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DOWN HILL FAST

The Harley Turner Story

This did not happen.

No, really.

Written By:

Roger Worthington

It's a bright spring day in Oregon's Cascade Mountains. A Subaru Forester pulls off the highway onto a slender dirt and gravel shoulder. A big wooden National Forest sign reads: "Tombstone Pass." A man gets out of the passenger side of the car and unfastens a road bike from the rack at the rear of the car. He's wearing a cycling jersey and shorts, without sponsor names or logos. There's a woman in the driver's seat.

HARLEY (V.O.)

Some people talk about the climb to the top. That's where you learn about yourself, they say. That's where you build character. Not me. I like to start at the top. Because in my book, it's how you take the ride down that counts.

We hear a woman's voice from the driver side of the car.

FEMALE VOICE

Use the force, Harley.

HARLEY

The Force?

FEMALE VOICE

It's called friction.

Harley leans in the window on the driver side.

HARLEY

Fiction?

WOMAN

Friction.

Harley kisses the driver—we still can't see her face—and grins.

HARLEY

Never heard of it.

Harley climbs on his bike and starts down a steep, serpentine mountain road. Camera pulls back to sky level as the figure of the rider recedes. We hear a faint heartbeat growing slower, steadier, as the rider accelerates downhill.

Chap 1: Dismembered on Olympus

Legend on screen reads: Three Years Earlier
Our hero, Harley Turner, crosses the finish line on the Champs-Elysees to win the Tour de France. He pumps his fist in the air, elated, and he's grinning as he accepts the customary flute of champagne, which he downs in a single gulp. A subtitle on the screen reads "Harley Turner, Winner 2006 Tour de France." American fans wave flags and scream their approval. It's all very impressionistic. Quick cuts. Band plays the Star Spangled Banner. Harley is ebullient. He holds up the Tour de France fuzzy lion doll. Freeze... Cut to image of Don Boss. Don is a dark-haired, wolfishly attractive man, slender but muscular. He is at country club spa lying on a massage table, stomach down, naked and facing a bank of big screen TVs. The volume is off, and the room is completely quiet. Don's handsome, chiseled face is grim but otherwise impassive. A shapely masseuse is massaging his thighs. Don props himself up on his elbow, reaches for his cell phone.

DON

(to the masseuse, smiling)
Thanks babe, you're the best.
Give me a minute.

DON

(on the phone)
Bud? Did you see Harley? Me too. Warmed my fucking heart. And you've spoken to Otto? Good. OK. Thanks. I'll see you in Paris. Later.

Camera zooms in so close that we see dancing television images reflected in Don's eyes as he watches, unamused. The music changes from uplifting and anthemic to screeching feedback.

Cut to images of Harley's downfall after the Tour win: headlines reflecting the failed doping test and the stripping of the title from Harley; scowling TV commentators; kids looking up in puzzlement at the TV screen. We hear the word "disgraced" repeated several times.

HARLEY (V.O.)

(voice over the frozen image
of him in disgrace)

Funny how things change.
There were lots of times when
it looked like all my years
on a bike were going to add
up to a first-class
collection of pre-cancerous
skin lesions. And then,
incredibly, I was the winner
of the Tour de France. The
greatest bike race in the
world. Maybe the toughest
sporting event ever, short of
tracking a woolly mammoth
across forty miles of frozen
tundra and bringing it down
with a spear. And cavemen
didn't have to deal with the
press.

Shot of Harley in front of a fallen Mastodon carcass in the
middle of a snow-covered landscape. Harley is in animal
skins with a spear and a beard down to his crotch.
Flashbulbs are going off and reporters are shouting at him.

HARLEY

It was a huge hairy beast,
dudes—the classic behemoth
situation. I did the best I
could to bring it down. I
need to give my fellow cave
dudes their props; and I want
to underscore that there were
no illegal chemicals, gases
or weapons of mass
destruction involved..

Fade to black. Harley's voice is heard in the darkness.

HARLEY

I should have remembered what
my mother told me. She always
said I was going to hell
riding my bike the way I did.
Turns out she was right.

Cut to news footage of Don, on a red carpet with a
beautiful date (Megan), stopping at the rope line to field
questions from the paparazzi.

DON

What Harley Turner did is a disaster for the sport...and I have to say that although I consider Harley a friend, he's got some serious issues. His mind is weak. He doesn't know how to win clean. As I'm sure you all know, when I was racing, I was tested...a few times.

Don chuckles self-effacingly.

In fact, when I raced, all my guys were tested, Harley included. Always came up clean. Because we were clean. We didn't put poison in our veins. We treated our bodies like temples, and we used the healthy stuff, the natural stuff, like my new Mindstrong™ Yellow Gold Energy Drink...

REPORTER #1

Donnie? Donnie! Any truth to the rumor that you're thinking about a comeback?

DON

(smiling, almost bashful)
I...I can neither confirm nor deny, Ed. I will say I've been working on a special energy bar that's being tested by Navy seals.

REPORTER #2

You mean the Special Forces guys?

DON

No, no, I mean actual seals. The ones that dive to find underwater mines. 300 feet down on a single breath. Can you imagine if I had lungs like that?

RANDOM FAN

You do, Donnie! You do!

Shot of Don in a Speedo, frolicking underwater among seals. Cut to a shot from a WWII sub film. An American sub approaches a field of spiky landmines. Don, swimming seriously, bubbles streaming from his mouth, points a seal at a mine. The seal nods and swims happily into the mine, setting off a chain detonation.

Return to Don and date on the ropeline.

DON

No, no. I can't compete with those guys, and I know it. No layer of subcutaneous fat, for one thing! But thank you. I have been blessed. And if a comeback is what it takes to restore cycling's good name, I'm willing to consider it.

Cross cut back to Harley in defeat, headlines announcing his disgrace. Slow motion of Harley with baseball cap turned around, head down, walking through a crowd of fans screaming at him angrily. He's stopped by a horde of microphone wielding reporters and camera men. He's agitated, wants to escape, feels imprisoned, looks up slowly and his lips move in slow motions as he begins to speak. Then freeze frame on his forlorn face.

HARLEY (V.O.)

That was probably the first time most of you heard of me. The disgraced Harley Turner. Senor Shit-Taco. King of the Losers. Doper. But I gotta say my life wasn't always a steaming mug of dog mucous.

Chap 2: Barefoot Boy in the Garden

Establishing shots of idyllic rural Sweet Home, Oregon—waterfalls, thick pine forests, hop farms, tidy downtown with foreclosure sign in every other shop window. But also a fair sampling of rusted-out pick-ups, a dilapidated roller rink and saggy-roofed farmhouses.

HARLEY (V.O.)

The world I grew up in was rural, depressed, and as dull as duct tape. I came from a town so small the Motel 6 only slept four. My dad died of asbestos cancer when I was a kid, and just about the only thing he left me, besides a 1951 Western 16 gauge shotgun, was my stupid name.

We see one of Harley's sisters prostrate on the front lawn, praying. Harley steps over her to get to the mailbox. A woman is watching from the front porch, looking at him with concern.

Cut to an interior shot of the woman from the porch. She is a pretty woman in her mid 30s dressed in simple country attire standing in a small town living room. She addresses the camera face-on but is obviously talking to Harley. Her tone is gentle but firm.

REBECCA

Our faith teaches us that our purpose in life, the reason why we're put on this earth, is to find our way back to Heaven. That bike of yours is not going to take you back to Heaven, Sweetheart.

HARLEY (V.O.)

I was fine with the idea of getting back to Heaven. I just didn't understand why that meant spending the rest of my life in a bumfuck town where everyone tells you what to do and think. Where you walked around afraid half the time..

Shot of Harley sitting with a glazed look in a short sleeve shirt and tie at a Wednesday night sermon. Cut to shots of him doing chores—washing clothes, tilling the garden, canning peaches, shoveling out the septic tank..

HARLEY (V.O.) (cont'd)

My mother did what her parents did. She worked hard and prayed

hard and she never complained, except about me. She never tried to beat the bad angel out of me, but she sure as hell tried to torture him with talking. And if I didn't fight back, I never really gave in. I guess I just had too many urges I wasn't willing to repress. Way I saw it, if the good Lord gave me gonads and adrenal glands, he must've wanted me to use 'em.

Shot of Harley standing in his garage. He's holding something. The camera closes in on what's in his hands: It's his first helmet—a makeshift object he's crafted from an old-fashioned bulbous blue football helmet, with strips cut out of the plastic shell to provide ventilation.

