UFC 51 PRELIMS RECAP

The prelims at UFC 51 in Busch Stadium kicked off with a middleweight clash between Shara Magomedov and Chris Curtis.

The fight opened with both men circling in orthodox stances, Curtis pressing forward behind a tight, high guard and pawing jab to gauge distance, while Magomedov stayed light on his feet, bouncing and switching angles. Curtis initiated the first exchanges with crisp boxing combinations—sharp 1-2s and body hooks—landing a clean left hook to Magomedov's body early in round one that drew a visible reaction. Magomedov responded by exploding into range with his signature unorthodox kicks: a fast low side kick to Curtis's lead leg, followed by a spinning back kick that grazed the midsection. Curtis absorbed the early leg kicks but countered effectively with overhand rights when Magomedov overcommitted.

Midway through round one, Magomedov began to find his rhythm at range. He landed a stinging teep kick to Curtis's solar plexus that backed him up, then chained it into a jumping switch kick that clipped Curtis's shoulder. Curtis pushed the pace, closing distance and landing a solid right cross that snapped Magomedov's head back, followed by a left hook that landed flush on the chin. Magomedov circled away, resetting, and answered with a vicious calf kick that buckled Curtis's lead leg noticeably late in the round. Curtis's mobility slowed slightly, but he still pressed forward, eating another low kick before landing a short uppercut in the clinch as the horn sounded.

Round two saw Curtis try to capitalize on his boxing inside. He feinted low and ripped a body shot, then followed with a three-punch combination that caught Magomedov coming in. Magomedov, however, showed his fluidity by slipping the punches and countering with a spinning heel kick that missed the head but forced Curtis to cover up. Magomedov poured on the leg kicks—multiple heavy calf shots that reddened Curtis's lead leg and forced him to switch stances repeatedly. Curtis fired back with volume, landing a clean right hand over the top that wobbled Magomedov briefly, but Magomedov recovered quickly and retaliated with a flying knee attempt that partially landed to the body.

As the round progressed, Magomedov's kicks began to dominate. A powerful roundhouse to the body folded Curtis momentarily, and a follow-up low kick dropped Curtis to a knee. Curtis rose immediately but was clearly compromised. Magomedov maintained distance, picking Curtis apart with front kicks and side kicks to keep him at bay while targeting the damaged

leg. Curtis swung wildly in bursts, landing a few hooks, but Magomedov's movement and reach advantage allowed him to evade the majority. The round ended with Magomedov landing a sharp crescent kick to the head that partially connected as Curtis ducked.

In round three, Curtis came out aggressive, knowing he needed something big. He pressed forward with pressure boxing, landing a solid combination to the body and head that backed Magomedov to the fence. Magomedov exploded off the cage with a spinning back fist that missed, but transitioned into a low kick that again targeted the lead leg. Curtis's footwork deteriorated further; he was limping noticeably between exchanges. Magomedov capitalized, landing a high kick that grazed Curtis's temple, followed by a straight right that rocked him. Curtis clinched to recover, but Magomedov broke free and unleashed a barrage of kicks—calf, body, and a final jumping switch kick to the head that landed clean on the chin. Curtis staggered, and Magomedov swarmed with punches, dropping him with a right hook. Curtis tried to rise, but the referee waved it off at 3:47 of round three, giving Shara Magomedov the TKO victory.

Next up was the light heavyweight bout between Jimmy Crute and Jared Cannonier

The fight began with Cannonier in southpaw, pawing with his lead hand and looking to establish his powerful jab, while Crute stayed orthodox and circled, feinting takedowns to keep Cannonier guessing. Cannonier landed the first significant strike—a stiff jab that snapped Crute's head back—followed by a low kick of his own. Crute closed distance quickly, shooting for a double-leg that Cannonier sprawled against, but Crute transitioned to a body lock and drove Cannonier to the fence. Cannonier fought the takedown valiantly, landing short elbows inside the clinch, but Crute persisted and dragged him down midway through round one.

On the mat, Crute worked from half guard, landing heavy ground-and-pound—short elbows and punches to the head and body. Cannonier used his hips to explode back to his feet, but Crute immediately chained another takedown attempt, this time succeeding in getting Cannonier down late in the round. Crute passed to side control and rained down elbows, opening a cut above Cannonier's eye. Cannonier scrambled, regaining guard as the horn sounded.

Round two opened on the feet again, with Cannonier coming forward aggressively. He landed a hard right hand that backed Crute up, followed by a knee to the body in the clinch. Crute

absorbed it and countered by changing levels for another takedown, this time securing it cleanly in the center of the Octagon. From top position, Crute worked to full mount, dropping heavy punches and elbows that forced Cannonier to give up his back. Crute locked in a body triangle and hunted for the rear-naked choke. Cannonier defended the hands well initially, but Crute flattened him out and slipped his forearm under the chin. Cannonier fought the choke for over a minute, turning into Crute and escaping to his feet with under a minute left.

Standing again, Cannonier unloaded with power shots—a big overhand right and left hook that grazed Crute. Crute clinched to slow the momentum, but Cannonier broke free and landed a solid body kick before the round ended.

Round three was a back-and-forth battle. Cannonier pressed forward, landing a clean 1-2 that rocked Crute early. Crute recovered and shot in, but Cannonier stuffed it and landed a knee to the head on the break. Crute circled away, then exploded with a level change, securing another takedown against the fence. He worked short punches from half guard while Cannonier tried to stand. Crute transitioned to the back again during a scramble, locking in hooks and threatening the RNC once more. Cannonier defended stoutly, but Crute maintained control, landing hammerfists to the head and body as Cannonier covered up. With time winding down, Crute postured up for ground-and-pound, dropping heavy elbows that cut Cannonier further. Cannonier survived to the bell, but the damage was clear.

All three judges scored the fight for Jimmy Crute via unanimous decision (29-28, 29-28, 30-27), rewarding his grappling dominance and control time despite Cannonier's moments of striking danger.

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Both fighters came out in southpaw stances, Murzakanov compact and coiled at 5'10" with explosive forward pressure, while the taller Saint Preux (6'3" with an 80-inch reach) used his length to circle and paw with jabs early. Round one opened cautiously, with Saint Preux flicking out long jabs and low kicks to keep distance, landing a clean front kick to the body that backed Murzakanov up momentarily. Murzakanov walked through it, closing range with a

sharp 1-2 combination that snapped Saint Preux's head back. Saint Preux responded with a spinning back fist that grazed, but Murzakanov countered with a heavy left hook to the body that visibly hurt OSP, forcing him to clinch against the fence.

In the clinch, Murzakanov worked short uppercuts and knees to the thighs while Saint Preux tried to break with elbows. Murzakanov broke free first, landing a crisp right hook as they separated that rocked Saint Preux. OSP recovered quickly and shot for a rare takedown attempt, but Murzakanov stuffed it easily and reversed into top position in half guard. From there, Murzakanov dropped heavy ground-and-pound—short elbows slicing through Saint Preux's guard, opening a cut near the eye. Saint Preux scrambled, regaining guard, but ate more punches before exploding back to his feet late in the round. The horn sounded with Murzakanov stalking forward confidently.

Round two saw Saint Preux try to reestablish range, landing a solid superman punch that caught Murzakanov coming in, followed by a low kick that reddened the lead leg. Murzakanov absorbed it and pressed, feinting low before unleashing a powerful left cross that landed flush on the chin, staggering Saint Preux. OSP clinched again to buy time, but Murzakanov broke with a knee to the midsection and followed with a barrage of hooks to the body that folded Saint Preux momentarily. Saint Preux fired back with wild overhands, landing one that grazed, but Murzakanov slipped most and countered with a vicious body shot that dropped OSP to a knee. Saint Preux rose, but Murzakanov swarmed, landing a clean left hook to the head that wobbled him badly. Saint Preux covered up against the cage as Murzakanov poured on punches—uppercuts, hooks, and elbows—until a final right hook sent Saint Preux crashing down. The referee stepped in at 2:51 of round two, awarding Azamat Murzakanov the TKO victory via strikes.

The next light heavyweight prelim featured Magomed Ankalaev against Carlos Ulberg.

Ankalaev came out orthodox, patient and measured with excellent distance control, while Ulberg, the taller kickboxer at 6'4", stayed orthodox as well, using his jab and footwork to circle and probe. Round one began with both men feeling each other out—Ankalaev landing a stiff jab and a low kick early, while Ulberg countered with a sharp right hand over the top that clipped Ankalaev's temple. Ulberg established his leg kicks quickly, chopping at Ankalaev's lead leg multiple times, slowing his movement slightly. Ankalaev responded with a powerful straight left that backed Ulberg to the fence, followed by a knee to the body in the clinch.

Ulberg broke free and landed a clean head kick that partially connected as Ankalaev blocked, but the impact still rocked him briefly. Ankalaev recovered and pressed forward with a combination—jab, cross, low kick—that landed solidly. Ulberg circled away, using feints to draw Ankalaev in, then countered with a fast 1-2 that snapped the head back. Late in the round, Ulberg landed a heavy low kick that buckled Ankalaev's leg, forcing him to switch stances momentarily. Ankalaev answered with a big overhand right that missed, but Ulberg capitalized on the opening with a body kick and a follow-up right hand before the bell.

Round two intensified on the feet. Ulberg came out aggressive, landing a crisp jab-cross combination that bloodied Ankalaev's nose early. Ankalaev stayed composed, countering with a clean left hand that rocked Ulberg back. Both exchanged heavy shots in the pocket—Ulberg with volume from his kickboxing base, Ankalaev with precise power shots. Ulberg targeted the body with hooks and knees, slowing Ankalaev's output, while Ankalaev landed a thudding body kick of his own that forced Ulberg to reset. Midway through, Ulberg feinted low and landed a high kick that grazed the top of Ankalaev's head, followed by a straight right that wobbled him. Ankalaev clinched to recover, but Ulberg broke with elbows and pushed off, landing a knee to the midsection on the break.

Ankalaev pressed late in the round, landing a solid combination to the head and body, but Ulberg countered beautifully with a spinning back kick to the body that folded Ankalaev momentarily. Ulberg swarmed with punches, rocking Ankalaev against the fence, but Ankalaev survived the flurry and fired back with hooks as the round ended.

Round three was a war of attrition. Ankalaev came out looking to impose pressure, landing a heavy jab and a low kick that reddened Ulberg's lead leg. Ulberg circled, using his reach to land jabs and keep distance, then exploded with a three-punch combo that caught Ankalaev clean, staggering him. Ankalaev recovered and shot for a takedown, but Ulberg sprawled and landed short elbows in the clinch. They separated, and Ulberg landed a vicious low kick that nearly dropped Ankalaev, followed by a head kick that partially landed. Ankalaev answered with a powerful right hand that rocked Ulberg, but Ulberg absorbed it and countered with a body kick that hurt Ankalaev visibly.

In the final minute, both men emptied the tank—Ulberg landing a clean overhand right that wobbled Ankalaev again, while Ankalaev fired back with hooks and a knee. Ulberg maintained composure, circling away and landing a final low kick as the bell rang. The judges scored a

close fight, but all three awarded it to Carlos Ulberg via unanimous decision (29-28, 29-28, 30-27), citing his effective leg kicks, volume, and damage in the exchanges.

The featured prelim fight at UFC 51 in Busch Stadium was a light heavyweight clash between Reinier de Ridder and Volkan Oezdemir, a three-round battle that ended with de Ridder securing the victory.

Both men came out orthodox—de Ridder at 6'4" with long limbs and a southpaw-leaning base in some exchanges, Oezdemir compact at 6'2" with a kickboxing foundation and explosive power. Round one started with Oezdemir pressing forward behind a sharp jab and low kicks, chopping at de Ridder's lead leg early to slow his movement. De Ridder circled laterally, using his reach to paw with jabs and front kicks to the body, keeping Oezdemir at bay. Oezdemir landed the first clean shot—a heavy left hook that clipped de Ridder's chin and backed him up—but de Ridder absorbed it and countered with a stiff straight right that snapped Oezdemir's head back.

Midway through the round, de Ridder feinted low and changed levels for a takedown attempt. Oezdemir sprawled initially, landing short elbows in the clinch, but de Ridder chained a body lock and drove him to the fence. After a brief struggle, de Ridder dragged Oezdemir down into half guard. From top position, de Ridder worked methodically—short elbows to the head, punches to the body, and controlling Oezdemir's wrists to prevent escapes. Oezdemir used his hips to create space and scrambled back to his feet late in the round, but not before eating several heavy ground strikes that reddened his face. As they separated, de Ridder landed a clean knee to the midsection on the break.

Round two opened on the feet again, with Oezdemir coming out aggressive to reclaim momentum. He feinted a jab and unleashed a powerful overhand right that landed flush, rocking de Ridder momentarily and forcing him to cover up. Oezdemir followed with a low kick and a left hook to the body that drew a reaction. De Ridder recovered quickly, circling away and landing a teep kick to the body to create space. Oezdemir pressed forward, landing a crisp 1-2 combination that bloodied de Ridder's nose, but de Ridder countered with a sharp right hand over the top that staggered Oezdemir briefly.

De Ridder capitalized on the opening by shooting in again—this time securing a clean double-leg takedown in the center of the Octagon. He passed quickly to side control, then to full mount, where he dropped heavy elbows that opened a cut above Oezdemir's eye.

Oezdemir bucked and bridged to escape, but de Ridder transitioned smoothly to the back during the scramble, locking in both hooks. De Ridder flattened Oezdemir out, working short punches to the head while hunting for the rear-naked choke. Oezdemir defended the hands stoutly at first, turning his chin and peeling the arm, but de Ridder maintained control, landing hammerfists and adjusting his grip. With under a minute left, de Ridder slipped his forearm deeper under the chin and squeezed—Oezdemir fought valiantly but began to fade. De Ridder cinched it tighter, forcing the tap at 3:42 of round two via rear-naked choke submission, giving Reinier de Ridder the victory.

he neutralized Oezdemir's striking threat once on the mat and controlled large portions with top pressure and transitions, ultimately finishing with his signature submission game. Oezdemir had dangerous moments on the feet with power punches and leg kicks, but couldn't prevent the takedowns or escape the ground control long enough to mount sustained offense

A sweeping DRONE SHOT flies past the illuminated Gateway Arch, banking hard over the Mississippi River before descending rapidly toward Busch Stadium. The open-air ballpark is transformed. A massive canopy hangs over the Octagon in the center of the diamond. 45,000 fans are creating a deafening roar, their breath visible in the crisp February air of St. Louis.

V.O. (MICHAEL CHANDLER):
They call this the Gateway to the West. A city built on grit, forged in blue-collar iron, and defined by its legends. Tonight, one of its greatest sons returns home to defend his throne... against a ghost from his past.

The camera cuts to the commentary booth. The stadium lights reflect off the desk. MICHAEL CHANDLER, looking dapper in a suit but radiating intense energy, sits next to DOMINICK CRUZ, who looks focused and ready to dissect the violence.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
We are LIVE from the baseball heaven of St. Louis, Missouri! The prelims delivered absolute chaos, Shara Magomedov just put the division on notice, and the Busch Stadium faithful are absolutely unglued! I'm Michael Chandler alongside the bantamweight G.O.A.T, Dominick Cruz. Dom, I'm a Mizzou boy, I've bled in this state, and I can tell you—the air in here tonight? It's heavy. It's heavy with history!

DOMINICK CRUZ:
It's heavy with questions, Mike. We just saw Reinier de Ridder and Shara Bullet make statements in the prelims, but the main card is where careers get defined or ended. We have five fights, and honestly? I don't see a single one going to the judges. The matchmaking tonight is specifically designed for violence.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
And it all leads to the trilogy. The rubber match. 1-1. The champion, the hometown hero, Tyron "The Chosen One" Woodley versus the man who took his belt once before, Jake Carter. Dom, Woodley is 43 years old. He's defying science, he's defying logic. Can he do it one more time against a guy in his absolute prime?

DOMINICK CRUZ:
That's the variable, isn't it? Father Time remains undefeated, but Tyron Woodley has been putting him in a headlock for the last five years. We saw what happened at UFC 36—Woodley was patient,

he found the right hand. But Jake Carter... He's not the same kid from 2018. He's not brawling anymore. He's using range, he's using those weird angles. If Woodley waits too long for the perfect shot, Carter is going to pick him apart from the outside.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
But you cannot blink when Tyron Woodley lets that right hand go! And speaking of right hands, we've got Alex "Poatan" Pereira versus Dricus Du Plessis. Chaos versus Precision!

DOMINICK CRUZ:
This is the most fascinating stylistic clash on the card. Pereira touches you, and you go stiff. It's that simple. But Dricus? He doesn't care about technique. He cares about overwhelming you. If Dricus tries to stand and trade with Poatan, he wakes up in the locker room. He has to make this ugly. He has to grapple.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
And let's not forget Kamaru Usman. The "Nigerian Nightmare" was knocked out cold by Jake Carter. Now he's back, at Middleweight, fighting a headhunter in Zane Church. Another rematch! Is Usman gun-shy? Or is he angry?

DOMINICK CRUZ:
We find out tonight. Mentality is everything coming off a loss like that.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
Plus, Ilia Topuria defending the featherweight strap against the sniper Fabricio Andrade, and we kick it all off with a light heavyweight collision that promises pain. Paulo Costa. Dominick Reyes. Someone is falling!

DOMINICK CRUZ:
Reyes has the reach, Costa has the pressure. Don't get popcorn, folks. You're gonna miss it.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
St. Louis! The gate is closed! The lights are bright! IT IS TIME... FOR UFC 51!

