

EDDIE THE EAGLE

by

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Based on a true story.

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INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

At the bottom of a 1970s avocado bath, a bathplug chain drifts from side to side in the soapy water.

EDDIE (VO)
Every great athlete is born with a natural talent. Arnold Palmer, Jimmy Connors, Muhammad Ali, the illustrious Brazilian Pele...

A boy's hand appears holding a waterproof plastic watch. The seconds tick by as bubbles begin to stream upwards.

EDDIE (VO) (CONT'D)
Every sporting legend you can mention - naturally gifted from birth.

Ten-year-old Eddie Edwards bursts to the surface, purple faced and gasping for air.

EDDIE (VO) (CONT'D)
And I was no exception.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Little Eddie, hair still wet, carries his Gola kitbag to the front door. He is a stocky kid with a determined jaw.

EDDIE (VO)
A week after my tenth birthday I equalled the Cheltenham Junior Swimming League record for holding my breath underwater.

He stands on tiptoes, straining for the lock.

EDDIE (VO) (CONT'D)
That meant I was ready to compete at the highest level.

A woman in a nightgown appears - Eddie's mother JANETTE. She's a large, jolly woman in a muumuu and brown tinted glasses, equal parts warmth and anxiety.

JANETTE
And where d'you think you're going, young man?

EDDIE

Rome. I'm going to hold my breath
in the Olympics and win a gold
medal.

She regards him thoughtfully, then goes and rummages in the
hall closet.

Among the coats and umbrellas is a pair of National Health
KNEE CALIPERS.

Eddie looks at them darkly until she emerges holding out an
empty Jaffa Cakes biscuit tin.

JANETTE

Well, you'd better take this for
your medals then, hadn't you.

Eddie tucks the tin under his arm, relieved. "Good thinking.

JANETTE (CONT'D)

And make sure you pack your hankie.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Eddie walks along the damp pavement. It's a neglected working-
class neighborhood, all stray dogs and misspelled graffiti.

EDDIE (VO)

I soon found out there wasn't an
Olympic event for holding your
breath.

He studies the time-table at a bus stop.

EDDIE (VO) (CONT'D)

And there wasn't a bus to Rome from
the end of our street.

(rain drizzles down)

And Mum was absolutely right.

He wipes a sleeve over his runny nose.

EDDIE (VO) (CONT'D)

I should have packed my hankie.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Eddie toys with a consoling cup of cocoa, poring over his
treasured 1972 Olympics photo album - *Moments of Glory*.

EDDIE (VO)
 But I didn't care. I knew I was
 going to be a part of it someday.

He studies the Kodachrome images enrapt – Jesse Owens, Olgar Korbut, Mark Spitz – triumphant medal winners cheered and chaired aloft.

JANETTE
 Alright, pet. Time for bed.

She removes his cup, revealing Eddie's handiwork: five chocolate rings on the plastic tablecloth – the Olympic logo.

EDDIE (VO)
 The first step was finding the
 right sport.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

Eddie swings a battered old cricket bat at an incoming ball and misses completely.

EDDIE (VO)
 Something that played to my
 strengths.

He swings again with the same result. And again. And again, long into the night.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

EDDIE (VO)
 I knew there'd be technical
 difficulties, and a fair bit of
 soul-searching.

Eddie trudges home, dragging his kitbag behind him.

EDDIE (VO) (CONT'D)
 Every great sportsman has to
 confront his demons eventually.

Eddie walks smack bang into a lamp post.

INT. OPTICIAN'S - DAY

EDDIE (VO)
 But it helps if you can see them
 first.

Eddie squints through an ancient eye test machine at a chart of letters – all wildly blurred.

Thick lenses are dropped in front of his eyes, snapping the letters in focus.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

EDDIE (VO)
Mum was a big fan of my new
incarnation.

Eddie shows off his new spectacles – National Health jam-jar lenses with thick black frames.

JANETTE
Very smart.

EDDIE (VO)
Dad too, I think.

Eddie's Dad, TERRY, is a no-nonsense ruddy-faced builder. He gives the glasses a wiggle.

TERRY
"My name is Michael Caine."

EDDIE (VO)
The playground was less convinced.

EXT. CRICKET NETS - DAY

KID
Oi Four-eyes!/Goggle-eyed git!

A dozen kids make "goggle" faces through the threadbare cricket netting. Eddie gives them a V-sign. Resumes his stance at the wicket.

EDDIE (VO)
It makes a big difference being
able to see properly.

He swings at the incoming ball and just like before, misses completely – taking this one right in the face.

EDDIE (VO) (CONT'D)
You get a much clearer perspective
on the best way to fulfill your
sporting potential.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Eddie drops his broken glasses into the biscuit tin.

EXT. SCHOOL RUGBY FIELD - DAY

EDDIE (VO)
Like making sure you pick the right
size ball for your physical type.

Eddie in ill-fitting shirt and shorts, chases a bobbling rugby ball, trying to scoop it up without success until the opposing team flattens him.

INT. EDDIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Another pair of broken glasses drops into the tin.

EDDIE (VO)
And choosing the best terrain for
your endurance capabilities.

INT. SWIMMING-POOL - DAY

A starting pistol sends Eddie and his classmates into the freezing water. They all emerge and swim off except for you know who.

EDDIE (VO)
Let's just say it was a process of
trial and error.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

We move down Eddie's effortfully handwritten list of sports: cricket, football, swimming, hurdles, boxing... All crossed out except for the last one - cycling.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Eddie peddles furiously on his trusty Raleigh Chopper - picking up speed towards a home-made jumping ramp.

The local kids watch as he flies into the air - so high that he clears the long line of milk crates.

He lands safely with a triumphant WHOOP only to discover that he hasn't left enough room to stop.

EDDIE
Shhhhhhhhhhhiiii-

He SLAMS into a neighbor's wall and FLIPS over the hedge with a CRASH of glass and a sickening THUD.

EDDIE (VO) (CONT'D)
It was not what you'd call a
textbook landing, but I couldn't
have been happier.

The local kids wince as they find Eddie writhing amid the remains of a smashed green house.

EDDIE (VO) (CONT'D)
I was on my way. Part of the big
show, admired and appreciated for
who I was.

Eddie is helped to his feet, badly cut and covered with broken plants.

LOCAL KID
Fucking maniac!

INT. BEDROOM - DUSK

EDDIE (VO)
And then came the bombshell.

Eddie lies on his bed reading *Moments of Glory*, like he does every night. A boy alone under his Evel Knievel poster.

TERRY (OS)
Eddie! Get down here now!

INT. KITCHEN - DUSK

Janette and Terry sit at the Formica table, bewildered and exasperated at this crazy son of theirs covered in scratches and cuts.

TERRY
Enough's enough. You're spending
your holidays with me down at the
site. It's time you learn the
plastering trade.

Eddie digests this like a death sentence, knee bouncing up and down.

EDDIE

What about my Olympic preparations?

Terry says nothing. Just picks off some debris from Eddie's sweater. Eddie looks to Mum. But she has to agree with Dad.

JANETTE

You never know, pet, you might like it.

EXT. HILL TOP - NIGHT

Eddie sits with his bike, gazing out over the lights of Cheltenham below.

EDDIE (VO)

So that was the sporting career of Eddie Edwards.

Down below him is a dirty noisy building site – his future.

EDDIE (VO) (CONT'D)

Eleven different sports and nothing to show for it except twelve pairs of broken glasses. (I sat on my sixth pair in the library.)

He scratches his knees absently as his defeated face slips into darkness. The crushing despair that only a 10-year-boy can feel.

We hold. Long enough to feel this could be the end of our story... and it probably would be except for the blaze of white light that suddenly illuminates the sky.

Eddie sits up annoyed, but then increasingly intrigued.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

He pedals back down the hill as fast as his wobbly wheel will allow. Reaches a wire fence with a big sign:

*"ENGLAND'S FIRST DRY SKI SLOPE –
OPENING THIS SUMMER!"*

He dumps his bike to get a closer look: "In conjunction with the British Olympic Ski Association."

His gaze drops to the corner of the sign. There it is. The magic symbol of the Olympics – five interlocking rings.

EXT. DRY SKI SLOPE - NIGHT

Eddie clambers over the wire fence and scrambles up the dirt slope, all pain forgotten as he steps into the glaring light.

EDDIE

Bloody ada.

He is standing at the top of a HUGE floodlit ski slope.

He steps out onto the plastic surface and feels the springy bristles under his feet. He's awe-struck, like he's stepping out for the first time onto the moon.

His battered urchin features tremble with emotion as he's swallowed up by the heavenly glare of the floodlights...

EXT. CALGARY OLYMPICS, DOWNHILL FINALS - DAY

The rousing theme tune from BBC's Ski Sunday. Out of the whiteness comes an adult SKIER zig-zagging down a slalom course towards a finish line, snow spraying in his wake.

A title card reads: "12 years later."

A crowd leaps to its feet, deafeningly loud.

RON PICKERING (VO)

... This is amazing! This is sensational! Edwards is carving up the Calgary hillside like a Sunday roast.

RON PICKERING, the BBC's tubby, excitable voice of skiing, grabs his microphone as the skier crosses the finish line.

RON PICKERING (CONT'D)

Oh my word! He's only gone and done it.

The crowd swarms forward as ADULT EDDIE takes off his goggles. He's in his 20s with a tan and cool bouffant hair.

RON PICKERING (CONT'D)

Get out the champagne because Great Britain has just taken its first ever gold in the men's downhill. And this is the man responsible, "Fast" Eddie Edwards.

The crowd lifts up Eddie with a cheer.

RON PICKERING (CONT'D)
 The plasterer's son from Cheltenham
 – now turned alpine champion and
 world-class –

WOMAN'S VOICE
 Oh for gawd's sake. Get a wiggle
 on.

Ron Pickering looks up confused. So does the crowd. Eddie
 drops backwards to the ground.

WOMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)
 Come on. Pick a lane.

INT. VAN - MOVING - DAY

A horn HONKS and Eddie snaps to. He is in the front seat
 being driven along by his MOTHER. A Charles and Di air-
 freshener swings from the rearview mirror.

In reality, Eddie is a stocky bloke in his twenties with a
 large jaw, no tan and gingery close cropped hair. His jam-jar
 spectacles are held together by a Band-Aid.

JANETTE
 Here we go, pet.

His mother turns off past a sign: "British Men's Downhill Ski
 Trials."

EXT. BOSA DOWNHILL SKI TRIALS - DAY

The crowd is modest but well-heeled. Barbour jackets,
 cravats, Hermès headscarves.

They applaud politely as a skier crosses the finish line.

Over in the sponsors' enclosure, a throng of suited
 businessmen pay slightly more attention to the canapés and
 free champagne.

A title card reads: "England, September 1986."

EXT. BOSA PARKING FIELD - DAY

The Edwards family van noses its way between Range Rovers and
 Jaguars to find a parking spot.

INT. VAN - DAY

Janette and Eddie share a final glance. This is his big moment, even though they're both trying to act like it isn't.

JANETTE

Knock 'em dead.

He grabs his skis and races off to the check-in, oblivious as he clips a wing mirror. She watches him go, and we see the true depth of her anxiety at having a daredevil like Eddie for a child.

She takes out her wool and needles. Starts to knit. Alone in the dirty cement covered van.

INT. CHANGING-ROOM - DAY

The room is full of Olympic class skiers, which means a hubbub of blokey posh accents. They're in no hurry to acknowledge Eddie as he breezes in.

He covers up his discomfort by humming to himself until finally, he finds a spare coat hook at the end.

TARGET (VO)

Great Britain has languished for too long on past glories - in business and in sports.

EXT. CORPORATE ENCLOSURE - DAY

The sponsors have gathered round a podium to hear DUSTIN TARGET's address. He is the conscientious new broom head of BOSA with immaculate green blazer and name tag to prove it.

TARGET

But just as you have entered a new era of business, so we have embarked on a new era of sports - and it's one that requires a new kind of athlete.

EXT. STARTING PLATFORM - DAY

Eddie shuffles forward, flapping his arms and making strange warm-up noises.

EDDIE

Edwards, E. Cheltenham Winter Sports Centre.

The STARTING OFFICIAL directs Eddie to the start gate; a glance at Eddie's shoddy equipment.

EXT. CORPORATE ENCLOSURE - DAY

Target surveys the crowd to make sure his theme is resonating.

TARGET

And just as the world of business looks to sporting champions for inspiration, so we in turn can now look to you – our distinguished sponsors – for ways to make our athletes more competitive.

EXT. STARTING PLATFORM - DAY

TARGET (VO)

You are not just successful competitors. You're brand leaders – the best in your field. And you deserve the best in return.

Eddie wipes the steam off his goggles and snaps them into place. They're pink.

EXT. CORPORATE ENCLOSURE - RESUME

Target leans forward, savoring his crowd-pleasing big finish.

TARGET

Ladies and gentlemen, today you're going to see just that.

The KLAXON rudely cuts the applause short.

EXT. BOSA DOWNHILL SLOPE - DAY

Eddie smashes down the plastic slope. He barely follows the "line," which shows his best quality is suicidal bravery. Not much style, plenty of guts.

One by one, the sponsors turn to watch.

Eddie takes the corners too fast and too tight, slamming over slalom flags. He looks like he'll wipe out at any moment, but amazingly he hangs on.

Target's face tightens at this careening blot on his landscape, flailing into the last two turns.

Suddenly the flaw in Eddie's all-out approach becomes apparent. He simply fails to make one of the turns.

He flies off the course, right through the sponsors' enclosure, and SMASHES into one of the hoardings.

Silence. The drip of toppled ice buckets. The dismayed stares of sponsors at the smashed billboard.

"I bet he drinks Carling Black Label."

Target turns to his Aide. Beckons him over. Now.

EXT. BOSA DOWNHILL SLOPE - DAY

The Course Official escorts Eddie off the slope.

EDDIE

See that? I was pinging down the hill like a ferret.

The Official can only watch as Eddie re-assembles his glasses, wired with excitement

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Forty-five seconds at the halfway line. If I'd gone any faster I'd have taken off.

MALE VOICE

Er, you did.

Eddie looks up. It's Target's Aide and he's holding out Eddie's gear and kitbag.

EDDIE

Hold a minute. I've still got a second run to do.

AIDE

Not anymore.

Eddie doesn't understand. Until he follow's the Aide's glance. Locates the real reason for his expulsion - the distant hovering figure of Target.

EXT. BOSA PARKING FIELD - DAY

The Aide escorts Eddie and his skis back to his van.

EDDIE
This is outrageous.

AIDE
It's very simple. We've only got 18 months to prep the squad for Calgary. You're just too raw.

EDDIE
But I've got run times as good as that bunch.

AIDE
It's not just about speed. It's about finesse. Polish. Boys who can fit seamlessly into the squad.

EDDIE
Public school boys, you mean.

The Aide doesn't try to deny it. He hands Eddie his kit bag. Leaves him next to his van: "Edwards & Son, Quality Finishes. Get plastered with us!"

EXT. BUILDING SITE - DAY

A pneumatic drill ROARS. Eddie is up to his elbows in muck, "knocking up" a big tin of plaster on a busy renovation job.

DAD inspects the resulting plaster like a three star chef.

TERRY
Too thick.

EDDIE
"Too thick"? I've been going like a Kenwood mixer all morning.

Terry fetches the water hose, unmoved.

TERRY
Quality plastering's no different from anything else. You want to get on, you gotta put in the graft.

EDDIE
"Quality plastering." All I'm doing is mixing up mud.

Terry hands Eddie the water hose.

TERRY

There's no quality plaster without
quality mud.

Eddie kicks dried cement off his boots.

EDDIE

Yeah, well, I'm still stuck in it.

TERRY

How many times I got to tell you?
Do your City and Guilds and get
qualified.

EXT. BUILDING SITE - DAY

Eddie at work in the wet and the cold - lugging bricks,
hauling cement, stirring plaster. Hating every minute even
though he never buckles.

He gets his weekly pay envelope from the OFFICE GIRL and it's
a pittance. He looks over to see his Dad getting yelled at by
the FOREMAN. Such is life on a building site.

