

Survivor: 2025

Promotion: United Toughness Alliance
Date: November 21, 2025
Location: Entertainment & Sports Arena — Washington, D.C

Preview

The UTA takes over the nation's capitol in this presidential size edition of the East Coast Invasion. A special event with special matches. You don't want to miss this one.

Results

Welcome to Survivor

Segment

Static crackles across the screen, then resolves into a slow-motion shot of the United States Capitol at night, its dome lit against a bruised purple sky. A deep drumbeat hits in time with flashing images of chaos and glory inside the ring.

Jarvis Valentine hoists the UTA Championship high as flashbulbs explode. Maxx Mayhem swings a chair at empty air as an opponent narrowly ducks. Chris Ross wipes blood from his brow and stares dead into the camera.

The images cut hard to the women's division — Amy Harrison standing over a fallen opponent, the UTA Women's Championship glinting in the crook of her arm. Emily Hightower raising the Women's United States Title, breath burning in her lungs. Marie Van Claudio's eyes burning with stubborn defiance. Susanita Ybanez flying through the air. Dahlia Cross wrenching a limb at a sickening angle. Valkyrie Knox, Angela Hall, Rosa Delgado, Selena Vex, Hardcore Sandy — all shown in quick, violent flashes, like a highlight reel of a civil war.

The screen floods with red, white, and blue as a narrator's voice cuts through the roar.

Narrator: "In the heart of the nation's capital... power is decided by the ones who survive."

We see Next Level standing side-by-side in a darkened corridor, silhouetted, then smash cut to Iron Dominion looming over a pair of broken bodies in the ring.

Narrator: "Tonight, rising stars face a dominion built on iron and intimidation."

Troy Lindz and Gunnar Van Patton collide mid-ring in a thunderous clothesline. Gunnar snarls. Troy fires back with a desperate strike, both refusing to stay down.

Narrator: "Tonight, grudges are settled, careers are defined, and legacies are rewritten."

The screen goes black for just a heartbeat.

Then — all at once — ten women fill the frame: Marie Van Claudio, Emily Hightower, Susanita Ybanez, Valkyrie Knox, and Angela Hall staring down Amy Harrison, Selena Vex, Dahlia Cross, Rosa Delgado, and Hardcore Sandy. The image flickers like old campaign footage, their faces framed with bold white letters:

"TEAM MVC" vs "THE EMPIRE."

Narrator: "In a city built on power... ten will enter. Only survivors will decide the future of the UTA women's division."

The Survivor: 2025 logo slams onto the screen with a metallic crash as a wall of pyro explodes over the sound.

We cut live to the Entertainment & Sports Arena in Washington, D.C. The camera swoops over a sold-out crowd, fans

on their feet, signs waving: "ELECT MVC," "AMY 4 EVER," "NEXT LEVEL = NEW DYNASTY," "SURVIVE THE EMPIRE," and "IN JARVIS WE TRUST." Red, white, and blue pyro erupts from the stage in rapid-fire bursts, the Survivor: 2025 logo blazing on the giant screen above the entrance ramp.

The hard cam settles on the ring, bathed in a wash of patriotic lights. The roar of the crowd is a constant, shaking the building.

John Phillips: "WASHINGTON, D.C.! WELCOME... TO SURVIVOR: 2025!"

The crowd erupts again, even louder, as the camera cuts to the commentary desk where John Phillips and Mark Bravo sit in front of a Survivor-branded backdrop, the Capitol silhouette glowing behind them on the LED wall.

John Phillips: "We are LIVE from the Entertainment & Sports Arena in the nation's capital, and tonight, the United Toughness Alliance doesn't just invade D.C... we TURN IT UPSIDE DOWN!"

Mark Bravo: "John, this city is built on power plays, backroom deals, and people stepping over each other to get to the top. So basically, it's a Tuesday in pro wrestling — except tonight, everything is bigger, brighter, and a whole lot more dangerous."

John Phillips: "Next Level looks to make a statement against Iron Dominion! Troy Lindz and Gunnar Van Patton are going to beat the absolute life out of each other in a one-on-one collision! And in our featured attraction—"

The crowd starts a loud chant, rolling through the building.

"M-V-C! M-V-C! M-V-C!"

John Phillips: "—Team MVC takes on The Empire in elimination tag action with the FUTURE of the UTA women's division on the line!"

Mark Bravo: "You want stakes? You want pressure? Ten women, one war, and when the smoke clears, either Marie Van Claudio and her squad prove the resistance isn't dead... or Amy Harrison and The Empire tighten their grip on this division like D.C. traffic at rush hour."

John Phillips: "Jarvis Valentine, the UTA Champion, is in the building. The entire East Coast Invasion has led us right here, right now, and—"

The arena lights suddenly dim, cutting John off. A single white spotlight falls on the ring. A wooden podium has been placed in the center, draped in a custom Survivor: 2025 seal — where an eagle should be, a stylized crown sits over a women's championship belt.

The crowd noise shifts instantly to a mix of curiosity and hatred.

Mark Bravo: "Oh great. Somebody decided this place needed more politicians."

"Sanctify Me" by In This Moment hits the sound system — The Empire's music. Boos surge from every side of the arena as Amy Harrison steps out from the back, UTA Women's Championship slung over her shoulder like executive power. She's in a sharp, dark jacket over her gear, every inch the self-appointed ruler. Behind her, Selena Vex, Dahlia Cross, Rosa Delgado, and Hardcore Sandy fall into formation, an escort of arrogance and menace.

Amy strides down the ramp and into the ring to the podium with a slow smile, soaking in the hatred like it's adoration. The Empire fans hold up "HAIL AMY" and "EMPIRE RULES" signs, desperately trying to out-yell the boos.

John Phillips: "And speak of The Empire... the so-called empress of this division has arrived, flanked by her cabinet."

Mark Bravo: "Hey, if you're gonna run a hostile takeover of a division, you might as well cut a State of the Union while you're at it."

The music fades. Amy places the title carefully on the podium in front of her, taps the microphone once, and smirks at

the crowd.

Amy Harrison: "Washington, D.C..."

The boos cascade down. Amy waits, head tilted, amused.

Amy Harrison: "You can boo all you want. You can chant your little slogans. But let's be honest... this city knows a winner when it sees one."

She lifts the UTA Women's Championship slightly, letting it catch the light.

Amy Harrison: "You live in a town built on power. On leverage. On making sure the right people stay in charge. So let me make this very simple for all of you — and for the five pretenders who think tonight is some kind of revolution."

She looks into the hard cam, her eyes cold.

Amy Harrison: "The Empire runs this division. Not Marie Van Claudio. Not Emily Hightower. Not anyone chanting for 'change.' We are the status quo. We are the law. And tonight... we're just going to put it in writing."

Selena Vex leans in, whispering something that makes Amy laugh softly.

Amy Harrison: "You've all seen the posters. You've heard the hype. 'Team MVC versus The Empire!' 'High stakes!' 'Elimination!' What they didn't tell you is the part I wrote myself."

The crowd buzzes at that.

John Phillips: "What the hell is she talking about?"

Amy Harrison: "Because when the dust settles, when the bodies hit the mat, when every last one of those little 'heroes' is counted out, pinned, or broken... all this talk of a resistance dies. For good."

The Empire members nod, some of them clapping slowly behind her.

Amy Harrison: "No more arguments about who 'deserves' a shot. No more feel-good moments. No more Marie nostalgia tour. Tonight is not about hope. Tonight is about survival. And The Empire?"

She taps the side of the belt again, three slow times.

Amy Harrison: "We don't just survive. We erase anyone who dares to stand against us."

The crowd boos relentlessly, starting a loud "M-V-C! M-V-C!" chant again.

Mark Bravo: "They're not buying what she's selling, John."

John Phillips: "They believe in Team MVC. They believe this division can be something more than Amy Harrison's playground."

Amy Harrison: "So go ahead. Chant her name."

She rests both hands on the podium, leaning in with a shark's grin.

Amy Harrison: "Because the louder you chant for Marie?"

She puts a finger to her throat and drags it across in a slow, cutting motion.

Amy Harrison: "The sweeter it's going to sound when I silence her... forever."

A fresh wave of heat floods the arena — and then the speakers EXPLODE with a new theme, cutting her off mid-smirk. The crowd erupts as the stage lights flash gold and white.

Marie Van Claudio steps out onto the stage, dressed for war, her eyes locked on the podium from the very first step. Beside her, Emily Hightower with the Women's U.S. Title over her shoulder, Susanita Ybanez bouncing on her heels

with wild energy, Valkyrie Knox radiating cold fire, and Angela Hall cracking her neck with a predator's focus. The five of them stand together, a united wall across the top of the ramp.

John Phillips: "THERE THEY ARE! TEAM MVC HAS ARRIVED IN D.C.!"

Mark Bravo: "Ten women. One war. And we're about to get a preview before the bell even rings!"

Marie lifts a microphone as her music fades, the crowd chanting her name. She takes a breath, lets the ovation wash over her, then speaks — voice strong, unflinching.

Marie Van Claudio: "You done?"

The crowd pops just for that.

Marie Van Claudio: "Because I'm standing in a city where people love to hear themselves talk. They filibuster, they grandstand, they promise the world and deliver nothing. But even by D.C. standards, Amy? That was a lot of hot air."

The Empire bristles behind the podium. Amy smiles thinly.

Marie Van Claudio: "You keep telling everyone that The Empire runs this division. That YOU are the law. But here's the thing about power in a place like this... it only lasts as long as the people let you keep it."

She steps forward, the entire team moving with her like a single body.

Marie Van Claudio: "And tonight? These people are done letting you run anything."

The crowd roars in agreement.

Emily Hightower: "You want to talk about survival, Amy? Survivor isn't about who cheats the best or who stacks the deck. It's about who gets back up when they shouldn't. It's about the women in this ring and in that locker room who EARN their spots."

Emily taps the face of her own championship.

Emily Hightower: "I didn't get here because I hid behind an Empire. I got here because I fought for every inch. And tonight, I'm fighting for everyone you've stepped on on the way up."

Susanita steps to the front, fire in her eyes.

Susanita Ybanez: "You like to hurt people just because you can? Cool. So do we... the difference is, when we hit you, it's gonna be for a reason."

She points directly at Dahlia Cross.

Susanita Ybanez: "Starting with you."

Dahlia smirks, mouthing something ugly off-mic as Rosa and Selena laugh.

Valkyrie Knox: "You think you ended my reign. You didn't end anything. You just lit a fuse."

Valkyrie's glare is locked solely on Amy.

Valkyrie Knox: "Champion to champion, Amy... you're not a queen. You're a placeholder. Tonight isn't just about beating you. It's about proving that this division is bigger than your ego and your little empire cosplay."

Angela Hall lifts her mic last, stepping right to the edge of the stage, her voice low and dangerous.

Angela Hall: "You're looking at five women who've been underestimated, dismissed, and written off more times than we can count. And we're still here."

Angela Hall: "So before this night is over, I want you to picture something, Amy. One by one, the members of your

Empire hitting that floor. One by one, the referee raising OUR hands. And when you look around for backup and realize there's nobody left?"

She points toward the ring, directly at the podium.

Angela Hall: "That is the moment you're going to understand what 'Survivor' really means."

The crowd is molten now, chanting "LET THEM FIGHT! LET THEM FIGHT!" as Team MVC starts marching down the ramp. In the ring, The Empire fans out behind Amy, ready to meet them head-on.

John Phillips: "Team MVC isn't waiting for later tonight! They're bringing the fight to The Empire right now!"

Mark Bravo: "We're about thirty seconds away from a ten-woman riot in the middle of the nation's capital, and I did NOT read the fine print on the insurance before we came on the air!"

Team MVC reaches ringside. Marie steps up onto the apron, Emily beside her. The Empire lines the ropes, shouting down at them, the tension electric. For a long moment, nobody moves — ten women, two sides, one line between them.

Then referees and security swarm the ring, sliding in from every side, throwing themselves between the two armies before the powder keg can fully blow.

John Phillips: "Officials are flooding the ring! Management knows we can't afford to lose this match before it even starts!"

Mark Bravo: "They better work fast, John, because I've seen calmer crowds at impeachment hearings!"

Amy snatches her championship from the podium and lifts it high, screaming down at Marie. Marie points back up at her, then slowly mimes pulling an invisible crown off Amy's head and tossing it away. The crowd loves it, roaring louder than ever.

John Phillips: "This is the fault line, folks! Tonight, Survivor: 2025 decides who walks out of Washington, D.C. on top of this division... and who doesn't walk out at all!"

Mark Bravo: "We haven't even rung the first bell yet and this place is already shaking! Buckle up — because if this is how we start the night, I don't even want to imagine how we're going to end it."

Officials continue to hold the two sides apart, the camera pulling back to capture the full chaos: The Empire screaming from inside the ring, Team MVC held at bay on the floor, the Survivor: 2025 logo looming large above them all as the crowd roars into the night.

We fade briefly to the Survivor: 2025 graphic.

Dismantle America

Segment

The camera cuts away from the chaos at ringside to the backstage loading dock, where the sounds of the crowd are a distant, muffled roar behind concrete walls and steel doors.

A white SUV rolls to a stop. The driver's door opens and out steps Jaxson Ryder, one half of Team U.S.A. He pulls a duffel bag from the back seat, the faint glint of red, white, and blue gear visible from the zipper. He looks up at a nearby monitor cart showing the Survivor: 2025 logo and exhales, shoulders squaring.

Jaxson Ryder: "D.C., huh? Time to go to work."

A production assistant hustles by and does a double take.

Production Assistant: "Ryder! Good to see you, man. You ready for tonight?"

Jaxson Ryder: "Biggest match of my career. Carter's not here, so I'm stepping up. Team Ross needs a closer?"

He smirks and pats his chest.

Jaxson Ryder: "They got one."

He slings the duffel over his shoulder and starts down the corridor, the camera following as he walks past crates, cables, and staff rushing in every direction. A graphic briefly flashes in the corner of the screen: "JAXSON RYDER – TEAM ROSS / MEN'S SURVIVOR MATCH TONIGHT."

As he turns a corner, the hallway grows quieter. The lighting changes from bright production white to a more shadowed, industrial glow. Jaxson slows just a bit, eyes narrowing, sensing something off.

Jaxson Ryder: "...Hello?"

No answer. Just the low hum of the building.

Then, from the side, a blur of motion — a boot crashes into his knee with horrifying precision. Jaxson crumples with a shout, the duffel bag flying from his shoulder and skidding across the floor.

The camera jerks around to reveal Malachi Cross, eyes cold and focused, already following up with a second, stomping shot to the same leg.

Malachi Cross: "Welcome to Survivor, patriot."

Before Jaxson can even push up, a heavy forearm explodes across the back of his neck, driving him flat again. Silas Grimm looms over him, wild-eyed, dread grin twisting his face beneath tangled hair.

Silas Grimm: "Team Ross just lost its flag bearer."

Grimm drops a knee between Jaxson's shoulder blades, wrenching him down while Malachi grabs the injured leg, twisting the ankle and driving the knee sideways against the concrete.

Jaxson Ryder: "Agh—! Get off—!"

Malachi doesn't say a word at first — his expression is clinical, almost serene, as he torques the joint and plants a boot above the kneecap. Grimm laughs, a harsh, jagged sound that echoes down the hall.

Silas Grimm: "Maxx sends his regards!"

Malachi finally leans in, voice low but clear enough for the camera to pick up over Jaxson's pained breathing.

Malachi Cross: "Orders from the king, Jaxson. Chaos says Team Ross doesn't get to walk in at full strength."

He SLAMS Jaxson's knee down against the floor, then drives an elbow into it for good measure. Jaxson howls, clutching his leg, rolling instinctively but finding nowhere to go as Grimm stomps down on his ribs.

Officials and security finally burst onto the scene, shouting as they rush the two attackers.

Security Guard: "Back it up! Get off him! Back it up!"

Malachi releases the leg, stepping back with controlled calm as two guards wedge between him and the fallen Ryder. Silas Grimm throws one last stomping feint that makes everyone flinch before he's shoved away.

Silas Grimm: "Relax! We're done! He's not going anywhere tonight anyway!"

Grimm points a finger-gun at Jaxson and "fires" it with a mocking wink.

Silas Grimm: "Sweet dreams, hero."

Malachi glances down at the writhing Jaxson, then up at the camera, his voice as calm as if he were reading a weather

report.

Malachi Cross: "Tell Ross he's one short. And tell the world..."

He taps a fist over his heart once.

Malachi Cross: "Team Mayhem doesn't come to survive. We come to dismantle."

He turns and walks off with Grimm, security trailing them, shouting threats and warnings. Medical staff rush in from the opposite end of the hall, dropping to their knees beside Jaxson as he clutches his knee, sweat already beading on his forehead from the pain.

EMT: "Don't move it, don't move it. Jaxson, can you hear me? Where's the pain?"

Jaxson Ryder: "Knee— my knee— they... they got my knee—"

The camera pulls in for a close shot of Jaxson's twisted face, his hands gripping his leg like he's trying to hold it together by force of will alone.

We cut back to the commentary desk, where John Phillips is visibly shaken and Mark Bravo leans forward, eyebrows raised, half in shock and half in furious disbelief.

John Phillips: "Ladies and gentlemen, that was Jaxson Ryder arriving at the arena for what was supposed to be the biggest night of his career... and Malachi Cross and Silas Grimm just ambushed him on the orders of Maxx Mayhem!"

Mark Bravo: "You want to talk about stacking the deck? Team Mayhem just ripped a page straight out of Maxx's playbook and lit it on fire! Jaxson might not even be able to stand, let alone compete!"

John Phillips: "Team Ross is now effectively down a man and we are less than two hours away from the men's Survivor match! We're going to try and get an update on Jaxson Ryder's condition as soon as possible, but right now... it does not look good for U.S.A or for Team Ross."

Mark Bravo: "Maxx Mayhem said he was going to turn Survivor into his own personal battlefield, and John, this is exactly what he meant. If this is how they're starting the night? I am terrified to see what they've got planned for later."

The camera lingers for a moment on their concerned faces before cutting to a replay of the ambush in slow motion — Malachi's targeted kick to the knee, Grimm's heavy shots — then fades back to the live shot of the arena as we move on to the next phase of the show.

Troy Lindz vs Gunnar Van Patton

Match

The cameras return to ringside following the previous segment.

The ring announcer stands center ring, mic in hand.

Ring Announcer: "The following contest is scheduled for one fall... and is your opening bout of Survivor: 2025!"

The crowd buzzes loudly, a mix of anticipation and energy as the lights dim.

"Born This Way" by Lady Gaga hits the speakers and red and black pyro bursts from the stage. The arena lights turn crimson as Troy Lindz steps onto the stage, arms extended, basking in a mixture of cheers and jeers. Sequins shimmer as they twirl once at the top of the ramp and blow a kiss toward the hard camera. Lindz struts toward the ring, hips swaying, pausing halfway down to admire their reflection in a handheld mirror from a fan in the front row.

John Phillips: "What a way to kick off Survivor: 2025. Our opening contest is going to set the tone for the entire night, and Troy Lindz looks absolutely full of themselves tonight."

Mark Bravo: "They called this 'the night the world meets its mirror,' whatever that means. If this is the first match on the

card, I'm a little scared of what the main event's gonna look like. I think we're about to find out."

Lindz climbs onto the apron, back to the ropes, and steps inside the ring with a flourish. They grab a microphone from the ring attendant, pacing slowly.

Troy Lindz: "So this is Survivor, huh? The night the strong endure and the weak get exposed. How poetic. And tonight, I'm staring down a relic—some boot-polished fossil who thinks camouflage and scripture make him dangerous. Gunnar Van Patton, you're not a warrior. You're a walking museum exhibit with a persecution complex."

The crowd boos viciously. A small pocket cheers just to spite Gunnar, but the majority rain heat down on Lindz. Lindz smirks and keeps pacing.

Troy Lindz: "A soldier, a Christian, a conservative—three strikes and you're not just out, you're obsolete. You're the kind of guy who thinks a flag and a Bible give you moral authority. Newsflash, grandpa: this isn't Sunday school, and it sure as hell isn't basic training. This is my spotlight. And when that light hits, even your God can't save you."

A low rumble of discomfort moves through the building. Some fans boo louder; others grimace at the line.

Troy Lindz: "You walk around like you're some righteous executioner, but all I see is a glorified mall cop with a Messiah complex. You're not a hero. You're a caricature—camouflage cosplay with delusions of grandeur. You preach about honor, but you fight like a man clinging to relevance. You're not defending anything. You're just afraid the world moved on without you."

The crowd roars with mixed heat and shock; a few 'You suck!' chants break out.

Troy Lindz: "You want to talk about values? You're the kind of man who'd salute a flag while stepping on a throat. You call it discipline—I call it fascism. Let's be honest, Gunnar: you don't just look like a Nazi, you act like one. All that talk of purity, tradition, and divine justice? You're one goose-step away from a history lesson."

The arena erupts in a storm of boos and gasps. A visible portion of the crowd turns on Lindz completely, some fans shouting for Gunnar to 'shut them up.' Lindz stands alone in the ring, back to the ropes, soaking in the chaos like it's applause. No music. No interruption. Just silence and heat.

Troy Lindz lowers the mic for a moment, pacing slowly, then raises it again—voice colder, sharper.

Troy Lindz: "Funny, isn't it? All that talk of floods and judgment, and yet here I stand—dry, defiant, and untouchable. Where's the water, Kinkade? Where's your wrath? I'm still waiting."

Still no entrance. Still no movement. The crowd buzzes with anticipation.

Troy Lindz: "Come drown me. But know this—when you finally drag your hillbilly ass down that ramp, I'll be here. Smiling. Because tonight, the flood meets the future. And the future doesn't kneel."

Lindz tosses the mic to the mat with a flourish and leans against the ropes, arms wide, daring the flood to rise.

John Phillips: "This is how we're starting Survivor? I don't know about this. Poking the bear in match one isn't the smartest strategy... and crossing that kind of line might come back on Troy in a big way."

Mark Bravo: "Lindz might just find out that poking the wolf is A LOT worse. You wanted a statement-making opener? I think we're about to get one."

The lights cut out. A single heartbeat echoes through the arena before the guitars of 'Boots and Blood' by Five Finger Death Punch explode through the PA system. The crowd roars as white strobes flash through the fog at the entranceway. Gunnar Van Patton steps through the haze, jaw clenched, eyes fixed on the ring. Behind him, Avril Selene Kinkade follows, composed, clipboard in hand, her heels clicking in time with the beat.

Mark Bravo: "Wait a second—Avril Selene Kinkade? She never comes to ringside!"

John Phillips: "That tells you what this opening bout means to her. This got personal after what Lindz said last week... and after what we just heard tonight."

Van Patton locks eyes on tonight's opponent, then glances toward Avril with a look that says, 'You serious?' She gives a single nod—cool, clinical, absolute. That's all he needs. Gunnar doesn't require speeches or strategy. He just needs a target. He bolts toward the ring, sliding under the bottom rope with practiced ease. No theatrics. No hesitation. Just movement with purpose.

Avril takes her place in Gunnar's corner, posture immaculate, expression unreadable. Across the ring, her eyes lock with Troy Lindz's—and the temperature drops. Lindz stares back, lips curled, unable to resist.

Troy Lindz: "You always look like that, or is your face just stuck in 'judgmental Victorian bitch' mode?"

A wave of boos comes from fans who, despite hating Gunnar's worldview, hate Lindz's mouth even more. Avril doesn't respond. She doesn't blink. Her silence is sharper than any retort.

Gunnar settles into position, slow and deliberate. No snarl. No flex. Just a long exhale through the nose as he adjusts his footing. Gunnar's eyes meet Lindz's—flat, unreadable, almost tired. He spins his Dallas Stars cap backward like he's clocking in. No emotion. No urgency. Just inevitability.

John Phillips: "You can feel it, can't you? This is our first match of the night, and it already feels like something that could reshape both of their careers."

Mark Bravo: "If this is the opener, Survivor's gonna be a crime scene by the time we hit the main event."

The referee calls for the bell.

DING DING DING

Lindz smirks, raising their hands dramatically.

Troy Lindz: "Say a prayer first, soldier boy—"

Before the sentence finishes, Gunnar lunges forward and drives a right hand straight into Lindz's mouth. A burst of glitter erupts on impact—sequins scattering like shrapnel—as the Superman Punch lands flush.

Mark Bravo: "FIST OF DEFIANCE!"

Lindz crumbles to the mat in a heap, their running lights more than dimmed. A shocked gasp rips through the building—followed by an uneasy rumble as fans realize how clean and sudden the knockout was.

John Phillips: "On the button! He hit that with everything! Lindz is out—just like that!"

Some fans pop at the brutality; others boo loudly, uncomfortable with how little of a fight Lindz got to put up.

Van Patton casually rolls them to their back with his boot.

Van Patton drops to one knee and places his hand on Troy's sternoclavicular joint. He glances over to Avril, who cannot stop herself from grinning like the cat that ate the proverbial canary.

One.

Two.

Three.

DING! DING! DING!

Mark Bravo: "It's over. Just like that—it's over! Our opening bout just ended in one shot!"

John Phillips: "I have never seen anything like it. One punch. Gunnar Van Patton just knocked Troy Lindz out cold in

the very first match of Survivor... and the crowd does NOT like how cold-blooded that looked."

There's a chorus of boos mixed with stunned silence as the referee checks Lindz, waving for ringside medical staff. The crowd buzzes between awe and a growing disgust, some fans shouting at Gunnar to 'back off' even though he hasn't moved.

Avril ascends the steps and steps through the ropes with careful poise. She stops beside her client, surveying Lindz's motionless body and shifting her weight towards Gunnar.

Avril Selene Kinkade: "For the record, clause seventeen-C of this bout's contract stipulates that you cannot be charged with a hate crime for your actions here tonight."

A fresh wave of boos washes over the ring. A 'That's too far!' chant starts in one section.

Gunnar Van Patton: "Yer ass owes me a beer."

More boos now, louder, directed at how casually he treats the situation.

Avril Selene Kinkade: "Naturally. Pint, chalice, or something worth smashing?"

The crowd's noise swells into a stunned roar, some fans jeering loudly at the lack of remorse. Gunnar starts his exit. However, Avril can't stop herself from taking pleasure in what just occurred. She kneels down next to Lindz, so she can whisper in their ear.

Avril Selene Kinkade: "Genesis 6:17, 'I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens.' Let this be a reminder that there will never be a place on the ark for someone like you."

A loud, sustained wall of boos hits that line, with scattered 'You sick freak!' shouts from the crowd.

Avril rises back up to a vertical base and straightens her attire before she exits the ring with 'Boots and Blood' thundering in the background. She joins the waiting Gunnar on the ramp before heading backstage together.

John Phillips: "My God, that was absolute domination. Van Patton didn't even take his shirt or hat off, and this D.C. crowd is letting him know exactly what they think of it."

Mark Bravo: "That was two messages in one. One, talk trash, get hit. Two, you cross Avril and he will put you in a grave—and he does not give a damn if the fans like it or not."

John Phillips: "If this is what our opening bout looks like, I dread what we're going to see by the end of the night. I hope all of UTA was taking notes... because Survivor just got real ugly, real fast."

The camera lingers on Troy Lindz as medical staff tend to them while boos continue to rain down on Gunnar and Avril's retreating figures, before the show shifts elsewhere.

Numbers Don't Lie

Segment

Backstage, the camera finds a dressing room door marked with a taped-on sign: TEAM ROSS. The low murmur of voices leaks out from inside before the door swings open and we head in.

Chris Ross stands in the middle of the room, hands braced on his hips, pacing a short, angry line in front of a bench. The rest of Team Ross loom nearby, some seated, some standing, all wearing the same expression: tense, focused, and just a little rattled.

Madman Szalinski, manager of El Fantasma, leans back against a row of lockers, arms folded, mask design on his shirt half-hidden under his jacket. His usual wild energy is muted, replaced with a rare, sober seriousness.

Madman Szalinski: "Alright, I'm just gonna say it straight, Chris. Jaxson's hurt. Medical says he's not cleared. That

means as of right now... we're down one."

Ross stops pacing, jaw clenching as he stares a hole through the floor. The room goes quiet. One of the teammates shifts uncomfortably on the bench, but no one speaks.

Chris Ross: "Yeah. I know."

He lifts his head, eyes burning, and turns toward Szalinski with a sharp snap of his neck.

Chris Ross: "You think I didn't see the replay? You think I don't know what Mayhem's doing? Jaxson gets blindsided, we get the message loud and clear: 'Welcome to Survivor, hope you like fighting uphill.'"

Madman pushes off the lockers, hands coming up in a half-shrug.

Madman Szalinski: "I'm not questioning you, man. I'm telling you what the reality is. Team Mayhem's walking in at full strength. We're walking in down a man. Numbers don't lie."

Ross takes a step closer, pointing at the floor between them.

Chris Ross: "Numbers don't lie, but numbers don't bleed either."

He turns, addressing the whole room now, voice rising, intensity filling the space.

Chris Ross: "Look, I'm not gonna sugarcoat it. Jaxson getting taken out? That sucks. That's a good man, a good teammate, and he earned his spot in this match. But Maxx Mayhem wants us rattled. He wants us walking in there thinking we're already beat because the math says four against five."

He jabs a thumb into his own chest.

Chris Ross: "Here's the problem with that: I don't give a damn about Maxx Mayhem's math."

The champion, Jarvis Valentine nods, murmuring under his breath. The mood shifts a notch, from anxious to locked in.

Chris Ross: "If we walk into Survivor down one? Fine. If for some reason they won't let anybody replace Jaxson? Fine. Hell, if all of you dropped dead right now and it was just me walking down that ramp—"

He points toward the door, then toward the unseen arena beyond.

Chris Ross: "I am still going out there. I am still stepping in that ring. And I am still looking every single one of Maxx Mayhem's little soldiers in the eye and making damn sure they don't walk out the same way they walked in."

Madman watches him, lips curling into a half-grin despite himself.

Madman Szalinski: "You realize you just told your whole team you're willing to go in there solo dolo, right?"

Ross glances back at the others, then back at Szalinski, unflinching.

Chris Ross: "What I'm saying is this—down one, down four, or down to just me? It doesn't matter. Tonight, nobody on Maxx Mayhem's team survives. Not one. I don't care what their names are, I don't care what kind of chaos they think they bring—"

He slices a hand through the air, punctuating each word.

Chris Ross: "Tonight, the only thing they're leaving with is the realization that they picked a fight with the wrong side."

A low rumble of agreement rolls through the room.

Chris Ross: "Maxx wants to send messages? Fine. Here's ours: you can take one of us out before the bell, you can stack the deck, you can stack the bodies—but when that cage door closes on this little war?"

He steps right up to the camera now, eyes locked dead on the lens.

Chris Ross: "I'm gonna make damn sure your whole team finds out what it feels like when chaos stops being cute and starts bleeding."

Ross turns away, grabbing his gear bag from the bench and slinging it over his shoulder. The rest of Team Ross begin to move with renewed purpose, tightening tape, adjusting boots, getting ready.

Madman Szalinski smirks toward the camera, lifting his brows.

Madman Szalinski: "God Damn Son."

The camera lingers on Ross, standing at the front of the pack, jaw set and eyes blazing, before fading out to the Survivor: 2025 graphic.

No Mercy Mode

Segment

Backstage, the camera fades in on a Survivor: 2025 interview backdrop. Melissa Cartwright stands center frame, microphone in hand, poised and polished as always.

Melissa Cartwright: "Ladies and gentlemen, Melissa Cartwright here at Survivor: 2025, and I am joined by the newest tag team in the United Toughness Alliance — fresh off a huge win over Velocity Vanguard — please welcome Next Level: Theo 'Player One' Sparks and Dex 'Player Two' Raines."

Theo Sparks bounces into frame from the left, hoodie half-zipped over his gear, eyes bright, practically vibrating with energy. Dex Raines steps in from the right, calm and collected, arms folded, eyes scanning the lens like he's reading data.

Melissa Cartwright: "Theo, Dex, tonight you two face one of the most dangerous units in the company, Iron Dominion. Coming off that big victory over Velocity Vanguard, how are you feeling heading into this one?"

Theo leans into the mic with a grin, miming a button press on an invisible controller.

Theo Sparks: "Melissa, first off... Velocity Vanguard was Level One. Fun stage, cool effects, great soundtrack? Sure. But we didn't come to the UTA just to clear the tutorial. We're here to speed-run the whole mode."

He taps his temple, glancing back at Dex.

Theo Sparks: "You beat a team like that, you don't just feel good — you unlock something. Confidence perk. Momentum buff. Crowd XP. Tonight?"

Theo spreads his arms, framing the camera with his hands like a HUD.

Theo Sparks: "Tonight is the boss fight."

The crowd in the arena can be faintly heard reacting to the big screen as Theo's words echo out. Dex finally uncrosses his arms and leans slightly toward the mic, voice low and dry.

Dex Raines: "Mini-boss. Let's not oversell their patch notes."

Theo laughs, nudging Dex with his elbow.

Theo Sparks: "See, this is why he's Player Two. I'm out here hyping the raid, he's in the back reading the frame data."

Melissa can't help but smile, turning slightly toward Dex.

Melissa Cartwright: "Okay, Player Two, since you brought it up — what's the data say about Iron Dominion?"

Dex glances at Theo, then back to the camera, expression cool.

Dex Raines: "They hit hard. They like to swarm. They don't mind if things get ugly, because chaos covers sloppy

code."

He holds up two fingers.

Dex Raines: "But they also have habits. They overextend on advantage. They underestimate anybody with color in their entrance. They think 'new team' means 'low level.'"

Dex lets the fingers drop, a faint smirk curving at the corner of his mouth.

Dex Raines: "That's a bug we can exploit."

Theo leans back into frame, nodding.

Theo Sparks: "Iron Dominion looks at us and sees noobs. Streamers. Cosplayers. They hear 'Player One, Player Two' and think it's a gimmick you can pause."

He stares directly into the hard camera now, tone still playful but with a sharper edge underneath.

Theo Sparks: "What they forget is... this is what we do. Boss fights? This is home. We grew up on wiping out entire squads, learning patterns, coming back on one percent health and still clearing the level. Pressure isn't a problem, Melissa. It's the whole reason you hit 'Start' in the first place."

Melissa nods, turning the mic slightly between them.

Melissa Cartwright: "There's a lot of buzz that a win tonight doesn't just cement you as the newest hot team in the UTA — it puts you right into tag team title contention, right into that main event conversation for the division. Do you feel that weight?"

Theo grins wider, then shrugs.

Theo Sparks: "Weight? Nah. We feel opportunity. Look, you don't call yourself 'Next Level' because you're happy staying on the menu screen."

He gestures between himself and Dex.

Theo Sparks: "We came in, we took out Velocity Vanguard. That unlocked this stage. Tonight, Iron Dominion is the checkpoint. We clear them?"

Theo taps the imaginary HUD again.

Theo Sparks: "Now you're not just talking about the new guys. You're talking about contenders."

Dex steps in closer, sharing the frame with Theo, voice dipping just a bit more serious.

Dex Raines: "And for the record... this isn't some casual playthrough. This is Survivor. There are no continues tonight. You get knocked out, you're done. You miss a cue, you're done. One wrong input and Iron Dominion will delete you."

He looks to Theo, then back to the lens.

Dex Raines: "We didn't come here to get deleted."

Theo nods firmly, the playfulness in his eyes tempered by focus.

Theo Sparks: "Iron Dominion, you like to call yourselves a force. A unit. A problem. Cool story. But tonight, you're just another health bar. Another pattern to break. Another name on a long list of teams who find out co-op campaign Theo Sparks and Dex Raines isn't some side quest."

He throws up one finger, then two, between them.

Theo Sparks: "Player One."

Dex Raines: "Player Two."

Theo Sparks: "New game plus..."

Dex Raines: "No mercy mode."

They both lean toward the camera at once, perfectly in sync.

Theo Sparks & Dex Raines: "Welcome to the Next Level."

Melissa turns back to the camera, eyes shining with the energy they've brought.

Melissa Cartwright: "Next Level ready for what they're calling a boss fight against Iron Dominion later tonight at Survivor: 2025. Back to you."

The camera lingers on Theo and Dex bumping forearms — the hype and the focus blending together — before fading out to the Survivor: 2025 graphic.

Let's Roll the Video Tape!

Segment

The door doesn't open — it gets bullied. Gunnar Van Patton strides in like he owns the building, not a bead of sweat on him. His MMA-style gloves hang from his back pocket like scalps — proof of victory, not preparation. His boots thud across the tile with deliberate disrespect, each step a middle finger in motion. Behind him, Avril Selene Kinkade enters like a scalpel — precise, poised, emotionally armored. She keeps a safe distance, tablet in hand, heels clicking like a countdown.

Scott Stevens sits behind his desk, arms folded, jaw clenched. His eyes lock on Gunnar like a sniper scope.

Scott Stevens: "Well, look who decided to grace us with their presence. Hell of a punch you threw out there — shame it came from the wrong Texan."

Gunnar Van Patton: "Ah figured you'd appreciate the tribute. Avril dubbed it 'The True Fist of Defiance.' Ah reckon it's a lot more honest of a name than that limp-wristed jab of yours."

Avril Selene Kinkade: "A proper name, with proper pronunciation. Unlike the halfwits on that podcast — it's 'Kink-Ayd', not 'Kin-Kah-Day'. Honestly, who but a provincial simpleton would butcher a surname with such pedigree?"

Her complaint falls upon deaf ears. The bickering Texans continue on like she isn't even in the room.

Scott Stevens: "Cute. Real cute. Imitation's the sincerest form of flattery — but you ain't got the pedigree to pull it off."

Gunnar Van Patton: "Pedigree? You mean that mutt blood you call legacy? Ain't that fat brother of yers got down syndrome? Now, call it as ya see it. Ah throw it cleaner, meaner, and with actual impact. Ask Lindz. They're still countin' stars. Hell, Ah bet they never leave concussion protocol."

He pulls up a chair, cocky as ever.

Gunnar Van Patton: "Funny, though. You and me — same shithole favoured saints company, never crossed paths. Guess you were too busy hidin' with the rest of your chicken-shit kin from that German and his boyfriend."

Stevens's jaw tightens. His knuckles whiten around the armrest. He explodes out of his chair.

Scott Stevens: "You piece of—"

Avril clears her throat— a survival instinct. A brawl between these two demons would have more collateral damage than she cares to imagine. She steps between them, eyes on the tablet and hoping to bring order to the room. Her voice forceful and bold.

Avril Selene Kinkade: "Gentlemen. We're here to review the Graves footage — not indulge in ego theatrics."

She taps the screen. The monitor behind Stevens flickers. Grainy footage rolls. Gideon Graves walks alone down a dim corridor, head down, unaware. Then — chaos. Three shadows explode from a side hallway. Two men. One woman. Hooded military jackets. Camouflage fatigues. Black respirator masks. They hit Graves like a coordinated strike team — fast, silent, merciless. No wasted motion. No hesitation.

The first blow is a steel-toed boot to the knee — Graves drops instantly, screaming as his leg folds the wrong way. The second attacker drives an elbow into his throat, cutting the scream short. The third — the woman — straddles his chest and rains down hammerfists, each one landing with surgical cruelty. Blood spatters the wall. A tooth skips across the floor.

Graves tries to crawl. One of the men grabs his ankle and drags him back like a carcass. The woman snatches up a nearby monitor and brings it down across his ribs — once, twice, three times — until the sound changes from crack to wet. Then she kneels beside him, dips a gloved finger into the pooling blood, and calmly draws a symbol on the wall. A twisting knot. A rune.

Avril leans in, eyes narrowing. Her breath catches. On the shoulder of each attacker's jacket — barely visible in the flickering light — is the same rune. Twisting. Interlocked. Familiar. Her fingers tighten around the tablet. Her posture stiffens. The color begins to drain from her face.

Scott Stevens: "Brought some friends with ya. Weren't tough enough to do it alone, huh?"

Gunnar Van Patton: "Ya seein' through them masks with x-ray vision or somethin'? It would explain why you spend so much time starin' at Lindz. Still zero proof it was me."

Scott Stevens: "You expect me to believe that? This has your stink all over it."

Gunnar Van Patton: "Yer talkin' out yer ass."

Scott Stevens: "Don't play dumb with me. A group of soldiers — that precision — it's got your fingerprints all over it."

Gunnar Van Patton: "Where's yer proof, Matlock? 'Cause from where Ah stand you got jack in one hand and shit in the other. Gettin' yer panties in a bunch, throwin' a tantrum because ya can't run this company right."

Graves crumples again. One attacker stomps his ribs for good measure. The blood on the wall thickens. The rune glistens under the flickering light.

Stevens notices Avril out of the corner of his eye. When an ice queen cracks, you notice.

Scott Stevens: "You look paler than usual, Kinkade. Do you know these bastards? That symbol mean something to you?"

His words snap her out of her fearful gaze.

Avril Selene Kinkade: "Focus on the footage, Stevens, and less on me. What I do is none of your concern."

She doesn't blink. Doesn't breathe. Doesn't speak again. But she knows. She knows exactly who those three are. Though, she wishes that she didn't.

Scott Stevens: "You had somethin' to do with this. I don't know how, but you did."

Gunnar Van Patton: "Ya just saw it with yer own two eyes. Ah ain't done damn thing. Next time yer ass accuses me of somethin' Ah didn't do, Ahm gonna break my foot off in it."

Scott Stevens: "You think you scare me, asshole? I've buried tougher men than you before breakfast even hit the table."

Gunnar Van Patton: "More like ya had yer dick buried in more men."

The two men go nose to nose over Scott's desk. Mirror images. Both hating the reflection they see.

Scott Stevens: "We never crossed paths because I was in the main event, while you were jerking the curtain."

Gunnar Van Patton: "Harsh words. Do the sheep get turned on by all that big talk?"

Scott Stevens: "A gay joke followed up with an animal joke, really? Like I haven't heard them all before. You think you're so damn smart, but you go right after the low hanging fruit like the imbecile you really are. You should stick to letting her talk for you. At least she speaks above a third grade level."

Gunnar Van Patton: "Motherfu—"

Before he can finish that thought, Avril's hand lands on Gunnar's shoulder — firm, silent. Her interjection is just enough to halt him.

Avril Selene Kinkade: "If there's no further evidence, this meeting will be concluded. Sergeant, the exit."

Gunnar shoots Stevens a cocky smirk, while his one-woman legal team turns her focus to Stevens.

Avril Selene Kinkade: "Accuse my client of the crime again and our next meeting will be in front of a judge."

No other words are needed and the office door slams behind Van Patton and his advocate. Stevens stands there, breathing fire, eyes locked on the frozen screen — the wolf rune bleeding back at him.

Scott Stevens: "I think that jackass needs to be taken down a few pegs. Time to make a call..."

Things shift to Gunnar Van Patton striding down the corridor, a smile stretching across his face. He doesn't flinch when Avril Selene Kinkade catches up, grabs his arm, and spins him around with quiet precision.

Avril Selene Kinkade: "Don't insult my intelligence, Sergeant. I saw your reaction — and I expect the truth."

Gunnar Van Patton: "Ya saw the tape. Truth was right there, live and in livin' color. It ain't me."

Avril Selene Kinkade: "The symbol. The bind rune for wolf. I know what it means. Even worse, I know WHO it means."

Gunnar's eyes shift — the lycan surfaces. No smirk. No dodge. He studies her face, sees the tension in her jaw, the flicker behind her eyes. Not outrage. Not confusion. Recognition. Dread. Unadulterated dread. He knows the jig is up.

Gunnar Van Patton: "Ah knew that would get yer attention and was waitin' for yer feathers to get all ruffled."

Avril Selene Kinkade: "You dared to allow them access. You know bloody well the anarchy that accompanies those... abominations."

Gunnar Van Patton: "Let me ask ya somethin'. If Ah told ya the plan — would ya have agreed?"

Avril Selene Kinkade: "You know precisely what those ravenous mongrels are capable of. They're not a K9 unit at your disposal — they're a plague. Immoral, hedonistic, murderous savages. Of course I would not have agreed to you calling them here."

Gunnar Van Patton: "Mah point exactly. You hate 'em. Fear 'em. But let's call a spade a spade, the heathens don't miss. Mission accomplished."

Despite her hatred of the entire situation, Avril cannot deny that fact. Yet, there's still a mix of rage and concern in her voice.

Avril Selene Kinkade: "Please confirm that this is truly a singular occurrence."

Gunnar Van Patton: "Put yer fangs away, princess. The heathens are good and gone. For now."

He turns and walks off, boots echoing like war drums down the corridor. Avril remains frozen, eyes locked, the mind focused on that blood-red rune — and the horror it promises. Her client's final words make her anything but

comfortable.

Tyger II vs. Aaron Shaffer vs Mr. Jaun Calderon vs. Jet Lawson

Match

The camera fades back to ringside, the crowd in the Entertainment & Sports Arena buzzing as a graphic flashes on the screen: "ELIMINATION FOUR-WAY – WINNER FACES ERIC DANE JR AT BLACK HORIZON FOR THE WRESTLEZONE CHAMPIONSHIP."

John Phillips: "Ladies and gentlemen, it is time for our first elimination match of the night here at Survivor: 2025! Four men enter, and one of them walks out with a guaranteed shot at Eric Dane Jr and the WrestleZone Championship at Black Horizon!"

Mark Bravo: "You don't get closer to the main event than this without smelling the pyro, John. This is a golden ticket match, and three guys are gonna watch someone else cash it in."

The house lights dim, then begin to pulse in a cool, electric blue. A low synth hum rolls over the PA, like a console booting up. The opening notes of "Higher Place" by Journey hit, sending a pop rippling through the arena.

A pair of CO2 cannons erupt at the center of the stage, blasting twin columns of white vapor toward the rafters. Through the cloud, a figure rockets out at full speed — Jet Lawson bursts onto the stage, arms wide, grin bright enough to be seen from the cheap seats.

Ring Announcer: "Introducing first... from Seattle, Washington, weighing in at 212 pounds... JEEEEET LAWSON!"

Jet races to the edge of the stage, skidding to a stop right at the top of the ramp. He throws both index fingers up to the sky, and the blue lights chase the gesture, cascading across the crowd like a wave of neon.

John Phillips: "There he is — the tech-savvy daredevil himself, Jet Lawson! One half of one of the hottest tag teams in the UTA, now stepping into elimination territory with a WrestleZone Championship opportunity hanging in the balance."

Mark Bravo: "My man's got parkour in his DNA and no understanding of the phrase 'maybe don't jump off that.' Put him in a multi-man chaos match and he's like a kid locked overnight in an indoor trampoline park."

Jet starts down the ramp at a jog, veering from side to side to slap as many outstretched hands as he can. He spots a "NEXT WRESTLEZONE CHAMP" sign with his name on it, points to it with a big grin, then taps his wrist like he's checking a watch — the universal sign that it's his time.

Midway down the ramp, he kicks it up a gear. Jet plants a foot on the edge of the barricade and, with startling ease, runs along the top rail in a perfect, balanced sprint. Fans below him reach up as he flies over their heads. At the end of the run, he launches into a forward flip, twisting just enough to land facing the hard cam on the floor, arms outstretched as the blue lights swirl around him.

John Phillips: "That balance, that fearlessness — that's what's made Jet Lawson a fan favorite in record time here in the UTA."

Mark Bravo: "And that's before he even gets in the ring, John. Imagine what he's gonna do when there are three other guys out here trying to take his head off and one title shot up for grabs."

Jet slides under the bottom rope in one smooth motion, popping up to his feet and heading straight for the nearest corner. He scales to the second rope, then the top, standing tall as the camera swings around to catch him framed against the sea of blue-lit fans.

He points to the sky one more time, then taps his chest and points straight into the camera lens — a clear message to Eric Dane Jr, wherever he is watching. The crowd responds with a cheer, a few pockets starting a "JET! JET! JET!" chant.

Jet hops down from the turnbuckle, bouncing lightly on his heels in the center of the ring. As “Higher Place” begins to fade, he grabs the top rope and gives it a quick shake, eyes locked on the entranceway, ready to see which of his three potential obstacles walks out next.

Jet’s music fades out as he paces the ring, rolling his shoulders and glancing toward the stage. The buzz in the arena shifts, anticipation climbing another notch.

The lights flicker, then drop into a warm, volatile amber wash. On the tron, static glitches into a reel of stylized explosions and stunt clips — cars flipping, bodies diving from rooftops, all silhouetted against roaring flames. The words “MR. JUAN CALDERON” slam onto the screen in bold, cinematic font before shattering into a spray of digital sparks.

With a sharp metallic crack, a line of pyro erupts across the front of the stage — a curtain of sparks raining down like someone set the edge of a film reel on fire. “Catalyst Chronicles” hits the speakers with a pounding riff that shakes the barricades.

Through the sparkling rain strides Mr. Juan Calderon, shoulders squared, a wide, confident grin cutting across his face. He’s wrapped in a stunt-jacket style entrance coat, dark fabric traced with thin reflective lines that catch every flash of light, making him look like he’s walking through his own explosion-laced highlight reel.

Ring Announcer: "Introducing next... from Los Angeles, California, weighing in at 272 pounds... MIIIIISTER JUAAN CALDEROOOON!"

John Phillips: "Here comes Mr. Juan Calderon, the Hollywood stuntman who decided being the guy behind the scenes wasn't enough — he wanted top billing in the ring."

Mark Bravo: "You give this guy a live crowd, a camera, and a few explosives and he'll give you an entire blockbuster. And if tonight ends with him earning a WrestleZone Championship match at Black Horizon? That's your sequel hook right there."

Calderon stops at the very top of the ramp, turning his head just enough to give the hard cam his best smolder. He lifts his hand and makes a little circle with his finger, like he's telling the crew to roll camera again. Right on cue, another burst of pyro flares behind him, outlining him in a halo of fire and smoke. The crowd pops, some booing the arrogance, others cheering the spectacle.

He starts down the ramp with a rolling swagger, boots thudding in time with the music. On his way, he spots a fan holding a phone out for a selfie; Calderon slows, leans in, and mugs for the camera with an exaggerated “shocked” face, then flicks his fingers toward the lens like he’s tossing a lit match. The fan loses it, and the nearby section reacts with a mix of laughs and jeers.

John Phillips: "Calderon always has time for the cameras — even if they belong to the fans."

Mark Bravo: "When your whole life is one long stunt sequence, every angle matters, John. But don't let the theatrics fool you. Under all that showmanship is a guy who hits like a runaway prop car."

At ringside, Calderon pauses for a beat, staring up at Jet Lawson in the ring. He mimes framing Jet in an invisible camera rectangle with his fingers, then snaps his hands shut like a clapperboard and mouths, “You ready to bump?”

He hops up onto the apron in one smooth motion, turning his back to the ropes to face the crowd. With a quick throat-cut gesture, he mouths “ACTION!” Just then, a series of small concussion pops fire along the stage edge, timed perfectly with the pounding drum hits of his theme.

Calderon grabs the top rope, steps through between the cables, and strides into the ring like it's his personal set. He walks a slow circle around Jet, not taking his eyes off him, then backs into his assigned corner.

There, he shrugs off his entrance coat with a practiced flick, tossing it over the top rope to a waiting ringside attendant without even looking. He gives the nearest camera one last cocky grin and a wink, then shakes out his arms, the blockbuster bravado bleeding into a more dangerous, coiled posture as “Catalyst Chronicles” fades under the crowd noise.

Jet Lawson and Mr. Juan Calderon occupy their corners, each stealing glances at the other as the anticipation builds. The crowd settles into a tense buzz, knowing there are still storms left to roll through this arena.

The lights dim to a bruised gray, and a low rushing sound creeps over the PA — a faint, eerie howl of wind weaving through the murmurs of the crowd.

John Phillips: "You hear that, Mark? Sounds like the weather's about to turn inside the Entertainment & Sports Arena."

Mark Bravo: "If the forecast says 'Aaron Shaffer,' you might as well batten down the hatches, because it's never a light drizzle with that guy."

On the tron, dark clouds begin to swirl, coiling into a tightening vortex. Lightning forks across the screen in jagged white streaks, each strike synced to a spike in the wind noise. The storm image zooms inward, right into the 'eye' at the center — and as it hits, “Eye of the Hurricane” blasts through the speakers with a driving guitar riff.

Wind machines at the top of the ramp roar to life, sending a powerful gust blasting across the stage. The curtain ripples violently — and then Aaron Shaffer explodes through it at a dead sprint, head low, arms pumping, running straight into the manufactured gale like he's trying to outrun the storm he summoned.

Ring Announcer: "Introducing next... from Chicago, Illinois, weighing in at 244 pounds... AARON SHAAAAFFER!"

The gust catches Shaffer's hair and gear, making them whip and snap behind him like flags in a hurricane. He doesn't slow down — if anything, he leans into the wind, using it to amplify every step as he charges to the top of the ramp.

John Phillips: "The human hurricane himself, Aaron Shaffer! From skateboards and street battles to this high-stakes elimination match, he has turned momentum into an art form."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, but tonight that art better come with a whole lotta impact, because you don't dance your way through three other guys with a WrestleZone Championship shot on the line. You crash into 'em."

Shaffer reaches the edge of the ramp and throws his arms wide, letting the wind rip through his hair as he tips his head back, eyes closed for a heartbeat, like he's standing in the center of a stormfront. Lightning flashes again on the tron behind him, framing him in stark white and shadow.

He snaps back to focus and bolts down the ramp, every stride long and aggressive. About halfway down, he veers toward the barricade, plants a foot on the top rail, and — without breaking speed — runs along it, arms out for balance like a street skater riding a rail over a sea of outstretched hands.

John Phillips: "Look at the balance! Shaffer's turning the barricade into a tightrope!"

Mark Bravo: "If he slips, that's a ten-foot drop into a pile of couch potatoes with nachos. High risk, high reward, baby."

At the end of the barricade run, Shaffer launches into a twisting leap, rotating mid-air before landing in a low, wide stance on the floor beside the ring. The wind machines hit one last blast behind him, sending a rush of air swirling past his shoulders as he snaps his head toward the ring, eyes locked on the two men already inside.

He slides under the bottom rope with a smooth, practiced motion, rolling through to his feet. Without missing a beat, Shaffer sprints to the nearest corner and hops up to the second rope, one boot landing on the middle turnbuckle, the other perched on the top pad.

He throws both arms out wide again, this time pointing one hand up toward the rafters and the other sweeping across

the crowd. The storm visuals on the tron sync to his movements, the swirling clouds tightening, a digital funnel forming behind him.

John Phillips: "Listen to this crowd respond to Aaron Shaffer! They know what he brings — speed, power, and absolutely no fear of heights."

Mark Bravo: "And no interest in playing it safe. If there's a high-speed springboard to hit, he's hitting it. If there's a window to fly through, he's jumping. Sometimes that makes you a highlight reel, sometimes it makes you a cautionary tale. Tonight we'll find out which."

Shaffer hops down from the ropes and starts to circle, arms loose at his sides, shoulders rolling, eyes flicking from Jet to Calderon and then back up the ramp. There's an almost manic energy in the way he bounces on the balls of his feet — like he's waiting for the next gust of chaos to catch and ride it.

As "Eye of the Hurricane" begins to fade, the wind sound softens under the crowd noise, leaving Shaffer in his corner, chest rising and falling with barely contained adrenaline, ready to tear into whoever dares stand between him and Black Horizon.

The arena falls into a heavy, expectant hush. The last traces of storm noise from Aaron Shaffer's entrance bleed away, leaving only the low murmur of the crowd and the distant whir of production equipment.

Then — one deep drumbeat echoes through the Entertainment & Sports Arena.

Another.

Another.

The lights dim all the way down, until the ring and ramp are swallowed by shadow. Phone screens pop to life in the stands like scattered fireflies as a low, throbbing taiko rhythm builds, each strike of the drum sounding like a heartbeat in the dark.

On the tron, ink-black smoke begins to swirl across the screen, rolling in slow, hypnotic curls. Out of that darkness, the faint outline of a tiger's head takes shape — sharp, stylized lines etching themselves in ghostly white. Its eyes remain hollow and empty for a long, unsettling moment.

John Phillips: "There's only one man left to make his entrance in this elimination match, and you can feel this D.C. crowd holding its breath."

Mark Bravo: "When the lights go out like this, John, either somebody forgot to pay the bill... or Tyger II is about to walk through dimensions to get here."

