



SHOWTIME

Saturday, June 16th, 2018 from the IIWF Coliseum in Portland, Oregon

Hour Two Hour Three

[We fade up as a very grand and booming instrumental is heard - something that could've been composed by John Williams... and in fact WAS composed by John Williams as the Walt Disney Company spared no expense for its newest content provider. We get a shot of what appears to be a film strip on screen, the AWA World Title the first image... but others quickly flash by - Ryan Martinez and Supreme Wright at SuperClash VI... Julie Somers moonsaulting onto Kurayami from SuperClash IX... Stevie Scott and Juan Vasquez squaring off all the way back at SuperClash I... quicker shots of Marcus Broussard, City Jack, Calisto Dufresne giving way to Jack Lynch, Jordan Ohara, and Kerry Kendrick... a glimpse of Melissa Cannon fading to Michelle Bailey fading to Harley Hamilton... Jim Watkins battling Joe Petrow... Ron Houston using a Fade To Black on an opponent... Hannibal Carver diving off the video wall at Eternally Extreme 2... Ayako Fujiwara delivering a German Suplex to Lauryn Rage... Violence Unlimited brawling with the Lynch Brothers... Shadoe Rage jumping off the top of a massive steel cage... Jackson Hunter swinging a shovel... Derrick Williams catching Ohara with a Future Shock as Ohara dives from the top... Next Gen using a Doomsday Device on the Soldiers of Fortune... and on... and on... and on...

...until they all explode into a logo that reads "THE AWA ON ESPN."

A voiceover.]

"ESPN welcomes you to the following presentation of the American Wrestling Alliance."

[The music and imagery fade and are replaced with a 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."

[Back to black for a moment...

With a blackened screen only lit by a white spotlight, a song begins to play.

It is Panic At The Disco's new single "Say Amen (Saturday Night)"

And that black screen changes to show past highlights of AWA superstars in action - starting with a shot of Kimmy Bailey and Ayako Fujiwara delivering a sandwich lariat on a helpless foe...

...and we cut to a studio shot of Bailey, Fujiwara, and Molly Bell posing for the camera, Bell clawing at the air as Bailey strikes a double bicep pose and Fujiwara crosses her arms confidently.]

#And every mornin' when I wake up
I wanna be who I couldn't say I'd ever been#

[Cut to Omega being hurled off the top rope by Polemos in an assisted splash...

...and cut to a studio shot of Omega striking his signature pose as Polemos towers behind him, tugging a glove into place.]

#But it's so much more than I ever was
If every night I go to sleep knowin' #

[Cut to Harley Hamilton and Cinder hoisting the Women's World Tag Team Titles overhead as Kelly Kowalski and Casey Cash celebrate in the background...

...and then to a studio shot of the foursome, smirks all around as Cash gleefully polishes the belts upon Seductive and Destructive's shoulders.]

#That I gave everything that I had to give
Then it's all I could've asked for#

[Shadoe Rage comes soaring off the top rope, dropping a Death From Above double axehandle on a victim...

...and then a studio shot of Rage decked out to the nines, pointing to the camera, nodding his head confidently.]

#I've been standing up beside everything I've ever said, but
Oh, it's Saturday night, yeah#

[Cut to a quick montage of shots of AWA superstars in action: Atlas Armstrong applying the torture rack backbreaker... Odysseus Allah winning the Battle Royal at SuperClash... Sid Osborne diving off the apron into a cannonball... Trey Carson delivering a big boot to the mouth.]

#I pray for the wicked on the weekend
Mama, can I get another amen?#

[Victoria June lifting an opponent in the Scorpion Crosslock as Kayla Cristol soars off the top rope with a leg drop... Ricki Toughill driving her hind quarters into someone's face with a running hip attack... Laura Davis, Carolina Colton, and Trish Wallace standing over a fallen foe...]

#Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, it's Saturday night, yeah#

[Derrick Williams delivering a Future Shock... Odin Gunn planting a foe with a Death Valley Driver... Jackson Hunter waffling someone with a shovel... Jack Lynch locking the Iron Claw on an opponent.]

#Swear to God, I ain't ever gonna repent
Mama, can I get another amen?#

[The American Idols throwing a double superkick... Masks For Money mauling a victim in the corner... Wes Taylor and Tony Donovan using their assisted CattleBuster DDT... the Soldiers of Fortune cutting a promo as Meekly wildly waves the flag.]

#Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, it's Saturday night, yeah#

[Michelle Bailey flattens someone with a Britney Spear... Hannibal Carver drops someone with the Mind Eraser...]

#If I had one more day to wish
If I had one more day#

[Lauryn Rage unleashes a Perfect Punch... the Peach Pits pose at the top of the aisle... Kerry Kendrick drives home a running kneelift as Miss Sandra Hayes looks on... Raphael Rhodes smashes in a cheekbone with a forearm crossface.]

#To be better than I could have ever been
If I had one more day to wish#

[Jordan Ohara sails off the top with a Phoenix Flame... Next Gen drop someone with the Generation Gap... Julie Somers uncorks a top rope moonsault.]

#If I had one more day
I could be better, but, baby#

[James Lynch smashes someone with a steel chair... Ryan Martinez spikes someone with a Brainbuster...]

#Oh, it's Saturday night, yeah#

[...and as the final lyric echoes out, Supernova holds the World Title over his head...

...and we fade through black into a very peaceful scene. It's a calm, sunny summer day in the city of Portland - our shot framed up on the famous Portland White Stag sign. A voiceover begins.]

"The city of Portland is different things to different people."

[Cut to a beautiful rose garden.]

"For some, the City of Roses is about natural beauty..."

[To a jam-packed music club.]

"...the arts..."

[The interior of the Moda Center during a Blazers game as Damian Lillard takes aim from distance.]

"...sports..."

[Cut to a couple having a coffee outside one of Stumptown's many cafes.]

"...food and drink..."

[And finally to a man covered from lips to toe tips in tattoos balancing on top of a unicycle while handing out flyers to people walking by.]

"...or just being... weird."

[Cut to a sign with the slogan "Keep Portland Weird" on display.]

"But for the world of professional wrestling, this legendary city means just a little bit more..."

[Day turns to night as the White Stag sign lights up in neon.]

"Because this city has professional wrestling in its roots."

[We get some black and white footage from the early days of television with two unknown grapplers squaring off in Owen Barr's simply-named "Portland Wrestling" back in 1953... and then get audio of an old-timer announcer by the name of Herb Borne speaking.]

"Portland Wrestling has been around since 1925, thrilling the fans of our hometown for going on three decades now... and now that exciting entertainment can extend to your own living room!"

[Cut to a clip of Salvatore Albano, a noted wrestling historic in addition to his commentary duties.]

SA: Owen Barr's Portland Wrestling is believed to be the first regularly scheduled professional wrestling program on television. Sixty minutes every week... they called it "Brawls by Blitz" named after the Blitz Weinhard Brewing Company, their #1 sponsor at the time. That was the beginning... and it lasted a long, long time. It's where names like Davis Denton, the original Golden Grappler, got his start... Owen Barr's kids all worked there as well and they actually took over the business when Owen retired. Portland Wrestling... if you go back to its roots in the twenties, I believe it might've been the longest-running territory by the time they went under in the early 90s.

[We see a darkened Portland Memorial Coliseum after Portland Wrestling's final show.]

"But Portland would not be without professional wrestling for very long."

[Cut to a shot of the Gaines family inside a ring.]

SA: The early 90s saw the rise of Pacific Coast Wrestling... in large part thanks to the Gaines family. Gunnar was there, of course, but so was his father and brother... his grandfather too. They all had a role to play there... and PCW would end up going national for a time.

[We cut to a shot of Gunnar in action in a match.]

"But the true "big time" was about to hit Portland in a big, big way."

[Cut to footage marked "May 18th, 1996 - IIWF Coliseum - Portland, Oregon" as we see the opening seconds of the very first show of the mighty Double Eye. The camera pans down past rows of screaming fans. Banners are held aloft, and the arena is packed to the rafters. As fireworks explode near the roof of the building,

the shot approaches the ring. Over these scenes of excitement we hear the voice of Tim Dross.]

TD: Welcome everybody to IIWF's first event! Welcome everybody to the IIWF Coliseum! Welcome everybody to CORONATION CLASH!

[The fans' cheers continue to echo as we see a few glimpses of some of the competitors who were in action that night: Tiger Claw, Billy Shakespeare, Deathbringer, Dan Kauffman, John Wesley Hardin under his Masked Outlaw hood, and a very different Casey James than modern fans are used to seeing.]

SA: Love 'em or hate 'em and believe me, there are PLENTY in the business still with opinions on both sides of that debate, you cannot disrespect and undervalue the sheer IMPACT the IIWF had on professional wrestling in the mid to late 90s. It was THE place to be for a couple of years there... and even Chris Blue will admit to the IIWF's influence over what would become the EMWC's product.

[Cut to footage from last year's Eternally Extreme preview show where the aforementioned former EMWC President is speaking about his former rivals.]

CB: The IIWF, for all its flaws, was one of the most successful promotions this business has ever seen. Memorable competitors, memorable matches, memorable moments... and boy, were they a great rival to have. Always pushing us to be better. Always forcing us to top ourselves every week.

[Cut back to more footage from inside the IIWF Coliseum with some of wrestling's most famous names in action: Kowalski, Byron, Petrow, Quigley, Thunder, both Rage brothers...]

SA: When you stop and do the math, the IIWF was only around for about two years which may not seem like much but during a time period when new promotions would open and close in a matter of weeks, it was a lifetime... and even if you want to give them grief for only being around two years...

[Albano shakes his head.]

SA: ...what a two years it was and what an impact it had.

[A clip of Tiger Claw doing battle with Hakiro Matusoto.]

SA: Would we have a "Cannonball" Lee Connors if Tiger Claw hadn't brought martial arts to the forefront of wrestling?

[To Lord Byron wrapping Creed up in the Aristoclutch.]

SA: How many technicians try to sell themselves to promoters by comparing themselves to Lord Byron?

[To a group shot of the Syndicate standing strong.]

SA: And every single faction that ever gets formed hopes to be compared to the Syndicate at some point. The IIWF's roster was influential and the promotion itself was too. Production values. The athleticism. Just the overall feel of the shows... the professional wrestling graveyard is overflowing with companies that tried to imitate but could not duplicate.

[A shot of the vacated IIWF Coliseum is shown from after the final IIWF events in the summer of 1998.]

SA: When it went under, it was a sad day for professional wrestling... because professional wrestling was better with the IIWF existing. But it even a sadder day for Portland because for the first time for close to a century, pro wrestling didn't have a presence in Rip City.

[We see a few old flyers float across the screen.]

SA: They tried. Rip City Wrestling with Spreadbury being the most notable... but even that didn't last. And the IIWF Coliseum... well, everyone knows that story.

[Cut to footage from an EMWC event where the abandoned Coliseum is literally in flames. Albano chuckles.]

SA: What? Blue? Hold a grudge? Never! But I'll tell you a secret. When the AWA decided to come to Portland and decided to run an event at the Coliseum... which has been tied up in legal fights for years now as some local businessmen wanted to bulldoze it while the city's been arguing against it... it was...

[Albano airquotes it up.]

SA: ...an anonymous donation from the professional wrestling industry that paid for the Coliseum to have full renovations to get it back up to code to hold this event... and to pave the way for the building to go back into full-time use by all the independent promotions in the area looking for a place to run.

[Another laugh.]

SA: I may not be on the call tonight - sadly - but you better believe I'll be there. Wrestling back in the IIWF Coliseum? Not a chance I'm missing that.

[Cut to a shot of AWA owner Jon Stegglet.]

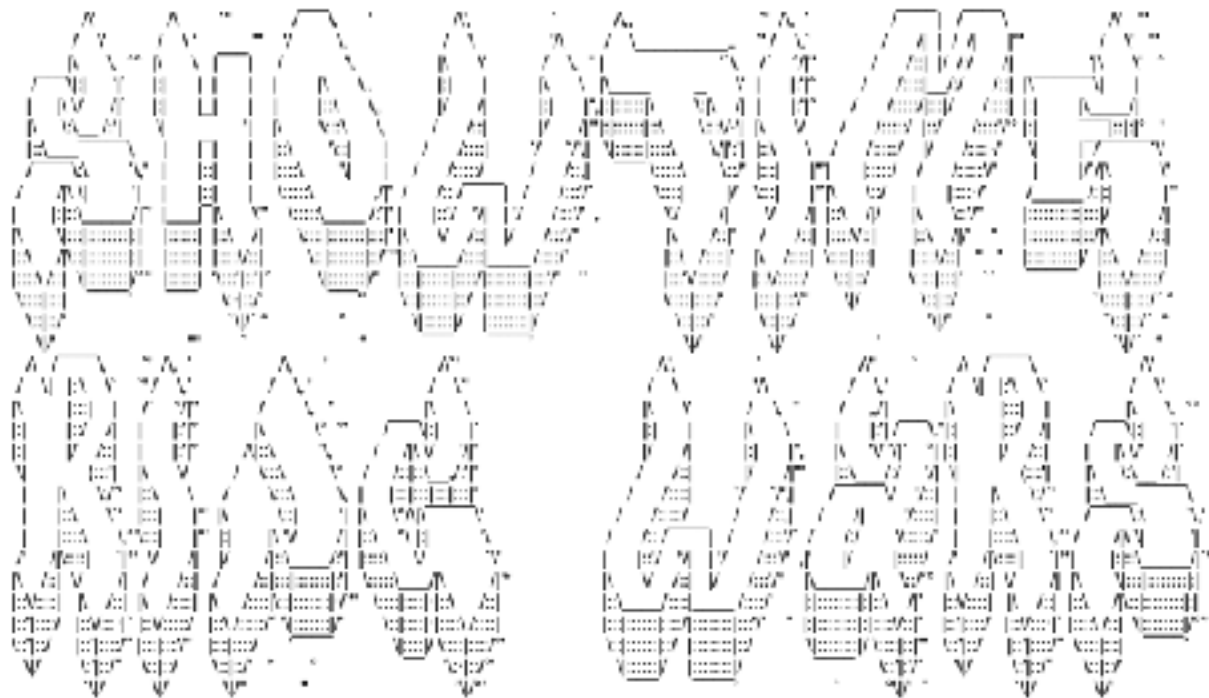
JS: The AWA's always been about honoring the past of this business - no matter what old rivals we have to be nice to to do it. We did it in Laredo... we did it in Toronto... and now we're doing it here in Portland. It's going to be a special night. We had to break into a third hour for this show because there's just so many AWA superstars who NEEDED to be on this show. They wanted the chance to step into this building and be a part of a historic night. I can't wait to see it all go down.

[To Showtime lead commentator Lori Dane.]

LD: Did I ever think I'd step foot in this building again? No chance! But I've been looking forward to this night since it was announced and it's going to be incredible. All those old IIWF legends out of the business... I hope they're home watching... and I hope we do them proud.

[We hold on a shot of the old abandoned IIWF Coliseum for a moment in black and white...

...which turns into a full color shot of the freshly-renovated Coliseum with the words "Showtime: Ring Wars" on the screen beneath it.



LIVE! + IWF Coliseum + Saturday 16 June 2018 + LIVE!

After a few moments, the opening graphics make way for interior shots of the renovated and rebuilt IWF Coliseum, the arena that served for more than two years as the purpose-built home of the _mighty_ IWF.

Tonight, it is, as it once was, lined with more than twenty thousand fans, a capacity crowd in full voice, bearing signs, wearing merchandise, and palpably anticipating the action to come.

The camera swings over the sea of humanity, over fans clamoring to make themselves visible in the shot, past the brightly-colored mix of AWA and old school IWF banners hanging from the rafters, over the ring, upon the canvas of which is silkscreened a special-for-this-night "Showtime: Ring Wars" logo, over the ringside enclosure, lined with photographers, press reporters, and broadcast tables...

Suddenly, the lights dim, pyrotechnics begin to fly across the Coliseum, and the crowd pops louder and hotter than ever before.

The crowd reaches a fever pitch as streaks of red, white and blue fireworks erupt throughout the rafters of the IWF Coliseum, each burst more deafening than the last. Over these scenes comes the voice of Showtime's lead announcer Lori Dane.]

LD: Welcome, everyone, to Portland, Oregon! Welcome, everyone, to the restored and revived IWF Coliseum! It'S SHOWTIME: RING WARS!

[White sparks shoot out alongside the rampway, spotlights swirl from every corner of the arena, and, above the ring, blue laser beams streak from pillar to post, then begin to dance maddeningly until finally projecting the words "SHOWTIME: RING WARS" onto the roof of the jam-packed Coliseum. The decibel level climbs higher and higher; then, with one last thunderous burst of white pyro, the lights come back on, and the fans pop with all their might.

The camera pans quickly across the chaotic sea of IWF fans, a blur of signs left in its wake. Assorted close-ups reveal fans screaming at the top of their lungs. One exuberant fan has another locked into a cobra clutch. One fan has a sign that says "IWF 4-Life." Another sign says "PORTLAND WRESTLING IS BACK!". Still another says "Ben Waterson is my Dad".

Finally, cut to ringside, and the English broadcast table, at which are seated Lori Dane and Ben Waterson - the former in a red top with billowing black pants, the latter in a black suit, looking around appraisingly at the surroundings for this night. Dane adjusts her headset before addressing the camera.]

LD: On August 1st, 1998, this building was the home of IIWF Forever - the final event in the short-but-storied history of the Double Eye... one of professional wrestling's most impactful promotions. Nearly twenty years later, this building has been renovated and restored and brought back to life - not just to serve as the home of this event here tonight, Ben... but to bring professional wrestling BACK to the city of Portland in high style!

BW: Dane, you can spew all the niceties you want about this joint but I know for a fact, it's gotta be eating you up inside to be here in this place tonight. When people are put on a battlefield and they go to war, they don't just forgive and forget... twenty years or two hundred years, I know there's a part of you that wants to burn this place to the ground like you and your pals tried to do years ago.

[Dane shakes her head.]

LD: Time changes all, Ben Waterson, and on this night, I am willing to forgive and forget and bury the hatchet in the most respectful way possible. As our colleague "Big" Salvatore Albano said in the opening video, whether you loved the Double Eye or you hated it, you cannot deny the impact it had on our industry. All these years later and we STILL have people involved with the AWA who were involved with the mighty IIWF right here in Portland, Ben.

BW: You can't fool me, Dane.

LD: Oh, and why would I try. We have a tremendous night of action lined up for you here on ESPN on a show so star-studded, we had to spill into a THREE hour show for the first time here on Showtime!

BW: Are we getting overtime for this?!

LD: You really are too much... and as the ring crew goes to work setting up for tonight's opening match...

[We cut inside the ring where we can see AWA ring crew members hard at work setting up wooden tables inside the squared circle and all around the ringside area.]

LD: ...I have to admit I never thought I'd see the day when Seven Tables of Fear came to the AWA, Ben.

BW: One of wrestling's most legendary matches... one of the matches the IIWF is most remembered for.. along with the Meatman Challenge, of course.

LD: Ben! We're supposed to be nice tonight!

BW: Oh, come on... you know you popped for that one.

[Dane sighs.]

LD: If you want to talk about the Double Eye's longstanding influence though, you can talk about Seven Tables... you can talk about Death In Darkness... you can talk about...

BW: The log scaffold?

LD: ...ahem... as I was saying, these are stipulation matches that are well-known in IIWF history that have made their way to other promotions over the years as well. And tonight, it's only fitting that Odysseus Allah is in this one with his father, Dirt Dog Unique Allah, helping to pioneer the match alongside Joe Petrow over twenty years ago.

BW: And we all saw them on Saturday Night Wrestling, reviewing the tapes, Odysseus poring over them as he tries to find a way to make his moment like his old man did so long ago. Tonight is his night, Dane.

LD: Lee Connors may have something to say about that... coming off a victory over Jayden Jericho in San Jose...

BW: A disqualification victory... and then he took a beating at the hands of Allah and Gen Lost! Connors might not even be able to walk out here tonight. Has anyone checked on that?

LD: Oh, he's here... and he's pledged to compete. In fact, I think the time for talk is done, Ben Waterson, so let's head up to our good friend Megumi Sato for the introductions!

[Sato takes center ring in a pair of black jeans and a "vintage" t-shirt reading "WHO'S YOUR DADDY?" as the lights lower.]

MS: Tonight's opening contest is SEVEN TABLES OF FEEEEEEEAR!

[The crowd ROARS for the announcement!]

MS: There will be no pinfalls, no disqualifications, no countouts and no submissions. The ONLY way to win is for one man to put his opponent through four out of the seven tables in and around the ring!

Introducing first...

[Sato grins as "Snakes" by Ol' Dirty Bastard begins to play and the Portland crowd goes NUTS for one of their cult heroes!]

MS: Being accompanied to the ring by his father.. DIRT DOG UNIQUE ALLAH...

[As the cheers get louder, Dirt Dog chooses to not wait any longer, bursting through the curtain out onto the entrance stage with a stumble and a stagger. He stands in a denim coat - sharp-eyed viewers would identify it as something similar or perhaps even the very same coat that he wore the night of the first Seven Tables of Fear matchup. He staggers to the top of the aisle, spreading his arms wide as he soaks up the perhaps-surprising-to-some adulation from the Portland crowd.]

LD: Listen to this ovation for the Dirt Dog, Ben!

BW: Local legend Dirt Dog Unique Allah has returned to stand in front of the fans that made him famous. I met a guy earlier tonight he said he was in Skydome for the original Seven Tables and paid \$500 for a ticket to this sold out show tonight to be here for this one. That's loyalty and that's dedication!

[Dirt Dog stomps his foot a few times, causing a loud "CLANG!" to ring out with each stomp on the metal stage before he swings around, pointing to the curtain...]

MS: ...he weighs in at 225 pounds... from Brooklyn, New York...

...ODYSSSSSEUSSSSSSSS ALLLLLLLAAAAAAAAAAH!

[And the son follows the father into view - a young, rough good-looking guy: gold fangs, undercut short dreads, patchy beard, tattooed sleeves on his arms. For this night, he's wearing an identical denim coat to his father, combat fatigue pants, and combat boots.]

LD: Born on April 1st, 1997, Odysseus Allah was about a week from being born on the night his father went through physical hell against an AWA alumni himself "SychoSYS" Joe Petrow in the original Seven Tables of Fear match at Ring Wars 3 - the night that Dirt Dog Unique Allah became a household name to professional wrestling fans around the world. This young man has never known a day in his life when the legend of this match has not hung over his head... and tonight, he seizes the opportunity to make his own legend in the match his father made famous.

[Odysseus reaches his father at the top of the ramp, draping an arm over his shoulders, pointing out on the cheering fans...]

"This is for you, pops."

[Dirt Dog grins, a hint of a tear escaping his eye as Odysseus nudges his father down the aisle, leading the way as father and son walk that ramp together.]

LD: A nice moment there for the Allahs as they head down to the ring together... and it might be the last nice moment for the night as this match is about to take destructive violence to a whole other level here in Portland tonight.

BW: The AWA ain't exactly known for breaking tables, Dane, so it's a rare thing to hear the promise of not just one table being broken... but at least four!

LD: Essentially, fans, this is a two out of three falls match... sort of... as the two men will attempt to put their opponent through more tables than the other. And it's important to note that ONLY these seven tables you see are allowed to be used. No extras under the ring. It's gotta be these.

[With Dirt Dog stumbling from railing to railing to give high fives and hugs to the excited Portland crowd, his son stays focused on the ring, chewing his lip with determination as he lets his fingers drift across a ringside table before rolling under the ropes.]

LD: Odysseus is in... and you can see the focus on his face, feeling the tables... testing their strength...

[He slaps another one before leaning back in the corner, his eyes closed as his father joins him. Dirt Dog cackles at the sight of the table, throwing himself backwards across one as he yells "THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME!" to the Portland crowd.]

LD: ...and Dirt Dog Unique Allah is loving every second of this, fans. The reaction of these fans has this man feeling a natural high he hasn't felt in a long, long time.

[Dirt Dog sits up, looking out on the cheering fans that start a chant...]

"DIRT! DOG!"

"DIRT! DOG!"

"DIRT! DOG!"

[...and Allah pumps a fist, excitedly running to the corner, hopping up on the middle rope to salute the fans as his son stands nearby, his eyes still tightly closed as his father rejoices at the crowd's reaction! Dirt Dog cups his hands to his mouth...]

"YOU LOVE ME! YOU REALLY LOVE ME!"

LD: What a moment for this longtime veteran of-

[...and suddenly, without warning...]

"CRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAASH!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: WHAT THE-?!

[The crowd and the announcers react as Odysseus Allah's eyes pop open as he steps to the corner, reaching up to grab his father by the jacket...

...and YANKS him backwards off the middle rope, throwing him down through a wooden table set up near the corner!]

LD: WHAT IN THE HELL WAS THAT?!

[The crowd is silent for a moment as son stands over father, looking down coldly at the former IIWF superstar...

...and then the boos start to grow. Odysseus' head whips up, staring out on the crowd...]

LD: Odysseus Allah... Ben, he just put his own FATHER through a table!

BW: I saw it, I saw it!

LD: What the hell is going through this kid's head?!

BW: I don't know but... he sure doesn't look like he regrets it!

[The Portland crowd on their feet - stunned, screaming, a mix of shock and outrage as the young Allah stands over his motionless father, looking out on them...]

LD: Dirt Dog Unique Allah was saluting these fans, thanking them for their support... and his son - his own flesh and blood - just violently assaulted him and...

[...and Allah doesn't waste any more time as he STOMPS his father between the eyes once... twice... looking out on the fans after each blow landed... three times... four times...]

LD: Can someone get him off the man?! You've gotta be kidding me!

[Odysseus steps back again, his father remains lying in the wreckage, barely showing any signs of moving or breathing as we see officials suddenly swarming down the ramp, EMTs rushing down behind them...]

LD: We've got officials on the way... medics as well... but they may be too late after this vile act by Odysseus Allah...

[The air feels heavy, tense as the cameras pick out shocked, saddened and horrified fans from the crowd to show the gravity of the situation.]

BW: Dane, did you see which table he...?

[The camera zooms in on the splintered remains of the airbrushed table which now reveals - to longtime fans...]

LD: That table - that's the Bulldog Bob Brown table! No one's ever...

BW: And now it's been done, Dane! The impossible has been done! The prodigal son has shattered not just the table - he's shattered the body, the career and the myth of Dirt Dog Unique Allah!

[The crowd is booing relentlessly now, breaking from telling Odysseus that he sucks to some much more obscene chants that earn the network censor their day's pay. The profanity is flying but Odysseus doesn't flinch.]

He stands tall over the broken remains of the table and Dirt Dog, crazed eyes popping. He rips the tape off his wrists, tosses it aside, and signals for a mic.]

LD: Are you kidding me? Don't give him a mic! After what he just did, nobody wants to hear-

[An intense glare at the ringside attendant is punctuated with a sharp threat as Allah, breathing heavily, snatches a microphone out of their hand.]

BW: I'm not sure we're even going to be able to hear him in here.

[Odysseus raises the microphone but the Portland crowd's intensity is overwhelming, not even allowing him to get a word out as they drown him out with boos. It's not just loud... it's suffocating.]

LD: The fans of Portland have waited a long, long time for this night... the fans of Dirt Dog Unique Allah - those longtime fans who've treated this man as something of a cult hero no matter where he went or what he did...

BW: Even as a brainwashed zealot?

LD: ...are in shock... they're horrified that a son would do this to his father. Fans, we've seen some terrible things in the AWA over the years between families. Brothers. Sisters. But for a son to betray his own father like this... it's twisted... it's vile.

[Allah's efforts to speak are drowned out again, spiking the decibel meter.]

LD: This place is shaking right now with fury!

[Odysseus paces, tight-jawed, frustrated. His eyes are hot. His breathing is ragged. He tries again to raise the mic. The boos only intensify again. The camera zooms in on his furious expression: the bulging veins in his neck, his wild red eyes, his wide nostrils.]

OA: (half-shouting, barely audible): You all - you - don't - know - a DAMN THING!

[Boos overwhelm him again. He slams the mic against his free hand in frustration.]

OA (shouting now, voice breaking through for just a moment): You want to cheer for him - that old drunk! You think he's still a king?!

[The camera cuts to Dirt Dog Unique Allah being tended to by AWA medical as Tommy Fierro tries to persuade Odysseus to exit. The crowd - seeing Dirt Dog on the big screen - sparks for him...]

"DIRT DOG!"

"DIRT DOG!"

"DIRT DOG!"

[Odysseus' face darkens. He glares down at his father - motionless on the mat - and that sends the crowd into an even bigger frenzy. Shoving a medic aside to a shout from Fierro, the son crouches beside Dirt Dog, sneering through clenched teeth. The camera catches just enough to read his lips: "Is this your king?" The chant abruptly ends as the boos pick up again.]

LD: Get him out of there!

[Odysseus stands again, snarling, pacing the ring. He points to his own chest, shouting silently as the audio barely picks up fragments through the roar.]

OA: (barely audible): I'm your king!

[He throws the mic down with a violent crack. The crowd boos harder - a sustained, relentless wall of sound. Allah grabs a handful of Dirt Dog's hair, dragging his limp body toward the corner. The crowd's roar turns panicked.]

LD: Oh no - oh, come on, not again! Somebody stop this!

BW: He's making a statement, Dane! You can't crown yourself without crushing the old regime!

[But before Allah can strike...]

LD: IT'S LEE CONNORS! IT'S LEE CONNORS!

[Without warning, "Cannonball" Lee Connors is sprinting down the aisle towards the ring, the Portland crowd opening with gratitude as he charges hard towards the ring. Odysseus, having spotted his scheduled opponent, shoves Dirt Dog aside, beckoning Connors forward...

...and when the running Connors leaps onto one of the ringside tables set up perpendicular to the ropes, he keeps on running for a few more steps before HURLING himself between the ropes into a spear tackle on an approaching Odysseus, taking him down to a thunderous ROAR from the Portland crowd!]

LD: SPEAR! SPEAR! SPEAR!

[With Allah down on the mat, Connors shifts into a mount, hammering fists down on him. This is no graceful and efficient display of martial arts in this moment - this is a fight!]

LD: The fists are flying in Portland!

[Allah covers up, trying to shield himself as Connors hammers him down into the canvas to even louder cheers!]

LD: Lee Connors from out of nowhere to save Dirt Dog Unique Allah here on Showtime!

[Allah wriggles out from under Connors, promptly rolling from the ring to the outside...

...but as Connors gets to his feet, he breaks into a charge, hitting the ropes...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and THROWS himself into a high speed somersault tope con hilo, wiping out Allah on the floor to a HUGE CHEER!]

LD: CONNORS ISN'T DONE WITH ODYSSEUS ALLAH QUITE YET!

[The ringside area floods with AWA officials again, Tommy Fierro taking point as he grabs the rising Connors around the waist, holding him back as Allah crawls several feet down the aisle before pushing to his feet, shouting threats back at Connors... at his father... at the officials... at the crowd...]

We cut to a shot of Dirt Dog Unique Allah, being loaded onto a stretcher as quickly as possible - shards of the Bulldog Bob Brown table still scattered around.

The shot cuts back and lingers on Odysseus at the top of the ramp, lit from behind, defiant against a sea of hatred.]

LD: Fans, I don't know what to make of all this... but I do know this: we just saw something we'll never forget.

BW: The throne has changed hands, Dane. All hail the new king!

[Allah throws his arms out and basks in the defiance.]

LD: This is RIDICULOUS, Ben! Absolutely disgusting!

BW: What are you going on about now?!

LD: Well, if you possibly can - and I don't see how - put aside for a second the man brutally assaulted his own FATHER... he also pulled the ultimate bait and switch on these fans! These devoted fans here in Portland were SO excited to see Seven Tables of Fear... our fans at home were as well... and Odysseus Allah just jerked all that out from under them. Our opening match is... it's just over before it even started and that is NOT how we wanted this special night to go down.

BW: Expect the unexpected anytime you watch AWA television, Dane. Odysseus Allah had a plan and he executed it to PERFECTION out here! He just took out an old piece of stanky trash that should've been dumped in the late 90s... but no, we all sat around for twenty years and put over a guy who made his name on ONE match and then coasted on that reputation through an ocean of cheap booze and cheaper women!

LD: BEN!

BW: Come on, people! Lemme hear ya! "SHOOT BEN SHOOT!"

LD: I don't know what's gotten into you tonight but these people deserved better than this... Dirt Dog Unique Allah... he did as well. The man may have his demons but he's a human being and a father and... as a parent, it makes me sick.

BW: You and ol' Dirt Dog might have more in common when it comes to parenthood than you'd admit to, Dane.

LD: Why you son of a-

[We abruptly cut to the backstage area where a totally unprepared Sweet Lou is standing, highball glass in hand, winking at a production assistant who is working on his hair.]

SLB: So, after this is all over, I hear there's a great brewery over at-

[A muttered "LOU! WE'RE LIVE!" is heard as Blackwell's eyes go wide. He nudges the assistant out of sight, shoving the in-hand glass behind a production case.]

SLB: Yes! We are LIVE here in the IIWF Coliseum in Portland, Oregon for this very special edition of Showtime! It's... it's...

[Blackwell has totally lost his train of thought for a moment.]

SLB: Ah! Yes! The World Television Champion... well, it was just two weeks ago, fans, in the Temple of Boyle Heights where we saw... quite frankly, it was a disturbing scene. Let's take a look at the closing moments of last week's wild brawl between Odin Gunn and King Kong Hogan!

[He swipes a hand across a sweaty brow...

...and we cut to footage from last weekend's Showtime where we see Odin Gunn tossing King Kong Hogan over a railing before following him out onto the office structure built into the arena area of the Temple. Gunn starts putting the heavy boots to Hogan as the crowd buzzes with concern

LD: Can we get help out here NOW?! This is out of control!

[More officials break into view, Kevin Slater rushing over near the office, arms extended as he shouts at Gunn to "STOP IT! STOP IT RIGHT NOW!"..

Gunn pulls Hogan off the roof of the office, pulling him into a standing headscissors near the edge...

...but a desperate Hogan fights back, standing tall...]

"THUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUD!"

"OOHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...delivering a backdrop that sends Gunn crashing onto the roof with a sickening thud!]

LD: My anxiety is through the roof just WATCHING this!

[The crowd gasps at the action far too far off the concrete floor to be safe as the punch-drunk Hogan pulls Gunn off the roof...

...and tugs him into a front facelock!]

LD: HE'S GOING FOR A DDT! HE'S GOING FOR A DDT ON THE ROOF!

[But Gunn wraps his powerful arms around Hogan's torso, lifting him into the air in what looks like a modified bearhug, holding him for all to see...

...but Hogan sinks his teeth into the flesh near the eyesocket of Gunn!]

LD: AHHHHHHH!

[...and with a primal roar and still in the air, Hogan DRIVES Gunn downward for that DDT...]

LD: DD- AHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

[...but the roof gives way under their combined weight!]

[illegible]

CBW: But that was just an appetizer, partner.

[He slowly drags a thumb across his own throat.]

CBW: Because in fourteen nights, Odin Gunn ain't just beatin' King Kong Hogan...
...he's gonna BURY him.

[He slams a boot down, as if he was driving a stake into the ground.]

CBW: Six feet under the cold Washington dirt! Six feet where the worms get fat and the maggots and every hungry thing that crawls in the dark can feast on what's left of that damned black, rotten soul of yours, Hogan!

[He suddenly grabs the camera with both hands, pulling it in close.]

CBW: You hear me, Hogan??? You bit him. You gouged him. You tried to send my champion to the grave.

[He releases the camera and throws his arms wide, his voice booming and roaring to the rafters.]

CBW: Well in two weeks, Odin Gunn rises up like the wrath of God itself and drags your sorry hide straight down to hell where you belong!

[He sneers.]

CBW: Two weeks, Hogan. Mark it in blood. Because when Odin Gunn's done with you...

[A sinister grin forms on Webb's face.]

CBW: ...the Devil's gonna need a bigger fire.

[He hurls the mic at Sweet Lou's feet and tips his Stetson, before storming off. Blackwell looks alarmed at what he just heard as we cut back to ringside.]

LD: Wow! Is that official?! Curly Bill Webb just told the world that in two weeks' time - in Seattle at the Historic Washington Hall - his man, the undefeated World Television Champion Odin Gunn will take on King Kong Hogan!

BW: Katie, bar the door, 'cause that's gonna be a Pier Sixer the likes of which Seattle ain't never seen, babydolls!

LD: Oh, don't you start with that. Fans, we'll eagerly be waiting to hear if President Zharkov agrees to that match for two weeks from now in Seattle on Showtime but while we wait for that, let's head to the ring for tag team action!

[Inside the ring, we see that the Soldiers of Fortune have made their way to the ring, Stephens muttering at the masked Mr. Stars and Stripes as he gestures across the ring at their opponents...

"DING! DING! DING!"

[And at the bell, the masked Mr. Stars and Stripes rushes across the ring, clubbing one opponent with a running forearm that sends them spilling out to the floor before pivoting to smash the other with an overhead elbow that knocks them into their own corner.]

LD: And the masked man wasting no time in taking the fight right to the opposition. as we jump right into tag team action here on Showtime: Ring Wars... and I believe that's Luther Stein in there right now getting some heavy shots to the skull... now that knee being swung up into the body as this new version of the Soldiers of Fortune look to impress Interim President Zharkov and the Championship Committee. Ben, President Zharkov says this version of the Soldiers are NOT the former Stampede Cup winners... they're NOT the former World Tag Team Champions... and if they want a shot at Team Supreme, they gotta earn it.

BW: Zharkov's got some good points in there but Charlie Stephens believes he's wrong. Charlie Stephens believes that as long as he's a part of this team, this IS the Soldiers of Fortune - Joe Flint or not... and as such, he thinks they should be getting the shot at the titles next weekend in Portland... not Wes Taylor and Tony Donovan.

LD: What Charlie Stephens believes does not matter though... because if they want to Run The Rankings on the 4th of July, they gotta make sure they're still in the Top 5 contenders list. I'm told that the current rankings was put in place prior to a directive from the President's office to NOT consider these Soldiers the same Soldiers... so I think they're going to sink like a stone in this next rankings to come out.

BW: Not if Mr. Stars and Stripes keeps this up... he's mauling this guy!

[Having worked Stein over with a flurry of forearms and elbows and kicks, the masked man grabs Stein by the hair, hauling him out to center ring where he scoops him up, throwing him down in a slam near the far corner where Meekly applauds and Stephens nods approvingly...]

LD: There's the tag... the masked man grabs the front facelock...

[Stephens steps through the ropes, hopping up on the middle before leaping off with a forearm across the back...]

LD: Nice doubleteam there, laying Stein out on the canvas.

[The masked man steps out, leaving Stephens to stomp Stein a few times before attempting a cover.]

LD: He gets one... he gets two... but that's all.

[Stephens angrily shouts at the referee, clapping his hands together...]

LD: Stephens wants a quicker count apparently... and the fans here in Portland aren't too fond of that.

[Stephens drags Stein off the mat by the hair, throwing him into the Soldiers' corner where he lays in some heavy boots to the ribs before making another tag.]

LD: Right back in comes the big man... ohhh! Big forearm across the sternum!

[Taking him from the corner, the masked man whips him across, sending him flying with an impactful clothesline across the chest...]

BW: Ooof! That'll knock the wind right out of you!

[This time, it's Mr. Stars and Stripes who makes a cover, getting another two count.]

LD: Two count for Stars and Stripes as well and-

[Just as Keith Walker gets up on the apron, the masked man barrels across the ring, connecting with a big tackle that sends him back down...]

LD: -oh, come on! The man had JUST gotten back into this and Stars and Stripes takes him down!

[Stephens sticks out a hand, looking for another tag...

...but instead, the masked man pulls Stein into a double underhook, looking out on the jeering crowd...

...and SPIKES him headfirst into the canvas!]

LD: DOUBLE ARM DDT! That's gotta be it!

[The masked man takes the cover... and gets the three count with ease.]

"DING! DING! DING!"

[Stephens smirks at the crowd's reaction, dusting off his hands before dropping off the apron, moving right over to a waiting Mariah Wolfe and Sweet Daddy Williams.]

LD: It looks like-

[Stephens jerks the mic towards him, shouting into it and cutting off Dane who was trying to hand the segment over to Wolfe and Williams.]

CS: HOW YOU LIKE THAT, ZHARKOV?! HOW YOU LIKE THAT, PORTLAND?!

[The fans of Portland don't like it too much, jeering angrily as Stephens smirks, Meekly sliding into view, whistling dangling from his mouth...]

CS: Zharkov thinks that these Soldiers aren't the same as the old Soldiers... well, I say he's wrong, Wolfe!

[Mariah Wolfe looks surprised she's going to get a chance to speak.]

MW: You have to admit - the personnel is different!

[Stephens waves a dismissive hand.]

CS: I'm here! Marty's here! What more do you need?

[Sweet Daddy Williams raises his mic with a grin.]

SDW: Joe Flint, baby.

[The crowd cheers as Williams chuckles at Stephens' reaction.]

CS: Ease off, fat man. Nobody asked for your opinion.

[Williams' fists ball up as he steps closer but Mariah steps in front of him, trying to intervene as Mr. Stars and Stripes joins his allies at ringside.]

MW: Hang on now... let's keep this professional. But my partner... my co-host raises a good point, gentlemen. IF you want to be the top contenders to Team Supreme, it seems as simple as that. Bring back Joe Flint and the President says you've got the match!

[Stephens shakes his head.]

CS: Oh yeah, Mariah! Real simple! Simple as punch! Oh, there's just one little problem... Joe Flint doesn't want to come back!

[The crowd grumbles at that proclamation.]

CS: I don't know, I don't know... there's something in his head after the whole Royal Crown thing and... he won't come back.

MW: Have you tried-

[Stephens angrily interrupts, his frustration is obvious.]

CS: I'VE TRIED EVERYTHING!

[Stephens throws up his hands.]

CS: I've tried absolutely everything, Mariah... he says he won't come back. He says he's done.

[He looks down, shaking his head as Meekly looks over at Stars and Stripes who nods. Meekly grabs Stephens by the shoulder.]

MM: Charlie, baby... listen to me...

[Stephens looks up at his manager.]

MM: ...I got an idea.

[Stephens raises an eyebrow as Meekly nods.]

MM: Yeah, I think I can make this all go away. Let's get out of here and discuss this...

[He throws a look at Wolfe.]

MM: ...in PRIVATE.

[Meekly steers Stephens away as Stars and Stripes glares at Sweet Daddy Williams for an awkward moment before following after his allies.]

MW: Well, it looks like it's time for a new strategy session for the NEW Soldiers of Fortune.

[Wolfe grins.]

MW: We'll be right back with more Showtime right here LIVE on ESPN!

[We fade to black...

And then back up to a shot of a darkened room, a filtered spotlight shining down in the middle of it. We can hear footsteps in the background.

Thump.

Thump.

Thump.

The steps are drawing closer it seems.

Thump.

Thump.

Thump.

And they come to a stop revealing the face of Ryan Martinez, still battle-weathered from his bloody war at SuperClash IX.]

"They call me the White Knight."

[A quick shot of Martinez delivering brutal chops to the chest of the King of the Death Match, Caleb Temple.]

"The son of a Hall of Famer."

[A shot of House Martinez - father and son - standing in the ring with Gunnar Gaines.]

"The former two-time World Champion."

[A shot of Martinez standing over Juan Vasquez with the World Title in his grasp.]

"And I am AWA."

[We get an almost identical shot in the darkened room but this time with Supreme Wright standing center stage.]

"The greatest professional wrestler on the planet."

[Cut to footage of Wright cranking on the arm of Casey James.]

"A two-time World Champion"

[Wright holds the title overhead with a defeated Dave Bryant in the background.]

"I am AWA."

[Wright is replaced by Julie Somers.]

"The Spitfire."

[A shot of Somers flipping off the top rope, crashing down on top of Kurayami with the moonsault.]

"The Women's World Champion."

[To SuperClash IX and Somers holding the title over her head.]

"The heart and soul of the Women's Division."

[Somers trading blows with Lauryn Rage inside a steel cage.]

"And I am AWA."

[Somers is replaced by Jordan Ohara, the National Title slung over his shoulder.]

"The Phoenix."

[Ohara dives off the top rope, smashing down with a Phoenix Flame splash.]

"The National Champion."

[Ohara stands on the midbuckle, holding the title up over his head.]

"A once in a millennium talent."

[A series of quick chops lighting up Juan Vasquez.]

"I am AWA."

[The champion is replaced by a grinning Michelle Bailey.]

"The Platinum Princess."

[Bailey tears across the ring, smashing home a Britney Spear on Laura Davis.]

"Former EMWC champion."

[A quick still photo comes up of Bailey holding a championship title aloft.]

"The heart and soul of the- Julie said that?! Grr!

[A playful Bailey plants her fists on her hips, striking a pose.]

"And I am AWA."

[Bailey is replaced by the face-painted Supernova, the World Title secured around his waist.]

"The icon."

[We get footage of Supernova way back in the day, trading blows with Mark Langseth.]

"The franchise player."

[Supernova using the Heat Wave splash on Shadoe Rage.]

"The World. Heavyweight. Champion."

"And I... AM... AWA."

[We get quick shots now, individual shots...

Jack Lynch.]

"I am AWA."

[Shadoe Rage.]

"I am AWA."

[Hannibal Carver.]

"I am AWA."

[Howie Somers.]

"I am AWA."

[Daniel Harper.]

"I am AWA."

[Harley Hamilton.]

"I am AWA."

[They come quicker and quicker, all repeating the tagline - James Lynch, Victoria June, Cinder, Kerry Kendrick, Ayako Fujiwara...

...and this time, each time they say it, they stay on screen, the framed shot getting smaller as more people are added to it...

Laura Davis. Jackson Hunter. Bret Grayson. Ricki Toughill. And on. And on. And on.

And the photos all disappear, leaving just the tagline behind...]

"I am AWA."

[The graphic fades and is replaced with more text - "The American Wrestling Alliance. Every Saturday Night. ESPN."

Fade to black.

We fade back up to live action where we find Sweet Lou Blackwell in the backstage area of the IIWF Coliseum. Blackwell inhales deeply, looking around.]

SLB: You can almost smell the Mooselips in here.

[He shakes his head with a chuckle.]

SLB: From the days of the Fury, the Red Gloved Rookie, and good ol' Whitebread to... Sweet Lou? Will wonders never cease! Fans, we are live here in the IIWF Coliseum in Portland, Oregon for this special night and... well, while our night is just beginning here in Rip City... I'm here to talk to you about two weeks from tonight in Historic Washington Hall in Seattle... and when I say that I hope the owners of that particular building are well-insured, I mean it.

[A graphic comes up, sending a ROAR through the arena.]

SLB: It's official! Two weeks from tonight in Seattle, it'll be a fight for the ages with the World Television Champion, Odin Gunn, taking on King Kong Hogan! Batten down the hatches for that one because if this fight is anything like the last time they hooked it up, we'll be looking for a whole lot of brooms and dustpans when it's all over. Now, let's go down to the ring for more tag team action!

[We fade from the backstage area to the ring where Megumi Sato awaits the next match.]

MS: The following contest is a tag team match scheduled for one fall with a ten minute time limit!

Introducing first... already in the ring at this time... from Miami, Florida... weighing in at 454 pounds... ADRIAN AND ALEJANDRO ALONNNNNNSOOOO!

[The two well-built Cuban brothers raise their arms to a mixed reaction from the crowd.]

The grungy sound of Neil Young starts up as "Dirty Old Man" rocks the PA and the former World Television Champion erupts through the curtain to a huge ROAR from the Portland crowd!]

MS: Their opponents... from... THE GRRRRREAT...! WHITE...! NORTH...! at a total combined weight of 460 pounds... JACKSON HUNTER... and SENNNNNNSAAAAAATIONALLLLL... ...SHAAAAAADOOOOOOE RAAAAAAAAAAGE!

[Rage bursts from the entrance, arms wide, spinning in a circle to make sure he acknowledges each and every fan cheering for him in Portland. Hunter struts behind him, a look of false modesty on his face, enjoying some secondhand adulation.]

LD: Ben, we've been here in Portland for the past couple of days now and I can tell you that of all the stars set to appear here tonight, this guy right here - Shadoe Rage - might be one of the most popular with this crowd!

BW: IIWF alumni... former World Tag Team Champion there with his brother Derek... maybe most famous in his Portland days for taking part in the first Death In Darkness match against then-World Champion Steve "The Fury" Kowalski. The people of Portland may not be alone in loving Shadoe Rage but they're certainly some of the loudest we've heard it express it!

[Rage hops onto the apron, and then perches on the top and middle ropes, making sure to point to as many fans as possible - those who remember him from back in the day, and the newer fans who are experiencing The Sensational Shadoe Rage for the first time. Hunter, meanwhile, skulks in the ring, throwing his hands in the air in his distinctive double peace sign.]

LD: This unique tag team came together alongside Brian James to battle Team Supreme back at Memorial Day Mayhem and after James' injuries at the hands of KAMS, these two grizzled ol' vets have stuck it out to try to climb the rankings and get a shot at those World Tag Team Titles... and a little bit of payback along the way.

BW: All the AWA's tag teams are vying for position. They know they have to be in the Top 5 if they want a chance to participate in Run The Rankings on the 4th of July at Opportunity Knocks in Seattle... and for these two, they're trying to put together a winning streak.

[The bell rings as the music fades, and the crowd is already loudly chanting "SHA-DOE! SHA-DOE! SHA-DOE!"]

LD: Jackson Hunter starting off this contest, though it's not too hard to tell who the sentimental favorite is in this match-

BW: What?! Huh? I dunno what these people are chanting, but I can't hear a thing you're saying!

LD: Collar-and-elbow tie-up with... I believe that's Adrian Alonso. Hunter with a definite reach advantage, but Alonso with the power advantage... backing Hunter into the corner.

[Adrian Alonso backs the former National Champion into the corner and Hunter starts complaining for the referee.]

"Get him off me! Get him off me, Miller!"

LD: Hunter... Calling for a break?

[The confident Alonso presses the advantage, until the referee tries to come between them. With the ref's back turned, Hunter lashes out with a quick thumb to the eye of Adrian Alonso.]

LD: Of course not a clean break – he didn't have to do that!

BW: Of course he did – that's Hunter's style, baby.

[Before the referee can question what happened, Hunter lights up Adrian Alonso with some harsh knife-edge chops in the middle of the ring, but to the tune of...]

"SHA-DOE!"

"SHA-DOE!"

"SHA-DOE!"

[Hunter, with a handful of his opponent's hair, points to his partner as if to ask the crowd, "him?"]

"RAAAAAAAAAAAH!!!"

[Hunter extends his hand for a tag...]

LD: For once, Jackson Hunter is about to give the people what they want.

[...but before slapping Rage's outstretched palm, he puts his hand to his ear, as if he wasn't quite sure what the fans wanted. They chant even louder.]

"SHA-DOE!"

"SHA-DOE!"

"SHA-DOE!"

LD: Or not.

[Then Hunter relents and tags in his partner.]

LD: There it is! And here comes one of the stars of this Coliseum homecoming! Shadoc Rage looks ready to explode across the canvas tonight!

BW: Ew. The ring crew better get paid extra for that.

[Rage leaps over the top rope and runs through Adrian Alonso with a flying knee lift that sends the young competitor flailing back to the ropes, close enough for his brother Alejandro to tag in.]

LD: Shadoc Rage, a house of fire here... look out!

[Alejandro charges in, but Shadoc ducks low and goes behind.]

LD: Belly-to-back side suplex, and these fans are loving what they are seeing... and you have to think the AWA Championship Committee might want to start giving these two crazy Canucks an appraisal as serious contenders for the World Tag Team Championship...

BW: Se-Serious appraisal?! These two have teamed together for less matches than the average IWF fan has fingers and toes! Single digits, Dane!

LD: Shadoc Rage with a big knee drop – I've seen Shadoc Rage wrestle for years now, and this seems to be the most dialed in I've ever seen him...

[The fans roar as Rage points to the turnbuckles, hazel eyes alight.]

LD: And now he's going up! They want to see one more Angel of Death drop in the Coliseum tonight!

[Rage scrambles to the ropes, and as he ascends, Jackson Hunter slithers into the ring, pulling Alejandro into a front facelock.]

LD: Wait a minute... he's not going to try this again.

BW: Hunter wants Shadoe to execute a Powerplex with him. It's an advanced maneuver that only the best tag teams in the world are able to pull off. THAT'S how you impress the Championship Committee, Dane.

[Rage looks dubiously down at Hunter, who gives him an eager "thumbs up." The Sensational One looks out to his fans for advice, pointing down at Hunter, who stands ready to suplex their opponent.]

BW: This isn't The Price Is Right! This is AWA Showtime!

[Rage shrugs, and moves to leap off the top rope with a crossbody. Hunter cinches up Alejandro Alonso, and his vertical suplex attempt is promptly reversed, getting taken as Rage looks down in disbelief, shaking his head.]

LD: You know, for two wrestlers with almost five decades combined experience in the squared circle, you'd think they would have thought to coordinate their offense better.

[Alejandro makes the tag to Adrian, but Jackson Hunter scooting around the mat, melodramatically wailing in agony and clutching his sacrum provides enough of a distraction to the Alonsos for Shadoe Rage to lay in wait.]

LD: Or did they...?

[Adrian suddenly finds the back of his head grabbed by the Sensational One, who dashes over the top rope to the floor to a roar from the crowd.]

LD: Hung out to dry in classic Rage fashion!

[Shadoe Rage flexes for the front row a couple of feet in front of him. A bunch of fans in the front row snap pictures of him before he climbs back on the apron and scales to the top rope, beckoning Adrian Alonso to get to his feet.]

LD: Rage right back up top!

[As the Cuban staggers up, Rage flies off driving him back into the mat with the Death from Above Double Axehandle.]

LD: DEATH FROM ABOVE CONNECTS! And how many times have some of these Portland fans seen that delivered over the years, Ben?

BW: More times than they can count... which could be not many... they're pretty dumb.

LD: Ben!

[Rage scoops up Alonso and slams him to the mat before pointing to the rafters and heading to the nearest neutral corner.]

LD: And now THIS should be the Angel of Death Drop that these fans have been dying to see.

[Alejandro is about to intervene, but he gets dragged off the apron to the floor by Jackson Hunter. He gets a poke to the eye for no good reason, then Hunter does a double-leg takedown on him at ringside.]

LD: Hunter cutting off any help – Rage perched on the top rope!

[You can see several of the fans in the stands stand up in excitement as the cheers reach a crescendo. On the floor below, Jackson Hunter torques Alejandro Alonso into the Mindflayer – but all eyes are on Shadoe Rage as he leaps off the top rope to drop his elbow with pinpoint accuracy onto Adrian Alonso.]

LD: There it is! Hooks the leg, but you can count to a hundred... Two! And three!

[Rage's emotive face is flushed with appreciation for the cheers that rain down on him.]

BW: I dunno, I'm still not sold on these two, Dane. Hunter, I like... he's a solid businessman, he's a solid tactician–

LD: You're talking about Jackson Hunter right now?!

BW: –I am, because I think he's the one who can lead this team to wherever it's ceiling is. I dunno how much upside you're going to get from a couple of guys whose prime years are behind them. But they're making a nice story for right now.

LD: Well, these two Canadian crazies are heading over to talk with Mariah Wolfe and Sweet Daddy. Jackson Hunter will be his usual charming self, I'm sure. And I know Shadoe Rage has got a lot to say. Mariah, Sweet Daddy, over to you.

[Cut to the interview area. Jackson Hunter chuckles darkly to himself as Rage is still at ringside, interacting with the fans.]

JH: See, Shadoe? I told you I had a plan!

SDW: Your plan was poke 'em in the eyeball?

JH: Always have a backup plan. And a backup backup plan. And a contingency. And a deadman's switch. And above all else, an all-purpose, rock solid alibi.

SDW: Well, considerin' last week on Saturday Night Wrestling, the last thing we saw from you was smacking Supreme Wright 'cross the back with your shovel, that's pretty on brand, ain't it? You enjoyed that, dinj'a?

JH: You're damned right I did, Sweet Daddy. I had considered aiming a little higher and scrambling Supreme Wright's brains, but after hearing him week after week creepily fawning over Paris Crawford for longer than a Leonard Cohen song, I figured that God has beaten me to it.

[Wolfe looks irritated at Hunter's comments.]

MW: Well... that's... misanthropic sentiments as always. Certainly won't endear you to the Tag Team Champions.

JH: GOOD. They don't like it? GOOD. There's more for all of you. Do something about it! Or sit on your rear ends and wait for nothing to happen. Hey Cain Jackson – we're all taking bets backstage about when this run is going to fizzle out like all

your others have. Hey AJ – are you a man or are you a meme? Hey Paris – bold choice being half Shawn Eckert, half Ruby Rhod. Bzz-BZZZZ!

[Shadoe Rage finally arrives at the host position with Sweet Daddy and Mariah and instantly commands the attention of all around him. Hunter sulks slightly as he politely shifts to the background. There is a little bit of tension between Sweet Daddy Williams and Rage from back in their day when they were in conflict over the World Television Title but that dissipates quickly.]

SDW: Well, Shadoe Rage, how does it feel to be back in Portland and the IIWF Coliseum?

[Rage looks around at the crowd.]

SR: How does it feel? How does it feel? It feels great, Sweet Daddy! It feels like it's a FREAK OUT!

[The fans cheer as Rage nods.]

SR: It feels like the clock has turned back and I'm feeling focused and energized. And now it's time to roll forward. And roll forward means keeping my vow of winning gold in 2018.

[Another big cheer as Rage makes the "belt gesture."]

SR: And that means those AWA World Tag Team titles in the clutches of Team Supreme. Portland, you know I know all about World Tag Team titles. So the road to the gold starts right here in Rip City. Me and Jackson Hunter... we're coming for those belts and maybe...just maybe... we're not coming alone. Dig it?

[Rage goes into a spin before pointing at the large video screen hanging above the entrance stage...

...which flickers to life with a shot of the parking lot of the IIWF Coliseum.]

SR: Well, whadda we have here, Hunter, hmm?

JH: If I was a betting man and... is gambling legal yet in Portland? Anyways, that looks like the parking lot of this very building to me.

[After a moment, we see a heavily-tinted and pimped-out Bentley Bentayga pull into view swiftly, the brakes screeching as it comes to a sudden halt just outside the wrestlers' entrance to the backstage area...]

LD: What is this all about? Someone has arrived here in Portland and...

[...and the camera pans down to the license plate, a personalized plate that simply reads "EOD"...]

BW: EOD... what's that?

[...and after a moment, the passenger door pops open, the camera staying back to allow the door to open and fully close before revealing - to a MASSIVE reaction...]

LD: OH MY GOD, IT'S BRIAN LAU!

[Indeed it is. DAMAN~! himself standing in the parking lot of the IIWF Coliseum. With a smirk on his face, he tugs a pair of sunglasses off, looking up at the arena that he made his name in during the early part of his career.]

BL: Looked better when it was on fire.

[With a shrug, he slides the glasses in place and starts walking towards the entrance.]

BW: Wait, wait, wait... Brian Lau here in Portland... EOD on the license plate here in Portland... Portland, Dane... are you getting this yet?

LD: EOD! The Engine of Destruction?!

[Cut back inside the arena where Jackson Hunter is grinning and Shadoc Rage is nodding to the boisterous crowd...

...and we cut to Lori and Ben.]

LD: Ben, can you believe it?! Brian James has come home to Portland and... Ben, Supreme Wright and the rest of Team Supreme are going go THROUGH THE ROOF when they arrive and hear about this!

BW: They WILL be here. We have that on good authority... and you're right, Dane. Supreme had to think this issue with Brian James was out of his hair for at least another month or two... but Brian James is apparently here in the parking lot waiting for Team Supreme to arrive and... this just got REAL interesting.

LD: Absolutely. And somewhat lost in all of this is another win for Jackson Hunter and Shadoc Rage, looking to impress the Interim President as we look ahead to Opportunity Knocks where five teams will get their chance to Run The Rankings and earn themselves a World Tag Team Title opportunity! And now-

[And now the chords of Prince's "Controversy" kick into the Coliseum a chorus of boos as the entrance screens kick to live with the graphics of... THE FRONT PAGE!

However, this was a bit unexpected as you can see the production team hastily bringing out the "desk" (honestly just a folding table and a tablecloth with a hand drawn "Front Page" sign), a chair behind the desk, a stool on the other side and a microphone.]

LD: What is this?

BW: Pretty obvious, Dane - it's the Front Page! One of the AWA's top rated television segments!

LD: Is that right? I'd like to see those numbers... and I realize it's the Front Page but what's it doing right now?! This was scheduled for later tonight!

BW: Does Bryson Page strike you as a man who follows anyone's schedule but his own?

[Adhering to his own schedule is the brash loudmouth himself, Bryson Page. He steps from the curtain, wearing his usual attire of black shoes with blue jeans, and a black tuxedo t-shirt under a leather jacket. He soaks in the boos from the Portland crowd as he walks over to the "desk" and picks up the mic. Making a cutting gesture to lower the music, he speaks...]

BP: WELCOME EVERYONE, MISTER AND MISSUS AMERICAN WRESTLING ALLIANCE AND THE ENTIRE FLUID RAINBOW IN-BETWEEN, TO THE HIGHEST RATED AND ENGAGED SEGMENT IN AWA HISTORY--

[Boos from the crowd for the - shall we say - stretching of the truth, which stops Page for a moment as he looks around]

BP: Ya know, this place shoulda STAYED BURNED DOWN!

[More boos... even louder this time.]

BP: Oh, I'm sure you all expect me, The Engagement GOD... to sit here and address the old elephant in the building and go off on how "legendary" this night is. And I can talk about how I did something once and it was the BEST...-

[He stops as the crowd starts to sing along.]

BP: I WILL NOT LOWER MYSELF TO THAT AND YOU WILL NOT SING ALONG!

[He shoots a look of disgust to the booing crowd.]

BP: I will not lower myself to doing any "shooting galleries" or anything like that. I'm more refined. You want that? The guy who made that famous is busy playing in Detroit, go bug him... I'm sure he'll be glad to live off the past, just like everyone else in PORTLAND!

[More boos at the antagonizing.]

BP: What I would like to talk about honestly is how the Westerly Dynasty has really upped their game and made everyone take notice, how they made their mark. Or how Team Supreme continues their brilliant stranglehold on the Tag Division!

[Crowd boos at the talk.]

BP: But no, you probably all want to talk about things that happened twenty-five years ago. Like throwbacks, big throwbacks. Why, throwbacks like.... the Seven Tables of Fear!

[Yup, that got the crowd who are ALL OVER Page for the bait and switch they were hit with earlier in the night.]

BP: Oh yeah, you want to talk about how another old timer clinging on to the past in Unique Allah was dragging his kid down! You see why Odysseus came in not wanting to trade on his daddy's name, because his daddy's a miscreant, a drunk, a leech. Odysseus did the right thing tonight, the HUMANE thing...

[The crowd is just raining hate down on Page now.]

BP: And like usual, you all can't take the truth! The truth of how brave and courageous Odysseus was in... well, letting his deadbeat old man have one last moment of nostalgia before sending his off to pastur-

[The crowd ROARS as "Cannonball" Lee Connors strides out onto the entrance stage to no fanfare, wearing the same wrestling attire we saw him in earlier when his much-hyped match was ripped from both him and the fans by the actions of Odysseus Allah. Page smirks at Connors' arrival, nodding his head.]

BP: HEY CONNORS, YOU'RE EARLY! Everyone, please welcome my special guest-

[Connors steps closer to the makeshift talk show set, kicking over a stool and sending it clattering away as Page gets up, alarm evident on his face as he raises his hand defensively.]

BP: Now now now! Hang on now... no need for that... let's keep this civil!

[Connors snatches up the extra mic on the desk.]

LC: CIVIL?! CIVIL?! I can't prove it, Page, but I KNOW you had something to do with what went down out here tonight!

[Page looks, or feigns, incredulously]

BP: I don't know what you're talking about.

[Connors shakes his head, pointing an accusing finger.]

LC: You've been whispering in Allah's ear since the moment you got here. You really expect me to believe he pulls that trigger tonight...

[He shakes his head, throwing an arm out.]

LC: ...destroying the match that everyone came out to see...

[His face twists in disgust.]

LC: ...and stabbing his own FATHER in the back... you expect me to believe he does ANY of that without talking to you.

[Page's alarm is getting worse as he tries to keep the desk between he and Connors.]

BP: Well, I mean, it may have come up in conversation. We do talk quite a bit...

[Connors nods.]

LC: His father is heading to the damn hospital, Page! These people came out to see one of their heroes - you know that?

[Page shrugs, suddenly finding his spine.]

BP: They saw their washed up hero. They saw him exposed for the FRAUD that he is! They saw him exposed as a JOKE who didn't deserve to share the spotlight with his much more talented son! They saw him as- ACK!

[Page's shout comes as Connors has heard enough, lunging over the desk to grab him by the suit jacket, yanking him forward so he's leaning over the wooden desk...]

BP: Wait, wait! Connors! Please! I'm an injured man! I'm a-

[...and with Connors threatening to inflict serious bodily damage on Page, a hulking beast of a man comes in from the blind side, smashing a forearm into the back of Connors' head!]

