

Infernalialia: Infernalialia — Ep. 11 - The Morning After

Promotion: Championship Wrestling Federation
Date: September 4, 2026
Location: Ziggo Dome — Amsterdam, Netherlands

Results

The Morning After

Segment

For once, there is no dramatic opening.

No heartbeat.

No orchestral swell.

No cinematic montage carrying us through decades of CWF history.

The screen simply fades in.

Amsterdam.

The exterior of the Ziggo Dome is illuminated against the early evening sky, the massive venue already surrounded by thousands of CWF fans. Black-and-gold CWF banners hang from the entrances, merchandise vendors are doing brisk business, and fans stream through the doors wearing shirts representing champions, challengers, legends and everyone in between.

Then the camera moves inside.

And the Ziggo Dome is already alive.

The building shakes with a mixture of cheers and chants as the camera sweeps across the audience. Hand-painted signs are held above heads.

"DANNY B'S BACK ON TOP!"

"JARED FINALLY DID IT!"

"GORDY KING WILL BE BACK!"

"CHAOS IS HERE!"

"MJ FLAIR/CALEDONIA AT ONE A PIECE!"

"SILAS ARTORIA — THANK YOU!"

One particularly large sign simply reads:

THE MORNING AFTER THE WRESTLE FEST HANGOVER

The camera continues around the arena before finally settling on the CWF announce desk.

Jim Gunt and Mike Rolash are seated behind it, both looking considerably more relaxed than they did the last time we saw them.

Jim Gunt: "Amsterdam, Netherlands... welcome to CWF Infernalialia."

The crowd responds loudly.

Mike Rolash: "And welcome to what may be the strangest feeling we've had walking into an Infernalía in quite some time."

Jim Gunt: "The morning after."

Mike Rolash: "Two weeks removed from Wrestle Fest V, Jim. And if you're anything like me, you're still trying to process everything that happened in Boston."

Jim Gunt: "I don't think anybody has completely processed it yet."

The screen behind them begins showing highlights from Wrestle Fest V. Esmeralda von Krauss standing victorious with the newly created Chaos Championship. Adam Hansen and Lex Collins raising the CWF Tag Team Championships. Jared Holmes pulling himself up the ladder with the Paramount Championship in his possession.

Jim Gunt: "Wrestle Fest changed this company."

Mike Rolash: "New champions everywhere."

Jim Gunt: "New champions, new challengers, a career ended, an eight-year rivalry finally revisited, and a new World Heavyweight Champion."

The screen shows Danny B standing over Gordy King.

Jim Gunt: "The Ripper, Danny B, defeated Gordy King in the main event of Wrestle Fest V and reclaimed the CWF World Heavyweight Championship."

Mike Rolash: "And now the question is... what's next?"

The screen changes to tonight's World Championship graphic.

CWF WORLD HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP "THE RIPPER" DANNY B vs. DANGEROUS DAN

Mike Rolash: "Because we aren't waiting around for the answer."

Jim Gunt: "Dangerous Dan gets his opportunity tonight."

The crowd gives a mixed reaction.

Jim Gunt: "And that's only our main event."

More graphics appear.

ESMERALDA VON KRAUSS vs. TYLER ANDERSON

CHAOS CHAMPIONSHIP #1 CONTENDERSHIP GAUNTLET

LEX COLLINS vs. MIA RAYNE

ADAM HANSEN vs. CALEDONIA vs. WADE MOOR

JD RIOT & TAYLOR RAYNE vs. DEAN & SETH MOXLEY

Mike Rolash: "We've got champions defending, we've got former champions fighting, we've got a gauntlet to determine who's coming after the Chaos Championship, and we've got some very angry people walking into this building tonight."

Jim Gunt: "Which brings us to the important part."

Jim leans slightly toward the camera.

Jim Gunt: "Wrestle Fest is over."

The crowd quiets somewhat.

Jim Gunt: "The confetti has been cleaned up. The ladders are back in storage. The championship belts have changed hands. The wounds have begun to heal."

He pauses.

Jim Gunt: "But the consequences?"

Jim looks toward the ring.

Jim Gunt: "Those are just beginning."

Mike Rolash: "This is Infernalía 11."

The CWF logo fills the screen.

Mike Rolash: "Welcome to the morning after."

The camera pulls away from the announce desk and sweeps across the roaring Ziggo Dome one more time.

Then it cuts backstage.

CWF INFERNALIA 11 — "THE MORNING AFTER"

The show officially begins.

Seth and Dean Moxley Introduce Their Younger Brother Roman Moxley

Segment

The scene comes on the air, and it shows both Seth and Dean Moxley standing backstage as they get talking.

"Ohio Prince" Seth Moxley: "I am Seth and this here is my baby brother Dean. We do have a younger brother named Roman, and he is going to be joining us. He wasn't with us when we started the Unstoppable Force, and when we stepped away from the ring we handed our team over to Billy and Tyler Anderson which they have really expanded it to what it is now. We can't wait for you all to meet our younger brother Roman, and he has been training to join us here."

"Lunatic Prince" Dean Moxley: "I am the only one in our family that has nightmares of what our dad did to me, and I am still dealing with that. The nightmares turn me into someone else, and if I have to bring that person out in the matches, I will as I have no control over what he will do. Seth and Roman try to keep me grounded, but sometimes even that doesn't stop the nightmares. We can't wait for our younger brother to get here, and we are a group that doesn't back down at all. Tonight, JD Riot and Taylor Rayne are gonna find that out the hard way."

They walk down the hallway, and heads down to Fire & Ice's locker room.

JD Riot & Taylor Rayne vs. Dean & Seth Moxley

Match

The Ziggo Dome has settled into a different kind of energy following the opening moments of Infernalía. The first match of the night is about to begin, and there is a sense of curiosity hanging over the Amsterdam crowd.

For one team, tonight is an opportunity to finally stop the bleeding.

For the other, it is a return.

The lights dim as the opening notes of "Die With Me" by Gemini Syndrome begin to play through the arena. A few cheers rise from the crowd as JD Riot steps through the curtain, the Nashville native looking focused as he stares down toward the ring.

Riot pauses at the top of the ramp, rolling his shoulders before beginning his walk. There is no elaborate celebration tonight. No attempt to soak in the spotlight. His recent run has not gone the way he wanted, and JD looks like a man who knows exactly what is at stake.

He reaches ringside, climbs onto the apron and steps through the ropes. He moves toward his corner, bouncing lightly on the balls of his feet as he waits.

Then the music changes.

“Hell On Heels” by Pistol Annies fills the Ziggo Dome.

The lights go out.

Taylor Rayne steps onto the entrance stage.

She stands there for several seconds, head held high, looking down toward the ring with the same smug confidence she carries everywhere else. Taylor slowly rolls her eyes toward the camera before beginning her walk, making absolutely no effort to acknowledge the fans lining the aisle.

She reaches the ring, climbs the steps and slips between the ropes, leaning against the second rope for a moment as she looks across at JD.

The two don't exactly look like a natural pairing.

But tonight, they don't need to be.

They just need a victory.

The arena suddenly drops into darkness.

A few seconds pass.

Then the opening of “Heartless” begins.

The response is immediate.

Dean Moxley steps through the curtain, the Lunatic Prince dressed in his ring gear, his expression serious as he looks across the Ziggo Dome. Behind him comes Seth Moxley, the Ohio Prince moving with considerably more confidence, a slight smirk appearing across his face as the crowd reacts to the returning team.

Jim Gunt: “And here they are.”

Mike Rolash: “Fire & Ice.”

Jim Gunt: “Dean and Seth Moxley are back in CWF.”

Dean and Seth walk side-by-side down the ramp. There is no grandiose celebration. No attempt to remind everyone of their history.

They don't need one.

Before Billy and Tyler Anderson took over the Unstoppable Force, Dean and Seth Moxley were the original foundation of the group. They were here before the Anderson brothers. They were part of the history that made the name mean something in the first place.

And tonight, they have returned together.

Dean climbs onto the apron and steps through the ropes while Seth circles around to the opposite side. Both men enter the ring, and the two brothers stand together in their corner.

Jim Gunt: “It's been a long time since we've seen these two men compete together here in CWF.”

Mike Rolash: “And judging by the look on their faces, I don't think they're interested in easing their way back into things.”

The referee calls both teams toward the center of the ring and gives them their final instructions.

JD Riot steps forward.

Dean Moxley meets him.

DING DING DING!

JD wastes no time.

He charges forward and the two men collide in the center of the ring, Riot throwing a hard forearm that catches Dean across the jaw. Dean answers immediately with one of his own. JD fires again. Dean fires back.

The crowd reacts to every shot as the two men trade blows before JD ducks underneath a wild right hand and catches Dean with a quick slingblade.

Dean hits the canvas.

JD doesn't cover.

He grabs Dean by the arm and drags him toward the corner, tagging in Taylor Rayne.

Taylor enters and immediately stomps Dean in the ribs before pulling him up by the hair.

Taylor Rayne: "Get up."

She snaps Dean into the corner and drives her shoulder into his stomach. Dean doubles over, and Taylor follows with a sharp knee to the ribs before stepping back with a satisfied smile.

Jim Gunt: "Taylor Rayne wasting absolutely no time."

Mike Rolash: "She's not exactly known for fighting fair."

Taylor reaches for another attack, but Dean suddenly catches her wrist.

He twists.

Taylor stumbles forward.

Dean ducks underneath her arm and drives her into the canvas with a spinning reserve DDT.

RECKONING!

Taylor's head snaps off the mat.

Dean immediately reaches for his corner.

TAG!

Seth Moxley enters.

Taylor is only halfway to her feet when Seth charges.

CODY CUTTER!

Taylor is caught cleanly and driven face-first into the canvas.

The crowd rises as Seth rolls through the landing and immediately pulls Taylor back up.

Jim Gunt: "Fire & Ice are moving beautifully together!"

Mike Rolash: "That's what happens when you've been doing this together for years."

Seth sends Taylor into the ropes.

She rebounds.

CLAYMORE!

The kick catches Taylor square in the chest and sends her tumbling backward.

Seth covers.

ONE!

TWO!

JD BREAKS IT UP!

Riot dives across the ring and catches Seth with a forearm before grabbing Taylor and dragging her toward their corner.

Dean charges after him.

JD sees him coming.

SUICIDE DIVE!

Riot launches himself through the ropes and crashes into Dean, sending both men into the ringside barricade.

The Ziggo Dome erupts.

Mike Rolash: "There's the JD Riot we've been waiting to see!"

Inside the ring, Taylor has managed to pull herself upright using the ropes. Seth turns toward her.

Taylor suddenly spits directly into his face.

The crowd responds with a chorus of boos.

Jim Gunt: "Oh, come on!"

The momentary distraction gives Taylor the opening she needs.

CLICKBAIT!

The soccerball kick catches Seth in the chest.

He doubles over.

Taylor grabs him.*

THE SELFIE!

The Deal Breaker plants Seth onto the canvas.

Taylor immediately hooks the leg.

ONE!

TWO!

DEAN BREAKS IT UP!

Dean dives in and stomps Taylor across the back before grabbing her and throwing her across the ring. Taylor rolls underneath the bottom rope to escape.

Dean turns.

JD is already climbing back onto the apron.

Riot steps through the ropes and Dean charges.

FOREARM SMASH!

Dean is rocked.

JD follows with a slingblade.

Dean hits the canvas again.

JD turns toward Seth.

But Seth has already recovered.

POP-UP POWERBOMB!

JD is caught and driven violently into the mat.

Jim Gunt: "POP-UP POWERBOMB!"

Riot rolls away, clutching his back.

Seth looks down at him, breathing heavily.

Then he looks toward Dean.

Dean nods.

The two brothers don't need to say anything.

They know exactly what comes next.

JD begins pulling himself up.

Dean grabs him from behind.

SOUTH OF HEAVEN!

The sit-out chokeslam drives JD downward.

But before Dean can cover, Seth is already climbing the ropes.

JD is barely moving.

FIRE BLAST!

Seth launches.

CROSS RHODES!

JD is planted directly onto the canvas.

Dean drops into the cover.

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

DING DING DING!

The bell rings and the crowd erupts.

Joey Garcia: "Ladies and gentlemen, your winners... DEAN AND SETH MOXLEY... FIRE & ICE!"

Dean rolls away from JD as Seth gets to his feet. The two brothers look at each other for a moment.

Then they clasp hands.

No excessive celebration.

No grandstanding.

Just a simple acknowledgment.

They are back.

Jim Gunt: "What a return for Fire & Ice!"

Mike Rolash: "That was fast."

Jim Gunt: "And that was the point! Dean and Seth Moxley didn't come back to CWF tonight to remind everybody who they used to be. They came back to show everybody who they still are!"

The camera cuts to JD Riot sitting against the ropes, staring toward the opposite corner. Taylor Rayne is outside the ring, furious, pacing along the floor.

Jim Gunt: "JD Riot and Taylor Rayne desperately needed this victory tonight. Both of them have been struggling, both came into Amsterdam hoping this would be the night they finally turned things around."

Mike Rolash: "Instead, they ran into a team that hasn't missed a beat."

Dean climbs onto the second turnbuckle and looks out across the Ziggo Dome. Seth stands in the middle of the ring, arms folded, watching the crowd.

Jim Gunt: "Remember, before Billy and Tyler Anderson became the Unstoppable Force, it was Dean and Seth Moxley carrying that name. Fire & Ice were here before the Anderson brothers, and if tonight is any indication..."

Dean hops down from the turnbuckle.

Jim Gunt: "...they may have come back looking to take back what they believe was theirs."

The camera focuses on Dean and Seth as they stand together in the center of the ring.

Mike Rolash: "CWF better be ready."

Fire & Ice leave the ring together as the Ziggo Dome continues to buzz over their successful return.

The camera fades away from the Moxley brothers and cuts backstage.

Interview With Tyler Anderson

Segment

Tyler is seen backstage jumping up and down excited about becoming a father for the first time when his Sister-In-Law Stormee walks over to her Brother-In-Law as she starts the interview.

Stormee Bright Anderson: "Tyler, thank you for this time. You found out that your going to become a father for the first time, and I know that both you and Jamie are happy about becoming parents. What are your thoughts about it?"

"Mysterious One" Tyler Anderson: "Ever since I found out the news, I've been so excited that I can't contain it, I can't wait to find out what Jamie and me are having. I am so happy that I am going to be there for every appointment that Jamie has. We both wanted this, and prayed about it and it is going to happen. As long as we have a healthy baby or babies it don't matter what the gender is. Billy, Kyle, Dean and Seth are helping me with a surprise for Jamie for the baby. We are still working on it, and will show it to Jamie when the work is over. I can't wait for Jamie to see the surprize for her and the baby or babies whichever it is."

Stormee Bright Anderson: "Thank you for your time, Bro-In-Law."

"Mysterious One" Tyler Anderson: "You're welcome, Sis-In-Law."

Tyler hugs his Sister-In-Law, and walks down the hallway toward the Unstoppable Force's locker room.

The Queen of Chaos

Segment

The camera comes up in a place that looks less like a wrestling arena and more like an old European study.

Dark wood. Tall bookshelves. A massive fireplace burning quietly in the background. An antique map of Europe stretches across one wall, covered in dozens of tiny red pins. Another wall contains photographs—some modern, some impossibly old—of people Esmeralda von Krauss has apparently encountered throughout the centuries.