EXT. BUILDING SITE - DAY

The BRICKIES sit around at lunchtime reading the tabloids and
smoking roll-ups. They're a hard-bitten lot. A couple even
swig beer.

Eddie sits off to one side, munching on a banana and milk
from a carton. His fingernails chipped with dried cement.

BRICKIE

That's strange. They must have
cropped you out.

The Brickie holds out his tabloid to Eddie. On the sports
pages is a photo of Target and the British Downhill squad
heading off to St. Moritz.

Eddie grabs the paper to see for himself. All the athletes in
their Olympic blazers. The final nail in the coffin.

The Brickie starts humming the BBC "Ski Sunday" theme music
and miming the slalom.

EDDIE

Get stuffed.

BRICKIE

Hey, I wasn't the one telling everyone I was going to be on the team.

EDDIE

It's not a team. It's a squad. You don't even know what you're talking about.

The other workmen join in the humming, drowning Eddie out even after he throws his banana skin at them.

INT. EDDIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eddie lies on his bed amid his Olympic shrine. Skiing posters, Olympic albums, photos of young Eddie accepting junior trophies, showing off his latest plaster cast; older Eddie teaching little kids how to ski.

His Mother enters with some tea and Jaffa Cakes on a tray. By his bedside is the newspaper story about the British Downhill Squad.

JANETTE

Come on, pet. It's not the end of world.

EDDIE

No. It just feels like it.

He rolls over onto his side, but there's no escape. Even his duvet cover has a Winter Olympic pattern - skiing, tobogganing, ski-jumping...

EXT. BUILDING SITE - DAY

Eddie works away in the sunshine. Radio 1 in the background. He's graduated from mixing to proper plastering now.

Terry gives an approving nod then exits, past JULIE, the office girl who hands out the weekly paychecks.

JULIE

Hello stranger.

EDDIE

Alright Julie. How's it going?

She comes up to Eddie with his envelope. They regard each other for a moment, quite comfortable together.

JULIE
So you're finally going for your
diploma?

EDDIE
City and Guilds. Level one.

JULIE
What about your downhill training?
He gives an airy wave of his trowel.

EDDIE
Hanging out with a bunch of
chinless wonders. Who needs it?
Not him, that's for sure.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
If I wanted to be "polished," I'd
be a bloody doorknob, wouldn't I.
She waits. Lets him finish.

JULIE
So you're free at the weekends
then?
She hands Eddie his pay envelope. Makes him tug it to get
it free.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eddie inspects his smartest 'date' outfit in the mirror - a
dark shellsuit.

It's fair to say he's not entirely at home with dressing up.
Even when he adds the finishing touch - his one pair of
unbroken glasses.

INT. JULIE'S LIVING-ROOM - NIGHT

Eddie sits on a floral sofa next to Julie, watching TV. We
all know how these things should go...

Until we notice the TV is showing Evel Knievel at Wembley
Stadium. He's getting ready to jump 13 double-decker buses
and Eddie can't keep his eyes off it.

EDDIE
I did a jump like that when I was a
kid. Thirteen milk crates.

She gets up and dims the lights.

JULIE

It's okay my parents aren't back
till 11.

She sits back next to him. But Eddie remains glued to Evel
Kniefel barrelling towards the ramp.

JULIE (CONT'D)

You can sit closer if you want.

EDDIE

I can see alright from here.

JULIE

I meant to me.

Oh. Eddie turns to face her.

They kiss but Eddie's gaze is drawn back to the TV – Kniefel
shooting into the air, suspended for an eternity...

The image reflected in Eddie's glasses until – CLICK. Julie
hits the remote.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Come on. Concentrate.

EXT. BUILDING SITE - DAY

But it's no use. Eddie has had an idea. And it's an idea
that won't go away as he trowels away on a low wall beside
his Dad.

TERRY

Guild requirement for pea-shingle
is half an inch for the base.

Eddie's brain is miles away as he intently works the cement
into some kind of strange shape.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Are you listening?

EDDIE

I'm listening. Pea-shingle. Half an
inch.

TERRY

Then what the chuff is that?

The strange shape in Eddie's plaster is revealed. A lovingly sculpted ski-jump.

EXT. BOSA HQ - DAY

Eddie walks up the steps past the BOSA insignia.

INT. BOSA HQ LIBRARY - DAY

In the reverent hush of the archive department, a BOSA OFFICIAL deals with Eddie's inquiry.

BOSA OFFICIAL

I hate to disappoint you but we don't have an Olympic ski-jumping squad.

He gives a consoling smile, but Eddie doesn't look remotely disappointed.

EDDIE

Not even a small one?

The Official shakes his head.

BOSA OFFICIAL

Nope. Britain hasn't had a ski-jumper since 1936.

EDDIE

Oh that's terrible.

He can barely contain himself.

EXT. BOSA HQ - DAY

He runs down the steps and launches himself off like a ski-jumper. Down the street he goes, joyfully leaping off every bench doing his best Ron Pickering impersonation.

EDDIE

Oh this is amazing, this is sensational.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Prince Andrew and Fergie's newly happy faces are covered by a big dollop of mash potato. The fancy china is out for the Edwards's Sunday roast.

JANETTE

Which conversion are you talking about? The kitchen-dinette on the corner?

TERRY

That's the one. With the pebbledash.

(he stabs a Brussel sprout)

Bursting with possibilities.

Eddie sits at the other end of the table, knee bouncing up and down like crazy. He repeatedly rolls a pea off his fork onto a mashed potato ski slope.

EDDIE

Mum. Dad. I've got an announcement.

He can barely contain his excitement.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I'm not going to be taking my City and Guilds. I've made new plans.

They turn and look.

JANETTE

Plans?

TERRY

What plans?

Eddie adjusts his glasses. Looks up with total conviction.

EDDIE

I'm going to train as a ski-jumper and go to the Olympics.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eddie rummages under the bed, packing up his ski gear. Janette watches aghast. Terry paces around in disbelief.

TERRY

This is insane. You got your first exam in six weeks.

Eddie just keeps packing.

EDDIE

It's not like I'm taking up ballet. It's still skiing. Only higher.

JANETTE
How much higher?

EDDIE
Twenty stories.

Her face drops with horror.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
Give or take.

He struggles to pull the zipper over his skis. No one offers to help. Terry paces around in disbelief.

TERRY
Britain doesn't even have a ski-jumping squad.

EDDIE
It does now.

He finally closes the zipper with a triumphant grin. Only to see he is underestimated his father's anger.

TERRY
And how are you going to pay for all this? Because we're not going through all that again with the bank and the bailiffs -

EDDIE
You won't have to. Florian got me a job: junior ski instructor.

Eddie picks up a ski resort brochure. Shows them a photo of young kids being taught how to snowplow.

JANETTE
Florian?

EDDIE
From the Winter Centre. He's back in Germany now.

Eddie points to four ascending ski-jumps in the background.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
In Garmisch.

He leaves his parents blanching at the four ski-jumps - small, medium, large and gigantic.

JANETTE
He's going to break his neck.

TERRY
I'm going to break his neck.

INT. STAIRS - DAY

Eddie carries his gear downstairs, all ready to leave. Terry follows but doesn't help.

EDDIE
 You can't tell me you never had a dream when you were a kid.

TERRY
 Of course I did. I'm not made of stone, am I.

This is news to Eddie. Great news.

EDDIE
 Really? You never told me.

He pauses at the bottom of the stairs. Turns to Terry.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
 ... So what did you want to be?

TERRY
 A plasterer.

They look at each other, both knowing it's hopeless.

Janette waits at the front door to see him off, as always.

JANETTE
 You're a stubborn bugger, you know that. Ever since you were a tot. Climbed out of every crib we put you in.

She gives him a ferocious hug as if somehow this will stop him going.

JANETTE (CONT'D)
 The only baby in the world who liked landing on his head!

Terry and Janette exchange a look - helpless and hit for six.

Eighties pop music rises up as the brochure photo dissolves to the real ski-jumps all lit up with spotlights.

EXT. GARMISCH - NIGHT

A title card reads: "Garmisch, Germany. Site of the 1936 Winter Olympics."

Eddie sits up excitedly. Peers out of the van he's hitched a ride in. The music is coming from the Walkman he wears on all his travels.

EXT. GARMISCH JUMPS - NIGHT

Eddie hurries into the floodlit landing arena, still carrying his gear.

The ascending row of ski-jump towers are lined above him. The 15m. The 40m. The 70m and above them on its own hill, the 90m jump. A huge iron monster.

At the top, in silhouette, a JUMPER sets off down the ramp.

Eddie moves closer as the Jumper shoots into the air, soaring through the sparkling snowflakes, seemingly forever until he lands and skids to a perfect stop.

This is LARS MOBERG, the moustachioed superstar of the Swedish national squad. He rejoins a monastic huddle of ATHLETES and COACHES in yellow and blue jumpsuits.

It is all very high-tech with video monitors and walkie-talkies.

Eddie moves closer still and sees this isn't just the national squad, it's the Olympic squad.

There it is, on all their gear like a lucky omen - the five-ring logo.

INT. GARMISCH DORM ROOM - DAWN

An LED alarm clock glows - 5.30am - in a tiny stuffy dormitory crammed with bunk-beds.

Eddie creeps out with his gear, accidentally smacking a sleeping roommate with his ski-tip.

GERMAN ROOMMATE

Hosenscheisser!

EDDIE

Bless you.

EXT. GARMISCH 15M JUMP - DAWN

Eddie bypasses the baby jump and goes straight to the 15m jump, all alone except for a distant snow groomer chugging up the hill.

He slots in his skis and sets off. Here it is, the moment of truth... He shoots off the ramp and PLOPS onto the slope, gliding easily to a stop.

EDDIE

What a doddle.

He can't believe his luck. It's so easy. He turns to look at the next jump up - the 40m.

EXT. GARMISCH 40M JUMP - DAWN

At the top of the ramp, Eddie finds this jump has two grooves into which you slot your skis.

He takes a breath and pushes off. This jump is significantly faster. He shoots into the air, WHOOPING with delight.

For one magical second he is flying, high above the twinkling resort below.

Then reality returns and he CRASHES into the icy slope, sliding to a halt face first.

EXT. GARMISCH SLOPE - DAY

A row of YOUNG SKIERS shuffle into line for FLORIAN from the front office.

FLORIAN

Class, I want you to meet your new instructor, Mr. Eddie.

CLASS

Good morning, Mr. Eddie.

Eddie gives the kids a wave, acting all cool.

EDDIE

Eddie. Fast Eddie. Whatever you like.

FLORIAN

Mr. Eddie's going be teaching you the three S's of skiing - smart, sensible, safe.

Eddie, we now see, has a huge bandage on his nose.

THE CLASS

Practice their snowplows down the hill under Eddie's supervision.

EDDIE

Okay, folks, nice practice postures. Now let's try it for real. Penguins to the left, polar bears to the right.

Eddie's concentration drifts enviously over to the Swedes on the 70m. Flying through the air. Making it look so easy.

NASAL VOICE (VO)

Room for one more?

INT. SAUNA - DAY

Eddie emerges from a cloud of steam, sporting sturdy swimming trunks and his huge nose plaster.

Lars and the Swedish team begrudgingly shuffle up as Eddie plonks down on the bench.

EDDIE

Effermidaggen! Eddie Edwards, Great Britain.

The Swedes just stare. Eddie presses on, undeterred.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I'll get right down to business if I may. I've just started on the 40m and I'm making solid progress, but I'd really appreciate a few tips.

A vicious HISS of steam reveals the forbidding Swedish Coach, ladling water on the rocks. Like all Swedes everywhere, given half a chance, he has no clothes on.

SWEDISH COACH

You have been jumping long?

Eddie looks everywhere but at the coach's genitalia.

EDDIE

About a week.

SWEDISH COACH

And you think you are ready to discover some advices from me?

Eddie nods, sweat dotting his brow, this intensely nude man standing over him, hands on hips.

SWEDISH COACH (CONT'D)

You know who Matti Nykanen is?

EDDIE

He's only the best ski-jumper in the world. The Flying Finn.

SWEDISH COACH

The best and the most craziest.

The Coach rocks back on his heels, arms akimbo.

SWEDISH COACH (CONT'D)

So maybe I give you something harder?

It's not exactly the phrase Eddie would choose, but okay.

SWEDISH COACH (CONT'D)

What is the maximum wideness for a jumping ski?

Eddie boldly holds out his thumb and forefinger.

SWEDISH COACH (CONT'D)

And that is what exactly?

Eddie can't help it. His gaze drops for a millisecond.

EDDIE

... About four inches.

The Coach SNAPS his fingers at Lars.

LARS

The maximum wideness is 11.5 cm.

EDDIE

That is about four inches, isn't it.

SWEDISH COACH

Not "exactly," no. So you tell me what is the most length of the ski?

EDDIE

"The most length of the ski?"
 (why doesn't anyone else
 find this funny?)
 Eight foot two.

It's another bold guess and it provokes another finger-snap at another naked jumper.

SWEDISH JUMPER

The ski has permission to be 77.5
 cm taller than the height of the
 jumper, but with no more taller
 than 275 cm.

Eddie hitches his trunks nervously.

EDDIE

Well, like I said, I'm just
 starting out.

SWEDISH COACH

In Sweden, the time to be starting
 out is when you are five.

This time he gives a double finger-snap and the whole team leaps up.

SWEDISH COACH (CONT'D)

We have not the moments for
 beginners. Good day.

Out he goes, his naked team obediently shuffling after him.

EXT. GARMISCH JUMPS - DAWN

Two skis plop over a fence. Followed by Eddie, all alone except for the distant snowgrooming machine on the hillside.

EDDIE

Bloody Swedes. What'd they ever do
 apart from invent the meatball?

Eddie sets off down the 40m jump and it's the same result - another ice-gouging wipe-out.

Eddie lies splayed on the ice, groaning in pain. He tries to move, but it's agony.

The SOUND of the snowgrooming machine gets nearer until it crests the hill, headlights blazing, and comes to a stop right next to Eddie's splayed form.

The shadowy figure of the DRIVER drops to the ground and inspects one of Eddie's craters. All Eddie can see is a glowing red tiparillo tip.

AMERICAN VOICE

So you're the mystery elf who's
been hacking up my slope every
night.

He walks over, dramatically backlit by his headlights, and peers down at Eddie.

AMERICAN VOICE (CONT'D)

It's just you? No pick-axe?

This is BRONSON PEARY, the resort's resident snow groomer. He's commanding in a weathered sort of way with a certain hard-partying ski bum panache – and yet he's still only a maintenance man.

PEARY

You do realize the time to start
jumping is when you're five or six.

EDDIE

Thanks. The Swedes already told me
that.

Eddie gets as far as his hands and knees, wincing in pain.

PEARY

Did they also mention you've got
the wrong body shape?

Eddie has to check. Yes, this is the cigarillo-puffing snowgroomer telling him this.

PEARY (CONT'D)

Just stating the obvious.

EDDIE

Well, state this.

He flicks him a V-sign. Peary climbs back behind the wheel and gives a raspy laugh.

PEARY

And one more thing. You got the
wrong skis.

PEARY (CONT'D)

Oh, and one more thing. There's no
such thing as British ski-jumpers.
They don't exist.

Eddie finally snaps.

EDDIE

What'd you know about it anyway?

Peary's face darkens - some strange wounded flicker of reflection. He turns and climbs back behind the wheel.

PEARY

Don't even think about going on the 70.

EDDIE

You can't stop me. I'm an employee.

PEARY

Still need my permission for the 70.

He steers his rusty snow machine back up the hill, spluttering into the mist.

Eddie watches it go, thoroughly bemused.

FLORIAN (VO)

You'd never guess he was part of the US Olympic Squad.

INT. GARMISCH FRONT OFFICE - DAY

Eddie points out the window towards the slope.

EDDIE

Who, that guy?

FLORIAN

It's true. Bronson Peary. He was in the '72 squad under Warren Sharp.

Eddie's jaw drops. No way.

EDDIE

"Bronson Peary...?" How come I never heard of him?

FLORIAN

Well, they kicked him out, obviously. Just before the Games.

EDDIE

What for?

