

# Proving Grounds: Episode 5: "Camera Test"

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**Promotion:** United Toughness Alliance  
**Date:** April 21, 2026  
**Location:** Proving Grounds House — Las Vegas, NV

## Preview

Eight unsigned hopefuls move into a shared training house for ten weeks to fight for one UTA contract. They train, compete, clash, learn, and unravel under the eye of Scott Stevens, who acts as host, evaluator, and occasional hard-nosed mentor. Each week features a mix of house life, physical training, promo work, character development, challenges, and direct exposure to current UTA stars.

The winner does not just get a contract. They earn a place in UTA, and the audience gets to watch exactly what kind of person survived the climb.

## Results

### Episode 5: "Camera Test"

Match

PROVING GROUNDS: EPISODE FIVE

Episode Title: "Camera Test"

OPENING MONTAGE

Black screen.

The sounds come first.

A camera shutter snapping. A makeup brush against skin. A rolling light stand. A producer saying, "Reset." A microphone being clipped into place. A chair scooting on polished concrete. Someone muttering, "I hate this." Someone else saying, "No, hold the look. Hold it."

Then the images hit fast.

Darren Valiant adjusting his jacket and staring straight into lens.

Roxie Raze leaning against a wall like she owns the building.

Boone Mercer under softbox lights looking like he'd rather be in a street fight.

Lena Lux freezing mid-answer in an interview chair.

Jace Van Ardent smiling for a photo, then being told, "Less model, more threat."

Tatum Quinn sitting perfectly still while a producer says, "Give me something back."

Malik Steele staring at the camera as if it personally insulted him.

Jarvis Valentine walking into frame in a tailored coat, sunglasses on, all presence.

SCOTT STEVENS (V.O.): "You can be great in a ring and still fail this business if the camera doesn't know what to do with you."

JARVIS VALENTINE (V.O.): "Anybody can wrestle. A star makes people feel something before the bell ever rings."

Quick flashes.

Lena blinking back frustration in front of a backdrop.

Boone snapping, "I'm not here to sell shampoo."

Roxie saying, "Then stop looking like the before picture."

Melissa Cartwright leaning forward in an interview chair.

Scott Stevens watching from behind the monitors.

A crowd of invited fans behind barricades.

SCOTT STEVENS (V.O.): "This week doesn't care if you can fight. It cares whether anybody wants to watch you do it."

Hard cut to black.

ON SCREEN: PROVING GROUNDS

SCENE ONE – MORNING AFTER THE FIRST ELIMINATION

The house is quieter in a new way.

There is space where there used to be tension. One less bag by the wall. One less toothbrush in the upstairs bathroom. One less presence at breakfast. The first elimination changed the atmosphere. Nobody can pretend anymore that this is just a cool opportunity. Now it is also a narrowing road.

In the kitchen, Jace Van Ardent stands at the counter pouring coffee while staring out the window. Boone Mercer sits at the island eating oatmeal with the expression of a man punishing himself with it. Malik Steele enters a few seconds later, slower than usual, still adjusting to the room being his alone now.

JACE VAN ARDENT: "Sleep okay?"

MALIK STEELE: "Not really."

BOONE MERCER: "First one always changes the place."

JACE VAN ARDENT: "You say that like you've done this exact weird reality show before."

BOONE MERCER: "I've been in enough locker rooms. Once one guy's gone, everybody starts countin' chairs."

Malik leans against the counter and folds his arms.

MALIK STEELE: "I'm tired of being close."

JACE VAN ARDENT: "Then don't be close this week."

MALIK STEELE: "That simple?"

JACE VAN ARDENT: "No. But simple and easy aren't the same thing."

Boone points his spoon at Jace.

BOONE MERCER: "You got too many poster quotes in you before nine a.m."

JACE VAN ARDENT: "It's a gift."

Darren enters, hair set, shirt crisp, already looking like camera week might have been invented in a lab specifically for him. Boone notices and gives a small, annoyed shake of his head.

BOONE MERCER: "Of course you look like that today."

DARREN VALIANT: "Like what?"

BOONE MERCER: "Like you slept in a magazine ad."

DARREN VALIANT: "Thank you."

BOONE MERCER: "That was not—"

DARREN VALIANT: "I know. I'm taking it anyway."

Confessional.

DARREN VALIANT: "Camera week should be a good week for me. That's not arrogance. That's awareness. But there's danger in a week that feels made for you, because now everybody expects you to own it. If you don't, the fall's louder."

