

Miracle
by
Eric Guggenheim

Revisions by
Mike Rich

Current Revisions by
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**For Educational
Purposes Only**

FADE IN:

EXT. MINNESOTA POND - NIGHT

Winter at its hardest. Snow, that has no intention of melting for months, blankets everything in sight. A few trees. Flat rural land.

A dusting of snow covers a nearby POND; frozen deep, with an old HOCKEY NET and STICK. It's a portrait of the cold months that shape upper Midwesterners every winter...as they have for generations..

A short distance away, through the dark and the bitter cold, shines the lights of a SMALL HOME. The dim light reveals a YOUNG MAN chopping firewood.

He takes a final swing and the sound resonates across the stillness.

TITLE: ST. PAUL MINNESOTA 1960

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The black and white glow from the television flickers on the face of HERB BROOKS SR., 52, as he watches the gold medal game of the Olympic hockey tournament.

He's as Midwest as they come; a no-nonsense straight-talker.

The young man carrying the firewood enters: HERB BROOKS, 22, and very much his father's son. He heads for the fireplace.

T-V ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
...the U-S scoring again! And the
Americans are about to win their
first-ever Olympic gold medal!

Herb tosses a piece of wood on the fire, trying to look as if he doesn't care. His father stares right at the set.

HERB SR.
Looks like Coach Riley cut the
right guy.

So much for not caring.

HERB
Sendin' me home a week before the
Games. I got a hard time seein'
anything right with that.

HERB SR.

Fact is Herb, boys that made that team are better than you. That's just the way it is.

Herb pokes at the fire. His father reaches for the empty plate on the T-V TRAY next to his chair...

HERB SR. (cont'd)

Guys like you? Gotta be willin' to pay a price. Takes hard work. Sacrifice...

...and gets up. He brushes past his son on his way to the kitchen.

HERB SR. (cont'd)

...not sympathy from your father.

Not a hand on the shoulder. Nothing. Just a firm Midwestern lesson in work values...laid out bluntly.

T-V ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

...and the celebration now minutes away here in Squaw Valley! Look at those faces!

Herb can't resist. He places the poker on the hearth rack and stands up...to watch. Their gold medal. His.

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLE: MIRACLE

...then, slowly rising in the background:

OFFICE RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)

USA Hockey, please hold. USA Hockey...

INT. THE OFFICE OF "USA HOCKEY" - DAY

On the wall, in the reception area, there is a large mounted PHOTOGRAPH of the Squaw Valley team celebrating the gold.

OFFICE RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)

...just a moment please.

And into view; waiting patiently: HERB, now several years north of Squaw Valley. A stack of papers rests on the table next to him, a thick bundle of PRESENTATION CHARTS at his side.

OFFICE RECEPTIONIST (O.S.) (cont'd)
I'm sorry, he's not in just now.

TITLE: COLORADO SPRINGS 1979

Despite the glasses directed at the notes on his lap, he still retains a look of youthful intensity.

The door to a CONFERENCE ROOM opens. WALTER BUSH, 55, the head of USA HOCKEY looks out...

WALTER BUSH
Hey Herb. We're all set for you.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Herb stands at the head of the table, surrounded by CHARTS filled with names...and diagrams...and graphs. It's as if he's been preparing for this interview for a lifetime, which...of course...he has...

HERB
The only way we can compete with the eastern bloc teams is if we're willing to change. Change the way we train, the way we prepare, even change our schedule...make it longer. Tougher. More competitive.

So much for the old-fashioned way.

HERB (cont'd)
We also need to change the way we play the game. My plan is to adopt a new style: a hybrid of the Soviet school and the Canadian school; a combination that requires the highest level of conditioning, speed, creativity, and most important...team chemistry.

A committee of SIX MEN listen. Their manner oozes status quo, while Herb's presentation represents just the opposite.

WALTER BUSH
This what you've been using at the University of Minnesota?

HERB
We're phasing it in, yes.

WALTER BUSH
(scanning Herb's resume)
Still managed to win three national titles.

The first question comes from BOB FLEMING of the USOC, 50; a man with few illusions of Lake Placid grandeur.

BOB FLEMING
Herb, what if these kids can't pick it up fast enough? Are we gonna embarrass ourselves on our own ice?

HERB
Mister Fleming, four years ago our Olympic team lost to the Czech "B" team 15 to one. All due respect but I doubt we'd embarrass ourselves any worse than that.

On the other side of the table: JACK WILLIAMS, 35, a rep for the NHL, the world's top professional hockey league.

JACK WILLIAMS
That's assuming they don't go pro. I don't know about the rest of you, but I'd have a hard time givin' up good money to finish sixth at Lake Placid.

WALTER BUSH
We know how tough the draw is Jack.

JACK WILLIAMS
It's a tough draw even if you don't play the Soviets. And if you do? We put our best on the ice with 'em last year. Professional all-stars. They still beat us.

HERB
Not because you weren't good enough.

...and the entire room looks his way. Slightly taken aback.

HERB (cont'd)
All-star teams fail because they develop a natural reliance on individual talent. The Soviets win by sacrificing individual talent for the betterment of the team.
(MORE)

HERB (cont'd)

My goal is to beat 'em at their own game.

JACK WILLIAMS

Bring down the best team in the world, maybe the best ever? Fairly lofty goal.

HERB

Well Mister Williams, that's why I'd like to pursue it.

Herb gathers his papers; the interview now clearly over.

INT. BROOKS' FAMILY LIVING ROOM - DAY

The Brooks' home has a busy feel to it, the kind of feel that comes with a party maybe an hour or two away.

PATTY BROOKS zips in with an item of decor. She glances at her son, DANNY, 11; working on a LEFTOVER PLATE and talking on the phone. He's still wearing his HOCKEY GEAR from practice.

PATTY

Danny Brooks I want you out of that uniform and in front of that piano in five minutes.

DANNY

Kelly's still practicin'.

Which she is. KELLY, 9, is still working the piano keys.

PATTY

Not anymore she's not. Kel hon, it's your brother's turn.

Thump. The lid goes down on the piano keys.

KELLY

Finally.

DANNY

(in the phone)
I gotta go.

Patty's now up on a tiny step-ladder, hanging the decoration on the ceiling. Danny waddles toward the piano.

PATTY

Kelly sweetie, can you grab that box of streamers on the floor?

The door opens and Herb walks in, soaked. It's been raining.

PATTY (cont'd)

Hey.

Herb tousles Kelly's hair as she passes by with the box of streamers.

KELLY

Stop it Daddy, you're wet!

HERB

(to Danny)

How'd we do today?

DANNY

Seven-three. Scored four goals.

PATTY

The only score I wanna hear right now is one from Mozart.

Danny and his father share a look. They've heard it before.

PATTY (cont'd)

So?

HERB

I'm not their guy.

Herb sets his stuff next to the table and reaches for the mail. He shuffles through it.

HERB (cont'd)

Only reason they had me come out was because two other coaches said no. I think they're still lookin' east coast.

He tosses the rest of the mail on the table and heads for the kitchen. And then...he sees it. His COSTUME. Hanging in the kitchen doorway. A snake would get a better reception.

PATTY

Herb, it's a costume party, okay?

(sees his look)

Atticus Finch.

No response.

PATTY (cont'd)
 "To Kill A Mockingbird?"
 (still nothing)
 It's a book hon.

INT. BROOKS' FAMILY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The height of the party. Forty guests, forty costumes. Patty, absolutely in her element, cuts through the room...dressed as MARIE ANTOINETTE. She carries a tray of food and passes a decked out couple: BILL and MARGIE.

PATTY
 Okay Margie, I've put this off long enough. I'm guessing you are...

BILL
 Don't let the demure expression fool you.

MARGIE
 Bill, the expression's part of the costume.

PATTY
 Black, overly conservative dress. Demure expression. I'm thinking Jane...

PATTY AND MARGIE
 ...Eyre.

MARGIE
 (to Bill)
 I told you.

Patty, the perfect hostess, is already moving on...

PATTY
 Make sure you find Jeannie. Scarlet Letter.

A WOMAN calls out to Patty from across the room. She holds her hand over the TELEPHONE RECEIVER.

WOMAN
 Patty? It's for Herb...someone from Colorado.

Patty nods and puts the tray on a table. She works her way through the room, smiling, as she heads for the place she knows she'll find her husband.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

An old TABLE-TOP HOCKEY GAME, complete with the familiar red and blue PLASTIC PLAYERS spinning away.

Herb, wearing his costume (at this point, nothing more than slacks and a shirt), stands at the controls on one end. His son Danny (not much left of his "Wizard of Oz Scarecrow" costume) works the levers on the opposite side.

HERB

Alright, I'm startin' my comeback.

DANNY

Right.

HERB

C'mon, c'mon...

Danny flips the puck. Kerplunk...goal.

DANNY

Nine nuthin'.

HERB

Okay, so it'll be a dramatic comeback.

PATTY

(from the door)
Herb? You've got a call from Colorado.

HERB

(to his son)
We're not done here.

INT. HOME OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Herb wraps up the phone call, the music and sound of the ongoing party still easily heard in the background.

HERB

I appreciate that. Thank you.

He hangs up, taking in what he was just told.

PATTY (O.S.)

So what'd they say?

Patty stands in the doorway. Herb looks at her for a moment, before finally saying...

HERB

I got the job.

It's what she already knew in her heart. Now...it's time to start sorting things out.

PATTY

That's great. When do you start?

HERB

Two weeks.

PATTY

Two weeks...that soon. We still gonna be able to take the kids camping this summer?

He doesn't answer right away; which, of course, *answers* the question.

PATTY (cont'd)

I guess that's a no.

Kelly, dressed as DOROTHY from the "Wizard of Oz" wanders in...yanking on her mother's elaborate dress.

KELLY

Mommy, I spilled punch on my ruby slippers.

Patty looks at Herb for a beat, then leaves with Kelly...

PATTY

C'mon hon, let's get those cleaned up.

INT. COLORADO SPRINGS LOCKER ROOM - DAY

A crowded, busy locker room; dozens of YOUNG PLAYERS arriving to try out for the Olympic squad. Duffel bags cover the backs of LATE-70'S TEE-SHIRTS, the sight almost reminiscent of boys showing up for the Army.

TITLE: U-S OLYMPIC TEAM TRY-OUT SEVEN MONTHS TILL OPENING CEREMONY

Cutting through the steady flow of players is JIM CRAIG; 22, handsome, despite his habit of shaving maybe once a week.

He wears a UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII HOCKEY shirt, stopping at a BULLETIN BOARD that bears the names of sixty or so players and their respective universities.

JACK O'CALLAHAN, 22, a bright, hard-nosed Boston kid, thumps Jimmy on the shoulder as he arrives...

JACK O'CALLAHAN
Jimmy Craig.

JIM CRAIG
Hey Jack?

Jack stops.

JIM CRAIG (cont'd)
There a reason why Joey Mullin's not here?

JACK O'CALLAHAN
Thirty thousand of 'em. All sittin' in his New York bank account.
(looks at the names...)
How's it look?

JIM CRAIG
Lotta guys from Minnesota and Boston.

JACK O'CALLAHAN
...yeah, that's gonna work.

INT. COLORADO SPRINGS LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

ROBBIE MCCLANAHAN, 21, sits in front of his locker, *carefully* wrapping the handle of a hockey stick. His well-groomed hair and soft features shield an intense competitiveness.

Next to him: MIKE ERUZIONE, 25, one of the oldest there and certainly the one with the thickest New England blood.

MIKE ERUZIONE
You gonna want a bow for that too?

Robbie ignores him. Both players wear ratted old practice jerseys; new one months away...if at all.

MIKE ERUZIONE (cont'd)
(holds his hand out)
Mike Eruzione.

ROBBIE MCCLANAHAN
Rob McClanahan.

MIKE ERUZIONE
One of Brooks' guys, right?

ROBBIE MCCLANAHAN
All four years. Guess I can put up
with a few more months if it means
movin' up in the draft. You?

MIKE ERUZIONE
Just tryin' to play a little more
hockey is all.

In walks O'Callahan...who announces to the entire room...

JACK O'CALLAHAN
Lace up your skates girls, we got
some hockey to play!

All attitude. Enough that McClanahan shakes his head. Jack
casually shakes hands with a nearby PLAYER...

JACK O'CALLAHAN (cont'd)
How you doin' man.

INT. COLORADO SPRINGS LOCKER ROOM OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Herb watches it all from his nearby office. Two men share the
room with him: DOCTOR V.G. NAGOBADS, 55, an engaging Latvian
man who has served as Herb's team doctor for years now...

...and CRAIG PATRICK, 32; Herb's assistant coach. A man who
has former athlete written all over him.

DOZENS OF PLAYER PHOTOGRAPHS are taped on the wall.

HERB
Well...doesn't appear confidence'll
be a problem. What else we got?

CRAIG PATRICK
Solid across the board. Both ways.
And smart. Fourteen hundred SAT
smart. Kid's huge on defense,
really physical.

Herb glances out at Jimmy Craig, settling in at his locker.

HERB
What's the latest on Craig?

CRAIG PATRICK

Since his mom died? Not the goalie
he was a year ago.

Eruzione comes over to greet Jimmy, a fellow Bostonian.

CRAIG PATRICK (cont'd)

Mike Eruzione. Ton of heart. Good
leader. He and Schneider are the
oldest ones here. At twenty five.

DOC NAGOBADS

(reads a scouting report)

Average to below average skating,
below average stick. Average to
below average shot.

HERB

Well...least he's consistent.

INT. COLORADO SPRINGS SKATING RINK - DAY

Proving time. The ice is a portrait of activity as dozens of
players --- all young --- work to catch Herb's eye.

In one corner of the ice: offensive players flick the puck
back and forth. Sharp. Quick.

In the middle of the ice: a line of players fire long slap
shots at an open net.

On the far side: players sprint down the ice, end to end,
Craig Patrick timing them with a stop-watch.

UP IN THE STANDS

Coaches. Scouts. All watching. Pointing out players. And
studying every second of it:

Herb. Skating, almost gliding, around the ice. He holds a
hockey stick, just like a player, and looks completely at
home. His eyes are steady, hawk-like.

MARK JOHNSON, 21, leads a three-player weave down the ice,
passing the puck to another PLAYER. His skill is readily
apparent, easily the class of the field.

He gets the puck back, makes a rush on goal, and fires the
puck into an empty net.

CRAIG PATRICK

Next line! Keep it movin'!

Up in the bleachers, a SCOUT offers an obvious assessment to the person next to him...

SCOUT
Mark Johnson. Best player in college hockey.

A new line of players sail up the ice. Herb watches every second.

INT. COLORADO SPRINGS SKATING RINK - LATER

Sixty hockey players, tired and sweating, stand on the ice, listening to Herb read from a HALF BENT SHEET OF PAPER.

HERB
Cox, Schneider, Craig...

Each player listens, their eyes *begging* to hear their name.

HERB (cont'd)
Brotten, O'Callahan, Baker. And Eruzione. Rest of you, thanks for coming out.

About three dozen disappointed players slowly leave the ice, two dozen stay. Doc and Craig Patrick stand behind Herb.

HERB (cont'd)
Take a good look gentlemen, 'cause they're the ones gettin' off easy.
(beat)
Alright, we're putting a few of you on reserve in case someone gets hurt or their game goes to hell. Final roster'll have twenty names on it in six months, which means more of you are goin' home. Give me 95 percent, you'll make my job easy.
(looks at the group)
I'll be your coach, but I won't be your friend. Need one of those? Take it up with Doc or Coach Patrick here.

Herb skates away without another word. Craig Patrick steps in and hands a FOLDER to each player.

CRAIG PATRICK
Little homework.

The young men stare at Herb, taken aback by the blunt talk.

INT. UNIVERSITY NEIGHBORHOOD BAR - NIGHT

A college hang-out if there ever was one. Players everywhere. Between sips, and over the steady pulse of a Donna Summers' tune, the boys study their homework: a PSYCH PROFILE TEST.