LD: OH! That's... Ben, that's Smasher Salazar! What's he doing out here?!

BW: Getting paid damn well if I know Salazar at all.

[Salazar lands a couple more clubbing blows, freeing Page from Connors. Page backs off, red-faced as he straightens his suit jacket, giving Salazar a nod. The burly brawler pulls Connors off the wooden desk by the hair...]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and SMASHES his face down onto the desk!]

LD: OH, COME ON!

[AWA officials flood onto the scene as Page shouts "AGAIN! AGAIN!" and Salazar obliges, lifting Connors' off the desk by the hair just to SLAM his face down a second time!]

LD: Enough is enough, damn it!

[Salazar raises his hands, backing off as Adam Rogers threatens him with god knows how much in fines. A smirking Bryson Page glares down at the laid out Connors as the Portland crowd jeers the dastardly duo...]

LD: Was... was this a trap for Connors?! Smasher Salazar sure seemed like he was lying in wait for him, didn't he?

BW: Bryson Page loves it when a plan comes together, Dane... a man after my own heart.

LD: That's disturbing. Just like what we've seen here tonight with Page and Salazar setting a trap for Lee Connors... and Connors has had a rough night here in Portland, Ben.

BW: Oh, boo hoo.

[The shot holds on Adam Rogers trying to get Page and Salazar to back away...

...and we fade back to the locker room area, we find Veronica Westerly - the head of the Westerly Dynasty - on a phone call.]

VW: Yes, Angelica, I understand what you promised him but why is that...?

[She trails off, shaking her head at her sister's response.]

VW: The money isn't my concern. I have the money. What I want to know is what he's going to do with it.

[She lifts a briefcase in her free hand, glaring at it... and then her eyes shift to the side.]

VW: He's here. Yes. Yes, I will, Angelica! Goodbye!

[She jams her phone into a pocket in her black pants, glaring hard at the man who interrupted her call. In a black suit of his own, gripping a wooden cane with a jagged crystal on top, Jason Dane has arrived in Portland.]

JD: Veronica, a pleasure to see you again.

[Westerly doesn't respond as Dane takes a deep breath, sighing with satisfaction.]

JD: Ahhhh. Veronica, as a woman who appreciates the history of our business, you've gotta love being here tonight. Just standing in this backstage area, I can feel the energy, can't you? It feels like a Kowalski Skullpump is around every corner... I can smell the implied inappropriate relationship between Requiem and his sister... I can hear Steve Roberts making a homophobic joke... I can-

[Veronica interrupts.]

VW: Please stop.

[Dane smiles.]

JD: I truly expected a warmer welcome for the man who brought your Dynasty one step closer to total dominance, Veronica.

[He stage whispers.]

JD: That would be me, of course. I'm assuming that was your sister on the phone.

[Veronica nods.]

JD: Did she have a message for me?

[Veronica grimaces.]

VW: She said to tell you she'll meet you in Monte Carlo... and to make sure the suite is filled with champagne.

[Dane smiles.]

JD: Oh, your sister is quite the little minx, Veronica.

[Westerly cringes.]

VW: Spare me before I get sick. Let's get this over with...

[She raises the briefcase.]

JD: It's all there?

[She nods.]

JD: Do I need to count it?

[She shakes her head.]

JD: Good. I'll trust we have an understanding that if you try to pull a fast one, things will go very wrong for you very quickly. It is the contents of that briefcase - and your sister's... persuasive tactics of course - that convinced me to get my friend to sign on to your managerial talents. Now, I know you can bring big things to Nenshou's future... so as long as we're on the same page... financially speaking...

[She grimaces again.]

VW: We are.

[He takes the offered briefcase, feeling the weight of it before grinning.]

JD: Excellent. Then I believe our business is concluded, Veronica. The best of luck to you in your future endeavors.

[Dane turns to leave when Veronica calls out.]

VW: One question.

[Dane arches an eyebrow.]

VW: That's a lot of money for a... what did you call it... a Finder's Fee?

[Dane smiles again... not the usual smile we're used to seeing from the former announcer but a slimy, used car salesman type of smile.]

JD: You mentioned a question.

[Westerly nods.]

VW: What do you plan on doing with it?

[Dane chuckles, rapping his knuckles on the leather case.]

JD: Oh, I've got an idea or two. See you around, Veronica.

[And with that, Dane walks out of view, leaving the manager behind.]

VW: I've got a bad feeling about this.

[We fade back down to Lori and Ben at ringside, an obviously-concerned look on the face of Lori Dane.]

LD: Me too.

BW: Okay, come on... spill it, Dane. What's going on with your brother?

LD: I have no idea. Seriously. I asked after Memorial Day Mayhem... I asked last week... he just says it's a business matter and he's got it under control.

BW: Which means...?

LD: Ben, I don't know! Okay? Can we just drop it?

[Dane clears her throat, trying to shake the concerned sound of her voice as she gets back down to business.]

LD: Earlier today, Mariah Wolfe met up with Casey Cash, who asked for some time before her match today, and Under Armour didn't even have to buy it for her.

BW: I think with the effort she put forth in the Rumble at Memorial Day Mayhem, she finally showed who she is to all those doubters out there, Dane.

LD: Well, she ran right into a buzzsaw named Stephanie Harper, and has been campaigning for a singles match against the Hall of Famer ever since. Last week on Saturday Night Wrestling, we saw Stephanie formally decline that match, so let's see if Casey has moved on. Let's go to the footage that Mariah got.

[We cut to footage marked with "EARLIER TODAY", as the "Charm City Cutie" Casey Cash stands beside Mariah Wolfe. Baltimore's favorite daughter is clad in an oversized orange Under Armour sweatshirt with a black logo and black Under Armour leggings, along with a Baltimore Orioles cap with a white front panel and an orange brim. Under her arm are two clipboards, which the interviewer eyes suspiciously.]

MW: It's nice to actually get a chance to talk to you by yourself, Casey. Normally you have the rest of E-Girl MAX, or the Thompsons, and I can never actually ask you anything.

CC: Well, sorry to burst your bubble... but I have a lot on my mind and I need to get it out, so I don't know how many questions you're going to get to ask.

[Mariah frowns but carries on.]

MW: I understand that you had something you wanted to say about Stephanie Harper. Is that correct?

CC: That's right, Mariah.

[Casey clears her throat and sighs.]

CC: Last week, I called Stephanie Harper a coward. I had only heard the context of what she said in her interview. I hadn't seen the full thing, and all I knew was that she turned down my challenge. Well, Mariah, now I've seen what she said, and I have to say, my feelings have changed.

[Mariah, suspicious, arches an eyebrow.]

CC: I mean, who knew that the wrestling world revolved around the whims and desires of Stephanie Harper's daughter and how she sees her mother?

[Mariah rolls her eyes, as we hear "aw come on" exit from her mouth but Casey keeps the microphone in front of her.]

CC: Stephanie, what a fairy tale for you, right? Out of retirement after 12 years away so you can show your daughter who you used to be.

["Used to be" practically drips with venom.]

CC: Draw #30, make your big entrance, show the world one more time who Stephanie Harper is... but that doesn't matter, right? Because all that matters to you in your eyes is your daughter, and how she sees you. Who gives a damn about the rest of the locker room that earned a spot in the Rumble, let's make way for the Hall of Famer throwing her weight around and dropping names.

[A scoff.]

CC: Hey Mariah. Ask Moxy Hart how that makes her feel. She was left out of the match so Stephanie Harper could make her kid happy. Ask Kelly Taylor how it feels to be the only Peach Pit on the sidelines. Ask Molly Bell why her treat supply is a little light this month. Ask my old classmate Charity Rockwell if she would have loved to jitterbug in Chavez Ravine.

[Casey shrugs as Mariah frowns again.]

CC: But I guess their dreams don't matter, huh Stephanie? Their paychecks don't need the pay-per-view cut. After all, we have to think about what Stephanie Harper's daughter thinks of her mother, so she gets to come right into the match in spite of not wrestling for over a decade. Isn't that what's most important? Her family? Does her image in her daughter's mind mean more than anything else? Anyone else?

[Casey glares at the camera, hoping her message goes straight to El Paso.]

CC: Those four women tried and failed to qualify for a match they should have been entered into by default, because they work here, and I may not like any of them but at least they should get the chance to compete. You get in because of your name, using your daughter's wistful memories of her retired mommy to wedge the door open.

[Casey practically spits out the next words.]

CC: You have the gall to call ME entitled? You take from the future of women's wrestling and you call ME entitled?

[She shakes her head.]

CC: Think about what you did at Memorial Day Mayhem, not just to me, but to the women you stepped over to get your selfish desires fulfilled. Think about if your daughter is proud of THAT. That her mom stole the dreams of people trying to make it in 2018, not living off what they did in 2003.

[Casey holds up the first clipboard, poking it with her index finger.]

CC: Then tell Zharkov you'll sign this contract for a match with me, so your daughter doesn't grow up thinking you're a coward, on top of being a thief.

[She hands the clipboard to Mariah, then holds up the second clipboard.]

CC: As for this, Mariah, those four women I mentioned? You tell any of them that what Stephanie Harper took from them, I'm going to give back. I'm listed as "in action" today, but this contract can be signed by any of those four women to be my opponent. You just warn them, Mariah...

[Casey shoves the second clipboard at Mariah, who looks at the "Charm City Cutie" with surprise.]

CC: ...what they get tonight is going to be on Stephanie Harper's conscience.

[With that, we cut back to the announcers, as Ben Waterson adjusts an Under Armour cap on his head. Lori Dane looks at her broadcast colleague and rolls her eyes.]

LD: Could you at least pretend to be objective?

BW: Hey, any time Casey Cash wrestles, it's brought to our fans by Under Armour. I'm making the sponsor happy.

LD: Well, I'm not going to even dignify what Casey Cash said about Stephanie Harper, it was utterly classless.

BW: You mean correct! If Stephanie Harper had a different name and no resumé to lean on, she would have been buying the pay-per-view instead of participating. I think Casey is right to call that out.

LD: I don't agree in the least, and I also don't think that gives Casey the right to make a grandstand challenge like she did. Molly Bell isn't even here today! She's been on a leave of absence ever since Ayako Fujiwara was injured!

BW: I doubt Casey keeps track of the dumb cats of the AWA, Dane. Besides, she has a reason to want all those four in the ring. The cat beat her in her first AWA appearance. We saw what Kelly Taylor did to her a couple of weeks ago. We know she's got a problem with her old classmate Charity Rockwell. Moxy Hart...

LD: I don't know what problem she has with Moxy Hart, but I do know Moxy faced Betty Chang in the past. Maybe Casey Cash has a part of her that wants to prove she's gone further than Betty Chang.

BW: I don't see why she should feel that way, considering how well she did in the Rumble compared to Chang.

LD: Well, folks, we don't know who accepted the challenge, and neither does the E-Girl MAX member, but we're going to find out in a moment! Let's go down to the ring and Megumi Sato for the introductions!

[We cut to the center of the ring, where Megumi Sato stands, with referee Rebecca Daniels at attention in the background.]

MS: Our next contest is in the Women's Division, set for one fall with a ten minute time limit, and it is brought to you by Under Armour!

[An Under Armour logo appears at the bottom left side of the screen.]

MS: Introducing first, she is a member of E-Girl MAX!

[There is a high-pitched enthusiastic scream from the crowd, followed quickly by a deeper-toned chorus of jeers. Riley Campbell can be seen at ringside, the Under Armour Head of Pro Wrestling Marketing readying her digital SLR camera for the upcoming match.]

MS: Stating that she hails from "the greatest city in the world", Baltimore, Maryland... weighing 141 pounds, she is the "Charm City Cutie"...

CAAAAAAAAAAAAAASEYYYYYYYYYYYYYYY
CAAAAAAAAAAAAAASHHHHHHHHHHHH!

WOOOOOOOOOO!

[As "1 of 1" by SHINee pumps through the IIWF Coliseum, Casey Cash walks through the entrance, a glare on her face. Her chocolate cherry hair is styled in loose waves as it cascades down to her shoulders, and she is wearing a black halter top with pink flamingos wearing heart-shaped sunglasses, a matching pair of black hot pants with the sunglasses-clad flamingos, black Under Armour kneepads, and black wrestling boots. She also has on black Under Armour wristbands, and a pair of heart-shaped sunglasses with pink frames resting on her head.]

LD: I'm a bit surprised, Ben, Casey Cash appears to be coming out here by herself - forget it, I should have known.

[The boos get louder as Harley Hamilton and Cinder, the AWA Women's World Tag Team Champions, walk out with the championship belts around their waists, Cinder clutching her sticker-encrusted Steal the Spotlight contract binder. They meet up with Casey, who finally shows a smile for the first time, and the E-Girl MAX trio walk to the ring confidently.]

LD: Why on earth do Seductive and Destructive need to be out here? Why can't Casey Cash wrestle a single match on her own?

BW: Hey, you had this argument when Casey wrestled against Betty Chang in Reseda, and they didn't interfere once! You were trying to get Harley Hamilton thrown out for trying to give Casey advice!

LD: They aren't Casey Cash's managers, Ben. They are wrestlers, they don't belong out here unless it's a six-woman tag team match...and I still don't trust that Riley Campbell character.

BW: She's an innocent photographer-slash-marketing maven-slash-organizational genius. She got my Instagram on point, Dane.

LD: She what?!

BW: On. Point.

[As Cash is about to climb into the ring, she places her sunglasses on the crown of Hamilton's head, then walks up the steps, climbs into the ring, and stares at the entrance as she paces back and forth, waiting to see who accepted her challenge.]

LD: We know it's not Molly Bell, as again, she's not here, but let's see who it indeed is...

[The arena lights cut out. A few moments pass before we hear a voiceover familiar to Broadway fans.]

"Welcome. Ladies and Gentlemen, you are about to see a story of murder, greed, corruption, violence, exploitation, adultery, and treachery - all those things we all hold near and dear to our hearts. Thank you."

[The singsongy horns that lead to Chicago's "All That Jazz" play over the PA system for a moment before cutting out...

...and a lone spotlight lances through the darkened arena to land on a young lady standing on the entrance stage in a pose. Her arms flung skyward, a long leg extended out to the side in a half crouch as she looks ready to cut quite the rug.]

"OHHHHHHHHH YEAAAAAAAAAH RIGHTEOUS!"

[The frenetic sound of Jerry Lee Lewis' version of "Wild One" kicks in as the lights come on - the normal white lighting interspersed with blue as we get a full look at the competitor now dancing and grinning her way down the aisle, slapping every offered hand she sees.]

MS: From Chicago, Illinois... weighing in at 99 pounds... "FOXY"... MOXXXXXXXXYYYYY HART!

[Hart pumps a fist in the aisle at the announcement of her name. She clasps a hand to her chest, the corners of her eyes becoming damp as she shouts "I LOVE YOU ALL!" on her way towards the ring. At 99 pounds and barely five feet tall, Hart is diminutive in stature to be sure. She's wearing a glittering silver sports bra style top with short black trunks...

...and a tremendous mane of bright blue hair hanging down to her rear as she repeatedly waves and smiles at the cheering fans.]

LD: How about this! It's going to be the rookie, Moxy Hart, going against Casey Cash here tonight in the IIWF Coliseum here in Portland... the place where her idol Richard "Moxy" Blue became a superstar!

BW: I think she's got more guts than brains in her blue-haired head! She's not even a hundred pounds and she's going against one of the most improved wrestlers on the roster who stands a half-foot taller and over 40 pounds heavier!

LD: They're both rookies though, Ben! Casey Cash had a great night at the Rumble, but she's just now coming up on her first anniversary of her career, just like Moxy Hart!

BW: Yeah, but we've talked about her pedigree! Remember the trail of broken bodies Shane Destiny left through the junior heavyweight division throughout the early-2000s? You think he didn't teach Casey Cash how to handle a smaller wrestler?

[As Hart reaches the ring and the arena lights start to return to normal...]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"

[...she catches two boots to the chest, courtesy of a Casey Cash baseball slide!]

BW: Manny Machado is safe at home, Dane!

LD: He's about the only bright spot on the Baltimore Orioles this year, Ben, so if she's going to emulate anyone it might as well be him.

BW: You be careful how badly you trash dem O's around the "Charm City Cutie", she's sensitive about their poor showing.

LD: She's hoping not to have a poor showing against Moxy Hart, but the bell hasn't even rung!

[Cash grabs a fistful of blue hair, guiding the Chicago native to the ring and...]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAM!"

[...slamming her headfirst onto the apron! The move gets a stern warning from the referee, as the camera picks up her instruction for Cash to "GET IN THE RING!"]

LD: Referee Rebecca Daniels is warning Cash that she needs to get in the ring and let this match formally begin. She's given herself one heck of a boost by jumping Moxy Hart before she even got in.

BW: In this sport you have to take advantage of whatever you can get, you know that. If it means you attack before the bell because your opponent is too busy kissing up to the fans, you do it.

LD: That seems to be the modus operandi of everyone in E-Girl MAX, as much as they tout fair play and chances for everyone.

[As the debate is ongoing, Cash throws Hart into the ring, then slides in immediately after, grabbing Hart by the hair as she enters to maintain control. As she rises, the referee signals for the bell to officially start the match, and Cash can be seen asking the referee if she's happy, when...]

LD: Moxy Hart ducks behind Casey Cash! There's a rollup! That's one! That's two!

[The crowd groans as Cash shoves Hart off.]

BW: Powerful kickout there by Casey Cash.

LD: Ben, Hart caught Cash napping there. That shows just how quick someone can be beaten.

BW: Yeah, but look at the look in Cash's eyes. She was already focused coming in, now Moxy Hart may have just ticked her off.

[Also helping the focus of the "Charm City Cutie" is Harley Hamilton, leaning against the ring apron and shouting encouragement into the ring as Cash grabs a hold of Hart's wrist and quickly whips her into the ropes.]

LD: Moxy Hart actually being given some propulsion here, her specialty is the high-flying maneuvers, I'm not sure she needed the encouragement here.

[Hart rebounds off the ropes, diving at Cash with a cross body block, but Cash drops down and lets Hart crash to the mat with a thud. Cash springs back up to her feet, pointing at her head, then quickly boots Hart in the ribs.]

BW: You were saying, Dane? Now Cash is taking the wind out of her.

LD: Fans, I'm being told that Moxy Hart was one of the first ones to the building today and was the first one to see Casey Cash's open challenge. Kelly Taylor and Charity Rockwell were both willing to take the match as well, but Moxy was able to get to it first.

BW: There's a lot of hungry sharks in the water in the Women's Division, throwing chum in the water is sure to get them swimming your direction.

[Cash quickly gets Hart to her feet, only to grab her by the side and easily lift her up, dropping her across the knee with a backbreaker!]

LD: We know Casey Cash loves to employ that Baltimore Crab that puts a ton of pressure on the back and the neck, and she has to be softening Moxy Hart up for it by using that backbreaker.

BW: We don't normally see Casey Cash get this kind of strength advantage over an opponent. If I were managing her, this would be the exact strategy I'd tell her to use. Use the size, work over the back, sink in that Baltimore Crab and make her suffer.

LD: We also know that Moxy Hart's Razzle Dazzle is a leverage move, and she's used it on women bigger than Cash.

BW: That seems to be what Hamilton is warning her about, she's telling Cash not to let up.

[Cash nods her head at Hamilton's instructions as she drops a knee on the vulnerable Hart's lower back, causing the Chicago native to scream out in pain. She then gets Hart back up to her feet, scooping her onto her shoulder...]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAM!"

LD: Back-first into the turnbuckle goes Moxy Hart! I haven't seen that out of Casey Cash before!

BW: She's never really been in a position to use her strength like this before!

[Cash steps away from the buckles, sizing Hart up, then charges!]

LD: Cash is incoming!

[The crowd roars with surprise, as Cash runs directly into Hart's raised feet!]

LD: Feet up, two boots right in the kisser!

[Cash stumbles backward as Hart runs at her, leaping into the air, and taking her over with a quick headscissors! The angle of the headscissors causes Cash to fall into the ropes, as Hart pumps her fist with excitement!]

BW: Whatever she's about to do, she better do it now! She doesn't have Cash worn down enough to delay!

[As Cash struggles to stand, Hart runs at the turnbuckles, bouncing back and clearing the top rope, turning to legdrop the back of Cash's head and force Cash's chest against the ropes!]

LD: She managed to catch Cash there, Ben! She got her just in time!

BW: This has been action-packed from the jump, Dane!

LD: Harley Hamilton and Cinder are pounding the mat on the outside, Casey Cash is on the inside, and Moxy Hart is on the apron, ready to jump into the ring!

[As Hamilton screams "IN FRONT! IN FRONT!" at Cash, Hart leaps up to the top rope, somersaulting towards the staggered Cash. Cash's eyes go wide as Hart hurtles towards her...]

BW: CAUGHT!

"THUDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDD!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: CASEY CASH YANKED MOXY HART OUT OF THE SKY! POWER BOMB!

[Cash, a grin on her face, remains at Hart's feet, then grabs Hart's ankles.]

LD: Oh no...

BW: Oh yes, Dane!

[Cash quickly hoists Hart up, planting her on her sternum in the dangerously elevated Baltimore Crab, then...]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAM!"

LD: Oh come on! A stomp to the back of Moxy Hart's head?! She had no way of protecting herself!

BW: That's the point, Dane! She wants Moxy Hart to quit, and quickly!

LD: And now the knee right into the lower back that she punished with the backbreaker!

[Rebecca Daniels quickly gets in sightline with Moxy Hart, whose face is compressed against the mat as Hamilton and Cinder continue to pound the mat, screaming "TAP OUT" in a chant. Hart has a muffled scream as Cash digs her knee into Hart's back, when...]

LD: That's it! That's the tapout!

BW: I don't think anyone can survive that hold, Dane!

[The bell sounds as Hamilton and Cinder climb into the ring, but there's just one problem.]

LD: Get Casey Cash to let her go, ref! She's already given up!

[Cash refuses to release the hold, as Hamilton encourages her to let go. As Rebecca Daniels threatens to disqualify the "Charm City Cutie", finally Cash lets go, with Hamilton immediately stepping in, pulling Casey away from the fallen Moxy Hart and Cinder giggles and taunts the fallen Moxy Hart. As Cash is pulled to the corner, she finds a camera and goes "that one is for you, Stephanie Harper!"]

LD: Oh come on. That one is for Stephanie Harper?

BW: Cash did say whatever she did today was going to be on Stephanie Harper's conscience, Dane. Ask Moxy Hart how her back and head feel, and if it was worth signing that contract.

LD: I know Moxy Hart has been looking to make an impression on the AWA, but I don't think she could have expected- wait a second! What is this!

[Harley lingers for a moment, before slowly turning back toward the prone Hart. She takes one deliberate step forward and bends down...]

LD: Wait... what is Harley doing? Is she-?

[A blur rushes into the ring, sliding a folding chair in as Cinder's eyes go wide. Cash sees the invader and yells, "MOVE! MOVE!", as she and Cinder both pull Harley through the ropes just as...]

"CLAAAAAAAAAAAAANK!"

[...Kayla "The Pistol" Cristol swings the chair and barely misses, the steel echoing through the arena!]

LD: KAYLA CRISTOL WITH THE CHAIR - AND NOT A SECOND TOO SOON!

BW: What do you mean?! Hamilton was just pulling Cash off Hart!

LD: You can't be serious, Ben... she was stalking Moxy like a shark! That could've been bad news!

BW: She wasn't doing anything, Dane! She was obviously checking on her! E-Girl MAX has class!

[Hamilton, shocked, points up at the chair and shouts, "A CHAIR?! REALLY?!" Cristol slaps the seat of the chair twice, daring them to come back in.]

LD: The sides are even now, ladies! Come get some now!

BW: How can you cheer for this thug with a weapon, Dane?!

LD: With as much as E-Girl MAX tries to take out their opponents using a numbers advantage, frankly, I think using a chair is fighting fire with fire! Kayla Cristol is giving them a dose of their own medicine and they don't like it!

[EGM retreats up the ramp, as Kayla drops the chair and helps the dazed Moxy Hart to her feet, then snatches a microphone from ringside.]

KC: Hey!

Listen up, Harley... listen up, E-Girl MAX!

Victoria June's got travel delays... she ain't here yet. But the second that plane touches down in Portland, we're comin' for you mean ol' bullies...

[The crowd cheers...]

KC: TONIGHT!

[...and then ROARS! At that proclamation, E-Girl MAX stops halfway up the ramp as Hamilton and Cinder exchange dangerous smiles with each other. Harley turns her attention back to the ring and mouths, "Tonight?" and laughs derisively, before giving Cristol a sarcastic thumbs-up, as Cinder yells, "WE'LL BE WAITING!", the duo seemingly delighted by the idea as they slip through the curtain with Casey Cash, who shoots Cristol a parting dirty look.]

LD: Did Kayla Cristol just challenge EGM to a fight later tonight?!

BW: If you ask me, this is a mistake, Dane! The Country Punks are writing checks their bodies can't cash!

LD: Folks, I have a feeling we'll be seeing a lot more between E-Girl MAX and the Country Punks before this night is over. As Kayla Cristol helps Moxy Hart to the back, we'll be right back...

[Cristol helps Hart towards the ropes 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 then back up on the face of “El Niño” Vengador V, the unmistakable mask of silver, with black trim around the eye holes and mouth. He speaks in voice-over, his English lightly-accented.]

VV: [V/O] Our masks represent a legacy...

[The shot fades to a newspaper clipping from August 1942. The Spanish text announces the successful debut of El Vengador de Plata for the Organización Mexicana de Lucha Libre in Mexico City. The original El Vengador poses proudly astride the middle rope in the photo accompanying the article.]

VV: [V/O] Family histories to be proud of...

[Fade to a shot of El Vengador facing off against the original Guerrero Oscuro, a photo from their famed 1952 mask versus mask match. Now we hear the voice of the man who currently wears the mask of Guerrero Oscuro.]

GO: [V/O] They tell the stories of battles...

[Fade to a photo of El Vengador, the silver mask partially torn and streaked with what appears to be blood, pinning Guerrero Oscuro.]

GO: [V/O] Of wars fought, win or lose, always with honor.

[Fade to a photo of Guerrero Oscuro, on his knees, about to pull the loosened mask off his head. The photo fades to the face of the current Guerrero Oscuro, his mask a plain black, with smoke gray trim around the eye holes and mouth giving it a bit of texture. We still only hear him in voice-over.]

GO: [V/O] Two weeks ago, we revealed the false idols for what they are...

[Fade to a still of Guerrero Oscuro mid-flight, about to hit Chaz Wallace with a somersault neckbreaker. The shot is replaced with a still of Guerrero Oscuro holding Chaz up in a crucifix powerbomb position, while Rey Fuerza prepares to leap off the top rope. The latter we now hear in voice-over.]

RF: [V/O] Una generación perdida...

[Fade to still of Vengador V mid-moonsault off one of the Temple’s balconies, Jayden Jericho and Justin Gaines looking up, open-mouthed, at the inevitable.]

VV: [V/O] Put down, as we promised.

[Fade back to Vengador V, flanked by Guerrero Oscuro to his right and Rey Fuerza to his left. We also now see that all three men are dressed in suits. Vengador V has on a black three-piece, Guerrero Oscuro’s suit is a charcoal gray, while Rey Fuerza’s is similar to Vengador V’s, but without the vest.]

VV: Our masks tell a story, but, now, el señor president wants us to prove our worth... In a division full of men who taint their legacies...

RF: Los hombres sin honor...

GO: Prideful men with nothing to actually be proud of...

VV: Two men in particular wear their masks, not as symbols to be proud of, but as signs of their corruption... They hide their sins behind those masks, while touting just what they are willing to do... For profit.

GO: Masks for Money, your continued existence offends us... Your name goes against everything our masks represent... Our culture... Our legacies...

VV: And, somehow, Masks for Money are ranked contenders for the AWA World Tag Team championships, while La Nueva Generación Oscura have got to prove themselves?

GO: And that is why, Golden Grappler, Ultra Commando Tres, mi hermano, Rey Fuerza, and I want you...

We choose you, Masks for Money, to prove ourselves worthy to Run the Rankings at Opportunity Knocks on the 4th of July and to ultimately prove why La Nueva Generación Oscura and Legado de Lucha deserve a shot at the World Tag Team titles.

VV: Next week at Providence Park... Saturday Night Wrestling... Masks for Money versus Legado de Lucha. Let the AWA and the world see for themselves the difference between those who wear their masks with pride and those who hide their shame behind them, and in doing so reveal their lack of honor.

[Fade to black...

...and then back up on Lori Dane and Ben Waterson sitting at ringside.]

LD: Challenge issued... but will it be accepted? Will the mercenaries for hire - Masks For Money - agree to do battle with the Legado de Lucha, Nueva Generación Oscura as the competition in the tag team scene continues to heat up. We know next weekend the former two-time World Tag Team Champions Wes Taylor and Tony Donovan will attempt to make history by becoming the first-ever three time champions when they meet Team Supreme. Taylor and Donovan will actually be here later tonight... but whoever comes out on top in that title showdown in Portland will have one question on their minds, Ben - who's next?

BW: Absolutely. A champion is always wanting to know who's next... but with the wide open title picture in the AWA World Tag Team Title hunt right now, the answer is foggier than ever.

LD: And remember... AWA Interim President Zharkov has called for a running of the rankings to take place on the 4th of July in Seattle at Opportunity Knocks... just three weeks away now. We expect to see many of the AWA's tag teams in action this week, next weekend on Saturday Night Wrestling, and finally right back here on Showtime in Seattle as they battle it out to make the Top 5. As we are on the air tonight, let's take a look at that Top 5 contenders list...

[A graphic comes up on the screen with said list.]

LD: Checking in at Number Five... the mysterious burly brawlers known as Masks For Money who have a challenge to answer in the form of Nueva Generación Oscura as we just heard. Number Four is Bobby O'Connor's nasty duo - the Blackjacks - who we also know will take on our Number Three contenders, Omega and Polemos, next weekend in Portland on Saturday Night Wrestling. The Number Two contenders - for now - are the Soldiers of Fortune however that may drastically change tomorrow when the Championship Committee issues new rankings and under order from President Zharkov, refuses to acknowledge these Soldiers as the former World Tag Team Champion Soldiers... unless Charlie Stephens can somehow convince Joe Flint to return to the ring. And of course, the Number One contenders - Wes Taylor and Tony Donovan.

BW: Which doesn't even include teams like the luchadors, like the American Idols, like the Aces In The Hole, like Rage and Hunter... all on the cusp of that list.

LD: There's a whole lot going on in the tag team scene... just like there's a whole lot going on in the world of E-Girl MAX... Hamilton and Cinder still having to defend their tag team titles... Casey Cash's bizarre obsession with Hall of Famer Stephanie Harper... the Steal the Spotlight contract, Hamilton's Girls To The Front date with destiny... Ben, how is that going to work?

BW: How's what going to work?

LD: Both Hamilton and Cinder have a title match in their grasp. But only one woman can be the champion. Right now, it's Julie Somers who is not here tonight as she had promotional commitments in Seattle for our upcoming Opportunity Knocks event... but how's the power of friendship going to survive when Hamilton and Cinder both want to wear the big, big gold?

BW: They'll make it work... they always do.

[Lori sighs and we can hear the sounds of Carly Rae Jepsen's "Cut To The Feeling" crank up over the IIWF Coliseum's PA system to a big cheer..

...and we cut to a shot of the ramp where we can see The Peach Pits emerge from the backstage area.]

LD: Well, speaking of the Women's World Tag Team Titles, the Peach Pits came up short in the Women's World Tag Team Title bid two weeks ago, Ben... and tonight it's about hitting the reset button and getting themselves back on a winning streak.

BW: It may be about that on the surface... but underneath... have you seen some of Shannon Walsh's social media posts this week? There's something not quite right there.

LD: What do you mean?

BW: Look, Laura Davis approached Donna Martinelli last weekend on Saturday Night Wrestling, right? And she essentially offered her former protege a spot in the Slam Sorority if she's looking to upgrade.

LD: Donna didn't say yes to that!

BW: But she didn't say no either... and I'm betting that didn't sit well with Shannon Walsh, Dane.

[In the ring, "Downtown" Debbie Dean and Carla Knox converse as Walsh powerwalks ahead of her teammates, leaving Martinelli and Taylor to try and catch up.]

LD: Shannon Walsh looks pretty focused to me, Ben.

BW: You call it focused... I call it pissed off. Which could be a good thing for the Peach Pits but just who is she pissed off at and why? That's another story.

[Taylor is clapping for her friends as they reach ringside, Walsh rolling under the ropes as Martinelli lingers in the aisle to slap a few fans with a big grin on her face... and then hurries to catch up, climbing up on the apron to play to the crowd before ducking through the ropes. Walsh points across the ring at their opponents, "keep your eyes on them... not them!" before pointing to the fans. Martinelli nods.]

LD: And it looks like it's going to be Donna Martinelli starting things off with-

"DING! DING! DING!"

LD: Check that! Walsh storming across...

[The former MMA fighter lunges in on Carla Knox, looking for a lockup but pulls out, feigning the tieup to lash out with a low kick to the outside of Knox' leg!]

LD: Oh! Nice kick... another one, this time on the inside of the leg...

[Dropping to a knee, Walsh throws a hard elbow back into the midsection, doubling over Knox and using a snapmare to take her over into a seated position...]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: ...and a hard kick right into the spine of Carla Knox! Knox, a veteran here in the Portland area - she's been in her fair share of tough scraps, Ben.

BW: Walsh is all over her, hammering her with rights and lefts down on the mat and... Knox rolls to the ropes! The only way out for her right there because Walsh was focused on putting her THROUGH the mat!

[The referee forces Walsh to back off as Knox struggles to get off the canvas...

...and Walsh storms back in, snatching a Muay Thai grip, flinging Knox into the Peach Pits' corner!]

LD: Oh! Tossed back into the buckles... goes downstairs with that roundhouse kick, over and over to the ribcage!

[Referee Rebecca Daniels forces Walsh back in, threatening to disqualify her if she won't obey instructions...

...which Walsh answers with a spin move, slipping past Daniels, charging in, and leaping into a back elbow on the chin!]

LD: OHHHHH! Knox might be out on her feet after that!

[Knox collapses out of the corner, falling to the mat...]

BW: Looks out OFF her feet to me!

[...and Walsh takes the mount, hammering forearms down into the head - stiff, surgical, impactful.]

LD: Shannon Walsh's MMA roots on full display right here - she's not here to wrestle, she's here to make a point, Ben!

BW: She's making it - to the locker room, to the fans, to her own partner too, I'd bet.

[Walsh gets off of Knox at the referee's four count, holding her hands in the air as she takes a verbal beating from the official...]

"SLAAAAAP!"

[...and then SLAPS the shoulder of Donna Martinelli who is on the apron.]

LD: A... tag? I suppose?

[Martinelli glares with surprise at her partner before joining her in the ring. A muttered "what the heck was that" isn't answered as Walsh ducks out. Kelly Taylor cheers her friend on from the floor, shouting "COME ON, DONNA!" which gets Martinelli back on task, grabbing Knox by the arm...]

LD: Whips her acro- no, reversed!

[The distraction costs Martinelli as she crashes into the corner in the wrong part of the ring.]

LD: Martinelli hits hard in the corner... and Debbie Dean makes a grab for her!

[But Martinelli fires back, throwing a back elbow to the jaw that snaps Dean's head back, dropping her off the apron as Knox charges in...]

LD: BIG AVALANCHE!

[...but as Knox draws near, Martinelli kicks her legs up, catching Knox's torso on her raised knees...]

"OHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and then grabs hold of Knox's head, falling out of the corner and riding Knox down to a second big impact on the canvas!]

LD: My goodness - what do you even call that?!

[Martinelli pops up, pumping a fist to the cheering crowd as Kelly Taylor cheers her on from the floor and Shannon Walsh glares in her direction...]

LD: Martinelli's got Knox shaken up after that one...

[Winding her arm around, Martinelli makes a dash into the ropes as Knox struggles to her feet...]

LD: Off the ropes and-

[...and the rebounding Martinelli pulls up short, catching a Knox attempt at a kick downstairs!]

LD: -and how about that, Ben? Donna Martinelli showing the world she continues to improve week after week, showing great ring awareness there and being one step ahead of her opponent!

[Martinelli holds Knox's foot for a bit, allowing her to hop up and down, pleading for mercy...]

...but Martinelli shows none, using a sudden twist to rip and tear at the knee of Knox, putting her back down on the mat!]

LD: DRAGON SCREW!

BW: And I'll give you one guess who she learned that from, Dane!

LD: Oh, come on, Ben... I don't think...

[Martinelli springs up, grabbing the suddenly-hurt leg, twisting it into her grasp under her arm...]

BW: Oh yeah?! That's the heel hook! She's looking to apply Laura Davis' signature hold and you try to tell me that she's not tempted by that offer?! Try sellin' that one out of town, sister, 'cause this guy ain't buyin' it!

[...and as the crowd buzzes in recognition, Martinelli pauses, a moment of hesitation...]

"STAY ON HER!"

[...and the sharp shout from Walsh causes even more of a distraction as Martinelli throws her a look before going back to the hold...]

LD: OH!

[...and catches a quick upkick from Knox, sending her staggering backwards!]

LD: WHAT A SHOT BY KNOX!

BW: Martinelli might've gotten her bell rung there!

[Martinelli falls back, trying to clear the cobwebs as Knox makes a lunging tag...]

LD: TAG! In comes "Downtown" Debbie Dean... she's on the move and-

[...but as Dean sprints towards her, a recovering Martinelli hooks her around the head and neck, the crowd instantly roaring in recognition before...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and Martinelli drops backwards, swinging her around to SMASH her face into the canvas!]

LD: MIC! CHECK!

[Martinelli rolls over, applying a lateral press as the referee counts one... two... and three.]

"DING! DING! DING!"

LD: That's it! The win goes in the record book for the Peach Pits here tonight, fans!

[Kelly Taylor is almost immediately in the ring, sliding under the ropes to join her allies as Walsh steps in, still glaring at Martinelli. Taylor grabs both women by the wrists, raising them high to cheers from the Portland crowd!]

LD: Taylor raising their hands and-

[The crowd grumbles with surprise and disappointment as Walsh yanks her hand away from Taylor, shaking her head.]

LD: -what's this about now? She doesn't look satisfied with the win, Ben.

BW: Walsh wants titles, not tributes... and I'm going to say it again - I'm betting she's wondering if her partner's loyalty has shifted a little closer to the Slam Sorority over the past seven days.

LD: We'll be seeing the Slam Sorority in action later tonight against Skylar Swift and Pink Cashmere...

[Donna looks puzzled, throwing up her hands with a "What?" at Walsh who ducks through the ropes, moving to the ringside area. Taylor stays in the ring with Martinelli, trying to calm her down as Walsh paces ringside.]

LD: ...and we've dispatched the newest member of our team here on Showtime, Lucy St. Clair, to speak with the Peach Pits to try to get to the bottom of this.

[We get one more shot of Martinelli throwing a glance into the nearest camera before Taylor convinces her to exit to the outside.]

LD: Take it away, Lucy!

[Out on the floor, we get a shot of Lucy St. Clair standing alongside Shannon Walsh who is still shaking her head.]

LSC: I'll do my best to cut through the weeds here, Lori... Shannon Walsh, your partner is on her way over here but congratulations to you both on a decisive win here tonight.

[Walsh nods as Martinelli and Taylor step in.]

LSC: But Donna, I have to ask the question that the wrestling world has been buzzing about since last weekend in San Jose. We all saw Laura Davis approach you on Saturday Night Wrestling and... well, it seemed clear to me at least that she was trying to persuade you to abandon this team and join up with another - namely her Slam Sorority.

[Donna doesn't respond, her eyes still on the seemingly-seething Walsh.]

LSC: We saw you use that dragon screw in there tonight... it looked like you might even be going for Laura Davis' heel hook... so I gotta know... what do you say to the people wondering where your head's at tonight in Portland?

[Martinelli chuckles.]

DM: My entire career - my entire LIFE - people have been asking where my head is at... in the clouds, in the sand, up my... well, you get the idea.

[Lucy nods with a smile.]

DM: But Lucy, believe me when I tell you that I am RIGHT where I want to be... with my sisters!

[Martinelli extends an arm over a grinning Taylor's shoulders, reaching out for Walsh who stays out of her grasp. Martinelli looks frustrated as she continues, speaking directly to Walsh now.]

DM: The Peach Pits are my home. Kelly, Shannon - we've fought for EVERY inch of respect we've gotten... and I know that given another chance, we could be standing here as the World Tag Team Champions...

[The crowd cheers that idea as Donna nods.]

DM: ...and I'm not walking away from that.

[More cheers for Martinelli who looks proud at the reaction.]

LSC: Shannon, you seem... reluctant to believe Donna.

[Walsh steps up, arms crossed, tone cool.]

SW: It's a real good answer, St. Clair... but you know what's funny, Donna? Where was that "real good answer" a week ago when Laura Davis was standing in front of you. Because you never told HER no!

[The crowd buzzes as Martinelli cringes.]

SW: So to me... that means either you're thinking about it...

[Walsh baits the hook.]

SW: ...or you're still afraid of her.

[The crowd "oooohs" as Donna blinks, shaking her head.]

DM: Shannon, that's not it at-

[Walsh cuts her off with a pointed finger.]

SW: I'm just saying... if you want to be MY partner... you better be sure whose side you're on.

[And with that, Walsh turns to exit, leaving an exasperated Donna behind.]

LSC: She raises a good point, Donna. Why didn't you give that answer to Laura Davis?

[Martinelli is quiet in her response.]

DM: I...

[Martinelli shakes her head... and then abruptly steps away, leaving a puzzled Kelly Taylor to call her name after her before rushing to catch up...]

LSC: Well, I may be a rookie to this game, fans, but that right there is tension you could cut with a knife. A win on paper for sure... but emotionally? This one might go down in the loss column... and with the Slam Sorority in the building, you know Laura Davis was watching every second of it.

[She shakes her head.]

LSC: This story's far from over if you ask me. Fans, we'll be right back with more Showtime on ESPN right here from Portland!

[Fade from the grinning rookie reporter..

...and then fade up from black onto black and white footage of an empty arena - likely the Crockett Coliseum from the looks of things - with deserted chairs and a wrestling ring with no one in it.

We see Karl O'Connor walking up a set of steps with the aid of a cane, moving slowly and deliberately, putting much of his weight on the cane. He slowly takes a seat, looking down onto the ring as the camera cuts to a closeup of him and we hear his voice.]

"I can still hear the echoes chanting my name."

[A closeup on his eyes, wrinkles showing the years and the mileage on his body.

Cut to a shot of "Big" Jim Watkins standing in a locker room dressed in an old brown ring jacket, running his finger down the trim as we hear his recognizable voice.]

"Time has not silenced the crowd."

[We get a trio of old pieces of footage - Brett Bryant in his younger days with his arms raised over his head, Cameron O'Connor applying a spinning toehold on an unknown foe, and Blackjack Lynch raising his black glove-covered hand into the air as his gravelly voice is heard.]

"I never did a moonsault..."

[Cut to a modern day closeup shot of Blackjack Lynch's eyes, a notable scar over one of them...

...and then a shot of Terry Shane Jr. in a suit looking out over the empty arena with his voiceover.]

"...or walked the top rope."

[Oliver Strickland sits on a locker room bench, his eyes drifting across the vacant room as he speaks.]

"There were no pyrotechnics..."

[And onto Ivan Kostovich who runs a hand over the links of his old Russian chain now hanging from a hook on a door as we hear his heavy accented words.]

"...no fancy, flashing lights."

[Cut to a series of modern shots of current day AWA superstars in action - Jordan Ohara diving off the top rope with a crossbody to the floor... Julie Somers using a moonsault from the top onto a standing opponent on the outside... and we hear Karl O'Connor's voice again.]

"We never flew through the air."

[Cut to O'Connor sitting in the Crockett, cane in hand as he looks at the empty ring...

...and then old footage of a defiant Blackjack Patterson shaking his head, refusing to submit to a painful hold as we hear Jim Watkins.]

"We were men of courage.."

[Closeup on Watkins' eyes in present day before cutting to Blackjack Lynch wrapping his hand around a foe's head as his voice is heard.]

"...men of steel."

[And then back to modern day shots of Juan Vasquez leaping off the top of the Woodshed, plummeting down... to Shadoc Rage hurling himself off the top of a super-sized steel cage... to a blood-covered Hannibal Carver wielding a steel chair as we hear Terry Shane Jr's voice.]

"They were men without fear."

[Cut to a shot of Blackjack Lynch standing in the ring, raising a hand in the air as if saluting the crowd as we hear his voice. We can actually see a ghost-like vision of cheering fans around him...]

"I can still hear the echoes cheering my name."

[...but when we cut to the opposite angle, we can see he's all alone in the ring.

And we cut again, this time showing the legendary Hamilton Graham standing outside the ring, a hand draped over the rope, a hungry look upon his face, wishing for one more moment of glory as we hear his familiar voice.]

"Today... I cheer for them."

[And as we fade to black, a graphic comes up promoting "AWA LEGACY" before we fade all the way out...

...and as we fade back in, we find ourselves backstage in the IIWF Coliseum where we see Moxy Hart leaning against a production case, clutching her lower back, grimacing with every movement...

...and then she angrily SLAMS her hand into the side of it, causing an echo to ring out as Sweet Lou Blackwell edges into view.]

SLB: A tough loss out there for you, Moxy. Care to comment on how you're feeling?

[Moxy turns to face the camera, slumping backwards against the heavy case, her blue hair pressed up against it.]

MH: I had my chance.

[She goes silent for several awkward moments.]

SLB: I'm not sure I-

MH: Lou, how much have you seen me on TV since I showed up earlier this year?

[Lou pauses, thinking about it.]

SLB: Not... a lot.

[Moxy nods.]

MH: That's being nice... and I appreciate it. But the truth is... from all my time on the indies, I know what it's like to be a...

[She smirks at her own size.]

MH: ...biggish fish in a small pond. But the AWA? It's a friggin' ocean, Lou... and it's filled with hungry sharks like Casey Cash... and Hamilton and Cinder... and... but this... tonight? That was my chance and I... I BLEW IT!

[She smashes her hand against the case again, falling silent as she covers her face with her arm. Lou looks like he doesn't know what to say when he's spared the attempt by another figure arriving on the scene.]

"Easy, mon ami."

[Hart peeks through her own fingers, her eye wide at the heavy Bayou accent...

...and then as she jerks her arm down, the camera pulls back and the crowd goes WILD at the sight of former IIWF superstar Richard “Moxy” Blue.

The Moxys stare at one another in silence a moment.]

SLB: Is... someone going to stay something?

[The OG Moxy goes first, grinning warmly.]

RMB: You back here causin’ all sorts of ruckus, my girl, and there just ain’t no cause for it... not at all. It’s been a long ol’ time since you came and asked me for a blessin’. And you got it...

[Hart smiles.]

MH: I know, I know! I’m so grateful for meeting you at that comic convention... and I’m so blessed you gave me your permission to use your name and...

[She runs a hand through her blue hair grinning.]

RMB: That’s not what I mean, sister.

[He spreads his arms wide.]

RMB: You got IT! You’re here! You made it! Every drop of fight... every drip of sweat and effort... it was all worth it, mon ami! You got here to the AWA.

[Hart nods at her idol.]

RMB: You got the blessing. Now you gotta make it count.

[Another nod... more determined now.]

RMB: That’s my girl. Now lemme hear it...

[With a huge grin, the duo cups their hands to their mouths...]

RMB/RH: OHHHHH YEAAAAAAAH RIGHTEOUS!

[...and the crowd inside the building ROARS in response as the duo embrace...

...and to the laughter of all, Sweet Lou joins in the hug after a moment. The two Moxys eyes go wide...

...and Lou awkwardly extracts himself.]

SLB: Sorry. Got caught up in the moment.

[And with smiles all around, we fade from backstage to a sweeping shot of the sold out IIWF Coliseum. There are signs all around on display supporting AWA heroes, decrying AWA villains, and even some paying tribute to IIWF legends gone by like a pair of young men holding up a “BYRON FOREVER: LONG LIVE THE LEGEND” placard.]

LD: The legends are out in full force... both backstage here at the IIWF Coliseum where we’ve seen some people we haven’t seen in years, Ben... and even out here at ringside... take a look...

[The camera cuts and pans across the front row ringside...

...and the building ERUPTS at the sight of a man long remembered as one of the elite in the grappling arts. He's sharply dressed with a cane in hand, his silvered hair gleaming and his still-regal presence earning a chant from the masses that shakes the building.]

"BY-RON!"

"BY-RON!"

"BY-RON!"

LD: There he is, Ben. Lord Byron himself. A man who helped put this building - and the Double Eye itself - on the map back in the day.

BW: It's incredible to see him here. When you look back on his career, it was short-lived - like many of the stars of an era who lived hard, worked hard, and burned out fast - but it was influential. Every man or woman who steps on the mat and decides to ply their craft as a true ring technician - at one time or another - is going to be compared to this man... and most of them are going to fall far short on the measuring stick.

LD: Well, it may be too early to tell if our next competitor is going to fall short... but there is no doubt that she has invited those early comparisons. We've seen her compete in the Rumble and tonight, we'll see her in singles action for the very first time. Lady Rebec-

BW: Hold on, hold on... that's not an introduction worthy of her.

LD: Oh, come on, Ben... it was-

BW: No, no... I won't tolerate it! You can feel the anticipation in the air, Dane... and that's because tonight, true aristocracy walks among us. The woman who redefines brutality and beauty, the Scarlet Sovereign of the squared circle - Lady Falkingham!

LD: Are you reading off notecards over there? What is that?

BW: I may have been giv- err, jotted down a few notes.

LD: Give me a break. Megumi, please take me away from this...

[Cut to the ring to a grinning Megumi Sato.]

MS: The following contest is set for one fall with a fifteen minute time limit in the AWA Women's Division. Introducing first... already in the ring at this time... weighing in at 140 pounds from right here in Portland, Oregon...

[A big cheer goes up for the local star!]

MS: ...JENNYYYYYYYY JIVVIIIIIIIIIES!

[Jivvies, a brunette in black tights with a single red wristband breaking up the monotony of her outfit, waves to the cheering crowd with a grin.]

MS: And her opponent... being accompanied to the ring by her herald... representing Lady Falkingham Palace... weighing in at eleven stones of...

[And now it's Megumi's turn to consult her notecards with a doubletake.]

MS: ...pure British superiority...

[The crowd serenades the introduction with jeers.]

BW: Megumi getting into it too... finally. You'll come around, Dane.

LD: I don't think so.

[Sato gestures to the stage with an elegant sweep of her hand.]

MS: ...LAAAADYYYY REBECCAAAA FAAAALKINGHAM!

[The houselights flare red, white and blue as Lady Falkingham's town crier, dressed in his ornate livery, steps onto the ramp, carrying his brass bell. He rings it three times, each clang echoing through the rafters. He projects his voice while speaking - a grand, booming proclamation.]

TC: OYEZ! OYEZ! Make way! Make way for her most illustrious ladyship - the Sovereign of Savagery! The Duchess of Discipline! The One, the Only...

...Lady Rebecca of House Lady Falkingham!

[He snaps to attention, lowering his head as if before royalty, then points his staff toward the curtain. The opening chords of William Byrd's "Mass for Four Voices: Kyrie" swell over the PA system. The haunting, ethereal choral piece is wildly out of place in the raucous arena of Portland.

Then Lady Falkingham appears - standing tall beneath the light. Her sequined red coat glitters with each slow step. The black tricorne hat rests perfectly angled upon her head, shadowing a disdainful smirk. Beneath, the gleam of her Union Jack-themed ring gear completes the image of aristocratic dominance wrapped in athletic precision.]

LD: We've been waiting to see this woman in singles action for a while now and finally, we get our opportunity. Time to see if she can live up to her own hype.

[She walks slowly, arms held up uselessly at her sides. The crowd breaks into a rolling chorus of boos - a sustained wall of sound that only seems to please her. She raises her chin higher, lips curling into a faint sneer of amusement. With her white-gloved arms extended outward, palms turned up elegantly, Lady Falkingham curtsies to her subjects.]

LD: The so-called Lady of the AWA making her grand entrance... Ben, she knows she has to wrestle and not address the Queen, right?

BW: Oh, you're on a roll tonight, Dane... you won't be cracking jokes when Lady Rebecca is cracking bones in there for this townie. Look at this presentation! You're looking at old-world class, refined brutality, and a woman who believes she doesn't just wrestle in this ring - she owns it. Look at that presence! Look at that control! The woman commands the air just by breathing it! That's pedigree, Dane. That's what dominance looks like.

LD: We'll see about that.

[Falkingham finally reaches ringside... and comes to a pause in front of Lord Byron.]

LD: Well, this should be interesting.

BW: Wow! What a moment! Lord Byron - the paragon of elegance, the man who once ruled the IIWF ring with the same grace and venom as Lady Falkingham!

[Byron tips his cane towards the ring as he rises, giving a slow and approving nod towards Lady Falkingham. She smirks at the crowd's jeers and returns a grateful curtsy before heading towards the ring.]

BW: That's mutual respect right there. See, Lord Byron knows she's the real deal - not Luke Steele - why don't you?

LD: Lord Byron is one of a long line of European stars who made their name in the Double Eye... men like Billy Shakespeare and Duncan Macbeth...

BW: The Butcher, baby! Can't forget the German Juggernaut, Otto Verhoeven!

LD: Absolutely not. But the AWA's not too shabby in that department either when you think of competitors like Raphael Rhodes and his family. It remains to be seen if Lady Rebecca Falkingham can earn herself a place in the roll call of honor alongside those individuals.

[In the ring, Falkingham is still taking her time, drawing the ire of her soon-to-be opponent Jenny Jivvies who shouts "COME ON!" at her. The British royal ignores the cry, smirking and removing her hat, handing it delicately to the attendant, making sure they never make physical contact...

...and then slowly turns to face Jivvies, acknowledging the official with a nod before they turn and signal for the bell.]

"DING! DING! DING!"

LD: Here we go! Falkingham versus Jivvies... and there's some tension in the air for this one as we finally see Falkingham in action.

[Falkingham gives a gesture, inviting Jivvies to seize the day... and the local favorite rushes into a mid-ring tieup, shoving Falkingham back a couple of steps...]

LD: No intimidation on the part of Jivvies, Ben.

BW: Oh, there will be...

[...and Falkingham suddenly ducks and slips under the pressed tieup, twisting the Portland native's wrist into a hammerlock. A quick stomp to the back of the knee forces Jivvies to kneel on the mat.]

BW: Simple. Effective. Brutal.

[The crowd is cheering Jivvies to escape as Falkingham shakes her head piteously at the crowd, cranking the arm.]

BW: See that wrist control? The body alignment? She's going to be painting a masterpiece on that mat and Jivvies is the canvas.

[Fighting off the mat, Jivvies snaps her free elbow back into the cheekbone of Falkingham, instantly breaking the hold as Jivvies dashes to the ropes, rebounding back...]

LD: Ohhh! Big football tackle puts Falkingham down! I guess she wasn't ready for that since American football is a bit of a mystery across the pond!

[...and as Falkingham comes off the mat, a bit of steam in her movement, Jivvies drops her with a leaping dropkick, knocking her back to the mat!]

LD: Jenny Jivvies has the Portland crowd rocking... swinging that arm around, calling her shot early...

[Getting momentum, Jivvies charges to the rope behind Falkingham, rebounding back as the British grappler turns...

...and as Jivvies throws the big clothesline, Falkingham somehow manages to hook the arm, swinging her leg around to force Jivvies back down to her knees with a straddling rear armbar!]

BW: You were saying?

LD: Nice counter by Falkingham... Jivvies trying to get to the ropes...

[Falkingham cranks back on the arm, preventing the escape.]

LD: ...can't get there though.

BW: Look at Lady Falkingham's expression! She's enjoying this!

[The camera zooms in on Lady Falkingham's cold eyes and slight smirk as she twists Jivvies's arm at an ugly angle...

...and as Jivvies cries out in pain, she flings herself just within reach of the ropes, hanging on tight as Falkingham holds... holds... holds...]

LD: Come on! Let her go!

[...and then releases, brushing invisible dust from her hands as the referee warns her about the near-disqualification.]

LD: Lady Rebecca Falkingham risking a DQ right there in her debut... and I have to wonder, Ben, if this isn't just about winning a match - it's about making a statement to the rest of the hottest division in wrestling.

BW: She IS the statement, Dane. The rest of us just provide punctuation.

LD: I don't even know what that means... and I'm betting you don't either.

[As Jivvies struggles off the mat, cradling her pain-filled arm, a stiff European uppercut sends her falling backwards into the turnbuckles...

...as we cut to Lord Byron who raises an interested eyebrow.]

LD: Looks like the Aristocrat was impressed by that one.

BW: Can you blame him?

[Holding Jivvies in the corner, Falkingham lands a pair of overhand chops before two more European-style uppercuts has Jivvies slump down into a seated position against the turnbuckles...]

LD: Falkingham showing off some impressive striking as well... doing a number on the hometown favorite who has struggled early on in this debut matchup for Lady Falkingham.

[Ignoring the referee's cries, Falkingham wings her opponent across the ring, sending her crashing chestfirst into the turnbuckles...]

LD: Ohh! Hard to the corner... OHHH! HARDER TO THE CORNER!

[...and Jivvies crumples backwards, being flung to the mat by Falkingham after a fierce running knee to the kidneys!]

LD: Unique strike right there does major damage...

BW: Wasn't he in the Double Eye? Major Damage?

[Falkingham stands over Jivvies, giving a mocking curtsy to the jeering crowd.]

LD: Some venom being shot the way of Falkingham from this crowd here tonight... and Portland is not going to be Falkingham's adopted stateside residence I've got a feeling.

[But Lady Rebecca seems to be feeding on the reaction, a sneer on her face encouraging them to boo even louder...]

LD: Dragging Jenny Jivvies off the mat... right into the butterfly... excellent technique on the suplex!

[Falkingham takes a knee, smirking in Lord Byron's direction.]

BW: That wasn't "excellent technique," Dane - that was flawless! Tell Larry Wallace to take a hike because we've got a new Flawless One in the AWA.

[Back on her feet, Falkingham looks down at Jivvies who is reaching out a hand, trying to crawl out of the ring...

...and she ruthlessly steps on the hand, grinding the appendage under her heel as she casually adjusts her gloves while the referee counts.

LD: You can't tell me she's not enjoying this, Ben. Look at her face!

BW: She's composed, Lori. That's what separates the elite from the emotional. She doesn't need to scream to be terrifying. She's firmly in control.

[She breaks at four, smiling faintly as Jivvies writhes...]

LD: We're going to take a quick break but when we come back, we'll have the conclusion of this one... unless it's already concluded.

BW: How dare you go to break during Lady Rebecca's debut?! Don't you hit that button, truck! Don't you-

[...and we fade to black.

And come back up on a shot of young Brass Ring competitor Armani Avery.]

AA: All I need... is an opportunity.

[The last word echoes, some voices familiar and unfamiliar repeating it...

...until we come up on Ricki Toughill.]

RT: An opportunity to be what I've always dreamed of being.

[A shot of Toughill cradling the AWA Women's World Champion...

...and then back to a closeup, this time of Sid Osborne.]

SO: An opportunity to prove everyone wrong.

[Of Betty Chang.]

BC: An opportunity to be all that I can.

[Of Wes Taylor.]

WT: An opportunity to be talked about the same way my father is.

["My father is" echoes as we get a glimpse of Tony Donovan smashing a steel chair across an opponent's back.]

TD: An opportunity to be MORE than my father ever was.

[To Lee Connors.]

LC: An opportunity to prove that size doesn't matter.

[To Donna Martinelli.]

DM: An opportunity to be better than my mentor.

[Cut to a glimpse of a rookie Martinelli being bellowed at by Laura Davis...

...who is the next closeup.]

LD: An opportunity to prove that I am the greatest wrestler on the planet.

["On the planet" echoes as we get glimpses of Supreme Wright... James Lynch... Ryan Martinez...

...and then to Shadoc Rage.]

SR: An opportunity to wear gold again.

[To Jackson Hunter.]

JH: An opportunity to forge a legacy.

[To Hannibal Carver.]

HC: An opportunity to get drunk and kick someone's ass.

[He shrugs as we fade to a closeup of Harley Hamilton.]

HH: An opportunity to endure...

[Of Cinder.]

C: ...outlast...

[Of Casey Cash.]

CC: ...rise up.

[And lastly, Jordan Ohara.]

JO: An opportunity... to soar.

[The shot fades away, leaving the words "OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS - 4th OF JULY - SEATTLE, WASHINGTON - LIVE ON ESPN" on the screen...

...and we fade back to live action where the Portland crowd is buzzing while Jenny Jivvies struggles to get off the canvas.]

LD: Opportunity Knocks is coming, AWA fans, but right now, Jenny Jivvies is looking for an opportunity to get back into this thing as Lady Rebecca Falkingham is absolutely dominating her debut matchup here at Showtime: Ring Wars.

[Back in the corner, Falkingham is back to work with the uppercuts - slow and deliberate, the last one snapping Jivvies' head back as the referee warns her to back off...]

LD: Again, Falkingham is risking a disqualification as she punishes her opponent.

BW: That's what sheer dominance looks like.

[Lady Falkingham turns to the jeering crowd, raises her gloved hand, and gives a slow, disdainful clap...

...and then points to the veteran sitting ringside.]

BW: There! Look - Lady Falkingham acknowledging the man who helped build this arena's legacy brick by brick!

[Falkingham pulls Jivvies up again, setting for a suplex...]

LD: Back on the attack and...

[...but Jivvies plucks her into a small package!]

LD: ...ONNNNNNE! TWOOOOOOO! THRE-

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[The crowd buzzes at the shocking near fall as Falkingham springs to her knees, clutching her chest in shock, holding up two fingers at the official who agrees with her.]

LD: Falkingham may go into shock off that one...

[Jivvies fights up to a knee as Falkingham gets to her feet... and walks right into a shot to the gut!]

LD: She's still in it! Jenny Jivvies refuses to quit!

BW: Admirable, but ultimately tragic. Lady Falkingham could end this whenever she likes. She's choosing not to. That's the cruel beauty of command.

[Falkingham makes another reach for Jivvies, getting another blow to the breadbasket that doubles her up...

...and as Jivvies get to her feet, the Stumptown Superstar ROCKS Falkingham with a fierce kneelift that snaps her head back, sending her falling back across the ring to a HUGE CHEER from the partisan crowd!]

LD: JIVVIES ON THE COMEBACK TRAIL!

[She looks out on the crowd, pain and exhaustion evident on her face as the crowd rallies behind her...]

"JEN-NY!"

"JEN-NY!"

"JEN-NY!"

LD: Listen to this crowd! They want to see her fight back!

BW: That's too bad, Dane - 'cause Lady Rebecca's got Jenny's number and it ain't what you think it is!

[...and with Falkingham stirring back to her feet again, Jivvies gets a running start, dashing past her into the ropes, rebounding off...]

LD: CROSSBODY CONNECTS! HOOKS THE LEG! ONNNNNNNE! TWOOOOOOOO!

[...and again, the crowd lets loose a deflated groan as Falkingham slithers out of the pin attempt!]

LD: Lady Rebecca's dreams of a dominant debut could be dashed by this Portland darling! She's got Falkingham reeling after several minutes of Lady Rebecca putting it on her.

[Jivvies drags Falkingham off a knee, pulling her towards the corner, pointing to the crowd before ramming her head into the top turnbuckle, the crowd counting along as she does...]

"ONE!"

"TWO!"

"THREE!"

"FOUR!"

"FIVE!"

"SIX!"

"SEVEN!"

"EIGHT!"

"NINE!"

"TEN!"

[...and Jivvies lets go, watching with a grin as Falkingham slowly spirals away, staggering out of the corner... and faceplants down on the mat!]

LD: Jivvies with the cover! Again gets one! Again gets two!

[The disappointment is loud and clear as Falkingham escapes again.]

LD: Jenny Jivvies has got Lady Rebecca Falkingham in a world of trouble... and despite Jivvies' stellar reputation coming in, I don't know that any of us expected this level of fight from her.

[Falkingham regains her feet as Jivvies swoops in behind her, lifting her up over her shoulder...

...and then brings her down on a bent knee!]

LD: ATOMIC DROP!

[Falkingham freezes in her tracks, a grimace on her face as she reaches back to grab at her rear end with both hands...]

LD: A little bit of damage being done to the royal hindquarters there, Ben!

BW: Do you hear me laughing, Dane?!

[...and Jivvies dashes to the ropes again, bouncing back off, leaping up for a hanging clothesline but Falkingham flattens out, sending Jivvies down to a hard crash on the mat!]

LD: Ohhh! And just like that, Falkingham turns this around...

[Lady Falkingham rolls to her knees, eyes wide, a flash of cold anger breaking her usual calm.]

LD: You can see it - that's pride hurting right there!

BW: Dangerous territory, Dane. You embarrass a monarch, you pay the royal tax.

[Falkingham is quick to act, lifting the rising Jivvies off the mat over the shoulder, twisting and dropping her throatfirst across the top rope!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[Jivvies ricochets off the ropes to crash to the mat. The thud silences the crowd.]

BW: That's the difference! Power with poise! You make her angry, she stops teaching and starts punishing.

