

Heart of Dixie tour: 2.3

October 6, 2025 | Alabama - Mobile

Show Opening

Ozzy Osbourne's "I Don't Wanna Stop" blasts out of the speakers as the cameras pan across a fired-up Tuscaloosa crowd, signs waving and fists pumping. The Heart of Dixie tour is rolling hot, and the roar inside the building sounds like it could tear the roof clean off.

At the commentary desk, Robbie Ray Carter leans in with that trademark smile, Angus Skaaland already sneering into his headset.

RRC:

"Tuscaloosa, Alabama--welcome to Iron City Wrestling! I'm Robbie Ray Carter, joined as always by the ever-opinionated Angus Skaaland, and folks, we're three stops deep on the Heart of Dixie tour, and the temperature is only rising!"

Angus:

"Rising? It's boiling over, Robbie Ray! Trust Fund's running the table, the Grapplerz are loaded with gold, and ol' Hot Toddy himself is styling with the Iron Crown. Meanwhile, Jesse Collins? Last week he stole one, and he paid the price. That's how the world works, baby."

RRC:

"You can call it the world if you want, Angus--I call it robbery. Collins pinned Jacoby Jacobs fair and square, but before he could celebrate, Todderick Davenport made sure to leave him flat on the canvas. Tonight, the Iron Kid's looking for answers--and maybe a little payback."

Angus:

"Answers? He'll get 'em all right. They'll be spelled D-A-V-E-N-P-O-R-T the Third."

RRC:

"Plus, Eric Dane Jr. continues his fight against the New Untouchables, Jack Havok's looking to spill more blood with that Television Championship on his shoulder, and the women's division keeps heating up with Sunny Holliday and the Reinas de Sangre both in action. It's a packed night here in Tuscaloosa!"

Angus:

"Packed like a keg on game day. Let's blow it up already!"

The cameras swing toward the curtain as the crowd buzzes, ready for the first entrance of the night.

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An "Iron" challenge!

The Tuscaloosa crowd is electric when the pulsing beat of "Iron Man" hits. The place explodes as the Iron Kid bursts through the curtain, fists pumping high. Streamers fly as he slaps hands down the rail before sliding into the ring with a live mic.

Jesse Collins (fired up, pacing):

"Tuscaloosa, you know me. I don't run from fights, I run into 'em! Last week in Montgomery, I pinned Jacoby Jacobs--one, two, three, right in the middle of that ring! But before I could even take a breath, before I could even celebrate, Todderick Davenport III jumped me from behind and left me laying.

So here I am, Hot Toddy. I'm not hiding behind cameras or cash--I'm standing right here, in front of everybody, calling you out! TD3, Trust Fund, Grapplerz--get your suits, your sunglasses, your shiny belt, and bring it down to this ring!"

The crowd roars, chanting "IRON KID! IRON KID!"

Suddenly, the unmistakable warble of "Lifestyle" by Rich Gang crashes over the PA. Boos rain down as golden spotlights sweep the stage. Out strut the Rich Young Grapplerz, Jacoby Jacobs with his phone high, already streaming, and Darian Darrington stomping behind him, all muscle and menace. Between them, smug as ever in his paisley jacket and shades, the Trust Fund International Champion Todderick Davenport III. The belt gleams on his shoulder as he smirks at Jesse in the ring.

They hit the apron, soaking in the venom from the Tuscaloosa faithful. Jacoby shouts into his phone, "This broke boy thinks he's big time!" Darian flexes and pounds his chest, while TD3 takes the mic, sneer locked in place.

TD3 (mocking, pacing slow):

"Well, well, well... if it isn't the Iron Kid. Jesse, I'll give you credit--you've got guts, but guts don't make you a champion. Pinning Jacoby for three seconds doesn't put you in my league. I'm the Trust Fund International Champion. I don't wrestle little dreamers like you. I buy and sell them.

But... since you're out here embarrassing yourself, I'll throw you a bone. You want a fight tonight? Fine. You're not getting me. You're getting the Grappler who breaks bones for breakfast--Darian Darrington!"

Darian steps forward, snarling, dragging a thumb across his throat. The crowd boos viciously. Jesse leans over the ropes, shouting back that he'll take on anyone, any time.

Then, the arena erupts again as Eric Dane Sr. storms out from the aisle, leather jacket on, mic in hand. He wastes no time climbing into the ring, planting himself between Jesse and Trust Fund.

Eric Dane Sr. (stern, steady):

"Hot Toddy, you've been walking around here with that belt, running your mouth like you own this company.

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But you don't. Jesse Collins pinned one of your Grapplerz fair and square last week, and you cut him off at the knees. That kind of bullshit doesn't fly around here!

So here's how it's gonna be. Main event tonight, right here in Tuscaloosa: Jesse Collins versus Darian Darrington."

The crowd roars, stomping their feet in approval. Jesse slams the mat, shouting "YES!" while pointing at Darian.

Dane Sr. (turning, pointing at TD3):

"And let me make this crystal clear so even you can understand it, champ. If Jesse Collins wins tonight, then at the Heart of Dixie tour-ender, he gets a shot at the Trust Fund International Title!"

The building erupts. Jesse nearly leaps out of his boots, fists in the air, shouting "LET'S GO!" toward TD3. The Grapplerz rage--Jacoby screaming into his phone, Darian pounding the ropes, TD3 ripping off his shades and screaming at Dane.

RRC (over the chaos):

"It's official! Collins versus Darrington in tonight's main event! And if the Iron Kid can pull it off, he'll punch his ticket straight to Birmingham and a Trust Fund International Title match!"

Angus (measured, smirking):

"Look, I've known Eric Dane a long time, Robbie Ray. When he says something's official, it's official. Do I think Jesse Collins deserves to be anywhere near Todderick Davenport the Third? No. But do I trust Dane's judgment? Yeah... I do. So kid, if you want to swim with sharks, tonight's your chance to see how fast you sink."

The segment closes with Jesse climbing the turnbuckles, fists raised high as the crowd thunders "IRON KID! IRON KID!" Trust Fund fumes at ringside, clutching their belts, while Eric Dane Sr. stares them down from the ring, unflinching.

Jenn Tinsley vs (enhancement talent)

[The camera cuts ringside, with Robbie Ray Carter and Angus Skaaland at the desk. In the ring, a woman - 'local talent', as they say - paces. A nameplate identifies her as Trish Cassidy]

Robbie Ray: Folks, we've got ourselves a debut coming up right here on Iron City Wrestling. No fancy backstory, no DEFIANCE family ties, nobody got choked out to earn a contract. Eric Dane Sr. was on a recruiting drive and he saw a little something in Jenn Tinsley -- and tonight, we'll all get our first look.

["Kawanga!" by Los Straitjackets hits the speakers, that jangly surf-rock riff bouncing through the arena. Jenn Tinsley bursts out from the back, full of energy, practically bouncing in place as she makes her way onto the

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stage. A grin spreads across her face, and without breaking stride she flashes a quick double bicep flex at the top of the ramp -- not stopping for it, just giving the crowd a taste before heading down.]

Angus: So she wasn't birthed by a legend and didn't cripple one either? Heck, I'm already halfway bored. Let's see if she can wrestle, huh?

[The bell doesn't even get the chance to ring. Cassidy rushes Tinsley and clubs her across the back.]

Robbie Ray: Cassidy's wasting no time!

Angus: Good. Let's see how this kid reacts under fire.

[Jenn stumbles forward, but as Cassidy lunges, Jenn drops low -- drop toe hold! Cassidy eats the mat. Jenn quickly sprawls on top, switching from sprawl to back mount, back again, riding her opponent and mugging for the crowd. The fans give a pop.]

Robbie Ray: Look at that confidence! Tinsley showing the crowd she can control the action.

[Jenn snakes an arm and pulls Cassidy into a quick armbar attempt! Cassidy flails desperately, kicking and scratching until she drags herself to the ropes.]

Angus: Alright, she didn't rip the arm off, but she sure as heck wanted to.

