these members of the AWA Galaxy want to see, too! And what is All-Star Showdown if not PRIME TIME TELEVISION?! So, if I'm going to follow in the footsteps of great AWA World Television champions past... Men like Supernova...

[The name is, of course, met with loud cheering.]

CM: Like my brother Kerry Kendrick...

[In contrast, the mention of Kendrick is met with booing.]

CM: If I am going to herald a NEW Golden Age of Television for the AWA, then, I'm going to start things right and defend this title right here tonight! In fact, last year, when we were here in Vegas, I started the Armbar Challenge. So, how about we keep that tradition going and have an open challenge RIGHT NOW for the WORLD TELEVISION CHAMPIONSHIP! Becky, make the introductions! Let's get a referee out here and let's do this!

[Mahoney tosses the mic back towards Rebecca Ortiz.]

MM: The gauntlet has been thrown down, Shark. Callum Mahoney has come out here and he's going to put the World Television Title on the line against anyone who wants a shot at it... and I'm sure there are plenty of people racing towards the entryway right now to cash in that golden opportunity. We're going to take a quick break but when we come back, we'll find out who will face Callum Mahoney with the World Television Title at stake so stick around!

[Mahoney is pacing the ring, holding up the title belt and shouting at the fans as we fade to black...

...and then back up. We see two young kids - a boy and a girl - standing at the barricade at an AWA live event. They are on their feet, screaming and shouting for the action in the ring. We can hear a bell and soon, Travis Lynch is standing in front of them, giving them both a high five with the AWA National Title belt hanging over his shoulder. The young man turns towards the camera.]

"Wow! I wish I could be the champion!"

[There's a voiceover.]

VO: Now you can!

[And with a flash of light, the young man has a replica of the National Title hanging over his shoulder. The boy yelps with glee, slapping the title belt with a big grin on his face. The voiceover continues as we see the title belts one by one.]

VO: Okay, maybe you can't be the champion but you can own your own version of the same title belts you see on TV each and every week!

The National Title, the World Television Title, the Tag Team Titles, even the World Heavyweight Title can be yours!

Kids sizes and adult sizes available.

[A quick shot of a grown man holding the World Title in the air, smiling broadly.]

VO: Oh, and don't think we forgot about you...

[FLASH!

And now the little girl from the start of the ad is holding her own version of the Women's World Championship.]

"I can be a champion too!"

[Cut to a three shot of the adult and the two kids each holding up their title belts.]

VO: Available now at retail stores everywhere and AWAShop.com!

[Fade to black...

...and as we fade back to a live shot of the T-Mobile Arena where Callum Mahoney is pacing the ring, ready to find out who will challenge him in his first World Television Title defense.]

MM: Welcome back to the AWA All-Star Showdown, wrestling fans, and Callum Mahoney - just like the rest of us - is eager to know who is going to pick up the gauntlet that he threw down! Who is going to step forth and challenge Mahoney for the World Television Title that he won six days ago? Who is-

[And before Matt Manning can utter another syllable, the sounds of "Himno del Chivas de Guajalajara" rings out over the PA system to big cheers from the Las Vegas crowd! Cesar Hernandez walks through the curtain out onto the stage, and takes a deep theatrical bow to the audience.]

MM: And how about that, Marcus? Cesar Hernandez has answered the call!

MB: Hernandez is one of the most underrated competitors in the entire business, Manning. He's a fantastic mat wrestler, a great submission artist, and has the heart of a lion. This is going to be a stiff challenge for Mahoney here tonight.

[Mahoney nods his head, backing to his corner as Hernandez makes his way down the aisle. A tall, rangy, dusky-skinned man with voluminous shoulder-length black hair, Hernandez sports a toothy smile as he waves to the fans, jogging confidently down the aisle. He fistpumps and claps, exhorting and greeting the fans on both sides of the aisle. It takes him little time to cover the distance to the ring, and he hops the rope, coming up in a big uppercut fistpump as the fans cheer.

The clean-shaven Mexican bears the scars of years of battle, yet despite it all retains a handsome visage. He's wearing red trunks and boots (both of which are monogrammed with his initials), matching kneepads, and white wrist tape. His ring jacket is a very stylish one, with pleated sleeves and frills along the torso... it bears the color of his trunks, along with white and green lining and trim.]

MM: We've got a referee out here who joined us during the commercial break and we're just about set to go in this one. Remember, fans - in the AWA, the World Television Title is always conducted under a ten minute time limit except in the case of special circumstances so if Hernandez hopes to win the title tonight, he's gotta get right into the battle quickly.

MB: Which may be a problem for Hernandez who usually likes to take his time in there. Hernandez comes into just about every match with the same gameplan but that gameplan is methodical and involves working the limbs of his opponent. He may not have enough time to fully implement his gameplan here tonight.

MM: We're about to find out about that as the referee speaks to both champion and challenger in the middle of the ring... sending them back to their respective corners now...

[Referee Scott Ezra signals for the bell, making it official.]

"DING! DING! DING!"

MM: And there it is. Ten minute time limit from that mark starts right now...

[Champion and challenger exit their corners, circling around each other as the fans in Las Vegas cheer for the impromptu title match coming their way.]

MM: Who will act first in this one? Mahoney at 32 years of age is the youngster in this one as Cesar Hernandez comes into this match tonight at 44 years old.

MB: And when you look at a number like that, Manning, you have to wonder how many years Hernandez has left inside the ring... and by that token, how many more opportunities like this one he'll have. On any given night, your career can come to a crashing halt - I should know - so on any given night when you get a shot at the title, it could be your last.

MM: Wise words from the first man to wear the AWA National Title... and the two combatants come together in a tieup in mid-ring and we're off!

[Hernandez and Mahoney jockey for position for a few moments in the middle, about even in strength.]

MM: Mahoney stands 6'3 and weighs 240 pounds. Hernandez at 6'3 and 242... very evenly matched.

[Hernandez suddenly spins out of the hold, grabbing Mahoney by the wrist as he does, cranking it around in an armwringer.]

MM: Hernandez goes right after the arm - a trademark for him if I understand correctly.

MB: Nice job on your homework, Manning. That's exactly right. If you've watched any Cesar Hernandez match, you know that he's going to try and weaken the arm of his opponent first, try to take away some of their offensive firepower... and then when he gets that softened up, he'll switch to the leg, breaking them down in hopes of locking in his signature figure four leglock and get the victory.

MM: Or he's also got that flying fist, right?

MB: El Misil De Jalisco, exactly. And that can KO even the biggest of opponents.

MM: And as Hernandez cranks on that arm again, it's interesting to note that BOTH of these men like to focus on the arm of their opponent. Hernandez to soften up his opposition and Mahoney to finish them off with his cross armbreaker that he's used to claim so many wins over the years.

MB: There's a reason they call him the Armbar Assassin, Manning, and it's not just a clever nickname the marketing department slapped on him.

[With Mahoney grimacing in pain, Hernandez looks out at the crowd, asking if he should wrench the arm around again. They, of course, cheer in the affirmative so Hernandez slowly twists the arm around a third time, leaving Mahoney leaning forward into the hold's pressure...

...and eventually front flips forward, landing on his back as Hernandez extends the arm, dropping his leg across Mahoney's bicep to a big cheer!]

MM: Hernandez staying on the arm, moving from the armwringer to the legdrop and now... what's this, Marcus? What's he doing now?

MB: Hernandez is kneeling down on the bicep and tricep area with his right knee, folding the arm over his own leg to trap it, and now kneeling with his left knee right on the wrist. That's a version of a short arm scissors and goodness, it's a painful one.

MM: The arm just isn't supposed to bend like that, am I right?

MB: Absolutely not. The pressure is turned on and you can see it all over Callum Mahoney's face.

[Mahoney is cringing in pain, defiantly shaking his head as the referee checks to see if he wants to submit. Slowly, he gets his right arm under him, pushing up towards a seated position...

...which is when Hernandez balls up his fist, slugging Mahoney in the cheek, and knocking him back down to the mat!]

MM: A solid right hand across the jaw puts Mahoney back down as Hernandez wrenches the arm again!

MB: Hernandez stays on the arm with the tenacity of a bulldog.

[Mahoney again shakes his head, refusing to give up as Hernandez cranks up on the trapped limb.]

MM: The referee stays right there in the perfect position to find out if Mahoney wants to submit away the TV Title but so far, he's hanging on.

[Mahoney rolls to his hip, forcing Hernandez to get off the arm, trapping it behind the Fighting Irishman in a hammerlock.]

MM: Mahoney manages to get off the canvas but Hernandez is hanging on to that arm...

[Mahoney is first to a knee, grimacing as Hernandez cranks up on the limb, and then climbs to his feet, reaching back to look for an escape.]

MM: The champion looking for a way out of this hold...

MB: Trying for the snap mare... that's not there. Looking for a back elbow too but Hernandez tucks his chin low, keeping himself out of range for that.

[Grimacing, Mahoney tries to walk across the ring to the ropes but Hernandez spins the hammerlock back out into full arm extension, using an armdrag to take Mahoney down to the mat.]

MM: Armdrag and a beauty by the challenger..

[Mahoney scrambles back up, moving swiftly towards Hernandez again but Hernandez catches him on the way in, taking him down with another armdrag to the cheers of the Las Vegas faithful.]

MM: Keeping the champion off-balance with another armdrag!

[Mahoney comes back up again and this time, the 44 year old challenger sends him flying through the ropes to the floor with a perfectly aimed and timed dropkick!]

MM: And how about that, Marcus? Did you expect to see a dropkick out of the 44 year old veteran here tonight in Vegas?

MB: Hernandez still moves pretty well, Manning. Time takes its toll on all of us but Cesar Hernandez has kept himself in great shape over the years and really, he's just never stopped competing. You look at a lot of veterans in our sport and they've got periods of time where they were on the sidelines for a while. Maybe

guys who sort of disappeared for a while when the EMWC went under... when RCW went under... but a guy like Hernandez just never stopped working. He's wrestled down in Mexico... all over Texas... out on the Pacific Coast. Always a top superstar and one of the most popular competitors wherever he goes.

[Mahoney walks around the ringside area, shaking out his arm as Hernandez stays inside the ring, waving him back in.]

MM: Hernandez needs to take caution here as the championship advantage is present - no title change on a countout or a disqualification.

[A grumbling Mahoney keeps on walking, forcing the referee's count up to six before an anxious Hernandez approaches the ropes, shouting at Mahoney. Hernandez ducks through the ropes, grabbing Mahoney by the hair..

...and in response, Mahoney digs his fingers into the eyes, raking across them!]

MM: Right to the eyes! A savage attack by Mahoney!

[Grabbing Hernandez by the hair, Mahoney PASTES him with a European uppercut to the underside of the chin... and another... and another...]

MM: Callum Mahoney earning the nickname of the Fighting Irishman here in Las Vegas tonight.

[Grabbing the ropes, Mahoney pulls himself up on the apron where he grabs two hands full of Hernandez' hair, laying in a vicious knee to the jaw... and another... and another...]

MM: Mahoney's all over him! No feeling out process on the part of the champion!

[Using the grip on the hair, Mahoney flips Hernandez over so that his back is resting across the middle rope...

...and then Mahoney CLUBS him across the chest, sending Hernandez flopping backwards through the ropes, crashing down perilously on the back of his head and neck on the barely-padded floor!]

MM: A hard fall to the floor for the veteran as the champion showing off the toughness and ferocity that put that title securely around his waist to begin with.

MB: We are almost halfway to the time limit in this one as Mahoney steps down the apron, sizing up the downed Hernandez...

[Mahoney suddenly leaps off the apron from a standing position, dropping an elbow down into the sternum of Hernandez!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

MM: That'll knock the wind out of your sails and just might sink your entire ship by the same token!

[A grimacing Mahoney rolls to a hip, reaching back to rub at his tailbone as he pulls himself to his feet. He grabs at his lower back, rolling himself under the ropes back into the ring.]

MM: Mahoney's back in as Hernandez tries to recover from the hard fall coupled with that devastating elbowdrop from the TV Champion.

MB: And you mentioned the championship advantage. Mahoney would be perfectly satisfied to pick up a countout win here tonight, I'd imagine.

[Mahoney gets to a knee, shaking out his arm with pain on his face as the referee continues to count and the Las Vegas crowd cheers Hernandez to get back to his feet and into the ring.]

MM: The official counts five and he keeps going, Shark. Hernandez took a hard fall and I wonder if he's seeing stars right now.

MB: If he doesn't get up, the only thing he's going to be seeing is the loser's half of the purse.

[Hernandez grimaces as he rolls to his hip, sitting up and looking inside the ring where the referee's count is now at six. Hernandez reaches up, making a grab at the ring apron as Mahoney climbs to his feet.]

MM: Hernandez starting to stir, looking to beat the count and keep his hopes of winning the World Television Title alive.

[Hernandez pulls himself to his feet as Mahoney dashes towards the ropes, dropping into a slide and DRIVING both feet into the fan favorite's face, sending him flying backwards and crashing ribsfirst into the steel railing surrounding the ringside area!]

"CLAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAANG!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[Mahoney rolls under the ropes, ignoring the referee's shouts as he stalks towards Hernandez who is clinging to the barricade to stay on his feet.]

MM: Mahoney with the timely attack puts Hernandez on the ropes - or on the railing you might say.

[Grabbing Hernandez by the arm, Mahoney fully extends it...

...and then SWINGS it down, jamming his elbow down into the steel barricade!]

MM: Eeeesh! A violent attack on the arm by Mahoney!

[He lifts the arm, setting again...]

MM: No, no... not again!

[...and DRIVES the elbow down into the barricade a second time. Hernandez falls to his knees, cradling his arm in pain as Mahoney stands over him, laying the badmouth on his challenger.]

MM: Hernandez had his arm driven down into the railing twice and this may sound obvious, Shark, but steel don't give.

MB: It certainly doesn't and all the work Hernandez put in to weakening Mahoney's arm might have been matched with two very vicious attacks.

[Grabbing the hurting limb, Mahoney gives it a hard yank as he pulls Hernandez to his feet, hauling him across the ringside area where he whips him under the ropes and back inside the ring.]

MM: Mahoney rolling back in as well, perhaps sensing the end might be near for Cesar Hernandez as we pass the six minute mark into the home stretch of this ten minute time limit battle for the World Television Championship.

[With both men back inside the ring, Mahoney is the first to his feet, using the flat of his boot to shove Hernandez facefirst down to the canvas. He pins Hernandez' arm to the mat before kicking his legs into the air, driving his knee down into the tricep area!]

MM: And now it's Mahoney's turn to go after the arm, dropping all 240 pounds in the form of a knee to the upper arm.

[A second kneedrop follows before Mahoney grabs the wrist, stepping over the arm, and pulling back on it as Hernandez stays on his chest.]

MB: Manning, I spent a lot of time under the learning tree of Jeff Matthews learning the perfect way to execute a Fujiwara Armbar. This is a modified version of that hold and that is some impressive torque being administered by the champion.

MM: Submission execution at its finest and the question becomes - can Cesar Hernandez manage to escape?

[Hernandez kicks his legs on the canvas, biting at his bottom lip as the referee checks to see if he wants to submit. He declines, sliding his right elbow under him, trying to push up off the mat as Mahoney pulls back on the left wrist.]

MM: These two men are grappling with greatness in there, trying to outdo the other and earn themselves a huge victory with the entire world watching.

[Mahoney leans back a little further...

...which allows Hernandez to slip his right arm under, pushing up, and flipping Mahoney onto his back in a modified schoolboy!]

MM: Hernandez rolls him up... but only a two count!

[Mahoney gets up quickly, booting the rising Hernandez in the midsection, doubling him up. The Fighting Irishman snatches him in a single underhook, dropping down in a DDT!]

"OHHHHHHHHH!"

MM: Now that's a good way to split up a shoulder!

[Mahoney hammerlocks the arm, rolling behind Hernandez.]

MM: In the GFC, we'd call this taking the back but here in the AWA, Mahoney's trying to keep up the pressure on the arm instead of looking for a rear naked choke or some strikes from the blind side.

[The Armbar Assassin shows off his arm attack skills, splitting his legs as he kneels down, straddling the back of Hernandez as he punishes the trapped arm.]

MM: The timekeeper is telling me we're nearing the eight minute mark in this ten minute time limit. A hard-fought battle to be sure but the question now switches to who can come out on top... if anyone! The time limit is creeping close, Marcus.

MB: Like we said at the beginning, Manning, the TV Title time limit makes it a tough fight to win the title.

[Mahoney holds the arm with his left hand as he reaches forward, snatching a one-handed chinlock with his right hand, pulling back on the head and neck...

