

Under Review: 3.2

January 18, 2026 | The Foundry - Birmingham, AL

Roadblocks

Robbie Ray Carter:

"Welcome everyone to ICW Under Review. We've got championship implications all over this card tonight, but before we get anywhere near the ring, Angus, I think we both know exactly how this show was always going to start."

Angus Skaaland:

"Oh yeah. You don't play that song unless you mean it."

"Sweet Home Alabama" blasts through the arena, the opening guitar lick detonating the building.

RRRAAAHHH!!!

Robbie Ray Carter:

We know exactly what that means. That is Graysie Parker.

Angus Skaaland:

And she's comin' out here feelin' herself -- and she's earned it.

Graysie Parker storms through the curtain with pure babyface fire, jaw set and shoulders squared, soaking in the roar as she heads down the ramp. She slaps hands on both sides, nodding to fans who lean over the barricade, feeding off the noise before sliding into the ring and popping up to her feet.

RRRAAAHHH!!!

Robbie Ray Carter:

Last week, Graysie Parker picked up a huge comeback victory over Che Juarez -- a bout with a major international star that's already being replayed all over the internet and has brought a lot of new eyes to Iron City Wrestling.

Angus Skaaland:

That wasn't just a win, Robbie. That was a statement.

Graysie paces slowly, letting the chant swell before raising the microphone.

Graysie Parker:

"You know, I heard a lot of talk before that match. About timing. About age. About how long you can be gone before the business decides it doesn't need you anymore."

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She stops, plants her feet, and looks straight into the hard cam.

Graysie Parker:

"I was told I'd lost a step. I was told I wasn't the same anymore. I was told I should be grateful just to still be standing in this ring."

BBBBBOOOOO!!!

Graysie Parker:

"And last week? I went out there and proved exactly how wrong that was."

The crowd surges again.

RRRAAAHHH!!!

Graysie nods once, measured, respectful.

Graysie Parker:

"Credit where it's due -- Che Juarez is a hell of a talent. That match was hard. That match hurt. And that match reminded me why I do this."

She taps the mat with the toe of her boot.

Graysie Parker:

"But let's get something straight. This ring? This crowd? This company?"

She gestures wide.

Graysie Parker:

"This is my home. You don't come in here and try to flex on me."

Graysie rolls her shoulders, then snaps into a double biceps pose, veins standing out, jaw set with pride.

Graysie Parker:

"I do the flexing."

RRRAAAHHH!!!

Angus Skaaland:

Yes. Yes, she absolutely does.

Graysie lowers her arms, eyes sharp now.

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Graysie Parker:

"So c'mon out, 'Tod-der-rick-dav-en-port-the-third. Tell the world what happens next."

"Lifestyle" by Rich Gang hits, drawing immediate boos as Todderick Davenport III steps onto the stage flanked by the Rich Young Grapplerz. Jacoby Jacobs barely looks up from his phone, thumbs still moving. Darian Darrington walks stiffly, cradling his right arm.

Robbie Ray Carter:

Take a look at Darian Darrington there -- that arm doesn't look right at all.

Angus Skaaland:

Alek Konstantin's kimura might've done more damage than anyone wanted to admit.

TD3 smirks as he enters the ring, waving the music down and lifting the microphone.

Todderick Davenport III:

"Congratulations, Graysie... on your banger match."

The word drips with contempt.

Todderick Davenport III:

"Unfortunately for you, Che Juarez -- even if he is a 'major international star' -- is not an Iron City Wrestling superstar. Which means he cannot hold rank on this roster."

The crowd starts to turn.

BBBBBOOOOO!!!

Todderick Davenport III:

"And that means a victory over him cannot improve your ranking. As far as getting you closer to a shot at the Trust Fund International Title? It did nothing."

Graysie just smiles, already bored.

Graysie Parker:

"Of course you'd say that."

She steps closer.

Graysie Parker:

"So what's next? Who's on your list? I went through your boys two seasons ago... and they don't exactly look ready to go."

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TD3 glances to the side. Jacoby stays on his phone. Darian shifts his injured arm.

Todderick Davenport III:

"Well, you know... there are so few people actually deserving of contendership in this promotion that I'm not sure beating any of them would even qualify you."

BBBBBOOOOO!!!

Graysie exhales, shakes her head once.

Graysie Parker:

"Yeah. We're not doing this shit even a little bit."

She lifts the mic one last time.

Graysie Parker:

"If you won't find me a match, I'll find someone else to do it. Or I'll find one myself."

She drops the microphone and turns away, hopping to the floor and heading up the aisle -- then veering into the crowd, slapping hands as she disappears through the fans.

RRRAAAHHH!!!

TD3 leans over the ropes, scrambling for a last word.

Todderick Davenport III:

"Oh real professional! Just walk away when you don't get what you want!"

It lands flat. The crowd drowns him out.

BBBBBOOOOO!!!

Robbie Ray Carter:

Graysie Parker has made it very clear -- Todderick Davenport does not control her path.

Angus Skaaland:

And that's gotta eat him alive. I mean uh, the rich have rights and um stuff and things, go Trust Fund!

The camera lingers on TD3 seething in the ring as ICW Under Review rolls on.

Sam Gardner vs Celestina Cruz

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"Rumba" by Ill Niño hits and Celestina Cruz steps through the curtain first, calm and composed, eyes already fixed on the ring like she's measuring distance. A half-step behind her is Valeria Cruz, right arm wrapped in a hard cast, jaw set and scowling at anyone who gets too close. Celestina doesn't hurry -- she walks with quiet confidence -- while Valeria stalks alongside her, barking insults in Spanish and daring the crowd to say something back.

Robbie Ray Carter:

"Up next, a rematch born out of shock and consequence. At Heart of Dixie, Sam Gardner stunned the ICW faithful with an upset win over Celestina Cruz--catching her without her sister at ringside. Tonight, Celestina insists she's ready."

At ringside, Celestina slides under the ropes and rises smoothly to her feet. Valeria circles the apron, slamming the cast against the edge of the ring once for emphasis before stepping down, never taking her eyes off the opponent. Celestina settles into her corner, loosening her shoulders, while Valeria leans in close to the apron -- smiling, waiting, already looking for an opening.

Angus Skaaland:

"Ready or not, Robbie, she's embarrassed. And embarrassed heels don't pace themselves--they punish. Sam better be quick on her feet, 'cause Celestina Cruz is not here to be patient."

When "Ugly Dee" by BanYa hits, Sam Gardner steps onto the stage, pauses for a quick pirouette, and bows with ballerina poise. Jenn Tinsley jogs out beside her, shouting encouragement. Straightening with a bright smile, Sam claps her hands once as if to announce she's ready to "take the stage," then heads down the ramp with light, springy steps.

Angus Skaaland:

"And allow me one of my uncharacteristically insightful moments if you will, Robbie. I've been in this business for almost forty years, and I've never seen someone with a complete lack of combat sports background come in with the level of athleticism that Sam has. She's likely a diamond in the rough - that's why Dane's giving her a chance to jump that he wouldn't give too many other people. But she's put everyone on blast by winning, on pay per view, with a picture perfect shooting star press."

Robbie Ray Carter:

"So what you're saying, Angus, is that despite that prior win she's still fighting an uphill battle against Celestina Cruz?"

Angus Skaaland:

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"Oh, yeah."

At ringside she hops gracefully onto the apron, catches the top rope, and vaults over with dancer's balance into the ring. Once inside, she twirls again and bows lightly to the crowd before retreating to her corner, poised and focused.

The bell rings--

--and Celestina Cruz explodes forward.

She closes the distance in a heartbeat, driving Sam Gardner back into the corner with a sharp forearm and a second that snaps Sam's head sideways. Celestina doesn't wait for separation, unloading with tight, efficient shots to the ribs, crowding Sam until she folds inward, arms tight, boots scraping for balance.

BBBBBOOOOO!!!

Angus Skaaland:

"This is not how Celestina usually starts a match, Robbie. That loss had to be eatin' at her."

Robbie Ray Carter:

"She looks determined to erase it."

Celestina backs off just long enough to snap Sam out of the corner with a quick arm drag, dragging her down to the mat and floating into control, wrenching at the arm before snapping a short kick to the back. Sam scrambles, trying to reset, but Celestina stays glued to her--measured now, the initial burst giving way to precision.

Sam finally finds space, springing up with a quick kick to the thigh, then another to the midsection. She gathers herself and surges forward, catching Celestina with a sharp roundhouse that forces her back a step. The crowd stirs as Sam reaches for a suplex--

--but Celestina slips behind, hooks the arm, and dumps Sam down hard, reasserting control before the rally can bloom.

Angus Skaaland:

"See, that's experience. Sam's got the tools, but Celestina knows exactly when to shut the door."

They spill to the mat in a tight grappling exchange, Celestina probing for position, Sam countering with fluid movement. Sam suddenly swings her legs up, snapping Celestina into a headscissor and cinching it tight. Celestina plants her hands, tries to pry free--nothing. She shifts her weight, attempts to roll--still trapped.

RRRAAAHHH!!!

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Robbie Ray Carter:

"Sam Gardner holding her own on the ground here."

Angus Skaaland:

"And Celestina does not like this."

At ringside, Valeria Cruz's expression hardens. She steps forward, grips Celestina's leg--and yanks.

Both women spill out of the ring in a heap, the impact breaking the hold as they crash to the floor.

THWACK!

Jenn Tinsley rushes in, shouting, arms out, trying to interpose herself as the referee moves to intervene. Valeria snarls back, cast raised, jawing in Spanish as the official wedges between them.

