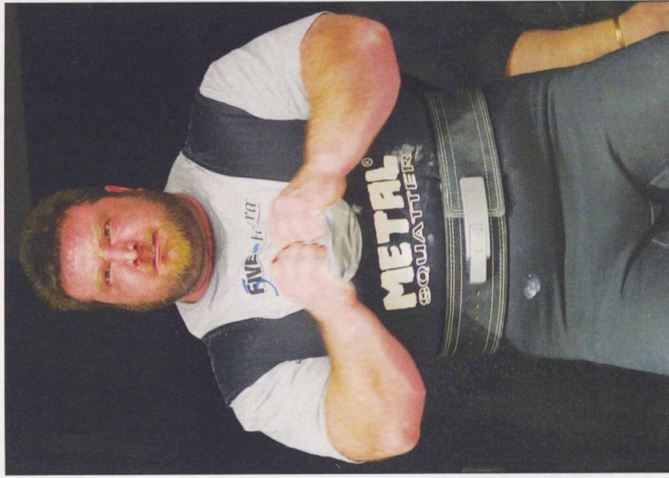


# INTERVIEW

## CHAD AICHS

interviewed by Ben Tatar Jr. of Critical Bench



(Above) Chad Aichs about to unleash his energies on a squat attempt



(Below) Chad has risen to sharing the platform with the very best

I'm excited to go one on one with you powerlifting great Chad Aichs and discussing what it will take to put powerlifting on the mainstream map. During the first part of the interview we learn a little bit about Chad and then in the second part of the interview we talk to Chad about the steps powerlifting must make in great detail to keep the hardcore aspect while making it as prime time as possible.

**Critical Bench:** Chad, tell us about yourself!

**Chad Aichs:** What is there to tell, I am "THE CHAD!" Ha ha, well I am a powerlifter with best lifts of 1173 squat, 821 bench press, 755 deadlift, and a 2733 total. I hold all the AWPFC world records and had the full meet WPO bench press world record.

I also compete in the Scottish Highland Games and like to mess around with strongman equipment, but have not competed in that. I love motorcycles and ride whenever I can. I am also into quads and dirt bikes, again riding whenever I can. It seems like I am usually too busy to shoot, much, but guns and rifles are also a hobby of mine.

I am very into photography and love to shoot just about anything. I love the creativity and challenge of photography. I would say landscapes are my favorite to shoot, but I really love to shoot stuff I am passionate about. Stuff like motorcycles, cars, guns, lifting competition, and—of course—my nieces and nephews!

**CB:** Wow, Chad it's always fun to see what successful powerlifters are like away from the gym. Do you have any links where people can read about you?

**CA:** Well, the best link would be my website. There is a lot of information on there. [www.chadaichs.com](http://www.chadaichs.com).

**CB:** Chad what was your life like as a kid?

**CA:** That's an interesting question and kind of hard to answer without taking a lot of time. I did a lot of fighting in school and a lot of sleeping during class. Even in kindergarten it seemed like I would get into a fight every time they let us out for recess. I would say I was a pretty angry kid.

I did not play any organized sports until high school, up until that point it was just neighborhood stuff. I am not a real social person and usually just had small groups of friends around. I absolutely hated school, but the summers during high school were awesome.

some because I spent most of my days training. It was the closest thing I have ever gotten to being a professional athlete. I would lift twice a day, run, swim, and then spend the evening playing some type of sport.

**CB:** Those were the days. Were you always very strong?

**CA:** No! I was just average. I figured out at a young age that I did have a lot more power when I had more strength when I was pissed. Maybe that's why I always liked the Incredible Hulk! Once I got in high school I started lifting and used to direct a lot of my anger towards that. I busted my butt lifting from my freshman year all the way through my senior year. I benched around 345 lbs., squatted over 500, and pulled over 500 at 275, which is not all that impressive.

**CB:** I'm sure that's inspiring to a lot of people showing that some of the best lifters in the world today didn't always start out super strong. Chad, what are your parents and family like?

**CA:** Like anyone else's family I guess—a little messed up. Ha ha. My dad was always a pretty big guy at 6'4" and high 200s to low 300s. He was a good high school athlete in the shot and football. My mom is short and never really did a lot of athletics, but she was always tough. She spent a lot of time on farms in the Midwest when she grew up. I think she was a tomboy when she was young.

