



SHOWTIME

Saturday, April 21st, 2018 from the Center Stage Studios in Atlanta, Georgia

[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#

[Shadoc 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 with a flash, we find ourselves inside the (slightly) new look Center Stage Studios in Atlanta, Georgia.

The initial wide shot of the makeshift arena shows the expected ring with black ringside mats all around it. The ringposts and apron are a deep purple color while the ropes and turnbuckles are gold-colored. Just as there was in the past, there are no barricades surrounding the ringside arena, leaving an empty space between the ring and the front row of fans seated on bleachers stretching up several rows towards the rafters where flags from countries around the world are hanging. In a new addition, we can also see a trio of large TV screens hanging high above the ring - high enough not to be caught in a standard camera shot but low enough for the fans in the arena to be able to see.

The shot pans across the crowd, showing the entrance staircase to land on the stage where we see our familiar announce table set up on one side and an interview podium on the other in front of another TV screen with the Showtime logo pulsating on it. A large black curtain has been set up as a backdrop behind the entire elevated stage area with small white LED lights stitched into it to create a starry effect.

As our shot lands on the interview platform, we catch our first glimpse of one of our hosts for tonight's action - a stunning brunette in a deep crimson dress with a sparkling silver necklace hanging around her neck and a huge smile on her face. This is Mariah Wolfe.]

MW: IT'S... SHOOOOWTIIIIIIIME!

[The crowd in Atlanta's Center Stage Studios ROARS as Wolfe grins.]

MW: The American Wrestling Alliance is ON! THE! AIR! Right here in Atlanta, Georgia at Center Stage Studios for the newest addition to ESPN's stable of shows - Showtime! I'm Mariah Wolfe and I'll be one of your hosts for the next two hours... and don't forget my co-host!

[The fans ROAR as Sweet Daddy Williams - in all his colorful glory - jumps towards the front of the stage, throwing his arms overhead as he stands in a deep purple sportscoat over a tie dye tanktop with a few gold chains dangling off his neck.]

SDW: YEAAAAAAAH, HOTLANTA, SHOW ME SOMETHIN'!

[The Atlanta crowd ROARS in response, greeting the AWA original as he waves his arms up and down a few times, nodding at the reaction as Mariah chuckles at her partner's antics before he settles back behind the interview podium.]

SDW: We back in Center Stage! We back in Hotlanta, baaaaaybeeeeeee!

[Another cheer goes up!]

SDW: And we back on Showtime, Miss Mariah!

MW: We certainly are... and with just a week to go until The Battle of London, this show is STACKED, Sweet Daddy! We've got Royal Crown first round matches! We've got a Last Chance Battle Royal! We've got the World Television Title on the line in tonight's Main Event!

[And still more loud cheers from the AWA faithful!]

MW: Plus a whole lot more, Sweet Daddy.

SDW: Yeah, yeah, yeah! We've got the Slam Sorority here! We've got Lee Connors here! We've got the Peach Pits! We've got KAMS! We've got EGM! The Shadow Wolf! Howie Somers! And soooooooooo much more! Let's do this! I'm ready! I'm hyped! Let's do this!

MW: You heard the man - let's head down to the ring for our opening tag team matchup! And as we do, let's toss it over to our good friends on the call for all of tonight's action - Lori Dane and Ben Waterson!

[We cut to our announce duo sitting on the elevated stage at the broadcasting desk. Lori Dane has gone for a golden blouse and black slacks on this night with her reddish-brown hair up and back in a ponytail. Ben Waterson's in a standard and stylish black suit, smirking at the camera as it lands on him for the first time tonight.]

LD: Thanks, Mariah... National Wrestling Night is in the books and it was a big one, Ben, but we're happy to take the baton as we continue to run down the road to The Battle of London. One week from today, the AWA will be in the O2 Arena in jolly ol' London, England for a very special night of action. We'll have more on that as the night goes on but Ben, what are you looking forward to the most tonight?

BW: How do you even pick one, Dane? Maybe it's Sid Osborne putting the so-called Savior of the AWA out to pasture and showing him that it's the future of the business that's moving on to the Royal Crown Finals next weekend. Maybe it's Toughill and Fujiwara showing the world that the hype is real and the AWA Women's Division is the cream of the crop! Or maybe it's the unbeaten World Television

Champion Odin Gunn squashing that annoying little bug Omega in the Main Event!
Take your pick, Dane!

LD: It's going to be one of those nights, huh? Well, we might as well get it going down in the ring with our ring announcer, Megumi Sato! Take it away, Megumi!

[We fade to the ring where Sato is sporting a bright red dress showing her pale white skin as she raises the mic.]

MS: Tonight's opening contest is a tag team match scheduled for one fall!
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.]

MS: Annnnnnnnd their opponents...

[The AWA faithful nearly give Center Stage Studios a skylight as the sounds of "Tom Sawyer" by Rush kick in over the PA system!]

MS: ...from Minneapolis, Minnesota and Dallas, Texas respectively... at a total combined weight of 485 pounds... the team of...

"FLAWLESS" LARRY WALLLLLLAAAAACEEEEEEE...

...ANNNNNNNNNNNNNND...

...TRAAAAAAAIAVISSSSSSSSSS LYNNNNNNNNNNNNCH!

[The curtain goes flying open as the popular duo makes their way onto the scene. Lynch is immediately tossing up the Hook 'Em Horns that even get Atlanta fans to cheer them in this moment. Larry Wallace is all grins as he steps out onto the stage in a black t-shirt with "I'M BACK!" in bold white print on it. He pulls off the shirt, revealing a well-toned physique underneath... and on the other side of the stage, Travis Lynch peels off his super smedium shirt to reveal his own well-tanned and toned upper body. They point to each other... and then fling their shirts into the crowd to the frenzy of the female fans in attendance scrambling to grab the unexpected souvenirs.]

LD: Wow! What a reaction for this duo, Ben!

BW: WHAT?! I CAN'T HEAR A THING! ALL THIS SQUEALING POPPED MY EARDRUMS!

[Lynch and Wallace make their way down the staircase towards the ring, the Alonso brothers complaining to referee Andy Dawson about... the fans liking Lynch and Wallace, I guess.]

LD: Travis Lynch went to bat for Larry Wallace back after the Anniversary Show after Wallace came to the aid of Lynch against the Blackjacks with Bobby O'Connor... and it's great to see both of these men back in action here tonight, Ben.

BW: I'd rather see the Blackjacks back in action but from what I hear, Bobby O'Connor has them on a spiritual retreat this weekend.

LD: I doubt that. Unless by "spiritual retreat," you mean a planning session on the best way to drive the Lynches out of professional wrestling.

BW: You say "tomato"...

[Lynch climbs up on the apron, turning to grin at the still very loud reaction from the crowd. Wallace is up on the midbuckle on the outside, pumping a fist to the cheering fans before hopping over the ropes into the ring where the former National Champion joins him.]

LD: Larry Wallace has been out of action here in the AWA since last year but he looks to be in tremendous shape there, Ben.

BW: Muscles are great but let's see what kind of ring shape he's in.

LD: Travis Lynch looks as good as always... and while many have wondered when Lynch might refocus on getting back to the National Title currently held by Jordan Ohara-

BW: Not anymore! Unless someone got him a bag to hold the pieces in!

LD: We'll get to that a little later when Sid Osborne is out here, I'm sure, but right now, I'm talking about how Travis Lynch says he's put his title aspirations on hold while he takes care of family business in the form of Bobby O'Connor.

[Travis and Wallace huddle up as the Alonsos do the same.]

LD: A final strategy session on the parts of both men... and it looks like it'll be Larry Wallace starting this off against Adrian Alonso.

[Alejandro and Travis step to the apron as the referee steps to the middle of the ring and...]

"DING! DING! DING!"

LD: Showtime is on the air and our opening match is underway... quick tieup in the middle, nice side headlock applied by Wallace...

[Alonso struggles against the hold for a moment before rifling a pair of forearms into the ribs...]

LD: ...Adrian Alonso looking for a way out. He and his brother, Alejandro, have had a run of success in Florida as well as down in Puerto Rico as of late...

BW: I'm not sure I believe these two were working in Puerto Rico.

LD: Why's that, Ben?

BW: Not enough scars on their foreheads.

[...and then lifts Wallace into the air, looking to suplex his way out of the hold but the Flawless One cranks up the pressure, coming back down with momentum that turns into a headlock takeover.]

LD: Nice attempt at a counter by Adrian Alonso but Larry Wallace had a counter to the counter in mind...

[Down on the mat, Wallace cranks the headlock on Alonso who cries out "nonononononooooo" to the questioning official.]

BW: I think that's a no, Dane.

[Lori chuckles as Adrian Alonso works his way to his feet, ready to try another escape attempt...]

LD: Adrian backs him in and shoves him off...

[Wallace hits the far ropes, hurdling over Alonso who dives at his feet...]

LD: ...Wallace off the far side...

[...and as Adrian attempts a hiptoss, Wallace reverses and takes him over with one of his own!]

LD: ...and the Flawless One living up to that nickname, taking Adrian Alonso down... whooooooa!

[And as Adrian scrambles to his feet, he finds Larry Wallace ready and waiting to deliver a standing dropkick... but Alonso dives through the ropes to the outside, desperate to avoid Wallace's signature move.]

LD: Adrian Alonso wanted NO part of that dropkick, Ben.

BW: Can't blame him. Larry Wallace once proclaimed he had the BEST dropkick in wrestling... and I don't know about that but it's a damn good one and it's laid out plenty of people in his career... a career that once saw him TEAM with Bobby O'Connor... a career that once saw him as a member of Team Supreme.

LD: Now what's with bringing all that up?

BW: I'm just wondering if Travis Lynch is as dumb as he seems. He's looking for an ally to take care of this family business he talks about... and he picks the one guy who has ties to BOTH of his family's enemies right now. I'm just saying he better watch out when Wallace goes to pat him on the back because he may be holding a knife, Dane.

LD: It's been years since Larry Wallace has had anything to do with either O'Connor or Supreme Wright!

BW: Cain Jackson could've said the same thing before the Red Wedding.

[Wallace waves Adrian Alonso back into the ring as Alonso paces the ringside area, glaring up at him. Adrian's brother Alejandro shouts something at Wallace, drawing his attention...

...which is when Adrian slides back in behind him, rushing to smash a forearm into the back of Wallace's head!]

LD: Ohhh! Sneak attack from behind by Adrian Alonso... stomping the lower back... and there's the tag to Alejandro...

[Alejandro Alonso steps into the ring, joining his brother in stomping the back of Wallace as the crowd boos loudly. The brothers drag Wallace off the mat, using a double whip to send him across...]

LD: A pair of blows to the body...

[...and a sandwiching dropkick to both sides of the head puts Wallace down on the mat as Adrian exits the ring.]

LD: ...and four feet to the head puts him down!

BW: A dropkick droppin' the guy who says his dropkick is the best.

[Alejandro climbs off the mat, dropping an elbow down into the sternum, earning a two count before Wallace kicks out.]

LD: Alejandro bringing him to his feet, short forearm on the jaw!

[Wallace falls back into the Alonsos' corner as Alejandro takes aim, lunging forward with a back elbow into the jaw... and then twists to land an elbow on the other side!]

LD: Nice striking combination by Alejandro Alonso, the young Cuban grappler...

[A snap mare flips Wallace out of the corner into a seated position...

...and then Alejandro BLASTS Wallace with a short forearm to the back of the head, knocking him prone and into a pinning predicament!]

BW: BIG FOREARM!

LD: Wallace is down! Could it be a major upset on the way?!

[A two count follows before Wallace kicks out again... and Alejandro climbs to his feet, slapping the hand of his brother.]

LD: Adrian Alonso tagging back in... dragging Wallace to his feet, setting for a suplex...

[And as Adrian lifts Wallace for a back suplex, Wallace flips out over the top, snatching Alonso for a reverse neckbreaker...

...and SLAMS the small of Alonso's back down into a bent knee...]

LD: OHH!

[...and then leaps up, dragging Alonso down with a full-on neckbreaker!]

LD: OHHHHHH! What a combination by "Flawless" Larry Wallace to take down Adrian Alonso and completely turn this match around!

[Wallace pushes up off the mat, staggering to the corner where he slaps the offered hand...]

LD: And in comes Travis Lynch!

[Lynch storms across the ring, leaping up to knock the rising Adrian Alonso back down with a shoulder block!]

LD: Travis knocks Adrian Alonso right back down!

[As Travis gets up, he sees Alejandro Alonso coming for him...

...and he lifts, pivots, and drives the bigger Alonso down with a powerslam!]

LD: POWERSLAM SPIKES HIM DOWN!

[Travis pops up, pumping his muscular arms as Alejandro rolls to the outside. He turns back to the rising Adrian, drilling him with two big left hands...]

LD: Lynch is fired up... whips him back to the corner...

[Travis barrels across the ring, leaping up to land a forearm smash in the corner, slapping Wallace's hand...]

LD: ...and a tag brings Wallace back in...

[With Adrian dazed, Travis and Wallace whip him across the ring...]

LD: Off the ropes and...

[...and the crowd ROARS as they both leave their feet, scoring with a double dropkick!]

LD: OHHH! DOUBLE DROPKICK ON TARGET!

[Travis takes up a protective stance as Wallace scrambles into a cover, hooking a leg for a one... two... three.]

"DING! DING! DING!"

[Travis pumps a fist, a big grin on his face as Wallace climbs to his feet, embracing his partner as the fans cheer.]

LD: Now THAT'S an impressive win, Ben.

BW: It's an impressive win over the Alonsos... but it'll be a very different story when they climb in there with the Blackjacks, Dane.

LD: We'll see about that... and in the not-too-distant future, I'd imagine... and right now, it looks like the new team of Travis Lynch and Larry Wallace are going to stop by the interview area to talk to Mariah and Sweet Daddy Williams!

[Lynch and Wallace exit the ring as we cut to the interview podium.]

MW: Thanks, Lori... and as the winners of tonight's opening match make their way over here to join us, Sweet Daddy - how did you like what you saw tonight out of them?

[Williams nods.]

SDW: Good showing, good win... and I ain't one that likes to agree with that guttersnake Waterson...

[The crowd cheers as Waterson glares at Williams.]

SDW: ...but it may be a whole otha story when they take on those big, nasty Blackjacks, ya dig?

MW: Oh, I hear you loud and clear... as do Travis Lynch and Larry Wallace. Gentlemen, come on in here...

[Travis and Wallace reach the podium, trading a high five as they settle in.]

LW: We hear you loud and clear too, Sweet Daddy... and you're right. You're one hundred percent right. The Alonsos are a tough team in there... but that's nothing compared to how tough it'll be against the Blackjacks. We know that... and we're ready for it.

[Travis nods, clapping a hand on the shoulder of Wallace.]

TL: That's right. Ever since I went to my ol' pal Zharkov and asked for this guy to be brought back, I've heard a whole lot of chatter about his background... about his history... but all I care about is what's here...

[He slaps Wallace's stomach, causing the Flawless One to double over...]

TL: ...and here...

[...and then lays in a pretty stiff chop to the chest.]

TL: His guts and his heart! I've known this man a long, long time... and he's had his fair share of wrong turns down this path of life but who the heck hasn't, Mariah? We all have. I sure have. I've fought my share of demons and while Larry's took on a different form, he's fought his too and come out better for it on the other side.

[Travis pauses.]

TL: Now, speaking of demons... let's talk about Bobby O'Connor.

[The crowd jeers as Wallace shakes his head.]

LW: Do we have to?

[Lynch grins.]

TL: I'm afraid so. Because the only reason I'm not lacin' 'em up and taking my shot at Jordan Ohara and the National Title is because I made a promise... I swore on my Holy Bible to my mom and dad that I was gonna make Bobby O'Connor regret the day he turned his back on my family. That man came to my family's home. He ate at our table. Slept under our roof. Trained with my brothers and I in the barn and on the ranch. He was like another brother.

And just like that polecat Supreme Wright, he turned his back on my family.

[Lynch pauses.]

TL: I'll go one further... he stabbed my family IN the back. And for that, he's gotta pay.

[Wallace nods.]

LW: Bobby and I haven't been on the same page for a long while now... but I always respected him and we had a bond 'cause we came up together. We walked into that locker room together. But the man I've seen since last summer? I don't know that man. But the Wallaces and the Lynches are bound by blood... the blood spilled inside the ring by our fathers... and that's a special kind of bond that can't be broken easily, Bobby. Go home. Go ask your old man about that bond and he'll tell you... your grandfather will tell you too... you can't walk away from that no matter how hard you try.

[Wallace points at the camera.]

LW: And no matter how big and bad your foot soldiers are, you let them know that it's not the size of the men in the fight, it's the size of the fight in the men... and Travis and I have a fight bigger than all get out inside of us, Bobby.

TL: Those two scumbags turned their backs on my family too. My dad did everything for them to give them a shot... and they buried him for it. Well, when we get our hands on the two of you, it's your turn to get buried.

And O'Connor?

[Travis shakes his head.]

TL: The Good Lord himself won't be able to save you when we get our hands on you... but my guess is he wouldn't want to.

[Travis has an ice tone to his voice on that before striding away, Larry Wallace smirking as he follows his partner out of view.]

MW: I would not want to be in Bobby O'Connor's boots if those two come looking for him! Fans, we're going to take a quick break but when we come back, it'll be the Slam Sorority in action so don't you go away!

[We fade out on the grinning Mariah to black.

We 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 toe hold 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 Shadoe 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 we fade back up to find Sweet Lou Blackwell and Interim President Maxim Zharkov standing in front of a door backstage with Zharkov's name written on it. Zharkov has his trusty clipboard in hand, a pencil tucked behind his ear as Blackwell speaks.]

SLB: Welcome back to Showtime here on ESPN, fans... and as you can see, I've managed to get a little one-on-one time with Interim President Zharkov who has certainly had his work cut out for him lately. Mr. Zharkov, it was two weeks ago here in Atlanta where you had to deal with an invasion for lack of a better term by Team Supreme... you've had the Desperadoes running wild... the Westerly Dynasty stealing the World Title belt... you seemed to be at a breaking point already... and then came National Wrestling Night with Jackson Haynes... with Victoria June... with Sid Osborne destroying the National Title bel-

[Zharkov raises a hand, silencing Blackwell.]

MZ: I do not need a reminder of recent events, Mr. Blackwell.

[Blackwell nods.]

MZ: This job... is hard. Harder than I ever imagined. It is no wonder people quit this job so quickly, no?

[Blackwell smiles, nodding again.]

MZ: Everyone has an opinion on what I should or shouldn't do. I hear commentary - "he should be fined! He should be suspended!" and then I have to make decision...

[He holds up his hands.]

MZ: ...with wrestler's careers... lives... in these hands. It is... hard.

[Zharkov sighs.]

MZ: You mention Westerly Dynasty stealing World Title. I go to Supernova... I tell him I will order return of the title. He refused.

[Zharkov shrugs.]

MZ: He says he's a man... and a man that will solve his own problem. And now the title is back in hand so...

[He shrugs again.]

MZ: You mention Victoria June. I am big fan of Miss June, yes. But...

[He rubs at his neck.]

MZ: ...I am... how you say... very sensitive... about wrestler health and safety. Miss June puts her own career at risk ignoring doctor's orders. Dr. Ponavitch says she's not cleared... and she attacks E-Girl MAX anyways.

[The Tsar shakes his head.]

MZ: This is not okay. And she has been suspended for two weeks from appearing at any AWA show.

[Blackwell raises his eyebrows.]

SLB: And Osborne? I can't help but notice that even after his actions on National Wrestling Night, he's here tonight... in the building... and competing in the Royal Crown tournament.

[Zharkov sighs, seemingly seething.]

MZ: Yes. "He should be fined! He should be suspended!"

[Zharkov nods.]

MZ: He WAS fined. Heavily. And... a suspension...

[He pauses.]

MZ: ...not this time. But I will warn Mr. Osborne personally. You destroyed something that means a great deal to many people.

[Zharkov's eyes get colder.]

MZ: You destroyed something that means a great deal to me.

[The camera zooms closer on the Interim President.]

MZ: You may believe your actions have no consequences.

[And closer.]

MZ: You. Are. Wrong.

[Zharkov clears his throat... and then shoves open his office door, disappearing from view.]

SLB: Ooooookay. Sid Osborne may have made a VERY big mist-

[And suddenly, a voice calls out from off-camera.]

"Hey Ivan!"

[The camera makes an abrupt pan to catch a furious Kelly Kowalski]

MZ: My name isn't-

[Kowalski waves an impatient hand, interrupting.]

KK: I ain't got time to get rememberin' your name. As far as I'm concerned, it's Ivan, and you're about to give me what I want, Ivan.

[Zharkov's eyes narrow.]

MZ: You need to-

[Kowalski again interrupts, sending a flash of anger through the Interim President.]

KK: Nah... YOU need to make a match. Me and Ricki Toughill. For tonight.

[The crowd inside the Center Stage Studios reacts as Kowalski stabs a finger into Zharkov's chest.]

KK: And right now would be better than later.

[Zharkov takes a moment to calm himself before reaching up slowly, grasping Kowalski's stabbing finger and pushing her slowly back before responding.]

MZ: Miss Toughill is already in a match tonight. The Royal Crown... perhaps you have heard of it?

[Kowalski grimaces, shaking her head.]

MZ: You will get no match tonight.

[Kowalski angrily responds.]

KK: But I-

[Zharkov raises a hand to silence her before speaking again.]

KK: But you may have a match in Atlanta on fifth of May... two weeks from tonight.

[Now Kowalski's eyes narrow.]

KK: Maybe ya ain't got to that part of the your Duolingo lessons yet, Ivan, but tonight ain't May fifth... and I said tonight. Not in a couple of weeks.

[Zharkov pauses.]

MZ: It is... how you say... take it... or leave it.

[Kowalski grumbles, fists planted on her hips. as she glares at the Interim President.]

KK: So that's a 'nyet' is it?

[Zharkov does not respond to the obvious jab. Kowalski crosses her arms in front of her chest and nods her head.]

KK: All right then. Just remember, I tried to do this right.

[And with those words, Kowalski turns to walk away.]

SLB: I have a feeling that wasn't the last word on this subject.

MZ: We shall see, Sweet Lou.

[And we fade from the tense scene backstage out to the ring where Megumi Sato is waiting.]

MS: The following match is a women's trios match set for one fall! Introducing first, already in the ring, at a combined weight of 400 pounds... first, from Tallahassee, Florida... ANGEL GONZALES!

[A Latino woman with black hair that comes just to her shoulders, with a lean build, and dressed in a yellow halter top and matching tights, smiles and waves to the crowd.]

MS: Her partner, from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania... SHELLY CARPENTER!

[A blonde woman with an athletic build, dressed in a baby blue halter top and a pair of white Spandex shorts, pumps her fist.]

MS: And their partner, from Tuscon, Arizona... ELLY MCELROY!

[A red-haired woman, taller than the other two and with more muscle development, dressed in a gold tank top and black tights, flexes her bicep and grins.

The lights go down and "300 Violin Orchestra" by Jorge Quintero plays, a static image coming up on the video screen, the words slowly coming into focus and, when the violins hit their crescendo, the words become clear:

"SLAM SORORITY"]

MS: And their opponents, at a combined weight of 458 pounds... they are CAROLINA COLTON... TRISH "T-BONE" WALLACE... "THE ALL-AROUND ATHLETE" LAURA DAVIS!

They are...

...THE SLAAAAAAAAM SOOOOOORORITYYYYYYYYYY!

[Three spotlights hit the entranceway. To the left is Carolina Colton, a sinewy woman with shoulder length blonde hair. Her two-piece ring gear is black, with neon green and orange "paint spatter"-style detailing. She drops to one knee and spreads her arms wide in a "how good am I?" gesture.

To the right is Trish Wallace, stocky and surly. Her hair is colored a titanium blonde and hangs loose halfway to her waist. She is dressed in a black sleeveless one-piece leotard with similar green and orange detailing and pounds her fist aggressively into her palm.

And in the middle is Laura Davis, who stands in the spotlight, arms spread to the side. Davis wears her red, white and blue track suit and, when she turns around, you can see the back, which has the words "DAVIS #1" in blue lettering.]

LD: The Slam Sorority making a grand entrance tonight. Sometimes I can't tell who has the bigger set of egos, E-Girl Max or these three.

BW: Do I detect a bit of jealousy in your voice, Dane? You are looking at three of the finest competitors in the AWA today, so I would expect a little something extra for an entrance!

LD: I won't deny their talents, Ben, but the attitudes of these three women leave a lot to be desired, as do a lot of their actions as of late.

BW: Let me guess, you're going to bring up what they did to Lauryn Rage on National Wrestling Night. What they did was a wake-up call to the former World Champion, a reminder that she can't possibly survive the Slam Sorority for much longer!

[Davis, Colton and Wallace make their way down the aisle, the spotlights following them, until they reach ringside, at which point the lights come back up and the spotlights fade away. Davis heads up the ring steps first – Wallace and Colton leap onto the ring apron on either side of her and hold the ropes open for their "coach" to step through, before following her into the ring themselves.]

LD: The Slam Sorority certainly tried to put Lauryn Rage out for good, but thank goodness for Kimmy Bailey, who made sure Laura Davis didn't get the chance to use that Screwdriver on Lauryn.

BW: What I don't get is why Kimmy Bailey would want to cross paths with Laura Davis again. Isn't once enough for her? And what was with Kimmy mouthing off to not only Lauryn, but her own partner, Ayako Fujiwara?

LD: I don't blame Kimmy one bit for coming to Lauryn's aid, but she had a valid point for both Lauryn and Ayako, about doing the right thing. And I, for one, applaud her for intervening when Lauryn might have been seriously injured otherwise.

BW: You mean that she's NOT already seriously injured, Dane? How much longer can that knee of hers hold up?

[Davis now removes her jacket and pants to reveal her wrestling attire: A dark blue leotard with matching kneepads and wrestling boots. She tosses the jacket over her shoulder, then her pants. Colton catches them both and twirls them into a ball. T-Bone Wallace does a couple of scapular stretches. The Starkiller lowers her aviator shades and snickers at their opposition for the evening.]

LD: Somehow, Lauryn Rage is pushing through that knee injury, though I can only imagine what Trish Wallace may have in mind at the Royal Crown Tournament Finals next weekend to change that situation.

BW: I imagine she has more than that on her mind, Dane! She has winning the whole thing on her mind! How she can vault herself up the rankings and make her coach proud!

LD: Trish Wallace will get her chance, but she'll not just have to deal with Lauryn Rage, but Michelle Bailey, one of the most accomplished women in wrestling today, along with whoever advances in our final qualifier between Ayako Fujiwara and Ricki Toughill.

BW: What a foursome, eh? Matches like that leave little doubt when people say the AWA Women's Division is the hottest division in wrestling. You've got arguably the strongest woman in the AWA in Wallace, the first AWA Women's World Champion in Rage, a woman with a resume longer than my arm in Bailey, and we're either going to add an Olympic gold medalist or one of the toughest women in wrestling history to the mix. That's a hell of a battle for the Royal Crown Finals, Dane.

LD: It sure is... and we'll be talking more about it as this match - and this night - goes on but right now...

[The bell rings and Davis then gestures to Wallace, saying to her, "You're up... show them what you got, T-Bone!" Wallace smirks as Colton gives a quick nod, then ducks between the ropes, Davis then doing the same.]

LD: ...it's go time here in Atlanta with Trish Wallace starting off this 6-woman tag team contest... across the ring, it's Shelly Carpenter. Speaking of Kimmy Bailey and Ayako Fujiwara - who we'll see in action later tonight when she takes on Ricki Toughill for the final berth in the women's Royal Crown - Trish Wallace and Ayako Fujiwara have locked horns a few times over the past few months.

BW: You bring that many strong personalities together, Dane - you're gonna find enmity. Trish Wallace gained her killer instinct, and I think Ayako lost hers.

LD: Well, that remains to be seen later tonight... collar-and-elbow tie-up... Wallace aggressively driving Carpenter into the turnbuckles.

BW: She's got a point to prove in the Royal Crown - she wants to bring the tiara home for Coach Davis!

LD: Coach Davis?!

BW: Yes, the Hoosiers have a proud tradition of upstanding, motivating coaches!

[Wallace grapples Carpenter to the mat with the pugnaciousness of a rottweiler.]

LD: Well, one of the knocks against Trish Wallace before coming to the AWA is that she was self-trained - with Laura Davis'... gentle coaching..., she does seem to have a greater grasp of the fundamentals.

[In a moment of irony, Trish Wallace begins to rain forearm shots down onto the back of her opponent, who is scrambling for the ropes to gain a respite. The referee begins counting.]

LD: That should be a clean break.

BW: T-Bone is in the zone!

[At 'four', Wallace throws her hands in the air, finally observing the rope break. Carpenter quickly scrambles to the friendly corner, tagging in the raven-haired Angel Gonzalez.]

LD: Tag is made... Gonzalez with a head of steam here, catches Trish Wallace flatfooted!

[A surprise kick to the midsection doubles Trish Wallace over, and Gonzalez begins to run the ropes. Whatever she has planned gets interrupted, when Trish Wallace springs back upright and catches her opponent by the shoulder and leg...]

BW: T-BONE SUPLEX! I could watch her dish those out all night!

[Wallace grabs her opponent by the wrist and effortlessly drags her to Slam Sorority's corner, tagging in Carolina Colton.]

LD: Tag is made to the Starkiller... these two are like oil and water, Ben.

BW: Yeah, if you put 'em together, get 'em hot enough, they explode and burn you, like whenever it's Michaelson's turn to make dinner, right?

[Colton and Wallace lay into Gonzalez with stomps. Gonzalez's partners look like they're about to object, and Colton stomps across the ring to smirk and patronize them. Wallace keeps the referee distracted...]

LD: Hey ref, turn around!

[...allowing Laura Davis, still on the apron, to put her boot on the neck of Gonzalez as she tries to prop herself up on the bottom rope.]

BW: My monitor went out, Dane! What exactly are you seeing? Is Lauryn Rage hobbling around out there like Long John Silver?

[Wallace retreats back to the ring apron, while Laura Davis pretends to be arguing with the crowd as the referee turns around. (What interference?) Gonzalez finally gets a chance to stumble to her feet, and walks right into Carolina Colton, who cinches her up...

...and flails her clear across the ring with a huge overhead belly-to-belly suplex!]

LD: Unbelievable! The core strength on display there by Carolina Colton!

BW: Someone get a bag of peanuts and half a can of pop for this little ragdoll stuck in the ring with Slam Sorority! I presume that's what people who don't take first class get these days.

[Gonzalez is close enough to her corner to roll through after her hard landing and make a desperation tag to the lanky Elly McElroy. She steps through the ropes and gets into Carolina Colton's face. McElroy extends her palm and spreads her fingers, signaling for a test of strength.]

LD: Well, this is new. We haven't seen Carolina Colton face off against many opponents who have a reach advantage over her.

[Colton looks over her shoulder at Laura Davis and Trish Wallace incredulously, then shrugs and adjusts her stance, extending her palm to her opponents... they lock fingers tentatively on one hand... then begin jockeying to lock fingers on the other...]

...and then Carolina gives Elly McElroy a cheap kick to the knee before locking fingers on the other hand.]

LD: Cheap shot from the third generation wrestler from Canada.

BW: "Tests-of-strength?" Are we really still doing that in 2018?

[Colton cinches McElroy around the waist, and with ferocity, hoists her up and slams her hard to the mat.]

LD: Powerbomb! Shades of big brother Blake!

[Colton drags McElroy to the Slam Sorority corner.]

LD: Tag made to the Bobby Knight of the AWA, according to my broadcast colleague...

[All three members of Slam Sorority come into the ring, and Wallace and Colton restrain their opponent in the corner, allowing Laura Davis to lay into McElroy with her trademark kneelifts.]

BW: "Pain 101" is now in session... tuition is payable to Slam Sorority!

[McElroy's partners have seen enough, as Slam Sorority ignores the referee's admonitions. Wallace and Colton cut them off before they can offer assistance, though. Davis takes down McElroy with a clinically precise dragon screw legwhip. Wallace womanhandles Angel Gonzalez with a spinebuster, followed by a leaping senton. Colton shoulderblocks Shelly Carpenter, then peels her off the mat to deliver a tilt-a-whirl slam.]

LD: It's bedlam in the ring, and these lunatic bullies are running the asylum!

[Meanwhile, Laura Davis is frighteningly focused on stretching and brutalizing the lanky legs of Elly McElroy. With her opponent's foot trapped in her grasp, she quickly draws her finger across her throat, signaling for her proteges to finish their opponents off. Then she twists McElroy's leg into yet another textbook dragon screw legwhip. Trish Wallace scoops Angel Gonzalez onto her shoulder, and Colton does the same for Carpenter.]

LD: Oh, we've seen this before... this is brutal...

[Wallace and Colton charge at each other from across the ring at full speed, squashing their opponent's between them, then pivoting, and performing stereo powerslams!]

BW: Like a four-car pileup on I-285!

[Davis drags McElroy to the center of the ring, and cinches in the Heel Hook. Wallace drops to the mat and locks in a bearhug on Angel Gonzalez. Colton shrugs, and decides to complete the triangle of submissions and puts the Cuffs on Shelly Carpenter, and rather than stand on ceremony, the referee calls for the bell as all three of Slam Sorority's opponents slap the mat frantically.]

BW: And that's why Laura Davis is guiding talents like Carolina Colton and my pick to win the Royal Crown: "T-Bone" Trish Wallace! Pick them apart until they're demoralized, and accept nothing less than complete surrender.

[Colton and Davis both release their holds. Wallace keeps squeezing at Angel Gonzalez's midsection.]

LD: And that's enough! There needs to be fines for this, especially with the Interim President in the house tonight!

BW: T-Bone just got to apply her favorite hold, and then suddenly the match is over! Let a gal have some fun!

[Colton and Davis circle Trish Wallace like lions as Wallace begins to ragdoll her helpless opponent to-and-fro. The bells sounds again and again, until Laura Davis nods to Trish Wallace, and she releases the vicious bearhug on her smaller opponent.]

LD: About time! I was concerned we'd see that... vicious triple submission Slam Sorority likes to torment their victims with... that Bearhug, Cuffs, and Heel Hook combo.

BW: It's a cunning play by Laura Davis... She keeps those two hungry to dish out the pain. All the better to unleash it in London next week.

[Davis stands up to face the crowd, hooking her thumbs to herself. Flanked on either side, Wallace and Colton drop to one knee and flex in sadistic symmetry.]

LD: Slam Sorority takes home a win in 6-woman tag team action. Mariah, Sweet Daddy... it's over to you to get some comments from the winners.

[We cut to the podium where Mariah Wolfe and Sweet Daddy Williams are standing.]

SDW: All right, Slam Sorority, get on over here!

[The members of the Slam Sorority approach the podium. Carolina Colton is snickering her extroverted, smug, snicker; her arm is over Trish Wallace's shoulder, and she doesn't seem to care much for her boorish partner's revelry. Davis, meanwhile, takes the front position, a scowl on her face.]

SDW: I'll tell you what, Laura Davis, I don't know what got into the three of you when it wasn't enough for Trish Wallace to put the squeeze on that young lady, but you and the Starkiller to brutalize her partners as well! What exactly are you trying to prove by not just winning a match but hurting your opponents like that, baby?

LD: First of all, Williams, my name isn't baby... it's Laura, but you better address me as Ms. Davis, the best in the world! Second, tonight was about making sure everyone in the AWA Women's Division understands why the Slam Sorority is the most dominant trio in women's wrestling today! And the one who really better be paying attention is Lauryn Rage, who thinks she's done with me?

[She shakes her head.]

LD: I don't think so! It's we who will decide when we're done with her! And if I was her, I'd be concerning myself with what you're about to face in London, that being T-Bone right here!

[She gestures back to Wallace, who begins to crack her knuckles, one by one.]

LD: Not only is Wallace going to put Rage down, but she's going to put everyone else down and show everyone why I have brought out the best in her! Just like I have brought the best out of Carolina right here...

[She gestures to Colton, who snickers again, and puts on her mirrored aviators.]

LD: And just like I have proven, time and again, that I am the best women's athlete in the world today! And not only does it seem Lauryn Rage needs more lessons in that, but now... Kimmy Bailey decides she wants to go another round? All right then! You can enjoy a ringside seat in London and see firsthand not only what T-Bone will do to Lauryn, but to your own flesh and blood, and either your tag team partner or someone I understand is a good friend of yours! Either way, when all is said and done, you better start asking yourself about reconsidering another round with the All-Around Athlete!

Enlighten these people, Starkiller.

[Colton nods, stepping into the mic.]

CC: Ohyahnowfersure, I know Coach Davis isn't happy about not being in the Royal Crown, and that makes me sad. Almost as sad as me knowing that you took me out of the Royal Crown too, Lauryn Rage. But ya know who's saddest of all?

T-Bone! Sad, sad, sad, T-Bone. She was looking forward to finally having a chance to scrap with me in London, and you denied it to her.

[In the background, Trish Wallace snorts and rolls her eyes, but doesn't interrupt.]

CC: You shoulda just taken the 'L' and stayed home in your Big Smoke condo and chewed on some bricks – 'cause it beats losing teeth when Trish punches you in the mouth. And if that muffin-topped gutter trash somehow manages to squeeze by Ayako tonight, don't look to her to bail you out, 'cause we've been hearing the rumors.

MW: Wait, what rumors?

TW: Wrestling Watcher Weekly. Get with the times, Mariah! Apparently Lauryn and Ricki used to be besties and they had a little falling out last year – that's why Ricki's never had Lauryn's back the past few months, and vice versa.

CC: Ohyahnowfersure, T-Bone. You and I may be frenemies, but at least I'm not the messiest human being alive like Ricki, and you're not a backstabbing narcissist like Lauryn Rage.

TW: I don't even know why I'm bringing it up. There's zero chance that a slob like that gets by a dirty underhanded cheat like Ayako. That's the one I want to see across the ring from me in London. I want two 'W's over those stupid Lariatos.

CC: And your mom, too!

TW: I don't like leaving my own country, ladies. And I especially don't like leaving it for anything less than warm sunny beaches and cocktails with little umbrellas in them!

[She turns to Colton.]

TW: You got a toothbrush? We're going to London.

CC: Do you hear that ladies? SHE'S COMIN' TO LONDON!

[Colton snickers and Davis' scowl is now replaced with a grin, clearly impressed with what her charges had to say.]

LD: You might say that, when we get to London, it's going to be T time... as in, time for T-Bone to win it all. Until then, Wolfe and Williams, your time with the all-time greats has ended!

[She gestures to her Slam Sorority members, who follow her in leaving the set.]

SDW: The Slam Sorority lettin' everyone know that they're comin' for the Royal Crown next weekend... and to settle some scores as well with Lauryn Rage and Kimmy Bailey. How'd I do, Mariah?

[Wolfe grins.]

MW: Absolutely perfect, partner. We've got one Royal Crown Final almost locked in as we wait to see who will come out on top in this big showdown between Ricki Toughill and Ayako Fujiwara later tonight... but on the men's side of things, it's a bit messy, Ess-Dee-Dub!

SDW: It sure is. Tony Donovan's in... we know that. But that's it! Everything else is up in the air just seven days before the Finals!

MW: We've got two singles matches here tonight to fill two of the other spots - Sid Osborne taking on Shadoe Rage later tonight...

[The crowd cheers that anticipated matchup.]

MW: ...and in just a few moments, we'll see Smasher Salazar taking on Joe Flint...

[More cheers.]

MW: And after all that, we're going to be seeing a Last Chance Battle Royal later tonight to determine the spot vacated by that chaotic battle between Rapahel Rhodes and Paris Crawford two weeks ago. And Sweet Daddy, have you SEEN the locker room tonight?

SDW: It's locked and loaded, baby girl! The whole joint is jumpin' with people who've come to Center Stage to try and get that final spot in the Royal Crown tournament final! You ask me? The men's side of this thing is wide open and there's a whole lot of people in the AWA locker room lookin' to get a crack at a major chance to get some eyeballs on 'em in the O2 next weekend!

MW: It's going to be a wild night here on Showtime... and right now, let's go backstage to hear from both Smasher Salazar and former tag team champion Joe Flint as we get ready for their sure-to-be-tough battle!

[And with that, we cut to footage marked with "A FEW MOMENTS AGO", where Smasher Salazar stands in a hallway, leaning against a wall. He has a roll of athletic tape that he is wrapping around his left hand and wrist, and his right hand is already heavily taped. He stares at his hand as he tapes, not looking up as he starts to talk. He's not loud for a change, but instead calm, relaxed... almost disquieting.]

SS: Used to be, when I was a young pup, tapin' up your hands like this was illegal. Used to be that people would come from all around to watch men tape their fists up like this, since it meant people waived a whole lot of rights 'cause they wanted to make the man across the ring from them bleed real bad.

[Salazar stops, ripping the tape.]

SS: 'Course, it ain't illegal no more. Lots of things ain't what they used to be no more. But you'd know all about that, wouldn't you, toy soldier?

[Salazar slaps his taped knuckles, then looks up at the camera with his beady eyes.]

SS: See, I heard what you said about me, G.I. Joe. I heard you cry your eyes out, sayin' I made fun of your service. And all I've heard since this match was made was about who you used to be. How you used to be a World Tag Team Champion. How you used to be a big shot 'round these parts, and plenty of other parts.

[Salazar picks up his trusty Dr Pepper bottle and spits into it.]

SS: But like I was sayin', things ain't what they used to be, huh? Just like how you used to be a soldier, now you just dress up like one and march around tryin' to give people orders. Just like how you used to be in control of your little platoon there, now your subordinate's gone and got himself his own recruit, right under your nose, and you didn't do nothin' about it. You want to come roarin' at me, you want to be all full of action... question is, can you still do it?

[Salazar shakes his head.]

SS: Far as I'm concerned, all I see is a man who's scared to say boo to a goose. I see a man who knows the hourglass is runnin' out of sand, and he's hopin' he's still got somethin' inside of him that makes him the great man he used to be. I see a man who looks in the mirror and wants to relive the past, because he's scared of what the future holds. I see a man who can't even trust his own regiment anymore. I see a man who's got somethin' he ain't felt in probably ever.

Doubt. And man, he don't like it.

[Salazar spits into the bottle again, eyes still focused on the camera, unblinking.]

SS: Time ain't movin' backward for you just because you want it to, toy soldier. The AWA ain't your military, and it don't answer to the orders that you bark. There's a lot of payola ridin' on this for me, not just winnin' this tournament but thinkin' about the future. See, I make my money by hurtin' people. If I beat a man like you as bad as I know I can, if I can go to London, that's sure gonna open a lot of eyes about what a man like me can do.

[Another spit into the bottle.]

SS: Knowin' all that, knowin' what I know about you and what you think you know about me... how you feelin' about tonight, Captain?

[Salazar smiles with his tobacco-stained teeth, a disturbing, unsettling grin.]

SS: 'Cause I feel mighty good, and that's real bad for you.

[And with that, we go from the pre-taped footage to a live shot of intrepid AWA scoopster Sweet Lou Blackwell standing in front of an AWA Showtime logo plastered on a wall backstage in the Center Stage Studios.]

SLB: Some intimidating words there from the gun-for-hire, Smasher Salazar... and believe me, fans, if you don't know that man's history, you may be underestimating what he's capable of in there. However, if I know my next guest, that's not a problem for him...

[Blackwell looks up, and sees the newest soldier in the Soldiers of Fortune army - Mr. Stars and Stripes - staring down at him. Blackwell is a little bit flustered, and straightens out his tie.]

SLB: Can I... can I help you?

[No response from the masked man. Blackwell adjusts his tie and clears his throat.]

SLB: Maybe you can tell me a little bit about yourself? Anything?

[Mr. Stars and Stripes continues to stay nothing, standing in a white mask with red stripes and blue stars across it in a makeshift American flag pattern. His upper body is bare - oiled and cut to a definition that few are able to muster - while his lower body is covered in camo pattern full-length tights - a likely outfitting from the Soldiers. His glare at Blackwell speaks volumes though as Blackwell slowly backs away...

...and bumps right into Joe Flint who is approaching from behind. Flint chuckles as Blackwell jerks around nervously.]

SLB: Joe Flint! What is this guy all about?! He won't say a word to me!

[Flint throws a look at the masked man, giving a slow nod.]

JF: I know the feeling, Blackwell. Good luck gettin' anything outta him. Not fer a lack of tryin', but even I can't get a peep outta this guy. I don't care much for why he chooses to be this way... am I right, Charlie?

[And now Charlie Stephens saunters into the mix, giving a look to Flint... then the masked man... then back to Flint with a shrug.]

CS: Say what you will about why he is what he is.. and I know how much you hate conspiracies, but you can't deny how good this man is, right?

[Mr. Stars And Stripes tilts his head in Flint's direction who slowly nods... obviously still not thrilled with the situation.]

JF: Yer right. I wish I could crack this guy's shell, but I am impressed at how reliable he's been. He shows up at the crack of dawn every mornin' and puts in the work. No matter how warm it got, the man never sweats. It's incredible. The ease of how he does things too...

[Flint hesitates a moment, throwing another look at the silent masked man.]

JF: I'm proud of Charlie for findin' this man, Lou... and despite the silence, Mr. Stars and Stripes is truly is one of us!

[Stephens beams in pride, while Mr. Stars and Stripes still stands unmoving.]

JF: Not only that, but the synergy these two have... just ask the recruits at the home base how good these two are. They're a very well oiled machine! I can say with utmost confidence that with him by our side... the Soldiers of Fortune are definitely gonna be the next AWA World Tag Team Champions... again.

[Blackwell nods... and then grimaces as Marty Meekly pops in from out of nowhere, camo-painted whistle already at the ready.]

"FWEEEEEEEEET!"

"FWEEEEEEEEET!"

"FWEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEET!"

[Blackwell grimaces, rubbing at his ear.]

SLB: Thanks for that. High estimation aside, Duke... it may be a while before ANY version of the Soldiers get another crack at the tag team titles after you lost that steel cage match to Next Gen a few weeks ago...

[Stephens glares at Blackwell, about to say something when Blackwell raises a hand.]

SLB: ...but tonight, I'm not here to talk about the tag team titles... I'm here to talk about the Royal Crown Tournament Finals, Joe Flint! You have a tremendous opportunity here tonight when you take on Smasher Salazar in a few moments to show the world the Joe Flint of old... the Joe Flint who USED to be one of the toughest and most well-regarded singles competitors in the business. You've dedicated your career to tag team wrestling for a couple of years not but with a win over Salazar-

[Charlie Stephens decides to interject.]

CS: Smasher Salazar is a clown, and tonight Sweet Lou, Joe here's gonna send that freak show runnin' right back to the circus where he belongs!

[Flint snaps his head in Stephens' direction, and raises a hand.]

JF: Settle down there, soldier.

[However, this seems to have the opposite effect.]

CS: But he IS a clown! That man is the absolute LAST person who should be insultin' you and the rest of us. He's a disgustin' freak! When's the last time he took a shower? Phew, I can smell him from all the way over here and...

[Flint's voice is harder the second time he interrupts.]

JF: Enough.

[Stephens pauses, glaring at Flint... but slowly, Mr. Stars And Stripes extends a muscular arm across Stephens' torso. Stephens looks down at the arm... then at the masked man... and then back to Flint, giving a slightly-apologetic nod before taking a step back. Flint nods gratefully before proceeding.]

JF: I wasn't gonna come out here an' insult the man until he insulted us. Until now, he didn't do anythin' to us other than be on the other side of the ring.

The man's filthy, undisciplined SCUM who survives on tobacco and gross gas station food. It's gonna take everything I got tonight to stop myself from passin' out as that scent from that puke assaults my sense of smell. I'm gonna be in for a long hot shower to wash that stink off of me. He's nothin' but a bum outside the ring...

[Flint pauses, shaking his head.]

JF: But inside the ring is another story, Lou. He can't be underestimated in there because that bum has a reputation for a reason. Folks all over the wrestlin' world are willin' to line his pockets for a reason. He gets the job done. I remember crossin' paths with him down Texas way back in ol' Blackjack's day and he's as tough as they come, takin' gigs for that PUKE Ghazi Hassan and his ilk. He didn't care who was writin' the checks, he'd bust up anyone and everyone for a payday.

[Flint shrugs.]

JF: Money is a very powerful motivator after all.

[Flint raises an arm, pointing at the camera.]

JF: Despite everythin', Salazar, I meant what I said. You're good enough to command a pretty penny...

[Stephens mutters "but he's still a clown..." which Flint doesn't pick up on.]

JF: ...but you ain't good enough to beat me.

[Flint slaps his arm.]

JF: Once I aim this Howitzer and slam it upside your head, I'm gonna go to jolly ol' England an' win that Royal Crown Tournament.. and then the sky's the limit. I'm not gonna rest on my laurels and simply be satisfied with that Royal Crown Tournament. The Soldiers of Fortune will hold all the gold again and prove to the AWA why WE should be the group everyone should be concerned about.

[Flint turns towards Stephens, Meekly, and Mr. Stars And Stripes.]

JF: But, for tonight.. Charlie, you said last week that you could handle your situation on your own, right?

CS: Yes, sir.

[Flint nods his head in satisfaction.]

JF: So.. for tonight, I'm gonna handle MY situation on my own.

[Stephens starts to protest when Flint raises a hand.]

JF: I trust both of you will follow my orders and stay in the back. Hit the town, have some fun while I send ol' Boxcar Willie on the next train out of town.

I got this, understand?

[Stephens again looks to complain as Flint arches an eyebrow, putting a hand on Stephens' shoulder.]

JF: That's an order.

[The other three look at each other, a little perplexed, before Stephens nods his head.]

CS: Understood. Go kick his ass, Captain.

[The Soldiers salute each other, and Meekly marches off stage left, with Stephens and Mr. Stars And Stripes in tow. Flint watches them leave, a grin on his face. He slaps the shoulder of Sweet Lou, who jumps in surprise.]

JF: Sweet Lou, I'm glad they understand.

I need to do this. I'm more than proud of what me and Charlie did in that ring as the AWA World Tag Team Champions, but I got a lot to prove.. not only to the others, but to myself that I am able to achieve singles success.

I got a lot left in this ol' Sherman Tank of mine, an' I'm about to prove why a legend like Karl O'Connor picked me for this tournament. It ain't personal, Salazar.. but you're in my way.

At ease.

[Flint nods at Blackwell, then storms off to head to the ring.]

SLB: "Captain" Joe Flint's fired up and ready for combat against Smasher Salazar with a spot in the Royal Crown Tournament finals at stake. Lori, Ben... back to you!

[We fade back to our announce position.]

LD: Thanks, Lou... and Ben, it appears both of these competitors are ready to surprise some people here tonight.

BW: And beyond, Dane. Let's start with Joe Flint. Those of us who've followed Flint's career for a long time know what he's capable of as a singles competitor. We've seen his work down in Texas for ol' Pennypincher Lynch. We've seen the battles with some of the toughest, roughest sons of guns this business has ever seen. And we've seen what he's done here in the AWA as a tag team competitor - Stampede Cup winner, former World Tag Team Champion... but for Flint to make the Royal Crown Finals, I gotta imagine some people would be surprised to see him there... maybe even some of the people he'd be climbing in there against.

LD: And Smasher Salazar?

BW: There are a lot of similarities there. Just like Flint, Salazar's spent the majority of his career out of the major promotions. He's working in Texas like Flint... but he's also worked in other places where the fans pay good money to see people fight and bleed. He's been in Puerto Rico... he's been in Japan... and for those people who saw Salazar show up with a Dr. Pepper bottle, covered in tobacco juice, and making deals with Sandra Hayes who thought he was some kind of joke - you're dangerously mistaken. This guy is tough, he's bloodthirsty, and there's not a damn thing he won't do for a dollar.

LD: A whole lot of dollars at stake in this one too.

BW: That's right. A win tonight catapults him into the Finals where anything can happen... and can you imagine the look on the faces of those stuffy front office suits if they had to put that shiny crown on Salazar's dirty hair? I love it!

LD: This one promises to not be pretty... but is sure to be exciting. Megumi, my friend, the floor is yours.

[We fade to the ring where Megumi Sato is standing.]

MS: The following contest is set for one fall with a twenty minute time limit and is a FIRST ROUND match in the ROOOOOOYALLLL CROOOOOOWWWWWN TOURNAMENNNNNNT!

[The crowd cheers loudly for that!]

MS: Introducing first... from Cut and Shoot, Texas... weighing 279 pounds...

SMAAAAAAAAAAASHERRRRRRRRRRRRR
SAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAALAAAAAAAAAZARRRRRRRRRRRRR!

["What a Beautiful Day" by dead horse plays as Smasher Salazar slowly ambles from the entrance, his long greasy hair hanging into his eyes. The lower half of his face is covered by a black bandana, and he is wearing a sleeveless T-shirt bearing the logo of "Kicks 101.5FM", an Atlanta country music radio station, as well as a pair of filthy jeans and well-worn black boots. Conspicuous by its absence is his bullwhip, although he carries his taped up Dr Pepper bottle in his equally well-taped left hand.]

LD: We heard from this man moments ago, Ben, and he seemed a lot more intense than he's ever been since arriving here in the AWA.