Behind the chaos, Celestina rolls to her feet first.

Sam turns--

--and Celestina drives her shoulder-first into the turnbuckle, snapping her back into the ring post before rolling her inside, eyes already cold, already calculating as the referee scrambles to regain control.

Back inside the ring, Celestina Cruz slows the pace immediately, planting a knee between Sam's shoulders and grinding her down to the mat. She peels Sam up by the wrist, twists it into an arm wringer, and snaps a short kick to the ribs before yanking her back down again. There's no rush now -- just pressure, just reminders.

BBBBBOOOOO!!!

Robbie Ray Carter:

"Celestina Cruz looks like a completely different competitor than we saw at Heart of Dixie."

Angus Skaaland:

"She's not waitin' on Valeria to make the openings tonight. She's makin' 'em herself."

Celestina drags Sam upright and whips her into the ropes, stepping in with a sharp spinning heel kick that drops Sam to a knee. She smirks -- not big, not showy -- just enough to let Sam know she felt it. Sam fires back with a quick kick to the thigh, then another, forcing Celestina to reset her stance.

Sam builds momentum, bouncing off the ropes into a flying headscissors that snaps Celestina down and sends her scrambling toward the corner. Sam follows, quick and light, landing a monkey flip that finally sends Celestina rolling through and popping to her feet.

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RRRAAAHHH!!!

Angus Skaaland:

"That's the upside right there, Robbie! Sam Gardner's dangerous if you let her move!"

Celestina doesn't let her. She lunges forward, cutting Sam off with a snap suplex that folds her in half and kills the rhythm instantly. Celestina stays with her, hooking the leg and rolling through into control before Sam can even think about rolling away.

She grinds Sam down with short forearm smashes, then floats behind into a tight waistlock, muscling her back up just long enough to dump her again. It's not flashy. It's deliberate.

Robbie Ray Carter:

"Celestina's not chasing highlights here. She's dictating the match."

Sam fights back to a knee, then to her feet, throwing a quick roundhouse that clips Celestina across the shoulder. She spins through, fires a second kick, then leaps -- catching Celestina with a rope-bounce arm drag that finally sends the Cruz sister sliding across the mat.

Sam presses, vaulting forward with a bodyscissors and rolling through into a quick cradle.

ONE!

TWO!

--KICKOUT!

Celestina explodes free, rolling to the corner and coming up fast, eyes narrowed now. Sam hesitates just a fraction too long, and Celestina makes her pay -- stepping in with a sudden Skyblade that catches Sam flush and knocks her backward into the ropes.

OOOOHHH!!!

Angus Skaaland:

"That'll knock the wind clean outta you."

Celestina drags Sam back to center, transitions smoothly into a cravat, and snaps her down with Cruz Control, rolling through and keeping wrist control as Sam squirms. She looks to the ropes -- not for help, just for spacing -- then pulls Sam back in again, refusing to let her reset.

At ringside, Valeria Cruz stalks the apron, cast visible, jawing nonstop. Jenn Tinsley shouts encouragement, pounding the mat with her hand, trying to will Sam back into the fight.

Sam finds another opening -- a sudden kick to the midsection, a quick scramble, and a tilt-a-whirl that sends Celestina stumbling back a step. Sam lunges, hooks the arm, and nearly gets Celestina over--

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--but Celestina blocks it, planting her feet and forcing Sam back down to the mat, pressing her advantage once more as the match grinds onward.

Sam Gardner fires one last burst of energy, planting her feet and spinning through with the Pirouette Kick that catches Celestina flush across the jaw. Celestina drops to a knee, then spills backward as Sam lunges into the cover.

ONE!

TWO!

--KICKOUT!

RRRAAAHHH!!!

Robbie Ray Carter:

"Sam Gardner nearly did it again!"

Angus Skaaland:

"She's learnin', Robbie! She's right there!"

Sam doesn't hesitate. She rolls through, eyes flicking to the corner, and scrambles up the turnbuckles, the crowd rising with her as she finds her footing on the top rope.

Robbie Ray Carter:

"That's exactly how she won the first time--Pirouette Kick into the Starlight Finale--and Celestina Cruz knows it!"

Celestina is already moving. She hits the opposite ropes hard, not looking up, not giving Sam a second longer to set herself.

Sam crashes to the top of the turnbuckle, then falls forward into the ring.

As the ref goes to check on her, Celestina pivots sharply and goes to work on the lower turnbuckle, wrenching at the pad until the steel bolt beneath is exposed.

BBBBBOOOOO!!!

At ringside, Jenn Tinsley shouts a warning and rushes forward, reaching through the ropes to stop her--

KRA-KOOM!!!

Valeria Cruz steps in and clubs Jenn across the shoulder with the cast, sending her crashing to the floor in a heap. The referee whirls around, immediately moving to check on Jenn, arms out, voice raised--but with Valeria outside the ring, there's no disqualification to be had.

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Inside the ring, Celestina doesn't waste a heartbeat.

She rushes the corner, snatches Sam out of her balance with a tight waistlock, and drives her straight across the ring--

THWACK!!!

--front-first into the exposed turnbuckle bolt, the impact jolting Sam violently before she crumples to the mat, clutching her ribs.

OOOOOHHHH!!!

Celestina drops with her, fluid and ruthless, threading her legs and arms into position and locking in the Mindanao Stretch, wrenching Sam's torso back at a brutal angle.

Sam doesn't fight long.

She taps--fast.

DING! DING! DING!

Robbie Ray Carter:

"That's it! That's it! Sam Gardner had no choice!"

Angus Skaaland:

"Celestina Cruz ended it the second she wanted to!"

The bell rings, but Celestina doesn't release. She leans back harder, smiling faintly as Sam cries out.

BBBBBOOOOO!!!

The moment stretches--

--and suddenly "Rumba" is drowned out by a roar as Sunny Holiday storms through the curtain, chair in hand, sprinting toward the ring.

Celestina looks up, sees her, and immediately lets go.

Valeria grabs Celestina by the arm, the sisters retreating together, slipping out the far side of the ring without argument, without hesitation.

Sunny slides in beside Sam, kneeling to check on her as Jenn struggles back to her feet at ringside.

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Angus Skaaland:

"Look at Sunny, Robbie--she's movin', but she's not movin' right. I still think that leg's botherin' her."

Robbie Ray Carter:

"Maybe so--but she wasn't about to let the Cruz sisters make a statement at Sam Gardner's expense."

Sunny stands tall in the ring, chair still in hand, eyes locked on the retreating sisters as the crowd roars its approval.

I, In Fact, Was Using You

The camera finds Rin Takanashi in The Foundry, half-blocked by the open door of her locker. Her body language is casual, almost domestic -- crouched low, shoulders hunched, one knee up as she works on something just out of view.

She's chewing gum loudly.

Humming off-key.

Perfectly unconcerned.

A strip of bright washi tape gets torn off with her teeth.

Behind her, Jeffrey Daniels and Lee Scott Rothlesberger step into frame.

Daniels watches her for a second, arms crossed.

Jeffrey Daniels:

"So... what the hell was that match yesterday?"

Rin keeps humming. Keeps taping.

Jeffrey Daniels:

"I thought you were supposed to be good."

Rin snorts.

Rin Takanashi:

"I am good."

She doesn't turn around.

Rin Takanashi:

"You fucked it up."

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Daniels blinks.

Jeffrey Daniels:

"...How?"

Rin sighs like this is exhausting.

Rin Takanashi:

"Bad teamwork. Bad vibes. No protection."

Daniels steps closer.

Jeffrey Daniels:

"You kept blind-tagging yourself in."

Another strip of tape. Rip.

Jeffrey Daniels:

"And you tapped to Cherry Mae so fast we couldn't even save you."

That finally does it.

Rin stands up and turns around, ready to argue -- and the camera clears her shoulder.

Her locker is a shrine.

Photos of Astrid Reichert, layered and overlapping. Training shots. Entrance stills. Backstage candid. And right in the center, positioned with meticulous care, an extremely risqué fitness-modeling photo from Astrid's past -- glossy, cropped, impossible to ignore. Green snakeskin pattern microbikini. Knees akimbo. Arms twisted above her head, biceps and forearms in relief. Tongue out, dangling to her chin.

Daniels freezes.

His eyes flick to the locker.

Then immediately up to the ceiling.

Hard pass.

Jeffrey Daniels:

"...Nope."

Lee, unfortunately, is still looking.

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Lee Scott Rothlesberger:

"What the hell is that?"

Rin follows his gaze, then brightens.

Rin Takanashi:

"Oh! Yeah."

She gestures proudly at the display.

Rin Takanashi:

"This is my motivation wall."

Lee stares.

Lee Scott Rothlesberger:

"Why is that the centerpiece?"

Rin bristles.

Rin Takanashi:

"Whoa. Don't make it weird."

She points at the photo, rapid-fire.

Rin Takanashi:

"Strong woman. Inspiring physique. Elite conditioning."

She ticks points off on her fingers.

Rin Takanashi:

"Very straight. Ultra-hetero."

Daniels squints harder at the ceiling.

Jeffrey Daniels:

"I'm learnin' a lot about the vents up here."

Lee doesn't look convinced.

Lee Scott Rothlesberger:

"You taped it dead center."

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Rin Takanashi:

"Because it is center."

She tilts her head, evaluating.

Rin Takanashi:

"Good symmetry."

Lee exhales.

Lee Scott Rothlesberger:

"You embarrassed us."

