

THE OLYMPIAN

Written by

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Based on Assault on Lake Casitas by Brad Alan Lewis

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FADE IN:

EXT. ACCESS ROAD NEAR A LAKE - NIGHT

A shitty 1970s ECONOLINE VAN comes to a stop. The sound of the Sex Pistols' "Sub-Mission" explodes on the cheap speakers. Then cuts silent. The door opens and BRAD LEWIS (29) steps out. He's muscular and shaggy haired, in a tattered t-shirt, ratty jeans, and flip-flops.

But what makes Brad Lewis unmistakable are his EYES. They gleam with deranged obsessiveness. Brad steps out and walks around to the back of the van.

As he walks, he SLAPS HIMSELF in the face. He keeps walking. Another SLAP.

He climbs onto the rear fender of the van. On top of the van, a blue tarp covers something. Brad yanks off the tarp, revealing a long, sleek RACING SCULL and a couple of OARS.

EXT. CHAIN LINK FENCE NEAR A LAKE - MINUTES LATER

Brad carries the scull and oars through sparse woods. He makes his way to a tall chain link fence topped with barbed wire.

Brad takes out a pair of wire-cutters. A quick glance around, then he starts cutting at the fence. Above his head, a sign: NO TRESPASSING.

EXT. LAKE CASITAS - HOURS LATER

Brad's t-shirt, jeans, and flip-flops are scattered lakeside. With the wire-cutters.

Brad's scull glides across the water. From a distance, it's impressive. Graceful. Nearly serene.

But in closer, the picture changes. Brad rows with maniacal energy. In his underwear. He breathes and spits and grunts. His oars cut into the water. Nothing graceful here. Just brute and animalistic.

Brad's HANDS are raw and blistered. His gnarled, calloused FEET are in the shell's shoes, which are bolted onto footboards.

He grunts and rows. Grunts and rows. Then Brad turns his head and PUKEs into the water. Without skipping a beat.

Feeling the adrenaline, Brad emits a crazed LAUGH and keeps grinding. His shell speeds out of frame. Linger on a SIGN:

**LAKE CASITAS
FUTURE SITE OF THE
1984 LOS ANGELES OLYMPIC
ROWING COMPETITION**

EXT. DAVID LEWIS' HOME - NIGHT

Brad gets out of his parked Econoline, sweat-soaked and exhausted. He heads toward a modest HOUSE.

INT. DAVID LEWIS' HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Brad walks in. On the TV, "Rowdy" Roddy Piper is beating the shit out of Jimmy "Superfly" Snuka with a coconut. A few empty beer cans near a Lay-Z-Boy recliner. But no one here.

Brad heads into the small kitchen. His father, DAVID LEWIS (50s, thickening but formidable), stands at the counter drinking a beer and eating a TV dinner. David is wearing work clothes. Years of hard labor have dampened most of the fire in his eyes.

BRAD

Put in three hours tonight. Beat John Biglow's best by four seconds.

Brad gets himself a beer from the fridge and studies his father, looking for a response. None arrives.

BRAD (CONT'D)

Trying to quicken my release.
Develop that extra gear. I found it. I think. With the extra work I'm putting in....I better've fucking found it...

His father keeps eating his TV dinner. Finally--

DAVID

If you'd found it, you'd know.

Brad absorbs this. He turns and heads downstairs.

INT. BRAD'S BASEMENT ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Brad enters a basement that's been converted into a studio apartment. A single mattress on the floor. An American flag on the wall. EXERCISE EQUIPMENT.

Barbells, a stationary bike, pull-up bar. Some HOLES in the walls. Angry, fist-induced holes. But mostly, the walls are covered with photographs. OTHER ROWERS. And their race times.

Brad steps up to the wall of rowers. He X's out JOHN BIGLOW's face and race time. He writes his own time underneath it. Four seconds faster.

Brad drinks his beer and takes in the board of rowers. Just a few don't have their faces X'd out. TIFF WOOD. DAN LOUIS. BILL PURDY. (We'll meet these rowers later.) Brad downs the rest of his beer, eyeing his competition.

He tosses his empty can aside and steps up to a stack of WOODEN BOXES, about waist-high.

BRAD
(to himself)
One.

He leaps up onto the boxes, then hops off.

BRAD (CONT'D)
Two.

Another leap.

BRAD (CONT'D)
Three.

Another.

BRAD (CONT'D)
Four.

INT. BRAD'S BASEMENT ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Digital clock: 4:29 am. Brad wakes up. Takes a breath.

He rolls out of bed and hits the floor. He immediately begins doing V-ups: sit-ups where the torso and legs are raised together. He's a well-tuned, high-powered engine. No wasted movements.

The clock hits 4:30. ALARM rings. Brad hits the apex of a V-up, turns off the alarm. And keeps going. All in one motion.

EXT. OCEAN AROUND LIDO ISLE - EARLY MORNING

Brad races against DAN LOUIS, one of the un-X'd rowers. Dan's a little bigger, a little younger than Brad.

They row around LIDO ISLE, a man-made residential island near Newport Beach, CA.

Dan is strong and clean in his technique. Brad is sheer unrelenting fury. They charge across the choppy water between SAILBOATS and motorized LAUNCH BOATS.

They stop rowing, finishing neck-and-neck. Now their entire bodies are aflame from oxygen deprivation and lactic burning. They breathe like men saved from drowning, suddenly desperate for air.

DAN LOUIS

Another round?

BRAD

Gotta get to work.

(beat)

You're picking up speed. It's
pissing me off.

DAN LOUIS

Four hours on the water, four in
the gym. Ten hours sleep. Every
day.

BRAD

No job?

DAN LOUIS

Family's funding my training. Time
away from my dad's firm. A condo
over by the boathouse. My
nutritionist and personal
trainer...

BRAD

I bet it's very humbling.

DAN LOUIS

It is. I--

BRAD

Know what? I think I've got time
for one more.

Brad spits into the water and grips his oars.

EXT. ROOF - DAY

The very tan, very buff MITCH (29) is on a battered old roof with a hammer, pulling shingles in the afternoon heat.

He's built like a bodybuilder but carries himself with the air of a spiritualist.

BRAD

Are we supposed to patch this thing up? Or give it an exorcism?

Mitch glances over to see that Brad -- wearing a roofer's belt -- has stepped onto the roof from a ladder. Brad's taking in the roof's curdled shingles.

MITCH

(re: roof)

Pretty bad case of blackberries, huh? Uplift in the front as well. They should have us just rip the whole thing off and build a new one.

Brad falls into work, pulling shingles.

BRAD

So why don't they?

MITCH

Because Californians are born optimists. Probably due to our access to both sun and ocean energies.

BRAD

Yeah. Probably.

As Mitch rips off a couple more shingles...

MITCH

You may think my spiritual path is a joke. But I happen to believe--

Mitch turns his head to finish his point, but he sees: Brad's doing push-ups on the roof.

MITCH (CONT'D)

That's a new one.

Brad keeps doing the push-ups as they talk.

BRAD

The princesses I'm competing against have personal trainers and nutritionists and private lakes.

MITCH

And this is your response?

BRAD

Fifty every hour. Gotta match their gains.

MITCH

Good luck with that.

BRAD

Well, you won't let me use your gym.

MITCH

It's not my gym. I just train my clients there.

BRAD

Both of them?

Mitch gives Brad a look. Brad pauses his push-ups and takes in his super-buff best friend.

BRAD (CONT'D)

Too dickish. Got it.

Brad resumes push-ups.

BRAD (CONT'D)

You should sneak me into the gym anyway. It'd be patriotic.

MITCH

Okay. I will.

BRAD

Seriously?

MITCH

But at night. After hours.

BRAD

Let me guess. Night's the optimal aura training period.

MITCH

No. I like the owners and I don't want to be the guy who unleashes his nutjob buddy on an innocent populace.

Brad gives Mitch a look.

BRAD

Yeah, I guess that makes sense.

Brad does one more push-up, then returns to work.

INT. TAP ROOM - EVENING

Brad enters after work and takes a seat at the bar. Exhausted. Behind the bar, PAMELA CRUZ (late 20s) has her back turned. She's writing in the margins of a dog-eared paperback of the great French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss' *The Savage Mind*.

BRAD

So, professor, what's the latest gossip from 18th century Bora Bora?

Pam smiles a bit to herself, hearing his voice.

PAM

You know, it's almost cute when you pretend to be curious about something other than rowing.

BRAD

Is "cute" supposed to be a compliment or an insult?

PAM

Both. And I said "almost."

She pours a draft. Brings it over.

PAM (CONT'D)

And you don't get to call me professor for another six months.

She gives him a kiss.

PAM (CONT'D)

Why haven't you called me?

BRAD

I don't know. I suppose I'm a little pre-occupied right now.

PAM

Preoccupied. I would go with "monomaniacal."

Brad gives her a look. Huh?

PAM (CONT'D)

A pathological obsession with just one thing. Like Ahab and his whale.

Brad's look doesn't change.

PAM (CONT'D)
You've read Moby Dick, right?

BRAD
Is it about rowing?

PAM
No.

BRAD
Then no, I haven't read it.

Pam can't tell: Is he serious? Or just fucking with her? She goes to pour a draft for other DRINKERS. She looks over at Brad, then returns to his spot. Leans in.

PAM
I get it, you know. You're
training. You should be obsessed.
I'm not going to get in the way of
that.

BRAD
No, but you still want something.

PAM
Yes. I want to help you. Asshole.
Which is why I think you should
quit your job with Mitch and move
in with me.

BRAD
Because things are going so well
right now.

PAM
Because it's a competitive
disadvantage for you to hold down a
job while training.

BRAD
So I should move in with you.

PAM
I can pay rent and groceries. You
can train.

BRAD
Sure. We can also stay up watching
romantic comedies--

PAM

Don't treat me like an obstacle.

BRAD

Maybe start a family between rows.

PAM

Or a fucking distraction.

Brad takes a moment.

BRAD

"First the Olympics, then us." That was the agreement.

PAM

You know, you're kind of being a chicken shit about this.

BRAD

Whoa. Hold your fucking horses--

PAM

Pushing everyone away from you.

BRAD

The Olympics are six months away. I'm a single sculler. Of course I'm pushing everyone away. That's not being chicken shit. That's sound pragmatic decision-making.

PAM

So it's you against the world.

BRAD

Yes, me against the world.

PAM

Why not us against the world?

BRAD

Because this isn't a fucking romance novel.

PAM

Really? You had me so convinced...

BRAD

Every person who depends on you makes you weaker. And every person who you depend on will let you down.

PAM

So you think turning into your father is the answer.

BRAD

He's not wrong. Other people mean compromise. Compromise means losing. I'm 29. This is my last shot at the Olympics.

PAM

Okay. So if you won't move in with me, trust me, or depend on me, can you manage one favor?

BRAD

What?

PAM

Can you try not being so on edge all the time? It's exhausting.

BRAD

No way. I gotta keep my edge.

PAM

Goddamnit. I was trying to resolve the argument with a little fucking dignity.

BRAD

I know.

PAM

So why'd you answer me like an asshole?

BRAD

Because assholes win.

PAM

Sure. And then they die alone.

Pam turns to get more drinks for customers. Brad watches her. When she walks by on her way to another customer--

BRAD

I got us a table at that Italian restaurant you've been talking about.

PAM

Now you're just being cruel.

Pam hands a beer to a CUSTOMER. Walks past Brad again.

BRAD

Friday night. 6:30. You could wear
that new blue dress of yours.

PAM

If you're fucking with me--

BRAD

I've been thinking. You could use a
distraction.

PAM

(skeptical)

I could? From what?

BRAD

Realizing that you could do much
better than me.

Pam looks at him, still skeptical.

INT. SMALL GYM - NIGHT

Brad does heavy squats in the empty gym, after hours. BARKS
as he does them. Mitch spots him.

MITCH

Two more reps. Match my breathing.

Brad's eyes are wild.

BRAD

Fuck your breathing. Three more
reps.

Another BARK. Brad squats down, stays a beat, then grits and
grunts his way back up to standing.

BRAD (CONT'D)

One.

Another loud BARK and Brad squats down again. Stays there.

MITCH

You're not gonna make three. Maybe
not even two. Spot?

BRAD

I'm making three.

Finally, Brad lifts himself back up, grunting and growling. He barely makes it. Catching his breath--

BRAD (CONT'D)
Two. And this, right now, is
fucking three.

Brad barks, then squats down. Tries to stand back up. But stays there.

MITCH
Spot?

Brad shakes his head. His face is going red. He's struggling to even keep his footing.

MITCH (CONT'D)
With your frame and mass, you
should be stronger. But your aura's
getting in the way. You're tense.
Insular. It's blocking your flow.
(beat)
Now?

Brad nods. Mitch helps him back up. Brad catches his breath.

MITCH (CONT'D)
So what happened to three?

BRAD
Man, I'm doing the best I can under
the circumstances.

MITCH
Yeah, I heard they give away gold
medals for that.

BRAD
Fuck you.

Brad comes out from under the weights. Recovers and catches his breath.

MITCH
You can't keep trying to match your
competition's gains with less time,
less money, and a worse attitude.

BRAD
What else can I do?

Mitch heads over to a corner of the gym.

MITCH

You can get out of your comfort zone and innovate.

Mitch heads through a doorway. Brad follows, reluctantly...

INT. MASSAGE ROOM, GYM - CONTINUOUS

Brad steps into a small side room. There's a massage table, some candles. New age music. Brad takes it in.

BRAD

What's this? The room where you fuck me?

MITCH

It's the room where I unfuck you. Beginning with your aura.

Brad looks skeptically at Mitch, who grows more excited the more he proposes his new age training ideas.

MITCH (CONT'D)

This is going to be your edge. Holistic training. It's the next evolution. It's...it's how I'm going to build up my clientele and open my own gym.

Brad takes in his best friend, knowing his long-nursed dream.

BRAD

Man, I just need to get stronger so I can make my boat go faster. That's it. It's not exactly rocket science.

MITCH

You're right. Rowing requires maximized synchronicity between the mind, body, and spirit, all firing together at strategic intervals. So, holistically speaking, rowing is actually more complicated than rocket science. It's time that your training reflected that. Beginning with aura massage.

BRAD

What the fuck is "aura massage"?

MITCH

Aura massage is the practice of channeling and balancing the healing properties of one's aura.

BRAD

Ah. So it's basically using the Force.

MITCH

It's the future. The massage table is ready. Let's get to work.

Brad looks at Mitch. In spite of his dickish tendencies, Brad recognizes his friend's vulnerability. But still...

BRAD

Maybe next time. It's getting late and I gotta work on my cardio.

Brad exits, leaving a disappointed Mitch.

EXT. SIDE STREET - NIGHT

Brad runs, walkman blaring. He's nearly sprinting.

EXT. DAVID LEWIS' HOME - NIGHT

Brad runs up to his father's house. He sees his glassy-eyed father sitting out on the porch in his work clothes, drinking. Brad takes his earphones off. Approaches.

BRAD

You're still up?

DAVID

Do you remember Terrence Daniel?

BRAD

Yeah, of course. We rowed the double my sophomore year.

DAVID

I saw him today. Married. Three kids. Real estate lawyer. Do you know what Terrence said the best moment of his rowing career was?

BRAD

Pac Ten semis, probably.

DAVID

It was when he quit rowing and started living his fucking life.

BRAD

What are you talking about?

DAVID

It's time to get a real job. Move out of this shithole. Start a family.

BRAD

After the games. This is my year.

DAVID

No, son. It's not. You're not going to be an Olympian.

BRAD

Like hell I'm not. I've been training for the last twelve fucking years.

DAVID

Twelve years. And you're still not even a part of the discussion.

BRAD

I'm not. Says who?

DAVID

Says the coach of the Olympic rowing team.

David goes inside, leaving Brad alone in front of the house. Brad looks at the doorway his father just disappeared into. What the fuck is he talking about?

INT. BRAD'S BASEMENT ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Brad enters his basement room. On his bed sits the sports section of a NEWSPAPER, laid out by his father. Brad picks it up. There's a picture of COACH HARRY PARKER (50) and a headline about the legendary rowing coach giving a talk at UCLA. Brad looks over the story, increasingly angered.

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Pam's in her blue dress, deeply enjoying her plate.

PAM

You have to try this ravioli. It's like eating a dream wrapped inside an orgasm inside a dream.

She takes a bite, savoring.

PAM (CONT'D)

Except maybe creamier. Here, try.

She scoops some of the pasta onto her fork and looks up at Brad. She sees that he has his fork gripped in his fist and is poking at his plate.

PAM (CONT'D)

You're stabbing your tortellini. So what'd he say?

BRAD

Huh?

PAM

Your dinner. You're stabbing at it. Which means your father must've said something particularly shitty. What was it?

BRAD

No. He didn't say anything out of the ordinary.

PAM

So just the usual shitty.

BRAD

He's got his reasons.

He stabs another tortellini.

PAM

So then what'd Coach Parker say?

Brad looks up, surprised.

BRAD

How the fuck'd you know that?