Upstairs, Roxie sits cross-legged on her bed going through outfit options laid out with surgical care. Lena stands in front of the mirror in a hoodie, trying expressions that look increasingly less natural the harder she thinks about them.

ROXIE RAZE: "Stop doing that."

LENA LUX: "Doing what?"

ROXIE RAZE: "Trying on faces like one of them is going to save you."

LENA LUX: "Helpful."

ROXIE RAZE: "You know what makes people look good on camera? Knowing what they want. Not symmetry."

LENA LUX: "I know what I want."

ROXIE RAZE: "Then stop looking like you're about to apologize for wanting it."

Lena stares at herself in the mirror. That lands harder than she wants to admit.

In Darren and Tatum's room, Tatum is staring at two plain black tops like they are philosophical enemies.

DARREN VALIANT: "Please tell me this is your version of panicking."

TATUM QUINN: "This is my version of wasting time."

DARREN VALIANT: "You know the camera can handle black clothing, right?"

TATUM QUINN: "That's not the point."

DARREN VALIANT: "Then what is?"

TATUM QUINN: "Everybody's going to try to look like something today."

DARREN VALIANT: "And?"

TATUM QUINN: "I'm trying not to look like a lie."

Darren studies her for a beat. That's more honesty than she usually volunteers.

SCENE TWO – TRAINING FACILITY / CAMERA WEEK REVEAL

The recruits arrive at the training facility and stop in the doorway.

The space has been transformed again. The ring is still present in the background, but the foreground is now a production environment. Backdrops. Light stands. Interview chairs. Makeup station. Rolling monitors. A small fan barricade setup. Multiple cameras. Clean, bright, unforgiving light.

Scott Stevens stands in the center. Beside him is Jarvis Valentine.

The reaction is immediate.

Darren straightens. Jace smiles in genuine respect. Roxie looks thrilled. Boone looks suspicious of every single light in the building. Lena's nerves spike. Malik goes inward. Tatum's jaw sets.

SCOTT STEVENS: "Welcome to camera week."

He lets them absorb the setup.

SCOTT STEVENS: "A lot of people think wrestling starts when the bell rings. They're wrong."

SCOTT STEVENS: "It starts when the camera finds you. When somebody asks who you are. When a fan looks at a poster, a thumbnail, an interview clip, a photo spread, and decides whether they care enough to keep watching."

He gestures toward Jarvis.

SCOTT STEVENS: "Jarvis Valentine understands presentation, pressure, and presence. He understands how to carry himself like a star without wasting motion. He's here today because looking good on camera isn't vanity. It's value."

JARVIS VALENTINE: "Everybody in this room wants to be remembered. Good. Then understand something — the camera doesn't remember effort. It remembers clarity."

JARVIS VALENTINE: "Who are you before you speak? What does your face say before your mouth does? What does your body say when the lens gets close enough to catch you faking it?"

The recruits listen closely.

SCOTT STEVENS: "You'll be tested in three areas today. Photo presence. Interview composure. Fan interaction."

SCOTT STEVENS: "By the end of the day, we'll know who understands presentation and who thinks presentation is just standing in better lighting."

SCOTT STEVENS: "Jarvis will observe. Melissa will handle interviews. I'll make the decisions."

SCOTT STEVENS: "Start at stations. Move."

### SCENE THREE – TEST ONE: PHOTO PRESENCE

The first station is brutal in the subtlest possible way.

One at a time, the recruits stand against a branded UTA backdrop while a photographer and creative director ask them for key poses: confidence, intensity, victory, staredown, promotional still, action-ready posture. No ring work. No movement to hide behind. Just image.

Darren goes early and looks immediately at home. Not overdone, not stiff. He knows his angles, knows when to move, when to hold, when to let stillness do the job.

CREATIVE DIRECTOR: "Good. Chin down a little. Eyes stay there. Yes. Hold that."

Click. Click. Click.

Jarvis watches with arms folded.

JARVIS VALENTINE: "He understands silhouette."

SCOTT STEVENS: "He'd better."

Roxie is next and maybe even more naturally dangerous in this setting. She doesn't just pose. She attacks the frame. Every expression says she knows exactly what reaction she wants.

PHOTOGRAPHER: "Great. Now less glam, more threat."

ROXIE RAZE: "That is threat."

The room laughs. She adjusts anyway and nails it.

Jace starts strong — easy smile, relaxed shoulders, naturally photogenic — but the creative director keeps stopping him.

