

Victory: 03.13.2026

March 13, 2026 | 713 Music Hall - Houston, TX

Introduction

The camera fades in from black as a roaring crowd fills the 713 Music Hall in Houston, Texas. Bright lights sweep across the arena as pyro erupts from the stage, sending a wave of energy through the packed building. Fans stand on their feet, many holding signs supporting their favorite UTA stars as the broadcast officially begins.

The camera pans the sea of fans as chants begin to echo throughout the venue.

Crowd: "U-T-A! U-T-A! U-T-A!"

The camera cuts to ringside where the familiar voices of the United Toughness Alliance sit behind the commentary desk.

John Phillips: "Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Victory! We are coming to you LIVE from the 713 Music Hall in Houston, Texas and I cannot tell you how electric this crowd is right now!"

Mark Bravo: "John, everything that went down at No Love Lost has this entire company on edge. The United Toughness Alliance just wrapped its Las Vegas residency and now we're hitting the road for the Victory tour. And let me tell you something -- Houston showed up tonight."

John Phillips: "They absolutely did, Mark. The fallout from No Love Lost is still being felt across the UTA locker room and tonight we begin the march toward Victorious. Every win matters. Every loss matters. And tonight's card is stacked from top to bottom."

Mark Bravo: "You said it. We're talking hungry competitors, rising stars, and one championship match that could change the entire landscape of the Fighting Division."

The camera cuts to a wide shot of the arena again as fans wave signs reading "IRON DOMINION," "TYGER II," and "NEON ACE."

John Phillips: "Let's take a look at what we have coming your way tonight here at Victory."

Mark Bravo: "We kick things off with a fascinating matchup -- Kairo Bex stepping into the ring with Vance Stone."

John Phillips: "Kairo Bey -- the Neon Ace -- has had a rough stretch as of late. A string of losses has left many wondering if the young star can get himself back on track."

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Mark Bravo: "But he's not getting an easy night, John. Vance Stone makes his official UTA in-ring debut tonight, and you better believe he's looking to make a statement."

John Phillips: "And let's not forget the looming presence of Eli Creed. Ever since implementing what he calls the Creed Method, he's been watching closely from the shadows."

Mark Bravo: "Which means anything could happen when these two lock up tonight."

The camera cuts briefly to excited fans near ringside.

John Phillips: "Then we have a match that fans have been buzzing about all week -- Tyger II going one-on-one with Trey Mack."

Mark Bravo: "Now THIS is a fight. Trey Mack has been clawing his way up the ranks, trying to prove he's one of the most dangerous threats in the UTA."

John Phillips: "And Tyger II continues to carve out his own legacy. The son of a legend, stepping into the ring with a supernatural presence and a style unlike anyone else in the locker room."

Mark Bravo: "When those two collide, it's going to be fast, violent, and probably a little chaotic."

John Phillips: "Also tonight -- Maxwell 'Max' Jett returns to action after an impressive showing at No Love Lost."

Mark Bravo: "I'll give him this much -- he backed up the talk. But going two-and-oh won't be easy tonight."

John Phillips: "Because standing across the ring from him will be Jaxson Ryder."

Mark Bravo: "One half of U.S.A and a guy who desperately wants to get himself back on track after some recent setbacks."

John Phillips: "Two competitors with something to prove. That one could steal the entire show."

Mark Bravo: "And speaking of dangerous situations, Troy Lindz steps into the ring tonight against Malachi Cross."

John Phillips: "Ever since embracing what Eli Creed calls the Creed Method, Troy Lindz has looked like an entirely different competitor."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah, but Malachi Cross isn't exactly the guy you want to test your new philosophy against."

John Phillips: "Cross has been lurking in the shadows recently, and when someone like that resurfaces -- it usually means bad things for whoever is standing across the ring."

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The crowd begins buzzing louder as the commentary team transitions to the main event.

John Phillips: "But our main event tonight -- the UTA Fighting Championship will be on the line."

Mark Bravo: "And what a defense it could be."

John Phillips: "Hakuryu successfully defended the Fighting Championship at No Love Lost against former UTA Champion Jarvis Valentine."

Mark Bravo: "And that win means Hakuryu is now just TWO defenses away from cashing in the Fighting Championship for a guaranteed UTA Championship opportunity."

John Phillips: "But standing in his way tonight is one of the most dangerous forces in the entire UTA."

Mark Bravo: "Gideon Graves."

The camera briefly shows a fan holding an Iron Dominion sign as boos mix with cheers.

John Phillips: "The Iron Dominion powerhouse has made it clear he wants championship gold, and tonight he has the chance to claim the Fighting Championship."

Mark Bravo: "And if Graves wins tonight, everything changes. No more Hakuryu countdown. No more title cash-in opportunity. Just Iron Dominion holding another piece of power in the UTA."

John Phillips: "Houston, buckle up. Victory begins right now!"

The crowd erupts as the camera cuts to the stage and the first match graphic flashes across the screen.

Kairo Bex vs. Vance Stone

The arena lights dim slightly as the crowd inside the 713 Music Hall buzzes with anticipation. The camera sweeps across the Houston crowd, signs waving and fans on their feet as the opening contest approaches.

John Phillips: "Ladies and gentlemen, we are about to kick things off here tonight at Victory, and this first match already has a lot of eyes on it."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah it does, Phillips. Because the guy walking out first has been at the center of a very interesting conversation over the last couple of weeks."

The arena suddenly fills with electric blue, pink, and white light as a crisp bassline hits the speakers.

John Phillips: "And here he comes!"

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The opening beat of "Neon Pulse" drops and the stage floods in shifting neon colors.

Kairo Bey steps through the curtain.

The Neon Ace pauses at the top of the ramp, shoulders loose, a calm grin crossing his face as the Houston crowd erupts. He lifts a hand toward the audience in acknowledgment before rolling his shoulders and starting down the ramp with that smooth, dancer-like rhythm.

John Phillips: "Kairo Bey -- the Neon Ace himself. One of the most naturally gifted aerial strikers in the United Toughness Alliance."

Mark Bravo: "And one of the guys Eli Creed has his eyes on right now."

John Phillips: "That's right. At No Love Lost we saw a very interesting backstage moment where Creed approached Kairo directly."

Kairo glides down the ramp, slapping hands with fans along the barricade, though his expression carries a little more focus than usual tonight.

Mark Bravo: "Look, Phillips -- I'm just going to say it. If Eli Creed is offering you the Creed Method... you take it."

John Phillips: "Really?"

Mark Bravo: "Absolutely. Look at Troy Lindz! That punch from Gunnar Van Patton could have ended their career psychologically. Instead, Creed rebuilt them. Sharpened them. And now Troy looks like one of the most dangerous competitors on the roster."

John Phillips: "Or... Mark... maybe Troy Lindz has simply become something else entirely."

Kairo reaches ringside and circles the ring once, eyes scanning the canvas as if visualizing every movement to come.

John Phillips: "That segment with Creed was... unsettling. Creed talking about breaking people... bending them... rebuilding them. That's not mentorship -- that's manipulation."

Mark Bravo: "Or maybe it's discipline. Maybe it's structure. Look at Kairo's last few matches. Loss to Tyger II. Loss to Troy Lindz. The Neon Ace has the talent, but sometimes talent without direction just flickers."

John Phillips: "Careful with that language, Mark. That's almost word-for-word what Creed told him."

Kairo hops onto the apron in one fluid motion and wipes his boots before stepping through the ropes.

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Inside the ring, he springs lightly off the ropes once, landing balanced before climbing to the second turnbuckle.

He throws a confident salute toward the hard camera.

The Houston crowd responds with a loud cheer.

Mark Bravo: "Look at that confidence though. That's why Creed wants him."

John Phillips: "Maybe. But if Kairo Bey joins the Creed Method, does he stay the Neon Ace... or does he become something colder? Something more controlled?"

Mark Bravo: "If it wins matches, who cares?"

John Phillips: "I think Kairo Bey might."

Kairo drops down from the turnbuckle and begins bouncing lightly on the balls of his feet, loosening his arms and focusing on the entrance ramp.

The neon lights fade slowly as he waits for his opponent.

The neon glow around the arena slowly fades, leaving the ring under a neutral white wash of light. Kairo Bey bounces lightly in the corner, focused on the entrance ramp as the atmosphere inside the 713 Music Hall begins to shift.

John Phillips: "Well Mark, Kairo Bey is ready... but the man he's about to face is making his official United Toughness Alliance in-ring debut tonight."

Mark Bravo: "And let me tell you something, Phillips... everything we've seen about this guy so far? It's unsettling."

The lights suddenly cut to black.

A single red searchlight sweeps slowly across the Houston crowd.

John Phillips: "There it is."

*A distorted, industrial guitar riff blasts through the arena -- a heavy remix of Pantera's "**I'm Broken.**"*

The curtain parts.

Vance Stone steps out slowly.

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The towering figure of "The Defector" stands under the red light wearing a tattered tactical vest and a matte black ballistic mask. He doesn't acknowledge the crowd. He doesn't pause for reaction.

He simply marches forward.

John Phillips: "Six-foot-eight. Nearly three hundred pounds. Former Navy SEAL... and a man with a very dark story behind him."

Mark Bravo: "Decorated soldier turned ghost, Phillips. Framed for a mission that supposedly never happened... locked away in a black-site prison for years... and now he's here."

John Phillips: "And according to what we saw last week, he isn't here for championships."

Mark Bravo: "Nope."

John Phillips: "He's here to hurt people."

Stone continues down the ramp with mechanical precision, boots hitting the metal ramp with heavy, deliberate thuds. The Houston crowd reacts with a mixture of cheers and uneasy murmurs as they realize the hometown connection.

Mark Bravo: "And Houston might have mixed feelings about this guy. He's billed from here... but I'm not sure he cares about hometown love."

John Phillips: "Everything about this man suggests he doesn't care about any of that."

Stone reaches ringside without breaking his pace. He stops at the apron and slowly removes the ballistic mask.

His expression is cold. Focused. The thousand-yard stare of someone who has seen far too much.

He mutters something under his breath toward the hard camera before tossing the mask aside.

Mark Bravo: "Look at those eyes. That's not a guy who's excited about debuting. That's a guy on a mission."

John Phillips: "He treats this like a job... not entertainment."

Stone rolls under the bottom rope without using the steps, rising to his full height in the center of the ring.

Kairo Bey stops bouncing for a moment, studying him carefully.

Mark Bravo: "And that right there is the size difference."

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John Phillips: "Kairo Bey is one of the fastest athletes in the UTA... but Vance Stone is built like a tank."

Mark Bravo: "Speed versus tactical violence."

John Phillips: "And if Kairo isn't careful... the Neon Ace could be walking straight into a war zone."

Stone cracks his neck once, never taking his eyes off Kairo.

The referee steps between them and signals for the bell.

The referee looks at both competitors one final time.

Referee: "Keep it clean. Listen to my instructions."

Kairo Bey nods once, bouncing lightly on the balls of his feet.

Vance Stone doesn't move.

He simply stares.

DING DING.

John Phillips: "And we are underway here at Victory!"

Mark Bravo: "This is going to be interesting right away, Phillips. Kairo Bey wants speed. Vance Stone wants destruction."

Kairo circles immediately, moving in wide arcs around the ring. His feet glide across the canvas with dancer-like rhythm as he studies the towering figure in front of him.

Stone stays planted in the center of the ring.

Watching.

John Phillips: "Look at the difference in approach already. Kairo Bey is constantly moving."

Mark Bravo: "And Stone is controlling the center of the ring like a sniper waiting for a target."

Kairo darts in with a quick feint jab before slipping back out of range.

No reaction from Stone.

John Phillips: "No wasted movement from Vance Stone."

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Mark Bravo: "That's what happens when a guy treats this like a tactical operation."

Kairo tries again.

This time he darts forward with a quick low kick to Stone's thigh before spinning away.

SMACK.

John Phillips: "Quick strike there from Bey."

Mark Bravo: "And look -- Stone barely even reacted."

Kairo nods to himself, circling again.

He suddenly bursts forward -- rapid kick combination to the thigh and ribs.

Stone absorbs the shots, barely giving ground.

Then suddenly swings a massive forearm.

Kairo ducks.

John Phillips: "Close call!"

Kairo rebounds off the ropes -- springboard attempt --

But Stone steps forward and catches him in mid-air.

John Phillips: "OH!"

Mark Bravo: "That's what I'm talking about!"

Stone hoists him high into the air.

MILITARY PRESS.

Kairo kicks his legs wildly and manages to slip off behind him before the slam can happen.

Kairo lands on his feet and immediately fires a spinning back kick to the ribs.

THUD.

John Phillips: "Great counter by Bey!"

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Kairo hits the ropes again --

SPRINGBOARD CROSSBODY.

This time it connects, taking Stone off his feet for the first time.

John Phillips: "There it is! First neon moment of the match!"

Mark Bravo: "Yeah but look at Stone already!"

Stone sits up almost immediately, cracking his neck as he rises back to his feet.

John Phillips: "That... is unsettling."

Mark Bravo: "That's psychological warfare, Phillips. You just took his best shot and you tell him it didn't matter."

Kairo backs up slightly, nodding as if accepting the challenge.

The Houston crowd begins clapping rhythmically.

Crowd: "LET'S GO KAIRO! LET'S GO KAIRO!"

Kairo rushes forward again, trying to keep the pace high.

But Stone suddenly steps into him.

LOU THESZ PRESS.

Stone drives Kairo down to the mat and begins unloading heavy punches.

THUD.

THUD.

THUD.

John Phillips: "And just like that the momentum shifts!"

Mark Bravo: "Those are not pretty punches. Those are demolition punches."

The referee quickly moves in.

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Referee: "ONE! TWO! THREE! FOUR!"

Stone rises before the five-count, staring down at Kairo as he slowly adjusts the straps of his tactical vest.

John Phillips: "That right there tells you everything about Vance Stone."

Mark Bravo: "Clinical violence."

Kairo rolls toward the ropes, clutching his jaw, trying to recover.

Stone steps forward slowly.

Entering his kill zone.

John Phillips: "Kairo Bey has to keep this match moving."

Mark Bravo: "Because if Vance Stone turns this into a fight?"

John Phillips: "The Neon Ace may not survive it."

Kairo Bey pulls himself up using the ropes, shaking out his jaw as he tries to regain his footing. Across the ring, Vance Stone advances slowly, shoulders squared, eyes locked on his opponent.

John Phillips: "Kairo Bey is going to have to stay one step ahead here. If this becomes a power fight, the advantage goes to Vance Stone every time."

Mark Bravo: "And that's exactly why I'm saying what I'm saying, Phillips. Kairo needs structure. Look at what Eli Creed has done for Troy Lindz."

John Phillips: "Or maybe Kairo just needs to stay true to who he is."

Kairo darts forward suddenly -- quick kick to the thigh -- then another to the ribs.

Stone absorbs the shots.

Then drives forward with a brutal throat thrust.

THUD.

John Phillips: "Oh right to the throat!"

Kairo staggers backward, gasping for air.

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Mark Bravo: "Respiratory warfare. Take the air away and you take the speed away."

Stone steps in and grabs Kairo by the back of the neck.

CRAVATE KNEE STRIKE.

CRACK.

Kairo drops to one knee.

John Phillips: "That was vicious!"

Stone pulls him up again and drives another knee into his chest.

Mark Bravo: "This is exactly what his scouting reports warned about."

Stone grabs Kairo by the arm and hurls him into the corner.

Kairo hits hard against the turnbuckles.

Stone follows immediately.

Corner boot to the face.

THUD.

THUD.

THUD.

Referee: "ONE! TWO! THREE! FOUR!"

Stone stops at the last second, stepping back calmly as Kairo slumps forward.

John Phillips: "Stone using every second of that count."

Mark Bravo: "That's called maximizing the rules."

Stone drags Kairo out of the corner.

SIDEWALK SLAM.

Kairo hits the mat hard.

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John Phillips: "Massive impact!"

Stone places a heavy boot across Kairo's chest.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

Kairo kicks out.

Mark Bravo: "Barely."

John Phillips: "But still alive."

Stone rises slowly, adjusting the straps of his tactical vest like a soldier checking equipment.

John Phillips: "You see that? No celebration. No theatrics."

Mark Bravo: "Because to him this isn't entertainment. It's a mission."

Kairo slowly crawls toward the ropes again.

The Houston crowd begins clapping rhythmically.

Crowd: "LET'S GO KAIRO! LET'S GO KAIRO!"

Kairo grabs the ropes and pulls himself up.

Stone charges forward for another throat strike--

Kairo ducks.

Kairo springs to the ropes.

Springboard rope-walk feint.

Stone turns just in time to see Kairo leap.

ROPE-WALK ARM DRAG.

John Phillips: "Beautiful counter!"

Stone crashes to the mat.

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Kairo pops up and hits the ropes.

BASEMENT DROPKICK.

John Phillips: "Momentum shift!"

Mark Bravo: "And that right there is why Creed wants him."

John Phillips: "Or why Kairo doesn't need Creed at all."

Kairo rises, adrenaline building as the Houston crowd gets louder.

Stone is already sitting up again.

John Phillips: "But if Kairo wants to win this match... he has to keep Stone down."

Mark Bravo: "Because once that big man gets rolling again?"

John Phillips: "The Neon Ace could be in serious trouble."

Kairo Bey stands in the center of the ring, chest rising and falling as the Houston crowd begins to rally behind him. Across the mat, Vance Stone slowly rolls onto his side, pushing himself up with deliberate control.

John Phillips: "This is the opening Kairo Bey needed."

Mark Bravo: "And he better use every second of it before that monster gets back up."

Kairo nods to the crowd as the clapping rhythm grows louder.

Crowd: "LET'S GO KAIRO! LET'S GO KAIRO!"

Kairo explodes forward.

Running forearm smash.

Stone stumbles back a step.

John Phillips: "Stone rocked!"

Kairo hits the ropes again.

Spinning back kick to the ribs.

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This time Stone bends slightly from the impact.

Mark Bravo: "Now he's feeling it!"

Kairo darts to the ropes once more.

SPRINGBOARD CROSSBODY!

Both men crash to the mat, but Kairo rolls through instantly and hooks the leg.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

Stone powers out.

John Phillips: "Close!"

Kairo wastes no time. He pulls Stone up and whips him toward the ropes.

Stone rebounds.

Kairo leaps -- TILT-A-WHIRL HEADSCISSORS!

Stone tumbles across the ring.

John Phillips: "Bey is flying now!"

Mark Bravo: "This is exactly the tempo he wants!"

Kairo sees Stone rising and charges.

Slingshot from the ropes -- sudden cutter attempt!

But Stone shoves him away mid-air.

John Phillips: "Counter!"

Kairo lands on his feet but stumbles forward.

Stone spins.

TEXAS UPPERCUT.

CRACK.

Mark Bravo: "Good lord!"

Kairo collapses to the mat.

The Houston crowd gasps.

John Phillips: "That might have taken his head off!"

Stone slowly pulls Kairo up by the neck.

He hooks the arm.

Lariat coming--

John Phillips: "Kill-Switch incoming!"

Kairo suddenly ducks.

He spins behind Stone.

SNAP GERMAN SUPLEX!

John Phillips: "WHAT A COUNTER!"

Stone crashes hard onto his shoulders.

Kairo scrambles into the cover.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

Stone kicks out with authority.

Mark Bravo: "And there it is again!"

Stone sits up almost immediately, cracking his neck as he rises to his feet.

John Phillips: "That is terrifying resilience."

Mark Bravo: "Kairo is throwing everything he has and this guy just keeps getting up."

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Kairo backs into the corner, breathing heavily but refusing to slow down.

Stone rises again in the center of the ring.

The two men lock eyes.

John Phillips: "Speed versus power."

Mark Bravo: "Heart versus brutality."

John Phillips: "And this fight is far from over."

Kairo Bey and Vance Stone circle each other again in the center of the ring. The Houston crowd is on their feet, the energy rising as both men prepare to collide once more.

John Phillips: "This match has been back and forth all the way through. Kairo Bey has taken punishment, but he refuses to stay down."

Mark Bravo: "That's the fire Creed was talking about. Imagine what happens if that fire gets direction."

Kairo suddenly bursts forward again, firing a rapid kick combination to Stone's ribs before bouncing back toward the ropes.

John Phillips: "Kairo keeping the pace high--"

Suddenly the camera angle shifts slightly.

Two figures are walking down the ramp.

No music.

No lights.

Just deliberate footsteps.

John Phillips: "...Wait a minute."

Mark Bravo: "Oh ho ho..."

The crowd begins to murmur as Eli Creed appears on the stage, dressed in his calm, controlled attire. Beside him walks Troy Lindz -- silent, focused, hands taped.

John Phillips: "Eli Creed... and Troy Lindz."

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Mark Bravo: "No entrance. No sermon. Just showing up."

John Phillips: "And you have to believe this is intentional. Creed knows exactly what he's doing."

Kairo charges toward Stone again -- but his eyes flick briefly toward the ramp.

That half-second of distraction allows Stone to catch him.

Stone grabs him around the waist and hurls him across the ring with a brutal belly-to-belly throw.

John Phillips: "Distraction cost him!"

Mark Bravo: "That's the presence of the Creed Method right there."

Kairo rolls to the ropes, pulling himself up slowly. His eyes lock onto the ramp where Creed and Lindz continue walking down.

Creed's hands are clasped calmly behind his back.

Lindz walks a step behind him.

Neither man says a word.

John Phillips: "They're not even acknowledging the match."

Mark Bravo: "They don't have to."

Creed and Lindz reach ringside and stop.

Creed slowly tilts his head upward toward the ring, locking eyes with Kairo.

John Phillips: "You can see it on Kairo's face... this is exactly what Creed wanted."

Mark Bravo: "He's offering him a choice again."

Kairo shakes his head slightly, clearly irritated by the presence at ringside.

Behind him, Vance Stone rises.

John Phillips: "Kairo needs to focus on the fight in front of him!"

Stone grabs Kairo from behind.

GERMAN SUPLEX.

Kairo crashes into the mat.

Mark Bravo: "And again the distraction pays off!"

John Phillips: "Creed and Lindz haven't touched anyone, but they are absolutely affecting this match."

Kairo rolls onto his side, clutching his back as Stone looms over him.

Outside the ring, Eli Creed simply watches.

A calm smile forms on his face.

Troy Lindz stands beside him, arms folded, observing the ring like a quiet demonstration.

Mark Bravo: "Phillips... that right there is the pitch."

John Phillips: "What do you mean?"

Mark Bravo: "Creed doesn't have to say a word. He's showing Kairo exactly what happens when you lose focus."