BW: Can you blame him? Karl O'Connor handpicked him to be in the Royal Crown.

LD: I doubt he cares one bit about the honor of Karl O'Connor picking him for the tournament.

BW: For once, you're right, Dane. He cares about the money that comes from winning this. It's like the old man dangled a juicy porterhouse in front of a rabid dog.

[Salazar continues his slow walk down to the ring, occasionally lifting his bottle to his mouth underneath the bandana to spit. His eyes dart around Center Stage, never staying fixed on any one person or thing, until he gets to the ringside area. He calmly walks up the steps, placing the bottle on top of the ringpost, and steps through the ropes. As he clears the plane of the ring, he pulls the bandana down around his neck, letting his tobacco-stained grin show.]

LD: Ugh. He's not going to win any awards for most hygienic wrestler here in the AWA, that's for sure.

BW: If there was any money in it, I bet he'd bleach his teeth tomorrow.

LD: You may notice, fans, he doesn't have his bullwhip with him. Even though he hasn't used it yet in one of his matches, it's very obviously a weapon, and Interim President Zharkov is taking no chances with having it out here.

BW: How come the soda bottle snuck past?

LD: Don't make me say it.

BW: No, I think I want you to say it.

[We hear a sigh from Lori Dane, then a disgusted tone comes across her voice.]

LD: Because he spits his tobacco into it, and he said he'll just spit on the floor if he can't have it.

[And then a laugh from Ben Waterson.]

BW: That takes me back to the old days back in Dallas, when the whole front row was spitting into cups.

LD: A far cry from when you were breaking into the business at Frank And Sons Collectible warehouse for PWR.

BW: Ha! Don't remind me.

[As the music fades, Sato continues.]

MS: Annnnnnd his opponent...

[A loud crackling noise is heard, slowly fading into a piercing buzz, as a distorted voice is heard shouting out partial lyrics to "My Country 'Tis of Thee"]

Land where my fathers died!
Land of the pilgrim's pride!
From every mountain side,
Let freedom ring!

[The 'ring' starts echoing, and it starts resembling an actual ringing sound. Suddenly, the ringing sound fades perfectly into the opening guitar riff by Ted Nugent of the Damn Yankees, as "Don't Tread on Me" by the early 90s super group Nugent played guitar for starts playing over the PA to a surprisingly mixed reaction from the crowd.]

MS: About to come down the aisle... from Parris Island, South Carolina... weighing 281pounds...

..."CAPTAIN" JOOOOOOOOOOOOE FLINNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNT!

[The mixed response continues as "Captain" Joe Flint steps out onto the entrance stage, a slightly-puzzled look on his face.]

LD: And there he is, fans... "Captain" Joe Flint... the Duke himself, looking to score the biggest singles win of his AWA career tonight in Atlanta.

BW: He looks a little confused too about some of these fans cheering him... and I can't say I blame him. I'm a little confused too. They've been spewing vitriol at him for years now, Dane.

LD: Well, I can't speak for the fans but I'll take a couple of guesses. I'd say Flint's decision to stand on his own lately has helped his reputation with the fans... and I also think the "do anything for a dollar" attitude of Smasher Salazar makes him easy to root against.

[Flint is a big, burly fellow. His barrel-chested physique isn't a picture of rock-solid conditioning, but it is a battle-scarred picture of toughness and raw power. The "Captain" keeps his hair in a military high-and-tight, and his prominent jaw and nose are the primary features of a face that strongly resembles a famous American actor of long ago... which is the reason many call him "The Duke". He wears camo fatigue pants and black combat boots, his hands are taped up, and he sports a single elbow pad on his left arm. The elbow pad is black, with the Soldiers of Fortune American-Flag colored Punisher skull logo on it.]

LD: When you hear the phrase "grizzled veteran" in this sport, fans, Joe Flint is the epitome of it. Six foot five, 281 pounds... as tough as they come... we talked about his time in Texas and some of the other Southern territories in the early 2000s and beyond after getting out of the Marines. He'll be turning 42 later this year as well, Ben.

BW: Which means that if Joe Flint wants a singles run under a national spotlight, the time is now. There's no better chance he's likely to ever get.

LD: I'd have to agree with that.. and conspicuous by their absence is the rest of the Soldiers of Fortune - Charlie Stephens, the mysterious Mr. Stars And Stripes, and the always-obnoxious Marty Meekly - who he ordered to stay in the locker room tonight. He wants to do this on his own and despite his past actions, you have to respect him for that, Ben.

BW: Respect ain't worth a dime if you don't get the win. Personally, I'd rather have 'em out there and not need them than need them and not have 'em. That's how I ran the Southern Syndicate and look at all the gold that was dripping off that group.

[Flint simply marches down to the ringside area, a determined expression on his face as he keeps an eye on the mercenary inside the ring.]

LD: Flint eyeballing Salazar the whole while...

BW: Smart move. I wouldn't put a pre-match attack past Smasher if he thought it would help his chances.

[Flint finally climbs the ringsteps, ducking through the ropes...

...which is when Smasher Salazar carpes the diem, rushing across to drive a boot into the ear of Flint, knocking him to a knee as the referee signals for the bell.]

"DING! DING! DING!"

LD: You called that one, Ben... and we're off and running in this one. Twenty minute time limit, one of three Royal Crown First Round matches here tonight and Salazar's really laying in the heavy artillery early in this one! Tremendous forearms to the back of the head and neck, clubbing down on Flint as the fans in Atlanta let Smasher have it...

[Dragging Flint off the mat, Salazar switches to big knees to the body, driving Flint back up against the ropes as Salazar looks to act quickly to wear down his opponent...]

LD: Flint's in early trouble in this one and-

[...and Salazar uncorks a brutal standing clothesline that flips Flint backwards over the top rope, dumping him unceremoniously on the barely-padded floor of the Center Stage Studios!]

LD: -OHHHH! A hard fall to the outside for Flint just moments into this match!

[Despite the protests of Shari Miranda, Smasher Salazar walks around her to step out on the apron, looking to continue the attack...]

BW: Salazar not letting up for a moment, this is the kind of killer instinct he needs to display if he's going to take the win in this one to make the tournament finals next weekend in the O2 Arena!

[...and drops off the apron, putting the heavy boots to Flint as he struggles to get off the floor!]

LD: The referee starting a ten count... and these two will have to be careful to keep their brawling within the confines of the rulebook or they BOTH could find themselves out of this thing.

[Pulling Flint off the ringside mats, Salazar DRIVES his face into the ring apron to jeers from the ringside fans shouting at him!]

LD: Facefirst into the mat... and Flint is reeling early...

[We cut to a quick split screen, showing an anxious Charlie Stephens looking on backstage alongside the masked Mr. Stars And Stripes and Marty Meekly.]

LD: ...and you can see Charlie Stephens and the rest of the Soldiers backstage, fans. Ben, he looks a little nervous about what's going on out here.

BW: This isn't the start the Soldiers wanted for sure, Dane. And if I know Charlie, they may have to tie him down to keep him back there.

LD: Surely he wouldn't disobey the order of a superior officer.

BW: Charlie's respect for command structure is a little... loose... at times.

[The split screen disappears as Salazar pushes Flint's throat against the bottom rope, choking off his air supply as Flint's face rapidly turns red...]

LD: Salazar with those roughhouse tactics on the outside, really working over Joe Flint in the early moments of this one...

[...and with Flint leaning hard on the rope, Salazar gives it a yank, snapping Flint backwards and back down on the ringside mats!]

LD: Joe Flint might be dealing with more than he bargained for in this one, Ben.

BW: I told you. It's easy to underestimate Smasher Salazar considering what we've seen out of him in the AWA so far... but if you know his history and the trail of broken bodies he's left behind him, you'd know that anyone who gets in the ring with him is playing with fire.

[Salazar lays in a few more boots on the floor as the referee's count reaches seven. The surly brawler rolls under... and then rolls back out, breaking the count.]

BW: Good, good. Using the rules to his advantage, making sure he doesn't get counted out... and look here now, he's climbing up on the apron...

LD: That's 279 pounds up on the apron... that's a big, big man annnnnnd...

[As Smasher raises his arms overhead, clasping his hands, Joe Flint struggles up to his feet...

...and BURIES a right hand into Salazar's exposed midsection!]

LD:and Flint lands the right hand! Make it two!

[With Salazar reeling from the surprise Flint recovery, the former tag champion reaches up, grabbing handfuls of belt and hair...

...and HURLS Salazar off the apron in a makeshift slam...]

"THUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUD!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: OHHHH! BIG SLAM OFF THE APRON!

BW: Good lord, Dane... it sounded like someone shoved a pork butt off the kitchen counter. You could hear the splat of flesh on barely-padded concrete down the block!

LD: Like I said, 279 pounds... and it just met the floor in a painful fashion!

[Flint leans against the apron, trying to recover as the crowd buzzes over the hard splat on the floor by Salazar...]

LD: And this gives Joe Flint a breather...

BW: Yeah, but he can't take too long breathing. He needs to get back into the fight and take it to Salazar before Smasher recovers out there.

[Flint grunts as he pushes up off the apron, staggering over towards Salazar who is still flat on his back breathing heavily.]

LD: Your wish is Flint's command, Ben, dragging Salazar off the floor by that dirty, greasy hair and... ohhh! Facefirst into the bleachers!

[The ringside fans scatter as Flint waves an arm to clear them...

...and SMASHES Salazar's head into a wooden bench a second time!]

LD: The fight has spilled out here into the crowd at ringside... which I'm sure is causing all sorts of smiles over at AWA Legal... and no, we're STILL not putting up barricades at ringside!

[Everybody got that? With Salazar laid out across the first couple rows of the bleachers, we again get the split screen shot, showing a much happier Charlie Stephens nodding and pumping a fist...]

LD: The comeback is on for Joe Flint and now Charlie Stephens likes what he's seeing... Marty Meekly as well... and Mr. Stars And Stripes too... probably. What's with the mask, Ben?

BW: What? The man wants to focus on his dedication to his country and not his own glory. He should be honored and respected for that.

LD: Uh huh.

[As we go back to a full screen shot, Flint hauls Salazar to his feet out of the bleachers by the arm...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and whips him into the apron, the small of Salazar's back smashing into the edge of the ring!]

BW: I hope Smasher's chiropractor is well-paid and on standby because he may need a serious adjustment after that.

[With Salazar reeling and the count growing again, Flint muscles him up on the apron, shoving his frame under the ropes into the ring. Flint gives a look out on some of the fans giving him their support, throwing a disbelieving shake of the head in their direction before he climbs up on the apron, stepping through the ropes...]

LD: Flint heading back in as well now and-

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...where Smasher Salazar, flat on his back and "writhing in pain," swings a leg up into the middle rope, driving his foot into the underside of it which jams the rope up between the legs of Flint in a low blow!]

LD: -that should be a disqualification! Joe Flint should be moving on, Ben!

BW: No, no... that was an accident! Smasher was in pain and... and... he didn't mean to do it, Dane!

LD: Are you kidding me?!

[Flint crumples through the ropes, falling to all fours as Salazar gets up... surprisingly quickly for someone who was just in horrible blinding pain a moment ago. The referee jumps up into Salazar's face, reading him the riot act as the fans jeer loudly in Center Stage.]

LD: The fans know it, I know it, you know it... and I think Shari Miranda knows it too! That was deliberate! It was intentional! And this match should be over with Joe Flint moving on to the Finals in London!

BW: The proof is in the pudding and we're fresh out of both!

[Miranda again shouts at Salazar who pleads his innocence before swiftly moving to attack one more, stomping and kicking Flint down on the mat to even louder jeers.]

LD: A resourceful move by Smasher Salazar has immediately turned this match on its head... and Salazar's going to work, pulling Flint up into the corner... and right back with those knees to the body and- ohh! Hard elbow down across the shoulderblades!

[Yanking Flint back to his feet, Salazar shoves his throat down over the top rope, leaning all of his weight onto the back of the neck...]

LD: Salazar showing there are no rules he will not break, a blatant choke over the ropes applied... Flint can't get loose...

[Salazar breaks the choke at the four count, raising his hands as Flint staggers down the ropes, coughing and choking as he falls to his hands and knees...]

...and Salazar BURIES a boot into the ribs, drawing an "ohhhh!" from the crowd as Flint flops over onto his back, and Salazar drops to his knees to cover.]

LD: First cover of the match by Salazar gets a one... a two... but Flint's out the back door before three.

BW: It's a good start but Smasher needs to stay on him, put a beating on him, and get this win before Flint can recover or before the Soldiers decide to get involved.

[Pushing to his knees, Smasher lives up to his name, smashing his fist down into Flint's ribcage a few times before climbing to his feet, dragging Flint up with him by the arm...]

LD: Both men are up... and Smasher ROCKETS him into the corner! And the gameplan of Smasher Salazar may be coming into view now as he works the ribs and back of Joe Flint with his smashmouth offensive style.

BW: I'm not doing it, Dane.

LD: What?

BW: I'm not making some kind of Smashmouth crack like Albano!

LD: Well, Smasher Salazar might not be an All Star yet... but he's definitely getting his game on right about now.

BW: I hate you so much.

[With Flint's arms draped over the ropes to support himself, Salazar comes bulldozing in, laying in a heavy clothesline that rocks the former tag team champion!]

LD: Big clothesline connects! Smasher Salazar may not have the biggest array of physical weapons in that ring but what he has is simple and effective and... he shakes the ring with that bodyslam!

BW: A whole lot of power behind that! Flint's in trouble if you ask me!

LD: Salazar measuring his man now... taking aim...

[The big Texan drops to his knees, driving his fist down between the eyes of Flint, causing the former Marine's legs to kick up into the air. Salazar sneers as he leans into a North-South pin attempt, not bothering with the legs as Miranda counts...]

LD: ...another shot to win it... one... and two... annnnnd... nooooo. Out at two again!

[Salazar promptly pushes himself back up onto his knees, shouting angrily as he pummels his fists down in a double axehandle onto Flint's exposed abdomen!]

LD: A little frustration there out of Smasher Salazar, pounding Flint down into the mat like a hammer pounds a nail...

[And again, we cut to the split screen... and this time, we see Mr. Stars And Stripes physically restraining Charlie Stephens who looks to be bolting for the door.]

LD: ...whoa, check that out, Ben.

BW: It looks like Corporal Punishment wants to get out here and get him a piece of Smasher Salazar. The masked man's holding him back there for now but you gotta wonder how long that'll last.

[Climbing to his feet, Salazar questions the count of the referee who holds up two fingers as Salazar mutters, shaking his head while leaning over to drag Flint up by the arm again...]

LD: Salazar staying on him though, not letting his frustrations take him out of the game... another slam perhaps?

[But as Salazar lifts Flint up in his arms this time, he twists and drives his lower back into the turnbuckles!]

"OHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: Into the corner they go, another hard shot to the back, and it looks like... is he...? Yes! Smasher Salazar is tying Joe Flint to the tree of woe!

[Stepping back, Salazar stomps and kicks at the torso of the trapped Flint, the referee ordering the bounty hunting brawler out of the corner!]

LD: Get out of there! Let the man go!

[But a few more stomps land on The Duke before Salazar finally relents, turning away from Flint as Miranda unhooks the foot, allowing the former tag team champion to slide down to the mat...]

LD: Flint's loose again, a taste of freedom... but here comes Salazar.

BW: Smasher smells blood in the water, Dane. Flint's in serious trouble and Smasher's gotta realize he's a big move or two away from finishing him off and earning his own ticket to the Royal Crown Tournament finals next weekend.

LD: Salazar puts him back in the corner..

[Holding Flint in place, Salazar drives his knee up into the ribcage once... twice... three times...]

LD: ...come on, ref! Get him back!

[And again, the protesting Shari Miranda forces Salazar to back off, hands raised as he pleads his innocence...]

BW: There you go, Dane. Quit yer complaining!

LD: Smasher Salazar is breaking rules left and right and for someone who is driven by the money, he's not only risking his opportunity at the Royal Crown, he's also risking a disqualification and ending up with the loser's share of the purse here tonight, Ben!

BW: You gotta know where you can press a referee. Most of 'em aren't gonna ring you up for hitting a guy in the corner no matter how many times they get their panties bunched up about it.

LD: Ew. Please don't discuss our official's underwear.

BW: Good point. Isn't that how your brother got fired?

[Stepping back into the corner, Salazar wraps an arm around Flint's head, dragging him into a side headlock...]

LD: I'm going to ignore that one, Ben, for both of our sakes as Salazar... is he actually going for a bulldog headlock? An actual wrestling move?

BW: You gotta use what gets you to the Winner's Circle. Sometimes it's a bullwhip to the throat, sometimes it's a bulldog headlock.

LD: Salazar setting his feet a little awkwardly... this might be out of his usual gameplan...

[And as the lumbering Salazar runs from the corner, Flint lifts as Salazar jumps, hoisting him into the air and throwing him out of the hold so Salazar goes CRASHING down on his back!]

LD: ...and a big time counter by The Duke! "Captain" Joe Flint showing that veteran ringsmanship and getting out of that bulldog attempt by Salazar... and that could completely turn this one around, fans.

BW: Salazar's gotta shake it off and get back up to the fight before Flint can take advantage of it.

LD: Flint fighting up off his knees, the fans in Atlanta behind him in this one now almost completely...

[And as both men struggle to their feet, Flint comes up swinging...]

LD: Right hand by the Duke! Another one! Rocking the bounty hunter from Texas!

[A third haymaker sends Salazar stumbling back into the ropes where Flint grabs an arm...]

LD: Whips him across... Flint on the move as well annnnnnd...

[Winding up his right arm, Flint hits the ropes for extra momentum, bouncing back...]

LD: ...HOWITZER CONNECTS!

[...and DRILLS Salazar across the collarbone with a big swinging clothesline that lifts him off the mat before dumping him down to the canvas!]

LD: HE GOT ALL OF THAT! THAT MIGHT DO IT, FANS!

[The veteran drops to his knees, diving into a cover, snatching up a leg...]

LD: ONNNNNNNNNNNE! TWOOOOOOOOOOOOOO! THREEEEEEEEE-

“OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!”

LD: -AND SMASHER SALAZAR SLIPS THE SHOULDER CLEAR IN TIME!

BW: I thought Flint had him there, Dane, but Salazar’s showing these people what kind of fight he’s got in his belly. Flint hits the big clothesline - the Howitzer - but it’s not enough and now Joe Flint’s gotta figure out what CAN get the job done.

LD: Flint can’t believe it, looking up at the official...

[And as Flint questions the count, we cut to the split screen again, showing Charlie Stephens ranting and raving at the television monitor, screaming “THAT WAS THREE! THREEEEEEEE!” and holding up three fingers as Meekly blows his whistle madly.]

BW: ...and Charlie Stephens can’t believe it either, Dane. He thought his partner had this one won right there.

LD: We’re closing in on the ten minute mark - the halfway point in the time limit for this one but you get the feeling it won’t be long now as Flint climbs back to his feet and...

[He waves his arms like he’s grabbing at something, earning another surprising cheer from the Georgia faithful...]

LD: ...and he’s calling for the Cobra Clutch! Flint looking to wrap him up and get the win here in Atlanta, sending him on to London, England next weekend for the Royal Crown finals where Tony Donovan and two more to be named await!

[As Salazar struggles to get up off the mat, Flint slips behind him, crouching down as the crowd buzzes with anticipation...]

LD: Flint’s got Salazar in his target sights... waiting... waiting...

[...and as the big Texan rises, Flint lunges in...]

LD: ...HE’S GOT IT! HE LOCKS IT IN!

[Salazar immediately starts swinging his arms frantically, searching for an escape as Flint secures the hold, trying to cut off the flow of blood to the brain and render Salazar unconscious!]

LD: The Cobra Clutch is applied in the middle of the ring and Smasher Salazar is in serious trouble now, Ben!

BW: In a hold like this, there isn’t much time. You need to find a way out and you need to do it quickly before the pressure kicks in and leaves you laid out!

[Salazar stretches out his arms, looking to grab the ropes for an exit but finds no ropes anywhere within reach...]

LD: And I'm not sure, Ben, but Smasher Salazar doesn't strike me as the type who can wrestle his way out of this.

BW: Probably not but there are a few tried and true escapes to a submission hold... you saw him grab for the ropes there and-

[On cue, Salazar plants his feet and uses his bodyweight to drive Flint backwards, smashing him into the corner...]

LD: OHHH! Hard into the corner they go... but Flint hangs on! A good effort to slip out but Flint's hanging on for dear life!

[Salazar stumbles forward, maybe looking to attempt the same escape again...

...which is when Flint leaps up onto the back, riding Salazar down to the mat, pushing his face into the canvas as he keeps the hold applied!]

BW: Uh oh... that might do it there! He's got Smasher down and once they're on the mat, there's no easy way out anymore!

LD: Salazar is fading! The arms slowing! The lights going out in his eyes!

[The referee steps in as Salazar's arm goes limp, lifting it into the air...]

LD: That's one! If it drops three times, it's over!

[Shari Miranda lifts the arm again, letting it drop...]

LD: Make it two! One more to the Royal Crown Finals for Joe Flint!

[...and she lifts it a third time, holding it for a moment before...]

LD: HE'S OUT! HE'S OUT!

[...and she whips around, signaling for the bell!]

"DING! DING! DING!"

LD: Joe Flint picks up the win and he's heading to London, fans!

[Surprisingly, Flint immediately releases the hold, throwing his arms up in the air as the referee points to him and the crowd cheers.]

MS: Here is your winner... moving on to the Royal Crown Finals next weekend in London... JOOOOOOOOOOE FLINNNNNNNNNNNNT!

[Flint gingerly gets to his feet, grabbing at his ribs with a wince as he raises the other arm in victory...

...and then turns towards the entrance stage where we see Marty Meekly, Charlie Stephens, and Mr. Stars And Stripes are standing, cheering him on.]

LD: And there's the rest of the Soldiers of Fortune to celebrate this win - the biggest singles win for Joe Flint in YEARS, Ben.

BW: Absolutely. This is a big chance for Joe Flint to show the wrestling world that he's still got it in singles as well as in tags... and if you thought 2017 was a big year for Joe Flint, 2018 may be his biggest year yet if he can win the Royal Crown next weekend, Dane.

LD: Flint saluting these fans... saluting his allies... Smasher Salazar put up a heck of a fight and showed the world just a taste of what he's capable of in there as well but right now, it's Joe Flint on top of the world!

[Flint mounts the midbuckle, celebrating his victory as 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 as we fade back up, we are backstage in Center Stage Studios where we find Tony Donovan standing alongside his... friend... Tiger Claw. Sweet Lou Blackwell joins them as well.]

SLB: Welcome back to Showtime, fans... and as you can see, I've tracked down one of the men heading into the Royal Crown Finals in one week's time in jolly ol' London, England - Tony Donovan. Tony, while we wait to see if it'll be Shadoe Rage or Sid Osborne taking the third spot in that four way Finals... I want to get your thoughts on Captain Joe Flint scoring the win just before the break to earn the second spot! Between yourself and Flint - both primarily tag team wrestlers over the past few years - this certainly seems to be a match all about opportunity.

[Donovan nods.]

TD: That's a good way of looking at it, Lou. Opportunity. You're right. For the past few years, everything I've done has been in the service of working with someone else for common glory. My team with Wes... the James Gang... the Kings of Wrestling... but this time in seven days at the Battle of London, this is all about me.

[Donovan straightens up, slapping a hand into his chest.]

TD: And for those who've forgotten, I'm a third generation superstar and this business is my family's business. My father Robert Donovan and HIS father and my namesake, "Tough" Tony Donovan, one of the OG Beale Street Bullies. This business is in my blood... and in case you think I'm some silver spoon punk who has had everything handed to him, you can forget about it. I went through the Combat Corner... and when that wasn't getting me where I wanted to go, I walked away and joined Team Supreme and received a Master's Degree in this business from the greatest in-ring competitor in this sport's history... and perhaps the most dangerous man to ever lace 'em up to boot.

[This earns him an unnoticed cold glare from a silent and stoic Tiger Claw.]

TD: But none of that means a thing when I step into the O2 Arena in seven days... because that night is not about blood... or training... or history... it's about the here and now. It's about me showing Joe Flint that he needs to re-enlist because he can't carry my boots. It's about me showing Shadoc Rage that his glory days are gone and the future is here and now... and it's NOT Sid Osborne. And it's about whoever survives that Last Chance Battle Royal thinking they're the Cinderella Story when I'm standing there to make sure the clock strikes midnight on 'em.

[Donovan smirks.]

TD: 2018 is my year. It's my year when Tony and I get Next Gen inside that ring and regain OUR tag team titles... and it's damn sure my year next weekend when I step into the Royal Crown Finals and remind the world why the name Donovan is feared in this sport.

[Donovan nods confidently, standing silent as we spot Claw... laughing.]

SLB: Some strong words from... Mr. Claw, is something on your mind?

[Claw glares a hole right through Blackwell.]

TC: Watch your tone, Blackwell. The only thing on my mind right now is this man walking out of London as the Royal Crown winner...

[Donovan nods again, grinning.]

TC: ...and right about now, I'm wondering if he really has what it takes.

[Blackwell's jaw drops as Donovan looks puzzled.]

TD: What?

[Claw extends an arm, nudging Blackwell aside so he can stare into the eyes of young Donovan.]

TC: The confidence is good. Very good.... and we know you have the skill. But you've still got one thing holding you back, Tony... and I think the best advice I can give you right now is a stiff reality check.

[Donovan's brow furrows.]

TC: Your father? He's a joke.

[Donovan's lips thin, an angry expression on his face.]

TC: I know that stings, Tony. The truth can have that effect. I'm sorry, Tony... but that's what it is. The truth. Your grandfather was feared. Your father's been the butt of the joke since the late 90s.

Your father gets on this mic and talks about all the places he's fought - South Laredo, Japan, Los Angeles... the same places I've fought. And yes, our paths even crossed in the ring from time to time.

Yes, he's big. Yes, he's strong. Yes, he's tough.

[Claw smirks.]

TC: But tell me why he's still peddling his broken down ass out here in 2018 if he was so good. Why isn't he on a beach somewhere spending his millions? Why isn't he dripping with honors and adulation as a former World Champion... as a Hall of Famer?

Because your so-called "legendary" father was far from it, Tony. One of the core tenets in our business is that if you tell a lie often enough, it eventually becomes the truth. He's weaved quite the story to make a lot of people believe it... even his own son. But you're a smart kid. You can do the research.

[Claw pauses, staring hard at Donovan... and then smiles.]

TC: But you don't have to, do you? You already know. You sat by and watched your broken down father get the opportunity that YOU deserved against Jordan Ohara... and despite all his bold words to the contrary, you knew he'd lose, didn't you?

[Donovan turns away from Claw's questioning gaze.]

TC: Good. Good. I'm glad I was wrong. You're not living in delusion... you're just being a proud son wishing your father was more than he is. I knew a young man like that once.

[Claw smirks at the obvious reference.]

TC: And no matter our differences now, that young man knew when it was time to step out of his father's shadow and be his own man... claim his name for himself. And these days, when you hear his last name, you think of him... you think of the future not the broken down past.

Now it's your turn, Tony. You can stand here and talk about the Donovan family name and its history and its legacy... or you can step forward and claim glory for yourself.

Your father failed in his quest to be the National Champion.

[Claw raises a closed fist, slowly extending a finger to point at Donovan.]

TC : Don't you dare fail in seven days.

[Claw turns abruptly, stomping out of sight and leaving a slack-jawed Tony Donovan behind.]

SLB: Tony...?

[Donovan has no response, staring after the departing Claw.]

SLB: Tony? Any respon-

[And Donovan suddenly stalks out of the camera shot as well, leaving Blackwell behind.]

SLB: I'd say Tony Donovan's got a lot to think about before he climbs into the ring in seven days, fans. Let's go back to the ring.

[We fade from backstage to the ring where Megumi Sato is standing. We can also see referee Scott Ezra and a slender and sleazy-looking grappler.]

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 Miami, Florida... weighing in at 232 pounds... JAMES DUKES!

[Said sleazy-looking grappler runs his hands through his slicked back greasy hair, flicking them at the camera with a sneer as the fans jeer.]

MS: Annnnnnnnd his opponent...

[Sato lowers the mic as "You're The Best" starts to play over the PA system to a BIG CHEER!]

LD: Oh yeah! Put on your gi and get ready for a fight!

[After a few moments, Sato continues.]

MS: From Winnipeg, Canada... weighing in at 177 pounds...

..."CANNONBALLLLLLLLLLLLLL"... LEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE... CONNNNNNNNORRRRRRRRS!

[And on cue, the youthful martial artist comes bursting through the curtain with a big fist pump towards the cheering fans. There's a big grin on the face of the Canadian as he looks out on the crowd, nodding his head. He stands in a red gi with a black dragon on the lapel and across the back. A matching headband is tugged off as Connors steps onto the entrance steps, tossing it out into the crowd to cheers.]

LD: "Cannonball" Lee Connors heading to the ring and it's great to see this young man back in action after being sidelined for several months with a knee injury, Ben.

BW: Connors has got skill for days - martial arts, high flying... plus he's got a tremendous amount of resiliency. But he's also out here slapping hands and kissing babies and... it remains to be seen if all that is a distraction... just like Betty Chang was.

LD: Oh, come on... we've closed the book on that story and Connors and Chang are just friends now. Now he's focused on the ring and the world of potential success waiting for him.

[Connors reaches the ring, climbing up on the apron where he sheds the gi to reveal a pair of black MMA style trunks with a burning red sun across the rump. He points in at his opponent before grabbing the top rope, vaulting into a somersault over the ropes, landing on his feet to a big cheer!]

LD: And there's that high flying you were talking about. The agility and athleticism of Lee Connors is off the charts.

[Across the ring, Dukes gives a bored yawn as he waves at Connors to stay back from him.]

LD: Connors looks ready to go... and I'm looking forward to see him kick that smirk off the face of James Dukes.

BW: Way to show your impartiality, Dane.

LD: I can't help it! Look at that sleazeball!

[Dukes slithers out of the corner, running a hand up his body hair-covered chest with a sneer at Connors who shakes his head, waving for the official to start the match.]

LD: And here... we... go!

"DING! DING! DING!"

[Connors starts to advance on Dukes who quickly swings up a hand, shaking his head...]

LD: What's this now? Dukes trying to stop Connors and...

[Dukes smirks as he leaps up, landing in a makeshift weak sauce excuse for a karate fighting stance...]

LD: ...oh, come on.

[...and the fans let him have it as Dukes swings his arms up and around in a silly-looking mocking kata as Connors glares at him.]

LD: James Dukes looking to get in the head of Lee Connors, I suppose, mocking his karate style and-

BW: Looks pretty good to me. He's got the moves.

LD: He does NOT have the moves at all. He's-

[And then Dukes swings his arms up, striking the pop culture karate fav - the Crane Kick pose...]

LD: Ugh. This guy's a real piece of work, Ben.

BW: Well, he kept Connors from attacking him at least.

LD: I suppose. Connors just staring at this mess and...

[But suddenly Connors leaps into the air, corkscrewing his body around, and SMASHES a boot into the bridge of Dukes' nose!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[With Dukes down on the mat, Connors pops right up, rushing the corner, running right up to the top rope, leaping into the air, twisting and soaring...]

LD: SHOOTING STAAAAAAR!

[...and Connors reaches back, snatching the leg...]

LD: ONNNNNNNNE! TWOOOOOOOO! THREEEEEEEEEEEE!

“DING! DING! DING!”

[The crowd ERUPTS as Connors pops up, pumping a fist in triumph with a huge smile on his face!]

LD: Wow! Just like that, Lee Connors scores the win here on Showtime!

[The referee raises his hand as the ring announcer makes it official.]

LD: “Cannonball” Lee Connors with a breathtakingly fast victory... and just like that, it’s over, Ben.

BW: I told you all that kata stuff was a mistake out of Dukes.

LD: You- you did not!

BW: Let’s roll it back. Play it again, Sam... that’s the guy in the truck, right?

LD: Stan.

BW: Whatever.

LD: Lee Connors scores a quick win here on Showtime... and now he’s making his way over to talk to Mariah and Sweet Daddy. Let’s listen in.

[A smiling Connors steps to the interview podium where Sweet Daddy Williams and Mariah Wolfe are waiting.]

MW: Lee Connors, it’s another impressive win for you here tonight as you come back from the leg injury... and it’s gotta feel good to be back!

[Connors grins, nodding.]

LC: Absolutely, Mariah. It feels SO good to be back here with you two... with Lori and yeah, even Ben calling my matches... and of course, it feels INCREDIBLE to be back here in front of all these fans!

[The fans cheer on cue.]

SDW: Everyone can tell how happy you are about that, kid... but two weeks ago, Cannonball, things went a very different direction for ya...

[Connors’ smile fades as he nods again.]

SDW: You were about to take that Phoenix Rises Open Challenge - you were about to take on Jordan Ohara for the National Title... only to have that taken away from ya by... and I can’t believe I’m sayin’ this... Dirt Dog Unique Allah!

[The crowd jeers the mention of what happened two weeks ago.]

SDW: Ya gotta be lookin’ for payback, Cannonball.

[Connors sighs.]

LC: Look, Sweet Daddy... when I came back from injury, I told myself I wasn’t going to let anything sidetrack me this time. I made it clear that I’m looking for wins and I’m looking for titles... and yeah, I had a shot two weeks ago at a tremendous fighting champion that I see a lot of myself in in Jordan Ohara. It would have been

one heck of a fight, I promise you that... and someday, all these fans will get to see it.

SDW: Yeah, but you can't let it slide.

[Connors shrugs.]

LC: The last I heard, Dirt Dog Unique Allah is retired. He's not on this roster and... frankly, Sweet Daddy, I'm a fighter with honor... and there's no honor in beating up an old man...

[The crowd "oooooooohs" as Sweet Daddy Williams grins.]

LC: ...but if his son wants some, he's welcome to it.

[Williams sticks out a hand, sharing a quick fistbump with Connors who grins again, raising his arms to the cheering fans.]

SDW: Y'all heard it... who wants to see Lee Connors versus Odysseus Allah?!

[A big cheer goes up, Williams clapping along with the crowd as Connors strides out of view, leaving the announce duo behind...]

MW: Leave it you, partner, to make some matches out here tonight. And speaking of making matches, let's go backstage where it's a match made in heaven with "Superstar" Steve Rogers talking to the Aces In The Hole!

[And we fade backstage where "Superstar" Steve Rogers is standing between "Cowboy Casanova" Billy Givens and David Layton - the duo known as the Aces In The Hole. Both are dressed in street clothes... but that means something very different to these two men. Layton's in black athletic pants and a plain dark grey tank top. Givens on the other hand is sporting black leather pants with "CC" written across the front, a glittery silver vest over his bare torso, and a matching glittery silver Stetson hat.]

SSR: Thank you, Theresa! And yes, I am here backstage in the Center Stage with these gents - The Aces of The Deep!

[Layton grimaces.]

DL: Hole.

SSR: Hmm?

DL: Aces In The Hole.

SSR: I don't follow.

[Layton looks exasperated at his partner who chuckles, holding up a hand.]

BG: I'll take care of this one, partner. You see, Superstar... my partner's letting you know exactly who the heck we are. We're not lookin' to flood anyone... we're lookin' to speed 'em up... and slow 'em down to a sudden and painful stop. Two weeks ago, Superstar... we were taking those Wallace boys to their limit and beyond. We were close - you saw it, you were here, you know we were close!

[Rogers cocks his head.]

SSR: Close, yes. But close only counts in horseshoes and hockey, young man!

[Layton mouths "hockey?" as Givens continues.]

BG: Oh, we know that too... that's why we can't wait to get another shot at those American Idols to show the world that close wasn't good enough. We won't be satisfied until we put 'em down and keep 'em down for the one, two three, Superstar... but before we get there, we got some other issues to settle. And that's-

[Layton steers the mic towards him, a hard look on his face.]

DL: The Bishops. No longer "boys" but apparently now all men... but I don't know what kind of "men" would attack an old man in a Battle Royal.

[Givens nods.]

BG: And what kind of "men" would sneak attack US two weeks ago when we were taking care of matters in that ring?

DL: They're the same kind of "men," Billy.

[Givens looks at his partner... and then nods.]

BG: That's right, Davey Boy! They are! And they're also the same kind of "men" that we're hoping will sign the contract we sent over to President Zharkov's office because on May 5th, right here in Center Stage on Showtime... WE! WANT! YOU!

[Givens points to the camera.]

DL: Bishops, we'll be waiting!

[And with that, the duo makes their exit...]

SSR: A challenge is issued! And we'll be right back with more... hmm? Another match now?

[As the Superstar tries to figure out what's going on by arguing through his earpiece, we fade back to the ring where Megumi Sato is standing.]

MS: The following taaaaag teeeeeeam contest is set for one fall with a twenty minute time limit in the AWA Women's Division!

[Sato lowers the mic as we sit in silence for a moment before...

A hip-hop beat starts and a young woman shouts over the microphone.]

"WORD..."

"...UP!"

[The crowd has little initial reaction as two women in blue and orange wrestling attire jog out of the entranceway. The eternally hyped Jazmyn Spice – a boombox on her shoulder – in an orange singlet with the sides cut out, and her partner "Sugabatz" Stephanie Cruz in orange tights with a glittery black and gold basketball jersey - a bling-heavy microphone in her hand.]

"S"SC: Yo, Sugabatz on the mic – throw our hats into the hater ring.
Peach Pit think they cook,
But we'll send you back to catering.

[Jazmyn Spice leans in to the camera tracking them down the aisle and shakes her head, "nope, nope, nope."]

"S"SC: Taylor Walsh and Kelly Shannon? I don't care to know your name.
Don't call yourselves players-
Suga'N'Spice, we own the game!

[Spice points to her boombox and nods along.]

"S"SC: Yo, you're looking like the AWA's seedy underbelly.
Gonna expose you both as frauds
Like your girl Donna Martin-Shkreli.

[Jazmyn Spice nods smugly, then takes the microphone from "Sugabeatz"
Stephanie Cruz. She goes up into the stands toward the steps a few feet until she is
among the fans...]

JS: CENTER STAAAAAAAAGE!

SUGA'...'N'... SPICE...

ARE GETTING...

nnnnnnnnnnnnnnNNNOOOOOOOIIIIIIIIIIICE!

MOUNT UP!

[The duo slides into the ring to a decent reaction from the crowd who surprisingly
got into Stephanie Cruz' verse.]

MS: First, in the ring at this time... weighing in at 255 pounds...

..."SUGABEATZ" STEPHANIE CRUZ...

...JAZMYN SPICE...

[Sato breathes deep.]

MS: ...SUGA'N'SPIIIIIIIIIIIIIICE!

[And again, a decent-sized cheer goes up for the hip hop duo as they settle into the
ring, ready for action...]

MS: Annnnnnnnnnd their opponents...

[The sparkly pop sounds of Carly Rae Jepsen's "Cut To The Feeling" bounces across
the PA to a solidly mixed reaction from the AWA faithful.]

MS: ...from Beverly Hills, California... SHANNON WALSH and KELLY TAYLOR...

...THE PEEEEEEEEAAAACH PITSSSSSS!

[The announced duo comes through the curtain, Kelly Taylor bouncing through the
curtain in a peach-colored windbreaker. She comes to a halt in front of the camera,
beaming as she holds up her hands in a heart and shouts "WE LOVE YOU, DONNA!"
Taylor spins away from the camera, revealing her lower half covered in peach-
colored spandex that resembles a one-piece swimsuit.

Shannon Walsh comes stomping out behind her - all business as she glares towards
the ring. She's in peach-colored long tights with "PEACH PITS" written across the
rump in script. Her hair pulled back into a tight ponytail as she slaps her hand on
Taylor's shoulder, shouting "FOCUS!" as she steers her partner towards the ring.]

LD: The Peach Pits - two of the three at least - heading down the aisle towards the ring ready for tag team action... and honestly, from talking to Walsh and Taylor earlier, Ben, they're ready to work their way into title contention.

BW: It's an unusual situation, right? The Peach Pits were the runners-up in the tournament to crown the first Women's World Tag Team Champions, losing to Seductive and Destructive... so ordinarily, they'd be the top challenger but with Donna Martinelli down due to that arm injury, Zharkov says that Walsh and Taylor need to earn their shot if they want one.

LD: And they do. Just one of many teams looking to get a crack at Hamilton and Cinder and those titles - the Slam Sorority, the Country Punks, the Lariatos are just the tip of the iceberg. You can't forget about teams like the Serpentes as well. A lot of top challengers waiting to get their shot... and if Walsh and Taylor can get the win tonight, they'll be right in the mix.

BW: And if they can't, it might be Suga'N'Spice getting the next shot!

LD: That's certainly a possibility. We haven't seen a ton of Cruz and Spice on TV since their debut but they've quickly become a very successful team on the live event circuit, scoring a number of big wins early in their AWA careers... and when the Peach Pits made this Open Challenge two weeks ago, Suga'N'Spice were quick to answer it.

[Taylor is up on the apron, slingshotting over the ropes into the ring as Walsh climbs up through the ropes, ducking in to join her...]

LD: Ben, I think this one's got the potential to be a barnburner.

BW: Absolutely. All four of these women are underrated in their games if you ask me... and this is a big chance to show out for the crowd here in Atlanta and the rest of the wrestling world watching at home.

LD: And of course, as these women get ready to compete here tonight, there's also the idea that they're fighting to impress Interim President Zharkov and the front office to try and earn spots in the upcoming Women's Rumble at Memorial Day Mayhem.

BW: Walsh is already in the Rumble thanks to making the tournament finals... but the other three would love that chance too.

[Walsh and Taylor go into a quick huddle as Cruz and Spice eyeball them from across the ring. Referee Davis Warren speaks to both corners, ordering one out on each side before waving for the bell...]

"DING! DING! DING!"

LD: Tag team action set to go here on Showtime!

[As Spice ducks out, Cruz sits on the middle turnbuckle in banana yellow tights criss-crossed with pink zebra stripes, white high tops, and a glittery black and gold basketball jersey style top.]

LD: Alright... well, I thought we were ready to go but it looks like Stephanie Cruz wants to have a seat and-

[Not wasting a moment after a nudge from Shannon Walsh, Kelly Taylor goes sprinting across the ring, leaping high in the air..]

...and wraps her legs around Cruz' head and neck, snapping her off the top turnbuckle with a rana!]

LD: OHHHHHH WOW!

[The athletic display puts Cruz down on the mat, flopping about as Taylor pops back up to her feet, looking as Jazmyn Spice runs her mouth at her...]

"WHAAAAAP!"

"OHHHHHHH!"

[...and Taylor snaps a jaw-popping jab off into the mouth, sending Spice flopping backwards off the apron to the floor to big cheers!]

LD: Kelly Taylor bringing the heat early on in this one!

[And with Cruz on her feet, Taylor snatches her by the hair, hauling her towards the corner, tossing her into the buckles before slapping her partner's hand.]

LD: There's the tag and in comes the hard-hitting Shannon Walsh...

[Walsh steps in, squaring up on Cruz with rights and lefts to the ribcage that have Cruz trying to cover up and the fans cheering...]

LD: ...and it's quite an odd thing to hear the fans out in support for the Peach Pits, Ben.

BW: I don't pretend to know what the heck these people are thinking but I think a whole lot of people were impressed with the performance of the Peach Pits in that tournament... and the guts to make it to the Finals and almost win it all.

LD: It doesn't hurt that Donna Martinelli's not been around to be her usual... charming... self.

[Walsh grabs a Muay Thai clinch, dragging Cruz out of the corner to swing her knee up into the torso once... twice... three times... and then uses the same clinch to toss Cruz into the ropes, sending her bouncing back off...]

LD: Cruz off the ropes and...

[...and Walsh LAUNCHES her overhead!]

LD: ...EXPLOOOODERRRRR!

[Cruz bounces off the mat, rolling under the ropes to the outside where Jazmyn Spice rushes to her side...]

...and Walsh gives a point to Taylor who nods, taking aim...]

LD: HERE COMES TAYLOR!

[...and the niece of the Outlaw throws herself into a somersault, wiping out both Suga'N'Spice members from the apron!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: THE PEACH PITS ARE OFF TO A HOT START IN ATLANTA!

[Taylor climbs back into the ring, trading a high five with her partner as Shannon Walsh glares down at the floored duo, ready for the action to continue as we fade to black...

We fade up on a dark but starlit Los Angeles sky, our focus on the stars themselves before slowly panning down to reveal we're in the middle of a completely empty Dodger Stadium... almost. The camera shot shows row upon row of empty seats with the stadium lights glowing down on them...

...and then slowly zooms in on the top deck, the cheapest seats in the ballpark to where someone is seated.

We cut to that "someone" to reveal the man once known as El Cholo... Los Angeles' native son, Juan Vasquez, sitting in a seat with a wistful smile on his face.]

"This... this is where it all began."

[Vasquez looks out on the field as the camera follows his gaze.]

"Right here. So many nights as a kid. Watching Gods walk among men."

[We can hear an echo of the immortal voice of Vin Scully on the call - "High fly ball into right field... sheeeee isssss GONE!" Vasquez smiles, nodding his head.]

"This is where it started for me. The rush. The roar of the crowd."

[He points down towards the field.]

"I knew I would never be like them. I wouldn't be Hershiser or Fernando..."

[The voice again - "if you have a sombrero, throw it to the sky!"]

"...Gibson or Guerrero... that wasn't my destiny. But this is where I heard the cheers of the fans for those men and knew my destiny was to one day hear them for me."

[Vasquez nods, closing his eyes, leaning back in his seat...]

"Can't think of any place I'd rather be when it ends."

[...and as we hold on Vasquez' face, serene... at peace... happy...

...the shot fades back up to the night sky where the Memorial Day Mayhem graphic appears with all the show info and the words "37 DAYS REMAIN."

And we fade back to live action where we find Shannon Walsh using a front facelock to drag Stephanie Cruz back across the ring, slapping the hand of Kelly Taylor.]

LD: Welcome back to Showtime, fans... and you see the tag right there... the Peach Pits have been in total control of this one since the opening bell, using double team maneuvers liiiiiike...

[Taylor comes off the ropes, smashing a forearm down across the back of the still-held Cruz...]

LD: ...this one! Taylor and Walsh have kept Stephanie Cruz in there since the opening bell, working her over... and Jazmyn Spice really wants to get in there to help her partner...

[Cruz is staggering towards her corner and Spice's outstretched hand when Taylor grabs her by the back of the tights, shaking her head in defiance as she pulls the 122 pound Cruz into a side waistlock, lifting her into the air...]

LD: Cuts off the tag and-

[...and Cruz flips over the top, landing on her feet as Taylor turns in a panic...

...and EATS a brutal Koppo kick as the somersaulting Cruz catches her flush between the eyes!]

LD: -ohhh! Cruz caught her good there... and there's the tag to Jazmyn Spice!

[Spice quickly steps in, joining her partner in stomping and kicking Taylor down on the mat...]

LD: And now we've got a mugging in there from Cruz and Spice, trying to get back into this thing after the Peach Pits have been in total control up until now.

[As Cruz exits, Spice pulls Taylor up off the mat, throwing chops...]

"WHAAAAAAAACK!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHH!"

"WHAAAAAAAACK!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and Spice goes into a spin...]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: DISCUS KNIFE EDGE CHOP! HOW ABOUT THAT?!

[Taylor flops back into the corner on the impact of the blow as Spice turns to shout at the fans, earning mostly jeers for it.]

LD: Jazmyn Spice has surprising striking skills, Ben.

BW: Both of these women do, Dane. Spice and Cruz have quickly earned a rep in the women's locker room as some hard-hitters who do major damage with their striking power.

LD: Kelly Taylor would certainly agree with that right now, reeling in the corner..

[Spice charges in from halfway across the ring, landing a running knee to the midsection of Taylor...]

LD: ...and a running knee to the ribcage!

[Walsh slaps the top turnbuckle, shouting to her partner as Spice backs off, running three-quarters of the ring this time for a second knee to the body...]

LD: Another one! Taylor's wide open and...

BW: She's not done.

[Spice stomps across the ring, getting as close to the Peach Pits' corner as she dares when Walsh takes a swipe at her... and a sneering Spice responds with a "tsk, tsk!" finger waggle before charging back in a third time...]

LD: ...ANOTHER RUNNING KNEE CONNECTS!

[Taylor crumples forward, grabbing at her ribs as she falls down on her hands and knees in the corner. Spice hangs over the top rope, smirking at the jeering crowd as Cruz nods approval for her partner's offense, shouting "LEMME GET SOME, JAZ!"]

LD: Stephanie Cruz, ol' Sugabatz herself, tags back in... she wants a piece of Kelly Taylor as well after Taylor and Walsh worked her over pretty good in the opening minutes of this one.

[Back in the ring, Cruz and Spice work together to lift Taylor into the air, dumping her with a double back suplex that gets an "oooooh" from the Atlanta crowd before Cruz slides into a lateral press.]

LD: Cruz gets one... she gets two... but Taylor kicks out in time there.

[Cruz comes to her feet, dragging Taylor back to her feet by the hair, scooping her up...]

LD: Scoop slam puts Taylor back down... and Cruz says she's going up!

BW: I'm not sure I like this idea, Dane. She just got back in the ring after being forced to tag out after all the offense she was taking... and now she wants to go up top? This could be a mistake.

[On the apron, Cruz starts climbing, the Showtime crowd buzzing as they watch her scale the turnbuckles...]

LD: Straight out of San Antonio, Stephanie Cruz looking to fly... all of twenty-five years old...

[Cruz steps to the top rope, looking down on Taylor as Walsh shouts a warning to her partner..

...and Cruz steps off, plummeting down in a leg drop across the collarbone!]

LD: ...OHHHH! LEGDROP OFF THE TOP CONNECTS!

[Cruz flips over, swinging her arms apart in a "it's over!" gesture as she dives into a lateral press...]

LD: CRUZ GETS ONE! GETS TWO! GETS-

[...but Taylor kicks out, breaking free of the pin attempt to cheers from the crowd!]

LD: -NOOOOO! TAYLOR ESCAPES IN TIME!

[Cruz shouts "aaaaaaay!" at the referee, slapping her hands together as she gets to her feet, slapping the offered hand of her partner...]

LD: The tag is made again, bringing Jazmyn Spice back into the mix.

[...and Spice promptly pulls Taylor up, dragging her out to the middle of the ring by the hair, ducking down...]

LD: Spice boosts her up into the fireman's carry... and we could be about to see the Spice Rack, her signature move...

[...and with a shout, Spice goes into an airplane spin...]

BW: Around and around she goes and where she stops... she's gonna plant her with the Samoan Drop!

[...but before she can do that, Taylor spins out of the hold, hooking a front facelock on her way down...]

"THUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUD!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: DDT! DDT! WHAT A COUNTER!

[Taylor flops over onto her chest, extending an arm towards the corner where a hopeful Shannon Walsh is waiting, arm outstretched as well...]

LD: And Shannon Walsh is looking for the tag now - she wants to get back in there and put an end to this!

[Taylor is crawling on her belly towards her corner as a dazed Spice tries to sit up on the mat, flopping over on her side...]

LD: Taylor looking for a tag... Spice is just trying to get back up after that DDT...

[...and the crawling Taylor reaches the corner as Spice climbs to a knee, trying to shake the cobwebs...]

LD: ...and there's the tag!

[The crowd cheers as Walsh slaps Taylor's hand, sprinting into the ring, and barreling across towards the staggered Spice...

...and leaps into the air, BLASTING her with a leaping front kick to the jaw!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: BOOT TO THE MOUTH! AND THAT MIGHT DO IT!

[Walsh dives across, hooking the leg...]

LD: ONNNNNNNNNE! TWOOOOOOOO! THREEEEEE-

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: CRUZ MAKES THE SAVE!

[A diving Stephanie Cruz smashes a forearm down on Walsh's back to break the pin attempt. With the referee trying to get her clear, Cruz pulls Walsh to her feet, hammering away with short forearms to the jaw...]

LD: And Cruz staying in, picking up the fight...

[...a quick spin buries a kick into the side of Walsh's knee, taking her down to one leg...]

"WHAAAAAACK!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: SUPERKICK!

[...and Cruz backs off, lashing out with a second to her kneeling opponent as the referee protests...]

“WHAAAAAAACK!”

“OHHHHHHHHHHH!”

LD: ANOTHER ONE!

[...and Cruz steps back again, taking aim...]

“WHAAAAAAACK!”

“OHHHHHHHHHHH!”

LD: RIGHT ON THE CHIN! WALSH GOES DOWN!

[Cruz pumps a fist, looking to cover Walsh but the referee cuts her off, shaking his head and ordering Cruz to vacate the ring...]

LD: The official forces Sugabatz out! She’s not legal!

BW: Cruz is hot about it though! She wants to get the win!

[Cruz finally crawls out as a staggered Spice rolls over, flopping an arm down across the chest of Walsh...]

LD: Cruz is out, Spice with the cover!

[...and the referee wheels around, diving down to count as the crowd counts along with him...]

“ONNNNNNNNNNNNNNE!”

“TWOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!”

“THREEEEEEEEEE-”

[...and the crowd ROARS as a charging Kelly Taylor leaps into the air, diving on top of Spice to break the pin!]

