

Living Proof

Screenplay by Robert Gately

Story by Jerry Gaughan

Based on a year in the life of Jerry Gaughan

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FADE IN:

INT. SOME ELEGANT RECEPTION HALL - NIGHT

A MASTER OF CEREMONIES (MC) is in mid-speech at the podium.

MC

This year's OPUS award was won by  
an unusual man; not the typical  
writer who has won in past years.

IN THE AUDIENCE

As the MC talks, PJ GALLAGHER fidgets with a Tau Cross that  
dangles from his neck. He daydreams as the MC speaks.

MC (V.O.)

This year's winner doesn't make a  
living writing. He lives in small  
town outside Pittsburgh ...  
(fading)

BEGINNING OF PJ'S DAYDREAM

INT. GREENSBURG HOCKEY ARENA - ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH - NIGHT

ANNOUNCER BRENT sits calmly calling the game (voice fades in)  
while ANNOUNCER PHIL looks through his binoculars.

ANNOUNCER BRENT

Malecki is like a bulldozer. if the  
Badgers can't check him tonight,  
they'll lose another championship.

ON THE ICE

MALECKI, a bulky, aggressive player from Greensburg, checks a  
BADGER and steals the puck.

ANNOUNCER PHIL (V.O.)

Gallagher wants back in there,  
Brent. He wants a piece of Malecki.

ON PJ

He shouts encouragement to his BADGER TEAMMATES while COACH  
FLANAGAN, 50s, light-haired, shouts orders to his players on  
the ice (improvises). A whistle BLOWS: off sides is called.

The coach pats PJ on the shoulder. PJ tucks his Tau Cross in his sweater, hops the boards, and enters the game.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RINK

COACH THOMAS, dark hair (40s) yells words of encouragement to his Greensburg PLAYERS. He looks up at the score board that reads: HOME 4 VISITORS 2. And a banner floats in the rafters nearby: WESTERN CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP GAME 7.

ON THE ICE

PJ skates in circles while the referee hustles the players for a face-off. He looks up at the clock. Two-and-a-half minutes remain in the game. As we stay on PJ ...

ANNOUNCER BRENT (V.O.)

It would be nice if the Badgers could win one championship. How many times has Gallagher been in this spot?

ANNOUNCER PHIL (V.O.)

Six or seven times. But who's counting? He's actually been the league's leading scorer for years, yet he hasn't won the championship. Looks like time's running out on him again, Brent.

IN THE STANDS

DORIS and WILLIAM GALLAGHER, 50s, and PHIL and TOM GALLAGHER, 20s, and FATHER FELIX, 50s, dressed in a Friars Habit, sit together as a family, cheering.

TOM

Hey, Dad, Malecki's getting away with murder.

WILLIAM

I know, son. Your brother has been turtling around him this period.

FATHER FELIX

Actually, the refs are backing off a tad. It's the last game of the championship series. That's probably why.

PHIL

A tad! Uncle Felix, come on. The zebras have lost control of the game.

DORIS

You can't have hockey opinions with them, Felix. Don't try.

ON THE ICE

A face-off results in PJ getting the puck. He spots STEVE CARLSON, another Badger who comes skating close by.

STEVE

(To PJ)

We haven't tried the shuffle yet.  
Give me the puck. I'll draw in Malecki, and then I'll pass it back to you.

PJ passes off to Steve, but Malecki picks Steve up and slams him on the boards before he can pass. The puck wobbles loose.

JEFF CARLSON picks the puck up and passes to PJ. PJ scores.

The Badger fans go wild. The score reads HOME 4, VISITORS 3. Badger players swarm PJ as Coach Thomas calls a time out.

As PJ returns to the bench, he looks up in the stands and nods to Father Felix.

ON FATHER FELIX

He clasps his hands together over his shoulders and gives PJ a congratulations gesture.

FATHER FELIX

One more. A tie sends it into overtime.

ON PJ

He skates circles on the ice.

ON COACH THOMAS

He yells instructions (improvise) then sends players back on the ice. He pulls Malecki to the side.

COACH THOMAS  
What was that move against Carlson?

MALECKI  
I was going for the puck.

Thomas pulls Malecki close and growls in his ear.

COACH THOMAS  
Take Gallagher out. That's the only thing on your assignment list, you hear? Without him they can't score, not even on a power play.

The coach pushes Malecki back on the ice.

BACK TO THE ICE

Play resumes and before long it's one-on-one between PJ and Malecki. Malecki rams PJ into the boards, a malicious check.

The Tau Cross rips from PJ's neck and falls to the ice. A SKATE kicks it into the boards while PJ goes down hard and Malecki's knee pounds his jaw. PJ is laid out, unconscious.

INT. GREENSBURG HOCKEY ARENA, PRESS BOX - LATER

The game progresses another few minutes, but without PJ for the Badgers, the game is over. Everyone has left except DAVE HANSEN, a reporter who types while while he smokes a cigar.

He looks over his shoulder at the Zamboni, the ice-cleaning machine, busy at work.

ON THE ICE

The twisted TAU CROSS lies on the ice. The sound of the approaching Zamboni gets louder as the sweeper comes into view and snatches the cross and chain from the ice.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Father Felix sits bedside while PJ reads the sports page. PJ tosses the paper at the foot of the bed, exposing the front page of the sport's page.

SUPERIMPOSE: A large caricature of PJ hanging from a rope, choking. A championship cup by his feet has wings and is flying away.

BACK TO SCENE

FATHER FELIX  
 (nodding at the paper)  
 Hansen's not much of an artist.  
 Good reporter, though.

NOTE: A head band, strapped to PJ's head and jaw, impedes his speech. However, he can mumble through clenched teeth.

FATHER FELIX (CONT'D)  
 I don't believe I've ever seen you  
 so quiet. Cat caught your tongue?

Father Felix has a good laugh at PJ's expense.

FATHER FELIX (CONT'D)  
 Hey, listen,  
 (points to the paper)  
 You don't need a lousy article to  
 throw you into a pity party. You do  
 a very good job of that yourself  
 without anyone's help.

PJ feels around his neck and notices his Tau Cross is missing. He mumbles something then looks away and sighs.

FATHER FELIX (CONT'D)  
 Lost your cross, huh? That explains  
 it all.

Ge takes off his Tau Cross and puts it around PJ's neck.

FATHER FELIX (CONT'D)  
 Don't lose this one. It's two-  
 hundred-and-fifty years old.

Just as he says this, PJ's family appears. Father Felix gets up and leans into PJ a little and whispers.

FATHER FELIX (CONT'D)  
 I pray for a slow recovery. You'll  
 learn a lot with a closed mouth.

PJ  
 Ha. Ha.

WILLIAM  
 Felix. You're part of this family.  
 Please stay.

FATHER FELIX

I'd love to, William. But as much  
as I hate them, I Have a fund  
raiser to go to.

Father Felix improvises his good-byes and leaves just as a  
slender nurse enters with a chart under her arm.

NURSE

How is everyone today?

Everyone nods and gives a 'thumbs up' sign except for Tom.

TOM

I was feeling lousy until now.

Doris looks at Tom. The message is clear: 'Behave yourself'.

NURSE

I'm assuming family, right?  
(responding to the nods)  
I need to ask some questions for  
you guys, and for Mr. Gallagher, if  
he can talk.

TOM

You can call him PJ.

DORIS

I'm PJs mother.  
(head nods to William)  
PJ's dad. The other two...my sons.

NURSE

(to Doris)  
I need some answers. Between PJ's  
concussion and his dislocated jaw,  
I didn't want to bother him too  
much so if you could talk for him,  
that'll be great.  
(looks at the chart)  
Is Mr. Gallagher allergic to any  
medicines that you know of? Or any  
history of heart trouble or high  
blood pressure in the family?

Doris looks at William who shrugs his shoulders.

TOM

We're all adopted.

The nurse chuckles.

DORIS

It's true, nurse. Don't know much about PJ's family history. From either birth-parent, I'm afraid.

NURSE

Oh, well. That's okay.

TOM

He's a hypochondriac, if that helps. And he gets hemorrhoids 'cause he sits on his butt so much.

The nurse just smiles and exits.

Tom notices the caricature in the paper and reads it.

TOM (CONT'D)

This is libelous, PJ. It says that you're a has-been that never was and that you can't win the big games. This is libelous.

William grabs the paper out of Tom's hands.

TOM (CONT'D)

Dad, you spent your good money for me to be a lawyer. So, listen to me for once. We can sue and win.

William throws the paper into the garbage.

WILLIAM

It's a sleezebag paper.

PHIL

You retired from the Butler Gazette, Dad. How can you say that?

WILLIAM

It's different working in the Ad department, today. Back when I was a reporter, we had more freedom. Today, reporters are piranhas trying to duck the checks and balances. They'd sell their mothers in a heart beat if they could get a scoop on a hot news item.



DORIS

Please. Will you all stop it. Can't you see that you're upsetting PJ.

PJ rolls his eyes just as the doctor walks in. The Doctor nods to the Gallagher family, then faces PJ.

DOCTOR

Find another occupation, PJ.  
Something less physical.

PJ just laughs through his clenched jaw.

DORIS

Why, Doctor?

DOCTOR

It's not his dislocated jaw I'm worried about. The Baron's Bandage will help stabilize his jaw. He'll be talking up a storm in no time. I'm more concerned about his brain. He's had three concussions in two years. That is not good.

Tom, Phil, and William look at each other. After a pause ...

TOM

What about Hicks? He's the leading scorer in the NHL this year, and he's working on his 7th concussion.

DOCTOR

Have you ever heard Hicks talk? He mumbles his words because his brain down's work. The next time PJ gets hit hard in the head, he may never get up again. Okay. Enough said.

The doctor exits. After a few seconds of silence PJ mumbles.

PJ

I can't quit now.

Doris throws a look to William who quickly looks away. She then looks to her two other sons who also look away.

LAUREN walks in.

TOM

(to Lauren)

PJ dislocated his jaw and the  
Doctor wants him to quit Hockey.  
That's why we have the long faces.

WILLIAM

That reminds me of a joke.

DORIS

I swear, If I hear that horse joke  
one more time, I'll punch you in  
the belly right here and now.

William remains silent.

DORIS

Hi, Lauren. I love hockey, but I  
love PJ more. Talk some sense into  
him, will you please.

LAUREN

I have no power over PJ, Doris, not  
when it comes to hockey.

(to PJ)

Have you asked them?

PJ shakes his head and points to his jaw. He mumbles  
unintelligibly then motions for Lauren to tell them.

LAUREN (CONT'D)

PJ wants to move out of his place and  
move back in with you guys. Then,  
when I come back from France, I'm  
going to France on an exchange  
program with two of my students, when  
I come back ... we're going to get an  
apartment and move in together

Tom and Phil raise their eyebrows to each other.

DORIS

Wow! A commitment? Did you hear  
that, William?

(to herself)

That's nice.

(to PJ)

Of course, you can stay with us  
until ... then.

WILLIAM

Yes. You can give me a break and do the lawn if the weather is nice, or rake the leaves, maybe.

Doris may seem calm, but her face shows concern, as if this news from Lauren unnerves her.

INT. GALLAGHER'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

The front door is open and PJ walks in with a box. He walks upstairs with it. After a beat, he comes back downstairs. William walks in with a chair. PJ can talk normal now.

PJ

One more box. I'll get it later.

INT. GALLAGHER'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

PJ and William walk in and they both sit at the kitchen table across from each other. Doris serves them a sandwich. After a long period of silence ...

PJ

Okay, you guys. What's the matter? You've been giving me the silent treatment all day.

PJ stares at his parents. No one seems to want to talk.

DORIS

Since you asked, I'll tell you. We love Lauren, PJ, but we don't like the fact that you're moving in with her before you get married.

PJ

Too many marriages end up in divorce because people don't know what they're getting into. That's all. Let it go, Mom.

PJ bites into his sandwich, chews slowly. Holds his jaw, then shakes off the pain.

PJ (CONT'D)

I'm not moving in with her until after the playoffs anyway. That's almost a year from now.

DORIS  
William? A little help here.

WILLIAM  
What can I say? Her biological  
clock is ticking. Got any mustard?

Doris sits as William gets up and heads for the refrigerator.

DORIS  
Okay. I'm not going to nag you  
anymore about this, but ... but

PJ  
You'll pray for my soul. Good. I  
love you too, Mom.

While William spreads the mustard on his sandwich--

WILLIAM  
The Penguins haven't called you up,  
and you're not getting any younger.  
Can't be distributing newspapers  
all your life, you know.

PJ  
(yelling)  
What is it with you guys?  
(pause, yielding)  
Maybe I am feeling a little 'off'  
because of that Hansen caricature.

PJ looks at Doris and William for a response. None comes,  
except for William who throws PJ a shrug of the shoulders.

PJ (CONT'D)  
I know you guys want me to quit,  
but hockey is all I know. I'm  
starting to feel like something's  
wrong with me, okay. They're just  
feelings. There's nothing cerebral  
about them.

WILLIAM  
Alfred Adler was asked once to sum  
up his study on human nature in one  
sentence. Know what he said?

PJ  
No, Dad. What did Alfred Adler say?

WILLIAM

To be human is to feel inferior.

PJ

Yeah, well he must've examined a lot of hockey players.

(holds up his hand)

Maybe that's all it is then. Maybe I'm just being human.

Doris pats PJ's arm and gets up from the table.

DORIS

Well, you do what you need to do. Go talk to my brother. Uncle Felix is good at these kind of things.

