

Proving Grounds: Season 1 - Episode 9: "The Final Five."

May 19, 2026 | Proving Grounds House - Las Vegas, NV

Episode 9: "The Final Five."

PROVING GROUNDS: EPISODE NINE

Episode Title: "The Final Five"

OPENING MONTAGE

Black screen.

Silence first.

Not total silence. The kind that lives in an empty arena before load-in. A chair leg scraping on concrete. The whirr of a monitor turning on. The soft click of a video remote. A breath taken in through the nose and held longer than usual.

SCOTT STEVENS (V.O.): "At this point, everybody left can wrestle. Everybody left can talk. Everybody left belongs in the room."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT (V.O.): "So now the question changes."

Quick flashes hit, but slower than usual. Heavier.

Darren Valiant sitting alone in a dark interview chair, looking at a monitor showing his Episode 1 promo.

Roxie Raze watching Lena Lux's elimination on replay and immediately looking away.

Boone Mercer sitting in a ring with no crowd, elbows on knees, staring at the mat.

Jace Van Ardent hearing his own words from Episode 1: "Pressure's kind of the point, right?" and closing his eyes for a second.

Tatum Quinn rewinding the moment the live crowd finally reacted to her in Episode 8.

Scott Stevens seated across from each recruit in a single chair under one hard light.

Melissa leaning in and asking something off-screen.

A table with five envelopes.

Proving Grounds: Season 1 - Episode 9: "The Final Five."

A camera dolly pushing slowly toward the ring.

SCOTT STEVENS (V.O.): "No crowd this week. No partner. No opponent to blame. Just the story you've told me, and whether it still stands up when I strip everything else away."

Hard cut to black.

ON SCREEN: PROVING GROUNDS

SCENE ONE - A DIFFERENT MORNING

The house feels almost too quiet now.

Five people in a place built for eight creates empty space in strange places. A clean bed that used to belong to someone else. One less voice in the kitchen. One less bag by the stairs. The competition is close enough to the end now that even routine feels temporary.

In the kitchen, Darren Valiant sits at the table instead of standing. That alone signals something. He has a coffee in front of him and a protein bar he has not opened. Boone Mercer comes in from outside, hoodie on, hands cold, clearly having already been awake a while. Jace follows a minute later, still wearing sleep in his face.

JACE VAN ARDENT: "Nobody sleeps before decision episodes, huh?"

BOONE MERCER: "Decision episode?"

JACE VAN ARDENT: "That's what this is. Don't act like it ain't."

Boone opens the fridge, takes out water, leans against the counter.

BOONE MERCER: "I know what it is."

JACE VAN ARDENT: "You just don't like me saying it out loud."

BOONE MERCER: "Correct."

Darren looks at both of them over the rim of his cup.

DARREN VALIANT: "He's not wrong. Today's not about whether we've got upside anymore."

JACE VAN ARDENT: "Nope."

DARREN VALIANT: "It's about whose case still breathes when they shut all the noise off."

Proving Grounds: Season 1 - Episode 9: "The Final Five."

Jace sits at the table across from Darren.

JACE VAN ARDENT: "You sound like you rehearsed that."

DARREN VALIANT: "I absolutely rehearsed that."

Even Boone can't help the small grin.

Confessional.

DARREN VALIANT: "There's a version of this show where I make the final two easily. I know that. The problem is, so do other people. Once that happens, the burden changes. Nobody's asking whether I'm good enough anymore. They're asking whether I've actually changed enough."

Upstairs, Roxie is alone in her room now. Lena's bed is still made, still untouched beyond basic reset. Roxie sits on her own bed, elbows on knees, staring across at the empty side of the room longer than she probably means to. Then she stands, grabs her gear, and leaves before the camera can turn the moment sentimental.

In Darren and Tatum's room, Tatum is already dressed and packing slowly. Darren's side is more organized than ever, which usually means he is more stressed than he is saying.

TATUM QUINN: "You look worse when you're calm."

DARREN VALIANT: "Thank you."

TATUM QUINN: "That wasn't a compliment."

DARREN VALIANT: "No, but it was observant."

Tatum zips her bag and looks at him.

TATUM QUINN: "You think Boone's in."

DARREN VALIANT: "Probably."

TATUM QUINN: "Roxie?"

DARREN VALIANT: "Probably."

TATUM QUINN: "And you?"

Darren pauses. Really pauses.

Proving Grounds: Season 1 - Episode 9: "The Final Five."