BW: TAYLOR RETURNS THE FAVOR! SHE BREAKS IT UP!

LD: Kelly Taylor perhaps saving the match for the Peach Pits right there! We’ve got bodies laid out! Walsh is down! Spice is down! Taylor being forced out now... and look!

BW: The referee trying to get out Taylor and that lets Cruz come back in!

[She pulls Spice off the mat, gesturing to the downed Walsh...]

LD: Cruz grabs Walsh, pulling her over to Spice and...

[...and a nodding Spice grabs the legs of Walsh, looking to wheelbarrow her up...]

LD: We’ve seen this before, fans! They’re looking for that facebuster!

[...which causes Taylor to duck under the referee’s arms, racing past, throwing herself into a shotgun dropkick that hits Cruz flush in the chest, sending her flying backwards through the ropes and down to the floor to a HUGE ROAR!]

LD: WOW! CRUZ GOES FLYING!

[Taylor scrambles up as Spice shoves Walsh aside and comes up swinging...]

LD: RIGHT HAND BY TAYLOR!

[Spice staggers backwards as Walsh comes up off the mat behind her, hooking a rear waistlock...]

"THUUUUUUUUUUUUUD!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and DUMPS Spice into a German Suplex, letting go so that Spice rolls over onto her knees. Walsh comes to her feet, shouting to Taylor who nods, moving to the other side of Spice...]

LD: Jazmyn is in trouble and...

[Taylor grabs one arm as Walsh grabs the other, lifting a staggered Spice to her feet...]

BW: What's this now? Some kind of a dance move?

[...and both duck under the arms, twisting them around and shooting Spice out to full extension...]

BW: I didn't sign up for ballroom dancing, Dane! This is professional wrestling and-

[...and YANK Spice back towards them, simultaneously leaping into the air, swinging their knees up...]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: HOLY MOTHER OF..

[...and the double bicycle knee strike SNAPS Spice's head back, sending her eyes rolling back in her head as she collapses to the canvas in a heap. Walsh lets loose a ROAR to the crowd as Taylor pumps her fists...]

LD: ...and if you thought they were dancing, Ben, I'd say that we just saw a MURDER on the dance floor!

[...and Walsh dives across the motionless Spice, hooking a leg...]

LD: ONE! TWO! IT'S OVER!

"DING! DING! DING!"

[Walsh comes to her feet, pumping a fist as Taylor excitedly embraces her partner and the Atlanta crowd cheers loudly!]

LD: The Peach Pits take the win in impressive fashion! Look out Seductive and Destructive!

BW: Did you ever think you'd be saying those words?

LD: Absolutely not but... wow! THAT was impressive, Ben.

BW: It was, it definitely was... and I don't know about that new finishing move there but that was DEVASTATING. I called that one wrong and you... what did you call it? A murder on the dance floor?

[Mariah's voice cuts in.]

MW: Lori, you may be on to something there...

[As Mariah is speaking, we cut to the interview area where we see a victorious and jubilant Kelly Taylor stepping behind the podium, draping an arm around Mariah's shoulders as an also-victorious but certainly more surly Shannon Walsh joins her, standing between Taylor and Sweet Daddy Williams.]

MW: Ladies, I doubt you could hear her and you may already have plans for your new finishing combination there but Lori Dane has dubbed it Murder On The Dance Floor. Thoughts?

[Walsh smirks.]

SW: I like it. Nice job, Lori.

[Walsh gives a little salute in the direction of the announce desk.]

MW: Sounds like we've got a winner... and speaking of winners, an impressive win right there over some stiff competition.

[Kelly Taylor rubs her jaw with a grin.]

KT: You're telling me, Mariah. Those girls pack a heck of a punch and it was a tough night at the office for Shannon and I... and anytime those two want to go again, we'll be ready for them.

MW: A win tonight isn't going to instantly get you a shot at Seductive and Destructive and the Women's World Tag Team Titles... but it certainly puts you in the conversation. I assume a shot at that gold is the goal?

[Walsh nods.]

SW: Absolutely. I've got all the respect in the world for Maxim Zharkov, Wolfe... but I think he's got Russian rocks in his head for making us fight our way to another shot at the titles. Hamilton and Cinder got the better of us in the tournament finals... but next time, we've got their number and we're gonna get those titles. Whether it's me and Kelly... or whether it's Donna back in the mix, it's just a matter of time before you're looking at the next Women's Tag Team Champions.

[The crowd surprisingly cheers as Mariah grins.]

MW: They like the sound of that.

[Walsh shrugs.]

SW: My guess is they'd like the sound of anyone but E-Girl MAX holding the titles but I'll take the cheers too.

MW: You mentioned Donna Martinelli. Do you have any update on her injuries?

[Taylor nods enthusiastically.]

KT: I talked to Donna right before we went out here to the ring tonight and...

[Kelly blows a kiss to the camera.]

KT: ...I know she's watching and I know she's proud of what we just did. She's getting better every day and we can't wait until she's right back here with us, Mariah.

MW: Any idea when that'll be?

KT: Not yet... but Donna has a message for everyone watching too. She wants you all to know that she's not cleared to wrestle yet... but she PROMISES that she'll be in the Rumble in Los Angeles looking to make history.

[Walsh steers the mic back towards herself.]

SW: But we're not waiting for that. The Peach Pits are stronger than ever... and just like Suga'N' Spice just learned, we've got our sights set on those titles and we're not stopping until we get them. So, the rest of the teams in this division need to straighten up and pay attention... whether it's the champs... the Slam Sorority... the Lariatos... you name 'em and we're ready for 'em, Wolfe.

MW: I can't help but notice a team missing from that list, Ms. Walsh. The Country Punks?

[Walsh snorts.]

SW: Ask me that question again when Victoria June is cleared to compete. But hell, go ahead... put 'em on the list. Because Kelly and I-

KT: And Donna.

SW: -are ready to take on whoever the front office puts in front of us to get back in that ring with Hamilton and Cinder.

[Walsh and a grinning Taylor exit, the latter waving at the cheering crowd as Mariah nods.]

MW: The Peach Pits looking to pave a path to the gold, fans! And when we come back, we'll have more tag team action right after this break so don't you dare go away!

[Fade to black...

Cut to the members of Next Gen. Howie Somers is holding a big box in hand, while Daniel Harper is holding what looks like a small packet.]

HS: You know, Daniel, somebody once said that life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get.

[Yes, that would be a box of chocolates that Somers is holding.]

DH: That's a good observation, Howie. But if you ask me, life is more like a pack of AWA trading cards.

[Sure enough, in Harper's hand, that's a pack of trading cards.]

DH: You never know what you're going to get, but chances are, you're going to get something good.

[Somers glance at Harper for a minute, then nods.

Now in comes a voiceover.]

"It's the premier edition of Topps AWA trading cards. Featuring today's top AWA stars from the men's division."

[Images pop up of cards featuring Ryan Martinez, Supreme Wright and Shadoe Rage.]

"The top AWA stars of the women's division."

[Images pop up of cards featuring Julie Somers, Victoria June and Erica Toughill.]

"The top AWA tag teams."

[Images pop up of cards featuring The Soldiers of Fortune, The Gold Standard and KAMS.]

"The managers and announcers."

[Images pop up of cards featuring Miss Sandra Hayes, Sweet Lou Blackwell and Colt Patterson.]

"The legends of the ring."

[Images pop up of cards featuring Casey James, Marcus Broussard and Shane Destiny.]

"Even the founders of the AWA."

[And, yes, you get images of cards featuring Jon Stegglet, Bobby Taylor and Todd Michaelson.]

"Plus, look for special inserts."

[Images of a "Fantastic Finishers" card features Supernova putting an opponent in the Solar Flare, a "Dynamic Duos" card features Harley Hamilton and Cinder and a "Rising Stars" card features Max Magnum.]

"Along with cards featuring event-used memorabilia."

[Images of such cards, featuring Jack Lynch, Jordan Ohara and Ayako Fujiwara.]

"Autographed cards."

[Images of such cards, featuring Derrick Williams, Gordon Myers and Michelle Bailey.]

"Even dual autographed cards."

[And the image featured, of course, would be Next Gen, with Howie Somers and Daniel Harper's signatures on the same card.]

Cut back to Somers.]

HS: Now that one's a keeper.

[We pull back and see Harper going through the cards in his pack.]

DH: Cool... Hannibal Carver autographed card!

HS: [looks at the box of chocolates, then back at Harper] Um, you want to trade?

DH: [stares at his tag team partner] You call that a fair trade, dude?

[We then cut to an opened display box of the Topps AWA trading cards and hear the voiceover again.]

"Look for Topps AWA trading cards wherever trading cards are sold. Or order them at AWAShop.com."

[We fade to black...

...and then come back up in the backstage area to Shadoe Rage. The bishonen brawler has his back to the camera for all to see his black monkscloth robe and the long tendrils of dreadlocks spilling down his back. Rage turns to the camera, holding a digital stopwatch. It shows a count of 2:57 seconds and it starts ticking down, the bright red numbers flashing by. Shadoe Rage lets out a long, drawn-out sigh as he stares at the clock behind his amber-lensed sunglasses.]

SR: Sid Osborne, you and me, we're desperate men, aren't we? With our backs against the wall. And you know what desperate men with their backs against the wall do with everything to lose and everything to gain?

They come out scratching and clawing and and fighting. Yeah, that's what they do. And that's what we're gonna do in this Royal Crown first round tournament match.

[Rage nods to himself as if he is accepting the violence and pain that is to come. He holds the waist band of his trunks as he points towards the camera, stabbing his finger into the lens and through the eyes of anyone watching.]

SR: Yeah, you and I we're both desperate men with our backs against the wall, yeah. My back's been against the wall my whole career, yeah, but now, man, now now in 2018, my back is really up against their world, and I can really feel it pressing against me. Yeah, it makes me desperate... it makes me crazy again. Understand what I'm saying, Sid Osborne? In 2018, I made a promise... I made a vow to all these people that I was going to wear gold and that clock is...

Tick tick ticking away!

[The counter reads 1:42 seconds.]

SR: Sid Osborne, every second, every minute and every hour of every day. I feel the pressure building inside me and building inside my head... just desperate to get released. I got a promise to keep. I got a promise to keep in 2018. And I will keep that promise!

And you, you?

[Rage tugs at his loose dreadlocks held back by his gold bandana.]

SR: Sid Osborne, you're a desperate man. You couldn't get the job done for the AWA National Championship. You couldn't beat Ohara when all the chips were down. And so you ruthlessly attacked him. You tried to tear him apart. You tried to end him.

[Rage pauses.]

SR: And I admire that. You're desperate. You'll do anything to win. But so will I and you, Sid Osborne, you're standing in my way because the Royal Crown ... that is my quickest and best opportunity to convince the AWA that my moment isn't

past, that I wasn't done in 2017 when I saved the AWA... no, that wasn't my last greatest moment.

I am and I was and I will always be the greatest AWA World's Television Champion there has ever been and will ever be.

[Rage nods.]

SR: Now I'm not going to rest on those laurels. I'm not just going to SAY that I was the greatest AWA World Television Champion of all time. I am going to prove it by wearing gold again.

[Rage lifts his sunglasses to show that crazed charcoal stare of his. His feverish hazel eyes burn through the cameras. The clock has wound down to thirty seconds and counting.]

SR: Desperate times, desperate hours, desperate men! So God forgive us for what we're going to do to each other... yeah!

[The stopwatch hits zero as Shadoe Rage stops the timer and lowers his sunglasses. He lets out a deep, cleansing breath before he exits stage left...

...and we fade back out to our announce duo.]

LD: Shadoe Rage letting the world know that the pressure is on him. He's told the world he plans on wearing gold in 2018... and the quickest path to the gold these days just might be the Royal Crown tournament. And the only way to win the Royal Crown is to be in the Finals... and to be in the Finals, you gotta win your first round match... and that's what Shadoe Rage aims to do later tonight when he takes on Sid Osborne.

BW: He can try but my money's on the Sin City Savior, Dane.

LD: That match is coming up a little later... but up next, we've got tag team action as Team Supreme will be represented by KAMS, with Cain Jackson and AJ Martinez going up against the two young men that they, to be frank, assaulted two weeks ago in Yoshi Fujiwara and Tizona.

BW: I've seen a lot of people make a lot of foolish mistakes in the AWA, Dane, but these kids are making one of the biggest ones yet. Fujiwara and Tizona combined weigh, what, 350? 375? Maybe if one of them sits on the other's shoulders, they can measure up to one of KAMS? They're asking to get mauled again.

LD: We've seen time and time again, Ben, that heart can overcome size.

BW: After KAMS gets done with them tonight, they're going to need a heart transplant. Don't forget, it was just six weeks ago that Paris Crawford mauled that Fujiwara kid by themselves. Now the big guns are pointed right at him and that masked misfit he's picked up.

LD: Obviously we know who you're picking, but fans, let's let the teams make their cases for themselves. We heard from both of them leading up to this match. First, our ACCESS 365 cameras caught up with Yoshi Fujiwara and Tizona getting prepared for this contest.

[The ACCESS 365 logo flashes across the screen, and we are taken to a locker room, where Tizona, already in his ring gear and mask, is hitting a set of striking mitts held by, of all people, Kimmy Bailey, who is clad in a pink and black tracksuit with the logo of the BATTLE♥DREAM promotion across the chest. Yoshi Fujiwara is sitting in the background, his hands in his hair, and his eyes widened with worry. He

is also dressed out in his ring gear, along with his sukajan bomber jacket. As Yoshi shakes his head, we hear Kimmy shout at Tizona.].

KB: C'mon, pick up the pace some!

[Tizona snaps off a quick combo, then leaps into the air and connects with a spinning kick. As he lands, the younger Bailey smacks him across the head with one of the mitts, causing him to recoil with surprise.]

T: Hey! What was that for?!

KB: Cut it out with that jumpin' stuff unless you can knock one of 'em out with it. You give one of 'em an openin' and they'll whack you so hard, you'll see tomorrow today.

[Tizona rolls his eyes, then looks over at Yoshi.]

T: Aw, knock it off, Yoshi. There's nothin' to worry about.

[Yoshi looks up.]

YF: "Nothing to worry about"? "NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT"???

[Yoshi slumps down further into his chair.]

YF: You do remember what they did to us, right?

T: Yeah, yeah, so what if they got the jump on us? That don't mean anything.

YF: Yeah. Aside from the fact they're going to kill us, I guess everything is sunshine and lollipops.

[Tizona scoffs, which doesn't set Yoshi at ease.]

YF: How can you find this funny? And why did you sign us up for this?! Isn't it bad enough that Flag-chan beat me up six weeks ago?

[Kimmy pipes up in the background.]

KB: Yeah, Brown Eyes looked like he got ate up by a wolf after that one.

[Yoshi gives an annoyed look to Kimmy, then back to Tizona.]

YF: It wasn't that bad.

[Again, Kimmy interjects from the background.]

KB: It was pretty bad.

[Yoshi sighs and slumps down even further into his chair. Tizona puts up his hands.]

T: Look, look, relax. If it's any consolation, I'll have you know that murder is illegal.

[Yoshi looks up to the ceiling in frustration.]

YF: Thanks, Tizona. That really puts my mind at ease. I may only wind up like Johnny Detson, and spend the rest of my life eating through a tube. Very encouraging.

[Tizona puts his hands on his hips.]

T: Okay, so we're dealing with cutthroat, take no prisoners, break all the rules, cheaters, huh? You know what I say we do? I say we cheat too! How do you feel about jamming a thumb right into AJ Martinez's eye?

[Yoshi lets out an anguished sigh.]

T: Not into that? Hm. Okay. Eye poking duty's on me. Kicks below the belt?

[Yoshi continues to stare at the ceiling, not responding. Tizona taps his foot on the floor.]

T: Guess that one's on me too. You know what, how about I just do all the cheating for us?

[Yoshi looks back at Kimmy, who is texting away on her phone.]

YF: Do you know where my sister is? I think we need a better gameplan.

[Kimmy looks up from her phone.]

KB: She's gettin' ready for her match, and once I'm done here gettin' y'all warmed up, I'm supposed to go help her.

[Kimmy gives a sideways glance to Tizona, who gives a sarcastic thumbs up, then looks back to Yoshi.]

KB: Besides, she was sayin' she wanted to remember you as you was, not as you're goin' to be.

[Yoshi's eyes get even wider and more panicked.]

YF: What is that supposed to mean!?

[Kimmy's phone dings and she takes a look.]

KB: Looks like it's goin' to have to remain a mystery to us all, Ayako's ready for me. I better skeedaddle. Don't go gettin' your pretty cheekbones all busted up, Brown Eyes. And you...

[Kimmy looks at Tizona.]

KB: ...you let him get hurt, and I'll knock your teeth so far down your throat that you'll spit 'em out single file.

[Tizona gives Kimmy an insincere salute, and Kimmy goes for the door. As she opens the door, she sees Betty Chang about to knock. Betty, shocked, stammers for a second as Kimmy grins.]

BC: Oh! Uh... hey there, Kimmy. Fancy meeting you here.

[Betty's eyes narrow.]

BC: I didn't expect you to be here.

[Betty looks off to the side, cheeks flushed and her face quickly turning a bright shade of red.]

KB: Well hey there, Bets! You eavesdroppin' on us?

BC: N-no!

[Kimmy slaps Betty's shoulder, knocking her off-balance and causing the martial artist to instinctively put her fists up into a fighting stance, before she quickly realizes what she's doing and places her hands behind her back.]

KB: Ha! I was just messin' with ya. Go on in. Brown Eyes is havin' an existential crisis and could use another space cadet to help steer him back to Earth.

[Kimmy scooches past Betty and leaves the scene. Betty awkwardly steps into the room, rubbing her shoulder from Kimmy's playful (and painful) slap. Tizona gives her a short wave, while Yoshi is still slumped in his chair. Betty approaches Yoshi, clearing her throat and trying to act casual (and doing a very poor job at it).]

BC: Uh... hey, Yoshi. I... I just came by to wish you good luck tonight.

[Yoshi sits up straight the moment he hears her voice, the worried look on his face momentarily replaced by what can best be described as restrained awe. He fumbles for words, running a hand nervously through his hair.]

YF: O-oh! Betty, I, um, didn't expect to see you here. T-thanks. I really appreciate it.

[An awkward silence follows. They both glance at each other, then quickly look away. Tizona, observing the entire scene, tilts his head and wonders out loud.]

T: Maybe it's just me, but is there something going on between you two?

[Yoshi and Betty both freeze. Betty's eyes widen, and Yoshi's face turns beet red.]

YF: What?! No!

BC: Nothing! Absolutely nothing!

[Tizona chuckles, clearly not convinced. Betty nervously fidgets with the ends of her sleeves, trying to change the subject.]

BC: I mean, I'm just here to be supportive. Just like... just like Kimmy was.

[At the mention of Kimmy's name, Betty's expression suddenly darkens. She crosses her arms tightly over her chest.]

BC: Speaking of Kimmy... she's been spending an awful lot of time with you, huh?

[Yoshi, oblivious to the sudden shift in Betty's mood, nods.]

YF: Yeah, Kimmy's been helping Tizona and me with preparing for this match. She's always around—

[Betty cuts him off, her voice growing colder.]

BC: Of course she is. Kimmy Bailey. Always around. How nice for you!

[Without another word, Betty turns on her heel and storms out of the room, leaving Yoshi completely baffled. Tizona watches her go, then turns to Yoshi.]

T: Look on the bright side, Yoshi... there's no way our match can go as badly as that just did.

[Yoshi slumps back down in his chair, looking utterly defeated.]

YF: I have no idea what's going on anymore...

[The scene fades out as we open to the backstage area and the words "PREVIOUSLY RECORDED" flash at the top of the screen as we see Mariah Wolfe standing by with KAMS. Cain Jackson and AJ Martinez stand confidently beside Mariah, towering over her, as Paris Crawford leans casually against a wall, filing their nails with a bored expression. Cain, dressed in a sharp, black tailored suit that highlights his imposing presence, maintains an air of detached authority. AJ Martinez sports a flamboyant outfit with flashy patterns and a leather jacket, exuding his usual arrogance. Paris Crawford, resplendent as always, wears a sleeveless purple silk jumpsuit and black shoes, with long black hair and icy blue eyes.]

MW: Cain, AJ... Paris - thanks for joining us. Cain and AJ, you're set to face Yoshi Fujiwara and Tizona in a match set up by Maxim Zharkov due to your actions on the last edition of Showtime, when you attacked the two before their scheduled match. What are your thoughts heading into this bout?

[Mariah raises the microphone above her head to reach Cain Jackson.]

CJ: Mariah, there's no need to waste words on the likes of Yoshi Fujiwara and Tizona. I don't know if Zharkov actually believes this is a punishment for what we did two weeks ago or if the man is just a sadist, but putting those two boys in the ring with us is the last thing he should've done. The only thing anyone needs to understand is that those two are in for a world of pain.

AJM: Exactly! They should be grateful they even get to take another beating from someone as magnificent as me. Honestly, they should be paying me for the privilege. Hey, there's an ide—

CJ: No.

MW: And Paris, what's your take on the upcoming match?

PC: Is it not a shame, darling Mariah?

MW: Is what a shame?

PC: Six weeks ago, that handsome boy Yoshi Fujiwara was beaten severely at my hand.

[Paris looks at their nails with a sigh.]

PC: Now, he must experience another beating. It darkens my heart.

[Cain glares at Paris, shaking his head.]

CJ: Boy, could you at least try to act like you're not sympathizing with our opponents?

PC: I just feel a certain sadness whenever a beautiful thing must be destroyed.

CJ: I know you did not just call Yoshi Fujiwara a "beautiful thing".

[Paris looks up, a sly smile playing on their lips, but they quickly return to filing their nails.]

CJ: It doesn't even matter. 'Cause after we get through with him, there ain't gonna' be a single thing beautiful about that kid.

PC: A pity. He had such potential. Ainsi va la vie.

AJM: Besides, there's only one beautiful thing anyone should care about, and that's me! And as for Tizona - I bet he's wearing that mask because he knows how ugly he is. Well, after we get through with him, he won't even be able to hide behind a mask anymore. The beating we give him is gonna' make him so ugly, even his own reflection won't want to look at him!

[AJ chuckles, as Cain grabs Mariah's wrist, directing the microphone back towards him.]

CJ: We've warned the AWA that there's a storm coming. Yoshi Fujiwara and Tizona? They're merely the first to be swept away. This is just the beginning. Brace yourselves, because the revolution is just getting started.

[And with that, Jackson, Martinez and Crawford make their exit as we fade out to the ring, where we see Megumi Sato standing in the center. Behind her, Yoshi Fujiwara stands nervously, as Tizona bounces foot to foot.]

MS: Our next bout is set for one fall with a twenty minute time limit, and it is a tag team match! Introducing first, already in the ring, at a total combined weight of 378 pounds, from Fujinomiya, Japan and Savannah, Georgia respectively...

YOSHIIIIIIIIII FUJIIIIIIWAAAAAARAAAAAAA AAAAAAAND
TIIIIIIIIIIIZOOOOOOONAAAAAAA!

[Fujiwara gives a quick bow to the crowd as Tizona pumps his fist. We then hear the PA system come to life as dialogue from "Conan the Barbarian" is heard, as the crowd erupts with boos...]

"WHAT IS BEST IN LIFE?"

"TO CRUSH YOUR ENEMIES, TO SEE THEM DRIVEN BEFORE YOU, AND TO HEAR THE LAMENTATIONS OF THEIR WOMEN."

[A metal cover of "Anvil of Crom" then begins to play as we see Paris Crawford stepping through the curtains. They stand there with their hands on their hips, looking rather bored and unimpressed by the crowd. The boos grow ever louder as they are soon joined by two massive towers of humanity: Six feet eight inches of pure intimidation in Cain Jackson and the near seven feet tall weapon of mass seduction, AJ Martinez. Standing on each side of Paris, the trio's eyes are focused solely in the ring, their concentration unbroken by the loud boos and the roar of the crowd.]

BW: Well, I was wondering if they'd manage to get a car into Center Stage.

LD: We'd have to tear down a wall.

BW: I'm sure old man Martinez would've made that happen if AJ wanted it.

LD: You know, there's something that bothers me about this trio. We knew how dangerous Cain Jackson and AJ Martinez were, and we saw glimmers of what Paris Crawford could do at SuperClash, but we had no idea that Paris was capable of the things they've done, much less to Johnny Detson, allegedly. For someone who was a flagbearer until a couple of months ago, they have really caused a lot of damage.

BW: Takeshi Mifune took Paris Crawford directly under his wing. Don't you think it's exactly like Mifune to hide someone as dangerous as Paris Crawford in plain sight

like that? And look at what Mifune's done to make Cain Jackson and AJ Martinez, who were already hard to keep contained before, and turned them into killers.

LD: There's no question that Jackson and Martinez were fierce competitors before, but they've definitely flipped a switch since becoming the Kabukicho Assassination Maniac Squad, partnering up with Crawford, and now being a part of this new Team Supreme.

BW: I'd feel bad for these punks in the ring if they weren't stupid enough to ask for this match.

[As the camera pans upwards on them, Jackson suddenly breaks his stare with the ring and looks down right at the viewers at home.]

"We've come here to chew bubblegum and kick ass..."

[AJ Martinez then pops his head into the frame.]

"... AND WE'RE ALL OUT OF BUBBLEGUM!"

[And with that, the trio begin their march to the ring, prepared for battle, destruction and all-out war. On their way to the ring, Crawford nudges Jackson, then gestures over to Lori Dane and Ben Waterson. Jackson nods, and as he and Martinez continue their march towards the ring, Crawford saunters over to the commentary area.]

BW: I believe we're about to have commentary help, Dane.

LD: Great. Just great. Just what we need.

BW: You don't like hanging out with models?

LD: No, I don't like hanging out with Team Supreme, especially after the Red Wedding.

BW: You can just admit that you don't like that Paris Crawford looks better than you.

LD: I'm not even going to dignify that with a response.

[We cut to the commentary area, where Crawford has lifted themselves onto the desk, crossing their legs and expectantly holding their hand out. Dane is shaking her head behind them, and Waterson places the spare headset into Crawford's waiting hand, where they place it gently onto their head.]

PC: Merci beaucoup, darling.

LD: We have chairs, you know. You don't have to sit on the desk.

BW: I think they can sit wherever they please, Dane.

PC: Oui, and you may feel blessed when I do.

[Dane can be heard sighing as we cut back down to the ring, where referee Andy Dawson is seen in the center of the ring, with Jackson and Martinez in one corner, and Fujiwara and Tizona in another. Martinez points at the smaller duo on the other side of the ring, laughing heartily, as Jackson simply smirks. Tizona glares across the ring as Fujiwara nervously bites his bottom lip.]

BW: We knew there was going to be a size difference between these two teams, but actually seeing it now that everyone's in the ring is a bit overwhelming.

LD: If you're just going to sit on our desk, Paris Crawford, then I'm going to ask - the contract just said "Kabukicho Assassination Maniac Squad". That included you as an option. Don't you feel any regret by not being in this match? Why have Cain Jackson and AJ Martinez in there when at least you as one of the participants would have made it a more fair fight?

BW: You don't have to answer that, Paris. It's a ridiculous question. If Fujiwara and Tizona are dumb enough to sign a contract against two out of any three people, why does it have to be Paris in the match just because they're a couple of shrimps?

LD: Quit covering for them, Ben. I want an answer from Paris themselves.

PC: Just because I am of similar size would not give them any other hope. They would get exactly the same as they will in moments.

BW: Don't you remember six weeks ago, Dane? Paris mauled Yoshi Fujiwara, and didn't have Cain Jackson or AJ Martinez at ringside for them.

PC: Such a good memory. If I did not need them against the handsome boy, then they do not need me for this. It is light work.

LD: Well, you can be overly confident if you want, but Yoshi Fujiwara took it to you pretty good in that match, and we've seen Tizona in some strong encounters in his infrequent AWA appearances.

[We hear a slight yawn from Crawford.]

BW: I think that sums up their opinion of your opinion.

[Dawson finally gets one member of each team in the ring, with Jackson and Fujiwara representing their respectful duos, and calls for the bell.]

LD: There's the bell, and we've got Cain Jackson and Yoshi Fujiwara in the ring here to start this one up.

BW: It's a little surprising to see Fujiwara start. He didn't seem too thrilled about being part of this match.

LD: Considering Tizona outright said he was going to cheat, I wonder if he wanted to get things off on the right foot rather than infuriate either of them early.

[We hear a scoff from Crawford.]

LD: I take it you disagree.

PC: He would need a weapon that is far more illegal than your typical wrestling fare.

LD: Your confidence is noted. And for that matter, so is Cain Jackson's.

[In the ring, Jackson, chuckling, stands next to Fujiwara, motioning to point out the height difference with his hands. He indicates that he has an idea, asking for Fujiwara to step back - and Fujiwara does so - before Jackson gets down on his knees. Fujiwara looks miffed as Jackson holds up an index finger, mouthing "You get one free one!"]

BW: This is very benevolent of Cain Jackson, to give a free shot to Yoshi Fujiwara. Almost like a parting gift before he leaves this earth.

LD: I think we all know that Cain Jackson and AJ Martinez have these two vastly outsized, but this is almost unnecessary, it's almost like he's mocking the kid.

BW: Almost? He IS mocking the kid, Dane!

[Fujiwara looks around, the crowd cheering him on, and he looks to Tizona in his corner. Tizona shouts "DON'T JUST STAND THERE, WAFFLE HIM!", as Jackson can be seen saying "yeah, kid, waffle me".]

LD: You've got to think that even if he throws his best shot, he's going to need to get out of there as fast as he can, or else he's going to get caught.

BW: Cain Jackson's a powerful man, Dane, but he's smart as well. He wouldn't just give up a free shot unless he had a plan for it.

[Fujiwara takes a step back, then spins around...]

“WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAP!”

[... and catches Jackson right behind the ear with a tornado roundhouse kick that stuns the crowd and sends Jackson to the mat!]

LD: OH MY GOSH! WHAT A KICK BY FUJIWARA!

BW: I don't believe it!

LD: Fujiwara scrambles over to cover Cain Jackson! He's got one...

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[Jackson throws Fujiwara into the air, towards the ropes, with such force and velocity that Fujiwara falls out of the ring before he can realize what's happened.]

BW: And that's all he'll get!

LD: Cain Jackson launches Yoshi Fujiwara off the mat and into the stratosphere!

[The crowd roars as Jackson, rolling to his knees, suddenly finds a masked man diving onto his back!]

LD: And here comes Tizona! He's in the ring!

BW: Illegally! Get in there, Andy!

LD: Hey, he said he was going to cheat, Ben! He's a man of his word!

[Tizona throws shot after shot at Jackson's head, trying to rattle the big man, but Jackson reaches back, grabbing Tizona by the mask...]

“WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAM!”

[...and hurls him to the mat, hitting so hard that he bounces several inches into the air.]

BW: That should stop that little flurry of offense.

PC: He has such spirit. It is a shame that he irritated Cain.

[Jackson grabs Tizona by the throat, hoisting him off the mat and rushing towards the ropes, where he throws him one-handed over the top...]

LD: Good lord, no! Look out!

[...onto a rising Fujiwara, sending both men crashing to the ringside floor!]

LD: Cain Jackson choke lifted Tizona up and threw him over the top rope, onto Yoshi Fujiwara!

BW: And look at AJ Martinez, he's having the time of his life over in the corner.

LD: He hasn't had to do anything!

BW: With how Cain Jackson's acting, Dane, he's not going to need to do anything!

[Jackson steps over the top rope, waving to Martinez to join him. Martinez climbs down from the apron and meets up with Martinez, grabbing Tizona by the mask and throwing him into the ringpost with such force that he spirals through the air and lands face-first onto the ground. Jackson grabs a hold of Fujiwara, but the younger brother of the Olympic Gold Medalist turns out to be a bit slippery.]

LD: Fujiwara just got out of Jackson's grasp!

BW: Yeah, and he better escape through the crowd, leave the hooded bozo out here to get slaughtered.

[Fujiwara doesn't do that, instead scrambling up onto the apron, then leaping onto the top turnbuckle.]

LD: What on earth...

BW: What is he doing?!

[As soon as Fujiwara's feet hit the top turnbuckle, he leaps off...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...diving at AJ Martinez and catching him with a somersault dive, sending the big man down to the floor!]

BW: Does this kid have a death wish?!

LD: Yoshi Fujiwara has made an impressive showing here, and that's all three members of KAMS that he's managed to hit big moves on!

[Another scoff from Paris Crawford.]

LD: Still think you don't need to be down there?

PC: Un seul coup ne suffit pas pour gagner.

LD: Hey, in English, please?

PC: ...I think not.

[Fujiwara looks towards the ring, where he sees Cain Jackson climbing in, then leaps onto the apron. He jumps onto the top rope, diving off...]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"
"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...but gets booted out of the air!]

LD: Yoshi Fujiwara was going for that springboard dropkick, but Cain Jackson just swatted him out of the air with his big boot!

BW: It's all over but the crying, Dane!

[Tizona, seeing Fujiwara flattened on the mat, rushes into the ring, but...]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"

[...gets a big boot of his own!]

LD: That's two! Cain Jackson just cut down both of these kids with his big boot!

BW: Yeah, and it's about to get worse for them!

[Jackson shouts down at Martinez, who climbs into the ring, a sick grin on his face. Annoyed, Jackson gives an order...]

"FIREBOMB 'EM, AJ!"

LD: Oh god. Not that! Andy, come on, these kids are out!

[Martinez grabs Tizona by the throat, bringing him up to his feet, and in one swift motion...]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAM!"

[...spiking him to the mat with the Firebomb! Jackson shouts "THIS ONE TOO!", kicking a prone Fujiwara in the ribs, and with the same fluid motion, Martinez grabs Fujiwara by the throat, lifts him up, and...]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAM!"

[...drives him down! Jackson throws Tizona's body on top of Fujiwara's, putting one hand on top, as Andy Dawson drops down to count.]

BW: He could count to a thousand, these two aren't getting up.

LD: Just a big boot from Cain Jackson or a Firebomb from AJ Martinez would typically be enough, but both of them together? You're absolutely right. Andy Dawson's made the three count, KAMS has won this one handily.

BW: And they didn't even need Paris Crawford at ringside to do it, either.

PC: I just make the victory all the more sweeter when I am there.

[Jackson keeps his hand at Tizona's throat, saying something to him that the cameras cannot pick up, while Martinez stands menacingly over the fallen body of Fujiwara.]

LD: Well, why don't you go get them out of the ring and away from Fujiwara and Tizona, huh? It's bad enough that Andy Dawson lost control of the match, which seems to be the norm for you three, but it's over. Get them out of here!

PC: Je n'apprécie pas le ton que vous employez. I will go, however, to celebrate the victory.

[We hear a gentle drop of the headset onto the desk, and see Crawford in the background leave the commentary area to make their way towards the ring.]

BW: Aw. You ran off the model.

LD: I wish they'd run off Jackson and Martinez.

[As Crawford gets to the ring, we see Jackson lift Tizona to his feet, then up into the air, and throw him face-first into the turnbuckles!]

LD: Oh no! There's no need for this, none whatsoever! Cain Jackson just dropped Tizona head-first onto the turnbuckle after he's already been big booted and Firebombed!

BW: As tall as Jackson is, Tizona's lucky that Jackson didn't extend the arms. He was already dropping from about seven feet, if Jackson lifted him any higher it could've been worse!

[Martinez can be heard asking if he can join in, and Jackson tells him to go ahead. Martinez lifts Fujiwara up, then slams him down to the mat with a sidewalk slam! The camera's mic picks up "Hot Stuff" telling Jackson "These guys are fun to beat up!"]

LD: What? Fun to beat up?!

BW: You never had fun beating someone up?

LD: The match is over! You're a foot taller and a hundred pounds heavier than them, and you want to keep beating them up?!

[Andy Dawson sees Paris Crawford and pleads with them to get Cain Jackson and AJ Martinez out of the ring, but instead, Crawford gently moves Dawson into the corner, standing in his path to prevent the official from helping out.]

LD: And look at this! Now Paris Crawford is stopping Andy Dawson from stopping this madness!

BW: Ah, this brings back memories of when I used to help my charges like this.

LD: It was wrong then, and it's wrong now!

[Martinez walks over to a half-conscious Tizona, yanking him up to his feet, and shouts "I wanna see what this guy looks like!" Jackson nods, walking over to put a boot on a groggy Fujiwara's throat. Martinez yanks at the laces of Tizona's mask, a cackle in his voice.]

LD: This is crossing the line into humiliation, Ben! AJ Martinez wants to unmask this young man!

BW: Serves him right! I've always said, you can't trust a guy in a mask.

LD: You've never said that before.

BW: I've felt it.

[After a few tugs of the laces, Martinez finally loosens the hood, and pulls it up over Tizona's face. He looks disgusted, as does Crawford, then shouts "I see why you wear it!" and pulls it back down over Tizona's face.]

LD: Oh come on! The humiliation that poor Tizona must be experiencing! He got unmasked here on live television!

BW: But hey, on the plus side, he got re-masked due to being ugly!

LD: I don't think anyone got a real good look at him aside from Martinez and Crawford, and that's beside the point! Fans, we're going to go to commercial break, and we're going to try and get control of this situation as we do!

[With Martinez paintbrushing Tizona down to the mat and the fans jeering loudly, we fade to black...

Where a voiceover begins.]

"When the AWA comes to town on a normal day, it's a good time."

[The black screen changes to a sunny sky, the burning ball of fire glaring down on a pair of sunglasses on the face of World Champion Supernova who is standing waist deep in the ocean, the waves crashing down around him as he rests an arm on his bright red surfboard.]

"When the AWA comes to town this summer..."

[A big wave comes up, splashing down on top of the champion.]

"...it's SHOWTIME!"

[And as the wave hits the sand, we get a graphic that takes the water's place as it rushes back out...]

"The AWA Showtime On Tour events begin on May 19th in the greater Los Angeles area - the American Legion Hall in Reseda has been the home of some of the greatest independent professional wrestling over the years... but on this night, the AWA is taking over!"

[The wave hits again, washing the graphic away...]

"On June 2nd, the AWA keeps on rolling just outside of downtown Los Angeles as we pay homage at the Temple in Boyle Heights!"

[...and then again...]

"Portland, Oregon, the AWA is coming to town for one of the biggest double shots of the year. Don't miss Saturday Night Wrestling at Providence Park but one week before, you gotta be at the old IIWF Coliseum - freshly renovated and reopened for one night only as the AWA presents Showtime On Tour: Ring Wars!"

[...and again...]

"Seattle, Washington! It's the Historic Washington Hall that'll serve as the showcase for Showtime in the Emerald City!"

[...and again...]

"For the second year in a row, the AWA will be battlin' in Saskatchewan as the AWA rolls into Regina's Globe Theatre on July 7th!"

[...and again...]

"July 21st, the Canadian shows continue as we present Showtime at Blue Cross Park in Winnipeg for what promises to be a special night of action!"

[...and again...]

"Talk about special nights - on August 4th, the AWA hits the largest shopping mall in the United States - the Mall of America in Bloomington, Minnesota for what should be a most unusual edition of Showtime!"

[...and again...]

"And for the final night of the 2024 Showtime summer tour, we'll be in the Hammerstein Ballroom in New York City for a night we're calling One More For The Road! Do not miss this chance to celebrate the final stop on the tour before Showtime heads back to the A-T-L!"

[...and then back to a shot of Supernova in the waves.]

S: Can you feel the heat?

[And we fade to black...

...and then come back up to live action where Cain Jackson, AJ Martinez, and Paris Crawford remain in the ring, the beaten up bodies of Yoshi Fujiwara and Tizona still inside. Andy Dawson has escaped to the outside, where he has been joined by several members of AWA security, who are trying to plot their next course of action. Also in the ring is another prone body wearing a red singlet, lying face down.]

LD: Welcome back to Showtime here on ESPN, and yes, fans, the Kabukicho Assassination Maniac Squad is still in the ring, order has indeed not been restored.

BW: Let's be honest, Dane, if anything it's gotten worse.

LD: You can see that Andy Dawson is conferring with security to try and figure out how to get these guys out of here, and they've already ruined what was scheduled to be our next match. Pietro Sandini, a long-standing veteran, was scheduled to compete...

BW: Guess that match is going to get struck. Sandini never crossed paths with Alex Martinez, as far as I can recall, so he got his first-ever Firebomb and it didn't even make TV.

[We cut to footage marked "DURING THE BREAK", where Sandini attempts to get KAMS to leave the ring, only to be yanked into the ring by Cain Jackson and thrown into a choke by AJ Martinez, lifted into the air and spiked by the Firebomb!]

BW: Well, I guess now it did.

LD: And you notice, Paris Crawford hasn't lifted a finger here. They haven't tried to get Jackson or Martinez under control whatsoever.

BW: They also haven't done any damage either.

LD: For someone Supreme Wright calls his "weapon", they're awfully comfortable staying sheathed.

BW: You don't pull a weapon like Paris Crawford at just any occasion, Dane. You save them for when you need them.

[As Yoshi Fujiwara struggles on the mat, Cain Jackson, stands over him, smirking with cold satisfaction. Suddenly, he turns his head up the aisle and shouts...]

CJ: "HEY AYAKO! WHY DON'T YOU COME DOWN HERE AND SAVE YOUR LITTLE BROTHER?"

[Cain buries a boot into Yoshi's midsection as the crowd boos.]

LD: Wait a minute. Why is Cain Jackson calling out Ayako Fujiwara?

BW: She had that standoff with Bret Grayson two weeks ago, remember? That definitely had to catch Team Supreme's attention.

LD: This is ridiculous. How petty are they? Trying to drag Ayako into this mess because she dared to stand up to them. Expecting her to come down here and take them on three-on-one? They're nothing but a bunch of bullies.

BW: You know, Ayako is probably tougher than Yoshi and Tizona put together. I wouldn't rule out her coming down here and dealing with this mess.

LD: I hate to argue with you, but- wait a second. Fans, I understand there's a bit of a commotion, and it's-

[Dane goes silent for a moment.]

BW: It's what? What are you talking about?

LD: Hold on, I'm listening to our producer.

BW: How come you get these messages and I don't?

[A moment of silence is cut as Fujiwara tries to get to his feet, only to get a kick in the ribs by Jackson.]

LD: I understand that Shadoe Rage is- oh, cut to the entrance!

[We have a sudden cut to the entrance, where Shadoe Rage, with several members of security in front of him, is pointing down to the ring, shouting "IT'S TIME FOR MY MATCH!"]

LD: Shadoe Rage made it to the Chimpanzee Position and found out his match is delayed... we mentioned the Pietro Sandini situation but Shadoe Rage is up next. Shadoe Rage and Sid Osborne in the Royal Crown tournament is our next match scheduled and...

BW: Is he seriously going to try and come out here and fix the situation? I know the man's crazy, but there's three of KAMS and one of him!

LD: He spent the last year fighting an entire army of goons, Ben!

BW: If you can't tell the difference between that situation and this one, you may need to see your oculist.

[Rage continues to try and make his way towards the ring, motioning at the fallen Sandini and pointing at Jackson, Martinez, and Crawford. Martinez throws both Tizona and Fujiwara out of the far side of the ring, and Jackson, seeing Rage

approaching, grabs Sandini by the neck, and throws him over the top rope to the floor on the entrance side, right as Rage approaches.]

LD: Cain Jackson instigating Shadoe Rage now, as AJ Martinez getting the ring cleared out, and Paris Crawford still not doing a single thing!

BW: That's not entirely true, they're leaning on the ropes and observing.

LD: I mean physically.

[Rage shouts "You want a problem!? You've got a problem!" as Jackson motions for Rage to get in the ring. Rage places his hands on his hips and tells security to get out of the way or he'll find a way, and Martinez shouts "Let him in! We're not done yet!"]

LD: Shadoe Rage is going to square up against KAMS!

BW: That's his funeral, Dane! If he can get past security, he's going to run right into two moving brick walls named Cain Jackson and AJ Martinez... and then if there's anything left, he's still gotta fight Sid Osborne!

LD: Before ANY of that happens, he's still got to get past security.

[Rage removes his hands from his hips and motions for security to part so he can get into the ring and, shockingly...

...they do so! The crowd ROARS as Rage gets a smile on his face...]

LD: The security sea has parted for the self-proclaimed "Savior of the AWA", and Shadoe Rage is going to try and take on KAMS!

BW: He's the "Savior"? He's going to need a savior! He's out of his mind!

[...and then Rage charges the ring, diving under the bottom rope!]

LD: Shadoe Rage is in! He's got to stick and move, Ben! A jab to Cain Jackson! A jab to AJ Martinez! He's hitting and getting out of the way!

BW: Yeah, but these monsters aren't going down!

[Rage does his best to catch Jackson and Martinez with shots, stinging them but not flooring them...]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAP!"

[...but the numbers game catches up, as finally Paris Crawford joins the fray, ducking forward and unleashing a scorpion kick to the back of Rage's head.]

LD: Oh, now they get involved!

BW: That just stopped the flurry!

[Rage staggers towards Jackson, who grabs him by the throat. Jackson looks at Crawford and shouts "up!" as Martinez also grabs Rage's throat, and Crawford starts to scramble to the top rope.]

LD: Both Jackson and Martinez have Rage by the throat! What are they going to do with him?!

BW: Do you remember SuperClash, Dane? These three irreparably shattered the Dogs of War, and now they're going to do the same to Shadoe Rage!

LD: Double choke on Shadoe Rage!

[Jackson and Martinez waste little time, lifting Rage into the air and lifting...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...DRIVING Rage across their knees with a double chokeslam backbreaker!]

LD: WELCOME TO THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE!

[Rage BOUNCES off the knees of Jackson and Martinez, flopping onto the canvas as the crowd buzzes with concern for the Savior of the AWA as KAMS does not appear to be done with the former Television Champion quite yet.]

LD: You're right, Ben! Look at Paris Crawford on the top rope! KAMS hit Welcome To The Slaughterhouse on Isaiah Carpenter at SuperClash, and then Crawford came off the top with that diving forearm to the chest! That's how KAMS beat the Dogs of War!

[Jackson and Martinez hold a prone Rage's arms to the mat as Crawford readies themselves.]

LD: Somebody's gotta stop this! They're going to END him!

[The crowd is on their feet, nervously looking towards the ring where Crawford is dangerously perched and looking down on the trapped Rage who is trying to struggle to free himself...]

LD: We need help out here NOW, damn it!

[Suddenly, Crawford's eyes go wide and they wildly motion to Jackson and Martinez, then hop down off the top rope.]

BW: What?!

LD: Why did Crawford get down off-

[Suddenly, the crowd ROARS as they spot two chair-wielding saviors in their own right storming down the entrance staircase towards the ring!]

LD: IT'S BRIAN JAMES! IT'S JACKSON HUNTER!

BW: They didn't come alone either!

[Jackson sees the oncoming threat and grabs Martinez by the elbow, telling him to get out of the ring. As James and Hunter climb in, Jackson finally gets Martinez to leave as well, causing Hunter to slam his chair down on the top rope in a near-miss!]

LD: Ohhh! Hunter almost got him a piece of AJ Martinez... and look at those cowards run!

BW: Two maniacs with chairs were coming in their direction! I don't blame them one bit for getting out of here!

[With Hunter and James in the ring and KAMS backing up the stairs now, Hunter angrily throws his chair at the stairway, sending it bouncing at the feet of a shocked AJ Martinez!]

BW: Whoa! Look out!

[James puts a hand on Hunter's shoulder, stopping him from any more action as James points a threatening finger at KAMS who continues to back away, leaving the chaotic scene...]

LD: I can't believe the wreckage caused here! Cain Jackson and AJ Martinez laid out Yoshi Fujiwara and Tizona, then Pietro Sandini during the break.

BW: Don't forget about what those two and Paris Crawford did to Shadoe Rage. And it could've been a whole lot worse.

LD: And of all people to make the save, Brian James and Jackson Hunter!

[Hunter tries to help Rage up, but Rage kicks at Hunter's hand, then rolls out of the ring, grabbing at his back as a referee comes to check on him...]

LD: Shadoe Rage living up to his name on the outside... he's DEFINITELY in a rage right now out there, glaring up at KAMS...

BW: That's all well and good, Dane, but he's got a match! He's got a match with Sid Osborne and it's scheduled to start right NOW!

[Hunter glares at the ungrateful Rage as James angrily steps to the apron, shouting after KAMS as security gets in the way, trying to prevent any more carnage from this scene...]

BW: Looks like Rage doesn't exactly appreciate the help, especially not from Jackson Hunter.

LD: Shadoe Rage has said he doesn't trust Jackson Hunter, and tensions are running awfully high today. I think we might have finally gotten things calmed down a little, at least. But you're right, Ben... we're supposed to see that Royal Crown match right away... but Shadoe Rage... he's not in any condition to take this match right now... is he?! Let's take a break and see if we can get things sorted out.

[Rage is down on a knee, grabbing at his back as we see Hunter and James shouting at KAMS who are on the entrance stage as we fade to black...

...and then back up on a shot of two boys sitting in front of a TV playing video games. The shot is over the TV so we can see the living room behind them. The boys are very into the action on the screen which we cannot see but we can hear the explosions and gunfire of the latest hot first person shooter type game. The girls sitting behind them look bored to tears as the boys trade jabs like "GOT YOU!" "YOU'RE TOAST!" and "GRENADES FOR DAYS, FRIENDO!" A voiceover begins.]

"Feeling left out of the action?"

[The girls look up, nodding.]

"Looking for your next video game to trade bullets for bodyslams?"

[The girls nod more emphatically.]

"Tired of just another boring shoot 'em up?"

[The girls get up from their seats on the couch now, looking eagerly at the screen.]

“Wish there was someone who looked like YOU that you could control?!”

[A white light shines down from the living room ceiling on the two girls...

...and with a burst of shattering glass, the room fills with light.

As the light dies down, we find the grinning form of “Spitfire” Julie Somers in wrestling gear standing in front of the now-smoking television set.]

JS: Step aside, boys... it’s Ladies Night.

[And we cut to a series of shots of video game pro wrestling action: Michelle Bailey delivering a Britney Spear to Kelly Kowalski. Charisma Knight and Skylar Swift trading blows. Harley Hamilton and Cinder making their entrance. The voiceover continues.]

“It’s AWA 2K17 coming your way just in time for the holiday season. Play as your favorite wrestlers...”

[Victoria June drops Xenia Sonova with a front powerslam.]

“...create your own shows in our new El Presidente mode...”

[A digital Castillo is on stage making a match.]

“...take your created superstar from rookie to SuperClash Main Event!”

[A face we don’t know is trading blows center ring with Trish Wallace before hoisting her into a Jackhammer suplex.]

“All in one tremendous game!”

[Cut scene of the digital Julie Somers standing on the turnbuckles, flipping off onto a prone Kurayami...

...and then to a shot of the real Julie Somers.]

JS: Now that’s what I like to see.

[Somers looks over at the boys now huddled in the corner of the room.]

JS: Aww, we didn’t forget about you two.

[Somers snaps her fingers as we get a barrage of shots from other characters - Supreme Wright using Fat Tuesday on Jeff Matthews. Jack Lynch applying an Iron Claw on Muteesa. Hannibal Carver using a Blackout on Derrick Williams. And finally, Ryan Martinez causing Johnny Detson to pinwheel through the air with an Excalibur. The voiceover continues.]

“Get AWA 2K17 at game shops, retail stores, and online! Available for your favorite gaming system and on PC!”

[Back to a shot of all four kids playing excitedly now, a tag team match on screen pitting Julie Somers and Victoria June against Ayako Fujiwara and Molly Bell. The on-screen Somers takes a German Suplex from Fujiwara as real life Somers grimaces, grabbing at her neck.]

JS: That had to hurt.

[And with that, we cut to a graphic promoting AWA 2K17 as we fade to black...

...and then back up to live action backstage in the Center Stage Studios where there's quite the chaotic scene. We can see a flood of AWA officials and security surrounding and dividing a shouting AJ Martinez and Cain Jackson, trying to usher them towards the exit of the building. Kevin Slater is shouting angrily...]

KS: GET 'EM OUT OF HERE! ZHARKOV'S ORDERS!

[Martinez has a few thoughts on the Interim President which are quickly censored by the powers that be. Jackson is shouting angrily and pointing at Slater, something about "THAT PIECE OF CRAP HUNTER!" and something muted before the word "JAMES!"]

KS: I DON'T WANT TO HEAR IT! THEY'RE OUT OF HERE TOO! YOU HAD A DIRECT IMPACT ON ANOTHER MATCH BEING CANCELED AND NOW THE ROYAL CROWN IS AT RISK! ZHARKOV WANTS YOU GONE SO YOU'RE GONE!

[Martinez shouts at Slater again, something about taking a walk on HIS wild side when the mass of humanity is finally able to get Martinez and Jackson through the doors. Slater stands, hands on his hips, shaking his head as Adam Rogers sidles up alongside him.]

AR: Hell of a night, huh?

KS: Just like every night lately. But at least they're out of here.

AR: Almost.

KS: What do you mean?

[Rogers smirks.]

AR: In all of that, you didn't notice it was just Jackson and Martinez?

[Slater glares at Rogers.]

