

# Blake Norton books the return of Jeff Jarrett

Blake Norton on how to book Jeff Jarrett's Return

By Blake Norton

This document is written to examine how to best exploit Jeff Jarrett's return to the ring. We want to make the event as grossing, engrossing and effective as possible.

If you're reading this online at WrestlingObserver.com, you can download a Word Document format at [www.BlakeNorton.com/articles/Jarrett.doc](http://www.BlakeNorton.com/articles/Jarrett.doc) as the formatting can be confusing when it's published to the website. I opted not to format it in Hollywood script format as many readers didn't have the Acrobat .pdf reader last time.

## OUTLINING THE STORY

First we consider the broad framework of the Jeff Jarrett return story. We shouldn't throw him back into the world title picture immediately; we neither want him to win the belt early, as he's overexposed in that role and the money is in the chase, nor do we want him losing a title match. The latter would kill his comeback momentum, given the dynamics of mainstream U.S. booking styles.

Next, I'd suggest that Jeff is best off returning as a babyface. The loss of his wife Jill last year, which is the reason for his absence from television, has been well established to the TNA audience. Thus, it would be counter-productive to attempt to heel him upon his return. The entire goal of a pro wrestling television show is to build an emotional connection between fan and wrestler, so when the time comes, the fan feels compelled to pay to watch the wrestler compete. With the business so exposed in 2008, that connection is harder to achieve than ever. Furthermore, attempting to heel Jeff at this point would be, frankly, unsettling. It was "bad heat" unsettling when Buff Bagwell returned from a potentially career-ending neck injury with an immediate heel turn in WCW ten years ago, and to do something similar in Jeff's situation would be infinitely worse.

So if we accept that the most effective way to re-introduce Jeff Jarrett to TNA is as a babyface in a semi-main program, we can jump straight to the most important part of the puzzle; the "hook." This is the fundamental axis, the idea from which every match, angle and development is derived, the fulcrum of the story. The key to the hook is that it's different for everyone, depending on their gimmick, their style, their strengths, their weaknesses, their character's history, the style of the show, the marketplace and so on.

In the case of the Jeff Jarrett return, I'd consider "the hook" to be the following:

The fans know Jarrett left wrestling due to a family tragedy. Last year at the TNA five year anniversary show, in one of the classiest segments I've seen in the business in years, Jarrett credited his late wife with having played a pivotal role in his work, and thus the development of TNA. "The worst place for me right now is in that ring," Jarrett told the audience via a pre-taped interview. The piece was touching, heartfelt and genuine and it opened the door to every TNA fan asking the same question:

"Will Jeff Jarrett regain the passion to wrestle?"

Now, one year on, it's time to make people pay to find out the answer.

## STEP 1:

### GETTING JEFF BACK ON TELEVISION

The question we're answering is "will Jeff Jarrett regain the passion to wrestle?" Thus our goals are to (a) make people ask that question (b) make people want the answer we're going to give them (c) increase the tension by teasing & not swerving - that they will not get the answer they want (d) delivering the right answer at the right time to create maximum interest and harness it into pay-per-view buys.

Core to the story achieving its goal is believability. We need to get from point (a) to point (d) in a way where people can suspend their disbelief, where there are no major jumps in logic, where each character's motivations come across

as genuine, intelligent and true to form. If we create a plot hole, the tension flows right down that drain. It only takes a pin prick to deflate an entire balloon.

Jeff Jarrett is established to the TNA faithful as a member of the front office. Thus, we have a plausible reason for him being in the building for an angle on any given night. He's also an ex-wrestler, the only qualified "tough guy" fans are generally aware of on the TNA staff. This unique qualification will be key to exploit in designing a story where the reasons for his return are plausible.

Now we need a scenario where TNA Management requires Jeff Jarrett's unique qualifications to fulfill a front-of-house duty to explain his return to television, where we can initiate the angle. We can achieve this quite simply with a device which has been used many times in the business. A certain wrestler or feud is getting out of control, and in order to guarantee a finish and maintain order, TNA Management assigns Jeff Jarrett, who is both tough and qualified in the ways of the ring, to lay down the law in what is implied to be a somewhat low-key, one-shot appearance.

## STEP 2:

### CASTING THE ANTAGONIST

We need to create a credible antagonist with believable motivation for causing mayhem and destruction, as is the key to every great story of good versus evil. For this role I'm putting forward Tomko.

Tomko has proven in recent years that he can be very effective when booked in an effective manner. He possesses the size and skill to be a top heel, and what's more, Tomko is underexposed in a main-event position. A program with Jeff can work not only to get the program over, but to elevate Tomko to the status as a top guy and potential draw in the process.

## STEP 3:

### THE STORY OUTLINE

Now we have the skeleton of our story. A heel wrestler is causing problems. Jeff Jarrett is called upon to fulfill a duty for which he is uniquely qualified. Jeff, as a veteran and responsible figure of respect, performs his duties to the best of his abilities. However, a sense of fair play is rarely a trait associated with a short-fused antagonist whose pride won't stand for anyone, particularly a retired wrestler, stealing the spotlight and telling him what to do. The antagonist, jealous and frustrated, makes the situation personal. The tragic hero, an emotional shell of his former self, has no intentions of getting into a fight. He does everything in his power to resolve the situation professionally. However the antagonist keeps pushing and pushing, with every passing day the fans wanting more and more to see the hero stand up for himself, until one day the antagonist finally crosses the line and takes it too far. In the third act, a sleeping giant awakens and sparks fly in spectacular fashion. Be careful what you wish for; the result is the big pay-per-view showdown, and the return to the ring of the ten time former heavyweight champion of the world, the father of TNA wrestling, Jeff Jarrett.

Along the way, we will consider important nuances, such as the balance between providing the audience with value and extras for their pay-per-view dollar without sacrificing the next big drawing match.

(Note: I do not script dialogue for wrestlers unless specifically asked to. I give them their point of motivation, time cues, and any key phrases required by the story. The dialogue is specified here for the sake of ease of reading, but if guys' natural personality doesn't have room to breathe, the chances of them catching on with the fan base are greatly diminished. Some of the best stuff in wrestling invariably comes from the boys themselves.)

## STEP 4:

### BOOKING THE STORYLINE

We can lead into the Jeff Jarrett return story via an infinite number of existing storylines. Angles change with such regularity in TNA that rather than try to adapt our plan to this week's television -- particularly as this article is being written over the period of several weeks - we'll just take a basic scenario which reflects basic themes employed in recent months.

As we enter the story, Kurt Angle is world champion. He's been using A.J. and Tomko as his right hand men to protect his dominance for the last year. Kurt uses his name value and the promise of expert guidance and career

opportunities as carrots by which to convince Tomko and A.J. to pursue the tag titles and leave the world belt with him for the time being. A.J. in particular has been expressing doubts about whether their relationship is mutually beneficial, but Angle continues to talk him around to the idea that it will soon be his time to be champion. A.J. is respectful of Kurt's accomplishments and status in the industry, and thus gives him the benefit of the doubt.

TNA is very fond of doing tournaments, so we'll do a basic three-week, eight-man elimination tournament on television to create the next number-one contender to the world title where A.J. Styles meets Tomko in the finals. It's hardly a shocking way to book it, and I'd surely do something more nuanced if that was the point of this article. Having said that, the point isn't to surprise the fans, it's to engage them, and most of the time the simplest solution is the most effective.

The story throughout the tournament is that A.J. is incredibly excited at the idea of challenging Kurt. He certainly wants to regain the TNA World Title, and he's elated by the opportunity to face his friend and an Olympic champion. But with every victory A.J. achieves, it's becoming more and more apparent to the viewers at home that the reason Kurt is supporting A.J. and Tomko for their matches is because he expects them to win the tournament (finals being held at Victory Road on July 13th) and then give him a free-ride in the ensuing title match (Hard Justice, August 10th). Tomko isn't entirely happy about the situation, but he "gets it," and goes along with it due to Angle offering him opportunities as part of his camp to compete in top matches in Japan and acquire merchandising deals. We can't be vague about this, as Kurt has to specify the carrots so Tomko doesn't come across as gullible. In classic heel fashion, Tomko is very analytical about the situation and uses his brain over his heart. Tomko sees the financial and career benefits in putting off his pursuit of the TNA title to a later time. A.J., however, is demonstrating a babyface's pure desire to compete and be the best.

A.J. thanks Kurt for his generous offers and opportunities, assuming the best of his intentions. But A.J. makes it clear that no amount of money or opportunity anywhere in the world can compare to the honor of competing for the TNA world championship. As the weeks pass by, and A.J. is successful in the first two rounds of the tournament, it's clear that the situation is headed for disaster. Kurt gets caught and ejected trying to help A.J. in round one. By round two, Kurt is in A.J.'s corner, but has no interest in helping him, not that A.J. would want it. When A.J. wins the second round, Kurt's reaction makes it clear that he's intimidated by the idea of facing A.J. for the belt.

(Note: Kurt's desperation to keep it and A.J.'s passion to win it, puts over the TNA belt. This is in very stark contrast to Booker T describing TNA as low-rent and Kevin Nash saying he's appearing "only for the money," which is entirely counter-productive to the company's image, regardless of whether they are heel or babyface.)

## VICTORY ROAD (July 13th)

In the finals of the contenders' tournament at the pay-per-view, Tomko faces A.J. Styles for the right to face Kurt Angle the following month at "Hard Justice." Angle, having approached Jim Cornette on the preceding Impact show, is granted the opportunity to be seated ringside for the match. Both men are in his camp and he ostensibly provides no unfair advantages.

As the match goes on, the camera cuts back to Angle for his reactions to key kick-outs. Angle seems frustrated when A.J. kicks out, but more relieved when Tomko does.

A.J. exhibits many babyface characteristics, but we haven't pulled the trigger on the full turn yet so he remains guilty by association. He's dominated through much of the match, but gets a lucky break in the fourth quarter and nails the Pele to rock Tomko. A.J. hits his comeback, and after a reversal tease or two sets up for the Styles Clash. Angle freaks out and jumps on the apron.

A confused A.J. asks, "what are you doing?"

Angle shouts, "he's your team mate! You can't give him the Styles Clash, you could break his neck!"

A.J. hesitates momentarily before deciding to go for the win. However, the referee is telling Angle to get off the apron, and doesn't see Tomko hit a low-blow on Styles. Tomko hits his finish and wins the match.

(Note: It's a huge mistake to have either your heel or your face act in an unintelligent manner; walking out on a match because a girl is standing on the apron or a heel is on the ramp makes a wrestler look like a fool and immediately lowers their credibility and thus drawing power in the eyes of the fans. The spot we wrote here, however, will work, because Angle is A.J.'s "coach" figure and is presumably acting on his behalf. Thus, when Angle jumps on the apron and tries to get A.J.'s attention, it causes a legitimate moment of hesitation on A.J.'s part.)

The bell rings as Tomko picks up the win. Angle immediately runs into the ring and tends to Styles. Styles eventually rolls

to his knees, still holding his groin, and starts screaming at Tomko. Angle plays dumb, like he didn't know Tomko had done anything underhanded. Tomko doesn't really give a damn if A.J. realizes he's been screwed or not and brushes A.J. off, but Angle tries to make out like the situation is a misunderstanding. Angle gives a very reluctant A.J. a hug, then turns and raises Tomko's hand joyously. It's clear Kurt is happy with the result. A.J. is left looking on from behind them, his eyes shooting bullets.