...but Hernandez yanks his left arm free, rolling to his back where he fires off a right hand to the jaw of Mahoney!]

MM: Hernandez with a shot from his back!

[Sitting up, he throws a second blow, this one into the midsection of Mahoney who was preparing to drop a double axehandle down over his skull.]

MM: The Guadalajara native's fists are flying here in Vegas!

[Rolling to a knee, Hernandez throws another fist to the midsection before climbing to his feet, grabbing Mahoney by the arm for an Irish whip...

...but as he attempts the whip, Mahoney slams on the brakes, leaping up to scissor the extended arm between his legs, and rolls Hernandez down to the canvas with a shocking cross armbreaker!]

MM: Whoa! Out of nowhere with the armbar and-

[And with no chance to block the hold, Hernandez has no choice but to quickly slap the canvas a few times, calling an end to the match.]

"DING! DING! DING!"

MM: And just like that, Mahoney picks up the submission victory! Incredible!

[Mahoney hangs on to the cross armbreaker for a few extra seconds, drawing the ire of the referee and the Las Vegas crowd. When he finally breaks, he spins up to his feet, an arrogant smirk on his face as Scott Ezra approaches with the World Television Title belt that the Armbar Assassin snatches away, holding over his head as Rebecca Ortiz makes it official.]

MM: Mahoney retains the title with that cross armbreaker seemingly out of nowhere, Shark.

MB: That's one of the things that makes Mahoney so dangerous, Manning. He can literally get a win from the opening bell til the closing one. At any given moment, Mahoney can lock in one of those armbars and if you get caught by surprise like Hernandez did there, you've got no choice but to tap out and live to fight another day.

MM: Callum Mahoney remains the World Television Title and now we're going to go backstage to Mark Stegglet who is STILL trying to talk to Ryan Martinez! Mark? Any luck?

[We fade from the ring backstage once again where Mark Stegglet is standing in front of the same door we saw him by earlier.]

MS: Callum Mahoney successfully retains the World Television Title here on All-Star Showdown in his first title defense... and as you can see, I'm still here backstage at the T-Mobile Arena waiting for my opportunity to speak to Ryan Martinez. After what we saw earlier, his father - Alex - told me that Ryan wasn't looking to talk to the press tonight but... well, I'm going to give it another shot.

[Stegglet turns towards the door, raising his hand to knock when he's startled by a voice shouting at him from off-camera.]

"MARK! MARK!"

[Stegglet pauses, looking at the voice. The person who shouted runs into the camera's view. It is a young man who we can assume is someone in production judging by the headset dangling around his neck.]

MS: Vic? What's going on? We're live here and-

[The man who we now know as Vic responds.]

V: It's Jason.

MS: Huh?

V: It's Jason. Jason Dane.

[Stegglet goes cold.]

MS: What happened to him? What did they do?

V: Come on!

[Vic turns, rushing out of view. Stegglet drops the mic, racing after him as the cameraman jogs behind both men, trying to keep up as they run through the twisted hallways backstage. Vic lets loose a few loud "EXCUSE ME!" shouts and even a couple "OUT OF THE WAY!" cries as they work their way towards their intended destination.

Finally, they dart around a corner, shoving open a set of double doors. As the cameraman follows, we exit the interior of the T-Mobile Arena into the twilight sky of Las Vegas.

A "OVER HERE!" from Vic sends our crew in that direction, darting around a corner, past a few production trucks...]

"Oh my god."

[Stegglet's words are swallowed as we hear shouts of concern and instruction from various backstage AWA workers. The cameraman pushes past, trying to get a glimpse...

...and ultimately finds the scene.

It is a black sedan parked outside the arena now surrounded by AWA officials - including Chris Blue who is right next to it, looking very concerned. Mark Stegglet suddenly exclaims "LET ME THROUGH!" as he shoves his way through the crowd, ending up by the car as well...

...where Jason Dane has been put facefirst through the car windshield. The crowd inside the T-Mobile Arena watching on the big screen collectively gasps and then buzzes as Stegglet and Blue try to speak encouraging words to Dane as Dr. Bob Ponavitch and AWA medical arrive on the scene in a rush.

Blue is shaking his head, speaking off-mic to a concerned-looking Mark Stegglet as we abruptly fade to black.

Fade up on a nondescript hotel room. The footage appears to be shot on a cellphone that's been leaned up against a lamp or something. After a moment, the controversial Japanese cruiserweight known as KYOSUKE walks into view, sitting down in the chair, a smirk on his face.]

"Konichiwa, motherfu-"

[The shot disappears in a burst of static with an error tone...

...and then up to a shot of the exterior of the Nippon Budokan. A voiceover begins.]

"One of Japan's most legendary venues..."

[We get a rapidfire montage of The Beatles playing there in 1966, Led Zeppelin in the 70s, and Prince in the 90s. The footage "burns up in flames" leaving a shot of an empty arena, a wrestling ring in the middle with the Tiger Paw Pro logo in the middle of it.]

"...goes up in BURNING GLORY!"

[Cut to some Tiger Paw Pro footage to the sounds of "Light In The Dark" by Bridear...

Yoshinari Taguchi using a released Tiger Suplex to throw an opponent on the back of their head before wrapping them up in a double armbar bridging submission.

TORA diving through the ropes, wiping out an opponent with a tope con hilo.

Hercules Hammonds catching a rebounding opponent, throwing them skyward and then vacating the premises as they crash facefirst to the canvas.

Isaiah Carpenter of the Dogs of War sailing off the top rope with a springboard kneestrike, knocking a victim off the shoulders of Wade Walker.

Isamu Kobayashi trading vicious open-handed strikes with Takeshi Mifune... the latter of which batters Kobayashi back before using a knee to the sternum to knock him through the ropes where he's swarmed by a sea of unnamed attackers all sporting similar attire.

And finally, KYOSUKE crossing his arms on the top rope in an "X" before delivering a flying doublestomp.]

"On September 11th... on Fox Sports X... a very special presentation..."

[More footage.

Brian James delivering a head kick to an opponent, causing their eyes to roll back in their head before collapsing to the canvas.

A wild eight man tag team match with several dives over the top rope to the floor.]

"BURNING GLORY."

[Cut to white and silence. After a moment, KYOSUKE - now dressed in a bright red suit and swinging a golden pocketwatch on a chain walks into the middle of the screen, turning and speaking in broken English.]

"Don't miss it..."

[A devilish smirk.]

"...assho-"

[And cut to black.]

We fade back up to live action where we find Theresa Lynch standing, looking concerned.]

TL: Welcome back to All-Star Showdown, fans, and... well, what we all just witnessed can't be described in any other way in my mind but disturbing. Jason Dane, a long-time employee of the American Wrestling Alliance, was brutally assaulted out in the parking lot of this arena. Many will speculate as to the manner of that attack and the identity of those involved but my thoughts right now - and those of many of us backstage - are on Jason's condition. I'm told he's currently being loaded into an ambulance and that his best friend, Mark Stegglet, will be accompanying him to the nearest hospital. I don't-

[Theresa is cut off by the arrival of a familiar face to wrestling fans - albeit one we don't see too often these days.]

TL: Mr. Michaelson?

[It is indeed AWA co-owner and former World Champion Todd Michaelson dressed in a stylish royal blue suit with a lighter blue shirt underneath.]

TM: Theresa... hey... look, I don't have a lot of time here. Everyone knows that Jason is part of my family and with Lori in the hospital still from Homecoming, I... well, she'll kill me if I don't get word on Jason. So, I need to get over there and-

TL: Mr. Michaelson, can you tell me what happened out there?

[Michaelson shrugs.]

TM: You saw it as well as I did, Theresa. I don't know anything more than you do right now. All I know is that Jason said some things this week... pissed a lot of people off and-

[Michaelson pauses, shaking his head.]

TM: I really don't know, Theresa. I'm sorry. I've gotta go.

TL: Of course. Give Jason my best please.

[Todd nods to the interviewer as he hastily makes an exit, walking out of frame.]

TL: It's a chaotic atmosphere here in the AWA as of late. The attack on Emerson Gellar. The news from earlier this week about the potential sale of the company. This incident. So much more. I... well, I'm sort of at a loss, fans. I don't know what's going on. I don't even know who's in charge right now. This is a bad scene backstage at Showdown and...

[Theresa's words trail off as she stares into the camera.]

TL: Let's go to Sweet Lou.

[A solemn Theresa Lynch looks on as we fade to another part of the backstage area where Sweet Lou Blackwell stands in front of an AWA backdrop. Julie Somers stands to his right and she is dressed in her wrestling attire, a red halter top with matching Spandex shorts that come just above her knees, red kneepads and white wrestling boots. Her long, wavy brown hair is pulled back into a ponytail.

To Blackwell's left is "Lady Lightning" Lori Wilson. Her wrestling attire consists of a black singlet with white lightning streaks on the front, back and sides, black

kneepads and wrestling boots with a lightning bolt on the sides. She wears a black headband with three small lightning bolts on it and her light brown hair touches her shoulders.]

SLB: We're set for women's tag team action tonight on All-Star Showdown, and these two ladies, Julie Somers and Lori Wilson, who were scheduled to face Erica Toughill and Lauryn Rage. However, there's been a change of plans, as the AWA Women's champion has bowed out of the match on the claim that she is recovering from injury to her -- *ahem* -- posterior. Instead, it's Xenia Sonova that will replace Lauryn Rage in this tag match. I must ask you both, how does this change affect your game plan?

[Wilson gives a quick nod to Somers, who speaks.]

JS: Sweet Lou, I was looking forward to tonight's match for plenty of reasons, one of them being my chance to face the Women's champion again. See, while I respect what Ayako Fujiwara and my good friend Melissa Cannon have to say about getting a shot at the Women's title, let's not forget that a major reason why it didn't come down to me and Lauryn Rage is because I got eliminated by somebody who was no longer a legal participant in the Women's Rumble. And I suspect that eats away at Lauryn Rage, that she never really proved she could toss me from the ring, even if she'll never admit to something like that. So, yeah, I'm a little annoyed that she won't be in that ring and that Lori and I have to prepare to face somebody else.

But that doesn't mean the game plan goes entirely out the window. Because there's still one woman we expected to face -- and that's you, Erica Toughill. Another woman who won't admit to things that I know are eating away at her. Like the fact that she tried, several times, to put me away with the Shrew's Fiddle, but despite her best efforts, she couldn't get it done. She found out that I had studied up on that move, figured a way to avoid it, to counter it, to fight out of it.

[She hooks her thumb at Wilson.]

JS: And I have this woman to thank for it. See, this is what happens when you have somebody who you looked up to is willing to pass on her knowledge. It allows somebody like to me to get better, to learn what it takes to go against what the best have to offer, then prove that you belong among the best as well. And Erica Toughill, that's exactly what I proved to you at Homecoming -- that I didn't just catch a break in this business because I had a certain look or fit a certain narrative, but because I'm the type of woman who sees what women like Lori Wilson have done -- and yes, what women like you have done -- and think about how I could do that, too, and work hard to prove it!

Erica, all I can tell you is you better realize that you'll need more than your reputation to put me down for the count. And believe me, I'm not gonna stop learning about what it takes to counter what you do best.

But don't just take it from me -- take it from my friend here.

[She gestures at Wilson.]

SLB: Lori Wilson, I take it you have confidence in your partner for tonight?

LW: [nodding] Absolutely, Sweet Lou. I know that Julie, while she's going to stick with what she does best, is showing that she understands what it takes to get better, to not get complacent. But with that said, we will have to adjust that game plan you talked about earlier, because it seems like somebody believes their availability for a match is dependent on whether or not she's in condition to strike a pose on her Instagram this week.

Yeah, Lauryn Rage, don't think I forgot about you. Don't think I forgot about what happened on the European tour, how it wasn't enough for you that you got a victory, but that you had to try to take me out for good. You should know enough about your family that they would never sit back idly if somebody tried to injure them, so you shouldn't expect anything less from me. But, no, you're too upset about Lori Dane giving you a butt kicking...

[She pauses and bites her lip.]

LW: Okay, so there's a more accurate description for what happened, but you get my point.

Anyway, you want avoid to facing me and Julie, well, I can promise you that there will be another day. In the meantime, my partner tonight said all that needs to be said about Erica Toughill. As for Xenia Sonova, I've seen you in action before and to say I'm not impressed with you would be a lie. But now that you've been put into this match, whether you want to cast your lot with Toughill, or Rage, or neither -- it doesn't matter, because you will be facing two women who, as you can tell, are not happy with a few things. So you better think carefully about what you want to do and not try anything funny, because I'll promise you that you can never predict when lightning will strike.

[She glances at Somers.]

LW: By the way, Julie, I'm sure there's something else you want to say, right?

[Blackwell turns to Somers, who sighs.]

JS: Yeah, and speaking about not being happy... Howie, I'm still upset about what happened to you at Homecoming. I wish I could be there for you right now, but at least I know that Uncle Eric and our good friend Daniel Harper are by your side. I just hope you're back in that ring soon because I can't wait to see you and Daniel kick Slaughterhouse's butts all over that ring, take care of Anton Layton, once and for all, and especially go on to become the next World tag team champions.

And Uncle Eric, I'm proud of you for owning up to everything you've done and I'm proud to be your niece. I wish things had ended under better circumstances and feel terrible your moment got ruined.

[She takes a deep breath.]

JS: Anyway, Howie, this one's for you.

[She gestures at Wilson, then points off camera.]

JS: Lori.. to the ring!

[Wilson gives a quick smile and she follows Somers off the set.]

SLB: Clearly a lot weighing on the minds of Julie Somers and Lori Wilson in tonight's match. Something tells me this one will be a donnybrook. Let's go back to ringside!

[We crossfade from Blackwell down to the ring where Rebecca Ortiz is standing.]

RO: The following tag team contest is in the Women's Division and is set for one fall with a twenty minute time limit. Introducing first...

[The sounds of the guitar riffs that kick off "Is She With You," the Wonder Woman theme from the DC Cinematic Universe kick in over the PA system.]

RO: At a total combined weight of 270 pounds... they are the team of...

"LAAAADYYYYY LIGHTNING" LORI WILLLLLSONNNN...

And "THE SPITFIRE" JUUUUULIEEEEE SOMERRRRRSSSS!

[Julie Somers emerges from the entranceway, an energetic smile on her face. She wears a red halter top with matching Spandex shorts that come just above her knees, red kneepads and white wrestling boots. She stands at the top of the ramp, motioning with her hands to encourage the fans to cheer.

"Lady Lightning" Lori Wilson emerges from the entranceway to stand next to her partner. She is dressed in a black singlet with white lightning streaks on the front, back and sides, black kneepads and wrestling boots, the boots with a lightning bolt on the sides. She also wears a black headband with three small lightning bolts on it.]

MM: And what a duo these two make, Marcus! The Spitfire and Lady Lightning standing together up on that stage to the roar of the fans here in Las Vegas.

MB: It's a tremendous team looking to make a big impact here tonight - especially when it comes to Julie Somers and Erica Toughill. Lauryn Rage may have managed to wriggle her way out of this match but that only removes one of the targets from the picture for Julie Somers in this one.

[The duo jogs down the ramp together, each to a side of the aisle as they slap all the offered hands in sight.]

MM: Certainly two of the most popular competitors in the entire Women's Division, Shark.

MB: Absolutely. In a recent poll that came out, Julie Somers was actually ranked the most popular female in the AWA and the 4th most popular overall - beating out people like Supernova and Jordan Ohara.

[Reaching the ring, Wilson takes the steps and ducks through the ropes as Somers slides underneath the ropes, rolling to her feet. She heads straight to the corner, hopping up on the midbuckle, waving her arms to encourage the cheers of the fans as Wilson does the same alongside the ropes. The music fades as the crowd waits for the arrival of their opponents.]

RO: Annnnnnnnd their opponents...

[The arena fills with the sound of an ominous synth as a sullen presence appears in the entry way. As "Another One" by Night Club kicks in, Erica Toughill makes her way down the aisle, carrying a baseball bat over her shoulder. She pays very little attention to the fans and focuses on the ring, snapping a wad of pink bubble gum the whole time.]

RO: First, weighing in at 170 pounds...

ERRRRRICAAAA TOUGHILLLLLLLLLLL!

[Toughill doesn't even bother to wait for her partner, beelining straight down the aisle for the ring where Julie Somers is still on the middle rope, beckoning her forward...]

RO: And her tag team partner... weighing in at 125 pounds...

XENIAAAAAA SOOOONOOOOVAAAAA!