At the center of the room sits Esmeralda.

The CWF Chaos Championship rests across her lap.

She isn't wearing her usual extravagant gown. Instead, she's dressed in a perfectly tailored black suit, her long blonde hair pulled back, an Egyptian cigarette resting in the familiar silver holder between two fingers.

Across from her sits Tyr.

The one-handed god of war says nothing.

Esmeralda slowly spins the championship's plate with one finger.

Esmeralda von Krauss: "Chaos."

She smiles faintly.

Esmeralda von Krauss: "Such an ugly little word for something so beautiful."

She looks down at the championship.

Esmeralda von Krauss: "Everyone thinks chaos means disorder. Panic. Screaming. People running in every direction because they don't know what happens next."

She takes a slow drag.

Esmeralda von Krauss: "But chaos isn't about losing control, dahling."

Her eyes rise toward the camera.

Esmeralda von Krauss: "Chaos is what happens when someone like me walks into the room."

Tyr finally speaks.

Tyr: "And Tyler Anderson?"

Esmeralda smiles.

Esmeralda von Krauss: "Ah."

She sets the championship on the table beside her.

Esmeralda von Krauss: "Tyler Anderson."

She considers the name for a moment, almost as though she's deciding where to place a piece on a chessboard.

Esmeralda von Krauss: "The Unstoppable Force."

She laughs softly.

Esmeralda von Krauss: "What a charming little title."

Esmeralda reaches toward the table and picks up a small antique chess piece—a black knight.

Esmeralda von Krauss: "You see, dahling, I have spent a very long time studying forces that believe themselves unstoppable."

She places the knight onto the map.

Esmeralda von Krauss: "Kings."

She moves it.

Esmeralda von Krauss: "Empires."

Another move.

Esmeralda von Krauss: "Generals."

She looks directly into the camera.

Esmeralda von Krauss: "Gods."

Her smile disappears.

Esmeralda von Krauss: "They all eventually learn the same lesson."

She closes her fingers around the chess piece.

Esmeralda von Krauss: "Nothing is unstoppable."

Tyr watches her carefully.

Tyr: "And if he proves otherwise?"

Esmeralda's smile returns.

Esmeralda von Krauss: "Then I shall simply have to stop him."

She stands, lifting the Chaos Championship from the table and draping it over her shoulder.

Esmeralda von Krauss: "Tonight isn't about the championship, Tyler. You cannot win it from me. It isn't even about proving that I am stronger than you."

She steps toward the camera.

Esmeralda von Krauss: "It is about proving that the Unstoppable Force has finally encountered something it cannot understand."

She raises the championship slightly.

Esmeralda von Krauss: "Chaos."

Esmeralda takes one final drag from her cigarette before extinguishing it in an ornate ashtray.

Esmeralda von Krauss: "You walk into that ring believing you are hunting a woman."

Her eyes narrow.

Esmeralda von Krauss: "You aren't."

A beat.

Esmeralda von Krauss: "You're walking into the territory of Justice."

She turns away from the camera, leaving Tyr sitting silently behind her.

Esmeralda von Krauss: "And dahling..."

She pauses at the doorway.

Esmeralda von Krauss: "Justice always collects."

The door closes.

The camera slowly pushes toward the Chaos Championship sitting on Esmeralda's shoulder as she disappears into the darkness.

Fade to black.

Esmeralda von Krauss (c) vs. Tyler Anderson

Match

The camera returns to the arena following the backstage interview with Tyler Anderson. The crowd is still buzzing from the announcement that Tyler and Jamie are expecting their first child, and that excitement carries over as the lights around the arena begin to dim.

Jim Gunt: "There is no question what is at stake emotionally tonight for Tyler Anderson. He is going to become a father. He's excited, he's fired up, and he told his sister-in-law Stormee Bright Anderson that tonight he wants to prove something."

Mike Rolash: "That he can do it without the Unstoppable Force!"

Jim Gunt: "Exactly. Tyler Anderson wants to stand on his own two feet tonight against the NEW CWF Chaos Champion."

The opening notes of "Burn In My Light" by Mercy Drive hit the arena.

Tyler Anderson bursts through the curtain.

He immediately begins making his way toward the ring with the unmistakable swagger of someone trying very hard to contain an enormous amount of excitement. He slaps hands with fans along the barricade, nodding to them as he makes his way around ringside before sliding beneath the bottom rope.

Tyler climbs onto the second turnbuckle and looks around at the crowd.

Jim Gunt: "He's got a lot on his mind tonight."

Mike Rolash: "He's got a LOT to prove tonight, too."

Tyler drops from the turnbuckle and turns toward the entrance.

The arena goes dark.

A single silver spotlight appears at the top of the ramp.

"Silver Blade, Steady Hand" begins to play.

Esmeralda von Krauss slowly emerges from backstage wearing her extravagant gown, the newly won CWF Chaos Championship resting over one shoulder.

The Chaos Championship glitters beneath the spotlight.

Esmeralda stops at the top of the ramp.

She calmly removes an ornate, foot-long cigarette holder from somewhere within her gown, lights the cigarette, and

takes a long drag.

Mike Rolash: "Look at that championship."

Jim Gunt: "The Chaos Championship is not on the line tonight."

Mike Rolash: "But Tyler Anderson would love nothing more than to beat the woman carrying it."

Esmeralda smiles faintly.

She walks toward the ring, never taking her eyes off Tyler.

At ringside, she hands the Chaos Championship to the timekeeper.

Esmeralda leans through the ropes.

Esmeralda von Krauss: "Guard it carefully, dahling."

She removes her gown and hands it to the timekeeper as well.

Esmeralda von Krauss: "Find a good home for it. I'll never wear it again."

Esmeralda steps into the ring.

The referee checks both competitors before calling for the bell.

DING DING DING!

Tyler and Esmeralda circle one another to begin the match. Tyler extends his hand and Esmeralda just looks at it. For a moment, it appears she might actually accept. Instead, she simply turns her palm upward and gestures for Tyler to come closer. Tyler smirks and then they lock up. The younger Anderson immediately uses his size advantage, forcing Esmeralda backward toward the ropes. The referee calls for the break and Tyler releases. Esmeralda steps away and gives Tyler a small nod.

Esmeralda von Krauss: "Polite."

Tyler charges as she rolls her eyes. Esmeralda sidesteps, but Tyler catches himself before hitting the corner. He turns around just in time to eat a vicious backhand across the jaw.

Mike Rolash: "THAT one wasn't very polite!"

Tyler stumbles backward. Esmeralda follows with a second strike. Tyler catches her wrist and yanks her toward him and drives a knee into her stomach. He follows up with a rope-hung DDT, dropping Esmeralda across the top rope before pulling her back into the ring.

Jim Gunt: "Good counter by Tyler Anderson!"

Tyler immediately goes for the cover.

ONE!

TWO!

Esmeralda kicks out. Tyler pulls her up and sends her into the ropes. Esmeralda rebounds and Tyler catches her.

GEORGIA ROUNDUP!

Esmeralda twists at the last possible second. Tyler's RKO attempt misses. Esmeralda lands behind him and immediately traps his arm and snaps him backward into an omoplata. Anderson grimaces as the Chaos champion wrenches the shoulder.

Jim Gunt: "That's the difference between these two! Tyler wants to hit you with something devastating. Esmeralda

wants to take away the part of your body you need to hit her with it!"

Tyler Anderson claws his way toward the ropes and finally gets a boot onto the bottom rope. The referee orders Esmeralda von Krauss to release. She looks at him for just a second before doing just that. Tyler rolls outside the ring, clutching his shoulder. Esmeralda remains seated inside the ring, watching him.

Mike Rolash: "She's just waiting."

Jim Gunt: "That's what makes her so dangerous."

Tyler Anderson climbs back onto the apron. Esmeralda rushes forward but the Mysterious One catches her with a shoulder through the ropes. Esmeralda staggers backward as Tyler climbs through the ropes. He grabs her.

INVERTED BACKBREAKER!

Esmeralda folds across Tyler's knee. Tyler immediately follows with a Georgia Flame, driving her throat-first across the ropes. Esmeralda collapses to the canvas. Tyler hooks the leg.

ONE!

TWO!

THR—!

Esmeralda kicks out. Tyler sits up, breathing heavily.

Jim Gunt: "Tyler Anderson is starting to find his rhythm!"

Tyler pulls Esmeralda to her feet. He drives a series of hard punches into her ribs. Esmeralda absorbs them. Tyler whips her into the corner. He charges forward steadfast, but Esmeralda gets a boot up. Tyler staggers, hands instinctively coming up to his face. Esmeralda rushes out of the corner and smashes a palm strike into his chest. The Anderson brother drops to one knee as von Krauss steps forward.

PALM STRIKE TO THE JAW!

No, Tyler ducks and the strike misses. The former CWF Tag Team champion grabs her from behind.

GEORGIA ROUNDUP!

Esmeralda lands hard on the canvas and Tyler Anderson doesn't waste a second to make the cover.

ONE!

TWO!

THR-

Esmeralda gets a shoulder up.

Mike Rolash: "THAT WAS CLOSE!"

Tyler sits up in disbelief. He looks toward the referee, but immediately accepts the decision. The crowd begins chanting for the Mysterious One, one by one coming to their feet.

Jim Gunt: "The crowd is behind him! Come on Tyler, you can do this!"

Mike Rolash: "You can DO it!"

Tyler rises up as Esmeralda is slowly getting back to her feet. He positions himself behind her and begins stomping her down in the corner.

Mike Rolash: "Tyler's setting up the Georgia Blood!"

Tyler pulls Esmeralda out of the corner and hooks both arms. He tries to lift her for the double-underhook DDT, but Esmeralda blocks. Tyler tries again and this time Esmeralda plants her feet. The Mysterious One adjusts his grip, but for just a fraction of a second, his injured shoulder gives out. His grip slips, and Esmeralda immediately recognizes it. She drives an elbow into Tyler's temple. Tyler staggers again. Esmeralda catches his wrist. She pulls him forward. Tyler tries to regain his balance, but his foot slips on the canvas. Esmeralda drops into a crouching position and then suddenly spins out of it.

Jim Gunt: "JUSTICE!"

Esmeralda explodes upward.

HER PALM CRASHES DIRECTLY INTO TYLER'S CHIN.

Tyler's head snaps backward, and he collapses onto the canvas. Esmeralda von Krauss immediately hooks both of his legs as the crowd remain in a mostly shocked silence.

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

DING DING DING!

It's like the bell wakes the thousands of fans in attendance back up, because they suddenly explode to their feet and cheer the Chaos champion's win.

Jim Gunt: "ESMERALDA VON KRAUSS HAS DONE IT!"

Mike Rolash: "TYLER ANDERSON WANTED TO PROVE HE COULD DO IT ALONE!"

Jim Gunt: "And he nearly did! But against someone like Esmeralda, one mistake is all it takes!"

Esmeralda slowly rises to her feet, not showing any reaction to the noise around her. She looks down at Tyler. There is no celebration or taunting, just a cold, knowing smile. The referee raises her hand, and Esmeralda immediately looks toward the timekeeper. Her Chaos Championship is handed back to her. She takes it beneath her arm with a smile pushing its way up her face. Then she looks down at Tyler one final time.

Esmeralda von Krauss: "You fought well, dahling."

She pauses.

Esmeralda von Krauss: "But you slipped."

Esmeralda turns and walks away. Tyler remains seated in the ring, frustrated but visibly composed. He looks toward the entrance where Esmeralda disappears.

Jim Gunt: "Tyler Anderson wanted to prove tonight that he didn't need the Unstoppable Force."

Mike Rolash: "And he proved something else."

Jim Gunt: "What's that?"

Mike Rolash: "He can hang with the best."

The camera cuts to Esmeralda at the top of the ramp, the Chaos Championship rests against her shoulder. She looks back toward the ring and gives a faint smile.

Jim Gunt: "But tonight belongs to Esmeralda von Krauss."

Esmeralda raises the Chaos Championship into the air as Infernal cuts to commercial.

Is This For Real?

Segment

Christian Patrick, the newly signed member of the Championship Wrestling Federation, is walking into the Ziggo Dome earlier today. He has a suitcase on wheels that he is pulling behind him. He has a look of confidence on his face as he rounds a corner and runs into, literally, Adam Hansen.

Hansen: 'Scuse me, son.

Christian is taken aback for a moment.

Hansen: Oh, hey... Christian, right? John's son?

Christian scoffs at being referred to simply as the son of John Patrick.

Patrick: Right. Adam Hansen. Last time I saw you? You were getting beaten badly around the United Center. Almost didn't recognize you without a fist next to your face.

Hansen: Yeah, he told me that you can be quite the spitfire. And I didn't mean no disrespect to you by referrin' to you as John's son. I know y'all got issues and stuff, and it ain't my place to be throwin' judgment at anyone or nothin'. Anyway, I heard ya signed a contract here and was hopin' to run into ya, and shoot, looks like I did.

Christian studies Adam as he speaks.

Patrick: Is this for real? Am I getting punk'd? Is this some sort of hazing ritual?

Hansen: I don't catch your meanin' there.

Patrick: I mean, there's no way you're serious right now.

Adam takes a step back and chuckles.

Hansen: Oh, I get it. You're thinkin' there's no way this guy actually talks like this, and I'm just one of them 'pretend cowboys'.

Adam gets right in Christian's face.

Hansen: Maybe you might wanna get some new material, or hell, maybe try respectin' people for who they is, not who you are wantin' 'em to be.

Christian puts up his hands defensively and takes a couple of steps back.

Patrick: Whoa man, I ain't trying to disrespect you or anything. I mean, I know John's friend Country is a former rodeo guy and lives and breathes like this, but I didn't know this was authentic or if you were trying to put one over on me.

Christian lowers his hands and then puts his right hand out in front of Adam.

Patrick: How about we start over? Hi Adam, my name is Christian. I know you've worked with my dad in your other company. Tonight is my first match here, and I am still trying to get the jitters out. I meant no disrespect to you in the slightest; I am just a bit on edge.

Adam's intense glare softens immediately, and he reaches out and accepts Christian's handshake.

Hansen: Now see, that wasn't so hard now, was it? Look, man, I ain't been around here much longer'n'you, so I ain't got no hazin' or anythin' like that. Lex'n'me are just here doing our jobs and puttin' on a good show for people. Now, bein' a friend of your dad, I am gonna be watchin' your back. Ain't no need to tell me not to... It's just who I am. So welcome aboard, Christian.

Adam claps him on the shoulder.

Hansen: How's about we go find Lex and all share a Pepsi or somethin'.

Patrick: Sounds good, Adam. Lead the way.

The two then walk towards the locker room area.

The Audition

Segment

Backstage at the Ziggo Dome, the corridors are alive with the organized chaos of another CWF event. Production assistants hurry past with headsets. A pair of stagehands wheel a road case around a corner.

And then, from somewhere off-camera...

Paul Freedom!: "Okay, okay, okay... this time, no unnecessary flips."

A pause.

Paul Freedom!: "Unless they're necessary."

The camera rounds the corner.

Paul Freedom is sitting on a production crate, already dressed for competition. His wrists are being taped, although the tape job looks considerably more complicated than necessary. There are several loops around his forearms, one around his thumb, and somehow one piece has ended up attached to his elbow.