DAVE SILK, 21, one of the Boston boys, reads a question...

DAVE SILK
Question 34. You are stopped by a
policeman and know you're not at
fault. Do you state your
disagreement right away?
(flips a page, sips)
He's got 300 of these things.

Eruzione is close by...taking his test seriously.

MIKE ERUZIONE
It's just a test Silkie. You've
taken one or two before.

DAVE SILK
Not to play hockey I haven't.

Silk reaches out and thumps the beer tap. The BARTENDER is already heading over.

DAVE SILK (cont'd)
Hey bud, pitcher us up here.

Jack steps to the bar, beer and test in hand. He gives a casual nod to the Midwest boys across the room.

JACK O'CALLAHAN
Check out the hayseeds. Middle of
summer, flannel shirts.

Jack pulls a PENCIL from behind his ear and starts to write his name on his test. Snap...the lead tip breaks.

INT. UNIVERSITY NEIGHBORHOOD BAR - CONTINUOUS

McClanahan plays a state-of-the-art PAC MAN MACHINE. Mark Johnson and Craig Patrick nurse beers nearby.

In contrast to the flashy, somewhat urban look of the New England kids...the Midwesterners look downright rural.

ROBBIE MCCLANAHAN

Just because Herb has a problem
with your old man doesn't mean
he'll have one with you.

MARK JOHNSON

Little more than a problem.

ROBBIE MCCLANAHAN

So he hates him. Herbie coaches at
the "U," your dad coaches
Wisconsin. He has to hate him.

Johnson shakes his head, knowing the first time he does
something wrong...

CRAIG PATRICK

Don't worry about it.

ROBBIE MCCLANAHAN

Listen if it makes you feel any
better, I hate your dad too.

(about to lose...)

No, no, NO...SHIT!

INT. UNIVERSITY NEIGHBORHOOD BAR - CONTINUOUS

O'Callahan approaches a table filled with players from the
upper Midwest: BILL BAKER, BUZZ SCHNEIDER, MARK PAVELICH.

He grabs a pencil off the table...and can't help himself.

JACK O'CALLAHAN

Any you Minnesota boys wonderin'
where to put your name, it goes
right by this N-A-M-E thing.

Robbie never takes his eyes off the machine...

ROBBIE MCCLANAHAN

You mean the place where we get to
write National Champions and you
don't?

The water heats up between the two. Jack stands up...

JACK O'CALLAHAN

You won this year, we won last.
What's your point?

ROBBIE MCCLANAHAN
My point is Jack...I think you're
an arrogant prick.

Jack looks as if he's seriously considering the notion. Me?
Arrogant prick? He drops the pencil on the table...

JACK O'CALLAHAN
'Scuze me guys, but your boy's
about to get his ass handed to him.

Robbie turns. Jack moves closer. And Craig Patrick shuts it
down...

CRAIG PATRICK
Hey! Knock it off! Two of you are
teammates.

The glaring continues.

INT. CAMPUS DORMITORY - NIGHT

A tiny, spare dorm room serves as home for Jim Craig. No
decorations...aside from a FAMILY PHOTO on the desk.

JIM CRAIG
(on the phone)
We go to Minnesota tomorrow, then
it's pretty much straight through
till February.

The "Rockford Files" plays on a TV set, the volume turned
down. The only sound...is a knock on the door.

JIM CRAIG (cont'd)
Hang on a sec Pop.

Jim puts the phone down, scratching his head as he heads for
the door. He opens it...to find Herb.

JIM CRAIG (cont'd)
Coach Brooks.

HERB
Jim.

JIM CRAIG
Listen, I was just finishin'...

HERB
Why won't you take the test?

An awkward break. Dad's on the phone, trouble at the door...

JIM CRAIG

Yeah well...it's nuthin' against you or anything. Guess I'm just not too big on all that psychology test stuff.

HERB

Well that's alright. You just took it anyway.

Herb turns and walks down the hall. Jimmy watches for a second, till he realizes his father's still waiting.

EXT. CAMPUS DORMITORY - MOMENTS LATER

Herb walks across the campus commons. The sound of footsteps, jogging, rises from behind. Jimmy pulls alongside him.

JIM CRAIG

So if I took it...

HERB

...you flunked.

He works to keep up with his coach. After a few strides...

HERB (cont'd)

How's your family?

Jimmy waits a beat, knowing why the question was asked.

JIM CRAIG

We're doin' alright. Dad's still havin' a rough time.

HERB

What about you?

JIM CRAIG

I'm gettin' there.

A break. Herb can see the pain that Jimmy still feels.

HERB

Look Jim, I've got twenty six guys tryin' to make this team, twenty of 'em are goin' to Lake Placid. Only way you're gonna be one of those guys is if you're committed to bein' here.

The young man's response doesn't come too quickly.

JIM CRAIG

My mom was the one who wanted this.
Me playin' on this team. Hard
sayin' no to someone who drove you
to practice every day, right?

HERB

We've got six months ahead of us.
You prepared to give me everything
you've got? 'Cause if you're not,
don't waste my time.

JIM CRAIG

I'm here, aren't I?

Herb reaches in his coat for a TEST. And hands it to him.

HERB

Before we get to Minnesota.

INT. BLOOMINGTON, MET CENTER ICE - DAY

Ralph Cox, wearing a tattered yellow jersey, sprints up the
ice...ERIC STROBEL and DAVE CHRISTIAN on each side of him.

They're met at center ice by TWO DEFENSEMEN coming from the
opposite end. Cox passes to Strobels, who sprints past the
defense and casually slides the puck toward the goal.

CRAIG PATRICK

Next line set!

O'Callahan is second in line on his end of the ice, but he
notices that MCCLANAHAN is first in line opposite him.

JACK O'CALLAHAN

(to the guy in front...)

Let me take this one.

Patrick blows the whistle and Johnson takes the puck up the
center of the ice. He makes a pass to Robbie, who quickly
sends it across the ice.

But instead of retreating to a good defensive position, Jack
makes a CRUSHING CHECK on Robbie, sending him to the ice.

He's up in an instant, dropping his gloves. Jack does the
same.

Fists fly. Craig Patrick blows his whistle, but to no effect. The two teammates pound away...swinging wildly.

Herb coasts along, whistle in mouth, watching for a second. The hockey purist in him; disgusted.

But rather than blow his whistle...he starts talking to the other players on the squad.

HERB

How 'bout it fellas, that look like a hockey fight to you?

(pause)

Looks more like a couple of monkeys tryin' to screw a football.

A few smiles. Even the heat of the battle between Robbie and Jack cools down.

HERB (cont'd)

You want to play goon hockey, you got the wrong coach. The game we play is about skating. Passing. Flow. Skill. No one is gonna push us around. We win with brains, not fists. Is that understood?

Jack and Robbie stop, each sporting a touch of blood. Without blinking, Herb turns to them and says...

HERB (cont'd)

...you two, get your butts off the ice and introduce yourselves.

Confused looks. All around.

HERB (cont'd)

Introduce yourself, get to know each other. Who you are, where you're from.

ROBBIE MCCLANAHAN

Rob McClanahan. Saint Paul, Minnesota.

HERB

Who you play for?

The players look at each other. No one has a clue.

ROBBIE MCCLANAHAN

For you. Here at the "U."

HERB

Jack.

JACK O'CALLAHAN

Jack O'Callahan. Charlestown,
Massachusetts.

HERB

Harvard?

JACK O'CALLAHAN

Boston University.

Herb nods toward Ralph.

HERB

Over here.

RALPH COX

Ralph Cox. I'm from wherever's not
gonna get me hit.

For the first time, a touch of laughter. But not from Herb.

HERB

Alright, everyone on the line.

The smiles are gone, the players knowing they're about to
bust their butts. Skating. Herb glides along a step or so
behind them.

HERB (cont'd)

Interval conditioning. Skate for
twenty seconds, rest for twenty
seconds. Why? Because the legs feed
the wolf gentlemen. I can't promise
we'll be the best team in the world
six months from now, but we will be
the best conditioned. That I can
promise you.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

A service station. Dozens of CARS form a line leading to the
pump...a line stretching deep into the street.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Doc is at the wheel, but the car is going nowhere. He reads a
newspaper...while Herb scours more scouting material.

DOC NAGOBADS

"The Salt Two treaty reduces both U-S and Soviet nuclear arsenals to levels that will assure mutual destruction, but nothing more. Critics contend the treaty tips the current military balance in favor of the Soviet Union."

(shakes his head)

So much fear.

HERB

Russians don't exactly strike me as being afraid of too much.

DOC NAGOBADS

Trust me...they are as afraid of you, as you are of them.

Doc folds the newspaper...and looks out at the line of cars.

HERB

How much longer?

DOC NAGOBADS

(counting, to himself)

Sixteen more.

A break.

DOC NAGOBADS (cont'd)

I see the young men are having problems, yes?

HERB

That's what happens when you put kids from Boston and Minnesota on the same ice.

DOC NAGOBADS

Arch-rivals too long I imagine. How does one deal with that?

HERB

One deals with that...by giving them a common enemy.

DOC NAGOBADS

(waits a beat before...)

And who might that be?

A hint of a smile from Herb. Common enemy number one.

INT. HOME OFFICE - NIGHT

A FILM PROJECTOR clicks away, offering Herb a black and white flickering image to study: the Soviets.

Patty --- bathrobe on --- walks in with a cup of coffee, knowing he'll be up for a few more hours.

PATTY

How much longer you gonna be?

HERB

Still got a few more.

PATTY

Well...I'm done. Oh, Kelly has ballet at four tomorrow and Danny's done with hockey camp about the same time. Which one you want?

Herb jots down an observation.

PATTY (cont'd)

Herb? Can you pick up Danny at four thirty?

HERB

We've got practice till four, then I gotta meet with Craig and Doc.

Not what she wanted to hear.

PATTY

Well I can't be two places at once.

HERB

What about Margie? I thought...

PATTY

They're on vacation.

The click-clack of the projector continues.

PATTY (cont'd)

Can you turn that off please?

He hears the change in tone...and turns it off.

PATTY (cont'd)

This is what happens during the summer.

(MORE)

PATTY (cont'd)

The kids are off doing a million things, so every once in awhile, Craig and Doc are just gonna have to wait, okay?

The words shut him down for a second.

HERB

Patty, I'm coaching a hockey team. We already talked about this...

PATTY

...really? When exactly did we have this talk Herb, 'cause I don't recall being a part of that conversation. What did I say? Was it interesting? Hmm?

(silence)

We never had this talk Herb. Never.

She leaves.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Patty brushes her teeth, with a little more zip than usual. Herb walks in.

HERB

What's on your mind?

PATTY

Nothing.

Now he's flat-out confused.

HERB

Well you're obviously mad about something. First you're upset because we didn't talk, now I try to talk about, whatever it is, and you don't want to.

(beat)

There's nothing I can do if you're not willing to...

PATTY

...it's not because we didn't talk Herb.

She heads for the bedroom...

PATTY (cont'd)

It's because you didn't even ask.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Patty sits down on her side of the bed and removes a pair of tiny ear-rings. Herb stands across the room, behind her, slowly realizing how much this bothers her.

PATTY

It's okay. Go do what you need to do.

She goes about her business, and for a moment...Herb is at an absolute loss as to what to do. He doesn't know what to say, doesn't know what to ask, and Patty is *not about* to help him out.

After a moment...he walks out. And Patty knows he's gone, the disappointment on her face obvious.

She sits there for a few seconds, wanting so much for him to have realized what she wanted...needed.

Resigned to the notion that she won't hear those words from her husband...she reaches for the light...

HERB (O.S.)

Hey.

Patty turns and Herb is standing in the doorway. He doesn't say anything for a second...because he's not good at these moments. And then, finally...

HERB (cont'd)

Ever since I stopped playin'...I've wanted to coach this team. And there's only one way I know how to do that. It's not the easiest way, I know. For you or the kids.

(a pause)

But I have to do this.

PATTY

I know you do.

They look at each other.

PATTY (cont'd)

Herb, I would never stand in the way of something this important to you. But you need to understand, that when hockey season starts? I lose you. Doesn't matter if you're here or on the road, you're gone.

(MORE)

PATTY (cont'd)

Once the season ends, we usually get three months with you...but we're not even gettin' that this year.

(beat)

And I'm not sayin' that to hurt you, I'm sayin' it 'cause I miss you...that's all.

Herb nods.

HERB

I'm sorry we didn't talk. And I was wrong not to ask.

She can tell he's trying.

HERB (cont'd)

So I'm askin' now. If you can be with me on this. 'Cause it won't mean anything if you're not.

They hold each other's eyes...Patty smiles...

INT. BLOOMINGTON, MET CENTER ICE - DAY

Thump. A shot tears into the back of the net, setting off a quickly-paced portrait of Herb Brooks the coach.

INT. BLOOMINGTON, MET CENTER ICE - CONTINUOUS

Herb glides along the boards; half his team on one side of the ice, the other half across the way. The puck zips from stick to stick...a game of hot potato.

HERB

It's tic-tac-toe gentlemen, that's the way we pass the puck. It's our puck and we want it. When we lose it, we're gonna get it back.

INT. BLOOMINGTON, MET CENTER ICE - CONTINUOUS

Herb continues with the introduction thing. A good-looking kid with hair that's seen it's share of blow-dryers says...

ERIC STROBEL

Eric Stobel. Rochester Minnesota.

HERB

Who do you play for?

Strobel hesitates...

INT. BLOOMINGTON, MET CENTER ICE - MOMENTS LATER

The team skates lines...

HERB

The wolf catches nothing if it
can't catch its prey.

INT. BLOOMINGTON, MET CENTER ICE - DAY

Five on five. Eruzione crosses the red line and dumps the
puck into the zone, as American players have for years...

HERB

We don't dump and chase Eruzione,
that's the old way. You play pond
hockey as a kid? Think of this as
sophisticated pond hockey.

INT. BLOOMINGTON, MET CENTER ICE - DAY

A soft-spoken kid, still shy of drinking age...

DAVE CHRISTIAN

Dave Christian. Warroad, Minnesota.
I play for North Dakota...
(hoping it'll help if...)
...University.

INT. BLOOMINGTON, MET CENTER ICE - MOMENTS LATER

Lines again. Herb casually gliding along...

HERB

Strong legs gentlemen. That's how
the wolf survives. The fastest way
to make this team is to be fast.

INT. BLOOMINGTON, MET CENTER ICE - DAY

A blur of players moves right-to-left in front of Herb, who
calls out a new combination...

HERB

Johnson, you're with Strobel and
McClanahan.

INT. BLOOMINGTON, MET CENTER ICE - DAY

Left-to-right...

HERB

Christoff, Schneider, Pavelich! Go together!

INT. BLOOMINGTON, MET CENTER ICE - DAY

A machine-gun-fast sequence in which, one right after the other, players zip a pass to a player on the wing...

HERB

Pass! Shoot!

Rat, tat, tat. The puck is passed and shot toward goal.

INT. BLOOMINGTON, MET CENTER ICE - DAY

Schneider gets the puck from Pavelich. Jimmy Craig is talking up a storm in front of the net...

JIM CRAIG

Watch the wing! Watch the wing!

Buzz swoops in. He shoots...and scores. Jimmy takes a slurp from his water bottle, then HEAVES IT against the board in frustration. And as he skates toward center ice...

HERB

Jimmy, you first today. Where you...

Before Herb finishes, Jim coasts toward the far line, leaning to unbuckle his shin guards. He's had it with Herb's game.

Herb watches, knowing he'd crack down on any other player, but aware that he has to be careful with this one.

HERB (cont'd)

Alright, on the line.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Practice is done, so are most of the showers. The players get dressed. Silk looks over at Eruzione...