[Nightwish's "Endless Forms Most Beautiful" plays over the arena speakers as Xenia Sonova steps through the entranceway, dressed in a white tank top, a pair of black pants and black boots. She also has on a pair of MMA-style fingerless black gloves. Her jaw set, unsmiling, Sonova holds up her right fist, her arm perpendicular to the ground, the back of her hand to the crowd, then thumps her fist once against her chest, before making her way towards the ring.]

MM: Tell me, Marcus, what does this late personnel change to this match mean for both teams?

MB: Well, any time you take the champion out of a match, it's going to lower her partner's chances of victory. No respect to Xenia Sonova but she's stepping into the platform heels of the AWA Women's World Champion and I'm not sure that's something she's ready to do. Of course, on the other side of the ring, you find yourself facing opponents you weren't prepared for. If Sonova can bring it, her and Toughill stand a good chance of scoring what I'd call an upset.

[Toughill grabs the ropes, pulling herself up on the apron. She's about to duck through when she pauses. Somers looks at her questioningly as Toughill flashes a sullen smirk, pointing to the entryway with her baseball bat...]

MM: Now, what is this about?

[There's a pregnant pause as Toughill points up the aisle when suddenly the arena goes dark. On television, the image has a filtered quality. The much-larger-than-usual video wall lights up with Instagram photos of Lauryn Rage in various poses interspersed with still action shots of Lauryn in a ton. At the bottom of the screen a like counter climbs.]

MM: I thought she was injured!

[Lauryn Rage, the AWA Women's World Champion, emerges out onto the stage, posing for the crowd with her left hand stretched out before her for the crowd to kiss her imaginary rings. The Women's World Title is secured around her waist before she starts walking the aisle towards the ring to the jeers of the Las Vegas crowd.]

MB: Well... where she was hurt, we'd have no way of seeing the damage done, Manning.

MM: She looks fine to me! I think she's goldbricking, Marcus!

MB: How can you possibly accuse the AWA Women's World Champion of not being true to her word?

MM: Simple! She's practically skipping to the ring! She just didn't want any part of Julie Somers here tonight... just like she's been ducking Melissa Cannon and the rest of the Women's Division since she won the title!

MB: Hey, she defended the title just days ago against Lori Dane - the Queen of Extreme - in a No Disqualification match! She's not ducking anyone in my book, Manning.

MM: Well, she is in mine!

MB: Your book's still on loan from the library, Manning - you just got here!

[Rage reaches ringside, reaching up to bump knuckles with Toughill before she steps into the ring. The champion arches an eyebrow at Xenia Sonova as the Russian grabs the ropes, pulling herself through as well.]

MB: Injured or not, it looks like the champion's going to be in the corner for her girl, Erica.

MM: Does that woman even have a manager's license?

MB: Actually, considering the time she spent in the Serpentine's corner, I wouldn't be surprised to learn that she does, Manning, but you're welcome to go ask her if you want.

[Somers and Wilson huddle up in their corner, obviously concerned at this change in the situation. Somers seems very animated in the corner, waving her arms at the other side of the ring but Wilson places a comforting hand on her shoulder, ushering her through the ropes to the outside.]

MM: Lori Wilson trying to keep her partner's emotions in check. We'll see how well she does at that as Lady Lighting will be squaring off against Xenia Sonova to start things off.

[Sonova offers her corner a high five but Toughill just stares at her, waving her to get out to the middle of the ring as the bell sounds.]

MM: Tag team action in the Women's Division set to start right now... and I did my research on Lauryn Rage but Marcus, what can you tell me about the newcomer to this match - Xenia Sonova?

MB: Sonova's a pretty tough competitor, Manning. She's got a Mixed Martial Arts background - right in your wheelhouse - with training in judo and some other combat arts. She's wrestled for promotions in Las Vegas and Phoenix in the past so they know her quite well here at the T-Mobile Arena. But she's been quite the journeywoman so far, not making any major impact in any of the companies she's worked for. She's definitely hoping to change that with her time here in the AWA although it hasn't happened yet.

MM: Being on live network television could go a long way to taking that first step though, Shark.

[Lori Wilson circles around, trying to stay out of reach of Sonova as she snaps out a jab or two, trying to gauge the range...]

MM: Sonova trying to land a jab but Wilson dances away...

[Wilson almost dances too close to Toughill who takes a big swing from behind. Wilson avoids it, turning to shout at Toughill...]

...which allows Sonova to rush her from the blind side, connecting with a forearm smash to the back of the head that knocks Wilson down to the mat to the jeers of the Vegas crowd.]

MM: Sonova caught her from behind!

[Grabbing the ropes, Sonova repeatedly stomps Wilson between the shoulderblades as Toughill reaches out, slapping her shoulder.]

MM: A tag is made... and I'm not sure Sonova was ready for that.

[Toughill barks at Sonova, ordering her out of the ring as she drags the veteran off the mat, shoving her back into the corner. Squaring up, Toughill tees off with a series of rights and lefts to the ribcage...]

MM: Erica Toughill is battering the body of Lori Wilson, rifling away at the ribs!

[Wilson brings her arms down to defend her torso which opens up her head for a well-placed Toughill hook shot that drops Wilson down to her knees in front of her. The referee orders Toughill to step back.]

MM: Ricky Longfellow telling Toughill to allow Lori Wilson out of the corner... but Toughill doesn't seem about to oblige.

[Dragging the veteran to her feet, Toughill scoops her up, twisting to slam her down to the mat.]

MM: She shakes the ring with that bodyslam, leaving Wilson in trouble in the early moments of this one...

[Toughill hops up to the midbuckle, glaring across at Julie Somers who shouts encouragement to her friend...

...and then leaps off, BURYING the point of her elbow into Wilson's throat!]

MM: The elbow hits the throat and Wilson's in serious jeopardy now, Shark.

MB: Erica Toughill ain't someone to mess with, Manning.

MM: I've gotta agree with that and Lori Wilson, if you don't know... now you know, Lady Lightning.

[Toughill climbs to her feet, stalking across the ring, glaring at Somers who shouts at her in response.]

MM: Some obvious tension between those two - unsettled business after what went down a few days ago at Homecoming.

MB: That's right... and Erica Toughill is looking for a fight the next time those two square off.

[Toughill turns back to Wilson, approaching as Lady Lightning struggles to get up off the mat, clutching her throat...]

MM: Wilson with a right hand of her own! And another! Lady Lightning opens fire on Toughill!

[With Toughill wobbled, Wilson grabs her by the hair, ramming her headfirst into the neutral corner...]

MM: Mr. Turnbuckle, meet Ricki Toughill!

[...and Wilson hops to the midbuckle, leaping off with a twist to catch Toughill with a cross body off the second rope!]

MM: Wilson takes her down... there's a cover!

[A two count follows before Toughill kicks out.]

MB: Wilson couldn't hold her down for a three and from my estimation, it's going to take a lot more than that to keep Erica Toughill down for a three count. Ask Julie Somers.

[Wilson grabs the rising Toughill, throwing her back into the neutral corner to the cheers from the crowd. She advances on Toughill, grabbing the top rope and swinging her leg up...]

MM: Kicks to the body, landing on the targeted ribcage!

MB: If Toughill thought Lori Wilson was going to be a walk in the park, she was sadly mistaken, Manning.

MM: A 20-year plus veteran of the mat game, Lady Lightning is taking it to Toughill right about now... here comes a big whip!

[Toughill SLAMS backfirst into the corner, stumbling out as Wilson bends over, elevating her high into the air and throwing her down to the canvas with a high back drop!]

MB: Wilson's wrestled all over the United States too, Manning. Just like when we talked about Cesar Hernandez earlier, Wilson's made a name for herself in the Pacific Northwest, the Midwest, the Southeast... and she was primarily a tag team wrestler during that time too so if Julie Somers needs a partner in there, she picked a good one.

MM: Toughill is reeling after that hard backdrop out of the corner... and Lori Wilson is right there waiting for her, Richard Marx-style, as she gets to her feet.

[And this time, it's Wilson who scoops Toughill up, slamming her down to the canvas. She backs to the corner, slapping the hand of Julie Somers to a HUGE cheer from the Las Vegas crowd.]

MM: And there's a tag to the Spitfire!

[Somers swiftly grabs the top rope, nodding to Wilson who grabs the rope as well, giving it a yank which catapults Somers over the top rope down onto the torso of Toughill with a splash!]

MM: Incredible teamwork from Wilson and Somers! Could that be enough?!

[Another two count follows before Toughill kicks out!]

MM: No! Just a two and-

[The crowd ROARS as Somers takes the mount on Toughill, balling up her fist and slamming it down repeatedly into the skull!]

MM: Julie Somers is taking the fight to Erica Toughill!

[At a shriek from Lauryn Rage, Xenia Sonova rushes in to intervene but gets caught with a running dropkick from Lori Wilson, sending Sonova down to the mat where she rolls out to the floor. Somers comes up off Toughill, approaching the ropes where Rage is now shouting at Sonova out on the floor...]

MM: HEADS UP!

[...and Somers slingshots herself over the top rope, crashing down onto both Rage and Sonova with a crossbody that wipes out both women!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

MM: RAGE AND SONOVA WERE IN THE CRASH ZONE AND THEY GOT WIPE OUT!

[Somers pops back up, pumping a fist to the cheering Las Vegas crowd as she turns to head back towards the ring, climbing up on the apron...

...where Erica Toughill CREAMS her with a right hand to the skull!]

MM: OH! Toughill was waiting for her!

[Grabbing Somers by the hair, Toughill runs down the length of the ropes and DRIVES her headfirst into the steel ringpost, sending Somers flying off the apron and down into a heap on the barely-padded concrete floor!]

MM: TOUGHILL SMASHES HER HEAD INTO THE POST!

[Toughill leans against the buckles, looking down to the floor where Somers is reeling after having her head smashed into the steel ringpost. The referee gets up in Toughill's face, backing her off...

...which allows a furious Lauryn Rage to rush over, lifting Somers off the floor, wrapping her arms around her torso...]

MM: RAGE TO THE POST!

[...and SLAMS the back of Somers into the ringpost!]

MM: Julie Somers meets the steel twice in a matter of seconds and now Rage is shoving her back into the ring, trying to give her allies a major advantage.

[Toughill flips Somers to her back, kneeling down on her chest as she shouts for a pin count.]

MM: ONE!! TWO!! TH-

[Somers' shoulder pops up off the mat, breaking the pin just in time!]

MM: Shoulder up! She got the shoulder up!

[Out on the floor, Lori Wilson and Lauryn Rage are trading hostile words as Toughill pulls Somers up, ramming her headfirst into the turnbuckle again with a loud "YAAAA!"

MM: Somers' head and upper back are taking a bushel of abuse at this point in the matchup and if Lori Wilson can't get her focus off Lauryn Rage and onto the matter at hand, I have a feeling this night will not go their way.

[Toughill holds Somers in the corner as Sonova climbs back up on the apron, tagging herself in.]

MM: Sonova back in off the tag...

[She steps in, grabbing Somers by the arm, snapping her over onto the canvas with a judo throw!]

MM: ...and she immediately shows off the judo background, using the arm and a lot of leverage to whip Somers over to the canvas!

[Sonova grabs the top rope, planting her boot on Somers' throat, choking her violently as the crowd jeers and the referee protests.]

MM: The referee's trying to get her to break the chokehold but-

[At the count of four and change, Sonova backs off, hands raised...

...which is when Lauryn Rage slips in to reapply the choke, hanging on the throat of Somers as the crowd jeers!]

MM: The official's back is turned and that allows the champion to do even more damage to Julie Somers!

[Rage lets go as the official turns around, questioning her. The champion begs off, shaking her head in denial as the fans insist she did exactly what she's being accused of.]

MM: She did it and we all saw her do it!

MB: Except for the referee and he's the only one who matters.

[Sonova pulls Somers off the mat by the hair, pushing her back into the corner. She tees off, throwing hooking forearm blows to the head repeatedly as Somers tries to cover up and the referee tries to get her to back off.]

MM: Somers is trapped in the corner, being worked over by Sonova!

[Sonova again backs off with her hands raised, taking another verbal beating from the official...

...while Toughill grabs Somers by the hair, throwing hooking blows of her own into the skull!]

MM: Lori Wilson's seen enough! She's coming in there!

[But the cheers of the crowd for Wilson's entrance turn into jeers as the referee cuts her off, refusing to let her pass.]

MM: But the official won't let her in... and look at this!

[With Somers trapped in the corner, Toughill steps in to join Sonova in taking turn driving fists and forearms into the head of the Spitfire as the crowd jeers loudly. Toughill reaches up, clapping her hands together as Sonova exits.]

MM: And an illegal exchange to top it off?! These two are certainly bending if not breaking the rules here in Las Vegas.

[Toughill pulls Somers out of the corner by the hair, dragging her towards the middle of the ring where she swings a knee up into the gut, doubling up the Spitfire.]

MM: Toughill's setting her up - a powerbomb perhaps?!

[And as Toughill hoists her into the air with a shrieking "GAAAAAFFFFFF!", she drops back down to the mat, falling down with Somers and laying out into a powerbomb!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

MM: Right down on the back of the head!

[Pushing up off the mat, Toughill hangs on to the waistlock, stacking up Somers for a pin attempt.]

MM: ONE!! TWO!! THRE-

“OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!”

MM: SHE GOT THE SHOULDER UP! CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?!

MB: Somers has taken a tremendous amount of punishment - a lot of it aimed at her back and head - and she's still fighting! There's a reason they call this young lady the Spitfire, Manning!

[Toughill can't believe it, shouting at the referee as Lauryn Rage does the same thing out on the floor. Ricki turns towards the Women's Champion, giving a gesture as she pulls Somers up...

...and HURLS her over the top rope, sending her crashing down incredibly hard on the barely-padded floor!]

MM: A hard fall to the floor for Somers!

[Toughill conveniently has a question for the referee, leading him away as Lauryn Rage pulls Somers up to her knees...]

“SLAAAAAAAAP!”

MM: The champion attacks out on the floor again!

“SLAAAAAAAAP!”

MB: Repeatedly slapping Somers across the face and-

[Suddenly, the crowd ERUPTS into cheers!]

MM: Melissa Cannon! It's Melissa Cannon and she's headed towards the ring in a hurry, fans!

MB: It's not the ring she's headed towards!

[And at one sight of Cannon, Rage lets go of Somers, backing off and pointing angrily at the incoming Cannon who looks pretty steamed at the situation going on at ringside.]

MM: And after what went down at Homecoming, you better believe that Melissa Cannon wants to get her hands on the woman who put Lori Dane in the hospital, fans!

[Cannon shouts a threat at the retreating Women's World Champion before taking a knee next to Julie Somers, checking on her good friend's condition.]

MM: Cannon's making sure Somers is okay after that assault on the floor by Lauryn Rage and-

[Rage shouts something at Toughill who turns around, striding towards the ropes where Cannon has helped Somers up to her feet. Toughill leans through the ropes, grabbing Somers by the hair, yanking her up onto the apron as Cannon protests the hairpull.]

MM: Toughill pulls Somers up on the apron and-

[Somers loops her arms around the back of Toughill's head, dropping off the apron and snapping her throat down on the top rope!]

MM: Oh! Somers with a timely and necessary counter!

[Somers pulls herself quickly back up on the apron, moving quickly to the corner where she climbs to the top. A choking Toughill advances on her but Somers takes flight, leaping into the air and driving both feet into Toughill's chest, sending her flipping ass over teakettle across the ring!]

MM: DROPKICK OFF THE TOP!

MB: And that might be enough, Manning. Somers needs to make that tag and she may have just got the opening she needs to get it done.

[Somers rolls to her hands and knees, spotting Lori Wilson waiting for the tag across the ring. She begins crawling towards her as Toughill struggles to recover from the missile dropkick off the top.]

MM: Somers is crawling on her hands and knees, desperately seeking the aid of her tag team partner as Melissa Cannon cheers them on from outside the ring!

[The Spitfire is getting closer and closer as Toughill pushes up to her feet, grabbing at her chest...]

MM: Can she get there before Toughill cuts her off? Toughill's on her feet as well, moving in on her...

[Somers pushes up to her knees, looking the short distance towards Lori Wilson who encourages her to make one more surge towards the corner..

...but Toughill hooks her by the hair, shouting "NAHNAHNAHNAH" as she brings Somers up to her feet, twisting her around to face her.]

MM: Toughill blocks the tag... big right- ducked by Somers!

[Somers catches Toughill as she whirs past her, rushing her towards the corner in a waistlock, smashing her into the buckles, and then rolling her back into a reverse cradle!]