GRAPHIC: UFC 51: WOODLEY VS CARTER 3

The lights of the stadium are dimmed, leaving only the Octagon bathed in a brilliant, almost blinding white light under the massive canopy erected over the baseball diamond. 45,000 fans are creating a low, rumbling hum of anticipation. The air is crisp, visible breath rising from the crowd.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
And Dom, we are starting with violence. Two light heavyweights, two men who have touched the very top of the mountain but slipped just before the summit.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
That's the cruelest part of this sport, Mike. You can be this close. Dominick Reyes was one judge's scorecard away from beating Jon Jones. Paulo Costa was undefeated until he ran into the buzzsaws at the top. But tonight isn't about the past; it's about survival. Especially for Reyes.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
Let's see if "The Devastator" can turn the tide.

The stadium screens light up blue. DOMINICK REYES emerges from the dugout tunnel. He isn't smiling. He isn't playing to the crowd. He looks gaunt, focused, almost haunted. He wears a black hoodie, hood up, staring straight at the cage.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
Here comes Dominick Reyes. And Dom, I gotta be honest, looking at that record... it's tough. He's lost three in a row. He's lost five of his last seven. And it's not just that he's losing; it's how he's losing. Knocked out by Alan Snyder. Knocked out by Izzy. Stopped by Jimmy Crute. He has taken a lot of damage in the last three years.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
It's the durability that worries me. When you get cracked by guys like Jiri Prochazka and Alan Snyder, it changes your biology. It changes how your brain reacts to trauma. But look at who he's fighting. He's fought nothing but champions and killers. Tonight, he has to use that reach. He's got five inches of reach on Costa. He cannot let Paulo get inside. If Reyes backs up to the fence tonight, the fight is over. He has to circle, use that southpaw straight left, and keep the bull away.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:

He looks incredibly lean tonight. He knows his back is against the wall. A fourth straight loss? In this division? That might be the end of the road for a title run. He needs to channel that guy who fought Jon Jones, that guy who knocked out Chris Weidman. He needs to be "The Devastator" again.

Reyes reaches the Octagon, checks in with the cutman, and sprints up the steps. He paces the canvas, taking deep breaths of the cold Missouri air.

The mood shifts instantly. The bass rattles the stadium seats. PAULO COSTA bursts out of the tunnel. He is a ball of muscle and energy. He stops at the top of the ramp, flexes, and screams at the camera. The crowd erupts—a mix of cheers and boos. He looks absolutely massive.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
And here comes the "Eraser!" Paulo Costa! And look at the size of this man! He has fully embraced the Light Heavyweight division. He's won two in a row, knocking out Jimmy Crute and winning a split decision war over Jiri Prochazka. He looks terrifying, Dom.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
He looks comfortable. That's the difference. At 185, he was killing himself to make weight. At 205, he has the energy to sustain that pressure for fifteen minutes. And look at the style matchup—Costa is a body snatcher. He rips hooks to the liver and the ribs. Reyes is a tall, long fighter. That creates a massive target for Costa's body shots. If Costa can get past the jab, he's going to chew up Reyes' midsection.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
We saw what happened when Costa fought Aaron Snyder—he got caught with that axe kick. But since then? He bounced back. He's proven he can hang with the technical guys. He just needs to make this ugly.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
He needs to cut the cage. Reyes has good footwork, he played football, he understands athleticism. Costa can't just follow him around. He has to step laterally, trap him, and unload.

Costa enters the cage, pouring a bottle of water over his head, shaking his hair out like a lion. He stares across the cage at Reyes, who is bouncing on the balls of his feet.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
The cage door is locked. The cold air is hitting their skin. Let's send it to the Veteran Voice of the Octagon.

BRUCE BUFFER:
Ladies and gentlemen, this fight is three rounds in the UFC Light Heavyweight Division!

CROWD: (Cheering)

BRUCE BUFFER:
Introducing first, FIGHTING out of the blue corner! A Freestyle Fighter holding a professional record of 16 wins and 7 losses. He stands 6 feet 4 inches tall, fighting out of Victorville, California! He is... THE DEV-A-STATOR... DOMINICK... REYYYYYYYES!

Reyes raises a single fist, staring intensely at Costa.

BRUCE BUFFER:
And now, introducing his opponent, FIGHTING out of the red corner! A Striker and Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu practitioner holding a professional record of 18 wins and 5 losses. He stands 6 feet 1 inch tall, fighting out of Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil! He is... THE ERASER... PAULO... "BORRACHINHA"... COSSSSSSTAAAAAA!

Costa screams, slapping his chest and pointing at the ground, signaling he's not moving an inch.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
Referee Herb Dean has the assignment.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
Watch the first exchange. If Reyes backs up immediately, Costa is going to smell blood.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
Here we go! UFC 51 main card is underway!

(SCENE START)

INT. OCTAGON - ROUND 1

5:00 - Referee Herb Dean chops his hand. "Fight!"
Paulo Costa sprints to the center, planting his feet on the logo. He’s in a wide, orthodox stance, shoulders rolling, looking absolutely enormous next to the leaner, taller Dominick Reyes. Reyes, in southpaw, immediately begins a lateral orbit to his right, staying away from Costa’s power side. No glove touch. The tension is palpable in the cold St. Louis air.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"Watch the feet. Reyes has to keep his lead foot outside of Costa’s lead foot. If Costa steps inside, that right hand to the body is open all night."

4:48 - Reyes flicks a long, probing jab. It falls short. Costa doesn't flinch. He takes a small, plodding step forward, cutting off the angle. Reyes twitches a feint, dipping his level, then pops back up to fire a straight left down the pipe. It grazes Costa’s shoulder. Costa responds with a violent, whipping right low kick that sounds like a gunshot. It connects with the meat of Reyes’s lead thigh. Reyes winces slightly but keeps circling.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"That sound! Costa is throwing with bad intentions early. He wants to chop that tree down so Reyes can’t use that footwork."

4:22 - Costa presses. He’s walking Reyes down, not rushing, just suffocating the space. Reyes pumps the jab—double jab, cross. The cross lands flush on Costa’s forehead! Costa’s head snaps back, but he eats it. He smiles, bites down on his mouthpiece, and marches forward. Reyes circles out frantically to escape the corner. Costa fires a spinning back kick to the midsection that misses by inches as Reyes slides away.

4:05 - Reyes resets in the center. He looks sharp, his hands are fast. He throws a teep to Costa’s knee, keeping the distance. Costa ignores it, stepping into the pocket. He unleashes a blur—left hook to the head, RIGHT HOOK TO THE BODY. The body shot lands with a sickening thud on Reyes's ribs. Reyes audibly exhales and clinches immediately to smother the follow-up.

DOMINICK CRUZ:

"That’s the money shot! The body work of Paulo Costa is the difference maker. He dug that hook right under the elbow. Reyes felt that."

3:45 - In the clinch against the fence. Costa has the underhooks. He’s bullying Reyes, driving his head under Reyes’s chin. Reyes frames off with a forearm, trying to create space. Costa stomps on Reyes's foot, then drives a knee into the thigh. Dirty boxing. Reyes lands a short elbow over the top that cuts Costa near the hairline. Costa doesn't care. He rips a left hook to the body on the break.

3:18 - Back at range. Reyes is breathing through his nose, but his movement has slowed just a fraction. Costa stalks him. Reyes plants his feet and fires a 1-2 combination. Clean! The straight left splits Costa’s guard. Costa takes a half-step back, resets, and throws a high kick. Reyes blocks it with his forearm, but the impact knocks him off balance.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"Reyes is landing the cleaner shots upstairs, but Costa is just walking through them! The durability of the 'Eraser' is holding up so far."

2:50 - Costa corners Reyes near the black post. He feints a takedown, freezing Reyes for a split second, then rips a devastating right hook to the kidney. Reyes grunts and circles to his left, right into Costa’s power hand. Costa throws a looping overhand right. Reyes ducks under it beautifully and lands a check right hook on the exit. High-level maneuvering.

2:22 - Center of the cage. Reyes is finding his rhythm with the jab. Pop. Pop. He’s touching Costa’s nose, reddening it. Costa is head-hunting now, looking for the knockout. He winds up a massive left hook. Reyes sees it coming, pulls back, and counters with a straight left to the solar plexus. Costa pauses, resets his stance. He respects that power.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"Reyes needs to keep doing that. Make Costa pay for entering the pocket. If he just runs, he gets tired. If he counters, he earns respect."

1:55 - Costa checks a low kick from Reyes. Bone on bone. Costa instantly fires back with a calf kick of his own that sweeps Reyes’s leg out from under him! Reyes hits the deck but scrambles up immediately. Costa rushes in! He swarms with a flurry—hook, hook, uppercut! Reyes shells up, back against the cage!

1:40 - Reyes is under fire! He ducks a wild right hand and clinches tight, wrapping his arms around Costa's waist, looking for a body lock takedown to slow the momentum. Costa defends easily, widening his base and framing against Reyes's neck. He pushes Reyes off violently.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"Costa smells blood! He's trying to finish it in the first! But Reyes is a veteran, he's surviving the storm!"

1:15 - Separation. Reyes takes a deep breath. His right side is visibly red from the body shots. Costa is marching forward, hands lower now, taunting Reyes. "Come on!" he yells. Reyes obliges, stepping in with a crisp 1-2-Head Kick combo. The kick is partially blocked, but the shin wraps around and slaps Costa's neck. Costa wobbles!

0:58 - Costa is hurt! Reyes sees it! He pours on the pressure for the first time. Jab, cross, lead hook! Costa covers up, backing to the fence. Reyes looks for the finish, throwing a flying knee! MISSED! Costa side-steps and Reyes crashes into the cage mesh.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"He got overzealous! Reyes had him hurt but he rushed the finish!"

0:40 - Costa capitalizes on the position. He pins Reyes to the fence. He drives a shoulder into Reyes's face, grinding him out. He drops levels and rips two hard shots to the body—thud, thud. Reyes is grimacing. The body work is paying dividends. Reyes spins out, desperate to get back to space.

0:20 - Ten seconds left warning clacks. Both men meet in the center. They trade leg kicks simultaneously. Costa throws a wheel kick! It misses by a mile, the wind from it blowing past Reyes's face. Reyes counters with a straight left that snaps Costa's head back right at the horn.

0:00 - HORN SOUNDS.

Costa stares Reyes down, refusing to go to his corner. Reyes turns his back and walks slowly to his stool, taking a deep breath. His ribcage is already swelling.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"What a round! Chaos! Precision! Violence! Reyes landed the cleaner head shots, rocked him late, but those body shots from Costa are going to pay interest in rounds two and three."

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"Reyes survived the pressure, but look at his right side. It's welted up. Costa is investing in the bank of the body. Reyes needs to stop circling into the power hand, or he's going to get caught."

(SCENE START)

INT. OCTAGON - ROUND 2

5:00 - Herb Dean waves them in. "Second round!"
Dominick Reyes rises from his stool, taking a deep, ragged breath. The swelling on his right side—right over the floating ribs—is angry, a deep shade of violet against his skin. He keeps his right elbow tucked tight to his body, a telltale sign of the pain. Paulo Costa, by contrast, bounces on his toes, looking fresh, practically glistening under the arena lights. He marches to the center, biting down on his mouthpiece, eyes locked on Reyes' midsection.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"Look at that right elbow of Reyes. It's glued to his ribs. He's protecting the damage, but that opens up the head for Costa. Reyes has to establish the straight left immediately to keep the bull off him."

4:48 - Reyes circles right, staying mobile. He snaps a stiff jab, then another. Pop-pop. Good range finding. Costa walks through them, barely moving his head, hands held high in a Muay Thai guard. Reyes fires a low oblique kick to Costa's lead knee to check the advance. Costa eats it and fires a thunderous right body kick. WHACK. It connects with Reyes' forearms as he crunches down to block. Even blocked, the impact shuffles Reyes backward toward the black lines.

4:25 - Costa cuts the angle, trapping Reyes near the fence. He feints a level change, causing Reyes to drop his hands slightly—reactionary defense. Costa explodes upward with a left hook to the head that grazes Reyes' ear, followed immediately by a shovel hook to the gut. Reyes grunts, audible even over the crowd, and pivots hard to his left to escape the pressure.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:

"You hear that noise? That is the sound of the wind leaving Dominick Reyes! Costa is systematically dismantling the body!"

3:58 - Reyes resets in the center. He knows he can't back up anymore. He plants his feet and sits down on a straight left cross. It's a laser! It splits Costa's guard and snaps the Brazilian's head back, spraying sweat. Costa stumbles for a split second! Reyes sees the opening! He follows with a high kick, but Costa gets a glove up just in time to deflect the shin.

3:40 - Costa shakes his head, grinning through a bloody lip. He resets, unfazed. He steps in with a jab, Reyes slips it and looks for the check hook, but Costa is already inside the pocket. Costa digs a short right uppercut to the solar plexus, then clinches. He drives Reyes into the cage mesh.

3:22 - In the clinch. Costa has a heavy collar tie with his left hand, pulling Reyes' posture down. He drives a knee into Reyes' thigh, then another to the midsection. Reyes is fighting the hands, trying to pummel for an underhook to spin out. Costa releases the collar tie and rips a short elbow on the break that slices Reyes above the eyebrow. Blood starts to trickle immediately.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"Reyes is fighting a defensive war now. He's reacting, not dictating. He needs to circle to the center and use his length. Costa is mauling him in the phone booth."

2:55 - Reyes wipes the blood from his eye. He looks frustrated. He fakes a jab and throws a looping overhand left—a Hail Mary. It connects partially on the top of Costa's head, but the Brazilian's neck barely moves. Costa walks forward, zombie-like. He throws a lazy jab to gauge distance, then lashes out with a calf kick that buckles Reyes' lead leg. Reyes stumbles, his movement visibly compromised.

2:30 - Costa senses the finish. He stops headhunting. He drops his level, staring at Reyes' hips. He throws a 1-2, forcing Reyes to shell up high, exposing the torso. Costa steps in deep and rips a VICIOUS LEFT HOOK TO THE LIVER.

2:22 - THE DELAYED REACTION.

Reyes freezes. His eyes go wide. He takes one step back, tries to throw a jab, but his body betrays him. The arm falls limp. He winces, his face contorting in agony, and he doubles over, guarding his right side.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"HE'S HURT! THE LIVER SHOT! REYES IS FROZEN!"

2:10 - Costa swarms! He smells blood in the water! He unleashes a barrage against the fence. Right hook to the head! Left hook to the body! Right uppercut! Reyes is covering up, leaning against the cage, legs trembling. He tries to fire back a weak right hook, but there's no power on it. Costa ducks under it and rises with another CRUSHING hook to the ribs.

1:55 - Reyes drops to one knee! He's not out, but he's crumbling from the pain! He tries to stand, using the fence for support, but Costa is relentless. Costa grabs the back of Reyes' head with one hand and rains down hammerfists and uppercuts. Reyes shells up, burying his head, offering no offense.

1:45 - Herb Dean takes a step closer! "Fight back, Dom! Fight back!"
Reyes tries to circle out, but his legs are gone. The body damage has shut down the system. Costa lands a clean right cross that snaps Reyes' head sideways, then goes back to the body with a knee. Reyes collapses to the canvas, curling into the fetal position, clutching his midsection.

1:38 - Costa stands over him, looking for one final shot, but Herb Dean dives in! He waves it off! It's over!

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"IT IS ALL OVER! THE ERASER IS BACK! HE BROKE HIM DOWN! BODY SHOT DESTRUCTION!"

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"That was surgical brutality. He invested in the body from the first minute of round one, and he cashed out in round two. Dominick Reyes is a warrior, but your liver doesn't have toughness. When that shuts down, the fight is over."

POST-FIGHT

JOE ROGAN:
"I'm here with the winner, 'The Eraser' Paulo Costa! Paulo, that was a terrifying display of power. We know you have heavy hands, but tonight you went to the body, and you shut Dominick Reyes down completely. Walk us through that finish!"

PAULO COSTA:
(Costa is pacing like a caged tiger, chest heaving, adrenaline still red-lining. He grabs the mic, eyes wide, sweat dripping off his massive frame.)

"JOE! JOE! LOOK AT ME! I AM THE KING OF THE BITCHS! ST. LOUIS! IT IS FREEZING HERE, BUT I AM ON FIRE, BABY! I AM TOO HOT FOR THIS STADIUM!"

(He flexes his biceps, screaming at the camera, veins popping in his neck.)

"I tell you, Joe! I tell everybody! They say, 'Oh Paulo, he is just muscle, he gassed out.' NO! I am powerful! I am fast! And tonight, I erase him! I see his ribs, they look soft. I say, okay, I make them soup! Boom! Liver shot! Goodnight, Cinderella!"

JOE ROGAN:
"You looked fantastic at 205 pounds tonight. You were patient, you cut the cage, and you invested in that body work early. Is this the best version of Paulo Costa we've ever seen?"

PAULO COSTA:
"Of course! This is the Secret Juice power! Pure, unadulterated, American patriot power! But Joe, listen to me. Listen!"

(Costa's expression shifts from jubilant to menacing. He points a massive finger toward the locker rooms.)

"I see on the TV in the back. I see the prelims. I see this skinny guy. The Dutch guy. Reiner! De Ridder! The... what you call him? The Knight? No, he is the skinny noodle!"

(The crowd laughs, confused but entertained.)

"He come here, he hug his opponent for fifteen minutes. He choke him. He make the fight boring! I hate this! This is not fighting! This is... prom night! Reiner! You are tall, you are long, but you are weak! You have no muscle! You drink zero Secret Juice!"

(Costa steps closer to the camera, staring directly into the lens.)