DARREN VALIANT: "I think if I'm not, then I misunderstood the whole show."

Tatum absorbs that. Honest. Cocky. Terrified. All at once.

TATUM QUINN: "That sounds exhausting."

DARREN VALIANT: "It is."

SCENE TWO - THE STRIPPED-DOWN SET

The recruits arrive not at the full training floor and not at a live venue. Instead, production has built a barebones evaluation environment inside a darkened section of the UTA facility.

One ring under focused light.

Five interview chairs.

A monitor bank.

A long black table with envelopes.

No crowd. No music. No extra polish.

Scott Stevens stands alone in the ring at first. Melissa Cartwright waits at ringside with a folder and a tablet. The atmosphere feels less like a TV show and more like a final board review before someone gets hired -- or doesn't.

SCOTT STEVENS: "Welcome to the part you can't hide in."

The final five stand in a line at ringside.

SCOTT STEVENS: "You've had matches. Challenges. Coaches. Partners. Cameras. Crowds. House pressure. Notes. Excuses. Wins. Losses. None of that disappears today, but none of it will carry you either."

SCOTT STEVENS: "This is the week where you tell me who you are, what changed, what didn't, and why you deserve the final two more than the people standing next to you."

He gestures to the monitors.

SCOTT STEVENS: "You'll each go through three things today. Playback. Interview. Final case."

SCOTT STEVENS: "Playback is simple. We show you who you were. You tell me whether that person still exists."

Proving Grounds: Season 1 - Episode 9: "The Final Five."

SCOTT STEVENS: "Interview is with Melissa. If your story falls apart under questions, it was never much of a story."

SCOTT STEVENS: "Final case happens in the ring. You get one uninterrupted shot to tell me -- and the people watching -- why you belong in the final two."

He looks down the line.

SCOTT STEVENS: "By the end of the night, three of you are out."

The room tightens instantly.

SCOTT STEVENS: "Darren. You're first."

SCENE THREE - PLAYBACK: DARREN VALIANT

Darren sits alone in the dark interview bay, monitor in front of him. The footage begins rolling.

Episode 1 Darren appears on screen. Confident. Polished. Certain.

EPISODE 1 DARREN (ON MONITOR): "I didn't come to Proving Grounds to be part of the experience. I came here because I expect to leave with a contract."

Then clips of his first challenge win. His early control. His tension with Boone. Story week's stumble. Live win over Tatum. House pressure week's calm leadership. The arc is all there, if he can claim it honestly.

SCOTT STEVENS (O.S.): "That guy still in there?"

Darren keeps his eyes on the screen.

DARREN VALIANT: "Yeah. But he thought confidence and readiness were the same thing."

SCOTT STEVENS (O.S.): "And now?"

DARREN VALIANT: "Now I know confidence is just the shape I default to when I want to be in control."

That hangs there, useful and a little dangerous.

SCOTT STEVENS (O.S.): "What'd the show strip off you?"

DARREN VALIANT: "The illusion that people only connect to the polished parts."

SCENE FOUR - PLAYBACK: ROXIE RAZE

Proving Grounds: Season 1 - Episode 9: "The Final Five."

Roxie sits in the same chair. The monitor lights her face. Early season Roxie appears -- all edge, all certainty, all knives.

EPISODE 1 ROXIE (ON MONITOR): "At least they cast attractive people."

Then follow-ups: promo dominance, early manipulation, camera control, the partnership with Lena, the smile during the live match, the silence after Lena's elimination. Those clips hit differently than Roxie probably expects them to.

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT (O.S.): "Who did you like least when this started?"

ROXIE RAZE: "Most of them."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT (O.S.): "Cute. Who surprised you?"

Roxie looks at the screen, where Lena is replaying her live promo from Episode 5.

ROXIE RAZE: "Lena."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT (O.S.): "Why?"

ROXIE RAZE: "Because she stopped asking if she belonged. Once she stopped doing that, people had to deal with her."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT (O.S.): "And you?"

ROXIE RAZE: "What about me?"

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT (O.S.): "What did you stop doing?"

Roxie leans back slightly.

ROXIE RAZE: "I stopped acting like being the smartest person in the room automatically meant I was the most complete one."

SCENE FIVE - PLAYBACK: BOONE MERCER

Boone watches his own footage like he doesn't quite trust it. Early Boone is a little rawer, a little more stubborn, a little more openly dismissive of half the show.