FLORIAN
Boozing. Womanizing. Being an
impossible asshole...

Take your pick. Eddie doesn't care. He's already smitten. He looks back outside at the snowgroomer struggling up the hill.

EDDIE
No kidding. Warren Sharp, '72...

INT. PEARY'S WORKSHOP - DAY

Peary's weatherbeaten profile - face up as he works underneath the snowgroomer.

PEARY
No.

EDDIE
Come on. All I want is a few tips.

Eddie crouches down, trying to make eye contact.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
Florian told me how you used to
jump in America.

PEARY
Yeah, well, Florian also said he
screwed Princess Stephanie of
Monaco.

EDDIE
He showed me a clipping with a
photo.

PEARY
She's just a lookalike. He met her
in Verbier on a stag night.

EDDIE
Of you. The 90 meter at Lake Placid
- 1969, American Youth Cup finals.
You clocked 118 meters!

Peary slides out and climbs into his cabin.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
Four years with Warren Sharp!

PEARY
Three years.

Eddie doesn't care. It's still amazing.

EDDIE

You shouldn't be fixing rust buckets, you should be coaching.

"Rust bucket"? Peary's face darkens.

PEARY

This is a PB 200 with a multiflex tiller. Grooms 81 square meters an hour.

It also leaks gunk. Peary surreptitiously wipes his hand as he coaxes the engine into life.

EDDIE

I'm just saying if I had your pedigree and experience -

PEARY

Well, you don't.

He lurches out of the garage, Eddie giving chase.

EDDIE

I won't get any better unless you help me!

PEARY

Then you won't get better.

He adjusts his rearview mirror, leaving Eddie in his wake, full of churned up emotion he doesn't know how to deal with.

He rumbles on toward the slope, heart thumping, all triggered. Not sure where it's coming from.

Then he passes the Swedish jumpers in their gleaming Olympic outfits. And notices again, rather more wistfully, his oil-stained hands.

INT. GARMISCH BAR - NIGHT

The apres-ski crowd in full swing. Beautiful people and hearty SWEDES. Eddie struggles to get to the bar after another gruelling day of wipe-outs.

SWEDISH JUMPER

You are still looking for pointers?
(he jabs a finger to the door)

It's that way back to England.

They laugh and close ranks, forcing Eddie to go farther down the bar. He consults his home-made crib sheet.

EDDIE
"Glas Milch, bitte."

The BARMAID serves him a glass of milk.

MALE VOICE
You just drink it straight? Nothing
in it?

It's Peary, perched in his regular corner nook, surrounded by 'essentials': pack of Tiparillos, Bic lighter, own personal schnapps bottle, American flag ashtray.

EDDIE
Don't be silly. I'm in training.

PEARY
For what? The Japanese air force?

Peary takes small sips, unhurried, but relentless.

PEARY (CONT'D)
Good-looking young guy like you.
You shouldn't be crashing into
mountains. You should be chasing
the ladies.

EDDIE
Yeah... That's never really been my
specialty.

Eddie gulps down half his milk and wipes his chin.

PEARY
I wonder why.

More Swedes arrive, bumping Eddie so he spills his drink.

EDDIE
Oi.

He gropes for a napkin, but none of them oblige.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
I thought they were all supposed to
be nice. Like Abba.

Peary smiles in spite of himself. A beat. The two men wedged together. Eddie downs what's left of his drink, spilling over with admiration.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

You stuck the first 90m at Copper Peak - with no tailwind! Opening Trials, 1970. I remember reading all about it in my Winter Sports omnibus...

Peary studies his newfound fan more closely even as he wipes his milk moustache with his sleeve. And yes, he's disarmingly genuine.

EXT. GARMISCH STREET - NIGHT

The snowgroomer rumbles down main street going all of 7mph. Eddie and Peary in the cabin, both quite indifferent to the irate HONKING behind them.

PEARY

Viking turds.
(handing his open flask to
Eddie)
Here. Hold this.

Peary gives Eddie cryptic look. Then hits the indicator and turns off towards a large building with a yellow and blue flag.

INT. GARMISCH GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

It is the Swedes' training HQ. Peary enters using a key from his big janitor keyring. Checks the coast is clear, then beckons Eddie inside.

He goes up to the blackboard covered with diagrams and trajectories.

PEARY

Look at this crap. Fucking pencil pushers.

He messes up some numbers with his sleeve.

PEARY (CONT'D)

This is what's wrong with modern jumping. They want to turn everyone into robots.

He moves off in despair, inspecting the rest of the room.

PEARY (CONT'D)

That's why they can never
understand - jumping's a paradox!
You've got to free your mind first.

He comes to a stop by a strange leather harness dangling from
the ceiling.

EDDIE

What's the jumping paradox?

Peary turns and looks at Eddie: Is he serious?

EDDIE (CONT'D)

The Swedes forget to fill me in.

Peary gives a long-suffering sigh, enjoying this more than he
cares to admit.

PEARY

The foundation of any jump is the
take-off. The paradox you have to
master is simultaneously stretching
up and leaning into your descent.

He raises his palm up high to demonstrate - tilting it
forward, then pushing his arm out at a downwards angle.

PEARY (CONT'D)

It feels unnatural at first because
you actually take-off downwards,
not upwards. It only looks like you
go up because the hill falls away
so quickly. But the leaning forward
is how you gain wind resistance.

He repeats the motion, this time making a fist.

PEARY (CONT'D)

Every time you stay hunched over,
you just hit the ground faster.
So...

He switches back to the 6" ski model, Eddie trying to keep
pace with him.

PEARY (CONT'D)

What you need is a quadruple action
where the skis come up and the legs
stretch *back* and the body tilts
forward all while simultaneously
dropping. You see?

The little skier tilts and drops before Eddie's eyes.

PEARY (CONT'D)
Up, back, forward, down – all at
the same time. Up, back, forward,
down. Got that?

EDDIE
Up, back, forward, down.
(he nods)

PEARY
Okay, your turn.

Eddie reaches for the little skier.

PEARY (CONT'D)
Not the model. You.

THE STRANGE HARNESS

Swings into view, hooked up with Eddie inside it. He jumps
from crouch to lift-off position and flops backwards.

PEARY (CONT'D)
Too soon.

Then flop forwards.

PEARY (CONT'D)
Too late.

Then falls to the floor with a THUMP.

PEARY (CONT'D)
Dead on.

EXT. GARMISCH 40M SLOPE - DAY

Eddie tries out his new Peary method all on his own at dawn.

EDDIE
Up, back, forward, down.

Off he flies and the improvement is stunning. For the first
time he knows he can really do this.

INT. PEARY'S WORKSHOP - DAY

Peary's hungover face – the morning battlefield of shame and
denial as he makes his coffee.

He reaches for his flask to top up his cup only to realize Eddie standing nearby. Peary covers seamlessly by extracting a tiparillo and firing up his Bic.

PEARY
About last night...

He laughs - alone. Eddie is strangely elated, and strangely still. No pacing up and down.

EDDIE
I think you should know I'm going to Calgary in February.

PEARY
To watch?

EDDIE
To jump.

Peary blows out a smoke ring. This should be interesting.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
I've got a golden opportunity.

Eddie leans forward, lowering his voice.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
Britain doesn't have a jumping squad.

Peary leans forward, lowering *his* voice.

PEARY
I *know*.

EDDIE
So I don't have to compete for a place, do I?

PEARY
They must have *some* minimum requirements. Distance, number of jumps... Talent.

Eddie shakes his head.

EDDIE
BOSA hasn't updated the rules in 52 years.

Eddie steps back. Waits to see how Peary deals with this bombshell.

PEARY

Eddie, "mate", the smallest Olympic jump is the 70m. Even the average jumper takes four years to build up to it.

EDDIE

I'm not the average jumper.

PEARY

Correct. You are well, well below average.

He turns away, trying to get some booze into his coffee without Eddie seeing... But Eddie insists on following him.

EDDIE

I can do it. It only took me a day to do the 40.

PEARY

Then go do it already.

EDDIE

Okay, then. I will.

PEARY

I mean now.

Eddie comes to a stop. This is his big chance and he knows it.

EDDIE

Seriously. The 70. I have your permission?

PEARY

Be my guest.

We push in on Eddie as he builds up his courage.

EDDIE

I'm not kidding.

PEARY

Neither am I.

The two men - nose to nose, neither one moving.

EDDIE

Great.

PEARY

Super.

EDDIE

Terrific.

Eddie turns and heads for the door. Peary swiftly empties his flask into his coffee as he follows.

EXT. GARMISCH 70M JUMP - DAY

The game of bluff continues at the base of the 70m tower. Eddie, now in his makeshift jumping gear, gathers up his skis.

EDDIE

No tips?

PEARY

You're the expert.

Peary sipping his coffee, 'miraculously' mellow again. Eddie starts up the steps.

EDDIE

You not coming up?

PEARY

I find the optimum view is from the bottom.

Peary saunters down the slope and joins some of the less boorish Swedes, who have gathered to watch.

LARS

He's not actually going to jump that, is he?

PEARY

Not a chance.

They're not sure they understand. Peary speaks to them in Swedish. A subtitle reads: "Just a little game of Call My Bluff."

EXT. GARMISCH 70M JUMP/PLATFORM - DAY

Up close, Peary seems to be right. Eddie emerges onto the platform, bravado waning as he looks down the ramp - a sheer drop as high as a tower block.

He grips the railings, his stomach tightening, the icy wind blasting his face.

Peary waves to the Swedes gathering at the base of the tower.

PEARY

I wouldn't stand too close if I
were you.

(he points at a bald ski
technician)

Especially you.

They look up, confused, just as Eddie goes white and stifles
a retch. The Swedes scramble backwards.

PEARY (CONT'D)

My mistake. False alarm.

Eddie slots the skis into the grooves on the starting
platform. The view from this angle is even more terrifying.

PEARY (CONT'D)

In your own time. No rush.

But Eddie stays stuck on the ramp, too scared to go forward,
too proud to go back.

MALE VOICE

The game is over now, yes?

Lars has arrived behind him.

EDDIE

Give us a push.

Lars looks at him confused.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

A push. It's not hard. You just
stick out both hands and -

Eddie loses his balance and sends himself down the ramp.

The Swedes react first, then Peary.

PEARY

What the f---

Eddie instantly accelerates to 50mph. His knees shudder like
jackhammers as he thunders into the 'tabletop', still frozen
in a crouch, skis screeching in the icy grooves.

He ROARS off the ramp and plummets to the slope for the
shortest 70m jump in history. Bouncing along, briefly
upright, before flipping over spectacularly.

The Swedes can only watch in horror as Eddie goes tumbling
past with a ski tip SMACKING him on the head.

Lars peers over the top of the ramp. Sees Eddie motionless on the ice.

Peary rushes over as Eddie rolls onto his back, face covered with snow: "How was that?"

We push in on Peary's stunned face.

PEARY (CONT'D)
You fucking idiot! What's the matter with you?

He's never seen anything like it in his life. And Eddie knows it.

Angry shouting breaks the moment as the Swedish coach charges up, beetroot with rage.

SWEDISH COACH
"Damn, damn, damn. Do you have piss in your head or what?"

PEARY
Alright. Take it easy. Everything's under control.

Peary helps poor dazed Eddie off the slope. The Swedish Coach's voice gets more high-pitched as he throws Eddie's skis after them.

SWEDISH COACH
Next time, I shove them under your pistenbully.

PEARY
Look forward to it.

INT. GARMISCH EDDIE'S DORM ROOM - DAY

Eddie lies propped up in bed like a convalescent.

GERMAN ROOMMATE
Eduard? You have a visitor.

Peary enters and pulls up a chair.

PEARY
How's the human cannonball?

EDDIE
Couple of aches and pains. No big deal.

He can barely speak his jaw it's so swollen. Peary knows better. He lifts the sleeping bag and blanket to reveal Eddie's purple swollen knees and even more swollen ankles - covered in bags of frozen peas.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I blame the landing surface,
frankly.

Peary shakes his head as he inspects Eddie's jaw, still fascinated by this maniac.

PEARY

No one jumps the 70 first time out.
No one. Even Matti Nykanen took two
years and he was a prodigy.

EDDIE

This mean you're going to coach
me properly?

Peary scoffs, but not unkindly.

PEARY

You can't get to Olympics unless
you compete on the European
Circuit. Who's got the dough for
that?

EDDIE

The only Olympic requirement is one
completed jump in a European
Circuit event. We can do that right
here.

Eddie hands him a flyer for the upcoming Garmisch Seniors Tournament.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

All the judges are Circuit
officials. It's totally valid.

PEARY

What are you going to do? Strap on
a colostomy bag? Pretend you're 82?

EDDIE

The last jump of the day is an open
event...

So it is. Peary looks up to see Eddie struggling to his feet.

PEARY

Where the hell are you going?

EDDIE

Training.

To Peary's amazement, Eddie starts to put on his ski gear.

PEARY

You idiot. You've got a fractured jaw.

EDDIE

I already thought of that.

He picks up his trusty pillowcase and RIPS it.

INT. PEARY'S WORKSHOP - DAY

Peary sorts out an ice pack for Eddie's swollen face, acting like his amazement is really disapproval.

PEARY

No one jumps the 70 first time out. No one. Even Matti Nykanen took two years and he was a prodigy.

EDDIE

This mean you're going to coach me full-time?

Peary slaps the ice-pack onto Eddie's cheek, making his grimace.

PEARY

Eddie. You can't get to Olympics unless you compete on the European Circuit. Who's got the dough for that?

EDDIE

The only Olympic requirement is one completed jump in a European Circuit event. We can do that right here.

Eddie indicates a poster for the Garmisch Seniors Tournament.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

All the judges are Circuit officials. It's totally valid.

PEARY

What are you going to do? Strap on a colostomy bag? Pretend you're 82?

EDDIE

The last jump of the day is an open event...

And with that final bit of news, Eddie gets to his feet, collects his skis and heads right back out to the slope.

EXT. GARMISCH 40M SLOPE - NIGHT

Eddie trudges back up the stairs for another jump. Drenched in sweat, teeth gritted against the pain, pillowcase tied around his head.

Peary watches, puffing on a cigarillo.

Beer-drinking TEENAGERS blow wolf-whistles at Eddie, but he just flicks them a V-sign and carries on - a lone but defiant figure under the floodlights.

EXT./INT. PEARY'S WORKSHOP - NIGHT

Peary returns to contemplate his drab workshop... And in a way his life. The empty bottles, the rusty engine parts, the sheer self-defeating clutter...

There's no hiding from it any longer. He picks up a tool, settles down to a long night's work.

INT. PEARY'S WORKSHOP - DAY

Peary leads Eddie in to unveil a new home-made harness dangling from the ceiling. Eddie is profoundly touched. Lost for words in fact. All this for him.

PEARY

But what would I know about it, eh?

Eddie climbs into the harness, trying it out.

PEARY (CONT'D)

Alright, first things first. Who's your favorite female movie star? Jane Fonda? Raquel Welch?

EDDIE

Honestly... Linda Gray.

Peary furrows his brow: Who?

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Sue Ellen from *Dallas*.

PEARY
JR's wife?

Eddie nods, a little defensively. Peary YANKS the harness up over Eddie's crotch.

PEARY (CONT'D)
From here on, you're going to approach every jump as if you're making love to Sue Ellen from *Dallas*.

Peary uses his home-made miniature skier and ski-jump to illustrate further -

PEARY (CONT'D)
The starting gate is your foreplay. The in-run is where you build your rhythm. The table-top is where you head for home. And the lift-off is your orgasm. Same facial expression. Same straining of the muscles. Same peaceful feeling of release - if you do it properly.

Eddie's nods. Er, okay.

PEARY (CONT'D)
And as with any act of lovemaking, there's only one way to tell if you've done it properly...?

EDDIE
You fall asleep?

This doesn't get a laugh.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
She falls asleep.

Neither does this. Peary lets out a deafening cry of release.

PEARY
Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!

It's a unique primal mix of war cry and sexual ecstasy...

PEARY (CONT'D)
Come on, let me hear you! Crouch. Clench. RELEASE!

Eddie lifts off with an exhausted little grunt.