Angle and Tomko leave the ring. Angle tells Tomko to "hold up," and beckons A.J. to come with them. Tomko doesn't wait and starts walking up the ramp alone, holding his arms in the air. Angle eventually talks A.J. into leaving with him.

IMPACT (July 17th)

Team Angle Promo

The following Thursday on Impact, Angle, Tomko and A.J. come to the ring for a promo. It's clear that A.J. is the odd man out, as he appears distant and disinterested, as he's clearly conflicted. Angle meanwhile puts Tomko over glowingly, stroking his ego. Angle finishes with

Angle:

"...and so, at Hard Justice on August 10th, it will be my honor to compete with the number one contender to the world title, the most dominating force in TNA today, this man..."

With that, Jim Cornette's voice booms over the P.A., interrupting Angle.

"Hold it! Hold it!" he yells, marching down the ramp with no music.

Cornette:

"I wasn't planning on addressing this issue until later in the show, but it only seems fair to the TNA fans to give them the inside track. You, Kurt Angle, came to me one week ago and asked to be seated ringside on Sunday because you were so proud of having your two boys compete in the finals of the contenders' tournament. And because you had no apparent motivation to support one man's interests over the other, I acquiesced. However, there isn't a single fan here today that didn't see you jump up on the apron, distract A.J., and give Tomko the chance to steal a match that may well have ended very differently!"

A.J. nods, his eyes wide, as if he was suddenly realizing that he wasn't going crazy.

Cornette:

"Now as far as what may or may not happen should you face Tomko for the TNA World championship, I've already warned you, but I cannot make a ruling on something that hasn't happened. (In various promos over the past month, Angle had heavily suggested that a victory for his boys would ensure that he keeps the TNA World Title.) However, I damn sure will not let you soil the integrity of the TNA World Heavyweight Championship by letting that miscarriage stand. Therefore, I am throwing out the result from Victory Road and signing a re-match between A.J. Styles and Tomko to decide the number one contender to the world title next week, right here on Impact! And YOU, Kurt Angle, are BARRED FROM RINGSIDE!"

Jim Cornette returns to the back, leaving Angle throwing a fit in the ring. Tomko is eerily calm. A.J. is overjoyed. Tomko leans his outstretched arms on the top rope in the corner of the ring. He lowers his head contemplatively. As A.J. plays to the crowd, Tomko slowly turns and gives him a look of sheer hatred. A.J. isn't looking at him, and doesn't notice.

A.J. leaves the ring first in celebratory fashion. Angle is distraught, but keeps it together and steps through the ropes to the floor. A.J. disappears to the back.

Angle starts to walk up the ramp. He signals to Tomko to follow. Tomko is still leaning against the top rope in the corner of the ring, staring blankly down towards the turnbuckle. Angle walks around ringside and calls up to Tomko, telling him to come to the back. Tomko doesn't respond. Angle is in a foul mood, and not in a mindset to play peacemaker. He quickly gives up and storms to the back. The show goes to commercial.

As the show comes back from commercial, Mike Tenay explains that Tomko hasn't moved. There are two referees in the ring trying to convince him to move, but they're getting no reaction. It's clear that the show has to move on. Referee Andrew Thomas puts his hand on Tomko's shoulder and forcefully tries to turn him around. Suddenly, Tomko shoots his right elbow back and cracks Thomas in the jaw. It's initially unclear whether

it was a reflex or intentional, but it's apparent that he feels no remorse for his actions.

Tomko turns and stands over Thomas, his eyes cold and unaffected. Tomko looks up at the second referee. The second official, shocked, quickly backtracks out of the ring. Tomko casts a vacant stare across the crowd. He pauses; then slowly prowls across the ring, slips to the floor, and slowly walks to the back.

As the coast clears, the second ref rushes over to check on Thomas, who hasn't moved. He turns him over. Two paramedics run down to ringside, and help Thomas, holding his jaw, gingerly walk backstage.

(NOTE: I don't like over-ruling pay-per-view finishes, but this is the most effective way of getting from point a to point b, and as long as the other matches on the Pay-Per-View delivered their finishes, particularly the main event, we can live with it. Furthermore, despite the screwy finish for A.J. and Tomko at the pay-per-view, we did deliver a major storyline development in the process, rather than simply doing a screw because we didn't have a finish.)

IMPACT (July 24th)

Backstage Promo: Tomko (with Kurt Angle)

A.J. is already in the ring for the Impact main event.

Borash:

"Tomko, have you any comments on the \$1,000 fine TNA Management has passed down for the incident where you struck official Andrew Thomas last week?"

Tomko opens his mouth to speak, but Angle, clearly worried about what he might say, immediately cuts him off, blurting out...

Angle:

"...it was an accident!... it was an accident, that's all."

Angle looks at Tomko as he talks, his eyes making it clear that Tomko needs to follow his lead.

Angle:

"It's a bogus fine, the ref was clumsy. He shouldn't have grabbed a wrestler from behind when he was standing in the ring. Of course he got smacked! But hey, we dropped a grand on the limo ride over here, that's nothing to us, right Tomko?"

A wry smile appears on Tomko's face, as Angle has disarmed him with his explanation.

Borash:

"Just moments from now, Tomko, you have a rematch with A.J. Styles, with the winner facing Kurt for the TNA World Title. Is there any friendship between you and A.J. any more, given that you used an illegal low blow to beat him at Victory Road?"

Tomko:

"The situation with A.J. is the situation with everyone else in the TNA locker room. It's not personal, just business. He takes it personal, that's his problem."

Angle looks uncomfortable. This wasn't how he'd have tried to spin it.

Borash:

"And what about the idea of wrestling Kurt Angle for the TNA World Championship? Is that just business too?"

Tomko:

(Pause)&hellip;

Tomko looks at Kurt, as he's uncomfortable with the question. His music starts to play, which saves them from an awkward moment. Angle leans in and gets back on track.

Angle:

"Okay Tomko, this is it. You've done it once and you can do it again. Of course, I'm rooting for both you guys. Remember, Tomko; remember what a great opportunity this is for you. Remember that I'll be bringing the winner of this match to Japan with me to challenge for the international tag team titles. Remember that my agent is going to be doing all she can on your behalf. You and me&hellip; and A.J., kings of the wrestling world. You remember what's on the line!"

Tomko turns to Kurt and looks him dead in the eye.

Tomko:

"Yeah. I remember."

Tomko gets his game face on and walks out of shot. Kurt looks on, concerned.

Borash:

"Kurt&hellip;"

Angle puts his hand up and walks off.

Match: Tomko vs. Styles II

In the main event of the July 24th edition of Impact, A.J. faces Tomko in the rematch to decide the number one contender to the TNA World Title. Kurt Angle is barred from ringside.

A.J. and Tomko go twenty. As in the first match, the bigger heel, Tomko dominates. And again, A.J. shows great resolve and fights back near the finish. He ducks the boot and sets up the Styles Clash. Tomko blocks it, and drives the two of them through the ropes to the floor in desperation. A.J. lands on top. By the count of four, A.J. is coming to his senses. He starts to climb back into the ring, but Tomko grabs his leg and drags him to the floor. Tempers are flaring as they exchange forearms back and forth. Tomko overpowers him and whips him into the steel, but A.J. moves on the blind charge and Tomko busts his guts on the railing.

Tenay:

"Tomko now, smashing into that steel railing! He's holding his ribs, he looks to be breathing heavily. I think Tomko may be seriously hurt here, Don."

West:

"Well here we see it again, Mike, Tomko nailing the steel full on, A.J. moved at the last second and he looks to have cracked his ribs into that unforgiving steel. We're twenty minutes deep in this one and these guys are swinging for the fences, looking for that knock-out blow. Tomko's slow to get up here, you're right, Mike, I think A.J. has a shot at a count-out."

Tenay:

"Styles now, rolling back into the ring. What's he&hellip; Oh my, A.J. Styles, bad back and all, is looking to fly here! A.J. wants to finish it, he's going for broke here, Don!"

Styles executes a slingshot cannonball dive to the floor on to Tomko, but in a great feat of strength, Tomko catches him and swings him head first (protected) into the guard-rail. Tomko collapses, grabbing his ribs under the force of the exertion as the referee counts "ten."

Tenay:

"My God the carnage! This one is over and then some. I think the referee can count to fifty. Both these guys have given everything here, Don, and look at them, they're just destroyed."

West:

"Here we see Tomko just starting to stir, it looks like he bruised a couple of ribs or worse, he's moving very slowly, Mike. By God, you watch a match like this and you think both these guys should be declared winners. What a battle right here on Impact! This is what TNA is all about!"

An exhausted Tomko rolls into the ring.

Tomko grabs the middle rope and pulls himself to his feet, all the while screaming at A.J. to get up. The referee, Rudy Charles, steps between Tomko and the ropes. Tomko doesn't pay any attention at first, but then notices Charles screaming that the match is over.

Tomko:

"What the hell are you talking about?"

Charles:

"Double count-out! The match is over!"

Tomko starts to unravel with frustration.

Tomko:

"I'm here now! I'm here now! Count him out!"

Charles:

"The match is over! It's a draw!"

Tomko, sweating like a pig, clutching his injured ribs and snorting like a wild animal, burns a hole right through referee Charles. Suddenly, he grabs the petrified official by the throat. Charles flails and screams and kicks desperately, but it's all for nothing. Tomko swings him eight feet through the air into the turnbuckle. His body contorts like a crash test dummy upon impact, and smashes face-first onto the ring with a dull thud. A fuming Tomko marches in a wide circle, his veins bulging and muscles tensed with rage. Tomko comes around, takes a quick step in and kicks Rudy Charles right in the face, snapping his neck and knocking him to the arena floor.

Kurt Angle rushes down into the ring, his world title in tow. He leaps into the ring, rushes up to Tomko and stands before him.

Angle:

"Jesus, Tomko! You're going to get suspended or fired! You gotta calm down! You're going to screw this thing up for both of us, damn it!"

The camera cuts to ringside, where A.J. is just coming to his senses. A.J. starts to check on Charles, who's lying motionless beside him. A.J.'s eyes widen upon seeing the referee's condition. Two EMTs hurry to ringside and take over. A.J. may not have seen what happened, but this was clearly no accident.

Angle is still trying to calm Tomko down as a weary A.J. climbs back into the ring. A.J. confronts Tomko, stepping in front of Kurt like he wasn't even there.

Styles:

"What the hell did you do to the referee?"

Tomko registers no response.

Styles:

"What the hell did you do? Rudy's unconscious, what the hell did you do to him?"

All three men are still.

A.J. stands on, demanding an answer.

Tomko doesn't acknowledge him.

Kurt's eyes are wide with fear. He's fast losing control of the situation, and with it, he feels his iron grip on the TNA world title rusting away.

Moments pass.

Tomko abruptly starts to walk towards the ropes, shoulder-checking A.J. as he passes him.

"Ooh!" gasps the crowd.