MM: ONE!! TWO!!

[A powerful kickout by Toughill sends Somers flying forward...

...right into a tag to Lori Wilson!]

MM: SHE MAKES THE TAG!

[The crowd roars as Lady Lightning ducks through the ropes, sprinting across the ring to catch the incoming Xenia Sonova with a dropkick that sends her right back through the ropes to the floor!]

MM: DROPKICK SENDS SONOVA OUT!

[Wheeling around, Wilson throws a dropkick at a rising Toughill, knocking her down as well!]

MM: Another dropkick gets rid of Toughill for the moment!

[And a protesting Lauryn Rage climbs up on the apron, screaming and shouting in time for a dropkick to send her right back down to the floor to a HUGE CHEER!]

MM: LORI WILSON IS CLEANING HOUSE WITH THAT DROPKICK!

[Pulling Toughill up, Wilson throws three quick forearms to the jaw, backing her into the ropes where she shoots her across before hitting the ropes behind her, building up speed...

...and leaps into the air, catching her under the chin with a leaping back elbow smash!]

MM: Wilson puts her down again!

[Lori Wilson climbs to her feet, giving a big triumphant whoop as she walks to the corner...

...and STOMPS her foot down into the mat!]

MM: Wilson's calling for the Lightning Strike! She's looking for that superkick!

[The crowd is roaring for Wilson as she waits... and waits... and waits...

...and as Toughill regains her feet, Wilson surges forward with the superkick attempt!]

MM: LIGHTNING STRIKE!

MB: She missed it! Toughill ducks!

[And as Wilson flies by, Sonova grabs the top rope, swinging her own leg up to catch the incoming Wilson with a high kick to the head!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

MB: High kick finds the mark! Sonova like she's back in the Hexagon!

[Wilson staggers back towards Toughill who hoists her into the air, dumping her down on the back of her head and neck with a released German Suplex!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[Toughill flips Wilson over, grabbing a leg as she sits on her chest.]

MM: Unorthodox cover!

[The referee slaps the mat once... twice... but just before three, Wilson kicks out, sending Toughill flying off of her.]

MM: Another kickout! Wilson and Somers are so hard to put down for a three count!

MB: You don't have to tell Toughill that. She realizes it right about now.

[Out on the apron, Julie Somers starts to climb the ropes, looking to take a shot to help her partner...

...which is when Lauryn Rage hops up on the apron, slamming her arms into Somers, causing her to fall down in a straddle on the top turnbuckle!]

“OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!”

MM: She’s got no business doing that!

MB: You’re starting to sound like Myers out here, Manning.

[Rage turns, taunting the ringside fans...

...which is when Melissa Cannon comes tearing around the ringside area, rushing towards Rage who doesn’t see her until she turns into...]

MM: SPEAR! CANNON SPEARS HER OUT OF HER BOOTS!

[The crowd ERUPTS for the big tackle on the floor as Cannon starts peppering Rage with right hands to the skull. Inside the ring, Toughill pulls Wilson to her feet, looking to twist her into a cobra clutch...]

MM: Toughill trying to set up something here...

MB: It’s the Shrew’s Fiddle! She’s trying to lock on the hold that Wilson’s been trying to teach Somers how to avoid...

[But as she struggles to apply it to the veteran, Wilson drives her backwards, smashing her into the buckles!]

MM: No! Wilson trying to escape!

[Twisting around, Wilson grabs Toughill by the arm, whipping her across the ring where Julie Somers is sitting on the top turnbuckle, extending her leg so that Toughill runs right into her foot!]

MM: Toughill in a daze!

[Toughill staggers in a circle towards Wilson...]

“WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!”

“OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!”

MM: LIGHTNING STRIKE! SHE GOT IT!

[As Toughill falls flat on her back on the canvas, Wilson dives across her as the referee dives down next to them...

...just as Lauryn Rage slips away from Melissa Cannon, running for her life by diving through the ropes into the ring.]

MM: RAGE IS IN! RAGE IS IN THE RING!

[Cannon is right in there after her though, grabbing her by the ankle, preventing the shrieking Rage from escaping...]

MB: She’s got her! Cannon’s got her by the ankle!

[Cannon comes to her feet, booting Rage in the midsection. She pulls her into a standing headscissors as the referee shakes his head, calling for an end to the brawling in the ring...]

MM: Lori Wilson’s got Toughill pinned, I think, but-

[...and Cannon lifts Rage into the air, sitting out in a thunderous Billion Dollar Bomb to a big cheer from the Vegas crowd...]

...and the referee spins, waving for the bell!]

“DING! DING! DING!”

MM: There’s the bell but-

[The referee is frantically waving his arms as the fans jeer loudly.]

MM: The referee is waving off the match. I think he just stopped the match, Marcus!

MB: I think you’re right. He’s talking to Rebecca Ortiz though... maybe she’s got the scoop.

[Rebecca Ortiz makes it official.]

RO: Ladies and gentlemen... the referee has declared that this match is a NO CONTEST and out of control!

[The boos pick up as Melissa Cannon watches Erica Toughill and Lauryn Rage barely able to stand outside the ring.]

MM: No contest? The referee throws the whole thing out!

MB: Thanks to Melissa Cannon!

MM: What?! It was Lauryn Rage who got involved AGAIN and climbed in the ring right when Erica Toughill looked like she was about to be pinned, Marcus! This is on her!

MB: Then why didn’t the referee ring the bell until Cannon got involved?!

MM: I think we’re going to have to agree to disagree on this one, my friend... but as the dastardly Toughill and Rage make their escape into the Las Vegas night, we’re going to take another break. You are watching AWA All-Star Showdown LIVE on the FOX Network!

[Fade to black...]

In stark, high contrast black and white, a large curtain with the words "SuperClash VII" written large across it cascades to the ground like a falling leaf. Behind it is a slow-motion montage of similarly stark monochrome clips, slowly fading in to each other. Leonard Cohen's rumbling, deep voice plays over top the minimalist orchestration of "You Want It Darker.']

[Brian Lau raises the hands of Wes Taylor and Tony Donavon...]

If you are the dealer
I'm out of the game #

[...Lau shakes the hand of "Dr." Harrison Fawcett...]

If you are the healer
It means I'm broken and lame #

[...Brian James looks over his shoulder as Lau raises the arm of Johnny Detson...]

If thine is the glory then
Mine must be the shame #

[...Summers, Mahoney and Kendrick all triple teaming the Gladiator...]

You want it darker
We kill the flame #

[...Shadoe Rage looking around the ring with maniacal eyes ...]

Magnified, sanctified, be thy holy name

[...The Hangman, shot from below, slowly tightens his noose around an invisible neck...]

Vilified, crucified, in the human frame

[...Flex Ferrigno with some poor victim's skull trapped in a powerful headlock...]

A million candles burning for the help that never came

[..."Flawless" Larry Wallace and his Best Damn Dropkick In The World in magnificent slow motion...]

You want it darker

[...Lauryn Rage makes her way down the aisle, Women's World Championship belt in one arm, phone extended at arm's length in the other...]

There's a lover in the story
But the story's still the same #

[...Erica Toughill cracks her knuckles, a slow-motion bubble emerging from between her lips...]

There's a lullaby for suffering
And a paradox to blame #

[...Another woman in a darkened space, the light forming a halo around her: the silhouette is in the general shape of Charisma Knight...]

But it's written in the scriptures
And it's not some idle claim #

[...Anton Layton fondles the Eye of Tyr, visibly giggling between Porter Crowley and The Lost Boy.]

You want it darker
We kill the flame #

[...Derrick Williams nailing Jordan Ohara with a Blackout, fading to Riley Hunter similarly betraying Ohara with an Instant Karma...]

They're lining up the prisoners
and the guards are taking aim #

[...Jackson Hunter trying to pull the Suited Savage MAWAGA off his prey...]

I struggled with some demons
They were middle class and tame #

[...Maxim Zharkov applying the Gorynych to a chained Kolya Sudakov...]

I didn't know I had permission
to murder and to maim #

[...Juan Vasquez piledriving Ryan Martinez, fading to a smile on Vasquez's face...]

You want it darker

[The stark monochrome montage is suddenly bathed in a golden light. A solitary figure is seen in the distance, standing tall.]

I'm ready, my lord...

[Before we get a good look at him or her, a metallic font splashes on screen.]

"SUPERCLASH VIII."

"The American Wrestling Alliance presents: SuperClash VIII: Thursday, November 24th, live from New Orleans."

[Fade to black...]

...and then up on a panning shot of the massive crowd jammed into the T-Mobile Arena for this event.

"Black Skinhead" by Kanye West begins to play as the Las Vegas crowd rises to their feet to pay tribute to the man many consider the finest technical wrestler in all of professional wrestling. The cheers are not the sort of rabid, wild roars you would expect from a fan favorite, but they are the applause of a crowd that deeply respects the abilities of the man they see walking out from behind the curtain... Supreme Wright.

The two-time AWA World Heavyweight champion is dressed in his usual dapper fashion, wearing a slim navy tweed suit and waistcoat with a white formal shirts and a pink pastel neck tie for a pop of color. He ignores the hands reaching out for him, his eyes focused completely on HIS ring.]

MM: Supreme Wright has arrived on the scene, having requested this time here tonight with Theresa Lynch, and I'm guessing he's got something on his mind.

MB: You're new around here, Manning, so let me give you a bit of advice. When Supreme Wright decides to come out here and talk, you better listen up because he prefers to do his talking inside the confines of a wrestling match.

[Wright scales the ringsteps, ducking through the ropes to join Theresa Lynch inside the ring. Lynch raises the mic as Wright settles in next to her and the crowd noise dies down.]

TL: Supreme Wright, you requested this interview time because you said you had an important announcement to make. So I guess we should start talking.

[Wright nods.]

SW: There's so many things to talk about, Miss Lynch...so let's start talking. Let's talk about wrestling. Let's talk about respect. Let's talk about Emerson Gellar. Let's talk about...

...The Syndicate.

[The crowd boos at the mention of the two Hall of Famers.]

SW: Last Monday, I watched two legends of this sport walk out into MY ring and complain that they weren't receiving the respect that they deserved. Because they are...LIONS! WRESTLERS! WARRIORS! Fearsome fighters forced to act like fools by the corporate suits of The AWA. And maybe they had a point.

But then they laid hands on Emerson Gellar.

And no matter what differences we have had in the past, Mr. Gellar most certainly is no wrestler, fighter, or warrior.

[Wright shakes his head.]

SW: At that moment, I didn't see any lions or legends standing inside my ring. No, I saw something much different. I saw bullies. I saw opportunists. I saw...

...cowards.

[The crowd roars at that.]

TL: Supreme, I know about as well as anyone that you're someone who just does not give a damn what he says, whether it be about a person...or their family...

[Theresa stops herself to shoot him a dirty look. Wright, unsurprisingly, ignores the gesture.]

TL: ...but do you think it's wise to make yourself a target of The Syndicate like this?

[He chuckles.]

SW: I'm sorry Miss Lynch, but I'll say whatever the hell I want about The Syndicate. For months, they've disrespected the roster of the AWA and disrupted show after show, throwing their pathetic temper tantrum.

And if Casey James and Tiger Claw have a problem with what I'm saying, they're more than welcome to step inside MY ring...

...and I'll say it right to their damn faces.

[The crowd roars with approval, as a big, disingenuous...and somewhat unsettling smile forms on Wright's face when he says that.]

TL: And...what then?

SW: "What then"? Heh. Well, I guess like the old saying goes...kill'em all and let God sort it out.

[Another big roar from the crowd. The look on Theresa's face is one of pure disbelief.]

TL: You can't be serious.

SW: As serious as a heart attack, darling.

["Darling"? That look of pure disbelief is now paired with a deep blush. Theresa shakes her head.]

TL: So you're telling the world, right here, right now...that you're challenging The Syndicate to a match?

SW: Did I stutter? Last time I checked, Miss Lynch, I had an open date at SuperClash.

[Big cheer for the big event!]

SW: If The Syndicate are the lions they claim to be, then they'll meet me in New Orleans, in my home state of Louisiana, inside MY ring and I'll show these two legends the "respect" they've been craving so badly...the only way I know how.

In an honest to God... WRESTLING match.

[HUGE POP!]

TL: But there's no way you can take them on alone. I'm not sure there's ANYONE that could! You're going to need a partner.

SW: Miss Lynch, I don't need anyb-

[The lights cut out to black. The crowd buzzes with anticipation, waiting to see who is about to appear. After a moment, a drumbeat familiar to just about anyone on the planet rings out.]

"DUN DUN DUNDUNDUN"

"DUN DUN DUNDUNDUN"

"DUN DUN DUNDUNDUN"

[The crowd instantly ERUPTS in a massive reaction as the opening synthesizer notes kick in that identify the song as the opening theme to Terminator 2. Steam and smoke pour into the entryway, completely covering it. Strobe lights start to fire in rhythm as well, lighting up the smoke and steam.]

MM: Are you kidding me?!

MB: Supreme Wright looks shocked!

[Wright does indeed have a surprised expression on his face as the music continues to play and the physical specimen known only as Mason strides out onto the ramp to another huge reaction. He walks down the aisle with purpose, clad in street clothes of blue jeans and a white t-shirt that reads "FIGHTING IS LIFE."]

MM: The man known as Mason is headed for the ring and Supreme Wright is standing there waiting for him.

[As Mason reaches the ring, he runs up the ringsteps, ducking through the ropes...

...and marches right out to mid-ring where he comes to a halt, staring into the eyes of Supreme Wright as the music fades out.]

MM: What's going to happen here, fans?

[Theresa Lynch looks as surprised as Wright does as she slowly raises the mic.]

TL: Mason... do you have something to-

[And before she can finish, Mason reaches out, snatching the mic from her shaking hand. The crowd reacts at this, realizing that Mason has come to talk - a rarity for the big man. Wright doesn't react, keeping his eyes locked on Mason as he slowly nudges Lynch to stand behind him.]

M: Emerson Gellar...

[Mason pauses, his voice escaping him in a bit of a growl.]

M: ...is my friend.

[Big cheer!]

M: We've known each other since my days fighting in Japan. And he's had my back every step of the way.

[Another cheer from the Vegas crowd.]

M: And where I come from... the streets of Detroit... that means something.

So, at SuperClash... when you step into the ring with two legends... two Hall of Famers...

[Mason pauses.]

M: Two stone cold killers who will stop at nothing to prove that they're the same heartless, ruthless bastards they've always been...

[He slowly extends his hand.]

M: You're not gonna do it alone 'cause I'll be your damn partner!

[HUUUUUUUUGE ROAR from the Las Vegas crowd as Wright stands mid-ring, staring at Mason's extended hand.]

MM: Wow! Is that an offer that Supreme Wright can't refuse made here on the Las Vegas Strip?! Will it be Supreme Wright and Mason fighting side by side at SuperClash against Tiger Claw and Casey James?!

MB: Let's not get ahead of ourselves, Manning. James and Claw haven't agreed to that match yet... and Wright damn sure hasn't-

[Broussard's words are cut off by a wordless Wright extending his hand, accepting Mason's swift and strong handshake to an enormous reaction from the AWA faithful!]

MM: Oh yeah! We've got a deal!

[Mason breaks off the handshake, nodding at Wright as he drops the mic on the canvas and makes his exit, leaving the two-time World Champion and Theresa Lynch standing in the ring.]

MM: Fans, Supreme Wright has issued a challenge to the Syndicate... and Mason says he'll be by his side if it happens! SuperClash may have just gotten its first official match on the bill!

MB: This is crazy.

MM: We've got to take a quick break but still to come - Kerry Kendrick interviews Big Papi himself, David Ortiz of the Boston Red Sox, so don't you dare go away!

[The camera holds on Wright, watching his new partner walking back up the aisle as we fade to black.

...and the fade back up as the sounds of Jason Aldean's "Lights Go Out" starts to play over various shots of the New Orleans area. A steamboat docked on the shore. A statue in the middle of the city. A twilight overhead shot of cars zipping by on the freeway. An overhead shot of a church cuts to a time lapse shot of the SuperDome - the home of SuperClash VII as the clouds move swiftly by and the lyrics begin.]

#When the lights come on, everybody's screaming#

[A night time drone shot of the Mercedes-Benz Superdome lights up the screen and then cuts to an interior shot of a crowd celebrating in the 'Dome.]

#Lighters in the sky, yeah, everybody's singing#

[A fan shot of a yellow sign that reads "HOME SWEET DOME" cuts to another crowd shot, this one of a fan gripping a sign that reads "THE DOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS."]