KS: Where the hell is Crawford?!

[Rogers shrugs.]

KS: Damn it. Get some people and go find them! And make sure James and Hunter have left too!

[Rogers nods with a chuckle, waving John Shock and a handful of AWA security guards in his direction. Slater shakes his head with concern.]

KS: That's the LAST one we want running loose.

[Slater shakes his head again as he waves for a more officials to join him in the hunt as we fade to another part of the backstage area...

...where Sweet Lou Blackwell is standing by.]

SLB: The action we just saw in and out of the ring has everyone buzzing, no doubt included in that is my guest at this time...

[Blackwell gestures to his left, as in walks the figure of one Sid Osborne. Osborne rolls his eyes.]

SLB: The unlikely duo of Jackson Hunter and Brian James even has to have you-

SO: Snore.

SLB: I beg your pardon?

SO: See, I say "snore" because I worry if I just yawned and snored you wouldn't get the fact that I don't care about any of this.

[Blackwell shakes his head at the disrespect.]

SLB: You have to admit, nobody could've guessed that Jackson Hunter and Brian James of all people would run to Shadoe Rage's aid!

[Osborne shrugs.]

SO: That's the thing. Sometimes people surprise you. I wouldn't think anyone would want to help a self serving fossil like that, but I guess being really dumb is contagious. Maybe they should make Jordan Ohara wear a protective face mask so he'd stop coughing his contagious gullibility all over the locker room.

[Blackwell gets a little burr under his saddle at the mention of the Phoenix, his tone sterner as he responds.]

SLB: Speaking of Jordan Ohara, what do you have to say for yourself? That despicable act you perpetrated... have you no respect for the National Championship?

[Osborne smirks.]

SO: Of course I do. It's my championship, after all. And if the Championship Committee wasn't going to do anything about that scumbag mama's boy stealing my property, I was going to make it right. I won it fair and square...

[Osborne chuckles.]

SO: ...so I SMASHED it fair and square. And now Ohara can have a fun time parading around with some replica belt they grabbed from the merch stands. See? Everyone's happy.

[Osborne nods.]

SO: You're welcome.

[Blackwell sighs.]

SLB: Someone who definitely can't be happy is Shadoe Rage. He may have had been rescued before KAMS could do long term damage... but there's no way he's at one hundred percent right now. Do you really want to move forward in the Royal Crown if you have to take a tainted win over the "Savior of the AWA" to do it?

[Osborne nods, pausing to give Blackwell a sideways glance... before bursting in uproarious laughter. He takes a few moments to compose himself before clapping Blackwell on the shoulder.]

SO: Oh man... that was good.

[Osborne shakes his head.]

SO: First of all, his name should be Quotation Savior of The AWA End Quotation Shadoe Rage because give me a break. For one, I pretty sure I saw a bunch of other people in that cage fighting Korugun's lackeys. And two, everyone knows Shadoe Rage has never done anything for anyone NOT named Shadoe Rage.

[Osborne shakes his head at Blackwell.]

SO: Anyway, yes. Obviously. I will take a win any way I can. The money's still green even if the dumb sucker cries that it wasn't fair. Besides, maybe I'd feel some sympathy that wasn't so richly deserved. But instead, it's yet another grandpa from a million years ago trying to take the spotlight from the future of this sport. He saw KAMS out there soaking in the adulation of the slackjawed fans and he couldn't take it. If his own bitter jealousy got his ass kicked, I couldn't care less.

SLB: You and I must have been watching two different things.

[Osborne shrugs.]

SO: Well, in all fairness, you're drunk.

[Blackwell fumes as Osborne points at the camera.]

SO: Rage, I know you're out there fuming at KAMS. I know you're hurting. Please just keep it up, because I don't mind an early night. They don't pay me by the hour. And when it's all said and done, I'll be happy to join KAMS in providing more proof that you've passed your prime. You can think about this when you're looking in the mirror with a head full of bruises later tonight.

And Rage?

[Osborne nods, smiling with contempt.]

SO: You're welcome.

[We stay on the smile slowly turning into a sneer as we fade to the announce position where Lori Dane is shaking her head as Ben Waterson is howling with laughter.]

LD: How can you find that funny?!

BW: Did the man say ANYTHING that wasn't true?

LD: Of course he did! He lied more than a certain Presi-

BW: Watch yourself. Don't want to end up in exile like your ol' buddy Cannon.

[Dane fumes at that too.]

LD: Fine. Shifting gears though, we've got medical personnel out here tending to Shadoe Rage. We still don't know if he's going to be able to compete. He's trying to stand up out here on the floor but...

BW: Call it a night, Rage. Go home, sit in your rocking chair, wrap an electric blanket around those eggshells you call knees, get the nurse to heat up a Microwave dinner for you... forget about the turkey jerky, your dentures can't take it.

LD: Such disrespect from you! From Osborne!

BW: Respect don't pay the bills. Sid Osborne's been gifted the chance of a lifetime by KAMS - roll over this bum, cash your ticket to London, and get ready to make history as the first Royal Crown winner.

LD: Will it happen? We're about to find out. Let's go down to Megumi for an update.

[As we fade to the ring, we can see Interim President Zharkov is on the scene as well, trying to talk to Shadoe Rage who has rolled inside the ring.]

MS: The following contest is set for one fall with a twenty minute time limit and is a first round match in the ROYAL CROWN tournament!

[The crowd half-heartedly cheers as Rage's effort to get to his feet ends with a grimace and sinking back down onto his knees.]

MS: Introducing first... in the corner to my right... from Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada... weighing in at 240 pounds... he is a former World Television Champion and the SAVIOR of the AWA...

..."SENSAAAAATIONALLLLLL"...

...SHAAAAAADOOOOOOOOOOOE RAAAAAAAAAAAAAAGE!

[The cheers are loud but there's a tinge of concern as Rage has still been unable to get up off the mat.]

MS: Annnnnnnnd his opponent...

[The driving bassline to "Chip On My Shoulder" by Slapshot begins to play as two red slashes appear on the video screen, forming an X.]

MS: ...from Las Vegas, Nevada... weighing in at 260 pounds...

...the SIN... CITY... SAAAAVIORRRRR...

...SIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIID OSSSSSSSBORRRRRRRRRNE!

[The guitar kicks in as on either side of the X, in collegiate block letters "SID OSBORNE" flashes on the screen to loud boos from the crowd.]

LD: Shadoe Rage may or may not be ready to compete, Ben, but Sid Osborne definitely is.

BW: That's right, Dane. There's a saying in sports that you don't have to get ready if you stay ready... and that's Sid Osborne to a tee. Look, I know this kid very well from our time in CCW together. This is someone who believes he's the best in the world and he won't let anyone dare tell or try to prove him wrong. He's always prepared to an elite level and he's always ready for whatever comes his way. This thing with KAMS tonight? None of us saw it coming but I wouldn't be surprised if he was ready for it.

LD: Well, Shadoe Rage certainly wasn't ready for it... and he's still down on the mat.

BW: Just where the Sin City Savior wants him.

LD: And speaking of CCW...

[The camera cuts to reveal a crowd shot of several well-dressed and physically fit individuals sitting in the audience...]

LD: ...we've got some of the future AWA stars of tomorrow in attendance here tonight as they have been for all shows lately as we continue to look ahead to this summer and the Brass Ring Tournament.

BW: We've talked a lot about the Royal Crown being about opportunity, Dane, but the Brass Ring is ALL about opportunity as the stars of CCW look for their big break to crack into the American Wrestling Alliance locker room.

LD: We'll be getting more details on this tournament as we head towards our big Showtime summer tour that we learned all about at National Wrestling Night but there are some people in attendance tonight, Ben, that would seem like surefire locks to compete in that tournament.

[The shot pans across the row of CCW competitors - revealing names like Armani Avery, Scotty Bell, Ryan Riggs, Bodhi Li, the masked Minokawa, Betty Watkins, and Quinn Quimby as they (mostly) wave at the camera.]

BW: A whole lot of talent here tonight but just because you made TV tonight don't mean the Brass Ring is in your future.

[And as the song kicks into high gear, the camera cuts to where Sid Osborne makes his way out to the top of the entrance stairs. His head is bowed, his arms outstretched. He turns his back to the crowd, the back of his college letterman jacket reading "LAS VEGAS STRAIGHT EDGE" in collegiate block letters. He then takes his jacket off, letting it drop. The back of his shirt underneath revealed to read:

"UNQUESTIONED
UNDEFEATED
NATIONAL
HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION"

All of which leads to a seemingly impossibly even more negative reaction from the crowd.]

LD: We saw that same shirt at National Wrestling Night and despite losing there, apparently Mr. Osborne's opinion of his standing here in the AWA in regards to that title have NOT changed.

BW: That's right, Dane. Sid Osborne believes he's the uncrowned National Champion... although so is Jordan Ohara now!

LD: The physical title belt may be broken but the Phoenix is not.

BW: Nope, just the windshield he landed on.

[Osborne stomps down the ramp, slowly walking up the ring steps to the ring. He stops at the apron, pointing around to the assembled crowd before cutting his thumb across his throat. He ducks through the ropes, smirking at the struggling Rage before heading across the ring towards his own corner.]

LD: It's the moment of truth, Ben. Can Shadoe Rage compete tonight? The brutal and unprovoked assault by KAMS has left him in tremendous pain obviously.

BW: We've got doctors out here. Zharkov's out here. The referee... everyone trying to convince Shadoe Rage to call it a night.

LD: But if there's one thing we know about Rage, he's as stubborn as the rest of his legendary family.

[As Osborne settles into his corner, coldly staring across the ring, we spot referee Koji Sakai kneeling next to Shadoe Rage who is down on his own knees, grabbing at his lower back, his face wrecked with pain...]

LD: Sid Osborne in the ring, fans, but right now - the real question is whether or not Shadoe Rage can go. He's hurt... and by all appearances, he seems to be hurt pretty badly, Ben.

BW: He played with fire and he got himself BURRRRRRNED! Like that, Dane?

LD: Not really, no.

BW: Ah, come on... I could've been a Martinez like half the business too!

LD: While my esteemed color man is joking, you can sense the concern coming off these fans in Atlanta right now for the Savior of the AWA - just months removed from earning that nickname by putting his body on the line against Korugun several times and...

[Rage grabs the middle rope, grimacing as he pulls himself to his feet.]

BW: What?! Daniel LaRusso's gonna fight?!

LD: Oh, come on, Ben!

BW: I've seen this play, Dane. This is Rage trying to garner sympathy from the fans... trying to make Osborne underestimate him... I have no doubt that Jackson, Martinez, and Crawford did a number on Shadoe Rage but where my doubt begins is that an egomaniac like Rage would EVER pass up this shot at the Royal Crown Finals no matter how hurt he is.

[Rage nods at the official, insisting he can go. The official looks reluctant at Rage, asking again...]

"DAMN IT, YES! RING THE DAMN BELL!"

[...and the official grimaces as he wheels and does exactly that.]

"DING! DING! DING!"

LD: Ask and ye shall receive- OH!

[The crowd ROARS as Osborne sprints across, looking to take advantage of the former Television Champion's weakened physical state... and runs right into a stiff left jab from Rage!]

LD: Osborne wanted to go for the quick win but Rage was ready for him... another left... another one!

[An overhead elbow goes crashing down between the eyes of Osborne, knocking the Sin City Savior down to the mat...]

LD: Down goes Osborne... and on a normal night with both of these men at the top of their games, Ben, I'd say this would be a tremendous matchup with a spot in the Royal Crown Finals on the line but tonight, with Rage in this condition...

BW: How can you even say that, Dane? He's got Osborne down, pounding him with those closed fists! Rage has come to fight!

LD: Shadoe Rage has ALWAYS come to fight... but I just don't know if he's got the physical condition to withstand the 2017 Golden Grapple winner for Best Newcomer.

[Rage climbs off the mat, dragging Osborne up to his feet by the hair...]

LD: Both men back up... and you have to imagine Rage is looking for a quick win in this one. With the back acting up as it is, the slightest miscue could be disastrous for him.

BW: He's gotta get it done quickly and that's what we're seeing him try to do.

[...and ducks down, looking for a slam...]

LD: Big scoop and- no! No! The back acting up, the back giving out on him!

[Rage cries out, staggering away as he grabs at his lower back. He wobbles over towards the ropes, leaning over as Osborne shakes off the early offense...

...and then barrels towards Rage, leaping up to land a knee to the back, sending Rage flying through the ropes and crashing down on the ring apron!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: And just like that, the Sin City Savior turns this one around, sending Rage to the outside... and Osborne's again not wasting any time, going right out after him on the apron, ignoring the referee...

[Out on the apron, Osborne awkwardly lifts Rage up under his arm, both men precariously positioned...

...and Osborne steps off the apron, DRIVING Rage's spine down onto the edge of the ring apron!]

"THUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUD!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: HOLY...

[Rage rolls off the apron, screaming in pain as Osborne sneers at the jeering fans from his spot on the floor.]

LD: ...an absolutely DEVASTATING attack there by the Sin City Savior, leaving Shadoe Rage in a wrecked pile of carnage on the floor!

BW: Sid Osborne came within a heartbeat of winning the National Title on National Wrestling Night... he's so deep under the skin of Jordan Ohara now, you just know another shot at the title is in his future... but right now, he's focused on the Royal Crown and all that can do for his career.

LD: We've thrown around the word "opportunity" since the Royal Crown was announced and that's what we're seeing. Men like Tony Donovan and Joe Flint are in... and you better believe Sid Osborne wants to join them and get a chance to put himself down in the record books as the very first winner of the Royal Crown tournament.

[Osborne rolls back inside the ring, waving a dismissive arm towards the wrecked Rage and shouting "COUNT HIM, REF!" to the official...]

LD: And it looks like Sid Osborne is looking for a countout here to move on to the Finals!

BW: Smart move. Sure, you could roll him back in and go for the submission or the pinfall... but in a tournament like this, this is just as good! Get the win however you can and start planning for London in seven nights.

LD: The Battle of London coming your way next Saturday night, fans, right here on ESPN from the O2 Arena in London, England. The Royal Crown finals for both the men and the women. Juan Vasquez getting his final crack to become the World Champion again when he takes on Supernova just about a month shy of his retirement match. Takeshi Mifune and Raphael Rhodes... plus so much more. It's going to be an epic night in the history books for the AWA... plus I hear there's a major announcement or two in the cards as well, Ben.

BW: What?! I haven't heard that! What do you know, Dane? Tell me now!

LD: I don't think so... and as the referee's count grows to three, Shadoe Rage is still barely moving on the outside and Sid Osborne is acting like he's already got this match won...

[On the floor, we can see Rage on his back, rolling to a hip as he grabs at his lower back in pain...]

LD: A hard fall with that quasi-backbreaker applied by the Sin City Savior, the 2017 winner of the Best Newcomer Golden Grapple... and what was a tremendous rookie year for Osborne has become one heck of a sophomore year with his battles with Jordan Ohara, Robert Donovan, and now Shadoe Rage. A trip to the Royal Crown Finals would be just the latest in a line of high profile moments for the Las Vegas native, Ben.

BW: Osborne buried that Best Newcomer award on stage at the Grapple... what do you think he'd do if they tried to slap a crown on his head?

LD: I'd rather not think about that - right now, I'm focused on thinking about whether or not Shadoe Rage is going to be able to beat this ten count. We're up to six now and he's still on the floor..

[The referee's count hits seven as Rage pushes up to a knee, still grimacing as he grabs at his lower back...]

LD: On a knee on the outside... Rage is running out of time, fans! Shadoe Rage has GOT to get back in this ring if he wants to keep his chance alive to make the Royal Crown Finals!

[...and then eight as Rage makes a half-hearted reach towards the ring apron only to cry out, grabbing at his back again...]

BW: He's not gonna make it, Dane! Sid's headed to the Finals!

[...but at nine, Rage reaches out with both hands, grabbing the ring apron as he screams in pain...]

LD: One... last...

[...and throws himself under the bottom rope to BIG CHEERS from the AWA faithful as Rage rolls to a halt on the mat and Osborne angrily sneers down at him.]

LD: ...chance! He made it! Rage makes it back in before the ten count and the match continues here on Showtime!

[An agitated Osborne rushes back into the fray, driving stomps down on the lower back of Rage, causing his entire body to quiver on each impact.]

LD: Osborne going right back to work on the lower back of Shadoe Rage, stomping him down into the canvas...

[Kneeling down, Osborne presses his knee into the spine before grabbing a handful of Rage's wild hair, yanking back...]

LD: Oh, come on! That's illegal!

[A count quickly follows, reaching four before Osborne lets go, lifting his hands to make sure the referee sees the break.]

LD: Osborne lets it go in plenty of time... not wanting to risk a potential disqualification.

[Climbing off the canvas, Osborne throws himself back into the ropes, bouncing off with momentum...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and snaps off a front flip, rolling onto the lower back of Rage with a senton that gets the crowd groaning for the Savior of the AWA!]

LD: Somersault senton finds the mark... Rage in BIG trouble now, Ben.

BW: He's been in big trouble before the bell even rang, Dane. It's just a matter of time now before Sid puts the finish on him.

LD: It might be over here - quick cover by Osborne gets one... gets two...

[The crowd cheers as Rage kicks out, firing a shoulder up off the mat.]

LD: ...and Rage slips out at two, keeping his hopes alive.

[Osborne glares at the official before grabbing Rage's lifted arm, giving it a yank to pull Rage over onto his stomach...]

LD: What's Osborne doing here? Flipping Rage over and- OHH! Kneedrop down on the lower back!

[The Sin City Savior gets back up, dropping a second... and a third, the crowd groaning and Rage crying out with every blow...

...and as Osborne gets up, mockingly twirling his finger in the air to big jeers...]

LD: ONE MORE! A big leaping kneedrop to the spine connects... and we get another cover!

[This time, Rage is a little slower and less forceful to kick out but kicks out nonetheless, breaking the pin in time...]

LD: And still only two as Shadoe Rage shows off that tremendous fighting heart and resiliency we've seen over the years here in the AWA and elsewhere during his time in places like the IIWF and the EMWC.

BW: But you can feel it, Dane... you can sense it... Sid Osborne is getting closer and closer with each offensive move, putting himself in position to advance to London to the Royal Crown Finals and cement himself as the future of this industry.

LD: We're not there yet, Ben... and with the actions of Osborne over the past week or two, how can you even want to see that? What a blatant disrespect he showed when he destroyed Jordan Ohara's National Title belt after he lost on National Wrestling Night!

[Osborne grabs a handful of Rage's hair, hauling him back up to his feet near the corner...]

BW: Hey, he got the attention of the wrestling world, didn't he?! He made everyone stand up and notice that this guy can't be controlled! He can't be stopped! And I believe when he gets another shot at the title, we're looking at the next National Champion, Dane.

LD: Jordan Ohara's going to have a lot to say about that...

BW: If they've pulled him out of that broken windshield...

[Grabbing the arm, Osborne ROCKETS Rage into the corner, his back smashing into the turnbuckles before Rage collapses down to the canvas, leaving the Sin City Savior with a rare smile on his face...]

LD: My word! What a shot into the corner that was! And much like Jordan Ohara, Ben, Shadoe Rage's body may be broken right now but his fighting spirit certainly is not and when Ohara gets his hands on Osborne, I would NOT want to be the man from Las Vegas... but right now, let's stay focused on this Royal Crown first round battle as Sid Osborne and Shadoe Rage look to join Joe Flint and Tony Donovan in the Final... plus whoever comes out on top of that Last Chance Battle Royal later tonight.

BW: Dane, does that Battle Royal mean that whoever loses this match could get another shot at it?

LD: By my understanding, yes... if they're physically able to compete that is.

[Osborne approaches the corner, lifting Rage back up and pushing him back against the turnbuckles...]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"
"OHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: Ohhhh! And a hard knife edge chop connects!

[Osborne looks out on the jeering crowd, setting up again...]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"
"OHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: And again! We're creeping up towards the ten minute mark - the halfway point in this time limit - and right now the Sin City Savior is in total control of the former World Television Champion.

[The referee orders Osborne to back off and the Vegas native obliges, lifting his arms and stepping back two paces...]

LD: A break in the corner for the moment... but Osborne coming right back in and-

[But as Sid steps closer, Rage snaps off a jab to the jaw that finds the mark and gets the crowd going!]

LD: Rage caught him with a jab!

“WHAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!”

“OHHHHHHHHHHHHH!”

LD: And Osborne returns fire with another chop!

[The crowd cheers as Rage peppers him with another jab but boos when...]

“WHAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!”

“OHHHHHHHHHHHHH!”

BW: They're trading blows, Dane, and I'm not sure that's the best idea for either of them at this point!

[A staggered Rage snaps off another jab!]

LD: Shadoo Rage taking a page out of his sister's playbook with these boxing skills, scoring with the jab... and there's another one... and another...

[Osborne backs towards middle ring, being driven back from the corner by Rage's pinpoint jabs...]

LD: ...and don't look now, fans, but Shadoo Rage is working his way back into this!

[...and then brings the point of his elbow down across the crowd of Osborne's skull, putting him on his heels falling back towards the opposite corner...]

LD: Osborne's stunned from the elbow, back in the corner...

[Twirling his finger in the air for the cheering Atlanta fans, Rage rushes forward...]

LD: Rage on the move and... ohhh!

[...but Osborne is still in it enough to pivot, sidestepping and hurling Rage chestfirst into the corner! Rage stumbles backwards as the Sin City Savior slides into position behind him, snatching a rear waistlock...]

BW: GERMAN!

[...and DUMPS Rage on the back of his head and neck, holding the bridge as the referee dives to count!]

LD: OSBORNE WITH ONE! WITH TWO! WITH-

[The crowd ROARS as Rage's shoulder pops off the mat at two and change, breaking down the bridge and narrowly escaping!]

LD: -RAGE IS OUT IN TIME! A close call there for the Savior of the AWA...

BW: Hey, I just realized this is a Savior versus Savior matchup. That's gotta be some kind of a record.

LD: Now we just need Simon LeBec out here in his priest's robe and we're in business.

BW: Lord knows what kind of business but sure.

LD: Osborne showing great tenacity and focus, right on his feet and... he's grabbing at the legs, trying to get Rage into wheelbarrow position...

BW: He could be looking for Into The Pit - that inverted powerbomb...

LD: Also known by longtime fans as The Fall, the signature move of the "Blood Angel" Simon Ezra...

[Osborne gets Rage in place, grunting with effort as he lifts him off the mat...]

LD: He's got him up!

[...but Rage tucks his head, reversing his momentum and rolling the surprised Osborne up into a cradle!]

LD: REVERSED! ONNNNNNNNE! TWOOOOOOOO! TH-

[The crowd groans as Osborne kicks out, freeing himself before the three count.]

LD: And this time, it's Shadoo Rage who nearly pulled out the victory!

BW: Rage's showing me something here, Dane. I didn't give him much of a chance after KAMS left him laying about ten minutes ago but he's hanging in this, putting up a heck of a fight. Kudos to him.

LD: Wow, look at you saying something nice about-

BW: But he's still gonna lose.

LD: ...that was a nice moment for... a moment.

[Struggling to his feet, Rage backs into the corner, leaning against the turnbuckles, grabbing at his lower back as Osborne pushes up to his feet as well...]

LD: Both men up, who can take advantage of-

[An incoming Sin City Sid gets BLASTED with a Rage haymaker as he nears the corner, stunning the 2017 Best Newcomer as Rage snatches a handful of hair...]

LD: Here we go!

[...and with the crowd counting along, Rage starts slamming Osborne's head into the top turnbuckle!]

"ONE!"

"TWO!"

"THREE!"

"FOUR!"

"FIVE!"

"SIX!"

"SEVEN!"

"EIGHT!"

"NINE!"

"TEN!"

[And with Osborne staggered, Rage seeks to take advantage, ducking low...]

LD: He's going for a slam annnnnnd...

[The crowd cheers loudly!]

LD: ...he got it!

BW: Oh, but what kind of effect did it have on him, Dane? Immediately grabbing at the back, his knees nearly buckling... he put a lot of effort into that slam and you can see the pain on his face...

[Rage angrily sweeps an arm at the official, ordering them out of his path as he ducks through the ropes...]

BW: ...and now he's going up top?! You've gotta be kidding me!

[With the Atlanta fans mixed in their cheers and buzzing concern, Rage heads towards the corner, stepping up on the middle rope, his face etched in pain as he tries to scale the turnbuckles...]

LD: Rage is usually quick as a cat up the corner but you can see the effects that everything from the Welcome To The Slaughterhouse on has caused. The shaky knees, the pain on the face... this is a struggle for the Savior of the AWA and-

BW: And it could cost him everything, Dane. Osborne's already starting to get up... that slam couldn't hold him down. Who knows how much Rage was able to get behind it with the bad back.

LD: Rage on the second rope, one foot on the top...

BW: It's a footrace now!

[And as Rage leans over, trying to pull himself onto his favorite perch, Sid Osborne pushes up off the mat, staggering towards the corner and DRILLS Rage with a right hand to the skull!]

LD: And if it's a race, it appears that Sid Osborne has won it... for the moment.

BW: Big right hands on Rage - now Sid needs something nasty to bring him down HARD off the top rope and end this thing.

[Osborne lands another right... and another, Rage barely staying on the ropes as Osborne tries to bring him down...]

LD: Osborne perhaps thinking about a superplex! Stepping to the middle rope, trying to hook-

[But before he can wrap up Rage's arm, Rage reaches out and shows the kind of desperation he talked about earlier in the night...]

LD: -TO THE EYES! TO THE EYES!

[...and with a vicious eyegouge, Rage sends a blinded Osborne staggering away from the corner, frantically trying to clear his vision as a refocused Rage steps to the top rope, arms raised over his head to the cheers of the AWA faithful!]

BW: He illegally went to the eyes and these people are still cheering him! Hypocrites!

"TEN MINUTES GONE BY! TEN MINUTES!"

LD: We've reached the halfway point in the time limit here as Rage stands up top, poised and ready as Osborne... HE LEAPS!

[And with his hands clasped together, Rage CRASHES down on Osborne with a double axehandle, laying out the Sin City Savior!]

LD: DEATH FROM ABOOOOOVE!

[With Osborne prone, a weary Rage dives across, not bothering to hook a leg as the referee drops to count...]

LD: We've got one! We've got two! We've got- nooooo! Osborne kicks out!

BW: And that's all because Rage didn't hook a leg, Dane. It left the legs totally free and that's where Osborne got the power to kick out of Death From Above.

[Rage sits up on the canvas, nodding his head, grimacing as he tries to battle back off the mat...]

LD: Shadoe Rage came oh-so-close right there... trying to get back, trying to take advantage, trying to overcome all the abuse his back has been through tonight thanks to KAMS and Sid Osborne...

[...and climbs to his feet. Again, he immediately grabs at his lower back, pitching to the right as he struggles to keep his balance. With Osborne on the mat, Rage quickly takes a look around...

...and points to the corner again to a huge cheer!]

LD: Shadoe Rage is no stranger to putting his body on the line and that's exactly what we're seeing right now, heading back to the corner, looking to do it again...

BW: I'd say this guy's not playing with a full deck but I think he's lost most of the cards and is now playing Solitaire with two cards.

LD: Rage to the corner again, starting that climb from the outside. He struggled with this last time and...

BW: And he's struggling just as much with it again.

LD: You're absolutely right, Ben. A slow climb for the former Television Champion, trying to get to the top rope before Sid Osborne is able to regain his feet...

[Rage is struggling in his climb to the top, grabbing at his back as he gets halfway there, fighting to keep his balance as the Sin City Savior gets on his feet...]

LD: Osborne's up and-

[...and charges the corner, leaping to the middle rope...]

LD: What's he...?

[...snatching a front facelock, slinging the arm over his neck...]

LD: He's going for a...

[...and takes Rage up and over, driving him down HARD on the canvas!]

LD: ...SUUUUUUPERRRRPLEEEEEEX!

[Osborne rolls over, quickly securing a lateral press as the referee dives to count...]

LD: Superplex off the top right down on the injured back and...

[The crowd buzzes with concern as the referee slaps the mat once... twice...]

LD: HE'S GOT-

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: Wow! Rage kicks out! Shadoo Rage just BARELY kicked out in time, Ben!

BW: It was a half count - maybe less - away from Sid Osborne heading to the Royal Crown Finals, Dane!

LD: What a battle we're witnessing here tonight for one of the final two spots in the Royal Crown Finals next weekend at the Battle of London! Shadoo Rage somehow finding a way to kick out after that spine-shaking superplex off the top... and now it's Sid Osborne who can't believe it...

[Osborne is on his knees, shouting at the official who holds up two fingers.]

LD: The referee letting Sid know it was two but Osborne doesn't believe it.

BW: Facts are facts, Dane. It doesn't matter what he believes - it's a two count and nothing is going to change that. He needs to keep his head in the game here because he's SO close to a big win!

[Climbing the rest of the way to his feet, Osborne's still shaking his head as he stands over Rage, hands on his hips...]

BW: He's wasting time here. Stay on him, kid!

LD: Osborne reaching down, dragging Rage up off the mat...

[Ducking low, Osborne lifts Rage up, slamming him down to a shout of pain from the Savior of the AWA...]

LD: ...big body slam plants him on the mat... and now Sid says HE'S going up top!

BW: An exchange of high risk offense hasn't gone in favor of anyone so far... let's see if Osborne can change that, Dane.

LD: Sid Osborne heading up top, moving much better than Rage is at this point in the contest... to the second rope, perhaps looking for that Stage Dive frog splash.

BW: If he hits it, I think it's over, Dane.

LD: I believe you're right. Osborne planting one foot up top, looking out at these fans here in Atlanta. He could be on the verge of punching his ticket to London, England for The Battle of London and the Royal Crown Finals where Joe Flint and Tony Donovan have already advanced.

[Osborne slaps himself across the chest a few times, gloating as the fans jeer loudly...

...and suddenly ERUPT into cheers as the PA system comes to life!]

LD: WHAAAAAAT?!

BW: What?! Is he here?! Where is he, Dane?!

[With Osborne's eyes wide in a shocked reaction, the Center Stage crowd is jumping for the sound of Nas' "Hero" playing over the PA system!]

LD: Jordan Ohara - the National Champion - is apparently here in Atlanta but I don't see him yet... and neither does Sid Osborne who is looking EVERYWHERE for him and that looks like a man with fear in his eyes, Ben!

BW: Oh, I wouldn't go that far. I don't think Sid Osborne's afraid of Jordan Ohara... and nor SHOULD he be afraid of that Boy Scout!

LD: We were told Ohara had some lacerations along with some general soreness from National Wrestling Night but apparently he-

[And the crowd ROARS as Ohara emerges on the entrance ramp. He's wearing black athletic pants with a bare torso showing some bandages including white tape wrapped around his ribcage. The Phoenix glares down at Osborne who locks eyes with him, pointing at him now...]

LD: OHARA IS HERE! THE CHAMPION IS HERE!

BW: How do you know he's the champ? He ain't got a belt!

LD: Oh, that's hysterical! You're a real riot, Ben!

[Osborne points at Ohara, shouting to the official who throws up his arms, saying there's nothing he can do yet...]

LD: Osborne's beside himself! He's completely lost-

[...and the crowd somehow manages to get louder as Shadoe Rage struggles to his feet, staggering towards an unaware Osborne, reaching up...]

"THUUUUUUUUUUUUUD!"
"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: HE SLAMMED HIM! HE SLAMMED HIM OFF THE TOP!

BW: Ahhhh, come on! This is terrible, Dane!

LD: Shadoe Rage taking advantage of the distraction - diving across!

[Rage wraps up a leg, nodding wildly as the crowd counts along with the official...]

"ONNNNNNNNNNNNE!"

"TWOOOOOOOOOOO!"

"THREEEEEEEE-"

[...but the crowd rapidly deflates as Osborne squeaks the shoulder off the mat in the nick of time!]

LD: NOOOO! OSBORNE KICKS OUT AT TWO AND CHANGE! OH MY! This is a wild one, Ben!

BW: Sid's not out of this yet. He needs to shove Ohara out of his mind and focus on-

[The fans ERUPT again!]

LD: That might not be so easy! Ohara's headed for the ring!

[The Atlanta crowd is rocking as Jordan Ohara rushes down the aisle steps, heading towards the ring where the referee NOW jumps in the path, throwing up his arms, shouting at the Phoenix to stay outside!]

LD: Ohara's trying to get in there but the referee's trying to keep the integrity of this match alive... and look at Rage! Look at Rage!

[With Ohara and the referee tangled up, Rage gets to his feet, boosted by a sudden surge of adrenaline as he points to the corner...]

LD/BW: AGAIN?!

[...and walks that way, moving through the ropes to the apron to start climbing once more...]

LD: Shadoe Rage heading up again... and this time, you gotta believe he's thinking about that flying elbow! The Angel of Death Drop!

[...and Rage is moving a little quicker this time, getting to the second rope with ease, planting a foot up top...]

...when suddenly there's a warning buzz from the crowd...]

LD: Wait! Wait! Someone's coming through the crowd! Coming from the-

BW: IT'S CRAWFORD! PARIS CRAWFORD!

[...and as Rage steps to the top rope, he's barely able to catch his balance before the Team Supreme weapon leaps up on the apron out of Rage's vision, delivering a mighty shove to the precariously-perched Rage...]

LD: NO!

[...and Rage goes tumbling off the top rope, twisting in the air as he falls...]

"THUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUD!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: OHHHH GOD! OHHHHH GOD! RIGHT ON THE APRON! RIGHT ON HIS INJURED BACK!

[The crowd is buzzing over the horribly painful looking moment as Rage plummets down, crashing spinefirst onto the edge of the apron!]

BW: Hahah! Shadoe Rage played with fire with KAMS and he just got burnt to a damn crisp, Dane!

LD: Rage is hurt! Rage is hurt badly, screaming in pain as Paris Crawford goes running right back out of sight the same way they came back into the arena and...

[Back on his feet, Osborne glares across at the downed Rage...]

...which is when Jordan Ohara fights up onto the apron, screaming bloody murder at the Sin City Savior...]

LD: Osborne's still got Ohara to deal with though so-

[Osborne charges at Ohara who is physically wrapped up with the protesting official now, desperately trying to keep him at bay...]

...and SMASHES into the National Champion, sending him flying awkwardly off the apron, crashing down onto the barely-padded Center Stage Studios floor!]

“OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!”

LD: OHARA GOES DOWN!

[And with Ohara out of the picture, Osborne stomps across the ring, grabbing Rage by the arm, dragging his pain-ravaged body into the ring...]

LD: Osborne drags Rage in, pulling him up... boot downstairs...

[...and with Rage doubled over, Osborne pulls him into a standing headscissors, wrapping up one arm...]

LD: You’ve gotta be kidding me!

BW: Look familiar, Dane?! Every Combat Corner student gets this as a graduation gift!

[...and then the other...]

LD: The Sin City Savior’s got him hooked, looking to lock in his trip to London annnnnnd....

[...and then lifts Rage into the air, flipping him over as Osborne leaps up...]

“THUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUD!”

“OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!”

LD: BILLION! DOLLAR! BOMB!

BW: You can thank your old man for that one, Dane! And Osborne hangs onto the legs for the one... two... he got him!

“DING! DING! DING!”

LD: Sid Osborne has done it! Sid Osborne has beaten Shadoe Rage here in Atlanta and cashed his ticket to London! He’s headed for the Royal Crown Finals with Joe Flint... with Tony Donovan... and with one more wrestler who will be added later tonight in that Last Chance Battle Roy-

[The crowd ROARS as Jordan Ohara slides into the ring, diving on top of Osborne!]

LD: -HERE COMES OHARA! OHARA WANTS HIM A PIECE OF OSBORNE!

[Ohara lands several hard shots from a prone position, battering the Sin City Savior who is trying to defend himself...]

...and with a desperate gouge of the eyes, Osborne gets loose, rolling from the ring and making his way swiftly for the exit as Ohara rubs at his eyes down on the mat!]

LD: Ohhh... and Osborne gets loose and he’s headed for the exit, fans! Sid Osborne wins the match, manages to escape from Jordan Ohara’s thirst for payback here tonight in Atlanta, and he’s headed to London!

BW: Oh, they’re gonna love the Sin City Savior in jolly ol’ England, Dane.

LD: I doubt that very much.

[Back on his feet, Ohara glares out after the fleeing Osborne, a disappointed look on his face as he slaps the top rope...]

LD: Ohara looking on... this isn't the end of this one, Ben.

BW: Absolutely not.

LD: Fans, we're going to take a quick break but when we come back, it'll be tag team action pitting Betty Chang and Charity Rockwell against E-Girl MAX! Don't go away!

[We fade to black.

We cut to a gym, where we see Harley Hamilton, Cinder, Kelly Kowalski, and Casey Cash walking side by side through the premises. Their names are displayed underneath their persons, and the term "professional wrestlers" briefly takes over the whole screen. All four are dressed in Under Armour workout attire. We hear Casey on the voiceover as the scene transitions to Cinder scrambling up a rock wall.]

CC: People say Cinder is crazy.

[Cinder makes it up the wall, sitting on top with a big grin on her face, shouting down to a smiling Harley below, as Casey gives a double thumbs up and Kelly stretches out.]

CC: But those who know Cinder know she thrives on not having to live up to the expectations of society.

[Cut to Kelly Kowalski, working over a heavy bag held by Harley and Casey with hard punches.]

CC: They say all Kelly Kowalski can do is brawl.

[Kelly suddenly grabs the bag, throwing knees into the side as Harley and Casey give each other a look, impressed with their friend's power.]

CC: Those who know Kelly Kowalski know that she has plenty of cards left in the deck, waiting for the right moment to play them.

[Cut to Harley Hamilton, giving Casey advice before a sparring session.]

CC: They say Harley Hamilton is selfish, spoiled, arrogant...

[Transition to archive footage of Harley from her time on St. Bonaventure's women's basketball team, with a new voiceover... "fifteen assists for Harley! A new single game record for the Bonnies!"... then back to Harley guiding Casey and Casey's voiceover.]

CC: But anyone who knows Harley knows the real truth about her loyalty.

[Cut to Casey just before her sparring session, taking a deep breath.]

CC: They say I'm just an airheaded rookie, a ditz, a hanger-on...

[And now to Casey taking down her sparring partners with quick armdrags and hip tosses.]

CC: I'll show you what's to come, with some help from my friends.

[We see the four assembling after their workout, drinking from steel Under Armour water bottles.]

CC: They say we're a disgrace to professional wrestling.

[Harley looks up at the camera, ending Casey's voiceover by speaking aloud.]

HH: We say we're changing the sport for the better.

[And with a grin from Kelly and a shouted "YEAHHHH!" from Cinder, we cut to the Under Armour logo, with the words "we will" underneath. Fade to black...

...and cue the lovely strains of Elgar's "Hope and Glory" as the screen fades in from black to white. We see the barest outline of a silhouette. The shot teases the eye. A voiceover begins.]

"Greetings and salutations... for weeks, we have held the responsibility to herald the arrival of a future superstar to the American Wrestling Alliance...

...Lady Rebecca Falkingham."

[The silhouette becomes sharper and we can see the blurred outline of a female figure in a tricorn hat and braided military coat.

"You have bore witness to her poise on the polo field..."

[The shot cuts to previously shown images of Lady Falkingham scoring on the polo field.]

"You have been honored to witness her mastery of strategy at the chessboard."

[The shot cuts to Lady Falkingham forcing her opponent to lay down his king after she checkmates him with her queen.]

"You have been enlightened with how these skills will translate to the professional wrestling battlefield..."

[The shot moves back to the silhouette. It is clear but blurred. We can make out the black tricorn hat and the red coat, but the woman's face is blurred still.]

"Hark! The unbearable wait has come to an end. There is no more need for further hyperbole.

In seven days, you shall be graced with her arrival.

In London... in her home country of England, you will finally be granted the privilege to cast your gaze upon this devastating English Rose.

The Battle of London will be over before it begins.

It will be well worth the wait."

[The silhouette almost comes into focus before the figure steps backwards and recedes into the white. The white then fades to black.]

"Just keep waiting."

[...and we fade back up on "Superstar" Steve Rogers standing in the backstage area of the Center Stage Studios.]

SSR: Victories are upon us and glory awaits for some as the Royal Crown tournament heads towards a conclusion in one week's time in the land of our ancestors - London, England! The American Hero, Joe Flint, is in the Finals thanks to his victory earlier tonight... Tony Donovan, the blood of brawlers in his veins, is in as well... and now, we just saw-

[Rogers gets interrupted by voices off camera.]

"YOU SAW NOTHING!"

[The camera cuts towards the direction of the voice, where we see Harley Hamilton, Casey Cash, Cinder, and Riley Campbell walking in from the side, cutting Rogers off mid-sentence. Harley strides confidently to the front while Riley is snapping pictures of the trio.

She is wearing a pastel yellow t-shirt that reads "If You Can't Find the Sunshine, Be the Sunshine!" on the front, high-waisted denim shorts, and white platform sneakers with ruffled ankle socks. Her strawberry blonde hair is styled with an abundance of colorful tiny butterfly clips scattered throughout. Around her shoulder, she's rocking the faux AWA World Tag Team champions of the Universe title belt and around her waist, she wears the genuine article, the AWA Women's World Tag title.

Cinder looks like she was bitten by a radioactive Hot Topic employee, with baggy black cargo pants with entirely too many buckles and grommets to be practical, a tight black t-shirt with "E-GIRL MAX" rendered to resemble the title to "Death Note" printed on the front. Her Universe and World Women's tag Team titles are buckled to each other, and she wears them both over her shoulder like a baldric.

Casey has a pair of pink-rimmed heart shaped sunglasses resting on the crown of her head, her loose brown curls flowing freely down to her shoulders. She is wearing an apricot orange Under Armour hoodie, along with Maryland flag-print leggings and black Under Armour sneakers.]

HH: Fraudulent. Illegitimate.

[She sneers.]

HH: LAME!

Those are the only words to describe this so-called...

[Harley raises her fingers into the air to make air quotes. As she does so, Casey and Cinder also raise their fingers to join in on the finger action.]

HH: ..."Royal Crown" tournament. E-Girl MAX was unfairly banned from it for absolutely no reason by that corrupt interim president, Maxim Zharkov! He's not fit to run a lemonade stand, let alone this company! What exactly are his qualifications, huh? Having big bushy eyebrows? Speaking with a bad accent? Well, that might have worked in Los Angeles or Toronto, back in the 1800s, but this is 2018, buster!

SR: Well-

[Rogers attempts to interject, but Casey cuts him off, pointing a finger at him.]

CC: Are you going to try and defend him? Don't even think about it! He's guilty! Do you even know why we're banned from this thing to start with?

[Rogers opens his mouth to say something, but Casey pinches her fingers to her thumb in a sign for him to keep his mouth shut. If Rogers didn't pick up on Casey's message, Casey starts talking again to hammer it home.]

CC: We're banned because Victoria June attacked ME. She started all of this! And not only did she attack me, Zharkov encouraged her to do it personally, then he told her to do the same to Harley and Cindy! You know what that is, you...

[Casey hesitates for a second, then looks at Harley in slight confusion.]

CC: I don't know his name.

HH: It's a man. It doesn't matter.

[Casey firmly nods.]

CC: You random man! That's state-sponsored terrorism! But ohhhhh, everyone wants to blame US. They blame ME for getting attacked. They blame Harley and Cindy for standing up for me! I want to know something... where's the justice in all this? Why am I the one punished when I'm clearly the victim here? Where's my opportunity to go to England and shine, huh? It's rigged! It's all rigged, and you should be disgusted!

[Riley snaps another photo as Casey finishes her outburst.]

HH: That's right!

C: Ah tried to 'ave a wee sit doon wit' Actin' President Bizarre-kov aboot mah Steal th' Spotlight contract. But ah coudnae comprehend a single word oot o' his numpty geggy! Ah'm from the Unitit Kingdom an it's once again unfair tae a young caledonian such a myself that once again we are no given a seat at the table! My mum and dad pay their taxes to Her Majesty, by the way. One call on the telephone to Lizzie Windsor, an' I'll do the entire AWA front office for HIGH TREASON!

HH: You tell'em, Cindy!

SR: Look, I don't want any trouble.

CC: And there won't be any trouble as long as you tell everyone the truth!

[Harley places a calming hand on Casey's shoulder, smoothly retaking control of the conversation.]

HH: Exactly, Casey. But tonight, it's not about that sham of a tournament. Tonight, it's about us proving why we're the real royalty around here. Betty Chang? She got lucky before. Those so-called victories over Casey? Pure flukes! Tonight, we're going to remind Betty and that flapper fossil Charity Rockwell, why they don't belong in the same ring as us.

[Casey steps back in as Riley Campbell positions herself to snap more shots. Each time Casey pauses, Riley clicks away on her camera.]

CC: This time, I don't care about Betty Chang and her stupid illegal karate! Obviously nobody's going to do anything about it! You know what, if she needs it that bad, let her have it!

[Casey juts a finger at Rogers, a determined grin on her face.]

CC: Because you better believe I'm going to let her have a whole lot worse than karate! You mark my words, Reporter Man, with Harley Hamilton by my side as my

partner, and Cindy giving us the moral support we need, there's nothing Betty Chang or Charity Rockwell can do to stop me from leaving with my hand raised in victory!

[Riley captures the moment, her camera almost feeling like part of the promo as it clicks with every breath Casey takes.]

SSR: Speaking of your group... Where's Kelly Kowalski? Last we heard, she was in a pretty heated situation with Ricki Toughill.

[Harley gives a brief uncertain look, her confident smirk faltering slightly.]

HH: Kelly... well, I warned her not to take things too far with Ricki. But she just won't listen to anyone right now! Kelly can't be reasoned with at the moment, but she's... her own person, and if she chooses to go down that path with Ricki, then so be it.

C: Aye, my wicked step-mummy can be rather abusive, but Our Kelly can handle herself', Harlz.

[Casey frowns momentarily but quickly shakes it off as Harley recovers her usual smirk.]

HH: As for us, the focus is on Betty and Charity tonight. Kelly will do what she has to, but tonight, the real show is in that ring when we prove why we're the stars of the Women's Division and the top of the AWA!

[Harley signals for the group to leave. Casey gives a final nod as Riley snaps one last picture, and Cinder follows them out of frame. Rogers is left standing there awkwardly, trying to process everything that just happened.]

SSR: Well, there you have it, folks... tonight's match is shaping up to be an intense one! Stay tuned for that later tonight... hmm? Now, you say? Oh... well... oh.

[Rogers looks flustered as he grins broadly at the camera...

...and we fade to another part of the backstage area where we see Mariah Wolfe standing by with Betty Chang and Charity Rockwell. Betty looks visibly agitated, her frustration palpable. Charity Rockwell, ever the epitome of flapper style and grace, stands beside her, calm and composed.]

MW: Betty, Charity, thanks for joining me. First off, Betty, I have to ask, with Yoshi Fujiwara suffering yet another brutal attack from The Kabukicho Assassination Maniac Squad earlier tonight, do you think that's affecting your focus going into your match against Harley Hamilton and Casey Cash?

[Betty does her best to show indifference and utterly fails.]

BC: Why would that affect my focus, Mariah? It's not like I care if Cain Jackson ruined his beautiful face! If he's laid up in a hospital again, maybe Kimmy Bailey can take care of him! It's not like I'm losing sleep over it or anything!

[Betty's attempt at acting indifferent is undermined by her nervous and frustrated demeanor. She crosses her arms and looks away, trying her best to be nonchalant.]

MW: It sounds like you might be a little more affected than you're letting on.

[Betty stares at her shoes, unable to even look Mariah in the eye.]

BC: I-I have no idea what you mean!

MW: Right. But let's focus on your upcoming match. You and Charity are set to face Harley Hamilton and Casey Cash tonight. What's your strategy for dealing with them?

[Charity steps forward, placing a reassuring hand on Betty's shoulder, as the fun-sized martial artist is still lost in her own thoughts.]

CR: Well, hon, let me assure you, our strategy is as slicker than a Charleston two-step. We'll be bringing a whole lot of flair and focus to that ring. Harley Hamilton and Casey Cash might think they can waltz in and sweep us off our feet, but a couple of showcase sharpshooters like us got other plans.

[Still visibly irked, but slightly calmed by Charity's presence, Betty nods in agreement.]

BC: Yeah, Casey Cash has been a real pain in the butt, calling my karate "illegal" and running away every time things get tough. And Harley... well, she's just so full of herself! She thinks she can force herself into something that isn't even any of her business and make fools out of us, but she's got another thing coming to her. We're no pushovers! We're a whole lot tougher than she thinks!

CR: You got that right Betty.

MW: Speaking of Harley Hamilton, she's the wildcard in all this. As one-half of the World Tag Team Champions, she's quite the step up in competition compared to Casey Cash. How do you plan on dealing with her?

BC: Well, we've been working on that. Harley might a step up in competition compared to Casey, maybe even two or three steps, but we've come up with something that-

[Charity cuts Betty off.]

CR: Loose lips sink ships, Bets. You might wanna keep that bullet in the chamber.

[Betty nods and makes a motion, zipping her lips. Wolfe raises an eyebrow.]

MW: What's this all about?

[Charity smirks and primps her hair.]

CR: Oh, lets just say we've learned the steps to give Harley Hamilton a dance she won't soon forget.

MW: Interesting.

[Charity grins big, giving Mariah a wink.]

CR: I always am, darling.

MW: Sounds like you two are ready to put on a show. Best of luck in your match!

BC: Oh, we'll be ready. Harley and Casey won't know what hit 'em!

CR: We're ready to razzle, dazzle and defeat those low lid dumb Doras, Mariah. And that's no bull!

[And with that, Charity saunters off camera, with Betty following close behind her as we fade out to the ring where Megumi Sato is standing.]

LD: Harley's experience is really showing here. Betty needs to find a way to use her speed and agility and of course... those deadly martial art strikes.

BW: Illegal martial art strikes.

LD: Don't you start.

[Hamilton pulls Chang out of the corner and grabs her into a tight headlock, before snapping her over onto the canvas and wrenching on it tightly.]

LD: Hamilton's not letting up. Those shoulder blocks were brutal and now she's got her grounded on the canvas, taking away Chang's greatest strengths.

BW: The experience and dare I say, the talent gap between these two is off the charts. Harley Hamilton is toying with Betty Chang, honestly.

[Chang struggles and manages to get her foot on the ropes, breaking the hold. However, just as the hold is broken, Hamilton rushes back in and floors her with a forearm smash!]

BW: Hamilton's not giving Chang any room to breathe. Smart strategy.

LD: Betty's got to find an opening here. She can't just let Harley maul her like this.

[Harley pulls Betty up and whips her into the corner, following up with a running clothesline. Chang slumps down, as Hamilton blows multiple kisses at a beaming Cinder who returns the blown kisses in kind, much to the chagrin of the crowd.]

LD: Hamilton's relentless and Chang's in a bad spot.

BW: This is what makes Harley Hamilton so dangerous. She's methodical and ruthless.

[The Kansas City native lifts Chang from the canvas and sets her up for a vertical suplex out of the corner. However, Betty manages to slip out and land behind her. The karate black belt quickly hits Harley with a series of rapid kicks to the legs and midsection, trying to wear her down.]

LD: Betty's fighting back! Those kicks are lightning fast!

BW: She's got to keep moving. Hamilton's too big and too strong to go toe-to-toe with.

[Stunning Harley with a thudding kick to the chest, Chang runs to the ropes and springboards off, but her attempt at a twisting roundhouse kick fails, as Hamilton knocks her out of the air with a big standing dropsault!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: OH MY GOSH! WHAT A COUNTER FROM HARLEY HAMILTON!

[Harley lays on the canvas for a second, before rolling onto her back and leaping onto her feet with a kip-up. She turns to Casey Cash with a big grin, as Casey hoots and hollers, screaming "YAAAAAAY HARLEY!" Hamilton tosses her hair and screams loud enough for every one to hear...]

"IT'S JUST TOO EASY!"

[Visibly pleased with herself, Harley Hamilton stands over Betty Chang, who is struggling to regain her footing. With a smirk, Hamilton strides over to Chang and grabs her from behind by the hair, pulling her up roughly and pulling her close to her face. Harley's face is a mixture of arrogance and menace.]

"Your karate is a joke! There's nothing you've got that I can't counter!"

[Just as Harley finishes her taunt, Betty, with surprising agility, executes a high kick over her shoulder. The kick connects sharply with Harley's face, stunning her and causing her to stumble back.]

LD: OH! Betty Chang surprises Harley with that one! What incredible flexibility!

BW: WHAT THE HECK WAS THAT?!

[With Hamilton momentarily dazed, Chang seizes the opportunity. She dashes toward the ropes and springs off the second rope, flipping through the air, and delivers a spectacular flipping kick that crashes down onto Harley's head. Harley falls face-first to the mat, seemingly knocked out by the force of the kick. A shocked Casey Cash reaches out, grabbing her partner by the hand and asking frantically if she's okay, as Shari Miranda signals that a tag has been made.]

"Wait! Wait! I didn't tag in!"

[Harley Hamilton somehow manages to roll out of the ring, dazed and barely conscious, as Cinder immediately rushes to her side.]