HARLEY (V.O.) (cont'd)

It was about then that a way out began to suggest itself. An alternative route to paradise, you might say.

Camera cuts to a cheap, dinged up mountain bike in a corner of the garage. Next we see Harley on the same mountain bike on a farm road with another kid, also on a bike. It's a warm summer day. The kid is dressed in shorts and t-shirt. Harley is in a stained gray sweat suit. He's wearing his home made blue helmet.

SMART-ASS KID

(pointing to the sweats)
Dude, it's summer. Aren't those hot?

HARLEY (V.O.) (cont'd)

I couldn't tell him that our religion prohibited us from exposing an inch more of flesh than was absolutely necessary.

HARLEY

(striking a pompous but awkward adult tone)
No, I mean yes, but uh, they help me maximize, uh,

maximize my caloric burn
while I'm increasing my,
uh,...lactic acid tol-er-ance.
[Beat.]

SMART-ASS KID

What the...?

HARLEY

Uh, look: suffering's the
pathway to glory...er
victory...or what have you.

SMART-ASS KID

Yeah? I got a bear skin rug
you could wear, if that would
help.

HARLEY

See ya later, fat ass.

Harley stands on his pedals and quickly outpaces his buddy up a mountain trail, sweat pants flapping, pumping like a demon up a country hill while the other kid falls further and further behind. His face is a mixture of anger and exhilaration.

Next we see images of a young Harley on a mountain bike climbing up single track, then speeding down the s-curves and high embankments, catching air, rubbing the tips of handlebars into the dirt as he counter-steers through the sharp turns, close up on fingers gripping the throttle, not feathering the brakes. His face is calm as he leans in, ducks, dives, and jumps over roots and rocks on a mountain bike down a steep single track.

HARLEY (V.O.) (cont'd)

I got to know myself on those
long rides. I wanted to haul
ass uphill so I could scream
down like a bat out of hell.
The juice was in the descent.
I wasn't big on braking.
Brakes were for scaredy cats.
Wimps. Here's a wimp.

Image of cyclist on mountain bike going downhill white-knuckling both brakes, knees wobbly, jerky, tense, afraid.

Soundtrack: Jimi Hendrix sings, "There's too much confusion, I can't get no relief..."

He's racked with fear,
mothering the brakes, his
head full of noise. I wanted
to be a Bad Ass. Here's a Bad
Ass:

Image of guy contentedly whizzing down a serpentine road on a mountain bike, his hands gripping the handlebars, his index fingers nowhere near the brake levers, his body leaning with the flow of the turns.

HARLEY

A Bad Ass turns with his
hips. His bike goes where his
eyes go. He doesn't feather
his brakes...doesn't even think
about it. His mind enters the
void, where all is quiet, and
he elegantly figure skates
with Fear.

Image of Harley figure skating with hot girl dressed in red with horns and a tail.

Soundtrack: The Rolling Stones, "Sympathy for the Devil")

HARLEY

Every time I went downhill I
played this little game of
chicken. How long and fast
could I go until it was
either brake...or die?

Chap 3: Potential is a Disease

Scene is Harley getting off of his mountain bike and taking off his ridiculous beat up mountain bike, with baggy shorts and baggy t shirt and hairy legs, and donning a skinsuit, booties, shiny shaved legs, and fitting an aero helmet on his head as he flips leg over top tube on a bladed aero road bike. Visually we see a transformation from gritty, dirty mountain biker to clean shaven and shiny road racer.

HARLEY (V.O.)

I got better and better at
dropping things: the Lord, my

family, my shithole town. And though I stopped paying much attention to what other people said, whenever I'd listen for 15 seconds it was always, "Harley, dude, you sure kick ass on that bike..." And since I had to do something with myself, I went south to join the carnival. It wasn't an EDUCATION I was looking for, it was CALI-FORNICATION—the SoCal cycling scene...

Shots of Harley racing road bikes, banging bars in field sprints, cornering fast in criteriums, attacking, chasing, crashing.

I thought I was getting free of all the mindfucks. What I didn't realize then is that winning didn't solve anything. Dropping a few pounds just made me want to drop more. Riding 90 miles made me want to ride 100. There was always a new potion or pill that promised to help me shave off a precious second or two. Winning became an affliction. Being the best was like having a chronic disease you were constantly feeding...

Scenes of Harley at breakfast over his oatmeal gruel, counting out his raisins to add to his skim milk, lubing the chain on his bike, pumping tires, shining his cleats, shaving his legs and arms and crotch, training on TT bike in aero/praying mantis tuck, on road bike climbing a mountain pass, and descending a mountain pass; saying his prayers and going to bed early, while LA - the City of Lights - glows somewhere in the distance, far from his crappy apartment in a boring Burbank subdivision.

HARLEY (V.O.)

I became a bullet, cutting through space, shaving the corners, flying fast up hills

so I could fly five times as
fast down them.

Images of Harley climbing in the peloton, slicing through throngs of cheering fans, who run beside the cyclists, grab at 'em, push 'em, yell in their face, screaming "Harder!" "More!" and "Go!" The cyclist's faces are tight and angry. It's pandemonium: the thump-thump of a helicopter overhead, a line of 3 cyclists slicing through a mob of fans on an uphill section, cheers and jeers, cowbells and horns, motorcycle escorts.

The racers go screaming downhill through tight corners. Harley's on point, shaving the inside of a turn at terminal velocity, the three racers on his tail try to hold his line but swing wide, hit a barricade, and go flipping over the rail. Meanwhile, Harley at peace in an aero tuck, sitting on the top tube at 60mph. Soundtrack: The Black Angels, "Black Grease."

HARLEY (V.O.)

I got fit. I won some races.
I made some friends. I
learned how to crash, and
like every serious rider I
crashed a lot. In the little
game of Chicken I played in
my head, sometimes the fox
got to win...

Shots of Harley crashing, over and over, on both mountain bike and road bike. Wiping blood off his elbows, pulling gravel out of deep lacerations in his shins, smacking into a tree, falling down, and then stoically popping his dislocated shoulder back into place.

It didn't matter - I was
young and fearless, and I was
learning that no one had the
tolerance for pain I brought
to the table.

Plus I had a certain gift for
technical improvements...

Cut to scene of Harley with another young SoCal cyclist, both on time trial bike, Harley on his elbows, clearly uncomfortable, constantly lifting up his but to re-arrange his testicles, juxtaposed with his partner, whose still,

aero, relaxed, despite being splayed out in an aero TT position.

HARLEY

(swiveling his hips
uncomfortably)
This is killing my balls.

SOCAL BIKE DUDE

That's because you don't ride
your time trial bike enough.
Always playing in the dirt
with that baggy shit. You're
a roadie now. Tighten up.
Skin tight lycra Dude. Not
board shorts. You gotta
be...lean and clean.

HARLEY

How can I get aero if I'm
constantly sitting up to
rearrange my nutsack? I'd
chop 'em off but I may need
'em someday.

SOCAL BIKE DUDE

You need calluses. On your
taint. Takes practice.

HARLEY

(shaking his head)
Time trialing is for
jackoffs. Like you. Straight
line. Splayed out like Super
Dork. Can't see a fucking
thing.

SOCAL BIKE DUDE

That's the price you pay for
reducing drag, numbnut. It's
not supposed to be fun,
squeezing your body through a
straw.

Harley stops abruptly, gets off bike, pulls allen wrench
out of his jersey pocket.

SOCAL BIKE DUDE

(slows down, turns
around, comes back)
What the fuck? Get a flat?

HARLEY

(adjusting the clip on bars,
ratcheting them upwards)
Well I was taught that if you
wanted something bad enough,
you'd better pray for it. I'm
ratcheting these god damn
sticks upward, so I can see.
And frickin' breathe.

SOCAL BIKE DUDE

Dude, those bars need to stay
level, or slightly tilted
down, . You've got to
practically rubbing your
knuckles against your tire.
That's Pro-set. It's supposed
to be painful.

HARLEY

And God said, let the time
trialers splay themselves out
above the pavement, for if
they rise up, I shall smite
them.

Harley wrenches the extender bars so they come up to a 45
degree angle. They mount their bikes and start riding.

HARLEY

There, Is my back flat?

SOCAL BIKE DUDE

Well. Yeah.

HARLEY

Is my head in the same
position relative to the
stem?

SOCAL BIKE DUDE

Seemingly...

HARLEY

So I'm as aero as the super
dork position but now I can
breathe. And see.