Paul notices the camera.

Paul Freedom!: "Hey!"

He immediately hops off the crate.

Paul Freedom!: "You came at a really good time."

Paul holds up his taped hands proudly.

Paul Freedom!: "I'm preparing."

He takes a deep breath.

Paul Freedom!: "Tonight is the big one."

His smile fades slightly.

Paul Freedom!: "Again."

That little admission hangs in the air.

Paul looks down at his hands.

Paul Freedom!: "Wrestle Fest didn't exactly go the way I wanted."

He forces a shrug.

Paul Freedom!: "I got really, really close."

He pauses.

Paul Freedom!: "And then I got less close."

Paul looks toward the camera.

Paul Freedom!: "And then I lost."

Another pause.

Paul Freedom!: "But that's wrestling, right?"

He nods to himself.

Paul Freedom!: "You lose. You learn. You get back up."

Paul's expression brightens.

Paul Freedom!: "And then you try something really cool that probably makes your trainer nervous."

He gives two quick thumbs up.

Paul Freedom!: "That's the cycle."

A slow clap comes from somewhere behind him.

Paul turns.

Standing several feet away is Alabaster Enders.

Top hat. Porcelain mask. Portfolio tucked beneath one arm.

Paul's eyes widen.

Paul Freedom!: "Alabama Sanders!"

Alabaster pauses.

Alabaster Enders: "No."

Paul Freedom!: "Right."

Paul points at him.

Paul Freedom!: "Alabaster Enders."

Alabaster Enders: "Progress."

Paul grins.

Paul Freedom!: "Did you come to see me wrestle?"

Alabaster Enders: "I did."

Paul's expression changes immediately.

The joking disappears.

Paul Freedom!: "Really?"

Alabaster slowly approaches.

Alabaster Enders: "You were disappointing at Wrestle Fest."

Paul's face falls.

Paul Freedom!: "Oh."

Alabaster Enders: "You came remarkably close to winning."

Paul looks back up.

Alabaster Enders: "Which made the disappointment considerably more interesting."

Alabaster stops directly in front of him.

Alabaster Enders: "Do you know what happens to most people when they come up short, Mr. Freedom?"

Paul shakes his head.

Alabaster Enders: "They begin searching for someone to blame."

He raises one gloved finger.

Alabaster Enders: "The referee."

A second finger.

Alabaster Enders: "The opponent."

A third.

Alabaster Enders: "Their preparation."

Alabaster tilts his head.

Alabaster Enders: "Their circumstances."

Paul listens carefully.

Alabaster Enders: "You did something different."

Paul Freedom!: "I blamed myself?"

Alabaster Enders: "No."

A beat.

Alabaster Enders: "You went looking for another opportunity."

Paul's eyes widen.

Alabaster opens his portfolio.

Inside are several pages covered with handwritten notes. He flips through them before finding one.

Alabaster Enders: "Since I first encountered you, I have watched you get knocked down."

He turns a page.

Alabaster Enders: "You get back up."

Another page.

Alabaster Enders: "You embarrass yourself."

Another.

Alabaster Enders: "You get back up."

Another.

Alabaster Enders: "You make catastrophically poor tactical decisions."

Paul raises a finger.

Paul Freedom!: "In my defense, some of them work."

Alabaster Enders: "Precisely."

Paul smiles.

Alabaster closes the portfolio.

Alabaster Enders: "You keep getting back up."

The smile slowly disappears from Paul's face.

Alabaster Enders: "That is not foolishness, Mr. Freedom."

A pause.

Alabaster Enders: "That is resilience."

Paul doesn't say anything.

Alabaster Enders: "And resilience is an extraordinarily difficult quality to manufacture."

Alabaster looks directly into Paul's eyes.

Alabaster Enders: "I have made a career of searching for people who can convince an audience that they are worth watching."

He gestures toward Paul.

Alabaster Enders: "You don't have that problem."

Paul Freedom!: "I don't?"

Alabaster Enders: "No."

Alabaster's porcelain smile somehow seems more pronounced.

Alabaster Enders: "You make people wonder what happens next."

Paul looks genuinely moved.

Alabaster Enders: "That is the foundation of every great protagonist."

Paul's eyes suddenly brighten.

Paul Freedom!: "Wait."

He points at Alabaster.

Paul Freedom!: "Did you just call me a protagonist?"

Alabaster Enders: "I did."

Paul Freedom!: "So I got the part!"

Alabaster Enders: "I did not say that."

Paul Freedom!: "But I'm auditioning!"

Alabaster Enders: "You are wrestling."

Paul Freedom!: "That's basically an audition."

Alabaster stares at him.

A beat.

Alabaster Enders: "Perhaps."

Paul grins.

Alabaster Enders: "Tonight, however, you have an opportunity that is far more valuable than an audition."

Paul's expression becomes serious again.

Alabaster Enders: "Five men enter that match believing they can win."

He leans slightly closer.

Alabaster Enders: "Only one gets to leave believing they belong in the Chaos Championship picture."

Paul nods.

Alabaster Enders: "Christian Patrick. Dakota Anderson. Kevin Hunter. Magik The Gatherer."

Alabaster pauses.

Alabaster Enders: "And you."

Paul looks down at his taped hands.

Paul Freedom!: "I've lost before."

Alabaster Enders: "Yes."

Paul Freedom!: "I've been hurt before."

Alabaster Enders: "Yes."

Paul Freedom!: "I've made some really questionable decisions."

Alabaster Enders: "Many."

Paul looks up.

There is a small smile on his face.

Paul Freedom!: "But I'm still here."

Alabaster nods.

Alabaster Enders: "Exactly."

Paul suddenly extends his hand.

Paul Freedom!: "Thanks, Alabaster."

Alabaster looks at the offered hand.

He takes it.

They shake.

Paul Freedom!: "And if I win tonight..."

Paul grins.

Paul Freedom!: "...maybe you can make a movie about me."

Alabaster releases his hand.

Alabaster Enders: "Perhaps."

Paul waits.

Paul Freedom!: "What would it be called?"

Alabaster considers him for several seconds.

Alabaster Enders: "The Asterisk."

Paul's smile fades.

Paul Freedom!: "That sounds kind of ominous."

Alabaster Enders: "It is."

Alabaster walks away.

Paul watches him disappear around the corner.

He looks at the camera.

Then at his taped hands.

Then back toward where Alabaster disappeared.

Paul Freedom!: "I think that was a compliment."

Paul suddenly hears his music beginning somewhere down the hallway.

His eyes widen.

Paul Freedom!: "Oh!"

He takes off running.

****Paul Freedom!: "That's me!"**

Paul disappears around the corner at full speed.

A second later, he comes sprinting back into frame.

Paul Freedom!: "WAIT! I FORGOT MY KNEE PADS!"

He grabs a pair of knee pads from the crate and sprints away again.

The camera remains on the empty hallway.

After a moment, Alabaster's voice can be heard faintly from somewhere off-screen.

Alabaster Enders: "Yes."

A pause.

Alabaster Enders: "Definitely a protagonist."

Christian Patrick vs. Dakota Anderson vs. Kevin Hunter vs. Magik The Gatherer vs. Paul Freedom

Match

The Ziggo Dome in Amsterdam is alive. Thousands of fans pack the building, their noise rolling through the arena as the camera sweeps across the crowd.

Jim Gunt: "Ladies and gentlemen, we are about to witness one of the most unpredictable matches of the night! Five competitors! One opportunity! And by the time this is over, only one will remain!"

Mike Rolash: "And whoever that person is gets a future shot at the woman who walked out of Wrestle Fest V as the NEW CWF Chaos Champion, Esmeralda von Krauss!"

Jim Gunt: "A championship that was won in one of the most bizarre and brutal matches we've ever seen!"

Mike Rolash: "And tonight, somebody gets to volunteer for another dose of chaos!"

The lights begin to dim.

Jim Gunt: "And our first two competitors have already had a very eventful week."

Deep violet light spills across the Ziggo Dome. Thousands of holographic cards flicker into existence throughout the arena.

Magik The Gatherer appears at the top of the ramp. There is something different about her tonight. The theatrical confidence is still there, but it is muted. The illuminated deck remains chained around her waist. For once, Blind Ambition is nowhere beside her.

Jim Gunt: "Magik The Gatherer is back in CWF."

Mike Rolash: "But she's coming off something that has to be weighing heavily on her."

Jim Gunt: "At Heroes & Villains Wrestling Evolution episode eight, Magik was forced into a Loser Leaves Town match against her own friend and teammate, Blind Ambition."

Mike Rolash: "And Magik won."

Jim Gunt: "Which means Blind Ambition is gone from HVW. Forever."

Magik slowly makes her way down the ramp.

Mike Rolash: "These two were Blind Magic. They were partners. Friends. And now Magik has had to travel back here to CWF without them."

Jim Gunt: "You have to wonder where her head is tonight."

Magik reaches the ring and climbs onto the apron and steps through the ropes. She removes the illuminated deck from around her waist and places it in her corner. Magik stares at it for several seconds then turns toward the entrance.

"Perfect Princess" by the Descendants 5 Cast blasts through the Ziggo Dome and Dakota Anderson comes through the curtain. The Georgia Peach smiles and waves to the Amsterdam crowd.

Jim Gunt: "And here comes Dakota Anderson!"

Mike Rolash: "One hundred and ten pounds of trouble."

Dakota skips down the ramp, slapping hands with fans before sliding underneath the bottom rope. She pops back to her feet and immediately points toward Magik. Magik simply watches her, and Dakota finally gives an awkward nod. The referee explains the rules to both women.

Jim Gunt: "Remember, this is a gauntlet! Two women begin, and after every elimination, another competitor enters. There are no break periods here. You win by pinfall or submission, and once you're eliminated, you're gone!"

Mike Rolash: "And the final survivor becomes the NEW number one contender for the Chaos Championship!"

The referee checks both competitors and calls for the bell.

DING DING DING!

Dakota and Magik start the match immediately looking for an advantage on the other. Dakota moves first. She shoots in, but Magik sprawls and catches her with a rapid series of palm strikes. Dakota backs away as Magik throws a spinning heel kick. Dakota ducks underneath it and fires back with a kick to the leg. Magik stumbles and Dakota grabs her.

CHOKEHOLD STO!

Magik hits the canvas hard and Dakota immediately covers.

ONE!

TWO!

Magik kicks out.

Jim Gunt: "Dakota with a quick start!"

Dakota pulls Magik up and sends her into the ropes. Magik rebounds and the first female member of the Unstoppable Force catches her with a dropkick. Magik rolls through the impact and springs back up. The Card Witch huffs and charges in through a sudden puff of smoke.

RUNNING METEORA!

Dakota is driven backward into the corner. Magik unloads.

One strike. Two. Three. Four.

Deck Collapse!

Dakota covers her head as Magik attacks from every direction. Magik The Gatherer finally backs away and reaches for the deck around her waist. Her fingers stop as she stares down at it. For the briefest moment, her expression changes. She remembers Blind Ambition and the Loser Leaves Town match over in HVW. The final moment between the two former partners before Magik put them away. Magik's eyes remain fixed on the deck.

Mike Rolash: "She's distracted!"

Dakota sees it. The Georgia Peach charges.

CHICK KICK!

Magik's head snaps backward. Dakota grabs her.

TWIST OF FATE!

Magik crashes down to the canvas. Dakota looks out to the cheering crowd and heads for the ropes. She looks toward the Amsterdam crowd, excitement running through every vein in her body before launching off the top rope.

DIVING BARANI!

Dakota crashes down across Magik. She hooks the leg as the fans continue to cheer.

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

DING DING DING!

Joey Garcia: "Magik The Gatherer has been eliminated!"

Jim Gunt: "DAKOTA ANDERSON ELIMINATES MAGIK THE GATHERER!"

Dakota immediately gets to her feet. Magik sits against the ropes, staring at the deck around her waist. Dakota offers her a hand and Magik looks at it. Finally, she accepts. Dakota pulls her up and Magik gives her a small nod before stepping through the ropes and leaving the ring.

Mike Rolash: "That's got to hurt."

Jim Gunt: "Not just physically. Magik came back to CWF carrying a lot of emotional baggage."

Magik pauses halfway up the ramp. She looks back toward the ring, then she turns away.

"Help Save the Youth of America From Exploding" hits the arena. The house lights die as Paul Freedom's career

highlights begin playing across the screen.

The early footage, the smiles, the ridiculous cheetah print hair. The blood. The failed moments, the improbable successes.

Pollo Road.

Wrestle Fest V.

Paul's near victory in the Chaos Championship match.

Jim Gunt: "Here comes a man who came painfully close at Wrestle Fest V!"

Mike Rolash: "And who has been getting some rather unusual encouragement lately."

Paul bursts through the curtain. He stops and looks around, glaring up at the big screen. He points at a clip of himself with a wide smile on his face.

Paul Freedom!: "THAT WAS AWESOME!"

The Asterisk suddenly realizes he's supposed to be going to the ring. He waves a quick finger and sprints down the ramp before sliding underneath the bottom rope. Paul immediately offers Dakota his hand. Dakota looks at him for a second before shaking it. Paul releases, and immediately offers another handshake.

Mike Rolash: "Does he think this is a networking event?"

Jim Gunt: "That's Paul Freedom!"

The bell rings and Paul and Dakota circle each other, both looking to attack on different levels as the match begins. Dakota lunges forward but Paul drops flat. The Georgia Peach goes over him, but Paul rolls backward. He suddenly pops up.

DOUBLE MULE KICK!

Dakota stumbles but does not fall off her feet. Paul shrugs his shoulders and grabs her.

BULLDOG!

This time, Dakota crashes down. Paul springs to his feet and immediately gives the Amsterdam crowd two peace signs.

Mike Rolash: "He's telegraphing something!"

Paul runs toward the corner and plants a foot against Dakota's torso.

PAUL FLIP!

He flips over Dakota's head and lands standing. Dakota turns around as Paul gives the crowd a knowing look and taps his temple.

Jim Gunt: "He thinks he's a genius!"

Dakota shakes her head and charges at him. Paul Freedom! drops and she sails over him. Paul grabs her on the way through.

DROP TOE HOLD!

Dakota faceplants. Paul rolls her over to her back and makes the cover.

ONE!

TWO!

Dakota kicks out and immediately rises. She catches Paul with a forearm. Another. She sends him into the ropes, and steadies herself as Paul rebounds.

STRATUSFACTION!

Dakota hooks Paul and plants him to the mat. She covers.

ONE!

TWO!

Paul kicks out. Dakota grabs him and pulls him right back up.

PAIGE TURNER!

No, Paul counters. He rolls through what could've been a match-ending shot, and Dakota swings a wild punch. Paul ducks again. He grabs her from behind.

SCHOOLBOY!

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

DING DING DING!

Joey Garcia: "Dakota Anderson has been eliminated!"

Jim Gunt: "PAUL FREEDOM HAS ELIMINATED DAKOTA!"

Paul immediately shoots to his feet. He looks stunned at first, then thrilled. He throws both arms into the air.

Paul Freedom!: "THAT WORKED!"

The crowd erupts as Dakota sits up. Paul immediately offers her his hand. She takes it and Paul helps her up. Dakota gives him a smile before exiting the ring.

