

Eddie the Eagle
by
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EXT. CALGARY SKI SLOPE - DAY

Out of a blur of blinding white spray...

A lonely dot comes into view, weaving towards us, slowly getting bigger, gradually coming into focus.

It is a DOWNHILL SKIER, flying down a slalom course, twisting and turning, leaving a majestic wake of powder.

He comes hurtling into the final straight towards a finish line decorated with Olympic flags.

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.

INT. CALGARY OLYMPICS/COMMENTARY BOOTH - DAY

The BBC's apoplectic voice of skiing, RON PICKERING - red V-neck, big 80s headphones - leaps up as the scoreboard reshuffles to reveal: "1st place. E. Edwards."

RON PICKERING

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

EXT. CALGARY OLYMPICS/FINISH LINE - DAY

Eddie skids to a halt and takes off his goggles and helmet. He is a radiantly good-looking guy, tanned and coiffed.

RON PICKERING

Crack open the Watney's. Light up a Panatella. Put an extra lump of sugar in your tea! Because Great Britain has just taken gold in the men's downhill at Calgary.

The crowd goes nuts, clambering over the hoardings, swarming around him.

RON PICKERING (CONT'D)

And it's all thanks to this man, "Fast" Eddie Edwards. The plasterer's son from Cheltenham.

The crowd lifts Eddie aloft, parading their new hero.

RON PICKERING (CONT'D)

Ever since he strapped on his first set of skis at the age of 12, he's been a beacon of British pluck and tenacity. Powering his way to success with unique blend of fluid athleticism, bulldog grit and -

VOICE

Oh for God's sake, get a move on.

The crowd, Pickering and Eddie all stop.

VOICE (CONT'D)

It's left turn only, you pillock!

A car horn HONKS. The crowd look up, confused, forgetting their new hero, who drops backwards with a thump -

INT/EXT. CAR - MOVING - DAY

Eddie snaps to. He is in a car being aggressively driven by JULIE, his girlfriend. She's around 20 and quite the feisty girl next door.

In reality, Eddie is a stocky boyish bloke with a big chin, no tan and bog-brush hair.

He firmly stabs his thick jam-jar spectacles back up on his nose. They are held together by a Band-Aid.

JULIE

Here we are.

With a screech of tires, Julie turns past a sign which reads: "British Olympic Downhill Ski Trials."

EXT. DRY SKI SLOPE - DAY

The crowd is small but well-heeled. Ascots, cravats, cream turtlenecks - applauding politely as a skier crosses the finish line.

EXT. DRY SKI SLOPE/CAR PARK - DAY

Julie's rusty Austin Allegro lurches to a halt between shiny Range Rovers and Jaguars. Two battered skis strapped to the roof.

A title reads: "England, January 1987."

INT. DRY SKI SLOPE/CORPORATE BOX - DAY

A pack of hard-nosed sponsors and some journalists are being corporately entertained by BOSA, the British Olympic Snowsport Alliance.

Giving the welcome speech is DUSTIN TARGET, the selection head, who sports an immaculate green BOSA blazer and nametag to prove it.

TARGET

...Winston Churchill, Lord Nelson, the Duke of Wellington... All British heroes and all - need I remind you - winners. Just like the squad we're assembling for Calgary next year.

INT. DRY SKI SLOPE/CORRIDOR - DAY

Eddie rushes to the changing-room with his gear. His patterned shellsuit swishing loudly, he blithely swats an OFFICIAL on the head with his ski-tip as he goes.

TARGET (VO)

It's only brash if you don't have the talent to back it up.
(after a smug pause)
We have the talent.

INT. DRY SKI SLOPE/CHANGING ROOM - DAY

EDDIE

Alright, lads, mind your backs.

Eddie breezes into the hubbub of blokey posh accents, trying to find a clothes hook, quite undeterred by the complete lack of acknowledgement.

EXT. DRY SKI SLOPE - DAY

Julie finds a spot among a cluster of Sloaney spectators, equally out of place and unconcerned by it.

INT. DRY SKI SLOPE/CORPORATE BOX - DAY

TARGET

Look around. See for yourself. The calibre of these boys is indisputable. Nick Bletchley. Lenny Cadogan. Dusty Fleming.

EXT. DRY SKI SLOPE/STARTING PLATFORM - DAY

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

OFFICIAL

"Edward Edwards"?

EDDIE

Eddie. "Fast Eddie." Whatever.

The OFFICIAL with the clipboard directs him to the start gate, a frowning glance at Eddie's shoddy equipment.

TARGET (VO)

It's time to let go of the years - the *decades* - of underachievement and re-set our sights on victory.

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

EXT. DRY SKI SLOPE - DAY

Julie can't help chewing a nail as the big moment arrives.

INT. DRY SKI SLOPE/CORPORATE BOX - DAY

As the G&Ts flow, Target is cornered by a bluff journalist.

BLUFF JOURNALIST

I must say, you're sounding a lot more confident than your predecessor.

TARGET

With good reason. I promise you - today you're going see downhill displays that will leave you speechless -

Heads are turning as the klaxon sounds and Eddie bounces into view.

EXT. DRY SKI SLOPE - DAY

Here he comes - smashing down the slope, barely following the "line," which shows his best quality is suicidal bravery. Not much style, plenty of guts.

Julie mimes along with Eddie's run, like a coach almost. Knowing he's doing everything right.

JULIE

Go on, Eddie, you bastard!

He takes the corners amazingly fast and tightly, 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 blot on his landscape.

Eddie comes flailing into the last two turns and suddenly the flaw in his approach becomes apparent. Julie sees it a split-second ahead of it happening - he simply fails to make one of the turns.

He flies straight off a ridge instead, shooting over the course boundary, impressively aloft until he crashes headfirst into a billboard.

It reads: "I bet he drinks Carling Black Label."

Julie's already hurrying towards him, knocking aside a few Hooray Henrys as she goes.

EXT. DRY SKI SLOPE/CORPORATE BOX - DAY

All the guests are indeed speechless, just as Target predicted. The Bluff Journalist turns to Target, "You were saying?"

Target turns and beckons over a Bosa MINION.

INT. FIRST AID ROOM - DAY

Eddie shakes off the attentions of a couple of St. John's Ambulance men to remonstrate with Target's Minion.

EDDIE

What are you talking about? I've got a second run to do.

MINION

Not anymore. It's revoked.

JULIE

What for?

Julie is as outraged as Eddie.

EDDIE

Yeah, what the chuff for?

Eddie's eye is already swelling up, his latex suit is ripped, his goggles are spider-webbed... Where to begin?

MINION

The official communication will make everything clear.

EDDIE

The what?

INT. EDWARDS' HALLWAY - DAY

A heavy manila envelope drops through the letter box, stamped with the BOSA Logo.

INT. EDWARDS' KITCHEN - DAY

Rows of royal china on a sideboard - Charles, Di, HRH, Prince Philip, all the family. They are the pride and joy of Eddie's MOTHER, a fiercely jolly woman in a muumuu.

She sits down to join Eddie's DAD at the dinner table. He's dressed in his builder's clothes, eating his breakfast fry-up and reading The Sun.

Eddie enters frowning over the Bosa letter.

EDDIE

I got my downhill application back.

Mum and Dad exchange a charged, long-suffering look as Eddie starts to read the letter. They are not exactly fans of his Olympic quest.

EDDIE'S DAD

What does it say?

He's not sure.

EDDIE'S MUM

Well, read it out then.

EDDIE

"...a negative decision based in part on the un-ignorable number of instances of wilful and reckless conduct not in keeping with the codes and measures of the British Olympic Snowsport Alliance as enshrined in the Bosa statutes..."

EDDIE'S DAD

In other words, 'No.'

EXT. BOSA TRAINING FIELD - DAY

Target turns from admiring the downhill ski squad as they heartily perform synchronised (and ludicrous) knee-bend exercises. "Effort, Tom." "Work it, Nick, work it."

TARGET

Don't take it personally. We've turned down 20 - 30 skiers just as good as you.

EDDIE

But I'm the only one with real guts.

TARGET

Well I'm the one who's only got 12 months to prep for Calgary. You're too raw. It's that simple.

Eddie adjusts his specs. That was a little more blunt than he was expecting.

EDDIE

So you're saying I can't get any training because I haven't had any training. That makes a lot of bloody sense.

Target stares back at Eddie quite unmoved.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I was 45 seconds at the halfway mark. That's a qualifying run time. If I'd gone any faster I'd have taken off -

TARGET

You did.

He coolly extends a finger towards the lump on Eddie's forehead.

TARGET (CONT'D)

You treat my slalom run like a ski-jump - then seriously expect to be accepted?

Eddie pulls up short. Calling him a ski-jumper. That's a really low blow.

TARGET (CONT'D)

In any case, it's not just about speed and guts. It's about temperament, finesse, *polish*.

Target steers him away before he makes a scene.

TARGET (CONT'D)

You forget this is the Olympic downhill we're talking about. The cream of the alpine disciplines. Our boys *have* to be the finished article.

EDDIE

Public school boys, you mean.

Target doesn't deny it. In fact, it's pretty much the crux of the matter.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Give me the same training, I'd be just as good as some of them, if not better -

TARGET

But that's my point.

Two men standing in a field as they're blown by the wind. It might as well be a duel.

TARGET (CONT'D)

If you're not good enough now, it's too late.

INT. EDDIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The Olympic shrine that is Eddie's bedroom.

Skiing posters, charts, ski magazines, albums. Photos of little Eddie trying various sports, but from age 12 on, it's all downhill skiing -

Eddie accepting a junior trophy or two, showing off his many bandages, slings and plastercasts.

Adult Eddie sits on the floor going through all his Olympic albums and ski mementos. Photos of Eddie teaching little kids how to ski.

JULIE

It's not the end of the world,
love.

EDDIE

It's the end of mine. I've spent
half my life working for this.

She sits next to him, against his bed, stroking his hair. Even his duvet is pattern of winter sports – tobogganing, slaloming, jumping.

JULIE

I know. It's hard. But we've got to
think about what comes next.

He tries, but there's not much. She slides down next to him.

JULIE (CONT'D)

We talked about getting our own
place, didn't we. Well, we can do
that now, can't we.

EDDIE

How?

JULIE

You get your City and Guilds in
plastering, we could easily stretch
to a starter flat.

Eddie contemplates his work clothes draped over a chair, his boots below. All of them splattered with dried plaster.

She gets up and goes, her feelings hurt.

JULIE (CONT'D)

It was just a suggestion.

EDDIE

No, it's a good one. I like it -

But he's too late. She's gone. He curls up on his bed in utter despair. Staring into space. Nothing but a ski-jumper on a peak of duvet for comfort.

EXT. BUILDING SITE - DAY

The tinny sound of Radio 1. The babble of construction workers. Eddie stirs away, 'knocking up' a tin tub of plaster, his hands caked in the stuff.

EDDIE'S DAD

Alright, you skiving bastards. What have you got?

Eddie's Dad enters and inspects the plaster - like a chef testing a sauce. A derisive grunt.

EDDIE'S DAD (CONT'D)

Still too thick.

IT'S LUNCHTIME

Eddie's fellow brickies sit around scoffing pie and chips, reading tabloids, smoking roll-ups, swapping banter.

On the sports pages is a photo of Target and the British Downhill squad heading off to St. Moritz.

WORKMAN

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

He pointedly shows it to Eddie, off to one side, munching on a banana and glugging a milk carton. Eddie glares at him.

WORKMAN (CONT'D)

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 know what you're talking about.

WORKMAN

Konrad Bartelski here.

He starts humming the "Ski Sunday" theme and miming the slalom.

EDDIE

Get stuffed.

More workers join in, humming away, until Eddie flings his banana skin at them. He leaves - chased by a jeering volley of chips and chunks of pie crust.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Eddie has strayed back to his old ski club with its plastic slope, loitering by the fence. Some TEENAGERS are skiing off a bump and jumping over a couple of milk crates.

TEENS

Hey, Fast Eddie./You four-eyed
tosser/ Alright, matey.

Eddie gives them a good-natured V-sign.

TEEN #1

What happened? I heard you stopped
training.

EDDIE

Hanging out with a bunch of
chinless wonders, who needs it.

Not him, obviously.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I mean, if I wanted to be polished,
I'd be a bloody doorknob wouldn't
I.

They're not sure how to reply. Eddie changes the subject.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Two crates? That all you can
manage? I jumped the whole fence
when I was your age. Right into the
carpark.

OLDER TEEN

Then they banned you.

EDDIE

It wasn't a ban. I was
"indefinitely suspended."

He moves along the fence, finding the exact spot.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

It was over this bit here. We set
up a little ramp and put down a
mattress over here and whoosh...
Evel Knievel on skis.

He retraces and relives the trajectory.

FLASH CUT Young Eddie sailing over the fence, scraping over a car roof and onto a mattress with a wallop.