John Phillips: "Or he's trying to manipulate him."

Mark Bravo: "Same result."

Inside the ring, Stone drags Kairo back to his feet.

But Kairo's eyes flick once more toward ringside.

Creed mouths three silent words.

Break.

Bend.

Build.

Kairo stares back at him... furious.

John Phillips: "Creed continuing the psychological games."

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Mark Bravo: "Or giving him the answer."

Kairo Bey stands slowly in the corner, one hand gripping the top rope as he tries to steady himself. Across the ring, Vance Stone rises again -- calm, relentless, like a machine resetting.

John Phillips: "Kairo Bey has fought through everything Vance Stone has thrown at him tonight... but you can see the damage."

Mark Bravo: "And you can see the distraction."

The camera cuts briefly to ringside.

Eli Creed stands motionless, hands clasped behind his back.

Troy Lindz stands beside him, silent and focused.

John Phillips: "They haven't interfered physically, but their presence has absolutely changed the complexion of this match."

Mark Bravo: "That's the Creed Method. Influence."

Inside the ring, Stone steps forward and grabs Kairo by the arm.

Irish whip.

Kairo rebounds off the ropes -- suddenly exploding with a desperate spinning heel kick.

CRACK.

John Phillips: "He caught him!"

Stone staggers.

The Houston crowd erupts.

Crowd: "KAIRO! KAIRO! KAIRO!"

Kairo sees the opening.

He sprints toward the ropes -- adrenaline pushing through the pain -- springboard attempt coming.

John Phillips: "Neon Skyline! He's going for it!"

Kairo leaps to the second rope--

But just before he jumps...

His eyes flick toward ringside.

Eli Creed is staring directly at him.

Creed slowly tilts his head... and mouths the words again.

Break.

Bend.

Build.

Kairo hesitates.

Only for a moment.

But it's enough.

John Phillips: "No--!"

Stone charges forward.

Kairo turns too late.

KILL-SWITCH.

BOOM.

The lariat nearly turns Kairo inside out as he crashes to the mat.

Mark Bravo: "GOOD LORD!"

John Phillips: "That hesitation just cost him everything!"

Stone drops into the cover.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

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Referee: "THREE!"

DING DING DING.

Ring Announcer: "Here is your winner... VANCE STONE!"

The Houston crowd groans loudly as Stone slowly rises from the mat.

John Phillips: "Kairo Bey had the match won. He had Stone lined up for Neon Skyline."

Mark Bravo: "But he looked at Creed."

John Phillips: "And that single moment of hesitation allowed Stone to end it."

Stone stands over Kairo for a moment before rolling out of the ring, completely uninterested in celebration.

He simply walks up the ramp like the mission is complete.

John Phillips: "An incredibly impressive debut for Vance Stone."

Mark Bravo: "But this story isn't about Stone anymore."

The camera cuts to ringside.

Eli Creed slowly steps forward toward the apron.

Kairo sits up in the ring, breathing heavily.

The two lock eyes.

John Phillips: "Look at Creed... he knows exactly what just happened."

Mark Bravo: "That wasn't interference."

Mark Bravo: "That was proof."

Troy Lindz stands behind Creed, watching quietly.

Creed offers Kairo a small, calm smile.

Then he nods once.

As if to say...

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You see?

The camera lingers on Kairo's conflicted expression as the Houston crowd continues buzzing.

The bell has already rung, but the tension inside the 713 Music Hall hasn't faded. Vance Stone is halfway up the ramp now, never looking back, his debut mission complete.

John Phillips: "An impressive debut for Vance Stone, but the bigger question right now is what just happened to Kairo Bey."

Mark Bravo: "What happened is exactly what Eli Creed told him would happen."

Inside the ring, Kairo Bey sits against the bottom rope, chest rising and falling as he tries to process the loss.

The Houston crowd gives him a sympathetic round of applause.

Crowd: "KAIRO! KAIRO! KAIRO!"

At ringside, Eli Creed calmly steps forward.

Troy Lindz remains behind him, arms folded, watching silently.

John Phillips: "Creed approaching the ring now."

Mark Bravo: "Here comes the lesson."

Creed climbs onto the apron slowly.

No theatrics.

No aggression.

Just calm certainty.

Kairo looks up at him, frustration and exhaustion written across his face.

Creed steps through the ropes.

The crowd begins to boo loudly.

John Phillips: "You can hear how Houston feels about this."

Mark Bravo: "They can boo all they want. The man isn't wrong."

Creed walks toward Kairo slowly.

He kneels beside him.

Not threatening.

Almost compassionate.

Kairo glares at him.

Creed leans in close so only Kairo can hear him.

Eli Creed (softly): "You felt it."

Kairo's expression tightens.

Creed continues, voice barely above a whisper.

Eli Creed: "That moment... when the rhythm broke."

Eli Creed: "When the lights flickered."

Kairo clenches his jaw.

Eli Creed: "You had him."

Eli Creed: "And then doubt found you."

Creed slowly stands.

He offers his hand.

The crowd boos louder.

Crowd: "NO! NO! NO!"

John Phillips: "Creed offering the hand again."

Mark Bravo: "That's not a handout. That's enlightenment."

Kairo stares at the hand for a long moment.

Troy Lindz steps onto the apron now, standing just behind Creed.

Calm.

Focused.

Proof of the transformation.

John Phillips: "This is exactly how he recruited Troy Lindz."

Mark Bravo: "And look how that turned out."

Kairo slowly rises to one knee.

He looks at Creed.

Then at Troy.

Then back at the outstretched hand.

The arena waits.

John Phillips: "What does Kairo Bey do here?"

The camera zooms in on Kairo's conflicted face.

The crowd continues chanting.

Crowd: "KAIRO! KAIRO! KAIRO!"

The moment hangs in the air.

The decision... not made tonight.

The camera fades to black.

Bad News' Favorite Disguise is Surprise

The loading bay door groans open as the Unholy Wolf Brigade sweeps into the arena like a pack returning from war. Gunnar Van Patton leads them, hobbling forward on crutches, every step a violent argument with

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pain. His right leg is swallowed by a heavy-duty brace, straps cinched tight. A massive bandage wraps around his skull, hiding dozens of stitches beneath faint streaks of dried blood. Across the upper half of his face, tied tight behind his head, is a bright red bandana--Raider-style--concealing the damaged eye beneath it.

Theron Tkachuk walks at Gunnar's left, silent and towering, his presence cold enough to chill the hallway. Avril Selene Kinkade keeps pace beside him, posture immaculate, expression carved from ice. She lingers near Theron with the same instinctive precision she always does--no warmth, no sentiment, simply preference. Arkady Bogatyr jitters on Gunnar's right, bouncing on the balls of his feet, restless as a live wire. Torunn Sigurjonsson follows behind them, warpaint streaked across her face, jaw set like stone.

The camera crew scrambles backward as the wolves advance.

Melissa Cartwright steps into frame, microphone raised, smile tight with nerves.

Melissa Cartwright: "Gunnar--Gunnar, I'm sorry to stop you, but I've just been informed by General Manager Scott Stevens that tonight, on Victory, you are scheduled to defend the WrestleZone Championship against Maxx Mayhem."

Gunnar freezes mid-step. Not gradually. Not with warning. He stops like he hits a wall. The red bandana hides his expression, but the tension in his shoulders makes the rage unmistakable.

Gunnar Van Patton: "Darlin'... Ah got forty stitches in mah damn skull... Ah got a leg that ain't worth two cents... an' Ah'm walkin' on crutches like a long-tailed cat in a room full'a rockin' chairs... an' you're tellin' me Scott Stevens books me in a title defense *tonight*... against Maxx Mayhem?"

Melissa swallows--audibly, nervously.

Torunn moves before anyone else. She marches straight up to Melissa, shoulders squared, eyes narrowed, posture radiating the kind of cold, Icelandic fury that promises broken bones. She looms over the interviewer, close enough that Melissa instinctively steps back, microphone trembling in her hand. Torunn doesn't speak. She doesn't need to. Her presence alone is a threat.

Melissa's voice wavers.

Melissa Cartwright: "I--I'm just relaying what production told us. It's official."

Gunnar's grip tightens on the crutch until the metal creaks. He pivots toward Avril, jabbing the crutch in her direction.

Gunnar Van Patton: "Avril. Explain. Now."

Avril turns her head with the slow, disdainful precision of a monarch acknowledging a servant. Her voice is

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crisp, clipped, and unmistakably British--each syllable sharpened to a legal scalpel.

Avril Selene Kinkade: "There is no sanctioned title defense on file. No contractual amendment. No medical clearance. No liability waiver. In short, Sergeant Van Patton, this announcement is procedurally unsound and flagrantly improper."

Her tone is cold. Clinical. Utterly humorless.

Gunnar Van Patton: "Spare me the legal bullsh*t. Ya know damn well what's goin' on. This is that yellow-bellied bastard Stevens takin' advantage 'cause his half-brothers already did the damage. The Fatus stop me from winnin' the UTA title, they damn near cripple me, an' now Stevens is bookin' me hurt 'cause he knows Ah ain't in no shape to wrestle."

Theron signs sharp and violent, "Let's kill everyone".

Arkady nods in agreement, a sinister smile stretching across his face.

Torunn remains planted in front of Melissa, still glaring down at her like a wolf deciding whether the prey is worth the effort. Avril remains perfectly still--hands folded, posture immaculate.

Gunnar leans in close to Avril, voice dropping to a lethal whisper.

Gunnar Van Patton: "Go do your f*ckin' job... an' fix this."

For the first time, Avril's mask shifts. Not much--just the faintest tightening at the corner of her mouth, a microscopic flare of the nostrils. A hint of offense. A warning. Then it vanishes beneath aristocratic frost.

Avril Selene Kinkade: "Very well. I shall address the matter immediately. Do try not to exacerbate your injuries further while I correct this... farce."

Her tone is still cold, still precise--but now with a razor-thin edge beneath it. A hairline crack. A quiet rift forming.

She turns and walks away with glacial composure, heels clicking sharply against the concrete. She does not look back. Theron watches her go for a moment, then resumes his silent guard beside Gunnar.

Gunnar looks back at Melissa, chest rising and falling with barely contained fury.

Gunnar Van Patton: "How's about you return the favor an' tell Stevens somethin' for me, darlin'."

Melissa hesitates, still shaken.

Melissa Cartwright: "O-okay... what?"

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Gunnar leans in until the camera catches the fire burning in his one visible eye.

Gunnar Van Patton: "Ah ain't dead yet."

Torunn shoves Melissa out of their path with a single arm, allowing Van Patton to hobble through, the Brigade falling in behind him like wolves scenting blood as they disappear down the hallway.

Better Than Him

The camera remains in the loading bay hallway as Melissa Cartwright steadies herself, clearly still shaken from the confrontation with Gunnar Van Patton and the Unholy Wolf Brigade. She exhales slowly, brushing a strand of hair from her face as production crew members whisper nervously behind the camera.

She begins to raise the microphone to compose herself.

But before she can speak, another figure quietly steps into frame.

Maxwell "Max" Jett.

MMJ stands just behind Melissa, hands in the pockets of his designer jacket, watching down the hallway where the Wolf Brigade disappeared. His expression is somewhere between amused and unimpressed.

Melissa turns and nearly jumps when she notices him standing there.

Melissa Cartwright: "Oh--Maxwell. I didn't realize you were--"

MMJ slowly raises a hand, cutting her off without even looking at her.

Maxwell "Max" Jett: "Relax, Melissa. Take a breath. You look like you just saw a horror movie."

He glances down the hallway again, smirking.

Maxwell "Max" Jett: "And judging by the freak show that just marched through here, I can't blame you."

Melissa blinks, still recovering.

Melissa Cartwright: "Well... that was certainly intense. But Maxwell, tonight you have a match against Jaxson Ryder and--"

MMJ sighs dramatically and rolls his eyes.

Maxwell "Max" Jett: "Oh good. We're talking about that now."

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He slowly removes his hands from his pockets and adjusts the cuffs of his jacket.

Maxwell "Max" Jett: "You see, Melissa, that's the problem with this company."

Maxwell "Max" Jett: "Everybody here is so obsessed with monsters, psychopaths, cult leaders, and whatever the hell Gunnar Van Patton thinks he is... that they completely ignore the most important thing standing right in front of them."

MMJ taps his chest.

Maxwell "Max" Jett: "Me."

He smiles smugly at the camera.

Maxwell "Max" Jett: "Maxwell. "Max." Jett."

Maxwell "Max" Jett: "The future of this entire damn company."

Melissa hesitates before continuing.

Melissa Cartwright: "Well... tonight you're facing Jaxson Ryder, who many consider one of the most talented athletes in UTA."

MMJ stares at her.

Then slowly tilts his head.

Maxwell "Max" Jett: "Did you just say that with a straight face?"

He lets out a short laugh.

Maxwell "Max" Jett: "Jaxson Ryder."

Maxwell "Max" Jett: "The guy whose entire personality is 'I try really hard'?"

Maxwell "Max" Jett: "That guy?"

MMJ shakes his head.

Maxwell "Max" Jett: "Listen, I'm sure Ryder is a great guy. Really."

Maxwell "Max" Jett: "Probably volunteers at animal shelters. Helps old ladies cross the street."

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Maxwell "Max" Jett: "But let me explain something to you... and to everybody watching."

MMJ steps closer to the camera.

Maxwell "Max" Jett: "This business isn't about being a nice guy."

Maxwell "Max" Jett: "This business is about being the best."

He taps the side of his head.

Maxwell "Max" Jett: "Smarter."

He flexes his hand.

Maxwell "Max" Jett: "Faster."

He points at the camera.

Maxwell "Max" Jett: "Better."

He grins.

Maxwell "Max" Jett: "And whether people like it or not... that's me."

Melissa glances toward the camera crew before asking another question.

Melissa Cartwright: "So what should Jaxson Ryder expect tonight?"

MMJ chuckles.

Maxwell "Max" Jett: "Pain."

Maxwell "Max" Jett: "Embarrassment."

Maxwell "Max" Jett: "And the unfortunate realization that he stepped into a ring with the best damn wrestler walking this planet."

He straightens his jacket again.

Maxwell "Max" Jett: "I already proved something at No Love Lost."

Maxwell "Max" Jett: "I proved that when the lights are on and the pressure is real... Maxwell "Max" Jett doesn't crack."

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Maxwell "Max" Jett: "He shines."

MMJ smirks confidently.

Maxwell "Max" Jett: "So tonight?"

Maxwell "Max" Jett: "Jaxson Ryder gets to learn the same lesson everybody else in UTA is eventually going to learn."

He leans closer to the camera.

Maxwell "Max" Jett: "I'm better than him."

Maxwell "Max" Jett: "And he knows it."

MMJ flashes a smug smile before casually walking out of frame, leaving Melissa standing there with the microphone.

Tyger II vs. Trey Mack

The Houston crowd is still buzzing after the unsettling ending to the previous contest. The image of Eli Creed quietly whispering to Kairo Bey lingers in the air like a ghost that refuses to leave.

John Phillips: "Still trying to process what we just saw moments ago. Kairo Bey had that match won -- and for just a moment he hesitated."

Mark Bravo: "And Eli Creed knew it. That man studies weakness like a scientist studies bacteria."

John Phillips: "And the disturbing part? He didn't threaten Kairo... he didn't attack him... he simply told him the truth."

Mark Bravo: "'You felt it.'"

Bravo pauses for a second.

Mark Bravo: "That's the kind of thing that sticks in your head, JP."

John Phillips: "And we may not have seen the end of that story tonight."

The arena lights shift suddenly.

Deep purple and gold tones wash across the stage as a heavy bassline begins thumping through the

building like a heartbeat.

John Phillips: "Well we have to move forward because the action continues here tonight -- and this next contest could shake the ring itself."

Mark Bravo: "Big man collision incoming."

The curtain bursts open.

Trey Mack steps onto the stage with a wide grin, shoulders rolling loose as he surveys the Houston crowd.

The big man slaps his chest once.

Then again.

Trey Mack: "MACK ATTACK!"

The crowd answers with a loud reaction as Mack begins bouncing down the ramp with surprising rhythm for a man his size.

John Phillips: "Two hundred ninety pounds moving like that should not be possible."

Mark Bravo: "You ever see a freight train try to sprint? That's Trey Mack."

Mack suddenly bursts into a short run halfway down the ramp, sliding into the ring with athletic speed.

He pops up quickly and spreads his arms wide.

Trey Mack: "WHO READY?!"

The crowd pops.

John Phillips: "Trey Mack calls himself 'The Mack Attack' -- and if you've seen him compete you know exactly why."

Mark Bravo: "Big man hits you like a truck... and somehow moves like a cruiserweight."

The camera suddenly cuts to the stage again.

And the mood changes.

Slow footsteps emerge from the curtain behind Trey Mack.

Clovis Black.

No music.

No theatrics.

Just a towering, silent presence walking slowly down the ramp.

John Phillips: "And there is the man who will accompany Trey Mack tonight... Clovis Black."

Mark Bravo: "I'm telling you right now, that man doesn't talk because he doesn't need to."

Clovis reaches ringside.

He doesn't acknowledge the crowd.

He doesn't acknowledge Mack.

He simply stands outside the ring.

Watching.

John Phillips: "Silent... intimidating... and if you're Tyger II you now have to keep one eye on that man the entire match."

Mark Bravo: "Tyger II doesn't scare easy."

John Phillips: "He better not."

Inside the ring, Trey Mack stretches his neck and rolls his shoulders, bouncing lightly as he waits for his opponent.

The crowd begins buzzing again.

John Phillips: "And speaking of opponents... the man he's facing tonight carries one of the most respected legacies in wrestling."

Mark Bravo: "Legacy... and a mean streak."

John Phillips: "Tyger II... is next."

The arena lights begin to dim.

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Purple and gold fades away.

For a moment... the arena sits in near darkness.

John Phillips: "You can feel the atmosphere shifting."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah. This one doesn't explode into the arena... it creeps in."

A single drum echoes through the building.

...THOOM.

Cold blue light slowly spreads across the stage.

A haunting bamboo flute begins to echo softly through the arena speakers.

Low mist crawls across the entrance ramp.

John Phillips: "A very different kind of presence entering the arena now."

Mark Bravo: "Trey Mack is momentum and impact... but Tyger II is something else entirely."

The drum strikes again.

...THOOM.

A silhouette appears through the mist.

Still.

Motionless.

The lights rise just enough to reveal the tiger mask.

Tyger II stands at the top of the stage.

Calm.

Focused.

Completely still.

John Phillips: "Kaito Watanabe... the son of the legendary Tatsumi 'Tyger' Tanaka."

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Mark Bravo: "That's a legacy most wrestlers would crumble under."

John Phillips: "But Tyger II has embraced it."

Mark Bravo: "Not embraced it -- weaponized it."

The music swells -- taiko drums joining the flute as the orchestral tension rises.

Tyger II lowers slowly into a ceremonial crouch.

One hand touches the stage.

The crowd begins to rumble with anticipation.

John Phillips: "There's that moment of respect for the ring."

Mark Bravo: "Sacred ground to him."

Tyger II rises and begins walking down the ramp.

Each step measured.

Deliberate.

Focused.

Inside the ring, Trey Mack watches closely, bouncing lightly as he sizes up the approaching opponent.

John Phillips: "This is a fascinating contrast of styles tonight."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah -- Mack explodes. Tyger waits."

John Phillips: "Momentum versus discipline."

Mark Bravo: "And don't forget... Clovis Black lurking at ringside."

The camera cuts briefly to Clovis.

He hasn't moved.

He hasn't blinked.

Just watching.

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John Phillips: "Tyger II has faced plenty of dangerous opponents... but the presence of Clovis Black changes the dynamic."

Mark Bravo: "Tyger's biggest weapon tonight might be his focus."

John Phillips: "Especially after what we saw earlier tonight with Eli Creed."

Mark Bravo: "Exactly. One moment of hesitation... and the whole match can change."

Tyger reaches the base of the steps.

He pauses.

Looks toward the ring.

Trey Mack stares back.

The crowd buzz grows louder.

John Phillips: "No hesitation here."

Mark Bravo: "Tyger II doesn't hesitate."

Tyger ascends the steps slowly.

He wipes his boots on the apron.

Then steps through the ropes.

Inside the ring, Mack grins wider.

Trey Mack: "Let's see what you got."

Tyger II says nothing.

He simply lowers into a fighting stance.

The referee steps between them.

John Phillips: "Agility versus discipline. Power versus precision."

Mark Bravo: "And Houston is about to find out which one wins."

The referee signals for the bell.

DING DING.

John Phillips: "And here we go!"

Mark Bravo: "Big man versus silent assassin. This should be interesting."

The two begin circling slowly.

Trey Mack bounces lightly on his feet, shoulders loose, grinning as he sizes up the masked competitor across the ring.

Tyger II remains still.

Calm.

Focused.

John Phillips: "Tyger II immediately slowing the tempo."

Mark Bravo: "He wants this match fought on his terms."

Mack raises his hands.

Trey Mack: "C'mon then."

They circle again.

Tyger suddenly steps forward.

Sharp low kick.

THUD.

Mack barely reacts.

Mark Bravo: "That's like kicking a refrigerator."

Tyger fires another kick.

WHACK.

This one lands higher on the thigh.

Mack nods.

Trey Mack: "Okay... I feel that."

John Phillips: "Tyger already targeting the base."

Tyger circles quickly now, darting to Mack's side.

Kick to the ribs.

CRACK.

Mack exhales sharply.

Mark Bravo: "That one landed."

Mack swings a heavy right hand.

Tyger slips it clean.

Arm drag.

Mack rolls through and pops back up.

John Phillips: "Beautiful technique."

Tyger moves again.

Low kick.

Low kick.

Then a quick spinning back kick to the ribs.

Mack staggers half a step.

Mark Bravo: "Okay now he's starting to feel those."

John Phillips: "Tyger II dissecting him piece by piece."

Mack shakes out his arms.

Grinning again.

Trey Mack: "You fast... I'll give you that."

Tyger doesn't respond.

He steps forward again.

Collar-and-elbow tie-up.

Tyger pivots instantly, slipping behind.

Hammerlock.

Mack tries to power out.

Tyger sweeps the leg.

Mack hits one knee.

John Phillips: "Very smart approach from Tyger II."

Mark Bravo: "You don't outmuscle a guy like Mack. You outthink him."

Tyger transitions smoothly.

Front headlock.

Knee to the ribs.

THUD.

Another knee.

THUD.

John Phillips: "Targeting the body now."

Mack pushes upward.