PJ

All right. I will.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PJ'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

PJ fidgets in bed, dreaming. The digital alarm on the night table displays 3:18 AM in its window. The alarm goes off and PJ bolts up, sweaty. He shuts the alarm off and falls back on the bed with a thud. Reluctantly, he finally gets up.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - MID-MORNING

PJ pulls up to the store in a newspaper distribution truck, jumps out, walks to the rear, opens the back door of the truck, retrieves a newspaper bundle, dumps it at the doorstep of the convenience store and then drives off.

INT. GALLAGHER'S GARAGE - LATE MORNING

William is sanding a piece of furniture when the phone in the garage rings. He answers it.

PHIL (V.O.)

Dad. It's your favorite son.

WILLIAM

Tom. How you doin? What's up?

PHIL (V.O.)

Very funny. Ha. Ha. It's Philip.

WILLIAM

Ha. Ha. I knew it was you. Tom never calls me.

PJ pulls into the driveway.

PHIL (V.O.)

Listen, I got some news that's going to knock your socks off.

INT. GALLAGHER'S KITCHEN

PJ walks in with a paper and slaps it down on the table. He pours himself a cup of coffee. He tastes it. He's had better. William storms through the side door from the garage.

WILLIAM

You're not going to believe this. Coach Thomas is going to be the new coach of the Badgers.

PJ sits down, deflated.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

That's not all, PJ. Malecki's coming with him.

PJ

Malecki is going to be a Badger?

William sits with PJ and leans in.

WILLIAM

I don't like Thomas. Never did. Can't be trusted. This is not good, PJ. It's time to look for a new occupation, don't you think?

PJ

Don't start, Dad.

WILLIAM

In High School, you had plans to be a journalist. Maybe I can ...

PJ

Dad! YOU had those plans, not me.

WILLIAM

You were a good writer...

PJ

What I remember about school is you taking a red pencil to all my work.

PJ shifts in his seat as if he's ready to do battle.

PJ (CONT'D)

Do you remember the award I won in seventh grade? I had to do a one-page report on what I read and enter it into a contest. It was bad enough that you picked the book...

WILLIAM

Moby Dick is a classic.

PJ

You had me revise it over and over. You had so many red pencil marks on the paper I couldn't read the text.

WILLIAM

It was a first draft. Everyone's first draft gets chewed up. Besides, you won the contest, didn't you?

PJ

You won the contest, you mean. It wasn't my paper. It was yours. Dad, you wanted me to be a writer so bad that that I lost the desire to become one.

PJ gets up and leaves. William sits at the table alone. The door slams indicating PJ has left the building.

WILLIAM

But you were a good writer.

EXT. CAPUCHIN FRIARY FRONT LAWN - DAY

Father Felix trims the hedges in front of the Friary as PJ pulls up and parks his car nearby. PJ gets out, walks over to a bench, and sits. That signals Father Felix to stop clipping and he walks over and joins PJ on the bench.

FATHER FELIX

What a beautiful day today!

The cooing of the pigeons interrupts a long silence.

FATHER FELIX (CONT'D)

I heard about Thomas and Malecki if that's what you're brooding over.

PJ

It's not that, Uncle Felix. My dad is bugging me to change careers. And your sister wants me to quit hockey as well.

FATHER FELIX

Parents are like that. It's a safety comes first kind of thing.

PJ

Yeah, I guess. Hey, on another note, you've seen me play for a lot of years. Do I choke during the big games? The important games.

FATHER FELIX

I don't know if you'd call it choking, PJ, but I've noticed that when the game is close you don't pass as much. You don't do it consciously, I'm sure. If I were to guess, I'd say it seems you don't trust your teammates when the game is close. But what the hell do I know in this crazy world?

Some pigeons nuzzle up close to them. Father Felix takes some food from his pocket and tosses it to them.

FATHER FELIX (CONT'D)

Now, don't get me wrong. You play with great intensity, which is good, but you play as if the outcome rests on your shoulders alone. Sometimes you're less productive because of that. Hopefully you'll be able to share the spotlight with Malecki. It's just what the team needs right now. I could be wrong.

PJ

No. You're right, Father but ... I'm figuring I should move on.

Father Felix laughs.



PJ (CONT'D)  
Why are you laughing? Stop it.

FATHER FELIX  
I think everyone would be happy if you quit, that's all. Hey, I'm not going to discourage you to move on. If you want to move on, go ahead. But do it for the right reasons, not because of negative criticism, albeit, constructive as it may be.

A pigeon comes up to them. Father Felix turns his pocket inside out and the pigeon walks away.

FATHER FELIX (CONT'D)  
A new occupation is not going to correct your attitude.

PJ  
What are you talking about?

FATHER FELIX  
I got a sock in the jaw, poor me. Malecki hates my guts, poor me. I'm adopted. Poor me. My birth parents didn't want me. Poor, poor, pour me another drink.

PJ  
STOP! Why are you doing this?

PJ bolts off the bench. Angry.

PJ (CONT'D)  
All I ever wanted was to play hockey. The only goal I ever had was to be a NHL star. And it's only recently that I've realized why I wanted to succeed so much.

PJ waits for a response. He doesn't get one.

PJ (CONT'D)  
So I could show my birth parents why they shouldn't've dumped me.

Father Felix smiles, gets up, and puts his arm around PJ.

FATHER FELIX

Feeling lousy about yourself, are we? Hey, look at it this way. It's like staring at the sun, PJ. It's not good if you to fixate on it for too long, else bad things happen.

(pause)

Maybe there's more to life than trying to impress people who don't measure success the way you do.

Both give each other a little space, quietly reflecting.

PJ

Maybe I'm bipolar. Maybe I need lithium, or something.

FATHER FELIX

Oh, good grief! Somebody shoot me.  
(looks skyward)

Dear, God. let us understand your prophet Euripides when he said in the worst of fortune, there is the best of chances for a happy change.

Father Felix picks up his clippers and works the hedges again. PJ takes the rake and begins sweeping the clippings. As Felix cuts and PJ sweeps--

PJ

Euripides? I never heard of him.

FATHER FELIX

He wasn't a prophet. He was an ancient Greek poet. He wrote ninety-two plays. Wasn't appreciated much during his day by the Athenian crowd. Refused to condone their moral hypocrisy. But he was a good man. That's what makes him so notable.

INT. GALLAGHER'S KITCHEN - MANY DAYS LATER - MOTHER'S DAY

Doris busies herself in the kitchen getting dinner ready. Phil walks in while the rest of the family and Lauren improvise their conversation at the dining room table.

PHIL

Need any help, Mom?

DORIS

The meat's about done. You can get it out for me.

Phil takes the pot holders, retrieves the ham from the oven, and sets the meat and the pot holders on the counter.

PHIL

What's up with PJ? Is he okay.

DORIS

I think so. Why?

PHIL

He's asking questions which he should've asked a long time ago. Tom and I went through that stage in Grammar School, remember? When I started to see a lot of hair on my body? Is it normal? Am I going bald? Is my birth father bald? And when I told Tom he was a product of inbreeding, he went crazy trying to find his birth-parents. Remember?

DORIS

That wasn't very nice of you. Tom searched the internet for weeks. He got physically ill because he didn't get his sleep. Shame on you.

PHIL

PJ never cared about any of that. All he cared about was hockey. And now he's having dreams...

DORIS

Dreams? I didn't know that.

PHIL

Oops! I forgot. He told me not to tell you and Dad. Not a word to PJ, or anyone, OK. Now, here's the scoop. His birth mother was a real doozy in his dream. Threw PJ's father away like a stale hot dog. She didn't even tell him she was pregnant. In his dream, I mean.

Doris finishes the preparation of the food.

DORIS

All right. Let's stop this talk.  
Dinner is cooked. Don't tell your  
father about any of this. He'll  
just get all riled up.

(handing the pot holders)

Go. Make yourself useful.

INT. DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A large ham dominates the center of the dining room table.

The table chatter is interrupted by Doris tapping on the table. She nods to William. Everyone bows their heads.

WILLIAM

Dear Lord. We gather today on this  
special occasion to honor a woman  
whom we all love and cherish. We  
thank you for her, and may we prove  
to be worthy of her love. Amen.

PJ raises his glass.

PJ

Happy Mother's Day, Mom.

And with that, everyone grabs their glasses and toasts Doris.  
After a pause, the hockey conversation resumes (improvise).

Doris leans in and they whisper to each other.

DORIS

I hope you like hockey.

LAUREN

I like tennis better.

DORIS

That'll be our little secret.

LATER

A half-finished pie indicates the dinner is over. Table talk  
is non-stop and is currently on football (improvise).

Doris nods to PJ to follow her into the kitchen. PJ gathers  
some plates, pats Lauren's arm and heads into the kitchen as--

WILLIAM

Do you like football, Lauren?

LAUREN

I was born in PA. Grew up in Fairbrook, Paterno territory.

TOM

Trivia time. Who was the Italian Stallion? Think early Paterno.

Phil and William are about to answer but Lauren is quicker.

LAUREN

That's easy. Franco Harris.

IN THE KITCHEN

Doris busies herself with washing the dishes and PJ dries them and puts the items away while they talk.

DORIS

Phil tells me you're having dreams about your birth parents.

PJ

Phil has a big mouth.

DORIS

What is going on, PJ? Something is not right. I can tell.

PJ

I don't know, Mom. Mid-life, maybe.

DORIS

You're too young for that. You've always been sensitive, though. When you were a child you cried when I ran over a bird accidentally. Remember? Then you discovered hockey and you stopped crying altogether. Ever since high school, hockey has been your number one passion in life, and that's when you stopped crying about things.

PJ

Oh. I see. We're having one of those conversations.

DORIS

You're under a lot of stress, PJ. I get that. But it's Mother's Day. Indulge me, okay?

PJ

I guess the thought of doing something other than hockey has me thinking about who I am and what talents I have. What kind of husband or father will I be?

DORIS

I see.

PJ

I'm haunted by dreams of a woman who wants no part of me, and a father, who might know I ever existed. I'm obsessed with this thought of finding my birth-parents because ... maybe something is wrong with me, like ...

DORIS

A genetic deficiency.

PJ

Maybe ... Yeah. Just maybe.

Doris sees William standing by the entrance to the kitchen.

WILLIAM

So. You feel something's missing in your life, PJ. Something your ... adopted parents can't give you.

DORIS

That's not what he said, William. Now don't start. Please! It's Mother's Day. Let's all of us keep it low on the Richter Scale, today.

WILLIAM

I'm just asking. No harm in asking. Is there something your mother and I have failed to give you, son? Direction? An education?

PJ

Dad. I just want to know why they didn't want me. I want to know if my birth father knew ...

DORIS

Sounds like a perfectly reasonable thought, William.

WILLIAM

Reasonable? I'll tell you what's reasonable. Gratitude. Gratitude for working ungodly hours so your children can go to college.

PJ

Are you saying that I don't appreciate what you guys have done for me?

(to Mom)

You see why I don't like talking about this?

(to William)

Everything has to be about you. This is not about you, Dad.

WILLIAM

I know it's not about me, but why now, PJ? Why didn't you come to us when you first had these dreams.

PJ

I didn't want to hurt you or Mom.

WILLIAM

This is a lot of bull, Man!

Doris waves a spatula at William.

DORIS

Don't be like this, William. We always knew that PJ might want to find his birth parents.

WILLIAM

Fifteen years ago, maybe. Why now? This is just a slap in the face.

PJ  
I didn't want you guys to think I  
didn't love you or appreciate ...

WILLIAM  
BULL CRAP!

William leaves through the door to the garage. The sound of  
the door slamming solicits a deep sigh from Doris.

PJ  
I knew this would happen.

DORIS  
He's just a hothead. He'll be fine.

PJ flops in a chair.

DORIS (CONT'D)  
Go to Catholic Charities where we  
got you, although I don't think  
they'll tell you anything because  
of their privacy rules.  
(thinks)  
Get a copy of your original birth  
certificate from the Vital  
Statistics Office. It should have  
your birth mother's name on it.

INT. PJ'S CAR - DAY

PJ is driving Lauren who is on the passenger's side of the  
car.

LAUREN  
I'm not angry. But we're a couple,  
PJ, aren't we? You should've told  
me about your dreams.  
(pause)  
You're not going to find another  
woman who loves you more than I do.  
So, go find your birth-parents and  
come to closure on that part of  
your life. But when I'm away think  
real hard what you want in your  
life and how I fit into it.

PJ arrives at Lauren's apartment complex. He pulls off to the  
side, and turns the engine off.



PJ  
Are you saying...

LAUREN  
I'm not saying anything. Let's just  
get a good night sleep. It's been a  
long day.

She leans into PJ and kisses him on the cheek. She touches  
his face tenderly, like she wants to take the hurt away.

LAUREN (CONT'D)  
I love you very much, PJ.

A tear in PJ's eye explains the lump in his throat.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE SOMEWHERE IN TOWN - ANOTHER DAY

PJ stops at a convenience store in his delivery truck where  
there is a mailbox. Before dumping the newspaper bundle he  
walks over to the mailbox and deposits the envelope addressed  
The Bureau of Vital Statistics in Harrisburg.

INT. FRONT LAWN OF THE GALLAGHER'S HOUSE - ANOTHER DAY

While William waters the flower bed, PJ comes by mowing the  
lawn. William nods his approval.

INT. SCHOOL BUILDING - MORNING

PJ parks his distribution truck at the entrance of the school  
building where Lauren teaches. He takes a vase full of roses  
and walks them in.

EXT. FRONT LAWN OF THE GALLAGHER'S HOUSE - WEEKS LATER

William is watering the front lawn. This time, when PJ passes  
by as he cuts the lawn, William squirts PJ as he passes by.  
PJ gets off the mower and chases William.

INT. GALLAGHER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN TABLE - DAYS LATER

PJ sits at the kitchen table. William comes in and slaps the  
newspaper down.