CREATIVE DIRECTOR: “You look good. I need you to stop looking friendly.”

JACE VAN ARDENT: “That feels personal.”

CREATIVE DIRECTOR: “It’s a note.”

Jace tries again, gets more intensity into the eyes, less casual charm. Better.

Boone hates every second of it.

PHOTOGRAPHER: “Relax the shoulders.”

BOONE MERCER: “They are relaxed.”

PHOTOGRAPHER: “No, they’re angry.”

BOONE MERCER: “That’s kind of my face.”

Even Scott almost smirks at that. Boone tries again. It is not elegant, but once they stop asking him to do “heroic” and start asking him to do “credible threat,” it improves immediately.

Lena is the most visibly shaken by the still-camera setup. She keeps trying too hard to “look ready,” which makes her look less natural each time.

CREATIVE DIRECTOR: “Stop posing and just own the space.”

LENA LUX: “That sounds easy when you say it.”

JARVIS VALENTINE: “Nobody asked easy. Stand like you’re tired of being overlooked.”

That changes her. Not instantly, but enough. The next pose has edge in it.

Tatum is technically solid, visually clean, but frustratingly hard to pull emotion from.

PHOTOGRAPHER: “I need a story.”

TATUM QUINN: “I’m standing here.”

PHOTOGRAPHER: “Yes. That’s the problem.”

Malik has the opposite issue. He looks like a wrestler immediately. Presence is not the problem. Specificity is.

CREATIVE DIRECTOR: “This is good. But good as what? Champion? Enforcer? Breakout athlete? Silent killer? You’re giving me all of them and none of them.”

Malik absorbs that in silence.

#### SCENE FOUR – JARVIS ADDRESSES THE GROUP

The recruits gather near the monitor bank as sample shots cycle on screen.

JARVIS VALENTINE: “A camera is cruel because it tells the truth faster than people do.”

JARVIS VALENTINE: “Darren and Roxie understand how to control a frame. Boone only started working once he stopped trying to cooperate and started trying to mean something. Jace is naturally watchable, but still too easy. Lena’s best shot happened after she got irritated. Tatum is all control, not enough invitation. Malik looks like somebody important, but not somebody defined.”

That sits on all of them differently.

SCOTT STEVENS: "And we're just getting started."

#### SCENE FIVE – TEST TWO: SIT-DOWN INTERVIEW

The interview chair is set under a softer light but feels even harsher than the photo wall. Melissa Cartwright sits across from each recruit, close enough to make evasion impossible.

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "Same rule for everybody. Don't tell me what kind of wrestler you are. Tell me why anyone should care."

Darren goes first.

DARREN VALIANT: "People should care because I understand what a moment feels like before it lands. Some wrestlers perform. Some create memory. I'm trying to be the second kind."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "And what happens when the moment doesn't go your way?"

DARREN VALIANT: "Then people find out whether I'm still worth watching without control."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "And are you?"

Darren leans forward slightly.

DARREN VALIANT: "I think the better question is whether I'm brave enough to let them see it."

Melissa nods. Good. Better than good.

Roxie next.

ROXIE RAZE: "People should care because I don't disappear. Doesn't matter if the room loves me, hates me, doubts me, underestimates me. I know how to take space."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "What do you do when someone takes yours?"

ROXIE RAZE: "Take it back."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "That's the attitude. What's the cost?"

Roxie hesitates. Rare.

ROXIE RAZE: "Sometimes people decide you're harder than you are."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "And are you?"

ROXIE RAZE: "Usually."

Melissa smiles. Not because it's sweet. Because it's true enough.

Jace next.

JACE VAN ARDENT: "People should care because when I'm right, I make wrestling feel bigger than gravity. I can make a crowd hold its breath. That matters."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "Why do you want them to hold it?"

Jace pauses. That question cuts deeper than expected.

JACE VAN ARDENT: "Because if they're holding their breath, that means they're with me."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "That's better. Stay there."

Boone next. Miserable in theory, but interesting in practice.

BOONE MERCER: "People should care because I don't fake the fight."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "You say that a lot. What do you fake?"

Boone blinks, caught clean.

BOONE MERCER: "Not much."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "That's not what I asked."

He sits with it. Irritated. Cornered.

BOONE MERCER: "I fake not caring how I come off more than I probably should."

That surprises even him.

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "Now we're getting somewhere."

Lena next. Nerves flare immediately.