A.J. looks down at his shoulder. He's put up with more than enough the last several weeks, and he's ready to lose it.

Tomko puts one foot through the ropes, then holding the top rope, turns his body back towards the center of the ring. With a condescending smirk, he acknowledges A.J. for the first time, rhetorically asking&hellip;

Tomko:

"We done here?"

(Beat.)

Suddenly, A.J. steps forward and kicks the middle rope, catching Tomko in the groin.

Tomko is stunned, grabbing the top rope for support as he backs towards the corner.

A.J. charges at Tomko, driving him into the turnbuckles with everything he's got. Tomko can only cover up as his smaller aggressor unloads with a flurry of lefts, rights, knees, kicks as the crowd explodes! Angle is totally flabbergasted. He hesitates before hurrying in and grabbing A.J. around the waist.

Angle pulls A.J. out of the corner. A.J. turns and pushes Kurt away. A.J. comes at Tomko again but is met with a shot to the head. Styles staggers back towards the center of the ring. Tomko swings again, but Styles blocks this one and returns fire. Back and forth they exchange strikes. Tomko! AJ! Tomko! AJ! Tomko! Tomko! Tomko! Styles is on shaky legs after three shots to the head. Tomko draws back for a big clothesline, but A.J. ducks. A.J. scores with the Pele!

Tomko's head snaps and his legs turn to rubber. Tomko crumples to the mat.

A dazed A.J. rolls to his knees. He slowly gets one leg under him, then digs deep and staggers to his feet, his eyes locked on Tomko. He takes a deep breath and starts to turn around when&hellip;

Boom!

Out of nowhere, Angle lays the bruised and battered A.J. out in the center of the ring with one shot to the head with the TNA world title.

All is still but for the rippling of Kurt Angle's chiseled abdomen as he breathes in and out.

Angle stands above A.J., brandishing the world belt in his right hand. A.J., bleeding from the forehead, lays flat on his back. Angle's eyes are distant and cold. For the first time, we know for certain that everything he said to A.J. over the past year was a lie.

Tenay:

"Oh my God! Kurt Angle just knocked his own team mate, his own protégé, unconscious! What a betrayal of trust! Kurt Angle never gave a damn about anything but the TNA Title! For the last year, A.J. Styles has done nothing but what Kurt Angle has asked, he's sacrificed his own career, and THIS is how Kurt repays him!"

West:

"It's very clear to us now, Mike, that if A.J. wasn't going to play by Kurt's rules, Kurt was going to take him out of the game. You talk about Kurt's reluctance to support A.J. in recent weeks, the distraction at Victory Road that cost him his shot at the TNA World Title. A.J. could be the number one contender for the world title today if it weren't for what Kurt has done. How long has Kurt been pretending to act in A.J.'s best interests? How long has Kurt been using him, lying to him, sabotaging his career?"

Tenay:

"And who will challenge for the TNA World Title? After tonight we seem no closer to finding an answer! But I'll tell you what IS clear is that Kurt Angle wants no part of A.J. Styles, he's been doing everything in his power to stop him getting a shot at the TNA World Title!"

Tomko is starting to stir, holding his head.

Blood continues to flow from A.J.'s head as his body lays motionless in the center of the ring. Kurt continues to look upon him with an icy stare. The line has been crossed. He did what must be done.

Tomko finds his feet and stands next to Angle. He steps forward towards A.J. and spits on him; then with a satisfied smirk, leaves the ring as Angle continues to contemplate the future.

The show fades to black.

IMPACT (July 31st)

A.J. Styles In Ring Promo

Styles:

"Kurt Angle. For the last year I've put my career on hold to be a part of Team Angle. And even things I didn't understand, I had the respect to listen to you and give you the benefit of the doubt. But I woke up this morning and I looked in the mirror and I saw a man who has sacrificed the last year of his career for nothing.

You may be an Olympic Gold Medalist as you so often remind me, but you're also a gutless coward! And after I put Tomko down for the count, I'm coming for you. You stole twelve months of my career, and I'm going to beat every single day, every single minute of it out of you and take what I want most in the world, the TNA World Heavyweight Championship!

Now Tomko, third time's a charm. Get the hell out here and let's finish this thing, you backstabbing son of a bitch!"

Instead of Tomko, Jim Cornette comes to the ring.

Cornette:

"I'm sorry, A.J., but I missed the point where you became the commissioner of TNA. Now I understand your frustration, and you WILL get your opportunity to become number one contender. However, after his disgraceful actions against TNA official Rudy Charles last week and Andrew Thomas the week before, Tomko has been fined and suspended for two weeks without pay."

(Note: The full story is published on TNAwrestling.com the next day for the hardcores, listing a fine of \$2,000, high enough to be harsh, low enough to be believable. It shouldn't be listed before this show airs, because A.J. would look dumb to not know what's happening in his own promotion.)

"A.J., you WILL get your opportunity to become number one contender to the TNA world title, and it will be when Tomko returns from suspension on August 10th at Hard Justice!

Furthermore, I would like to inform you and the TNA audience that this match at Hard Justice will have a special consideration. Twice you two men have locked up to decide the number one contender, twice the match has ended without a clear winner, and twice a TNA official has been assaulted. These people pay good money to see you wrestle, and I think it's safe to say that they have seen two great matches that only TNA Wrestling can deliver. But they also pay to see a winner. All of our senior officials have refused to officiate Tomko's match at the pay-per-view, and quite frankly I don't blame them. Therefore I have decided that I will be appointing a special guest referee for the Tomko verses Styles III who I am confident WILL maintain law and order. Tonight I make a promise to the fans of

TNA, which is that at Hard Justice, even if it takes all night, we WILL crown a number one contender, as the winner of Tomko verses Styles III WILL challenge TNA World Champion Kurt Angle!"

Later in the show&hellip;

Cornette&rsquo;s Office (with Kurt Angle)

Secretary:

"Sir, Kurt Angle is here to see you."

Jim Cornette sighs.

Cornette:

"Send him in."

Angle barges in. He&rsquo;s clearly livid, but tries to play nice. He musters up a fake smile towards Jim, who no-sells it. Kurt puts his hands on his hips. He&rsquo;s clearly trying to think of an opening line. Finally, he stutters and blurts out&hellip;

Angle:

"So&hellip; nice weather we&rsquo;re having."

(beat)

Cornette:

"Well, it IS Florida."

Angle:

"Yup. Sure is. Ol&rsquo;&hellip; Florida. It&rsquo;s really&hellip; hot."

Cornette leads him on, knowing damn well why he&rsquo;s there.

Cornette:

"You know, they say that global warming is going to change the flow of the gulf stream, meaning that&hellip;"

Angle&rsquo;s face turns sour. He suddenly smacks his hands on the table and leans in to Cornette.

Angle:

"Who&rsquo;s the special guest referee?!?"

Cornette:

"Subtle."

Angle:

"Who is he?"

Cornette:

"I&rsquo;m not telling you!"

Angle:

"WHY?"

Cornette:

"Because the second I release the name of the official, he becomes a target for threats and intimidation! Nobody is finding out, not A.J., not Tomko, and least of all you, until the bell rings for Styles & Tomko III at Hard Justice!"

Angle towers over Jim, leaning into his face, spit flying as he grunts&hellip;

Angle:

"INTIMIDATION! Who the hell would try to use intimidation?!?"

Cornette:

"It's crazy, I know, but that's the way it's going to be. We're going to decide this thing fairly. And if you think for a second that I don't recognize that your actions helped put us in a situation where you don't have to defend the world title at Hard Justice, you're wrong. You dodged the bullet this time, Kurt."

(Note: Kurt would still be wrestling at the show, but not defending the belt. Number one contender status needs to be protected and made to feel special, and only achievable through sacrifice and excellence.)

Cornette:

"Now I have to figure out where YOU fit in to that show, and believe me it's in your best interests to leave my office immediately if you don't want to find yourself in a handicap match against the entire locker room!"

Kurt is seething, but has no choice but to leave. He puts his TNA World Title on his shoulder, pats it, then turns and storms off.

IMPACT (August 7th)

Jim Cornette Addresses The Audience

(From His Office)

Cornette:

"At Hard Justice this Sunday night, A.J. Styles and Tyson Tomko will meet for the third and final time to decide the number one contender to face Kurt Angle for the TNA World Heavyweight Championship. I have assigned a special guest official who I am confident will be able to maintain order in the ring. He has been instructed to enforce the rules to the letter; anyone grabs a chair, performs an illegal move or puts their hands on the any TNA staff member, they can expect to be disqualified. If any man interferes, he will be suspended. I know how bad the blood is between A.J. Styles and Tomko, but it comes to an end one way or the other this Sunday night live on pay-per-view. I don't care if it's pin fall, submission, disqualification or count-out, this coming Sunday we WILL crown a new number-one contender to the world heavyweight title, and that man will face Kurt Angle at No Surrender on September 14th!"

Promo Video

Impact finishes with a promo video highlighting the last year of A.J. Styles doing everything Kurt asked of him, be it wrestle two matches in one night, sacrifice himself in a fight or take a walk. We move to Kurt becoming more distant as the title tournament approaches. We move to the screw at the end of Tomko v Styles I, Tomko's reaction to Cornette announcing the rematch, Kurt finally turning on A.J. with the belt as audio is overlaid of Kurt saying "A.J., I need you to do something for me&hellip;" "Anything you need, Kurt&hellip;." "Trust me, A.J."

"Trust me."

(Beat)

The music kicks in full force with a montage of A.J. v Tomko clips.

Voiceover:

"This Sunday, championship partners turned bitter enemies battle for the right to face Kurt Angle for the TNA World Title!"

Tomko&hellip;

Tomko (V/O)

"When I become number one contender, I will become bigger than TNA, bigger than wrestling&hellip;"

Styles&hellip;

Styles (V/O)

"I live and breathe to once again become TNA World Champion!..."

Two men. One winner.

Tomko v Styles III; This Sunday live at Hard Justice, only on Pay Per View!

HARD JUSTICE (August 10th)

Featuring Tomko v Styles III

(Note: Tomko v Styles III can go on either main event or semi-main depending on the rest of the card. I&rsquo;d lean towards main, but it does depend on what else is on the show. If it goes main, Angle would win his semi-main, non-title match in dominating fashion. We need to build one match at a time.)

It&rsquo;s time for the main event.

Match: Tomko v Styles III

Jeremy Borash:

"Ladies and gentlemen, it is now time to introduce your special guest official for this match."

Jeremy takes a deep breath, appearing almost afraid to continue lest he not do the responsibility justice. He looks up and momentarily surveys the crowd in a proud, almost fatherly manner. Finding his inspiration, he continues.

Borash:

"Since the inception of this organization six years ago, this man has worked tirelessly in the name of TNA. Without him, there would be no TNA Impact, no international television deals, no pay-per-views. He is one of the founding fathers of TNA Wrestling, to whom all of us here owe a great&hellip; great debt of gratitude. He has helped to pave the way for the top stars of 2008 across this industry and&hellip;"

Jeremy&rsquo;s voice breaks.

Borash:

"&hellip;and&hellip; and I&rsquo;m&hellip; I&rsquo;m so proud to call him my friend. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming back to TNA Wrestling, the ten time former world heavyweight champion, the one, the only&hellip; Jeff Jarrett!"