Tyger tries to snap him down again--

Mack suddenly surges upward.

Both men separate.

Mark Bravo: "You can slow a freight train... but you can't stop it forever."

Tyger moves first again.

Snap kick to the chest.

CRACK.

Mack takes two steps backward.

John Phillips: "Tyger firmly in control of the opening minutes."

Mark Bravo: "But look at Mack."

Mack wipes sweat from his chin.

Still smiling.

Mark Bravo: "He's enjoying this."

John Phillips: "That might not last."

Tyger charges forward--

Running forearm smash.

Mack staggers.

Tyger hits the ropes.

Springboard crossbody--

Mack catches him.

The entire arena gasps.

Mark Bravo: "OH BOY."

John Phillips: "Tyger got caught!"

Mack adjusts his grip.

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Then drives Tyger down with a crushing powerslam.

BOOM.

The ring shakes.

Mark Bravo: "And there's the Mack Attack."

John Phillips: "That might have just changed the entire match."

Mack slowly rises.

Tyger rolls across the canvas clutching his back.

At ringside...

Clovis Black finally moves.

One slow step closer to the ring.

Mark Bravo: "And the cavalry just got a little closer."

John Phillips: "Momentum has shifted."

Trey Mack stands over Tyger II, rolling his shoulders after the thunderous powerslam that shook the ring.

The Houston crowd buzzes loudly.

John Phillips: "That was the moment we talked about earlier -- one collision and the entire rhythm of this match changes."

Mark Bravo: "Tyger was playing chess... but Mack just flipped the table."

Tyger rolls toward the ropes, trying to create space.

Mack grabs him by the mask.

John Phillips: "Oh come on--"

Mack drags him up to his feet.

Short-arm lariat.

CRACK.

Tyger flips inside out and crashes to the mat.

Mark Bravo: "That man hits like a truck!"

John Phillips: "Two hundred ninety pounds of velocity."

Mack pulls Tyger up again.

Whip to the ropes.

Tyger rebounds--

Mack explodes forward.

Massive shoulder block.

BOOM.

Tyger hits the mat hard.

Mark Bravo: "That's collision offense right there."

John Phillips: "And you can see Tyger feeling the difference now."

Mack hits the ropes.

Running crossbody.

THUD.

The impact forces the air out of Tyger's lungs.

Mark Bravo: "Big man flies!"

John Phillips: "And that's the scary part about Trey Mack."

Mark Bravo: "He moves way faster than someone his size should."

Mack stands up quickly, feeding off the reaction.

Trey Mack: "MACK ATTACK!"

The crowd answers loudly.

At ringside, Clovis Black stands motionless.

Watching.

John Phillips: "And look at Clovis Black down there."

Mark Bravo: "That man hasn't blinked since the match started."

John Phillips: "The presence alone changes things."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah. You know he's waiting for something."

Mack grabs Tyger again.

Lifts him high.

Belly-to-belly suplex.

Tyger is launched halfway across the ring.

The crowd erupts.

John Phillips: "What power!"

Mark Bravo: "He just threw him like luggage!"

Tyger rolls across the mat, clutching his ribs.

Mack stalks forward.

No rush.

He pulls Tyger up again.

Massive body shot.

THUD.

John Phillips: "That might've cracked a rib."

Mark Bravo: "Tyger's precision doesn't mean much when you're getting punched by a refrigerator."

Mack whips Tyger hard into the corner.

Tyger hits the turnbuckles with a loud thud.

Mack backs across the ring.

He points.

Trey Mack: "Here we go."

Mark Bravo: "Uh oh."

Mack charges full speed.

Corner splash.

BOOM.

Tyger collapses to the mat.

John Phillips: "That might have crushed him!"

Mack immediately drops into the cover.

Referee slides down.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO--"

Tyger kicks out.

John Phillips: "Still alive!"

Mark Bravo: "Barely."

Mack sits up slowly, nodding to himself.

Trey Mack: "Okay... okay..."

He cracks his neck.

Then drags Tyger up again.

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John Phillips: "Trey Mack firmly in control now."

Mark Bravo: "And if Tyger II can't change the pace soon... this might get ugly."

Trey Mack stands over Tyger II again, breathing steady as he surveys the damage he's done.

John Phillips: "This match has turned into a survival test for Tyger II."

Mark Bravo: "He had the early pace, but Mack flipped the switch and now it's all power."

Mack pulls Tyger up by the arm.

Tyger barely steadies himself.

Mack swings a heavy forearm--

Tyger ducks.

Low kick.

THUD.

Mack stumbles half a step.

John Phillips: "Quick counter!"

Tyger fires another kick.

WHACK.

Then a third.

Mack's stance begins to shift.

Mark Bravo: "There we go. Tyger going back to the legs."

Tyger spins.

Sharp roundhouse to the ribs.

CRACK.

The crowd pops.

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John Phillips: "Momentum starting to shift again!"

Tyger hits the ropes.

Running forearm smash.

Mack staggers.

The Houston crowd begins to rally.

Crowd: "TYGER! TYGER! TYGER!"

Tyger fires a rapid strike combination.

Body kick.

Chest kick.

Spinning back kick.

Mack backs into the ropes.

Mark Bravo: "You give this guy an inch and he turns it into ten feet!"

Tyger charges.

Springboard attempt--

Mack swings--

Tyger lands behind him.

The crowd gasps.

Tyger spins.

FLASH SNAP SUPERKICK.

GHOST FANG KICK.

CRACK.

Mack drops to one knee.

John Phillips: "HE CAUGHT HIM!"

Mark Bravo: "That landed clean!"

The crowd explodes.

Tyger doesn't hesitate.

He grabs Mack and tries to pull him into position.

John Phillips: "Tyger might be thinking finish here!"

Tyger attempts the lift--

Mack doesn't move.

The crowd reaction dips slightly.

Mark Bravo: "...uh oh."

Tyger tries again.

Mack suddenly explodes upward.

Massive headbutt.

CRACK.

Tyger stumbles backward.

John Phillips: "Oh no!"

Mack roars.

Trey Mack: "MY TURN."

Mack charges forward.

Running spinning back elbow.

BOOM.

Tyger collapses to the canvas.

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Mark Bravo: "And just like that -- the Mack Attack is back!"

John Phillips: "Tyger had a moment there... but Mack shut the door."

At ringside, Clovis Black slowly steps closer to the apron again.

Watching.

Mark Bravo: "And that shadow outside the ring isn't helping Tyger either."

John Phillips: "This match is turning into a war of survival."

Trey Mack slowly rises again, breathing heavier now but still firmly in control of the match.

Tyger II rolls toward the ropes, clutching his ribs after the devastating spinning elbow.

John Phillips: "Tyger II has shown incredible resilience tonight, but Trey Mack has simply overwhelmed him with power."

Mark Bravo: "Sometimes technique just isn't enough when a man that size starts throwing you around."

Mack grabs Tyger and drags him toward the corner.

He lifts him roughly and shoves him against the turnbuckles.

John Phillips: "This is dangerous territory."

Mark Bravo: "Very dangerous."

Mack backs away across the ring again.

He pounds his chest once.

Trey Mack: "MACK ATTACK!"

The crowd roars as Mack charges forward.

Cannonball in the corner.

BOOM.

The ring shakes as Tyger collapses forward out of the turnbuckles.

John Phillips: "Cannonball connects!"

Mark Bravo: "And that might have crushed the air out of him!"

Mack grabs Tyger by the arm and drags him out from the corner.

The crowd buzz begins rising.

John Phillips: "Wait a second... this could be the setup!"

Mark Bravo: "Crash Landing!"

Mack reaches down to haul Tyger up--

Tyger suddenly explodes upward.

Sharp elbow to the jaw.

The crowd pops.

John Phillips: "Tyger still fighting!"

Tyger fires another strike.

Then another.

Mack staggers a half step.

Tyger sprints toward the ropes.

Springboard attempt--

Mack catches him mid-air.

The arena gasps loudly.

Mark Bravo: "OH NO."

John Phillips: "He caught him!"

Mack adjusts his grip, muscles flexing as he lifts Tyger high.

Mark Bravo: "There's no escaping this now."

Mack drops.

SIT-OUT POWERBOMB.

MACK TRUCK.

BOOM.

The impact echoes through the arena.

John Phillips: "MACK TRUCK!"

Mark Bravo: "That's it!"

Mack stays stacked over Tyger for the cover.

The referee slides down.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

Referee: "THREE!"

DING DING DING.

John Phillips: "Trey Mack picks up a huge victory!"

Mark Bravo: "That man just ran Tyger II over."

Mack slowly rises, breathing heavily but grinning wide.

He pounds his chest again.

Trey Mack: "MACK ATTACK!"

The Houston crowd reacts loudly.

At ringside, Clovis Black finally nods once.

No smile.

No celebration.

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Just quiet approval.

John Phillips: "An impressive win for Trey Mack tonight."

Mark Bravo: "And if I'm the rest of the locker room... I'm paying attention."

John Phillips: "Tyger II fought valiantly, but tonight belonged to the Mack Attack."

Mack climbs the second rope and throws his arms wide as the crowd continues buzzing.

Tyger II slowly rolls toward the ropes, still recovering from the crushing powerbomb.

The camera lingers on Clovis Black standing beside the ring like a silent shadow.

The message is clear.

Trey Mack is a force...

And he may not be alone.

Card Subject to Change

The Unholy Wolf Brigade's locker room is dim, quiet, and tense. Gunnar Van Patton sits on a bench, leg braced, crutches leaning beside him. Arkady paces in tight circles like a caged animal. Torunn leans against a locker, arms folded. Theron sits on a low stool, eyes closed, silently lost in his thoughts. The door opens with a sharp click of heels.

Avril Selene Kinkade enters with her usual glacial composure, posture immaculate, expression unreadable. She lingers near Theron as always, though her eyes are fixed on Gunnar.

AVRIL SELENE KINKADE: "Sergeant Van Patton. The matter is addressed. UTA has retained a new legal team--one specifically tasked with handling your affairs. Their intent, of course, is to ensure any resolution favors Mr. Stevens."

Gunnar snorts, unimpressed.

AVRIL SELENE KINKADE: "Despite their... predispositions, I negotiate terms. You are permitted to appoint a representative from the Unholy Wolf Brigade to defend the WrestleZone Championship on your behalf."

Arkady stops pacing. His head snaps up, eyes wide.

AVRIL SELENE KINKADE: "However, the match must be contested under street fight rules. No

disqualifications. No count-outs. Total liability waiver."

Arkady practically vibrates with excitement.

AVRIL SELENE KINKADE: "I take the liberty of informing the legal team that Arkady Bogatyr is the likely candidate."

Arkady explodes with energy, bouncing on his toes, fists pumping.

ARKADY BOGATYR: "HELL YEAH! Major league ass-kicking is back in town--"

Gunnar raises a hand. Arkady freezes mid-celebration.

GUNNAR VAN PATTON: "Sit it down, Volk. It ain't gonna be you."

Arkady blinks, stunned. Torunn arches an eyebrow. Avril's eyes narrow--just slightly--as she turns her gaze back to Gunnar.

AVRIL SELENE KINKADE: "Sergeant Van Patton... I select Bogatyr because he is the most strategically appropriate choice."

Gunnar stares back at her, unblinking behind the red bandana.

GUNNAR VAN PATTON: "Ah heard what ya said, but you ain't the general here. Ah am."

Avril is not accustomed to being overruled, and a faint spark of fire flickers in her eyes as she focuses on her client.

Van Patton turns his head toward the biggest wolf in the room.

GUNNAR VAN PATTON: "Tkachuk, yer up."

Theron's eyes burst open. He snatches a roll of tape from his bag and begins wrapping his fists with cold, deliberate precision, while heading towards the door. Arkady grumbles, disappointed. Torunn nods approvingly.

Avril's jaw tightens by a fraction--another tiny crack in the ice. She couldn't care less if Arkady suffered great bodily harm at the hands of Max Mayhem, but Tkachuk was quite a different matter. Avril drapes the WrestleZone title over the coldblooded Canadian's shoulder before staring daggers at the alpha wolf.

AVRIL SELENE KINKADE: "Very well. If that is your decision... Sergeant Van Patton."

Gunnar and Avril lock eyes--his burning with defiance, hers with frosted disapproval. A rift growing in width

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with every passing second, with neither willing to back down.

Theron gets a pat on the back from Torunn and she signs "wolves against the world" to him, which gets a nod in reply. Arkady and his tag partner bump fists before Tkachuk makes his way out the door and towards the ringside area.

The tension between Van Patton and Kinkade lingers long after he is gone.

Hall of Fame 2026 Headlining Inductee Announcement

The screen fades to black.

Soft orchestral music begins to play as archival footage slowly fades into view.

Highlights from years past flash across the screen -- roaring crowds, violent battles, championship celebrations.

A familiar face appears among them.

Madman Szalinski.

The footage shows Szalinski in his prime -- wild-eyed, unpredictable, dangerous inside the ring as the UTA Championship rests proudly around his waist.

The music swells as the video cuts between moments of triumph and chaos.

A voice begins to narrate.

Voiceover: "In the history of the United Toughness Alliance... there have been many champions."

Footage of Szalinski lifting the UTA Championship high above his head fills the screen.

Voiceover: "But very few have carried the spirit of the UTA quite like Madman Szalinski."

The video shows brutal matches, wild brawls, and Szalinski celebrating victories with the same manic energy that defined his career.

Voiceover: "A former UTA Champion."

Voiceover: "A competitor who embraced chaos and turned it into legacy."

The footage transitions to present day.

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Szalinski now stands at ringside, guiding the current UTA Tag Team Champions with the same unhinged confidence that once defined his in-ring career.

Voiceover: "Today, Madman Szalinski continues to shape the future of the United Toughness Alliance... standing beside champions and proving that madness never truly fades."

The music grows louder as the footage slows.

The screen fades once more to black.

Then white text slowly appears.

UTA Hall of Fame Class of 2026

The Headliner

The final image fades in -- Madman Szalinski standing proudly with a familiar small companion at his side.

Voiceover: "And now... he joins his loyal companion Peach... in the United Toughness Alliance Hall of Fame."

The screen fades to black.

One final name appears across the screen.

Madman Szalinski

Fallen Empires

Inside The Empire's locker room, Dahlia Cross sits on the bench tying her boots while Rosa Delgado leans against a locker and Selena Vex paces slowly across the room.

The tension that once filled this room feels different now. Lighter. As if something oppressive has finally lifted.

Dahlia Cross: "Well... I guess we finally did it."

Selena exhales with a faint smile.

Selena Vex: "Yeah. No more Amy Harrison breathing down our necks."

Rosa Delgado: "No more orders. No more lectures."

Dahlia slowly nods, though her expression remains conflicted.

Dahlia Cross: "Yeah..."

She pauses.

Dahlia Cross: "But I've been thinking."

Rosa and Selena both turn toward her.

Dahlia Cross: "The time's come for me to go my own way."

Selena's smile disappears immediately.

Selena Vex: "Wait... what?"

Dahlia Cross: "Look... I'm glad we came together and broke free from Amy's grip."

Dahlia Cross: "But I can't overlook what happened."

Dahlia Cross: "Both of you turned on me."

Selena Vex: "It wasn't like that."

Dahlia shakes her head.

Dahlia Cross: "My decision's final."

Dahlia Cross: "It's for the best."

Rosa studies Dahlia for a moment before shrugging.

Rosa Delgado: "You know what? That's fine."

Rosa Delgado: "Neither of us are Amy. We're not here to tell you what to do."

Rosa Delgado: "Dahlia... good luck to you on whatever that is."

Dahlia nods quietly.

Rosa turns to Selena.

Rosa Delgado: "Our focus now is getting the UTA Tag Team Championships back."

Selena nods in agreement.

Dahlia grabs her bag and slings it over her shoulder before walking toward the locker room door.

She pulls it open.

Standing there is Amy Harrison.

And she looks absolutely furious.

Amy Harrison: "Oh... am I interrupting your little celebration?"

Amy Harrison: "Got one over on Amy?"

Her voice rises into a furious screech.

Amy Harrison: "How DARE you."

Amy Harrison: "After everything I did for you!"

Amy Harrison: "I BUILT you!"

Amy Harrison: "I GAVE you your careers!"

Amy Harrison: "And THIS is how you repay me?!"

She points violently between them.

Amy Harrison: "None of you were ever good enough to be part of The Empire!"

Amy Harrison: "You're barely peasants!"

Dahlia slowly drops her bag to the floor.

Dahlia Cross: "You know Amy... I've had just about enough of your mo--"

CRACK!

Amy Harrison slaps Dahlia across the face with vicious force -- the second time she's done it in a month.

Amy Harrison: "DO NOT talk to me that way!"

Amy Harrison: "You weren't even good enough to be a curtain jerker before I ALLOWED you to be in my

presence!"

Rosa steps forward, disgust written all over her face.

Rosa Delgado: "Look BITCH..."

Rosa Delgado: "You keep running your mouth, putting your hands on Dahlia -- or any of us for that matter -- and I will rip those pretty little bleach blonde hairs out of your skull."

Amy immediately grabs her hair protectively.

Amy Harrison: "My hair color is real!"

Selena Vex: "Yeah... as real as Kylie Jenner's boobs."

Amy looks horrified.

Amy Harrison: "Look here you worthless little--"

WHAM!

Dahlia Cross suddenly punches Amy Harrison square in the face, cutting her off mid-sentence.

Amy crashes to the floor.

Dahlia snaps.

She mounts Amy and begins raining punches down on her.

Weeks of anger explode all at once.

Selena Vex: "Dahlia!"

Rosa Delgado: "HEY!"

Rosa and Selena rush forward and pull Dahlia off of Amy.

Selena Vex: "It's not worth it!"

Rosa Delgado: "It's not worth it Dahlia!"

Amy pulls herself up, seething with rage.

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Amy Harrison: "You just made the biggest mistake of your lives messing with me!"

She storms out of the locker room, slamming the door behind her.

The three women remain standing there, breathing heavily as the reality of what just happened settles in.

Maxwell "Max" Jett vs. Jaxson Ryder

The camera sweeps across the sold-out 713 Music Hall in Houston as the crowd buzzes with anticipation for the next contest.

John Phillips: "Ladies and gentlemen, our next contest here tonight at Victory features two men looking to build momentum following No Love Lost."

Mark Bravo: "And if you watched earlier tonight, JP, you know momentum is a dangerous thing right now in the UTA. Kairo Bey just hesitated for one second... and Eli Creed made sure he paid for it."

John Phillips: "That moment is going to linger over this show for the rest of the night."

Mark Bravo: "You say linger. I say lesson."

The arena lights suddenly explode into red, white, and blue strobes.

The opening guitar riff of an energetic alt-rock anthem blasts through the arena.

The crowd pops loudly.

John Phillips: "Listen to this reaction!"

Mark Bravo: "Houston loves this guy."

JAXSON RYDER bursts through the curtain with explosive energy.

He slaps hands along the stage as he points out toward the crowd, feeding off the roar of the fans.

John Phillips: "Jaxson Ryder -- the self-proclaimed Hometown Hero of Dayton, Ohio -- a man who thrives on energy like this."

Mark Bravo: "And you can see it immediately. Ryder wrestles like the crowd is plugged directly into him."

Ryder jogs to the edge of the stage and throws both arms wide as the crowd cheers louder.

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John Phillips: "High energy, explosive offense, and an unbreakable spirit. That's what has made Jaxson Ryder one of the most exciting young competitors in the UTA."

Mark Bravo: "But tonight he's stepping in there with someone who thrives on crushing spirits."

Ryder sprints down the ramp slapping hands with fans on both sides.

John Phillips: "And that someone... is Maxwell 'Max' Jett."

Mark Bravo: "The Platinum Pretender."

Ryder slides into the ring under the bottom rope and pops to his feet.

He jumps onto the middle turnbuckle and points out into the crowd.

Jaxson Ryder: "LET'S GO HOUSTON!"

The crowd erupts again.

John Phillips: "You talk about feeding off the crowd -- this building is electric right now."

Mark Bravo: "And Ryder is going to need every ounce of that energy, because Maxwell Jett is one of the most manipulative competitors we've seen come through the UTA in a long time."

Ryder hops down from the turnbuckle and begins pacing the ring, loosening up and preparing for the match.

John Phillips: "The Hometown Hero looks ready."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah... but now the real problem walks through that curtain."

The energy inside 713 Music Hall shifts as the lights dim slightly.

A single gold spotlight ignites at the top of the stage like a camera flash.

Cocky arena rock collides with heavy trap percussion as "Gold Standard" hits the speakers.

The crowd immediately erupts into loud boos.

Mark Bravo: "Ahhh there he is. My favorite kind of problem."

John Phillips: "You would say that."

MAXWELL "MAX" JETT slowly steps through the curtain wearing a designer robe trimmed in metallic gold.

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He pauses under the spotlight and slowly turns in a circle, soaking in the hostility.

The boos grow louder.

Mark Bravo: "Listen to that reaction."

John Phillips: "Maxwell Jett absolutely thrives on it."

Jett smirks and mouths toward a fan in the front row.

Maxwell Jett: "You're welcome."

The boos intensify.

John Phillips: "Jett calls himself 'The Platinum Pretender' and if you watched No Love Lost, you saw exactly why."

Mark Bravo: "That open challenge victory turned a lot of heads."

John Phillips: "It did. Maxwell Jett defeated Graham Keel in impressive fashion."

Mark Bravo: "Impressive and infuriating at the same time."

Jett slowly begins walking down the ramp.

No urgency. No concern.

Just absolute confidence.

John Phillips: "He moves like a man who already knows the ending."

Mark Bravo: "Because in his mind... he does."

Jett stops halfway down the ramp and gestures for the camera operator to come closer.

Maxwell Jett: "This... is what a star looks like."

He taps the camera lens and pushes it away.

John Phillips: "You can see the arrogance dripping off of him."

Mark Bravo: "That's not arrogance. That's self-awareness."

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Jett continues toward the ring, jawing with fans leaning over the barricade.

One fan shouts something at him.

Jett stops and slowly shakes his head.

Maxwell Jett: "You paid to see me."

Louder boos rain down.

John Phillips: "And that right there is Maxwell Jett's entire philosophy."

Mark Bravo: "He doesn't want your respect."

John Phillips: "No."

Mark Bravo: "He wants your attention."

Jett reaches ringside and circles the ring slowly.

Inside the ring, Jaxson Ryder watches him carefully.

John Phillips: "And look at Ryder. Focused. No games."

Mark Bravo: "That's because Ryder knows exactly what Jett is going to try to do."