LD: That seems to have taken all the air out of Jivvies, gasping down on the mat... and-

[Lady Falkingham pins Jivvies again, delicately placing her forearm across the jaw, pressing down with her weight. Miranda counts to two before Jivvies just barely slips out in time.]

LD: I thought that one was over right there, Ben... and I think Lady Falkingham did as well.

[Falkingham glares at the interrupted pin in outrage, dragging her off the mat by the hair where she boots her in the gut before snapping her over in a spinning neckbreaker...]

LD: Ohhh! Big impact there!

[She stays seated beside her fallen opponent, breathing deeply - that aristocratic calm returning.]

BW: There it is. Composure restored. Lady Falkingham never stays rattled for long.

[Regaining her feet, she pulls Jivvies up, walking her to mid-ring where she winds up for a big European uppercut...]

LD: UPPERCUT - NO!

[...but Jivvies avoids it, somehow managing to drag the British native down in a backslide!]

LD: BACKSLIDE FOR THE WIIIIIIIN... NOOOOOO! OUT AT TWO POINT NINE!

BW: Alright, that was a little too close.

LD: Jenny Jivvies has this Portland crowd on their feet, waiting to see if she can pull this off...

[Lady Falkingham rises, furious and blowing like a bellows and as Jivvies charges in, Falkingham levels Jivvies with a lariat that spins her inside out!]

LD: ...NEARLY TAKES HER HEAD OFF! And just like that - she snaps the momentum right back in her favor!

[The boos rain down again. Lady Falkingham slowly turns, raising her chin. She shouts at the crowd, "You will learn to respect me, you hooligans!"]

LD: Falkingham is showing the whole world what she's capable of... and Ben, we've got another debut coming up a little later. Kelly Woods will be making her debut in the IIWF Coliseum as well. I wonder how she would fare against a competitor like Lady Falkingham.

BW: You don't invite a dirt-on-the-knees farmer to a State Dinner, Dane.

LD: Meaning what?

BW: Kelly Woods isn't worthy to even be in the ring with Lady Falkingham.

[Falkingham stands over Jivvies again, lifting her by the chin with the faintest of smirks on her face...]

"SLAAAAAAAAAAAAAP!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and slaps her across the cheek with a resounding echo throughout the arena!]

LD: OH! There's no call for that, Ben! None at all!

[Falkingham drags her up by the arm, whipping her into the ropes again...

...or so we all thought before she slams on the brakes, yanking Jivvies back towards her for a ripcord European uppercut that lifts Jivvies off the mat, dumping her on the mat as the crowd gasps at the impact!]

LD: She just turned the lights off with that one shot!

BW: That's European precision. That British uppercut is spectacular!

[Lady Falkingham doesn't go for the cover. With a cold and determined focus, she drags Jivvies up, and throws her into the ropes...]

LD: Into the ropes again... what's this now?

BW: Here we go!

[...and catching the dazed Jivvies around the head and neck on the rebound, Falkingham lifts and SPIKES her down with a uranage slam. Jivvies flops on the canvas before she goes limp. The audience groans - even the front rows fall silent as she floats into a cover...]

LD: That's gotta do it. We've got one. We've got two. We've got... OH, COME ON!

[The crowd JEERS as Falkingham lifts Jivvies off the mat, pulling her shoulders clear deliberately...]

LD: She had her beat! She had it won!

BW: Ending it now would be rude, Dane. She's cultured. She prefers to make the suffering last.

LD: Give me a break, Ben. Just pin her already! She's been through enough!

[Falkingham rises off the mat again, turning deliberately to the front row.]

LD: Staring right at Lord Byron now... what's this about?

[Turning away from Byron, Falkingham kneels beside Jivvies, flipping her over with clinical ease, threads an arm, a leg - methodically locking the limbs into position.]

LD: She's setting up for... don't tell me.

BW: Oh yes! The Aristoclutch! The very hold that put legends to shame!

[Lady Falkingham bridges back on the sleeperhold. Jivvies screams, her hands clawing at the canvas.]

LD: The pain's excruciating! You can see her body contorting...

BW: Perfection! Absolute perfection in the execution! And the crowd is in a frenzy.

[And it doesn't take long for Jivvies to frantically tap out, seeking an end to her suffering...

...and Falkingham obliges upon hearing the bell, letting go of the hold and again looking over to Lord Byron who nods in response.]

LD: Perhaps a nod of approval... respect perhaps? Whatever it is... chalk this one up as a debut match victory for Lady Rebecca Falkingham. Jenny Jivvies gave it her all but-

BW: But her all was nowhere near enough against Lady Rebecca. All hail Lady Rebecca! All hail Lady Rebecca!

LD: Oh brother. Well, Portland obviously can't stand her but I don't think they're likely to forget that finish anytime soon - the Aristoclutch back in action after years on the shelf and it gets the tapout victory here tonight.

[Falkingham celebrates her win, soaking up the jeers of the crowd as we fade down to ringside to Mariah Wolfe and Sweet Daddy Williams.]

MW: A big win for Lady Rebecca Falkingham in her debut... and a great moment here with Lord Byron in the house to witness it.

SDW: The Portland fans were glad to see one of them... the other? Not so much.

[Mariah chuckles.]

MW: Fans, we've got a little bit of breaking news for you - big news out of the Interim President's office. After weeks of negotiation, President Zharkov has signed the contract. Kimmy Bailey will get her shot at former World Champion Kurayami!

SDW: That's right, Mariah... but she's gotta go halfway around the world to make it happen!

MW: Unfortunately, that's true. The deal got done but Kimmy Bailey will be traveling to Japan later this week to meet Kurayami in Korakuen Hall in Tokyo. But we can also announce we've secured the broadcast rights to the footage from the match and it will air next weekend on Saturday Night Wrestling... and I can't wait to see it as Kimmy Bailey looks to get revenge for her fallen friend and partner, Ayako Fujiwara! But that's not all we're hearing out of the office... with the tag team scene heating up, President Zharkov has invited any four of the men's Brass Ring competitors to join up for tag team action to make an attempt to sneak in the back door to the Top 5 rankings. Who will accept the offer? We'll find out soon enough.

[Mariah glances up at the ring.]

MW: And while we stall for time...

[She grins as Sweet Daddy Williams chuckles.]

MW: ...and we wait for Lady Rebecca Falkingham to get out of the ring...

[We cut back to the ring where we see Falkingham taking her sweet time as Sweet Lou glares at her.]

SLB: That's it, young lady. Hit the bricks. Don't let it hit ya where the Good Lord split ya!

[Blackwell smirks, adjusting his tie as he turns to the hard camera. We can hear Falkingham's annoyed words to the officials trying to get her back up the aisle as Blackwell clears his throat and begins to speak.]

SLB: Portland, lemme hear ya!

[The crowd ROARS as Blackwell nods, looking around at the sold out arena.]

SLB: It's been a great night of action here in Portland so far and we're not done yet! We've still got the Brass Ring first round matchups ahead of us! We've got Sid Osborne in action! The debut of Kelly Woods! And so much more... but right now, I've got a piece of breaking news that I felt needed to be delivered out here in this very ring...

[Blackwell pauses.]

SLB: ...and that has to do with the medical condition of the World Heavyweight Champion Supernova.

[The crowd cheers, Blackwell nodding along with them.]

SLB: But before I let you know how the champ is doing tonight... let's take a look at what put him in that hospital in San Jose to begin with. It was one week ago on Saturday Night Wrestling... the champion was confronting the Westerly Dynasty and... well, watch this.

[We fade to footage marked as coming from last weekend's Saturday Night Wrestling as we see Veronica Westerly - flanked by the entirety of the Westerly Dynasty - looking out on the World Champion who is still in the aisle.]

VW: I've had enough out of you! You just came out here to prove I was right about every single thing I said... you're out here to make excuses as to WHY you won't fight James Lynch again... about WHY you won't step in the ring with Nenshou... about WHY you won't take on the Almighty.

You know, Supernova... you used to come out here with your face painted yellow... but now the only yellow I see is the stripe running down your back!

[The crowd jeers as Supernova grimaces... and then takes a couple of steps towards the ring.]

VW: Now?! You want to do this now?! You want to step in here against the collective might of the Westerly Dynasty?!

[Supernova pauses in the aisle, then nods.]

S: You're right... the odds are not favorable.

[He then grins again...]

S: That is to say... they're not favorable for you!

[...and reaches into his trenchcoat, slowly pulling a wooden baseball bat into view to a HUGE ROAR from the San Jose crowd.]

SA: SWEET SANTA MARIA, SUPERNOVA IS LOOKING TO KNOCK ONE OUT OF THE PARK!

CP: Hey, Sal, we're not in Dodger Stadium any longer!

SA: I think someone forgot to tell Supernova that!

[With the crowd ROARING, Supernova tosses the mic aside, diving headfirst under the ropes, coming to his feet as Westerly frantically calls for her team to get the hell out of the ring...]

SA: THE CHAMP'S HERE FOR BATTING PRACTICE AND-

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and the San Jose fans react to Supernova burying the end of the bat's barrel into the midsection of James Lynch, doubling him over...]

SA: DOWNSTAIRS ON LYNCH!

[...and then comes up high, smashing the barrel into the sternum of the attacking Nenshou, knocking him off his feet where he promptly rolls to the outside where Veronica Westerly is waving her arms, calling her men to the outside...]

SA: NENSHOU'S DOWN AS WELL!

[...and as Supernova pivots, he takes aim at the only man not coming on strong - the Almighty Atlas Armstrong who stands his ground as Nova winds up, swinging it down like an axe towards the big man...]

SA: LOOK OUT!

[...and Armstrong's mighty arms come swinging up, his powerful hands grasping the barrel of the bat, preventing it from crowning him between the eyes!]

SA: WHAT?! WHAT?!

CP: HE CAUGHT THE BAT!

[Armstrong RIPS the bat out of a shocked Supernova's hands, sneering before he raises it overhead. The Champion drops back in a defensive posture, arms raised to block a blow...]

"CRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and Armstrong SNAPS the bat in half in his mighty grasp, throwing the splintered halves aside...]

SA: OH! HE BROKE IT! BROKE IT RIGHT IN HALF!

CP: LOOK AT THE POWER!

[...and a shocked Supernova takes a reflexive pair of steps backwards, his jaw dropped and eyes wide in disbelief...]

SA: Atlas Armstrong broke that wooden baseball bat like it was a toothpick, Colt!

CP: And from the look on his face, Supernova might be next!

[The World Champion shakes the shock and awe, lashing out with a right hand... and another... and another...]

SA: Supernova was as surprised as the rest of us at Armstrong breaking the bat but he's not done yet! He came to fight and that's EXACTLY what he's going to do!

[The barrage of blows from Supernova sends Armstrong falling back into the corner where the fists come faster, battering a defenseless Armstrong into the turnbuckles before grabbing him by the arm...]

SA: Irish whip across! HERE... HE... COMMMMMMMES!

[...and Supernova goes barreling across the ring, leaping into the air, soaring through the sky for his signature Heat Wave splash in the corner...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and the Bay Area fans collectively gasp as the uber-powerful Armstrong YANKS Supernova out of the sky, catching his flying 260 pound frame in his muscular arms in a body-crushing bearhug!]

SA: HE CAUGHT HIM! ARMSTRONG CAUGHT HIM ON THE FLY AND... THE BEARHUG IS ON!

CP: In Dodger Stadium, he broke the streak of Max Magnum... and tonight, he's looking to break the BODY of the World Champion!

[Supernova starts raining down right hands on the head of Armstrong!]

SA: NOVA TRYING TO BREAK FREE!

[The Big Sur powerhouse steps out of the corner, holding Nova in the air as the champion continues to try to get loose of the rib-crushing grip...]

CP: Armstrong won't let go! The squeeze is on!

[...and Armstrong starts shaking Supernova, ragdolling the World Champion back and forth in his mighty grasp...]

SA: Supernova's starting to fade! His arms are starting to slump!

[Nova throws another right hand, weaker than before...]

SA: The champion still fighting!

[...and another...]

SA: Nova's gotta get out of this hold!

[...and another but Armstrong will not relent, shaking Nova back and forth again, his grasp getting tighter and tighter...]

CP: I don't think he can! Armstrong won't let go!

[...and suddenly, Supernova is completely limp in the arms of Armstrong, the crowd buzzing with concern...]

SA: He's out! The World Champion has passed out!

[With the crowd stunned into near-silence, Supernova is slumped backwards now, dangling from Armstrong's grip, a trickle of blood coming from the corner of his mouth...]

SA: Oh... oh no! Supernova is bleeding from the mouth!

CP: The champ's been busted open from the inside!

[...and with the referee and a few AWA officials in the ring pleading with Armstrong to let go, he shows no signs of doing so.]

SA: And he STILL won't let go! He STILL won't let the World Champion out of that body-crushing vice grip!

[We cut a little bit ahead in the action, showing Ryan Martinez and Dr. Bob Ponavitch jogging alongside a stretcher headed through the backstage area, the World Champion resting on it, clutching his ribcage in extreme pain...]

...and then another cut shows Supernova being loaded into the back of an ambulance, the forms of Ponavitch and Martinez joined by President Zharkov, all with concerned looks on their faces...

...before we fade back to live action to Sweet Lou in the middle of the IIWF Coliseum. Blackwell shakes his head in disgust.]

SLB: Terrible. Just terrible. It was an awful scene backstage there in the SAP Center as Supernova was loaded onto that ambulance. Now... he WAS taken immediately by that ambulance to a local hospital for treatment. The good news, fans, is that there were no internal injuries... which certainly was a concern considering the bleeding from the mouth we saw. The bad news however is that the World Champion suffered cracked ribs in the unfriendly confines of Atlas Armstrong's powerful arms... and he WILL be out of action for an undetermined period of time. But we send our best wishes to the champion and-

[Blackwell's cut off by the symphonic sounds of the opening to "Superstar" on the Jesus Christ Superstar soundtrack, the anthem that can only mean the arrival of one man... or in this case, three men and a woman as the curtain parts to reveal the Westerly Dynasty has arrived in Portland, Oregon.]

SA: How dare these people even show their faces here tonight on Showtime: Ring Wars after their actions last weekend in San Jose?

BW: You mean when Lynch and Nenshou beat Carver and Martinez?

SA: No, I don't... and you know this, maaaaaan!

[Armstrong is leading the charge for his allies on this night, stomping proudly down the ramp in a pair of workout pants and a tie dye tanktop with slits cut across the broad back. He's wearing a pair of mirrored sunglasses as Veronica Westerly, James Lynch, and Nenshou trail behind in close proximity. Blackwell lowers the mic, confusion on his face as the Dynasty hits the ring, Armstrong up the steps and ducking through the ropes first as the others follow. The big man from Big Sur gestures for a mic...]

AA: The champion thanks you for the wishes and send them right back, Jack.

[A flustered Blackwell looks at Atlas for a moment, before he begins to understand what he's saying.]

SLB: What?! I wasn't wishing you well!

AA: Sure you were, you said "we send our best wishes to the champion," and as far as I'm concerned that's two times the supposed World Champion has gone up against Atlas Armstrong...

...and that's two times I've broken his back.

[The crowd jeers that statement.]

AA: So you know what that makes me?

That makes me the rightful and uncrowned World Champion.

So thank you, Blackwell! I appreciate it!

[The crowd is all over Armstrong for the bold proclamation as James Lynch throws a look in his allies' direction - first at Armstrong for the statement and then to Westerly who is proudly clapping for her charge. Lynch lets the crowd seethe for a few moments before stepping over to Armstrong, leaning over the mic.]

JL: Look, I appreciate the enthusiasm. But...

[Lynch looks Armstrong in the eyes.]

JL: You keep forgetting that I pushed Supernova to his limits on Memorial Day, and if not for just a little bit of luck... I'd have beaten Supernova.

[Armstrong looks doubtful as the crowd jeers the Black Sheep of the Lynch family.]

JL: Now you will get your turn... someday... but right now, I'm still next!

[Armstrong jerks the mic back, shaking his head as he puts a powerful hand on Lynch's shoulder.]

AA: Whoa whoa whoa whoa whoa whoa, James Lynch. I know you're all fired up to get your hands on Supernova again, but let's get one thing clear. When you wrestled him for the title... he pinned you.

You lost, dude.

[The crowd cheers that fact as Lynch looks around in irritation.]

AA: So when Supernova can ever get back onto his feet, the next title shot belongs to the man who put him down again and again... and that's me! Atlas Armstrong!

[Armstrong smirks confidently at Lynch as the fans continue to jeer..

...a reaction that only gets louder as every light in the arena suddenly snaps to a cold, surgical white.

A low, pulsing synth bassline throbs through the PA as "Starfighter" by Wice begins to play. The Portland crowd's boos turn seismic as from behind the curtain steps the full force of Team Supreme, six individuals moving in perfect, predatory synchronization: Takeshi Mifune first, a black towel hanging over his head like an executioner's hood. Bret Grayson and Paris Crawford side-by-side, each carrying one of the AWA World Tag Team title belts. Cain Jackson, towering and silent, arms folded. AJ Martinez, smirking and brimming with arrogance. And finally, dead center, stands Supreme Wright dressed in a charcoal three-piece tweed suit and a yellow necktie knotted with lethal precision. His expression is cold as arctic ice.]

LD: Uh oh.

BW: You can say that again.

LD: Team Supreme has arrived in Portland! We knew they were scheduled to be here tonight, Ben, but... well, this can't be good news for anyone.

[They do not rush. They do not pose. They simply advance down the ramp as one weaponized unit. The jeers rain down, but the six may as well be walking through a storm of silence; nothing touches them. They reach the apron in unison, pause for a single moment and then slide under the bottom rope together. Six bodies rise as one, coming up in a fashion that essentially encircles the Westerly Dynasty. Veronica looks concerned at the big numbers edge as she tries to keep her charges backed up.

Supreme silently extends his hand as Sweet Lou places the microphone in it like he's handing over a loaded gun. The music cuts as the arena is left with only the sound of thousands of people hating in unison.]

SW: I'm ready to speak.

[The boos reach a deafening crescendo before slowly dying out.]

SW: Atlas. James.

[His eyes narrow as he stares at his brother-in-law.]

SW: There is no debate. There is no line. There is only the man who carried this company on his back twice before and the man who will do it a third time. Me.

[The fans let Wright have it for that belief. Wright slowly looks around, surveying the scene.]

SW: If you respectfully disagree with this assessment, if you believe you belong in the conversation for MY title, then step forward. Because the line doesn't go around the Westerly Dynasty. It ends at my feet.

[Atlas Armstrong's chest rises with a slow, dangerous breath. He removes his sunglasses, folding them with deliberate care, and takes one step toward Supreme as the crowd roars.]

James Lynch's jaw tightens; he cracks his knuckles and mirrors the movement, closing the distance until the two Westerly Dynasty members are inches from Supreme Wright's unflinching stare.

The tension is suffocating. Nenshou and Veronica freeze, sensing the powder keg is one spark from detonation.

And then... detonation.

Thirty Seconds to Mars' "Vox Populi" plays over the PA as the Portland crowd loses its collective mind.]

LD: OHHHHH YEAH RIGHTEOUS!

BW: Oh, not you too!

LD: The AWA's White Knight, Ryan Martinez, is here! He's arrived in Portland and this already-tense scene just got a whole lot worse!

[The former two-time World Champion is undeterred by the numbers in the ring, boldly stomping down the ramp, climbing the ringsteps, and ducking through the ropes...

...and steps right into the face of his greatest rival to a HUGE ROAR from the Portland crowd!]

RM: I think I've heard just about enough!

There's only one person who is next, and that's me.

[Wright doesn't react but the crowd sure does, fully in support of that idea.]

RM: That title shot is mine and I'm not about to give it up.

And if you don't believe me? Well, just remember what the champion himself said!

[Martinez nods as Wright's glare bores a hole through him.]

RM: Supernova isn't here right now but... I... AM!

And Supreme, I know you think that the office saying I can't have a match with you means you're safe.

But there's two things you've overlooked.

[He holds up two fingers.]

RM: First... Zharkov isn't here tonight.

And second... we're in Portland.

[Big Rip City cheer!]

RM: The home of men who were never afraid of breaking rules.

Men like Steve Kowalski, Brody Thunder, JW Hardin, Casey James, Tiger Claw.

[Martinez smirks.]

RM: Heck, my father was in this very arena one time, and when he was? Well, it took a lot of years to finish cleaning up that mess.

So if I can't get a match, why don't I just carry on in the fine tradition of those men...

...and kick your ass!

[The arena explodes but Wright doesn't flinch, slowly raising his mic again as his allies look ready to swarm at the slightest gesture...]

SW: There would be no greater thrill in this world than for me to break you, Ryan Martinez. To silence you forever and discard what's left in the trash where it belongs.

[He tilts his head, studying Martinez's face with cold, clinical detachment.]

SW: But it's obvious to me that Ryan Martinez is not quite ready for that particular method of disposal.

Not yet.

[The crowd roars with angry boos as Martinez surges forward, but Supreme raises a finger, stopping Martinez in his tracks. Angry as he is, Ryan knows all too well the danger that stands before him as he looks around... the unlikely danger that is Paris Crawford... the brother from another mother who would love to prove something to dear ol' dad... the Olympic gold medalist... the seething Team Supreme Original... the sadistic trainer.

This isn't the time to charge in recklessly.]

SW: Patience, Ryan Martinez. Our time will come.

But there is someone here who very much would like to test you tonight.

Someone who does not require paperwork or permission.

[He gestures to his right as Takeshi Mifune steps forward, towel cracking like a whip, eyes promising slow, methodical torture.]

SW: Takeshi Mifune.

[Martinez hesitates for half a heartbeat, but Supreme catches it all the same.]

SW: Tell me, Ryan Martinez... is that fear I see in your eyes?

[Martinez's fists clench hard and his jaw sets, as determination fills within him and fire returns to his eyes.]

RM: Fear? Stop drinking your own Kool-Aid.

I ACCEPT!

[A monstrous roar from the crowd! Veronica Westerly throws up her hands, angrily stomping to stand between the two men.]

VW: NO! NO! NO! Ryan Martinez, you will NOT do this to me - to my Dynasty - again! This was OUR moment and once again, you got involved and made everything all... about... YOU!

[She punctuates the final word with a stabbing finger into the chest of her former stepson. That is... until Supreme Wright's voice interrupts her tirade.]

SW: I didn't forget about you... Rhoni.

[Veronica freezes, turning slowly to Supreme, who just gave her the biggest ick.]

SW: You will not be denied your chance at glory.

[He points to James Lynch and Nenshou.]

SW: I watched James and Nenshou wrestle as a tag team last week. Competent. Entertaining, even.

[Wright has the faintest smirk on his face as James glares a hole in him.]

SW: How about another one, tonight? Nenshou. James Lynch.

[A beat.]

SW: Against Bret Grayson. Against Paris Crawford.

[The crowd cheers that idea as Westerly shakes her head angrily!]

VW: Absolutely not! We are not your dancing monkeys! You do not snap your fingers and we just-

[She stops herself and takes a breath, almost as a realization has washed over her.]

VW: Fine. You want a match tonight? You'll get one.

[She placing a possessive hand on James Lynch's shoulder and another on Nenshou's.]

VW: My men will walk through your little puppets and when the smoke clears and my Dynasty is standing tall, we'll do it again... and we'll take those tag team titles you're holding hostage and bring them home to a team that truly deserves them!

[She leans in toward Supreme.]

VW: Enjoy your little power trip while it lasts.

[Supreme stares at her for a moment, eyes locked onto hers. Not wanting to stare into the abyss too long, Westerly quickly disengages and Supreme's gaze turns its attention to Atlas Armstrong.]

SW: And as for you...

[Armstrong steps closer, ready to fight if that's what comes...

...but before he can, the crowd ROARS. The sudden eruption of sound catches Paris Crawford's attention, Supreme Wright's weapon of choice twisting around in search of...]

LD: CARVER! CARVER!

BW: WHERE THE HELL DID HE COME FROM?!

[...and the Boston Brawler reaches under the ropes, snaking the ankle of Wright, yanking him down into a faceplant on the canvas!]

LD: OHH!

[Carver hauls Wright under the bottom rope, peppering his face with quick and solid right hands as the Portland crowd goes NUTS!]

LD: CARVER CAME FOR WRIGHT!

[Crawford makes a move to intervene but a crescent kick from Nenshou stabs out lighting-quick, catching Crawford under the chin and knocking them down to the canvas...

...and that's where the spark takes life.]

LD: HERE WE GO! HERE WE GO!

[James Lynch grabs Bret Grayson by the shoulder, swinging him around into a looping haymaker...

AJ Martinez steps forward to grab his half brother by the throat in a double choke as Veronica Westerly bails out. Martinez' attempt to lift the White Knight is foiled by a knee to the sternum...

...and the White Knight ducks away, causing Cain Jackson's running clothesline to hit his own partner, sending "Hot Stuff" to the outside to a ROAR from the Portland fans!]

LD: All hell is breaking loose in-

[But as a fired up Martinez gets up, the Shadow Wolf strikes!]

LD: -CHOKE! CHOKE FROM BEHIND!

[Mifune leaps up, scissoring the body of the White Knight, dragging him down to the canvas in a Japanese sleeperhold!]

"CLAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAANG!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: CARVER PUTS WRIGHT INTO THE RAILING!

[Carver is all over Wright on the outside, a swarming flurry of fists battering the two-time World Champion as we see bodies all over the ring and ringside area battling it out...

...and suddenly, pretty much every official and backstage security in the building come sprinting down the aisle led by a frantic-looking Kevin Slater!]

LD: We've got trouble in Rip City, fans! It's broken loose and... what's going to happen after all this?! We'll be right back!

[Mifune cackles madly as he strangles the air out of Ryan Martinez while Adam Rogers tries to pry his arms apart...

...and 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 we come back on a chaotic scene in the Chimpanzee Position. We've still got an out-of-control situation where voices are raised, bellowing across the area at one another as AWA officials and security strive to - as the Offspring say - keep 'em separated.

Supreme Wright wades through the pile towards the front, shoving aside Bret Grayson as he stabs a threatening finger at Hannibal Carver who makes a lunge at him only to be held back by Adam Rogers and Tommy Fierro...]

HC: I'M GONNA RIP YER DAMN THROAT OUT!

[Wright's emotions are a lot more contained than the Boston Brawler's, coldly glaring at him.]

SW: Hannibal Carver... you inserted yourself into business that does not concern you.

[Carver shouts back.]

HC: Oh, it concerns me a whole lot, you son of a...

[The audio cuts out for a moment as Carver lets the expletives fly.]

HC: When the Cowboy was here, he asked me to let him handle you and your little pals his way... and I said yes because that man is my friend and I don't have a hell of a lot of those!

But now he's gone... thanks to you and that little...

[Carver grimaces, shaking his head at the words he was about to lay down on Wright's bride.]

HC: THAT WAS HIS DAMN FLESH AND BLOOD, WRIGHT! HIS BABY SISTER! AND WITH HIM OUT OF THE WAY, THERE'S NOT A DAMN SOUL WHO IS GONNA STOP ME FROM BEATING YOU INTO AN EMERGENCY ROOM!

[Wright is taken aback seemingly, surprised at Carver's venom. Shaking his head, he stares at Carver with contempt in his eyes and disdain in his voice.]

SW: You're just another fool who believes loyalty to the Lynch name is some type of virtue. It is a disease. And like all diseases... it will be cured.

[Carver spews angrily again.]

HC: I can't believe I ever stood by your side to do a DAMN thing! You turning your back on us... on all of us...

[He throws a look over his shoulder as Ryan Martinez arrives on the scene, glaring a hole through Wright...]

HD: It's the worst damn mistake you'll ever make... and the last.

[Wright smirks.]

SW: Jack Lynch is gone because he chose poorly. You're choosing the same death.

[Supreme leans in until their foreheads almost touch.]

SW: I thought we could co-exist, but it's clear now that you have become part of the rot plaguing the AWA. You need to be removed.

[Carver gleefully nods.]

HC: Oh yeah! OHHHH YEAH! TRY IT, WRIGHT! TRY AND TAKE ME OUT! I CAN'T [BLEEPING] WAIT!

[Wright starts to respond with a point but Carver SLAPS his hand away. Wright's eyes flash as Carver steps towards him, now being restrained by Ryan Martinez as well.]

HC: We're doing this, Wright. We're doing it tonight...

[The Portland crowd inside the arena ROARS!]

HC: ...and I don't want any damn rules saving your ass from what I'm about to do to you. Tonight? RIP! CITY! STREET FIGHT!

[The crowd EXPLODES at the thought of it as Wright steps closer.]

Bret Grayson puts a hand on Supreme's shoulder, seemingly trying to talk him down from accepting this fight... but Wright's withering glare aimed at his Olympic gold medalist gets Grayson to jerk his hand back like he's been badly burned...

...and as Wright turns his gaze back onto Carver.]

SW: Accepted.

[He finally shifts his gaze to Ryan Martinez.]

SW: And you, Ryan Martinez. Watch closely tonight. Pay attention to what happens when an object forgets its place. Learn the price of noise.

[Martinez glowers at Wright, still rubbing his throat from Mifune's dangerous Japanese Stranglehold before Carver nudges him aside, the duo walking out of view as Team Supreme huddles around Wright. He looks off into the distance after Carver and Martinez.]

SW: We all have goals to accomplish tonight.

Paris. Grayson. Dismantle the Westerly tag division.

Mifune. Break the object that calls itself Ryan Martinez.

Carver... is mine.

[He looks at Martinez and Jackson.]

SW: And you two... Brian James still breathes.

That is an oversight.

[A beat.]

SW: Correct it. Understood?

[Jackson nods, grabbing Martinez by the arm and walking him away before he can open his big mouth. Wright turns back to stare off after where Carver and Martinez disappeared as we fade back out to the ringside area where we find a surprised Dane and Waterson.]

LD: Ben Waterson, did I just hear that right?! Supreme Wright and Hannibal Carver in a Rip City Street Fight?! TONIGHT?!

BW: We gotta get some clarification if that's actually happening, Dane, because that's the LITERAL "Main Event in any arena in the world"... even this dump!

LD: The IIWF Coliseum has seen its share of chaotic battles over the years but if that one goes down later tonight, it might be the craziest one yet!

BW: Meatman Challenge.

[Dane sighs as Megumi Sato's voice takes over.]

MS: The following contest is set for one fall with a ten minute time limit. Introducing first... already in the ring at this time... from Walla Walla, Washington... weighing in at 216 and a half pounds ... STANLEY HAMILTON!

[The gangly Hamilton, clad in briefs-over-tights, with a black horseshoe mustache and bleached white hair, shadow boxes while dancing one-two-three, then raises a fist. Crowd members acknowledge the somewhat local connection.]

LD: Walla Walla's what, a three-hour drive from here?

BW: Closer to four, by the time you hit the restroom on the way.

[Megumi continues.]

MS: Annnnnnnnd his opponent...

[The PA crackles to life with a voice.]

"Slates are never clean. And respect is never assumed."

[The staccato rhythm of "All My Life" by Foo Fighters plays.]

All my life, I've been searchin' for somethin'
Somethin' never comes, never leads to nothin'
Nothin' satisfies, but I'm gettin' close
Closer to the prize at the end of the rope
All night long, I dream of the day
When it comes around, then it's taken away
Leaves me with the feelin' that I feel the most
Feel it come to life when I see your ghost

[The music kicks into overdrive as out steps Justin Gaines, clad in a black hat, his ring gear of black brief tights, black knee pads, a black leather vest personalized with his name, and black boots personalized with his initials near the ankle.]

LD: Justin Gaines, alone this time, as he heads determinedly to the ring. He looks in no mood to mess around.

BW: His running buddy, Jayden Jericho, sunning himself on some beach as we speak... and who knows where the American Idols are tonight.

[Gaines climbs in as the announcer says...]

RO: Representing Generation Lost... weighing in at 283 pounds from Fairbanks, Alaska...

...JUSTINNNNNNNNN GAAAAAIAAINES!

[The referee points to the timekeeper...]

"DING! DING! DING!"

[...as Gaines charges Hamilton from the go and LEVELS him with a lariat clothesline, Hamilton pinwheeling over and landing face-first with a thud!]

LD: And Gaines wasting no time!

[Gaines proceeds to stomp Hamilton in the head multiple times, not allowing him a chance to get up. The referee attempts to shield the opponent as Gaines barks back.]

BW: I am sensing an urge that, once again, Justin Gaines has something to prove in this match - that being that he can pummel people at will.

[After about the seventh stomp, Gaines stops. He cracks his knuckles, stretches his neck, then reaches down to pull Hamilton to a standing position. He takes three steps back...]

LD: What do you know about Stanley Hamilton?

BW: I know he's a second generation talent from around here. Growing up, his single dad did multiple jobs so they could get by. I heard he even worked nights. He...

"THWAAAAAAAAAAACK!"

[Ben is cut off as Gaines jumps up and hits a knee strike to the face!]

LD: What a shot! And Hamilton goes down like dead weight, Ben.

[Gaines covers as the referee counts one... two...]

LD: Oh, come on! He just pulled the guy up! I get the feeling this one was all over right there but Justin Gaines - perhaps with something to prove like you mentioned, Ben - was having none of that.

BW: He could easily have won right then and there... and I'm not a big fan of pulling people out of a pin. If you get the chance to win it, take it... I just hope this doesn't come back to bite him tonight.

LD: Gaines all alone out here, without his pals to interfere...

[Gaines stands to full height, pulling up Hamilton with him. He pie-faces Hamilton with a palm to get him to center ring, then shoves his head down into a standing headscissors.]

LD: You know what is next. Denali Death Drop time.

[Gaines hoists Hamilton into an elevated crucifix...]

BW: And here it comes!

[But Hamilton wriggles to escape, sliding down Gaines' back. He hooks up a quick backslide on Gaines and leverages him down into a pinning predicament...]

LD: Backslide!

[One... two... and kickout just in the nick of time!]

BW: Stanley Hamilton nearly stole one there!

[Hamilton stands - only to get clotheslined out of his shoes a second time by Justin Gaines!]

LD: What acceleration and impact right there! Hamilton might be seeing stars after that one... and you gotta imagine Justin Gaines did not like having his signature move interrupted there.

[Gaines angrily reaches down and lifts Hamilton into a chokehold. He bends his knees slightly, lifting Hamilton up...]

LD: Chokeslam?!

"THUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUD!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[And drives Hamilton into the mat with a high-impact, chokeslam/uranage combination!]

BW: Not just ANY chokeslam, Dane - that's the Grizzly Slam! And that's all she wrote!

[Gaines covers again, getting one... two...

...and again lifts the opponent off the mat to break the pin, earning the ire of the Portland crowd!]

LD: Well, the Gaines family might be treated with reverence here in the Pacific Northwest but young Justin has crossed a line in the eyes of this Portland fans here tonight. He pulls up his opponent a second time... the referee admonishing him now, threatening to end the match in Hamilton's favor.. hey, you think he's any relation to-

BW: The way Justin's dominating him? The closest this guy would get to Harley is buying the Topps Now card from Memorial Day when she won the Rumble. I got the patch auto of that one by the way. Sheer luck.

LD: I'm sure. And what's it going for on eBay?

BW: About three- uhh... no! I'd never sell something that precious!

[Gaines stands, just looking down on the crumpled Hamilton as he stifles a fake yawn.]

BW: If there's one thing I've noticed about Justin Gaines, he's always out to prove something, and it's not about pinning people. It's about hurting them, which he clearly enjoys doing. And why not? I'm sure there was no one on the playground growing up who could tell him otherwise.

[Gaines uses his right foot to tap at the opponent's head lightly.]

LD: Following his dad's example, no doubt...

[Gaines is still standing over Hamilton, shaking his head. The ref warns him to move the match along and he obliges, dragging Hamilton up to shoot them into the ropes...]

LD: Tosses him in and... HAMILTON DUCKS THE CLOTHESLINE!

[Hamilton hits the far ropes, rebounding back to duck under an off-balance clothesline attempt...]

LD: Swing and a miss a second time!

[...but as Gaines seeks to prove that the third time is a charm, Hamilton drops into a slide between the legs, coming up behind him to tap him on the shoulder. Gaines snaps an elbow back at the temple but Hamilton ducks under as Gaines spins around.]

LD: Look at this!

[And with great effort, Hamilton lifts Gaines into a Northern Lights Suplex, hanging on with a bridge!]

LD: BIG UPSET ON THE WAAAAAAAAY... NOOOOOO! Out at two!

BW: I'm surprised he got him up! Stanley Hamilton giving Justin Gaines more of a fight than he expected here, despite the rather significant strength disadvantage. And speaking of strength, Justin Gaines is still adding muscle to his frame. Already dangerous - but just getting started, Dane.

[Hamilton is slow to get up, still recovering when Gaines CRACKS him with an uppercut from his knees, sending Hamilton staggering away. The quite angry Gaines grabs a fistful of hair, glaring at him for a moment before rearing back to deliver a vicious headbutt...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and hanging onto the hair to prevent a wobbly Hamilton's collapse so that he can deliver a second headbutt...]

OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH

[...and that one sends Hamilton down to the canvas.]

BW: Might've cracked his skull wide open with... he sure did, look at that...

[The referee looks alarmed at a laceration on the head of Hamilton, shaking his head and trying to keep Gaines at bay as the youngster pulls Hamilton up by his rapidly-bloodied hair, warning him to stop fighting back before shoving him into another standing headscissors...]

BW: This is what you have to expect though. You interrupt Justin Gaines' dominance, he'll just take it as an insult.

LD: Maybe he should work on that.

[Gaines grabs Hamilton around the middle, elevates him into an elevated crucifix - then drops him into a hangman's neckbreaker!]

LD: DENALI DEATH DROP! It's academic now!

[The ref counts one... two... three.]

"DING! DING! DING!"

MS: Here is your winner... JUSTINNNNN... GAIIIIIIIINESSSSSS!

[The referee raises Justin's hand for a moment before quickly moving to the aid of Hamilton, rolling them from the ring before Gaines can decide to inflict any more damage. The Portland crowd is letting Gaines hear it as he looks out on the IIWF Coliseum fanbase. We can see Mariah Wolfe climbing into the ring on the far side as Gaines glares coldly at the jeering crowd.]

MW: Fans, Justin Gaines with-

[Gaines snatches the mic from her hand, earning himself more boos.]

JG: You saw that, right? You all saw what I did to that guy... right?

[The crowd boos louder..]

JG: I'm just saying... some competition would be nice! It would be great! Because I sure didn't get any tonight!

[The crowd boos more.]

JG: Speaking of competition. I'm right here in the good ol' IIWF Coliseum... home of the good ol' Double Eye. And I have to say, not only was I in a Double Eye ring at a VERY young age... helping my dad and mom torment some guy called the "Meatman"...

[Mariah jerks the mic back towards herself.]

MW: The one and only Jimmy Steele!

[There are some cheers for the former Meatman from the formerly IIWF Faithful.]

JG: Was that his name? Who cares. Because not only did I appear in the ring early on, but I grew up watching this stuff on tape. You see, my dad was my hero, and TV was the best way to see him. Hell. It was usually the ONLY way to see him.

[Justin smirks a grin. Almost a Grizzly Grin?]

JG: Thanks, Dad!

[A smattering of boos from the Grizzly faithful.]

JG: But I didn't just watch my Dad. I also needed to see all the other legends doing their thing as well. And I have to say... there's more to wrestling history than the Double Eye. Competition didn't live and die with that place. Not nationally... and not even here in Portland.

[More boos are heard from the die-hards in the IIWF Coliseum.]

MW: Justin, what do you mean?

JG: You know what I mean, but I'm just gonna say it. Pacific. Coast. Wrestling. PCW for short. The regional promotion from late night TV, every Saturday night - Live from the Grapplearium. It came on after the news. It had Tom Peterson Appliance ads and Crow's Nest interviews, direct from a run-down former bowling alley. Stuff that will never be replaced...

[The crowd cheers, mildly, the respect given the old Grapplearium.]

JG: ...and thank God, because it was a dump. And though they thought the tapes were destroyed, my granddad saved them and I watched them. I watched every single one.

My dad wrestled there, as well, until they banned him. I think that was the property insurance carrier's call. He then came back when it went national - Psychotic Championship Wrestling, they called it. He won the title and, of course, because it's Gunnar Gaines, he got fired again. So I know the history and I know the names.

"Superstar" Steve Sampson...

[A smattering of cheers is heard.]

JG: "Maniac" Adrian Dickeson...

[More cheers.]

JG: The Newcastle Warrior... Judge Dread and T.R. Ela...

[There's a smattering of cheers and boos as Gaines goes down the list.]

JG: Christian Kingsworth... and the legendary Super Scott.

[Major boos for that particular notorious member of wrestling history.]

JG: "Idolizer" Trace Michaels... The Witch King... The Extremist...

[And we're back to the mix of cheers and boos. A nodding Mariah speaks up.]

MW: Some deep cuts from the past. Some major names as well.

[Gaines shrugs.]

JG: Mostly nobodies, if we're being honest. But hell... everyone starts somewhere and so many of them started here. Some became megastars, most became footnotes. They performed in stinky old armories, gyms and cafeterias in Newport... in Eugene... in Walla Walla... in Longview... in Salem... in Gervais... down in Coos Bay...

[The crowd cheers a number of these cities.]

JG: And those dreary old mill towns were as good as it got for them. My old man wrestled in every last one of those cities - and he kicked every last one of their asses. They called him The Baddest Thang Runnin'.

[A pretty vocal contingent of the crowd cheers the mention of Gunnar, a local hero.]

MW: Some appreciation for the guy you call your "old man"... someone who made it big. He was ranked tops in the world at one time. A former champion! A man who became a Hall of Famer!

JG: [irritated] Listen, Mariah. I ain't here to talk about him, except as a reference point. I'm here to talk about me, because he and I were quite often defeated as a tag team, before he decided the local bar was more interesting through the gaze of his double vision. See, all those losses must have been HIS fault, because me? As a solo performer? I'm unbeaten.

The facts are this. Since I came back, no one in the AWA, and I mean no one, has been able to stand up to me without counting their teeth afterwards. Not even the likes of Hannibal Carver.

[The jeers are loud for that comment.]

MW: Most of your opponents have been unranked though... and for those who have been names of note, you've had help. You know... "Those are your boys, this is your gang?" So your point would be?

[Gaines glares at Wolfe.]

JG: My point being, it's 2018, and there's only one man around here they should call The Baddest Thang Runnin' these days - and that's me!

[Boos rain down - as Justin spreads his arm and raises his chin to absorb the non-adulation.]

MW: With all due respect, Justin... I seriously have to ask... have you EARNED that name?

[The crowd ROARS their own response to that as Gaines looks around in annoyance.]

MW: Your dad created havoc everywhere he went. He sacrificed and bled. There wasn't an enemy he wouldn't make to get ahead, and some people liked him for it, but he absolutely didn't care either way.

[Gaines is obviously irate as he responds.]

JG: I don't care either! You don't believe me? I'll be back in town next week at Providence Park. Watch me do next week what I just did this week... and the week before that... as well as what I'll be doing two weeks from now...

...and I don't care who it is.

Watch all that. Pretty soon you too will be calling me... The Baddest Thang Running.

[Justin's music, "All My Life" by Foo Fighters, plays as he exits and we cut to ringside to Lori and Ben...]

LD: That's one Justin Gaines with a bold statement, proclaiming himself The Baddest Thang Runnin' - the sobriquet that was once carried by his dear old dad, Gunnar Gaines. But I don't exactly see the Grizzly out here giving an endorsement or passing the torch, Ben.

BW: I'm not so sure that matters to Justin Gaines! You heard him say "just a reference point." That's a hell of a way to talk about one of your own parents - especially one who happens to be a Hall of Famer.

LD: Is it a premature statement for Justin to self-apply that name?

BW: I don't know, Dane. The kid's got athletic gifts for days... he's got his whole career ahead of him... you talk about self-application. If he applies himself, there may not be a ceiling on his possible accomplishments.

LD: What kind of hypocrite comes out here and talks down his legendary father... and then tries to make a name for himself off his father's old nickname?!

BW: You'll have to talk to him about that.

LD: Maybe I will. But right now, folks, we're heading backstage to the newest member of the AWA announce team - Lucy St. Clair!

[We fade from the ringside area to the backstage area of the IIWF Coliseum where we find the newest member of the Showtime announce team - Lucy St. Clair - standing and grinning.]

LSC: Showtime: Ring Wars is one for the ages! So much action and excitement here tonight in Portland already and we're just getting started, AWA fans! We've still got two more hours here LIVE on ESPN and...

[St. Clair trails off as she spots something off-camera. Her investigative journalist instincts kick in and she waves the cameraman to follow her. He obliges and soon we find St. Clair coming face to face with the AWA Women's World Tag Team Champions - who also happen to be the 2017 Steal The Spotlight winner and contract holder and the 2018 Memorial Day Rumble winner - Harley Hamilton and Cinder aka Seductive and Destructive. They are deep in conversation when St. Clair approaches.]

LSC: Ladies, a quick word?

[Cinder looks like she's stepped in gum and seems ready to shoot her down but Harley Hamilton puts a soothing hand on her partner's shoulder.]

HH: It's okay, Cindy. We can make a little time for the new girl.

What's the magic word, St. Clair?

LSC: ...Please?

[Harley gives her a patronizing smile.]

HH: That wasn't so hard, was it? Ask away.

LSC: Let's talk about what happened earlier. Kayla Cristol coming to the rescue of Moxy Hart and making it clear that she - and Victoria June whenever she arrives in the building - are looking for a fight!

HH: That little twerp Moxy Hart wasn't in any danger and she certainly didn't need any rescuing. If anything, that doofus Kayla Cristol jumped the gun and got her panties in a bunch over a situation that was already defused. Casey got caught up in the heat of the moment and unfortunately Moxy paid the price for it.

LSC: But it looked like you were-

[Harley cuts her off.]

HH: Let me give you some advice, Lucy-Loo: in the world of wrestling, never assume things are as they seem.

[Hamilton smirks.]

HH: But if The Country Punks are looking for a fight? Well, they're not going to have to look too hard, because I promise you-

[A loud bellow rings out from off-camera which cuts off Hamilton who jerks her head in that direction... but she only has a moment to react before Victoria June launches herself into frame, smashing a forearm into the side of Hamilton's head, sending her spinning away and crashing bodily into a rolling production crate which predictably starts rolling as Hamilton falls to the ground.]

St. Clair bails out in a hurry as the Afro Punk wheels around, smashing a pair of fists into Cinder as Cinder tries to do the same to her. June is screeching with fury as she flails away on Cinder with fists, driving her back across the room towards the opposite wall as Lori Dane's voice cuts in.]

LD: It's broken loose in Portland! Victoria June has arrived in the building, on the scene, and she's wasted no time in taking the fight to the World Tag Team Champions!

[June lands some looping right hands before grabbing a shrieking Cinder by the hair, turning her around to face the wall with some evil intentions...]

LD: Look out! She's gonna put Cinder's head into the wall!

[...but she never gets the chance as Harley Hamilton comes flying into the scene, driving her knee into June's lower back! Hamilton has a few off-mic words for June as the Afro Punk collapses against the wall, words that earn her a silencing from a quick-triggered censor...]

LD: Fans, we apologize for-

[Cinder grabs June's other arm as they pull her away from the wall before...]

"THUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUD!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and HURL her backwards into the wall, a large dent forming in the drywall as the back of June's head SMASHING into it!]

LD: OH! Oh no, Ben... the back of Victoria June's head just hit the wall... and we all remember June spending time on the shelf with a concussion...

BW: She may be headed back to the injured list after that one! How dare she lay her hands on the champions like that?! She's out of control, Dane! This lunatic should be fined! She should be suspended!

[With June slumped down on a knee against the wall, Cinder plants her hands on the wall before DRIVING a ferocious knee across the jaw, dumping her motionless on the floor...]

"OHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: And Victoria June just got herself into a bad situation with this impulsive attack in the backstage area as... here it is now, Cinder and Hamilton working together, stomping and kicking the Afro Punk on the cold, hard concrete here in Portland, Oregon!

BW: Such a shame too.

LD: Well, I agree... but I'm surprised to hear you say it.

BW: Who better to help "Keep Portland Weird," than Victoria June... the weirdest of them all.

LD: Ah, there it is.

[The violent stomps have June weakly raising her arms trying to cover up as Hamilton and Cinder seem intent on doing serious damage...

...until another body comes flying into the fray!]

LD: THERE'S KAYLA CRISTOL!

[The brawler from Folkes, Arkansas cracks Hamilton with a right hand behind the ear that sends her flailing and falling, sprawled out across the floor. Cinder turns to address the new threat but Cristol lashes out backwards with a kick to the gut, sending Cinder stumbling backwards gasping for air..

...but before it can get any worse, the area floods with officials and security, trying to wedge bodies apart as Harley pulls herself off the floor, leaning hard on a production case as she screams at her attacker!]

HH: CHEAP SHOTS AND SNEAK ATTACKS! THAT'S ALL YOU'VE TWO GOT, CRISTOL! BUT THIS IS THE LAST TIME! I'M GOING TO END YOU! YOU HEAR ME?! I'M GOING TO-

[Hamilton is cut off by Cristol lunging past John Shock to get at her, hands outstretched for Hamilton's throat but Shock and a pair of security guards are able

to keep her back as Hamilton takes a swing at her, bouncing it off the back of Shock's head accidentally.]

LD: We've got a fight going on! This is out of control!

[With Cristol and Hamilton struggling to get at one another, we can see the officials' gameplan now as security starts forcing Cinder and Hamilton down the hallway through sheer numbers as a fuming Cristol backs up, turning to help her partner off the floor. There's a mutter of "you alright?" from Cristol to June who nods before Cristol nudges her back against the wall, fire in her eyes.]

KC: WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

[June grimaces as she grabs at the back of her head.]

VJ: What are you talking about?

[Cristol throws up her hands incredulously.]

KC: What am I talking about?! You just ran into a two on one with the champions! You got yourself beat up... AGAIN! What the heck do you mean what am I talking about?!

[June shakes her head, looking like she really doesn't understand the issue.]

VJ: You texted me and said "as soon as you get here, we're going after Harley and Cinder." So ah got here... and ah went after them. What's the problem?

KC: The problem is - I wanted a MATCH with them... not a damn street fight in the back.

[Cristol sighs.]

KC: Why is this ALWAYS your solution? I want the titles! Don't you?

[June nods.]

VJ: You know I do.

[Cristol puts a hand on her partner's shoulder.]

KC: Then you need to start acting like it. This isn't about what they did to you... or me... this is about us becoming the Women's World Tag Team Champions. And you...

[She throws up her hands again, her emotions getting the better of her.]

KC: You might have just ruined everything!

[Cristol starts to walk away but June reaches out.]

VJ: Wait, hang on...

[Cristol shrugs off her partner's hand.]

KC: Not right now, Vicky. I need to take a walk, clear my head...

[Cristol storms off down the hallway. June watches her leave for a beat... then her mood shifts. Serious. Purposeful.]

VJ: I can fix this. I need to find Zharkov.

[She storms off in the opposite direction as Lucy St. Clair looks on in shock...

...and we fade back out to where Lori and Ben are seated at ringside.]

LD: A tense scene backstage between the Country Punks and the Women's World Tag Team Champions, Seductive and Destructive.

BW: You call it a "tense scene" - I call it an ambush by the uberjealous Victoria June! And what about the tension between Cristol and June?! You can't win the tag team titles if you can't trust your own partner to be on the same page. Maybe it's time for Cristol to kick that Afropunk to the curb, Dane.

LD: I'm sure both you and E-Girl MAX would love to see that... but speaking of tag teams, coming up next we've got tag team action... and we've got ourselves a volatile one here, Ben. Two teams that nobody in this arena is inclined to cheer for and two teams who absolutely hate the idea of being second-best.

BW: And with Veronica Westerly at ringside and Team Supreme in the building, this one's got the potential to get messy in a hurry.

LD: Fans, let's go to the ring for what promises to be an explosive tag team showdown!

[We fade to the ring where Megumi Sato is waiting.]

MS: The following contest is a TAAAAAG TEEEEEEAM MATCH scheduled for one fall with a thirty minute time limit! Introducing first, they represent Team Supreme... first, from Youngstown, Ohio... weighing in at two-hundred forty-three pounds... he is an Olympic Gold Medalist...

BRET GRRRRRRRAAAAAYYYYSSSSOOOON!!!

His partner, stating to be from Heaven, claiming to weigh 23 feathers from angels' wings... they are Team Supreme's "Weapon"...

PARISSSSSSSSSSSSSSS CRAWWWWWWWWWFORRRRRRRRRRRRRRD!!!!

[The lights drop down to nothing, plunging the arena into darkness to the loud buzz of the crowd. A low electronic buzz is heard; the opening section of "Final Countdown" by Europe. As the various industrial/synth sounds come up, small plumes of steam emit from around the entranceway. And then, the famous synthesizer riff begins, causing the crowd hype to build.]

LD: I have to admit, I'm surprised to see Grayson and Crawford as the ones picked for this bout, Ben. Of all the members of Team Supreme, they're the ones that appear to get along the least.

BW: Perhaps it's a front, Dane, just like when Crawford snuck into the AWA as a flagbearer. We know Grayson and Takeshi Mifune are close, and Crawford follows Mifune's instructions to a T. Maybe Mifune has them training together and whipping them into shape.

LD: If he hasn't, then I'll at least say this - Grayson and Crawford are both extremely dangerous competitors, even if the way in which they are dangers is vastly different.

BW: Sometimes that pays off. What Grayson specializes in, maybe Crawford is weak, and vice versa. Maybe they could surprise us.

[At last, as the voice from the song counts down from ten, the entranceway begins filling with thick white mist, like a smoke cloud.]

At two, the entrance way floods with golden light, as if a rocket were taking off. And at zero, the light drops, replaced by red, white, and blue small spotlights playing through the now-receding mist, as a previously unseen trap door opens up, revealing... none other than Bret Grayson rising from beneath the stage. The Olympic gold medalist is kneeling, with his arms raised, gripping the United States flag over his head as he rises into view. Standing behind him, a hand to their face with their ring finger gently touching their lips, is Paris Crawford. As Grayson turns around, he looks annoyed at his teammate, who responds with a whimsical salute.]

#We're leaving together#
#But still it's farewell#

[Bret Grayson is a man in prime physical condition, with wide shoulders and well-defined muscles. He has black hair kept short but messily curled. He has hazel eyes and an epic-level smirk. He's wearing an amateur wrestling-style singlet with an American flag motif. Around his neck, he proudly wears his Olympic gold medal. Paris Crawford walks as though they are floating on air behind them, with their hair this week a rose gold and their eyes a crystal blue, accentuated with a smokey eye. They are dressed in a black leather crop top with a long right sleeve and an elbow length glove with no sleeve on the left arm, along with black high-waisted shorts laced up the size, and a long silk train belted around their waist. They wear knee-high black leather boots which cover their kneepads. Strapped to their back are black angel wings, which Grayson looks especially perturbed by.]

And maybe we'll come back#
To earth, who can tell?#
I guess there is no one to blame#
We're leaving ground#
Will things ever be the same again?#

[Upon arriving at ringside, Grayson walks around the ring and walks up to the steps, shaking his head as Crawford removes their train and angel wings. He steps through the ropes and then climbs up onto the second turnbuckle. With perfect timing, Grayson raises his arms and points to the sky as the chorus hits...]

IT'S THE FINAL COUNTDOWN!

[...as the crowd sings along. The lights return to normal inside the arena, as Grayson nimbly hops off the second turnbuckle and retreats to a corner, where he is met by Crawford. Crawford shyly waves at their partner, wiggling their fingertips, causing Grayson to say "why can't you dress like a professional?" to the model. Crawford props themselves up across the top rope, yawning like they haven't got a care in the world as Grayson stalks the ring, ready to strike...

...and to a buzz from the crowd, we get an entrance theme that AWA fans have not heard in a long time as "Raijin's Drums" begins to play and the entranceway fills with smoke.]

MS: Annnnnnnnnnd their opponents... being accompanied down the aisle by Veronica Westerly and representing the Westerly Dynasty... the team of JAMES LYNCH and NENSHOUUUUUUUUU!

[There's an aura of menace in the air as Nenshou emerges in a slow glide, face painted in stark white and crimson... a ghost given muscle... in a pair of loose-fitting pants, a bare torso, and a long, flowing hooded headpiece that runs halfway down his back. He drags a taped thumb across his throat, gesturing at the ring while

being joined by James Lynch who is in black trunks and boots, his hair slicked down with water trickling down his torso as he glares intensely down the aisle, the hard gaze of a man who just failed to win the big one, the bottom half of his face covered in a skull and crossbones bandana tied around his head. Veronica Westerly is the final piece to the puzzle, arriving with a smile that doesn't quite reach her eyes as she places a hand on the shoulder of each of her men, giving them a nudge down the aisle. She gives off the vibe of a queen inspecting her soldiers as she follows close behind - confident, calculating, and fully in control.]

LD: Quite an entrance for this trio, Ben.

BW: The Dynasty doesn't come to the ring - they descend!

LD: And as you see these four competitors getting set for in-ring action, Ben... I don't know who is the most dangerous athlete inside that ring... but we may be about to find out.

BW: All four of them are athletic freaks of nature in different ways which is what makes this showdown so intriguing to me, Dane.

[The tension is high as the two teams stand in the ring, Westerly keeping out of the ring as she whispers final strategy to her squad. Across the ring, we can see an animated conversation unfolding between the Team Supreme members as the Olympic gold medalist jerks a thumb at himself repeatedly.]

LD: It looks like Bret Grayson wants to start this off, Ben... and he just called out James Lynch, demanding the Black Sheep of the Lynch family get in there to join him.

BW: I'm not surprised by that, Dane. If you look at the big picture of the landscape of things, Grayson is the guy - who in the eyes of many - is the overlooked member of Team Supreme lately. I'm betting he's looking to change that tonight by showing the world he can hang with the same man who was a heartbeat away from becoming World Champion just a few weeks ago at Memorial Day Mayhem.

[Lynch stares hard across the ring at the outspoken Grayson, his jaw tight as he nods to Westerly and Nenshou, not even watching as Nenshou slingshots over the top rope to the apron. The Texan edges across the ring, eyeballing Grayson as Crawford exits in a huff...]

"DING! DING! DING!"

[...and as soon as referee Scott Ezra signals for the bell, Grayson lunges forward, engaging in a tieup with Lynch who seems on his heels as the Olympian easily shoves him back across the ring, ending up right in the neutral corner with surprising speed.]

LD: Driven all the way back and-

"SLAAAAAAAAAAAAAP!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: -hello! That'll wake up James Lynch!

[It sure does. The slap and Grayson's smirk has Lynch's temper up as he storms out of the corner, looking to tie up again but this time, the Olympian hits a single leg, lifting and tossing Lynch down to the mat where he goes into a ride, staying with Lynch through a series of sitouts and spins, trying to get away from the gold medalist to no avail...

...and in fact, Lynch ends up on his stomach where Grayson ties him up in a crucifix, giving just a little crank to cause Lynch to cry out before he spins out, spins across, and then pops up with a little paintbrush slap to the back of the head!]

LD: Bret Grayson just trying to humiliate James Lynch out here, Ben!

BW: Well, I'm as big of a James Lynch fan as there is, Dane... but even I know you don't try to mat wrestle with an Olympic gold medalist. That was Lynch's temper getting the better of him.

LD: And remember, fans... President Zharkov is watching closely, I'm sure. We're all waiting to see these new Tag Team contender rankings after tonight's show to see where the teams are slotted as they look towards the 4th of July and their chance to Run The Rankings in that gauntlet match.

BW: The crazy thing about it, Dane, is that THIS could've been a tag team title match. Grayson and Crawford have NEVER teamed before to the best of my knowledge and they could've been slotted in to defend the titles tonight as two members of Team Supreme.

[Lynch comes off the mat, even angrier than he was before as he bumrushes Grayson, landing a heavy haymaker to the jaw...]

LD: We've got a fight on our hands now!

[The fists are flying in Portland, rights and lefts as the two men battle it out, trading big blows to cheers from the crowd...]

LD : These people seem like they just want to see these two teams beat each other up and you can hardly blame them for that.

BW: What? I can blame them!

LD: I don't see how. With the recent actions of the Westerly Dynasty injuring the World Champion and the laundry list of bodies behind Team Supreme, they deserve all the boos they're getting and then some if you ask me.

[The referee manages to get 'em apart for a moment... but just a moment as Lynch lunges back in, getting single legged up over Grayson's shoulder again...]

...and this time, the Olympic gold medalist takes a lap with him up there, smirking at the fans...]

LD: You've gotta be-

[...but a wriggling Lynch uses his size to slip over the shoulder, dragging Grayson down in a sunset flip for a two count.]

LD: -ohhh, nice reversal there by Lynch and-

[Lynch comes up quick, beating Grayson up just barely, and lands a standing dropkick on the chin that connects flush, knocking the gold medalist down to the mat where he promptly rolls to the outside as Lynch takes a knee, glaring out at him as Grayson stalks the ringside area, rubbing his chin before slamming his arms down on the apron...]

LD: Well, that went as well as could be expected for Bret Grayson until that dropkick. Lynch showing off some of the athleticism that once made him one of the AWA's most popular competitors but that day is long gone in 2018. And that seems to have caught Grayson off his game a little bit.

[Grayson angrily paces the floor for a bit before looking up at Crawford who lackadaisically extends their hand in his direction. With a serious case of the frownies, Grayson rolls in and slaps the hand...

...and across the ring, Lynch makes the exchange as well, Nenshou slingshotting over the ropes in a somersault, rolling through to a knee as Crawford steps in, taking a couple of skips before delivering a bow in Nenshou's direction...]

LD: I can't even tell if Crawford is mocking Nenshou with that... and this should be very interesting, Ben.

[Nenshou tilts his head appraisingly at Crawford - silent and predatory...

...a gaze that gives Crawford a seeming moment of hesitation, a half step back away from the Silent Assassin.]

BW: Dane, we've both known Supreme Wright for a very long time now... and we both know what he's capable of AND what he demands out of his allies.

LD: Right.

BW: So, imagine how much of a stone cold killer you have to be to be deemed Wright's personal "weapon." Crawford gets taken lightly by a lot of people for the way they look or act at times... but make no mistake, they're as dangerous as it comes in there.

LD: Right now though, it looks like Crawford did NOT like that look by Nenshou. Sends a chill right down your spine.

[Crawford aggressively comes forward, through a low kick to the side of Nenshou's leg... but Nenshou shows no visible sign of reaction.]

LD: Ooooookay. That can't be comforting.

[Crawford throws another one, harder this time, with more intensity...

...and again, Nenshou stares them dead in the eye with no response.]

LD: Nenshou showing the aura and mystique that has made him of one the sport's most feared - and successful - competitors.

[Crawford takes a pair of steps back, obviously surprised by this turn of events. Crawford throws a look at Grayson who looks alarmed... and then to Westerly who smirks, nodding in response...

...and then Crawford's emotions burst forth, charging in, piefacing the painted face backwards...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and catching a thrust kick to the sternum in response!]

LD: Two kicks by Crawford don't even get a reaction but one thrust kick to the chest by Nenshou floors Crawford!

[As Crawford scrambles up, the Silent Assassin is there to meet them with a snap mare, flipping them over into a seated position...]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: KICK TO THE SPINE!

[With Crawford reeling from the blow, Nenshou hits the far ropes, rebounding back with a low dropkick on the mark!]

LD: Precision offense by Nenshou... and look at Crawford, rolling to the corner...

BW: For the second time in this match, a member of Team Supreme has bailed out of the fight... and we talked about Supreme Wright's expectations for his allies a few moments ago, Dane... you gotta think Wright is looking on at this and he is NOT happy at what he's seeing.

[Cut to Veronica Westerly applauding her charges' work so far.]

BW: And on the other hand...

LD: This is really the first time we've seen Paris Crawford in this state, Ben. Upset, maybe even a little confused or embarrassed...

BW: Paris wanted the spotlight and instead, they got hit by a Japanese freight train in the early moments of this one.

[Crawford pulls themselves up in the corner just as Nenshou dashes across, cartwheeling and tumbling in...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: HANDSPRING ELBOW CONNECTS! AND NENSHOU'S MOMENTUM CARRIES HIM ALL THE WAY TO THE OUTSIDE!

[Crawford staggers out of the corner as Nenshou is quickly back up on the apron and just as quickly heading for the top rope...]

LD: Look at the speed, the quickness, the agility of Nenshou...

BW: Reminding these people just who the hell he is!

LD: ...to the top and-

[Grayson is shouting at Nenshou from the apron, trying to distract him but Nenshou's focus is absolute, diving off the top rope to catch the stunned Crawford with a flying crossbody!]

LD: -CROSSBODY OFF THE TOP! ONNNNNNNNE! TWOOOOOOOO!

[Crawford kicks out just as Grayson steps through the ropes, ready to make the save...]

...and Nenshou is immediately up and in a defensive posture as Grayson holds up his hands, backing out to the apron...]

LD: Grayson wants no part of-

[Suddenly, Nenshou pitches forward, crashing down facefirst on the mat...]

LD: -OH! Crawford trips him from behind!

BW: Always dangerous when you least expect it!

[With Nenshou sprawled, Crawford surges to their feet and divebombs in, CRACKING Nenshou in the back of the head with a stiff forearm strike!]