Adult Eddie smiles at the memory of it. His Young Self enjoying the reaction he got from the watching kids.

At least until the Slope Manager appears, screaming in outrage.

BACK IN THE PRESENT

Eddie realizes the Teens have moved on, heading back up the slope.

He takes a last look around before starting for home. Off he goes. Trudging away in his work boots...

Until something makes him stop. He turns back and looks at the fence - an idea forming in his head.

EXT. BUILDING SITE - DAY

And it's an idea that won't go away as he trowels away at a tub of plaster, his Dad behind him giving orders.

EDDIE'S DAD

Then you slap on half an inch for the second base. You always need a little extra with the pea-shingle - Oi, are you listening?

EDDIE

Pea-shingle. Half an inch.

Eddie's Dad grunts, none too convinced. Especially when he sees the strange shape in Eddie's plaster... like a ski jump.

EDDIE'S DAD

And what the chuff d'you call that?

EXT. BOSA HQ - DAY

Eddie enters past the insignia of the British Olympics Snowsport Association - BOSA.

INT. BOSA HQ - DAY

Eddie is in the research library/office with a BOSA OFFICIAL.

BOSA OFFICIAL

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

Eddie doesn't look remotely disappointed.

EDDIE
Not even a small one?

BOSA OFFICIAL
No. And no likelihood of one
either. Britain hasn't had a ski-
jumper since 1936.

EDDIE
That's terrible.

Eddie can barely contain his joy.

EXT. BOSA HQ - DAY

He bursts out the doors and down the steps, picking up speed, leaping onto a low wall, running to the end and launching himself off like a ski-jumper as -

INT. EDWARDS' HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

A dollop of mash potato plops onto Prince Andrew and Fergie smiling faces. The fancy china is out for the Edwards's Sunday roast.

EDDIE'S MUM
I know the ones you mean. The
conversions on the corner with the
pebble-dash.

JULIE
That's the ones. One-bedroom.
Kitchen-dinette. Move-in ready.

Eddie sits at the other end of the table, his knee bouncing like crazy. He repeatedly rolls a pea off his fork onto a mashed potato skislope. Biding his time.

Finally they all notice he's got something to say.

EDDIE'S DAD
What are you grinning about?

EDDIE
I've only gone and made new plans,
haven't I.

JULIE
Plans?

EDDIE'S MUM
What plans?

EXT. EDWARDS' HOUSE - NIGHT

The local cat flees as the night sky is streaked with parental effing and blinding. "You're out of your mind!"

INT. EDWARDS' HOUSE/EDDIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mum and Dad and Julie trail Eddie as he packs up his ski gear.

EDDIE
Look, it's not like I'm taking up ballet. It's still skiing. Only higher. So I'm halfway there already.

EDDIE'S DAD
Yeah, halfway to breaking your neck. Eddie, this is demented. Britain doesn't even have a ski-jumping team.

EDDIE
That's the whole point. No jumpers means no competition for places. So I don't have to worry about getting into the squad.
(sharing his trade secret)
Squad? I am the squad.

JULIE
You're the squad?

EDDIE
Julie, I'll literally be the only bloke in Britain doing it. The Olympic Committee will have no choice but to accept me.

Eddie struggles to close the zipper over his skis but no one offers to help.

EDDIE'S DAD
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. I got my old job back.

Eddie produces one of the many ski resort brochures stacked under his bed. He is pictured among the zany resort staff - "Fast Eddie" - teaching young kids how to snowplow.

In the background of the photo are four ascending ski-jumps - small, medium, large and bloody gigantic.

EDDIE'S DAD

Christ on a bike.

EDDIE

Dad, it's a gift. A second chance.

EDDIE'S DAD

It's a bloody wild goose chase is what it is.

Mum blanches at the size of the jumps in the photo.

EDDIE'S MUM

Oh Eddie...

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Eddie finds Julie who has recoiled to the hallway, understandably feeling more than a little betrayed,

JULIE

Thanks for discussing it with me first.

EDDIE

We'll go look at places when I get back. I promise.

EDDIE'S DAD

(stomping past them)
If you get back.

Julie stares at Eddie, mystified, as his Mum's concerned sighs grow louder from the bedroom.

EXT. GARMISCH - NIGHT

The brochure photo dissolves to the real ski-jumps all lit up with spotlights.

Eddie's view from the van he's hitched a ride in as it descends the mountain road to Garmisch. Music blaring from the Walkman he wears on all his travels.

EXT. GARMISCH STADIUM - NIGHT

Eddie lugs his gear from the van and hurries through an archway into the floodlit landing arena.

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

At the top, in silhouette, a last JUMPER is setting off, down the ramp. Eddie moves nearer in anticipation.

The Jumper shoots into the air, soaring through the sparkling night sky, 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 even closer and sees this isn't just the national squad, it's the Olympic squad. There it is, like a lucky omen, on all their gear - the five-ring logo.

INT. GARMISCH/EDDIE'S DORM ROOM - DAWN

An alarm clock glows - 5:30am - in a tiny dormitory crammed with bunk-beds. Eddie creeps out with his gear, smacking a snoring German roommate with his ski-tip. "Hosenscheisser!"

EXT. GARMISCH 15M JUMP - DAWN

Eddie bypasses the baby jump for beginners and goes straight to the 15m jump.

He is all alone except for the PUT-PUT of a snow-grooming machine, chugging up the mountain.

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.

He can't believe his luck.

EDDIE

What a doddle.

He scrambles to the next jump up, the 40m, unaware that the snow-groomer has stopped and swivelled round to watch.

This jump is a lot faster and for one magical second he is airborne, letting out a wobbly whoop of joy.

Then he tumbles over headfirst and slams into the slope with a bone-crunching thump.

INT. GARMISCH/SAUNA - DAY

Waves of steam engulf Lars and the Swedish team.

NASAL VOICE

Room for a little one?

It is Eddie, sporting sturdy swimming trunks and a huge plaster over his nose.

EDDIE

Hi there. Eddie Edwards, Great Britain.

The Swedes shuffle up as he plonks down.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I'll get right down to business if I may. I've just started on the 40m and it's going pretty well, 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

About a week.

SWEDISH COACH

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

Eddie nods firmly, steam clouding his specs. This completely nude man now standing over him.

SWEDISH COACH (CONT'D)

You know who Matti Nykanen is?

EDDIE

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

The Coach rocks back on his heels, hands on hips.

SWEDISH COACH

So maybe I give you something
harder then?

It's not quite the phrase Eddie would have used, but okay.

SWEDISH COACH (CONT'D)

Like what is 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 clicks his fingers at Lars, who leaps to his feet.

LARS

The maximum wideness is 11.5 cm.

Correct.

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.

A bolder guess this time. But it provokes another finger-
click and another naked jumper leaping up.

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, starting to blanch a little at the encircling array of eye-level appendages.

EDDIE

Well, like I said, I'm only a beginner.

SWEDISH COACH

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

He gives a double finger-click this time and the whole naked team leaps up.

SWEDISH COACH (CONT'D)

We have not the moments to help. Goodbye.

Out he goes, his team obediently shuffling after him.

EXT. GARMISCH SLOPES - DAY

Eddie tramps up the slope, dragging his skis.

EDDIE

Swedish wankers. All they've done is invent the meatball.

He approaches one of the AMATEUR JUMP COACHES, again under the gaze of the passing snow-grooming machine.

The AMATEUR JUMP COACH listens skeptically to Eddie's request for help. The big nose plaster really doesn't help his case. The Amateur Coach points Eddie across the slope -

To a bunch of pimply TEENAGE JUMPERS. They react to Eddie's pitch with "too cool for school" derision, and point him across to another bunch of guys.

A group of 8-year-olds. Snooty blonde Aryan wunderkind in fancy latex outfits.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Come on. A few tips. What do you say?

Eddie flees under a ferocious bombardment of snowballs.

EXT. GARMISCH - SLOPE - DUSK

It's late, the floodlights are getting switched off, and Eddie trudges back at the end of another long, bruising day.

VOICE

I'll give you a few tips if you want.

It's the driver of the snowgroomer, descending from his parked machine. It's a beaten up old machine, despite the banner across the windshield: "Carve diem."

PEARY

Take up gardening.

This is BRONSON PEARY, the hard-partying, heavily weathered resort fixture with a dash of aging surf bum elan, lighting up one of many cigarillos, the kind with a plastic tip.

EDDIE

Get stuffed.

PEARY

It's not like you couldn't use 'em. You got more postural errors than the Elephant Man.

Eddie has to check. Yes, this is the cigar-puffing out-of-shape full-of-shit snowgroomer telling him this, resplendent in his overalls and upturned collar.

PEARY (CONT'D)

Hunched back. Protruding posterior. Elbows tucked in like you're still doing downhill.

EDDIE

Now you're the expert?

PEARY

I'm just stating the obvious.

EDDIE

Well, state this.

Eddie gives him a V-sign and enters his dorm block. Peary blinks, quite taken aback. Around him, some work-mates look at Peary derisively. "You really put him in his place, didn't you."

INT. COMMUNAL SHOWERS - NIGHT

Eddie emerges in his sturdy trunks with a towel to find Peary blocking his way.

PEARY

Hey. I'm making a serious point here.

(jabbing his cigar)

If you don't respect the hill, you shouldn't be strapping on your skis.

EDDIE

What do you know about it, you're nothing but a glorified lawn-mower.

He waves aside the smoke and steps right up to Peary.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Come on, you know so much, tell me where my elbows *should* go.

Peary suddenly flicks aside his cigar and grabs Eddie's wrists, flipping him round and doubling him over, and YANKS back his arms

PEARY

Down your backside. Like a railroad track.

A SKIER peers round a toilet cubicle, a little alarmed at the Turkish prison scene that greets him.

PEARY (CONT'D)

How can you not know this? This is Jumping 101. Chest down. Arms back. Body forward. On tiptoes - like a bullet.

Eddie topples forward into the cubicle of the peering Skier, trousers round his ankles, right onto the guy's lap.

EXT. GARMISCH SLOPE - DAY

A line of KIDS poised in basic snow plows, waiting on their teacher, "Fast" Eddie, who is chatting with his front office pal, ANDRE.

A couple of restless pupils are using their ski sticks as light sabres complete with "bzzzzzthmm" sound effects.

EDDIE

So he's not completely full of
shit?

ANDRE

Not completely, no. Look he even
made the Olympic squad.

Andre shows Eddie a tattered old ski album: "*Bronson Peary, Boulder, Colorado - rising star of the interstate circuit.*" A teenage Peary flying through the air. Posing with victorious team mates. And, crucially, with the Olympic squad.

ANDRE (CONT'D)

Obviously, they kicked him out
pretty quickly.

EDDIE

What for?

ANDRE

Being an impossible asshole!
(what else could it have
been?)

Eddie doesn't care. He studies the Olympic photo intently. His nose beyond repair for now, oblivious as the light sabre fight gets out of hand, toppling his pupils like dominos.

EXT. GARMISCH/MOUNTAINS - EVENING

Peary is holding court at the resort bar, dispensing incontrovertible wisdom about the best ski runs to some of the younger crowd, doing bar tricks, schnorring for free drinks.

EDDIE

You're a dark horse.

Eddie stands there in his garish shellsuit.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Interstate Youth Champion. Boulder,
Colorado, 1973. Andre told me all
about it.

PEARY

Well, Andre also said he's screwed
Princess Stephanie of Monaco.

Clearly, Peary is going to milk this for all its worth.

EDDIE

He showed me a picture.

PEARY

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

EDDIE

Of you. On the 90 at Lake Placid.
You clocked 118 meters!

Peary is a brick wall of false modesty.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

You were in the Olympic Squad for
Christ's sake -

PEARY

- Junior Olympics -

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

EDDIE

If I had your pedigree, I'd be out
there moulding champions, not
shovelling snow.

PEARY

Hey. I'm trying to relax here.
D'you mind?

EDDIE

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

PEARY

Well, you don't.

He turns back to his younger cronies, quickly swallowed up in
their noisy boozy antics, leaving Eddie standing there -
marooned.

EXT. PEARY'S WORKSHOP - DAWN

Peary trundles up to his snowgroomer, trying to shake off a
hefty hangover. And there is the last person in the world he
wants to see -

EDDIE

A few tips. That's all.

Peary gets into the cabin and shuts the door.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
One measly lesson.

Peary fires up the engine, its unholy rattle drowning him out. Eddie shouts louder. Peary mimes "I can't hear you," lurching forward, forcing Eddie to jump out the way.

INT. PEARY'S SNOW-GROOMER - DAY

Peary rumbles up the slope, shaking his head at this nutjob, when he hears a THUMP...as Eddie jumps aboard the running board.

PEARY
Hey. Authorized personnel only.