SOCAL BIKE DUDE

You look like a bug.

HARLEY

Exactly. The praying mantis.
Hey don't those things try to
eat each other after they...?

SOCAL BIKE DUDE

(scanning his memory banks)
The female bites the male's
head off, after he spews.

HARLEY

Hmm. Nothing to worry about.
Only thing I'm humping these
days is my bike.

HARLEY (V.O.)

I thought all the important
innovations were technical. I
didn't realize they could
also be...PHARMACOLOGICAL. And
then one fine day I met...The
Boss: Donnie Boss. DONALD
HENDERSON BOSS. America's
Champion.

Series of video images of Donnie as toddler running with
football, then sprinting on football field, then barking
signals over center as the QB in a packed stadium with a
frothing middle linebacker taunting him, screaming "Don
Boss, you Pissant! I'm going to bite your pissant head
off." Headlines about his prospects to win the Heisman one
day. A big collision on the goal line in a packed stadium,
the carnivorous middle linebacker hits him head on, Donnie
falls forward, lights out, holds on to ball. Cut to images
of him in a hospital, hooked up to ventilator. Doctors
hover about him, exchanging significant glances. Fans hold
candlelight vigils outside the hospital. His parents hold
hands and pray for his recovery.

HARLEY (V.O.)

Once upon a time they called
him Donnie Football. All-
American kid with cheekbones
you could dive off and a jaw
like a cement superhero. 4.4
time in the 40. Could throw
the ball into next week. He

was leading his high school team to the state championship when a funny thing happened on the way to the Heisman. Donnie got nailed on the goal line as the game ended.

According to the legend, he was in a coma by the time he hit the ground, winning the game, of course. He spent three weeks on a ventilator, watched over by an anxious nation. When he came to, he was the most famous 18-year old in America. Said he'd had a vision while he was out. Football wasn't his calling after all. The reporters crowded around him. You could have heard a catheter drop. Everyone wanted to know what was next for the phenomenal Donnie Boss.

Scene is inside a patient's room inside a hospital

DOCTOR

Donnie, Can you hear me?

DON

Loud and clear, sir.

DOCTOR

How do you feel, son?

DON

My legs are a little wobbly, sir. But my mind feels...strong. I had a vision.

REPORTERS

(eagerly shouting over each other in unison)

Tell us, Donnie! A vision? What was it?

DON

I dreamed I put that football down. And picked up a

bicycle. And I rode it. I
rode it hard. And I won.

We see a faint, gauzy image of The Boss waving an American Flag on the podium of the TDC with one hand while holding a fuzzy lion doll in the other, along with his happy shiny wife and two young boys..

Chap 4: The Devil Wears Lycra

Harley is out on his road bike, pedaling through Napa Valley on a training ride. He hears a helicopter and glances up. The copter is coming up fast. A motorcycle zooms past him. Next comes a procession of mopeds/Vespas motor pacing Don Boss, whose bike is equipped with on-board computers, energy meters, etc. He's wearing a pilot's microphone, plus earplugs. He's like Gordon Gecko on two wheels. The entourage zooms past Harley, but Don looks over and catches Harley's eyes, slows down, falls back and pulls abreast. His drivers and pilots are frantically barking at each other, assuming that The Boss must be having a mechanical crisis. Meanwhile, Don Boss is riding beside Harley, wordlessly sizing up his legs, belly, and arms.

DON
(shouting to make himself
heard)
You're Harley...!

HARLEY
This is true.

Don gazes disdainfully at Harley's chipped up road bike.

DON
You know your bike is a ...
relic, don't you?

HARLEY
(unruffled)
It gets me where I'm going.

DON
Impressive! But isn't that
kind of the problem?

Harley glances over at Don, puzzled.

HARLEY
How's that?

DON

Where ARE you going?

HARLEY

Same direction you are. I just don't have any helicopters.

DON

(looking up, smiling)
Nice, right? Smile, youre on camera.

HARLEY

You're filming yourself on a training ride?

DON

Of course. The eye in the sky doesn't lie. Learned that in football. Got a team of engineers who monitor my aero position on every ride. Hey, every second counts.

HARLEY

Well, don't let me slow you down. This must be costing you, valuable, uh, valuable sec-

DON

No. No. It's Ok. Let's just say Im getting my resistance training, sitting up like this, yaknow, into the wind. (phony laugh).

HARLEY

Well you're not the first one to tell me talking to me is like talking to a brick wall.

Don stares blankly

HARLEY

You said "resistance" talking to me, I said "brick..."

DON

Oh yeah, yeah, I get it. Hey, Harley, heard last week you made the podium at Long Beach. Not on that thing I'm guessing...

HARLEY

Actually I was riding my Big Wheel. [Pause] The one with the streamers on the handlebars.

Cut to fantasy shot of grown-up Harley in skinsuit on a Big Wheel pedaling hard across the finish line at a race. Harley is riding in real time. Around him are bikers on standard race bikes moving in slow-motion.

DON

(genuinely amused and impressed)

You're a funny man, Harley. I like that. Come see me.

Don shouts something into his microphone, communicating with one of his handlers trailing in a town car, who appears to be the conductor. The handler is Don's attorney, Bud Crown. Don pedals off and Crown pulls up beside Harley. He rolls down the power window and hands Harley a card, like Harley just won something important.

BUD

(shouting at Harley out the window)

You want to make history, Harley?

HARLEY

Nah. All that stuff's been done before.

BUD

All right, smart ass. You want to make the future?

HARLEY

Haven't you heard? The future is now. I'm like, you know, living the life.

BUD

Great. "Rice and beans for all my friends."

HARLEY

Boil 'em myself, man.

BUD

Up to you, amigo. A personal invite from Don is something most up 'n comers would die for.

HARLEY

(Grudgingly takes the card.)
Well dying doesn't much interest me these days.

BUD

Uh huh - well, if the life you're living ever gets a little...wearisome...give me a call.

HARLEY (V.O.)

Don Boss was the premier bike racer of his generation. But he was more than that. He was a capitalist. He was an inventor. And he was a philanthropist. He was also, as I was going to discover, something much more, and much worse...

Chap 5: Do You Know Who I Am?

Dallas, Texas. A motorcade advances toward the camera. The procession consists of a Black Escalade in front, two motorcycles directly behind, and a skinny guy on a Vespa with a cyclist behind, trailed by a black Lincoln town car. The motorcade blows through a red light at a busy intersection. Another car proceeding through intersection at the green light hits the brakes, and is struck by the vehicle behind it. A pile up ensues, including Boss's chauffeur driven town car. An earnest cop arrives on the scene and starts writing tickets. Boss pedals up and confronts the cop while horns honk, drivers get out of cars, and sirens screech. The cop is about the same size of

the linebacker who knocked Don Boss unconscious a few years earlier.

DON

(flexing his quads and
throwing out his chest, to
cop)

Do you know who I am?

COP

(looking up)

You're a scrawny poser in a
leotard with shaved arms and
legs who seems to be part of-
and maybe even the cause of-a
major accident.

DON

(hands the cop a business
card)

I'm Donnie Boss, officer.
These are my people. Good
people. This is a corporate
sponsored training ride
undertaken for charitable
purposes. If you write those
tickets (Boss lowers his
voice to a low growl) you'll
get a call tomorrow morning
from someone high up in your
department, I promise you.

The cop grunts, goes on writing tickets, not intimidated.

COP

Fine. I think they have my
cell number.

DON

(shaking his head)

Officer, I think I may know
what the problem is: your
mind's not STRONG. It's full
of cloudy ideas. Rules.
Regulations.

COP

You know, Mr...[glances at
Don's business card] - Boss,
you can tell all that to the

judge. By the way, (glancing at Don's shiny legs) those are some real pretty legs you got there. [Sniffs air.] What is that? Cocoa Butter? [Hands Don a ticket.] Enjoy the rest of your day, sir.

HARLEY (V.O)

Don didn't like folks who disagreed with him. He was the world's premiere cyclist. He made and sold dreams. To many, he was the messiah who promised a long and prosperous life. He hobnobbed with rock stars, world leaders and titans of industry. He liked fame and money and the ladies, but he hated piss ants who tried to slow him down. And he'd teach those piss ants a lesson. In this particular case, he used his battery of lawyers and political friends to declare war on a cop for doing his job.

Shot of the cop working as crossing guard at a local elementary school. Cop wearing a purple sash and holding a yellow/orange flag.