I have one brother around a year older than me and he is about 230. He never really excelled at conventional sports, but does pretty well at the extreme stuff. I attribute that to the fact that he is mostly nuts, like me!

My younger sister never did hardly anything sportswise or liftingwise. She has two kids, my niece and nephew. I am hoping they will be into sports, but what I really care about is that they show some drive towards something and that they are happy. My family is really good about supporting my powerlifting and my parents have done a lot of traveling to see me compete. I know my father is proud of what I have accomplished, but he really wishes I would do something that had more of a future, where I could make some money.

**CB:** Very interesting family, you

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# POWER RESEARCH

dedicated to bringing Science to the sport of Powerlifting

## PROFESSIONAL STRENGTH WHEY PROTEIN

### New Research Reveals Scientifically Superior Protein for Powerlifters as researched for Powerlifting USA by the MuscleTech Research Team

Powerlifting is more than just a sport; it's a way of life. Diehards like you may even call it war. The daily battle between man and iron is something that most cannot comprehend. Few will ever know the feeling of locking grip with a fully loaded bar bearing half a ton of dead weight and pulling it off the floor with the synergistic flex of every fiber in your body. The goal of any powerlifter is to make consistent improvements in increasing strength and power. But powerlifting is about more than simply moving a bunch of weight. It's about winning meets and shattering your previous PB. Success for a powerlifter is directly related to how much time you put into training, how hard you train and what you put in your body—especially supplements. Supplements are the key to maximizing training sessions and unblocking your body's true potential. One of the best and most effective supplements that a powerlifter (and anyone else for that matter) can take is protein. You know that—and so do Six Star® Muscle researchers!

There are a truck-load of different protein supplements out there, but most of them just won't cut it! You need something more powerful, something scientifically superior and something designed to meet the muscle- and strength-building needs of a powerlifter like you. You need Six Star Muscle Professional Strength Whey Protein!

**Every Protein Is NOT Created Equal**

Protein is arguably the most important nutrient for your body and is found literally everywhere in your system. From your muscle tissues to the enzymes that digest your food to your skin cells, and even within your blood, protein is there helping you become bigger and stronger, and it's absolutely critical to every single lift.

Protein quality is measured by Biological Value (BV). BV is a value that measures how well the body can absorb and utilize protein based on nitrogen retention. The higher the Biological Value of the protein you use, the more protein your body can absorb, use and retain. As a result, proteins with the highest BV promote the most lean muscle gains.

Of all the many different proteins, the whey protein found in Six Star Professional Strength Whey Protein is one of the most bioavailable forms of protein in the world and is considered best in class.

**Scientifically Superior to 100% Premium Whey Protein**

There is no denying the power of protein, but just because something is proven to work doesn't mean that it can't be improved. Six Star® Muscle took a proven muscle and strength builder in protein and made it even better! What makes Six Star Muscle Professional Strength Whey Protein far superior to regular whey protein is that this advanced formula has been engineered through countless hours of scientific research and has university, clinical studies on trained subjects supporting its key ingredients. The Pro-



tein you can trust. One that is backed by real science. One that is guaranteed to deliver results. Six Star Muscle Professional Strength Whey Protein is that name and it can help you get the most out of each lift. Powerlifters like you demand the best out of themselves and should demand the best when it comes to supplementation. With Six Star® Muscle Professional Strength Whey Protein surging through your veins, failure will never be an option!

As a powerlifter, you can't afford to rely on cheap, inferior protein supplements. If you're going to push your body to the limit day in and day out, you need a name you can trust. One that is backed by real science. One that is guaranteed to deliver results. Six Star Muscle Professional Strength Whey Protein is that name and it can help you get the most out of each lift. Powerlifters like you demand the best out of themselves and should demand the best when it comes to supplementation. With Six Star® Muscle Professional Strength Whey Protein surging through your veins, failure will never be an option!

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have there. Chad, how important is technique when it comes to the squat, bench, and deadlift?

**CA:** That is a huge question that could take hours. WARNING: shameless self-promotions coming!!! I am finishing up my first training video which will focus on what I consider to be the foundation of a strong powerlifting or strength career, technique. Proper technique is one of the only ways to lift more weight without actually getting strong. Proper technique will allow you to reach your maximum potential. Proper technique will help to keep injuries away.