LENA LUX: "People should care because I know what it's like to be looked past, and I'm done letting that happen."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "Who overlooked you?"

LENA LUX: "A lot of people."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "Name one."

Lena freezes.

LENA LUX: "I..."

The silence stretches too long.

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "That's what I mean. You keep talking around the wound instead of from it."

Lena's eyes flash with frustration. Embarrassment too.

Tatum next.

TATUM QUINN: "People should care because competence matters. Trust matters. Being reliable matters."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "To who?"

TATUM QUINN: "To the company. To the locker room. To the people depending on you not to waste the moment."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "And to the fan?"

Tatum says nothing for a beat too long.

TATUM QUINN: "I'm still working on that answer."

Honest. Valuable honesty.

Malik last.

MALIK STEELE: "People should care because I bring impact. Presence. Power. I'm somebody you notice."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "Yes. And then?"

MALIK STEELE: "And then I make it count."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "That still sounds like a trailer. Where are you in it?"

Malik leans back, frustrated.

MALIK STEELE: "I'm trying not to sound soft."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "Then you're already talking to the wrong audience."

That one stuns him silent.

#### SCENE SIX – BREAK / MELTDOWNS AND NOTES

The recruits are given a short reset. It does not calm anyone. Camera week is getting under their skin in a way physical week didn't. Bruises are easier than exposure.

In the hallway outside the interview area, Lena stands alone trying not to cry from frustration. Roxie comes around the corner and sees it instantly.

ROXIE RAZE: "No."

LENA LUX: "No what?"

ROXIE RAZE: "No bathroom breakdown montage. Not on camera week."

LENA LUX: "I'm not breaking down."

ROXIE RAZE: "Then stop looking like a deleted scene from one."

Lena laughs once in spite of herself, which diffuses it just enough.

ROXIE RAZE: "Who overlooked you?"

LENA LUX: "What?"

ROXIE RAZE: "Melissa asked you. You froze. So answer it."

LENA LUX: "People who thought I was too little, too nice, too... easy to move past."

ROXIE RAZE: "Good. Say that. Stop trying to sound evolved when being mad would actually help you."

Lena stares at her.

LENA LUX: "You are such a weirdly useful person."

ROXIE RAZE: "I know."

On the other side of the facility, Boone sits on a folding chair staring at the floor while Jarvis Valentine walks over and stands beside him.

JARVIS VALENTINE: "You know why this week bothers you?"

BOONE MERCER: "Because it's nonsense?"

JARVIS VALENTINE: "Because you think image is the enemy of honesty."

BOONE MERCER: "A lot of times it is."

JARVIS VALENTINE: "No. Dishonesty is the enemy of honesty."

Boone looks up.

JARVIS VALENTINE: "Presentation is just the shape honesty takes when it knows people are watching."

That lands on Boone harder than he wants to show.

Nearby, Darren leans against a wall sipping water while Tatum stands beside him in silence.

DARREN VALIANT: "You know what's funny?"

TATUM QUINN: "Probably not."

DARREN VALIANT: "You're more honest on the weeks you hate."

TATUM QUINN: "And you're more serious on the weeks you should like."

DARREN VALIANT: "See? Chemistry."

TATUM QUINN: "Don't ruin it."

#### SCENE SEVEN – TEST THREE: FAN INTERACTION

The final station is set in a separate area of the building where a small invited group of UTA fans is waiting behind waist-high barricades. Not a huge crowd. Enough to be real.

The recruits must rotate through three short live situations:

1. Answer a fan question in character or authentic voice.
2. Take a photo with a fan while staying present.
3. Cut a 20-second promo directly to the fans, not the camera.

It is harder than it sounds. Fans are unpredictable. Energy shifts fast. Smile too hard and you look fake. Stay too guarded and you look cold.

Darren handles this beautifully. He speaks to fans like he sees them individually, but still controls the room. His 20-second promo is crisp and magnetic.

DARREN VALIANT: "Remember this face now, because you'll be seeing it in bigger places than this very soon."

The fans react well. Not because it's humble. Because it fits him.

Roxie is also excellent, though in a different way. She flirts with antagonism without ever crossing into unpleasantness. She knows exactly how much edge to use.

FAN: "Are you always this intense?"

ROXIE RAZE: "Only when I'm awake."

They laugh. She wins them anyway.

Jace is naturally great with fans, but again gets a familiar note from Scott.

SCOTT STEVENS: "Good. But you're still giving me 'easy to like' before 'must watch.'"