“OHHHHHHHHH!”

[Crawford gets right up, leaps into the air, and DRIVES their knee down into the small of Nenshou’s back!]

LD: Look at Crawford - a blur of brutal offense in there...

[Crawford is immediately up and striking, stomping the wrist and hand of Nenshou twice before leaping high into the air...]

LD: ...DOUBLE STOMP!

[...but Nenshou pulls the hand clear, swinging to lean back on one knee, twisting the other leg up and thrusting it out to catch an off-balance Crawford in the chest with another kick!]

LD: Wow! What a battle this is!

[As Crawford staggers back, Nenshou kips up to an “oooooh” from the crowd...

...which gets louder as Crawford snaps off a hard kick to the thigh...

...then a leaping knee to the jaw that pops Nenshou flush, his head snapping backwards...]

“OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!”

[Crawford spins and runs, hitting the ropes for more momentum...

...and Nenshou throws himself into the air, connecting with a spinning leg lariat that wipes out Crawford to actual cheers from the AWA crowd for the exchange of high impact offense!]

LD: The fans getting behind Nenshou a little here for the sheer athleticism alone!

[Down on the mat, Crawford rolls to the outside, cradling their upper body as Nenshou glides across the ring, gripping the top rope with both hands...

...and slingshots OVER the top rope, wiping out Crawford with a crossbody!]

“OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!”

LD: Big dive by the newest weapon of the Westerly Dynasty...

[Nenshou rolls back in, striking a kneeling pose to some more cheers from the AWA Faithful...]

LD: ...and he looks like he hasn’t lost a step, Ben.

BW: So impressive. Nenshou’s been in Japan for the past several years, winning gold there several times... and that’s not an easy thing to do. What a coup for Veronica Westerly in bringing Nenshou back to the States!

LD: Although if my brother is telling it true, he might’ve played a role in that as well.

[Grayson walks along the ring apron, shouting in at Nenshou, threatening to “tie his legs into knots until they pop!” as the referee tries to keep the two men apart...

...which allows Crawford to roll back in, rushing across, and blitzes Nenshou with a running forearm to the back of the head!]

LD: OH! Cheap shot by Paris Crawford... and down goes Nenshou!

BW: You can't take your eye off the prize for a single second in this business, Dane.

LD: The tag is made... and in comes the Olympic gold medalist, Bret Grayson!

[Grayson shows his typical aggressive nature upon stepping in, helping Crawford to toss Nenshou back into the Team Supreme corner before the duo begin laying into him with boots to the body...]

LD: Double team in the corner, Nenshou in the wrong part of town here...

BW: Remember, Nenshou's made his name as primarily a singles wrestler, Dane... so this tag team thing could be new to him.

LD: He'd better pick it up fast because these two are very dangerous competitors to be in there with, dragging him back out... hooking him up... annnnd...

[Grayson and Crawford take him up and over, putting him down hard with a double vertical suplex, leaving Nenshou down on the mat...]

LD: ...nicely done there. As we've mentioned, we've never seen these two team before as Grayson usually is alongside Takeshi Mifune who we'll see in singles action later tonight and Crawford is a part of KAMS... but they're working well together so far, Ben.

BW: Supreme Wright's got his soldiers like a well-oiled machine, Dane, so it's no surprise that any combination of them might excel as a unit... I'm sure that's why he was so confident in declaring Team Supreme as the collective tag team champions.

LD: I still can't believe AWA Legal couldn't put a stop to those contractual shenanigans... but in the meantime, Grayson gets a two count there, grinding that forearm across the cheekbone in big bully fashion.

[As Crawford steps out, Grayson pulls Nenshou up by the arm, tossing him into the neutral corner before following him in...]

LD: BOOT UP!

[...but as Nenshou raises the leg to block the charge, Grayson shows his adaptability by snaring the leg under his arm, pulling the leg to yank Nenshou towards his grasp...]

LD: BELLY TO BELLY!

[...and HURLS Nenshou halfway across the ring with an overhead belly to belly throw!]

LD: What a throw by the Olympic gold medalist!

[Grayson is full of fire now, trashtalking the crowd, his opponents, anyone in his line of sight as he gets back up, turning around...]

LD: Nenshou up and running and-

[...but as the Silent Assassin approaches, Grayson dives low, lifting him into the air by the legs before leaping up, driving him down in a double leg slam!]

LD: -wow! The Olympic gold medalist has come to fight tonight in Portland!

[Getting back up, Grayson again lays the badmouth on Nenshou, paintbrushing him across the face a few times as the Portland crowd jeers loudly...]

LD: Blatant disrespect on the part of Bret Grayson, Ben.

BW: They're both technicians but Bret Grayson wants to HUMILIATE people while Nenshou is just looking to END them!

[Grayson reaches down with both hands, hauling Nenshou up by the hair...

...and pulling him into perfect position for the Silent Assassin to deliver a staggering throat thrust, sending Grayson coughing and gasping away as the referee warns for the illegal strike.]

LD: No respect for the rules on the part of Nenshou who seems to still be willing to do whatever it takes to win a match, Ben.

BW: His old allies may be gone but this Lynch/Nenshou combo is an Unholy Alliance of a different sort.

[With Grayson trying to gather his breath, Nenshou charges at him...

...and Grayson leaves his feet, connecting with a low dropkick to the ankle that flips Nenshou over in a somersault onto his back...]

LD: Ohhh! Nenshou thought he had Grayson right where he wanted him but no dice... Grayson was on the attack and-

[...and the crowd cheers as Grayson makes a grab for Nenshou's leg!]

LD: -the Olympic gold medalist is looking for the Liberty Lock! Looking to hook that ankle and twist it for all he's got, Ben!

BW: If he hooks it in, this one might be over, Dane!

[But Nenshou is ready for it, rolling through in a front somersault...

...which sends Grayson - still holding the leg - flipping through the air onto the canvas. He's quickly back to his feet though, still looking to apply the submission...]

LD: Grayson hanging on like a pit bull and-

[...but Nenshou rolls to his back, upkicking once... twice... three times before he connects flush on the jaw, sending Grayson staggering backwards as Nenshou breaks away, lunging to his corner at a shout from Veronica Westerly...]

LD: TAG!

[...and James Lynch comes charging in, connecting with a clothesline on a surprised Grayson, knocking him right back off his feet. He twists around, dashing to the ropes again...]

LD: A back elbow finds the mark! James Lynch is fired up and he's looking to finish off Team Supreme here in this one... OHHH! KNEELIFT CONNECTS! Grayson may be seeing stars after that one!

[We cut to ringside where Veronica Westerly is clapping proudly for her man as Lynch scoops up Grayson, slamming him down and pointing to the corner. He comes through the ropes and starts to climb...]

LD: Lynch heading up top! And that's not his usual tactics anymore, Ben, but maybe he's looking for a little something extra to battle it out with Team Supreme.

BW: Or maybe he's trying to convince people he's the one who should get the next crack at Supernova and not his running buddy Armstrong.

LD: James Lynch, the former high flyer, is heading to the top rope... a little slowly, like I said this isn't his usual gameplan but-

[...and the crowd ROARS as Grayson kips up off the canvas, sprinting across the ring, leaping in a single bound to the top rope...]

LD: WHAT?! WHAT?! WHAAAAAAAAAAT?!

[...and after wrapping a shocked Lynch in a bodylock, Grayson HURLS him overhead, sending him BOUNCING off the canvas three-quarters of the way across the ring with a belly to belly superplex!]

BW: THAT'S IT, DANE! THAT'S GOTTA BE IT!

LD: Ten minutes into this thirty minute time limit and Grayson crawls, diving into a cover!

[The referee dives down, slapping the mat once... twice...]

LD: HE'S GOT... NOOOOOOOO! NENSHOU MAKES THE SAVE FOR THE WESTERLY DYNASTY!

[Paris Crawford is through the ropes in a blur, starting to move after Nenshou but the referee dives in front of them, keeping Crawford from getting in the mix as Nenshou steps back out...]

...and a furious Bret Grayson gets off the mat, pointing a threatening finger at Nenshou before turning back to a stunned James Lynch, hauling the Black Sheep of the Lynch family off the mat...]

LD: He's going for the Gold Medal Slam!

[...and ducks down, lifting him up into a torture rack position...]

...but Lynch uses the momentum to slip out of the lift, landing on his feet, rearing back his hand...]

LD: CLAW! CLAW! HE'S GOT THE IRON CLAW LOCKED IN!

[The crowd reacts to the Lynch family legacy - even if it's their least favorite wrestling Lynch applying it...]

...and gives an even bigger reaction as he sweeps out the leg while using the clawhold to DRIVE the back of Grayson's head into the canvas!]

LD: LYNCH TURNS IT AROUND! AND NOW HE MIGHT HAVE IT WON!
ONNNNNNNNNE! TWOOOOOOOOOO!

[But just as Nenshou made the save moments earlier, Paris Crawford comes in this time, rearing back their arm...

...and leaps up, DIVING to deliver a spine-crushing forearm to the spine!]

“OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!”

LD: WHAT A SAVE BY CRAWFORD!

BW: Lynch’s lower back just got absolutely PULVERIZED with that diving forearm by Crawford! That’s a HARD way to break up a pin attempt and... Ezra was trying to keep it one on one in there but I think that’s out the window now!

[Nenshou comes back in, rushing to confront the rising Crawford...]

LD: All four are in there - Nenshou all over Crawford with those scintillating chops from the Silent Assassin!

[Snatching the arm, Nenshou sends Crawford into the corner, backing across the ring before tumbling across again...]

LD: HANDSPRING ELB-

“OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!”

[...but this time, Crawford gets clear and Nenshou SLAMS backfirst into the turnbuckles. With Nenshou stunned, Crawford grabs the top rope, swinging their legs up to catch Nenshou with a boot in the skull!]

LD: OH! Crawford’s got Nenshou in some trouble...

[Grabbing the hair, Crawford swings Nenshou out of the corner towards Grayson who wraps the arms around the torso...]

LD: ...belly to... BELLY!

[Dane exclaims as Nenshou gets LAUNCHED overhead in belly to belly again, Nenshou’s body SLAMMING into the turnbuckles!]

LD: INTO THE CORNER!

[The high impact throw sees Nenshou rolling out of the ring as a fired up Grayson yanks down the straps off his singlet...]

LD: And Bret Grayson has shifted it into a higher gear!

BW: This is devolving fast, Dane. The ref’s completely lost control!

[Crawford and Grayson are back on Grayson, each pulling him up by an arm...]

LD: Double whip across...

[...but as Crawford and Grayson drop back into the ropes for a double clothesline attempt, Nenshou snakes an arm under the ropes to trip up Crawford from the floor, dragging them outside to the ringside area as Grayson continues on, Lynch ducking a clothesline attempt by the Olympic gold medalist...]

"CLAAAAAAAAAAAAAANG!"
"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: ...AND NENSHOU PUTS CRAWFORD INTO THE RAILING!

[...and the Texan slams on the brakes as Grayson rebounds...]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"
"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: SUPERKICK! RIGHT ON THE JAW!

[Grayson falls back into the ropes, bouncing off with just enough to stagger back to mid-ring where Lynch boots him in the gut, grabbing a front facelock, turning him over slowly...]

LD: Neckbreaker on the way!

[...but Grayson shoves him off hard, sending Lynch slipping through the ropes to the apron!]

LD: Grayson gets loose from it! Nice counter by the Team Supreme member and-

[The crowd jeers as Veronica Westerly is suddenly on the apron, shouting at Bret Grayson...]

LD: What's this about now?! Scott, get her down from there!

[The referee moves over to confront Westerly as Grayson shouts at her as well.]

LD: We've got confusion here at ringside - just the way Veronica Westerly likes it, it seems. She's got the referee's attention... Bret Grayson is giving her an earful as well.

[Scott Ezra turns to block Grayson from getting closer, forcing him back the other way before turning his attention back to Westerly...]

...and Grayson throws a dismissive gesture at Westerly before moving back in on Lynch who is on a knee on the apron.]

LD: Grayson staying on Lynch, doing the right thing here and- what's he...?!

[But as Grayson makes a grab for the kneeling Lynch, Nenshou pulls himself up on the apron as well...]

LD: OHHH! MIST! MIST!

[...and Grayson goes falling backwards, rubbing madly at his stinging eyes...]

LD: The mist in the eyes from Nenshou - that dangerous green mist directly in the eyes! That should be a disqualification, Ben!

BW: But Veronica's got the referee's attention on her and he missed the whole thing! He missed the mist!

[And with Grayson blinded, Lynch uses the top rope to slingshot over in a somersault before CRACKING the Olympian with a solid lariat!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: QUICK DRAW BY LYNCH! Grayson's out! Grayson got rocked with that and-
Lynch makes the cover!

[Lynch wraps up a leg as Nenshou looks on, Westerly dropping off the apron so the referee can turn to count...]

LD: ONNNNNNNNNE!

[...and as Crawford attempts to get in the ring to break it up...]

LD: TWOOOOOOOOO!

[...Nenshou slides along the apron gracefully to SMASH a punt kick into the head of Crawford, laying them out on the floor as the referee slaps the mat for the third time!]

LD: MAKE IT THREE!

"DING! DING! DING!"

BW: What a win for the Westerly Dynasty!

[A gleeful Westerly climbs back into the ring, meeting Nenshou in there as a smirking James Lynch comes off the mat, raising his arms overhead. Westerly is cheering her men on as Nenshou nods in satisfaction at a job well done as a shocked Scott Ezra waves for a towel to help Bret Grayson with his stinging eyes.]

LD: The referee is finally realizing something went on with the mist... but it's too late now. The match is over and the Westerly Dynasty picks up a big win, Ben.

BW: A HUGE win if you ask me. If the champions weren't watching before, they better be watching now.

[Westerly looks on, smiling and clapping as she surveys the scene.]

LD: There aren't many who can stop Nenshou OR Lynch... stopping both of them together is a whole other challenge, Ben.

BW: Tonight wasn't about good versus evil... it was about excellence versus excellent and tonight, the Westerly Dynasty proved they're the better team... for now.

[Westerly's excitement goes awry as Nenshou suddenly has his legs yanked out from under him, his ankle quickly hooked and cranked by the green-mist stained Bret Grayson who is screaming as he twists the ankle in the Liberty Lock!]

LD: WHAT?!

BW: Grayson got some of the mist out of his eyes with that towel and he's snapped! He's SNAPPED! And if they don't Nenshou out of that anklelock, Grayson's not gonna be the only thing snapped around here!

[Westerly shouts at the stunned Lynch who rushes forward, smashing a forearm into the back of Grayson's head, knocking him down to the canvas where he starts putting the boots to him...]

...and after a few moments, the crowd begins to stir again!]

LD: Uh oh! The Dynasty's got big trouble heading their way and I do mean BIG, Ben!

BW: It's Cain Jackson and AJ Martinez!

[The two big men get to the ring where Lynch is overrun by a Cain Jackson big boot!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[AJ Martinez stops at ringside to help Crawford off the floor, shoving them back in under the ring...]

LD: And as Veronica Westerly gets the heck out of there, we've got a four on two advantage for Team Supreme!

[Jackson holds Lynch by the arms as Martinez tees off, landing some heavy right hand as a dazed Crawford goes to work stomping on Nenshou on the canvas alongside Bret Grayson with the crowd jeering all the while.]

LD: It's a four on two!

[The beatdown doesn't last long though before the crowd ERUPTS in a mixed reaction again...]

LD: Here comes Atlas Armstrong! The Almighty is heading out to help his allies!

BW: You mean the uncrowned World Champion.

LD: I'm not about to call him that!

[Armstrong dives under the ropes, coming to his feet...]

...and BLITZES Bret Grayson with a big clothesline that flips them over the top rope, dumping them out on the floor!]

LD: Well, it's all even now!

[Martinez looks ready to go right after Armstrong... but Jackson extends an arm across his chest, shaking his head as Crawford steps to their side, drawing a line between the two groups as Armstrong strikes a defensive posture over his allies, daring Team Supreme to cross it...]

LD: What's gonna happen now? What's gonna happen now that the odds are even?

[...and Jackson is able to get Martinez back across the ring with Crawford's help, getting them all out of the ring as the crowd jeers at Team Supreme backing away from the fight as they help Bret Grayson up to his feet outside the ring.]

LD: It looks like Team Supreme has decided to live to fight another day, Ben.

BW: Smart move. There's no more money in this fight tonight. They took their loss and now they need to regroup and figure out what comes next.

LD: The fans are all over Team Supreme for walking away from this fight but... that doesn't matter to those four, I promise you that.

[Armstrong keeps an eye on the quartet as they back down the aisle...]

LD: Fans, we'll be right back from right here in Rip City!

[...and we fade to black.

We see a station wagon pulled over at a gas station off Route 14. A tired couple in their 30s, both wearing sunglasses, argue while refilling the car. Their two kids squabble in the back seat.]

MOM (through gritted teeth): We forgot the snacks, again.

DAD (sighing): We've got like, an old granola bar in the glovebox?

MOM: We need real food. Something good. Something not-

[Suddenly, the trunk FLIES OPEN. Shadoo Rage surges out from inside the luggage pile like some mythical beast in fuchsia and gold spandex, holding two fists full of turkey jerky.]

SR: (bellowing) Wanna feel sensational? Bored of bland road snacks!? TIRED of trail mix lies!?

TEAR INTO MR. BERKELEY'S TURKEY JERKY!

[Mr. Berkeley's Turkey Jerky explodes into frame. Rage rips into a pack with a feral growl. The parents GASP. The kids freeze. Then - INSTANT TRANSFORMATION: leather jackets, sunglasses, the daughter's hair turns PINK. The wagon pulses with rock music.]

SR: The signature herbs and spices! The smoky flavor! The lean turkey jerky! It's the perfect snack! This ain't your gas station jerky! It's lean, it's mean, it's seasoned like a champion!

DAD (biting in): This is... actually amazing.

MOM (amped): We don't need GPS. We've got RAGE.

SR: OH MAN THAT'S GOOD! When I get my hands on Mr. Berkeley's Turkey Jerky, I feel... I feel... I feel...

ALL TOGETHER: SENSATIONAL!

SR (lunging into the camera):
And so will you!
So will you!
SO WILL YOU!

TEAR INTO IT!

MR. BERKELEY'S TURKEY JERKY... IT'S SENSATIONAL!

[Cut to a final shot of Rage leaning out the window of the speeding wagon, wind blowing through his dreadlocks before we fade to black...

...and hear a voiceover.]

"Who would have thought it would have led me here?"

[Fade up on Wade Walker, backlit, his impressive physique outlined by bright light, as "Whatever It Takes" by Imagine Dragons plays. His voice carries over cinematic footage of his in-ring career over the past few months.]

"Coming back from Japan to end up at SuperClash in New Orleans..."

[A quick cut succession of slow motion spears...]

"Lost my team..."

[Black and white footage of Walker being stitched up after the Dogs of War were betrayed by Pedro Perez and the Desperados...]

"...and found myself a contender."

[Wade Walker levels Odin Gunn with a double axehandle Mjolnir, and a half-a-dozen more to other opponents. Cut to Sweet Daddy Williams.]

SDW: You thinkin' about investing in an AWA star, get in on the ground floor of Wade Walker, daddy – that stock's only going up.

[Cut to Wade Walker posing with a confident smirk for a ringside fan's selfie with the AWA Television Title belt he had assumed he had won for one night. Cut to Marcus Broussard.]

MB: I'm going to say, when we look back, 2018 is going to be the pivotal year for Wade Walker as a future dynastic AWA Champion.

[Cut to Wade Walker squaring off with the then-KAMS under the wide open sky at 2017's Battle of Saskatchewan.]

"There are some demons that the fans want to see slain..."

[Cut to Walker in a sit-down interview.]

WW: Guess what? I want to beat them down too.

[Another series of cinematic bone-breaking slow-motion spears to opponents. Voiceover from Lori Dane...]

LD: Coming up short against Odin Gunn in such a bitter back-and-forth and surviving what he survived, I think, proves to me that wasn't just a well-fought challenge, but it's Day 1 to prove to the AWA that Wade Walker is willing to do whatever it takes to accomplish his goals and shift into that next gear...

[Cut to an epically framed shot of Wade Walker, alone and powerful, walking down the aisle at Saturday Night Wrestling.]

LD: ...and the unspoken challenge to him is to BE that breakout star of 2018.

[Fade to Wade Walker standing on the turnbuckles, facing out to fans, as Dan Reynolds of Imagine Dragons sings the last line of the song...]

"I'll do what it takes."

[...and we fade to the locker room area where - sitting on a bench in her ring gear - is the young woman carrying on a legacy, Isabella Liriano. The pressure is on as she sits on a wooden bench, rubbing her taped wrists.]

IL: Talking is over.

[She says with a nod and a heavy exhale.]

IL: All the previews, all the appearances... now it's the tournament. Now, it's all one on one.

[Liriano raises an arm, pointing to the camera and the woman watching beyond it.]

IL: Riley Bennett, I like you. I know where you come from and what you're fighting for, and it's a shame we end up paired together in the first round. Because we BOTH have futures. We BOTH have something bigger to live up to. Something to push toward.

[She gets up from the seat, clapping her hands together with a nod.]

IL: You have a whole history and a whole lot waiting for you back home.

I'm just getting started but that doesn't mean I want it any less.

[The Puerto Rican fan favorite pauses, reaching out a hand to touch the concrete wall of the legendary building.]

IL: Tonight... in Portland... in a building full of history... shadows of what could've been... of what can be... of what will be.

Riley, I'm sorry, but that's the way things pan out.

[She raises a lone finger.]

IL: Only one of us moves on... and tonight, that's me. See you in the ring.

[We fade from the locker room footage to a shot of the backstage area where Riley Bennett stands confidently next to Lucy St. Clair, mic in hand, the Brass Ring Tournament logo glowing behind them.]

LSC: Riley, in just a few minutes you're set to face Isabella Liriano in the first round of the Brass Ring Tournament. A win here puts you one step closer to that main roster contract. What's going through your mind right now?

[Bennett smiles, looking like she's about to launch into one of her famous stories.]

RB: You know, Lucy, when I was a little girl my grandmother used to tell me this story about a brass ring on a carousel- AH!

"CRACK!"

[A sickening thud from out of frame knocks over the Kentuckian as Lucy St. Clair runs for cover. The camera whips around just in time to catch a black-hooded figure slamming a forearm into the back of Riley's skull. Bennett staggers forward and is immediately grabbed by the hair and RAMMED face-first into the metal AWA backdrop... once, twice, three times, until she crumples! The voice of Lori Dane cuts through.]

LD: What in the world...?

BW: Looks like someone wasn't in the mood for story time, Dane.

LD: Riley Bennett has been assaulted backstage by- who in the world is...?

[The crowd inside the arena groans as the hooded attacker spins Bennett around and DRIVES the back of her head into the Brass Ring Tournament logo hanging on the wall, her head CLANGING off the metal before she collapses to a heap on the floor, groaning in surprise and pain as the figure turns to the camera, slowly pulling the hood back...]

LD: It looks like we're about to find out who-

[...and then yanks it clear as the Portland crowd gasps at the revelation.]

LD: AMBER GOLD?!

[Gold grins coldly into the camera, making sure the world can see her model-esque face.]

LD: I can't believe what I'm seeing, Ben! Amber Gold has been on the shelf for months now after a promising debut in the AWA back in February... she was injured at the hands of E-Girl MAX and... quite frankly, we haven't heard a word about her since then, Ben.

BW: I'm guessing we will now - the little princess has turned to the dark side!

LD: Ben, she looks UNHINGED! She's smiling! She's actually smiling while Bennett is down on the floor holding onto her head and... Ben, this is NOT the Amber Gold you and I have known since she arrived at the Combat Corner!

BW: Maybe that's the point. The Amber Gold we knew was hyped to the moon by the machine... and then got chewed up and spit out by this place. This one might actually stick around for awhile.

[Gold stands there with red-streaked blonde pigtails, black warpaint under her eyes, and a half-smirk on her pretty little face. She casually walks over and picks up the microphone Lucy St. Clair left behind and turns to the camera that's now shoved in her face.]

AG: You want to hear a story? Well, try this one on for size...

Once upon a time there was a girl named Amber Gold. They called her "America's Sweetheart." They put her on magazine covers, told her she was the future, handed her a golden ticket...

[Her face twists into an angry grimace.]

AG: ...and then threw her to the wolves. They let a pack of jealous, mouth-breathing mean girls take it all away from her. No one cared.

[She crouches down, grabs a handful of Riley Bennett's hair, and yanks her head up so the camera can see Bennett's glassy eyes.]

AG: They told me my roster spot "expired" while I was in surgery. They told me maybe, just MAYBE, I might get a second chance.

[A bitter chuckle.]

AG: Funny... I never asked for a second chance. I'm here for the first one they stole from me!

[She lets Riley's head drop with a thud and stands, turning to the swarm of officials and agents now rushing in. Amber shouts at them as they tend to the fallen Bennett.]

AG: This tournament? This whole main roster contract fairy tale? It's a sham! There is no open spot!

There never was!

That contract has MY name on it in permanent ink!

[We see Kevin Slater pushing through security, face red, pointing at her.]

KS: Gold, you just assaulted a tournament participant! You're going to be suspended, you're—

[Gold giggles.]

AG: Suspended? Riley Bennett can't stand, let alone wrestle. And her match is next. Somebody's gotta fill the bracket, Kevin, and we both know the show can't wait.

[Slater's jaw tightens. He glances at the medic checking on Riley, who is barely conscious. The medic looks up, shaking their head as Slater sighs.]

KS(through gritted teeth): Go! You're in the match. But this is NOT over, Gold.

AG: Of course it isn't over... I'm just getting started.

[She drops a blood-specked pair of brass knuckles on Riley Bennett's chest, then brushes past Slater and the officials as she heads out of sight...

...and we cut to the ring where Megumi Sato is looking on with shock and concern as Adam Rogers leans through the ropes, handing her a notecard and pointing towards the back.]

LD: All sorts of confusion out here over what we just saw and-

[Sato straightens up as the sounds of "Backwoods" by Justin Moore starts to play over the PA system... which makes Sato look even more confused. She points to her ear as Rogers shrugs, waving for her to start...]

MS: The... uhh... the following contest is set for one fall with a fifteen minute time limit and is a first round match in the 2018 Brass Ring Tournament! Introducing first...

[She looks over at Rogers who gestures again. Sato lifts the note card in her hand.]

MS: ...the America's Sweetheart... AMBERRRRR GOLLLLLLLLLLD!

[Gold saunters through the curtain to jeers from the Portland crowd. She quickly cups a hand to her ear, shouting "WHAT IS THIS GARBAGE?!"]

LD: Well, this unexpected arrival of Amber Gold back on Showtime and INTO this Brass Ring Tournament had our audio technicians as surprised as anyone. This is definitely not Amber Gold's music but after the injuries to Riley Bennett... I suppose this is what she gets, Ben!

BW: Redneck rhythms aside, Dane, Amber Gold has put herself into an incredible position to advance in this tournament! Her opponent's not expecting her. Gold could've been planning this for... who knows! She might have Liriano well scouted and-

[Gold reaches ringside, grabbing the top rope with both hands as she prepares to show off her gymnastic skills...

...and then throws her hands in dismissal at the crowd, ducking through the ropes as she sneers.]

LD: Amber Gold came into the AWA earlier this year with much hype as you said, Ben. A former NCAA gymnastics star. A former Dallas Cowboys cheerleader. She was all about pleasing the fans... not anymore.

BW: Where did it get her, Dane? On the shelf two weeks into her run! And nobody cared! Nobody mentioned her name from the beginning of March but she just made sure EVERYONE is talking about her now.

[Gold struts around the ring, soaking up the newly-heard jeers as Sato continues.]

MS: And her opponent...

[Sato is still shaken up by the sudden change of events as we hear "La Gozadera" by Gente de Zona start up over the PA system which heralds the arrival of the Puerto Rican fireball to cheers!]

MS: ...from San Juan, Puerto Rico... weighing in at 120 pounds...

...ISABELLA LIRIAAAAAAANOOOOOOOOO!

[Liriano seems fit to be tied as she comes charging down the aisle at full speed!]

LD: SHE'S NOT WAITING! SHE WANTS PAYBACK FOR HER FALLEN FRIEND!

[Gold squares up to get ready but as Liriano dives into the ring, she runs her right down with a double leg takedown that gets the crowd on their feet in a hurry!]

LD: Oh yeah! Liriano's got the technical skills but she doesn't want to use 'em right now - rights and lefts, all over her with pure righteous fury over the dastardly actions of Amber Gold here tonight!

[Gold is desperately trying to cover up her beautiful face as Liriano scores over and over again...

...until Gold wriggles free, rolling under the ropes to the outside, grabbing at her face as Liriano steps out on the apron after her...]

LD: Gold was looking for shelter but she's find no shelter here tonight!

[...and LEAPS off with a flying forearm to the jaw, wiping out Gold as the crowd ERUPTS!]

LD: Amber Gold may have made the biggest mistake of her young career getting her young opponent fired up! Isabella Liriano... her great uncle was Jose Liriano... and if that name means nothing to you, you need to do your homework because that man was one of the greats in this business in the 1970s. She's been in the Combat Corner since early last year... and when her grandfather passed during the holidays of 2017, she became determined to be in a moment just like this one, showing the world what the Liriano name means to this business.

[With Gold up and attempting to flee, Liriano grabs her by the hair and RAMS her into the ring apron, forcing Gold to stumble away, pleading for mercy before the bell has even rung. The referee is also begging Liriano but she wants her to bring the action inside the ring...]

LD: Gold again trying to get away, back in the ring now...

[Liriano follows her in as the referee signals.]

"DING! DING! DING!"

LD: Now it's official!

[Liriano keeps up the high-paced offense, throwing herself into a spinning leg lariat that drops Gold to the mat.]

LD: Bella Liriano came up in this business alongside women just like Riley Bennett... and that creates a fellowship that perhaps someone like Amber Gold who didn't come up through the indies, didn't scrape and claw her way to get here... maybe she just can't understand it.

BW: Are you trying to say that Amber Gold didn't work as hard as Liriano to get here?

LD: Not at all... but their paths were very, very different, Ben, and you know it.

[Gold comes off the mat, still pleading as Liriano rushes her, hopping to the middle rope, fist held up to cheers...]

"ONE!"

"TWO!"

"THREE!"

"FOUR!"

"FIVE!"

"SIX!"

"SEVEN!"

"EIGHT!"

"NINE!"

"TEN!"

[She hops down, grabbing the arm to whip Gold across the ring...

...and then charges in after, leaping up into an old school style headscissors takedown to cheers!]

LD: That takes me back right there, Ben. You watch those old tapes of Jose Liriano in action, that was one of his favorite moves.

BW: The traditional headscissors has been abandoned by most wrestlers these days for the lucha-style huracanrana... but not by Bella Liriano.

[A rising Gold gets popped on the jaw with a dropkick, bringing more cheers as she goes stumbling backwards, falling into the corner as Liriano regains her feet, pumping a fist to charge back in...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...but a second dropkick attempt bombs when Gold bails clear, causing Liriano to crash and burn HARD, the back of her head slamming into the mat!]

LD: And just like that, one dodge to avoid the dropkick turns this around!

[Pouncing on her prey, Gold grabs Liriano by the shoulders, ramming the back of her head into the canvas a few times as the fans jeer...]

LD: Absolutely vicious. What has gotten into Amber Gold?!

[With a running start, Gold leaps up to drive both feet into the mid-section with a double stomp, a move that causes Liriano to sit up...

...and Gold twists around into a kick to the back of the head that rings out through the Coliseum, Liriano sinking back onto the mat.]

LD: Liriano got booted in the skull... and look at the arrogance on the face of Gold, fans.

[The smug and smirking Gold looks out on the jeering crowd before yanking Liriano up by the hair...]

"SLAAAAAAAAAAP!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHH!"

"YOU CAN'T STOP WHAT COMES NEXT!"

[Gold backs off, allowing Liriano to slump back down... and then with a picture perfect show of agility and skill, she goes into a cartwheel before backflipping into the splits across the torso!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: The gymnastics skills are still there... arrogant pin attempt though... just a two count there.

[Gold sneers at the official, holding up three fingers before getting back to her feet, dragging Liriano off the canvas...]

LD: Whips her across...

[Gold again turns to argue with the referee... which causes just enough distraction for Liriano to leap up on the clothesline attempt, swinging through into a crucifix, and then twisting into a sunset flip to cheers!]

LD: ...SUNSET FLIPS HER DOWN FOR ONE! TWOOOOOOOO! THREEEE-

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: GOLD JUST BARELY ESCAPES!

[Gold rolls to her knees, clutching her chest in a panic as she looks to the official who confirms the two count. Gold nods, popping up to her feet, twisting around...]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: SPINNING HEEL KICK CONNECTS! GOLD IS STUNNED!

[Liriano pumps a fist to the cheering crowd, turning to run across the ring, hitting the ropes...]

LD: CROSSBODY!

[...but as Liriano's weight drives Gold down, Gold uses the momentum to roll Liriano over onto her back...]

LD: REVERSED BY GOLD!

[...and as the referee drops down the count, Gold yanks a handful of tights for leverage!]

LD: No, no! Not like this!

[The three count comes down, ending Liriano's night and tournament run in stunning fashion...]

LD: Ahhh, Liriano got ripped off!

[Gold immediately rolls out of the ring, hands up in victory, smirking at the reactions of the crowd AND Liriano who is instantly on her feet to complain about the pull of the tights!]

LD: Ben, you saw it as well as we all did!

BW: I don't know about that. But what I DO know is the referee didn't see a thing and that makes Amber Gold your winner and she's moving on-

LD: She's not even supposed to be IN this tournament!

BW: She is though! And she just cashed her tickets to the Semifinals alongside Catalina Lopez!

LD: Two women are through to the Semifinals... two more to go... and two weeks from tonight in Seattle, it'll be Jo Jo Washington versus Big Boss Shinza in the first of our two remaining first round battles. And Bella Liriano is STILL hot under the collar about this and who can blame her?!

[We cut to the aisle where Gold is slowly backing away, smirking as she comments softly for the ringside camera to hear.]

"Winners win, sweetie... losers make excuses."

[Liriano is shouting at Gold from the ring, leaning over the ropes and inviting her back in.]

LD: She wants another piece of Amber Gold, Ben.

BW: She can want until the cows come home but she's out of the tournament - that's a fact!

[Gold waves a mocking hand at Liriano who is fuming mad as we fade to the backstage area...

...where the camera creeps around a corner and finds Takeshi Mifune alone, dressed in his trademark black trunks. He is deep into a punishing set of Hindu squats: slow, deliberate, endless. His breathing is a low, rhythmic growl. Sweat drips, but his face never changes. After what feels like an eternity, he stops on the final rep and rises without hurry. He picks the black towel off the ground, draping it over his head like a shroud. Only then does he acknowledge the camera. His voice is gravel dragged across concrete, every word dripping with contempt.]

TM: Ryan Martinez...

[His lips curl, a predator baring its teeth.]

TM: You come to me again with your World Titles. Your fame. You let them chant your name like it means something. You think that changes anything between us?

[He takes one slow step toward the camera.]

TM: I know the real you. Small. Weak. Crying in the corner of the dojo while the others slept. Begging me to stop when I twisted your arm until the joint screamed. Begging me to stop when I placed my arm around your throat and watched the fight drain from your eyes.

[A chuckle.]

TM: You were nothing then. You are nothing now. All the belts, all the lights, all the adoration... they are decorations on a corpse I already killed years ago. Tonight, when that bell rings, the decorations fall away. Tonight, you are that same pathetic young boy again.

[He takes the towel from his head and it snaps taut between his fists with a sharp crack that echoes down the hallway.]

TM: I am taking you home, boy.

Back to the dojo that lives in your nightmares.

Back to the cold mat.

Back to the lessons you never learned. I will break your body the way I broke your spirit. I will make you beg for mercy again.

And when you finally go limp in my arms, when the last flicker of hope dies in your eyes... I will whisper the same thing I whispered all those years ago.

[He leans in until his battle-worn face fills the entire screen, his voice dropping to a venomous hiss.]

TM: You never belonged here.

[Mifune drops the towel across the lens, plunging the screen to darkness before the feed cuts to black...]

...and we fade through black to a shot of retired AWA wrestler Eric Somers, who is dressed in a three-piece suit and wears eyeglasses. He is walking down a well-lit hallway and we can see what appear to be framed painting lining it.]

ES: In order to truly appreciate this world, you have to learn to respect your heritage... that is, what those before you have left to be appreciated by ongoing generations.

[He then stops and gestures to a painting over his shoulder.]

ES: For instance, why we should remember the Alamo.

[Indeed, the painting is of The Alamo. He then walks over to the next framed item.]

ES: Or why we should remember the importance of the men who led our great nation.

[He gestures to said item, a painting of Mount Rushmore. Somers continues to walk to the next framed item.]

ES: Or why we should appreciate the wonders of nature.

[He gestures to yet another painting, this one featuring the Grand Canyon.]

ES: Or even why we should not forget those who came before us.

[He then reaches into his pocket and pulls out a packet, which he then opens.]

ES: Especially those who have graced the rings of the AWA.

[He then pulls out trading cards from the pack and fans them. We then hear a voiceover as we cut to a sample of the cards.]

VO: It's the inaugural release of Topps Heritage AWA trading cards... cards that use the design of the 1952 Topps baseball set.

[The sample of cards does, indeed, feature that style, with the subjects including Supernova, Ryan Martinez, Supreme Wright, Michelle Bailey and Ricki Toughill.]

VO: Collect the AWA stars of today...

[The next sample of cards includes Julie Somers, James Lynch, Cinder and Atlas Armstrong.]

VO: ...and the AWA stars of the past.

[The next sample of cards includes Adam Rogers, Marcus Broussard, Mark Shaw and Ron Houston.]

VO: Plus, look for special parallels, event-used relic cards and autographed cards!

[We then get a gold parallel featuring Harley Hamilton, a black-bordered parallel featuring Sid Osborne, a relic card featuring Raphael Rhodes and an autographed card featuring Shadoe Rage.]

We cut back to Somers as he displays the trading cards in his hand.]

ES: Because nothing could be finer than a way to remember your heritage... without having to step inside an art gallery.

[He raises his eyebrows and grins as we cut to a shot of a box of Topps Heritage AWA trading cards and hear that voiceover again.]

VO: Topps Heritage AWA trading cards are available wherever trading cards are sold or you can find them at AWAShop.com!

[We fade to black...

...and then into the backstage area where we find Lucy St. Clair standing in the hallways of the IIWF Coliseum.]

LSC: Topps Heritage cards are all the rage right now and my binder is POPPIN', folks. You oughta see my page of red, white, and blue Memorial Day Mayhem variants!

[Lucy suddenly looks a little embarrassed.]

LSC: And my Women's Division page is getting better and better... hey, maybe my next guest will honor me with a quick autograph on my "Melissa Cannon Is Home!" Topps Now card!

[Cannon steps into view in a green and white Combat Corner t-shirt and black workout pants. Her hair is tied back in a tight ponytail as she smiles and nods at the latest addition to the AWA announce team.]

LSC: Melissa, it's been an exciting night here in Portland already and... well, how are you feeling about being inside the IWF Coliseum?

[Cannon grins.]

MC: It's something, isn't it? The Double Eye didn't have a Women's Division - hey, nobody's perfect, right? - but what it was known for was high quality action featuring a literal Hall of Fame roster. So, yeah... walking the same halls like competitors like Byron... like Verhoeven... like the Syndicate... it's a special moment.

[St. Clair nods.]

LSC: It's likely also to be a special moment when you climb inside that ring tonight with a very tough opponent in the red hot rookie herself, Kimmy Bailey.

[Cannon smirks.]

MC: The "red hot rookie," huh? You know, Lucy, she's not the first rookie to make waves in this building. Once upon a time, there was a red GLOVED rookie that everyone was talking about. Racking up a huge winning streak, getting an army of fans behind him, shaking the business to the core...

...and within a couple of years, he was gone, Lucy.

[The AWA original shakes her head.]

MC: That's the problem with a red hot candle burning bright. Sooner or later, it's going to burn out and leave nothing but ashes.

LSC: And you think that's what's going to happen with Kimmy Bailey tonight?

[Cannon chuckles.]

MC: No, no... I highly doubt Kimmy's ready to burn out quite yet. On the contrary, Lucy, I expect her to come in there burning hotter than ever... because she's been in a bad mood since Memorial Day Mayhem... and I expect to get singed by the flames. But that's okay. Because I've walked through fire to get where I am today... and I'm not about to let Kimmy Bailey be the one to stop this comeback short. I've waited for over a year to get back in this ring with the best in the world... to be back IN the hottest division in wrestling... and nobody's going to stop me now.

[St. Clair raises her eyebrows.]

LSC: One more question... with the announcement earlier tonight that Kimmy Bailey must travel to Japan later this week to face Kurayami, do you think she's looking past you to the Queen of Kaiju?

[Cannon's gaze goes cold.]

MC: I've been in the ring with Kurayami. I know what she's capable of. I know the trail of bodies she's left in her wake all over the globe, Lucy.

LSC: And?

MC: And if Kimmy Bailey is looking past me to her, I can only hope Kimmy Bailey bought refundable airline tickets because she's not going to make her flight.

[Cannon stalks away, leaving Lucy St. Clair behind.]

LSC: When veterans and rookies collide, the industry waits with baited breath to see who prevails: the past... or the future. Let's hand it back to Megumi!

[We fade from backstage to the ring where Megumi Sato is indeed standing at the ready.]

MS: The following contest is set for one fall with a ten minute time limit. Introducing first...

[The lights go down, and the piercing two-note guitar intro to Horrified's "Deus Diabolus Inversus" rings out. The words "BAD SEED" flash on the screen.]

MS: From Black River Falls, Wisconsin.... Weighing in at 213 pounds...
He is "THE BAAAAAAD SEEEEEEEEEEEEEED"...
DAAAAAAAAAMIAN....
DEVILLLLLLLLLLLLLLLE!

DEUS

[DeVille steps out from behind the curtain and into the aisle, his face utterly devoid of emotion. His long black hair, shaved at both sides, is pulled and tied back. His lean, muscular upper body is a portfolio of dark tattoo work, befitting of a young man who once fronted a black metal band. He wears plain black fight shorts, knee pads and boots, and a sleeveless black leather jacket.]

DEUS DIABOLUS INVERSUS

[He stalks slowly down the aisle as the growled, repetitive mantra of the song continues.]

BW: This kid talks a big game, Dane, but we've yet to see him do much of anything against a proven competitor in the time he's been here.

LD: Slightly unfair, Ben - Damian DeVille is still at the beginning of his journey in pro wrestling.

BW: Come on, we both know Daddy pulled some strings to get him in the door, even if Temple does keep up this charade of not wanting his kid to follow in his footsteps.

[Reaching the ring, DeVille slips off the jacket, lays it on the ring steps and slides into the ring on his belly, springing to his feet.]

MS: And his opponent, already in the ring, hailing from New Port Richey, Florida, and weighing in at 206 pounds... Brayden Baxter!

[Baxter is pale and a little pudgy, and his nondescript look is perfectly rounded off by his plain white singlet.]

"DING! DING! DING!"

LD: And we are underway! Ben, thoughts on what we might see from DeVille tonight?

BW: Anything short of a quick annihilation won't do anything to change my mind about him.

"WHAAAAACK!"

[DeVille opens instantly with a low calf kick that cracks through the arena.]

LD: OH! Brayden Baxter didn't even get both hands up yet!

BW: Hands up? Dane, this ham and egger doesn't have a hope. I bet he's already regretting showing up for his fifty-buck payday.

[DeVille circles and lashes out again.]

"WHAAAAACK!"

LD: Another calf kick! Baxter hops back on one leg... tries to lock-up...

[DeVille just snaps a push kick right into the sternum, sending Baxter across the ring.]

BW: That push kick had the same energy as "No, I will NOT join your group chat." Very firm.

[Baxter backs into the corner as DeVille closes in on him.]

LD: Sharp elbow to the jaw! Another! DeVille traps him and ties one arm up- OH!

[DeVille hits a short-range elbow right above the eyebrow, leaving a nasty red mark.]

BW: Mercy!

LD: DeVille now with a Thai clinch in the corner - knees to the ribs! Three! Four!

BW: Baxter's whole torso is about to start turning colors you don't see outside of hazardous waste warnings! Purple-green is in this season. Very fashionable.

[Baxter slumps and DeVille yanks him back up.]

"WHAAAAACK!"

LD: Devastating body kick! That echoed!

[Baxter doubles over, wheezing, as DeVille hooks his arm and whips him straight to the mat with a snapmare.]

"CRAAAAAACK!"

[He follows up with a brutal kick right between the shoulder blades.]

BW: That kick just erased the scrub's childhood memories, Dane. He's going to have to re-learn long division.

LD: Baxter trying to crawl to the ropes as DeVille stalks behind him like a horror movie villain.

BW: Apples falling from trees, no?

[DeVille grabs him by the waist - DEADLIFT GERMAN SUPLEX!]

LD: OHHHHH MYYYYYYY!

BW: Baxter folded like a pizza box! His spine made a noise - a very non-health-insurance-approved noise.

LD: DeVille rolls him over. Hard stomps to the legs now! He's systematically removing Baxter's ability to stand. The precision is frightening.

BW: Hey, if my dad was a wrestling legend who didn't want me in the business, I'd also be working out some feelings.

LD: Not the time, Ben!

BW: It's ALWAYS the time for implied generational emotional trauma.

[Baxter shows some fight, throwing a wild forearm, but DeVille blocks it effortlessly. Baxter tries again with another, and DeVille ducks, countering with a stiff knee to the midsection.]

LD: OH! A spinning back elbow! Baxter drops like he's been unplugged!

BW: Lights out!

[But DeVille isn't finished. Showing a sadistic streak reminiscent of his father, he drags Baxter up by the wrist.]

LD: Rapid-fire elbow combo! One to the cheek! One to the temple! One more to the jaw! Baxter collapses for the third time!

BW: He's collecting knockdowns like Pokemon. Gotta catch some sleep.

[DeVille backs into the far corner - pacing, calculating.]

LD: Baxter is trying, God bless him, to stand using the ropes. His legs are jelly. His eyes are glassy.

BW: His soul left four minutes ago and is already showering.

[DeVille lunges forward.]

"CRAAAAAACK!"

LD: Sharp liver kick! Baxter screams and goes to his knees and DeVille pulls him up by the hair. He's practically holding him upright!

BW: He's doing this schlub's taxes at this point. Complete control.

[DeVille lets go, takes three steps back, waiting, stalking.]

LD: Baxter is swaying. He doesn't know where he is... AND DEVILLE CHARGES!

BW: THIS IS GONNA BE BAD!

LD: THE OMEN! RUNNING, FLYING KNEE - RIGHT TO THE BACK OF THE HEAD!
BAXTER CRASHES FORWARD ON IMPACT!

BW: That knee strike had intent. Dark, dark intent.

LD: DeVille hooks the leg and the referee drops... One... two... three!

"DING! DING! DING!"

LD: That was about three minutes of complete domination. Damian DeVille didn't just win, he completely dismantled Brayden Baxter.

BW: Five-star massacre. Baxter won't remember his own zip code after that. Someone get this man a stretcher, a therapist, and a job application for the drive-thru window.

[DeVille stands tall over the fallen Baxter, expression cold, chest heaving, the crowd buzzing with equal parts fear and awe.]

BW: And the Daddy issues remain tragically unresolved.

LD: That's enough, Ben. Let's hear from the "Bad Seed," who is ringside with Mariah Wolfe and Sweet Daddy Williams.

[Damian DeVille, barely breaking a sweat after his squash victory, looms in front of the camera. Mariah Wolfe holds the mic, with Sweet Daddy Williams standing at her side. DeVille's taped fists have hints of Baxter's blood, and he's pacing like a caged animal.]

MW: Damian DeVille, an absolutely devastating performance out there tonight. What did Lori say? "About three minutes of complete domination." The question everyone's asking... what's next for you?

[DeVille Stops pacing. Stares straight through the lens, voice low, gravelly.]

DD: What's next? Tougher competition, Mariah. I'm not here to beat up nobodies. I'm not here to tune up on local talent. I want a fight. A real one. So I'm taking myself to Saturday Night Wrestling. And when I walk into that arena... anybody who steps up better be ready to bleed for it. Because I sure as hell will.

[Sweet Daddy injects.]

SDW: Strong words. Now, Damian... I have to ask. There's been a lot of speculation online about your estranged stepmother, Veronica Westerly—

[DeVille immediately recoils in disgust, lip curling.]

DD: Don't. Don't you dare say that name like it belongs anywhere near me.

SDW: She's been very public about wanting you to join her Dynasty.

[DeVille laughs, a sharp, humorless bark. Then spits on the floor between them.]

DD: Her Dynasty? That's what we're calling it now? A parasite clinging to my father's legacy, twisting it, choking it? She can build her empire out of sycophants and snakes for all I care. I want nothing to do with her.

[He steps closer, intensity rising.]

DD: She forced my father to turn his back on me once. Then she made sure he did it again. You think I'm going to smile, nod, and stand beside her? I'd rather die on my own two feet than kneel in her shadow.

MW: And talking of your father-

[DeVille cuts her off instantly, jaw tightening.]

DD: No. We're not. We are not talking about him.

[He pulls off the wrist tape, throwing it aside.]

DD: This interview is over.

[He steps back, glaring one last time into the camera.]

DD: I'll be at Saturday Night Wrestling. And I'll be doing my talking in the ring.

[DeVillie storms off, leaving Mariah speechless and Sweet Daddy uneasy, like they just watched a storm choose its next direction.]

MW: We'll... we'll be right back, fans.

[Fade to black.

The shot opens on Jordan Ohara standing to the left of the screen. He wears a white ringer T-shirt with the words "BE A HERO" printed on it in orange lettering. On his right is a graphic of the same orange words: "BE A HERO!" In the background, Ohara's theme song plays, Nas' "Hero."]

JO: To all my fans, don't be a bully. Be a hero. Stand up for everyone and be respectful of everyone's feelings. You don't have to like everyone you meet, but you should always try to be kind and think about where they are coming from.

We all want to laugh and joke. We all like to point out each other's differences. But sometimes words hurt as much as being hit. Sometimes they make someone feel like an "other." And that isn't fair. You wouldn't like to feel left out. So why would anyone else?

Bullying can feel overwhelming, relentless and make people go to desperate lengths for it to stop. You don't want to hurt somebody for the sake of a joke, do you? I didn't think so.

So don't be a bully. Be a hero. Please.

Only together can we stop bullying in all its forms. Join me and the AWA in the 2018 Be a Hero campaign because we need heroes. Like you.

[The camera fades out on Ohara giving the viewers and encouraging nod and little clasped hand bow before he fades from view as "Hero" fades out, leaving only the orange words:

BE
A
HERO.

And with that, we fade back to a black screen with rolling thunder. A narrator speaks in a deep, resonant voice.]

"Long before the lights of the arenas... before the chants, the cameras, the noise - there were women who fought for justice because the world gave them no choice. They called them... The Agojie."

[The shot cuts to grainy black and white footage. It shows images from West Africa. It shows images of statues of the Dahomey Amazons. Etched shields and spears glinting under the sun. Drums rumble beneath the narration.]

"They stood as the King's guards, an army of women in the Kingdom of Dahomey - present-day Benin. Warriors who trained harder, struck faster, and feared nothing. To their enemies, they were myth. To their people, they were protection. And to history - they became legend."

[The shot cuts to modern day AWA hi-definition footage ...

A flash of Askari's spinning kick...

Nubia's spinebuster...

The crowd on their feet in The Temple.

The screen intercuts the AWA match with flashes of the old black-and-white statues, matching pose for pose.]

"Centuries later, that name - that legacy - rises again. But this time, the battlefield... is a wrestling ring."

[Cut to footage of the Agojie's entrance at the Temple in Los Angeles. Amber light. Drums. Askari steps through the curtain, her eyes scanning the crowd. Nubia follows, her frame massive, steady, commanding. The crimson and gold gear is shining under the television camera lights. Lori Dane's voice from that night is heard.]

LD: Listen to that reception, Ben! Boyle Heights remembers these two!

BW: From Kigali, Rwanda and Accra, Ghana - the Agojie aren't here to dance. They're here to dominate.

[Cut to a historical segment. Archival artwork of the Dahomey warriors. The women march in formation, their spears raised under the sun. The narrator is heard again.]

"The Agojie of Dahomey were trained from childhood to fight for their people - to protect their sisters, their homeland, their pride. They were warriors who fought in chains, who stood when others fell. And now, their spirit has crossed oceans and centuries... to stand again."

[Cut back to AWA match footage. Askari legsweeps Tiffany Dream to the mat with surgical precision. The sound of the strike echoes like a drumbeat. Fans chant "AYE! AYE! AYE!" with every kick as Ben Waterson's voice from that night cuts in.]

BW: That sweep — that's years of martial arts discipline right there!

LD: Clinical precision from Askari. No wasted motion!

[The shot cuts to a flashback montage of the Agojie training. Askari shadowboxing at dawn on a Kigali rooftop. Nubia flipping tractor tires outside a gym in Accra. Each frame is tinted with sun flare, evoking the fire of rebirth.

ASKARI (voiceover): They told me to fear the storm that was coming...

NUBIA (voiceover): But I whispered back. I am the storm.

[Cut back to the Temple match. Askari hits a roundhouse kick that drops Tiffany flat. The crowd explodes. Nubia storms in on the hot tag - clothesline, power slam, domination.]

BW: She just steamrolled her! The power from Nubia is unreal!

LD: Pure power, pure confidence. This is a statement!

[Cut to a close-up of the action in slow motion. Askari and Nubia clasp forearms, eyes locked. They are the picture of sweat, focus, and unity. The chant of "A-GO-JIE! A-GO-JIE!" fills the arena as we hear from the narrator again.]

"History does not fade.
It transforms.
It evolves.
It fights back."

[Cut to a split screen shot. On the left is a historical painting of the ancient Agojie in battle. On the right is a picture of Askari and Nubia finishing their opponents. Nubia lifts Chardonnay Bliss high - the powerbomb drops at the same instant that Askari's flying double stomp lands. The crowd explodes as the referee counts.]

LD & BW (together): One... two... three!

[The bell sounds and the ring announcer makes it official as we cut crowd footage of the fans standing, clapping and chanting as Askari and Nubia bow to the audience. Children in the front row mimic their salute.]

"From the warriors of Dahomey...
to the fighters of Kigali and Accra...
to the women who now carry their name into AWA -
the spirit of the Agojie endures.
Unbroken. Unbowed. Unafraid."

[We fade from the footage to the AWA logo gleaming in gold along with text that reads: The Agojie - Strength. Sisterhood. Survival. The narrator is heard one more time - a whisper.]

"The storm... has arrived."

[We fade through black back out to the ring where Megumi Sato is standing.]

MS: The following contest is set for one fall in the AWA Women's Division with a ten minute time limit! Introducing first... already in the ring, from Roanoke, Virginia, and weighing 120 pounds, here is... CAROLINE MITCHELL!

[A young woman with a lean build, short brown hair and brown eyes, dressed in a yellow halter top and matching tights, white kneepads and wrestling boots, spreads her arms above her head, a smirk on her face.

"You're Going Down" by Sick Puppies starts up over the PA system. Up on the video wall, you see a quick succession of black-and-white camera shots, the camera panning over somebody's eyes, then taped-up fists, mixed in with a silhouette of somebody in a boxer's pose. This continues as the guitar picks up, and when the drums and lyrics kick in, the video wall flickers and you see one word.

"KNOCKOUT"]

MS: Aaaaand her opponent... she hails from the Bronx in New York City, and weighs 140 pounds... please welcome "THE KNOCKOUT"...

...KELLY WOODOOOOOOODS!

[And the young lady known as "The Knockout" Kelly Woods emerges from the entranceway. She is dressed in women's boxing gear, consisting of a black top that leaves her midriff bare and white shorts. Woods also wears white kneepads and black wrestling boots. Her dirty blonde hair is pulled back behind her head and she has her fists taped up.]

LD: We saw this young lady make her first in-ring appearance in AWA at the Memorial Day Rumble and, tonight, here on Showtime, we will see her in singles action for the first time.

BW: You talk about wanting to make your debut in the Rumble match, that says a lot about how you want to make a statement, but the question is, how does she follow up? We're about to find out!

[Woods stands at the top of the ramp, where she does a little shadow boxing. She then jogs down to the ring, climbs onto the ring apron and ducks between the ropes. There, she takes her position in a corner, where she sizes up her opponent and balls up her fists, like she's ready for a fight.]

LD: And the former women's boxer looks like she's ready to take the fight to Caroline Mitchell!

BW: I will take nothing away from anyone in boxing, but wrestling isn't like boxing, because in wrestling, you won't get saved by the bell and have a chance to go another round!

LD: I think Kelly Woods has learned that a lot, Ben... she may be new to AWA but she is no stranger to the wrestling ring, having competed in AWA partner promotion P*WIN and the independents.

[The referee calls for the bell as Woods now comes out of the corner, her fists still balled up, and Mitchell starts shouting at the referee.]

LD: The bell has rung and, already, Mitchell is complaining about Woods and her closed fists.

BW: And why shouldn't she? Closed fists are illegal in wrestling, you know that!

LD: Kelly Woods hasn't even laid a hand on Mitchell!

[As Mitchell argues with the referee, Woods uncurls her hands, then motions with her right hand, an intense look in her eyes, and shouts at Mitchell.]

"TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT!"

LD: Kelly daring Mitchell to come at her and...

[And that's when Mitchell steps right toward Woods and hauls off with a hard slap across the face.]

BW: And how's that for her best shot, Dane?

LD: A blatant sign of disrespect from Caroline Mitchell to the woman who was trained by the Hall of Famer, Stephanie Harper!

[The official gets on Mitchell's case for the slap, but Woods, who reels for a moment, turns back toward her opponent, a slight smile on her face, then a nod.]

"ALL RIGHT, NOW YA GET MINE!"

[And with that, Woods leaps toward Mitchell and hammers her with a hard forearm smash, sending Mitchell back into the corner.]

LD: And Woods returns the favor! What a hard shot by The Knockout!

BW: And now she has Mitchell in the corner... what is she doing now?

[Woods immediately follows Mitchell into the corner and fires off a series of hard fists and forearms into Mitchell's ribs.]

LD: The former women's boxer showing everyone exactly what she's good at!

BW: But this isn't a boxing match, and even if it was, she needs to back off when her opponent is in the corner!

[The referee gets to the count of four before Woods steps back, holding up her hands as the official warns her.]

LD: And Kelly Woods is doing just that, Ben.

BW: Yeah, after she hits Mitchell about 20 times in the ribs!

[Mitchell comes forward, tilting over a bit from the blows to the body as Woods snares her in a front facelock, lifting her into the air...]

LD: That's not boxing right there, Ben. That's a good ol' fashioned vertical suplex and a good one at that.

[Woods rolls to her feet, then balls up her right hand into a fist and drops down.]

BW: You were saying? Because that's another closed fist!

[Woods gets up, grinning at the crowd before dropping down to her knees a second time...]

BW: Come on, ref! Get her to knock it off or stop this thing!

[Another one follows, Mitchell's legs kicking up in the air on impact...]

LD: Make it three in a row and-

BW: This is ridiculous, Dane!

[With the referee protesting, Woods stands up again, looking out to the crowd, lifting her right fist in the air to even louder cheers...

...and drops one final fistedrop between the eyes!]

LD: A FOUR BAGGER FOR THE KNOCKOUT!

BW: The referee's letting her get away with a lot. We get it, new girl... you can throw a fist but what else can you do? She trained with a Hall of Famer and all Harper taught her how to do was punch. No wonder Harper's afraid to face Casey Cash!

LD: I don't think that's true at all.

BW: What part?

LD: ANY of it! Stephanie Harper was, however, known for her hard hitting strikes and thus far, we've seen the same out of Kelly Woods.

[In the meantime, Woods has dragged Mitchell to her feet before using a swinging neckbreaker to take her back down...]

LD: Happy, pappy?

BW: What the hell does that even mean? And no, I'm not! She's done two things in this whole match that didn't involve punching someone! Am I supposed to be impressed by that?

[Woods backs off, sizing up Mitchell as she struggles to get off the mat...]

LD: Woods measuring her... not sure what she has in mind here but-

[Woods then shuffles her feet as Mitchell gets to hers, and when Mitchell turns around...]

LD: ROUNDHOUSE RIGHT! Down goes Mitchell! DOWN! GOES! MITCHELL!

[Waterson sighs.]

BW: Look, before I got involved with pro wrestling, I was a mixed martial artist so I know all about striking... and I know that closed fists are illegal in this world. Trust me. I looked it up to make sure. Can someone get Woods a copy of the AWA rulebook?

[Dane chuckles.]

LD: I highly doubt you've ever seen such a thing.

BW: Don't get smart with me, Dane!

[An elbowsmash across the forehead of the barely-standing Mitchell sends her falling back into the ropes where Woods grabs the arm, looking for a whip across the ring...]

LD: Irish whi- reversed!

[The reversal sends Woods bouncing off the ropes and then down to the mat after Mitchell lands a standing dropkick.]

LD: Mitchell connects on that dropkick...

BW: Look at how high she got up in the air! I have to say, Dane, I like seeing that out of Mitchell, especially after the punishment she's taken!

[Mitchell pauses to catch her breath, then rises to her feet, spreads her arms and smirks.]

LD: Pretty confident smile there for someone who has been getting her tail kicked around the ring for the whole match...

BW: Until now... and now is what matters as Mitchell looks for a whip of her own.

[The whip sends Woods in, Mitchell swinging out her arm for a mighty clothesline...

...but Woods ducks under it, rebounding back off the far side of the ring to connect with a running clothesline of her own!]

LD: BIG TIME CLOTHESLINE! KELLY WOODS TAKES HER DOWN!

BW: Come on, Dane, spit it out!

LD: Spit what out?

BW: I know what you want to say... the same thing you say every time Kimmy Bailey or Ayako Fujiwara throws a clothesline like that! You want to try to make that a thing every time one of your favorites does that, don't you?

[Meanwhile, Woods has pumped her fist a couple of times, drawing cheers from the crowd. She then backs into the corner, measuring Mitchell again.]

LD: Well, if Woods can throw a lariat like that, then I... wait a minute, Mitchell getting to her feet... what's Kelly Woods doing?

[As Mitchell rises, Woods quickly shuffles her feet, then rushes forward as her opponent turns toward her...

...driving her shoulder right into Mitchell's chest and taking her down hard to the mat!]

LD: WHAT A SPEAR BY THE KNOCKOUT!

BW: Woods isn't that big of a woman, but look how hard she came at her!

[Woods rises to her feet, the crowd cheering once more, and then the Knockout slaps her right fist into her left palm twice.]

"IT'S TKO TIME!"

BW: What is that all about, Dane?

LD: I don't know... but it looks like Kelly Woods wants to finish this!

[Mitchell has staggered to her feet as Woods measures her, then runs back into the ropes...

...and as Mitchell turns around, Woods leaps toward her, snapping her rear leg back and extending her right arm, her hand curled into a fist.]

LD: SUPERMAN PUNCH!

BW: Or Superwoman, perhaps!

LD: That must be the TKO!

[Mitchell crumples to the mat and Woods dives on top, hooking the leg for good measure.]

LD: AWA fans, Caroline Mitchell is down for the count!

[The referee's hand slaps the mat three times, the bell rings and Woods rises to her knees, a smile forming on her face.]

LD: What a showing by The Knockout in her Showtime debut! Let's get the official word!

[Woods then gets to her feet, allowing the referee to raise her hand.]

MS: Here is your winner... "THE KNOCKOUT" KELLY WOOOOOODS!

[Woods pumps her fists above her head, then ducks between the ropes.]

LD: An impressive debut by Kelly Woods, who we'll be seeing a lot more of in the weeks to come! Let's go up to Mariah and Sweet Daddy!

[We cut to Mariah Wolfe and Sweet Daddy Williams at ringside.]

MW: Thanks, Lori! Kelly Woods, come on over here!

[Woods now walks up to the duo, giving a nod at both Wolfe and Williams.]

MW: I have to say, Kelly, that was an impressive debut for you here on Showtime! We saw you in an AWA ring for the first time at Memorial Day Mayhem... what was it like to be in that Rumble match?

[Woods speaks with an obvious New York accent.]

KW: Mariah, it wasn't the first time I was in a match like dat, ya know? Course, I was a bit younger when I got thrown out dere at Angels and Amazons, but hey, I figured...

[She shrugs her shoulders.]

KW: Why not start my AWA career the way it all began for me? Show everyone I'm not afraid of a challenge like dat... dat I'm no longer the nervous wreck I was at Angels and Amazons way back when.

[She gets a slight grin on her face.]

KW: I will say, though, dat Kimmy Bailey sure knows how to hit hahd. Wouldn't mind mixin' it up with her again... or maybe go out for ice cream, or doughnuts, maybe a beer, and tawk about what went down. I'm good either way next time I see her and I can't wait to see how she handles a big gal like Kurayami.

SDW: Yeah, we saw you throwin' it down a bit with Kimmy in the Rumble, but just like she's the daughter of one of the greats, Michelle Bailey, you learned a few things from another one of the greats, Stephanie Harper! I gotta ask you, Kelly, what was it like to see the woman who trained you, back in that ring, even if it was just for one night?