A spectral flute line cuts through the drums, eerie and high, joined by a low electronic hum that gives the whole thing a modern, otherworldly edge. The tiger's eyes on the tron suddenly flare to life in an eerie violet glow. A distant, distorted roar ripples through the sound system, layered with barely audible whispers in Japanese — like a ritual being recited just beyond comprehension.

"Claw of Yokai" slams fully into gear, taiko drums driving the rhythm as synths and flutes weave around them. A single narrow beam of violet-white light ignites at the top of the ramp, cutting a perfect circle into the darkness.

In the center of that circle stands Tyger II.

He is motionless at first, a living statue. His yellow-and-black mask gleams under the spotlight, but etched along its edges are faint, glowing markings — spirit-script lines that pulse subtly in sync with the drums. His ring gear is sleek but battle-worn, details hinting at both traditional Japanese design and something colder, more futuristic. A faint mist curls around his boots, clinging low to the stage.

Ring Announcer: "And finally... from Osaka, Japan, weighing in at 202 pounds... he is... TYYYYYGER... TWOOOOOO!"

John Phillips: "Listen to this reaction! Tyger II, carrying the legacy of his father, Tatsumi 'Tyger' Tanaka, and staring down the chance to earn a WrestleZone Championship opportunity at Black Horizon."

Mark Bravo: "You can feel it, John. This isn't just another entrance for him. This is a ritual. This is 'step out of your father's shadow and into your own myth' territory."

Tyger II slowly raises his right hand into the air, fingers curling into the unmistakable "Tiger Claw" gesture. The violet light intensifies around him for a heartbeat as the crowd responds with a roar, some fans mirroring the claw sign back at him from the stands.

After a moment, he lowers the hand to his chest, palm open, as if centering himself. Then, with precise, measured steps, he begins his walk down the ramp.

The spotlight follows him alone, leaving Jet Lawson, Mr. Juan Calderon, and Aaron Shaffer as half-seen silhouettes in the ring. Each footfall seems to land perfectly in time with the taiko drums, giving his movement an almost ritualistic cadence.

As he nears ringside, Tyger II pauses. His head tilts up toward the rafters, eyes fixed on some unseen point high above. The camera follows his gaze for a moment, capturing only steel beams and darkness, but the intent is clear — a silent nod to the spirit of the original Tyger, to the legacy that brought him here.

John Phillips: "A quiet moment from Tyger II, maybe a wordless prayer, maybe a message to his father... whatever it is, you can feel the weight of it."

Mark Bravo: "If I'm Eric Dane Jr watching this in the back, I'm taking notes. That's not just a wrestler walking to the ring, that's a man dragging a whole legacy and a whole lot of ghosts behind him."

Tyger II drops his gaze back to the ring, and the calm in his posture sharpens into something predatory. In one smooth, explosive motion, he springs up onto the apron, landing lightly despite the sudden vertical burst.

He grips the top rope with both hands, lowers himself slightly like a coiled spring, then vaults over the ropes in a tight, flipping arc. He lands in a low crouch at the center of the ring, one hand pressed to the canvas, the other clawed in front of him, head bowed.

The spotlight lingers on him for a few extra seconds as the music crests — the masked hunter alone in the eye of the storm.

Slowly, Tyger II rises from the crouch to a full, upright stance. He takes a moment to look at each of his three opponents one by one — Jet Lawson, Aaron Shaffer, Mr. Juan Calderon — his gaze steady, unblinking, respectful but unafraid.

Then he pivots toward them collectively and offers a slight bow. Not deep, not submissive — just enough to acknowledge the gravity of the fight and the men who share it with him.

As "Claw of Yokai" begins to fade, the house lights slowly normalize. The mist at his feet dissipates, but the chill in the air remains as Tyger II backs into his assigned corner, hands lightly resting on the ropes, chest rising and falling in slow, controlled breaths, ready to turn ritual into violence for a chance at Black Horizon.

The official checks all four men one last time, then steps back and signals to the timekeeper.

DING DING DING

John Phillips: "And here we go! Our first elimination match of the night is officially underway!"

Mark Bravo: "Four men, one title shot at Black Horizon. Nobody's gonna wanna make that first big mistake."

For a moment, nobody moves. Tyger II stands in his corner, hands lightly resting on the ropes, eyes tracking each man in turn. Jet Lawson bounces on the balls of his feet, rolling his shoulders. Aaron Shaffer paces in a tight half-circle, shaking out his arms, while Mr. Juan Calderon leans casually against the buckles, smirk playing at the corner of his mouth.

Jet steps toward the center first, raising his hands in a loose, open grappling stance. Tyger II answers, drifting forward with his own guard up, chin tucked, shoulders square. The two circle, the crowd buzzing at the idea of a first clash.

John Phillips: "Looks like Jet and Tyger II are going to start this one off for us."

Mark Bravo: "High-flyer versus supernatural striker. This is like choosing which game mode you wanna get wrecked in first."

They tie up in a collar-and-elbow. Tyger II immediately shifts his weight, sliding into a quick side headlock, tightening just enough to test Jet's base. Jet plants his feet, pushes at Tyger's hips, then uses a burst of speed to fire him off into the ropes.

Tyger rebounds—Jet drops down. Tyger steps over, hits the opposite ropes, and on the return Jet leaps up, looking for a quick arm drag. Tyger rotates through, lands on his feet, and the two men separate, facing off again in the middle of the ring as the crowd applauds the stalemate.

John Phillips: "Early feeling-out process here, neither man able to get the clear advantage on that exchange."

Mark Bravo: "Jet's testing Tyger's reflexes, Tyger's testing Jet's balance, and I'm testing how long I can go without screaming when somebody finally crashes and burns."

Jet grins and gives Tyger II a small nod. Tyger responds with the slightest of bows, then steps back, opening his stance as if inviting another challenger. Before Jet can move again, Aaron Shaffer darts in from the side, tagging Tyger on the shoulder in a light slap and spinning him away.

Shaffer slips between Jet and Tyger with a whirlwind energy, hands up.

Aaron Shaffer: "My turn."

He and Jet circle, the tempo immediately ticking up. They lock up, but instead of settling, Shaffer rolls through into a quick waistlock, tries to lift, and Jet widens his base. Jet fires an elbow back; Shaffer ducks, pivots, and pushes Jet toward the ropes.

Jet rebounds, ducks a wild Gale Force Dropkick attempt, hits the opposite ropes, and on the return pops up for a running Sling Blade that Shaffer narrowly side-steps, catching Jet in a loose headlock from behind before shoving him away again.

Jet turns, lips curled in an impressed smirk, while Shaffer bounces in place, nodding with a stormy grin of his own. The crowd reacts with a rumble of appreciation for the early speed chess.

John Phillips: "Jet Lawson and Aaron Shaffer matching pace for pace, counter for counter. This is exactly what you'd expect with a WrestleZone Championship opportunity on the line."

Mark Bravo: "Everybody's just rattling the cage right now, John. Checking the range, checking the reflexes. Nobody's thrown that big kill shot yet."

From the corner, Mr. Juan Calderon gives an exaggerated yawn, then steps out with his hands raised like he's walking onto a set.

Mr. Juan Calderon: "Alright, alright, enough rehearsals. Let's shoot something we can use."

He strolls up behind Shaffer and taps him on the shoulder. As Aaron turns, Calderon suddenly explodes with a shove, sending Shaffer chest-first into Jet, knocking Jet back a step.

Shaffer whirls around, eyes narrowing, and Calderon throws his hands up, playing innocent.

Mr. Juan Calderon: "Hey, improv, baby."

Before tempers can flare too far, Tyger II glides in, slipping between them with one arm extended to each side, palm open in a calming gesture. He looks from Shaffer to Calderon, then takes one small step back, dropping into a ready stance that clearly says: if you want to throw down, throw down with all of us watching.

John Phillips: "Tyger II stepping in before this breaks down completely already. You can feel the egos starting to collide in there."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, and remember, this isn't one fall to a finish, this is elimination. You burn all your gas fighting over who goes first, you might not make it to last."

Jet takes advantage of the brief pause to dart in behind Calderon and roll him up in a surprise schoolboy, just to see what he can get.

ONE!

Calderon kicks out at barely one and a half, popping to his knees with wild eyes, more offended than hurt. Jet backs away with his hands up, laughing, shrugging like, "Worth a try."

John Phillips: "Jet Lawson testing the waters with an early pin attempt! You never know — in a match like this, it only takes three seconds."

Mark Bravo: "And Calderon just found out he can't trust anybody in there. Not the hurricane, not the tiger, and definitely not the guy who runs on parkour and bad ideas."

Calderon charges at Jet in frustration, swinging with a wild right hand. Jet ducks under, hits the ropes, and as Calderon turns, Jet rebounds — only to have Tyger II step in and snag him around the waist with a sudden, smooth takedown, rolling him to the mat and floating over into a quick front facelock before releasing and backing off.

Jet scrambles up, eyes wide for a second, realizing just how fast Tyger can change levels. Across the ring, Shaffer leans against the ropes, watching all three of his opponents with a storm brewing behind his eyes.

John Phillips: "All four men getting a little taste of each other's timing and tendencies here in the opening minutes. Nobody's fully committed to a big risk yet, but the tension is starting to ratchet up."

Mark Bravo: "You can feel it building, John. This is the part of the game where everybody's just tapping the buttons, seeing what combos they've got. Sooner or later, somebody's gonna press something that changes the whole match."

The four competitors slowly spread back into the corners of the ring, each one keeping their eyes locked on the other three. The crowd rises to its feet, sensing that the testing phase is about to give way to something far more dangerous.

The loose circle tightens again as all four men step back toward the center, the crowd's noise rising with every cautious step. You can feel the moment about to tip from testing to fighting.

John Phillips: "There's that quiet before the storm again. Nobody wants to blink first... but somebody has to."

Mark Bravo: "Four predators in one small box, John. Eventually, somebody's gonna stop circling and start biting."

Calderon breaks the tension first, clapping his hands once, loudly.

Mr. Juan Calderon: "Alright, kids. Time to make some magic."

He points back and forth between Shaffer and Jet.

Mr. Juan Calderon: "You two? Go do your flip-fest. I'll take the sequel."

Shaffer snorts and shoves Calderon back a step with one hand.

Aaron Shaffer: "You'll take whatever's left when the storm's done, man."

Jet uses the opening and snaps a low kick into Calderon's thigh. Calderon winces, reaching down instinctively—just in time for Tyger II to step in with a sharp, surgical kick of his own to the same leg, dropping Calderon to one knee.

John Phillips: "Jet and Tyger both targeting that leg of Calderon, maybe seeing an early weakness in the bigger man."

Mark Bravo: "You chop the stuntman's base out, suddenly all those big explosions get real expensive."

Shaffer surges forward and blasts Jet with a forearm to the jaw, staggering him toward the ropes. Tyger II turns toward the impact and eats a sharp back elbow from Calderon rising off his knee, the bigger man using the last of his balance to buy space.

For the first time in the match, all four swing at once—forearms, elbows, fists colliding in the center of the ring in a chaotic flurry. The crowd roars as the exchange turns into a wild, four-way firefight.

John Phillips: "And now it breaks down! All four men throwing hands in the middle of the ring!"

Mark Bravo: "So much for feeling each other out—now they're just feeling each other's teeth rattle!"

Jet cracks Calderon with a quick one-two combo and spins, catching Shaffer across the chest with a sharp backfist. Shaffer staggers, but rebounds with a stiff European uppercut that rocks Jet back into the path of Tyger II, who threads in a knife-edge chop that echoes off Jet's chest and draws a chorus of "WOO!" from the crowd.

Calderon barrels back into the fray, bulldozing Tyger with a shoulder block that sends him stumbling into the corner. Shaffer turns and launches a high Gale Force Dropkick at Calderon—but Calderon drops at the last second, and Shaffer's boots catch Jet square in the chest instead, blasting him into the ropes.

John Phillips: "Friendly fire from Aaron Shaffer! He caught Jet Lawson flush trying to take Calderon's head off!"

Mark Bravo: "That's the chaos of an elimination four-way, John. You throw a hurricane in a phone booth, everybody's getting hit with something."

Jet crashes to the mat and instinctively rolls under the bottom rope, hitting the floor and clutching at his ribs to regroup. Inside, Calderon pops to his feet, eyes wide, pointing from himself to Shaffer and back again.

Mr. Juan Calderon: "You almost killed my co-star!"

Shaffer shrugs, breathing hard, a crooked grin cutting across his face.

Aaron Shaffer: "Then move faster."

Calderon swings with a wild lariat. Shaffer ducks, hits the ropes, and comes back with a Cyclone Clothesline of his own that flips Calderon inside out, drawing a huge reaction from the crowd as the big man crashes to the mat.

John Phillips: "Cyclone Clothesline! Shaffer just turned Calderon upside down!"

Mark Bravo: "That's a whole lotta stunt work with no crash pad."

Before Shaffer can capitalize, Tyger II explodes out of the corner with a Ghost Fang Kick—his boot flashing up in a blur. Shaffer ducks at the last possible second, Tyger's heel missing his jaw by inches and cracking into the top rope instead, sending a shudder through the cables.

Tyger lands lightly, spins, and the two lock eyes for a heartbeat—storm and spirit, nose-to-nose in the center of the ring, the crowd buzzing.

John Phillips: "What a near miss! If Tyger II connected with that Ghost Fang Kick, Shaffer might've been the first man eliminated."

Mark Bravo: "You can't fight for a WrestleZone Championship shot if you're looking up at the lights wondering what license plate just hit you."

Shaffer throws a quick right. Tyger parries with a forearm block and answers with a pair of precise kicks to Shaffer's thigh and ribs, each one snapping clean. Shaffer doubles over just enough for Tyger to grab a front facelock, but Aaron plants his feet and shoves Tyger off, sending him backpedaling toward the ropes.

On the outside, Jet Lawson has pulled himself up on the apron, one hand on his chest, the other on the top rope. He watches the chaos, timing his re-entry like a chess move.

As Tyger hits the ropes near him, Jet reaches up and gives a quick slap to Tyger's back—tagging himself in under elimination rules before springboarding up to the top rope in one fluid motion.

John Phillips: "Jet just tagged himself back into this thing off Tyger II!"

Mark Bravo: "Opportunistic? Absolutely. Smart? Also absolutely."

Tyger lands on his feet, turning with a flash of surprise that fades quickly into understanding. He steps aside as Jet launches from the top rope, twisting through the air with a beautiful arc before crashing into both Shaffer and the recovering Calderon with a high, sweeping crossbody that wipes them both out.

John Phillips: "Jet Lawson taking out TWO men with that high crossbody!"

Mark Bravo: "That's the kind of move that makes the highlight reels... if he can get somebody eliminated off it."

Jet scrambles, hooking the leg on Calderon.

ONE!

TWO—

Shaffer shoves Jet off with a desperate burst, breaking up the pin before the count can hit three.

John Phillips: "Shaffer just saved Calderon from being the first man out!"

Mark Bravo: "Not because he likes him, John—because the more bodies in there, the less likely he is to be the next crater in the mat."

Jet rolls to a knee, eyes flashing. Shaffer pushes up at the same time, and the two collide in the center with forearms, trading rapid-fire shots—Jet's crisp strikes versus Shaffer's heavier blows.

Tyger II watches for a beat, then grabs Calderon by the wrist and yanks him up, whipping him hard into the corner. As Calderon staggers into the buckles, Tyger follows with a running back elbow that snaps the big man's head to the side and draws a sharp "OOH!" from the crowd.

He steps back, measuring, then unloads a rapid barrage of kicks to Calderon's midsection and thigh—each one precise, each one placed to soften the base for later. The referee leans in, counting.

Referee: "One! Two! Three! Four!"

Tyger raises his hands and backs off at four, giving Calderon a respectful half-step of space—only to snap in with one final sharp kick to the inside of the leg as he turns away, dropping Calderon to a seated position in the corner.

John Phillips: "Tyger II methodically chopping down Calderon, staying within the rules but pushing that count as far as he can."

Mark Bravo: "That's the thing about the quiet ones, John. They don't say much, but every strike is a full sentence."

Back in the center, Jet ducks a wild lariat from Shaffer, hits the ropes, and comes flying back with a Running Sling Blade that plants Shaffer on the canvas. The crowd pops as Jet pops right back to his feet, adrenaline surging.

He glances at Tyger in the corner, then up at the top rope, and a wild idea flickers behind his eyes.

John Phillips: "Jet's looking at the high rent district again—"

Mark Bravo: "Uh oh. I know that look."

Jet runs to the turnbuckles and vaults up in one smooth motion, perching on the top rope. He looks out at the D.C. crowd and throws an arm up, pointing to the sky. The fans rise, noise swelling.

Before he can fly, though, Calderon lurches out of the corner on one knee and hits the ropes, shaking the top strand. Jet loses his balance, dropping into a painful split on the turnbuckle, face contorting in agony as the crowd groans in sympathy.

John Phillips: "Calderon just cut Jet Lawson off at the top! That could change the whole complexion of this match!"

Mark Bravo: "Nothing like getting your next title shot turned into a failed stunt, John."

Tyger II steps in and buries a sharp kick into Calderon's thigh again, sending the bigger man stumbling away from the ropes. Shaffer crawls toward the corner opposite Jet, pulling himself upright, chest heaving.

All four men are in motion, but nobody's in control. The crowd senses the first big momentum swing coming and roars as the camera pulls back, taking in the chaotic tableau of bodies moving toward something bigger.

Jet Lawson is still perched painfully on the top rope, grimacing as he tries to shake feeling back into his legs. Below him, the ring is a tangle of motion—Tyger II stalking Calderon, Aaron Shaffer sucking wind in the opposite corner, eyeing his opening.

John Phillips: "All four of these men have taken damage already, and we still haven't seen our first elimination!"

Mark Bravo: "You can feel it coming, though. Somebody's about to get edited out of this scene."

Tyger II closes in on Mr. Juan Calderon again, driving another sharp kick into the side of the stuntman's thigh. Calderon winces, leg buckling for a moment, then fires back with a stiff forearm to Tyger's jaw that snaps the masked man's head to the side.

Tyger absorbs it, rolls his shoulders, and answers with a sudden palm strike to Calderon's chest that echoes through the arena. Calderon stumbles back into the ropes, clutching at his sternum, eyes wide.

John Phillips: "Tyger II using that precision striking to wear down Calderon's base and his breathing at the same time."

Mark Bravo: "You can't do big stunts if you can't stand up or breathe, John. It's a problem."

Across the ring, Shaffer pushes off the turnbuckles and bursts forward, zeroing in on Tyger. He swings with a wild clothesline—Tyger ducks, whips around, and snaps off a kick that clips Shaffer in the ribs and sends him staggering into the same ropes Calderon just bounced off.

For a split-second, Shaffer and Calderon end up shoulder-to-shoulder on the ropes, both dazed. Tyger steps in, grabs a wrist of each, and with a sharp tug tries to whip them across the ring.

Calderon plants his good leg and reverses, yanking Tyger and Shaffer toward him instead. At the last second, he drops down, sending both men tumbling over him in a double back body drop that sends them crashing to the mat behind him.

John Phillips: "Calderon with a big double counter! That's the stuntman timing paying off!"

Mark Bravo: "He just rolled take two and nailed it."

Calderon staggers to center ring, sucking in deep breaths, leg clearly bothering him. He looks up and spots Jet still seated on the top rope, trying to stand. Calderon's face splits into a wild grin.

Mr. Juan Calderon: "Time for the big spot!"

He limps toward the corner and clubs Jet across the back with a forearm, then climbs up onto the second rope in front of him, hooking Jet in a front facelock.

John Phillips: "Oh no, Calderon's got something dangerous in mind from up there—"

Mark Bravo: "If you see a stuntman climbing, start praying for whoever's underneath."

Calderon hoists, looking for a superplex, but Jet throws a desperate punch into his ribs. Another. Calderon wobbles. Jet fights to his feet on the top rope, both men now balancing precariously above the ring.

Down below, Shaffer gets to his feet and sees the developing disaster. He stumbles to the ropes, grabbing them to steady himself as he looks up with wide eyes.

Aaron Shaffer: "Don't do it! ...Actually, no, do it, I wanna see!"

Calderon swings another forearm, rocking Jet. He sets his feet, ready to launch both of them backward—but before he can, Tyger II appears on the apron, having rolled there from the previous impact. He springs up and cracks Calderon's thigh with a pinpoint kick, the already-damaged leg buckling violently.

Calderon's foot slips off the rope.

Jet reacts on instinct, grabbing Calderon around the waist from behind as the stuntman drops. In one lightning-quick motion, Jet launches himself with him, twisting in mid-air—improvising a top-rope, flipping crash of bodies.

John Phillips: "OH MY GOD!"

Jet and Calderon come crashing down in a tangled heap across the middle of the ring—Calderon taking the worst of it, his back and shoulders slamming into the canvas hard under Jet's weight. The crowd erupts into a deafening roar.

Mark Bravo: "That wasn't a move, that was a car wreck! Somebody call craft services, they're gonna need ice and a whole new spine!"

All four men are down for a moment—Tyger on the apron, clutching the rope; Shaffer on one knee, eyes wide; Jet laid out beside Calderon, arm draped across the stuntman's chest from the impact.

The referee drops down.

ONE!

TWO—

Shaffer dives in and shoves Jet off at the last possible second, breaking the cover. The crowd groans loud at how close it was.

John Phillips: "Aaron Shaffer breaks it up! Mr. Juan Calderon was half a heartbeat away from being the first man eliminated!"

Mark Bravo: "He might already be eliminated mentally, John. I don't know if Calderon even knows what city he's in after that landing."

Shaffer drags Jet up by the arm, whips him hard into the corner, and follows in with a running forearm that sandwiches Jet against the turnbuckles. Jet crumples to a seated position, gasping for air.

Tyger II slides back into the ring behind Shaffer, moving like a shadow. Shaffer turns, and Tyger lashes out with a low kick to the shin, then a sharp mid-kick to the ribs, doubling him over.

Tyger grabs Shaffer's wrist and spins through with a snapping arm drag, sending him skidding across the canvas. Shaffer rolls through to a knee, clutching his arm.

On the far side, Calderon is trying to drag himself up using the ropes, face twisted in pain, leg barely cooperating. He stumbles into the corner, slumping against the buckles.

John Phillips: "Calderon is in a bad way, that leg has been targeted all match and that crash from the top didn't do him any favors."

Mark Bravo: "He wanted a big stunt and he got one. Now we find out if there's anything left in the tank after the credits."

Tyger glances at the staggering Calderon, then at Shaffer getting to his feet again. He moves toward Calderon—but Shaffer bursts forward, grabbing Tyger from behind and shoving him chest-first into the corner, sandwiching Tyger against Calderon.

Tyger's chest hits Calderon's, driving the air out of the stuntman. Shaffer backs up a step, then charges in and crushes both men with a high-impact corner lariat, the collision rattling the entire ring.

John Phillips: "Shaffer just hit that corner like a runaway freight train!"

Mark Bravo: "Two for one special, and Calderon got the worst of the discount!"

Tyger falls to his knees and rolls out under the bottom rope to regroup, clutching his chest. Calderon slumps forward, barely held up by the ropes, glassy-eyed.

Shaffer steps back, the crowd starting to buzz as they sense something big coming. He points at Calderon, then to the sky, wind machines at ringside kicking up another low howl.

John Phillips: "Aaron Shaffer... looking to set up for something here."

Shaffer sprints to the opposite corner, hits the turnbuckles, and rockets back across the ring at top speed. As Calderon staggers out of the corner, Shaffer snatches him, rotates, and plants him with the Twister Slam—spiking him hard near center ring and leaving him sprawled, eyes staring at nothing.

John Phillips: "Twister Slam! Calderon is absolutely rocked!"

Mark Bravo: "He just spun that man like a weather vane in a tornado."

Shaffer pops to his feet, chest heaving, and looks toward the corner. The crowd roars louder as he climbs, one rope at a time, until he stands on the top turnbuckle, arms out, feeling the imaginary wind rush past him.

John Phillips: "Shaffer's not done! He's going all the way up!"

He launches himself into the air, twisting into a beautiful arc, arms cutting through the air as he crashes down across Calderon with the Storm Surge Moonsault. The impact drives the breath from the stuntman's body, and he lies motionless, sprawled.

Mark Bravo: "Storm Surge Moonsault! He's trying to end Calderon's entire trilogy right now!"

Shaffer hooks the leg and the referee drops.

ONE!

TWO!

Before the three can hit, Jet slides in and, instead of breaking the pin, he crashes onto the pile with a Standing Shooting Star Press, adding his weight to the cover and the wreckage. The crowd loses it.

John Phillips: "Jet just added more impact on top of Calderon!"

Mark Bravo: "Dogpile of doom! Somebody send this footage to OSHA!"

Tyger II, on the outside, reaches for the rope—but he's half a second too late.

THREE!

DING! DING! DING!

Ring Announcer: "Mr. Juan Calderon... has been ELIMINATED!"

The crowd erupts as the bell rings, some cheering the carnage, others groaning at the end of Calderon's wild night. In the ring, Jet rolls off clutching his ribs, Shaffer lies on his back staring at the lights, and Calderon doesn't move at all, save for a slow rise and fall of his chest.

John Phillips: "Mr. Juan Calderon is the first man eliminated from this four-way! After that insane crash from the top and a combination of the Twister Slam, Storm Surge Moonsault, and Jet Lawson's shooting star impact, there was just nothing left in the tank!"

Mark Bravo: "If you're gonna go out, go out with a stunt they're gonna replay a thousand times. Calderon just turned his WrestleZone Championship hopes into a blooper reel and an all-time car crash at the same time."

Officials slide into the ring to check on Calderon, carefully helping him roll toward the apron. He groggily waves them off with a weak, stubborn hand, insisting on sitting up on his own, but it's clear he's done.

On the floor, Tyger II watches with an unreadable expression behind the mask, one hand resting on the apron. In the ring, Jet and Shaffer begin to push themselves up, realizing that the field has just shrunk—and that the stakes just got higher.

John Phillips: "And now we are down to three: Jet Lawson, Aaron Shaffer, and Tyger II. One of these men will outlast the others and go on to Black Horizon to challenge Eric Dane Jr for the WrestleZone Championship."

Mark Bravo: "The stuntman's gone, but the danger level just spiked. No more fourth body to hide behind. From here on out, every move counts double."

The camera lingers on Calderon being helped to the back, then cuts back to the ring where Jet, Shaffer, and Tyger slowly converge again, the next phase of the war about to begin.

The ring has cleared of officials and Mr. Juan Calderon; only three men remain. Jet Lawson leans in one corner, rubbing his ribs. Aaron Shaffer clutches the back of his neck in another. Tyger II stands near the center, chest rising and falling, eyes locked on both of them like a hunter choosing which target moves first.

John Phillips: "We are down to three men in this elimination match. Jet Lawson, Aaron Shaffer, and Tyger II... and you can feel that pace about to spike again."

Mark Bravo: "We just lost the stuntman, John, but the highlight reel is far from over."

Jet pushes off the buckles and steps forward, shaking out his arms. Shaffer sees him move and straightens up in his own corner. Tyger II takes two measured steps back, opening his stance, giving them just enough space to decide how this next phase begins.

Jet and Shaffer glance at each other across the ring—then, without a word, they both break into a sprint toward Tyger.

John Phillips: "Jet and Shaffer both charging Tyger II!"

Mark Bravo: "Temporary alliances, my favorite kind. Here for a good time, not a long time."

Tyger waits until the last second, then drops low and rolls forward between them. Jet and Shaffer nearly collide, both throwing on the brakes. They spin around just as Tyger hits the ropes and rebounds, sliding between them again with a

low baseball slide that clips the back of Shaffer's ankles and sends him pitching forward.

Shaffer stumbles, catching himself on his hands. Jet steps over him and swings a quick roundhouse at Tyger's head—Tyger snaps his head back, the kick whistling inches from his mask, then answers with a blistering kick combo to Jet's thigh and midsection that doubles him over.

Shaffer springs back up and charges—Tyger ducks under a wild clothesline, Shaffer's momentum carrying him into the ropes. He rebounds and Jet, recovering, hooks him in a tilt-a-whirl attempt. Shaffer spins through and lands behind Jet, shoving him toward Tyger.

Tyger sidesteps at the last instant, catches Jet's wrist, and uses his own momentum to arm-drag him deep across the ring. Jet rolls through to his feet, hits the ropes, and comes back with a Running Sling Blade aimed at Tyger—

—but Tyger drops flat, and Jet wipes out Shaffer instead, taking him down hard in the middle of the ring.

John Phillips: "Jet just took Shaffer's head off with that Sling Blade!"

Mark Bravo: "He wanted Tyger, he got a hurricane! That's what happens when the game speeds up too fast."

Jet pops to his feet, momentarily stunned by who he hit. Tyger is already moving—he sprints to the ropes, leaps to the middle strand, and springs back with a Feral Descent-style flipping neckbreaker aimed at Jet.

Jet dives forward at the last possible second, Tyger crashing to the mat back-first with no one home. The crowd gasps as the masked warrior arches in pain.

Jet scrambles up, grabs Tyger around the waist from behind, and tries for a quick roll-up. Tyger rolls through, using his legs to sling Jet off. Jet tumbles, slides on his back, and ends up under the bottom rope, half-spilling to the apron.

John Phillips: "Jet nearly stole one there, but Tyger II rolled through and redirected him right toward the outside."

Mark Bravo: "That's ring awareness, John. Even when he's getting spun, Tyger knows where he is at all times."

Shaffer pushes up to one knee, shaking stars out of his head. Tyger meets him with a sharp kick to the chest that snaps him upright. Another kick—this one to the thigh—buckles him. Tyger grabs Shaffer's wrist and whips him toward the ropes.

Shaffer hits the ropes, but instead of coming straight back, he grabs the top strand and uses it to launch himself into a springboard—spinning in mid-air and crashing a flying forearm into Tyger's jaw that sends the masked man reeling.

John Phillips: "What a counter from Aaron Shaffer! Using that springboard to turn the tide!"

Mark Bravo: "The man doesn't know how to walk in a straight line, everything's got hang-time."

Tyger staggers back into the corner. Shaffer charges in, but Tyger explodes out with a Ghost Fang Kick—this time connecting flush, his boot cracking against Shaffer's jaw. Shaffer spins and collapses to the mat, rolled to his side, clutching at his face.

John Phillips: "Ghost Fang Kick! Shaffer might be out!"

Tyger drops to a knee for a split second, shaking out the impact in his leg. As he rises, Jet, from the apron, grabs the top rope and slingshots himself back into the ring, firing a Springboard Knee Strike right at Tyger's temple.

Tyger ducks under, the knee grazing his mask instead of caving it in. Jet lands, pivots, and both men fire off kicks at the same time—Jet with a rolling Savate, Tyger with a low thrust. Their shins collide with a sickening crack and both stagger back, each grabbing their leg as the crowd winces.

Mark Bravo: "You ever kick a ring post by accident? Multiply that by ten and add a tiger spirit."

Shaffer forces himself up again, shaking off the Ghost Fang. Seeing both men momentarily stunned, he darts between

them, hits the ropes at top speed, and rebounds—springing into a beautiful high-angle Storm Surge-like front flip over both, hooking their heads and snapping them down in a wild double neckbreaker variation.

All three crash to the canvas in a heap, the crowd erupting into a standing ovation for the sequence.

John Phillips: "What a high-speed collision! All three men are down!"

Mark Bravo: "Bodies everywhere, John! This is what happens when you put three human highlight reels in one ring and say 'go faster.'"

The referee starts a count as all three stir, but Shaffer is the first to find the ropes, dragging himself up with them. Jet rolls to the apron again, one hand on his neck. Tyger uses the opposite ropes to get to a knee, then a stand, eyes narrowing behind the mask.

Shaffer sees Jet on the apron and charges, looking for a shoulder to knock him to the floor. Jet side-steps and snaps a rope-assisted kick into Shaffer's face, sending him stumbling backward toward the center of the ring.

Jet vaults up to the top strand in a single fluid motion, springboarding in with a crossbody—

Shaffer catches him.

John Phillips: "He caught him out of mid-air!"

Shaffer grits his teeth, adjusts Jet onto his shoulders in the Meteor Lift position—

—but before he can complete it, Tyger II surges in and snaps a low kick into the back of Shaffer's knee. The joint buckles, Shaffer losing his base. Jet uses the break in balance to slip down Shaffer's back, landing behind him.

Jet shoves Shaffer forward—straight into a sharp back elbow from Tyger that cracks against his cheekbone. Shaffer reels, spun toward the ropes. Tyger steps in with another combo, but Shaffer, running on pure adrenaline, grabs Tyger's wrist and uses his momentum to whip him toward Jet.

Jet drops low and yanks the top rope down as Tyger hits it, using Tyger's own speed against him. The masked warrior tumbles over the top, but manages to grab the rope mid-fall, landing catlike on the apron instead of the floor.

John Phillips: "Tyger II almost taken to the outside, but he hangs on!"

Shaffer, dazed, charges again. Jet ducks, grabs the back of Shaffer's tights and leverages his own body weight, using Shaffer's momentum to hurl him over the top rope on the opposite side. Shaffer crashes to the floor in a heap, clutching his back.

Mark Bravo: "There goes Shaffer to the outside! High-speed exit!"

Jet turns back toward Tyger, rushing in with a forearm, but Tyger drives a shoulder through the middle rope from the apron, ramming Jet in the midsection. Jet doubles over. Tyger slingshots up and over, rolling across Jet's back and landing behind him in the ring.

Jet spins—Tyger lashes out with a jumping kick that Jet narrowly ducks. Jet hits the ropes and rebounds, but Tyger steps aside and uses Jet's speed, low-bridging him with a drop in the ropes. Jet is sent tumbling over the top, this time landing hard on the same side of the ring where Shaffer is still trying to recover.

John Phillips: "Jet Lawson sent out to the floor with Aaron Shaffer! For the moment, Tyger II is the last man standing inside the ring!"

Mark Bravo: "And you know what that means, John. When the hunter's alone in the ring and the prey's on the outside..."

John Phillips: "We might be about to see Tyger II take flight."

On the outside, Jet and Shaffer struggle to their feet near the barricade, both using it to brace themselves. They end up side-by-side without meaning to, each glaring back toward the ring, chests heaving.

Inside, Tyger II steps to the center and looks out at them, the crowd rising as they sense what's coming. He slowly raises his hand into the Tiger Claw gesture, the entire arena buzzing louder.

John Phillips: "Tyger II... measuring..."

He breaks into a sprint, hitting the ropes opposite Jet and Shaffer. He rebounds with blistering speed, the ropes humming from the force. As he reaches the near side, Tyger plants one foot on the bottom rope, then the second on the middle, and launches himself up and over the top in one fluid, soaring motion.

He twists in mid-air, body turning in a tight somersault as he comes crashing down on top of both Jet Lawson and Aaron Shaffer with a high, crashing plancha. All three men explode into the ringside mats, bodies scattering like bowling pins.

John Phillips: "TYGER II OVER THE TOP ROPE TO THE FLOOR!"

Mark Bravo: "Holy—! The tiger can FLY, John! Three-man wipeout on the outside!"

The crowd erupts into a thunderous "HO-LY S***! HO-LY S***!" chant, bleeped for broadcast but deafening in the building. replays flash on the tron: Tyger's perfect rotation, the impact as all three crash into the barricade, fans recoiling from the shockwave.

Tyger rolls off first, clutching his back but already trying to push himself up to a knee. Jet lies on his side, arm wrapped around his ribs again. Shaffer is flat on his back, staring at the lights of the arena rafters like he's trying to remember how he got there.

John Phillips: "Tyger II sacrificing his own body to take out both of his remaining opponents! That is what a WrestleZone Championship opportunity means to this man!"

Mark Bravo: "You don't just want it, you gotta throw yourself at it and hope gravity's on your side. Tyger II just turned the outside of that ring into a crash site, and all three of these guys are paying the bill."

The referee leans through the ropes, starting a count as the camera pulls back to capture the scene: three broken contenders, sprawled in a heap at ringside, with Black Horizon—and Eric Dane Jr—looming over all of them like a distant, unforgiving horizon.

The referee's count reaches four as all three men stir in the debris at ringside. Tyger II is the first to make it to all fours, the masked warrior sucking in air through clenched teeth as he crawls toward the apron.

John Phillips: "After that incredible dive, Tyger II is the first man back on his feet — that could be the difference-maker right there."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, congratulations, you survived your own car crash. Now you gotta start driving again."

Tyger grabs the edge of the apron and pulls himself up. He glances down to his left — Aaron Shaffer is still flat on his back, one arm draped over his ribs. To his right, Jet Lawson is on his side against the barricade, trying to push himself up, eyes glassy.

Tyger chooses.

He stalks over to Jet, grabs a handful of wrist tape and the waistband of his trunks, and hauls him up with surprising strength. Jet's legs wobble, barely holding him.

John Phillips: "Tyger II's picked his target — he wants Jet Lawson back inside that ring."

Mark Bravo: "Smart move. Shaffer's still trying to remember his own name. Take out the man who can flip you inside

out first."

Tyger guides Jet toward the ring and rolls him under the bottom rope. Jet tumbles to a stop near the center, clutching his ribs. Tyger follows, sliding in under the bottom strand and quickly draping himself across Jet's chest, hooking the far leg.

ONE!

TWO!

Jet kicks out, jerking his shoulder up just before three. The crowd pops, a pocket starting a small "JET! JET! JET!" chant.

John Phillips: "Jet Lawson stays alive! He refuses to let his WrestleZone Championship dreams die that easily!"

Mark Bravo: "Might wanna tell his body that, because everything from his ribs to his soul is screaming 'stay down.'"

Tyger sits back on his knees for a second, then nods once, as if acknowledging the heart in front of him. He rises smoothly and pulls Jet up by the arm, guiding him into the corner.

Tyger buries a short, precise kick into Jet's midsection. Jet doubles over. Another kick, this one lower to the thigh. Jet tries to cover up, but Tyger peels his guard open with a sharp forearm to the chest, then snaps a final kick into the ribs that leaves Jet gasping, arms draped over the top rope for support.

John Phillips: "Tyger II going to work on that already-damaged midsection, staying laser-focused."

Mark Bravo: "That's the difference between a daredevil and a hunter, John. One jumps and hopes. The other picks the spot and never stops hitting it."

Tyger backs up a few steps, then charges in. Jet, on pure instinct, throws himself sideways out of the corner. Tyger hits the brakes, planting a boot on the bottom rope to stop his momentum before he collides with the turnbuckle.

Jet catches him with a desperate roll-up from behind, folding Tyger into a tight small package.

ONE!

TWO—

Tyger kicks out hard, sending Jet rolling away. The crowd groans at how close the upset was.

John Phillips: "Jet almost stole one! Tyger II barely escapes!"

Mark Bravo: "That was pure muscle memory. Jet's body went, 'I know one more thing we can try,' and almost pulled it off."

Both men scramble up. Jet throws a forearm, catching Tyger on the jaw. Tyger eats it and comes back with a sharp palm strike. Jet answers with another forearm, then a back elbow. The crowd rallies behind him, each strike getting louder noise.

Jet hits the ropes, rebounds, and connects with a Running Sling Blade that snaps Tyger to the mat. The masked man rolls to a knee almost immediately, stubbornly trying to stand. Jet doesn't wait — he sprints to the opposite ropes, bounces, and nails a Springboard Knee Strike to the side of Tyger's head, sending him sprawling.

John Phillips: "Jet Lawson putting together a flurry! Sling Blade, springboard knee — Tyger II might be rocked!"

Mark Bravo: "You can't give Jet even ten seconds of daylight, he'll turn it into a combo video."

Jet clutches his ribs again but forces himself up, adrenaline pushing him forward. He looks out at the crowd, then up toward the rafters, raising one hand to point at the sky — the familiar signal that he's thinking *Ion Driver*.

The crowd roars, but Jet hesitates for a half-second, holding his side. That tiny pause is all Tyger needs.

As Jet turns back, Tyger surges up from his knees with frightening speed and drills a low kick into Jet's injured ribs. The impact doubles Jet forward, the breath exploding out of him in a gasp.

Tyger follows with a lightning-quick backhand to Jet's chest, then a spinning kick to the leg that drops him to one knee. The combination comes together like a practiced kata — fluid, ruthless.

John Phillips: "Tyger II just cut Jet Lawson off mid-finish! Those ribs have to be screaming now!"

Tyger takes a step back, breathing hard, then slowly raises his right hand into the Tiger Claw gesture, fingers curled, aiming it directly at Jet's bowed head.

Mark Bravo: "Uh oh. When he pulls out the claw, that's bad news."

Tyger grabs Jet by the wrist, pulls him up just enough, and spins him in close, slipping behind to hook him in a waistlock. In one smooth, vicious motion, Tyger hauls Jet up, shifts his grip, and drops him with a brutal sit-out Yokai Driver — Jet's spine and the back of his head bouncing off the canvas from the sudden impact.

John Phillips: "Yokai Driver! Tyger II just planted Jet Lawson!"

Jet's body goes slack for a second, arms splayed. Tyger doesn't waste time. He rolls through, maintaining control, and drags Jet back up by pure force, deadlifting him halfway off the mat.

With a guttural shout, Tyger hoists Jet up onto his shoulders, then swings him down in front, snapping him into a vicious, spinning Michinoku-driver style slam — spiking him high-angle on the back of his neck and shoulders.

John Phillips: "TIGER ECLIPSE! Tiger Eclipse in the center of the ring!"

Mark Bravo: "Jet Lawson just got slammed into the shadow realm, John. That might be it."

Tyger folds Jet's legs over his chest, pressing down in a tight cover, shoulders low.

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

DING! DING! DING!

Ring Announcer: "Jet Lawson... has been ELIMINATED!"

The crowd reacts with a mix of shock and respect — some groaning at Jet's elimination, others cheering the sheer impact of the finishing sequence. Tyger rolls off, sitting back on his heels, chest heaving, eyes still fixed on Jet for a moment.

John Phillips: "Jet Lawson is out! Tyger II just strung together the Yokai Driver into the Tiger Eclipse and pinned him clean in the center of the ring!"

Mark Bravo: "Jet threw everything he had at this match, but there's only so many times you can crash before the system shuts down, John."

Jet lies on the mat, staring up at the lights, chest rising and falling in ragged gasps. A trainer slides in under the bottom rope to check on him, asking if he knows where he is. Jet nods weakly, frustration written all over his face.

Tyger II pushes himself to his feet. For a long moment, he stands over Jet, looking down at the fallen daredevil. Then, in a quiet gesture that draws a murmur from the crowd, Tyger gives a small, respectful bow in Jet's direction before turning away.

John Phillips: "Even in elimination, Tyger II showing that warrior's respect. He knows how dangerous Jet Lawson was in this match."

Mark Bravo: "He also knows he just took out one of the biggest X-factors in the company. That's a statement going into Black Horizon contention."

Jet is helped to the outside by officials as the fans give him an appreciative round of applause. In the background, Aaron Shaffer has pulled himself back onto the apron, one hand on the top rope, watching all of this with narrowed eyes.

John Phillips: "And just like that, we're down to two. Tyger II and Aaron Shaffer — one of them is going to Black Horizon to challenge Eric Dane Jr for the WrestleZone Championship."

Mark Bravo: "The hurricane versus the tiger spirit. One more elimination, one more man's dream shattered, and one man's road to the main event begins."

The camera tightens on Tyger II in the center of the ring, his chest still rising and falling, and then pans to Shaffer on the apron, eyes locked on his opponent as he steps through the ropes for the final phase of the war.

Shaffer steps through the ropes, eyes never leaving Tyger II. The crowd, sensing the final showdown, rises to their feet in a rolling roar.

John Phillips: "Here we go. We started with four, and now it comes down to this. Aaron Shaffer. Tyger II. Winner goes to Black Horizon to face Eric Dane Jr for the WrestleZone Championship."

Mark Bravo: "The human hurricane versus the haunted tiger. Somebody's walking out of here with a golden ticket, and somebody's walking out looking for a dentist."

Tyger steps toward the center of the ring, hands raised in a measured guard. Shaffer rolls his shoulders and meets him there, jaw set. For a moment, they're nose to nose, the crowd noise swirling around them like static.

Shaffer shoves Tyger back. Tyger barely budes.

Tyger responds with a sharp palm strike to Shaffer's chest that echoes through the arena. Shaffer takes a half-step back, then fires a forearm into Tyger's jaw. Tyger snaps his head back and answers with a low kick to the thigh. Shaffer comes back with another forearm. Tyger answers with another kick.

Soon they're trading in the center of the ring—forearm, kick, forearm, kick—each strike landing heavier than the last. The crowd "OOH!"s with every shot.

John Phillips: "Listen to those strikes! Neither man backing down an inch!"

Mark Bravo: "That's not a wrestling exchange, that's two guys arguing about who wants the main event more—with their bones."

Shaffer finally breaks the rhythm, ducking low and driving a shoulder into Tyger's midsection, forcing him back into the corner. He unloads with a barrage of body shots—hooks to the ribs, quick uppercuts under the mask. Tyger absorbs as many as he can, then snaps a short, vicious elbow to the side of Shaffer's head that staggers him.

Tyger steps out of the corner and drills a spinning back kick into Shaffer's liver. Shaffer doubles over, gasping, eyes wide in sudden pain. Tyger hits the ropes, looking to follow up—but Shaffer, running on instinct, explodes forward and crushes him with a Cyclone Clothesline that turns Tyger inside out.

John Phillips: "Cyclone Clothesline! Tyger II just got flipped!"

Tyger crashes to the canvas and rolls to his back, staring at the lights for a moment. Shaffer drops down and hooks the leg.

ONE!

TWO!

Tyger kicks out, jerking his shoulder off the mat as the crowd pops.

John Phillips: "Tyger II stays alive at two!"

Mark Bravo: "You're gonna need more than a wind gust to keep a yokai down, John."

Shaffer slams a fist into the mat, frustration flashing across his face. He drags Tyger up, hooks him, and snaps him down with a Flashpoint DDT. Tyger's head bounces off the mat, and Shaffer immediately rolls through, keeping a grip as he hauls Tyger back up and transitions into a Tempest Suplex, snapping him over with a high-angle throw.

Tyger lands hard, grabbing at his lower back. Shaffer crawls over, pressing him flat for another cover.

ONE!

TWO!

Tyger kicks out again, this time with slightly less force, but still defiantly.

John Phillips: "Another near fall for Aaron Shaffer! He's throwing everything at Tyger II to keep him down!"

Mark Bravo: "Shaffer's in that place where you start scrolling through the whole move list wondering what you haven't tried yet."

Breathing heavy, Shaffer pushes to his feet and looks toward the corner. The crowd buzzes as he points up, signaling for something bigger.

John Phillips: "Uh oh. When Aaron Shaffer starts looking at the ropes, that usually means bad things for whoever's on the mat."

Shaffer hauls Tyger up, drives a knee into his gut, and sends him staggering into the corner. He follows in with a Corner Lariat, dazing the masked warrior, then muscles him up onto the top turnbuckle, Tyger seated facing the crowd.

Shaffer climbs up with him, hooking him for Eye of the Storm.

John Phillips: "Eye of the Storm! If Shaffer hits this top-rope cutter, Tyger II might be DONE!"

Shaffer balances on the ropes, arm cinched around Tyger's head. Tyger's fingers flex on the top turnbuckle, searching for anything to anchor to. At the last possible second, he drives a series of short punches into Shaffer's ribs, then wedges his free arm under Shaffer's grip, prying it loose just enough to slip his head out.

Shaffer swings anyway, losing his balance without Tyger, and crashes back-first to the mat alone. The entire ring shakes.

Mark Bravo: "Nobody home on Eye of the Storm! Tyger just let gravity beat Aaron to the punch!"

Tyger steadies himself on the top rope, watching Shaffer writhing on the canvas. The crowd rises as they realize the roles have reversed.

Tyger stands, back to the ring, then launches with a high, twisting body press—more impact than flash—crashing down across Shaffer's chest. He hooks both legs on landing.

ONE!

TWO!

Shaffer kicks out at two and three-quarters, the crowd roaring at the close call.

John Phillips: "So close! Tyger II nearly put Aaron Shaffer away off that high impact from the top!"

Mark Bravo: "That was a big cat landing right on your lungs. I'm amazed Shaffer's ribs didn't just file for divorce."

Tyger rolls off, one hand on his own back, feeling the cumulative damage. He pushes to his feet, eyes narrowing behind the mask as he looks down at Shaffer, who's reaching for the ropes to drag himself up.

Tyger waits, watching. Shaffer pulls himself upright in the corner, leaning heavily against the buckles, chest heaving. The referee checks him, but Shaffer nods, refusing to quit.

Tyger gives a small nod of respect—then charges.

He goes for a running elbow, but Shaffer explodes out of the corner with a desperate Gale Force Dropkick, both boots slamming into Tyger's chest mid-run and sending him crashing backward to the mat.

John Phillips: "Gale Force Dropkick! Shaffer caught him flush!"

Tyger hits the mat hard and rolls to his side. Shaffer pops up, adrenaline overriding exhaustion, and lets out a ragged shout as he motions for Tyger to rise.

Tyger struggles up to one knee. Shaffer grabs him, hooks him low, and with a surge of strength, muscles him up and over into the Stormbreaker—hammering Tyger down with a twisting slam that leaves him flat on his back.

John Phillips: "STORMBREAKER! Shaffer hit the Stormbreaker in the center of the ring!"

Mark Bravo: "If Tyger kicks out of THIS, I'm checking his birth certificate for 'actual ghost'!"

Shaffer collapses on top, hooking the far leg deep, pressing all his weight down.

ONE!

TWO!

TWO AND NINE-TENTHS—TYGER KICKS OUT!

The crowd explodes, half in disbelief, half in awe. Shaffer rolls onto his back, hands over his face, unable to believe it.

John Phillips: "Tyger II kicks out of the Stormbreaker! I don't know how he did it!"

Mark Bravo: "Look at Shaffer's face! He's thinking the same thing we are: what in the hell is it gonna take to keep this man down?!"

Shaffer rolls to his knees and stares at Tyger, who's barely moving. Slowly, the hurricane rises again, dragging himself to his feet by the ropes, decision hardening in his eyes.

He yanks Tyger up by the mask, dragging him toward the corner, and signals for one last high-risk shot—Eye of the Storm, one more time.

John Phillips: "Aaron Shaffer going back to the Eye of the Storm—if he lands it this time, we may be looking at the man headed to Black Horizon!"

Shaffer props Tyger up on the top rope again, this time facing inward. He climbs to the second rope beside him, then up to the top, both men precariously balanced.

He hooks Tyger's head for the cutter—but Tyger suddenly bursts to life, driving a brutal series of elbows into Shaffer's side. One, two, three, four—each one cracking into cartilage.

Shaffer's grip loosens. Tyger shoves him off. Shaffer lands on his feet—but his legs buckle and he drops to one knee, completely spent.

Tyger stands tall on the top rope, swaying slightly, then drops down to the mat behind Shaffer, landing light despite the

height. He waits, coiled.

John Phillips: "Shaffer's hurt, he's exhausted—he might not see this coming!"

Shaffer pushes up, turning—

GHOST FANG KICK.

Tyger's boot FLASHES up and connects flush with Shaffer's jaw. The impact spins Shaffer around and drops him face-first to the mat, arms splayed.

John Phillips: "Ghost Fang! Ghost Fang! Shaffer's out on his feet—if he's even on his feet at all!"

Tyger doesn't cover. Instead, he drops to a knee beside Shaffer, one hand braced on the mat, drawing a long, steadying breath. The crowd senses the end and surges to their feet.

With deliberate care, Tyger hauls Shaffer up from behind, locking his arms around the waist. He plants his feet, summons the last of his strength, and snaps backwards with a crisp tiger suplex—a clear tribute to his father—bridging for half a second before releasing.

Shaffer lands high on his shoulders and neck, bouncing and rolling to a seated, glassy-eyed position.

John Phillips: "Tiger suplex! A tribute to Tatsumi 'Tyger' Tanaka!"

Tyger pushes to his feet, stumbling forward a step before turning back to Shaffer, who is somehow still upright, barely, swaying like a tree in a hurricane.

Tyger raises his hand once more into the Tiger Claw gesture, the entire arena roaring in approval.

Mark Bravo: "We're at the end of the combo, John. This is it."

Tyger steps in, scoops Shaffer up across his shoulders in one exhausted, powerful motion, then swings him down and forward, snapping him into the brutal, spinning sit-out slam of the Tiger Eclipse—driving Shaffer into the mat with enough force to rattle the buckles.

John Phillips: "TIGER ECLIPSE! AGAIN! In the center of the ring!"

Tyger collapses forward, hooking both of Shaffer's legs, pressing down with everything he has left.

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

DING! DING! DING!

Ring Announcer: "Here is your winner... and the man advancing to Black Horizon to challenge for the WrestleZone Championship... TYYYYYGER... TWOOOOOO!"

The arena erupts as Tyger II rolls off, collapsing onto his back, arms spread wide, chest heaving. The lights pulse in violet and gold as "Claw of Yokai" hits the speakers again.

John Phillips: "What a war! Aaron Shaffer came within a heartbeat of punching his ticket to Black Horizon, but Tyger II survives the Stormbreaker, escapes the Eye of the Storm, and finishes it with Ghost Fang, a tribute tiger suplex, and the Tiger Eclipse!"

Mark Bravo: "Shaffer threw a whole hurricane at him, and Tyger just kept walking through the rain. You wanna talk about a statement win on the road to Eric Dane Jr? That was it."

Tyger slowly rolls to his side and pushes himself up to a knee. The referee helps him to his feet and raises his arm.

Tyger wobbles, but stays upright, the mask hiding whatever mix of exhaustion and emotion he's feeling.

On the mat, Shaffer stirs, one hand on his jaw, the other pushing against the canvas. He looks up at Tyger, frustration and respect warring in his eyes.

Tyger steps toward him, still unsteady, and extends a hand.

John Phillips: "Tyger II offering his hand to Aaron Shaffer after that brutal battle."

Shaffer stares at it for a long moment as the crowd murmurs. Finally, he takes it. Tyger hauls him up, and the two share a brief nod before Shaffer pulls away, clutching his neck, exiting the ring to an appreciative ovation from the D.C. faithful.

John Phillips: "Aaron Shaffer came within inches of Black Horizon, but tonight belongs to Tyger II. The son of a legend is now one step away from carving his own name into WrestleZone history."

Mark Bravo: "Eric Dane Jr, if you're watching this? I hope you understand what's headed your way. It's not just a contender. It's a legacy with a tiger mask and a mean finishing sequence."

The camera pans up from Tyger II standing alone in the ring, Tiger Claw raised high, to a graphic on the tron: "BLACK HORIZON – ERIC DANE JR (c) vs TYGER II – WRESTLEZONE CHAMPIONSHIP." The crowd roars as the image lingers, the future now set in motion.

Legacy Clash

Segment

Backstage, the camera cuts to a cluttered production hallway. A monitor on a rolling stand is replaying the finish we just saw: Tyger II planting Aaron Shaffer with the Tiger Eclipse. The pop from the arena is muffled through concrete walls.

Eric Dane Jr is there... sort of. The WrestleZone Championship hangs off his shoulder at a crooked angle, one hand hooked lazily over the top plate. His other hand is on his phone, thumb scrolling. He's half-watching the monitor, half-taking a selfie with the belt just prominent enough in frame.

From off-screen we hear hurried footsteps. Melissa Cartwright rushes in with a microphone, catching her breath as she slides into the shot beside him.

Melissa Cartwright: "Eric— Eric— what do you think about knowing that you will be facing Tyger II at Black Horizon?"

Dane doesn't answer right away. He finishes whatever he's typing on his phone, taps send with exaggerated care, then tucks it into his peacoat pocket. Only then does he glance at the monitor, watch Tyger II raising the Tiger Claw for a couple of seconds... and smirk.

Eric Dane Jr: "You mean... the kitty cat?"

He tilts his head, squinting at the screen like he's trying to make out a distant menu.

Eric Dane Jr: "Right, right, Tyger Two. Sequel Tyger. Direct-to-streaming version. Got it."

Melissa Cartwright: "He just survived three other competitors and scored the final pinfall to earn a shot at your WrestleZone Championship. A lot of people are already talking about this as a legacy clash—"

Dane barks out a laugh before she can finish.