It's not a bad note. But it's the same one. That matters.

Boone does much better than expected once actual people are in front of him instead of lenses. He stops posing entirely and just talks like himself. The fans buy it immediately.

BOONE MERCER: "I'm not polished. I'm not supposed to be. You don't call me in to make things prettier. You call me in when you want it to feel real."

That gets a stronger reaction than even he expected.

Lena starts shaky with the first fan question, then recovers once she stops trying to be perfect. On the 20-second promo, she finally says the thing Roxie pushed her toward.

LENA LUX: "If you ever got used to people looking past you, don't. Make them pay attention. I'm done asking for space. I'm taking mine."

The fans pop for that. Real pop. Small, but real. Lena hears it and visibly changes in the moment.

Tatum is composed and respectful, but still distant. One fan asks why they should root for her.

FAN: "Why should I care about you?"

Tatum doesn't get offended. She thinks.

TATUM QUINN: "Because if I earn your attention, I'm not going to waste it."

That's actually her best moment of the day. Still not huge, but human enough to land.

Malik struggles hardest. He looks impressive. Fans are interested. But when they ask him who he is beyond "intense athlete," he drifts again into broad strokes.

FAN: "What makes you different?"

MALIK STEELE: "The way I hit. The way I move. The pressure I bring."

FAN: "Yeah, but who are you?"

Malik has no quick answer. That silence is deadly.

#### SCENE EIGHT – JARVIS' MASTERCLASS

After the fan station, Jarvis gathers the remaining seven recruits in the ring.

JARVIS VALENTINE: "Some of you think charisma is volume. Some think it's beauty. Some think it's confidence. It can be any of those things. But at its core, charisma is clarity under attention."

JARVIS VALENTINE: "Darren has it. Roxie has it. Boone found a version of it today the second he stopped fighting the setting. Lena found a flash of it the second she stopped asking permission. Jace has natural connection, but he's still leaving a little danger on the table. Tatum earned respect by being honest. Malik..."

He looks at him directly.

JARVIS VALENTINE: "Malik, you keep showing me a frame with no portrait in it."

That line cuts through the room.

Malik absorbs it like a punch.

#### SCENE NINE – FINAL DELIBERATION

All seven recruits stand in the ring as Scott and Melissa step forward. Jarvis remains near the ropes, still watching.

SCOTT STEVENS: "This was one of the hardest weeks because it exposed something some of you are better at hiding than fatigue or fear."

SCOTT STEVENS: "It exposed whether you understand what your value looks like outside the ring."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "A few of you started the day describing yourselves. A few of you ended it actually revealing yourselves. That difference matters."

SCOTT STEVENS: "Top three."

Pause.

SCOTT STEVENS: "Darren Valiant."

No surprise. Darren nods once, but the relief is there. A strong bounce-back week.

SCOTT STEVENS: "Roxie Raze."

Roxie smirks, but it's tighter than usual. She wanted this one.

SCOTT STEVENS: "Boone Mercer."

That gets the room's attention. Boone looks genuinely surprised this time.

SCOTT STEVENS: "Boone, you finally understood that looking real and presenting real are not enemies. That was your breakthrough."

SCOTT STEVENS: "Darren, this is one of your lanes. Good. You handled it like it should be handled."

SCOTT STEVENS: "Roxie, your control of a frame is elite. Now keep proving there's more there than skill."

SCOTT STEVENS: "Bottom three."

SCOTT STEVENS: "Malik Steele."

Expected. Malik takes it hard but doesn't flinch.

SCOTT STEVENS: "Tatum Quinn."

Tatum nods. She knew it.

SCOTT STEVENS: "Lena Lux."

Lena's face falls. She fought back hard today, but not enough.

SCOTT STEVENS: "Lena, you were close to escaping this group. Close. But close does not count."

SCOTT STEVENS: "Tatum, you gave me your most human moment yet. It still took you too long to get there."

SCOTT STEVENS: "Malik, every week you tell me there's more in there. I'm tired of hearing about what's in there. Bring it out."

SCOTT STEVENS: "No one is going home today."

Relief everywhere, but especially in Malik and Lena.

SCOTT STEVENS: "Because next week is the week a lot of you have been waiting for."

He lets that linger.

SCOTT STEVENS: "In-ring storytelling."

The room reacts instantly. Some with excitement. Some with nerves.