Eddie mimes back "I can't hear you." Peary swerves sharply, one way then the other, but Eddie hangs on.

EDDIE
Come on. One lousy lesson!

Peary veers over to some trees. Edging alongside until branches start whipping over Eddie.

Peary edges closer, eyeball to eyeball with Eddie, as he gets hit with a crunching barrage of twigs and pine needles.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
I won't get any better unless you help me.

PEARY
Then you won't get any better!

WHAM - a big branch makes Eddie disappear from view with a YELP.

Peary pulls away, adjusting his rearview so he can see Eddie's tumbling body in his wake.

But there is no sign of him. Only a tenacious hand on the side door as Eddie clambers back into view, spitting out pine needles.

EXT. GARMISCH STREET - NIGHT

Peary leads Eddie down to a gym building, flicking away his cigar, digging out a big ring of keys.

PEARY

Alright, one lesson - just to get you out of my face.

EXT. SWEDES' TRAINING ROOM - NIGHT

Peary leads him to a door, working the lock.

EDDIE

Peary. This is the Swedes' set-up.

PEARY

So?

EDDIE

They're a pretty uptight bunch, that's all.

PEARY

That's the problem with modern jumping. The bureaucrats have taken over. Killed all the fun, all the spontaneity. Turned everyone into robots.

INT. SWEDES' TRAINING ROOM - NIGHT

He leads Eddie into the gym, carefully bolting the door on the inside.

There are blackboards with diagrams, a miniature ski-jump, a flexible 6" model of a skier and a strange leather harness contraption dangling from the ceiling.

Peary picks up the model skier and holds it solemnly under Eddie's nose.

PEARY

You've got to free your mind.

He circles the room, testing the harness, inspecting the diagrams.

PEARY (CONT'D)

Attitude is altitude.

Is he gathering his thoughts or stalling for time? Eddie's not sure until Peary abruptly kicks into life.

PEARY (CONT'D)

The foundation of any jump is the take-off.

(MORE)

PEARY (CONT'D)

That's where you've got to master
the jumping paradox -
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 goes from crouch to lift-off position and flops backwards.

PEARY (CONT'D)

Too soon.

Then flop forwards.

PEARY (CONT'D)

Too late.

Then spins into a crotch-knotting tangle that no words can explain. Peary, revelling in his new role of appalled grandmaster, wrangles Eddie back into position.

PEARY (CONT'D)

Let's try a more instinctive approach. Who's your favorite movie star?

EDDIE

(that's easy)

Burt Reynolds. I must have seen Hooper 28 times.

PEARY

Female movie star.

That's not so easy.

PEARY (CONT'D)

Whoever you want? My treat. Jane Fonda? Sigourney Weaver? Raquel Welch? The buffet is yours,

Eddie furrows his brow.

PEARY (CONT'D)

Mr. Picky here. What about a singer then? ...Carly Simon? Cher? *Madonna?*

EDDIE

Too tarty.

PEARY

(okay, in that case)
Whitney Houston.

EDDIE

She used to sing in a choir! Far too clean-cut.

Peary raises his palms and backs off. Just trying to help.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
Honestly. Linda Gray.

Peary has to think about that one.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
You know, Sue Ellen from Dallas.

PEARY
JR's wife?

Eddie nods firmly. That's the one.

PEARY (CONT'D)
Who's the dark horse now?

Peary gets the miniature ski-jump -

PEARY (CONT'D)
Eddie, tonight's your lucky night.
From now on, every time you jump, I
want you approach to it as if
you're making love to Sue-Ellen.

Eddie adjust his specs, wrapping his brain around the concept
- blowing his own mind a little.

EDDIE
What about my girlfriend?

PEARY
It's just a mental exercise. But
you'll probably find this brings
you closer together.

Using the miniature ski jump to illustrate -

PEARY (cont'd) (CONT'D)
The starting gate is your foreplay.
The in-run is where you build your
rhythm, gaining momentum. 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.

He turns for the answer.

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
Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!

A unique primal mix of war cry and sexual ecstasy...

PEARY (CONT'D)
The noise you make! This is you and
the hill communing together, two
into one in perfect unity. If you
don't give it everything, it won't
work.

Eddie crouches over, in bare feet now, flexing his toes and
lifting his heels.

PEARY (CONT'D)
Come on, let me hear you on three.
Crouch and clench. Crouch and
clench.

Eddie's winces and strains, joining in, flexing and lifting,
starting to sweat.

PEARY/EDDIE
Crouch and clench and RELEASE!

Eddie lifts off with an exhausted grunt.

PEARY
Woah.

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 comes right up to Eddie's face and lets rip.

PEARY
Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!

He keeps going until Eddie joins in, conducting him as he gets louder and louder.

EDDIE/PEARY
Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh -

EXT. SWEDES' TRAINING ROOM - NIGHT

Startled lights snap on in the neighboring dorm rooms.

EXT. GARMISCH SLOPE - DAY

Peary is parked under his snow-mobile trying to fix the tired old engine. Eddie crouches by his feet handing over various tools when needed.

EDDIE
Before this gets any further, you should know I am serious about this.

PEARY
Before what gets any further?

EDDIE
I'm going to the Olympics at Calgary next February.

TARGET
To watch?

EDDIE
To jump.

Peary wipes his brow. This should be interesting.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
I've got a loophole.

He leans forward, lowering his voice.

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

Peary leans forward, lowering *his* voice.

PEARY

I know.

Peary grits his teeth, wrenching at a greasy axle.

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

None. Bosa hasn't updated the rules in 52 years.

PEARY

Yeah, but you've still got to be jumping on the European Circuit. That's Olympic protocol. And that's not cheap - licence fees, entry fees, travel, accommodation -

EDDIE

I don't have to go anywhere. The Olympic requirement is one completed Circuit jump. One. And I can do that right here -

Eddie indicates a nearby poster for the Garmisch Seniors Tournament - smiling old people in latex.

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, you gremlin.

Peary takes a moment. Eddie might actually be onto something here.

PEARY

What about getting the interview with the Circuit Committee? That's not exactly a picnic.

EDDIE

Why do you think I'm talking to you now?

(he produces some paperwork)

11:30 - tomorrow.

This really does impress Peary.

PEARY

How the hell d'you get an interview with the Committee? These things take months.

FLASH CUT - A flurry of ringing phones and harassed sports Bureaucrats dealing with the pest that won't go away until finally...

HARASSED BUREAUCRATS

Yes/Fine/Okay./Just stop calling!

BACK TO EDDIE

Adjusting his glasses modestly.

EDDIE

Charm.

Peary is starting to look at this funny looking guy in a new light.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

So? Are you in or out?

PEARY

Eddie, I'm not one to piss on anyone's dream. Think big, be big. That's my motto.

He pauses from wiping engine muck from his hands to make sure he gets this vital point across.

PEARY (CONT'D)

But the Seniors jump - that's not even two months from now.

EDDIE

I know.

PEARY

Well, the smallest jump they have is the 70m. Same as at Calgary. Even the average jumper takes four years to build up to it.

Peary holds up four fingers in Eddie's face - "Four."

EDDIE

But I'm not the average jumper.

Eddie holds up his forefinger -

EDDIE (CONT'D)

You know how long it took me to do the 40?

"One."

EDDIE (CONT'D)

One day.

PEARY

Even Matti Nykanen took two years to do the 70 and he was a child prodigy.

EDDIE

It's just a jump - only taller.

Peary stops on a dime. Excuse me?

PEARY

Eddie. Never think you're bigger than the slope.

INT. SNOW-GROOMING WORKSHOP - DAY

Eddie has followed Peary into his workshop

EDDIE

Come on, you're acting like a hairdresser. I can do it.

Peary shakes his head at this nonsense. Enough is enough.

PEARY

In that case, let's do it now.

EDDIE

You're on.

PEARY

I mean, right now.

They are nose to nose, neither one moving.

EDDIE

Great.

PEARY

Super.

EDDIE

Terrific.

EXT. GARMISCH 70M JUMP - DAY

The game of bluff continues at the bottom of the steps. Eddie, now in his gear, gathers his skis.

EDDIE

If I do this, you help me get to the Seniors, right?

PEARY

I'll even wax your skis. And when you don't, you buy me a box of these.

Peary lights up a tiparillo.

PEARY (CONT'D)

I don't want this to take all day. You've got until this burns down.

Eddie scoffs - it's a fairly long cigar.

EDDIE

No tips?

PEARY

Arms straight, fanny in.

What more do you need? Eddie starts up the steps, a big show of nonchalance.

EDDIE

You not coming up?

PEARY

I find the optimum view is from the bottom.

Peary saunters down the slope and joins some of his young Bar Crowd, who have gathered to watch.

BAR BUDDY

He's not going to jump that?

PEARY

Of course not.

They're not sure they understand.

PEARY (CONT'D)
It's like a wild mustang. You can't
make 'em till you break 'em.

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.

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 snaps his boots into his skis. But the closer angle down the ramp is even more terrifying. He simply freezes up.

Peary finds a spot to sit down, flicking more ash, savoring the last of his smoke.

PEARY (CONT'D)
In your own time. No rush.

EDDIE

stays stuck on the ramp, too scared to go forward, too proud to go back. All he can see are the puffs of smoke swirling up from Peary.

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 slope just as Peary flicks his cigar butt into the air.

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 in the ramp.

He flies into the air as the tumbling cigar butt starts to plummet.

It is the shortest 70m jump in history. A hunched rocket plunging straight to earth.

Peary recoils as Eddie bounces down the slope, briefly upright, before flipping over spectacularly.

Just like the tumbling, falling cigar butt.

The Swedes watch, stunned, as Eddie goes tumbling himself, rolling and bouncing past. Painfully skidding to a halt.

The cigar tip spears the snow and extinguishes itself with a fizz.

Peary instinctively rushes over to help. Everyone else just stares. Lars peers over the top of the ramp.

Eddie waits till Peary arrives, then rolls over, a groaning tangled mess, face covered with snow: "How was that?"

Eddie grins even more when he sees the glimpse of amazement on Peary's face before Peary regains his gruff poise.

PEARY (CONT'D)

I thought I told you to keep your
arms straight.

But clearly Peary's never seen anything like it. The moment is broken by angry shouting spews from a bullhorn. It is the Swedish coach, racing over, beetroot with rage.

SWEDISH COACH

Jävlar, satan och helvete! Har du
piss i huvudet, eller?

Subtitles if needed: "Damn, damn, damn. Do you have piss in your head or what?"

PEARY

Take it easy. It's all under control.

Peary helps Eddie off the slope, the Swedish Coach's voice getting more high-pitched as he throws Eddie's skis after them.

SWEDISH COACH

Next time, I stick them under your Pisten-Bully.

EDDIE

Look forward to it.

Peary wrangles Eddie to zip it. That's enough fuss for one day. But Eddie can't stop grinning, even as he rubs his bruised jaw.

EXT. GARMISCH/EDDIE'S DORM BLOCK - DAY

The sun rises up on a new day, a new start. Peary hurries up to Eddie's dorm block, conspicuously smartened up to face the Committee, starting to enjoy all this in spite of himself.

INT. GARMISCH/EDDIE'S DORM BLOCK - DAY

A strange groaning is coming from Eddie's room. Peary pushes his way through the cluster of German roommates and sees -

INT. EDDIE'S ROOM - DAY

Eddie's face has swollen to the size of a football. He is trying to get up from his bunk bed, while clutching an ice-pack.

GERMAN ROOM-MATE

(to Peary)

You have to talk to him. He refuses to go to hospital.

EDDIE

I-just-need-a-first-aid-kit.

He buckles over, gasping with excruciating pain.

PEARY

You don't want to cancel?

Eddie shakes his head firmly, which succeeds releasing a stream of drool.

EDDIE

It'll-take-too-long-to-reschedule.

Eddie is getting less and less intelligible. But Peary understands and is kind of amused by it.

PEARY

Suit yourself.

He helps Eddie up, but the slightest movement to Eddie's head makes him clutch his cheek and HOWL.

GERMAN ROOM-MATE

When the swelling is that much, you have to support the jaw.

PEARY

Here's an idea. You hold him steady and I'll stand around making useless comments.

Peary looks around for something to use as a bandage.

PEARY (CONT'D)

Someone must have first aid kit surely?

Actually, no one does.

GERMAN ROOM-MATE

(having to shout over
Eddie's howling)

You don't think the Committee's going to be a little suspicious?

PEARY

"The Committee." What do they know about jumping? They're just pen-pushers and pointy heads.

INT. EUROPEAN CIRCUIT HQ - DAY

Not quite. A imposing row of sporting grandees - the Committee - sits under the logo for the European Circuit. Staring in formidable disbelief.

COMMITTEE MEMBER #1

So Mr. Edwards, you are saying you are *not* a reckless jumper?

Each Member asks a question in turn, each with a different but intimidatingly thick accent: German, French, Czech, Finnish.