"RYAN GASPER! Bring me the skinny Dutch man! I want to snap him in half! He thinks he can grapple? I will bench press him! I will throw him out of the cage! Reiner de Ridder, you are next! Prepare your liver, because I am hungry! I AM THE ERASER!"

JOE ROGAN:
"A massive callout from a massive winner! Ladies and gentlemen, Paulo Costa!"

PAULO COSTA:
(Screaming incoherently in Portuguese, slapping his chest)

The stadium screens transition from the replays of Paulo Costa's brutal body-shot knockout. The temperature has dropped a few more degrees, and the breath of the 45,000 fans hangs thick over the diamond.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
St. Louis is still buzzing from that Costa finish, but folks, we are moving from a demolition derby straight into a high-stakes tactical nightmare. Dricus Du Plessis. Alex Pereira. This is a fight about the "Boogeyman" trying to find his teeth again and a South African warrior who simply refuses to lose.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
This is the most dangerous fight on the card for both men. For Alex Pereira, he's on a three-fight skid. That's uncharted territory for a guy with his pedigree. He's lost to Rakic, he's lost to Ingram, and he lost that light heavyweight title bid to Adesanya. People are starting to ask if the aura is gone. Tonight, he has to prove that left hook is still the ultimate equalizer.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:

And on the other side, Dricus Du Plessis. Dom, he’s the most "confusingly effective" fighter I’ve ever seen. He looks like he’s running out of gas in the first three minutes, yet he’s finishing Robert Whittaker in the third. He’s awkward, he’s powerful, and he is a physical specimen.

The lights turn a deep, ominous red. ALEX PEREIRA emerges from the dugout. He is stone-faced, his eyes fixed on the Octagon like a predator. He stops at the top of the ramp, goes into a deep crouch, and mimics drawing a bow and arrow, letting the imaginary string snap toward the cage.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
There he is. "Poatan." Hands of Stone. Even on a three-fight losing streak, when that man walks into the stadium, the air changes. You can feel the tension. He doesn't need a high-volume attack; he just needs you to make one mistake.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
The problem Pereira has had lately is distance management and the wrestling threat. Ingram and Rakic didn't play his game. Tonight, he’s facing DDP, who is notoriously "blunt force trauma." But Pereira has a massive advantage here: height and reach. He’s 6’4” with a 79-inch reach. He needs to use those calf kicks early to stop Dricus from blitzing. If Dricus gets inside and grabs a body lock, Alex is going to have a long, heavy night.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
Look at the focus. He’s not here for the cheers. He’s here to take a soul.

Pereira marches up the steps, his presence looming large over the Octagon. He stares at the floor, pacing slowly, a silent statue of violence.

DRICUS DU PLESSIS bursts out of the tunnel, draped in the South African flag. He’s shadow-boxing with high intensity, looking like he’s already in the third round. He’s screaming, high-fiving fans, radiating a strange, frantic energy.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
And here comes "Stillknocks!" 21 and 3. Coming off a dominant win over Kelvin Gastelum. This man has one of the highest finishing rates in the division. He’s not pretty, he’s not technical in the traditional sense, but he is a winner.

DOMINICK CRUZ:

Dricus is a nightmare because he doesn't fight in a rhythm you can track. He lunges, he throws from weird angles, and he's incredibly strong in the clinch. His game plan tonight has to be pressure. He cannot let Pereira settle. If he stands at range and tries to be technical, Pereira will pick him apart. Dricus needs to make this a dogfight—clinch him, trip him, and use that submission game we saw against Darren Till.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:

He looks like he's in incredible shape. Since that nose surgery we talked about last year, his gas tank has looked completely different. He's not mouth-breathing in the first round anymore. He's a dangerous, dangerous man.

Du Plessis vault over the cage wall, lands in a crouch, and lets out a roar, pointing directly at Pereira. Pereira doesn't even look at him.

BRUCE BUFFER:

Ladies and gentlemen, this fight is three rounds in the UFC Middleweight Division!

CROWD: (Roaring)

BRUCE BUFFER:

Introducing first, fighting out of the blue corner! A Kickboxer and Striker holding a professional record of 8 wins and 4 losses. He stands 6 feet 4 inches tall, fighting out of Sao Paulo, Brazil! Presenting... ALEX "POATAN" PEREIIIIIRAAAAAA!

Pereira raises his hand slightly, his face a mask of stone. The St. Louis crowd gives him a respectful, slightly chilled ovation.

BRUCE BUFFER:

And now, introducing his opponent, fighting out of the red corner! A Freestyle fighter holding a professional record of 21 wins and 3 losses. He stands 6 feet tall, fighting out of Pretoria, South Africa! Presenting... DRICUS "STILLKNOCKS" DU PLESSIIIIS!

Du Plessis beats his chest, his face turning beet red as he screams back at the crowd.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:

Referee Mark Smith in charge of this one.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
Look at the stance of Pereira. Hands are low. He wants Dricus to lead. Dricus needs to be careful. That upright chin of his is a landing strip for a left hook.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
The "Boogeyman" vs. the "Juggernaut." Here we go!

ROUND 1

5:00 – Referee Mark Smith signals for the clock to start.
Alex Pereira stands rooted like an ancient monolith, hands low near his waist, chin tucked, eyes burning into Dricus Du Plessis. Du Plessis is a contrast of kinetic energy, bouncing frantically, switching his lead foot between orthodox and southpaw feints. The tension in Busch Stadium is thick; the crowd knows one man represents a scalpel and the other a sledgehammer.

4:48 – Pereira flicks a lightning-fast calf kick without any tell. It thuds against Du Plessis's lead shin. Dricus doesn't check it; he absorbs it and lunges forward with a wild, shifting overhand right that Pereira misses by a fraction of an inch, sliding his head back just enough.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"Look at the footwork of Pereira. He's already measuring the distance. Dricus is lunging, and that is a dangerous game to play against a counter-striker of this caliber."

4:35 – Du Plessis resets, his breathing already heavy—a trademark of his high-output style. He snaps a stiff jab that Pereira parries with a lazy-looking right hand. Pereira responds by digging a heavy lead left hook into Dricus's ribs. Dricus winces and immediately tries to close the distance, but Pereira circles out, pivoting on his lead foot with world-class grace.

4:15 – Dricus chops at Pereira's lead leg with a heavy low kick. Pereira checks it perfectly, bone-on-bone. You can hear the crack of the shins in the front row. Du Plessis doesn't let up; he blitzes forward with a three-punch combination—left, right, left. Pereira shells up, absorbing the shots on the gloves, and counters with a short, stabbing jab that bloodies Dricus's nose instantly.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"Dricus is in his face! He doesn't care about the technique; he's trying to make this a dogfight early! But Pereira is so calm!!"

3:58 – Pereira begins to find his rhythm. He whips a roundhouse kick to the body that Du Plessis barely blocks. The impact shuffles Dricus toward the fence. Pereira cut the cage off, stepping laterally to keep Du Plessis trapped. He feints the left hook, then snaps a straight right that catches Dricus flush. Dricus's head snaps back, and his legs tremble for a micro-second.

3:42 – SENSING DANGER, DU PLESSIS EXPLODES. He ducks under a follow-up hook and drives his shoulder into Pereira's midsection. He's looking for the double-leg. Pereira spreads his base, back against the cage, digging his underhooks in. Dricus is driving forward with raw, South African power, his face turning a deep shade of purple from the exertion.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"This is exactly where Du Plessis needs to be. Take away the space, take away the leverage. He's pummeling for that right underhook. Pereira has to stay upright."

3:20 – In the clinch, Dricus is a mauler. He digs a hard knee into Pereira's thigh, then another to the body. Pereira tries to frame off with a forearm against Dricus's throat, landing a short, dirty-boxing elbow that opens the cut on Dricus's nose further. Blood is now splashing onto Pereira's white chest protector. Dricus ignores it, locks his hands behind Pereira's waist, and lifts.

3:05 – PEREIRA IS ELEVATED! Du Plessis slams him to the canvas in the center of the Octagon! The stadium shakes! Pereira tries to use a butterfly hook to keep Dricus from passing, but Dricus is too heavy. He's heavy in the hips, leaning his weight into Pereira's chest.

2:48 – Dricus is in half-guard. He starts raining down short, clubbing hammerfists. Pereira is trying to find the cage with his feet to walk himself up, but Du Plessis is wise to it, pinning Pereira's left wrist to the mat. Dricus is methodically looking to pass to side control.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:

"THE POWER OF STILLKNOCKS! He got him down! Pereira is in deep trouble now, Dom! He's never looked this uncomfortable on the bottom!"

2:30 – Pereira explodes with a hip heist, trying to scramble to his feet. He manages to get to one knee, but Du Plessis stays glued to him, transitioning to a front headlock. This is Du Plessis's specialty. He's hunting the guillotine. Pereira knows the threat and tucks his chin, fighting the hands.

2:12 – Du Plessis abandons the neck and spins to the back as Pereira tries to rise! He gets one hook in, then the second. He locks a body triangle around Pereira's long torso. The size difference is negated now—Dricus is a backpack, and Pereira is carrying 185 pounds of muscle that wants to end his night.

1:55 – Du Plessis begins hand-fighting. He's digging his right forearm under Pereira's jaw. Pereira is desperate, pulling at the fingers, trying to create a pocket of air. Dricus is patient, landing short punches to the side of Pereira's head to force the Brazilian to move his hands.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"He's flattening him out! Du Plessis is putting his hips into the mat, stretching Pereira's spine. This is a nightmare for a striker. He's losing his oxygen, and he's losing his energy."

1:38 – Pereira manages to turn slightly, trying to get his back to the mat, but the body triangle is locked too tight. Dricus uses a rear-naked choke grip to turn Pereira's head. Pereira gasps for air. Dricus slips the right arm under the chin—IT'S DEEP. IT'S UNDER THE BONE.

1:20 – DU PLESSIS LOCKS THE BICEP! He hides the palm behind Pereira's head. Pereira's eyes roll back slightly. He's clawing at Dricus's forearm, but the grip is a vise. Du Plessis arches his back, tightening the squeeze.

1:05 – Pereira's face is turning a terrifying shade of red. He's reaching back, trying to find a limb, any limb, to stop the pressure. The crowd is on its feet, a deafening roar echoing through the stadium. Du Plessis closes his eyes, focusing every ounce of strength into his shoulders.

0:52 – THE TAP! PEREIRA TAPS! HE TAPS REPEATEDLY ON DRICUS'S THIGH!

MICHAEL CHANDLER:

"OH MY GOODNESS! HE DID IT! DRICUS DU PLESSIS HAS SUBMITTED THE BOOGEYMAN! THE STREAK CONTINUES!"

0:47 – Referee Mark Smith dives in to break the hold. Du Plessis releases the choke and immediately somersaults off Pereira's back, sprinting to the top of the cage. He's screaming at the top of his lungs, pounding his chest. Pereira stays on the mat for a moment, gasping, looking up at the Missouri stars in total disbelief.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"Absolute dominance. He took the best shots Pereira had, drove through the fire, and exploited the one area where Alex is still human. Dricus Du Plessis is the real deal, Mike. That's a statement win."

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"Alex Pereira has now lost four in a row, and Dricus Du Plessis is staring down a title shot! What a performance!"

The Octagon is a hive of activity. Alex Pereira is sitting on his stool, staring blankly at the canvas as his team consoles him, while Dricus Du Plessis is still pacing the perimeter, draped in the South African flag, shouting "South Africa!" at the cameras.

BRUCE BUFFER:
"Ladies and gentlemen, referee Mark Smith has called a stop to this contest at four minutes and eight seconds of the very first round, for the winner by way of rear-naked choke... DRICUS! 'STILLKNOCKS!' DU PLESSIIIIIS!"

The crowd erupts as Dricus drops to his knees in the center of the logo, then pops back up as Joe Rogan approaches with the microphone.

JOE ROGAN:
"Dricus, that was an absolutely incredible performance. You stepped into the cage with arguably the most feared striker in the history of this sport, you ate some heavy shots early, but you stuck to the game plan and found the finish in under five minutes. How are you feeling?"

DRICUS DU PLESSIS:
"Joe, I've said it before and I'll say it again—I don't care about the 'aura!' I don't care about the left hook! I am the most dangerous man in this division because I am a complete martial artist. Respect

to Alex, he hits like a truck, my ribs are screaming right now, but this is MMA! You cannot just be a kickboxer anymore! I saw the neck, I took the neck, and now I take his spot at the front of the line!"

JOE ROGAN:
"You've now finished Robert Whittaker, submitted Darren Till, and now you've just submitted Alex Pereira in one round. There is a massive title fight headlining this card tonight between Tyron Woodley and Jake Carter. Does the winner of that fight have a date with you next?"

DRICUS DU PLESSIS:

"RYAN GASPER! AUTUMN! LOOK AT ME!"

(Dricus grabs the fence with one hand, pointing at the executives.)

"I have done everything you asked! I have gone through the fire! I have finished the legends! There is no one else! I don't want a 'title eliminator,' I don't want another 'contender' fight. I am the uncrowned king of Africa and soon I will be the king of the world! Whether it's Woodley or whether it's Carter—whoever leaves St. Louis with that belt tonight, keep it clean for me! Because 'Stillknocks' is coming to take what belongs to South Africa! Ryan, sign the contract! Let's do it in a stadium! Let's go to Cape Town or let's do it right here! I WANT THE GOLD!"

JOE ROGAN:
"The message is loud and clear. Ladies and gentlemen, Dricus Du Plessis!"

DRICUS DU PLESSIS:
(Screaming into the mic as Rogan pulls it away)
"HULLE WEET NIE WAT ONS WEET NIE!" (They don't know what we know!)

The camera pans over the sea of 45,000 fans, the Gateway Arch glowing in the background under a clear Missouri sky.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
St. Louis! We are just getting started. If you're just joining us, Dricus Du Plessis just shocked the world by submitting Alex Pereira in the first round, and now, we move to a fight with enough

subplots to fill a novel. Kamaru Usman. Zane Church. In their first encounter Kamaru put Zane to sleep with a clinical uppercut. But Dom, the world looks very different today for the ‘Nigerian Nightmare.’

DOMINICK CRUZ:
It’s a complete role reversal, Mike. In their first fight, Usman was the invincible boogeyman and Zane was the guy trying to prove he belonged. Tonight? Usman is on a three-fight losing streak. He’s been finished by Woodley, out-pointed by GSP, and most recently, put on a highlight reel by Jake Carter just two months ago. At 38 years old, the question isn't just about his knees—it’s about his spirit.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
And let's not forget what Jake Carter said in that interview with Ariel Helwani earlier this week. He called Zane Church a "bar brawler" with "zero fight IQ." He said Zane was an action figure you feed to lions. Zane has been chirping back on social media all week, and you have to wonder if he’s fighting Kamaru tonight, or if he’s fighting the ghost of Jake Carter's words.

[MUSIC: "No Church in the Wild" by Kanye West & Jay-Z begins to blast.]

The stadium screens flip to a gritty, Albuquerque-themed graphic. ZANE CHURCH emerges from the tunnel. He’s in a black-and-gold walkout shirt, Greg Jackson and the Jackson Wink team flanking him. He looks calm, almost stoic, bouncing in his southpaw stance as he moves toward the ramp.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
Here comes "Ricochet!" 16 and 3. Coming off a massive KO win over Derrick Quinn. This man is a former Golden Gloves champion, 15-0 in the boxing ring before the neck injuries nearly ended his life. He’s a survivor, Dom. And he’s looking for the ultimate scalp tonight.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
The technical evolution of Zane Church is what’s interesting. He’s a southpaw, which always presents a puzzle. In the first fight with Usman, he was too stationary. He let Kamaru dictate the wrestling. Tonight, look for Zane to use that lateral movement Greg Jackson is famous for. He has to keep his back off the fence. If he stays in the center and uses that straight left, he can hurt anyone in the world. He’s faster than Kamaru—he has to make that count.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
He looks locked in. He heard the "bar brawler" comments. He's here to prove he's a technician.

Church high-fives a few fans, touches the Gateway to the West logo on the floor, and enters the cage with a purposeful stride. He begins shadowboxing in the corner, his hands looking like lightning.

The lights dim to a deep green. KAMARU USMAN walks out. He moves with his face hidden behind his signature hood. There's a solemnity to his walk. He isn't looking at the crowd; he's looking at his own hands.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
And there is the man. One of the greatest to ever put on the four-ounce gloves. Kamaru Usman. But Dom, this is the first time in his career we've seen him with this much "red" on his ledger. Three straight losses. 21 and 6. For a guy who was the P4P king for so long, how do you handle this?

DOMINICK CRUZ:
It's a psychological hurdle, Mike. When you get knocked out by a guy like Jake Carter—especially when you thought you were winning—it changes how you approach the pocket. You start to second-guess your chin. You start to hesitate on your shots. Kamaru needs to find his wrestling tonight. He cannot afford to stand and trade with a Golden Gloves champ if his confidence is shaken. He needs to clinch, he needs to grind, and he needs to remind Zane Church why he's a Nightmare.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
He looks physically as strong as ever, but middleweight is a different beast. These guys are bigger, they hit harder. Kamaru has the experience edge by a mile, but he's fighting a hungrier version of the man he already beat.

Usman reaches the Octagon, closes his eyes for a moment at the steps, and then enters. He goes to his corner, staring across at Church. The tension is a physical force between them.

BRUCE BUFFER:
Ladies and gentlemen, this fight is three rounds in the UFC Middleweight Division!

CROWD: (A roar of respect for the legend, and a loud contingent for the New Mexico native.)