Rin's smile drops -- not hurt, just irritated.

Rin Takanashi:

"Oh my God, you're still crying?"

She waves him off.

Rin Takanashi:

"I got TV time. You got TV time. Everyone wins."

Lee Scott Rothlesberger:

"You screamed. You tapped immediately."

Rin rolls her eyes.

Rin Takanashi:

"Yeah, loud."

She taps her temple.

Rin Takanashi:

"People remember loud."

Daniels finally looks down.

Jeffrey Daniels:

"So that was... what. The plan?"

Rin grins.

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Rin Takanashi:

"I was using you."

Beat.

Rin Takanashi:

"Obviously."

Lee stares at her.

Lee Scott Rothlesberger:

"You said you wanted to run with us."

Rin scoffs.

Rin Takanashi:

"I wanted cameras."

She slaps one last strip of tape onto the locker door.

Rin Takanashi:

"You had cameras."

She shuts the locker with a sharp THWACK!, spins on her heel, and starts down the hallway without another look back.

Rin Takanashi:

"Cry more, fuckboys!"

Her voice echoes as she disappears.

Silence settles over The Foundry.

Daniels turns slowly to Lee.

Jeffrey Daniels:

"Did you actually research this woman before you had her team with us?"

Lee rubs his jaw, thinking. Too late.

Lee Scott Rothlesberger:

"...I might've skimmed."

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Daniels just looks at him.

Not angry.

Not shocked.

Just tired.

The camera lingers for a beat -- and cuts.

Consolidation

The Trust Fund Lounge is quiet in the way only expensive rooms ever are, insulated from the noise of the building around it. Todderick Davenport III paces slowly across the polished floor, jacket still on, posture immaculate, but his movement betrays a restless edge. He isn't panicking. He isn't rattled. He's thinking, and thinking hard.

A door opens smoothly behind him.

The Butler:

"Mr. Jacobs and Mr. Darrington, sir."

Jacoby Jacobs enters first, eyes already glued to his phone, thumbs moving with practiced disinterest. He doesn't look up, doesn't speak, doesn't even acknowledge the room. Darian Darrington follows more carefully, his right arm held close to his body at an awkward angle, every step slightly guarded.

TD3 stops pacing and turns to face them.

Todderick Davenport III:

"In periods of instability, it becomes more prudent to consolidate existing holdings than to overextend into new markets."

Jacobs doesn't react. Darian blinks, processing.

Darian Darrington:

"What does that mean, boss?"

TD3 exhales through his nose, adjusts his cuffs, and slips seamlessly into his familiar boardroom cadence.

Todderick Davenport III:

"It means I'm pulling you out of the tag division. Effective immediately. Your priority is no longer acquisition--it's asset protection. Mine."

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Darian's shoulders sag just a fraction.

Darian Darrington:

"...Why?"

For the first time since they arrived, TD3's voice changes. The polish dulls. The phrasing simplifies.

Todderick Davenport III:

"Because your arm is hurt, Darian. And if you don't take that seriously, you're no good to me, you're no good to yourself, and you're no good to anyone else."

He gestures toward the arm without touching it.

Todderick Davenport III:

"This isn't the time to be chasing tag titles. You need that arm in a sling. You need recovery. Not toughness. Not pride."

Darian looks down at his arm, then nods quietly.

Jacobs is still silent, already drifting toward the couch, phone never leaving his hands.

TD3 turns his attention to him.

Todderick Davenport III:

"Jacobs. Do you have anything to say?"

Jacobs finally glances up, just long enough to smirk.

Jacoby Jacobs:

"I dunno. Guess I'll just sit here and make sure I don't accidentally offend anybody by talking."

TD3 closes his eyes for half a second. When he opens them, he sighs.

Todderick Davenport III:

"I've arranged additional backup. Coverage. You're not being punished--you're being repositioned."

He extends his hand, businesslike and neutral.

Jacobs gives him a quick, careless shake and immediately drops back onto the couch, phone already back in his face.

TD3 turns to Darian and offers the same gesture. Darian takes it--and winces sharply, pulling back as pain shoots through his arm.

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TD3's jaw tightens.

Todderick Davenport III:

"That settles it. You're not needed at the Foundry tonight."

Darian looks up, surprised.

Todderick Davenport III:

"You're going to a medical center. One of the good ones. Not a walk-in."

He steps closer, lowering his voice.

Todderick Davenport III:

"If your own name doesn't open the doors fast enough, say Davenport as often as you have to."

Darian nods again, more firmly this time, and heads for the door.

The room settles into an uneasy quiet. Jacobs is already stretched out on the couch, scrolling.

TD3 watches him for a moment, irritation flickering across his face.

Todderick Davenport III:

"I have other business to attend to. Keep an eye on things."

Jacobs gives a lazy nod without looking up.

TD3 shakes his head once, turns on his heel, and exits the Trust Fund Lounge--leaving the luxury, the silence, and the problem behind him.

Jesse "Iron Kid" Collins vs local talent

As we return to ringside, a very muscular wrestler - in a bland, nondescript way - is waiting in one corner. A name plate identifies him as Tyson Hollister.

Robbie Ray Carter:

"Earlier tonight we saw consolidation at the top of the card--now we see what it looks like on the way back up. Iron Kid Jesse Collins returns to action for the first time since coming up short against Todderick Davenport III."

Angus Skaaland:

"And that's the test, Robbie. You don't find out who somebody is when they get the opportunity--you find out who they are after they lose it."

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"Doin' This" hits, and Jesse "Iron Kid" Collins bursts through the curtain with a grin and a full head of steam, slapping every outstretched hand along the aisle. He doesn't slow down, weaving side to side to reach the cheap seats, feeding off the noise as the chorus kicks in. This isn't showboating--it's communion, a hometown kid pulling energy straight from the crowd as he heads for the fight.

Robbie Ray Carter:

"That's Birmingham's own--raised in this building, fighting like every match still matters to him."

Angus Skaaland:

"You can't teach that, Robbie. You either believe in this place... or you don't."

Jesse slides under the bottom rope, pops to his feet, and climbs the corner in one smooth motion, throwing both arms up as the fans roar back at him. He hops down, springs to the top turnbuckle again, then backflips cleanly into the ring, landing light on his feet and already bouncing in place. No posing, no waiting--Iron Kid's ready to go.

DING! DING! DING!

The bell rings, and Hollister immediately barrels forward, using every inch of his size advantage. He clubs Jesse with a heavy forearm, shoves him into the corner, and hammers him with short, ugly shots that snap Jesse's head back. Hollister hooks him and throws him across the ring with a rough snapmare, following with a boot that sends Jesse rolling to the ropes.

Robbie Ray Carter:

"This is actually our second look at Tyson Hollister, Angus - he appeared back on Arc 1, in a losing effort against the Urban Ninjaz."

Angus Skaaland:

"You remember local talent names?"

Robbie Ray Carter:

"You remembered Trish Cassidy last week."

Angus Skaaland:

"Yeah, I can think of three reasons why she was more memorable than this guy."

Robbie Ray Carter:

"Three, Angus?"

Angus Skaaland:

"...you know what, never mind."

Hollister drags Jesse up again and muscles him into a bearhug, squeezing hard and walking him backward,

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trying to sap the fight out of him early. Jesse grimaces, slaps at Hollister's arms, and finally wriggles free enough to fire a quick elbow to the jaw. Another. A third. Hollister stumbles back a step, surprised.

Jesse hits the ropes, ducks a wild swing, and snaps off a quick dropkick that finally puts Hollister on the mat. The crowd rises as Jesse follows with a fast arm drag, then another, keeping the bigger man scrambling instead of settling.

RRRAAHHH!!!

Robbie Ray Carter:

"That's the adjustment--speed, angles, no letting Hollister get comfortable."

Jesse stays on him, peppering Hollister with quick strikes and a sharp snap suplex before hooking the leg.

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--KICKOUT!

Hollister shoves Jesse off and lumbers to his feet, irritation creeping in. He charges again, catching Jesse in mid-move and hoisting him up, driving him down hard with a powerslam that rattles the ring. Hollister looms over him, breathing heavy, then hauls Jesse up for another--this time turning it into a brutal-looking spinebuster.

Angus Skaaland:

"Uh-oh."

Hollister flexes, pounding his chest, and pulls Jesse up again, teasing something bigger. He lifts Jesse onto his shoulders, wobbling as he tries to steady his base. For a moment, it looks like Jesse might be done.

Robbie Ray Carter:

"That's the danger zone right there."

Jesse twists desperately, raining elbows down onto Hollister's head. One lands clean. Then another. Hollister stumbles forward, loses balance, and Jesse slips off behind him, shoving Hollister chest-first into the turnbuckles. Jesse explodes forward with a running forearm, then another, firing up as the crowd responds.

RRRAAHHH!!!

Jesse hits the ropes, launches himself, and crashes into Hollister with a flying crossbody that finally puts the big man flat. Jesse scrambles to his feet, rallies the crowd with a quick clap, then charges again. He leaps, wraps his arm around Hollister's neck and snaps his own body around and down, spiking Hollister head first into the canvas with his Tornado DDT, and rolling straight through into a tight cover.

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ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

Jesse pops up immediately, chest heaving, and pumps his fist as the crowd cheers. He takes a second to offer Hollister a nod--brief, respectful--before turning back to the fans, slapping the mat once as if to say he's still here.

Robbie Ray Carter:

"That's how you respond to a setback. Iron Kid Jesse Collins didn't disappear--he came back swinging."