SUPER:

He newspaper headline reads: THE NEW BADGER COACH OPENS

TRAINING CAMP TOMORROW

BACK TO THE KITCHEN

WILLIAM

Stay loose. You're in for a ride.

INT. BADGER'S HOCKEY RINK LOCKER ROOM - DAY

JACK, the assistant coach, puts up a notice on the bulletin board, then goes to the training table and folds towels.

Most of the PLAYERS are present and have already picked their lockers. Steve Carlson points to the notice.

STEVE

What's this, Jack? It says here pick any locker. First come first serve on choice of lockers.

JACK

New coach. New rules.

Malecki enters, duffel bag in hand. He struts up to the bulletin board and reads the notice.

MALECKI

Which one was Gallagher's locker?

JACK

Twelve.

Full of himself, Malecki heads for locker twelve and greets the Carlson brothers, STEVE and JEFF, way with just a grunt. Malecki finds locker twelve and throws his stuff in it just as PJ saunters in.

PJ carries a small ditty bag and draws an array of emotional greetings from his teammates. He notices Malecki in front of his locker. PJ walks over to the Carlson Brothers.

PJ

What's Malecki doing in my locker?

JEFF

Check out the board.

STEVE

New rules, PJ.

PJ walks to the board and reads the notice. He looks to Jack who just shrugs his shoulders. PJ swings his attention to Malecki and heads his way. As PJ passes Steve ...

STEVE (CONT'D)

I don't think he's said a word to anyone yet. Careful, PJ.

Coach Thomas comes out of his office just as PJ finds a locker by the Carlson Brothers.

COACH THOMAS

Hello, men. I'm your new coach. I like to be called Coach by my players. Coach Thomas by everyone else. Know that I'm not shy about getting in your face. And know that I reward players who produce. You are here because you're good hockey players. But being good doesn't mean you'll win games. It's the smart skaters who win games, and you'll find me a very pleasing man if you win. Winning defines me as a coach and you as a player. Don't think that it's how you play the game that matters. Making it to the conference championship is what matters, and is not something to boast about until you've won it. I'll give you an example, Green Bay won the Super Bowl in 2011. You know that but who lost that game. Mr. Carlson. Do you know?

Steve just shrugs his shoulders.

COACH THOMAS

Everyone knows the Packers won, but no one knows the Steelers lost that game. So, just remember folks, making it to the conference championship is not something to boast about. You must win it. I'm a win-at-all-cost kind-of guy, and the sooner you integrate that into your daily routines, the better off you'll be. Questions?

Everyone sits motionless, stunned, except for Malecki. He has obviously heard this speech before.

COACH THOMAS

Ok, then. Chop, Chop. Get dressed.  
Get on the ice. Let's see who'll  
play first line for me this year.

While dressing, Steve yells over to Malecki.

STEVE

How was the Penguin tryouts?

MALECKI

I'm here, aren't I?

To the side, away from Malecki, Jeff leans into PJ and ...

JEFF

He can speak! By the way, the  
Penguins bought his contract.

PJ

Penguins have too many forwards.

As the players finish dressing, some of them move out to the rink. Jack drops off a stack of papers on the bench.

JACK

Here are the schedules.

PJ takes one of the schedules as does Malecki. They both put it in their lockers and then leave to go to the rink.

INT. BADGER'S HOCKEY RINK - MOMENTS LATER

The players skate around the rink. Malecki skates into the boards as if he is checking someone as part of his warm-ups.

JEFF

Glad he's on our side this year.

As Rogie breezes by PJ--

ROGIE

Aren't you miffed that Malecki took  
your locker?

PJ

Don't ask stupid questions, Rogie.

While Rogie and PJ skate short bursts up and back at center ice they watch Malecki who continues to pound the boards looking mean and brutish.

ROGIE

I don't think I've seen him waste a smile on anyone yet.

PJ

Yeah, well maybe he's not in touch with his feelings.

The Coach has all the players lined up in two columns side by side. Each pair of men skate the length of the rink passing the puck back and forth.

Then they sprint up and back, from net to net, as fast as they can. In one sprint, PJ loses a small amount to Steve. The Coach takes notice.

COACH THOMAS

You're dogging it, Gallagher. Pick it up. Everyone, pick it up ...

In another sprint with Malecki versus Rogie, Coach Thomas takes notice that Malecki is substantially faster.

COACH THOMAS

(yelling)

More speed drills.

Coach Thomas takes a position on the ice between two columns of players. His mere presents commanded their attention.

COACH THOMAS

You turtlenecks have a rep for losing the big one. That ends today. It's not going to be business as usual. Extend your stick, Carlson. Use your thighs to accelerate. PJ, you're dogging it. You give me twenty laps after practice. Okay, now this drill is designed to give you stamina. I'll blow the whistle and the lead man from each line will race each other to the other end where Jack will announce the winner by raising his left or right arm. Ready...

The coach blows the whistle and the skaters race the length of the rink. Jack raises his right arm, indicating the winner of the first duel. They returned to the end of the line and the next couple took off at the sound of the whistle.

He had them race each other for five cycles, and after the speed drills were over the coach blew his whistle and --

COACH THOMAS (CONT'D)

Okay men, one more speed drill with the puck this time. I got something to say first ...

PJ bent over heaving breaths to the ice too tired to even object. Malecki came over spraying PJ with ice from the skates as he stops. PJ gives Malecki a harmless push.

COACH THOMAS (CONT'D)

I saw that, Gallagher. Twenty more laps. That's forty laps you owe me.

Coach Thomas skates up and down the rink like an army instructor.

COACH THOMAS (CONT'D)

First change around here is Joe Malecki is your new captain. Now, let's get in shape. We'll double up again. Malecki and PJ, I want you two paired from now on. Everyone else, find a partner. Throw the pucks out, Jack.

As the players formed two rows again, they mumble their disbelief that Malecki is their new captain (improvise), and they form two rows again, Jack dumped a bag of pucks on the ice. One man from each pair retrieves a puck.

COACH THOMAS (CONT'D)

You know the drill, Gents. Pass the puck back and forth while you skate down center ice. Alternate who takes the shot and then hustle back on the perimeters. You stop when I tell you to stop.

One pair at a time hustle down center ice while passing the puck back and forth to his partner and, when they reach the face-off circle, one player takes a shot on goal and the other retrieves the puck and returns to the end of the line.

As Thomas heads back to the bench, PJ and Malecki pass the puck to each other as if they have been teammates forever.

As the men skate down the ice--

COACH THOMAS (CONT'D)

Let's go men. If you want to beat the Gators this year, you must be in shape. And every man on this team will be in shape, I promise you that. Let's go ... go ... go. You stop when I tell you to stop.

PJ and Malecki pass the puck back and forth. The Coach nods to Malecki and Malecki purposely passes the puck just out of PJ's reach. The puck slides into the boards.

COACH THOMAS (CONT'D)

You're dogging it Gallagher. You should've caught that. Add twenty more laps when we're done. That's sixty you owe me.

PJ

Why don't you round it off to an even hundred.

COACH THOMAS (CONT'D)

Done. A hundred it is.

(to the team)

Okay, hit the showers.

One by one they happily hop on the boards in route to the showers. As Steve passes by Thomas, he slows down and ...

STEVE

You're kinda tough on PJ, Coach. He's been our captain for the last five years. What are you doing?

COACH THOMAS

You don't like it, Carlson? You can join him. Give me twenty.

As Steve skates back on the ice and joins up with PJ--

STEVE

This season is gonna be hell.

INT. BADGER'S LOCKER ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Jeff, already showered, is putting on his street clothes. He moans while trying to put on his pull-over sweater.

JEFF

Oh, my aching body ...

Steve hobbles in from the rink, sits on the bench and stares straight ahead. He falls into a motionless pose.

JEFF (CONT'D)

You okay?

STEVE

I don't know. I can't feel my legs.  
I think I might be dead.

JEFF

How's PJ?

STEVE

I think he's dead too.

ON THE ICE

As PJ skates by--

PJ

Fifty-one.

The lights go out leaving PJ in the dark. The SOUND of steel scraping on the ice gets louder and louder as PJ approaches again. We hear a loud SWISH and then ...

PJ (CONT'D)

Fifty-two.

INT. BAR - BUTLER BADGERS BEER BASH - NIGHT

ESTABLISHING SHOTS OF THE BAR - The bar is crowded with FANS and most of the Badgers. The IRON CITY HOUSE ROCKERS, a local band, are playing their music in the background.

LAUREN IN A BOOTH

She waits for PJ and watches some fans beg the players for autographs. The Badger players are sore and worn out, hardly in any disposition to celebrate the first day of the season.



Lauren spots Steve. She throws her hands in the air as if to ask, 'where is PJ'. Steve walks over very slowly.

STEVE

PJ had to do extra laps, Lauren. Got on the wrong side of the new coach. He'll be here soon, but I don't think he's going to be in a good mood. Oh, and ... be gentle ... he's not the captain this year.

LAUREN

What? Who did you vote in?

STEVE

The coach elected Malecki. The players didn't vote this year.

LAUREN

Which player is Malecki?

STEVE

(pointing)

He's the guy at the end of the bar talking to Rogie.

LAUREN

(looking)

The one who looks very grim.

STEVE

Yeah. He doesn't smile much. He's the type who likes to smash people into the boards.

Lauren then spots PJ entering the front door.

LAUREN

Thanks for the info, Steve.

She waves. PJ spots her and as he maneuvers his way over, several fans ask him for an autograph. He gladly gives it while Lauren waits patiently. Finally, PJ has to wave a few fans off to get to Lauren.

He sits down across from her.

PJ

You wouldn't believe the day I had.

LAUREN  
Steve told me a little.

They both feign a smile to each other. They look around and pretend to be interested in activity around them.

LAUREN (CONT'D)  
PJ, this may not be the right time to talk about this, but ... I'm concerned about us.

She stops and looks at PJ in a stoic kind-of way.

LAUREN (CONT'D)  
When I come back from France, if we don't set a date then we'll have to go our separate ways.

PJ  
Wow! That is a doozy. Sounds like you rehearsed that.

Lauren puts her fingers to PJ's lips.

LAUREN  
I'm sorry, PJ. I want to have children, and I want to be married to someone I love. And I love you.

PJ  
But your biological clock is ticking, right?

PJ stops as the noise at the bar gets rowdy. PJ sees that Malecki is in the middle of it.

PJ (CONT'D)  
We can't talk here.

PJ grabs Lauren's hand and pulls her from the booth. As they leave, the reaction shots between PJ and Malecki are not friendly. Malecki seems to be warming up to the teammates, alcohol induced as it may be.

EXT. BAR PARKING LOT -- CONTINUOUS

Lauren and PJ walk out of the bar. PJ takes a deep breath as if he's just been released from prison and it has been years since he's seen the outside world. As they walk--

LAUREN

I know this is a tough time for you, PJ. I know your family has given you a hard time about playing hockey because of the concussions.

PJ

We don't talk about it. We're a hockey family, Lauren. It's ... just the way it is.

They walk a little more in silence, then--

LAUREN

I know being captain meant a lot ...

PJ

I have one career goal right now, and that is to find success in hockey this season.

LAUREN

You're already a success in hockey.

PJ

Not until I'm a Penguin. That sounds funny, doesn't it.

PJ waddles, like a penguin, trying to be funny.

PJ

Look. I'm a penguin.

LAUREN

What if you don't get a shot with the Penguins after this season?

PJ

Then I'll die. Okay. You happy now.

INT. PJ'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

They both get in the car and PJ drives off.

PJ

I'm sorry. Really ... I hate it when I get this way.

(pause)

You kind of ambushed me tonight, Lauren.

(MORE)

PJ (CONT'D)

Let's just call it a night and sleep on ... whatever we need to sleep on.

LAUREN

Fair enough.

INT. BADGER'S LOCKER ROOM - NEXT DAY

Members of the team pass by the coach's office in route to the practice rink while Coach Thomas sits at his desk.

Malecki notices the coach staring at his trophies which stand on a shelf like a miniature skyline. He goes in.

COACH THOMAS

(pointing)

Coach-of-the-Year. I had to win three championships to get that.

MALECKI

I still say we could've won without putting him down.

COACH THOMAS

You keep the pressure on PJ, you hear? That's all you need to know.

MALECKI

Don't get me wrong, Coach. I wouldn't mind putting him out of commission for a while. I mean, he's my competition for the scoring championship. But he's a good player. We can win another championship without doing this.

COACH THOMAS

Let me put it another way, Malecki. The Penguins listen to what I have to say. You and Gallagher are forwards, and when the Penguins are hit with injuries, they call me up and ask for my opinion on who's ready to come up. Catch my drift?

MALECKI

Say no more, Coach. Pressure's on.

INT. BADGER'S HOCKEY RINK

In the middle of an intra-squad scrimmage: Malecki has a red shirt on (defense); PJ does not (offense). The action shows PJ flaunting his skating skills, escaping checks from Malecki, upstaging him, so to speak.

Malecki angrily checks PJ into the boards, then retrieves the puck, rambles towards the net, shoots and scores.

COACH THOMAS

Good hustle, Malecki. Good hustle.

ON PJ

who is flat on his back, moaning. He gets up and chases Malecki and trips him. The gloves come flying off.

Malecki lays PJ out on the ice with an uppercut to his jaw.

A few players form a huddle over PJ. At first he appears badly hurt. He rubs his jaw and gets up. He's okay.

PJ

He hits like a wuss.

INT. GALLAGHER'S DINING ROOM - 6 PM

William sips on a cup of coffee at the dinner table. PJ's eating. Doris just sits at the table, thinking.

PJ

The coach just stood there, like he enjoyed that I got clocked.