BRUCE BUFFER:
Introducing first, fighting out of the blue corner! A Boxer holding a professional record of 16 wins and 3 losses. He stands 6 feet tall, fighting out of Albuquerque, New Mexico! Presenting... ZANE "RICOCHET" CHURRRRRCH!

Church snaps a crisp 1-2 into the air, nodding to the camera, a thin, confident smile on his face.

BRUCE BUFFER:
And now, introducing his opponent, fighting out of the red corner! A Wrestler and Striker holding a professional record of 21 wins and 6 losses. He stands 6 feet tall, fighting out of Auchi, Nigeria! Presenting... THE NIGERIAN NIGHTMARE... KAMARUUUUUU USMAAAAAN!

Usman doesn't move. He stays in his crouch, eyes locked on Church, the picture of a veteran who has seen it all.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
Referee Herb Dean in the center.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
Watch the lead foot. Church is southpaw, Usman is orthodox. It's a battle of the lead hands. If Church can find the angle for that straight left, Usman's chin is going to be tested early.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
The rematch. Here we go!

ROUND 1

4:59 - Herb Dean signals for the start. Kamaru Usman moves out of his corner with a slow, measured gait, his lead hand extended, fingers flickering—a classic range-finding tactic. He looks physically imposing, but there's a noticeable stiffness in his stance, a cagey caution born of recent trauma. Zane Church is the opposite; he's a blur of lateral movement, bouncing in his southpaw stance, his lead right hand pumping in short, non-committal rhythmic bursts.

4:45 - The lead foot battle begins. Church is constantly stepping his right foot outside of Usman's left, looking to create the corridor for his straight left. Usman feints a level change,

dipping his hips. Church reacts instantly, snapping his hips back—a hair-trigger reflex. Usman doesn't shoot; he just stands back up and flicks a stiff jab that catches Church's forehead.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"Usman is trying to download the timing early. He needs to know if Zane has fixed that tendency to duck into the power side. But look at the twitch of Church; he's much faster tonight than he was in the first fight."

4:22 - Church finds his range. He slips an Usman jab and rips a three-punch combination: a right hook to the shoulder, a left straight to the body, and a right hook that clips Usman's ear. Usman covers up and circles away, reset and focused. Church doesn't chase; he resets in the center, staying disciplined.

3:58 - Usman tries to slow the pace. He digs a hard oblique kick to Church's lead knee. Church retracts the leg and answers with a blistering calf kick that spins Usman around. Usman's lead leg is already showing a faint red welt. He bites down and marches forward, throwing a heavy overhand right. Church slips it by an inch, the wind of the punch audibly whistling past.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"Zane is playing with fire there! You cannot give Kamaru Usman those kinds of openings. But the confidence of Church right now... he feels like he's a step ahead!"

3:34 - Usman initiates the clinch. He feints the jab, drops low, and drives his head into Church's chest, pinning him against the fence. This is the "Nightmare" of old. Usman pummels for an underhook, grinding his shoulder into Church's jaw. Church stays wide with his base, his back flat against the chain-link, using his right hand to overhook Usman's arm.

3:12 - In the clinch, Usman is methodically working. He rips a short, digging right hand into Church's ribs, then a knee to the inner thigh. Church is trying to frame off, landing a couple of sharp, short elbows to the side of Usman's head. Usman doesn't budge. He's looking for the inside trip, but Church is keeping his weight heavy.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"This is exactly what Kamaru needs. He needs to feel the weight of his opponent. He needs to take the air out of the boxer. Zane has to find a way off this fence or his arms are going to be too heavy to punch in the second."

2:45 - Usman sees a window. He switches from a double-leg attempt to a high crotch, lifting Church momentarily. Church grabs the top of the cage for a split second—Herb Dean shouts a warning—and Church lets go, falling back into the fence but staying upright. Usman stays glued, his forehead grinding into Church's nose, which is beginning to leak.

2:20 - Separation. Church finally manages to swim an underhook through and shucks Usman off. As they break, Church uncorks a VICIOUS left hook that catches Usman right on the temple!

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"HE'S HURT! USMAN WOBBLED! THAT LEFT HAND LANDED FLUSH!"

2:12 - Usman's equilibrium is clearly compromised. He's back-pedaling, his arms high and defensive. Church senses the moment. He doesn't rush in blindly; he stalks, popping the jab, measuring for the kill. He whips a straight left that snaps Usman's head back again. Usman is purely on instinct now, dipping his head and looking for a desperate shot.

1:55 - Church feints the left and fires a lead right hook. It connects on the jaw! Usman's knees buckle, and he almost goes down, but he manages to fall into Church's hips, locking his arms around the legs. He's clinging on for dear life, his face buried in Church's trunks.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"The veteran instincts are kicking in. Usman is using his wrestling as a life raft right now. Zane needs to peel those hands and get back to the center of the cage where he has the advantage."

1:30 - Church is frustrated. He's landed the bigger shots, but he's stuck in a grappling struggle again. He lands two heavy hammerfists to the side of Usman's head while Usman stays tucked. Usman slowly, agonizingly, works his way up Church's body, transitioning from the legs to a waist lock. He drives Church back to the fence, buying himself precious seconds of recovery.

1:05 - The cobwebs seem to be clearing for Usman. He's no longer just clinging; he's working the chain wrestling again. He drops his level, secures a single leg, and with a massive heave, he trips Church's remaining leg out.

0:55 - TAKEDOWN FOR USMAN! Church hits the mat near the center. Usman is immediately into the guard, leaning his weight forward, trying to pass to half-guard. Church is active from the bottom, looking for a high-guard or a triangle, but Usman's posture is disciplined.

0:38 - Usman postured up and digs a heavy elbow into the bridge of Church's nose. CRACK. Church's head bounces off the canvas. Usman follows with a barrage of short, heavy punches. Church is forced to give up his attacking guard and just shell up. Usman is suffocating him now, using his chest to pin Church's shoulders down.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"Look at the heart of Kamaru Usman! He was almost out of there thirty seconds ago, and now he's dominating on top! This is why he's a legend!"

0:15 - Ten-second clacks sound. Usman is relentless. He's looking to pass to side control. He manages to get his right knee across Church's belly. He's raining down hammerfists. Church is scrambling, trying to get his feet back on the fence to push off, but Usman is too heavy.

0:05 - Usman lands one final, thudding punch to the jaw as Church tries to sit up. Church's head snaps back, and he goes flat again just as the horn sounds.

0:00 - HORN SOUNDS.

Usman stands up slowly, staring down at Church for a beat before walking to his stool. He's breathing hard, and his left temple is already swelling significantly. Church sits up, wiping blood from his nose, looking more annoyed than damaged, though his face is flushed red from the ground-and-pound.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"What a rollercoaster! Zane Church nearly had him finished, but the 'Nigerian Nightmare' clawed his way back into it! That takedown might have stolen the round on the judges' cards!"

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"This is a razor-close round to score. Church had the impact, but Usman had the control and the late damage. The question is: how much did those left hands take out of Kamarudeen?"

ROUND 2

Herb Dean signals for the restart. Kamaru Usman rises slowly, his left temple now a grotesque, purple knot. He looks every bit of thirty-eight as he lumbers toward the center, but his eyes are cold, fixed on Church's midsection. Zane Church bounces with a cocky rhythm, his southpaw stance wide, right hand flicking out like a snake's tongue. He's looking for the repeat of the left hand that nearly ended it in the first.

4:45 - Church snaps a lead right hook that catches the air as Usman ducks. Usman isn't playing the jab game anymore; he's trying to close the distance behind a high, tight shell. Church flicks a low kick, but Usman checks it—a rare defensive success. Church resets, popping a double-jab that reddens Usman's nose further.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"Look at the hands of Usman. He's tucked in tight. He doesn't want to see that straight left again. Zane is trying to bait him into a firefight, but Kamaru is being very disciplined here."

4:22 - Church circles to his right, cutting an angle. He digs a heavy left straight to the body. Usman winces—that body work is subtle but effective. Usman tries to respond with a calf kick, but Church is too fast, retracting the leg and countering with a sharp right hook that clips Usman's jaw.

3:58 - Usman fakes a level change, and Church bites, dropping his hands. Usman doesn't shoot; he fires a straight right that catches Church on the bridge of the nose. THUD. Church's head snaps back, and blood begins to flow more freely from his nostrils. Usman follows up with a heavy leg kick that thuds against Church's thigh.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"Patience! The 'Nigerian Nightmare' is showing that veteran poise. He's taking the steam out of the lion's punches by making him think about the wrestling!"

3:35 - Church gets aggressive, sensing Usman slowing. He rips a 1-2-3 combination—left, right, left. The final hook catches Usman's ear, making his balance waver. Church sees the wobble and steps in for a flurry! He unleashes a barrage of hooks! Usman is forced to cover up, his back hitting the fence near the blue post.

3:12 - Usman is under a storm! Church is digging hooks to the body and head. But Usman is a master of the clinch. He waits for Church to overextend on a big left hook, slips inside, and locks a body lock. He drives his head into Church's chest, the impact audible through the ringside mics.

2:50 - Against the fence. Usman is leaning his entire weight into Church. He's pummeling for the double underhooks. Church is fighting the hands, trying to keep his back off the fence, but Usman is a statue. He's grinding his head into Church's jaw, forcing the boxer to look at the lights.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"This is the 'grind' that broke the Welterweight division for years. Usman isn't doing a lot of damage here, but he is stealing Zane's soul. He's making him carry 200 pounds of muscle in a high-tension clinch. This is exhausting."

2:28 - Usman drops his level, looking for the high-crotch. Church stuffs it with an overhook, but Usman immediately transitions to a single leg. He's lifting, driving. Church is hopping on one leg, his back still against the cage. Usman trips the supporting leg—TAKEDOWN!

2:15 - Usman is on top in half-guard. He's immediately busy. He uses his forehead to pin Church's chin to the side and begins digging short, nasty elbows into the ribs. Church is trying to regain guard, but Usman is too heavy. He's got his right leg pinned across Church's thigh.

1:52 - Church is trying to scramble. He pushes off Usman's chest and gets to his feet for a micro-second, but Usman is a shadow. He stays glued to Church's back, locking his arms around the waist, and slams him back down with a thunderous mat return!

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"THE MAT RETURN! Kamaru Usman is putting on a wrestling clinic! He is saying, 'I am the boss in this Octagon!'"

1:30 - Usman is back in top control. He's in the full guard now. He postures up, looking for the big elbows. Church is trying to hand-fight, grabbing Usman's wrists, but Usman is too strong. He breaks the grip and lands a thudding punch to the jaw. CRACK. Church's head bounces.

1:12 - Usman is opening up. He lands a series of short, choppy punches. Church is bleeding heavily now, the canvas beneath his head starting to stain pink. Usman is methodically passing the guard. He gets his right knee across—he's in mount!

0:55 - FULL MOUNT FOR USMAN! The stadium is erupting! Usman is raining down hammers! Church is in survival mode, rolling his head from side to side, trying to avoid the worst of it. He manages to buck his hips and scramble, but Usman stays with him, transitioning to the back as Church tries to rise.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"This is a disaster for Zane Church. He had the momentum on the feet, but he's been on bottom for three minutes. His cardio is going to be zapped for the third."

0:38 - Usman has the back with both hooks in. He's not looking for the choke yet; he's looking to punish. He's landing unanswered punches to the side of Church's head. Church is covering up, his face a mask of crimson. Herb Dean is looking closely. "Move your head, Zane! Fight back!"

Usman is relentless. He tries to slide the arm under the chin for the RNC, but Church manages to tuck his chin and fight the hands. Usman gives up on the choke and simply continues the ground-and-pound. Left, right, left. Church is just taking them now.

0:05 - One final, massive elbow from Usman lands right on the bridge of Church's nose. Usman lands two more hammerfists as the horn sounds.

0:00 - HORN SOUNDS.

Usman stands up, his chest heaving, sweat and Church's blood dripping off his chin. He stares at the Jackson-Wink corner. Church stays on the mat for five seconds, looking at the ceiling, before his coaches rush in to haul him up. He's staggering to his stool, his nose clearly broken and his spirit visibly flagging.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"DOMINATION! Kamaru Usman turned the clock back! That was a ten-eight round on my card! He completely neutralized the boxer and battered him on the mat!"

DOMINICK CRUZ:

"That was a grueling, physically taxing round. Zane Church is leaking blood and he's gasping for air. But Kamaru is 38—can he sustain that level of wrestling for another five minutes after being rocked in the first? This third round is going to be about who wants it more."

ROUND 3

The final round begins. Kamaru Usman moves toward the center. Zane Church looks like a man who just had a spiritual awakening on his stool. He's wiped the blood from his eyes, his chin is tucked deep, and he's bouncing with a terrifying, rhythmic fluidness.

4:45 – Church doesn't wait. He snaps a double-jab—snap, snap—that jars Usman's head back. Usman tries to parry, but his hands are a fraction slow. Church follows with a straight left to the solar plexus. Usman gasps, his body hitching.

DOMINICK CRUZ:

"Look at the footwork! Church is back on his bicycle. He's not letting Usman get within three feet of him. He's learned the lesson from the second round: stay long or get drowned."

4:30 – Usman lunges for a desperate single-leg. It's telegraphed. Church doesn't just sprawl; he pivots 90 degrees to his right, a beautiful Jackson-Wink lateral slip, and digs a short left uppercut into Usman's jaw as he passes. Usman stumbles, nearly hitting the fence, his balance completely shot.

4:12 – Church is flicking the jab, targeting the swelling on Usman's temple. Pop. Usman's head snaps. Pop. The swelling opens up, a trickle of dark blood leaking down his cheek. Usman tries to fire back a wide overhand right, but Church slips it like he's in a sparring session, countering with a crisp 1-2 that echoes through Busch Stadium.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:

"THE SPEED! It's like they're in two different time zones! Zane Church is putting on a boxing clinic against one of the greatest to ever do it!"

3:50 – Usman is a stationary target. He's trying to cut the cage, but his feet are flat. Church whips a lead right hook that catches Usman's guard, then immediately sinks a left shovel hook

into the liver. Usman's face contorts. He's hurt. He tries to clinch, but Church frames off perfectly with a stiff forearm and lands a short elbow on the exit.

3:25 – Usman shoots again. A power double-leg in the center. He gets deep, his arms wrapping around Church's thighs. Church stays calm. He widens his base, digs his overhooks in, and uses a whizzer to toss Usman off balance. They scramble. Church wins the transition, popping back to his feet and landing a clean right hand as Usman rises.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"That was the shot, Mike. That was Usman's last bullet in the chamber. The momentum has completely shifted."

3:05 – Church is styling. He feints a high kick, draws Usman's hands up, and rips a three-punch combination to the body. Thud, thud, thud. Usman is doubled over. Church snaps a head kick that misses, but he transitions into a spinning back-fist that clips Usman's guard.

2:48 – Usman is bleeding from the nose, the mouth, and the temple. He's the personification of "grit," but his body is failing him. Church flickers the jab—flick, flick—then unleashes a straight left that finds the mark. Usman's head snaps back so hard his sweat sprays the front row.

2:25 – Church is cutting the cage now. He's the one stalking. He traps Usman near the black post. He feints the jab, slips the counter-jab, and fires a lead right hook-left straight-right hook. A "Golden Gloves" classic. Every shot lands. Usman is wobbled! His back hits the cage and his arms drop for a second.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"HE'S TEETERING! USMAN IS HANGING ON BY A THREAD! CHASE HIM, ZANE! FINISH THE STORY!"

2:05 – Church doesn't rush. He stays composed. He parries a weak Usman jab and digs another left hook to the ribs. Usman is visibly grimacing. Church is "Ricochet" in every sense—every time Usman tries to touch him, the energy is redirected into a counter-strike.

1:45 – Usman tries a final, soul-crushing clinch. He grabs Church's waist and tries to drive him into the fence. Church is ready. He pummels for an underhook, uses his head to create space

under Usman’s chin, and lands three devastating knees to the body in the clinch. Usman’s grip softens. Church shucks him off and lands a clean uppercut on the break.

1:20 – The crowd is on its feet. 45,000 people are watching a legend being dismantled. Church isn't even being touched. He slips a wild Usman hook, rolls under it, and comes back with a straight left that snaps Usman’s head back again.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"This is a masterclass. Zane Church is answering every question his critics asked. He’s showing Fight IQ, he’s showing patience, and he’s showing world-class boxing. He is surgically picking apart a Hall of Famer."

0:55 – Usman is exhausted. He’s leaning against the fence, his hands up but his eyes glazed. Church is in the pocket now. He lands a four-punch flurry—left, right, left, right. All headshots. Usman’s head is bouncing off the cage like a speedbag. He’s not going down, but he’s not "there" anymore.

0:35 – Church snaps a lead high kick. It connects with the shoulder, but the impact sends Usman stumbling sideways. Church follows him, popping the jab—pop, pop. He’s not looking for the one-shot KO anymore; he’s looking for the cumulative damage.

Ten-second clacks sound. Church opens up. He’s throwing everything. A spinning heel kick graze. A flying knee to the body. He lands a CRUSHING straight left right on the chin! Usman’s knees buckle! He’s falling!

0:05 – USMAN IS ON ONE KNEE! Church doesn't jump on the ground-and-pound; he stands over him, looking for one clean, final punch. Usman slowly, painfully, pulls himself up by the fence. He’s standing, his face a mask of blood, staring at Church with pure, unadulterated heart.

0:01 – Church lands one final, thunderous straight left right at the buzzer.

0:00 – HORN SOUNDS.