Mike Rolash: "He just pinned an Unstoppable Force member!"

Jim Gunt: "And look at Paul Freedom!"

Paul looks around at the Amsterdam crowd. He gives them two peace signs.

Jim Gunt: "He's feeling it!"

The arena lights turn red as "Sin After Sin" by Alter Bridge blasts through the Ziggo Dome. Kevin Hunter emerges. The Devil Incarnate stands at the top of the ramp and stares down at Paul.

Mike Rolash: "Well, somebody just had his fun interrupted."

Hunter slowly makes his way toward the ring as Paul Freedom! bounces on his feet. Hunter enters and the referee checks him.

DING DING DING!

Hunter charges forward, not looking to waste any time, but Paul ducks under a clothesline. Hunter turns and Paul hits him with a dropkick. The Devil Incarnate barely moves.

Jim Gunt: "That didn't exactly stop Kevin Hunter."

Hunter grabs Paul Freedom! by the throat. Paul kicks wildly, and an annoyed Hunter throws him into the corner. He

charges in at him, but Paul gets a boot up. Hunter staggers and The Asterisk sees his opening, running at his opponent with full speed and leaping up at him. Paul hits the Lou Thesz Press, dropping Kevin to the mat. He rains down punches as the Amsterdam crowd counts along.

Crowd: "ONE! TWO! THREE! FOUR! FIVE!"

A smiling Paul finally stands to his feet, apparently satisfied with himself. But Kevin Hunter suddenly grabs him.

DEVIL'S KISS!

Hunter's headbutt catches Paul. The Asterisk collapses, but Hunter pulls him right back up. He hoists Paul into the air.

PROJECT SATAN!

Paul is driven into the canvas. Hunter covers.

ONE!

TWO!

Paul gets a shoulder up.

Mike Rolash: "HOW?!"

Hunter looks annoyed. He stalks Paul and watches as he slowly gets up. Hunter moves in but Paul suddenly ducks. Hunter crashes chest-first into the corner. Paul grabs him from behind and tries the schoolboy rollup on Hunter. The Devil Incarnate kicks out before the official can even drop down to make the count. Paul rolls away and Hunter turns. Paul Freedom! suddenly has momentum on his side as he sprints towards him.

BULLDOG!

Hunter falls and Paul looks down at him, immediately climbing the turnbuckle as the crowd rises.

Jim Gunt: "He's going for the Impressive Display of Agility!"

Paul launches.

NO-LOOK!

He twists and lands knee-first across Hunter's chest. Paul hooks the leg.

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

DING DING DING!

Joey Garcia: "Kevin Hunter has been eliminated!"

Jim Gunt: "PAUL FREEDOM HAS DONE IT AGAIN!"

Mike Rolash: "Two wins now, back to back in the gauntlet. Can The Asterisk finally put one in the win column here tonight!?"

Paul rolls onto his back and stares at the ceiling. His chest heaves up and down, his breathing clearly more shallow than at the start of the gauntlet. Then he starts laughing before slowly sitting up.

Paul Freedom!: "I'M ON A ROLL!"

The crowd roars as Hunter slowly rolls from the ring. Paul gets to his feet and raises both hands.

The celebration abruptly stops as the arena lights dim. "My Name Is Human" by Highly Suspect begins. The crowd quiets as Christian Patrick steps onto the stage. He wears black trunks with pink accents, and a fractured crown across the back. He stops beneath the lights and looks toward the ring. Paul is waiting. Christian doesn't smile, he doesn't taunt. He simply studies him.

Jim Gunt: "Here he is."

Mike Rolash: "The newest member of the CWF roster."

Jim Gunt: "The son of the legendary John Patrick, the BRAND NEW Uprising Apex Champion!"

Mike Rolash: "Though I suspect Christian Patrick would prefer you remember that he's Christian Patrick."

Christian walks toward the ring.

Jim Gunt: "He has been very clear about that."

Christian circles the ring. He looks at Paul, at the canvas, then at the turnbuckles, scoping out every inch of the ring. He climbs onto the apron and wipes his boots before stepping through the ropes. Christian adjusts the tape around his wrists as Paul extends his hand. Christian looks down at it, not quite sure what to make of his opponent. Paul smiles back at him, and Christian shrugs and shakes it.

The crowd cheers as Christian releases. The referee checks both men.

DING DING DING!

Paul Freedom! moves first, despite already having two matches in on the newcomer. He throws a kick, but Christian catches the leg. Paul hops. Christian Patrick attempts a takedown, but Paul drops out of it. He rolls through, but Christian stays with him. Paul springs to his feet, somehow managing to stay one step ahead, and throws a forearm. Christian answers with one of his own. Paul backs away, attempting a break, but Christian advances. Paul suddenly leaps.

FLYING BULLDOG!

Christian hits the mat and Paul quickly goes for a cover.

ONE!

TWO!

Christian kicks out.

Jim Gunt: "Paul came out fast!"

Paul grabs Christian.

SNAP SUPLEX!

Christian lands and Paul immediately scrambles to the ropes. He rebounds but Christian Patrick catches him.

HIGH-ANGLE SPINEBUSTER!

Paul crashes down to the mat and Christian covers.

ONE!

TWO!

Paul kicks out. Christian pulls him up.

OVER-THE-SHOULDER GUTBUSTER!

Paul doubles over and Christian goes right for the arm.

CROSSFACE!

Paul struggles.

Mike Rolash: "This is where Christian's technical game starts becoming a problem!"

Paul Freedom! claws toward the ropes. He reaches out and his fingertips touch the bottom rope. The referee orders Christian to release and eventually the second generation superstar does. Paul rolls outside. Christian watches him as Paul takes a deep breath. He slaps his own cheeks.

Paul Freedom!: "Okay!"

He climbs back into the ring as Christian charges. Paul sidesteps and Patrick hits the ropes. The Asterisk attempts a drop toe hold, but Christian jumps over it. Paul looks up.

SHORT-ARM CLOTHESLINE!

Paul Freedom! is absolutely flattened. Christian pulls him up.

RELEASE GERMAN SUPLEX!

Paul flips through the air and lands hard.

Jim Gunt: "Christian Patrick is systematically taking Paul apart!"

Christian stalks him. Paul crawls toward the corner, but Christian Patrick grabs him. He tries the Saito Suplex, but the Asterisk fights it, the crowd coming alive on his side. Paul elbows backward and Christian loosens his grip. Freedom! turns and arches his head towards his opponent.

HEADBUTT!

Christian staggers, nearly losing his footing. Paul Freedom! sees the opportunity.

STANDING MOONSAULT!

Paul lands on top of Christian, but he isn't done with him. He fires punches rapidly into his opponent's face. Christian does his best to cover up, and Paul suddenly changes tactics and pulls him up.

BULLDOG!

Christian hits the mat. Paul points toward the corner. The crowd knows.

Mike Rolash: "Oh no."

Paul climbs. He gives the crowd two peace signs.

Jim Gunt: "He's going upstairs!"

Paul leaps.

*IM—

Christian rolls away. Paul crashes onto the canvas.

Mike Rolash: "HE MISSED!"

Paul Freedom! grabs his knee, and Christian is already moving. He grabs Paul from behind. Saito Suplex! Paul lands on the back of his neck, but Christian Patrick doesn't cover. He knows better. He pulls Paul up.

ALL RISE!

URANAGE!

Paul crashes down. Christian backs into the corner and watches Paul slowly gets to his feet. Suddenly the second generation superstar charges forward.

PATRICK KICK!

SUPERKICK!

Paul drops to his knees and Christian grabs him, hooking his leg.

Jim Gunt: "HEAVY IS THE HAND!"

Christian lifts. Saito Suplex! Paul somehow lands on his feet. The crowd erupts as Christian turns. Paul charges into a cartwheel.

THE SVOBODA SPECIAL!

NO!

Christian counters by pushing Paul away. He rebounds off the ropes and the Fractured Heir catches him.

ROUND THE WORLD!

SPINNING LARIAT!

Paul flips inside out. Christian covers.

ONE!

TWO!

THR—!

PAUL KICKS OUT!

Jim Gunt: "PAUL FREEDOM REFUSES TO DIE!"

Mike Rolash: "And now Christian Patrick is realizing exactly what Alabaster Enders saw!"

Christian sits beside Paul for a moment. He looks frustrated more than angry. Focused even more than frustrated. He looks at Paul's legs, then at the turnbuckle, then finally back at Paul. Christian has figured something out. Paul slowly rises and Christian approaches. The Asterisk swings but Christian Patrick easily ducks underneath. He grabs Paul's waist.

German suplex!

Paul lands and Christian holds on.

Another!

Paul lands again. Christian holds on a third time.

RELEASE GERMAN!

Paul crashes into the canvas. Christian doesn't rush. He pulls Paul up. The Asterisk is barely standing as Christian hooks both arms.

Jim Gunt: "MY TIME NOW!"

Christian lifts Paul into the air, his opponent desperately kicking at him to try to get the release. Eventually, Christian's grip slips and Paul Freedom! drops. Patrick turns a one eighty and Paul swings a wild right hand. Christian ducks. Paul's boot catches the canvas awkwardly. He stumbles, just for a second. Christian sees it and steps behind him. He

hooks both arms.

Mike Rolash: "PAUL'S IN TROUBLE!"

Christian lifts. Paul's feet leave the mat before he's driven down hard into the mat.

MY TIME NOW!

SHEER DROP BRAINBUSTER!

Paul's body folds against the canvas. Christian immediately covers.

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

DING DING DING!

The Ziggo Dome erupts.

Joey Garcia: "Paul Freedom! has been eliminated! That means the winner of this Chaos Championship #1 contendership gauntlet match is...The Fractured Heir...CHRISTIAN PATRICK!!"

Jim Gunt: "CHRISTIAN PATRICK HAS WON!"

Mike Rolash: "IN HIS CWF DEBUT!"

Jim Gunt: "WHAT A DEBUT!"

Christian remains on his knees for several seconds. He looks down at Paul, then slowly rises. The referee raises his arm.

Jim Gunt: "Christian Patrick has survived Paul Freedom! And what a performance by Paul Freedom!"

Mike Rolash: "Paul pinned Dakota Anderson. He pinned Kevin Hunter. He fought through exhaustion, he threw everything he had at Christian Patrick, and he came within inches of winning this entire thing!"

Christian looks toward the entrance, then toward the Chaos Championship hanging in the distance on the screen.

Jim Gunt: "But Christian Patrick is the man who walks away with the prize!"

Christian turns toward his opponent. Paul is sitting up, and he looks devastated. He looks at the mat, then toward Christian. Paul slowly gets to his feet. Christian waits as Paul walks toward him. He extends his hand.

Christian takes it.

Paul shakes it firmly before nodding at his final opponent in the gauntlet.

Paul Freedom!: "Good match."

Christian nods.

Christian Patrick: "Good fight."

Paul Freedom! releases his hand. He gives Christian a small smile, then he turns and rolls beneath the bottom rope. Paul walks up the ramp alone. He looks back once as Christian Patrick is standing in the center of the ring. The referee raises Christian's hand.

Jim Gunt: "Christian Patrick is officially the NEW number one contender to the CWF Chaos Championship!"

Mike Rolash: "Which means sometime down the road, the Fractured Heir will stand across the ring from Esmeralda

von Krauss!"

Jim Gunt: "The new Chaos Champion against the son of John Patrick!"

Mike Rolash: "And Christian just announced his arrival in CWF in a very big way!"

The camera cuts between Christian standing victorious in the ring and Paul Freedom disappearing through the backstage curtain.

Jim Gunt: "Christian Patrick has his opportunity."

Mike Rolash: "But don't forget Paul Freedom."

Jim Gunt: "No."

Christian slowly looks toward the camera.

Jim Gunt: "Because tonight, Paul Freedom proved something too."

Mike Rolash: "What's that?"

Jim Gunt: "That the Asterisk is starting to look like a name people might want to remember."

Christian raises his fist one more time as the camera fades to black.

Welcome Back

Segment

The camera cuts away from the ring and into one of the quieter corridors beneath the Ziggo Dome. The noise of the crowd is distant as we get further into the catacombs of the arena, muffled behind concrete walls and closed production doors. For a moment, nothing seems particularly unusual.

Then the camera finds Mia Rayne.

She stands alone near one of the backstage loading doors, still carrying the exhaustion of the night. There is something different about her tonight, though. Perhaps it is the fact that she is about to wrestle again. Perhaps it is the fact that she has finally returned to a CWF that no longer resembles the world she left behind.

Whatever it is, she doesn't get long to contemplate it as a familiar voice comes from behind her.

Jaiden Rishel: "You always did have a talent for finding the middle of a disaster."

Mia turns to see Jaiden Rishel standing several feet away. For the first time since Ascension, the Prince of CWF is standing inside a CWF arena as something other than a hero trying to save the world from a cult of vampires, or the man who watched as Amelia pressed a button bringing the world crashing down around him.

Jaiden stands in much cleaner and sleeker clothing than we'd seen him wear back in the Colosseum days. He has a designer dark blue track suit on with a white undershirt, and dark sunglasses which he presses up his face to stare directly into Mia's eyes.

Mia Rayne: "Well if it isn't the Prince, gracing the peasants with his presence..."

Jaiden Rishel: "Yeah. I know. It's been a while."

He gives her a small smile before looking down the hallway.

Jaiden Rishel: "Last time you and I stood together, everything was falling apart. Literally."

His expression changes.

Jaiden Rishel: "You remember Anthropolis?"

Mia Rayne: "How could anyone forget? So much happened, so many decisions made in an instant."

Jaiden Rishel: "You're right, and none of that we can change. All we're left with now is the broken memories."

He pauses.

Jaiden Rishel: "But those memories? They're starting to become more and more clear, Mia. I remember my father, all the ups and downs I've had with him through my life. I remember what happened to him in his final days. I remember waking up in a world that wasn't supposed to exist anymore. And I remember Anhellica telling me that CWF belonged to her, that the Amoralists owned it. That my father's legacy had been swallowed up by the world she built."

Jaiden looks directly at Mia.

Jaiden Rishel: "And I remember you standing beside me when almost everyone else had either fallen, disappeared, or decided they were better off staying out of it."

Jaiden bites his lip, trying to hold back the emotion as he continues.

Jaiden Rishel: "We fought together. We bled together. We lost people together."

He reaches into the inside pocket of his jacket and removes a slim black folder.

Jaiden Rishel: "So when we came back here, I had a question."

He taps the folder against his palm.

Jaiden Rishel: "Who actually owned CWF?"

Mia's expression changes slightly. Her face twitches and she shrugs.

Mia Rayne: "Your guess is as good as mine."

Mia smirks slightly as Jaiden continues. Something was apparently really exciting, and the punchline had to be coming, right?

Jaiden Rishel: "Because apparently..."

He opens the folder.

Jaiden Rishel: "...nobody bothered to ask a lawyer."

Jaiden almost laughs to himself.

Jaiden Rishel: "Anhellica never legally owned Championship Wrestling Federation."

He lets that hang for a moment.

Jaiden Rishel: "Not in 2326. Not before 2326. And certainly not after we came back."

He turns a page.

Jaiden Rishel: "She controlled it. She ruled it. She put an army of psychopaths between herself and anyone who disagreed with her. She had Watchers, Amoralists, weapons, technology, and enough bodies to make everybody believe she had the authority to do whatever the hell she wanted."