EPISODE 1 BOONE (ON MONITOR): "I'm not really a 'live in a pretty house and talk about my feelings' kind of guy."

Proving Grounds: Season 1 - Episode 9: "The Final Five."

That gets the smallest eye-roll from present Boone.

The clips continue: early resentment, promo week exposure, physical week rebound, camera week breakthrough, live win over Jace. The arc is surprisingly clean when laid out like this.

SCOTT STEVENS (O.S.): "What annoyed you most when this started?"

BOONE MERCER: "Everything that looked like polish for polish's sake."

SCOTT STEVENS (O.S.): "Still feel that way?"

BOONE MERCER: "Less."

SCOTT STEVENS (O.S.): "Why?"

BOONE MERCER: "Because some of that wasn't fake. Some of it was people taking their work seriously in a language I just didn't respect yet."

That is maybe the smartest sentence Boone has said all season.

SCENE SIX - PLAYBACK: JACE VAN ARDENT

Jace watches early Jace with complicated affection. He looked so easy then. So naturally centered. So certain the season would bend in his direction eventually.

EPISODE 1 JACE (ON MONITOR): "Pressure's kind of the point, right?"

Then the clips stack: strong start, "easy to like" note repeated again and again, losing some narrative ground midseason, live rebound against Boone in defeat. It is a season of alms and recoveries, which is a dangerous thing to see laid bare.

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT (O.S.): "You're still one of the most naturally appealing people left."

JACE VAN ARDENT: "That sounds like a compliment with a knife in it."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT (O.S.): "Maybe."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT (O.S.): "What held you back?"

Jace sits with that, no joke first this time.

JACE VAN ARDENT: "Thinking being easy to ride with would eventually read as depth if I just kept showing up."

Proving Grounds: Season 1 - Episode 9: "The Final Five."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT (O.S.): "And now?"

JACE VAN ARDENT: "Now I know you have to choose the sharp parts too. Not just the smooth ones."

SCENE SEVEN - PLAYBACK: TATUM QUINN

Tatum's playback may be the most dramatic despite her being the least outwardly dramatic person in the room. The contrast between early controlled Tatum and the live moment where the crowd finally reacted to her is stark enough to build an episode around by itself.

EPISODE 2 TATUM (ON MONITOR): "Respect."

The monitor then shows every coach note about feeling something from her. Every time she was technically right and emotionally late. Then the crowd reacting in Episode 8. Then her own face as she realizes they actually have.

SCOTT STEVENS (O.S.): "Why did it take so long?"

Tatum doesn't answer right away.

TATUM QUINN: "Because I thought if I opened the door too early, I'd lose control of the room."

SCOTT STEVENS (O.S.): "And instead?"

TATUM QUINN: "Instead I kept control and lost some of the room anyway."

That is brutally clear. And important.

SCENE EIGHT - INTERVIEW BLOCK WITH MELISSA

The next phase starts after a break. One by one, Melissa Cartwright sits across from each recruit in a harder, cleaner interview setup. No screen. No memory cushion. Just questions.

First: Boone Mercer.

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "Why do you belong in the final two?"

BOONE MERCER: "Because nobody left here has grown more without losing who they are."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "And who are you?"

BOONE MERCER: "A guy people believe."

Proving Grounds: Season 1 - Episode 9: "The Final Five."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "That's good branding. Try again."

Boone leans back, irritated -- then chooses not to stay irritated.

BOONE MERCER: "I'm the guy in this group who had the most to unlearn, and I did."

That's better. Melissa knows it too.

Next: Jace.

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "Why should you be in the final two instead of Boone?"

Direct. No soft entry.

JACE VAN ARDENT: "Because Boone's argument is that he became more complete. Mine is that I've had the whole tool set from the beginning and finally stopped trying to make the easier parts carry all of it."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "That's a good line. Is it true?"

Jace exhales.

JACE VAN ARDENT: "It's becoming true."

Melissa clocks the honesty and the danger in it. Becoming true may be one week too late.

Next: Roxie.

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "Why should you be in the final two instead of Darren?"

Roxie almost smiles at the bluntness.

ROXIE RAZE: "Because Darren's a frontrunner in a way people already understand. I'm one in a way they had to catch up to."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "That sounds like ego."

ROXIE RAZE: "No. It sounds like I had to be harder to read because people assume they know what a woman like me is before I say anything."

Melissa says nothing for a beat. That answer has weight.

Next: Tatum.