PAM

Well, darling, I am trained to discern the underlying substrata to all human behavior and cognition.

Brad's not exactly following...

PAM (CONT'D)
Your knuckles are white. Tell-tale
sign.

Brad looks down: his tight knuckles are white. He tries to relax a little.

PAM (CONT'D)
And...?

BRAD
And so there's a story in yesterday's paper. Coach Parker discusses the top candidates for the Olympic rowing team.

PAM
So what'd he say about you? You're too old? Too hotheaded? Too slow on the release?

BRAD
Too slow on the release?

PAM
Well...

BRAD
No, he doesn't even mention me. Which means he's going to try and fuck me out of a spot on the national team again.

Brad takes out a folded-up cut-out of the story.

BRAD (CONT'D)
(reading)
"Coach Parker listed amateur rowers Tiff Wood, Joe Bouscaran, John Biglow, and Charlie fucking Altekruze as the US fucking team's best fucking medal fucking contenders..."

He slaps the story down. It disgusts him.

BRAD (CONT'D)
He doesn't like my style. Or my attitude. Too rough. Too California. That's why he cut me from the national championship team.

PAM

Did he say that?

BRAD

Basically. I had the second best time in the entire camp...

PAM

This is why men are the expendable sex.

BRAD

What?

PAM

All this male dominance posturing crap. The Papa New Guineans have the right idea. The women start up conflicts between themselves and the neighboring clans. Every couple years. Just to give the men a chance to go fight each other and thin out some of the macho shit.

Brad's eyes light up.

BRAD

You know, Coach Parker's fundraising talk is tonight.

PAM

Brad...

BRAD

And we are already in this part of town...

PAM

Christ. Brad...

INT. AUDITORIUM, UCLA BUSINESS SCHOOL BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

About FIFTY PEOPLE -- white, successful, mostly middle-aged -- mingle. Brad leads Pam through them, trying to find a couple of seats.

PAM

(quietly)

What exactly is the plan here?

BRAD

(quietly)

Recon. Gathering information behind
enemy lines.

One of the professors steps up to a podium.

PROFESSOR

Welcome to the UCLA Graduate School
of Management's Leadership Speaker
Series.

People start sitting. Brad and Pam find a spot near the back.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

I am particularly excited to
introduce tonight's speaker. Coach
Harry Parker has been called the
John Wooden of American rowing, a
dynasty onto himself.

Brad glances over at Pam and gives the patented jerk-off hand motion.

PAM

(amused)

Shhhh.

PROFESSOR

Parker competed as a single sculler at the 1960 Olympics in Rome. The next year, he began his coaching career at Harvard, where his men and women's teams consistently dominate. For the last twenty years, Harry Parker has also coached both the men's and women's Olympic rowing teams. Over the course of his already legendary career, Coach Harry Parker has helped forge the character of young men and women who've spread his gospel of hard work and integrity into the worlds of American business, politics, and law. We've all got something we can learn from this man. Ladies and gentlemen, Coach Harry Parker.

COACH HARRY PARKER -- rigid, intense, imperial -- approaches the podium. He stands at the mic and takes in the audience with an icy, knowing stare.

COACH HARRY PARKER

Boys who like to frolic go out in a field and play with balls. Men who know how to work plant their asses in a boat and row. Crew is the only Olympic sport to originate as a form of capital punishment. So what kind of man rows crew? A man with strength of mind. Strength of body. Mostly, a man with a taste for pain. Not just tolerance for pain. A taste for it.

Coach Parker scans the crowd. A series of hooked, intrigued faces. Until he sees Brad: skeptical and nearly bemused by the coach's words. A moment of recognition, then Coach Parker aims his gaze at Brad, as if addressing him alone.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)

Some rowers believe that simply rowing harder is the key to winning. Inevitably, they're proven wrong.

Coach Parker calmly starts getting under Brad's skin.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)

In truth, speed derives from equal parts desire, strength, and control. Control is a championship rower's secret weapon. Blade control. Body control. Self control.

Brad's bemused skepticism has now curdled into anger.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)

Every Olympic caliber rower possesses it. Lesser rowers, no matter how hard they slap the water, do not.

Finally, Brad stands.

BRAD

Coach Parker.

Coach Parker maintains his imperial calm.

COACH HARRY PARKER

Ah, I see Mr. Brad Lewis has joined us. Do you have a question?

BRAD

How many rowing events are there in the Olympics?

COACH HARRY PARKER

Counting both the men and women's teams, fourteen events.

BRAD

Fourteen separate Olympic events. And you've competed or coached on the US team for the last quarter century. That's what? 60, 70 medal opportunities? Just how many gold medals have you won? You must've lost count at this point.

Coach Parker's imperial calm slips away a little as Brad likewise gets under his skin.

COACH HARRY PARKER

No golds.

BRAD

None? Really?

COACH HARRY PARKER

I'm proud to say our eight-man boat won the silver in 1972 and our eight-woman boat won the bronze in 1976.

BRAD

One silver and one bronze in 25 years of Olympic competition. Impressive dynasty, Coach.

Satisfied, Brad sits back down.

BRAD (CONT'D)

Please. Carry on. Don't change a thing.

Silence. Coach Harry Parker stares out at Brad. Enraged, but calm. Parker walks from the podium and up to where Brad's sitting. Everyone leans forward to check this out.

COACH HARRY PARKER

I assume you plan on competing in the Olympic trials again this year.

BRAD

I plan on winning.

COACH HARRY PARKER
Best of luck to you.

Coach Parker turns from Brad and walks back to the podium.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)
Apologies for the disruption. I'll
leave it to you to determine
whether our friend Mr. Lewis here
has the self-control inherent to an
Olympic caliber rower.

Some laughter.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)
But I don't think we have to worry
about that. Mr. Lewis tends to talk
big, start fast, and come up short.
He's slow on his release and short
on stamina. He also shoots his butt
out like a mare in heat whenever he
gets winded.

More laughter. Brad looks on, hiding his embarrassment.

INT. PAM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Brad stalks around Pam's apartment, drinking a beer. He's wired. Wild-eyed. She's concerned, but calm.

BRAD
I can't believe I just shit all
over Harry Parker's legacy.

PAM
I think you clarified his legacy.

BRAD
Yes. To his face.

PAM
So?

BRAD
So Harry Parker is not someone you
challenge. Half his rowers don't
even risk looking him in the eye.

PAM
Then why...

BRAD

Did I stand up and show my ass like that?

(beat)

He pushed my buttons and I lost my cool. That's what he does. Gets under your skin. He didn't like me before. Now he's gonna want to crush me. Maybe my dad's right. Maybe I should move on.

PAM

Move on from what? Rowing?

BRAD

Yeah. Then we could move in together, like you said. Get married, start a family.

PAM

Do you think that's what I want? To marry a quitter and then start pumping out a bunch of half-quitter children?

BRAD

You said you wanted me to move in with you.

PAM

To give you more time to train. Not to snare you in some kind of romantic trap. Brad, look at me. I'm not an obstacle.

Brad looks at her. He seems to get it.

BRAD

Okay. You're not an obstacle.

PAM

So what are you going to do?

BRAD

I don't know. What do you do after declaring war on a coaching legend?

PAM

You embrace it. I mean, after tonight, you kind of have to win.

BRAD

Why?

PAM

Because if you don't, you'll look
like a complete idiot.

BRAD

Thanks.

PAM

So make that your edge. Make that
get you out on the water and
practice when all the other rowers
are still asleep.

Brad considers this.

BRAD

Any idiot can cultivate the will to
win. A champion cultivates the will
to train.

PAM

Did you just come up with that?

BRAD

No.

PAM

Who did? It's good.

BRAD

(beat)

Coach Parker.

Brad looks at Pam, then smiles to himself.

BRAD (CONT'D)

You thought it was hot, didn't you?

PAM

What? Tonight?

BRAD

Yeah. Like watching a couple of
chieftains battle each other for
tribal dominance...

She laughs. But Brad's right. They start going at it, kissing
and groping and undressing each other. They make their way
into Pam's bedroom and onto her bed. Brad goes for the top.

BRAD (CONT'D)

That's why you put up with me,
isn't it? My anthropological
peculiarity.

PAM

A little.

Pam surprises him with a surge of strength. Now she's on top.

PAM (CONT'D)

But it's mostly just your body.

Brad laughs at this. He lifts her up and they begin screwing, grinding athletically away. Pam looks over at a MIRROR, turned on by their reflection.

PAM (CONT'D)

I mean, just look.

Brad turns to look at the reflection of them screwing. Both of them watch as they keep pumping...but then Brad's expression changes. He slows down and watches his motions with a clinical curiosity.

BRAD

Fuck. He's right.

PAM

He is? About what?

BRAD

I shoot my butt out when I get winded.

He stops screwing.

PAM

What are you doing?

BRAD

Sorry...

He gets up and starts getting dressed.

PAM

No, no, no. You just got started...

BRAD

I gotta go work on my technique.

He exits.

Pam lays there in bed, naked and frustrated. She glances over at an anthropology book on her bedside table: *Sex and Temperament*, by Margaret Mead. Pam pushes it off the table. Still naked, she takes a breath. She's resigned to having to satisfy herself sexually.

As Pam begins doing so, her hand brushes against her own breast. She feels something. She touches her breast again, troubled.

EXT. LAKE CASITAS - NIGHT

The barbed-wire-topped fence around Lake Casitas has been pulled back again.

Out on the lake, Brad rows beyond the point of exhaustion. He's focused on keeping his back straight and his ass from shooting out. He stops, sucking in oxygen.

He looks at his hands. They're blistered and bleeding on the oar grips. Brad dispassionately picks up a white towel, wipes the blood from the grips, and resumes rowing while making adjustments to his posture.

EXT. DAVID LEWIS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Exhausted and with strips of bloodied cloth wrapped around his hands, Brad drags his way from his van and toward his father's house. He sees the flickering light of the TV through a window in the otherwise darkened house. He enters...

INT. LIVING ROOM, HOUSE - NIGHT

...to see his father David passed out in the recliner. Beer cans on the floor, next to a cracked framed picture frame.

In the frame: a black and white PHOTOGRAPH of the young, proud, athletic David Lewis in a scull, holding a trophy. Now we understand: Brad's father used to be a nationally competitive rower.

Though bloodied and exhausted, Brad puts a blanket over his sleeping father. He then picks up the cracked photograph. He looks at his father's past youthful self, then at his passed out present version.

BLACK SCREEN

TITLE reads:

OLYMPIC SINGLE TRIALS
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY
APRIL 1984

INT. NEW JERSEY AIRPORT LOBBY - DAY

Brad exits the airport lobby and enters the hallway. Just trying to get out of the crowd and get himself ready for the trials. But he sees that he's fallen in step with a young PREPPY DUDE with a popped collar. Both hustle down the hallway at the same speed. Brad notes a Harvard insignia on the dude's luggage.

Brad's competitiveness kicks in. He picks up his pace. Preppy Dude does likewise. Pretty soon they're nearly running, trying to best the other. Brad knows this is ridiculous, but he can't help it. They round a corner. Brad nudges Preppy Dude so he runs into a couple of FAT TOURISTS. Brad walks on.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Brad speeds down a two-lane highway in a rented 1982 ACCORD past a sign announcing PRINCETON UNIVERSITY. He drives a little too fast, a little too out of control.

EXT. PRINCETON BOATHOUSE, PRINCETON CAMPUS - DAY

Brad pulls his Accord into the parking lot near the PRINCETON BOATHOUSE. LAKE CARNEGIE shimmers in the near distance.

Brad parks and gets out and strides over to a FLATBED TRUCK with six duct-tape and cellophane wrapped SINGLE SCULL SHELLS. BILLY (23), blue-collar and bright-eyed, gets out of the cab of the truck.

BILLY

I was hoping you'd be the first one here. I'm Billy.

Brad goes right to one of the wrapped-up shells. He takes out a box-cutter and starts slicing away the duct tape and such.

BILLY (CONT'D)

I've been watching you row since I was a freshman in high school--

BRAD

Any surprises I should be ready for, Billy?

BILLY

No. Smooth drive. Just some weather. All the shells should be fine.

Brad pulls back the covering, checking the shell's condition. Looks okay. He glances over and sees that Billy's HANDS have tell-tale blistering and callouses.

BRAD
(still examining)
Is this your first trial race?

BILLY
Yeah. Have any advice?

BRAD
I do. Don't drive cross-country
right before a competition.

BILLY
You're shitting me.

BRAD
Nope.

Brad notices a TENT set up in the trees by the parking lot. Seeing it, Brad's demeanor softens slightly. He's been in the same situation as this kid.

BRAD (CONT'D)
You know, I couldn't afford a hotel
room my first trials either.

BILLY
How'd you do?

BRAD
Didn't even make the semis. Body
was too worn out.

Brad reaches into his pocket. He hands over some twenty dollar bills to Billy.

BRAD (CONT'D)
Here. Get a hotel room and a decent
night's rest. Get out early and get
a feel for the course. And if you
crap out in the first heat like I
did, save up for a plane ticket
next time. These guys were born
about three boat lengths ahead of
you. Don't give 'em any more.

Brad lifts the shell and goes to take it to his Accord.

BILLY
(re: shell)
Wait.
(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)

Aren't you gonna store your shell
in the boathouse with everyone
else's?

BRAD

I don't want any surprise leaks on
race day.

BILLY

How're you gonna get a surprise
leak?

BRAD

I'm kind of an asshole, Billy.
That's how.

BILLY

You seem okay to me.

BRAD

Give it a few days.

Brad carries his wrapped-up scull shell toward his Accord.

EXT. HOTEL, PRINCETON NEW JERSEY - DAY

Brad's rented Accord is parked outside a modest hotel.

INT. ROOM, HOTEL - DAY

The shades are drawn. Brad is laid out on a single bed in his room. On the OTHER BED lay his single scull shell, now unwrapped and balanced on the bed.

Falling asleep on the bed for a mid-day nap -- and finally alone with his obsession -- he almost seems to have a mild, peaceful smile.

On the bedside table, Brad has set up the cracked, framed picture of his father as a young rower.

EXT. LAKE CARNEGIE - BEFORE DAWN

Pre-dawn dark. Brad is in his single scull, casing out the qualifying course on the lake, which is marked by a series of buoys. He's the only one out here right now. He rows steadily. There's a STROKE METER mounted in front of him.

BRAD

750 meters. Strong and steady.

He glances at a lakeside GIANT SLOPING ROCK.

EXT. LAKE CARNEGIE - MINUTES LATER

Brad rows, still marking the course. Eyes the stroke meter.

BRAD

1500 meters. Make your move.

He glances at a LAKEFRONT MANSION.

EXT. LAKE CARNEGIE - MINUTES LATER

Brad rows. Eyes on the stroke meter.

BRAD

1800 meters. Just you and Tiff.

He looks up at a WHITE SHED on the lake front.

BRAD (CONT'D)

Thirty seconds to the finish. Bury
him--

BAM. Brad has rowed off-course enough to have slapped one of the buoys with his oar.

BRAD (CONT'D)

And you just lost, fuck face. Do it
again.

Brad starts rowing back around to the start of the course.

EXT. LAKE CARNEGIE - HOURS LATER

Brad carries his single scull up from the lake and toward the parking lot. He looks up to see a GROUP OF MEN coming his way. It's Coach Harry Parker leading a half-dozen ROWERS carrying their shells to the water.

These rowers are Brad's main competition. We'll get to know a few of them, including: CHARLIE ALTEKRUSE (late 20s, preppy, haughty) and JOHN BIGLOW (mid 20s, aloof physical beast).

These rowers take in the approaching Brad, surprised: he's buffer than the last time they saw him.

CHARLIE ALTEKRUSE

(loud enough to be heard)

Looks like California's discovered
steroids.

Some of the others laugh. Brad doesn't break stride. He keeps walking toward them, projecting imperviousness as he gets closer to the group.

But he's nervous. It's the first time he's seen Coach Harry Parker since the confrontation at the business school. Coach Parker stops walking. His rowers likewise stop.

COACH HARRY PARKER
Mr. Lewis, a moment's discussion.

Coach Parker and Brad step aside. Brad tries to hide his nerves.

BRAD
Coach Parker.

COACH HARRY PARKER
Your arms are breaking on your initial drive.

Brad looks at him, puzzled.

BRAD
Excuse me?

COACH HARRY PARKER
I was watching you earlier.
Technique's improved. But if you're going to do a hybrid stroke, you can't break your arms on the drive.

BRAD
I didn't know I was.

COACH HARRY PARKER
Easy to miss. But now that you know, it should keep you stronger on the drive and help you catch the water a little harder.

BRAD
I don't get it. Why are you helping me?

COACH HARRY PARKER
Because I don't think it's going to matter.

Coach Parker strides on. Coach Parker's guys follow, in synch.

A bit shaken, Brad watches them carry their shells down toward the lake. He then turns and looks forward again to resume carrying his shell up to his car when...

