

One more match, and this would all be over.

Or at least the first round would be.

Dexter wanted to cuss out whoever was running things at the time when the Shot of Adrenaline tournament was first created.

Make no mistake, from a wrestling perspective, he could see the value in this tournament. He'd taken note of how underappreciated the adrenaline title seemed to be around SCW, even if you took social media out of the equation, so devoting an entire tournament to it in hopes of showcasing what the title was all about and who could really make a statement as a potential champion was a brilliant move. True, it reeked of social media publicity by trying to cater to the kind of faster-paced action that had grown in popularity in recent years with sites like Twitter/X and YouTube allowing a worldwide audience to appreciate similar kinds of wrestling from all over the world, but not even Dexter could fault SCW for wanting to put their own spin on a concept that seemed like a gold mine.

The problem was this tournament in particular, and it's very convenient timing.

The fact that it had been announced right after Rise To Greatness made something very clear to Dexter: even if he hadn't lost the title to Kimberly Williams on that night, he still would've been ensnared in this web regardless. Starting the tournament without the title simply made it easier for SCW to hide their true intentions with this whole gambit at first...at least, to anyone besides him.

"A whole tournament where the champion has to defend the title in every match they have?" he mused to himself. "Did they really think they could slip that past me and I wouldn't call them out on this bullshit?"

Unlike Kim, who seemed all too happy to accept losing the title back to him because she accomplished the only thing she really needed from holding it but was frustrated at still being made to finish out the tournament regardless, Dexter had been pissed off about it from the very beginning. The fact that he'd gone undefeated in it up to this point wasn't as awe-inspiring a feat as it would be for someone like Deanna Frost...no, for him, it was a necessity, as defeat meant SCW would be 'saving' the title from him once again and putting it on anybody else who would be all too eager to pose for promotional pictures and have their smile plastered all over Instagram and who knows what else. The title would go back to being the prop SCW wanted to treat it as and everyone else was far too brainwashed to resist playing along.

At least in his hands, it made his tournament run feel like it meant something.

After dispatching of Alex Belmont earlier tonight, and rightfully so since he still found it a joke that the man could just be allowed to replace Chris Dumont because of his injury all so the extra chance to get the title off of Dexter wouldn't be lost, there was only one match left before the round robin stage of this thing was finally over. One would think he could breathe a sigh of relief because Deanna, just like him, was already practically a guarantee to advance to the next round because neither one of them had been bested yet. It brought about the thought...why not hold back a bit, not let Deanna experience everything Dexter was capable of? If he lost the title to her, then he'd certainly have a chance to get it back in the next round and the interruption to this reign would be an even more brief setback than when Kim had gotten one over on him.

"Like I'm going to fall for the obvious bait," he scoffed.

Dexter Grant vs. Deanna Frost had tournament finals written all over it, and the only reason SCW had to even offer this clash between them at Shattered Reality was a formality. He doubted the social media machine was too bothered by it, because this was an extra chance to move the title from him onto one of their obvious golden children. That said, it was also painfully obvious that regardless of who else joined them in the little bracket stage to close out the tournament, there was no way in hell he and Deanna would meet again immediately, not when the marketing overlords saw engagement to farm and money to print. At least in that tight window, all he would have to do is reach the finals and he'd be guaranteed to get his rematch for the belt regardless of who met him there.

Still, the fact that he'd rarely lost since showing up in SCW and he, much like the very title he held, were trying to be treated as afterthoughts that would somehow sort itself out irritated him. There was no way CHBK and the board weren't plotting ways to be done with him and trying to act like he wasn't the threat he'd posed since day one, and the fact that people he had Disconnected along the way were becoming their go-to options for bigger opportunities spoke far greater volumes than they may have realized. Dexter knew a rat when he smelled one, and it always somehow connected back to social media in one form or another.

"At least Wendell's hopefully got something good finally going his way with somebody who understands him," Dexter openly pondered. "He'd be in a better position than I'm stuck in, and he definitely deserves it."

Dexter had been walking out to his RV at this point, ready to put Dallas in the rear view mirror. While SCW was going to be holding night one of the Shattered Reality pay-per-view in Boston, that wasn't going to be any of Dexter's concern. He wasn't competing until night two in Montreal, and the only thing worth any attention from him on night one was seeing Kim and Syren battle to determine the next world title challenger, if only because that became someone

who's path he could cross for that very prize if he wrapped up Shot of Adrenaline the way he was hoping to: with the title still around his waist and forcing SCW to give him another opportunity he knew he had long since earned.

As he started to step inside, he paused and turned to look towards an area near the door he'd walked out of. As soon as the show had ended, Wendell had taken off while Dexter had been grabbing a shower. Sure enough, there he stood, talking with Destiny Page. He didn't want to hang around and eavesdrop, but he was glad to see that Destiny seemed to understand the message he'd relayed to her recently and recognized the only way that seemed a sure thing for her and Wendell actually getting to have a proper conversation. Not to mention poor Wendell had been made into enough of a joke by all these clowns who apparently had no sympathy for a guy who'd been beaten and bullied into social inadequacy, as if they didn't react in a similar way or brag about being anywhere near "hot babes" online at the sight of someone like Destiny.