Jaiden closes the folder.

Jaiden Rishel: "But authority and ownership are two very different things."

He looks toward the camera.

Jaiden Rishel: "And apparently, the paperwork survived the apocalypse."

Jaiden reaches into his pocket again and produces another document. This one has a familiar logo at the top.

Jaiden Rishel: "My father founded this company. And when he died, whatever happened afterward didn't erase that."

His voice becomes quieter as he looks back to Mia.

Jaiden Rishel: "So I went looking. I found the lawyers, I searched through records."

Jaiden smiles.

Jaiden Rishel: "And then I did something truly fucking insane. I went off and bought my father's company."

Mia stares at him.

Mia Rayne: "A stellar investment in the future I would hope?"

Jaiden Rishel: "So..."

He folds the document neatly and puts it away.

Jaiden Rishel: "Welcome back to CWF, Mia."

He gestures around them.

Jaiden Rishel: "You're looking at the new owner."

For the first time, the enormity of what Jaiden has said seems to settle over the hallway.

Jaiden Rishel: "And before you start worrying..."

He raises a hand.

Jaiden Rishel: "No. I'm not putting you back in charge."

A faint grin.

Jaiden Rishel: "You've done enough bossing people around to last several lifetimes."

He steps closer.

Jaiden Rishel: "Besides, I watched what happened at Ascension."

The humor disappears.

Jaiden Rishel: "I watched you stand there when you didn't have to. I watched you fight for this place when there wasn't even any guarantee there would be a place left to fight for. Whatever happened between us before... whatever happened between Mia Rayne, Amelia, me, my father, and all the insanity that came after..."

He nods toward her.

Jaiden Rishel: "I saw what CWF meant to you. We need that here, now more than ever."

He pauses before slowly smiling.

Jaiden Rishel: "Just not behind a desk."

Jaiden steps aside, gesturing toward the arena.

Jaiden Rishel: "Because you're needed in that ring."

Mia's eyes narrow slightly.

Mia Rayne: "Back in the saddle again? There are several on the roster I've had my eyes on..."

Jaiden Rishel: "That's right."

He points toward the arena.

Jaiden Rishel: "You're back."

The faintest grin crosses his face.

Jaiden Rishel: "Full time."

He lets the words breathe for a moment.

Jaiden Rishel: "And since you've apparently decided tonight is the perfect night to prove you still belong..."

Jaiden looks toward the arena entrance.

Jaiden Rishel: "You already have a match."

The camera briefly cuts to the arena graphic.

MIA RAYNE vs. "THE OUTSIDER" LEX COLLINS

Jaiden Rishel: "Former HWW World Champion. One half of the CWF Tag Team Champions. One of the toughest bastards currently walking around this building."

He looks Mia up and down. She stares at him.

Mia Rayne: "My eyes are up here."

Jaiden Rishel: "Oh...sorry. I was just seeing if you'd appreciate a challenge."

Mia Rayne: "This so called Outsider will be a fun first toy to play with. I just hope he doesn't break easily."

Jaiden starts to walk away, then he stops and looks back.

Jaiden Rishel: "Oh."

That single word changes something. Jaiden reaches into his jacket and pulls out his phone.

Jaiden Rishel: "I almost forgot something...I'm not finished."

He turns the phone toward Mia. The screen displays a polished promotional graphic.

CWF LAST CALL

DECEMBER 11, 2026

The color drains from Mia's expression. The cockiness and zany amusement disappears. For perhaps the first time tonight, Mia looks genuinely caught off guard. Jaiden watches her carefully. He lowers the phone and turns it toward the camera. The graphic expands across the screen.

The camera slowly pushes closer and closer, until the words fill the entire screen.

THE FINAL CWF EVENT OF ALL TIME.

The familiar CWF logo sits beneath the words. For a moment, there is only silence, then the screen cuts to black.

Carry-On

Segment

The camera opens on Lex Collins' duffel bag. Airline tags from Los Angeles, Reno and Amsterdam hang from one handle. The CWF Tag Team Championship lies across the top.

Lex sits shirtless on an examination table. The bruising begins beneath his left arm, crosses his ribs and disappears around his back. Fresh damage layered over everything that was already turning yellow.

A CWF Trainer: presses two fingers into his side. Lex's stomach tightens.

Trainer: "When did this happen?"

Lex Collins: "What time zone?"

The trainer presses again. Lex's hand closes around the edge of the table but he remains stone-faced.

Trainer: "Breathe in."

Lex does. The breath stops halfway.

Trainer: "All the way."

He tries again. Something catches beneath the bruising. Lex turns away and coughs once into his fist. That's so much worse. His boots and gear are arranged on a chair nearby. Lex reaches down for one boot but cannot bend far enough without his ribs locking. He tries from another angle. Same result.

The trainer picks it up for him.

Lex Collins: "I had it."

Trainer: "Clearly."

Lex takes the boot without looking at them. He braces his heel against the table leg and works it on slowly. The trainer moves behind him, separating the hair near his scalp. Lex whirls and catches their wrist. The motion tears through his ribs. His face drains white, but his grip remains locked. Silence. For a good ten seconds before that feral gleam fades from his eyes. Lex releases them.

Lex Collins: "Sorry. Just a little twitchy, I guess."

Trainer: "I was checking the old wound."

Lex touches it himself. Two careful fingers. No blood. He shows it to the trainer, about to argue how he's good enough to go against Mia when his phone vibrates beside the championship. He ignores it. Watches while the trainer goes for a roll of tape, holding it up like he's asking for permission before Lex's head dips just a fraction. He's worried anything more will send him packing back to the hotel, his match scrubbed from the card. The trainer begins wrapping his ribs. Each pass pulls tighter. Lex raises his arms as far as they will go and watches the match graphic glowing on the television across the room.

MIA RAYNE vs. LEX COLLINS

Trainer: "The tape makes the target obvious."

The laughter's absolutely scornful and self-deprecating.

Lex Collins: "My guy, it was obvious when I walked in bent sideways."

Another pass. Tighter.

Trainer: "You're protecting your ribs every time you breathe."

Lex Collins: "That's an easy fix. Just won't breathe. Easy-peasy."

The trainer nods toward Lex's hand, still hovering near his scalp, no-selling the gallows humor.

Trainer: "And your head every time somebody gets close. You can't protect both in there. Especially not against someone like Mia Rayne."

Lex says nothing. He finishes lacing the boot. Pulls on the second. Stands. His body immediately lists to one side. Lex waits. Forces himself upright. Blinks slowly like he's not currently seeing stars before he pulls his shirt over his head

one painful inch at a time. Lex drapes the championship across the top, then lifts the duffel.

Trainer: "Lex."

Collins stops in the doorway.

Trainer: "You heard me, right?"

Lex looks back. Sighs.

Lex Collins: "Yeah. I did. Nothin' wrong with my ears."

He flashes a tired, crooked smile.

Lex Collins: "You think Mia's gonna fuck me up. Trouble with that hypothesis is how I've been fucked up for twenty years. You think she's gonna play 'connect the dots', find all my damage an' exploit it. Right?"

The trainer nods.

Lex Collins: "Good. Might actually make this interesting, then."

He walks out without another word, leaving the poor trainer speechless before we....

CUT TO BLACK.

Lex Collins vs. Mia Rayne

Match

The camera returns from commercial to the Ziggo Dome, and the crowd is already buzzing as the familiar opening notes of "Unbreakable" by New Year's Day begin to echo throughout the building. Jim Gunt's voice comes over the broadcast, noticeably quieter than usual.

Jim Gunt: "Ladies and gentlemen, after what we just heard from Jaiden Rishel and Mia Rayne, there is a very different feeling in this building tonight."

Mike Rolash: "I don't even know how we're supposed to transition from that announcement into wrestling, Jim."

Jim Gunt: "We do what we've always done. We ring the bell."

Mike Rolash: "That's the problem, isn't it?"

The lights shift and Mia Rayne emerges at the top of the ramp. There is still something slightly unsettling about the way she smiles at the audience, but tonight there is also a different confidence in her posture. She pauses at the stage, takes a long look around the Ziggo Dome, and then begins her familiar skipping descent toward the ring. The crowd gives her a strong reaction, some cheering, some booing, but most simply wanting to see what the newly returned former World Champion is going to do now that she has officially been released back into active competition.

Jim Gunt: "Mia Rayne is back. Officially. After everything she accomplished in CWF before stepping away, after winning the Golden Intentions Rumble, after becoming a World Champion, after becoming a Hall of Famer earlier this year... she is finally back in the active competition portion of the roster."

Mike Rolash: "And she's picked one hell of a first dance."

Mia rolls beneath the bottom rope and rises immediately, throwing her arms outward as the crowd responds. The smile becomes that trademark crazed smirk before she settles into her corner.

Then the lights dim again as "Re-Education" begins. The reaction is different as Lex Collins steps through the curtain wearing the CWF Tag Team Championship around his waist. His face is bruised, his lower lip still carrying the damage from his recent battles, and there is an obvious stiffness to the way he rolls his shoulders before starting toward the ring.

Jim Gunt: "And there is the other half of this equation. Lex Collins."

Mike Rolash: "Who has had an absolutely insane week."

Jim Gunt: "Crown of Legends last weekend. Two nights of competition. First night, he and Adam Hansen successfully defended those CWF Tag Team Championships against Jared Holmes and Wade Moor. Then, on the final night, Lex entered that High Noon match for the HVW World Championship against Dan Highlander, Christopher Saint James, and the woman who shocked the world by winning it all, Danielle Page."

Mike Rolash: "And if you watched that match, Jim, you saw what Lex went through. Then you remember he has been wrestling everywhere else too. UPRISING. CWF. HVW. Everywhere."

Jim Gunt: "He is running on fumes."

Mike Rolash: "And he's walking directly toward Mia Rayne."

Lex reaches the ring and climbs onto the apron. He pauses there for a second, looking across at Mia. There is no smile this time. No joke. No gesture to the crowd. He simply steps through the ropes and removes the Tag Team Championship, handing it to the official.

Lex stretches the back of his neck and looks at Mia. Mia tilts her head. The bell rings.

DING DING DING!

Neither moves immediately as the match begins. Lex finally takes one step forward. Mia takes one as well.

They meet in the center with a collar-and-elbow tie-up, and immediately it becomes obvious that neither woman nor man is interested in wasting time. Lex uses his weight advantage to force Mia backward, walking her several steps toward the ropes before Mia twists her hips and turns the position into a side headlock. Lex's arm immediately snakes around her waist, attempting to peel her off, but Mia drops her weight and drives a short elbow into his ribs. She follows with another. Lex absorbs both and answers with a European uppercut that snaps Mia's head backward.

The crowd reacts in a state of shock as Mia doesn't fall. She simply looks at the former HVW World Champion and smiles. Lex gives the smallest nod.

Mike Rolash: "I think they just agreed on something."

Jim Gunt: "What?"

Mike Rolash: "This is going to hurt."

Lex shoots forward again, but Mia catches him with a knee to the stomach and immediately plants him with a short snap DDT. She doesn't rush the cover. Instead she rolls through, grabs Lex by the hair, and pulls him to a seated position before driving another DDT into the canvas. This time she hooks the leg.

ONE!

TWO!

Lex kicks out, but Mia's expression doesn't change. She simply sits up and studies him.

Jim Gunt: "Mia isn't frustrated. That's important. Her own profile tells us she doesn't lose control when an opponent kicks out. She looks for the damage and she keeps going."

Mia grabs Lex's left arm and begins wrenching it across her knee. Lex grimaces, rolling toward his stomach to relieve the pressure, but Mia follows him, dragging the arm back and forcing him onto his side. Lex manages to get a boot against her hip and pushes her away. He gets to one knee before Mia charges. Lex catches her.

SWINGING NECKBREAKER!

The impact shakes Mia's entire body. Lex stays down beside her for a moment, breathing heavily before forcing himself upright. He wipes at his mouth, sees blood on his fingers, and gives a small, humorless smile.

Mike Rolash: "That smile is concerning."

Jim Gunt: "That's Lex Collins. He's hurt, Mike."

Mike Rolash: "I know."

Jim Gunt: "And he's acting like he's taking inventory."

Lex grabs Mia around the waist and lifts.

FALLAWAY SLAM!

Mia lands hard and rolls toward the corner. Lex follows, but his attempt at a big boot comes a fraction too late. Mia ducks underneath it and catches his planted leg, dragging him down. She immediately begins deliberately attacking the knee. One stomp to the thigh. Another to the calf. Then Mia drives her knee across the back of Lex's leg and twists. Lex reaches toward the ropes, but Mia drags him backward. The crowd starts to boo.

Mike Rolash: "There it is. She found something."

Jim Gunt: "She absolutely did. Lex has been wrestling at an absurd pace for weeks, and Mia is smart enough to understand that she doesn't need to destroy the whole man. She just needs to make one part of him stop working."

Lex crawls, his fingertips touch the bottom rope, and finally Mia Rayne releases the hold before the referee can begin the count. The Outsider pulls himself up using the ropes. Mia's head tilts sideways for just a second before she runs right at him.

THE PUNCHLINE!

Lex catches the rebounding clothesline with both arms and stumbles backward, but Mia changes direction, turns, and drives a running knee into his stomach instead. Lex doubles over. Mia hoists him up into the air in powerbomb position. Collins does his best to fight out of it, not with a reversal, but by hammering short punches into her neck and upper chest.

One.

Two.

Three.

The Forsaken Psychotic loses her grip and Lex lands behind her. He immediately catches her with a stiff elbow to the back of the head. Mia staggers and Lex grabs her from behind.

AD HOMINEM.

The headlock driver drives Mia into the mat. Lex drops beside her rather than immediately covering, one hand going to his knee.

Jim Gunt: "That hurt Lex almost as much as it hurt Mia."

Mike Rolash: "That's what happens when you're already beat up and trying to throw a headlock driver."

Lex finally turns Mia over and hooks the leg.

ONE!

TWO!

TH-

Mia kicks out as the referee drops down to make the three count. The Outsider doesn't complain, he simply sits up and studies her. That veteran instinct returns. He looks at the way she is moving, he looks at her ribs, then he looks at her neck. He chooses the neck. Lex pulls Mia up and peppers her with short punches, each one compact and economical. European uppercut. Jab. Palm strike. Another uppercut. Mia doesn't give two shits about some "Outsider's" choice, and answers with a forearm that rocks him backward.

Lex steps forward again and Mia hits him. Lex hits her. Neither starts swinging wildly. They trade individual, incredibly deliberate shots, each strike becoming heavier than the last until Mia finally ducks under a right hand and catches Lex around the waist. Suplex. Lex lands hard, but Mia Rayne doesn't let go. She hits another, this one is slower, uglier, and more painful.

Lex Collins rolls away afterward, clutching his back. Mia rises and shows surprising patience as she waits. Lex pushes himself to one knee. The former boss lady charges, but Lex catches her.

DAMAGED GOODS!

The snap sit-out uranage folds Mia into the canvas. Lex remains seated for a moment, chest heaving.

Mike Rolash: "That was nasty."

Jim Gunt: "And Lex isn't wasting anything. He knows he's tired. He knows Mia is hurt. This is becoming a contest of who can keep functioning longer."