[The ref forces the break. Jenn's already up and waiting. Cassidy staggers upright and eats a German suplex! The crowd cheers -- but Jenn holds on, muscles Cassidy back up, stalls with her opponent flailing helplessly in midair, then bridges back with a big stalling German suplex! The ref counts -- 1...2... kickout at the last instant!]

Robbie Ray: Ohhh! Nearly a debut victory right there.

Angus: Nearly don't count, kid.

[Cassidy scrambles, drags herself into the ropes, and rakes Jenn across the eyes. The crowd boos. Cassidy clubs Jenn with forearms, whips her across the ring -- but Jenn reverses, handsprings off the ropes and nails a jumping back elbow! Cassidy crumples.]

Robbie Ray: That right there's that athleticism Eric Dane Sr. talked about.

[Jenn climbs the turnbuckle. She pauses, clapping her hands above her head to get the fans into it. The arena joins in. She leaps -- diving crossbody! The impact wipes Cassidy out -- but instead of pinning, Jenn rolls through, popping to her feet behind Cassidy. She clamps down both arms, muscles them tight to Cassidy's sides -- and arches back with the Tinsley Bridge! The ref counts -- 1...2...3!]

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[DING DING DING!]

Robbie Ray: Impressive debut! Jenn Tinsley with the Tinsley Bridge, and she is officially on the ICW map.

Angus: Ehh. She looked fine. Beat up a local talent, hit a couple suplexes, did her cute little bridge. Seems like a nice kid. But I didn't see anything tonight that makes me think she's ready for Astrid Reichert or Duchess Vaughn.

Robbie Ray: That's fair, Angus -- but I'll tell you what. The fans have another wrestler to get behind, and that's good news for Iron City Wrestling's women's division.

[Jenn celebrates in the ring, grinning as the crowd applauds her debut win.]

Astrid Reichert vs Valeria Cruz

Robbie Ray Carter: (steady, setting the table)

"Fans, there are no heroes in this one. The Reinas de Sangre didn't come here to make friends -- they stormed into ICW aiming straight for the top. Last week they jumped the most popular woman in this division, Sunny Holiday, two-on-one. Tonight, Valeria Cruz is looking to make her mark against the top bad girl herself, Astrid Reichert. But after earning her crown in that epic fight with Duchess Vaughn on pay-per-view, is Astrid really gonna concede her spot so easily?"

Angus Skaaland: (low, a little gleeful)

"You know the answer to that, Carter. Astrid Reichert doesn't give anything away -- you've gotta bleed for it."

Valeria Cruz makes her entrance first, Celestina by her side. A plume of smoke rolls across the aisle as the sisters step through the haze, sneering at the crowd and barking Spanish curses. They stalk to the ring like they own it, Valeria cracking her knuckles and pacing as she waits.

The lights dim again for Astrid. The Punk Rock Baroness doesn't waste time with theatrics -- she shrugs off her leather jacket at the top of the ramp, eyes already locked on Valeria. She slides under the bottom rope and rises smoothly to her feet, never breaking that glare. The air is tense before the bell even rings.

Bell rings. Valeria doesn't hesitate -- she charges straight across the ring and hammers Astrid with wild clubbing forearms. Astrid reels back into the corner, trying to cover up, but Valeria is relentless, smashing her with heavy shots to the chest and jaw.

Valeria lowers her shoulder and drives it again and again into Astrid's ribs, ramming her into the buckles until the Baroness gasps for breath. With a snarl, Valeria yanks her out by the hair, drags her across the ring, and throws her throat-first over the middle rope. The crowd winces as Valeria leans her full weight across Astrid's back, choking her against the ropes while the referee shouts and counts.

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Robbie Ray Carter: (angry)

"She's not even trying to wrestle -- she's trying to choke the life out of her!"

Angus Skaaland: (laughing)

"And I love it! This ain't a beauty contest, Carter, this is a fight -- and Valeria Cruz came ready to brawl!"

Robbie Ray Carter: (tense)

"The referee forces the break, but Astrid looks like she's already gasping--"

Valeria storms right back in, but Astrid digs a tight hook into the ribs that doubles her up just enough. Astrid shoves off the ropes, hauls Valeria into the corner, and goes to work with stiff body punches, her shoulder driving hip checks into the midsection with every blow. The thud of each shot echoes in the studio as Astrid leans all her weight in.

Angus Skaaland: (gravelly)

"That's her specialty, Carter! Astrid'll turn your insides black and blue before she even thinks about your head!"

But Valeria Cruz snarls, absorbs the barrage, and when Astrid tries to muscle her into a suplex out of the corner, Valeria clamps both hands around the ropes and won't budge. A heavy axehandle clubs Astrid loose. Valeria scoops her up with surprising force and plants her in the center of the ring with a spinebuster.

Robbie Ray Carter: (sharp)

"Good lord, what a spinebuster!"

Valeria sprawls across Astrid, hooking the leg.

ONE! TWO!

Astrid jerks a shoulder up before three, glaring through the hair in her face as Valeria hovers over her, smirking.

Valeria hovers over Astrid with a smirk, but Astrid adjusts. She clamps her arms tight around her body and digs in, refusing to let Valeria dictate the tempo. As Valeria leans down to drag her up, Astrid fires another hook to the body, heavy enough to stagger her. Astrid shoves to her feet and muscles Valeria down into a tight headlock, wrenching her around the ring with sheer upper-body strength. Every twist grinds against Valeria's shoulder and neck, Astrid cinching in tighter with that cold, deliberate patience.

Robbie Ray Carter: (measured, pointing it out)

"That's the Baroness's adjustment. Valeria wants a sprint, but Astrid knows how to drag a match into deep water."

Angus Skaaland: (chuckling darkly)

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"And once you're there, she'll drown you, Carter. She ain't just strong, she's methodical -- and she'll tear that arm apart piece by piece."

Astrid shifts her weight, drives Valeria down, and traps the arm against the mat. She leans her full weight onto it, hammering short forearms across the shoulder to soften it up. Valeria snarls and thrashes, but every escape opens her up to another wrench or crank. Astrid is slowing her down, brick by brick, taking the fire out of Valeria's wild start and turning the fight into her own grinding pace. Astrid mounts up and delivers some stiff shots into Valeria's face, then, when Valeria raises her hands to block, goes after the wrist. She wrangles Valeria down into a tight armbar, extending for the jujigatame with a cold focus, but Valeria grits her teeth and fights to her feet. She muscles Astrid up off the mat, Astrid dangling and wrenching the arm -- and suddenly it dawns on everyone.

Robbie Ray Carter: (alarmed)

"She's hoisting her up--Astrid's set herself right into danger! Valeria's got her in position for that sit-down powerbomb!"

Astrid's eyes go wide as she realizes it too. She releases the armbar in a hurry, snapping her legs up to coil around Valeria's head for the guillotine choke. The crowd gasps as both women struggle for leverage, but Valeria's grip is tighter, her base wider. She shifts her weight, lifts Astrid, and drops her down hard with a stiff atomic drop that leaves the Baroness jolted.

Astrid's grip loosens just enough for Valeria to rip her head free. Valeria keeps hold of the wrist, plants her feet, and blasts Astrid with a brutal short-arm lariat that flips her inside out. Valeria crashes down on top, hooking the far leg deep.

ONE!

TWO!

THREEE--

Astrid kicks out just before the full count, rolling to her side with a grimace, clutching her jaw.

Angus Skaaland: (half-laughing, half-awed)

"She nearly had her, Carter! Valeria Cruz almost had the Baroness beat right in the middle of the ring!"

Robbie Ray Carter: (urgent)

"Two and three-quarters, Angus! Astrid Reichert's still in it, but Valeria just showed everybody that she's not backing down from the Baroness one inch!"

Valeria drags Astrid's legs, trying to turn her over into El Martirio. Astrid fights it, snaring Valeria's hair and yanking her head down into a rough guillotine grip. The lock isn't deep, Valeria hammers her side with punches, forcing Astrid to loosen. The instant Valeria drops the leg to strike, Astrid snakes her hips up and cinches her thighs around the midsection. With a wicked smirk she drags Valeria down chest-to-chest and threads her arms back through her own legs -- locking in a full body scissor with the crunching squeeze of the

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scorpion hold.

