

MOTHER'S DAY

I get home after a hard day's work slinging software, anxious to bond with my comfy chair in front of the TV for an evening of professional wrestling, some wacky pay-per-view billed as the "Mother's Day Bash". What a tag line, "Out of the kitchen and into the ring: she's not just your mother anymore." This stuff is great, I think to myself — two guys each the size and weight of a refrigerator, are cussing at each other in the middle of the ring, at times punctuating the more pejorative insults with a rough shove. The whole thing is presided over by a squirrely announcer and the female manager of one of the wrestlers. She looks old enough to be his mother but she's all decked out in black leather, wears sunglasses that must block any light whatsoever, bobs and weaves and shakes her fingers and pats her man on the butt and looks mean as hell.

The phone rings. "Now what," I say into my half-empty mug of Coors Light. So I get up and pout my way over to the phone. Before I can say a pleasant 'hello' a rather unpleasant voice tells me he demands a title shot for the belt.

"What belt is that?" I ask.

"Don't be cute," the voice says with a snarl that leaps out of the receiver and onto my wall where it leaves a slimy trail behind as it high-tails it out of the room. I stare into the receiver for some kind of answer, but quickly give up and go looking for a towel to wipe up that trail of spunk. I open the drawer where I keep my kitchen towels and there lying on top is a huge wrestling championship belt, the kind I imagine *The Rock* or someone of that ilk might wear with pride. A yellow sticky on the belt tells me to call my mother or else. So what's with the "or else" and what the fuck is a wrestling title belt doing here in my kitchen drawer?

I better call my mom, not because of any goddamn note but because... I want to. It's mother's day, ain't it? She answers the phone with a meek 'hello'. In the background I hear loud unfamiliar voices. Someone grabs the receiver and yells, "I want that title shot, Baron. I want it now or something nasty might happen to mommy dearest."

The whole thing seems absurd so I tell him so and add, "And who the hell is 'Baron' anyway."

The line goes dead but from my television I hear his voice, louder than ever. "Don't be cute," he says, repeating what is obviously his little catch phrase. "You, the 'Dark Baron', you who stole my belt, you who cheated me, 'The Executioner', cheated me of my victory..." He goes on like this for a while, at times near tears in his vitriolic attack.

A pair of ruffians drag my mom into the ring, she looks pained and worried, but at the same time I have this crazy notion that she's somehow in on the whole messy affair. "Listen to them, Donnie," she pleads.

The Executioner does a double take.

“You bonehead,” I yell into the TV. “My name is Don Bacon not Dark Baron. You’ve got the wrong guy.”

The Executioner consults his manager in tense whispers and after some serious nods they let my mom go. She is helped out of the ring by the announcer. The Executioner stares into the camera and bellows, “I’ll get whoever’s behind this cute trick and take him apart, do you hear me? Take him apart one sinew at a time.” He throws the microphone down and hustles out of the ring like a bad-ass schoolchild.

Back in the kitchen the apocryphal wrestling belt is nowhere to be found. The phone rings again. This time it’s my mom.

“Mom are you okay?” I ask.

After a tense silence she says, “Fine thing to ask your mother. You might call once while to find out!”