DAVE SILK

You need to spend some quality time with, what was her name? The chick from Revere?

MIKE ERUZIONE

Gina Pasarelli.

JIM CRAIG

Gina Pasarelli. Take her out? You'll be scorin' again in no time.

MIKE ERUZIONE

Scorin' where?

DAVE SILK

Lotta places.

O'Callahan walks in from the bathroom; combing his hair, wearing a brand new DISCO SHIRT.

DAVE SILK (cont'd)

Jesus that is one bad shirt.

JACK O'CALLAHAN

Watch where it gets me pal.

JIM CRAIG

We're thinkin' Gina Pasarelli to get Rizzo's stick workin'.

JACK O'CALLAHAN

She always got mine workin'.

(looks at Eruzione)

Know what your problem is? You want this way too much.

(off his look)

Look, everybody knows you're big on this red, white and blue stuff. But there is not gonna be a fairy tale ending here, okay? Not for you. Not for us.

Nobody disagrees.

JACK O'CALLAHAN (cont'd)

You think it's hard puttin' one by Jimmy here, wait'll you got some goddamn Russian in front of you.

INT. MET CENTER ICE, LOCKER ROOM OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Herb leans over his desk, shuffling PHOTOGRAPHS of his young players into various combinations of offensive lines. Craig Patrick enters...

CRAIG PATRICK
They're comin'.

HERB
Schneider, Pavelich, Harrington.

CRAIG PATRICK
The Coneheads.

Herb looks up at him.

CRAIG PATRICK (cont'd)
That's what they've been callin' themselves.
(off Herb's look...)
Last few days on the power play we've kind of kept 'em off to the side of the ice. Pav says they might as well be traffic cones.

HERB
I'm not gonna mess with 'em. All I know is when I put 'em together, somethin' happens and it's usually good.
(pause)
How's everyone else doin'?

CRAIG PATRICK
Not bad. Little tired.

Herb nods.

CRAIG PATRICK (cont'd)
You can't push 'em this hard Herb. Not for six months.

HERB
Craig...the only reason I had 'em take that test was to make sure I could push 'em this hard.

The Coneheads come in.

JOHN HARRINGTON
Wanted to see us Coach?

HERB
I'm puttin' the three of you
together, everybody alright with
that?

SCHNEIDER AND HARRINGTON
Yah sure. Been good so far.

Pavelich is silent, but the other two sound like dialect
coaches from the upper Midwest.

HERB
How 'bout it Pav? Think you can
work with Bah and Buzzy here?

MARK PAVELICH
Sure. Yah.

HERB
Coneheads huh?

They smile. Herb dismisses them with...

HERB (cont'd)
Alright, we'll see how it goes.

They leave.

HERB (cont'd)
I'm takin' a line of Coneheads to
Norway.

CRAIG PATRICK
Yah.

EXT. NORWEGIAN ICE HOCKEY ARENA - NIGHT

A small sporting arena. Nothing big, just the first stop on a
long journey.

TITLE: OSLO USA VS. NORWAY FIVE MONTHS TILL OPENING
CEREMONY

INT. OSLO LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

The team enters the room. Hanging above each dressing area:
the brilliant white USA JERSEYS.

Most of the young players don't seem to notice. Except for
Eruzione. He spends a long moment, taking it in.

INT. NORWAY ICE RINK - NIGHT

The U-S team settles in on the bench, the game only seconds away. Herb, arms folded, strolls behind them...

HERB

We plays these guys in Lake Placid.
Let 'em know we're gonna be hell to
deal with.

INT. NORWAY ICE RINK - NIGHT

But the first glimpse of the American players in action shows they're easy to deal with:

Strobel holds the puck on the point, far too long for Herb's liking, before sending it across to Broten. He fumbles the pass, and it's quickly picked up by a hustling Norwegian.

Herb paces behind the bench, already working up a glare.

INT. NORWAY ICE RINK - MOMENTS LATER

The Norwegians set up an attack, the puck a step ahead of the U-S team. Three quick passes lead to a solid shot on goal.

The puck thumps into the back of the net. Jimmy scoots the puck back out.

INT. NORWAY ICE RINK - NIGHT

Silk crosses the red line and sends the puck deep into the zone; the type of attack Herb detests. From the bench...

HERB

Keep the puck damn it! Don't give
it away!

Herb looks at his players...and sees a complacent team. No fire. Nothing. He shakes his head.

INT. NORWAY ICE RINK - LATER

Robbie casually shoves the puck ahead, no longer skating, because...

THE FINAL HORN BLARES. He glances at the scoreboard...

NOR 3 USA 3 0:00

...and *strolls* toward the bench. But as the players get ready to head for the locker room, they're met with a chilly...

HERB
Back on the ice.

JACK O'CALLAHAN
For what?

Herb's steady glare is all the answer he needs.

JACK O'CALLAHAN (cont'd)
Christ.

INT. NORWAY ICE RINK - MOMENTS LATER

Two dozen pair of skates scrape into the line, and head back the other way. Lines. Back. Forth.

Herb paces behind the bench...

HERB
Think you can win on talent alone?

Silk. Robbie. KENNY MORROW. Each player digs his skates into the ice, their hockey sticks out in front...

HERB (cont'd)
Gentlemen, you don't have enough talent to win on talent alone.

They sprint across the line, gasping for air during the very short break.

HERB (cont'd)
Think you won't have to work for this? S'that it?

He blows his whistle. Off they go; exhausted, furious.

HERB (cont'd)
Maybe you should turn pro. Wanna embarrass yourself, might as well get paid for it.

From the far side of the bench, Craig Patrick glances at Herb, waiting for him to call it. But he doesn't.

INT. NORWAY ICE RINK - LATER

The arena lights clank as they're dimmed about halfway down, the work crew's way of asking the Americans to go home.

HERB

How 'bout it Silkie, you gonna be
the first to quit on me?

Silk crosses the line, his head bowed from fatigue. He turns, coasting, but manages to say to Cox...

DAVE SILK

This sonuvabitch isn't breakin' me.

Whistle. Off they go again. Back...

INT. NORWAY ICE RINK - MOMENTS LATER

...and forth. The lights are now completely out, the players nothing more than silhouettes dashing across the ice. Doc Nagobads steps close to...

DOC NAGOBADS

Herb for godsakes...

HERB

...not yet.

INT. NORWAY ICE RINK - CONTINUOUS

Mark Johnson slams his stick onto the boards, the sound echoing throughout the arena. From the darkness...

HERB (O.S.)

If I hear one more stick, I will
keep you here all night.

Steam rises from their bodies, their breath visible against the dim light. Forceful bursts as they gasp for air.

HERB (O.S.) (cont'd)

Back on the line.

But before the next whistle can be heard. *Magic...*

MIKE ERUZIONE

Mike Eruzione...

(bent over, gulps for air)
...Winthrop...Massachusetts...

Robbie, exhausted, looks at Eruzione...

ROBBIE MCCLANAHAN
What the hell you doin' man?

Eruzione doesn't say anything, waiting for...*hoping for*...

HERB (O.S.)
Who do you play for?

Sweat drips from his forehead as he says...

MIKE ERUZIONE
...for the United...States of
America.

Another long break. Until...from the darkness...

HERB
That's all gentlemen.

INT. NORWAY COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Herb finishes the last bite of breakfast, just as Walter Bush cuts through the room...a bit behind schedule. As he sits...

WALTER BUSH
Sorry I'm late.

A waitress is right there with the coffee. He thanks her.

WALTER BUSH (cont'd)
Guess who's in New York next week?
(off Herb's look)
Tarasov. Soviets are playing the
NHL and Canada. Figured it'd be
nice to bring along the father of
Russian hockey.

HERB
NHL's playing both us and the
Soviets? Same week?

WALTER BUSH
Don't take this wrong, but I don't
think you're the one they're
worried about.

Walter sips his coffee.

WALTER BUSH (cont'd)
 Hell of a schedule you put together
 here Herb. Sixty games in six
 months? A good pro team in St.
 Louis next week? Lot to ask of
 these kids.

Herb looks at Walter, knowing he wouldn't just say that...

HERB
 What are you sayin' Walter?

WALTER BUSH
 Nobody's saying anything. It's
 just...the committee, the NHL. No
 one's too sure where you're goin'
 with all this. And let's face it, a
 tie against Norway doesn't help.

Herb stands to put on his coat. Reaching in his pocket for...

HERB
 Took twenty years for the Soviets
 to learn to play this way. Might
 take these kids a few weeks to
 figure it out.

...the buck or two he gently drops on the table.

INT. ST. LOUIS LOCKER ROOM HALLWAY - NIGHT

TEAM USA walks, dejected, down the hall into the locker room.

TITLE: ST. LOUIS BLUES 9 USA 1

Herb and Craig Patrick follow the players in...

CRAIG PATRICK
 Time to worry yet?

HERB
 Yeah I think so, sure.

They reach the opening into the locker room, where Doc is
 visiting with Jack Williams of the NHL.

JACK WILLIAMS
 Coach. Craig. Good to see you
 again.

They exchange greetings.

JACK WILLIAMS (cont'd)
Listen Herb, about them runnin' the
score up tonight...

HERB
Don't apologize for winning Jack.

JACK WILLIAMS
(an awkward beat)
Well...if it helps you find a few
things to work on. Right?

HERB
Right.

JACK WILLIAMS
I'll let you get back to work.

They shake hands and Williams leaves. Herb turns to Patrick
and Doc...

HERB
Alright, give 'em two days off and
whatever you do, don't tell 'em it
was my idea.

CRAIG PATRICK
What do we say?

HERB
I don't know, give 'em...that stuff
about the cat bein' away so the
mouse gets to be independent.
Somethin' like that. Alright?

He nods...and goes. Doc and Craig Patrick can only smile.

HERB (cont'd)
I want 'em ready on Monday though.

INT. DISCO CLUB - NIGHT

Independent mice. The Boston boys are decked out in disco's
finest: lapels the size of legal envelopes, tight slacks.

The Midwest kids are trying, but their clothes lack that
little something that...O'CALLAHAN has in abundance. He
dances with an ATTRACTIVE YOUNG WOMAN.

INT. DISCO CLUB - CONTINUOUS

The Coneheads surround a table, John Harrington with a few pieces of paper close to his beer. He's writing...

JOHN HARRINGTON

"Let's be idealistic, but let's also be practical."

BUZZ SCHNEIDER

Oh yah. How 'bout "Schneider you're playin' worse every day, but now you're playin' really bad."

JOHN HARRINGTON

Nah, that's not it.

Robbie walks up, his arm around a RESIDENT DISCO QUEEN.

ROBBIE MCCLANAHAN

Leann, these are the Coneheads.
Coneheads, this is Leann.

The Coneheads pay little attention, merely saying "hey."

ROBBIE MCCLANAHAN (cont'd)

Whatcha doin'?

BUZZ SCHNEIDER

Bah here's writin' down all the weird stuff Coach says.

JOHN HARRINGTON

"You're playin' worse every day..."

ROBBIE MCCLANAHAN

...and right now you're playin' like the middle of next week."

JOHN HARRINGTON

Yahhhh, that's it.

INT. DISCO CLUB - NIGHT

A break between songs. Mark Johnson watches the scene with MIKE RAMSEY, only 18, but a rock-solid Minnesota lad. His shirt, and jeans, did not come from O'Callahan's store.

Eruzione walks up, beer in hand.

MIKE ERUZIONE

You boys just gonna stand here all night?

MARK JOHNSON

Ramsey's workin' up a move on the white dress over there..

They look across the room where a YOUNG WOMAN is visiting with TWO OTHER YOUNG WOMEN. Stunning. Gorgeous. O'Callahan walks up to the boys, grabbing his beer...

MIKE ERUZIONE

That's some serious real estate big fella.

JACK O'CALLAHAN

Which one?

Eruzione nods toward the object of Ramsey's affection...

JACK O'CALLAHAN (cont'd)

Who? Rammer?

(takes a sip)

Watch and learn Jethro.

The first chords of a slow song. Jack puts his beer down and heads over. Rizzo can tell Ramsey's feelings are hurt.

MIKE ERUZIONE

I think Jack's about to find out what home field advantage is all about.

Jack moves in and starts talking to the young woman.

MIKE ERUZIONE (cont'd)

Y'see Ramsey, I'm thinkin' that underneath that thankfully very skimpy dress is a hometown girl who probably hates cocky New England guys as much as you do.

They watch as the young woman politely stiffs Jack.

MARK JOHNSON

Aaaaata girl...

MIKE ERUZIONE

Now I'm just guessin', but if she were to know that saying yes to a fellow, what do you guys call yourselves?...

MIKE RAMSEY
Minnesotans.

MIKE ERUZIONE
...fellow Minnesotan would give her
as much satisfaction as just saying
no to our Boston friend. I think
she might find that an attractive
proposition.

Ramsey looks at both Rizzo and Johnson, before smiling and
awkwardly heading over.

MARK JOHNSON
This could get ugly.

O'Callahan returns.

JACK O'CALLAHAN
She's already with someone.

All three watch as Ramsey begins to talk with the young
woman. She listens, smiles, then laughs. And then...

...takes his hand and GUIDES HIM onto the floor. The stunning
young woman wraps her arms around young Mister Ramsey as if
he's the only man in the world.

MIKE ERUZIONE
Looks like she's with Jethro.

Johnson smiles. Jack looks on in disbelief. The song fades...

INT. NEW YORK HOTEL RESTAURANT - DAY

...into the elegant piano of a hotel restaurant. Herb sits at
a table, reading the sports pages of the New York Times. A
headline offers: USSR DEFEATS CANADA 6-0

On the table...a tall wrapped GIFT sits next to his cup of
coffee. It's the unmistakable size of a BOTTLE.

THE HOST OF THE RESTAURANT leads a group of men to their
table, a group representing hockey royalty.

VICTOR TIKHONOV, the coach of the Soviet hockey team; TWO OF
HIS ASSISTANTS; and ANATOLY TARASOV, the retired coach who
put Russian hockey on the map.

Tikhonov and his assistants notice Herb, offering a look of
cool indifference. But Tarasov smiles and walks over.

TARASOV
I should be wary of American
coaches bearing gifts. No?

Herb stands and tries his hand at speaking Russian...

HERB
Hello Anatoly. How are you?

TARASOV
Your Russian...much better.
(shakes his hand)
It's been a long time. How are you
my friend.

HERB
Better than most of Canada from the
looks of things.

TARASOV
I often thank your neighbors for
inventing our game. Now? We are
showing them how to play it.

HERB
It's Tikhonov's best team.

TARASOV
I am sure your professionals will
help to show us tonight. You are
here to watch?

HERB
I have to fly back.

TARASOV
Ah...so you are here to see if an
old Russian man will share secrets.
(off Herb's look)
There is no secret my friend. You
wish to know why we win? Look at
the scores.

HERB
I've seen the scores.

TARASOV
Look at them again.
(looks at his gift)
I will raise this in hopes of
better times between our two
countries.
(MORE)

TARASOV (cont'd)
 (holds out his hand)
 Be well.

HERB
 You too.

Tarasov starts to leave...and then stops. And what he says at that moment, he says almost with a hint of compassion.

TARASOV
 Mister Brooks...this, what you are thinking. It cannot happen.

INT. JET - NIGHT

The ever-present overhead light shines on Herb and the ream of paperwork on his lap. He's tired, but he reads.

The top sheet is a list of the past forty or so games played by the Soviet Union. The letters "USSR" are to the left of every opponent, winners of every game.

He flips the page, filled with photo-copied ARTICLES. And he sees it in the headlines...as he circles the key words:

"SOVIETS SURGE IN FINAL PERIOD" "RUSSIANS DOMINATE CZECHS
 IN FINAL FRAME" "CANADIANS FADE AGAINST SOVIETS"

INT. AIRPORT PARKING LOT - MORNING

Late fall cold. Herb gets into his car, blowing his hands to keep them warm. He starts the engine. The radio comes on...