#Every word to every song to a girl to take it home tonight#

[A large crowd shot of a cheering crowd, showing off the immense audience who will be packed into the Dome soon enough.]

#When the lights come on, everybody's feeling#

[Older footage comes up, showing the huge audience that once packed into the Superdome to see Muhammad Ali fight Leon Spinks cuts to a shot of that actual fight.]

#A hallelujah high from the floor to the ceiling#

[A football falls just out of the reach of one of the San Francisco 49ers in a shot from a Super Bowl played in the Dome.]

#Yeah, the drink that we're drinking, the smoke that we're smoking#

[Cut to a shot of Mick Jagger center stage in the Dome at a Rolling Stones concert held there and then to Keith Richards from the same show strumming his guitar.]

#The party we throw, it's going all night long#

[A burst of pyro fills the screen before we see a time lapse of the crowd filing into the stadium for a New Orleans Saints game.]

#When the lights come on#

[Cut to another time lapse shot outside the Superdome as the sun goes down and the lights come on.]

#When the lights come on#

[And we cut to the SuperClash VIII logo with all the information on the show...

...and then to black.

When we fade back up, we're looking at a shot inside the T-Mobile Arena. The ring mat has been covered by a carpet of midnight green. Erica Toughill leans against the back turnbuckles like a bouncer, arms folded around a baseball bat across her chest. Two black suede swivel balloon chairs sit in the middle of the ring, and in front of them, in a charcoal oxford shirt and black jeans...]

KK: This... is the Think Tank. I am Kerry Kendrick. I am a Self Made Man. I am the longest tenured member of the AWA roster...

...And I always will be.

[He chuckles at the jeers around him.]

KK: The Think Tank is my medium. My place for me and all the AWA to spout some rhetoric. And if you think Emerson Gellar is sitting at home convalescing and hating what he's watching right now, you are absolutely 100% right, probably. But he doesn't get a say as to what I present here on the Think Tank. That's one of the benefits of having someone on the inside in the production department.

MB: Really? That's all you need? Who does he know?

MM: I have no earthly idea... I've been attending all this week's production meetings.

[Kendrick speaks again.]

KK: And before I continue, a little housekeeping: Rex, Callum, and myself decided that we would put our alliance on the shelf for a little while. They're always welcome here, and I'm always around if they need someone to watch their backs. You know, we're like a rock and roll supergroup: we're just as good as solo acts as we are as a unit.

How's that for irony, huh? They said we'd break up because our egos would get too big, or we couldn't fight the urge to stab each other in the back. Well, Jordan Ohara keeps getting his heart ripped out, the Northern Lights explode, and SM&K? We all shake hands and agree to get together again on some rainy day.

[Kendrick chuckles. Even the normally stoic Queen of Clubs manages a satisfied smirk.]

KK: And speaking of egos ripping teams apart... The first ever guest on the Think Tank has been called a future first ballot Hall of Famer, the best hitter to have ever stepped up to the plate in Fenway Park—even though baseball purists like me oppose the very concept of the Designated Hitter...

He is number 34 for the Boston Red Sox, "Big Papi" DAVID ORTIZ!

[And to the sound of his walk-up jam "Como Yo Le Doy" by Pitbull and Don Miguelo, there Big Papi is at the entrance. He is smiling and gregarious, in a crisp, shiny black suit, a bright red handkerchief folded into his jacket's breast pocket, slapping hands on either side of the aisle.]

MM: There he is, fans! And for once, Kerry Kendrick speaks the truth. He IS a future first ballot Hall of Famer! He IS perhaps the greatest hitter to ever put on the Boston Red Sox uniform! David Ortiz is in the house and I've been looking forward to this all week!

MB: I don't know why, Manning. Ortiz' lawyers have already told the world that he can't wrestle for the AWA. His contract with the Sox prohibits it... so unless he's

decided to quit, this whole thing is a vanity exercise for him. Getting another sport's fans to cheer for him like he matters.

[Erica Toughill holds the ropes open for Ortiz as he climbs the steps up to the ring. However, they are the middle and bottom ropes. Ortiz elects to round the ring post and step through the ropes unassisted.]

MM: David Ortiz not the trusting sort when it comes to these two... and I can't say that I blame him one bit. Toughill's got that baseball bat over her shoulder and unlike Big Papi, she's not looking to hit a few fly balls here tonight.

[Kendrick extends his hand and gestures with all the patronizing congeniality he can muster to one of the chairs.]

KK: Don't mind her, Papi, that's just Ricki being Ricki. Human interaction isn't exactly her strong point. [In a stage whisper.] Mets fan...

[Toughill retreats to the corner of the ring and sulks heartily.]

KK: And present company notwithstanding... America seems to love you... These people seem to love you.

[Ortiz flashes a winning grin, and the Vegas fans seem instantly charmed by him.]

KK: I, of course, think they're wrong...

[The boos start coming out.]

KK: They're wrong because they are here for wrestling, not for baseball, and they should be cheering the wrestlers, not the interlopers. But I guess Las Vegas can't get a pro sports team, not matter how hard this garish cesspool tries!

[Ortiz realizes exactly what type of "interview" this is, and slouches back into his chair, rubbing his temple with his finger.]

KK: Not that you and the rest of the Red Sox haven't tried to turn the clubhouse in Fenway into your own personal Vegas, Papi. From what I've heard, you guys have been goofing off in the middle of games... out comes the beer, out comes the snacks—

DO: Chicken too. Don't forget the chicken.

[Ortiz laughs charmingly. He turns to the fans.]

DO: Who doesn't like beer and chicken, man?

[He clearly has the fans on his side.]

KK: So you're admitting that your team... a team who has been struggling to maintain a lead in the AL East... you're giving up in your last season with the BoSox? Is that any way to behave as a franchise? 'Cause that's not how a Self Made Man would behave.

[Ortiz clearly isn't a fan of this line of questioning, rising out of his chair to a big cheer from the crowd. He takes a step towards Kendrick who looks surprised with a "easy, big fella" escaping his lips.]

DO: Man... we got guys on our team with huge hearts! I'm okay with you questioning my heart, 'cause I'm right here, compadre. Don't question people who aren't here to defend themselves!

[Kendrick shrugs.]

KK: I'm not the only one here who feels the same way. In fact, I'd like for you to meet my second guest tonight... He's the Monsta Mack...

[Booing...]

KK: ...The Gunzilla Thrillah...

[More booing...]

KK: ...The Quadrasaurus...

[Booing intensifies...]

KK: ...And the man who says he's the REAL "Big Papi..."

FLEX...

FERRIGNO...

["Give Him Everything You've Got" by Craig Armstrong fires up! Ortiz' eyes go wide, as he looks to the entryway.]

MM: Oh, I smell a setup, Shark.

MB: I think anyone who has a functioning brain cell or two saw this one coming... which is exactly why Ortiz fell for it.

MM: What on Earth do you have against David Ortiz, Marcus?!

MB: Hey, I agree with Ferrigno and Kerry Kendrick on this one. The fans are here to see wrestling... they're not paying to see baseball players. David Ortiz isn't a wrestler... he's a baseball player... and barely that since all he does at this point is hit. So, he's got no business being here.

[The methodical tones of metal being struck, the eerie wind up, and finally the score kicks in with the violin instrumental and rapid escalation of beats. Flex bursts through the entrance portal, fists beating across his massive physique, and then exploding outward.]

MM: This, my friends, is trouble in my estimation.

MB: Maybe Ortiz should've brought the rest of the team with him because right now, he's outnumbered!

[He's got the chainmail headdress, he's got the mirrored Aviator glasses, he's got gobs and gobs of baby oil lathered across his pecs, and an open New York Yankees jersey with the sleeves ripped off. The fans in Vegas are booing lustily in his direction.]

MM: The AWA faithful in the T-Mobile Arena are letting him have it, Marcus.

MB: For what? What did Ferrigno do to deserve all this disdain?

MM: Well, no one likes a Yankee fan.

[All too true. Toughill crosses to the ring ropes, sitting on the middle rope and pressing the top overhead, allowing Ferrigno easy access as he enters the ring. Although she doesn't look thrilled to see him either.]

FLEX: YA KNOOOOOOOWWW...

[Boos start raining in as Flex begins his tirade.]

FLEX: Kerry, get Ricki to bring over some white chalk and yellow tape, because I'm about to verbally murder Number 34!

[Ferrigno stares down at Ortiz who - to his credit - isn't backing down.]

FLEX: I've been waiting two months for this, fat boy.

[Ortiz pats his stomach jokingly as Ferrigno flashes a quick bicep pose at him.]

FLEX: I know the sight of this jersey makes your stomach turn... and there's plenty of it to turn. The greatest rivalry in team sports they say. I say that's a joke because while you helped the Sox win two World Series, my boys are running strong with the most World Championships in baseball history.

[Ortiz shrugs, nodding his head.]

FLEX: What? No comeback? Being in the shadow of greatness slapped your mute button?

Or maybe...

[Ferrigno steps closer.]

FLEX: Maybe you're wondering if you're man enough to climb Mount Muscle and show me how tough you are. Is that what it is?

[Ortiz still isn't backing down, staring up at Ferrigno.]

FLEX: Maybe you're wondering if the Battle of Boston was a fluke or if you can really get the drop on the strongest man you'll ever meet a second time.

Maybe you're feeling like the world's fattest frog and you're thinking of jumping on a ride you just can't handle.

[Ferrigno pauses, the crowd jeering as he continues to berate David Ortiz as flashbulbs fire around ringside from many press photographers.]

FLEX: You watchin' this, Kendrick? You watchin' Big Papi stand his ground?

[Kendrick circles in behind Ortiz, nodding his head as David Ortiz finally steps back, shifting his position so that his back is to the ropes.]

KK: Uh oh. A little rattled, are you? Don't worry, Ortiz... we're the welcoming committee. Imagine how mad the suits would be if we put our hands on you...

[Kendrick steps closer, a grin on his face.]

KK: ...and then imagine how little we'd care.

[The two back Ortiz into the ropes now, standing just a few feet away. A nervous-looking Ortiz raises his fists, balling them up in front of himself.]

FLEX: Oh, that's cute, Big Papi. You think we're afraid of you? Standing there in your pretty little gold chains and oh-so-cute diamond earrings. Hey Ricki... when I rip this clown's ears off, I'm gonna have a nice little present for you.

[Ferrigno winks at Toughill who looks on the verge of spontaneous projectile vomiting.]

FLEX: Kerry and I got an e-mail this week from the suits... saying that we needed to come out here tonight and... how did they put it?

KK: "Defuse the situation."

[Ferrigno nods.]

KK: Trouble is... we don't feel much like defusing the situation... right, Flex?

FLEX: Nope.

KK: In fact, we just happen to see the check they wrote you to show up here tonight... and Flex and I are thinking we're going to take every single cent of that... right out of your ASS!

[The crowd roars at that as Ortiz bravely shouts "COME ON!", waving them forward.]

FLEX: Oh, this is gonna be fun. Ricki, I think Big Papi here might like to feel more at home...

[Toughill twirls the bat in her hand and raises it. She, Kendrick, and Ferrigno begin to surround the trapped Ortiz as the crowd buzzes with concern.]

MM: We've got a problem here. We've got a major problem! Can we get security out here? Can we-

[Ortiz suddenly grabs the mic out of Ferrigno's hand. Flex looks shocked.]

DO: Three on one? That's how you do things here? There's only one problem, you muscleheaded goof...

After I saw you two on Monday, I decided that I might need someone...

[Dramatic pause.]

DO: ...to watch MY back!

[Ortiz lowers the mic as Kendrick shouts "WHO?!"]

MM: What's he-

[And the crowd EXPLODES at the sound of Judas Priest's "You Got Another Thing Comin'"]

MM: OH MY GOD! IT'S SUPERNOVA!

[The face-painted fan favorite comes TEARING out of the entryway onto the stage. He races down the aisle towards the ring as Ferrigno and Kendrick turn their attention towards him.]

MM: SUPERNOVA IS HEADING FOR THE RING! SUPERNOVA HAS COME TO SAVE DAVID ORTIZ!

[Nova dives headfirst under the bottom rope at a full sprint, sliding right into the jaws of the lion as Kendrick and Ferrigno start pounding on him.]

MM: Supernova slid right into the thick of it, getting worked over by both men...

[They quickly bring 'Nova to his feet, each grabbing an arm...]

MM: Double whip across... 'Nova ducks under...

[Ducking a double clothesline, Supernova bounces off the far side, leaping high in the air to drop both men with a flying double clothesline of his own!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[Erica Toughill steps from the corner, bat raised back over her head as she approaches Supernova from the blind side...]

MM: BEHIND YOU!

[...but David Ortiz steps forward, snatching the bat out of her hands to a HUUUUGE REACTION!]

MM: ORTIZ HAS GOT THE BAT!

[Toughill spins around, spotting Ortiz with the bat and then bails out of the way as he rushes towards the rising Ferrigno and Kendrick, jamming the end of the bat into Ferrigno's midsection!]

MM: OHH! ORTIZ GOES DOWNSTAIRS ON FERRIGNO!

[Grabbing Kendrick by the arm, Supernova whips him to the corner, throwing himself back into the other. He throws his head back, howling to the crowd as he charges across, leaping high into the air, and crashing hard into the chest of Kendrick to a huge cheer!]

MM: HEAT WAVE ON KENDRICK!

[As Kendrick slumps to the mat, Toughill drags him under the bottom rope to the floor. A grinning Supernova grabs Ferrigno by the arm, whipping him across to the corner as well...

...but before he can use a second Heat Wave, Kendrick manages to pull Ferrigno from the ring to jeers from the crowd. Supernova stands in the ring, hands on his hips, watching as the trio backpedals up the aisle.]

MM: Big Papi made the call and Supernova answered it! What a moment here on All-Star Showdown!

[Ortiz grabs Supernova's arm, raising it high in the air, pointing to the face-painted fan favorite as the Vegas crowd roars.]

MM: And David Ortiz may not be able to fight Flex Ferrigno and Kerry Kendrick inside this ring... but Supernova sure can! And if that happens, I bet Big Papi will want to be right there to see it, fans!

[The crowd is still roaring as Supernova and Ortiz celebrate in the ring...

...and we fade backstage, where Theresa Lynch stands, microphone in hand.]

TL: Ladies and gentlemen, my guest at this time is none other than the AWA World Heavyweight Champion, Jack Lynch!

[Theresa is all smiles as her big brother steps into the frame. Jack Lynch is dressed in his ring gear, along with a long white duster, open to show the World Heavyweight Title strapped around his waist. The Iron Cowboy's white hat is tilted forward, casting a slight shadow over his face.]

TL: Ever since you won the World Heavyweight Championship from Johnny Detson, you have been all over the world defending it with honor. But tonight has to be the biggest test you've ever faced, against the toughest opponent you've ever been in the ring against.

[Lynch nods his head.]

JL: First off, 'Reesa, let me just say how happy I am to be here with you holdin' that microphone. Like old Blackjack said in Dallas, you've been doin' a stellar job here and at Power Hour.

[A bright red blush comes to Theresa's face, and her full wattage smile shines even brighter.]

TL: Thank you so much!

JL: Just callin' it like I see it, sis.

But yeah, you're right. Tonight isn't just a challenge, as far as I am concerned, Juan Vasquez, you are THE challenge of my reign.

I know exactly who ya are, Juan. I know when it comes to the moniker of "Livin' Legend," in this sport in general, and in the AWA in particular, that conversation starts and stops with you. I know where ya been, what ya done, and what you're capable of doin'.

TL: And you can't forget that where Juan Vasquez goes, the Axis is sure to follow.

[Lynch nods his head.]

JL: It's true, Williams, Hunter, Zharkov, MAWAGA, they're all lurkin' in the shadows. But you're wrong about one thing, 'Reesa.

If I'm gonna win tonight, then I have to forget about all 'em.

Just like Detson, I can't let what's goin' on outside the ring distract me from the man standin' across the ring from me. Takin' my eye off Vasquez for even one second is gonna cost me this belt, and that ain't happenin'.

TL: But what about the other members of the Axis?

[Lynch chuckles..]

JL: Well Theresa, any of 'em try to stick their nose in my business, and they're gonna find out that Juan ain't the only one with friends.

TL: That's so true. But as you alluded to, Juan Vasquez himself is someone you must take seriously.

[Lynch nods.]

JL: Juan Vasquez, like I said, I know who you are. And I know how good you are. I watched you defeat Alex Martinez. I watched you put down Stevie Scott, and I've seen you spend the better part of this year leavin' bodies lyin' everywhere ya went. And I know that you're thinkin' that tonight it's my turn.