Understanding proper technique will allow you to figure out weak points fast, which will allow you fix them faster. I have been to lots of meets and lots of different gyms and I find technique is one of the most overlooked areas of powerlifting. There are also many guys out there that think they know proper technique, but have no clue. I hope to explain all about proper technique for vari-

ous different lifters with various gear in this video. I want to start new lifters off on the right foot and help some current lifters to bust through some plateaus and put up the numbers they are capable of. Look for this video within the next few months on my website [www.chadachicks.com](http://www.chadachicks.com) or [www.ellifts.com](http://www.ellifts.com).

**CB:** Keep your eyes out people for Chad's video! Chad, tell us your role in the BFS movie!

**CA:** Ha, ha, it was not much of a role. They simply tapped when I went down with 1154 (I think) at the APF Nationals in Vegas. That is about it, a clip lasting 5 seconds. It was pretty funny to see everyone in the movie theater gosp when that clip came up. I was laughing. I think it is awesome. I was awake for something like 8 days before that meet and I crashed with all that weight, but walked away from it. Most people don't get it, but I am proud of that. I was very thankful that I didn't hurt any of the spotters though, that would have been really bad. The people from Magrino Pictures wanted some shots that really stood out

to promote the movie. I heard that they were not really impressed with anything until they saw some pics of me and they just said that's it, that's what we are going with.

**CB:** Just another hardcore crazy experience in the life of "THE CHAD!" What is it like being sponsored by Muscle Milk?

**CA:** I am sponsored by them (CytoMax/Muscle Milk), but did not work the booth. I have been with them for 3 years now and absolutely love their products. I live on Muscle Milk! They are great about getting me products whenever I need them. They have not really done that much marketing with me, which I would like to do. Maybe that will happen in the future. They really don't ask too much of me, just lift big!

**CB:** Nice... just what you do best! Chad, although you are one of the strongest men on the Earth, you still claim you aren't any better than anybody else. Tell us about that.

**CA:** I don't judge myself by my strength. I am much more than just a lifter. I love strength sports and always have. Ever since I was young I wanted to be big and

strong. I was born to do this stuff and I will always be stronger than the normal. Being a strength athlete is in my blood.

Even though I feel this way, I know there is a lot more to life than strength. I can be the strongest man in the world and it really doesn't mean much in the Big Picture. It doesn't mean I am better than someone or that I should walk around being an "a\*\*hole to people. I have very good friends who don't even lift, but they are great people. There are plenty of people in this world who do great things, but they are weak as hell.

I judge people on who they are on the inside. I don't like people because they are strong, or not. I like them because they are good people. In life, strength doesn't really mean all that much. I do like being around other strong guys and hanging around guys that are like me. I don't do this stuff to feel better than anyone else. I just love to do it.

**CB:** Great outlook. Do you have any secrets to getting huge like setting the alarm clock and drinking a protein shake in the middle of the

night?

**CA:** Not really. I think it is important to have a protein drink before bed. When I am trying to put on mass I look at food from a portion prospective...meaning I eat whatever has the most calories in the smallest portions. It is usually named Hostess or Little Debbie! **CB:** How does powerlifting compare and contrast to your other hobbies?

**CA:** I would say powerlifting is like a lot of my hobbies in that it is all about strength and power. Motors, cars, and motorcycles are all like art to me. I love the lines and mechanical aspects of them, but what I really like is the power. A car that actually shakes when it rolls by and a motorcycle where you can feel the exhaust; it's all about power and how it feels. I am always trying to get the biggest and most powerful guns and rifles I can afford. The bigger the better, if I could get my hands on a rocket launcher I would.