The TNA Impact music plays. Jeff Jarrett is a humble official.

Jeff Jarrett walks out onto the stage. He&rsquo;s dressed in black, a professional looking TNA long-sleeved shirt and semi-formal black jeans with understated cowboy boots. Jeff places his hands on his hips and his eyes gently walk from one end of the arena to the other, finding every single fan along the way.

"TNA: The House that Jeff built" reads one sign.

"Thank You Jeff" reads another.

(Note: These can obviously be planted, though I suspect there would be no need.)

It&rsquo;s not shocking that Jeff Jarrett is the special official, and neither Tenay nor West should try to make it sound otherwise.

But it certainly is wonderful.

Jeff approaches the ring in a manner befitting a retired legend. He steps gently through the ropes. Walking to the center of the ring, he engages Jeremy in a handshake and a long hug. Jeremy's eyes well up as his chin rests on Jeff's shoulder.

Tenay:

"What a proud moment it is for all of us here in TNA to welcome back Jeff Jarrett!"

Jeff walks to the corner and climbs to the second rope. A proud, yet sadly reflective expression reveals itself from behind the wrinkling skin of a doughy-eyed kid turned a road-weary man. Jeff nods sincerely to the fans as he graciously accepts their applause.

The music fires up and out comes A.J. Styles.

A.J. makes his way down the aisle and leaps into the ring, where he stops short. A.J. puts his hands on his hips and shakes his head, like he's seeing a ghost. He drops to his knees and bows, like a fan, before Jeff Jarrett.

Jeff immediately steps into him, embarrassed, and pulls him to his feet. A.J. gives Jeff a long hug and raises his hand to the crowd. Jeff bows his head, embarrassed at the fuss.

A.J. pats Jeff on the back and goes to the corners to show out to the crowd.

The music fires up again and out comes Tomko

Tomko strides confidently into the ring. He climbs up the first corner, and raises his hands.

He climbs the second corner and raises his hands.

He climbs the third corner and raises his hands.

Tomko begins to approach the fourth corner.

Jeff is standing next to the buckle, talking to the timekeeper at ringside.

Tomko brushes past Jeff.

Jeff spins around defensively. Tomko is already half way up the buckle when Jeff's eyes find him. Jeff looks up curiously at Tomko for a moment. Tomko doesn't acknowledge Jeff. Jeff quickly writes the incident off.

The commentators say nothing about the incident.

The bell rings, and we're underway.

Twenty five minutes in of a match designed to play off spots from the first two and deliver the highest plateau of drama of all three, the first designed to be the level of a pay-per-view undercard match, the second to the level of a television main event, and this being a pay-per-view main event.

A.J. is firing on all cylinders for his comeback. He sets up the Styles Clash, but Tomko reverses with the back body drop. Styles hangs on, however, and gets a sunset flip for two! Tomko explodes off the mat and charges with a clothesline. A.J. ducks and grabs a waistlock. Tomko, in desperation, grabs Jarrett by the collar and throws his leg back to deliver a low blow.

A.J. grabs his groin and crumples to the mat. Tomko drops to all fours, exhausted yet relieved at having finally halted Styles' momentum.

Jarrett looks up. He sees A.J., he sees Tomko, and he knows damn well what happened.

Tenay:

"Jeff Jarrett didn't see the low blow, but he has to know it happened! He has to know! Jeff Jarrett knows every

trick in the book!"

West:

"But will he call it, Mike? He could disqualify Tomko here, but if he didn't actually see it, can he? Will he?"

"Come here!" demands Jarrett, pointing angrily at Tomko.

Jarrett:

"I know damn well what you did! If you&hellip;"

Tomko smirks arrogantly at Jeff, turning his back on him in mid-sentence. Tomko grabs a handful of A.J.'s hair.

Jeff grabs Tomko by the shoulder and spins him around.

|

"Ooh!" whispers the crowd.

Tomko is shocked that the official would dare lay a hand on him, but Jarrett isn't intimidated, and points into Tomko's chest.

Jarrett:

"Now listen to me. I can disqualify you right now if I want to. You play by the rules, and if you so much as look at me cockeyed you're taking an early shower, kid!"

Tomko does not appreciate being spoken to that way. Putting his hands on his hips, he starts to breathe heavily, his level of anger rising by the second. The sarcastic smile slowly turns to a stone-splitting complexion of hatred. Tomko takes a step towards Jarrett, and&hellip;

Suddenly, A.J. rolls Tomko up from behind. Jeff is caught off guard. He hesitates before dropping down for the count. One&hellip; kick out! Tomko kicks out quickly, and the match continues.

Tomko grabs A.J. by the head, but the resilient babyface throws back his hands and drives his nemesis into the corner. A quick reversal later, Tomko is pancaked in the corner. A.J. gets a head of steam and charges, but eats boot, smacking flat-back on to the mat. Tomko, sensing his opportunity, leans in and pushes A.J.'s legs up to his head for the cover, putting his feet on the corner ropes for leverage. Jeff Jarrett drops down for the count.

One!... Two!...

Suddenly, Jeff stops counting.

Out of the corner of his eye he's seen Tomko's legs on the ropes.

Jeff stands up and points to Tomko's legs. Tomko dumps A.J. and approaches Jeff. He's really pissed now, and the crowd knows damn well that few people make it long enough to piss off Tomko twice.

Tomko is seething with anger as he approaches Jarrett.

Tomko:

"Have we got a problem?"

Jarrett:

"Get your foot off the ropes!"

Tomko:

"I asked&hellip;"

Tomko grabs Jarrett by the collar with both hands. Jarrett puts his hands up defensively, trying to diffuse the situation.

Tomko:

"HAVE WE GOT A PROBLEM, OLD MAN?"

Jarrett's head snaps back as he looks Tomko dead in the eye.

(Beat.)

Jarrett:

"Take... your damn... hands off of me."

Tomko:

"Make me!"

Suddenly, A.J. smashes Tomko with a forearm to the back. It sends Jeff shooting back. Jeff falls onto his knees. Tomko is irate, firing straight back at Styles. Jeff is quickly back on his feet. He's embarrassed at getting involved in the match, even if it wasn't his fault, and just hopes the match comes to a natural conclusion before anything else can happen.

Tomko goes absolutely berserk. He lays into A.J. and whips him into the opposite corner. Tomko charges, but A.J. slips to the apron at the last second. Tomko is so overzealous he smacks into the turnbuckles at full-speed. Gasping for air and clutching his hurt ribs, he feeds around in a circle as A.J. grabs the top rope, setting up for a springboard move. Tomko, however, charges at him the moment he sees him. A.J. side-steps, as Tomko misses the big boot, crotching himself on the top rope.

Tomko feeds back into the center of the ring, holding his groin. A.J. scores with a springboard elbow, and quickly sets up the Styles Clash. Tomko blocks it, hurking him into the air with a huge scream. Tomko throws him so hard that A.J. flips over on to his feet. Tomko, holding his ribs, turns around just in time to eat the Pele right in the face. Before he can even collapse, A.J. hooks the Styles Clash and drives it in for the pin in the middle of the ring, holding on to Tomko's shoulders for dear life.

Tenay:

"A.J. STYLES! A.J. STYLES!... A.J. Styles is the number one contender to the TNA World Title!"

West:

"He certainly is, Mike, and listen to the people!"

Tenay:

"It was such a tense match-up; Tomko, these last few months has been so on edge, so quick to snap. I was afraid the match might break down on more than one occasion, but Jeff Jarrett maintained control and we have a new number one contender to the world title!"

West:

"And you know, Mike, I have to give all the credit in the world to Jeff Jarrett. He called it right down the middle. There were some tense moments, but he showed so much class and professionalism here tonight."

Tenay:

"Indeed, Don; A.J. with a fantastic victory here tonight. But I have to wonder, if Tomko was focused on the task at hand, and didn't let himself become so sidetracked with Jeff Jarrett, it could have ended very differently. So much talent has Tomko, raw talent, but patience is everything, and I think that's something he needs to learn."

West:

"No doubt, Mike, no doubt! And we see Jeff Jarrett leaving the ring, this is A.J.'s moment and he's not going to stick around. And now it's the match we've been waiting for, Mike; A.J. Styles and Kurt Angle! The Olympic Gold Medalist has beaten everyone in his path, everyone, except for A.J. Styles. He's kept his friends close and his enemies closer, but Styles versus Angle is finally going to happen and I can't wait for No Surrender!"

Tenay:

"What a match! What a pay-per-view! Styles verses Tomko III was everything we hoped for and more! Congratulations A.J. Styles, you deserve it!"

Tomko rolls out of the ring, holding his ribs, and makes his way to the back as A.J. is celebrating in the middle of the ring.

The show fades to black.

IMPACT (August 14th)

Tenay:

"What an event Hard Justice was! Kurt Angle asserted his dominance over Kaz. We saw the TNA Tag Team Titles change hands as The Motor City Machine Guns overcame a two hundred pound weight advantage to defeat Team 3D. And in the main event, over thirty minutes of blood, sweat and tears, we crowned a new number one contender to the TNA World Heavyweight Title! We now know that it will be A.J. Styles challenging Kurt Angle for the world title next month at No Surrender on September 14th!"

West:

"That's right Mike! Jim Cornette promised it and he sure delivered; serving as special guest enforcer for the match was none other than the father of TNA Wrestling, ten-time world champion Jeff Jarrett!"

Still images from Styles - Tomko III, starting with Jeff's introduction, are overlaid.

West:

"What an awesome moment it was seeing Jeff Jarrett walk back into the Impact Zone. He maintained law and order, delivered an undisputed result, and now we move forward to A.J. Styles looking to not only get revenge on Kurt Angle, but challenging for his TNA World Heavyweight Title, and I can't wait!"

As West is talking, Tomko's music fires up.

Tenay:

"And here comes the man who was so close to becoming number one contender last night, Don, Tomko!"

West:

"That's right, Mike, and Tomko has looked so devastating over his series of matches with A.J. Styles. I can't help but feel that he may well have come out on top last night if he didn't get so worked up about Jeff Jarrett being the special enforcer. Tomko has such a short fuse that it makes him just so dangerous in the ring, but it can work against him sometimes."

Tenay:

"That's absolutely right, Don. Tomko is a force that can go toe-to-toe with anyone in TNA, but to become world champion some day he's got to get his temper under control. Jeff Jarrett called the match right down the middle. If anything, he let Tomko get away with things he shouldn't have, and there's no disputing that A.J. Styles walked out of that match the winner."

Match: (Tomko vs. Shark Boy)

Tomko gets in the ring and destroys Shark Boy in forty seconds, pinning him with a foot on his chest.

His foot unmoving, Tomko turns towards the official.

"Get me a mic&hellip; NOW."

Tomko:

"Jeff&hellip; Jarrett. It takes two guys to steal a match from Tomko, is that the deal? My question is, did A.J. Styles pay you, or is your ego so big you just had to be the center of attention?"

West:

"What the hell is he talking about, Mike? Jeff Jarrett called that match right down the middle, if anything, he could have disqualified Tomko earlier in the match!"