Eddie gingerly shakes his head, which seems to be wrapped in something.

COMMITTEE MEMBER #2

And you never take unnecessary risks?

EDDIE

No, sir.

He slurps noisily to contain his drooling saliva.

COMMITTEE MEMBER #3

And you are also in good physical condition with a sufficient command of jumping technique to be considered an asset to the sport?

Eddie nods. We now see his jaw is wrapped and tied in his floral pillowcase.

COMMITTEE MEMBER #4

I'm sorry? I couldn't hear.

EDDIE

Yes, sir.

His eyes water with the pain. A committee member leans forward. He just has to ask.

COMMITTEE MEMBER #4

Then perhaps you can explain why you are wearing a pillowcase around your head?

Eddie readies to answer, but looking up into the daunting row of faces - he freezes.

The only sign of life is the stream of drool falling out of his numb, swollen mouth and hitting the gleaming floor with a SPLAT.

The Committee shifts its collective gaze to Peary.

COMMITTEE MEMBER #3

Mr. ...Peary, you are the coach?

He breezily tweaks his tie.

PEARY

It's more of a sports consultancy role. My core philosophy is what I call Expressive Jumping. The foundation is technical, obviously, but the ultimate aim is transcendent, artistic, expressive.
 (warming to his theme)
 True jumping comes, I believe, from a mix of physics and art -

COMMITTEE MEMBER #2

We know what jumping is. We just want to know why Mr. Edwards is wearing a pillowcase?

Eddie can barely look at Peary. This is all too awful. But Peary doesn't buckle. He leans back with even more studied nonchalance.

PEARY

It's actually an impacted molar. The pillowcase is just a temporary measure.

COMMITTEE MEMBER #1

You don't have medical insurance?

PEARY

No, no - we have it.
 (of course they don't)
 It's just our resort dentist... got injured today.

It's impossible to tell what the Committee thinks.

PEARY (CONT'D)

In a ski-jumping accident, ironically enough. He was told the regulations. He ignored them. He crashed. A classic example of the kind of person we need to keep away from jumping.
 (with the merest wink at Eddie)

These well-meaning maverick romantics who think they can outsmart the rules and precepts so meticulously laid down by senior administrators like yourselves.

Peary shoots his cuffs and tweaks his collar.

PEARY (CONT'D)
Gentlemen, let me assure you, that
is not the kind of operation we
run.

EXT. EUROPEAN CIRCUIT HQ - DAY

The front doors open as Peary and Eddie scurry out the building. Peary leading the way - still unable to believe they've pulled it off.

PEARY
Not yet... Not yet. Okay now.

As soon as they are out of sight, Eddie unleashes an abject HOWL of searing pain. Peary quickly muffles him with his scarf.

PEARY (CONT'D)
What are you moaning for? You're on
the Circuit!

Peary re-ties Eddie's pillowcase tight with a YANK - silencing him.

EDDIE
I'm not moaning. I'm celebrating!

Eddie brushes off Peary's assistance and starts walking.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
Come on. We've got less than 8
weeks to ready. We've got to get
moving.

The pair of them set off with a epic determination. All the way across the road to a little bus stop to inspect the timetable.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
When's the next one?

PEARY
25 minutes.

EXT. GARMISCH 70M JUMP - DAY

The echo of PA announcements and light applause - the Annual Garmisch Seniors Tournament in full swing.

It's a modest easygoing crowd. Lots of chatter, laughter, missing teeth. Spry, spindly antique jumpers signing in at the registration table, all having a whale of a time.

And Eddie looking very intense as he's prepped by Peary.

PEARY

This crowd can be just as snotty as a real Circuit crowd. So don't get intimidated. Just stay focused and do what we've done in training.

Eddie heads for stairs, psyching himself up.

EDDIE

You're one jump away from the Olympics. You're one jump away from the Olympics.

He passes a couple of Arrogant Teens (the ones who refused to help him earlier), who swap looks and laugh at Eddie's mantra.

ARROGANT TEEN

(in German with subtitles)
[He really thinks he's going to the Olympics?]

They gesture that Eddie is crazy, only to find Peary glaring at them -

PEARY

Like you're anything special.

He stomps off down the hill to take his place. The Teens react: "What's his problem?" while a horrified busybody SPECTATOR, who's watched all of it, complains to an ORGANIZER.

BUSYBODY

[These young men just insulted the entrant for the Special Olympics.]

ORGANIZER

["Special Olympics"? Which one?]

BUSYBODY

[The English jumper. They were laughing right at him. Right in front of his coach.]

ORGANIZER

[You insulted a "Special Olympics" jumper?]

The mini-drama escalates with more people sticking their noses in, including the PA Announcer. The ORGANIZER gets on the phone to the top of the tower to do damage control.

EXT. TOP OF GARMISCH 70M SLOPE - DAY

Eddie climbs the last of the stairs, still muttering to himself, clipping on his helmet. His chin strap is now customized with a MASSIVE piece of protective sponge.

He emerges to find everyone looking at him with uniformly welcoming smiles as the JUMP OFFICIAL discreetly hangs up the phone.

JUMP OFFICIAL

Eddie?

EDDIE

Yes.

It's very strange. All these people seem hugely impressed that he knows his own name.

JUMP OFFICIAL

You want to follow me?

EXT. GARMISCH 70M SLOPE - DAY

Peary takes his place in the technical area, well aware he is surrounded by bone fide jumping bigwigs.

And if that wasn't awkward enough, out comes the following announcement -

PA ANNOUNCER

(in German with subtitles)

[Our next jumper is Eddie Edwards from Great Britain. Eddie is new to the sport but if all goes well today, he can look forward to competing in the Special Olympics.]

A warm ripple goes through the crowd: Isn't that wonderful? Peary doesn't know where to look. A couple of the other coaches pat him warmly on the back.

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

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

PEARY

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

Eddie, quelle surprise, does not lift. He plops straight down onto the slope, still crouched over, a good 30 meters above the Measuring Officials at the normal landing position.

It is the shortest jump they've ever seen - testing their liberal composure to the limit.

Eddie rockets past them, still hunched over, crossing the crucial 'K point' red line to complete his jump.

Peary lets out a fist-clenched whoop of relief as Eddie skids to a ungainly halt.

ANNOUNCER

(in German with subtitles)

E. Edwards - 48 meters.

Eddie can't believe the crowd is applauding so warmly - a bank of smiles, cheers and thumbs up signs - even as his name flicks up his name in last place. "E. Edwards. 48m."

Eddie looks around, squinting without his glasses, to see who is getting all the cheers, then realizes it's him.

EDDIE

What are they all cheering for?

Er... Peary isn't sure how to answer that one until -

ANNOUNCER

[That is, I'm informed, a new
British record for a competitive
jump!]

PEARY

(seizing the excuse)

You just set a new British record.

EDDIE

Yeah?

Eddie starts to celebrate... leaping up and down, giddy with happiness.

The crowd clap ever more warmly, choking up at this wonderful example to us all.

Peary guiltily plays along as he gets another pat on the back.

Eddie has now moved on to doing an ungainly but joyous moonwalk, which moves many of the spectators to tears at his amazing triumph of the human spirit over adversity.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
 (to Peary)
 What were you worried about?
 They're not snotty at all.

Look - even the official PHOTOGRAPHER wants to take his picture. Click!

EXT. GARMISCH SLOPE - DAY

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

EDDIE
 How can you not know this? This is
 Snowplow 101! Knees bent. Elbows
 in. Backside out.

A row of kids, all crouched in the snowplow position, peer up at him, wide-eyed in terror.

PEARY
 (calling out)
 Eduardo.

Peary appears waving a clutch of envelopes and a newspaper.

INT. GARMISCH SLOPE - DAY

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 stamped with the BOSA logo in the rest of Eddie's mail. What's that?

Behind him, completely ignored, his class are back fighting with 'light sabres' causing all manner problems for passing skiers.

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 distance of 61 meters to be achieved in European Circuit contests as the minimum qualification for all future British ski-jumping contestants in Olympic competition..."

Eddie has to read it again to be sure.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

"Minimum qualification?"

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

INT. GARMISCH RESORT BAR - NIGHT

Peary lines up another drink through a cloud of a cigar smoke, back at his spot at the bar.

PEARY

So much for your loophole.

EDDIE

I'll go back and talk to them. Sort it out face to face.

PEARY

Like you did with your downhill application?

EDDIE

This is different.

PEARY

How?

Eddie is already heading for the exit, shouting above the evening's influx of Eurotrash.

EDDIE

They're dealing with the British Record Holder now!

INT. BOSA HQ - DAY

Eddie sits alone at one end of a long conference table. Knotted tie, Argyle V-neck, combed hair - all very neat, apart from his battered specs.

Facing him are Bosa flunkies on both sides of the table leading up to an official at the end in a telltale green blazer - his old pal, Dustin Target.

TARGET

Mr. Edwards, it costs £4.5 million to send a national squad to the Olympics. The government only gives us £2.5 million. How do you think we make up the difference?

EDDIE

Charities, fund-raisers.

TARGET

That gets you five percent if you include private benefactors.

EDDIE

TV rights?

TARGET

Which are controlled by the International Olympic Committee.

He waits. They all wait.

EDDIE

Sponsorship?

TARGET

Sponsorship.

(at last, the right answer)

Our survival is entirely dependent on the amount of corporate funding we attract.

EDDIE

I've never had a penny of sponsorship in my life.

TARGET

That is no surprise. Corporate sponsors pay to be associated with the finished article, not presumptuous incompetents.

Eddie grits his jaw.

EDDIE

Why do I stop being presumptuous if
I jump 61 meters?

TARGET

That was the distance ratified by
our health and safety committee.

Target indicates a rather porky-looking OFFICIAL.

EDDIE

Him? The only thing he could ratify
is a buffet -

Target slams his hand down, ending the discussion.

TARGET

Mr. Edwards, we've been over this
once already and our position could
not be clearer. We will not put
amateurs in with the real athletes.

Eddie's brow furrows.

EDDIE

I thought the Olympics was for
amateurs...

Chairs are already scraping back. The meeting is adjourned.

INT. EDWARDS' HOUSE/KITCHEN - EVENING

Eddie sits tensely at the kitchen table.

EDDIE'S DAD

Answer me this.

Eddie's Dad picks up the Prince Charles salt shaker.

EDDIE'S DAD (CONT'D)

If this is you now -

He puts it near the middle of the table.

EDDIE'S DAD (CONT'D)

How much more are they asking you
to jump?

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

EDDIE'S DAD (CONT'D)

So you're no better off than when
you left, are you.

He heads disgustedly into the other room. Eddie looks to his mother. She folds away her knitting, avoiding his gaze.

He looks back at the two royal figures. This huge gap. This impossibly huge gap.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The mournful swish of shellsuit as Eddie tramps along deserted streets. Past his old ski club with the floodlights all out.

A doorbell RINGS:

FEMALE VOICE (VO)

Coming.

EXT. JULIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Julie opens her front door to find a bedraggled Eddie on the doorstep.

EDDIE

Any chance of a hug?

INT. JULIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A floral duvet moves up and down to a stream of grateful grunts (his and hers).

Eddie's feet poke out at the bottom of the bed. Flexing and pointing. Flexing and pointing.

Julie's eyes go wide as his feet go rigid with a very un-British "cry of release."

INT. JULIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eddie and Julie lie there, side by side. Feeling weird. She watches his knee - bouncing restlessly under the sheet.

JULIE

You're not thinking of going back,
are you?

He's been thinking of nothing else.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Oh Eddie... It's impossible. You said so yourself.

EDDIE

But there's nothing here for me.

JULIE

Oh thanks.

EDDIE

I mean, nothing that means as much.

JULIE

Thanks again.

EDDIE

You know what I'm trying to say.

No she doesn't.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

You must want something more. You must have something you dream about.

Actually, she does.

JULIE

Settling down. Having a family.

She says it firmly and decisively. Judging by Eddie's reaction, this is a new piece of information.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Well, I'm not getting any younger, am I.

EDDIE

You're 19, for Christ's sake!

JULIE

And you're a grown man. Can't you see. We're getting left behind here. We've got to get on with our lives.

EDDIE

Doing what? Plastering? Working on a site all my life?

JULIE

Why not? It's been good enough for your Dad.

EDDIE
It's what he loves.

JULIE
And you love jumping?

Why is she pushing him like this?

JULIE (CONT'D)
I don't mind you chasing a dream.
That's what I fell in love with
about you. I'm the one who drove
you to all those ski trials,
remember. But that was different.
You loved doing it. With this...

Eddie's face is fixed with a dark determination.

EDDIE
It's the same dream. Nothing's
changed.

JULIE
No. But you have.

They two of them look at each other - miles apart.