Eric Dane Jr: "Legacy clash? Melissa, c'mon. I'm twenty-four years old and I already have this."

He slaps the face of the WrestleZone title with an open palm, the metal ringing.

Eric Dane Jr: "He's playing dress-up as his dad. I'm out here rewriting the whole damn franchise."

Melissa tries to interject, but he's rolling now.

Eric Dane Jr: "You see that guy out there? Quiet, mysterious, bowing to the ring like it's sacred, looking up at the rafters for daddy's approval. That's cute. That's real cute. Meanwhile, I'm standing here with a championship I won on my own name, my own time, my own 'flippy-doo bull!'"

He air quotes the phrase with a grin, clearly proud of it.

Eric Dane Jr: "—and everybody's still so obsessed with his dad and my dad that they forget the only name on this title is mine. Not Tyger. Not 'The Only Star'. Eric. Dane. Junior."

Melissa Cartwright: "Some would say your father's name is the reason you're even here, Eric."

The smirk on his face twitches, just for a second. He leans toward her with mock offense.

Eric Dane Jr: "Yeah, 'some' people also thought HOSS was gonna be the next big thing. Look how that turned out."

He straightens up, rolling his shoulders, the belt sliding a little before he adjusts it back into a more flattering position for the camera.

Eric Dane Jr: "You know who got in the ring? Me. You know who did the shooting stars, the dives, the dumb stuff that everybody said would kill me? Me. You know who walked out of WrestleZone with a championship and a main event future?"

He taps his own chest with his thumb.

Eric Dane Jr: "This guy. Not Dad. Not Ghost Tigerman out there. Me."

Melissa Cartwright: "Tyger II fought through chaos tonight. He pinned Jet Lawson, he outlasted Aaron Shaffer, and now he's got a direct line to you at Black Horizon. Are you underestimating him?"

Dane gives a lopsided grin that's half-charm, half-arrogance.

Eric Dane Jr: "Melissa, I underestimate everyone. It's part of my charm."

He glances back at the monitor again, watching a slow-motion replay of the Tiger Eclipse.

Eric Dane Jr: "Look, I'll give him this—mask looks cool, moves look slick, he hits that spinny-drop-whatever and people lose their minds. Good for him. Seriously. Mazel. But Black Horizon isn't some anime finale where the noble spirit warrior avenges his bloodline and wins the big shiny belt."

He holds the WrestleZone Championship up between himself and the camera, letting it fill the frame.

Eric Dane Jr: "Black Horizon is my night. It's my proving ground. It's the night Eric Dane Jr walks into a pay-per-view with all the pressure in the world on his shoulders, all the 'you're not your dad' talk in the back of his head... and still walks out with this over his shoulder while another legacy story crashes and burns."

Melissa Cartwright: "So no nerves? No pressure at all, knowing this might be Tyger's big moment?"

He scoffs, shaking his head.

Eric Dane Jr: "Oh, there's pressure. Don't get it twisted. There's always pressure when people want you to fail. Half this roster is waiting for me to trip over my own ego. Half the internet's waiting to tweet 'See, told you he wasn't his father.'"

He leans closer to the camera, eyes bright, almost manic.

Eric Dane Jr: "And that's exactly why I love this. Tyger II walks into Black Horizon with his father's ghost on his back, a country behind him, and a highlight reel entrance theme. I walk in with bad cardio, a chip on my shoulder, and a last name everybody thinks I don't deserve."

He pats the belt again, more possessive this time.

Eric Dane Jr: "Then I beat him anyway."

Dane finishes the line and just stares into the camera for a beat, that cocky half-smile frozen on his face. The noise from the arena hums under the moment. Then, slowly, the smirk fades. His eyes shift past the lens, and his posture tightens, just a little.

The crowd in the building reacts before the home audience sees why — a low rumble that builds as a shadow falls across the edge of frame.

Chris Ross steps into the shot.

The man Dane went to hell and back with stands shoulder-to-shoulder with him, not breaking eye contact. The WrestleZone Championship sits between them like a fault line.

For a long second, nobody talks. They just size each other up.

Eric Dane Jr: "Chris."

Chris Ross: "Eric."

Melissa glances nervously between the two, feeling the tension spike. She takes a half-step forward, raising the microphone between them like a referee trying to get between two fighters.

Melissa Cartwright: "Chris, if I can... tonight, in our main event, you go into the men's Survivor match a man down after the attack on Jaxson Ryder earlier tonight. How are you feeling heading into that kind of war, knowing Team Ross isn't at full strength?"

Dane's eyes flick from Ross to the camera, then to the monitor still replaying Tyger II's victory. He listens, jaw set, that earlier arrogance tempered by the reminder of the man standing inches away from him — the man who he went to war with.

After a moment, Eric lifts the WrestleZone Championship a little higher on his shoulder and takes a quiet step out of frame, leaving the spotlight to Ross and Melissa as the focus shifts to the looming chaos of tonight's main event.

Chris finally tears his gaze away from Eric and looks at Melissa, jaw grinding. When he speaks, his voice is low but intense.

Chris Ross: "How do I feel?"

He snorts, shaking his head.

Chris Ross: "I'm pissed off, Melissa. Let's not pretty it up. Jaxson Ryder showed up tonight ready for the biggest match of his career, ready to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with me, El Fantasma and Jarvis Valentine... and Maxx Mayhem couldn't handle that like a man."

He turns his head slightly toward the camera, eyes burning now.

Chris Ross: "So he sent his goons. Malachi Cross. Silas Grimm. They jumped Jaxson in the back and took him out of this match before the bell ever rang. That's not strategy. That's cowardice with a paint job."

Melissa Cartwright: "But the reality is, when that bell rings later tonight, you're going in four-on-five. Does that change your strategy? Your confidence?"

Ross smirks, but it's humorless.

Chris Ross: "Melissa, I've been fighting uphill my entire career. I'm used to walking into a fight where the numbers say I should lose. I'm used to people looking at the situation on paper and going, 'Yeah, Ross is screwed.'"

He jabs a thumb into his own chest.

Chris Ross: "And I am still here. Still swinging. Still headlining nights like Survivor."

He gestures vaguely toward the ring area.

Chris Ross: "Being down a man doesn't change who I am, and it sure as hell doesn't change who's standing next to me. Neither El Fantasma Oscuro came to D.C. to play it safe. Jarvis Valentine didn't sign up to coast. They knew the second they put their names next to mine on that sheet that it meant we were going to war."

Melissa Cartwright: "Still, Team Mayhem has the numbers advantage, and we've all seen what Maxx is capable of when the rules get loose."

Ross's expression darkens at the mention of Mayhem.

Chris Ross: "Yeah, we've seen it. We saw it when he sent his people to take Jaxson out. We've seen it every time he's turned a match into a demolition derby and walked away smiling about the wreckage."

He leans in closer to the camera.

Chris Ross: "Here's the thing about Survivor, Melissa — they can start with five and we can start with four, but it only takes one three-count at a time. One elimination. One mistake. Maxx can stack the deck all he wants, but once that bell rings, every single one of them has to step through those ropes and stand across from me and my guys."

He taps his temple.

Chris Ross: "You don't win this kind of match by panicking about the math. You win it by taking away their bodies, one at a time, until suddenly that advantage isn't an advantage anymore."

Melissa Cartwright: "So what's your message tonight to Maxx Mayhem and Team Mayhem, going into this match a man down?"

Ross doesn't hesitate.

Chris Ross: "My message is real simple: you drew first blood. Congratulations. Enjoy it. Put it on a T-shirt."

He holds up three fingers.

Chris Ross: "But you didn't finish the job. Jaxson Ryder's gonna heal. He's gonna be back. And when he is, he's gonna remember who put him on the shelf."

He slowly curls those fingers into a fist.

Chris Ross: "In the meantime? You're not fighting five-on-four, Maxx. You're fighting four people who are mad enough and desperate enough to make sure you don't survive your own match."

He glances sideways at Eric, who's still lingering just at the edge of frame, then back to Melissa.

Chris Ross: "Tonight, I walk into Survivor down a man. I still plan on walking out with my hand raised. And if Maxx Mayhem wants to turn this into a message night?"

Ross leans a little closer to the camera, voice dropping.

Chris Ross: "Then I'm gonna make damn sure the last thing he remembers is that you don't threaten the future of this place without going through Chris Ross first."

Melissa steadies the microphone, nodding.

Melissa Cartwright: "Strong words from Chris Ross. A man down, but not backing down as Team Ross prepares to go to war with Team Mayhem in our main event tonight."

The camera lingers on Ross's intense stare for a final second before fading back toward ringside.

Recruitment Drive

Segment

Backstage. Concrete walls, low hum of distant crowd noise. Gunnar Van Patton zips his duffle bag shut, the Dallas Stars jersey stretched across his frame. His work for the night is done—Troy Lindz is unconscious, Stevens got his proof, and the air around him is still. Not peaceful. Just still.

Avril Selene Kinkade stands nearby, tablet in hand, posture immaculate. Her heels click once as she shifts, eyes fixed on Gunnar with a look that could cut glass.

Avril Selene Kinkade: "They were careless. Sloppy. Leaving a bind rune in blood like some adolescent calling card. It was meant to intimidate, but all it has done is draw attention."

Gunnar Van Patton: "Stevens ain't exactly a scholar of Norse paganism, darlin'. He saw what he needed—me knockin' Lindz into next week and not layin' a finger on Graves."

Avril Selene Kinkade: "You are playing with fire. And you have dragged me into the smoke."

Gunnar Van Patton: "Then you've got two choices. Come to the bar with me... or head back to the hotel and bitch to yer husband over in England."

Footsteps. Slow. Intentional.

Maxx Mayhem steps into frame. No traffic cone. No trash can lids. Just a black hoodie, taped fists, and eyes that burn with quiet, hungry malice. He doesn't bounce or posture—he just arrives, like bad weather.

Avril sees him. Her expression hardens immediately.

Avril Selene Kinkade: "Of course. The revolving door of miscreants never stops. I shall leave you to handle this. I have neither the time nor the patience for any more nonsense. Goodnight, Sergeant."

She snatches up her bag and exits without another word. Maxx watches her go with the faintest smirk, then turns his full attention to Gunnar.

Maxx Mayhem: "She is sharp. I'll give her that. Wrong side of the board... but sharp."

Gunnar doesn't rise to it. He just stares back, jaw working, waiting for the point.

Maxx Mayhem: "You, though... you are something else entirely. I saw it tonight. That punch. That silence after. You didn't just win, Van Patton—you shut the whole building up. You reminded them what happens when violence stops pretending it's a sport."

Gunnar Van Patton: "That was judgment. Like Cain strikin' Abel—only this time, the mark stays with the one who lost."

Maxx's smile widens just a hair.

Maxx Mayhem: "Exactly. That's why I'm here."

He takes a step closer, lowering his voice—not theatrical, just cold and certain.

Maxx Mayhem: "Right now, on paper, Survivor is five on four. Team Mayhem against Team Ross. We already stacked the deck. Took Jaxson Ryder off the board. That's math. That's cute."

He taps a taped finger against his temple.

Maxx Mayhem: "But I'm not a 'paper' guy. I like extra lives. Insurance. I like knowing that when the bodies start to fall, I've still got another monster I can unleash. You... would make six."

Gunnar Van Patton: "Chaos. That's what gets ya goin', huh?"

He stands up straight, shoulders squaring, eyes locked on Maxx.

Gunnar Van Patton: "What about me says Ah like disorder? Ya think all them years in the Army were to help anarchists like you turn this world into a shithole?"

He steps forward, closing the gap, chest almost touching Maxx's.

Gunnar Van Patton: "Go spew yer bull to someone who gives a damn."

Mayhem doesn't flinch. He just absorbs the refusal, filing it away. The smirk fades, replaced by something colder.

Maxx Mayhem: "I had a feeling you'd say that. Good soldier. Chain of command. Leash around your neck and a commendation on your chest."

That word—"leash"—hits. Gunnar's jaw tightens.

Maxx Mayhem: "But here's the part you keep missing, holy man. Order doesn't survive fire. It doesn't get medals. It melts. It runs. It panics when the math stops working."

He gestures lazily with one hand.

Maxx Mayhem: "Five on four, six on three... doesn't matter. I'm not trying to win fair. I'm trying to make sure Jarvis Valentine, Chris Ross, everybody Stevens holds up as the future of this place... never forget what it felt like the night the numbers stopped meaning anything."

He leans in, voice dropping low enough that it's almost a hiss.

Maxx Mayhem: "You had a chance to be more than a weapon they point at the 'bad people' and pat on the back. You could have been the match that burns the whole board down. Instead... you chose the leash."

Gunnar closes the gap in an instant, nose-to-nose now, shoulders coiled.

Gunnar Van Patton: "Leash?"

He practically spits the word.

Gunnar Van Patton: "How's about Ah show ya the difference between a dog and a damn lycan? Ya can bet yer bottom dollar yer ass won't be makin' it to that match. Hell, odds are ya won't even be makin' it outta this room."

Mayhem's eyes narrow, but he still doesn't back down. Tension hangs thick in the air.

Gunnar Van Patton: "Now take yer wannabe Joker bull and walk away... or Ah'm gonna show ya what real hellfire and brimstone is like."

Maxx finally takes two slow steps back, creating just enough space. Gunnar turns his back on him deliberately and calmly goes back to his bag, resuming his packing like the conversation never happened. No fear. No concern.

Maxx stares daggers into Gunnar's shoulders, jaw tight, speaking through gritted teeth.

Maxx Mayhem: "You can cling to your order, Sergeant. You can hide behind your verses and your handlers."

He tilts his head, that cruel little smile returning.

Maxx Mayhem: "But when Survivor hits the tipping point... when five on four stops being numbers and starts being bodies... your God won't save you from what comes next."

He turns and walks out of frame, the echo of his footsteps lingering. Gunnar doesn't look up, but the vein in his neck stands out, knuckles whitening around the zipper of his bag as the scene fades out.

More Than a Name

Segment

Backstage, the camera fades in on a WrestleUTA interview backdrop. Melissa Cartwright stands centered, microphone in hand. Beside her, Tyger II stands in full gear, mask still damp with sweat, chest rising and falling from the war he just fought. The hum of the arena is a low thunder behind them.

Melissa Cartwright: "Ladies and gentlemen, Melissa Cartwright here, and I am now standing with the man who has just earned himself an opportunity at the WrestleZone Championship at Black Horizon... Tyger II."

The crowd in the arena pops audibly at the mention of his name, the noise bleeding faintly through the walls. Tyger gives the slightest nod, hands resting on his hips, eyes fixed ahead.

Melissa Cartwright: "Tyger, you just survived a four-man elimination match. You outlasted Mr. Juan Calderon, Jet Lawson, and Aaron Shaffer to secure your shot at Eric Dane Jr and the WrestleZone Championship. After everything you went through out there tonight... how does it feel?"

Tyger keeps his gaze forward for a moment, then slowly turns to Melissa. His voice is calm, measured, but there's a current of intensity underneath.

Tyger II: "I feel... grateful."

He glances down for a second, then back up.

Tyger II: "Grateful to still be standing. Grateful that my body answered when my spirit asked more of it. Grateful that, tonight, when the storm and the stuntman and the high flyer tried to break me... they did not."

He lifts one hand briefly, curling the fingers into the familiar tiger claw before letting it fall back to his side.

Tyger II: "This ring... this company... they do not hand out chances like this. You earn them. Tonight, I bled for mine."

Melissa Cartwright: "At Black Horizon, you face Eric Dane Jr — a man who has not been shy about his confidence as champion, and who believes he is rewriting the future of the WrestleZone. You've heard the talk about legacies, about last names, about living in shadows. What does this opportunity mean to you personally?"

Tyger's eyes narrow slightly behind the mask at the mention of legacy.

Tyger II: "People here speak of shadows like they are prisons."

He takes a slow breath, choosing his words carefully.

Tyger II: "My father's name is not a chain around my neck. It is a path beneath my feet. I do not wear this mask to hide in his shadow... I wear it to carry his light forward in my own way."

He turns slightly toward the camera now, addressing the audience at home.

Tyger II: "At Black Horizon, I do not step into the ring as 'someone's son.' I step in as Tyger II. As the man who survived tonight. As the challenger who will not bow to a champion just because he says he was born to be one."

Melissa Cartwright: "Eric Dane Jr said that Black Horizon is his night, his proving ground, and that you're just the next legacy story waiting to crash and burn in front of him. Do you have a response to that?"

Tyger's head tilts, the hint of a smile touching the edge of his mouth — not amused, but knowing.

Tyger II: "Eric Dane Jr talks like a man who believes the story is finished before the pages are written."

He taps two fingers lightly against his own chest.

Tyger II: "He says he underestimates everyone. That is good. Let him underestimate me. Let him believe that bad cardio and a famous name will be enough to carry him through the horizon."

The faint smile fades, replaced by a sharper intensity.

Tyger II: "Because when the bell rings, his last name will not protect him. His father will not protect him. The only thing that will stand between him and the fall... is how much punishment he can take before the tiger closes his jaws."

Melissa Cartwright: "Is there anything you'd like to say directly to Eric Dane Jr, knowing he's watching this somewhere in the building right now?"

Tyger turns fully toward the camera, shoulders squaring. The crowd in the arena begins a low, rumbling reaction as if they can feel the shift.

Tyger II: "Eric."

He lets the name hang in the air for a heartbeat.

Tyger II: "You call me a sequel. A costume. A cat. You laugh because it is easier than admitting that, for the first time, you are looking at someone who does not care who your father is or what doors his name opened for you."

He raises the tiger claw again, slowly, deliberately.

Tyger II: "At Black Horizon, I am not coming to take your spotlight. I am coming to take your breath. Piece by piece. Kick by kick. Until the only thing you hear in that arena is the sound of your own doubt."

His voice drops, steady and cold.

Tyger II: "You want to prove you are more than your last name? Good. So do I. Let us find our answers in the same place — under the lights, in the ring, when there is nowhere left for either of us to hide."

He lowers his hand, posture returning to that calm, ritualistic stillness.

Tyger II: "And when the horizon breaks... we will see whose legacy still stands."

Melissa nods, the weight of his words hanging in the air.

Melissa Cartwright: "Tyger II, your path to Black Horizon is set. Thank you for your time — and congratulations on your victory tonight."

Tyger gives a small bow of the head toward her, then toward the camera, before stepping out of frame. Melissa turns back to face the lens as the crowd's reaction swells behind her.

Melissa Cartwright: "Tyger II versus Eric Dane Jr for the WrestleZone Championship is official for Black Horizon — and judging by what we've heard tonight, neither man is planning to blink. Back to you."

The shot fades out on the Black Horizon logo graphic as the show transitions.

Team MVC vs The Empire

Match

The cameras cut back to the arena, where the buzz has turned into a rolling roar. The ring is empty, the apron skirts fresh, and ten nameplates flash in rotation across the big screen above the stage.

John Phillips: "We've had chaos already tonight, but this... this is our first Survivor match of the evening. Ten women. Elimination rules. High stakes for the entire division."

Mark Bravo: "Oh yeah, this is the one I've been waiting for. Two squads, no place to hide, and somebody's ticket to Black Horizon is getting punched before we're done."

The arena lights dim to a rich violet. A heartbeat of silence...

Then the first haunting notes of "Forever & Ever" by Lacey Sturm ft. Lindsey Stirling hit the PA. A swirl of soft white and purple lights cascade across the stage as a burst of golden pyro erupts on either side of the entrance.

Out through the haze steps Marie Van Claudio.

She stands at the top of the ramp, framed in the glow, eyes sweeping across the packed D.C. crowd. No smirk, no coy games tonight—just a focused, veteran calm. She lifts one hand to her heart, then points straight toward the ring: business.

John Phillips: "And here comes Team MVC! Led by a woman whose fingerprints are all over the history of this division, Marie Van Claudio!"

Mark Bravo: "You're looking at the woman who helped build this place and never really got to cash the check she wrote with her body. She's got four ride-or-dies with her tonight, and they are not here for cardio."

The curtain parts again and Emily Hightower strides out to Marie's right, UTA Women's United States Championship slung over her shoulder like it belongs to her and no one else. The "Junkyard Bitch" cracks her neck, points out toward the ring, then slaps the faceplate of the belt twice, barking something we can't hear over the noise.

To Marie's left, Angela Hall steps into view, bouncing lightly on the balls of her feet, loose and coiled. She looks from one side of the arena to the other, soaking in the energy, then jabs a finger up toward the rafters as if calling down the storm.

Behind them, Susanita Ybanez emerges, small in stature but moving with the kind of swagger only earned in places far rougher than a TV arena. She slaps hands with a couple of fans in the front row along the ramp, pointing back to the camera and shouting in rapid Spanish, fire in her eyes.

And anchoring the formation, just a step behind the line, comes Valkyrie Knox. Shoulders broad, expression carved from stone, Nordic war paint sharp under the arena lights. She raises her war-horn taunt high in the air, unblinking, as the crowd lets out a fresh roar.

John Phillips: "That is a squad right there. Marie Van Claudio, Emily Hightower, Susanita Ybanez, Valkyrie Knox, and Angela Hall. Team MVC is in the building!"

Mark Bravo: "You've got legacy, you've got the U.S. Champion, you've got a street-made luchadora, a literal storm in human form, and an Icelandic war machine. That's not a team, that's a boss rush."

The five women start their walk to the ring in unison, Marie leading the way. Emily and Angela flank her on either side, Susanita just off Marie's shoulder, Valkyrie looming behind them all like the last line of defense.

On the way down, Marie pauses at the edge of the ramp, looking back at her team. She says something to them over the music, one hand gesturing toward the ring and the stage. Whatever it is, it has weight—four heads nod in agreement.

John Phillips: "Remember what's on the line here: if Team MVC wins, the last woman standing from that side earns a shot at Amy Harrison and the UTA Women's Championship at Black Horizon."

Mark Bravo: "That is a golden ticket with gold on top. You survive tonight, you get to walk into Black Horizon with the champ trapped in a corner. If The Empire pulls it off, Amy gets to pick whoever she wants and how she wants to fight 'em. No pressure, right?"

At ringside, Susanita hops up onto the apron first, turning to face the crowd. She throws her arms wide, yelling out to the fans in Spanish before slipping through the ropes with a quick, athletic twist. Angela slides in under the bottom rope, popping up to one knee and slapping the mat, testing the canvas as if it's a starting block.

Emily climbs the steps, pausing on the apron to hoist the U.S. title high with both hands. A "HIGHTOWER!" chant starts in one corner of the arena, rolling through the building as she smirks and ducks into the ring.

Valkyrie takes the steps one at a time, deliberate, then steps over the middle rope with authority. She moves straight to

one corner, raising her war-horn pose again, staring up into the lights like she's calling down something ancient and ugly.

Marie is the last to enter, wiping her boots on the apron before stepping through the ropes. She takes a slow circle around the interior of the ring, looking out at the DC crowd, then back to her teammates. The music swells as the five women gather in the center, hands stacking in the middle for a brief, tight huddle.

John Phillips: "If you want to talk about motivation, Marie Van Claudio has plenty. For years people have asked if she'd ever get her flowers, ever get that one more run. Tonight, this team could be her road back to the top... or the night The Empire slams the door on all of them."

Mark Bravo: "And don't forget, standing across from them is Amy Harrison and The Empire — an empress with her court, and you can bet your last dollar she's gonna let her soldiers do the dirty work while she stays fresh."

"Forever & Ever" fades as the referee steps between the teams, directing Team MVC to their corner. The camera pans over the focused faces of Marie, Emily, Susanita, Valkyrie, and Angela, then swings back toward the stage.

The atmosphere tightens; everyone in the building knows what's coming next.

The arena lights dip again, trading violet for a colder, harsher palette. The titantron glitches to life with a black-and-gold graphic: a jagged crown over the words "THE EMPIRE." The crowd's buzz turns instantly to venom.

John Phillips: "And here comes the opposition... The Empire, led by the UTA Women's Champion, Amy Harrison."

Mark Bravo: "Five women who've spent months making everybody else's life miserable. You wanna talk about control? They don't just want the division, John. They want the whole damn company kneeling."

A sultry, aggressive rock riff hits — Amy Harrison's theme — flooding the Entertainment & Sports Arena with a wall of sound. Strobe lights flash gold and blood-red across the stage as a thin curtain of smoke pours from the entranceway.

Through it steps Amy Harrison.

The UTA Women's Championship is strapped tight around her waist, catching every flash of light. She's all smirk and sway, hips rolling with predatory confidence. One hand runs along the main plate of the title, the other traces down her own side as she pauses at the top of the ramp, batting her lashes at the booing D.C. crowd like they're cheering her.

John Phillips: "There she is. The champion. The architect behind The Empire."

Mark Bravo: "And the woman who would love to walk out of Survivor without breaking a sweat, then handpick her dance partner and her playground at Black Horizon."

The music punches into its chorus and the rest of The Empire floods out behind her in a tight formation.

Hardcore Sandy steps to Amy's immediate right — towering, broad-shouldered, with that rough Vegas edge carved into every line of her face. No theatrics, no smile, just a slow roll of the shoulders and a look that says she's been through wars that would send most people home crying.

On Amy's left, Selena Vex clicks into position, laughing as she looks out at the sea of boos. She runs a hand through her hair, then flips off a particularly vocal fan in the front row, mouthing something unprintable as she points at the ring like it already belongs to her.

Rosa Delgado hangs half a step behind, eyes hooded, arms loose at her sides. She doesn't play to the crowd — she studies the ring, the distance, the angle, like she's already plotting which arm she's going to dismantle first.

Beside her, Dahlia Cross tilts her head, violet hair spilling over one shoulder, lips curled into a small, poisonous smile. She flexes her fingers slowly, like she's already feeling somebody's joints twist in her grip, then traces an imaginary line across her throat as she stares down the aisle.

John Phillips: "Hardcore Sandy. Selena Vex. Rosa Delgado. Dahlia Cross. That is a vicious cabinet around a very dangerous champion."

Mark Bravo: "It's the perfect system, John. Amy calls herself the empress, and she's got four assassins to do her dirty work while she kicks her feet up and enjoys the view."

Amy finally starts down the ramp, the rest of The Empire falling in around her like a moving fortress. Sandy and Rosa walk a step ahead and to the sides — the front line. Selena and Dahlia flank just behind, closer to Amy's shoulders. Amy herself saunters in the center of it all, touching the title and mouthing along with her own lyrics.

John Phillips: "Remember the stakes: if The Empire wins, Amy Harrison gets to choose her next challenger and the stipulations at Black Horizon. She doesn't just keep the crown — she gets to redraw the map."

Mark Bravo: "And don't forget what you said, John. Amy Harrison would love nothing more than to let her Empire do the heavy lifting tonight. If she can survive this match barely even tagging in? That's her perfect outcome."

Halfway down the ramp, Selena breaks formation just long enough to strut toward the barricade, leaning over it to scream back at a fan waving a Marie Van Claudio sign. She snatches the sign from his hands, rips it clean in half, and tosses the pieces back at him with a mocking curtsy before rejoining the line.

Near ringside, Rosa pauses, looking up at Team MVC in their corner. No words. Just a long, assessing stare that lingers on Angela's shoulders, on Emily's arm, on Valkyrie's neck. Picking targets.

Dahlia drifts toward the steps, running her fingers along the cold steel like it's a lover, then slithers up them one at a time, smirking straight at Susanita as she does.

Hardcore Sandy stomps up the steps beside her, each footfall echoing. She steps onto the apron and hooks both arms over the top rope, tugging it hard and barking something at Team MVC that's lost in the crowd noise, but the sentiment is clear: let's fight.

Amy, naturally, is last to approach the ring. She saunters up the steel steps with deliberate care, pauses on the top one to turn her back to the ropes and face the hard camera. With a slow, practiced motion she unstraps the Women's Championship, raises it high over her head, and lets the hate wash over her like it's a warm shower.

John Phillips: "Listen to this building! They cannot stand The Empire, and they may hate Amy Harrison most of all."

Mark Bravo: "Which is wild, because if you ask Amy? She thinks they're all just jealous they're not in her kingdom paying rent."

Amy ducks between the ropes with a flourish, handing the title off to the referee only after making him reach for it twice. Selena slides in under the bottom rope and pops up to one knee, arms outstretched like she's presenting the queen. Rosa steps through and immediately takes a corner, rolling her shoulders, testing the ropes. Dahlia slinks along the ropes, never taking her eyes off Team MVC, smiling that cruel little smile. Sandy enters last, stomping into the center and cracking her neck like a warning shot.

The five women of The Empire drift together in their corner, Amy at the back, one hand resting casually on the top rope while her four lieutenants stand in front of her like a wall.

John Phillips: "Look at that picture. Amy Harrison literally using her team as a shield, just like we expected. She'll tag in if she has to, but she's gonna do everything in her power to stay fresh and let the rest of The Empire carve up Team MVC."

Mark Bravo: "Hey, if you've got an army, you might as well use it. She's not dumb, she's just evil."

The music fades as the referee moves to the middle, gesturing to both corners and running through final instructions. Ten women stare daggers across the ring at one another, the air absolutely crackling.

John Phillips: "Team MVC. The Empire. First fall, first elimination, first turning point in what could define the entire women's division heading into Black Horizon."

Mark Bravo: "Bell hasn't even rung yet and I'm sweating. Let's see who starts this war."

The official holds the Women's Championship high for a moment, then passes it to ringside. When he turns back around, all ten women have filtered into the ring.

Team MVC and The Empire surge toward the center like colliding tides. Marie, Emily, Susanita, Valkyrie, and Angela on one side; Amy, Sandy, Selena, Rosa, and Dahlia on the other. The noise in the arena spikes as they close the distance, jawing and pointing, shoulders bumping.

John Phillips: "Oh boy... we knew this was going to be volatile, but look at this face-to-face!"

Mark Bravo: "Ref might wanna call in some backup, because we're about two seconds away from a ten-woman pile-up."

The referee rushes in, arms outstretched, barking orders.

Referee: "Hey! Only two! ONE from each side! Get to your corners, let's go!"

Valkyrie Knox steps right up to Hardcore Sandy, eyes like ice, the two powerhouses nearly nose-to-nose. Susanita and Selena are shouting over each other, fingers in faces. Rosa and Emily are shoulder-checking back and forth. On the outskirts, Dahlia Cross and Angela Hall lock eyes—no words, just open hatred.

John Phillips: "There is so much history and bad blood crammed into that circle. Dahlia Cross staring down Angela Hall—let's not forget, it was Dahlia's betrayal and sudden alliance with The Empire that cost Angela the Women's Championship weeks ago!"

Mark Bravo: "She didn't just cost her the belt, John. She ripped it out of her hands and gift-wrapped it for Amy Harrison. You're looking at the woman who turned Angela's dream night into a highlight reel for The Empire."

The referee wedges himself between the two teams, pushing at shoulders, shouting louder.

Referee: "BACK UP! Everybody but ONE back it up! Amy, Marie—pick a starter, now!"

Amy Harrison, who had drifted just slightly behind her line, raises both hands like she's calming a crowd. The smirk on her face only infuriates the audience further.

Amy Harrison: "Alright, alright... relax. Let's start this off right, yeah?"

She pats Dahlia's shoulder, brushes past Rosa, and takes a slow, unhurried step back toward The Empire's corner. She turns her back on Team MVC, climbing out to the apron with not a care in the world, leaning against the top rope like she's supervising instead of fighting.

John Phillips: "There it is. Amy Harrison doing exactly what we expected—getting as far away from the opening blows as humanly possible."

Mark Bravo: "She's playing chess, not checkers. Why take a punch when you've got four other women who'll gladly take it for you?"

With Amy on the apron, The Empire huddle for a quick second. Sandy taps her fists together and nods toward the center, clearly ready to start it herself. Selena leans in, jabbing a thumb toward Angela Hall with a nasty grin. Rosa says a few quiet words to Dahlia, gesturing subtly toward Angela again. Dahlia just smiles, slow and venomous.

On the other side, Marie is pulling her team back toward their corner, trying to instill a little order. Emily is pacing, gripping the ropes like she wants to tear them off. Valkyrie stands just behind Marie, arms crossed, unflinching. Susanita leans toward Angela, gesturing between Dahlia and the center of the ring.

Emily Hightower: "You want her, Angie? Go get her."

Angela's eyes never leave Dahlia's. She nods once, sharp and decisive.

Angela Hall: "I've been waiting."

Marie clamps a hand on Angela's shoulder—a grounding touch. They exchange a few words we can't hear, but Marie's look says everything: be smart, not just angry. Angela nods again, then steps forward into the breach.

John Phillips: "You can see it on Angela's face—this has been building since Dahlia's attack. Since the night The Empire stole that championship moment from her."

Mark Bravo: "This isn't just about Black Horizon for her. This is about payback with interest."

Back in The Empire's corner, Amy taps the top rope with her fingers.

Amy Harrison: "Go on then, Dahlia. You started it... finish it."

Dahlia's smile doesn't move, but her eyes flare. She slips under the top rope and glides toward the center of the ring like she's heading to a surgical table instead of a fight.

Angela steps out from Team MVC's corner at the same time. The referee finally gets the rest of the bodies moving back to their aprons, barking at Marie and Sandy to step through the ropes. One by one, the extra combatants file out—Valkyrie last on one side, Hardcore Sandy last on the other, each still glaring across the divide.

Within moments, the ring is cleared. Eight women on the aprons, hands wrapped around the tag ropes, and two in the center.

Angela Hall. Dahlia Cross.

They circle slowly, the crowd swelling into a roar as the realization sinks in.

John Phillips: "We asked who would start this war... and we've got our answer. Angela Hall and Dahlia Cross, face-to-face."

Mark Bravo: "The storm and the snake, John. Dahlia lit the fuse on this whole thing when she lined up with The Empire. Angela's been dying to get her hands on her ever since. Bell hasn't even rung and you can cut this tension with a chainsaw."

The referee checks both sides one last time, then steps between them and points to the timekeeper.

Referee: "Ring the bell!"

DING DING DING.

Angela surges a half-step forward, fists clenched, but she holds herself back, chest heaving with controlled fury. Dahlia just tilts her head and smiles, raising her hands slowly as if inviting the first shot, eyes glittering with cruel amusement.

John Phillips: "Our first women's Survivor match is officially underway... and you can feel the hate in here."

Mark Bravo: "If Dahlia thought stealing Angela's championship night was bad? She's about to find out what happens when the storm finally breaks."

Angela and Dahlia close the distance, hands starting to rise for a collar-and-elbow...

But Dahlia cuts the angle first, slipping to the side with a smirk and flicking a low kick at Angela's lead leg. Angela checks it, absorbing the sting, eyes narrowing.

John Phillips: "Dahlia trying to take that base away early—no surprise from one of the nastiest technicians in the game."

Mark Bravo: "If she chops Angela's wheels out, there's no storm. Just a drizzle."

They circle again. This time Angela doesn't rush. She feints high, then shoots in low, snagging Dahlia's wrist in a tight grip. In one smooth motion she twists into a standing wristlock, wrenching the arm and forcing Dahlia down to one knee.

Dahlia's face contorts, but the smile never fully leaves as Angela torques the joint, stepping through to add leverage.

John Phillips: "Look at that control from Angela Hall—this isn't just speed and high impact, this is technical precision. She's isolating the arm, making Dahlia feel every bit of this."

Angela rolls the wrist, transitions into a hammerlock, and shoves Dahlia chest-first toward the ropes. The Empire's corner shouts warnings as Angela keeps the arm pinned high between Dahlia's shoulder blades.

Dahlia reaches for the ropes with her free hand—Angela yanks her back, spins under, and snaps her down with an arm-drag, rolling through to maintain the armbar on the canvas.

Mark Bravo: "Okay, I see you, Angela! Arm-drag into a grounded armbar, and look how tight she's glued to that shoulder. Rosa Delgado's not the only one who can turn a limb into a bullseye."

Dahlia grimaces, slamming her boot into the mat, trying to rotate her hips. Angela adjusts, posting a knee between Dahlia's shoulder blades and leaning back, stretching the arm. The crowd rallies, clapping in rhythm.

John Phillips: "Angela Hall wrestling this like a woman who did her homework. She knows Dahlia loves to take people apart joint by joint, and she's beating her to the punch—literally and figuratively."

Dahlia snakes her free arm around Angela's ankle and gives a sharp tug, unbalancing her. Angela stumbles just enough for Dahlia to roll through, kip to a knee, and twist into a counter wristlock of her own.

But before Dahlia can cinch it, Angela drops, rolls forward, and kips back up to her feet, using the momentum to send Dahlia flipping with a smooth, deep Japanese arm-drag that sends the violet-haired technician skidding toward The Empire's corner.

Dahlia pops up to one knee, eyes wide, clutching her arm. Angela is already in motion—she darts forward, then stops dead just short, hovering over Dahlia with a cold stare instead of a strike.

Angela Hall: "Remember this part?"

The reference is clear: the moment Dahlia ripped her title away. The crowd roars with approval.

John Phillips: "Angela just reminding Dahlia exactly why she's out here tonight!"

Dahlia's smile snaps back into place, brittle around the edges. She surges up and lunges in for a tie-up—but Angela slips behind instantly, cinching a waistlock. In one fluid motion, Angela drops her level and takes Dahlia straight down with a mat-return, riding her to the canvas and floating into a front facelock.

Dahlia tries to snake out, but Angela shifts her weight, grapevines a leg briefly to keep her grounded, then snaps her over into a tight side headlock, grinding the forearm against Dahlia's jaw.

Mark Bravo: "You can see the track-and-field background there—Angela's got that hips-and-leverage game on lock. She's not just trying to hurt Dahlia, she's trying to drain her, make her feel every ounce she stole from her weeks ago."

Dahlia, annoyed now, wedges a forearm under Angela's chin and shoves, trying to create space. Angela responds by posting her free hand on the canvas and wrenching the headlock tighter, jaw clenched as she leans her weight down.

Slowly, Dahlia forces both women up to their feet, still trapped. She drives a sharp elbow into Angela's ribs once, twice, three times. On the third, Angela winces, loosening enough for Dahlia to shove her off into the ropes.

Angela hits the ropes hard, rebounds—Dahlia drops low, Angela hurdles. Angela hits the opposite ropes, rebounds again—Dahlia pops up, swings a wild leg sweep—Angela vaults over it, lands in a forward roll, springs up and catches Dahlia on the turnaround with a crisp arm-drag back into the middle of the ring.

The crowd pops big as Dahlia hits the canvas again, this time immediately rolling out to a seated position in the corner, eyes wide and chest heaving. Angela stands tall in the center, breathing steadily, hands open and ready.

John Phillips: "Angela Hall is out-wrestling Dahlia Cross right now. Not just out-fighting her—out-wrestling her."

Mark Bravo: "That's the scary part, John. We know Angela can hit you like a freight train, we know she can fly—but when she starts chaining holds and using that speed as a weapon in the grappling game? That's a whole different problem for The Empire."

Dahlia wipes her mouth with the back of her hand, the smirk slipping for just a moment into a scowl. On the apron behind her, Amy leans over the top rope, shouting quick instructions, one manicured finger jabbing toward Angela.

Angela doesn't wait. She surges forward, grabbing Dahlia by the wrist and yanking her out of the corner before the count can even begin. She whips Dahlia hard into the far ropes, planting in the center.

Dahlia rebounds—Angela steps in and snaps her down with a picture-perfect arm drag again, this time keeping hold of the limb and sliding straight into a grounded hammerlock, her knee digging between Dahlia's shoulder blades as she stares over at Amy Harrison.

John Phillips: "Statement made. Angela Hall sending a message not just to Dahlia Cross, but to Amy Harrison and the entire Empire—she can dissect you piece by piece if that's what it takes."

Mark Bravo: "And we're just getting started. First fall hasn't even been teased yet."

Angela keeps the hammerlock cinched, knee grinding between Dahlia's shoulders. She leans down, teeth grit, twisting a little extra as the crowd roars her on.

John Phillips: "Angela Hall still in full control of Dahlia Cross, and I don't think she's forgotten for one second what happened the night she lost the Women's Championship."

Mark Bravo: "If she cranks that arm any harder, Dahlia's gonna have to tap just to keep it attached."

Dahlia grimaces, eyes squeezed shut for a heartbeat—then they snap open, sharp and calculating. She plants her free hand on the mat, pushes up just enough to alleviate pressure, and starts inching toward the ropes on her knees, dragging Angela's weight with her.

Angela senses the shift and transitions, sliding one knee off Dahlia's back and yanking her up to her feet while maintaining the hammerlock. She spins Dahlia around, hooks her by the chin with the free hand, and snaps her backward into a short hammerlock back suplex variation, dumping Dahlia onto the canvas with a thud.

Dahlia arches in pain, clutching her shoulder. Angela floats over for a quick lateral press.

ONE!

T— Dahlia kicks out, twisting her body and immediately rolling toward The Empire's corner.

John Phillips: "Quick cover from Angela, but Dahlia Cross isn't going out that early."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, but you can already see that arm starting to bother her. That's gonna mess with a lot of her favorite toys."

Angela doesn't let her get far. She grabs Dahlia by the ankle and drags her back toward the center of the ring. Dahlia spins to her back at the last second, lashing out with a heel kick toward Angela's knee.

Angela hops back, narrowly avoiding the kick, then dives forward with a basement dropkick to Dahlia's ribs, folding her up.

The crowd pops as Dahlia rolls to her side, gasping. In Team MVC's corner, Susanita is leaning over the rope, arm extended, shouting for the tag. Emily slaps the turnbuckle pad, trying to rally the fans even louder. Valkyrie just watches, eyes locked and unblinking.

Emily Hightower: "C'mon, Angie! Bring her over!"

Angela glances to her corner and nods, grabbing a fistful of Dahlia's violet hair to haul her up—

—and that's when Dahlia strikes.

With the referee's view partially obscured, Dahlia snakes her good arm up and digs a thumb into Angela's eye, sharp and fast. Angela recoils instantly, clutching her face as the crowd boos.

John Phillips: "Oh, come on!"

Mark Bravo: "There it is. There's the Dahlia Cross we all know and despise."

The referee barks at Dahlia, warning her about the eye, but she's already playing innocent, hands up, backing away.

Dahlia Cross: "I slipped, love, she ran into it!"

Angela stumbles, blinking furiously, and Dahlia seizes the opening. She dives low, scything Angela's legs out from under her with a pinpoint leg sweep. Angela hits the mat hard, and Dahlia immediately pounces, driving a vicious knee into Angela's shoulder.

Another. And another.

John Phillips: "Just like that, the tide turns. One dirty shot, and now Dahlia is going after the shoulder like a shark."

Mark Bravo: "If you're waiting for Dahlia to wrestle clean, you're gonna be waiting longer than Angela's title rematch took."

Dahlia grabs Angela's arm, swings her hips around, and drops her back with a snapping arm wringer. Angela cries out, cradling the arm, rolling toward the ropes. Dahlia stalks after her, stomping the limb against the canvas.

On the apron, Amy Harrison leans over the top rope, applauding slowly, a satisfied grin on her face.

Amy Harrison: "That's it, petal! Break her down!"

Dahlia drags Angela toward The Empire's corner and slams her arm against the middle turnbuckle. She threads Angela's wrist around the second rope and pulls, using the cable like a garrote on the joint.

The referee starts the count.

Referee: "One! Two! Three! Four—"

Dahlia lets go just before five, raising her hands and stepping back with that mock-innocent expression again. Angela slumps to her knees, clutching the arm.

Selena Vex reaches down and slaps Dahlia's shoulder.

Referee: "Tag!"

Selena bursts through the ropes with a running start and drives a sliding dropkick straight into Angela's injured shoulder, sending her crashing back into the corner.

John Phillips: "Now Selena Vex tagging in, and The Empire is doing exactly what they do best—isolating and dissecting."

Mark Bravo: "Pick a limb, make it scream, then write your name all over it. That's Empire strategy 101."

Selena stands over Angela and grinds the heel of her boot into the shoulder joint, pushing Angela back against the bottom turnbuckle. The referee counts again, and Selena backs off at four, arms out wide as she soaks in the boos.

Selena Vex: "You wanted a fair fight? You came to the wrong kingdom!"

She reaches down, yanks Angela up by the hair, and whips her across the ring. Angela hits the opposite turnbuckles hard, shoulder-first, and staggers out on rubber legs.

Selena charges, flipping her hair back dramatically, and crushes Angela with a running clothesline that nearly takes her head off. Angela crumples to the mat, and Selena drops into a lazy cover, pressing her forearm across Angela's face.

ONE!

TWO— Angela kicks out, twisting her shoulder away, grimacing.

John Phillips: "Nearfall! Angela Hall refusing to let this be over so quickly, but you can see the damage piling up."

Selena scowls, then grabs Angela's wrist and stomps on the arm again for good measure. She drags Angela toward The Empire's corner, tagging in Rosa Delgado this time.

Referee: "Tag!"

Rosa steps in calm and methodical, her eyes locked on Angela's damaged arm like a wolf eyeing a wounded leg.

Mark Bravo: "Oh, this is bad news. If you're hurt and Rosa Delgado gets the tag? That's like handing your medical chart to the Grim Reaper."

Rosa takes Angela's wrist, pries it away from her body, and twists it into a standing armbar. No wasted motion. No showboating. She yanks Angela down into a short-arm shoulder breaker, dropping her hard to one knee.

Angela bites down on a scream, eyes squeezed shut. Rosa doesn't let go—she transitions seamlessly into a hammerlock, then into a hammerlock back suplex, spiking Angela high on her shoulders and upper back.

Angela sprawls on the mat, clutching her arm. Rosa rolls over and traps the limb again, threading it between her legs, leaning back into a modified armbar that wrenches the joint at an ugly angle.

John Phillips: "Rosa Delgado just chaining submissions together, and every single one of them is focused on that shoulder and elbow!"

Mark Bravo: "You can feel that all the way up here. Angela's in the worst place you can be in a Survivor match—stuck on the mat, far from her corner, and in Rosa's crosshairs."

Team MVC lean in as far as they can, all four of Angela's partners reaching, shouting, slapping the turnbuckle pad.

Marie Van Claudio: "Angela, move! Get to us!"

Angela grits her teeth, rolling her hips, trying to shift her weight. She manages to twist just enough to get her knees under her, then pushes backward, stacking Rosa onto her shoulders in a makeshift pin.

ONE!

TWO— Rosa breaks the hold and rolls free, popping back to her feet with a glare.

Angela uses the tiny window to roll toward her corner, cradling her arm, dragging herself inch by inch across the canvas.

John Phillips: "This could be Angela's chance! She's got daylight—"

Rosa lunges, grabs Angela's boot, and yanks her back toward the center of the ring. The crowd groans in unison as

Angela's fingertips brush Susanita's outstretched hand but fall just short.

Mark Bravo: "Denied at the last possible second! That's veteran awareness from Rosa, and it just sucked the air out of this building."

Rosa drags Angela up again, looking to reapply the punishment—but this time Angela fires off a desperate forearm with her good arm, catching Rosa on the jaw.

Another. And another.

Rosa staggers back a step. Angela roars, spins, and blasts her with a sudden Lightning Bolt Lariat using the healthy arm, dropping Rosa hard to the canvas. The impact sends Angela crashing down too, clutching her injured shoulder.

John Phillips: "Lightning Bolt Lariat out of nowhere! Angela Hall just created the opening she needed!"

Mark Bravo: "She paid for it, John, but if she can crawl a few more feet, this whole match could swing back the other way."

Both women lie on the mat, the referee starting his ten-count. The crowd claps in rhythm, stomping their feet, willing Angela toward her corner.

ONE... TWO... THREE...

Angela starts to move first, rolling onto her stomach and crawling toward Team MVC's outstretched hands. On the other side, Rosa shakes the cobwebs out and reaches for her own corner, where Selena and Sandy are both calling for the tag while Amy remains on the apron, arms folded, watching.

FOUR... FIVE...

Angela stretches, fingertips scraping the canvas, the MVC corner screaming for her to make the tag...

FOUR... FIVE...

Rosa pushes up to her knees, blinking the lariat out of her eyes, and veers hard toward her corner. Angela drags herself the opposite way, arm stretched toward Marie, Susanita, Emily, and Valkyrie like a lifeline.

SIX...

Rosa dives the last couple of steps and slaps Hardcore Sandy's outstretched hand.

Referee: "Tag!"

John Phillips: "Rosa gets there first—tag to Hardcore Sandy!"

Mark Bravo: "And business just picked up, John. Angela Hall is in a bad neighborhood right now."

Sandy swings one heavy leg over the top rope and steps into the ring like she owns it. The Vegas brawler doesn't rush; she stalks. Angela is inches from salvation, hand straining out toward Marie's fingers—

—when Sandy's massive paw clamps around Angela's ankle.

The crowd groans as Sandy yanks her backward with one jerk, dragging Angela away from Team MVC's corner like she's hauling a sandbag.

John Phillips: "No! Hardcore Sandy just ripped Angela away at the last second!"

Mark Bravo: "So close you could taste it, and then Sandy just slammed the door. That's what a six-foot-one roadblock looks like."

Angela claws at the canvas, trying to dig in, but Sandy drags her all the way back to the Empire's side of the ring. Once she's got Angela in no-man's land, she releases the foot... only to stomp down on Angela's injured shoulder with a

sickening thud.

Angela cries out, curling around the arm. Sandy doesn't blink. She stomps again. And again. Each shot is heavy, deliberate, like she's grinding a cigarette out on the mat.

John Phillips: "Hardcore Sandy just punting that already-damaged shoulder—she knows exactly where Rosa and Dahlia left off."

Mark Bravo: "You don't last as long as Sandy has without knowing how to read the damage report. She's not here to be fancy, she's here to break things."

After a trio of stomps, Sandy pauses and slowly turns her head toward the opposite corner. Marie Van Claudio is reaching in as far as she can, eyes blazing, the other members of Team MVC shouting at the referee to do something.

Sandy takes two heavy steps toward them, planting herself halfway between Angela's prone body and the MVC corner. She doesn't say a word—she just stares.

First at Marie.

Then at Emily, who's nearly halfway through the ropes already before the referee shoves her back.

Then up at Valkyrie, who stares back with cold, unblinking fury.

John Phillips: "Hardcore Sandy sending a message without saying a thing—she's daring Team MVC to come in."

Mark Bravo: "And look who she's eyeing the hardest—Marie and Valkyrie. That's not posturing, that's scouting."

Sandy slowly raises her hands, palms out, feigning innocence for the referee... then turns her back on the MVC corner with a dismissive shake of the head, like they're not even worth her time.

She walks back to Angela, who is pushing up to all fours, teeth grit. Sandy grabs a fistful of Angela's hair, jerks her upright, and muscles her into the nearest neutral corner. She buries a shoulder into Angela's midsection once, twice, three times, each shot driving the air out of her lungs and folding her around that damaged arm.

Team MVC pound on the turnbuckle pad, the crowd rallying behind them as Sandy steps back, measuring Angela with a predator's calm.

John Phillips: "Hardcore Sandy in full control, and Angela Hall in a world of trouble here in the early going."

Mark Bravo: "Empire wanted to cut the ring in half and make an example out of someone—looks like Angela drew the short straw tonight."

Hardcore Sandy backs up to the opposite corner, rolling her shoulders, eyes locked on Angela slumped in the buckles. The crowd swells with nervous energy as Sandy pumps one fist, then charges—

—going full-speed for a corner avalanche.

John Phillips: "Sandy looking to crush Angela Hall in that corner!"

At the last possible heartbeat, Angela twists her body sideways and drops, rolling under the bottom rope to the apron. Sandy collides chest-first with the turnbuckles, the ring shaking from the impact.

Mark Bravo: "Nobody home! Hardcore airball!"

Sandy staggers back out of the corner, clutching her ribs. Angela clings to the middle rope with her good arm, using it to pull herself up onto the apron. As Sandy turns, Angela springs up, slingshotting herself over the top rope—

—and drills Sandy in the side of the head with a springboard Gale Force Knee.

The impact sends Sandy dropping to one knee. Angela lands awkwardly, grabbing her bad shoulder, but forces herself

forward with a wild yell. She hits the ropes, rebounds, and cracks Sandy with a second running knee to the temple, sending the Vegas brawler crashing to the mat.

John Phillips: "Angela Hall with two big shots in a row! How much does she have left in that arm?!"

Angela drops to all fours, gasping, the pain from her shoulder written all over her face. The crowd senses the turning point and erupts into a thunderous chant.

Crowd: "LET'S GO ANG-ELA! *clap clap clapclapclap*"

Both women are down. The referee checks them, then starts the count.

ONE... TWO...

Angela rolls toward her corner, dragging herself by her good arm, every inch a war. Sandy slowly pushes up to her hands and knees, shaking her head, crawling toward The Empire's side of the ring.

John Phillips: "We've seen Angela Hall taking a beating like only The Empire can deliver, but this is her moment! She has to make a tag!"

THREE... FOUR...

Sandy lunges and slaps the nearest hand—Rosa Delgado's—before flopping onto her back.

Referee: "Tag!"

Rosa steps through the ropes, but she's a half-second too late to stop the inevitable. Angela throws herself forward, body fully extended—

—and slaps Valkyrie Knox's outstretched hand.

Referee: "Tag!"

The roof nearly comes off the Entertainment & Sports Arena.

John Phillips: "Valkyrie Knox is legal!"

Mark Bravo: "Oh, NOW we're about to find out how much Empire insurance Amy really bought!"

Valkyrie vaults over the top rope like it's nothing, boots hitting the canvas with a heavy thud. Rosa rushes her immediately, going for a rolling elbow—

—and gets scooped straight off her feet.

Valkyrie catches her around the waist, muscles straining as she pops her hips and rattles off a brutal deadlift German suplex. Rosa lands high and hard, folding up on the back of her neck before rolling to the corner in a daze.

John Phillips: "Deadlift German suplex! Rosa Delgado just got launched!"

Selena Vex darts through the ropes without a tag, screaming, and charges. Valkyrie meets her in the center with a short-arm lariat that nearly flips Selena inside out. The official waves his arms, shouting for order, but the crowd is losing its mind.

Mark Bravo: "Short-arm lariat! That's like running face-first into a tree!"

Dahlia Cross steps one leg through the ropes, thinking about joining the ambush, but the moment Valkyrie's eyes land on her, Dahlia thinks better of it and lets the rope snap back into place, backing off with her hands raised and that forced little smile on her face.

Hardcore Sandy pulls herself up on the apron, only to eat a running big boot from Valkyrie that sends her spilling back down to the floor, arms pinwheeling.

John Phillips: "Valkyrie Knox is an avalanche right now! Anyone in Empire colors who steps into that ring is getting buried!"

For the first time, Amy Harrison's smirk falters on the apron. She barks rapid-fire instructions at the remaining members of The Empire, one hand gripping the top rope a little tighter than before.

Across the ring, Team MVC is electric. Emily pounds the turnbuckle pad, Susanita is practically dancing on the apron, and Marie leans in, shouting, her voice cutting through the noise.

Marie Van Claudio: "Keep her in there, Val! Break them down!"

Rosa staggers back to her feet, clutching the back of her head. Valkyrie stalks her, cuts off the ring, and muscles Rosa up into position—

—hoisting her above her head in a full gorilla-press.

Rosa flails in mid-air, eyes wide, as Valkyrie turns slowly in place, displaying her to all four sides of the arena.

Mark Bravo: "Look at the power! Valkyrie's got Rosa up like she weighs nothing!"

With a roar, Valkyrie steps forward and powerslams Rosa down into the canvas with authority, rattling the ring.

John Phillips: "Gorilla-press powerslam! This could be it right here!"

Valkyrie drops for the cover—

ONE!

TWO—

Dahlia Cross slides in and stomps Valkyrie in the back of the head to break the pin. The crowd erupts in a wave of boos.

John Phillips: "Dahlia Cross saving the match for The Empire!"

Mark Bravo: "And saving Rosa's neck, literally and figuratively."

The referee rushes in, yelling at Dahlia to get out. Dahlia raises her hands, backing away slowly, but not before she sneaks one last kick into Valkyrie's ribs on the way past.

On the apron, Amy slams her hand down on the turnbuckle pad, demanding a tag.

Amy Harrison: "Rosa! Over here, now!"

Rosa starts crawling toward her, dazed, arm reaching—

—but Valkyrie grabs Rosa's ankle, halting her progress. The Icelandic powerhouse drags Rosa back into the danger zone and hauls her up, eyes flicking toward Amy.