Chap 6: In the Throne Room of the Mountain King

Don Boss is seen giving one of his MindStrong lectures in an auditorium in Houston. The scene is reminiscent of a Joel Osteen TV revival or a Tony Phillips marketing event. Mindstrong is dedicated to the proposition that mental strength can overcome disease and personal failings. Big screen TVs flash images of Mindstrong products and healthy, happy people. In the audience sit hundreds of middle aged, mostly portly Texans and their chubby children.

DON

Thanks for being here, y'all.
I'm always grateful when folks who have families to take care of and jobs to worry about and children to

teach show up for one of these sessions.

The camera cuts back and forth between his speech and the screen. There's a large yellow MindStrong symbol on the screen as Don begins.

By now you know about that day in Dallas when the lights went out. Texas High School Football Championship. Plano, my team, was losing to Odessa Permian.

On the overhead screen behind Don scenes from the game, shot of the scoreboard, Odessa Permian 21, Plano 17, 4th Quarter, 3 seconds remaining.

We were on the 3 yard line with time enough for one play. Our coach called a dive play for our fullback. But I had noticed the ends were biting on the hand-off all day, so I called my own play. Quarterback Bootleg. I took the snap, broke some tackles, then I threw myself toward the goal line, where a 260 pound middle linebacker launched himself at me.

Images on the screen of Don Boss faking hand off, breaking tackles and veering towards goal line.

He hit my head on with just about the same force as an eighteen-wheeler. You can see it on the tape right...HERE! Ouch, right?

Now the doctors say I was probably unconscious at that point. No brain function at all. And I can't argue with them, 'cause I don't remember a thing. But you can see how I staggered off here to the right, and then half-dived, half-fell across the goal

line. Because even brain
dead, I was not about to lose
that football game.

The crowd applauds.

And then I died.

The stage lights go down. The crowd gasps.

Donnie Boss was gone.
People...they ask me..what
was it like to have "crossed
over"? And I tell them. It
was a big blank. There was
nothing. There was no God.
There was no Heaven. There
was no me. There
was...nothing

Shots of rapt faces in the crowd. The screen and the
room have gone dark. Don alone in the spotlight.

But in that...that Nothing
there was this one thing,
this...force, this black
diamond.

It was the urge to live, to
strive, to be something, to
not be defeated. Even when
everything else was gone,
this one thing still burned
like a flame. And in that
darkness [reaches out,
clenches his fist] that tiny
little ember was still full
of fire.

You know, I'm sure some of
you have heard of the Ancient
Gnostics, who lived in the
Holy Land. Gnostics, "the
people who know." Some people
even think Jesus was a
Gnostic. And the Gnostics
they believed in two Gods:
the God who created Death and
Sin, and then the God who
created Light and Life. And

the only pathway toward the dark side or the bright side was by learning who you really are.

The screen fills with images of triumph and hope, many of them pictures of Don winning races on his bike. Swelling electric guitar music from the speakers on either side of the stage.

Each one of you has Life, and Death, within you. You have the capability to WIN completely, and forever. And you have the capacity to LOSE utterly, and always. You need to summon the side that chooses WINNING. Because LOSING is like death. There's nothing NOBLE about it. Show me a "good loser" and I'll show you a...what? A loser," the crowd shouts back—they clearly know the drill.]

That's right. A LOSER! And if in every single moment of your life, this precious Life, the only one you'll ever be given before all the defenders of darkness crash down on top of you...if in this life you are committed to winning, and never being satisfied, which is another form of death, you will WIN, and you will be powerful. And your mind will be STRONG.

Crowd erupts rapturously.

OK that's all the free ADVICE. [Big grin.] Now here's the part of the evening where I try to sell you something. The difference is that I'm telling you up front. It's up to you right now. I've got a line of energy drinks that utilize

the scientifically proven
amazing anti-oxidant and
anti-cancer powers of the
extract from the adrenal
glands of the puffer fish.
This is the real stuff, the
natural stuff..
C'mon down here to the stage!
I'll sign some books, let's
talk some more...

Chap 7: Band of Douchebags

Quick set of establishing vignettes: each one of the four Douchebags - Fred, Art, Tobias, and Kent is introduced and little background is given on each. Video footage of 5 cyclists in a line, the first four in blue Send It kits, going fast, with the last guy in line wearing a yellow jersey.

HARLEY

In cycling, there's a pecking order. There's the leader—what you might call the Alpha Male. [We see images of Don Boss.] And then there are the worker bees, the sherpas, also called "domestiques." We didn't exactly wear French maid aprons, but we were there for one purpose: to serve the Padron.

Images of rider grotesquely loaded down with water bottles and stuffed musette bags strapped over shoulder like an overburdened donkey slogging uphill.

The Boss hand-picked his domestiques. He liked them tiny, obedient, obsessed, and a little stupid. Easier to control that way. There was Art Weinstein, The Mutant, a waifish creature with zero charisma and a huge fear of germs.

We see The Mutant getting on a commercial airplane wearing a mask and refusing to shake the hand of a fan. Show him sleeping in an oxygen tent with neuro stimulators around skull and full-on oxygen mask.

There was Kent Gandolph, aka "Techno Fop." Obsessed with Superhero dolls, pop music parodies, and the latest, lightest carbon fiber aero tubing.

Images of Gandolph whispering to and caressing his sleek aero time trial bike while wearing his Captain America skinsuit.

There was Tobias Phelps, "The Professor." This genius turned down a full ride to Harvard to bump bars with a bunch of simpletons for what amounts to minimum wage. Fond of mugging for the cameras on the steep climbs, but scared shitless of going down fast.

Images of Tobias in red polka dot jersey glistening on an uphill switchback, coming off a rider to sprint for the uphill points and celebrating, but stopping and starting downhill, squeezing the brakes, frightened.

And then there was Fred Pinkus, "The Mule". He was like that plow horse in Animal Farm. The harder it got, the harder he'd go. All he ever wanted was to please the Boss. Strong as an anaconda, dumb as a dirt clod.

Images of large cyclist on a dark, ominous hurricane force day sitting up and stretching out windbreaker like a sail to shield Don Boss behind him from the driving wind and rain.

Domestiques is what the Frenchies call 'em. I called us, collectively, The Douchebags.

Cut to a typical scene in The Life of A Douchebag during training camp. After a hard day of training the team is sitting inside the Team Send It Bus, wearing compression

leggings and shirts, eating a meagre dinner of rice and beans with kale garnishing, washing it down with Mindstrong Yellow Gold energy recovery drinks. Don strides in,

DON

I smell updawg!

FRED

What's updawg?

The douchbags laugh dutifully, except Gandolph, who rolls his eyes. They watch in disbelief however, when Don goes to the refrigerator and cracks open an Arrogant Bastard. The Professor and Mutant mumble worriedly that the beer will lead to carousing that will delay the start time of their group ride in the morning by 30 minutes.

Don starts munching on a Baby Ruth bar, smacking loudly, and sucking on his beer.

Fred reaches for a bowl of sunflower seeds.

DON

Hey. Pinkus. How many of those have you had?

FRED

(sheepishly)

Just a few...

DON

A few. Right. Guys?

TOBIAS

That makes sixteen.

FRED

(guiltily)

Dude, I'm hungry!

DON

Don't dude me, FRED. You know the rules. SUCK AND SPIT! You can taste the sunflower seeds, but by god, you better not swallow. I will not abide a sugar belly on my team. Are you a sugar belly?

FRED

Nossir. But they're salt, not sug-

DON

(Talks over Fred). Are you wearing saddle bags on your hips or are you just to the point where you no longer give a fat flaming fuck? You want to go back to hauling your lard ass around a business park in Tampa fucking Florida with a bunch of fucking Freds so you can win a rectangular hunk of Lucite and a commemorative coozie? This is the fucking Tour de France we're training for here, gentlemen. We're here to shove the Eiffel Tower up Francois Mitterand's ass and make me the richest fucking Yankee imperialist in the world! Flamingos, not hippos! Sugar belly! Shit Fire no SUGAR BELLIES!.

Don burps with satisfaction.

FRED

(flinching)

I'll ride it off, Boss. I'm sorry.

DON

That's OK (soothingly). Just don't let it happen again. I want you with me in Paris, Pinkus. I want all my homies with me in Paris. Because I love you knuckleheads! Hey Bud, call up Dakota, I need a massage (gesticulates jacking off). I'll show her what's updawg.

The douchebags fake laugh, pissed off that the ride will almost certainly be delayed.