RADIO SPORTS ANCHOR (V.O.)
 ...Baltimore's 9 to 6 win over the
 Pirates moves the Orioles within a
 game of the World Series title...
 (Herb listens...)
 ...and in hockey the Soviet Union
 rallied in the final period to beat
 the NHL All-Stars five to four...

Herb stares at the radio. The words "holy" and "shit" have never been so close.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Herb paces along the wall, having seen the film before. But for most of the players, the flickering images represent an introduction of sorts...

HERB

Boris Mikhailov, captain the past six years, better than anyone at his position and that includes the NHL.

MIKHAILOV, the world's best player, fills the screen. He zips toward the net and scores; his team barely celebrates.

ERIC STROBEL

These guys ever smile?

JACK O'CALLAHAN

They're Russians. They get shot if they smile.

HERB

Vladislav Tretiak.

Jimmy watches as TRETIAK pulls off an incredible stop.

HERB (cont'd)

Score on Tretiak, keep the puck, 'cause it doesn't happen often.

The Americans continue to stare in silence.

HERB (cont'd)

Forty two games last three months, forty two wins. Their main weapon is intimidation. They know they'll win...so do their opponents.

The film ends. The lights come up. Silence born of reality.

HERB (cont'd)

Look. I could give you a line of bullshit right now about you bein' a better team than they are, but that's what it'd be. Every one of us here knows what people are sayin' about our chances. I know it. You know it.

They listen.

HERB (cont'd)

But I also know...we can find a way to stay with this team. You don't defend them, you attack them. You throw their game right back at them.

(MORE)

HERB (cont'd)

The team that's finally willing to
do that is the team that will
eventually put them down.

Knute Rockne would be proud.

HERB (cont'd)

The NHL won't change its game, we
will. The rest of the world is
afraid of them, we won't be. No one
has ever worked hard enough to
skate with them for an entire game.

(the message gets through)

Gentlemen, we're gonna work hard
enough.

INT. BLOOMINGTON, MET CENTER ICE - DAY

The work begins. The puck sailing from stick to stick.

INT. BLOOMINGTON, MET CENTER ICE - DAY

TEAM USA wears its rag-tag practice jerseys, Herb lurking a
few strides away. Robbie pushes the puck up the ice...

HERB

Hold the puck, hold the puck, NOW!

...and he zips it to Johnson, who punches it into the net.

HERB (cont'd)

Better.

INT. BLOOMINGTON, MET CENTER ICE - LATER

Lines. Back and forth.

HERB

The wolf's gettin' stronger boys.

INT. BLOOMINGTON, MET CENTER ICE - DAY

Eruzione skates with the puck, still lagging...

HERB

Faster Michael...c'mon!

INT. BLOOMINGTON, MET CENTER ICE - DAY

The team runs up the stairs of the arena. Sweat dripping.

INT. BLOOMINGTON, MET CENTER ICE - DAY

Jack leans over, tired. Herb skates up and leans down...

HERB

Know what a whipping boy is Jack?

(off Jack's look)

You get to be mine. When I call you
by your last name, I'm yellin' at
the team. I call you by your first,
I'm talkin' to you, alright?

Jack nods.

INT. BLOOMINGTON WEIGHT ROOM - DAY

Baker, Christian, Buzz and Broten. Each player holds a 45
POUND PLATE and squat jumps onto a one-foot-high step in
front of them. Agonizing.

INT. BLOOMINGTON, MET CENTER ICE - DAY

One by one, the team slaloms back and forth between CONES set
on the ice...while trying to control the puck ahead of them.

HERB

Every minute you're tired now is a
minute you won't be in February.

INT. BLOOMINGTON, MET CENTER ICE - DAY

Jimmy Craig is peppered with a shot on goal by: Cox, Strobel,
McClanahan. All three shots find the back of the net. The
last player to swoop in is Jack...who misses, barely.

HERB

Damn it JACK! You're playin' worse
every day and right now you're
playin' like the middle of next
month.

The Coneheads and the rest of the team, even Jack, have to
smile. But Herb has other concerns...

...he looks at Jimmy; head down, lightly thumping his stick on the ice.

EXT. HARVARD RINK - NIGHT

The early November cold of Cambridge greets the players as they head for the TEAM BUS.

TITLE: HARVARD THREE MONTHS TILL OPENING CEREMONY

A short distance away, Jim Craig is giving his FATHER a hug, saying goodbye. There is not a hint of embarrassment for either man.

JIM CRAIG

Love you Pop.

Herb, Doc and Craig Patrick walk out of the arena doors, just in time to catch a glimpse of the encounter. Catching a glimpse of the sadness in the eyes of Jimmy's father.

JIMMY'S FATHER

You too son. Keep that glove up.

JIM CRAIG

Yeah.

Jim heads for the bus. Herb keeps walking, but finds himself watching the father...who can't take his eyes off his son.

INT. BUS - LATER

Jimmy sits next to the window, staring out so that the rest of the team can't see the emotion welling in his eyes.

Herb walks up and sits down next to him.

HERB

Doin' alright?

The young man continues to stare out the window.

JIM CRAIG

It's hard leavin'. He goes back home and I'm still off doin' this.

HERB

You havin' second thoughts?

Jimmy doesn't answer right away.

JIM CRAIG

All her stuff's still there. He won't throw anything away. It's like a piece of him died with her and now he can't seem to get it back.

(pause)

You think me doin' this can help him out?

HERB

I don't know.

It's quiet for a moment.

HERB (cont'd)

Look Jim, about the way you're playin'...

JIM CRAIG

...I know.

HERB

This team needs to put the saddle on you. But you gotta give me a better effort than what I've been seeing.

Jimmy nods. Herb starts to push himself out of the seat...

HERB (cont'd)

Oh and my wife wanted to make sure you got a place for Thanksgiving. Long as you don't mind a couple of kids runnin' in front of the TV.

It's the only kind of Thanksgiving the young man knows.

JIM CRAIG

I don't mind.

HERB

Your father's right. Keep your glove up.

INT. BROOKS' FAMILY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Patty sits on the floor, legs crossed under the coffee table as she works on some DRIED HARVEST ARRANGEMENTS. Herb works at the kitchen table, papers spread all over.

The TV is tuned to the variety show "Real People."

PATTY

Honey, you've been staring at the same piece of paper since you walked in the door. Take a break, get your mind off the team for awhile.

Herb stares at the sheet below him...

HERB

How do I cut this kid? He's done everything I've asked of him. They all have.

PATTY

So keep him. Tell Walter you're not comfortable lettin' anyone else go.

HERB

It doesn't work that way.

PATTY

Could have him do it. Doesn't seem like an unfair thing to ask.

HERB

Walter's not their coach.

(pause)

I just didn't think it'd be this hard.

PATTY

Yeah you did.

The SPECIAL REPORT message fills the screen...

T-V ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

We interrupt our regularly scheduled program so that we may bring you the following special report...

...a somber JESSICA SAVITCH is at the anchor desk. The ACTUAL BROADCAST from late 1979 (denoted as A.B.) begins...

JESSICA SAVITCH (A.B.)

The American embassy in Tehran is in the hands of Muslim students tonight.

PATTY

Oh my God.

Patty leans forward, setting the harvest work to one side.

JESSICA SAVITCH (A.B.)
Spurred on by an anti-American
speech by the Ayatollah Khomeini,
they stormed the embassy, taking
dozens of American hostages...

The haunting image of a BLIND-FOLDED HOSTAGE fills the TV
screen, while the voice-over continues...

PATTY
Herb?

Her eyes remain locked on the screen as she slowly gives a
half turn of her head. She sees her husband still totally
engrossed in his work.

PATTY (cont'd)
Herb, look at this.

Finally, they both look.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Craig Patrick sips a cup of coffee as he stares at a sheet of
paper on the bulletin board. The TEAM SCHEDULE has a new game
listed: 2/9/80 USA VS. SOVIET UNION MADISON SQUARE GARDEN

Herb emerges from the tiny office a few steps away, ready to
walk out for practice.

CRAIG PATRICK
This your idea?

HERB
What's that?

CRAIG PATRICK
Playin' the Soviets three days
before Lake Placid?

HERB
They're gonna have to get the shit
scared out of 'em sometime. Might
as well be when it doesn't count.

INT. BLOOMINGTON, MET CENTER ICE - DAY

The team is muddling through a lackluster practice; everyone
a little on edge, a little out of sorts.

Mike Eruzione, now wearing the CAPTAIN'S "C," has the puck. Heading up the ice. He shoots. And misses. Herb blows his whistle. Loud, angry.

MIKE ERUZIONE

I know.

The players coast around the ice, all knowing Herb will be taking a moment with the team captain. With their friend.

HERB

(skates up)

Start puttin' the puck in the net or you're not goin' anywhere. And don't think I won't do it.

(skates away, yells to the team)

Next line!

Eruzione, the young man who wants it more than anyone, can't believe it. Can't believe he might be the one who gets cut.

Mark Johnson takes the puck and heads up the ice, but as he breaks into the clear, he passes the puck to Cox, who slams it hard into the net. A seemingly perfect play.

HERB (cont'd)

Run it again.

MARK JOHNSON

But we had a breakaway! We scored!

HERB

AGAIN!

It's as forceful a voice as he's used against his team, even though he's staring at the ice. Glaring. Johnson turns his head toward Robbie, who raises his eyebrows as if to say "don't ask me."

INT. UNIVERSITY OFFICE - NIGHT

Herb sits at his desk, the warm green light of a desk lamp spilling on the stacks of paperwork. He's on the phone...

HERB

Mhmm, yeah.

Mark Johnson is at the door. Herb, glasses on, motions him in. Success is everywhere: TROPHIES. PLAQUES. PHOTOGRAPHS.

Herb hangs up. The young man waits on his coach, who is scribbling a note. No greeting. Nothing. Until...

HERB (cont'd)
You're the guy.

Johnson doesn't get it.

HERB (cont'd)
When you go, we go. If you are wide open and you have a shot? We need you to take it. Your father'll say the same thing. Even though he is the coach of a second rate college program.

The young man has to smile a bit.

MARK JOHNSON
This mean I'm on the team?

HERB
Depends on whether you take the advice I just gave you.

Herb continues working and Johnson realizes the conversation is over. He quietly turns for the door.

But on his way out...he notices on the wall: a PHOTO of the SQUAW VALLEY HOCKEY TEAM, mounted next to the team photos from INNSBRUCK and GRENABLE.

Herb, so much younger, is in each one. His name below.

MARK JOHNSON
I thought you only played on two teams?

He turns to look at his coach. Still glued to his work.

MARK JOHNSON (cont'd)
You're in all three of these...

HERB
...Mister Johnson, was this your meeting or mine?

Meeting over. Mark waits a second, then quietly walks out.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA CAMPUS COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Herb, Craig Patrick and Doc surround a small table; Minnesota cold on display through the window. NAPKINS, scribbled with various combinations of players, clutter the table top.

HERB

So...say we keep Johnson and Robbie together, where's Eruzione go?

CRAIG PATRICK

Could put him with Broten.

HERB

Can't keep up with him. Then again, he can't keep up with anyone.

A knowing smile from Doc.

CRAIG PATRICK

What about Cox? Kid's been scorin'.

HERB

I know.

(rubs his eyes, tired)
How bad is it when the only thing I'm sure of is keeping the Coneheads together.

Now it's Patrick's turn to smile. Herb exhales, deep.

HERB (cont'd)

We're still not there. We've got 'em to where they're willing to be on the same team, but they gotta want to be on that ice together.

DOC NAGOBADS

These boys? Teammates, maybe. Brothers? No.

CRAIG PATRICK

You serious about lettin' Michael go?

HERB

How long's it been since he put one in the net?

CRAIG PATRICK

I don't know. Has he?

HERB

He gives us a lot off the ice. I just need somethin' on it.

INT. ERUZIONE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

About half the players are sprawled on the floor and the old recliners at Rizzo's place. It's a textbook example of collegiate living: food, mess, bad posters.

"SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE" is on the set. Bah, Buzzy and Pav are beside themselves as they watch the "Coneheads."

Mark Johnson and Neal Broten are locked in a BACKGAMMON duel nearby; while Jack, Jimmy, Eruzione and Silk are slouched a short distance from the television.

The door opens and Robbie comes in...a BOX under one arm, a brutally ugly CHRISTMAS TREE in the other hand. Three feet tall, maybe.

He plops it on the floor and opens the BOX OF ORNAMENTS.

JACK O'CALLAHAN

Nice tree Mac.

ROBBIE MCCLANAHAN

Found it at that lot down on the corner.

MIKE ERUZIONE

Sure it wasn't reserved for Charlie Brown?

McClanahan hangs the first ornament. It holds. Barely.

ROBBIE MCCLANAHAN

Don't mess with me on Christmas.

INT. MINNESOTA LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

TEAM USA is in full uniform, the players silently waiting as Herb paces back and forth in the middle of the room.

HERB

Neal, I want you at center with Strobel tonight. Ralph, you move over to right with Johnson.
(looks at the Coneheads)
...you guys...you guys stay the same.

They nod. They always stay the same.

HERB (cont'd)
These are still the Czechs. It may
only be their "B" team...

A snicker. From somewhere.

HERB (cont'd)
...but we need to play as if...

Another. From Ramsey. Herb stops...

HERB (cont'd)
What is it Ramsey?

MIKE RAMSEY
Sorry.

Herb looks around and notices the only player not smothering
a smile is MCCLANAHAN. He walks over...and sees that Robbie
is holding a CRUMPLED LETTER.

He holds out his hand. The young man hands it over. On the
envelope: the words "SANTA BOY."

Herb pulls out the letter...and finds a ransom note of sorts.

HOCKEY PLAYER DO AS YOU'RE TOLD AND THE TREE DOESN'T GET
HURT

ROBBIE MCCLANAHAN
They stole my tree.

Jimmy Craig titters. Robbie EXPLODES...standing, pointing...

ROBBIE MCCLANAHAN (cont'd)
These...SONS OF BITCHES took my
damn Christmas tree!

HERB
These sons of bitches?

ROBBIE MCCLANAHAN
Yeah. Had Hallmark shit hangin' all
over it.

Eruzione breaks first. Dominoes. Then a semblance of silence.

HERB
Okay, well that pretty much ruins
any chance of a productive speech.
(beat)
(MORE)

HERB (cont'd)
 Alright, the thing at Doc's house
 is after the game, don't spoil it
 by losin'.

They're all laughing, even Robbie coming close to a smile.

INT. DOC'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

As warm a holiday setting as one can find. Decorations,
 garland, lights, and...of course...

ROBBIE'S TREE. Gifts piled underneath. Most of the team is
 already there, but McClanahan, Johnson and Broten are just
 coming in, gifts in tow.

Robbie stomps the snow from his boots...

ROBBIE MCCLANAHAN
 If one of you heathens from Boston
 messed with my tree...

Jimmy Craig is dressed as SANTA. He catches the gifts that
 McClanahan gently tosses his way.

JIM CRAIG
 Don't go gettin' regional on us
 Mac.

INT. DOC'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Fire crackling. Twenty one young men, hair blown well enough
 to gain entry to Studio 54, watch Herb open his gift. He
 pulls out...a BLACK WHIP. The room laughs.

HERB
 The gift that keeps on giving.

ALL
 (laughing)
 No!

The room falls silent, waiting to see what Herb might say...

HERB
 This may come as a surprise to some
 of you, but...I don't do those
 sentimental speeches.

More laughter.

HERB (cont'd)
You played better tonight. Got a
hell of a long way to go.
(wry smile)
And I'm only sayin' that 'cause we
got Christmas comin' up.

Herb heads for the door.

HERB (cont'd)
Don't stay out late tonight.

ALL
Merry Christmas Coach.