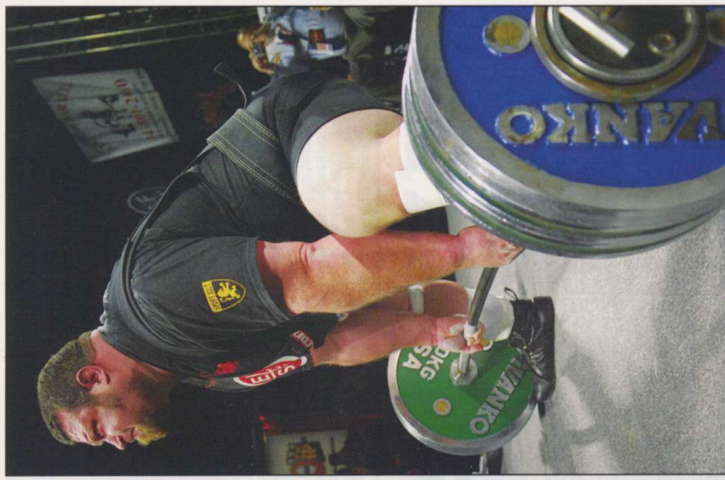
Another thing that is the same as the intensity I have for my hobbies; I want to do the absolute best I can at everything I do. I want to be the best photographer, rider, and shooter I can. It is just that right now powerlifting takes up most of my time and focus.

The biggest difference is the person I become in order to lift the weights I do. I have put myself in a very angry and aggressive state. When I do my photography I am usually very calm. I have to slow things down and concentrate. I have to focus on angles, composition, camera setting, and be creative. Most of the time riding is just relaxing for me, except when I am racing or riding fast. Then it is more of an amped up, but relaxed kind of focus. I guess you could say the difference all boils down to my mental state.

**CB:** You are king of hardcore. Moving on to the second part of the interview, I must ask, why don't you think powerlifting is mainstream at this time?

**CA:** There are a lot of reasons. I think the main one is that powerlifting doesn't really want it to be mainstream. I think there are a lot of lifters who like it, being underground and kind of unknown. It also seems like a lot of the promoters out there are just in it for themselves. They are too worried about how they look and how much control they have.

There are probably a lot of lifters that could do a great job of helping to promote the sport,



Chad showing a classic start position at the deadlift attempt

they keep watching to see how I describe a typical powerlifter?

**CA:** Most powerlifters are a little off tilt (crazy) and I think that's exactly why I get along with them! I would say that 90% of the guys I have met in any of the strength sports have been great guys. They are down to earth and humble. They just want to have some fun and lift heavy stuff. Some of the best times I have had in the sport were hanging around with all the other lifter before and after competitions. Like any group, there are a few that I don't get along with, but it is very few.

**CB:** Yes, that is another great thing about powerlifting...it's a big family! However, I think powerlifting needs drama to go mainstream. Take the UFC for example, to a lot of outsiders, people feel they are just watching people hump each other into submission and it isn't interesting. I think powerlifting needs some kind of drama and behind the scenes stuff and even have the powerlifters go at it before they lift and

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but as lifters we make almost no money so it is very difficult to keep up a training program, take care of life stuff, and worry about promotions at the same time. I still feel like powerlifting could go mainstream, to at least the level of strongman, but it would take a lot of work.

**CB:** Why do you think most people don't get powerlifting and can't relate to you or other powerlifters?

**CA:** I think most people don't get it because they know nothing about it. Most people don't even understand what powerlifting is. I always get asked stuff like "are you in the Olympics" or "are you on TV lifting the stones?" Most people have no idea what powerlifting really is. Almost everyone that has ever done a sport or been to a gym knows the main lifts, they just don't know about powerlifting.

I think a lot of people could relate to powerlifters. Most powerlifters have regular lives too. I think the best way for people to get it is through publicity. Someone has to see the potential for the sport and get it out there in more mainstream magazines and television. They need to introduce lifters and the type of people who are in the sport. That way people can make connections with powerlifters, and then they will be more likely to stay interested in it. They will want to keep up on what the guys they like, and hate, are doing.

**CB:** Exactly, if they could learn about different powerlifters behind the scenes and what they are like, they could choose who to root or not root for and that will increase ratings. I also like the idea of head to head, one on one powerlifting match ups. Chad, what do you think it will take for powerlifting to go mainstream?