ART

(whispers)

Beers. Candy bars. We've got to worker harder to carry all those extra ounces.

TOBIAS

Friggin Split-tails. Sucking away our precious training time. She gets the deep dickin but we get fucked.

FRED

(forlornly)

This means he'll be late for morning workout.

TOBIAS

(despondently)

And SEND IT™ doesn't roll until the Boss is behind the wheel, empty sack, bloated liver, brain dead and all...

ART

(mournfully)

And he's not behind the wheel until he's had his three dumps. God I wish I could flush it out like he does. Man's amazing. (sigh).

Chap 8: The Blood Oath

The scene is a bright sunny day at Tiger Gates's Napa estate. We see cypress trees, a swimming pool overlooking vineyards, butlers serving shrimp skewers and caviar. Don's talking to Tiger Gates, the owner, about "the numbers." Tiger's a billionaire. He buys thoroughbreds and owns an NFL football team, The Marauders, though he stopped caring about the game a decade or two earlier.

TIGER

(pointing to Harley)

Who's the new racehorse?

DON

Harley Turner. "Farmboy."
He's been tearing up the pro-am circuit.

TIGER

(nods approvingly)

Lean. Nice cuts. You test him?

Quick cut to shot of Harley in a Lab getting his blood drawn.

DON

Of course. Full work-up. God-given hematocrit. His red blood cells are as packed as Mississippi river sludge.

TIGER

Testosterone?

DON

Like a 16 year-old with a stack of Hustlers.

TIGER

Power?

DON

Dung beetle crossed with a bald eagle. Huge strength to weight. He could carry you up Mount Ventoux on his back without breaking a sweat.

TIGER

VO2 max?

DON

Dinosaur heart. Valves big as the Lincoln Tunnel.

TIGER

Lactate threshold?

DON

He's a machine that runs on water. He hit the Fast and slow twitch jackpot.

TIGER

Wind tunnel?

DON

Aero as a needle fish with
big tits.

TIGER

(quizzically)

That's good? The tits?

DON

Absolutely. Like the rounded
leading edge on the wing of
your Gulfstream.

TIGER

Eating disorders? Anorexia?
Bulimia? What...?

DON

Not so lucky there. But his
parents taught him to fast
weekly, so that helps.
Religious thing. Probably
wears barbed wire around his
scrotum.

TIGER

And he's clean?

DON

As a baby's bottom.

TIGER

What about focus?

DON

Way I see it, focus is a
progression. You start with a
hobby-your basic weekend
warrior. Then you graduate to
a passion, something that
lights a guy's fire. And
finally...there's the
addiction. A guy with passion
may still have enough room in
his heart for a job or
family. But an addict-he
can't be bothered. He only
thinks about one thing. And
he only does one thing.

TIGER

So is our boy all in or...

DON

Right now's he hooked on
Heart, Grit, God and Glory.
All he needs is the proper
...vitamins. And a strong
teacher.

TIGER

(laughing)

A Mindstrong teacher, eh?

DON

He'll be my personal step n
fetchit.

TIGER

Look, I don't want any more
bust outs. The last recruit
had the numbers but turned
out to be a poof. Could climb
like a mountain goat but
afraid to go downhill for
fuck's sake. I want an
animal. A coachable, super
animal. Like my boys on The
Marauders. Gladiators, one
and all. (He points to a few
of his NFL stars, wearing NFL
caps, ripped, bulging,
clearly juiced.) Super
heroes. Maniacs who will lop
off heads to fill the seats.

DON

You know, Tiger, cycling's
not the NFL. In Europe, yes.
For the right price
they'll...work with you. But
here, the drug testing
vampires are still on a witch
hunt. I got the situation
handled - I'll throw them a
bone here and there - bust a
domestique for the headlines
- but they're starting to get
clever. And they don't want

minions anymore. They want me.

TIGER

You just keep collecting yellow jerseys. My football team pays the bills. You guys - my ponies - nothing personal, are for fun. And nothing satisfies me more than seeing the faces on my European colleagues when my whizkids take out their Eurotrash in the sport they invented.

DON

Yeah, well, your little hobby is going to make me rich and you... well, you can name the new wing of your Napa villa after me.

Megan Marshall, a gorgeous Stanford-educated attorney who's one of Tiger's chief lieutenants (one of Tiger's "kittens," as they're sometimes called), glides up to Harley with a glass of wine in her hand and looks him over. A talented cross-country runner in college, she is still fit and willowy.

MEGAN

You're Harley, right?

HARLEY

How does everyone know that already?

MEGAN

(extends a well-manicured hand)

Megan Marshall. I'm one of Tiger's attorneys.

HARLEY

(nodding, looking around)
Oh, one of the "kittens" I've heard so much about...

MEGAN

Be nice to Tiger and I purr.
Cross him and you get the
claws. (She mock hisses,
bares her teeth and splays
her fingers like a cat about
to pounce. Then she laughs.)

HARLEY

(smiling)

When your circus has a lot of
clowns you need more than one
ringmaster.

MEGAN

(smiling back)

When your zoo has a lot of
wild animals, you make sure
the cages are strong.

HARLEY

(shakes his head)

I never cared much for
either...

MEGAN

Zoos? Or circuses?

HARLEY

Both. Put them in the same
category with churches,
schools, and marriage. Cruel
and confining with a lot
of...braking.

MEGAN

Damn braces, bless relaxes,
right?

HARLEY

(befuddled)

Um. Okay.

MEGAN

Marriage of Heaven and Hell.
Blake? Never mind. Tell me,
what lights your fire?

HARLEY

I like to go fast...

MEGAN

That's interesting. Because I heard..

HARLEY

You heard what?

MEGAN

I heard you like to go down.

HARLEY

(clearing his throat)

I, um, like to go downhill.

MEGAN

Ah. So you like to go downhill, but you don't like to go...down.

HARLEY

(stammering, as Megan laughs)

Uh...

MEGAN

Relax, Harley. I'm messing with you. I don't get to see a lot of blushing around here. (Nodding goodbye.) And I've got bigger fish to fry.

HARLEY

(left alone for a moment)

Don't forget to gut it. Him.
...What have you.

Bud Crown arrives and pulls Harley away to confer with Don. Don is sitting in Tiger's elegant study, gazing out at the vineyards.

DON

Your numbers look strong, Harley.

HARLEY

I try to please my maker.

DON

(pointing to his brain)

Uh huh. How's the head?

HARLEY

The head?

DON

Is your mind right?

HARLEY

The Mind? Well, it's uh, the mind's willing...uh, do I need to say "sir"?

DON

You can call me Don.

HARLEY

With a "the" in front or just "Don"?

DON

Let's get this straight, Harley. We're not here to sniff each other's butt. We're here to win. No, not just win. We're here to crush. You're here to help me crush. (Pretends to be crushing his boot on his downed enemy's neck.)

HARLEY

I'm good with that. Might need a bit of obedience training.

DON

Oh, you're gonna get ALL KINDS of training. With the right kind of training, you can run with the thoroughbreds. With the right vitamins, you can fly like Pegasus. [Leans toward Harley and lowers his voice.] With the right kind of mind, with a STRONG mind, you can walk on water.

Harley stares at Don, dumfounded by Don's arrogance, Cut to a shot of Harley and the Douchebags in a boat on a stormy

sea. Don, dressed as Jesus, walks toward them across the sea, holding out his hand.

DON/JESUS

(shouting above the roar of
the storm)

IS YOUR MIND STRONG, BROTHER
TURNER? IS YOUR WILL AS HARD
AS A PERVERT'S PECKER? WILL
YOU WALK WITH ME?

Harley shakes his head and rubs his eyes to dispel the ghastly vision. Don, seeming not to notice, slaps him on the shoulder and pours Harley a glass of fine cabernet from Tiger's vineyard.

DON

Ever heard of Omerta?

HARLEY

The talk show chick?

DON

(grins good naturedly)
Omerta is the Sicilian oath
of silence.

HARLEY

I've heard of it. It's what
held the Mafia together. For
a while, anyway.

Don nods approvingly and pours a glass of wine for himself.

DON

Silence is an almost magical
force. It creates an
invincible circle of trust.
You protect me, I protect
you. We're a team, Harley.
One mind. One heart.

As they've been speaking, Bud Crown has come up beside them. He presents Harley with a contract, which Harley glances at, flips to the signature page, and then signs. Don clinks his glass to Harley's.