Tomko:

"You steal the match two on one, then run off and jump in your car like a coward! We both know that the reason you&rsquo;re not wrestling today is because you&rsquo;re scared of Tomko!"

West:

"Now wait a minute, this is just&hellip; this isn&rsquo;t right, this is out of line. Tomko knows damn well why Jeff Jarrett stopped wrestling."

Don West starts to get a little bit rattled with the emotion of the situation.

Tomko:

"You&rsquo;ve been hiding in Tennessee behind a shirt and tie and pretending like you&rsquo;re doing what&rsquo;s best for TNA. Well that&rsquo;s a bunch of crap. You&rsquo;re just too big a damn coward to man up to Tomko!"

So Jeff Jarrett! You got two choices. You can face me in the ring like a man, and take what&rsquo;s coming to you. Or you can tuck tail and run away. But I promise you this. The next time I see you, whether it&rsquo;s in the back, in the parking lot, in a staff meeting, I&rsquo;m going to jam my fist so far down your throat you&rsquo;ll regret the day your daddy gave you your first pair of boots!"

Tomko throws down the mic and leaves the ring. Tenay is irate.

Tenay:

"This is totally out of line, just, totally out of line by Tomko. He lost fair and square to A.J. Styles, and to turn around and take a cheap shot at a man like Jeff Jarrett, who has not only done so much for TNA Wrestling, but a man who has had so much to deal with these last few years in his personal life, that&rsquo;s just totally unacceptable."

West:

"Tomko&hellip; well, Mike, he obviously feels like he was short-changed on Sunday, and I have to disagree with that. But any way you look at it, this is just, this is just, hopefully by this time next week Tomko will have calmed down and we can move on."

The Broadcast Booth (Seventh Quarter)

Tenay:

"Well, ladies and gentlemen, I&rsquo;ve been given this information to pass on to you. Jeff Jarrett&hellip; will be here in the Impact Zone next week to address the fans of TNA."

Don nods hesitantly, then turns to Mike with a reluctant expression.

Mike takes a deep breath and removes his glasses. Turning to Don, he says&hellip;

Tenay:

"&hellip;I&rsquo;m just sorry to see Jeff Jarrett returning to Impact for the first time in a year and a half under these circumstances. Tomko, earlier tonight, just&hellip; so disrespectful. I have so much respect for Tomko&rsquo;s talent as a wrestler, he epitomizes the strength and desire of TNA Wrestling. But the way he just slandered a man who has done so much for this promotion, so much for this industry. So many of these great talents may not have jobs if it

weren't for the dedication of Jeff and... dare I say it, his family, his late wife Jill who passed away last May. They're just such a wonderful family, and I'm just, I'm embarrassed on behalf of all of TNA Wrestling that this would happen."

Jim Cornette's Office (Cornette, Angle, Tomko)

Kurt Angle and Tomko enter Jim Cornette's office.

Kurt:

"You asked to see us?"

(Beat.)

Jim Cornette leans forward and looks up at Kurt and Tomko. He takes a deep breath and shakes his head.

Cornette:

"Well, Tomko, I hope you're happy with yourself. You know, there comes a point where no matter how talented a man is, he becomes a liability."

Tomko doesn't react.

Kurt:

"You called us in what, to complain?"

Cornette:

"No, I called you in here to inform you. To inform you that next week, Tomko's services will not be required here at Impact."

Tomko unfolds his arms and looks at Kurt with uncharacteristic concern.

Kurt:

"What the hell are you talking about?"

Cornette:

"Jeff Jarrett is coming here next week to address the fans. It is a disgrace that he feels the need to come here and address them under duress. And you, Tomko, will not be in the ring, in the back, or in the parking lot. You are banned from the building."

Tomko:

"And what if I come anyway?"

Cornette:

"If I so much as smell you looking to cause trouble, you'll be suspended without pay for six months. Are we clear?"

Kurt:

"You can't..."

Cornette:

"ARE WE CLEAR?"

Tomko leans in to Jim, closer and closer, until their faces are inches apart. He suddenly bobs his head forwards, causing Jim to flinch. Tomko's expression never changes. He leans back and leaves the room, slamming the door on his way out.

## The Broadcast Booth (Eighth Quarter)

Tenay: (Soberly)

"...and we'll be back next Thursday right here on Spike with the return to Impact... of Jeff Jarrett."

## IMPACT (August 21st)

Jeff Jarrett Promo

Borash:

"Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Jeff Jarrett!"

Jarrett:

"First of all, I want to apologize for taking so long to speak to you all. I've gotten your cards, and your well wishes, and I've wanted to see you for a long time, but I didn't know what to say. I think all I can say is... thank you. Thank every single one of you from the bottom of my heart.

The last couple of years have been very... very challenging. I just, I just thank God for my family, and I thank every single one of you for the love and the well wishes.

As far as Tomko goes... I have no hard feelings about what happened at Hard Justice, and I hope he feels the same way. He's a tremendously talented man and I hope that he, like all the other stars here at TNA, can carve out a name for himself in this sport for many more years to come. Talents like him are what make TNA the most competitive wrestling organization in the world, and I wouldn't change that, even if I disagree with how he handles certain situations. Let he who is without sin cast the first stone. I've certainly done some things over the years I'm not proud of myself, and I'd like for us to move on from this situation.

I honestly don't know if I'm ever going to wrestle again. I've wrestled my whole life. It's all I've ever known. But... I've been away a long time, and my life has changed. You know, the last few years have... been... so hard. Jill was just... it took everything out of her, and it took a... it took more than I like to admit out of me... I want to tell you that I'm strong, but all my strength I put into her, and I'm..."

Jeff starts to crack, as his eyes glow red with flowing tears.

Jeff:

"...I'm not the same man I used to be. I walk into this locker room that was like my home away from home for the last twenty years of my life, and for the first time I... I don't feel... like... a wrestler... any more."

Jeff takes a deep breath. That was hard to say. He lowers the mic to waist level and puts his hand to his mouth. He takes a deep breath, then picks himself up and charges for the finishing line.

Jeff

"...As I said, I don't know if I'll ever be a wrestler again. But I do know that I'm not ready now. I have three wonderful girls at home... and they need their dad at home with them almost... almost as much as... as I need them. The day I step foot in this ring looking for a fight will be a new chapter in my life. And I don't know if that day is ever going to come."

Jeff looks out at the audience.

Jeff:

"Every single one of you who have supported me, supported these wonderful young athletes, TNA Wrestling... You're in my hearts, and even though you won't see me so often these days, each and every day I'm in the TNA office back in Tennessee doing everything I can. Every day I do my best to use the gifts my dad gave me to give the great competitors of TNA the opportunity to do what they do best; come out and wrestle for you

great fans.

Thank you and God bless."

Jeff kneels down in the ring and gently places the microphone on the mat. The camera stays on the mic a moment. Jeff walks to the ropes. He steps through them, as if intimidated, like he was returning to a house that is no longer his and couldn't feel comfortable there any more. He looks out upon the capacity crowd and musters up a sincere smile of appreciation. He walks along the apron and carefully down the steps.

Tenay:

"What a man is Jeff Jarrett. As much as I miss seeing Jeff Jarrett competing in that squared circle, that's how grateful we all are here at TNA to have him help us achieve all we can in this great sport. What a great ambassador for the sport of professional wrestling."

IMPACT (August 28th)

(The show opens with a package. It shows Tomko challenging Jarrett, and Jarrett's response last week.)

Tomko Promo (In-Ring)

Tomko comes to the ring slowly and circles it. He needs to burn 2-3 minutes before he gets on the mic because this is a short but pivotal promo, and thus we need to settle people into the segment and get the storyline fresh in their heads before delivering the punch line.

Tomko:

"I have come out here tonight to publicly apologize for comments I made two weeks ago here on this show."

Tomko takes a deep breath.

Tomko:

"Two weeks ago, I said that Jeff Jarrett wouldn't face me in the ring because he's a piece of crap and he's hiding behind a shirt and tie. But I want to apologize to you, Jeff, because I now realize that I underestimated you. I now realize that you were actually hiding behind your wife's coffin."

Tenay:

"Oh dear lord, no..."

Tomko:

"Jeff Jarrett, you are a disgrace to professional wrestling, and an embarrassment to your family. You owe everyone here in TNA an apology for lying to them about your cowardice! You..."

Tomko's mic stops working. Jim Cornette comes out on stage. He runs his thumb across his throat, making it clear he cut Tomko's microphone.

Tomko gets a bemused look on his face. He walks towards the ropes. Jim, despite being forty feet away, backs up. Tomko chuckles. He slowly raises the microphone over his head, then throws it at the concrete floor, smashing it into pieces. The smirk turns to a scowl, as he turns back and re-takes the center of the ring.

Tomko:

"JARRETT! You can't hide behind your family forever! You will pay for your disrespect, you will answer to Tomko!"

Tomko starts to chuckle, and as he does, it turns into a laugh. He's in love with the attention, the special treatment. He slowly meanders to the ropes and leaves the ring. He backs up the aisle, still laughing at everyone in the arena, his back brazenly turned to the dressing room like he's almost daring someone to attack him.

## Backstage

Jeremy Borash, running through the back, catches up with Jeff Jarrett who is walking down a hallway.

Borash:

"Jeff, I&hellip;"

Jarrett:

"No, Jeremy."

Borash:

"Did you see what Tomko&hellip;"

Jarrett:

"I have nothing to say."

Borash:

"What are you going to do?"

Jeff stops walking. He takes a deep breath. He turns towards Jeremy, and we see his face for the first time.

Jarrett:

"I&rsquo;m going home."

Jeremy is stopped dead in his tracks. Jeff has already turned his back and begun leaving through an emergency exit as he begins calling&hellip;

Jeremy Borash:

"For how long? JEFF?"

We cut to the commentary desk.

## Commentary Desk

Tenay and West are silent. Tenay&rsquo;s hands are resting on the table, his fingers locked. His head is lowered.

Don turns to Mike.

West:

"What&hellip; do you want to&hellip;"

Tenay:

(Speaking somberly)

"I don&rsquo;t know. I just don&rsquo;t know. I don&rsquo;t think Tomko should be working here any more. I think&hellip; yeah. I think he should be fired. And I&rsquo;m going to tell Jim Cornette that myself after the show."

Don West takes a deep breath, and turns his head back towards the arena. His puppy dog eyes are weary from stress.

The bell rings. And we move on with the show.

Match: (Tomko over Petey Williams)

After the match, Tomko asks for a mic. He's denied.

He gets out of the ring, grabs the mic from the timekeeper's table and gets back in the ring. He starts to talk, but the mic is dead. He throws it down on the mat and leaves the ring. He's amused at the effort TNA has gone to in order to silence him.

Later in the show...

Backstage Promo &ndash; Johnny Devine

Borash:

"Johnny Devine, tonight you'll be looking to get back into the X-Division title picture when&hellip;"

Suddenly, Tomko appears in the left-hand side of the frame. He's looking directly at Devine.

Tomko:

"Get out."

Devine, caught off guard, hesitates.

Tomko:

"NOW."

Devine quickly backs off. Tomko turns to Jeremy Borash. He takes the mic from him. Their eyes meet. Jeremy seems angry, but too scared to stand up for himself. He hurries off.