PEARY (CONT'D)

Whoa.

Everything grinds to a halt.

PEARY (CONT'D)

The most shattering physical and
emotional experience of your life,
and that's the noise you make?

Eddie fiddles with his harness strap.

EDDIE

In England, yeah.

Peary walks back over to him.

PEARY

Rule number one. All the hi-tech
gadgets in the world don't mean
squat if you're not feeling it
here.

He thumps Eddie in the chest and lets rip.

PEARY (CONT'D)

Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!

He keeps going until Eddie joins in, thumping Eddie in the
chest again as he gets louder and louder.

EDDIE/PEARY

Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh -

EXT. GARMISCH STREET - NIGHT

One by one, lights snap on in the neighboring dorm rooms.

EXT./INT. GARMISCH VARIOUS - DAY

Eddie does squat jumps in the snow.

Pins up a poster of Sue Ellen from *Dallas*.

Watches Peary use his little home-made skier to show when
not to pull up your skis.

PEARY

Too soon... Too late...

EXT. GARMISCH 40M JUMP - DAY

Peary winces as Eddie shoots off a jump.

PEARY

Too soon.

INT. PEARY'S WORKSHOP - DAY

Eddie sits on a sofa with two black eyes. Peary shows him video footage of Matti Nykanen in action.

He is a blue-eyed boyish enigma. And insanely brilliant.

EXT. GARMISCH SLOPE - DAY

Eddie races to the jump, full of inspiration... Peary watches and winces doubly hard.

PEARY

Too late.

He turns away to hide his expression only to meet the appalled stare of the Swedish Coach.

SWEDISH COACH

"Haven't you got a toilet to go clean?"

DOWN AT THE BOTTOM

Eddie finds his boots and straps have finally snapped.

EDDIE

(to the Swedes)

Any chance of borrowing some equipment?

SWEDES

Screw off English! Go take a bollock! Go play with your wanker!

INT. GARMISCH SENIORS REGISTRATION - DAY

A line of spindly, spry OLD PEOPLE. Eddie registers for the Seniors Tournament, his face swollen and purple.

SIGNING-IN OFFICIAL

For sure, he is okay for this?

PEARY
 (indignantly)
 He's the national squad captain.

It's a modest easygoing crowd. Lots of geriatric laughter and missing teeth. And the odd recovering Jumper in a wheelchair and plaster cast.

Eddie tries to hide his nerves as Peary preps him at the base of the tower.

PEARY (CONT'D)
 Remember. You're only one jump away
 from the Olympics.

Eddie puts on his battered old helmet. He's customized the chin strap with a big piece of sponge.

PEARY (CONT'D)
 Just stay focused and do what we've
 done in training only better.

He slides Eddie's chin strap into place.

PEARY (CONT'D)
 A lot better.

INT. GARMISCH 70M TOWER - DAY

Antique jumpers bound up the stairs past Eddie as he psyches himself up.

EDDIE
 You're only one jump away... You're
 only one jump away.

EXT. GARMISCH 70M SLOPE - DAY

Peary takes his place next to the MEASURING OFFICIALS, who are uniformly short intense men, who take measuring jumps very seriously.

EXT. GARMISCH TOP OF THE 70M - DAY

On the wind-swept platform, a bunch of OLD TIMERS laugh it up. One OLD SKIER turns to Eddie to share the joke.

OLD JUMPER
 He says, "You must treat every jump
 as if it's your last." We are
 saying, for us, that is easy.

Eddie stares down the gut-churning icy ramp.

EDDIE

And for me.

OFFICIAL

Edwards!

A OFFICIAL points at Eddie. It's time.

PA ANNOUNCER

Our next jumper is Eddie Edwards
from... Great Britain.

The Measuring Officials snap into position – eyes fixed on the landing area. Peary discreetly mutters a prayer for good luck.

The horn blares, the light goes green and off Eddie goes.

Peary can't help mime everything that Eddie should be doing.

PEARY

Arms back. Chest down. Fanny in...
And lift. Lift!

Eddie does not lift. He loses his nerve and shuts his eyes, so he stays frozen in a crouch and SMACKS down onto the slope, a good 30 meters above the normal landing position.

The Measuring Officials, who never make a mistake, are completely caught out. The crowd too. That was the shortest jump they've ever seen.

Eddie rockets past their dumbstruck faces, eyes still closed, to cross the red line and technically complete his jump.

ANNOUNCER

Eddie Edwards – 48 meters.

The crowd still can't believe it. Eddie opens his eyes as he comes to stop. Catches Peary look of relief. And it only gets better.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

That is a new British record for a
competitive jump.

(not quite covering the
microphone)

This has to be mistake.

(a hasty consultation)

No, that is correct – 48 meters. A
new British record for a
competitive 70m jump.

The crowd bursts out laughing. Even more so when Eddie leaps up and down with joy. Who is this crazy guy? The OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER scurries forward to get a picture. Click!

EXT. GARMISCH SLOPE - DAY

Eddie is back teaching his class and Peary's influence has begun to show.

EDDIE

Come on, you're acting like a bunch of robots! Technique doesn't mean squat if you don't feel it here.

He THUMPS his chest. A row of kids, crouched in the snowplow position, peer up at him wide-eyed.

PEARY

Eduardo.

Peary appears waving a clutch of letters and a newspaper.

INT. PEARY'S WORKSHOP - LATER

Peary and Eddie hunch over a *Daily Mail* sent from home and find his photo - hamming it up - under "Jumping for Joy":

PEARY

"Plucky plasterer 'Fast' Eddie Edwards set a new British record in ski-jumping last week at Garmisch, Germany, jumping 48 meters on the normal hill. The previous record was set back in 1929 by Hector Moonie."

EDDIE

"Plucky plasterer."
(liking the sound of it)

Peary points to an envelope in the rest of Eddie's mail stamped with the BOSA logo. What's that?

Eddie slits it open and pulls out an embossed letter.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

"Dear Mr. Edwards, We are writing to inform you that in the interests of safety we have ratified a minimum distance of 61 meters to be achieved in European Circuit contests as the qualification for all future British ski-jumping contestants in Olympic competition..."

Eddie has to read it again to be sure.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

"Minimum distance?"

Peary grabs the letter and reads for himself. One figure leaps out from the page. 61 meters. 61 meters.

INT. GARMISCH BAR - NIGHT

Peary sits back in his regular spot, steadily sipping his way through a bottle of schnapps.

PEARY

So much for your golden opportunity.

EDDIE

Don't be like that. I'll just go back and talk to them. Sort it out face to face.

PEARY

You use the same approach when you were doing downhill?

He takes another sip. Lights up a tiparillo.

EDDIE

This is different.

PEARY

How?

Eddie shouts over the babble of incoming Swedes as he leaves.

EDDIE

They're dealing with the British Record Holder now!

He leaves. Peary ponders his reflection in the bar mirror. He seems to be taking this harder than Eddie.

INT. BOSA HQ - DAY

A seated row of BOSA officials, all in green blazers.

Eddie sits opposite, perched on a single chair. Knotted tie, Argyle V-neck, combed hair – his dressed to impress look.

Heading this row of flunkies is Dustin Target.

TARGET

Mr. Edwards, this is a pointless conversation. Our sponsors pay to be associated with hard-earned success, not some ridiculous side-show, however well intentioned.

Eddie grits his jaw.

EDDIE

Why do I suddenly stop being ridiculous at 61 meters?

TARGET

You won't reach 61 meters.

EDDIE

I shouldn't have to reach anything. I'm the only one in Britain doing the event!

TARGET

That was the distance ratified by our Health and Safety committee.

Target indicates a PORKY AIDE sitting at the end.

Eddie's face: "He's Health and Safety?" Target gets to his feet.

TARGET (CONT'D)

Our position could not be clearer. We will not put amateurs in with the real athletes.

More chairs scrape back. The meeting is adjourned.

EDDIE

I thought the Olympics was for amateurs...

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A steaming pot of tea – untouched. Eddie sits at the kitchen table with his parents.

TERRY

So the only way to qualify is to make 61m in a European competition?

Eddie nods.

TERRY (CONT'D)

And how much is that going to cost?

EDDIE

Not too much. It's mostly entrance fees and a bit of travel –

TERRY

But more than you can afford.

Eddie doesn't deny it. Terry picks up a Prince Charles salt shaker.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Well, answer me this. If this is you now –

He mimes Prince Charles jumping off the teapot spout to the middle of the table.

TERRY (CONT'D)

How much more are they asking you to jump?

Eddie can't lie. He 'jumps' the Lady Diana pepper shaker all the way to the edge of the table.

Janette and Terry look at this huge gap. This impossibly huge gap.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eddie lies on his bed, flicking through well-thumbed pages of photos – Mary Peters, Lasse Viren, Dick Fosbury...

It's his old Olympics album, *Moments of Glory*. The same book he pored over as a kid.

He arrives at 1960 triple gold medallist Wilma Rudolph from Tennessee –

"The Black Gazelle."

A strikingly fit black woman, the 20th of 22 children, but also amazingly -

"a polio sufferer who couldn't even walk until she was eight."

Eddie gazes deeply at the photo of Wilma taking gold in Rome - *"the fastest woman in the world"* - and even more deeply at the photo of Wilma as a young girl, standing in a pair of leg braces. Just like the ones in the hall closet.

INT. LIVING-ROOM - NIGHT

Terry and Janette sit by their pewter Flickerflame gas fire in matching armchairs.

TERRY

So he's no better off than when he left, is he?

JANETTE

Like that's going to stop him.

She wants to go back to her knitting but can't. He wants to go back to his copy of *Plasterer's Monthly*, but can't either.

JANETTE (CONT'D)

We're just going to have to face it. He's an obsessive.

Terry grunts.

TERRY

Yeah. I wonder where he gets that from.

He looks at her *surrounded* by shelves of royal china.

JANETTE

Yeah. I wonder.

She looks at him *surrounded* by swirly stucco walls and ornate brickwork.

INT. HALLWAY - DAWN

Eddie carries his gear to the bottom of the stairs. This time, Janette and Terry are both waiting for him.

JANETTE

If we can't stop you, at least we can support you.

She holds out a check, which catches Eddie completely offguard.

EDDIE

... You don't have to do this.

TERRY

That's what I said.

Janette throws him a look. Turns back to Eddie.

JANETTE

Just come back in one piece.

Eddie sees the amount on the check and reacts. It's sizeable. Janette pushes the check into his hand.

TERRY

That was going to be for your first van after you got your diploma.

Terry lets out a sigh.

TERRY (CONT'D)

That was the other dream I had.

EXT. MOTORWAY - DAY

A truck motors down the autobahn, splashing through puddles, ferrying Eddie back to Garmisch.

INT. TRUCK - MOVING - DAY

90 Eddie sits in the front seat. Headphones on, deep in thought. One knee bouncing up and down. 90.

INT. PEARY'S WORKSHOP - NIGHT

Peary idly tinkers away under a solitary work lamp. Lonely, bored, drunk. Eddie enters, fresh off the truck. Peary looks up and takes in Eddie's pensive expression.

PEARY

Let me guess. BOSA didn't budge.

Eddie takes in the empties and the mess, somewhat taken aback at the squalor.

EXT. GARMISCH 70M PLATFORM - NIGHT

The twinkling lights of the resort. Eddie and Peary sit atop the 70m, drinking cups of 'fortified' coffee from Peary's Thermos.

PEARY

I think it's a good thing, to be honest. It means now you've got to do it for real.

Eddie sips his drink, in no mood to be consoled.

EDDIE

It was different for you. You were a champion. You were always *good*. I got kicked off every team I was on. And the one thing I thought I was good at - ruddy downhill - they wouldn't even take me.

PEARY

They're not exactly begging you now.

Eddie looks down, toying intently with his cup. Peary pulls out his schnapps bottle. Adds some more to his coffee.

PEARY (CONT'D)

Believe it or not, I do know what it's like to be written off.

Eddie glances up. A rare glimpse of the real Peary underneath.

PEARY (CONT'D)

Of course, my solution was to come here and screw everything that moved...

He gives a worldly laugh, but it quickly evaporates. Eddie goes back to toying with his cup.

EDDIE

I was in a hospital for a year when I was a kid. Dodgy knees. All the doctors told me to forget about sport and take up reading.

Eddie pauses, reliving the moment.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

So I did. First book I got was
the official 1972 Olympics photo
album -

EDDIE/PEARY TOGETHER

Moments of Glory.

Peary knows the title all the well.

PEARY

That was the book I got written
out of.

EDDIE

That was the book that made me
realize I needed my own "moment."
That one thing I could do to prove
them all wrong.

Peary watches Eddie lift his hot metal cup to reveal five
interlocking rings in the iced platform.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I've never changed my mind since.

EXT. BOTTOM OF THE 70M - NIGHT

The clang of unsteady feet as Peary and Eddie descend the
stairs. They get to the bottom.

A pause. Peary has something to say too. He puts an arm
around Eddie's shoulder.

PEARY

Eduardo, *mein freund*. I'll get you
your moment.

Off they weave, down the slope to the lights below.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - DAY

Music swells as we sail over a snowy mountain road.

PEARY (VO)

We've only got three contests to
make your distance before the
Olympic cut-off date. Seefeld, St.
Moritz and Oberstdorf. Two months.
Three jumps. That's it.

A caravanette hatchback comes into view – the Garmisch maintenance van.

INT. CARAVANETTE - MOVING - DAY

Peary does the driving. Eddie handles navigation.

On a map, Peary has marked the jumps in sequence – 1, 2, 3.

EXT. SEEFELD SLOPE - DAY

Eddie does brutal squat thrusts and leaping star jumps.

PEARY (VO)

I was letting you push off later
because it gave you more time for
your alignment. No more.

Peary demonstrates using a homemade model skier.

PEARY (VO) (CONT'D)

You've got to do it quicker and
stronger – with explosive
plyometric force.

Eddie doesn't know what that means.

PEARY (CONT'D)

Like a mad salmon.

Eddie leaps – just like a mad salmon.

INT. SEEFELD SLOPE OFFICE - DAY

PEARY (VO)

Good start times! You'll gain at
least a meter jumping on early
morning ice.

Eddie presents himself to a surprised OFFICIAL. Signs his name on a clipboard.

PEARY (VO) (CONT'D)

So let's get you registered as a
squad captain and claim a pole
position.

Eddie tries out his captain's armband, just like the one that Lars wears.

INT. SEEFELD STREET - DAY

Peary drags Eddie along to a ski resort building.

PEARY

New equipment! Decent skis, proper boots, aerodynamic jumpsuit, streamlined helmet. This will gain you at least two meters.

EDDIE

With what? We've barely got enough left for entry fees and petrol.

PEARY

Who said anything about buying?

Eddie looks confused.

EDDIE

I already tried borrowing.

Peary leads Eddie past a sign for "Lost Property".

PEARY

We're not borrowing. We're *reclaiming*.

INT. SEEFELD LOST PROPERTY DEPT. - DAY

Peary and Eddie root out various ski boots, a helmet, gloves, a ski suit - recoiling at the musty smell.

PEARY

Size 11, right?

EDDIE

10.

PEARY

All they've got is 11.

He hands Eddie the boots. And six pairs of socks.

Eddie assembles his final selection. Notices Peary inspecting his own selection in the mirror - an alpine sports jacket with a distinctive zip-up collar. The preferred style for European jumping coaches.

PEARY (CONT'D)

What? I just like the look, that's all.

INT. SEEFELD CHANGING-ROOM - DAY

Eddie puts on his six pairs of socks and oversized boots.

He joins the circle at the captains' meeting, proudly putting on his armband.

One by one, the other captains react to their new colleague and his kaleidoscope of mismatched gear. "Is this a joke?"

EXT. SEEFELD 70M JUMP - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: "Contest No. 1 Seefeld."

Eddie jumps and lands. Judging by Peary's reaction - it's an instant improvement. Ugly, but definitely longer.

Peary gives Eddie the thumbs-up, resplendent in his new distinctive high-collar jacket. It's a little shabby, but otherwise he looks just like the other coaches now.

SWEDISH JUMPER

Din jävla idiot.