He bursts out laughing. What he sees: TIFF WOOD (30) is carrying his shell down to the water. But Tiff's a little different from the others. He has a stars-and-stripes STRAP-ON DILDO tied around his waist and reads a PAPERBACK copy of The Stories of John Cheever as he walks.

BRAD

Tiff, you loony son of a bitch.
It's good to see you.

Tiff stops walking. But he doesn't take his eyes off the paperback.

TIFF WOOD

Tiff's not here, friend. He's still nuzzled up with the sexy Lithuanian gymnast he met last night. So you'll have to talk to me.

BRAD

What?

TIFF WOOD

Down here, amigo.

Brad looks down at the stars-and-stripes strap-on Tiff wiggles before him. Brad understands: he's to address it, not Tiff himself.

BRAD

(to strap-on)
I see. Well, my patriotic friend,
when you see Tiff, tell him Brad
Lewis said hello.

TIFF WOOD

Sure thing. Tiff wanted me to give you a message.

BRAD

What's that?

TIFF WOOD

Look out. You got into Coach Parker's head. And that's a dark, weird place to be.

Tiff starts walking again, still reading. Brad considers the warning, then heads up toward his car.

INT. BRAD'S ACCORD/EXT. LAKE CARNEGIE - MINUTES LATER

Brad drives through campus. He comes to a clearing where he can see Lake Carnegie. He stops to watch Harry's rowers practice race out on the lake.

He sees that Tiff Wood is a full boat-length ahead of Charlie Altekruze and John Biglow, with the others trailing even further behind. Tiff is in a class by himself.

Coach Harry Parker stands on the shore, looking on, sphinx-like.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM, WOMEN'S CLINIC - DAY

Pam sits on an examination table in a hospital gown. Blank expression. A DOCTOR (60s) faces her.

DOCTOR

Do you have someone you can call?
It's important not to go through
this alone. Do you have family?

PAM

Traditional family's superfluous in
western culture.

The doctor looks at her: huh?

PAM (CONT'D)

I'm not close to my family.

DOCTOR

So do you have a partner you can
call? A friend?

PAM

I'll call Mitch. He's my
boyfriend's best friend.

DOCTOR

This isn't any of my business,
but...why don't you call your
boyfriend?

Pam looks at the doctor with sober clarity.

PAM

Because I'm not going to be a
fucking distraction.

The doctor looks at her, not understanding.

EXT. LAKE CARNEGIE - MORNING

Brad Lewis stands amongst other ROWERS. Coach Harry Parker stands in front of the lake, facing them.

COACH HARRY PARKER

These are the qualifying single trials for the 1984 United States Olympic rowing team. They are open. They are competitive. They will produce one winner. That winner will represent our country and sport in the single scull in the summer games.

Brad takes in his competition: there are OVER THIRTY other rowers gathered here. Brad notes the presence of Tiff, Charlie Altekruze, John Biglow, Dan Louis (whom he competed against in California). Also an anxious young Billy (the young rower who drove the flatbed truck cross-country).

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)

Assistant Coach Chris Allsopp will provide you with details.

Coach Harry Parker walks forward to leave. The group of rowers parts, Red Sea style. Chris Allsopp (30s) steps up to address the rowers.

ASSISTANT COACH CHRIS ALLSOPP

Looks like we've got thirty-six rowers competing for one spot. So we'll be breaking you into groups of six for six separate heats. The winner of each heat goes to the finals. And the winner of the finals goes to the Olympics.

Assistant Coach Chris Allsopp raises a clipboard.

ASSISTANT COACH CHRIS ALLSOPP (CONT'D)

Coach Parker has selected your heat assignments and race times.

Brad stands back as the rowers swarm forward to see Coach Parker's selections. He glances over to see that Tiff Wood, Charlie Altkruze, John Biglow and a few of Harry's other favorite rowers turn and walk the other direction, away from the swarm. They're not even looking at the heat assignments.

Brad watches his competition walk away. He then steps forward, joining the anonymous swarm of anxious rowers around the assistant coach.

BRAD

Harry stack the heat on me?

ASSISTANT COACH CHRIS ALLSOPP

Would it be a surprise?

Allsopp hands over the clipboard. Brad takes a look at it. His heat is stacked.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - EVENING

Brad sits on his single bed. His shell balanced on the other bed. He sits staring at the wall. Face fixed in concentration. Cracked picture of his father nearby.

EXT. LAKE CARNEGIE - MORNING

WELL-DRESSED SERVERS circulate platters of hors d'oeuvres. A small crowd for the race. Very white, very privileged.

Brad Lewis cuts through, carrying his single-scull down to the lake. He's got a hard warrior punk bearing. People have to move out of his way.

He takes his scull down to the water. As he gets in, he takes in the rest of his heat: five other rowers, including Dan Louis, young Billy, a Yale rower, and a Princeton Rower. A stacked heat.

Brad gets into his scull. He starts slapping his face, pumping himself up. He enters a deep state of concentration, summoning an ancient, fearsome mental space.

Young Billy is in the next lane. He leans over.

BILLY

Hey, thanks for the extra cash. I think the hotel room--

Brad turns his head. But he's in a different place. He looks right through young Billy. Spits in the water.

BRAD

Nobody beats me.

Brad returns to his headspace. Young Billy, a bit shaken, retracts. Assistant Coach Chris Allsopp approaches the six racers.

ASSISTANT COACH CHRIS ALLSOPP

Etes vous prêt?

He looks over the rowers. They seem ready. He raises a flag.

ASSISTANT COACH CHRIS ALLSOPP (CONT'D)
Partez!

He drops the flag. And at that, they're off--

EXT. LAKE CARNEGIE - MINUTES LATER

Five sculls charge across the lake. Dan Louis is as powerful and fast as we saw when he was training in California with Brad. He's pretty even with two other rowers. But the Princeton rower is beating him by five feet. And Young Billy, going all out, is even further ahead of the Princeton rower.

And where's Brad? We PULL BACK to finally reveal that he's two full scull lengths ahead of the others. He rows past the GIANT SLOPING ROCK that marks 750 meters--

EXT. LAKE CARNEGIE - MINUTES LATER

Brad is rowing and not relenting. His arms are strong on his initial drive, catching plenty of water and generating huge bursts of power. He passes the LAKE FRONT MANSION that marks 1500 meters. He's now three full lengths ahead of the nearest competitor.

But he doesn't relent. He keeps grinding, putting more space between himself and his competition.

He passes the WHITE SHED that marks the last thirty seconds of the course. He seems to increase in speed as he races to the finish lane.

Brad passes the end of the course. The FLAGMAN drops his flag and points at Brad.

FLAGMAN
Winner!

Brad's won the first race. But he doesn't celebrate. He stops rowing and looks up at Coach Harry Parker, who is standing near the finish line. If Coach Parker has any opinion concerning Brad's performance, he doesn't show it.

Brad raises his hand and starts counting silently. He keeps eye contact with Harry Parker the entire time.

BRAD
(silent)
One. Two. Three. Four.

Finally, the Harvard rower crosses the finish line in a very, very distant second place.

FLAGMAN
Second place!

Brad and Coach Parker hold each other's gaze.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - EVENING

Brad sits on his bed, again facing the wall. No emotion. No thoughts. Just a samurai rigidly waiting for the next battle. A KNOCK. Without changing expression, Brad gets up to answer the door. It's Tiff Wood. He seems a little drunk.

TIFF WOOD
Grab your vaseline and tequila,
buddy. The festivities are about to
begin.

Tiff walks in, holding a bottle of tequila.

TIFF WOOD (CONT'D)
Everyone else is over at the other
hotel. You know, the non-suicidally
shitty one.

Tiff tosses the tequila to Brad, who's intense warrior expression hasn't changed.

TIFF WOOD (CONT'D)
Here. We'll discuss the vaseline
logistics later.

Brad catches the bottle.

BRAD
So you won your heat.

TIFF WOOD
Yeah. Me, Charlie, Biggie, Bill
Purdy, Joe--

BRAD
All of Harry's guys.

TIFF WOOD
Plus you.

Brad looks down at the tequila bottle.

BRAD
And now you want to get me drunk.

TIFF WOOD
Now I want to celebrate.

BRAD
Did Harry send you here?

TIFF WOOD
To do what?

BRAD
Get me drunk. Before the final race. Did Coach Harry Parker send you over here to buddy me up and get me drunk so I'd be at less than a hundred percent?

TIFF WOOD
Man, we've been buddying up for eight fucking years.

BRAD
And now we're both competing for the same Olympic spot. So I doubt that means shit to either of us.

TIFF WOOD
Are you serious?

BRAD
I'm a threat.

Brad tosses the tequila bottle back to Tiff.

BRAD (CONT'D)
And you're a distraction. So please exit my fucking room.

Tiff gives Brad a long look, then leaves. Brad returns to sitting on the bed. Stares at the wall.

EXT. LAKE CARNEGIE - DAY

Brad carries his scull down toward the lake.

COACH HARRY PARKER
(calling)
Mr. Lewis.

Brad sees Coach Parker walking his way. Stops.

BRAD
Coach Parker.

COACH HARRY PARKER
You won by four full seconds.
Impressive. But I wonder. Today's
the finals. Are you going to end up
wanting a couple of those seconds
back?

Before Brad can reply, Coach Parker walks off. Brad stands there a beat. Swallows. Tries to push this new seed of doubt out of his mind.

EXT. STARTING LINE, LAKE CARNEGIE - MINUTES LATER

Brad is in his scull in lane five of six. Tiff, Charlie, and the other rowers are lined up in the other lanes. John Biglow is on Brad's right. Six rowers in total: Brad and five of Harry's guys. All are focused with a calm intensity.

Lakeside, the posh crowd mingles. Some focused on the race. Others simply there to be seen. In the water, an ABC CAMERA CREW is in a motorized boat. Brad ignores it all. On the dock, Coach Harry Parker addresses the rowers.

COACH HARRY PARKER
One of you six men will win this
race and represent our nation and
our sport at the 1984 Olympics.

Brad takes a moment to check out his scull and oars.

BRAD
(to himself)
Shit.

Brad realizes: he's put his oars in wrong. The left-handed oar is on his right, and the right-handed one is on his left. Brad starts frantically switching them around.

BRAD (CONT'D)
(to himself)
He's in my fucking head again...

COACH HARRY PARKER
I trust you will conduct yourselves
accordingly--

Coach Parker sees Brad.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)
And row your best race.

Coach Parker turns from the rowers. He gets into a motorized boat, which departs.

Brad hustles to get his oars re-arranged in time. Assistant Coach Chris Allsopp approaches, holding the starting flag. He starts at the other end from Brad.

ASSISTANT COACH CHRIS ALLSOPP
Lane one, prêt? Lane two, prêt?

Each of the rowers nods: yes, ready.

ASSISTANT COACH CHRIS ALLSOPP (CONT'D)
Lane three, prêt? Lane four, prêt?

Assistant Coach Allsopp makes it to Brad's lane. Allsopp waits a beat. Brad secures his oars in their proper locks.

ASSISTANT COACH CHRIS ALLSOPP (CONT'D)
(beat)
Lane five, prêt?

Brad nods: yes. And thank you. He takes a deep breath.

ASSISTANT COACH CHRIS ALLSOPP (CONT'D)
Lane six, prêt?

John Biglow nods, yes.

BRAD
(rushed to himself)
Nobody beats me.

Allsopp raises his flag. Drops it.

ASSISTANT COACH CHRIS ALLSOPP
Partez!

And they're off! Brad's a little slow on the release. He's rowing hard just to stay in the middle. He's got to shake off his nerves.

JOE BOUSCAREN takes an early lead. By the time they get to the SLOPING ROCK that marks the 750 meter mark, Brad is steady and strong in 4th place.

BRAD
(to himself)
750 meters.

Joe Bouscaren stays in first place, followed by Tiff Wood, then Charlie Altekrule, then Brad, then John Biglow. Brad rows with wild strength. He glances lake side, seeing the LAKEFRONT MANSION that marks 1500 meters.

BRAD (CONT'D)
(to himself)
1500 meters. Make your move.

Brad starts putting more of his back into his strokes. Louder grunts. He hits a new gear, passing Charlie Altekruse and into third place. A couple more strokes. He glances over his shoulder to see that Joe Bouscaren is slipping. Tiff passes Joe for first place. Brad keeps at it. He too passes Joe Bouscaren.

BRAD (CONT'D)
You and Tiff.

Now it's a two man race between old friends/foes: Brad Lewis and Tiff Wood. They battle, stroke for stroke. Brad's pain is almost unbearable by now. But his eyes gleam. Like he's getting off on the pain. He finds a higher gear. Passes Tiff, who has plateaued.

Brad keeps pushing. This is not the time to ease off. He reaches the WHITE SHED.

BRAD (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Thirty seconds. Bury him.

He matches his inhuman pace toward the victory line...but then remembers his pre-dawn practice runs. Alarmed, he glances at his OAR and...he's good. Plenty of space between his oars and the buoys. He keeps rowing. Then sees...

John Biglow has been gaining on him. Not just gaining. Biglow's passing him. Brad's been so focused on Tiff that he didn't see Biglow to his right.

BRAD (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Fucker.

We enter the last ten strokes. And with each stroke, John Biglow seems to gain a couple of meters. Brad rows with abandon. SCREAMS. He's never rowed harder.

John Biglow seems almost serene. As if he doesn't feel pain. He's peaking at the right time. They approach the finish. Neck and neck. Impossible to tell who's going to win. One more stroke to go.

Time slows down. Brad releases and drives for that last victorious stroke. He powers through. Hits the finish. A herculean assertion of superhuman will. Brad looks up at the FLAGMAN.

FLAGMAN

Winner!

But then, Brad sees...the Flagman is gesturing to John Biglow. Now the Flagman turns to Brad.

FLAGMAN (CONT'D)

Second place!

At this, Brad goes into shock. He stares at the Flagman. Not comprehending. Not processing. He lost. Brad's face fixes itself in blank confusion as his eyes go wild. He looks over at Coach Harry Parker, who looks down at Brad with a knowing superiority.

INT. BRAD'S ACCORD - DAY

Brad drives his Accord down a FREEWAY, scull tied to the top. Eyes unhinged, Brad shifts gears, reckless--

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN, NEW JERSEY COAST - DAY

Brad hustles through the BEACH CROWD on the sandy ocean shore. Same expression. His scull above his head, Brad heads toward the OCEAN--

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN, NEW JERSEY COAST - MOMENTS LATER

Brad rows, away from the shore and out into the ocean. Past the breakers. The shore gets more distant. But he keeps rowing. And rowing. Finally, he stops and sits there in his scull, out in the ocean. No sight of land. Or other people.

And here, his face crumbles in pain. He lets out a wailing, mourning SCREAM of agony. Then goes silent. He sits in his scull, trying to regain his composure. From somewhere, a voice--

MAN'S VOICE

'There are only the pursued, the pursuing, the busy and the tired.'

What the fuck? Brad looks behind him. A FORTY FOOT SAILBOAT is gliding behind him, nearby. A RICH GUY (50s) stands on the deck, holding a drink. Pretty fucking surreal.

RICH GUY

F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote that.
Tell me, friend, which one are you?

Brad takes in this man's self-satisfaction and privilege.

BRAD
(mostly to himself)
They beat me.

RICH GUY
Excuse me? You'll have to speak up,
ol' boy.

BRAD
They fucking beat me.

INT. PAM'S APARTMENT - DAY

Pam is in bed, in a robe. She still has her hair, but a week of chemo has left her pale and weak. The phone beside her rings. She answers.

PAM
(into phone)
Hello?

A moment of silence on the other end. The faint sound of the ocean. Then a click and dial tone. Pam puts the receiver back. She looks at it. The phone rings again. She answers.

PAM (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Are you okay?

BRAD'S VOICE
I--

His voice trails off. A long silence, then...

PAM
(into phone)
How close did you get?

BRAD'S VOICE
Half a second.

A long beat of silence. Pam fights tears. Finally--

PAM
(into phone)
There's still the double. And the quad.

BRAD'S VOICE
I burned those bridges. But at least I can move in with you now.

Pam looks at her sickly face in the mirror.

PAM
(into phone)
"First the Olympics, then us."

BRAD'S VOICE
Yeah...

PAM
(into phone)
The Olympics aren't over.

BRAD'S VOICE
They are for me. I raced my best
time. And Harry still beat me. He
knew he'd beat me...

PAM
(into phone)
But the double. The quad--

BRAD'S VOICE
Pam, no one's gonna want to row
with me. I've been pushing everyone
away. I'm alone out here.

PAM
(into phone)
Then it's time to change.

She hangs up.

EXT. PAYPHONE NEAR BEACH - CONTINUOUS

Brad stands at a pay phone. Listens to the dial tone. Shaken,
he hangs up.

INT. BOSTON DIVE BAR - EVENING

Brad enters a local bar. Not too crowded yet. He approaches
the Bartender and puts some bills on the counter.

BRAD
A bottle of your best tequila.

The Bartender grabs a top shelf tequila and hands it to Brad.
Brad takes the bottle deeper into the bar. Following him, we
now see that Tiff Wood sits at a far booth, getting drunk and
reading. Brad walks his way. Tiff doesn't see him. He's
reading William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury.