**CA:** It will take publicity first off. We have to get the sport out to the general public and show them what it is. We have to introduce them to the characters and stars of the sport. Like I said earlier, people need to make a connection with a lifter or something about the sport so that they are more interested and want to keep up with the progress. If a person sees an interview with me and finds out I am into some of the same things as them, then they may have that connection with me. They may like the fact that I am into riding quads like them, so that gives them a reason to cheer for me. They become a fan and now



Chad at the scene of his greatest lifts - the WPO Arnold Classic

Chad Aichs is ONE OF THE BEST BENCHERS in three lift history

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not even like each other (but respect each other after the lifts), what is your take on all of this?  
**CA:** Yes, I agree with the fact that there has to be some type of drama to make it more exciting. I think it is already there though, it's just that no one markets it. There are always guys that go to a meet to beat someone else or guys betting each other who will win. A guy could get beat by someone three times in a row and all through his next training cycle he is just focusing on beating that one guy.

I have been in competitions where there was friendly trash talking (more or less just messing around with each other) between guys. There are rivalries between certain gyms. There is a lot of stuff going on that people never see. I am sure most guys would be willing to play that up a bit if needed. I would: I think it would be funny to do. On the platform, it is all business though. They played a lot of things up in the movie PUMPING IRON; if they hadn't it would have never been as good.

**CB:** How can we promote this in a

healthy way to put powerlifting over the top?

**CA:** It would all be through media. Maybe reality shows or have guys taping in the warm-up areas at competition. I wouldn't worry too much about healthy competition, some people just don't get along and that's the way it is.

**CB:** If powerlifting goes mainstream which way do you think it should go?  
**CA:** It should go WPO style with lights, big TV screens, card girls, and loud music. That makes it exciting for the lifters and the spectators. The WPO Arnold Classic was the coolest competition I ever did. There was so much energy and as you looked over the crowd you could just feel their excitement. I have done some other meets that are more restrictive and they are boring. I don't even get excited at them.

**CB:** To make powerlifting go mainstream, do you think that there should be weight classes?

**CA:** Unfortunately, I don't think weight classes are all that marketable, but I think people want to see the huge guys that are way out of the normal range. Some of

the smaller lifters are completely insane strong, but I don't know if people want to see that. Strongman has only two weight classes, but which I think is a good idea, but you never see the lightweighters on TV. The most popular bodybuilders are always the biggest guys too. I think from a marketing standpoint, you could do under 220 and over 220. Then it's up to the lifters to decide what's best for them. I know in the upper weight class the numbers are not far off between classes. This would also make it easier to run meets and keep track of the athlete's places.

**CB:** Do you think powerlifting should have pay per view events down the road like the UFC and WWE?

**CA:** Yeah, I think pay per view would be great. Right now, I don't think they would make too much money, but with the right marketing I think it would do well. Anything that can bring money into the sport is good as long as it makes its way down to the lifters, but if it doesn't, then the lifters will just end up doing backyard meets and would blame them.

**CB:** Would mainstream powerlifting kill the dark side of the sport? Many powerlifters simply don't want powerlifting to be mainstream because they like the idea of powerlifting being an underground sport. How can powerlifting go mainstream while still keeping its exciting edge?

**CA:** I think powerlifting can go mainstream and still keep the dark side. Mainstream just means that the general public gets into the sport. They watch it on TV, go to events, and buy merchandise of the guys they like. They are not really going to be following around the hardcore lifters; the general population will probably still be scared as hell of them. The dark side guys will still train in little gyms that the normals are not allowed in. All going mainstream means it that guys will be able to make a living doing what they love. They will be able to become bigger, stronger, and more hardcore than ever.

**CB:** Chad, we know powerlifters in the game say "Setting a personal record is all that matters. The only person you must beat is yourself." Explain why you think this is so important.

**CA:** For me, it is all about setting goals. When you first start lifting, you can't set a goal to break a world record in your first meet or to put up the all time total.

You have to start off with small goals. When I first started, my goals were to beat my own personal best total at each meet. I did have big goals of being one of the top supers, but I knew that small goals were the best way for me to reach my all time goal. So, yes, I think it is really good for people to go after personal records and that is what it is about, but there will be a time when you will start looking at other lifters and the all time numbers. I still say the best way is to keep looking to yourself and just focus on making yourself better. If you keep pushing yourself and trying to break your own personal best, then it will all work itself out. One of my goals is to break the all time total, but I don't focus on what the other lifters are doing. I focus on what I am doing and how I can make my numbers keep growing. I can only affect my training; I can not change what other people are doing.