Angus Skaaland:

"He took his shot, he missed... and now he's right back to work. That kid's got a big heart, a short memory, and a long fight ahead of him."

Confrontation

Deep in the bowels of the building, away from the crowd and the lights, Todderick Davenport III stands with his back turned, phone held to his ear. His posture is relaxed, almost casual, his voice smooth and abstracted--corporate cadence without obvious subject.

TD3:

"Risk mitigation requires timing. You don't rush leverage, you place it. When the moment comes, the return speaks for itself."

Footsteps approach. Eric Dane Junior spots him and doesn't slow down.

EDJr:

"So this is what hiding looks like now?"

TD3 doesn't turn. He doesn't react. He keeps speaking into the phone.

TD3:

"Short-term volatility doesn't concern me. What matters is sustainability."

Dane steps closer, irritation flashing across his face.

EDJr:

You're ducking Graysie. You know it, I know it, everybody knows it.

TD3 sighs, taps his phone a couple times.

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EDJr:

You keep spinning this like it's some process thing, but you couldn't even book me a match.

TD3 still doesn't turn.

EDJr:

Not tonight. Not next week. Nothing. So what, you just don't have it in you when it's someone who's actually right here?

TD3 exhales quietly, still facing away.

TD3:

"What--no concern for Kirsty?"

That does it.

EDJr:

Don't. Don't you bring her into this. She has nothing to do with it, and you don't get to deflect by saying her name.

He jabs a finger toward TD3's back, voice rising.

EDJr:

You didn't even have the guts to give me a match. So if you want to keep hiding behind procedures and paperwork, I'll just cut through it and take the fight to you. Right here. Right now.

TD3 finally turns around.

He pockets the phone, studying Dane with a tired look, like a man watching someone make a mistake he's already accounted for.

TD3:

Reckless maneuvers rarely end--

Dane surges forward.

A shadow moves.

A man - a large, muscular, bare-chested black man with a stubble-length beard, steps into frame, placing himself squarely between them. He folds his arms across his chest, deliberately flexing thick muscle, eyes forward. He doesn't say a word.

The hallway goes very quiet.

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TD3:

With Darian Darrington briefly sidelined, I've secured outside assistance.

He gestures slightly, almost dismissively.

TD3:

Etienne LaMort.

No explanation. No résumé. Just the name.

TD3's attention returns to Dane.

TD3:

You want a match? Fine. You can have it. Against him. Next week.

Dane bristles.

TD3:

This week, we have other objectives. You may be the promoter's son--but I'm the promotion's champion. And that means I outrank you.

Dane glances at LaMort again, jaw tight. The math is obvious, and he hates it.

EDJr:

...See you next week.

He throws the words toward LaMort, then turns and storms off down the hall.

TD3 watches him go. Then he exhales, long and measured.

TD3:

Now where were we?

LaMort remains still as the segment fades.

Imao noots suck

The camera opens in The Foundry with The James Gang leaned casually against a stack of production crates, loose and relaxed in the way that only comes from having already handled your business. Zeke James stands in the center, arms folded, posture tall and unmoving. Zeb James is half-sitting on a road case, boots hooked on the edge, grinning to himself. Cherry Mae James lingers just off to the side, smiling faintly, eyes alert.

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There's no rush. No anger. Just the easy confidence of people who watched a mess unfold and don't feel like pretending it wasn't funny.

Zeke shifts first, shaking his head slowly.

Zeke James:

"Y'know... I never liked the New Untouchables."

He pauses, choosing his words with care.

Zeke James:

"But what y'all been doin' lately? That ain't even rivalry. That's just sad. Those original boys built somethin'. They meant somethin'. And watchin' y'all wear that name while trippin' over your own feet... hell. I almost feel bad for 'em."

Zeb snorts and slides off the road case, already shaking his head harder.

Zeb James:

"Almost."

He steps forward, grin wide now, eyes bright with mean amusement.

Zeb James:

"I don't, though. Not even a little. 'Cause see, this ain't bad luck. This is y'all bein' dumb. Twice."

Zeb jabs a thumb back over his shoulder like he's replaying the match in his head.

Zeb James:

"You lost your scary friends at the pay-per-view, so you went shoppin' for a new one. Didn't check the label. Didn't read the fine print. Just saw 'Japan' and figured, 'Yeah, that'll fix it.'"

He laughs, sharp and delighted.

Zeb James:

"That girl wasn't a killer. She was baggage. Astrid carried her around like a purse, and you boys couldn't tell the difference."

HA HA HA HA HA!!

Zeb's grin turns a little nastier.

Zeb James:

"And Lee... buddy. I ain't sayin' you got distracted on purpose. But you sure did get real stupid the second a

Under Review: 3.2

loud, angry woman showed up swingin' a stick. You didn't see a wrestler. You saw what you wanted to see."

He shrugs, unapologetic.

Zeb James:

"That's on you."

Cherry Mae's smile fades. She steps forward, planting her boots square on the concrete, voice steady and calm as the room seems to tighten around her.

Cherry Mae James:

"Alright. Fun's over."

Zeb leans back, content to let her have the floor. Zeke doesn't move, but his eyes stay locked on the camera.

Cherry Mae James:

"We know who y'all are. And we know who you want to be. You want to be dangerous. You want to be feared. You want to be somethin' people take serious again."

She nods once, matter-of-fact.

Cherry Mae James:

"But as long as you're here, runnin' around in Eric Dane's promo, tryin' to cut corners and borrow somebody else's reputation... we're gonna be right here."

She leans in just a little, voice lowering.

Cherry Mae James:

"And the second you stick your heads up?"

A faint smile returns--no warmth in it this time.

Cherry Mae James:

"We'll take 'em off."

Zeke finally cracks a small, humorless grin. Zeb chuckles under his breath. The camera lingers on the three of them--unhurried, united, waiting--before cutting away.

Night Riders vs Urban Ninjaz

"Blue Highway" hits, neon lights slicing through the Foundry as Neon Blaze steps through the curtain in

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mirrored shades, already smiling like he knows how this ends. Steel Thunder follows half a step behind, bigger, darker, eyes cold. Blaze throws a crisp karate pose at the top of the ramp, holding it just long enough to soak in the reaction.

BBBBBOOOOO!!!

They move with practiced arrogance. Blaze plays to the camera, tapping his own chest, while Thunder stays grounded, rolling his shoulders and scanning the ring like he's measuring distance. Blaze hops to the apron, snaps another pose, and vaults in as Thunder steps between the ropes without ceremony.

The lights cut again as "Boost Up" thunders through the speakers, and Junichiro and Flip D burst out together in a blur of motion. They slap hands, throw up frantic gestures to the crowd, and sprint down the aisle like they're already late for something dangerous.

RRRAAAHHH!!!

They don't slow down once they hit the ring -- bouncing on the balls of their feet, circling, feeding off the noise. The contrast is immediate: restless energy versus composed cruelty.

Robbie Ray Carter:

"The Urban Ninjaz live at a hundred miles an hour, but the Night Riders have seen every trick in the book."

Angus Skaaland:

"And they're about to start rippin' pages out of it, Robbie."

The bell rings and the Night Riders go to work immediately. Steel Thunder steps forward and crushes Junichiro with a heavy shoulder block, knocking him flat before he can build speed. Neon Blaze darts in behind, snapping a quick kick to the ribs and freezing in a karate pose as Junichiro curls up.

BBBBBOOOOO!!!

Thunder drags Junichiro up by the wrist and twists into a grinding armwringer, leaning his weight into it. Blaze tags in and peppers the trapped arm with sharp kicks, each one punctuated by exaggerated stances that dare the referee to say something about it.

Flip D tries to rush in to help -- and Thunder simply steps into him, blasting him off the apron with a short-arm clothesline that sends him tumbling to the floor.

Robbie Ray Carter:

"The Night Riders are completely in control right now -- they've cut the ring in half and they're dictating every second of this."

Angus Skaaland:

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"That's how you break up a stunt team, Robbie. Don't let 'em breathe."

Junichiro manages a burst of offense, snapping a jumping wheel kick that staggers Blaze back a step. He hits the ropes, looking to build momentum -- but Thunder blind-tags himself in and catches Junichiro mid-flight, redirecting him down into a punishing slam.

OOOHHH!!!

Thunder grinds him down again, wrenching the arm and leaning over him, palm strikes chopping across the shoulder and neck. Blaze claps mockingly from the apron, shouting instructions like the fight is already over.

Thunder yanks Junichiro up and tags Blaze back in. Blaze explodes off the ropes with a running superkick, then climbs quickly to the top rope.

THWACK!

Neon Elbow Dive crashes down flush.

Blaze pops to his feet instantly.

No cover.

Instead, he turns and sprints for Flip D, blasting him off the apron with a forearm that sends him crashing hard to the floor. The crowd roars as Thunder slides out after him -- and then everything changes.

Thunder reaches under the ring.

He pulls out a steel chair.

Robbie Ray Carter:

"What--what is he doing!?"

Thunder slides the chair into the ring.

Blaze doesn't hesitate.

He snatches it up and drives it straight into Junichiro's midsection, folding him in half.

BBBBBOOOOO!!!

The referee immediately calls for the bell, waving his arms and shouting.

Robbie Ray Carter:

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"That's it! That's a disqualification!"

KRA-KOOM!

Blaze smashes the chair across Junichiro's back anyway.

On the floor, Thunder hoists the ring steps -- all four of them -- and charges, running Flip D over with the steel in a brutal collision that sends both crashing to the concrete.