LD: Harley Hamilton's down outside the ring, and Cinder's right there to tend to her. It looks like Casey Cash is going to have to go at this on her own!

BW: It's Zharkov's fault for letting Betty Chang get away with an illegal fighting style! Look at the damage it's caused!

LD: Please be serious.

[Casey, looking nervously at Betty Chang waiting for her inside the ring, turns to Cinder.]

"Cindy, what do I do???"

[Cinder shakes her head, pumping a fist at her ally.]

"Yer gonna' hav'ta fight on yer own, Casey!"

[Casey looks to Cinder, then back to the ring, and grimly nods, yelling "OKAY!" as she steps through the ropes, ready to face Betty.]

LD: It looks like Casey Cash is stepping up! This is her chance to prove herself. And believe me, she's got a lot to prove after all those embarrassing losses to Betty Chang.

BW: They weren't embarrassing.

LD: She's run away in complete fear twice!

BW: Tactical retreats. From illegal karate.

LD: It's not illegal!

[Casey and Betty circle each other, with Chang snapping out some kicks at Cash from a distance to intimidate her, before they lock up in the center of the ring. Casey Cash surprises everyone by taking Betty Chang down with a quick arm drag. Betty gets up, only to be met with another arm drag.]

LD: Some surprising offense here out of Casey Cash... and look at this! Big slam by Cash!

[Chang gets up again but is promptly run down with a clothesline, sending her falling back into her corner as a jubilant Casey Cash jumps up and down, excited at her burst of offense.]

"DID YOU SEE THAT HARLEY!?"

[Cinder throws a look at her ally.]

"Shay can't hear ye, Casey!"

[Casey gives a small pout, before turning her attention back to the task at hand.]

LD: Casey Cash is showing some real improvement there! That's the most offense I've ever seen her get on Betty Chang!

BW: Maybe it's time you admit Harley Hamilton and the rest of E-Girl MAX been a good influence on her after all.

LD: Maybe you should mind your own business.

[Charity Rockwell tags in and steps into the ring, much to Casey's dismay.]

LD: And here comes Casey Cash's former high school classmate, Charity Rockwell. There's no love lost between these two!

BW: You mean Casey's old bully.

LD: I've spoken with Charity Rockwell many times and she's been nothing but a sweetheart.

BW: That's not how I hear it. Riley Campbell - a highly respected journalist by the way - went to the same high school as the both of them and she told me the whole story!

LD: She runs a Twitter account for Under Armour and is an E-Girl MAX propagandist, Ben. I would hardly call her a highly respected journalist.

BW: Fake news!

[Charity immediately goes on the offensive, ducking under a wild swing from Cash and hitting the ropes, catching Casey first with a spinning headscissors and then snapping her over with a rana, leaving Casey reeling!]

LD: Charity's on fire!

BW: Casey Cash has GOT to find a way to slow Charity Rockwell down. Her and Betty Chang are both speedy, but Rockwell is just about Cash's size. That combination of size and speed can be deadly.

[Pumping her fists with excitement, Charity whips Casey into the ropes. However, she ducks her head too soon for a backdrop and Cash catches her off guard, grabbing her head in a front facelock. She then hits Rockwell with a spinning neckbreaker, leaving the both of them laying on the canvas.]

LD: That neckbreaker bought Casey Cash some time, but can she follow it up?

BW: She's putting up a fight! She's proving that she can hang against The Flapper Doodles, even if Harley Hamilton's out of commission. And by the way, you're over there hating on the International Date Machines name, Dane, but you've got no problem at all with the Flapper Doodles?!

[Dane chuckles as the camera cuts to Harley Hamilton, still laying on the outside of the ring, as Cinder waves a towel at her unconscious form.]

LD: But can Casey Cash keep this up? I really don't think Harley is going to be coming back any time soon after that kick from Betty Chang knocked her senseless.

[Rockwell manages to crawl over to her corner and tag Betty Chang back in. Betty strikes Casey with a hard kick from her left leg to Casey's thigh, a snapping kick from her right leg to Casey's back, a snapping kick from her left leg to Casey's midsection...]

LD: The feet are flying in Hotlanta!

[...and then she attempts to end the flourish with a spinning hook kick to the head, but The Charm City Cutie manages to catch Chang by the leg and execute a Dragon Screw legwhip!]

LD: A Dragon Screw stops Betty Chang dead in her tracks! Casey Cash is showing some real resilience here.

BW: I think with her back to the wall, she's showing us what she's really made of.

[Getting to her feet first, Casey tries to press her advantage...]

"KI-YAAAAAH!"

[...only to be felled by a punch to the midsection from Betty Chang that knocks all the wind out of her!]

LD: There's that trademark strike to solar plexus from Betty Chang and it looks like all the fight just left Casey Cash's body.

BW: I've been hit by that same shot during my time in MMA and in the ring and let me tell you, getting hit right there just paralyzes you. You're struggling just to breathe!

[As Casey lays crumpled on the canvas clutching her sides in agony, Betty and Charity exchange a determined glance and nod at each other. Betty tags Charity in and they stand Casey up.]

LD: Wait, what are Betty and Charity doing?

BW: I think I know! I heard they were working on this move for a while now. They call it The Fancy Shindig!

[With precision and practiced coordination, Charity performs a leg sweep, as Betty leaps into the air and catches Casey in the jaw with a powerful spinning kick. Casey is caught by both kicks simultaneously, collapsing to the canvas with a thud, as the crowd gasps with shock!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!"

BW: There it is! The Fancy Shindig!

LD: That move would knock out anybody! That has to be it for Casey Cash!

[However, before Charity Rockwell can even drop down to make the pin, she's suddenly clobbered from behind by a furious Harley Hamilton!]

LD: WAIT! HARLEY HAMILTON HAS COME ROARING BACK TO LIFE!

BW: I thought she was done for!

[Harley turns and boots a surprised Betty Chang in the gut, doubling her over before grabbing her by the head and dropping her with The Hot Girl Stunner!]

LD: THE HOT GIRL STUNNER!

[As Betty hits the mat, Harley immediately is on top of her, pounding away at her with rapid, forceful elbows.]

BW: And look at this! Harley's all over Betty Chang! She is NOT happy about getting knocked out!

LD: Someone needs to stop her! Betty Chang won't be able to take much more of this!

[As Harley continues to pound away on Betty, a dazed Charity Rockwell gets back to her feet and stumbles toward Hamilton. Charity wraps her arm around Harley's throat, trying to pull her off Betty Chang...]

LD: Rockwell's trying to save her partner from a fired-up Harley Hamilton and- OHHHH!

[...and Lori and the fans react as Hamilton buries a knee in the midsection of Rockwell, dropping her as well...]

LD: Another Hot Girl Stunner! This is chaos! Harley Hamilton's lost it!

BW: She's going to town on both of The Flapper Doodles!

[Shari Miranda approaches, trying to separate Harley Hamilton from Betty Chang who Hamilton is pounding once again. She grabs Harley by the shoulder, attempting to pull her away...]

LD: Shari Miranda trying to regain some control of this one and- OH!

[Harley shoves the referee aside with a forceful push, knocking her down on her butt on the canvas before turning her attention back to Betty Chang. Left with no other choice, Shari Miranda immediately signals for the bell.]

"DING! DING! DING!"

LD: The referee's calling for the bell. It's a disqualification, but Harley Hamilton doesn't care!

[A slightly dazed Casey Cash and Cinder finally pull Harley away from the ring as the crowd boos loudly.]

LD: What a match! Betty Chang and Charity Rockwell are going to win this one by disqualification, but they hardly look like winners at the moment. The International Date Machines may have won the battle, but this war is far from over!

[The ringside doctor tends to Betty Chang and Charity Rockwell, who are both recovering from Harley Hamilton's crazed attack. The camera cuts to E-Girl MAX retreating to the back, as the crowd continues to boo...]

LD: The Women's Division continues to be the hottest division in wrestling as the Flapper Doodles pick up the victory... and you have to imagine that may get them some notice from the Championship Committee when it comes time to rank the top contenders to Hamilton and Cinder this weekend... and speaking of the Women's Division, we are NOT done spotlighting it here tonight... isn't that right, "Superstar?"

[...and we fade to another part of the backstage area where we find former EMWC Universal Champion Steve Rogers standing.]

SSR: "Superstar" Steve Rogers back with you, and I gotta be honest, I was having some serious flashbacks back at SuperClash when I saw you in the ring...

[Enter Ricki Toughill, taping up her wrists, her short silvery hair combed back over her scalp. She pops the pink bubble and churns her gum back into her grinning, crooked mouth.]

SSR: ...I mean, surely I was not expecting to see the Bloody Idol O' Millions in the ring twenty years later.

RT: Well, you and I probably have the same problem, Superstar – I'm a little hard of hearing too. Of course that was from a C4 explosion that cost me 25% of my hearing. See, I'm the Bloody Idol O'... Dozens. Just like that meme everyone misheard...

SSR: "Poor Ricki," right?

RT: Nah, nah. I think that was the Mandela effect: it wasn't "Poor Ricki." It was, "More Ricki." That was what The Dozens were saying. They were saying, "More Ricki!"

SSR: But you must have heard Kelly Kowalski earlier tonight try to call you out.

RT: You could say my ears were burning.

SSR: Just like that C4 explosion.

RT: Exactly. But as our President said, my dance card is otherwise occupied tonight with Ayako Fujiwara. Kowalski, you had your shot at me last week in Kansas City and you couldn't get the job done.

I know it's big. I know it's tempting.

[Toughill points to her own wide posterior.]

RT: But I only have so much butt to be kicked at any one time. You'll have to wait your turn, Kelly. Wait in the green room for a couple of weeks, cool off, maybe have Casey, Harley and Cinder make some friendship bracelets for you... I will get to you when I get to you.

Tonight, I have to focus on Ayako. We've been in the ring together before, she and I. And... I've been flung across the same ring a few times by her too. She and I, we've earned some accolades outside the AWA – a trophy here, a medal there. But... no gold for either of us. Going to London and winning the Crown next week would go a long way to silence those little nagging voices in the back of our heads, wouldn't it?

I know stepping into that ring that Ayako can toss me around like a sack of potatoes and rip and tear at my arms until I feel like the Venus Di Milo, just in time for the European tour. But has she ever faced an opponent who can take every shot that she dishes out... and gets back up?!

I know you're going to be at ringside, Kimmy, so I will politely ask you to send along a message to your mother... The same message I am sending to everyone who will facing me in the Royal Crown: that Mr. and Mrs. Toughill's Little Princess is coming for her tiara!

[Ricki shoots the camera an EVG-esque grin that seems to send shivers down the spine of Steve Rogers before exiting stage right.]

SSR: There you have it, AWA fans... Ricki Toughill's loins are girded for battle and-

[A loud shout and clatter is heard off-camera.]

SSR: -what in the world?!

[And the camera rapidly pivots to find Ricki Toughill down on the ground in the hallway, courtesy of a badly-dented trash can to the skull that Kelly Kowalski is holding in her hands...

She lifts it over her head again, swinging it down across the hip of Toughill who raises an arm, trying to shield herself.]

"Don't have time for me, huh?! Make some time!"

[Kowalski smashes the can down on the raised arm of Toughill, causing her to cry out as she yanks her hand back like she's been burned.]

"You're worried about Fujiwara? About the Royal Crown? Worry about me!"

[And the can comes down again, this time on the shoulder of Toughill who rolls to all fours, trying to get to her feet as Kowalski raises the can again...

...and with a grunt of effort, Toughill pushes up, wrapping her arms around Kowalski's torso and DRIVES her back into the wall of the Center Stage Studios backstage area! The crowd inside the arena watching the action groans along with Kowalski who drops the dented can down on the floor as Toughill grabs her by the hair, raining wild blows into the head!]

"YOU WANT A FIGHT, HUH?! YOU GOT IT NOW, GIRLIE!"

[A knee swung up into the gut sees Kowalski double over as Toughill grabs a handful of pants and...]

"THUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUD!"

[...propels Kowalski chestfirst into the opposite wall, causing her to groan in pain and slide down onto the floor, sitting down and leaning against the wall as Toughill scoops up the dented trash can...]

"Hold this for me, will ya?"

[...and Toughill tucks the dented can up against the face of Kowalski, wrapping her arms around it so it's held in place as Ricki steps back, takes aim...]

"CRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAASH!"

[...and KICKS the can into Kowalski's face! Toughill leans heavy against the wall, breathing hard as some shouts are heard off-camera. Toughill raises her arms, backing away from the downed Kowalski...]

"It's over, John Boy. It's over."

[We see AWA backstage official John Shock arrive on the scene, shouting at Toughill to "get back! Get away from her!" Toughill nods, her arms still raised as she walks away, leaving the officials to deal with Kowalski as Shock shouts "GET THE DOCTOR!"...]

...and we fade to black...

...and fade back up as the quintessential American family of four walks up and down the snack aisle of Anyplace grocery store in Anytown USA. The father wears khaki dockers and a golf shirt that would make him look like a State Farm agent if it weren't navy. The wife is in jeans and a quilted jacket. Her curly hair drops a little bit. The kids, a daughter and a son, trudge along behind them, seemingly on the verge of a meltdown tantrum. The mother searches the snack aisles, picking up chips, candies, candy bars. She sighs in exasperation.]

M: Kids, I know you're hungry. But none of this stuff is right. It so bland. It isn't

[Suddenly, the racks of candies fly apart and Shadoe Rage bursts onto the scene dressed in fuchsia and gold. He holds up two handful of jerky sticks.]

SR: Wanna feel Sensational? Tired of bland cured meats? Tear into Mr. Berkeley's Turkey Jerky!

[Rage tears a chunk of jerky from the pack in his hand. The sound reverberates through the screen. The family is suddenly transformed and energized into hip looking versions of themselves.]

SR: The signature herbs and spices! The smoky flavor! The lean turkey jerky! It's the perfect snack!

[Rage hands out the packs of jerky.]

SR: Ohhhh man, that's good. When I get my hands on Mr. Berkeley's Turkey Jerky, I feel SENSATIONAL!

[Rage tears into another bite along with the family. Everybody seems even more amped as Rage turns towards the camera.]

SR: And so will you.

So will you!

SO WILL YOU!

TEAR INTO IT!

MR. BERKELEY'S TURKEY JERKY... IT'S SENSATIONAL!

[Rage savages the remaining piece of jerky before he stares straight into the camera, smiling as we fade to black...]

...and as we come back to live action, there's quite the commotion going on as we see officials and security rushing past Sweet Lou Blackwell.]

SLB: Welcome... jeez! What the heck is going on here tonight?!

[Blackwell joins the jog off-camera, his cameraman following behind him.]

SLB: We're trying to find out... something has happened...

[And as we round the corner of a hallway, we see a circle of officials as Tommy Fierro is shouting "GET PONAIVITCH!"]

SLB: We've got someone down here backstage... Ponavitch is over with Kelly Kowalski, Tommy!

[Fierro shakes his head, looking anxious with a "GO FIND ONE OF HIS MEDICS!"]

SLB: Kowalski is down on one side of the building - we saw that before the break and... excuse me! Trying to make some TV happen here... please clear a path...

[And an insistent Blackwell pushes his way through the crowd before...]

SLB: ...oh no.

[...the camera reveals David Layton and "Cowboy Casanova" Billy Givens laid out on the floor, a cracked piece of wood by Layton's head.]

SLB: The Aces In The Hole. We heard from them earlier, putting out a challenge for The Bishops for two weeks from tonight. Who could've done such a-

[And a voice comes from off-camera.]

"We did it."

[The camera pivots and zooms to show the collective known as Generation Lost standing nearby. Justin Gaines backs the group, towering over all with a cold expression on his face. A smirking Jayden Jericho is in front with the Wallace twins flanking him.]

CHAZ: That's right, Blackwell. We did it... and we ain't ashamed to admit it.

[Blackwell looks at him incredulously.]

SLB: What?! Why?! You could be fined! You could be suspended!

[Chet waves a dismissive hand.]

CHET: We could be put on TV because the suits know that when Gen Lost shows up, the ratings go up and whatever show we're on becomes the #1 trend in the world, baby. And these two...

[He gestures to the downed Aces.]

CHET: ...they got in our way two weeks ago, yeah? Not so tough now, are they?

SLB: They got in your way?! You were having a match with them and you had your... friends there... interfere!

[Chet chuckles, throwing a glance at Justin Gaines.]

CHET: It's called having your brothers' backs... something my dear sister could learn a little bit about.

[Jericho nudges Chet.]

JJ: That's enough of chatting with this clown. Let's go tell the people what they need to know.

[Chet nods as the quartet turns away from Blackwell, heading down the corridor, leaving the chaotic scene they caused behind them. The cameraman pursues, following them from behind as Gaines, Jericho, and the American Idols travel through the snaking hallways of Center Stage Studios...

...and finally emerge into the Chimpanzee Position where Interim President Zharkov is glaring at them, clipboard in hand.]

JJ: Don't mind us, boss man... just want to give the people a thrill.

[And they walk right past a fuming Tsar, emerging through the curtain - with the camera still following them - out onto the entrance stage to jeers as "Wins & Losses" by Meek Mill rings out over the PA system. The Idols are diggin' their new entrance music, rapping along with the tune as Jayden Jericho teases slapping a few hands only to pull his arm back with a smirk. The big man trails behind, keeping his eyes open and his head on a swivel for any Generation Lost foes.]

LD: Well, with all the chaos we've seen tonight, you might as well toss the format out the window, fans... because we were NOT scheduled to hear from these four tonight to the best of my knowledge.

BW: I like this attitude though, Dane. Gen Lost does what they want to do and be damned the opinions of anyone who doesn't like it!

LD: They attacked the Aces In The Hole backstage! Unprovoked!

BW: Again with the unprovoked nonsense. They had unsettled issues from two weeks ago... and don't look now but I think they just settled it.

LD: We'll see about that... but as Jericho, Gaines, and the Idols hit the ring, it looks like they've got something to say...

[Inside the ring, the Idols distribute mics to their allies before taking center stage.]

CHAZ: Now, it's SHOOOOOOWTIIIIIME!

[The fans jeer the chuckling Chaz Wallace as Chet takes his spot.]

CHET: The people of Atlanta are in for a treat. Don't worry... you'll get your Royal Crown match with Toughill and Fujiwara soon enough but before that, we wanted to make sure you people were aware there were TRUE stars in the building tonight.

CHAZ: True stars that the AWA were depriving you from seeing.

CHET: Turns out they weren't exactly big fans of the last time Gen Lost was in action so we got ourselves a little unofficial punishment... but it was you - the people - who truly got punished.

[Chaz holds up a finger.]

CHAZ: Left off National Wrestling Night!

CHET: Criminal.

CHAZ: Left off Showtime - the show we BUILT!

CHET: Tragic.

CHAZ: Left off The Battle of London too!

CHET: Can you Adam and Eve it?!

CHAZ: But Generation Lost is not about to be ignored! Generation Lost is not about to be denied! Generation Lost - as you should know by now - does what we want...

CHET: ...when we want...

CHAZ: ...and there ain't a soul who can stop us. Tell 'em, Jayden.

[The crowd jeers the arrogant (and annoying) Wallace twins as the Son of the Playboy grabs the stick...]

JJ: They call this place "Hotlanta..."

[The crowd cheers!]

JJ: But without Generation Lost on the show, this building is cold as ice if you ask me. Have no fear though because the future of this business has arrived in true style. Those two bums back there? Layton and Givens?

[Jericho scoffs.]

JJ: They honestly thought they were going to get away with what they pulled on my boys?

[He drapes his arms around the Wallaces' shoulders.]

JJ: That's not the way Gen Lost does things. You step to one of us and you step to all of us... and you best not do that unless you fancy a hospital stay... right, big man?

[Justin Gaines steps forward with a nod.]

JG: You can add those two to the list... right alongside that chair-swinging freak Hannibal Carver. We took him out. We took them out. And so it goes for anyone who gets in our way. I hear that Russian dictator Zharkov backstage talking about the tag team division... talking about the Aces taking on the Bishops?

[Gaines shakes his head.]

JG: What he should be talking about is the American Idols, the best thing going in tag team wrestling today.

[Chet Wallace grins.]

JG: What he should be talking about is putting the Idols in that match, making it a three way dance, and watching as my brothers put a world class beating on the Flashes In The Pan and the Latest Nostalgia Act and show the world why they deserve a crack at Harper and Somers and those tag team titles.

[Jericho leans in.]

JJ: That's right... and if those other freaks that Fawcett leads around by the nose want to stick their-

[The crowd ROARS as “those other freaks” emerge from the backstage area, fire in their eyes...]

LD: You were saying?

[...and at an unspoken signal, Porter Crowley and The Lost Boy come charging down the staircase towards the ring...]

LD: The Fawcett Family has arrived in Atlanta!

BW: No Fawcett though... no Hannigan either... and these two moronic monsters are running right into a numbers disadvantage!

[Crowley is the first one in, coming to his feet...]

“WHAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!”

[...and gets superkicked by Chaz Wallace, sending him stumbling back towards the ropes as The Lost Boy comes in, lunging at the nearest set of legs...]

...and SINKING his teeth into the calf of Jayden Jericho who cries out as The Lost Boy starts gnawing!]

BW: HE’S BITING HIM!

LD: It’s not the first time we’ve seen The Lost Boy get a little feral in there and...

[Justin Gaines buries a kick into the ribs of the Lost Boy, trying to break up chowtime as Chet Wallace lands a superkick of his own on Crowley.]

LD: ...Generation Lost using the numbers edge to their advantage, working over both members of the Fawcett Family...

[A few more kicks land on the ribs of The Lost Boy before Gaines drags him up by the topknot, pushing him back against the ropes as Jayden Jericho, red in the face, gets to his feet and gets up into the Lost Boy’s face...]

“You’re gonna pay for that, you rabid little freak!”

[The Idols bring Crowley over near his partner, the Wallace whipping him across as Gaines and Jericho do the same to The Lost Boy...]

BW: Quadruple whip!

[...but the Fawcett Family runs right through a pair of double clothesline attempts, hitting the far ropes behind...]

LD: The Fawcett Family on the move annnnnnnnd...

“OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!”

[...and the crowd ROARS as both men leap into the air, connecting with a double clothesline on each, putting all of Gen Lost down on the mat!]

LD: THEY WIPED ‘EM OUT! What a move out of the Fawcett Family to totally turn this thing around, fans!

[Crowley and The Lost Boy rise to their feet, soaking up the surprising cheers of the Georgia fans as they look to keep up the attack...]

LD: Crowley grabs Wallace and... HE'S BITING HIM!

[The Lost Boy grabs Chet Wallace... and sinks his teeth into the forehead as well!]

LD: STEREO BITING!

[But Jayden Jericho quickly breaks it, swinging his arm up into the groin of The Lost Boy!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[The Lost Boy crumples to his knees on the mat as Justin Gaines yanks Crowley off of Chaz Wallace, turning him into a standing lariat!]

LD: Ohhh! What a shot from Justin Gaines!

[The crowd's cheers turn to jeers as Gaines and Chaz start stomping Crowley as Jericho and Chet take turns pummeling the kneeling Lost Boy.]

LD: And there's that four on two advantage come to play. The Fawcett Family rushed into this fight and-

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"

[A superkick to the kneeling Lost Boy for Chet snaps his head back...]

LD: -OHH! SUPERKICK BY CHET WALLACE!

[...and with a shuffle of his feet...]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"

LD: AND JERICO LANDS ONE AS WELL! THE LOST BOY IS OUT ON HIS KNEES!

[And with a nudge, the duo steps in in tandem...]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"

LD: DOUBLE SUPERKICK LAYS OUT THE LOST BOOOOY!

[Pulling the downed Crowley off the mat, Justin Gaines muscles him up into the air...]

LD: CHOOOOOKESLAAAAAAM!

BW: Nah, nah, nah... that's the GRIZZLY SLAM! Right out of the old man's arsenal!

[The near-300 pound Gaines steps backwards, giving room as Chaz grabs Chet, lifting him into the air for a back suplex...]

...and leaps with him, dropping a whole lotta legs down on Crowley!]

LD: The Idols with a doubleteam!

[And as they were doing that, Jayden Jericho was scaling the turnbuckles, taking aim...]

LD: OFF THE TOOOOOP!

[...and drops a devastating legdrop of his own across the neck of the downed Lost Boy!]

“OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!”

BW: Look at that high flying skill! Look at the athleticism! Look at the impact!

[And with both members of the Fawcett Family laid out on the canvas, Jericho gets up to join Gaines and the Wallaces, standing over their broken bodies with their arms aloft...]

BW: Look! At Generation Lost, Dane!

LD: I see 'em, I see 'em.

[The crowd is letting them have it, raining down boos on the foursome as they celebrate their brutal beatdown...]

LD: And after that, you might need to add Porter Crowley and The Lost Boy to their list of people put on the shelf, Ben.

BW: Absolutely.

LD: Fans, we need to get some medical help out here, I believe... and in the meantime, let's go to some pre-recorded footage and hear from the other member of tonight's final first round women's Royal Crown matchup - the Olympic gold medalist, Ayako Fujiwara!

[The scene opens backstage with Ayako Fujiwara standing confidently. Behind her, the faint sounds of Kimmy Bailey and Molly Bell playing around fills the background. Ayako is dressed in a ripped, denim jacket worn over a red asymmetrical strap crop top with a corset-like front tied together with black string. She pairs the top with sleek, middle-waist black motorcycle pants adorned with rivets running up and down the legs. Ayako's gaze is focused and intense as she addresses the camera.]

Ayako: I heard earlier tonight that Ben Waterson was questioning my killer instinct. It's funny how time and time again, people mistake my kindness for weakness. But when it comes to me? It couldn't be further from the truth.

[She steps forward, her voice gaining a sharper edge.]

Ayako: A lioness shouldn't concern herself with the opinions of sheep, but let me be clear about something: whenever I bare my teeth, the AWA is woefully unprepared. Was anyone questioning my killer instinct last year when I ran through Margarita Flores and Skylar Swift? I left them both cracked and broken right before SuperClash. There were no questions then, right?

[She pauses, letting the weight of her words sink in as Kimmy Bailey giggles in the background at Molly pouncing on her, completely unaware of Ayako's words.]

Ayako: And Trish Wallace, the woman who now supposedly possesses the killer instinct that I lack... did anyone wonder where she was when Michelle Bailey kept her out of my reach and took her place in the very same match where I laid waste to Flores and Swift? Michelle knew, just like everyone else does, that once I set my sights on someone, there's nothing but devastation in my wake. Michelle is the kindest person I know... but she wasn't protecting Trish Wallace out of compassion —she was afraid of what I'd do to her.

[She tilts her head, eyes narrowing slightly, as she takes a step forward.]

Ayako: And let's not forget about SuperClash, when I gave Laura Davis exactly what she deserved. I didn't hesitate, I didn't falter. I struck her down with swift vengeance. Was anyone questioning me then? No.

[Ayako smirks, a flicker of satisfaction in her eyes as the memory of delivering a Kapenkina to Laura Davis plays in her head before she continues.]

Ayako: And what about Kurayami? The woman who cost me the AWA Women's World Heavyweight title. The same beast who ruled the AWA Women's Division for an entire year. The monster who once broke Ricki Toughill's back. After SuperClash, I tracked her down in Japan, faced her at The Empress Cup, and not only did I defeat her, but I shattered her spirit so completely that she refused to return to the AWA. Was my killer instinct lacking then?

[Ayako's smirk widens, a flicker of satisfaction in her eyes as she continues.]

Ayako: Tonight... will anyone dare question my killer instinct when Ricki Toughill takes on the full brunt of my ferocity? When Ricki receives the same "kindness" I have shown all my opponents who came before her?

No.

Because when the dust settles, they will not have to wonder anymore. They'll have their answer.

[Suddenly, Molly Bell, bounces over to her. Ayako, without breaking her gaze at the camera, crouches down slightly and absentmindedly pets Molly's head. Molly purrs contentedly, curling up beside her.]

Ayako: My kindness does not make me weak.

[She leans in slightly, her voice dropping to a near whisper, though it drips with menace.]

Ayako: It makes me DANGEROUS.

[With that, Ayako straightens back up, leaving Molly and Kimmy Bailey behind and walks off with a quiet intensity as the camera fades...

...out to the ring where Megumi Sato is standing.]

MS: The following contest is set for one fall with a twenty minute time limit and is the FINAL First Round match in the Women's Royal Crown Tournament! The winner of this one will move on to The Battle of London next weekend and the four way final match!

[The crowd cheers that!]

MS: Introducing first...

["The Cyborg Fights" by Makoto Miyazaki begins to play as the Atlanta crowd rises to their feet with cheers. The roar grows even larger once the crowd sees Ayako Fujiwara emerging from behind the curtains, dressed in the same attire we saw her in moments ago in pre-taped footage. She stops at the top of the aisle and lowers her head momentarily to soak in the crowd's reaction, before throwing her arms back and letting loose a loud roar.]

MS: From Fujinomiya, Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan... weighing in at 73 Kilograms... she is a former Olympic Gold Medalist...

AYAAAAAAAAAAKOOOOOOOOOOOOOO FUJIWARRRRRRRAAAAAAAAAA!

[Stopping as she reaches the ring, Ayako grabs the edge of the apron with both hands and bows deeply, before sliding in under the bottom rope. As she pops up to her feet, Ayako lifts her arms into the air to more cheers from the Showtime crowd.]

LD: There she is, Ben. Olympic gold medalist. One of the best in the world inside that ring.

BW: No doubt about that... and it sounds like I struck a nerve earlier. Well, good! Let's see what she's capable of 'cause I think I might like her when she's angry.

LD: And perhaps a sign of how serious she's taking this match that we see no sign of her friends out here with her. She's all business in there, fans.

[Fujiwara settles back into the corner, waiting as her music fades.]

MS: Annnnnnnnd her opponent...

"ALL MY LIFE I WANTED TO BE SOMEBODY AND NOW HERE I AM!"

[The roar of Suzi Quatro brings the arena to life. A tomboyish-looking woman with a messy undercut combover bursts her way through the curtain exuberantly. Ricki Toughill makes her way down the aisle, pumping her fist up in salute over her head to "The Wild One (Single Version)."]

MS: ...from Rochester, New York... weighing 160 pounds...

...RIIIIIIIIIICKIIIIIIIIIIIIII TOOOOOOOOOOOOUGHILLLLLLLLLLL!

[Ricki Toughill rolls into the ring under the ropes, and props herself up on the middle rope. She looks like a wayward schoolgirl: a tattered dress shirt and loose necktie cover a plaid kilt with a corseted tank top, with ripped black fishnets and a pair of well-loved Converse high tops. Most prominent among her half-dozen tattoos is the large octopus occupying her right shoulder. She backs into the corner, does a few squats and lunges, and blows another pink bubble as she stares across the ring at a waiting Fujiwara.]

LD: Ricki Toughill wasting no time heading down here... and on the surface at least, showing no ill signs from the attack from Kelly Kowalski earlier tonight.

BW: She's hurting though, you better believe that.

LD: You could very well be right, Ben... and if you are, I'm guessing Ayako Fujiwara will find it.

[The referee edges out to the middle of the ring as the music fades, throwing a questioning look at Fujiwara... then at Toughill.]

LD: One final check to see if both competitors are ready... and boy, are they ready!

[As the bell sounds, the crowd cheers for the much-anticipated matchup they're about to see as Ricki Toughill and Ayako Fujiwara slowly make their way out of their respective corners towards the middle of the ring...]

LD: Ever since the Royal Crown matches were announced, Ben, I've had this one circled on my calendar - two of the best in the world set to collide to see who moves on to London one week from tonight to compete alongside Trish Wallace,

Michelle Bailey, and Lauryn Rage for the right to call themselves the very first winner of the Royal Crown tournament.

BW: You weren't the only one with this one circled, Dane. The fans online and around the world have been talking up this match since the beginning. The phrase "Main Event anywhere in the world" certainly applies to this one right here.

[...and engage in a staredown that only serves to get the crowd hotter as the Atlanta fans shout their salutes to their favored competitor...]

LD: Both women know what it's like to compete in the big matches - in big tournaments for that matter. Ricki Toughill won the 2011 edition of the Empress Cup in Japan... and of course, while she was doing that, Ayako Fujiwara was preparing for the 2012 Olympic games where she struck gold before turning pro and going on to win the Empress Cup twice herself.

BW: But neither of them have held championship gold since arriving here in the AWA, Dane... and winning the Royal Crown just might go a long way to rectifying that.

LD: I'm sure World Champion Julie Somers is watching elsewhere as she looks to see who might be her next challenger...

BW: You mean after Michelle Bailey chickened out and refused the match?

LD: That's not how I'd phrase it at all but Somers is in need of a challenger for Memorial Day Mayhem and... well, this Royal Crown might get her one.

[...and then lunge into a collar and elbow tieup to a big cheer as they struggle back and forth, looking for the match opening edge.]

LD: Jockeying for position at the outset of this one... trying to get an advantage...

[The expert grappler Fujiwara spins out of the tieup, securing her first waistlock of the match - likely the first of many for Miss Germany...]

LD: ...Fujiwara with the go behind, hanging on for dear life as Toughill tries to get out of it.

BW: She wants no part of any of those German Suplexes that Fujiwara is so fond of and who can blame her. Those are a quick ride with an abrupt landing.

LD: Like it or not, she's going up!

[But a flailing and kicking Toughill forces Fujiwara to put her back down to an "oooooh" from the crowd who thought they were about to see their first suplex of the match... but instead see the resourceful Toughill swing a sharp elbow back, catching Fujiwara on the cheekbone and breaking free.]

LD: Toughill escapes and she's on the move!

[Bouncing off the far ropes, Toughill charges in, swinging a "lariato" of her own but Fujiwara ducks under, snatching the waistlock again as the brawler goes by...]

LD: Right back into the waistlock! Fujiwara looking to strike hard early...

[...but surprisingly, Toughill leans over, taking Fujiwara with her as she reaches between her legs to grab the Japanese superstar's ankle, yanking it out from under her to break the hold...]

LD: ...wow! Nice counter wrestling by Toughill - not the usual thing we see from here... and she's going for the spinning toehold!

[The crowd cheers as Toughill looks to apply the hold she picked up from former SuperClash tag team partner Terry Shane...

...but Fujiwara plants a boot into the chest, shoving her out of the hold attempt, into the air, and down on the mat...]

LD: And this time, it's Fujiwara with the quick and timely escape annnnnd... we've got ourselves a standoff!

[The two women swiftly got to their feet, arms raised in a defensive posture as the crowd cheers the early exchange...

...and as a smirk crosses the face of Ricki Toughill, she balls up her fists, nodding her head...]

LD: Uh oh. And Ricki Toughill tried it Ayako's way with the grappling... maybe it's time for Fujiwara to do the same!

[Fujiwara gives a nod of her own and then lunges forward, swinging her forearm up into the jaw of Toughill!]

LD: OHH!

[Toughill staggers from the impact of the blow before stepping up and throwing a haymaker in response...]

LD: OHHHH!

[...and Fujiwara shakes off the punch to throw another forearm... and then gets punched in the face in reply...]

BW: We've got a fight on our hands!

[Fujiwara's stunning forearm shots has Toughill on her heels but the flying fists of Toughill rocks the Olympic gold medalist in turn...]

LD: From the grappling to the brawling, these two are rocking and rolling early on in this one and-

[Snatching Toughill by the hair, Fujiwara lets loose a war cry as she batters Toughill with a series of stiff forearms!]

LD: Toughill's dazed! Fujiwara firing off... to the ropes!

[Fujiwara rebounds off, charging in on Toughill, swinging her arm back...]

LD: LARIAT- OHHH! HEADBUTT! TOUGHILL SCORES WITH THE HEADBUTT!

[...and the lunging wild cracking of skulls sends Fujiwara staggering backwards, barely able to catch herself before falling to the mat! Toughill grabs her by the arm, launching her into the ropes...]

LD: Shoots her across...

[...and doubles over, setting for a backdrop as Fujiwara rebounds, leaping up and over with a hurdling leapfrog...]

LD: ...leapfrogged by Ayako...

[...and the Olympic gold medalist spins around, leaping up with a dropkick to the back that sends the off-balance Toughill pitching forward, flying between the ropes to land on the outside of the ring on the ring apron to cheers from the Atlanta crowd!]

LD: ...and to the apron goes Ricki... and what a start to this one, Ben!

BW: Pretty evenly matched so far. They both came to fight, Dane.

LD: So much at stake with that Royal Crown Finals spot on the line. Who's going to London to join Wallace, Bailey, and Rage in the Finals?

[Fujiwara looks to take advantage of Toughill out on the apron, grabbing hold again to smash her forearm into the temple repeatedly...]

LD: Fujiwara's got her hooked, going to town with those elbow strikes...

[Fujiwara rushes the adjacent ropes, rebounding back to run alongside the ropes near Toughill...]

LD: ...LARIA-

[...but Toughill ducks under another clothesline attempt, catching the off-balance Fujiwara with a barrage of blows to the side of the head before grabbing her by the hair, letting loose a wild shout as she runs alongside the ropes...]

LD: -HEADFIRST TO THE BUCKLES!

[...and as Fujiwara staggers backwards, Toughill ducks through the ropes, grabbing the hair again, and SNAPS her down to the mat with a hairpull neckbreaker!]

LD: OHHH! NECKBREAKER BY TOUGHILL!

[She flips over, diving across the torso of Fujiwara...]

LD: Toughill's got one! Got two! But that's all - Fujiwara out at two!

[With Fujiwara down and grabbing at the back of her neck, Toughill quickly gets to her feet, rapidly backing into the corner and boosting herself up onto the middle rope, standing tall for an instant before leaping off and DRIVING the point of her elbow down into the throat!]

LD: OHH!

BW: Right in the throat! That'll make it hard for Fujiwara to get a breath in to recover and... another cover, Dane!

[A two count follows before Fujiwara kicks out a second time.]

LD: Two count again... and Toughill's right back up, staying on her, working quickly in the early part of this one.

BW: Remember, these matches only have a twenty minute time limit and in a battle against an Olympic gold medalist and cardio MACHINE like Fujiwara, Toughill realizes she needs to do as much damage as quickly as possible if she wants to put her down and earn that trip to London.

LD: She's certainly trying to do exactly that, Ben, dragging Fujiwara up again... and you mention the cardio of Fujiwara, I actually have to wonder - as Toughill FIRES her chest first into the corner - what kind of cardio Ayako is working with considering she's been focusing primarily on tag team wrestling for several months now...

BW: A good question.

LD: ...and now it's Toughill with the waistlock, looking for a German Suplex of her own!

[And the Rochester, New York native is able to pull it off, tossing Fujiwara overhead and down onto the back of her head and neck...]

LD: RELEASE GERMAN SUPLEX AND... OHHHHHH MY!

[...and the crowd ROARS as Fujiwara rolls through it, coming to her feet with a cold glare at Toughill!]

BW: Nobody tries to out German Miss Germany and lives to tell the tale!

[With the Atlanta crowd roaring, Fujiwara bellows as she throws herself forward, running Toughill down with a high impact clothesline...]

LD: LARIAAAAATOOOOOOO!

[Toughill hits the mat hard as Fujiwara collapses against the buckles, grabbing at the back of the neck...]

LD: Well, perhaps Ayako Fujiwara is human after all, feeling the effects of that German Suplex as the adrenaline wears off and...

[...and Toughill struggles back to her feet, looking to get back into it as Fujiwara lets loose a roar, rushing forward again...]

LD: LARIAAAAATOOOOOOOOOOO!

[...and the second one drops Toughill as well, putting her down on the mat as Fujiwara pumps an arm at the cheering crowd!]

LD: Could we be looking for the trifecta here?! Fujiwara's ready... she's set... she's...

[And as Toughill crawls to the ropes, using them to get back off the mat, barely able to stand...]

LD: ...HERE SHE COMES!

[...and Fujiwara connects with a third running lariat, this one sending Toughill toppling over the top rope, crashing down in a heap on the floor below!]

LD: LAAAAARIAAAAATOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

[Fujiwara pumps the arm again at the ROARING crowd as Toughill lies flat on her back on the outside. The Olympic gold medalist does a full circuit around the ring, playing to the Atlanta fans as the referee starts a ten count on the floored Toughill.]

LD: Toughill goes down hard after taking THREE devastating lariats from one-half of the tag team known as The Lariatos! And remember, a countout is as good as a pinfall in this one. If Ricki gets counted out, Ayako's headed to London!

[Fujiwara ends up near the ropes, barking at Toughill to get back inside the ring as the referee breaks her count to block Fujiwara...]

LD: Shari Miranda breaking her count for a moment, trying to keep Fujiwara at bay...

BW: Good luck with that if she's determined to go after her.

LD: Do you think she should or sit back and wait for the possible countout?

BW: I'm all about taking whatever win you can get... but I don't think Toughill's down for the count just yet. We've seen her take tremendous amounts of punishment both here and before her time in the AWA... and three lariats - even when thrown by Fujiwara - isn't enough to put her down in my book.

[Ben's words seem to ring true as we see a staggered Toughill reaching up to grab the apron, trying to haul herself off the floor as the referee returns to her count...]

LD: A new count for Toughill as she tries to get up off the mat... and here comes Ayako to the outside, out on the apron now...

[With her back against the ringpost, Fujiwara eyeballs the rising Toughill...

...and with a shout, she barrels down the ring apron, leaping off with a flying forearm to the jaw of the stunned Toughill, knocking her right back down in a heap on the barely-padded Center Stage Studios floor!]

LD: Ohhhh.... and down Ricki goes again, Ben. Ayako Fujiwara's physicality has given her the advantage in this one...

[Climbing off the studio floor, Fujiwara looks out on the cheering crowd, shouting something in Japanese...]

LD: If only we spoke Japanese, Ben.

BW: Speak for yourself, Dane.

LD: What did she say then?

BW: I'm not at liberty to say.

LD: That's what I thought... Ayako dragging Ricki Toughill back to her feet on the outside and-

[Fujiwara wraps her powerful arms around Toughill's torso, causing an immediate buzz to break out amongst the fans as Toughill makes a frantic grab for the ropes, coming up empty...]

LD: She's not going to do this on the outside, is she?!

BW: At least it's padded.

LD: Just barely though and-

[...so instead, she plants her feet and drives backwards, pushing Fujiwara across the ringside area...]

"CLAAAAAAAAAAAAANG!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and DRIVES her backfirst into the steel ringpost!]

LD: OHH! I don't think she meant to do that at all, Ben!

BW: You don't think she was trying to escape?

LD: Of course she was trying to escape! But I don't think she knew the post was behind them!

BW: Right. Because Ricki Toughill is such the queen of fair play. Maybe they should give her the Royal Crown for that!

LD: You're a real piece of work at times, you know that?

BW: As a matter of fact, I do.

[Fujiwara staggers away from the ringpost, grabbing at the back of her head that hit the steel as a freed Toughill stumbles a few feet away along the apron, slowly turning to face her...]

LD: Fujiwara - the back of her head might be busted open after hitting the steel like that...

BW: She's looks out on her feet right now, Dane.

LD: She definitely looks stunned...

[Fujiwara instinctively throws a weak roundhouse kick with very little behind it towards Toughill who manages to catch the kick...]

LD: ...and- oh! Caught the kick on the floor!

[...and shifts the leg over, placing the foot on the ring apron to leave Fujiwara in an awkward position...]

LD: What is she...?

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and then BLITZES Fujiwara with a standing lariat of her own, wiping out the off-balance Olympian and dumping her on the back of her head on the floor!]

BW: Call that one, Dane! Come on! LARIATO! LARIATOOOOO!
LAAAAARIAAAATOOOOOO!

LD: Oh, would you shut up?! Ayako Fujiwara gets absolutely STEAMROLLED with that standing clothesline out of Ricki Toughill and that puts the Olympic gold medalist in some serious trouble, fans.

BW: Toughill oughta try to take advantage of it though. I know she's shaken up too but this is a big chance.

[Toughill lifts Fujiwara off the floor, tossing her back under the ropes before crawling in behind her...]

LD: She's looking to do exactly that as Ben Waterson channels his former managerial instincts there...

BW: Oh, I never would've managed Toughill.

LD: Why is that?

BW: She's too soft these days. The loss to Somers... all that garbage tagging with Theresa Lynch against Sandra Hayes. Where's the vicious, bloodthirsty, uberviolent Ricki Toughill? Even the name is soft now. "Ricki." Get me Erica Toughill ASAP or get ready to spend your golden years posing with sweaty, unwashed dudes at Comic-Cons with a stupid grin on your face.

LD: Quite the analysis there... if you ask me, Ricki came very close to winning the title against Julie Somers.

BW: Sure she did. But what's close get ya other than the loser's end of the purse and a spot at the back of the line? Nobody's talking rematch for Toughill, are they?

LD: Maybe if she wins the Royal Crown, they will.

[Back on her feet, Toughill grimaces as she watches Fujiwara using the ropes to pull herself to her knees in the corner...]

....and with a shout of her own, Toughill tears across the ring, smashing her ample hindquarters into the side of Fujiwara's head, smashing her skull into the middle buckle!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: HIP ATTACK IN THE CORNER! AYAKO GOT ROCKED AGAIN!

[Dragging her out of the corner, Toughill dives onto Fujiwara as the referee hits the canvas...]

LD: We've got one! We've got two! On her way to London... nooooooooo! Fujiwara kicks out in time!

[...and with a frustrated shout, Toughill swings a leg over the downed Fujiwara, winding up and smashing her fist down between the eyes of the Olympic gold medalist!]

LD: Toughill shifting gears, hammering away on Fujiwara...

BW: And this is closer to what I want to see out of her, Dane. Show her something she DIDN'T see in the Olympics. Smash her in the mouth a few times and see if she's smiling about her stupid cat friend then. That's the problem with BOTH of these two, Dane... they've both gone soft and let the young lions of this division pass them by.

LD: Oh, come on, Ben... Ricki Toughill is only 34 years old - a few months shy of 35 - and Ayako Fujiwara is 27.

BW: Yet this division is all about E-Girl MAX, right?

LD: Hardly!

[Climbing off the mat, Toughill drags Fujiwara up with her, whipping her HARD into the turnbuckles, sending her staggering back out...]

LD: And this time, Ricki connects with the backdrop! Sending Fujiwara down HARD on the mat!

[...and without attempting a pin this time, Toughill is right back to work, dragging the dazed Fujiwara up to her feet...]

LD: Side waistlock... looking for a Backdrop Driver perhaps!

[...but as the crowd reacts with excitement for the potential big move, Fujiwara drives the point of her elbow down into the back of Toughill's neck...]

LD: Fujiwara trying to elbow out of it! Trying to break free!

[...and she does, taking the opportunity to dash to the ropes, looking to deliver something impactful to turn the momentum back on her side...]

...but running right into a boot to the midsection that doubles her up. Toughill steps forward into a standing headscissors...]

LD: Toughill's got her hooked!

[...and lifts Fujiwara into the air, DRIVING her down with a thunderous powerbomb!]

"THUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUD!"
"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[On impact, Fujiwara immediately starts roiling, wisely escaping the ring before Toughill can attempt a pin cover, instead sinking to a knee, extending her arms and beckoning for cheers from the Center Stage Studios crowd who accommodate the request with a thunderous cheer!]

LD: A ring-shaking powerbomb by Ricki Toughill sends Ayako Fujiwara to the safety of the ring apron, trying to make sure Toughill couldn't go for the cover right there, Ben.

BW: A tremendous powerbomb from the heavens right there by Toughill and you're right, Dane, Fujiwara got out of there in a hurry and it was definitely the right thing to do. I don't know how much Fujiwara's got left in her after that.

LD: I'm not sure either but-

"TEN MINUTES GONE BY! TEN MINUTES REMAIN! TEN MINUTES!"

LD: You hear the call there. We've reached the halfway point in the time limit for this one and now both of these competitors really need to turn up the aggression.

BW: Turn up the aggression?! Toughill practically just powerbombed Fujiwara through the damn ring, Dane! These two are giving it all they've got to be the last member of the Royal Crown Finals next weekend... more than I thought they had left with their weak, soft fighting spirits.

[Climbing to her feet, Toughill keeps an eye on Fujiwara as she uses the ropes to drag herself to her feet on the apron...]

LD: Both women back up now... Fujiwara hanging onto the ropes. She can barely stand after that powerbomb, Ben, and now she's-

[...and Toughill suddenly dashes forward, sprinting across the ring, twisting to jam her hip into the torso of Fujiwara...]

"CLAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAANG!"
"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and sends the Olympic gold medalist ROCKETING through the air, crashing down back first on the staircase leading to the entrance stage!]

LD: HOLY...

[Dane pauses as Fujiwara cries out in pain, grabbing at her back as Toughill looks a little shocked from inside the ring...]

LD: I don't think Ricki meant to do that, Ben.

BW: No? Who cares?! If it's a happy accident, take advantage of it! You'll never get a better chance than this, Toughill!

LD: Ricki seems reluctant to...

[Toughill grimaces as she stares down at Fujiwara who rolls to a hip, revealing a nasty cut on her back that has already begun to ooze crimson...]

LD: ...oh no. Ayako Fujiwara's back was lacerated by the stairs there. I believe Ricki was trying to knock her off the apron to the floor but... that was more than she expected. Fujiwara sailed over the ringside area, cleared it completely, and landed on the stairs leading up here by us. My goodness... what a horrific fall that was.

BW: Yeah, yeah... it was awful... but what's more awful is Toughill standing there like a damn goof and not taking advantage of it! Finish her!

[Toughill slowly steps through the ropes as the referee goes out to check on Fujiwara, making sure she's still able to continue...]

LD: Shari Miranda making sure that Fujiwara can go on after that fall... it seems like she's saying yes... although I can't imagine how.

[Toughill drops off the apron, edging closer to Fujiwara's whose back is rapidly becoming a bloody mess...]

LD: In the words of our good friend, Gordon Myers... oh my stars! Look at that, Ben!

BW: I see it... and if it looks that bad on the outside, imagine how it must feel on the inside!

LD: Toughill down to the floor, making her way over to Ayako...

[Toughill again pauses, looking reluctant as she gestures at Fujiwara, questioning the official who is again checking to see if the Olympic gold medalist can go forward.]

LD: ...the referee saying she can go, Ben.

BW: Well, I don't think anyone is surprised by that. Think what you want about Fujiwara but no one can deny she's gonna fight if she can stand.

LD: Well, she can barely stand right now and I have to question the wisdom of this decision on her part.

[Toughill shrugs at the official, shaking her head as she approaches Fujiwara who is still laid out across the steps. She leans down to grab the Japanese superstar who responds with an upkick to the chest!]

LD: Oh!

BW: See? Plenty of fight left in her!

[But the upkick does little to Toughill but annoy her as she aggressively grabs her by the hair, yanking her off the steps and chucking her under the ropes into the ring.]

LD: And I think Ricki Toughill might be mad now, Ben.

BW: Well, sure... she got kicked in the mouth.

[A fired up Toughill rolls in behind her, the referee sliding back in as well as Toughill gets back to her feet, stomping towards the downed Olympian.]

LD: Toughill grabbing the arms and... ohhh, surfboard applied!

[With her knee jammed between the shoulderblades, Toughill yanks back on both arms, stretching out Fujiwara as the fans buzz with concern...]

BW: It's usually Fujiwara looking for a submission hold... this is unusual territory for a brawler like Toughill.

[Fujiwara cries out as she looks for a way out of the decently-applied submission hold, Toughill occasionally cranking the arms back to increase the pressure...]

LD: And what a feather in the cap it would be for Ricki Toughill to get a submission win over Ayako Fujiwara and cash her ticket to London and the O2 Arena for The Battle of London and the Royal Crown Finals next weekend. Now, remember, fans... due to the time difference, Saturday Night Wrestling: The Battle of London will be on at a special time next weekend. Sal and Colt will be calling the action at 11 AM Pacific, 2 PM Eastern next weekend so clear your afternoon schedule and be a part of some tremendous international AWA action!

BW: Sal and Colt?! What about us?!

LD: We'll be holding down the home front.

BW: Ahhh, what a gyp.

LD: Oh, come on... we get to go on tour this summer! Did you see that list of tour stops? Los Angeles, Portland, Seattle... back in Regina! The Hammerstein Ballroom! The Mall of America!

BW: Working in a mall? Who am I? Robin Sparkles?

[Lori chuckles as we see Fujiwara trying to get up off the mat, slowly working her legs underneath her as an alarmed Toughill tries to prevent it...]

LD: In the meantime, we can see Ayako Fujiwara working her way off the mat here... Toughill can't keep her down and-

[Once on her feet, Fujiwara twists her torso, reversing the hold to some cheers. She lifts her leg, planting a foot on the back of Toughill and swiftly drives her down to her belly for her own surfboard...]

...which she quickly abandons to hook her feet under the armpits of Toughill, rolling to the side into a pinning position!]

LD: CRADLE! CRADLE!

[The referee slaps the mat once... twice... and almost a third time when Toughill narrowly escapes in time!]

LD: Whoooooa... close call there for Ricki Toughill who almost got put down with that unusual cradle hold by Fujiwara...

[Both women scramble up off the mat, each trying to get the edge. Toughill comes up swinging, a wild haymaker designed to take Fujiwara's head off her shoulders but the gold medalist ducks under, hooking a waistlock that gets the crowd on their feet!]