Proving Grounds: Season 1 - Episode 9: "The Final Five."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "Why should you be in the final two instead of Jace?"

TATUM QUINN: "Because my growth cost me more."

Melissa leans in slightly.

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "Explain that."

TATUM QUINN: "He needed more edge. I needed to let people into places I built specifically so they couldn't."

That's the most revealing sentence Tatum has spoken all season.

Last: Darren.

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "Why should you be in the final two instead of Roxie?"

DARREN VALIANT: "Because I've been the more complete version for longer."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "That answer came out too fast."

Darren knows it immediately.

DARREN VALIANT: "Because I think I've proven I can lead every type of week this season, not just the ones that naturally suit me."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "Better."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "And what if I said Roxie's harder to forget?"

Darren's eyes narrow the smallest amount.

DARREN VALIANT: "Then I'd say memorable and complete are not always the same job."

That is sharp. Maybe too sharp. But sharp.

SCENE NINE - BACKSTAGE INTERLUDES

Between the interview block and the final case, the recruits get time alone in different corners of the facility. The cameras catch fragments, which feel almost more important than the official answers.

Boone stands alone in the ring and runs one rope, stops, then sits on the apron like he doesn't want to burn nervous energy before he needs it.

Proving Grounds: Season 1 - Episode 9: "The Final Five."

Jace stares at old match posters on the wall outside the production office, then closes his eyes and leans his head back against the cinderblock.

Roxie stands in the hallway by herself, not touching her phone, not fixing gear, just thinking -- which for her may be the most exposed posture possible.

Tatum sits cross-legged on the floor outside wardrobe with her back to the wall and her eyes shut, breathing in for four, out for four. Discipline as medicine.

Darren stands in front of the bathroom mirror alone and says one line to himself three times, changing where the emphasis lands each time until the line finally sounds true enough to keep.

Confessional.

ROXIE RAZE: "This is the scary week because no one's hiding behind a result. You can lose a match and still argue your way out of it. You can't lose your own story and still tell me you belong."

SCENE TEN - THE FINAL CASE

The ring is now lit alone in darkness. Each recruit enters one at a time, stands center ring with a microphone, and gets one uninterrupted minute. No responses. No rebuttals. No second take.

Order: Tatum Quinn, Jace Van Ardent, Boone Mercer, Roxie Raze, Darren Valiant.

TATUM QUINN:

TATUM QUINN: "I belong in the final two because I am the contestant in this competition who had the least margin to hide behind. If I was great physically, it was expected. If I was disciplined, it was expected. If I was composed, it was expected. My whole journey here has been whether I could let myself be felt without losing what made me credible in the first place. I think I've finally started doing that. And if this contract is about who can become something real and lasting in UTA, I know how to build that with intention."

It is not flashy. It is more human than any version of Tatum would have allowed early in the season. That matters.

JACE VAN ARDENT:

JACE VAN ARDENT: "I belong in the final two because I've had every excuse to stay easy. Easy to like. Easy to watch. Easy to root for. And somewhere in this process I figured out that easy only gets you invited -- it doesn't make you undeniable. I've been forced to sharpen. To get more honest. To stop thinking natural chemistry was enough when the room kept asking for deeper weight. I'm still the guy who can make people look up. Now I'm also the guy who knows why they should stay there."

Proving Grounds: Season 1 - Episode 9: "The Final Five."

That is probably Jace's best verbal case of the season.

BOONE MERCER:

BOONE MERCER: "I belong in the final two because nobody here had to stretch further without snapping. I came into this place thinking half of it was nonsense. Cameras. image. promo psychology. presentation. Living in a house and acting like that mattered. Turns out it all mattered. I learned that without becoming fake, without losing the part of me people believe the second I step in a ring. I'm more dangerous now because I'm still me, but I'm harder to dismiss."

That's strong. Very strong. Boone doesn't over-sell it. He doesn't need to.

ROXIE RAZE:

ROXIE RAZE: "I belong in the final two because I have had to fight two competitions this entire season -- the actual one, and the one people project onto me before I even open my mouth. They think they know what women like me are. That we're style first. Edge first. Armor first. Fine. I used all of that. And I still had to prove I could tell stories, lead when it mattered, connect when it counted, and survive the house when it stopped being fun. I'm not asking for a final-two spot because I'm memorable. I'm telling you I earned it because I'm complete."

That one lands hard in the room. Melissa hears it. Scott hears it. The camera definitely hears it.