Peary flicks him an Eddie-style V-sign.

INT. CARAVANETTE - DAY

Eddie - an ice pack on each knee - writes a postcard home, sketching a little diagram to show his progress...

INT. EDWARDS KITCHEN - DAY

... Janette hands Eddie's postcard to Terry, sitting behind his copy of *Plasterers' Monthly*.

Then she moves Prince Charles a full two inches towards Lady Di at the edge of the table.

INT. SEEFELD PRESS ROOM - DAY

Eddie expertly plunders the free food. Peary, even more expertly, plunders the open bar. Until a voice on one of the TV monitors catches his attention....

He looks up to face the moment he's been dreading for 20 years. A silver-haired MAN on screen. The TV caption reads "Warren Sharp, Former US Olympic Coach".

Sharp is being welcomed aboard the ABC Sports commentary team for Calgary. Peary goes quite still as he takes in Sharp's immense patrician presence. Hurtling back into his past...

INT. CARAVANETTE - NIGHT

It's small, but they've made it like home. Makeshift clothes line. Posters of Matti Nykanen and Linda Gray on the wall.

Eddie shivers in his sleeping bag, swaddled in mittens and scarfs, breath misting the windows.

EDDIE

"I'm going outside. I may be some time."

Not even a smile from Peary, lost in his thoughts.

INT. SKI RESORT STORE - DAY

Eddie peruses postcards, gulping milk. Peary discreetly unbags his new book - *Sharp Words: The Coaching Wisdom of Warren Sharp*.

He studies the back cover photo of Sharp - the archetypal straight arrow coach. His unforgiving eyes drilling deep into Peary's conscience...

EXT. SLOPE - DAY

Swirling snow fills the sky. Peary and Eddie two dots on the wind-swept landscape.

PEARY

We have to keep working on your Telemark landing. It's key.

EDDIE

It's too complicated. The other way feels better.

PEARY

Yeah, but it's not correct.

Eddie looks at Peary, unsure where this sudden pedantry is coming from.

EDDIE

What happened to ugly but effective?

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The caravanette WHOOSHES past, more slowly now as it heads uphill...

PEARY (VO)

You plateaued sooner than I thought. The more you push now, the worse you make it. The only way forward is better technique.

EXT. SLOPE - DAY

Eddie practices the Telemark landing - knees bent, one leg in front of the other - without skis. Again and again under Peary's exacting, precise direction.

EDDIE

Christ. When did you get so fussy?

Peary ignores him. Just keeps correcting and adjusting.

PEARY

How does it feel now?

EDDIE

Robotic.

Off Peary's glare -

EXT. ST. MORITZ 70M JUMP - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: "Contest No. 2 St. Moritz."

PEARY (VO)

(losing patience)

Precision is what sets you free.
Form and function combined.
Otherwise you just snatch at your
lift-off and make it worse.

We travel all the way down the scoreboard to last place -
"Edwards, E. - 53m."

INT. EDWARDS KITCHEN - DAY

Terry butters his toast with a plasterer's precision. Looks up to see Janette move Prince Charles backwards from Lady Di - a whole inch. Terry's face: What did I tell you?

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

The caravanette sits parked in a muddy field, rain drumming on the roof.

INT. CARAVANETTE - NIGHT

Peary sips his drink and lights another tiparillo. Eddie fidgets noisily with the model skier as he ponders his progress chart – or rather lack of progress chart.

The air is thick with fatigue and mutual frustration. And the odd leaking raindrop.

PEARY

Attitude is altitude. You can't move forward if your head's not right.

What is Peary talking about?

EDDIE

We've only got three weeks left!

Peary's well aware of the pressure. And he's not coping so great either. He tops up his glass.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Like that's going to help.

PEARY

Well, look at the raw material I got to work with.

Eddie snaps. Hurls the little ski model into Peary's glass, splashing it all over Peary's shirt.

EDDIE

Some coach you are.

Peary leaps to his feet, banging his head on the low ceiling.

PEARY

It's ski jumping, not bungee jumping!

EDDIE

Since when did it have to be Swan Lake?

Peary's face tightens. Water dripping off him. Something has snapped in him too.

PEARY

Eddie. You have a self-limiting belief.

Eddie can't believe what he's hearing.

PEARY (CONT'D)

A self-limiting belief that keeps you small.

Peary peels off his wet shirt and hands it to Eddie.

EDDIE

Like you're so bloody special.

Peary's face: Oh really? The two of them, nose to nose once more.

Very coolly, Peary picks up his drink. Pulls out the dripping little ski model. Hands it to Eddie. Heads for the door.

EXT. SLOPE - DAY

Peary marches across the slope - no shirt, no shoes, drink in one hand, tiparillo in the other. Eddie trailing after him.

EDDIE

Nice. Nice attitude. Very professional.

Peary hands Eddie his glass.

PEARY

Here. Hold this.

He marches on to the base of the 90M jump. Points at a Jumper changing into ski boots.

PEARY (CONT'D)

What size are those?

JUMPER

11s.

PEARY

Close enough.

He takes them and the guy's skis and starts up the stairs.

Down below, the Swedes have gathered to watch.

SWEDISH JUMPER

What is this? *Call My Bluff* again?

Eddie feels the glare of onlookers.

EDDIE

Do you mind?

Up at top of the ramp, Peary clips on his boots and slots in his skis, tiparillo still in mouth.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Alright, Peary. You've made you're point. Very impressive. Thank you.

But Peary is only getting started. He crouches down, arms back, palms up, and sets off... He's like a great surfer, the natural elegance undimmed by years away.

He shoots off the ramp, springing upwards, taut and beautiful - no helmet, no shirt - flying past Eddie and the Swedes... and flying... and flying...

The Swedes watch in awe. They all know pure style when they see it.

Peary's skis slap down in the most rakish version of a Telemark landing anyone ever saw. Gliding to a halt with a parallel skid and a perfect arc of spray.

Awed silence. Peary removes his tiparillo and taps the ash. Takes back his drink from Eddie and takes a sip.

PEARY

I'm sorry. I interrupted you. You were saying?

INT. CARAVANETTE - NIGHT

Eddie lies in his sleeping bag, awake, looking like he's been slapped. Peary is still up and so drunk, he's turned mean.

PEARY

You're uncharacteristically quiet tonight.

He offers the dregs of his bottle to Eddie, so forcefully Eddie has to push it away.

EDDIE

I can see why they kicked you off the squad now.

Peary's eye narrow. Suddenly this is no longer fun.

PEARY

If you really want to get to
Olympics so bad, just go jump the
90m yourself.

He clambers into his bed still with the bottle.

PEARY (CONT'D)

Your BOSA letter only said the
minimum distance had to be recorded
at a Circuit jump. It didn't
specify what event.

He hits the light switch, drifting into sleep.

PEARY (CONT'D)

It's perfect for you. You can do as
badly as you like and still make
the distance.

Out he goes. Eddie lies awake, fuming in the dark... Knee
bouncing up and down.

INT. CARAVANETTE - DAWN

Peary stirs awake in the morning light thanks to the empty
bottle hitting the floor. Finally, he notices the blindingly
obvious - Eddie's bed is empty.

EXT. 90m JUMP - DAY

A ski-jump elevator takes Eddie up into the sunlight peeping
over the ridge. All the way to the top.

THE 90M START PLATFORM

is surprisingly small. There is just enough room to put on
his skis and shuffle into position.

Eddie moves out, bracing the wind, and takes in the view.

It's like nothing he could have imagined.

A vertigo-inducing ice-ramp that plunges down into infinity.

He steps forward, dislodging some ice from the metal grating.
The ice chunks fall... and fall... and fall...

Blood drains from Eddie's face and a new expression fills his
features. One we've never seen before.

Total fear.

THE ELEVATOR

hisses open behind him, producing a new JUMPER. A preposterously young guy. He opens his palms at Eddie: What's the delay?

Eddie is white as a sheet. The kid has to skirt around him. He clicks on his skis and pushes off, he picks up speed at a frightening pace then abruptly disappears from view.

A l-o-n-g moment later he flies back into view - SLAPPING down onto the slope. A hard crunching landing. A fierce stop. Real ski-jumping.

Eddie attempts to move into position. All he can hear is the whistling wind. All he can feel is the metal structure creaking beneath him. He fumbles for the rail.

A few deep breaths seem to do the trick. He regains his composure, even managing a smile at his own silliness.

Then vomits spectacularly.

EXT. RESORT - DAY

Two figures pick their way through the crunchy morning snow. It's Peary and the resort JANITOR, who leads him into the men's restroom.

INT. RESTROOM - DAY

The Janitor opens the end cubicle door for Peary to step forward to see for himself. Eddie is slumped on the floor by the toilet bowl.

Peary considers Eddie's ashen face. His trembling fingers gripping the rim. This was not what he was expecting at all.

STEAM RISES UP

From a sink of hot water.

Steadied by Peary, Eddie splashes water over his face. Slowly, he gets some color back in his cheeks.

Peary goes and gets him a wodge of paper towels.

PEARY
No more shortcuts.

Eddie wipes his face. Looks up to face Peary's gaze in the misted mirror and finds his coach is surprisingly empathetic.

PEARY (CONT'D)
We're just going to have to dig deeper, that's all.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - DAY

The caravanette chugs uphill across the border into Germany, black clouds in the distance.

PEARY (VO)
You need to get used to skiing at 50-60mph.

Peary stands at the top of a mountain road with Eddie. Nothing to see but more mountain tops in any direction.

EDDIE
Don't we need a wind tunnel for that?

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

Eddie's grimacing face - jowls flapping. His skis have been bolted to the roof of the caravanette.

Peary at the wheel, bombing downhill.

PEARY
Louder. I can't hear you!

EDDIE
Arrrrghhhhhhhhh!

The caravanette speeds past the sign for Germany, black clouds in the distance.

INT. CARAVANETTE - MOVING - DAY

Peary and Eddie wear waterproof plastic sheets. Rain leaking everywhere now.

They pull up outside an old Gothic building with a sign in German and English that says "Health Spa."

PEARY
Look at all the best jumpers. They're tall, wide and thin.
(MORE)

PEARY (CONT'D)
 Like a sail. Whereas you, you're
 built like a linebacker...

Peary gives Eddie's broad shoulders a squeeze.

PEARY (CONT'D)
 You, my husky bricklaying friend,
 are going on a diet.

INT. HEALTH SPA - DAY

A SCALE pings to 188lbs. Eddie is getting weighed.

Peary can barely get his pinkie inside Eddie's waistband.

EXT. HEALTH SPA - DAY

Eddie sets off on a run, wrapped in a plastic trash bag. He passes OBESE PATIENTS, taking the cure. "Slow down!"

INT. HEALTH SPA - DAY

Eddie's head pokes out the top of a sweat box. Peary wipes his steamed up glasses.

PEARY (VO)
 Private Edwards, you are a thigh-
 chafing horror.

EXT. HEALTH SPA - DAY

Eddie does press-ups while an OBESE GUEST in a tracksuit offers him pointers.

PEARY (VO)
 Gargantuan. Obese. Disgusting. What
 are you?

INT. SPA KITCHEN - DAY

EDDIE
 Starving.

Peary feeds raw spinach into a blender... And a raw egg...
 And a whole lemon... And cayenne pepper...

Eddie gulps down a glass of the green liquid wincing.

A tempting box of chocolate Jaffa Cakes sits on the table. A gift from Mum. Peary removes them from view.

PEARY
Not until you qualify.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Eddie runs downhill, Peary driving alongside.

PEARY
No rest until every pound of
quivering blubber is gone!

Coming back up the hill, Eddie easily outruns the caravanette, forcing Peary to shout after him.

PEARY (CONT'D)
Vanished! Purged! Finito!

INT. HEALTH SPA - DAY

Peary prods Eddie past a sign for "Hydro-Colonics."

PEARY
Every pound you lose is a meter
gained!

INT. HEALTH SPA - DAY

The scale BOINGS to 175lbs. Peary gets two whole fingers inside Eddie's waistband.

PEARY
How do you feel now?

EDDIE
Weak.

EXT. OBERSTDORF SLOPE - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: "Oberstdorf Practice Jumps."

Various squads and coaches arrive to begin their preparations.

The Swedes gather round their coach, but Lars's gaze keeps straying over to Eddie.

The new streamlined Eddie. Already hard at work on the slope. Valiantly doing as Peary instructs. Not complaining once.

Just like a real athlete.

INT. OBERSTDORF CHANGING-ROOM - DAY

Eddie gets undressed, exhausted from another long day, stomach GROWLING, tighty-whiteys slipping off his new slimline frame.

Behind him, nonchalantly nude as usual, Lars strolls up holding out a shiny new pair of Atomic skis.

LARS

You could maybe use these, I think.

The skis are gleaming, unused – and bright pink.

LARS (CONT'D)

Proper jumping skis. With lightweight tips. For better balance.

Eddie waits for the punchline, but it doesn't come.

EDDIE

You sure? These things cost a fortune.

LARS

The sponsors take care of it.

He thrusts the skis at Eddie, who runs a hand over their gorgeous dimensions.

EDDIE

They're beautiful.

Lars shrugs – the nearest he'll ever get to an overt display of emotion – and leaves Eddie to it.

After a moment, Eddie 'comes to' and realizes Lars has already gone. He turns to one of the other Swedes.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Quick. How do you say "Thank you for the skis" in Swedish?

INT. OBERSTDORF SHOWERS - DAY

Lars ambles nudely to the shower.

EDDIE

Lars!

Eddie chases after him, still clad only in his Y-fronts.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Det var som fan sanslös.

A subtitle reads: "Bugger me till I faint."

Lars blinks in surprise, which only emboldens Eddie to squeeze Lars's shoulder more warmly.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Det. var. som. fan. sanslös.

EXT. OBERSTDORF 70M JUMP - DAY

Eddie is all ready to jump with his shiny new skis, but the JUMP MARSHALL has a clipboard full of forms to be signed first.

EDDIE

It's a practice jump! You don't paperwork for a practice jump!

JUMP MARSHALL

At Oberstdorf, we do everything to the letter.

EDDIE

I could have done two jumps by now.

Peary drags Eddie aside before he makes things worse.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I can't help it. I'm bloody starving.

PEARY

Take a breath. Relax. Remember: Focused not tense.

A much improved WHOOSH sees Eddie shooting off the slope in his shiny new pink skis.

It's not a great lift-off, but he stays aloft appreciably longer, and lands at 61 meters – the magical distance.

EDDIE

And that was without a headwind!

PEARY

Alright, don't get cocky. Your new
skis did most of the work.

The Jump Marshall signals the distance on his electronic
board - "61 meters." The magical distance.

Eddie erupts with joy, but he's so weak, he falls into
Peary's arms.

PEARY (CONT'D)

Do that tomorrow and you're
through.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Prince Charles CLINKS into Lady Di, so he's right next to
her. Terry exchanges a tense look with Janette. Fingers
crossed.

INT. SPA BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eddie lies wide awake. Staring at the ceiling, stomach
growling like a bear.

He gets up, careful not to wake Peary, and digs out the
parcel of Jaffa Cakes - only to find a note attached from
Peary: "I said, Not until you qualify!"

It doesn't matter. He's felt so much self-belief.

EXT. OBERSTDORF 70M SLOPE - DAY

The arena fills up with officials, TV crews, spectators.
Competition day.

Peary rubs the overnight snow between his fingers. Sizes up
the headwind. It's all good.

SUPERIMPOSE: "Contest No. 3 Oberstdorf."

EXT. OBERSTDORF 70M JUMP - DAY

Eddie gets his armband with Lars and the other captains. And
his jumping position.

OFFICIAL

Number three: Klauser. Number two:
Moberg. Number one... Edwards.

Wow. The prime start time.

EXT. OBERSTDORF 70M SLOPE - DAY

Eddie hurries to find Peary and tell him the good news.

EDDIE

Peary! You better get in position.
I'm first off.

He pulls up short like he's seen a ghost. Two of them in fact. It's Target and his Aide in their bright green blazers.

TARGET

Can we take it you've acquired a coach?

EDDIE/PEARY

Yes./No.

Pause.

PEARY

It's not a formal arrangement.