Lex pulls Mia up by the wrist. He attempts the MIND KILLER, but Mia blocks the side slam backbreaker by planting her foot. She twists.

SPIKING DDT!

Lex's head crashes against the canvas as the crowd erupts. Mia rolls to her knees and immediately grabs at Lex's leg. She sees the damaged knee, she knows just where her opening is. She drags Lex toward the corner and begins stomping the leg again. Lex reaches for the ropes, but Mia pulls him away and catches him with a high-angle dragon screw. Lex screams, but Mia surprisingly doesn't scream back. She gets back to her feet, staring down at him with the cold focus of somebody solving a problem.

Jim Gunt: "This is the Mia Rayne we were warned about. Chaos, yes, but controlled chaos. She doesn't need to be reckless. She has identified the knee and she is attacking it over and over."

Mia backs into the opposite corner as Lex pulls himself upright. She charges in but the veteran sees it coming. He moves just in time as Rayne slams shoulder-first into the turnbuckles. Lex catches her from behind.

BRICKS!

The sudden knockout right hand lands flush. Mia collapses against the ropes. Lex gathers what little he has left and pulls her toward the center.

READY TO FALL!

He pivots, looking for the final shot, but Mia drops her weight. Lex's knee buckles, and the swinging reverse STO never comes. Mia lands behind him and immediately grabs his head.

HIGH-ANGLE DDT!

Lex crashes down like the sack of bricks that he punches through on a weekly basis, and Mia rolls him over, looking out at the shocked crowd with an awe-inspiring smile on her face.

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

NO!

Lex kicks out at two point nine. The crowd roars at the near fall, but Mia is nonplused, immediately sitting upright. She doesn't look frustrated, she looks almost pleased.

Mike Rolash: "She knows."

Jim Gunt: "Knows what?"

Mike Rolash: "That she can beat him."

Lex crawls toward the ropes but the Forsaken Psychotic follows. He suddenly turns and fires a desperation European uppercut. Mia stumbles and Lex follows with another. Another. He grabs her around the waist.

EXPLODER SUPLEX!

Mia goes flying, but Lex drops to his knees afterward, exhausted. For the first time all night, Mia is slower to get up. Lex sees it. He forces himself upright and charges. Running corner clothesline. Mia absorbs it. Lex immediately transitions into the release German. Mia hits the canvas and rolls through the landing. She gets up as Lex turns.

The Punchline!

The rebounding clothesline catches Lex across the chest and sends him spinning. Somehow, he refuses to go down. Mia grabs him.

WISECRACK!

The Randy Orton-style backbreaker folds Lex over her knee. Lex rolls off and hits the mat. Mia stands over him and waits. Lex struggles to his knees. Mia's eyes narrow. She delivers The Insert Pun Here, a straight, brutal strike that snaps Lex upright and leaves him stunned. Lex is barely standing as Mia catches him.

CHAOTIC INTERVENTION!

Instead of forcing some elaborate maneuver, Mia uses the damage already created. She twists Lex's compromised leg out from underneath him, sends him crashing awkwardly toward the mat, and immediately follows by spiking him with a high-angle DDT. Lex folds and Mia quickly hooks both of his legs.

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

DING DING DING!

For a moment, the Ziggo Dome is simply loud, then Mia slowly sits up.

Joey Garcia: "And the winner of this match by pinfall....MIA RAYNE!!"

The referee takes her wrist. She rises slowly to her feet as Lex remains on the canvas. Mia turns toward him as Lex rolls onto one elbow.

Their eyes meet. There is no handshake, there is no grand gesture. Lex simply nods. Not dramatically or happily, but a whole lot of respect is shown between the two competitors just with that simple nod.

Mia watches him, then she nods back. Lex pushes himself to his feet using the ropes, retrieves his CWF Tag Team Championship from the timekeeper, and slips out beneath the bottom rope. He pauses at ringside, looking back at Mia one last time before turning toward the entrance.

Jim Gunt: "A hell of a fight from Lex Collins."

Mike Rolash: "And considering what he's been through, I'm honestly surprised he was standing at the end."

Jim Gunt: "Mia Rayne has returned to CWF competition, and she has returned with a victory over one half of the CWF Tag Team Champions. And with the announcement that Last Call in December will be our final event of all time for CWF, I for one am glad to see the Forsaken Psychotic back in the ring for our final few months."

Mike Rolash: "Oh don't go getting emotional on us now, Jimbo."

Lex disappears through the curtain. Mia doesn't celebrate. She doesn't climb the ropes or acknowledge the cheering Amsterdam crowd. Instead, she slowly turns toward the hard camera and the smile fades. Her expression becomes completely serious. The crowd quiets as Mia looks directly into the lens. She doesn't say a single word, choosing instead to stare deeply into your soul. The screen abruptly fades to black.

Jim Gunt: "Mia Rayne has made her intentions crystal clear."

Mike Rolash: "Has she? I'm not sure Mia's intentions are ever truly clear."

Jim Gunt: "Mia Rayne is back."

Mike Rolash: "I mean yeah, I guess that much is clear..."

The CWF logo appears before the screen cuts to commercial.

Revolution 13

Segment

Check out UPRISING, one of CWF's top affiliate feds, newest show: REVOLUTION 13 from Reno, Nevada here! It's the fall-out of the massive two night Solstice IV PPV and the Apex Championship is on the line as Crash Rodriguez defends against "The Final Arbiter" John Patrick. This is so much more takes place on a show you'll just have to see to believe!

The Mountain

Segment

The camera comes up on an empty section of the Ziggo Dome.

No crowd. No entrance music. No bright lights.

Just rows upon rows of empty seats disappearing into the darkness.

The camera slowly pans across the arena before settling on a small display mounted against one of the concrete walls.

Photographs.

Championship victories.

Old CWF posters.

Golden Intentions.

Tag Team Championships.

The Impact Championship.

Paramount Championship.

And photographs from companies that no longer exist.

In front of it all stands Dangerous Dan.

No championship around his waist.

No Chris beside him.

No microphone in his hand.

Just Dan.

He studies the wall silently for several seconds before finally speaking.

Dangerous Dan: "That's a lot of history."

He gives a small laugh.

Dangerous Dan: "Some of it mine."

Dan points toward one of the photographs.

Dangerous Dan: "Some of it belongs to people who ain't around anymore."

Another photograph.

Dangerous Dan: "Some of it belongs to guys I beat."

Another.

Dangerous Dan: "Some of it belongs to guys who beat me."

He takes a step closer.

Dangerous Dan: "And there's one thing missing."

Dan's eyes settle on an empty space at the center of the display.

There is no photograph there.

No championship.

Nothing.

Dangerous Dan: "That."

He points.

Dangerous Dan: "The one thing I've spent damn near twenty years chasing."

Dan pauses.

Dangerous Dan: "The CWF World Heavyweight Championship."

The camera slowly pushes closer.

Dangerous Dan: "I've had a hell of a career."

A proud smile.

Dangerous Dan: "I've won titles. I've won tournaments. I've won the Golden Intentions. I've fought in damn near every kind of match you can think of."

He looks down briefly.

Dangerous Dan: "I've had nights where I thought I was finished."

Beat.

Dangerous Dan: "And somehow... I kept getting back up."

Dan turns back toward the empty space.

Dangerous Dan: "But every time I climbed another mountain, there was always a bigger one sitting behind it."

He exhales.

Dangerous Dan: "And at the very top..."

Dan taps the empty wall.

Dangerous Dan: "...was that damn belt."

Silence.

Dangerous Dan: "For years, I thought winning it would prove something."

He shakes his head.

Dangerous Dan: "That I was good enough."

Another shake.

Dangerous Dan: "That all the miles were worth it."

He looks toward the camera.

Dangerous Dan: "That every scar, every loss, every time I got back up when I had no business doing it... meant something."

Dan smiles faintly.

Dangerous Dan: "But I figured something out over the last few days."

He steps away from the wall.

Dangerous Dan: "It already meant something."

That smile grows.

Dangerous Dan: "I don't need Danny B's championship to tell me who I am."

Dan looks down at his taped fists.

Dangerous Dan: "I'm Dangerous Dan."

He looks back up.

Dangerous Dan: "I'm the kid from Smithville who got into this business with his brother."

Dangerous Dan: "I'm the guy who kept coming back."

Dangerous Dan: "I'm the guy who lost championships and chased them again."

Dangerous Dan: "I'm the guy who spent fifteen years waiting for somebody to finally say..."

He pauses.

Dangerous Dan: "...you're next."

Dan's expression hardens.

Dangerous Dan: "Well, Danny..."

He looks directly into the lens.

Dangerous Dan: "Tonight, I'm not climbing that mountain because I need to prove I belong at the top."

Beat.

Dangerous Dan: "I'm climbing it because I finally got the chance."

Dan turns toward the empty arena.

Dangerous Dan: "And when you've spent twenty years waiting for your moment..."

He starts walking away.

Dangerous Dan: "...you don't waste it."

Dan disappears into the darkness of the arena corridor.

The camera remains on the wall.

On the empty space where the CWF World Heavyweight Championship should be.

After several seconds, Dan's voice echoes faintly from somewhere off camera.

Dangerous Dan: "The ENDD is near..."

Beat.

Dangerous Dan: "Can you feel it?"

Fade to black.

Adam Hansen vs. Caledonia vs. Wade Moor

Match

The Ziggo Dome is still buzzing from the earlier action as the camera settles on the ring. Three competitors are about to collide in a match where there are no alliances, no disqualifications, and perhaps most importantly, no reason for any of them to trust the other two.

Jim Gunt: "We are coming off one of the biggest nights of Dangerous Dan's career, and now we turn our attention to another matchup with enormous implications. Three very different competitors are about to collide."

Mike Rolash: "And I wouldn't want to be any of them, Jim. You've got Caledonia, who has been through an emotional rollercoaster since coming back to CWF. You've got Adam Hansen, one half of the brand-new CWF Tag Team Champions. And then you've got Wade Moor."

Jim Gunt: "A Hall of Famer and former World Champion."

Mike Rolash: "Who also happens to be six-foot-four, 247 pounds, and apparently thinks getting hit in the face is a good way to spend an evening."

The arena lights fall and "Day and Night" by Billie Piper begins playing. The response is immediate as Caledonia steps onto the stage. She stops beneath the entrance lights and looks across the Ziggo Dome. There is a battle-worn quality to her tonight. She doesn't smile. She doesn't play to the crowd for long. She simply takes in the moment before raising both hands as the audience roars.

Jim Gunt: "Caledonia Highlander has had one of the most remarkable journeys in CWF history, and recently, one of the most difficult."

Mike Rolash: "Eight years. Eight years waiting for another match with Mariella Jade Flair."

Jim Gunt: "And after defeating MJ Flair in their first encounter at Paradise all those years ago, Caledonia finally got that rematch."

Mike Rolash: "And lost."

Caledonia makes her way down the ramp, slapping hands with several fans before climbing the steps. She wipes her boots against the apron and steps through the ropes, before walking to the center of the ring.

Caledonia looks toward the hard camera, then toward the entrance and waits.

The music cuts before “Wanted Dead or Alive” by Bon Jovi hits. The arena lights turn red and Adam Hansen steps through the curtain. The Carolina Cowboy adjusts his hat and gives the crowd a familiar “YEEHAW!” before making his way down the ramp. But there is a clear difference in his demeanor tonight. Adam isn't carrying himself like a man looking for another match, he's carrying himself like a champion.

Jim Gunt: “Adam Hansen enters tonight as one half of the brand-new CWF Tag Team Champions.”

Mike Rolash: “After Wrestle Fest V, where Adam and Lex Collins defeated Wade Moor and Jared Holmes.”

Jim Gunt: “A victory that took the championships away from #BeachKrew.”

Mike Rolash: “And Wade Moor has not forgotten that.”

Adam climbs onto the apron and scrapes his boots against the edge, flips over the top rope and enters the ring. He removes his hat and vest and looks across at Caledonia. His expression hardens as he prepares himself for the big triple threat match.

The arena falls darker as “The Dark Sentencer” by Coheed and Cambria begins. A lone spotlight appears as Wade Moor stands beneath it wearing his open Hawaiian shirt, sunglasses and familiar grin. The former CWF Tag Team champion takes a long sip from the beer in his hand before handing it to a ringside attendant.

Mike Rolash: “There he is.”

Jim Gunt: “Wade Moor.”

Mike Rolash: “The man who apparently came out here dressed for a fishing trip and somehow ended up in a professional wrestling match.”

Jim Gunt: “A Hall of Famer, Mike.”

Mike Rolash: “I know. I'm just saying he looks like he could be looking for a bait shop after this.”

Wade strolls toward the ring without urgency. His eyes remain on Adam. The smile is there, but it disappears for just a moment when he reaches ringside. The GAWDNilla climbs onto the apron.

He steps through the ropes and Adam doesn't move. Wade slowly walks toward him. The two men stand face-to-face and Wade gives Adam a small grin.

Wade Moor: “You enjoying those belts?”

Adam doesn't answer him. Wade waits for just a moment and then nods.

Wade Moor: “Good.”

Wade steps away from Hansen, Caledonia watches the exchange. The referee checks all three competitors and calls for the bell.

DING DING DING!

Adam and Wade immediately start circling each other as Caledonia stays several feet away, watching. Wade points toward her.

Wade Moor: “Smart.”

Caledonia doesn't respond. Adam moves first. He shoots forward and catches Wade around the waist. Wade braces

himself, but Adam drives him backward into the corner with enough force to shake the turnbuckles. Adam buries a shoulder into Wade's stomach, then another, trying to take the larger veteran off his feet. Wade responds by wrapping an arm around Adam's head and dragging him into a side headlock. Adam fights upward, but Wade tightens the hold. Adam plants his feet and lifts. Wade's feet briefly leave the canvas, and Adam drops him with a hard back suplex.

Wade lands on his back. Adam gets up and Caledonia immediately attacks.

SUCH IS LIFE!

The enzuigiri catches Adam on the side of the head. Adam falls through the ropes and lands on the apron. Caledonia turns and Wade is already behind her. He catches her around the waist. Caledonia elbows backward and Wade releases. She spins out of it, but Wade throws a forearm. No, Caledonia ducks underneath it. She springs off the ropes at full speed and Wade catches her.

Release Uranage!

Caledonia crashes to the canvas. The former Tag Team champion rolls onto his knees. The current champion climbs back into the ring. Wade sees him and Adam charges. Moor ducks and Hansen's boot catches the middle rope. Wade grabs him.

Running corner clothesline!

Adam is crushed against the turnbuckles. Wade immediately follows with the release German. Adam is thrown halfway across the ring. Wade rises and looks toward Caledonia. She is already getting back up, bringing a wide smile to the Gawdnilla's face.

Wade Moor: "Your turn."

Caledonia charges forward. Wade catches her with a forearm leaving the High Priestess staggering but not off her feet. Wade goes for the discus clothesline, but Caledonia ducks. She rebounds from the ropes.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT!

Caledonia leaps onto the top rope in the corner and springs backward with the roundhouse. The kick catches Wade flush across the chest and jaw. Wade falls backward and Caledonia lands on her feet. She turns toward Adam and the Carolina Cowboy is already waiting. He catches her around the waist.

Fallaway Slam!