As far as he could tell, the conversation between the two seemed to be going well, and he simply smiled and nodded in Wendell's direction before closing the door to the RV.

Dexter didn't mind the fact that he wouldn't be going anywhere for a little while, out of respect to giving Wendell however long he needed to talk with his crush and see where things might go. As far as he was concerned, that gave him a chance to devote some time to cutting the head off of another snake he was dealing with.

Dexter fished out the old laptop he kept stashed away and cracked it open, wasting no time in trying to sort through all the evidence that Sabrina had passed along. It had been one thing when Martin had deceived him about what his code was actually being used for and then claiming it was his all along to make a fortune off of Dexter's hard work, but staring him in the face was screenshot after screenshot after screenshot that painted a pretty damning picture of just how corrupt and narcissistic Martin Zachary truly was.

"The man's been hailed as a revolutionary coding genius," Dexter spat, "and yet, I'm willing to bet the bastard doesn't even know the first thing about Python or Javascript, much less what any of these lines actually do."

Even if he hadn't become the Digital Detoxer, Dexter would be disgusted at knowing so many people's hard work and legitimate passion for code had been stolen and bastardized just so one greedy man could make a fortune and prop himself up like he was the king of the internet.

As easy as it seemed on paper to weaponize this and annihilate Martin's whole false empire, exposing him like the king nothing he truly was, Dexter's own pride put him in a position that complicated things immensely.

It would be so simple for him to just speak with a lawyer and slap a lawsuit in Martin's smug face over the stolen code, and armed with this information, he could very well be the first domino to fall in what would easily snowball into a class-action lawsuit that would cause irreparable damage that Martin had no hope in hell of recovering from. Unfortunately, given Martin's public status as the head of one of the biggest coding firms in the entire world, not to mention the spotlight he knew followed him at all times since he signed to SCW for a much bigger target in his fight, he knew the moment he unveiled this revelation was the moment the Digital Detoxer was branded a hypocrite and would never be able to recover in his own right.

"The world can do without this son of a bitch," Dexter mumbled to himself as he clicked through screenshots. "But if I fall, odds are my crusade burns with me at this point, whether I like it or not."

Was it a very stupid justification for not taking the simplest solution possible? Absolutely, but Dexter considered it a flaw in his thought process he would have to bear as a necessary consequence of declaring war on the very concept of social media and everything that had become so deeply integrated with it.

That left everyone else who absolutely did not know that Martin had effectively stolen their work after they'd quit or been fired because of how many hoops this man would jump through to keep all of his dirty little secrets as exactly that. Dexter still needed a way to notify them all to potentially initiate a class-action suit against Martin without being directly involved in the proceedings, thus keeping his crusade intact. Unfortunately, branding himself as a warrior fighting against social media and many other questionable aspects that were now a part of the internet as a whole had absolutely torched every single bridge Dexter would've had to reach out to some of these people and convince them of the authenticity of this discovery. Sabrina would've been the next best option, but if any of them were as skeptical of Martin as he was, then a current employee passing this along would reek of bait that Martin would absolutely resort to if it gave him something to work with.

Part of him considered maybe having Wendell play the middle man here, but anyone familiar enough with at least SCW would likely know he was associated with Dexter and that ran into the same problems attached to his name.

"There has to be somebody I can trust that would have no problem helping me pull the rug right out from under Martin and set him up to fall into a pit he deserves to be trapped in for the rest of eternity," Dexter pondered, his finger tapping the laptop as if the answer would just magically appear on his screen.

Deciding he needed to do something to occupy his mind, he grabbed his phone and decided to give Sabrina a call. Maybe she found some more dirt, maybe she figured out the answer to the problem that was eluding him...maybe she just wanted to talk to help him pass the time until Wendell was ready to go. He figured she would still be up around this time, considering they were both notoriously bad when it came to sleep schedules.

“You’ve reached the voicemail of Sabrina Kincaid. I can’t answer the phone right now, but leave your name and number and I’ll return your call as soon as I can.”

“Huh,” Dexter mumbled to himself before he heard the beep. Instead of actually leaving Sabrina a message, though, he quickly hung up. On the off chance Martin was enough of a creep to want to check through her voicemails just to feel in control (and Dexter knew for a fact he would absolutely do that as he’d been subjected to it himself when he was employed at Innovatech...but what’s an invasion of privacy just to make sure your company’s secrets weren’t being leaked, right?), he didn’t want to risk outing the fact that she was operating as a mole and was colluding with him in case Martin heard his message first. “Maybe she actually went to bed at a decent time for once, or maybe she’s busy with something...”

There was a small part of his brain that felt like something was up, but he knew he could trust Sabrina. The two had been close for so long and would’ve absolutely been a thing if they weren’t both idiots, a fact they’ve both acknowledged. If anything, that part of his brain needed to be more worried about whatever SCW was no doubt scheming as their precious Shot of Adrenaline tournament was winding down and Dexter still showed no signs of being stopped by anybody.