Jett wipes his boots on the apron before stepping onto it.

John Phillips: "Classic heel playbook."

Without warning Jett suddenly slides under the bottom rope with speed.

He pops to his feet and immediately climbs the second rope.

Maxwell Jett: "I'm not here to impress you--"

He gestures dismissively at the crowd.

Maxwell Jett: "--I'm here to remind you who's better than you."

The boos thunder through the arena.

Mark Bravo: "I love it."

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John Phillips: "Of course you do."

Jett hops down and begins pacing the ring, staring directly at Jaxson Ryder with a smug grin.

John Phillips: "Confidence versus heart."

Mark Bravo: "Technique versus energy."

John Phillips: "And right now... Houston is ready for this one."

The referee steps between the two competitors as the crowd buzz grows louder.

The referee steps between both competitors, looking from one man to the other.

Jaxson Ryder bounces lightly on the balls of his feet, energized by the Houston crowd.

Across from him, Maxwell "Max" Jett simply rolls his shoulders and smirks.

John Phillips: "Two very different mindsets in that ring right now."

Mark Bravo: "One guy wants to fight."

John Phillips: "And the other?"

Mark Bravo: "The other guy wants to prove he's smarter than everyone in the building."

The referee signals to the timekeeper.

DING DING!

The bell echoes through 713 Music Hall.

Ryder immediately steps forward.

Jett immediately backs away toward the ropes.

Mark Bravo: "Oh come on."

John Phillips: "Already creating space."

Jett raises a finger.

Maxwell Jett: "Relax, hero."

The crowd boos loudly.

Mark Bravo: "See? He's controlling the pace already."

John Phillips: "Or stalling."

Jett slowly circles the ring, wagging a finger at Ryder.

Maxwell Jett: "You people really think this guy is the future?"

The boos grow louder.

Maxwell Jett: "Houston... you deserve better."

Suddenly Ryder rushes forward.

Jett barely dives through the ropes to the apron.

Mark Bravo: "Smart move!"

John Phillips: "Smart? He ran."

Jett stands on the apron shaking his head.

Maxwell Jett: "You see that? That's desperation."

Ryder throws his hands up in frustration as the crowd chants loudly.

Crowd: "COWARD! COWARD! COWARD!"

John Phillips: "Houston making their opinion very clear."

Mark Bravo: "They're emotional. Jett is logical."

Jett slowly steps back into the ring.

The two men circle.

Collar and elbow tie-up.

Ryder quickly transitions into a side headlock.

John Phillips: "Nice control from Ryder."

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Mark Bravo: "Technical wrestling from a guy everyone thinks is just high energy."

Jett shoves Ryder into the ropes.

Ryder rebounds.

Shoulder tackle.

Jett crashes to the mat.

The crowd pops loudly.

John Phillips: "Big shoulder tackle!"

Mark Bravo: "And Jett didn't like that one bit."

Ryder hits the ropes again.

Jett rolls onto his stomach and grabs the ropes.

Ryder hops over him.

Jett quickly pops up.

Ryder rebounds again.

Dropkick!

Jett is sent stumbling into the corner.

The Houston crowd explodes.

John Phillips: "Jaxson Ryder coming out hot!"

Mark Bravo: "Energy is on his side right now."

Jett sits in the corner looking stunned.

Ryder raises both arms to the crowd.

Jaxson Ryder: "LET'S GO!"

The arena erupts again.

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John Phillips: "Houston firmly behind Ryder."

Mark Bravo: "And Jett... looks irritated."

Jett slowly rises in the corner, wiping his mouth and staring at Ryder.

The smirk slowly returns.

John Phillips: "That look worries me."

Mark Bravo: "Why?"

John Phillips: "Because when Maxwell Jett starts smiling... it usually means he's about to do something terrible."

Maxwell Jett slowly pushes himself up from the corner, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand.

Across the ring, Jaxson Ryder bounces in place, energized by the Houston crowd.

John Phillips: "Right now the Hometown Hero has the momentum."

Mark Bravo: "But momentum can disappear in a second in this business."

Ryder rushes forward again.

Jett suddenly lunges toward the referee.

The official instinctively steps between them.

And in that exact moment--

Jett rakes Ryder across the eyes.

The crowd erupts in boos.

John Phillips: "Oh come on!"

Mark Bravo: "What? What happened? I didn't see anything."

John Phillips: "You saw exactly what happened."

Ryder staggers backward clutching his face.

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Jett wastes no time.

Running boot to the face.

Ryder collapses to the mat.

Mark Bravo: "And just like that... Maxwell Jett is back in control."

John Phillips: "Through deception."

Mark Bravo: "Through intelligence."

Jett casually dusts off his robe sleeve before dropping down to grab Ryder.

Arm wringer.

Snap suplex.

Ryder crashes to the canvas.

John Phillips: "Picture perfect suplex."

Mark Bravo: "That's the technical side of Maxwell Jett people overlook."

Jett floats over into a cover.

Referee: "ONE!"

Ryder kicks out quickly.

John Phillips: "Not enough."

Jett sits up and smirks at the hard camera.

Maxwell Jett: "Did you see that?"

The boos rain down.

Mark Bravo: "He's talking to the camera again."

John Phillips: "Always aware of where the spotlight is."

Jett pulls Ryder up and traps the arm.

Hammerlock.

Hammerlock DDT.

Ryder spikes hard into the mat.

John Phillips: "Hammerlock DDT!"

Mark Bravo: "That targeted the shoulder and neck."

Jett grabs Ryder by the hair and drags him toward the ropes.

He drapes Ryder's arm over the bottom rope.

Referee: "Watch the ropes!"

Jett steps back like he's complying.

Then suddenly stomps Ryder's arm against the rope.

Loud boos.

John Phillips: "Blatant disregard for the rules."

Mark Bravo: "Blatant strategy."

Jett paces the ring slowly, soaking in the hostility.

Maxwell Jett: "You people wanted a hero."

He kicks Ryder in the ribs.

Maxwell Jett: "You got a victim."

John Phillips: "This man is unbelievable."

Mark Bravo: "He's effective."

Jett lifts Ryder again.

Pendulum backbreaker.

Ryder arches in pain before collapsing back to the mat.

John Phillips: "Ryder is in trouble now."

Mark Bravo: "That early energy might be fading."

Jett hooks Ryder's head and cinches in a grounded headlock.

He leans down toward Ryder's ear.

Maxwell Jett: "This is why I'm better than you."

The Houston crowd begins clapping rhythmically, trying to rally Ryder.

John Phillips: "Listen to this crowd."

Mark Bravo: "Houston trying to will Ryder back into this."

John Phillips: "Earlier tonight we saw hesitation cost Kairo Bey everything."

Mark Bravo: "And right now Ryder can't hesitate."

John Phillips: "Because Maxwell Jett is the kind of competitor who only needs one moment."

Jett tightens the hold.

But Ryder slowly begins fighting up to one knee.

The crowd volume rises.

John Phillips: "Here comes the fight back!"

Mark Bravo: "Maybe."

Maxwell Jett tightens the grounded headlock, grinding his forearm across Jaxson Ryder's jaw.

Ryder grimaces in pain but begins pushing himself up.

John Phillips: "Listen to this crowd trying to rally him."

Mark Bravo: "If Ryder feeds off energy, he's getting a full buffet right now."

The Houston crowd claps rhythmically.

Crowd: "LET'S GO RY-DER! LET'S GO RY-DER!"

Ryder powers up to one knee.

Then both feet.

Jett keeps the hold locked in.

John Phillips: "Jaxson Ryder fighting his way back up!"

Ryder fires an elbow to the ribs.

Another.

A third.

Jett releases the hold.

Ryder spins around--

Spinning neckbreaker!

The crowd erupts.

John Phillips: "Huge neckbreaker!"

Mark Bravo: "That might have just reset the entire match."

Both men lie on the mat for a moment.

The referee begins counting.

Referee: "ONE! TWO! THREE!"

Ryder reaches the ropes and pulls himself up first.

Jett staggers up seconds later.

Ryder explodes forward.

Running clothesline!

Jett pops back up.

Second clothesline!

The Houston crowd roars.

John Phillips: "Ryder building momentum!"

Mark Bravo: "And Jett is suddenly on defense."

Jett swings wildly.

Ryder ducks.

Pop-up hurricanrana!

Jett flips across the ring and crashes to the mat.

John Phillips: "POP-UP HURRICANRANA!"

Mark Bravo: "Where did that come from?"

Jett stumbles to his feet near the ropes.

Ryder charges.

Springboard crossbody!

Both men crash to the mat.

Ryder hooks the leg.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

Jett kicks out.

John Phillips: "So close!"

Mark Bravo: "That was a dangerous two count for Maxwell Jett."

Ryder slaps the mat, energized.

Jaxson Ryder: "COME ON HOUSTON!"

The arena explodes.

John Phillips: "Ryder feeling it!"

Mark Bravo: "But this is the dangerous moment."

John Phillips: "Why do you say that?"

Mark Bravo: "Because when Maxwell Jett starts losing control... he starts cheating."

Ryder pulls Jett up and kicks him in the midsection.

Hook kick!

Jett staggers.

Ryder hooks the arms.

John Phillips: "He's setting up the Ace Driver!"

The Houston crowd rises to their feet.

The Houston crowd rises to their feet as Jaxson Ryder hooks both arms.

John Phillips: "He's setting up the Ace Driver!"

Mark Bravo: "If Ryder hits this, it might be over!"

Ryder tries to lift.

But Jett suddenly drops his weight.

Ryder tries again.

Jett shifts his hips and twists violently.

Snakebite counter!

Ryder is shoved forward into the ropes.

John Phillips: "Jett slipped out!"

Mark Bravo: "That's ring awareness."

Ryder rebounds off the ropes.

Jett immediately kicks him in the midsection.

But Ryder powers through it.

Forearm smash!

Jett staggers backward.

John Phillips: "Ryder still fighting!"

Ryder charges forward.

Running bulldog!

Jett hits the canvas hard.

John Phillips: "Bulldog!"

Ryder climbs the turnbuckles quickly.

The crowd rises even louder.

Mark Bravo: "Wait a second..."

John Phillips: "Victory Lane!"

Ryder steadies himself on the top rope.

He leaps--

Phoenix Splash attempt!

But Jett rolls out of the way!

Ryder crashes hard onto the mat.

John Phillips: "Nobody home!"

Mark Bravo: "That might have been Ryder's last shot!"

Both men slowly begin to rise.

Ryder is clutching his ribs.

Jett smirks as he stalks forward.

Maxwell Jett: "You almost had it."

Jett suddenly traps Ryder's arm.

John Phillips: "Watch out!"

Jett yanks Ryder forward violently.

PLATINUM DRIVER!

The impact spikes Ryder into the mat.

John Phillips: "PLATINUM DRIVER!"

Mark Bravo: "That's it!"

Jett immediately hooks the leg.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

Referee: "THREE!"

DING DING DING!

John Phillips: "Maxwell Jett steals it!"

Mark Bravo: "Steals it? He won it."

John Phillips: "Jaxson Ryder had the match in his hands!"

Mark Bravo: "And Maxwell Jett ripped it away."

Jett slowly rolls off Ryder, breathing heavily.

Then the smirk returns.

John Phillips: "That is exactly the kind of opportunistic victory Maxwell Jett is known for."

Mark Bravo: "You can boo him all you want, but the man keeps winning."

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Jett stands up and raises both arms.

The Houston crowd showers him with boos.

Maxwell Jett: "I told you."

He points directly at the hard camera.

Maxwell Jett: "I'm better than you."

Jett blows an exaggerated kiss toward the crowd.

Behind him, Ryder slowly rolls toward the ropes trying to recover.

John Phillips: "A heartbreaking loss for Jaxson Ryder tonight."

Mark Bravo: "But a statement win for Maxwell Jett."

John Phillips: "The Platinum Pretender continues to make his presence known in the United Toughness Alliance."

Jett backs up the ramp smiling arrogantly as the Houston crowd continues booing loudly.

Loss Has a Sound to It

Backstage in a quiet hallway, Kairo Bey sits alone on a production crate, still in his ring gear.

His hands are taped, but the tape is beginning to fray. Sweat still clings to his hair from earlier in the night.

Bey stares down at the floor.

His loss still weighing on him.

Footsteps approach.

Slow. Deliberate.

Kairo doesn't look up.

Eli Creed steps into view.

Troy Lindz stands just behind him, calm and composed in their Muay Thai gear.

Creed folds his hands in front of him, studying Bey quietly.

Eli Creed: "Loss has a sound to it."

Kairo exhales slowly.

Eli Creed: "It's quiet."

Eli Creed: "Heavy."

Eli Creed: "It sits right here."

Creed taps the side of his temple.

Kairo finally looks up.

Kairo Bey: "You done yet?"

Eli Creed: "Not even close."

Creed steps a little closer.

Eli Creed: "You felt it tonight."

Kairo's jaw tightens.

Kairo Bey: "Yeah."

Kairo Bey: "I felt losing."

Eli Creed: "No."

Eli Creed: "You felt hesitation."

Creed gestures toward the hallway.

Eli Creed: "You saw us."

Eli Creed: "And for just a moment..."

Eli Creed: "You weren't fighting your opponent anymore."

Eli Creed: "You were fighting yourself."

Kairo looks away.

Eli Creed: "That moment cost you everything."

Creed motions toward Troy Lindz.

Eli Creed: "Look at Troy."

Kairo glances over.

Lindz stands calm. Centered. Focused.

Eli Creed: "Before the Creed Method... Troy was chaos."

Eli Creed: "Emotion."

Eli Creed: "Distraction."

Eli Creed: "Now?"

Eli Creed: "Now Troy is purpose."

Lindz nods slightly.

Troy Lindz: "Break."

Troy Lindz: "Bend."

Troy Lindz: "Build."

Kairo scoffs.

Kairo Bey: "You two rehearse that in the mirror?"

Creed smiles faintly.

Eli Creed: "Mock it all you want."

Eli Creed: "But you felt it."

Creed leans closer.

Eli Creed: "You felt doubt."

Eli Creed: "You felt fear."

Eli Creed: "And deep down..."

Eli Creed: "You felt the truth."

Kairo stands up slowly.

Kairo Bey: "What truth is that?"

Eli Creed: "That you're not where you're supposed to be yet."

Eli Creed: "Not without guidance."

Creed places a hand over his chest.

Eli Creed: "I can fix that."

The hallway grows quiet.

Eli Creed: "You don't have to answer tonight."

Eli Creed: "But understand something."

Eli Creed: "You already know the path."

Creed begins to walk away.

Troy Lindz follows beside him.

Eli Creed: "All you have to decide..."

Eli Creed: "Is whether you're ready to walk it."

Creed and Lindz disappear down the hallway.

Kairo Bey remains standing there.

Thinking.

Fear the Reaper

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As we return ringside, the arena lights suddenly cut out, plunging the building into darkness.

The big screen flickers to life as a shadowed figure appears on the screen -- his face revealed as half skull... half Chris Ross.

"FEAR THE REAPER!" flashes across the screen.

"Black Flame" by Bury Tomorrow echoes through the arena.

Smoke rolls through the dark hall as Chris Ross slowly emerges through it.

The UTA Champion is dressed in a long black hooded jacket, hood pulled low over his head. The championship belt hangs over his shoulder.

Ross smiles slightly, nodding his head to the music as he steps forward.

Chris Ross: "You know... it's funny... everyone seems so shocked I won against Gunnar and Eric Dane Jr... but it seems like people need a reminder."

Chris Ross: "In order to beat me... YOU HAVE TO KILL ME!!!!"

The crowd in the arena can be heard erupting from the distance.

Chris Ross: "Call me The Boss... call me The Keystone State Killa... call me whatever you want."

Chris Ross: "But those names are associated with a past paved in tragedy and darkness... names carved in the worst times of my life..."

Ross closes his eyes and slowly lowers the hood from his head.

Chris Ross: "The reality is... when I was blacklisted in this sport... outcasted... literally ghosted by anyone and everyone..."

Chris Ross: "Well... I am the ghost this sport created."

Chris Ross: "I am the ghost that haunts this place."

Chris Ross: "To all those who wanted me gone... I am now the nightmare they fed."

Chris Ross: "They literally built a reaper out of hatred..."

Ross laughs as he slaps the championship belt against his shoulder.

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Chris Ross: "I used to come to the ring with nothing but unadulterated rage... I fought to survive..."

Chris Ross: "But now..."

Chris Ross: "The Reaper of Harrisburg comes to collect..."

Ross slowly paces forward as crew members clear out of his path.

Chris Ross: "I'm not the same guy... I have a new reason to fight... and a new purpose."

Chris Ross: "I know I'm the last thing this sport wanted... and I know I was never meant to be World Champion..."

Chris Ross: "Well... monsters grow stronger in silence... what can I say..."

Ross smirks as he slowly drags his thumb across his throat in a cut-throat gesture.

Chris Ross: "Scott Stevens... let me say this... I don't know what your deal is with taking Gunnar out... but if you stick your nose in my business again..."

Chris Ross: "Well... let's just say I'm not afraid to storm into your office and lay waste to it!"

Chris Ross: "Get it? Got it? GOOD!"

Ross nods his head slowly.

Chris Ross: "And Gunnar... I ripped your eye patch off because one... I thought it looked stupid... and two... I wanted to face the REAL you!"

Chris Ross: "I don't give a damn about your bullshit fake eye!"

Chris Ross: "The fact is... you didn't get the job done."

Chris Ross: "You couldn't kill The Reaper."

Chris Ross: "I seen the look in your good eye... I seen a man that realized he's against the one person that refuses to go out like a bitch!"

Chris Ross: "Want to go one on one with me again?"

Chris Ross: "You know where to find me..."

The camera slowly fades out on the UTA Champion standing alone in the hallway, the championship resting

heavily on his shoulder.

John Phillips: The champion with strong words for Scott Stevens and Gunnar Van Patton.

Mark Bravo: I don't think I've ever seen Chris Ross like this.

Max Mayhem vs Theron Tkachuk

The camera cuts straight to the commentary desk. The crowd is still buzzing, a restless, electric hum rolling through the arena after the shocking locker-room scene. Fans are on their feet, pointing, shouting, trying to process what they just witnessed.

John Phillips: "Ladies and gentlemen, if you're just joining us, tonight's WrestleZone Championship match has taken a dramatic and unprecedented turn. One week ago at No Love Lost, Gunnar Van Patton suffered catastrophic injuries at the hands of the Fatu Twins--forty stitches to the skull, a severe concussion, and major knee damage. He has not been medically cleared. He cannot defend the title."

Mark Bravo: "He shouldn't even be walking, John! The man looks like he got jumped by a snowblower and a grizzly bear. He's held together with tape, stitches, and pure spite."

John Phillips: "But earlier tonight, Scott Stevens informed Gunnar that the title had to be defended. No postponements. No exceptions. Avril Selene Kinkade immediately went to war with UTA's legal team, and the only way they would approve a substitute was under hardcore rules. No disqualifications. No countouts. No referee discretion."

Mark Bravo: "Basically the lawyers said, 'Fine, you can have a replacement--but we're not taking responsibility for whatever happens.' And honestly? Smart. If the Unholy Wolf Brigade is involved, you want the rulebook in a shredder."

John Phillips: "Avril pushed for Arkady Bogatyr to take Gunnar's place, but Gunnar--barely conscious--chose Theron Tkachuk instead. A man we have never seen compete in UTA. No tape. No interviews. No public matches. Nothing."

Mark Bravo: "John, if a man with forty stitches and a scrambled brain points at the silent giant in the corner and says, 'That one,' you listen. Gunnar knows something we don't."

The crowd begins to stir again, a low rumble of anticipation rolling through the arena. A few fans point toward the upper levels, unsure, uneasy.

John Phillips: "We don't know his style. We don't know his temperament. We don't know his background. All we know is that Gunnar Van Patton trusts him with the WrestleZone Championship."

Mark Bravo: "And that's the part that scares me. Gunnar didn't hesitate. He didn't blink. He didn't even look at Arkady. He said 'Theron' like he was naming a weapon."

Before Phillips can continue, the arena lights don't dim--they vanish.

Instantly.

As if the entire building has been dropped into the Arctic night.

The crowd gasps. A few scream. The sudden darkness feels heavy, suffocating, predatory.

John Phillips: "What--what just happened to the lights?!"

Mark Bravo: "John... I think we're about to meet him."

"Death March" by Motionless in White erupts through the darkness, the opening chords pounding like war drums. The crowd quiets without being told to. The air feels colder. Heavier. Like something ancient has stepped into the arena.

A single spotlight snaps on deep in the crowd, cutting through the black like a blade.

Fans jolt as the beam lands on a hooded figure standing perfectly still among them.

Theron Tkachuk.

The hood is pulled low, shadowing most of his face. A black wolf-jaw gaiter mask covers his mouth--skeletal fangs painted in stark, predatory detail. Strands of sleek black hair spill from beneath the hood. His ice-blue eyes glint like frost catching moonlight.

And draped over his right shoulder... the WrestleZone Championship belt.

John Phillips: "There he is... that's Theron Tkachuk. Gunnar Van Patton's chosen substitute. And he's not coming down the ramp--he's emerging from the crowd."

Mark Bravo: "John... he looks like he walked out of a blizzard to collect a debt."

Theron doesn't move.

He stands like a ghost carved out of winter--silent, unreadable, immovable.

The crowd instinctively steps back, giving him space without being asked.

Then he begins to walk.

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Not fast. Not slow. Just inevitable.

The crowd parts around him like he's a glacier advancing--unstoppable and indifferent.

John Phillips: "Look at the way the fans are moving aside... he's not pushing anyone. They're just--getting out of his way."

Mark Bravo: "Wouldn't you?! That's not a man, John. That's a warning."

Theron descends the steps with cold, deliberate purpose, the title belt still draped over his shoulder. He doesn't look at the fans. He doesn't acknowledge the music. He simply advances, each step controlled, each movement precise.

Down below, Maxx Mayhem is pacing at ringside, pounding his trash-can lid against the apron like a war drum. He's vibrating with anticipation, eyes wild, waiting for Theron to reach the floor.

John Phillips: "Maxx Mayhem is watching him like a predator spotting another predator."

Mark Bravo: "Maxx is loving this! He wanted chaos--he's getting a walking apocalypse!"

Theron reaches the lower bowl. He stops at the edge of the crowd, the spotlight still locked on him. The WrestleZone Title gleams on his shoulder like a silent declaration.

Maxx sees him.

And Maxx Mayhem--chaos incarnate--lights up like a kid on Christmas morning. He drops the trash-lid, screams something unintelligible, and bolts up the arena steps, shoving fans aside as he charges straight toward the silent monster in the crowd.