Robbie Ray Carter: (sitting forward, voice sharp)

"She's got it locked in! That's a scorpion body crunch variation, Angus! Astrid Reichert's squeezing Valeria Cruz like a python!"

Angus Skaaland: (uncertain)

"I don't even know what I'm looking at -- but I know Valeria's face is turning red!"

Astrid laughs as Valeria thrashes on top of her, the blows to her ribs reduced to little more than flailing slaps. Valeria's legs buckle under her, trapped in Astrid's coils, and the crowd starts to murmur -- is she about to tap? Is she going to pass out?

Robbie Ray Carter: (grim)

"Valeria Cruz is in more trouble than she realizes. That squeeze will shut the air right out of you."

At that moment Valeria's eyes widen with realization. She plants both palms against the mat, pushes back with every ounce of strength left, and stretches for the ropes. Celestina Cruz shoves the bottom rope forward with both hands, just enough for Valeria to hook her toe on it. The referee spots it and calls for the break, forcing Astrid to finally unclamp the hold.

Angus Skaaland: (snarling)

"Say what you want, Carter, that's Cruz toughness right there. Most women would've been done."

Robbie Ray Carter: (correcting)

"Toughness -- and maybe a little help from her sister at ringside. Either way, Astrid Reichert just showed the world she's got a brand-new way to squeeze the fight out of anyone."

Astrid keeps the squeeze clamped in even as the referee barks at her. Valeria's boot is clearly draped on the bottom rope, but Astrid just grins up at the official like she's savoring every second.

"One! Two! Three! Four!"

Astrid tightens her grip with a mocking laugh, arching her back to wrench the hold in deeper. When the referee leans down to shout in her face, she tilts her head with aristocratic disdain, lips curling.

Astrid Reichert: (mocking, cold)

"Count louder, peasant. Perhaps I'll hear you then."

The ref shoves at her shoulder, nearly losing his cool, and Astrid finally releases just a breath before the five. She sits up, brushing hair from her face with a sneer, and spreads her arms wide as if daring the referee to disqualify her. Behind them, Valeria crawls toward Celestina, clutching at her ribs, struggling to even catch her breath.

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Robbie Ray Carter: (low, disgusted)

"She knew exactly what she was doing, Angus. That wasn't about winning the match -- that was about humiliating Valeria Cruz."

Angus Skaaland: (grinning)

"And it worked! The Baroness might not have a crown, Carter, but she sure knows how to act like royalty."

Astrid mauls Valeria back into the buckles, shoulders low, fists pounding the ribs with cold precision. Each hip check jolts Valeria's battered midsection, forcing a groan out of her as she clings to the ropes with one arm, the other hugging her side. Astrid steps back to center ring, chin high, spreading her arms in a cruel little curtsy for the jeering crowd.

Robbie Ray Carter: (serious)

"She thinks she's got this in the bag, Angus. Look at her -- Astrid Reichert believes she's already broken Valeria Cruz."

Angus Skaaland: (cackling)

"She might not be wrong, Carter. Valeria's hanging on by a thread!"

Astrid stalks forward to finish it, but Valeria suddenly explodes out of the corner. WHAM! A lariat nearly takes Astrid's head off and sends her stumbling back. Before Astrid can recover, Valeria barrels in with a crushing body check that folds her over, driving the wind out of her lungs.

Valeria roars, hooks Astrid's waist, and heaves her up and over with her trademark exploder suplex -- sending the Baroness crashing violently into the corner. Both women crumple to the mat, clutching their bodies as the studio crowd buzzes with shock.

Celestina pounds the apron, shouting encouragement in Spanish, urging her sister to rise.

Robbie Ray Carter: (shaking his head)

"Valeria Cruz just dug down deep and turned this whole fight around with one burst of fury!"

Angus Skaaland: (awed)

"Both women are down, Carter. It's whoever can get up first -- and if Valeria beats Astrid to her feet, the Baroness might be in trouble after all!"

Valeria, still clutching her ribs, drags Astrid up and shoves her head between her legs. The studio crowd stirs as she cinches the standing headscissor, setting up for Tierra Quebrada.

Robbie Ray Carter: (urgent)

"She's going for it -- Tierra Quebrada! If she hits this sit-down powerbomb, it's over!"

Astrid throws desperate hooks up into the ribs, each shot thudding against the damage she's inflicted all

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match. Valeria grimaces, gasping, her grip faltering. Astrid wriggles free, slides behind, and sweeps out a leg, toppling Valeria flat. In an instant Astrid slithers up her back, snaking an arm under the chin and trying to lock down Schlechte Nacht, her cruel single-arm rear naked choke.

Angus Skaaland: (half-rising)

"Oh no, Carter, she's got the Baroness's leash on her now!"

Valeria thrashes, but Astrid digs for control -- until suddenly a shadow flies in from behind. Celestina Cruz springboards from the apron and drives a perfect flying elbow drop into the back of Astrid's head.

THUD!

The referee waves it off immediately, signaling for the bell.

Robbie Ray Carter: (furious)

"That's a disqualification! Celestina Cruz just saved her sister -- and robbed us of a clean finish!"

The bell clatters as the Cruz sisters swarm. Valeria shoves Astrid to the mat and stomps away at her ribs, while Celestina rains fists and boots across her shoulders. The Reinas de Sangre stand tall in the ring, jeering and spitting venom, while Astrid lies half-conscious on the mat.

Angus Skaaland: (grinning)

"They don't care about clean finishes, Carter. The Cruz sisters care about making statements -- and they just made one on Astrid Reichert's skull!"

Celestina doesn't waste time after the disqualification. With Astrid dazed from the flying elbow, she snakes her arms under and around, hoisting her into the cruel torque of the Queen's Gambit. Astrid groans in pain as her shoulders and back are stretched wide, chest exposed. Valeria rolls outside, grabs a chair, and slides back in with malice in her eyes.

Robbie Ray Carter: (horrified)

"No! Don't do this -- Astrid's ribs are wide open, she could be seriously injured here!"

Angus Skaaland: (smug)

"Turnabout's fair play, Carter. Astrid's been trying to break ribs all night. Time for her to feel it herself."

Valeria raises the chair high over Astrid's exposed torso -- but the crowd erupts as Sunny Holiday bolts down the aisle. She slides into the ring, yanks the chair right out of Valeria's hands, and levels her with a clothesline. Celestina drops Astrid to fight Sunny, the two trading wild punches as Astrid collapses onto her hands and knees.

Sunny backs up in the struggle -- right into Astrid. The Punk Rock Baroness seizes the moment. In a blink, she clamps around Sunny's waist, muscles straining, and spikes her with the Lyndwyrn Suplex, folding

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Sunny up on the back of her head.

Robbie Ray Carter: (shocked)

"She just dropped Sunny! After Sunny came to save her hide!"

Angus Skaaland: (delighted)

"That's Astrid Reichert for you -- no friends, no allegiances, just cruelty!"

Celestina stares, momentarily stunned. Astrid rises, dusts herself off with contempt, and gestures coolly toward Sunny's crumpled body -- a baroness's invitation. "Be my guest." With that, she turns her back and strides from the ring.

Celestina sneers, stomps at Sunny, and together with Valeria they seize control. Valeria locks in El Martirio, wrenching Sunny back in the half-crab and facelock. Celestina kneels on the mat in front of her, eye to eye, spitting venom in Spanish as Sunny cries out in pain.

Robbie Ray Carter: (desperate)

"Somebody's gotta stop this! Sunny Holiday is defenseless and the Reinas are tearing her apart!"

Angus Skaaland: (cold)

"This is what happens when you play hero, Carter. You run into the wolves' den, you get chewed up."

But suddenly Jenn Tinsley charges down with a steel chair in hand. She slides in and jabs the edge into Valeria's ribs -- the same ribs Astrid had softened all match. Valeria winces and releases the hold, snarling in pain.