LD: WAISTLOCK!

[But Toughill again scores with a back elbow, escaping the hold and sending Fujiwara into a staggering spin as the New Yorker hooks a waistlock of her own...]

LD: Toughill's got her hooked annnnnnd...

"THUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUD!"
"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: ...BACKDROP DRIIIIVAAAAAAH!

[With Fujiwara in a physically wrecked heap on the canvas, Toughill slides into a lateral press, reaching back for a leg...]

LD: ONNNNNNNNE! TWOOOOOOOOOO! THREEEEEEEEEEEE-

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: -FUJIWARA GETS THE SHOULDER UP IN TIME!

[The crowd is buzzing over the very near fall as Toughill sits up, burying her face in her hands...]

LD: Ricki Toughill almost had the big win in this one but Ayako Fujiwara escapes in the nick of time!

[Toughill climbs off the mat, shaking her head as she leans down, dragging Fujiwara off the mat and into a standing headscissors...]

LD: Another powerbomb?!

[...and quickly lifts Fujiwara into the air, looking to drive her down...]

LD: SHE'S GOT HER UP!

[...but Fujiwara slips out, landing on her feet behind Toughill's back, reaching back blindly...]

LD: SHE'S LOOSE AND SHE'S GOING FOR A BACKSLIDE! FUJIWARA LOOKING FOR A BACKSLIDE HERE!

[...and Toughill spins out of the attempt, burying a hard forearm into the bleeding back of Fujiwara who cries out in pain as Ricki spins her back around, tugging her back into the standing headscissors...]

LD: She's going for it again, Ben!

BW: With the injured back, it's the right thing to do! Toughill showing some killer instinct here!

[But as Toughill lifts again, Fujiwara slips out again, twisting around to snatch her...]

LD: WAISTLOCK!

[...and this time, Fujiwara is able to get her up, dumping her down on the back of her head and neck but she's unable to hold the bridge, collapsing to the mat alongside her!]

LD: OHHHHHH! She got the German, Ben, but-

BW: But she couldn't keep her in pinning position! Again, who knows what kind of damage that fall to the steps did to her back... she just couldn't hold the bridge.

LD: And that puts BOTH women down with referee Shari Miranda laying a double count on them... and again, if they're counted out, they're OUT of the tournament!

BW: Yeah, but we've already got a Last Chance Battle Royal coming up later tonight for the men. Would we have to add a second one?!

LD: That's totally possible, Ben.

"FIVE MINUTES REMAIN! FIVE MINUTES!"

LD: You heard it, fans. Five minutes to go in this one... and that's ANOTHER way both women could be eliminated!

BW: Time is NOT on their side right now and they're going to need to pick it up a little!

[With the official still counting, the two competitors work their way back to their feet, the crowd urging them on...]

LD: Here we go again!

[...and Toughill throws a big right hand, only to have it answered in kind with a Fujiwara forearm strike...]

LD: A haymaker from Ricki... and a forearm from Ayako!

BW: We're right back where we started!

LD: Another right hand! And another forearm as well!

[The exchange of strikes goes on for a few more moments before Fujiwara seems to catch a second wind, landing another forearm... and another unanswered one... and another...]

LD: FUJIWARA'S GOT HER BACKPEDALING!

[And a well-placed elbowstrike to the temple sends Toughill staggering back into the corner...]

...and Fujiwara comes charging in, letting loose a roar as she DRILLS the stunned Toughill with a running elbowstrike to the jaw!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: TOUGHILL GOT ROCKED! SHE'S OUT ON HER FEET!

[Fujiwara leans over, wrapping her arms around the torso of Toughill...]

LD: Northern Lights Suplex out of the corner?!

[...but Fujiwara's efforts end with her crying out, grabbing at her lower back as she falls a step back. The referee moves in to check on her...

...when Toughill leans back in the corner, swinging her legs up and DRIVING them into the chest of Fujiwara, sending her flying backwards...

...RIGHT into referee Shari Miranda, sending her down in a heap!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: Oh no! Down goes the referee! Shari Miranda was going in there to check on Fujiwara and Toughill inadvertently kicked Ayako RIGHT into the referee and she's down, Ben!

BW: She sure is... and now it's time to get dirty! Ricki should roll out there, grab a chair, waffle her with it, and cash that ticket to London!

LD: What?! Why would you even encourage that at all?!

[With Toughill still reeling in the corner, Fujiwara turns to check on the downed Miranda...]

LD: Ayako now, over to check on the referee... she's still down and we may need to get a second referee out here...

[...and with Fujiwara's back to her, Toughill stumbles out of the corner...

...and SMASHES Fujiwara with a lariat to the back of the head, knocking her flat!]

BW: LARIATO!

LD: Stop it. Toughill attacks Fujiwara from behind! Putting her down!

BW: That's the kind of mean streak I'm looking for out of her! Now grab a chair and finish the job!

[Toughill looks down at the laid out Fujiwara, a look on her face that some might interpret as regret... and then over at the official. She grabs at her head with both hands, shaking it back and forth...]

LD: Fujiwara's down... but with the official down, it doesn't help Toughill at all!

[...and with the crowd suddenly buzzing and Toughill's rethinking her actions...]

LD: Toughill is look- HEY!

[...Kelly Kowalski comes rolling under the bottom rope, quickly getting to her feet and hitting Toughill with her own clothesline to the back of the head!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: KELLY KOWALSKI! WHAT THE HECK IS SHE DOING HERE, BEN?!

BW: She told Zharkov she wanted Toughill tonight and he wouldn't listen! She went after her backstage too! Of course she'd be here because THAT'S a woman with a mean streak! With a killer instinct!

[The crowd is all over the E-Girl MAX member as she puts her Doc Martens to work on the head of Toughill!]

LD: She's stomping her down... this should be a disqualification!

BW: By the rulebook, yes... but you need a referee to call it and Miranda is still laid out!

LD: Kowalski's putting the boots to Toughill and-

[Dragging her to her feet, Kowalski tosses Toughill into the corner, rushing in after her with a running kick to the torso. She snatches a loose headlock, battering Toughill with right hands to the skull as the fans continue to jeer!]

LD: -we need to get some help out here for Ricki! Kowalski's letting her have it and-

[With Toughill staggered and hanging onto the ropes, Kowalski comes charging at her, connecting with a clothesline that sends them both flipping over the ropes to the outside!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: -BOTH WOMEN OUT TO THE FLOOOOOOR!

[The fans are buzzing with concern for Toughill and for the outcome of the match itself as Kowalski drags herself off the thin mats covering the concrete floor of Center Stage Studios, grabbing hold of the ropes as she stomps Toughill's neck a few more times.]

LD: She's snapped! Kelly Kowalski is COMPLETELY out of control!

BW: They fought through the crowd on National Wrestling Night! They fought backstage here tonight! Kowalski's not gonna be satisfied until she gets her pound of flesh, Dane!

LD: Well, she's certainly trying to take it right now, stomping and stomping and stomp... and finally she stops. Thankfully.

[Kowalski walks away from the laid out Toughill, sneering at the booing crowd as she walks around the ringside area...]

LD: Get her out of here! Where the heck is security?! Where is Zharkov?!

[...and with a wicked gleam in her eye, Kowalski looks down at the floor.]

LD: What is she...?

[Suddenly, the Jersey Girl leans down, ripping and tearing at the edge of the ringside floor covering...]

LD: What is she doing?! Ben, what in the world is she doing?!

BW: She's pulling up the padding on the floor to expose the concrete!

LD: Why?! Why would she do that?!

BW: It's just a hunch but I think she's looking for some PERMANENT damage!

[Flipping the mats up and ignoring the ringside fans getting in her face, Kowalski stomps across the exposed concrete back to the slowly-rising Toughill...

...and YANKS her into a double underhook!]

LD: No! NO! She's looking for the Broken Skull DDT on the floor! She's got the mats up and the concrete exposed and-

BW: And "Broken Skull" isn't going to be just a clever name if she does this!

LD: Kowalski's got Toughill right where she wants her and-

[Suddenly, Toughill senses the danger she's in, charging forward...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...with the intent to drive Kowalski's lower back into the apron but Kowalski jumps at the last moment, taking the brunt of the impact on her tailbone before sitting on the apron!]

LD: Toughill trying to get away from her, trying to get out of her grasp...

[Toughill reaches up, snatching a handful of Kowalski's hair and starts HAMMERING her fist into her head!]

LD: ...or maybe not! Toughill's gone crazy on the outside! She realized what Kowalski was trying to do and now she wants some payback of her own!

[Toughill scrambles up on the apron, pulling Kowalski to her feet alongside her...]

LD: Uh oh! Both these women are up on the apron now, right above this exposed unforgiving concrete floor!

BW: And I just got told by the timekeeper that we're down to under three minutes, Dane! The time is still ticking!

[Toughill looks out on the fans, balling up her fist as she takes aim on Kowalski...

...who desperately reaches out, digging her fingers into the eyes of Toughill!]

LD: OHHH! SHE GOUGED THE EYES! SHE-

[Kowalski buries a boot into the gut of Toughill, doubling her over...]

LD: Wait a second... what is she...? No! NO! SHE CAN'T! SHE CAN'T DO THIS!

[The crowd is equally horrified as Kowalski pulls Toughill into a standing headscissors, looking down on the exposed concrete...]

LD: BEN, SHE CAN'T DO THIS!

BW: You're welcome to stop her!

LD: Somebody's got to! Somebody's gotta stop this! She's going to end her career... or WORSE!

BW: Puts a whole new meaning to "killer instinct," huh?

LD: This isn't funny, Ben! Not one bit! Somebody stop this, for crying out... here comes security! Here comes Tommy Fierro and John Shock! Come on, guys... hurry up! Get down there and-

[Kowalski pauses when she sees the incoming threats...

...which is all the time Toughill needs.]

LD: NO, NOOOO! BACKDROOOOOOOP!

"SPLAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAT!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[And as Toughill straightens up, backdropping Kowalski out of the piledriver position and down onto the exposed concrete floor, the crowd ROARS...

...and Kowalski screams.]

LD: Oh... oh no.

[The sickening screams of pain from Kelly Kowalski echo through a suddenly silent Center Stage Studios as Ricki Toughill leans hard against the ropes, looking down at Kowalski as she's suddenly surrounded by ringside security and officials. Tommy Fierro is the first one there, down to a knee... and immediately screaming for Dr. Ponavitch.]

LD: I think... she's badly hurt, Ben.

BW: Pro wrestlers are built to absorb pain... so when you hear a scream like that, Lori... it's a good bet.

[Toughill looks down with surprise at the screaming Kowalski... and starts to make a move towards her when John Shock waves her back, refusing to let her down there...]

LD: Ricki looks shellshocked, Ben. I don't think... no, I KNOW she didn't mean to do that. Kelly Kowalski is seriously hurt and... we've got the medics coming for backstage and...

[...and with Toughill looking the other way, she's totally oblivious to an incoming Ayako Fujiwara stepping up to the middle rope behind her, wrapping her arms around the torso of a shocked Toughill...]

LD: ...the match continues! The timekeeper says we're down under two minutes left! And I have no idea if either of these competitors know that but... LOOK AT FUJIWARA! LOOK AT THE POWER!

[...and choking down the pain from her own injured back, Fujiwara lifts Toughill off the apron, using her height on the middle rope to get her up into the air, her back still covered with crimson as she powers Toughill up...

...and lets gravity do the rest!]

"THUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUD!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: GERMAN SUPLEX! GERMAN SUPERPLEX, I STAND CORRECTED!

[An exhausted Fujiwara rolls over, flopping an arm across the torso...]

LD: ONNNNNNNNNNE! TWOOOOOOOO! THREEEEEEEEE! FOUUUUUUUUR!

BW: There's no referee! You could count to a hundred but we've got no ref!

LD: How do we STILL have no referee?! If Shari's out of it, get someone else out here! This match should be over!

BW: The match should've been over with Kowalski hit the ring! They're all even now!

"ONE MINUTE REMAINS! ONE MINUTE!"

LD: SIXTY SECONDS LEFT!

[Fujiwara urgently gets up, looking around for the official and spotting a slowly recovering Shari Miranda in the corner trying to get up. Fujiwara lets loose a harsh sounding exclamation in Japanese as she turns back towards Toughill, yanking her to her knees...]

"WHAAAAAAAACK!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: Big roundhouse to the chest!

"WHAAAAAAAACK!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: Another one!

"WHAAAAAAAACK!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: And another! AND LOOK AT TOUGHILL!

[Trying to fire up with her own second wind, the brawler climbs off the mat, shouting "COME ON, BITCH! DO IT AGAIN!"...

...only to have Fujiwara respond with a brutal front kick to the chest that sends Toughill flying backwards into the corner!]

LD: OHH!

BW: SPARTAN KICK CONNECTS!

[With Toughill in a daze, Fujiwara rushes forward, leaping into the air...]

LD: ELLLLLBOOOOOW IN THE CORNER!

[Fujiwara shoves Toughill back up, hooking her arms over the top rope to stay standing as Fujiwara backs off again... this time going all the way to the opposite corner...]

LD: She's gonna do it again!

"THIRTY SECONDS!"

[...and with a tremendous bellow, Fujiwara runs from corner to corner, leaping into the air...]

LD: ELLLLLLLLLBOOOOOOOOO- NO!

[...and leaps RIGHT into the raised boot of the dazed Toughill, snapping her head back!]

LD: TOUGHILL GOT THE FOOT UP! AYAKO IS ROCKED!

[And with a Shari Miranda back on her feet, Toughill hops up on the middle rope, setting her feet carefully...]

LD: What is she...?

[...and leaps off towards the doubled-up Fujiwara, sailing over her...]

LD: SUNSET FLIP! SUNSET-

[...but as she tries to drag Fujiwara down, the Olympic gold medalist kneels down on the shoulders, pulling the legs down into an airtight cradle!]

LD: COUNTERED! COUNTERED! ONNNNNNNNNE! TWOOOOOOO!
THREEEEEEEEEEEE!

“DING! DING! DING!”

LD: SHE GOT HER!

[Fujiwara collapses forward out of the cradle, a relieved look on her face as the bell rings. Down on all fours, Fujiwara dips her head forward, pressing her forehead into the mat as Toughill sits up, looking at the official in shock.]

BW: Toughill can't believe it, Dane. She thought she had her there and suddenly, the Olympic gold medalist not only reverses it... but ends up winning the match with her reversal!

LD: It's gotta be a heartbreaking loss there for Ricki Toughill who came so close to victory only to have it snatched away... but an exhilarating win for Ayako Fujiwara.

BW: We talked earlier about the men's Royal Crown being such a big opportunity for competitors who've been better known as tag team wrestlers as of late like Joe Flint and Tony Donovan... the same is true here. Fujiwara's been known mostly as a tag team wrestler for several months now but this is a big singles win and puts her in position for an even BIGGER singles win next weekend in London.

LD: It was a tremendous battle for the final spot in the Royal Crown Finals and... now it's official!

[A graphic comes up showing Ayako Fujiwara being added to the trio of Trish Wallace, Michelle Bailey, and Lauryn Rage.]

LD: Quite the quartet there... and that's going to be a hell of a Royal Crown Finals, Ben.

BW: I'm looking forward to it for sure.

[The graphic fades and we see Ricki Toughill looking over the ropes to the outside...]

LD: And despite the thrilling match and big win, there's a darker story to be told here. Ricki looking on... and you can see our AWA medical team down here trying to get Kelly Kowalski on that stretcher.

[Kowalski is writhing on the stretcher, obviously in tremendous pain as Dr. Bob Ponavitch and his staff try to keep her calm and comfortable.]

LD: I hate to speculate, Ben, but does this look like some kind of a back injury or...?

BW: She took the brunt of the impact on her lower back... maybe even her tailbone area which we saw get smashed into the apron. I don't know, Dane. It doesn't look good though.

[The concern on Ricki Toughill's face is evident as Ponavitch finally gets Kowalski secured on the stretcher and is able to get his staff to start moving her. A respectful Atlanta crowd gives a supportive cheer for the E-Girl MAX member as she's taken through a side walkway around the stage...]

LD: They're getting her out of here now... no doubt headed to a nearby hospital for examination... a worrisome scene that puts a slight damper on the result of the match we just saw... and fans, as Ayako Fujiwara celebrates her win and Kelly Kowalski is taken by stretcher from the arena... we're going to take a quick break. We'll be right back.

[And with that, we fade to black.

After a moment, the ESPN 30 For 30 logo comes up on the screen with the words "COMING IN EARLY 2018."

We come up on a shot of Lori Dane - a talking head shot.]

LD: They told me repeatedly - "there's no room for women's wrestling in the AWA." It wasn't even up for debate really. I mean... I wasn't surprised. Look at what happened in the E.

[We get a brief still photo publicity photo shot of "Luscious" Lori Dane holding the EMWC Women's Title.]

LD: Yeah, I held the title but for the life of you, could anyone remember who I beat for it? Or if I even defended it on TV? I was a house show gimmick. Someone they could trot out there to get whistled at and make the guys drop money for bikini 8X10s at intermission.

[Cut to a talking head of former AWA competitor Melissa Cannon.]

MC: Most of the talented women's wrestlers in the 80s and 90s were in Japan. There were a handful here but for every Jessica Starbird, you had an "Erotic" Erin. For every Lori Dane, a Satin Sheets. The women in the States were being treated as a sideshow and everyone knew it. The Throbbing Mattress Kittens? Give me a [BLEEPING] break!

[Cut to Laura Davis with a smirk on her face.]

LD: The UWF took it pretty seriously but very few other places did. Even the so-called biggest promotions on the planet didn't give us the time of day. Hell, some of the best women were better in the ring than the top men at times... but you'd never know it by the way they promoted us.

[Back to Dane.]

LD: I was a friggin' co-owner of the company and I still couldn't get it done for a long damn time. But when it changed...

[Dane raises her eyebrows as we fade to a graphic that says "THE BIRTH OF THE AWA WOMEN'S DIVISION."

The "Coming Soon" graphic returns for a moment before we go back to black...

...and as we come back from break, we return to a tense backstage scene. Mariah Wolfe stands in the center, microphone in hand, looking uncomfortable as the members of E-Girl MAX - Casey Cash, Harley Hamilton, and Cinder, along with their associates The Thompson Sisters and Riley Campbell - are gathered around her.

The atmosphere is thick with emotion as news of Kelly Kowalski's injury weighs heavily on the group. Riley Campbell is busy snapping photos in the background, but the mood is anything but light.]

MW: I'm here with E-Girl MAX following the devastating scene moments ago... the news that Kelly Kowalski was injured by Ricki Toughill just moments ago and during the break was loaded into an ambulance to be taken to a local medical facility. Her condition remains unknown at this time. How are you all processing this?

[Casey Cash, visibly shaken, is the first to speak. She looks around nervously, trying to keep her composure.]

CC: This can't really be happening, can it?! Kelly... she's tough! She's not hurt! She can't be hurt! You just watch, any second now, she's going to walk through the door and be just fine!

[Casey looks around, pleading with the others, but no one meets her gaze. Riley snaps a picture of Casey, capturing her desperate attempt to deny the situation. Harley Hamilton steps forward, her face tight with anger, her voice sharp.]

HH: I warned Kelly not to push things too far, but she didn't understand that a piece of garbage like Ricki Toughill doesn't care about boundaries or about people!

C: Aye, and tried to warn the world, did I or did I not? "Oh, E-Girl MAX, they're so annoying, don't listen to them." Was I not right about my wicked stepmum? She is out of control, an' this is the consequence that I tried to warn the AWA about!

[Harley holds her head with her hands, trying to contain her rage.]

HH: It wasn't that long ago, when I had Ricki dead to rites on the outside of the ring. I could have stomped her head in right then and there! But unlike Ricki, I'm a beautiful human being with a heart filled with nothing but love and compassion! I spared her! I showed her mercy!

[Harley's head drops, her voice barely audible now.]

HH: And now Kelly's hurt—because I didn't do what needed to be done. I won't make the same mistake twice. Ricki is gonna' get what's coming to her, mark my words!

[Riley's camera clicks again, this time capturing Harley's clenched fists and angry expression. Cinder steps up next, pacing slightly, a look of deep thought crossing her face as she tries to grasp for control.]

Cinder: Even if I have to go to President Zharkov, or Bobby Taylor, or Kevin Slater, or Todd Michaelson, or Lori Dane, or whoever is in charge on any given day around here... I will make sure that my wicked stepmum never has a happy day in the AWA again! When Kelly comes back, it can be to a Ricki Toughill free AWA, aye?

[Riley captures Cinder's contemplative expression, and Melody Thompson, her eyes red from crying, steps in next. Her voice is small, the weight of the situation pulling her down.]

MT: But what if... what if she doesn't make it? What if she doesn't come back? I can't deal with this! I don't know how!

[Riley's camera clicks once more, capturing Melody's despondent expression as tears well in her eyes. Harmony Thompson, her twin, steps forward next, her voice calm, though there's sadness beneath her words.]

HT: Look, everyone, we can't change what happened, right? We can only wait until we hear what the doctors say, and we have to stay strong... for her. For Kelly. I know she'd want us to keep moving forward, no matter what.

[Riley snaps another picture, focusing on Harmony's resolute face. Harley, still seething, turns and glares at Riley, yelling at her.]

HH: Riley, enough! Stop taking pictures like this is just another day on the job for you! Kelly is hurt! This isn't a photo op, damnit!

[Harley storms over to Riley, snatching the camera from her face. But as she does, she stops in her tracks. Tears are streaming down Riley's cheeks, her face filled with sorrow even as she continues to take photos. Harley's expression softens immediately as she realizes Riley is just as devastated as the rest of them.]

HH: Oh... Riley...

[Harley gently hands the camera back to Riley. There's a moment of silence, before Harley pulls Riley into a hug. The rest of E-Girl MAX, joins in. The camera zooms in on their group hug, holding on the shot as the scene fades back to the announce table where Lori Dane and Ben Waterson are seated.]

BW: I bet you loved every second of that, didn't you, Dane?

LD: Ben, I... no! Of course not! How can you even say that?! No matter how I feel personally about E-Girl MAX, I would NEVER root for any of them to be injured like that. I stepped in the ring. I lived my life inside that ring. I know what these women sacrifice to get in there... what they put at stake to get in there. I... I feel for those girls right now. Their friend is hurt... I know what that's like too, damn it.

[Dane's emotions get the better of her as she angrily glares at Waterson, slapping a hand down on the desk and causing Waterson to flinch.]

BW: Alright, alright... sheesh. Take it easy.

LD: Fans... if we get an update on Kelly Kowalski's condition before we go off the air tonight, we'll be sure to bring it to you. If not, be sure to check AWA.com and all the AWA social media for any updates.

[Lori sighs deeply.]

LD: And now, as we often must do in our business, we have to try to push that unfortunate injury out of our minds and... well, the show must go on, right? We just saw Ricki Toughill in action... and she was in action last weekend at National Wrestling Night as well, teaming with Women's World Champion Julie Somers and Michelle Bailey against E-Girl MAX. After that match concluded, Julie Somers made Michelle Bailey an offer for Memorial Day Mayhem, encouraging Michelle to challenge for the Women's World Title.

BW: And you'd think after saying she had never gotten a World Title shot before, she would have accepted right away. Instead, she went off to cry about it!

LD: You know full well that Michelle is very thoughtful in how she handles her business. She asked for time to think about it, but that reaction did lead to a lot of debate on social media.

BW: And she's gone into hiding too, hasn't she? I've heard she wasn't at any of the live events for the last week, and she's not here today either.

LD: No, Ben. She had previously arranged to have the last week off, as well as today. She's at her new home in Los Angeles, where she's been working on matters related to her therapist career. She hasn't even been in hiding, as you well know, because she's been doing promotion for Memorial Day Mayhem due to being local to Los Angeles.

BW: Sounds like a convenient excuse to me.

[Lori rolls her eyes.]

LD: While she couldn't be here today, I was fortunate enough to talk to her via video chat yesterday evening. She agreed to have the chat recorded, so let's show everyone that footage.

[We cut to a split screen, marked with "RECORDED YESTERDAY", with Lori Dane on the left side of the screen, and Michelle Bailey on the right, both appearing from the waist up. Michelle is being recorded by her laptop's camera, the screen of which reflects against her black-rimmed cat eye glasses. She is wearing a blue silk blouse patterned with white polka dots, along with a delicate silver necklace and several silver bracelets. She takes a sip from a mug of tea with a tag from an herbal tea bag hanging from the rim as Lori begins to speak.]

LD: Michelle, thank you for joining me tonight. When you asked for this week off from AWA action, you mentioned that it was a very busy week for you.

MB: It has, Lori. I mentioned a few weeks ago that I was in the process of gaining my clinical social worker license in California, where the requirements are different than they are in Massachusetts, as well as re-establishing my practice now that I've moved out here.

LD: I think AWA fans forget that while you've been active as part of the roster, you have been keeping your practice active via remote sessions. Has that been difficult for you?

[Michelle smiles.]

MB: When I came back, I knew that eventually I'd return to this full-time, and I didn't want to have to start over from scratch. Besides, it's not healthy to have a singular focus, you know. Just focusing everything on wrestling... you and I have been around long enough to have an address book full of people who were destroyed by that.

[Lori nods.]

LD: It can't be easy to maintain that kind of schedule, though, especially with the travel involved with being in the AWA. You're off to London next week to participate in the Royal Crown Finals, where Lauryn Rage and Trish Wallace await you, as well as the winner of tomorrow's matchup between Ricki Toughill and Ayako Fujiwara.

MB: Oh, sure, but most things that are worth doing aren't exactly easy. That match isn't going to be easy, either. No matter who wins between Ricki or Ayako will mean that the Finals will get a quality competitor to join Lauryn, Trish, and myself. It will be a tough night no matter who joins us between Ricki or Ayako, but the competition will be worth it.

LD: How disappointed are you that your daughter won't be in the match?

[Michelle frowns somewhat.]

MB: I'm proud of my daughter, no matter what. I know she's disappointed in herself for losing to Trish Wallace, but I told her to think about the positive of what happened. She had Trish on the ropes so badly that Laura Davis had to help Trish out. You know, Lori, I think that our Women's Division represents the pinnacle of competition in our sport, and for my daughter to be competing at her experience level says a lot about who she is. As she learns from each match she competes in, she'll be making a lot of noise very soon.

[Michelle smirks.]

MB: But I am admittedly biased.

LD: Shifting gears a little bit, last week, you joined with Julie Somers and Ricki Toughill to go against E-Girl MAX. You mentioned why you accepted Julie's offer to be her partner after the match, but the AWA Galaxy was surprised to hear you have praise for Harley Hamilton, Cinder, and Casey Cash. Can you elaborate on those feelings a little? Honestly, I don't get them.

[Michelle nods.]

MB: With how they behave, I feel like I've been through all this before, both with Ego MAX fifteen years ago and raising my own daughter. Harley Hamilton and Cinder are obviously incredibly skilled in the ring, but people take them lightly because of their attitudes. I know that people always go back to Steal the Spotlight when it comes to those two, but frankly, I can't be that upset about what they did.

[Lori's jaw drops.]

LD: I think I have a bad connection.

MB: Hear me out. Those two were the last women standing after ten other women in the match were already eliminated, myself included. They made it to the end of the match. One of them was going to win it, and I think people bought in too much into the thought that they were going to bury a knife into each other's back. Those people, clearly, were wrong. We should have seen it coming, and we didn't. It was the responsibility of the people in the match to prevent what they did by eliminating one of them.

[Michelle shrugs.]

MB: We failed to do that. I'm just as much to blame for what happened that night as they are for doing it. We may not like what they did, but they earned the right to do it. The thing is, Lori, we can't do anything about the past. What we can do, though, is learn from what they did and understand that they are a dangerous group of people. Part of understanding the danger they represent is respecting their abilities and planning accordingly.

[Lori thinks about Michelle's response for a moment, then changes the subject.]

LD: I have to ask, though... Julie Somers offered you a shot at the Women's World Title at Memorial Day Mayhem. It would be your first-ever shot at a World Title. You asked for time to think about it, and I have to ask you why you didn't accept right away.

[Michelle takes a deep breath, slowly exhaling.]

MB: Can I answer that by letting everyone know something about me?

[Lori nods.]

LD: Of course.

[Michelle fidgets for a moment, as though she is thinking of how she wants to phrase her response.]

MB: When I first got into wrestling, it was to make sure that my daughter had a better life ahead of her, but I couldn't shake the thought that I was being selfish. When I started wrestling as Michelle Bailey, I became more popular, got better contracts, put more money in the bank so I could meet my goal of taking care of my daughter...

[Michelle frowns.]

MB: But it drove a wedge between myself and a lot of my family. Again, I couldn't shake the feeling that I was being selfish.

[Michelle shakes her head.]

MB: When I went to Japan, because it was the only place I could get work, I worried that I was making things even harder between myself and my daughter, and my family. Once again, that feeling that I was being selfish crept up. When I cut back my wrestling schedule in 2008, so I could go to school, I worried about what it would do to our savings and what it meant for my goals.

[Michelle points to herself.]

MB: When I retired to focus on school? Selfish. When I decided I couldn't keep ignoring the voice inside of me telling me this was who I needed to be? Selfish.

[Michelle looks down, away from her laptop's camera.]

MB: When Shane called me in 2015, telling me there was someone at his new student intake who started wrestling because she was a big fan of me, and she was worried about where I had disappeared to? I felt bad because I had vanished without a trace. I felt selfish. When I started thinking about a comeback, and I thought about all my clients that I saw weekly, or bi-weekly, I thought about how I'd try to care for them while chasing the dreams I thought I gave up. I felt selfish. I feel selfish when I think about the ones I'm seeing now, about how they may need me more than I can be available for them, but I'm not, because I'm chasing a dream I should have given up long ago.

[Michelle takes a moment to wipe her eyes.]

MB: When I walked into Madison Square Garden in June 2017, I worried about what spot I was taking away from some hungry up-and-comer who wasn't getting her chance because I wanted to come back. When I started climbing the ladder, I thought about whose dreams I was trampling because I was clinging onto memories of the past. And honestly, after Kelly Kowalski dropped me on my head at

SuperClash and joined E-Girl MAX, I felt selfish, because she felt she had to do that to me rather than just go be with her friends.

[Michelle looks back up, her eyes still watery.]

MB: I wasn't going to wrestle at Memorial Day Mayhem. It's Juan's night. He's retiring, it's his last night in the spotlight, and he deserves every moment he'll get that night. When I told him that I wasn't going to wrestle, so I could focus on making sure his retirement went off well, he asked me if I was sure. After all, he knew how much I wanted to be in a Women's Rumble.

[Some sadness creeps into Michelle's voice.]

MB: After all those years of only ever being in Men's Rumbles.

[She takes a moment to shake it off.]

MB: And how many times does the Women's Rumble come along? I had to go for it, right? That's what he told me.

[More fidgeting, as though discussing it makes her uncomfortable.]

MB: But then Julie offered the shot at the title and... and... I don't know, Lori. All week, on social media, through texts and emails, people have been telling me to go for it. That I'm the #3 contender and that Cinder and Harley Hamilton won't be challenging, so I deserve the opportunity. But I still can't shake the feeling that I...

[Michelle looks up, briefly lost in thought.]

MB: ... I don't deserve this. I know I've been working hard, and people have been telling me I do deserve it, but all this time I still feel... well... selfish. You look over our roster, and you've got people who have busted their butts to get within sniffing distance of a shot. Lauryn Rage tore her ACL over a year ago when she lost the title and has been talking about wanting it back. Ayako Fujiwara got robbed in her last shot at the title almost two years ago, and then got sidetracked by Laura Davis. Ricki Toughill had E-Girl MAX constantly in her head when she had a shot.

[Michelle looks back at her camera, a frown back on her face.]

MB: What did I do to deserve the shot that they didn't? Just because I said I never had a shot at the title? I just...

[She looks down again, her voice becoming a whisper.]

MB: I didn't earn it. And I can't shake that I feel selfish for even thinking about taking it.

[Lori starts to ask another question, but Michelle speaks up.]

MB: Can we cut?

LD: Of course.

[The footage cuts back to Lori Dane and Ben Waterson, Lori's face looking somewhat grim and Ben looking surprised.]

BW: Selfish? That's the reason? She thinks she'll be selfish?!

LD: I think she has some valid concerns that she has to work through.

BW: She's been involved in wrestling since 1998, and she hasn't gotten over the thought that sometimes, you have to be selfish? I can tell why she has never gotten a World Title shot before now.

LD: Look...

BW: She's been giftwrapped a shot at Julie Somers, and she's worried about how she'll look? She better not take the shot, Dane, or because if she goes in with that kind of attitude, she-

LD: Hey! Watch it! First of all, that's my friend you're talking about, and second, for all the issues we see in this sport about people cutting each other's throats, I think it's admirable to think about what her actions mean to everyone. Both her and our champion, Julie Somers, represent the best of the Women's Division, and it'd be genuinely refreshing to see actual role models wrestle a good, clean match for the top prize in our sport.

BW: And maybe they can bake cookies together after it's done.

LD: Michelle's a heck of a baker, I'll have you know. Moving along though, coming up next we have...

[A voice rings out over the PA system - a voice that is definitely not Megumi Sato's...]

"Ladies and gentlemen, children of all ages... the AWA proudly presents... the NUMBER ONE RATED SEGMENT IN ALL OF AWA TELEVISION..."

...THE FRONNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNT PAAAAAAAAAAAAAAGE!"

LD: ...this.

[The crowd boos loudly as Prince's "Controversy" starts up in Center Stage Studios and we cut to the entrance stage where we see some curtain have been set up. The curtains swing open to reveal the "set" of The Front Page which is its usual folding table set up as a desk, and a folding chair set up behind and to the side, but at least we finally have a monitor instead of a hanging cardboard sign - although this monitor just has a simple "Front Page" in red block font on a white background.]

And on cue, stepping into the stage is the loudmouth himself, Bryson Page, wearing black loafers, faded blue jeans, and a white T-shirt under an outdated tweed blazer, and of course a microphone in hand.]

BP: Thank you... thank you all... and you heard it here first, ladies and germs... THE... NUMBER ONE...

[He holds up one finger... no, not that one.]

BP: ...RATED SEGMENT... in ALL of AWA television...

[He beams broadly at that likely-false statement.]

BP: ...THE FRONT PAGE!

[Page strikes a pose, mic in hand, as the fans continue to boo. He smirks at the reaction, nodding his head...]

BP: And yes... ladies, men, other designations, Mister and Missus American Wrestling Alliance and all her ships at sea... it is once again I...

[He spreads his arms wide, soaking in the building boos...]

BP: ...the straw that stirs the drink, the spoon that stirs the pot...

[And build those boos are.]

BP: ...the agent of chaos, the provocateur, the biggest driver of engagement for the AWA and even Disney itself...

[The Architect of Anger is smirking as the boos grow louder.]

BP: ...I am Bryson Page...

[It's the friggin' Taj Mahal of boos right now.]

BP: ...and this... is THE FRONT PAGE!

[Page enjoys his moment, taking it all in as the crowd lets him have it.]

BP: And as we reflect on a huge night last week for the AWA - National Wrestling Night - we weep for the lost ratings and engagement because that Mad Russian and his bosses were too scared I might say something too terrible for Network TV! No Network Front Page because, "I'm barely acceptable on Cable"!

The nerve!

I'M too risky for National TV, but no problems letting Magnum murk Temple's dirty little secret? No problems letting that lunatic Jackson Haynes on TV at all?

[Page shakes his head madly.]

BP: Oh, and speaking of what's on everyone's mind... and no, it's not the Retirement Tour Juan Vasquez getting ANOTHER shot at the World Title in this white washing of his last two years of trying to destroy the place, no.

It's the aforementioned King of the Death Match getting his dirty laundry exposed on TV by his ex.

[Page smirks, rubbing his hands together with glee.]

BP: Now, I could go on a long winded and screaming tirade about yet ANOTHER NEPO BABY showing up in the land of nostalgia, but it looks like Max Magnum cleaned up that mess for everyone's benefit.

So I say "Bravo" Max, and do us a favor, when Temple decides that getting his ass handed to him by Martinez last time he wrestled wasn't bad enough for the Legend, I'd out and bet the mortgage on Magnum putting Temple out for good.

[The crowd is all over Page's incitement of a legend.]

BP: But now people, speaking of "Legends" being embarrassing to their kids...

BW: That's a heck of a segue.

BP: ...that leads me to my guest tonight.

Two weeks ago, on Showtime, he got himself a little worked up, overextended himself, bit off way more than he can chew, and for this man, that's an accomplishment, if ya know what I mean, and got himself shut down by the Line Jumping National Champ, Jordan Ohara.

[The crowd cheers the mention of the Phoenix but Page ignores them and steamrolls on.]

BP: And in doing so, he embarrassed my dear friend Odysseus Allah.

So ladies and Gentlemen, please welcome my guest at this time, to explain just what he's doing..."DIRT DOG" UNIQUE ALLAH!

[Page rises, clapping obnoxiously as Ol' Dirty Bastard's "Snakes" begins to play over the PA system, drawing a mixed response from the AWA faithful... some of whom cheer the nostalgia of Allah's late 90s run. After a few moments - during which Page checks an obnoxiously large and expensive looking watch on his wrist - Dirt Dog Unique Allah makes his appearance at the top of the ramp, stumbling and swaying a little as he walks. He carries a red Solo cup in hand, lifting it to salute the crowd before collapsing into the guest's seat, taking a big swig out of the cup and gargling before speaking...]

DDUA: Yo, you silver-tongued Devil, what is you talking bout, man? I ain't embarrass nobody. Fuh outta here. Stop tryin to convince these people I'm old. I ain't old!

[Page arches an eyebrow.]

BP: I'm sorry... can he say "fuh"... is that allowed?

[Page shrugs.]

BP: Whatever. Look, I'm just talking about two weeks ago when you got royally thumped in a match you had no business being in.

[DDUA leans closer, squinting at Page.]

DDUA: Yo muhfuh, let me ask you sumpin'. You been in the ring with that Ohara muhfuh?

[Page looks off-camera.]

BP: Really? "Muhfuh" is okay too?

[He sighs, shaking his head.]

BP: Mr. Unique Allah, good sir... no, I have not had the distinction of competing against the fraudulent National Champion. You see, I have been out of action for a while with this sports hernia issue and... I'm still not cleared to compete unfortunately!

[The crowd jeers Page's obvious cowardice.]

BP: But if I was cleared... let me tell you...

[He balls up his fist in a "let me at him, let me AT him!" gesture as Allah narrows his eyes, taking a long pull from his cup and sighing contentedly.]

DDUA: Aight then, you ain't know what it's like.. that muhfuh good but I got him all mapped out and OD gonna benefit. He gonna be National Champion.

[Page waves a dismissive hand at the 90s star.]

BP: Well, of course... there's no doubt that Odysseus will be National Champion one day... but what I'm saying is that day could've been two weeks ago, couldn't it?

[Allah looks puzzled.]

BP: You didn't even give your own son the chance to take that match with Ohara, did you? You just jumped right in there like... like Ohara The Line Jumper was your son and not Odysseus.

[Allah starts to get up but flops back down.]

DDUA: You listen to me-

[Page interrupts with a glare.]

BP: No, no... you listen to me, oldtimer. What I'm really wondering as I'm sitting here right now with you is that if you were willing to do that to your own son two weeks ago... are you gonna do the same thing to him when he finally cashes in his World Television Title shot?

[Allah smashes a hand down on the table, shaking it visibly as he shouts angrily.]

DDUA: ENOUGH!

[DDUA leans hard on the table, pointing a shaking finger at Page who is visibly leaning back in his seat away from the unpredictable Allah.]

DDUA: Yo, Devil, you sho nuff do run yo mouth. You think you cool or sumpin? Look, I been up and down this road before. I ain't taking no Bullet Train from Hell from you! OD gonna be the top, Devil. I'm gonna make sure of it. So shut up talkin' 'bout me and just keep shutting up.

[Allah looks down into his cup, shaking his head.]

DDUA: Hey, you... uh... you got some beer?

[Page looks disgusted at the idea.]

BP: Beer? That's Carver's gig, not mine... but if you ask me, you've already had a few too many.

[Allah doesn't seem to hear Page's jab, breaking out into song.]

DDUA: I don't know hooooow to loooove him!

[Allah pops up on his feet, leaning on the table as Page somehow manages to lean even further back.]

DDUA: Yo, lemme get a beer! You wanna beer? Yo, drink with me, bruh.

[Page holds up a hand.]

BP: No, I'm good.

[DDUA shakes his head.]

DDUA: Nah, nah... you ain't... but I like that. You gonna do some ish round here. I can see why my boy like you. I don't care what nobody say... Odysseus Allah is the gotdang truth.

[Page looks over off-camera.]

BP: "Gotdang" too? You've gotta be kid-

[Allah leans waaaaay over the table, grabbing Page by the wrist.]

DDUA: You gon' see, Devil. I was great but he gon' be the greatest!

That TV Title? His. National Title? His. World Title. His.

[Allah's eyes suddenly get big.]

DDUA: TAG TEAM titles! OURS! WE GONE BE WORLD CHAMPS TOGETHER, YO!

[Page tries to withdraw his hand from DDUA's grasp.]

BP: Uh, okay... Unique, ya know, as much as I'd like to push the envelope here, I think we're gonna wrap this up-

[Allah shakes his head, slapping a hand down on the table again.]

DDUA: My boy understands how hard the road is. How lonely it gets? It ain't nuthin to slip into some moments of weakness specially when it's a fantasy sittin' right there. Whatchu gonna do? Naw'mean? Yo, why we talkin' 'bout this anyway?

Lissen here, man. Let me drink in peace, okay? I got some plannin' to do to make Odysseus THE man.

[Page stands up as well, still trying to get his hand free.]

BP: Right, anyways... aw hell, I don't actually have a sign off!

[Allah yanks the hand towards him, causing Page to nearly fall over.]

DDUA: See, it's men like you that done got the game messed up! You think you can try me with that Devil tongue of yours? No... let me calm down.

[Allah keeps his grip as Page struggles to get free.]

DDUA: Me and OD going straight to the top! You hear me? He gon' be everything I was supposed to be and more. That's what it is! And that's how it's gone be...

[Allah trails off as he looks into the crowd, spotting someone in the crowd that sparks his interest.]

DDUA: Yo, yo! Meet me backstage, aight! Yo, make sure she gets through! Yeah! Her in the red!

The Dog in me is acting up! WOOF!

[Page is looking a bit panicked as he searches for some assistance...

...when suddenly and without fanfare, Odysseus Allah comes through the curtain into view, seemingly frustrated and concerned as he approaches his father.]

DDUA: YO! Here's my boy! Yo, this Devil calling me a old man, son. I ain't old, boy. You know that.

[Odysseus puts Allah's arm over his shoulder. He looks apologetically at Page.]

OA: Don't worry about it, Pops. Let's head to the back.

[Allah nods, finally letting go of Page's wrist, throwing back another big gulp out of his red cup...]

DDUA: NAH! NAH! I don't care, boy! They ain't gonna call me old! They ain't gonna disrespect us, son!

[Odysseus is a little more forceful, trying to guide his father offstage as DDUA continues to shout into his mic.]

DDUA: I'M A SHOW 'EM!

LEE CONNORS! YEAH, YOU, MUHFUH! I CHALLENGE YOU! COME SEE ME, SON!

[Odyaseus holds his head, wishing the words never came out his father's mouth.]

BP: Oh, great. THIS is the week you corporate suits don't cut me off? You want this blood on your hands? You wanna see an old man get hurt? You want to embarrass a great talent like-

[And now Page's mic is cut as he silently rants towards the camera...

...and we abruptly fade to black.

...and then back up on a shot of Ryan Martinez walking down the aisle. From the scenery around him, we can see this slow motion footage is from right before WarGames at SuperClash IX.]

#When you wish..#

[Dissolve to the White Knight throwing knife edge chops at the towering form of Torin The Titan...]

#...upon a star#

[...to Martinez and Derrick Williams working together to use a double clothesline to take the giant off his feet...]

#Makes no difference who you are...#

[...to a closeup of a bloodied Martinez, looking up in shock as a hobbled Shadoe Rage joins him in the cage...]

#Anything your...#

[...to the White Knight driving Vasquez' skull into the canvas with his signature brainbuster...]

#...heart desires will...#

[...to Martinez hooking John Law in a crossface, wrenching back with all his might as Law struggles to hang on...]

#...come to you.#

[...to a crowd shot of a group of young fans holding up a banner that reads "THE WHITE KNIGHT FOREVER!" as a voiceover begins...]

"Ryan Martinez, you and..."

[Cut to a shot of a bloodied but smiling Ryan Martinez standing triumphant with his teammates...]

"...Team AWA just won the Main Event at SuperClash! Now what are you gonna do?"

[...to a regular speed shot of Martinez still in the double cage, looking into the camera's lens with a grin...]

RM: I'm going to Disneyland!

[...and we fade to a shot of the Disneyland logo before fading to black.

And as we fade back up, we get the ominous sounds of "O Fortuna" - a song quite familiar to longtime professional wrestling fans. A graphic comes up.]

"A promising young superstar."

[We get a clip from National Wrestling Night from the intense battle between Damian DeVille and Max Magnum where DeVille is charging a cornered Magnum...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

SA: KNEE STRIKE! A FLYING KNEE BY DEVILLE!

[...and the crowd reacts with shock as Magnum's knees are buckled by the blow, urgently hooking an arm over the ropes to the stay on his feet!]

CP: He's hurt, Sal! The flying kneestrike caught him and Magnum is hurt!

[A look of panic bordering on sheer terror is on the face of Stevie Scott as he slams his hands on the apron, shouting at his charge to "GET BACK! GET OUT!"]

SA: Stevie Scott urging Magnum to get out of there and regroup but DeVille's on him again!

[With Magnum slightly slouched over, DeVille goes back on the attack, driving down elbowstrikes to the cheekbone of the stunned Magnum, attempting to knock his legs out from under him!]

SA: Magnum's down to a knee! DeVille hammering him with those elbows - all the weaponry from his former days in the ring... and the referee's taking a look, Colt.

CP: It'd be the biggest upset of all time if DeVille shatters the undefeated streak with a referee's stoppage!

SA: Magnum's in serious danger here! You only need to look at the face of the Hotshot to know how bad this is!

[DeVille hooks his hands around Magnum's head and neck...]

SA: Muay Thai clinch!

[...and DRIVES a knee up into the dazed Alpha Beast's jaw!]

SA: OHH! KNEE CONNECTS!

[Stevie is frantically shouting at the official now - "GET HIM OUT OF THE CORNER, DAMN IT!" The referee is trying to oblige, bellowing at DeVille who is narrowly focused on the chance to score perhaps the biggest upset in AWA history...]

SA: ANOTHER ONE FINDS THE MARK!

[A third knee causes Magnum to slump back against the turnbuckles, still on one knee...

...and we fade to black to another graphic that reads - "A surprising savior"...

...and we go back to footage from the same match where Magnum has taken the mount and is delivering hammerfists that are landing without any obstruction on the bloodied face of the rookie...]

"OHHHHHHHHH!"

"OHHHHHHHHHH!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

SA: This is too much, Koji! You gotta-

[And suddenly, Sakai leaps into the action, diving on the prone DeVille's face as he swings his arms frantically at the timekeeper. Magnum holds up his bloodied fist, glaring down at Sakai's back...]

"DING! DING! DING!"

CP: That's it! Sakai stopped it! He stopped the match!

SA: Finally. It's about time... and you can only hope that it's not too late for-

[Sakai pushes up to his knees, waving his arms a second time...

...which is when Magnum SHOVES Sakai off of DeVille, swinging his arm down again...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[The crowd is ROARING with disdain for Magnum!]

SA: What the hell?! The match is over!

CP: Tell Magnum that!

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[The referee shouts at Magnum, warning that he's going to reverse the decision...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

SA: There is no one who can stop this but Koji Sakai! The kid's got no friends! No allies!

CP: Magnum's trying to end this kid's career right here with the whole world watching, Albano! He's trying to finish him off for good!

SA: And there's no one who can save Damian DeVille from-

[And suddenly, the crowd ERUPTS at the sound - the familiar sound - of music that has not been heard in the AWA in several months but is instantly recognized by not just AWA fans... but professional wrestling fans... all around the globe.

The song itself is known...

...as is who it represents.]

SA: WHAT?! WHAT?!

CP: What the hell is he...? It can't be!

[But it is as a man who is a former World Champion comes running into view, sprinting may be a better word to describe it, tearing down the aisle before his music can even really get going...

A man known by many names to longtime fans of this business.

Former World Champion.

Hall of Famer.

Evil Incarnate.

The King of the Death Match.

The Father of Truth.

He is known by all these names.

But on this night, he adds another to the list...

The Savior of Damian DeVille.]

SA: CALEB TEMPLE! CALEB TEMPLE! MY GOD IN HEAVEN, IT'S CALEB TEMPLE!

CP: He ain't got a thing to do with ANY God in Heaven, Albano!

[Temple hits the ring at full speed, diving under the bottom rope into the ring...

...and as he does, Max Magnum climbs to his feet, DeVille's blood on his fists as he balls them up and stares unblinkingly at one of the most dangerous competitors in the history of professional wrestling.]

SA: CALEB TEMPLE IS IN THE RING AND THIS PLACE IS GOING NUTS, COLT!

CP: WHAT?! I CAN'T HEAR A THING!

[Temple glares, a burning fire in his eyes as he stares down Max Magnum who stands over DeVille, not backing down a step as the crowd is going apoplectic at the idea of these two throwing down...

...and we fade to black again with another graphic - "A shocking revelation"...

...and back up on the aftermath of what we just saw, Caleb Temple inside the ring with a bloodied Damian DeVille... a smirking Veronica Westerly on the entrance stage with a confused Truth Marie Temple.]

CP: This is turning into quite the family affair!

[We cut back to the stage, where an ecstatic-looking Veronica is flanked by their daughter, Truth Marie. The teenager is looking at her father, her eyes full of confusion and questions.]

TMT: Daddy, what is this?

[Temple waves a dismissive hand, shaking his head.]

CT: Not here, not now, baby. I promise we can talk about it, but not like this.

[For the first time, Caleb Temple looks vulnerable. All at once, he looks every second of his forty-nine years. He looks tired. Truth points at Damian.]

TMT: Why are you so interested in him?

[He looks away. He can't meet his daughter's eyes.]

VW: Yes. Come on, "Daddy." Your CHILD asked you a question.

[He looks at Veronica with sheer burning contempt and shakes his head.]

VW: You call yourself "The Father of Truth"... and you sit on a throne of lies.

[Truth Marie looks puzzled at her mother, turning back towards her legendary father.]

TMT: Daddy... what's Mom talking about?

CT: Truth... baby... I...

[Westerly's voice goes cold as she interjects.]

VW: Tell her.

[Temple's fury flashes again.]

CT: NO!

[Westerly waves a hand across the crowd.]

VW: Tell everyone.

[Temple buries his weathered face in his hands.]

CT: I CAN'T! YOU KNOW I CAN'T!

[Westerly smirks.]

VW: In that case... Truth...

[Temple looks at Rhoni, and then at Damian, and then at Truth.]

CT: Truth...

[And, glassy-eyed, he swallows hard and does the hardest thing he's ever had to do.]

CT: He's my son, Truth.

[The crowd absolutely EXPLODES!]

SA: HIS SON?!?!?

CP: WHAT IN _THE_ HELL?!

[Temple slowly drops back to one knee on the mat beside the bloodied DeVille, who is now sitting up and looking at him with the aid of the medic.]

CT: He's my son. Damian... is your brother, baby.

[Off mic, we hear Veronica say "HALF brother" to Truth. The teenage girl barely acknowledges her mother. Her eyes are filling with tears and she has both hands over her mouth.]

CT: I'm so sorry. I didn't want you to find out like this. I didn't want this. Any of it.

[Truth shakes her head, but what emotion is behind it? Is it denial? Is it shock? Is it disgust that her trust has been shattered by the man who meant everything to her?]

SA: What are we...?

[But Sal trails off as Truth Marie looks at her mother, and then at her father, and simply turns and walks away. Westerly turns back towards the ring, a wicked expression on her face.]

VW: That's the thing about Truth, Caleb...

[Temple locks eyes with his wife.]

VW: ...it always comes with Consequences.

[Veronica smirks as she turns to follow her daughter, leaving a broken King of the Death Match kneeling in the ring beside, apparently, his son...

...and we fade to black with one final graphic.

"Saturday, April 28th
The Battle of London
Damian DeVille speaks"

[And we fade backstage to where Sweet Lou Blackwell was standing.]

SLB: I'll tell you, fans... I'm quite proud of my standing as the master of scoops in this business but this? Even I was surprised by this. Caleb Temple admitting to the world that Damian DeVille is his son? Wow! Well, one week from tonight, we will hear from DeVille about this revelation and about... well, what comes next for the rookie as he tries to find his way here in the AWA. But right now...

[A horrific sound rings out as a cringing Blackwell recoils in shock... and then still more noise as the camera pulls back to reveal a wild scene as a chainsaw-wielding Harper Hannigan is facing off a line of security guards. The guards are trying in vain to calm them down. After a moment passes, "Doctor" Harrison Fawcett rushes in, talking directly to Hannigan.]