PJ moves his jaw around. Testing it.

PJ (CONT'D)

I think the Coach has it in for me.

Doris and William look at each other as if they share a secret. PJ notices them staring at him.

PJ (CONT'D)

What? Why are you guys looking at me that way?

William seems to have something to say. Doris head nods for William to 'go ahead' and speak.

WILLIAM

I think I'm partly responsible for the way Thomas is treating you.

PJ

Don't be silly, Dad. How could you be responsible for his behavior?

WILLIAM

When I was a reporter years ago, he was new coach who groomed certain players on how to be aggressive and win, but fall short of the betting line at the same time.

PJ

You mean, he bet against his team?

WILLIAM

I don't know if he did. According to my source, this new coach controlled two or three players. It was a great team, a team full of all-stars. He'd have them purposely foul someone. You know, a trip here, an illegal stick there. Of course, players would be penalized, cause a power play situation, giving the advantage to the weaker team. He'd win by only one or two goals but didn't make the spread.

It suddenly dawns on PJ what William is TRYING to say.

PJ

And this coach was Thomas?

WILLIAM

Yes. I got suspicious when they crushed a team by six goals one night and came back the next day to beat the same team by only one. A player on the team fessed up to me, privately. He told me when the fix was on again. The Gators were playing the last place team. It was suppose to go into overtime where they would win easily.

(MORE)

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

But with two seconds left in regulation, the other team scored on a lucky deflection and he lost. I wrote a scathing editorial and the piece got published that night and five players talked the next day. They all got suspended. Big scandal.

PJ

What happened to Coach Tomas?

WILLIAM

Nothing. He played it smart. Thomas hid his money very well. None of the players could implicate him because he never directly told them to foul anyone. A man contacted the players before the game to let them know when the fix was on. The players were told to follow the coach's instructions. He would use Code talk like 'check so-and-so' which would mean 'take him out'. that was their cue to smash the guy, I guess. Playing aggressively is not a crime. You know that.

PJ

The Coach got away with it?

WILLIAM

There was a cloud on him for a long time after that. Today, people have forgotten what happened.

PJ

Except for Coach Thomas. He hasn't forgotten, has he, Dad?

WILLIAM

You're paying for the sins of the father, I'm afraid.

PJ

It would've been nice to have known this, so I could've been prepared.

WILLIAM

I could call ...

PJ

NO! Leave it alone, Dad. I'm not angry with you. You did the right thing by telling me. But I'll just deal with this my own way.

Doris gets up, retrieves a letter from the counter, and plops it down in front of PJ, who takes it and, as he leaves--

PJ

I'll open it later.

William waits for PJ to leave then looks at Doris and shrugs.

DORIS

Would it have killed you to say you were sorry. Nooo! *'You're paying for the sins of your father'*. What's that about?

INT. LAUREN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lauren and PJ embrace in a Brett Butler kiss. PJ immediately stops as a REPORTER and Coach Thomas appear on the TV screen.

REPORTER (V.O.)

Friday is opening night. How do the Badgers look, Coach?

COACH THOMAS (V.O.)

The team is coming along fine. They're in real good shape.

REPORTER (V.O.)

This is Malecki's first season with the Badgers. He hasn't gained the respect of the veterans, yet he's captain of the team. How do you explain that, Coach?

COACH THOMAS (V.O.)

Nothing to explain. Next question.

REPORTER (V.O.)

Well, Coach, PJ Gallagher was the captain for the last few years ...



COACH THOMAS (V.O.)

This team has the reputation of choking when a big game is on the line. The team needed a change to stir things up. I made that change.

REPORTER (V.O.)

But he's playing. He's been one of the top scorers in the league since ... forever.

COACH THOMAS (V.O.)

When you're talking about a new season, 'forever' is a short time. Besides, we all know about his injuries. I'm going slow with him for now, that's all.

The Announcer improvises his thanks - TV shifts to a FAN.

FAN (V.O.)

I think Malecki and Coach Thomas are what Butler needs. Those two guys made it happen in Greensburg, so ... hey, maybe this is our year.

PJ grabs the remote, points it at the TV and shuts it off.

LAUREN

You want to talk?

PJ

I'm not looking forward to opening night, is all. I mean, the guy who put me in the hospital last year is the captain of my team now.

PJ takes the letter from Harrisburg out from his pocket.

LAUREN

You had your birth certificate in your pocket all this time and you didn't tell me, you knucklehead?

(looks at it)

You haven't opened it.

PJ

I wanted to open it with you.

She opens it and reads it quickly.

LAUREN

Your mother's name is Mary Ann Flannigan. No father's name? says 'Not available'. It has your name here as Jerome Flannigan. Jerome?  
(laughs)

I can see you as a Jerome.

PJ inspects the certificate and falls silent for a few beats.

PJ

It says here my mother was nineteen when I was born.

LAUREN

We should be able to find something on her on the internet.

INT. LAUREN'S BEDROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Lauren hits the return key and waits. Several messages appear in response to a Google search. She selects one and waits.

LAUREN

Blah, blah. It says here, Mary Ann Neuberger's maiden name was Mary Ann Flannigan. Neuberger! My God, PJ. Mary Ann Neuberger! Do you know who she is? She's the heiress of Puree, if that is the same person.

She immediately types in Mary Ann Neuberger and over two thousand URLs are selected. She reads one article.

LAUREN (CONT'D)

It says here that she's fifty. Right age, I guess. Considering.

PJ walks away and looks out the bedroom window while Lauren continues to read. After a beat, Lauren gets up and walks over to him. A tear is running down his cheek.

PJ

I don't care if she is rich. I really don't.

Lauren holds onto him lovingly and then leads him back to the computer. They sit, and she types and waits for a response.

LAUREN

It says that she lives in Woodland Hills, California. No address.

PJ

Let's send a nasty E-mail to her.

LAUREN

I don't think so. What are you going to say, 'Hi, you don't know me, but I'm your son who you gave up for adoption thirty something years ago'? It'll be seen by a hundred eyes before she gets it.

PJ

Just the same, I'd love to do it.

Lauren types a few keys and waits.

LAUREN

Let's see if we can find out the phone number for the Chamber of Commerce for Woodland Hills.

Lauren looks at the clock. It's 8PM.

LAUREN (CONT'D)

It's five PM over there. Hopefully someone will answer the phone.

The screen displays the address and phone number for the Woodland Hills Chamber of Commerce.

Lauren picks up the phone, dials just retrieved and waits. Someone answers the phone at the other end.

LAUREN (CONT'D)

Hello. I'm calling because we're trying to reach Mary Ann Neuberger. Do you know who she is?

LADY (V.O.)

Yes, but we can't give out personal information. We could forward a letter to her, if you send it to us. Do you have our address?

LAUREN

Yes. I have it. Thank you so much.

She hangs up and while she types--

LAUREN (CONT'D)

We can mail them a letter and they will forward it to her.

(pause)

If she's your birth mother, you may be opening up a can of worms. Are you prepared for that?

PJ

No. But let's do it anyway. Okay. How about Dear Mrs. Neuberger. No ... that's too formal.

LAUREN

How about Dear Mary Ann.

PJ

Yes. That's good. Dear Mary Ann. I hope you are sitting down ...

LAUREN

(as she types)

How about we just say who you are and explain where you were born and when, and you believe that she is your mother because of the name on the birth certificate.

PJ

Okay. Ask her about my father. Ask her if she remembers his name? Did he play hockey? Where did he live?

LAUREN

Whoa. Hold on cowboy. I can't type that fast.

DISSOLVE TO:

BEGIN PJ'S DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. HOCKEY RINK - NIGHT

A WOMAN sporting a mink coat and expensive jewelry watches a hockey game in the stands. She seems interested in a specific HOCKEY PLAYER who parades around the ice after scoring.

EXT. HOCKEY RINK PARKING LOT

The same hockey player comes out of the rink and walks to a limousine parked close by with a woman in a mink coat in the back seat waving him on. She opens the car door and pulls him in, and slams the door shut.

INT. A GRAYISH, DINGY ROOM - NINE MONTHS LATER

The woman's feet is in stirrups while a mid-wife struggles with the delivery. The soon-to-be mother wears her mink coat and reads a newspaper. Multitasking is becoming difficult.

She reaches for the cigarette that burns in the ashtray. Her diamond ring GLISTENS as she smokes. She seems callous and detached while giving birth to a baby.

Once the mid-wife makes the final cuts to the umbilical cord, the woman takes her legs off the stirrups and gets up as if nothing has happened. She reaches into her pocketbook, takes out some money, and tosses it on the bed.

As she leaves, she looks at the back of her hand as if the whole experience was like having her nails done.

END OF DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. PJ'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

An alarm wakes PJ and he bolts up from the dream all sweaty.

INT. DELIVERY TRUCK - EARLY MORNING

As PJ pulls into a mini-mall lot, he spots a mailbox on the side of the road. He parks the truck, takes the letter out of his pocket, but shakes the letter as if he is going to weigh it. He gets out of the truck and deposits the letter.

He walks back to the truck, pulls a newspaper bundle from the back and brings it into the store. A second later he comes out, gets into the truck and drives off.

INT. BADGER'S HOCKEY RINK - OPENING DAY - LATER

The Announcers improvise a welcome message to the local TV station viewers establishing opening day at the Badger Hockey Rink. The crowd buzzes with excitement. The Gallagher family, and Lauren, are already seated.

INT. ANNOUNCER BOOTH

Announcers Brent and Phil are announcing opening day.

ANNOUNCER BRENT

The Panthers come into Youngstown  
Arena with a new mascot, Phil.

ON THE ICE

As a clown frolics in front of some Badger fans, he grinds his eyes with his knuckles as if he's crying, inciting them.

ANNOUNCER PHIL

That's mean. The Badger fans don't  
like the Panther mascot very much.

Several fans boo and shout at the mascot.

INT. BADGERS' LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Badgers, in uniform, scuffle their skates on the floor, pound their thighs and, in general, show their adrenaline rush. The coach comes out of his office.

COACH THOMAS

All right men. It's time to show  
the world what you're made of.

INT. BADGER'S HOCKEY RINK

Some fans yell as the Badgers appear by the entrance. The organ plays and the cheers build momentum.

ANNOUNCER BRENT (V.O.)

As is customary on opening night on  
home ice, each Butler Badger will  
be introduced.

Brent begins the introductions (improvise) and the cheers morph into a steady clap and chant.

ON THE GALLAGHER FAMILY

As the introductions continue, we scan down the row where the Gallagher family sits. Lauren is sitting next to Doris.

Lauren leans in to Doris. She must talk above the roar of the crowd to be heard.

LAUREN

He is very anxious on how the fans  
are going to receive him tonight.

ON CENTER ICE

While Malecki is introduced, the fans raise their cheers an  
octave. Brent stops announcing until the fans calm down.

ON PJ

He waits next to be introduced.

ANNOUNCER BRENT (V.O.)

And Butler's own hockey legend,  
PEEEEE JAAAAAY GAAAALLAGERRRRRRRR!!

The fans go into a frenzy. PJ skates to center ice and waves  
to the fans.

ON MALECKI

MALECKI

Today is your day, Gallagher.  
Tomorrow will be mine.

ON THE GALLAGHER FAMILY

We scan the joyful faces of the Gallagher family.

LATER - ON THE ICE - THE ACTION BEGINS

Rogie passes the puck to Malecki who zigzags down the ice  
with it. Rogie then positions himself to score and waits for  
a pass from Malecki. Malecki fakes a pass to Rogie, and gets  
the defenseman off balance, then shoots the puck himself.

ANNOUNCER BRENT (V.O.)

SCOOOOORE!!!

While we wait for the fans to calm down, we see PJ on the  
bench watching and waiting patiently.

ANNOUNCER PHIL (V.O.)

Interesting beginning, Brent.  
Malecki scores the first Badger  
goal of the season in the first  
minute of the game. And Gallagher  
hasn't even seen ice time yet.

IN THE BOOTH

ANNOUNCER BRENT

It will be interesting to see Coach Thomas's strategy with these two.

ANNOUNCER PHIL

Rumors have it Malecki and PJ are not getting along. Given Malecki will have more ice time, that won't bring them any closer together.

PRODUCER ONE frantically slices his fingers across his throat for Phil to stop that kind of talk.

ANNOUNCER PHIL (CONT'D)

PJ's an institution here, and he'll certainly get his turn.

ANNOUNCER BRENT

That's right, Phil.

Phil covers his microphone and leans into Brent and ...

ANNOUNCER PHIL

Still, this is going to be a VERY interesting season.

BACK ON THE ICE

The Panther offensive player shoots and the Badger goalie stops the puck and slides it off to Steve, who then passes to PJ and PJ skates down the ice and scores.

SPX - RINGER

This is a SOUND that will elevate this scene to a more thought-provoking level. Establishes the competitive spirit between PJ and Malecki. The contest between them has begun.

The Announcers AD-LIB the fans' excitement and, as the surrounding noises diminishes, we transition to ...

BEGIN SERIES OF SCENES/SHOTS

This series is intended to take us into the season to show the continuing strife within PJ, and between PJ and Malecki and Coach Thomas.



- A) Both Malecki and PJ play extremely well in this first game as the Badgers win. PJ bends over with exhaustion while Malecki looks more energetic at the end of the game.
- B) Another game, another day: PJ makes a mistake, is checked, and a fan boos him. PJ smacks the glass in frustration.
- C) Malecki scores effortlessly while PJ sits on the bench.
- D) PJ scores.
- E) Malecki scores.
- F) PJ loses the puck against the backdrop of a loud Coach.
- G) PJ drives the newspaper distribution truck. He's sleepy and almost gets into an accident.
- H) PJ listens to Father Felix. While they talk we hear ...