Robbie Ray Carter: (exploding with energy)

"Jenn Tinsley with the chair! Tinsley just saved Sunny Holiday!"

Angus Skaaland: (outraged)

"Saved her? She just robbed the Reinas! That's a cheap shot!"

Celestina yanks her sister away before further damage can be done, hissing at Jenn with cold fury. The Reinas de Sangre back up the ramp, Valeria clutching her ribs, Celestina glaring daggers and clearly plotting vengeance.

Jenn drops to one knee beside Sunny, standing protectively over her as the crowd cheers.

Robbie Ray Carter: (with conviction)

"Jenn Tinsley may be outnumbered, she may be outgunned, but she just proved Sunny Holiday isn't standing alone anymore!"

Angus Skaaland: (grumbling)

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"She's batting out of her league, Carter. The Reinas'll make her pay for this."

Jenn drops to one knee beside Sunny, standing protectively over her as the crowd cheers.

Angus Skaaland: (dismissive)

"Jenn Tinsley's trying to bat way out of her league, Carter. She's gonna regret sticking her nose in the Reinas' business."

Robbie Ray Carter: (resolute)

"Maybe so, Angus, but at least Sunny Holiday isn't standing alone anymore. Because if the ICW women's division has made one thing clear, it's crawling with evildoers -- and Sunny just found someone willing to fight beside her."

Jenn stays crouched at Sunny's side, one knee down, a hand resting on her shoulder, the steel chair lying close enough to grab if the Reinas even think about circling back. The crowd is buzzing, half with relief, half with anticipation of what's coming next.

Valeria staggers on the ramp, one arm wrapped around her battered ribs. Celestina, jaw tight and eyes like ice, keeps her sister upright with one arm while jabbing a finger back toward the ring. She spits a furious stream of Spanish curses, her voice cutting over the noise of the fans.

Robbie Ray Carter: (low, ominous)

"She says this isn't over, Angus. The Reinas de Sangre are promising revenge."

Angus Skaaland: (grinning, almost eager)

"And when they come back, Carter, they're gonna come back meaner. You can bet your last dollar on it."

The Reinas finally vanish through the curtain, Valeria snarling through the pain, Celestina's glare lingering like a blade. In the ring, Jenn helps Sunny sit up, still protective, still braced for a fight, as the camera closes on the unlikely alliance -- and the promise of war yet to come.

The "new Superstar" in ICW?

Back from break, the lights dim and the spotlight hits the stage. The smooth warble of "Money (That's What I Want)" by Barrett Strong hits, and out struts Ricky Dale Cash in his tacky three-piece suit, a mic in one hand and a gold chain glinting under the lights. The Tuscaloosa crowd boos instantly, but Cash just soaks it in, grinning like he owns the place.

Behind him steps a tall, athletic figure in gleaming white-and-gold tights -- Preston Price. Slick hair, cocky sneer, the man walks with a deliberate swagger as Cash motions to him like he's unveiling a prized racehorse.

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Ricky Dale Cash (into the mic, cutting through the jeers):

"Ladies and gentlemen of Tuscaloosa... stand up straight, take a good long look, because you're staring at the new Superstar of ICW! This right here--this thoroughbred, this specimen, this diamond--his name is Preston Price. And with my brains and his skills, there's not a man or woman in this company who can stop us."

Cash smirks, pacing in front of his new client as Price flexes for the camera, jaw set with arrogance.

Cash (snapping his fingers for emphasis):

"Sammy Starr? Done. Finished. History. With me steering the ship and Preston here at the wheel, we've left that little bedazzled sideshow in the rearview. From here on out, it's money moves only, baby. And the cash cow is Preston Price."

The crowd boos heavy, but Price just smirks and mouths, "I'm the real Superstar now," before raising both arms to the rafters.

RRC (cutting in, disgusted):

"You've got to be kidding me. Ricky Dale Cash jumped from Sammy Starr to Preston Price, and he's already calling him the new Superstar?"

Angus (shrugging, smirking):

"Can't say the man doesn't have vision, Robbie Ray. Preston Price looks like money, moves like money, and now he's got Cash in his corner. Starr might want to keep those sequins in storage--his fifteen minutes are running out."

The segment closes with Price and Cash posing at center stage, soaking in the boos as the Tuscaloosa crowd lets them have it.

Primetime Preston Price vs Riley Cross

The Tuscaloosa lights turn gold as a brassy jazz riff slips into a swaggering hip-hop beat. Out struts "Primetime" Preston Price, sequined jacket gleaming, arms wide like he owns the world. Behind him, Ricky Dale Cash claps and struts, pointing to his new prize with a salesman's grin. The crowd boos, but Price just smirks, mouthing "Primetime" for the hard cam before strutting to the ring.

Inside, Riley Cross paces in his corner, bouncing with reckless energy. The fans cheer him like a hometown hero, knowing he's outgunned but loving his fight.

RRC:

"Here's the clash--Riley Cross is raw, he's reckless, he's guts and grit all in one. But Preston Price? Slick, technical, and he knows he's a star."

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Angus:

"Knows he's a star? He is a star, Robbie Ray. Look at him! Suits, swagger, skill--Sammy Starr wishes he had half this shine."

DING DING DING.

Price circles Riley with a mocking smirk, feints a lock-up, then slaps Riley across the back of the head. Riley explodes forward with a shotgun dropkick that rattles Price into the ropes! The crowd pops huge, but Price rolls through, adjusts his hair, and smirks like nothing happened.

From there, it's all Primetime. Price strings together crisp suplexes, a running dropkick, and a rope-hung arm drag that leaves Riley clutching his shoulder. Every move, Price poses for the hard cam, taunting the crowd: "This is Primetime, baby!"

Riley gets a brief flurry--springboard crossbody, a lightning forearm, and a near-miss with a rolling cradle that gets one... two...--but Price bails to the ropes, screaming for a break.

Late in the match, Ricky Dale Cash hops on the apron, waving his arms to distract Riley. Cross rushes him, but Cash trips on his own footing and nearly falls into the ring. Riley spins him around into a schoolboy on Price--ONE! TWO!--Price barely kicks out! The crowd gasps as Cash stumbles back in shock.

RRC:

"Cash almost cost his man the whole match!"

Angus:

"Almost? He's lucky Preston's got nine lives!"

Price explodes with fury--snatches Riley up, plants him with the Bayou Bomb, then drags him to center and finishes with the Spotlight Special double underhook facebuster. He hooks the leg deep.

ONE! TWO! THREE!

DING DING DING.

Ring Announcer:

"Here is your winner--'Primetime' Preston Price!"

Price rips his arm away from the referee, pacing the ring, pointing to himself and shouting "Primetime! Spotlight!" while the crowd rains boos.

But then--he turns on his manager.

Preston Price (grabbing the mic, red-faced):

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"Cash, you almost screwed this up! I don't need you, I don't need your scams, I don't need your mouth--I'm Primetime, baby! So hit the road!"

The crowd roars at the breakup, but before Cash can even stammer a response, the music hits--"Sharp Dressed Man" by ZZ Top.

Sammy Starr blindsides Price from behind! Starr clubs him down, stomping the back of his head, the sequined robe flaring as he screams, "I'm the REAL Superstar!" Cash slides into the ring, cackling as Starr puts the boots to Preston.

RRC (shocked):

"It was a setup all along! Cash never dumped Sammy--this was a trap for Preston Price!"

Angus (laughing):

"Now that's showbiz, Robbie Ray! Sammy Starr proving there's only one Superstar, and his name sure as hell ain't Preston Price!"

Starr and Cash stand tall over Price, mocking him as the Tuscaloosa crowd rains boos, the trap revealed in full.

Hoggin' with the Noots (ft. the James Gang)

Robbie Ray Carter:

"It's time for Angus' favorite segment of every ICW Fight Night -- we're about to hear from the New Untouchables!"

Angus Skaaland:

"...hate those guys so much..."