TARGET

I should hope not. That would require you to be licensed and registered. It's Peary, isn't it?

Target flicks a glance at Peary's 'Lost Property' chic.

TARGET (CONT'D)

Your old exploits on the US Olympic squad are quite the talk in the press tent.

Peary assumes his most nonchalant air.

PEARY

If I'd been French, they'd have made me captain.

TARGET

If you'd been British, we'd have never let you in the squad.

Peary and Eddie turn to watch as Target and his Aide walk over to glad-hand - who else? - the asshole Swedish Coach.

PEARY

Back home, we have a word for guys like that.

EDDIE
We have the same word.

EXT. OBERSTDORF 70M JUMP/PLATFORM - DAY

Eddie settles into position. Flapping his arms, doing his breathing warm-ups: "Ahhhhhhh!"

He sees Peary down below giving him the OK sign. Then catches sight of Target and his Aide, which doesn't help.

He tries to shut them out - "Focused not tense." "Linda Gray." The light goes to green and he pushes off in his shiny new skis.

Peary watches in gradually awakening amazement as Eddie soars and hovers like never before.

Graceful, controlled, no trace of panic. It's like he's a completely different athlete. He even pulls off a Telemark landing - arms out, knee bent - which is simply a miracle.

Eddie skids to a stop and flips off his goggles. He sees Peary's face and sees his wonderment. Even better, there's no red flag from the Officials. The jump will stand.

EDDIE
What did I hit?

Peary completely forgot to register his distance.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
What was the distance?

Peary has no idea. Some of the Circuit crowd are doing their usual patronising reaction - cries of "woo-hoo" and taunting hand gestures.

But Peary doesn't care. That was a genuinely decent jump.

Eddie though only has eyes for one thing. The distance. He turns to the scoreboard as it clicks up.

"E. Edwards 57m."

He blinks at this obvious mistake. But the announcer confirms it. It's a full 4 meters short.

Target turns to his Health and Safety Aide with relief. At last, the nightmare is over.

An OFFICIAL steers Eddie off the snow to make way for the next jumper, but Eddie pushes him away. Wait. Wait. This is all wrong.

EXT. OBERSTDORF FRONT OFFICE - DAY

Peary waits outside, while inside Eddie remonstrates with the Event Officials, voices rising.

EDDIE

You don't understand. This is my only chance. You have to give me another run.

They will not budge. The rules are the rules.

OBERSTDORF OFFICIAL

At Oberstdorf, we do everything to the letter.

EDDIE

You all keep saying that! It doesn't help! These people at BOSA. They're bastards! If it's 61 this year, it'll be 71 next year. Then 81.

Eddie explodes, grabbing the man's lapels, ending any chance of clemency.

Peary watches all this, knowing it's pointless, but that's okay. In some strange, wonderful way, this mad quest is turning out better than he'd ever hoped.

INT. CARAVANETTE - NIGHT

The long drive back. Headlights moving through ghostly tree-lined roads.

Eddie stares out the window, jaw clenched tight. The box of Jaffa Cakes in his lap - unopened.

Peary looks over at Eddie, biding his time.

EXT. GARMISCH CARPARK - DAY

The caravanette noses to a stop right back where it all began.

Except now, there's only leaden skies and humdrum tourists waddling about.

INT. CARAVANETTE - DAY

Peary switches off the engine.

PEARY

Eddie, I want to tell you something.

Eddie stares out the window like a zombie.

PEARY (CONT'D)

Your jump yesterday...

Peary has never looked more alive.

PEARY (CONT'D)

It was the first time you had all your components working together - lift-off, timing, balance, trajectory. All of it, working together like second nature.

Eddie can't face any of this. He opens the door and gets out. Peary reaches to pull him back.

PEARY (CONT'D)

You idiot. I'm telling you it was the best jump you've ever done.

But Eddie's already gone, hurrying out of sight.

EXT. GARMISCH RESORT - DAY

Wind blows across the slopes as the last Swedish flag is taken down and their Olympic HQ packed up.

INT. PEARY'S WORKSHOP - DAY**INT. PEARY'S WORKSHOP - DAY**

Peary sits at his desk, underlining key sections of his copy of *Sharp Words*, jotting notes in the margins, a man reborn.

The sound of BANGING and SLAMMING intrudes. Peary looks over to find Eddie hollering in his garage.

PEARY

Eddie. Cut it out. I've been doing some thinking.

Eddie just keeps hollering like a maniac.

PEARY (CONT'D)
 Seriously. Enough with the
 histrionics. I've figured out a way
 forward -

Eddie appears in front of him, waving a Telex.

EDDIE
 We did it. We're through.

He's not upset. He's celebrating.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
 They only recorded the bloody
 practice jump.

He hands the telex to Peary. "E. Edwards, Great Britain,
 Oberstdorf 61m."

EDDIE (CONT'D)
 It's official. It counts.

Eddie charges out, banging the door, whooping with joy.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
 "Everything to letter!"

Peary stands there, completely thrown. This is a disaster.

EXT./INT. CARAVANETTE - DAY

Matti Nykanen's inscrutable blue eyes are unpinned from
 the caravanette wall. Eddie rolls up his poster, unstoppable
 now as he does his best Ron Pickering.

EDDIE
 Oh this is amazing, this is
 sensational.

Peary arrives at the van, now with a "For Sale" sign in the
 front window.

PEARY
 Eddie. What I said about your jump
 - I meant it. We can do this for
 real.

Eddie hums, dances, moonwalks as he packs up his gear.

PEARY (CONT'D)
 You don't have to settle for being
 a novelty item anymore.

Eddie just keeps bopping away as he packs his case.

PEARY (CONT'D)

We should take another four years.
Re-train you from the ground up.

EDDIE

What are you talking about?

PEARY

I'm saying I want to coach you for
the next four years. So we can go
and really compete.

Eddie finally starts to pay attention.

EDDIE

What for? We're already going.

PEARY

I'm saying, if you go now, they're
never going to let you back.

EDDIE

So what?

PEARY

So all you can prove is that you
don't mind coming last.

EDDIE

I *don't* mind!

Eddie can't believe he's trying to ruin this great moment.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

What's the matter with you? We just
pulled off the impossible. Now we
get to be a part of it.

PEARY

I was a part of it. Remember?

The intensity in his voice takes them both by surprise.

PEARY (CONT'D)

It doesn't mean anything if you
sell yourself short.

EXT. GARMISCH CARPARK - DAY

A bus driver loads up luggage, ready for the drive back to England. Eddie and Peary stand there, regarding each other with equal frustration.

EDDIE

I don't understand. Why can't we just go and have fun?

It's a good question. And one Peary has already pondered.

PEARY

A year after I got bumped from the Olympic squad, I went back to Warren Sharp to apologize. I literally got on my knees and begged him to let me jump again.

Even now, it still stings.

PEARY (CONT'D)

You know the last words he said to me?

This is the first time, we sense, Peary has said them aloud.

PEARY (CONT'D)

"You'll never take jumping seriously, because you'll never take yourself seriously."

Eddie digests the words and yes, they're brutal.

EDDIE

They going to be your last words to me, too?

The driver honks his horn. It's time to go.

PEARY

Eddie. I got 20 years to make good on. Either we do it right or not at all.

EDDIE

You're crazy! Six months ago you were driving a rust bucket.

They stand there. Each hoping the other one will cave.

PEARY

Eddie. Don't be a fool.

EDDIE
Better a fool than a coward.

The bus driver honks again. It really is time to go.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
At least wish me luck, you stubborn
bastard.

They hug awkwardly.

INT. COACH - MOVING - DAY

Eddie clamps on his headphones and folds his arms as the bus moves off. How can a victory feel more like a defeat?

He can't even bring himself to look back. Not even a farewell glance at the windswept jumps.

EXT. EDDIE'S STREET - DAY

The street is strangely empty outside Chez Eddie, palace of stucco. Just a voice yelling -

EDDIE (VO)
Hurry up, it's starting!

INT. LIVING-ROOM - DAY

Packed inside are Eddie, Terry, various NEIGHBORS, KIDS and Builders. Eddie's Mum enters with another round of tea and Jaffa Cakes as -

ON TV, Eddie flaps his arms, jumping in a European contest.

UK NEWS REPORTER (ON TV)
This week, local boy Eddie Edwards achieves a boyhood dream when he heads off to Canada to compete in the Winter Olympics in Calgary.

"Ahhhhhhhhhhhh." Eddie practices in his homemade harness in the back garden, watched by the local Kids.

EDDIE (ON TV)
I've broken my arm, my jaw, three fingers, two ribs, and eight pairs of glasses.

NEWS REPORTER (ON TV)

Even though he only finishes half the distance of normal jumpers, Edwards can look forward to competing against the likes of Finnish champion Matti Nykanen. And can even expect to be cheered on by Great Britain's consort at the Games, Her Royal Highness Princess Anne.

On TV, a Gentleman's Outfitter slips an Olympic blazer onto Eddie's shoulders.

OUTFITTER (ON TV)

Any pinching under the arms, sir?

Eddie shakes his head, proudly inspecting the breast pocket crest. "Calgary 1988." Five Olympic rings and a Union Jack.

Just like in all the official British squad photos that fill the walls.

Through all this, Terry and Janette exchange a look – quietly humbled by Eddie's achievement.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Eddie rechecks his airline ticket and passport for the last time. When he struggles to close his ski bag, Terry comes and grips it, so Eddie can pull the zipper shut.

TERRY

Wider than normal skis, aren't they.

EDDIE

Yeah. For the wind resistance.

TERRY

Different buckles too. So you can lift your heel at the take-off.

His dad is quite the expert, these days.

EDDIE

You sure you want to fly all that way just to see me? I mean, it's not cheap.

TERRY

It's already done. Call it an early summer holiday.

EDDIE

Yeah, but it's not the plastering
World Cup though, is it.

No, it's not. But they don't feel it has to be anymore.

TERRY

I'll get this. You save your
strength.

Terry picks up Eddie's bag and carries it downstairs. Eddie takes one last look around his shrine. His lifelong dream finally turning real.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

At the front door, Janette waits, as always, beaming with pride.

JANETTE

And where do you think you're
going, young man?

She gives Eddie a ferocious hug, her eyes tearing up. He pulls a hankie out of his pocket.

EDDIE

Alright. Take it easy. You're going
to see me in a week.

She dabs her eyes and blows her nose. Terry peers in from the front door.

TERRY

Pull yourself together, woman.
We've got a farewell committee.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Eddie exits his front door to find a small curious crowd has gathered. The local kids, a stray dog, the Indian family opposite, a clutch of grannies, a passing milkman.

Eddie walks towards Terry's mud-splattered van past their silent inquisitive faces. A real crowd begins to ROAR, getting louder and louder.

EXT. STOCK FOOTAGE - DAY

Suddenly, we're hurtling over the Calgary skyline towards the McMahon Stadium and the teeming spectacle of the opening ceremony.

A procession of runners brings in the Olympic Torch to light the flame.

COMMENTATOR (VO)

Fifty-seven nations, 1,700 athletes, 60,000 spectators and more than two billion TV viewers around the globe - all have come together for the 15th Olympic Winter Games, where today the words will be spoken, Let the Games begin!

The flame is lit and the stadium erupts in a swirling display of synchronized flag-waving.

Drummers, marching bands, polar bear mascots, singer Gordon Lightfoot, sexy ice-skater Katarina Witt, the Jamaican bobsleigh team and -

EXT. CALGARY 70M JUMP - DAY

Whoosh! A SKI-JUMPER flying through the air to reveal a packed stadium below. Olympic flags. TV commentators. Thousands of fans. This is so much bigger and NOISIER than anything in Europe.

INT. CALGARY CHANGING-ROOM - DAY

Eddie waits, suited and ready to jump, his knee bouncing like a jackhammer. Around him, athletes are prepped and massaged by their coaches.

Being on his own, Eddie makes do with humming and fidgeting.

RON PICKERING (ON TV)

So here we are, kicking off the men's 70m ski-jump with the legendary Matti Nykanen.

Eddie leaps up at the mere mention of his idol's name.

RON PICKERING (ON TV) (CONT'D)

The 70m crowd has really come alive at the sight of the Flying Finn. Not what you'd call an accessible figure.

(MORE)

RON PICKERING (ON TV) (CONT'D)
 Prefers to let his jumping do the
 talking – and my word, here's his
 first speech!

Eddie watches the TV monitor: Nykanen soaring for an eternity
 – a near perfect jump.

RON PICKERING (CONT'D)
 Oh, that's big. That's very big.
 It's got to be at least 89 meters.

Nykanen's brilliance silences the other jumpers getting
 ready, even the Swedes. They quickly turn to stretching,
 checking their buckles.

All except Eddie, who is rapt by the sight of Nykanen as he
 strides off – eerily boyish in close-up, and also eerily
 unmoved by the crowd's rapture.

OFFICIAL
 Edwards!

A super intense OFFICIAL executes the now familiar pointing
 routine to Eddie and then to the sky. You. Next.

EXT. CALGARY 70M JUMP/START PLATFORM - DAY

Eddie bounds up to the platform determined to enjoy every
 second. This is his moment, right?

He gets to the rail and looks down on the biggest ski crowd
 he's ever seen. 70,000 people and his parents, all waiting
 for him.

RON PICKERING
 Here he comes, Eddie Edwards. His
 arrival in Calgary has already
 caused quite a stir, I can tell
 you. That homespun, idiosyncratic
 jumping style has even inspired a
 nickname –

Fans wave a placard: "Canada welcomes Eddie 'the Eagle'
 Edwards."

RON PICKERING (CONT'D)
 "Eddie the Eagle." Well, if ever
 there was a moment to prove he's
 not an endangered species, this
 is it.

Eddie waves to the crowd, hiding his nerves by hamming it up.

EXT. VARIOUS - DAY

Around the world, people watch their TVs curiously – Eddie's neighbors, Florian, his old pupils.

EXT. CALGARY STADIUM - DAY

Around the stands, people watch curiously too – fans, commentators, some of the British squad.

Target turns with a withering look to his porky Health and Safety Aide.

TARGET

"He'll never make 61m."

EXT. CALGARY 70M JUMP/START PLATFORM - DAY

The klaxon sounds and Eddie sets off down the slope, picking up speed.

He flies into the air and flaps his arms with a mighty cry. But it's more of a squawk as he SHOOTs into the air and plummets to the slope.

He lands awkwardly and skids to a halt only when he THUMPS sideways into the end billboard.

It's all over in five seconds and the silence is deafening. The crowd, the commentators, the other athletes – all staring in disbelief.

Until one by one they start cracking up. "What the f*** was that?" Americans, Canadians, Brits – all cracking up with amused disbelief.

And the Swedish team, as always – totally impassive. They all turn towards Lars: "You gave that guy skis?"

EXT. CALGARY 70M JUMP/SLOPE - DAY

Eddie lifts his goggles and automatically turns to get Peary's reaction. But of course he's not there.

The score flicks up on the big screen: 55 meters. The crowd applauds good-humoredly, but it's lame and Eddie knows it.

TARGET'S AIDE

Well, it could have been worse.

Target's not so sure as he watches Eddie hide his disappointment by clowning it up for the crowd.

INT. PEARY'S WORKSHOP - NIGHT

A stream of smoke. Peary watches the TV replays of Eddie and his forced bonhomie. Peary looks sad but resigned.

He turns back to his new reading material, *Sharp Words: The Coaching Wisdom of Warren Sharp*.

INT. CALGARY CHANGING-ROOM - DAY

Eddie clatters back to the quiet of the changing-room, still on a high.

He goes straight to his kitbag to find his celebratory chocolate. A box of Jaffa Cakes all ready to go. But something's off and he knows it.

He catches sight of himself in the mirror. Away from the crowd, he can't hide it anymore. It should feel great and it doesn't.

EXT. OLYMPIC VILLAGE - DUSK

Eddie wanders along, fighting a growing sense of anticlimax. He squints at his map, totally lost amid the geometric athletes' quarters.

He passes the Jamaican bobsleigh team, decked out in green and yellow latex suits. They watch him go by very strangely.