Angus Skaaland:

"I don't like it, Robbie--but I can't say they didn't warn 'em. You jump into the Night Riders' business, you better expect trouble."

The referee is screaming now, helpless, as the Riders continue the assault without a shred of concern for the decision.

The crowd is loud, angry--

RRRAAAHHH!!!

--and that's when the attention shifts to the entranceway.

The referee is still shouting, still waving the disqualification signal, as Neon Blaze raises the chair again over Junichiro. Steel Thunder stands on the floor near the wreckage of the ring steps, breathing hard, eyes cold.

Then the house lights dip.

A low murmur ripples through the Foundry as Eric Dane Sr. steps out onto the stage.

RRRAAAHHH!!!

He doesn't hurry. He doesn't posture. He walks with purpose, microphone already in hand, eyes fixed on the ring like a disappointed school principal.

Robbie Ray Carter:

"That's Eric Dane Senior. And I gotta be honest -- you don't usually see him come out for a match like this."

Angus Skaaland:

"No you do not, Robbie. The big guy comin' out because of a Night Riders-Urban Ninjaz match? That's... unusual."

Dane steps onto the apron and through the ropes, calmly positioning himself between Blaze and Junichiro. Blaze backs off half a step, chair still clutched tight, jaw already working.

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Eric Dane Sr.:

"I've always been a fan of tag team wrestling."

He lets the moment breathe, scanning the ring, the wreckage, the bodies.

Eric Dane Sr.:

"Every kind of it. The kind where you cut the ring in half, make the tags count, and do things the right way. And the kind where things get... messy."

A few chuckles ripple through the crowd.

Eric Dane Sr.:

"That's why I've spent a long time tryin' to bring different styles under one roof. Southern-style teams like the Night Riders. High-risk, car-crash teams like the Urban Ninjaz."

Junichiro drags himself to a knee behind him. Flip D clutches his ribs on the floor.

Robbie Ray Carter:

Dane's always taken pride in the tag division -- this is very much his wheelhouse.

Angus Skaaland:

Yeah, but I still don't love where this is headin', Robbie.

Dane turns slightly, eyes settling on the Urban Ninjaz.

Eric Dane Sr.:

"Now, the Ninjaz have had a rough go of it here in ICW. And I've been watchin'. Closely."

He shifts his gaze back to the Riders.

Eric Dane Sr.:

"And maybe -- just maybe -- it ain't all their fault."

The crowd starts to buzz.

Eric Dane Sr.:

"Because it might not be real fair to bring in a team that cut their teeth in deathmatches... and then keep askin' 'em to wrestle regulation matches."

RRRAAAHHH!!!

Blaze shakes his head furiously, stepping forward.

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Neon Blaze:

"Oh come on--"

Dane cuts him off with a raised hand.

Eric Dane Sr.:

"And since the Night Riders have now demonstrated -- more than once -- that they ain't exactly opposed to introduc'in' weapons when it suits 'em..."

He glances pointedly at the chair.

Eric Dane Sr.:

"...I think it's only fair."

A beat.

Eric Dane Sr.:

"I'm overturnin' the disqualification."

The reaction explodes.

RRRAAAHHH!!!

Eric Dane Sr.:

"And we're restartin' this match... under hardcore rules."

The crowd loses it.

RRRAAAHHH!!!

Robbie Ray Carter:

He's restarting the match! Hardcore rules!

Angus Skaaland:

Well I'll be damned... everybody but the Night Riders just got real happy.

Blaze is already in the referee's face, shouting, gesturing wildly, chair still in hand.

Neon Blaze:

"This is bull--!"

He spins back toward Junichiro and telegraphs a massive chair swing, putting his whole body into it.

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Junichiro ducks.

On the floor, Flip D snaps into motion, grabbing a kendo stick and sliding it into the ring just in time.

Junichiro snatches it up and immediately goes on the attack -- cracking Blaze across the ribs, then again across the shoulder, then again, fast and sharp, swinging the kendo stick with wild, martial-arts fury.

THWACK! THWACK! THWACK!

Blaze staggers backward, hands up, neon arrogance evaporating in real time as the Urban Ninjaz finally find their opening.

Robbie Ray Carter:

The Urban Ninjaz just became very dangerous.

Angus Skaaland:

Hardcore rules, Robbie. Different game entirely.

Junichiro doesn't stop swinging.

The kendo stick cracks across Neon Blaze's ribs, then his shoulder, then his back -- fast, sharp, reckless shots delivered with wild martial-arts fury. Blaze stumbles into the ropes, neon arrogance replaced by panic as the Urban Ninjaz finally seize control.

THWACK! THWACK! THWACK!

Robbie Ray Carter:

The Urban Ninjaz are in control now -- this is exactly the kind of chaos they thrive in.

Angus Skaaland:

Hardcore rules, Robbie. You give these kids room, they'll burn the house down.

Flip D slides into the ring and the Ninjaz move with sudden cohesion, whipping Blaze into the corner. Junichiro leans a table upright against the turnbuckles as the crowd rises, sensing what's coming.

RRRAAAHHH!!!

Junichiro hooks Blaze, pivots, and drives him forward--

KRA-KOOM!

The Arabian facebuster sends Blaze crashing through the leaned table in the corner, splintering it apart as the Foundry erupts.

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RRRAAAHHH!!!

Blaze lies in the wreckage, clutching his ribs, neon scattered across broken wood.

Robbie Ray Carter:

"They just put Blaze through a table!"

Angus Skaaland:

"That'll wake you up in the mornin', I promise you that."

The Ninjaz are buzzing now. Junichiro throws his arms wide, feeding off the noise as Flip D scrambles back to the apron and starts barking for more.

Another table slides into the ring.

They set it up flat, center canvas -- taking their time, hyping the crowd, slapping hands.

That moment is all the Night Riders need.

Outside the ring, Steel Thunder steps into Flip D's path as he turns back toward the apron. There's no warning, no chase -- just a sudden grip and a violent lift.

KRA-KOOM!

Thunder plants Flip D with a Wringerbuster onto the ring steps, steel clanging sickeningly as Flip D crumples in a heap.

OOOHHH!!!

Robbie Ray Carter:

"Wringerbuster on the steps!"

Angus Skaaland:

"That's the danger right there, Robbie -- you lose track of Steel Thunder for one second..."

Inside the ring, Junichiro turns -- still amped, still reckless -- and runs straight into Blaze.

Blaze snaps him up and spins--

THWACK!

Neon Lights Out catches Junichiro flush.

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No pose. No smile. Just efficiency.

Blaze drags Junichiro onto the table the Ninjaz brought in, climbs immediately to the top rope, and launches himself without hesitation.

KRA-KOOM!

Neon Elbow Dive drives Junichiro straight through the table, wood exploding beneath them.

RRRAAAHHH!!!

Blaze rolls off, hooks the leg.

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

The bell rings as Blaze scrambles to his feet, chest heaving. Thunder slides back into the ring, looming over the wreckage as Flip D remains down on the floor.

Robbie Ray Carter:

"The Night Riders survive the chaos -- and they end it on their terms."

Angus Skaaland:

"That's experience, Robbie. Let the kids burn hot -- then snuff 'em out."

Blaze doesn't celebrate. He rolls under the ropes, nodding once to Thunder, and the Night Riders retreat up the aisle without a backward glance -- leaving broken tables, battered bodies, and a lesson learned behind them.

In Walks Kirsty, Set to Stun

Fresh from defusing Dane Junior, Todderick Davenport III moves down the hallway toward the Trust Fund Lounge with a measured confidence, phone already back in his hand. That confidence falters when he hears it--muffled shouting from behind a closed door across the hall. He stops, frowns, and notices the long window set into the wall beside it. The lights inside are off.

TD3 crosses the hall, opens the door, and flicks the switch.

The lights snap on to reveal the butler, trussed tightly to a chair with venetian blind cords, his jacket wrapped awkwardly around his head in a makeshift gag and blindfold all at once. He struggles helplessly as TD3 rushes forward.

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Todderick Davenport III:
What--what happened?

TD3 pulls the jacket free, hands shaking just slightly.

The Butler:
I'm very sorry, Mr. Davenport. I truly am. I tried to stop her, but--

TD3 drops to a knee and starts working at the knots. They don't budge. He pauses, fingers hovering, realization setting in.

Todderick Davenport III:
Stop her? What do you mean?

The butler swallows.

The Butler:
She said she was coming to do some scouting and attempted to enter the Trust Fund Lounge. I tried to refuse her entry, and then... well.

The explanation trails off, unnecessary.

For once, TD3 can't find the words--corporate or otherwise.

Todderick Davenport III:
I--... I'm sorry, Millison, but I have to go. I don't know what she's doing in there. I'll be back as soon as I can.

There's a beat.

The Butler:
...Very well, sir.

It's as close to open irritation as a butler like Millison will ever allow himself.

TD3 rises and hurries down the hall.

He throws open the door to the Trust Fund Lounge.

Inside, Kirsty McKinney is calmly walking the room, hands clasped behind her back, studying the decor like she's on a private tour. Jacoby Jacobs is sprawled on the couch, phone inches from his face, utterly oblivious to everything around him.

TD3 stops dead.

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Todderick Davenport III:
What the hell is going on?!

Kirsty turns slowly, eyes flicking over him with flat exasperation.

Kirsty McKinney:
Relax, Todd.

That alone lands like a slap.

Todderick Davenport III:
How did you even--?

He gestures back toward the hallway, too angry to finish the thought.

Kirsty sighs, rubbing a hand through her hair.