The camera finds the New Untouchables lounging in their usual spot. Jeffrey Daniels is sprawled across a folding chair in his oversized, wide-ankled JNCOs, sunglasses indoors, chewing gum loud enough for the mic to catch it. Lee Scott Rothlesberger sits upright, composed and smug, hands folded like he's three moves ahead. Kirsty McKinney leans against the wall, arms crossed tight, staring daggers into the lens.

Jeffrey Daniels:

"Look at this, y'all. Eric Dane Junior's playin' wrestler again. Can't get it done on his own, so he drags three hilljacks outta the Smoky Mountains. Hilljack Team Danger! The Smoky Mountain Outlaws, live from the pigpen!"

Daniels chuckles at his own joke, nearly tipping his chair back.

Lee Scott Rothlesberger:

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"History repeats itself. Your dad built an empire by surrounding himself with professionals. You, Junior? You scrounge up your dad's drinking buddy's nephews. In Montgomery, we're going to expose every last one of you as frauds."

Jeffrey claps his hands together, howling with laughter.

Kirsty McKinney: (cool, sharp)

"Eric--face it. I beat you once. I'll do it worse the second time. Bring your play-family, it won't matter."

Daniels:

"Montgomery, Alabama--perfect! The capital of--what, boiled peanuts? We'll put on a corn-shuckin' invitational, then pin 'em in three seconds flat!"

The New Untouchables roar at their own gag--until the sudden, violent slam of doors off-camera echoes through the hallway. The laughter dies on their lips. All three turn toward the noise just as Eric Dane Jr. and the James Gang storm into frame.

Dane Jr. is red-faced, fists clenched. Zeke James looms behind him, silent and unblinking. Zeb James cracks a wide grin, rolling his shoulders like he's about to dive into a bar fight. Cherry Mae James steps right to the front, fiery and unafraid.

Zeke James: (low, even)

"Sure got quieter in here all of a sudden, didn't it?"

Eric Dane Jr.: (eyes locked on Jeffrey)

"You think you're Andrews? You're not even a knockoff. Keep flappin' those gums, Jeffrey, and Montgomery's gonna bury you the same way my old man buried yours."

Zeb James: (jabbing a finger at the group)

"Four of us, three of you--bar fight math, boys. And it ends ugly!"

Cherry Mae plants her boots and steps up to Kirsty.

Cherry Mae James:

"You know all about that fancy sport wrasslin'. But d'you know anything 'bout dirty wrasslin'?"

Kirsty doesn't flinch. She smirks, her contrarian streak flaring as she cuts her eyes at Cherry Mae.

Kirsty McKinney:

"I'll spare you the Deliverance jokes, not 'cause I care about your egos--it's just low-hanging fruit. Besides--" (she jerks her chin toward Dane Jr.) "--I already made Junior squeal like a pig."

Jeffrey Daniels shoots to his feet, eyes wide in alarm.

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Daniels:

"Kirsty! Kirsty, chill, c'mon-

But Kirsty keeps going, nose-to-nose with Cherry Mae.

Kirsty: (sneering)

"And you. What are you, anyway, his little hog-caller? You clap your hands and the boys come runnin'? Figures. That's about as close as you'll ever get to bein' a real wrestler."

Cherry Mae:

"I know a thing or two about makin' the pigs mind, myself."

Kirsty:

"Oh, I don't doubt it. You've spent your whole life knee-deep in mud, squealin' and rootin' right along with 'em. The only ring you belong in is the one you put through a hog's nose--"

That's when Cherry Mae hauls back and piefaces her hard, shoving Kirsty right in the face, cutting her off mid-rant. Kirsty's eyes go wide as she touches her face where Cherry Mae shoved her, in sheer disbelief.

LSR:

"...oh shit."

Kirsty responds with a forearm smash that sends Cherry Mae stumbling back into her brothers.

Dane Jr. explodes, lunging straight into Kirsty with fists flying, Cherry Mae joining him in the scrap. Zeke and Zeb surge forward, grabbing Daniels by the collar. Jeffrey shrieks, flailing helplessly as the James brothers hammer him with roughhouse fists.

Lee R. slips off his chair, darting for the corner like a man looking for an exit. He hesitates, sees his partners being overwhelmed, then vanishes from frame.

The James Gang and Dane Jr. have the numbers. Zeb laughs wildly as he slams Jeffrey into the wall, Zeke cutting off any hope of escape. Dane Jr. pins Kirsty against a crate, raining down punches with Cherry Mae right in the mix.

Robbie Ray: (from the arena)

"The James Gang and Dane Junior have the Untouchables cornered! This is chaos back there!"

Angus Skaaland:

"About time somebody shut the Noots' mouths, Carter!"

Kirsty fights back like a wildcat, throwing shots, but the gang smothers her. Just as Zeke and Zeb haul Jeffrey up for a two-on-one beating--

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A sudden white cloud fills the screen.

Lee Scott Rothlesberger barrels back into the fray with a fire extinguisher. He rips the pin out and blasts it, foam and gas hissing everywhere. The Gang and Dane Jr. stagger, coughing, waving through the haze.

Through the fog, Lee grabs Kirsty by the arm and yanks her free. Jeffrey stumbles out of Zeke's grip, eyes wide, bolting like a rabbit down the hall. Lee drags Kirsty after him, the pair disappearing into the haze.

Robbie Ray:

"A fire extinguisher! The New Untouchables couldn't fight their way out, so they smoked their way out!"

Angus:

"That's the smartest thing I've ever seen Lee R. do--knowing when to run!"

The extinguisher cloud lingers as Dane Jr. and the James Gang stagger back into view, coughing but on their feet, fury etched on their faces. The crowd in the arena roars as Zeb leans over the chaos, pointing down the hall where the Untouchables vanished.

Zeb James:

"Montgomery, boys! Bar's open and the fight's on!"

Robbie Ray:

"The Untouchables run again, but Montgomery's coming quick, and the James Gang just proved they're the real deal."

Angus: (almost giddy)

"That's right! Zeke, Zeb, Cherry Mae--finally some folks with guts! They ran the Noots outta the building, Carter, and I love it!"

The camera lingers on Dane Jr. and the James Gang standing tall in the wreckage as the segment cuts away.

Brothers Gluck vs Top Notch Team

Robbie Ray:

"Fans, what we've got here tonight is a rare thing -- two teams who want the same thing so bad, they just went ahead and made this match themselves. The Brothers Gluck, the Top Notch Team, they're not waiting on Eric Dane, and they're sure as heck not waiting on the Rich Young Grapplerz to sign any papers."

Angus:

"Oh come on, Robbie Ray. This is ridiculous. Wrestlers don't get to just make their own contendership matches because it makes 'em feel good inside. Last time I checked, this ain't the playground -- the

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Grapplerz are the champs, and they didn't agree to this nonsense."

Robbie Ray:

"Maybe not, but the Grapplerz ducking challengers don't get the final word either. These are two top teams saying, 'Best men win, winner gets the shot.' Simple as that, partner."

Angus:

"It's garbage, is what it is, but let's watch these meatheads roll around anyway."

The bell rings and the opening is pure sport wrestling respect. Carlton ties up with Hayes, both men jockeying for position, rolling through takedowns and counters until Hayes snaps on a hammerlock. Carlton switches to a go-behind, Hayes cartwheels out and returns to the arm. The crowd applauds the slickness, recognizing the craft. Chapps tags in next and, to everyone's surprise, wrestles clean with Cameron West. West ducks a lockup into a waistlock, Chapps sits out and switches, they scramble through a series of holds until Chapps yanks him over with a sharp headlock takeover. West instantly kicks out into a legscissors, Chapps kips free, and both men stare each other down while the audience claps the exchange.

Robbie Ray:

"Chain wrestling at its finest! These two teams aren't just power and flash -- they're students of the game."

Angus:

"Yeah, yeah, fun little dance. Wake me up when somebody throws a punch."