BRAD (CONT'D)

I was so focused on kicking your
ass, I didn't even see him.

Tiff looks up from his book. He's clearly drunk. He takes in
Brad, who is holding the bottle.

TIFF WOOD

Who?

BRAD

Biglow. He snuck up my blindside.

Brad sits and pours tequila into Tiff's shot glass.

BRAD (CONT'D)

I didn't know he'd picked up so
much speed--

TIFF WOOD

(interrupting)

How'd you find me?

BRAD

I remember your bender after the
boycott. And you live two blocks
from here. Simple deduction.
Cheers.

Brad raises his bottle. But Tiff simply downs his tequila and
returns to reading. Brad sits across from him.

BRAD (CONT'D)

So...Faulkner, huh?

TIFF WOOD

Yes, I occasionally like to jerk
myself off to the suppleness of
William Faulkner's immemorial
prose. Now stop pretending like you
give a shit and tell me what you
want.

BRAD

I was thinking. Since we're the two
best rowers in this country--

TIFF WOOD

After John Biglow.

BRAD

(beat)

Since we're the two best rowers
after John Biglow, and since the US
team still needs to field a double
crew...

TIFF WOOD

You think you and me should be that
crew.

BRAD

Give me one reason why not.

TIFF WOOD

I'll give you two. First off, Harry
always picks his favorites for his
crews. And I'm pretty certain you
are not among them.

BRAD

Then we'll skip Harry's camp and
train on our own.

TIFF WOOD

Harry would lose his shit.

BRAD

An added bonus. What's the second
reason?

TIFF WOOD

For not teaming with you in the
double?

BRAD

Yeah.

TIFF WOOD

You're a dick.

BRAD

And you're a spoiled shit who
spends all his free time being a
fuck-up to keep from accepting that
he's going to spend his entire life
as an insurance actuary and will
never get around to actually
writing the great American novel.

A tense beat between the two men--

BRAD (CONT'D)

So we know each other. So what?
None of the above has anything to
do with you and me and getting into
a boat and kicking some ass.

TIFF WOOD

You got a decent double shell?

BRAD

I'll find one.

Tiff gets up.

TIFF WOOD

I'll see you at Harry's camp. If
you get an invite.

BRAD

What are you talking about? I said
I'd find us a double shell.

TIFF WOOD

Harry's already bought up every
competitive double and quad shell
on this side of the country. So
unless you plan on building your
own boat, it's his camp or nothing.

BRAD

That malicious son of a bitch.

TIFF WOOD

I warned you. You got inside the
Sphinx's head.

Tiff goes to exit. Brad catches up to him.

BRAD

Has Harry sent out those camp
invites yet?

Tiff reaches into his book and pulls out an envelope.

TIFF WOOD

Got mine today. You?

BRAD

I've been a little hard to find
lately.

TIFF WOOD

Stop by Harry's office. I'm sure
he'd be more than happy to tell you
himself.

Tiff exits.

INT. BRAD'S ACCORD, NEWELL BOATHOUSE PARKING LOT - DAY

Brad sits in his rented Accord. He looks out at the boathouse and the HARVARD STUDENTS milling around.

BRAD

(practicing)

Harry, I got second goddamned
place. Missed out by half a second.
Now if you're too much of a pussy
to not invite me to your fucking
Olympic camp just because you can't
handle my intensity...

Brad stops. Reconsiders his approach. Softens it.

BRAD (CONT'D)

(practicing)

Look, Coach Parker, I'm sorry about
my behavior lately. I've been out
of line. I want to apologize...

(to himself)

Fuck that.

BAM! BAM! Brad looks up to see a HARVARD SECURITY GUARD banging on his window.

HARVARD SECURITY GUARD

Sir, please exit your vehicle.

Brad opens the door and gets out.

BRAD

Is there a problem?

HARVARD SECURITY GUARD

We received a complaint about a
transient-looking man talking to
himself in the boathouse parking
lot.

Brad glances over at the Boathouse.

BRAD

(to himself)

That son of a bitch.

HARVARD SECURITY GUARD
Are you a student, faculty or staff
at Harvard University?

BRAD
No, I just need to talk to Harry
Parker--

HARVARD SECURITY GUARD
I need to escort you from campus.

COACH HARRY PARKER (O.S.)
Officer, is there a problem?

Brad and the Security Guard look over to see Coach Harry Parker standing nearby.

HARVARD SECURITY GUARD
Good afternoon, Coach Parker. This man says he needs to speak with you.

Coach Parker looks over at Brad, sphinx-like.

COACH HARRY PARKER
Mr. Lewis. You need to speak with me? Again?

Brad takes a moment to look at Coach Parker. What approach is he going to take?

BRAD
Your camp. Am I in or out?

COACH HARRY PARKER
Are you even capable of teaming with other rowers?

BRAD
Of course I'm capable of--

COACH HARRY PARKER
Then you're in.

BRAD
I am?

COACH HARRY PARKER
This is Olympic rowing. Not a California high school. I have no interest in personal grudges. If you can help us win a medal, you're welcome to my camp.

Coach Parker heads back toward the boathouse, leaving Brad a little stunned.

BLACK SCREEN

TITLE reads:

**"TWO WEEKS LATER--
OLYMPIC ROWING CAMP
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
MAY 7, 1984"**

INT. MAIN ROOM, NEWELL BOATHOUSE - DAY

A DOZEN ROWERS are gathered in the main room of the Newell Boathouse. These are mostly clean-cut, Ivy League specimens in button up shirts, ties and jackets.

Tiff Wood, Charlie Altekkruse, Joe Bouscaran, BILL PURDY are gathered together in their usual clique. A couple of YALE and PRINCETON rowers likewise converse, with one of them absorbed in a business textbook. A new face, a tall balding loner named PAUL ENQUIST. He sits alone in nondescript casual clothes.

Brad's outfitted in his usual: flip-flops, ratty t-shirt, jeans. He's uneasy, but determined to figure out how to negotiate this world. His gaze darts around the room, taking in clues to navigating this new environment.

Coach Harry Parker and Assistant Coach Chris Allsopp enter.

COACH HARRY PARKER
Not much time. Big task ahead.

Coach Parker is rigid, inscrutable. A king in his castle.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)
No wasted workouts. Confident we can assemble two fast boats for the summer games. The quads stay dry for now. You'll be working in doubles. Each morning, you'll row two 2000 meter races. The winning two-man crew will stay together. Losers will be assigned a new partner. Any questions?

Coach Parker looks around. No one speaks up. Not even Brad.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)
You'll break into two groups: Red Group and Green Group.
(MORE)

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)

Red Group consists of Tiff Wood, Charlie Altekruze, Joe Bouscaran, Bill Purdy, Sean Colgan and Ridgley Johnson. Everyone else is in the Green Group. Each morning, the Red Group will practice first--

BRAD

Wait a second.

Surprised heads turn Brad's way. Brad tries to soften his edge. He doesn't want to immediately alienate himself.

BRAD (CONT'D)

I mean...may I ask a question?

Coach Parker can only stare. Brad raises his hand.

COACH HARRY PARKER

(beat)

You have a question, Mr. Lewis?

BRAD

So you're splitting us into varsity and JV squads?

COACH HARRY PARKER

You are free to look at the camp how you wish. You are also free to leave. If anyone else--

PAUL ENQUIST

(interrupting)

Will the Green Group get a chance to break into the Red one?

Surprised heads turn the other way. The tall, balding loner Paul Enquist has also spoken up.

COACH HARRY PARKER

(beat)

The fastest double from the Green Group will earn a shot at making the Red Group.

Parker looks over his rowers. Some lower their eyes.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)

Great day.

Coach Parker exits, with Assistant Coach Allsopp following him. An exhale, then the rowers mingle. Tiff, Charlie and their clique start heading out. Brad approaches.

BRAD

You guys headed out?

TIFF WOOD

For a drink.

BRAD

I could use one.

Charlie takes in Brad's clothes.

CHARLIE ALTEKRUSE

Private club. Jacket required.

BRAD

Jacket's in my car. First round on
me.

The other rowers look amongst each other. Do they really want
Brad joining them?

TIFF WOOD

(beat)

Second round's on you too.

They head out with Brad in tow.

INT. PRIVATE CLUB, BOSTON - EVENING

Brad is with Tiff, Bill Purdy, and Joe Bouscaran in a small,
posh private club. Brad's still in flip-flops, jeans, etc.
Also, an athletic WARM-UP JACKET. The others are more
formally attired. They're on drink number three or so.

BILL PURDY

So even though there are a few
cultural differences between
yourself and most of the other
rowers--

TIFF WOOD

Bill was raised to be very polite.
He's saying you're a dick.

BRAD

Noted.

BILL PURDY

But you are a dick who came in
second in the single trials.

A WAITER comes over. He taps on Brad's shoulder.

WAITER
Excuse me? Sir?

BRAD
Yeah?

WAITER
We have a strict "jacket only" policy.

BRAD
I'm wearing a jacket.

WAITER
(quietly)
A proper formal jacket.

Brad looks around, notes just how out of place his attire is.

BRAD
(quietly)
I don't have a proper formal jacket.

WAITER
We have a strict policy.

Tiff leans over and whispers into the Waiter's ear.

WAITER (CONT'D)
Oh, well. Thank you. Yes, I suppose...

The Waiter takes off his jacket and hands it over to Brad.

WAITER (CONT'D)
Enjoy your evening, gentlemen.

The Waiter walks off. Brad, feeling a bit unmoored, puts on the ill-fitting jacket.

BRAD
Am I okay now?

TIFF WOOD
You're good. My great grandpa was a founding member of this dump. As we were saying...

BILL PURDY
Regardless of your...individuality, on sheer performance, you should have a reserved spot on either the double or quad.

TIFF WOOD
Let alone a spot in the red group.

JOE BOUSCARAN
So aren't you pissed off that Harry
stuck you in green?

BRAD
Harry's just getting in my head.
Motivating me to prove I'm a team
player. Can't be that hard, can it?

Charlie Altekruze comes over. He takes out a TWENTY DOLLAR BILL and slides it into one of Brad's jacket pockets.

CHARLIE ALTEKRUSE
(to Brad)
After you bring out the next round
of drinks, go ahead and pull my car
around to the front.

Charlie gives a playful pat to Brad's face.

CHARLIE ALTEKRUSE (CONT'D)
Thanks, Champ.

Charlie walks off, delighted. Brad's knuckles go white.

TIFF WOOD
It can be fairly hard if you murder
one of your crew mates.

Brad tries to relax. Takes a drink and takes in the ornate private club.

BRAD
So this is your great-grandfather's club? Maybe you shouldn't let guys like Charlie into it.

TIFF WOOD
Got to. His great-grandpa was a founding member too.

EXT. CHARLES RIVER, HARVARD CAMPUS - LATER

Brad rows in a double-scull with Paul Enquist, the tall balding loner. They're behind the other Green Group doubles. Can't get in synch. Brad glances at Coach Parker, who stands sphinx-like on the shoreline.

PAUL ENQUIST

Hey, shit head. Pull your head out
before you get us both cut.

Brad snaps his attention back. Tries to get in synch. But can't. They lag further behind, in last place.

Coach Parker looks on, inscrutable.

INT. DINING HALL, HARVARD CAMPUS - DAY

Brad enters a dining hall. Old oak tables. Oil paintings. He sees that all of the other rowers are dressed in khakis and polo shirts. Brad's in sweaty rowing clothes. Quickly overwhelmed, he exits.

INT. MCDONALDS - DAY

Brad sits alone in a McDonalds eating a Big Mac.

INT. DORM ROOM, HARVARD CAMPUS - DAY

Brad stalks his dorm room. Picks up the phone. Dials.

MITCH'S VOICE

This is--

BRAD

(into phone)

Man, I don't know what the fuck I'm
doing.

INT. MITCH'S HOUSE - INTERCUT

Brad's buff buddy Mitch is at home, wearing an apron and cooking. His spare apartment features a number of candles and crystals.

MITCH

(into phone)

--Mitch. Hello, Brad.

BRAD

I can't get Coach Parker out of my head. I know I have to make adjustments moving from the single to the double. But I can't even think straight.

MITCH

Then slow down your breathing.
Breath is the pulse of thought.
Control your breathing to control
your thoughts.

BRAD

I really don't need any of your
aura bullshit right now.

MITCH

Good. Because this isn't my aura
bullshit. This is my 'stop fucking
up your last shot at the Olympics'
bullshit.

Brad considers. He's skeptical. But also desperate. He looks
at his father's old rowing photograph, nearby as always.

BRAD

Okay. Let's hear it.

MITCH

You have two bodies. Your physical
body. Flesh and blood and such. And
your etheric body. Which is
essentially your energy field. Or,
your aura.

BRAD

Fucking knew it...

MITCH

These two bodies are connected.
Your physical body is grounded and
limited. But your etheric body can
expand.

BRAD

What the hell does this have to do
with rowing?

MITCH

Is it easier to coordinate one or
two bodies at a time?

BRAD

One.

MITCH

So try to form one body with your
partner. Forget about aura and
anything else that sounds weird to
you.

(MORE)

MITCH (CONT'D)

Just focus on your partner's breathing. How deep does he breathe? How long does he hold it? What's his rhythm? Focus on that. Then match your breathing to his.

BRAD

I'll think about it.

MITCH

Good. And one more thing.

BRAD

What?

MITCH

Call Pam.

EXT. NEWELL BOATHOUSE - MORNING

Brad's in the boathouse with the rest of the JV Green Group. Coach Parker calls out the morning's pairings.

COACH HARRY PARKER

...and in the last boat, we'll allow Lewis and Enquist another shot.

PAUL ENQUIST

Another shot at getting our asses cut.

Brad doesn't really listen. He zeroes in on Paul's breathing. They walk to pick out a double-scull.

PAUL ENQUIST (CONT'D)

(to Brad)

You doing okay, pal?

Brad's still focused on Paul's breathing. Trying to match it.

PAUL ENQUIST (CONT'D)

Hey. Buddy. You okay?

BRAD

Doing great.

Brad keeps trying to match Paul's breathing. Paul gives Brad a look, then points to a scull.

PAUL ENQUIST

This one work?

Brad, still trying to match up his breathing, gives a vague affirmative shrug.

PAUL ENQUIST (CONT'D)
Fucking weirdo.

They lift the scull and head out. Brad still trying to synchronize his breathing.

EXT. CHARLES RIVER, HARVARD CAMPUS - LATER

Brad rows hard. Paul too. But they're in last place. Again. Brad zeroes in on Paul's breathing: grunting on the exhale, breathing in through the nose. Finally falls into rhythm.

PAUL ENQUIST
What the fuck...
(row/breathe/grunt)
...are you...
(row/breathe/grunt)
doing?

BRAD
Forming...
(row/breathe/grunt)
...a single...
(row/breathe/grunt)
...etheric body...
(row/breathe/grunt)
...with you.

PAUL ENQUIST
Fuck...
(row/breathe/grunt)
...you.

Brad doesn't relent. He matches Paul's breathing and grunting. Their rowing strokes likewise fall into place. Hands. Oars. Legs. Breaths. All one body. They start catching up. They pass one boat. Then another. A final surge and they come in a close second at the finish line.

Coach Harry Parker, standing imperially on the shore, nearly seems intrigued.

EXT. NEWELL BOATHOUSE - DAY

Brad walks out to find Paul Enquist waiting for him.

PAUL ENQUIST
So what was that out there?

BRAD

I don't know.

PAUL ENQUIST

Something clicked.

BRAD

Maybe.

PAUL ENQUIST

Fuck maybe. Something clicked.

Charlie Altekruze, unseen by Brad, bumps him in the shoulder.

CHARLIE ALTEKRUZE

Sorry. Didn't see you.

Brad watches Charlie head into the boathouse.

BRAD

Either way, we still lost.

Brad walks off.

INT. PAM'S APARTMENT - DAY

Pam kneels over her toilet. She just finished vomiting from her chemo. Her hair is thinner. She looks weaker. She goes to the sink and gets some mouthwash. Swishes it.

Her phone rings. She slowly goes to answer it.

PAM

(into phone)

Hello?

INT. DORM ROOM - INTERCUT

Brad's on the phone. He's tense, wired, anxious.

BRAD

(into phone)

It's me.

But the sound of Brad's voice instantly perks up Pam.

PAM

Hey. How's the camp going?

BRAD

It's going...

PAM

Yeah?

Brad can hear the anticipation and need in Pam's voice.

BRAD

I guess it's going okay. I'm
starting to click with the other
rowers...

PAM

And Coach Parker?

BRAD

I think he's just a
little...monomaniacal about
winning. How are you? How's
everything in 18th century Bora
Bora?

PAM

The normal. Lots of research and
grading and fending off drunken
assholes at the bar.

BRAD

Hopefully not too many drunken
assholes. I think that's your type.

PAM

Ah, there's only one drunken
asshole for me.

A KNOCK at Brad's door. Brad goes to the peephole to see
Assistant Coach Chris Allsopp.