HARLEY

Silence is easy for me.
Easier than talking to

people, I mean. I generally prefer the company of my own thoughts...when I think at all.

DON

Interesting. Tell me about your thoughts.

He looks at Harley closely, like a scientist inspecting a specimen. Shot of Harley lying in a couch in a psychiatrist's office. He looks very uncomfortable. He glances over at doctor taking notes: it's Don.

HARLEY

(uncomfortable)

Weelllll, Don...my thoughts go probably where most bike racers' go: away from people, including myself. I guess I like to escape.

DON

(pretends not to hear)

I want you on my team, Harley. I can sense how much you're capable of. But I need to know that your mind is clear...and strong.

Reaches out to shake Harley's hand in a bond of friendship and understanding.

HARLEY

Definitely. Clear as a windowpane.

DON

(cold and brutal)

Strong...

Close up of Harley and Don's hands clenched together. This has obviously become a contest of will; their hands are trembling with effort.

HARLEY

(grimacing with effort)

Yeah...sure...urgghhhh...STRONG!

DON

STRONG...[His face grows blank,
scary]...STRONG...

Switch to head on shot of Harley facing the camera...

HARLEY (V.O.)

And if that wasn't weird
enough, there were the daily
conversations with the
douchebags.

Chap 9: Mass Murder as Training Regimen

Day time. Bike Race. The Team Bus converted to a warm up
area. Cyclists on trainers, spinning. We see four of the
Douchebags -The Mutant, The Professor, The Geek and Fred-in
profile, working hard, panting, sweating. The camera pulls
back and we see these guys sitting on stationary bikes,
debating under the canopy of the Bus at a race. They are
cordoned off and fans are packed around the cordoned-off
area, taking photos as if they're standing outside the
monkey cage at the zoo.

ART

Dude, you should see this
this book I just found in the
library. It's about the
Ukrainian famine of the 30s.
Unbelievable how few calories
those people survived on. I
mean, these dudes boiled
their own hair and drank the
soup. Hard fucking core, man.

TOBIAS

I actually think the Bataan
Death March provides a better
training template. Not only
did the prisoners starve,
they had to keep moving. Talk
about endurance.

FRED

(thinking about weight
training)

Weren't they forced to bust
rocks at those Soviet Gulags?
That would be good. Build up
the strength-to-weight ratio.

ART

What was the best famine, I wonder. I mean from a conditioning perspective...

TOBIAS

Probably not the Holocaust. Those people just sat around in Auschwitz. They really didn't do much. Think about it—how many calories do you burn waiting around to be...uh, gassed?

Cut to shots of the Douchebags sitting in a concentration camp, they are wearing filthy ragged gray prisoners uniforms with yellow Stars of David. Except Art, who is wearing a pink triangle.

ART

(Uncomfortable with this tangent)

C'mon guys - this is in poor taste.

KENT

(smug, amused)

What's in "poor taste" is winding up in a concentration camp in the first place. They had bikes. They could have had just ridden away!

Cut to shot of Toby in prison garb riding up to the other Douchebags in a camp on a 30s era bike.

KENT

(cont.)

Hit the road, as it were...

TOBIAS

Um, one problem with that scenario, Douche Nozzle. The Nazis had bikes too. With motors. And performance diminishing machine guns. Don't be such an idiot.

The Gallery all nod sagely, considering the vagaries of history. Then they look up and wave solemnly at the tourists who are watching them.

Chap 10: An Introduction to the Gear

This scene transitions to a "Wise Guys" type montage where we see various images of the bus pulled over by the side of the road, guys hooked up to the blood bags, guys delivering drugs via motorcycle, etc., all to musical montage accompaniment..

Then the camera cuts to Don's trophy room in his palatial home in Highland Park, Dallas, Texas. There are neon lights that flash: "Don Boss," "Phenom" and "MindStrong™." There's a life size white marble statue of Don as Michelangelo's David. Don sits Harley down. He sets a yellow fishing tackle box on a red ottoman.

DON

We've been monitoring you closely.

HARLEY

How've I measured up?

DON

We're ready to bring you in-country. You're going to France this summer.

HARLEY

Awesome. Beauty and the Beast is like, my favorite movie. Castles, right? Cobbles? Chocolate? Waffles?

DON

No castles. You'll be working for me and living in shitty shoe-box size gasthofs with stone walls that absorb all the noise within a 2-mile radius. Which means you're going to need to step up your training, physical and mental. This is the Bigs. Guts and grit aren't enough.

It's an inhumane 21 day
carnival of sado-masochism.
You're gonna need The Gear.

HARLEY

Ahh yes. The Super B vitamins
I've heard so much about.

DON

(pointing to his yellow
tackle box)
That's right. And this here
box will be your best friend.

HARLEY

We going fishing?

DON

We keep the vitamins in the
Tackle Box. I like the word
"tackle." It means to crush.
Which is why you're here. To
help me crush the forces of
apathy, lethargy, and
mediocrity. The Status quo.
Homeostasis. Good enough. You
have talent, but it's time to
enhance what the Good Lord
gave you.

HARLEY

Look, I'll chase down your
adversaries like a dog. I'll
lead you out through the mud
and gravel. I'll shelter you
from the storms. Maybe give
up a kidney. Certainly a big
chunk of self-respect. But I
won't blow my brains out with
dope.

DON

No, you won't. Because I
won't let you. That's what
the Europeans do - they're
unsupervised, they're
unsanitary, and they're
stupid. They think if a
little is good, a lot has to
be better.

HARLEY

So we have 23 year old elite athletes dying of heart attacks and brain aneurisms. That's a stiff price to pay for a few minutes on a podium. For somebody else.

DON

We don't do it that way. We're... conservative. We have doctors, nurses, protocols, labs. This is science. We're taking medicines that help people live longer and happier and applying them to athletes, so they can train longer and harder, recover faster, and perform at maximum levels. Our enemy is apoptosis, programmed cell death.

We see images of scientists in white coats in a clean room looking through microscopes, eyeballing beakers, etc.

HARLEY

Sounds like you're up for a Nobel Peace Prize. Don Boss beats Death.

DON

If Death would get his ass on a bike, I'd beat him too. Look. Everybody does it. We just do it better..and less detectably. We're doing everything we can to make sure the playing field is UNEVEN - our enemy is death itself.

HARLEY

(eyeballing the tackle box)
So what's in the box?

DON

Ok, here's the drill. You rub a little testosterone cream on your chest and inner

thigh. Do it every day. Then inject this liquid, EPO, with this tiny little needle. See how tiny it is? Then inject this stuff, HGH. Again, using the itty bitty needle. And then every month we'll take out your own blood with this needle, it's a little bigger (it's huge, 8 inches, 18 gauge), you refrigerate it, and we re-inject it with all that fresh hemoglobin when you're broken down, like by the 5th day of the Tour, and you need a tune up.

video images of injections in shiny, veiny legs, arms and abdominals.

HARLEY

That (pointing to the needle) looks like it's gonna hurt.

DON

All the winners do it. Now with plenty of EPO and testosterone you'll be able to up your training from 4 hours a day to 8. And you'll recover faster so you can get up the next day to do it all over again.

Images of Don training in wind, sleet and rain, up and down hills, strong, confident, pull back on his face and he's wearing a superman cape.

HARLEY

Got anything in that box that helps amp you up?

DON

Affirmative. For big race days, like time trials, you'll want to spike your adrenaline. Goes without saying caffeine's a natural booster, so you'll want at

least 3 cups of espresso
daily.

HARLEY

I'm fairly regular at about
12.

DON

Ounces?

HARLEY

Cups.

DON

Nice. So you won't need much,
but take this - Adderall - to
enhance your fight or flight
response. And inject this,
T.Rex, again with the tiny
needle, to help you burn off
fat and build muscle. But not
too much. Or too often.

HARLEY

Or what?

DON

Oh, any number of things. You
might develop a high fever,
you might get the cold
sweats. Your heart rate might
spike. You could get dizzy
spells, maybe pass out. You
might go a little crazy. Piss
on a teammate as he sleeps.

HARLEY

Seriously?

DON

Room with Pinkus. He's used
to it. Take way too much and
you end up in the news for
punching your girlfriend.

Images of a sort of roid rage, cyclist cursing truck
drivers, shouting at cops, punching girlfriend.

HARLEY

Jesus. I don't even have a girlfriend.

DON

It's a small risk compared to a huge benefit - your veins will dilate and you'll look a leaner version of Arnold Schwarzenegger. If you're behind in your training and putting on a few LBs, there's this.

close up images of sculpted quads with lattice of embossed veins.