Kirsty McKinney:
I grew up working with goats, Todd. Compared to them, tying your butler up was Sunday work.

She looks around again, unimpressed.

TD3 finally notices Jacobs.

Todderick Davenport III:
Jacobs! Get off your phone and get her out of here. Now!

Jacobs looks up, startled, then glances at Kirsty, then back to his screen, clearly unsure how he ended up in this situation.

Kirsty looks him dead in the eyes, raises her own eyebrows.

Jacobs looks to TD3, and then back to Kirsty.

With a slightly awkwardly large swallow, he sets his phone down and stands. And again looks to TD3.

Kirsty smirks and shakes her head.

Kirsty McKinney:
Don't bother. I'm done anyway.

She steps past TD3 without a hint of urgency, stopping just long enough to meet his eyes.

Under Review: 3.2

Kirsty McKinney:

54 You've got a real nice setup, Todd. You should be proud.

She heads for the door, leaving TD3 seething.

The door swings shut behind her.

TD3 turns back to Jacobs, jaw tight.

Todderick Davenport III:

Congratulations. You're wrestling her next week.

Jacobs blinks, finally putting the phone down as the weight of that sinks in.

Introducing... The Deputies

The screen opens in near-darkness.

Heavy boots cross a concrete floor. Not fast. Not slow. Just steady. A pair of hands tighten wrist tape. A leather vest creaks as someone rolls their shoulders. The sound of breath is close, unhurried.

Electric Worry hums low beneath it all.

White text fades in.

Some problems don't resolve themselves.

A faceless body slams into a corner. A short right hand snaps a head sideways. Another body is shoved down to the mat and pinned there by sheer weight. No faces. No names. Just consequences.

Some men are paid to make sure they stop.

A corner foot choke, framed tight on white boots pressing in as a referee's count echoes faintly. Hands cinch around a torso in a standing Full Nelson, the hold not rushed, not showy -- just applied and held until the struggle drains away.

They don't negotiate.

A body is hoisted and driven down with an Alabama Slam.

Cut.

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Another angle -- a middle-rope driving elbow drop, all weight and gravity, no flourish.

They don't posture.

Two silhouettes stand side by side in a locker room doorway. One tall and awkwardly heavy. One dense, thick through the shoulders. Neither looks at the camera.

They work for whoever's in charge.

The music dips. Silence for a beat.

New text fades in, slower now.

Roy "The Enforcer" Harris.

A close shot of hands -- knuckles taped, flexing once.

Big Bubba Blackwell.

A thick neck rolls side to side. A jaw sets.

The Deputies.

The words linger.

Final line fades in beneath them.

Coming soon.

Cut to black.

Duchess Vaughn vs Cole Marksson

Robbie Ray Carter:

"Welcome back to ringside here in Iron City Wrestling. Up next, singles action in the Television Division -- and it comes with some real context behind it."

Angus Skaaland:

"Yeah it does, Robbie. Duchess Vaughn broke Valeria Cruz's wrist at Heart of Dixie, and Eric Dane Senior decided enough was enough. Not about gender, not about optics -- about bodies adding up."

Robbie Ray Carter:

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"Dane made it clear: the top women can handle Duchess Vaughn. Most of the division can't. So tonight, Duchess makes their first appearance in their new divisional home -- the TV Division."

Angus Skaaland:

"And that brings us to the poor soul on the other side of this thing."

Cole Marksson steps through the curtain to a friendly reaction, clapping his hands and nodding as he heads down the aisle. There's a bounce in his step, a little nervous energy mixed with optimism, like he still believes tonight might be his night if he just hits things hard and fast enough.

RRRAAHHH!!!

Angus Skaaland:

"I gotta ask, Robbie -- is this kid always that cheerful?"

Robbie Ray Carter:

"He's still new, Angus. Still fighting for his place."

He slides into the ring, stretches against the ropes, and looks around the building like he's soaking in the moment. Cole rolls his shoulders, checks his wrist tape, and takes a breath -- all heart, all readiness, no real sense yet of what's about to be dropped in the ring with him.

Angus Skaaland:

"Does he realize he's got Duchess Vaughn waiting on him?"

"Shutdown" by Skepta hits, blunt and immediate -- and the mood in the building changes.

Duchess Vaughn storms through the curtain already talking, already pointing, already furious. They don't acknowledge the crowd so much as confront it, barking insults at the front row as they stalk toward the ring, shaking their head in disbelief at everything they see.

BBBBBOOOOO!!!

They reach the apron, wipe their boots with deliberate disrespect, and step through the ropes like they're crossing a line that shouldn't exist. Duchess paces, jawing nonstop, eyes hard, shoulders squared -- filling the ring without rushing, without posturing, like a predator let loose where it's absolutely not supposed to be. The music fades. The talking doesn't.

Robbie Ray Carter:

"This feels less like an entrance and more like letting the lion into the coliseum."

Angus Skaaland:

"Cole Marksson wanted a chance to impress. Careful what you wish for."

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The referee checks both competitors.

The bell rings, and Duchess Vaughn steps forward immediately, jawing as they do -- pointing at Cole Marksson, talking over him, talking through him. Cole doesn't wait. He explodes forward with a quick dropkick to the knee and follows with a burst of forearms, trying to catch Duchess before they can set their feet.

Duchess absorbs it, shoves Cole off with a stiff forearm, and snaps a big boot into his chest that knocks the air out of him. They grab Cole by the back of the neck, muttering something sharp and dismissive, and drag him into a corner for a series of short, ugly hammer fists. Duchess fills the ring despite the size difference, stepping into Cole's space and forcing him backward with every strike.

Cole fires back with speed -- a running dropkick catches Duchess on the jaw, followed by a quick slingshot crossbody that finally puts them on their back.

RRRAAHHH!!!

Cole scrambles, feeling it, and tries to build momentum with another run off the ropes -- but Duchess cuts him off mid-stride with a brutal pendulum backbreaker, folding him in half and dumping him to the mat.

Angus Skaaland:

"That's what happens when you run straight into grown-ass hands."

Duchess stays on him, grinding the pace down. They haul Cole up into a crushing bear hug, trash talking directly into his ear as they squeeze, then toss him aside when he starts to fade. Cole staggers to the ropes and tries desperation -- a leaping dropkick, a quick snap powerslam that almost surprises Duchess into a stumble -- but every burst of speed ends the same way, with Duchess catching him, clubbing him down, and reminding him who controls the space.

Robbie Ray Carter:

"Cole Marksson keeps trying to outrun the problem -- but Duchess Vaughn isn't chasing him."

Cole finds one last opening, ducking a lariat and hitting a sloppy but explosive running dropkick that sends Duchess into the corner. He charges -- and gets snatched mid-motion into a Cradle DDT, driven hard into the mat. Duchess rolls through immediately, hauling Cole up into position.

They don't rush. They glare at the crowd, bark something venomous at ringside, and then hurl Cole across the ring with the Pumphandle Toss, releasing him with emphasis. Cole hits and doesn't get up.

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

Duchess releases the cover and rises slowly, already talking again -- to Cole, to the crowd, to anyone who'll

Under Review: 3.2

listen. They stand over the rookie for a moment, shaking their head in disgust, before stepping away like the lesson has been delivered. Cole rolls to the ropes, breathing hard, still trying -- and Duchess doesn't even look back.

I Hate Heroes

Duchess Vaughn:

"The fuck outta here, kid -- what were you thinkin', yeah?"

They pace the ring, pointing down at Cole Marksson as he rolls to the apron, still catching his breath. Duchess laughs once, sharp and humorless, shaking their head.

Duchess Vaughn:

"You lot see that? Proper brave, innit. Big heart. Loads of fight. That what we call it now?"

They lean into the ropes, glaring out at the crowd.

"Soft. That's what that is. Soft as bread."

They straighten up, rolling their neck, voice rising with irritation rather than volume.

Duchess Vaughn:

"I don't hate effort. I hate heroes. I hate this idea that tryin' hard's the same as bein' good. I hate this place clappin' for people gettin' hurt just 'cause they won't stay down."

A sneer.

Duchess Vaughn:

"You don't get points for losin'. You get fixed. Or you get moved. Or you get forgotten."

Duchess paces again, slower now, more deliberate.

Duchess Vaughn:

"I been told to take it easy. Been told to mind myself. Been told I'm too much for people who ain't ready."

They shrug.

"Maybe that's not my problem."

They stop, dead center, eyes hard on the hard cam.

Duchess Vaughn:

"You wanna be a hero? You wanna be the hometown favourite? Oi -- good for you."

A beat.

"Just don't stand in my ring expectin' mercy. I don't do stories. I don't do hope. I do results."

Under Review: 3.2

Duchess steps over the ropes, still jawing as they leave, voice carrying up the aisle.

Duchess Vaughn:

"And if you lot keep cheerin' for people who ain't ready?"

They glance back once, disgust plain.

"Don't cry when they don't walk out."

BBBBBOOOOO!!!

Duchess disappears through the curtain, still talking -- the message clear without a single name said.

Preston Price vs Lowlife Larry Edwards (c)

Robbie Ray Carter:

The ICW Television Title on the line tonight, and this is more than a championship match. Lowlife Larry Edwards defending against "Primetime" Preston Price, with a whole lot of unresolved history at ringside.

Angus Skaaland:

History, grudges, and one loudmouth manager who can't stay out of his own way. This thing's already got sparks.

Brassy New Orleans jazz blends into a swaggering hip-hop beat.