John Phillips: "MAXX MAYHEM ISN'T WAITING FOR ANYTHING! HE'S GOING STRAIGHT FOR THERON TKACHUK!"

Mark Bravo: "HARDCORE RULES, BABY! CLOCK IN AND SWING HARD!"

Theron doesn't move.

Not an inch.

The title belt still draped over his shoulder, gleaming like a warning as Maxx barrels toward him through the sea of fans.

The collision course is set.

The crowd splits.

The air tightens.

And the fight is seconds from detonating.

Maxx Mayhem rockets up the arena steps like a human missile, boots hammering against concrete, shoving fans aside with gleeful disregard. Drinks spill. Popcorn flies. Fans scream and scatter as he barrels forward, eyes wide, grin feral, arms swinging like he's trying to punch the air itself into submission.

Theron Tkachuk stands perfectly still in the spotlight, the WrestleZone Title draped over his shoulder, the wolf-jaw mask staring down the oncoming storm. He doesn't flinch. He doesn't brace. He simply watches Maxx approach with those cold, unreadable eyes.

John Phillips: "Maxx Mayhem is charging straight into the unknown! He has no idea what Theron Tkachuk is capable of!"

Mark Bravo: "He doesn't care, John! Maxx sees a monster and thinks, 'Cool, let's hit it with a trash can!'"

Maxx leaps the final step, screaming like a man possessed--

--and Theron calmly lifts the WrestleZone Title from his shoulder and lets it fall to the concrete.

The belt hits the floor with a heavy metallic thud that echoes through the upper bowl.

Maxx swings the trash-can lid--full force, reckless, joyful--

--and Theron's free hand shoots up, catching it mid-air with terrifying, effortless calm.

The entire arena gasps.

John Phillips: "HE CAUGHT IT! THERON TKACHUK JUST CAUGHT THE WEAPON MID-SWING!"

Mark Bravo: "OH THAT'S BAD, JOHN! THAT'S REAL BAD! MAXX JUST HIT THE 'WAKE THE BEAR' BUTTON!"

Maxx tries to yank the lid back--no movement. He tries again--nothing. Theron's arm doesn't budge. His stance doesn't shift. He holds the lid like it's a child's toy.

Maxx's eyes widen--then he bursts into manic laughter, leaning in nose-to-mask with the silent giant.

Theron doesn't blink.

He just tightens his grip.

Then he moves.

One step forward.

One shift of weight.

One heavy, blunt forearm--

--and it lands across Maxx's jaw with a sound like a tree splitting.

Maxx's head snaps sideways. His body whips around. He crashes into a row of seats, knocking them over like bowling pins. Fans scatter, screaming, stumbling over each other to get out of the blast zone.

Maxx hits the concrete, rolls, pops back up--laughing, blood on his lip, eyes wild. Tkachuk removes his jacket and launches it into the crowd.

John Phillips: "Maxx Mayhem is laughing through that shot! That forearm would have knocked most men unconscious!"

Mark Bravo: "Maxx isn't most men! He's a crash test dummy with a pulse!"

Maxx charges again--swinging wild punches, elbows, anything he can throw. Theron absorbs the first shot with a slight turn of his head. The second with a shift of his shoulder. The third with nothing but stillness.

Maxx keeps swinging, screaming, laughing, throwing everything he has--

--and Theron's expression never changes.

Then Theron fires back.

A rib-shot that sounds like a baseball bat hitting a heavy bag.

A downward forearm that nearly buckles Maxx's knees.

A short elbow to the jaw that sends Maxx stumbling into a fan's lap.

John Phillips: "Theron Tkachuk is absorbing these shots like they're nothing! Maxx Mayhem is throwing bombs and getting no reaction!"

Mark Bravo: "John... he's hitting a glacier. You don't punch a glacier. The glacier wins."

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Maxx grabs a fan's plastic beer cup and hurls it at Theron's face. It splashes across the wolf-jaw mask. Theron doesn't react. Maxx grabs a metal chair from the row and swings it overhead--

--Theron steps in, catches the chair by the frame, rips it from Maxx's hands, and hurls it down the steps like it weighs nothing.

The chair bounces off the concrete, clattering violently as fans scream and dive out of the way.

Maxx's grin widens.

Theron's expression stays frozen.

Maxx lunges again--Theron meets him with a brutal tackle, driving him backward into a cluster of seats. The impact sends chairs collapsing, fans scattering, drinks exploding into the air like confetti.

John Phillips: "THIS IS ABSOLUTE MAYHEM IN THE UPPER BOWL! THEY'RE DESTROYING EVERYTHING UP THERE!"

Mark Bravo: "THIS IS BEAUTIFUL! THIS IS ART! THIS IS WHAT HARDCORE WRESTLING IS SUPPOSED TO BE!"

Theron grabs Maxx by the back of the head and slams him face-first into a metal railing. Maxx bounces off it, staggering, laughing, wiping blood from his mouth with the back of his hand.

He spits a mouthful of red onto the concrete and screams something incoherent at Theron.

Theron answers with a clubbing forearm that sends Maxx tumbling down three steps, crashing into a pile of knocked-over chairs.

Maxx rolls, pops back up, and hurls a seat cushion at Theron's head.

Theron doesn't even blink as it bounces off his mask.

Mark Bravo: "JOHN, HE JUST GOT HIT WITH A CHAIR CUSHION AND DIDN'T EVEN LOOK AT IT! THAT'S A SUPERVILLAIN!"

Maxx grabs a fan's half-eaten nachos and flings them at Theron. Cheese splatters across the wolf-jaw mask. Theron doesn't react. Maxx laughs so hard he nearly falls over.

Theron steps forward--slow, inevitable, predatory.

Maxx swings again--Theron catches the punch, twists Maxx's wrist, and hurls him sideways into a concrete pillar. Maxx hits with a thud that echoes through the arena.

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He slumps for a moment--then starts laughing again.

John Phillips: "Maxx Mayhem is taking an unbelievable amount of punishment!"

Mark Bravo: "He's not taking it, John--he's ordering seconds!"

Theron grabs Maxx by the back of the neck and drags him down the steps, bouncing him off railings, seats, and concrete as they descend toward the lower bowl. Fans scatter in every direction, creating a widening path of destruction.

Maxx tries to fight back--wild elbows, headbutts, kicks--but Theron absorbs them with irritation, not pain.

Theron slams Maxx into a railing so hard the entire section rattles.

Maxx collapses to a knee, wheezing, still laughing.

Theron reaches down, grabs him by the hair, and yanks him back to his feet like he weighs nothing.

John Phillips: "They're fighting their way down toward the floor! This match hasn't even touched the ring yet!"

Mark Bravo: "WHO NEEDS A RING?! THIS IS A STREET FIGHT WITH TICKETS!"

Theron shoves Maxx forward, sending him tumbling down the last few steps. Maxx crashes onto the concrete walkway below, rolling, coughing, laughing, pounding the floor with his fist like he's having the time of his life.

Theron descends after him--slow, cold, inevitable--like winter coming down a mountain.

The crowd roars as the two men collide again, fists flying, bodies slamming into railings, fans scattering in every direction.

The fight is no longer a match.

It's a riot.

And it's only getting worse.

Maxx Mayhem tumbles down the last few concrete steps, crashing onto the walkway below in a heap of limbs and laughter. He rolls onto his back, coughing, wheezing, pounding the floor with his fist like he's having the time of his life. Fans scatter in every direction, climbing over seats, diving behind railings, trying to get out of the blast radius.

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Theron Tkachuk descends after him--slow, cold, inevitable--like winter coming down a mountain. Every step is deliberate. Every movement is controlled. He doesn't rush. He doesn't posture. He simply advances, the spotlight following him like it's afraid to lose him.

John Phillips: "They've made it down to the lower bowl, and this is absolute chaos! Fans are scrambling to get out of the way!"

Mark Bravo: "This isn't a match, John! This is a natural disaster with theme music!"

Maxx pushes himself up to his knees, still laughing, still bleeding from the lip. He wipes his mouth with the back of his hand, smears the red across his cheek like war paint, and screams something incoherent at Theron.

Theron answers by grabbing Maxx by the back of the head and hurling him into the steel guardrail. Maxx hits with a clang that echoes through the arena. The railing shudders. Fans behind it recoil like they've just seen a car crash.

Maxx slumps for a moment--then pops back up, staggering, laughing, pounding the rail with both fists like he's trying to hype it up.

John Phillips: "Maxx Mayhem is absorbing an unbelievable amount of punishment!"

Mark Bravo: "He's not absorbing it, John--he's auditioning for more!"

Maxx lunges forward, grabbing a fan's souvenir popcorn bucket and smashing it over Theron's head. Popcorn explodes everywhere, raining down like confetti. Theron doesn't react. He doesn't even blink. Kernels slide down the wolf-jaw mask like snowflakes.

Maxx grabs a plastic drink tray and swings it like a frying pan. It smacks against Theron's shoulder and shatters into pieces.

Theron doesn't move.

Mark Bravo: "JOHN, HE JUST GOT HIT WITH A DRINK TRAY AND DIDN'T EVEN LOOK AT IT! THAT'S A SUPERVILLAIN!"

Maxx backs up, laughing, arms wide, daring Theron to come at him.

Theron obliges.

He steps forward and drives a knee into Maxx's ribs with enough force to lift him off the ground. Maxx folds over, wheezing, stumbling backward into a merchandise cart. Shirts, hats, and foam fingers spill everywhere.

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Theron grabs Maxx by the back of the neck and slams him face-first into the cart. The whole structure tips, crashing onto its side, sending merch flying like debris in a storm.

John Phillips: "They're destroying the merchandise area! This is out of control!"

Mark Bravo: "I HOPE THEY BREAK THE SNOW GLOBES! I HATE SNOW GLOBES!"

Maxx crawls out from under a pile of shirts, grabs a foam finger, and jabs it into Theron's face like a sword. The foam bends instantly. Theron doesn't react. Maxx throws it aside and grabs a metal clothing rack instead.

He swings it like a battering ram--

--Theron sidesteps, grabs the rack mid-swing, and rips it out of Maxx's hands. He hurls it across the walkway, where it crashes into a trash can and sends it rolling down the aisle.

Maxx charges again--Theron meets him with a brutal shoulder block that sends Maxx flipping over a row of chairs and crashing into the concrete floor on the other side.

John Phillips: "THERON TKACHUK JUST SENT MAXX MAYHEM INTO THE NEXT ZIP CODE!"

Mark Bravo: "HE GOT FREQUENT FLYER MILES FOR THAT ONE!"

Maxx crawls out from under the chairs, coughing, laughing, dragging himself upright using the railing. He spits onto the floor, wipes his mouth, and screams at Theron to bring it on.

Theron obliges again.

He grabs Maxx by the wrist, yanks him forward, and whips him into a concrete support pillar. Maxx hits hard, bouncing off it like a ragdoll, collapsing to the floor in a heap.

Fans gasp. Some cheer. Some cover their mouths. Some back away like they're afraid the fight might spill into their laps.

John Phillips: "Maxx Mayhem is being ragdolled all over the arena!"

Mark Bravo: "He's gonna need a chiropractor, a priest, and a new spine!"

Maxx crawls away, dragging himself along the floor, laughing through the pain. He reaches a concession stand, grabs a plastic nacho tray, and flings it at Theron. Cheese splatters across the wolf-jaw mask again.

Theron doesn't react.

Maxx grabs a soda machine cup and throws it. Then another. Then another. He's pelting Theron with drinks

like a child throwing snowballs at a tank.

Theron keeps walking.

Maxx backs up, trips over a fallen chair, and scrambles to his feet. He grabs a metal stanchion pole from a crowd-control barrier and swings it like a baseball bat.

Theron catches it mid-swing.

Maxx's eyes go wide.

Theron rips the pole out of his hands and snaps it across his knee.

Mark Bravo: "HE JUST BROKE A METAL POLE! A METAL POLE, JOHN! WHAT IS HE MADE OF?!"

John Phillips: "This is terrifying. Theron Tkachuk is terrifying."

Maxx stumbles backward, hands raised, laughing nervously now. Theron steps forward, grabs Maxx by the throat with one hand, and shoves him backward into a rolling equipment crate.

The crate tips, crashes, and spills cables and gear across the floor.

Maxx rolls out of the wreckage, coughing, clutching his ribs, still laughing, still refusing to stay down.

Theron advances again--slow, cold, inevitable--like a storm that refuses to pass.

John Phillips: "They're heading toward the entrance ramp! This fight is tearing through the entire arena!"

Mark Bravo: "GOOD! TAKE IT TO THE PARKING LOT! TAKE IT TO THE ROOF! TAKE IT TO THE MOON!"

Maxx staggers toward the ramp area, using the guardrail to stay upright. Theron follows, relentless, unstoppable, the crowd parting around him like he's a force of nature.

The riot is moving.

The violence is escalating.

And the ring is still nowhere in sight.

Maxx Mayhem staggers along the lower bowl walkway, clutching his ribs, laughing through the pain as he uses the guardrail to stay upright. Theron Tkachuk follows behind him with the cold inevitability of a glacier, each step measured, each movement controlled, the crowd parting around him like he's a force of nature.

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Maxx turns, sees Theron closing in, and immediately grabs the nearest object--a fan's souvenir drink cup--and hurls it at Theron's head. It bounces off the wolf-jaw mask and splashes soda across his chest.

Theron doesn't react.

John Phillips: "Theron Tkachuk is completely unfazed! Maxx Mayhem is throwing everything he can get his hands on!"

Mark Bravo: "He's throwing drinks at a polar bear, John! It's not gonna work!"

Maxx grabs a nacho tray from a startled fan and flings it like a frisbee. It smacks Theron in the shoulder, cheese and chips exploding everywhere. Theron keeps walking. Maxx backs up, laughing, slipping on spilled nacho cheese, nearly falling over.

Theron reaches him.

Maxx swings a wild right hand--Theron catches it mid-air, twists Maxx's wrist, and yanks him forward into a brutal short-range elbow to the jaw. Maxx's head snaps back, and he stumbles into a cluster of fans, knocking them aside like bowling pins.

He collapses over a row of seats, legs tangled, arms flailing, laughing like a man who's lost all sense of self-preservation.

John Phillips: "Maxx Mayhem is being tossed around like a ragdoll!"

Mark Bravo: "He's gonna need a chiropractor, a priest, and a new skeleton!"

Theron steps over the fallen chairs and grabs Maxx by the back of the neck, dragging him upright. Maxx tries to fight back--wild elbows, frantic punches--but Theron absorbs them with irritation, not pain.

Theron drives Maxx backward, slamming him spine-first into a concrete support pillar. The impact echoes through the arena. Fans gasp and recoil.

Maxx slumps, wheezing, clutching his back--then starts laughing again.

Mark Bravo: "JOHN, HE'S LAUGHING! HE JUST GOT INTRODUCED TO A CONCRETE PILLAR AND HE'S LAUGHING!"

Theron grabs Maxx by the wrist and whips him across the walkway. Maxx crashes into a metal trash can, sending it flying. It rolls down the aisle, scattering debris everywhere.

Maxx crawls out of the wreckage, grabs the trash can lid, and hurls it like a discus. It clangs off Theron's shoulder. Theron doesn't react.

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Maxx grabs the entire trash can and charges with it like a battering ram--

--Theron steps aside, grabs Maxx by the back of the head, and sends him crashing face-first into the railing. Maxx flips over it and lands in the row below, chairs collapsing under him.

John Phillips: "MAXX MAYHEM JUST WENT OVER THE RAILING!"

Mark Bravo: "HE'S TAKING THE EXPRESS ELEVATOR TO THE NEXT SECTION!"

Theron steps over the railing with one smooth motion, dropping down into the next row. Fans scramble, climbing over seats, diving out of the way, spilling drinks and snacks everywhere.

Maxx crawls up the steps, dragging himself by the railing, leaving a trail of chaos behind him. He grabs a fan's foam finger and jabs it into Theron's face like a sword.

The foam bends instantly.

Theron doesn't blink.

Maxx throws it aside and grabs a metal folding chair from the aisle. He swings it overhead--wild, reckless--

--Theron catches the chair mid-swing, rips it out of Maxx's hands, and smashes it across Maxx's back with a thunderous crack.

Maxx collapses onto the steps, rolling down three rows, limbs flailing, laughing hysterically.

John Phillips: "THERON TKACHUK JUST FOLDED MAXX MAYHEM IN HALF!"

Mark Bravo: "HE HIT HIM SO HARD THE CHAIR IS FILING A WORKERS' COMP CLAIM!"

Maxx lands at the bottom of the section, sprawled across the concrete. He pushes himself up, coughing, wheezing, still laughing. He grabs a fan's souvenir soda and chugs it, then spits it into the air like a fountain.

Theron descends the steps after him--slow, cold, inevitable--like a storm rolling downhill.

Maxx grabs a metal stanchion pole from a crowd-control barrier and swings it like a baseball bat. Theron catches it mid-swing, twists it out of Maxx's hands, and snaps it across his knee.

The pole breaks in half.

The crowd erupts.

Mark Bravo: "HE JUST BROKE A METAL POLE! A METAL POLE, JOHN! WHAT IS HE MADE OF?!"

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John Phillips: "This is terrifying. Theron Tkachuk is terrifying."

Maxx backs up, hands raised, laughing nervously now. Theron steps forward, grabs Maxx by the throat with one hand, and shoves him backward into a rolling equipment crate.

The crate tips, crashes, and spills cables and gear across the floor.

Maxx rolls out of the wreckage, coughing, dragging himself upright using the guardrail. He spits onto the floor, wipes his mouth, and screams at Theron to bring it on.

Theron obliges.

He grabs Maxx by the back of the head and hurls him into a merchandise table. Shirts, hats, and foam fingers explode into the air as Maxx crashes through the display.

John Phillips: "THEY'RE DESTROYING THE MERCH TABLE!"

Mark Bravo: "NOOO! NOT THE LIMITED-EDITION FOAM FINGERS!"

Maxx crawls out from under the merch pile, grabs a t-shirt, and flings it at Theron's face. It flutters harmlessly to the floor.

Theron steps forward, grabs Maxx by the waistband, and deadlifts him into the air like a sack of flour. He walks forward--carrying Maxx overhead--before dumping him onto a row of chairs with a crash that sends metal bending and fans screaming.

Maxx rolls off the chairs, coughing, laughing, dragging himself toward the aisle.

Theron follows.

The riot continues.

The crowd scatters.

The violence escalates.

And the ring is still nowhere in sight.

Maxx Mayhem stumbles out of the lower bowl and onto the flat concrete leading to the ramp, clutching his ribs, laughing through the pain as he drags himself forward. Fans scatter behind him, climbing over seats, diving behind railings, desperate to get out of the blast radius. Theron Tkachuk follows with that same cold, inevitable walk -- no bounce, no wasted motion, just forward pressure.

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Maxx reaches the base of the ramp, plants both hands on the metal, and hauls himself upward, boots scraping against the steel grating. He slips once, catches himself, and keeps climbing, laughing like a man who thinks he's winning a fight he's clearly losing.

John Phillips: "Maxx Mayhem is dragging himself up the ramp! He's trying to get higher ground!"

Mark Bravo: "Higher ground?! Against THAT guy?! That's not strategy, that's a dare!"

Theron steps onto the ramp behind him, the spotlight following him like a predator tracking its prey. Maxx reaches the top, turns around, and immediately grabs the nearest object -- a lighting rig cable -- swinging it like a whip.

Theron keeps walking.

Maxx snaps the cable across Theron's chest. It bounces off the wolf-jaw mask and tactical fatigues with no effect. Maxx swings again -- Theron catches the cable mid-air, yanks Maxx forward, and drives a heavy knee into his gut.

Maxx folds over, wheezing, stumbling backward across the stage.

John Phillips: "Theron Tkachuk is absorbing everything Maxx throws at him!"

Mark Bravo: "He's not absorbing it, John -- he's IGNORING it!"

Maxx backs into a lighting truss, grabs a loose metal clamp, and hurls it at Theron's head. Theron tilts his head slightly -- the clamp whistles past and clatters across the stage. Maxx charges with a wild clothesline -- Theron ducks, pivots, and shoves Maxx forward.

Maxx slams chest-first into the LED wall.

The entire screen glitches violently, static rippling across the massive display.

John Phillips: "THE LED WALL IS GLITCHING! MAXX HIT IT LIKE A CAR CRASH!"

Mark Bravo: "THE WALL IS BEGGING FOR MERCY!"

Maxx bounces off the screen, staggering sideways, laughing through the pain. He grabs a production crate, shoves it toward Theron, and sprints across the stage like a man trying to outrun gravity.

Theron steps around the crate and follows.

Maxx reaches the very edge of the stage -- the long drop to the floor below looming behind him. He turns, wild-eyed, chest heaving, and swings a desperate right hand.

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Theron blocks it, grabs Maxx by the wrist, and twists.

Maxx screams, drops to a knee, then laughs through the agony.

Theron lifts him by the arm and hurls him across the stage.

Maxx skids across the metal grate, rolling, tumbling, crashing into a stack of lighting cases. The cases topple, spilling cables and equipment everywhere.

John Phillips: "MAXX MAYHEM JUST GOT LAUNCHED ACROSS THE STAGE!"

Mark Bravo: "HE'S GONNA NEED A MAP TO FIND HIS WAY BACK!"

Maxx crawls out from under the fallen cases, coughing, dragging himself upright using the edge of the stage. He spits onto the metal, wipes his mouth, and slaps himself twice, screaming at Theron to come finish it.

Theron obliges.

He grabs Maxx by the hair, yanks him upright, and drives a headbutt into his forehead. Maxx stumbles backward, nearly falling off the stage. He catches himself at the last second, teetering on the edge.

Theron steps forward.

Maxx swings a wild elbow -- Theron catches it, pulls Maxx in, and lifts him overhead in a military press.

John Phillips: "OH MY GOD -- THERON TKACHUK HAS MAXX MAYHEM PRESSED OVER HIS HEAD!"

Mark Bravo: "DON'T DROP HIM! DON'T DROP HIM! ...ACTUALLY, DROP HIM!"

Theron walks toward the center of the stage with Maxx held high, the crowd roaring in disbelief. Maxx kicks wildly, laughing, screaming, flailing -- but Theron's grip doesn't waver.

He steps forward --

plants his feet --

and SLAMS Maxx down onto the metal grate with a thunderous crash.

The entire stage shakes.

Maxx's body bounces off the steel, rolling onto his side, coughing, laughing weakly.