Tomko turns to camera.

Tomko:

"Jarrett! We could have done this the easy way. But now you've got me mad. Jeff Jarrett, I'm coming for you&hellip;. You're going to learn that nobody takes liberties with Tomko&hellip;"

Tomko leans into the camera.

Tomko:

"When I get a hold of you, I'm going to make orphans out of your little girls. And if&hellip;"

The show abruptly goes to commercial.

Cornette's Office (Jim Cornette & Jeremy Borash)

Borash:

"So what do you want to do?"

Jim takes a deep breath.

Cornette:

"I don't believe in censorship. I believe in letting guys settle issues in the ring. I believe TNA is about being at the cutting edge. And the reality is Tomko is a marquee star."

Jim Cornette sighs as he considers his options.

"If I have to let go of him&hellip; that&rsquo;s what I&rsquo;m going to do. But he&rsquo;s a top level talent that benefits this company, so that has to be the last resort. It has to be. I&rsquo;ve made it clear to him that if he wants to talk trash about other members of the TNA roster, that&rsquo;s fair game. But using TNA programming to launch personalized attacks against members of staff, that&rsquo;s&hellip; that&rsquo;s just not acceptable.

I&rsquo;m making a ruling. Tomko is not allowed to talk about Jeff Jarrett any more. The next time he verbally attacks Jeff, or anyone who isn&rsquo;t a professional wrestler here in TNA&hellip; he&rsquo;s fired. I know damn well that all he&rsquo;s doing is trying to get attention for himself, and I&rsquo;m not going to stand for it any more."

Borash:

"Will I spread the word?"

Cornette points into the camera.

Cornette:

"Well, a few million people sitting at home already know now. But yes, Jeremy, please make sure all the senior staff and Tomko are aware of the situation."

Jim looks Jeremy in the eye.

Cornette:

"This thing has to end tonight."

IMPACT (September 11th)

MATCH: (Tomko vs. Local Talent)

Tomko destroys his opponent in 45 seconds, finishing him with the charging boot to the head. He drops down for the pin, but pulls him up at two. The referee screams at Tomko. Tomko has a grin on his face.

He stands up and grabs his opponent&rsquo;s left leg. Looking out at the crowd, he smiles deeply. He spins the leg and locks in the figure four.

His victim screams in agony and quickly taps out.

Tenay:

"You know damn well what he&rsquo;s doing, Don."

West:

"Tomko will be fired the next time he talks about Jeff Jarrett, but he certainly hasn&rsquo;t forgotten about him. But if Jeff isn&rsquo;t coming here, and Tomko can&rsquo;t keep throwing fuel on the fire, it&rsquo;s only a matter of time before this thing is finally done with."

Tomko circles the ring, celebrating mockingly. He hunches down in the center of the ring, like he&rsquo;s ready at the gorilla position, his eyes fixated on the entrance ramp.

Nothing.

Tomko parades around the ring, obnoxiously holding his arms out wide. He steps out of the ring, grabs a microphone, and before getting back in the ring tests it out.

Tomko:

"Hello? Oh look, I can talk again. Isn&rsquo;t that special! I want to invite all the fans, the wrestlers, and ESPECIALLY the members of TNA&rsquo;s front office to No Surrender this Sunday night, where I&rsquo;ll be presenting a special surprise for everyone in the company!"

West:

"What do you think he's talking about, Mike?"

Tenay:

"I'd rather not think about it."

Tomko drops the mic and turns to leave the ring. He pauses, having perhaps changed his mind. His head turns. He gets a gleam in his eye.

Quickly, Tomko marches back towards his fallen opponent and slaps on the figure four again. He flails his legs, causing his opponent to scream out in pain.

Tomko releases the hold.

Tenay:

"I don't know where this is going, but it seems clear to me that it continues to relate to Jeff Jarrett."

West:

"We'll have to wait until this Sunday to find out, Mike!"

Note: (1) I realize Jeff Jarrett also uses The Stroke as a finish, but that's a horrible, ugly little indy move that I hope he never uses again. (2) Tomko's match for the forthcoming No Surrender Pay-Per-View is no major deal, but there's a little bit of intrigue about what he's going to do. You can only push 2-3 matches big per PPV or you water everything down, and Tomko's on this show isn't one of them.

NO SURRENDER (September 14th)

Match: Tomko v Jimmy Rave

Tomko wins the match in three minutes. It's a glorified undercard squash, against a worker of normal stature to emphasize Tomko's size.

Tomko takes the mic.

Tomko:

"I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce TNA Wrestling fans all over the world to my new ring girls. Hit the music!"

West:

"Ring girls?"

The music plays, and three scantily-clad women, no older than twenty each, walk through the curtain and pose at the top of the ramp.

Tomko:

"This here with the luscious curves that's Joslyn."

Tenay:

"No... no, God, no."

West:

"Is that..."

Tenay:

(Speaking in a low voice)

"That's the name of Jeff's daughter."

Tomko:

"...And in the middle... where she likes to be... is Jaclyn. And finally, to my right, my little baby, Jeryn. God, this one can barely keep her clothes on!"

Tenay speaks in a low, voice.

Tenay:

"We... we need this to stop. This is unacceptable. Someone has to get out here."

Tomko starts to laugh.

Tomko:

"You'll be seeing a lot more of my little girls from now on, won't they, sweetheart?"

Tomko grabs one of the girls by the behind. He leads them all out of the ring.

Tenay:

"Cut to the back... cut to the back. Just cut..."

The show cuts to the backstage for a promo.

An hour later...

Cornette's Office (with Tomko)

Cornette:

"I told you that you cannot use TNA Impact as a platform for verbally harassing non-wrestlers!"

Tomko:

"Who's harassing? I'm sharing my joy with the world!"

Cornette:

"You know damn well what you're doing. It's sick, it's perverse, and it's not becoming of a professional wrestling broadcast. I'm done playing games. You're out of chances. The next time you step a foot wrong, you're out of TNA."

Tomko casually raises an eyebrow, the smirk continuing to permeate his face.

Tomko:

"Really?"

Cornette:

"You even think of bringing those... girls to the ring on Thursday, it will be your last appearance on Impact."

Tomko starts to laugh.

Tomko:

"Well, I guess I'll see you Thursday night, Jim!"

Tomko backs out of Jim's office

## Back At Ringside

Tenay:

"This thing is ready to explode. I don't think Tomko's going to make it past Thursday night. I don't think he has it in him. His ego is too big for him to back down"

West:

"What's he going to do, Mike? Have security force him out of the building?"

Tenay:

"It's either that or Tomko obeys Jim Cornette's demands, and I don't see that happening."

The show moves on to the main event.

## IMPACT (September 18th)

### Tomko vs. Sharkboy

Tomko wins his match in dominating fashion.

Tomko:

"After their pay-per-view debut last Sunday, I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce Impact viewers to my three little girls."

West:

"Well this is it. This is going to be Tomko's last night on Impact, isn't it Mike? Look at him, he's acting like nothing's wrong, like Jim Cornette didn't explicitly tell him that he's had his last chance."

Tenay:

"I can't believe after everything that's happened that Tomko is just... he's brazen, he's totally fearless. And bringing these three... girls... here and, and, giving them the same names as Jeff Jarrett's little daughters, that's just, this man has a very, very sick streak."

The three young, bikini-clad girls walk down the ring, arm-in-arm.

Tomko:

"This here... this is Joslyn. Right here... right here we got Jaclyn. And this here... this is Jeryn. Mmm-mmm! Daddy likes! Come on in here, girls."

The girls get into the ring. Tomko pats them on the butt.

Tomko:

"Now it's time for my victory kiss. Jeryn... come here, sweetheart..."

Tomko suddenly grabs "Jeryn" by the throat. She screams and squirms. She clearly wasn't expecting this. The other two girls, petrified, run away and disappear to the back.

Tenay:

"What the hell is he doing?"

Tomko pushes Jeryn down on the mat, a la Shawn Michaels and the late, great Sherri Martel.

Tomko:

"Jeryn, Jeryn, Jeryn, my little baby. You're not going to make daddy angry, now are you sweetheart? You know what happens when you make daddy angry!"

Tenay:

"We need help out here now, right now. You guys hearing me? Someone needs to step in now!"

Tomko slowly kneels down above his "girl." "Jeryn" is shaking with fear. Tomko jams the mic in her face.

Tomko:

"WHO'S YOUR DADDY, YOU LITTLE SLUT?"

"Jeryn" is too scared to talk.

Tomko:

"Say it! SAY IT!"

Tenay:

"This girl is scared out of her mind!"

Jeryn:

"You&hellip; you are, Tomko! Please, please&hellip;"

Tomko pulls the mic away.

Tomko:

"Well, I feel so lucky I just must be the chosen one!"

Tomko throws the mic to the arena floor.

Tenay:

(Losing it)

"This has to stop! Get security, that girl needs help! We need security on the floor!"

The camera cuts to a shot of Mike Tenay losing it in the booth. Don, unsure of what to do, keeps looking back and forth between Mike and the ring.

Jim Cornette appears at the top of the ramp accompanied by two security guards. The resolved expression on his face leaves no doubt as to what he's about to do. He starts power walking towards the ring. Mike Tenay catches sight of Cornette and commands him directly from twenty feet away.

Tenay:

"Fire this man! Fire this man! This is totally out of line, fire this man, Jim!"

Tomko leans in and lifts "Jeryn's" head off the mat. He sees Cornette and security out of the corner of his eye. He casts a look their way and chuckles.

Tomko's eyes return to gazing upon his victim. He wipes a tear from her eye and pulls her lips in close to his.

Suddenly, the crowd begins to rumble. The rumble turns into an explosive eruption of screams. Tomko turns away from "Jeryn."

Jim Cornette, casting a fleeting glance back towards the locker room, stops dead in his tracks, his security officers bumping into him as he turns to see what's happening.

The camera crash zooms in to the top of the entrance ramp so fast that its subject is out of focus.

Standing at the top of the ramp is Jeff Jarrett.

Tomko's momentary look of surprise turns to a deep, inviting grin. He nods in anticipation. "Got my wish" he mutters under his breath.

Tomko backs into the center of the ring and opens his arms wide, as "Jeryn," no longer of any interest to him, flees the arena in tears.

At ringside, Mike Tenay and Don West are standing in their booth. All is silent but for the sound of screaming fans.

Jeff walks down the ramp past Cornette and the security officers. They are invisible to him. He doesn't see the shining lights, or the hundreds of fans. He doesn't hear the people chanting his name and screaming in excitement. All he sees is Tomko, standing in the center of the ring.

"What are you doing out here?" bellows Tomko joyously. "I thought this ring was for wrestlers? But you're not a wrestler any more, are you Jeff? You got nothing left!"

"What's he going to do?" whispers Mike Tenay to Don West, oblivious to his voice being heard around the world on television.

One of the security guards takes a step forward. Jim Cornette extends an arm to stop him.

We quickly cut to a shot of the back, where the last few are hurrying into a communal area for the staff and talent.

"Jeff is out! Jeff is out!" screams a wrestler off-screen. "Jeff is out with Tomko!"