Valkyrie shoves Rosa backward into The Empire's corner on purpose and points straight at Amy, barking something we can't quite hear, but the message is obvious.

John Phillips: "Valkyrie Knox just dared Amy Harrison to tag in!"

The crowd surges into a chant.

Crowd: "WE WANT AMY! *clap clap clapclapclap*"

Amy looks down at Rosa, then up at Valkyrie, then glances back over her shoulder at the rest of her team. For a heartbeat, it looks like she might actually do it—

—then she steps back off the apron, shaking her head with a smirk, waving Rosa toward Selena instead.

Mark Bravo: "And there it is. Classic Amy Harrison. Big on talk, low on walking into the buzzsaw."

Rosa, still half out of it, slaps Selena's hand. Selena hops onto the top rope, springboarding in—but Valkyrie is already moving, charging the corner and smashing Rosa and the ropes with a massive corner body avalanche that sends Selena crashing awkwardly back onto the apron instead of flying clean.

Selena tumbles to the floor, clutching her midsection as Rosa collapses to her knees again.

John Phillips: "The Empire is completely on the back foot now! Valkyrie Knox has turned Survivor into a demolition project!"

The referee tries to restore order, gesturing for the legal competitors to stay in. Valkyrie stands tall in the center of the ring, chest heaving, eyes locked on The Empire's corner, while Team MVC roars behind her.

The message is clear: the storm has passed, and the war-goddess has entered.

Valkyrie paces in the center of the ring, breathing hard but steady, The Empire scattered around her. Rosa crawls toward the corner, clutching her neck, while Selena and Sandy regroup on the apron. Amy Harrison stays just out of reach, one hand on the top rope, barking orders but never stepping through.

John Phillips: "Right now, Valkyrie Knox has blown this thing wide open for Team MVC!"

Mark Bravo: "If she keeps this up, Amy might have to actually lace up those boots she's standing in."

Rosa uses the ropes to pull herself upright in The Empire's corner. Dahlia Cross reaches over the rope, tapping Rosa on the shoulder.

Referee: "Tag!"

Dahlia slips in cool and calm, rubbing her arm where Angela twisted it earlier. She takes one look at Valkyrie, then at the battered Rosa, and makes a quick choice—she points at Valkyrie and mouths, "Later," then immediately backs into her corner and slaps Selena Vex's chest.

Referee: "Tag!"

The crowd boos as Selena rolls her eyes theatrically but steps through the ropes anyway.

John Phillips: "Interesting. Dahlia Cross tags out the moment the war-goddess is staring her down."

Mark Bravo: "She's smart, John. She knows Valkyrie's a wrecking ball right now. Why take that hit when you've got someone like Selena who enjoys getting hit as long as she can cheat back?"

Selena saunters to center-ring, shaking out her arms, then flicks an invisible speck off Valkyrie's chest with a smirk.

Selena Vex: "You done showing off, sweetheart?"

Valkyrie doesn't answer. She just snarls, then explodes forward with a clubbing forearm that sends Selena staggering back into the ropes. Valkyrie follows with a barrage—short-arm lariat, corner body avalanche, another lariat—each blow thudding through the arena.

John Phillips: "Valkyrie Knox is mauling Selena Vex!"

Valkyrie whips Selena hard across the ring. Selena rebounds—

—and Dahlia, from the apron, reaches out and slaps Selena on the back as she runs past.

Referee: "Tag!"

Selena eats a huge running big boot from Valkyrie and spills out under the bottom rope, but Dahlia is already slipping through the ropes behind the referee's back-and-forth wave, the tag having been made.

Valkyrie raises her fist for the crowd, but as she turns—

Dahlia shoots in low and clips Valkyrie's knee with a brutal chop block.

John Phillips: "Dahlia Cross from behind! Chop block to the knee!"

Mark Bravo: "That's one way to deal with a powerhouse—take out the pillars."

Valkyrie collapses to one knee with a roar of pain. Dahlia pounces, stomping the back of the knee, then twisting the ankle and calf in a nasty, torquing motion. The referee dives in, checking on Valkyrie, shouting at Dahlia to watch the joint.

Team MVC erupts on the apron—Emily halfway into the ring, Marie shouting, Susanita gesturing frantically to the ref. Angela, still clutching her shoulder, leans in over the rope, eyes burning a hole through Dahlia.

Angela Hall: "Tag me in! TAG ME!"

Valkyrie snarls, shoving Dahlia away with both hands, then forces herself upright on a shaky base. Dahlia rushes her, peppering the knee with low kicks, but Valkyrie muscles through and shoves her back into the MVC corner with one massive shove.

Valkyrie glances to Marie. Marie nods toward Susanita, then Emily—both eager—but Angela slaps the turnbuckle pad once, hard, her voice cutting through the noise.

Angela Hall: "She's mine!"

Marie meets Valkyrie's eyes. For a second, there's hesitation—Angela's shoulder is a wreck—but Valkyrie sees the fire and slaps Angela's outstretched hand.

Referee: "Tag!"

John Phillips: "And here we go again! Angela Hall back in this match, and she's got Dahlia Cross dead in her sights!"

Angela vaults over the top rope despite the pain and charges straight at Dahlia. Dahlia swings a quick palm thrust toward the throat—

—Angela ducks under, hits the ropes, and comes back with a blistering running forearm from her good arm that spins Dahlia around.

She doesn't stop. Another forearm. Then a spinning back elbow. Then a snap dropkick that sends Dahlia tumbling into The Empire's corner.

Mark Bravo: "Look at Angela go! This is all that pent-up anger from losing the title and watching Dahlia jump ship!"

Selena reaches in to tag herself, but Dahlia grabs the tag rope with her good hand and yanks it away, refusing the escape. She shoves Selena back, snapping at her, eyes locked on Angela like she wants this fight.

Angela charges the corner—

Dahlia sidesteps, but Angela plants a foot on the middle turnbuckle and springboards backward, catching Dahlia with a flying back elbow that drops her to the mat. The crowd roars as Angela pops up, clutching her shoulder but forcing herself to keep moving.

John Phillips: "Even hurt, Angela Hall is wrestling like she's got everything to prove!"

Angela grabs Dahlia by the hair, hauls her up, and whips her to the ropes. Dahlia rebounds—Angela scoops her into a quick tilt-a-whirl and plants her with a nasty Cyclone DDT, spiking Dahlia head-first into the canvas.

Angela hooks the leg.

ONE!

TWO—

Selena dives in and shoves Angela off at the last instant, breaking the pin. The crowd rains boos as the referee rushes to usher Selena back out.

Mark Bravo: "Selena saving Dahlia's skin! Empire playing the numbers game again!"

Angela staggers up, frustrated, and shouts something at Selena as she's herded out. That split-second distraction is all Dahlia needs.

From her knees, Dahlia reaches forward and jabs Angela's already-damaged shoulder with a pinpoint thumb strike, right into the joint.

Angela screams, dropping to one knee, arm hanging limp.

John Phillips: "Oh, come on! Right into the shoulder again!"

Dahlia slithers up behind Angela, wraps her arms around the injured limb, and yanks her violently down into a modified Fujiwara-style armbar, but with her knee pressing directly into the shoulder socket. Angela thrashes, teeth bared, fighting the hold.

The referee drops down.

Referee: "You wanna give it up, Angela?"

Angela Hall: "NO!"

Dahlia smiles, sickly sweet, and leans back further, twisting the arm at a grotesque angle. Angela's boot scrapes at the mat, searching for leverage, but the pain is screaming through her entire upper body.

John Phillips: "Angela Hall is trapped in the middle of the ring with that armbar, and that shoulder has been under assault since the opening minutes!"

Team MVC is losing their minds on the apron. Emily is halfway through the ropes again before the referee shouts at her. Susanita pounds the top turnbuckle. Marie grips the tag rope so hard her knuckles go white.

Marie Van Claudio: "Angela, don't you tap! Don't you dare!"

Angela claws toward the ropes with her free hand—but Dahlia rolls her body, dragging Angela back to the center, never letting go of the arm. She transitions seamlessly, snaking her legs around Angela's trapped limb and cranking back into the full Violet Vice, hyperextending both the elbow and shoulder.

Angela's face is a mask of agony. She raises her free hand, hovering between air and canvas as the crowd screams.

John Phillips: "She's got her in the Violet Vice! Dahlia Cross has Angela Hall dead center of the ring!"

Mark Bravo: "If Angela doesn't tap, that arm might not make it to Black Horizon, let alone the end of this match!"

Angela slams her fist into the mat—not in surrender, but in frustration, trying to push herself up. Her body betrays her. The arm buckles. The pain spikes again.

For a heartbeat, she and Marie lock eyes—years of grind, of near-misses, of chances stolen and given back.

Then Angela's hand hits the mat three times, rapid and desperate.

Referee: "That's it! That's it! She tapped!"

DING DING DING.

Ring Announcer: "Angela Hall has been eliminated!"

The arena erupts in a mixture of shock and fury. Dahlia releases the hold slowly, almost tenderly, then nudges Angela's arm with her boot, watching her roll away, clutching the limb.

John Phillips: "No! Angela Hall is the first one gone, and it's The Empire drawing first blood!"

Mark Bravo: "You can't blame her, John. Sometimes the body taps before the heart does. That shoulder was hanging by a thread, and Dahlia just cut it."

The referee helps Angela roll under the bottom rope, where officials and a ringside trainer immediately check on her. Team MVC gathers at the floor, Marie and Susanita kneeling beside Angela, Emily pacing like a caged animal, Valkyrie leaning on the ropes, furious and breathing hard.

Inside the ring, Dahlia rises slowly, that venomous smile spreading across her face. She turns to The Empire's corner and gives a little curtsy, as if presenting a gift.

Amy Harrison applauds from the apron, smirk fully restored.

John Phillips: "We're down to five-on-four in favor of The Empire, and the woman who might've had the biggest personal score to settle tonight just got taken out of the equation."

Mark Bravo: "And you know Amy Harrison loves every second of it. The numbers, the advantage, and the fact that Angela Hall's road back to that championship just got a whole lot longer."

As Angela is helped up the ramp, clutching her arm, Marie Van Claudio slides back onto the apron and grabs the tag rope, jaw clenched, eyes locked on Dahlia and Amy both. The war is far from over—but Team MVC is already fighting from behind.

Dahlia lingers in the center of the ring, soaking in the heat from the crowd as Angela is helped up the ramp clutching her arm. The Empire is up five-on-four, and they know it.

John Phillips: "The Empire strikes first, and it's a big one. Angela Hall is out, and Team MVC is suddenly down a soldier."

Mark Bravo: "If you're Amy Harrison, that's exactly how you drew it up. Damage the body, take out the heart, and then pick apart what's left."

Back on the apron, Marie and Emily climb into their corner, faces tight with concern but eyes burning. Valkyrie stands on the second rope, bellowing something at Dahlia in Icelandic that doesn't sound like a compliment.

Between them, Susanita Ybanez steps through the ropes, slapping Valkyrie's shoulder as she passes to claim the legal spot for Team MVC.

Referee: "Susanita's in!"

The crowd perks up as the Paraguayan firebrand bounces on the balls of her feet, rolling her shoulders loose. She points straight at Dahlia with both hands, then taps her own jaw and beckons her forward.

John Phillips: "And here comes Susanita Ybanez! First woman from South America to sign with UTA, and she is not backing down from this five-on-four situation."

Mark Bravo: "She grew up fighting uphill every day of her life, John. Being down a partner is just Tuesday to her."

Dahlia tilts her head, that cruel little smile creeping back. She saunters forward, raising her hands loosely for a lock-up. Susanita meets her in the center and they tie up—

—only for Dahlia to immediately yank Susanita into a tight side headlock, grinding her forearm across the smaller

woman's face.

Susanita stomps a boot, backs them both into the ropes, and shoots Dahlia off. Dahlia rebounds—

Susanita drops flat, Dahlia runs over. On the return, Susanita pops up and sends Dahlia flying with a deep arm drag, rolling through to her knees with a flourish.

Dahlia scrambles up, annoyed, charges again—another arm drag. The third time, she hesitates on the charge, so Susanita changes level, snatches the legs, and topples her into a quick jackknife cradle.

ONE!

TWO— Dahlia kicks out, eyes wide.

John Phillips: "Susanita almost stole one right there!"

Mark Bravo: "You can't wrestle her like she's just another face in the crowd. She's lucha, she's street, and she will turn your overconfidence into a receipt."

Dahlia scrambles to her feet, furious now, and swings a wild palm strike toward Susanita's throat. Susanita ducks under, hits the ropes, and comes back with a flying corkscrew body press that wipes Dahlia out in the middle of the ring.

She rolls off, pops to her feet, and throws her arms wide to the crowd.

John Phillips: "Corkscrew splash from Susanita! She's bringing that hybrid style to Survivor tonight!"

She doesn't waste time. Susanita drags Dahlia up by the hair, shoots her into the corner opposite The Empire, and follows in with a sharp running back elbow. Dahlia slumps; Susanita backs up a step, checks her distance, and unloads a rapid-fire combo of kicks to the midsection, the crowd counting along.

Crowd: "UNO! DOS! TRES! CUATRO! CINCO!"

On the last kick, Dahlia drops to a seat in the corner. Susanita sprints across the ring, hits the opposite buckles, and comes screaming back in with a low running dropkick that nails Dahlia in the jaw.

Mark Bravo: "There's the Lambaré attitude—for every dirty trick, Susanita's got three ways to rearrange your face."

Across the ring, Amy slaps the top rope in frustration, shouting at Dahlia to get out of the corner. Hardcore Sandy reaches out for a tag, but Susanita yanks Dahlia away by the ankle before she can get close.

Susanita spins her through and plants her with a snap DDT in the center of the ring, bouncing Dahlia's head off the canvas. She floats into a quick cover, hooking the inside leg deep.

ONE!

TWO— Selena Vex dives in again, raking Susanita's back to break the pin as the crowd boos loudly.

John Phillips: "Selena Vex with another cheap save for The Empire!"

Mark Bravo: "Empire might be up in numbers, but they're fighting this like they're the ones in trouble, and that tells you a lot about how dangerous Susanita is."

The referee rushes Selena back to the apron, chewing her out. Selena just laughs, blowing a kiss in Susanita's direction as she exits.

Susanita pushes to her feet, rubbing her back, and glares daggers at Selena... but she forces herself to turn her focus back to Dahlia, who is rolling toward the ropes.

Susanita grabs Dahlia by the wrist and yanks her back, then threads that arm through her legs and drops into a tight,

low hammerlock, using all her weight to pin Dahlia's shoulders to the mat while twisting the joint.

John Phillips: "Angela Hall might be gone, but look at Susanita picking up the baton—she's going after the same arm that Angela punished earlier tonight."

Dahlia hisses in pain, pounding the mat with her free hand, teeth bared. She squirms, reaches up, and manages to snag a handful of Susanita's hair, yanking hard.

Susanita yelps but doesn't release the hold. Instead, she shifts her hips, swings around Dahlia's body, and transitions beautifully into a seated Fujiwara-style armbar of her own, cranking back on the limb while planting her boots against Dahlia's ribs.

Mark Bravo: "Turnabout is fair play! Dahlia made Angela tap with a Violet Vice, and now Susanita's out here trying to tear her arm off the same way!"

Ringside, Angela—still halfway up the ramp with medical staff fussing over her—turns back to look at the ring, arm in a makeshift sling of ice and tape. She watches Susanita wrench Dahlia's arm and nods once, lips pressed into a line of approval.

Inside the ropes, Dahlia scrambles for the bottom rope, stretching her fingertips, but Susanita leans back further, forcing her to drag both their bodies across the mat.

Referee: "You wanna give it up, Dahlia?"

Dahlia Cross: "Get off me!"

After a desperate scramble, Dahlia manages to hook a boot over the bottom rope. The referee immediately calls for the break and starts his count.

Referee: "One! Two! Three! Four—"

Susanita releases at four and a half, popping up with her hands raised, heat in her eyes. She backs away, but not before giving Dahlia a light, mocking tap on the cheek with her boot.

On the MVC apron, Emily and Marie clap and shout encouragement in Spanish back at her. Valkyrie slaps the turnbuckle once, nodding in approval.

John Phillips: "Team MVC may be down a member, but Susanita Ybanez just flipped this match right back on its head."

Mark Bravo: "If you're counting MVC out this early, you haven't been paying attention to their resumes. These women have all crawled out of worse holes than five-on-four."

Dahlia rolls to The Empire's corner, clutching her arm, where Amy and Selena both lean in, talking rapidly at her. Hardcore Sandy slaps the top turnbuckle, wanting in again. Amy, though, holds out her hand, eyes never leaving Susanita.

Dahlia hesitates, glancing between Amy and the ring, then makes her choice—she tags in Selena Vex with a sharp slap and slips out under the bottom rope to regroup.

Referee: "Tag!"

Selena steps through the ropes with a wicked grin, shaking out her hair as she stalks toward Susanita, who's already bouncing in place, ready for another sprint.

John Phillips: "Dahlia wants no more of that arm work for the moment, and now it's Susanita Ybanez and Selena Vex squaring up. The numbers say Empire, but the momentum—right now—that's all MVC."

Mark Bravo: "Next exchange could swing this whole match. Susanita's gotta stay two steps ahead, because Selena's

the kind who'll turn a stumble into a theft faster than you can blink."

Selena and Susanita circle, the roar of the Survivor crowd building again as the next chapter of this war begins.

Selena and Susanita circle, the energy in the building buzzing. Selena stretches an arm out lazily like she wants a test of strength. Susanita eyes it, then instead fires a sharp low kick at Selena's thigh.

Selena jerks her leg back, more annoyed than hurt. She steps in again, this time rushing with a collar-and-elbow tie-up. Susanita ducks under, slips behind, and shoves Selena chest-first into the ropes.

On the rebound, Susanita rolls forward under Selena's attempted clothesline, popping up behind her and cracking her between the shoulder blades with a stiff dropkick.

John Phillips: "Susanita Ybanez using that speed and precision—she's not letting Selena get comfortable for even a second!"

Selena stumbles into the ropes, catching herself on the middle cable. She turns, fuming, and charges again. Susanita sidesteps, hooks her, and whips her into the opposite ropes instead.

Selena rebounds—Susanita drops low, then leaps into the air, catching Selena with a high arm drag that sends her skidding toward the Empire's corner. Selena slams her fists into the mat in frustration.

Mark Bravo: "Every time Selena tries to hit the gas, Susanita just opens a new off-ramp under her."

Selena pulls herself up with the ropes, snarling. She feigns stepping through them to bail, causing the referee to move in. As he does, Selena suddenly spins and lunges, raking her nails across Susanita's eyes when the official's line of sight clips the post.

Susanita yelps, clutching her face as the crowd erupts in boos.

John Phillips: "There it is again—Selena Vex with the eye rake behind the referee's back!"

Mark Bravo: "She calls that exploiting the patch notes. If the ref can't see it, it's not a bug, it's a feature."

Selena grabs Susanita by the hair and spikes her down with a hair-pull mat slam that bounces the back of Susanita's head off the canvas. She floats over, pressing a forearm into the face for the cover.

ONE!

TWO— Susanita kicks out, twisting her hips and shoulder off the mat.

Selena pops up and immediately drives a series of stomps into Susanita's ribs, punctuating each one with a sneer down at her opponent.

Selena Vex: "You're out of your depth, sweetheart!"

She hauls Susanita up by the wrist, yanks her into a short-arm clothesline that nearly takes her head off, then drags her toward The Empire's corner by the leg, using her as a message to the MVC side.

Hardcore Sandy slaps the turnbuckle, wanting back in, but Selena waves her off with a smirk and instead wraps Susanita's arms around the middle rope, driving a boot into her midsection and choking her against the cable.

The referee starts the count.

Referee: "One! Two! Three! Four—"

Selena releases at four, hands high, backing away with exaggeration like she's innocent. As the ref moves to check on Susanita, Selena darts back in and lands a cheap slap across Susanita's face.

Susanita's eyes flash. Even winded, even hurting, she snaps a forearm into Selena's jaw out of pure instinct.

John Phillips: "Susanita firing back! She's not gonna be disrespected like that!"

Selena reels, then charges—but Susanita ducks and snaps her down into a small package out of nowhere.

ONE!

TWO— Selena kicks out, exploding free at the last heartbeat.

Both women scramble to their feet. Selena swings a wild right; Susanita blocks and answers with a sharp European uppercut. Another. A third. Selena staggers backward into the MVC half of the ring as the crowd rallies.

Mark Bravo: "Susanita's turning this into a street fight now—those are receipts from Lambaré right there."

Susanita grabs Selena's wrist, whips her toward the MVC corner—then follows in, leaping into a high running knee that crushes Selena against the turnbuckles. Selena slumps, gasping.

On the apron, Emily slaps the top turnbuckle, Susanita glances back—and sees Valkyrie standing there, hand out, eyes locked on the chaos in The Empire's corner.

John Phillips: "And look who's ready to rejoin the fight—Valkyrie Knox wants back in!"

Susanita nods, hooks Selena in a snapmare and launches her out of the corner toward the center of the ring. Selena lands seated, jolted. Susanita hits the ropes, rebounds, and drills a running low dropkick into Selena's spine, flattening her.

She pops up from the impact and turns immediately to her corner, hand raised.

Susanita Ybanez: "¡Vamos!"

Valkyrie slaps Susanita's hand with a thunderous smack.

Referee: "Tag!"

The crowd explodes as Valkyrie steps through the ropes, casting a quick nod to Susanita, who slips back to the apron, winded but fired up.

John Phillips: "Valkyrie Knox is legal again, and Selena Vex could not have picked a worse time to be stuck in the middle of the ring."

Selena pushes herself to all fours, dazed. She looks up just in time to see Valkyrie's shadow fall over her. The Icelandic powerhouse reaches down, grabs Selena by the back of her gear and a handful of hair, and hauls her straight up to her feet like she weighs nothing.

Valkyrie shoves Selena chest-first into the ropes, then yanks her backward into a crushing short-arm lariat that spins her inside out.

Mark Bravo: "Short-arm lariat! Selena just got folded up like a cheap lawn chair!"

Valkyrie doesn't go for the cover. She drags Selena up again, ragdoll-light in her grip, and hooks her for a deadlift German suplex. With a roar, she pops the hips and sends Selena flying, the back of her head and shoulders crashing into the mat near The Empire's corner.

John Phillips: "Deadlift German for good measure! Valkyrie Knox is not just trying to beat Selena Vex—she's trying to send a message to all of The Empire."

On the apron, Amy Harrison barks orders, gesturing frantically for someone—anyone—to be ready to save the match if it comes to that. Dahlia flexes her aching arm, Sandy pounds the turnbuckle, ready to charge back in at the first opening.

Meanwhile, Valkyrie stands tall in the center of the ring, chest heaving, eyes burning as she stares down The Empire's

corner with Selena sprawled at her feet.

John Phillips: "Team MVC might be down a member, but with Valkyrie Knox back in there and Susanita Ybanez firing on all cylinders, the playing field inside those ropes feels a whole lot more even."

Mark Bravo: "As long as Valkyrie's standing, nobody on The Empire side is safe. Let's see if she decides to take Selena off the board next."

Valkyrie stands over Selena, the Empire's schemer barely moving. The crowd is roaring, but behind her, a hand slaps the top turnbuckle pad in a steady rhythm.

Emily Hightower leans over the ropes, eyes blazing, U.S. Women's Championship plates glinting from the timekeeper's table.

Emily Hightower: "Tag me in! C'mon, Val—let me finish this!"

Valkyrie looks back, chest heaving, then nods once. She hauls Selena up by the hair, scoops her, and drops her across her knee with a nasty backbreaker for good measure. As Selena spills to the mat, Valkyrie strides to the corner and slaps Emily's outstretched hand.

Referee: "Tag!"

John Phillips: "And here comes the Junkyard Bitch! Emily Hightower is legal!"

Mark Bravo: "If Selena thought Valkyrie was bad news, wait 'til she gets a taste of West Memphis hospitality."

Emily vaults over the top rope and beelines straight for Selena, who is trying to roll to the ropes to escape. Emily stomps down on Selena's hand, pinning it to the canvas, then bends down and grabs a fistful of hair to yank her upright.

Emily Hightower: "You like cheap shots, huh? Try this on."

She pistons a short, brutal forearm into Selena's jaw, then another, then whips her into the ropes. Selena rebounds on shaky legs—Emily steps in and BLASTS her with the Ode To My Father bull hammer elbow, echoing through the arena.

John Phillips: "Ode To My Father! Emily just shut Selena Vex's lights off!"

Selena crumples to a knee, eyes glassy. Emily doesn't hesitate. She yanks Selena into position, hooks her, and hoists her up into the air before driving her down with Total Loss, planting Selena in the center of the ring.

Mark Bravo: "TOTAL LOSS! Center of the ring! That's junkyard justice right there!"

Emily folds Selena up tight, hooking both legs deep.

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

DING DING DING.

Ring Announcer: "Selena Vex has been eliminated!"

The crowd erupts as Emily rolls off, pounding the mat once with a roar. On the floor, Selena spills under the bottom rope and lies half-conscious, one hand weakly reaching toward The Empire's corner as officials move in.

John Phillips: "We're all tied up again! Emily Hightower just evened this match at four-on-four!"

Mark Bravo: "Angela Hall goes out, Selena Vex goes out, and the Junkyard Bitch just put some teeth marks in The

Empire's numbers advantage."

On the apron, Amy Harrison's smirk disappears for the second time tonight. She slams her palm on the turnbuckle pad, fury flickering across her features. Dahlia clutches her arm, glaring at Emily. Hardcore Sandy rolls her shoulders, itching to get back in.

Rosa Delgado, calm and composed, taps Amy on the shoulder.

Rosa Delgado: "My turn."

Amy eyes her for a beat, then nods and slaps Rosa's hand.

Referee: "Tag!"

Rosa steps between the ropes, the San Antonio technician rolling her neck as she walks toward Emily, who stands dead center across from her, breathing hard but grinning.

John Phillips: "Oh, this is gonna be good. Emily Hightower and Rosa Delgado—two women who hit like freight trains and don't mind leaving bruises to prove it."

Mark Bravo: "No flips, just fists—and maybe a shoulder socket or two."

They close in, face to face. Emily wipes her mouth with the back of her hand and lightly bumps her forehead against Rosa's, daring her. Rosa stares back, unblinking.

Emily Hightower: "You wanted a fight, right? Let's make it ugly."

Rosa Delgado: "That's the only kind that counts."

The first shot comes from Emily—a stiff forearm that cracks Rosa across the jaw. The crowd pops. Rosa doesn't go down. She fires back with a stiff forearm of her own, snapping Emily's head to the side.

John Phillips: "Here we go—Rosa and Emily trading bombs in the middle of the ring!"

Forearm. Forearm. Forearm. Each one louder than the last. Emily snarls, grabbing Rosa by the collar and driving a knee into her midsection. Rosa doubles over for half a beat, then surges back up, smashing Emily with a sudden rolling elbow that rocks her.

Mark Bravo: "Rolling elbow from Rosa! That's her bread and butter!"

Emily stumbles back into the ropes, but rebounds with a wild clothesline. Rosa ducks under, hits the far ropes, and comes back with a shotgun dropkick that nails Emily in the chest and sends her crashing into the buckles.

Rosa charges, but Emily explodes out of the corner with a running tackle, slamming Rosa down and raining down rough, scrapyard fists. The referee dives in, counting, forcing her to switch from closed to open hands.

John Phillips: "Emily turning this into a straight-up brawl, just like she likes it!"

Rosa covers up, then answers by hip bumping Emily off and rolling to her knees. Emily swings a boot at her; Rosa catches the leg, twists, and yanks Emily down into a nasty dragon screw, torquing the knee.

Emily clutches her leg, hissing. Rosa doesn't hesitate—she grabs the same leg and steps through, threatening the Magnolia Lock, but Emily boots her away with her free foot, sending Rosa stumbling back into the ropes.

Mark Bravo: "Rosa already thinking about that Magnolia Lock, but Emily's not about to let herself get planted that easy."

They rise at almost the same time, chests heaving. Emily charges—Rosa shifts sideways and blasts her with a spinning backfist that echoes off Emily's jaw.

Emily staggers, drops to one knee for a heartbeat... then laughs. Actually laughs, blood at the corner of her mouth.

Emily Hightower: "That all you got?"

Rosa's lips twitch into the faintest of smirks.

Rosa Delgado: "Not even close."

Rosa steps in, hooking Emily's arm and trying to cinch a hammerlock to begin her grind. Emily responds with a sharp headbutt to Rosa's cheekbone, then shoves her off and blasts her in the ribs with a stiff body shot, following immediately with a snapping suplex that rattles both women on landing.

Emily rolls through, keeping her arms locked, and deadlifts Rosa up for a second suplex, then a third, a gritty series that has the crowd counting along.

Crowd: "ONE! TWO! THREE!"

John Phillips: "Emily Hightower chaining suplexes together, and Rosa Delgado might finally be in trouble!"

Emily hangs on for a moment, breathing hard, then releases and rolls to a knee, shaking the cobwebs from the backfist. Rosa lies on the mat, cradling her ribs but already trying to push up.

On the MVC apron, Valkyrie slaps the turnbuckle, Susanita is shouting in Spanish, Marie's eyes dart between the ring and The Empire's corner where Amy is barking instructions again, clearly wary of how this slugfest could end.

Mark Bravo: "We're one elimination apiece now, and you get the feeling whoever wins this mini-war between Rosa and Emily is gonna tilt this entire Survivor match on its axis."

Emily drags herself upright and stalks Rosa, who's fighting to her knees. The U.S. Champion snorts, wipes the blood from her lip, and cocks her arm back for another Ode To My Father as Rosa tries to rise—

—and we're left on the brink, the next blow poised to either crack this thing open for Team MVC or swing the door back toward The Empire.

Emily cocks her arm back, Rosa on one knee, swaying. The crowd knows what's coming.

John Phillips: "Emily looking for Ode To My Father again!"

She charges in—Rosa tries to rise, but Emily cracks her with the bull hammer elbow flush on the side of the head. Rosa flips to her back, staring up at the lights, eyes glassy.

Mark Bravo: "She just knocked a week off Rosa's calendar!"

Emily drops to her knees, hooks the far leg.

ONE!

TWO—

Rosa kicks out at the last second, shoulder jerking off the mat. Emily falls to all fours, hands on her hips, disbelief washing over her face.

John Phillips: "Rosa Delgado somehow survives, but Emily Hightower has taken control of this fight!"

Emily grabs Rosa by the hair and hauls her up, peppering her with short, sharp body shots—left, right, left to the ribs—then whips her into the corner. Rosa hits hard, slumping for half a heartbeat.

Emily charges, leaping into a running splash that crushes Rosa in the buckles. She follows with a flurry of shoulder thrusts, driving the air out of her, then hoists Rosa onto the second rope in a seated position.

Mark Bravo: "The Junkyard Bitch is feelin' it now; Rosa is just trying to stay vertical."

Emily climbs up to the second rope, hooking Rosa for a superplex. The crowd rises with them, buzzing.

John Phillips: "If Emily hits this, Rosa could be all done—"

Before she can lift, a blur of motion hits the ring.

Hardcore Sandy storms through the ropes like a freight train, ignoring the legalities. She barrels into Emily's lower back with a monstrous forearm, sending Emily tumbling off the buckles and flat onto the mat.

John Phillips: "Come on! Hardcore Sandy just blindsided Emily Hightower!"

Emily arches in pain, clutching her spine. The referee immediately dives in front of Sandy, shoving at her, yelling.

Referee: "Get out of the ring! You're not legal! Back to your corner!"

Mark Bravo: "Sandy saw enough of her team getting mauled and said, 'Nah, I'm tagging myself in the hard way.'"

Sandy roars in Emily's direction, trying to push past the official. The ref plants himself in front of her, jabbing a finger toward The Empire's corner, threatening disqualification if she doesn't comply.

On the apron, Amy Harrison throws up her hands, shouting at Sandy to get out before she ruins everything. Dahlia is clapping slowly, amused. Sandy finally steps through the ropes, dropping back to the apron with a glare that could cut glass.

John Phillips: "The referee barely keeps a lid on this before it explodes, but the damage to Emily Hightower might already be done."

With the referee's back turned, Rosa Delgado shifts her weight on the top rope, shaking the cobwebs loose. She looks down, sees Emily writhing on the mat, and her expression hardens into pure focus.

She carefully swings a leg over, climbing down from the ropes to the inside, never taking her eyes off Emily's back.

As the official turns back toward the action, Rosa pounces. She drives a brutal knee into the small of Emily's back, folding her up with a cry. Emily reaches instinctively for the ropes, but Rosa hooks her from behind in a tight waistlock and snaps her backward with a hammerlock back suplex, sending Emily high and crashing down on her already-damaged spine and shoulder.

Mark Bravo: "And Rosa goes right to work! Hardcore Sandy handed her an opening and Rosa is treating it like a gift card!"

Emily rolls onto her stomach, clutching her lower back. Rosa doesn't let up. She grabs Emily's left arm, plants a knee between her shoulder blades, and wrenches back with a vicious double arm stretch.

The referee drops down, checking for a submission.

Referee: "Emily, you wanna give it up?"

Emily Hightower: "No—NO!"

Rosa leans back further, bowing Emily's spine at an ugly angle. Emily's boots kick at the canvas, teeth gritted, pain etched across her face.

John Phillips: "Rosa Delgado is dissecting Emily Hightower's back now, and that's after Hardcore Sandy blindsided her!"

On the apron, Marie and Susanita are shouting at the ref, pointing to Sandy, but the official can only deal with what's in front of him. Valkyrie pounds the turnbuckle with a booming fist.

Valkyrie Knox: "Fight out of it, Hightower! Don't break!"

Emily digs her elbows into the mat, inching her way forward despite the hold. Rosa releases the stretch just long enough to spin around and trap Emily's leg, dragging her back toward the center.

She plants Emily face-down, hooks her left leg, and twists into a nasty single-leg crab variation angled across the back and hip.

Mark Bravo: "That's ugly. Rosa's not just trying to win; she's trying to make sure Emily's not walking right for a week."

Emily pushes up on her fists, screaming, sweat dripping off her face. She claws at the mat, trying to get leverage. Rosa sits deeper, expression cool, unhurried, like she's tightening a vise.

Emily throws an arm forward—once, twice—and finally manages to hook the bottom rope with her fingertips.

Referee: "Break! She's on the ropes, break it, Rosa!"

Rosa holds on to the four count, then lets go at the last heartbeat, hands raised. Emily slumps half under the ropes, one arm hanging over the apron, gasping.

John Phillips: "Emily Hightower survives the submission attempt, but her back is a target now, and The Empire knows it."

Rosa grabs Emily by the waist of her gear and drags her back to center, then drops a sharp elbow right between the shoulder blades. Another. Then she rolls Emily onto her back and snaps a quick lateral press, hooking the far leg.

ONE!

TWO— Emily kicks out, jerking a shoulder up, but the effort leaves her clutching her spine again.

Mark Bravo: "That was close, and every kickout is costing Emily more pain than most people's entire matches."

Rosa stays glued, grabbing Emily by the wrist and yanking her into a seated position. She threads Emily's arm around her leg and clamps on a tight chinlock from behind, wrenching back to compress the neck and back even more.

Emily's face twists, but she gets a knee under her, then another, slowly forcing both women up. The crowd claps in rhythm behind her, chanting.

Crowd: "EM-I-LY! EM-I-LY!"

Emily drives an elbow into Rosa's midsection. Rosa holds on. Another elbow. Rosa's grip loosens. A third elbow to the ribs finally breaks the hold, and Emily hits the ropes on instinct.

She rebounds, but her back seizes mid-stride. The hesitation is all Rosa needs—she steps in and nails Emily with a sudden Dragon Screw, whipping her back down to the mat by the leg and spine.

John Phillips: "Dragon screw! Rosa drags her right back down—Emily Hightower cannot get any sustained momentum here with that back shredded!"

As Emily writhes on the mat, clutching her lower spine and knee, Rosa stands over her, breathing measured and steady, the picture of a blue-collar technician doing what she does best—breaking an opponent down piece by piece.

On the apron, Team MVC looks on with a mix of fury and concern, knowing that the Junkyard Bitch is in deep trouble after Sandy's assault and Rosa's surgical follow-up.

Rosa stands over Emily, her breathing steady, eyes cool. She reaches down, grabs a handful of gear and hair, and drags Emily upright again.

John Phillips: "Rosa Delgado has not given Emily Hightower a single second to breathe since Hardcore Sandy's blindside. She's picked a target and she's cutting the ring in half."

Rosa shoves Emily chest-first into The Empire's corner and follows in with a sharp back elbow between the shoulder

blades. Emily jolts, sagging against the buckles. Amy Harrison pats Rosa on the shoulder, asking for the tag, but Rosa shakes her off, that stubborn San Antonio grit shining through.

Rosa Delgado: "I've got this."

She hooks Emily's arms around the top rope, spreading them wide, and drives a stiff chop into Emily's chest that echoes through the arena.

Crowd: "WOO!"

Another chop. Another echo. Emily's chest is already turning red, each shot folding her a little more.

Mark Bravo: "Those aren't your fancy, pose-for-the-hard-cam chops. That's years of sparring and long shifts behind every shot."

Rosa snaps a short European uppercut that snaps Emily's head back, then snatches her by the wrist and whips her hard across the ring. Emily hits the opposite buckles with a thud, stumbling out on rubber legs.

Rosa charges and connects flush with a running rolling elbow to the jaw, dropping Emily to her knees before she collapses flat to the mat.

John Phillips: "Rolling elbow again! Rosas's starting to string those combinations together!"

Rosa drops to a lateral press, hooking the far leg deep.

ONE!

TWO—

Emily jerks a shoulder up, face twisted in pain, grabbing her lower back immediately.

Mark Bravo: "Every kickout is another mile on that odometer. Emily Hightower is running on fumes and spite."

Rosa doesn't argue the count. She slides smoothly into position, grabs Emily's left arm again, and threads it around her legs, sitting back into a tight seated arm-and-neck crank that forces Emily into an uncomfortable C-shape, back screaming.

The referee drops beside them.

Referee: "You wanna give it up, Emily?"

Emily Hightower: "No! Get off me!"

Rosa cranks back harder, eyes down, not wasting words. Emily's boots drum the mat, searching for traction. She tries to twist, but Rosa adjusts, using her own body as an anchor to keep Emily stuck in the middle of the ring.

John Phillips: "Rosa Delgado is like a vice. Once she gets a limb, she doesn't just let go—she starts taking options away."

Emily forces a knee under herself, then another, grimacing. She powers up inch by inch, Rosa still hanging on her like extra weight. Emily fires a desperate back elbow into Rosa's ribs. Then another. The third finally loosens the grip enough for Emily to roll forward, sending Rosa tumbling over her shoulder.

Both women lie on their backs for a moment, staring at the lights.

Mark Bravo: "That cost Emily a whole lot of pain, but at least she's not stuck in Rosa's grinder right now."

Rosa is first to move, pushing up to one knee, then to her feet. Emily rolls to her side, reaching instinctively toward her corner—but she's still a long way away.

Rosa stomps down on her lower back again, cutting that thought off. Emily cries out, clutching her spine. Rosa grabs

her by the ankle and drags her back toward The Empire's corner, then tags in Hardcore Sandy with a sharp slap.

Referee: "Tag!"

The crowd rumbles as Sandy steps through the ropes, that Las Vegas scowl etched deep.

John Phillips: "And now here comes Hardcore Sandy with Emily Hightower already picked apart."

Sandy doesn't play around. She drops one massive elbow into the small of Emily's back. Then another. Then a third, each one heavier than the last. Emily spasms with every impact, fingers clawing at the canvas.

Mark Bravo: "That's like dropping cinder blocks on a cracked foundation. Something's gonna give."

Sandy hauls Emily up in a bearhug, arms wrapped low around the ribs and spine, squeezing the life out of her. Emily's feet dangle for a moment before she kicks, trying to wriggle free.

Referee: "You wanna quit, Emily?"

Emily Hightower: "N-no!"

Sandy shakes her like a ragdoll and then runs her spine-first into the nearest turnbuckle, sandwiching her between brick-wall body and unforgiving steel. Emily slumps forward onto Sandy's shoulder; Sandy calmly turns and hits another corner with the same punishing impact.

John Phillips: "Sandy's using Emily like a battering ram—turnbuckle to turnbuckle, all of it into that lower back!"

Finally, Sandy lets her drop, Emily collapsing to her knees and then face-first to the mat. Sandy plants a boot between her shoulder blades and grinds down, pushing Emily's chest into the canvas.

Team MVC is nearly coming unglued on the apron. Susanita has both hands out, yelling encouragement in a torrent of Spanish. Marie is pacing, one hand in her hair, the other slapping the tag rope. Valkyrie's jaw is clenched tight, knuckles white on the top rope.

Valkyrie Knox: "Get to us, Hightower! Crawl!"

Sandy releases the boot and bends down, dragging Emily up by the hair yet again. She hooks her under the arms from behind and launches her with a massive release German suplex. Emily flips and lands hard on her stomach and chest, bouncing once before going limp.

Mark Bravo: "Good lord! Emily Hightower might be held together with duct tape after this."

Sandy rolls her over and casually drapes a forearm across her face for the cover.

ONE!

TWO—

Emily jerks a shoulder up again, almost on reflex, roaring through gritted teeth. The crowd erupts in surprised cheers.

John Phillips: "She kicks out again! I don't know how smart it is, but it sure as hell is tough!"

Sandy glares at the referee for half a second, then shrugs it off. She grabs Emily by the jaw and snarls something inaudible, then shoves her back to the mat and storms toward the MVC corner, jawing at them.

Hardcore Sandy: "This your champion? This your big shot?"

Marie leans over the ropes, shouting back. Susanita climbs halfway into the ring before the referee intercepts her.

Referee: "Back on the apron! Let's go!"

The distraction gives Emily the smallest window. She rolls to her side, forcing herself up onto one knee, then both, one

hand glued to her lower back.

Sandy turns around and charges, looking for another freight-train strike. At the last second, Emily drops, yanking the top rope down as she falls. Sandy's own momentum carries her up and over, crashing to the floor outside.

Mark Bravo: "Big woman overboard! Emily just gave herself a tiny crack of daylight!"

Emily slumps against the bottom rope, breath ragged. The referee starts the count on Sandy outside.

ONE... TWO...

On the floor, Sandy pushes herself up, shaking off the fall. Amy yells at her to get back in. Dahlia paces, rubbing her arm.

Inside, Emily flips over and starts crawling in the opposite direction—toward her corner. Every inch looks like hell. Her hand presses to the small of her back, but she doesn't stop.

John Phillips: "Come on, kid—this is your chance. You've gotta make that tag."

Valkyrie reaches out, fingers spread, shouting. Marie leans in as far as she can, eyes wide. But it's Susanita at the front of the line, arm stretched the farthest, tag rope taut in her other hand.

Susanita Ybanez: "¡Vamos, Emily! ¡Aquí, aquí!"

THREE... FOUR...

Sandy slides back into the ring under the bottom rope, breaking the count. She sees Emily halfway across and bolts after her—

—but Emily lunges, everything she has left in that battered frame going into one desperate dive.

Her hand slaps Susanita's.

Referee: "Tag!"

The arena blows up.

John Phillips: "Susanita Ybanez is legal!"

Susanita rockets over the top rope, using the springboard of the cable to launch herself. Sandy barely gets upright before Susanita crashes into her with a flying forearm, staggering the bigger woman.

Emily rolls under the bottom rope to the floor, collapsing near the barricade where officials and the timekeeper's crew check on her immediately, ice packs and concern at the ready.

Mark Bravo: "Emily Hightower may be done for the night whether she's eliminated or not, but she did the one thing her team needed—she survived long enough to get Susanita Ybanez back in this fight."

In the ring, Susanita pops to her feet, face blazing with righteous fury, eyes locked on Sandy as she lines up the next shot, ready to turn Empire's theft into a street-bred receipt.

Sandy staggers from the flying forearm, but Susanita is already in motion again. She hits the ropes, rebounds, and smashes her with a running dropkick to the knee that buckles the big woman down to one side.

John Phillips: "Susanita Ybanez coming in like a lightning bolt! She's not giving Hardcore Sandy a second to plant her feet!"

Sandy drops to one knee. Susanita sprints to the far ropes, rebounds, and nails a low-angle running knee strike to the side of Sandy's head, snapping her upright and then sideways to the mat.

Mark Bravo: "That'll make the lights flicker! Sandy just saw three of her and tried to punch the middle one!"

Riding the surge, Susanita pops to her feet and throws both arms wide to the crowd, yelling.

Susanita Ybanez: "¡VAMOS!"

The arena responds, the volume spiking. Susanita doesn't waste it. She drags Sandy up by the wrist and whips her into the corner—Team MVC's corner.

Sandy hits the buckles hard. Valkyrie and Marie both lean in, shouting, but Susanita's already in motion. She charges and hits a stinging running forearm to the jaw, then hops up to the second rope and rains down rapid-fire punches to Sandy's face.

Crowd: "ONE! TWO! THREE! FOUR! FIVE! SIX! SEVEN! EIGHT! NINE—"

Sandy shoves her off before ten, but Susanita lands on her feet. She pivots, leaps, and snaps Sandy's head down with a quick snap DDT out of the corner, driving her face-first into the canvas.

John Phillips: "Snap DDT! Susanita might have the monster on her back!"

She scrambles into a lateral press, hooking the far leg.

ONE!

TWO—

Sandy launches her off with a powerful kickout, sending Susanita rolling toward the ropes.

Mark Bravo: "That's the problem with big, mean legends—you can hit 'em clean, but you gotta hit 'em deep or they're getting up mad."

Susanita pulls herself up with the ropes, chest heaving. Sandy pushes to all fours, shaking her head, then snarls and shoves to her feet like something hit by a car and decided to hit back.

Susanita charges again. She ducks a wild lariat, hits the ropes, and rebounds—only for Sandy to catch her on the return with a massive sidewalk slam, using Susanita's own speed against her and smashing her into the mat.

John Phillips: "Sidewalk slam! Hardcore Sandy just planted Susanita like a fence post!"

Susanita arches in pain, clutching her lower back. Sandy stays down for a second, then rolls over and climbs on top, raining down clubbing forearms across the chest and shoulders. The referee dives in and starts counting.

Referee: "One! Two! Three! Four!"

Sandy breaks at four, hands raised for half a beat—then drops a knee across Susanita's ribs for good measure.

Team MVC yells at the ref; he can only warn her again. Sandy drags Susanita up, whips her into The Empire's corner, and charges in with a running clothesline that nearly breaks Susanita in half against the buckles.

As Susanita slumps, Rosa sneaks in a cheap shot through the ropes, rattling her jaw with a short hook before stepping back onto the apron as if nothing happened.

John Phillips: "There's that numbers game again—Rosa Delgado getting her shots in while the referee's tied up!"

Susanita tries to fight out, swinging a weak forearm that glances off Sandy's side. Sandy grabs her wrist, twisting the arm behind her back in a hammerlock while pinning her chest-first to the buckles. She leans in, forearm grinding the back of Susanita's head into the pad.

Hardcore Sandy: "You wanted to run hot? Let's see how you do on empty, kid."

Sandy yanks Susanita out of the corner, still in the hammerlock, then drives her down with a nasty hammerlock slam, all Susanita's weight landing on the trapped shoulder and arm.

Susanita screams, clutching at the limb as she rolls toward the center of the ring.

Mark Bravo: "That'll wreck your rotator, your elbow, and that last bit of hope you had in the tank."

Sandy doesn't go for the pin yet. She drags Susanita up one more time, hooks her head under one arm and lifts, pausing in a vertical suplex position to let the blood rush and the crowd see.

Then she drops straight down with a thunderous brainbuster, spiking Susanita high on the back of her head and neck.

John Phillips: "Oh my God! Brainbuster from Hardcore Sandy!"

Susanita crumples, body going slack. The crowd groans in unison.

Sandy rolls over, plants a forearm across Susanita's face, and hooks the near leg.

ONE!

TWO!

THREE.

DING DING DING.

Ring Announcer: "Susanita Ybanez has been eliminated!"

The reaction is a mix of heartbreak and fury. Sandy pushes off of Susanita, breathing heavy, eyes wild. On the apron, Valkyrie and Marie both surge forward, but the referee intercepts them, forcing them to stay put.

John Phillips: "That's a huge blow to Team MVC—Susanita Ybanez is out after a vicious combination from Hardcore Sandy and a little 'help' from The Empire's corner."

Mark Bravo: "Emily's broken in half on the floor, Susanita just got dumped on her head, and now we're looking at a four-on-three advantage back in The Empire's favor. This is exactly the kind of grind Amy Harrison wanted."

Officials slide into the ring to help Susanita roll under the ropes. She holds the back of her neck and shoulder, eyes squeezed shut, as they guide her toward the ramp. On the floor nearby, Emily is still being checked over, the U.S. Women's Title resting beside her like a reminder of what she's fighting for.

In the ring, Sandy gets to her feet, raising her arms with no frills, just a satisfied sneer. She turns to MVC's corner and gestures across her throat, mouthing something that doesn't need microphones to be understood.

John Phillips: "We're down to Marie Van Claudio, Valkyrie Knox, and a battered Emily Hightower against the full remaining force of The Empire—Amy Harrison, Rosa Delgado, Dahlia Cross, and Hardcore Sandy."

Mark Bravo: "If Team MVC's gonna survive this Survivor match, they're gonna have to do it the hard way. But those three? Hard ways are kind of their specialty."

Hardcore Sandy stands tall in the center of the ring, chest heaving, the echoes of Susanita's elimination still hanging in the air. Across the way, the remaining members of Team MVC regroup on the apron—Valkyrie Knox burning with rage, Emily Hightower clutching her back and shoulder, and between them...

Marie Van Claudio steps through the ropes.

John Phillips: "And here comes the First Lady of the UTA herself—Marie Van Claudio is finally entering this Survivor match."

Mark Bravo: "Business just picked up in the nation's capital, John. These people know what Marie means to this company."

The crowd rises as Marie walks slowly toward the center, eyes locked on Sandy. There's no fear in her stare, just a

heavy, complicated history. Sandy steps out from The Empire's corner, her own gaze guarded, jaw set.

For a long moment, they just stand there. Hall of Famer and the woman who put her there. No moves. No trash talk. Just weight.

John Phillips: "You can feel that from here. It was Marie Van Claudio who inducted Hardcore Sandy into the WrestleUTA Hall of Fame... and now they stand on opposite sides of this war."

Mark Bravo: "Respect doesn't mean mercy, though. Not on Survivor night."

From The Empire's apron, Amy Harrison leans over the top rope, shouting.

Amy Harrison: "What are you waiting for, Sandy? Finish her! Put her down!"

Sandy's eyes flick to Amy for half a second, then back to Marie. Her fists clench, but she doesn't move. The crowd senses the tension and buzzes louder.

Marie steps in close, almost chest-to-chest with Sandy. She looks up slightly—Sandy has the height—but there's no backstep to her posture.

Marie Van Claudio: "Is this what you signed up for, Sandy? Being Amy's attack dog?"

Sandy's jaw works, but she doesn't answer. Amy slaps the turnbuckle pad in fury.

Amy Harrison: "SANDY! Stop staring and BREAK her!"

Marie takes a breath. Then, without warning, she hauls off and slaps Sandy across the face.

The sound echoes. The arena gasps.

John Phillips: "Whoa! Marie Van Claudio just slapped Hardcore Sandy across the face!"

Sandy doesn't swing. She doesn't even flinch backward. Her head turns with the impact, then comes back slowly, eyes narrowing, breathing a little heavier.

Marie stares up at her, lips tight, eyes wet but burning.

Marie Van Claudio: "If you're gonna do it... do it as you. Not as her puppet."

She slaps her again—harder this time. Sandy's head snaps to the side a second time. The crowd roars, half in shock, half in dread.

Mark Bravo: "Marie might be playing with nitroglycerin right now."

Sandy slowly brings a hand to her cheek, feeling the sting. Her eyes close for a heartbeat.

When they open, whatever war was going on behind them is over.

Hardcore Sandy explodes forward with a devastating clothesline, absolutely steamrolling Marie and flipping her inside out. Marie lands hard on the back of her head and shoulders, folding up before sprawling flat.

John Phillips: "GOOD LORD! Hardcore Sandy just took Marie Van Claudio's head off!"

Mark Bravo: "That's years of frustration, loyalty, and maybe a little guilt all thrown into one lariat!"

Sandy stands over Marie, chest heaving, staring down at the woman on the mat. For a second, she doesn't move—just looks, breathing like a dragon trying not to burn the village down.

From the apron, Amy sees enough.

Amy Harrison: "Tag out. Now. We're not wasting you on nostalgia."

Sandy's eyes flick to Amy again, flaring, but this time she doesn't argue. She reaches down, grabs Marie by the wrist,

and drags her limp body a few feet toward The Empire's corner.

Then she lets go, turns, and strides to the ropes, slapping Dahlia Cross's outstretched hand without a word.

Referee: "Tag!"

Dahlia slips through the ropes like a shark smelling blood, massaging her arm but smirking as she stalks toward Marie, who's barely moving.

John Phillips: "Hardcore Sandy answers Amy's call but chooses to step out instead of finishing Marie herself. And now the viper of The Empire, Dahlia Cross, is tagged in with the First Lady of the UTA laid out at her feet."

Mark Bravo: "Whatever's going on in Sandy's head, one thing's clear—Dahlia Cross doesn't have that same conflict. She'll happily take Marie apart piece by piece."

Dahlia crouches beside Marie, that wicked smile spreading as she hooks a hand under Marie's chin, turning her face toward Amy like a trophy, the next cruel chapter of this Survivor war about to begin.

Dahlia Cross kneels beside Marie, fingers curled under her chin, tilting the First Lady's face toward the hard cam like she's presenting a broken doll.

Dahlia Cross: "Look at her, Amy. Is this the woman who was supposed to save your division?"

She releases Marie's chin and immediately drives a sharp palm strike into her jaw, snapping her head sideways. Marie drops back to the mat, clutching her face.

John Phillips: "Dahlia Cross wasting no time, and there is zero hesitation in her. Whatever was going through Hardcore Sandy's head, Dahlia doesn't share it."

Dahlia grabs Marie by the wrist and smoothly threads it around her leg, rolling her to her stomach and planting a knee between Marie's shoulder blades. She leans back, wrenching on the arm with surgical cruelty.

Mark Bravo: "There's that joint manipulation. Dahlia doesn't just throw hands, she rewrites how your joints work."

Marie grimaces, reaching for the ropes, but Dahlia keeps her centered, twisting the wrist and elbow at ugly angles. The referee drops down beside them.

Referee: "You wanna give it up, Marie?"

Marie Van Claudio: "No!"

Dahlia releases just long enough to stomp the back of Marie's shoulder, then transitions smoothly into a seated armbar variation, trapping Marie's wrist under her own armpit and cranking back on the elbow.

Marie's boots drum the canvas, teeth clenched, eyes squeezed shut in pain.

John Phillips: "The Empire already took Angela Hall and Susanita Ybanez out of this match, and now Dahlia is trying to take Marie's arm home as a souvenir."

On the MVC apron, Valkyrie leans halfway through the ropes, shouting in Icelandic. Emily clings to the tag rope with one arm, her other still wrapped around her back, but she's yelling all the same, trying to will Marie through the pain.

Dahlia finally releases the armbar, only to drag Marie up by that same aching arm. She whips her into the Empire's corner; Marie collides chest-first with the buckles and stumbles back out.

Dahlia hits the ropes and darts in behind her, sweeping Marie's legs out with a low leg sweep that sends her crashing face-first to the mat.

Mark Bravo: "Classic Dahlia—take the base, then start plucking the limbs."

Marie tries to push up. Dahlia steps in front of her and drives a palm thrust straight into her throat, sending her sprawling back, coughing and clutching at her neck.

John Phillips: "Palm thrust to the throat—Dahlia using every nasty trick in the book tonight."

Dahlia stalks her prey, backing Marie into a corner with a series of sharp kicks to the ribs and midsection. Once Marie is trapped against the buckles, Dahlia plants a boot across her throat and leans all her weight in, choking her ruthlessly.