Preston Price steps through the curtain in a sequined jacket, arms wide, chin high, soaking in the reaction like it's owed to him. Ricky Dale Cash follows a step behind, cane in hand, nodding along as if he personally arranged the crowd noise. Price mouths "Primetime" to the hard cam, rolls under the ropes, and slowly turns in place, presenting himself.

BBBBBOOOOO!!!

Angus Skaaland:

You can boo all you want, Robbie. That's star presence.

Robbie Ray Carter:

It's confidence. The question is what happens when it gets tested.

A low, grinding New York hardcore riff kicks in.

Lowlife Larry Edwards trudges out through the curtain in a battered hoodie, cigarette dangling from his lips. He doesn't acknowledge Cash. He doesn't acknowledge Price. He walks like a man on his way to a fight he's already had a hundred times. At ringside, he flicks the cigarette away, peels off the hoodie, and steps between the ropes with a flat, unblinking stare.

Under Review: 3.2

RRRAAAHHHH!!!

Angus Skaaland:

That reaction didn't come from marketing, Robbie.

Robbie Ray Carter:

It came from believability.

The bell rings, and Price immediately circles, light on his feet, shoulders loose, hands ready. Edwards doesn't move much at all, tracking him with his eyes. When Price finally shoots in, he snaps off a quick arm drag and rolls through, popping up with a grin.

Price struts, wagging a finger, then snaps Edwards down with a clean snap suplex. He kips up smoothly and gestures to the camera.

BBBBBOOOOO!!!

Angus Skaaland:

That's textbook, baby.

Robbie Ray Carter:

That's Preston Price announcing himself.

Edwards pushes up to a knee and answers with a heavy knife-edge chop that echoes through the building.

THWACK!

Price recoils, more shocked than hurt, chest already reddening. He shakes it off, fires back with a running dropkick, then chains a Russian legsweep that puts Edwards flat on his back. Price floats into a lateral press.

ONE!

TWO!

--KICKOUT!

Price smirks, nodding as if impressed, then grabs a wrist and works a sequence of arm drags and rope-assisted leverage, keeping Edwards grounded while never staying still himself. Every escape Edwards attempts gets met with something flashy and frustrating.

Angus Skaaland:

Edwards can't get a grip on him.

Robbie Ray Carter:

Price is making him chase, and that burns energy fast.

Under Review: 3.2

Cash paces at ringside, tapping the cane against the mat, barking encouragement. Edwards finally explodes forward with a short-arm clothesline, but Price ducks and answers with a crisp Crescent City Cutter that snaps Edwards down hard.

RRRAAAHHHH!!!

Price hooks the leg.

ONE!

TWO!

--KICKOUT!

Price's grin tightens. He drags Edwards up, lands a sharp back elbow, then whips him into the corner and charges with a running knee that folds the champion over. He climbs to the second rope and leaps, driving an elbow into Edwards' chest.

KRA-KOOM!!!

Price rolls through, spreads his arms, and soaks in the noise.

BBBBBOOOOO!!!

Angus Skaaland:

That's confidence bordering on disrespect.

Robbie Ray Carter:

And Larry Edwards is still getting up.

Edwards staggers to his feet, breathing hard, sweat already slicking his brow. Price goes for another suplex, but Edwards blocks it, muscles free, and drives Price backward into the ropes. He unloads with a wild flurry of punches, finishing with a vicious backfist to the face that sends Price stumbling.

Edwards follows with a kitchen-sink knee lift and a snap DDT, planting Price squarely. He covers.

ONE!

TWO!

--KICKOUT!

Angus Skaaland:

He just won't stay down!

Robbie Ray Carter:

Price has been on top most of this match--and it still isn't enough.

Under Review: 3.2

The match grinds on, Price continually finding ways to stay one step ahead. Rope breaks with theatrical flair. Quick escapes. Just enough taunting to stay in Edwards' head. Edwards answers every flashy sequence with raw force--short-arm strikes, clubbing forearms, sheer refusal to fold.

Late in the match, Price finally signals for the Spotlight Special, hauling Edwards up and locking in the double underhooks. Edwards resists, legs trembling. Cash slaps the apron, shouting.

On the far side, Sammy Starr has appeared, arms crossed, eyes fixed on Cash.

Price tries to lift--Edwards surges upward and cracks him with a brutal headbutt.

CRACK!

Both men stagger. Edwards fires the Lowlife Lariat, nearly decapitating Price. He collapses into the cover.

ONE!

TWO!

--KICKOUT!

Angus Skaaland:

How does he keep kicking out?!

Robbie Ray Carter:

Grit. Pride. Survival.

Frustration creeps in as Edwards drags Price up again, hooking him for the Dumpster Fire Driver. Cash shouts and slides the cane toward the apron.

Before Price can grab it, Starr steps in--just enough--boot pinning the cane to the floor.

Cash whirls on him, incredulous.

Ricky Dale Cash:

"What're yew dooin, boy?!"

The referee turns to break it up. Price hesitates.

That hesitation costs him everything.

Edwards yanks Price in and drives him down with the Dumpster Fire Driver.

KRA-KOOOOOM!!!

Under Review: 3.2

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

RRRAAAHHHH!!!

Robbie Ray Carter:

Larry Edwards retains the Television Title!

Angus Skaaland:

Cash talked his way right outta this one!

Edwards pushes up slowly, chest heaving, title dangling from his hand. He looks down at Price, then lifts his eyes to Starr. They lock gazes--brief, awkward, honest. No respect gesture. No gratitude. Just recognition.

Starr holds it for a beat, then turns away.

Cash hurriedly gathers Price, still barking, still furious, oblivious to the fact that control is already slipping.

Cut to the parking lot.

Jack Havok stands beside his car, watching the finish on his phone. His jaw tightens. He spikes the phone to the pavement, climbs in, and peels out, tires screaming into the night.

The road forward is getting crowded.

Over You

The camera finds Graysie Parker in a quiet corner of the loading dock, tucked well out of the crew's way. Concrete walls, yellow lines on the floor, a single overhead light humming softly. She leans back against a waist-high barrier, hoodie pulled on over her wrestling gear, phone in her hand. The show plays silently on the screen as she watches, thumb resting along the edge, eyes sharp and aware of every footstep in her sightline.

She doesn't look up right away when someone enters frame.

Jeffrey Daniels steps into view and stops where she can see him. Not crowding her. Not hiding either. He waits.

Graysie finishes whatever she's watching, lowers the phone a few inches, and finally looks up at him.

Graysie Parker:

Under Review: 3.2

"Lemme guess. You're lost."

Daniels exhales through his nose and shakes his head once.

Jeffrey Daniels:

"Nah."

Forklifts rumble somewhere far off, then fade.

Graysie lowers the phone the rest of the way, eyes staying on him now.

Graysie Parker:

"So what, you here to talk? Or you here to say somethin' stupid?"

Daniels shifts his weight, then stills. When he speaks, there's no grin, no shrug.

Jeffrey Daniels:

"You know that match Davenport said you had to have next week? To earn your shot?"

Graysie's eyes narrow.

Jeffrey Daniels:

"You don't have one yet."

He gestures to himself.

Jeffrey Daniels:

"Right here."

Graysie studies him for a long second.

Graysie Parker:

"You serious?"

Jeffrey Daniels:

"Yeah."

The corner of Graysie's mouth twists upward, just a little.

Graysie Parker:

"...you tryin' to impress Kirsty?"

Daniels doesn't hesitate.

Under Review: 3.2

Jeffrey Daniels:

"Yes."

That gets her attention.

Graysie studies him now, really looks at him. The dock stays quiet.

Graysie Parker:

"Alright. Let's say you beat me."

She shifts her weight, unimpressed.

Graysie Parker:

"Then what. You get a shot at Toddy instead? You thinkin' you're gonna win Kirsty back with a big gold belt?"

Daniels looks up at the ceiling for a second. Just a second. Then he looks back down and meets her eyes.

Jeffrey Daniels:

"...Maybe."

Graysie huffs a short laugh, sharp and humorless.

Graysie Parker:

"Pretty sure she'd rather have the belt than you, bro."

Daniels holds eye contact. Doesn't flinch.

Jeffrey Daniels:

"Well even if she would, it won't be your problem, will it?"

The silence stretches.

Graysie's jaw tightens. She doesn't like him. That much is obvious. But something in her expression shifts--not approval, not respect. Calculation.

She straightens slightly, pushing off the barrier.

Graysie Parker:

"Yeah. Alright then."

She lets a beat pass, eyes still on him.

Graysie Parker:

Under Review: 3.2

"Your funeral."

Graysie looks back down at her phone, the conversation clearly over.

Daniels hesitates for a moment longer, then turns and walks out of frame, leaving the loading dock as quiet as he found it.

Top Notch Team vs The Brothers Gluck (c)

Robbie Ray Carter:

We close ICW 3.2 with the Iron City Wrestling Tag Team Championships on the line. The Brothers Gluck have proven they can survive pressure, but tonight they face a Top Notch Team that believes structure and discipline can finally break them.

Angus Skaaland:

I like structure just fine, Robbie. I just don't know how much it helps once somebody gets picked up and thrown halfway across the ring.

Robbie Ray Carter:

The relationship between the Brothers Gluck and Top Notch Team has been refreshingly professional-

Angus Skaaland:

By which you mean boring.

Robbie Ray Carter:

I do not mean boring, Angus, don't put words in my mouth. Back on the show before Heart of Dixie, Top Notch Team defeated the Night Riders in-

Angus Skaaland:

-an absolute clusterfuck.