HARLEY

What's this? Artificial blood? Hormones from a velociraptor?

DON

No, our lab guys are working on synthetic blood, virtually undetectable, and we did find DNA from a velociraptor in a tar pit we're trying to clone, but it's a few years off. This is insulin, the strongest anabolic steroid there is. Your body makes plenty of it, but nothing succeeds like excess. When you're beat up and bonky, inject this, but make sure you eat a meal and are plenty hydrated.

HARLEY

Or?

DON

Insulin shock.

HARLEY

Which can kill you.

DON

Yeah. So don't let it. We've yet to have a single casualty at Send It™. I personally guarantee this regimen, as I own the patents. Well, Mindstrong™ owns them.

images of Mindstrong™ products on display table at MAX Muscle shop.

HARLEY

All this sounds great for training, but what about game day? In addition to the 12 cups?

DON

For a big time trial you'll want to inject this - again, with the tiny ... Pure adrenaline. But you got to do it within 10 minutes of your start time or it totally wears off.

imagery of cyclist injecting in stomach, standing up and breaking out into crab pose with a roar.

HARLEY

Hmmm. I'm sure management doesn't encourage us to break out those tiny needles in public.

DON

That's why we have The Bus. The bus is our safe haven. We keep the Tackle Box in the back.

imagery of injecting in the bus, peeling skinsuit back on, aero helmet and glasses on, with ear piece, and rushing out the bus door into the throngs of people at TT starter ramp.

HARLEY

I've got fairly active glands as it is. How am going to come down after all that

rattlesnake venom and
gunpowder in my veins?

DON

Yes. After all the uppers,
you'll need something to calm
you down at night. To relax,
take these pills, Ambien.
They won't work after a while
so we'll get you a
prescription for Xanax. For
nerves.

HARLEY

My palms are already getting
sweaty.

DON

That's natural. Relax. You're
in good hands. Just remember
to refrigerate your blood
bags just above freezing. And
filter out the clots.

Imagery of ugly clumps from bag going into the IV line as
it approaches the filter at the point where needle is in
arm.

HARLEY

What if I forget?

DON

You'll either stroke out or
develop terminal sepsis.
We'll send a note to your
folks.

HARLEY

And this is a "conservative
drug" regimen?

DON

Totally safe. And very
profitable.

HARLEY

I'd hate to see what an
aggressive plan looks like.

DON

Look, if you don't want to win, go ride with Blowphone fairies. Are you in or are you in?

We see image of cyclists riding by white church wearing skinsuits resembling Mormon black pants and white shirts with black ties, all bearing the Team Blowphone logo.

HARLEY

Like a tick in a bloodhound.

DON

Good. One more thing. Don't go barefoot in the bus. Sometimes the boys get loopy and forget to throw away their needles.

We see images of bare feet about to step on pile of bloody discarded needles and broken vials on the dirty floorboards of the bus.

Chap 11: Every Problem Has a Solution

Switch to video images of Don Boss in lab on erg with mouthpiece pedaling hard, monitors flashing numbers, lab coats with clipboards, then images of Boss on the bike sprinting in pack, climbing up an alp overtaking a skinny Italian wearing the polka dot jersey, and in full time trial tuck (superdork with back flat) with all the aero gear, teeth flared like a cowcatcher on a train, inhaling huge amounts of oxygen. Last image is Don coming across the finish line in a mountain stage of the Tour De Transylvania (2002), raising arms triumphantly in a Vee.

HARLEY (V.O.)

Don was special. He had all the gifts. Big lungs. Big heart. Big ego. Compared to your Italian climber he was big as an NFL linebacker. He could climb. He could time trial. He could sprint. The trifecta. Winning came easy. Sometimes, too easy.

Cut to hallway of fancy hotel in Paris. Don has just won the 2002 Tour de Transylvania by a comfortable margin.

Lawyer Bud Crown knocks on door. Worried look on face. Don answers. Naked, except for towel around waist. There's a beautiful model in his bed, tousled, post coitus.

BUD
(eyeballs the girl and shakes
head)
We need to talk.

DON
(looking at girl)
To the victor goes the
spoiled supermodels, eh?
[Raising glass of champagne.]

BUD
(severely)
In private.

DON
(motioning Bud to another
room)
Well then Sir Grumpleloaf,
step into my office.
[They walk into an adjoining
suite.]

DON
Dude, why so grim? We won.

BUD
(perturbed)
That's the problem, dude.
Your blood came back dirty.
You knew they'd be testing
the top 3, Donnie. It was
supposed to be a warm up race
for the Tour. But you had to
win, didn't you.

DON (bravado)
You can't ask a wolf not to
eat its kill, man. I felt
great. Super great.

BUD
Well that little feast will
end up costing us. Otto
Ubermann called me
personally.

Don gives a blank look, as if he doesn't recognize name)

BUD

Head of the International
Cycling League.

DON

There's an International
Cycling League?

BUD

This is serious, Donnie.

DON

You're tellin' me a German
can't be persuaded to cut a
few corners for the Good of
the Sport?

BUD

...Sigh...He's Austrian. Not
German.

DON

Whatever. Ok so what's this
Uberdork's beef?

BUD

You tested positive for
anabolic steroids. And
catabolic.

DON

(more soberly)

Has our (coughs) ... good
friend made it public?

BUD

Not yet. I guess he does like
you. And he respects what
you've accomplished.
Mentioned he uses many of
your Mindstrong products
himself. He gave us 48 hours
to explain it.

DON

So call Tiger already. Ain't
no problem he can't fix.

Chap 12: The Bait

We are in Otto Ubermann's UIC office. Megan Marshall, dressed in an elegant and form-fitting black dress, has just arrived in Innsbruck. Otto ushers her politely into his office, and she gets settled.

MEGAN

(all business)

You have a problem, Mr. Ubermann. I'm here to help you fix it.

UBERMAN (German accent)

(astonished)

I have a problem, Ms. Marshall?

MEGAN

I represent Mr. Tiger Gates. Mr. Gates has made a considerable investment in advancing the progress...the profitability...of your little organization.

UBERMANN

(frowning, suspicious)

Ah yes. Mr. Tiger Gates. And you, I presume, are one of his ... kittens.

MEGAN

Amusing. I can purr, or I can scratch your eyes out, whatever you decide.

UBERMANN

A cornered cat will behave in just this manner.

MEGAN

Mr. Ubermann.

UBERMANN

Please, call me Otto. We Austrians are not as formal as our German neighbors. And we drink more beer. May I offer you a cold lager?

MEGAN

(smiling and dropping her
voice)

And you should call me Megan.
And no thank you on the
beverage, I'll have water.
With gas. And ice.

UBERMANN

(looking down at her)

Tsk. Tsk. A pity.
Megan...Ms. Marshal...as you
know, drugs have permeated
the peloton for some years.
I'm here to clean it up. Even
the playing field, as they
say.

MEGAN

Noble, Otto. But asinine.
C'mon. We don't want
slower/weaker. We want
faster/stronger. Evening the
playing field would require
you to chop out a little bit
of lung and little bit of
heart from each racer, so
everybody's equal. But, of
course, this is all academic.
You don't have the manpower
or the technology to catch
all the cheats, just the
stupid ones.

UBERMANN

The stupid ones? As in,
your...Strike that. The King of
your Pride - Mr. Tiger Gates
- he is, shall we say, a
sponsor of Mr. Don Boss?

MEGAN

Yes. Mr. Boss is one of
Tiger's assets. Mr. Gates
owns many companies, all of
which generate ample profit.
But these days the only
numbers he's interested in
are the training logs of Mr.
Boss and his associates.

They're curving upwards and to the right, impressively, and rapidly.

UBERMANN

All that power and intellect...and yet here you are in your business attire, leather bus---, in a corner, I presume to...negotiate.

MEGAN

Neither Mr. Boss nor my boss, Tiger Gates, are stupid. And, I'll wager, neither are you. Each of us is a stakeholder in raising the sport to the next level - better performance, more sponsors, more sales, more "miracle" potions, powders and gels. As they say, a rising tide raises all boats. That little lab test you thought turned up as positive? It never happened.

UBERMANN

It never...happened? We've been watching your Asset for some time, Ms. Marshall. He's crafty, I'll give him that...

MEGAN

(passionately)

He's the biggest talent in bicycle racing since Eddie Merckx, and you know it.