The tags keep coming as the match cycles through every possible pairing. Carlton and West trade suplex attempts, Carlton trying to muscle the smaller man up while West uses his leverage to cradle Carlton for a close two count. Hayes and Chapps lock horns in a collar-and-elbow, Hayes slipping into a headlock before trying to snake his way into the chickenwing, but Chapps powers out, shoving him chest-to-chest in defiance. Carlton and Hayes grapple again, testing raw amateur strength, and they roll into the ropes before either can gain a clear advantage.

The temperature in the ring starts to rise. What began as friendly competition grows more aggressive, the holds cinched tighter, the escapes more forceful. Forearms start landing, chests redden under the impact of chops, and the applause becomes louder, hungrier.

Chapps and Hayes end up nose-to-nose, foreheads pressed together, jawing back and forth.

Robbie Ray:

"You can feel that temperature rising, Angus."

Angus:

"Finally! Somebody's gonna get punched."

And then they explode. Hayes fires off sharp forearms, Chapps answers back with blistering open-hand

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chops that echo through the building. Hayes whips Chapps into the ropes, Chapps rebounds and launches him across the ring with a throwing German Gluckplex that rattles the boards. West charges in to save his partner, cutting Carlton down with a big European uppercut, but Carlton fires back, catching him and planting him with a gutwrench Gluckplex. TNT rally and hit tandem suplexes of their own, proving they can match power for power, and the crowd comes alive as both teams swing for bigger bombs.

The pace quickens in the closing stretch. Hayes counters Chapps' Rebel Proud Gluckplex into a smooth butterfly suplex. West follows with a missile dropkick that staggers Carlton back into the ropes. TNT hit their Smooth Transition double-team, tripping Carlton down and chaining him into a facelock. Hayes seizes the moment, clamping on his crossface chickenwing, wrenching back with everything he's got.

But Carlton roars to life, rolling through with a burst of unexpected agility, dragging Hayes over and pinning his shoulders with a rolling double chickenwing cradle.

ONE! TWO! THREE!

The bell rings and the arena pops.

Robbie Ray:

"Carlton Gluck! For all the talk about him being a big, unkempt redneck -- look at the technique! That's a man who knows his wrestling, and he just beat Derek Hayes at his own game."

Angus:

"He's a barn, Robbie Ray! A barn! And barns aren't supposed to move like that. But somehow this one does. It's horrifying."

The Brothers Gluck stand tall in the ring, Carlton calm and deliberate, Chapps pumping his fists in wild celebration but, for once, keeping the antics subdued. Across from them, West and Hayes pull themselves up, frustration in their eyes, but they nod in respect before exiting. The message is clear: two teams fought with honor, but the Glucks earned the right to take the first swing at the Rich Young Grapplerz.

Leaner Fish

Ryan Caudill stands in front of the ICW backdrop, microphone in hand, posture stiff as he tries to project authority. Astrid Reichert steps into frame, still in her ring gear, her expression the cool mask of the Baroness.

Ryan Caudill: (professional, serious)

"Astrid Reichert, earlier tonight you had Sunny Holiday come to your aid against the Reinas de Sangre -- and yet, rather than stand with her, you blindsided her. Why would you betray someone who was literally there to help you?"

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Astrid tilts her head, smirking, giving no answer. She brushes an errant strand of hair from her face and lets the silence hang, almost daring Ryan to fill it.

Ryan Caudill: (pressing, a little tense)

"Last week when you and Sunny faced each other, she seemed to have an answer for everything you tried -- until the Reinas interfered. Tonight, Valeria Cruz gave you trouble early, too. Isn't it fair to say that maybe Sunny Holiday is... is your equal?"

Astrid's smirk spreads into a smile that doesn't reach her eyes.

Astrid Reichert: (cool, deliberate, Baroness cadence)

"So did Valeria this veek... at first. But I do not like to rush into things, Ryan. I proved to ze Blood Queens zat I am more zan both of them. And ze same goes for Sunny. I could prove zat I am so much more zan she is. But you Americans, you haf saying: 'bigger fish to fry'? I must change zat. Ze problem vith fish named Sunny... is zat she is too big."

She sneers faintly, gesturing at her own waistline as the venom drips.

Astrid Reichert: (mocking, Baroness flair)

"I do not vant to fry a fish zat big. So cholesterol. Such calorie. Wow."

She smirks, lingering on the wow with that knowing little lilt, like she's enjoying a joke she'd never admit to making. Maybe saying a 'w' properly for once is part of the joke.

Astrid Reichert: (primly)

"I in fact haf leaner fish to fry. Ze big fish can float to ze top like scum und oil. I vill come for it ze next time I am... bulking."

Ryan's face stiffens, clearly uncomfortable.

Ryan Caudill: (bristling)

"Astrid... you're fat-shaming Sunny Holiday. That--"

Astrid suddenly flexes her tattooed right arm, "The Python," directly in his face, the inked scales rippling over muscle. She laughs low in her throat as Ryan blinks and stammers, taken off his stride.

Ryan Caudill: (flustered, scrambling to recover)

"Uh--be... be that as it may--if Sunny isn't your focus, if you've got... other, leaner fish to fry, then who exactly are you going after next?"

Astrid continues to watch her arm. She flexes her fingers, making the rest of the muscles in her arm ripple. Ryan swallows.

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Astrid Reichert: (measured, regal)

"You will find out... ven everyone else does."

With that, she grips Ryan by the lapels, lifts him off his feet with surprising gentleness, and sets him down a few feet away as if he were an unruly child. Without another word, Astrid sashays out of frame, leaving Ryan straightening his jacket, flushed and flustered.

Havok's Open Challenge

The lights drop, the crowd already souring as Metallica's "Seek and Destroy" tears through The Foundry. Red strobes wash over the entrance as "The Outlaw" Jack Havok rides his Harley out from the curtain, the ICW Television Championship hanging off his shoulder and a steel chair clutched in his fist. Boos rain down. Havok throttles the bike harder, a wolfish grin plastered across his face, before killing the engine at ringside.

RRC: "Here he comes -- the most dangerous man in Iron City Wrestling, and he's got that look in his eyes again."

ANGUS: "Not just the look, Ronnie. He's got a chair in hand. That means someone's gonna leave here broken."

Havok drags the chair into the ring, unfolds it, and drops it dead center like a calling card. He paces with the microphone, the crowd's hatred fueling him.

JACK HAVOK:

"Week after week, I've walked down this aisle and left bodies in this ring. Loudmouths, wannabes, tough guys -- all of 'em on the mat, starin' at the lights. This chair?" He kicks it hard, the clang echoing. "This is my weapon of choice. And this belt?" He hoists the Television Title high. "This is the only prize that matters. I don't run. I don't hide. So here it is: open challenge. Right now. Any man in this building dumb enough to try -- come bleed for it."

Jack Havok vs Larry Edwards

The crowd swells, buzzing -- and then the haunting piano of Nas' "N.Y. State of Mind" shakes the walls. The place erupts as Lowlife Larry Edwards storms through the curtain, barking at Havok the whole way down the aisle.

RRC:

"Lowlife Larry! He's not afraid to step into the fire!"

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ANGUS:

"Larry's nuts. We've seen what Havok does to him, and he's back for more!"

Larry slides into the ring and gets nose to nose with Havok as the referee signals for the bell.

[DING DING DING]

They lock up hard. Larry shoves Havok back, and chops him across the chest once, twice, three times. The crowd roars as Havok stumbles. Larry whips him into the ropes and nails a running forearm. Havok spills into the corner, and Larry rushes in with a clothesline that nearly takes his head off. Larry brings to the center of the ring and hooks the leg --

ONE! TWO! Havok powers out.

RRC:

"He almost had him! Edwards was one heartbeat from a miracle right there!"

Larry keeps the momentum, climbing to the second rope and hammering down fists on Havok's skull as the fans count along. Havok staggers, but he doesn't fall. Instead, the outlaw rips Larry down, smashing him with a back elbow to the jaw. Havok drops him with a running lariat, then mounts him, raining down stiff fists.