DARREN VALIANT:

DARREN VALIANT: "I belong in the final two because from day one, I've looked like somebody this company could use. The question since then has been whether I was only that -- polished, aware, built for a frame -- or whether there was enough under it to survive the weeks that stripped all the nice angles away. I think I answered that. I've won on camera, in the house, under pressure, live in front of a crowd, and in weeks that punished exactly the parts of me I thought would protect me. I didn't just survive the process. I became more difficult to define by the easy version of myself. That's why I belong in the final two."

Complete. Confident. Thoughtful. Maybe the strongest full-package statement of the night.

SCENE ELEVEN - SCOTT'S PRIVATE CHECKS

After the final case, Scott does one last pass -- not in front of everybody. One sentence, one question, one recruit at a time near the apron.

To Tatum:

SCOTT STEVENS: "If you miss the final two, what did you miss by?"

Proving Grounds: Season 1 - Episode 9: "The Final Five."

TATUM QUINN: "Time."

He nods. She's probably right.

To Jace:

SCOTT STEVENS: "If you make the final two, why?"

JACE VAN ARDENT: "Because I stopped confusing natural with finished."

To Boone:

SCOTT STEVENS: "If you don't make it, what will surprise you?"

BOONE MERCER: "That growth didn't count as much as I thought."

To Roxie:

SCOTT STEVENS: "If I tell you no, what'd you leave undone?"

ROXIE RAZE: "Nothing. Which is why 'no' would bother me."

To Darren:

SCOTT STEVENS: "If I tell you yes, what's the danger?"

DARREN VALIANT: "That I start acting like it was always inevitable."

That answer matters more than maybe any of them know.

SCENE TWELVE - THE CUT TO TWO

The five recruits stand in the ring under one hard white light. No music. No crowd. Just Scott Stevens, Melissa Cartwright at ringside, and the weight of the last nine weeks pressing inward.

SCOTT STEVENS: "I told you from the beginning that this show wasn't about one skill. Not one week. Not one match. It was about who could survive the whole thing and still look like somebody UTA should invest in."

SCOTT STEVENS: "Tonight, we cut from five to two."

Nobody moves. Nobody blinks if they can help it.

SCOTT STEVENS: "Tatum Quinn..."

Proving Grounds: Season 1 - Episode 9: "The Final Five."

Tatum stands straighter somehow.

SCOTT STEVENS: "You made this difficult at exactly the wrong and right time. Your growth is real. Your timing was not quite enough."

SCOTT STEVENS: "You are eliminated."

Tatum closes her eyes once. Opens them. Nods. No collapse. No speech. Just acceptance sharpened by disappointment.

TATUM QUINN: "Understood."

SCOTT STEVENS: "You became visible. Don't lose that."

Tatum steps back from the line, but remains there for the full cut. Professional to the end.

SCOTT STEVENS: "Jace Van Ardent..."

Jace's jaw tightens.

SCOTT STEVENS: "You were gifted coming in. More gifted than some people here. That's never been the problem. Your problem was thinking your floor was enough to carry your ceiling."

SCOTT STEVENS: "You figured that out. Late. But you figured it out."

SCOTT STEVENS: "You are eliminated."

That one hurts the room in a different way. Jace takes the hit visibly, but he does not break. He just nods once, eyes wet but not falling apart.

JACE VAN ARDENT: "Yeah."

SCOTT STEVENS: "You're closer than you were. Don't waste that."

Jace steps back beside Tatum. He looks at the mat, then up again. Keeps it together.

SCOTT STEVENS: "Boone Mercer..."

Boone's hands flex once at his sides.

SCOTT STEVENS: "You came in here harder to coach than anyone left. You leave this stage one of the clearest examples of what this process was supposed to do."

Proving Grounds: Season 1 - Episode 9: "The Final Five."

SCOTT STEVENS: "You are moving on to the final two."

Boone exhales hard, like somebody knocked air out of him. Real reaction. No posing. He nods once, then again, as if the body needs a second to catch up.

MARKED SILENCE IN THE ROOM.

That leaves Darren and Roxie standing across from each other, with one spot left.

SCOTT STEVENS: "Roxie Raze. Darren Valiant."

The entire season seems to live in that pairing for a moment. Early frontrunner and late-arriving complete threat. Two different kinds of control. Two different kinds of awareness. Two different kinds of ambition.

SCOTT STEVENS: "Both of you have a case."