Caledonia is thrown across the ring. Adam covers.

ONE!

TWO!

Caledonia kicks out. Adam immediately pulls her up and drives a knee into her stomach.

USHIGOROSHI!

Caledonia is lifted across Adam's shoulders and dropped hard across his knee. The Regulator member hooks the leg.

ONE!

TWO!

Wade breaks the count with a boot to Adam's back. The Carolina Cowboy rolls away, attempting to roll out of the ring, but the big man grabs him.

POP UP SIT-OUT POWERBOMB!

Adam is driven into the mat and Wade Moor holds on for the cover as the life seems to be let out of the Ziggo Dome.

ONE!

TWO!

THR-

Adam powers up a shoulder as the referee drops down for the three count. Wade nods.

Wade Moor: "There you are."

Wade pulls Adam up, but the Carolina Cowboy fires a right hand. The former champion absorbs it, and the current one hits him again. The Gawdnilla grins.

Wade Moor: "That's more like it."

Adam swings again, but Wade catches the arm. Hansen reverses and his opponent is sent toward the ropes. Moor rebounds and the Carolina Cowboy catches him.

Snap Powerslam!

Wade Moor hits the canvas and Adam immediately grabs the legs. He begins trying to turn Wade over. Caledonia comes off the ropes. Adam sees her out the corner of his eye and releases Wade. Caledonia leaps through the air, but Adam Hansen catches her.

TURNPIKE POWERBOMB!

Caledonia lands hard on the back of her neck!

Adam covers.

ONE!

TWO!

Wade grabs Adam Hansen by the shoulder and pulls him off. The Carolina Cowboy spins around and Wade fires a discus clothesline. Adam ducks. The blow catches Caledonia instead. The former CWF World Champion collapses. Adam turns back toward Wade. The Gawdnilla catches him with a rolling elbow. Adam drops to one knee, and Wade hooks the waist.

Release Uranage!

Adam crashes hard to the mat, and Wade goes for the cover. Before the official can even drop down to make it, however, Caledonia grabs Wade's ankle and pulls him off. Wade lands on his stomach. Caledonia grabs his arm and pulls him into a grounded position. He tries to power out but Caledonia transitions. She drives a knee into his shoulder and twists the arm. Wade grimaces.

Jim Gunt: "Caledonia is changing the complexion of this match. She's not trying to outmuscle either of these men."

Mike Rolash: "She's making them fight her match."

Wade crawls toward the ropes but Caledonia pulls him back. Adam rises behind them and grabs Caledonia from behind, pulling her away.

Swinging Neckbreaker!

Caledonia hits the mat. Adam turns and sees his Tag Team rival already charging.

BLACKWATER KNEE!

The ripcord knee catches Adam in the jaw. The Carolina Cowboy drops, and Moor looks down at him. He turns and Caledonia is rising. Wade charges in, but Caledonia sidesteps. He crashes shoulder-first into the corner. Caledonia climbs the ropes.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT!

No, Wade moves at the last second. Caledonia lands awkwardly on the apron. Wade Moor grabs the former World champ and tries to pull her back inside. Caledonia catches the top rope and swings her legs around. Her foot catches Wade across the head. He staggers backward, trying to regain his bearings as Caledonia enters the ring. Adam is standing behind her. Caledonia turns as Adam charges. She drops, and Adam sails over her. Caledonia catches him on the way down. She rolls through, Adam is trapped in a submission.

Caledonia drives a series of short strikes into his chest before releasing him. Adam Hansen rolls toward the corner as the English Rose rises. Wade is behind her.

Dragon sleeper!

Wade Moor wraps his arm around Caledonia's neck and drops backward, trapping her. Caledonia immediately starts fighting the hands. The #BeachKrew member remains calm. Adam sees his opportunity slipping away and charges in. Wade releases Caledonia just before Adam arrives. His boot catches Wade instead. Wade rolls out of the ring. The Carolina Cowboy now looks to put the final nail in the High Priestess, but she ducks just in time. Adam turns and Caledonia kicks him in the stomach. She grabs his arm. Adam reverses, and Caledonia is sent toward the ropes. She rebounds.

Adam tries the Cowboy Stampede, but Caledonia slips over his shoulder. She lands behind him, and Hansen turns just a second too late.

SUCH IS LIFE!

The enzuigiri catches him clean. Adam drops and Caledonia immediately covers.

ONE!

TWO!

THRE-

Wade breaks the count and grabs Caledonia to pull her up. She throws a forearm, but Moor answers with one of his own. Caledonia hits another, and Wade's grin returns. They trade blows for several seconds, neither giving ground. Caledonia suddenly ducks beneath Wade's arm and strikes him with a kick to the thigh. Wade absorbs it. She kicks again. Wade steps forward, and Caledonia hits him with a third. Wade responds with a brutal rolling elbow. Caledonia falls backward, but the Gawdnilla doesn't cover. He looks toward Adam, and the Tag Team champion is pulling himself up using the ropes.

Wade walks over.

Wade Moor: "You still got those belts?"

Adam swings. Wade ducks. Adam's fist soars through the air. Wade catches him around the waist.

Exploder Suplex!

Adam lands hard. Wade drops beside him and pulls Adam up.

BLACKWATER KNEE!

Adam drops to his knees. Wade steps back and measures him. Caledonia suddenly rushes from behind. Wade turns toward her as Caledonia leaps.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT!

The roundhouse catches Wade in the jaw, dropping him abruptly. Caledonia drops right down for the cover.

ONE!

TWO!

ADAM BREAKS THE COUNT!

Caledonia rolls away. Adam is breathing heavily. The Amsterdam crowd are rocking the Ziggo Dome, thousands of fans standing on their feet.

The Carolina Cowboy looks at Wade Moor, then Caledonia. Adam suddenly grabs Caledonia.

SNAP POWERSLAM!

Caledonia hits the canvas on the square of her back. Adam Hansen holds on for the cover.

ONE!

TWO!

THR-

Wade pulls Adam away, the fans immediately booing. The Carolina Cowboy swings around and his rival catches him.

POP UP SIT-OUT POWERBOMB!

Adam is planted right on his back. The crowd sense that it may finally be over as Wade Moor holds on for the cover.

ONE!

TWO!

Caledonia dives across and breaks the count. Wade sits up, huffing out of anger. He looks at Caledonia, and she stares right back at him. He rises and moves toward the former World Champion with a strange look in his eyes, leaving her backing up into the corner trying to rethink her next move. Wade advances and Caledonia suddenly charges. She looks like she's going to take him down with a swinging leg-sweep, but Wade catches her. He lifts her high in the air, but Caledonia slips free. She lands behind him and drives a kick into his knee. The Gawdnilla drops slightly and Caledonia grabs his arm. She pulls, but Wade reverses. Caledonia is sent toward the corner. She reaches the turnbuckles as Wade charges. Caledonia gets her foot up. Wade catches it. Caledonia swings her other leg, but Wade releases. Caledonia spins.

SUCH IS LIFE HITS FLUSH!

The enzuigiri catches Wade again. The #BeachKrew member drops to one knee as Caledonia climbs the nearest turnbuckle. She looks toward Wade, then Adam. Adam is recovering near the opposite corner, making the decision easy. Caledonia launches.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT!

The roundhouse crashes into Wade Moor. He falls backward as Caledonia lands. Adam suddenly charges but Caledonia turns. Adam catches her.

COWBOY STAMPEDE!

Caledonia is driven down. Adam hooks the leg.

ONE!

TWO!

Caledonia kicks out! Adam looks at the referee and Caledonia before nodding slowly.

Adam Hansen: "All right."

Adam pulls her up and hooks both arms.

CAROLINA CRUSH!

The slingshot springboard forearm connects! Caledonia staggers, barely on her feet as Adam grabs her.

CAROLINA SUNSET!

He lifts her into the inverted kneeling tombstone. But before he can complete it, Wade crashes into Adam from behind. Adam drops Caledonia as Wade grabs Adam.

BLACKWATER KNEE!

The knee smashes into the back of Adam's head. Adam drops to his knees. Wade grabs him.

THE DEEP END!

He lifts Adam for the Death Valley Driver. Adam fights out of it and elbows free. Wade staggers as Adam turns.

LONG ROAD HOME!

Ripcord knee!

Wade drops. Adam falls beside him. All three competitors are down as the Ziggo Dome rises. Caledonia is the first to move as she crawls toward the ropes. Adam is on his knees and Wade is flat on his back. Caledonia pulls herself upright and Adam does the same. They see each other, neither has enough left for another prolonged exchange. Adam charges in but Caledonia sidesteps. The Carolina Cowboy catches himself against the ropes. Caledonia grabs him from behind. She attempts a German suplex, but Hansen blocks. He reaches backward and Caledonia releases. Caledonia hits him with a forearm. Adam answers. Caledonia answers again. Adam's legs begin to buckle. Caledonia drives another strike into him. Adam falls to one knee as Caledonia steps onto the ropes. She looks toward him as Adam rises.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT!

Caledonia springs from the top rope. The roundhouse connects dropping Adam Hansen immediately. Caledonia lands and turns, where Wade is standing waiting on her. He charges in, but Caledonia ducks the discus clothesline. Wade spins and Caledonia grabs his wrist. She pulls him toward the ropes. Wade reverses. Caledonia rebounds but the Gawdnilla catches her.

THE DEEP END!

Wade Moor lifts, but Caledonia slips free at the last second. He turns and Caledonia catches him with a sudden kick to the head. She turns and sees Adam rising and drops him with a spinning DDT. Wade is still on the apron as Caledonia launches.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT!

The roundhouse catches Moor across the jaw. The Gawdnilla collapses back into the ring and Caledonia falls on top of him for the cover.

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

DING DING DING!

The bell rings and the Ziggo Dome erupts.

Joey Garcia: "And your winner of this match by pinfall....CALEDONIA!!"

Caledonia sits up. Wade remains motionless beside her. Adam is still down across the other side of the ring.

Jim Gunt: "CALEDONIA WINS!"

Mike Rolash: "What a way to do it! She survived Adam Hansen and Wade Moor!"

Jim Gunt: "And look at what this means for Caledonia!"

Caledonia slowly gets to her feet as the referee approaches. She doesn't raise her arms or look toward the fans. She doesn't even look toward Adam or Wade. Instead, she turns toward the hard camera. The crowd begins to settle, realizing something is happening. Caledonia stares directly into the lens. Her breathing is heavy, her hair is disheveled and she looks exhausted. But her eyes are completely focused. Caledonia takes one step toward the camera.

Caledonia: "I do."

The crowd reacts. Caledonia holds the stare.

Caledonia: "You said I needed to prove I could still do it."

She pauses.

Caledonia: "I did."

Caledonia points directly toward the camera.

Caledonia: "Ripper."

The name draws another reaction from the crowd.

Caledonia: "You have the championship."

She looks down briefly, then back into the camera.

Caledonia: "For now."

Caledonia takes a breath.

Caledonia: "I'm coming for you."

She points toward the hard camera again.

Caledonia: "And I'm coming for the CWF World Championship."

Caledonia lowers her hand. She doesn't celebrate. She simply stands there, staring into the camera as the arena erupts around her. The camera slowly pushes closer. Her expression never changes.

Cut to commercial.

The Champion's Hangover

Segment

The camera cuts backstage to a quiet corridor inside the Ziggo Dome.

There is no crowd noise here. No music. No production crew rushing around. Just the distant, muffled thump of the arena beyond the walls.

Standing beside a production case is CWF World Heavyweight Champion “The Ripper” Danny B.

The championship is draped over his shoulder.

Danny is dressed in a dark shirt and jeans, sleeves pushed up his forearms. He looks tired. Not physically exhausted so much as irritated by the fact that he is still thinking.

Beside him stands Ian Ambrose, microphone in hand.

Ian and Danny share a long look before Ian finally speaks.

Ian Ambrose: “Danny, I know you probably don’t want to do this right now, but—”

Danny B: “Then why are you holding a microphone?”

Ian pauses.

Ian Ambrose: “Because that’s generally how this works.”

Danny gives him a thin smile.

Danny B: “Fair.”

Ian glances at the championship.

Ian Ambrose: “CWF World Heavyweight Champion. You won Golden Intentions. You defeated Gordy King at Wrestle Fest V. You finally got the championship you’ve spent years talking about.”

Danny looks down at the title.

Ian Ambrose: “And yet you don’t exactly look satisfied.”

Danny is silent for several seconds.

Danny B: “You know what the funny thing is?”

He adjusts the championship on his shoulder.

Danny B: “I thought I would be.”

Ian Ambrose: “Be what?”

Danny B: “Satisfied.”

Danny looks at the title.

Danny B: “For years, everyone kept telling me the same thing. ‘Danny, if you want people to stop questioning you, win the World Championship.’”

A small laugh escapes him.

Danny B: “So I did.”

He looks toward Ian.

Danny B: “And for about five minutes, it felt exactly the way I thought it would.”

Danny taps the faceplate.

Danny B: “Then I went to Heroes & Villains Wrestling.”

His expression tightens.

Danny B: “And Dan Highlander beat me.”

Ian doesn't immediately respond.

Ian Ambrose: "Fourteen years after you beat him for the CWR World Championship."

Danny B: "Yeah."

Danny nods slowly.

Danny B: "Fourteen years."

He looks down the corridor.

Danny B: "And suddenly everybody wants to talk about how much Dan has changed."

Danny shakes his head.

Danny B: "How much better he's gotten. How he's matured. How he's become this different man."

He looks at Ian.

Danny B: "Good for him."

A beat.

Danny B: "Seriously. Good for him."

Danny's jaw tightens.

Danny B: "But you know what I heard when that match was over?"

Ian watches him carefully.

Danny B: "I heard the same fucking question I've been hearing for years."

Danny points toward his own chest.

Danny B: "'Is Danny B really as good as he thinks he is?'"

He laughs bitterly.

Danny B: "Apparently winning Golden Intentions twice wasn't enough. Becoming a three-time World Champion wasn't enough. Beating Gordy King wasn't enough."

He lifts the championship slightly.

Danny B: "Apparently I have to keep proving it."

Ian Ambrose: "Does that bother you?"

Danny immediately looks at him.

Danny B: "Yes."

No hesitation.

Danny B: "It bothers the hell out of me."

Danny takes a step forward.

Danny B: "Because I thought Wrestle Fest was the end of that."

Danny B: "I thought I finally got the monkey off my back."

Danny B: "I thought I finally got to stop fighting the ghosts of everybody who came before me, everybody management preferred, everybody who got handed opportunities while I had to kick the fucking door down."

He looks at the championship again.

Danny B: "I thought this meant I could finally breathe."

Danny's eyes rise.

Danny B: "Then Highlander beat me."

Ian lowers the microphone slightly.

Ian Ambrose: "And now Dangerous Dan."

Danny's expression changes.

The irritation disappears.

Something colder takes its place.

Danny B: "Yeah."

He nods.

Danny B: "Dangerous Dan."

Danny chuckles.

Danny B: "You know, Ian, there is something almost poetic about this."

Ian Ambrose: "How so?"

Danny B: "I spent all those years trying to get to the top."

He gestures toward the championship.

Danny B: "Finally get there."

He points down the corridor.

Danny B: "And who's waiting for me?"

Danny B: "Another relic."

A pause.