FATHER FELIX

Try writing your story. Get your conflicts down on paper and applying them to a fictitious character. Can be very therapeutic.

PJ is not convince and shrugs his shoulders.

FATHER FELIX (CONT'D)

Let's pray on it.

END OF SERIES

INT. GALLAGHER'S KITCHEN - EARLY EVENING

Doris loads the dishwasher while listening to the rest of the Gallagher family who are in the living room watching TV. After a few seconds PJ enters the kitchen. Opens the refrigerator and pulls out a soda.

DORIS

How's the search for your birth-parents coming along? It's been a while since you mailed the letter to what's her name ...

PJ

I sent it to the Chamber Of Commerce. where she lives. Her name is Mary Ann Neuberger.

DORIS  
 You can still go the Catholic  
 Charities to find out the father...

PJ  
 I know, Mom. It's right outside  
 Greensburg. We're playing them  
 soon. I'll check it out then.

DORIS  
 Under the circumstances, I don't  
 think you should tell your Father.  
 He's being funny about all this.

PJ  
 Tell me about it. I'm not doing  
 this because he has failed in any  
 way. I'm doing this because ...

William walks in and PJ stops talking.

WILLIAM  
 You're doing what?

PJ  
 What?

WILLIAM  
 You said 'I'm doing this because'  
 and then you stopped when I walked  
 in. What is it you're doing?

PJ  
 I don't understand.

William looks to Doris for her help. She doesn't give any.

DORIS  
 What?

PJ  
 What?

WILLIAM  
 Okay. I get the picture. You're  
 having a mother-son talk.

William opens the refrigerator and takes out a beer.

As he heads back into the living room, he stops.

PJ

What?

WILLIAM

Nothing. I'm watching football.  
Cleveland is losing. Life is great.

After William leaves, Doris looks PJ square in the eye.

DORIS

Go to the Catholic Charities and  
stop this foolishness.

PJ

Mom! Enough. I said I would. Has  
anyone told you lately that you are  
a nag? And Lauren is getting as bad  
as you are. Women?

Tom enters the kitchen.

TOM

Women ... what?

PJ

What?

TOM

You said, 'Women', as if they are a  
pain in the ass.

Tom heads for the refrigerator. Doris shoots a look at him.

TOM (CONT'D)

I didn't say women are a pain in  
the ass. PJ did.

PJ

I did not.

Tom takes out a beer, just as Phil walks in. Tom waits.

PHIL

Any soda left.

(looks in refrigerator)

By the way. Good game yesterday, PJ

TOM

Yeah. Good game yesterday, PJ.

PJ  
Thanks. Did you hear an abnormal  
amount of boos?

TOM  
Mostly by women. The men think  
you're hot.

Doris throws her hands in the air and her sons retreat into  
the living room.

INT. GALLAGHER'S PARENTS BEDROOM - NIGHT

Doris is asleep. William tosses and turns. He hears tapping  
noises. He gets up and puts on his robe.

HALLWAY

The door to PJ's bedroom is slightly ajar. William walks down  
the hallway, peeks in and sees PJ typing on his computer.  
William ponders a beat and then returns to bed.

INT. BUS - AFTERNOON

The Badger team is on the bus with Coach Thomas and Jack in  
the front seat. Coach Thomas stands up and faces the players.

COACH THOMAS  
Okay, listen up. This game has some  
importance since I think it'll be  
another Greensburg and Badger  
championship series this year.

ROGIE  
With a different outcome this time.

There's a few 'here here' comments (improvise).

COACH THOMAS  
Greensburg's strength is in their  
depth. We have a stronger asset.  
Anyone know what that is?

No one answers. PJ just stares out the window.

COACH THOMAS  
We're faster. But I don't want you  
to show all your speed today.  
(MORE)

COACH THOMAS (CONT'D)  
 Vindication will be yours, and if  
 tonight was the seventh game of the  
 championship series, then I would  
 say go all out, by all means.

PJ snaps his head forward as if Coach Thomas might be giving  
 a 'special' message to one or two of the players.

COACH THOMAS  
 I want you to win today, of course,  
 but do it by controlling the puck.  
 Dazzle them with your passing. Let  
 them get tired by chasing the puck,  
 not you. We'll show 'em our speed  
 when it counts. All in due time,  
 men. Today, we control the puck.

Before sitting back down, the Coach glares at PJ for a beat.

EXT. GREENSBURG HOCKEY STADIUM - EARLY AFTERNOON

The players file out of the bus one-by-one.

COACH THOMAS  
 Don't wander too far. Be back here  
 in three hours.

ROGIE  
 I'm going to the locker room to  
 sack out. I'm tired.

COACH THOMAS  
 I don't want to hear that.

PJ hails a taxi and gets in.

EXT. CATHOLIC CHARITIES BUILDING - LATER - DAY

The taxi pulls up to the Catholic Charities and PJ gets out  
 of the cab, looks around a beat, then walks in the building.

INT. CATHOLIC CHARITIES BUILDING HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

PJ finds help in an OLD WOMAN walking down the hall.

OLD WOMAN  
 Can I help you?

PJ  
I'm looking for Christine Carroll.

The Old Woman points and PJ follows her direction.

INT. CATHOLIC CHARITIES ADMIN OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

PJ opens the door and walks into a waiting room. There's no receptionist, but the door to the main office is open.

WOMAN'S VOICE  
I'll be with you in a minute.

PJ sits and waits. After a beat ...

WOMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)  
The door is open. Please come in.

INT. ADMIN OFFICE'S INNER SANCTUM - CONTINUOUS

CHRISTINE CARROLL sits at her desk as PJ walks in.

CARROLL  
How can I help you?

INT. GREENSBURG HOCKEY ARENA PRESS BOX - CONTINUOUS

The cameramen are setting up and testing their equipment.

INT. GREENSBURG HOCKEY ARENA -- CONTINUOUS

The stands are empty, but early PATRONS begin entering the arena. Among those entering is Father Felix. Meanwhile--

INT. CATHOLIC CHARITIES ADMIN OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Christine Carroll and PJ are in mid-conversation --

CARROLL  
I empathize with you, but I can't let you see the records. Our reputation hinges on our ability to keep our clients anonymous.

PJ  
But I already know my mother is Mary Ann Flannigan ... excuse me, her new name is Neuberger ...

Carroll stands and holds out her hand like a traffic cop.

CARROLL

I'm sorry. Like you said, don't you  
have a game to go to.

PJ shakes her hand, then leaves.

INT. TAXI

PJ sits in the back seat of a taxi. He looks at his watch,  
then ahead as the taxi faces a wall of red brake lights.

PJ

What's the matter.

TAXI DRIVER

Looks like an accident.

INT. GREENSBURG HOCKEY ARENA

All the players are in their game uniforms when PJ storms in.  
Coach Thomas is in the middle of a pep talk.

COACH THOMAS

Nice that you can join us, PJ.  
You've just been relegated to third  
linesmen for today's game. Jeff,  
you move up to second squad.

PJ kicks the bench into the lockers and everyone's attention  
is focused on PJ. PJ's Tau Cross hangs over his shirt.

PJ

You're a piece of work, Coach. Why  
don't you tell everyone why you  
don't want them to use their speed  
tonight. How many goals do you want  
to shave today? Hmm? Two? Three?

Players look to each other, disbelieving their ears. Malecki  
just smiles. PJ grips the cross tightly.

COACH THOMAS

That'll cost you, Gallagher. Don't  
bother dressing. You're scratched.

PJ rips the cross from his neck and tosses it, and it lands  
by Malecki who stares at it while PJ storms out of the room.

INT. GREENSBURG HOCKEY GRANDSTAND AREA

PJ sits in the stands. He looks up at the score board. It's the first period and the score is HOME: 1 VISITORS: 0.

VOICE

Is this seat taken?

It's Father Felix and, as usual, he is wearing his habit.

PJ

Uncle Felix, why are you here?

FATHER FELIX

To see you play. I guess I'm not going to see that today.

Father Felix sits and looks squarely at PJ. A query.

PJ

My anger got the best of me. Coach told us to be low key today, and I accused him of shaving goals.

FATHER FELIX

Hmm. A little impetuous are we?

ON THE ICE

Malecki takes a shot on goal. Misses.

BACK TO FATHER FELIX AND PJ

FATHER FELIX

Well, since you're here, how's that writing coming along?

PJ

Slow.

FATHER FELIX

Slow as in, 'I'm not doing it', or slow as in 'I'm writing, but it's slow moving'.

PJ

Uncle Felix, I understand what you're trying to say, okay.



FATHER FELIX

What is it that I'm trying to say?

PJ

That writing is therapy, or some  
such happy ...

The action of the ice interrupts PJ.

FATHER FELIX

Okay. So, what else is new?

PJ

Aside from screwing up my hockey  
career, I'm just trying to find out  
the meaning of life. That's all.

FATHER FELIX

Oh, that's all. Let me know if you  
make any headway on that, will ya?

PJ

I have already. Life sucks no  
matter how you slice it.

They watch the action on the ice for a few seconds then--

FATHER FELIX

Do you know how women look when  
they want sex?

PJ shakes his head.

FATHER FELIX (CONT'D)

Me neither.

Father Felix chuckles and slaps his knee. PJ smiles and--

PJ

Don't give up your day job, Father.

FATHER FELIX

Let me tell you a story. One  
evening an old Cherokee Indian told  
his son about a battle that was  
going on inside himself. He said,  
"My son, it is between two wolves.  
One is evil: anger, greed,  
arrogance, self-pity, inferiority.

(MORE)

FATHER FELIX (CONT'D)

The other is good: joy, peace, love, serenity." The son thought about it for a second and then asked, "Which wolf won?"

Greensburg scores and the roar of the crowd interrupts Father Felix's story.

FATHER FELIX

Two nothing in the first period! They miss you out there, PJ.

PJ waits for a beat or two. He becomes impatient.

PJ

So, what did the Indian father say? You know, the son asked, 'which wolf won'. What did the father say?

FATHER FELIX

Oh, yeah. So the father says, 'the one I feed'.

PJ ingests the message. He leans forward on the rail and looks out onto the ice. He turns to Father Felix and smiles.

INT. GALLAGHER'S KITCHEN - MORNING - A FEW DAYS LATER

William walks in and sits at the kitchen table with Doris. He tosses the newspaper exposing the headline.

SUPER:

Headline reads: Gallagher SUSPENDED FOR INSUBORNIATGON.

BACK TO WILLIAM AND DORIS

Doris reads the newspaper and just grunts

INT. GALLAGHER'S KITCHEN - MORNING - A FEW DAYS LATER

Again, William walks in and sits at the kitchen table with Doris. He tosses the day's newspaper down on the table.

WILLIAM

Badgers won seven in a row.

DORIS

Yup. That's because PJ's back.

WILLIAM

Just in time too. What a lousy  
Christmas this would be if he were  
serving a suspension.

DORIS

Come to think of it, how long is  
the Christmas break this year?

WILLIAM

Don't know. Says there in the paper  
that Malecki is the scoring leader.  
PJ is third, three points behind.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

The Gallagher family sit by a Christmas tree and exchange  
gifts. There's a knock on the door and PJ gets up. A few  
seconds later, Lauren enters bearing gifts.

LAUREN

Merry Christmas, guys. A day early.

After William and Doris improvise their greetings, William  
hands Lauren a gift and Doris pulls his arm back.

DORIS

Not now. Tomorrow morning.

INT. GALLAGHER PARENTS' UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - NIGHT

While Doris sleeps, William is wide eyed and hears the  
tapping of a computer's keyboard in PJ's room. William rolls  
over and goes back to sleep.

INT. GALLAGHER'S LIVING ROOM - SEVEAL NIGHTS LATER

William, Doris, and PJ are taking down the decorations on the  
Christmas tree.

PJ

Greensburg has a lot of depth in  
their lineup. They're a good team.

WILLIAM

So are the Badgers.

The phone rings and Doris walks over to the phone.

DORIS

I got a great idea. Let's not talk about hockey tonight. Let's talk about something else.

(answering the phone)

Hello.

(pause)

Yes. Who's this, please.

Doris looks right at PJ. She holds out the receiver.

DORIS (CONT'D)

It's Mary Ann Neuberger.

PJ takes the phone from Doris and improvises his greetings.

MARY ANN (V.O.)

Hello. I'm Mary Ann Neuberger. I got your letter, and I figured I owed you at least a phone call to wish you a Merry Christmas.

PJ

Hi. Merry Christmas to you, too.

After several seconds of silence ...

MARY ANN (V.O.)

I don't know exactly what to say.

PJ

Neither do I.

MARY ANN (V.O.)

How about if I start with 'What's your name?'

PJ

Patrick Jerome Gallagher. People call me PJ for short.

MARY ANN (V.O.)

Well, PJ, I looked you up on the internet. So, you're a hockey player, huh?

PJ

Yeah. That's what some people say.

MARY ANN (V.O.)  
 PJ, why are you looking for me  
 after all these years?

PJ  
 Mid-life crisis, I guess.  
 (pause)  
 May I have your telephone number?

MARY ANN (V.O.)  
 Listen, PJ, I don't want to sound  
 callous but ... I'm an old lady  
 now, and much too old to start a  
 mother-son relationship. You can  
 understand, can't you?

IN THE KITCHEN

Doris and William sit at the kitchen table. He appears very  
 distraught - angry maybe.

DORIS  
 Everything will be fine, William.

BACK TO PJ

PJ  
 I have only one question for you  
 and that is, 'Who's my father?'

MARY ANN (V.O.)  
 (pause)  
 I don't know, PJ.

PJ  
 You don't know? Or you forgot his  
 name? Or you won't tell me?