Once Eddie's out of sight, we see why. The Jamaicans pull out a huge joint.

EXT. OLYMPIC VILLAGE - NIGHT

Eddie finally locates his block, where a perky PR WOMAN is waiting to greet him.

PR WOMAN

A-ha, the elusive Mr. Edwards,
where the hell have you been?

INT. PRESS CONFERENCE HALL - NIGHT

The PR WOMAN leads Eddie down a backstage hallway towards a growing hubbub of expectation.

EDDIE

Blimey, who else is doing the press conference?

PR WOMAN

No one. It's just you.

Eddie notices a TV screen showing footage of him reading *The Sun* at the top of a jump... doing his funny arm-flapping warm-up exercises.

She beckons him into the room and a sea of flashbulbs explode. "Eddie!" "Eddie!" "Over here! This way!"

More than 130 photographers, TV cameramen and journalists are crowded inside for the new star attraction. All bombarding him with questions.

EXT. CALGARY - VARIOUS - DAY

TV REPORTER

The Winter Olympics descended into French farce this week with the outbreak of Eaglemania.

SINGING FANS ON TV

"Fly like an eagle... Let your spirit carry me."

Eddie signs autographs and poses for pictures. With kids, parents, even Mounties.

Watching in amazement around the globe are Eddie's neighbors. The builders. And the Obese Push-up Expert back at the spa.

OBESE GUEST

Heilige Scheiße!

Eddie has a quiet dinner with his parents until flashbulbs explode through the window.

TV REPORTER

Everywhere he goes the former plasterer is provoking equal parts amusement and derision.

Fans impersonate Eddie's arm-flapping. Make "four-eyes" faces with their fingers. Give him an inflatable eagle.

TV TALKING HEAD #1

He's the Elton John of ski-jumping. He gives the ordinary man in the street hope.

TV TALKING HEAD #2

If he's anyone famous on skis -
it's Benny Hill.

Eddie gets mobbed by showgirls. Gets presented with a real eagle. Even when he's on the toilet, a tape-recorder appears under the door.

UK NEWS REPORTER

A hairdresser from Bristol is
claiming he was your lover for two
years? Any comment?

Eddie valiantly signs more autographs, buffeted by fans, who surge round, spilling hot dogs and soda all over his Olympic blazer.

Some of the other ATHLETES watch all this without comment. Eddie thinks they're doubtful about the crazy fans, but we sense their reservations have more to do with him.

EXT. OLYMPIC VILLAGE - DAY

Eddie and his mother head towards the Olympic Village laundromat carrying a basket of his clothes.

JANETTE

I don't care who wants your
autograph. You're not going to the
closing ceremony with mustard down
your front.

A team of SECURITY PERSONNEL make them wait while some VIP Guest passes.

JANETTE (CONT'D)

Who is it, Katarina Witt?

Eddie cranes for a better look. No, it's -

EDDIE

Bloody Nora.

Actually, it's PRINCESS ANNE on a royal walkabout. And she's walking all the way over towards him.

PRINCESS ANNE

I know you. You're our ski-jumper.

She shakes Eddie's hand.

PRINCESS ANNE (CONT'D)

You know, my son Peter's just starting skiing at the dry slope in Cheltenham.

EDDIE

Get out of it. That's where I started.

(off the aide's discreet prompt)

... Ma'am.

PRINCESS ANNE

Maybe you can give him some lessons?

EDDIE

Love to. I'll even get him a weekend discount.

PRINCESS ANNE

Just skiing. No jumping.

Eddie beams in royal-lover heaven. As for his Mother — she's gone as stiff as a board.

PRINCESS ANNE (CONT'D)

Mrs. Edwards? You must be very proud.

Janette can only stare, too stunned to speak, still gripping Eddie's basket of underwear.

EXT. VARIOUS - DAY

Newspapers in every language tell Eddie's story. Crowds mob him. Frat guys MOON him.

TV TALKING HEAD

This guy isn't embodying the spirit of the Games. He's debasing it.

TV TALKING HEAD #2

Let's not forget. The founder of the Olympics was Baron de Coubertin, not P.T. Barnum.

The crowd and media mob is now totally out of hand as BOSA officials escort Eddie into the flag-draped Olympic HQ.

INT. OLYMPIC HEAD OFFICE - DAY

The PR WOMAN is not so perky anymore. She looks anxiously across at Eddie.

PR WOMAN
I'm not sure how to put this...

On the conference table is a fanned-out mass of tabloid newspapers - Eddie's antics all in print.

PR WOMAN (CONT'D)
The official photo session for the British athletes is being held tomorrow. And some of them don't think it's such a good idea that you attend.

She reluctantly pulls out a letter.

PR WOMAN (CONT'D)
In fact, they've signed a petition.

EDDIE
Let me guess, the downhill squad?

PR WOMAN
... Not just them.

He takes the letter and reads. There's four pages in total - 108 names. All of telling him to go home.

TARGET (VO)
You have to understand, these athletes have been preparing their whole lives to get to these Games.

EXT. BOSA OLYMPIC HQ - NIGHT

Target stands on the steps, addressing a cluster of reporters and cameras.

TARGET
This is their chance to get the exposure and sponsorship they need to survive.

Watching from way back is Eddie.

TARGET (CONT'D)
They simply want to make sure it doesn't get hijacked by some sideshow.

(MORE)

TARGET (CONT'D)
Especially by someone with no
desire to compete as a genuine
athlete.

A voice blurts out from the rear -

VOICE
I have desire!

Target stops. Heads turn - curious, annoyed. But Eddie doesn't emerge from the shadows, riding out the awkward silence until Target resumes.

TARGET
The Games are not about 15 minutes
of fame. They're about a lifetime
of excellence.

The crowd turns back to the steps as Eddie slinks away unnoticed.

EXT. CALGARY STADIUM - DUSK

The vast empty freezing cold stadium.

Eddie sits way at the back, a tiny solitary dot, hunched against the icy wind, feeling like absolute shit.

His only company is a snowgroomer put-putting up and down the slope. A steady rhythm that seems to say, *What did I tell you? What did I tell you?*

In Eddie's lap is his battered copy of *Moments of Glory*. All his treasured images of triumph. Victorious athletes getting cheered and chaired aloft.

Terry slides into the seat next to him. Eddie barely looks up from his book.

EDDIE
You were right. They don't want me.

TERRY
They don't know you.

Eddie looks up at the 90M jump, towering above them in all its concrete and steel glory. And keeps looking up at it, daunted but compelled. Building up to some kind of decision.

EDDIE
Those other athletes on the
petition. They're not snobs.
They're good people.

Terry looks up at the 90 then back to Eddie, putting two and two together.

TERRY

Are you thinking what I think
you're thinking?

Eddie takes a last look at Wilma Rudolph's lung-busting face, then back up at the towering 90.

EDDIE

Mum's going to kill me.

Terry considers his only son, breath misting in the vast arena, as tortured as he's ever seen him.

TERRY

You leave her to me.

Eddie gets to his feet, his mind made up. He knows what he has to do. We hear the discreet hush of camera-clicking -

INT. PRESS CONFERENCE HALL - DAY

Eddie has called a second press conference. This time, it's all business.

EDDIE

I'm not deluded. I do know there's plenty of athletes more deserving of publicity than me. Which is why I've decided not to do any more press interviews.

Eddie adjusts his specs, like he always does before taking the plunge.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Not until I've completed my 90m jump on Saturday.

The room reacts. Half confused. Half delighted at the good copy this potential fiasco will provide.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I'd only planned to do the 70m. But as people wiser than me know, taking part in the Olympics doesn't mean anything if you sell yourself short. I like clowning around, I admit it. But I like proving people wrong better.

He seeks out the German TV camera. Looks into the lens.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I didn't come here as a novelty act
and I'm not going home as one.

INT. PEARY'S WORKSHOP - DAY

Peary watches from his work bench. On his TV, Eddie gets up and leaves the press conference, a clamor of questions in his wake.

Peary's expression is hard to read until he gradually breaks into a small but distinctly proud smile. No one else in the bar can know or understands. But that doesn't diminish his vindication. "We're on!"

INT. BOSA OLYMPIC HQ - DAY

Target and his Aide watch the end of Eddie's televised press conference with utter disbelief.

TARGET

He must be mentally ill. How else
can you explain it?

AIDE

I actually think he's starting to
make some sense.

Target throws a look, appalled this disloyalty. Then reaches for the phone.

TARGET

Get me Benjamin Pensotti at
Eventing Safety.

EXT. CALGARY 90M JUMP - DAY

Eddie runs against the wind with his kitbag and skis, a man on a mission. He gets there just in time to make his practice jump. It is all very regimented with clipboard officials and allocated times.

But Eddie is blocked from entering. And only Eddie by the looks of it.

INT. EDDIE'S CALGARY BEDROOM - DAY

On a TV monitor, Dr. Benjamin Pensotti of the Eventing Safety Commission explains:

DR. PENSOTTI (ON TV)
While the winds are this high, we have decided the less experienced jumpers should not jump.

EDDIE
High winds? That's not even a stiff breeze.

DR. PENSOTTI (ON TV)
It's nothing personal. It's strictly a question of safety.

Eddie switches channels in disgust. All he gets is a news report on the British athletes doing their photo call.

And an episode of *Dallas* dubbed into French.

And randomly, the Jamaican Bobsleigh team going down on their heads.

INT. OLYMPIC VILLAGE - NIGHT

Endless fluorescent-lit corridors. Eddie contemplates the contents of a vending machine – Big Turk, Coffee Crunch...

His fingers stray to the buttons to make a selection only to be interrupted loudly by a 'polite' cough.

It's Peary, fresh off the plane, still with his travel bag. He looks Eddie up and down, none too impressed.

PEARY
"Eddie the fucking Eagle."

Eddie's never heard such reassuring words.

INT. EDDIE'S CALGARY BEDROOM - NIGHT

Peary and Eddie get to work setting up base camp in the kitchenette – ski wax, green diet drink, harness, etc.

EDDIE
It can't be like the Seniors Jump.
It has to be a real jump.

PEARY
I wouldn't be here otherwise.

INT. HOTEL BEDROOM - NIGHT

The 90m tower, all lit up like a fortress. Janette looks out from her hotel window, trying to hide her nerves and failing badly.

Terry sits at the bureau, customizing a shiny new ski helmet.

TERRY
Get some sleep, pet. I got it covered.

He pops open a tin of varnish. Dips in a brush.

INT. EDDIE'S CALGARY BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eddie's single bed lies empty, stripped of its blankets. Nearby, a fold-out bed stands unopened.

Instead, Eddie and Peary lie side by side on the floor, just like in the caravanette.

The wind whistles outside, flapping the curtain. Neither one can sleep and they have to acknowledge it.

EDDIE
Have a cigarillo if you want.

PEARY
It's just jetlag.
(no it's not)

Eddie fidgets noisily. Peary reaches out to stop him.

EDDIE
I can't help it.

He really can't. He rushes to the toilet. Heaves violently into the bowl.

Peary has his own nerves to deal with. His hand hovers over the flask in his bag... Somehow he refrains.

Eddie waxes his skis... Just like his Dad plastering the top of a low wall.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
Peary?

PEARY

Eduardo.

EDDIE

Thanks for coming.

PEARY

What are you going to do? Jumping's
my Sistine Chapel and you're my
brush.

Eddie heaves one last time. Gets back into his sleeping bag,
pale as a sheet. Outside the wind howls remorselessly.

EDDIE

You ever get the feeling you've
made the biggest mistake of
your life?

His questions hangs in the air. They continue to lie there,
lost in their private hopes and fears. We fade to black.

We fade back up: "Six hours later."

Eddie and Peary are still staring at the ceiling, only now
the first rays of dawn are peeping through the curtain. Peary
gets to his feet and extends a finger: Listen.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

What is it?

He can't hear anything. Which is precisely Peary's point.

Eddie scrambles to his feet and pulls back the curtains. A
clear blue sky. Not a flag fluttering anywhere.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

They can't use the weather as an
excuse now, can they.

Peary sets out Eddie's breakfast, a glass of green sludge.

PEARY

Neither can we.

INT. CALGARY CORRIDOR - DAY

Olympic Officials go down the hall, delivering sheets of
paper at each door with a sharp KNOCK.

OFFICIAL

Klauser. Start time... Puikkonen.
Start time... Edwards. Start
time...

Eddie opens his door to collect his start time and finds his parents waiting there awkwardly.

JANETTE

We wanted to give you this.

She holds out an airport shopping bag.

EDDIE

Your duty free?

Terry pulls out the new ski helmet now customized with the word "Eagle" on the front in gold.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

It's a helmet.

JANETTE

A *safety* helmet.

Terry throws her a look: I'll handle this.

TERRY

I put some Styrofoam inlay panels at the key pressure points and a few extra coats of shellac polyurethane for general reinforcement.

He hands the helmet to Eddie, pointing out his handiwork.

EDDIE

Good thinking.

JANETTE

You can't be too careful.

Terry throws her another look: *I said, I'll handle it.*

TERRY

We just wanted to wish you luck.
That's all.

Eddie runs a hand over the helmet.

EDDIE

Top quality finish, Dad.

Janette can't hide her fear any longer. She hugs Eddie so tightly he can barely breathe.

JANETTE

Oh Eddie -

Terry glares furiously at his wife, betraying his own nerves more than anything else.

TERRY

I thought we agreed to play it cool!

EXT. CALGARY STADIUM - DAY

Fans STREAM into the stadium. Finally, it's D-Day.

A row of global TV commentators - each one excitably reporting in his native tongue. Apart from the lugubrious fellow with a blonde beard. What a surprise. It's Swedish TV.

RON PICKERING

That was Bruce "Blizzard" Sassoon, the American, opening his account with a distance of 109.5 meters.

INT. CALGARY CHANGING-ROOM - DAY

"Ahhhhhhhhh." The applause of the crowd echoes from outside as Eddie warms up, Peary massages his calfs.

PEARY

I want to hear you at the back of the stands. If you're not yelling it, you're not selling it -

Waters drips on the floor. Peary is suddenly eye to eye with a couple of naked Swedes. Whoa.

SWEDE

You are quite the popular fellow, Eagle-Man. Every time we turn on TV, you are there.

SWEDE #2

Maybe, perhaps, you could tell us... What is the secret?

PEARY

Clothes.

A KLAXON sounds for the next jump.

EXT. CALGARY STADIUM - DAY

Janette and Terry take their seats. Her knitted sweater says, "I'm Eddie's Mum."

INT. CALGARY CHANGING-ROOM - DAY

Peary gets Eddie to his feet.

PEARY

And remember: you're going to land so much harder on this jump. So when your skis hit the slope keep that fanny up. Whatever it takes, don't drop back otherwise...

A huge GASP goes up from the crowd.

The TV MONITOR shows a jump has gone horribly wrong - a monster wipe-out on the slope.

PEARY (OS) (CONT'D)

Otherwise, you're going to be joining him.

OUT IN THE STANDS

Janette and Terry watch in horror as medics stretch off the injured jumper. It's a broken limb at the least.

INT. TV GANTRY - DAY

CANUCK ANCHORMAN

And that may not be the only wipe-out of the day. Not with Britain's Eddie "the Eagle" Edwards coming up soon. Take a look at this.

They run footage of Peary arriving with Eddie earlier.

CANUCK ANCHORMAN (CONT'D)

Eddie's coach is none other than Bronson Peary, fallen whiz kid of '70s ski-jumping and an old Olympic squad member of yours, if I'm not mistaken, Warren?

WARREN SHARP

We had a few years together.

SUPERIMPOSE: "Warren Sharp, Former US Olympics Coach." A Living Legend, no question. And not a man to waste words.

CANUCK ANCHORMAN

How do you feel about this unconventional return?

Sharp flattens out his palms, not unprepared for the question.

WARREN SHARP

There's an old expression in jumping. 'You're never bigger than the hill.' That was Bronson Peary to a T. And it broke my heart. I could never reach him. He was such a natural talent when he was young. Technique, flair - everything but discipline and humility.

CANUCK ANCHORMAN

And now?

Sharp ponders the question deeply. Finally -

WARREN SHARP

He disrespected the sport so totally as a jumper, I'm just sad he's going to do the same thing today as a coach.