EXT. MOTORWAY - DAY

A truck motors past, splashing through puddles, ferrying
Eddie back to Europe.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Eddie in the front seat with day-old stubble. Headphones
clamped on. Deep in thought with a pen. Studying the small
ads in a German newspaper.

INT. GARMISCH BAR - NIGHT

Still carrying his bag, Eddie looks for Peary at the bar.
Peary with a new younger crowd, but doing the same shtick and
bar tricks.

He looks up and reads Eddie's expression. What a shock. They
said no.

INT. GARMISCH BAR - DAY

Peary and Eddie have cloistered in a booth.

PEARY

You're talking about going on the Circuit proper. That's not a one-off prank over some old geezers with pacemakers. That's a full-time job - six days a week, 20 jumps a day. Never mind the expense. Travel, accommodation, entry fees -

EDDIE

I'll get the money.

Peary considers Eddie's determined face. He probably would get the money.

PEARY

But hitting 61m in three months? That leaves you no time to build any technique. And that's your foundation. You push for distance too soon, you lose all your form and balance. You crash. A lot -

EDDIE

I don't need a lecture. Just tell me if you think I can do it.

PEARY

It'll be like sitting on a wall before the cement's dry.
(even Eddie can understand that simile)

EDDIE

Yes or no? It's not a hard question.

PEARY

It'll be the ugliest thing they've ever seen!

Eddie jams Peary's cigar into his drink and storms out.

EDDIE

You're the one driving around a bloody rust-bucket.

EXT. TOP OF THE 70M - NIGHT

Eddie stares down at the glitter of town lights, perched atop the 70m, trying to get his feelings under control.

With no little effort, Peary has tracked him down.

PEARY

Here -

He slumps down and offers Eddie a cup of 'fortified' coffee from his Thermos.

PEARY (CONT'D)

It's got some anti-freeze in it.

They sit and sip, Eddie not used to alcohol at all.

PEARY (CONT'D)

All I'm saying is: What's the point in going on the Circuit if you're not going to be a real jumper?

EDDIE

To get to the sodding Olympics!

Peary recoils at the bitterness of Eddie's reply.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Look, it was different for you. You were a champion. You were always *good*.

PEARY

- Junior champion. -

EDDIE

Me, I got kicked off every team I was on. Even the bloody tiddlywinks team. And the one thing I thought I was good at - ruddy downhill - they wouldn't take me.

PEARY

They're not exactly begging you to carry on jumping either.

EDDIE

That just makes me more determined.

He looks down, fiddling with his steaming cup.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I was in hospital for a year when I was a kid. Infected cartilages. All the doctors said I wouldn't walk again. And I believed them. They were the experts. So I sat in that bed like a lemon for a whole year.

(MORE)

EDDIE (CONT'D)
 Every specialist telling me nicely
 to forget about sport and take up
 reading.

INT. HOSPITAL - FLASHBACK - DAY/NIGHT

Eight-year-old Eddie, confined to his bed, is offered books from the hospital library cart: *Indoor Word Games*, *Watercolours Made Fun*, *Playing the Flute*.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
 Well, I already had plenty of
 reading.

He pointedly resumes reading his Olympics photo album with the action-packed cover: *Moments of Glory*.

He pores over the photos of Jesse Owens, Olgar Korbut, Mark Spitz, ignoring the braces getting fixed to his knees.

Even after lights out, Eddie keeps reading, leaning over to catch the moonlight.

We move in on his face as it slowly fills with ethereal inspiration. He has just discovered 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 8."

Young Wilma in her leg braces. Just like Eddie's -

"...who went on to become the fastest woman in the world."

EDDIE (VO) (CONT'D)
 That's when I realized I needed my
 own moment.

INT. HOSPITAL - FLASHBACK - DAY

Eddie plants his caliper-clad legs onto the tiled floor and sets off, Forrest Gump-style, for the exit.

EDDIE (VO)
 That one thing I could do to prove
 them *all* wrong.

He gets precisely two yards before he tumbles to the floor and crunches the first of many pairs of spectacles.

EXT. TOP OF THE 70M - RESUME

Adult Eddie looks down, fiddling with his cup, his jaw set firm just like when he was a kid.

EDDIE

I've never changed my mind since.

He lifts his hot metal cup to reveal five interlocking rings in the iced platform.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

My moment's going to be the Olympics.

EXT. BOTTOM OF THE 70M - NIGHT

The clang of unsteady feet as Peary and Eddie tipsily help each other descend the stairs.

PEARY

When I got kicked off the Olympic squad, the last thing I wanted to do was prove anyone wrong. I just came to Europe and forgot all about it.

EDDIE

Working at ski resorts?

PEARY

In the end, yeah.

Maybe it's the booze, maybe it was Eddie's speech, either way he's opening up in return.

PEARY (CONT'D)

I thought, I was good at jumping. I'll be just as good at lots of other things. And I was.

(with a guilty tweak of the cuffs)

If you count drinking and screwing around.

EDDIE

You must have missed it a bit.

Peary considers this deeply, and answers honestly.

PEARY

Only when it was too late.

EDDIE

It's not too late to be a coach.

PEARY

It was my Coach who threw me out.
Howie Van Mann. I'd have to train
up a world record holder and a gold
medalist combined to ever prove him
wrong.

Peary flicks his cigar butt high into the night: Screw that.

PEARY (CONT'D)

I wasn't going to spend my whole
life waiting for the perfect jumper
to come along.

EDDIE

So you got me instead.

PEARY

I got you instead. The human Weeble
Wobble.

Peary puts an arm around Eddie's shoulder. What is about this
kid that gets to him so?

PEARY (CONT'D)

I'll get you your moment. If we
can't be pretty, at least we'll be
effective.

EDDIE

With your skill and my persistence -
I don't know, that sounds like a
pretty good combination.

Off they weave, down the slope, toward the twinkling lights
below.

PEARY

That still leaves the money.

INT. EDDIE'S DORM ROOM GARMISCH - NIGHT

In his bunk, amid snoring Germans, Eddie studies more small
ads with a penlight.

Finally he finds something and circles it with his pen:
"Sensationsdarsteller gewollt/Stuntman required."

EXT. GARMISCH/MOUNTAINS - DAY

A SLICK SPOKESMAN does his pitch in German to a camera crew. Some kind of superglue is applied to a jumpsuit.

Wearing the jumpsuit is none other than Eddie, who is now being stuck to a wooden board.

As he hangs there, he gives the thumbs up.

Eddie's face is blasted with wind as he roars along. The sheet of wood has been strapped to the top of a speeding van.

Again, the thumbs up. It's truly a great product. But the Spokesman yabbers some more, getting really excited now. Eddie isn't sure why until a helicopter hovers into view.

Eddie's frozen face - upside down now - as he is lifted into the sky. Trying valiantly to give the thumbs 'up' as he heads towards the jagged rocks.

EXT. GARMISCH DORM BLOCK - DAY

Peary angrily tries to fix his snow-groomer, nursing another hang-over. Gunk and oil splurt out as a rusty engine part snaps loose. He whacks the machine with his wrench in frustration - sending more oil spurting onto his overalls.

EDDIE

Peary?

Eddie is standing there - in his glue-torn banana jumpsuit, hair still standing on end. He holds up his check so Peary can see all the zeroes.

A big smile spreads on Peary's face. "For real?" Eddie nods. That's all Peary needs to hear. He's already chucking his wrench down as music kicks in and -

EXT. MOUNTAIN - DAY

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 Obersdorf. Two months. Three jumps. That's it.

A weird caravanette hatchback comes into view, groaning its way up hill. On the side is a faded pizza delivery logo. Peary at the wheel, Eddie squinting over a map.

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

PEARY (VO) (CONT'D)
The first thing to do is focus on your uplift. That's where we'll have the most impact on your distance.

EXT. SEEFELD/SLOPE - DAY

Eddie does brutal squat thrusts.

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

Peary moves him onto leaping star jumps.

PEARY (VO) (CONT'D)
You've got to do it quicker and stronger.

Eddie leaps like a mad salmon.

INT. SEEFELD/SLOPE OFFICE - DAY

PEARY (VO)
Start times. You'll gain at least a meter jumping on early morning ice.

Eddie presents himself to a surprised OFFICIAL.

PEARY (VO) (CONT'D)
So get registered as a squad captain and claim your pole position.

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

INT. SEEFELD/STREET - DAY

Peary drags Eddie along to a 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

We're not buying. We're borrowing.

INT. SEEFELD/CHANGING ROOM - FLASHBACK

A row of naked Swedes looking very unhelpful.

EDDIE

Come on. One bloody pair of skis. I wouldn't ask if I didn't have to.

A lobbed jockstrap lands on Eddie's face to hearty Viking-style laughter, hands on hips etc.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Dra åt helvete!

A subtitle reads: F*** off! This only makes the Swedes laugh harder.

SWEDES

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

EXT. SEEFELD/STREET - RESUME

Back to Eddie on the street with Peary.

EDDIE

I already tried that.

PEARY

Not here you haven't.

INT. SEEFELD/LOST PROPERTY DEPT. - DAY

A multi-lingual sign for "Lost Property." Beneath it, Peary and Eddie root out various ski boots, a helmet, gloves, a ski suit - trying not to mind the smell too much.

PEARY
Size 10s, right?

From their final selection pile, Eddie pulls a face as he unearths a garish Tyrolean hat complete with feather and a superfly sheepskin coat.

PEARY (CONT'D)
(ahem)
Those are for me.

INT. SEEFELD/CHANGING ROOM - DAY

Eddie is in his new equipment. A kaleidoscope of mismatched gear. And it's really pungent gear too.

He joins the circle at the captains' meeting, putting on his armband. One by one they all react to the strange aroma.

EXT. SEEFELD 70M JUMP - DAY

"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* Lost Property couture, until he gets a waft from his own armpit. Woah.

The crowd's reaction is another story: jeers, "woo-hoo"s and the local hand gesture for "wanker". Not like the Seniors crowd at all.

INT. EDWARDS' HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Mum hands Eddie's latest postcard to Dad. Moves Prince Charles a full two inches towards Lady Di.

From behind his copy of *Plasterers Monthly*, Dad gives a "let's wait and see" grunt.

INT. CARAVANETTE - DAY

The caravanette WHOOSHES along merrily...

PEARY (VO)
Be prepared though. You're going to plateau. Quicker than you think.

The caravanette promptly GROANS and stalls as it hits a hill.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Eddie hops up and down the caravanette steps, struggling, while Peary fixes the engine.

PEARY (VO)
The important thing is not to
panic. Not to get frustrated.

EXT. SLOPE - DAY

Eddie dangles in a makeshift homemade harness attached to a branch.

PEARY (VO)
If you get too tense, you're going
to snatch at your lift-off and
nullify any short-term gain.

Eddie jumps, far too hastily, and the harness SNAPS.

PEARY (CONT'D)
I thought I told you to RELAX!

EXT. ST. MORITZ 70M JUMP - DAY

"Contest No. 2 St. Moritz."

We travel down the scoreboard all the way to the bottom as Eddie's distance flicks up in last place - a feeble 53m.

PEARY
Jesus, he's getting worse.

INT. EDWARDS' HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Mum moves Prince Charles backwards from Lady Di - a whole inch.

Dad grabs the postcard to see the bad news for himself.

INT. CARAVANETTE - DAY

Side by side and head to toe in their sleeping bags. Peary under a poster of Jane Fonda, mulling coaching manuals and accounts.

Eddie under his poster of Matti Nykanen, arms folded, two huge black eyes.

EDDIE

What if I just jump the 90? My BOSA letter only said the minimum distance had to be officially recorded at a Circuit jump. It didn't specify in what event, did it?

Peary stares at Eddie in appalled disbelief.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Even the worst jumpers make 75 - 80 meters. All I have to do is land upright and I'd make the distance.

PEARY

Eddie. You can't wing it on the 90. No one can.

EDDIE

It's only 20 more than the 70.

PEARY

(it doesn't matter)
It's an exponential difference.

Peary hits the lights and rolls over.

PEARY (CONT'D)

Don't worry. We'll find a way forward. It might even involve you getting good.

But Eddie stays sitting upright, his knee bouncing away in the dark.

INT. CARAVANETTE - DAWN

The morning sun creeps through the blinds, stirring Peary awake. He notices something strange about Eddie's bed - it's empty.

EXT. SLOPE - DAY

A ski-jump elevator takes Eddie up into the golden rays of the dawn sun, peeping over the ridge to the top of the 90m.

THE START PLATFORM

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

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

An ice-covered steel ramp plunging into infinity. It's like nothing he could have imagined.

He steps forward, dislodging snow through the metal grating beneath his feet, and gradually the blood starts to drain from his skin as a new expression fills his face. 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 and completely paralyzed. The kid has to brush past him.

The kid clicks on his skis. Shifts out and pushes off. He disappears from view in a flash.