Referee: "One! Two! Three! Four—"

Dahlia drops the choke at four, hands up like she's innocent. Marie sinks to a seated position in the corner, gasping for air.

Dahlia takes two casual steps back, then sprints in and drives a knee into Marie's jaw, the corner knee choke connecting flush as she grinds her shin against Marie's face against the middle turnbuckle.

Mark Bravo: "Dahlia Cross is enjoying this way too much."

The referee pries her off again, issuing another stern warning. Dahlia just smiles sweetly at him, then turns back to Marie, reaching down to grab a handful of hair.

She yanks Marie to her feet and snaps her down with a tight single-leg dropkick that catches MVC right in the side of the head. Marie crashes to the mat, rolling to her back, eyes glassy.

John Phillips: "It has been all Dahlia Cross since she tagged in. Marie Van Claudio hasn't been able to get out of the gate."

Dahlia drops into a lazy cover, pressing a forearm across Marie's face, smearing it in while hooking the near leg.

ONE!

TWO—

Marie kicks out, shoulder jerking up. Dahlia's expression doesn't change much—if anything, the refusal amuses her.

Dahlia Cross: "Stubborn. Cute."

She grabs Marie's wrist again and pulls her up, only to yank her straight into the top rope throat-first with a hotshot. Marie snaps back, clutching at her neck, and staggers right into Dahlia's waiting arms.

Dahlia hooks her in a front facelock, then twists and drops, spiking Marie with a quick, snapping neckbreaker. Marie sprawls, rolling onto her side, gasping.

Mark Bravo: "Neck, shoulder, throat—Dahlia's building a blueprint for how to dismantle a legend in real time."

On your screen, The Empire looks pleased. Amy leans on the top rope, smirking. Rosa nods once, approving of the methodical breakdown. Sandy, arms folded, just watches, unreadable.

Dahlia rises and saunters toward the MVC corner, turning her back briefly on Marie as she leans over the ropes and waves mockingly at Valkyrie and Emily.

Dahlia Cross: "You two might wanna go ahead and throw in the towel. This one's about done."

Valkyrie snarls, reaching for her, but the referee blocks her from entering. Emily, still hurting, yells over the official's shoulder.

Emily Hightower: "Turn around and say it to her face!"

Dahlia chuckles and turns back toward the center of the ring—

—just as Marie, running on pure instinct and history, surges up from her knees and slaps her across the face.

Crowd: "OOOOOOH!"

John Phillips: "Marie Van Claudio still has some fight left!"

Dahlia's head whips to the side. She blinks, clearly not expecting that. She turns back to Marie, expression sharpening—

—and Marie slaps her again, even harder.

Dahlia stumbles back a half-step, hand going to her jaw. The crowd roars to life, sensing the shift.

Marie forces herself up to her feet, favoring her neck and shoulder, but standing tall. Dahlia rushes in with a wild palm strike, anger finally cracking the calm—but Marie ducks under and, on instinct, snaps Dahlia down with a quick schoolboy roll-up.

ONE!

TWO— Dahlia kicks out hard, sending Marie sprawling, but the veteran lands on her knees instead of flat.

Dahlia pops up and swings a clothesline. Marie ducks again, hits the ropes, and comes back with a clothesline of her own that drops Dahlia to the mat.

Mark Bravo: "There it is! Marie's starting to fire back!"

Dahlia scrambles up—Marie hits a second clothesline. Dahlia goes down again. She gets up slower this time, and Marie snatches her with a snap Russian legsweep, planting her to the canvas.

The crowd is back in full voice now as Marie rolls to a knee, one hand on her neck, the other balled into a fist.

John Phillips: "Listen to this crowd! The First Lady of the UTA digging deep, trying to turn this match around for Team MVC!"

Dahlia crawls to the corner on instinct, trying to put some distance between them. Marie stalks after her, stomping her in the midsection once, twice, then grabbing the top rope with one hand while driving a series of short, sharp kicks into Dahlia's side.

Dahlia slumps, and Marie pulls her out by the wrist, whipping her into the opposite ropes. Dahlia rebounds—Marie steps in and snaps her over with a snap DDT, spiking her head into the canvas.

Both women stay down for a moment, the momentum finally shifting but the damage to Marie clearly taking a toll.

Mark Bravo: "Marie Van Claudio just bought herself a lifeline, but she's spent a lot of gas getting here."

Marie rolls onto her stomach and starts crawling, one hand pressed to her neck, the other reaching instinctively toward her corner where Valkyrie has her arm outstretched and Emily, hurting but defiant, slaps the turnbuckle to rally the crowd.

Dahlia, dazed, pushes to her hands and knees, blinking away the cobwebs, trying to orient herself before Marie can make that crucial tag.

John Phillips: "Dahlia Cross made one mistake—she got cocky—and now Marie Van Claudio has a chance to get Team MVC back into this thing."

Marie crawls, every inch a battle, fingers outstretched. Dahlia shakes the cobwebs loose behind her, pushing to her knees with a snarl.

John Phillips: "This is the moment—Marie has to make that tag!"

Dahlia lunges forward, reaching toward The Empire's corner where Rosa has her hand out. At the same time, Marie dives, stretching with everything she has left.

Her hand slaps Valkyrie's.

Referee: "Tag!"

The arena erupts as Valkyrie Knox vaults over the top rope and hits the mat with purpose.

Mark Bravo: "And the Valkyrie has landed!"

Dahlia's fingertips are inches from Rosa's when Valkyrie closes the distance like a freight train. She grabs Dahlia around the waist from behind and rips her away from her corner, deadlifting her off her feet.

Dahlia flails, trying to grab at Rosa's hand, but it's too late. Valkyrie pops her hips and launches Dahlia backward with a crushing German suplex, dropping her high on the back of her neck and shoulders.

John Phillips: "Deadlift German! Valkyrie Knox just ripped Dahlia Cross out of the air!"

Dahlia skids across the canvas and lies sprawled, eyes wide, gasping. Rosa and Amy reach through the ropes, shouting for her to move, to roll, to do something.

Valkyrie pushes to her feet in one fluid motion, that stoic, storm-dark expression locked in place. She stalks Dahlia, grabs her by the hair, and hauls her up just enough to muscle her into the corner.

She buries a shoulder into Dahlia's midsection—once, twice, three times—each impact driving air and resistance out of the English technician.

Mark Bravo: "Dahlia spent five minutes twisting people into knots. Valkyrie's answer is 'what if I just run you through a wall instead?'"

Valkyrie straightens up and, with a single heave, ragdolls Dahlia out of the corner, sending her tumbling face-first to the mat. Dahlia tries to scramble up on instinct.

Valkyrie hits the ropes, rebounds, and crushes her with a running big boot that nearly decapitates her. Dahlia's body flips and crumples into a heap.

John Phillips: "Big boot! Dahlia Cross just got uprooted!"

Valkyrie doesn't go for the pin. She stands over Dahlia for a second, chest rising and falling, then throws her head back and raises her arms in a fierce, war-horn pose as the crowd roars.

Mark Bravo: "That's not showboating—that's a warning shot to the rest of The Empire."

She turns back to Dahlia, grabs her by the gear, and lifts her straight up into a gorilla press. Dahlia's legs kick uselessly in the air as Valkyrie walks a slow, deliberate circle, showing off her power to every side of the arena.

John Phillips: "Look at the power of Valkyrie Knox! She's got Dahlia Cross hoisted like she's nothing!"

With a grunt, Valkyrie slams Dahlia down into a crushing gorilla-press powerslam, the ring shuddering on impact.

Dahlia doesn't even bounce. She just collapses, limp.

Valkyrie gets to one knee beside her, looking down at the wreckage, then looks up—eyes locked on The Empire's corner. Amy barks at Rosa and Sandy to be ready to move, but neither gets the chance.

Valkyrie grabs Dahlia by the hair one more time, dragging her to the center of the ring. She tucks Dahlia's head between her thighs, hooks both arms, and with a roar, hoists her high into an elevated position.

John Phillips: "Uh oh—this might be it! Valkyrie's looking for the Ragnarok Bomb!"

Valkyrie steps forward, sits out, and DRIVES Dahlia down with the Ragnarok Bomb, spiking her into the canvas with a high-angle sit-out powerbomb that folds Dahlia in half.

Mark Bravo: "RAGNAROK BOMB! That's all she wrote!"

Valkyrie keeps her shoulders pinned, folding Dahlia up tight, calves over Dahlia's arms as she leans all her weight forward.

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

DING DING DING.

Ring Announcer: "Dahlia Cross has been eliminated!"

The building erupts as Valkyrie releases the pin and shoves Dahlia's limp body aside with a flick of her boot. Rosa immediately tries to climb in, but the referee bars her path, forcing her back to the apron.

John Phillips: "What a statement by Valkyrie Knox—Dahlia Cross just got absolutely flattened! And just like that, we're even again at three-on-three!"

Mark Bravo: "Angela Hall and Susanita are out for Team MVC, Selena and Dahlia are gone for The Empire, and now you've got Marie, Emily, and Valkyrie standing across from Amy Harrison, Hardcore Sandy, and Rosa Delgado. Tell me that doesn't feel like a powder keg ready to blow."

Valkyrie rises to her feet, staring down The Empire's corner, chest heaving, lips curled in a faint, dangerous snarl as Amy and her crew regroup and rethink the math.

Dahlia's body is rolled to the floor by officials while The Empire regroups in their corner. Amy barks orders, but Rosa Delgado has already stepped forward, hand out, eyes locked on Valkyrie.

Amy Harrison: "Fine. Go fix it."

Amy slaps Rosa's hand.

Referee: "Tag!"

Rosa steps through the ropes, rolling her neck, that composed stubbornness written all over her face. Across the ring, Valkyrie Knox squares her shoulders, ready to meet her.

John Phillips: "And here we go again—Rosa Delgado and Valkyrie Knox, two very different brands of power about to collide."

They circle, the crowd buzzing. Rosa feints low for the leg; Valkyrie doesn't bite, keeping her base wide. Rosa steps in for a collar-and-elbow—Valkyrie meets her and immediately starts muscling her backward.

Rosa digs her heels in, twisting, trying to slip to a side headlock, but Valkyrie shoves her off and sends her into the ropes. Rosa rebounds and goes low, aiming for a dragon screw—

—but Valkyrie yanks her leg free at the last second and clubs Rosa across the back with a forearm that drops her to one knee.

Mark Bravo: "Rosa's trying to work that leverage game, but Valkyrie's just too strong right now."

Valkyrie grabs Rosa around the waist from behind and hoists her clean off the mat, hitting a tight back suplex that slams Rosa down. Rosa arches her back, wincing, but rolls quickly to a seated position.

Valkyrie hits the ropes and comes back with a brutal running big boot right to Rosa's face, sending her crashing to the canvas.

John Phillips: "Big boot again! Valkyrie just about took Rosa's head off!"

Valkyrie drops into a quick cover.

ONE!

TWO—

Rosa kicks out, shoving Valkyrie off with more grit than power. Valkyrie rises, unbothered. She drags Rosa up by the arm and whips her into the corner. Rosa hits hard, but as Valkyrie charges in for a corner avalanche, Rosa dives out of the way.

Valkyrie eats turnbuckle chest-first, staggering backward. Rosa seizes the opening, slipping behind and driving a stiff kick into the back of Valkyrie's left knee, finally forcing her down to one leg.

Mark Bravo: "That's the opening Rosa needed—attack the base, soften the tree."

Rosa follows up with a sharp Dragon Screw, twisting Valkyrie to the mat and torquing the leg. Valkyrie snarls, clutching at her knee, but pushes to sitting almost immediately.

Rosa lunges in for the leg again—Valkyrie fires a short, vicious elbow right into her ribs. Rosa grunts, grip loosening. A second elbow drives her back to her feet, winded.

John Phillips: "Rosa got her shot in, but Valkyrie Knox is not staying grounded for long."

Valkyrie powers up, shaking out the leg. Rosa swings a quick spinning backfist—Valkyrie ducks under it and answers with a thunderous short-arm lariat that sends Rosa flipping to the canvas.

The crowd roars as Valkyrie steps over Rosa, breathing hard. On the apron, a voice cuts through the noise.

Emily Hightower: "Tag me!"

Emily is back on the apron, one arm wrapped around the tag rope, the other still clutching her lower back—but her eyes are on fire.

Mark Bravo: "Oh, you've gotta be kidding me. Emily Hightower wants back in there after what Sandy and Rosa did to her spine?"

Valkyrie glances at Emily, then down at Rosa, who's stirring. She hesitates for half a heartbeat—then nods once and hauls Rosa toward the MVC corner by the wrist.

She reaches out and tags Emily's hand.

Referee: "Tag!"

The building pops as Emily climbs through the ropes, jaw set.

John Phillips: "The Junkyard Bitch is back in this match, bad back and all."

Valkyrie stays just long enough to yank Rosa up and feed her into Emily's waiting arms. Emily unloads with a barrage of body shots—left, right, left to the ribs—before slamming a forearm into Rosa's jaw that spins her around.

Emily grabs Rosa in a front facelock and snaps her down with a tight suplex. She holds on, rolling hips for a second and third, rattling Rosa and herself with every impact.

Crowd: "ONE! TWO! THREE!"

Mark Bravo: "That's pure spite keeping Emily's grip locked. Every suplex hurts her own back as much as Rosa."

Emily drapes an arm over Rosa for a quick cover.

ONE!

TWO—

Rosa kicks out, shoulder lurching off the mat. Emily rolls off, hissing as her back seizes. She grabs the middle rope, dragging herself to her feet, then stalks back toward Rosa.

She yanks Rosa up and whips her into the ropes. Rosa rebounds—Emily leaps and connects with a wild flying forearm that sends Rosa sprawling again. Emily hits the mat and arches in pain, hand gluing to her spine, but she grits through it and forces herself up.

John Phillips: "That back is screaming, but Emily Hightower refuses to slow down."

Emily points at Rosa, then at the ropes, signaling for something bigger. She heads to the corner, climbing to the top turnbuckle gingerly, pausing once as the pain flares. The crowd rallies behind her, clapping and shouting.

Rosa, dazed but not done, rolls toward the far corner instead of staying put in Emily's landing zone. Emily catches it too late, crouched on the top rope as Rosa pulls herself up by the opposite buckles.

Mark Bravo: "Rosa's ring sense saves her there. Emily can't risk the big dive with Rosa halfway to another zip code."

Emily drops back to the mat, the impact jarring her back again. She winces, then storms across the ring, grabbing Rosa by the wrist and spinning her out into a short-arm lariat—

—Rosa ducks under and counters, snapping Emily's arm down across her own shoulder, jamming the shoulder joint and jolting the already-battered spine.

Emily staggers, letting out a guttural sound. Rosa tries to follow up with a dragon screw—but Emily kicks her away with her free leg and staggers back into the MVC corner.

Valkyrie is right there, hand outstretched.

Valkyrie Knox: "Enough. Tag."

Emily breathes hard, eyes flashing between Rosa and Valkyrie, then nods once and slaps Valkyrie's hand.

Referee: "Tag!"

John Phillips: "Smart move from Emily. She got her licks in, she proved she's still in this fight, and now the heavy artillery is back."

Valkyrie steps through the ropes as Emily ducks out to the apron, leaning heavily on the tag rope, one hand pressed to her lower back but a fierce little smile still on her face. Across from them, Rosa braces herself, knowing round two with the Valkyrie starts all over again.

Valkyrie steps back into the fray, rolling her shoulders, that cold storm brewing behind her eyes. Rosa shakes out her arms, jaw set. The two meet center-ring and lock up again, this time Rosa trying to go low for the arm—

—but Valkyrie shoves her away with raw power, sending Rosa staggering back a few steps.

John Phillips: "Rosa's trying to drag this into deep water on her terms, but Valkyrie Knox keeps dragging her right back into the blast zone."

Rosa comes in again, this time throwing a quick spinning backfist. Valkyrie eats it on the shoulder, grimacing, then answers with a brutal knee to the midsection that doubles Rosa over. She hooks Rosa around the waist and hoists her up into a quick, snapping side suplex, dumping her to the canvas.

Mark Bravo: "That's like getting dropped by a forklift, John."

Rosa rolls to her side, clutching her back. Valkyrie doesn't give her long. She drags Rosa up, whips her hard into the ropes. Rosa rebounds—Valkyrie charges for a corner body avalanche, but Rosa sidesteps at the last second, shoving Valkyrie chest-first into The Empire's buckles instead.

Valkyrie hits hard but spins out, refusing to slump. Rosa tries to capitalize with a running dropkick, but Valkyrie snatches her out of the air and muscles her up, spinning into a short Valknut Driver-style slam that spikes Rosa into the mat at a high angle.

John Phillips: "What a counter! Valkyrie turned that dropkick into a drive-by demolition!"

Rosa crumples, rolling onto her stomach. Valkyrie rises over her, breathing heavy, then glances back toward her own corner where Marie and Emily shout encouragement.

She turns... and that moment's glance is just enough.

When she refocuses, Rosa has already rolled clear and scrambled toward The Empire's side. Valkyrie storms after her, grabbing at an ankle—but in doing so, she drifts too close to the wrong corner.

Mark Bravo: "Careful, Valkyrie... that's not the side you wanna be trading real estate with."

Hardcore Sandy, standing tall on the apron, watches Valkyrie's back approach like an incoming target. The referee's attention is on Rosa's scrambling, not on the periphery.

As Valkyrie leans down to yank Rosa up—

—Sandy suddenly lashes out with a huge forearm smash to the side of Valkyrie's head, all weight and bad intentions behind it. The impact echoes, and Valkyrie staggers sideways, eyes suddenly glassy.

John Phillips: "Oh, come on! Hardcore Sandy just blasted Valkyrie from the apron!"

Mark Bravo: "That's the difference between a fair fight and The Empire's rulebook, John. They've got a sixth sense for cheap shots."

The crowd erupts in boos. Marie and Emily shout at the referee, pointing furiously at Sandy, but the official only caught the aftermath—Valkyrie reeling and Rosa suddenly surging up to her feet.

Rosa doesn't waste a heartbeat. She seizes Valkyrie's left arm in a tight grip, jerks her forward into a brutal rolling elbow that cracks across the jaw and temple, compounding the damage from Sandy's shot.

John Phillips: "Rolling elbow! Rosa Delgado just caught Valkyrie flush!"

Valkyrie sways, legs rubberized but refusing to buckle. Rosa steps in again, this time hooking Valkyrie in a double underhook, straining to muscle the bigger woman up. For a second, Valkyrie resists—

—then her knees dip, the delayed effect of the double impact finally catching up.

Mark Bravo: "The lights are on but I don't think anybody's home right now."

With a roar that's more effort than anger, Rosa hoists Valkyrie up, turns toward center-ring, and slams her down with the Steel Magnolia, folding her nearly in half on impact.

John Phillips: "Steel Magnolia! Rosa hit all of that!"

Rosa collapses into the cover, hooking both legs as tight as she can, her body draped across Valkyrie's chest.

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

DING DING DING.

Ring Announcer: "Valkyrie Knox has been eliminated!"

The arena reacts in a stunned roar—some boos, some shocked silence. On the apron, Marie's face falls, hand going to her hair. Emily pounds the top rope in frustration, back screaming but anger drowning it out for a moment.

John Phillips: "Just like that, after a cheap shot from Hardcore Sandy and a perfectly timed Steel Magnolia, Valkyrie Knox is out of this match!"

Mark Bravo: "That's how fast the math changes in a Survivor match. Team MVC is down to Marie Van Claudio and a battered Emily Hightower, and they're staring across at Amy Harrison, Hardcore Sandy, and Rosa Delgado."

Rosa rolls off, lying on her back for a second, chest heaving, a grim little smile creeping across her face. Sandy drops down off the apron, expression unrepentant, while Amy Harrison claps slowly, pleased with how the numbers have swung back in The Empire's favor.

Valkyrie, still dazed, is helped from the ring by officials, her head bowed but her jaw clenched, as Marie and Emily look on, realizing just how steep the climb has become.

Valkyrie is halfway up the ramp with the help of officials when the camera swings back to The Empire's corner. Amy Harrison is practically beaming, one hand on the Women's Championship slung over her shoulder, the other clapping slowly in mock applause.

Amy Harrison: "Two-on-three now, girls! How's that feel?"

She leans over the ropes, pointing at Marie and Emily.

Amy Harrison: "First Lady! Junkyard Bitch! You still think this is your division?"

John Phillips: "Amy Harrison loves this. With Valkyrie Knox gone, it's down to just Marie Van Claudio and Emily Hightower for Team MVC."

Mark Bravo: "One's held together by experience, the other by athletic tape and attitude."

In the opposite corner, Marie drops from the apron to the floor for a moment, slapping the barricade to fire herself up. Emily leans against the post, stretching her back with a grimace, trying to loosen the knots. Marie looks up at her partner.

Marie Van Claudio: "We're not done."

Emily nods, jaw tight.

Emily Hightower: "Then get in there and prove it."

Marie slides back under the bottom rope, pulling herself up with a deep breath as Rosa Delgado, now fully recovered, steps out of The Empire's corner, rolling her shoulders and adjusting her wrist tape.

Referee: "Rosa and Marie are legal. Let's go!"

They circle, the crowd buzzing. Rosa's expression is calm, almost respectful—not of Marie's legacy, but of the danger of underestimating her. Marie, neck and shoulder still aching from Dahlia's assault and Sandy's clothesline, keeps her stance low and tight.

They move in for a collar-and-elbow tie-up. Rosa immediately shifts to a side headlock, grinding down, trying to control Marie's posture. Marie swings a forearm into Rosa's ribs, once, twice, and then shoves her off into the ropes.

Rosa rebounds—Marie drops flat. Rosa runs over. On the second rebound, Marie pops up and catches her with a crisp arm drag, sending Rosa sliding across the mat.

John Phillips: "Classic Marie, using leverage and timing to neutralize the power game."

Rosa rolls through and pops up to one knee. Marie meets her with a low dropkick to the left arm, knocking her back down. Rosa clutches the arm, grimacing as Marie grabs it and twists into a quick standing arm wringer, torquing the joint.

Rosa drops to a knee to relieve the pressure, then rolls forward, flipping to her feet and reversing the hold into an arm wringer of her own. She yanks Marie down to one knee and drives a knee into Marie's shoulder for good measure.

Mark Bravo: "Rosa's not just a brawler, she's a technician. You tug on her rope, she's tugging right back."

Marie grits her teeth, rolls through the pressure, and kips to her feet, reversing again and snapping Rosa over with a quick, tight snapmare that plants her in a seated position. Marie hits the ropes and comes back with a low-running dropkick between the shoulder blades, jolting Rosa forward.

Rosa sprawls, but quickly scrambles to a knee. Marie grabs her, looking for a German suplex—Rosa fires a sharp back elbow into Marie's jaw to break the grip, then spins and nails a stiff spinning backfist that rocks Marie, sending her stumbling toward the ropes.

John Phillips: "That spinning backfist caught Marie flush!"

Marie hangs onto the top rope to stay upright. Rosa charges with a corner-style shotgun dropkick, but Marie drops at the last second and pulls the top rope down—Rosa goes tumbling over the top and crashes to the apron before rolling awkwardly back into the ring under the bottom strand.

The crowd pops as both women take a moment to recover—the veteran instincts of Marie buying her just enough breathing room.

Mark Bravo: "Marie Van Claudio didn't survive this long in the business by eating every shot head-on. Ring awareness saves her there."

Rosa uses the ropes to stand, shaking out her leg and arm. Marie closes the gap and snaps off a hard slap to the face, echoing through the arena. Rosa's head whips to the side, eyes narrowing as she turns back.

Marie follows with a second slap, then hits a quick spinning heel kick to the midsection that doubles Rosa over. She grabs Rosa's head and drills her with a snap DDT, planting her center-ring.

Marie rolls Rosa over and hooks the leg.

ONE!

TWO—

Rosa kicks out, powering a shoulder up. Marie doesn't argue, already dragging Rosa toward her corner by the arm.

John Phillips: "Marie's not trying to win it all in one move—she's trying to manage this, to survive and keep Rosa on the wrong side of town."

Marie stands Rosa up and whips her toward the MVC corner. Rosa hits chest-first, stumbling backward. Marie charges in and crushes her with a corner clothesline, pinning her against the buckles for a heartbeat before backing away.

Emily Hightower slaps the turnbuckle pad, tag hand stretched out, eyes blazing despite the pain.

Emily Hightower: "Right here! C'mon, Marie!"

Marie grabs Rosa by the wrist, gives her a sharp forearm to the jaw for good measure, then drags her a step closer to the corner.

Marie Van Claudio: "You want in? Come get her."

She stretches back, and Emily reaches over the top rope. Their hands slap together.

Referee: "Tag!"

The crowd comes alive again as Emily ducks through the ropes, one hand still briefly pressed against her lower back before she straightens up, eyes locked on Rosa.

John Phillips: "And here comes Emily Hightower once more. Her back's a wreck, but she wants Rosa Delgado in the worst way."

Marie releases Rosa and steps out to the apron, one hand still resting on the top rope, every line in her face saying she's not done helping Emily fight—but for now, it's the Junkyard Bitch and the Steel Magnolia, squared up again under the Survivor lights.

Emily steps through the ropes, eyes narrowed, hand briefly braced on her lower back before she shakes it out and stalks toward Rosa. Rosa straightens, still rattled from Marie's assault, but she squares up all the same.

John Phillips: "Rosa Delgado and Emily Hightower have been beating the tar out of each other all night and we're about to get another chapter."

They meet center-ring. Rosa tries to go low, reaching for Emily's arm to start dissecting a limb again—but Emily slaps her hands away and fires a stiff forearm into Rosa's jaw. Rosa answers with a sharp elbow to the ribs. Emily grits through it and blasts her with another forearm, then another, backing Rosa toward the ropes on pure stubbornness.

Mark Bravo: "That's the junkyard in her. You hit Emily Hightower once, she's already winding up the receipt."

Rosa cuts the exchange off with a well-placed knee to Emily's gut and whips her hard into the ropes. Emily rebounds—Rosa swings for a rolling elbow—

—Emily ducks under and hits the far ropes again, coming back with a sudden running sling-like lariat that takes Rosa down hard.

Rosa pops up on instinct. Emily hits a second running shot, this time a leaping clothesline that flips Rosa onto her back. The crowd surges behind Emily as she roars, adrenaline drowning out the pain in her spine.

Crowd: "EM-I-LY! EM-I-LY!"

Rosa staggers to her feet again, shaking out the cobwebs. Emily rushes in, grabs her wrist, and yanks her into a short-arm Gale Force Knee, smashing Rosa's face with a brutal rising strike. Rosa sways, knees buckling.

John Phillips: "That Gale Force Knee turned Rosa's lights way down!"

Emily doesn't stop. She grabs Rosa by the head and darts to the corner, springing up onto the middle rope with a burst of agility that makes the crowd gasp given the beating her back has taken. She launches backward with a twisting body press, crushing Rosa under a modified Crash Landing-style splash.

Both hit hard. Emily rolls off, clutching at her lower back, teeth gritted in agony.

Mark Bravo: "Every time she goes aerial it's a coin flip between 'highlight reel' and 'chiropractor's nightmare.'"

Rosa rolls to her side, dazed, trying to push up. Emily drags herself upright using the ropes, then stalks back in, grabbing Rosa's arm and yanking her into position.

She muscles Rosa up, using every ounce of strength left, and drills her with a sudden Burn Out—a tornado double arm DDT that spikes Rosa straight on the crown of her head.

John Phillips: "BURN OUT! Emily hit it flush!"

Rosa crumples, body slack. Emily, breathing like a bellows, rolls her over and hooks the leg deep, draping her own

battered body over Rosa's.

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

DING DING DING.

Ring Announcer: "Rosa Delgado has been eliminated!"

The crowd explodes as Emily rolls off, lying on her back for a moment, one arm thrown over her face. On the apron, Marie leans in, pounding the top rope in approval, yelling down at her partner.

Marie Van Claudio: "That's it, Emily! That's it!"

John Phillips: "Listen to this place! Emily Hightower just pinned Rosa Delgado dead in the center of the ring and we are back to even—two on two!"

Mark Bravo: "Team MVC is down to Marie Van Claudio and a very banged-up Junkyard Bitch... and on the other side you've got Hardcore Sandy and Amy Harrison—who, for the record, has not taken a single bump in this match yet."

Rosa rolls under the bottom rope with help from officials, clutching her neck and jaw, the disappointment plain on her face. On The Empire's apron, Hardcore Sandy stares daggers at the ring, while Amy Harrison steps back down to the floor, adjusting the Women's Championship on her shoulder with a smug little smile.

John Phillips: "The Women's Champion is still pristine, still untouched, still letting everyone else do the dirty work while she holds all the power."

In the ring, Emily pulls herself to her feet with the ropes, back screaming, but she manages a pained grin as she locks eyes with Amy across the way. Marie slaps the turnbuckle pad, the two survivors of Team MVC shoulder to shoulder now as the war narrows to four women, one inevitable collision, and a championship future hanging in the balance.

Emily clings to the ropes, chest heaving, back visibly seizing between breaths. Across the ring, Hardcore Sandy stands on the apron, one hand wrapped around the tag rope, the other resting on the top strand. She glances over her shoulder at Amy Harrison.

Amy's standing on the floor again, Women's Championship perched on her shoulder like a crown, a satisfied little smirk on her lips.

Hardcore Sandy: "You gonna get in here or what?"

Amy blinks once, slowly, like she can't believe the question. She tilts her head, eyes narrowing, then points at the ring with a sharp jab of her finger.

Amy Harrison: "You're bigger. You're meaner. You go finish it."

Sandy's jaw clenches. She doesn't move.

Hardcore Sandy: "I've been doin' your dirty work all night."

Amy leans closer to the apron, her voice cutting like a knife.

Amy Harrison: "And you'll keep doing it until I tell you otherwise. Get. In. The. Ring."

The crowd boos, sensing the tension. Sandy stares at Amy for a long heartbeat, that big frame coiled tight. Finally, she huffs through her nose, like a bull deciding which wall to run through, and slaps Rosa's abandoned tag rope as if it were Amy's face instead.

She steps through the ropes.

John Phillips: "Hardcore Sandy clearly doesn't like being spoken to like that, but Amy Harrison's calling the shots tonight."

Mark Bravo: "You can feel it brewing, John. One of these nights Sandy's gonna remember she doesn't take orders well. But for now? Emily Hightower's got a whole different problem in front of her."

Emily pushes off the ropes, squaring herself as best she can. Sandy lumbers toward her, eyes hard, no wasted motion. They meet center-ring.

Emily fires first—a right hand, then a left, then another, peppering Sandy's jaw and chest. The shots rock Sandy, but not nearly enough. She shoves Emily back with a single palm to the face, sending her sprawling to one knee.

Emily grits her teeth, gets up, and charges again, throwing a flurry of body shots into Sandy's ribs. Sandy absorbs them, then clubs Emily across the back with a forearm that sends a shockwave straight through her injured spine.

John Phillips: "That shot went right through the bad spot—Emily's back just folded!"

Emily collapses to all fours, jaw clenched in pain. Sandy grabs a handful of hair, yanks her up, and hurls her chest-first into the corner. Emily hits hard and stumbles back out—right into Sandy's waiting arms.

Sandy wraps her up and sends her flying with a huge belly-to-belly suplex, tossing Emily across the ring like she weighs nothing.

Mark Bravo: "That's not just a suplex, that's 'see your chiropractor in six to eight weeks!'"

Emily writhes, hand glued to her lower back. Sandy sits up, eyes flicking briefly to Amy on the floor. Amy lifts a hand in a lazy "wrap it up" gesture.

Sandy gets to her feet, stalks Emily, and stomps straight down between her shoulder blades, flattening her back to the mat. The crowd winces as Emily cries out.

John Phillips: "Hardcore Sandy is just mauling Emily Hightower right now."

Sandy drags Emily up by the gear and shoves her into The Empire's corner. Amy casually steps back out of reach, making sure there's no chance of Emily tagging her by mistake. Sandy drives a massive shoulder into Emily's midsection—once, twice, three times—each impact reverberating through the ring.

Emily slumps in the corner, gasping, arms draped over the ropes. Sandy takes a few steps back, then charges in with a running boot to the jaw that snaps Emily's head back over the turnbuckle.

Mark Bravo: "I think Emily just saw tomorrow and yesterday at the same time."

Emily collapses to a seated position. Sandy grabs her by the ankle and drags her away from the ropes, planting a boot on her ribs and grinding down, all her weight pressing into the already-battered torso.

The referee dives in.

Referee: "Get off the ribs, Sandy! One! Two! Three! Four!"

Sandy steps off at four, throwing her hands up, then drops a quick elbow across Emily's chest for good measure.

Marie reaches as far as she can from the MVC corner, arm stretched over the top rope.

Marie Van Claudio: "Emily! Tag me!"

Emily rolls to her stomach, reaching blindly, but she's still in the middle of the ring. Sandy walks her down, grabs her by the ankle, and drags her back, then drops a knee into the small of her back, bowing her spine in an ugly arch.

John Phillips: "Sandy's not just trying to beat Emily, she's trying to break her."

Sandy hauls Emily up again, pushing her into the ropes and whipping her across. Emily rebounds—Sandy swings for a clothesline. Emily ducks under on pure instinct, hits the far ropes, and comes back with a desperate flying forearm that staggers Sandy but doesn't drop her.

The crowd pops anyway, sensing the tiny shift.

Sandy growls and swings a wild haymaker. Emily ducks again, this time landing a quick kick to the knee that drops Sandy down to one leg. Emily hits the ropes one more time, gritting her teeth against the pain, and charges in—only to be snatched out of the air and slammed down with a monstrous spinebuster.

Mark Bravo: "And that's what happens when you play chicken with a dump truck."

Emily bounces and lies sprawled, eyes glassy, back screaming. Sandy covers, pressing a forearm across her face.

ONE!

TWO—

Emily jerks a shoulder up, barely, the crowd roaring at the last-second escape.

John Phillips: "Emily Hightower refuses to stay down!"

Sandy sits back on her knees, staring down at Emily with a mix of frustration and respect she'll never admit out loud. She glances to the floor again. Amy just twirls a finger: 'Finish it.'

Sandy grabs Emily by the hair and hauls her up one more time, shoving her into the corner—the wrong one. Marie's corner.

In her zeal to punish, Sandy doesn't clock the geography quickly enough.

Mark Bravo: "Uh oh... wrong neighborhood."

Sandy rears back for another massive forearm, but Emily, on fumes, ducks low and throws herself sideways, diving with everything she has.

Her hand slaps Marie's.

Referee: "Tag!"

The place erupts as Marie Van Claudio explodes through the ropes.

John Phillips: "She got her! Emily Hightower somehow made the tag, and here comes the First Lady again!"

Sandy turns just in time to eat a stiff right hand from Marie, and the momentum of this war tilts once more as fresh fury meets old brutality dead center of the ring.

Marie explodes through the ropes and meets Hardcore Sandy dead-center with a flurry of strikes. Right hand, left hand, a backhand slap that rings out, then a sharp kick to the thigh that actually rocks the big woman.

John Phillips: "Marie Van Claudio coming in hot on Hardcore Sandy!"

Marie follows with a spinning heel kick that tags Sandy behind the ear, staggering her back a step. The crowd surges as Marie hits the ropes and rebounds, leaping with a flying clothesline that bounces off Sandy's chest but doesn't quite take her down.

Mark Bravo: "She moved the mountain, but it's still on its feet!"

Undeterred, Marie pops up and sprints to the corner, springboarding off the middle rope into a flying crossbody that crashes full-on into Sandy's upper body. This time Sandy stumbles, dropping to one knee as Marie rains down short

punches to the forehead.

Sandy shoves her off with both hands, sending Marie rolling, but Marie is already back up, feeding off the noise. She grabs Sandy's wrist and snaps her into a short-arm clothesline that finally flattens the veteran.

John Phillips: "Marie Van Claudio just put Hardcore Sandy on her back!"

The arena pops. On the floor, Amy's smile dips into a frown for the first time, arms tightening around the Women's Championship.

Marie, breathing hard, grabs Sandy by the hair and yanks her upright, trying to press the advantage. She hooks for a snap DDT—

—but Sandy suddenly surges straight up, powering Marie off her feet and driving her backward into the corner. Marie's spine collides with the buckles with a sick thud, the air whooshing out of her lungs.

Mark Bravo: "And just like that, the pendulum swings back the other way."

Sandy unloads with heavy shoulder thrusts to Marie's midsection—one, two, three, four—each shot forcing a grunt from the First Lady. The referee orders her out of the corner; Sandy backs off, only to charge back in with a brutal running forearm that whiplashes Marie's head against the pad.

Marie slumps in the corner, hanging on by the ropes. Sandy grabs her by the wrist and whips her as hard as she can to the opposite buckles. Marie hits, staggers forward on jelly legs—

—and Sandy scoops her up like she weighs nothing, spinning out to center-ring before planting her with a massive powerslam.

John Phillips: "Good Lord! Hardcore Sandy just about drove Marie Van Claudio through the ring!"

Marie bounces and lies flat, eyes glassy, arms spread. The crowd groans, a deflated sound that says they felt that one in their own backs.

Sandy drops to her knees beside her, one hand pressing down on Marie's chest, the other reaching to hook a leg—

Amy Harrison: "NO!"

The shout cuts through the noise. Sandy freezes, mid-motion, head snapping toward the floor.

Amy is right there at ringside, both hands on the apron, eyes blazing—not with concern, but with offended ego.

Amy Harrison: "Don't you dare pin her."

The crowd rains down boos as Sandy slowly straightens up from the near-cover, chest heaving, annoyance flaring behind her eyes.

John Phillips: "Sandy had Marie dead to rights and Amy Harrison just stopped her own partner from making the cover!"

Mark Bravo: "Of course she did. There's only one thing Amy Harrison wants more than a win... and that's the credit for it."

Amy taps the side of her head and then points emphatically at the turnbuckle.

Amy Harrison: "Tag me. I end Marie Van Claudio."

Sandy stares down at Marie—completely laid out—then back at Amy. The muscles in her jaw twitch. The fans chant a scattered "LET HER PIN!" out of sheer spite for the champ.

Sandy mutters something under her breath—too low for the cameras to pick up—then grabs Marie by the wrist and roughly drags her a few feet closer to The Empire's corner instead of covering.

She rises, takes one heavy step toward the ropes, eyes never leaving Amy's for a long, tense second...

...and then slaps Amy's outstretched hand.

Referee: "Tag!"

The boos swell as Amy slips through the ropes with a satisfied little smirk, Hardcore Sandy stepping back to the apron, arms folded, expression somewhere between fury and resignation as the Women's Champion moves in on the woman she once called friend.

Tag made.

Amy Harrison steps through the ropes, Women's Championship glinting on her shoulder as she slips it off and hands it to the timekeeper without taking her eyes off the woman lying flat on the canvas.

Hardcore Sandy doesn't leave the ring. She stays rooted in place a few feet away, chest heaving, watching.

John Phillips: "Amy Harrison is finally legal in this match... but why is Sandy still in there?"

Mark Bravo: "Because she knows what that slam just did to Marie. She knows this is academic."

Amy saunters over to Marie Van Claudio's motionless body, plants one boot arrogantly on her shoulder, then changes her mind and drops down into a proper cover, pressing both hands to Marie's chest like she's pinning a trophy to the mat.

For a split second, Sandy just stares down at the scene. Then, without a word, she takes one slow step back, arms at her sides, making no move to interfere.

The referee hesitates, confused by Sandy's presence, but she steps back as well and drops to count.

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

DING DING DING.

Ring Announcer: "Marie Van Claudio has been eliminated!"

The arena erupts—not in cheers, not in simple boos, but in a stunned, tangled roar. The First Lady of UTA, pinned clean in the middle of the ring by the woman who stabbed her in the back.

John Phillips: "Amy Harrison just pinned Marie Van Claudio... and Hardcore Sandy stood there and watched it happen."

Mark Bravo: "You can feel an entire decade of history groan at once."

Amy pops up to her feet, yanking her arm away from the referee's grasp so she can raise it herself. She throws her head back, soaking in the chaos and fury from the crowd, mouthing, "I told you," at the hard cam.

On the MVC side, Emily Hightower has already slid into the ring, dropping to her knees beside Marie. She gently rolls Marie onto her side, one hand on her shoulder, the other on her head.

Up close, we see it—the sheer disappointment etched across Marie's face. Not just at losing, but at who did it, and how.

John Phillips: "Look at Marie Van Claudio... that's not just pain, that's heartbreak."

The referee urges Marie toward the ropes; Emily helps her under the bottom strand. Marie drops to the floor, sagging back against the barricade, head in her hands for a moment as the fans closest to her reach out, calling her name.

Back in the ring, Amy turns away from the scene entirely, already over it. She jabs a finger toward the apron.

Amy Harrison: "Get back on the apron, Sandy! I'll tag you when I'm ready!"

Sandy doesn't move.

Amy's eyes narrow.

Amy Harrison: "Did you not hear me? Get. Back. On. The. Apron."

Still nothing. Sandy stands in the middle of the ring, breathing slow, eyes locked on Amy with a look that's getting darker by the second.

Mark Bravo: "Uh... this might be where the transmission falls out of The Empire's bus."

Amy stomps forward and gets right in Sandy's face, jabbing a finger into her chest.

Amy Harrison: "I said get out of my ring and back on that apron, now. I'm the champion, I give the orders!"

Each word is punctuated by another poke to Sandy's chest. The crowd oohs, sensing a line being crossed.

While Amy is screeching up at Sandy, behind her Emily Hightower slowly rises from where she'd been kneeling, having watched Marie roll to the floor. Her face is thunder—rage, exhaustion, disbelief all rolled into one.

Hardcore Sandy's gaze flicks over Amy's shoulder. She doesn't say a word. She simply raises one massive hand and points past the champion.

John Phillips: "What's Sandy pointing at—"

Amy scoffs.

Amy Harrison: "Don't point at me, you big—"

She turns.

And walks face-first into a huge right hand from Emily Hightower.

Crowd: "YEAHHHH!"

Amy's head snaps sideways and she stumbles back, almost tripping over her own feet. She spins in a half-circle from the impact, disoriented—and spins right into Hardcore Sandy's waiting hand clamped firmly around her throat.

Mark Bravo: "Ohhhhh, no way—"

Sandy's face is stone. No smile. No quip. Just a decision made.

With one fluid motion, she hoists Amy high into the air by the throat, the Women's Champion's boots kicking uselessly above the mat for a split second before Sandy DRIVES her down with a monstrous chokeslam.

John Phillips: "CHOKESLAM! HARDCORE SANDY JUST CHOKESLAMMED AMY HARRISON!"

Amy bounces and lies sprawled, arms splayed, eyes wide and unfocused. The arena detonates, a wall of shock and catharsis.

Emily staggers back a step, eyes wide, hand halfway to her mouth. She looks from Amy's wrecked body to Sandy, genuinely stunned.

Mark Bravo: "Emily Hightower can't believe it! These people can't believe it! I don't even think Sandy can believe she finally did that!"

Camera cuts to ringside: Marie Van Claudio, still seated against the barricade, staring into the ring with a hollow, disbelieving look. Whatever she expected tonight, this wasn't it.

In the ring, Sandy looks down at Amy for a beat longer, then turns and walks toward the ropes without a word.

She steps over the top rope, drops heavily to the floor, and immediately finds herself staring at Marie.

They lock eyes. No words. Just years of history, respect, betrayal, and something like vindication crashing together in one silent, heated exchange.

John Phillips: "Whatever that look means between Hardcore Sandy and Marie Van Claudio... it's not simple."

Sandy finally breaks the stare, turns away, and starts up the ramp. No pose. No explanation. Just leaving the champion she once backed flat on her back in the ring.

Inside, Amy Harrison lies motionless. Emily Hightower stands over her now, chest heaving, still trying to process what just happened, the referee hovering nearby, desperate to restore some semblance of order.

Mark Bravo: "And just like that, the Empire has crumbled—for tonight, anyway. Amy Harrison is all alone with Emily Hightower and a whole lot of consequences."

Amy Harrison rolls onto her side with a groan, hand instinctively going to her back and then to her throat. She blinks hard, trying to clear the fog, having no idea what just happened or why the world is sideways.

John Phillips: "Amy Harrison has no clue what truck just hit her... but its license plate absolutely said 'Hardcore Sandy.'"

Slowly, shakily, Amy pushes herself to hands and knees. She coughs, hair hanging in her face as she crawls toward the ropes, trying to drag herself up one rung at a time.

Emily Hightower stands a few steps behind her, chest heaving, eyes locked on the champion like a predator watching wounded prey. The crowd starts to rise, sensing it.

Crowd: "EM-I-LY! EM-I-LY!"

Amy finally reaches a vertical base, her back to Emily, one hand clutching the top rope, the other pressed to her throat. She turns in a wobble—

—and Emily seizes her wrist, yanking her fully around.

John Phillips: "Uh oh—"

Before Amy can even register who's grabbed her, Emily steps in and drills her with a savage bull hammer elbow right to the jaw—

John Phillips: "ODE TO MY FATHER!"

Amy's body goes limp mid-spin, dropping like a marionette with its strings cut. She collapses flat on her back, arms spread, eyes staring at the lights.

Emily doesn't waste a millisecond. She drops to her knees, sprawls across Amy's chest, and hooks the far leg tight, stacking the champion up for the pin.

Referee: "ONE! TWO! THREE!"

DING DING DING.

Ring Announcer: "Here is your winner... and earning a UTA Women's Championship match at Black Horizon... EMILY... HEIGHTOWER!"

The arena erupts, a thunderous wave of noise crashing over the ring as Emily rolls onto her back, one arm thrown over her face in total disbelief, the other still clutching her own ribs and back.

John Phillips: "She did it! Emily Hightower just pinned the Women's Champion and punched her ticket to Black Horizon!"

Mark Bravo: "The Junkyard Bitch is going hunting for gold in Philly, and she just cashed in the hardest-earned win of her career to get there!"

On the floor, Marie Van Claudio stumbles along the barricade, hand sliding over the padding as she hauls herself toward the ring. Every step is slow, but she doesn't stop. She reaches the apron, takes a breath, and rolls under the bottom rope.

Inside, Emily pushes to her knees, eyes still wide, chest heaving. The referee moves to raise her hand, but Emily half-pulls away, almost overwhelmed.

Marie uses the ropes to pull herself upright. She stands there for a moment, one hand to her head, eyes on Emily.

You can see it—right there on her face. The weight of expectation. The quiet ache. She thought she'd be the one with her hand raised. The one heading to Black Horizon. The First Lady with one last run.

John Phillips: "Look at Marie. For everything she's done, for everything she means to this division... she wanted that spot. You can see it written all over her."

Emily turns, noticing Marie standing in the corner. For a long second they just stare at one another: veteran and rising contender, past and present colliding.

Emily's expression shifts—guarded at first, then softening into something like respect. She straightens as much as her back will allow.

Marie nods.

It's a small motion, but it lands like a bell ringing through the arena.

Mark Bravo: "That's it. That's the torch, right there."

Marie steps forward, closing the distance, and gently takes Emily's wrist. The crowd swells in anticipation as she turns to face the hard camera... and lifts Emily's hand high into the air.

The building explodes.

John Phillips: "Marie Van Claudio just raised the hand of the woman who took the title shot she wanted! That is respect. That is what this division was built on."

Outside, Amy Harrison has rolled under the bottom rope, crumpled on the floor. An official hands her the UTA Women's Championship. She snatches it to her chest like a lifeline, clutching it close as she stares up at the ring, eyes wide with dawning horror.

In the ring stand Marie Van Claudio and Emily Hightower, hand in hand, one era acknowledging another, while Amy hugs the belt tighter like it might vanish if she lets go.

Mark Bravo: "That right there is Amy Harrison's worst nightmare: the woman who built this division and the woman who wants to run it next, standing tall together, while she's stuck on the outside looking in."

Emily steps to the ropes, pointing down at Amy and then to the Black Horizon logo on the hard-cam side of the arena.

Emily Hightower: "Philly. Me and you."

Amy shakes her head on the floor, clutching the title even tighter, backing away slowly as if distance could somehow change the stipulations she just lost control over.

John Phillips: "At Black Horizon, Amy Harrison has to defend the UTA Women's Championship against Emily

Hightower, and you can see it on her face—she did not plan for this ending tonight."

The camera cuts briefly back up the ramp, where Hardcore Sandy stands halfway up, arms at her sides, watching the scene play out with a hard, unreadable expression. She doesn't look back at Amy. Not once.

Mark Bravo: "If Amy's looking for backup at Black Horizon, she might wanna start a whole new group. Because if there's one thing we can say for sure? Hardcore Sandy is done with The Empire."

Back in the ring, Marie releases Emily's wrist but stays by her side, one hand still resting on her shoulder as the referee raises Emily's arm high one more time. The crowd roars, the Survivor graphic flashes, and the image of Emily Hightower standing tall with Marie's respect and Amy's fear anchors itself in the road to Black Horizon.

The Creed Method

Segment

Fade in. Black screen again. The faint hum of fluorescent lights echoes in the distance. A heartbeat monitor beeps faintly — steady, controlled.

White text fades in:

"PHASE TWO: ACCEPTANCE."

Cut to a sterile classroom-like setting — white walls, folding chairs in a semi-circle. A projector hums quietly. The camera pans slowly across faces — men and women sitting perfectly still, staring ahead. Some are smiling. Others are trembling. On the whiteboard, written in careful lettering:

THE CREED METHOD

Underneath: 1. BREAK 2. BEND 3. BUILD

A calm voice begins to speak off-camera — Eli Creed's.

Eli Creed (V.O.): "You can't fix a house without tearing out the rot first. People cling to their damage because they think it's who they are. I'm not here to erase you..."

The camera pans to reveal him standing at the head of the room, sleeves rolled up, hands clasped behind his back.

Eli Creed: "...I'm here to rebuild you."

The group repeats softly, in eerie unison:

"Rebuild us."

He nods slowly, approvingly.

Eli Creed: "That's it. Honesty. Accountability. Pain. Those are your teachers now."

Cut — flashes of training footage: someone taking a stiff forearm shot and refusing to fall. Another collapses mid-rollup and Eli's voice echoes:

Eli Creed (V.O.): "Again."

Back to the room. A woman with tears in her eyes raises her hand.

Follower: "What if it hurts too much?"

Creed kneels in front of her, smiling softly.

Eli Creed: "Then you're close."

He gently presses a hand to her shoulder — the shot lingers too long. The tone is equal parts nurturing and predatory.

The piano music from the first vignette creeps back in — slower, more discordant now.

Eli Creed (V.O.): "The UTA is full of souls pretending they're already whole. I'll find them. I'll remind them. And when they finally see the light..."

The classroom flickers. For one frame, the light turns red. Creed's smile remains, but his eyes appear hollow.

Eli Creed: "...they'll thank me."

Cut to black. A faint glitch sound echoes. The UTA logo appears for a split second — then static — then the following text:

TEXT ON SCREEN: "THE MORNINGSTAR IS WATCHING."

Static fades out. Silence lingers for three beats.

Eli Creed (V.O., whisper): "Your turn."

Fade to black.

On My Mind

Segment

Backstage, the camera hustles down a concrete hallway to catch up with the towering frame of Hardcore Sandy. She's still in her gear, hair wild, sweat glistening, jaw tight with barely-contained emotion as she storms away from gorilla. Melissa Cartwright hurries into frame, microphone in hand.

Melissa Cartwright: "Sandy—Sandy, can I get a word?"

Sandy stops. Slowly. Shoulders rise and fall with a deep breath. She doesn't turn right away, but when she does, the look on her face freezes Melissa in place.

Melissa Cartwright: "Everyone's asking the same thing right now. You walked out on The Empire. You chokeslammed Amy Harrison in the middle of the ring and left the Women's Champion all alone. What is on Hardcore Sandy's mind?"

Sandy stares at Melissa for a heartbeat, then shifts her gaze past her—right into the lens. When she speaks, her voice is low and rough, scraped raw by years of fights and too many cigarettes.

Hardcore Sandy: "What's on my mind?"

She snorts, shaking her head.

Hardcore Sandy: "I ain't a puppet. I never have been. I don't dance when somebody yanks a string, and I damn sure don't take orders from somebody like Amy Harrison."

She jabs a thumb back toward the arena.

Hardcore Sandy: "She thought because she's holdin' that pretty little belt, she could treat me like muscle on a leash. 'Hit this one. Break that one. Don't pin her, let me do it.'"

Sandy's lip curls.

Hardcore Sandy: "That ain't how I was raised in this business. That ain't why I bled in this company."

She pauses, the fire in her eyes cooling into something heavier.

Hardcore Sandy: "And for the record? It killed me to do what I did to Marie Van Claudio tonight."

Melissa's expression softens. Sandy looks down for a beat, then lifts her eyes back to the camera.

Hardcore Sandy: "That woman inducted me into the UTA Hall of Fame. That woman gave me my flowers when nobody

else even remembered I was still breathin'. I got nothin' but respect for Marie. But in that ring tonight?"

She clenches a fist at her side.

Hardcore Sandy: "I was stuck in the middle of Amy Harrison's twisted little game. I had to make a choice in the moment, and yeah—I put Marie down. I ended her shot at the Women's Championship. I gotta live with that."

Sandy steps closer to the camera now, filling the frame, eyes locked dead ahead.

Hardcore Sandy: "Marie..."

Her voice drops, softer but no less intense.

Hardcore Sandy: "At the Hall of Fame, I told you I had one more match in me. One more that mattered."

She shakes her head slowly.

Hardcore Sandy: "Tonight don't count. Tonight was Amy Harrison's doing. Her ego. Her manipulation. Her hands all over the strings. That ain't the way I wanna go out. That ain't the way we do this."

Sandy sets her feet, shoulders squaring, like she's standing across from Marie already.

Hardcore Sandy: "So how about this, Marie..."

Hardcore Sandy: "Black Horizon. Philadelphia. You and me, one-on-one."

The crowd can be heard off in the distance, reacting as the words echo through the hallway.

Hardcore Sandy: "You can bring every ounce of anger and pain you felt tonight. All the frustration from gettin' screwed, from gettin' used, from watchin' somebody else pin you when you thought it was your time."

She taps her chest with two thick fingers.

Hardcore Sandy: "Or you can bring the respect. One woman to another. First Lady. Hall of Famer. Just two lifers steppin' into the ring to see who's got more left in the tank."

Sandy leans in, voice dropping to a gravelly promise.

Hardcore Sandy: "Either way... I want you, Marie."

Hardcore Sandy: "Not as a puppet. Not as somebody's hired gun. Just Hardcore Sandy, standin' across from the woman who helped put this division on the map... and findin' out who walks out under their own power."

She straightens, taking a step back from the camera.

Hardcore Sandy: "I look forward to hearin' your answer."

Sandy turns without another word and walks off down the hallway, boots echoing against concrete, leaving Melissa staring after her—eyes wide, microphone limp at her side—as the shot slowly fades back toward the arena.

Next Level vs. Iron Dominon

Match

The lights in the arena dim down to a soft neon glow, the giant screen over the stage flickering to life with retro 8-bit graphics—pixelated health bars, blinking "PRESS START" prompts, and sprite versions of tiny wrestlers bouncing in place.

A synth chime hits.

Then the pounding beat of "Press Start" by MDK BOOMS through the sound system, and the crowd comes alive.

John Phillips: "Here we go! Next Level back in action after that huge win over Velocity Vanguard!"

Mark Bravo: "And now they've unlocked the boss battle, John. Iron Dominion ain't a casual mode."

The stage explodes with a burst of digital-green pyros that shoot upward in staggered columns, timed to the music like rhythm-game notes being hit perfectly. On the tron, the words "NEXT LEVEL" flash in glitchy font, cycling through "PLAYER ONE / PLAYER TWO / CO-OP MODE" as the beat kicks in harder.

From stage left, Theo Sparks bursts through the entryway, hooded sleeveless jacket unzipped, bright ring gear catching the lights. He bounces on his toes at the top of the ramp, miming a quick button mash on an invisible controller before thrusting a finger up toward the rafters.

Theo Sparks: "CO-OP MODE, LET'S GO!"

The crowd pops as he sprints forward a few steps, then pivots and turns back toward the entrance.