BRAD

One of the coaches is here.

PAM

Then you should go.

Brad hangs up and opens the door.

ASSISTANT COACH CHRIS ALLSOPP

Coach Parker wants everyone to meet
him at the football stadium in
fifteen. Bring running shoes and
your biggest set of balls.

EXT. HARVARD FOOTBALL STADIUM - DAY

Brad is gathered with the other rowers. All are in running shoes, shorts and wearing their Red and Green tank tops. Coach Harry Parker stands in front of them.

COACH HARRY PARKER

Disappointed with what I've seen.
Poor racing cadence. Poor form. You
row as though you're afraid of
pain. That changes today.

Brad and the other rowers look amongst one another. Uh oh.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)

You will run these steps until you
drop. If a rower from the Red Group
is the last man running, I'll keep
you in the same groupings for the
entire camp. If a rower from the
Green Group is the last man, he'll
move up to Red. He'll also choose
who'll be sent down.

At this, Brad glances hungrily at the rowers in the Red Group. Particularly Charlie Altkruse. Coach Parker starts pulling off his windbreaker and khakis, revealing that he's also wearing running clothes.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)

But if I am the last man running,
then I will immediately cut two
rowers from camp.

The rowers look at each other. Shit. Coach Parker takes off, headed up the stadium stairs. Brad and the eleven other rowers start running, trying to catch up.

EXT. HARVARD FOOTBALL STADIUM - THIRTY MINUTES LATER

Coach Parker and all dozen rowers run the steps. A commingling swarm of Green and Red.

EXT. HARVARD FOOTBALL STADIUM - AN HOUR LATER

Brad runs the steps. He's sweating. But strong. He runs past JOEY PENDLETON, a Green Group rower who drags slowly up a couple of steps. Pendleton pauses in the middle of the steps, sucking breath.

COACH HARRY PARKER (O.S.)

Move, Pendleton. Weakness spreads.

Joey Pendleton drags himself out of the way as Coach Parker crisply sprints down the steps his rowers are running up. Brad keeps running. Still briskly. He catches up to Charlie Altkruse, who labors up the steps. Brad brushes past Charlie's shoulder.

BRAD

Sorry. Didn't see you.

Brad takes off up the steps, outpacing Charlie. Coach Parker sprints up the steps. He passes a winded Ridgely Johnson, a Harvard rower who is barely making it up the steps.

COACH HARRY PARKER

Soft, Ridgley.

Ridgely Johnson gives up and drops out. Brad and Coach Parker cross paths, dominating the competition.

EXT. HARVARD FOOTBALL STADIUM - AN HOUR LATER

Most of the rowers are sprawled in the stands in Red and Green clusters. Paul Enquist, Tiff Wood, Coach Harry Parker and Brad Lewis run the steps as the FINAL FOUR.

Brad's sweating, exhausted. But focused. He sees Coach Parker running down the steps. Sweating, but impervious.

Brad keeps going. He passes Paul Enquist, who stops. Brad glances back over his shoulder to see Paul collapsing into the seats from exhaustion.

Just Brad, Coach Parker and Tiff Wood now. Brad keeps on. Tiff ahead of him. Brad pushes to catch up. They run beside each other.

TIFF WOOD

It's like getting in a pissing contest with General Patton.

BRAD

Heads up.

Tiff looks up to see that Coach Parker is running briskly down the steps toward them.

COACH HARRY PARKER

Great day.

Coach Parker keeps on, outpacing the two younger Olympic level athletes.

TIFF WOOD
Fuck this. I need a drink.

Tiff stops running, leaving just Brad and Coach Parker.

EXT. HARVARD FOOTBALL STADIUM - THIRTY MINUTES LATER

Brad runs up the steps. Soaked in sweat. Beyond exhausted. Turns to see Coach Parker running beside him.

COACH HARRY PARKER
Does an Olympic caliber rower lose
to a middle-aged man?

Coach Parker goes into higher gear. Separates from Brad. Brad tries to switch gears but...

His body won't do it. He stumbles, falls. Looks up to see Coach Parker run briskly away. Brad tries to get up, but his body has shut down. Spasms and cramps.

Brad watches as Coach Parker runs back down the steps, past him, to address the rowers.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)
So this is the fire we're bringing
against the West Germans. The East
Germans. The Belgians.

Brad looks on and struggles to get back to his feet.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)
People ask me, "Why haven't you
coached the Americans to a gold
medal yet? Why haven't we won a
single gold in the single, double
or quadruple scull in the last
fifty years?" This is the answer.
Our rowers accept defeat.

The rowers are silent.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)
As it appears I'm the last man
standing, I'll now make the camp's
first cuts. Mr. Pendleton, you were
the first to drop out. Assistant
Coach Allsopp will take your dorm
keys and sign you out.

Joey Pendleton sits there, devastated.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)

Mr. Pendleton, I would like to
speak to the competitive rowers in
my camp now.

Joey Pendleton gets up and walks off. The others flinch at
the brutal dismissal. Coach Parker dispassionately surveys
his remaining rowers.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)

Who will join Mr. Pendleton?

Coach Parker's gaze moves across faces, mostly from the
lesser Green Group. Finally, he holds his gaze on Brad.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)

The will to discipline and control.
Some cultivate it. Some do not.

Brad holds Coach Parker's stare, expecting the worst.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)

Mr. Enquist, you can also gather
your belongings and meet in
Assistant Coach Allsopp's office.

Paul Enquist stands up.

PAUL ENQUIST

I outran nearly every one of these
fucks.

COACH HARRY PARKER

Nearly every one of them. I'll
notify the papers.

Coach Parker stands impassively as Paul Enquist stalks off.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)

Tomorrow we practice at the regular
times. I expect to choose my two
and four man boats by week's end.

The remaining rowers get up and start heading out. Charlie
Altkruse comes over to Brad.

CHARLIE ALTEKRUSE

Tick tock, tick tock...

Brad keeps quiet. They all file out.

COACH HARRY PARKER
One final adjustment. I want Mr.
Altekruze to switch tops with Mr.
Lewis.

CHARLIE ALTEKRUSE
What?

COACH HARRY PARKER
Mr. Lewis, welcome to the Red
Group.

CHARLIE ALTEKRUSE
But Coach--

COACH HARRY PARKER
Either give your red top to Mr.
Lewis, or join Mr. Enquist and Mr.
Pendleton in Assistant Coach
Allsopp's office.

An angered Charlie starts taking off his red top. A surprised Brad starts taking off his green top as well.

INT. BAR NEAR HARVARD - NIGHT

Brad has a beer. He's in a dive bar, much more at peace. He spots Paul Enquist in a corner, drinking alone. Brad takes his beer and walks over.

BRAD
You got screwed today.

PAUL ENQUIST
I did. But I hear you're moving up
in the world.

Brad sits down across from him.

BRAD
Maybe. I can't figure out if
Harry's trying to push me or crush
me.

PAUL ENQUIST
No one can. That's why he's the
fucking Sphinx.

BRAD
What are you gonna do? Partner up
with someone and challenge the
camp's double at the trials?

PAUL ENQUIST

No, I'm gonna go back to Seattle,
propose to my girlfriend, and go
back to working on my dad's fishing
boat. Fuck crew. Rich boy's sport.

BRAD

When are you heading back?

PAUL ENQUIST

As soon as I run out of drinking
money.

Paul takes a drink of his beer. Brad studies him.

BRAD

You're stalling. Why?

PAUL ENQUIST

Ever smelled a fish?

EXT. NEWELL BOATHOUSE - MORNING

Brad, now wearing a red tank top, stands among the other rowers in the Red Group. Coach Parker addresses them.

COACH HARRY PARKER

Purdy and Bouscaran have won the
last two heats. Colgan and Johnson,
you get one shot at unseating them.
That leaves Tiff Wood and Brad
Lewis for the third boat.

Coach Parker now looks at something beyond the rowers.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)

The remaining boats will be manned
by our Green Group rowers, who will
now join us each morning.

Brad and the other Red Group turn to see Charlie Altkruse and the other three Green Group rowers.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)

I take it some of you men consider
yourselves Olympic caliber rowers.
Now would be the time to prove it.

Brad joins Tiff in selecting a shell. Charlie Altkruse eyes them, pissed to be demoted.

INT. NEWELL BOATHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Brad and Tiff are selecting a double scull.

TIFF WOOD

This is it.

BRAD

It is?

TIFF WOOD

The steps tested character. And we were the last two left. Now we have to show Harry we can row a boat. Can we?

Brad's eyes light up.

BRAD

Fuck yes we can.

They grab a double shell.

EXT. CHARLES RIVER, HARVARD CAMPUS - LATER

Mid-race. Brad and Tiff row hard. Brad focuses on Tiff's breathing, synching his own to it. They fire away, one very fast etheric body.

Coach Harry Parker stands on the shore, next to Assistant Coach Allsopp at the finish line. Watching.

Brad and Tiff's boat races neck-and-neck with a fired-up Charlie Altekruze and a Green Rower's boat for the lead. It's a two boat race. All the others are well behind.

Brad and Tiff start to pull away a little. Then a little more. And they win the race. Coach Parker looks on.

COACH HARRY PARKER

I've found my Olympic double.

Assistant Coach Allsopp looks over at Coach Parker.

INT. PAM'S APARTMENT - DAY

Pam is in her bathrobe, on her couch. Hair cropped short. Puke bucket nearby. The chemo is kicking her ass. But she does her research and writing anyway. A KNOCK at the door. Pam slowly gets up to answer. Opens the door. It's buff Mitch, holding a large bowl.

MITCH

I brought soup.

Pam takes the bowl. Behind Mitch is a mop and a bucket full of cleaning supplies. He grabs them.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Now let's turn this place into a temple of healing.

PAM

Do you mind if I work on my dissertation while you turn my apartment into a temple of healing?

MITCH

I'd be offended if you didn't.

Pam steps aside. Mitch brings his stuff inside. Pam takes the soup into the kitchen.

MITCH (CONT'D)

I'm going to welcome in some positive energy.

Mitch measures the apartment's aura, then takes out a piece of chalk and starts making CHOKU-REI symbols.

MITCH (CONT'D)

The symbol of choku-rei. "Place the power of the universe here."

Mitch opens up windows as Pam slowly returns to reading on the couch.

MITCH (CONT'D)

We need to open you up to the greater spirit's flow.

PAM

Could you close those, actually?
The greater spirit's causing a draft.

MITCH

It's also clearing out some of the stale chemo fart smell.

Mitch starts pouring cleaning products into the bucket. He takes out cleaning brushes and sponges.

MITCH (CONT'D)

You haven't told Brad yet, have you?

Mitch starts scrubbing Pam's floor.

PAM

The last thing Brad needs right now
is a distraction.

MITCH

Do you know how I came to be best
friends with an asshole?

PAM

I'm guessing it wasn't his hot body
or general anthropological
piquancy.

MITCH

I was the school nerd in fifth
grade. Official bully magnet.
Pimples, comic books, thick
glasses, undersized. Sometimes I
wore a cape.

PAM

A cape?

MITCH

It was purple.

PAM

You were kind of asking for it.

MITCH

And Brad was the school spazz. So
by default, we were playground
buddies. No one else would play
with us. I figured, once we got to
junior high, we'd split up. So on
the first day of seventh grade, I'm
alone doing my nerd thing. And
these three huge 8th grade jocks
start picking on me, right before
gym class. And before I know it,
Brad comes running across the
locker room, fists flying, and
tries taking on all three of them
at once.

PAM

Sounds like Brad.

MITCH

They kicked his ass.

PAM

Also sounds like Brad.

MITCH

So on the very first day of junior high, Brad gets himself a week's suspension. When he gets home, his dad takes a switch to him and grounds him for a month. After his suspension, Brad comes back to school. Walks into the locker room. Sees those same three jocks still giving me shit. So Brad runs over and takes on all three of them. All over again. First day back. Even though he knows he's gonna get his ass kicked. All over again. By them and by his dad.

Pam takes this in.

MITCH (CONT'D)

And that's when I became best friends with an asshole. If Brad believes in something, he doesn't stop fighting for it.

PAM

He's fighting to make the Olympics.

MITCH

And you're fighting for your life. Which is more important?

Pam considers a moment.

PAM

First the Olympics. Then us.

MITCH

Pam...

PAM

I'll tell him. When I'm ready.

Mitch takes a breath. Okay.

INT. DORM ROOM - DAY

A KNOCK at the door. Brad -- still in his rowing clothes -- answers. It's Assistant Coach Allsopp.

ASSISTANT COACH CHRIS ALLSOPP
Coach Parker wants to talk to you.

BRAD
About what?

ASSISTANT COACH CHRIS ALLSOPP
The camp's double boat.

BRAD
I'm on my way.

Brad closes the door. He goes to his closet and finds a button-up shirt and a pair of slacks. He takes the tags off. Starts putting them on. As he does, he takes a look at his father's photograph.

BRAD (CONT'D)
(to father's picture)
Here we go.

Brad tucks his shirt in and straightens his tie.

EXT. HARVARD CAMPUS - MINUTES LATER

Brad strides across the beautiful campus.

INT. PRIVATE DINING ROOM, HARVARD CAMPUS - DAY

Brad enters a private, ornate dining room on Harvard campus. He wears his nice looking button-up shirt and slacks. Coach Harry Parker sits alone in the otherwise empty room. He's eating, wielding his utensils with surgical precision.

COACH HARRY PARKER
Mr. Lewis, have a seat.

Brad sits in one of the weirdly ornate chairs.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)
Hungry?

BRAD
Sure.

A WAITER approaches the table.

COACH HARRY PARKER
(to waiter)
The same.

The waiter exits the room. Coach Parker continues eating. Brad sits there. Anticipating.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)
(still eating)
You've been working toward this for awhile.

BRAD
Every day for twelve years.

COACH HARRY PARKER
Technique's improved lately.

BRAD
You were right. About my posture and my arms on the drive. So I made adjustments. I don't care about personal grudges either.

COACH HARRY PARKER
Only being an Olympian.

BRAD
I care about helping us win a medal. I think I get it now. Your philosophy. You get inside our heads and coach us from there.

Coach Parker considers this. He dabs at his mouth with his cloth napkin. He takes in Brad with seemingly sober imperial approval.

COACH HARRY PARKER
The camp double is going to be Joe Bouscaran and Charlie Altekruze.

Brad takes the news like the sucker punch it is.

BRAD
But me and Tiff--

COACH HARRY PARKER
Tiff and I.

BRAD
We beat Charlie and Joe. In the single and the double. We're the two best rowers you have.

COACH HARRY PARKER
Tiff will lead our four man quad boat.

BRAD
What about me?

COACH HARRY PARKER
My job as coach of the Olympic
rowing team is to find out what is
inside men. I pull it out of them
and forge it. Then I put it to the
test.

BRAD
And you've seen what's inside me.

COACH HARRY PARKER
I have. It's not enough.

Coach Parker returns to casually eating.

BRAD
I beat every other rower in this
camp. I outlasted all of them on
the steps.

Coach Parker is relaxed, enjoying his meal.

COACH HARRY PARKER
It's interesting. You sit there and
argue as though you ever had a
chance.

BRAD
What the fuck are you talking
about?

COACH HARRY PARKER
I have no intention of allowing an
individual of your character into
one of my boats. Too volatile. Too
inconsistent. Too out of control.

BRAD
Then why am I even at this camp?

COACH HARRY PARKER
To motivate my competitive rowers,
mostly. To expose them to the
threat of losing their seats to a
specimen such as yourself. It's
been useful to gauge their
responses.

BRAD
Fuck you.

COACH HARRY PARKER

Plus, your dismissal should now also help me remind one Tiff Wood of the limits of a brutish and immature self-regard.

Coach Parker returns to eating.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)

You can leave your dorm key and uniform with Coach Allsopp.

Brad sits there. The Waiter enters and sets a plate before him. Brad -- pissed off and bewildered -- stares at the odd assortment of seafood and cheeses before him.

BRAD

This is all because I interrupted you at the business school, isn't it?

COACH HARRY PARKER

No, I regard your performance at my lecture as just another symptom of your lack of character. I don't actually blame you for that, though. I knew your father when he thought he was a competitive rower, so I know you can't help coming up a little short. It's your birthright, I suppose.

Brad's knuckles are now going white.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)

A fascinating cycle. Generation after generation on this planet. But the Lewis family can't seem to figure it out. How to pull itself together. How to cultivate any kind of class. Take your father. Rowing at the highest level. Perhaps at an Olympic level. And then he gives up, at his peak. Cracked from the pressure.

Coach Parker finally stops eating and looks Brad in the eye.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)

Why would I allow someone like that to represent my legacy, my country, or my sport on the world stage?

BRAD

I'm not my father. I'm the best fucking rower in the country.

COACH HARRY PARKER

Yes, enjoy telling that to your children between shifts cleaning toilets or whatever it is you end up doing for a living.

BRAD

Fuck you!