KW: [chuckling] Couldn't be happier for her, Sweet Daddy! She taught me so much, not just about what it's like in the ring, but what it's like to be disciplined, to work my tail off and to know it's never gonna come easy for ya.

But while she may've been back for a one night appearance, I'm not just here for one night... I'm here in the AWA to stay, ya know?

[She gets a serious look on her face, her smile now gone.]

KW: And ya got a lot of gals in the back who like to flap their yaps, like to be the center of attention, think it's all about dem and nobody else. Well, I got news for all dem gals that wanna tawk dat tawk... once ya step in between those ropes to face me, ya gonna find out exactly why ya gonna go down for the count from this gal from the Bronx who learned many times over what hard knocks really meant!

[She balls her hands up into fists and holds them up near her face.]

KW: Ya get me?

[She glances at Wolfe and Williams, giving them a nod, then departs the ringside area.]

MW: If you ask me, Sweet Daddy, the Women's Division just got a little bit rougher with the addition of that competitor.

[Wolfe grins.]

MW: Let's go backstage to Sweet Lou who is standing by with a big, big guest! Lou?

[We fade from the ring to the backstage area where Sweet Lou Blackwell is standing along the towering form of the veteran brawler, Robert Donovan.]

SLB: From one woman making her AWA debut to a man who has been a part of this promotion for a long, long time now... big Rob Donovan, can you believe it's been almost eight years since you first stepped foot inside an AWA ring?

[Donovan looks surprised for a moment, then shakes his head.]

RD: Eight years. And even then, I had been in this business... what? Ten, fifteen years? Time slips away from us all, Lou. I stand here on hallowed ground. The house that the Blackheart built. The place the Lone Wolf roamed. The joint the Outlaw shook. All old men now... all long gone. An entire generation of this sport has hung it up...

...but I'm still here, Lou. I'm still fighting.

[Blackwell smiles.]

SLB: You even stuck around long enough to see your own son in the ring.

[Donovan proudly nods.]

RD: The kid's doin' alright, huh? Now that he's got Claw out of his business, I know that he and Wes are gonna get those titles back and make some history next weekend... but all this reminiscing, that's not why you wanted to talk to me, right?

[Blackwell shrugs.]

SLB: A little, actually... but no, you're right. You've got a match tonight... but I think we all know there's another elephant in the room that needs addressed and that's Trey Carson.

[Donovan raises a finger.]

RD: Actually, it's Dave Cooper.

[Blackwell furrows his brow.]

RD: Because it's Dave Cooper who is the puppetmaster pulling the strings. It's Dave Cooper who tells this kid where, when, and who to fight. And for some old grudge I thought was dead and buried, Dave Cooper's told that kid that it's me he wants to fight.

[Donovan holds up a taped fist.]

RD: But kid, I promise you it's not.

[Blackwell interjects.]

SLB: Big Rob, I gotta remind you though - Trey Carson is UNDEFEATED since arriving in the AWA. He's big, he's tough, he's strong... and... well, he's young. He's hungry. He's got his entire career ahead of him.

[Donovan nods.]

RD: And I don't. I get it, Lou. Trey Carson is the future... and big Rob Donovan can't even be considered the present anymore. I'm the past in the eyes of the suits... the fans... hell, even you, Lou.

[Blackwell looks embarrassed.]

RD: And that's okay. Because while every day, a box gets crossed out in the calendar of my career, I'm not done yet. And as long as I can get in the ring to fight... that's what I'm going to do, Lou.

Because what else do I have?

[Donovan grimaces.]

RD: If I make it like Hardin... if I make it like James and walk out the door, what's left for me out there? An empty house. A family that gave up on me for one too many Christmases spent on the road. My son is here... and besides that ring... he's the only thing I've got left.

And if I walk away from that ring... and I walk away from my son...

[Donovan trails off.]

RD: I can't do it, Lou. I can't. So, I'm going to go out there and face whoever they dug up for me tonight... and I'm gonna hurt 'em... and yeah, my knees will ache and my back will be sore afterwards... but I'm gonna win.

And kid, whenever Cooper tells you it's time to fight, you tell him I'm ready for him... and you.

[Donovan gives Blackwell a nod before exiting.]

SLB: Some heartfelt words there from big Rob Donovan who is on his way to the ring. Lori, Ben... back to you.

[We cut from the backstage area down to ringside.]

LD: Thanks, Lou... and Robert Donovan with not just heartfelt words to me, Ben... but haunting words. This is a man who knows that he's physically near the end of the road for a storied career... but also seems to be unable to process how to walk away from it all.

BW: Look, Donovan and I go way back... and he's not my favorite person... but I genuinely feel for the guy. I never had to walk this road. My career in the ring was taken away from me before it really ever got started... but I've seen this before. We just saw it with Juan Vasquez. This business gets under your skin... in your blood... and it's NOT easy to walk away from the money, the women, the glory, the rush... whatever it is that drives you. Time catches up to us all... and if you're a fan of Robert Donovan, you just have to hope he's able to recognize that before it's too late.

[On cue, the opening notes of Metallica's cover of "Turn The Page" begins to play as we hear Megumi Sato on the mic.]

MS: The following contest is set for one fall with a ten minute time limit. Introducing first... already in the ring at this time.. from Seattle, Washington... weighing in at 223 pounds... "Pretty" Ricky Hale!

[“Pretty” Ricky turns out to be a scrawny looking kid in neon green trunks who flexes pipecleaner arms for the camera with a “Check that out, right there, mama!” before settling back into the corner...]

MS: And his opponent... standing a massive seven feet, two inches tall... weighing in at 332 pounds... from Pensacola, Florida...

....ROBERRRRRRRRRT DONNNNNNNNOVAANNNNNNNN!

[A few moments later, the looming figure of Robert Donovan steps into the aisle, wearing a pair of loose leather pants with stylized griffins running up the outside of each leg, a dark red double-strapped singlet with the word "Heritage" scrawled across his abdomen, and black boots. He pauses to adjust the heavy brace on his left elbow, his beard shot through with gray, and a focused expression like a man checking in for a hard day at the cement factory. This man has come to go to work.]

LD: The crowd with a good reaction here to big Rob, showing respect for all his years in the business. They heard what he had to say too... and we've all read the stories online. Lots of injuries over the years that just won't heal... bad back, bad elbow, sore knees.

BW: The ring can be an unforgiving mistress, Dane. There's been a lot of talk in recent years about the toll that the late 90s and early 2000s wrestling pace and style took on people. Hell, we're in the IIWF Coliseum tonight... how many guys from that era are anywhere to be seen - not just wrestling - but in the public eye at all? When's the last time anyone's heard from Steve Kowalski? From Billy Shakespeare? From Creed? Robert Donovan may have never worked in the IIWF but he's part of that generation and like so many of his brothers and sisters before him, that curtain is starting to close.

LD: We don't agree on much, Ben, but after Donovan's recent failed attempt to win the National Title, you have to feel like time might be running out. Every time this song hits these days, you can feel the miles. Donovan's been walking these roads for almost twenty years now...

BW: And he's running out of road. He's back there talking about Trey Carson and Dave Cooper? That's a mistake if you ask me and a real quick way to end up in retirement with even more injuries to deal with.

[Donovan slowly steps up the ringsteps, pausing on the apron to take in the cheering crowd with a slight smile before stepping over the top rope into the ring.]

LD: You think about the roads this man has traveled - his time in the legendary LWC down in Laredo, Texas... his time in Japan bleeding buckets for whatever death match promotion paid him to come there... of course, his time in Los Angeles as a top star there as well. He once told me he'd wrestled and bled in just about every place a man can make money doing that in professional wrestling.

BW: And it shows. The big man moving slowly in there... you used to call it methodical but now I think it's just Father Time dragging him down.

[The referee checks on Donovan who gives a nod and...]

“DING! DING! DING!”

[...and Ricky Hale comes rushing out of the corner out of sheer survival instinct, throwing a flurry of right hands as he tries to get an early advantage...]

LD: Ricky Hale wasting no time in this one and-

[...but the massive Donovan reaches up to palm his face...]

BW: Bad move.

[...and SHOVES him halfway across the ring, sending him crashing down where he flips backwards onto his stomach to a big cheer!]

LD: All that size, all that power... age and injuries don't take that away from you.

BW: That wasn't just a shove... that was a rejection!

[Dane chuckles as Hale scrambles up, launching himself into a running dropkick but the big man doesn't even flinch, just absorbing the blow.]

LD: Not sure that did much but you gotta give Hale credit for not being intimidated in there. Back on his feet... to the ropes annnnnnd...

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[The crowd reacts as Donovan delivers a big boot to the chest of the rebounding Hale, folding him up and dumping him on the mat again.]

LD: The big man just let that kid come to him and then CRUSHES him when the time is right.

BW: A man the size of Donovan doesn't have to do much in there. That's part of the secret of his longevity, Dane. He doesn't have to go for huracanranas or top rope legdrops. He can hit one move and completely change the course of a matchup.

[Grabbing the wrist of the downed Hale, Donovan YANKS him to his feet right into a crushing lariat with one motion, flipping the kid inside out and dumping him back down on the mat...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: You were saying?

BW: This kid probably feels like he's been in a car wreck right now, Dane, but this kid AIN'T Trey Carson! There's no way Donovan's doing this to the Big Man On Campus - no way!

[Donovan pauses, rolling his neck, grimacing as he rotates his knee around a little like some movement aggravated it...]

LD: A little chink in the armor perhaps, the bad knee giving him issues.

BW: Twenty plus years in the business - don't let the power fool you, Dane. Donovan is hurting every night he's out there in the ring.

[Hale struggles up off the mat, dragging himself to his feet in the corner where Donovan shakes out the knee one more time before lumbering in...]

LD: AVALANCHE IN THE CORNER! The whole ring shook on that as three hundred plus pounds just CRUSHED Ricky Hale against the turnbuckles!

[Donovan steps aside, allowing Hale to stagger out before collapsing on the canvas. The big man raises an arm to the crowd, getting his well-earned cheers from the Portland fanbase.]

LD: Donovan's been on both sides of the fans over the years... who can forget that time he spent with the Beale Street Bullies? But these days, he's solidly being supported by fans everywhere we go from coast to coast and around the world.

BW: That's part of the problem, Dane. That level of adulation is hard to walk away from.

LD: No doubt about it... Donovan bringing him back off the mat again, whips him across...

[As Hale rebounds, Donovan easily lifts him up, pivots around, and DRIVES him down with an impactful spinning spinebuster!]

LD: ...and SMASHES his spine into the canvas! Signature spinebuster right there from Donovan and the end may be near for young Ricky Hale...

[Donovan rises to his feet, looking down on Hale...]

LD: Donovan looking down on him... and you can almost see it in his face, Ben. This isn't about Hale at all... this is about proving something to everyone in that locker, everyone online, everyone in this arena. He wants the world to know he can still go in that ring... and you better believe he wants Dave Cooper and Trey Carson to know it.

[Donovan reaches down on the on-all-fours Hale, snatching a gutwrench...]

LD: DEADLIFTS HIM UP!

[...and then THROWS him down with a thunderous powerbomb!]

LD: We've seen that many times before and we know what comes next.

[Donovan - on a knee after the big slam - plants a fist in the chest of the unmoving Hale as the referee counts one... two... three.]

"DING! DING! DING!"

LD: No doubt about that one. That gutwrench powerbomb from way up high is certainly still a dangerous weapon as Donovan makes short work of Ricky Hale tonight but... what's this now?

[Donovan gets off the mat, no sign of celebrating his win as he turns towards the entrance, his eyes up the aisle expectantly...]

LD: He looks like he's waiting for something, Ben.

BW: He is. He's waiting for the future to walk down that aisle.

[And on cue, "The Man" by The Killers kicks in over the PA system...]

LD: Uh oh. This just got REAL interesting, Ben.

[...but it's not Trey Carson who emerges from the locker room onto the entrance stage, it's his manager - longtime AWA personality "The Professional" Dave Cooper. Cooper is all smirks as he emerges onto the stage with a mic in hand.]

DC: Were you expecting someone else, Rob?

[Cooper chuckles as he starts walking down the aisle.]

DC: So sorry to disappoint you... and I'm sure you're not the only one. These fans are disappointed too because while they spent the last few minutes being subjected to your old and tired act, they were hoping they would get their brush with greatness here tonight... their glimpse of the future of this business... the Big Man On Campus, Trey Carson.

[Cooper draws nearer, looking back and forth at the crowd jeering Carson's name.]

DC: But have no fear, people of Portland... Trey Carson is coming. Oh yes, he's coming real soon...

[He points to the ring.]

DC: ...for you, Robert Donovan.

[By now, Cooper has reached ringside, going up the ringsteps, ducking through the ropes as Donovan glares at him, hands on his hips.]

DC: Rob, there's a whole lot of nostalgia in the air tonight here in the IIWF Coliseum... and while you and I never worked here, we've known each other for a long, long time now. What did they say earlier? Eight years you've been here? Eight years since you walked through the door and said you wanted to be the first Longhorn Heritage Champion.

[Cooper shakes his head.]

DC: A lot has happened since then for both of us, Rob... some good, some bad, all memorable...

[Cooper pauses.]

DC: ...and I gotta say I'm feeling a little sentimental here tonight. So, Rob... I'm going to give you one chance...

[He raises a finger.]

DC: One chance for all we've been through together. Everyone knows it's coming, Rob. Everyone knows your time in this business is almost over. And unlike me with the brilliant managerial mind, when your time is up, all you can do is go home, sit in the living room, and watch your glory days on YouTube. This business is done with you, Rob. It's over. You had a good run.

[Cooper draws closer.]

DC: You get one chance to walk away, Rob. This is it. Take off your boots, leave 'em in the ring, walk out the door and say goodbye. This is your chance to walk out... because if you stay, Trey Carson is going to make them CARRY you out.

[Donovan shakes his head, glaring a hole right through Cooper.]

RD: You're right.

[The crowd gasps in concern as Cooper nods with a smirk.]

RD: We have been through a lot together in the past eight years. And you're right, there's no spot for me in the front office when this is over... there's no spot for me managing some young buck. This is it for me... these people...

[A big cheer rings out.]

RD: ...and this ring. You may be right about something else too, Cooper. I may not have enough left for Trey Carson... but you let him know we're going to find out in two weeks in Seattle...

[The crowd ROARS for that as Cooper shakes his head in disgust.]

RD: ...and while it remains to be seen if I've got enough left for the "Big Man On Campus"... I got more than enough left for you.

[Donovan throws the mic down, reaching out to grab Cooper by the throat to a THUNDEROUS ROAR from the Portland crowd!]

LD: HE'S GOT HIM! HE'S GOT HIM!

[But not for long as the athletic big man Trey Carson comes charging into view, sliding into the ring...

...and CLIPS the knee of Donovan from behind!]

LD: OHHH! RIGHT ON THE BAD WHEEL!

BW: Donovan's been fighting injuries to those knees for years, Dane!

[The blow fells Donovan, putting him down on his back in tremendous pain as Cooper escapes, coughing and glaring red-faced down on his fellow AWA veteran. Cooper sweeps a hand at Donovan, ordering his man to "show him who's the AWA's TRUE big man!"]

LD: Oh, come on!

[Carson takes a mount on Donovan, raining down heavy forearms - young, fast, and vicious as he pummels the veteran relentlessly. Donovan swings his arms up, trying to shield himself but Carson's landing more than he's missing as the fans jeer loudly.]

LD: Cooper cheering him on, demanding he do more damage... Cooper got embarrassed and he wants payback!

BW: There may not be enough of Donovan left after this to even have a match in Seattle!

[Carson gets up off the mat, dragging a hurting Donovan with his hands around the seven footer's throat...]

LD: Carson pulling him... getting him into position...

[...and with a Herculean effort, Carson lifts Donovan off the mat into a bearhug position, holding on for all to see...]

LD: ...look at the power! He's got Donovan up annnnnnd...

"THUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUD!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and DRIVES him down into a spinebuster slam of his own, crushing Donovan under his own weight as well!]

LD: ...THE BOTTOM LINE!

[Carson pushes up to his knees before climbing to his feet, looking down on Donovan as Cooper steps forward to raise his hand, pointing to his mammoth charge as the fans jeer loudly...]

BW: Well, Dane... the bottom line to this one is Trey Carson just showed Robert Donovan and the world that there's a new big man on the block and that Mick Jagger is dead wrong - time is NOT on the side of Robert Donovan.

[Cooper smirks at the fallen Donovan, shouting "tick tock, old man" off-mic as Donovan writhes in pain on the canvas. Carson's arms are still raised high as the fans jeer...]

LD: We've got some medical personnel hitting the ring... Donovan trying to get up on his own but that's not happening...

[Carson exits at Cooper's direction, the duo making their way from the ring to exit the hostile atmosphere...]

BW: Donovan might be looking for one last legacy moment but Trey Carson? He's looking to build HIS legacy by ending Donovan's.

LD: And after tonight, that ending could be closer than any of us thought. Let's go backstage where I'm told our old friend Mark Stegglet is standing by with a very special guest just moments before his big featured matchup here tonight. Mark?

[Cut to backstage, where Mark Stegglet stands with Ryan Martinez. The former World Heavyweight Champion has a serious expression on his face as he faces his long time friend and interviewer.]

MS: Thanks, Lori. We saw the explosive announcement earlier tonight, and in just a few minutes, you will be going to war with a man you're very familiar with, Takeshi Mifune. I've got to ask - how are you feeling, Ryan?

[Martinez exhales slowly.]

RM: Well Mark, I'm feeling something I haven't felt in a long time...

...nervous.

[Stegglet looks surprised for a moment, but finally nods.]

MS: That isn't a great surprise. Longtime fans will know that you have a long history with Takeshi Mifune, dating back to Tiger Paw Pro Wrestling, and your earliest days in the ring.

[Martinez nods.]

RM: Even before that, Mark.

My first day in the Tiger Paw dojo, before I had ever even hit the ropes, Mifune-sensei put every student in a line and stalked up and down the line.

He told us that he hated rookies, children of pro-wrestlers and gaijin...

...you can imagine how he felt about me.

And what he did about it.

[Stegglet involuntarily shudders.]

RM: Sometimes, I wake up in the middle of the night in a cold sweat, and I swear to you it feels like I'm back there in the dojo, getting twisted into knots and screaming to be given mercy by a man who has none.

MS: And here you are tonight, about to face him.

[Martinez nods again.]

RM: That's right. And I know why. I know whose plan this is. And I know why he's doing it.

MS: You mean Supreme Wright?

RM: That's exactly who I mean...

[Martinez is silent a moment, his expression growing more serious, more intense.]

RM: But here's what you're both forgetting...

...the man I am now is worlds away from the man I am now.

The boy you knew, Mifune-sensei, hadn't been through what I've been through. He hadn't been humiliated on national television by Justin Gaines. He hadn't gone to war with the Wise Men. He hadn't risked it all against Kurogun. He hadn't fought against Caleb Temple and come out the other side.

He hadn't walked into Madison Square Garden and taken the World Title from Supreme Wright.

Am I nervous? I am. And I'm not ashamed to say it. Because I remember those days in the dojo. And I remember all those days in the rings as well. I remember Kobe, and I remember Osaka, Fukuoka, Sapporo, Nagoya, and Hiroshima and all the other places you made me scream.

And you beat me.

But I still call you Mifune-sensei because you were my teacher then. And because I remember more than the beatings.

I remember all the lessons.

[Martinez reaches up, a hand running across the neck that Mifune strangled the life out of earlier.]

RM: I remember how you taught me that pain is nothing but another experience. I remember that you taught me that fear was weakness leaving the body. And I remember that you taught me that a warrior's greatest weapon is perseverance.

Everything you taught me made me the man, and the wrestler I am today.

And tonight? You're going to see the fruits of your labors and the results of your lessons.

Because when it's you and me in the ring tonight, you aren't fighting the young boy you used to sadistically abuse.

You're wrestling a two time World Champion.

You're wrestling the White Knight.

And by the end of the night? You're going to respect me, Mifune-sensei. You're going to realize that I am the weapon you made.

[Martinez' expression shifts slightly... almost a smile.]

RM: And that now, I am not the student, but the Master.

And you're going to learn that I'm better than you.

[The smile is fully there now.]

RM: The same as I am better than Supreme Wright.

[He tosses a wink at Mark Stegglet who chuckles, knowing the impact those words will have on another man in the building.]

RM: Count on it.

[And with those words, Ryan Martinez steps away, ready to go to war...]

MS: Two-time World Champion. The White Knight. Student no longer.

[Stegglet grins, looking into the camera.]

MS: Take that, Shadow Wolf.

[And with that, we fade from backstage to the ring where Megumi Sato is standing.]

MS: The following contest is set for one fall with a thirty minute time limit.

[She takes a deep breath...

...and as "Kaze ni Nare" begins to play, she throws an anxious look towards the curtain.]

MS: Representing Team Supreme... weighing in at 235 pounds from Yokohama, Japan...

THE SHADOW WOLF!

TAAAAAAKESSSSSHIIIIII MIIIIIFUUUUUNEEEEEEEE!

[She jerks the mic down, an almost disgusted expression on her face as the monster made man, Takeshi Mifune, walks into view in simple black trunks and short black boots with white tape on his wrists. He is not a good-looking man with a hardened, weathered face that's been beaten into ugliness by decades of non-stop fighting. He has a smile that only a hockey player can love, as he's missing several teeth. He has a black towel draped around his neck as he walks to the aisle, an almost gleeful anticipation on his face.]

LD: There's a different energy in the air for this one, Ben.

BW: You talk about "big fight feel," this is it. But it's more than that. With the background of these two, I feel like I should be ringside at the Sumo Hall or Korakuen...

LD: And I'd imagine that's also the vibe that Megumi Sato is feeling. She's done her best to hide it since arriving here in the AWA... but there is a history between

our ring announcer and this man from her time working in Japan... including a physical encounter.

BW: Look, if you've looked up Mifune on YouTube, I'm sure it's no secret that Mifune has gotten physically involved against female competitors in Japan over the years in matches. The intergender matches in some promotions there are booked on the regular... and if you've seen that, you've seen Mifune pull no punches against female competitors... no matter how hard the AWA and Disney has worked to get those videos off the Internet.

LD: Megumi Sato was no competitor that night, Ben. She was serving the same role she is tonight... and when she announced Mifune's opponent as the victor, he headbutted her for it! Let's call it what it is! He's a sadistic animal and the day can't come soon enough when he's put down and out of this business once and for all! The horror story that is this man's career - in and out of the ring - ranges from dark to disturbing... just ask Ryan Martinez, the man who will attempt to exorcise some very old demons here tonight.

BW: There's a reason why in Japan, he's been referred to as "the worst person in existence," Dane... and the AWA fans have only gotten a taste of what he's capable of. Tonight, they get an All-You-Can-Eat buffet of violence.

[Mifune takes the ring, many in the crowd singing along to his iconic entrance song as he looks out on the Portland faithful... and we can hear Ben chuckle.]

BW: Sorry. I was just imagining Mifune being turned loose on the IIWF roster in his evil prime.

LD: That would've been a sight to see... but tonight, the 48 year old Mifune has a much different task on his hand against his former student Ryan Martinez. You heard him say it, Ben.

BW: "When I left you, I was but the learner but now I am the Master."

LD: To paraphrase, yes.

BW: Martinez out here talking like Vader but in reality, he's just little Annie trying to play hero.

[Mifune stalks the ring like a man arriving at his dinner table. Zero hesitation. Zero fear. Zero humanity. He gives a look at Megumi Sato which causes her to take a cautious step back which brings a smile to his face before he settles in a corner, sitting cross-legged on the canvas, staring down the aisle with an awful, anticipatory half-smirk... the smile of a predator who knows his prey is walking willingly into his clutches.]

MS: Annnnnnnnnnd his opponent!

[Sato's voice is bold and hopeful, glaring right down at Mifune as she says it...

...and as the opening tinkling of synth music can be heard, the IIWF Coliseum crowd LOSES IT! Sato is forced to shout over it as the synth music builds in intensity, and then the drums kick in, the deep, bassy notes reverberating throughout the arena, as Thirty Seconds to Mars' "Vox Populi" blasts out over the loudspeakers. The fans, begin to stomp their feet in unison to the drums. As the lyrics begin, the voice of Jared Leto is drowned out by the sound of the fans singing along.]

#This is a call to arms, gather soldiers#
#Time to go to war#

#This is a battle song, brothers and sisters#
#Time to go to war#

[A single spotlight shines over the entranceway, and there he stands – the AWA's White Knight.

To another enthusiastic roar from the crowd, Ryan Martinez steps forward, spotlights illuminating the frame of the one of the most beloved men in AWA history.]

MS: FROM LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA... WEIGHING IN AT 255 POUNDS... THE WHITE KNIGHT...

...RYYYYYYYYYAAAAAAAAN MARRRRRRRRRTIIIIIIINEZ!

[And as Martinez sheds his long, white and red sleeveless ring jacket at the top of the aisle to pool at his feet, we can see that the White Knight has taken a trip to the past. Short black trunks. Black boots. And all business.]

BW: Young Boy Martinez, reporting for duty.

[Martinez walks the aisle with steady, righteous, laser-focused pacing. He looks more serious than we've seen him in some time - no slapping hands, no acknowledgement of the fans - just determination.]

LD: You talk about big fight feel, Ben. This is a man who knows that feeling all too well. He has fought Supreme Wright for the World Title at Madison Square Garden on the biggest stage in our sport. He has held the World Title on two occasions. But this is different. This is the man who shaped him... and scarred him.

BW: Martinez can talk all he wants about the ghosts of yesteryear, Dane... but you can NOT convince me he wanted this match. This is Supreme Wright's dream match right here. He wants to see Mifune break Martinez... and he just might get it.

LD: This one... as much as Martinez wants to beat Mifune... first, he has to survive him.

BW: Easier said than done.

[Reaching ringside, Martinez climbs the ringsteps, keeping his eyes on an unmoving Mifune. He stands on the apron, eyes boring into the Shadow Wolf before quickly ducking through the ropes, coming up ready to defend if Mifune comes for him...

...but Mifune does not budge.]

LD: The mind games are on before the bell even rings, Ben.

BW: Absolutely.

[Martinez stays center ring, eyeballs trained on Mifune as the Shadow Wolf waits...]

"DING! DING! DING!"

[...and upon hearing the bell, he moves quickly from sitting to kneeling, a sudden enough shift to cause Martinez to step back. Mifune grins... stabbing a finger into his own heart...]

"FEAR!"

[...and shouts at Martinez who grimaces, stepping forward again...

...a little too close as Mifune surges from a knee into a single leg, picking the ankle and dumping Martinez to the mat like he's still a trainee.]

LD: Here we go!

[Mifune slides into a rear mount, straddling the lower back of Martinez, pinning him down as he reaches around to sink his fingers into the corner of his student's mouth, yanking back on the skin...]

LD: Ah! A fish hook right out of the gate!

[Referee Pete "Blue Shoes" Miller - also no stranger to Mifune from his own time officiating in Japan - calls for an immediate break but Mifune hangs on, cackling madly as Martinez cries out...]

...and at four and a half, Mifune lets go, rising... and wipes Martinez' saliva off his fingers across his torso, sneering as Martinez scrambles up, full of fury...]

"WHAAAAAAAAACK!"
"OHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and lets his emotions drive him to walking right into a palm strike across the face, sending Martinez spiraling away, falling into the ropes, hanging onto the top rope as he slumps forward...]

"WHAAAAAAAAACK!"
"OHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and Mifune lunges in again, this time with a running kneelift to the face, knocking Martinez through the ropes and out onto the apron!]

LD: My word, Ben!

BW: Mifune's got his marching orders from Wright... not that he needs them... break this man, make him suffer, and let his screams echo so loud the ghosts in this building look for a new place to haunt.

[Mifune tries to go after Martinez but Miller boldly puts himself between the Shadow Wolf and his prey...]

...which allows a camera closeup to reveal Martinez' leaking nose.]

LD: Oh... oh no. We've got a bloody nose on the White Knight just seconds into this match, Ben.

BW: That may not be the only blood drawn at this rate. Mifune's-

[Mifune tosses the official aside roughly, earning a shouted warning as Mifune grabs two hands full of hair, dragging Martinez through the ropes back into the ring...]

...and rakes his face across the canvas, leaving bloody streaks on the mat.]

LD: Sadistic may not be a strong enough word for this- OHHH!

[The crowd echoes the cry of Lori Dane as Mifune STOMPS the fingers of Martinez, laughing as the White Knight cries out...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and then does it again, digging his boot into the fingers as Martinez fights to a knee, using his free arm to shove Mifune away.]

BW: This has gotta feel like something out of a walking nightmare for Martinez, Dane.

LD: Look at Mifune now... look at him!

[Mifune smirks at the hurting Martinez, waving him to his feet, and slapping himself in the chest...]

LD: He's telling Martinez to chop him!

BW: After he stomped his fingers too!

[Martinez struggles to his feet, keen to oblige...]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...but Mifune shakes his head, refusing to register the blow, piefacing Martinez backwards and slapping his own chest again.]

LD: He wants more!

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: And he gets it!

[But Mifune piefaces him back again, leaning forward, pressing his forehead into his former student's, whispering something for the White Knight's ears only...]

LD: What in the world could he possibly have to say right now?

[...and then steps back, snapping his arm up like a whip...]

"SLAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAP!"

[...and again...]

"SLAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAP!"

[The slaps keep coming - fast, wicked, and impactful, battering Martinez backwards towards the corner as the crowd struggles to react to the heavy open-handed blows before another lands...]

"SLAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAP!"

"SLAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAP!"

"SLAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAP!"

"SLAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAP!"

LD: This is the exact hell that Ryan Martinez trained under! This isn't just muscle memory - this is trauma memory!

[With Martinez slumped against the buckles, Mifune gets backed off by Miller... who he pushes aside again, nearly knocking him down before he charges across the ring...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and connects with a Yakuza Kick that LAUNCHES Martinez over the top rope, dumping him in a heap on the cold, hard concrete in Portland!]

LD: The Yakuza connects... and you gotta wonder right there, Ben...

BW: We've seen Martinez use that for years... and did we just see who taught it to him?

LD: And Mifune is not opposed to a match turning into a street fight either. He's heading out there despite ol' Blue Shoes' best efforts.

[Mifune drops off the apron, glaring hard at a ringside fan in a t-shirt with Ryan Martinez posing on it with letters in kanji up the side of it.]

LD: Keep this guy away from the crowd! The last thing we need is another riot!

[Mifune is dissuaded from confronting the fan, turning his attention back to Martinez who is trying to push up off the floor. The Shadow Wolf grabs him by the hair, pulling him the rest of the way up...

...and Martinez SMASHES his skull into Mifune's!]

LD: OHH! DESPERATION HEADBUTT!

[The blow stuns Mifune, causing him to freeze in his tracks as Martinez grabs him by the head...]

LD: EUROPEAN UPPERCUT BY MARTINEZ!

[Still holding the head, Martinez lays in a brutal elbowstrike across the temple that buckles Mifune's knees...]

LD: This man may have just remembered who the hell he is, Ben!

[...and Martinez tosses Mifune under the ropes, putting him back inside the ring. He reaches up, wiping the blood from his nose as he climbs up on the apron.]

BW: The blood from the nose... if the nose is broken, this is a serious problem for Martinez. If it's just bloodied, it's a minor problem but anything that effects airflow in a match like this is dangerous.

LD: Martinez back in...

[Mifune winds up, ready to greet the entering Martinez with a slap but Martinez is a step quicker this time...]

"SLAAAAAAAAAAAAAAP!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[The impact of the blow snaps Mifune around where Martinez winds up...

...and CHOPS him in the back of the neck, sending Mifune stumbling facefirst into the corner!]

LD: OH! A knife edge chop to the back of the neck! We don't see that too often!

[Martinez lumbers in after him, swinging him around, holding onto the head as he unloads with a heavy forearm to the jaw...]

"OHHHH!"

[...and another...]

"OHHHH!"

[...and keeps on going, shaking his former sensei's dental work.]

"OHHHH!"

"OHHHH!"

"OHHHH!"

"OHHHH!"

"OHHHH!"

"OHHHH!"

[And with the referee complaining loudly, Martinez twists his body around into position...]

"MAR [CHOP!] – TI [CHOP!] – NEZ [CHOP!]"

"MAR [CHOP!] – TI [CHOP!] – NEZ [CHOP!]"

"MAR [CHOP!] – TI [CHOP!] – NEZ [CHOP!]"

"MAR [CHOP!] – TI [CHOP!] – NEZ [CHOP!]"

"MAR [CHOP!] – TI [CHOP!] – NEZ [CHOP!]"

LD: MACHINE GUN CHOPS!

[Martinez pauses, taking a breath, as the fans chant for more. Ever a man of the people, young Ryan obliges. This time, the barrage of chops is slower, as is the fans' chant.]

"MAR [CHOP!] – TI [CHOP!] – NEZ [CHOP!]"

"MAR [CHOP!] – TI [CHOP!] – NEZ [CHOP!]"

"MAR [CHOP!] – TI [CHOP!] – NEZ [CHOP!]"

"MAR [CHOP!] – TI [CHOP!] – NEZ [CHOP!]"

"MAR [CHOP!] – TI [CHOP!] – NEZ [CHOP!]"

[The referee is bellowing at him now, stepping in to force him back away from Mifune who is hanging onto the top rope with both arms to stay on his feet...

...and this time, it's Martinez who shoves the official aside, rushing back in, DRIVING a running forearm into the jaw!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[Martinez grabs Mifune by the arm, dragging him out of the corner...

...and a Mifune attempt at a chop comes up empty as Martinez ducks, hooking a waistlock as Mifune spins past...]

"THUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUD!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: GERMAN! GERMAN! FOR THE WINNNNNN!

[The referee dives down, counting once... twice...]

LD: HE GOT... NOOOOOOOOOOO!

[The crowd groans as Mifune twitches at the last moment, slipping out of the bridging German Suplex to save himself.]

LD: Martinez almost had him there! He almost shook off the demons and took the win here in Portland with the man he wants in the ring more than any other - his former friend Supreme Wright - in the building watching.

[Martinez sits up on the mat, again wiping the blood from under his nose, shaking his head...]

BW: We're just over five minutes into this and these two are beating the holy hell out of them, Dane!

LD: That's putting it mildly... and the White Knight isn't backing down. Mifune kicked out of the German but Martinez isn't done.

BW: I'm not even sure he cares if he wins, Dane - right now, he's trying to prove he BELONGS in the same ring with Takeshi Mifune, the most sadistic man we know.

[Coming off the canvas, Martinez turns back towards the slowly-rising Mifune, looking to grab him again. He hooks a waistlock, lifting Mifune off his knees...]

LD: DEADLIFT!

[...but Mifune lashes out, slamming his head backwards into the already-bloodied nose, causing pain to shoot through the eyes and brain of Martinez, falling backwards as Mifune slips around behind him...]

LD: MIFUNE FROM BEHIND!

[...and with the crowd gasping in unison, Mifune clamps on the Japanese Stranglehold!]

LD: HE LOCKS IT IN! HE LOCKS IT IN!

BW: Passed down from the skilled hands of Roosevelt Wright, Takeshi Mifune has taken this hold and made it one of the most lethal in the history of our great sport! A hold used by names not just Wright and Mifune... but by the great Prince Izumi, one of the greatest professional wrestlers of all-time!

LD: We saw Martinez locked in it earlier tonight... and we know he's been locked in it many, many times in his career!

[Martinez' eyes widen at the grip on his neck, his arms desperately flailing as he finds himself in the very hold that's put down thousands of opponents over the decades - including Martinez himself as a young student-turned-competitor...]

LD: Trying to get to the ropes! This might be his only way out!

BW: Look in his eyes, Dane! That's panic! That's fear! It might be the only way out because he can't slow his heartbeat enough to find a true counter to get out of it! I had Izumi put me in this hold one time when I was competing in Japan and believe me, it won't take long to put Martinez to sleep if he can't find a way out of this and fast!

[The effort to get to the ropes fails as Mifune jerks him backwards, twisting him around, actually lifting him off the mat for a moment on the spin...

...which allows Martinez to get his feet under him, pushing off the mat in a lunge forward...]

LD: DIVE!

[...but he comes up short, crashing down on the canvas, arms stretched out towards the ropes as Mifune screams a defiant "NOOOOOOO!", twisting the neck trapped in his grasp...]

LD: MARTINEZ IS FIGHTING! CRAWLING! SCRATCHING! DRAGGING HE AND MIFUNE ACROSS THE FEW INCHES REMAINING...

[...and Martinez just barely hooks a finger around the bottom rope, the referee crying for an immediate break...

...and getting none.]

LD: COME ON! BREAK THE DAMN HOLD!

[But the Shadow Wolf has a weakened prey in his grasp, throttling him back and forth as he tries to end him...]

LD: The referee is counting! If Mifune doesn't break soon, he's gonna get disqualified!

BW: What is victory to a man who scorekeeps in pain and not points?

[You can call it "that close"... you can call it four-and-nine-tenths... however the description, Mifune breaks in time to get an earful from the official but not the sound of a bell ringing.]

LD: The match continues!

[Mifune climbs off the mat, seemingly disgusted...]

BW: I don't know if he's mad that he didn't get the win or that Martinez took the coward's way out by going to the ropes.

[...and then STOMPS the exposed ribcage of Martinez with evil intentions.]

LD: Another vile shot... right down into the body. The referee AGAIN shouting at Mifune, Ben.

BW: Yeah, but he hasn't DARED to disqualify him... so Mifune's free to inflict all the punishment he wants however he wants.

[Mifune grabs Martinez by the bloody nose, tweaking it in his grip as he drags him out of the ropes towards the middle of the ring...

...and then again swipes at his own chest, this time leaving a bloody badge of war across his heart. He smiles at the crimson stain, pulling Martinez into a standing headscissors...]

BW: I think we know what's coming next, Dane.

LD: Yeah, but if we do... so does-

[...and this seems to be Mifune's first miscalculation - his own hubris at having nearly choked his former student into unconsciousness leading him to believe he could attempt the Roosevelt, the cradle pancake piledriver, at his own methodical pace...]

LD: -MARTINEZ!

[...only to get lifted into the air, backdropped down to the canvas by a desperate White Knight, falling to his knees while being celebrated by the roaring Portland crowd for yet another narrow escape!]

LD: MARTINEZ OUT THE BACK DOOR!

[Martinez climbs back to his feet, a determined look on his face as he grabs the rising Mifune, yanking him into a front facelock...]

LD: HE HOOKS HIM!

[...and muscles Mifune up off the canvas into a vertical position - the crowd ROARING for the exertion as Martinez holds him for a long, defiant moment...]

LD: THE STUDENT NO MORE!

[...and brings Mifune CRASHING down on top of his skull on the canvas!]

LD: BRAAAAAAINBUSSSTERRRRRRR!

[Mifune lands straight down - a nasty landing if there ever was one, leaving him motionless on the canvas... just like Freddie or Jason or Michael or Ghostface...]

...but as a physically and emotionally battered Martinez pushes to a seated position, throwing a look at the unmoving Shadow Wolf, he gives a crazed, emotional shake of his head.

He climbs off the mat, looking down in disbelief...

The arena waiting to see if Mifune has one more jump scare left in him.

When Ryan Martinez decides to flip that script.]

LD: No cover! Martinez drags him back up!

BW: He thinks one is not enough! Not for him!

[The crowd is ROARING as Martinez hooks a front facelock again, slinging the limp arm over his neck, letting loose a scream of exertion as he powers Mifune up a second time, perfectly straight up and down...]

...and with a scream, he drops!

Mifune's head and neck crumples on impact, somehow a harder landing than the first...

...and with his adrenaline crashing, Martinez flips over, diving across his tormentor, the crowd counting along...]

"ONE!"

"TWO!"

"THREE!"

"DING! DING! DING!"

[The crowd ERUPTS at the moment, Martinez unmoving as he soaks in the reality of what just happened...]

LD: HE! HAS! DONE IT! The White Knight has slayed the Shadow Wolf right here in Portland, Oregon!

[...and with a push off the mat, Martinez rolls onto his back, breathing heavily, wiping a hand across the bloodied nose again.]

LD: What a battle. Intense, violent, fast-paced, hard-hitting. The fans loved every second of it...

BW: And now that it's over, so did Ryan Martinez.

LD: Blood in the mouth, filling his tastebuds with that coppery taste... but nothing tastes sweeter than the fruits of victory in this one, Ben. Ryan Martinez - after years of trauma - has finally put down the man who used to break him for fun.

[Martinez then sits up, looking over at the still-unmoving, giving a nod of his head that it's over. He extends an arm, the referee helping him back to his feet. He takes a few unsteady steps for a moment, falling into the ropes as the fans continue to cheer.]

LD: Interim President Zharkov says that the office will NOT allow Ryan Martinez to face Supreme Wright... but after a defeat like this for Team Supreme, you better believe that Wright will be looking to change that decision so he can avenge this one.

[Martinez winces a bit as he looks down on Mifune whose eyes are still closed, the referee kneeling next to him to make sure Martinez doesn't look to do any more damage.]

LD: I don't know that it took two Brainbusters... but that's what he got. Two deliveries of one of the sport's most dangerous maneuvers... and that led to one of Ryan Martinez' greatest victories here in Portland.

[Mifune suddenly twitches, coughing. The referee puts a hand on his shoulder as Mifune rolls to his side...

...his eyes locking on Martinez.]

BW: This might not be over... not yet.

[Mifune looks up at his former student... and smiles.]

LD: What in the world...?

[There's no hint of mocking in this smile. No sadism. No derangement.]

LD: What an unsettling moment that's gotta be for Martinez.

[The White Knight looks down at his former mentor, shaking his head at him. Mifune grimaces as he shouts something in Japanese at Pete "Blue Shoes" Miller who reluctantly helps him into a sitting position, keeping a leg behind his torso so he doesn't fall back down...]

LD: Mifune staring right up at Martinez, a smile on his face... Ben, could that be respect?

BW: You never can tell with Mifune. He DOES enjoy a good test of his skills and love him or hate him, Martinez gave him that tonight, Dane.

LD: Tonight wasn't about titles. And really, it wasn't even about Supreme Wright and the rest of Team Supreme. It was about a shared history... and something that both men felt they needed to prove. Ryan Martinez has done exactly that. Like he said before the match, he is not the man he was as a young boy in the rings of Japan. He is a former champion. He is a franchise player. He is a pillar of this company. He IS the White Knight.

BW: And maybe... just maybe... he's also the next World Champion, Dane.

LD: That remains to be seen... and speaking of things that remain to be seen, I'm told Sweet Lou has made his way out to the parking lot of the building to see if he can get to the bottom of this Brian James situation. Lou?

[As we fade to the parking lot of the IIWF Coliseum, we see the same heavily-tinted and pimped-out Bentley Bentayga from earlier in the night parked on the dark asphalt, an AWA production truck with the faces of Supreme Wright and Ryan Martinez upon it sitting nearby. Sweet Lou Blackwell is in front of it all, peering at the tinted window.]

SLB: I can't see a damn thing in there.

[He raps his knuckles on the window.]

SLB: Hellooooo in there! Anyone want to come out and talk?

[The answer appears to be "no" as there is no response. Blackwell sighs heavily, shrugging as he turns away from the vehicle.]

SLB: Fans, I've been out here for a while now... not a word, not a sound from inside this beautiful specimen of a vehicle... obviously I can't see anything through that window tint and... is it Brian James?

[A voice calls from off-camera.]

"The question of the evening, right?"

[Blackwell turns, his expression souring at the man approaching him.]

SLB: Brian Lau.

[The only manager in Professional Wrestling's Hall of Fame saunters into view, smirking at Blackwell.]

BL: The one and only. Oh, come on, Blackwell... put a smile on that angelic face of yours. You might be about to do your second favorite thing after raising your BAC - breaking a scoop.

[That DOES brighten Blackwell's spirits.]

SLB: Oh? Whatcha got, Brian Lau?

[Lau smirks.]

BL: The answer to the question everyone's asking. The question that's trending on social media. The question that's got the locker room floor slick with perspiration as people fear that Brian James has come...

[He spreads his arms wide.]

BL: ...home.

SLB: So, it's him? It's really him?

BL: There's only one way to find out, yes?

[Lau gestures towards the car as Blackwell looks at it again...

...and then comes to a halt.]

"And what do we have here?"

[Into the scene walk two-thirds of the Kabukichō Assassination Maniac Squad, or KAMS if you're so inclined. The imposingly mammoth form of Cain Jackson, and the handsome hybrid himself, AJ Martinez. The speaker is Martinez, and he continues.]

AJM: I'd say that you were slumming it, but based on who is standing in front of me... well, you wouldn't know who I was saying that to.

Why don't you step aside, old man... and you too, Blackwell.

And let us do what we do best!

[Lau sneers.]

BL: What's that? Talk a lot and do nothing? You always were good at blundering into a situation without knowing what was going on.

[AJ laughs.]

AJM: "Do nothing"?

"DO NOTHING"???

All we've ever done is get results! Tell 'em, Cain!

[Jackson shakes head.]

CJ: Don't need to tell this has-been manager anything. He can think what he wants, but if he wants to get broken alongside his boy, that's fine by me.

AJM: You're wasting your time with a loser, Lau. Brian James couldn't cut the mustard when you were carrying his water, and he ain't cuttin' it now!

[Cain puts a hand on AJ's shoulder.]

CJ: This is getting us nowhere. Argue with Lau on your own time, AJ. Unless you're going to chuck him through that windshield, let's get down to business.

AJM: There's an idea.

[Martinez suddenly reaches out and grabs Lau by the shirt, contemplating doing just that, but after a moment, roughly shoves him away.]

AJM: Not even worth my time. All right... let's do this!

[Martinez moves forward heedlessly, and pulls the car door open, nearly pulling it off the hinges in the process. And then looks inside.]

AJM: What the...?

[The camera shows the empty interior of the car...

...and then a smirking Lau.]

BL: Empty, just like your head.

SLB: I don't... OH MY GOD!

[Blackwell beats it... fast. Martinez throws a puzzled look at him as Cain Jackson peers inside the vehicle to make sure there's not someone hiding in the backseat or something when a voice rings out from behind them.]

"Oh my dear K A M S, you have been naive..."

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"

"OHOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!"

[And a shovel shot across the back sends Cain Jackson crumpling forward, falling inside the vehicle he was just peering into. Jackson Hunter promptly slams the door shut on Jackson's lower body, pressing the door into Jackson's upper thighs and rear as Jackson struggles to get loose.

Martinez whips around, "HEY, YOU LITTLE SH-" but before he can finish - or even get censored - Hunter shouts, "NOW! NOW!"

And as the camera whips up, we see what caused Blackwell to run like hell to begin with...

That lunatic Shadoe Rage standing on top of the production truck!]

LD: OH MY GOD! OH MY GOD!

BW: That suicidal son of a...

[Without hesitation or fear, Shadoe Rage HURLS himself off the top of the truck, soaring off the lofty perch...]

"CRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAASH!"

"OHOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!"

[...and CRASHES down on top of AJ Martinez, crushing part of the car underneath their combined bodies as Rage turns a Death From Above setup into more of a flying crossbody that crumples metal under their bodies!]

LD: HE'S OUT OF HIS DAMN MIND, BEN!

BW: You're just now realizing that?!

LD: Shadoe Rage is down! AJ Martinez is down! Did Rage just take out AJ Martinez?!

[A cackling Jackson Hunter steps away from the car door, extending a hand to Brian Lau...]

JH: Trap well set.

[...and Lau reluctantly takes the handshake.]

BL: Tell him to make sure when he comes back, he's ready for war.

[Hunter nods.]

JH: Ten steaks are ten steaks.

[Hunter walks over to the hurting Rage, dragging him onto his feet, slinging Rage's arm over his shoulders as the two veterans beat a hasty retreat before reinforcements arrive for the fallen Team Supreme members...

...and we fade through black to ringside at an unknown AWA event. Ricki Toughill is flung over the ropes by an unknown opponent and crashes into the ringside barricade. She stands upright, looking a bit frustrated, and looks at something off-camera.]

RT: Oh hey.

[The something off-camera is a fully stocked Dunkin' shop counter at ringside, complete with a friendly-looking barista.]

B: Looks like a pretty tough opponent tonight. Medium cold brew?

"ONE!"

[Ricki looks up at the ring, which is off-camera, then back at the barista.]

RT: You can make it a large. This ref always counts slow.

[The barista hands Ricki her tall, frosty cold brew. She takes a sip. Another customer seated at a ringside table with a laptop computer in front of him takes notice.]

C: Wow, she knows your order?

RT: Yeah, I spend a lot of time out here.

[Ricki is about to sit down, when she notices the empty chair beside the other customer. She picks up the folding chair and snaps it shut.]

RT: Mind if I take a seat?

[Ricki looks up into the ring with a mischievous, crooked grin—a cold brew in one hand and a steel chair in the other.]

V/O: Where there's wrestling, there's Dunkin'.

[Cut to a close-up shot of a cold brew. Another cold brew rebounds off a set of three ropes and slides into position beside it. The AWA and Dunkin' logo flash on screen.]

V/O: Cold brew for bell time. America runs on Dunkin'!

[And we fade through black...

...and the camera comes up in the concrete backstage corridor of the IIWF Coliseum. The air is still buzzing from a recent fight. Security and officials hover in the background, keeping distance but watching closely. Kayla Cristol stands alone in frame, jacket half-off her shoulder, tape frayed at the wrists, a faint red mark rising along her jaw. She rolls her neck once, steadying herself, then looks straight into the lens.]

KC: Don't clean it up and don't cut away. What just happened back there was real, and it wasn't an accident.

[Kayla lifts her hands, flexing her fingers slowly before clenching them into fists.]

KC: Harley Hamilton and Cinder tried to make a statement - two on one, real confident when the numbers are right. That used to be enough to shake me, but that girl ain't here no more.

[She takes a step forward, voice low but loaded.]

KC: I remember exactly how this started. Harley on a screen, talkin' down on everyone, talkin' down on the Lynches like they didn't build half the wrestlers in this place. That arrogance lit a fuse in me, so I stepped up, and yeah - she beat me.

[Kayla exhales through her nose, anger contained, not cooled.]

KC: She beat me clean, beat me hard, and I fell apart afterward. I lost my rhythm while she found hers, and somewhere in that stretch Seductive & Destructive became a thing and I became a cautionary tale.

[She shakes her head once, sharp.]

KC: I don't deny that loss shaped me, but I'm done lettin' it steer me. What happened tonight didn't reopen old wounds - it clarified somethin'.

[Kayla plants her boots, shoulders squared.]

KC: Harley doesn't want closure. She wants control, and she only feels in control when I'm still that girl she left behind.

KC: So here's the smart part, since everyone thinks this is just anger talk.

[She taps her temple with two fingers.]

KC: Next week on Saturday Night Wrestling, I want Harley Hamilton.

One-on-one. No Cinder, no ambushes, no safety net.

Bell rings, doors shut, and whatever's been hangin' between us stays in that ring.

You got the guts to take that challenge, Harley? You got enough respect in you to actually wrestle for once and not turn everything into a damn joke?

[Kayla lowers her hand, voice steady.]

KC: I'm gonna make you respect me, Harley. I'm gonna erase any psychological edge you think you might have over me and I'm gonna be the one to put that doubt in your mind. It's time. It's time to humble you, Harley. It's time to teach you some respect and I reckon I'm the best possible to deliver that switch to you.

[Before she can continue, the “Afro Punk” Victoria June rushes into frame, practically bouncing, completely unaware of the declaration that just happened.]

VJ: Kayla! There you are - this is huge, you’re gonna love the news ah got!

[June grabs Kayla by the arm, excited, oblivious to the tension.]

VJ: Ah just talked to Zharkov. Next Saturday down the street... we’ve got the Peach Pits! Number one contenders match! This is our shot back at the titles.

[Kayla closes her eyes for a brief second, then slowly turns her head toward June.]

KC: ... Vic....

VJ: ... Ah know, ah know, it’s perfect timing, right? One big win and we’re right back where we belong. Right on top and ready to kick the heads in off Seductive and Destructive.

[Kayla rubs her forehead, frustration creeping in despite her control.]

KC: You didn’t hear any of what I just said, did you?

VJ: Huh?

KC: I just challenged Harley Hamilton for next week!

[June’s smile flickers but she presses forward, still well-meaning.]

VJ: Okay, but that doesn’t have to be right now. We focus on the Peach Pits, we win, and then we deal with Harley later - clean and smart.

[Kayla turns fully toward her partner now, voice calm but edged.]

KC: That’s the part you’re missin’. Harley IS later. She shows up when it matters most, and if we win that match, Seductive & Destructive don’t just disappear. They linger on us and probably jump us. I have to get Harley off my mind.

[Kayla gestures back down the hallway.]

KC: I’m not fightin’ emotional. I’m tryin’ to remove a problem before it costs us the contendership or the titles.

VJ: And ah’m tryin’ to keep you from burnin’ yourself out before we even get there.

[Kayla nods once, acknowledging the point but not conceding.]

KC: I hear you. But I also know I’m not the same girl who unraveled after one loss. I can carry both fights - but only if we’re honest about what’s comin’.

[She looks back into the camera, anger sharpened into purpose.]

KC: So book it. Kayla Cristol and Harley Hamilton at SNW. Country Punks and Peach Pits the same night.

[Kayla pauses, then steps out of frame.]

KC: I reckon that makes us both happy.

[The camera lingers on Victoria June, her excitement replaced with uncertainty, the weight of miscommunication settling in as the shot slowly fades back out to ringside where Ben Waterson is laughing uncontrollably.]

LD: I can't believe what I just heard... and what's so funny?!

BW: Kayla Cristol... two matches... one night.

[He grabs at his stomach, wheezing from laughter.]

LD: It's a bold move for sure but-

BW: It's a DUMB move for sure! Look, I don't know what order those matches are going down but... either Cristol's going to have to fight for the Number One Contendership after getting her tail wrecked by Harley Hamilton... or they're going to give it their all against the Peach Pits and then she's going to walk in exhausted and beaten up against the woman who just may be the next World Champion. Either way, the Pistol? She's out of bullets if you ask me, Dane.

LD: Well, I've got more faith in Kayla Cristol than you do.

BW: Apparently.

LD: But speaking of tag teams and tag team titles, the wrestling world is buzzing this week after President Zharkov laid down a challenge to the entire AWA men's tag team division. After dealing with teams all night looking for a chance to compete for the World Tag Team Titles, the former National Champion responded. Let's take a look...

[We fade to a black screen with white text challenging the tag teams of the AWA men's division to "RUN THE RANKINGS" as "Starfighter" by Wice begins to play in the background.]

Fade through to footage from the last Saturday Night Wrestling with Interim President Zharkov holding court as the tag teams of the AWA surround the ring. The shot slowly pans across the tag teams on the scene - Laredo Morrison with his arms crossed looking tense, Anton Layton glaring hard into the ring, the masked luchadors...

...then to Zharkov center ring, clipboard in hand.

Back to ringside to the masked faces of Omega and Polemos.

We can hear commentary from the night, first from Salvatore Albano, over the music.]

"All night long, the tag teams of the AWA have been jockeying for position..."

[Back in the ring, Zharkov raises the mic as we hear the crowd cheering.]

"Enough. I have made a decision..."

[The music swells, building tension...

...then with a hard cut, the arena floods crimson, white lasers cutting through stage smoke as the leader of Team Supreme - Supreme Wright - steps onto the stage, the crowd ROARING their disapproval as the words "TEAM SUPREME HAS ARRIVED" appears over our shot.

We get quick cuts: Wright's cold stare, Takeshi Mifune grinning madly, Bret Grayson lifting the title belts overhead, Cain Jackson cracking his neck, AJ Martinez taunting the ringside fans, and Paris Crawford slyly slipping in behind the Tsar himself. Wright's voice rings out over the visuals.]

"You think you're lining up for a shot at a mere tag team?"

[The music intensifies as we get a Zharkov/Wright staredown, the teams around ringside reacting to the interruption...

...a closeup of the gleaming title belts as Zharkov's voice rings out.]

"Prove it. Prove your worth."

[Bold on-screen text lights up the shot: OPEN CONTRACTS, TOP FIVE CONTENDERS, RUN THE RANKINGS - JULY 4

And as the music hits full speed, chaos ensues with Guerrero Oscuro diving off the top rope, wiping out Grayson and Jackson... Vengador V tackles Crawford... Martinez chokeslams Rey Fuerza... Sal's voice breaking through the wild scene.]

"HERE WE GO!"

[More action unfolds - Jimi Jam Jester coming after Ryan Martinez, Laredo Morrison delivering a big boot, Mifune gouging the eyes sadistically, Layton delivering a thudding German Suplex, Jackson unleashing a massive double clothesline, Omega diving through the ropes onto foes, Pemos delivering a double chokeslam.

The shot pulls back to show bodies strewn all around ringside as we get quick flashing text of "NO ORDER. NO ALLIANCES. ONLY OPPORTUNITY."

We see Wright attempting to bully the Tsar only to be turned into a massive SHOVEL SHOT from Jackson Hunter who punctuates the blow by shouting "BRIAN JAMES SENDS HIS REGARDS!"

With Wright stumbling, we see Shadoc Rage flying from the top rope, Sal's voice breaking in again...]

"DEATH FROM ABOVE!"

[The music briefly drops for impact and then surges back as officials flood the ring, Zharkov watching the chaos go down with a knowing nod, Wright retreating through the bodies...

...and then an elevated shot showing the ring cloaked in madness before we get one more title screen.]

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS
JULY 4 - SEATTLE
RUN THE RANKINGS
TAG TITLES AWAIT

And the music crashes out as we fade back to Ben and Lori at ringside.]

LD: The Tag Titles await indeed but to get to the champs, you gotta Run The Rankings on the 4th of July in Seattle at Opportunity Knocks... and to do that, you gotta qualify. The teams of the AWA are lining up to get that chance... to get that opportunity... challenges flying in every direction as they try to make that Top Five contenders list in time to be invited to compete in Seattle... and we've got another

one of those tag teams looking to impress right here tonight. They're standing by backstage so let's get their thoughts before this important tag team showdown!

[We cut backstage, where a concerned-looking Yoshi Fujiwara is standing next to Tizona, clearly not pleased with what the American-born luchador has been telling him. Tizona, dressed in a sleeveless T-shirt with an airbrushed visage of Charity Rockwell on the front, as well as denim shorts, kneepads, and wrestling boots, seems completely oblivious to Fujiwara's displeasure. Fujiwara, in his sukajan bomber jacket and red and white wrestling tights, holds up a hand.]

YF: English isn't my first language, so maybe I just don't understand you. Explain it to me again.

[Tizona rolls his eyes.]

T: Jeez, Yo-man, it's really simple. We go out there, we hit them with Katrina's skateboard, and we keep climbing the ladder of success!

YF: But that's cheating.

T: ... and?

[Fujiwara frowns.]

YF: Not only is that wrong, we'll be disqualified.

[Tizona stares blankly at his partner.]

YF: We'll lose. The match. That we're wrestling in.

[Tizona blinks and shakes his head.]

T: That's your problem, Yo-man. You have no imagination! Nowhere in my little spiel did I say to hit them with Katrina's skateboard in front of the ref!

YF: Right. Right. You said to distract the ref, but I'm not going to do that. That's cheating.

T: So?

YF: Not only is it against my own moral code, but Ayako would kill me if I did that... and even if she's laid up at home, I'm way more scared of her than I am of you.

[Tizona sighs.]

T: Always with the flies in the ointment. Okay, look, you don't have to distract the ref, right? You do one of your spectacular flippy-dos that you do so well, and when everyone's going "hey whoa, that Yoshi Fujiwara's a smooth-movin' dude", then BLAMMO! Skateboard to the dome.

[Fujiwara looks off-camera.]

YF: Coleman-san, do you condone this?

[Katrina Coleman can be seen gliding into frame, then kicking the deck of her skateboard into her hands. The YouTube sensation seems a little disappointed with her trainer.]

KC: I think Yoshi raises a good point, T. Skateboards are expensive... I don't really want you hitting someone with mine and risk breaking it.

[Fujiwara firmly nods as Tizona pleads his case.]

T: Kat, please! So what if I break one measly skateboard! Once Yo-man and I take the Tag Team Titles away from Team Supreme and I hit a few bets in Vegas, I can buy you a million skateboards!

[Coleman folds her arms and frowns.]

T: A thousand! A dozen!

KC: Not liking how that number keeps going down.

T: It all depends on the bets hitting. Jeez. Don't you trust me?

YF/KC [together]: No.

KC: Not really.

YF: I don't even know how we're a team. I never agreed to it in the first place!

KC: I mean I like you, but I wouldn't trust you to buy me the right kind of ice cream. You couldn't even get Betty the right kind last week.

[Yoshi looks shocked.]

YF: Why were you buying Betty ice cream?!

[Tizona pouts from under his mask.]

T: How dare you say hurtful things about me, even if they're true?

[Just then, a despondent Betty Chang trudges into frame first, her lips colored red from the bag of Flamin' Hot Cheetos she's eating from. Charity Rockwell glides in right beside her, elegant as ever in a beaded flapper dress, long pearl necklace swaying, and a closed paper fan dangling from her wrist. Her perfectly arched eyebrow twitches the moment she clocks the airbrushed portrait of herself plastered across Tizona's chest.]

CR: Good heavens. I want to rip that shirt right off you.

[Tizona's eyes light up behind his mask. He straightens, flexing unnecessarily.]

T: Whoa, Charity, baby! Finally coming around, huh? I knew the shirt would work its magic! You want this bad, don't you? Just say the word and I'll-

[Before he can finish, Charity's fan snaps open with a sharp crack. She swings it in a perfect arc and smacks it right across Tizona's cheek.]

CR: Not even in your wildest dreams, you repulsive little gremlin!

[Betty, who had been staring blankly, finally glances up, seeing Tizona stumbling towards her. Almost as out of instinct, she falls into a martial arts stance and...

"KI-YAAAAH!"

...and knocks all the air out of Tizona with a blow to the solar plexus. At that moment her eyes land on Yoshi and she freezes. Yoshi, shocked, suddenly finds the floor incredibly interesting.]

BC: Uh... hi.

YF: ... Yeah.

[Katrina, leaning on her skateboard, rears back like she's about to swing it. She sizes Tizona up, then lowers it again.]

KC: Wait... you might scuff it. This board's limited edition.

[Tizona staggers between the three, but stays upright. He holds his stomach and grins like he just won the lottery.]

T: Ha! See? Passion! Fire! The ladies can't keep their hands off me!

YF: They seem repulsed by you.

T: Just playing hard to get. Come on, Yo-man, you know how it works!

YF: I-

[Yoshi finally lifts his gaze and his eyes meet with Betty's for a split second. Both immediately look anywhere else. Yoshi clears his throat and adjusts his bomber jacket unnecessarily. Betty digs aggressively in the bag for a Cheeto that isn't there.]

CR: The day I touch you with affection is the day prohibition comes back, you soggy rag.

T: Anyway! Enough foreplay. We got a match to dominate, Yo-man! The AWA is about to find out why we're the future of this division!

[He starts dragging Yoshi down the hallway. Yoshi stumbles after him, but not before stealing one last awkward glance back at Betty. Their eyes accidentally lock again. Yoshi offers the tiniest, shyest wave with his fingers. Betty responds with an almost imperceptible nod before shrinking away again.]

T: Ladies, try not to miss me too much! Especially you, Charity... dream about this shirt tonight!

[Tizona takes off the shirt and tosses it at Charity's feet as she raises her fan threateningly. Katrina chuckles and pushes off on her board in the opposite direction. Betty sighs quietly once the boys are out of earshot.]

BC: ...he didn't even ask how I'm doing.

CR: He wanted to, doll. Trust me. That boy's tongue ties itself in knots the moment you walk into a room.

[Betty groans and leans her head against the wall. As Tizona and a reluctantly dragged Yoshi disappear around the corner, we fade out on Charity picking the shirt up off the ground with her fan, holding it far away from her.]

CR: Somebody ought to burn this thing... preferably with him still in it.

[And we fade from backstage to the ring where Megumi Sato awaits.]

MS: The following match is a tag team contest set for one fall with a ten minute time limit! Introducing first, already in the ring, at a total combined weight of 450 pounds, from East St. Louis, Illinois and Gary, Indiana... BOBO
REEEEEEESSSSSSSSSEEEEE AND DRAAAAKKKKKEEEE NOOOOOORRRRTTTH!

[Almost no response for the pair in the ring, both dressed in nondescript black and blue singlets. Reese has a shaved head and a bit of muscle definition, and the bearded North is taller but lanky.]

MS: And their opponents, weighing in at a total combined weight of 378 pounds, from Fujinomiya, Japan and Savannah, Georgia...

YOSHI FUJIWAAAAAARAAAAAAA AND TIIIIIIIIIZOOOOOOONAAAAAAA!

[A metal cover of "Bloody Tears" from the Castlevania video game series begins to play, as the crowd erupts with applause and cheers. Yoshi Fujiwara steps out from behind the curtains, pumping his fists in the air as the crowd's cheers grow louder. Fujiwara is dressed in a sukajan bomber jacket embroidered with golden dragons over his wrestling gear. He wears a pair of wrestling tights with one red leg and one white leg, with matching boots. He has a chiseled physique with well-defined muscles. Despite his impressive physique, Yoshi is still growing into his body, giving him a thin, almost lanky look.]