SCOTT STEVENS: "Moves don't matter if they mean nothing. Pain doesn't matter if nobody feels it. A match is a conversation. Next week, we find out who can actually say something."

#### SCENE TEN – HOUSE FALLOUT

Night at the house. The tension is less explosive than partner week, but more personal. Camera week got into their heads.

In the kitchen, Boone stands at the counter with a protein bar and a look like he's still not fully comfortable with being praised for a media week. Darren walks in and opens the fridge.

BOONE MERCER: "Top three on camera week. That's embarrassing."

DARREN VALIANT: "For you maybe. I look fantastic in those conditions."

BOONE MERCER: "You really do hear compliments even when nobody says them."

DARREN VALIANT: "Why make life harder?"

Boone shakes his head, but he's not fighting the grin this time.

Upstairs, Lena sits on her bed staring at the floor when Roxie comes in carrying two waters and tosses one to her.

ROXIE RAZE: "You weren't bad."

LENA LUX: "I was bottom three."

ROXIE RAZE: "Yes. And you still weren't bad."

LENA LUX: "That sounds almost like comfort."

ROXIE RAZE: "Don't make me regret it."

Lena takes a sip.

LENA LUX: "The fan promo felt good."

ROXIE RAZE: "Because you were finally mad."

LENA LUX: "You really think anger helps that much?"

ROXIE RAZE: "Not anger. Ownership."

That lands. More gently than usual, but it lands.

In the now-single room, Malik sits on the bed in silence until Jace knocks and leans in.

JACE VAN ARDENT: "You hiding or thinking?"

MALIK STEELE: "Both."

JACE VAN ARDENT: "Cool. I'll be quick."

He steps in.

JACE VAN ARDENT: "You know what's frustrating about you?"

MALIK STEELE: "This should be fun."

JACE VAN ARDENT: "You've got all the hard parts. Presence. Build. discipline. Calm. Most people would kill for that base. You keep acting like the part where you tell people why it matters is optional."

MALIK STEELE: "Maybe I don't want to overshare."

JACE VAN ARDENT: "Nobody asked you to bleed on the floor. Just stop being a locked door and calling it mystique."

Malik looks at him. That one is hard to shake.

In the backyard, Tatum stands alone under the patio light until Melissa steps outside again, as if she has a sense for who needs air after certain weeks.

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "You did better today."

TATUM QUINN: "Bottom three says otherwise."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "Bottom three says you're late, not absent."

Tatum folds her arms.

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "You know what your issue is?"

TATUM QUINN: "Several things, apparently."

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "You think if people see too much of you before you've earned it, you're doing something wrong."

Tatum says nothing, which is answer enough.

MELISSA CARTWRIGHT: "That makes sense in life. It doesn't work on television."

Tatum looks out into the dark yard, taking that in with visible discomfort.

#### FINAL CONFSSIONALS

DARREN VALIANT: "This week was important because I needed a week that looked like mine and felt like mine. That matters after physical week."

ROXIE RAZE: "Camera week? Yes, obviously, I was good. That said, Boone doing well was the bigger surprise, and I do enjoy being forced to acknowledge reality."

BOONE MERCER: "I still don't like lights, cameras, any of that. But Jarvis said something that stuck. Presentation ain't the lie. The lie is the lie. I can work with that."

JACE VAN ARDENT: "I keep getting the same note. Easy to like isn't enough. Fine. I hear it. The question is what I do with it next."

LENA LUX: "Bottom three hurts more this week because I felt something click for a minute. Which means now I know it's there. Now I have to keep it there."

MALIK STEELE: "I'm running out of weeks to be 'close.' I know that."

TATUM QUINN: "I hate weeks like this because they ask for something messy. That probably means I need them."

#### FINAL TAG

Black screen.

Then flashes from next week.

A ring under lower lighting. Athena Storm walking into frame. Scott Stevens speaking in the middle of the ring. Two recruits circling each other slowly. A body crashing hard into the mat. Boone pulling back a strike to sell a beat. Darren being told to slow down. Lena getting emotional during a comeback drill. Tatum being told to let the pain show. Malik standing motionless over a grounded opponent. Jace launching into a burst, then being stopped mid-flow.

ATHENA STORM (V.O.): "Anybody can do moves. Who can make me feel the story?"

SCOTT STEVENS (V.O.): "Next week, spots die. Meaning lives."

ON SCREEN: NEXT WEEK — "TAKE A HIT, TELL A STORY"

## Show Credits

Results Compiled by the eFed Management Suite