Havok drags Larry by the hair, tossing him outside. He slams him into the guardrail, into the steps, then boots him back inside before rolling under the ropes himself.

ANGUS:

"That's the Havok formula, Ronnie -- take him for a ride on the outside, then drag the corpse back in."

Larry digs deep, though. He ducks a wild clothesline, bounces off the ropes, and plants Havok with a spinning neckbreaker. The crowd explodes as Larry crawls over for another cover.

ONE! TWO! Havok just kicks free, snarling.

Larry, fired up, signals for the suplex, hooking Havok around the waist. Havok blocks it. Larry tries again -- another block. Havok drives a knee into Larry's ribs, breaking the hold. He staggers to the corner, eyes locking on the steel chair still propped there.

The referee sees it too and steps in front of him.

RRC: "No! The ref's cutting Havok off, he knows what's coming!"

Havok leans in close, growling something low and ugly. He raises his fist like he might swing at the official. The referee throws his hands up and backs away fast, the crowd jeering loudly.

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Havok snatches the chair, turns, and--

CRACK! Right across Larry's spine.

[DING DING DING!]

RING ANNOUNCER:

"The winner of this match, by disqualification... Lowlife Larry Edwards! However, still your ICW Television Champion... Jack Havok!"

RRC:

"Come on! Larry had him reeling, and Havok knew it -- so he took the low road, the outlaw road!"

ANGUS:

"That ain't low, Ronnie. That's smart. Belts don't change hands on a disqualification."

Havok doesn't stop at one. He slams the chair down again across Larry's ribs as the referee waves frantically for help. The crowd is molten, booing Havok with every ounce of breath. Havok finally tosses the chair aside, retrieves his belt, and bails to the floor, sneering back at the carnage.

RRC: "Lowlife Larry Edwards gets the victory, but he's the one left lying in ruins. And Jack Havok, once again, walks out with the gold."

ANGUS: "Get used to it. Havok ain't playin' by anybody's rules but his own."

The last shot shows Larry writhing in pain, clutching his back, while Havok raises the TV Title high on the stage, soaking in every ounce of venom the crowd throws at him.

Dane Sr/Duchess Vaughn segment

The camera cuts backstage. Eric Dane Sr. sits in his office, papers spread across his desk, headset draped around his neck. A monitor in the corner plays the live feed of the show on mute. He's making notes, flipping through bout sheets like a man who's half-boss, half-coach.

The door swings open hard -- in storms Duchess Vaughn. Leather jacket over her ring gear, fire in her eyes.

Duchess (thick Londoner accent, pointing at Dane):

"Oi! I'm bloody sick of this, yeah? Sick of bein' treated like some second-string filler. I ain't no warm-up act, I ain't nobody's spare part. You lot keep overlookin' me like I ain't the baddest, coldest killa' in this whole company!"

Dane leans back in his chair, calm, eyebrows raised.

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Eric Dane Sr. (measured):

"You done?"

Duchess (snarling):

"Not even close, bruv. I went toe-to-toe with Astrid Reichert, took her to the brink, and what do I get? Swept under the rug while Sunshine Holliday twirls her way into headlines and them Cruz girls prance about like queens. Nah, mate. Duchess Vaughn ain't nobody's bloody understudy. I'm top billing, whether you like it or not."

She slams her palm on the desk, leaning in close.

Duchess:

"So what's it gonna be, big man? You gonna' keep ignorin' me, or are you finally gonna' give me somethin' that shows the world I'm the next REALEST one 'round here?"

Dane doesn't flinch. He slowly folds the bout sheet in front of him, sets his pen down, and fixes her with that cold, deliberate stare.

Eric Dane Sr.:

"You've got guts, Duchess. I respect guts. But you don't walk into my office and demand the world on a platter. You want to prove you're not filler? Then prove it out there, bell to bell. You do that, the rest takes care of itself."

Duchess scoffs, smirking through her fury.

Duchess (mocking, still their thick south London accent):

"Yeah, 'course. Work harder, wait my bloody turn, all that bollocks. You just watch, boss man. I been takin' notes from unc, see. He's fillin' me in on how to make 'em all take notice. All the tricks, yeah. And when I do? When you ALL lookin'? You best remember this moment... the moment Duchess Vaughn told you they weren't nobody's bloody filler."

She jabs a finger at him.

Duchess:

"And they ain't one for waitin' their bloody TURN, neither."

They then storm back out, slamming the door behind them. Dane exhales, shakes his head, and goes back to his papers as the crowd buzzes over the tension.

Eric Dane Sr. (under his breath):

"Havin' fuckin' flashbacks, over here... "

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Jesse "Iron Kid" Collins vs Darian Darrington

The Tuscaloosa crowd is on their feet as the pulsing beat of Jesse Collins' theme shakes the building. Out bursts the Iron Kid, fists pumping in the air, eyes blazing with determination. Streamers fly from the student section, and the fans stomp in unison, chanting "IRON KID! IRON KID!" Jesse slaps every hand he can reach, climbs the ropes, and throws his fists high to a deafening pop.

RRC (excited):

"Tuscaloosa is alive, and they are behind Jesse Collins one hundred percent! If he wins tonight, he's going to Birmingham with a chance at the Trust Fund International Title!"

Angus (grinning sly):

"Big 'if,' Robbie Ray. Darian Darrington ain't no spring chicken. He's the biggest, baddest Grappler in the game. Jesse might be running into a brick wall head-first."

The energy flips instantly as "Lifestyle" by Rich Gang blares through the speakers. Golden spotlights sweep the arena while the boos rain down. Out strut the Rich Young Grapplerz, Jacoby Jacobs already streaming live on his phone, Darian Darrington stomping behind him with shoulders rolling like a prizefighter ready to maul. Between them walks Todderick Davenport III, Trust Fund International Title slung arrogantly over his shoulder, designer blazer gleaming under the lights.

They saunter to the ring as if they own it. TD3 smirks and veers toward commentary, slipping on a headset next to Robbie Ray and Angus.

TD3 (immediately smug):

"Tuscaloosa, take notes. You're about to watch the Iron Kid's fairy tale get crushed under Darian Darrington's size thirteen boots."

Jacoby struts around the ring, filming Jesse and mocking him as Darian climbs the steps with deliberate menace. Inside, Darian flexes hard, staring down Jesse across the ring while TD3 chuckles into his mic.

The referee steps in, raising his hand to signal the stakes to the roaring crowd: if Jesse Collins wins, he's heading to the Heart of Dixie finale to challenge TD3 for the Trust Fund International Title.

The bell is about to ring.

DING DING DING.

The two circle. Jesse bounces on the balls of his feet, fists high, while Darian stands tall and stoic, flexing his broad shoulders. The crowd chants "IRON KID! IRON KID!" as Jesse darts in for a quick lock-up.

Darian instantly overpowers him, muscling him back into the corner with one massive shove. Jesse pops out, fists raised again, nodding as if to say "okay, I see you."

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RRC:

"Collins giving up size, giving up weight, but he's not giving up heart."

TD3 (smug on commentary):

"Heart doesn't beat horsepower, Robbie Ray. Darian's about to fold this kid like a dollar bill."

They lock up again -- Jesse slips behind with a waistlock, but Darian flings him off like nothing. Jesse rolls through, pops up, and peppers Darian with a pair of sharp dropkicks to stagger the big man! The crowd erupts.

Jesse charges -- but Darian cuts him off with a brutal shoulder block that drops him flat. Darian flexes his arms and roars at the crowd while TD3 claps at commentary.

Angus:

"That right there? That's a difference maker. Darian's a brick wall, and the Iron Kid just bounced right off of him."

Jesse crawls back up, fire in his eyes, and the fans rally again with loud chants. He ducks under another lariat attempt, rebounds, and nails a flying forearm that staggers Darian back a step -- proof the underdog's speed can find cracks in the armor.

Jesse's rally is short-lived. He charges for another forearm, but Darian plants his feet and blasts him with a brutal back elbow that nearly spins the Iron Kid inside out. The crowd groans as Jesse crumples to the mat.