Zane Church doesn't celebrate wildly. He takes a step back, raises both hands, and looks at the sky. He’s barely breathing hard. Kamaru Usman stays leaned against the fence, his head

down, blood dripping onto the Gateway to the West logo. Herb Dean has to help him to his stool.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"UNBELIEVABLE! THE RESURRECTION OF ZANE CHURCH! He was outworked in the second but that third round was as close to a perfect striking round as you will ever see in this sport!"

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"He out-struck Usman four-to-one. He stuffed the wrestling. He broke the legend's nose. This fight is going to be a nightmare for the judges to score—was the second round dominance of Usman enough to overcome the first and third round striking of Church? We're going to the cards!"

The Octagon is filled with officials, commissions, and cornermen. Kamaru Usman is standing with a towel over his head, his face a swollen map of the battle he just endured. Zane Church is pacing, pointing at the St. Louis crowd.

BRUCE BUFFER:
"Ladies and gentlemen, after three rounds, we go to the judges' scorecards for a decision. All three judges score the contest 29–28, for the winner by UNANIMOUS DECISION... ZANE 'RICOCHET' CHURRRRRCH!"

Church lets out a primal scream, drops into a split, and then springs back up as Joe Rogan enters the cage.

JOE ROGAN:
"Zane, what a performance. You were pushed to the absolute limit in that second round, but you came out in the third and looked like a world-beater. How did you turn it around?"

ZANE CHURCH:
"JOE! LOOK AT ME! LOOK AT THIS FACE! I look like a glazed donut that got dropped in a gravel pit, but I feel like a million bucks! First of all, Kamaru Usman... man, that guy is a brick wall. Hitting him is like punching a humvee. Much respect to a legend, but the 'Nightmare' is over, baby! It’s morning time and I’m the alarm clock!"

JOE ROGAN:

"You faced a lot of criticism this week. Jake Carter called you a 'bar brawler' with 'zero fight IQ.' Does this win silence those critics?"

ZANE CHURCH:
"JAKE CARTER! THE CANADIAN MACHIAVELLI! HEY JAKE! Did you see that third round?! Was that a bar brawl?! That was a goddamn symphony, you maple-syrup-chugging meathead! I just out-boxed a Hall of Famer while my nose was sitting on the other side of my face! You're not a Machiavelli, Jake, you're a librarian with a gym membership!"

JOE ROGAN:
"You've got a lot to say to the headliners tonight."

ZANE CHURCH:
"I'm not done! TYRON WOODLEY! I'm in your house! I'm in St. Louis! I can hear the Arch from here! You and Jake are in the back right now putting on your pretty little hand wraps, but just know—one of you is leaving with that belt, and the other is leaving with a headache, and I DON'T CARE WHICH ONE IT IS! Ryan Gasper! Autumn! Give me the winner! Give me the loser! Give me both of 'em at the same time! I'll fight Jake in Montréal and Tyron in the parking lot of a TGI Fridays! I don't care!"

(Church turns to the crowd, cupping his ear to a chorus of boos and cheers.)

"ST. LOUIS! I love the hate! It feeds me! Now somebody get me a beer and a doctor, in that order! CHAMA! Is that what the kids say?! CHAMA, BABY!"

JOE ROGAN:
"One of the wildest personalities in the sport today. Zane Church!"

ZANE CHURCH:
"JAKE CARTER, I'M UNDER YOUR BED! SLEEP WITH ONE EYE OPEN, MOOSE-MAN!"

The stadium lights have shifted to a sharp, cinematic gold. The camera cuts from a wide shot of the Gateway Arch—shimmering in the distance—to the Octagon, where the mat is still

stained with the remnants of the wars that preceded it. The roar of 45,000 fans has reached a fever pitch following Zane Church's explosive interview.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
St. Louis, if you are just catching your breath from Zane Church's sermon, don't sit down yet! We are headed into the championship rounds of the evening! For the UFC Featherweight title, the man who dethroned the great Alexander Volkanovski, Ilia "El Matador" Topuria, makes his second title defense! And Dom, he's facing a man many believe is the most dangerous striker to ever come out of the ONE circle.... Fabricio "Wonder Boy" Andrade.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
This is a purist's dream, Mike. We talk about 'levels' in striking, and tonight we are seeing two different philosophies. Ilia Topuria is the master of the pocket. His technical boxing, his ability to sit down on his shots and find the chin, it's arguably the best in the UFC right now. But Fabricio Andrade? He's a sniper. He's a Muay Thai specialist who targets the midsection. He's finished guys with knees, with shins to the liver... if Ilia gets too comfortable in that boxing range, Andrade will make him pay in blood.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
Topuria has that Greco-Roman base, but we rarely see him use it because his hands are so lethal. But look at Andrade's run: Shore, Ige, Emmett, he has systematically dismantled the elite of this division to get here.

FABRICIO ANDRADE emerges from the tunnel. He is draped in the Brazilian flag, moving with a calm, almost rhythmic bounce. He looks lean, shredded, and entirely unbothered by the 45,000 screaming fans. He stops at the entrance to the field, taps his chest, and points to the sky.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
Here comes the "Wonder Boy!" 11 and 2. Since joining the UFC, he has been a human highlight reel. That flying knee of Dan Ige? One of the cleanest finishes I've ever seen. Dom, what does Andrade have to do to overcome the power of the Matador?

DOMINICK CRUZ:
He has to keep the fight at the end of his kicks. Andrade is a master of "teeps" and calf kicks. He wants to keep Ilia at a distance where Ilia's hooks can't reach him. If he lets Topuria get into that

mid-range where he can unload the 1-2-3 combinations, Andrade is in trouble. But if Andrade can land that left kick to the liver—a shot he is famous for—he can take the wind out of Topuria's sails early.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
He looks incredibly focused. He knows the history. He knows Topuria is a finisher. He's not here for a points win; he's here to take that belt back to Brazil.

Andrade reaches the Octagon, vaults over the side, and immediately goes to his corner, staring at the center of the cage with a cold, predatory intensity.

The stadium erupts in a mix of cheers and respect. ILIA TOPURIA walks out. He is dressed in a custom walkout kit, the gold trim reflecting the lights. He doesn't look around; he is focused entirely on the cage.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
And here is the champion! "El Matador!" 17 and 1. His only loss was a decision to Yair Rodriguez years ago, and since then, he has been a wrecking ball. He knocked out Volkanovski, he knocked out Zabit Magomedsharipov, the two most difficult puzzles in the division, and he solved them both with his fists.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
Ilia's boxing is so compact, Mike. He doesn't waste energy. He parries, he slips, and he counters with maximum leverage. But don't forget his wrestling. If Andrade starts getting the better of the kickboxing, Ilia has the ability to change levels and put this fight on the floor. He's a complete martial artist, but he loves the knockout. He wants to prove he is the best striker in the world, and taking out a Muay Thai champion like Andrade is the ultimate way to do it.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
He looks like he's carved out of stone. The aura around Topuria right now is incredible. He believes he is the best in the world, and so far, nobody has been able to prove him wrong.

Topuria climbs the steps, enters the Octagon, and walks straight to the center, raising his arms. He stares directly at Andrade, a smirk playing on his lips.

BRUCE BUFFER:

Ladies and gentlemen, this is the CO-MAIN EVENT of the evening! Five rounds for the UFC FEATHERWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP!

CROWD: (A massive, sustained roar)

BRUCE BUFFER:
Introducing first, the challenger! Fighting out of the blue corner. A Muay Thai specialist and Striker holding a professional record of 11 wins and 2 losses. He stands 5 feet 7 and a half inches tall, fighting out of Fortaleza, Ceara, Brazil! Presenting... FABRICIO "WONDER BOY" ANDRRRRAAAAADEEEEE!

Andrade bows slightly, then snaps a high kick into the air, his eyes never leaving Topuria.

BRUCE BUFFER:
And now, introducing the champion! Fighting out of the red corner. A Freestyle fighter and Greco-Roman Wrestler holding a professional record of 17 wins and only 1 loss. He stands 5 feet 7 inches tall, fighting out of Spain! He is the REIGNING, DEFENDING, UNDISPUTED UFC FEATHERWEIGHT CHAMPION OF THE WORLD... ILIA "EL MATADOR" TOPURRRRRIAAAAAA!

Topuria doesn't move. He simply stares, his jaw set, the belt held high by the official behind him.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
Referee Jason Herzog has the center.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
Watch the stance. Topuria is heavy on that lead leg, which makes it a target for Andrade's kicks. But that lead leg is also the spring for Ilia's devastating lead hook. This is a game of inches, Mike.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
For the gold! St. Louis, are you ready?! Here we go!

ROUND 1

Referee Jason Herzog brings his hands together and retreats. Ilia Topuria occupies the center immediately, his posture upright, chin tucked, hands held in a tight, high-peek-a-boo guard.

He looks like a condensed block of granite. Fabricio Andrade bounces on the outside, a rangy southpaw today, his lead hand flickering out in long, non-committal probes.

4:45 – Topuria takes a small, sliding step forward. Andrade snaps a lead leg kick that thuds against Topuria's inner thigh. Topuria doesn't flinch; he just resets his base. He's looking at Andrade's solar plexus, ignoring the head movement, waiting for a commitment.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"Watch the lead foot battle. Andrade is in southpaw to keep that lead leg away from Topuria's power, but it opens up the body for the Matador's straight right. Both men are playing for inches right now."

4:28 – Andrade flicks a sharp jab that skims Topuria's guard. Topuria parries with his right hand and immediately fires back a jab-hook combination. Andrade slides his head off the centerline, and the hook whistles past his jaw. The speed is blinding.

4:12 – Topuria is cutting the cage with elite precision. He isn't following; he's anticipating. Andrade tries to circle out to his right, and Topuria digs a thudding calf kick that turns Andrade's lead foot inward. Andrade resets and answers with a stinging left teep to the champion's midsection, creating three feet of space.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"Ilia is so compact! He's not wasting a single movement! But Andrade's length is a real problem early on. He's catching Topuria every time he tries to enter the phone booth!"

3:55 – Topuria feints a level change. Andrade reacts, dropping his hands for a micro-second, and Topuria snatches the opportunity to land a stiff jab right on the nose. Andrade's head snaps back, and blood begins to bead from his right nostril.

3:38 – Andrade adjusts. He stops circling and plants. He whips a heavy left roundhouse kick toward Topuria's liver. Topuria catches it on the elbow—a sickening thwack echoes—but the impact shoves the champion two steps back. Topuria grins, a predatory, cold expression, and marches back in.

3:20 – Topuria finds the pocket. He slips a jab and unleashes a three-punch flurry: right straight, left hook, right hook. Andrade parries the first two, but the final hook clips his temple! ANDRADE WOBBLES!

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"HE TOUCHED HIM! TOPURIA LANDED THE HOOK! ANDRADE IS ON THE BICYCLE!"

3:05 – Topuria doesn't rush. He knows Andrade's knees are dangerous when he's hurt. He stalks him to the fence. Andrade throws a desperate flying knee to reset the distance—Topuria side-steps it with a matador's grace and rips a short, digging right hand to the ribs as Andrade lands.

2:48 – Clinch battle. Topuria pummels for an underhook, using his Greco-Roman background to drive his forehead into Andrade's jaw. Andrade is fighting the hands, looking for a Thai plumb, but Topuria is too strong. He digs a knee into Andrade's thigh, then another to the body.

2:30 – Andrade manages to frame off and creates a sliver of space. He lands a short, razor-sharp elbow over the top on the break. It catches Topuria on the cheekbone, instantly raising a welt. They separate.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"Andrade's elbows are his best friend in this clinch. Topuria wants to maul, but he's leaving his face open on the exits. High-level adjustments from the 'Wonder Boy' there."

2:12 – Back in the center. The pacing is grueling. Topuria's nose is starting to leak red from the jab work. He flicks a low side-kick to Andrade's knee, then explodes with a 1-2. Andrade slips the cross and counters with a vicious left straight to the gut. Topuria winces—the liver kick from earlier is starting to pay interest.

1:55 – Andrade begins to find his rhythm. He's using a "long guard," keeping his lead hand extended to obstruct Topuria's vision. He digs a calf kick, then another. Topuria's lead leg is reddening. The champion responds by switching to southpaw briefly to hide the damage, then switches back.

1:38 – Topuria feints the jab, drops his shoulder, and drives forward for a double-leg! He gets deep! Andrade's back hits the fence as Topuria lifts him. Andrade displays incredible balance, hopping on one leg and digging a frantic overhook. Topuria chain-wrestles, transitioning to a single, but Andrade shucks him off.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"THE TAKEDOWN DEFENSE! Andrade is proving he belongs in there with the elite! He's not just a striker, Mike!"

1:20 – Separation again. Topuria looks frustrated for the first time. He wipes the blood from his nose and charges. He throws a massive overhand right—Andrade ducks! Andrade rises with a lead knee that catches Topuria right in the chest!

1:05 – Topuria gasps, the wind momentarily knocked out of him. He clinches to recover, burying his head. Andrade lands two short punches to the ears. Herzog warns them to "work." Topuria spins Andrade against the fence and looks for a trip, but Andrade's base is impenetrable.

0:52 – Topuria breaks the clinch with a massive left hook that catches Andrade's guard. The power is still there, even this late in the round. Andrade circles laterally, his movements still fluid, his eyes laser-focused.

0:35 – Andrade snaps a head kick! Topuria just barely gets his glove up. The impact makes a hollow thump. Topuria answers with a thudding body shot that forces Andrade to reset his breathing. Both men are breathing heavily now, the St. Louis winter air visible in their exhales.

0:18 – Ten-second clacks sound. Topuria goes for a final burst. He unleashes a barrage of hooks in the pocket. Andrade slips the first, eats the second on the shoulder, and fires back a straight left that snaps Topuria's head back.

0:05 – They stand in the center and trade leg kicks simultaneously. Topuria lands a final jab right at the buzzer that snaps Andrade's head back one more time.

0:00 – HORN SOUNDS.

Herzog steps between them. Topuria stares Andrade down, refusing to blink, before turning to his corner. Andrade walks back, breathing through his mouth, nodding as his coach shouts instructions.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"What a chess match! That is 145-pound royalty right there! Topuria landed the bigger power shots, but Andrade's volume and those body kicks... that's a tough round to score!"

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"Topuria is winning the center, but he's taking damage on the way in. He needs to find a way to keep Andrade's back on the fence. If he lets Fabricio reset in the center, he's going to get picked apart over five rounds."

ROUND 2

The stool is pulled away. Ilia Topuria stands, his face a map of the first round—a welt on the cheek, a reddened nose. He looks irritated, his jaw set in a hard line. Fabricio Andrade stands tall, his posture relaxed, his eyes tracking Topuria's every twitch. Topuria takes the center again, his stance slightly wider, prepared to dig in.

4:48 – Topuria aggressively cuts the cage. He's tired of the range game. He snaps a low calf kick that Andrade barely checks. Andrade responds with a long, flickering jab that Topuria slips. Topuria is looking to explode.

4:30 – THE COLLISION. Topuria dips his head to lung in with a massive overhand right at the exact moment Andrade level-changes to look for a counter-knee. Their heads collide with a sickening, hollow THUD that is heard over the crowd. Both men recoil.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"OH! A massive clash of heads! That was accidental, but it was loud! Look at Topuria's forehead!"

4:22 – Topuria reaches up to touch his right eyebrow. As his glove moves away, a thick, dark curtain of blood immediately masks the right side of his face. It's a deep, vertical gash right through the meat of the brow. Jason Herzog pauses the action for a split second to look, but since it was accidental, he lets them continue.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"That is a disaster for the champion. It’s in a terrible spot, Mike. That blood is going straight into the eye socket. If the cutman can't close that, Ilia is fighting with fifty percent vision for the rest of the night."

4:05 – Andrade sees the crimson. He is a shark in the water. He abandons the body kicks and starts flickering a long, annoying jab directly at the wound. Pop. Pop. Every time the glove touches the cut, more blood sprays. Topuria tries to wipe his eye with his lead glove, leaving a red smear across his vision.

3:48 – Topuria gets desperate. He charges forward with a 1-2-3. Andrade slips the cross and digs a sharp, short elbow right into the gash. The wound zips open further, now a jagged 'Y' shape. Topuria lunges for a clinch, his right eye completely squeezed shut by the flow.

3:30 – In the clinch against the cage. Topuria is fighting blind on one side. He pummels for an underhook, but Andrade is using his head to grind into the cut, a veteran move to keep the blood flowing. Topuria trips Andrade, but the Brazilian catches his balance on the fence and breaks away, landing a clean left hook on the exit.

3:12 – Topuria is blinking rapidly, his head tilted to the left to try and see out of his "good" eye. Andrade is exploiting the blind spot. He steps to his left—Topuria’s right—and whips a roundhouse kick that Topuria doesn't even see coming until it hits his shoulder.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"Andrade is being surgical! He’s moving into the blind spot! Topuria is swinging at shadows right now!"

2:50 – Topuria plants his feet and tries to find a home for the overhand. He’s throwing with a 100% power, looking for the equalizer. Andrade parries the shot and counters with a stiff straight left that lands right on the bridge of the nose. The impact sends a spray of blood across the canvas.

2:32 – Topuria’s lead leg is being ignored now. Andrade is purely focused on the head. He snaps a lead high kick that Topuria blocks, but as Topuria drops his guard to reset, Andrade flicks a lightning jab that finds the cut again. Topuria winces, the salt from his own sweat and the iron of the blood stinging the open wound.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"He can't see, Mike. Look at his posture. He’s leaning his head back, trying to let the blood drain away from the pupil, but it’s too thick. He’s guessing where Andrade is."