Dex Raines steps out a half-beat later, calm where Theo is chaos—dark, streamlined gear, wrist tape neat, expression measured. He pauses just past the curtain, scanning the ring and the crowd like he's reading a HUD. The tron behind them shifts to four tiny pixel icons: Iron Dominion's silhouettes on one side, Next Level's on the other, with "BOSS FIGHT: LOADING..." blinking underneath.

John Phillips: "Theo Sparks, the mouthpiece, the hype engine... and Dex Raines, the guy already doing the calculations on how to pick Iron Dominion apart."

Mark Bravo: "I guarantee you Dex has already found at least three glitches in Gideon Graves' spine."

Theo jogs back up beside Dex and slaps him on the chest, grinning.

Theo Sparks: "C'mon, man, we've cleared worse levels than this."

Dex gives him the tiniest smirk—that little co-op tell that the fans have learned to pop for—and nods once. Together, they start down the ramp, Theo playing to the crowd, Dex laser-focused ahead.

Theo leans over the barricade to smack hands with a row of fans in Next Level shirts, one kid holding a cardboard controller that reads "PRESS START ON ME." Theo "clicks" an imaginary button on it and the kid practically vibrates out of his seat.

John Phillips: "These two have connected with the UTA crowd fast. It's like everybody saw themselves in the loading screen and decided to ride with 'em."

Dex, walking just to Theo's inside, occasionally taps his own temple, eyes tracking the ring posts, the corners, the camera positions—mapping the battlefield with every step. At the base of the ramp, Theo sprints forward and slides under the bottom rope on his side, popping up to a knee in one smooth motion. Dex takes the steel steps, methodical, hand brushing the top rope as he steps through.

The lights flicker in sync with chiptune beeps as "Press Start" hits its hook. Theo darts to the near-side ropes, leaping up onto the middle strand and leaning out over the hard-cam side, arms wide.

Theo Sparks: "SURVIVOR! Y'all ready to see us speed-run Iron Dominion?!"

The crowd answers with a roar. Theo drums his fingers along the top rope like he's tapping out a combo, then hops back down.

Dex moves to their corner, leaning back against the ropes, one boot on the bottom strand as he quietly confers with Theo. He traces quick shapes in the air—little "routes" and angles—while Theo nods, pantomiming dodges and counters like he's visualizing a boss pattern.

Mark Bravo: "Look at that. That's not just a tag team, that's a strategy meeting. That's patch notes, hotfixes, and a day-one update all rolled into one."

The music begins to fade as the arena lighting cools from neon to a harsher, steel-blue wash. Theo and Dex turn in unison, eyes settling on the stage, their earlier showmanship sharpening into game-face focus.

John Phillips: "Next Level is logged in, controllers synced, and ready to go... but the loading screen's about to change. When Iron Dominion walks through that curtain, this whole match goes from co-op adventure to survival horror."

The camera tightens on the ramp as "Press Start" dies out completely, the crowd buzzing in anticipation for the arrival of Gideon Graves and Magnus Wolfe.

The lights that had been pulsing neon for Next Level cut out in an instant, plunging the arena into a heavy, industrial darkness. For a second there's only the low rumble of the crowd...

...then a jagged white strobe hits the entranceway in time with a single, echoing BOOM of a distant hammer on steel.

The tron glitches from pixel art to grainy, monochrome footage of a steel mill—sparks flying, conveyor belts churning, molten metal pouring in slow motion. Over it, in rusted block letters, the words:

IRON DOMINION

Snarling guitars rip through the speakers as "I Stand Alone" by Godsmack roars to life, the bassline rattling the guardrails.

John Phillips: "And here comes the boss fight. Gideon Graves and Magnus Wolfe—Iron Dominion."

Mark Bravo: "All the bright colors and extra lives just got turned off. Welcome to hard mode."

Through the glare of the strobes, two silhouettes appear at the top of the ramp. Magnus Wolfe steps out first, head bowed, shoulders loose, a predator at rest. He slowly lifts his face to the ring, a thin, mean smirk already tugging at one corner of his mouth.

Behind him, Gideon Graves emerges like a walking furnace—broad shoulders, cold eyes, heavy black gear with subtle metallic trim. He pauses beside Magnus, fists clenched, gaze fixed dead ahead on the ring where Next Level waits.

On the tron their names flash in sequence: GIDEON GRAVES—grainy footage of him folding people in half with Grave Makers and Iron Drops—then MAGNUS WOLFE—targets over knees and shoulders, joints being twisted into ugly angles.

They start down the ramp. No playing to the crowd. No wasted movement. Magnus walks a half-step ahead, eyes constantly scanning, the smirk returning whenever he spots a particularly disgusted fan. Gideon's pace is slow, methodical, each step like a stamp of ownership on the aisle.

John Phillips: "You can feel the mood change with every step they take. This isn't about having a great match for Iron Dominion—this is about wrecking someone's night."

Mark Bravo: "Next Level wanted a boss fight? That's the raid leader in the back and the limb-collecting mini-boss up front."

Magnus reaches the ringside area and stops just short of the apron, tilting his head to study Theo and Dex like they're fresh meat on a chart. Theo leans over the ropes, jawing at them, shouting unheard over the music. Dex says nothing, fingers flexing on the top rope as he watches every shift of their posture.

Gideon steps up to Magnus' side. For a moment, all four men just stare at one another—Next Level defiant inside the ring, Iron Dominion unblinking on the outside. The camera sweeps across the face-off: youth and energy meeting cold, iron patience.

Then Magnus breaks the moment with a slow clap, mocking, lips moving just enough to form the words, "Press start, boys." He turns away from the apron and heads for the steel steps.

Magnus climbs the steps and steps through the ropes with predatory ease, claiming center-ring like it belongs to him. Gideon doesn't bother with the stairs—he hauls his big frame right up onto the apron from the floor, one hand on the top rope as he glares out at the crowd, daring anyone to boo louder.

The lights settle into an ominous steel-blue wash as the song begins to fade. Gideon steps through the ropes, joining Magnus in the middle of the ring. They stand side by side, turning slowly to face each side of the arena.

Magnus glances over his shoulder at Next Level's corner and gives that trademark smirk after a tiny, mocking nod—as if he's already visualized every counter, every twist, every snap he plans to inflict.

Gideon rolls his shoulders once, then lifts his head and pins Theo and Dex with a glacier-cold stare. He raises one hand and drags an invisible line across his throat, then lets his arm fall, done talking before the match has even started.

John Phillips: "You can feel it. This isn't just about a win—Iron Dominion want to send Next Level back to the character select screen."

Mark Bravo: "We got co-op daredevils on one side, industrial-grade bone collectors on the other, and a very small amount of ring for all four of them to share. Somebody's about to lose some hit points."

The referee steps between the teams, motioning Theo and Magnus toward their corners to decide who starts. The crowd buzzes with anticipation as the official checks all four men, then signals for the bell.

DING DING DING.

Survivor rolls on with Iron Dominion versus Next Level, the opening seconds of a boss battle that might just change the tag team landscape in UTA.

The bell rings, and for a moment, all four men hold their places. Magnus Wolfe steps forward from Iron Dominion's corner with that slow, hungry smirk, tapping his own jaw as if inviting a shot. Across the ring, Theo Sparks bounces on his toes, glancing back at Dex.

Dex nods once. Theo turns back and walks out to center-ring, hand extended like he's about to select an option off a menu.

Theo Sparks: "Level one, boss man. Let's see your moveset."

Magnus' smirk widens. He meets Theo in the middle and slaps his hand away, then immediately snaps into a tight collar-and-elbow tie-up.

The difference in intent is instant—Magnus digs in, torquing Theo's arm into a hammerlock and wrenching up between his shoulder blades. Theo grimaces, reaching back for leverage, but Magnus steps in and shoves him face-first toward the corner.

John Phillips: "Magnus Wolfe wasting no time going after the joints. That's his wheelhouse."

Theo plants a boot on the middle turnbuckle and kicks back, rolling through and twisting his body to slip behind Magnus into his own hammerlock. The crowd pops as Theo wrenches up and gives a little extra torque just to be petty.

Mark Bravo: "Player One just reversed the input! That's a clean counter."

Magnus' eyes narrow. He ducks, grabs Theo's leg, and snaps him down with a quick single-leg trip, spinning into a grounded side headlock. He squeezes hard, forearm grinding into Theo's temple, then plants a knee on Theo's trapped arm, isolating the shoulder.

The referee drops in to check. Theo's teeth grit, but he shakes his head, planting one boot and starting to scoot them both toward the ropes. Magnus lets him get just close enough that the crowd starts to buzz—then abruptly releases,

drags Theo back to center by the wrist, and stomps down on the shoulder.

John Phillips: "That's the difference with Magnus. He's not just trying to win moments; he's trying to take pieces with him."

Magnus yanks Theo up, swings him into a short-arm, and spikes him with a sudden single-arm DDT, wrenching that shoulder again. Theo hits hard and rolls away, clutching at his arm.

Magnus looks over at Dex and gives a little "so much for your patch notes" shrug, then turns toward his own corner.

Magnus Wolfe: "You want the big one?"

Gideon Graves reaches out, dead-eyed, and tags his partner's shoulder.

Referee: "Tag!"

Magnus hauls Theo up and feeds him into Gideon's orbit. Graves steps in and immediately drives a knee into Theo's midsection, folding him in half, then muscles him up into a pendulum backbreaker—holding him there over his knee, pressing down on the chin and leg to bow his spine.

Mark Bravo: "That's not a move, that's a chiropractor's retirement plan."

Theo yells, back arched, arms flailing for anything to grab. Gideon finally lets him drop off his knee like trash, then drags him by the foot back toward Iron Dominion's corner.

Graves steps down hard on Theo's chest and leans his full weight in, looking at Dex the whole time.

Gideon Graves: "This your star player?"

Dex grips the tag rope tighter but doesn't take the bait, eyes narrowing as he watches every motion.

Gideon yanks Theo up again, hooks him, and sends him flying with a huge overhead belly-to-belly suplex that dumps him near the opposite ropes. Theo rolls onto his side, coughing, trying to push up. Graves stalks after him, deliberate, like he's got all the time in the world.

John Phillips: "Iron Dominion showing exactly why they're so dangerous—cut the ring off, isolate, grind you down."

Gideon grabs Theo by the hair and trunks, dragging him toward the Dominion corner again, but Theo suddenly drops to a knee and slips loose, spinning under Gideon's arm. He fires a desperate shot to the ribs, then another, then shoves Graves into the ropes.

Gideon rebounds and mows Theo down with a brutal big boot that echoes through the arena.

Mark Bravo: "And that's the error message you get when you try to out-muscle Gideon Graves."

Theo sprawls flat, blinking up at the lights, lungs trying to reboot. Gideon looms over him, then casually turns and stomps down on Theo's shoulder for emphasis before reaching out to tag Magnus back in.

Magnus slips through the ropes, immediately dropping a knee onto Theo's bad arm, then twisting it into a grounded top wristlock. He leans in close, muttering something we don't quite catch, that trademark smirk returning as Theo grimaces.

John Phillips: "Next Level in trouble early here. Iron Dominion have hacked the game and they've got Theo Sparks in a very bad loop."

The crowd starts clapping in rhythm, trying to will Theo back up. He feeds off it, rolling his hips, forcing Magnus' shoulders closer to the mat for a quick near fall.

ONE!

T—

Magnus releases the hold just enough to roll through and keep control, then drags Theo back up by the arm and whips him into the ropes. On the rebound, Magnus swings for a knee lift—

—Theo ducks under, hitting the far ropes again. On the second rebound, Magnus lowers his head for a back body drop, but Theo reads it, plants his hands on Magnus' back and vaults clean over him, landing on his feet behind.

Magnus whirls around into a sudden running dropkick combo, Theo's "Double Tap" slamming both boots into his chest and sending him staggering back into his own corner.

John Phillips: "There's that speed we talk about! Theo Sparks just hit the reset button!"

Magnus slumps against the buckles for a beat, sucking wind. Theo, clutching his shoulder, looks over his own shoulder toward his corner.

Dex already has his arm out.

Dex Raines: "Tag."

Theo sprints, dives, and slaps Dex's hand.

Referee: "Tag!"

The crowd pops as Dex vaults over the top rope with no wasted motion, beelining straight for Magnus. Theo, instead of rolling out, cuts across the ring in the opposite direction.

Magnus stumbles out of the corner—right into a stiff discus elbow from Dex, "Critical Hit," snapping his head sideways. As he reels, Theo hits the ropes and comes back with a springboard crossbody that knocks Magnus flat.

Mark Bravo: "And here comes the co-op combo! That's what Next Level does—speed, timing, and about a billion frames per second."

The referee warns Theo to get out. He nods, backing toward the apron as Dex drops into a quick cover on Magnus.

ONE!

TWO—

Gideon Graves storms in and boots Dex in the side to break it up.

The referee rushes to cut Gideon off, herding him back toward his corner. Theo, now right behind the official, steps through the ropes long enough to charge and dropkick Gideon through the ropes to the floor, sending the big man stumbling into the barricade to a huge cheer.

John Phillips: "And just like that, the pace is completely different—Iron Dominion's power game disrupted by Next Level's speed!"

Magnus pushes to his hands and knees, shaking his head, but Dex is already up, already moving. He grabs Magnus in a rolling armbar takedown—"Patch Note"—flipping him across the mat and threatening to extend the elbow before Magnus scrambles to the ropes to force a break.

The referee pulls Dex off. Theo claps from the apron, hyping the crowd, while at ringside Gideon slaps the apron in frustration, trying to get back up.

Mark Bravo: "We started in Iron Dominion's world—slow, grinding, limb torture—but blink and we're in Next Level's zone. Fast tags, fast combos, and Iron Dominion outside the ring trying to reload."

Dex stands tall in the center, expression cool, adjusting his wrist tape as Magnus clings to the ropes in the corner. Theo bounces on the tag rope, shouting to his partner like they're mid-stream.

Theo Sparks: "We got 'em on the ropes, man! Keep the pressure on!"

For the first time, Magnus' smirk fades just a little as he eyes the two of them—speed having turned the script around—for now.

Magnus clings to the ropes, one arm draped over the top strand, eyes darting between Dex in the center and Theo hyping the crowd on the apron. Gideon finally hauls himself back up to his corner, one hand gripping the tag rope, jaw tight.

John Phillips: "Iron Dominion suddenly on the back foot here. Next Level have flipped the tempo in their favor."

Dex takes a few measured steps forward, hands up, motioning Magnus in. No trash talk, no antics—just precision. Magnus watches him like a hawk, then slowly steps out of the corner, favoring his jaw.

They circle. Magnus flicks his fingers, inviting a tie-up. Dex obliges, but instead of locking up, Magnus slips low and grabs the wrist, twisting into a quick standing switch—only for Dex to roll through, kip up, and reverse into a wristlock of his own.

The crowd pops as Dex torques the arm, then yanks Magnus into a short-arm knee to the ribs, doubling him over.

Mark Bravo: "Dex Raines is not here to make friends. He's here to update your pain levels."

Dex snaps Magnus down with another "Patch Note" rolling armbar motion, but this time releases at the peak of the spin, sending Magnus sprawling toward the Next Level corner. Magnus hits, rolls to a knee, and finds himself dangerously close to Theo's extended hand.

Theo slaps Dex's shoulder as he passes.

Referee: "Tag!"

Theo vaults over the top rope, hits the far ropes in one smooth motion, and comes back with a springboard crossbody that flattens Magnus to a huge cheer.

He pops up, fires a quick "Double Tap" running dropkick to Magnus' temple before the referee shepherds Dex fully out of the ring. Magnus rolls to his stomach, hand to his head, disoriented.

John Phillips: "Next Level are chaining these moments together—every tag is a combo, every combo is a problem for Iron Dominion."

Theo grabs Magnus's wrist and hauls him up, whipping him to the ropes. Magnus rebounds—Theo ducks low for a back body drop, but Magnus sees it and plants a boot, stopping short. He drives a sharp knee lift into Theo's chest, jerking him up straight.

Theo staggers, air knocked out of him. Magnus doesn't capitalize; he steps back, one hand on his ribs, playing up the damage. He stumbles toward his corner, reaching for Gideon—but keeps one eye on Theo, watching.

Mark Bravo: "Look at Magnus. He's hurt, yeah... but he's still scouting. That's a wolf, not a deer."

Theo sees the opening and surges forward, lunging to cut Magnus off before he can tag. Magnus barely misses Gideon's hand as Theo grabs him from behind, spinning him around and lighting him up with forearms to the face.

The crowd counts along—one, two, three, four—until Magnus ducks the fifth and bails sideways, collapsing to a knee like his leg just gave out.

The referee instinctively steps between them for a split second, checking Magnus's stability.

John Phillips: "Did Magnus just—"

Magnus turns his head just enough for the hard cam to catch it: that tiny, cruel smirk.

Mark Bravo: "Oh, come on. Possum play, UTA edition."

The ref waves them on. Theo moves in to grab Magnus—

—and Magnus explodes upward, snagging Theo's arm and dropping backward into a snapping armbar takedown that spikes Theo's shoulder again. Theo yelps and scrambles, forcing Magnus to release or risk a rope break. They tumble toward the Iron Dominion corner.

Magnus doesn't even fully stand; he just throws an arm up.

Magnus Wolfe: "Now."

Gideon slaps his hand.

Referee: "Tag!"

The mood shifts like someone dropped a weight on the ring.

Gideon steps through the ropes with a grim, deliberate pace, zeroing in on Theo, who's on all fours clutching his arm. Graves hooks Theo under the ribs and deadlifts him straight up into the air with frightening ease.

The crowd gasps.

Gideon holds him there a second, then drives him down with the Iron Drop, a brutal two-hand lift into a sit-out spinebuster that sends shockwaves through the canvas.

John Phillips: "IRON DROP! Theo just got driven into the mat like a nail!"

Theo bounces and sprawls, eyes glassy. Gideon stays seated for a beat, hand on his own knee, then slowly pushes up to his feet, looming over the fallen Player One.

Dex leans halfway through the ropes, arm outstretched.

Dex Raines: "Theo! Tag!"

Gideon hears it. He looks over his shoulder at Dex and shoots him that dead-eyed glare, the kind that says "try me." Then he turns back and grabs Theo's wrist, yanking him away from the Next Level corner and back toward the Dominion side.

Mark Bravo: "And once again, Iron Dominion starting to cut the ring in half. This is their game."

Gideon drags Theo to his feet, shoves him sternum-first into the corner, and crushes him with a corner lariat that nearly folds him in half. Theo slumps, arms draped over the top rope.

Gideon doesn't rush. He places a big palm over Theo's face and shoves him back into the buckles again, then steps back and hits a second lariat for good measure.

John Phillips: "Every strike from Gideon Graves looks like it's meant to end a career, not just a match."

The referee orders him out of the corner. Graves grunts and backs off a step, hands raised—then snaps forward with a short, vicious knee to the midsection on the break, drawing a warning.

Theo stumbles out of the corner, clutching his ribs and bad shoulder both. Gideon hooks him, muscles him up, and drops him across his knee with a pendulum backbreaker, holding the position and pressing down to bow Theo's spine again.

Theo cries out, hand stretching blindly toward Dex.

Dex is right there on the apron, fingers just out of reach, jaw clenched.

Dex Raines: "C'mon, Theo! Move to your left! Left!"

Even while Gideon tortures his back, Theo listens—shifting his hips just enough to roll off Gideon's knee instead of being dropped flat. He hits hard but ends up a foot closer to his own corner than the Dominion's.

Gideon reaches for him again, but for the first time in the sequence, Theo reacts faster—he rolls to his stomach and lunges forward, scraping his way across the mat, fingers outstretched.

Gideon's hand clamps around his ankle.

John Phillips: "He's got him again—"

The crowd buzzes as Theo spins onto his back, using the momentum to kick at Gideon's knee with his free leg once, twice, three times. The third connects just right and Graves stumbles, grip loosening.

Theo twists, dives—

—and just misses Dex's hand as Magnus reaches in from the outside, yanking Graves backward by the waistband to stop him from falling into the Next Level corner. It's subtle, but effective.

Mark Bravo: "Tag team wrestling, ladies and gentlemen. The ref didn't even see that little assist."

The crowd boos, sensing the escape window slam shut. Theo collapses face-first on the mat, inches from salvation.

Gideon regains his balance, then drags Theo back by both ankles, hauling him all the way to the Iron Dominion corner like a trophy.

He tags Magnus in, then lifts Theo's legs into a wheelbarrow position as Magnus steps through the ropes.

Magnus measures, runs, and drills Theo with a running knee trembler to the side of the skull as Gideon flips him up and forward, the combo snapping Theo's head sideways.

John Phillips: "Oh my God! Knee trembler to the temple and Theo might be out cold!"

The crowd gasps as Theo crumples to the mat. Dex's grip on the tag rope tightens until his knuckles go white.

Magnus drops into a cover, forearm grinding across Theo's face.

ONE!

TWO!

Theo jerks a shoulder up at the last possible moment, the arena erupting in relief.

Mark Bravo: "Player One still has a life bar! Barely, but it's flashing red!"

Magnus doesn't look frustrated. He just smiles that wolfish smile again, sitting back on his heels as he stares down at Theo like the game is going exactly the way he planned.

He reaches down, grabs Theo by the wrist, and starts to twist again—right back to the limb, right back to the shoulder—while Dex paces the apron like a caged animal, waiting for his chance to tag in and turn the tide back in Next Level's favor.

Magnus keeps that wrist twisted, grinding the heel of his palm into the back of Theo's hand while he leans his weight into the shoulder. Theo winces, trying to turn with the torque to relieve pressure, but Magnus steps over his arm, pinning it between his legs and bending it at a brutal angle.

John Phillips: "Magnus Wolfe has turned Theo Sparks' arm into a geometry lesson that nobody wants to learn."

Dex paces the apron, fist outstretched, shouting instructions.

Dex Raines: "Roll! Toward me, not away—toward me!"

Theo plants his boots, grits his teeth, and starts to roll his hips, trying to drag both men across the mat. Magnus resists, dropping to one knee, bearing down harder on the trapped limb.

Mark Bravo: "Magnus is enjoying this. This is exactly his speed—if your joints had a difficulty setting, he just cranked Theo's to 'nightmare.'"

The crowd starts clapping, rallying. Theo uses the rhythm, rocking back and forth until he manages to slip his free arm under him and lever them both onto their sides. Magnus adjusts, trying to keep the hold locked—but in that adjustment Theo finds space.

He twists, kicks his legs up, and spins through, rolling Magnus onto his shoulders in a tight cradle.

ONE!

TWO—

Magnus breaks loose and kicks out, but the leverage forces him to release the wrist. Both men scramble up, Theo clutching his arm.

Magnus charges first with a wild forearm—Theo ducks, hits the ropes, and rebounds with a springboard crossbody that takes Magnus down!

John Phillips: "Theo using that burst of speed again to change the equation!"

Theo rolls off, holding his shoulder, eyes flicking straight to his corner. Dex already has his hand out, fingers spread wide.

Dex Raines: "Now! Tag now!"

Theo crawls, each inch dragging like a mile. Magnus shakes his head and starts after him, grabbing at his boot—but Theo kicks free, dives—

—and slaps Dex's hand.

Referee: "Tag!"

The arena erupts as Dex vaults over the top rope like he's been shot from a cannon.

John Phillips: "Here comes Player Two!"

Magnus pushes to his feet and walks straight into a stiff discus elbow—"Critical Hit"—that spins him around. Dex doesn't stop; he grabs Magnus around the waist from behind, pops his hips, and rattles off a quick snap German suplex that sends Magnus sliding toward the ropes.

Magnus rolls to his knees, dazed. Dex hits the ropes, rebounds, and nails him with a low running knee to the side of the head, knocking him flat again.

Mark Bravo: "That's the problem with Iron Dominion: you do all that work on Theo Sparks and then Dex Raines comes in like a day-one patch that fixes every mistake."

Gideon Graves steps one boot between the ropes, ready to storm in, but Dex sees him out of the corner of his eye and snaps a glare his way, daring him.

The referee moves to cut Gideon off. Graves drops back to the apron, hands raised... but the damage is done. The distraction lets Magnus roll to the floor, trying to reset.

Dex isn't having it. He hits the ropes on the far side, rebounds, and sprints straight toward Magnus' escape route.

John Phillips: "Dex Raines building up a full head of steam—"

At the last second, Gideon reaches over and slaps Magnus' shoulder.

Referee: "Tag!"

Magnus drops off the apron just in time for Dex to launch into a baseball slide, but instead of connecting with Magnus, Dex slides under the bottom rope and nearly out of the ring. Magnus sidesteps, smirking, while Gideon steps through the ropes as the legal man.

Dex catches himself on the floor, popping to his feet—just as Gideon barrels across the ring and clubs him from behind with a double axe handle over the ropes.

Dex crashes chest-first into the barricade, staggering.

Mark Bravo: "That's the kind of tag you only see in horror games—think you've escaped one monster and the boss kicks down the door."

Gideon drops to the floor and snatches Dex by the collar, hurling him under the bottom rope like luggage. Dex rolls to his back, lungs burning, as Graves climbs back in and stalks him down.

Theo, still on the apron rubbing his shoulder, pounds the turnbuckle pad to fire the crowd up again.

Theo Sparks: "C'mon Dex! Buffer that damage, man!"

Gideon yanks Dex up by the wrist and flings him into the ropes. On the rebound, Dex ducks the big boot, hits the opposite side, and on the second pass he launches into a flying forearm—

—but Gideon swats him out of the air with a brutal lariat that turns Dex inside out.

John Phillips: "Oh my—Dex just got folded in half!"

Dex hits hard but somehow rolls to a knee, trying to stand on instinct alone. Gideon steps in and locks his arms around Dex's waist, ripping him off the mat into a Gorilla-Press. He hoists Dex high, turning toward Theo with that cold glare as he holds Player Two over his head like a trophy.

Gideon Graves: "This is your backup?"

Theo shouts something unheard, shaking his head.

Gideon slams Dex chest-first to the mat with a sickening thud.

Mark Bravo: "That's not a slam, that's a rage quit."

Dex curls up, clutching his ribs, sucking for air. Gideon doesn't cover. Instead, he walks over to Next Level's corner, looming, staring Theo down. The referee steps between them, ordering Gideon back.

Behind the official's back, Magnus reaches in and snags Dex by the ankle, yanking him halfway toward Dominion's corner. The ref turns just in time to see Gideon "helping," never catching Magnus' hand on the boot.

John Phillips: "That's the second time tonight Magnus has tilted the scales with just the smallest bit of interference. It's like watching someone exploit a bug in real time."

Gideon drags Dex the rest of the way, tags Magnus in, and then holds Dex's arms pinned behind him. Magnus steps through, lines up his shot, and drives a running knee into Dex's exposed ribs.

Dex collapses to his knees, coughing. Magnus grabs a front facelock, walking him out to center-ring, then snaps him down with a swinging neckbreaker—Scar Struck—spiking the back of his head.

Magnus rolls through with the momentum and floats into a cover, pressing his forearm into Dex's jaw.

ONE!

TWO!

Dex kicks out, shoulder just barely coming off the mat!

Mark Bravo: "Dex Raines is running on fumes and bad decisions right now, but he is still in this!"

Magnus sits up, the smirk back in place, but there's a new edge to it—slightly annoyed now. He grabs Dex's wrist, slams his arm to the mat, and starts to thread his legs around it, looking to lock in the Wolf Trap.

John Phillips: "If Magnus gets that Wolf Trap cinched in, Dex might not have anywhere to go."

Magnus spins, trying to weave his legs around Dex's arm and shoulder. Dex senses the danger and rolls with him, scrambling, using his free foot to push off the mat. They tumble in a tight coil—Magnus hunting for the submission, Dex fighting like hell to keep his arm from being isolated.

At the peak of the scramble, Dex suddenly changes direction, rolling backward and stacking Magnus up on his shoulders in a tight, surprise pin.

ONE!

TWO!

Magnus kicks out, but Dex uses the momentum to roll toward his own corner, ending up on his stomach, hand shooting out toward Theo.

The crowd rises, screaming.

John Phillips: "Listen to this place! Dex Raines inches away from a desperately needed tag!"

Magnus dives after him, fingertips brushing Dex's boot—but this time Dex manages one last desperate surge, flinging his arm forward.

SLAP.

Referee: "Tag!"

The roof just about blows off as Theo Sparks vaults onto the top rope and slingshots himself into the ring with a high-angle dropkick that catches Magnus flush as he stands.

Mark Bravo: "Player One has re-entered the game!"

Magnus hits the mat and rolls to the ropes. Gideon starts to step in, but Theo is already in motion, sprinting across the ring to hit him with a running forearm that knocks Graves off the apron to a huge pop.

The referee shouts at Gideon to stay down as Theo turns back to Magnus, firing up the crowd with a quick spin of his hands like he's rolling a controller stick.

Theo Sparks: "TIME TO SPEED-RUN!"

He yanks Magnus up, whips him to the corner, and follows with a running double-knee strike, then snaps him out with a quick Code Breaker—"Debug Error"—that plants Magnus center-ring.

Magnus sprawls, dazed, as Theo scrambles for a cover, hooking the leg deep.

ONE!

TWO!

Gideon Graves dives in—

—and Dex Raines intercepts him with a low tackle, taking both of them down in a tangle before the three can land!

John Phillips: "Next Level just blocked the interference! Theo's got him—"

At the last heartbeat, Magnus jerks a shoulder up, the count stopping at two and nine-tenths as the crowd groans in disbelief.

Mark Bravo: "So close to a game clear right there! Iron Dominion just burned their last continue!"

The official forces Dex and Gideon apart, ordering them back to their corners as the arena buzzes. In the chaos, Theo and Magnus both lie on the mat sucking wind—Player One and the wolf, each trying to reboot.

We're dead-center in the boss fight now, and neither side looks willing to back down.

Both Theo Sparks and Magnus Wolfe lie on the canvas, chests heaving, fingers twitching as they try to will life back into their bodies. The crowd surges into a steady roar, sensing we're deep into the danger zone.

John Phillips: "We are past the halfway point in this one—Next Level and Iron Dominion have thrown everything at each other!"

The referee starts a standing ten-count, arms slicing through the air.

Referee: "ONE! TWO! THREE!"

Magnus rolls to his side, pressing a hand to his jaw. Theo clutches his ribs and shoulder, blinking up at the lights.

Referee: "FOUR! FIVE!"

Magnus crawls toward his corner, dragging himself inch by inch, eyes locked on Gideon's looming figure with an almost desperate focus. On the other side, Theo turns onto his stomach and begins to claw his way toward Dex, who's hammering the top turnbuckle pad with his free hand.

Dex Raines: "C'mon, man! Tag! Tag!"

Referee: "SIX!"

The crowd claps in rhythm, the noise swelling into a chant split between "LET'S GO NEX-T LE-VEL" and a low rumble of boos for Iron Dominion.

Referee: "SEVEN!"

Magnus stretches, fingers straining—

—Gideon Graves slaps his hand.

Referee: "TAG!"

On the opposite side, Theo heaves forward with one last burst of adrenaline and slaps Dex's hand at almost the exact same moment.

Referee: "TAG!"

John Phillips: "Double tag! Gideon Graves and Dex Raines are the legal men!"

The roof nearly blows off as Dex slingshots over the top rope while Gideon steps through his ropes like a storm front moving in. They meet dead center—Dex throwing sharp jabs and low kicks, Gideon walking through them like they're raindrops.

Dex snaps a low kick to the thigh, another to the calf, then a third that cracks off Gideon's ribs. Graves grunts, but keeps coming, arm cocked.

Mark Bravo: "Dex is speed-running those strike options like it's a combo trial!"

Dex hits the ropes, rebounds, and blasts Gideon with a forearm under the jaw. The big man rocks back a step—but only a step.

Dex doesn't hesitate. He hits the ropes again, rebounds, and this time throws the discus elbow, "Critical Hit," right on the button.

Gideon staggers, dropping to one knee. The crowd roars.

John Phillips: "He got him! Graves is rocked!"

Dex doesn't waste it—he rushes in, hooks Gideon around the head and arm, and with a sharp shout uses all his leverage to snap the big man over with a modified snap suplex. It's ugly, but it works.

Gideon hits hard and rolls to his back. Dex scrambles for the cover, hooking the far leg deep.

ONE!

TWO!

Gideon powers out with authority, bench-pressing Dex off him.

Mark Bravo: "That's the problem with trying to pin a steel beam, John—it kicks out at two and a half."

Dex lands on his knees, breathing hard, but his expression doesn't change. He looks to Theo, who's just now using the ropes to pull himself up in the corner, then back at Gideon, making a decision.

Dex backs into his corner and reaches out. Theo nods, wiping sweat from his brow, and tags in.

Referee: "Tag!"

Theo springboards in again, landing beside Dex. They both look down at Gideon, who's pushing up to all fours.

Theo Sparks: "Co-op finisher?"

Dex Raines: "Do it."

The crowd starts buzzing as Next Level move in tandem. Dex grabs Gideon from behind in a waistlock, straining to deadlift the big man upright. He gets him halfway, enough to stack Gideon in a hunched position.

Theo hits the ropes, rebounds, and leaps, smashing a flying knee into Gideon's jaw as Dex yanks him up and forward, the impact snapping his head back. Graves collapses to his knees, then face-first to the mat.

John Phillips: "Huge double-team! That might have knocked Graves' teeth back into the steel mill!"

Dex rolls out under the bottom rope as Theo dives onto Gideon for the cover, hooking both legs with everything he has.

ONE!

TWO!

Magnus Wolfe dives in—

—and stomps Theo in the back of the head to break the pin at two-and-three-quarters, drawing a thunder of boos.

Mark Bravo: "Magnus just saved the match! He might've just saved their whole evening!"

The referee immediately gets in Magnus' face, shoving him back toward his corner, threatening to toss him if he doesn't obey. Magnus raises his hands, backing off with a mocking little bow.

On the apron, Dex sees an opening and sprints in, blindsiding Magnus with a forearm that knocks him off the apron and into the barricade. The ref turns and starts yelling at Dex now, pushing him back to his corner as the crowd roars its approval.

John Phillips: "This thing is breaking down in a hurry! The referee's having a hard time keeping any semblance of control here."

Inside the ring, Theo struggles to his feet, clutching his head. Gideon, still rattled, uses the ropes to pull himself upright in the opposite corner, glassy-eyed but stubbornly vertical.

Theo sees him, nods, and slaps his own battered shoulder like he's hitting a "Retry" button.

Theo Sparks: "Okay, big man. Boss phase three."

He charges in, going for "Double Tap" again—running dropkick to the chest in the corner. He launches—
—and Gideon explodes out of the corner with a savage big boot that cuts him out of the air.

John Phillips: "Ohhh! Theo just got SNIPED mid-air!"

Theo car-crashes to the mat, folding awkwardly on his neck and shoulder. The crowd groans in unison.

Gideon staggers, shakes out the cobwebs, and then his expression hardens. He knows he's got an opening. He drags Theo up by the hair and trunks, muscling him into position.

Mark Bravo: "Gideon Graves just downloaded the pattern, John—this is bad news for Player One."

He hoists Theo up between his legs, then onto his shoulders in a powerbomb lift—setting him up for the Grave Maker.

On the apron, Dex sees it and starts to climb the turnbuckles, desperation in his movements.

John Phillips: "If Graves hits this, it might be over—"

Gideon takes a step forward, ready to drive Theo down. The crowd rises to its feet, half in dread, half in expectation, as the match teeters on the brink of a finish.

The referee shouts a warning at Dex, who's halfway up the corner and trying to time a last-second save, while Magnus pulls himself back onto the apron on the far side, one hand gripping the tag rope, the other the top strand, eyes locked on the chaos in the ring.

Everything is about to break one way or the other.

Gideon Graves has Theo Sparks hoisted high, the arena buzzing in a low, anxious hum as Player One teeters on his shoulders. The referee hovers close, watching for impact. On the far side, Dex is half a story up the turnbuckles, desperate.

John Phillips: "Grave Maker incoming! If he hits this, it could be game over for Next Level!"

Gideon steps forward to deliver...

...and Theo suddenly comes alive, pistoning short punches down onto Gideon's forehead. One, two, three stiff shots. Graves staggers, balance rocked. Theo shifts his weight, swings his legs forward—

—and rolls down Gideon's back, dropping into a rough sunset-flip attempt. The big man windmills his arms, refusing to go all the way over, legs spread wide to stop the momentum.

For a heartbeat, it's a frozen glitch—Theo hanging on, Gideon trying not to topple.

Mark Bravo: "Theo Sparks trying to speed-run a powerbomb counter!"

Gideon finally stomps his feet and drops his weight, breaking free of the pin attempt. He swings a wild hammerfist downward—Theo rolls away at the last second, letting the forearm crack the mat instead.

Graves clutches his hand, grimacing. Theo scrambles toward his corner on all fours.

Theo Sparks: "DEX! TAG!"

Gideon lunges after him, grabbing at Theo's ankle, but Theo twists and kicks loose, diving forward—
—and slaps Dex's hand.

Referee: "Tag!"

The crowd explodes as Dex vaults into the ring, springboarding over the top rope and landing in a low crouch. Gideon is halfway upright when Dex surges in with a discus elbow, "Critical Hit," smashing off his jaw and knocking him back into the ropes.

John Phillips: "Player Two with the save and the shot that rocks Graves!"

Graves rebounds, dazed but still upright. Dex ducks behind and chop-blocks the back of his knee, dropping the big man to all fours. Theo, still on his knees, sees it and rushes to the ropes.

Theo springboards in and blasts Gideon across the side of the head with a flying knee, sending him sprawling toward the corner.

Mark Bravo: "Next Level chaining combos like it's a boss fight on easy mode!"

Gideon rolls out under the bottom rope to the floor, instinctively bailing out. Theo slumps against the ropes, worn down but grinning through the pain.

On the apron nearby, Magnus Wolfe slaps Gideon's back as he stumbles past.

Referee: "TAG! Magnus is legal!"

Magnus slides in immediately, zeroing in on Dex's leg. He dives low with a crisp dragon screw, spinning Dex down hard and wrenching the knee.

Dex cries out, clutching his leg. Magnus hangs on to the foot, twisting, then flows into a grounded hold, trying to trap the ankle and thread his way into the Wolf Trap.

John Phillips: "Magnus Wolfe wasting no time trying to drag Dex Raines into the Wolf Trap again!"

Magnus starts to weave his legs around Dex's arm and shoulder—but Dex has seen this level before. He plants his free foot on Magnus' hip and shoves, disrupting the angle. Magnus stumbles, losing the thread of the hold.

Dex rolls backward,ipping up off one leg and staggering into the ropes. Magnus charges—

—Dex ducks and hooks him in a quick schoolboy roll-up!

ONE!

TWO—

Magnus kicks out, rolling through... straight into a standing position in front of Theo's corner.

Theo slaps Dex's shoulder on the reset.

Referee: "TAG!"

Theo slingshots up to the top rope in one fluid motion as Dex, still legal a half-second prior, grabs Magnus around the waist from behind.

Mark Bravo: "Uh oh. Co-op finisher incoming!"

Dex yanks Magnus backward into a lifted backbreaker position, holding him bent over his knee just long enough for Theo to launch.

Theo leaps off the top and crashes down across Magnus' chest with a high-angle flying double stomp, driving him through Dex's knee. Magnus' body jackknifes and crumples to the canvas.

John Phillips: "Double-team crush! Graves is still down, Magnus is broken in half!"

Dex rolls away clutching his leg as Theo sprawls across Magnus' chest, hooking the far leg deep.

ONE!

TWO!

Gideon Graves drags himself onto the apron, reaching between the ropes to break the fall—

—and Dex, on pure instinct, dives in and grabs Gideon's ankle, yanking his arm short of the pile!

Mark Bravo: "Dex with the clutch crowd-control grab!"

THREE!

DING DING DING!

John Phillips: "They got him! Next Level just pinned Magnus Wolfe! Next Level have beaten Iron Dominion!"

The arena erupts as Theo rolls off Magnus, eyes wide in disbelief for half a second before he bursts into a grin and pounds the mat. Dex, still holding Gideon's leg, lets go and flops onto his back, laughing through the pain.

"Press Start" by MDK hits the speakers as the referee raises Theo's hand, then Dex's. Next Level stand, battered and limping, but victorious.

Mark Bravo: "You wanna talk about a level-up? Beating Iron Dominion clean in the middle of the ring is one hell of an EXP boost, John."

On the floor, Gideon shoves himself upright, fury written all over his face. He glares into the ring at Next Level—Theo on the second rope, throwing gamer taunts to the crowd, Dex leaning in the corner, smirking through a throbbing arm and leg.

Magnus rolls to the apron, clutching his ribs and jaw, eyes burning a hole through both members of Next Level. There's no tantrum—just a cold, simmering promise of receipts.

John Phillips: "Iron Dominion do not look happy. This is not the end of their story with Next Level, not by a long shot."

Mark Bravo: "Nope. But tonight? Player One and Player Two just beat the bosses. That's a statement win, and the whole tag division just unlocked a new threat."

The camera lingers on Next Level in the ring—Theo and Dex bumping forearms, shouting over the crowd noise, gesturing to the imaginary leaderboard above them. On the ramp, Iron Dominion pause, turning back for one last venomous look before disappearing behind the curtain.

Next Level stand tall, controllers clearly in their hands now, as we fade out from ringside.

The Stipulation

Segment

Backstage in the UTA locker room, the energy is still crackling from the arena. Emily Hightower stands front and center, a sheen of sweat on her brow, the rest of Team MVC circling around her — Angela Hall with her hands on her hips, Susanita Ybanez grinning through exhaustion, Valkyrie Knox looming like a granite statue, and Marie Van Claudio leaning against a locker, still rubbing the back of her neck.

The door swings open and in steps Scott Stevens, suit jacket unbuttoned, tie slightly loosened, paperwork folder in hand. The room murmurs quiets as he approaches, his eyes going first to Emily.

Scott Stevens: "Well... I'll say this much. That was one hell of a Survivor match."

He pauses, glancing around the circle of women, letting the weight of his next words hang for a second.

Scott Stevens: "Even if there were some... questionable decisions made along the way."

The mention of "questionable decisions" makes Marie's jaw tighten, her eyes flick briefly to the floor. Emily crosses her arms, shoulders squaring, clearly ready for whatever comes next.

Scott Stevens: "Emily, bottom line is this — you survived. You pinned the UTA Women's Champion. And that means you are going on to face Amy Harrison for the UTA Women's Championship at Black Horizon."

The room pops — Angela claps once and lets out a sharp whistle, Susanita throws an arm around Emily's shoulders, Valkyrie nods in slow approval. Emily can't help the small, proud smile that creeps across her face.

Scott Stevens: "And as an extra bonus... I'm going to let you pick the stipulation."

That gets everyone's attention. Angela's eyebrows shoot up. Susanita lets out a low, impressed, "Ooooh." Valkyrie's eyes narrow, intrigued. Emily tilts her head, rolling her jaw as if she's chewing on the idea... and then that smile turns into something meaner.

Emily Hightower: "You're serious?"

Scott Stevens: "Dead serious."

Emily steps forward, closer to Stevens, closer to the camera. The Junkyard Bitch is fully awake now.

Emily Hightower: "Then that's easy. There's only one match that fits for a dog like Amy Harrison."

She taps the side of her neck, eyes locked on the lens.

Emily Hightower: "Dog collar match."

The room reacts instantly — Angela lets out a sharp laugh, half shock and half approval. Susanita's eyes go wide, then she nods, psyched. Valkyrie's lips curl into a dark, satisfied smirk. Even Marie's brows lift, impressed despite the ache in her eyes.

Angela Hall: "Chain her up and drag her around Philly. I like it."

Susanita Ybanez: "Ella no va a escapar esta vez..."

Stevens nods once, slow, making it official.

Scott Stevens: "Done. At Black Horizon, Amy Harrison defends the UTA Women's Championship against Emily Hightower... in a dog collar match."

The noise in the room swells — a mix of adrenaline and anticipation. Emily glances back at her team, then back to Stevens, fire burning behind her eyes.

Stevens lets that settle for a beat, then turns his attention toward Marie. The mood in the room shifts, just slightly. Marie straightens off the locker, crossing her arms protectively over her ribs.

Scott Stevens: "Marie..."

She meets his gaze, tired but unbroken.

Scott Stevens: "I'm sorry things happened the way they did out there tonight. You didn't deserve that. Not from Hardcore Sandy... and not from Amy."

Marie's jaw flexes. She doesn't argue — she doesn't have to. It's all in her eyes.

Scott Stevens: "But... I just got word. Hardcore Sandy has laid down a challenge. Black Horizon. She wants you, one-on-one. How does that sound? Would you like to face a true UTA legend in what might very well be her final match?"

The room goes quiet. Emily looks over at Marie. Angela does too. Susanita and Valkyrie both shift their weight, instinctively giving her space to answer.

Marie takes a slow breath, looking down for a heartbeat, then lifts her head. When she speaks, her voice is steady, but there's a crack of hurt just under the surface.

Marie Van Claudio: "Of course I do."

She steps forward, just enough to be framed closer to Stevens and the camera.

Marie Van Claudio: "Hardcore Sandy is a legend. I inducted her into the Hall of Fame. I respect her... more than most will ever understand."

Her hand drifts unconsciously toward the side of her neck, where Sandy's chokeslam left its mark earlier in the night.

Marie Van Claudio: "But respect doesn't mean I'm going to forget what happened tonight. It killed me to be the one left lying there while Emily punched her ticket. It..."

She exhales, shakes her head, swallowing back the emotion.

Marie Van Claudio: "That hurt. And what Sandy did? That hurt too."

She looks straight into the camera now, speaking past Stevens, past the locker room, straight to one person.

Marie Van Claudio: "Sandy, you said you had one more match in you. Tonight wasn't it. Tonight was Amy Harrison's little puppet show."

A murmur of agreement from Emily and Angela behind her.

Marie Van Claudio: "Black Horizon... that's different. That's where we decide what your last chapter looks like. Woman to woman. Legend to legend."

She shifts her stance, a small, grim smile touching her lips.

Marie Van Claudio: "And since Black Horizon is happening at the world famous 2300 Arena... a building that was built on blood, broken tables, and some of the most brutal matches in wrestling history?"

The room starts to buzz again. Stevens arches an eyebrow, already knowing where she's going with this.

Marie Van Claudio: "How about we give Hardcore Sandy one final Hardcore Match."

There's a beat of silence. Then the room erupts — Angela barks out a "Let's go!" Susanita claps, eyes wide. Valkyrie nods in grim satisfaction. Emily grins despite her own aches, clearly loving the symmetry of it all.

Emily Hightower: "Dog collar in one ring... Hardcore in the other. Black Horizon's about to get real ugly, real fast."

Stevens looks between Emily and Marie, weighing the gravity of both challenges, then nods once, decisively.

Scott Stevens: "All right. Message received loud and clear."

He fixes his gaze on the hard cam.

Scott Stevens: "At Black Horizon, from the 2300 Arena in Philadelphia — Amy Harrison defends the UTA Women's Championship against Emily Hightower in a dog collar match..."

The team around Emily buzzes again, the words making it real.

Scott Stevens: "And Hardcore Sandy... if you're as serious as you say you are... you'll get exactly what you asked for. One last ride. One last fight. Hardcore Sandy versus Marie Van Claudio... in a Hardcore Match."

He lowers the mic, giving the women a final nod before stepping back out of frame.

Emily and Marie share a long look — exhaustion, pride, and looming war all written between them. Emily extends her fist. Marie bumps it, just once, before glancing back toward the camera with a cold, renewed fire in her eyes.

Black Horizon just got a lot more dangerous.

Lucky?

Segment

Backstage, the camera finds The Empire's locker room in chaos.

The UTA Women's Championship is on a table, not displayed proudly, but slammed there so hard the metal plate still vibrates. Amy Harrison paces back and forth in front of it, hair wild, eyes blazing. Her lipstick is smudged from the war she just walked out of, and every step she takes feels like it's rattling the walls.

Selena Vex sits on the bench, one boot unlaced, ice pack on her neck. Rosa Delgado leans against the lockers, one arm wrapped around her ribs. Dahlia Cross is perched on the edge of a folded steel chair, elbows on her knees, violet hair hanging in her face. All three look like they've been through it — because they have.

Amy Harrison: "Do you people have any idea what you've done to me tonight?"

She whirls on them, eyes burning.

Amy Harrison: "Do you have any idea what it means to lose a Survivor match like that?! To get pinned in the middle of the ring— in my ring— because everything went sideways? Because that lumbering, washed-up cow decided to grow a conscience at the worst possible time?!"

She slaps the title belt on the table, the crack echoing.

Selena Vex: "Amy— hey— look, you're still champ, okay? Emily just— she got lucky out there. Dog collar or not, she's not walking out of Black Horizon with that belt."

Amy whips around on Selena like a viper.

Amy Harrison: "Lucky?"

She steps in, right into Selena's space.

Amy Harrison: "She pinned me. In front of the whole world. Dog collar match means she gets to yank me around the 2300 like I'm some street mutt if I let her. And why are we even in that position, Selena?"

Selena starts to answer, but Amy cuts her off with a sharp wave of her hand.

Amy Harrison: "Because you didn't finish the job. You had your chance. You had your little possum games. You had that match in the palm of your hand, and Emily Hightower is still breathing, still swinging, still stealing my spotlight."

Selena's jaw clenches. She looks away, fingers tightening around the ice pack.

Rosa Delgado: "That's not fair. I stayed in there as long as I could. I did the work. I cut the ring, I took the hits, I—"

Amy turns on her next, finger jabbing in Rosa's direction.

Amy Harrison: "Oh, you did the work, did you? You know what I saw? I saw you getting pinned by that junkyard rat after you failed to put her away. I saw you let the whole thing spiral out of control while I played chess and everybody else kept tripping over their own shoelaces."

Rosa straightens from the lockers, anger flickering behind her eyes, but she bites it back, grinding her teeth instead of swinging.

Dahlia Cross: "Amy..."

Dahlia's voice is calm, low, the way it is when she's picking someone apart in the ring.

Dahlia Cross: "We all bled for you out there. We all took our lumps. I had Knox by the throat until Marie stuck her nose in again. Everybody played their part. Sandy... made her choice. That wasn't on us."

Amy's laugh is short and humorless.

Amy Harrison: "You're right about one thing. Sandy made her choice."

She grabs the back of a folding chair and hurls it against the wall. It bounces off the cinderblock with a violent clatter, making all three women flinch.

Amy Harrison: "She walked out on me. On this. On the only thing that ever made her relevant in the first place. Do you know how that looks? Do you know how that feels?!"

She jabs a finger toward the door, the direction Sandy stormed out earlier.

Amy Harrison: "After everything I did— bringing her back, putting that spotlight on her one last time, giving her a chance to stand next to the Women's Champion instead of being just a dusty plaque in the Hall of Fame... And she chokeslams me and walks."

Her voice cracks on the last word, not with sadness — with rage.

Selena Vex: "Amy... we get it. We're with you. You still have us. Empire isn't dead because one fossil decided she's too sentimental to follow orders."

Selena stands, stepping closer, hands up in a placating gesture.

Selena Vex: "We regroup. We refocus. We walk into Philly and we make Black Horizon about you, not about Sandy, not about Marie, not about Emily. We'll be in your corner. We'll make sure that chain works in your favor, not hers."

Amy stares at her, breathing hard, mascara just starting to smudge in the corners of her eyes. For a second, it almost looks like Selena's words are breaking through.

Rosa Delgado: "We're not going anywhere, Amy. You say jump, we don't ask how high. We just jump."

Dahlia leans back, studying Amy with those cold, analytical eyes.

Dahlia Cross: "Emily Hightower and Marie Van Claudio think tonight was some big turning point. All it really did was show them how dangerous you are when you've been humiliated."

She tilts her head, a small, poisonous smile forming.

Dahlia Cross: "Dog collar match means Emily can't run. Hardcore match means Marie can't hide. Let them have their moments. We'll take everything else."

Amy exhales slowly, shoulders still tense, but the raw edge of her fury starts to sharpen into something more focused.

Amy Harrison: "You're right about one thing..."

She takes the Women's Championship off the table, holding it tight against her chest for a moment, like a shield.

Amy Harrison: "Empire is not dead. Empire doesn't crumble because one dinosaur decides she's suddenly too noble to finish what she started. If Sandy wants to throw away the chance to stand beside greatness on her last night? Fine."

She looks dead into the camera now, speaking past her team, past the walls, straight to Black Horizon.

Amy Harrison: "Emily Hightower thinks a dog collar match favors her because she likes to scrap. She has no idea what she's just done. You chain yourself to me, sweetheart... all you've done is guarantee there's nowhere to go when I decide to drag your face across every inch of that building."

She shifts her gaze, colder now.

Amy Harrison: "And Marie? You want to play white knight for Hardcore Sandy, like she's the broken saint of this division? You want to bleed for her one more time? I hope you both destroy each other. I hope that arena eats you alive."

She turns back to her team, the fragile moment of connection cracking again.

Amy Harrison: "But don't get it twisted."

She points at each of them in turn — Selena, Dahlia, Rosa.

Amy Harrison: "I shouldn't have needed Sandy tonight. I shouldn't have been in a position where her little temper tantrum even mattered. You're the Empire. You're supposed to be the standard. You're supposed to make sure it never gets that far."

Silence. Three sets of eyes on her. None looking away this time, but none daring to talk back either.

Amy Harrison: "So here's how this works now. From this moment until Black Horizon? No more slip-ups. No more excuses. No more 'almost.'"

She shoulders the Women's Championship, the gold catching the harsh fluorescent light.

Amy Harrison: "You don't protect my legacy... you answer for it."

With that, Amy brushes past them, the title tight to her side, leaving a trail of tension in her wake as she storms out of the locker room.

Selena exhales slowly, checking her jaw. Rosa shakes out her arm, thinking. Dahlia just smiles faintly, head tilting as if she's already mapping out who breaks first— Amy, Emily, Marie... or The Empire itself.

The camera lingers on the three lieutenants left behind, the fault lines in The Empire glaringly visible now, before the scene fades to black.

It's Time

Segment

Backstage at Survivor, the low rumble of the arena leaks through the cinderblock walls. The camera finds the door to Team Ross' locker room — the nameplate crooked, the tension inside almost visible. For a moment, everything is quiet.

The handle turns. The door swings open, and Madman Szalinski leans in, one hand braced on the frame, that wild glint in his eyes barely contained behind his glasses.

Madman Szalinski: "Boys..."

He steps fully into the room, gaze sweeping across the team — the dual masks of El Fantasma Oscuro I and II, Jarvis Valentine with the UTA Championship slung across his lap, Chris Ross lacing his boots with deliberate focus.

Madman Szalinski: "It's time."

El Fantasma One and Two slowly turn to look at one another, mirrored masks tilting in unison. No words. Just that eerie synchronicity — two phantoms about to walk into the same war.

On the bench, Jarvis Valentine rises to his feet. The UTA Championship glints under the fluorescent lights as he

adjusts it over his shoulder. He steps up behind Chris Ross and sets a firm hand on his teammate's shoulder.

Jarvis Valentine: "We got this."

Ross looks up for a second, meeting Jarvis' eyes. Then he stands, rolling his shoulders, cracking his neck once to either side. His hands clench into fists and he cracks his knuckles, the sound sharp in the cramped room.

Chris Ross: "We might be down a person..."

He glances around at the men beside him — the champion, the twin specters, the mad genius at the door — and a slow, dangerous smile creeps onto his face.

Chris Ross: "...but it's time to cause a bit of mayhem of our own."

Madman Szalinski lets out a low, satisfied laugh, stepping back to clear the doorway.

One by one, Team Ross files out — El Fantasma Oscuro I and II flanking the hall like omens, Jarvis adjusting the title on his shoulder, Ross at the center of the storm, marching toward the unknown.

The camera lingers on the now-empty locker room for just a moment... then follows them out toward the roar of the D.C. crowd as we head to war.

Team Ross vs. Team Mayhem

Match

The lights inside the Entertainment & Sports Arena dip to a low, sickly glow as the buzz of the crowd swells. On the tron, the Survivor: 2025 logo glitches, colors bleeding and warping...

Then a jagged guitar riff tears through the PA.

John Phillips: "Oh no... you know that song."

Mark Bravo: "Of course I do. It's the national anthem of bad decisions. Here comes Maxx Mayhem."