But what ya failed to comprehend is that, so long as this belt is around my waist, this ain't your AWA.

This is MY AWA.

And I ain't givin' it up.

[Lynch reaches up and pulls his hat off, smoothing his hair back with his other hand.]

JL: There ain't no other way to say it but this – ya brought darkness and evil here to the AWA, Vasquez. You've spent six months makin' everyone's nightmares a reality.

Tonight is the night that the nightmare ends.

I don't mean no disrespect to either Martinez, or to Jordan Ohara, or anyone else that's planted their feet on that line and stood up against ya Juan, but takin' care of you has been my duty ever since I won this belt.

I am the World Heavyweight Champion, and for all you've accomplished, that's somethin' that ain't on the list, and it falls to me tonight to make sure you don't get it.

Vasquez, you are a legend. You are the man who was the man for a long time. But what you are not is the AWA. You were the main man here for a long time. But that time has come and gone. All you are now is a cancer eatin' away at the soul of this place.

And the only cure for cancer is to cut it out.

I'm not holdin' no lines, Vasquez. I'm comin' at ya full speed ahead. You ain't reckoned with me before Vasquez, and come the end of the night, you're gonna wish you never had.

This is my title, and this is my night.

And you? Well, if you won't go quietly, I'll make sure your last night is filled with noise and blood.

[Lynch puts his cowboy hat back on.]

JL: And that, Vasquez, is how I'll make the AWA greater than it ever was.

[With those words, Lynch steps away, heading out of sight...]

...and then we fade to a shot of Juan Vasquez in profile, standing backstage in front of an AWA backdrop. Vasquez is dressed in his usual wrestling attire, consisting of black leg-length tights with blue flames running up the sides, under a black M-65 Army field jacket with the words "IN JUAN WE TRUST" stenciled along the left arm and "DEUS VULT" on the right. Vasquez slowly turns to the camera, revealing a half-face painted in the style of his "Dia de los Muertos" skull facepaint.]

JV: We are at war, Jack Lynch.

[A beat.]

JV: Maybe you don't realize it, because the only thing a Lynch ever gives a damn about is another Lynch, but... we are at war. We HAVE been at war. For months. For years. Since the very first day you and your worthless clan ever stepped foot into an AWA ring.

You want to know when the AWA ceased to be great? I can tell you the exact MOMENT.

March 26th, 2011.

That day, a faded, washed up old cowboy named Blackjack Lynch introduced the world to his three worthless sons and declared that they would carry the AWA into the future.

[Juan chuckles.]

JV: No, what they ended up doing was dragging us down into a pit of corruption, nepotism, and unearned glory. We can call Jordan Ohara an opportunist line-jumper, but he's a damn amateur compared to the Lynches. The next time a Lynch actually EARNs something will be the FIRST time a Lynch ever earned something. From the moment the AWA bought out PCW, they've handed your family opportunity after opportunity. Title shot after title shot. They gave your prepubescent little sister her own television show. They drag out that walking corpse we call your father every year to deify a man that accomplished a FRACTION of what true legends like Hamilton Graham ever did.

Just where does it end?

And I realized it never will. Not as long as Jack Lynch is the World Champion. Not as long as his screw-up of a little brother continues to hold the National Title. Not as long as his floozy of a little sister controls the narrative. Not as long as your army of sycophants, O'Connor and Martinez and the rest of your ilk else continues to thrive.

[Juan squeezes his eyes shut and takes in deep breath, before exhaling loudly through his nostrils.]

JV: Last week, Shadoe Rage was called a lunatic for telling the truth. Don't believe the fake news... Shadoe Rage isn't a mad man. No, Shadoe Rage is as WOKE as they come. He knows as well as I do just exactly what the Lynch family means to professional wrestling.

[His eyes narrow as his voice becomes a hateful hiss.]

JV: They are the symptom. The sickness. The DISEASE that's been rotting the AWA from the inside out.

But you better believe that I'm the fire that will burn out that rot. I am the flame that will cure that wound. I am the man that WILL take the AWA World Heavyweight Title from you, Jack Lynch. And then, finally... FINALLY, I will...

...make the AWA great again.

[He stares hard at the camera, before turning away, holding onto the lapels of his coat, looking up into the air.]

JV: So prepare yourself, amigo.

[A beat.]

JV: We are at war.

[He walks off, as we fade out.

And we fade back to a panning shot of the T-Mobile Arena crowd, buzzing with anticipation of what they're about to witness.

Suddenly, the lights go down as the video screen lights up. A voice is heard over the PA system and sharp-eared viewers will recognize it as the voice of legendary former World Champion Karl O'Connor. As he speaks, the theme to the HBO miniseries "The Pacific" entitled "Honor" begins to swell in the background.]

"The World Heavyweight Title.

The greatest prize in all our industry.

The culmination of the longest, hardest road in all of sports.

The men who have held it have bled... have sweat... have made sacrifice after sacrifice to reach the top of that mountain.

And when they fall from that summit, they are not forgotten...

...they are honored."

[The legend's voice fades out as we fade from black to a shot of James Monosso holding the AWA World Title. The graphic features his name along with the worlds "First AWA World Champion.

It fades through black to show Calisto Dufresne, a smirk on his face and the title around his waist. The number "2" is next to his name.

Another fade through black takes us to Dave Bryant. The Doctor of Love is freshly triumphant in his photo, the World Title held over his head alongside the numbers 3 and 5.

Then on to Supreme Wright. Wright's got a studio shot, well-dressed as always with the title belt cradled in his arms. His graphic reads 4 and 6.

Ryan Martinez is next, the bloodied White Knight cradling the World Title belt to his chest beside a graphic that reads "7."

Another fade through black brings us Johnny Detson. Detson also has a studio shot, wearing a three-piece suit with the title belt slung over his shoulder. He's number 8.

And finally, Jack Lynch brings up the rear to a big cheer. The Iron Cowboy's shot is right after he won the title, a big grin on his face as he grips the belt in his white-gloved hand. The King of all Cowboys is number 9.

And we fade back to black both on the screen and in the arena. The lights slowly come up on Rebecca Ortiz as the fans cheer the Roll Call of Champions.]

RO: Ladies and gentlemen, it is now time for the MAIN EVENT of the evening!

[Big cheer! Ortiz lowers the mic as the lights drop again. Franz Schubert's "Ave Maria" begins to play as the massive video screen lights up with a shot of Juan Vasquez and some of his Axis allies making their way down a corridor towards the entranceway.

As they walk, there's slow fade outs, jumping from Jackson Hunter to Derrick Williams to Riley Hunter and finally to Vasquez, their demeanor all business. As they reach the curtain, the rest of the Axis stops and Vasquez steps through. As he does so, the video on the screen cuts out and we're left in total darkness and "Ave Maria" stops playing over the PA system, replaced by a more familiar piece of music.]

It's dark...and hell is hot#

[Suddenly, large columns of flame erupt from the top of the aisle.]

"WOOOOOOOOOOOOOOSH!!!"

[DMX's "Ain't No Sunshine" plays as the top of the ramp is flooded in white light, where we see a silhouette with both arms thrust triumphantly into the air. As the lights return to normal inside the arena, the boos immediately begin when we see Juan Vasquez standing in front of the tron, where in ten foot high lettering, we see the words "MAKE THE AWA GREAT AGAIN" appear.]

MM: Juan Vasquez certainly not striving for subtlety here tonight, wrestling fans, but he does look ready for this battle for the AWA World Title.

MB: I've faced Juan Vasquez in the ring before, Manning, and I'll tell you this - you've never met a man more obsessed with his legacy than Juan Vasquez. And when he looks himself in the mirror and realizes that he's fighting tonight for the one title that he's always wanted but never held, you understand that not only is he a man determined... not only he is a man focused... he is a man obsessed with doing whatever it takes to snatch that title off Jack Lynch tonight and claim it as his own.

[Vasquez lowers his arms and begins his walk towards the ring, looking more serious and focused than usual. He is dressed in a black M-65 Army field jacket with the words "IN JUAN WE TRUST" stenciled along the left arm and "DEUS VULT" on the right. Underneath, he wears the same wrestling tights he had on before, black with blue flames on the side. As the Las Vegas crowd showers him with boos, his eyes remain glued on the ring where he knows an incredibly tough battle awaits him.]

MM: No members of the Axis out here tonight... not yet at least. I'm told that AWA officials asked Vasquez to keep them backstage and he obliged.

MB: But it's important to note that there's no rule keeping them backstage. They asked and he obliged but what Juan giveth, Juan can easily taketh away. The Axis WILL be a concern here tonight and while Jack Lynch is talking about his friends being his backup, it's also important to note that neither Travis Lynch nor Bobby O'Connor are here in Las Vegas tonight. They're both back in Texas at our live event so Lynch may have allies in that locker room tonight - including Ryan Martinez - but he does NOT have the allies that he usually relies on as backup.

[Vasquez reaches the ring, climbing the ringsteps and ducking through the ropes to even louder jeers. He shrugs out of his jacket, tossing it aside as his music fades. He turns towards the aisle, leaning over, hands on his knees as he stares down the aisle awaiting his opponent.]

MM: The challenger has arrived... now we wait for the champion.

[The sounds of DMX are replaced by the signature guitar riff that leads into Bon Jovi's "Wanted Dead Or Alive." The guitar notes alone cause the crowd to ROAR in

response, a reaction that seems to get under Vasquez' skin a bit as he turns to glare at the Vegas crowd.

As the lyrics kick in, Jack Lynch emerges out onto the entrance stage, thrusting his long arm up into the air, gripping the title belt in his gloved hand to an even bigger reaction. He stands in his white duster that hangs down around his ankle, his white Stetson on top of his head. The duster hangs open to reveal his ring gear as he starts the walk to the ring.]

MM: And there he is, fans. The Iron Cowboy himself has held that World Title since the end of July when he defeated Johnny Detson to claim the gold. In the days since, we've seen him defeat his good friend Bobby O'Connor on television... we've seen him beat Johnny Detson in a rematch... but we've never seen a challenge like this. To put it simply, Juan Vasquez has been on a rampage since SuperClash of last year - an unstoppable rampage that no one has been able to put a halt to. Not Jordan Ohara. Not Sweet Daddy Williams. Not Willie Hammer. Not Stevie Scott. And no, not Ryan Martinez. But tonight, Jack Lynch stands as the great hope between Juan Vasquez' reign of terror and the title that he covets so badly.

[Lynch reaches the ring, pulling himself up on the apron to another big cheer. He points a gloved hand in at Vasquez who has backed across the ring, nodding his head. Lynch ducks through the ropes, stomping to the corner where he mounts the midbuckle, again thrusting the title belt over his head to a huge reaction. Vasquez walks along the ropes to the corner, paying no attention to Lynch as he hops back down, shrugging out of his duster and tossing it out to a ringside attendant. He does the same with his hat, standing now in white boots, trunks, and kneepads - oh, and of course, his white fingerless glove.]

MM: Ladies and gentlemen, Rebecca Ortiz...

[The shapely ring announcer steps to the middle of the ring, mic in hand.]

RO: The following contest is scheduled for one fall with a sixty minute time limit and it is for the AWA WORRRRRRLD HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP!

[HUUUUUUGE CHEER!]

RO: Introducing first... he is the challenger...

[HUUUUUUGE JEERS!]

RO: From Los Angeles, California... weighing in tonight at 238 pounds... he represents the Axis... he is a former AWA National Champion... a former World Heavyweight Champion... a member of the Professional Wrestling Hall of Fame...

He is...

JUAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAN
VAAAAAASSSSSSQUEZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ!

[Vasquez steps forward, raising both arms over his head as the crowd rains down boos on him. He looks around at the Las Vegas crowd with disdain as he slowly lowers his arms, backing into his corner.]

RO: Annnnnnnnd his opponent...

[They're cheering already!]

RO: From Dallas, Texas... weighing in tonight at 265 pounds... he is the AWA WORRRRRRLD HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION! The Iron Cowboy! The King of All Cowboys!

Ladies and gentlemen...

JAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK
LYNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNCH!

[The cheers are deafening for the World Champion as he throws up his gloved right hand. He smiles at the reaction as referee Davis Warren takes the title belt, lifting it over his head to show the crowd.]

MM: There it is, fans. That's what this battle... this fight... everything you've seen here tonight is all about. This match is for the title itself but every single match you've seen tonight has been about getting yourself into position to battle either for that title or the Women's equivalent of it.

MB: It's been said many times, Manning, but it's worth saying again here tonight. If you're in this business and your ultimate goal isn't that leather and gold that the referee is holding... that strap with so many of the best in the world's names on it... then you should get out of pro wrestling and start selling refrigerators down at Sears.

[The official hands the belt out to the ringside timekeeper. He walks to the middle of the ring, beckoning both champion and challenger to join him as Rebecca Ortiz exits the squared circle.]

MM: The official with some final instructions. Making sure both men know his expectations for them. When to break, what's illegal.

[The referee nods his head, sending both men back to their respective corners.]

MM: Alright... you can feel the electricity in the air for this one, fans. This place is a powderkeg just waiting for someone to light a match... and heeeeeere... we...

"DING! DING! DING!"

MM: ...go!

[Juan Vasquez walks straight out of his corner to the middle of the ring, staring across at the Iron Cowboy...

...and then SPITS in his direction!]

"OHHHHH!"

MM: Well, that's one way to start a title match!

[A fired-up Lynch storms out of the corner, fist drawn back...

...but the official dives between Lynch and Vasquez, shouting at the World Champion to lower his arm. Lynch shouts at Vasquez who returns the favor angrily. After a few moments of trying to get past Davis Warren, Lynch obliges, lowering his clenched fist as Vasquez smirks in response.]

MM: A testy start to this one here in Las Vegas and...

[Vasquez steps back, pointing to the corner...]

MM: What's this?

MB: It looks like the turnbuckle padding has come loose.

[Indeed it does, Shark. One of the corner buckles has slipped loose. The referee raises a hand to the two men, asking them to hold on as he turns to go fix the buckle. He gets to the corner, going to work on it as Lynch watches him, waiting...

...which is when Juan Vasquez drops to his knees, swinging his arm up into Lynch's groin!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

MM: WHAT THE-?!

MB: It was a plan, Manning! Vasquez loosened the buckle himself! I saw him over there in that corner during Lynch's entrance and-

[Vasquez shouts at the official as he shoves Lynch over, diving across, hooking both legs tightly. The referee looks puzzled, looking back and forth, trying to figure out what happened...

...but ultimately dives to the mat, ready to count...]

MM: ONE!!! TWO!!! THREEEEEEEEEEE-

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

MM: LYNCH GETS THE SHOULDER UP! MY GOD, HE ALMOST LOST THE TITLE IN RECORD TIME! HE ALMOST LOST EVERYTHING JUST LIKE THAT!

[Vasquez angrily claps his hands together, climbing to his feet. The referee shouts at him, wondering what in the world is going on as Vasquez launches into a stomping attack on the Iron Cowboy, forcing him under the ropes and out to the floor.]

MM: Vasquez drives the champion out of the ring...

MB: I don't think that was what he wanted but Lynch was rolling for it. Lynch got hit with a low blow before the match even got really going and he's gotta get a breather to recover from that, Manning.

[Vasquez hauls Lynch off the floor by the hair, smashing his head down into the ring apron!]

MM: Vasquez has got Lynch out here on the floor, working him over!

[With Lynch's back up against the ring apron, Vasquez balls up his fists, launching into a series of hooking rights and lefts to the body.]

MM: Vasquez tearing into the body of the Iron Cowboy with those rights and lefts!

[Grabbing Lynch by the arm, Vasquez gives a big whip...]

MM: LYNCH GOES OVER THE RAILING!

[...with enough force for Lynch to leave his feet as he approaches the railing, flying over it into the front row of the Las Vegas crowd!]

MB: Good lord, Manning. The World Champion just got flung into the crowd like a sack of garbage... and Vasquez is going after him.

MM: Remember, fans... this match is NOT under No Disqualification rules. There are countouts in this as well. And Lynch does have the championship advantage. If he gets counted out, he loses the match but not the World Title. If Vasquez wants to be the champion, he's gotta make it happen inside the squared circle.

[Vasquez hurdles over the railing, grabbing Lynch by the hair...

...and SMASHES his face down into the ringside steel seat!]

MM: Juan Vasquez playing with fire here a bit, fans. This could be a disqualification at any moment!

MB: I feel like the referee is going to give these two some leeway, Manning. He wants to see a clear winner as much as the rest of us do.

[Vasquez pulls Lynch off the floor, shouting into his face...