2:10 – Topuria shoots a reactive double-leg. It’s a slow, blinded attempt. Andrade sprawls easily, his chest heavy on Topuria’s head. Andrade lands short, thudding elbows to the ears. Topuria is trapped in the front headlock. He’s breathing hard, his chest heaving as he tries to find the strength to drive through.

1:52 – They scramble back to their feet. Topuria’s entire right side, from his shoulder to his waist, is stained a deep, visceral red. He wipes his eye again—a frantic, rhythmic motion he’s doing every five seconds now. Andrade times the wipe and lands a clean 1-2. The cross rocks Topuria’s head back.

1:30 – Topuria is backed to the fence. He’s shelling up, his vision almost entirely obscured now. Andrade is pouring it on—not with power, but with volume. Snap, snap, snap. The jab is a metronome of pain. Topuria tries to fire a counter-hook, but it’s a foot wide of the mark. Andrade counters with a lead knee to the chest.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"This is getting hard to watch! The heart of Ilia Topuria is legendary, but you can’t fight what you can’t see! He’s a sitting duck on the fence!"

1:12 – Topuria finds a second wind. He ducks a hook and drives Andrade across the cage, pinning him to the opposite fence. He’s using his sense of touch now, feeling where Andrade’s hips are. He lands a couple of short, heavy punches to the ribs. Andrade responds by framing against Topuria’s neck and landing a short upward elbow that catches the brow again.

0:55 – They separate. Topuria is a crimson mask. The blood is pouring down his cheek, dripping off his chin in a steady stream. He looks at Herzog, his left eye wide and searching, his right eye a dark, swollen slit of red. Andrade isn't letting up. He snaps a high kick—Topuria ducks, but he’s slow. The shin grazes the top of his head.

0:38 – Andrade digs a lead hook to the body, then goes high with a straight left. Topuria is stumbling. He’s trying to stay upright on pure instinct. He throws a spinning back-fist—a

desperate move. Andrade steps back, watches it sail by, and counters with a thudding leg kick that nearly takes Topuria's feet out.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"Topuria is in survival mode. He just needs to get to the stool. He needs a miracle from his cutman, or the doctor is going to waive this off. He's essentially fighting a Muay Thai champion with one eye shut."

0:20 – Ten-second clacks. Topuria is leaning against the cage, his hands up in a high guard, blood pouring through the gaps in his fingers. Andrade is stalking him, looking for one clean shot to end the night. He fires a head kick—Topuria blocks it, but the force sends him reeling toward the post.

0:05 – Andrade lands a final, sharp 1-2. The jab opens the cut even wider, and the cross snaps Topuria's head back. Topuria is blind, swinging a wild left hook at empty air as the horn sounds.

0:00 – HORN SOUNDS.

Herzog immediately steps in and grabs Topuria, who is still trying to find his bearings. Topuria's face is a horror show of red. He can't see the official; he's squinting through a film of blood. Andrade walks back to his corner, looking at the blood on his own gloves with a cold, detached expression.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"A DISASTER FOR THE CHAMPION! That headbutt has changed the entire course of this title fight! Topuria is blind in one eye, and the doctor is already on the apron!"

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"Look at that gash. It's deep, it's long, and it's right over the eye. The doctor is looking at Ilia's vision right now. If he can't see the doctor's fingers, this fight is over."

The Octagon is a frantic tableau of medical emergency and rising tension. Topuria is slumped on his stool, his head tilted back as the cutman, "Swayze," desperately tries to pack the gash with adrenaline-soaked swabs and mounds of Vaseline. It's useless. The blood is under high pressure, pulsing out with every heartbeat.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"Look at the doctor's face. He's not looking at the cut anymore; he's looking at Ilia's pupil. The eye is completely submerged in a pool of red."

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"Jason Herzog is standing right there. He's waiting for the word. If the doctor says the vision is obstructed due to an injury caused by an accidental foul, this is over. And because we haven't completed the third round in a five-round fight, this goes down as a No Contest."

The ringside physician, a stern man in latex gloves, grabs Topuria's chin. "Ilia, look at my light. How many fingers?" Topuria is squinting, his left eye darting, but his right eye is a fixed, dark slit of crimson. He wipes his face frantically with his glove, a smear of red across his forehead. "I see! I see everything! Let me fight!" he roars in Spanish.

The doctor looks at Herzog and shakes his head. "He can't see the fingers, Jason. He's got a mechanical obstruction. I'm stopping it."

THE STOPPAGE.
Herzog waves his arms over his head. The stadium let's out a collective, thundering groan of frustration. Topuria freezes. He looks at Herzog, then at the doctor, and his face transforms from a warrior's mask into an expression of pure, unadulterated rage.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"THAT'S IT! IT'S OVER! THE DOCTOR HAS CALLED IT! WE HAVE A NO CONTEST IN THE CO-MAIN EVENT!"

Across the cage, Fabricio Andrade has his hands on his hips. He looks disappointed, but he lets out a sharp, mocking laugh, gesturing toward Topuria's face as if to say 'You're lucky the doctor saved you.'

Topuria shoves Jason Herzog out of the way with a violent two-handed thrust. He charges across the blood-slicked canvas like a bull released from a pen.

Topuria lunges at Andrade, uncorking a massive left hook that catches Andrade on the shoulder. Andrade doesn't back down—he fires a lightning-fast straight right that connects with Topuria's already ruined eyebrow, sending a fresh spray of blood onto the officials.

Andrade's cornermen, including the massive Tiger Muay Thai trainers, vault over the fence. Topuria's team, led by his brother, swarm from the other side.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"TOTAL CHAOS IN ST. LOUIS! THE TEAMS ARE CLASHING! IT'S A FULL-BLOWN RIOT INSIDE THE OCTAGON!"

The Octagon is a swirling mass of bodies. Security guards in neon yellow vests are being tossed aside. A Topuria teammate is trading punches with an Andrade trainer near the black post. Ryan Gasper, looking frantic but sensing the "spectacle" of the moment, vaults over the railing and into the cage, grabbing Topuria by the waist, trying to pull him back.

RYAN GASPER: (Caught on a hot mic)
"ILIA! STOP! STOP IT NOW OR YOU'RE STRIPPED! GET HIM BACK!"

Topuria is a madman. He's screaming in a mix of Georgian and Spanish, trying to claw his way past Gasper and three security guards to get back to Andrade. Andrade is being held back by four men, but he's still kicking out, trying to land a blow on anyone within reach.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"This is a disaster for the sport, look at this crowd! Busch Stadium is falling apart! There are fights breaking out in the front row! This is absolute anarchy!"

Autumn Alarie is seen shouting orders to the production crew to cut the feed or move to a wide shot, but the cameras stay tight on the violence. Gasper is shoved to the mat in the scramble. He pops back up, his expensive suit jacket torn at the shoulder, looking more energized than angry. He signals for more security to flood the cage.

It takes nearly three minutes for a semblance of order to be restored. A phalanx of St. Louis police officers and UFC security forms a human wall across the center of the Octagon, separating the two camps. Topuria is being dragged toward the tunnel, his face a horrifying mask of red, still lunging forward, his eyes fixed on Andrade.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"I have never seen anything like this! The Co-Main event ends in a No Contest, and now we have a blood feud that will burn for years! Ryan Gasper is in the middle of it, covered in blood that isn't his! This is the most volatile night in UFC history!"

Bruce Buffer stands in a cage that looks like a crime scene. The canvas is smeared with streaks of red. He looks shaken but professional.

BRUCE BUFFER:
"Ladies and gentlemen... the ringside physician has called a stop to this contest... due to an accidental headbutt rendered in the second round. Per the rules, this bout is declared... A NO CONTEST!"

The announcement is drowned out by a deafening chorus of boos. Topuria is already gone, taken to the back for stitches, while Andrade is escorted out under a heavy security detail, dodging beer cans thrown from the stands.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"A No Contest. No winner, no loser, just a lot of bad blood and a division in total limbo. Ilia Topuria is still the champion, but after what we just saw, that belt feels like a secondary concern to the war that just started."

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"We still have a main event to get to, but how do you follow that?! St. Louis, stay with us! The trilogy is next!"

Visual: A sweeping, cinematic drone shot of the Gateway Arch at dusk. The sky is a bruised purple. The city lights of St. Louis begin to flicker on.

NARRATOR (V.O.):
Some stories are written in the gym. Some are written in the rankings. But some... some are written in the stars.

(Visual: Grainy, high-contrast footage of UFC 2018. A younger JAKE CARTER, looking lean and lightning-fast, lunges forward. An uppercut connects. TYRON WOODLEY crashes to the canvas. The young Carter screams, draped in the Maple Leaf.)

JAKE CARTER: "I told you! I'm not the WWE guy! I'm the best in the world!"

NARRATOR (V.O.):
Eight years ago, a prodigy arrived. He didn't just win a title; he dismantled a dynasty. He was the future. And for Tyron Woodley... the sun seemed to be setting.

(Visual: Cut to black. Silence for one second. Then, the sound of a heavy punching bag being struck—THUD. THUD.—in a dark, gritty gym in St. Louis.)

TYRON WOODLEY (Voiceover): "They counted me out. They said I was too old. They said the game had passed me by. But they forgot one thing..."

(Visual: Fast-cut montage of Woodley's late-career run. The slam on Covington. The punch that dropped Whittaker. Finally, the footage of UFC 36. Woodley, 41 years old, patient, stalking. He lets go of a thunderous overhand right. CARTER drops like he's been shot.)

TYRON WOODLEY (Voiceover): "...I only need one second to remind you who I am."

(Visual: Slow motion of Woodley wrapping the Middleweight belt around his waist as a stunned Carter looks on from the stool.)

NARRATOR (V.O.):
The score is settled. The ledger is even. 1-1. One knockout for the young lion. One knockout for the old king.

(Visual: Cut to Montréal. Snowy streets. Inside Tristar Gym, JAKE CARTER. He's no longer the brawler. He's throwing sharp, technical combinations. His eyes are cold, focused.)

JAKE CARTER (Current): "The loss at UFC 36... it was the best thing that ever happened to me. It forced me to evolve. It turned the brawler into a strategist. They call me the 'Canadian Machiavelli' for a reason. I've mapped out every inch of this trilogy. I'm faster. I'm smarter. And I'm in my prime."

(Visual: Split screen. Left side: Carter training at Snyder Combat Arts with Antonio Snyder. Right side: Woodley training in the heart of St. Louis, surrounded by his community.)

ARIEL HELWANI (V.O.): "This isn't just a fight. It's a collision of eras. You have a 43-year-old legend defying the laws of nature against a young world-beater who has spent his entire life preparing for this moment."

(Visual: The music shifts. A heavy, driving orchestral track kicks in—brass-heavy and epic. Fast cuts of both men: Woodley's explosive power, Carter's technique)

TYRON WOODLEY: "you can't plan for the pressure of St. Louis. You can't plan for the power I carry. This is my house. This is my city. And this... is my belt."

JAKE CARTER: "Legacy is on the line. I took his belt once. I'll take it again. The rubber match is where the truth comes out. And the truth is... it's my time now."

(Visual: The two men face off in the center of the stadium, the Gateway Arch towering behind them. The UFC 51 logo burns onto the screen.)

NARRATOR (V.O.):
One city. Three fights. One final answer.

BRUCE BUFFER (V.O. - Echoing): "IT'S TIME!"

(Visual: Fast cuts—Woodley landing the overhand—Carter landing the uppercut—the crowd roaring in Busch Stadium.)

NARRATOR (V.O.):
The King of St. Louis... vs. The Canadian Machiavelli.

(Visual: A final shot of the two men staring each other down. Text appears over the screen.)

[TRILOGY. FOR THE UNDISPUTED CHAMPIONSHIP.]

(Music climaxes and cuts to black.)

The chaos of the Co-Main event has finally been cleared. A double-layer of St. Louis Police and private security now lines the aisle and the perimeter of the Octagon. The canvas has been scrubbed, but faint, dark smears of Ilia Topuria's blood remain—a grim reminder of the volatility of the night.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
Ladies and gentlemen, we have witnessed anarchy. We have witnessed a riot. But the lights are still on, the Gateway Arch is still standing, and we have the most important fight in the history of the Middleweight division left to settle. St. Louis... are you still with us?!

DOMINICK CRUZ:
The energy in here is beyond anything I've ever felt. The fans are vibrating. But for these two men in the back, they have to block out the madness of the last thirty minutes. They have to find the zone. Jake Carter. Tyron Woodley. Eight years of history, two devastating knockouts, and one final answer.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
It is the rubber match. The trilogy. For the undisputed Middleweight Championship of the world!

JAKE CARTER emerges from the visitor's dugout. He is flanked by Firas Zahabi and Antonio Snyder. He wears a white-and-red Tristar walkout hoodie, the hood pulled low. He isn't looking at the crowd, which is raining down a deafening chorus of boos. He looks cold. He looks surgical. He looks like a man about to perform an execution.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
Here comes "The Canadian Machiavelli." 29 and 6. He's in the absolute physical prime of his life. Dom, he looks like he hasn't blinked in twenty minutes. The focus on Jake Carter right now is terrifying.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
He's the betting favorite for a reason tonight. He has the youth, he has the reach, and he has the momentum.. But more importantly, he has the blueprint. He knows he can't brawl with Woodley. He has to be the matador. He's been training with the Snyders and the Tristar team to find the gaps in Woodley's patience. He's not here for a fight; he's here for a technical masterclass.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
He’s 1-1 with the legend. He took Woodley’s belt when he was just a kid. Tonight, he wants to take it back as a veteran.

Carter reaches the cage, ignores the beer cans being held back by security, and steps onto the apron. He looks out over the 45,000 fans with a look of pure, detached indifference. He enters the cage and immediately begins a rhythmic, calculated warm-up.

[The stadium lights go pitch black. Total silence for three seconds.]

The stadium explodes. It is a physical vibration that rattles the commentary desk. The lights strobe in rhythm with the bass. TYRON WOODLEY emerges from the home dugout. He is draped in a "St. Louis King" flag. He is 43 years old, but his skin is tight over his muscles, his physique looking as explosive as it did a decade ago. He is walking slowly, absorbing the worship of his city.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
(Screaming over the crowd)
LISTEN TO THIS! THIS IS ST. LOUIS! THIS IS THE CHOSEN ONE! Tyron Woodley, 43 years of age, defending the gold in the house that the Cardinals built!

DOMINICK CRUZ:
This is an emotional atmosphere, Mike. Woodley has to be careful not to let the adrenaline of this crowd override his game plan. His greatest weapon is his patience. He waits for you to make a mistake, and then he ends your night. If he tries to "show out" for St. Louis and gets reckless, Jake Carter will pick him apart. But if he remains the patient sniper we saw at UFC 36? He’s the most dangerous man on the planet.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
He’s won 32 fights. He’s been the king of two divisions. He’s finished GSP, Usman, Carter, Covington... the list goes on and on. He is the greatest elder statesman this sport has ever seen. Tonight, he tries to put the final nail in the coffin of this rivalry.

Woodley reaches the steps. He stops, looks up at the Gateway Arch visible beyond the stadium walls, and pounds his chest. He enters the Octagon and the roar reaches a level that makes the audio feed crackle.

BRUCE BUFFER:
Ladies and gentlemen, THIS IS THE MAIN EVENT OF THE EVENING!

CROWD: (Deafening roar)

BRUCE BUFFER:
Five rounds for the UNDISPUTED UFC MIDDLEWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP OF THE WORLD! Introducing first, the challenger! Fighting out of the blue corner. A Karate and Boxing specialist holding a professional record of 29 wins and 6 losses. He stands 6 feet 1 inch tall, fighting out of Montreal, Quebec, Canada! Presenting... "THE CANADIAN MACHIAVELLI" JAKE CARRRRRRTERRRRR!

Carter gives a slight, respectful nod toward the Snyder camp in the front row, his face a mask of stone. The boos are legendary.

BRUCE BUFFER:
And now, introducing the champion! Fighting out of the red corner. A Wrestler and Striker holding a professional record of 32 wins, 6 losses, and 1 draw. He stands 5 feet 9 inches tall, fighting out of ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI! He is the REIGNING, DEFENDING, UNDISPUTED UFC MIDDLEWEIGHT CHAMPION OF THE WORLD... TYRON "THE CHOSEN ONE" WOOOODLEYYYYYY!

Woodley doesn't move. He stares directly into Carter's soul, the belt draped over his shoulder. He looks like a king defending his castle.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
Referee Herb Dean has the assignment.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
Look at the height difference. Carter is 6'1", Woodley is 5'9". Carter has the two-inch reach advantage. This is a game of the jab vs. the overhand. If Carter can keep the jab in Woodley's face, he wins. If Woodley can slip it just once? We've seen how that ends.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
Eight years. Three fights. One winner. FOR THE GOLD! ST. LOUIS, LET'S GO!

ROUND 1

Referee Herb Dean looks at both men, his own breath visible in the freezing Missouri air. "Fight!" he commands. Tyron Woodley doesn't move forward; he takes two steps back, his heels nearly touching the black line of the Octagon. He's in a wide, explosive crouch, his right hand glued to his chin, his left hand extended as a feeler. Jake Carter occupies the center immediately. He's in a tall, bladed karate stance—shoulders relaxed, chin tucked, his lead foot constantly twitching, measuring the distance to the champion's lead leg.

4:45 – The crowd is a wall of sound, but the cage is a cathedral of focus. Carter flicks a non-committal jab. It's a range-finder. Woodley doesn't move his head; he just parries it with his lead palm. Carter circles laterally to his left, staying away from the "office" of Woodley's right hand.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"Look at the positioning, Mike. Woodley wants to be against the fence. He uses the cage as a backrest to generate torque for that counter right hand. Carter knows it. He's staying in the center, refusing to get lured into the pocket."