Two dozen wrestlers and a legion of staff are huddled around a 60" widescreen monitor. Some have their hands on their mouth. Nobody is moving. Nobody is talking.

His eyes still locked upon his nemesis, Jeff slowly climbs up on to the ring apron.

His attention shifts now. It isn't on Tomko so much as it is on the ropes. Like Peter Pan, if he steps through these ropes in search of a fight, his life will be changed, and he can never go back to the way his life is now.

A tear runs down his face as Jeff holds the top rope in his clenched fists. He looks lovingly upon it like a prodigal son returning home, slowly running his left hand up and down the rope. It causes him pain. It cuts like a knife.

Mike Tenay and Don West are still standing at the desk, frozen, their eyes wide open.

The director cuts wide, revealing seemingly every fan in the building.

Jeff takes a deep breath as the last year of his life bolts through his head like a runaway train. In stepping through these ropes, he would be committing his wife from the present to the past. He would be closing the door on one chapter by opening the next. Is it time? Is he ready?

"Jeff Jeff Jeff Jeff!"

Jeff slowly raises his head and looks upon the TNA faithful, a stern, pained expression etched upon his face.

Suddenly, and without hesitation, he steps through the ropes.

Before a single fan can digest his first movement, like a wrestler, he has sailed across the threshold and is now standing in the center of the ring, his shoulders back, eye to eye, face to face with his behemoth aggressor.

The two warriors stand as stone statues, poised motionlessly, the calm before the storm, in stark contrast to the passionate pastel blur behind them of ecstatic fans leaping up and down in the bleachers.

Nose to nose, Tomko berates Jeff, looking down on him like he were a lower form of life.

Jarrett:

"You son of a bitch&hellip;"

Tomko:

"This is my ring now, old man!"

Jarrett:

"Bring it on!"

Suddenly, Tomko swings. Jarrett blocks a right, and immediately returns fire. Boom!... Boom!... Boom! Tomko staggers into the corner. Jarrett follows in, but the enemy is too strong. Tomko grabs Jarrett and powers him into the corner. Tomko just unloads on him, lefts, rights, forearms. Jarrett's body flails and jars with every blow, his carcass collapsing into a heap of wrinkled clothing and bruised flesh in the corner.

An elated Tomko immediately pulls back, admiring his work. He turns to the crowd and circles the ring, screaming victoriously, his arms outstretched, dominant. The crowd drowns the ring with their hollers of condemnation, every additional voice widening Tomko's sick smile.

Tomko turns his attention back to the corner, but as he does, Jarrett comes charging at him like a man possessed. He tackles Tomko to the mat, and immediately starts reigning down frantically from above with left after right after left as the crowd roars in exhilaration.

"Okay, break 'em up!" screams Jim Cornette.

As TNA security hurries down towards the ring, Tomko scores with a headbutt from below and turns Jarrett over. He grabs Jeff's curly blonde hair and smashes the back of his head off the mat with a sickening thud. Smack! Smack! Smack!

Like a flash, the two warriors are smothered in a sea of security and several lower-card workers, each grabbing at a limb, separating them by force. A dazed Jarrett holds his head and rolls on to his rubbery knees as Tomko is dragged through the ropes to the floor by half a dozen men.

Sonjay Dutt and a security guard begin to lift Jarrett to his feet. Jeff's head spins around, momentarily confused. He catches another glimpse of Tomko being restrained on the floor. Jeff's limbs immediately start flailing like a fish out of water, as he sheds his shirt, pie-faces Dutt and charges across the ring, launching his 240lb frame unceremoniously over the top rope and on to Tomko, sending both men and several members of security crashing to the earth.

"That's enough! That's enough!" screams Cornette. "Get 'em apart! This isn't a damn prison riot, get 'em apart!"

Jeff Jarrett and Tyson Tomko anxiously swing their fists in vein as they are restrained by a dozen hands. "Jarrett! Jarrett! Jarrett!" booms the crowd, as the hero Jeff screams abuse at his aggressor. "I'm right here! I'm right here! I'm RIGHT HERE!" he repeats again and again.

Tenay and West have left the announce desk, as they are looking on anxiously just a few feet from the fray.

Jeff Jarrett:

"I'm RIGHT HERE, TOMKO!"

As Jarrett continues to scream, the show fades to black.

IMPACT (September 25th)

The show opens with still-frame & audio from the incident at the pay-per-view through last week's Impact.

The images are furnished with audio of a "We want Jeff!" chant. With every refrain the frame changes.

As we come to ringside, Tenay and West are standing.

Tenay:

"Ladies and gentlemen, it's Thursday night, it's Spike TV, WELCOME TO TNA IMPACT!"

West:

"And the big question on everyone's mind is has Tomko been fired? We went off the air a mess last week. Jeff Jarrett, after resisting time and time again, showed up unannounced and confronted Tomko one-on-one in the middle of that ring. It was just electric Mike!"

Tenay:

"Jim Cornette will be making an announcement about the Tomko situation in the middle of the ring tonight. All I know for sure is that Tomko is NOT in the building tonight, which has led to heavy speculation in the locker room that he has, in fact, been released from TNA Wrestling. But we won't know for sure until Jim Cornette's official announcement later tonight."

Jim Cornette Announcement In-Ring (Final Segment)

Jim Cornette

"Two weeks ago I told Tomko that if he continued his behavior of harassment and personalized attacks against non-wrestlers here in TNA Wrestling, he would be released by the company. This was not a decision I came to lightly, but his disruptive behavior was reaching a level where he was becoming a liability to this organization.

Fortunately for me, however, Tomko for once did what he was told. Last Thursday night, Tomko did not engage in personal attacks against non-wrestlers, and therefore will remain on the TNA roster."

West:

"What is Jim Cornette talking about? He, he brought out those girls, he goaded Jeff Jarrett right into coming out to the ring, he&hellip;"

Cornette:

"Last Thursday night, Tomko engaged in some very personal attacks. But luckily for him, they were not focused on a non-wrestler. They were focused&hellip; on Jeff&hellip; Jarrett!"

Jim Cornette points at the big-screen, airing the return video for Jeff Jarrett.

Promo Package

Video plays of Tomko and Jarrett's altercation at Hard Justice.

Tomko:

"Jeff Jarrett&hellip;"

Jarrett:

"I have no hard feelings&hellip;"

Tomko:

"You've been hiding behind your wife's coffin!"

Jarrett:

"I have my three little girls&hellip;"

Tomko:

"This is Jeryn&hellip; come here, baby&hellip;"

Jarrett:

"The day I step through those ropes looking for a fight, my life will change&hellip;"

Cue video of Jeff Jarrett standing on the apron, from the September 18th Impact, looking to the fans for guidance.

The music kicks in, and snippets of Jarrett and Tomko destroying each other flash on the screen.

Voiceover:

On October 12th, 2008, Jeff Jarrett will return to the ring for the fight of his life.

Tomko:

"I will rip you limb from limb!"

Voiceover:

"Jeff Jarrett&hellip; Tomko&hellip; October 12th &hellip; Bound For Glory!"

The show fades with the image of Jeff and Tomko standing face-to-face in the middle of the ring with chants of "We want Jeff!... We want Jeff!... We want Jeff!..."

Fade to Black.

IMPACT (October 2nd)

Mid-Show Hype

Tenay:

"Ladies and gentlemen, we are just ten days away from one of the biggest matches in TNA Wrestling history. It is the match we wanted so badly, but didn't dare to dream. On October 12th, Jeff Jarrett will step into the ring one more time to face the challenge&hellip; of Tomko. Let's take a look at the fight."

Jarrett v Tomko Video Package

Video of Jeff in training.

Jarrett:

"I wanted to get my speed, my timing as sharp as possible, as much endurance as possible&hellip; I called Jerry Lynn, the father of the X division. Jerry&hellip; he's maintained an incredible level of athleticism and recovery over twenty five years of high-impact fighting. I knew he was the man to help me."

Video of Lynn calling commands as three sparring partners work take-downs with Jeff.

Lynn:

"Jeff is in great shape, he's kept himself in great shape all the time he's been gone. But there's a difference between being in great shape and being in great ring shape. No amount of treadmills can prepare you for going twenty, thirty minutes in the ring, in a fight. It's not the same. You have to get those hours in the ring under your belt."

Lynn interview clip.

Lynn:

"Tomko's bigger, stronger, younger. Jeff has to be faster, smarter and more durable."

Jarrett interview clip.

Jeremy Borash:

"Will this match at Bound For Glory be your last match?"

Jarrett:

"I don't know. I have a lot of questions about my life, my future. And the only thing I know for sure is that the answers are all in Chicago, on the other side of Tyson Tomko.

And I'll give every drop of blood to get there."

The video changes to Tomko lifting weights; bicep curls, shoulder presses, bench presses, the basic strong-man groups.

Kurt interview clip.

Kurt:

"...yes, I understand that Jeff has brought in Jerry Lynn. He may be an X-division legend, but I'm an Olympic Gold Medalist. Nobody understands cardiovascular training the way I do."

Video of Kurt training in a ring with Tomko.

Kurt:

"Every time he moves to block your power, he'll leave himself open. If you know how to capitalize, this match won't go two minutes."

Video of Tomko destroying three sparring partners at once with speed and power.

Kurt:

"Tomko's not just going to be bigger and stronger. He's going to be faster. He's going to beat Jeff on his feet, on the mat, and in the air. He's a new breed of athlete. He's an animal!"

Tomko:

"I know how to get what I want. I wanted to be the star of the show, and I am. I wanted to get Jeff Jarrett back in the ring, and I did. Now I want to destroy him, to suck the blood out of his legacy in professional wrestling, to take it for myself. The era of Tomko is here, and nobody is safe. I will be the biggest star, the biggest money maker in this entire sport. And tearing Jeff Jarrett limb from limb is my golden ticket."

Tenay:

"On any given night, Tomko can beat anyone in professional wrestling..."

Cut to clips of Tomko pinning Samoa Joe, Kurt Angle, A.J. Styles, Abyss.

Tenay:

"...I have never seen him more driven, more confident, I'm worried for Jeff. No matter how great a wrestler he is, coming back cold after a year and a half to face a monster like Tomko... and I don't think Tomko wants to beat Jeff Jarrett. I think he wants to destroy him."

Interview with Jarrett.

Borash:

"Have you any doubts?"

Jarrett:

"I have... a lot of doubts. About everything. Except this match. I don't know what happens when I wake up the next day. Who I'll be. Where I'll be at. This fight at Bound For Glory is... it's the only thing I can think about, day and night. Win, lose or draw, Tomko is going to regret the day he messed with my family."

Shots of Jeff doing cardio work and suicide drills.

Lynn:

"My biggest concern is overtraining. Jeff has to, HAS to be faster, to have more cardiovascular training to win this match, to survive. If he goes in tired, he won't have that edge, and he's been putting in, just, insane training hours, I'm talking about twelve hour days. He's in a zone, he's focused like I've never seen anyone in my life; and that includes Kurt Angle."

Angle interview.