INT. POND - NIGHT

A CAN that's been crushed into a MAKE-SHIFT HOCKEY PUCK skids
across the frozen pond out back of Doc's place. And for one
night, the young men of TEAM USA...

...are boys once again; dressed in heavy coats, winter hats,
scarves and gloves. They play the game they all grew up
with...on a pond of ice.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Herb drives, alone. On the radio...

RADIO NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)
...seen by many as the President's
most important speech of his term.
A look back now as WCCO's year-end
special continues...

The thin voice of PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER comes on, the words
reflecting a longing for the past. A hope for the future.

PRESIDENT CARTER (V.O.-A.B.)
The erosion of our confidence in
the future is threatening to
destroy the social and the
political fabric of America. The
confidence...

EXT. POND - CONTINUOUS

The boys skate, their laughter in stark contrast to the
somber tone of the President...

PRESIDENT CARTER (V.O.-A.B.)
...that we have always had as a
people, is not simply some romantic
dream or a proverb in a dusty book.
that we read on the Fourth of July.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Herb drives along. Homes with holiday lights surround him,
but they fail to attract his attention...

PRESIDENT CARTER (V.O.-A.B.)
(thin voice becomes full)
It is the idea which founded our
nation and has guided our
development as a people. Confidence
in the future...

EXT. POND - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy Craig is still in Santa garb. The can-puck skitters
close to him...and he kicks it away, laughing...

PRESIDENT CARTER (V.O.-A.B.)
...has supported everything else.
We've always believed in something
called progress. We've always had
faith that the days of our
children...

EXT. OLD DOWNTOWN STREET - NIGHT

Herb walks down a snow-covered sidewalk, his coat scrunched
high on his neck. He passes a SALVATION ARMY BELL-RINGER,
then reaches for the door of a SMALL STORE.

PRESIDENT CARTER (V.O.-A.B.)
...would be better than our own.
Our people are losing that faith.
The symptoms of this crisis of the
American spirit are all around us.

EXT. POND - CONTINUOUS

Childhood again. Jack tugs at Strobel's scarf as he skates
away, both laughing.

PRESIDENT CARTER (V.O.-A.B.)

For the first time in the history of our country a majority of our people believe the next five years will be worse than the past five years. Two thirds of our people do not even vote.

INT. SMALL STORE - CONTINUOUS

Herb pays a STORE CLERK for the gift he just picked out. The small wrapped present is on the counter below him.

PRESIDENT CARTER (V.O.-A.B.)

We were taught that our armies were always invincible and our causes always just, only to suffer the agony of Vietnam. We respected the presidency as a place of honor...

EXT. POND - CONTINUOUS

Eruzione loops around, laughing at the three Coneheads...

PRESIDENT CARTER (V.O.-A.B.)

...until the shock of Watergate. We've got to stop crying and start sweating, stop talking and start walking, stop cursing and start praying...

INT. BROOKS' FAMILY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Herb opens the front door of his home. The room is fairly dark, except for the glow coming from...

PRESIDENT CARTER (V.O.-A.B.)

With God's help and for the sake of our nation, it is time to join hands in America.

...the CHRISTMAS TREE; garland and lights now covering the branches. He walks over.

PRESIDENT CARTER (V.O.-A.B.) (cont'd)

Let us commit ourselves together for a rebirth of the American spirit. Working together with our common faith, we cannot fail.

And all is quiet. Herb places Patty's gift on a table close by...and notices, resting all alone: THE STAR that goes on top of the tree. A note to one side reads...

"Daddy, we left the star for you. Love Kelly"

It's as close as Herb will ever come to shedding a tear.

EXT. DOC'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The boys are heading for their respective cars, parked in various spots near, and on, Doc's lawn.

Robbie looks for his ride, but it's already gone. Jack, Eruzione and the Coneheads approach...

JACK O'CALLAHAN
Santa boy? Lose your ride?

ROBBIE MCCLANAHAN
Looks that way.

JACK O'CALLAHAN
C'mon.

INT. STATION WAGON - NIGHT

BURGERS and SHAKES are perched on various spots throughout the car. Jack drives, with Robbie up front. Eruzione takes the entire middle seat, sprawled on his back...while the Coneheads are way in the rear.

JACK O'CALLAHAN
Wait, wait. You're sayin' you went to that movie for the singing.

JOHN HARRINGTON
Some good songs, y'know.

MIKE ERUZIONE
Like what?

Harrington, mouth full, ponders for a second. Until...

JOHN HARRINGTON
"Summer lovin'...had me a blast..."

...and within seconds, Schneider joins in...creating an upper Midwest version of "Grease." Terrible. Awful.

JACK O'CALLAHAN
Hey Travolta? It's a long way to walk.

BUZZ SCHNEIDER
Like you haven't seen it.

MIKE ERUZIONE
Oh he's seen it alright. It's the perfect flick. Your girlfriend thinks you're seein' it for her, when what you're really doin'...

JACK O'CALLAHAN
...is watchin' Olivia Newton John in those black leather pants.

MARK PAVELICH
Yah, good pants.

JACK O'CALLAHAN
Damn good pants Pav. Don't need a Harvard education on that one.

MIKE ERUZIONE
O-Cee here should know.

ROBBIE MCCLANAHAN
You could've gone to Harvard?

JACK O'CALLAHAN
I could've gone a lot of places.

Robbie shakes his head.

JACK O'CALLAHAN (cont'd)
I wanted to play hockey. Sure as hell wasn't goin' to Minnesota.

ROBBIE MCCLANAHAN
Thank God for that.

And for the first time, the words don't cause a problem. Jack looks at Robbie. Robbie looks at Jack. The two of them laugh.

The boys in the back are quietly humming again.

JACK O'CALLAHAN
Hey, let's keep it down back there.

INT. BLOOMINGTON, MET CENTER ICE - DAY

Back to work. The players warm up, slowly skating around the rink. But the laughter from Doc's pond is long gone, not because the grind is resuming. But because...

THERE IS A NEW PLAYER ON THE ICE: Timmy Harrer, one of the reserves from the first try-out.

He grabs a puck with his stick and, as he skates along, fires an absolute rocket toward the empty net.

Silk skates up alongside Jimmy Craig...

JIM CRAIG

Timmy Harrer. One of the kids Herb had on reserve.

DAVE SILK

Who got hurt?

JIM CRAIG

Nobody.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - LATER

The boys are getting dressed; no music, no talking, just an uneasy silence. Harrer, duffel over his shoulder, walks out...plenty of eyes following him as he leaves.

MIKE RAMSEY

This is bullshit.

Rizzo tosses his bag over his shoulder, passing Ramsey on his way out...

MIKE ERUZIONE

Don't worry big man. I'll be okay.

Out he goes.

JACK O'CALLAHAN

He won't do it, he's just dickin' with us.

MARK JOHNSON

Yeah he will.

All eyes turn.

MARK JOHNSON (cont'd)
He made the Squaw Valley team.
Herb. My dad says he got sent home
a week before they won the gold.
Come that close? Get nuthin'? He'll
do whatever it takes.

INT. BROOKS' FAMILY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Patty escorts Kelly, pajamas on, in the general direction of her bedroom. She's on the phone, its long cord allowing her to move around the room.

PATTY
You are so late for bed young lady.
(on the phone)
I'm sorry Walter. He's just walking
in.

Herb walks through the front door. Patty holds the phone to her chest, a serious look on her face.

PATTY (cont'd)
It's Walter Bush.

INT. HOME OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Patty stands and watches the TV set...

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)
The Soviet military invasion is
focusing on the northeastern
section of Afghanistan, with troops
now heading for the key city of
Kabul.

Herb walks in...and watches from the doorway.

PATTY
What'd he say?

HERB
There's already talk Carter may
boycott the Moscow Games next
summer.

PATTY
If we don't go there, they won't
come here...will they?

He walks away. She exhales, sensing his disappointment.

INT. BROOKS' FAMILY LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Herb kneels in front of the fireplace, tossing a couple of logs on the fire. Patty comes in...and gives him a moment before...

PATTY

Don't do this to yourself Herb.
There are things you can control
and things you can't.

No response.

PATTY (cont'd)

Herb?

HERB

I heard you.

She knows she has to be careful.

PATTY

You'll still have everything you've
won here at Minnesota.

The quiet frustration he's feeling right now gives birth to the next few words...

HERB

...don't...tell me what I'll have.
You don't know this enough to tell
me that.

Silence for a moment. But instead of walking away, Patty, the only one who can stand up to this man, replies...

PATTY

Y'know...I don't mind you getting
upset with me when I say you work
too hard teaching a simple game.

(beat)

But don't ever patronize me for
caring about you.

Herb wisely lets her have the last word. She walks away.

INT. WISCONSIN ICE ARENA - NIGHT

Timmy Harrer sprints to the middle of the ice. He zips past one of the INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE ALL-STAR PLAYERS...

TITLE: MILWAUKEE THREE WEEKS TILL OPENING CEREMONY

...and fires a long shot toward goal. SCORE. He skates back to the bench, where he's barely acknowledged.

Eruzione anxiously thumps the butt-end of his stick on the floor, worried. He glances over his shoulder at Herb.

EXT. WISCONSIN ICE ARENA - LATER

The January cold is about to grow colder. A group of the players stand and wait outside the bus. Eruzione. Craig. Jack. Robbie. Baker. Silk. Johnson.

Herb gets off the bus and quickly walks over, both Craig Patrick and Doc right behind...

HERB

This had better take two minutes.

Reluctance. For a moment.

ROBBIE MCCLANAHAN

This isn't right Herb. Bringin' him in this late.

JACK O'CALLAHAN

We got parents buyin' tickets, gettin' rooms. Makes it hard knowin' what to tell 'em.

JIM CRAIG

And with one of us goin' home as it is...

Herb's eyes fall on Eruzione.

HERB

I don't have to ask where you are on this, do I?

BILLY BAKER

This wasn't Mike's idea Herb.

HERB

Yeah?

MIKE ERUZIONE

Listen Herb, you want me to say I'm scared of gettin' cut, then I'm scared of gettin' cut. Okay? Everybody is.

DAVE SILK

We just want it to be fair.

HERB

Don't even try tellin' me that. He was right there in Colorado...

JIM CRAIG

That was six months ago!

HERB

You don't think he's been skatin' for six months?

JACK O'CALLAHAN

Not with us he hasn't.

HERB

So?

DAVE SILK

So there's a difference.

HERB

Like hell there is. All I know is the kid can flat-out play...

ROBBIE MCCLANAHAN

What? And we can't?

HERB

...he moves the puck, he's got great vision, hands, stick...

JIM CRAIG

You're missin' the point man...

But Herb isn't missing anything. He pushes them...

HERB

...and he's got the attitude I want, on, and off, the ice. Now somebody here tell me why I shouldn't give him a look?

MARK JOHNSON

Because we're a family.

The *GOLDEN MOMENT*. The words Herb has been waiting to hear. The Boston kids. Minnesota. Wisconsin. Now...

HERB

A family. And this is the family
you want to go to New York with?

They nod. A long pause...Herb flashing a quick glance at Doc,
the one who wondered if it was too much to ask.

HERB (cont'd)

Alright I'll send him home. But we
still have one more to get down to
twenty. Understood?

The players nod again, satisfied. They trudge to the bus.

CRAIG PATRICK

Looks like you got yourself a team.

HERB

Almost.

INT. BLOOMINGTON, MET CENTER ICE - DAY

Click, click, click. The team photograph is taken; the young
players, all wearing their Olympic uniforms, smile proudly.

Eruzione sits in the middle of the front row; Herb to his
left, Craig Patrick to his right.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Ralph Cox, showered and now in street clothes, closes his
duffel; his USA jersey hanging to one side. Craig Patrick
walks up.

CRAIG PATRICK

Ralph. Herb wants to see you.

The words are spoken quietly, but loud enough that Eruzione,
Robbie and Jack --- all dressing nearby --- can hear. Out of
respect to Ralph, they don't react.

Ralph glances at Rizzo, both knowing, and as he walks out he
casually shakes his hand...no words necessary. The three who
remain share a look. On the team...at last.

INT. UNIVERSITY OFFICE - DAY

Herb is working at his desk, waiting for the gentle knock on
the door that comes a second later. He removes his glasses
and rubs his eyes, knowing how difficult this will be...

HERB

Come in.

Ralph enters.

HERB (cont'd)

Have a seat Ralph.

He does.

HERB (cont'd)

Son, there's no easy way of doin' this. Rules say I have to be at twenty men and right now I'm at twenty one.

Herb remembers the disappointment he felt.

HERB (cont'd)

I wish to hell I could take you, I do. But...

For the first time, Herb's voice catches. Unable to get the words out.

RALPH COX

Yeah...I know.

HERB

You're a hell of a hockey player. This doesn't change that.

Ralph nods. They both stand to shake hands...

RALPH COX

Thanks for givin' me a shot.

And Ralph turns to walk out. For the last time. Weary and worn out emotionally...Herb runs his hand over his face.

The PHONE RINGS. He picks it up after a couple rings...

HERB

Yeah.

BEGIN INTERCUT WITH:

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Walter Bush cradles the receiver of a PAY PHONE...

WALTER BUSH

I just got off the phone with the IOC. Brezhnev's telling Carter to screw himself.

HERB

Yeah Walter, how's that?

WALTER BUSH

The Kremlin just released a statement, says they're gonna show how good they are by beating us over here.

(beat)

They're gonna play. The Soviets. The Czechs. All of 'em.

It's the news Herb wanted, had to, hear.

WALTER BUSH (cont'd)

Got your team yet?

HERB

Yeah.

WALTER BUSH

Get 'em to New York. They got a game to play.

EXT. NEW YORK SKYLINE - DUSK

The majesty of the Manhattan skyline. The Empire State Building. The Chrysler. The World Trade Towers.

TITLE: USA VS. SOVIET UNION THREE DAYS TILL OPENING CEREMONY

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

Herb paces behind the bench, staring at the LINEUP CARD in his hands. He tucks it away, knowing that if he keeps looking...he'll lose faith.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

The U-S players swirl around their end of the ice as they warm up, nervously glancing toward the entrance.

The first glimmer of RED appears...and...

THE SOVIETS EMERGE, striding onto the ice with a calm, business-like demeanor. The CCCP. Intimidating. Gods.

They circle toward the center line. And as they skate past the young Americans, there is a noticeable look of disdain.

...you have no business being on the ice with us...

Johnson. O'Callahan. Ramsey. Have never looked younger.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy Craig uses his skates to rough-up the ice in front of the net, looking across the way as...

TRETIKOV does the same, the red of his uniform making him look all the more like an impenetrable brick wall.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - MOMENTS LATER

The two teams stand on their respective blue lines, the first time they've come face to face.

P-A ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

...please join us now in welcoming the 1980 Olympic hockey team from the United States...

(applause)

...and the four-time defending gold medal champions from the Soviet Union...

BORIS MIKHAILOV skates into the center ice opening of the Soviet line, proudly placing the NHL CANADA CUP on the ice.

P-A ANNOUNCER (V.O.) (cont'd)

...winners of this year's NHL Canada Cup.

The U-S team applauds. Behind the bench, Herb turns to Craig Patrick...

HERB

We're clapping.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

The U-S players settle onto the bench. Herb glances at the adjacent bench, exchanging a short look with TIKHONOV.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

Johnson coasts up for the face-off, lining up across from Mikhailov.

Mikhailov...so composed. Johnson...scared shitless. The REFEREE drops the puck...

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

And the symphony of destruction begins. The pucks goes over to VALERI KHARLAMOV and...

...pop, pop, pop. It zips to Mikhailov, finds PETROV, back to Kharlamov. In a heartbeat the Soviets are sprinting away from the Americans, rushing toward Jimmy...

JIM CRAIG

C'mon, back, back, *BACK!*

...firing a quick shot that he's barely able to kick away with his outstretched leg. The speed of the attack is *staggering*.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Robbie picks up the puck, only to have it wobble away as he's slammed into the boards by a SOVIET DEFENDER.