MARY ANN (V.O.)  
 Listen, I had a one night fling and  
 I can't remember his name.

PJ  
 Does he know about me?

MARY ANN (V.O.)  
 It was just a one night stand. I  
 didn't see the need to tell him, so  
 ... no, he doesn't know.

PJ opens his mouth but nothing comes out. Silence.

MARY ANN (V.O.)

Listen, I'm calling to ask you not to seek a permanent relationship with me. I know that sounds cruel, but please understand. I wish you well, but I'm not in the best of health. I just came off a bout with pneumonia and ...

BACK IN THE KITCHEN

William turns the newspaper pages as if he's reading. Doris quickly turns the pages of a magazine as if she's reading.

PJ walks in and plops himself down in a chair.

PJ

She said she had a one night fling with a guy she doesn't remember. And she doesn't want me calling her. She says she too old to start a mother and son relationship.

(pause)

This is all a bad dream.

WILLIAM

I don't know what you expected, PJ.

PJ

At the very least, I thought she'd remember my birth-father's name.

(gets up to leave)

Lauren's got last minute shopping to do for France. She's going in two weeks, you know.

DORIS

Yes, sweetheart. We know.

PJ exits the kitchen. We stay with Doris and William. The SOUND of the front door signals that PJ has left.

WILLIAM

I was talking to Mr. Slater, the sports editor over at the Gazette. He said the Penguins told the Badgers' to cut PJ at the end of the season for medical reasons.

DORIS

If the info is reliable, you have to tell PJ, William. The sooner he plans for a new life the better.

EXT. AT THE MALL - NIGHT

Later that night PJ and Lauren window-shop while they talk.

LAUREN

So, she doesn't want you calling her. She's probably like Howard Hughes. Eccentric. Rich people are like that, you know.

PJ

She said that my birth father never knew I existed. I hope that's true. I don't feel so bad now. I mean, that explains why he never tried to contact me, right?

LAUREN

True. It also explains why he didn't take you from the Catholic Charities who probably has his name in their records somewhere. You should go back there. Try again.

PJ

What good is that going to do?

LAUREN

They might let you see the records if you tell them your birth-mother has given you permission. I know she hasn't, but bluff them. Give them her phone number, make one up, and tell them to verify with her. They won't call it, and if they do, well ... at least you tried.

PJ

I don't know, Lauren. That Christine Carroll was very adamant about the rules. Besides, Mary Ann probably didn't give a name for the father.

Lauren stops in front of a lingerie window.

LAUREN

She was nineteen at the time. Maybe she did.

(points to the window)

Would I look good in that?

PJ halfheartedly looks. Then he looks at her up and down.

PJ

You'd look good in a potato sack.

LAUREN

You're sweet.

PJ

Okay, a sweet potato sack.

They continue looking in the windows.

LAUREN

So. When am I going to read this story of yours.

PJ

I should have it done tomorrow.

INT. PJ'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

PJ continues to tap on the computer.

He stops, prints out a copy and grabs a red market pencil. He takes the first page from the printer and catches himself before writing any 'corrections'. He replaces the red pencil with green pencil. He lifts his pencil from the paper and scowls whispers to himself--

PJ

I'm like my father. I'm doomed!

INT. LAUREN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lauren reads PJ's manuscript while PJ watches TV. Lauren catches him looking at her.

LAUREN

I can't read while you're watching.

(gets up)

I'm reading this in the bedroom.

You watch TV. Don't bug me.



LATER

PJ is asleep while the TV is on. Lauren wakes him up.

LAUREN

This is terrific, PJ. It's not just about hockey. It's about someone who is trying to come to grips with being adopted. It's really good. You should show it to your dad.

PJ

No way. He'll just mark it up until I won't recognize it anymore.

LAUREN

I cried when the Hero talked to his birth-mother for the first time. It doesn't seem to be finished, though. There's no closure on the birth-father. Who he is, I mean.

PJ

Maybe the hero finds the birth-father, and they have an argument and the hero sues the father and takes him to court ...

LAUREN

How about the hero finds the birth-father who welcomes his birth son with open arms. Everyone is happy. The adopted parents don't get slighted. Etcetera, etcetera.

PJ

Now how realistic is that?

LAUREN

Very.

PJ

Boring.

INT. GALLAGHER'S LIVING ROOM - LATE NIGHT

PJ quietly enters the house. He has the manuscript in a shirt box which is tucked under his arm. He tip-toes to the stairs and hears the TV on. He peeks in and sees William.

PJ  
It's late for you, Dad, isn't it?

WILLIAM  
A little. Come in. Sit.

PJ comes in and places the box on the night table and William turns off the TV.

WILLIAM  
When are you playing Greensburg.

PJ  
Day after tomorrow. It's our last season game with them.  
(waits)  
Looks like you have something important to say? What is it, dad?

WILLIAM  
There's no easy way to say this. I talked to Mr. Slater the other day, the Gazette sports editor. And he told me that the Badgers intend on cutting you at the end of the season. You're supposedly a medical risk. You know, with all the concussions.

PJ  
Would they do that, Dad? Even if I won the scoring championship?

WILLIAM  
I don't know, son. I'm sorry. Are you okay?

PJ  
I'm ah ... Am I okay? Yes. I am ok.

PJ gets up and walks away, but comes right back. He picks up the shirt box from the table, nods to William and exits.

INT. PJ'S BEDROOM

PJ walks to his desk, opens the box, takes out his manuscript, puts it into the drawer, and flops in his bed.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY

PJ and Lauren are strolling down a walkway to a terminal in the airport. They meet up with Lauren's STUDENTS.

LAUREN

Patricia and Danielle, this is Patrick Gallagher. PJ these are my students, Patricia and Danielle.

PJ

Nice to meet you.

PJ is aloof. Lauren suspects something's wrong. She excuses herself and pulls PJ to the side.

LAUREN

On the ride up here you hardly spoke a word. Something's wrong.

PJ

This is your day. I don't want to make it my day. I'm going to miss you, that's all.

Neither knows what else to say next. Lauren looks back at her students and holds up one finger.

LAUREN

Go to Catholic Charities, and tell them that if they don't let you see the records that they'll have to deal with me. And you beat what-his-name's ass in the scoring race. Beat Greensburg and bring home that championship cup. And when I come home I want to be able to introduce you as my fiancée, Capisce.

PJ

That's Italian.

LAUREN

Pardonnez moi.

(to her students; loudly)

How do you say "Do you understand" in French?

DANIELLE

Comprenez-vous?

LAUREN

(to PJ)

There you go. I don't teach French.  
I teach social studies.

PJ

I love you very much, and let me  
know how to reach you as soon as  
you get settled.

They hug.

LAUREN

Take care of business. Au revoir.

PJ

Bon voyage.

EXT. GREENSBURG HOCKEY STADIUM - EARLY AFTERNOON

The Badger bus pulls up next to a sign that says 'Welcome to Greensburg Stadium'. The Badgers get off the bus and Coach Thomas looks at his watch.

COACH THOMAS

I want everyone suited up in three  
hours. So don't wander too far.

Steve comes over to PJ.

STEVE

Wanna go to town? Catch a movie?

PJ

Can't, Steve. I have an errand I  
have to do.

STEVE

Okay. Catch you later. Be on time.

PJ nods, then sneaks off and hails a taxi.

EXT. CATHOLIC CHARITIES ADMIN OFFICE BUILDING - LATER

The taxi pulls up and PJ gets out.

PJ

Please wait. I won't be long.

INT. CATHOLIC CHARITIES ADMIN OFFICE

A YOUNG LADY, business dress, 30s, short hair, is ready to leave as PJ walks in. While locking her desk--

YOUNG LADY  
May I help you?

PJ  
I'd like to see Christine Carroll.

YOUNG LADY  
I don't have anyone in my  
appointment book for this time ...

Before the Young Lady has a chance to say anything else, PJ heads right into Christine's office.

INT. ADMIN OFFICE'S INNER SANCTUM

PJ barges in. The Young Lady comes in right after him.

CARROLL  
It's okay, Beatrice. You can go  
now. I'll finish up.

The Young Lady nods and leaves.

CARROLL (CONT'D)  
Mr. Gallagher, isn't it?

PJ nods. They shake hands and PJ sits.

CARROLL (CONT'D)  
Something tells me I know why  
you're here. Again.

PJ  
I have a different pitch this time.

CARROLL  
But I'll have the same answer.

PJ  
Please, hear me out, Ms. Carroll.

PJ waits a beat then--

PJ

I was going to tell you my birth-mother gave me permission to look at the records. But she did not. Mrs. Neuberger, Mary Ann Flannigan in your records, doesn't want me to pursue her. So I won't. But she said nothing about trying to find out the name of my birth father.

Christine starts to object, but PJ won't let her.

PJ (CONT'D)

While growing up, I was always afraid someone would confront me with lurid details of my birth-parents. Maybe they were drug addicts, or something worse. I shied away from ever wanting to know about them because of that. But had this vague sense of rejection all along. As much as I tried, couldn't shake it. Now, I think my birth-father never knew I was born. My birth mother forgot his name, which tells me didn't reject me. He never had the chance. I can't blame him for that, can I? I don't even know who he is. Okay, I'll believe her. But I think his name is in that folder, somewhere, and I think it's time he knows.

Christine stares at him, thoughtfully. She walks over to one of the cabinets, pulls out a file, and lays it on her desk.

CARROLL

I did some checking after your last visit, Mr. Gallagher, and I feel... Well, there's no need to tell you how I feel, outside the fact I root for the Gators, not the Badgers.

Carroll's chuckle turns into a sigh.

CARROLL (CONT'D)

Contrary to what you might think, my sense of righteousness is not rooted in established processes. They don't cover all situations.

(MORE)

CARROLL (CONT'D)

I have to go to the ladies room. I usually take about five minutes.

She leaves and PJ stares at the file on the desk. After a beat he opens it and begins reading. He quickly flips one page after another until he stops at one report.

SUPERIMPOSE

The words "FRED HARRINGTON" are penciled in with an arrow that goes from it to top of the report titled, FATHER.

BACK TO PJ

PJ quickly writes the name on a piece of paper and leaves.

INT. CATHOLIC CHARITIES ADMIN OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

PJ leaves the office and walks past the unattended desk.

EXT. CATHOLIC CHARITIES ADMIN OFFICE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

PJ storms out the door and into the waiting taxi.

INT. GREENSBURG HOCKEY ARENA - LATER

The Badgers drift out of the visitors ramp and onto the ice. We wait a few seconds, and then PJ appears.

ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH

ANNOUNCER BRENT

Well, this is the last inter-division meeting between Greensburg and the Badgers who are 0-and-two against Greenberg and need a win tonight for a psychological lift in case they meet again in the championship series.

ANNOUNCER PHIL

I don't think there's any doubt that the finals should be between these two teams. But don't forget Brent, Gallagher was serving a suspension in one of those games. In some minds, the Badgers are a better team.

## BACK ON THE ICE

The Face-off starts the game begins with a brutal check by Malecki who takes the puck and scores. The announcers and the Badger fans go wild (improvise).

## SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1) Greensburg scores and ties the game.
- 2) PJ scores
- 3) Greensburg scores and ties the game.
- 4) PJ passes to Steve and Steve scores.
- 5) Greensburg scores and ties the game.
- 6) A missed shot by the Badgers.

## END SERIES OF SHOTS

## INT. GREENSBURG HOCKEY ARENA

The announcers improvise their excitement as they see PJ and Malecki on the ice together.

With the seconds running down, PJ skates free and has a clear shot. Malecki has the puck and instead of passing to PJ, he takes the puck to the net.

He shoots and the puck is stopped just as the buzzer sounds ending the game in a tie.

## INT. ANNOUNCER BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Announcer Brent peers through his binoculars while he talks.

## ANNOUNCER BRENT

What a shame. Gallagher was open  
and was denied the hat trick.

## ANNOUNCER PHIL

Gallagher gained a point in the  
scoring category. Only three points  
separates Malecki and Gallagher now.



INT. PJ'S BEDROOM - DAY

PJ types on the computer while looking at a paper marked in red. He sits back and looks at the monitor.

ON THE MONITOR

PJ leans in and clicks on a search engine at the computer and types "Fred Harrington" in the search box. An article appears about Fred being a hockey legend in Canada.

INT. GALLAGHER'S KITCHEN - LATER

Doris and William sit at the kitchen table eating dinner with PJ, who gulps his food like there is no tomorrow.

PJ  
Finished. Thanks for dinner, Mom.  
Gotta get back upstairs.

PJ vanishes while his parents continue eating.

WILLIAM  
He's obsessing. I don't like it.

Doris gives him a 'what are you taking about' look.

WILLIAM  
He obsessing over Fred Harrington.  
I knew I recognized that name. He's  
a hockey legend in Canada. He never  
joined the Maple Leafs even though  
he was a great player.

INT. PJ'S BEDROOM

PJ sits at the computer and starts typing the words...

ON THE MONITOR

The words appear: *I approached my father not knowing whether he would accept the idea that he had a son, a son who was born thirty years ago to a woman whose name and face were lost due to the passage time.*

LIVING ROOM

The phone rings and we follow Doris to the phone which is next to the stairwell. PJ appears at the top of the stairs by the banister and listens. Doris casually picks it up and answers it.

She waves PJ off. It's not Lauren. PJ disappears from view but we stay on the banister.

DORIS

Excuse me, Bertha, there's another call coming in.

(beat)

Oh, hello Lauren.

PJ bolts back into view, and skips quickly down the stairs. Doris excuses herself with Bertha (IMPROVISE). She hands PJ the phone and then goes back into the kitchen.

PJ

Lauren. Guess what? His name is Fred Harrington, a hockey player. A damn good one, it appears.

