

LOGLINE for *Living Proof*, (based on a true story, J. Gaughan), screenplay by R. Gately
Adopted at infancy, a professional minor league ice hockey player searches for his biological parents during a championship season where his dream of playing for the Pittsburgh Penguins hangs on a thread and a prayer, but his quest to find his birth parents is more disruptive than expected and he finds himself more on a journey of enlightenment than discovery.

SYNOPSIS for *Living Proof*, (based on a true story, J. Gaughan), screenplay by R. Gately
While listening to the introductions at the Opus Writing Award ceremony, PJ Galagher sits in the audience and muses over his life. This nostalgic ‘time out’ takes us on a journey where PJ is the captain of his minor league hockey team. He excels during the championship series. In game seven the opposing coach, Charles Petzinger, instructs his star player, Malecki, to take PJ out of action. A malicious check sends PJ to the hospital with a concussion and a broken jaw. Another championship lost; another season not being brought up to the Pittsburgh Penguin’s camp. And now the doctor wants PJ to quit playing hockey altogether, and so do his parents.

PJ has always loved his adopted mother and father and finding his birth-parents never interested him. But with the recent injury and hockey failure, he suddenly wants to seek out his roots. He wants to tell his birth parents they made a mistake in giving him up for adoption. The problem is, he has no idea who they are and William, his caring adopted father, appears hurt and angry over PJ’s sudden interest in his bloodlines. Still, PJ begins his investigation during a crucial season where his team hires Petzinger as the new coach and Malecki as the new captain of the team.

PJ soon finds himself competing with his nemeses, Malecki, and is relegated to second line. His insecurities mount, further increasing his desire to know why his blood parents didn’t want him. He begins to write his story secretly, and shares his memoirs only with his fiancée, a teacher who will travel to France for several months. When she returns she wants PJ to make a commitment of marriage, an act he’s not willing to do until they are financially settled. The pressures mount.

While PJ and Malecki battle for the scoring championship, he finds out the identity of his blood mother – a callous person whose only desire is to be left alone. His birth father, a Canadian Hall-Of-Fame hockey player, never knew he had a son. Afraid of rejection, PJ does not confront him. Instead, he becomes more committed than ever to play hockey and become an NHL player - his only measure of success in life. Once more the critical championship series arrives. This time PJ is the series hero, but the Penguins cut him anyway for medical reasons. Too many concussions. Too many hospital bills. Too old, perhaps.

We end the story where we began – at the Opus Award Ceremony. William found a copy of PJ’s memoirs and secretly entered it into the contest. It won and as PJ talks at the podium about his story, Fred Harrington, his birth-father, walks in – an arrangement William made on the sly.

As we listen to PJ’s Voice Over from the award ceremony, we visually jump several years in the future. We watch through a video camera and see PJ and his adopted son skating on a pond. Our hero finally realizes he is who he is, not because of his DNA, but because of the love and hard work of his *adopted* parents. He is one of the luckiest men alive to be loved by a woman like Lauren who skates into the frame and offers a kiss and a hug. As PJ talks about the new life and relationships, Fred and William pan into view. They frolic on the ice with hockey sticks and a puck ... a little awkward from age, perhaps, but genuinely having fun. At last, PJ finds peace.