**CB:** How can powerlifting attract high dollar sponsors for meets?

**CA:** Powerlifting can get money from almost any type of sponsor. The problem is that the sponsors want something in return and they deserve that. They want some press and marketing. Someone with some very good business sense and some money has to come along. The best marketing we could ever give sponsors would be television coverage. The problem with that is no one will give us television coverage unless we can prove it will pay off. It's a "catch 22." Some one would have to front the cost of the first few television events and hope that it pays off in the end. We need someone with money, business sense, and a vision. MMA fighting has gone completely crazy and a lot of people said that would never make it.

**CB:** This is true! How could powerlifting personalities put their egos aside and all come together to make powerlifting grow? And what do you say to those lifters who say "who gives a crap?" As some powerlifters simply don't care whether or not powerlifting gets put on the map!

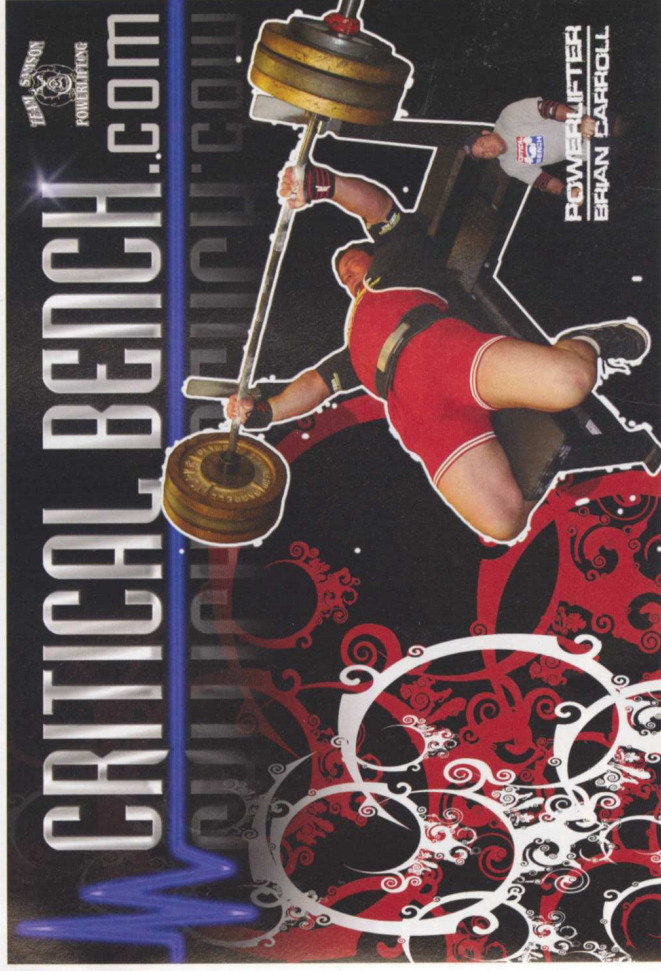
**CA:** Well, there will always be egos and that might not be a bad thing. It makes for good entertainment. We do need to get together for a main goal of making some damn money in this sport. Although this sport has cost me a ton of money and almost killed me, I love it and want it to grow. Whenever I go into some commercial gym, I just laugh at all the stupid people wasting their time.

I want there to be real gyms in every city in the world and I want big strong ass people walking down every street in the world. I want people to understand and respect what all the top lifters put themselves through. For the people who say "who gives a crap," screw them. They are probably just in it for themselves and afraid that if the sport gets bigger then it will attract better athletes who will challenge them.

**CB:** Chad, you are super enormous and strong. Has it been worth it?  
**CA:** Yes! I wrote an article about this question for Elite/Is.com a while back. I have been though some messed up stuff over the last 8 years and some of that may have been compounded by lifting, but it was worth it.

**CB:** Well, Chad it has been great talking to you today. Only time will tell us what the future of powerlifting holds. I hope that your interview has made people think and try new things to help propel the sport of powerlifting in new ways. There is an old saying "if you do what you always did, you will get what you always got." I think by trying new things with powerlifting can help the sport in very new and exciting ways. Chad, it has been a pleasure.

SHOWING INTENSE EMOTION - Chad's got plenty to shout about after an awesome attempt



At the 2003 APF Seniors, Chad was showing signs of what was to come