TD3 (grinning into commentary):

"That right there is assets management. You don't waste energy when you've got a Grappler this efficient. Darian's an investment that always pays dividends."

Darian slows the pace, dragging Jesse up by the hair. He drives a knee into Jesse's ribs, then hoists him up and slams him spine-first into the turnbuckles. Jesse gasps for air as Darian presses a forearm across his throat, leaning all 250 pounds in until the referee reaches four. Darian breaks with a smug grin, raising both arms as if he did nothing wrong.

While the ref is admonishing Darrington, Jacoby Jacobs struts past the apron, phone in one hand, and cheap-shots Jesse with the other, cracking him across the jaw. The crowd erupts in boos. Jesse slumps in the corner as Darian stomps him down into a heap.

RRC (furious):

"Come on, ref! Jacobs just hit him right in front of us!"

TD3 (mock innocence):

"I didn't see anything. All I see is a kid who can't hack it at this level."

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Darian scoops Jesse up into a massive bearhug, squeezing the life out of him. He shakes Jesse violently, the Iron Kid grimacing in pain, flailing fists. The crowd claps and stomps, trying to will him free.

Jesse fights back--elbows to the temple, one after another until Darian finally loosens the grip. Jesse tries to hit the ropes, but Jacoby hooks his ankle from the floor! Jesse stumbles forward, right into a thunderous spinebuster from Darian that rattles the ring.

ONE! TWO! ... Jesse kicks out to a massive pop.

Angus (measured):

"That's the problem with kids like Jesse. They fight hard, but you put 'em in the grinder, and sooner or later they're just dust. Darian's breaking him down piece by piece."

Darian drags Jesse up again, lifting him high for a delayed vertical suplex, showing off his power as TD3 applauds at commentary. The crowd chants louder for Jesse, but Darian just drops him flat on his back, then flexes over him, pointing to TD3 at the desk.

Darian hauls Jesse up, smirking as he lines him for another slam -- but Jesse wriggles free mid-lift, slipping down the back and rolling Darian into a sunset flip!

ONE! TWO!-- Darian powers out with authority, nearly launching Jesse across the ring. The crowd gasps, then erupts, stomping the bleachers to rally the Iron Kid.

Jesse pops up with fire in his eyes. He ducks a clothesline, rebounds off the ropes, and nails a leaping dropkick square to Darian's chest! The Grappler staggers back, and Jesse hits a second one, then a third -- the big man finally topples into the corner. The crowd explodes.

RRC (fired up):

"He's got him rocking! Darian Darrington is reeling!"

Jesse rushes in with a flurry of forearms, unleashing his scrappy heart, then climbs the second rope and rains down punches as the crowd counts along -- "ONE! TWO! THREE! FOUR! FIVE! SIX! SEVEN! EIGHT! NINE! TEN!" Tuscaloosa roars.

But Darian stumbles out, still on his feet. Jesse sprints, springboards off the ropes, and connects with a flying crossbody! He hooks the leg --

ONE! TWO!-- Darian kicks out, but the fans are alive, chanting "IRON KID! IRON KID!"

Jacoby panics at ringside, slamming his phone on the apron to distract Jesse. The Iron Kid leans over the ropes, shouting at him, but the ref intercepts, waving Jacoby down. The Tuscaloosa crowd erupts as the official finally ejects Jacoby Jacobs from ringside!

Heart of Dixie tour: 2.3

Jacoby loses his mind, screaming into his phone as he's escorted up the ramp. Jesse points after him, firing the crowd up even more -- but the distraction gives Darian time to recover. He charges, but Jesse sidesteps! Darian collides chest-first with the turnbuckle, staggers backward -- and Jesse rolls him up!

ONE! TWO!-- Darian powers out at the last second.

TD3 (furious at commentary):

"That was a slow count! You're robbing the Trust Fund right here!"

Jesse scrambles to his feet, crowd on fire, pumping his fists, knowing he's got a shot.

Jesse rallies the crowd, stomping in rhythm as Darian stumbles toward center ring. The Iron Kid charges -- but Darian nearly decapitates him with a Lagniappe Lariat! Jesse crashes to the mat, the crowd gasping. Darian drops down, hooks the leg--

ONE! TWO!-- Jesse kicks out! The building explodes.

RRC:

"He kicked out! The Iron Kid is still alive in Tuscaloosa!"

TD3 (furious at commentary):

"No, no, no! That was three! Somebody fire this ref!"

Darian slams the mat, barking at the official. He hoists Jesse onto his shoulders, setting up for a massive slam -- but Jesse counters, rolling forward into a victory roll!

ONE! TWO!-- Darian powers free again, but now the crowd is in a frenzy.

On the outside, TD3 rips off his headset and storms toward the ring, belt slung in his hand. He climbs onto the apron, shouting at the referee. The distraction gives Darian an opening--he clubs Jesse from behind and sets him for another spinebuster.

But Jesse fights out, shoving Darian toward the ropes -- and Darian collides with TD3 on the apron! The Trust Fund International Champion goes tumbling to the floor, clutching his chest, the crowd roaring as he's taken out of the equation!

Darian reels from crashing into TD3, but when he turns back, Jesse meets him with a running forearm! The Iron Kid fires again--another forearm! Darian staggers, and Jesse hits the ropes for a third--only to get snatched out of mid-air and planted with a thunderous spinebuster!

The crowd gasps as Darian pops up, roaring, pounding his chest. He drags Jesse up by the hair, rage etched on his face, and hoists him for another crushing slam.

Heart of Dixie tour: 2.3

RRC (panicked):

"This could be it--Darian's about to finish it off!"

Darian swings Jesse up for a powerbomb--

--but Jesse kicks and wriggles free mid-lift, flipping down behind him! He hooks Darian's waist, rolls him tight with all his leverage, stacking shoulders!

ONE! TWO! THREE!

DING DING DING!

Tuscaloosa erupts, the fans blowing the roof off as Jesse shoots to his feet, wide-eyed and stunned. The ref grabs his wrist and raises it high, the Iron Kid collapsing to his knees in disbelief.

RRC (shouting over the noise):

"He did it! Jesse Collins did it! The Iron Kid is going to Birmingham with a shot at the Trust Fund International Title!"

On the outside, TD3 explodes in fury, throwing his blazer to the ground, screaming at the referee. He clutches the Trust Fund International Title to his chest, shouting "You'll never take this!" as Jesse points straight at him from inside the ring.

Angus (measured, almost impressed):

"Well I'll be damned. Kid pulled it off. Darian had him dead to rights, and Jesse found daylight. Eric Dane Sr. made it official earlier tonight, so love it or hate it--the Iron Kid is going to the Heart of Dixie finale with the golden ticket."

The show closes with Jesse climbing the turnbuckles, fists raised high, soaking in the Tuscaloosa roar. Behind him, TD3 glares from the floor, seething, the Trust Fund International Title glinting in the lights.

Heart of Dixie tour: 2.3

Show Credits

Segment: "Show Opening" - Written by justin.

Segment: "An "Iron" challenge!" - Written by justin.

Match: "Jenn Tinsley vs (enhancement talent)" - Written by oldlinejeff.

Match: "Astrid Reichert vs Valeria Cruz" - Written by oldlinejeff.

Segment: "The "new Superstar" in ICW?" - Written by justin.

Match: "Primetime Preston Price vs Riley Cross" - Written by justin.

Segment: "Hoggin' with the Noots (ft. the James Gang)" - Written by justin, oldlinejeff.

Match: "Brothers Gluck vs Top Notch Team" - Written by oldlinejeff.

Segment: "Leaner Fish" - Written by oldlinejeff.

Segment: "Havok's Open Challenge" - Written by justin, Sheriff.

Match: "Jack Havok vs Larry Edwards" - Written by Sheriff, justin.

Segment: "Dane Sr/Duchess Vaughn segment" - Written by justin, bombastic.

Match: "Jesse "Iron Kid" Collins vs Darian Darrington" - Written by justin.

Results Compiled by the eFed Management Suite