Alongside Fujiwara is Tizona, the Southern-fried luchador, wearing faded jean shorts frayed at the hem, black kneepads, and black boots. His mask is half his usual black mask with a white faceplate and blue and purple kabuki-esque swirls, and the other half is now red with a white faceplate and a golden dragon roaring along his head.]

LD: And we're about to get some tag team action here on Showtime! It's the team of Bobo Reese and Drake North taking on the exciting duo of Yoshi Fujiwara and Tizona... or Fujizona, as Tizona keeps calling them!

BW: Fujizona? That's the best this masked clown could come up with?

LD: Whatever you want to call them, they were absolutely electrifying on Saturday Night Wrestling! They're one of many teams gunning for the AWA World Tag Team titles that are currently held hostage by Team Supreme.

BW: Sure, but we've seen them take on Team Supreme before and it wasn't pretty.

"DING! DING! DING!"

[Yoshi Fujiwara starts for his team, circling the larger Bobo Reese. The two men lock up collar-and-elbow in the center of the ring, with Reese using his size advantage to muscle Yoshi back toward the ropes.]

LD: Too much size there. Fujiwara's going to need to use his speed against this guy.

[Yoshi counters with a slick go-behind, but Reese powers out, shoving the younger Fujiwara across the ring.]

LD: Fires him across... and look at Fujiwara move!

[Yoshi rebounds off the ropes with explosive speed, ducking a wild clothesline and snapping off a crisp armdrag that sends Reese sprawling to the mat.]

LD: Beautiful armdrag by Yoshi Fujiwara!

[The crowd cheers as Reese scrambles up, only to eat another textbook armdrag that flips him over his own shoulder.]

LD: Down he goes again annnnnnd...

[Before Reese can fully recover, Yoshi is already in motion and leaping into the air with a lightning-fast dropkick straight to the chest that drops Reese and sends the bigger man scrambling back into the neutral corner.]

LD: Listen to this crowd! Yoshi Fujiwara is like lightning in a bottle! Those armdrags were textbook perfection, and that dropkick had some serious snap on it! He's making Bobo Reese look silly out there!

BW: Looks like Reese already wants out!

[Reese, red-faced and embarrassed, reaches out and tags in Drake North.]

LD: And here comes Drake North to see if he has any better than Reese did with Yoshi Fujiwara.

BW: North is from Gary, Indiana, the most dangerous city in the United States. He might be tough.

[North storms in aggressively, charging Yoshi with a full head of steam. Yoshi sidesteps at the last second, hits the far ropes, and explodes back with a flying forearm that catches North flush on the jaw, rocking the taller man.]

LD: OH! The point of the elbow caught North right on the forehead!

[North stumbles to his feet, swinging wildly as Yoshi ducks again, rebounds off the ropes, and connects with a spinning leg lariat that drops North once again.]

LD: Electric offense on the part of Fujiwara, doing his family proud here tonight on Showtime with the whole world watching! Even his sister Ayako who is still at home recuperating from what went down at Memorial Day Mayhem - we send her our best wishes for a speedy recovery and can't wait to see her back in action in the very near future!

[The crowd is buzzing now as Yoshi grabs North's wrist, whips him into the ropes, and on the rebound drops him with a picture-perfect rana that sends North flipping through the air.]

LD: Yoshi Fujiwara is on fire! This kid's speed and technique are just on another level from North and Reese!

BW: Forget what I said about North being tough.

[North rolls to his corner, clutching his back and tags Reese back in. Reese barrels in like a bull, but Yoshi meets him head-on with a drop toe hold that face-plants the big man.]

LD: Haha! Reese came in hot but Fujiwara cooled him off in a hurry!

[Yoshi floats over, locking in a quick front facelock, before driving a knee into Reese's chest. He then quickly snaps him over with a suplex, that sends Reese rolling out of the ring to regroup with an ailing North on the outside.]

LD: Yoshi Fujiwara has dominated the opening moments of this match and...

"HEY YO-MAN LEMME GET SOME OF THIS!"

[Tizona reaches out, begging for a tag, as Fujiwara pauses for a second before slapping his hand.]

LD: ...and here comes Tizona!

BW: Oh great, the clown's turn. This oughta be good for a laugh.

[Tizona vaults to the top rope in one motion, shouting "Watch this, Yo-man!" to Yoshi on the apron. As both Reese and North regroup on the outside, Tizona springboards in and immediately goes into a front handspring before leaping over the top rope into a breathtaking moonsault that crashes onto both opponents on the floor in a heap as the crowd erupts in cheers!]

"OOOOOOOHHHHHHHHH!!!"

LD: OH MY GOODNESS! Tizona with a moonsault over the top onto both men! What elevation! What a risk!

BW: Okay, I'll give the clown that one. That was stupidly impressive. Didn't think the goof had that kind of air in him!

[Tizona rolls Reese back in, stomping away at the East St. Louis native while shouting "That's how we do it, baby!" He then turns to Yoshi Fujiwara and with a shout of "Finish it off, Yo-man!" and tags him back in.]

LD: It looks like Tizona smells blood in the water because he just told Yoshi Fujiwara to end it!

[Yoshi Fujiwara grabs a groggy Bobo Reese into a cravate, leaping backwards over him in one fluid motion...]

"THUDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDDD!"

"OOOOOOOHHHHHHHHH!!!"

[The IIWF Coliseum crowd gasps as Yoshi drives Reese head-first into the mat with the backflip inverted DDT. From the apron, Tizona slaps Yoshi's back as the referee signals the tag. Yoshi, rolls out just as Tizona vaults to the top rope.]

LD: Blind tag by Tizona!

BW: Wait a minute... that looked planned! Last time they did this move, it looked like a happy accident. This time it was perfectly coordinated!

[Tizona launches off, twisting through the air before crashing down across Segovia's chest with his 630 Senton "Salpicadura"! The ring shakes from the impact, and the crowd erupts in a standing ovation!]

LD: SALPICADURA! What height, what rotation!

[On the outside, Yoshi Fujiwara cuts off Drake North with his uppercut double axhandle, "The Ohtani", while back inside, Tizona hooks both of Reese's legs deep as the referee drops for the count.]

LD: Cover! ONE! TWO! THREE!

"DING! DING! DING!"

MS: Your winners of the match...

YOSHI FUJIWARA AND TIZOOOOOONAAAAA!

[Tizona pops up, dusting his hands dramatically before grabbing Yoshi's wrist and raising it high, shouting "We did it again, Yo-man! Fujizona's unstoppable!" Yoshi shakes his head and smiles, as Tizona continues to celebrate.]

LD: Another statement win for Fujizona!

BW: The masked goof and Ayako's little brother might actually be figuring each other out. That could be a scary thought for the rest of the tag division.

[And as the duo celebrates, the crowd starts to buzz...]

BW: Speaking of the rest of the division!

[...and without warning, the American Idols have arrived on the scene, standing behind Fujizona as the crowd shouts warnings to the victorious duo. The Wallaces are shaking with excitement, ready to strike with...]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

BW: SUPERKIIIIIIICKS!

[...and a pair of superkicks light up Tizona and Fujiwara as they turn around! The blow staggers both as Tizona falls backwards into the ropes. Fujiwara struggles to stay standing but is within range for the Wallaces who shrug and...]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

BW: SUPERKIIIIIIICKS!

[...unleash a DOUBLE superkick on Fujiwara, sending him flying backwards through the ropes to the outside of the ring!]

LD: There goes Fujiwara! The American Idols with a sneak attack on the victorious Fujizona...

BW: They're not done yet either, Dane.

[Chaz approaches the staggered Tizona who responds with a desperate right hand to the jaw... and another... and another...]

...which is when Chet has seen enough...]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

BW: SUPERKIIIIIIICKS!

[...and DRILLS Tizona on the masked man's ear with a superkick, knocking him down on all fours! Chet points to him, grabbing his twin brother...]

LD: What is this now?

[...and lifts him for a belly to back suplex, Chaz overrotating to come down...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and lands on the on-all-fours Tizona with both knees to the back, breaking him down as the crowd groans!]

LD: My oh my! An absolutely DISGUSTING landing on the back with that doubleteam! Tizona is laid out... Fujiwara is- well, he's getting up, Ben!

BW: Bravery doesn't equal IQ points, Dane.

[Fujiwara is quickly up on the apron, running down it to the corner where he starts to climb...

...but gets intercepted by a dropkick from Chet Wallace, high and mighty, knocking Fujiwara down to a crotched position on the top turnbuckle as the crowd groans.]

LD: That didn't work out well for Yoshi Fujiwara... and the Idols are looking to take advantage of it... now what are they doing?!

BW: That's the beauty of the Idols, Dane... you just never know what they're going to do next in there. Constantly innovating!

[The two Wallace brothers scale the ropes in the corner, reaching under to hook Fujiwara under the armpits...]

LD: It looks like a...

[...and lift and toss him down, a ring-shaking double hiptoss from the second rope!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[A grinning Chet takes aim, stepping a foot to the top rope...]

LD: MOONSAULT! CONNECTS!

[Chet crashes down across Tizona, rolling right to his knee where he points to his brother who steps to the top rope, looking down on Fujiwara...

...and leaps into the air, snapping off a 450 splash that CRUSHES Fujiwara beneath him!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: THE AMERICAN IDOLS LAYING WASTE TO FUJIZONA HERE ON SHOWTIME!

[The crowd is loud and boisterous, raining down jeers on the smirking Idols as they celebrate their dominant beatdown of the popular duo. Chaz walks over to the ringside cameraman, looking down into the lens aimed at him...]

"Consider that a challenge... LOSERS!"

[...and yes, he was looking kind of dumb with his finger and his thumb in the shape of an L on his forehead. His brother though, cackles at the "witty" insult, as the Idols make their exit, heading back up the aisle...]

LD: Well, you heard Chaz Wallace make it clear... "consider that a challenge."

BW: LOSERS!

LD: Thank you for that.

BW: I just wanted to make sure he was accurately quoted.

LD: I'm sure he's grateful. The American Idols making wave here on Showtime as we get some help out here for Fujizona... and speaking of making waves, a former ally of them is looking to make some serious waves here in the AWA in the very near future. Take a look...

[The screen fades in to the sound of crashing waves and the faint strum of "Toxic" (Surf cover) by The Surfrajettes. A golden sunset bathes Sunset Beach, Hawaii, as the camera pans across the shoreline. A lone figure stands in the surf, water lapping at his feet, his silhouette framed against the fiery sky. The camera zooms in, revealing Jay Alana; Six feet three, two hundred and fifty pounds of Polynesian perfection, his long black curls flowing in the breeze, kakau tattoos gleaming on his sun-kissed, tanned. A voiceover begins, with Alana's smooth, Hawaiian drawl.]

"Y'all think you know what's comin' to the AWA? Nah. You ain't ready for THIS."

[Cut to a montage of Alana in action: a slow-motion shot of him delivering a bone-rattling "Deadman's Hand" shotei palm strike, drawing blood from an opponent's nose. Next, the crowd roars as he casually nails a no-look superkick with his back turned, smirking like he's got eyes in the back of his head. A quick flash of him soaring through the air, landing the "Tidal Crush" top-rope splash at Rising Sun Showdown 2015. The impact echoes as the ring shakes.]

"I'm not just a wrestler. I'm a storm. A tidal wave. A force of nature that none of y'all are prepared for."

[The scene shifts to a gritty gym in Southern California, 2012. A young Jay, sweat-soaked, sets up a ring under his father, Kai Alana's stern gaze. Flash forward to Japan, 2014, where Jay dominates in Tiger Paw Pro, catching and tossing an opponent down with a one-armed Uranage slam, the crowd going wild. Cut to him walking away from a diving opponent, letting them crash and burn, as he blows a cocky two-finger kiss to the sky.]

"I was born in the sun, raised in the surf, and forged in the ring. My blood's Hawaiian fire, my heart's pure steel. You think you've seen stars? Wait 'til you see Jay Alana shine."

[Quick cuts of Alana no-selling a headbutt, grinning as he smacks his own skull. A "Wipeout" swinging neckbreaker, with Alana floating over into a cocky pin, winking at the camera. A "Wave Breaker" leaping double stomp to a standing opponent's chest, driving him into the canvas and leaving the crowd gasping. The screen flashes red as the impact lands, the crowd erupting.]

"They call me the Sun King, but I'm not a mere king... I'm the Sun GOD. And your AWA heroes? They're about to bow."

[Cut to a final shot of Jay Alana standing atop a turnbuckle in an empty arena, arms outstretched, tattoos gleaming under a spotlight. He tilts his head back, letting his curls fall, and flashes a wicked grin. The screen cuts to black as "Toxic" swells, with bold white text fading in:]

JAY ALANA ARRIVES IN AWA. SUMMER 2025.

[A faint sound of waves crashing lingers as the vignette ends...

...and we fade back up to footage marked "MOMENTS AGO" as Kimmy Bailey sits on a bench, lacing up her boots. She is wearing a bright pink zip-up hoodie over her ring gear, with the hood over her head, as her pigtails can be seen coming out of the bottom of the hood. She doesn't look at the camera as she starts to talk, just focusing on her left boot.]

KB: So I was at the gym this mornin', on the stair stepper with the weight pack on my back, and a guy comes up to me. He asks me if I'm Kimmy Bailey, and I say "yes sir". He tells me he watches all the AWA shows, and he thinks I really got

somethin'. As I'm thankin' him, he asks me if there's a reason the announcers call me "red hot rookie" but I never say it about myself.

[A smile comes across Kimmy's face, but her eyes stay focused on her boots.]

KB: I tell him that it's real nice that people look at me that way, and the announcers call me that, but I was raised to think that you can be a rooster one day and a feather duster the next. It ain't worth it to toot your own horn that much because you don't know when it's all gonna end for you.

[As Kimmy pulls on her laces, she looks up, her two-toned eyes peering from underneath the hood.]

KB: Besides, if you're good enough, people will do the tootin' for you, so you ain't gotta pile on. He thanked me, went about his workout, and I went about mine.

[Kimmy looks back down at her right boot, looking at the laces.]

KB: It ain't that way if you listen to Melissa Cannon, though, is it?

[As Kimmy starts to thread the laces through the eyelets of the right boot, she shakes her head.]

KB: Melissa Cannon showed back up here a month ago, and started hittin' my mama like she was owed money. And for as much as I try to stay out of my mama's business, and she tries to stay out of mine, I don't like when people take advantage of her kindness. One minute, Melissa's sayin' it was an accident, she didn't know if Mama was tryin' to hurt Julie Somers. The next, she says she's tired of Mama and me runnin' her division.

[A scoff.]

KB: "Her division."

[We see the shape of a frown on Kimmy's face.]

KB: Six months ago, I fought Melissa Cannon at the Empress Cup. It's the only victory of my career that I ain't proud of, because Melissa got attacked by Kurayami earlier in the night. She got her ribs busted up, and she was told she either had to wrestle anyway or forfeit. It's a knockout tournament, no subs, she has to fight or it's a walkover. I was told by everyone that Melissa was too much of a fighter, that she'd rather go down swingin' than quit.

[A nod.]

KB: That's what she did. I looked her in the eye, I offered her my hand, and I said "this ain't right what happened, so when you get healthy, let's run it back". In my eyes, I ain't ever beat Melissa Cannon. I beat a shell of her. But is who's here now really Melissa Cannon? The woman last week who tried to big league me ain't who I saw in Osaka six months ago. I looked in her eyes, and there ain't the same hamster runnin' on that wheel.

[Kimmy pulls back her hood as she looks up at the camera.]

KB: She walks in here like everything should be handed to her because she had to go to Japan for a year. We should all just step over yonder while she gets handed what she wants, because she had to suffer for her sins. This is her division, given to her by birthright, because she was here first. She's coming back to take what belongs to her, ain't she? Because she deserves it, don't she?

[Kimmy licks her lower lip.]

KB: Bless your sweet little heart, Melissa Cannon.

[A grin forms on Kimmy's face as she finishes tying her boot.]

KB: Listen, honeybun, if you want to claim squatter's rights because you got dealt a pair of twos, a four, a six, and the instruction card, that ain't got nothin' to do with me. When you start draggin' my mama's good name into it, when you start targetin' her, we've got a problem. When you start sayin' you deserve to cut in line because you were here when I was 11 years old, I'm here to tell you that dog ain't gonna hunt. And yeah, I want Kurayami real bad. It ain't exactly a secret. I'm boardin' a plane to go get her.

[Kimmy points to the camera, her grin vanishing, her eyes narrowing.]

KB: But I'm more than happy to get your ass first, feather duster.

[With that, as Kimmy stands and walks out of frame, we cut to the ring where Megumi Sato is standing...]

MS: The following contest is set for one fall with a twenty minute time limit in the AWA Women's Division! Introducing first... she hails from Pinehurst, North Carolina, weighing in this evening at 194 pounds...

KIMMMMMMYYYYYYYYYYYY BAAAAAAAAAAILEYYYYYYYYYYYYYY!

[The crowd waits in eager anticipation, until...]

Stand on the bar, stomp your feet, start clappin' #
Got a real good feelin' somethin' bad about to happen

["Somethin' Bad" by Miranda Lambert & Carrie Underwood plays through the IIWF Coliseum, as Kimmy Bailey walks through the entrance, a bundle of tense energy, her two-toned eyes fixed on the ring.]

BW: This has got to be eating you up, Dane!

LD: I have to admit, I don't like that these two are fighting. I've known Melissa Cannon for a long, long time. I've known Kimmy Bailey since she was just a few years old. I don't like that things have escalated to this point, but this may be the best thing for them.

BW: You've got to be out of your mind! Kimmy Bailey goes to Japan to fight Kurayami in a few days, and you're acting like it's good that she's taking on someone like Melissa Cannon?

LD: No, I think Kimmy needs to realize she can't be so headstrong, Ben. Being headstrong is what got her into this match against Melissa, and she can't be headstrong if she's going to fight Kurayami.

BW: Sounds like you're casting blame on someone sticking up for her mother.

LD: That's not what I'm saying at all!

BW: Since when did you put the knife in the back of Michelle Bailey, huh?

LD: Now you're just stirring up trouble, just like usual!

[Over the announcer clatter, Kimmy slaps an occasional outstretched hand from a fan, but remains focused as she storms into the ring, running at breakneck pace from rope to rope, east to west. The North Carolinian, dressed in a rainbow leopard print singlet over a black sports bra, along with black kneepads and black boots, hits the ropes five times before thrusting her arm into the air, screaming along with the audience...]

"LARIATOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOS!"

[Kimmy nods her head, going to the corner where she stares at the entrance, grinding her teeth.]

MS: Annnnnnnnd her opponent...

[The sound of the quiet panflute introduction of Zamfir's "The Lonely Shepherd" is heard as pale yellow lighting illuminates the IWF Coliseum...

...and after a moment, we get the arrival of the AWA Original herself as Melissa Cannon steps out onto the stage in full length yellow vinyl pants, glimmering in the spotlights. She's sporting a matching yellow sports bra type top with black "slashes" scattered throughout. A black belt is around her waistline as she looks down the aisle at the night's opponent.]

LD: Welcome home, Melissa Cannon. We missed you.

BW: Speak for yourself.

[The music abruptly changes to "Battle Without Honor Or Humanity" as Cannon starts walking with purpose down the aisle towards the ring.]

LD: Oh, come on, Ben... you really aren't happy to see her back after she was wrongfully exiled from the company she loves... from the division she helped BUILD?

BW: Melissa Cannon is the perfect example of the First Amendment in action. She was free to run her mouth about any topic she wanted... but her company was also free to kick her to the curb for it. She embarrassed the front office, she enraged our sponsors, she alienated half of our audience, and she slandered our broadcast partners. Am I surprised she was shown the door? I'm more surprised they gave her a second chance.

LD: How does that boot leather taste, Mr. Waterson?

[Cannon reaches ringside, climbing up on the apron, a grin on her face towards the cheering crowd - an expression that disappears as she ducks through the ropes and locks her eyes on Kimmy Bailey.]

LD: All business in there now. She was happy to see and hear these fans but now she's... what's this about?

[Bailey starts to approach, flashing her hot temper with some trash talking as she gets near...

...and gets POPPED with a right forearm to the jaw!]

LD: OH!

BW: Cheap shot! Call it like it is, Dane!

LD: I think Melissa didn't know if she was coming to attack her or not... I don't think she was, that's not really Kimmy Bailey's style. I mean... she even had her hands down at her side but-

"DING! DING! DING!"

[Reeling from the forearm, Bailey EXPLODES like a shotgun blast at the bell, charging hard towards a surprised Cannon before Bailey lowers her shoulder, lifting and tossing Cannon across the ring into the turnbuckles!]

LD: OHH! SHEER POWER BY THE RED HOT ROOKIE!

[Bailey follows her in, shoving her back into the corner before she can get out, rearing waaaaaaaay back...]

LD: LARIA-

[...but the standing lariat attempt is ducked and avoided by the veteran who swings around, plants her feet, and fires off a short, cracking elbow to the jaw that snaps Bailey's head back!]

LD: OH! Cannon returns fire!

[But Bailey has some hard-hitting in her toolbelt as well, smashing a forearm of her own into the jaw of Cannon, sending her stumbling backwards...]

LD: And now it's Bailey who lands one of her own! An early exchange by these two, getting the Portland crowd on their feet in a hurry!

[...but Cannon finds her footing, snapping off another forearm to the jaw of Bailey but the rookie keeps coming...]

BW: Uh oh! Looks like your girl's striking may be outmatched tonight, Dane.

[...and a surprised Cannon lands a second... and a third, the final one causing Bailey's eyelids to flutter as she falls backwards into the corner again!]

LD: You were saying?

BW: Well, I think one thing is clear out of the gate - this one is going to hurt... for both of them.

[Shifting tactics, Cannon snaps off a pair of leg kicks to Bailey's left knee area, trying to hobble the much-quicker youngster...]

...and then grabs the leg, twisting it around the middle rope, jamming her own knee into it a few times...]

LD: Melissa targeting the leg now, trying to take away the power base of this very strong, very impactful young woman who has taken the AWA by storm since her arrival.

BW: That storm is about to peter out into a slight drizzle when Kurayami gets through with her this week.

LD: We'll see about that. Fans, remember... that battle between former World Champion Kurayami and Kimmy Bailey will air on Saturday Night Wrestling next weekend on tape from their clash in Japan coming up this week. I can't wait to see that... but right now, Kimmy Bailey's got bigger problems!

BW: No such thing.

[Cannon grabs the leg under her arm, dragging Bailey from the corner as the rookie hops on one foot to keep her balance...]

LD: Perhaps looking for the dragon screw here!

[...but Bailey instead swings for the fences from one foot, catching Cannon with an awkward-looking lariat on the collarbone that sends Cannon falling into the ropes!]

LD: Oh! She didn't get all of that but she might've gotten enough!

[Bailey stays on Cannon, doubling over to land a trio of driving shoulders into the midsection...]

LD: Going downstairs, taking some of the wind out of the AWA Original...

[...but as Bailey goes for an even harder shoulder drive, Cannon swings a knee up, catching Bailey on the chin!]

"SMAAAAAAAAAACK!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[Bailey goes staggering backwards after the kneelift finds the mark, giving Cannon a chance to swing for the fences herself...]

LD: SPINNING BACKFI-

[...but Bailey ducks down to avoid it, wrapping her massive arms around the torso, lifting Cannon into the air with ease...]

BW: Unbelievable power by this kid!

[...and CHUCKS Cannon halfway across the ring, sending her crashing down on the canvas!]

LD: WOW!

[The Portland crowd is ROARING for Bailey's strength as the rookie pumps her powerful arms a few times, waving for Cannon to get back up... and the veteran obliges, giving a respectful nod towards her opponent...]

...and then they come back together in center ring as Cannon rears and fires, landing a solid elbowstrike on the jaw of Bailey!]

LD: Back to the elbows now... forearms, elbows, and knees... these two are swinging for the fences and doing serious damage in this one.

[A flurry of elbows has Bailey on her heels as Cannon tries to elevate from "damage" to "knockout" on the power meter...]

...until the official steps in, forcing an irate Cannon to step back, allowing Bailey to recover in the corner...]

LD: Gutsy call there by referee Shari Miranda! Getting right in there to give Bailey a momentary reprieve in the corner and-

[But as Cannon moves past Miranda, Bailey comes rushing from the corner...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: LIKE MOTHER, LIKE DAUGHTER! MELISSA CANNON JUST GOT ROCKED WITH A BRITNEY SPEAR!

[Kimmy wraps up the legs with her powerful arms, nodding along as the referee counts one... counts two... counts...]

LD: NOOOOOOOOO! OUT! AT! TWOOOOOOOOO!

[The crowd buzzes over the near fall as Bailey questions the official who confirms Cannon JUST BARELY got her shoulder up in time. A frustrated Bailey pistons her fist into the canvas on her way back to her feet...]

BW: And this is where Kimmy Bailey could run into trouble, Dane. She's gotta keep her cool, stay on her gameplan. She thought she had it won and she was wrong... that's no reason to blow your top.

LD: You know it and I know it but I'm not sure the red hot rookie does...

[As Cannon pushes up on all fours, cradling her midsection, Bailey reaches down, looking to deadlift her up with a gutwrench...]

...but on the way up, Cannon wriggles free and EXPLODES upwards with a stiff European uppercut that rolls Bailey's eyes back, falling away in a circle!]

LD: CANNON RETURNS THE FAVOR! BAILEY'S SEEING STARS!

[As Bailey turns away from her, Cannon wraps up the rookie in a rear waistlock...]

LD: LOOK OUT HERE!

[...and LAUNCHES her through the air, tossing her down in a released German Suplex that lands Bailey HARD on the canvas!]

"THUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUD!"
"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: Wow! What a brutal battle this has been!

BW: And we're not even five minutes into this thing, Dane! These two are beating the hell out of each other!

[Cannon struggles up, moving as quick as she can to take advantage of the situation as she hauls Bailey off the mat by the hair, flinging her across the ring into the ropes where she bounces back...]

LD: Off the far side and...

[The veteran drops to her back, grabbing Bailey's leg as she approaches...]

LD: ...RAINBOW BRIDGE! CANNON'S HOMAGE TO MIYUKI OZAKI!

[...but the rolling half Crab comes up snake eyes for Cannon as Bailey sees it coming and holds her ground!]

BW: She can't get her over!

LD: Melissa Cannon trying to upend Bailey into the half crab but it's not happening! Kimmy Bailey holding her footing and - wow! Look at the power!

[And Bailey reaches down from her defiant standing position, wrapping her arms around Cannon on the canvas...

...and DEADLIFTS her right up into a bearhug position!]

“OHHHHHHH!”

[The crowd reacts to the show of power and then reacts even louder to...]

“THUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUD!”

“OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!”

[...an overhead belly to belly that LAUNCHES Cannon across the ring, nearly sending her bouncing through the ropes to the outside but Cannon is able to grab the ropes to stay inside!]

LD: INCREDIBLE!

[Bailey comes back to her feet, eyes on the veteran as Bailey throws her arms straight out to the side...]

LD: She’s calling for Death Mountain, Ben!

BW: And that means SERIOUS trouble for your girl.

LD: Death Mountain, of course, named after one of the hardest parts of Hyrule in the Legend of Zelda series of video games.

BW: Nerd alert!

[Bailey pulls Cannon into a standing headscissors, looking out on the split crowd with a confident nod...]

LD: She’s looking to end this right here and gain some big-time momentum heading into her battle with Kurayami later this week in the Land of the Rising Sun!

[...and powers Cannon up into the air, lifting her into crucifix position. Cannon is wriggling, trying to get free as Bailey walks her out to to the middle of the ring!]

LD: She’s got her up! Looking for that sitout powerbomb here...

[The fans of Portland are on their feet, waiting for Bailey to deliver the decisive and likely match-ending blow...]

BW: Cannon’s helpless up there and-

[The lights inside the arena partially dim as we hear a loud, booming laughter ringing out over the PA. A ripple of shock and horror washes over the Portland faithful as Kimmy Bailey’s eyes go wide and the opening notes of Judas Priest’s “Demonizer” rings out!]

LD: WAIT A SECOND!

BW: Somebody’s decided not to wait until Tokyo, Dane!

LD: The classic metal anthem that heralds the arrival of one of the most dangerous and destructive forces in all of professional wrestling, the former Women’s World Champion Kurayami!

[Bailey has frozen in her tracks, letting Cannon fall into the canvas as she balls up her fists, staring down the entrance ramp with a "COME ON! COME ON, LET'S DO THIS!"]

LD: Kimmy Bailey is NOT backing down from the former champion... where is she?! Get out here and do this!

[Bailey waves her arms towards the back, summoning the Queen of Kaiju...]

LD: Kimmy Bailey seemingly had Melissa Cannon dead to rights there and-

[...but Bailey soon finds herself dragged down to the mat in a schoolgirl rollup, her shoulders pressed down as Cannon puts all of her weight on the legs of the surprised rookie!]

LD: WAIT! ROLL UP!

[The referee dives down, the music fading as she slaps the mat once... twice...]

LD: SHE GOT HER!

"DING! DING! DING!"

[The crowd buzzes with confusion as Cannon rolls off, her arm held aloft in victory as Bailey pops up to a seated position, a look of shock on her face...]

LD: Ben, what just happened out here?!

BW: You saw it yourself, Dane! Kimmy Bailey had your girl Cannon dead to rights... and then that music started up... the music of Kurayami and... Bailey just completely fell apart. Cannon... to use a phrase you'd enjoy, Dane... she stole this! She literally stole this win away from the red hot rookie... who showed just how much of a rookie she still is right there.

LD: Is Kurayami even here?! Are these all just mindgames?!

BW: That's what Bailey's gotta be wondering right now.

[Frowning at the official, Bailey shakes her head at having been deceived long enough to take the L as Cannon gets to her feet, allowing the referee to raise her hand in victory as (most) of the fans cheer.]

LD: A huge victory for Melissa Cannon, the AWA Original, as she works her way back into the mix after a long time away from the AWA rings... and that's gotta drop her right into title contention if you ask me.

BW: Just going to ignore the whole "stolen victory" thing, huh?

LD: It wasn't without controversy - I'll grant you that much. But it goes down in the record books as a win and that's all that matters to Melissa Cannon right now...

[Bailey comes to her feet, shouting at Cannon, jabbing an accusatory finger through the air as Cannon throws up her hands defensively, shaking her head...]

LD: ...and I get the feeling this one isn't over, Ben.

BW: I get the feeling you're right about that.

LD: The Women's Division continues to be the hottest in wrestling and it'll only get hotter as the Brass Ring Tournament continues to go down right here all summer

long on Showtime. We saw Amber Gold shockingly take a spot in the tournament and advance in victory earlier tonight... but what about another glittering member of the Brass Ring field - "Diamond" Lily Driscoll?

[We cut to an empty wrestling ring, where we find "Diamond" Lily Driscoll sitting on the apron. Driscoll is dressed in her wrestling attire, consisting of a gold and purple singlet with a diamond across the chest, white kneepads and wrestling boots with "LD" in black cursive script. She has a serious look on her face.]

LD: I heard Felicia Love talk about how I was afraid... how I was terrified about how the front office is going to treat me. How I'm...

[She pauses for effect, then that serious look turns to a frown.]

LD: ...worried I'll be mistreated because of my family name?

[She shakes her head.]

LD: No, Felicia, you've got it all wrong. I'm not afraid... I'm not worried... I'm not terrified about what the front office thinks.

I'm motivated!

[The frown is gone, replaced by the smug smile we are used to seeing.]

LD: I'm motivated to prove that I can take on anybody they want me to face, show them that I'm up to the challenge and leave no doubt in anyone's mind that I will prove why, like every other member of the Driscoll family, I'm destined for greatness!

[She hops down from the apron and chuckles.]

LD: I am glad, though, that you've found your reasons to be motivated, Felicia. That you were overlooked... undervalued... abused, as you put it. I would expect you to be motivated to prove to everyone how wrong they were about you.

Because I want you to be motivated... more motivated than you've ever been in your life. I want you to be so motivated to prove yourself, that it's going to make it that much better when I prove myself!

[She walks alongside the ring as she talks, the smug smile now fading and a serious look returning.]

LD: I hope that motivation drives you to try to claw my face off, as you put it. I hope that motivation drives you to want that Brass Ring so badly, you'll do whatever it takes.

I want that motivation to be so strong, that it will be that much more satisfying when my motivation to earn that AWA contract allows me to prevail!

[She then leans against the ringpost and folds her arms.]

LD: So, Felicia, don't concern yourself with whether or not I'm worried... afraid... terrified of whoever.

Concern yourself with the fact that, as much as you have motivation to prove to everyone you are not to be overlooked... I have the motivation to prove to everyone, whether they hold a grudge against me or not, that I will not only live up to the Driscoll name... that I will not only live up to the Diamond moniker... but that

I will follow in the footsteps of my brother before me, win the Brass Ring, win a title shot and go on to win championship gold!

[The smug smile is back and she chuckles again.]

LD: See you in Regina, Felicia... when I show you why Diamonds are forever!

[We fade to black.

And then back up to a shot of a darkened room, a filtered spotlight shining down in the middle of it. We can hear footsteps in the background.

Thump.

Thump.

Thump.

The steps are drawing closer it seems.

Thump.

Thump.

Thump.

And they come to a stop revealing the face of Ryan Martinez, still battle-weathered from his bloody war at SuperClash IX.]

"They call me the White Knight."

[A quick shot of Martinez delivering brutal chops to the chest of the King of the Death Match, Caleb Temple.]

"The son of a Hall of Famer."

[A shot of House Martinez - father and son - standing in the ring with Gunnar Gaines.]

"The former two-time World Champion."

[A shot of Martinez standing over Juan Vasquez with the World Title in his grasp.]

"And I am AWA."

[We get an almost identical shot in the darkened room but this time with Supreme Wright standing center stage.]

"The greatest professional wrestler on the planet."

[Cut to footage of Wright cranking on the arm of Casey James.]

"A two-time World Champion"

[Wright holds the title overhead with a defeated Dave Bryant in the background.]

"I am AWA."

[Wright is replaced by Julie Somers.]

"The Spitfire."

[A shot of Somers flipping off the top rope, crashing down on top of Kurayami with the moonsault.]

"The Women's World Champion."

[To SuperClash IX and Somers holding the title over her head.]

"The heart and soul of the Women's Division."

[Somers trading blows with Lauryn Rage inside a steel cage.]

"And I am AWA."

[Somers is replaced by Jordan Ohara, the National Title slung over his shoulder.]

"The Phoenix."

[Ohara dives off the top rope, smashing down with a Phoenix Flame splash.]

"The National Champion."

[Ohara stands on the midbuckle, holding the title up over his head.]

"A once in a millennium talent."

[A series of quick chops lighting up Juan Vasquez.]

"I am AWA."

[The champion is replaced by a grinning Michelle Bailey.]

"The Platinum Princess."

[Bailey tears across the ring, smashing home a Britney Spear on Laura Davis.]

"Former EMWC champion."

[A quick still photo comes up of Bailey holding a championship title aloft.]

"The heart and soul of the- Julie said that?! Grr!"

[A playful Bailey plants her fists on her hips, striking a pose.]

"And I am AWA."

[Bailey is replaced by the face-painted Supernova, the World Title secured around his waist.]

"The icon."

[We get footage of Supernova way back in the day, trading blows with Mark Langseth.]

"The franchise player."

[Supernova using the Heat Wave splash on Shadoe Rage.]

"The World. Heavyweight. Champion."

"And I... AM... AWA."

[We get quick shots now, individual shots...

Jack Lynch.]

"I am AWA."

[Shadoe Rage.]

"I am AWA."

[Hannibal Carver.]

"I am AWA."

[Howie Somers.]

"I am AWA."

[Daniel Harper.]

"I am AWA."

[Harley Hamilton.]

"I am AWA."

[They come quicker and quicker, all repeating the tagline - James Lynch, Victoria June, Cinder, Kerry Kendrick, Ayako Fujiwara...

...and this time, each time they say it, they stay on screen, the framed shot getting smaller as more people are added to it...

Laura Davis. Jackson Hunter. Bret Grayson. Ricki Toughill. And on. And on. And on.

And the photos all disappear, leaving just the tagline behind...]

"I am AWA."

[The graphic fades and is replaced with more text - "The American Wrestling Alliance. Every Saturday Night. ESPN."

Fade to black.

And we fade back up to loud voices and the sound of a trash can being kicked.]

SLB: Ladies, please! Control yourselves!

[But Blackwell's pleas are getting him nowhere as Kimmy Bailey looks at the trash can she just kicked down the hall, then turns around to shout at AWA Original Melissa Cannon, who looks less-than-thrilled herself.]

KB: Damn it, Kurayami ain't even here! It must've been you that got someone to play her music! You know everyone in that truck, someone would've played Kurayami's music for you when you needed it... who'd you put up to it, huh?

[Cannon puts on her "who, me?" face, shaking her head.]

MC: You lost fair and square, kid. Get over it and move on. You've got a big match later this week and I'd hate for you to lose that one too because you're distracted about losing to me.

[Cannon's got a little smirk on her face, which doesn't help the situation. Bailey puts her hands on her hips, feigning a smile.]

KB: Don't you worry about me and my match with Kurayami. I'm goin' to beat her, then I'm goin' to come back here and shove it straight down your throat when I beat you again like I was about to do toni-

[Cannon shakes her head before lunging at Bailey, trying to make a grab for her..

...when Adam Rogers and Kevin Slater rush in, trying to separate the two. Cannon and Bailey can be seen shouting at each other with the two agents in between them, but the audio has been muted due to the high tensions causing profanity to fly freely. After a couple of moments, we see a hand reach in and grab Kimmy Bailey's shoulder, with another hand resting on the top of the rookie's head. The sound cuts in as Bailey seems to relax...]

KB: Aw. Hi Mama.

[We pan back to see Michelle Bailey, who fully steps into frame to put her arm around her daughter's broad shoulders. Kimmy's calming allows for Rogers and Slater to keep Cannon held back, but as Cannon sees Michelle completely disarm the ticking bomb that was in front of her with just a touch, she too starts to relax. Rogers and Slater, confused, look at Michelle.]

AR: How did you do that?

KS: Yeah, it's never that easy to break things up.

[Michelle winks at her former EMWC peers.]

MB: I've got an inside edge on this one.

[Michelle gives Kimmy a slight jostle, which makes Kimmy's smile seem more genuine. Even Blackwell looks amazed at how easily Kimmy has calmed down.]

MB: I've got it from here, okay?

[Rogers and Slater, shaking their heads, leave the scene, as Michelle keeps her arm around her daughter.]

MB: Now look... we can't change the past, can we?

[Kimmy shakes her head, sighing.]

MB: You've got a big week ahead of you. I don't want you worrying about what happened today. Melissa said she had nothing to do with Kurayami's music, and you know Kurayami isn't just a big monster who wins by fear and physicality.

[Michelle moves her daughter to look into her eyes, using her free hand to brush Kimmy's loose hair out of her face. Melissa stands back, watching it unfold, slightly amazed at how easily Michelle is talking Kimmy into relaxation.]

MB: Kurayami's smart too. So if you're going to beat her, you can't just win by brute force.

[Michelle taps the side of Kimmy's head.]

MB: You've got to use that too, okay? Just like everyone's taught you.

[Kimmy nods.]

KB: I will, Mama.

[Michelle leans forward, kissing her daughter's forehead. Kimmy can be heard saying "aw" as Melissa smiles in the background.]

MB: I love you. Go get cleaned up and get some sleep. You've got a plane to catch tomorrow, and I want to make sure I at least get breakfast with you on your birthday.

KB: I love you too, Mama.

[Kimmy starts to walk away, mumbling "sorry, Lou" as she exits the frame, Blackwell simply nodding with understanding. Michelle looks to the premiere interviewer of the AWA with a satisfied grin.]

MB: Good to see you, Lou!

SLB: Good to see you, Michelle.

[Melissa steps forward as Michelle turns her eyes to someone she's been waiting to see face to face for a while.]

MC: You've gotta teach me how to do that.

[Michelle shrugs.]

MB: A lot of patience and love plus a little bit of luck over 21 years, minus a day.

[Michelle shifts back and forth on her feet a little.]

MB: Lou, I hope you don't mind, but I have a lot to talk about with Melissa, and I think it'd be best if we did so privately.

[Blackwell, disappointed to be missing out on a scoop, snaps his fingers.]

SLB: Only if you promise to tell me what happened after.

[Michelle holds up a pinky, as Blackwell holds up a hand and Melissa smirks.]

SLB: I know your word is good.

[Michelle smiles, then turns to Melissa.]

MB: I know this really nice tea room a few blocks away.

[Melissa raises an eyebrow.]

MC: I was thinking we could go somewhere where I could get a beer.

[Michelle puts her hand on Melissa's shoulder, her eyes shining with excitement.]

MB: I'm sure we can find a bar that will serve me a Diet Coke.

[And the two walk out of frame together, as we cut to back out to the ring for more action.]

MS: The following contest is a tag team match set for one fall with a twenty minute time limit. Introducing first...

[The lights go out and the arena is bathed in a neon pink and blue glow as a gritty synth plays. Fury Weekend's synthrock interpretation of "Another Brick in the Wall" introduces the powerhouses of the women's tag division.]

MS: At a total combined weight of 308 pounds... being accompanied to the ring by Laura Davis...

[Three women step into the stage fog, lasers and strobe lights that decorate the stage. The two taking the lead are both in cropped leather vests and retro-styled shades. The more toned of the two women drops to one knee and spreads her arms wide in a "how good am I?" gesture while the stockier woman stands behind her in the classic bicep curl flex pose. Davis brings up the rear, grinning at her dastardly duo while applauding their arrival before all three make their way down the aisle.]

MS: ..."T-BONE" TRISH WALLACE...

[Wallace is THICK: 166 pounds of solid muscle and bad attitude. Her hair is colored a titanium blonde and hangs loose halfway to her waist. She is dressed in a black sleeveless leotard with hot pink and baby blue detailing and pounds her fist aggressively into her palm as she climbs the ringside steps.]

MS: ..."STARKILLER" CAROLINA COLTON...

[Colton, while not as jacked as her partner, is nonetheless very buff herself. She smirks her way confidently down the aisle, gripping her lapels. She is also dressed in black with baby blue and hot pink: her halter top and tight shorts showing off her tight abs. She slides into the ring after her partner.]

MS: ...THE SLAAAAAAAAAAM SORORITYYYYYYYYYY!

[The two second generation powerhouses go to the center of the ring and adopt the same pose; T-Bone flexing her thick biceps with a smug scowl, The Starkiller lowering to a knee and spreading her arms wide with a cocky smirk. Davis stands between the two, her arms spread out as well to present her duo to the Portland crowd.]

LD: The Slam Sorority looking to earn their own shot at the World Tag Team Titles here tonight... creeping into position to face Harley Hamilton and Cinder, Seductive and Destructive, for the gold... but tonight, I feel like winning just might be their secondary goal, Ben.

BW: I think winning is ALWAYS Laura Davis' primary goal... but you're right about one thing, Trish Wallace would absolutely LOVE to put Skylar Swift back on the shelf after Swift eliminated her from the Memorial Day Rumble.

LD: Skylar Swift returning from injury, making her way back into the mix and this is going to be a tough test for her tonight, teaming with Pink Cashmere to make quite the makeshift duo against a proven squad.

[The music fades as Sato begins again.]

MS: Annnnnnnnnnd their opponents...

[The crowd ROARS for the opening notes of "Dukes" by Repartee.]

MS: At a total combin-

[And without warning, Swift and Cashmere come charging down the aisle, Megumi Sato beating a quick retreat as Swift dives under the ropes, quickly followed by her ally, coming up swinging...]

LD: We've got a fight on our hands!

[A flurry of fists from Swift on Wallace and Cashmere on Colton have the musclebound duo reeling...

...and a double dropkick sends the Slam Sorority scurrying the outside where an irate Laura Davis waves them into a huddle!]

LD: Wow! A quick start for Swift and Cashmere, perhaps looking for an early advantage in what many would consider to be a mismatch, Ben.

BW: I think they just made them mad. Look at Laura Davis!

[Davis is berating her team on the outside, Colton nodding as Wallace glares up at the ring where Swift and Cashmere are ready to continue the fight. The official tries to keep Swift and Cashmere back as Davis grabs Wallace by the shoulders, looking into her eyes as she speaks to her.]

BW: A little motivational pep talk before ol T-Bone Trish gets back in there... and that seems like a good idea to me, Dane. Settle it down, get them back to square one, and start this off.

LD: Speaking of starting it off, the official's calling the Slam Sorority back into the ring and...

"DING! DING! DING!"

[The ovation for the start of the match is unusually strong as the Portland fans salute the returning Canadian Dream Girl with a "SKY-LAR!" chant that brings a smile to her face, giving a grateful wave before leaning down to adjust the brace on her knee...]

LD: These fans letting Skylar Swift know how happy they are to have her back - and they're not alone in that, Ben.

BW: Maybe not... but I'll tell you who ISN'T happy to see her back and that's the woman standing across the ring from her right now - Trish Wallace.

LD: Her former partner and friend... and Trish Wallace is really hearing it from these fans now as well. They haven't forgotten what she did when she betrayed Skylar earlier this year... and you better believe Skylar hasn't forgotten it either.

BW: Spare me. She got hurt because she couldn't hang. Trish Wallace made a career decision and if you ask me, she made the right one because look at her now, Dane.

[Laura Davis surveys the scene from the floor, eyes never leaving the squared circle as she looks on thoughtfully...]

LD: And perhaps surprisingly, it looks like we WILL get Swift versus Wallace to start this thing off. Skylar Swift is demanding that very thing right now...

[Swift points at Wallace with a loud "COME ON!" as Wallace smirks across the ring at her.]

LD: ...and Wallace is staying in there. How about that?

BW: What? You thought Trish was going to be AFRAID of Skylar Swift?

LD: No, of course not but-

[Swift takes the smirk as an invitation to fight, rushing in to land a pair of forearms before switching to kicks to the upper leg...]

LD: Swift is all over her, starting off strong!

[Wallace seems surprised by the intensity, being backed into a neutral corner as Swift continues to hammer away at her before the referee forces her out...]

LD: Rebecca Daniels forcing a break here... or is she?

"OHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[The crowd reacts on a running front dropkick to the chest, pinning Wallace against the turnbuckles as Swift scrambles up, smashing an elbow into the jaw... and another... and another...]

LD: LISTEN TO THESE FANS!

[...and the hits keep comin' to the joy of the Portland fans as Swift hammers Wallace down onto a knee, Laura Davis and Carolina Colton both screaming at their ally, the official, anyone who will listen before Daniels is able to waistlock Swift, dragging her backwards!]

LD: Wow! Skylar Swift attacking like what she is - someone who has waiting MONTHS for this moment!

BW: On the other hand, you can say she's wrestling on pure emotion which is a great way to get the leg kicked out of your... leg.

LD: Nicely said.

[Swift marches back in, absorbing an earful from the official as she grabs a recovering Wallace in a front facelock, dragging her to her feet...]

...but the powerful Wallace shoves her off, sending her tumbling backwards before a shocked Wallace tags out to jeers.]

LD: Well, so much for that showdown... in comes Carolina Colton for the Slam Sorority and... here we go! Swift makes the tag on the other side and in comes the uber-energetic and colorful Pink Cashmere!

BW: This is a big match for her, Dane. It's not all that long since her debut earlier this year and it's been a shaky start for her.

LD: The biggest problem in the early months of her career, Ben, is that people keep getting involved in her affairs! She keeps getting attacked or injured or... she's made the wrong enemies early.

BW: Or maybe the wrong friends. It never pays to be allies with a woman like Lauryn Rage.

[Colton and Cashmere are circling to the anticipation of the crowd, nerves evident on the face of Cashmere as they come together... but Cashmere ducks her smaller frame under the outstretched arms of Colton, coming up swinging with a right and a left and a hair-swinging wild leaping headbutt that sends Colton stumbling backwards.]

LD: Sudden offense by Cashmere!

[She gets a running start, ducking under a wild swing from Colton, and rebounds back into a dropkick that takes Colton off her feet!]

LD: Nice dropkick by Pink Cashmere - remember, fans... she grew up watching the cruiserweights of the late 90s and early aughts in this business - men like November... like Juvenil Inferno... and that's the style she aims for inside the squared circle...

[On cue, Cashmere waits for Colton to get to her feet before running past her to the ropes, leaping up to get some spring off the middle rope...

...and snatches an arm on the way back down, dragging Colton down to the canvas to big cheers!]

LD: Look at the athleticism of the rookie! Cashmere starting off strong here in the IIWF Coliseum... I talked to her before the show, Ben, and she said competing in this building as someone who grew up a fan of this industry is a dream come true.

[With Colton a little wobbly getting up, Cashmere hits the ropes again, running with speed and dashing right up the turnbuckles to the top, looking out on the cheering fans...

...before throwing herself backwards, flipping through the air!]

BW: MOONSAULT!

[The backflip body block wipes out Colton again as Cashmere pops up, grinning as she drops into a graceful bow...]

LD: I don't think that was any mere moonsault, Ben... that was the Curtain Call! A little tribute from Cashmere to a man who once roamed the halls of this arena - the great Billy Shakespeare! And while this young lady may still be a wet-behind-the-ears rookie, Ben, it's obvious that she's as athletic as they come and a potential future superstar here in the AWA.

BW: Ehh, she can flip and fly but when Colton and Wallace get their hands on her, we're going to all see just how over her head she is... or maybe over their heads when they toss her around like a ragdoll.

[Cashmere dashes to the corner again, ducking through the ropes, climbing quickly...

...which is when - at a shout from Laura Davis - Trish Wallace goes barreling down the apron towards Cashmere who pulls up, shouting at her...

...which brings Rebecca Daniels into the mix, stopping Wallace from advancing...]

LD: We've got an argument on the apron as the referee tries to stop-

[...all of which allows Carolina Colton to grab the leg of Cashmere, yanking it out from under her as Cashmere SLAMS down, hitting the small of her back on the top turnbuckles before collapsing to the canvas in a heap!]

“OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!”

LD: Shenanigans abound for the Slam Sorority right there and they just completely changed the tide in this one!

[Davis nods approvingly from the outside as Colton stomps to her corner, aggressively slapping her partner’s hand, pointing at the downed Cashmere. The duo work in tandem, pulling her into a double whip across...]

LD: The Slam Sorority working togeth- OHHHHH!

[The crowd groans as Cashmere kisses the sky in a sky-high double backdrop that sends her CRASHING down onto the canvas!]

LD: My goodness, the power of these two is undeniable...

BW: This might be over right now, Dane. Can you imagine winning a match in 2018 with a backdrop?

[Wallace doesn’t even bother with a pin attempt though, dropping a knee into the lower back and striking a double bicep pose as she sneers as Skylar Swift who shouts words of encouragement to her partner while impatiently pacing the apron.]

LD: Trish Wallace giving a little show to Skylar Swift, her former friend and partner and... pulling Cashmere off the mat now...

[A quick tag brings Carolina Colton right back in, each grabbing a leg...]

BW: A little wishbone action!

[The crowd groans as Cashmere’s legs are violently ripped apart by the two powerhouses as Davis looks on approvingly from the outside.]

LD: You know, Ben, we’ve been talking a lot about the men’s World Tag Team Titles and the hot competition for those titles but what about the women? There are a lot of great contenders for Harley Hamilton and Cinder’s gold as well - including this duo.

BW: The Slam Sorority versus Seductive and Destructive would be a barn burner and I’d love to see it go down. But right now, they’re a little bit busy turning Pink Cashmere’s lower half into well-tenderized mush.

[Colton smirks at the jeering crowd as she muscles Cashmere over into a half Crab, bending the leg back as the rookie cries out, clawing at the canvas...]

LD: No mercy in these two as they work on that leg - almost surgical in there, Ben.

BW: That’s learned behavior - the fingerprints of the All-Around Athlete are all over this and Pink Cashmere is finding out the hard way that maybe she doesn’t belong in the ring with professionals like these just yet.

LD: This young lady has a lot of fight, a lot of heart, and I think she’s going to prove you wrong, Ben.

BW: Not many people can.

[A quick self-break of the submission hold followed by another tag brings Trish Wallace back with Cashmere cradling her leg down on the mat.]

LD: Look at this now, hooking her up...

[A double vertical suplex brings Cashmere high in the air, held perfectly still straight up and down by the two powerhouses...

...who lower one arm each to strike a pose.]

LD: ...oh, are you kidding me?! Look at this now! Showing off for all to see annnnnd... DOWN with the double suplex!

[Wallace rolls into a lateral press as Colton departs.]

LD: First pin attempt of the match for the Slam Sorority... and there's that heart, Ben! Pink Cashmere kicks out at two!

BW: Is it heart or is it being too stupid to know you're risking your career?

[Cashmere is immediately on the move, desperately crawling towards her corner...

...until Wallace viciously stomps the knee, earning the Portland fans jeers as she drags her back across the ring.]

LD: Wallace cuts off any attempt to get to her corner and make that tag and bring Skylar Swift back in... and you just know the Dream Girl is dying to get hands on Trish Wallace after what happened earlier this year, Ben.

BW: And Wallace can't wait to get her hands on Swift's knee, Dane.

[Wallace keeps a grip on the leg as she drags Cashmere to her feet, leaving the rookie hopping on one foot as Wallace looks to do even more damage...]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: ENZUIGIRI! THE HEAD KICK DROPS WALLACE! AND THAT OPENS A WINDOW FOR CASHMERE AND SWIFT!

BW: We talk about the tag titles - how big of a boost to the contendership of Swift and Cashmere would a win over the Slam Sorority be, Dane?

LD: It would be huge! It was make them almost instantly in the conversation... but right now, it's not about the tag titles - right now, it's about getting that tag and getting this win! Cashmere crawling on her hands and knees, looking towards her corner where Swift's arm is stretched out for her...

[The crowd starts to buzz in anticipation as Cashmere draws closer... and closer...

...which is when Carolina Colton comes rushing across the ring, blitzing Swift with a forearm to the head that sends her fellow Canadian flying off the apron to big JEERS from the AWA faithful!]

LD: Oh, come on! She can't even get into the match, Ben!

BW: She shouldn't be out here in the first place! With that bum knee, the Slam Sorority is going to put her on ice for good with Laura Davis smiling all the damn while.

[With Swift momentarily out of the picture and Colton being sent out by the angry official, Wallace regains her feet. She's a little wobbly as she does, holding the

back of her head as she tries to regain her balance, reaching down to grab Cashmere...

...who plucks her into a small package!]

LD: CRADLE! CRADLE!

[The crowd ROARS at the small package... counting "ONNNNNNE!" "TWOOOOOO!"]

LD: COME ON, REFEREE!

[Rebecca Daniels, distracted by removing Colton, whips around and dives to the canvas, slapping the mat once... twice...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: WALLACE KICKS OUT AT TWOOOOOO!

[A quick cut to the outside shows a relieved Laura Davis shaking her head.]

LD: A close call there for the Slam Sorority who almost got shaken to the core with one of the biggest upsets of the year!

[Wallace springs to her knees, holding up two fingers at the official who nods in agreement...]

...which gives Cashmere JUST enough time to scramble to her feet, lunging!]

LD: TAG!

[Wallace makes a lunge of her own, coming up just short as Skylar Swift tags into the match!]

LD: SWIFT IS IN!

[Skylar slingshots over the top rope, giving a whoop as she rushes into action, landing forearm after forearm on the jaw on her former partner...]

...and then switches to rapid-fire kicks to the legs, chopping the powerhouse down to force her onto her knees...]

LD: Swift taking out all that anger and frustration that she's built up sitting on the sidelines for-

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and CRACKS Wallace in the jaw with a superkick, sending her crumpling down to the canvas! Swift pumps a fist at the cheering crowd as she moves in on Wallace, pulling her right back up to her feet.]

LD: Skylar Swift is all over here, not giving her a moment to recover...

[A whip sends Wallace into the ropes, rebounding back into a spinning back elbow that takes her off her feet again as a concerned Laura Davis looks on from the outside and an angry Carolina Colton shouts at her partner from the apron - "DON'T LET HER DO THIS TO YOU!"]

LD: Swift right on top of her, hammering away... look at her go, Ben!

BW: This is a side of Skylar Swift that I don't know if we've ever seen, Dane. She's angry, she's hurt, she's mad at missing time and she's letting Wallace feel every bit of it.

[Swift gets a four count from the official for the closed fists on the mat before getting up, pulling ol' T-Bone Trish with her before whipping her into the nearest corner, rushing in after, leaping into the air with a Skylar Splash in the corner!]

LD: The Skylar Splash in the buckles! And that usually comes in... TWO!

[Swift hits a second running splash... then a third, twisting to snare a side headlock...

...and runs out of the corner, leaping up to drive Wallace's face into the canvas with a running bulldog!]

LD: OHHH! That might do it! Swift with the cover for one! She gets two! She-

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[With Colton on her way into the ring, Wallace kicks out, sending Swift flying off of her...]

LD: This is the Skylar Swift we - and these fans - remember! They're on their feet here in Portland cheering on the Canadian Dream Girl as she looks to make her comeback official here against the woman who put her on the shelf and the people who helped her do it!

[With Wallace in a daze and Colton shouting from the apron, Swift grabs her former partner off the mat, tugging her into a front facelock...]

LD: She's looking for that Broken Dreams DDT, Ben! If she hits it, it might be-

[But before she even gets a chance to run up the ropes, Colton is in in flash, lunging and diving...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: SHE CLIPPED THE KNEE! DROVE HER SHOULDER INTO THE KNEE!

[Swift collapses in pain to the canvas at having her formerly-injured knee targeted. The referee is all over Colton, shouting at her...

...which brings Pink Cashmere into the ring, charging hard as she LEAPS into the air to tackle Colton back into the turnbuckles to big cheers!]

LD: CASHMERE'S BACK IN AS WELL!

[Cashmere is hammering away at Colton with a flurry of fists as Laura Davis shouts at Rebecca Daniels from the outside...]

LD: Daniels trying to get Cashmere out of there! It's breaking down in Rip City!

[Daniels is forcing Cashmere back across the ring as Wallace pulls Swift off the canvas, Colton moving back in to help her...]

LD: Get Colton out of there, Rebecca!

[...and Colton lifts Swift into the air, Wallace reaching up to grab the hair for a little added oomph...]

"THUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUD!"
"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: POWERBOMMMMMMMB!

BW: They almost put her THROUGH the ring!

[Colton comes off the mat, charging across the ring to SMASH a forearm into the head of Pink Cashmere, sending her flying backwards off the apron, crashing into the ringside railing...]

"CLAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAANG!"
"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and as Colton exits to go after Cashmere on the outside, the referee wheels around and drops down...]

LD: Oh, come on!

BW: That's one! That's two! That's three, babydolls!

[...and delivers a match-ending three count as Wallace pins the laid out Swift. Laura Davis grins, lifting her arms overhead as she rolls into the ring to join her allies.]

LD: Wallace and Colton pick up the win... but-

BW: Oh, there's no buts in this one, Dane. An impressive victory over a tough duo that put up a fight but it wasn't enough to put down the Slam Sorority, Dane!

LD: There was so much that went on there at the end with Colton clipping the knee... with Colton and Wallace illegally doubleteaming on the powerbomb. Yes, they got the win BUT I think Swift and Cashmere showed on any given night, they can compete with the best teams in this division.

BW: The match may be over, Dane, but I don't think the Slam Sorority is!

[With Davis in the ring looking on, an angry Wallace grabs Swift by the leg again. The referee steps in to intervene but Wallace shoves her back with an implied threat...]

LD: Trish Wallace is going to get herself fined doing something like that and... oh, come on! There's no call for this!

BW: Trish disagrees!

[Wallace looks over to Davis who gives a nod...]

LD: HEEL HOOK! WALLACE HOOKS IN LAURA DAVIS' SIGNATURE HOLD!

BW: Take some notes, Martinelli! This is how it's done!

[Swift is crying out in pain as Wallace tries to rip apart the braced leg, cranking and pulling with all her considerable strength...]

LD: Swift is in trouble - BIG trouble! Her partner is laid out on the outside with Carolina Colton putting the boots to her and-

[Suddenly, the Portland crowd ROARS to life!]

LD: LAURYN RAGE! DA KID IS IN THE HOUSE!

[With her own surgically-repaired knee carrying her down the aisle, the first Women's World Champion sprints to the ring, steel chair gripped in her angry hands, diving under the ropes...]

LD: HERE WE GO!

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and SMASHES the chair down across the exposed torso of the downed Wallace, instantly breaking up the heel hook and saving Skylar Swift from further injury!]

LD: WHAT A SHOT ON WALLACE!

[The sound brings Carolina Colton up on the apron but Rage isn't done yet...]

BW: LOOK OUT!

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and Rage CRACKS Colton as well, sending her falling off the apron down to the floor!]

LD: AND THEN THERE WERE TWO!

[Rage swings around, glaring a hole right through a shocked Laura Davis who shakes her head, holding up her hands defensively...

...and as Rage barrels towards her, Davis dives from the ring to safety as Rage's third blow with the chair bounces harmlessly off the ropes!]

LD: And Laura Davis gets the heck out of there in a hurry!

[Davis reaches under the ropes, grabbing Wallace by the wrist to drag her to the outside as well as Rage SLAMS the chair down on the canvas, gesturing to ringside for someone to hand her a mic...]

LR: THIS?! THIS IS DONE, YA HEAR?!

[Rage is pacing around the ring, fuming mad.]

LR: I worked too damn hard to be the first Women's World Champion to let a fight with you keep me from getting that title back. TOO. DAMN. HARD. And the longer this goes on, the bigger shot the three of you are gonna jump me backstage or in the damn parking lot and put me back on the shelf.

Zharkov's right. No more.

[Rage nods.]

LR: I'm done chasing you. Let's END this.

[Davis glares at Rage, then retrieves a mic of her own.]

DAVIS: Now that's the best idea you've ever had, Lauryn! Let's end this...

[She climbs up on the apron as Rage balls up her fists, waving her forward as the crowd ROARS in anticipation!]

BW: Are we doing this right NOW?!

LD: Oh yeah! Let's finish it in Portland, baby!

[With the fans screaming for the fight, Davis then smirks.]

DAVIS: ...on my terms... when I'M ready!

[And with that, she drops off the apron to join a wounded Wallace and Colton, looking up at the ring, that smirk still on her face, while a frustrated Rage stands there, glaring down at her. The former Women's Champion looks fit to be tied as Davis waves a mocking hand at her, backing down the aisle along with Wallace and Colton...]

LD: Well, I suppose in hindsight, that was entirely predictable. Laura Davis wasn't about to rush headlong into a fight she wasn't ready for.

BW: Unlike Lauryn Rage who would rush into a fight with anyone, anywhere, anytime, Laura Davis is waiting for a time when it's on her terms so she can properly say Good Night, Farewell, Amen.

LD: Oh brother. The challenge is laid down, fans... Lauryn Rage is looking for one final encounter with Laura Davis to end this long-standing rivalry between Da Kid and the Slam Sorority... and I'm sure President Zharkov will make it a top priority to get that signed ASAP. But in the meantime, Skylar Swift is back on her feet, thankful that Lauryn Rage was here to prevent that knee from getting re-injured here tonight in Portland...

[Swift makes her way over to Rage with a bit of a hobble, reaching out a thankful hand towards the former Women's World Champion...

...who also predictably in hindsight buries a boot into the midsection of the Canadian Dream Girl...]

LD: What the...?!

[...hooks her around the head and neck, tucking the chin into her shoulder...]

LD: LAURYN, NO!

[...and DROPS her down to the mat with the Snakebite, sending Swift bouncing back down onto the canvas in a heap as the crowd delivers a collective gasp!]

LD: AHHHH!

[Waterson is cackling at the scene that just unfolded.]

BW: Lauryn Rage doesn't save people, Dane. She's a loner to the core and only gives a damn about herself. Skylar Swift should've known that before now but she just got a reminder the hard way!

[Rage gets up off the mat, glaring down at Swift... and then Pink Cashmere as Cashmere rolls into the ring, shaking her head angrily at Rage as she crawls to Swift's side...]

LD: Lauryl Rage may have just made herself a new enemy in Skylar Swift though because I can't imagine the Canadian Dream Girl is going to forget about this one anytime soon, Ben.

[Cashmere helps prop Swift into a seated position as Rage throws one more look down the aisle at the Slam Sorority...

...and then exits the ring in an angry huff.]

LD: Skylar Swift came back for justice. Pink Cashmere was out here for opportunity. But Lauryl Rage? She's here for war, Ben.

BW: Yeah, but she ain't calling the shots. That belongs to the Laura Davis and the victorious Slam Sorority!

LD: Fans, we'll be right back with more AWA action right here on Showtime on ESPN!

[We fade to black on a pissed off Rage stomping her way down the aisle...

We fade in to a snowy mountain, as we see a woman skiing down the slopes. As she does so, we hear the voice of AWA wrestler - and E-Girl MAX member - "Charm City Cutie" Casey Cash.]

CC: Whether it's conquering the most dangerous of terrains...

[The woman comes to a stop in front of the camera, removing her protective helmet. A name graphic identifies her... 2010 Olympic Gold Medalist, and Under Armour Athlete Lindsay Vonn.]