Brad swipes plates, food, and drinks off of the table. They go flying onto the floor. Coach Parker, undisturbed, takes in the mess and the furious young man in front of him.

COACH HARRY PARKER

You make my case for me quite succinctly.

Having heard the commotion, the Waiter rushes in.

WAITER

Mr. Parker, is something wrong?

COACH HARRY PARKER

No, the food is splendid, Charlie.
I'm ready for dessert.

EXT. HARVARD CAMPUS - DAY

Brad walks through the Harvard campus. Furious. Despondent.

INT. DORM ROOM - DAY

Brad's ripping off his nice clothes with disgust. He can't even look at his father's picture.

EXT. SIDEWALK, BOSTON - DAY

Brad's on a payphone.

BRAD

(into phone)

Harry cut me from his camp.

PAM'S VOICE

But I thought--

BRAD

Apparently I never had a chance to make the team. I was only there so he could make an example out of me.

PAM'S VOICE

Oh. Oh God...

BRAD

So now I've got to figure out how to make the Olympics without him.

Brad now hears: Pam's crying.

BRAD (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

PAM'S VOICE

Nothing.

BRAD

Then why are you crying?

PAM'S VOICE

You're still fighting...

BRAD

Of course I'm still fighting. I won't stop fucking fighting.

PAM'S VOICE

Me neither.

Brad takes this in.

INT. BAR NEAR HARVARD - NIGHT

Brad enters the bar and goes over to where Paul Enquist drinks beer and plays Galaga.

BRAD

The qualifying trials are three weeks away. We have time to train.

Paul stays focused on the arcade game.

PAUL ENQUIST

Ah, so your ass got cut as well. Sorry, but I'm flying back home tomorrow.

BRAD

Then cancel the fucking flight.

Paul dies in his Galaga game. He puts in another quarter and resumes playing.

PAUL ENQUIST

Can't do it. I told my dad I'd be back for salmon season.

At this, Brad grabs Paul and gets in his face.

BRAD

If you gave a shit about salmon season, you would've left this hellhole a week ago. So let's cut the bullshit and get into a boat.

Paul looks at the wild-eyed Brad.

EXT. NEWELL BOATHOUSE - JUST BEFORE DAWN

Brad leads Paul through the pre-dawn darkness around the Boathouse. They reach a back door. Brad reaches above it, searching for the key. He finds it.

PAUL ENQUIST

Are we stealing one of Coach Parker's shells?

BRAD

That's an interesting philosophical question.

Brad unlocks the door and enters. Paul follows...

INT. NEWELL BOATHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

...as they enter and make their way among the hanging sculls.

BRAD

On one hand, we are trespassing, breaking and entering, and taking private property. On the other hand, Harry Parker is a rank piece of shit.

Brad checks out a gleaming double-scull with "HARVARD" written on the side.

BRAD (CONT'D)

So it might be best to leave questions of morality to those with a more refined upbringing.

PAUL ENQUIST

Perhaps so.

He joins Brad in taking down the double-scull.

EXT. HARVARD CAMPUS - MINUTES LATER

Brad and Paul hustle across the pre-dawn darkness, carrying the stolen double-scull above their heads.

INT. BRAD'S ACCORD - NIGHT

Brad and Paul drive through Boston with their liberated scull tied to his rental car.

PAUL ENQUIST

So where are we going?

BRAD

I have no idea.

Paul gives Brad a look.

BLACK SCREEN

TITLE reads:

"ITHACA"

EXT. LAKE CAYUGA, ITHACA - DAY

Brad pulls his Accord up to an isolated LAKE. Double scull still on top. He and Paul get out and take in the lake. It's beautiful, serene.

MAN'S VOICE

So are you the assholes who stole
one of Coach Harry Parker's shells
and then blew outta Dodge?

Brad and Paul turn to see TONY JOHNSON (60s), Cornell's weathered crew coach. He has a steely bearing, not unlike Harry Parker's.

BRAD

I suppose we may have borrowed one
of Harry's spare shells.

TONY JOHNSON

I see. And now you think you can
come make yourself at home at my
lake and my practice camp?

BRAD

We were hoping you'd let us train
here so we could challenge Coach
Parker's double at the Olympic
qualifier.

Tony Johnson stares at them a beat. Then breaks into a grin.

TONY JOHNSON

Well, I've been waiting two decades
to see someone stand up to that son
of a bitch Parker.

Brad and Paul exhale with relief. Tony Johnson steps up, hand
extended. As they shake--

TONY JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Coach Tony Johnson. Which one's
Lewis and which one's Enquist?

PAUL ENQUIST

I'm Enquist, he's Lewis.

TONY JOHNSON

Welcome to Ithaca, fellas. Our
lightweight boat hits the water at
5 each morning. Join us if you've
got any hair on your balls because
my boys will kick your fatweight
asses up and down this lake.

BRAD

Looking forward to it.

TONY JOHNSON

Where are you staying?

BRAD

We were gonna look for a motel
nearby. Any suggestions?

TONY JOHNSON

Yeah. Fuck motels. We've got room
in the boathouse.

PAUL ENQUIST

You're going to let us stay in your
boathouse?

TONY JOHNSON

Look, I love our sport. But it
could really use a kick in the ass.

INT. CORNELL BOATHOUSE - DAY

Brad unpacks. Glances over at Paul, who sits on his own cot. Paul eats sardines from a can. Lifts his butt to release a fart. Brad realizes: the honeymoon period is going to be short.

EXT. LAKE CAYUGA, ITHACA - MORNING

Coach Tony Johnson stands on the dock, looking out at the lake. Brad and Paul row in their double-scull. Brad keeps looking over his shoulder.

PAUL ENQUIST

What are you looking at?

BRAD

They're like goddamn skeletons.
It's ghoulish.

Brad is fixated on the four-man quad with FOUR LIGHTWEIGHT ROWERS that he and Paul are racing against. They're strikingly thin: small-boned, hollow-cheeked, hungry-looking. They're also a couple of boat-lengths ahead.

PAUL ENQUIST

Those skeletons are kicking our ass.

BRAD

Then maybe you should pick up your cadence.

PAUL ENQUIST

Fuck you. You're lagging.

BRAD

I'm not lagging. It's you. Your technique blows. You're not leaning into your catch--

Paul stops rowing. Turns to Brad.

PAUL ENQUIST

My technique is pristine, fuckhead.
Now shut up and row.

Brad glares at Paul, then they start rowing again. Still out of synch.

EXT. LAKE - LATER

Brad and Paul sit there in the scull, sucking air.

BRAD

We suck ass.

PAUL ENQUIST

What was that weird breathing shit
you were doing at the camp? When we
clicked?

BRAD

I was fusing our etheric bodies.

PAUL ENQUIST

What does that mean?

BRAD

I have no fucking idea.

PAUL ENQUIST

Then who does?

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Mitch walks out of the terminal, carrying a small tote bag
and a portable massage table. He sees Brad.

MITCH

Let's get to work.

They walk out.

INT. CORNELL BOATHOUSE - DAY

A hand hovers above a naked back. Mitch's hand, Brad's back.
Brad is laid out on the massage table, wearing only a towel.

BRAD

So what are you doing?

MITCH

Measuring your aura.

Mitch is moving his hands about an inch above Brad's body.
It's sort of Eastern, mystical in its vibes.

BRAD

How?

MITCH

My etheric body is measuring your etheric body. Energy flow and balance.

Paul stands aside, skeptical.

PAUL ENQUIST

This is some hippie bullshit.

MITCH

Tell that to the Belgians.

BRAD

The Belgians do this?

MITCH

They do what it takes to win.

(to Paul)

Put pressure on his right arm.

Paul does so.

MITCH (CONT'D)

(to Brad)

Lift.

Brad tries to lift his arm.

PAUL ENQUIST

Go ahead.

BRAD

I am.

PAUL ENQUIST

Seriously?

BRAD

Fuck off.

MITCH

Aura imbalance. Energy blockage below your waist and between your shoulders. I'm gonna have to make some adjustments.

BRAD

To which body?

MITCH

The one that keeps losing.

Mitch grabs one of Brad's legs and yanks it. POP! He goes to work on Brad's vertebrae, cracking each one.

MITCH (CONT'D)
Hard to get in rhythm with a
lopsided instrument.

Mitch makes a few more adjustments. Then hovers his hands up and down Brad's body.

MITCH (CONT'D)
Lift again.

Brad lifts. Paul has to fight to keep the arm down.

PAUL ENQUIST
Shit.

Brad can also feel the difference.

BRAD
Shit.

MITCH
(still massaging Brad's
aura)
No, shit is corporeal. That was
etheric.

PAUL ENQUIST
So it works?

MITCH
Of course it works. Are you going
to give it a try?

PAUL ENQUIST
I don't know...

MITCH
(as he massages)
The way I see it, you've got two
options. Either stand there like a
pussy or strip down naked so I can
massage your aura like a man.

Paul thinks a moment, then starts stripping.

EXT. LAKE CAYUGA, ITHACA - DAY

Brad and Paul row. No miracles. But they're doing better.

Mitch stands on the dock, doing arm curls with some small boat anchors. He studies Brad and Paul's progress. Sees them begin arguing out on the water.

INT. CORNELL BOATHOUSE - DAY

Brad sits across from Mitch. They study video of a race.

MITCH

Belgium. Their eight-oared shell sprinted from last place to first place at the '82 worlds.

BRAD

No shit.

MITCH

This is the difference between a crew wound tight with Harry Parker anxiety and a crew loose enough to excel at the highest level.

Mitch rewinds to before the race. The Belgians chat amiably, relaxed near tensed and silent AMERICAN ROWERS. Mitch pauses the video.

INT. CORNELL BOATHOUSE - INTERCUT

The video fast forwards to the last quarter of the race.

MITCH

Five hundred meters out. While every other crew is winded, Belgium sits up straighter. They row faster. They embrace the danger.

Mitch rewinds again to before the start of the race and the Belgian rowers chatting amiably. Pauses it.

MITCH (CONT'D)

One mind. One body. One aura. Prepared. Flowing with positive energy.

It's now Paul in the same room, watching the same video, getting the same pep talk.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Can I be candid? Just between you and me?

PAUL ENQUIST

I guess.

MITCH

Psychologically, you're the
stronger one in the boat.

Paul nods knowingly at this.

INT. CORNELL BOATHOUSE - INTERCUT

Back to Brad and Mitch watching the same Belgium race.

MITCH

And since you're the stronger one,
you'll have to step up.

BRAD

Okay, I figured that. How?

MITCH

Indulge Paul's quirks. Go with his
flow. Be his Belgium.

INT. CORNELL BOATHOUSE - INTERCUT

Paul considers the same suggestion from Mitch.

PAUL ENQUIST

You mean I should just let Brad
push me around?

MITCH

No. I mean there's more than one
way to dominate. There's Harry
Parker dominance. And then there's
Belgium dominance.

INT. CORNELL BOATHOUSE - INTERCUT

Mitch now speaks to Brad.

MITCH

Starting now, I want you to
cultivate your boat's aura. Think,
"Belgium."

EXT. LAKE CAYUGA, ITHACA - DAY

Brad and Paul charge across the lake, smoothly in synch. Eyes closed. They're racing the lightweight quad and beating them.

Mitch does arm curls as he watches from the dock. In unison, Brad and Paul sit up together as they accelerate their stroke rate. Coach Tony Johnson looks on as well.

TONY JOHNSON
What'd you do to them?

MITCH
I unfucked their auras.

TONY JOHNSON
You what?

MITCH
I sent them to Belgium.

Tony Johnson looks at Mitch as if he were some alien. Mitch grins to himself and keeps up his curls.

EXT. LAKE CAYUGA, ITHACA - DAY

Brad and Mitch walk alone around the lake. Brad takes in the deep, luxurious pines and picturesque boulders.

BRAD
I want to buy it. This whole aura routine. I do.

MITCH
"Aura routine." An upgrade. It used to be "aura bullshit."

BRAD
I've been thinking about it. If this aura bullshit isn't real, then why's it working? Here's why. It's something for me and Paul to rally around. A flag. A mascot.

MITCH
The Fightin' Etheric Bodies. Got it.

BRAD
I'm not complaining. I'll keep doing it as long as it's working.
(MORE)

BRAD (CONT'D)

But it's not like I'm going to go back home when this is all over and start dry humping yoga candles and chanting and shit.

Mitch looks at him: really?

BRAD (CONT'D)

Or whatever it is you do in your spare time.

MITCH

So what do you plan on doing when you get back home?

BRAD

After the Olympics, I'm going to move out of my dad's basement. Move in with Pam. Get married. Start a family. Try to have a hobby. Surfing, maybe. I've always wanted to fly a hot air balloon...

MITCH

After the Olympics. And if you don't make it?

BRAD

If I don't make the Olympics, then it doesn't matter what I do. It was all for nothing.

MITCH

What was?

Brad looks at Mitch, eyes intense.

BRAD

My entire fucking existence.

BLACK SCREEN

TITLE reads:

"ONE WEEK LATER --
OLYMPIC DOUBLE TRIALS
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY
JUNE 1984"

EXT. PRINCETON CAMPUS - DAWN

Brad drives his Accord through campus. Paul shotgun. Double-scull shell strapped to the roof. They pull into the parking lot of the Boathouse and park. A SECURITY GUARD comes over.

SECURITY GUARD

Is this your boat? Coach Harry Parker of Harvard reported one stolen from his boathouse.

BRAD

Someone stole one of Harry's boats?
That's terrible.

The Security Guard glance at the shell, which has "HARVARD UNIVERSITY" stenciled onto it.

SECURITY GUARD

I'm going to have to confiscate that boat until Coach Parker can clear it. You may not be able to use it for the race.

BRAD

Then I guess we'll have to use that other boat then.

Brad gestures at a little green RENAULT, driven by Mitch, rolling into the parking lot. A double scull with "BELGIUM" stenciled on it is strapped to the top.

EXT. PRINCETON CAMPUS - DAY

Harry Parker, Charlie Altekruuse and Joe Bouscaren discuss strategy. Charlie points up.

CHARLIE ALTEKRUUSE

Classy as always.

Coach Parker and Joe look up to see Brad and Paul hanging a bedsheet with the words "NOBODY BEATS US" spray painted across it from their dorm window.

INT. DORM ROOM - DAY

Two single beds side by side. Brad sits on one facing Paul, who sits on the other. Both men have their eyes closed and are synchronizing their breaths. Mitch stands nearby. As Brad and Paul keep their breaths in synch, Mitch tries to shake their resolve.

MITCH

Harry Parker is the most successful rowing coach in this country. He found both of you lacking. No one expects you to win here. What do you say to that?

Brad and Paul keep in synch.

BRAD AND PAUL

Nobody beats us.

MITCH

In Lucerne, Charlie Altekroese and Joe Bouscaren dominated world class double sculls from all across Europe. They have better equipment, better training, better funding than you. Win or lose, they will go on to have more successful lives than you. What do you say to that?

BRAD AND PAUL

Nobody beats us.

MITCH

Paul, you're going to smell like fish for the rest of your life. Your wife will recoil from your touch. Your children will fight to not be embarrassed by your presence. What do you say to that?

PAUL ENQUIST

Nobody beats us.

MITCH

Brad, you trained every day for twelve years to make the Olympics as a single sculler. You sacrificed more than you even realize for a chance to win the singles qualifier. And when you were given that chance, you choked. Just like Harry Parker knew you would.

Brad keeps his breathing in synch with Paul's.

MITCH (CONT'D)

And now everyone expects you to fail in the double as well because the only person who would crew with you is a balding fisherman with middling talent.

(MORE)

MITCH (CONT'D)

You've pushed away anyone who's
ever loved you to chase a dream no
one gives a shit about. What do you
say to that?

Both men keep their breathing in synch.

BRAD

Nobody beats us.

Mitch takes in these two men. Hovers his hands around them,
testing their aura.

MITCH

You're ready.

Brad and Paul open their eyes. They stand.

MITCH (CONT'D)

One bond, one aura, one--

Paul punches Mitch in the gut and stalks out of the room.
Mitch falls to the ground, sucking breath.

MITCH (CONT'D)

(breathless to Brad)
I was just...trying to get...a
reaction.

BRAD

It worked.

Brad reaches down to help Mitch get up.

EXT. LAKE CARNEGIE - DAY

Brad and Paul are on the lake, eyes closed. They row and
breathe slowly, in synch. The other rowers are amused,
watching the two outcasts and their strange methods.

COACH HARRY PARKER (O.S.)

(through megaphone)
To the starting line.

Brad and Paul open their eyes as Coach Parker's launch speeds
by, nearly swamping their scull with water from its wake.

EXT. DOCK, LAKE CARNEGIE - MINUTES LATER

Brad and Paul settle into their scull and dry their oars.
Tiff Wood and JIM DIETZ are in the lane next to them.

BRAD
(to Tiff)
I thought you were in Harry's quad.

TIFF WOOD
I was. Then in Lucerne, the quad
was one and a half seconds faster
with Charlie Bracken in my seat.

BRAD
And Harry threw you out?