Robbie Ray Carter:

ANGUS!

Angus slips his microphone off and begins laughing into his elbow.

Robbie Ray Carter:

As I was trying to say, before I was so rudely interrupted...

Angus is silently dying.

Robbie Ray Carter:

Under Review: 3.2

Top Notch Team beat The Night Riders in a match for the number TWO contendership for the tag titles, which retroactively validated a #1 Contender match the Glucks won. And the Glucks went on to beat the Rich Young Grapplerz for the Iron Crown Tag Team Championship, and immediately chiseled all the Trust Fund nonsense off the belts.

Angus Skaaland:
Injustice!

Robbie Ray Carter:

On 3.1, Top Notch Team went straight to the Glucks and asked for the shot in exchange for the help. And Carlton Gluck said yes without hesitation - TNT would receive a Tag Team Championship Opportunity, no strings attached-

Angus Skaaland:

NEVER say Championship Opportunity again, Robbie, what are you thinking?! They get a title shot! A chance to hold the straps! A match against the champs, belts on the line! Take it away, Cito!

Cito Conarri:

The following contest is scheduled for one fall... and it is for the Iron City Wrestling Tag Team Championship!

"Working Man" by Rush begins to play. Cameron West and Derek Hayes, in their Danger: Construction theme gear, walk out into the aisle. A quick raise of their hands above their heads, a quick fist bump, and they're headed straight to the ring.

Cito Conarri:

Introducing first, the challengers! Hailing from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Cameron West! And from Cleveland, Ohio, Derek Hayes! Weighing in at a combined weight of 469 lbs! THEY ARE TOP! NOTCH! TEEEAAMMM!!!

In the ring, West and Hayes hit opposite turnbuckles, and drop their entrance jackets down to the ringside staff, before heading to their corner to weight.

Cito Conarri:

And their opponents... from the Mudflats of Mississippi... weighing a combined FIVE HUNDRED and NINETY pounds!

"The South is Rising" rolls through the building as The Brothers Gluck step through the curtain together. Carlton moves first, steady and unhurried, eyes forward and posture relaxed. Chapps bursts out alongside him, arms thrown wide, hollering toward the crowd as if daring them not to get loud.

RRRAAHHH!!!

Under Review: 3.2

Cito Conarri:

They are the reigning and defending Iron City Wrestling Tag Team Champions! CARLTON! CHAPPS! The BRRRRRRRROTHERS... GLUUUCCCKK!!!

Carlton tags hands on the walk down the ramp, the faintest smile creasing his face. Chapps slaps the guardrail and paces in tight, restless circles, soaking in every shout. In the ring, Carlton plants himself squarely in the center, broad and composed, while Chapps circles him, bouncing on the balls of his feet, feeding off the noise without a trace of hostility.

Across from them, Top Notch Team take their time. A quick conference. A nod. No wasted movement.

Carlton and Hayes open the match with a collar-and-elbow tie-up that immediately tells the story. Hayes digs for leverage and tries to turn Carlton, but Carlton shifts his hips, slides behind, and snaps him down with a smooth go-behind into an ankle pick. The crowd murmurs as Carlton releases and backs off, letting Hayes regroup.

Robbie Ray Carter:

Carlton Gluck isn't rushing anything. He doesn't need to.

Angus Skaaland:

Big man knows exactly how strong he is.

They reset. Hayes shoots low this time, catching Carlton by surprise just enough to force him to sprawl. Carlton posts, shucks him aside, and hauls Hayes up into a tight gutwrench Gluckplex, dropping him square in the center of the ring before calmly stepping back and tagging Chapps.

Chapps comes in hot, slapping his chest once and barking toward the crowd before lighting Hayes up with a sharp open-handed slap.

THWACK!

OOOOOOH!

Hayes swings back and eats a T-bone Gluckplex for his trouble. Chapps pops up grinning, already pacing, already loud, but Carlton reaches out and gives him a steadying touch on the shoulder from the apron.

Top Notch Team adjust quickly. A blind tag catches Chapps charging the wrong corner, and suddenly the challengers are in motion. They shove Chapps chest-first into the turnbuckle, tag again, and begin a disciplined, methodical isolation.

They don't rush. They cut the ring in half. One man holds Chapps in place while the other tags in and strikes, always keeping a body between Chapps and his corner. Chapps sells big, bumping hard, swinging wild when he gets frustrated, but every burst of energy is smothered.

Under Review: 3.2

Robbie Ray Carter:

Top Notch Team are doing exactly what you have to do here. They are denying the tag.

Angus Skaaland:

And Chapps is burning gas trying to force it.

Hayes drags Chapps back by the arm just as he dives for Carlton. He snaps him down, wrenches the shoulder, and for the first time hints at the chickenwing, testing the grip before abandoning it to tag out and keep the pressure steady.

Carlton stalks the apron, clapping once, voice calm and measured as he calls to his brother. Chapps lunges again and gets cut off again.

The heat deepens. TNT slow the match further, grinding Chapps down with positioning rather than flash. Hayes peppers him with short forearms, then traps him against the ropes while his partner tags in and stomps the shoulder.

Chapps finally creates space with a reckless elbow and stumbles toward the corner, fingertips brushing Carlton's hand before Hayes yanks him back again.

CLAP CLAP CLAPCLAPCLAP

Angus Skaaland:

That was it. That was the tag right there.

Robbie Ray Carter:

And Top Notch Team knew it.

Hayes pulls Chapps upright and wrenches the arm, reaching back toward the chickenwing again. Chapps bucks and twists free just enough to shove Hayes backward into the turnbuckle. He dives across the ring, body stretched as far as it will go.

The tag lands.

RRRAAAHHH!!!

Carlton storms in and the entire tone of the match changes. He levels Hayes with Clobbersaurus, turning him inside out, then flattens the partner as he rushes in. The challengers retreat instinctively, scrambling to the apron as Carlton stalks forward.

Robbie Ray Carter:

Here comes the champion!

Under Review: 3.2

Angus Skaaland:
That's a problem.

Carlton hauls Hayes up and plants him with a belly-to-belly Gluckplex, rolls through, then muscles him up again for a gutwrench Gluckplex that rattles the ring. He drags Hayes toward the corner and tags Chapps back in.

Chapps explodes in, feeding off the roar of the crowd as he hammers Hayes with slaps and short strikes, never staying still long enough to be caught.

This time, Top Notch Team don't panic. They weather the storm. Hayes bails to the floor to regroup, drawing Carlton after him. The partner seizes the opening, blindsiding Carlton from behind and rolling him back into the ring while Hayes slides in and tags.

Suddenly Carlton is the one cut off.

Robbie Ray Carter:
Smart adjustment by Top Notch Team.

Angus Skaaland:
They survived the wave. Now they gotta surf it.

TNT chop Carlton's base, working him down with quick tags and sharp strikes. Carlton absorbs it, never frantic, but now it's Chapps pacing on the apron, shouting encouragement instead of chaos.

Hayes snaps Carlton down and floats over into a cover.

ONE!
TWO!
--KICKOUT!

The crowd gasps. It's not close, but it's real.

Carlton muscles out and forces space with brute strength, shoving Hayes back and tagging Chapps again. Chapps bursts in, wild and reckless, and the ring dissolves into chaos. Hayes fires a desperation forearm and reaches for the chickenwing again, this time committing.

He hesitates.

Just a beat.

Chapps bucks backward, smashing Hayes into the turnbuckle, then snaps him over with a frankensteiner, spiking him hard. Chapps doesn't waste a second.

Under Review: 3.2

Gluckbuster!

KRA-KOOM!

He floats over into the cover.

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

DING! DING! DING!

Angus Skaaland:

HE GOT 'IM! Ain't no one getting up from a Brothers Gluck Brainbuster.

The bell rings. Carlton is already there, pulling Chapps up and wrapping an arm around his shoulders, steadying him before anything spills over. No extra shots. No gloating.

RRRAAAHHH!!!

Carlton raises the belts high as Chapps paces, shouting and pointing to the crowd, adrenaline still surging.

Robbie Ray Carter:

Top Notch Team had their opening tonight, but hesitation cost them everything.

Angus Skaaland:

You don't blink against the Glucks. You act -- or you get dropped.

The Brothers Gluck stand tall in the center of the ring, champions still, having survived pressure, adjustments, and their most disciplined challenge yet.

Show Credits

Segment: "Roadblocks" - Written by oldlinejeff.

Match: "Sam Gardner vs Celestina Cruz" - Written by oldlinejeff.

Segment: "I, In Fact, Was Using You" - Written by oldlinejeff.

Segment: "Consolidation" - Written by oldlinejeff.

Match: "Jesse "Iron Kid" Collins vs local talent" - Written by oldlinejeff.

Segment: "Confrontation" - Written by oldlinejeff.

Segment: "Imao noots suck" - Written by oldlinejeff.

Match: "Night Riders vs Urban Ninjaz" - Written by oldlinejeff.

Segment: "In Walks Kirsty, Set to Stun" - Written by oldlinejeff.

Segment: "Introducing... The Deputies" - Written by oldlinejeff.

Match: "Duchess Vaughn vs Cole Marksson" - Written by oldlinejeff.

Segment: "I Hate Heroes" - Written by oldlinejeff.

Match: "Preston Price vs Lowlife Larry Edwards (c)" - Written by oldlinejeff.

Segment: "Over You" - Written by oldlinejeff.

Match: "Top Notch Team vs The Brothers Gluck (c)" - Written by oldlinejeff.

Results Compiled by the eFed Management Suite