(beat)

No, I didn't write Mary Ann to verify. I don't want to communicate with her any more. He lives right outside Toronto. Can you believe that?

(beat)

I'm sorry. I'm so self-centered. How was your day?

(beat)

Good. Good. And your students, how are they doing?

(beat)

Good. Anyway, that's not a far trip ...Toronto. It's about six or seven hours. We have a two day break after tomorrow's game, so I'm going up to Toronto to confront him.

(beat)

Oh. Okay. I'll slow down.

(beat)

I love you too, honey.

INT. BADGERS' LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

The Badgers enter the locker room exhausted from having just finished a game. Rogie slaps PJ on the back and ...

ROGIE

Nice game, PJ. Another hat trick.

Over to the side, Steve and Jeff are removing their shirts.

STEVE

How many is PJ behind now.

JEFF

Two, I think.

PJ comes over by his locker, and Steve and Jeff improvise their congratulations to PJ.

INT. DISTRIBUTION BUILDING - EARLY MORNING

PJ pulls into a dimly lit newspaper parking lot, exits the truck and jumps into his car.

INT. PJ'S CAR - MORNING

PJ drives alone on the dark road. The lights of the car shine on a sign on the highway: "BUFFALO 200 MILES"

JUMP CUT

The sun is coming up. PJ passes a sign: "BUFFALO 150".

JUMP CUT

PJ passes a sign: "BUFFALO 100".

JUMP CUT

PJ passes by a sign which shows a fork in the highway. One side says "BUFFALO" and the other says "NIAGARA FALLS".

JUMP OUT

EXT. TOLL BOOTH AT THE US/CANADA BORDER - DAY

PJ hands the toll ATTENDANT his Passport as he inspects PJ's car. After the inspection ...

PJ

How far is Toronto?

ATTENDANT

Ninety miles. Have a nice stay.

PJ nods and drives off.

INT. PJ'S CAR - DAY

PJ drives past a sign which says "TORONTO 5 miles". He pulls over into a parking lot of a small diner. He looks at his map. He takes a quick, deep breath and holds it a beat. He lets the air out of his lungs in a long, measured blast.

INT. A DINER OUTSIDE TORONTO - NOON

PJ enters and sits at the counter. A waitress comes over.

WAITRESS

What will you have, cowboy?

PJ

Hamburger. Well done. French fries. And I gotta have a cup of coffee, please. And I got a question. Did you ever hear of Fred Harrington?

WAITRESS

Are you kidding me? Of course. He's a celebrity around these parts. He comes in here often.

PJ

Good. I want to get his autograph.

WAITRESS

Well, he's approachable. Shouldn't have a problem getting it.

EXT. PARKING LOT DINER - DAY

PJ leaves the diner and jumps into his car and drives off.

INT. PJ'S CAR - DAY

A little later, PJ drives into a residential area - a middle class neighborhood. He alternately looks at the street signs and a piece of paper. He parks the car.

EXT. FRED HARRINGTON'S STOOP - CONTINUOUS

PJ walks up to the stoop of an average-looking house. He freezes at the door, looks at his watch which reads 1PM.

He goes to knock, but he can't do it. He leaves.

EXT. PJ'S PARKED CAR BY HARRINGTON'S HOUSE

PJ looks at his watch. It's 1:30 PM. Instead of leaving, he gets out of his car for another attempt. Just as he steps forward, FRED HARRINGTON, comes out of the house and walks down the street. PJ follows on foot.

From a distance he sees Fred give an autograph to a kid before continuing on his journey. PJ follows him and almost has to jog to keep up. As PJ gets closer, Fred makes a sharp left and heads down a side street.

PJ stops, deep breathes and whispers to himself ...

PJ  
Don't be afraid ...

PJ gets closer and closer, and suddenly Fred makes a sharp left and heads down another side street.

PJ stops, takes quick, shallow breaths and turns and heads back to his car.

INT. GALLAGHER'S LIVING ROOM - LATE NIGHT

PJ enters the house and quietly heads upstairs.

INT. PJ'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

PJ comes in and plops himself in his bed. Slowly, he closes his eyes and goes to sleep.

INT. PJ'S BEDROOM - MORNING - NEXT DAY

PJ comes into his room with a cup of coffee and heads right for his computer and begins typing.

INT. PJ'S BEDROOM - MORNING - NEXT DAY

In a time lapse photography we get the feel that he has spent hours writing and typing.

INT. GALLAGHER'S HOUSE ALCOVE AREA BY THE PHONE - NIGHT

The phone rings and the thumping noise indicates PJ is running full speed from his room, down the stairs, and to the phone before Doris has a chance to answer it.

She heads outdoors and shakes her head as she walks by PJ.

PJ

Hello.

(beat)

Oh, Lauren. Thank God it's you. I tried to call a couple of times, but you weren't in.

LAUREN (V.O.)

How did it go?

PJ looks around. He sees Doris through the window talking to a neighbor on the front lawn. PJ leans on the wall.

PJ

I ... I couldn't do it. I went. I mean, I saw him. But I couldn't confront him. People love him up there. He's a god, almost. I didn't ... I felt that ... I couldn't. What if he ...

LAUREN (V.O.)

Rejected you?

PJ

Yeah. I mean, he's in the Hockey Hall Of Fame, for crying out loud.

LAUREN (V.O.)

So, you approach him and tell him that you play hockey too.

PJ

And then what? Tell him I'm his son? There's too many kooks in this world. He wouldn't believe me.

As PJ talks, he scans the living room and notices the back of a high-back chair faces him in a position where he can't see that William is sitting in it.

Of course, William hears what PJ is saying.

INT. BADGER'S HOCKEY RINK - NIGHT

Fans were filling the stands at Badger Stadium as the pre-game hype prevails - organ playing, fans howling, etc.

INT. ANNOUNCER BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Brent switched the microphone to talk.

ANNOUNCER BRENT

Well folks, this is the Badgers' last game of the season against the Cumberland Cougars. This game doesn't hold much importance since the Badgers won their division by fifteen points, but the scoring championship is still in question.

ANNOUNCER PHIL

That's right, Brent. We still have the scoring championship in question. Malecki has sixty points and PJ is only one behind. The top two in the division standings.

ANNOUNCER BRENT

And they're tied in the goal category. They lead the league with thirty-five goals each.

ANNOUNCER PHIL

That's right, Brent. And for those viewers who don't know how the individual goal trophy is determined, if it is a tie, the player who has scored the goals in the least amount of games wins the goal trophy.

ANNOUNCER BRENT

That means, if it's tied in the goal category, when the game ends, then PJ will win the trophy because he missed four games and Malecki only missed one.

ANNOUNCER PHIL

Boy, Brent, this is going to be an exciting match.

ANNOUNCER BRENT

Me too. Especially since Malecki and Gallagher lead the league with thirty-five goals each.

ANNOUNCER PHIL

That's right. And for those viewers who don't know how the individual goal trophy is determined, if it is a tie, the player who has scored the goals in the least amount of games wins the goal trophy.

ANNOUNCER BRENT

Which means if the game ends with them tied in the goal category, then PJ will win the trophy.

ANNOUNCER PHIL

This is going to be an exciting game.

ON THE ICE

The two teams barge onto the ice to a roaring crowd.

INT. GALLAGHER'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Doris glances at the TV while she pretends to be engrossed in knitting. William is totally glued to the TV.

ON THE TV

The Cougars have the puck but Steve steals it. The Badgers cross the offensive blue line. Steve passes to PJ, but MALECKI skates in front, steals the pass, shoots, and scores just before the game-ending buzzer.

INTERCUT reaction shots of Father Felix and PJ at the rink, and William and Doris at home. We see William throwing his paper against the wall, but we end with a disappointed PJ against the backdrop of fan excitement.

INT. GALLAGHER'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Doris sits quietly eating breakfast. William reads the paper while eating. PJ walks in and Doris starts to get up.



PJ  
 Sit. I'll make he cereal myself.

PJ makes breakfast for himself.

WILLIAM  
 Steve's pass was meant for you.

PJ nods and then sits down and eats. William continues to read the paper.

PJ  
 Did Lauren call last night?

Doris shakes her head. PJ grabs part of the paper and reads.

INT. PJ'S BEDROOM - EARLY EVENING

PJ is writing when the phone rings. He bolts from his chair.

INT. GALLAGHER'S LIVING ROOM

Doris answers the phone. PJ races down the stairs and falls the last few steps. He lays at the bottom steps not far from Doris. He moans while testing his neck and shoulders.

DORIS  
 (into the phone)  
 Hi, Lauren. He's right here. Come home as soon as you can. He can't seem to walk without you around.

Doris stretches the phone to PJ who takes it lying down and improvises the conversation as Doris goes into the kitchen.

KITCHEN

Doris enters. William sits at the table reading the paper and drinking coffee.

DORIS  
 I wish they would get married already.

WILLIAM  
 Today's joke ... How do you get a sweet little eighty-year-old lady to say the 'F' word.  
 (waits a beat)  
 (MORE)

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
Get another sweet little eighty-  
year-old lady to yell, 'BINGO'.

INT. BADGER'S HOCKEY RINK - LOCKER ROOM

As people fill the stadium, and as Announcer Brent looks through the glass partition in the press box --

ANNOUNCER BRENT (O.S.)  
Wow. Look at this, Phil. I've never  
seen so many painted faces.

We see close-ups of the painted bodies and faces as they take their seats.

LATER

The championship season begins with the opening game face-off.

IN. CONVENIENCE STORE SOMEWHERE IN TOWN

PJ pulls up in his truck and unloads a bundle and throws it by the convenience store door. The lead story of the top paper in the bundle reads: BADGERS WIN FIRST ROUND PLAYOFF. SWEEP SERIES.

INT. UNIDENTIFIED RINK - NEXT SERIES

Malecki and PJ show their skating skills in an unmatched duel down the ice. They skate brilliantly: first one way and Malecki scores, then in another period they go the other way and PJ scores.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE SOMEWHERE IN TOWN

At work, PJ drops off another bundle of papers where the lead story reads: BADGERS WIN SECOND ROUND.

INT. GALLAGHER'S UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - MORNING

William finishes brushing his teeth and walks out of the bathroom. He sees PJ's bedroom door open and goes in and looks around. Just as he is about to leave, he notices a folder stuffed under a magazine.

He picks it up and looks inside the folder. It's PJ's manuscript and William begins reading.

INT. GALLAGHER'S GARAGE - DAY

The Gazette newspaper lies on the work bench while William fixes a chair. The newspaper lies face up exposing the headline which reads:

INSERT headline: OPUS AWARD DEADLINE.

BACK TO SCENE

William comes into the kitchen from the garage. He pours himself a cup of coffee and sits. PJ enters with and hands the letter to William.

PJ  
What's this, pray tell?

WILLIAM  
(reading)  
You're a finalist! That's great.

PJ  
A finalist in what?

WILLIAM  
Oh, yeah. I have a confession.

PJ  
I'm listening.

WILLIAM  
There's no way to say this, except except that I was snooping in your room. I found your manuscript and sent it in to the OPUS competition for you.

PJ  
Excuse me. You did what?

WILLIAM  
I copied it and I put the original back. I didn't steal it.

PJ left the kitchen and walked straight for the front door. William followed him.

PJ  
You had no right to invade my  
privacy like that.

WILLIAM  
Guilty.

PJ walked out of the house and William followed him to the  
outside porch and stopped while PJ heads to his car.

PJ  
You had no right to submit my book  
without my permission.

WILLIAM  
I'm guilty of that, too.

PJ  
And you had no right to change what  
I wrote to 'make it better'.

As PJ gets into the car --

WILLIAM  
I didn't change a single word.

PJ gets out of his car and goes right up to William and faces  
him, nose to nose. He then unclenches his fists and softens.

PJ  
You didn't change a word?

WILLIAM  
Not a word. You're a good writer,  
PJ. I couldn't do that to you. This  
OPUS Award is a prestigious  
contest. I tried to win it myself  
one year, but I wasn't good enough.

And with that, PJ changes his demeanor. His face shows an  
element of understanding.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
What's the matter.

After a long pause, PJ finally responds.

PJ  
I think I realize what you are  
trying to say, dad.  
(MORE)

PJ (CONT'D)

I've put you through a lot of headaches, haven't I? Some spirit has taken over my body, and I think I finally realize the sacrifices you have made over the years, including absorbing this 'faux pas' when it's not really a mistake. It was more of a loving gesture. You didn't do it out of spite, or anger or for an ego trip. You did it out of love and the knowledge that I am a good writer.

He walks up to his father and hesitates for a brief second.

PJ

You're a good father. Thanks for having my back.

PJ hugs him like he was never going to see him again, then goes to his car and leaves.

INT. BADGER'S HOCKEY RINK - LATER

The excited fans pack into the arena. The Gallagher family take their seats.

The Badgers burst onto the ice to the howling frenzy of the fans. The Gators take the ice to the scoffing boos.

As the national anthem plays, the crowd, the players and announcers give reverence to the flag.

The anthem ends and the Referee blows the whistle for the game to start.

Players scurry to the bench while the first lines for both teams stay on the ice and ready themselves for the face-off.

The game begins.

INT. GALLAGHER'S KITCHEN - BREAKFAST - NEXT DAY

Doris is cutting coupons from the paper. William sits at the table reading the paper.

DORIS

I have to go shopping. We have nothing in the house.

WILLIAM

Wow! Nice coverage of the Badgers winning their the first game of the championship series.

DORIS

Dear, God. I do hope there's hockey in heaven. For my family's sake.

WILLIAM

I'm thinking about going up to Toronto today and make a visit to that Fred Harrington character.

Doris leans into William real close.