TIFF WOOD
Same fucking night. Charlie and Joe
kicked ass, though.

Brad glances at Charlie Altekruse and Joe Bouscaren in a gleaming new scull. Coach Parker steps forward to address the rowers. Among the four other pairs competing, we also see young Billy (who drove Brad's single scull cross-country).

COACH HARRY PARKER
This race will determine which double will represent our nation and our sport in the double scull at the summer games. Assistant coach Allsopp will call your positions.

Coach Parker walks off the dock and back into his motorized launch boat, which takes him to the finish line. Chris Allsopp approaches the sculls.

ASSISTANT COACH CHRIS ALLSOPP
Lane one, prêt? Lane two, prêt?

The first two doubles nod: yes. Allsopp reaches Tiff and Dietz.

ASSISTANT COACH CHRIS ALLSOPP (CONT'D)
Lane three, prêt?

They give a thumbs up. Allsopp continues down the dock.

ASSISTANT COACH CHRIS ALLSOPP (CONT'D)
Lane four, prêt? Lane five, prêt?
Lane six, prêt?

Everyone's ready. Allsopp raises his flag.

ASSISTANT COACH CHRIS ALLSOPP (CONT'D)
Partez!

The race begins. In one graceful, impeccable stroke, Brad and Paul bolt off the line. One perfect stroke follows another.

The other doubles measure their progress to each other as they row. But Brad and Paul focus only on their own rowing. Brad's eyes are riveted to Paul's back. Paul's gaze is focused on the shell's stern. Breaths in synch. They wobble a little at the mid-point...

PAUL ENQUIST
(under breath)
Steady...

They right themselves quickly. Brad finally glances to see where they're at compared to the other boats. They're just ahead of Altekruuse-Bouscaren and Wood-Dietz.

But young Billy's boat is ahead of them...they keep grinding...

PAUL ENQUIST (CONT'D)
Who's ahead?

BRAD
Children.

PAUL ENQUIST
They'll fade.

Brad and Paul reach the SLOPING ROCK that nearly marks the halfway point...

BRAD
750 meters. Ten for Harry.

In perfect synch, Brad and Paul amplify their speed, counting out "one, two, three" all the way to "ten"...and they pass Young Billy's boat. They're now in first place...

Altekruuse & Bouscaren (second) and Wood & Dietz (third) also make their moves...they pass the WHITE SHED that marks the last stretch...

BRAD (CONT'D)
Thirty more seconds. Ten for Charlie.

PAUL ENQUIST
For Charlie?

BRAD
I want to see the fucker turn his head...

Paul laughs. In perfect synch, Brad and Paul amplify their speed again, counting out "one, two, three" all the way to "ten"...Charlie Altekruze turns his head to see Brad and Paul pull away. Charlie's will drops away.

Brad and Paul approach the finish, where Coach Harry Parker watches, inscrutable. A thought hits Brad. Has he overlooked another boat, like he did John Biglow in the single? He scans. No. No other boat close to them.

But there are ONE HUNDRED BICYCLISTS riding alongside the lake, cheering.

BRAD (CONT'D)
Ten for us...

Brad and Paul amplify their speed one last time, counting out "one, two, three" all the way to "ten"...

OFFICIAL
Winner!

Brad and Paul cross the finish line in first place. It takes a full SIX SECONDS for Tiff and Dietz to cross...

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)
Second place!

Followed by upstart Young Billy's boat...

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)
Third!

Finally, Altekruze and Bouscaren cross the finish line in a distant fourth...

Coach Parker gazes inscrutably at the finish line, watching the final two doubles cross. He holds his gaze. Then turns away from the lake and walks off, alone.

On the water, Brad and Paul don't celebrate. Instead, they silently row at half-speed in perfect synchronization, eyes closed, cooling down and breathing in synch out beyond the finish line.

Brad opens his eyes to see Coach Parker walking away from the lake. Brad smiles slightly, then closes his eyes and falls back into rhythm with Paul.

BLACK SCREEN

TITLE reads:

"LOS ANGELES"

INT. LAX AIRPORT LOBBY - DAY

Brad and Paul walk through the airport, wearing Olympic warm-up suits. PEOPLE notice. Brad looks around as they walk.

PAUL ENQUIST
Expecting autograph seekers?

BRAD
No. Girlfriend must be at work. You all set with a place and everything?

PAUL ENQUIST
Yeah. Bare bones. No distractions.

BRAD
Okay, I'll pick you up at four and drive us out to Lido Isle. I gotta pick up a few things first.

Paul walks off. Brad turns to a KIOSK selling small Olympic and American flags.

INT. BRAD'S ECONOLINE VAN - DAY

Brad's back in his shitty Econoline van, happy to be stuck in the traffic and smog of LA. He holds a bouquet of flowers with the Olympic and American flags tucked inside.

EXT. PAM'S APARTMENT - DAY

Brad gets out of his van and walks toward Pam's apartment building, holding the flowers. He walks up to her door and knocks, not knowing that she's sick. Brad stands there, expectant. But when the door opens, the flowers and small flags fall to the ground.

INT. PAM'S APARTMENT - DAY

Brad and Pam sit on her couch. He's stunned, disbelieving. Pam's thin, pale, and calm.

BRAD
Why didn't you tell me?

PAM
Because I'm not a distraction.

Brad takes in the room. Sees candles and choku-rei symbols.

BRAD

Then why didn't Mitch tell me?

PAM

Because I wouldn't let him make me one.

Brad searches for words. He takes in Pam's skin and hair.

BRAD

I should've been here. You should have told me.

PAM

Because you'd have given up your chance at the Olympics and flown back?

Brad glances down at his Olympic uniform.

BRAD

I...

PAM

You're an asshole, Brad. Not a liar.

BRAD

(beat)

I don't know if I would've flown back.

PAM

I do.

They sit there in silence a long beat.

PAM (CONT'D)

It's fine. If you were the type who'd come back, I never would've been interested in you in the first place. I would've gotten bored.

BRAD

So what are we going to do?

PAM

I'm going to write another chapter in my dissertation. You're going to train for your race.

BRAD

Fuck your dissertation. Fuck my race. What about the cancer?

PAM

Do you know what Socrates did after
he was sentenced to death?

BRAD

You haven't been sentenced to
death.

PAM

Do you know what he did? In his
final hours?

BRAD

Socrates? What do you think?

PAM

He took out his flute and learned
how to play a new song.

BRAD

Why the fuck did he do that?

PAM

Because it was his last chance to
learn it.

Brad takes in Pam, who is sickly but resolute.

INT. BRAD'S ECONOLINE VAN - DAWN

Brad drives out to the coast. Paul rides shotgun.

BRAD

Have you ever known anyone with
stage three cancer?

PAUL ENQUIST

Why?

BRAD

Making conversation.

PAUL ENQUIST

Yeah. My aunt Tracy.

BRAD

What'd she do about it?

PAUL ENQUIST

She died.

EXT. OCEAN AROUND LIDO ISLE - DAY

Brad and Paul row hard, but they're subtly out of synch. Brad's clearly distracted. They stop...

PAUL ENQUIST
Cadence is still off...

They catch their breaths...

BRAD
What do you know about homeopathy?

PAUL ENQUIST
I don't know jack shit about it.
What does homeopathy have to do
with rowing?

BRAD
It doesn't.

PAUL ENQUIST
Then don't think about it. Think
about getting your timing and
release unfucked before our race.

BRAD
Right.
(beat)
Let's do another.

They start getting into position for another row...

PAUL ENQUIST
And let's do Mitch's breathing
thing on this one. The whole one
body routine.

BRAD
One body. Good idea.

They start rowing again, though Brad's mind is elsewhere.

EXT. DAVID LEWIS' HOUSE - EVENING

Brad gets out of his van and walks toward his father's house. The blue light of the TV is visible through the window. Brad's holding something, though we can't tell what. He heads inside...

INT. DAVID LEWIS' HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

...to see his father David Lewis drinking beer in his recliner and watching TV. David doesn't look up as Brad crosses over to the couch and sits down. The TV features a segment on US sprinter CARL LEWIS.

DAVID LEWIS

So you're an Olympian now.

BRAD

I suppose so.

DAVID LEWIS

And now you probably think you're better than me.

BRAD

I just think I'm a pretty good rower.

DAVID LEWIS

And what kind of man are you?

BRAD

I'm working on it.

DAVID LEWIS

I was faster than Harry Parker. I was faster than all of them.

BRAD

Dad...

DAVID LEWIS

If I was in your place, I'd have a case full of gold medals by now. A case full.

A long silence.

BRAD

I brought you something.

Brad hands it over.

DAVID LEWIS

What's this supposed to be?

It's a nice wooden picture frame with TWO PHOTOGRAPHS in it: the black and white picture of the younger David Lewis that Brad took with him, and a picture of Brad after qualifying for the Olympics.

BRAD

I took your picture with me to the Olympic trials. And the camp. It's what pushed me. Past Harry Parker. Past all of them.

David looks at the pictures of father and son.

BRAD (CONT'D)

You made the Olympics, Dad. We both did.

David looks up at his son. Father and son hold each other's gaze. Tears well in David's eyes. He's deeply moved. But he doesn't have the language to express it. Finally...

DAVID LEWIS

You could've just brought me some beer.

David gets up and goes to the kitchen. But as he walks, he keeps the picture frame tight against his body. Brad watches him exit, then turns his eyes back to the TV where Carl Lewis is being swarmed by well-wishers and autograph seekers.

INT. PAM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Pam opens her front door to see Brad standing there with a couple of suitcases.

BRAD

Can I move in?

PAM

The Olympics aren't over.

BRAD

Lots of distractions out there.

Pam steps aside, letting Brad bring his things inside.

BLACK SCREEN

TITLE reads:

**"1984 SUMMER OLYMPICS
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
JULY 28, 1984"**

EXT. BLUE SKY - DAY

A ROCKET POWERED MAN wearing a jet pack seems to fly through the smoggy Los Angeles sky. He's above 90 feet above ground. This looks like something out of an 8 year old boy's dream.

But it's real. This is a man named William Suitor. He's flying above the ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND PEOPLE packed into the LA Coliseum for the opening ceremonies.

INT. TUNNEL, LOS ANGELES COLISEUM - AT SAME TIME

Brad and Paul are surrounded by a HUNDRED OTHER AMERICAN OLYMPIC ATHLETES, all packed into the tunnel. All wear red, white, and blue tracksuits and holding mini American flags. Brad and Paul take this in, spotting some of the more famous US Olympic athletes.

Carl Lewis is nearby. MARY LOU RETTON. MARY DECKER. EDWIN MOSES. Outside, the crowd ROARS and all of the American Olympians start moving forward. Brad and Paul move out with the herd, toward the daylight.

EXT. COLISEUM - CONTINUOUS

Brad and Paul and the other American Olympians emerge from the tunnel to a deafening ROAR from the hometown crowd. Brad takes in the spectacle, overwhelmed.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - DAY

Coach Harry Parker is staring straight ahead at the camera.

COACH HARRY PARKER

I have four strong rowers on the quad. Solid connection between legs and back. Good acceleration. We have a strong single. Very strong.
John Biglow. Yale graduate.

Coach Parker is speaking to a REPORTER.

REPORTER

Tell me about your double scullers.

INT. PAM'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Brad is on the floor, stretching and watching the TV. Pam is nearby, working on her dissertation.

COACH HARRY PARKER
(on TV)
I hope our double will compete.

REPORTER
(on TV)
There's been reports of conflict
behind the scenes, especially as
you'd previously cut both double
scullers from your camp.

Brad leans in a little to hear his response.

COACH HARRY PARKER
(on TV)
My only focus is winning Olympic
medals.

REPORTER
(on TV)
Especially that long-elusive gold
medal, I'm sure. Your double is
considered a long shot for a medal
of any kind. What do they need to
do tomorrow?

COACH HARRY PARKER
(on TV)
Physically, they're fine. A little
raw on technique. But fine. My
challenge with the double, as a
coach, is mental. Motivation.
Focus. Resilience. Control. The
fear is that they'll crack from the
pressure. I've seen it happen with
men like this before.

BRAD
You son of a bitch.

Brad gets up and turns off the TV.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREETS - NIGHT

Brad drives his Econoline van through residential streets. He drives slowly, working on his breathing, getting himself focused. He takes in the houses, mostly dark at this hour.

Then he hits the brakes. Without quite meaning to, he finds himself outside his father's house. Per usual, the blue light of the TV can be seen through the window.

But that's not what has Brad transfixed. Brad stares with deep satisfaction at the front of the house, where TWO AMERICAN FLAGS hang proudly from the railings of the formerly bare front porch.

INT. PAM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Brad quietly enters the apartment. Pam's asleep on her couch. Book open. Pen in hand. He gently picks her up in his arms and starts carrying her toward the bedroom.

Pam stirs. Looks up at Brad as he carries her. She smiles dreamily.

PAM

There's my Olympian.

Brad carries her to bed. Sets her down and pulls the covers over her. He kicks off his shoes and gets in bed as well. He listens to her breathing, then begins matching his breathing to hers. Breath in. Breath out. Pam turns. Faces him.

PAM (CONT'D)

(quiet)

What are you doing?

BRAD

(quiet)

Forming a single body with you.

They lay there in the dark, breathing together. And fall asleep. But their breathing remains in synch.

BLACK SCREEN

TITLE READS:

"MEN'S DOUBLE SCULL RACE
1984 SUMMER OLYMPICS
AUGUST 5, 1984"

INT. DINING HALL, OLYMPIC VILLAGE - MORNING

Brad and Paul eat breakfast with other OLYMPIC ATHLETES. Brad glances over to see two OLYMPIC ATHLETES -- clearly a romantic couple -- eating and laughing a few tables over. They look a bit like a Brad and a healthy Pam.

PAUL ENQUIST

Hey. How do you feel?

BRAD

Huh?

Paul reaches across and SLAPS Brad.

PAUL ENQUIST

How do you fucking feel?

BRAD

Fired up.

Paul looks at him. That wasn't convincing.

PAUL ENQUIST

I'm going to the lake. The race is
in two hours. Are you ready?

BRAD

I will be.

Paul gives Brad a look, then gets up and leaves. Brad
remains, eating his food. Glances again at the couple.

Coach Harry Parker enters the dining hall, searching. Brad
looks up and sees him. They lock eyes. Brad gets visibly
tenser as Coach Parker comes closer. Coach Parker sits across
from him. They look at each other a beat, then...

COACH HARRY PARKER

You don't have it in you to win a
medal today.

BRAD

And why is that? The shitty
coaching?

COACH HARRY PARKER

You think I don't like your
personality, or that you don't come
from East Coast money. I don't care
about personality. I've coached at
Harvard for twenty-five years. It's
an asshole factory.

BRAD

And East Coast money?

COACH HARRY PARKER

I was in the Navy. My father was a
carpenter. I'm as blue-blooded as
you are.

Brad tries to hide his surprise.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)

The reason for our conflict. The reason why I know you won't win a medal. They're the same. You need it too much. It means too much. Every time you get close to it, you get overwhelmed. And that's why you lose control.

Brad swallows a little. This has the ring of truth.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)

Do you know how I know it means too much?

BRAD

How?

Coach Parker slides over an old PHOTOGRAPH: Brad's father David Lewis stands with his oars, looking out on a lake.

COACH HARRY PARKER

I took that picture of your father just before the national championships. Your father was the favorite. I was nobody. An upstart. Then we raced. I won. And he didn't.

Brad looks at the picture.

BRAD

I get it. My father cracked under the pressure. So I will too. Thanks. It's an honor to experience your legendary coaching in person.

Brad gets up to leave.

COACH HARRY PARKER

This was your father's last race. Before he quit.

Coach Parker shows Brad the date written on the back of his father's photograph.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)

August 15, 1954. He didn't crack, did he?

Brad stops.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)

I was filling out paperwork this morning. Bureaucratic nonsense. But when I entered your birthdate on a form, I realized something. You were born in November, 1954. Four months after this picture was taken.

Coach Harry has detected Brad's core inner wound. And it terrifies Brad.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)

That's why you need it too much. Your father didn't quit rowing because he couldn't take the pressure. He quit rowing because he had to start making a living and raising you. If it wasn't for you, your father would've been an Olympian, wouldn't he?

Brad fights tears.

COACH HARRY PARKER (CONT'D)

How long have you known that?

BRAD

I've always known that.

COACH HARRY PARKER

And now you think what, exactly? That winning an Olympic medal is going to somehow justify your entire existence?

Brad tries to hide his tears. He looks around at the other Olympians. A few are checking out the quietly intense scene between coach and athlete.

BRAD

Why are you doing this? Now? Before the race?

COACH HARRY PARKER

Because it's an embarrassment to me, to have you here. So the least I can do is enjoy the satisfaction of telling you that I've figured you out. And that I know exactly why you're going to come up short.

EXT. LAKE CASITAS - DAY

Brad and Paul are going slowly at half-speed in their double scull. Brad's unnerved. He scans the other teams. Some are cycling through ten or twenty count reps. Some are barking and digging their oars deep into the water to loosen themselves up.