“If anybody can be their goddamned golden goose, it would be Deanna Frost...” he huffed as he started to close out of everything he’d been looking at, realizing he was probably going to be making no further progress with it tonight.

Just as Dexter was about to put the laptop away, the phone began buzzing. He chuckled at first, figuring Sabrina had realized he’d called and was returning it despite the lack of voicemail. As he checked the caller ID, however, his eyebrow rose. It wasn’t Sabrina’s name he saw, but instead that of Maxwell, his brother.

“Well, at least it’s still a phone call to pass the time,” he shrugged before he answered. “What’s up Max?”

“Do you know you’re trending online right now?” was the reply his brother had waiting for him.

‘OK, jumping straight into it,’ *Dexter thought before his brother’s words fully sank in.* “Wait, what? What the hell for? And how do you know? I thought you and our folks had gotten on board with-”

“Sorry Dex, but this isn’t a time for technicalities,” *Max urged from the other end of the call.* “That guy who was your former boss? He just pulled something huge, and...trust me, you need to see this for yourself.”

“If it’s on social media, then it’s a hard pass,” *Dexter fired back.*

“Bro, just this once, you really need to compromise on that,” *Max said, and Dexter hadn’t heard the tone his brother used in a very long time. It was that urgent, worried tone someone only used when something truly cataclysmic was going down and there was no room for arguments.* “I’ll send you the link, but trust me...you need to see what this son of a bitch just pulled, because it does not paint you in a very good light and could cost you everything you’ve been trying to build in SCW and for your crusade.”

Max hung up almost immediately, and Dexter was left staring at his phone, feeling truly lost for perhaps the first time ever. On one hand, whatever social media stunt Martin was trying to pull was probably being blown way out of proportion.

‘On the off chance this is something horrible though...’ *he couldn’t help but think, and for perhaps the first time since they’d crossed paths in Denver, Martin’s warning to him was finally being considered, and the curiosity was becoming far too dangerous to ignore, especially as a text from Max came through containing a YouTube link.*

“Fuck...” *he growled, pacing around the RV. He didn’t know how much longer Wendell was going to be talking with Destiny, and the last thing he wanted was Wendell being dragged into whatever stunt Martin had pulled. A quick glance out the window confirmed he and Destiny were still happily chatting away, but the signs were there that the conversation was starting to wind down.*

“Just this once...” *he ultimately told himself, connecting his laptop to the nearest wifi source and typing in the YouTube link so he could bear witness to whatever nonsense his former boss had cooked up this time.*

The fact that the very first thing he saw when he hit play was one of the angles of his rollup on Polly from Under Attack that made it look like he’d grabbed beneath her skirt already sent his heart crashing through the floor of the RV.

“Dexter Grant,” *came the familiar voice of Martin himself.* “He claims he’s against social media, and he’s told the world that includes the exploitation of women on these platforms. But how can he justify this?”

Dexter growled as the video flipped through whatever pictures Martin had no doubt “borrowed” from SCW’s social media platforms that featured Polly.

“Polly Pingotti is an innocent woman just trying to live her dream,” *Martin’s voiceover continued,* “and she was **violated** by the lies of a man who’s willingly built himself into a monster claiming to be **your** savior.”

Cue the audio stinger and the photo negative transition into Dexter’s pin once again, and Dexter watched as this then shifted to “interviews” Martin supposedly conducted with women speaking out about how awful he was to have done such a thing. He was willing to bet Martin either convinced the female employees still at Innovatech to participate or likely promised them a bonus to coerce their cooperation, but the more “testimonials” he heard, the angrier he got.

Until he got to one in particular that felt like his throat had just been ripped out.

“Polly didn’t deserve this, and SCW shouldn’t have such a disgusting individual like Dexter Grant on its roster!” *exclaimed none other than Sabrina Kincaid.*

Dexter blanked out through most of the rest of the video, his brain only tuning back in to the end to see Martin superimposed in front of a still image of Polly in the ring, wearing her black skirt and black halter top. The overly pleased smile was very on brand for Martin, and he had spun this enough to be able to keep anybody from questioning it.

“Please click the link down below and sign our petition,” *he claimed.* “With enough signatures, we can force SCW to understand that Dexter Grant is bad for business. Show your support on social media with #DownWithDexter and #Justice4Polly, and let’s get this scumbag out of wrestling for good.”

A wink from Martin that had to be directed at Dexter himself ended the video, and he could only sit and stare at the screen in disbelief at what he’d witnessed. A whole campaign, petition and all, had been started to try and get him terminated from SCW, and Martin was all too happy to use Polly’s outrage for his own purposes under the guise of helping her voice to be heard where she herself claimed to be ignored about this.

At some point in Dexter’s daze over what he’d witnessed, he heard his phone buzzing, the caller ID revealing Sabrina’s number.

With bile forming in his throat, he let it go to voicemail before shutting everything off for the night.