Johnson snags it, but as he heads up the ice, it seems as if all he sees is RED. Swarming. Circling. Confused, he passes the puck up ice, but it's stolen.

Bam. Bam. Two quick passes. And the Soviets are flying again.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

Robbie, Johnson and Silk plop onto the bench...

DAVE SILK

Shit these guys are fast.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

The scoring parade begins: ALEXANDER MALTSEV attacking from the slot. Jimmy, with no chance. The puck thumps hard into the back of the net.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

VLADIMIR KRUTOV cutting in from the right, sliding the puck between Jimmy's legs. The RED LIGHT above goal glows bright.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

O'Callahan pursues a SOVIET FORWARD, but he can't catch up. To make matters worse, he's slammed into the boards. He quickly pops up; wincing, pissed as hell.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

The Coneheads attack. Buzzy Schneider sends the puck over to Pavelich, who soars in. It's a clean shot...but TRETIAK brushes the puck aside, as he would an annoying fly.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

Thump. Thump. Thump. The back of the net is alive, the red light above lit up more than a Christmas tree on the 25th.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

The most elegant goal of all. MALTSEV attacks from the right and spins around, back-handing a goal past Jimmy.

HERB

(to Craig Patrick)
Get Jimmy outta there.

Patrick turns and gives a gentle shove to the BACK-UP GOALIE; then waves toward Jimmy, calling him over...

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

Jimmy settles in on the bench, the first time he's been there all year. He rips off his gloves, pissed as hell.

Herb looks over, but decides not to say anything...yet.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

Tikhonov sends another red wave onto the ice. He glances at the scoreboard...

USA 3 URS 10

...before turning to look at Herb, barely concealing an arrogant smile.

INT. HALLWAY LEADING TO THE U-S LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Jack Williams is in the midst of an interview with a group of NEW YORK T-V REPORTERS.

JACK WILLIAMS

...I think what you saw out there was the youngest team in Olympic history against what may be the best team ever. Given that, I don't think it's fair to these kids to expect much more over the next two weeks.

Herb and Craig walk by. The T-V reporters turn, hoping to get a word, but Herb doesn't break stride...

HERB

(asks Craig to...)
Check in with Doc.

Craig peels off toward the training room. Herb continues on, walking into the locker room, where he sees...

INT. LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

...a DEFEATED, CRUSHED team. Not just the loss of a single game. But the confidence that had been slowly building...

GONE. Silk ices a sprained ankle; the rest of the team in quiet despair, many with head in hand.

Herb watches, hands on hips, knowing anything he says right now...won't matter. Patrick walks up from behind...

CRAIG PATRICK

Herb?

Without looking, Herb nods. He turns and walks back, leaving Johnson to quietly mutter to Eruzione...

MARK JOHNSON

Those guys are in another world.

INT. HALLWAY LEADING TO THE U-S LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

The news gets worse. Walter, Doc and Craig talk with Herb...

DOC NAGOBADS

I don't know if he'll need surgery yet. I'm guessing a ligament pull, but it could be a tear.

CRAIG PATRICK

What if he stays off it?

WALTER BUSH

There's no time for that. We've got Sweden in three days. You keep him on that roster, you wasted a spot.

HERB

What's best case?

DOC NAGOBADS

Miss three or four games. At least.

WALTER BUSH

That's almost the whole qualifying round!

Not what anyone wanted to hear.

HERB

The kid's made the team, busted his ass for me for six months and now I gotta send him home. That the deal?

Nobody says a word. That's the deal. Herb shoves open the door...

INT. TRAINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

...where he finds JACK. Ice piled high on his knee. The rock solid cocky Boston kid...has been crying. The tears may be gone, but Herb can tell.

JACK O'CALLAHAN

What'd Doc say?

HERB

He doesn't know yet. It's too early.

Jack nods.

HERB (cont'd)

He's gonna go with you to the hospital, get some pictures of your knee...

The young man fights off another rush of emotion, well aware of the news those x-rays might bring.

Herb considers saying something more, but...thinking it might make matters worse, turns to open the door. He walks out...

INT. HALLWAY LEADING TO THE U-S LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

...and almost bumps into Jimmy Craig, already dressed and heading for the team bus. Without blinking...

HERB

I'm thinkin' about sittin' you down.

Jimmy wheels around.

JIM CRAIG

What?

HERB

It's my fault. I've played you too many games, you're tired...
(keeps walking...)
...maybe it's time we give someone else a look. At least for a few minutes.

JIM CRAIG

You're kiddin' me...now?

HERB

Of course I mean now.

JIM CRAIG

That's my net man, you can't do that.

HERB

They scored ten goals Jim. Right now it's everybody's net.

Jim stops, but Herb keeps right on walking. The young man stares at him for a moment, stunned.

INT. LOCKER RESTROOM - NIGHT

The chaotic noise of the U-S locker room ends abruptly as the door to the restroom closes behind Herb.

He stands for a long moment, alone, allowing the complete and total devastation of the evening to sink in.

His hand rests on top of one of the stall doors as he looks down, each bit of news slowly running through his head. And for a second, it appears he's allowing himself to fall into an almost zen-like state of calm. Until...

...he RAMS the door with his hand, hard, showing the emotion he would never dare show his team.

INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT LOUNGE - NIGHT

Herb and Patty sit at a small table. He picks at his dinner, his thoughts obviously elsewhere.

Patty's already working on her after-dinner coffee. The WAITER comes up and fills her cup.

PATTY

Thank you.

He holds the container, but Herb is deep in thought.

PATTY (cont'd)

He's fine.

The waiter leaves.

HERB

Maybe I was too conservative with the game plan. I should've gone more aggressive.

A pause.

HERB (cont'd)

I've been on these kids for six months, pushed 'em right up to the breaking point. I thought...if I could get 'em to Lake Placid...I'd open the door and they'd be fine, against anybody. But after tonight...

He shakes his head. The Soviets were better than even he imagined.

PATTY

There's no disgrace in losing to this team Herb. Not tonight. Not two weeks from now.

(pause)

Important thing is...you gettin' to go back. To the Games. Right?

HERB

What's important...is havin' twenty kids, in twenty years, knowin' they didn't leave anything on the table.

PATTY

Herb Brooks, I've known you for twenty years and I have yet to see you leave a single thing on the table. These kids won't be any different, not with you as their coach.

He looks at her, hoping she's right. Unsure if she is.

INT. MEDIA INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

DOZENS OF JOURNALISTS pack the interview room. Flashbulbs burst from time to time as Herb answers questions...

TITLE: LAKE PLACID THE 13TH WINTER OLYMPICS

REPORTER #1

Herb, you've got Sweden tomorrow, one day before the opening ceremony. You worried about that strong a team so soon after New York?

HERB

I always worry about Sweden. Same as I'll worry about the Czechs.

REPORTER #2

You think you'll have to win both of those games to advance?

HERB

I don't think we have to win both, but if we lose one we're done.

INT. OLYMPIC VILLAGE, BUILDING TWO - DAY

Jim Craig is at the front of the check-in line, his teammates right behind him. The OLYMPIC OFFICIAL hands him...

OLYMPIC OFFICIAL

This is your room key, and your I-D badge, which you'll need for most everything.

Jimmy leans over to scribble his name. He glances over at the table next to him...where BORIS MIKHAILOV is doing the same thing. Their eyes meet. Jimmy, rattled, looks away.

ACROSS THE WAY

Doc, Herb and Craig Patrick huddle...

DOC NAGOBADS

The good news is...he won't need surgery. But there's no way he can play before the medal round. Even then, I'd say his chances are one in four.

CRAIG PATRICK

And if someone else goes down? It's gonna be hard puttin' a team on the ice.

Herb looks at Jack, standing in line. The young man is on crutches, smiling and laughing with Ramsey and Johnson.

HERB

I'll talk to him.

INT. TUNNEL LEADING TO THE OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - DAY

One by one, the players walk into...THE OLYMPIC HOCKEY ARENA, looking down at the venue they've worked so many months to reach. The OLYMPIC RINGS in the ice. The words "LAKE PLACID 1980" on the boards.

Herb is the last to enter. He takes a moment, like everyone else, simply to stare.

HERB

Welcome to Lake Placid gentlemen. You busted your ass for seven months...to get two weeks on that ice. Let's make the most of it.

The players eyes scan the vacant, quiet building. Almost as if in a church.

HERB (cont'd)
Take all the time you want. Won't be this quiet tomorrow.

He turns and walks out. Doc and Craig Patrick follow.

INT. LOWER CONCOURSE - LATER

Herb walks from the LOCKER ROOM toward the HUGE ROLL-UP STAGE DOOR where the team bus, just outside, idles away.

He takes a quick glance down a floor-level tunnel, where he sees...standing on the ice: a silhouette. On crutches.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - DAY

The sound of footsteps echoes hollow as Herb walks out. He stops...Jack stands in the middle of the ice, hunched over his crutches.

JACK O'CALLAHAN
Doc said no...didn't he?

HERB
He says you might be able to go in two weeks.

JACK O'CALLAHAN
And if I can't...

HERB
Puts me in a tight spot.
(off his look)
Look, Jack. I've got twenty guys to think about. And they're all lookin' at me to do what's best for this team...

JACK O'CALLAHAN
I know.

HERB
...which is why I'm hangin' on to you.

The young man's disappointment is gone. Replaced with...

JACK O'CALLAHAN
I swear to God Herb, if you are not
bein' serious right now...

HERB
...but this is only if you promise
me, right now, that you will not
even think about asking to play
till I tell you to...

JACK O'CALLAHAN
(hobbles closer)
I won't. I mean I will. Promise.

HERB
...because if you do I will put
your ass on a plane to Boston,
understood?

Jack nods.

HERB (cont'd)
Alright, Doc's waitin' for you.
He's gonna get you over to the
medical tent, set you up on round
the clock treatment.

Herb walks toward the exit. Jack, stunned, hears him say...

HERB (cont'd)
Doc. Now.

...and can only smile in amazement at what just happened.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

Herb stands behind the bench, watching as a SWEDISH PLAYER
surges past DAVE CHRISTIAN.

TITLE: USA VS. SWEDEN QUALIFYING ROUND

A sharp pass to a SWEDISH TEAMMATE leads to a spectacular
rush down the ice. Instantly it's apparent that the Swedes
are clicking...and that the Americans are tight, tentative.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Broten, Eruzione and Strobel head over the dasher onto the
ice. Herb looks up at the scoreboard:

USA 0 SWE 1

He looks toward the end of the bench, and sees ROBBIE limping into the tunnel that leads to the locker; Doc right behind him. The team doctor looks at Herb...and shakes his head.

INT. HALLWAY LEADING TO THE U-S LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The U-S team waddles to the locker room, already a portrait of dejection. Herb and Craig are last in line. Doc closes the door after the last player goes in.

HERB

Well?

DOC NAGOBADS

Upper leg contusion. He's done for the night.

HERB

Done. With a bruise on his leg.

Herb is surprisingly calm.

HERB (cont'd)

If he plays, will he be okay?

DOC NAGOBADS

I don't understand.

HERB

If he plays, can he hurt himself any worse?

DOC NAGOBADS

No, but you won't get much out of him.

Herb nods, takes a breath...and goes in.

INT. FIELDHOUSE LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

And he's quickly in full glare mode. Pacing, pissed as hell, right in front of his despondent squad. After a few seconds of ominous silence...

HERB

You're playin' like this is some throwaway game up in Rochester.

(he picks...)

Who we playin' Ramsey?

MIKE RAMSEY

Sweden.

WHOOSH! Herb rips his arm through a rack of HOCKEY STICKS, sending about a dozen flying into the middle of the room.

HERB

You're DAMN RIGHT WE'RE PLAYIN'
SWEDEN!

Silence. Herb glances at Robbie, standing up; jersey off, leg already wrapped.

HERB (cont'd)

What the hell's the matter with
you. Get your gear on.

Surprised, Robbie looks for Doc. But he's not there.

HERB (cont'd)

I said get your gear back on.

ROBBIE MCCLANAHAN

But Doc said...

HERB

I don't care what Doc said.

The entire room is stunned. Players looking at one another.

HERB (cont'd)

Fine, put your jeans on, 'cause I
don't have time for quitters.

MIKE ERUZIONE

Jesus Herb, nobody's quittin'.

HERB

Worry about your own game, plenty
there to keep you busy.

Okay, so now everyone's pissed. Herb turns back to Robbie.

HERB (cont'd)

Bruise on the leg's a long way from
the heart. Damn candy ass.

Robbie, angry, moves toward Herb.

ROBBIE MCCLANAHAN

What did you call me?

HERB
You heard me.

They scream at each other. Suddenly, it's CHAOS in the room.

ROBBIE MCCLANAHAN
You want me to play? That what you want?

HERB
I want you to be a hockey player!
Craig Patrick has to pull Herb away...

MARK JOHNSON
(playing peacemaker)
Get him outta here!

...and he manages to shove Herb back out into the...

INT. HALLWAY LEADING TO THE U-S LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The door closes behind the two men. And just as quickly as he had flared inside the room...Herb straightens his jacket, and with a hint of a smile toward Craig, heads for the ice..

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

ROBBIE sails across the blue line; gear on, fire in his eyes. He passes the puck to Johnson, who sends a quick pass over to Silk. A sizzling shot on goal...and...

A SCORE.

Silk celebrates, his hockey stick aloft. Robbie coasts along the boards, giving Herb his best "I showed you" look.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

Buzzy Schneider pushes the puck along the boards and fires a shot toward goal...but the SWEDISH GOALTENDER bumps it away.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

Broten skates hard toward the goal and takes a shot, missing by inches.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

The Swedes, so methodical, attack again. A PLAYER sends the puck through the U-S defense, onto the stick of a SWEDISH DEFENSEMAN.

He shoots the puck...~~past~~ Jimmy and into the net. SCORE.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

Mark Johnson shoots. But the goalie snares it.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Herb looks at the scoreboard. It's the time remaining that is so critical...

USA 1 SWE 2 0:47 3rd PERIOD

HERB
(to Craig Patrick)
Pull Jimmy, game's over if we don't
get another skater in there.

Patrick motions to Jimmy, who sprints for the bench as Buzzy Schneider goes over the dasher and onto the ice.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Mark Johnson crosses the blue line, but the Swedes seem to be everywhere. He flicks the puck to Robbie, who holds it...

...0:38...0:37...

...before dropping it to Schneider. He skirts behind the back of the net, the ~~empty~~ American net visible across the way.

...0:33...

Schneider sends the puck to Pavelich...who holds it just long enough to see BILLY BAKER, unguarded, on the other side of the ice. He whirls around and sends the puck his way...

...0:29...

Baker winds...and shoots. THUMP. The puck pierces deep into the back of the Swedish net.

CELEBRATION TIME. The Americans dance toward Baker at center ice, the crowd roaring in the stands. Herb merely places his FOLDED PROGRAM into his coat pocket.

EXT. LAKE PLACID WINTER LANDSCAPE - DAY

The grandeur of the Adirondacks. The snow is bright, the sky is brilliant blue.

The introduction to the ABC BROADCAST of the Games plays...

JIM MCKAY (V.O.-A.B.)
Here we are in Lake Placid, New
York. The occasion? The 13th Winter
Olympic Games.

It looks like a wintry paradise. But down closer to...

EXT. MAIN STREET, LAKE PLACID - DAY

...it's a mess. A long, really long, line stretches back along the sidewalks; spectators waiting to catch a bus.

A BUS pulls away, splashing muddy slush everywhere. Patty and the kids wait in line with everyone else. Cold, miserable.

An OLYMPIC OFFICIAL, now walking the line, has bad news...

OLYMPIC OFFICIAL
Folks, they're tellin' us the next
bus may not be here for forty five
minutes.