INT. CALGARY CHANGING-ROOM - DAY

The changing-room has fallen silent. Peary turns from the TV monitor to find the whole room staring at him.

He doesn't even attempt to make light of it. An Official enters and points at him and Eddie. You. Next.

INT. CALGARY STADIUM - DAY

Eddie and Peary are ushered down the tunnel, two silhouettes heading towards the rising wall of noise. One last glance at each other before they step out into the light.

EXT. CALGARY STADIUM - DAY

Electric excitement pulses through the athletes and officials 'backstage,' including a British contingent.

One by one, they start to recognize Eddie. So this is the infamous Eagle.

Peary steers Eddie through the gauntlet of stares, feeling the mounting pressure.

He gets to the check-in desk. Hands over their paperwork. Mouth like cotton. They pass through to the elevator at the base of the tower.

Eddie's not sure what to do. So Peary leans over and presses the button – just like a regular elevator.

EXT. CALGARY STADIUM - DAY

Down in the stands, Eddie's parents feel the buzz in the crowd. Officials hurry into position. TV crews from every country get the countdown.

EXT. CALGARY 90M JUMP/ELEVATOR - DAY

As the elevator descends, Peary checks Eddie's equipment for the last time.

The doors open with a hiss. It's all happening too fast.

Peary CLASPS Eddie's arms. A complicated last look: fear, affection, resolve. A coach's complete faith in his pupil.

PEARY

You know what to do.

He thumps Eddie's chest, just like in their first lesson.

PEARY (CONT'D)

Linda Gray. All or nothing.

Eddie backs onto the elevator, joined by another athlete, who's just strolled up.

As the doors HISS shut –

PEARY (CONT'D)

See you at the bottom.

But the words are too late. All Peary can do now is step backwards and tilt his head back to look up... And up... And up...

It is truly a concrete monster of a jump.

INT. CALGARY 90M JUMP/ELEVATOR - DAY

Inside, the roar of the crowd is eerily distant. Just the rhythmic hum of the winching cables ascending into the sky. Eddie stares ahead, trying to keep calm.

Suddenly -

MALE VOICE

Jumping is all that matters. If I didn't jump, I would drink and have sex all the time.

Eddie turns and blinks. It is MATTI NYKANEN. His caravanette poster made flesh.

Blonde, boyish and surprisingly small (5ft 8in), which throws Eddie even more.

NYKANEN

Everything else is shit, no?

Eddie searches for a suitable reply.

EDDIE

... Congratulations on your medal.

NYKANEN

I win gold, but it was not my best. If I had done my best, I could have come last and been happier.

EDDIE

What, like me?

His strained laugh is quickly silenced.

NYKANEN

You did not do so good either.

EDDIE

No, not so good.

NYKANEN

You've done better.

EDDIE

(a chastised schoolboy)
Yes.

NYKANEN

You laugh. You think I am being patronizing.

(MORE)

NYKANEN (CONT'D)
 (Eddie's not laughing at
 all)
 But you and I are like one o'clock
 and eleven o'clock.

Nykanen extends two gloved fingers to demonstrate. A V-sign
 over Eddie's nose.

NYKANEN (CONT'D)
 Closer to each other than to the
 others. Winning, losing - that's
 for the little people.

He rotates his V-sign so a finger now points at each of them.

NYKANEN (CONT'D)
 Men like us, we jump to free our
 souls.

Eddie stares back, frankly bewildered. The doors HISS open.
 Nykanen doesn't move.

EDDIE
 ... I think this is our floor.

He still doesn't get it. Nykanen leans in and grasps Eddie's
 lapels.

NYKANEN
 The only two jumpers with a chance
 to make history today are you
 and I.

His stare is rich with self-loathing and threat.

NYKANEN (CONT'D)
 If we do less than our best with
 the whole world watching, it will
 kill us inside for all time.

And with that cheery parting thought, he steps out.

EXT. CALGARY 90M JUMP - DAY

Peary hurries down to his viewpoint, passing under the gaze
 of his old coach in the TV gantry box.

RON PICKERING
 Here he comes, the Flying Finn.
 Matti Nykanen getting into position
 to go for an unprecedented second
 gold for jumping.

Eddie is instructed to wait on the bench. But he can't help peering over as Nykanen sets off, hurtling down the jump. It is a nigh perfect jump: 118.5m. Alpine poetry in motion.

The commentators are in raptures. The crowd applauds like crazy. Eddie is momentarily relieved – it is like a blessing – until he sees the close-up of Nykanen's face on the monitor, the tiny telling hint of disappointment.

Nykanen turns his piercing blue-eyed stare into the camera – right into Eddie's soul.

OFFICIAL

Edwards!

EXT. CALGARY 90M JUMP/START PLATFORM - DAY

Eddie moves onto the start platform. And now it all becomes terrifyingly real. The horizon starts to sway. The sound of SCRATCHING echoes in his head. His knees go weak and his stomach heaves.

It's just like the last time he was on the 90.

He spits into his steamed-up goggles, but nothing comes out.

The Official locks Eddie into position as he stares down the monstrous ramp. No wind. No snow. No creaking metal. Just the dying rumble of the crowd – the whole world – falling silent as they wait for him to fail.

His pupils, his neighbors, the builders, the local kids – all glued to their sets.

EXT. CALGARY 90M JUMP - DAY

Pickering drops his voice to a whisper as we pull back – and back – and back – to see the full magnitude of Eddie's task – a 90m sheer drop, as high as a tower block.

RON PICKERING

The jump here at Calgary is a doubly tricky one. The short tabletop gives the jumpers less time than normal to get aligned for the push off. And the slope is a steeper than average 38 degrees.

A 'high-tech' 80s graphic illustrates the steepness.

RON PICKERING (CONT'D)

In short, it's the fastest, most unforgiving slope in the world, especially when it comes to landings. And if Edwards has one weakness - one salient weakness, I should say - it's his landings.

EXT. CALGARY 90M JUMP/START PLATFORM - DAY

Eddie grips the rail, inching into position as the amber light comes on.

RON PICKERING

Okay. Here we go...

But Eddie doesn't move. At all.

RON PICKERING (CONT'D)

Don't tell me he's frozen up.

Actually, it's worse. Eddie's shuffling back.

RON PICKERING (CONT'D)

It's going to have to be a re-set. This is it for Edwards. Last and final chance.

Eddie re-focuses, sweat beads on his forehead. The light turns amber and then green, burning in front of him.

PEARY

Come on, you bugger, get moving.

Eddie pushes off, crouching low, picking up speed.

The wind pummels his cheeks as he hits 30 - 40 - 50mph. A glorious, terrifying view spreading out below him...

He hurtles into the tabletop. Knees juddering over the ridged ice. Going the fastest he's ever skied in his life.

RON PICKERING

Here goes Edwards into the straight. He's got to pick his moment just right -

Peary urges Eddie into his lift-off.

PEARY

Push. Up and out. Up and out.

Eddie stretches for his life, straining into the wind, as his skis shoot off the ramp edge.

RON PICKERING

He's away, but it was late. That was very late. That's going to cause all kinds of problems.

Janette and Terry hold each other tight in the crowd.

Eddie's ski-tips swing up to his face - dangerously close. He's leaning forward. Way forward.

RON PICKERING (CONT'D)

Oh no. He's going to lose his balance.

His pupils go wide-eyed. Janette turns away, unable to look.

EXT. CALGARY STADIUM - DAY

Eddie grits his teeth as he reaches the pinnacle of his flight. Still no sound coming from his mouth.

RON PICKERING

How he's going to make this landing, I don't know.

PEARY

Release!

But Eddie's still not yelling anything as -

He flaps his arms desperately - still no sound coming from his mouth - as he starts to fall -

Target's cold eyes burning into his brain...

PEARY (CONT'D)

Come on, release!

Peary thumps his chest.

RON PICKERING

He's coming in too steeply, surely.

The slope rushing upwards beneath his shuddering ski tips...

As Eddie sees Wilma Rudolph smash through the finish tape and he finally summons up his voice and lets rip -

EDDIE

Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh...

Drowning out every rejection, every setback.

PEARY
Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!!!

BUILDERS/PUPILS/KIDS
Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!!!

EDDIE
Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!!!

His skis SLAM into the snow, his whole body ROCKED with the impact... Just like jumping milk crates on his bicycle.

RON PICKERING
Oh no!

Janette and Terry wince. The crowd gasps. Eddie's butt has dropped, his arms are flailing, but he's still screaming...

EDDIE
Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!!!

Target starts to smile with vindication... Some of the commentators too.

But Peary refuses to concede defeat.

PEARY
Up! Up!

Eddie gives one final agonizing push and with all his might, lifts his body back upwards to crest the safety bump and shoot his arms into the air.

It's good. He's safe. He's made it.

PEARY (CONT'D)
(leaping the barrier)
Ahhhhhhh, you motherf-----

RON PICKERING
Unbelievable! Unbelievable.

Janette and Terry whoop and holler, sending their neighbors' popcorn flying.

EXT. CALGARY 90M JUMP/SLOPE - DAY

Peary rushes to Eddie as he skis to a stop. Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!
It's a two-man primal meltdown.

RON PICKERING

I've been waiting nearly two weeks to say this. Well, here goes - The Eagle has Landed!

The crowd ROAR and CHEER, loving every second as Peary and Eddie hug and topple over into the snow.

Everyone's letting rip. The Swedish coach EVEN gives a curt nod to Lars. Not bad.

The only person conspicuously not watching this is Target.

RON PICKERING (CONT'D)

Britain's Eddie Edwards has completed his large hill jump - and it's a belter. A small jump for mankind, a very small jump, but it's a personal best in competition for Edwards - 71.5 meters. And that is a new British Record.

Peary and Eddie get control of themselves until they see the result flash up: "71.5m... A new UK record."

Peary turns to catch Warren Sharp's reaction, up in the commentary box. But Sharp is already removing his headphones and leaving...

Peary's disappointment is swept aside by Eddie hugging him all over again, falling onto the snow.

RON PICKERING (CONT'D)

What a sight. What an amazing sight.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Eddie and Peary tumble into the dressing room. Eddie goes straight for the Jaffa Cakes only to notice the muted watchful glances from the other athletes... Alerting them to the august presence waiting by their locker.

Warren Sharp, as they live and breathe. His aura is even more impressive in the flesh, almost religious in effect.

His eyes meet Peary's. The forbidding father and the outcast son. A electrically charged reunion 20 years in the making.

Sharp slowly reaches into Peary's bag. Eddie stiffens.... But instead of a flask, Sharp pulls out Peary's copy of *Sharp Words*. Notices the many comments scrawled in the margins.

WARREN SHARP
Interesting read?

Peary manages a nod.

PEARY
Very...

He's actually lost for words.

WARREN SHARP
Instructive?

Sharp pulls out a thick Mont Blanc pen. Inscribes the title page. The room is so quiet, everyone can hear the pen scratching.

He finishes and hands Peary the book, considering his former athlete, and the man he's become.

WARREN SHARP (CONT'D)
I was wrong about you today.

No more words are needed. The atonement is complete. He gives Peary's shoulder a paternal squeeze, pent-up emotion flooding across Peary's face.

The soothing hum of a plane fades up, taking them home -

INT. PLANE - NIGHT

Eddie and Peary in steerage, utterly drained, utterly content, enjoying it all - drinks, snacks, headphones and a copy of the Calgary Herald.

EDDIE
"The most raucous applause came during Olympic President Juan Antonio Samaranch's speech at the closing ceremony when he said, "Some competitors have won gold and some have broken records, and one has even flown like an eagle..."

Peary digs out his copy of *Sharp Words* and flips to the title page.

PEARY
I think I can match that.

He shows Eddie the handwritten inscription.

EDDIE

"Now the real works begins - W.S."

Peary picks up his glass of bubbly.

PEARY

So how about it? To the next four years?

Eddie picks up his glass of milk.

EDDIE

At the least.

They clink and drink, not noticing the ominous blur of green making its way towards them from first class.

VOICE

They have hangers, you know.

It's Target. He moves aside Eddie's folded-up blazer up on the empty seat. Sits down on the arm.

TARGET

It's only fair to tell you. A motion has already been approved to amend the entry criteria for the next Olympics.

He pauses to savor the killer blow.

TARGET (CONT'D)

You will never be wearing this blazer again.

He shifts closer, free at last to say what he really thinks.

TARGET (CONT'D)

You think because a few TV pundits find your antics amusing, you've done something to be proud of. But you came last - twice. You made fools of your countrymen. You embarrassed your flag. When you get home, you're going to find out how funny that really is.

INT. HEATHROW TERMINAL 4 - DAY

An endless terminal corridor, down which Eddie pushes his baggage cart, Peary alongside, the blazer resting on his bag.

It is a desolate place. Jetlagged passengers shuffling like zombies. Except the odd one who whispers and points at Eddie.

Up ahead at Customs, Target is surrounded by his gleaming downhill boys. All spruced up in their blazers. They point out Eddie to some CUSTOMS OFFICIALS.

PEARY
My connection's Terminal 3.

EDDIE
Time for a coffee then.

Before Eddie can follow Peary, the Officers approach him.

CUSTOMS OFFICER
This way, sir.

Eddie is taken to one side while Target and his chinless wonders are escorted through.

EDDIE
What's the matter?

CUSTOMS OFFICER
If you just come with me, we can explain it all.

Peary is told to keep moving. "Nothing to see here."

Another OFFICIAL arrives to take Eddie's bag and skis. Leads him into a sideroom - Eddie, a German Shepherd and two customs officials alone in a tiny room.

EDDIE
It's not a drugs test is it?

The Officers share a wry glance, which is really unnerving.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
'Cos I can tell you now, I've never taken a steroid in my life -

A far door opens and a forbidding SENIOR OFFICIAL enters.

SENIOR CUSTOMS OFFICIAL
This is him is it? Righty-o. Let's get this moving.

He gestures firmly for Eddie to follow him.

SENIOR CUSTOMS OFFICIAL (CONT'D)
This way, sir.

Eddie, his nerves already at breaking point, is steered forward through the second door and his jaw hits the floor.

INT. HEATHROW ARRIVALS - DAY

A thousand people are waiting for him. Crammed in with banners, flags, foam fingers, stetsons. There's women in bikinis from a vodka company, TV cameras, his local Mayor.

His whole life before his eyes: his parents, Julie, the neighbors, the builders. All there for him.

This isn't the polite amusement of the Calgary crowd. This is a full-on folk hero explosion. The great stonewashed. Not the prettiest bunch in the world, but the most adoring.

EDDIE

Bloody ada.

Janette gives him the proudest hug of her life, tearing up, as well-wishers gather round and flashbulbs explode.

TERRY

Alright, alright, calm down.

Terry takes his turn to hug Eddie only to tear up even more.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Now look what you made me do.

EDDIE

(dabbing his own eyes now)
Me? You started it.

Everywhere he looks - delirious faces wearing pink Eddie-style glasses. Hanging over balconies, clambering onto check-in counters. Even some policemen are craning their necks for a better look.

Some of the British athletes are there too, swept along by chaotic energy of the crowd. Giving it up. One team-mate to another.

Eddie catches Target's face, tight-lipped with rage, as his Aide and the downhill squad mutinously join in clapping.

An equally amazed Peary joins the fold as one of the Tabloid Reporters sticks a microphone under Target's nose.

BLUFF JOURNALIST

Mr. Target! The one British athlete being acclaimed as a hero is the very person you didn't want to compete. Any comment?

TARGET

Piss off.

Eddie and Peary turn from this clinching irony to face each other and the emotion is overwhelming – relief, joy, vindication...

The crowd hoists Eddie onto its shoulders, lifting him into full view. The effect is like a winning goal. He can't decide whether to smile or cry. So he does both, waving and waving.

For Eddie, finally, the dream has come true. He gives the V-for-victory sign – the reverse of what he's been giving since he was a kid – as we freeze-frame and immortalize what has just turned into the greatest day of his life.

SUPERIMPOSE: *"Eddie continued to jump in European contests and eventually retired with a personal best of 115m – a new British record."*

THE END