LV: I will.

[We cut to a man dodging through much larger competitors on the basketball court, before pulling up behind the three-point line.]

CC: Going up against the fiercest rivals on the hardwood...

[The man first off a shot, which swishes through the net. He turns around, and his name graphic identifies him... it's 2015 and 2017 NBA Champion, and Under Armour Athlete Stephen Curry!]

SC: I will.

[Now we cut to a football field as a man avoids a tackle, scrambling out of the pocket.]

CC: When the game is on the line, and the pressure is on?

[He throws a pass, hitting his teammate in the end zone. In celebration, he takes off his helmet, looking at the camera. His name graphic shows that it's multi-time Super Bowl Champion, and of course, Under Armour Athlete Tom Brady.]

TB: I will.

[We now cut to a wrestling ring, where two women can be seen dominating their opponents.]

CC: When you need to prove that you are a champion?

[We see the women holding up their glittering gold belts, showing them off to the camera, and their name graphic identifies them... AWA Women's World Tag Team Champions and Under Armour Athletes Harley Hamilton and Cinder!]

HH/C [together]: I will!

[We cut to all five performing incredible feats of athleticism in rapid succession.]

CC: There's only one brand you can trust to have your back.

[And now, all five are facing the camera at their location, with their voices in sync.]

"Under Armour - I Will."

[The screen displays an Under Armour logo, then fades.]

And we come up backstage on footage marked "EARLIER TONIGHT" where we find Lucy St. Clair standing between the two-time World Tag Team Champions Wes Taylor and Tony Donovan who are just seven days away from a date with potential history.]

LSC: Welcome back to Showtime here in Portland... and gentlemen, this is a special night for not just the AWA but for professional wrestling history. What's it like to be here in this legendary arena?

[Taylor looks around with a smile.]

WT: I feel like I'm on enemy ground, Lucy. I grew up with my father talking about this place and the people who worked here like they were the enemy. The place that gave birth to the Masked Outlaw... the place where the Lone Wolf rode roughshod... the home of the OG Syndicate.

[Donovan gives Taylor a quick look... the partners exchanging a wordless moment as Donovan quickly speaks up.]

TD: But we're not here to talk about old ghosts, Lucy... we're here to talk about what comes next. And what comes next for us after tonight goes down in seven days just down the road when we get OUR shot at history. We've held the AWA World Tag Team Titles twice, Lucy... TWICE. And that puts us in rarified air alongside teams like Air Strike, the Lights Out Express, and Next Gen in the conversation for the greatest team in AWA history.

WT: That's right. And nobody... NOBODY... has ever done it three times. And that's what we're going to do one week from tonight.

[St. Clair grins.]

LSC: Gentlemen, I appreciate the confidence but you've gotta be going into that title match with a little bit of trepidation because you don't know - and won't know until next week - who you'll be facing. It could be the men who won the titles - Cain Jackson and AJ Martinez... it could be Grayson and Mifune... heck, it could be Supreme Wright himself teaming with ANY of them!

[Taylor nods.]

WT: Supreme Wright wants to play games with us... well, we're up for the challenge because it doesn't matter who it is, Lucy. We're ready for any and ALL of them.

LSC: Even Wright himself?

WT: Even Wright himself. Because if anyone knows how Team Supreme thinks... how they operate... it's this man right here... my partner.

[Donovan reluctantly nods, again throwing a look at Taylor.]

LSC: Is that right, Tony Donovan? Does your experience as a member of Team Supreme give you bonus insight to how this all might go down next weekend?

TD: Lucy, those men were once my friends... so yeah, I know them well. I know how they think... I know their strategies and gameplans for guys like Cain and AJ.

LSC: But what if they pick someone you DON'T know well? Mifune! Grayson! Crawford!

WT: Then we'll do the same thing we've always done. Adapt. Survive. Thrive. And win. Because while the most important thing to us is walking out of Portland with gold, I've got a little extra incentive to put my fist through their faces.

LSC: What's that?

[Taylor shakes his head.]

WT: The new girl needs it explained, Tony. Lucy, Team Supreme has been a wrecking crew since they came together last year at SuperClash... by putting one of my best friends in a hospital bed. Johnny Detson has a family, damn it. And that family got to spend their Christmas last year watching him struggle to walk down the stairs to the Christmas tree. That family has spent the bulk of this year watching him go through surgeries and physical therapy and everything else just to get back on his damn feet.

And to really put the screws to the whole thing, they framed our best friend Brian James. Our brother.

[Taylor spits with disgust.]

WT: And then they took him out too. So yeah, I got a desire to get some blood on my hands... and whether it's AJ and Cain... Grayson or Mifune... Supreme and his little weapon... or some other combination, I don't much give a damn as long as I get to make someone taste boot leather en route to making history. Tony, let's show 'em what we're talkin' about.

[Tony Donovan gives a nod as he and his partner exit, leaving Lucy St. Clair behind.]

LSC: Sheesh. Someone's in a bad mood... and I didn't even get to ask about Tiger Claw.

[St. Clair shrugs as we fade from the pre-recorded footage to the ring where we find Jimi Jam Jester and Laredo Morrison are playing to the ground... playing air guitar along with their entrance music to be exact.]

LD: Tag team action about to go down here in Portland with The Band taking on the men who will attempt to make history a week from tonight down the road in Providence Park - Wes Taylor and Tony Donovan.

BW: The two-time champs looking to do what no one else in AWA history has done - make it three!

LD: That's right. In an odd little piece of AWA trivia, no AWA competitor has ever won a title three times. We've got plenty of two-timers from Ryan Martinez to

Supreme Wright to Jordan Ohara and so on... but nobody's "made it three" as you say, Ben. But in seven nights, Taylor and Donovan will get the chance.

BW: And their "chance" would be much better if they'd stuck with Tiger Claw guiding them to victory.

LD: I'm not so sure about that. Tiger Claw seemed to be more a divisive force for these two than a unifying one.

[The sounds of "Beer Drinkers and Hell Raisers" starts up as the former two time World Tag Team Champions comes stomping aggressively down the aisle looking every bit like a team with something to prove...]

...and before Megumi can get a word out, they've hit the ring, sliding in...]

"DING! DING! DING!"

[Boldly and... dumbly perhaps... Jimi Jam Jester charges across the ring to nail Wes Taylor in the back of the head with a double axehandle that pitches Taylor forward into his own corner...]

LD: Oh! Cheapshot to get this one going!

[Jester lands a pair of flailing forearms before scampering away before Donovan can take a swing at him. The referee reprimands Jester for the sneak attack but Jester doesn't care, making a grab at the back of Taylor's trunks, yanking him into a short forearm to the kidneys...]

BW: Dane, earlier we talked about tag teams looking to impress Zharkov and the Championship Committee to get into that Run The Rankings gauntlet... and this one is big for The Band. They don't have the best win-loss record but a win over the former champions would catapult them forward.

LD: It sure would and Jester's pulling no punches early on in this one - big kick downstairs put Taylor up against the ropes...

[Pulling the hair back to expose the torso, Jester lands a pair of big hooking shots to the body...]

BW: Maybe Taylor and Donovan took these two too lightly in getting ready for their tag title shot.

[...and with a grab of the arm, Jester tries to whip Taylor across but has it reversed, sending Jester into the ropes instead, running right into a big tackle that knocks Jester to the mat!]

LD: The former two-time All-American linebacker from Arizona State and NFL draft pick just flattens Jester down to the canvas...

[Taylor waits for Jester to rise, burying a boot into the midsection before snatching side headlock and smashing his fist into the head repeatedly as he turns away from referee Koji Sakai...]

LD: Nothing fancy there... fists to face...

[Holding the headlock, Taylor drags Jester to the corner, slapping his partner's hand.]

LD: ...and a quick tag to Tony Donovan. The former champions working in tandem here...

[A double whip sends Jester across, running right back into a boot to the gut from Taylor as Donovan bounces off the side ropes to take him over with a swinging neckbreaker...]

LD: ...and a nice double team by Taylor and Donovan there!

[Jester is reeling as he crawls across the ring, making the tag.]

LD: And in comes the big man from The Band... six foot eight, 312 pounds out of Kickapoo, Kansas...

BW: You know, I think Laredo Morrison once Main Evented here against Requiem, Dane... and then took home Requiem's sister after the match.

LD: I don't think either of those things are true, Ben.

BW: Are you calling Laredo Morrison a liar?

LD: I'm saying Mr. Morrison is known for having a casual relationship with the truth.

[The big powerhouse immediately ties up Donovan, bullying him back into the turnbuckles where he instantly breaks and pops him on the chin with an uppercut!]

LD: Oh!

BW: Hard shot there, Donovan may need to check his dental work after that!

[Morrison grabs the arm, whipping Donovan across to the opposite neutral corner as the big man lumbers across towards him...

...and runs right into a raised boot, staggering him backwards as Donovan hops up on the middle rope, using a flying clothesline to bring the big man down!]

LD: Middle rope clothesline connects!

BW: Experience versus enthusiasm might be a good way to describe this one, Dane - and enthusiasm is losing at the moment.

[Donovan reaches up, slapping his partner's hand.]

LD: Quick tag brings Taylor back in... oh, look at this, Ben...

[Hooking Morrison, the duo lifts the big man up, taking him up and over with a ring-shaking double suplex!]

LD: ...and you gotta be impressed by Taylor and Donovan!

BW: Of course you do. Former two-time tag champs. Former members of the Kings of Wrestling with Johnny Detson, Brian James, and Brian Lau... you know, Brian Lau doesn't manage just anyone. If he managed these two, he saw something in them. But I'm going to make sure the world is aware there's a damn difference between doing that to Laredo Morrison and doing it to AJ Martinez.

LD: Donovan steps out, Taylor stays in... and he's putting the boots to Morrison. These two can wrestle - Donovan's time with Team Supreme is evidence of that... but they can also get down and dirty and that'll serve them well against WHATEVER duo Supreme Wright chooses for them to face for the titles... and don't get me started on what a travesty that situation is.

BW: You call it a travesty, I call it a brilliant strategy that I wish I thought of first.

[Dragging Morrison to the ropes, Taylor throws him down with his throat over the middle rope, putting a shin on the back of the neck, choking him over the ropes as the referee counts...]

LD: The fans might be behind Taylor and Donovan these days... but there's no mistaking that they're not changing up their wrestling styles for anyone.

[...and at the four count, Taylor breaks, slingshotting himself over the top rope to land on his feet on the outside before CRACKING Morrison with an uppercut that sends him falling backwards on the canvas!]

LD: Morrison is down after that one...

[Taylor rolls back in, making his way to the corner where he slaps his partner's hand.]

LD: ...another tag and these two are working together so well. So polished heading into this big title showdown...

[Donovan steps in, joining his partner in getting Morrison back up on his feet again, shooting him across the ring...

...and the six foot six Donovan uses a charging big boot to put the big man down once more!]

LD: Ohohooo... longtime fans will remember that Tony Donovan used to use that running big boot as a tribute to his former ally Cain Jackson... and that might've been a little message to his former friend, Ben.

[Taylor slaps his partner on the shoulder with a big grin, waving at the downed Morrison.]

BW: I'd be careful about sending Cain Jackson any messages.

LD: Two count off the big boot... not enough to keep him down.

BW: Which is how you know it was a knockoff and not the real deal because if Cain Jackson had hit it, they'd be checking the Goonies house for Morrison's head right about now.

[Donovan comes up off the mat, looking down at Morrison as Jimi Jam Jester cheers for his partner from the apron...

...until Donovan lands a running, leaping superkick!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: The messages continue... he used to call that leaping superkick the Team Supreme Special!

[A determined Donovan turns back to the rising Morrison, swooping in behind him to hook a side waistlock, folding up the leg...]

LD: Donovan gets him up annnnnnd... DOWN with the shinbreaker!

[With Morrison hobbled, Donovan sets him on his feet, dropping back into the ropes and rebounding to clip the knee!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: Targeting the knee know... and I think we know what's next.

[Donovan grabs the injured wheel, wrapping it around his neck...]

BW: Stretch muffler... and he's not done yet!

[...and stretching out his legs, he hooks a headscissors to completely immobilize Laredo Morrison, bending the leg across his neck in a torture rack type position, Morrison screaming in pain as Taylor looks on approvingly...]

LD: The Gnaw Bone Clutch!

BW: This hold was GIFTED to a young Tony Donovan by Supreme Wright!

LD: And this might be a reminder to Team Supreme that this will NOT be an easy night at the office for them next weekend in Providence Park. These two are coming to make history and- there's the tapout! It's over!

[Donovan hangs on for a few more seconds to make Morrison scream again before he lets go, climbing to his feet with a cold expression on his face. His partner joins him, giving a high five and a quick embrace as they stare out on the crowd.]

LD: Icy cold focus on the part of Taylor and Donovan and-

[We cut to a backstage shot - Supreme Wright looking on, arms folded, expression unreadable.]

LD: And speaking of icy cold. Supreme Wright is keeping an eye on this one... and I wonder if he saw anything to help him pick who will defend the titles for Team Supreme next weekend.

[Wright slowly smirks, reaching up to turn off the monitor as we cut back to the ring.]

BW: You don't smile like that unless you've got a plan.

[Having seen Wright's appearance on the big screen, Taylor leans in towards the closest camera, speaking off-mic.]

"Supreme Wright... you pick the team... hell, you pick YOURSELF. We'll be ready."

[Donovan nods his head confident, putting his hands on his partner's shoulders as we fade to black.

A single knock.

Then another.

Then a third, harder each time.

Atlas Armstrong appears, his voice low and dangerous.]

"Some knocks... you don't ignore."

[We get a flash of a scene of Armstrong flattening an opponent with a pump kick.

Derrick Williams appears, smirking and confident over training footage.]

"Some knocks? You answer 'em... just to shut somebody up."

[Cut to a show of Williams driving a foe down to the mat with the Future Shock.

Cut to black. Another knock. Louder this time.

Then a shot of an ice cold and deadly serious Laura Davis.]

"And some knocks...? You pray they aren't for you."

[Cut to Davis wrenching a heel hook on a helpless opponent, an aggressive expression on her face.

Cut to Lauryn Rage snarling at the camera, fire in his eyes.]

"But Opportunity Knocks? That one - we OPEN."

[A flash of Rage battering an opponent with body blows in the corner before nearly ripping their head off with a hook shot and screaming into the nearby camera lens.

The music picks up in intensity - big percussive hits.

Onto Shadoc Rage who is semi-lit, a manic expression on his face.]

"Because some of us don't wait for an invitation..."

[Cut to a shot of Rage leaping off the top rope, dropping a double axehandle on a surprised foe. Rage's voice is heard over the shot.]

"...we kick the damn door down."

[Cut to a shot of E-Girl MAX assembled in front of the camera. Harley Hamilton steps forward first.

"You wanted challengers?"

[Then Cinder.]

"You wanted chaos?"

[Then Casey Cash.]

"You wanted a moment?"

[Hamilton points at the camera.]

"We'll give you all you want and THEN SOME!"

[We get some fast action shots of the trio.

Cut to the World Champion, Supernova, backlit in white. His voice is calm and steady, carrying a champion's weight.]

"Opportunity doesn't knock for everyone. Some of us... ARE the opportunity."

[Cut to Supernova sailing through the air with a Heat Wave splash...

...and then a final cut brings us Ryan Martinez. The AWA's White Knight is sweaty, breathing heavy, eyes locked on the camera.]

"Me? I hope every last one of you steps up. Because on July Fourth... there's nobody left to hide behind. No executives. No excuses. No running.

Opportunity knocks. And I'm answering every damn one."

[A hard cut to the Opportunity Knocks logo - July 4th - Seattle, Washington on ESPN with red, white, and blue fireworks exploding behind the information on screen.

A voiceover is heard, deep and official in tone.]

"No contracts. No politics. No escape. If your name is called... you fight.

Opportunity Knocks. Answer the door."

[As we fade through black back into the IIWF Coliseum, we find someone we don't know in the ring. He's ready for action as Megumi Sato stands center ring.]

MS: Annnnnnnnnnd his opponent...

[There's a pause as we wait.]

LD: Welcome back to Showtime: Ring Wars, fans... and we've got Sid Osborne about to come out here and grace us with his presence. You know, Ben... Sid's been pretty vocal in interviews and online this week about how unhappy he is that the AWA booked him for this show.

BW: Nobody should be surprised by that. The Sin City Savior has made it plenty clear in the past about how much he despises all the nostalgia in pro wrestling... and in the AWA in particular.

[With Sid's music ripping over the PA, the crowd starts to boo...

...and then gets louder upon seeing Osborne's arrival.]

LD: What's this about now?

[The camera holds on the aisle where Sid Osborne is coming towards the ring, hobbling on a pair of crutches. He is grimacing with every aided step, looking around at the jeering crowd.]

LD: Sid Osborne coming out here on a pair of crutches and- Ben, do you know anything about this?

BW: I gotta admit that I don't, Dane. This match was announced as being part of tonight's show... and I haven't seen him on any kind of AWA medical report or anything but he sure looks like he's in a lot of pain.

LD: The 2018 Royal Crown winner... and the guy who came up just short in winning the National Title at Memorial Day Mayhem... and in a lot of ways, I'd also call him the guy who might be directly responsible for us having a new National Champion, Ben.

BW: Uhhh, no... that would be Kerry Kendrick.

LD: Of course Kendrick defeated Jordan Ohara to win the title... but Ohara wouldn't have been in the weakened state he was in if it wasn't for Sid Osborne.

BW: Well, that's true... and most educated people already thought Sin City Sid was the uncrowned National Champion anyways soooooo...

LD: I didn't think that.

BW: Like I said. Most EDUCATED people.

[Dane's sigh is audible as Osborne reaches ringside, an attendant coming over to help him up the ringsteps. He ducks through the ropes, nearly losing his balance as he steps inside the ring, gesturing for Megumi Sato's mic.]

SO: Unlike most nights when the name "Sid Osborne" means the AWA is going to make a lot of money... tonight, I'm going to actually end up COSTING the AWA money. Refunds are available at the door, people, because "card subject to change" or not... Sid Osborne will NOT be competing tonight.

[There are some boos from the crowd for that announcement.]

SO: I know, I know. There are so few things to look forward to when you leave in this cesspool of a city...

[The boos get louder now as Osborne smirks.]

SO: ...an appearance by the 2018 Royal Crown winner, the uncrowned National Champion, and the best thing on this - or any other - AWA show was enough for you all to skip a few days of avocado toast and "medicinal" marijuana to spend your hard begged money to come to the show tonight.

So sorry to disappoint you... but even this guy they dragged off the streets down by the porno theater by Voodoo Doughnuts, put in a pair of trunks and boots, and gave the chance of a lifetime...

[Osborne looks across at Ricky Roberts.]

SO: ...even you don't want to win like this, right? Even you aren't going to take a forfeit win, right?

[Roberts looks around at the crowd urging him to do exactly that.]

SO: Seriously?! I'm injured! I can't compete! Why would you people want to see him win like that?!

[The fans are still encouraging Ricky Roberts to take the W. Osborne shakes his head with disgust.]

SO: Don't listen to these jackals. They've got no pride. No honor. Come on over here, shake my hand, and I'll agree to fly you to the show of your choosing when I heal up and we'll have this match for real. Deal?

[Roberts sighs, shrugging as he walks towards Osborne, reaching out a hand...]

LD: Watch out for a trap!

[...which Osborne accepts with a smile, nodding his head.]

SO: I knew you had it in ya.

[Roberts shrugs, turning with a wave to the fans...]

BW: And you thought it was a trap.

LD: Color me mistaken but you can hardly blame me considering...

[Dane trails off as Osborne suddenly stands on both feet, lifting the crutch in both hands...]

“WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!”

“OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!”

[...and CRACKS the crutch across the back of Ricky Roberts’ head, putting him down like a light as the crowd JEERS loudly!]

LD: I knew it! I knew it, Ben!

BW: IT’S A MIRACLE! HE’S HEALED!

[Osborne smirks at the laid out Roberts as the referee throws himself between Osborne and the fallen enhancement talent.]

SO: You know... I’m starting to feel a lot better already.

[He flexes his leg, grinning.]

SO: It’s as though the mere thought that I wouldn’t have to wrestle here tonight just fired up the white blood cells in my body to pull a comeback and get me up on my feet.

The office wanted me... the Royal Crown winner... to compete... here.

[He looks around with disgust.]

SO: I’d rather do time for burning the damn place to ashes again than actually wrestle here.

[Even more jeers as Osborne shakes his head.]

SO: I’m disgusted with myself for even APPEARING on this show. Ring Wars... give me a break. Just when I thought the AWA couldn’t drown itself in any more nostalgia, they’ve decided to waste valuable air time on a promotion that hasn’t been relevant in almost twenty years!

How many ol’ Double Eye warhorses did we put over here tonight, huh? Oh, I’m sure Dane’s been over there on commentary putting over Hardin and Thunder.. James and Kowalski... maybe good ol’ Soundbite himself even...

[Osborne walks towards the ropes, looking down on the play-by-play announcer.]

SO: What a hypocrite you are.

[Dane looks irritated but stays silent.]

SO: What a hypocrite that entire front office is! Stegglet, Michaelson, Taylor... the three of you spent YEARS of your life trying to put this place out of business... and even years after it was gone, you were still obsessed with burying it... and now you’re here trying to wring a buck from putting over the rotting corpse of it. Shameful. Shameful.

But shockingly, Dane... your old pals aren’t the most shameful person in the building. No, no, no. The battle for that high honor was won by the guy with a bird’s eye view of all this...

[The Sin City Savior smirks, gesturing upwards.]

SO: Don't be shy now. Shine a little light on him. Where you at, Danny Boy?

[Spotlights come up, hitting one of the new luxury boxes in the remodeled IIWF Coliseum to reveal former IIWF owner Daniel Spreadbury seated. The former Hall of Fame executive gets a HUGE ROAR from the partisan crowd, forcing him to smile and wave even under these circumstances.]

SO: There he is. The ol' Hall of Famer himself. Daniel Spreadbury is here, sucking at the teat of the swollen corpse of a cash cow that was the IIWF.

[The crowd jeers as Spreadbury glares down at Osborne.]

SO: That's twice now, right? Twice you've taken the cash from the people who wanted to run you out of business so badly... twice you've taken the payday to show up and WHORE yourself out to these people so that the world thinks you're still relevant.

But I know different. You're not relevant anymore, Danny Boy... hell, you barely were relevant then... because for every Blackheart, there was a Fop... for every Triple Cross, there was a spooky guy with a creepy relationship with his sister... for every Seven Tables, there was a Meatman Challenge.

[A small "SHOOT SID SHOOT!" chant breaks out, bringing a smirk from Osborne as he acknowledges it with a nod.]

SO: The AWA thought that I'd show up on this pathetic little flashback show in this burned out shoebox of a venue and give you people the privilege of seeing me compete. The AWA thought that I was willing to WHORE myself out for a payday just like Danny Boy here.

They were wrong... but when I heard you were coming, Spreads, I knew I had to be here for this... this moment right here.

Because that meant for one night, I could stand in MY ring... in MY company... and I could tell you that when I tell them to turn off this spotlight, you're going to slink back into obscurity where no one will remember who the hell you are until the next time they decide to stand on your back to make a buck.

For once... I could tell the world that you... and your company... was overhyped... overrated... and just plain over.

[Osborne smirks.]

SO: I did that once.

[He pauses, baiting the hook.]

BW: HOW DID THAT TURN OUT FOR YOU?

[Osborne winks at Waterson.]

SO: Best weekend of my life.

[Osborne drops the mic, dragging a thumb across his throat as the spotlights cut to black...

...and we cut backstage where we find a jubilant Wes Taylor and Tony Donovan going over their match.]

WT: It was just liked we planned out, brother... JUST right! If we look like that next weekend, we're gonna be the new champions - I just know it!

[Donovan nods.]

TD: Don't get cocky though, Wes. It's gonna be a fight... you know that. We don't know who our opponents are going to be... and you know Supreme's going to have a plan to keep those titles and maybe take us out too if we're not ready for them.

[Taylor nods in agreement.]

WT: Absolutely. That's why we've gotta be ready for anything. We've gotta watch video on all of them... try to figure out how any of them would work together as a team...

[A voice rings out from off-camera.]

"Be the champions you were born to be."

[The former two-time champions turn to look in tandem... and then grin excitedly when they see Brian Lau enter the room, all smiles as the crowd ROARS for the arrival of the former IIWF managerial mastermind. Lau moves to give a quick handshake and embrace to his former charges.]

WT: Couldn't resist a visit to the old stomping grounds, huh?

[Lau shrugs.]

BL: Rage and Hunter made a request... Brian liked the idea... who am I to say no to pulling the wool over the eyes of Jackson and Martinez?

[Taylor chuckles.]

WT: We could've helped, you know?

[Lau nods.]

BL: I do know that. Brian too. But he wants to do this his way.

[Donovan smirks.]

TD: Where have I heard that before?

[Lau chuckles.]

BL: Listen, I'm just glad you're both back on speaking terms with him after all that went down last year. This place could use a little Kings of Wrestling to keep things in check. That's actually why I came to see you.

[Taylor arches an eyebrow.]

WT: Hey, we'd love to get the Kings going again but with Johnny still laid up and Brian nursing the wrist, I-

[Lau shakes his head.]

BL: Not what I meant. I'm talking about Team Supreme.

[Donovan's brow furrows.]

TD: What about them?

BL: Tony, you gotta realize... this is a VERY different Team Supreme than when you were involved. Not just personnel-wise for sure but believe me, knowing the kinds of things that Crawford and Mifune are capable of sends a chill down my spine. And that doesn't even take the Olympic gold medalist into account.

These guys are dangerous. REAL dangerous.

[Taylor shrugs.]

WT: We know that.

[Lau shakes his head again.]

BL: Wes, I need you guys to go into this understanding what I mean. You want the titles... and damn right, you should. But these guys... as much as they're about keeping the titles, right now they're about sending messages. They've been taking out anyone and everyone in their way. Johnny and Brian were just the tip of the iceberg. Howie Somers is on the shelf too. Max Magnum got his damn skull cracked open and he wasn't even really on their bad side. Who knows what they're gonna do to Carver tonight?

You're trying to take something from them... and they're going to come gunning for you.

[Donovan nods.]

TD: He's right, Wes.

WT: I know he's right. But we're not going to just give up. We're not going to walk away. That's not us, Brian. We're gonna fight.

[Lau grins.]

BL: Like your fathers before you?

[Taylor chuckles.]

WT: Like a couple of Outlaws.

[Donovan grins.]

TD: Like an old man who's still willing to go to war for glory.

[Lau nods.]

BL: You're on your own with this... you know that, right?

[The duo nods.]

BL: Johnny may never wrestle again. Brian's not ready. No one can find Casey. Claw's... doing whatever the hell Claw does.

[Donovan flinches... and Lau notices.]

BL: And yeah, that's the right reaction to that too. Because no matter what happens next weekend, don't think for a second that Claw's forgotten that you two embarrassed him.

[Taylor protests.]

WT: That's wasn't-

[Lau interrupts.]

BL: That's how he'll take it. And he'll be gunning for you both too. Guaranteed. And that means I can't be any part of this either. I've got no help for you boys. I wish I did. I made some calls but... nothing. You're outnumbered. You're outgunned. You're overwhelmed.

But you can do it. I know you can.

[Lau pauses, a little emotional surprisingly.]

BL: I... I just wanted to let you two know that.

[A grinning Taylor slaps Lau on the shoulder.]

WT: You old softie. Those old Double Eye fans will think we got an impostor in here.

BL: Hey, I worked hard for that coldblooded cutthroat genius reputation.

TD: Might've been spoiled by the nymphs.

BL: At least I never agreed to the Tuxedo Match... or did I?

[Laughter all around. Lau suddenly gets serious.]

BL: Alright, I'm out of here before Supreme decides to put me in a hospital bed next to Johnny. You boys take care of yourselves, yeah?

WT: That's what we're good at, boss.

[Handshakes all around as we fade to black...]

We open to a plain white room, and a smiling Michelle Bailey, who has changed out her glasses for safety goggles. She is identified with a graphic, reading "Michelle Bailey - Expert Consultant".]

MB: Hello, and welcome to the AWA Technologies testing lab! When the team here, in collaboration with 2K Games, asked me to tell you at home about the upcoming AWA 2K18, I was faced with a dilemma. I hardly know anything about video games!

[We cut to Michelle holding a Sega Genesis controller, surrounded by smart-looking people in labcoats, with the sounds of ToeJam and Earl playing in the background. She looks up with a shrug, saying "this is the only game I know how to play". We then cut back to Michelle in the white room with a slight frown.]

MB: So obviously, we needed to call in a pro to help me.

[We pan back to see Kimmy Bailey holding a controller. She is identified with a graphic as well, reading "Kimmy Bailey - Video Game Genius".]

KB: Mama, you ain't gonna believe what they've done with this game! I thought last year's was somethin'...

[Kimmy lets out a low whistle.]

KB: But take a look at this!

[Kimmy presses a button, and the room transforms into a digital representation of the Saturday Night Wrestling arena packed with fans, with the mother and daughter standing inside of a ring, Michelle looking around in confusion.]

KB: Have you ever wanted to play through the storied career of Juan Vasquez?

[Michelle tilts her head.]

MB: But I was there for most of it...

[Kimmy ignores her mother.]

KB: With the new Showcase mode, you can!

[Kimmy presses a button, and her outfit changes to a replica of Juan Vasquez's, along with an AWA 2K18 T-shirt. Michelle looks on in surprise as Kimmy flexes.]

KB: You can take on practically everyone my daddy's faced! You can even play as the West Memphis Assassin!

[Kimmy presses another button, and the West Memphis Assassin's mask covers her face. We hear snarling in the background, as the camera pans to see digital representations of all the big opponents in Juan Vasquez's past - among them, Stevie Scott, Calisto Dufresne, Luke Kinsey, Shane Destiny, and Ryan Martinez - with a digital version of Raphael Rhodes standing in front of them. Michelle gets a worried look in her eyes.]

MB: You have to face all of them?!

[Suddenly, from the side, Juan Vasquez steps beside Kimmy, shaking his head.]

JV: I think you better let me handle this one. Hold down the left trigger and hit X.

KB: Sure thing, Daddy!

[Kimmy does so and Juan transforms into a digital version of himself, charging into a fight against all his famed foes. Michelle looks on in amazement as Kimmy holds up the controller.]

KB: That ain't all! If you want to be in control of the AWA, just put yourself in Maxim Zharkov's shoes with the new Galaxy Mode!

[Kimmy presses another button, and her outfit turns into a button down and slacks, pencil behind her ear, holding a clipboard in one hand and the controller in the other. The arena also repeatedly transforms, from Showtime, to Memorial Day Mayhem, to Power Hour, to the Crockett Coliseum, to SuperClash.]

MB: You mean I can make the matches?

KB: Of course, Mama! There's over 150 stars from the AWA's past and present, plus more than 25 different arenas to choose from, with over 20 different match types from your basic singles match to War Games! You can even make E-Girl MAX fight themselves!

[We pan to the other side, where Harley Hamilton, Cinder, and Casey Cash stand, glaring.]

HH: That'll never happen!

KB: Oh yeah?

[Kimmy holds down the right trigger and presses B, and all three turn into digital representations of themselves, with digital Casey wearing a referee shirt.]

KB: Oh, and there's a new special referee mode, too! Now get to work, you three!

[As the digital versions of EGM loudly complain, we see Maxim Zharkov himself enter the frame.]

MZ: I think you might want to let me handle this.

KB: Oh! Sure, Interim Boss!

[Kimmy hands Zharkov the pencil and clipboard, and he turns into a digital representation of himself, walking towards the fussing digital EGM as we close back in to Michelle and Kimmy.]

KB: And if that many stars ain't enough for you, they beefed up the creation suite to make as many as your hard drive can hold, or even modify the existing roster!

MB: Baby, don't...

[Kimmy holds down the left and right bumpers, pressing A, and turns Michelle into a digital version of herself. The camera whips around to see a seven foot tall version of Ayako Fujiwara, eyes glowing with a heavenly light, as Molly Bell happily purrs beside her. The digital Michelle looks across the ring in horror.]

MB: Reset the game right now, young lady!

[Kimmy pouts.]

KB: All right, fine. Sheesh. She was on your side.

[Kimmy presses the home button, as Michelle turns back to normal, and we're back in the white room. Michelle puts her hand to her chest, gasping.]

KB: And you can even take AWA action with you on the go!

[A Nintendo Switch is thrown into the frame, as Kimmy catches it without looking.]

KB: We got a version of AWA 2K18 on the Switch!

[And an iPhone gets thrown into the frame, again with Kimmy catching the device without effort.]

KB: Plus exclusive iOS and iPadOS versions!

[Michelle puts her hands on her hips with a sigh.]

MB: I'm really glad I asked you.

KB: Sure thing, Mama! That's AWA 2K18, coming this fall to practically everywhere! PlayStation, Xbox, Switch, Apple mobile devices, Windows, and Mac!

[Kimmy narrows her eyes.]

KB: But not Android, bless their hearts.

[We cut to the AWA 2K18 logo, and logos of the platforms underneath...

...and then we fade back up to backstage in the IIWF Coliseum where we find Sweet Lou Blackwell standing.]

SLB: Welcome back, AWA fans! It's been an exciting night here in Portland and it's only going to get more exciting in the weeks to come with so much action on tap for AWA fans around the world - especially as we continue this red hot summer on both Showtime and Saturday Night Wrestling. We've got so many big events this summer to look forward to as well like Opportunity Knocks, Girls To The Front, Duel At The Diamond, and One More For The Road among others. So many big matches already signed and more coming all the time including this one... earlier tonight, we saw Fujizona assaulted by the American Idols who made it clear that was a challenge. Well, challenge accepted! The Generation Lost tag team will take on Fujizona in action next weekend in Portland for Saturday Night Wrestling as the tag team scene continues to heat up!

[Blackwell pauses.]

SLB: But speaking of champions, I'm being told we're just about set to hear from another AWA champion...

[The interviewer shakes his head.]

SLB: ...and if you can hear the disdain in my voice, it's because I can't stand the way this man won the title. Jordan Ohara was robbed... again... of the National Title and it's mostly because of this man... and I'm so glad that Mariah and Sweet Daddy Williams drew this assignment. Take it away, guys!

[We cut from the backstage area to the ring where Mariah Wolfe and Sweet Daddy Williams are standing.]

MW: Thanks, Lou... and I suppose we'll take one for the team here. Ladies and gentlemen, the brand new AWA National Champion... Kerry Kendrick!

[From slightly off-camera, Kendrick and Miss Sandra Hayes step into view, the boos coming down strong for the one of the AWA's most disliked duo. Kendrick is in his latest merch: a very edgy-looking printed black t-shirt of a silver, custom designed "King of Spades" logo on the front with a black leather pageboy cap worn insolently backwards on his head. Sandra Hayes is dressed in the latest trends she presumably stole from Ariana Grande, although her favorite accessory is her man's AWA National Title she has slung across her chest.]

MW: Along with his...

[Miss Sandra Hayes shoots Wolfe an icy smirk as Wolfe bites her tongue.]

MW: ...as well as Miss Sandra Hayes. We're one week away from your first televised National Title defense, and tonight, you make the announcement about who you will be facing next week on Saturday Night Wrestling.

[Kendrick draws closer, leaning over the mic.]

KK: Yes, live tonight as Showtime comes to you from...

[A mirthless, condescending snicker.]

KK: ...from the "eye-eye-dubya-eff calla-see-yum." The sad fact of life is that I've seen airplane hangers with more character than this dump.

[The boos rain down from the Portland fans.]

KK: Man, you know it was natural that the AWA and The Mouse were teaming up, because no one like the AWA can bottle your own mediocre memories and charge their customers a premium selling a diluted version back to them. Who are we catering to next on Showtime's "Peaked Twenty Years Ago" nostalgia tour? Shootfire Pro Rasslin'? Atlantic City Entertainment? Chinook?

[Sweet Daddy seems unamused, despite Kendrick snickering while looking right at him.]

KK: I'm so... so... so glad I don't have to pretend to like any of this crap. No kissing ugly babies or hugging fat chicks for the Self Made Man. I'll just keep looking toward the future, and defending the National Title. And against the advice of Miss Hayes...

[Hayes looks on taciturnly, but keeps holding the belt before her proudly.]

KK: ...after seeing what I saw from Veronica Westerly earlier tonight, I've decided to take her up on her offer and defend the National Title against the opponent she chooses. Nenshou, Armstrong, Jimmy Lynch... whoever she's got. Me beating any of those three will erase any-

[The fans start cheering loudly... and Sandra Hayes tapping his shoulder makes Kendrick stop his train of thought. She points off-camera and as Williams turns, he locks his eyes on the man coming down the aisle...]

KK: You got a problem with that, Williams?

[..."The Future" Derrick Williams who smirks at the new National Champion. Williams is dressed in street clothes and spends more time looking at the National Title belt over Kendrick's shoulder than acknowledging him as he draws near the ring. Williams produces a mic of his own.]

DW: You know, Kendrick... it's funny you should talk about looking to the future.

I think I'm looking at MY future... and whether or not that belt looks better over my shoulder or around my waist.

[Williams shrugs.]

DW: And we all know that next week, you're not about to be facing Nenshou or James Lynch... and definitely not Atlas Armstrong. But what we DO know is you'll be facing a tomato can that you and Miss Hayes here handpicked.

[Hayes clutches her chest in exaggeration.]

DW: I was thinking though...

[Williams steps through the ropes, getting close to the new champion.]

DW: ...why not me?

[The crowd CHEERS that idea as Kendrick falls back a few steps, Hayes coming with him, the duo laughing.]

KK: I'd love to but... the sad fact of life is you haven't won a match since you lost to Ryan Martinez at Memorial Day Mayhem.

[The fans jeer and Williams bristles as he immediately steps closer, raising the mic again.]

DW: It's one loss.

[He holds up one finger.]

DW: That's never happening again. Not to him.

[Kendrick nods, obvious amusement on his face.]

DW: But if we want to rewind a little a bit... remind me, champ... what was YOUR last match before you won the National Title?

[Kendrick grimaces as Hayes waves him off with a "we don't talk about that!"]

DW: That's right. It was Juan Vasquez, wasn't it? And it was actually supposed to be your last match in the AWA period. I was watching that match... backstage just like everyone else.

And I gotta hand it to you, you gave him hell.... and I even though you had him a couple of times.

Just like I had the White Knight dead to rights a couple of times.

[Williams looks thoughtful for a moment.]

DW: A lot of similarities between you and I... except I'm still here on my own. You had to be convinced by the brains of the outfit not to take your ball and go home - isn't that right, Miss Hayes?

[As usual, Kendrick's thin skin is his weakness and he gets into Williams' face.]

KK: I don't have to justify anything to you! I'm AWA National Champion! That's in the record books! I've been here longer than anyone-!

[Miss Hayes gets between Kendrick and Williams, who is egging Kendrick on.]

MSH: Derrick... Derrick... I knew you'd come up here and try to do this, so I made a deal with President Zharkov. He likes you. God knows why, but he does. He said that you can have a match next week against any opponent we choose, and if you win, then you're next in line for a National Title shot.

Deal?

[Williams glances back and forth between Hayes and the National Title belt.]

DW: Any opponent you chose? Well, I know that, unlike Kerry here, I'll have an actual challenge next week. If Max was okay with it, so am I.

[Williams smirks in Kendrick's direction, unable to resist one last parting shot.]

DW: Try not to walk out of the AWA... AGAIN, before our title match, okay Self Made Man?

[And with that, Williams turns to leave the ring, stepping out to the apron as Kendrick fumes from inside the ring...]

LD: And just like that, we've got ourselves a deal! Kerry Kendrick will defend the National Title next weekend in Portland against an opponent of Veronica Westerly's

choosing and Derrick Williams will meet an opponent of Kendrick's choosing... and if he wins, he'll get a shot at the National Title! And speaking of title opportunities, that's one of the carrots being dangled in front of the participants in this summer's Brass Ring Tournament which will run over the next few months right here on Showtime, Ben.

BW: There are wrestlers who spend their entire career fighting to get a title shot and these kids are getting the chance to not only win an AWA contract but to win a title shot as well! It's a huge opportunity for them.

LD: Earlier tonight, we saw Amber Gold advance in the tournament on the women's side of the bracket... and in just a few moments, the men will be in action with the international import Rodrick Storm taking on the former indy superstar who many feel is looking at his last chance to break through, Gabriel Cordova. We caught up with both competitors - let's hear from them before they hit the ring for Brass Ring action!

[We fade through black to find a steel chair that sits empty in front of the AWA banner. After a few moments, footsteps begin to echo throughout the very empty room and a gravelly voice begins to speak.]

Voice: Tonight, the AWA faithful are finally going to watch the Iron Kraken arise from the depths.

[The camera pans to the direction of the voice and the imposing figure of Rodrick Storm strides into view. The camera takes in the full view of the monster of a man by panning up from his black wrestling boots with purple laces. The camera begins to pan up revealing the back of the legs, upon the right knee is a black knee pad with purple trim and this black and purple theme continues upon the wrestling trunks.

Storm stops as he nears the chair and slowly spins around, allowing the camera to see the word "STORM" is written upon the trunks in purple letters. As he spins the viewer takes in his massive back, adorned with scars from various wars in the ring.]

RS: And it is fitting that here at Ring Wars, my quest for the Brass Ring finally begins.

[Rodrick lets out a deep chuckle.]

RS: A brass ring... it seems less impressive than earning your first career victory. A brass ring seems less important than an accolade crowning you the best in the world. And a brass ring is clearly duller than a golden title belt that signifies reaching the top of the mountain.

[The Iron Kraken pauses for a brief moment.]

RS: So why would I be interested in a simple, dull brass ring? It's what is attached to that ring I am interested in... you see the ring holds the key... it holds pieces of paper... but not mere pieces of paper. They are the key to something that has eluded me for nearly an eternity, a contract and entrance into the AWA.

For it is in the AWA that the monster known as the Iron Kraken needs to be. I need to be unleashed upon the fans of the United States, for they need to learn the true meaning of fear. They need to understand that a monster truly does exist and that he is coming for each and every one of you. And that starts with Cordova. They say tonight could very well be your final opportunity to cash in and earn your place in the AWA.

[Roderick Storm reaches down, grabs the steel chair and tosses it, for a few moments the clangs of the chair hitting the floor of the corridor echo.]

RS: Well Gabriel, I will do everything in my power to make sure that your opportunity crashes in upon you. That you are staring at the lights, wondering what you did in a past life to have to enter the ring with the Iron Kraken! But Gabriel, know that you were just the first of many to fall before me!

[Without warning, his hand engulfs the camera lens causing all to fade to a shaky black...

...and we fade back up backstage at the IIWF Coliseum, where we see a specially designed AWA backdrop with the walls lined with faded posters from its glory days. Mark Stegglet stands in front of the backdrop, with microphone in hand.]

MS: Ladies and gentlemen, I'm here with a man who has waited years for this moment... Gabriel Cordova! Gabriel, you're moments away from your first-round match in the Brass Ring Tournament against the massive powerhouse, Rodrick Storm. What are your thoughts heading into this?

[Gabriel Cordova steps into frame, his powerfully built 230 pounds of densely packed muscle filling the screen. He's dressed in a simple black hoodie over black wrestling trunks. His hair is pulled back into a tight ponytail with a few loose strands framing his face. His face is burning with focused intensity, exuding confidence and power.]

GC: Mark... look at where we are. Years ago, the men that wrestled here rewrote the rules of what this business could be. This is where legends were born and where empires fell. Legacies were forged right here that still echo through every arena we step into today.

[He pauses, letting the weight sink in.]

GC: And now, here we are. Two men walking through these same doors, carrying names that came before us. There's people who look at me and see Juan Vasquez's shadow. And Rodrick Storm? They look at Rodrick Storm and they see Kraken reborn.

But Mark, they're wrong.

We're not here to carry anyone else's legacy. We're here to forge our own. Rodrick Storm is 6'9", 285 pounds of pure destruction. He's survived wars in Japan that would've ended most careers. He's got power that can crush a man, head drops that can make hearts skip a beat, and that Uraken that hits like thunder.

[He lowers his head, nodding to himself.]

GC: I respect it. I respect what he's built. But respect doesn't mean fear.

[He steps closer to the camera, voice rising with conviction.]

GC: Size? Power? Legacy? None of that matters when the bell rings, because I've got something bigger than all of it. Heart. A heart that kept me grinding these past two years when everyone wrote me off. A heart that turned disappointment into motivation. A heart that refuses to let any man stand in my way.

Rodrick Storm, you might tower over me. You might hit harder than anyone I've ever faced. But my heart? It doesn't care how much you weigh or whose blood runs through your veins. Heart is the fire that keeps you moving when your body

screams to quit and Rodrick, my heart burns hotter than anything you've ever faced.

[He turns and gives Stegglet a brief glare, before turning his attention back to the camera.]

GC: Tonight isn't about Juan Vasquez's shadow or Kraken's bloodline. This is about stepping out of every shadow and becoming a light that blinds everyone who ever doubted me. This is about Gabriel Cordova writing the first chapter of a legacy that's all my own. I've stared at the end of my story before and I refused to let it be written by anyone else.

[His voice rises, steady and unyielding.]

GC: Nothing will stop me from grabbing this brass ring. Not your size. Not your power. Not your legacy. Not the ghosts of this building or the weight of every name that came before us.

I'm not here to inherit anything.

I'm here to TAKE everything.

And when all's said and done, the only legacy that's going to matter...

[He glares into the camera, eyes filled with determination.]

GC: ...is the one I write with my hand raised over you in victory.

[A beat.]

GC: I'll see you in the ring, Rodrick.

[He then walks off-screen as we fade from backstage out to the ring and Megumi Sato.]

MS: The following contest is set for one fall with a fifteen minute time limit and it is a first round match in the 2018 BRASSSSSS RIIIIIIING TOURNAMENNNNNNT!

[The crowd cheers that!]

MS: Introducing first...

[Some unknown dark and brooding music plays over the PA system to a mixed reaction from the Portland crowd.]

MS: From Cripple Creek, Colorado... weighing in at 285 pounds...

...he is the IRON KRAAAAAAKEN...

...RODRIIIIIIIIIICK STORRRRRRRRRRRM!

[The imposing figure that is Rodrick Storm strides into view. Fresh out of the Japanese wrestling scene, the mountain of a man stands six foot nine, his body littered with scars - souvenirs of his time in Japan's death match scene. His face appears younger than the damage on his body would indicate, topped with short, slicked back brown hair and a well-trimmed beard. His hazel eyes bear down on the crowd as he walks the aisle.]

LD: Rodrick Storm, the nephew of former AWA competitor Kraken... and Ben, tell the world a little about this man.

BW: Rodrick Storm is an international superstar... period. While not known well here in the States yet, he's a big gaijin name in the Land of the Rising Sun... where the fans love and respect his hard-hitting style. Big slams, big throws, big suplexes. Check your neck when you're taking on the Iron Kraken because you may be a few inches shorter when it's all said and done.

LD: And of course, like his Uncle who precedes him, you have to be on the lookout for the Uraken - the spinning backfist - which can turn out yours lights in a hurry.

BW: No doubt.

[Storm reaches the ring, climbing in and settling into a corner to await the arrival of his opponent...]

MS: Annnnnnnnnnd his opponent...

["Narco" by Blasterjaxx and Timmy Trumpet heralds the arrival of the much-hyped competitor heading through the curtain to a mostly positive reaction.]

MS: From Rowland Heights, California... weighing in at 230 pounds...

...GAAAAAABRIELLLLLL COOOOOORRRRDOOOVAAAAA!

[The Puerto Rican youngster pops through the curtain with a pump of the fist, showing off the muscular frame that has replaced his sinewy build of years gone by. His thick, wavy mane tops his youthful babyface features, showing much intensity as he stares down the aisle at his destiny.]

LD: Gabriel Cordova is in the IIWF Coliseum! And if you're a fan of CCW, you're VERY familiar with Cordova, Ben.

BW: Gabriel Cordova is a cautionary tale for every rookie out there... every indy darling with the Internet hyping them up. Flash back two years ago and Gabriel Cordova was on the list with names like Jeremiah Moon... guys who were on the indies, making waves, getting over on Twitter and on YouTube... guys who the Internet INSISTED they'd be big stars if they ever got the chance. Well, Cordova got the chance... and he couldn't get the job done. He earned himself a CCW contract and there he's sat for two years trying everything he could to get "the call." But this tournament has given him one more chance... one LAST chance, I believe. He's gotta show the world he's ready for this or he'll be back on the indies working for a hot dog and a dream before he knows it.

[Cordova reaches the ring, climbing inside as he does his last moment pre-match preparations. Storm stands ready for battle, waiting to be unleashed.]

LD: The cold, hard reality of this business and that even the brightest of stars internationally like Storm or on the indies like Cordova don't always shine when the brightest lights are on them. One of these two is going to learn that the hard way here tonight in Portland.

"DING! DING! DING!"

[At the sound of the bell, it's as if someone severed the cable holding back the Iron Kraken as he rushes forward, trying to get his hands on the much-smaller Cordova who dances away, trying to keep from being grasped or cornered.]

LD: Both men on the move early in this one...

[Cordova is sidestepping like mad, trying to circle the larger opponent who rushes him again, fists clenched and at the ready as Cordova ducks and dances away again, keeping some distance between he and his opponent.]

LD: Cordova trying to use his size to his advantage, the speed and quickness edge as Storm looks to overwhelm him and cash his ticket into the next round of this Brass Ring Tournament which will be running all summer long here on Showtime.

BW: We've got Catalina Lopez, Armani Avery, and Amber Gold moving on into the Semifinals already. One of these two are going to join them.

LD: And then in two weeks on Showtime from Seattle, we'll see two more advance when Jo Jo Washington takes on Big Boss Shinza and Elijah Wilde meets Will Robinson.

[A frustrated Storm pauses, glaring across the ring at Cordova.]

BW: Look at the size difference between these two, Dane. Cordova's smart to try to stay out of reach because if Rodrick Storm gets his hands on his much-smaller opponent, this might turn into a demolition in a hurry.

[Storm closes the distance again, slower and more methodical this time as he tries to measure the gap, lunging in for a tieup...]

...but Cordova ducks under, slipping free, and snaps a kick off the thigh that echoes throughout the IIWF Coliseum!]

"OHHHHHHH!"

LD: Surgical strike there by Gabriel Cordova, trying to perhaps take those long legs out from under the big man.

BW: Everyone's the same size when they're flat on their backs, Dane.

LD: Very true.

[Storm turns to glare at Cordova who has created space again, standing at the ready...]

...and another lunge sees Storm change levels this time, grabbing the torso of Cordova before he can escape.]

BW: Uh oh! He's got him now!

[Storm bodily flings Cordova towards the corner, rushing in after...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and a big running shoulder block lifts Cordova into the air, slamming him violently against the turnbuckles!]

LD: Uh oh is right, Ben!

[Storm seizes the moment, driving his knee repeatedly up into the midsection, jamming Cordova back against the turnbuckles...]

LD: Storm is all over him here, rushing in on him...

BW: Storm doesn't rush. He crushes space.

[Grabbing the arm, the powerhouse wings Cordova across the ring, sending him crashing into the opposite corner, standing mid-ring as Cordova stumbles out...]

LD: LOOK AT THAAAAAT!

[...and the crowd is buzzing over the elevation on the backdrop as Connors goes bouncing off the canvas!]

BW: Shoulda got him to change some lightbulbs while he was up there, Dane.

LD: I'm sure Gabriel Cordova isn't finding that too amusing right- first cover of the match!

[It's a lazy cover though, sending a message more than attempting to score victory as Cordova escapes at one.]

LD: Not much behind that cover though and Cordova slips out.

[Rising off the canvas, Storm stands and waits, unimpressed by Cordova's kickout.]

LD: Rodrick Storm showing tremendous power as advertised and he's got Gabriel Cordova in a bad spot early on in this one, Ben.

BW: The pre-match press on Storm is the stuff of highly-touted international prospect who has dominated in Japan and is looking to bring that same overwhelming dominance to the States. But this ain't Japan and this is a whole other beast when it comes to competition. The AWA IS the cream of the crop and it's where the best in the world do battle.

[Storm reaches out to grab Cordova by the hair but the Southern California native pops him on the jaw with a forearm shot!]

LD: Speaking of doing battle...

[Cordova lands a second... and a third, the Portland crowd rallying behind the undersized underdog...]

LD: ...Cordova's battling back!

[Storm's hair whips back as Cordova pops him on the jaw again...

...but then he BURIES a right hand deep into the midsection of Cordova, hanging onto his head as he slams home the big haymaker time after time!]

LD: Storm's hammering the body, working over the ribcage of Gabriel Cordova!

[And a final blow in the form of an uppercut snaps Cordova backwards, sending him flopping back against the ropes as the referee warns Storm for the illegal closed fists blows.]

LD: The referee letting Storm hear it but the big man doesn't care!

[As Cordova pushes off the ropes, Storm snatches him up with a two-handed grip, lifting him up into a choke...]

LD: And now the referee is REALLY letting Storm have it! That's a blatant choke in there and-

[Storm holds until four before flinging Cordova down onto the mat, sending him splattering down on the canvas...]

LD: Rodrick Storm has Cordova right where he wants him, Ben.

BW: Showing the world that size DOES matter.

LD: Classy. Maybe I can dig up ol' Soundbite and you guys can really go to town.

[Storm pulls Cordova up again, lifting him under his arm, doing a full spin for all to see, and then DRIVES him down in a ring-shaking side slam!]

LD: Big slam there... and another cover!

[This time, it's a two count that follows before a grimacing Cordova kicks out to cheers.]

LD: Two count off the slam... and Cordova's gotta find a way to get back into this one in a hurry, fans, or it's going to be all over.

BW: That's right. You can only take so much of the power and punishment of a guy like the Iron Kraken.

LD: We're a few minutes into this one and so far, it's been almost all Rodrick Storm.

[Storm's a little annoyed as he pulls Cordova up again, whipping him across the ring into the turnbuckles...

...and then comes charging in after him, swinging a long leg up to boot Cordova right in the mouth!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: BIG BOOT CONNECTS!

[Cordova slumps down, hooking his arms over the top rope to stay standing.]

LD: Storm may be moving in for the kill here - he's got Cordova right where he wants him!

BW: You gotta love this, Dane! The Brass Ring Tournament is where prospects find out in a hurry whether they belong! And we may be seeing the end of Gabriel Cordova as a much-hyped prospect and the beginning of him as the answer to a trivia question!

LD: Storm backing away, the Iron Kraken looking to strike once more, trying to drag Cordova down into the depths...

[With three-quarters of the ring ahead of him, Storm comes barreling in again...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and Cordova just BARELY rolls clear, throwing himself into a front somersault, rolling up to his feet as Storm SMASHES chestfirst into the turnbuckles!]

LD: ...but it's Storm who goes facefirst into the corner! And suddenly, the much-hyped prospect as you put it, Ben, has a window of opportunity in front of him!

[Slowly moving in on the staggered Storm, Cordova lashes out with a low kick to the side of the knee, causing Storm to grimace as he pitches forward, grabbing the top rope to brace himself...]

LD: And Cordova looking to target the knees, trying to bring the big man down...

[A second and third kick find the same target, Storm hobbling as he leans against the turnbuckles. He makes a desperate grab for Cordova who spins away, using the extra moment to land a final kick to the side of the knee, bringing Storm down onto the other knee!]

LD: He's chopping down the mighty oak!

[Storm winces as he pushes himself up to his feet, Cordova leaping at almost the same time...]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: KNEE STRIKE! A LEAPING KNEE ON THE BUTTON HAS STORM SEEING MERMAIDS!

[Storm falls back into the corner as Cordova moves away, nodding as the Portland fans get loud in support of him...]

LD: Cordova now, measuring his man... looking to get back into this one...

[Storm pushes off the turnbuckles, stumbling out towards Cordova who comes charging back in, leaving his feet and DRIVING both feet into the chest, a blow that sends Storm CRASHING backwards into the turnbuckles again!]

LD: ...DROPKICK ON TARGET! And suddenly, it's Rodrick Storm who finds himself in serious trouble, Ben!

BW: Cordova could feel the walls closing in on him and he knew he had to do something to save himself from the heap of obscurity that he was heading towards FAST!

LD: A lot of people have said that this Brass Ring tournament might be Cordova's last shot to get a break at the big time. He did his time on the indies... he's spent a while in CCW as well... this is his chance to break into the AWA locker room and stake his claim on a spot.

[With Storm leaning against the corner, Cordova slingshots over the ropes to the apron, giving his opponent a little shove that sends him staggering from the turnbuckles towards the middle of the ring as Cordova grabs the top rope with both hands. The crowd ROARS with anticipation as Cordova gives a nod...]

LD: Cordova on the apron and if you've watched this young man compete, you know what's coming up next!

[...and then leaps into the air, springing off the top rope...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and connects with a flying forearm smash that puts Storm down on the mat, rolling immediately under the ropes to the outside as Cordova gets up with a fist pump, shouting "COME ON!" at the cheering Portland crowd!]

LD: AIR CORDOVA COMES IN FOR A CRASH LANDING ON TOP OF RODRICK STORM!

BW: The Iron Kraken bailed out in a hurry too... looking to regroup as Cordova has COMPLETELY turned this around from the opening minutes.

LD: Speaking of minutes, we're about six minutes into this one... and remember, these first round Brass Ring Tournament matches have a fifteen minute time limit. So, plenty of time left as these two battle it out with their very future in this business on the line.

[Cordova stands center ring, waiting for Storm to regain his feet on the outside and as soon as he does...]

LD: HERE COMES CORDOVA! TO THE ROPES... SPRINTING ACROSSSSSSSSSS...

[...and Cordova HURLS himself into an over-the-top-rope somersault, wiping out a stunned Storm on the outside!]

LD: SOMERSAULT PLANCHA COMES DOWN HARRRRRRD ON THE IRON KRAKEN!

BW: You can call it high risk 'til the cows come home, Dane, but in a match like this, high risk may be what it takes to get you across the finish line. Cordova knows he's undersized and doing what he does best - even at risk to his own body - is a big way he can even things up a little bit.

[Cordova, sensing momentum on his side, pulls Storm off the mat, shooting the international superstar back inside the ring...]

LD: Back in he goes... grabbing that top rope again is Cordova, looking to use those high flying skills once more...

[...and as Storm struggles up off the mat, Cordova leaps into the air again, springing off once more...]

LD: ...DROPKICK CONNECTS! RIGHT TO THE BACK OF THE HEAD!

[Cordova crawls across, diving over Storm's torso, wrapping up a leg...]

LD: ONNNNNNNNE! TWOOOOOOOOO!

[...but the powerful Storm escapes at two, breaking free.]

LD: Two count only... and Rodrick Storm shows a little of the resiliency that's made him a household name in Japan. A true international superstar, Ben.

BW: They talk about his slams... his suplexes... all his crazy drivers... even his death matches... but what they oughta be talking about is just how much punishment this guy can take and come out the other side a winner. Because right now, that's what matters, Dane.

LD: I totally agree, Ben, and as Gabriel Cordova pulls Storm off the mat, Storm needs to dig down deep for that second wind and-

[Cordova wraps his arms around the torso of Storm, taking him up and over with a Northern Lights Suplex with a grunt of exertion...]

LD: SUPLEX BY CORDOVA! No bridge though - he rolls through it, bringing Storm up to his feet with him...

[The SoCal native switches his grip to a front facelock, hooking the tights with the off-hand...]

BW: Looking for Skyfall!

[...but as he attempts to muscle the 285 pounder up into the air, Storm kicks the legs and manages to settle right back down on his feet!]

LD: He couldn't get him up for the brainbuster onto the knee!

[But back on his feet, Storm UNLEASHES a brutal standing lariat that flips Cordova inside out before dumping him back down on the mat!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: The Lariatos would be proud of that one - Storm with the cover!

[Pressing his palms down into the chest, Storm sneers as the referee slaps the mat once... twice... and Cordova kicks out, slipping the shoulder up in time to cheers!]

LD: Ohhh... and Cordova kicks out in tiiiiime!

[A furious Storm pushes up to his feet, dragging a dazed Cordova up with him, hammering him backwards towards the corner with brutal elbow strikes to the side of the head...]

LD: Cordova can't defend himself! The referee taking a look there!

[...and in the corner, Storm switches to heavy knees to the body, rocking Cordova's torso over and over and over.]

LD: Come on! Get him out of the corner!

[The referee tries to do exactly that but the aggressive Storm ignores him, grabbing the arm to whip Cordova across hard, sending him crashing into the turnbuckles before staggering back out...]

LD: Cordova's out on his feet...

[...where Storm lifts him into the air, throwing him down with a standing spinebuster that shakes the ring!]

"THUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUD!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: ...UP AND DOWWWWWWN WITH THE SPINEBUSTER! Could that be it?!

[Storm looks down at the unmoving Cordova, taking a step towards him before pulling up, shaking his head... and then slowly raises his arms up before throwing them down hard!]

LD: And he's calling for To The Depths - his lifting powerbomb that has won him so many matches during his time in Japan! Could it be his ticket to the Semifinals here tonight?

[Storm drags a dazed Cordova up, yanking him right into a standing headscissors...]

BW: Cordova's about to get sent to the bottom of the ocean!

[...and lifts him up, powering him up onto his shoulders...]

LD: HE'S GOT HIM UP!

[...but Cordova's got a little too much momentum on the lift, slipping out of Storm's grasp, sliding right down the back into a sunset flip, wiggling legs out to get under him for more leverage!]

LD: ONNNNNNNNE! TWOOOOOOOO!

[Cordova's running in place to try to keep the shoulders down as Storm thrashes madly underneath him...]

LD: THREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!

"DING! DING! DING!"

[...and Cordova immediately is kicked off by the struggling Storm, rolling under the ropes, a shocked expression on his face. Storm is right behind him to his feet, rushing the ropes as Cordova backsteps away, the referee joining him on the outside.]

LD: HE GOT HIM! HE GOT HIM!

[Storm angrily kicks at the bottom rope as the referee raises Cordova's hand on the floor.]

MS: Here is your winnnnnnnnnerrrrrrr...

...GAAAAAAAABRIEL CORRRRRRRDOOOOOOVAAAAA!

[Cordova has his hand raised, a huge grin crossing his face on the (perhaps) upset victory as Storm shouts a threat at him from inside the ring.]

BW: I think he had the tights or something, Dane!

LD: He did not!

BW: Of course he did! There's no way he held down Storm without some kind of... something.

LD: Expert analysis there by my partner but let's call it like it is, Ben - Gabriel Cordova is headed to the Semifinals to join Armani Avery, Amber Gold, and Catalina Lopez!

[A tournament graphic comes up on the screen showing the aforementioned competitors all in the Semifinals with more text promoting the rest of the first round:

6/30 - Historic Washington Hall - Seattle, Washington

ROUND ONE: Jo Jo Washington vs Big Boss Shinza

ROUND ONE: Elijah Wilde vs Will Robinson

7/7 - Globe Theatre - Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

ROUND ONE: "Diamond" Lily Driscoll vs Felicia Love

ROUND ONE: Danny King vs Adrian Kirk]

LD: The Brass Ring Tournament continues two weeks from tonight in Seattle when Jo Jo Washington, Big Boss Shinza, Elijah Wilde, and Will Robinson look to join Cordova in the Semifinals as well. It's going to be a red hot summer here in the AWA and this tournament is just the tip of the iceberg.

[Cut to a grinning Dane before we fade to a black screen... the thud, thud, thud of a faint heartbeat heard in the background. The voice of Julie Somers comes up... soft... reflective.]

"I remember when people said we'd never get here."

[We fade up on old footage never-before-seen - Julie Somers and Melissa Cannon working out together in a ring at what appears to be before the show at an AWA live event. The arena is empty... no fans to cheer them on.]

"When the Women's Division was a few names on a clipboard... when we changed in broom closets... when nobody believed this could be real."

[Cut to a shot of Somers tumbling off the top rope, launching herself into a moonsault to win one of her first AWA matches.]

"I stayed. I fought. I helped build this."

[Cut to a series of Harley Hamilton highlights: lighting up an opponent with a knife edge chop, throwing them with a big overhead slam, eliminating Michelle Bailey from the Rumble. Closeup on Harley, fists pumping in triumph.]

"And now Harley Hamilton wins the Rumble and wants to take it all from me."

[We cut to a split screen shot of Somers, the title belt over her shoulder as she stares confidently into the camera and Hamilton, intensity - and an annoying smirk - on her face as she looks down her destiny.]

"She's hungry. She's rising. She's everything we wanted this division to create...

...except she wants my title."

[We get a big orchestral track in the background, pumping up the hype for this upcoming showdown.

It is accompanied by a flash cut to a Somers suicide dive and Hamilton delivering Hail To The Queen.

Somers' voice sounds stronger as we hear her again.]

"And if Girls To The Front is where history gets written... then I'm writing mine the same way I always have - in sweat, in sacrifice, and in the center of the ring."

[We get a quick montage of other women from the division in action: a Melissa Cannon rolling elbow, a Betty Chang thrust kick, Ricki Toughill snarling at the camera, Victoria June and Kayla Cristol walking to the ring together, Kelly Taylor diving off the roof in Boyle Heights, Laura Davis and Lauryn Rage tearing into one another, Michelle Bailey delivering the Britney Spear...]