Danny B: "Another man who has been here forever."

Danny smiles.

Danny B: "Another bloke carrying around a history book and hoping everybody mistakes it for relevance."

Ian Ambrose: "Dan's career is a little more substantial than that."

Danny B: "I know."

Danny looks directly at him.

Danny B: "That's why he's dangerous."

Ian raises an eyebrow.

Ian Ambrose: "You just called him dangerous."

Danny B: "Don't get excited."

Danny smirks.

Danny B: "I'm not suddenly writing him a Hall of Fame speech."

He pauses.

Danny B: "But I've known Dan a long time."

Danny B: "I've seen him when he's good. I've seen him when he's desperate. I've seen him when he's got nothing left and somehow finds another gear."

Danny's smile fades.

Danny B: "And I know exactly what tonight means to him."

Danny steps closer to the camera.

Danny B: "This isn't just another World Championship match for Dangerous Dan."

Danny B: "This is the one he's been waiting for."

He taps the championship.

Danny B: "The one he never got."

A beat.

Danny B: "The one he's convinced will finally make all those years mean something."

Danny shakes his head.

Danny B: "And that's where he's wrong."

Ian looks toward Danny.

Ian Ambrose: "Why?"

Danny stares straight into the camera.

Danny B: "Because I learned something at Wrestle Fest."

He slowly lifts the championship.

Danny B: "You don't get to the top by waiting for somebody to tell you that you belong there."

Danny B: "You take it."

He lowers the title.

Danny B: "I took this from Gordy King."

Danny B: "Tonight, Dan gets to find out what happens when he tries to take it from me."

Danny starts to walk away.

Ian follows him for a few steps.

Ian Ambrose: "One last question."

Danny stops.

Ian Ambrose: "After everything you've been through—Golden Intentions, Gordy, Wrestle Fest, Highlander—are you angry coming into this match?"

Danny slowly turns around.

A long silence.

Then he smiles.

Danny B: "No."

He looks down at the championship.

Danny B: "I'm focused."

Danny looks back at Ian.

Danny B: "Angry is what I was before Wrestle Fest."

He adjusts the title on his shoulder.

Danny B: "This?"

Danny pats the championship.

Danny B: "This is what happens when the man who finally got everything he wanted realizes he still wants more."

He turns toward the camera.

Danny B: "Dan..."

A pause.

Danny B: "You spent fifteen years climbing toward this."

Danny's eyes narrow.

Danny B: "I've spent fifteen years learning how to keep people like you from taking it away."

He begins walking backward, never breaking eye contact.

Danny B: "So bring your history."

Danny B: "Bring your experience."

Danny B: "Bring every scar you've collected trying to get here."

Danny smiles.

Danny B: "Because tonight, old dog..."

He lifts the championship from his shoulder.

Danny B: "...you don't get to put me out to pasture."

Danny turns and walks away.

Ian watches him disappear around the corner.

The camera lingers on Ian for a moment.

Ian Ambrose: "I think that may be the most satisfied I've ever seen a man sound while admitting he's not satisfied at all."

The camera cuts back to Danny.

He is walking alone through the corridor, the CWF World Heavyweight Championship resting against his shoulder.

He stops at the end of the hallway.

For just a moment, he looks down at the championship.

Then he looks toward the arena.

The faint roar of the crowd grows louder.

Danny smiles.

Danny B: "Let's see if the old dog can bite."

He disappears through the curtain.

Fade to black.

CWF WORLD HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP

"THE RIPPER" DANNY B (C)

vs.

DANGEROUS DAN

Tonight on Infernalía.

"The Ripper" Danny B (c) vs. Dangerous Dan

Match

The Ziggo Dome is already deafening as the camera sweeps across the Amsterdam crowd. Signs are held overhead, fans are on their feet, and the massive CWF logo glows above the entrance before the screen changes to show the match graphic for tonight's main event.

Jim Gunt: "Ladies and gentlemen, this is what we've been waiting for! The main event of Infernalía Episode 11 is here, and the CWF World Heavyweight Championship is on the line!"

Mike Rolash: "And what a story we've got, Jim. Danny B finally reached the top at Wrestle Fest V after winning Golden Intentions for the second time and defeating Gordy King. Dangerous Dan has been waiting even longer."

Jim Gunt: "Because in a career filled with championships, tournaments and accolades, there is one thing Dangerous Dan has never possessed."

Mike Rolash: "The CWF World Heavyweight Championship."

The arena lights fall as the opening notes of "For I Am Death" by The Pretty Reckless echo through the Ziggo Dome. The reaction is immediate as "The Ripper" Danny B steps through the curtain, the CWF World Heavyweight Championship wrapped around his waist. Danny stops at the top of the ramp and looks over the crowd. There is no grand celebration. Just his familiar, self-assured smirk.

Jim Gunt: "The Ripper has spent weeks telling everybody that the obstacles placed in front of him were never enough to stop him. Tonight, he has another one."

Mike Rolash: "And it's a man Danny knows very well."

Danny walks down the ramp, occasionally acknowledging the reaction from the crowd but otherwise keeping his eyes on the ring. He climbs the steps, enters and walks to the center of the ring. Ripper removes the championship and raises it overhead. The reaction is mixed, but noticeably warmer than it was several weeks ago. Danny lowers the title and hands it to the official.

The lights fall again as the opening notes of "Enemy" by Imagine Dragons hit. The Ziggo Dome erupts.

DANGEROUS DAN.

Dan steps onto the stage, for once there is no Paramount Championship around his waist. For the first time since April 3rd, when he defeated Byson Kaliban for that championship, Dangerous Dan walks toward a CWF ring without carrying gold.

Jim Gunt: "And look at Dangerous Dan."

Mike Rolash: "No Paramount Championship."

Jim Gunt: "He held that championship from April 3rd until Wrestle Fest V, when Jared Holmes finally took it from him."

Mike Rolash: "But perhaps losing that championship opened a door."

Jim Gunt: "The door he's been waiting his entire career to walk through."

Dan looks toward the ring and sees the CWF World Championship being held by the official. His expression tightens. Dan begins his walk. He slaps hands with fans along the aisle, then reaches ringside and pauses. He looks at the championship one more time, then he climbs the steps. The Dangerous One enters the ring, and Danny B waits across from him. The two veterans stare at each other as the official raises the championship. The crowd comes alive as the belt is handed outside. The official backs away and calls for the bell.

Neither man rushes forward. They circle one another, studying their opponent. Danny reaches out and Dan meets him. Collar-and-elbow tie-up. Dan immediately uses his strength to drive Danny backward, but Danny pivots and turns the position into a wristlock. Dan rolls through, reverses it and forces Danny toward the ropes. The referee calls for the break.

Danny releases and smiles.

Danny B: "Still strong."

Dan doesn't answer as they tie up again. This time Danny slips around behind and catches the waist. Dan fights the grip, drops his weight and fires an elbow backward. Danny releases as Dan turns toward him.

EUROPEAN UPPERCUT!

Danny stumbles. Dan follows with another. Danny catches Dan's arm and yanks him forward.

RIPPER KILL SHOT!

No, the former Paramount champion ducks out just in time. Danny spins around and Dan catches him with a short-arm clothesline. Ripper crashes onto his back and Dan goes right for the cover.

ONE!

TWO!

Danny kicks out.

Jim Gunt: "Dangerous Dan gets the first near fall!"

Dan pulls Danny up and drives him into the corner with another uppercut. He follows with a hard chop, then whips Danny across the ring. The World champion picks up speed as he rebounds. Dangerous Dan's eyes flash as he prepares for Ripper's return, catching him on the way through.

BELLY-TO-BELLY SUPLEX!

Danny lands hard. Dan reaches down for the champion, but Danny suddenly sweeps Dan's leg. The challenger crashes and Danny attacks the knee immediately, stomping the thigh and dragging Dan toward the ropes.

Mike Rolash: "There it is. Danny B has found the target."

Jim Gunt: "Dangerous Dan's explosive offense depends heavily on that base."

Danny twists Dan's leg around his own and wrenches it sideways. Dan grimaces and reaches for the ropes. He holds until the referee's count reaches four before releasing. Dan pulls himself up with help from the middle rope, struggling

to get there. Danny runs his hands across his half painted face then through his hair, his expression changing.

SHINING WIZARD!

Dan ducks, and Danny's knee narrowly misses. Dan catches him.

DANGER ZONE!

Danny slips free before the move can be completed and lands behind him.

RIPPER KILL SHOT!

Dan ducks again. Danny turns.

EUROPEAN UPPERCUT!

Danny staggers. Dan grabs him.

NORTHERN LIGHTS SUPLEX!

Dan holds onto the bridge, the Ziggo Dome absolutely coming alive!

ONE!

TWO!

THR-NO!

Danny kicks out. The match slows as the Dangerous One clearly still isn't at 100% following the brutal ladder match at Wrestle Fest V. The wary veteran, Danny B stops chasing the knockout and begins working the damaged leg. He kicks the thigh, and Dan answers with a forearm. Danny kicks the knee again. Dan grabs him and throws a hard European uppercut. Danny stumbles and the challenger charges in. Ripper drops low and sweeps the leg again. Dan falls and Danny B grabs the ankle.

He drags Dan into the center and begins stomping the knee. Another kick.

Danny B: "You want this title?"

Another. Danny twists the leg.

Danny B: "You're going to have to crawl for it."

Dangerous Dan kicks him away. Danny comes right back but the Dangerous One catches him with a boot. Danny staggers as Dan gets to his feet. The three time World champion throws a straight punch, but Dan answers with an uppercut. Danny responds with an elbow. Dan fires another uppercut. Danny's back hits the ropes as Dangerous Dan charges. Ripper sidesteps as Dan hits the ropes. Danny catches him on the rebound.

DESTIN-KNEE!

The V-Trigger catches Dangerous Dan flush. He collapses in a heap and Ripper drops right down for the cover, ignoring the response from the Amsterdam crowd.

ONE!

TWO!

THR-

DAN KICKS OUT!

Danny sits up and looks at the referee.

Two fingers.

Danny nods, trying to collect himself before pulling the challenger up.

COMPLETE SIN!

No, Dan blocks the Future Shock DDT. He drives Danny into the corner. Dan follows with three rapid European uppercuts, then pulls Danny out.

DANGER ZONE!

Danny slips out. Dan turns.

RIPPER KILL SHOT!

No, Dan ducks. Ripper spins a one eighty, and the Dangerous One catches him through the air.

BLUE THUNDER BOMB!

Danny crashes backfirst on the canvas, and the Dangerous One holds on for the cover hoping to finally achieve the one goal that's always alluded him.

ONE!

TWO!

THRE-

DANNY KICKS OUT!

Jim Gunt: "Another close one!"

Mike Rolash: "And this is where Dangerous Dan's experience becomes important. He doesn't need to dominate every second. He just needs to find the opening."

Dan crawls toward the corner as Danny rolls toward the opposite side. Both men use the ropes to pull themselves upright. Dan's injured leg is visibly bothering him and Ripper sees it, the intensity in his eyes becoming more and more evident. He smiles, but it's not a pleasant one. The Ripper is practically salivating as he pulls the challenger up to his feet, looking to put him out of his misery.

Dan catches him with a sudden elbow.

Danny staggers and Dan grabs him.

THE ENDDD IS NEAR!

SUPERKICK!

Danny ducks. Dan's boot misses. Danny immediately catches Dan around the waist.

GERMAN SUPLEX!

Dan lands hard on the top of his neck. Danny rolls through and grabs him again.

SECOND GERMAN!

Dan lands even harder this time. Danny releases. He doesn't attempt a third, instead, he waits as Dan slowly crawls toward the ropes. Danny charges.

RIPPER KILL SHOT!

Dan somehow ducks again. Danny shakes his head and turns and Dan catches him.

DANGER ZONE!

CONNECTED!

Danny folds. Dan looks out at the screaming fans and goes right for the cover!

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

DANNY KICKS OUT RIGHT BEFORE THE FUCKING THREE!

The Ziggo Dome explodes.

Jim Gunt: "TWO POINT NINE!"

Mike Rolash: "THE RIPPER JUST SAVED HIS CHAMPIONSHIP!"

Dangerous Dan sits upright. He looks toward the championship outside the ring, then toward Danny B. There is no frustration in his eyes now, only determination. Dan pulls himself up. Danny is on his knees. The challenger grabs him.

DANGER ZONE!

Danny blocks!

He slips around.

COMPLETE SIN!

Dan fights it. He drives Danny backward into the ropes. Danny rebounds. Dan catches him.

DANGER ZONE!

No, Danny slips out again. Dan turns.

DESTIN-KNEE!

Dan is rocked, barely able to stand on his feet. Danny doesn't waste another second, pulling him in.

THE COLOUR RED!

Danny drives Dan down with Sister Abigail!

Dan crashes. Danny rolls through. He doesn't immediately cover. Instead, he looks down at Dan as the fans packed into the Ziggo Dome are screaming. Danny takes a breath, then hooks both legs.

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

DING DING DING!

Joey Garcia: "The winner of this match and STILLLL CWF WORLD HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION...THE RIPPER....DANNY B!!!"

"For I Am Death" once again hits over the Ziggo Dome's speaker system. Danny remains on the canvas for several seconds as the official retrieves the CWF World Heavyweight Championship and hands it to him. Danny slowly sits up. He looks down at the title, then at Dangerous Dan. Dan is sitting against the bottom rope, exhausted.

Jim Gunt: "Dangerous Dan came within inches of becoming CWF World Heavyweight Champion!"

Mike Rolash: "He hit the Danger Zone! He hit the Swanton Bomb! He nearly had Danny B pinned!"

Jim Gunt: "But The Ripper survived!"

Danny gets to his feet. He holds the championship against his chest. Dan slowly stands at ringside. Danny looks toward him, for a moment, the two men stare at one another. Danny takes a step toward the ropes, looking to perhaps offer his hand. Dan looks at him, then shakes his head. He rolls out of the ring. The crowd gives him a loud ovation. Dan walks around the ring, visibly frustrated, running a hand over his face. He stops at ringside and looks back.

Danny is standing on the second turnbuckle with the championship raised overhead.

Dan stares at him, then turns away.

Mike Rolash: "I don't think Dangerous Dan wants to hear about respect tonight."

Jim Gunt: "He'll have to live with this one. He was closer than he's ever been."

Dangerous Dan disappears up the entrance ramp. "The Ripper" Danny B watches him go, then shrugs. He climbs to the top turnbuckle and raises the CWF World Heavyweight Championship. Fireworks explode above the entrance.

BOOM!

Another volley, then another. Gold and silver sparks rain down as the Ziggo Dome erupts. The crowd reaction is mixed, but mostly positive. Danny looks around at the fans. For once, he doesn't argue with them, he simply raises the championship higher.

Jim Gunt: "What a main event! What a night in Amsterdam!"

Mike Rolash: "Dangerous Dan didn't get the championship he's chased his entire career, but tonight he proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that he belongs at this level!"

Jim Gunt: "And Danny B remains CWF World Heavyweight Champion!"

Danny taps the championship and points to himself, then raises the title overhead one final time.

The camera slowly pulls back, revealing the packed Ziggo Dome, the fireworks illuminating the arena and The Ripper standing alone in the center of the ring. The image holds before fading to black.

Show Credits

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