A moment later he flies back into view - slapping down onto the slope. A hard landing. A fierce stop. Real ski-jumping.

Eddie attempts to move into position.

But all he can hear is the whistling wind. All he feels is the metal structure swaying slightly. Actually, it's his knees buckling. 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.

And then he vomits spectacularly.

INT. RESTROOM - DAY

A JANITOR leads Peary into the restroom. In the end cubicle, they find Eddie gripping the toilet bowl for dear life.

PEARY

The five most beautiful words in the English language. "What did I tell you?"

EDDIE
Get stuffed.

He tries to get up, only to heave up more air.

A SINK OF WATER

Eddie washes his face, still shell-shocked.

Peary idles by a contraceptive machine. He has just noticed something about Eddie's physique compared with the other JUMPERS lined up at the other sinks.

Unlike Eddie, they are all pasty, stick-thin beanpoles.

Peary notes the name on the contraceptive machine: Fetherlite. And the logo of a floating feather.

Then looks back at Eddie, sticking out a mile next to all the virtually anorexic jumpers.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Rows and rows of leafy vegetable produce. Peary leads Eddie along the aisle, abuzz with a brilliant new idea.

PEARY
Look at the best jumpers. They're all tall, wide and thin. Like a sail. Like a feather. Whereas you, you're built like a linebacker...

He starts piling things into the cart Eddie is pushing - cabbages, kale, carrots... A JUMBO box of laxatives.

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

EXT. SANITORIUM - DAY

At the gate to a Gothic building, a GERMAN NURSE emerges to greet Peary warmly, hugs, kisses, clearly some old girlfriend reunion.

Eddie takes her in - a mighty, bosomy Brunhilde of a woman.

EDDIE
I'm the dark horse, am I?

She leads them up the driveway to the imposing building. Eddie warily reads the sign by the door: "Sanatorium."

PEARY
It's like a spa.

Jaunty muzak swells up as -

INT. SANITORIUM BATHROOM - DAY

A SCALE pings to 185lb. Peary can barely get his pinkie inside Eddie's waistband.

PEARY
Private Edwards, you are a disgusting fatbody. A whale. A monster. A thigh-chafing horror!

EXT. SANITORIUM - DAY

Eddie finishes a run, wrapped in a plastic trash bag, only to get a celery stick from Peary.

He does press-ups watched by a few of the PATIENTS. Peary sitting on top of him.

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

INT. SANITORIUM KITCHEN - DAY

EDDIE
Starving.

He gulps down green liquid with a wince.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Eddie runs downhill. Peary drives alongside with sadistic glee.

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. SANITORIUM BATHROOM - DAY

The scale pings to 183lbs.

PEARY
Every pound you lose is a meter
gained!

INT. SANITORIUM - DAY

A beefy NURSE slaps lubricant onto a gurgling hose nozzle.

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

INT. OBERSDORF CHANGING ROOM - DAY

The scale BOINGS to 180lbs.

Eddie's ashen face is not unlike Ned Beatty's in Deliverance.
Peary gets *two* whole fingers inside Eddie's waistband.

PEARY
How do you feel now?

EDDIE
Weak.

EXT. OBERSDORF SLOPE - DAY

A title reads: Obersdorf Practice Jumps.

Various squads and coaches arriving, beginning their preparations.

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

The new streamlined Eddie. Already hard at work out on the slope. Valiantly doing as Peary instructs. Not complaining once. Just like a real athlete.

INT. OBERSDORF CHANGING ROOM - DAY

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

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

LARS

You could maybe use these, I think.

The skis are gleaming, barely used - 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 can't help run a hand over
their gorgeous dimensions...

EDDIE

They're beautiful.

And with that done, Lars nods - the nearest he'll ever get to
an overt display of emotion - and leaves him to it.

Eddie 'comes to' and turns to one of the other Swedes.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

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

INT. OBERSDORF SHOWERS - DAY

Lars ambles nudely to the shower.

EDDIE

Lars!

Eddie pushes through the other athletes, still clad only in
his Y-fronts, and places a grateful hand on Lars' shoulder.

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 repeat
his thank-you with more heartfelt affection.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
 Det. var. som. fan. sanslös.

EXT. OBERSDORF 70M JUMP - DAY

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 floating appreciably longer, and lands at 61 meters - the magical distance.

PEARY
 And that was without a headwind!

Peary runs over to catch Eddie before he faints from hunger.

PEARY (CONT'D)
 Do that in the contest tomorrow and
 you're through.

INT. EDWARDS' HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

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

INT. SANITORIUM - NIGHT

All is still apart from the quiet flicker of German TV left on for the night staff. (Some naff commercial for superglue with a guy in a yellow jumpsuit.)

INT. SANITORIUM BEDROOM - NIGHT

Peary is fast asleep. Eddie is wide awake. Staring at the ceiling, stomach growling like a bear.

He gets up, rummaging for a snack. Finds a parcel of Jaffa cakes - and a note from Peary: "Not until you qualify!"

INT. SANITORIUM KITCHEN - NIGHT

Eddie has rustled up some green soup, relieved for some company as he talks to a night shift DOCTOR.

EDDIE
 Well, normally it takes eight years
 to reach Olympic standards. But
 we've done it in 10 months.

DOCTOR
 (he nods, impressed)
 And this is all with a snow groomer
 as your coach?

Eddie nods, pushing back his Band-Aid-hinged specs, sipping his spinach puree.

EDDIE
 Well, he jumped a bit in his youth.

Peary's Nurse passes with a tray of medication. The Doctor goes out for a discreet word.

DOCTOR
 (in German with subtitles)
 [Is that the lithium for the new
 patients?]

She nods. He gives a nod back to the kitchen.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
 [This one, you can give double.]

EXT. OBERSDORF 70M SLOPE - DAY

The same jump for practice is now filling up with people. Competition day. Peary rubs the overnight snow between his fingers. Sizes up the headwind. It's all good.

"Contest No. 3 Obersdorf."

EXT. OBERSDORF 70M JUMP - DAY

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

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

Wow. The prime start time.

EXT. OBERSDORF 70M JUMP - DAY

Eddie hurries to tell Peary the good news: Peary is raiding the free coffee from the press room.

EDDIE
 You better get in position. I'm
 first off -

He pulls up short like he's seen a ghost. Not quite, but close enough. It's Target, in his gleaming blazer naturally, and some of the downhill boys.

He is studying Peary closely as he joins up with Eddie, mouth full of pilfered toast.

TARGET

Do I take it you have acquired a coach?

EDDIE/PEARY

Yes./No.

Over-riding Eddie -

PEARY

It's not a formal arrangement.

TARGET

I should hope not.

He gives a withering glance over Peary's 'Lost Property' chic.

TARGET (CONT'D)

That would require you be licensed and registered, Mr...

PEARY

Peary.

TARGET

Mr Peary.

Peary holds Target's gaze. There is no hiding the mutual animosity. But Target's threat is quite clear.

TARGET (CONT'D)

Don't mind us.

EXT. OBERSDORF 70M JUMP/PLATFORM - DAY

Officials at the top of the jump. Eddie trying to settle into position. Flapping his arms, doing his breathing warm-ups: "Ahhhhhhh!"

He can see Peary down below, giving him the OK sign. Also a glimpse of Target and his conga. He tries to shut them out - "focused not tense." "Linda Grey."

The light goes to green and off he goes.

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. 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. The crowd are doing their usual patronising reaction - cries of "woo-hoo" and another local variation on the obscene hand gesture.

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

Eddie though only has eyes for one thing. The length. 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.

Eddie sees Target turn away. "That's it. All over."

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

EXT. OBERSDORF OFFICIALS OFFICE - DAY

It's much later, Eddie is still remonstrating with the OFFICIALS for another jump. But they will not budge. The rules are the rules.

OBERSDORF OFFICIAL (OS)

At Obersdorf, we do everything properly! To the letter.

EDDIE

You don't understand. These people at Bosa. They're bastards!

(MORE)

EDDIE (CONT'D)

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 from outside. He knows it's pointless. But it doesn't matter. Suddenly, wonderfully, this is turning out better than he'd ever hoped.

INT. CARAVANETTE - NIGHT

A ghostly world of headlights moving through tree-lined roads. The long drive back.

Eddie stares out the window, his jaw tense with seething injustice. The box of Jaffa cakes - unopened, uneaten.

Peary looks over at Eddie, biding his time.

EXT. GARMISCH CAR PARK - DAY

The caravanette noses to a stop. Eddie looks out the car window.

Right back where they started. The deserted carpark of Garmisch.

INT. CARAVANETTE/GARMISCH CAR PARK - DAY

PEARY

Eddie, I want to tell you
something.

Peary switches the engine off -

PEARY (CONT'D)

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

Eddie can't face any of this. He reaches for the door.

PEARY (CONT'D)

I felt... *proud*. I never felt like
that before - not even as a jumper.

But Eddie's already gone, not even shutting the door.

PEARY (CONT'D)
I'm telling you it was the best
jump you've ever done!

INT. EDDIE'S DORM ROOM GARMISCH - DAY

Peary tracks him down, getting directed to the restroom,
which echoes with the slamming of cubicle doors and
melodramatic wailing.

The JANITOR waits outside, terrified at this lunatic hurling
toilet rolls inside.

PEARY
Eddie? Listen to me.

Still the toilet rolls come flying. He charges in. There is
Eddie, eyes ablaze, waving a Telex.

EDDIE
We did it! We're through.

Eddie can barely get the words out.

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

FLASH CUT to - _

OBERSDORF OFFICIAL
At Obersdorf, we do everything
properly. To the letter.

Eddie hands the telex to Peary. "E. Edwards, Great Britain,
Obersdorf 61m."

EDDIE
It's officially logged. We're
through!

Eddie charges out, slamming more cubicle doors (one hits our
old friend the petrified peering skier).

EDDIE (CONT'D)
Where are those bloody Jaffa cakes?

Peary watches him go, feeling very ambivalent.

EDDIE (VO) (CONT'D)
I can't wait to see their faces.
They're going to have a shit-fit!

INT. EDDIE'S DORM ROOM GARMISCH - DAY

Eddie is feverishly packing up, taking down the Matti Nykanen poster from his bunkbed, unstoppable now.

EDDIE

Bosa dickheads. I'm gonna shove it right down their throats.

Peary watches all this, a little removed. Eddie moonwalking backwards, humming, full of it.

PEARY

Eddie. What I said about your jump - I meant it. You don't have to settle for being a novelty item anymore. We can do this for real.

Eddie just keeps bubbling away.

PEARY (CONT'D)

We should take another four years. Re-train you from the ground up. Then we go to the Games and compete as equals.

Eddie finally starts to slow up and listen.

EDDIE

What are you talking about?

PEARY

I'm saying I want to coach you for the next four years.

EDDIE

We don't need to do anything. We've just pulled off the impossible.

PEARY

If you go now, they're never going to let you back, are they? However good you do.

EDDIE

So what?

PEARY

So all you can really 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)

Six months ago you were shovelling snow and telling me to be a gardener. Now you want to be a real Olympic coach.

PEARY

It's only by getting to the top of the first hill that you see the real one you have to climb.

What is Peary on?

EDDIE

This *is* my hill.

He slams his gear into his bag. Peary bites back the sting of rejection.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I was hoping you'd come - if not as a coach, then as a friend. Just go, enjoy ourselves, be a part of it.

PEARY

I was a part of it. It doesn't mean anything if you sell yourself short.

There's no way to change Eddie's mind. He leaves.

EXT. GARMISCH CARPARK - DAY

Eddie climbs aboard a van for his ride home. How can a victory feel more like a defeat? He clamps on his headphones, not even a farewell look at the jumps or the parked rusty now-groomer out on the slope.

DISSOLVE TO:

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. EDWARDS' HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Packed inside are Eddie, Dad, various NEIGHBORS, KIDS and Builders. Eddie's Mum hurries in with another round of tea and Jaffa cakes as -

ON TV, Eddie flaps his arms, jumping in a European contest with an over-excited foreign commentator.

NEWS REPORTER (ON TV)

This week, local boy Eddie Edwards, a plasterer from Cheltenham, achieves a boyhood dream when he heads off to Calgary, Canada tomorrow to compete in the Winter Olympic Games.

"Ahhhhhhhhhhhh." Eddie practices in his own harness in the back garden, watched by the local Kids over the wall and one very scared cat.

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, an 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.

Through all this, Dad and Mum exchange a look - quietly humbled perhaps by Eddie's achievement.

On TV, Target's face tightens as Eddie bounces up in his blazer to join the other athletes.

A familiar doorbell rings as -

EXT. JULIE'S FRONT STEP - DAY

Julie opens the door to find Eddie on her front step.

EDDIE

Thanks for the good luck card.

She smiles, awkwardly. It was the least she could do.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

You sure you won't reconsider?

He has a plane ticket in his hand.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

It's covered by my travel grant. I just have to split the ticket.