He eyes the BELGIAN DOUBLE. They're loose, disciplined, rowing perfectly in synch.

Brad grips his oars tightly. His nervous eyes dance around. He looks up at the THOUSANDS of people in the stands. Then he sees Coach Harry Parker standing on the side of the course, looking directly at him, judging. Brad diverts his gaze elsewhere.

A WHISTLE BLOWS. Brad and Paul start rowing to the starting dock.

EXT. LAKESIDE GRANDSTAND, LAKE CASITAS - AT SAME TIME

Pam and Mitch sit in the stands, watching Brad and Paul.

PAM

I don't think I've ever seen Brad like this.

MITCH

You mean this nervous?

PAM

No. Scared.

EXT. STARTING DOCK, LAKE CASITAS - MINUTES LATER

Brad and Paul are in their scull in lane 6. They dry off their oars with a towel. The STARTER walks onto the dock, holding a white flag. Paul tosses their water bottle and towel to a nearby STAKE BOY.

Brad is anxious, a little unhinged. Seated in the rear, taps Paul on the shoulder. Paul turns to him.

BRAD

Fired up?

PAUL ENQUIST

I'm fired up.

Brad SLAPS Paul in the face.

BRAD
Are you fired up?!

Paul SLAPS Brad back.

PAUL ENQUIST
I'm fired up!

Wild-eyed, Brad nods. The Yugoslavian double-scull next to them stares at these two maniacs in disbelief.

Nearby, a motorized launch idles with the ABC film crew packed inside. Cornell coach Tony Johnson in an ABC-TV windbreaker. Tony Johnson gives them a big thumbs-up.

STARTER (O.S.)
République Belgique, prêt?

Brad sees that the Starter has his white flag lifted and is making his way across the lanes.

STARTER (CONT'D)
Canada, prêt? Allemagne, prêt?
Italie, prêt? Yougoslavie, prêt?

Finally, the Starter makes it to Brad and Paul.

STARTER (CONT'D)
Étas-unis, prêt?

Brad's gaze wanders back toward Coach Parker.

BRAD
(under breath)
You better fucking believe we're
ready.

STARTER
Prêt?

Brad nods. The Starter goes to the center of the dock. Brad and Paul are primed. Adrenaline fires through them. The Starter drops his flag--

STARTER (CONT'D)
Partez!

They're off! Brad and Paul explode from the starting line with the five other boats. After just a few strokes, they already have a three foot lead. Another powerful stroke, then...a BELL sounds. All the rowers stop rowing.

PAUL ENQUIST
Someone false started.

BRAD

Good. They're fucked.

Brad and Paul -- along with all the other doubles -- paddle back to the starting dock. A YOUNG MAN walks onto the dock, holding a RED TRAFFIC CONE. All of the rowers watch to see whose lane the cone is set at.

The Young Man walks up and sets the cone in Brad and Paul's lane. Brad and Paul false-started.

Brad and Paul look at each other. Shit.

EXT. LAKESIDE GRANDSTAND, LAKE CASITAS - CONTINUOUS

An alarmed Pam and Mitch look on.

PAM

We're fucked.

A nearby OLDER WOMAN leans over.

OLDER WOMAN

What's going on?

MITCH

Americans false-started.

OLDER WOMAN

So they start over again?

PAM

And if they false-start again,
they're disqualified.

EXT. STARTING DOCK, LAKE CASITAS - CONTINUOUS

Brad and Paul dry off their oars.

PAUL ENQUIST

Slow off the line.

BRAD

We fucked it up.

Paul turns to face Brad, who is breathing rapidly out of anger and frustration.

PAUL ENQUIST

Slow breaths. Slow off the line.
Nobody beats us.

Brad nods. Begins focusing on Paul's breathing. It slows his own down. On the dock, the Starter drops his flag--

STARTER
Partez!

All the boats explode off the line. Except Brad and Paul. Cautious now, they take off a moment after the rest. Caught in the choppy wake of the other boats, they also row at a slower rate.

The ABC launch stays even with the hometown duo for a few strokes. But as Brad and Paul fall farther behind...

TONY JOHNSON
(to his pilot)
Speed it up. They're too far back already. We gotta film the race.

The launch speeds up as Tony Johnson takes one last look at Brad and Paul as his launch accelerates to catch up with the rest of the boats.

EXT. LAKESIDE, LAKE CASITAS - CONTINUOUS

ABC's announcing team is set up on the side of the lake. CURT GOWDY is doing the play by play with STEVE GLADSTONE doing the color commentary.

CURT GOWDY
Belgium the leader, Canada number two, and Yugoslavia right now is running third.

EXT. LAKESIDE GRANDSTAND, LAKE CASITAS - CONTINUOUS

Mitch and Pam watch the race.

PAM
Too slow.

MITCH
Maybe.

INT. DAVID LEWIS' HOME - DAY

David Lewis sits in his Lay-Z-Boy, gripping a beer. He's watching the race on TV.

CURT GOWDY (V.O.)

Italy, in the blue, is running
fourth. Federal Republic of Germany
is a close fifth.

DAVID LEWIS

And the Americans aren't even in
the picture.

David takes another drink.

EXT. LAKE CASITAS - DAY

Brad and Paul grind on.

BRAD

Five hundred meters.

Some of the lead boats start slowing down a little.

PAUL ENQUIST

Now?

BRAD

Not yet. Deep breaths. Keep
control.

EXT. MEDIA AREA, LAKE CASITAS - CONTINUOUS

Coach Harry Parker stands near the course, watching with
single sculler John Biglow.

JOHN BIGLOW

Think they'll at least make a show
of it?

Coach Parker doesn't respond. He just watches.

EXT. LAKE CASITAS - CONTINUOUS

Brad and Paul are at the same cadence. Other doubles slow
down. Brad and Paul row their way back into the pack. They
pass a boat into fifth place.

BRAD

Now. Ten for quick hands.

Brad and Paul pick up the pace. They hit the mid-point. And
pass another boat to get into fourth place. They row and
breathe in perfect union. Brad takes in the rest of the
field.

BRAD (CONT'D)

One length from third. Ten for
quicker hands.

They pick up the pace another notch. We now pick up with
ABC's commentary as a VOICE-OVER.

STEVE GLADSTONE (V.O.)

This American crew are two people
who'd really like to make their
mark. They don't feel they've
gotten the respect they deserve,
even from their own coach. Once
again, this is a boat that beat a
selected boat.

Brad and Paul edge closer to the West Germans for third.

INT. PRIVATE CLUB, BOSTON - CONTINUOUS

Tiff Wood, Charlie Altekruse, Joe Bouscaran, and Bill Purdy
watch the private club's TV intently.

STEVE GLADSTONE

(on TV)

These Americans beat a crew that
had been picked ahead of them and
had every advantage. And then Lewis
and Enquist came back through the
trials to make a tremendous race of
it and go on to victory.

Charlie Altekruse puts some twenties in the jacket pocket of
a passing WAITER.

CHARLIE ALTEKRUSE

Keep 'em coming.

EXT. LAKE CASITAS - CONTINUOUS

Brad and Paul keep grinding.

CURT GOWDY (V.O.)

In the lead in lane one is Belgium.
Second, down in lane five, is
Yugoslavia. The United States right
now is closing in on third place.
Here they are. Brad Lewis is
actually a roofer and Paul Enquist,
the stroker, is a commercial
fisherman. These are amateurs in
the truest sense of the word.

Brad and Paul pull past the West Germans. They're now in third place.

PAUL ENQUIST
We got the bronze.

BRAD
Fuck the bronze. Throw it back.

Brad and Paul keep at it.

EXT. LAKE CASITAS - CONTINUOUS

Coach Harry Parker and John Biglow watch. Biglow's excited.

JOHN BIGLOW
Holy shit! Look at them!

But Coach Parker remains inscrutable.

EXT. LAKE CASITAS - CONTINUOUS

Brad and Paul keep charging.

CURT GOWDY (V.O.)
Belgium is still leading. They've sprinted back out again. United States in second.

Brad and Paul keep grinding. Brad nearly hits a buoy.

PAUL ENQUIST
Careful...

Brad, rowing in synch, glances at his oar as he lifts it out of the water and drives for another stroke...

And the oar flies out of the water and right for the buoy...but his oar just barely flies over the buoy by millimeters. Somehow, Brad and Paul both synchronize to keep increasing their speed and to stop steering off course...

BRAD
Five hundred meters. Ten for Belgium.

In perfect unison, Brad and Paul sit taller in their seats and pull harder, raising their stroke rating.

STEVE GLADSTONE (V.O.)
Lewis and Enquist are making their move!

CURT GOWDY (V.O.)

Coming up now, they're about half a
boat length behind the Belgians.

The CHEERING CROWD gets louder as Brad and Paul keep driving.

INT. DAVID LEWIS' HOME - CONTINUOUS

We see Brad and Paul rowing on the TV.

STEVE GLADSTONE (V.O.)

This would be a tremendous upset!
No one expected these two to have
this capability!

David Lewis sits in his Lay-Z-Boy. He grips his beer, his knuckles going white.

EXT. LAKESIDE GRANDSTAND, LAKE CASITAS - CONTINUOUS

Mitch and Pam watch. Everyone around them is screaming encouragement. Mitch and Pam stand, rapt.

EXT. LAKE CASITAS - CONTINUOUS

Brad and Paul keep grinding away in their boat. Their muscles are straining. Everything is excruciating pain right now.

CURT GOWDY (V.O.)

Paul Enquist, Brad Alan Lewis,
coming down toward the grandstand
and the finish line with a shot at
a gold medal.

The Belgium and American boats are way ahead of the rest of the field. Brad and Paul are ready to make their last move.

BRAD

Ten for Nobody Beats Us!

They pick it up even more. Both Belgian rowers look over at Brad and Paul, stunned and concerned.

But Brad and Paul don't glance at the Belgians. They focus on their breathing and on their boat. They know what they're capable of doing. They gain on the Belgium boat with astonishing speed.

CURT GOWDY (V.O.)

The American crew has passed them!
They're in the lead!

STEVE GLADSTONE (V.O.)
These two crews are going neck to neck. This would be an incredible upset if the Americans won!

Brad and Paul row and grind and ache and breathe.

INT. DAVID LEWIS' HOME - CONTINUOUS

David Lewis sits up in his recliner.

CURT GOWDY (V.O.)
The Americans are in the lead!
They've got a shot at the gold!

David's now got tears in his eyes.

EXT. LAKE CASITAS - CONTINUOUS

Brad and Paul make their last strokes. The finish line is just a few boat lengths away...

Everything goes SILENT except for Brad and Paul's breathing.

Breathe in. Breathe out. Breathe in. Breathe out.

EXT. LAKESIDE GRANDSTAND, LAKE CASITAS - CONTINUOUS

The SILENCE continues.

Mitch and Pam are standing in the grandstand.

Breathe in. Breathe out. Breathe in. Breathe out.

INT. DAVID LEWIS' HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Still SILENT.

David Lewis stands up from his recliner.

He has the framed picture of himself and Brad nearby. But he's focused on his son's race.

Breathe in. Breathe out. Breathe in. Breathe out.

EXT. LAKE CASITAS - CONTINUOUS

Still SILENT.

Brad rows and breathes. His hands are dripping blood.

EXT. LAKE CASITAS - CONTINUOUS

Still SILENT.

John Biglow is jumping and screaming and cheering on the double.

Coach Parker looks on.

COACH HARRY PARKER
(under breath)
Twenty five years.

EXT. LAKE CASITAS - CONTINUOUS

Still SILENT.

Brad is in an absolute trance. He sees nothing but Paul's back. He keeps rowing and breathing and bleeding until...

A HORN beeps, piercing the silence. Then a second HORN beeps. One right after the other.

Brad snaps out of it, looks up at the SCOREBOARD.

The SILENCE breaks with a ROAR from the crowd.

CURT GOWDY (V.O.)
The Americans have done it! They've
won the gold!

Brad and Paul look at each other. Stunned. They see the ABC launch boat speeding their way with an ecstatic Tony Johnson nearly leaping out of the boat in excitement.

STEVE GLADSTONE (V.O.)
What an upset!

Brad and Paul alternate between laughing in happy astonishment and painfully sucking in oxygen as they realize they just won the gold.

They take a few moments to catch their breaths. Then they start to savor the moment. They start rowing slowly toward the awards dock.

Brad looks up at the cheering people and the waving flags.

STEVE GLADSTONE (V.O.)

These were two rowers who were not selected by their own U.S. rowing coach. By all rights, they were not supposed to be here. I can't think of anyone who thought these two had a chance at a medal, let alone the gold.

As they row, Brad now sees Coach Parker standing lakeside. They lock eyes. Coach Parker looks upon Brad with a kind of proprietary pride. As if to say: this was all a part of my plan.

Brad sees this. The question hits him. Had Coach Parker been prepping him for this race the entire time? Building up his inner resources?

Coach Parker seems to nod: yes, yes I did.

BRAD

(under his breath)

Bullshit.

Their stares stay locked as Brad and Paul row on, closer to the awards dock.

CURT GOWDY (V.O.)

Lewis and Enquist challenged the selected crew, picked by Olympic Coach Harry Parker -- this is a unique sport, you can do that -- they challenged and beat the coach's hand-selected team.

Brad and Paul row closer. Brad now sees Mitch and Pam looking down at him, bursting with pride.

STEVE GLADSTONE (V.O.)

And now they've won America's first sculling gold since 1932.

Pam is waving a small American flag. Brad smiles to himself. He looks down at his hands. Though they're gripping his oars, the knuckles are relaxed. No white.

EXT. AWARDS DOCK, LAKE CASITAS - MOMENTS LATER

Brad and Paul stand on the awards platform. Belgium for the silver. Yugoslavia for the bronze. An AWARDS OFFICIAL places gold medals around Brad and Paul.

Brad breathes deeply as the NATIONAL ANTHEM starts to play and the American flag is raised up the flagpole. The crowd CHEERS. Brad takes in the glory and the cheers.

FADE TO:

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM, WOMEN'S CLINIC - DAYS LATER

Brad sits in an exam room. He's next to Pam. It's a few days after the Olympics. Both of them are nervous, quiet. They share anxious looks as they wait. The door opens. The DOCTOR walks in.

DOCTOR

I've gone over your tests. The good news is that the cancer cells do not seem to be spreading.

PAM

And the bad news?

DOCTOR

The chemo hasn't completely eradicated them.

BRAD

What does that mean?

DOCTOR

(to Pam)

Who's he?

BRAD

I'm Brad. The boyfriend.

DOCTOR

Nice to meet you, Brad. Finally. What it means is that Pam's cancer is not in remission.

PAM

Not yet.

The doctor's professionalism is touched with sadness.

DOCTOR

Yes. Not yet.

INT. BRAD'S VAN - DAY

Brad drives his shitty van down an LA surface street. WORKERS take down Olympic banners from the street's telephone poles.

Brad steers, his eyes red. Pam's in the passenger seat. Both are quiet, processing the news.

PAM

You know, I've never had any interest in playing the flute.

BRAD

What?

PAM

I can't even whistle.

BRAD

Sure you can.

She tries. Just air. Brad smiles.

BRAD (CONT'D)

You're right. You can't.

He drives a beat.

BRAD (CONT'D)

What do you have an interest in?

PAM

I always thought I'd make a pretty good chef.

BRAD

I hate to break this to you...but you're kind of a shitty cook.

PAM

I know. But I can learn.

Brad looks at her.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Brad pushes a grocery cart down a produce aisle. It's nearly overflowing with vegetables and food.

TEXT appears on screen:

"Two days after the Olympic closing ceremonies, Paul Enquist was back in Seattle working on his father's fishing boat. Paul married, started a family, and eventually bought his father's boat. He now works as a longshoreman."

Pam excitedly picks out food to add to the cart.

INT. KITCHEN, PAM'S APARTMENT - DAY

Brad cuts up vegetables.

New TEXT appears, replacing the prior:

"The legendary Harry Parker coached the Harvard varsity crew until his death in 2013. A member of the US Rowing Hall of Fame, the pinnacle of Parker's coaching career was likely the Olympic gold medal won by his men's double of Brad Lewis and Paul Enquist in the 1984 Olympics."

He looks over at Pam, who is trying to manage the multiple overflowing pots on her stove. They share a laugh at the chaos. A total mess in the kitchen. But Brad and Pam happily add ingredients and stir the concoctions.

More TEXT appears:

"Pamela Cruz lost her fight with cancer in 1988."

Pam dips a spoon into one of the pots and taste tests it. Pretty good. She puts another spoonful in Brad's face, making a mess.

More TEXT appears:

"After the Olympics, Brad Lewis began writing and publishing both fiction and non-fiction books. He also surfed, competed as a grinder in the America's Cup yachting race, and began coaching amateur and Paralympic rowers. He now spends his free time writing, hiking, and flying hot air balloons."

Both of them laugh as they smear food on each other's faces.

A FINAL TEXT appears:

"He's never married."

Brad and Pam messily cook and taste, gleefully full of life.

THE END