Theron stands over him, silent, unreadable, the wolf-jaw mask staring down like a death omen.

The ramp is a warzone.

The stage is wreckage.

And the ring is finally seen in the distance.

Maxx Mayhem is still rolling, tumbling, half-falling down the ramp from the beating atop the stage, boots scraping sparks off the metal as he tries to catch himself. He finally slams onto the incline, skidding several feet before he manages to hook an arm around the guardrail and stop his slide. He's coughing, wheezing, laughing like a man who's forgotten what pain is supposed to feel like.

Up on the stage, Theron Tkachuk steps forward into the spotlight. No rush. No flourish. Just that cold, inevitable walk -- the Dire Wolf descending the mountain after its prey. The crowd roars as he reaches the top of the ramp, the metal grating groaning under his boots.

John Phillips: "Maxx Mayhem is trying to get back to his feet, but Theron Tkachuk is coming down that ramp like a force of nature!"

Mark Bravo: "He's not walking, John -- he's HUNTING!"

Maxx pulls himself upright using the guardrail, chest heaving, blood on his lip, sweat pouring down his face. He turns, sees Theron halfway down the ramp, and immediately charges -- reckless, wild, fearless.

Theron meets him with a shoulder block that sends Maxx flipping backward down the incline. Maxx hits the ramp, rolls, bounces, and crashes onto his back, laughing through the agony.

John Phillips: "THERON JUST RAN THROUGH HIM!"

Mark Bravo: "LIKE A FREIGHT TRAIN MADE OF REGRET!"

Maxx scrambles up again, slipping on the metal, grabbing at the rail to steady himself. He lunges with a wild punch -- Theron sidesteps, grabs Maxx by the back of the head, and slams him face-first into the ramp. Maxx's skull bounces off the steel with a hollow clang.

Maxx rolls onto his back, clutching his face, laughing like a lunatic.

Theron grabs him by the ankle and drags him down the ramp, Maxx's body scraping across the metal, boots leaving streaks behind him. Maxx claws at the grating, trying to slow himself, but Theron's grip doesn't budge.

John Phillips: "Theron Tkachuk is dragging Maxx Mayhem like he's hauling a carcass!"

Mark Bravo: "MAXX IS GONNA NEED A NEW SET OF SKIN AFTER THIS!"

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Maxx kicks wildly, catches Theron in the thigh, and manages to twist free. He rolls to the side, grabs the guardrail, and pulls himself upright. He rips a fan's sign out of their hands and swings it like a weapon.

Theron swats it aside with one hand.

Maxx swings again -- Theron catches the sign mid-air, snaps it in half, and hurls the pieces down the ramp.

Maxx charges -- Theron meets him with a knee to the gut that folds him in half. Maxx collapses to all fours, coughing, gagging, still laughing through the pain.

Theron grabs him by the waistband and the back of the neck, lifts him, and throws him down the ramp like a sack of sand. Maxx slides on his stomach, arms flailing, boots scraping sparks as he skids toward ringside.

John Phillips: "MAXX MAYHEM IS SLIDING DOWN THE RAMP LIKE A HUMAN TOBOGGAN!"

Mark Bravo: "HE'S GONNA HIT THE RING LIKE A BOWLING BALL!"

Maxx slams into the bottom of the ramp, rolling onto the ringside mats. He tries to stand -- his legs wobble, his arms shake, but he's still laughing, still daring Theron to come finish the job.

Theron reaches the bottom of the ramp, stepping off the incline with that same cold, controlled menace. Maxx throws a desperate punch -- Theron blocks it, grabs Maxx by the throat, and shoves him backward into the barricade.

The barricade rattles violently, fans recoiling from the impact.

John Phillips: "They've reached ringside! The ramp is a warzone behind them!"

Mark Bravo: "AND THE RING IS ABOUT TO BECOME A CRIME SCENE!"

Maxx slumps against the barricade, coughing, laughing, barely able to stand. Theron steps toward him, silent, unreadable, the wolf-jaw mask staring down like a death omen.

The ring is finally within reach.

And Maxx Mayhem is barely conscious enough to realize it.

Theron Tkachuk drags Maxx Mayhem along the ringside floor like he's hauling a carcass, the Dire Wolf finally corralling the chaos toward the ring. Maxx tries to crawl away, laughing through the pain, but Theron grabs him by the back of the neck and slams him chest-first onto the apron. Maxx bounces off it and collapses to the mats, coughing, wheezing, still grinning like a man who doesn't understand the concept of danger.

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Theron doesn't give him a second. He hauls Maxx up by the waistband and the back of the head, lifts him, and drives him spine-first into the barricade. The steel rattles violently, fans recoiling from the impact.

John Phillips: "Theron Tkachuk is in complete control! Maxx Mayhem is getting dismantled outside the ring!"

Mark Bravo: "He's getting hit like he owes Theron rent!"

Maxx slumps to a knee, clutching his ribs, laughing through the agony. Theron steps forward, grabs him by the hair, and yanks him upright. Maxx swings a wild punch -- Theron blocks it with one forearm and answers with a heavy downward clubbing shot that drops Maxx to all fours.

Theron stalks him -- slow, cold, inevitable -- and grabs Maxx by the back of the head again, dragging him toward the corner of the ring. Maxx tries to fight back, throwing frantic elbows that bounce harmlessly off Theron's ribs.

Theron shoves him toward the ring steps.

Maxx stumbles.

Theron lowers his stance.

The crowd rises.

They know what's coming.

Theron surges forward.

A full-speed charge.

A freight train in human form.

Maxx's eyes widen -- then light up with manic joy.

He sidesteps.

Theron barrels past him --

and SMASHES shoulder-first into the steel steps.

The top half of the steps explodes off its base, skidding across the floor. The bottom half shifts violently, scraping the mats.

The crowd erupts.

John Phillips: "THERON TKACHUK JUST HIT THE STEPS AT FULL SPEED!"

Mark Bravo: "THE STEPS ARE FILING A RESTRAINING ORDER!"

Theron is down on one knee, one hand on the floor, head lowered -- not hurt, but stunned. It's the first real mistake he's made all match.

Maxx sees it.

Maxx LOVES it.

He drops to the floor immediately, laughing like a man who just found a new religion, and rips the ring skirt upward with both hands.

The crowd roars.

Maxx's grin widens.

He reaches under the ring...

...and pulls out a dented metal trash can stuffed with weapons.

Kendo sticks.

A chain.

A stop sign.

A baking sheet.

A crowbar.

A steel pipe.

A bag of something that rattles ominously.

Mark Bravo: "OH NO. OH YES. OH NO. OH YES!"

John Phillips: "Maxx Mayhem has found the hardware!"

Theron is still recovering from the collision. Maxx drags the trash can out, dumps the entire contents across

the floor, and kicks the can itself into the ring.

He grabs the first weapon his hand touches -- a kendo stick -- and turns toward the Dire Wolf with a grin that says he's about to enjoy every second of this.

The brutality is about to begin.

Maxx Mayhem stands over the wrecked steel steps, laughing like a man who just watched divine justice happen in real time. Theron Tkachuk is still down on one knee, one hand braced on the floor, the Dire Wolf shaking off the collision with slow, deliberate breaths. Maxx grips the dented trash can full of weapons with both hands, lifts it overhead, and brings it crashing down across Theron's back.

The metal buckles around the impact, the weapons inside rattling like bones in a drum.

Theron drops to both hands. Maxx howls with manic joy.

John Phillips: "Maxx Mayhem is taking full advantage of that mistake!"

Mark Bravo: "He's hitting him with a whole apartment's worth of bad decisions!"

Maxx slams the trash can down again -- this time across Theron's shoulders. The can dents further, folding around the Dire Wolf's frame. Theron tries to rise -- Maxx boots him in the ribs, sending him rolling toward the apron.

Maxx pounces, mounting Theron's back and raining down wild, frantic punches -- lefts, rights, hammerfists, anything he can throw. Theron absorbs them, muscles tensing, forearms tightening, but Maxx keeps swinging, laughing through every shot.

Theron pushes up to one knee -- Maxx grabs the trash can again and smashes it across the side of Theron's head.

The can folds nearly in half.

Theron slumps against the apron, dazed but not broken. Maxx wipes sweat from his face, breathing hard, grinning like a man who just found a new favorite toy. He grabs Theron by the mask and shoves him under the bottom rope, rolling him into the ring like a corpse being dumped into a grave.

Maxx slides in after him, dragging the mangled trash can with him.

John Phillips: "Maxx Mayhem is bringing the weapons into the ring!"

Mark Bravo: "And the ring is about to regret it!"

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Maxx flips the trash can upright, reaches inside, and pulls out the first thing his hand touches -- a kendo stick. He twirls it once, screams, and cracks it across Theron's back.

CRACK.

Theron's body jerks, but he doesn't fall.

Maxx swings again.

CRACK.

The stick splinters. Maxx tosses it aside and reaches into the can again.

He pulls out the baking sheet.

CLANG.

Across the back.

CLANG.

Across the head.

Theron drops to one knee.

Maxx laughs, throws the sheet aside, and digs deeper.

He pulls out the stop sign.

The crowd roars.

Maxx charges and swings it like a medieval shield.

WHAM.

Theron staggers.

Maxx hits the ropes, rebounds, and slams the sign into Theron's chest again, bending the metal around the impact.

Theron drops to both knees.

John Phillips: "Maxx Mayhem is unloading everything he has!"

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Mark Bravo: "He's hitting him with traffic violations!"

Maxx tosses the stop sign aside and reaches into the can again. He pulls out the chain, wraps it around his fist, and charges with a chain-wrapped right hand aimed at Theron's jaw.

Theron catches his arm.

The entire arena freezes.

Maxx's grin flickers.

Theron rises -- slow, cold, inevitable -- still gripping Maxx's fist.

Maxx tries to yank free. Theron doesn't budge. Maxx swings with his free hand -- Theron blocks it and shoves Maxx backward with one violent push that sends him stumbling into the ropes.

Maxx rebounds, frantic, wild, desperate -- and dives back into the trash can.

He pulls out the steel chair.

He snaps it closed.

He raises it high.

The crowd explodes.

John Phillips: "Maxx Mayhem has the steel chair! He's lining up Theron Tkachuk!"

Mark Bravo: "THIS IS ABOUT TO GET VERY LOUD AND VERY ILLEGAL!"

Maxx stalks forward, chair raised, eyes locked on the Dire Wolf.

Theron Tkachuk is rising again.

And Maxx Mayhem is ready to swing.

Maxx Mayhem stands over the staggering Dire Wolf, steel chair already raised high above his head, breath ragged, sweat dripping, eyes wild with adrenaline. Theron Tkachuk pushes up from one knee, blood streaking down his face, the wolf-jaw mask still covering most of it.

Maxx screams and swings.

CRACK.

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The chair detonates against Theron's skull with a sickening metallic blast, the steel folding around the impact point like it's made of tinfoil. Theron's body snaps backward, collapsing flat onto the canvas, arms splayed, legs limp, blood beginning to pool beneath his hairline.

John Phillips: "THERON TKACHUK IS DOWN! MAXX MAYHEM JUST CAVED HIS SKULL IN!"

Mark Bravo: "THE CHAIR IS DEAD! THE CHAIR IS SO DEAD!"

Maxx drops the ruined chair and throws his arms wide, screaming at the crowd, pounding his chest, feeding off their shock. He slides out of the ring, laughing, flips the apron skirt up, and drags a folding table out from underneath the ring. He slams it onto the floor, kicks the legs open, and slaps the tabletop twice like he's christening a sacrificial altar.

Inside the ring, Theron Tkachuk moves.

Barely.

A twitch of the fingers. A shift of the shoulder. A slow, deliberate breath.

Maxx doesn't see it. He's too busy taunting the fans, too busy hyping himself up, too busy promising carnage.

Theron pushes up to one knee.

Blood runs down his face in thick, crimson trails.

He reaches up... grabs the wolf-jaw mask... and pulls it down, exposing his face fully for the first time since the match began.

The crowd gasps.

Theron rises.

Slow.

Cold.

Inevitable.

He whips his hair back with one violent jerk, spraying blood everywhere, revealing a face carved from stone and streaked with red. His eyes lock onto Maxx with a predator's focus.

John Phillips: "THERON TKACHUK IS BLEEDING! BUT HE'S GETTING UP!"

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Mark Bravo: "HE LOOKS LIKE HE JUST WALKED OUT OF A HORROR MOVIE!"

Maxx finally turns -- and freezes.

Theron is standing.

Theron is staring.

Theron is coming.

Maxx slides back into the ring, fists clenched, laughing through the fear. He charges and unloads with wild punches -- lefts, rights, hooks, hammerfists -- each one landing flush on Theron's jaw, cheek, temple.

Theron staggers at first.

Then less.

Then not at all.

Maxx keeps swinging, frantic, desperate, screaming with every shot.

Theron just stands there.

Taking it.

Absorbing it.

Growing colder.

Growing stiller.

Growing inevitable.

Maxx's punches slow. His breathing falters. His eyes widen.

Theron finally fires back.

A single, brutal right hand.

Maxx's head snaps sideways.

Another.

Maxx stumbles.

A third.

Maxx drops to a knee.

A fourth -- a haymaker that echoes through the arena.

Maxx collapses onto his back, gasping, eyes wide, the manic grin finally fading.

John Phillips: "THERON TKACHUK IS UNLOADING! MAXX MAYHEM IS GETTING DESTROYED!"

Mark Bravo: "HE'S THROWING HAYMAKERS LIKE HE'S TRYING TO KNOCK DOWN A WALL!"

Maxx scrambles, desperate, wild -- and jabs a thumb straight into Theron's eye.

Theron recoils, blinking hard, blood mixing with tears.

Maxx darts to the ropes, hits them at full speed, rebounds--

--and runs straight into the Deep Six.

Theron snatches him mid-charge, spins him violently, and plants him in the center of the ring with a thunderous crash that shakes the canvas.

John Phillips: "DEEP SIX! DEEP SIX! THERON TKACHUK JUST PLANTED MAXX MAYHEM!"

Mark Bravo: "MAXX JUST GOT SPUN LIKE A BAD DECISION!"

Theron Tkachuk rises from the Deep Six, blood dripping down his face, chest heaving, eyes locked on Maxx Mayhem with cold, predatory focus. Maxx tries to crawl away, clutching his ribs, gasping for breath, but Theron grabs him by the back of the head and drags him upright like he's hauling a carcass.

He shoves Maxx backward into the corner -- hard. Maxx's spine hits the turnbuckles with a dull thud, his arms draping over the ropes, legs barely holding him up.

Theron steps in close.

Too close.

Maxx's eyes widen.

Theron pins him in the corner with one massive forearm across the chest, trapping him like prey caught in a

snare.

John Phillips: "Maxx Mayhem is trapped! Theron Tkachuk has him pinned in the corner!"

Mark Bravo: "This is about to get VERY unpleasant!"

Theron cocks his right hand back.

And unloads.

A massive right hand crashes into Maxx's cheek, snapping his head sideways. Maxx's knees buckle, but Theron holds him up with the forearm across his chest.

Another right hand -- this one to the eye.

Maxx's head jerks violently, his face already swelling, his breath hitching.

Another -- to the jaw.

Maxx's mouthpiece nearly flies out. His legs give out completely, but Theron keeps him pinned upright, refusing to let gravity save him.

Theron fires another right hand. And another. And another.

Each one lands with the thud of a sledgehammer hitting wet earth.

Maxx tries to laugh -- he really does -- but the sound dies in his throat. His face contorts, his eyes glaze, his body slumps harder against the ropes.

Theron doesn't stop.

He unleashes a barrage of brutal, piston-like right hands -- eye, cheek, jaw, cheek, jaw, eye -- each one more devastating than the last. Maxx's head snaps back and forth like it's barely attached.

John Phillips: "THERON TKACHUK IS DESTROYING MAXX MAYHEM IN THAT CORNER!"

Mark Bravo: "MAXX CAN'T EVEN LAUGH ANYMORE! THAT'S HOW YOU KNOW IT'S BAD!"

Maxx's arms fall limp over the ropes. His legs wobble. His face is a swollen, bloody mess. He tries to lift a hand, tries to defend himself, but it's useless -- Theron swats it aside and buries another right hand into his jaw.

Maxx's body sags.

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Theron steps back just long enough to let Maxx collapse to his knees...

...then grabs him by the hair and yanks him upright again.

The brutality isn't over.

Not even close.

Theron yanks Maxx upright by the hair, dragging him out of the corner like a ragdoll. Maxx's legs barely work, his face a swollen, bloody ruin, his arms hanging limp at his sides. Theron positions Mayhem's head between his legs and looks around the arena, before doing the cutthroat gesture.

Mark Bravo: "That's some sign language everyone knows."

The crowd rises.

They know what's coming.

Tkachuk hooks him around the waist, lifts him, and marches him toward the ropes with cold, mechanical purpose.

John Phillips: "Oh no... oh NO... he's not--"

Mark Bravo: "HE IS! HE ABSOLUTELY IS!"

Theron hoists Maxx higher, shifting his grip, muscles tightening beneath blood-slick skin. Maxx's head lolls backward, eyes half-open, barely conscious.

Theron steps to the ropes.

And powerbombs Maxx Mayhem OVER the top rope.

Maxx sails through the air--

--and CRASHES through the table on the floor.

The table explodes beneath him, splintering into jagged pieces as Maxx's body folds violently on impact. The crowd erupts in a mixture of shock and awe, the kind of noise that only comes from witnessing something catastrophic.

John Phillips: "MAXX MAYHEM JUST GOT POWERBOMBED THROUGH A TABLE FROM INSIDE THE RING!"

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Mark Bravo: "HE'S DEAD! HE'S ACTUALLY DEAD! CALL SOMEBODY!"

Maxx lies motionless in the wreckage, limbs twisted, chest barely rising. Theron doesn't celebrate. He doesn't pose. He doesn't acknowledge the crowd.

He simply steps through the ropes and drops to the floor with the calm inevitability of a man finishing a job.

He grabs Maxx by the wrist and drags him out of the debris, hauling his limp, lifeless body across the floor. Maxx's boots leave streaks in the dust as Theron pulls him toward the ring like a hunter dragging a carcass.

Theron rolls him under the bottom rope.

Then follows.

He kneels beside Maxx, hooks an arm under his neck, and locks in Hypothermia -- the blood-choked sleeper, the cold embrace of the Dire Wolf.

Maxx doesn't fight.

He can't.

His arms twitch once... twice... then fall limp.

John Phillips: "Maxx Mayhem is fading! He's fading fast!"

Mark Bravo: "He's not fading -- he's GONE!"

The referee checks the arm.

It drops.

Checks again.

It drops.

Checks a third time--

It drops.

The bell rings.

John Phillips: "THERON TKACHUK HAS DONE IT! MAXX MAYHEM HAS PASSED OUT!"

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Mark Bravo: "THE DIRE WOLF JUST PUT HIM TO SLEEP!"

Theron releases the hold and lets Maxx's body slump to the canvas, motionless.

The Dire Wolf rises slowly, blood dripping from his face, chest heaving, eyes cold and unblinking.

He has won.

The bell rings the instant Maxx Mayhem's arm drops for the third time. Theron Tkachuk releases Hypothermia immediately, letting Maxx's limp body spill onto the canvas like a marionette with its strings cut. The Dire Wolf rises slowly, blood dripping from his face, chest heaving, but his expression never changes -- cold, steady, unblinking.

The referee grabs Theron's wrist and raises it high. The crowd erupts, a mixture of shock, awe, and raw adrenaline. Medical staff rush past Theron to check on Maxx, but the Dire Wolf doesn't spare them a glance.

John Phillips: "THERON TKACHUK HAS DONE IT! MAXX MAYHEM IS OUT COLD -- AND THE WRESTLEZONE CHAMPIONSHIP STAYS WITH GUNNAR VAN PATTON!"

Mark Bravo: "Gunnar Van Patton picked the right man! He picked the ONLY man who could survive this kind of war!"

Theron stands in the center of the ring, blood-soaked and unmoving, as the referee retrieves the WrestleZone Championship. The belt is handed to him -- not as his own, but as the symbol of the man he fought for.

Theron doesn't raise it. He doesn't pose. He simply drapes it over his shoulder with quiet, deadly purpose.

John Phillips: "Theron Tkachuk didn't just win a match... he defended a championship for a man too injured to stand. Gunnar Van Patton trusted him -- and that trust was rewarded."

Mark Bravo: "Van Patton made the call of his career. He put the title in the hands of a monster... and the monster delivered."

Theron steps through the ropes and drops to the floor, walking past the shattered remains of the table -- the splintered wood, the twisted metal, the crater where Maxx's body hit. He never looks back.

He climbs the ramp slowly, the WrestleZone Title still draped over his shoulder, blood still dripping from his chin, leaving a crimson trail behind him.

At the top of the stage, he pauses for only a heartbeat -- not to celebrate, but to acknowledge the weight of what he's done.

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Then he disappears behind the curtain.

The Dire Wolf has fulfilled his duty.

Gunnar Van Patton remains the WrestleZone Champion.

And the legend of Theron Tkachuk grows.

The Hightower Clan

The camera cuts to the loading dock outside the arena.

A row of wooden pallets sits near the edge of the concrete bay.

Emily Hightower sits on top of them, arms folded, staring down at the ground in obvious frustration.

The distant rumble of an engine echoes through the dock.

The camera pans toward the sound as a rusted old pickup truck rattles its way into the lot.

The truck screeches to a stop.

The driver door swings open and David Hightower climbs out.

Emily Hightower: "Well it's about damn time you got here..."

Emily Hightower: "Not that I really have much of a reason to be here."

Emily Hightower: "Another damn show where I didn't even get so much as a show opener... nothing!"

David sighs as he walks over and sits beside her on the pallets.

Emily Hightower: "I swear dad... it's starting to feel like this company has forgotten about me after losing that damn belt."

Emily Hightower: "And don't even get me started on the rematches where some random person who doesn't even have a contract with the company basically screwed up everything!"

Emily lets out a long groan, leaning forward with her hands on her knees.

David watches her for a moment before patting her shoulder.

David Hightower: "Hey... listen..."

David Hightower: "I know things have been rough lately."

David Hightower: "But... that's about to change."

Emily looks up, raising an eyebrow.

Emily Hightower: "What do you mean?"

David Hightower: "They're here."

The passenger doors of the pickup truck swing open.

Emily's brother Buck Hightower climbs out first.

He looks like someone who just wandered out of a bar fight.

Behind him, her younger sister Dakota Hightower hops out of the truck.