The crowd groans. Patty tries to make the best of it, nudging the kids...

PATTY
Tell you what, let's go back to the
room, get warmed up.

EXT. OPENING CEREMONY ARENA - DAY

The ACTUAL BROADCAST of the Parade of Nations. The Soviet team enters...

JIM MCKAY (V.O.-A.B.)
...and now the Soviet Union. Here's
the reception...and, from what I
can hear, it sounds like a
sportsmanlike reception to me.

The Soviets, dressed in fur coats, proudly stride in.

EXT. OPENING CEREMONY ARENA - DAY

The Americans follow; SCOTT HAMILTON, the U-S flag bearer...

JIM MCKAY (V.O.-A.B.)
Now the United States, the host
nation...

INT. HOTEL CHALET ROOM - DAY

Patty and the kids are on the floor, leaning against the foot
of the bed, holding hot chocolate...watching...

JIM MCKAY (V.O.-A.B.)
...carrying the American flag, a 21
year old male figure skater named
Scott Hamilton.

FULL SCREEN as the U-S athletes seem to wave as one. Back on
Patty and company as they hear...

JIM MCKAY (V.O.-A.B.) (cont'd)
Tomorrow we really get serious. A
big hockey game between the United
States and Czechoslovakia...

PATTY
There we go, that's us.

McKay fills the TV screen.

JIM MCKAY (V.O.-A.B.)
One half hour from now, following
your local news: ABC News, the Iran
Crisis, Day 102. I'm Jim McKay, see
you tomorrow night.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

The Czech game. Strobel sails up the ice, passes to Broten,
and gets the puck right back...

Pop, pop. Score. The crowd roars.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Herb, still calm, looks at the scoreboard: USA 2 TCH 1

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

The U-S team is finding itself. Billy Baker closes in on a CZECH PLAYER and knocks him ass-over-tea kettle.

In a heartbeat, Johnson snags it and sends it to Robbie; swooping, shooting, SCORING.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

A CZECH PLAYER breaks free, firing a shot that should result in an easy goal. But Jimmy Craig snags it. Too hot tonight.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

Silk...to Mark Johnson...who dipsy-doodles toward the net. He fires a rocket. ANOTHER SCORE.

USA 6 TCH 2

Smiles, joy, everywhere. And for the first time...a chant...

...USA...USA...USA...

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The U-S bench leads the cheering; Jack O'Callahan, wearing street clothes, crutches held high.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

This time it's Rizzo breaking free. Johnson has the puck, passing it to him...and...

...a CZECH DEFENDER, wearing NUMBER THREE, sweeps in and, a full second after the pass, LEVELS Johnson.

His head HITS THE ICE. He's knocked cold. The crowd roars out, booing as loudly as it had been cheering.

Doc and Craig Patrick scramble toward Johnson, while the U-S bench screams at the Czech player.

U-S TEAM

That's bullshit three!

Herb looks at Johnson, who manages to move his arm, but is clearly done for the night. If not more.

The Czech player coasts in front of the U-S bench, and it's at *that* moment that Herb Brooks lets loose...

HERB

We're gonna bury that goddamn stick right in your throat.

INT. PRESS ROW - CONTINUOUS

A row of reporters, tiny TV MONITORS in front of them, see and *hear* the wrath of Brooks...

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.)

Herb Brooks...in what should be a glorious moment. Very upset.

HERB

You're gonna eat that goddamn Koho three!

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Herb paces behind the bench. The U-S team revels in Herb's support...realizing...*we are* a family...

U-S TEAM

You heard the man three!

INT. MEDIA INTERVIEW ROOM - LATER

Packed. Reporters everywhere, now latching on to the story. Herb and Walter sit in front of the lights.

REPORTER #1

What's the word on Mark Johnson?

HERB

Slight shoulder separation, but he should be okay. He's a tough kid.

REPORTER #2

Any chance we can talk with him?

HERB

This team isn't about one player getting the spotlight. We're a team on the ice, we'll be one off it.

A pause. The reporters, so used to *individual* stories are caught off guard.

'87.

WALTER BUSH
Next question please.

EXT. MAIN STREET, LAKE PLACID - DAY

Herb and Walter walk Main; a few spectators and athletes doing the same thing.

WALTER BUSH
Why so many reporters? Look at what they've had to cover the last few months. The hostages. Afghanistan. Even here things could be going better. I'm sure Patty can tell you about that.

They reach the door of a TINY CAFE/BAR. Walter holds the door open for Herb...

INT. LAKE PLACID CAFE/BAR - CONTINUOUS

...and the two men head for stools at the bar.

WALTER BUSH
Bottom line is, you've got a bunch of kids that just beat the crap out of Czechoslovakia and a country that's ready to see that. Think you've got reporters now, try winnin' a couple more games.

They sit.

HERB
They're eighteen, nineteen years old Walter. Let's not go turnin' 'em into something more.

WALTER BUSH
I don't think we're gonna have much say in that.

The two men glimpse up at the TV set, catching a superimposed update of the Soviet hockey game...

USSR 16 JAPAN 0

...just as the BARTENDER walks up.

BARTENDER
What can I get you?

WALTER BUSH
Beer for me.

Herb's still staring at the television.

WALTER BUSH (cont'd)
Make it two.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

A QUICKLY-PACED MONTAGE. Johnson swoops in on a NORWEGIAN OPPONENT, faking one way before surging into the zone...

INT. MEDIA INTERVIEW ROOM - LATER

Herb and Walter face the media again...

REPORTER #3
Herb, now that Norway's behind you, what do you look for out of Romania?

HERB
Should be a tough test. We're sure not gonna overlook 'em.

REPORTER #4
Jimmy Craig's been great between the pipes. Any chance we can ask him just one or two questions?

HERB
As I said the other night...

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

Neal Broten tips the puck past a stumbling ROMANIAN. He passes to Dave Silk...

...quick shot. Quick score.

INT. MEDIA INTERVIEW ROOM - LATER

Another win. Another press conference.

HERB
...making it to the medal round was our goal from day one, so we feel good about what we've accomplished.

REPORTER #2
How's the team holding up?

HERB
Well they haven't lost yet, if
that's what you're asking.

A ripple of laughter.

REPORTER #1
Still no chance we can talk with
your team?

HERB
Still no chance.

REPORTER #3
Herb, how do you respond to those
who feel you're just doing this to
keep the spotlight on yourself?

The ripple of laughter is gone. The room grows cold as Herb
stares at the reporter.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

Robbie takes a long breakaway pass and crosses in front of a
WEST GERMAN DEFENDER, the difference in speed so apparent.

He fires at the net. AND SCORES.

INT. MEDIA INTERVIEW ROOM - LATER

WALTER BUSH
...the pairings for the medal round
are as follows. The United States
will face the Soviet Union in the
first game tomorrow, Sweden and
Finland in the second. Please note
that all media passes are non-
transferable and this policy will
be strictly enforced.

(beat)
Now to answer any questions you may
have...U-S assistant coach Craig
Patrick.

Craig Patrick leans forward to take questions. Herb is
nowhere to be seen.

INT. HOTEL CHALET ROOM - NIGHT

Patty tucks Kelly in, already asleep on the COUCH ROLL-OUT. She leans down, kisses her snoozing daughter...and glances over at Danny, slumbering on a ROLL-AWAY. She smiles.

EXT. BALCONY - NIGHT

Herb sits on the balcony, staring at the twinkling lights of the Olympic Village. Patty steps out.

PATTY

You must be freezing.

He doesn't appear to be. They look at the lights for a second.

HERB

I've run through all of 'em. Broten
on Petrov. Johnson, Mikhailov.
Pavelich, Krutov.

(beat)

We don't match up.

PATTY

Might want to skip that when you
talk to the boys tomorrow.

She walks over and sits down next to him.

HERB

We got a telegram from a lady in
Texas today. Know what it said?

PATTY

What?

HERB

Beat those commie bastards.

A quiet laugh from Patty. Not because she finds it funny, but because it's so surprising in tone.

HERB (cont'd)

We're playing a hockey game against
the best team in the world, maybe
the best that's ever played. Why
can't we leave it at that?

PATTY

Because a lot of people can't. I love that you see it that way, I do, but...this one's more than a hockey game.

(pause)

And you should feel good about that. Because they're cheering for a team that you brought together.

She takes his hand. It's quiet for a moment...until, slowly rising in the background: USA...USA...

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The chant now surges, rhythmically. There are no empty seats.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

AL MICHAELS, the ABC ANNOUNCER for the game, fills the screen...over-sized shirt lapels and all.

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.)

The excitement, the tension building. I'm sure there are a lot of people in this building who don't know the difference between a blue line and a clothes line. It's irrelevant. It doesn't matter. Because what we have at hand...the rarest of sporting events, an event that needs no build-up, no superfluous adjectives...

INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

The U-S team prepares. Skates are laced, sticks are taped. All in determined silence.

The young squad's red, white and blue jerseys have never looked better.

No one says a word; the only form of communication between the players...a look of resolve.

A second later...Herb walks in. He paces through the room, passing Jack O'Callahan, finally in uniform. Ready to play.

He pats him on the shoulder. Then moves to the center of the room to speak.

HERB
Great moments...are born out of
great opportunity.

A pause.

HERB (cont'd)
That's what you have here tonight.
That's what you've earned here
tonight.

The noise from the arena quietly thumps behind him...

HERB (cont'd)
One game. If we play them ten
times, they might win nine.
(pause)
But not this game. Not tonight.

None of the players move. All wanting to hear this.

HERB (cont'd)
Tonight we skate with them. We stay
with them. We shut...them...down.

He glances at Jimmy Craig. Then over to Mike Eruzione.

HERB (cont'd)
Tonight, we are the best hockey
team in the world.

The nervous air that was so present before the game in New
York is gone. A long pause as he lets the words sink in...

HERB (cont'd)
You were born to be hockey players.
You were meant to be here. This is
your time.
(pause)
Their time's over. Screw Mikhailov
and the rest of those Soviets.
(another beat)
This is your time.

No more words are needed.

HERB (cont'd)
Alright, let's go.

The team stands.

INT. HALLWAY LEADING TO THE U-S LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Jim Craig leads the team down the hallway, using his hockey stick to touch the wall, FILLED WITH TELEGRAMS from all across the country. And as he does...

THE FAMILIAR KETTLE DRUM REFRAIN OF THE OLYMPIC THEME BEGINS

...each young man touches the wall, the sound from the arena growing louder with each step.

The opening to the ice looms. And as Jimmy steps onto the ice...

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

...Dorothy is in Oz. There is a sudden burst of color and sound, American flags...seemingly everywhere. A crush of noise as the U-S team takes the ice...

...USA...USA...

Jack glides along as he looks at everything, thrilled to be on the ice again. Jimmy heads for the goal, taking a moment to look for his FATHER in the stands.

The slow circling of players begins...the Soviet team, in familiar red, is already on the ice. Impassive.

The U-S team, in contrast to the Madison Square Garden game, skates with head held high. Confident.

JIMMY CRAIG sets up shop in front of the goal, mask still off. He looks over at the bench to see HERB glancing his way...offering a quick, yet subtle nod of encouragement.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Everyone's here: WALTER BUSH, JACK WILLIAMS, BOB FLEMING. All standing at the edge of the tunnel directly adjacent to the U-S bench.

PATTY AND THE KIDS are a couple of rows up. She watches as Herb settles in behind the bench, allowing himself a deep breath to calm the nerves he never shows.

TIKHONOV stands in front of the adjacent bench; everything on this night...a little louder, a little brighter.

THE HORN SOUNDS

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

Mark Johnson coasts up to center ice to face Mikhailov. Just as he did two weeks earlier.

But tonight, instead of fear, there is a steady, almost icy determination in his eyes.

The pucks drops...

...and there is a BRILLIANT BURST OF FLASHBULBS, exploding around the arena...

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.)

Here we go as the game is underway,
the Soviet Union in red, the United
States in white.

The game opens at *BREAKNECK PACE*...

KHARLAMOV takes the puck up the right side, smoothly sailing away from the U-S players.

He calmly sends it completely across the ice to PETROV, MIKE RAMSEY'S stick rattling away a stride behind him.

The game is only seconds old, but everything is lightning quick.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The Soviets set up for their first attack on Jimmy, the puck darting from...

...stick to stick. RAMSEY and MORROW station themselves a short distance away. JIMMY CRAIG chatters away...

JIM CRAIG

On the point Kenny, watch him on
the point. Left now, left, left!

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A sudden flurry of images:

BILYALETDINOV pounding *ROBBIE MCCLANAHAN*. Hard. To no effect.

DAVE CHRISTIAN thumping SERGEI MAKAROV. The Soviet jumps up.
The puck skittering along the sideboards. Skates moving...
...fast...fast. The crowd chanting with patriotic passion.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Herb orders the next line in...

HERB

Broten, up.

...and BROTEN, RIZZO and STROBEL sail over the dasher.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

ALEXANDRE GOLOKOV streaks into the American zone and fires a shot so hard...it almost sizzles through the air. But Jimmy Craig's glove, on this night, is almost a blur...

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.)

...Golokov in on Craig and the save by Jim, stops the rebound and the whistle with a face-off. So...Craig tested for the first time tonight and is equal to the task...

KEN DRYDEN (V.O.-A.B.)

A very big save by Jim Craig this early in the game.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

HARRINGTON passes to PAVELICH, but the puck is taken away by MAKAROV.

Heading up the ice, he flicks the puck toward the corner...

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

...where it rattles around for a second until BUZZ SCHNEIDER tracks it down. But as he heads behind the net...he loses control of it...

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.)

Schneider, losing it, out to the point, slap shot...

A quick Soviet shot skips through traffic...

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.) (cont'd)
...and it was deflected IN, and the
Soviet Union takes a one nothing
lead.

The Soviet players, emotionless and silent, acknowledge the goal in a matter-of-fact manner.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

Herb won't be discouraged. Not tonight. He glances at Jack...

HERB
You ready?

...and O'CALLAHAN is on the ice in a heartbeat. A masterful stroke by Herb. Instead of being down, the young men yell their support for Jack...finally on the ice.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

JOHN HARRINGTON skates up to JIMMY...

JOHN HARRINGTON
We'll get it back!

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

O'CALLAHAN passes the puck to BAKER...

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.)
Bill Baker, that goal with 27
seconds to go the big shot against
Sweden.

...but he has to turn back, the Soviet defense too tight.

KEN DRYDEN (V.O.-A.B.)
The Americans can't get anything in
the middle. The U-S team is gonna
have to skate a little bit more.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

VLADIMIR KRUTOV attacks the goal...shooting...

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.)
The Soviet slap shot, just wide...

RAMSEY back-hands the puck along the boards. Out of the zone, where --- once again --- it lands on a Soviet stick.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

HERB
(to Patrick)
We're too pumped up.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Almost before Herb can finish the thought, PAVELICH steals the puck and storms up the ice...

KEN DRYDEN (V.O.-A.B.)
I think the crowd is perhaps a little bit like the American team right now, just a little bit tight.

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.)
Pavelich, taking it away for the U-S, Pavelich, up ahead...

...passing it over to BUZZY, free on the left side...

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.) (cont'd)
...to Schneider, slap shot, GOES
IN!

The forty foot slap shot ~~stuns~~ TRETIAK. The crowd ERUPTS.

AL MICHAELS (cont'd)
That's the kind of goal you don't expect someone like Tretiak to give up!

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

The Coneheads arrive at the bench. Pats on the back big-time.

HERB
Alright, let's build on it.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

But the Soviets are far from shaken. MIKHAILOV passes the puck to KHARLAMOV...

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.)
The Soviets, the shot by Kharlamov,
a glove save by Craig!

KHARLAMOV coasts by, staring at Jimmy, trying to rattle him. Jimmy stares right back...

JIM CRAIG
Not tonight buddy.