4:22 – Carter snaps a low, digging calf kick. It's fast, a whip-like motion. Woodley doesn't check it; he absorbs it on the muscle of the calf and immediately feints a level change. Carter hitches, his hips reacting to the takedown threat, and Woodley resets. A mental chess match in the first sixty seconds.

4:05 – Carter finds his first opening. He feints the jab, draws Woodley's parry, and instead rips a lead hook to the body. It's a sharp thud against Woodley's ribs. Woodley responds with a lightning-fast overhand right—the stadium holds its breath—but Carter leans back, the knuckles of Woodley's glove grazing the air inches from his nose.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"WHOA! Tyron let it fly! Jake Carter just saw his life flash before his eyes! That right hand carries the power of the entire city of St. Louis!"

3:48 – They reset. Carter is more cautious now. He's using a long guard, keeping his lead hand extended to obstruct Woodley's vision. He snaps a double-jab. Pop-pop. The second one gets

through, snapping Woodley's head back. Woodley's face remains a mask of stoicism. He's waiting. He's always waiting.

3:30 – Woodley explodes forward—not with a punch, but with a clinch. He's too fast for a 43-year-old. He drives his shoulder into Carter's chest and pins him against the fence. The crowd roars as their hero initiates the grind. Woodley pummels for an underhook, his head tucked firmly under Carter's chin.

3:12 – In the clinch. Woodley is a fire hydrant of muscle. He digs a hard knee into Carter's inner thigh, then another to the body. Carter is calm. He uses his frame to create space, digging his own underhook and looking for a "whizzer" to throw Woodley off. Woodley is heavy, his wrestling pedigree on full display as he grinds his forehead into Carter's orbital bone.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"This is the physical tax of fighting Tyron Woodley. He makes you carry his weight. Carter has to find a way to frame off or he's going to be tired by the third round. This is veteran savvy from the champion."

2:50 – Carter manages to get a palm on Woodley's face, pushing the head back to create a sliver of space. He rips a short upward elbow on the break—it misses, but it forces Woodley to release the grip. They're back in the center. Carter's white hoodie-marks are stained with a bit of condensation from the cage.

2:32 – Carter adjusts. He starts using his lead leg more, flicking out side-kicks to Woodley's lead knee to keep him at bay. Clack. The side of the foot hits the kneecap. Woodley winces slightly. Carter is playing the long game, trying to disable the "spring" in Woodley's legs.

2:15 – Woodley feints a big right hand and instead digs a heavy lead hook to Carter's liver. Carter catches it on the elbow, but the force shoves him back. Woodley stalks, for the first time in the round, moving toward the center. He's trying to cut the cage.

1:55 – Carter snaps a straight right hand down the pipe. It lands flush! Woodley's head snaps back, and for a micro-second, his feet go stationary. CARTER LANDS THE JAB RIGHT AFTER!

MICHAEL CHANDLER:

"CLEAN SHOTS FROM THE CHALLENGER! Carter is finding the timing! He's using that length to touch the champion!"

1:38 – Woodley resets, unfazed. He ducks a follow-up hook and looks for a power double-leg takedown. He drives his head into Carter's hips. Carter displays incredible balance, hopping on one leg and leaning against the fence to stay upright. Woodley is driving, his face reddening from the exertion.

1:20 – Woodley transitions to a single leg, lifting Carter's right foot off the canvas. Carter uses his reach to grab Woodley's head, looking for a desperation guillotine to stop the drive. Woodley recognizes the threat and abandons the takedown, breaking the clinch with a massive right hook that Carter barely blocks.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"High-level transitions. Carter's grappling defense has improved immensely since the first fight. He's not getting bullied on the mat tonight."

1:05 – The mist is getting thicker, making the canvas a bit slick. Carter slips as he tries to throw a high kick. He's down for a second! Woodley rushes in like a predator! He launches a massive grounded strike, but Carter rolls, scrambles, and pops back to his feet before Woodley can land the killing blow.

0:50 – Back on the feet. The crowd is standing. Both men are breathing heavily, their exhales visible in the strobe lights. Carter is bleeding slightly from the nose—likely from a clinch elbow earlier. He wipes it on his shoulder and resets.

0:35 – Carter goes back to the jab. Pop. He's finding the range. Woodley is looking for the overhand. He feints it once, twice... then he lets it go. Carter slips it by a fraction of an inch and counters with a sharp left hook that clips Woodley's jaw.

0:18 – Ten-second clacks sound. Clack, clack, clack. Both men meet in the center. Carter unleashes a 1-2-Head Kick combination. The 1-2 lands on the gloves, and the head kick is blocked, but the impact is audible. Woodley fires back with a thudding leg kick that spins Carter around.

0:05 – They trade jabs. Carter lands. Woodley lands. They're in the pocket now, both men refusing to give an inch as the final seconds of the round tick down. Woodley tries one final right hand, but Carter parries it as the horn sounds.

0:00 – HORN SOUNDS.

Herb Dean steps between them. Woodley stays in the center, staring Carter down, refusing to show any fatigue to his hometown. Carter turns his back, walking slowly to his stool, nodding to Firas Zahabi. He's marked up, but he looks composed.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"WHAT A START! This is exactly what we expected! A technical, high-stakes chess match between two of the best to ever do it! Carter landed more volume, but Woodley had the control in the clinch!"

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"This is a razor-close round to score. Woodley's clinch work and that takedown threat are keeping Carter from really opening up. But Carter's jab is the most consistent weapon in the cage right now. 10-9 Carter on my card, but only by the slimmest of margins."

ROUND 2

Herb Dean signals for the second frame. Tyron Woodley rises from his stool with a deep, deliberate exhale, his shoulders rolling as he looks out into the sea of St. Louis fans. He looks incredibly composed for a 43-year-old in a dogfight. Jake Carter is already standing, bouncing on the balls of his feet, his face marked by a small smear of grease on his forehead to help the leather slide. He's in that wide, bladed stance again, lead hand out, looking for the "Machiavellian" path through the champion's defenses.

4:45 – Carter immediately establishes the jab. Flick. Flick. He's testing the reaction time. Woodley parries the first, but the second grazes his cheek. Woodley takes a lateral step, refusing to be pinned in the center, and whips a thunderous calf kick that catches Carter's lead leg as he's stepping in. Carter's leg kicks out from under him for a second, but he stays upright.

DOMINICK CRUZ:

"Adjustment from Woodley. He's not going to let Carter just stand there and poke him. He's attacking the mobility. If he deadens that lead leg, Carter can't spring away from the right hand."

4:22 – Woodley feints a heavy overhand, then digs a lightning-fast left hook into Carter's liver. Carter catches it partially on his elbow, but the thud echoes. Carter responds by snapping a lead high kick. Woodley ducks—the shin whistles over his head—and Woodley rises with a stiff jab of his own.

4:05 – The mist is settling on the mat, creating a thin, treacherous film. Carter pivots to his left, creating a new angle, and rips a two-punch combo: a straight right to the solar plexus followed by a lead hook to the head. Woodley covers up, absorbing the impact on his gloves, but the force shoves him back toward the fence.

3:50 – Woodley is back on his "rest," his heels touching the cage. Carter doesn't rush. He stays at the end of his reach, flicking a side-kick to Woodley's lead knee. Woodley winces and immediately launches a counter-right. Carter slides back, the punch missing by the width of a coin.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"THEY ARE PLAYING WITH FIRE! Every time Tyron lets that right hand go, the whole stadium holds its breath! Carter is dancing on the edge of a razor!"

3:30 – Woodley explodes! He doesn't throw a punch; he drives his head into Carter's chest for a massive double-leg. He lifts Carter off the canvas! THE STADIUM ROARS! Woodley slams him down near the red post, but Carter remains active. He uses his long legs to create a frame, preventing Woodley from settling into half-guard.

3:12 – On the ground. Woodley is heavy in the hips, trying to pin Carter's shoulders. Carter is in full guard, his back against the canvas, hand-fighting desperately to keep Woodley's posture down. Woodley postured up for a massive right hand—Carter slips his head sideways—and the punch slams into the mat with a sickening thump.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"Carter is doing a great job with his hips here. He's not letting Woodley get the space to rain down those hammers. But the energy expenditure for Jake right now is massive."

2:50 – Woodley manages to pin Carter's right wrist to the mat. He rains down three short, clubbing elbows to the side of the head. Carter winces, a small cut opening up near his temple. Carter uses the cage to walk his feet up, looking for a high guard or a triangle. Woodley recognizes the threat and postures back down, grinding his forehead into Carter's jaw.

2:28 – MOMENTUM SWING! Carter finds a pocket of space, shrimps his hips, and creates enough room to kick Woodley off him. Woodley tries to dive back into the guard, but Carter is a ghost—he scrambles to his feet before Woodley can re-establish top control.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"GREAT ESCAPE BY CARTER! He refused to stay under that pressure! We are back on the feet in St. Louis!"

2:15 – Both men are breathing hard now. The cold air makes the exertion look more visceral as steam rises from their shoulders. Carter is back to the jab. Pop. Pop. He's finding the range again. Woodley's right eye is beginning to show a faint purple puffiness from the volume.

1:52 – Carter feints a jab, slips to the outside, and rips a lead hook-straight right. CLEAN! BOTH SHOTS LAND! Woodley's head snaps back, and he stumbles toward the fence! CARTER IS ON THE HUNT!

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"HE HURT HIM! WOODLEY IS ON THE RUN! CARTER IS UNLOADING!"

1:35 – Carter swarms with a flurry—hook, hook, uppercut! Woodley is shelled up, leaning against the cage, his veteran instincts keeping his chin tucked. He's taking punishment, but he's not "out." Woodley ducks a big overhand and clinches tight, burying his head in Carter's chest to buy precious seconds of recovery.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"Woodley is a master of the clinch. He knows how to smother the fire. Carter needs to be careful here; Woodley is still dangerous in the tie-up."

1:12 – In the clinch. Woodley is recovering his breath. He digs a knee into Carter's midsection, then another. Carter frames off with a stiff forearm against Woodley's throat, trying to break

the grip. Woodley stays glued, his strength advantage evident as he turns Carter and pins him against the mesh.

0:50 – Woodley works short, dirty boxing punches to the ribs. Thud. Thud. Carter is breathing through his mouth now, the body work from Woodley beginning to pay interest. Carter manages to spin out, landing a sharp elbow on the break that draws a fresh streak of blood from the bridge of Woodley's nose.

0:35 – Center of the cage. Both men are marked up. Woodley's nose is bleeding; Carter's temple is swollen. Carter snaps a lead high kick—Woodley blocks it, but the force shoves him back. Woodley fires back with a massive overhand right that Carter parries. The tension is unbearable.

0:18 – Ten-second clacks. Clack, clack, clack. Carter is aggressive, looking to steal the round. He pops the jab, then a straight right. Woodley ducks and looks for the counter, but he's a half-second slow. Carter lands a final, thudding body kick that echoes through the stadium.

0:05 – They trade in the pocket! Woodley lands a short hook! Carter lands a jab! They are throwing with bad intentions as the clock expires!

0:00 – HORN SOUNDS.

Herb Dean steps between them. Woodley is bleeding from the nose, staring a hole through Carter. Carter is wiping sweat and blood from his eyes, staring back with an icy, calculated look.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"WHAT A WAR! This is everything we hoped for! Carter had the champion rocked, but Tyron's wrestling and clinch work kept him in the fight! That was a massive round for the challenger!"

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"That was a clear Carter round on my card. He out-struck Woodley significantly and showed great grappling defense. But look at Woodley—he's not broken. He's just waiting for the one opening."

ROUND 3

Herb Dean signals for the third round. Tyron Woodley walks out from his corner with a gait that is heavy but purposeful. His right eye is noticeably puffy now, and the bridge of his nose is swollen, but his breathing is steady. He's the personification of "old man strength" and veteran poise. Jake Carter bounces out, his Tristar-honed footwork still fluid, but his white trunks are smeared with a mixture of his own sweat and the champion's blood. He's still in that bladed karate stance, his lead hand out, playing the distance like a master fencer.

4:45 – Woodley does something different. Instead of backing up to the fence, he takes the center. He's taking the initiative. He snaps a hard jab—his own version—to disrupt Carter's rhythm. Carter parries and immediately fires back a calf kick. Woodley checks it perfectly, bone-on-bone.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"Adjustment by the champion. He's not going to let Carter dictate the real estate this round. By taking the center, he's forcing Carter to be the one moving backward. This changes the entire geometry of the fight."

4:28 – Carter snaps a lead jab. Woodley slips it to the inside and digs a heavy right hand to the body. THUD. It's a clean shot to the solar plexus. Carter's posture hitches for a second. He circles out to his right, resetting his breathing. Woodley doesn't chase; he stays in the center, stalking with his hands held high.

4:10 – Carter tries to re-establish the jab. Pop. Pop. Woodley is parrying them with his lead palm, his eyes laser-focused on Carter's chin. Carter feints a high kick, then drops low for a calf kick. Woodley checks again.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"Woodley's defense has tightened up! He's not eating those low kicks anymore. Carter is going to have to find a new way to compromise the champion's base."

3:52 – Woodley explodes! He lunges with a massive overhand right. Carter ducks, but Woodley follows with a lead hook that clips Carter on the temple. Carter wobbles! Woodley sees it and charges! He's not throwing wild; he's throwing calculated power. He backs Carter into the fence near the black post.

3:35 – Woodley is unloading! A three-punch combination: right to the body, left hook to the head, right cross! Carter is shelled up, his back against the mesh, his veteran instincts taking over as he rolls with the punches. He catches the cross on his forearm and immediately clinches, wrapping his arms around Woodley's waist.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"MOMENTUM SWING! Woodley just reminded everyone that he only needs one opening! Carter is clinching to clear the cobwebs. He needs to breathe."

3:18 – In the clinch. Woodley is bullying him. He pummels for an underhook and drives a knee into Carter's thigh. He's using his head to grind into Carter's jaw, making every second miserable. Carter is fighting the hands, trying to create a frame with his forearm against Woodley's throat.

3:00 – Woodley releases the clinch and rips a short, sharp elbow on the break. It catches Carter right on the bridge of the nose, opening a fresh cut. Blood starts to spray across both men. Carter resets in the center, blinking through the red, but his movement is slightly more labored now.

2:45 – Carter snaps a 1-2. It's a desperation move to keep Woodley back. Woodley slips both and fires a heavy leg kick that turns Carter's lead leg inward. Carter's mobility is starting to flag. He tries to fire a straight left, but Woodley parries it effortlessly.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"The tables have turned! Woodley is the one stalking now! The age isn't showing, Dom—the experience is! He's breaking the kid down!"

2:22 – Carter adjusts. He switches to southpaw to hide the damaged lead leg. He flickers a jab from the new stance. Woodley isn't fooled. He takes a lateral step, resetting his own angle. Carter throws a high kick—it's slow—and Woodley catches it!

2:05 – Woodley has the leg! He drives forward, looking to slam Carter to the canvas. Carter displays incredible balance, hopping on one leg, his back hitting the fence. Woodley abandons the slam and instead drives a massive right hand into Carter's ribs while he's still on one leg.

1:52 – Carter grunts and manages to pull his leg free, but he's trapped against the cage. Woodley is on him. He's digging hooks to the body—thud, thud. Carter is covering up high, his right side turning a deep, angry shade of crimson.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"Woodley is investing in the bank of the body. He knows Carter's cardio was an issue earlier in his career. He's trying to drain the tank for the championship rounds. This is surgical."

1:30 – Carter finds a sliver of space and spins Woodley! He uses a beautiful greco-roman tie-up to reverse the position on the fence. Now Woodley is the one with his back to the mesh. Carter lands a short elbow, then a knee to the midsection.

1:12 – Carter is fighting back! He lands a series of short, dirty-boxing uppercuts. Woodley is shelled up, his eyes peering through his guard. He's waiting for the exit. Carter throws a final elbow and breaks the clinch, landing a clean jab as he steps back.

0:55 – Both men are in the center. The pace has slowed as the physical toll of the first fifteen minutes sets in. They are both breathing through their mouths, sweat and blood dripping onto the mat. Carter snaps a lead hook—Woodley ducks. Woodley fires a straight right—Carter slips.

0:38 – Carter finds his rhythm again. Pop. Pop. Two jabs find the mark. Woodley's right eye is almost completely shut now. Carter follows with a thudding calf kick. Woodley doesn't check it this time, and his leg buckles momentarily.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"It's a dogfight! Neither man is giving an inch! This is the rubber match of a lifetime!"

0:20 – Ten-second clacks sound. Clack, clack, clack. Woodley goes for a final burst. He explodes with a three-punch flurry! Carter slips the first two, but the third—a short left hook—catches him on the jaw. Carter's head snaps back, but he fires back a straight right that catches Woodley on the forehead!

0:05 – They trade in the pocket! Hook for hook! The stadium is a wall of noise as the two legends refuse to yield! Woodley lands a final, thudding body shot just as the horn sounds.

0:00 – HORN SOUNDS.

Herb Dean steps in. Woodley is leaning against the fence, his chest heaving, his face a mask of battle. Carter is staring at him from the center of the cage, his nose bleeding, his eyes showing the fatigue.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"WHAT A ROUND! Woodley took the initiative, rocked the challenger, and dominated the clinch! But Carter finished strong! That is a nightmare to score!"