...and then HURLS him back over the railing, sending him crashing down onto the barely-padded ringside floor!]

MM: Lynch slams down hard on the concrete here at the T-Mobile Arena... and Vasquez is coming back over the railing as well, looking to finish what he started with that low blow.

[Dragging Lynch off the floor, Vasquez pushes his face up against the steel ringpost, He drives forearm into the back of Lynch's head, reading him the riot act as he tries to drive Lynch's face through the steel.]

MM: Vasquez just punishing Lynch right now on the floor... shoving him back inside the ring now...

[With Lynch down on the mat, Vasquez climbs up on the apron, quickly climbing the adjacent turnbuckles...]

MM: What in the world?! He's going up top already!

MB: He's gotta take advantage of that low blow! He knows that every second that ticks off the clock is a second giving Lynch a chance to recover for it. He's gotta strike quick, often, and with great impact if that low blow is going to lead to victory here tonight in Vegas!

[The Hall of Famer reaches the top rope, looking down on the prone Lynch...

...and leaps HIGH into the air, tucking his arms and legs, and SLAMS backfirst down across Lynch's chest!]

MM: SKY HIGH SENTON SPLASH BY THE HALL OF FAMER!

[Vasquez grabs at his lower back for a moment before spinning around, diving across the chest of Lynch!]

MM: Vasquez with the cover!

[The referee dives to the mat, slapping the canvas once... twice...]

MM: HE'S GOT- NO! LYNCH KICKS OUT IN TIME!

[Vasquez angrily climbs to his feet, shouting at the official who holds up two fingers. The former World Champion grabs the top rope, raining down stomps on the chest of Lynch...

...and then plants his boot in the throat, pulling down on the ropes for leverage as he strangles the air out of the Iron Cowboy!]

MM: Vasquez choking the life out of Lynch!

[The referee's count finally gets Vasquez to back off, storming around the ring as the Vegas crowd lets him have it. He circles back towards the rising Lynch, laying in a boot to the ribcage before bringing him to his feet, shoving him back into the corner.]

MM: And this is not where you want to be with Juan Vasquez.

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAP!"

[An overhead chop finds the mark, blasting off the chest of the Iron Cowboy as the referee again shouts at Vasquez to vacate the premises and let Lynch out of the corner.]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAP!"

MM: You could hear that one all the way down at Fremont Street!

[Vasquez winds up a third time...]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAP!"

[...and leaves Lynch reeling in the corner as Vasquez backs off again, getting shouted at by the referee. He moves back in, grabbing Lynch by the hair, pulling him out of the corner...]

MM: Vasquez hooks him... setting up for a suplex...

[But as he lifts Lynch into the air, Vasquez lunges forward, dropping Lynch hard gutfirst across the top rope...

...and Lynch bounces off, flopping down to the floor in a heap!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

MM: A HARD FALL TO THE FLOOR FOR THE IRON COWBOY!

[Vasquez sneers at the protesting official as Lynch writhes in pain on the floor. The Las Vegas crowd is all over Vasquez but the leader of the Axis of Evil seems to be enjoying those boos as he walks around the ring again, considering his next action.]

MM: The World Champion is laid out on the floor and Juan Vasquez is in complete control of this match at this point in this encounter, Marcus.

MB: The low blow at the outset put this match on the wrong path for Jack Lynch and the World Champion simply hasn't been able to recover yet... and as Vasquez steps out on the apron, you have to wonder how far Vasquez will go to win the World Title here tonight. My guess is he'll go all the way.

MM: But knowing the kinds of things that Juan Vasquez has done in his career, Marcus, what in the world is "all the way" for him?

MB: That's what I'm afraid to find out.

[Vasquez hops off the apron to the floor, ignoring the referee's protests. He delivers a few quick stomps to the downed World Champion before moving towards the timekeeper's table.]

MM: Vasquez is over there near Rebecca Ortiz... you stay away from her, you cad!

[But Vasquez isn't there for the shapely ring announcer, rather to grab the table she's sitting at, tugging it across the ringside floor, setting it up as he throws a glance at the top rope.]

MM: The Hall of Famer has some sinister intentions right about now, fans. He's got Lynch up off the mat, shoving him onto the table... and I don't like the looks of this dire situation for the Iron Cowboy.

[With Lynch laid out across the table, Vasquez walks around the ringpost, reaching up to pull the ropes to aid him in getting on the apron. He looks down at Lynch again, making sure he's right where he wants him.]

MM: Juan Vasquez has set the table with the broken body of Jack Lynch and... well, I think he might be planning on serving one heck of a dessert right about now!

[Vasquez slaps the turnbuckle a few times before starting his climb up the ropes.]

MM: And it's as I feared as Juan Vasquez starts to climb the turnbuckles!

[The Vegas crowd is buzzing in anticipation as Vasquez steps up to the second rope...]

MM: Vasquez is on the second rope... looking to go to the top!

MB: But Lynch is getting up! He's not done yet, Manning!

[The crowd ROARS as the World Champion manages to get to his feet atop the timekeeper's table...

...and reaches out to BLAST the climbing Vasquez with a big right hand!]

MM: Lynch has risen and he's fighting back! Another right hand!

[A stunned Vasquez wobbles backwards, grabbing the top rope, trying to stay on his feet...]

MM: Lynch is trying to knock Vasquez from his perch to the hard and unforgiving cement floor!

[Lynch grabs Vasquez by the hair with his left hand, stepping off the table and onto the ring apron...

...and then reaches out with his right hand, locking his gloved fingers around the skull of the challenger! The crowd responds with a thunderous roar!]

MM: The Lynch family legacy is locked in - the Iron Claw!

[Vasquez winces in pain as the World Champion digs his fingers into the temples!]

MM: Jack Lynch is digging those fingers in! But he can't win the match outside the ring, Marcus!

MB: No, but he can't lose the title out there either. If they both get counted out, Jack Lynch is walking out of Vegas with the World Title strapped around his waist. It may not be the way he wants to keep it but he'd keep it nonetheless.

MM: Lynch hanging on to the head of Vasquez! Vasquez searching for a way out, desperately trying to find an exit to this hold as the energy is slowly drained out of him and-

[And without warning, Vasquez takes a giant step to his left, hopping off the apron...

...which SLAMS Lynch's hand and wrist down on the metal piece running from the turnbuckle to the ringpost!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[Lynch cries out in pain, slumping against the turnbuckles, cradling his right hand against his torso as Vasquez sits on the floor, looking up at the World Champion!]

MM: A desperation move by the leader of the Axis of Evil pays huge dividends! He rolled the dice and came up a winner here in the city where that rarely happens!

MB: An absolutely brilliant counter for the Iron Claw... and Jack Lynch is in tremendous pain, Manning. That hand could be broken... maybe the wrist. It smashed right down on that metal.

[The challenger climbs to his feet, leaning against the apron for a few moments, catching his breath as he keeps his eyes locked on Lynch who is still grimacing in pain as the referee checks his condition.]

MM: And with Jack Lynch's primary weapon being essentially taken out of his arsenal at this point in time, how badly do the odds shift in Vasquez' favor of walking out of Las Vegas as the World Champion?

MB: We've seen Lynch in a situation like this before, Manning. There's a reason they call him the Iron Cowboy. He's come back from worse and that's the situation he's in here tonight.

[Back on his feet, Vasquez slides under the bottom rope into the ring. He rises to his feet, grabbing Lynch's wrist and giving it a hard yank.]

MM: And with every movement of that wrist and hand, you can see the pain on Jack Lynch's face.

[Vasquez threads Lynch's wrist over one top rope and under the other, leaving his forearm pressed against the top turnbuckle as the challenger backs off, keeping his eyes on the trapped World Champion...]

MM: Vasquez measuring his man... and here he comes!

[Charging in, the challenger leaps into the air, driving both knees squarely into the arm, causing Lynch to cry out in pain again, pulling his arm out of Vasquez' reach as he still stands on the top turnbuckle...

...but Vasquez won't be denied, reaching over the ropes to snatch hold of the arm again.]

MM: Jack Lynch is still on the apron, a dangerous place to be in there against Vasquez...

[Vasquez turns Lynch around, his back against the ringpost now. Still holding the arm, Vasquez whips him from inside the ring, sending him running down the length of the ringpost...]

...and Lynch SLAMS into the steel ringpost, leaving his feet, flying through the air, and taking another hard fall to the floor!]

“OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!”

MM: A HORRIFIC CRASH AND BURN TO THE FLOOR FOR THE WORLD CHAMPION!

[Lynch instantly rolls to his stomach, arms pulled up over his head as a smirking Juan Vasquez leans against the ropes. The referee again gets on his case about the illegal activities as Vasquez catches a breather.]

MM: We are just a hair under the ten minute mark in this battle for the AWA World Heavyweight Title and what a conflict between champion and challenger we’ve seen so far, Shark.

MB: I’ve seen my fair share of hard-fought title matches... heck, I’ve been in my fair share of `em but these two are bringing the fight early and often in this one, Manning.

[Vasquez drops to his back, rolling under the ropes to the floor where he goes to a knee...]

MM: Juan Vasquez is following the World Champion out to the floor... adjusting his boot it looks like...

[But the challenger is quickly back up to his feet, walking across the ringside area to where Lynch is laid out on the thin ringside mats. He reaches down, hauling the Iron Cowboy up to his knees...]

...where we get our first glimpse of a nasty cut on the forehead of the World Champion, crimson oozing down his face.]

MM: And if you’re a Jack Lynch fan, it may be best to avert your eyes because he’s been busted wide open by Juan Vasquez... and Vasquez isn’t done yet!

[Pulling the hair back to expose the forehead, the violent Vasquez repeatedly slams his knuckles down into the cut, digging deeper and deeper into the wound which starts to bleed even worse.]

MM: He’s going right after that cut, really splitting the head of the World Champion open now!

[After a half dozen blows to the head, Vasquez steps back, shoving the bloody World Champion back down to the floor as Vasquez backs off, showing his blood-covered knuckles to the nearest camera with a sneer on his face.]

MM: The blood is flowing in Vegas like the money in the casinos elsewhere on the Strip!

[The referee’s count on both men reaches five as Vasquez rolls under the ropes to break the count before rolling right back out.]

MM: Vasquez gets the count restarted with that little in and out move there. And he’s taking advantage of all the rules in this one!

[Vasquez steps over to the bloodied Lynch again, hauling him up by the hair, walking alongside the ring apron...

...and SMASHES Lynch's head down into the wooden ringside table!]

MM: Headfirst into the table over there by Rebecca and our timekeeper! Look out, folks! You just never know what Vasquez might do at any given moment.

MB: I expect him to be on his best behavior - relatively speaking - here tonight, Manning. He wants that World Title and he doesn't want to take any risks that might result in him walking out without the gold around his waist.

MM: Dark times are upon the AWA and Juan Vasquez hopes to dim the light a little bit more here in Las Vegas tonight.

[Vasquez drags Lynch alongside the table towards the ringpost, shoving him back into the steel.]

MM: Lynch up against the ringpost... Vasquez is having some kind of trouble with his boot, Marcus. He's working on it again. A bad time to be having equipment issues.

MB: No, no... he's not working on fixing his boot... he's working on getting something out of it!

[Vasquez climbs to his feet, a devious grin on his face as he holds up a length of boot lace for the crowd to see.]

MM: His boot lace? I don't understand.

MB: Nah, his boot is still laced. The son of a gun came prepared! That's an extra stretch of lacing and the question is - what does he plan on doing with it?

[As Vasquez moves in on him, Lynch throws a desperation left hand to the jaw of the Hall of Famer...]

MM: Lynch scores with the left! Throwing the off hand to protect his right and-

[The crowd groans as Vasquez delivers a two-handed shove to the chest, pushing Lynch's back into the ring apron. The Iron Cowboy winces as he slumps to his knees near the ringpost...

...which is when Vasquez grabs the right arm, stretching it out towards the steel.]

MM: Vasquez is going after the arm again... is he...? He's tying Lynch to the ringpost! He's tying his arm to the ringpost!

[The referee slides to the floor, loudly and angrily protesting as Vasquez loops the lace around the wrist and the post again and again until Lynch is stuck against the steel, pulling on his arm, trying to get free...

...which is when Vasquez shoves past the referee, stomping over to the timekeeper's table again.]

MM: He's got a chair! He just took that chair out from under the timekeeper!

MB: Color me wrong, Manning. I thought Vasquez wouldn't risk getting disqualified in this one but that's EXACTLY what he's doing right now! He may have snapped because if he hits Lynch in the hand with that steel chair, he's GOING to get disqualified and this match will be over!

[Vasquez smacks the chair into the floor a couple of times as the official puts himself between Vasquez and Lynch, shouting at him, threatening him with an instant disqualification if he uses the chair...]

MM: The referee's telling him that, Marcus! He's saying that if Vasquez uses the chair, the match is over but- I can't tell if he's listening! I can't tell if he even knows what they're saying at all! He might be too blinded by rage!

[The challenger lifts the chair, ready to swing it...

...but the defiant referee holds his ground, reaching out to grab the chair. Vasquez and the official jostle each other for a bit, trying to get the chair free from the other.]

MM: Davis Warren with a daring move right there, defying Juan Vasquez as he snatches that chair right out of his hands!

MB: I'm a little surprised Vasquez gave it up that easy.

[But as the referee turns to put the chair aside, Vasquez reaches back, snatching the steel ring bell off the apron...]

"CLAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAANG!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and swings it full force into Lynch's trapped right hand and wrist!]

MM: HE USED THE BELL! VASQUEZ USED THE BELL ON THE HAND!

[Lynch is wailing in agony as Vasquez tosses the bell aside, looking innocent as the referee whips around, sticking an accusing finger in the challenger's face, backing him away from the Iron Cowboy as he practically hugs the ringpost, trying to cradle his trapped and injured hand..]

MM: Jack Lynch might have a broken hand! Juan Vasquez used the steel ringbell on his hand and-

MB: But the referee didn't see it, Manning. He heard it. He suspects it. But he didn't see it and that means he can't call it. Vasquez - we thought he'd lost control when he grabbed that chair but I think he MEANT for the chair to get taken away. I think he played that situation to perfection.

[Vasquez brushes past the referee, quickly unwrapping the bootlace from around Lynch's wrist. Lynch stumbles away, clutching his arm to his body as Vasquez pursues him, grabbing him by the trunks and firing him under the ropes back into the ring.]

MM: Vasquez puts him back in and as we approach the fifteen minute mark in this time limit, we may be on the verge of a new World Champion being crowned.

[Vasquez rolls under the ropes, crawling towards Lynch. He dives across him, hooking a leg in a lateral press.]

MM: The challenger covers... but only gets a two count!

[An agitated Vasquez looks up at the referee first, questioning the count. From there, the kneeling Vasquez reaches out, interlocking the fingers on his left hand with those on Lynch's injured right hand...

...and SLAMS the hand back into the mat!]

MM: Vasquez continues to go after the hand... the wrist.. the fingers...

MB: He's going to completely take away the Iron Claw from Jack Lynch... and we've seen this strategy play out with Brian James and Travis Lynch back at the Battle of Boston. It's a solid one and it could spell a World Title victory for Vasquez here tonight in Las Vegas at All-Star Showdown.

[The challenger locks the fingers on the other hand together as well, pushing Lynch's shoulder down to the mat.]

MM: Both shoulders down - can he keep them there?

[A two count follows before Lynch pushes the left shoulder off the mat.]

MM: Just a two as Lynch powers a shoulder up.

[With a grimace and a growl, Vasquez pushes the left shoulder back down, swinging his leg over Lynch's torso to hold his midsection down to the mat.]

MM: Another attempt... and another two count as the right shoulder comes up this time.

[Vasquez shifts his weight, pushing the right shoulder back down, holding them both down again as he squats over Lynch, putting his weight up high on the arms...

...and at a two count, Lynch bridges up, breaking the pin!]

MM: Look at the bridge!

MB: A bridge like that is always impressive to former grapplers like me, Manning.

[Vasquez looks frustrated at this development, lifting up off the mat to put his legs on the thighs of Lynch, trying to break down the bridge but Lynch keeps holding it.]

MM: Vasquez trying to knock down the bridge to no avail...

[The challenger plants his feet on the mat, pushing up high into the air, crashing down with all his weight on the upper thighs of Lynch, trying to break it down.]

MM: All the weight comes crashing down but Lynch continues to hold his ground, refusing to let Vasquez get his shoulders down on the mat for another pin attempt. But Vasquez is going to try it again and-

[Pushing up into the air, Vasquez aims to drop his weight on Lynch's torso...