"Holiday" by Green Day blasts at full volume as green and white strobes stutter across the entranceway. Smoke machines belch out thick plumes that roll across the stage like fog spilling out of a cracked asylum door.

Maxx Mayhem bursts through the curtain first, traffic cone crown tilted on his head, mouth split in a feral grin. He's in a battered black hoodie, taped fists raised, jaw working like he's chewing on barbed wire. He stops at the top of the ramp, spreads his arms wide, and just soaks in the hate raining down from the Washington, D.C. crowd.

John Phillips: "There he is. The self-proclaimed King of Chaos, the man who orchestrated Jaxson Ryder's ambush earlier tonight, and the architect of this entire nightmare for Chris Ross."

Mark Bravo: "He didn't just stack the deck, John—he lit it on fire and laughed about it. Team Ross is walking into a five-on-four war and he's loving every second of it."

Maxx stalks to the very edge of the stage, leans down toward the camera, and licks the lens with an exaggerated, disgusting swipe of his tongue before flipping a middle finger straight into the living rooms of everyone watching. He cackles, then throws both arms out again, screaming something wordless into the rafters.

Behind him, the rest of Team Mayhem emerges one by one.

First, Malachi Cross steps through the fog—head bowed, arms crossed over his chest like a funeral rite. When he lifts his gaze, those dead, unblinking eyes scan the arena with quiet contempt. No taunts. No gestures. Just the slow walk of a man already writing eulogies in his head.

John Phillips: "Malachi Cross, the so-called priest of violence. Every hold a prayer, every suplex a burial. He's not walking to the ring—he's marching to a ritual."

Beside him, Silas Grimm glides out of the smoke, mask in one hand. He stops at the top of the ramp, raises the mask slowly to his face, then removes it in one unhurried motion before tilting his head to the side in that unsettling, birdlike way. His eyes are cold, calculating, drinking in the jeers like they're incense.

Mark Bravo: "And there's Silas Grimm. If Malachi's the priest, that's the guy who digs the graves and hums while he does it."

A half-step behind them, Kaida Shizuka appears—stoic, composed, kendo-inspired gear immaculate. She pauses at the curtain, wipes the soles of her boots with deliberate care, then bows toward the ring in the distance as if acknowledging a battlefield long before she touches it.

John Phillips: "Kaida Shizuka bringing that cold, disciplined strong-style to a match that's anything but honorable tonight. She may be the smallest on that side, but make no mistake—she might be the sharpest blade."

And then the last shadow slips free.

Kaine steps through the haze in his skeletal face paint, chest heaving like he sprinted straight out of a graveyard. He screams wordlessly at the crowd, arms outstretched, fingers clawing at the air. Fans on the ramp side lean back instinctively as he stomps to the edge of the stage, pounding his fist against his heart and mouthing, "Dead but alive," over and over.

Mark Bravo: "There's The Revenant. Kaine is the kind of guy who looks at a building like the 2300 Arena and calls it 'home sweet home.' If this thing breaks down into chaos—and spoiler, it will—that man is gonna thrive."

Maxx starts down the ramp first, swaggering, yelling at fans, pointing at signs and mocking anyone within arm's reach. Malachi and Silas walk in lockstep behind him, the air around them almost colder. Kaida strides with measured, martial focus, eyes already on the ring. Kaine paces along the barricade like a caged animal, slapping hands away, barking at anyone brave enough to boo him to his face.

One particularly loud fan in the front row screams something at Maxx. Maxx stops dead, leans over the barricade, and starts an over-the-top argument, eventually reaching over to tap the fan's forehead with one finger.

Maxx Mayhem: "You're gonna need a new hero by the end of the night, champ!"

He throws his head back and laughs before hustling to catch up with his army.

At ringside, Malachi steps methodically up the steel steps, pausing on the apron to bow his head again before slipping between the ropes. Silas rolls in under the bottom rope and immediately stalks to a neutral corner, hands flexing like he's already imagining ligaments snapping. Kaida slides in, taking a knee in the center of the ring for just a moment before rising and moving to their corner. Kaine hops up onto the apron, roars "DEAD BUT ALIVE!" to a wall of boos, then vaults over the top rope with a wild forward roll.

Maxx climbs the turnbuckles in his team's corner, one foot on the middle rope, arms wide, traffic cone crown raised high like a twisted trophy.

John Phillips: "Look at that picture. Maxx Mayhem on top of the world, flanked by Kaine, Malachi Cross, Silas Grimm, Kaida Shizuka... this is an army built on pain and chaos."

Mark Bravo: "And don't forget the math, John. This is a Survivor match. Five for Team Mayhem... four for Team Ross. Jaxson Ryder's lying somewhere in the back still trying to remember his own name thanks to that earlier beating."

Maxx hops down, pacing the ring like a rabid general giving last-minute instructions. He slaps Kaine's chest, points at the entrance. Malachi stands motionless in the corner, hands clasped. Silas rolls his shoulders, head tilting in tiny clicks. Kaida's eyes never leave the ramp.

John Phillips: "They can smell blood already. They know they've got the advantage. The question is—can Team Ross

overcome the numbers and the chaos... or is this the night Maxx Mayhem takes everything?"

"Holiday" starts to fade, the last echo of guitar giving way to a rising, expectant roar from the Washington crowd.

All five members of Team Mayhem turn toward the stage as the lights begin to shift again, the arena bracing for the arrival of Chris Ross, Jarvis Valentine, El Fantasma Oscuro I and II... and whatever fight they've got left.

The arena falls into a low, electric hum as "Holiday" dies out. Team Mayhem lurks in their corner, eyes fixed on the stage. For a heartbeat, there's nothing but the sound of the crowd...

...and then the lights CUT.

For a half-second, D.C. is plunged into darkness.

A single white spotlight hits the stage.

Then the opening riff of "Black Flame" by Bury Tomorrow detonates through the PA.

John Phillips: "Here we go! Listen to this place!"

The tron erupts with stark black-and-white images: city streets, burning newspapers, shattered glass, the faint outline of Harrisburg alleyways. The words "THE BOSS" and "ROSS" flash in jagged typography between quick cuts of suplexes, chair shots, and blood-smeared faces from Chris Ross' past.

Out on the stage, a silhouette steps into the light.

Chris Ross stands at the top of the ramp, back to the ring, head down, fists clenched at his sides. The spotlight carves out the hard lines of his frame, the scars on his shoulders, the chipped edges of a man who's seen too many wars and keeps signing up for more.

Mark Bravo: "There he is. No traffic cones. No games. Just Chris Ross, walking into a five-on-four execution chamber with a smile on his face."

As the drums kick in, Ross slowly turns around to face the ring. The crowd roars. He scans Team Mayhem, eyes lingering on Maxx Mayhem, then drops his chin just enough to sneer. The camera catches a tight shot of his face — cold, furious, but alive.

He takes one step forward... and two shadows peel out of the darkness behind him.

El Fantasma Oscuro I and El Fantasma Oscuro II flank Ross on either side, masks gleaming in the spotlight, cloaks hanging just-so. They don't gesture. They don't play to the crowd. They simply stand there, heads tilted slightly in opposite directions like mirrored phantoms, giving the whole scene an almost supernatural symmetry.

John Phillips: "The twin ghosts themselves, El Fantasma Oscuro I and II... if you're not creeped out by that visual, check your pulse."

The spotlight widens as one last figure steps through the curtain — Madman Szalinski, eyes blazing with manic pride. He pats each Fantasma on the back, then slaps Ross on the shoulder twice, shouting something we can't quite hear over the music.

Mark Bravo: "And there's the mad scientist who helped bring this all together — Madman Szalinski. He may not be throwing punches tonight, but you better believe he's pulling strings."

The music surges into the chorus—

On the beat, another figure emerges at the top of the ramp, completing the formation.

Jarvis Valentine steps out with the UTA Championship strapped tight around his waist, the silver and gold plates catching the flashing lights. He pauses just behind Ross, one hand resting on the faceplate of the title like it's a promise

he intends to keep.

John Phillips: "And there stands the UTA Champion, Jarvis Valentine. He's not just fighting for Team Ross tonight—he's fighting to make sure there even is a UTA left for that championship to mean something in if Maxx Mayhem gets his way."

For a moment, the five of them stand together at the top of the ramp — Ross in the center, El Fantasma Oscuro I and II like mirrored banshees at his flanks, Jarvis just behind with the title, Szalinski grinning like he's about to watch an experiment explode.

The camera cuts to Maxx Mayhem in the ring, laughing, arms wide, mock-clapping for them. Behind him, Kaine beats a fist against his chest, Malachi stands statue-still, Silas leans on the ropes with that eerie head-tilt, and Kaida's eyes never leave the incoming army.

Mark Bravo: "Take a screenshot. That's war, right there."

Ross finally starts down the ramp, deliberate and unhurried, soaking in the roar of the crowd. The Fanstasmas trail a step behind on either side, moving like shadows bonded to his shoulders. Jarvis brings up the rear, hand occasionally resting on the title, eyes locked dead ahead on Maxx Mayhem.

Madman Szalinski paces alongside, hyped to the gills, shouting into Ross' ear and pointing toward the ring like he's calling plays in the biggest fourth quarter of his life.

John Phillips: "They're walking into a five-on-four situation, down a man after Jaxson Ryder was taken out earlier tonight. They know the numbers. They know the risks. And they're still walking."

At ringside, Ross stops, staring up at Team Mayhem. He reaches back and slaps the UTA Championship on Jarvis' waist twice, then jabs a thumb toward the ring as if to say, "We're not dying back here."

El Fantasma Oscuro I slides into the ring under the bottom rope in one smooth motion, rolling to his feet with a sudden, sharp snap of his head toward Silas Grimm. El Fantasma Oscuro II vaults up onto the apron, then flips over the top rope with a short, eerie twist, landing in a low crouch.

Jarvis walks up the steel steps, pauses on the apron to look out at the D.C. crowd, then steps between the ropes with the calm of a champion used to pressure. Szalinski takes his place at ringside, thumping the apron with both palms, voice already hoarse.

Finally, Ross climbs the steps one by one. He stops on the top step, turns to look back at the sea of fans on their feet, and just nods once, like he's making peace with whatever comes.

He ducks between the ropes and enters the ring, walking straight past his team, straight toward Maxx Mayhem.

John Phillips: "No fear from Chris Ross. No hesitation. Just a straight line from that locker room to the man who stabbed him in the back and built an army on his name."

Maxx steps out from his corner to meet him mid-ring, grinning ear to ear. Their foreheads almost touch, the noise of the crowd hitting a fever pitch as the referee wedges himself between them, shouting for space.

Mark Bravo: "Look at this! Before the bell even rings, you can feel it—this isn't just about numbers, or tag titles, or bragging rights. This is about who gets to write the last line in the story of Ross versus Mayhem."

Behind Ross, El Fantasma Oscuro I and II prowl on the apron like mirrored ghosts, Jarvis leans on the ropes with the title now unstrapped and resting in the corner, and Szalinski paces like a caged animal on the floor. Across from them, Team Mayhem fans out in their corner — Kaine bouncing in place, Malachi unmoving, Silas stretching his neck, Kaida calm as a blade in its sheath.

The referee forces Ross and Maxx back toward their corners, shouting instructions over the roar of the crowd as "Black Flame" fades away.

John Phillips: "The stage is set. Team Ross. Team Mayhem. Survivor rules. The winner names the stipulation when Ross and Mayhem meet at Black Horizon."

Mark Bravo: "And at the end of this, I don't know who's gonna be left standing... but I promise you this, partner: whoever survives? They're gonna earn that word tonight."

The bell hasn't even rung yet, but the energy in the building feels like it's seconds away from snapping.

The referee steps to the center, glancing between both corners, then points to Jarvis Valentine and Maxx Mayhem.

Ring Announcer: "Starting this Survivor contest... representing Team Ross... he is the reigning UTA Champion... JARVIS VALENTINE!"

The crowd pops as Jarvis steps forward, rolling his shoulders, eyes locked on the chaos king across from him.

Ring Announcer: "And representing Team Mayhem... the self-proclaimed King of Chaos... MAXX MAYHEM!"

Maxx throws both arms up, spinning in a slow circle to drink in the boos, traffic cone crown almost falling off before he slaps it back into place. He turns and points both fingers like guns at Jarvis, laughing.

John Phillips: "Interesting choice here, Mark — the UTA Champion himself, Jarvis Valentine, starting this match for Team Ross. Earlier tonight we saw Amy Harrison do everything she could to avoid getting in the Women's Survivor match. Maxx Mayhem? Totally different story. He wants in first. He wants to set the tone."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, Amy ducked that ring like it was on fire. Maxx is the guy who brings the gasoline. And Jarvis? He's about to find out what happens when logic meets lunatic."

On the floor, Madman Szalinski is pacing like a caged animal, slapping the apron with both hands.

Madman Szalinski: "Come on, Jarvis! Set the pace! Break him down, champ, break him down!"

The referee checks both men, then steps back and signals.

DING DING DING

Jarvis moves out of his corner with measured steps, hands up, weight centered. He circles, eyes never leaving Maxx, calling for a collar-and-elbow tie-up.

John Phillips: "Jarvis looking to start this like a wrestling match — technical base, control the chaos before it explodes."

Maxx does three little bounces in place, arms loose at his sides... then surges forward, faking the lock-up and instead raking his fingers across Jarvis' eyes.

Mark Bravo: "Or we could just do that."

Jarvis stumbles back, clutching at his face as the crowd boos. The referee barks a warning, but Maxx just throws his hands up in innocence, stepping sideways with a lopsided grin.

Maxx Mayhem: "My bad, ref, I was aiming for a handshake!"

He lunges again, this time swinging wild forearms at Jarvis' head and shoulders, driving him back into the corner with a flurry of brawling shots. Jarvis covers up, absorbing the blows, trying to bide his time.

John Phillips: "This is exactly the kind of start Maxx wanted. No structure, no clean breaks — just chaos in the corner."

Maxx stomps Jarvis down to a seated position, then backs up, arms wide, drinking in the reaction.

Maxx Mayhem: "You wanted the champ, D.C.? Here he is!"

He charges in for a running knee, but Jarvis rolls out under the bottom rope, popping up on the apron. As Maxx turns, Jarvis grabs the top rope and slingshots himself over with a crisp forearm smash that catches Maxx under the jaw and sends him staggering.

Mark Bravo: "There you go! Jarvis getting some of that technical-meets-impact game going."

Jarvis stays on him this time — front facelock, quick transition into a standing switch, then a tight waistlock takedown that plants Maxx face-first on the canvas. Jarvis floats over, grinding a forearm into the back of Maxx's head as he cinches in a front chancery, smothering the chaos for a precious few seconds.

John Phillips: "That's the journalist-turned-champion right there — control the head, control the story. Jarvis wants to slow Maxx down, make him wrestle instead of wreck."

On the floor, Madman Szalinski is losing his mind in the best way.

Madman Szalinski: "Yes! Squeeze him, Jarvis! Make him think, he hates that! Make him think!"

Maxx flails, grabbing blindly for anything, finally finding Jarvis' hair and yanking back hard. Jarvis grimaces but adjusts, transitioning smoothly — he traps the arm, swings his hips, and snaps Maxx over with a crisp side headlock takeover, landing in full control on the mat.

Mark Bravo: "Textbook headlock takeover. Jarvis is trying to turn a riot into a wrestling clinic."

Jarvis wrenches the hold, keeping his weight low, chin tucked. Maxx kicks his legs, slaps the mat, then starts talking even as he struggles.

Maxx Mayhem: "C'mon, champ... you can't smother me forever..."

He shifts, rolls Jarvis' shoulders to the mat —

Referee: "One! Two—"

Jarvis pops the shoulder up and cranks the headlock tighter, grinding his forearm across Maxx's ear.

John Phillips: "Near-fall out of nowhere, and Jarvis wasn't having it. He's got to remember: every second he spends controlling Maxx Mayhem is a second closer to evening the odds in this match."

From the apron, Kaine slaps the turnbuckle, roaring at Maxx to fight out. Malachi Cross simply watches, hands folded, as if patiently waiting for his turn to administer the next sacrament of pain.

Inside, Maxx starts to twist his hips, working back up to a knee. He plants one hand on Jarvis' waistband, one on his ribs, and begins to shove him toward the ropes, desperate to break free and drag this thing back into the gutter where he lives.

Mark Bravo: "The wrestling match is Jarvis Valentine's comfort zone. The bar fight? That's all Maxx Mayhem. And you can feel the tug-of-war already."

The crowd roars as Maxx and Jarvis struggle toward the ropes, the opening chapter of this survival war already drawing its battle lines between control... and chaos.

Jarvis and Maxx struggle toward the ropes, the headlock still cinched tight. Maxx shoves, reaches, and finally gets Jarvis' back against the cables. The referee slides in.

Referee: "Break it! One! Two! Three—"

Jarvis starts to release clean—

—and Maxx drives a forearm up between his shoulder blades the second the grip loosens.

John Phillips: "Cheap shot on the break!"

Maxx spins Jarvis around and thumbs him in the eye again for good measure, then hooks him and snaps him down with a quick, ugly DDT. Jarvis bounces to his back and clutches his head as Maxx scrambles to his corner, laughing breathlessly.

Maxx Mayhem: "You wanted wrestling, champ? Wrong class!"

He slaps the outstretched hand of Malachi Cross.

John Phillips: "And here comes Malachi Cross, the coldest man in a match full of monsters."

Malachi steps through the ropes with unhurried precision, eyes never leaving the dazed Jarvis. He doesn't rush; he stalks. He grabs a wrist, peels Jarvis up to a knee, then drives a sharp Muay Thai knee into the ribs. Jarvis doubles over with a grunt.

Mark Bravo: "Malachi doesn't waste motion. Everything is on purpose, everything hurts, and everything is supposed to last."

Another knee. Then another. Malachi transitions seamlessly, snaking an arm under Jarvis' and snapping him down with a stalling spinebuster that rattles the canvas. He floats into a lateral press.

Referee: "One! Two—"

Jarvis powers out at two and a half, shoving Malachi off.

On the floor, Szalinski is hammering the apron.

Madman Szalinski: "Come on, Jarvis! Breathe! Get to the ropes, get to a ghost, let's go!"

Malachi sits up, expression unchanged, then swings one leg over Jarvis and cinches in a tight front facelock, wrenching down, blocking the path to his corner. He leans his weight in, grinding Jarvis into the mat, the air slowly leaving the champion's lungs.

John Phillips: "This is where Malachi Cross is at his scariest. No rush, no panic, just methodical suffocation. He's trying to turn Jarvis Valentine into the first slow bleed of the night."

Jarvis digs an elbow into Malachi's ribs. Once. Twice. On the third, Malachi shifts, but Jarvis keeps fighting, rolling them both to their sides. The crowd starts to clap, willing him to his feet. Malachi transitions to a cravate, twisting the neck, but Jarvis pops his hips and throws a back elbow that cracks Malachi in the jaw.

Another elbow. Malachi's grip loosens. Jarvis spins, grabs him around the waist, and with a roar from the crowd hits a German suplex, folding Malachi up on the back of his neck!

Mark Bravo: "Big time German from the champ! That bought him an opening if he can crawl his way out of there!"

Both men are down. Jarvis rolls to his stomach and starts to crawl toward his corner. Malachi lies still for a moment, then slowly moves to his own side of the ring.

In the Ross corner, El Fantasma Oscuro I and II are both leaning over the ropes, arms outstretched, the mirrored masks nodding in eerie sync.

Madman Szalinski: "Tag a ghost! Tag a ghost!"

Jarvis stretches, fingertips brushing El Fantasma I's glove—

—and Malachi snags Jarvis' ankle from behind, dragging him back into no man's land.

John Phillips: "Oh come on!"

Malachi rises with Jarvis' leg trapped and drops a sharp elbow into the hamstring. Then another. He's about to roll into a leg lock—

Jarvis spins, using the momentum to shove Malachi off with a desperate kick. Malachi stumbles backward... right into the Team Mayhem corner, where Kaine slaps him on the shoulder.

Mark Bravo: "And now we get that one..."

Kaine vaults over the top rope, landing in a half-crouch, eyes wide and wild. He slaps his own face, then points straight at Jarvis and screams,

Kaine: "DEAD! BUT! ALIVE!"

Jarvis scrambles up as Kaine charges. The Revenant launches himself into a flying knee strike—but Jarvis ducks at the very last second, and Kaine hits the ropes chest-first, bouncing back off.

Jarvis spins and BLASTS him with a discus clothesline that sends Kaine flipping inside out!

John Phillips: "Discus clothesline! Jarvis just turned Kaine inside out!"

The crowd explodes. Kaine rolls to his side, clutching his jaw, but he's already pushing up, laughing through the pain.

Jarvis doesn't wait. He stumbles backward, turns, and dives to his corner—

TAG! El Fantasma Oscuro I slaps his hand.

Mark Bravo: "Here comes a ghost!"

El Fantasma I vaults to the top rope in one smooth motion, springboarding in as Kaine gets to his feet. The masked phantom twists mid-air and drills Kaine with a springboard crossbody that flattens him. Kaine kicks out of El Fantasma's quick cover at two, but the pace has changed completely.

El Fantasma yanks Kaine up, whips him toward the ropes, then drops low to clip the knee with a low dropkick. Kaine hits the mat hard. Before he can rise, El Fantasma sprints to the corner, runs up the turnbuckles like they're nothing, and launches with a Phantom Spiral corkscrew plancha, crashing down across Kaine's chest!

John Phillips: "Phantom Spiral! El Fantasma Oscuro turning this into a completely different game!"

Cover.

Referee: "One! Two—"

Kaine kicks out, shoving the masked man off, but his eyes are a little less steady now.

El Fantasma I backs up, then, without looking, extends a hand to his corner. El Fantasma Oscuro II reaches over and their fingers barely graze—

TAG!

Mark Bravo: "Oh, this is where things get weird."

El Fantasma II slingshots in as Kaine gets to a knee. The first Fantasma hits the ropes; the second one mirrors on the adjacent side. In perfect unison, they rebound—

—I hits a running basement dropkick to the face.

—II hits a running low dropkick to the spine.

Kaine is sandwiched between them, snapping flat to the mat.

John Phillips: "Stereo dropkicks! Team Ross using the twin ghosts to carve Kaine up!"

El Fantasma II kips up, glides to the nearest corner, and ascends to the second rope. He grabs Kaine's head, plants a boot on the middle turnbuckle, and drives him down with Whispers of Death, that inverted snap DDT off the ropes. The crowd gasps as Kaine's skull bounces off the canvas.

Before Fantasma II can go for the cover, Maxx is already halfway through the ropes. The referee cuts him off, arguing, pushing him back—

—which gives Silas Grimm just enough time to slip in behind the ref's back and punt El Fantasma II in the ribs with a stiff basement kick.

Mark Bravo: "Silas with the cheap shot! Of course!"

Silas slides out just as quickly, expression unreadable. Inside, Kaine drags himself toward his corner, laughing weakly between clenched teeth, one hand slapping the mat for rhythm.

Kaine: "More... more..."

He lunges and tags Maxx Mayhem.

Maxx barrels back into the ring, beelining for El Fantasma II—

—but Fantasma II suddenly rolls under him and pops up on the far side, diving to the Ross corner.

TAG! Chris Ross' hand slaps his.

John Phillips: "And now the Boss is in!"

The crowd erupts as Ross steps through the ropes, eyes riveted on Maxx Mayhem. Maxx skids to a stop in the center of the ring, that wild grin freezing into something sharper as the realization hits.

Mark Bravo: "There it is. No smoke, no mirrors, no contracts... just Chris Ross and Maxx Mayhem, finally staring each other down in a Survivor match that could set the table for Black Horizon."

Ross rolls his neck, the faintest hint of a smirk on his lips. Maxx bounces on his toes, traffic cone crown long gone to the floor, both of them stepping slowly toward the center as the crowd hits a fever pitch.

The twin Fanstasmas hang on the top rope in their corner, Jarvis catching his breath on the apron, Madman Szalinski pounding the steel with both fists.

Madman Szalinski: "There it is! There it is! Light him up, Boss!"

The referee hovers between them, ready to dive out of the blast radius as Chris Ross and Maxx Mayhem close in, the war about to kick into an even higher gear.

The noise in D.C. swells as Chris Ross and Maxx Mayhem stand nose-to-nose in the center of the ring, breathing heavy just from everything that brought them here.

John Phillips: "This is what it all comes down to. Chris Ross. Maxx Mayhem. The right to decide how they finish this at Black Horizon."

Mark Bravo: "Forget Black Horizon, this might end right now if they don't stop glaring and just start swinging."

Maxx smirks first.

Maxx Mayhem: "You miss me, big man?"

Ross answers by headbutting him square in the bridge of the nose. No wind-up, no warning — just a violent crack of skull on skull.

John Phillips: "Oh my—"

Maxx reels back, clutching his face, and Ross is on him immediately with a barrage of mounted forearm shots, hammering him to the canvas. The crowd roars with every thud.

Chris Ross: "You wanted this! Remember that!"

Ross stands, jerks Maxx up by the hoodie, and hurls him chest-first into the turnbuckles with a violent Irish whip. Maxx bounces out and Ross spikes him with a wicked spinebuster that rattles the ring.

Mark Bravo: "Spinebuster! The Boss throwing the book at him!"

Ross doesn't go for a cover. He mounts again, raining down fists, forearms, and the occasional nasty elbow, the referee counting and yelling.

Referee: "One! Two! Three! Four!—"

Ross finally steps back at four and three quarters, hands raised in mock innocence. Maxx rolls to his side, laughing through the pain.

Maxx Mayhem: "There he is... that's my boy..."

Ross stomps him hard in the ribs for that.

He drags Maxx up, hooks him, and snaps him over with a huge suplex. Maxx hits, skids, tries to roll to the ropes—Ross holds on, rolls the hips, and hits a second suplex. The crowd counts with him. He rolls again—

John Phillips: "Look at the power—"

—and third suplex, folding Maxx on the back of his neck before letting him flop to the mat.

Mark Bravo: "Maxx Mayhem just took the Harrisburg Hat Trick!"

On the floor, Szalinski is losing it.

Madman Szalinski: "Bury him, Boss! Bury him!"

Ross paces for half a heartbeat, then slides out of the ring to the floor on the Mayhem side. The crowd's buzz shifts, sensing danger. He flips the ring apron up and starts rummaging.

John Phillips: "Oh no... we know what lives under there when Chris Ross is involved."

The hardcam just catches a flash of metal.

Ross stands up with his screwdriver in hand, twirling it between his fingers like a promise.

Mark Bravo: "There it is. The Crime Scene starter kit."

The referee leans over the ropes, shouting.

Referee: "Put it down! This is Survivor rules, not no-disqualification! Put it down!"

Maxx, still on his knees, sees it and actually laughs, blood already trickling from his nose.

Maxx Mayhem: "Do it! C'mon, Christopher! Make it interesting!"

Ross slides into the ring, the screwdriver in a low grip, eyes locked on Maxx. The arena is on its feet.

John Phillips: "Don't do this, Ross! You get disqualified, you put your whole team in an even deeper hole!"

The referee grabs Ross' wrist, trying to pry it free. Ross snarls, jaw clenched, eyes never leaving Maxx. For a heartbeat, it looks like he's going to swing anyway.

Then El Fantasma Oscuro I reaches in from the apron and taps the ref's shoulder, shouting something in Spanish, creating just enough of a distraction for Ross to flip the screwdriver out of the ring, letting it clatter to the floor near Szalinski, who pounces on it and stuffs it under his jacket.

Mark Bravo: "Madman just became an accessory to something very illegal."

Maxx uses the moment to lunge forward and rake Ross' eyes again, this time with both hands. Ross staggers back,

blinded.

Maxx Mayhem: "My turn."

Maxx explodes forward with a wild discus elbow that catches Ross flush on the jaw, spinning him around. Ross drops to a knee, dazed.

John Phillips: "That discus elbow caught him clean! Maxx just turned the tide!"

Maxx doesn't let up. He yanks Ross to his feet by the beard and hurls him shoulder-first into the ring post between the top and middle turnbuckles. Ross' body jolts, then slumps into the corner.

Maxx backs up, slapping his own head, psyching himself up. He lets out a howl and charges—

—Crash Course. He launches his full body into a cannonball in the corner, crushing Ross between himself and the turnbuckles. Both men hit the mat in a heap, Maxx holding his own back, Ross gasping for air.

Mark Bravo: "Crash Course! He flattened him and probably rattled his own spine in the process!"

Maxx crawls over, drapes an arm across Ross' chest.

Referee: "One! Two—"

Ross powers out at two and three quarters, shoving Maxx off and rolling to his side, clutching his ribs.

John Phillips: "Chris Ross stays alive! If Maxx had finished that combination with Maxximum Carnage, this might've been over."

Maxx punches the mat once, then sits up, chuckling through gritted teeth.

Maxx Mayhem: "Okay... okay... you're fun, Boss."

He grabs a handful of Ross' hair and hauls him up, peppering him with short, sharp forearms. Ross answers with one of his own. Maxx fires back. Ross answers again. Soon they're trading bombs in the center of the ring, the crowd roaring with every shot.

Mark Bravo: "Here we go! Harrisburg haymakers versus Mayhem's brain-cell erasers!"

Maxx swings big — Ross ducks, grabs the back of his neck, and spikes him face-first into the mat with the Side Walk Smash!

John Phillips: "Side Walk Smash! That's usually the setup for the Welcome To Harrisburg!"

Maxx instinctively rolls to his knees, hands on the mat, blinking, trying to get his bearings. Ross stumbles to his feet, chest heaving, and backs into the ropes, eyes locked on his former partner.

Chris Ross: "Get up..."

Maxx rises, legs wobbly. Ross surges forward, looking for the kill—

—and Kaida Shizuka reaches through the ropes, just brushing Maxx's shoulder with a blind tag as Ross barrels past the ref.

Ross obliterates Maxx with a running muscle buster-style slam, planting him hard in the center of the ring. The crowd erupts—

John Phillips: "Welcome To—NO, WAIT!"

Before Ross can even hook the leg, Kaida is already in mid-air, having springboarded off the top rope. She drills Ross in the side of the head with a springboard missile dropkick, sending him crashing sideways into the canvas.

Mark Bravo: "Kaida from outta nowhere! She's the legal one now!"

Maxx rolls under the bottom rope to the floor, clutching his neck and laughing like a lunatic even as he grimaces. Inside, Kaida kips up, eyes cold, shaking out her leg as she stalks the stunned Chris Ross.

On the apron, Jarvis and the twin Fanstasmas clap and shout, trying to rouse Ross as Szalinski shouts strategy from the floor, but for the moment, the Boss is down, the chaos king is regrouping on the outside... and the blade of Team Mayhem has just been unsheathed.

Kaida Shizuka rises from that springboard missile dropkick, expression unreadable as she measures the fallen Chris Ross. She wipes the soles of her boots on the canvas with ritual precision, then stalks in.

John Phillips: "The tide just turned in a hurry. Kaida Shizuka is legal, Maxx Mayhem is on the floor, and Chris Ross just got his head taken off."

Mark Bravo: "And Kaida's not here for the drama, she's here to break things. Preferably important things, like shoulders, necks, and momentum."

Kaida grabs Ross by the wrist and yanks him up, then snaps a shoot kick straight into his thigh. Ross' leg jerks, dropping him back to a knee. Another shoot kick — this one across the chest — echoes through the arena.

John Phillips: "Those kicks from Kaida are surgical. Ross is a brawler, but even he can't just eat those all night."

Kaida pivots and drills a third kick into Ross' ribs, then snatches him into a tight cravate, wrenching the neck. She steps through, looking to roll him into a snap Saito—

—but Ross digs a forearm into her midsection and backs her toward the ropes, using raw power to shove her off. Kaida rebounds and swings with a rolling elbow—

—Ross ducks under, staggers toward his corner, and dives with the last of his strength.

Mark Bravo: "He needs out, bad."

TAG! El Fantasma Oscuro I slaps Ross' shoulder just before he collapses to his knees and rolls under the bottom rope to the apron, clutching the back of his neck.

John Phillips: "Smart tag! Ross lives to fight later, and now Kaida's got to deal with something completely different."

El Fantasma I vaults to the top rope in one fluid motion as Kaida turns. The masked phantom launches with a flying crossbody that crashes into her chest, taking her down. The crowd pops as he scrambles to a quick cover.

Referee: "One! Two—"

Kaida kicks out at two, shoving him off with surprising force.

El Fantasma I is already moving. He hits the ropes, rebounds low, and fires a low dropkick to the knee, clipping Kaida's leg out from under her. She drops to one knee and he sprints to the corner, stepping up to the second rope. With a twist, he springs off and catches her with a tilt-a-whirl headscissors, whipping her across the ring.

Mark Bravo: "The ghosts are like glitches in the system — one bad frame and you're upside down on your head."

Kaida slides under the bottom rope on impact, landing on her feet on the floor. She steadies herself, hand on the apron, eyes narrowed behind the fringe of her hair. Inside, El Fantasma I runs to the far ropes and comes back with a slingshot dropkick through the middle rope, both boots smashing Kaida in the chest and knocking her back into the barricade.

John Phillips: "El Fantasma Oscuro I taking the fight to the outside! This is what Team Ross needs — speed and chaos that they can control."

On the floor, Madman Szalinski is right there, shouting at Fantasma to keep her moving.

Madman Szalinski: "Back in the ring, back in the ring! Don't get lost out here!"

El Fantasma I doesn't brawl. He hauls Kaida up by the wrist and rolls her back into the ring under the bottom rope, then hops up onto the apron and grabs the top strand. As Kaida rises, he springboards in for a high crossbody—

—Kaida catches him clean out of the air.

Mark Bravo: "Oh, that's bad."

She plants her feet, adjusts her grip, and snaps him over with a lightning-quick snap Saito suplex, dumping him high on the back of his neck. The crowd wincing in unison as Fantasma crumples to the mat.

John Phillips: "Snap Saito! Kaida just turned the momentum inside out in a second!"

Kaida doesn't rush a cover. She rolls El Fantasma onto his stomach, takes his arm, and begins to methodically stomp the elbow, then the shoulder, softening up the limb with ruthless efficiency. Each stomp is measured, deliberate, the referee hovering but with nothing to warn her about.

She drops a sharp knee into the back of his shoulder and leans in, wrenching the arm up at an ugly angle.

Mark Bravo: "She's picking him apart piece by piece. Different style, same goal: take away the ropes from the rope-runner."

El Fantasma I tries to push up with his free arm, reaching toward his corner where El Fantasma II and Jarvis are both shouting encouragement. Kaida stays glued to the wrist, sliding her knee up between his shoulder blades in a modified armbar, twisting the joint.

John Phillips: "Remember, if Kaida can wear down that arm, she softens him up for the Sakura Clutch later. Team Mayhem doesn't just want eliminations, they want lingering damage."

El Fantasma digs his masked face into the canvas, muffling a yell, then kicks with his legs, inching toward the ropes. Kaida feels the shift and abruptly releases, letting him lurch forward—

—only to springboard off the middle rope as he rises, catching him in the side of the head with a Silent Flash spinning back-kick that drops him flat again.

Mark Bravo: "Silent Flash! The precision on that—she barely needed a window."

Instead of covering, Kaida glances back toward her corner, where Malachi, Silas, Kaine, and a recovering Maxx Mayhem stand along the apron. She walks over, tags Malachi lightly on the chest, then points at the prone Fantasma, silently communicating a shared plan.

John Phillips: "Kaida tagging out to Malachi Cross now, and that is not good news for El Fantasma Oscuro."

Malachi steps in, head bowed, arms briefly crossed before he stalks over to the downed Fantasma. Kaida lingers just a second longer than necessary, watching as Malachi plants a boot between the masked man's shoulders and reaches down to grab the weakened arm.

In the Ross corner, Jarvis and El Fantasma II are both leaning in, hands out, desperately trying to will their partner to move as Malachi begins to fold that arm back in a vicious torque.

Mark Bravo: "You can feel it building, partner. Kaida softened the limb, and now Malachi's about to start the sermon."

The crowd's buzz darkens, sensing that Team Mayhem is lining up something ugly, something that might not just win them an elimination... but take a chunk out of Team Ross for the long haul.

Malachi cranks back on the arm, boot dug between El Fantasma Oscuro I's shoulder blades, but the masked ghost

kicks and twists, refusing to be still. With a sudden burst, he rolls his hips, sends Malachi stumbling forward, and lunges with his good arm toward his corner.

John Phillips: "He's desperate for a tag—"

Jarvis Valentine leans as far as he can over the ropes, hand outstretched.

Jarvis Valentine: "Come on, come on—"

Fingertips brush—then smack.

Referee: "Tag!"

Mark Bravo: "Jarvis is back in!"

Jarvis vaults over the top rope, charging straight at Malachi. He levels him with a big clothesline, then wheels and clobbers Silas Grimm off the apron with a running forearm for good measure. The crowd roars as chaos erupts.

El Fantasma Oscuro II jumps in without a tag, sliding under the bottom rope as his brother drags himself to his feet. For a moment, all three members of Team Ross' in-ring unit stand together — Jarvis in the center, a ghost on each side — staring down Malachi Cross and a seething Silas Grimm, who's already climbed back onto the apron and is halfway through the ropes.

John Phillips: "The referee's losing control and we've got a three-on-two standoff!"

Jarvis surges first, swinging left and right, rocking both Malachi and Silas with stiff right hands that stagger them back toward opposite corners. The Fantasmas move in perfect sync: they sprint to the near buckles, climbing in fluid motions — I to one corner, II to the other, perched high as Malachi and Silas teeter in front of them.

Mark Bravo: "We're about to see a double ghost dropkick!"

Jarvis grabs Malachi by the wrist, yanking him forward to feed him into the line of fire. On the opposite side, Silas pushes off the ropes, shaking off the cobwebs just as the twin phantoms balance themselves for launch, the crowd rising to its feet in anticipation.

And then the storm breaks the other way.

Malachi suddenly drives a knee into Jarvis' gut, doubling the UTA Champion over. He shoves Jarvis backward into the ropes — Jarvis crashes chest-first and stumbles away, clutching his ribs.

Across the ring, Silas Grimm's head tilts at an eerie angle. He locks eyes with Kaida for a heartbeat, then snaps his attention to the corners.

Silas Grimm: "Down."

In eerie unison, Malachi and Silas explode toward the turnbuckles.

Malachi barrels into the corner beneath El Fantasma I, slamming both forearms into the top turnbuckle. The impact shakes the ropes violently. El Fantasma I's feet slip; his legs scissor awkwardly across the cable before his body whiplashes and he spills, unable to catch himself, crashing hard to the arena floor on his shoulder and back.

John Phillips: "Oh my God, he just bounced off the corner! That was a terrible landing!"

At the same instant, Silas hits the opposite corner, dropkicking the top turnbuckle under El Fantasma II. The jolt sends II's boots flying out from under him. He tumbles forward, arms flailing, and splats on the floor beside his brother, both masked men colliding in a heap of twisted limbs and neon trim.

Mark Bravo: "Both Fantasmas down! Both Fantasmas down on the outside!"

The crowd gasps as the camera cuts to the floor: El Fantasma I and II lie tangled near the barricade, one clutching his

shoulder, the other rolling to his side, hands on his lower back.

Madman Szalinski is there in an instant, sprinting around the corner post and dropping to his knees between them.

Madman Szalinski: "Hey! Hey! Talk to me! You good? You good?!"

He waves frantically at the referee, who's already halfway through a count but clearly torn between the chaos inside and the damage outside.

John Phillips: "Those two might be out of this match for a while. That was a brutal fall, Mark."

Mark Bravo: "Team Ross just lost both of their high flyers in one shot, and they didn't even get an elimination out of it."

Back in the ring, Silas Grimm slips through the ropes and returns to the apron, face expressionless, as if nothing unusual just happened. Malachi drags Jarvis up by the head, the champion still sucking wind from that knee and the chest-first collision with the ropes.

Malachi's eyes are flat, unblinking. He lowers his head slightly, almost in prayer, then drives a forearm into Jarvis' jaw, sending him stumbling into the corner.

John Phillips: "And now Jarvis Valentine is alone in there with Malachi Cross while Madman checks on the Fantasma on the outside."

Malachi closes in, trapping Jarvis in the buckles with a series of measured body shots — ribs, ribs, then a sharp knee to the midsection. Each strike is deliberate, each pause between them filled with the growing dread of the crowd.

Mark Bravo: "The game plan just changed, partner. This started as five-on-four. After that landing, Team Ross might effectively be down to two and a half men."

On the floor, Szalinski keeps one hand on each fallen phantom, shouting reassurances in between yelling at the ref that they can continue. In the ring, Malachi presses his forearm into Jarvis' throat, leaning in, turning the moment into a private sermon of violence as the UTA Champion fights for both air... and his team's survival.

On the floor, Madman Szalinski is still checking on the fallen Fantasma when a blur of black hoodie and bad intentions whips past him.

John Phillips: "Wait a minute—Maxx Mayhem is moving!"

Maxx rounds the corner like a shot, eyes locked on the Ross side of the ring. Chris Ross has just pulled himself back up to the apron, one hand on the tag rope, ribs heaving.

Maxx grabs Ross' boot and yanks with both hands, ripping him off the apron. Ross' jaw bounces off the edge on the way down and he crashes to the floor.

Mark Bravo: "Maxx just ripped Ross off the apron! That's whiplash and a half!"

Maxx pounces, raining down wild forearms and clubbing shots, driving Ross back-first into the barricade. He grabs a handful of Ross' beard and slams his head into the railing once, twice, three times, the metal ringing out.

Maxx Mayhem: "You miss me, Boss? Huh? HUH?!"

Inside the ring, Malachi goes to whip Jarvis across, but the UTA Champion plants his boots and fires a short, desperate elbow into Malachi's ribs, then another. The forearm across his throat breaks, and Jarvis surges out of the corner with a roar.

John Phillips: "Jarvis is fighting back!"

Jarvis hits the ropes and comes back with a running bulldog, spiking Malachi face-first into the canvas. The crowd pops as Malachi rolls away, stunned.

Silas Grimm, seeing the tide turn, slides back through the ropes from the apron and stalks up behind Jarvis.

Mark Bravo: "Here comes Silas—this is about to turn ugly."

Silas catches Jarvis by the shoulder, spins him, and unloads with a palm-strike barrage to the jaw and temple, rocking the champion back into the ropes. Jarvis slumps for half a heartbeat—

—and Kaida Shizuka steps through the ropes without even waiting for a tag, brushing Malachi's shoulder as she enters, making herself legal in the confusion.

John Phillips: "We're well past referee control here. Jarvis Valentine is suddenly in a three-on-one situation!"

Kaida steps in and snaps a vicious low kick into Jarvis' thigh, followed by a rising dragon knee that clips his jaw. Jarvis staggers forward into Silas' waiting arms.

Silas hooks him from behind in a half nelson, looking for Last Rites, while Malachi rises in front of them, lining up a Yakuza kick. Kaida spreads out to the side, ready to pick off anything that escapes.

Mark Bravo: "This is a mugging. Jarvis is about to get erased."

Malachi charges—

Jarvis suddenly drops his weight, yanking Silas forward by the arm. Malachi's boot BLASTS Silas in the face instead, the impact echoing through the arena as Grimm crumples to the mat.

John Phillips: "Jarvis slipped out and Malachi just Yakuza-kicked his own partner!"

Kaida springs in, going for Silent Flash. Jarvis ducks the spinning back-kick by inches, snatches her around the waist, and launches her with a high-angle back suplex that sends her crashing near the ropes.

Mark Bravo: "What a throw! Kaida got planted!"

Malachi turns, eyes burning, stepping into range—Jarvis meets him with a stiff boot to the gut, hooks the head and arm, and snaps him over with a neckbreaker slam, bouncing Malachi off the canvas.

Silas tries to rise on rubber legs. Jarvis hits the ropes, comes back, and wipes him out with a huge discus clothesline, turning Grimm inside out and sending him rolling under the bottom rope to the floor.

John Phillips: "Discus clothesline! Silas Grimm just got decapitated!"

Kaida pulls herself up on the ropes, one hand on the middle strand. Jarvis charges and clotheslines her over the top, the impact sending her tumbling to the floor beside Silas.

Malachi is on hands and knees, shaking out the cobwebs. Jarvis stalks up behind him, hooks the waist, and hits a deadlift German suplex, dumping Malachi high and hard. Malachi instinctively rolls under the ropes on landing, dropping to the apron and then to the floor, one arm wrapped around his neck.

Mark Bravo: "Jarvis Valentine just cleared the ring! One man against three, and he just emptied the house!"

The crowd erupts as Jarvis stumbles to the center, chest heaving, fists clenched. Around the outside, Kaida, Silas, and Malachi regroup near the timekeeper's area, all nursing fresh pain. Maxx pauses mid-assault on Ross just long enough to notice, one hand twisted in Ross' hair as he glares up at the ring.

John Phillips: "Team Mayhem just got run out of the ring by the UTA Champion, but look at the cost—El Fantasma Oscuro I and II are still down on the floor, Madman Szalinski's trying to get them upright, and Chris Ross is brawling with Maxx Mayhem near the barricade."

Jarvis plants a foot on the bottom rope and leans over, yelling down at the cluster of Mayhem's soldiers retreating from the apron.

Jarvis Valentine: "You want this ring? You want this company? You gotta go through me!"

The fans in Washington, D.C. roar their approval as Jarvis turns back to the center, rolling his neck. For the moment, the ring belongs to the UTA Champion — but all around him, wolves are circling, and the war is far from over.

On the outside, Ross and Maxx are still tearing into each other. Maxx rakes Ross' eyes and shoves him chest-first into the barricade; Ross answers with a wild right hand that sends Maxx tumbling over the rail and into the front row.

John Phillips: "Chris Ross and Maxx Mayhem are taking this thing into the crowd!"

Ross climbs over after him, fans parting as security rushes to form a loose wall. The two madmen brawl deeper into the sea of bodies, trading fists and forearms, bumping into chairs, the camera struggling to keep up as they vanish into a swirl of chaos.

Mark Bravo: "They're not interested in pins, partner. They just want to hurt each other. This isn't strategy, this is a crime in progress."

Back in the ring, Jarvis Valentine stands alone, chest rising and falling, eyes tracking the brawl as it disappears into the stands. Around ringside, Kaida, Malachi, and Silas regroup on the floor, the Fantasma still down near Madman Szalinski, who's arguing with the official about their condition.

Then—

The lights dim. A soft, familiar drum machine pattern echoes through the arena. The first haunting notes of "In the Air Tonight" by Phil Collins roll over the PA.

John Phillips: "...No way."

The crowd erupts, half in disbelief, half in instinctive recognition. A single white spotlight hits the stage.

Out from behind the curtain steps Sean Jackson.

Suit jacket, open collar, that same cold, predatory smile. UTA Hall of Famer. Dynastic poison. A man we haven't seen since he and The Spectre turned the WrestleUTA: 25 into a psychological hostage situation.

Mark Bravo: "That's... that's Sean Jackson. That's Sean Jackson!"

John Phillips: "The three-time UTA World Champion, NeWA legend, Dynasty alumnus—what in the hell is he doing here at Survivor?!"

Jackson stands at the top of the ramp, soaking in the reaction. Some fans cheer out of sheer star power, others boo on reflex. He slowly raises his arms, index and pinky fingers extended in the familiar Hook 'Em symbol, eyes locked straight ahead on the ring.

Inside the ropes, Jarvis Valentine has gone completely still.

The UTA Champion turns from the crowd brawl and looks up the aisle, jaw tight, eyes narrowed. His knuckles flex around the top rope as the camera zooms in on his face—somewhere between disbelief, anger, and the cold calculation of a journalist who just watched a new headline walk out in real time.

John Phillips: "Jarvis Valentine is standing in the middle of the ring watching a ghost from UTA's past walk down that aisle."

Mark Bravo: "Last time we saw Sean Jackson here, he was rewriting history and stabbing backs. If he's back in the building, it's not to shake hands and sign autographs."

Jackson starts his walk, slow and deliberate, eyes never leaving Jarvis. The music swells through the famous drum fill as he reaches the halfway point of the ramp.

John Phillips: "We know what Sean Jackson's résumé says. We know what he's done to this company before. But the real question tonight—"

Mark Bravo: "—is he here for Chris Ross and Maxx Mayhem, is he here for Jarvis Valentine, or is he here for something even worse?"

Jarvis steps out from the corner into the dead center of the ring, UTA Championship glinting under the lights ringside, never blinking as Jackson comes closer. Around ringside, Kaida, Malachi, and Silas all look back toward the stage, momentarily forgetting the fight as the air in the building turns electric and poisonous all at once.

John Phillips: "Hall of Famer. Dynasty architect. Career killer. Sean Jackson is at Survivor... and nobody in this arena has any idea whose side—if any—he's on."

Jackson reaches the foot of the ramp and stops just shy of the ring steps, still staring up at the champion, the faintest smirk curling the corner of his mouth as the music starts to fade... and Washington, D.C. buzzes with the uneasy feeling that the main event just got a whole lot more dangerous.

Sean Jackson stands at the base of the ramp, the faintest smirk on his face as the last notes of "In the Air Tonight" hang in the air. Then, slowly, he ascends the steps and steps through the ropes, taking his time, never breaking eye contact with the man in the middle of the ring.

John Phillips: "Sean Jackson is in a UTA ring again... and he's walking straight toward the UTA Champion."

Jarvis Valentine doesn't back down. He steps right up, chest heaving, sweat still beading from the war he's just been waging. Between them, the UTA Championship glints on Jarvis' shoulder like a target.

Jackson glances down at the belt, then lifts a finger and points directly at the center plate. He looks Jarvis dead in the eye and silently mouths two words.

Sean Jackson: "Black Horizon."

Mark Bravo: "Oh, you've got to be kidding me. Is he... is he challenging Jarvis Valentine for the UTA Championship?"

Jarvis' eyes go wide. He shakes his head, incredulous, and grabs the belt tighter with one hand.

Jarvis Valentine: "This isn't the time or the place, Sean! We're in the middle of Survivor! What the hell are you doing?!"

Jackson just tilts his head, that smug, infuriating little smirk spreading wider. He lifts both hands, palms out, like he's trying to calm things down.

John Phillips: "Sean Jackson acting like he's here to talk, but I don't trust that man as far as I could throw him."

Jarvis keeps talking, jabbing a finger toward the corners, toward the chaos at ringside, toward the crowd where Ross and Maxx are disappearing into the upper bowl.

Jarvis Valentine: "I've got a team hanging on by a thread, I've got Mayhem's psychos circling, and you pick now to—"

He doesn't finish.

Jackson's hands drop in an instant. His right knee pistons up and drills the back of Jarvis Valentine's skull with surgical precision.

John Phillips: "MENTAL BREAKDOWN! Sean Jackson just took Jarvis Valentine's head off!"

The champion crumples face-first to the canvas, arms splayed, body motionless. The crowd explodes into a storm of boos and shocked cries.

Mark Bravo: "That snake! He didn't come out here to talk contracts, he came out here to line up a title shot and cash it in on Jarvis' skull!"

Jackson stands over the fallen champion for a long, poisonous moment. He looks down at Jarvis, then off to the side where the UTA Championships.

He backs up slowly, eyes never leaving the gold. At the ropes, he turns, steps through, and drops to the floor. Halfway up the ramp he pauses, glances back over his shoulder at the fallen champion and the championship, that smirk back on his face.

John Phillips: "Sean Jackson just sent a message to the entire UTA locker room: he wants Black Horizon, and he wants Jarvis Valentine."

As Jackson disappears behind the curtain, the referee is shouting, trying to restore order. The crowd's still buzzing when a shadow slides under the bottom rope behind Jarvis.

Malachi Cross, the last legal man for Team Mayhem, glides in like a specter. He doesn't gloat. He doesn't hesitate. He simply steps over the champion's body, plants a boot on his shoulder, and drops into the cover, pressing a thick forearm across Jarvis' jaw.

Mark Bravo: "No... no, not like this."

The referee has no choice. He dives into position.

Referee: "One! ...Two! ...Three!"

The bell rings. The arena erupts in outrage.

DING! DING! DING!

John Phillips: "Jarvis Valentine has been eliminated! The UTA Champion is out of the Survivor Match!"

Malachi rolls off and slides immediately back under the bottom rope to the floor, joining Kaida and Silas. The three of them look up at the ring with a mixture of cold satisfaction and predatory calm.

Mark Bravo: "Team Ross just lost its anchor, its captain, its champion... and it happened because Sean Jackson decided tonight was the night to make a statement."

In the ring, Jarvis lies motionless as the official checks on him, waving for ringside staff. On the floor, Madman Szalinski can only look from the fallen Fantasma to the fallen champion, hands on his head, eyes wide.

John Phillips: "We started five-on-four in favor of Team Mayhem. Now, with Jarvis Valentine eliminated and the Fantasma barely able to stand, it's effectively three men left on Team Ross against the full five of Team Mayhem."

Mark Bravo: "And somewhere in the back, Sean Jackson is probably smiling about all of it."

The camera lingers on the UTA Championship, lying just out of Jarvis Valentine's reach on the canvas, as the crowd in Washington, D.C. drowns the arena in boos... and the reality of the uphill war facing Team Ross sinks in.

Chris Ross heaves Maxx Mayhem over the barricade near the ring, the two of them crashing through a sea of chairs and startled fans. Maxx lands in a heap, still laughing like a lunatic even as he clutches his ribs.

Maxx Mayhem: "HAHAHA! DO IT YOURSELF, BOSS!"

Ross climbs back over the rail to ringside. He straightens up and finally takes stock of the battlefield:

El Fantasma Oscuro I and II are still down near the barricade, Madman Szalinski frantically trying to bring them around.

Jarvis Valentine is halfway up the aisle, being helped to the back by officials after Sean Jackson's cheap shot.

Ross' face hardens as the reality sinks in. His shoulders rise and fall with each breath. For a long moment, it's just him and the noise of a restless D.C. crowd.

John Phillips: "Chris Ross is looking at the wreckage of Team Ross and realizing he may be the only man left who can finish this."

Mark Bravo: "He said earlier tonight that even if it was just him, he'd take down Team Mayhem by himself. Well... it looks like the bill just came due."

Inside the ring, Malachi Cross leans over the ropes, eyes dead and unblinking.

Malachi Cross: "Get in the ring."

On the apron behind him, Kaida Shizuka and Silas Grimm clap slowly, mockingly, like they're applauding a man headed to the gallows. On the far side, Maxx Mayhem drags himself back to his team's corner, using the apron to haul himself up, still grinning like a madman.

Ross circles to the steps, jaw clenched. He looks up at Malachi, then back down to his scarred fists. The fans buzz as he starts up the steel stairs, one heavy stomp at a time.

John Phillips: "It is four-on-one. Chris Ross versus the entirety of Team Mayhem."

Mark Bravo: "And that's if the Fantasma's can even stand again tonight. This is as bad as it gets."

Ross steps through the ropes and into the ring, never taking his eyes off Malachi. The air feels heavy. He said he'd cause some mayhem of his own, even if he had to do it alone... and it looks like that's exactly where this is headed.

Malachi grins, a cold, joyless curl of the lips. Kaida and Silas clap louder. Maxx slaps the turnbuckle pad and cackles.

Maxx Mayhem: "WELCOME TO THE ENDGAME, BOSS!"

Outside, Madman Szalinski is half up, half down between the Fantasma's, shaking their shoulders and yelling.

Madman Szalinski: "C'mon, chicos! I need you! Up! UP!"

Ross glances over his shoulder for just a heartbeat—at his fallen partners, at the empty aisle where Jarvis once stood—then turns back to center, squaring up.

And then...

The speakers crackle and a familiar beat drops. Horns and drums hit with swaggering force as "Made You Look" by Nas blasts through the Entertainment & Sports Arena.

John Phillips: "Oh, come on..."

Mark Bravo: "No way. No way."

The cameras whip to the stage as the crowd surges to its feet, a mix of boos, shock, and "of course he's here" groans washing over the building.

Through the curtain steps the WrestleZone Champion, Eric Dane Jr.

Silver trunks, wrap-around sunglasses, sequined jacket half falling off one shoulder, the WrestleZone Championship slung arrogantly around his neck like oversized jewelry. He chews invisible gum, jaw working as he looks around like all of this was booked just for him.