HH: I don't wanna hear it, Harry! No gaggle of giggling hyenas is gonna do that to my family!

[Fawcett raises both hands, talking in a calm tone.]

"D"HF: I understand all too well how you feel. It certainly was not my idea. Not any of it.

HH: Then what the hell is going on?

[A cautious Blackwell interrupts.]

SLB: I could ask the same question.

[Fawcett sighs at both.]

"D"HF: I never have and never will lead those two, or you for that matter, into a strategically weak situation. In almost every situation, they have both adhered to my every bit of counsel. This time with these men however...

[Fawcett shakes his head.]

"D"HF: ...they've been lead down a path of rage. One so great, they rush in where it would be better for cooler heads to prevail. When our team gets in the ring with just two of Generation Lost, I expect that will go much differently than what we saw transpire tonight.

HH: Yeah, I can see that, but what in the hell is the plan?!

"I am thinking I am the one with the plan."

[And Interim President Zharkov steps into view, clipboard in hand...]

MZ: Your men fought bravely, Fawcett.

[Fawcett gives a "well, duh" look to the Tsar.]

MZ: And bravery - although foolish in this case - will be rewarded as long as I hold this...

[He wields the clipboard.]

MZ: One week from tonight, the AWA will be putting on The Battle of London, yes?

[Fawcett nods.]

MZ: What better battle to present than...

[Zharkov pauses...]

MZ: Generation Lost versus the Aces In The Hole... and your Family.

[Zharkov nods as Fawcett smiles.]

"D"HF: I'm not sure about that Givens kid but Layton... well, I can respect that bloodline.

MZ: Is that a yes?

"D"HF: That's a yes. And we'll see what happens when the odds are even.

[Hannigan fires up the chainsaw, again causing Blackwell to duck away, shielding his ears as Hannigan nods as well...]

...and we fade back out to ringside to Lori and Ben.]

LD: Wow! Big breaking news right there as we've just added another match to an already-stacked Battle of London card as it'll be eight man tag team action when Generation Lost takes on the quartet of The Fawcett Family and the Aces In The Hole, Ben!

BW: I hope AWA Legal is on standby because sending The Lost Boy and Crowley over there is the start of an international incident, Dane.

[Lori chuckles.]

LD: Speaking of international incidents, one of the men in our next match is just as likely to cause a problem while in London next weekend - I'm talking about the Shadow Wolf himself, Takeshi Mifune!

BW: Mifune's been even more out of control lately than usual. Hanging around with the rest of Team Supreme seems to have him fired up and after he gets his pound of flesh tonight with Howie Somers, you better believe Raphael Rhodes will be next.

LD: I'm just hoping our official tonight can keep him under control long enough to actually see a winner. Let's go down to Megumi for the introductions!

[We fade to the ring where Megumi Sato is standing.]

MS: The following contest is set for one fall with a fifteen minute time limit. Introducing first...

[Sato lowers the mic as there's a moment's pause before you hear a little chanting.]

"Do-do-do-do do-do-do-do
Do-do-do-do do-do-do-do"

[And then, it kicks into the unmistakable chorus of "Centuries" by Fall Out Boy. Up on the video screen flash two words:

"NEXT GEN"]

MS: From Boston, Massachusetts... weighing in at 265 pounds... he is one half of the AWA WORRRRRRRRRRLD TAG TEAM CHAMMMMMMPIOONNNNNNSSSSSS...

...HOOOOOOOWWWWWIEEEEEEEEE SOMMMMMMMMMMERRRRRRRRRS!

[The crowd ROARS as the curtain parts and Howie Somers steps out onto the elevated entrance stage dressed in a navy blue vest with the words "NEXT GEN" printed across the back in white block lettering. Under the vest, we can see a white singlet with the letters "NG" on the front in the center in navy blue block lettering with blue tights, white knee pads, and white wrestling boots...

...oh, and the AWA World Tag Team Title secured around his waist. Somers raises his arms in the air on the stage, drawing in the cheers of the fans with a grin on his face.]

LD: One-half of the most popular tag team running in the AWA - and one of the most successful to boot. Next Gen are two-time AWA World Tag Team Champions, Ben, after regaining the titles back at SuperClash from the Soldiers of Fortune.

BW: They are both of those things, Dane - popular AND successful - but if you ask me, their time as champions is running out.

LD: And why is that?

BW: If you sit down, keep quiet, and watch over the next little bit, we're about to get a sneak preview of exactly what the Gold Standard will do to these two when they finally get their shot at the titles.

LD: Bret Grayson played a role in helping Harper and Somers regain the titles and as a thank you, they offered the Gold Standard a shot at the titles. Of course, that was before Grayson and Mifune pulled the rug out from under everyone and joined Team Supreme after their terrible actions at the Red Wedding... but Daniel Harper and Howie Somers are men of their word so that title defense will be coming in the very near future, I'm sure.

[While the announcers have been recapping, Somers is making his way towards the ring, slapping all the offered hands...]

LD: Bret Grayson has been sidelined for a while with an arm injury but reports are that it won't be long until he's cleared to compete and we'll finally see that showdown.

[Somers climbs onto the ropes, ducking through the ropes and raising his arms again as he prepares for action, removing the tag title belt to hand off to the official as the music fades and...]

MS: Annnnnnnnd his opponent... weighing in at 235 pounds... fighting out of Yokohama, Japan and representing Team Supreme...

He is the Shadow Wolf...

...TAAAAAAKESSSSSSSSHIIIIIIIIII MIIIIIFUUUUUUUUNEEEEEEEEEE!

[And with "Kaze Ni Nare" coming to life over the PA system, the crowd roars with boos as they see "The Shadow Wolf" Takeshi Mifune emerging from the entrance, looking like everyone's worst nightmare. Mifune, a thick, stocky Japanese male, is wearing simple black trunks and short black boots with white tape on his wrists. On his head is a Cuban hat and in his hands is a black towel. He walks towards the ring with enough intensity and intimidation to make even the bravest man quake in his boots.]

LD: And there he is, "The Shadow Wolf" himself, Takeshi Mifune. Mifune has been causing nothing but destruction and chaos everywhere he wrestles in the last few weeks, Ben.

BW: It's almost like giving up leadership of Mifune-Gun and handing it over to Supreme Wright to form Team Supreme has given him the freedom to be as insane and chaotic as he wants to be. And that's a scary thought, because think about just how insane and chaotic he was before the formation of Team Supreme!

[As Mifune reaches the ringside area, the song hits its climax and the more knowledgeable fans in the crowd can't help but join in...]

"KAZE NI NARRRREEEEEE!!!"

BW: Typical humanoids in the crowd... they hate the guy, but they love his entrance music.

[Mifune removes his hat, revealing a pineapple-like stalk of hair on the top of his head styled upwards in a samurai topknot while the rest of his head has been shaved into the designs of various swirls, resembling the wind and clouds in ancient Japanese art.]

LD: What an intimidating sight.

BW: That's one of the toughest men you'll see in ANY ring standing right there in front of you. Somers must be shaking like a leaf.

LD: I highly doubt that.

"DING! DING! DING!"

[The crowd buzzes with anticipation as the bell rings. The two men circle each other, locking eyes. Mifune, ever the bully, smirks as he extends a hand, baiting Somers for a collar-and-elbow tie-up. Somers hesitates for just a second, then goes in with full force.]

LD: And here we go!

[Mifune wastes no time. He quickly transitions from the tie-up into a hammerlock, smoothly twisting Somers' arm behind his back. But Somers reverses, slipping free and countering with a headlock takedown, planting Mifune on the mat.]

LD: Somers is not backing down from Takeshi Mifune at all!

BW: Not a bad start for Somers, but let's see how long he can keep this up. Trying to keep it on the mat against a master of ring like Mifune will not end well.

[Trapped in a side headlock, Mifune growls, annoyed to find himself in this predicament. He powers back to his feet, locking his hands around Somers' waist and lifts him for a back suplex...]

"THUUUUUUDD!"

LD: A big back suplex breaks that headlock!

BW: What'd I say? Mifune escaped that with the greatest of ease!

[...Somers crashes down, but rolls through, quickly popping back up to his feet and shaking off the effects of the suplex and roars at a surprised Mifune, causing the audience to cheer loudly!]

LD: Would you look at that! Somers is showing some real resilience and Mifune is shocked!

BW: Calm down, Dane. Mifune's been wrestling for almost thirty years and he's seen it all. Somers being too dumb to know he's hurt shouldn't be surprising to anybody.

LD: Mifune and Somers going nose to nose and- oh! Mifune just pie-faced him!

[Big cheer!]

LD: And Somers pie-faces him right back! He's not letting Mifune bully him for a second!

[Somers and Mifune then both run the ropes, coming back and colliding in the center of the ring with a pair of shoulder blocks, but neither budge. Mifune cackles and points to the ropes, daring Somers to try it again. Somers tries again, but this time, instead of running the opposite direction, Mifune follows him, driving a knee into Somers' midsection just as he hits the ropes, halting his momentum.]

LD: Howie Somers makes his first mistake of the match, walking right into a trap set by Takeshi Mifune.

BW: That was masterful work from a veteran like Mifune. He played that pumped-up halfwit Somers like a fiddle, and just like that, he's at his mercy.

[Mifune grabs Somers and throws him into the corner, delivering a series of hard overhead chops to the chest.]

"SMACK!"

"SMACK!"

"SMACK!"

LD: And there's those trademark overhead chops from Mifune!

BW: Of the thousands of people who have been on the receiving end of those chops in the last three decades, the result is always the same: clutching your chest in excruciating pain as your soul attempts to leave your body!

LD: A bit of an overstatement there, Ben.

BW: I've been on the receiving end of one! It's not pretty!

[Somers gasps for breath in the corner, but Mifune switches things up, throwing a huge knife-edge chop to the chest that rocks Somers. However, Somers fires back with a chop of his own...]

"SMACK!"

LD: OH! Somers returns fire!

[The crowd initially cheers—except they and Somers react with shock as Mifune barely registers the blow. Mifune stares at him, unflinching, as if daring Somers to try again.]

LD: Oh, Mifune felt nothing from that chop!

BW: Did Somers watch any film at all? This man is impervious to them! Somers might as well be trying to chop down an oak tree, Dane! He needs to change his game plan fast.

[Somers shakes his head, refusing to back down. He goes for another chop, but again, Mifune absorbs it with ease. He simply dusts off his chest, laughing at Somers and immediately rocks Somers with a brutal elbow to the side of the head, dropping him to one knee. He grabs Somers by the hair, looking down and yelling "WEAK!" at him.]

LD: Mifune's showing off that vicious side of his. He's not just tough—he's out here to humiliate Somers!

[The Japanese grappler pulls Somers up, locking in a wristlock and forcing him to the mat. Somers grits his teeth, desperately trying to bridge up to escape. Mifune, however, cranks on the hold harder, twisting Somers' wrist at a painful angle.]

BW: See how Mifune's toying with him? Somers is a good wrestler, I'll admit, but Mifune's world-class. A man right up there with the likes of men like Lord Byron or Jeff Matthews in terms of technical prowess. Hell, he taught Supreme Wright how to wrestle! And he's making Somers look like a rookie.

[Somers struggles, but manages to roll out of the wristlock, escaping to his feet. He ducks under an attempt at a slap from Mifune, and doubles him over with a boot to the midsection. He hooks him for a quick suplex. Mifune tries to fight it, but Somers powers through, taking him over and planting him on the mat! The crowd roars as Somers stays on him with a front facelock, looking to take Mifune over with another suplex.]

LD: What a suplex by Howie Somers! And I think he's going for another!

[Somers wrenches the facelock tight, taking a moment to look out into the crowd, but Mifune suddenly grabs Somers' legs and sweeps him to the mat!]

LD: Oh! Takeshi Mifune takes Somers down!

BW: Somers isn't going to have it that easy. This is what makes wrestling a man like Mifune so dangerous... you can't ever stop and take a moment to breathe, let alone let your guard down. The moment you give him an opening, you better believe he's going to take it!

[Mifune then transitions into a knee bar, looking to tear apart Somers' leg as the tag team champ desperately tries to fight it.]

BW: And now Mifune goes to work on the leg! This is where Somers is in real trouble. Mifune can do a ton of damage here.

LD: Somers has to get to the ropes or find an escape fast!

[Somers yells out in pain, but somehow manages to claw his way to the ropes, grabbing the bottom rope to force a break. The referee steps in, but Mifune holds on for a few extra seconds, drawing boos from the crowd.]

LD: COME ON! Get Mifune off him, ref!

[Mifune releases at the count of four, a sinister grin crossing his face as he backs away from a hurting Howie Somers.]

LD: Look at Mifune... he's savoring every bit of this. But Somers is still fighting!

BW: But not for long. Now he's wounded and Mifune's going to target that leg for the rest of the match. He's a shark and now he smells blood in the water!

[Somers uses the ropes to pull himself up, hobbling slightly on the injured leg. Mifune charges in for the kill, but Somers ducks and rolls through, surprising Mifune with a quick schoolboy pin attempt!]

LD: OH! Somers surprises Mifune with the rollup! ONE! TWO! Mifune kicks out!

[Both men scramble to their feet and Somers connects with a forearm to Mifune's jaw, staggering him.]

LD: Somers with the forearm! He's mounting a comeback!

[Mifune shakes his head, more annoyed than hurt, and looks to fire back. But Somers catches him with a deep arm drag! The crowd is getting behind Somers as he starts gaining momentum. Mifune rises, only for Somers to hit him with a clothesline!]

LD: A big clothesline from Howie Somers and he has Mifune reeling!

BW: Somers is actually hanging in there, I'll give him that!

[Somers goes to capitalize, grabbing Mifune by the head, but before the action can continue...]

LD: IT'S BRET GRAYSON!

[Bret Grayson rushes down the ramp and slides into the ring. The referee immediately calls for the bell as the Olympic gold medalist clobbers Somers from behind, causing the match to end in a disqualification.]

LD: And just like that, Bret Grayson has ruined this match!

BW: Ruined? If anything, he's improving it! Howie Somers had his fun, but now the real punishment starts.

[Grayson and Mifune both begin stomping away at Somers, with Mifune barking orders. The crowd boos loudly as the two-on-one beatdown continues.]

LD: This match was heating up, but now we've got chaos in the ring! What a cowardly attack!

BW: Hey, Somers wanted to stand up to the Shadow Wolf. Looks like the wolf pack came after him!

[As Grayson and Mifune continue their two-on-one beatdown on Howie Somers, the crowd suddenly erupts into cheers.]

LD: Wait a minute! Here comes Daniel Harper!

BW: Not this guy!

[Daniel Harper, charges down the ramp with fire in his eyes. He slides into the ring, immediately going after Grayson with a series of hard right hands. Mifune tries to cut him off, but Harper ducks a clothesline and blasts Mifune with a dropkick, sending him stumbling into the ropes.]

LD: Harper's a house on fire! He's taking it to The Gold Standard!

[Harper turns his attention back to Grayson, clotheslining him over the top rope! Mifune tries to attack from behind, but Harper catches him with a back body drop, sending the Shadow Wolf tumbling out of the ring to the floor with his tag team partner!]

LD: Harper's cleared the ring! He's saved his partner!

[The crowd cheers wildly as Mifune and Grayson backpedal up the ramp, seething with frustration. Inside the ring, Harper helps Somers to his feet, both men standing tall as the camera focuses on their victorious moment.]

LD: Daniel Harper with the save, and now Grayson and Mifune are running with their tails between their legs!

BW: For now, Dane. But this is far from over.

[As Mifune and Grayson regroup outside the ring. Next Gen remains in the ring, Harper shouts at the Gold Standard and motions with his hands, as if daring them to re-enter. Somers stands beside Harper, his hands on his hips and an ice-cold look in his eyes. The referee gets in front of Harper, trying to hold him back but glancing over his shoulder as a voice rings out over the PA system.]

"Hold on, now... everybody hold on!"

[Sweet Daddy Williams has the mic at the podium and draws the attention of everyone.]

SDW: Let me tell you something... it's clear we're not gonna keep this between Mifune and Somers, so why should we? Why don't we just do this as a tag match, right now?

[The crowd cheers that idea. Harper nods toward Williams, gestures with his hand and shouts, "LET'S DO IT!" Somers' expression doesn't change. Takeshi Mifune folds his arms, clearly annoyed, while Bret Grayson, though hesitant at first, begins pacing in frustration. They look at each other for a moment, unsure of whether to accept the challenge.]

SDW: Look here, baby, it's clear to anyone that, Bret Grayson, there's nothing wrong with your arm any more! Now why don't you show all these people what made you an Olympic gold medalist and throw it down with the champs!

[The crowd cheers again.]

SDW: And Takeshi Mifune, don't tell me you still aren't thinking about what Daniel Harper had to say about you and you aren't gonna let it go unanswered!

[Mifune's brow furrows as he glances at Harper and Somers standing tall in the ring. Grayson, on the other hand, starts to grin. His eyes light up as he turns to Mifune.]

"You know what? Let's do it. Let's show them why we're The Gold Standard!"

[Mifune remains silent for a second, then he slowly nods, a wicked smile creeping across his face.]

SDW: And maybe we can't make it a title match without President Zharkov's blessing, but we can sure do a preview of what a title match would look like, right here, in Atlanta, baby!

[Williams gestures to the crowd, whose cheers keep on going.]

SDW: So what we are waiting for, an invitation? Let's get this on!

[Harper is still shouting at Gold Standard, and then Somers, who hasn't said anything to this point, taps his partner on the shoulder to get his attention, gestures with him to settle down...

...then raises his right hand and motions in it a way to tell Gold Standard to "bring it."]

BW: Is this really going to happen right now, Lori? Next Gen versus The Gold Standard?

LD: It sure looks that way! And look at Grayson! He's chomping at the bit!

[Grayson, now visibly shaking with excitement, screams, "I'm gonna break them!" as he and Mifune step towards the ring. The crowd roars in anticipation.]

LD: It looks like the Gold Standard is all in! Harper and Somers better be ready for a war!

[Mifune and Grayson stand in their corner, while Howie Somers and Daniel Harper are fired up in theirs. The bell rings and we're underway!]

"DING! DING! DING!"

LD: Here we go! It looks like Mifune and Somers are starting, so we're continuing right where we left off. These two have a score to settle!

[Somers and Mifune lock up in the center of the ring. Somers secures Mifune in a headlock. Mifune struggles but quickly counters with a sharp elbow to Somers' ribs, breaking the hold.]

LD: All those years of experience gets Mifune right out of Somers' grip and... ohh, down goes Somers right away!

[Mifune spins behind Somers and grabs him by the hair, executing a leg trip, sending him sprawling. Mifune sticks out his tongue and makes a throat cutting gesture at Somers, drawing loud boos from the crowd.]

LD: Somers trying to settle into this tag team match slowly, but Mifune seems to want a quicker pace!

BW: After the way the last match ended, Somers starts off this one with a headlock? Read the room, kid... this match is a powder keg and the action is going to explode at any moment!

[Somers seems to understand this and charges at Mifune, meeting him with a solid dropkick that sends him into the corner. Mifune recovers quickly and runs at Somers, but Somers ducks and hits a big German suplex!]

LD: Somers showing Mifune he can match his fire! That suplex almost knocked Mifune out of his boots!

BW: Look at Grayson pacing back and forth on the apron. He hasn't been in the ring for months and now he's like a caged animal.

LD: With all the chaos in this match getting made by Sweet Daddy Williams of all people, I've gotta wonder - is Grayson even medically cleared? Does anyone even have the answer to that?

BW: You're welcome to go check... I'm gonna watch the action.

[Holding the back of his head, Mifune looks over and sees Grayson holding out his hand, practically begging to be tagged in. Mifune shoots Somers a look, before he tags in Bret Grayson, to a huge chorus of boos.]

LD: And he's in! For the first time in three months, Bret Grayson is inside a ring...

BW: And cleared to wrestle!

LD: ...hopefully.

BW: Bret Grayson is no Victoria June, Dane. He's a professional to the bone. If the man is in there, I'm betting he's cleared to go.

LD: ...hopefully.

[Grayson enters with an intense look on his face. The Olympic Gold Medalist locks eyes with Somers, who tries to stand his ground. Grayson immediately rushes and lifts Somers high into the air, slamming him down with a double leg!]

LD: Here comes Bret Grayson!

BW: I didn't see any trouble from that arm on that takedown. Just look at the intensity on this man! He's ready to run through a wall!

[Grayson drags Somers up to his feet and throws him an overhead belly-to-belly.]

"THHHUUUUDDDD!"

LD: What an overhead throw from Grayson!

BW: He looks like he hasn't missed a single day from the ring. That was as perfect of an overhead belly-to-belly suplex as they come!

[Somers hits hard, but pushes himself to his feet, before Grayson quickly grabs him by the arm and pulls him into a knee to the midsection.]

LD: Grayson staying right on him, showing the tenacity that made him an Olympic champion... look at this now!

[Grayson then goes for a gutwrench suplex, lifting Somers high into the air and holding him before bringing him crashing down hard!]

LD: Grayson is in his element now, really dominating Somers with a variety of suplexes. But Somers isn't giving up; he's trying to power through. He's not staying down after these suplexes. He keeps getting back up, showing some tenacity of his own, Ben.

BW: And that might just be a mistake, because all it does is leave him open to even more punishment from Grayson!

LD: Remember, fans... this is a non-title matchup but if Grayson is medically cleared as it seems, it may just be a matter of time now before we get the real deal title match we've been waiting months for!

[Grayson pops up to his feet and holds out his arms, screaming "ARE YOU NOT ENTERTAINED?" at the crowd, who just responds with even more boos.]

LD: In another time and place, Bret Grayson might be one of the most popular men in professional wrestling with his talent inside the ring... but as long as he stands beside the rest of Team Supreme, he's going to make the Most Hated rankings for sure.

[Grayson rolls his eyes at the crowd's reaction, before pulling Somers back to his feet. He whips Somers into the ropes...]

LD: Somers ducks that clothesline by Grayson... off the far side...

[...Somers and Grayson both have the same idea, going for a crossbody block at the same time and colliding in the center of the ring! The crowd begins to stomp and clap as both men are down.]

LD: The action is non-stop intensity! Somers and Grayson are both trying to get to their feet after that crash in the center of the ring!

BW: That was a nasty collision. They both need to tag out badly.

[As Somers gets to his feet first, Takeshi Mifune suddenly rushes into the ring, tackling Somers from behind and throwing him through the ropes and onto the floor!]

LD: Wait a minute! What the heck is Takeshi Mifune doing!?

BW: What he always does... whatever the heck Takeshi Mifune wants and can do to inflict the most pain and suffering on another human being.

LD: We were having what was shaping up to possibly being a great tag team match and Mifune is trying to ruin it!

[Mifune and Somers begin to brawl on the outside, trading slaps, elbows, punches and kicks...]

LD: It's breaking down on the outside and-

[...and the crowd groans as Mifune buries a knee into Somers' midsection before hurling him into the timekeeper's table!]

LD: Look out down there at ringside! Mifune's out of control AGAIN!

[With Somers reeling, Mifune digs under the ring apron, dragging a steel chair into view...]

LD: Wait a second now! This is going too far out here on the outside! Mifune's got the chair and-

[...and swinging the chair back over his head, winding up...]

LD: Somers blocks it! Somers blocks the chair!

[...and the Next Gen powerhouse responds with a kick to the gut, wresting the chair away from Mifune's grasp, tossing it aside before SMASHING Mifune facefirst into the timekeeper's table!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: Mifune gets a taste of his own medicine there... and we've got action inside the ring again as well! Grayson and Harper trading shots and-

[Grayson buries a kick in the gut of Harper, quickly going behind him, taking him up and over...]

LD: -AND HE FOLDS DANIEL HARPER IN HALF WITH A GERMAN SUPLEX!

[...and Grayson hangs on, rolling back to his feet, holding the waistlock...]

LD: Right back up, he's going for it again!

BW: No, he's not! He's going for the Gold Medal Slaaaaaam!

[...but as he attempts to lift Harper into the air, Harper counters with a DDT, spiking Grayson onto his skull!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: HARPER WITH A COUNTER! THIS IS MADNESS! THIS IS OUT OF CONTROL!

BW: Grayson and Somers - they're legal, right?!

LD: I believe so but-

[The referee tries to regain control, but it's too late. All four wrestlers are now outside the ring, brawling among the ringside fans.]

LD: -now we've got EVERYONE on the outside! More chaos thanks to Team Supreme, Ben!

BW: This is absolute pandemonium! The referee's trying to get control, but it's clear things have already spiraled OUT of control! And now they're going into the crowd! Hey, we wouldn't have that problem if we had barricades, Dane!

LD: Not gonna happen!

[Within moments, a wider shot shows Mifune and Somers up in the bleachers, trading haymakers as security endeavors to keep the fans back from the brawl!]

LD: We've got two of them fighting in the bleachers and...

"CLAAAAAAAAAAAAANG!"
"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: -HARPER PUTS GRAYSON INTO THE RINGSIDE STEPS!

[Harper gives a shout, diving on top of Grayson to pummel him as the referee shouts for the action to get back inside the ring but ain't a soul listening.]

LD: Fighting at ringside! Fighting in the bleachers! Look out!

[Working back down the bleachers, Mifune picks up the fallen chair and HURLS it at Somers who raises his arms to swat it down as an anxious security guard lunges to make sure it doesn't hit anyone in the crowd!]

LD: The referee... this is out of control! We've got security in the bleachers, trying to protect the fans... Somers and Mifune are too caught up in their rage towards each other and-

[Spilling back into the ringside area, Somers picks up another chair, throwing it at Mifune who takes it off the shoulder before lunging at Somers, hands wrapping around his throat...]

LD: Look out! Look out!

[...and Mifune shoves Somers backwards, spilling into the front row with fans scattering from their seats, loving every minute of the chaos happening in the stands.]

LD: It's a full-blown melee now! The ref has no choice but to throw this match out!

[The referee signals for the bell, as the camera captures the chaotic scene as officials try to restore order. Daniel Harper has made his way towards Mifune, grabbing a chair on his way...]

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"
"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and SMASHES it across the back of the Shadow Wolf, breaking the death grip on the throat of Howie Somers!]

"DING! DING! DING!"

LD: Well, folks, this one's ended in a double disqualification. Neither team could be contained. But what a chaotic scene!

[The ring bell keeps ringing as The Gold Standard and Next Gen continue to battle in and around the stands.]

"DING! DING! DING!"

[We catch sight of Mifune throwing a chair that narrowly misses Harper's head.]

"DING! DING! DING!"

LD: The Gold Standard and Next Gen tried, but this ultimately couldn't be settled in the ring!

BW: THEY'RE COMING THIS WAY! WATCH OUT!

[The camera focuses on the wild scene as security and officials struggle to separate the four wrestlers now headed towards the entrance stage as we cut to a commercial break...]

Cut 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 then back up on the podium where an anxious-looking Mariah Wolfe and a grinning Sweet Daddy Williams are standing next to their collapsed interview podium.]

MW: Welcome back to Center Stage Studios and Showtime on ESPN, fans... and... as you can see, the action got a little too close for comfort during the break as it spilled backstage and... well, it seems we finally have some order restored after what I can only describe as an all-out war between Next Gen and Gold Standard, that took all four wrestlers all over the arena, even to the concession stand during the break. I certainly hope there weren't any fans who got hurt.

SDW: I'll tell you what, Mariah, I can tell nothing got settled in that one, and if that was merely just a preview of that tag team title match, I can only imagine how much of a dogfight that the actual title match is going to be like!

MW: We'll try to get an update on what's going on with...

[Wolfe then stops as she notices a commotion in the crowd.]

MW: Hold on... what do we have here?

[And the fans cheer because it's Next Gen making their way through the floor seating towards the ringside area. Daniel Harper is still carrying the dented lid of the trash can that likely got used in the brawl, his eyes wide and his facial features leaving no doubt to his anger. Howie Somers follows him, his eyes narrow and cold but little emotion otherwise, though you can tell he's breathing heavily.]

MW: Next Gen is coming back out here.. the World Tag Team Champions... maybe we can get a word with them?

[Crossing from the seats to the ringside area, Somers nudges Harper, pointing up towards the stage. Harper swipes a hand across his face, wiping what appears to be mustard from his brow before nodding, the duo heading up the steps to cheers from the crowd...]

MW: Gentlemen... Daniel, Howie... a word?

[Harper walks right past Wolfe and Williams, toward the back of the interview set. He then takes the trash can lid, raises it high, then slams it down against the floor. From there, he just starts pacing back and forth.

Meanwhile, Somers comes right toward Wolfe and Williams. He immediately places his hands on hips and he's still breathing heavily.]

MW: Howie, it sure seems like your partner Daniel still wants a piece of Gold Standard.

[Somers stares at Wolfe for a moment.]

HS: Can you blame him, Mariah?

[He then glances at Williams, who is looking at Harper and appears to want to say something to him, but Somers taps Williams on the shoulder.]

HS: I know you mean well, Sweet Daddy, but let Daniel cool off, all right?

[He then turns back to Wolfe.]

HS: And I know you're just doing your job, Mariah, so my apologies if I come on too strong, but I'm going to say this.

[He turns to the camera, still breathing heavily.]

HS: I. Have. Had. Enough!

[He stares hard, hands still on his hips.]

HS: I have had enough of Team Supreme, I have had enough of all their shenanigans, I have had enough of hearing about the Red Wedding and them never having to answer for it, and I've certainly have had enough of Gold Standard playing this game! And by this point, Bret Grayson, you don't have any more excuses, and neither you do, Mifune!

[He points a finger at the camera.]

HS: You both have a shot at our tag team titles waiting for you. We want nothing more than to get both of you in that ring. And given that the ring here at Showtime can't hold our fight, it's clear we need to do this on a bigger stage!

[He pauses again to catch his breath.]

HS: And maybe it's too late to do it in London, but there's a Saturday Night Wrestling stop in Las Vegas coming up in a few weeks.

So why wait until we're in Los Angeles... we'll go see President Zharkov and get him to book us a date in Vegas!

[The crowd cheers at that. Somers glances back at his partner, who is still pacing about, then turns back to Wolfe.]

HS: If you see Grayson and Mifune, you can just ask them if they're feeling lucky, right?

[Williams, who has been listening to Somers, holds up his hand.]

SDW: You're saying you want to do the dance in Vegas, Howie? I'm sure they'd love to see you get it on, but what does your partner think?

[Williams glances back.]

SDW: Hey, Daniel, come on over here!

[Harper approaches Williams and Wolfe. Even after all that pacing, he's still got this wild look in his eyes.]

DH: I heard everything Howie said! Do you even need to ask me?!

[He turns to the camera and jerks his finger toward it.]

DH: Grayson! Mifune! We'll see you both in Vegas! And if you thought what Howie and I did to the Soldiers of Fortune was bad... if you thought what Howie and I did to the Shot Callers was bad...

[And then he really cuts loose.]

DH: YOU AIN'T SEEN NOTHING YET, I PROMISE YOU!

[Wolfe seems a little surprised at that reaction. Harper glances at her.]

DH: Sorry, Mariah... but enough is enough already!

[He then turns on his heel and moves swiftly off the set. Somers stares in Harper's direction, then nods at both Wolfe and Williams and follows his partner.]

MW: My goodness, Daniel Harper is clearly upset and I can tell Howie Somers is not happy, either! And on top of that, they've issued a challenge to Gold Standard for a match on Saturday Night Wrestling in Las Vegas! How about that one? Fans, we're going to take another break and get this place cleaned up but when we come back, we're going to get someone to track down Mifune and Grayson and get that answer! So don't you dare go away!

[We fade to black...

Cut to the members of Next Gen. Howie Somers is holding a big box in hand, while Daniel Harper is holding what looks like a small packet.]

HS: You know, Daniel, somebody once said that life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get.

[Yes, that would be a box of chocolates that Somers is holding.]

DH: That's a good observation, Howie. But if you ask me, life is more like a pack of AWA trading cards.

[Sure enough, in Harper's hand, that's a pack of trading cards.]

DH: You never know what you're going to get, but chances are, you're going to get something good.

[Somers glance at Harper for a minute, then nods.

Now in comes a voiceover.]

"It's the premier edition of Topps AWA trading cards. Featuring today's top AWA stars from the men's division."

[Images pop up of cards featuring Ryan Martinez, Supreme Wright and Shadoo Rage.]

"The top AWA stars of the women's division."

[Images pop up of cards featuring Julie Somers, Victoria June and Erica Toughill.]

"The top AWA tag teams."

[Images pop up of cards featuring The Soldiers of Fortune, The Gold Standard and KAMS.]

"The managers and announcers."

[Images pop up of cards featuring Miss Sandra Hayes, Sweet Lou Blackwell and Colt Patterson.]

"The legends of the ring."

[Images pop up of cards featuring Casey James, Marcus Broussard and Shane Destiny.]

"Even the founders of the AWA."

[And, yes, you get images of cards featuring Jon Stegglet, Bobby Taylor and Todd Michaelson.]

"Plus, look for special inserts."

[Images of a "Fantastic Finishers" card features Supernova putting an opponent in the Solar Flare, a "Dynamic Duos" card features Harley Hamilton and Cinder and a "Rising Stars" card features Max Magnum.]

"Along with cards featuring event-used memorabilia."

[Images of such cards, featuring Jack Lynch, Jordan Ohara and Ayako Fujiwara.]

"Autographed cards."

[Images of such cards, featuring Derrick Williams, Gordon Myers and Michelle Bailey.]

"Even dual autographed cards."

[And the image featured, of course, would be Next Gen, with Howie Somers and Daniel Harper's signatures on the same card.]

Cut back to Somers.]

HS: Now that one's a keeper.

[We pull back and see Harper going through the cards in his pack.]

DH: Cool... Hannibal Carver autographed card!

HS: [looks at the box of chocolates, then back at Harper] Um, you want to trade?

DH: [stares at his tag team partner] You call that a fair trade, dude?

[We then cut to an opened display box of the Topps AWA trading cards and hear the voiceover again.]

"Look for Topps AWA trading cards wherever trading cards are sold. Or order them at AWAShop.com."

[We fade to black...

With a flash of the ACCESS 365 logo, we are taken backstage, where Maxim Zharkov is looking over his clipboard as we can hear a nearby monitor showing the footage we saw moments ago of Next Gen and The Gold Standard. He goes to reach behind his ear for his pencil when he is stopped by a familiar voice.]

"Need some water?"

[The Interim President slowly looks up and turns to see Kimmy Bailey standing a few feet away, holding out a water bottle. He arches an eyebrow as Kimmy grins.]

KB: When I was trainin' in Japan, one of the things I had to do was second other wrestlers if I wasn't actually in the ring. Make sure they were feelin' okay, get them medical help if they needed it, clear the way if they were fightin' outside the ring, that kinda stuff. I was supposed to keep water bottles around in case they were thirsty, too.

[Kimmy leans a bit closer to Zharkov.]

KB: And you look like you're well on the road to bein' worn slap out.

[Zharkov looks confused by the second-generation wrestler's colloquialism.]

KB: Means you're lookin' real tired, interim boss.

MZ: Ah.

[Kimmy re-offers the water bottle, and Zharkov takes it.]

MZ: Thank you. That is very kind.

KB: Folks come up to you and ask you for all sorts of stuff, and since I'm about to do that, I figured the least I could do is make sure you're hydrated.

[Zharkov lets out a small sigh as he sips from the water bottle.]

MZ: Is it a reasonable request?

KB: I think it is. See, I was wonderin' how come I ain't heard nothin' from your offices about that Last Chance Battle Royal.

[Zharkov lets a small smile come across his face as Kimmy keeps talking.]

KB: I was waitin' and waitin' - because I figure you're real busy and you'd get to me - but I didn't hear a peep, so now I've come to make a ruckus. A polite ruckus, though! You get plenty of rude ruckuses, and I don't think you need to be takin' no aspirin on my account.

MZ: Again, you are kind. I am afraid to tell you, however, that you did not hear from my office because the Last Chance Battle Royal was for the men's side of the Royal Crown.

[Kimmy shrugs her shoulders, nonplussed by Zharkov's apparent rejection.]

KB: I figured you were goin' to say that it fit me like socks on a rooster, but I got a rebuttal to that. See, the advertisin' for the match said it was for all the competitors who were on the losin' side of the tournament so far. It didn't actually say it was just for the men. As much as it pains me to admit it, Trish Wallace did hold my shoulders down for a three count, so I meet those qualifications.

[Kimmy holds up a finger.]

KB: On top of that, there's precedent, because there have been two women in battle royal-type matches with the men in AWA history. Ricki Toughill was in the Rumble last year, and of course, you know my mama was in one too, but she was beatin' up men datin' back two decades almost.

[Zharkov's eyes brighten a little and he reaches back for the pencil behind his ear, as Kimmy continues.]

KB: And it ain't like I'm scared to mix it up with any of 'em. You saw me challenge Derrick Williams to a fight a few weeks ago. Not to mention I slammed that bear back at the Anniversary Show. Plus I-

[Zharkov silences Kimmy with a simple raised hand.]

MZ: You may stop. You have made your case.

[Kimmy looks surprised for a moment, but stops anyway.]

MZ: You have spirit. I like to reward spirit. You want to be in Last Chance Battle Royal? I grant your request.

[Kimmy excitedly balls up her fists as Zharkov starts to write.]

KB: YyyyyyyyyyyyyyyYYYYYYYESSSSSSSS!

[Kimmy throws a fist pump so strong that she spins a full 360 on her heel.]

KB: I used to clobber all sorts of boys when I was little, it'll be fun to give it a go now! Thank you!

[Kimmy excitedly runs out of the frame as Zharkov, finished writing, puts the pencil back behind his ear with a smile.]

MZ: I hope she does not waste her energy in celebration, she will need it in that match.

[We cut back to live action where the interview stage is a chaotic scene. Somehow, they've managed to get Takeshi Mifune and Bret Grayson back out on stage... and as we come up, we see Adam Rogers, Tommy Fierro, and President Zharkov walking off in a huff after what was no doubt a very heated conversation. Takeshi Mifune stands with his usual scowl, looking like he's just had a minor inconvenience. Meanwhile, Bret Grayson, still fuming from the fight, exudes anger and frustration on his face.]

MW: Gentlemen... gentlemen, a moment? I know you just had a very... tense discussion with AWA officials during the break... and I know you just heard the challenge from the World Tag Team Champions. What's your response to all this?

[An angry Grayson claps his hands together, his fist smashing into an open palm.]

BG: What do you think our response is!? Of course-

[Mifune raises a hand, motioning for Grayson to settle down.]

TM: There is nothing I find more amusing than weaklings who think they can stand up to the strong. Such bravado. Such arrogance. Nothing brings me greater joy or satisfaction than to crush their spirits and to leave them with nothing with despair when they realize they cannot defy their fate to be dirt beneath my feet. We accept their challenge, not because they deserve it, but because I enjoy demonstrating our superiority.

[Grayson nods enthusiastically in agreement.]

BG: Yeah! And after tonight, I'm more than ready to show them why they're out of our league! In Las Vegas, they'll see exactly why we're the top tag team in the world today.

MW: But what about the ongoing concerns regarding your health, Bret? There were some questions - even tonight - about whether you're actually fully cleared to wrestle.

[Grayson frowns, looking annoyed.]

BG: My arm is fine! You saw me in the ring tonight, didn't you? And I'm ready to get back in the ring as soon as possible and taking those tag team titles! If there were any doubts before, they should be gone after what happened tonight. The Gold Standard are going to Las Vegas and proving we're the best of best!

[Mifune nods.]

TM: Exactly. If Grayson is cleared to wrestle, then we will have our match in Las Vegas. Next Gen will get their chance to learn exactly what happens when you face the strongest.

[Grayson shoots Mifune a dirty look.]

BG: What do you mean "if"? My arm's fine! Let's get those titles!

[Mifune just stares at Grayson and smirks, before walking off, as Grayson follows behind him.]

MW: You heard it here first, fans! The Gold Standard have accepted the challenge at long last and the match is set - the World Tag Team Titles on the line with Next Gen defending the gold against the Gold Standard in three weeks LIVE from Las Vegas on Saturday Night Wrestling on May 12th!

SDW: You got it right, Miss Mariah! We've been waiting since SuperClash for this one and it's finally happening in Sin City!

MW: But that's not all we've got in the weeks to come... first off, let's talk about next weekend in the O2 Arena in London, England for The Battle of London, Sweet Daddy.

SDW: Let's talk about it! If you're gonna talk about it, you gotta talk about the Royal Crown. Two big matches. Two big winners!

MW: On the women's side of the bracket, it'll be Michelle Bailey versus Trish Wallace versus former Women's World Champion Lauryn Rage versus the Olympic gold medalist Ayako Fujiwara in the Finals! Remember, these are four way elimination matches with eliminations possible by pinfall, submission, or by putting someone over the top rope and having both feet touch the arena floor.

SDW: And on the men's side, it's all about opportunity with former World Tag Team Champions Tony Donovan and Joe Flint... plus Sid Osborne... plus... we don't even know, Mariah!

MW: The Last Chance Battle Royal is coming up next - and we've seen the list of competitors for this one, Ess-Dee-Dub... twenty competitors - all of which would be a big addition to the Finals.

SDW: That ain't all we got in London though - earlier, Interim Prezzy Zharkov made the match with Generation Lost taking on Aces In The Hole and the Fawcett Family in what's gonna be a wild eight man tag!

MW: I can't wait for that one... but I also can't wait for this one. Just announced! A European showcase featuring some of the hottest stars from Europe... some of which are on the AWA roster already and some of which are in as special guests. We're hearing the full lineup for this one will be announced tomorrow night on AWA social media so don't miss that! And speaking of European talent, what about the debut of Lady Rebecca Falkingham?

SDW: We've been feelin' the hype for weeks and she finally arrives next weekend! But Miss Mariah, what about...?

[Sweet Daddy Williams trails off as the crowd cheers the return of the Interim President Maxim Zharkov on the entrance stage, clipboard in hand. Zharkov gives a wave to the Atlanta crowd before joining Williams and Wolfe at the podium.]

MW: President Zharkov, this is a surprise...

[Zharkov nods.]

MZ: My apologies, Miss Wolfe... but I have something to add to these announcements. I believe you were about to discuss the match between Raphael Rhodes and Takeshi Mifune.

[The crowd cheers that match!]

MW: We were.

[Zharkov nods again.]

MZ: I have two things to say about that match. After Mifune's recent actions - including what we just saw - the AWA is concerned what might happen in London. So, we have added a set of special British Rounds Rules to this match.

[Zharkov hands a sheet of paper from his clipboard to Sweet Daddy Williams.]

SDW: Let's take a look at this... six three minute rounds with twenty second breaks between rounds... two out of three falls... falls can be won by pin, submission, countout... okay, got it. When a fall occurs, the round ends... oh ho... if there's a disqualification or a knockout, the match instantly ends... if we go the distance, whoever is ahead on falls wins. I like this, Tsar!

[Zharkov nods.]

MZ: We believe it gives us the best chance for a competitive match while reducing the chance of...

[Zharkov shrugs.]

MZ: ...chaos.

[Mariah interjects.]

MW: Excuse me, President Zharkov... you said you had two things to say about the match?

[Zharkov smiles.]

MZ: I did. The winner of that match will be right back here on May 5th for the farewell to Atlanta edition of Showtime to face Jordan Ohara for the National Title in the Main Event!

[The crowd ROARS for that!]

MW: Wow! Huge news there! Rhodes versus Mifune at the Battle of London under British Rounds Rules... and the winner meets Jordan Ohara for the National Title on May 5th here in Atlanta! Thank you, sir!

[Zharkov nods, turning with a wave to the crowd before departing.]

MW: That certainly adds extra stakes to this big showdown... if it needed it after the wild scene here two weeks ago, Sweet Daddy.

SDW: Can you imagine Raphael Rhodes walking into Dodger Stadium on Memorial Day as the National Champion?! The title that Juan Vasquez spent so much of his early AWA days chasing... and holding!

MW: Or Jordan Ohara being forced to take on an old friend in Takeshi Mifune!

SDW: Either way, I can't wait to see it.

MW: We've got all of that at The Battle of London... and we can't forget about the Main Event in the O2 - the World Heavyweight Title on the line when Supernova defends the big gold against Juan Vasquez! One more shot for Vasquez as he heads towards retirement... and you talk about imagining Rapahel Rhodes walking into Dodger Stadium as the National Champion... what if Juan Vasquez walks in there with the World Title around his waist?!

SDW: The hype is real, Miss Mariah!

MW: It sure is... and then we move ahead to May 5th, right back here in Atlanta, our Bon Voyage to Atlanta as we head out for the Showtime On Tour summer! And we've got four big matches already locked in for that night. It'll be tag team action when the Aces In The Hole take on the Bishops in their AWA in-ring return! It'll be Ricki Toughill taking on Kelly Kowalski... IF the EGM Jersey Girl is medically cleared to compete after being sent to the hospital earlier tonight. We already know about Jordan Ohara defending the title against the winner of Raphael Rhodes and Takeshi Mifune's match in London... and we just got word - it's official - Dirt Dog Unique Allah returns to the ring for singles action to take on "Cannonball" Lee Connors! It's going to be a big night here in Atlanta and fans, you don't want to miss it... but speaking of big nights, we're not done here tonight quite yet! It's Battle Royal time here on ESPN and the ring is starting to fill up so let's go back to Lori and Ben!

[We cut to a shot of the rapidly-filling ring.]

LD: Thanks, Mariah... and you're absolutely right. We've got some great AWA action coming up over the next two weeks but we've got what should be some wild and exciting action coming up right now as well. Twenty men - excuse me, twenty competitors - sorry Kimmy - heading to the ring right now for the Last Chance Battle Royal to see who will climb in there next weekend with Tony Donovan, Joe Flint, and Sid Osborne to see who wins the Royal Crown.

BW: Look at big Trey Carson in there. You know, size matters in all things, Dane... especially Battle Royals.

LD: I'm not touching that comment with a stick. But we can see the Big Man on Campus joining the fray... no Dave Cooper out there though. All managers have thankfully been barred from ringside.

BW: That just means that those lunatics The Lost Boy and Porter Crowley will be even MORE out of control without Fawcett or Hannigan here to keep them in check.

LD: Some of Generation Lost is in there as well... making for a nice sneak preview of next weekend in London in that eight man tag announced earlier. Kimmy Bailey, as we mentioned, joining the mix... looking to make a little history of her own.

[The camera pulls back to reveal the entire ring, showing most of the field already inside the squared circle: Kimmy Bailey, Takeshi Mifune, "Golden" Grant Carter, Jayden Jericho and Justin Gaines of Generation Lost, "Flawless" Larry Wallace, former National Champion Travis Lynch...]

LD: This is truly top flight competition in there, Ben.

BW: The best of the best looking to head to London next weekend.

LD: I've got to question the wisdom of allowing Mifune in there though! Hasn't he done enough damage for one night?

BW: Oh, come on! This is right up his alley! Can't deny the Shadow Wolf his fun!

[...the former Dog of War Pedro Perez, the aforementioned Fawcett Family members, Robert Donovan...]

LD: Another big seven footer in there in Robert Donovan... who has to be seething over some of the recent comments by Tiger Claw towards him.

BW: I'm a little surprised he signed up for this, Dane. What's he gonna do if he wins? Beat up his own kid in the Finals?

LD: Michelle Bailey was willing to do it... so I suppose it's okay for big Rob as well.

[...former reality TV star Ricky Heartbreaker, hired gun Smasher Salazar...]

LD: Here comes the Smasher... a walking disaster potentially for some of the others in this thing.

BW: Came up short earlier against Joe Flint but he's right back in there - just like this Battle Royal was intended for.

[...Englishman Rory Smythe...]

LD: One last chance for Rory Smythe to get into the Royal Crown finals in front of his home country next weekend.

[...a surly-looking Odysseus Allah...]

LD: Odysseus Allah, winner of the Battle Royal held on the Pre-Game Show at SuperClash, looking for a timely repeat here tonight...

[..."Cannonball" Lee Connors who keeps a watchful eye on Allah...]

LD: ...and the man we just learned will be facing Odysseus' father two weeks from tonight, Lee Connors looking to make a major impact early in his AWA return from injury.

[...a smirking Charlie Stephens...]

LD: What's this about now?

BW: What? Charlie Stephens has every right to be in there, Dane.

LD: Well, sure... but what about his partner?! Joe Flint's got a tremendous opportunity next weekend and Stephens is trying to get into a position to steal that away from him?!

BW: Oh, don't be so dramatic. For all you know, this is a master plan that Joe Flint came up with.

LD: I don't think so!

[Stephens keeps on heading for the ring, sneering at the crowd's reaction...

...which turns to big cheers as Wade Walker comes through the curtain!]

LD: Uh oh! Bad news for Pedro Perez as Wade Walker has entered the Battle Royal after coming up just a hair short against Odin Gunn two weeks ago. And with the history between Walker and Perez, I'm thinking Perez is in for a short night at the office, Ben.

BW: Pedro Perez is a planner, Dane. You really think the Desperadoes weren't ready for this?

LD: We'll see about that... by my count, we've got one more to go and...

[The crowd ROARS as Shadoe Rage emerges from the curtain onto the entrance stage... slowly.]

LD: ...it's Shadoe Rage! The former World Television Champion!

BW: Yeah, but what kind of condition is his back in after earlier tonight?

LD: I can't imagine it's good. He's moving very slowly out here, already grabbing at his back... and that means, we've got the longest reigning National Champion AND the longest reigning World Television Champion in the same match!

[Rage acknowledges the crowd with a lifted arm and a wave before rolling under the ropes into the ring. Referee Pete "Blue Shoes" Miller gives a shot to the assembled mass of humanity annnnnd...]

"DING! DING! DING!"

LD: We're off and running in this one, fans... twenty competitors battling it out for the final spot in the Royal Crown Finals... and remember, to win, you must be the last man standing after everyone else has gone over the top rope and had both feet touch the floor.

BW: This is gonna be-

[And almost as soon as the bell rings, with brawling and chaos all around, Travis Lynch yanks Ricky Heartbreaker around by the shoulder into a big left hand!]

BW: -NOT THE FACE!

[Heartbreaker recoils in horror, grabbing at his cheekbone...]

LD: You may recall that Ricky Heartbreaker's AWA talent contract specifically bars punches to the face and...

[...and then Kimmy Bailey swings him around the other way, connecting with a big right hand, this one lifting Heartbreaker off the mat where he flips over the ropes, crashing down to the floor below!]

LD: ...whoooooaa! Heartbreaker's gone already!

BW: Illegal! Those blows were illegal!

[Out on the floor, Heartbreaker is making the same argument to the closest official, pointing to his face...]

"THEY CAN'T DO THAT! I HAVE A CONTRACT!"

LD: Well, there are no disqualifications in a Battle Royal... so I'd say Ricky Heartbreaker is out of luck...

[Heartbreaker is pleading his case to the referee who shrugs his shoulders and says "you're gone!"]

LD: ...and just like that, we're down to nineteen competitors remaining!

[Heartbreaker throws up his arms in frustration as someone in the front row shouts "YOU GOT TOSSED BY A GIRRRRRRL!" and Heartbreaker shakes his head wildly with a "NO! NO! I ELIMINATED MYSELF BECAUSE THEY WERE VIOLATING MY CONTRACT!" Kimmy Bailey smirks at the exiting Heartbreaker, waving a hand at his exit. As the sulking Heartbreaker exits, we cut to a different part of the ring where we can see Wade Walker trying to get around a brawling Larry Wallace and Charlie Stephens to get his hands on Pedro Perez who seems to be hiding from his former ally...]

LD: Always tough to follow the action early on in one of these... we can see Grant Carter tangled up with Jayden Jericho... Lee Connors throwing a few kicks at Trey Carson... and don't forget about Shadoe Rage who is in the corner, playing defense right now...

[The Lost Boy is sinking his teeth into the forehead of a screaming Rory Smythe as Smasher Salazar pummels Odysseus Allah in the corner...]

BW: Battle Royals make for strange bedfellows AND strange rivalries at time as well - look at Justin Gaines and Takeshi Mifune working over Porter Crowley, a little Gen Lost and Team Supreme team-up action on the Fawcett Family...

LD: Trey Carson, the Big Man on Campus, has got Connors in trouble early...

[We cut to that action, Carson using his size and weight to push Connors back against the ropes, trying to tip him over the top rope to elimination...]

LD: ...Connors is hanging on for dear life and... ohhh! Big shot to the belly by Shadoe Rage, bailing out Connors for the moment... and one of those signature elbowsmashes down between the eyes of Carson... and speaking of strange bedfellows, Ben, we've got Shadoe Rage and Lee Connors working together to try and eliminate Trey Carson!

[But before they can get too far down that path, Odysseus Allah shows up and gouges the eyes of Rage, sending him stumbling away before he smashes a right hand into Connors' jaw, knocking him away from a grateful Carson who nods to Allah before stalking off to blindside Grant Carter with a big shot to the ear!]

LD: And a Battle Royal like this is also a place where you may see old rivalries come back to the forefront as Carson and "Golden" Grant Carter are tangled up again.