She's casually carrying a bottle of Captain Morgan.

Emily's eyes widen immediately.

Emily Hightower: "Dad..."

Emily Hightower: "You brought Buck?!"

Emily Hightower: "Oh god... dad you yourself say something ain't right about him!"

David bursts out laughing.

David Hightower: "Yeah... and?"

David Hightower: "You don't need to be right to know how to kick someone's ass!"

Emily rubs her temples.

Emily Hightower: "I literally seen him eat a beer bottle once."

David Hightower: "That's my boy!!!"

Dakota takes a swig from the bottle and grins.

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Dakota Hightower: "So... we going to get this party started?"

Buck cracks his knuckles.

Buck Hightower: "Yeah!"

Buck Hightower: "Who's ass is getting kicked?"

Emily stares at all of them in disbelief, shaking her head.

Emily Hightower: "Dad this isn't what I had in mind when you said you're making a clan!"

Emily Hightower: "I thought you were going to get your rough tough bar room friends or something!"

Emily Hightower: "For god sake Dakota drinks more than all of us combined!"

Dakota proudly raises the bottle.

Dakota Hightower: "Damn right."

David looks at Buck and Dakota and shrugs.

David Hightower: "Well who else do you think I'd bring?"

David Hightower: "Yer Uncle Charlie?"

Emily groans loudly.

Buck nods confidently.

Buck Hightower: "Hey..."

Buck Hightower: "Ain't no one going to screw with the Hightowers now."

The camera slowly pulls back as the chaotic family stands together in the loading dock.

The Hightower Clan has arrived.

The Number One Champion in UTA

Backstage in the interview area, Hakuryu stands silently with the UTA Fighting Championship draped over his shoulder. His disciple and manager Sinja stands beside him as the interviewer nervously holds a microphone.

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Hakuryu: "???????UTA???????????????...???UTA??????"

Sinja: "My master says you are looking at Hakuryu... the UTA Fighting Champion... the number one ranked wrestler in this company."

Hakuryu: "???????????????...??????"

Sinja: "Jarvis Valentine... former world champion."

Hakuryu: "??????????????"

Sinja: "Jarvis Valentine didn't tap out."

Hakuryu: "?????????????????????"

Sinja: "But Hakuryu forced him to pass out."

Hakuryu: "??????????????"

Sinja: "My master says that is a far worse fate. A man can choose not to tap... but when your body gives up and your lights go out... your pride goes with it."

Hakuryu slightly smirks as he taps the championship resting on his shoulder.

Hakuryu: "??????????"

Sinja: "Hakuryu says the World Championship is getting closer."

Hakuryu: "??????????????????????"

Sinja: "But the disrespect placed before him continues."

Hakuryu: "??????????????"

Sinja laughs softly.

Sinja: "Gideon Graves."

Hakuryu: "?????????????????????????????????????"

Sinja: "You haven't even stepped into a ring since November of last year... yet they put you in front of the number one ranked wrestler in UTA."

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Hakuryu: "??????????"

Sinja: "My master says that is an insult to him... and to this championship."

Hakuryu: "?????????...??????????????????"

Sinja: "Gideon Graves likes to boast that steel may bend... but he never will."

Hakuryu slowly lifts his head and stares coldly into the camera.

Hakuryu: "???????"

Sinja: "Hakuryu says he doesn't bend steel..."

Hakuryu: "?????????????????"

Sinja: "...he breaks it."

Hakuryu: "???????"

Sinja: "And Gideon Graves will snap the same way... like a twig."

Hakuryu raises the championship slightly.

Hakuryu: "??????????????????????????"

Sinja: "When Hakuryu secures another victory, he will collect his bounty."

Hakuryu: "?????...?????"

Sinja: "And after that... the only thing left in Hakuryu's path... is the World Championship."

Troy Lindz vs. Malachi Cross

The lights inside 713 Music Hall slowly dim.

A low fog begins creeping across the entrance stage.

The crowd noise softens as a haunting Gregorian chant echoes through the arena.

John Phillips: "Well... this building just got a lot colder."

Mark Bravo: "Malachi Cross has that effect."

The chants slowly distort into deep, thunderous bass hits.

The curtain parts.

MALACHI CROSS steps through the fog.

His eyes are locked forward. Arms crossed tightly over his chest.

No expression.

John Phillips: "Malachi Cross moves like a man who believes violence is sacred."

Mark Bravo: "That's because for him... it is."

Cross begins walking down the ramp slowly.

Each step measured.

Each breath deliberate.

John Phillips: "A methodical punisher out of New Orleans, Louisiana. Malachi Cross doesn't rush anything."

Mark Bravo: "Pain is a ritual to him."

John Phillips: "And that ritual could collide tonight with something very different."

Mark Bravo: "You mean the Creed Method."

John Phillips: "Exactly."

Cross reaches the bottom of the ramp and pauses.

The fog rolls around his boots.

John Phillips: "We've already seen Eli Creed attempt to recruit Kairo Bey earlier tonight."

Mark Bravo: "And after what happened in that first match? You have to wonder if Bey is reconsidering."

John Phillips: "Creed's message is always the same -- break, bend, build."

Mark Bravo: "And look what it's already done for Troy Lindz."

Cross slowly climbs the steel steps.

He wipes his boots on the apron.

Then steps through the ropes.

Once inside the ring, Cross walks to the center.

He lowers his head.

And crosses his arms again.

John Phillips: "This man fights like every hold is a prayer."

Mark Bravo: "And somebody is about to confess."

Cross slowly raises his head.

His eyes stare toward the entrance ramp.

Waiting.

The crowd begins buzzing.

The lights dim further inside 713 Music Hall.

The Gregorian chants fade.

A deep drumbeat suddenly echoes through the arena.

Slow. Rhythmic. Primal.

John Phillips: "Listen to that..."

Mark Bravo: "That's not entrance music."

John Phillips: "No... that's war drums."

The drumbeat continues.

Then the curtain parts.

ELI CREED steps through first.

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Dressed in a clean black suit tonight, sleeves rolled slightly, hands folded behind his back.

He pauses at the top of the ramp, scanning the crowd with calm detachment.

John Phillips: "There he is. Eli Creed."

Mark Bravo: "The Morningstar himself."

John Phillips: "A man who claims he isn't here to hurt people... he's here to rebuild them."

Mark Bravo: "And if you watched Troy Lindz lately... that rebuilding process looks pretty effective."

Creed slowly turns toward the curtain.

The drumbeat grows louder.

Then Troy Lindz steps through.

No glitter.

No poses.

No showmanship.

The crowd murmurs at the visible change.

Troy's hair is braided tightly back.

Their gear is unmistakably Muay Thai inspired -- black striking shorts, taped hands, taped ankles.

Their posture is upright.

Guard raised slightly.

John Phillips: "Look at this transformation."

Mark Bravo: "Completely different athlete."

John Phillips: "Troy Lindz used to thrive on theatrics."

Mark Bravo: "Now they thrive on discipline."

Troy begins walking down the ramp.

Measured steps.

No wasted movement.

Eli Creed follows a few paces behind.

John Phillips: "And all of this started after that infamous moment at Survivor."

Mark Bravo: "When Gunnar Van Patton knocked Troy out with a single punch."

John Phillips: "Many people thought that moment broke Troy Lindz."

Mark Bravo: "Eli Creed says it sharpened them."

Troy stops halfway down the ramp.

They roll their shoulders once.

Then raise their guard briefly, shadowboxing with a pair of tight Muay Thai elbows.

John Phillips: "Look at the stance. Tight guard. Elbows ready."

Mark Bravo: "That's a Muay Thai fighter."

John Phillips: "And tonight Malachi Cross may be walking into a completely different opponent than he expected."

Troy resumes walking.

Mark Bravo: "And don't forget the bigger story here."

John Phillips: "Kairo Bey."

Mark Bravo: "Exactly."

John Phillips: "Earlier tonight we saw Eli Creed approach him backstage."

Mark Bravo: "And if Bey is watching right now, he's seeing the end result."

John Phillips: "Break. Bend. Build."

Mark Bravo: "And Troy Lindz might be the first successful example."

Troy reaches ringside.

They stop and stare into the ring.

Malachi Cross stands motionless in the center.

John Phillips: "Two very different philosophies about violence standing in the same ring."

Mark Bravo: "Malachi Cross treats pain like a ritual."

John Phillips: "And Troy Lindz treats it like a lesson."

Troy climbs the steel steps.

Steps through the ropes.

Immediately settling into a Muay Thai stance.

Light bounce.

Measured breathing.

Eli Creed calmly takes position at ringside.

John Phillips: "Houston is about to witness a collision."

Mark Bravo: "Discipline versus dread."

The referee steps between the competitors.

The crowd buzz builds as both fighters stare each other down.

The referee stands between both competitors, looking from Troy Lindz to Malachi Cross.

Cross remains perfectly still in the center of the ring.

Across from him, Troy Lindz bounces lightly in a Muay Thai stance, guard raised.

John Phillips: "This is going to be fascinating."

Mark Bravo: "You've got two people who believe pain means something."

John Phillips: "Just very different meanings."

The referee signals the timekeeper.

DING DING!

The bell rings through 713 Music Hall.

Cross does not move.

Troy slowly circles.

John Phillips: "Malachi Cross treating this like a ceremony."

Mark Bravo: "And Troy Lindz treating it like a fight."

Troy steps in with a probing jab.

Cross doesn't bite.

Another step in.

Low Muay Thai kick to the thigh.

SMACK.

John Phillips: "First strike from Lindz."

Mark Bravo: "That's how you chop a tree down."

Cross slowly tilts his head.

No reaction.

Troy fires another low kick.

SMACK.

John Phillips: "Malachi absorbing the damage."

Mark Bravo: "Or studying it."

Troy steps forward with a quick elbow strike.

Cross blocks it and grabs the back of Troy's head.

MUAY THAI CLINCH.

John Phillips: "Cross with the clinch!"

Cross drives a knee into Troy's ribs.

THUD.

Mark Bravo: "There's that brutality."

Another knee.

Troy absorbs it and fires a sharp elbow across Cross's jaw.

John Phillips: "Great counter!"

Troy breaks the clinch and circles again.

Cross follows slowly.

The crowd begins clapping rhythmically.

Crowd: "LET'S GO TROY! LET'S GO TROY!"

John Phillips: "The audience starting to rally behind Troy Lindz."

Mark Bravo: "Because they're seeing the difference."

John Phillips: "What difference?"

Mark Bravo: "Discipline."

John Phillips: "You're giving Eli Creed credit already."

Mark Bravo: "Look at the stance! That's not the same Troy Lindz we used to see."

Troy suddenly explodes forward.

Combination of body shots.

Low kick.

Elbow.

Cross stumbles back into the ropes.

John Phillips: "Quick striking combination!"

Troy rushes forward again.

Cross suddenly fires a Yakuza Kick.

CRACK.

Troy drops to one knee.

Mark Bravo: "And there's the punishment."

Cross grabs Troy by the head.

Rope hung kneeling DDT attempt--

Troy fights free.

Elbow to the ribs.

Spinning back elbow!

Cross staggers back.

John Phillips: "Both fighters landing heavy shots!"

Troy backs up, resetting their guard.

Cross slowly straightens his posture.

Both competitors stare at each other.

Mark Bravo: "You know who's watching this very carefully right now?"

John Phillips: "Kairo Bey."

Mark Bravo: "Exactly."

John Phillips: "Earlier tonight Eli Creed told him he had a decision to make."

Mark Bravo: "And Troy Lindz might be the example of what that decision looks like."

John Phillips: "But it comes at a cost."

Mark Bravo: "Pain always does."

Cross suddenly charges forward.

Clothesline attempt.

Troy ducks.

Running knee strike to the ribs!

John Phillips: "Huge knee from Lindz!"

Cross stumbles backward.

Troy Lindz resets their stance in the center of the ring, guard high, bouncing lightly on the balls of their feet.

Across from them, Malachi Cross slowly rolls his neck.

His breathing is calm.

Measured.

John Phillips: "The pace of this match is fascinating."

Mark Bravo: "Two people trying to impose their philosophy."

John Phillips: "Speed and pressure from Lindz."

Mark Bravo: "And suffocating violence from Cross."

Troy steps forward with another quick kick to the thigh.

SMACK.

Cross absorbs it.

Then suddenly lunges forward.

Massive forearm smash.

Troy stumbles backward into the ropes.

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John Phillips: "That might be the hardest strike we've seen all night."

Mark Bravo: "Cross doesn't throw many."

Mark Bravo: "But every one lands like a sermon."

Cross stalks forward slowly.

Troy fires a quick jab.

Cross swats it away.

Yakuza Kick!

CRACK.

Troy collapses to the mat.

John Phillips: "Yakuza Kick from Malachi Cross!"

Cross doesn't cover.

He simply stands over Lindz.

Watching.

Mark Bravo: "That's the eerie part about this guy."

John Phillips: "He wants the suffering."

Cross grabs Troy by the arm and drags them up slowly.

Gutwrench lift.

Falling gutwrench slam!

The ring shakes on impact.

John Phillips: "Heavy slam!"

Cross hooks the leg.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

Troy kicks out.

Mark Bravo: "Still alive."

Cross rises slowly again.

He kneels beside Lindz.

His hand presses lightly against Troy's chest.

Almost like a prayer.

John Phillips: "That's disturbing."

Mark Bravo: "That's Malachi Cross."

Cross suddenly drives a brutal elbow into Troy's ribs.

THUD.

Troy gasps.

John Phillips: "He's targeting the breathing."

Mark Bravo: "Exactly where a striker can't afford damage."

Cross pulls Troy up again.

He traps the arm.

Rope hung kneeling DDT!

The crowd groans as Troy hits the mat.

John Phillips: "Cross is dismantling them now."

At ringside, Eli Creed calmly steps closer to the apron.

His voice is low.

Almost soothing.

Eli Creed: "Breathe."

Eli Creed: "Pain clarifies."

John Phillips: "Creed coaching from ringside."

Mark Bravo: "Not yelling."

Mark Bravo: "Just guiding."

Cross grabs Troy again.

He lifts them into a brutal stalling spinebuster.

Holds them there.

Then slams them into the mat.

John Phillips: "Spinebuster!"

Cross goes for another cover.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

Troy kicks out again.

Mark Bravo: "Lindz refusing to stay down."

John Phillips: "But you can see the damage building."

Cross rises slowly.

He stares down at Troy Lindz.

No emotion.

John Phillips: "Malachi Cross believes pain reveals truth."

Mark Bravo: "And Eli Creed believes pain builds strength."

John Phillips: "Two philosophies colliding."

Mark Bravo: "And somewhere tonight... Kairo Bey is watching."

Malachi Cross slowly circles the fallen Troy Lindz.

Lindz clutches their ribs, breathing hard.

At ringside, Eli Creed stands calmly at the apron.

Eli Creed: "Breathe."

Eli Creed: "Pain is a teacher."

Cross reaches down and drags Lindz up by the head.

He pulls them into another clinch.

Cross drives a knee toward the ribs.

Lindz blocks it!

John Phillips: "Block from Lindz!"

Lindz fires a sharp elbow across Cross's jaw.

CRACK.

Mark Bravo: "There it is!"

Another elbow.

Then a brutal Muay Thai knee to the midsection.

THUD.

John Phillips: "Combination strikes!"

Cross stumbles backward.

Lindz steps forward.

Low kick to the thigh.

SMACK.

Another low kick.

SMACK.

Mark Bravo: "Those leg kicks are stacking up."

John Phillips: "Cross's base starting to weaken."

Cross lunges forward with a forearm.

Lindz ducks underneath.

Spinning elbow!

Cross staggers into the corner.

John Phillips: "Huge elbow!"

The Houston crowd begins rising.

Crowd: "LET'S GO TROY! LET'S GO TROY!"

Mark Bravo: "Listen to this crowd!"

Lindz charges the corner.

Running knee strike to Cross's chest.

Cross collapses forward.

Lindz grabs the back of his head.

Muay Thai clinch!

John Phillips: "Dangerous position for Cross!"

KNEE.

KNEE.

KNEE.

Mark Bravo: "That's pure Muay Thai!"

John Phillips: "Cross absorbing punishment now!"

Lindz shoves Cross backward.

Cross stumbles into the ropes.

Lindz charges forward.

Running knee strike to the jaw!

John Phillips: "Running knee!"

Cross collapses to the mat.

Lindz drops into a cover.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

Cross kicks out.

Mark Bravo: "Still alive!"

Lindz sits up, breathing deeply.

Creed nods calmly from ringside.

Eli Creed: "Focus."

Eli Creed: "Break."

Eli Creed: "Bend."

Eli Creed: "Build."

John Phillips: "That mantra again."

Mark Bravo: "And it's working."

Lindz slowly rises.

Across the ring, Malachi Cross begins pushing himself up.

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The crowd noise grows louder as both fighters stand again.

John Phillips: "This fight is far from over."

Mark Bravo: "And Kairo Bey has to be watching every second of this."

Both competitors slowly rise inside the ring.

Troy Lindz resets their Muay Thai stance.

Malachi Cross rolls his shoulders, breathing heavier now.

John Phillips: "Both of these fighters have absorbed tremendous punishment."

Mark Bravo: "But look at Lindz."

Mark Bravo: "Still disciplined. Still composed."

Cross suddenly charges forward.

Massive clothesline!

Lindz ducks underneath.

Low kick to the thigh.

SMACK.

Another low kick.

SMACK.

John Phillips: "Those leg kicks again!"

Cross roars and lunges forward.

Brutal forearm smash!

Lindz staggers.

Cross grabs them by the throat.

John Phillips: "Cross going for the choke!"

Cross hoists Lindz up.

Chokeslam attempt--

Lindz drives rapid knees into Cross's ribs!

THUD.

THUD.

THUD.

Mark Bravo: "Brutal knee strikes!"

Cross releases the choke.

Lindz immediately grabs the back of Cross's head.

Muay Thai clinch!

John Phillips: "Cross in trouble!"

KNEE.

KNEE.

KNEE.

The Houston crowd erupts.

Crowd: "LET'S GO TROY! LET'S GO TROY!"

Mark Bravo: "That's the Creed Method!"

John Phillips: "That's Muay Thai!"

Lindz shoves Cross backward.

Cross stumbles but refuses to fall.

He swings wildly.

Lindz slips underneath the strike.

Spinning elbow!

CRACK.

Cross collapses to one knee.

John Phillips: "What an elbow!"

Lindz backs into the ropes.

They charge forward.

Running knee strike to the jaw!

Cross collapses onto his back.

John Phillips: "Knee strike!"

Mark Bravo: "That's it!"

Lindz drops into the cover.

Referee: "ONE!"

Referee: "TWO!"

Referee: "THREE!"

DING DING DING!

John Phillips: "Troy Lindz wins!"

Mark Bravo: "That transformation is real!"

Lindz rolls off Cross, breathing heavily.

Eli Creed slowly climbs onto the apron.

He steps into the ring.

John Phillips: "Here comes Creed."

Creed looks down at Lindz.

A small approving nod.

Eli Creed: "You endured."

Eli Creed: "You grew."

Lindz slowly stands.

The Houston crowd cheers loudly.

Mark Bravo: "If Kairo Bey is watching tonight..."

Mark Bravo: "That's the future Creed is offering."

John Phillips: "Or the cost of it."

Mark Bravo: "Depends on who you ask."

Creed raises Lindz's arm in the center of the ring.

Cross slowly rolls out of the ring, staring coldly back at them.

John Phillips: "Another victory for Troy Lindz."

Mark Bravo: "And another message sent by Eli Creed."

An Intense Situation

The camera cuts backstage where Melissa Cartwright stands with a microphone in hand. Beside her are the two current champions of the women's division -- UTA Women's Champion Marie Van Claudio and the newly crowned Women's United States Champion Susanita Ybanez.

Melissa Cartwright: "Melissa Cartwright here backstage with the two champions of the UTA Women's Division -- Marie Van Claudio and the newly crowned Women's United States Champion, Susanita Ybanez. Ladies, I have to ask... what brings the two of you together tonight?"

Marie smiles proudly, glancing toward Susanita.

Marie Van Claudio: "Simple. I'm giving Susanita a few pointers."

Marie Van Claudio: "This is her first run as champion, and that can be overwhelming. Expectations change. The locker room changes. Everything changes."

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Marie Van Claudio: "I want her to succeed. I want her to represent this division the right way."

Marie places a reassuring hand on Susanita's shoulder.

Marie Van Claudio: "And maybe one day... a long ways away... she can hold the UTA Women's Championship too."

Susanita smiles warmly, clearly grateful.

Susanita Ybanez: "That means a lot to me, Marie."

Susanita Ybanez: "I will be a fighting champion. I promise that. I want to earn everything here."

Susanita Ybanez: "Every match. Every opportunity. I want to prove I belong in this division."

Melissa nods approvingly.

Melissa Cartwright: "Two champions representing the future of the UTA Women's Division."

Suddenly a voice cuts into the conversation.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Don't you two have some cooking to do or something?"

All three women turn immediately as Eric Dane Jr. casually strolls into frame.

The champions look instantly offended.

Marie Van Claudio: "You need to watch your mouth."

Eric Dane Jr.: "Yo, put the broomstick down for just a moment. I didn't mean to offend."

The comment clearly makes things worse.

Dane casually pushes his way between them so he can face Melissa.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Anyway... let's talk about what really matters."

Eric Dane Jr.: "I got robbed at No Love Lost."

Melissa Cartwright: "Well... Eric... while it may have been the best match of your career, the ending was pretty definitive."

Marie chimes in immediately.

Marie Van Claudio: "You lost."

Eric Dane Jr.: "Yo, I heard what she said. I was there, remember?"

Dane shakes his head with exaggerated frustration.

Eric Dane Jr.: "But here's what really gets me... after everything we've been through... after everything I did in that match... Chris Ross tells Gunnar Van Penis that he knows where to find him."

Eric Dane Jr.: "Guess what?"

Eric Dane Jr.: "So do I."

The tone shifts slightly. A little more serious.

Susanita steps forward.

Susanita Ybanez: "Look... we were here first. You can wait your turn."

Dane laughs dismissively.

Eric Dane Jr.: "I'm the superstar here."

Eric Dane Jr.: "I'm the next big breakout in the UTA and when I want to talk... I'll talk... and you'll--"

Dane pokes his finger into Susanita's chest.

Eric Dane Jr.: "--listen."

Marie immediately steps between them.

Marie Van Claudio: "I don't know who you think you are but--"

Eric Dane Jr.: "I already told you. I'm Eric Dane Jr."