KEN DRYDEN (V.O.-A.B.)
One big difference between these
two teams, that line out there
right now for the Soviets: Petrov,
Mikhailov and Kharlamov, have
played together for nine years.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

The Soviets are everywhere, snipers without a pulse. MAKAROV shoots...

...but JIMMY CRAIG saves.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

PETROV shoots. But Jimmy is right there.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Until finally GOLOKOV finds a crack, passing the puck to...

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.)
...Makarov, tried to get it back to
Golokov, then gets it back and
SCORES...

So fast. Boom, boom. Leaving JIMMY without a chance.

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.) (cont'd)
...and the Soviets take the lead
two to one.

KEN DRYDEN (V.O.-A.B.)
The U-S has had its chances to get
the puck out and if you don't do
that, it leads to second and third
chances and the Soviets don't need
them.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Herb sends ERUZIONE, BROTEN and STROBEL in...then looks next
door in time to catch a calm smile from TIKHONOV.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

BILYALETDINOV takes the puck at the blue line, attacks, but
his shot is shoved aside by JIMMY. Brilliantly.

KEN DRYDEN (V.O.-A.B.)
Those are the kind of saves that if
the U-S can come back...will be
memorable later on.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

Herb glances at the clock...counting down the opening period.

USA 1 URS 2 0:15

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The puck scampers toward the far end and a few of the players
start coasting, assuming the period will end quietly.

Assuming wrong. 0:06...0:05...

DAVE CHRISTIAN fires a long and lazy shot, easily blocked by
TRETIAK.

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.)
...easy save by Tretiak...

But swooping in, *still playing*, is MARK JOHNSON...

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

U-S TEAM
(from the bench)
C'mon Mark...go, GO!...

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

...who grabs the puck and flicks it underneath Tretiak's leg.

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.)
...Johnson is there *AND SCORES!*
With one second to play!

THUNDEROUS SOUND as JOHNSON is mobbed by his teammates.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A hint of a smile on Herb's face. He looks at Patrick as the chant is heard...

...USA...USA...USA...

TIKHONOV leans over to his BACK-UP GOALIE, VLADIMIR MYSHKIN, calmly giving him instructions.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - LATER

MYSHKIN is now in goal, scratching away at the ice out front.

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.)
And as we start the second period
now, a change for the Soviet Union,
as Vladimir Myshkin becomes the new
goalie...

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

HERB
Gentlemen, you just put the best
goalie in the world on the bench.
(to Patrick, quietly)
What the hell's the best goalie in
the world doin' on the bench?

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

But the Soviets are intent on putting the Americans away,
slamming JOHNSON hard into the boards...

...doing the same to ROBBIE...

...and then...

BILLY BAKER loses the puck to...

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.)
 Baker, losing it to Krutov, Krutov
 up ahead to Maltsev, Maltsev on a
 breakaway, Maltsev GETS IT BY Craig
 to give the Soviets the lead...

INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Silence. For the last time. The young men sit in the locker room, still sweating, but not even close to gasping anymore.

Herb uses chalk to diagram a play...on the floor.

HERB
 Alright, we go with short shifts,
 45 seconds. That way we make sure
 we've got fresh legs every second
 we're out there. For once, they're
 gonna be the ones who get tired.
 (stops diagramming, looks
 at his team)
 We've come from behind every game
 of this tournament. Let's go out
 there and do it again.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

...and ROBBIE MCCLANAHAN soars across the red line...with a
passion to win like never before.

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.)
 The U-S winless against the Soviets
 since that day in Squaw Valley.

...passing to JOHNSON. A SOVIET DEFENDER reaches out with his
 stick and hooks him. The LEAD OFFICIAL blows his whistle.

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.) (cont'd)
 And we've got a penalty coming up
 on the Soviets!

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

Herb calmly sends BROTEN, ERUZIONF and STROBEL in...

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

DAVE CHRISTIAN pushes the puck to BROTEN, who shoots...

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.)
Christian over to Broten, the shot
is wide.

The Soviet defense is so tight. MORROW pushes the puck out,
but MAKAROV tips it away and it skids down the ice.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

ROBBIE controls the puck, heading up the ice...

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.)
The Americans with perhaps their
final rush on this power play
opportunity, thirteen seconds left
in the penalty...

...before passing to SILK, who flips it at the net...and...

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.) (cont'd)
...Silk, followed by Johnson...

...suddenly the puck is on JOHNSON'S STICK. He shoots.

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.) (cont'd)
...THEY SCORE!!!

And the building shakes, louder than it's ever been over the
past week. JOHNSON is overrun by his teammates.

KEN DRYDEN (V.O.-A.B.)
A goal that absolutely came out of
nowhere!

For the first time, HERB is caught up in the excitement. He
pumps his fist.

USA 3 URS 3 11:26

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.)
The Americans, losers 10 to 3 just
thirteen days ago, the game now
tied!

The chant now CRUSHES from the stands: USA!...USA!...USA!

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

And an incredible sight. The Soviets, the best team in the world, are suddenly on their heels.

ROBBIE sends the puck to BROTEN. Pop, pop.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

PAVELICH to HARRINGTON. Precise. Exact. The crowd roaring.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

SCHNEIDER takes himself out of the game. ERUZIONE hops over the dasher.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

The puck stalls in the corner of the American end. HARRINGTON grabs it and sends it rattling out toward the blue line...

KEN DRYDEN (V.O.-A.B.)

The U-S team depending a little too much on Jim Craig. He's making too many good saves...

ERUZIONE skirts along near the blue line. Suddenly, all is silent...aside from the skidding sound of the puck.

The look on the U-S captain's face is that of a man who, for the first time in weeks, *maybe months*, SEES the next half dozen chess moves...

...sees his life about to play out...

PAVELICH sends the puck his way...a soft crack as it thumps against his stick. He winds...

...and as he strikes the puck; the sound, the motion, all of it comes back with a quick rush of intensity.

IT HITS THE BACK OF THE NET

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.)

...ERUZIONE SCORES! MIKE ERUZIONE!

86 seconds earlier it would have seemed impossible, but it's suddenly LOUDER. ERUZIONE virtually tap-dances to the sideboard, his stick aloft.

The ABC CAMERA can't hold the image still. The building shakes. Everything shakes.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Herb is exuberant, punching his fist into the air...

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.)
...and now we've got bedlam! Oh and
I love Brooks' reaction!

Hands on his hips, Herb stares at the scoreboard...

USA 4 URS 3 10:00

...as if he can't believe it. As if he's treasuring it.

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.) (cont'd)
That goal coming at the ten minute
mark, exactly halfway through the
period.

ERUZIONE arrives at the bench, teammates leaning forward to yell their congratulations as he sits down. And then...

...as HERB walks behind him, he places his hand on the young man's shoulder, gently thumping it before walking away.

It is the ONLY MOMENT Herb has praised him, a gesture without words...a gesture that means everything.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

But there is work to be done. The puck drops again...hitting the ice like thunder.

And the Soviets begin their assault on Jimmy Craig.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

MIKHAILOV receives the pass from KHARLAMOV, firing it toward JIMMY. He snags it.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

MAKAROV shoots...and misses. But so close.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

MIKE RAMSEY, on the bench, glances up at the clock...

USA 4 URS 3 8:38

MIKE RAMSEY
(to himself)
Too much time.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Now it's...

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.)
...Lebedev now out in front of
Krutov...

...and there is a sizzling sound as the puck darts through
the air, CLANKING off the goal post. A *half inch* from a
four-four tie.

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.) (cont'd)
...and it looks like IT HIT THE
POST!

KEN DRYDEN (V.O.-A.B.)
...it did, it did. Maltsev wide
open...

MALTSEV swoops in for a second shot.

KEN DRYDEN (V.O.-A.B.) (cont'd)
...there *he is again!*

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

HERB
(quietly, to himself)
Hang in there Jimmy...

CRAIG PATRICK
(off his stopwatch)
45 seconds!

...and Herb sends JOHNSON, ROBBIE and SILK into the game.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

KENNY MORROW sprawls length-wise on the ice, blocking a shot.

USA 4 URS 3 5:46

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

For the first time, the Soviets on the bench glance up at the clock. A hint of concern creeping in.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

HERB

Broten, up!

...and another line spills onto the ice. Relentless.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

Another Soviet rush...

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.)

Kasatanov's slap shot, knocked down
in front, gloved by Craig!

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

Herb leans down, calmly instructing each player...

HERB

Play your game. Play your game.

...USA!...USA!...USA!

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

ROBBIE coasts up to take the face-off; Jack, the player he once traded punches with, urges him on from the circle...

JACK O'CALLAHAN

Three more minutes bud.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

TIKHONOV isn't quite as calm, leaning down, an edge to his voice as he pulls one player back and pushes another in.

For the first time: *confusion*.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

MIKHAILOV holds the puck just inside the blue line. He yells something to PETROV across the way, who yells back.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

HERB

(to Doc)

What are they saying?

DOC NAGOBADS

(a smile grows...)

They're panicking.

Herb glances at Tikhonov. This time it's the Soviet coach who has to turn away.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

O'CALLAHAN smashes KRUTOV against the boards...

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.)

2:25...2:24...2:23 remaining...

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

HERB

Johnson.

The JOHNSON LINE heads in. Herb looks up...

USA 4 URS 3 2:00

P-A ANNOUNCER

(a woman's voice, calm)

Two minutes left in the period. Two minutes.

HERB
(to the clock)
Keep movin' dammit.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

DAVE CHRISTIAN blasts a SOVIET PLAYER to the ice...

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.)
Honestly Ken, a couple of months ago, would you have believed this possible?

KEN DRYDEN (V.O.-A.B.)
Absolutely not.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

The final attack. MIKHAILOV, now gasping for air, fires a wild pass to no one in particular. Panic now oozing...

KEN DRYDEN (V.O.-A.B.)
The Soviets are going to be put in the very unusual position of having to pull their goalie...

...0:55...0:54...

The stands, the crowd...are alive. Flags rippling.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Herb looks at MYSHKIN. He doesn't leave the ice. And it's at that moment that Herb realizes...

HERB
They don't know what to do.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The final, incredible, half-minute plays out...

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.)
Long shot, Craig able to get a piece of it, to sweep it away, 28 seconds, the crowd going...insane!

...USA!!...USA!!...USA!!...

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.) (cont'd)
Kharlamov shooting it in to the
American end again. Morrow is back
there, now Johnson, 19 seconds...

Spectators in the front row pound their hands on the glass...

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.) (cont'd)
Johnson over to Ramsey,
Bilyaletdinov gets hit by Ramsey,
McClanahan is there, the puck is
still loose! Eleven seconds, you've
got ten seconds!

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A sudden realization on Tikhonov's face. As he looks at the
clock. At the ice. It's over.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

AL MICHAELS (V.O.-A.B.)
The countdown going on right now,
Morrow up to...*five seconds* left in
the game. *DO YOU BELIEVE IN
MIRACLES?*

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Herb throws both arms into the air...

HERB
YES!

...the young players in front of him, the best hockey team in
the world on this night, rush onto the ice. Doc and Craig
Patrick are right behind them...

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Sticks fly. Spirits soar. Nineteen young men head toward Jim
Craig as one. And there is sheer bedlam.

A *CELEBRATION FOR THE AGES*. Jack barrels into Ramsey and
knocks him to the ice, throwing his arms into the air in
triumph.

JIMMY CRAIG, embraced by his teammates, one by one, each
knowing how much his effort meant.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Herb heads toward the tunnel, everyone trying to shake his hand. Walter Bush, even Jack Williams.

But Herb looks up...to find the person who gave so much of herself so that he could realize this one moment.

PATTY

Without a word, their eyes say everything. So many things lost. So many things gained. All in a very short beat.

He quickly disappears into the tunnel.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The moment continues. There is no hesitation for the U-S kids; cheering, yelling. ROBBIE embracing JACK. SILK and JOHNSON. Boston and Minnesota.

While ON THE OTHER END OF THE ICE: the SOVIETS stand very patiently --- stunned, in disbelief --- yet graciously waiting for the celebration to end.

And in the very front of the group stands MIKHAILOV, the old and hardened veteran, resting his arm on top of his hockey stick.

Slowly, a hint of a smile grows. He sees the U-S celebrating the joy of winning...a joy his team forgot under the pile of victories.

INT. HALLWAY LEADING TO THE U-S LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The power of the sound from the ice is once again muffled.

A short distance down the hall...stands HERB, a dark and still silhouette against the dim light seeping from the locker room area. Alone.

He leans a hand against the cinder wall, motionless for a moment. Finally knowing what the Squaw Valley team felt.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - NIGHT

Hockey's grandest tradition takes place: warriors shaking hands, one by one. And in that moment, the Americans can see...that these are not evil men.

They are hockey players. Just like they are.

INT. HALLWAY LEADING TO THE U-S LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Herb, still nothing more than a darkened silhouette, gathers himself. He takes a deep breath. Shoves the emotion aside.

And becomes Herb Brooks again. He turns to walk toward the locker room.

EXT. MAIN STREET, LAKE PLACID - NIGHT

In a light snow, hundreds of spectators forget the nation's pain...as they laugh and cheer with people they don't know.

Embracing each other. Some close to tears. And through the laughter and the unexpected joy, the song that many are singing can be heard...faint at first, but growing...

... "stand beside her, and guide her, through the night"...

The lyrics roll in and out of the patriotic bedlam that hours earlier seemed so unlikely.

HERB (V.O.)

Two days later the miracle was made complete...

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - DAY

...the U-S team celebrates again, this time dressed in their BLUE UNIFORMS.

HERB (V.O.)

...as our team defeated Finland to win the gold medal. Coming from behind once again.

JIMMY CRAIG, an AMERICAN FLAG draped over his shoulders, skates quietly along the glass, looking up into the stands...mouthing the words "Where's my father?"

He finds him. Their eyes meet. And they share a look, realizing that she is watching too.

Rising in the background, the last seconds of the NATIONAL ANTHEM.

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - DAY

MIKE ERUZIONE stands on the tiny staging set up in the middle of the ice; MIKHAILOV just below on the silver medal side, a SWEDISH PLAYER with the bronze.

Rizzo sings his heart out, staring at the U-S flag, raised a bit higher than the other two.

And as the anthem ends...the U-S captain motions for the rest of the team to come join him. As one, they rush to do just that...

HERB (V.O.)

I've often been asked, in the years since Lake Placid, what was the best moment for me.

Herb, Craig and Doc stand behind the bench, watching. Craig and Doc smile broadly...while Herb's expression finally offers a hint of pride.

HERB (V.O.) (cont'd)

It was here. The sight of twenty young men of such differing backgrounds, now standing as one.

The celebration on the stand continues.

HERB (V.O.) (cont'd)

Young men willing to sacrifice so much of themselves...all for an unknown.

Herb's smile grows a bit wider.

HERB (V.O.) (cont'd)

A few years later, the U-S began to use professional athletes at the Games. "Dream teams."

The players, all twenty, somehow stay balanced on the tiny stage.

HERB (V.O.) (cont'd)

I always found the term ironic. Because now that we have dream teams...we can no longer dream.

INT. AMERICAN BAR - DAY

A group of good Americans share in the joy of the moment,
watching the medal ceremony on a TELEVISION SET...

HERB (V.O.)

But...on one weekend, as those
across America watched...

INT. OLYMPIC HOCKEY FIELDHOUSE - DAY

The team on the victory stand. Still celebrating. As one.

HERB (V.O.)

...a group of remarkable young men
gave a nation what it needed
most...

Herb. Still watching. Still smiling.

HERB (V.O.) (cont'd)

A chance, for one night, not only
to dream...

The young men hold on to each other. Laughing. Joyous.

HERB (V.O.) (cont'd)

...but a chance, once again, to
believe...

Gold medals draped around their necks, the American players
hold their hands high, signaling that ~~they~~ are number one.

The best hockey team in the world.

On this night.

FADE OUT.