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"That was a Tyron Woodley round. He dictated where the fight took place, he landed the more damaging power shots, and he took the center of the cage. We are headed into the championship rounds, and the scorecards have to be razor-thin. This is where champions are made, Mike. Who has more left in the gas tank?"

ROUND 4
The "Championship Rounds" begin. Tyron Woodley stands up from his stool with the deliberation of a man who has lived in this deep water many times before. His right eye is a dark, swollen slit, but his breathing has slowed to a rhythmic, meditative pace. Jake Carter's face is a mask of crimson; the cut on the bridge of his nose is leaking steadily down into his mouth. He's bouncing, but the spring in his calves is visibly shallower. The Missouri cold is biting now, and both men are radiating steam like thoroughbreds.

4:45 – Woodley takes the center again, his lead foot planting firmly. Carter circles to his right, his lead hand flickering out—not a jab, but a distraction. Woodley doesn't bite. He's waiting for the "Machiavelli" to overextend. Carter snaps a low calf kick; Woodley checks it perfectly, and the sound of shin-on-shin echoes like a crack of a bat through the open-air stadium.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"Carter's lead leg is compromised, Mike. He's still trying to go to that well, but Tyron has the timing down. If Jake doesn't stop kicking, he's going to break his own shin on Woodley's knee."

4:28 – Carter adjusts. He abandons the kick and steps in with a sharp double-jab. Pop-pop. Woodley parries the first and slips the second, but Carter follows with a thudding straight

right to the ribs. Woodley absorbs it and immediately rips a lead hook to the head. Carter ducks under it, his hair spraying sweat and blood across the canvas.

4:10 – The pacing is agonizingly tense. Carter is trying to lead Woodley into a trap, feinting a stumble to draw the overhand. Woodley just stares, his right hand cocked. Carter snaps a jab—Woodley parries. Carter digs a lead hook to the body—Woodley catches it on the elbow. It's a stalemate of elite defensive awareness.

3:52 – Woodley explodes! He doesn't throw the right; he lunges with a massive left hook that catches Carter's guard and shoves him toward the fence. Woodley is on him instantly, closing the distance and locking his hands behind Carter's waist. He's looking for the high-amplitude slam.

3:35 – Carter widened his base, his back flat against the fence. He's digging his overhooks in, fighting the clasp of Woodley's hands. Woodley is driving his forehead into Carter's jaw, the pressure making Carter's neck muscles cord with strain. Woodley grinds a knee into Carter's thigh—thud—then another.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"THE STRENGTH OF THE CHAMPION! At 43 years old, Tyron Woodley is still out-muscling the younger man in the clinch! Jake Carter is fighting for every breath right now!"

3:18 – In the clinch, Carter finds a pocket of space. He frames off Woodley's face with a palm, creating just enough room to sneak a short upward elbow. It grazes Woodley's temple, drawing a fresh trickle of blood. Woodley doesn't break the grip. He turns Carter, pinning him against the black post, and digs a shoulder into his chin.

3:00 – Woodley drops his level, looking for the double-leg. Carter sprawls beautifully, his hips hitting the fence. Woodley stays glued, transitioning to a single-leg. He lifts Carter's right leg high. Carter is hopping on one foot, using his left hand to stabilize himself against the cage. Woodley launches a short, clubbing right hand that clips Carter's ear.

2:45 – Carter uses the momentum of the punch to pivot. He executes a beautiful inside trip, catching Woodley off balance! WOODLEY GOES DOWN! Carter falls into his guard, but Woodley is too experienced to stay there. He uses a butterfly hook to elevate Carter and scrambles back to his feet before Carter can land a strike.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"Unbelievable scrambling from both men! Carter nearly had him, but Woodley's veteran instincts on the mat are flawless. They are right back where they started."

2:22 – Center of the Octagon. The fatigue is setting in. Carter's hands are an inch lower than they were in the first. Woodley is stalking, his movements plodding but heavy. Carter snaps a jab—Woodley slips it and counters with a straight right to the body. WHACK. Carter's breath hitches. He circles out, trying to find his range again.

1:55 – Carter feints the jab and throws a spinning back-fist! It's a low-percentage move born of frustration. Woodley sees it coming a mile away. He ducks under it and rises with a VICIOUS OVERHAND RIGHT!

1:48 – THE COLLISION! The punch lands on the top of Carter's head! It's not the chin, but the impact sends Carter reeling back three steps, his equilibrium completely shattered!

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"HE LANDED IT! THE RIGHT HAND CONNECTED! CARTER IS WOBBLED! HE'S STUMBLING!"

1:35 – Woodley is a predator. He marches forward, looking for the kill. Carter is on his heels, his back hitting the cage. He's shelling up, his arms trembling as he tries to survive the storm. Woodley unleashes a barrage—hook, hook, uppercut! Carter is rolling with the punches, but he's taking a massive amount of "interest" on his brain.

1:18 – Carter ducks a wild hook and desperately shoots for a double-leg. It's a "safety shot." He's just trying to stop the punching. Woodley sprawls heavy, his chest pinning Carter's head to the mat. Woodley lands two heavy hammerfists to the ear before Carter can scramble back up to his feet against the fence.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"Carter is on life support! He's purely reacting now. He needs to find the clinch and stay there until the horn, or Woodley is going to finish this in the fourth!"

1:00 – Clinch against the cage. Woodley has Carter trapped. He's digging his head into the cut on Carter's nose, making it worse. He rips a short right hook to the ribs, then a knee to the solar plexus. Carter is gasping, his shoulders slumped as he carries Woodley's weight.

0:45 – Carter finds the heart. He manages to frame off and lands a short, desperation elbow that rocks Woodley's head back. It buys him space. He circles back to the center, his legs looking like they're made of lead. He flickers a jab—it's slow, but it touches Woodley's nose.

0:25 – Woodley stalks. He knows Carter is hurt. He feints the right hand again, drawing Carter's hands up. Woodley digs a heavy left to the body. Carter folds slightly, protecting the midsection. Woodley snaps a jab that snaps Carter's head back.

Ten-second clacks sound. Clack, clack, clack. The stadium is screaming "T-WOOD! T-WOOD!" Woodley goes for one last burst. He unleashes a 1-2. The 1 lands, the 2 grazes. Carter fires back a straight right of his own that catches Woodley on the forehead right at the horn.

0:00 – HORN SOUNDS.

Herb Dean steps in. Both men stay leaned against the fence, their chests heaving, steam pouring off them in the frigid night. Woodley looks at Carter. Carter is leaning his head back, letting his corner pour water over his face. He's battered, but he's still here.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"ST. LOUIS IS UNBELIEVABLE! THAT WAS A CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND! Woodley landed the biggest shot of the fight, had the challenger in trouble, and dominated the clinch! Jake Carter is showing the heart of a lion just to still be standing!"

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"That was a clear 10-9 round for Woodley. On my card, it's all even going into the fifth. It all comes down to the final five minutes. Who has more left in the tank? Who wants it more? The young phenom or the old king? This is what it's all about, Mike."

ROUND 5

The final five minutes of the trilogy. Tyron Woodley stands up, smiling. Jake Carter, by contrast, looks like he's just stepped out of a cold plunge. The "Machiavelli" has arrived.

4:45 – Woodley tries to take the center, but Carter is already there. Carter snaps a lead jab—pop—that splits Woodley's guard. Woodley tries to respond with a massive overhand, but Carter isn't where he was. He's pivoted 45 degrees to his left, sliding out of the "kill zone" before the punch even reaches its apex.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"Look at the feet of Jake Carter! He's entered that 'flow state.' He's not thinking anymore; he's just reacting. Woodley is throwing at where Carter was, not where he is."

4:28 – Carter snaps a lead high kick that grazes Woodley's guard. As Woodley brings his hands up to defend, Carter immediately drops his level and digs a lightning-fast straight right to the solar plexus. Woodley's breath hitches. Carter reset and flickers the jab—pop, pop—targeting the bridge of Woodley's nose.

4:10 – Woodley is swinging at air. He's frustrated, his face a mask of blood and swelling. He launches a desperate lead hook; Carter slips it with a microscopic head movement and counters with a three-punch combination: left hook to the body, right cross to the head, left uppercut. Every shot lands with surgical precision.

3:52 – THE CLINICAL MASTERCLASS. Carter is effortless now. He whips a calf kick that turns Woodley's leg, then chains it into a lead elbow as Woodley stumbles forward. Woodley clinches to survive, but Carter pummels underhooks instantly, refusing to be pinned. He uses a beautiful inside trip to off-balance the champion, then breaks the clinch with a stinging jab.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"I HAVE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS! Jake Carter is performing a literal masterpiece! He's making a Hall of Famer look like he's in slow motion! St. Louis is watching the passing of the torch in real time!"

3:30 – Woodley, sensing the fight slipping away, summons the last of his explosive power. He charges forward with a 1-2. Carter ducks the 1, parries the 2, and Rising-Suns a lead knee that catches Woodley right in the sternum. Woodley gasps, his momentum halted as if he's hit a brick wall.

3:12 – Carter is a ghost. He's circling laterally, his hands low, almost taunting the champion. He flicks a lead hook that draws Woodley's guard, then rips a straight right to the liver. WHACK. Woodley's right elbow drops to protect his side. Carter immediately goes high with a head kick. Woodley just barely gets his glove up, but the force sends him reeling toward the fence.

2:55 – Carter stalks. He traps Woodley against the black post. He's not headhunting; he's dismantling. He lands a lead hook-straight right-lead hook. Pop-pop-pop. Woodley is shelled up, blood spraying from his nose with every impact. Carter steps back, measures, and digs another left hook to the ribs.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"This is 100% Fight IQ. Carter knows Woodley is dangerous when cornered, so he's picking him apart from just outside the range of that right hand. He's fighting a perfect round."

2:30 – Woodley shoots a desperate double-leg. It's the "Safety Shot." Carter anticipates it perfectly. He snaps a sprawl, his hips heavy as lead, pinning Woodley's head to the canvas. Carter doesn't stay there; he lands two thudding hammerfists to the ear, then spins to his feet before Woodley can grab a limb.

2:15 – Back in the center. Carter is glowing. He's landed more strikes in the last three minutes than in the first two rounds combined. He snaps a lead side-kick to Woodley's lead knee—clack—disrupting the champion's base. Woodley tries a final, soul-crushing right hand. Carter slips it, rolls under, and comes back with a check hook that rocks Woodley's head back.

1:52 – Carter enters the pocket. He's in total control. He lands a four-punch flurry—jab, cross, hook, cross. Woodley is purely on instinct now, leaning against the fence, his arms up but his eyes glazed. Carter isn't rushing the finish; he's savoring the dominance. He digs a knee to the body, then a short elbow in the clinch.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"THE HEART OF TYRON WOODLEY IS ALL THAT'S KEEPING HIM UPRIGHT! Jake Carter is putting on the greatest single-round performance in Middleweight history! This is absolute poetry!"

1:30 – Carter snaps a head kick! It connects with the top of the skull! Woodley's knees buckle! He's falling! He's falling! NO! Woodley grabs the fence to stay upright, his champion's spirit

refusing to let him hit the mat. Carter steps in and lands a clean 1-2. Blood is everywhere—the canvas is a Jackson Pollock of red.

1:12 – Carter pivots and lands a spinning back-kick to the midsection. Woodley doubles over. Carter follows with a lead uppercut that snaps Woodley's head toward the Missouri stars. Woodley is stumbling along the fence, his hands out to feel for the mesh because he can no longer see.

0:55 – Carter is in a trance. He's smiling. He snaps the jab—pop. He lands a straight right—thud. He whips a calf kick—crack. It's a rhythmic destruction. Woodley tries to fire back one last time, a looping hook that is so slow Carter has time to reset his feet before sliding under it.

0:38 – Carter lands a VICIOUS lead hook that opens a new cut above Woodley's left eye. Both eyes are now compromised. Woodley is essentially fighting blind. Carter is surgical, picking his shots with the precision of a jeweler. Straight right to the nose. Lead hook to the liver. Jab to the eye.

The stadium has gone from a roar to a stunned, respectful silence. They are watching a legend being systematically dismantled. Carter doesn't stop. He unleashes one final flurry in the center of the cage.

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"He's not even being touched! In five minutes of a championship fifth round, Jake Carter hasn't absorbed a single significant strike! This is the 'Canadian Machiavelli' at his zenith!"

0:10 – Carter lands a CRUSHING straight right. Woodley's head hits the cage. Carter follows with a flying knee! IT LANDS! Woodley is out on his feet! He's slumped against the mesh, held up only by the fence and his own sheer will. Carter lands three more hooks—boom, boom, boom—right at the buzzer!

0:00 – HORN SOUNDS.

Herb Dean dives in, not to end the fight, but to catch Tyron Woodley before he collapses. Woodley is a crimson wreck, his face unrecognizable, but he is still standing. Jake Carter

doesn't celebrate. He takes a step back, raises a single finger to his lips to quiet the crowd, then walks over and bows deeply to the fallen king.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"HISTORY! WE HAVE WITNESSED HISTORY!"

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"The trilogy is over. That fifth round was one of the greatest technical displays I have ever seen in this sport!"

(SCENE START)

INT. OCTAGON - POST-FIGHT

The Octagon is a scene of organized chaos. The St. Louis medical staff is working frantically on Tyron Woodley, who is sitting on his stool, head back, eyes shut, while the cutman tries to stem the flow of blood from multiple gashes. Jake Carter is standing near the center, his chest heaving, refusing the stool his team brought him. He stares at the floor, the gravity of the last twenty-five minutes finally sinking in.

The roar of Busch Stadium has shifted from a partisan scream to a low, electric hum of awe. They came to see a coronation for their king; they witnessed a masterclass from the usurper.

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"Look at the respect. Jake Carter isn't jumping on the cage. He's not screaming. He's just... he's just present in the moment. He knows what he just did."

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"He just survived a war with a legend and finished with a masterpiece. That fifth round will be studied for decades, Mike. The scorecards are a formality."

BRUCE BUFFER:
"Ladies and gentlemen, after five rounds, we go to the judges' scorecards for a decision."

The stadium goes silent. Even the wind seems to stop.

BRUCE BUFFER:
"Judge Sal D'Amato scores the contest 48–46. Judge Chris Lee scores it 48–46. And Judge Derek Cleary scores the contest 49–45..."

BRUCE BUFFER:
"For the winner... by UNANIMOUS DECISION... AND NEWWWWWWW... UNDISPUTED UFC MIDDLEWEIGHT CHAMPION OF THE WORLD... JAKE 'THE CANADIAN MACHIAVELLI' CARRRRRRTERRRRR!"

The boos are there, but they are hollowed out by a wave of standing-ovation applause for the sheer heart shown by both men. Ryan Gasper enters the cage, holding the gold belt. He looks at Carter, nods with a look of "I told you so," and wraps the strap around Carter's waist.

Joe Rogan approaches, his eyes wide with the excitement of what he just witnessed.

JOE ROGAN:
"Jake, I have been calling fights for a long time. I have never seen a championship fifth round like that. You entered a flow state that looked like something out of a movie. Before we talk about that, what is going through your mind right now, completing this trilogy against a legend like Tyron Woodley?"

JAKE CARTER:
(He takes the mic, his hands trembling slightly. He's crying, the tears mixing with the blood and sweat on his face. He looks over at Tyron Woodley, who is now standing, leaning on his coaches.)

"Joe... first of all... St. Louis, listen to me. I know you want to boo. I know I'm the villain tonight. But look at that man." **(He points at Woodley).** "That is one of the greatest to ever do it. Eight years ago, he gave me my first big win. Two years ago, he gave me my hardest lesson. He didn't just take my belt at UFC 36; he took my ego. He forced me to become the man you saw tonight. Tyron, thank you. You are a king, and it was the honor of my life to share this cage with you three times."

JOE ROGAN:
"It was a beautiful display of respect. Jake, early in your career, people called you the 'WWE guy.' They said you were a brawler. Tonight, you dismantled a Hall of Famer. You've talked about a

conversation with Antonio Snyder that changed everything. Is this the culmination of that moment?"

JAKE CARTER:
"Antonio... he saw me when I was just a kid throwing haymakers. He told me I was fighting like an idiot. He told me I was wasting a gift. Between him, Alan, and Firas Zahabi at Tristar... they didn't just teach me how to punch. They taught me how to think. They taught me that a fight is a game of chess played at 100 miles per hour. That fifth round... I didn't feel the cold. I didn't hear the crowd. I just saw the gaps. I've worked my entire life to have five minutes like that. I'm the best Middleweight on the planet."

JOE ROGAN:
"You are undeniably that. You are the champion once again. What's next for the Canadian Machiavelli? Dricus Du Plessis submitted Alex Pereira tonight and screamed for a title shot. Zane Church just beat Kamaru Usman and called you a 'maple-syrup-chugging meathead.' The sharks are circling, Jake."

JAKE CARTER:
"Dricus is a beast. Zane is... well, Zane is Zane. He's a loudmouth who finally found a win. But they can all wait. Tonight? I'm going to go to the back, I'm going to hug my team, I'm going to call my family, and then I'm going to take this belt back to Montréal where it belongs."

(Jake raises the belt high over his head, screaming toward the Gateway Arch.)

"MONTREAL! QUEBEC! CANADA! WE GOT IT BACK, BABY!"

JOE ROGAN:
"Ladies and gentlemen, the NEW Undisputed Middleweight Champion of the World, Jake Carter!"

MICHAEL CHANDLER:
"The era of the Machiavelli has truly begun! What a night in St. Louis!"

DOMINICK CRUZ:
"A trilogy for the ages. 2-1 for Carter. History is made."