"Every woman in this division has fought to stand here. Every one of them deserves this night."

[We finally see the source of the voice - the champion herself - who appears to be fresh out of a workout. Sweat dripping down her face. Intensity in her eyes. Resolve. The coveted Women's World Championship on her shoulder. Her voice is quiet now.]

"But I've been here since day one. And I'm not done making history."

[We cut from Somers to a black screen with a full-screen graphic promoting - "GIRLS TO THE FRONT. AUGUST 18th. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN."

And one final line from the Spitfire.]

"Get loud. Get ready. Get to the front."

[And as Somers disappears, she's replaced by the AWA and ESPN logos before we fade through black to where "Sweet" Lou Blackwell is standing.]

SLB: Girls To The Front is coming in mid-August to the world's most famous arena. Madison Square Garden - but the AWA is coming just down the road to Providence Park in Portland, Oregon, one week from tonight for Saturday Night Wrestling... and I understand the two men joining me have something to say about that... and the challenge issued to them by Legado de Lucha earlier tonight. Gentlemen?

[Two imposing figures join the scene. To Blackwell's right, Golden Grappler stands stoic, dressed in a gold suit with black trim and a black shirt with gold tie, his mask matching the suit in Gold with black trim around the eye, nose, and mask holes.

To the left of Sweet Lou stands the younger, brash Ultra Commando 3, his suit for the most part matching his partner, except Commando's suit is a gold flecktarn camo pattern, with matching black shirt, his balaclava-style mask itself gold flecktarn camo matching his suit, as well as an oddity, UC3 wears a fedora that matches his suit and mask. Commando jumps right in, his body language betraying an impatience and annoyance]

UC3: Yes, we'd like to respond. Oscuro, Fuerza, Vengador... you want to talk about tradition, legacy and pride as if we have none? I am the third man to wear this mask, dating back to the 1970's. I am a cold blooded mercenary that will take out my own father for a hundred, but I do so wearing this mask with pride and the expectations of the men that came before me!

My partner here, has held this mask on his head for over twenty years! He prides himself that no one, NO ONE, has been able to remove it from him! You want to challenge US? You want to make your name off US? This is a time we've been waiting for our entire careers, to be recognized for what we are! For our shots. We do this for money, and the World Tag Team Titles are the top of this business and the most money. We've been waiting for this chance, to get ranked, a Run the Rankings to get our shot.

We will meet you next week and we will END YOUR LEGACY!

[Grappler holds up a hand, as if to calm his protege and partner before making a slight gesture for Lou to switch the mic over to the veteran]

GG:It's a simple equation, gentlemen. You don't understand fully what you speak of. My partner is correct in everything he said, We have our own legacies we're preserving, and building. And to continue to build that legacy we need to win, not only against the Legado de Lucha, but then Run the Rankings, then winning the World Tag Team Championship.

Our name is not a gimmick, it's what we are. Two masked men out to obtain money, no matter the job. We don't hide our shame, we proudly beat our chests about who and what we are. Believing otherwise is folly and will ensure our victory. We accept your challenge, but it's not our First Step, no no, it's just another on our way to our legacy.

[Lou takes the mic back.]

SLB: There you have it, fans! It is ON for next week on Saturday Night Wrestling, Nueva Generación Oscura against Masks for Money... and that will be a barnburner! You won't want to miss it! Now, let's go down to ringside to Lori and Ben!

[Cut back to the ringside area.]

LD: Thanks, Lou... and next weekend's Saturday Night Wrestling is certainly shaping up to be a rip-roaring jam-packed affair, Ben!

BW: Sounds like a lot of work for me. Glad it's on Colt and Albano to call it.

[Lori shakes her head with a smirk.]

LD: We're just about set for more action here on Showtime: Ring Wars but before our next contest, just a few minutes ago, Lucy St. Claire was able to speak with The Rhodes Dynasty about their match tonight.

BW: Are you sure you can remain objective about it?

LD: Why wouldn't I be?

BW: They made an awful lot of noise at you a couple of weeks ago about their lack of ranking, and wouldn't you know it, they made the cut in the newest release.

[Dane shakes her head.]

LD: I have no control over rankings, Ben. I told them to talk to Zharkov, and if they did, they must have made a convincing argument.

[Waterson just smirks at his broadcast colleague, who sighs.]

LD: Just go to the footage, will ya?

[We cut to footage marked "MOMENTS AGO", as Lucy St. Claire stands with a glaring "Wigan Wildcat" Cassie Rhodes to her left, and the "Snakepit Sweetheart" Sophie Rhodes to her right. The elder Rhodes stares at the interviewer, while her daughter smirks and tousles a lock of Lucy's hair idly.]

LSC: Lucy St. Claire here with the Rhodes Dynasty, the mother/daughter team of Cassie and Sophie Rhodes. You know, this is the first opportunity that I've had to chat with you, and if I'm not mistaken, it's your first interview since Memorial Day Mayhem. Perhaps you could share my congratulations with your brother, Cassie, and your uncle, Sophie, in his long-desired win over Juan Vasquez.

[Cassie looks at her daughter, a grin forming on her face, exposing her missing canine tooth.]

CR: Casual, ain't she?

[Sophie nods.]

SR: I was about to say, awful knowin' in the way she talks to us, yeah?

[Cassie's grin immediately turns into a scowl, as she glares at Lucy, her hand trembling in anger as she points at the now-nervous interviewer, her voice becoming tense and quiet. Sophie continues to play with Lucy's hair, excited at her mother's furor.]

CR: Took him a bleedin' hour to finish a job that would have taken a third of the time if he just listened to us, stubborn git, and he wouldn't be sittin' in the dark with his brain rattled right now.

[Sophie leans in to whisper in Lucy's ear, just barely loud enough for the microphone to pick up.]

SR: We thrive on bein' efficient.

[The younger Rhodes giggles and shrugs her shoulders, as her mother moves her hand close to Lucy, as "wait a second!" just barely is said before Cassie covers Lucy's mouth.]

CR: Now you give your head a wobble before askin' me about my brother, and keep your tongue in your head before a mean old witch cuts it out, yeah?

[Lucy nods her head as Cassie again grins, her missing tooth standing out, while Sophie looks at the camera.]

SR: Mum, I bet she was goin' to ask us how we felt about bein' ranked finally.

[Sophie pats Lucy on the head.]

SR: Snuck a peek at your cards, love.

[Sophie tilts her head, annoyed.]

SR: Fifth, yeah? Bobbins. So what, we knocked the Jiu-Jitsu Jitterbugs out the list.

[Lucy, muffled by Cassie's hand over her mouth, can be heard saying "Flapper Doodles".]

SR: Thanks, love, s'what I said. Anyway, that lot's off the list for us, but that ain't enough. Until we put the World belts around our waists, don't none of it mean a thing. So we're fifth?

[Sophie looks to Lucy for confirmation, who nods her head.]

SR: Guess we got more people to hurt until we're first in line. We got a match tonight?

[Lucy nods again, as Cassie takes her hand off of Lucy's mouth to storm out of frame. Sophie is clearly excited, her body shivering with glee as she coos.]

SR: Mad fer it! Do watch us, yeah? We'll need a witness to tell the rankings board that fifth just won't do.

[From off-screen, we hear Cassie's voice shout "POPPET!", as Sophie skips off, blowing kisses with both hands to Lucy, who looks rattled, her hair disheveled from Sophie's tousling. She wipes her mouth in disgust.]

LSC: ...yeah. So that happened.

[We cut back to the ring, where Megumi Sato stands with two eager women to her right, and referee Rebecca Daniels in a neutral corner, hands behind her back and standing at attention.]

MS: Our next contest here on Showtime is in the Women's Division and it is a tag team match, set for one fall with a ten minute time limit! Introducing first, already in the ring, both hailing from The City of Roses, Portland, Oregon...

[A pause from the ring announcer as the hometown crowd roars with delight.]

MS: At a total combined weight of 289 pounds... "STUMPTOWN" CARRIE BROWN! "BRUISIE" SUZIE SLADE! They are... THE PDXPRESS!

[The crowd once again cheers as the two women - the 5'8" Slade, with long black hair parted down the middle, and the 5'3" Brown, with dyed blonde hair cut into a shag, wearing matching outfits of black high-neck singlets with a rose with many thorns on the left leg and black boots - motion for the crowd to get louder.]

LD: The AWA debut of the PDXpress, Ben, right here in their hometown of Portland, Oregon! For those of you who are confused by the name, "PDX" is the airport code here, and the city of Portland has embraced "PDX" as a nickname.

BW: So basically, they're saying they can't wait to get out of here, huh.

LD: Ben!

BW: Why else would you name yourself after the airport you're departing from, huh?

LD: Anyway, these two became friends in 2014 when trying out for the local roller derby team and were deemed, and I quote, "too dangerous for roller derby", so imagine the territory that covers.

BW: Well, the team they're facing might be too dangerous for pro wrestling, so let's see if the Portland Pilgrims can figure out how to stop the Rhodes Dynasty.

[And with that, Megumi Sato's voice picks back up again.]

MS: And their opponents, at a total combined weight of 271 pounds, both from Ashton-in-Makerfield in the borough of Wigan, England...

"THE WIGAN WILDCAT" CASSIE RHODES!

"THE SNAKEPIT SWEETHEART" SOPHIE RHODES!

They are... THE RHOOOOOOOOOOODES DYYYYYYYYYYNASTY!

[The crowd boos as the voice of Ren Aldridge screams out over the sound system, and Sato leaves the ring as Brown and Slade start to prepare for a fight, looking right at the entrance in a ready position.]

WE WILL DISTURB THE FALSE PEACE!

[With "False Peace" by Petrol Girls playing through the IIWF Coliseum, Cassie and Sophie Rhodes walk from the entrance, an angry glare in mother Cassie's eyes as daughter Sophie looks down the aisle at the PDXpress with an amused smirk. The Rhodes Dynasty wears attire in matching print of red with white chevrons down the leg. Cassie is in leg-length tights and a tank top, while Sophie is in a matching halter crop top and shorts. Both wear black kneepads, and Cassie has well-worn black boots, while Sophie has black leather shinpads over black boots. The two slide into the ring head-first, rising as soon as they clear the ropes, only to be met by the PDXpress!]

LD: Here we go! The Rhodes Dynasty against the PDXpress, and you have to give credit to the locals for taking it right to the British bullies!

LD: WHAT A BACKHAND! WHAT AN INCREDIBLE BACKHAND BY SOPHIE RHODES!

BW: I've seen a lot of people get hit hard with unsuspecting backhands, Dane, but that caught her flush on the hinge of the jaw! Carrie Brown might be out!

[Sophie shouts "MUM!" out to Cassie on the floor, who quickly climbs onto the ring apron. Sophie reaches out for a tag, signaled by the referee as a legal tag, and Cassie climbs onto the turnbuckles, sitting on the top buckle.]

LD: What on earth does Cassie Rhodes have in mind here?

BW: Not exactly a place I've ever seen her before, Dane.

[Sophie drags a groggy Brown to her mother, turning her around as Cassie reaches around "Stumptown"'s neck...

...and lifts!]

BW: SLEEPER!

LD: My God! Look at Carrie Brown's feet dangling in the air from that sleeper! Rebecca Daniels is counting, this is not a legal hold because they're in the corner!

BW: Yeah, but it's doing some serious damage, Dane!

[As Daniels is about to hit five in her count, Cassie drops the smaller Carrie Brown and keeps her hands in the air, as if to say "I didn't do anything!" Sophie, who has since stepped onto the apron, suddenly takes off in a sprint...]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"

LD: A shin kick to the face of "Bruisie" Suzie just as she stands up by Sophie Rhodes! The Rhodes Dynasty is dividing and conquering once again!

BW: And look at Cassie Rhodes! She's stalking her prey!

[The elder Rhodes, grinning to expose her missing tooth, waits for Carrie Brown to be almost standing before locking in the sleeper once again, firmly lacing her arm around Brown's neck to compress the carotid arteries.]

LD: Cassie Rhodes with another sleeper, this time a legal one in the ring and not the corner!

BW: Dane, you know how the sleeper is a Rhodes family trademark. Raphael Rhodes has perhaps the most lethal sleeper in the game, right up there with Takeshi Mifune's Japanese Stranglehold, or so we thought. It might actually be big sister Cassie instead and we didn't know it until now.

[As Cassie cackles with delight, Carrie Brown's arms go limp. Cassie pulls Brown to center ring, and Brown's feet drag against the canvas.]

LD: I think Carrie Brown might be out, Ben.

BW: That's a sucker bet. She IS out.

[Cassie goes to adjust the hold now that she has her prey in the center of the ring, but Brown's body simply crumbles to the mat. Cassie looks at referee Rebecca Daniels, who is crouched at Brown's shoulder, before grabbing two fistfuls of Brown's hair while Sophie keeps Suzie Slade contained at ringside. Cassie drags the

unconscious Brown by the hair for approximately a foot before Daniels tries to put her body in between Cassie and Brown, waving for the bell.]

LD: Rebecca Daniels is calling this one off, fans... I don't know what the decision is going to be here.

BW: Just like a couple of weeks ago, it has to be a win for the Rhodes Dynasty. Nothing Cassie Rhodes did there was illegal.

LD: I think you're right, Ben, it's just awful to see them winning this way. They're not winning to win, they're winning to hurt people.

BW: Money deposits in the bank just the same.

[Cassie stands over the fallen Brown, with Sophie joining her in the ring, and a battered Slade standing outside the ring slapping the mat trying to rouse her PDXpress teammate. Megumi Sato's voice filters through the sound system...]

MS: Referee Rebecca Daniels has stopped the match, as "Stumptown" Carrie Brown is unable to defend herself. Your winners, by way of a referee stoppage... CASSIE RHODES AND SOPHIE RHODES, THE RHOOOOOOOOOOODES DYYYYYYYYYYNASTY!

[The crowd boos as "Bruisie" Suzie Slade, overcome with emotion, charges into the ring and tries to tackle the nearest member of the Rhodes Dynasty. It happens to be Sophie, preening for the camera, which might be a mistake as Cassie immediately digs her fingers into Slade's mouth for a fishhook.]

LD: Oh come on! There's no need for this!

BW: You're absolutely right, Dane! Suzie Slade should have taken her loss like a professional!

LD: That's not what I meant, and you know it! I don't fault Cassie Rhodes for defending Sophie, but a fishhook?

[As Slade lets out a guttural scream, distorted by the sides of her mouth being yanked by Cassie's hooking fingers, Sophie quickly throws a rolling savate kick into Slade's ribs. As Slade grasps at her ribs, Cassie then grabs at the exposed neck of the larger PDXpress member, locking her in the feared sleeper as the crowd boos heavily!]

LD: And this is completely unnecessary! She already knocked out Carrie Brown with this sleeper, now she wants Suzie Slade?!

BW: All Slade had to do was get her partner out of the ring, Dane! She's the one that decided to attack the Rhodes Dynasty!

[The crowd's booing quickly turns to cheers, though, as the cavalry arrives in the form of Betty Chang and Charity Rockwell! Sophie warns her mother of the invading duo, and rather than fight, Sophie and Cassie roll out of the ring and out of harm's way.]

LD: Oh, and there goes the Rhodes Dynasty! The Flapper Doodles hit the ring and the Rhodes Dynasty ran like some scalded bulldogs!

BW: They got their pound of flesh! There's no need to fight a second team tonight!

LD: Yeah? You think so? Well, I think they're just a couple of cowardly bullies!

[There is some off-camera noise as we hear Sophie yelling something at Lori Dane.]

LD: You heard me! Cowardly bullies!

BW: Stop antagonizing them, Dane!

[Chang and Rockwell motion for the Rhodes Dynasty to return to the ring, with Rockwell sitting on the ropes and Chang leading the crowd in a chant!]

"COWARDS!"

"COWARDS!"

"COWARDS!"

"COWARDS!"

"COWARDS!"

"COWARDS!"

"COWARDS!"

"COWARDS!"

"COWARDS!"

"COWARDS!"

[Sophie rolls her eyes as Cassie grabs her daughter's wrist, pulling her back through the entrance, while Chang and Rockwell shrug and check on the fallen PDXpress.]

LD: So much for all the tough talk, Ben.

BW: You're going to get someone hurt a whole lot worse than they already hurt people the more you keep that up, you know.

LD: It's only going to get harder for the Rhodes Dynasty from here, especially now that the Flapper Doodles seem to be on their tail. I'd imagine we may see a showdown between those teams in the very near future. Fans, we're rapidly approaching our Main Event here tonight on Showtime: Ring Wars... but before we get there, let's take a look at what's in store for us in two weeks right back here on ESPN!

[We fade to black and a low war-drum beat.

Into a series of slow motion shots.

Odin Gunn glaring across the ring, a sheen of sweat on his torso.

King Kong Hogan shouting at a referee, saliva dripping into his tangled mess of a beard.

A referee frantically waving his arms.

A narrator's voice cuts in - grave and deliberate.]

"Some nights aren't about momentum.

They're about survival."

[The music swells, heavy and primal as the intensity grows.

Odin Gunn stalks forward, smashing a double axehandle across a helpless opponent's spine.

King Kong Hogan rips a massive right hand across a cheekbone, sending someone spiraling away and down.

Cut to a shot of Gunn and Hogan doing battle in the rafters in the Temple. The narrator is heard again.]

"One man fights for dominance."

[Cut to Gunn roaring, the title belt held overhead.]

"One man fights because it's all he knows."

[Hogan swings a chair like the out-of-control madman that he is, his eyes wild. On screen text appears.]

MAIN EVENT

ODIN GUNN vs KING KONG HOGAN

[The voiceover returns.]

"No excuses. No escape."

[The music picks up as we fade to a shot of Robert Donovan standing in a locker room, adjusting his elbow brace as he looks wearily into the mirror.

Then to Trey Carson demolishing an opponent with heavy knees in the corner as Dave Cooper watches enthusiastically. The narrator's voice is heard.]

"When legacy stands in the way of the future..."

[On-screen text.]

ROBERT DONOVAN vs TREY CARSON

[The narrator speaks.]

"..someone gets pushed aside."

[A sharp percussion kicks in as we cut to footage of Shannon Walsh delivering brutal strikes from the mount on a foe.

And then cut to Ricki Toughill silently cutting a promo, shouting into the camera angrily.]

"Personal becomes violent."

[The graphic reveals.]

RICKI TOUGHILL vs SHANNON WALSH

[Another cut shows the Peach Pits standing together...

...and then the Slam Sorority with their arms raised in victory.]

"And sisterhood gets tested."

[The graphic returns.]

THE PEACH PITS vs THE SLAM SORORITY

[The tempo increases - heartbeat rhythm as we see some of the Brass Ring Tournament participants in action: Jo Jo Washington firing punches, Big Boss Shinza posing on the middle rope with a silent roar.]

"The Brass Ring Tournament continues."

[The graphic promotes JO JO WASHINGTON vs BIG BOSS SHINZA before cutting to Elijah Wilde using a powerbomb on an opponent and then to Will Robinson gracefully soaring through the air. The graphic shows "ELIJAH WILDE vs WILL ROBINSON.]

"New blood. One shot."

[The music cuts with one ringing impact sound as we cut back to Gunn and Hogan nose to nose.]

"Two weeks from tonight..."

[The graphic returns to promote the Main Event.]

"...one one stands."

[The final graphic comes up.]

AWA SHOWTIME
TWO WEEKS FROM TONIGHT

DON'T BLINK

[And we fade through black back up to the locker room area of the IIWF Coliseum where we find Hannibal Carver seated on a wooden bench. He's in his ring gear, elbows on his knees... hands on his temples... staring down at the concrete floor.]

HC: Wrestling is fun to me. Always has been.

[Carver's voice is strained.]

HC: Show up, drink a few beers, kick a little ass... kick a whole lot of ass some nights... make some money... rinse and repeat the next night. Yeh couldn't find a better job if yeh ask me.

[Carver lifts his head slightly, looking into the camera with a dark gaze.]

HC: It gets harder when emotions get involved... when it becomes about more than kickin' ass, winnin' gold, cashin' checks.

When it involves friends.

[Carver sighs, shaking his head.]

HC: Jack Lynch is my friend... and I don't have a lot of those. That man has stood by me since the day we met... from kooky quartets to mixed loyalties to fighting wars... that man...

[He hisses through his teeth.]

HC: ...I'd die for that man.

But for you, Supreme Wright, the bigger problem is that I'd KILL for that man.

[Carver abruptly gets up, pointing angrily at the camera.]

HC: Not being in the building the night of the Red Wedding is one of the biggest damn regrets of my life, Wright... because if I had, there is NO amount of thugs and soldiers yeh could put between us that would've kept me from getting my hands on yeh.

It would've been over before it started.

No match at Memorial Day Mayhem. No Towel Match 2.

[Carver's voice gets harder again.]

HC: No Theresa breaking her brother's heart.

Jack's sitting at home in Dallas... sitting in the dark... wondering where it all went sideways for him. In case yeh've forgotten, Wright... and I damn sure know yeh haven't... that man is a former World Champion. He's a former multi-time tag team champion. He is the Iron Cowboy... nah, nah... the KING of the Cowboys.

And now he's sitting in a damn hole rethinking everything that led him to this point.

He's got a wife and a baby girl at home... and they're the ONLY things in the world puttin' a smile on his face right now. The rest of his family's in damn tatters.

The Lynch family... at one time, the strongest unit in wrestling... has fallen apart.

[Carver points a finger again, a little more thoughtful this time.]

HC: And some of that sits on yeh, Wright. Yeh've added the cherry on top to a whole lot of family trouble... and that means yeh added just a little bit more misery to a guy who has seen more than his share.

There's blood on your hands, Wright. From the Red Wedding and on down the line, there's blood on your hands.

[Carver lifts his hands, looking at them.]

HC: And tonight in Portland, there's gonna be blood on my hands too.

[The Boston Brawler smashes his fists together, stalking out of view as the camera holds...

...and then fades to a hallway backstage where we see Mark Stegglet standing with microphone in hand. Supreme Wright waits opposite him, dressed in his wrestling gear and ready for battle. The air is thick with tension before a single word is spoken as Wright lays his eyes on Stegglet.]

MS: Supreme Wright, tonight you face Hannibal Carver in a no-rules Rip City Street Fight. The Boston Brawler has been vocal about the Red Wedding, about Jack Lynch, about everything you've done. How do you respond to-

[Supreme cuts him off, his voice low and cold.]

SW: Stop.

[Stegglet freezes mid-sentence. Supreme's stare is unblinking, predatory.]

SW: I saw your interview with Ryan Martinez earlier. I will not be interviewed by a propagandist.

MS: A what? Now look here-

SW: A fanatic whose bias reeks like cheap cologne. It is unacceptable.

[Before Stegglet can protest, the camera jerks slightly. Still sweating and bleeding from his match with Ryan Martinez, we see Takeshi Mifune materialize from the shadows behind Stegglet, silent, sudden, and monstrous. One arm snakes around Stegglet's throat in the unmistakable grip of the Japanese Stranglehold. Stegglet's eyes bulge and his microphone clatters to the floor as Mifune drags him backward, feet scraping, while Stegglet gurgles uselessly.]

MS: Wh-what... HELP!

[We see personnel burst into frame - Kevin Slater, two referees, a medic, and a production assistant - rushing after the retreating pair. Supreme doesn't even glance back. The camera refocuses on him, as from off-screen, we hear soft footsteps. Theresa Lynch steps into frame, elegant in black, her blonde hair pulled back, a faint knowing smile on her lips. She stops beside Supreme as if she's always belonged there.]

TL: I believe I am the suitable replacement you requested, Mister Wright.

SW: Indeed you are, Miss Lynch. Thank you for being punctual.

[They stand side by side, inches apart but never touching, taunting the audience with their act.]

TL: Well, the world is waiting, Mister Wright. What message do you have for Hannibal Carver before tonight's annihilation?

SW: I once believed, perhaps foolishly, that Hannibal Carver could be forged into something useful. A worn instrument rebuilt and polished for the new world I am building. A relic that could be reshaped into progress.

[He pauses, letting the words settle in the silence.]

SW: I was mistaken. He is not raw material.

He is a blight.

A stubborn infection that clings to dead men's names... Jack Lynch. The Red Wedding... old grudges.

This blight must be eradicated for evolution to continue.

[His gaze shifts away from Theresa and towards the camera, through it, right into the viewer's soul.]

SW: Tonight, in the Rip City Street Fight, I meet him on his terms.

No rules. No mercy. No escape.

And when the blood dries on the concrete and the violence has ceased, Hannibal Carver will receive the fate he has begged for since the moment he opened his mouth.

[He turns his head slightly toward Theresa, voice softening only by the smallest degree.]

SW: Permanent elimination from the AWA.

[Theresa Lynch offers her hand and Supreme takes it gently, raises it to his lips, and presses a slow, deliberate kiss to her knuckles. The gesture is formal, yet unmistakably possessive. He releases her hand and looks back at the camera one final time.]

SW: My new world will arrive.

[A beat.]

SW: Hannibal Carver will not be part of it.

[He offers Theresa his arm and she takes it. They walk off together down the corridor as the camera lingers on the empty space they leave behind, the distant sounds of Takeshi Mifune's crazed laughter fading into silence as we cut to black.

There is a low rumble. The sound of a bell echoing leads into quick cuts.

The AWA World Tag Team Title belts being held in the air by referee Koji Sakai.

Tony Donovan shadowboxing against a gym wall, throwing a roundhouse kick as we cut again...

...to Wes Taylor sitting on a wooden bench, a wet towel draped over his head, dripping down as he stares out from under it into the camera.

The narrator speaks - measured and ominous.]

"History is waiting."

[The music builds, heavier than before as we get a promotional still of Wes Taylor and Tony Donovan in their World Tag Team Champion days, the titles over their shoulders.]

"Wes Taylor and Tony Donovan."

[We cut to a series of shots: Taylor and Donovan celebrating after their first tag team title victory... clashing their belts together as the crowd looks on.]

"Two-time World Tag Team Champions... chasing history."

[A graphic comes up with "THREE-TIME TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS?" before we cut to Supreme Wright, arms folded, calculated smile.]

"But they don't know who they're facing.

Because this man chooses."

[A series of quick flashes showing each member of Team Supreme before we cut to another on-screen graphic.]

WORLD TAG TEAM TITLES
TEAM SUPREME vs TAYLOR & DONOVAN

"Any night. Any combination. Any consequence."

[We fade through black as the tempo increases. More quick shots.

The American Idols posing arrogantly.

Big dives from Fujizona.

Masks For Money brawling outside the ring.

Nueva Generación Oscura standing united in a promotional photo.]

"And every tag team in the AWA is watching."

[On-screen graphics are coming.]

THE AMERICAN IDOLS vs FUJIZONA

"Position matters."

MASKS FOR MONEY vs NUEVA GENERACIÓN OSCURA

"Momentum matters."

[The music dips as the tension sharpens. Cut to Kerry Kendrick and Sandra Hayes posing with the National Title as Hayes whispers into her man's ear.]

"The National Championship will be defended..."

[Cut to Derrick Williams with his jaw clenched.]

"...but this potential challenger won't know his fate...

...until Kerry Kendrick decides it."

[An on-screen graphic promotes both Kendrick's title defense and the special challenge match for Williams.

The music shifts - darker and atmospheric - as we get a backlit shot of Kimmy Bailey with the Japanese flag behind her.

Then to Kurayami cloaked in shadow.]

"And in special footage straight from Japan..."

[The graphic returns.]

SPECIAL ATTRACTION
KIMMY BAILEY vs KURAYAMI

[The music hits a final beat as we see belts raised... we hear a crowd roaring... and then finally the narrator once more.]

"This is Saturday Night Wrestling."

[Fade to black...

...and then back out to the ring where Megumi Sato is standing.]

MS: The following contest is your MAIN EVENT of the evening! It is set for one fall with TV Time Remaining and it is a RIP CITYYYYYY STREEEEET FIIIIIIIGHT!

[The crowd ROARS!]

MS: Introducing first...

[Sato lowers the mic as "Power Slam" by Paradelous thunders through the IIWF Coliseum as the lights dim, and a cascade of white lasers slices through the air, pulsing in rhythm with the pounding beat. They converge on the entrance ramp, where Supreme Wright steps out from behind the curtain, his pristine white attire shimmering under the spotlight. The crowd unleashes a deafening torrent of boos, but Supreme's steely gaze locks onto the ring, HIS ring, his face showing unshakable confidence.]

MS: ...making his way to the ring, weighing in at 228 pounds... hailing from Sherwood Forest, Baton Rouge, Louisiana... he is... "The White Knight"... SUPREEEEEEEMMMMMEEEEEEE WRRRRRIIIIIIGGGGGHHHHHHHTTTTT!!!

[The crowd's boos intensify at the announcement of the AWA's most hated villain. Supreme's attire consists of white full-length tights, matching elbow pads, kneepads, and boots, worn underneath a sleeveless white coat. He looks the part of a hero, but everyone in the crowd knows he is anything but a hero, showing him no love at all.]

LD: The way things change in a matter of months, Ben. Think back to last year at SuperClash... think back to the hero's welcome this man got when he took on one of the Korugun hired guns in the Hall of Famer Jeff Matthews, a man he defeated to a thunderous ovation. And after the actions of Wright that night unknown to all of us at the time... and after what he's done at the Red Wedding and in the months since... there's this. Boos. Disgust. Rage. This man has betrayed us all... and these people are happy to let him hear it.

BW: And he's happy to ignore it... or at least I'd imagine he is. He doesn't smile much.

LD: No he doesn't... and if Hannibal Carver has his way here tonight, any Wright smiles after this one will show a few less teeth.

[Supreme ascends the apron, pausing to bask in the crowd's venom as the music fades. He ducks through the ropes, taking center ring and turning to stare down the aisle to wait for his opponent.]

LD: The crowd buzzing with anticipation here, waiting for the arrival of-

[As Wright stares down the aisle, the sirens that herald the arrival of the AWA's toughest brawler ring out to BIG cheers...]

LD: This one is NOT going to be pretty, fans.

BW: We ain't lookin' for sweet, sweet science here tonight. This isn't going to be Kauffman versus Quigley or Lord Byron or any of the kind of stuff this joint used to see. This is going to be the kind of war that would make "The Fury" himself proud. Let's just hope there are no tricycles involved.

LD: Carver isn't in the mood for fun and games and-

[Proving Lori's point, as his music continues to play, Hannibal Carver's arrival is through the crowd, sending a rush of enthusiasm through the Portland fans as the Boston Brawler climbs over the barricade...]

LD: HERE HE COMES! HERE HE COMES!

[...and Carver is over the railing and in the ring before Wright even realizes it, hoodie off... taped fists clenched... eyes locked on his prey...

Ready for war.]

BW: Supreme doesn't know he's there!

[The referee barely has time to signal for the bell...]

"DING! DING! DING!"

[...and Wright suddenly senses danger, whipping around just in time to get BLASTED with a running haymaker from Carver, sending him stumbling back, being caught by the corner to prevent an early match fall.]

LD: This Rip City Street Fight is all systems go and- LOOK AT CARVER!

[The crowd is ROARING as Carver is hammering Wright in the corner with rights and lefts...]

LD: This is what the people want to see! Supreme Wright paying the price for all his evil deeds since SuperClash last year!

BW: Carver wanted a Street Fight... but we've seen Wright survive and thrive in this kind of environment before. SuperClash VIII in New Orleans... it was the Syndicate Street Fight with Casey James and Tiger Claw falling to defeat against Supreme Wright and his ol' pal, Jack Lynch.

LD: And Jack Lynch is the reason we're here for this fight tonight, Ben. Jack Lynch being put on the shelf after Memorial Day Mayhem opened the door to this fight as Carver finally gets his hands on him.

[The crowd continues to cheer loudly as Carver rains down bombing forearms, big chops, boots to the ribs...]

LD: It's a Boston Beatdown of epic proportions!

[...but an attempted chop ends up with a calculated attempt by Wright to grab the arm, spinning out of the corner as he wrenches it around in an armwringer...]

BW: And that's what Wright needs to do, counter brawling with-

[...but Carver escapes by headbutting Wright in the face!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[Wright staggers backwards, grabbing at his cheekbone as Carver flashes a grin at the simple-but-effective counter...]

...and after grabbing the back of the head, Carver HURLS Wright over the top rope, sending him bouncing off the barely-padded concrete floor at ringside!]

LD: A LONG WAY DOWN TO THE FLOOR FOR SUPREME WRIGHT!

[Carver wastes no time, ignoring the referee's shouts as he drops to his back, rolling under the ropes to join his opponent on the outside...]

LD: And this is NOT where Supreme Wright wants to be against Hannibal Carver, Ben.

BW: It's definitely not. Carver's got a mean streak a mile wide and Wright's about to experience that firsthand.

[Carver pulls Wright off the floor, taking aim...]

"CLAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAANG!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and sends Wright bouncing shoulderfirst off the ringside barricade before slumping down to his knees, his face pressed up against the steel...]

LD: OFF THE RAILING!

BW: Uh oh... get out of the way, Supreme! MOVE!

[...but Ben's shouted warnings are to no avail as Carver barnstorms in with evil intentions...]

"CLAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAANG!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and DRIVES his knee into the side of Wright's head, sandwiching his skull between unforgiving steel and sadistic glee!]

LD: THE RUNNING KNEE PUTS HIM INTO THE STEEL AGAIN!

[Wright flops backwards to the floor as Carver leans over the railing, accepting the cheers and backpats of the ringside fans, nodding his head at what's gone down so far...]

LD: Hannibal Carver wanted the Rip City Street Fight so he could do things just like this to Supreme Wright and he got his wish. It was pretty obvious, Ben, that the rest of Team Supreme did NOT think Wright should take this match but the two-time World Champion has never been known to back down from a fight.

[With Wright laid out on the floor, Carver approaches the side of the ring, pulling up the apron to dig underneath...]

LD: Oh... oh no.

[...and drags a length of heavy metal chain into view to a ROAR from the Portland crowd!]

LD: Hannibal Carver came prepared for this fight, Ben!

BW: Totally legal too. The referee can wring his hands all he wants but he can't do a damn thing about it!

[Carver holds the chain, letting it dangle to scrape the floor as he watches Wright pull himself to his feet...]

LD: Look at him, just waiting for Wright to see that chain...

BW: Yeah, but he didn't put that chain out here for intimidation alone, Dane. He intends to use it!

[Wright shakes his head for a split second before Carver lashes out with the length of chain...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: HE WHIPS HIM ACROSS THE RIBS! MY GOD!

[Wright doubles up, staggering away from the ring as the malevolent Carver wraps the chain once around his hand, still holding the length...]

LD: He's gonna do it-

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: AHHHHH! RIGHT DOWN ACROSS THE BACK AS WELL!

[Wright slumps down to all fours on the floor as Carver stands over him.]

BW: That's street justice, Dane! Carver taking out all his anger and frustration at the man he believes is a driving force behind a lot of it.

LD: Carver mercifully tosses the chain aside... although I don't care for it being in the ring. Not one bit.

BW: Uh oh... he's not done out here yet either.

[Reaching under the ring again, the crowd ROARS once more as Carver pulls a steel chair into sight...]

LD: And now he's got a chair! This is right up Carver's alley and he's taking every bit of advantage of these rules... or lack thereof.

[With Wright dragging himself up using the ringpost, Carver takes aim, swinging wide...]

"CLAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAANK!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...but Wright pulls himself clear, causing Carver to SMASH the chair into the solid steel post, sending a jolt of pain through his hands and arms, instantly dropping the weapon down on the floor!]

LD: WRIGHT MOVES!

[Wright swings the stunned Carver around, rifling a European uppercut up under the chin, snapping his head back...]

LD: Oh! What a shot by the leader of Team Supreme!

[The blow knocks Carver back against the post where Wright advances on him, pressing his forearm into the throat, shoving Carver's head back into the steel!]

LD: This could be a turning point in this match...

[He grabs the arm, raising it and pushing it backwards...

...before DRIVING his foot into the elbow joint, jamming the elbow back into the post!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[With deadly precision, Wright twists the arm around, hammerlocking it around the post before lashing out with another kick - this one of the thrust variety to smash the arm against the steel a second time!]

BW: Wright doesn't need a weapon, Dane - his BODY is a weapon! The RING is his weapon!

[As Carver untangles himself from the post, Wright grabs the arm in another hammerlock, coldly cranking up on it as Carver grimaces...

...and then kicks out the back of Carver's knee, causing him to fall on his own trapped arm, pinning it under his weight and against the unforgiving concrete floor!]

LD: Ohhh! Ruthless and brutal accuracy and precision on the part of the two-time World Champion has TOTALLY turned this match around, targeting the arm... then the leg with that sweep...

[Ignoring the referee's calls to get the action back in the ring, Wright grabs the leg, looking out on the crowd for a moment...

...and then drops back to the floor, jamming Carver's leg down into the barely-padded concrete!]

LD: OHH! We've seen that out of Wright in the past and the best way I can describe it, Ben, is a DDT on the opponent's leg!

BW: It jams the foot down into the floor, jolting the ankle... the knee... all the way up the leg is stinging for Carver right now as Supreme Wright looks to physically dissect him here in Portland.

[Dragging Carver off the floor, Wright tosses him back inside the ring, rolling in after him as the crowd buzzes with confusion...]

LD: Wright's got Carver down and hurting and that's EXACTLY where he wants him.

BW: For Carver, this is personal. For Wright, it's business... and important business. It's no secret that Supreme Wright is positioning himself for a future shot at the AWA World Title and what better way to do it than to defeat - and possibly take out - another top contender to the title.

LD: Wright rolls back in now...

[The former champion quickly grabs the leg of Carver, looking down on him before doing a front flip, violently stretching out the hamstring of the Boston Brawler!]

LD: ...and rips and tears at the knee of Carver, going right back after the leg! He's attacked the arm... now he's going after the leg... trying to break down Carver physically in there.

[Wright comes back up off the mat, snatching up the leg again. Carver tries to kick him off but Wright swipes the fighting foot away before twisting the leg around, torquing it against his own...]

LD: Spinning toehold!

BW: Heheh... one of Carver's first rivalries when he came to the AWA was against Terry Shane III... and you know as well as I do, Dane, that one of the Shane family's signature holds is...?

LD: The spinning toehold. And look at Wright crank on that leg, trying to force a submission out of the former National Champion!

BW: I'd be VERY surprised if Wright got a submission out of him... but he might be just as satisfied to simply break him down.

[Seeing no submission coming, Wright transitions from one hold to another, keeping the grip on the leg but bending it across his own neck in torture rack type position!]

LD: That's the stretch muffler now!

BW: We mentioned earlier that Tony Donovan learned this very hold from Supreme Wright and now we're seeing the master at work, ripping the knee to pieces as Carver tries to hang on!

[Carver grunts in pain, smashing his fists down into the mat...]

BW: He might break his own hand doing that!

LD: The pain shooting through the leg of Hannibal Carver as perhaps the best submission wrestler in the world goes to work on him! We saw Lord Byron sitting ringside earlier and you've gotta believe he's impressed by what he's seeing out of Wright here tonight.

BW: We know Wright's a student of the techniques Byron employed... we've seen him use the Aristoclutch from time to time in his matches as well but tonight, the stretch muffler could be enough!

LD: Carver trying to drag himself across the mat, trying to get to those ropes...

BW: Yeah, but the big dummy might not know that getting to the ropes in this Rip City Street Fight he demanded does him no good! If there's no DQ, there's no punishment for keeping the hold on when he gets to the ropes!

[Carver continues to drag himself across the mat... and a slight look of amusement appears on the face of Wright as he seems to relent just a bit...]

BW: If I'm not mistaken, Dane, I think Wright just eased up on the pressure.

LD: But why? Why would he do that?

[...and that slight decrease in pressure is enough for Carver to make a lunge, grabbing hold of the ropes.]

LD: He made it to the ropes and-

[Wright can be heard saying "What now?" to his victim as Carver pulls harder at the ropes, trying to drag his own body through them to the outside.]

LD: Carver's going to keep going! He's going to keep pulling until he gets through-

[But as Carver gets his torso through the ropes, Wright shifts his grip, putting the leg over the ropes instead...

...and yanks down again!]

LD: AHH! USING THE ROPES FOR MORE LEVERAGE ON THE STRETCH MUFFLER!

[Carver cries out, digging his fingers into the apron, trying to drag himself to the floor as Wright continues to torment the injured limb...]

LD: Carver trying to hang on! Carver fighting the urge screaming from his leg to give up!

[Wright keeps the hold applied for a few more seconds before letting go and allowing Carver to slip through the ropes to the outside, cradling his knee in pain on the floor.]

LD: Supreme Wright let him go again... and you get the sense right about now, Ben, that Supreme Wright could end this match at anytime he wants to.

BW: He could... but right now, he wants to send a message to the locker room. Do NOT get yourself involved in Team Supreme's business or this is what happens. Hannibal Carver was not a target of Team Supreme until he got himself involved in their business here tonight... and now he's paying the price for it.

LD: And I'm sure it doesn't help that Wright's gotta be in a foul mood after seeing all of his allies lose or get shown up here tonight.

BW: I'm sure it doesn't. This might be Team Supreme's worst night as a unit since coming back together... and Wright's looking to make that night just a little bit better.

[Wright rolls under the ropes to the outside, looking down on Carver whose jaw is clenched as he tries to rub life back into his knee. The crowd looks on with concern as the predatory Wright looks to finish the job, leaning over to pull Carver up to a knee...

...but the Boston Brawler gets desperate, wrapping his arms around Wright's torso and surging to his feet, shoving him backwards!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: A DESPERATE CARVER DRIVES WRIGHT'S LOWER BACK INTO THE APRON!

BW: That's a big moment there for Carver - the lower back RIGHT into the edge of the apron and that's going to do some major damage to Wright!

[Grabbing the back of Wright's head, a hobbled Carver wheels him around...]

LD: FACEFIRST OFF THE APRON! AGAIN! AND AGAIN!

[Wright goes staggering away, trying to escape Carver who is in pursuit, grabbing him before he can get out of reach...]

"CLAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAANK!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: THE SKULL TO THE POST! THE UNFORGIVING STEEL!

[Wright's head BOUNCES off the steel ringpost, glassy eyed as he staggers around it, pitching forward...]

LD: Look out! Right here by us now!

BW: I'm outta here, Dane!

[...and lands facefirst on the announce table where we see Dane and Waterson scatter as Carver catches up to Wright, pulling him up again...]

LD: Drives him down onto our table now! Carver using the whole ringside area as his weapon of choice right now, trying to get back into this thing after Wright tweaked, torqued, and tormented the leg for several minutes!

[Carver steps towards the table, aggressively swinging an arm across to displace the monitors, water bottles, and anything else in his way.]

LD: Uh oh.

BW: I'm taking three more long steps back, Dane, and I suggest you do the same! This guy is out of control!

LD: And I hope Jack Lynch is back home in Dallas watching this, Ben. I hope he's watching what Hannibal Carver, his friend, is doing to Supreme Wright right now on his behalf!

[The crowd starts buzzing as Carver climbs up onto the table...]

BW: I'm getting a bizarre bit of reverse deja vu here, Dane!

LD: It was all the way back at SuperClash VII in 2015 when Juan Vasquez did this EXACT same thing to Hannibal Carver! The piledriver through the table that put Carver on the shelf and-

BW: It didn't just put him on the shelf! He went running from the company with his tail between his legs!

LD: And maybe Carver is thinking that's what it'll do to Wright! Supreme Wright might flee the scene of the crime and leave the AWA if he goes through this table tonight!

BW: I think that's wishful thinking on Carver's part... it's more likely Wright would come back stronger than ever with the determination to put Carver in the damn ground!

LD: This building has seen it's fair share of incredible moments but it might be about to witness another one! Carver's got Wright up on the table with him... getting him hooked... he's gonna do it! He's gonna do it!

[But before Carver can manage to lift Wright into the air, a panicking Wright lashes out... a fist to the injured knee lands first, causing Carver's balance to shift hard, allowing Wright to pull his head out...

A grab of the hand, twisting the fingers violently as Carver cries out...

A nasty-as-sin headbutt to the eyesocket that sends Carver stumbling back, barely catching his balance before falling off the table...

...and a lunging elbowstrike to the jaw that sends both Wright and Carver falling off the table onto the unforgiving floor!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[Wright pushes up to a knee, breathing hard, staring at the table like it was almost the end of all things...]

LD: Wright knows. He remembers. He knows what could've happened right there and it sent chills down his spine!

[The two-time World Champion climbs off the floor, shaking his head... and then angrily flips the table over...]

LD: WHOA! WHOA!

[He shouts something off-mic at the fallen table, turning with a murderous glare towards Carver who is on his feet inside the ring, waving his hands with a "COME ON, MOTHERFU-" before the censors save us all.]

LD: Carver wants to finish this!

[Wright dives under the ropes, coming to his feet as Carver rushes him, laying into him with a flurry of fists that gets the crowd on their feet again...]

LD: HERE WE GO!

[Carver's punches are landing wild and reckless, bouncing off the skull and upper torso of Wright who tries to shield himself from the blows...]

...before swinging a leg up to kick the side of Carver's injured knee, instantly putting him down on the same knee. Wright grabs a Thai clinch and...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: KNEESTRIKE!

[The blow would've dropped Carver if Wright hadn't hung on, using the clinch to pull him to his feet, grabbing him by the arm...]

LD: Whips him- no, reversed!

[...and as Wright comes rebounding back, Carver lifts, pivots...]

"THUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUD!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: SPIIIINEBUSTER SLAAAAAM! CARVER MAKES THE COVER! COULD THAT BE ENOUGH?!

[The referee dives down to count.]

LD: ONNNNNNNNNNE! TWOOOOOOOOOOO! THR-

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: NOOOOO! SHOULDER UP IN TIIIIIME!

[Carver pushes up to his knees, angrily shaking his head as the referee holds up two fingers.]

LD: Carver thought he had him there... getting back to his feet now, looking for a way to finish off the leader of Team Supreme and perhaps the greatest in-ring competitor in our sport today.

[The Boston Brawler looks around the cheering Portland crowd, a "CAR-VER!" chant breaking out as he nods his head...]

...and then points to the steel chair down on the canvas.]

LD: Uh oh.

BW: Somebody didn't want to get the damn chair out of the ring?!

LD: It's a Rip City Street Fight, Ben! Anything goes!

BW: I know that but-

LD: But nothing... and Carver's got the chair!

[He holds it over his head to a huge cheer, watching and waiting as Wright struggles to get up off the canvas...]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and BLASTS Wright across the back with it, putting him right back down on the canvas, flat on his back!]

LD: What a sadistic shot by Carver! Dishing out the pain, doling out the punishment, all in the name of his friendship with the Iron Cowboy himself, Jack Lynch, who you have to believe is sitting home in Dallas looking on... and loving every second of what Carver's doing to the man who engineered Jack's own sister, Theresa, turning her back on her own damn family!

[Carver backs to the corner, still holding the chair as he boosts himself up to stand on the middle rope...]

LD: Carver standing tall! Chair in hand!

[...and with the chair gripped in front of him, he leaps off...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and DRIVES the chair down into Wright's skull, the two-time World Champion's legs kicking up into the air on impact!]

LD: It's like a fistdrop with the chair! Steel meets skull!

[Carver slings the chair aside before applying a cover.]

LD: ONNNNNNNNNNNNNE! TWOOOOOOOOOO! THR-

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: WRIGHT KICKS OUT AGAAAAAAIN!

BW: You talk about resilience?! You talk about a will to win?! I give you Supreme Wright!

[Carver again angrily slams his fist into the canvas before rolling out of the ring.]

BW: Now where the hell is he going?!

[Carver reaches under the ropes again, pulling a metal trash can out from under the ring...]

LD: The Boston Brawler's decided to take out the trash here in Portland!

[He launches the trash can over the ropes, sending it bouncing across the canvas...

...which is when Supreme Wright pushes up to his knees, revealing his skull has been busted wide open!]

LD: The literal crimson mask on the face of Supreme Wright, his head BADLY lacerated from that steel chair to the head!

BW: Well, Carver swore he'd have Wright's blood on his hands tonight and never say he's not a man of his word.

[Carver crawls in, retrieving the trash can as he looks down at the bloodied Wright, a sadistic grin on his face...]

"CRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAASH!"
"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: TRASH CAN TO THE HEAD!

[Wright sways but doesn't collapse, still on his knees as Carver winds up a second time...]

"CRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAASH!"
"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: AGAIN!

BW: The referee may need to look at stopping this thing! Wright's busted open and he's NOT defending himself right now!

[Carver raises the trash can overhead a third time, Wright barely able to keep himself vertical...]

"CRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAASH!"
"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and finally, Wright does down, the crowd roaring as Carver stands over him, dented trash can in hand... and then flings it aside, diving into a sloppy mount to hammer his fists down into the bloodied face of Wright!]

LD: Carver going to work! Right hands raining down on Wright!

[Wright still isn't able to get his arms up to defend himself as Carver tries to cave in his skull with his bare hands! The referee throws up his hands, an anxious expression on his face as he looks in closely...]

LD: The referee taking a long look here... he may be about to stop it... you may be right, Ben.

[Carver abruptly gets up, dragging Wright over to the turnbuckles, crimson on the taped fists of the Boston Brawler as he dumps Wright into a seated position against the turnbuckles before stomping him over and over until Wright flattens out on the canvas...]

LD: A mini-Boston Beatdown in the corner.. what's this now?

[Retrieving the badly-dented trash can, Carver plants it on Wright's face and upper body before stepping up to the middle rope...]

LD: No, no, no! Don't do this! Don't-

[...and then leaps off, CRUSHING the trash can and Wright underneath it with an impactful double kneedrop!]

LD: THE TRASH CAN IS MANGLED AND SO MAY BE SUPREME WRIGHT!

[Carver rolls off, crying out in pain as he grabs his injured knee!]

BW: A horrible and STUPID decision there by Carver who let his emotions get the better of him there! He put his own body at risk to get one over on Wright and he may have just opened the door for Wright to win this thing!

[The badly bloodied Wright drags himself towards the ropes, barely moving as Carver writhes in pain on the canvas...]

LD: Both men are down! Both men are hurt! But who is going to come out on top in this Rip City Street Fight with the Portland fans on their feet?!

BW: Carver was inches away from finishing him off, I think, Dane... but that boneheaded kneedrop on the trash can might've turned this around in shocking fashion!

[Carver rolls to a hip, pounding a fist into his own knee as the referee checks to see if he wants to continue. Across the ring, Supreme Wright has managed to drag himself into a seated position against the ropes, blood streaming down his face as he tries to will himself back into the battle...]

LD: Carver's the first one... well, he was... but he can barely put weight on that leg, Ben.

BW: Fell right back down. That knee is mangled at this point. Supreme Wright has done serious damage to that injured leg and Carver might lose this one even if he pulls out a win.

[Carver grits his teeth as he gets back up, defiantly shaking his head at the bloodied Wright seated across the ring...]

...and with the aid of the ropes, Carver hobbles down towards the corner...]

LD: Oh my god... no.

[...and picks up the length of steel chain!]

LD: We've seen chairs! We've seen trash cans! We ALMOST saw a table... and now this damn heavy steel chain is back in the mix!

BW: What the hell is he going to do with THAT?!

[Carver answers that question by slowly wrapping it around his hand... then his wrist... then up his forearm...]

LD: I don't like the look of this at all, Ben.

BW: Neither does Supreme Wright.

[A bloodied and weakened Wright raises a hand, shaking his head...]

LD: And if Supreme Wright was expecting mercy from Hannibal Carver, he's badly mistaken!

[Carver advances on him step by very slow step as Wright drags himself to his feet with the aid of the ropes, wobbly on unsteady feet against the ropes as Carver draws closer...]

LD: Carver closing the distance, Wright with nowhere to run... nowhere to hide... nowhere to-

[...and the Boston Brawler lunges, off-balance and showing signs of fatigue as he aims a chain-wrapped forearm at the skull of Wright who shifts, turning away from the blow that glances off his shoulder!]

LD: OH! HE MISSED!

[But Wright does not, going with the spin to CRACK Carver on the ear with a spinning backfist that knocks him even more off-balance, sending the Boston Brawler down to a knee!]

BW: He didn't get all of that, Dane, but he might've gotten enough!

[Wright stays on him, dragging the stunned Carver to his feet, reaching down from behind...]

LD: He's gonna rack him!

[...and lifts Carver up into the torture rack that means Reign Supreme is en route!]

LD: HE'S GOT HIM UP! STEPS OUT TO THE MIDDLE FOR ALL TO SEE!

[But as Carver reaches his hand up, he digs his fingers into Wright's eyes!]

LD: TO THE EYES! CARVER GETS LOOSE!

[As Carver lands on a knee behind Wright, he surges upward, driving his head into the midsection of Wright as he turns around...

...and then gets up, yanking Wright down into a standing headscissors...

...and then points to the crowd, reaching down to hook one arm - the crowd ROARING with recognition as a chant quickly starts up.]

"SKULL-PUMP!"

"SKULL-PUMP!"

"SKULL-PUMP!"

"SKULL-PUMP!"

"SKULL-PUMP!"

LD: The Furies of days gone by are living their glory days in Portland! They want to see it! They want to see the Skullpump!

BW: Crack your Mooselips if he hits it 'cause it's all over, babydolls!

[Carver reaches down for the other arm, pulling it into a double underhook as Wright struggles to escape with all his might and skill...]

LD: HE'S GOT IT HOOKED! HE LIFTS HIM UP!

[...and with the "SKULL-PUMP!" chants continuing to echo throughout the historic IIWF Coliseum...]

LD: UP ANNNNNNNND...

[...but Carver's injured knee seems to buckle, giving way as he falls into the driver awkwardly!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: Did you see that, Ben?! The knee gave out!

BW: It did! It did! And that means Carver hit the Skullpump but he didn't hit it clean! Supreme Wright's down but he might not be out after that... but Carver's going for it!

[The crowd counts along with the official's count...]

"ONNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNE!"

"TWOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!"

"THREEEEEEEEEEEE-"

[...that gets broken when Wright BARELY slips the shoulder up in time!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: HE KICKS OUT! HE KICKS OUT! SUPREME WRIGHT LIVES!

[Carver lies on his back, staring up at the lights, stunned at the knockout.]

LD: What a battle between two of the very best this company has to offer, paying the purest of tributes to the mighty Double Eye here tonight at Showtime: Ring Wars! What a Main Event this has been, Ben!

BW: A Main Event anywhere in the world... even right here in Portland!

[Carver sits up, a look of disbelief on his face as he looks at the official who holds up his hands to show how close it was.]

LD: That close... that close to Carver SPIKING Supreme Wright on top of his head, winning this match, and perhaps avenging his friend Jack Lynch.

[Carver gets to his feet, weary and hobbling across the ring...]

LD: We're creeping up on the twenty minute mark of this one...

BW: Yeah, but twenty minutes against Supreme Wright feels like an hour against anyone else. Carver's on rubber legs, sucking wind through, sweating enough Budweiser to fill a keg.

LD: A lovely image.

[...and picks up the steel chair, stepping out to center ring and throwing it down to plant it on the canvas.]

LD: He puts the chair in the middle... now he's moving in on Wright again...

[Dragging a dazed Wright to his feet, Carver pulls him towards the middle of the ring...]

...and snatches the three-quarter nelson, bringing the few fans not already standing in Portland the rest of the way to their feet!]

LD: HE HOOKS HIM! THERE'S GONNA BE A BLACKOUT IN PORTLAND!

[Carver pulls him into position, making sure that his cutter will send Wright skullfirst into the steel chair...]

...which is when Wright STOMPS the back of Carver's injured knee, causing him to cry out, falling to a knee...

...and Wright goes into a spin before he THROWS HIMSELF into a diving forearm smash to the back of Carver's head!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

BW: WAS THAT A MIND ERASER?!

[Wright flips Carver over, collapsing on top of him with an arm across the chest!]

LD: ONNNNNNNNNNNNE! TWOOOOOOOOOOOO! THREEEEEEEEEE-

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: CARVER SURVIVES! STILL IN THIS!

[Wright rolls onto his back, both men staring up at the lights now as the crowd ROARS over the battle they've been seeing!]

LD: The Rip City Street Fight continues! The crowd is on their feet! They're loving every second of this! Carver went for the Blackout but Wright was ready for it, going after the knee again and then hitting that devastating elbow to the back of the head... and yes, it DID look like a Mind Eraser from our vantage point out here... standing... wishing our table was a safe space.

[Waterson chuckles as Dane mourns the loss of her seat...

...and inside the ring, Supreme Wright is struggling to get up off the canvas.]

LD: Wright is the first on the move... trying to get up... trying to find a way to put down the Boston Brawler...

BW: But now Carver's getting up too! Both men fighting to get up! This is wild, Dane!

LD: What a Main Event it's been here on Showtime: Ring Wars - something that the fans who packed this building two decades ago can be very proud of!

[Wright is the first one up, moving slowly towards the rising Carver..

...who POPS him on the jaw with a stiff forearm strike!]

LD: OH! BIG SHOT BY CARVER!

[The blow stuns Wright but he composes himself, settling in to land a forearm shot of his own!]

LD: We've got a fight on our hands! Nearly twenty minutes into this thing and it's broken down into a slugfest! Elbowstrike by Carver... and Wright with one of his own! Trading blows in the center of the ring that would level an ordinary man as these two keep battling it out like few others could!

[Carver rallies with a roar, landing three unanswered haymakers and a stiff elbowstrike that spins Wright around...]

LD: CARVER'S GOT HIM ROCKED!

[...and reaches around, snatching a three-quarter nelson...]

LD: BLACKOU-

[...but the ever-ready Wright STOMPS the back of Carver's injured knee, causing the Boston Brawler to let loose a howl of agony, stumbling forward...

...which is when Wright hooks him by the wrist with his right arm, trying to slide his left hand behind the neck...]

LD: HE'S LOOKING FOR THE CROSSFACE!

BW: The Cobra Clutch Crossface is truly the ONLY unbreakable hold in pro wrestling! If Supreme Wright secures it, it's just a matter of time before his opponent is begging for mercy and tapping out!

LD: Hannibal Carver is fighting it! For all the talk of Carver being a mindless brawler at times, he IS a veteran of this game and he knows what Wright is capable of! He knows what Wright could do if he gets this hold locked in!

[Carver is struggling to stay on his feet as Wright looks to cinch it in...

...and then abruptly shifts his footing...]

LD: NO!

[...and lifts Carver into the air, THROWING him down on the top of his head on top of the steel chair on the canvas!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: COBRA CLUTCH SUPLEX! ON THE CHAIR! RIGHT ON TOP OF THE STEEL CHAIR!

BW: He didn't know it was there!

LD: Or he didn't give a damn, Ben!

BW: Whatever it is, Carver's out! I mean, he is OUT, Dane! All he has to do is cover and this one's over!

LD: What's he waiting for?! Wright on a knee, looking at Carver... glaring at him might be a better way to put it.

BW: Burning a damn hole right through him might be even better.

[Wright angrily gets up, showing more emotion than usual for him as he stomps across to close the distance, dragging a limp Carver off the canvas...

...and then slaps his hand around the head, squeezing tightly.]

LD: Is that... that's the Iron Claw! That sick son of a...

BW: You talk about adding insult to injury, Dane... this is the ultimate insult as Wright tries to put down Lynch's knight in sullied armor with the Lynch family hold!

[The boos are loud and lusty as Wright squeezes the head of Carver, holding him aloft in the center of the ring...

...and then abruptly breaks it, dashing to the ropes behind him, charging back in...]

LD: LARIA-

[...but Wright's attempt at Jack Lynch's leaping clothesline is thwarted when Carver slumps down, causing Wright to crash and burn on the canvas!]

LD: An unlikely mistake by Wright and it could cost him, Ben!

BW: We don't see too emotion out of Wright EVER, Dane... but right there, there was a little bit rubbing salt in the wounds and he made a mistake. But can Carver take advantage it with the punishment he's gone through tonight?

LD: Carver on rubber legs, watching Wright struggle his way back up off the canvas.

[Wright makes a lunge at Carver...

...who snaps out, hooking a three-quarter nelson!]

LD: BLACKOUT! HE GOT IT! HE GOT IT! IT'S OVER!

[But the joy of the fans is short-lived as Carver hits the canvas...

...and grabs his knee, wincing in pain as he rolls back and forth on the mat!]

BW: Uh oh! I think he tweaked his knee when he hit the mat, Dane!

LD: I think you're right. The knee got jammed or something... and he can't make the cover! He hit the Blackout but he can't make the cover!

[Ever determined, Carver rolls over onto his hip, trying to drag his body across the ring towards the prone and unmoving Wright...]

LD: Carver trying to get there... GET THERE!

[...but several seconds pass before Carver gets within reach, throwing an arm across the chest in a sloppy pin attempt!]

LD: ONNNNNNNNNNNE! TWOOOOOOOOOOOO! THREEEEEEEE-

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: WRIGHT LIFTS THE SHOULDER AND BARELY SLIPS OUT!

[The crowd deflates over the near fall as Carver again slams his fist angrily into the canvas, shaking his head as he rolls to a sitting position, vigorously rubbing at his injured leg...]

LD: Wright kicks out but it's not over yet! Carver trying to shake some life into that leg, trying to force down the pain and keep on going! The Portland fans are behind him! Solidly behind him as he tries to get to his feet...

[With a lot of exertion and a grunt of pain, Carver gets there, looking out on the cheering fans... and smirks as he looks down at Wright.]

BW: What's that look, Dane? I don't like that look one bit!

LD: Carver dragging Wright off the mat... front facelock and- no, you've gotta be kidding me!

[The smirk gets wider as the fans ROAR in recognition!]

LD: He's got him hooked and I think he's looking for the Brainbuster! From one of Wright's rivals to another, Carver's got him hooked in the middle of the ring
annnnnnnd...

[Carver muscles Wright up, holding him up and down...

...but only for a moment before he cries out, grabbing at his knee as he is forced to set Wright back on his feet...

...and Wright lifts Carver up instead, trapped in a fireman's carry...]

LD: REVERSED!

[...and shoves Carver up and over, swinging his legs up...]

LD: FAT TUESDAY! THE GUTBUSTER CONNECTS!

[...and Carver stumbles backwards, grabbing at his midsection as Wright pushes back to a knee, swinging Carver around...]

LD: TORTURE RACK ANNNNNNNND...

[...Wright shoves Carver up and over a second time...]

LD: ...OHHHHHHHHHHH! REIGN SUPREEEEEEEEEEEEEME!

[With Carver flat on his now-aching back, Wright stacks up the legs, leaning over to apply enough pressure...]

LD: ONNNNNNNNNNNNNNE! TWOOOOOOOOOOOOO! THREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!

"DING! DING! DING!"

LD: Ahhhhhh... what a fight, Ben!

BW: It was a HELL of a fight, Dane, but in the end, Supreme Wright continues to show why he IS the best in the world! A massive victory here in Portland for the leader of Team Supreme... for the former and perhaps future World Champion... wow!

LD: Wright with another notch in his belt takes this hard-fought victory... and there was no interference, no distractions... you can be mad that he won but you can't be mad about HOW he won.

BW: Absolutely.

[Wright struggles to his feet with the aid of the official, holding his arms overhead as Megumi Sato makes it official...]

LD: It was a match worthy of the name Ring Wars for sure... and on a night where we paid tribute to men like Lord Byron... like Casey James and Tiger Claw... like JW Hardin and Brody Thunder and Otto Verhoeven and Serge Annis and... the list goes on and on and on... wait a second...

[The positive buzz in the air quickly turns sour as Wright turns his attention back upon the laid out Carver...

...and POUNCES on him, hammering him with heavy elbowstrikes from the mount!]

LD: OH, COME ON! THE MATCH IS OVER, DAMN IT!

[Wright lands a half dozen blows on Carver, hammering him in the head...

...and quickly spins out of the mount, grabbing Carver's injured knee, wrenching it into a kneebar!]

LD: HE'S GOING AFTER THE LEG! HE'S GONNA TRY AND TAKE OUT CARVER FOR GOOD!

[Carver screams in pain, pounding his fists into the canvas as Wright rips and tears the limb...

...and suddenly, the crowd ROARS to life once more as Ryan Martinez comes sprinting through the curtain, racing down the aisle towards the ring!]

LD: IT'S THE WHITE KNIGHT! RYAN MARTINEZ IS HERE!

[Martinez hits the ring on a dead run, diving under the bottom rope...

...and HURLS himself onto Supreme Wright, smashing his fists down over and over and over on Wright as the crowd ROARS with elation at Martinez finally getting his hands on his former friend!]

LD: MARTINEZ ON WRIGHT! MARTINEZ PUMMELING SUPREME WRIGHT!

[Wright breaks the kneebar, rolling like he's on fire as Martinez continues to try to pound him into the mat...

...and Wright rolls right out of the ring, leaving Martinez dangling between the ropes, shouting bloody murder at Wright as he escapes into the aisle, backing up it as the White Knight regains his feet, moving to the side of the injured Carver.]

LD: With Carver in the grip of Supreme Wright, Ryan Martinez makes the save and sends Supreme Wright scurrying up the aisle!

[Wright is quickly deep down the aisle as Martinez kneels on the canvas, glaring at his former friend...]

LD: What a night it's been! Martinez FINALLY gets his hands on Wright! But not for long enough. Good night everybody!

[...and we fade to black.]