Eric Dane Jr.: "And if you don't stop interrupting me during my time here with Martha--"

Melissa Cartwright: "Melissa."

Dane completely ignores her.

Eric Dane Jr.: "--then I'm gonna have to do what Amy Harrison can't do... and that's put you in your place."

Marie and Susanita both step forward now.

Dane only smirks.

Eric Dane Jr.: "Oh wow. Big bad women's champions."

Eric Dane Jr.: "So tough. So scary."

Eric Dane Jr.: "Get out of here with that nonsense."

Marie and Eric lock eyes.

There is nothing friendly about the look they share.

Suddenly a voice cuts through the tension.

Scott Stevens: "Whatever... THIS... is... no."

Scott Stevens: "No, no, no. Absolutely not."

The General Manager steps into frame, clearly annoyed.

Scott Stevens: "Marie, Susanita... I'm sorry. I've been trying to track him down since I heard he was here."

Stevens turns toward Dane.

Scott Stevens: "Dane. My office. I need to talk with you."

Eric Dane Jr.: "It better be about my damn rematch, Scott."

Scott Stevens: "Just go. My office. Now."

Dane rolls his eyes and walks off down the hallway.

Scott Stevens follows behind him.

Back in the interview area, Marie and Susanita are visibly upset.

Melissa Cartwright: "I'm don't know what to say."

Marie Van Claudio: "I do."

Marie looks toward the camera with intensity.

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Marie Van Claudio: "I don't care if it's pieces of crap like Amy Harrison..."

Marie Van Claudio: "or pieces of crap like Eric Dane Jr..."

Marie Van Claudio: "Everyone in that locker room will respect both of us."

Susanita nods firmly beside her.

The camera fades out on the two champions standing united.

You Reap What You Sow

The screen cuts to black.

Slow... distant wind begins to echo.

Images begin flashing across the screen in rapid succession -- violent moments from UTA history.

Champions standing tall.

Bloodied competitors crawling across the mat.

Wars fought inside the ring.

A distorted voice slowly begins speaking.

Voice: "In this business... everyone thinks they're death."

The footage continues -- bodies falling... referees checking on downed wrestlers... championship belts raised high.

Voice: "They call themselves monsters."

Voice: "Destroyers."

Voice: "Reapers."

Voice: "We've already seen that earlier tonight."

The screen flickers violently.

The footage abruptly stops.

Now the screen shows a dark field under a gray sky.

A long shadow stretches across the ground.

Voice: "But there is only one truth about death."

A metal scythe slowly drags through the dirt.

The blade carves a line across the ground.

Voice: "Death does not talk."

Voice: "Death does not boast."

Voice: "Death does not need permission."

The camera slowly pans upward.

A hooded figure stands in the distance.

The wind blows the coat slightly as he grips the scythe.

Voice: "Death simply comes."

The titantron flickers violently.

The words appear across the screen.

SAMUEL SCYTHER

The hooded figure slowly lifts his head.

Only his eyes are visible beneath the hood.

Voice: "They speak of reapers in the United Toughness Alliance."

Voice: "But they have forgotten something."

The scythe blade scrapes across the ground again.

Voice: "The harvest does not belong to them."

The screen suddenly cuts to black.

One final message appears.

YOU REAP WHAT YOU SOW.

The sound of a blade slicing through the air echoes as the screen fades out.

Hakuryu vs. Gideon Graves

The lights inside 713 Music Hall suddenly plunge into darkness.

A low industrial hum fills the arena.

Then sparks explode from the entrance stage.

John Phillips: "Here we go."

Mark Bravo: "You can feel the building shaking."

"I Stand Alone" by Godsmack erupts through the arena speakers.

The Houston crowd reacts with a mix of boos and uneasy anticipation.

Through the falling sparks, a massive figure emerges.

GIDEON GRAVES steps through the curtain.

Broad shoulders.

Heavy taped fists.

Jaw clenched like a steel vice.

John Phillips: "Six-foot-four. Two hundred and eighty-five pounds."

John Phillips: "The Iron Giant -- Gideon Graves."

Mark Bravo: "This man worked eight years in a Pittsburgh steel mill."

Mark Bravo: "You think the Fighting Champion has ever fought someone built like that?"

John Phillips: "Not like this."

Graves stops halfway down the ramp.

He pounds his metal gauntlet with his fist.

THUD.

The sound echoes through the arena.

Mark Bravo: "That's not theatrics."

Mark Bravo: "That's a warning."

Graves continues marching toward the ring.

No poses.

No acknowledgement of the crowd.

Just forward movement.

John Phillips: "Coming off a violent rivalry with Gunnar Van Patton."

Mark Bravo: "Which means Graves is already in a fighting mood tonight."

John Phillips: "And tonight he steps into Fighting Championship rules."

Mark Bravo: "No pinfalls."

Mark Bravo: "Submission or referee stoppage only."

John Phillips: "Which means that monster just has to break you."

Graves reaches ringside.

He steps up onto the apron.

Then climbs over the top rope in one step.

Once inside the ring, Graves walks to the center.

He slowly turns, scanning the arena.

Then he pounds his gauntlet again.

THUD.

Mark Bravo: "Steel bends."

Mark Bravo: "He doesn't."

John Phillips: "But tonight he faces a man who thrives on suffering."

Mark Bravo: "And the reigning UTA Fighting Champion is next."

The lights slowly dim again as Graves turns toward the entrance ramp.

Waiting.

The lights dim again inside 713 Music Hall.

The industrial atmosphere fades into silence.

Then...

A deep gong echoes through the arena.

Once.

Twice.

Three times.

John Phillips: "And just like that... the energy in this building changes."

Mark Bravo: "Every single time."

A narrow white spotlight appears at the top of the entrance ramp.

White smoke begins rolling across the stage.

Spiritual chanting slowly fills the arena.

John Phillips: "The ritual begins."

A figure in white steps into the spotlight.

SINJA emerges from the curtain.

Face painted.

Head bowed beneath the wide takuhatsugasa hat.

White pilgrimage robes flowing around him.

He plants the shakujo staff against the ramp.

CLANG.

Mark Bravo: "The disciple."

John Phillips: "The interpreter."

John Phillips: "The voice of the White Dragon."

Sinja stands motionless for a moment.

Then slowly turns toward the curtain.

The chanting grows louder.

Then he appears.

HAKURYU steps forward.

The UTA Fighting Champion.

Calm.

Silent.

Focused.

John Phillips: "The reigning UTA Fighting Champion."

John Phillips: "Hakuryu."

Mark Bravo: "And coming off perhaps the biggest win of his reign."

John Phillips: "Defeating former UTA Champion Jarvis Valentine at No Love Lost."

Mark Bravo: "Which means tonight... he moves one step closer to something even bigger."

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John Phillips: "If Hakuryu continues defending the Fighting Championship... he earns a UTA Championship opportunity."

"White Dragon's Blade" begins to swell through the arena.

Hakuryu begins his walk down the ramp.

Each step deliberate.

Measured.

Controlled.

Mark Bravo: "Look at him."

Mark Bravo: "No emotion."

John Phillips: "That's how he fights too."

John Phillips: "Patient. Calculating."

Halfway down the ramp, Hakuryu stops.

He slowly raises his hands together in prayer.

Murmuring words no one can hear.

John Phillips: "A ritual before battle."

Hakuryu lowers his hands.

Then continues walking.

Mark Bravo: "But tonight... he might be facing his toughest challenge yet."

John Phillips: "Gideon Graves outweighs him by over forty pounds."

Mark Bravo: "And Graves doesn't care about rituals."

Mark Bravo: "He cares about breaking people."

Sinja reaches ringside first.

He steps up to the apron and holds the ropes open.

Hakuryu climbs the steel steps.

Steps onto the apron.

He pauses.

Then slowly lifts his chin toward Gideon Graves inside the ring.

John Phillips: "And there it is."

Mark Bravo: "First look at the challenger."

Hakuryu enters the ring.

He walks directly to the center of the canvas.

Then kneels.

Hands together.

Head bowed.

Perfect stillness.

John Phillips: "A man who treats combat like prayer."

Mark Bravo: "And a man who treats combat like demolition."

Hakuryu slowly rises.

He removes his outer garments.

Handing them to Sinja at ringside.

The referee steps forward and raises the UTA Fighting Championship high above his head.

John Phillips: "Fighting Championship rules."

Mark Bravo: "No pinfalls."

John Phillips: "Submission or referee stoppage only."

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Mark Bravo: "And tonight... someone may have to be broken."

Hakuryu lowers into his meditative stance.

Across the ring, Gideon Graves stares him down.

The tension inside 713 Music Hall is immediate.

DING DING DING!

The Houston crowd immediately comes alive.

John Phillips: "UTA Fighting Championship on the line!"

Mark Bravo: "Submission or stoppage only!"

Hakuryu and Gideon Graves begin circling each other.

The difference in size is immediately obvious.

Graves looks like a wall of iron.

Hakuryu moves lightly on the balls of his feet.

John Phillips: "Hakuryu giving up nearly fifty pounds tonight."

Mark Bravo: "Yeah but that dragon has made a career out of slaying giants."

Graves steps forward.

Hakuryu backs away.

Still studying.

John Phillips: "Hakuryu is one of the most patient fighters in UTA."

Mark Bravo: "He has to be tonight."

Graves suddenly lunges.

Massive collar and elbow tie-up!

Graves immediately muscles Hakuryu backward.

John Phillips: "Look at the power!"

Graves shoves Hakuryu into the corner.

The referee steps in.

Referee: "Break!"

Graves holds the pressure for a moment longer.

Then releases.

Mark Bravo: "That's the strength difference right there."

John Phillips: "Hakuryu felt that."

Hakuryu calmly steps out of the corner.

His expression remains unchanged.

Sinja watches silently from ringside.

Mark Bravo: "Sinja studying every second."

John Phillips: "The disciple always watching."

The two circle again.

Hakuryu suddenly fires a quick low kick to Graves' thigh.

SMACK.

Mark Bravo: "First strike!"

Another kick.

SMACK.

John Phillips: "Targeting the base!"

Graves barely reacts.

Instead he steps forward and swings a massive forearm.

Hakuryu ducks underneath it.

Spinning back kick to the ribs!

John Phillips: "Beautiful strike!"

Graves stumbles a step backward.

Mark Bravo: "Okay now that one he felt."

Hakuryu follows up.

Another quick kick.

Then another.

John Phillips: "Hakuryu picking his shots."

Mark Bravo: "Smart strategy."

Graves suddenly charges forward.

Massive shoulder block!

Hakuryu is flattened.

John Phillips: "Good lord!"

Mark Bravo: "That's two hundred eighty-five pounds!"

Hakuryu rolls across the mat.

Graves stalks toward him.

John Phillips: "And just like that the challenger takes control."

Graves drags Hakuryu up by the wrist.

He hoists him high into the air.

THUNDEROUS body slam!

John Phillips: "Massive slam!"

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Mark Bravo: "Graves trying to break the champion early!"

Hakuryu arches his back in pain.

Graves cracks his neck slowly.

Then begins stalking the champion again.

John Phillips: "Hakuryu may have just met his toughest opponent yet."

Hakuryu slowly pushes himself back up to one knee.

Gideon Graves looms over him.

John Phillips: "The challenger wasting no time."

Mark Bravo: "This is exactly what Graves wants."

Mark Bravo: "Turn this into a fight about strength."

Graves grabs Hakuryu by the hair and drags him to his feet.

He hooks him around the waist.

Then lifts.

OVERHEAD BELLY-TO-BELLY SUPLEX!

Hakuryu crashes across the canvas.

John Phillips: "What a throw!"

Mark Bravo: "Hakuryu just got launched!"

The Houston crowd gasps.

Hakuryu rolls toward the ropes trying to recover.

Graves stalks forward again.

He grabs Hakuryu by the arm and yanks him back to his feet.

Short-arm clothesline!

Hakuryu flips inside out.

John Phillips: "Graves is dismantling the champion!"

Hakuryu tries to crawl toward the corner.

Graves drags him away again.

Mark Bravo: "No escape!"

Graves drops a heavy knee into Hakuryu's ribs.

THUD.

Another.

THUD.

John Phillips: "Those ribs are being punished."

Graves grabs Hakuryu and pulls him up once more.

He lifts him high.

Military press!

The crowd roars as Graves holds the champion overhead.

Mark Bravo: "Look at the power!"

Graves tosses Hakuryu across the ring.

Hakuryu crashes hard against the mat.

John Phillips: "Unbelievable strength!"

Hakuryu rolls onto his stomach, grimacing.

Graves immediately drops onto his back.

He locks in a crushing rear chinlock.

John Phillips: "Submission attempt!"

Victory: 03.13.2026

Mark Bravo: "Graves trying to choke the life out of him!"

The referee kneels beside them.

Referee: "Hakuryu, do you submit?"

Hakuryu closes his eyes.

Breathing slowly.

Measured.

John Phillips: "Look at this."

John Phillips: "He's centering himself."

At ringside, Sinja suddenly strikes the apron with the staff.

CLANG!

Sinja: "Endure!"

Sinja: "Endure the suffering!"

Hakuryu slowly reaches forward.

Fingers clawing toward the ropes.

Mark Bravo: "This man refuses to quit."

Graves tightens the hold.

Hakuryu's arm trembles.

Referee: "Do you submit?"

Hakuryu shakes his head.

John Phillips: "Still fighting."

Hakuryu suddenly twists his hips.

He slips partially free.

Then drives rapid elbows backward into Graves' ribs.

THUD!

THUD!

THUD!

Mark Bravo: "Elbows to the body!"

Graves loosens the hold.

Hakuryu rolls forward and escapes.

Both men scramble back to their feet.

John Phillips: "The champion survives!"

Graves charges.

Hakuryu leaps!

Spinning heel kick catches Graves in the jaw!

The big man stumbles backward into the ropes.

John Phillips: "Huge kick!"

Mark Bravo: "Graves just got rocked!"

The Houston crowd explodes.

Gideon Graves staggers against the ropes after the spinning heel kick.

Hakuryu wastes no time.

He charges forward.

Jumping knee strike to the jaw!

John Phillips: "Knee strike!"

Graves stumbles forward.

Victory: 03.13.2026

Hakuryu fires a roundhouse kick to the ribs.

SMACK.

Another.

SMACK.

Mark Bravo: "Now the champion is finding his openings!"

John Phillips: "Those kicks are lightning fast."

Hakuryu pivots.

Spinning back kick to the midsection!

Graves finally drops to one knee.

John Phillips: "That one landed flush!"

The Houston crowd begins to rally behind the champion.

Crowd: "HA-KU-RYU! HA-KU-RYU!"

Mark Bravo: "Listen to this building!"

At ringside, Sinja strikes the apron again.

CLANG!

Sinja: "Strike the mountain!"

Sinja: "Strike until it falls!"

Hakuryu rushes forward.

Running forearm smash!

Graves stumbles into the corner.

Hakuryu climbs the second rope.

He leaps.

Missile dropkick!

Graves crashes backward to the mat.

John Phillips: "Missile dropkick!"

Mark Bravo: "The giant is down!"

Hakuryu quickly rises.

He backs toward the ropes.

Waiting.

Graves slowly begins to stand.

John Phillips: "Hakuryu looking to finish this!"

Hakuryu explodes forward.

Running knee strike attempt--

GRAVES CATCHES HIM!

Mark Bravo: "OH MY--"

Graves lifts Hakuryu high into the air.

SPINEBUSTER!

The ring shakes on impact.

John Phillips: "WHAT A COUNTER!"

Hakuryu gasps for air.

Graves slowly rises.

His chest heaving.

Mark Bravo: "Just when it looked like Hakuryu had control."

John Phillips: "Graves reminded everyone how dangerous he is."

Victory: 03.13.2026

Graves drags Hakuryu up again.

He hooks him around the neck.

John Phillips: "This could be bad!"

Graves lifts him.

Brutal running powerslam!

Mark Bravo: "The champion just got crushed!"

Hakuryu writhes on the mat as Graves stands over him.

The Houston crowd buzzes with tension.

John Phillips: "Hakuryu may have just met his match tonight."

Hakuryu lies motionless after the running powerslam.

Gideon Graves stands over the champion, breathing heavily.

John Phillips: "Hakuryu may be in serious trouble."

Mark Bravo: "Graves is dismantling him."

Graves reaches down and drags Hakuryu up by the wrist.

He hooks both arms behind the champion's back.

John Phillips: "Double underhook!"

Graves lifts.

DEVASTATING TIGER SUPLEX!

Hakuryu folds violently on impact.

Mark Bravo: "GOOD GOD!"

John Phillips: "The champion just got dropped on his neck!"

Hakuryu rolls onto his stomach, coughing.

Victory: 03.13.2026

Graves wastes no time.

He grabs Hakuryu and flips him onto his back.

Then he steps over the champion.

Graves locks in a brutal Boston Crab.

John Phillips: "Submission locked in!"

Mark Bravo: "Graves trying to snap the champion in half!"

Hakuryu screams in pain.

The referee drops beside him.

Referee: "Hakuryu! Do you submit?"

Hakuryu clenches his fists.

His face contorts with pain.

John Phillips: "This might be it!"

At ringside, Sinja slams the staff against the apron repeatedly.

CLANG!

CLANG!

Sinja: "Endure the pain!"

Sinja: "Pain is the path!"

Hakuryu digs his elbows into the canvas.

Dragging himself forward inch by inch.

Mark Bravo: "He's trying to crawl out!"

Graves sits deeper into the hold.

Hakuryu screams again.

Referee: "Do you submit?"

Hakuryu shakes his head violently.

John Phillips: "The champion refuses to give up!"

Hakuryu suddenly twists his hips.

He rolls sideways.

Graves loses his balance.

The hold breaks!

John Phillips: "He escaped!"

Hakuryu immediately scrambles toward the ropes.

Graves charges after him.

Massive boot to the back of Hakuryu's head!

Mark Bravo: "Oh my!"

Hakuryu collapses again.

Graves grabs him by the throat.

John Phillips: "This could end it!"

Graves lifts Hakuryu high into the air.

Two-handed choke!

Mark Bravo: "Graves is trying to choke him unconscious!"

The referee watches closely.

Referee: "Hakuryu! Fight back!"

Hakuryu's arms slowly begin to fall.

The Houston crowd rises in panic.

John Phillips: "Hakuryu may be fading!"

Sinja climbs onto the apron.

Sinja: "White Dragon!"

Sinja: "Awaken!"

Hakuryu's eyes suddenly snap open.

He drives a rapid series of elbows into Graves' temple.

THUD!

THUD!

THUD!

John Phillips: "He's still alive!"

Graves releases the choke.

Hakuryu lands on his feet.

He spins.

Roundhouse kick to the jaw!

Graves staggers.

Mark Bravo: "What resilience!"

The Houston crowd explodes.

Gideon Graves staggers backward after the roundhouse kick.

Hakuryu breathes heavily.

The champion's chest rises and falls rapidly as he steadies himself.

John Phillips: "Hakuryu barely survived that choke."

Mark Bravo: "Graves almost took the title right there."

Victory: 03.13.2026

The two men stare at each other from across the ring.

The Houston crowd buzzes with anticipation.

John Phillips: "This has been the toughest fight of Hakuryu's reign."

Graves suddenly charges.

Massive clothesline attempt!

Hakuryu ducks underneath.

Spinning back kick to the ribs!

Graves stumbles forward.

Hakuryu fires another kick.

Then another.

Mark Bravo: "The champion is throwing everything he has!"

Graves roars and swings wildly.

Hakuryu slips underneath.

He leaps onto Graves' back!

John Phillips: "What is he doing?!"

Hakuryu locks his legs around the massive challenger.

Then snakes his arm under the chin.

John Phillips: "Rear naked choke!"

Mark Bravo: "He's trying to choke the giant out!"

Graves stumbles around the ring trying to shake him off.

He slams backward into the corner.

Hakuryu refuses to release the hold.

John Phillips: "Hakuryu holding on!"

Graves staggers toward the center of the ring.

His movements slowing.

Referee: "Graves! Fight it!"

Hakuryu tightens the choke.

Graves drops to one knee.

Mark Bravo: "The Iron Giant is fading!"

The Houston crowd rises to its feet.

Crowd: "HA-KU-RYU! HA-KU-RYU!"

Graves tries to stand again.

But his legs give out.

Both men collapse to the mat.

Hakuryu still locked in the choke.

Referee: "Graves! Respond!"

Graves' arm slowly drops.

The referee checks once.

No response.

He checks again.

Still nothing.

DING DING DING!

John Phillips: "The referee has called it!"

Mark Bravo: "Hakuryu retains!"

Victory: 03.13.2026

The Houston crowd erupts.

Hakuryu slowly releases the choke.

He rolls onto his back, completely exhausted.

John Phillips: "What a war!"

Mark Bravo: "That may have been the toughest challenge of Hakuryu's entire reign!"

Sinja quickly enters the ring.

He kneels beside Hakuryu.

Helping the champion sit up.

John Phillips: "Hakuryu survives Gideon Graves."

Mark Bravo: "And now he is one defense away."

John Phillips: "One defense away from cashing in the Fighting Championship for a UTA Championship opportunity."

The referee hands Hakuryu the UTA Fighting Championship.

Hakuryu slowly rises to his feet.

Sinja raises the champion's arm.

The Houston crowd applauds loudly.

John Phillips: "What a main event here tonight at Victory."

Show Credits

Segment: "Introduction" - Written by Ben.

Match: "Kairo Bex vs. Vance Stone" - Written by Ben.

Segment: "Bad News' Favorite Disguise is Surprise" - Written by tony.

Segment: "Better Than Him" - Written by Ben.

Match: "Tyger II vs. Trey Mack" - Written by Ben.

Segment: "Card Subject to Change" - Written by tony.

Segment: "Hall of Fame 2026 Headlining Inductee Announcement" - Written by Ben.

Segment: "Fallen Empires" - Written by Ben.

Match: "Maxwell "Max" Jett vs. Jaxson Ryder" - Written by Ben.

Segment: "Loss Has a Sound to It" - Written by Ben.

Segment: "Fear the Reaper" - Written by Ben, chris.

Match: "Max Mayhem vs Theron Tkachuk" - Written by tony.

Segment: "The Hightower Clan" - Written by Ben, chris.

Segment: "The Number One Champion in UTA" - Written by stevens.

Match: "Troy Lindz vs. Malachi Cross" - Written by Ben.

Segment: "An Intense Situation" - Written by Ben.

Segment: "You Reap What You Sow" - Written by Ben.

Match: "Hakuryu vs. Gideon Graves" - Written by Ben.

Results Compiled by the eFed Management Suite