JULIE

I just can't.

EDDIE

Why. You met someone else?

JULIE

No. I've got my second interview for textiles college.

"Textiles college"?

EDDIE

So I was right. You did want something more.

She nods, acknowledging this.

JULIE

It's just the beginning though. Not like you.

EDDIE

You going to watch it on the box?

JULIE

(a nervous laugh)
See what you threw me over for.

That came out a little more bitter than she intended.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Eddie, you know I'm happy for you. I hope it's what you wanted.

She gives him a good luck hug.

INT. EDWARDS' HOUSE/EDDIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Eddie rechecks his luggage for the last time. Airline ticket and passport at the ready. A last look around his Olympic shrine - a happy photo of him and Julie at a downhill event.

Mum and Dad appear in doorway.

When Eddie struggles to close his ski bag, Dad comes and grips it together, so Eddie can pull the zipper shut.

EDDIE'S DAD

Wider than normal skis, aren't they.

EDDIE

Yeah. For the wind resistance.

EDDIE'S DAD

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

Suddenly his dad is quite the expert. Mum is also acting strangely, Eddie notices. Both hands held behind her back.

EDDIE'S MUM

We're going to come and see you jump. We decided last week.

Just like when he got the skis from Lars, Eddie has to make sure this is for real.

EDDIE

You sure? It's not cheap -

EDDIE'S MUM

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

He's quite taken aback by this.

EDDIE

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

No it's not. But they don't feel it has to be anymore. A car horn honks outside. Mum peers out the window.

EDDIE'S MUM

Careful, you've got a send-off committee.

INT. EDWARDS' HOUSE/HALLWAY - DAY

Eddie lugs his gear down the stairs towards a waiting van. One of the brickies is giving him a lift.

A curious little crowd has gathered. The local kids, a stray dog, the Asian family opposite, a clutch of grannies and a passing milkman.

As he goes past the Kids imitate him: "Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhh."

Eddie heads for the car past their curious faces, and a real crowd begins to ROAR, getting louder and louder.

EXT. CALGARY 70M JUMP - DAY

A JUMPER goes flying into the air revealing 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 sits, suited up and ready to jump, his knee bouncing like a jackhammer. Around him, athletes are being prepped and massaged by their coaches.

Eddie makes do with humming to himself.

RON PICKERING (ON TV)

The 70m crowd has really come alive at the sight of Matti Nykanen, the Flying Finn. Not what you'd call an accessible figure. Prefers to let his jumping do the talking - and my word, here's his first speech!

Eddie leaps up to watch the TV monitor: Nykanen soaring for an eternity - a near perfect jump.

RON PICKERING (CONT'D)

Oh that is a Godzilla of a jump. It's got to be at least 89 meters.

Nykanen's brilliance silences even the other jumpers. 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 short OFFICIAL executes the familiar pointing routine to Eddie and then 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. The joker in the pack. His arrival in Calgary has caused quite a stir, I can tell you. That homespun, idiosyncratic jumping style has already 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 gambolling around, overdoing it to be honest.

EXT. CALGARY STADIUM - DAY

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

EXT. CALGARY 70M JUMP/START PLATFORM - DAY

A horn blares and Eddie sets off down the slope.

He flies into the air and flaps his arms with a cry. It's more of a squawk as he plummets and lands in all sorts of trouble before skidding to an ungainly halt.

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 and look at Lars: "You gave that guy a pair of 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.

INT. OLYMPIC HEAD OFFICE - DAY

Target watches a TV in disgust.

TARGET

Just as I predicted - a total embarrassment.

INT. RESORT BAR - NIGHT

A spiral of smoke leads down to Peary at the bar.

He has been watching the TV too: Replays of Eddie and his forced bonhomie shown in close-up.

He turns back to his coaching manual.

EXT. OLYMPIC VILLAGE - DUSK

Amid the geometric athletes' quarters, Eddie wanders along, squinting over his map; all the blocks look the same.

He nurses a carton of milk, fighting a sense of anticlimax.

He passes a quartet of Jamaicans in eye-popping green and yellow latex bobsleigh suits. They regard him curiously as he passes.

Finally, Eddie locates his block and is greeted by a perky, camp UK PRESS OFFICER.

UK PRESS OFFICER

The elusive Mr. Edwards, where the hell have you been?

INT. PRESS CONFERENCE HALL - NIGHT

Eddie is lead down a back hallway towards a growing hubbub of expectation.

EDDIE

Blimey, who else is on the panel?

UK PRESS OFFICER

No one. It's just you.

He enters the room and 100 flashbulbs explode. "Eddie!" "Eddie!" "Give us a smile." "Eddie, to your left!"

130 photographers, TV cameramen and journalists crowded into a room for the new star attraction.

JOURNALIST #1

Is it true your helmet once jumped further than you did?

JOURNALIST #2

How long did you stay in a mental home for?

A TV screen replays Eddie's jump with a graph to show how much shorter it is than the norm.

Another one has footage of Eddie reading The Sun at the top of a jump... doing his funny warm-up exercises.

JOURNALIST #2 (CONT'D)

Did you really use a pillowcase as a bandage?

Watching in surprise around the globe are Eddie's neighbors.

Julie and her parents.

And one very surprised doctor at the sanitorium, surrounded by cheering patients. "It's him, it's him!"

TV REPORTER

The Winter Olympics descended into French farce this week with the outbreak of Eaglemania.

Eddie signs autographs and poses for pictures. With kids, parents, even Mounties.

TV REPORTER (CONT'D)

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. Signs yet more autographs buffeted by fans, hot dogs and soda spilling all over his blazer.

INT. OLYMPIC VILLAGE LAUNDRY - DAY

Mum has taken charge of cleaning and folding Eddie's clothes.

EDDIE'S MUM

I don't care who wants your
autograph. You're not going to the
closing ceremony with mustard down
your front.

The other ATHLETES doing their laundry glance over. Eddie thinks they're unsure of his Mum. But we sense their reservations have more to do with him.

EXT. OLYMPIC VILLAGE LAUNDRY - DAY

Eddie and his Mum head back with his basket of clothes turning a corner into a group of SECURITY PERSONNEL. They quickly hold Eddie and his Mum back as the VIP Guest passes.

EDDIE'S MUM

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.

PRINCESS ANNE

I know you. You're our ski-jumper.

She comes over and 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.

(an aide discreetly prompts him)

...Ma'am.

PRINCESS ANNE

Maybe you can give him some lessons?

(dry pause)

Just skiing. No jumping.

Eddie beams in royal-lover heaven. As for his Mother - she has gone as stiff as a board.

PRINCESS ANNE (CONT'D)

Mrs. Edwards, you must be very proud.

Mum stares madly, gripping the basket of Eddie's skivvies so tightly, the Princess has to make do with shaking her pinkie.

PRINCESS ANNE (CONT'D)

(turning back to Eddie)

Is it a stroke?

FLASH BULBS pop and newspapers in every language tell Eddie's story, climaxing with the News of the World: "Eagle's love nest!" with Julie caught at her front door.

TV TALKING HEAD

He's not embodying the spirit of the Games. He's debasing it.

TV TALKING HEAD #2

Yes, let's not forget. The founder of the Olympics was Baron de Coubertin, not P.T. Barnum.

EXT. OLYMPIC HQ - DAY

Eddie is shepherded by BOSA OFFICIALS through an unseemly SCRUM of fans and tabloid hacks.

PRESS

Eddie, Eddie./What's your favorite food?/Why won't you speak up for disabled rights?/Do you use a condom for casual sex?

Into the door of the flag-draped Olympics head office.

INT. OLYMPIC HEAD OFFICE - DAY

Tabloid newspapers are fanned on a conference table - Eddie's antics all in print. Beyond them, Target looks down at the huge window.

TARGET

Your traveling circus is causing quite a commotion, Mr. Edwards. Congratulations.

He turns from the jostling mob below.

TARGET (CONT'D)

You'll forgive me for not joining in.

Eddie is a trickier proposition for Target now that he has a media profile. But Target is unnervingly serene.

TARGET (CONT'D)

As you know, the official photo session for the British athletes is being held tomorrow. I seriously recommend you refrain from attending.

EDDIE

Why? I've got as much right as anyone to -

TARGET

It's not a right. It's a privilege.

He picks up a letter and brings it to Eddie.

TARGET (CONT'D)

In any case, it's not my doing. It's what the athletes requested.

EDDIE

You mean the downhill squad -

TARGET

No. I mean the British athletes.

He hands Eddie the letter and let's him see for himself. Four pages of names. The whole British Olympic squad.

TARGET (CONT'D)

All of them.

Eddie looks at this relentlessly dense list of names, the shock of stark rejection kicking in.

TARGET (CONT'D)

You don't understand, do you? These men and women have been preparing their *whole* lives for these Games. This is their chance to get the exposure they need to survive. Then you come along on a whim and hijack it with your sideshow, which wouldn't be so galling if you were halfway serious. But you don't even bother with the *pretence* of being a genuine athlete.

Target waits until he is certain Eddie is completely lost for words. Then plucks the letter away from Eddie's frozen grip.

TARGET (CONT'D)

I think it's time for you to slip away quietly, don't you.

EXT. CALGARY 90M JUMP - DUSK

Eddie sits way up high in one of the empty stands, feeling like absolute shit, a tiny dot under the shadow of the 90m.

He is eating a box of Glosettes candy, going through his old copy of Moments of Glory.

His only company is a snowgroomer put-putting up the slope. A steady rhythm that seems to say, What did I tell you? What did I tell you?

Eddie gets to his feet and a phone starts to ring.

INT. CALGARY PHONE BOOTH - DAY

He slides in his international calling card and takes a deep, deep breath.

EDDIE

Peary? It's Eddie...

As he struggles to find the words, we hear the multi-lingual camera-clicking bustle of the press corps -

INT. PRESS CONFERENCE HALL - DAY

Eddie has called a second press conference. All business this time.

EDDIE

It's very simple. There's plenty of athletes more deserving of publicity than me. So I'm not doing any more press coverage.

Eddie adjusts his specs, stalling before he takes 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 know the Olympics is all about taking part. But that doesn't mean anything if you sell yourself short. Maybe I came as a novelty act. But I'm not going to leave as one.

He finds the BBC camera and looks into it.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I gave up a lot of things to get here. The wrong things.

INT. JULIE'S LIVING-ROOM - DAY

Julie watches her TV thoughtfully -

EDDIE (VO)

I want to get them back.

On TV, Eddie gets up and leaves. A clamor of questions in his wake.

INT. BOSA HQ - DAY

Target's minion rushes in, but Target's already seen it on his TV and he knows just what to do.

TARGET

Get me Dr. Pensotti at Eventing
Safety.

EXT. CALGARY 90M JUMP - DAY

Eddie runs against the wind with his kitbag and skis - 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. OLYMPIC VILLAGE/ROOM - DAY

Eddie watches a TV monitor as 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 safety issue.

Target hovers half-seen in the background.

Eddie changes channels. All he gets is news footage of the British athletes lining up for their photo call. And the Elephant Man. And Dallas. And an ad for Weeble Woobles. And randomly, the Jamaican Bobsleigh team coming down on their heads.

INT. OLYMPIC VILLAGE/HALL - DAY

A whirring candy bar machine drops a big bar of chocolate into the slot. Eddie pulls it out. Tears off the wrapper and takes a huge bite, like a drunk falling off the wagon, chewing ravenously.

Before he can swallow though, a hand grabs the back of his neck.

VOICE

Out. Now. All of it.

It is Peary, fresh off the plane, still with his travel bag. Making Eddie spit everything out like a bad dog.

PEARY
"Eddie the Eagle."

Eddie's never heard such welcoming words.

INT. OLYMPIC VILLAGE/EDDIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Eddie wheels out a fold-out bed, trying to ignore the continuing bad news about the weather on TV.

EDDIE
It can't be like the Seniors Jump.
It has to be a real jump.

PEARY
I wouldn't be here otherwise.

He has set up base camp in the kitchenette - ski wax, nasty green diet drink, harness etc.

PEARY (CONT'D)
Eddie, it's going to be fine.

He comes over and gives Eddie a hand.

PEARY (CONT'D)
We'll do it together. Like we
always do. Precision engineered
cogs working in unison -

A metal catch PINGS across the room. The bed flops open with a useless clunk.

INT. OLYMPIC VILLAGE/EDDIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

The bed is empty and stripped of blankets. 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 tiparillo if you want.

PEARY
It's just jetlag.
(no, it's not)

They stare at the ceiling some more.

EDDIE

Hey Peary... Thanks. For coming.

PEARY

You want to be a real jumper, you need a real coach.

They continue to stare upwards in silence, lost in their private thoughts.

We fade to black.

Then fade up with the title: 6 hours later.