...but the Iron Cowboy drops back down to the mat, raising both shins to catch Vasquez FLUSH in the groin!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

MM: A counter below the belt and I've gotta say that turnabout is fair play with that one!

[Vasquez rolls off of Lynch's raised knees onto his back, his cheeks puffing as he tries to suck down the pain shooting through his body. Lynch, right next to him, rolls to his chest and starts crawling across the ring.]

MM: And this could be the turning point in this match, Marcus!

MB: We're fifteen minutes into this sixty minute time limit and if Jack Lynch was ever going to find a way back into this match, this might be the time to do it.

[Lynch crawls across the ring towards the safety of the corner as Vasquez winces in pain, sitting up on the mat...

...and gives a gesture towards the aisleway.]

MM: Vasquez waving his arm towards the locker room and... things just got substantially worse for the World Champion, Marcus.

[A concerned-looking Jackson Hunter starts jogging down the aisle towards the ring, the Vegas crowd booing his every step.]

MB: It could be worse still though. Right now, it's just Hunter. At least his cousin and Derrick Williams stayed in the back.

MM: For now.

MB: You took the words right out of my mouth, Manning.

[Hunter reaches ringside, repeatedly slamming his hands down on the ring apron, shouting to Vasquez as the Hall of Famer gingerly gets to his feet. He is moving very slowly towards the corner where Jack Lynch is using the ropes, trying to drag himself up to his feet.]

MM: Both men in a bad way right now but they're both on their feet and ready to-

[The crowd roars as Lynch spins from the corner, driving a left hand into the skull of the challenger!]

MM: Big left hand! Lynch keeping that right hand back, keeping it protected as he drives his southpaw side into Vasquez!

[The blow seems to stun Vasquez, catching him off-guard as he wobbles backwards. Lynch advances on him, cocking and firing another left hand... and another, battering the dazed Vasquez across the ring to the far corner.]

MM: Lynch is tearing into Vasquez with a pocketful of punches, sending the Hall of Famer into the far corner...

[Grabbing Vasquez by the arm, Lynch uses a one-armed whip to send him across the ring, charging in after him as Vasquez hits the buckles...]

MM: Oh! Jumping high knee in the corner! Right on the chin!

[Vasquez' eyelids flutter at the high impact blow to the jaw, causing him to grab hold of the top rope with both arms, desperately trying to stay on his feet.]

MM: Vasquez hanging on for dear life, trying to stay standing as The Iron Cowboy looks down on him through bloodstung eyes!

[Lynch mounts the midbuckle, looking out at the crowd to a big cheer, and then starts raining down left handed blows on Vasquez' skull!]

"ONE!"

"TWO!"

"THREE!"

"FOUR!"

"FIVE!"
"SIX!"
"SEVEN!"
"EIGHT!"
"NINE!"
"TEN!"

[Lynch hops down off the buckles, the crowd roaring for his flurry of offense as he grabs Vasquez by the arm again, whipping him across the ring with another one-armed toss...]

MM: The challenger hits the buckles, stumbling out...

[Lynch ducks down low and lifts up high, sending Vasquez sailing through the air before he crashes down hard on his back!]

MM: ...into a big backdrop! Lynch is trying to stem the tide and turn the waves of momentum in his favor! Can he do it? Can he pull it together and somehow walk out of Las Vegas with the World Title still around his waist?

[As Lynch advances on the now-kneeling Vasquez, he raises his left hand over his head...

...and SLAMS his fist down between the eyes! And again! And again!]

MM: Jack Lynch taking it down to basics! It's his fist and Vasquez' face meeting time and time again!

[Pulling the challenger off the mat, Lynch scoops him up with one arm, slamming him down on the canvas...]

MM: Scoop and a slam by the Iron Cowboy... to the ropes he goes...

[...and as he rebounds back, Lynch leaps high in the air, driving his shin and knee down across Vasquez' sternum!]

MM: Leaping kneedrop by the champion! Could that be enough?

[Lynch stays down on Vasquez, reaching back with the left arm to hook a leg loosely.]

MM: The referee counts one! He counts two! He counts-

[But Vasquez will not stay down, lifting his shoulder off the canvas in time to break the pin attempt!]

MM: -no! Two count only!

[Lynch smashes his left hand down into the canvas in frustration as Vasquez escapes the pinning predicament.]

MM: And the Iron Cowboy showing some signs of frustration.

MB: I can't even imagine the pain running through his hand, his wrist, his arm right now, Manning. He wants this thing over and he wants to walk out as STILL the World Champion so of course he's frustrated right now.

[Climbing off his hands and knees, the World Champion regains his feet, looking down at Vasquez who is attempting to crawl away to create some distance between himself and the World Champion.]

MM: The champion stalking his challenger around the ring. You can believe that Jack Lynch has been on his fair share of hunting trips with his brothers and his father on the Lynch family ranch and that's the look that he has in his eyes right now, fans. He's hunting Juan Vasquez and he's thinking about the best strategy to end this night with Vasquez' head mounted on his wall.

[Lynch reaches Vasquez just as the Hall of Famer is getting to his feet. The champion lowers his shoulder into the midsection, driving Vasquez back into the turnbuckles.]

MM: Back to the buckles they go, crashing into them...

[Reaching out his left hand, Lynch grabs the middle rope, using it for support as he drives his shoulder into Vasquez' midsection once... twice... three times...

...and then straightens up with a stiff uppercut that snaps Vasquez' head back, dropping him to a seated position in the corner.]

MM: The crowd is cheering Lynch's every move as he battles to remain the flickering candle shining brightly through the darkness.

[Grabbing the top rope with his left hand, Lynch drives his big cowboy boot down into the chest... again and again, each stomp getting a huge cheer from the crowd and a shout of protest from referee Davis Warren... oh, and drawing the ire of Jackson Hunter who is screaming in at both Lynch and Warren.]

MB: He's stomping the hell out of him, Manning!

MM: The shoe leather being driven down repeatedly into Vasquez' upper body!

[And at the count of four and a half, Lynch withdraws, spinning out of the corner and stalking around the ring as Vasquez reels in the corner.]

MM: We're creeping up on the twenty minute mark of this battle for the World Heavyweight Title and Jack Lynch has found himself back in control, giving everything he's got with a banged-up hand and a bloodied face to keep that title securely around his waist.

[Lynch ends up in the opposite corner, leaning over, breathing heavily, his face covered in crimson...

...and then bolts across the ring, bearing down on the stunned Vasquez...]

MM: KNEE!

[...and DRIVES his knee into the skull of the seated Vasquez, taking a page right out of the Hall of Famer's playbook!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

MM: HE GOT IT! THE RUNNING KNEE TO THE SKULL!

MB: That might be enough, Manning!

[Lynch tries to grab Vasquez' ankle with both hands but ultimately has to give up, using just his left to slowly pull the Hall of Famer away from the corner. He doesn't get too far before he desperately throws himself on top of Vasquez, going for a pin.]

MM: LYNCH WITH THE COVER!! ONE!! TWO!! THR-

“OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!”

[The crowd roars with disappointment as Davis Warren springs to his feet, pointing at Vasquez’ foot draped over the bottom rope as Jackson Hunter walks quickly away from it.]

MM: Did... did Hunter put his foot on the ropes?!

MB: I couldn’t see it from this angle but it’s certainly possible. He’s running from the scene of the crime like he did something wrong.

MM: Jack Lynch may have just had this victory snatched away from him by Jackson Hunter, fans! We couldn’t see it but I know I wouldn’t be surprised to find out he did it.

[Hunter stands near the ringpost, nervously whistling as the referee glares at him. An exhausted and bloodied Jack Lynch regains his feet again, looking down at Vasquez...

...and then holds up his damaged right hand to a big cheer!]

MM: He’s... I can’t believe I’m going to say this, fans... but Jack Lynch is calling for the Iron Claw with that banged up hand!

MB: That’s a bad idea. Lynch may be letting his emotions get the better of him here. He’s got plenty of other weapons he can use. The superplex... the Calf Branding... the lariat... don’t even think about trying to use that hand, Lynch!

MM: Vasquez being dragged up off the mat, being pulled up to his knees...

[Lynch stands over his challenger who is kneeling on the mat, looking up through glassy eyes at the World Champion who has that right hand raised. The Iron Cowboy grits his teeth, trying to force away the pain shooting through his hand as he takes aim on Vasquez...]

MM: The crowd is ready for it! They want to see it!

MB: But there’s a reason he’s in the ring and they paid their hard-earned money to see him in there! He’s making a mistake here!

[With a steely-eyed nod of his head, Lynch reaches down to wrap his injured hand around Vasquez’ head...]

MM: THERE IT IS! HE’S GOT THE CLAW! HE’S GOT THE CLAW!

[...but Lynch abruptly lets go, grimacing as he wobbles away from the kneeling Vasquez, clutching his right hand in pain as the crowd quickly deflates.]

MM: But he couldn’t hold on! He couldn’t keep that iron grip locked on the head of the challenger!

MB: And I want to know how much more damage that caused! What did that flight of fancy - that delusion of grandeur - cost Jack Lynch? He had visions of winning this match with his family legacy in front of all of these fans and he let his hubris at being an almighty Lynch get the better of him!

[Jackson Hunter springs up on the apron, waving his arms wildly at Lynch and the official. Davis Warren shouts at him, approaching the manager angrily as Lynch

doubles over, left hand on his knee as he winces in pain, flexing the fingers on his right hand...

...as Juan Vasquez crawls on his hands and knees behind Lynch, the crowd buzzing with concern.]

MM: Vasquez is coming up behind Lynch! I don't think the World Champion knows he's there!

[Shouts of concern and warning are heard from the sold-out T-Mobile Arena crowd as Vasquez gets closer... and closer. Jackson Hunter is still shouting at the official who waves him off, looking to turn back to the action...

...but Hunter grabs hold, pulling the referee closer to him, hanging on for dear life as...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

MM: ANOTHER LOW BLOW! VASQUEZ FROM BEHIND!

[Lynch collapses to his knees as Vasquez rises to his feet, a devious sneer on his face...

...and then he dips into the front of tights, producing what appears to be a roll of coins.]

MM: Wait a minute! Vasquez has got something!

MB: It's a roll of coins! He's loading up that right hand!

[Vasquez walks around Lynch, Hunter still holding the referee tightly as Vasquez looks down at the bloodied and hurting World Champion...]

MM: RIGHT CROSS!

[...and BLASTS Lynch across the face with a loaded Right Cross, smashing his fist into the Iron Cowboy's face and sending him dropping like a stone motionless to the canvas!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[With a sweeping motion with his foot, Vasquez kicks a few coins out of the ring towards the announce table, diving onto the prone Lynch, hooking both legs as he rolls into a back press. Jackson Hunter abruptly lets go of the official, shoving him forward towards the pin.]

MM: Wait a second! He used a roll of coins!

MB: Silver dollars! One of 'em landed right here on our desk! He hit him with a roll of silver dollars!

MM: The referee knows something happened! He's looking around for proof but-

MB: But I said it before, he can't call what he didn't see!

[Vasquez screams "COUNT!" at the referee who snaps out of it, realizing he has no choice as he dives to the mat and slaps it once...]

MM: It can't end like this!

[...twice...]

MM: It can't-

[...and the seemingly inevitable third time.]

"DING! DING! DING!"

[The crowd falls to a hush. Near silence at first as they realize what just happened. And as Vasquez sits up on the mat, hugging himself and Jackson Hunter falls through the ropes, crawling towards him... that's when the boos pick up once more. Loud boos. Deafening boos. The kind of boos reserved for the truly despicable... the malignant... the darkness that threatens to envelop all things light... all things good... and leave them in shadow.]

Rebecca Ortiz makes this dark moment in AWA history official as she raises the mic, a hint of disgust in her voice.]

RO: Your winner of the match...

...and NEEEEEEEEWWWW AWA WORLD HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION...

[She can barely be heard over the boos at this point as Hunter and Vasquez embrace on the canvas, their long journey to "make the AWA great again" complete.]

RO: ...JUAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAN VASSSSSSSSSSQUEZZZZZZZZ!

[Davis Warren brings the title belt into the ring, walking towards Vasquez who is still sitting on the mat...]

...and then Jackson Hunter SNATCHES the belt out of his hands, rushing back towards Vasquez and shoving it into his chest. Vasquez holds the belt away from himself for a moment, staring at the golden plate, taking in the moment he's fought so long and hard for.]

MM: Fans, I can't believe I'm saying this but... Juan Vasquez is the AWA World Champion. I'll repeat it to help it sink in... Juan Vasquez is the new AWA World Champion.

[Hunter helps Vasquez to his feet, a grin starting to grow on the Hall of Famer's face as he takes the title belt in his hand and shoves it skyward for all to see. The T-Mobile Arena crowd turns up the heat, burning their lungs with the rage expelling from their bodies.]

MB: And here comes the rest of the Axis here tonight in Vegas. Riley Hunter. Derrick Williams.

[The Seven Star Athlete and The Future join their leader in the ring, rushing to his side. Vasquez grins with a big handshake to Hunter and then embraces the man he's deemed the future of the AWA, Derrick Williams, who lifts Vasquez' hand, gesturing to him.]

MM: The Axis of Evil standing tall in Las Vegas... and what was once one man's quest to dominate our industry... a quest that became a crusade for a group of like-minded individuals... tonight that quest ends in gold for the Axis.

MB: They beat the Kings. They won the World Title. This IS the night of the Axis. Make no mistake about that.

[Vasquez walks across the ring, stepping up on the midbuckle. He holds the title belt over his head again, soaking up the jeers of the Vegas crowd as he shouts at them - "THIS IS MY MOMENT! THIS IS MY TITLE! THIS IS MY COMPANY!"]

MM: Vasquez has been on a path of destruction that started just under a year ago at SuperClash... and tonight, that path ends with him holding the most coveted prize in our sport - the AWA World Title.

[The boos from the crowd seem to rankle Vasquez who hops down off the ropes, looking around the ring...

...and then points at the bloodied and defeated Jack Lynch who is barely conscious.]

"GET HIM!"

[The boos get even louder as Williams and Riley Hunter rush to oblige, snatching Lynch off the canvas and dragging him towards Vasquez who hands the title belt to a grinning Jackson Hunter. Hunter nods approvingly as he puts the belt over his shoulder, making the gesture for the piledriver.]

MM: Hunter's telling Vasquez to piledrive Jack Lynch!

MB: I don't think Vasquez needed the suggestion but he's going to take it!

[Vasquez snatches Lynch by the hair, looking down into his bloodied face, speaking off-mic to him...

...and then yanks him into a standing headscissors, the crowd roaring their concern for the Iron Cowboy.]

MM: He's going to try and eliminate Jack Lynch from EVER being a threat to him again!

MB: I hate to say it but it's a smart move to eliminate the man who is going to be looking for a rematch.

MM: Vasquez reaching down, his arms wrapped around the waist of-

[And suddenly, the crowd ERUPTS into cheers!]

MM: ALEX MARTINEZ! RYAN MARTINEZ! JACK LYNCH DOESN'T HAVE HIS BROTHER AND HIS FRIEND, BOBBY O'CONNOR, IN THE BUILDING TONIGHT BUT HOUSE MARTINEZ IS COMING TO HIS AID!

[Jackson Hunter spots the incoming Martinez clan and gestures to his men, calling for an exit. His cousin and Derrick Williams quickly oblige but Vasquez takes a little more prodding before he jumps from the ring, clearing out just as father and son arrive.]

MM: And there goes the Axis! The Axis of Evil flee the ring rather than do battle with House Martinez yet again!

[Ryan Martinez is fuming mad, shaking with rage as he stares down at Juan Vasquez who holds the title belt over his head, making sure that the AWA's White Knight gets a nice clear look at it. The Last American Badass kneels down next to Jack Lynch, placing a comforting hand on his shoulder as he stands guard.]

MM: What a way to wrap up this night, fans! We started with a bang and we end with a brand new World Champion crowned and staring down perhaps the greatest

father and son duo in pro wrestling history! We're out of time! We've gotta go! But make sure you tune in tomorrow night to The X for a special post-Showdown edition of the Power Hour!

[Vasquez taunts Martinez from the floor, looking up into the ring at him.]

MM: For Marcus Broussard, Sweet Lou Blackwell, Mark Stegglet, and Theresa Lynch, I'm Matt Manning and it's been the thrill of a lifetime to be here with you tonight, fans! So long from All-Star Showdown and we are out of here!

[The shot pulls back to show a shot over Vasquez' shoulder looking up at Martinez, the World Title belt being held in the air...

...as we fade to black.]