DORIS

You're going to do no such thing. You've done some stupid things in your life, but interfering with your son's life like that ... that would take the cake.

William holds up his hand and ...

WILLIAM

Okay. Okay.

As Doris leaves ...

DORIS

Don't. I mean it, William.

SUPER: GAME SIX WITH GREENBURG

INT. BADGER RINK - DAY

The top of the scoreboard reads CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES, game 6, and in the middle of the board it reads HOME 3 AWAY 3.

PJ gets checked hard and falls. Malecki gets the puck and he races down the ice. He shoots and scores. The buzzer sounds.

NT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NEXT DAY

PJ is watching TV from a bed. The announcer IMPROCVISES the Badgers win over Greensburg as the doctor walks in.

DOCTOR

No concussion. your jaw is just bruised. But I'm going to repeat what I said the last time we talked. Hang up the skates, PJ, or something very bad will happen.

PJ gathers his jacket and before leaving he looks the doctor in the eye.

PJ

No offense, Doc, but you got to be out of your mind if you think I'm going to miss game seven of a championship series.

He tries one more time as he puts on his jacket.

PJ

I live in a Pittsburgh town, doc. I'd never be able to live it down.

INT. BADGER'S LOCKER ROOM - EARLY EVENING

A newspaper reporter is in one corner of the locker room interviewing Malecki. Not far away, PJ is being interviewed by Dave Hansen, the Gazette reporter from an earlier scene.

DAVE

Is there a hex on the Badgers, PJ. Some people say ... you can't win the big game.

PJ

I gotta get ready, Dave.

Dave leaves, and so does the other newsman.

ON MALECKI

While getting dressed he yells out,

MALECKI

Penguin scout's in the stands. I'll show him things he hasn't seen.

ON PJ

He notices a dangling chain in his locker. He looks closer and sees it's the Tau Cross. He removes the cross and puts it around his neck.

He kisses the cross and sticks it in his shirt, and looks around for its donor. No one's looking back except Malecki.

ON MALECKI

He saw PJ give reverence to the chain and just smirks. Mission accomplished.

INT. BADGER'S HOCKEY RINK

PJ is announced and he jumps onto the ice from the runway. He skates and waves to the roaring fans.

JUMP CUT to the end of the National Anthem, the crowd roars.

ANNOUNCER PHIL

This is it, Brent. The whole season coming down to this game.

ON THE ICE

Announcer BRENT improvises the play-by-play action (O.S.) as two opposing players face-off. The game begins.

Malecki skates brilliantly, makes a good pass, takes the puck back and scores. The reaction shots of the Gallaghers give us rare footage of them approving of Malecki.

LATER

PJ skates brilliantly, avoids a check, then shoots the puck over to Steve and he scores.

The following series is to be mingled with reaction shots of the Announcers, the crowd, PJ's family, and the scout.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1) Greensburg scores
- 2) Malecki scores



- 3) Greensburg scores
- 4) PJ scores
- 5) Greensburg scores
- 6) Malecki assists in a score
- 7) Greensburg scores
- 9) PJ assists in a score
- 10) Greensburg scores and the scoreboard shows the game is tied at six apiece.

END SERIES OR JUMP OUT TO:

Coach Thomas is intently observing the game. He taps Badger player on the shoulder who is sitting on the bench.

COACH THOMAS

Switch.

Three linesmen take the ice as three forwards come off.

ON PJ

who sits on the bench and looks up at the clock. Less than two minutes to go in the final period.

ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH

ANNOUNCER BRENT

Can you believe this, Phil. Malecki and PJ both have a hat trick going for them. I swear, I've never seen this kind of play by two players on the same team. Even if Greensburg wins, one of these men deserve the MVP for this series.

ANNOUNCER PHIL

Brent, the MVP for the final series has never been given to anyone on the losing side.

## ANNOUNCER BRENT

Doesn't mean it can't happen. And I don't need to remind anyone, the Badgers haven't lost. It's a tied game and anything can happen.

## BACK ON THE ICE

With two minutes left, the checking gets particularly nasty. Jeff gets checked and falls hard. No penalty is called, but he gets up very slow.

## COACH THOMAS

Goes over to PJ and taps him on the shoulder. Jeff comes in as PJ jumps on the ice.

## ON THE ICE

Malecki, at Center, and PJ, at Right Wing, skate defensively to try and get the puck back. Greensburg shoots and misses.

Greensburg gets the puck back and tries to pass the puck around, stalling, waiting for an end-game shot. The clock reads 30 seconds left and counting.

Rogie sneaks from behind one of the Greensburg players and knocks the puck loose. Malecki retrieves it and the ambient sound softens. We can hear only breathing during the following Montage.

## MONTAGE - TO GENERATE THE EXCITEMENT OF THE MOMENT

-- Malecki stands alone, motionless. At first he's not confronted by opposing players. He scouts the entire rink with one look. His eyes meet PJ's. Malecki nods and ...

-- PJ nods back, and we just know that the two men are about to bury their differences and enter into hockey glory.

-- The roar of the crowd is still muted as Malecki takes off with the puck between opposing players. He passes to PJ starting a sequence of passes that show skating and passing skill rarely found even in the big leagues.

-- PJ and Malecki pass the puck back and forth, faking out the Gators' defense and delighting the crowd. But we only hear their breathing and sounds of steel slashing the ice.

-- With the final, unselfish pass (assist) from Malecki, PJ shoots the puck into the net with one second left and scores.

END OF MONTAGE

The buzzer sounds for the end of the game just as the ambient noise goes back to normal. The announcers improvise their cheer, and Malecki must yell above the noise for PJ to hear.

MALECKI

That was the greatest skating I've ever seen in my life, PJ.

Malecki holds up his hand. They high-five each other.

PJ

Besides yours, of course.

MALECKI

Naturally.

PJ points his index finger to the heavens (to God). He takes out his Tau Cross and kisses it. He looks in the stands for Father Felix and finds him. He raises his hand in victory.

PJ loses balance and falls as he is mobbed by his teammates.

INT. BADGER'S HOCKEY RINK LOCKERROOM - LATER

The Championship Cup sits on the table for all to see. Next to the cup is a Most Valuable Player award. Upon closer inspection of the award, we see PJ's name on it.

Coach Thomas comes out of the office to a celebrating team.

COACH THOMAS

Gallagher. Front and center.

ON PJ AND STEVE

STEVE

A Penguin Scout is in his office. This is it, PJ. You're moving up.

PJ

Your mouth to God's ear.

INT. COACH THOMAS'S OFFICE

The Scout stands as soon as PJ enters.

COACH THOMAS

PJ, this is George Gately. He's one of the Penguin scouts.

George holds out his hand and PJ grabs it and they both improvise cordial greetings, and then they both sit.

GEORGE

PJ, a decision was made before this game to take certain actions to streamline the organization. We knew that we had a great minor league player in you. There's no doubt in my mind that you'll be in the minor league hall of fame.

PJ

You're cutting me, aren't you?

Gately looks at Coach Thomas, then back at PJ.

GEORGE

PJ, it's a proven statistic that once a player has more than one concussion, he represents a high medical risk. Hospital costs are enormous and represent a large part of our budget. If we are not prudent in our decisions ...

COACH THOMAS

And you're not getting any younger, PJ. You're cut, and that's that.

PJ gets up and holds out his hand to George. They shake.

GEORGE

We're not going to make the announcement for another month. So, if you choose to retire and avoid the embarrassment ...

PJ

Oh! Yeah? Embarrassment for who, Mr. Gately?

(MORE)

PJ (CONT'D)

I won the scoring race and I was the MVP in the champion series and the Penguins cut me? Are you sure you're not trying to avoid embarrassing yourself?

PJ heads for the door.

GEORGE

I can make a couple of phone calls. The league always has coaching needs.

PJ

I may take you up on that, Mr. Gately. But ... no for now.

After PJ leaves, George lets out with a heavy sigh.

GEORGE

We made a mistake a couple of years ago by not bringing him up. We just had too many forwards.

(pause)

Bring in Malecki. We're not going to make the same mistake with him.

INT. GALLAGHER'S LIVING ROOM - NEXT DAY

The MVP trophy sits on the mantle piece in the living room. PJ is talking on the phone with Lauren.

LAUREN (V.O.)

Two days. I'll be home in two days.

PJ

Oh, thank, God. It's been a long wait, honey.

LAUREN (V.O.)

I missed you more than you know.

There's a knock on the door. And PJ improvises his goodbyes with Lauren and answers the door.

MAILMAN

Please sign.

PJ takes the letter from the mailman and signs the register. As the mailman walks away, PJ opens he letter and reads it.

INT. GALLAGHER'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

William comes into the kitchen from the garage. He pours himself a cup of coffee just as PJ enters.

PJ  
I won the OPUS award.

END OF PJ'S LONG DAYDREAM AT THE OPUS CEREMONY

INT. ELEGANT RECEPTION HALL - NIGHT

We come back to the scene of PJ at the OPUS award ceremony.

MC  
This man is not a writer by trade.  
Normally, our winner is a wanna-be  
novelist or journalist ... or a  
screenwriter, maybe.  
(waits for silence)  
This year a hockey player has won  
the OPUS Award. Won't you welcome,  
Patrick J. Gallagher.

In the first scene we couldn't see who was with PJ but now,  
as we pull back, and as PJ rises from his seat, we see Doris,  
William, Tom, Phil, Father Felix and Lauren.

PJ tucks his Tao Cross in his shirt while accepting pats on  
the back from his family. He accepts a peck on the cheek from  
Doris and Lauren, and then he walks up to the podium.

AT THE TABLE

William seems a little nervous as he alternately looks at his  
watch and the back door. At the end of his double takes, Fred  
Harrington enters from the back of the room.

ON FRED

Fred finds a seat. He spots William and they nod.

ON PJ

PJ stands at the podium and waits for the applause to  
subside. He sees Fred, then looks at William.

ON WILLIAM

William just shrugs his shoulders. He is busted for meddling.

ON PJ

He breaks out in a broad smile. He improvises his thanks and waits for the laughter and noise to subside.

PJ

I can appreciate what Mr. Townsend just said. I'm a hockey player, not a writer. But I wrote this story using the same single tool as I used to play hockey. Passion. I had passion for pushing a puck up and down the ice. Odd when you think about it. I mean, I love hockey more than anything. I loved the joy of skating and the competition. I also had a passion for finding out who I am, and while writing the story, my story, I found out some very interesting things.

As PJ speaks in the present, we watch him and his loved ones as they WILL BE in the future. A home movie camera catches this moment.

EXT. A FROZEN POND - SOMETIME IN THE FUTURE - DAY

At the present, we don't know who is operating the camera. Nevertheless, we catch a glimpse through the camera lens of PJ and Lauren skating on a frozen pond. While Lauren skates after PJ, the present-day PJ talks at the podium.

PJ (V.O.)

My adopted parents did a great job making me feel like I was special. They told me they chose me from a hundred babies. In that sense I was special, I guess. But this idea of trying to find out who I am came late in life. Maybe it was a mid-life crises. I don't know. I told people I wanted to prove to my birth parents that they made a mistake in letting me go by becoming successful in hockey.

(MORE)

PJ (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I paid so much attention to the sport all my life, I didn't know what else I could do. I was afraid of committing to a beautiful woman who I loved. I was afraid of the failures that awaited me beyond hockey. I was filled with fear as I searched for my birth-parents and I found out a few things on the way.

Through the lens, Lauren catches PJ and they hug. They turn and wave to the camera.

PJ (V.O.)

I found out that I was in love. Deeply in love. And there was no need to be afraid of commitment. My heart loved unconditionally, and what a wonderful endorphin that is.

PJ and Lauren look beyond the camera and point. The camera turns. We see Doris who is sitting on a bench helping a small boy skate. The boy falls while hanging onto Doris' hand.

PJ (V.O.)

I knew I would adopt a child. If Lauren and I can have children, we will, of course. But our first one will be that very special child who might need to be reassured a little bit more than other children. We will say that we have selected him or her above hundreds of other children because there was some god-like voice that said 'This is the one. This is the one.'

William skates into view with two hockey sticks. He puts the sticks down next to the bench and waves to the camera. He takes a seat next to Doris.

The boy falls again and William picks him up and puts him back on his feet. The boy then skates over to Lauren. The camera stays on Doris and William.

PJ (V.O.)

Something else I realized while writing this story was how superficial my wants were and how important my parents were to me.

(MORE)



PJ (V.O.) (CONT'D)

My adopted-parents sacrificed a lot to see me where I am today. I am so thankful to them for the person I am, for the new life I'm going to lead. God has been good to me.

William gets up with the two hockey sticks and approaches the camera.

He holds out his free hand to take the camera, and we catch flashing glimpses of the sky, the ground, the park, and then the camera focuses on Fred Harrington who now has the two hockey sticks in his hands and is skating towards PJ.

Fred hands one stick to PJ and they fake a face-off followed by mock play of chasing after the imaginary puck.

The camera moves to the right and all of sudden Father Felix appears reaching into the camera.

There is a series of jittery moves and then William appears in the frame who gets into the fray by chasing PJ and checking him. They both go falling in the snow.

Fred skates by them, and William and PJ get up and chase after Fred.

PJ (V.O.)

I am so looking forward to the new adventures that lay before me and the new people who will come into my life. I am so grateful and thank God a thousand times for the people who believed in me when I doubted myself, and for those who stood by me when I had a hard time getting up. And if I may paraphrase Oscar Wilde and add a word or two of my own: "Children begin by loving their parents; as they grow older they judge them; and when they become parents themselves, they forgive them." I thank you all for this honor, and I thank my parents for the inspiration that helped me achieve it.

FADE OUT:

THE END