[We cut to another part of the ring where we can see Charlie Stephens lurking, down on a knee in the corner trying to stay inconspicuous as Smasher Salazar and Robert Donovan trade huge haymakers a few feet away.]

LD: Those two have come to fight, Ben.

BW: No doubt about it. That's what they excel at and- ohhh! There goes Larry Wallace! Who did that?

[As Wallace regroups on the floor, we see Justin Gaines and Jayden Jericho taunting the Flawless One.]

LD: Gen Lost! Gaines and Jericho working together send Larry Wallace to the outside and we're down to eighteen!

[We cut to another part of the ring where Pedro Perez slips past Porter Crowley who catches a stray shot from Wade Walker who is trying to get at his former ally...

...which brings The Lost Boy back into the fray, hammering Walker with a headbutt from behind!]

LD: Wade Walker falling into a fight with the Fawcett Family... not something he was looking for, I'm guessing.

[A nearby Shadoe Rage takes a big forearm shot to the lower back courtesy of Travis Lynch...]

LD: Ohhh... big shot to the injured back... and there's certainly no love lost between the Lynches and the Rage family. We all remember the history there and...

[Trying to seize the moment, Charlie Stephens grabs Travis Lynch from behind, trying to toss him over the ropes but Lynch reverses, rocketing Stephens over the top...

...but the athletic and wily Stephens hooks the top rope, landing on the apron where he promptly rolls back inside the ring, moving to get away from the former National Champion!]

LD: ...Stephens almost got tossed but hangs on...

BW: Having the talent to avoid elimination like that is a real important skill in a Battle Royal. If you don't have the size, you need to be able to pull off a move just like that... and what the hell is this now?

LD: I'm not... oh, it's Howie Somers! Howie Somers AND Daniel Harper - the World Tag Team Champions are out here!

BW: Why?! They've got no business being out here!

LD: I'll give you one reason why!

[From the stage, we can see Somers shouting at the ring...

...and as we cut to the ring, we see a smirking Takeshi Mifune, Rory Smythe on his knees in front of him, looking at the interrupting Next Gen and beckoning him towards the ring.]

LD: Didn't these three get enough of each other earlier?!

BW: Obviously not! Somers and Harper are out here, interrupting this match to distract the Shadow Wolf and Mifune's not backing down - he's telling them to bring it on and join the match!

LD: They can't join the match, Ben! It's already started!

[And the commotion on the stage gets worse as Bret Grayson emerges from the locker room, shouting at Harper and Somers...]

LD: Uh oh! It's gone from bad to worse!

[...and inside the ring, with Mifune distracted, Kimmy Bailey takes her best shot, smashing a lariat across the back of the Shadow Wolf's neck, knocking him down to a knee...]

LD: Ohhh! Kimmy Bailey strikes hard on Mifune, putting him on his knees!

BW: She may live to regret that.

LD: Takeshi Mifune has never been one to back down from an intergender match during his time in Japan, fans, and I'm guessing he won't pass up the opportunity to take it to Kimmy Bailey in this one eith- ohhh! Trey Carson just eliminated Grant Carter! GGC's gone!

[As a disgruntled Carter looks up at the ring from the floor, we see a charging Jayden Jericho get backdropped over the top rope, dumped to the floor by Porter Crowley!]

LD: JERICO'S GONE TOO! The Fawcett Family gets a little bit of payback on Generation Lost as Crowley tosses Jericho and-

[As The Lost Boy slides over towards Crowley, Justin Gaines comes tearing forward, connecting with a double clothesline that sends both Fawcett Family members over the top to the floor!]

LD: -WHOOOOOA! OUT GOES THE FAWCETTS WELL! We've got a sudden burst of eliminations here, quickly whittling down the field! We're down to... what's that now? 14?

BW: 14 by my count too, Dane. But not for long if some of these-

[Gaines turns around, ready to strike again...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: SPEAR! SPEAR! SPEEEEEEAR! WADE WALKER CUTS JUSTIN GAINES IN HALF!

[A fired up Walker pulls Gaines off the mat, chucking him over the ropes to join his Generation Lost ally on the mat!]

LD: AND GAINES IS GONE AS WELL! DOWN TO 13!

[And as Walker turns around, he finds Pedro Perez waiting for him, wildly railing down haymakers on his former partner...]

LD: The Dogs of War are going at it right now!

[...but Perez' wild blows do not faze the mighty Walker who uncorks one solid shot, knocking Perez off his feet and sending him scrambling away...]

...and we cut to the ringside steps where Somers has gotten away from the AWA officials holding back Grayson and Harper, making his way towards the ring...]

LD: Howie Somers is heading towards the ring... look at Kimmy Bailey trying to get Mifune over the top! You gotta admire this kid's guts, Ben!

BW: She's got guts, sure... but she's also messing with a Shadow Wolf who is likely to slash her with his claws and spill those guts all over the mat.

LD: Thank you for that graphic imagery.

BW: No problem.

LD: But right now, I'm not sure you're right about that. Kimmy's got him up against the ropes, lifting that leg off the mat... can she finish the job? She might need more help than that!

[Seizing the chance to help, Lee Connors makes his way over towards the off-balance Mifune, looking to grab the other leg...

...and catches a brutal straight right hand to the mouth, sending Connors staggering back as Mifune grabs Bailey by the hair, yanking her backwards and causing her to lose her grip...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and SMASHES his own skull into hers, stunning Kimmy Bailey long enough for him to twist and toss her over the ropes!]

LD: Ohhhh no! Kimmy Bailey is eliminated! We're down to 12!

[A disappointed Bailey sits up on the floor, looking up at the ring where Mifune makes a dismissive gesture in her direction, turning his focus back to Howie Somers again...]

LD: What a wild scene this is! Somers shouting at Mifune, Mifune replying in kind...

[Bailey works her way to her feet with the aid of a ringside official, grabbing her forehead and nodding that she's okay.]

LD: Mifune... whoa! He just took a swing at Somers!

BW: Yeah, but he oughta be focused on the ring! We're down to 12 which means there's 11 people in there who'd love to be able to say they tossed Takeshi Mifune out of the ring and eliminated him from this match!

LD: Speaking of which, Mifune already has a match for the Battle of London! Is he really thinking of working double duty, Ben?

BW: I think Mifune would fight in every match on the card if they'd let him.

[Mifune swipes at Somers again who is barely being held back by a quartet of AWA officials including Adam Rogers...

...and that hanging arm is just too much dangling fruit to pass up...]

BW: WHAT?!

LD: SHE'S GOT THE ARM! SHE'S GOT THE ARM! BAILEY'S GOT MIFUNE'S ARM!

[A shocked Mifune tries to pull his arm back but Bailey's too strong for that, angrily shaking her head as she pulls the arm with both hands...

...and with an assist from Shadoe Rage who upends Mifune from inside the ring, Mifune gets yanked over the top and dumped on the outside!]

LD: KIMMY BAILEY ELIMINATES TAKESHI MIFUNE! HAHAHA! HOW ABOUT THAT, BEN?!

BW: That's a crock of garbage, Dane! She was eliminated! These idiot officials should've been focused on getting her out of here and-

[An enraged Mifune makes a lunge at Bailey...

...but runs right into Howie Somers annnnnnd...]

LD: THE FIGHT IS ON AGAIN! SOMERS AND MIFUNE TRADING RIGHT HANDS ON THE FLOOR! WE'RE DOWN TO ELEVEN! FANS, WE'RE GOING TO TAKE A QUICK BREAK AND TRY TO GET CONTROL OF THIS! WE'LL BE RIGHT BACK!

[We fade out on the wild scene on the outside...

...and then back up on a shot of Ryan Martinez walking down the aisle. From the scenery around him, we can see this slow motion footage is from right before WarGames at SuperClash IX.]

#When you wish..#

[Dissolve to the White Knight throwing knife edge chops at the towering form of Torin The Titan...]

#...upon a star#

[...to Martinez and Derrick Williams working together to use a double clothesline to take the giant off his feet...]

#Makes no difference who you are...#

[...to a closeup of a bloodied Martinez, looking up in shock as a hobbled Shadoe Rage joins him in the cage...]

#Anything your...#

[...to the White Knight driving Vasquez' skull into the canvas with his signature brainbuster...]

#...heart desires will...#

[...to Martinez hooking John Law in a crossface, wrenching back with all his might as Law struggles to hang on...]

#...come to you.#

[...to a crowd shot of a group of young fans holding up a banner that reads "THE WHITE KNIGHT FOREVER!" as a voiceover begins...]

"Ryan Martinez, you and..."

[Cut to a shot of a bloodied but smiling Ryan Martinez standing triumphant with his teammates...]

"...Team AWA just won the Main Event at SuperClash! Now what are you gonna do?"

[...to a regular speed shot of Martinez still in the double cage, looking into the camera's lens with a grin...]

RM: I'm going to Disneyland!

[...and we fade to a shot of the Disneyland logo before fading to black.

And then coming back up on the battle royal.]

LD: Welcome back, fans... and indeed we've managed to get Next Gen, Kimmy Bailey, Takeshi Mifune, and Bret Grayson out of here... whew. We're down to eleven still - no eliminations during the break... and Ben, let's try to run down who is left in this.

BW: Well, you have that sneaky weasel Shadoe Rage who tossed Mifune when his back was turned. Both of the former Dogs of War - Walker and Perez - are still trying to get at one another.

LD: Walker's trying to get at Perez... Perez is trying to duck and hide...

BW: Whatever. Charlie Stephens is still in there - Corporal Punishment himself. Odysseus Allah...

LD: Who won the SuperClash Battle Royal last year. The hired gun Smasher Salazar is still standing... not to mention the two big men, Trey Carson and Robert Donovan...

BW: The Brit trying to go home, Rory Smythe... Lee Connors...

LD: ...and the longest reigning National Champion, Travis Lynch. Eleven men left, all fighting for the final spot in the Royal Crown Finals where Joe Flint, Tony Donovan, and Sid Osborne are waiting!

[As we re-join the action, we see Smasher Salazar working over Shadoe Rage in the corner with big fists and kicks to the body, Rage hanging onto the ropes to stay on his feet...]

LD: The Savior of the AWA... Ben, I have to question his wisdom even being in this thing after the punishment his back took earlier tonight.

BW: Wisdom? There are a lot of things that Shadoe Rage has, Dane, but I'm not sure "wisdom" is one of 'em. The guy is crazier than Monosso when he couldn't watch the People's Court at recreation time in Happy Valley.

[Dane chuckles as we see Travis Lynch unloading on a cornered Robert Donovan with big right hands...]

LD: And when you talk about old wounds being revisited, the Lynches and Robert Donovan certainly qualifies, Ben.

BW: Sure does. Back when Robert Donovan was worthy of my notice, he made a good living out of beating up Lynches. In fact, he was directly responsible for James Lynch being on the shelf for years!

LD: Lee Connors trying to get Pedro Perez out of this thing, trying to get that leg up... and ohhh! Odysseus Allah strikes from behind again! Making sure Connors couldn't get Perez out!

BW: Connors will be facing his old man in two weeks right here on Showtime - Lee Connors versus Dirt Dog Unique Allah and I can't believe I even just said that.

LD: I'm guessing Odysseus is less than thrilled about that match being made as well...

[Allah and Connors immediately start hammering away on one another to the cheers of the crowd...]

LD: ...and here we go! We're getting Allah versus Connors two weeks early and-

[...and the cheers are short-lived as the lumbering Trey Carson connects with a big double clothesline, sending them both over the top to the floor!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: CARSON ELIMINATES THEM BOTH! TREY CARSON ELIMINATES ALLAH AND CONNORS!

BW: The Big Man On Campus strikes again, Dane!

LD: He's undefeated in the ring so far... he could ride that streak to the biggest win of his career here tonight.

BW: And that double elimination leaves us with nine - Lynch, Perez, Donovan, Cars-

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[The crowd reacts as Carson snatches Travis Lynch by the hair from behind, dragging him off Robert Donovan and HURLING him over the ropes as well!]

BW: Make it eight!

LD: Travis Lynch is gone as well! Trey Carson is cleaning house in there!

BW: And I'll pardon the interruption by Big Trey so I can say we're down to Perez, Donovan, Carson, Smythe, Salazar, Stephens, Walker, and Rage!

LD: With the final eight remaining, you got a prediction for us, Ben?

BW: Trey Carson's looking pretty good right now. Pedro Perez is always resourceful. Charlie Stephens has always got a master plan.

LD: Sooooo... no?

BW: I'll go with Carson.

[Carson is shouting at the eliminated Lynch...

...which is when Robert Donovan slides in behind his fellow big man, lifting him by the leg and dumping him to the outside!]

LD: Carson's eliminated! You were saying?

BW: Stephens. I'll go with Stephens.

LD: We're down to seven... and look at Carson! He can't believe it!

BW: Robert Donovan's been around this business for a long, long time... he knows how to survive and thrive in a match like this.

[But as Donovan turns around...]

LD: WALKER WITH A CLOTHESLINE!

[...and as Carson pulls down the top rope behind him...]

LD: AND DONOVAN'S GONE! DONOVAN'S ELIMINATED!

BW: Thanks to Trey Carson!

[Donovan comes up off the floor hot and starts swinging at a gloating Carson!]

LD: And we've got ANOTHER fight on the outside! Down to six on the inside though - Perez, Smythe, Salazar, Stephens, Walker, and Rage! Who's it gonna be? Who is going to join Donovan, Flint, and Osborne in London next weekend in the Royal Crown Finals? We've got bodies brawling on the outside, bodies brawling on the inside... only one can be the winner!

[Trying to take advantage of Walker's distracted moment, Pedro Perez slinks in behind up, trying to upend him over the ropes... but Walker stuffs the attempt...]

...and the crowd ERUPTS as Walker gets his hands around the throat of his treacherous former partner!]

LD: WALKER'S GOT HIM! WALKER'S GOT HIM! AT LONG LAST!

[Walker lifts Perez off the mat by the throat, tossing him into the corner...]

LD: Ohhh!

[...and goes to work, throwing huge right hands at Perez, rocking his former ally to the ROAR of the crowd...]

LD: Perez is in trouble now! Walker's all over him! Wade Walker is taking out all the rage and frustration he's had since Perez' betrayal on him right now and Perez has none of his Desperado allies to help him!

[Grabbing the arm, Walker whips Perez across the ring, sending him into the far buckles...]

LD: Ohhh! Into the corner goes Perez... and here comes Walker!

[...but the charging Walker gets BLASTED across the collarbone with a Smasher Salazar clothesline!]

LD: SALAZAR TAKES HIM DOWN!

[A weary Perez waves a hand at Salazar who nods, peeling Walker off the mat...]

...and tossing him over the ropes!]

LD: WALKER'S GONE!

BW: HA! So much for all that payback, Dane!

LD: Perez Perez is... he's patting Salazar on the back...

[Perez holds up a hand, rubbing his fingers together...]

LD: Of course... of course it's about the money! It's always about the money with Smasher Salazar!

[Salazar grins at Perez, nodding his head...]

BW: You thought Perez had no Desperado allies in there... but you shoulda known Curly Bill would have a plan! I'm sure Smasher just made a nice payday for eliminating Wade Walker from this match!

LD: I'm sure he- OHHH!

[...and just as quickly, Salazar grabs Perez by the back of the head and LAUNCHES him over the top rope to a shocked reaction!]

LD: HE TOSSES PEREZ TOO!

[And now it's Salazar rubbing his fingers together in the money gesture, shrugging at a questioning Perez...]

BW: Well, I guess Curly Bill's payoff only goes so far 'cause Smasher Salazar's still got a match to win! And there's money in that and getting to the Royal Crown Finals too!

LD: So, just like that... the Dogs of War are gone and we're down to the Final Four of this Battle Royal, Ben!

BW: It's probably not the Final Four most would've predicted but we're got Rory Smythe, the Englishman fighting for one last chance to make The Battle of London show in his home country... Smasher Salazar who just showed he's willing to do ANYTHING to win... Charlie Stephens who most of us are surprised to even see in this match at all... and Shadoe Rage who should be in a hospital somewhere right now and not hobbling around this ring...

LD: The four men all eyeballing one another, looking to see-

[Without wasting time, Rory Smythe rushes Shadoe Rage, knocking him back into the corner as he starts raining down blows on him...]

LD: -and Her Majesty's Might decides to after Shadoe Rage!

BW: That's what I'd do. Rage has already been through a brutal beatdown and a grueling match... the back's a wreck, his knees are held together with bubble gum and prayers... this is exactly who I'd go gunning for first...

[And on the other side of the ring, Charlie Stephens seems to be offering an accord to Smasher Salazar...]

LD: Is Stephens trying to buy off Smasher?!

BW: Hey, if I'm Smasher, I'm taking the deal. Stephens has got a healthy bank account after winning the Stampede Cup last year.

LD: Alongside his partner, Joe Flint, who is already in the Royal Crown Finals. I still can't believe Charlie Stephens is even IN this Battle Royal trying to encroach on Flint's moment... well, check that... of course I can believe it because Charlie Stephens is a no good, manipulative piece of...

BW: Easy there, tiger. You're not in Los Angeles anymore, Toto.

LD: Stephens offering the payday to Salazar... and is he actually considering it?

[Salazar strokes his chin thoughtfully as Stephens outlines his offer...

...and in the background, we see Smythe whip Rage across the ring, sending the former Television Champion CRASHING into the turnbuckles!]

LD: INTO THE CORNER HARD GOES RAGE!

[Smythe nods confidently as he waves for Rage to approach, the Savior of the AWA staggering out of the corner, right into Smythe's powerful arms as he lifts him up over his shoulders...]

LD: Uh oh! The Hayden Hoist on the way!

[...which is when Salazar suddenly wheels around, burying a kick into the midsection of Smythe, sending him staggering backwards towards the ropes where Rage somehow shifts his weight, hooking the ropes...]

LD: What in the...?

[...and with a crucifix type move, Rage pulls the Englishman over the ropes, depositing him on the floor to huge cheers!]

LD: Smythe is gone! Rory Smythe is eliminated and we're down to three!

BW: Awww, no feel good home country moment for Smythe.

LD: Who's it gonna be?! Smasher Salazar, Charlie Stephens, and Shadoe Rage are the final three and... look at Stephens! Stephens is telling Salazar to take out Rage.

[Rage crawls to the corner, using the ropes to pull himself up as he eyeballs Salazar and Stephens...]

LD: ...what happens if he does though? Does Salazar eliminate himself?

BW: If the price is right, Bob.

LD: Salazar listening to Stephens, nodding his head... I think he's accepted! He's taken the deal!

BW: What a businessman Charlie Stephens is.

[Salazar suddenly rushes the corner, overwhelming Rage with a flurry of fists and forearms, clubbing him backwards and down to a knee!]

LD: Oh no... and this might be the end for Shadoe Rage as Smasher Salazar is all over him, battering him with those heavy blows...

[Dragging Rage up by the arm, Salazar whips him across the ring, pumping his arm once as he glares him down from across the ring...]

LD: Shadoe Rage is helpless! Barely able to stand!

[...and Salazar barrels across the ring with a roar, throwing himself into an impactful clothesline in the corner!]

LD: Ohhhh!

[Stephens steps closer, all grins as he shouts "DO IT AGAIN, SMASHER!"]

LD: Charlie Stephens wants another one. He wants to make REAL sure that Shadoe Rage is out of it before he tosses him.

BW: And look out London, the Royal Crown Finals is about to be all about the Soldiers of Fortune!

LD: Salazar backing down... taking aim...

[And Salazar storms in once again, landing a near 300 pound clothesline that crushes Rage's injured back against the turnbuckles!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: ...and he lays it in HARD again. Shadoe Rage clinging to the ropes, trying to stay on his feet...

[Stephens steps in again...]

"SLAAAAAAAAAAAAAAP!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and slaps Rage across the face.]

"THE SAVIOR, HUH?! THE BIG HERO?!"

[He turns to the jeering crowd.]

"LOOK AT YOUR HERO NOW!"

[A cackling Stephens turns to Salazar... "HIT HIM AGAIN!"]

LD: Oh, come on! Enough is enough!

[Salazar backs off to the far ropes, a fierce sneer on his face...]

LD: HERE! HE! COMES!

[...and as he barrels in a third time, Rage reaches out, snatching the too close Stephens and pulling into Salazar's rampaging path!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: HE GOT STEPHENS! HE GOT STEPHENS! RAGE PULLS STEPHENS INTO THE PATH!

[Salazar staggers backwards, looking on in shock as Stephens staggers out of the corner, falling to the canvas as Rage stumbles out of the corner, hanging onto the ropes for dear life...]

...and as Salazar rushes back in, looking to strike once more...]

LD: SALAZAR ON THE MOOOOOOVE!

[...and Rage drops down, pulling the top rope with him!]

LD: OHHH! SALAZAR'S GONE! SALAZAR IS ELIMINATED!

[And the crowd ROARS, sensing a window of opportunity for their hero as Charlie Stephens struggles up off the mat...

...and Rage rushes forward, connecting with a clothesline that flips Stephens over the top rope, dumping him outside!]

LD: HE GOT HIM! HE DID IT!

“DING! DING! DING!”

LD: SHADOE RAGE WINS THE BATTLE ROYAL AND HE’S HEADED TO LONDON!

[Rage collapses to the ropes, falling to his knees with a smile on his face as Megumi Sato makes it official.]

LD: And how about that, Ben?! Our men’s Royal Crown Final is set! It’ll be Joe Flint, Tony Donovan, Sid Osborne, and Shadoe Rage battling it out to see who walks out on top!

BW: Well, Rage may have pulled off the miracle tonight but next weekend, I don’t think he’ll be so lucky.

LD: We’ll see about that. Fans, Shadoe Rage celebrating here in the ring with the Atlanta fans... it’s been an incredible night and we’ve STILL got our Main Event! We’re going to take one more break and when we come back, the World Television Title will be on the line!

[Rage climbs to his feet, wearily raising an arm to the cheering fans as 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 Shadoc Rage.]

"The World. Heavyweight. Champion."

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

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

Jack Lynch.]

"I am AWA."

[Shadoc 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 as we fade back up, the fans are already cheering loudly.]

MW: The Showtime Main Event is moments away right here LIVE on ESPN, fans... and tonight, he makes his return to Center Stage and to Showtime to challenge for the World Television Championship after successfully Running the Rankings...Please welcome... Omega!

[Omega bursts through the curtain, striking his signature Omega pose. His sparkling ultramarine blue cape flaps in the wind (although there may be a helpful stagehand hidden behind the Neptunian – we'll never know.) Omega shoots a "thumbs up" to the fans in attendance before joining Sweet Daddy and Mariah Wolfe at the interview area.]

SDW: Lemme tell ya, Sweet Daddy's seen a lot of 'em come and go, but I ain't often seen someone come back from a whuppin' like those dirty Desperado's laid on you last month, Omega.

O: wwwwwwWHAT'S UP, Atlantis...-lanta!

[Big response from the Atlanta crowd anyway.]

O: Citizen Daddy... I admit Whitiri, Polemos and I got a licking of cosmic proportions. Whitiri is out for some time. And poor Polemos, he doesn't yet have the hearty constitution of a Neptunian... but I know he'll be back before long.

MW: Tonight, you're facing Odin Gunn for the Television Championship in a match that was demanded by the Champion's representative. Do you get the impression that Curly Bill Webb and The Desperados are hoping that you're not one hundred percent?

O: Citizen Wolfe, that's the burden of being a member of the High Council of Justice, and that seems to be the burden of surviving running the rankings. I don't get to pick when I am needed. If the call comes, I have to pick up the line. If someone needs help, I can't just stand aside and say 'no, not today, thank you kindly.' I have to be there for them. Someone has to 'hold that line,' to use a phrase I heard one of your heroes say. Even if it's just me against all the Desperados.

[Omega seems... oddly focused and contemplative.]

O: Yeah, I'm still a little sore a month later. But I got through Whitiri to be here. I got through "Golden" Grant Carter. I got through almighty Atlas Armstrong. I didn't put all that work in just to stand in front of big bad Odin Gunn and say 'please don't hit me too hard.' I have a chance to be the first World Television Champion not from this World! I won't stand for cruelty. I won't stand for cowardice. I won't stand for deceitfulness. Odin, even with all the odds against me, a Natural 20 is coming for your title reign, and I'm betting it's tonight. Omega... OUT!

[And with that, Omega starts heading towards the ring as a grinning Mariah nods.]

MW: The odds may indeed be against him, fans, but I know I'm never betting against the mighty Omega! Megumi, take it away!

[We fade to the ring where Megumi Sato is standing as Omega's entrance music plays over the PA system.]

MS: The following contest is your MAIN EVENT of the evening!

[The crowd ROARS!]

MS: It is set for one fall with a ten minute time limit and is for the AWA WORRRRRRLD TELEVISION TITLE!

[Another big ROAR rings out!]

MS: Introducing first, he is the challenger... at weight unknown... from Neptune...

The winner of the Run The Rankings challenge...

...OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOEEEEEEEEEGAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

[Omega reaches the ring just as the announcement is ending, climbing up on the apron. He points to the cheering fans, pumping his fist a few times before ducking through the ropes into the ring...]

LD: Fresh off the injuries at the hands of the Desperadoes, Omega stands alone here tonight as the challenger looking to shatter the undefeated streak of Odin Gunn and to take that title off his waist...

[Waterson snickers are loud and clear.]

LD: ...oh, knock if off.

[As Omega settles into his corner, the music fades and...]

MS: Annnnnnnnnnd his opponent...

[The haunting opening to "Man with a Harmonica" by Ennio Marricone begins to play, as the mustachioed Curly Bill appears, causing the audience to serenade him with boos. However, a hulking mass of humanity then makes its way through the curtains, drawing an audible gasp from the crowd that quickly becomes silent awe.]

MS: ...he is accompanied to the ring by "Curly" Bill Webb... he weighs in tonight at three hundred and thirty-three pounds ...hailing from Paradise, Montana ...he is the reigning AWA Television Champion...

OOOOOOOOOOODINNNNNNNNNN GUUUUUUNNNNN!

[The Television Champion is dressed in a brown pancho with Southwestern design, a beige cowboy hat, and a black bandana that covers the lower part of his face, giving him the appearance of an Old West bank robber. He holds the AWA Television Title by the end of one of its straps, dragging it along the ground as he makes his way to the ring...]

LD: And here comes the champion now, Ben.

BW: Let's talk about the big man, Dane. 333 pounds. Undefeated since arriving in the AWA. He won the title from the late Whitiri on September 30th last year which - if you can't do the math - means he's held the title for 204 days and counting. Only three men have held the strap longer than that - World Champion Supernova at 248 days, former World Champion Dave Bryant at 295 days, and Shadoc Rage who held the title for an entire year - 365 days.

LD: ...and he's not coming down here alone, fans, and I'm not talking about Curly Bill.

[The crowd jeers as they spot the masked Texas Ranger, a bullrope hanging around his neck and the former Dog of War, Pedro Perez who looks agitated and shows off his belligerent side almost immediately as he shouts at some fans from the entrance stage. With his Desperadoes assembled, Curly Bill Webb gives off a big, arrogant smile as he waves them towards the ring.]

LD: And this is ridiculous if you ask me, Ben.

BW: Why is that?

LD: These other guys - not only do they have no business out here but they're not NEEDED out here!

BW: That's their ally in there! That makes everything he does their business, Dane!

LD: Odin Gunn doesn't need their help! Look at the guy! Just take one look at this guy and tell me he needs anyone's help!

BW: Moral support.

LD: I'm so very sure.

[Making his way to ringside, Gunn tosses the title belt over the ropes, where it lands in the middle of the ring, as he removes his personal effects. He rips off the bandana, revealing a stoic, weather-beaten, sun dried face completely devoid of any emotion as Curly Bill waves towards his men.]

LD: The Texas Ranger thankfully staying out on the floor... but what's Pedro Perez doing now?

[Perez climbs into the ring, glaring angrily across...]

LD: Perez looks even angrier than usual, Ben.

BW: Did you see what happened to him in the Battle Royal?!

[Omega stares defiantly across the ring at Odin Gunn who is standing in the corner as referee Davis Warren retrieves the World Television Title off the mat...

...which is when Pedro Perez stomps across, getting right up in the face of Omega who recoils backwards a step in surprise...

...and then gets his legs yanked out from under him by the masked Texas Ranger from the outside!]

LD: Oh! What the...? The Desperadoes getting involved before the bell!

[And with Omega down on the mat, a hot-headed Pedro Perez starts stomping the downed challenger...]

LD: Pedro Perez got embarrassed in that Battle Royal earlier tonight and now he's trying to make up for it by attacking Omega before this match can even get started!

[The Texas Ranger rolls under the ropes, bullrope in hand...]

LD: And now that masked man is in there too with the bullrope and- ohhh! He whipped him with the bullrope!

[The referee wheels around, shouting at both Desperadoes as the Texas Ranger lashes the bullrope down across the back of Omega a second time...]

LD: Davis Warren is ordering them out of here and... Perez is pulling him up off the mat...

[Perez whips Omega across the ring as the Ranger tosses one side of the bullrope to him...]

“OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!”

[...and the duo knocks the challenger flat with a double clothesline using the stretched-out rope!]

LD: OMEGA GETS FLATTENED BY THE DESPERADOES!

[The referee is all over both men now, shouting at them as he tries to clear the ring. Omega is down on the mat, rolling around in pain as Perez tries to get back at him...]

LD: The official is trying to get the Desperadoes to clear the ring... Perez- OHH! He buries a kick in the ribs! Come on, referee!

[And from the outside on the floor, a smiling Curly Bill Webb calls a halt to the assault, ordering Perez and the Ranger to exit... with Perez delivering one more stomp for the road before they duck out of the ring, leaving Omega laid out on the mat as an emotionless Odin Gunn looks on from across the ring. The referee dips to a knee, checking to see if Omega can continue...]

LD: Curly Bill putting a stop to this...

BW: Look at Odin Gunn, Dane. Look at the World Television Champion. He couldn't care less what just happened. He can roll over Omega at will and he knows it. I know it. Why don't you know it?

LD: Because I believe in the fighting heart of Omega! I believe he can overcome the physical obstacles and pull off perhaps the biggest upset in AWA history to become the World Television Champion. Remember, he battled through the other contenders to this title in the Run The Rankings series to get this match. He's EARNED this opportunity, Ben.

BW: The opportunity to be slaughtered by Odin Gunn and the Desperadoes? What was second prize, a kick in the balls?

LD: Real nice. Omega is down and hurting... and the official is checking to see if he should throw out this match before it even starts, I'm sure.

BW: He should. Omega should go home and play video games or whatever a nerd like him does with his free time and save himself the humiliation and the hospital visit.

LD: Omega grabbing at his neck... that clothesline with the bullrope and...

[Suddenly, the Samoan Cowboy is on the move, rushing across the ring where he brushes past the protesting official, yanking Omega to his feet by the hair and shoving him back into the corner...]

LD: ...what the hell is happening here?!

[...and starts hammering him with overhand blows to the shoulders and neck, using his left hand to hold Omega up to prevent him from falling...]

LD: The referee's trying to get Gunn to back off... and Curly Bill's shouting for the referee to start the match!

BW: Sounds like a plan because it looks like the match is already started!

[Still holding Omega aloft, Gunn switches to hooking blows to the body, battering the ribcage of the challenger...]

LD: Now Gunn going downstairs on Omega... the referee is refusing to start this match, shouting now at Curly Bill who is... he's ordering him to start the match! He's got no authority out here!

[Gunn suddenly whips around, locking his cold eyes on a suddenly panicked Davis Warren who backpedals away...]

...and keeps on backing as Gunn stalks him, forcing him back into the far turnbuckles.]

LD: If Gunn puts his hands on the official, his night is done... and his title reign might be done as well!

[Gunn towers over the much-smaller Warren who is cowering in the corner with dread on his face...]

...and then weakly waves a hand to the outside.]

"DING! DING! DING!"

LD: You've gotta be kidding me!

BW: Hey, if Odin Gunn was looking at me like that, I'd do anything he wanted me to do to save my own skin! And that's exactly what Davis Warren just did!

LD: Warren called for the bell, the match is underway and Omega's in NO condition to fight Odin Gunn right now!

BW: Get your hands up, kid.

LD: That's not funny, Ben!

[Gunn turns away from the official, moving back across the ring where Omega is leaning hard against the turnbuckles, trying to catch his breath from the early onslaught by the Desperadoes...]

LD: Gunn moving in on Omega and-

[Omega springs off the bottom rope, smashing a surprise forearm into the jaw of Gunn, landing with enough impact to cause Gunn to take a step back!]

LD: OHH! Where did THAT come from?!

[The crowd ROARS for the shocking offensive strike as Omega scrambles around the stunned champion...]

LD: Dropkick by the challenger, right on the chin!

[Gunn stumbles a bit as Omega scrambles up again, leaping a second time...]

LD: And another one! Odin Gunn is staggered!

[Curly Bill angrily pounds his fists on the apron, shouting at his meal ticket to get back into this one...]

LD: Odin Gunn is in trouble early... where's Omega going?

[An also-staggered challenger hops up on the middle rope, waving his hands to draw Gunn towards him...]

LD: Middle rope... DROPKICK!

[...but Gunn easily swats the attack away, sending the hopeful challenger crashing to the canvas as the crowd instantly deflates from the comeback being abruptly and harshly halted...]

LD: Omega hits hard there...

BW: Odin Gunn smacked him down like a normal human might swat an annoying little fly, Dane. Omega's overmatched here.

LD: Well, after the Desperadoes attacked him before the bell, that's certainly a strong possibility.

BW: It wouldn't have mattered if Omega was backed up Polemos... hell, it wouldn't have mattered if he had the entire US Army behind. Nobody's stopping Odin Gunn.

LD: Omega having a hard time getting up off the mat, taking a lot of time here and...

[As Omega gets to a knee, Odin Gunn races to the far ropes, his 335 pound frame tearing back across...]

LD: ...Gunn's coming strong annnnnd...

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and high impact crossbody attempts to rip Omega's torso in half, leaving him in a crumpled heap on the canvas as Gunn takes a knee, looking down on him as Omega weakly tries to roll away from him.]

LD: Omega's in serious trouble, fans... he's rolling out of the ring...

BW: Ordinarily, I'd say that's a smart move, Dane. Get a chance to recover on the outside but in this case, this is just Omega delaying the inevitable.

LD: You really think he stands no chance at all?

BW: He stood no chance when he was in perfect shape. After Pedro Perez and the Texas Ranger got ahold of him, his odds shrank even more.

LD: In the words of a man from a galaxy far, far away, never tell me the odds, Ben.

BW: Nerfherder.

[Gunn climbs to his feet, eager to continue the assault... but the referee boldly steps in his path, ordering him back...]

LD: Davis Warren perhaps trying to atone for his mistake in starting this match under duress as he tries to shield Omega for the moment...

[But as Gunn is held at bay, a ferocious Pedro Perez seizes the moment to grab a hurting Omega off the floor...]

LD: No, no... NOOOO!

"CLAAAAAAAAAAAAANK!"

"OHLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLL!"

[...and ROCKETS the challenger skullfirst into the steel ringpost! Omega is wrapped around the post, falling limply to the floor as the crowd jeers Perez savagely.]

LD: Pedro Perez strikes again! This is out of control! President Zharkov needs to do something about this! Omega's all alone out here, Ben!

BW: Just the way the Desperadoes wanted it. It's no secret that Curly Bill demanded this match take place this week because he knew Polemos was still injured and he knew Polemos wouldn't be here. Omega's got no backup out here against the Desperadoes and that makes for a dangerous situation for this Neptunian freak.

LD: The Texas Ranger getting involved now too, rolling Omega back into the ring...

[And as he does, we see blood flowing from the forehead of the challenger around his mask...]

LD: He's been busted open, Ben! Omega's been busted open by Pedro Perez and that smash into the steel ringpost!

BW: I see it... and Omega's odds just got even worse! This is the kind of longshot that a wild-eyed degenerate gambler wouldn't even take... Blackwell just called his bookie to try to back out.

LD: Sweet Lou slander aside, Omega's down on the mat, bleeding badly and Odin Gunn looks like he's moving in for the kill...

[Gunn drags the barely-moving Omega off the mat, whipping him into the corner where he smashes into the turnbuckles...

...and then comes charging in after him, silently smashing into his challenger with 335 pounds!]

LD: ...AVALANCHE IN THE CORNER!

[Gunn steps back, allowing the bloodied Omega to stagger towards him, scooping him up over his shoulder...]

LD: Oh no... annnnnd DOWWWWWN with the powerslam!

[Gunn stays on him as the referee dives to count.]

LD: That's gonna do it... one... two... thre- HEY!

[The crowd grumbles as the champion yanks Omega off the mat by the hair before the three count. The referee shouts at the stoic Gunn who simply stares at him as Curly Bill flashes a tobacco-stained smile on the outside...]

"That's it. Show him what we do to varmints who step to the Desperadoes!"

[Gunn gives a nod as he rises off the mat, dragging Omega with him...]

LD: Oh, come on... look at him! He can barely stand!

[Hooking Omega's arms across his own torso, Gunn lifts him into the air, dumping him down on the mat...]

LD: GERMAN SUPLEX CONNECTS! RIGHT ON THE BACK OF THE HEAD!

[...and Gunn rolls right back to his feet, switching his grip to a double chickenwing...]

BW: This isn't just any suplex, Dane!

[...and takes him over a second time, driving the back of his head and neck into the canvas with a Tiger Suplex!]

BW: This is the Holy Trinity! We've seen The Father... we've seen The Son...

[Gunn rolls up to his feet again, bringing Omega with him...]

...and again shifts his grip to a half chickenwing and a half nelson...]

LD: Omega's gotta get out-

[...and DESTROYS his challenger with the third suplex in the combination, nearly spiking him on his head from the high angle in which Omega takes the suplex!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

BW: ...THE HOLY GHOOOOOST!

[Gunn sits up on the mat, a cold and unfeeling expression on his face as the crowd buzzes with concern for the condition of the bloodied and broken Omega who is barely moving on the mat...]

LD: The referee should stop this right now, Ben. He should stop this match before this goes any further and Omega risks any further injury.

[...and Gunn rolls to a knee, pushing up off the mat, looking out at Curly Bill who shakes his head.]

"Not yet."

LD: Not yet?! Why not?! You maniacs have proved your point! What else can you possibly do?!

[Gunn reaches down, effortlessly lifting Omega's limp form off the mat, holding him up near the ropes, looking out on the pleading crowd...]

LD: Stop this match! Stop it now!

[...and Gunn FLIPS Omega inside out with a devastating standing lariat!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[Omega gets flipped onto his back by Gunn who plants a hand in the torso, taking a knee on the mat...]

LD: That's it. One. Two. Thre-

[...and the crowd ERUPTS in a mix of shock and terror as Omega weakly slips a foot over the bottom rope.]

LD: Oh no... oh... he got the foot on the rope. I don't even know if he knows where he is. That was pure instinct, fans. Omega got the foot on the ropes though so the match continues and...

[Curly Bill smashes his fist into the mat again, turning red in the face as he shouts at his man...]

"BREAK THE SUMBITCH IN HALF!"

[...and Gunn angrily yanks Omega off the mat by the arm, firing him into the ropes where Omega stumbles back towards him...]

LD: SPINEBUSTER!

[...and Gunn lifts, twisting for a traditional old school spinebuster...]

"THUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUD!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...that a desperate Omega SOMEHOW turns into a tornado DDT on the way down, SPIKING Gunn's head into the canvas to a thunderous ROAR from the Atlanta faithful!]

LD: OH MY GOD! OH MY GOD! HE SPIKED HIM WITH A DDT!

BW: How in the...?

LD: And Omega just bought himself a moment! One moment to recover... one moment to fight... one moment to somehow get himself together and win the World Television Title from this cold-blooded piece of-

BW: Easy there, Dane. He bought himself a moment to get the heck out of there before Gunn REALLY gets pissed off and ends his career. That's it. Don't get all crazy on me talking about the title changing hands!

LD: All it takes is a moment! You don't know, Ben! Maybe this is it! Maybe Omega is about to do the unthinkable!

[The Showtime crowd is on their feet now, roaring as champion and challenger struggle to get up off the canvas...]

"FIVE MINUTES GONE BY! FIVE MINUTES REMAIN!"

LD: Five minutes left in the ten minute time limit all TV Title matches have... both competitors on their feet somehow...

[A wild right hand from Gunn sweeps over the ducking Omega who leaps up, snapping a foot off the back of Gunn's head!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: ENZUGIRI CONNECTS! MORE SIGNS OF LIFE FROM THE CHALLENGER!

[The bloodied Omega gets back to his feet, watching as Gunn wobbles on unsure footing for the first time in the match. Curly Bill is pounding the mat, screaming at his charge as Pedro Perez looks incredibly anxious on the outside...]

LD: Look at the Desperadoes, Ben! They know their guy's in trouble!

[Swinging around, Gunn throws an even wilder left hand that comes up empty as Omega ducks under, rushing to the ropes, rebounding back...]

LD: SPINNING LEG LARIAT PUTS! GUNN! DOWWWWWWWN!

[The flying kick knocks the off-balance Odin Gunn to the mat as Omega struggles off the mat, striking his Omega pose to a THUNDEROUS ROAR from the AWA fans who suddenly have hope anew!]

LD: HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL IN ATLANTA! OMEGA HAS THE CHAMPION DOWN AND... HE'S GOING UP TOP!

[Omega ducks through the ropes, moving unsteadily down the apron towards the corner...]

LD: And up... up... up he goes, climbing the turnbuckles, looking for the home run shot like Ronald Acuña Junior down the road at Truist Park! Omega to the second rope...

[He plants a foot on the top rope, looking into the ring...]

..and swings his arms up in protective alarm as he finds a rampaging Gunn approaching fast, smashing a fist into the abdomen of Omega...]

LD: ...ohhh! Gunn caught him downstairs! Maybe Gunn wasn't down as much as Omega - or any of us - thought!

[...and yanks him right off the ropes onto his shoulders, marching out to the middle of the ring...]

LD: Gunn's got him on the shoulder annnnnd...

"THUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUD!"

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: ...DOWWWWWWWWN WITH THE SAMOAN CATTLEBUSTER!

[Gunn rolls to his knees, planting his hands in the chest, sticking out his tongue as he defiantly pins the shoulders...]

LD: One. Two. And three.

"DING! DING! DING!"

BW: Hahaaa! "Hope springs eternal in Atlanta!" Nietzsche said it best, Dane.

LD: What's that?

BW: "Hope in reality is the worst of all evils because it prolongs the torments of man."

LD: Sunshine and rainbows you are not, Ben Waterson. Odin Gunn scores the victory with the Samoan Cattlebuster, retaining his title and continuing on this epic title reign of his. 204 days and counting.

BW: About a month and change from passing Supernova's 248 days on the all-time World TV Title reign list. And that Venice Beach bum better hope that's the only thing of his that Gunn's got his eyes on. Still undefeated, still unbeaten, still inevitable... Odin Gunn wins again in Atlanta.

[As Gunn climbs off the bloodied and motionless Omega to boos from the crowd, he's joined by Curly Bill Webb, Pedro Perez, and the Texas Ranger inside the ring to celebrate... and the boos get louder.]

LD: The Desperadoes certainly have no fans here in Atlanta after laying waste to Omega, one of the most popular men in the entire AWA... the fans are letting them have it...

[Perez is on the middle rope, pointing and shouting angrily at a fan as the Texas Ranger lurks behind him, the bullrope over his shoulder.]

LD: ...and now Curly Bill's getting in on the act, shouting at the fans here in Atlanta and... uh oh!

[Laughter breaks out as a half-eaten hot dog bounces off Webb's chest. Webb recoils in disgust, swiping a hand at his chest as he glares out at the fans with an irate "WHO DID THAT?! SHOW YOURSELF!" as the Texas Ranger looks ready to club whoever is responsible. Webb angrily stomps towards the timekeeper's table, waving a beckoning hand...]

LD: Looks like Curly Bill's got something to say...

[Odin Gunn, stands over the fallen Omega, who lies sprawled out in the ring. Gunn, simply stares down at Omega with a cold, stoic look on his face, radiating fear and menace to all who lay eyes on him. Curly Bill, microphone in hand and a satisfied grin plastered across his face, taps the mic a few times...

...and then checks his watch with exaggerated nonchalance.]

CBW: Well, well, well! Looks like we've still got some time left on TV! My man Odin Gunn here just made short work of Omega, but he's still raring to go!

[Bill twists his mustache and cackles, relishing in the destruction Gunn and the rest of The Desperadoes have caused in the ring.]

CBW: So, here's the deal, folk and lady folk. We've still got a few minutes left on the clock. Now, if anyone out there thinks they've got what it takes to step into the ring with Odin Gunn, now's your chance! Come on down and try your luck against the most dominant AWA Television Champion that's ever existed!

[The old cowboy's eyes scan the crowd, searching for any sign of challengers. His grin widens as he soaks in the roaring boos from the audience.]

CBW: Come on, don't be shy! If you think you can do any better than Omega did, step right up! But let me tell ya, Odin Gunn isn't just any champion - he's a force of nature! And you'll need more than guts to take him on! Anybody?

[Bill's grin widens as he anticipates no takers.]

LD: I can't believe this, Ben! Curly Bill's offering to have Odin Gunn defend the title a SECOND time?! We need to get some medical attention out here for Omega but in the meantime...

BW: Yeah, but the whole locker room is yellow when it comes to this guy! Can you blame them?! They all see what he's done to every single person who has been put in front of him!

[The crowd is buzzing with energy, but no one seems to be stepping forward - until the tension in the air shifts...]

LD: Not EVERY single person!

[Suddenly, we see Wade Walker, emerge from the entrance! Walker walks with purpose, his gaze locked onto Gunn, the crowd's reaction a massive cheering roar! Curly Bill's confident demeanor falters, as his expression turns to one of concern as Walker produces a mic from his spot on the stage, still moving down the entrance stairs as he speaks...]

WW: I'm here to challenge Odin Gunn!

[The crowd ROARS at the idea of the rematch!]

WW: I had him BEAT last time and everybody knows it!

[Another big ROAR rings out as Curly Bill looks around anxiously, throwing another look at his watch as Walker climbs into the ring, drawing closer towards a waiting Gunn as Omega is rolled from the ring by Pedro Perez with a pair of boots to the ribcage...]

WW: If Gunn was any sort of man, he'd give me another shot at the Television title!

[Walker lowers the mic and the crowd cheers loudly as we zoom in on Wade Walker, the determination palpable on his face. The crowd's reaction intensifies, as Gunn steps forward and the two behemoths are staring face to face.]

LD: Uh oh! We've got them face to face now, eye to eye!

[Curly Bill's composure is cracking as he tries to regain control of the situation, glancing nervously between Wade Walker and Odin.]

CBW: Well, would ya' look at that! Look who's decided to make an appearance. Wade Walker, huh? I mean, sure, you've got guts to step into this ring, but this is Odin Gunn you're dealing with. You're letting one fluke lucky shot go to your head.

You really think you can take him on again, after witnessing a slaughter like that?

[Walker jerks his head towards Curly Bill...]

WW: I'm not here to talk.

[...and then turns back to Gunn.]

WW: I'm here to take that title from your boy!

[Big cheers! Glancing nervously at Gunn, Bill's face goes pale when the Samoan Cowboy grimly nods his head, seemingly accepting Walker's challenge!]

LD: I think Odin Gunn just said "Yes!" He wants that rematch with Wade Walker as bad as Walker does!

BW: Are you kidding me!? Odin Gunn versus Wade Walker? Right now!?

[Bill tries to mask his concern with a strained smile.]

CBW: Alright, Walker... I gave you a chance to change your mind and now it's too late!

[Webb subtly checks his watch again.]

CBW: Well, it looks like it's your funeral! Don't say I didn't warn you!

[And with that, Curly Bill gets the heck out of Dodge, not wanting any part of the chaos and destruction the two monsters in the ring are about to participate in...

...but before the bell can sound, the Texas Ranger rushes at Walker, bullrope over his head...]

LD: We don't have a lot of time left but-

[...but Walker avoids the Ranger who stumbles past as Walker gets a running start...]

LD: -SPEEEEEEEEEEEEEEAR!

[...and cuts down the masked Ranger who promptly rolls under the ropes to the floor, clutching his ribcage as Pedro Perez attacks his former partner from behind, battering him into the ropes...

...which is when Walker lowers his shoulder, tossing Perez effortlessly over the top rope in a makeshift backdrop!]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

LD: AND THERE GOES PEREZ AS WELL!

BW: WHAAAAAT?!

[Walker stands tall... and points right at Odin Gunn as Curly Bill waves his hands frantically on the outside, trying to call the whole thing off...

...but referee Davis Warren signals...]

"DING! DING! DING!"

LD: HERE WE GO! HERE WE GO!

[With a short time remaining on the show, Walker and Gunn start throwing bombs at one another, the crowd ROARING for the slugfest!]

LD: WE'VE GOT A FIGHT ON OUR HANDS!

BW: Can someone get a call on the time remaining?! How much time do we got?!

LD: I'm not sure... if anyone in production can...?

[Gunn and Walker's haymakers are fast and furious but Walker's are a little bit faster than Gunn who has just finished a match, Walker landing at will, driving Gunn backwards...

...but the World Television Champion lashes out with a headbutt, staggering Walker, knocking him back a few steps...]

LD: Alright, we're hearing we're under two minutes left in the time remaining on this show! Just under two minutes to go as Wade Walker tries to shock the world and take the World Television Title off the undefeated Odin Gunn!

[Grabbing the arm, Gunn fires Walker across the ring...]

LD: Clothesli- ducked by Walker, off the far side!

[...and with a leap, Walker SMASHES a hammer blow into the sternum of Gunn, knocking him off his feet to a HUUUUUGE ROAR!]

LD: HE DROPPED HIM! ONE MIGHTY BLOW AND WADE WALKER PUTS DOWN THE UNDEFEATED WORLD TELEVISION CHAMPION!

BW: The Mjolnr hammer blow connects! Gunn's in trouble, Dane, but time is on his side!

LD: The lack of time, you mean... the seconds tick down as Odin Gunn is... wait a second!

[The crowd ERUPTS as a fired up Wade Walker smashes a fist across his chest, stomping to the corner where he lowers into a crouch...]

LD: Walker's in the corner! Walker's measuring his man!

[...and as a stunned Odin Gunn gets to his feet, Walker rushes across the ring, leaping into the air...]

LD: SUPERMAN PUNCH!

[...and connects with the flying punch, staggering Gunn but the champion does NOT go down from it...]

LD: I can't believe he's still standing!

BW: Odin Gunn is a monster of a man!

[Walker backs off, taking aim a second time...]

LD: ANOTHER ONE!

[...and the flying fist staggers Gunn a second time, causing his knees to go weak but...]

BW: ODIN GUNN WILL NOT FALL!

"SIXTY SECONDS REMAIN! ONE MINUTE TO GO!

LD: One minute left! Wade Walker's gotta hurry!

[Walker shakes his head in disbelief, rushing to the ropes, running past a staggered Gunn once... then twice...]

LD: Building up speed annnnnnd...

[...and Walker leaps into the air, smashing his fist between the eyes of the World Television Champion a third time, knocking him flat on the canvas!]

LD: ...WHAAAAAAMMMMOOOO! THE THIRD SUPERMAN PUNCH DROPS HIM! GUNN GOES DOWN! GUNN GOES DOWN AND-

[Seeing his charge's title and undefeated streak at risk, Curly Bill scrambles up on the apron to intervene...]

"OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

[...and the crowd ERUPTS as Walker lands another Superman Punch, this one on Curly Bill, knocking him flat on the floor!]

BW: OH, WHAT KIND OF CHEAP SHOT IS THAT?!

[The timekeeper's voice rings out!]

"THIRTY SECONDS REMAIN! THIRTY SECONDS!"

LD: Thirty seconds! Time is running out for Wade Walker!

[The masked Texas Ranger is the next one up on the apron, grabbing at his ribs as Walker storms down the length of the ropes...]

LD: CLOTHESLINE ON THE MASKED MAN! DOWN GOES THE RANGER!

[...and flattens the Ranger, knocking him off the apron as well!]

LD: Wade Walker's taking out the Desperadoes as well!

[Pedro Perez is the last one up, steel chair in hand...]

LD: PEREZ HAS A CHAIR AND-

"WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!"

[...and the crowd EXPLODES as Wade Walker runs, leaps, and delivers a Superman punch to the chair, smashing the steel back into the face of Pedro Perez, sending him back down to the floor as Odin Gunn is slowly getting up off the canvas...]

"TEN SECONDS TO GO!"

BW: TEN SECONDS! COUNT 'EM DOWN!

LD: GUNN IS GETTING UP! WALKER'S GOT A CLEAR SHOT! ONE MORE SHOT!

[...and as Walker turns around, he backs to the corner, lowering his body to take aim...]

LD: Gunn's on his feet and-

[...and Walker storms across the ring, leaping off his feet...]

LD: -SPEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEAR!

[...and DRIVES his shoulder into the ribcage of the World Television Champion, flattening Odin Gunn under him! Walker grabs the leg, yanking back...]

LD: ONNNNNNNNNNNNNE! TWOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

BW: WE'RE OUT OF TIME! WE'LL SEE YOU IN LONDON!

LD: THREEEEEEEE-

[Cut to black.]