SCOTT STEVENS: "Darren, you were the early standard and, more importantly, survived becoming more than that. Roxie, you were dangerous from the start and kept getting fuller instead of narrower."

He looks at Roxie first.

SCOTT STEVENS: "Roxie Raze..."

Roxie's eyes do not leave his.

SCOTT STEVENS: "You are eliminated."

The room absorbs that slowly. It is not a shock, exactly. But it is brutal because of how real her case was.

Roxie does not flinch. Not at first. Then one breath breaks differently than the rest.

ROXIE RAZE: "Okay."

Just one word. But there's a lifetime of controlled disappointment in it.

SCOTT STEVENS: "You made this very hard. That matters."

He turns to Darren.

SCOTT STEVENS: "Darren Valiant... you are moving on to the final two."

Darren closes his eyes for one second, then opens them and exhales, not triumphant so much as relieved and aware of what that relief cost him.

Proving Grounds: Season 1 - Episode 9: "The Final Five."

DARREN VALIANT: "Thank you."

Scott steps between Boone and Darren.

SCOTT STEVENS: "Your final two: Boone Mercer and Darren Valiant."

The camera holds on the contrast. Boone -- rough, grounded, transformed. Darren -- polished, sharpened, tested. It is a strong final pairing. It feels earned.

SCENE THIRTEEN - EXIT CONFESSIONALS

TATUM QUINN:

Tatum sits upright, hands folded.

TATUM QUINN: "I knew the clock was against me. That doesn't make it easier. But I also know who I was when I got here, and who I am now. The space between those two people matters. More than the placement, maybe. Not today. But later."

JACE VAN ARDENT:

Jace sits back, shakes his head once, smiles sadly.

JACE VAN ARDENT: "This one stings because it feels true. Not unfair. True. I got sharper here. I got more real here. I also waited too long to stop believing talent would keep me in front. That's on me. But I'm not leaving confused anymore."

ROXIE RAZE:

Roxie sits with arms folded, then finally lets them fall.

ROXIE RAZE: "I hate almost more than I hate losing. That's the honest answer. Because almost means you can see exactly how close the door was before it shut."

She looks off-camera, then back.

ROXIE RAZE: "But if I'm being honest-honest? I didn't leave this show small. I left it undeniable in ways I wasn't when I started. That counts for something, whether I'm in the final two or not."

SCENE FOURTEEN - FINALISTS ALONE

The facility is almost empty now. Staff has thinned out. Cameras are lighter. The long evaluation day is done.

Proving Grounds: Season 1 - Episode 9: "The Final Five."

Boone and Darren stand in the ring alone, no mics, no Scott, no Melissa, just the final two remaining under the overhead light.

BOONE MERCER: "Us."

DARREN VALIANT: "Apparently."

BOONE MERCER: "You knew."

DARREN VALIANT: "I hoped."

BOONE MERCER: "That's a cleaner lie than usual."

Darren laughs quietly.

DARREN VALIANT: "You were always gonna be dangerous if you let yourself change."

BOONE MERCER: "You were always dangerous. Period."

They stand with that. No chest-thumping. No fake sportsmanship. Just two men who know exactly what the other is now.

DARREN VALIANT: "You know this is the right final."

BOONE MERCER: "Yeah."

DARREN VALIANT: "Good."

FINAL CONFESSIONALS

DARREN VALIANT: "I'm in the final two because I earned it. That's the clean version. The less clean version is I'm also here because every time this show tried to expose something in me, I survived that exposure and got more interesting after."

BOONE MERCER: "I started this thing wanting to fight the process. Now I'm standing in the final because I let the process work on me without sanding off the part that matters. That means more than I thought it would."

FINAL TAG

Black screen.

Then the last flashes of the season.

Proving Grounds: Season 1 - Episode 9: "The Final Five."

Boone and Darren warming up in separate corners of a ring.

Scott Stevens holding a contract folder.

Video packages of both finalists.

The house, now almost empty.

Melissa Cartwright saying, "This is it."

Darren staring into camera.

Boone wrapping his wrists.

SCOTT STEVENS (V.O.): "One of you leaves with a UTA contract."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT (V.O.): "And the other leaves knowing they were good enough to get close, but not close enough to finish it."

ON SCREEN: NEXT WEEK -- "NEXT IN"

Proving Grounds: Season 1 - Episode 9: "The Final Five."

Show Credits

Match: "Episode 9: "The Final Five."" - Written by Ben.

Results Compiled by the eFed Management Suite