Angle:

"...Jeff Jarrett is a great professional wrestler, and on some levels understands this sport even better than I do. It's in his family, in his blood. But he's not Kurt Angle. He can't train like Kurt Angle trains, like Tomko has been training. And Jerry Lynn can't coach the way Kurt Angle can coach. Mark my words; at Bound For Glory, Tomko is going to take everything Jeff Jarrett has left, then beat him to a bloody pulp. He won't know what hit him!"

IMPACT (October 9th)

Tomko v Rhino

Tenay:

"...and Tomko asked to face Rhino tonight, I can't imagine why. Rhino is one of the most dangerous super-heavyweights in TNA, I just don't understand asking for a match of this magnitude three days before Bound For Glory."

West:

"I think Tomko feels invincible right now, but it's just crazy to think that he can go into a match like this and be 100% on Sunday. We talked about it before, Mike, he just gets so worked up that he can be his own worst enemy!"

Rhino catches Tomko in the head coming into the ring and unloads on him for forty five seconds. He goes for a corner splash, but Tomko moves, hits the ropes and clotheslines him. Tomko takes him apart. Rhino gets his boot up on a corner splash and leaps from the second rope. Tomko catches him in mid-air and drives him to the mat. He calls for the finish, lets Rhino slowly come to his feet, then takes his head off with the boot, two minutes.

West:

"One... two... three. Dear God, did you see what I saw?"

Tenay:

"I saw a man get utterly pounded by Rhino and absorb every blow like it was nothing. I saw a man pick Rhino out of the air like a fly and break his body off the mat. I saw Tomko knock unconscious one of the top contenders in TNA Wrestling in two minutes flat. As you see the end of the replay here, Rhino isn't moving."

The camera cuts back to Rhino, laying motionless in the ring.

Tomko puts his foot on his chest, and rubs his head with his hand.

Tomko:

(Shouting)

"I didn't even break a sweat! Jeff Jarrett! Kiss your little girls goodbye, I'm going to tear you apart!"

Tomko leaves the ring. The final shot is of Rhino. He remains motionless, flat on his back, in the middle of the ring.

Final Hype

Tenay:

"This Sunday at Bound For Glory, we will see the tag team championships on the line as The Motor City Machine Guns face Team 3D!"

Cue image for the match.

West:

"The X-Division Title will be on the line as Jay Lethal faces the challenge of Sonjay Dutt!"

Cue image for the match.

Tenay:

"World heavyweight champion, Olympic Gold Medalist Kurt Angle has been on the warpath, and he will face A.J. Styles in a 30-Minute Iron Man Match. Can A.J. find a way to unseat the dominant champion?"

Cue image for this match.

West:

"And finally&hellip;"

West takes a deep breath.

West:

"Phew, you really don't mind me announcing this match, Mike?"

Tenay:

"Go ahead, my friend."

West:

"After a year and a half, Jeff Jarrett finally makes his return to the ring to face the super predator, the most violent, the most fearless man in TNA Wrestling, Tomko! I just hope to God he knows what he's doing, Mike. Tomko is a monster."

Tenay:

"Well Don, a man's got to do what a man's got to do. This is the house&hellip; that Jeff Jarrett built. And everyone here in TNA Wrestling, we are so proud that the man we affectionately call "The Boss" is coming back to the ring. Ladies and gentlemen, we'll see you this Sunday&hellip; for Jarrett verses Tomko&hellip; at Bound For Glory.

The Last Promo Video

Music & video hype all the title matches for this Sunday's show, culminating in Kurt Angle vs. A.J. Styles.

The video slides to black.

Cue the opening of Clannad's "I Will Find You" from "Last of The Mohicans."

The music quickly transitions into the original opening theme from TNA Wrestling. Years & dates flow across the screen as historical video of some of TNA's most memorable moments burst upon the screen.

Tenay:

"Good evening and welcome to NWA Total Non-Stop Action!"

Tenay:

"TNA has arrived on Fox Sports."

Tenay:

"Ladies and gentlemen, we are proud to announce our move to Spike TV!"

Tenay:

"TNA Impact IS GOING PRIME TIME!"

Cornette:

"TNA is going two hours!"

Dixie Carter:

"This is TNA Wrestling&hellip;"

West:

"TNA Wrestling has hit another milestone&hellip;"

Cornette:

"I'm so proud to announce the signing of&hellip; "Kurt Angle!..." "Booker T!..." "Sting!..." "Samoa Joe!..."

Tenay:

"&hellip;as the world's most dangerous man, Ken Shamrock holds the NWA Title aloft!"

Jeff Jarrett:

"Hulk Hogan didn't come to TNA, I brought TNA to Hulk Hogan!"

Video: Elix Skipper does the cage walk headscissors as the centerpiece of a tag and X-Division collage

West:

"Oh my God, Mike, The athleticism! This is a new breed, this is a new world of professional wrestling!"

West:

"A.J. Styles! A.J. Styles is world champion, and he's phenomenal!"

Tenay:

"Raven has fulfilled his destiny!"

Suddenly the music stops.

Change back to the opening of Clannad's "I Will Find You" from Last of The Mohicans.

Tomko:

"JEFF JARRETT!... I will turn your daughters to orphans&hellip; you left wrestling because you're scared of Tomko&hellip; Your legacy is worth nothing!..."

Video of Jarrett in pain, bleeding, reaching for the TNA World Title, a collage of images from the last six years.

Tenay:

"Jeff Jarrett&hellip; has given everything&hellip; for TNA Wrestling. It's his dream, his baby, every single person with a job here owes him a debt of gratitude for making this possible&hellip;"

Slow motion video of Jarrett sitting in the locker room.

Jarrett:

"The worst place for me right now is being in the center of that ring."

Tomko:

"You're hiding behind your wife's coffin!"

Jarrett:

"The day I step through those ropes looking for a fight will be a new day in my life…"

Slow motion. The crowd jumps up and down in a frenzy as Jeff steps into the ring to face Tomko.

Tomko:

"You WILL ANSWER TO TOMKO!"

Impact cuts to black.

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BOUND FOR GLORY (October 12th)

Feat. Jarrett v Tomko

The Main Event.

Jeremy Borash takes a deep breath.

Borash:

"Ladies and gentlemen… it's time for the main event of the evening."

The arena goes black, save for two pairs of spotlights dancing back and forth in sequence through the arena.

The opening lick of Bon Jovi's "Dead or Alive" gently flows into the arena.

As the opening lyric chimes in, the spotlights converge at a point, illuminating a man's back. Jon Bon Jovi turns to face the arena.

Bon Jovi:

"It's all the same. Only the names change. Every day. It seems we're wasting away."

On the monitor, photos of Jeff refereeing matches a quarter century ago as a blonde teenager back in Memphis.

Bon Jovi:

"Another place. Where the faces are so cold. I'd drive all night… just to get back home."

Jeff and his family. His friends. His fans. His championships. In cars. On planes, by trains, in automobiles.

Bon Jovi:

"I'm a cowboy. On a steel horse I ride. And I wanted… dead or alive."

The monitor cuts to a live shot as the camera makes its way down the locker room hall. A security guard knocks on a door. It opens.

Jeff Jarrett, his head down, walks into the hallway.

He's dressed to wrestle.

Bon Jovi:

"Sometimes I sleep. Sometimes it's not for days.

The people I meet... always go their separate ways."

He turns back to the doorway and kneels down. He leans back into his locker room, out of the view of the camera. He's talking to someone. He stands back up and starts walking up the hallway towards the camera, his head up now.

Bon Jovi:

"Sometimes I tell the days, by the bottle that you drink. Sometimes when you're alone, all you do is think."

The hall opens up into a main foyer. Staff and wrestlers are scattered around, and clearly not by accident. Before he steps through the curtain leading to the entrance ramp, he turns to the group standing.

Kurt Angle lifts the world title to his shoulder and pats it.

The camera cuts back to the arena.

The band roars into the solo as Jeff Jarrett walks into a wrestling arena ready to fight for the first time in a year and a half.

He hesitates as he hits the apron, then bursts into the ring and climbs up each of the four corners. (\*Six sides&hellip; WHY?!?)

Tenay:

"And there he is! I didn't know if we'd ever see it again, Jeff Jarrett, standing in that ring. We are live across America, live on tape delay all over the rest of the world, it's TNA Bound For Glory 2008."

West:

"The electricity going through this room you can reach out and touch it, no matter what happens, no matter what happens here this is a moment that I will never, ever forget Mike, and I'm so glad to be here to experience it. There is nowhere on earth, no time in history that I would want to be other than right here, right now!

Tenay:

"Don, I know exactly how you feel. Tonight is so important on so many levels. This is not just a match. Win, lose or draw, it can't be what's on the mind of Jeff Jarrett. He's been on the road for twenty years, winning championships in every major wrestling organization, going toe to toe with the biggest names of professional wrestling. Tonight isn't about winning, tonight is about surviving. He has the guts, the passion, the will to win, that much I truly believe. But Tomko is bigger, he's stronger, he's younger, he's out of control. The odds are stacked against him tonight, but tonight Jeff Jarrett fights for the honor of his family and the integrity of this entire sport, Don."

West:

"Win, lose or draw, that man, Jeff Jarrett, tonight his legacy is cemented. What a man. What a champion. We talk about fearless; he has everything to lose here tonight, and he's rolling the dice and putting all his cards on the table."

The music stops.

Tomko's music starts.

Tomko walks out onto the ramp. He's elated to be standing here in the main event.

The moment he appears, Jarrett's eyes light up, as if it were the first moment he'd seen him all over again.

"You want some?" read Tomko's lips mockingly.

Jarrett starts walking towards the ropes. He climbs through to the floor.

Tomko drops the smirk as he starts powerwalking towards the ring.

Jarrett starts running up the ramp, faster and faster.

Tomko charges down the ramp like a runaway train.

BOOM!

(The end.)

#### THE AFTERMATH

If I were to write it from here, I'd probably have this first match go Broadway, end up in a giant pull-apart that brings Lynn, Angle and others down to the ring before finishing with a big celebration of Jarrett in the ring. We can get a follow-up cage match out of the program the following month easy.

I threw a couple of teases in there, too. I'd keep the belt on Angle and do Angle v Jarrett the following year. Of course, Kurt's health might change that, and I could see Tomko callously feasting off Kurt's remains to win his first world title, setting up a rematch between he and Jarrett a year later, or other potential matches, such as he and A.J., who bested him in the first place.

I wouldn't use tables, chairs or gimmicks in the first match. Nothing says "real hatred" like two guys going at it with their bare fists, selling heavy and showing some color. Garbage can lids and tables are goofy and dumb.

When the guys finally get separated, Jeff climbs into the crowd and celebrates euphorically as Mike Tenay screams, "The fans want more! The fans want more! He said it was his last match, but Don tell me that man is not a professional wrestler!"

I do hope that I haven't been overly crude or personal in some of the elements used in this booking. I don't like distasteful angles, but to me it's not distasteful if the story has the right ending and is done for the right reasons. Seeing a guy who has traveled the road for twenty years like Jeff, performing traditional professional wrestling, is an inspiration and it deserves to be treated to the best possible celebration. I certainly hope TNA run with the ball as, if they do his return right, I may well start watching TNA again.

If you have an opinion about this article, or any of the other booking-related material I have on my website, I welcome correspondence.

With thanks,

Blake Norton

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