Eddie and Peary still staring at the ceiling, only now the first rays of dawn are peeping through the curtain. Peary sits up and cocks a forefinger.

EDDIE

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 a glass of green sludge, Eddie's breakfast.

PEARY

Neither can you.

EXT. CALGARY STADIUM - DAY

ROARING 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.

Mum and Dad take their seats, wide-eyed as a jump sets the crowd alight. Her sweater says, "I'm Eddie's Mum."

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 under Peary's guidance.

PEARY

I want to hear you at the back of the stands. This is all or nothing. Up and out. And remember: you're going to land so much harder on this slope. So keep that fanny up when your skis hit. Whatever it takes, don't drop back otherwise you're going to -

A huge GASP goes up from the crowd.

The TV MONITOR shows a jump has gone horribly wrong. Medics stretcher a jumper off the slope.

PEARY (OS) (CONT'D)

You're going to be joining him.

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 60s ski-jumping and an old Junior Olympic squad member of yours, if I'm not mistaken, Howie?

A title tells us this is Howie Van Mann, US Senior Coach. A Living Legend, no question.

HOWIE VAN MANN

Until we kicked him off the squad.

An epic seriousness fills Howie's features.

HOWIE VAN MANN (CONT'D)

I always told him, You're never bigger than the slope. If you don't respect the hill, you don't strap on your skis. But some people never learn, do they.

(MORE)

HOWIE VAN MANN (CONT'D)

It breaks my heart to say it, but he embarrassed the sport as a jumper. And he's going to embarrass it again today as a coach.

The dressing-room has fallen silent. So too has Eddie.

Peary stands up, tweaking his collar, shooting his cuffs, before he faces the room. But he does. He looks in every eye: We'll see about that.

OFFICIAL (OS)

Edwards!

An Official dramatically enters and points. You. Next.

INT. OLYMPIC VILLAGE/HALLWAY - DAY

They move towards daylight and rising noise.

PEARY

Maybe now you understand.

Peary stops him on the threshold of daylight and noise, before they have to face the world.

PEARY (CONT'D)

This has got to be my moment too.

EXT. OLYMPIC VILLAGE/ATHLETES AREA - 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 Eagle.

Peary steers Eddie up to the grey concrete tower, running the gauntlet of stares, feeling the mounting pressure.

He hands over their paperwork and they pass through to the elevator.

EXT. CALGARY STADIUM - DAY

Down in the stands Eddie's parents feel the buzz in the crowd. Officials hurrying back into position. Scuttling TV crews from every country.

EXT. CALGARY 90M JUMP/ELEVATOR - DAY

The elevator lights descend as Peary checks Eddie's equipment for the last time.

The metal doors open with a hiss. It's all happening too fast.

EDDIE
Any last tips?

PEARY
You know what to do.

Peary CLASPS Eddie's arms. A complicated last look: fear, affection, resolve, and a coach's complete faith in his pupil.

Eddie backs onto the elevator, joined by another athlete, who's just strolled up.

PEARY (CONT'D)
See you at the bottom.

The doors HISS shut. All Peary can do now is step backwards to look up... And up... At this concrete monster of a jump amid the rising noise of the crowd.

INT. CALGARY 90M JUMP/ELEVATOR - DAY

Eddie stares ahead, trying to keep calm. Inside, the roar of the crowd is eerily distant.

MALE VOICE
Jumping is all that matters. If I didn't jump, I would drink and have sex all the time.

Eddie turns and his eyes go wide. 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.

(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. And who are they anyway?
The nobodies, the mediocrities. All
they can do is compete amongst
themselves.

He rotates his V-sign a quarter-turn and gives it a neat
jerk, a finger now pointing at each of them.

NYKANEN (CONT'D)

You and I, we are pioneers. We live
by our will alone. At the extremes.
Me at the top. You at the bottom.
The only people we can compete
against is ourselves.

Eddie has no idea what he's talking about.

The doors HISS open. Nykanen grips Eddie's lapels and fixes him with a piercing stare, rich with self-loathing and threat.

NYKANEN (CONT'D)

The only two jumpers with a chance to make history today are you and I. If we do less than our best with the whole world watching it will kill us inside for all time.

And with that cheery piece of advice, he steps out.

EXT. CALGARY 90M JUMP - DAY

Peary hurries down to his viewpoint, passing under the gaze of his old team-mate in a 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 - to his eyes - a nigh perfect jump - 118.5m. Alpine poetry in motion.

The commentators are in raptures. The crowd goes wild. Eddie is momentarily relieved - it is like a blessing - until he sees the close-up of Nykanen's face on the monitor, the 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. His stomach heaves.

He spits in 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.

Julie, his old pupils, his neighbors, the builders - 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 scale and magnitude of Eddie's task - a 90m sheer drop, as tall as 30-storey 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. If Edwards has one weakness - one salient weakness, I should say - it's his landings. Strangely, our researchers couldn't locate the statistics for his 90m jumps, but on his 70m jumps, he's racked up a 54% per cent infringement rate.

EXT. CALGARY 90M JUMP/SLOPE - DAY

Eddie grips the rail, inching into position, but as the light goes to amber, he backs away.

Thousands of faces watch confused as Eddie shuffles back.

RON PICKERING

Don't tell me he's freezing up.

Target picks a hair off his blazer: This is going to be a disaster.

PEARY

Come on. Stand up.

Eddie struggles to focus, sweat beads on his forehead. The light turns green, burning in front of him.

There is nothing to do but close his eyes and go back...

INT. HOSPITAL FLASHBACK - DAY

Eight-year-old Eddie tries to pick himself up off the tiled floor.

PEARY (VO)
Stand up, you gremlin.

With all his might, Young Eddie gets to his feet, using the wall for help.

PEARY (VO) (CONT'D)
Straight like a ski.

... Picking up speed as he races for the exit doors, banging them open to the freedom beyond it -

EXT. CALGARY 90M JUMP/START PLATFORM - DAY

As he opens his eyes in slow motion and pushes off.

He crouches low, picking up speed, Peary urging him on.

The wind pummels his cheeks as he hits 50mph. A glorious, terrifying view ahead of him -

He hurtles into the tabletop. His knees juddering over the ridged ice.

RON PICKERING
Here's the straight. He's got to
pick his moment just right -

Peary urges Eddie into his lift off.

PEARY
Up and out. Up and out.

Eddie stretches for his life, straining against the wind.

RON PICKERING
He's away, but it was late. That
was very late. That's going to
cause all kinds of problems.

Mum and Dad 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. Julie grabs a cushion. The Builders can't bare to look.

Mum and Dad wince. The crowd gasps. Eddie's butt has dropped, his arms are flailing...

Target starts to smile with vindication... Some of the commentators too.

But Peary refuses to concede defeat.

PEARY
Stay up. Stay 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. The Swedish coach gives a curt nod to Lars. Not bad. Peary is a lot less restrained.

PEARY (CONT'D)
(leaping the barrier)
Ahhhhhhh, you motherf-----

RON PICKERING
Unbelievable! Unbelievable.

Mum and Dad whoop and holler, sending their neighbors' popcorn flying.

INT. JULIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Julie flings her cushion into the air.

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, even the Swedish commentator.

RON PICKERING (CONT'D)
Britain's Eddie Edwards has completed his large hill jump - and it's a belter.
(MORE)

RON PICKERING (CONT'D)

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."

Somewhere in all this, Peary catches Howie's eye for a second - a hint of his expression softening - before he and Eddie start hugging all over again, falling over into the snow. Much to Target's consternation.

RON PICKERING (CONT'D)

What a sight. What an amazing sight.

Eddie suddenly remembers to blow a kiss into the camera.

INT. JULIE'S LIVING-ROOM - DAY

Julie chokes up, deeply touched.

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.

PEARY

"The most raucous applause came during IOC 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..."

They savor the moment, then hold up their glasses for a toast.

PEARY (CONT'D)

What to? The next four years?

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 blazer, folded up on the empty seat. Sits on the arm of the chair.

TARGET

You think because a few foreigners and some 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 and you embarrassed your flag. When you get back home, you'll find out just how funny that is.

He shifts closer. It's an exultantly intimate assassination.

TARGET (CONT'D)

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 final killer blow.

TARGET (CONT'D)

You will never be wearing this blazer again.

INT. HEATHROW TERMINAL 4 - DAY

An endless terminal corridor, down which Eddie pushes his baggage cart, Peary alongside, the blazer folded up on top.

It is a desolate place. Jetlagged passengers shuffling like zombies. Except the odd one who whispers and points at Eddie.

INT. HEATHROW/CUSTOMS - DAY

Up ahead at Customs, Target is surrounded by his gleaming downhill boys. All spruced up in their blazers. Getting special treatment. Pointing Eddie out to some CUSTOMS OFFICIALS as he and Peary join the civilian line.

EDDIE

Where's your connection?

PEARY

Terminal 3.

EDDIE
Time for a coffee then.

PEARY
Yeah.

Before Eddie can follow Peary as he passes through, 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.

EDDIE
I haven't got any duty free or anything.

They don't care. He is lead into a sideroom and the door is shut. Eddie, a German Shepherd and two customs officials alone in a tiny room. Eddie's jetlag and exhaustion starts to turn into panic.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
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?
(the men nod)
Then let's get this moving.

He gestures firmly for Eddie to follow him.

SENIOR CUSTOMS OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

This way, sir.

EDDIE

Why? Where are we going?

Eddie, his nerves already at breaking point, is steered forward through the second door and his jaw hits the floor.

INT. HEATHROW/ARRIVALS - DAY

Waiting by the arrivals gate are more than a thousand people. Crammed in with banners, flags, Union Jacks, big foam fingers, stetsons. There's women in bikinis from a vodka company, press cameras, TV cameras, his local Mayor.

His whole life before his eyes: his parents, Julie, her parents, 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.

Mum gives him the proudest hug of her life, tearing up, as well-wishers gather round and flashbulbs explode.

EDDIE'S DAD

Alright, alright, calm down.

Dad takes his turn to hug Eddie only to tear up even more.

EDDIE'S DAD (CONT'D)

Now look what you made me do.

EDDIE

(dabbing his own eyes now)

Me? You started it.

Everywhere he looks - cheering faces wearing pink Eddie-style glasses. Hanging over balconies, clambering onto check-in counters. Airport staff, policemen all craning their necks.

Many of the other British athletes are there too, and they are applauding. Giving it up. One team-mate to another.

And there is Julie, giving him a big kiss. Somehow he's made it right between them.

Eddie catches Target's tight-lipped face, puce with rage, as his downhill squad look on enviously, some of them even mutinously joining in with the clapping.

An equally amazed Peary joins the fold as our old friend the Bluff Journalist sticks a microphone under Target's nose.

BLUFF JOURNALIST

Mr. Target! What do you make of the irony that the one British athlete being acclaimed as a hero is the very person you didn't want to compete?

TARGET

Piss off.

Eddie is hoisted onto some 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 as we freeze-frame and immortalize what has just turned into the greatest day of his life.

Music kicks in and Ron Pickering materializes with his microphone in a split-screen for the coda:

RON PICKERING

Despite the new stricter Olympic criteria, Eddie was still able to jump in European contests. He eventually retired with a personal best of 115m... a new British record.

Eddie bows out to an adoring crowd. His parents show off the Olympic photo album he now adorns for real... And that hit single he had in Finland: "Fly, Eddie, Fly."

RON PICKERING (CONT'D)

Bronson Peary retired from snow grooming in 1991 to run a junior jumping clinic in Colorado.

Peary teaches the importance of perseverance to his young pupils - using a Weeble Wobble skier.

RON PICKERING (CONT'D)

After failing to produce a single British medallist in winter sports, Dustin Target moved into local politics with similar results.

An unctuous poster of Target - "Your Conservative Party Candidate."

RON PICKERING (CONT'D)

As for the Flying Finn: Matti Nykanen won an unprecedented three gold medals at the 1988 Winter Olympics to become the greatest ski-jumper of all time.

Nykanen poses with an array of trophies - expressionless.

RON PICKERING (CONT'D)

He retired in 1992 and did indeed develop a chronic drink problem.

Housewives grope a stripper's bethonged buttocks.

RON PICKERING (CONT'D)

Not to mention a raging sex addiction. In 2004, he went to jail for stabbing a drinking buddy during a five-day binge. It's all in his memoirs.

The book cover reads: "Greetings from Hell."

RON PICKERING (CONT'D)

Eddie, on the other hand, is now a happily married qualified solicitor and thriving motivational speaker.

Mature Eddie (the real Eddie in his cameo) has a row of businessmen bent over in undignified jumping positions.

EDDIE

Louder! A church mouse with strep throat could make more noise than you lot!

The room fills with cries of release. Middle-age executives, moaning away like mating whales. Ahhhhhhhh!

EDDIE (CONT'D)

And remember. If you don't respect the hill, you're nothing. Nothing!

THE END