John Phillips: "That's the WrestleZone Champion, Eric Dane Jr.! He already punched his ticket to Black Horizon tonight, he's got Tyger II waiting for him... so what is he doing walking out here in the middle of Survivor?!"

Mark Bravo: "Last time Eric Dane Jr. and Chris Ross shared a spotlight, they tried to tear each other and the WrestleZone apart. If this kid is out here now, it is not to make friends."

On the ramp, Dane Jr. spreads his arms wide, letting the boos rain down. He looks up at the big screen replaying his

name, then down at the ring, locking eyes with Chris Ross.

Ross' expression goes from grim focus to outright disgust.

Chris Ross: "You gotta be kidding me."

Dane Jr. taps two fingers against the WrestleZone title hanging off his chest, then points one of them straight at Ross, mouthing off with a smirk the cameras barely pick up.

John Phillips: "You can feel the history between those two from here. They practically killed each other in that streetfight, and now the champ is strutting out here while Team Ross is on the brink."

In the opposing corner, Maxx Mayhem's grin somehow widens.

Maxx Mayhem: "OHHH, LOOK, ROSS! THEY SENT YOU A GIFT!"

Malachi, Kaida, and Silas all glance toward the stage, calculating. Nobody is sure which way the scales are about to tip—only that a brand-new wild card just walked into an already rigged deck.

Mark Bravo: "Is Eric Dane Jr. here to help Chris Ross? To help Maxx Mayhem? Or is he just here because he heard the cameras were still rolling and he couldn't stand not being on them?"

Dane Jr. starts sauntering down the ramp, WrestleZone Championship bouncing against his chest, soaking in every ounce of attention. In the ring, Chris Ross flexes his taped fingers, eyes burning a hole straight through the kid who once tried to build his name off Ross' broken body.

John Phillips: "The odds were already stacked against Chris Ross... and now, with Eric Dane Jr. walking toward that ring, Survivor just found yet another way to get more complicated."

Eric Dane Jr. saunters the rest of the way down the ramp, hops up onto the apron with a spring in his step, and drapes the WrestleZone Championship over the top turnbuckle like it's a prop in his personal music video. He lays one hand casually across the top rope and leans in toward the ring.

John Phillips: "Eric Dane Jr. is on the apron... there is no way..."

Mark Bravo: "Are we about to see the WrestleZone Champion tag into SURVIVOR?!"

Inside the ropes, Chris Ross and Malachi Cross stand dead center, the chaos momentarily frozen. Ross glares over at Dane Jr., jaw working.

Eric Dane Jr.: "C'mon, old man... hit continue."

Ross looks out at the wreckage of Team Ross—Jarvis gone, Fantasmas down, Madman desperate. He curses under his breath, then steps toward his own corner, eyes never leaving Dane Jr.

John Phillips: "They went to war, they tried to end each other's careers... and now Chris Ross is staring at a man who could be his salvation."

Ross and Dane Jr. get nose-to-nose over the top rope, trading heated words the cameras can't quite pick up. Dane Jr. smirks, tapping two fingers against his own temple like he's already out-thought everyone in the building.

Mark Bravo: "You can feel the hate from here, but Ross doesn't have a lot of options."

Finally, with a snarl, Ross slaps Dane Jr.'s outstretched hand.

John Phillips: "He tagged him! Eric Dane Jr. is officially the fifth member of Team Ross!"

Dane Jr. explodes over the top rope with a springboard, landing in the ring like a kid who just got handed a controller. Malachi steps forward, arms up for a lock-up—

—Dane Jr. jukes left, hits the ropes, and comes back with a flying cannonball into Malachi's chest, bowling him over.

Mark Bravo: "First move and he's already throwing his whole body like it's a highlight reel!"

Malachi rolls to a knee, clearly annoyed. Dane Jr. doesn't give him time to breathe. He charges, grabs Malachi's wrist and whips him to the corner, following with a blazing running knee strike that snaps Malachi's head back against the turnbuckle.

Malachi stumbles out and eats a snap suplex for his trouble, Eric popping back up and throwing his arms out like he just stuck the landing in the Olympics.

Eric Dane Jr.: "You're welcome!"

Kaida Shizuka slips through the ropes to cut him off. Dane Jr. doesn't even wait. He hits the ropes again and blasts her with a flying forearm that sends her tumbling back to the apron. Silas Grimm reaches in for a grab—

—Dane Jr. baseball-slides between Silas' legs, pops up behind him and hits a quick rolling elbow to the back of the head that knocks Grimm off the apron to the floor.

John Phillips: "Eric Dane Jr. is coming in 100% fresh and turning Team Mayhem into bowling pins!"

On the far side, Maxx Mayhem climbs back onto the apron, cackling—until Dane Jr. charges, springboards off the middle rope, and nails a springboard dropkick that blasts Maxx off the apron and back into the barricade.

Mark Bravo: "He just knocked the King of Chaos off his throne!"

The crowd is buzzing now, half booing the ego, half losing it for the chaos. In the ring, Malachi tries to rise again, shaking the cobwebs. Dane Jr. stalks him, then peppers him with sharp chops and elbows, driving him back to the ropes.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Welcome to the EDJ show!"

He Irish whips Malachi across. On the rebound, Dane Jr. scoops him up with surprising power, spins, and plants him with a crisp tilt-a-whirl slam. Malachi clutches his back as he hits.

John Phillips: "Whether you like him or not, Eric Dane Jr. is tearing into Team Mayhem like this is his own personal sizzle reel."

On the apron, Chris Ross watches, eyes narrowed, chest still heaving. He doesn't look happy about it—but he can't deny the ring just got a whole lot less lonely.

Mark Bravo: "Ross might hate this kid's guts, but right now, all that matters is that every time Eric Dane Jr. flips, twists, or crashes into somebody, it's one less second that Chris Ross is alone against the wolves."

Dane Jr. kips up, arms wide, soaking in the chaos, the WrestleZone Champion standing tall in the middle of Survivor as Team Mayhem struggles to regroup around him.

Eric Dane Jr. stands tall in the center of the ring, bouncing on his heels, as Malachi Cross struggles back to a knee. On the apron behind him, Chris Ross clenches his fists, and suddenly—

—two gloved hands grab the edge of the apron beside him.

El Fantasma Oscuro I and II drag themselves up, bodies battered, masks askew, but very much alive. Madman Szalinski practically loses his mind, slapping their backs as they reclaim their spots on the apron.

John Phillips: "Somehow, some way, both El Fantasmas are back on the apron! Team Ross is whole again—well, as whole as you can be with the UTA Champion taken out!"

Mark Bravo: "Jarvis Valentine's gone, but with Eric Dane Jr. randomly joining the cause and the ghosts back from the

dead? This match is officially back on track."

Malachi stumbles up in front of Dane Jr. Eric, smirking, glances back and slaps the nearest outstretched hand—

TAG!

El Fantasma Oscuro I vaults over the ropes with a springboard, landing in front of Malachi to a big pop. Malachi swings a lariat—Fantasma ducks, hits the ropes, and comes back with a low dropkick right to Malachi's knee, sending the priest of violence crashing to all fours.

Fantasma I pops up, tags his brother.

TAG!

El Fantasma Oscuro II slingshots in with a slingshot dropkick right to Malachi's chest, flattening him. The crowd roars as the twins move like mirrored ghosts.

John Phillips: "Listen to this place! The Fantasmas are turning Survivor into a horror show for Team Mayhem!"

From the apron, Silas Grimm slaps Malachi's shoulder.

TAG!

Silas steps through the ropes, eyes cold, head tilted. El Fantasma II circles, darting in with a palm strike attempt—Silas snatches the arm, twisting into a vicious hammerlock and driving a short knee into the ribs.

Mark Bravo: "Silas Grimm is a surgeon in there. He doesn't care about the flash, he cares about the pain."

Silas wrenches the arm, rolling through into a cravate and snapping Fantasma II down into a brutal cravate suplex. Fantasma lands hard, clutching his neck. Silas slithers up behind him, planting a knee between the shoulders and yanking back on the chin, staring dead-eyed at Ross and Dane Jr. on the apron.

John Phillips: "Silas Grimm trying to grind the air out of El Fantasma Oscuro II, and by extension, grind the momentum out of Team Ross."

Silas drags Fantasma II to the corner and tags Kaida Shizuka.

TAG!

Kaida steps in, emotionless, and immediately drills a shoot kick into Fantasma's exposed ribs. Another. Another. She yanks him up, whips him to the ropes, and on the rebound snaps him over with a crisp Snap Saito Suplex, dropping him high on his shoulders.

Mark Bravo: "Kaida Shizuka is trying to fold this man up like bad origami."

Kaida reaches down to pull Fantasma II up again—but he suddenly fires a blind back elbow to the midsection. Another. He spins, hits a quick tilt-a-whirl headscissors that sends Kaida tumbling toward the Team Ross corner.

Fantasma II dives and slaps his brother's hand.

TAG!

El Fantasma I bursts in, springboarding to the top rope and launching with a springboard moonsault that wipes Kaida out just as she rises. He hooks the leg—

ONE!

TWO—

Silas Grimm storms in and stomps the cover apart, dragging Fantasma I up by the mask strings and clubbing him across the back. The ref forces Silas back, but the damage is done.

John Phillips: "Silas Grimm not about to let Kaida go out that easy."

Silas tags himself in on Kaida's shoulder as she rolls to the apron, shaking out the cobwebs.

TAG!

Silas stalks El Fantasma I, hooks him under the arms for Black Ritual, but Fantasma twists out mid-rotation, lands behind him, and shoves Silas chest-first into the Ross corner.

Silas bounces off the buckles backward—

SMACK! Chris Ross reaches over and clubs him with a huge forearm from the apron, sending Silas stumbling.

Mark Bravo: "Ross made sure he left a calling card on that one!"

Silas staggers into the middle of the ring where El Fantasma II is already perched on the top rope on one side, and El Fantasma I is scaling the opposite corner.

John Phillips: "Uh-oh. This is about to get supernatural."

Silas drops to one knee, dazed, as the twins motion to each other.

El Fantasma Oscuro I flies first—

—Phantom Spiral! A corkscrew plancha crashes into Silas from behind, knocking him forward to his hands and knees.

Silas tries to push up—

—and El Fantasma Oscuro II launches from the opposite side, hitting a somersault cutter across Silas' jaw that spikes him to the mat.

Mark Bravo: "Double impact from the dead men walking!"

Fantasma II scrambles, hooks Silas under the head and arm, and with Fantasma I helping crank the neck, they snap down into a vicious double-team variation of the Veil Breaker.

Fantasma I dives into the cover, hooking both legs as Fantasma II shields them from the corner.

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

DING! DING! DING!

John Phillips: "They got him! El Fantasma Oscuro I and II just eliminated Silas Grimm!"

Silas' body lies twisted on the canvas as the ref waves him out. Kaida drops from the apron, frustration flashing for a heartbeat before her face returns to stone. On the floor, Maxx Mayhem slaps the apron in anger, shouting toward what's left of his team.

Mark Bravo: "That's one body down for Team Mayhem, and it happened fast. This is exactly what Team Ross needed—momentum, numbers, and a reminder that the ghosts can still kill you from any angle."

In the Ross corner, Chris Ross, Eric Dane Jr., and Madman Szalinski all shout encouragement as the Fantasmas rise, arms outstretched like specters over the fallen Silas.

John Phillips: "We are now looking at a very different landscape: Team Ross back to four men—Ross, Dane Jr., and both El Fantasmas—against Maxx Mayhem, Malachi Cross, Kaida Shizuka, and Kaine. Survivor is far from over, but Team Mayhem just took their first big loss."

Silas Grimm's body is rolled under the bottom rope as the announcement of his elimination fades. In the chaos of the Team Mayhem corner, a taped hand slaps Malachi's shoulder.

TAG!

Kaine vaults over the top rope, face paint cracked with sweat, eyes blazing. He lands in a crouch, pounding the mat once before snapping his gaze to the legal man—El Fantasma Oscuro I, still catching his breath from the last exchange.

John Phillips: "Here comes Kaine, the Revenant himself, and he looks like he's ready to turn this into a warzone."

Mark Bravo: "If there's anybody in this match who doesn't care how much pain he takes to give it back, it's that lunatic right there."

Fantasma I steps forward, raising his guard. Kaine doesn't waste a second—he explodes out of the corner with a blistering pump kick that caves in the masked man's chest and sends him rolling back into the buckles.

Kaine follows, crashing in with a rapid-fire barrage—body shots, forearms, then a stiff flying knee strike to the side of the head that snaps Fantasma I's neck over the top turnbuckle.

John Phillips: "Good lord, that knee might've just shut the lights off!"

Fantasma I slumps to a seated position. Kaine hits the opposite ropes, roaring as he rebounds and crushes him with a running senton, all 210 pounds driving through ribs and spine.

Mark Bravo: "That's the thing about Kaine—every move looks like it hurts him almost as much, and he just doesn't care."

Kaine drags Fantasma I up by the mask, shoving him chest-first into the Ross corner. He swings an elbow—
—but Fantasma I ducks at the last second and slaps his brother's hand.

TAG!

El Fantasma Oscuro II springs to the top rope in one motion and launches in with a high missile dropkick that catches Kaine flush in the jaw, staggering him back.

John Phillips: "Blind tag! The other Fantasma's in, and he just turned Kaine's lights to flicker mode!"

Fantasma II kips up, hits the ropes, and rebounds with a slick low dropkick to Kaine's knee, buckling him. He follows with a sharp rope-walk hurricanrana, sprinting up the middle rope and snapping Kaine over to a roar from the crowd.

Mark Bravo: "The ghosts are flying! This is what happens when you let them get a second wind!"

Kaine rolls to his knees, shaking his head. Fantasma II charges, going for another tilt-a-whirl—
—but Kaine catches him mid-rotation, muscling him up onto his shoulders.

John Phillips: "Uh-oh. Uh-oh!"

Kaine lets out a guttural roar and plants Fantasma II with a nasty snap dragon suplex, folding him up on the back of his head and neck. Fantasma II bounces, then flops onto his back, arms splayed.

Mark Bravo: "Kaine just snapped him in half!"

The Revenant doesn't stop. He drags Fantasma II by the wrist toward the corner, then whips him chest-first into the opposite buckles. Fantasma staggers back out, dazed, barely on his feet.

Kaine points to the rafters, voice raw.

Kaine: "DEAD BUT ALIVE!"

The crowd roars in a mixture of awe and dread.

Kaine charges, boots the ropes, and in one fluid motion springs to the top turnbuckle, launching off with a brutal, crushing Grave Digger—a double stomp that drives both heels straight through Fantasma II's chest and sternum.

John Phillips: "Grave Digger! Center of the ring!"

Fantasma II's body jackknives on impact before collapsing flat. Kaine lands, stumbles a step from the force, then drops into a cover, forearm grinding across the mask.

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

DING! DING! DING!

Mark Bravo: "And just like that, one of the dead gets buried for real. El Fantasma Oscuro II has been eliminated!"

The referee signals to the timekeeper as Kaine rises, chest heaving, a manic glint in his eyes. He glares at the Ross corner where Chris Ross, Eric Dane Jr., El Fantasma I, and Madman Szalinski all watch with clenched jaws.

John Phillips: "We're back to three for Team Ross—Ross, Dane Jr., and one surviving Fantasma—against Maxx Mayhem, Malachi Cross, Kaida Shizuka, and the man who just stomped a ghost into the mat, Kaine."

Mark Bravo: "Nobody said surviving Survivor was gonna be pretty. Kaine just proved it the hard way."

Kaine rises from the mat, chest heaving, staring down at the fallen body of El Fantasma Oscuro II as the referee ushers the eliminated twin out under the bottom rope.

In the Ross corner, El Fantasma Oscuro I suddenly vaults over the top rope, fury in every step. The crowd comes alive as he rushes Kaine from behind.

John Phillips: "The surviving Fantasma is not waiting around—he wants payback for his brother right now!"

Fantasma I blasts Kaine with a low dropkick to the back of the knee, sending the Revenant stumbling forward. He hits the ropes and rebounds with a sharp running dropkick to the side of the head, dropping Kaine to all fours.

The ghostly luchador wastes no time. He sprints to the corner, springboards up, and comes off with a high springboard moonsault that crashes across Kaine's back and shoulders, flattening him to the canvas.

Mark Bravo: "That's the receipt right there! You take one ghost out, the other one starts haunting you personally!"

Fantasma I grabs a handful of hair, dragging Kaine up. He whips him to the ropes, drops low for a back body drop—but Kaine skids to a stop and drives a stiff kick straight up into Fantasma's face.

John Phillips: "Kaine puts on the brakes!"

Fantasma lurches upright, dazed. Kaine charges, smashing him with a vicious running senton that crushes him to the mat again. Both men scramble to their feet; Fantasma staggers to the corner, looking for another springboard.

He climbs to the middle rope, but Kaine is already in motion—he sprints in and drills him with a high running apron knee-style strike right to the ribs, folding Fantasma over the rope.

Mark Bravo: "Kaine just cut him out of the air! That knee took the wind and the soul right out of him!"

With Fantasma slumped in the ropes, Kaine grabs him around the waist and yanks him back into the ring with a nasty snap dragon suplex, sending the masked man crashing high on the neck and shoulders.

Kaine rolls to his corner, slapping the outstretched hand of Kaida Shizuka.

TAG!

John Phillips: "And now Kaida Shizuka is tagged in to finish what Kaine started."

Kaida steps through the ropes, face expressionless. Fantasma I struggles to all fours—and Kaida immediately lashes out with a savage shoot kick to the thigh, buckling his leg.

Another kick. Another. A final roundhouse to the back that echoes through the arena and sends Fantasma collapsing to his stomach.

Mark Bravo: "Kaida's not here for the theatrics—she's here to carve this man up piece by piece."

Kaida drags him up by the mask strings, whips him to the ropes, and on the rebound snaps him over with a crisp Snap Saito Suplex, dumping him on the back of his head. She floats over, hooks a leg, but deliberately breaks her own cover at one.

John Phillips: "Kaida Shizuka just pulled him up herself. This is punishment."

Kaida pulls Fantasma to a seated position and drives repeated shoot kicks into his spine, each one snapping his body forward. She then hits the ropes and returns with a sharp sliding single-leg dropkick right to the side of his head, flattening him.

She doesn't taunt. She doesn't yell. She simply stands over him, breathing calmly, then yanks him up one last time.

Kaida whips him hard into the corner, follows in with the Rising Dragon—a pop-up high-angle knee strike that detonates under his jaw and ricochets his head off the turnbuckle.

Mark Bravo: "Rising Dragon! She got all of it!"

Fantasma staggers out of the corner on rubber legs. Kaida steps in behind him, hooks the arms, and in one smooth, merciless motion plants him with the Kusanagi Driver, spiking him in the center of the ring.

John Phillips: "Kusanagi Driver! Dead center!"

Kaida folds him up tight into a cover, her body weight pressed down across his chest.

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

DING! DING! DING!

Mark Bravo: "And the last Fantasma is gone. Kaida Shizuka just eliminated El Fantasma Oscuro I."

Madman Szalinski slumps against the apron outside, head in his hands as officials move in to help the second ghostly luchador out of the ring.

John Phillips: "Team Ross is right back where they never wanted to be—down in numbers. It's now Chris Ross and Eric Dane Jr. against Maxx Mayhem, Kaine, Kaida Shizuka, and Malachi Cross."

Mark Bravo: "The ghosts did their damage, but Team Mayhem's monsters are still very much alive."

Kaida rises without celebration, eyes drifting to the Ross corner where Chris Ross and Eric Dane Jr. watch grimly, knowing the margin for error just got razor thin.

El Fantasma Oscuro I rolls under the bottom rope to join his brother on the floor, both men clutching at necks and ribs as officials help them toward the back. Madman Szalinski stands between them and the ring for a moment, wild eyes darting from the ghosts to Chris Ross.

Madman shakes his head, mouthing "I'm sorry" and slapping a hand over his heart. He gives Ross a tight nod, then throws an arm around each Fantasma as the three of them make the slow walk up the ramp together.

John Phillips: "Madman Szalinski is leading the Fantasmas to the back, apologizing to Chris Ross as he goes—he knows how badly Ross needed them in this fight."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, but there's no time for apologies now. It's down to Ross and Eric Dane Jr. against four hungry wolves. This is where careers get shortened."

In the Ross corner, Chris Ross and Eric Dane Jr. share a look. No words—just a grim nod between two men who don't particularly like each other but need each other now.

Ross steps through the ropes, volunteering himself to face the music. Across the ring, Kaida Shizuka remains the legal competitor, expression unreadable.

As Ross clears the ropes, Kaida surges forward with a sharp low kick to the lead leg, then another to the inside thigh, trying to chop the bigger man down. Ross grits his teeth, taking the shots, then swings a wild forearm that Kaida ducks under, answering with a rolling elbow to the jaw.

John Phillips: "Kaida opening up with those shoot-style strikes, trying to dissect Ross before he can turn this into a brawl."

Ross stumbles back a step, shakes it off, then steps in and shoves Kaida hard in the chest, sending her into the ropes. On the rebound she goes for a running knee—but Ross catches her mid-air, wraps both arms around her waist, and thunders her to the canvas with a huge spinebuster.

Mark Bravo: "And that's the problem with trying to out-tech a tank—eventually the tank runs you over."

Ross doesn't let up. He mounts Kaida and rains down mounted forearm shots, every thud echoing off her guard as she tries to cover up. The referee warns, but Ross snarls right through it, driving one last hammering shot before yanking her up by the hair.

He muscled her into the corner, rattling the buckles with a barrage of shoulder thrusts to the midsection, then hoists her and launches her across the ring with a high-angle overhead suplex. Kaida crashes hard and rolls to a knee, coughing.

John Phillips: "Chris Ross is imposing his will now. This is the Ross who made his name ending nights and ending careers."

Kaida pushes to her feet, stubborn as ever. Ross charges, looking for the Side Walk Smash, but Kaida ducks under his arm and fires a desperate shoot kick to the liver, then another to the leg. She hits the ropes, looking for a momentum shift—

—Ross cuts her off with a brutal lariat that flips her inside out.

Mark Bravo: "She was a half-second from turning that around and he just deleted her."

Ross stands over Kaida, eyes burning, then looks back at his corner. Eric Dane Jr. is already on the middle rope, arm extended, yelling to get in.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Tag me in, I'll finish the level!"

Ross glares at him for a beat, breathing hard... then stomps Kaida's hand, drags her toward the corner, and slaps Dane Jr.'s outstretched palm.

TAG!

John Phillips: "And here comes Eric Dane Jr. to pick the bones."

Dane Jr. springs over the top rope with a little flourish, immediately hitting the far ropes and bouncing back with a snapping running basement dropkick to Kaida's temple as she tries to sit up.

He pops to his feet, theatrically dusting his hands off before yanking Kaida up by the wrist.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Welcome to the highlight reel."

He whips her into the corner, follows in with a sharp flying forearm, then monkey-flips her out toward the center of the ring. Kaida lands seated, dazed. Dane hits the ropes again, rebounds, and nails a stiff running knee strike between the shoulder blades, sending her sprawling forward.

Mark Bravo: "This kid's ego is unbearable, but right now his offense is exactly what Team Ross needs."

Dane Jr. heads for the nearest corner, climbing to the top rope. Kaida rolls onto her back, trying to blink the stars away. Eric stands tall, arms wide, basking in the mixed reaction.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Daddy's watching!"

He launches off with a crisp standing Shooting Star Press-style arc from the top—coming down hard across Kaida's ribs and chest. He stays hooked in the landing, one arm trapping the leg, the other posting on the mat.

John Phillips: "Picture-perfect Shooting Star crash from Eric Dane Jr.!"

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

DING! DING! DING!

Mark Bravo: "Kaida Shizuka is eliminated! Team Ross just evened things up a little!"

Dane Jr. rolls off, popping to his feet and throwing his arms wide like he just cleared a boss fight. In the opposite corner, Kaine and Malachi Cross seethe on the apron while Maxx Mayhem bangs on the turnbuckle, yelling at them to keep it together.

John Phillips: "We're now down to Maxx Mayhem, Kaine, and Malachi Cross for Team Mayhem against Chris Ross and Eric Dane Jr. for Team Ross. It's still a numbers advantage for Mayhem's side, but the tide just turned again."

Chris Ross steps through the ropes to join Dane Jr. in the ring for a moment. They don't celebrate. They just stand side by side, staring across the battlefield at what's left of Team Mayhem, knowing this war is far from over.

Eric Dane Jr. is still mid-smirk from pinning Kaida when the temperature in the ring drops.

Malachi Cross steps through the ropes without waiting for a tag, eyes like tombstones, and beside him, Kaine slides in under the bottom rope. The referee shouts for order, but there's none coming.

John Phillips: "Oh, come on! Malachi and Kaine are both in there now, and the referee's lost control of this thing!"

Malachi cuts Dane Jr. down with a savage Yakuza kick that nearly takes his head off, while Kaine barrels across the ring and diving cannonballs into the corner, crushing Chris Ross off the apron and spilling him to the floor.

Mark Bravo: "That's one way to answer a momentum shift—just send in the undead hit squad!"

Dane Jr. tries to rise, clutching his jaw, but Malachi snatches him in a Muay Thai clinch and drives a trio of brutal knees into his ribs before hurling him to the mat with a stiff falling gutwrench slam.

On the outside, Ross shakes it off and hauls himself back to the apron. Kaine sees him, hits the ropes, and launches with a wild top-rope clothesline to the outside, wiping Ross out again and crashing into the barricade himself.

John Phillips: "Kaine just turned himself into a human missile! Bodies everywhere!"

Inside the ring, Malachi stalks Dane Jr., arms folded like in prayer, before yanking him up into a front facelock, looking for Purgatory Clutch. He cinches in the arm triangle—

—and Dane Jr. suddenly explodes, driving Malachi backward into the neutral corner with a desperate burst of power. The hold breaks as Malachi's spine collides with the turnbuckles.

Mark Bravo: "Say what you will about his cardio, the kid's still got a burst or two left."

Malachi staggers forward—right into a desperate rolling elbow from Dane Jr. that rocks him back a step. Before he can reset, the crowd roars as Chris Ross slides back into the ring, murder in his eyes.

John Phillips: "And here comes Chris Ross again! The Boss is back on the clock!"

Kaine rolls under the bottom rope to join Malachi, and suddenly it's a full-on two-on-two brawl. Kaine swings at Ross—Ross blocks and bites his forehead, sending Kaine reeling as the crowd gasps.

Mark Bravo: "He said it earlier: this isn't about a three-count. Ross is trying to leave people in ambulances!"

Ross boots Kaine in the gut and hurls him chest-first into the ropes. On the rebound, Ross launches him with a massive overhead belly-to-belly suplex, sending Kaine skidding toward the corner.

Across the ring, Malachi tries to decapitate Dane Jr. with another Yakuza kick—Dane ducks, springs to the ropes, and rebounds with a snapping flying knee to the jaw that staggers the priest of violence into the path of Ross.

Ross steps in and spinebusters Malachi into the canvas so hard the ring shakes.

John Phillips: "Massive spinebuster! Team Ross just turned the tide in a heartbeat!"

Malachi rolls under the bottom rope to the floor to save himself, clutching his back. Kaine tries to rise in the corner—Dane Jr. charges, hits a running high knee to the side of the head, and Ross follows by clotheslining Kaine clear over the top rope to the outside.

Outside, Maxx Mayhem is losing his mind, pacing and screaming, yanking at his hair as he sees his monsters getting bounced around.

Maxx Mayhem: "GET YOUR ASSES UP! THIS IS SURVIVOR! MOVE!"

Mark Bravo: "Maxx Mayhem is absolutely unhinged right now, and honestly? This is the most relatable he's ever been."

Maxx slams both fists on the apron, then decides he's had enough. He slides into the ring wild-eyed, not bothering with a tag, and charges straight at Ross and Dane Jr.

John Phillips: "And here comes Maxx Mayhem, the architect of all this chaos—"

Ross and Dane Jr. exchange a quick glance—just a nod—and then move as one.

Maxx swings a wild discus elbow at Ross—Ross ducks and scoops Maxx up across his shoulders in one smooth motion. Dane Jr. hits the ropes at full sprint.

Ross charges forward and plants Maxx with a huge Running Muscle Buster-style slam, driving him to the mat—

—and as Maxx's back hits, Dane Jr. launches into a crashing running cannonball senton across Maxx's chest and ribs.

John Phillips: "What a combination! Ross with the slam, Dane Jr. with the exclamation point!"

Mark Bravo: "You wanted solidarity? There it is. Chris Ross and Eric Dane Jr. just hit Maxx Mayhem with a co-op combo straight out of a boss fight!"

Maxx rolls to the ropes, coughing, clutching his ribs, eyes wide with equal parts pain and fury. On the floor, Malachi and Kaine drag themselves upright, staring into the ring at the unlikely united front of Ross and Dane Jr.

Standing shoulder-to-shoulder in the center of the ring, battered but defiant, Ross and Dane Jr. glare back at what's left of Team Mayhem as the crowd surges to its feet.

John Phillips: "It's down to three for Team Mayhem—Maxx Mayhem, Kaine, and Malachi Cross—against just Chris Ross and Eric Dane Jr., but right now, Team Ross is the only side standing tall."

Mark Bravo: "We knew Survivor was gonna be chaos—but I don't think anyone expected this kind of co-op between The Boss and the Nepo Kid."

Maxx Mayhem spills under the bottom rope, clutching his ribs and rolling to the floor. On the outside, Malachi Cross and Kaine drag themselves upright, shaken by the sudden surge from Team Ross.

The referee shouts for order, waving off the chaos. Malachi slides halfway into the ring—but Kaine slaps him on the back and dives in first.

TAG!

John Phillips: "And the official is calling that a tag—Kaine is the legal man for Team Mayhem now."

Eric Dane Jr. exhales hard and ducks back out to the apron, slapping the top rope once before taking his place on the apron, one hand out for a future tag.

Mark Bravo: "Dane Jr. heading back to the corner—looks like it's time for The Boss to collect another debt."

In the center of the ring, Chris Ross cracks his neck from side to side, staring down Kaine as the Revenant straightens up, pounding his own chest.

Kaine: "DEAD... BUT ALIVE!"

Kaine charges, swinging a wild lariat. Ross ducks, hits the ropes, and comes back with a brutal running forearm that staggers Kaine but doesn't drop him. Kaine roars, firing back with a stiff pump kick that glances off Ross's jaw.

Ross stumbles to a knee, wipes his mouth, and then laughs—a low, humorless sound. He surges up and bats Kaine's next strike away, burying a knee into the gut before hooking him around the waist.

With a guttural shout, Ross launches Kaine overhead with a nasty release German suplex, folding him up on the back of his neck. Kaine flops to his stomach, arms sprawled.

John Phillips: "German suplex from Ross! He just spiked Kaine like a lawn dart!"

Kaine somehow pushes to all fours, stubborn, refusing to stay down. Ross stalks him from behind, eyes narrowed.

Mark Bravo: "You'd think after everything tonight, somebody would tell Kaine that 'keep getting up' is a bad life choice."

Ross steps in, grabs Kaine by the back of the neck and the waistband, and yanks him upright just to slam him face-first back down with the Side Walk Smash, bouncing his skull off the canvas.

John Phillips: "Side Walk Smash! Ross just drilled him into the mat!"

Kaine's body goes slack. Ross doesn't hesitate—he peels him off the mat, shoves his head between his legs, and with a roar hoists him up for one more exclamation point.

He flips Kaine into position and plants him with Welcome to Harrisburg, driving him down in the center of the ring with all the weight and rage he's built up over the entire match.

Mark Bravo: "Welcome. To. Harrisburg. Kaine just got stamped and mailed, buddy!"

Ross stays on him, hooking the far leg deep and pressing his forearm hard across Kaine's jaw.

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

DING! DING! DING!

John Phillips: "Kaine is eliminated! Chris Ross just cut Team Mayhem's numbers down again!"

On the floor, Maxx Mayhem slams his fists against the apron, screaming in frustration as Malachi Cross stares coldly into the ring, expression unreadable.

Mark Bravo: "And just like that, we're down to Maxx Mayhem and Malachi Cross versus Chris Ross and Eric Dane Jr. The odds are finally evened up—and you can feel this whole arena buzzing for what comes next."

Ross pushes off Kaine's body and rises, chest heaving. He glances back to his corner where Dane Jr. is bouncing on the bottom rope, nodding. Ross gives him a curt nod in return, then turns his glare to the remaining monsters on the Mayhem side.

Malachi Cross steps through the ropes, the arena light catching the cold sheen in his eyes. He rolls his shoulders once, slow and deliberate, then fixes his gaze on Chris Ross.

John Phillips: "And here comes Malachi Cross, the priest of punishment, back into this match."

Ross stares right back at him... then turns to his corner and slaps the outstretched hand of Eric Dane Jr.

TAG!

Mark Bravo: "Oh, Ross wants none of that sermon just yet—he's sending in the Nepo Kid!"

Dane Jr. pops over the top rope with a cocky hop, shaking out his arms as he steps toward the center of the ring. Malachi doesn't move. He simply lowers his head, crosses his arms over his chest in a chilling, ritualistic gesture, then looks up through his brow at the WrestleZone Champion.

Eric Dane Jr.: "You picked the wrong mini-boss, spooky."

Dane feints in for a lock-up—then slaps Malachi across the face.

CROWD: "OHHHH!"

John Phillips: "Oh come on!"

Malachi barely reacts. His head turns with the slap... then slowly centers back on Dane, expression unchanged. Suddenly he explodes forward with a barrage of palm strikes to the chest and jaw, backing Dane into the corner.

He snatches Dane into a Muay Thai clinch and unleashes a vicious series of knees to the ribs, each one knocking the air right out of the cocky champion.

Mark Bravo: "You wanna talk about bad decisions? Slapping Malachi Cross is at the top of that list."

Malachi whips Dane across the ring; Dane reverses. Malachi hits the buckles hard but bursts out with a sudden running back elbow that catches Dane clean on the cheekbone and sends him staggering to a knee.

Malachi stalks behind him, wraps the waist, and muscles him up into a high, hanging stalling spinebuster that rattles the canvas.

John Phillips: "Spinebuster by Malachi! He just planted the WrestleZone Champion!"

Malachi covers, forearm grinding across Dane's face.

ONE!

TWO!

Dane kicks out, twisting his shoulder off the mat.

Mark Bravo: "Still life in the kid. He knows if he goes down here, Team Ross is right back on the brink."

Malachi doesn't argue. He simply drags Dane up by the wrist and drives a short, sharp knee into the midsection, then threads the arm and snaps him over with a tight arm wringer takedown, rolling seamlessly into a grounded hold and digging a knee between the shoulder blades.

Dane grimaces, reaching for the ropes as Malachi wrenches back on the arm, testing joints, testing patience.

John Phillips: "Malachi Cross is dissecting the WrestleZone Champion now, slowing this match to his pace."

Ross pounds the top turnbuckle in the Team Ross corner.

Chris Ross: "Get up, kid! You wanted to be a star, move!"

Dane digs a boot into the canvas, scooting inch by inch until he manages to swing a leg under the bottom rope. The referee calls for the break.

Referee: "Break it, Malachi! One! Two! Three—"

Malachi releases at four, rising slowly. He backs off a step, then snaps a brutal soccer kick to Dane's ribs the moment he tries to stand, folding him over again.

Mark Bravo: "He broke at four, technically legal. Just absolutely merciless."

Malachi pulls him up into a front facelock, walking him toward the Mayhem corner—Maxx Mayhem reaches out, roaring for the tag.

Dane suddenly twists, drops low, and drives Malachi back-first into the Ross corner instead, smashing him into the turnbuckles.

John Phillips: "Dane Jr. reverses and buys himself a window!"

With Malachi stunned in the corner, Dane peppers him with rapidfire elbows to the side of the head, then backflips out, landing on his feet and hitting the ropes. He rebounds and nails a sharp running dropkick to the chest, pinning Malachi against the buckles.

The crowd buzzes as Dane pops up, slapping his own chest and pointing to the top rope.

Eric Dane Jr.: "You want a star? Watch this!"

He scrambles up the turnbuckles, turning to face the ring as Malachi stumbles two steps out from the corner.

Dane launches with a gorgeous springboard-style Shooting Star press—

—and Malachi steps aside at the last heartbeat.

Dane crashes and burns chest-first into the canvas, the air exploding out of him. He writhes, clutching his ribs.

Mark Bravo: "He went high-risk and got absolutely nothing!"

Malachi kneels beside him, one hand on Dane's shoulder like a false blessing, the other cradling his head.

John Phillips: "Uh-oh... we've seen this posture before."

Slowly, Malachi threads his arm under Dane's neck, looking to cinch in the Purgatory Clutch arm triangle again, this

time on the mat.

Dane feels it coming and frantically kicks his legs, twisting just enough to slip his free arm between Malachi's grip. He manages to roll them both, stacking Malachi's shoulders for a quick cradle.

Referee: "ONE! TWO—"

Malachi powers out, but Dane uses the momentum to roll toward his corner.

John Phillips: "Brilliant counter by the kid! He didn't catch him, but he bought himself just enough separation—"

Malachi dives for an ankle. Dane lunges and just manages to slap the outstretched hand of Chris Ross.

TAG!

Mark Bravo: "And here comes The Boss again!"

Ross explodes through the ropes, leveling Malachi with a running clothesline that nearly turns him inside out as the crowd roars, the war for Survivor raging on.

Malachi Cross bounces off the canvas from that clothesline, rolling to his knees on instinct alone. Chris Ross looms over him, chest heaving, eyes burning.

John Phillips: "Malachi Cross is still somehow moving after that lariat—"

Ross steps in and boots him square in the face, snapping his head back. Malachi slumps to all fours. Ross doesn't hesitate; he yanks him up by the waistband and the back of the head, muscling him into position.

He hooks the arm, spins him, and drives a savage 12 Gauge headbutt into Malachi's skull. The sickening crack echoes as Malachi drops to one knee, glassy-eyed.

Mark Bravo: "Ripcord headbutt! 12 Gauge landed flush!"

Ross hauls him back up, shoves his head between his legs, and hoists him high. The arena rises with him as he plants Malachi in the center of the ring with a thunderous Welcome to Harrisburg.

John Phillips: "Welcome to Harrisburg! Ross hit all of that!"

Malachi's body sprawls, arms out. Ross doesn't waste a second—he hooks the far leg, pressing his forearm hard across Malachi's jaw.

Referee: "ONE! TWO! THREE!"

DING! DING! DING!

Mark Bravo: "Malachi Cross is eliminated!"

John Phillips: "And now it's down to exactly what this war has always been about—Chris Ross and Maxx Mayhem!"

Ross shoves Malachi's lifeless weight aside and rolls to his knees, sucking air. The camera pans to the Mayhem corner—empty. Then the hard cam catches movement at ringside.

Maxx Mayhem slides under the bottom rope, still clutching his ribs, the wild grin already spreading across his face. He pops to his feet and starts cackling, arms wide, drinking in the chaos.

Maxx Mayhem: "YOU HEAR 'EM, ROSS?! THEY WANT BLOOD!"

Mark Bravo: "Of course he's laughing. Of course."

Maxx paces in a crooked circle, eyes never leaving Ross. Behind Ross, on the apron, Eric Dane Jr. has one hand on the top rope, the other clutching the WrestleZone Championship. He looks from Ross to Maxx, then back again, jaw

tight.

John Phillips: "Officially, it's two-on-one right now: Chris Ross and Eric Dane Jr. versus Maxx Mayhem. Team Ross has the numbers—"

Ross pushes to his feet, sweat dripping, every breath a growl. He turns, looks up at Dane Jr. on the apron. The crowd buzzes, sensing something.

Chris Ross: "I got this."

Dane Jr. blinks, pointing at himself like he didn't hear right.

Eric Dane Jr.: "You sure?"

Ross steps closer to the ropes, never taking his eyes off Maxx.

Chris Ross: "I said... I got this."

For a beat, the two stare at each other—former enemies turned uneasy allies, now standing at a crossroads. Then, slowly, Eric Dane Jr. nods.

He steps through the ropes, drops down to the floor, and slings the WrestleZone Championship over his shoulder. He looks back up at Ross, raises two fingers to his temple in a lazy salute, and starts backing up the ramp.

Mark Bravo: "Wait a second—Eric Dane Jr. is... leaving? He's walking out of this match."

John Phillips: "Ross told him he's got this, and for once, Dane Jr. is actually listening. That's... that's a strange kind of respect right there."

In the ring, Maxx Mayhem's grin somehow gets wider. He leans back into the ropes, laughing so hard he nearly doubles over.

Maxx Mayhem: "YOU'RE ALL ALONE, BOSS MAN! JUST LIKE YOU LIKE IT!"

Ross turns back to center, eyes locked on Maxx, shoulders squared. The referee checks with him—Ross just nods, jaw clenched.

John Phillips: "It is now officially Chris Ross versus Maxx Mayhem. One fall to a finish. The winner names the stipulation for their showdown at Black Horizon."

Mark Bravo: "No more teams. No more back-up. Just The Boss and the King of Chaos, finally face to face with the whole damn future on the line."

The crowd rises to its feet as Ross and Mayhem step out of their corners in unison, the ring turning into an island where only two men—and one massive decision—remain.

The bell sounds again and the place rumbles, everyone on their feet as Chris Ross and Maxx Mayhem stalk out of their corners, no rush, no hesitation—just hatred.

John Phillips: "This isn't about survival anymore. This is about who gets to decide how far they go at Black Horizon."

They meet dead center. No lock-up. Just fists.

Ross swings first—a heavy right hand that cracks across Maxx's jaw. Maxx's head snaps to the side... then rolls back with a grin. He answers with a short, stiff elbow to Ross's cheek. Ross staggers... then smirks right back.

Mark Bravo: "Oh yeah, they're gonna beat the stupid out of each other."

They trade again. Ross. Maxx. Ross. Maxx. Each shot louder than the last, the crowd roaring with every impact. Ross finally rocks Maxx with a looping forearm and drives a knee into his gut, forcing him back into the ropes.

Ross grabs a wrist, whips Maxx across—Maxx reverses. Ross hits the ropes and comes back into a wild Snap DDT attempt, but plants his hands and shoves Maxx off instead. Maxx bounces chest-first off the ropes and turns right into a massive spinebuster from Ross that shakes the ring.

John Phillips: "Spinebuster! Ross just planted Mayhem!"

Ross sprawls over him for a cover.

Referee: "ONE! TWO—"

Maxx kicks out hard, shoving Ross off and rolling to his side, laughing through clenched teeth.

Maxx Mayhem: "YOU HIT LIKE A PARKING TICKET!"

Ross snarls, dragging him up by the hair. He buries a forearm into Maxx's chest, then another, then clamps a front facelock and hoists him, snapping him over with a nasty suplex. He keeps the hands locked, rolls the hips, and delivers a second. On the third, he spikes Maxx almost straight down.

Mark Bravo: "There's that suplex barrage! Ross is trying to fold this man in half!"

Maxx flops to the corner, clutching his lower back. Ross stalks him, grabs his boot, and drags him out to center—but Maxx suddenly kicks Ross's knee out from under him. Ross drops, and Maxx uses the opening to scramble to the ropes.

He explodes back with a running cannonball that crushes Ross's ribs and sends them both tumbling to the mat.

John Phillips: "Running cannonball! Maxx Mayhem just threw his whole body at Ross!"

Maxx rolls to his knees, pounding the mat, eyes wild. He straddles Ross and starts raining down wild, clubbing forearms to the side of his head. The referee warns him about closed fists—Maxx pauses just long enough to flip the ref off before switching to open-handed slaps across Ross's face.

Mark Bravo: "That's one way around the rules—just insult the rules while you're breaking 'em."

Maxx yanks Ross up, whips him hard into the corner. Ross hits chest-first, staggers back—and Maxx sprints, crashing into him with a full-speed corner lariat. Ross hits the buckles again, dazed.

Maxx backs up, grabs the top rope with both hands, and starts stomping a rhythm, screaming at the crowd.

Maxx Mayhem: "CRASH! COURSE!"

John Phillips: "He's calling for that Crash Course cannonball!"

Maxx charges, throwing his whole body at Ross in the corner—but Ross explodes out at the last second, catching Maxx mid-run and hurling him with a violent overhead belly-to-belly suplex. Maxx crashes back-first into the opposite turnbuckles and slumps into a seated position, eyes glazed.

Mark Bravo: "He reversed the Crash Course! Mayhem just got full-sent into the corner!"

Ross drops to a knee, sucking wind, then pushes himself up, wiping blood from the corner of his mouth. He stalks across the ring, grabs Maxx by the jaw, and drags him to his feet, talking trash the whole time.

Chris Ross: "You wanted chaos? I am the damn riot."

He yanks Maxx into a short-arm and spins—10–71, the discus elbow, connects flush with Maxx's temple. Maxx crumples to the mat, limp.

John Phillips: "10–71! Ross hit that elbow dead-on!"

Instead of covering, Ross staggers to the ropes and shouts something to ringside. The hard camera catches him

gesturing wildly—too ingrained in him to end it quick, he wants Maxx to hurt.

Mark Bravo: "He could've gone for the pin right there, but of course Chris Ross is out here trying to send a message, not just get a W."

Ross drops to the floor and flips up the ring skirt, rummaging. The crowd buzzes—they know what lives in that world. The referee leans out, warning him.

Referee: "Ross, don't do it! Get back in the ring!"

Ross pulls out a steel chair to a roar, then stops, grinning. He tosses the chair aside and reaches back under, fingers curling around something much more personal.

John Phillips: "Oh no..."

Ross rises, holding his infamous screwdriver, the arena gasping at once. He slides back into the ring, eyes locked on Maxx.

Mark Bravo: "That's not a message, that's a felony waiting to happen!"

The referee grabs his wrist, shouting at him to put it down. Ross glares at the official, chest heaving. For a second, it looks like he might swing anyway.

Behind them, Maxx Mayhem starts to stir, rolling to his knees, blinking through the fog.

John Phillips: "If Ross gets disqualified here, Team Mayhem walks out with the power to pick the stipulation!"

Ross jerks his arm free, looks from the screwdriver... to Maxx... to the hard cam. Then, with a snarl of pure frustration, he hurls the screwdriver out of the ring, sending it skidding across the floor.

Chris Ross: "Fine. I'll do it your way."

He turns—

—and walks straight into a desperate low blow from Maxx Mayhem, hidden behind the referee's back.

Mark Bravo: "Of course he did!"

Ross crumples to his knees, eyes wide, breath gone. Maxx collapses beside him, both men down, the referee totally unaware of what happened.

John Phillips: "Both men are down in the center of the ring, and this war is far from over! One of these two is going to Black Horizon with the power to choose the battleground!"

Maxx Mayhem is the first to move, slithering up to his knees with that crooked grin stitched back across his face. Ross is still folded on the mat, one hand between his legs, breathing in broken gasps.

John Phillips: "That low blow turned the tide, and the referee never saw a thing."

Maxx crawls over and shoves Ross onto his back, draping himself across The Boss with a sloppy cover, forearm grinding into his jaw.

Referee: "ONE! TWO—"

Ross kicks out hard at two, shoulder jerking off the mat. Maxx rolls away, then shoves both hands through his hair and laughs.

Maxx Mayhem: "YOU AIN'T DEAD YET, HARRISBURG!"

Mark Bravo: "I swear if this guy ever gets a psych evaluation, it's gonna come back 'just fire into the sun.'"

Maxx drags Ross up by the beard and hair, sneering as Ross winces. He hammers a forearm into Ross's jaw, then another. He whips Ross into the corner; Ross hits spine-first and staggers out.

Maxx hits the ropes and barrels in with a running clothesline that nearly takes Ross's head off. Ross splats to the mat, arms splayed.

John Phillips: "Maxx Mayhem is in full control now, and every shot is taking a chunk out of Chris Ross's chances."

Maxx doesn't cover. He mounts Ross and starts dropping wild elbow strikes, each one more unhinged than the last. The referee counts, warning him about closed fists again.

Referee: "One! Two! Three! Four—"

Maxx throws his hands up dramatically, rolling off Ross and sticking his tongue out at the official, then at the hard cam.

Maxx Mayhem: "HEY, MOM! I'M ON PAY-PER-VIEW!"

Mark Bravo: "Somebody cut his mic that he doesn't even have."

He yanks Ross back up, hooks him under the arm, and snaps him down with a nasty swinging neckbreaker. Ross bounces and clutches the back of his head.

Maxx pops to his feet and stomps around Ross in a circle, booting his ribs, his shoulder, his spine.

John Phillips: "This is bordering on sick. Maxx Mayhem is dismantling Chris Ross, piece by piece."

Maxx drags him into the corner and props him against the buckles, then backs up to the opposite side of the ring, slapping the top turnbuckle like a man possessed.

Maxx Mayhem: "CRASH! COURSE! LET'S GO!"

He tears across the ring, throwing his entire body at Ross for the Crash Course cannonball—

—and Ross drops at the last possible second.

Maxx obliterates the turnbuckles, spine crashing into the bottom buckle and whiplashing him against the pads. He spills to the mat clutching his lower back, face twisted in pain.

Mark Bravo: "He missed it again! That's two times tonight Maxx Mayhem's tried to turn his body into a wrecking ball and only wrecked himself!"

Both men lie on the canvas, the referee beginning a ten-count as the arena thunders.

Referee: "ONE! TWO! THREE!"

Ross rolls to his side, gripping the ropes. Maxx claws at the air, trying to push himself up.

Referee: "FOUR! FIVE!"

Ross pulls himself to one knee in the corner, sweat and spit hanging from his lips. He glares at Maxx, who is on all fours, shaking his head like he's trying to rattle his brain back into place.

Referee: "SIX!"

Ross grabs the second rope and drags himself upright. The crowd begins to rumble.

CROWD: "ROSS! ROSS! ROSS!"

Maxx forces himself up too, sucking air, using the opposite ropes for support. The ref waves the count off as both men reach their feet.

John Phillips: "Both of these men are running on fumes, but this is about so much more than tonight. This is about

Black Horizon."

Maxx staggers in first with a wild swing. Ross blocks it and fires back with a right hand. Maxx answers with a forearm. Ross with another right. Maxx with a headbutt.

Ross stumbles, nearly drops... then straightens, snarling.

Mark Bravo: "Oh... he just woke something up."

Maxx swings again—Ross blocks and answers with a stiff chop that echoes. Another. Another. He forces Maxx into the ropes with a barrage of forearms and chops, then whips him across.

On the rebound, Ross scoops him and plants him with a brutal sidewalk slam, then rolls through, dragging him right back up into a snap suplex. He rolls the hips and hits a second suplex, then a third, keeping the hands locked.

John Phillips: "Chris Ross digging down deep, chaining those suplexes together!"

He releases on the third, sending Maxx skidding across the canvas. Ross drops to one knee, sucking wind, then slaps his own face a couple of times, forcing his body to respond.

Chris Ross: "C'MON!"

Maxx pushes up on rubber legs. Ross charges and spears him into the corner, driving shoulder after shoulder into his midsection. The referee counts, Ross breaks at four, but only to pull Maxx out and slam him face-first into the top turnbuckle.

He hooks Mayhem from behind and launches him with a high-angle back suplex, dropping him almost on the top of his shoulders.

Mark Bravo: "Every time Maxx thinks he's got this thing in hand, Ross finds one more gear!"

Ross crawls to the ropes, using them to stand. His chest heaves, his face is a mask of exhaustion and rage, but his eyes are clear now—locked on Maxx as the King of Chaos rolls to his stomach, clutching his neck.

John Phillips: "Chris Ross has taken a hellacious beating, but he is still in this fight. One of these men is close—very close—to deciding what kind of war they wage at Black Horizon."

Ross stalks across the ring, looming over Maxx as he struggles to rise, the energy in the arena rising with every heartbeat, everything teetering on the edge of one final, defining exchange.

Maxx Mayhem sways on his knees, one hand on the ropes, the other on the back of his neck. Chris Ross stalks in behind him, sweat pouring, chest heaving, eyes locked in.

John Phillips: "Ross has taken everything Maxx Mayhem can throw at him and he's still upright. This might be the moment."

Ross grabs a fistful of Maxx's hair and hauls him up. Maxx, desperate, swings a wild right hand—Ross blocks and answers with a crushing forearm to the jaw. Maxx fires another, softer now. Ross absorbs it and returns fire with a straight right that staggers Mayhem into the ropes.

Ross whips him across the ring. Maxx rebounds, ducks a lariat, hits the ropes again and comes charging back with a full-speed cannonball-style shoulder block—

—but Ross steps aside and shoves him mid-run, sending Maxx crashing shoulder-first into the turnbuckles.

Mark Bravo: "He just redirected him right into the corner like a human crash test dummy!"

Maxx staggers backward out of the corner, spine arched in pain. Ross is already moving. He hooks an arm around Mayhem's neck from behind and drives brutal forearms across his face and skull in rapid succession, a merciless

barrage that sends spit flying.

John Phillips: "Mounted forearms from Ross! He is absolutely unloading on Mayhem!"

Ross shoves him forward, then yanks him back by the wrist—

SPIN—the 10–71 discus elbow detonates against Maxx's temple, snapping his head sideways and dropping him to one knee.

Mark Bravo: "10–71! He caught him again!"

Maxx is barely conscious, swaying. Ross isn't done.

He grabs Maxx by the back of the neck, jerks him upright, and slams his face straight down into the canvas with the Side Walk Smash, bouncing his skull off the mat.

John Phillips: "Side Walk Smash! The set-up—"

Ross doesn't hesitate. He hauls the dead weight back up, muscles Mayhem across his shoulders, the crowd roaring as he stumbles a step then adjusts.

Mark Bravo: "We know what's next!"

With a guttural yell, Chris Ross drives Maxx Mayhem down with a vicious Welcome to Harrisburg, planting him high on his neck and shoulders in the center of the ring.

John Phillips: "WELCOME TO HARRISBURG! ROSS HIT IT FLUSH!"

Maxx folds like a broken jackknife. Ross collapses on top, hooking the far leg as tight as his exhausted arms will allow.

Referee: "ONE!"

CROWD: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

CROWD: "TWO!"

Referee: "THREE!"

CROWD: "THREE!"

DING! DING! DING!

The bell explodes through the noise as the arena erupts. Ross rolls off, sprawled on his back, staring up at the lights while Maxx Mayhem lies motionless beside him.

Ring Announcer: "Here are your survivors... TEAM! ROSS! And earning the right to choose the stipulation at Black Horizon... CHRIS! ROSS!"

John Phillips: "He did it! Against the odds, down a man, down his champion—Chris Ross has survived Maxx Mayhem and he now holds the power to decide their final battleground at Black Horizon!"

Ross rolls to his side and slowly pushes up to his knees, one hand on the middle rope. The referee comes over and lifts his arm, and Ross lets it hang for a second before yanking it away and staggering to his feet on his own power.

Mark Bravo: "Look at him—he doesn't want help, he doesn't want celebration. He just wanted Mayhem down."

The camera cuts to the ramp where medics are helping a groggy Jarvis Valentine limp toward the back, still clutching at his ribs from Sean Jackson's ambush. Further up, Madman Szalinski stands with the El Fantasma Oscuro duo, one on each shoulder, all three looking back toward the ring.

Back inside, Ross staggers to the ropes facing the hard cam, throat working as he breathes in deep, sweat dripping from his beard. He glares down at Maxx Mayhem, who's only just beginning to stir, clutching his neck.

John Phillips: "Team Mayhem came in with the numbers. They came in with chaos. But in the end, it's Chris Ross standing tall, and somewhere down the road, he's going to make Maxx Mayhem pay for all of this on his terms."

Mark Bravo: "And that's the part that scares me. We don't know when he's gonna announce it, we don't know what he's gonna pick—but if you know anything about Chris Ross, you know he doesn't think in 'normal match' terms. Whatever he chooses at Black Horizon... it might be the last time either of these guys walks anywhere under their own power."

Ross points at Maxx on the mat, then drags a thumb slowly across his own throat, mouthing something the camera can't quite catch—but the intent is clear. This isn't over. It's just escalated.

The shot pulls back to take in the wreckage—Mayhem broken in the center of the ring, Ross barely standing over him, the crowd roaring around them—as the scene fades on the knowledge that at Black Horizon, their final encounter will happen under rules chosen by Chris Ross.

Conclusion

CARD SUBJECT TO CHANGE

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