UBERMANN

Hmmm. I see. Your interest in Mr. Boss isn't strictly professional, is it, Ms. Marshall?

MEGAN

(ignoring him)

It's going to go away, and here's why.

UBERMANN

I didn't mean to touch a nerve. Don Boss is a major talent. And a charismatic man. I give you my best wishes. And a hearty good luck. I had heard there was a divorce in progress...

MEGAN

That is none of my doing. And none of your business, for that matter. As I was saying: Tiger has been planning to take the sport of biking to the next level for years now. He sees a race like the Tour as the ultimate laboratory for human performance. Leaner, stronger athletes. Lighter, more aerodynamic bikes. All with the aid of...science.

UBERMANN

Yes. Around here we are very familiar with such men with a similar...passion for supremacy.

MEGAN

Faster, stronger, longer. The Holy Grail.

UBERMANN

You Americans and your fairytales. You think if it can be dreamed, it should be done. Especially when there's the hint of money to be made.

MEGAN

Look, nobody has done as much for the cycling industry as Don Boss. Americans are getting off the couch and riding bikes. They're buying bikes. Blade's making millions. Mindstrong is printing money. The TV and

endorsement dollars are pouring in. And he's just getting started.

UBERMANN

I'm aware of all this. Your Mr. Boss is quite the star. And what is the phrase? Shaker and Mover.

MEGAN

(carefully)

I'm pleased you are sensitive to the negative repercussions an unfounded accusation would have on Don. And the sport.

UBERMANN

You are suggesting that we...

MEGAN

I'm suggesting that we work together. We announce at a joint press conference that Mindstrong™ is making a donation of \$500,000 to the ICL. It will be used to purchase new lab equipment to help catch the dopers.

UBERMANN

And the prize for such a generous...lead out?

MEGAN

7% stock ownership in Mindstrong™ and 10% of Mr. Boss' European sponsorship dollars.

UBERMANN

(smiles)

Mr. Boss is a true ambassador of the sport. But gifts like these... they leave long trails.

MEGAN

Don't insult us, Otto. We know how to cover our tracks.

UBERMANN

(hopefully)

And bury any cat who should make the grave mistake of getting too curious?

MEGAN

Of course. (Mimics cat showing claws) Then this, this matter is closed?

UBERMANN

As long as you understand that this is being done for the good of the sport.

MEGAN

Of course. The sport will be in good hands. America will keep its hero. And we'll all be better off.

UBERMANN

Excellent. We will protect the...Asset...for one year. After the Tour he'll retire, a wealthy man. And so, perhaps, shall I.

MEGAN

(extending hand)

Mr. Ubermann, welcome to the team.

Chap 13: Douchebag Envy

Bright day, inside the Team Send It Bus, an hour before an uphill Time Trial, the iconic Alpe d'Huez with its 23 switchbacks. Harley busily cutting the chamois out of his skinsuit with an exacto knife. The douchebags express their puzzlement and awe.

HARLEY (V.O.)

Yeah, I joined The Boss and his Send It [™] Douchebags, I mean, heroes. I made the tour team. Everyone told me it was an honor. But it really meant I was a glorified donkey. I had to carry my ass up those

mountains, and the Boss's too, along with his potions, pills and gels. Did I get carried away? Was I jealous that ants had the best strength to weight ratio in the animal kingdom? That whippets had excellent BMI? Was I angry that eating became the enemy? And starvation my friend? Yes.

We see Harley with his jersey pockets full of bottles, goo packets and bars, the back of his jersey swollen with bottles, and musette bags loaded with food wrapped around his neck, straining to ride up to Don from the support vehicle and offload the cargo.

Switch to Fred and Harley inside the Send It Bus.

FRED

(addressing Harley)

What are you doin', man?

HARLEY

I'm going to win this fucking time trial is what I'm doing.

FRED

By slashing your skinsuit?

HARLEY

By cutting out the chamois. You know how much asscrack water a chamois absorbs? We're talking about 2-3 ounces. Over 12 miles, that's 4 seconds.

Fred hesitates, and then reaches out his hand.

FRED

Gimme that knife.

Harley and Fred emerge from bus with top hat of their respective penises outlined against the nicked up crotch of their skintight skin suits. The other Douchebags stop talking and take note.

ART

Hey look.

KENT

Are those...

ART

Man they look skinny...

KENT

...their...dicks?

TOBIAS

They cut out their chamois!
Brilliant! Sitting on a
switchblade's a small price
to pay for gaining a few
precious seconds.

ART

Man that Harley's a freak
(enviously). You know he made
his own hypobaric chamber?

KENT

Made his own?

ART

Yeah he found a sewer pipe,
vacuum sealed the ends,
attached a pump, sucks out
the oxygen. Sleeps in it. His
hematocrit jumped 8 points in
two weeks.

KENT

(in disbelief)

He sleeps in a sewer pipe?

ART

Like a vampire enriching his
own blood.

Images of Harley lying down inside a narrow concrete pipe
with a pump attached to suck out the air.

KENT

(in awe)

Looks like he hasn't eaten
since birth. And he's

(admiring Harley's shaven
arms and legs) streamlined.
Like a little...embryo.

TOBIAS

Or a freshly plucked
hummingbird. Hah!

ART

He'd cut off his Johnson if
it'd help him lopp off a few
ticks. He never used to be
like that. That's what
happens when you get on the
bus with The Boss. The guy's
a bona fide freak.

Art has two mentholated cotton balls shoved crudely up his
nostrils to 'open the sinuses'.

Won't wear gloves. Absorbs
too much water. Or socks.
Damn.

Tobias ponders the conversation.

Cut to a few minutes later. Tobias wheels his bike to the
start line. The camera zooms in on his crotch. His chamois
has been crudely extricated, and he's wearing no glove and
no socks.

Chap 14: The Winspeak

It's 2002. Six weeks before Harley's first TDF. Hollywood
studio (Jay Leno show). Lawyer Bud Crown is backstage
escorting Harley, wearing compression tights under a baggy
grey t-shirt and grey shorts, down the hall to Boss'
dressing room.

BUD

Thanks for coming in, Harley.
We've been chasing our own
asses. Everybody wants a
piece of Donnie.

HARLEY

It's cool. I needed to get
back down here anyway.
Challenge my immune system.

All that fresh Oregon air was
making me weak.

BUD

Yeah, you've been holed up.
Been reading your daily
charts. Watts look good.
Calories burned, so on.

They come to a door. Leaning against hall, 2 small boys
wearing Mindstrong t-shirts are playing handheld video
games. There's a loud thumping inside the room. Crown
knocks on the door

DON

(muffled)

Just a second!

They wait. Louder thumping, banging, screeching. Seconds
later, a female shriek and contemporaneous loud male groan.
The door opens. A young starlet saunters out, indifferent,
adjusting her bra. She surveys the little kids
disdainfully.

STARLET

(derisively)

What are you guys? Scenery?

DON

Harley! Good to see you, man!
Come on in.

HARLEY

Was that...?

DON

Yeah, she was complaining of
feeling beat down, lethargic.
So I administered a dose of
my Dorian Gray Forever Young™
cream. Injected it,
actually...Hah!. She'll be
fine.

HARLEY

Damn. I'd hate to get
embrocated by the likes of
an...Endurance Athlete.

DON

Yeah, well. Stay on my good side. Listen, I've been reviewing your numbers, the dailies. They look good, but they need to be great. The Tour will beat you to a pulp. 21 days of hell. Dehydration. Battle fatigue. Hypoxia. Insomnia. And this year's tour is going to be the toughest yet. The sponsors want longer stages. More mountain top finishes. More suffering.

HARLEY

I'll be ready.

DON

(Close up on Don's hard stare)

I'm not sure you will. Bud tells me you haven't been filling your vitamin quota.

HARLEY

Shit's bad for me, man. Twitchy all day. Amped all night. Fairly pissed off all the time. It's making me nuts.

DON

It's making you strong. For me. It's not about you, Harley. It's about me. You serve at my pleasure.

HARLEY

Jeezus Don I'm not your slave.

DON

I know that came out harshly and I apologize. Do this for me, and yes, for yourself. I think you've got the stuff. You know, I only have a year

or two left and I'm history.
Then it's your turn.

HARLEY

Thanks Man. You know I'll
bleed for you. I want you to
win, and I want to learn, so
maybe one day.

DON

You'll get your chance, I
promise.

HARLEY

That means a lot, coming from
you. I'll go back and train
even harder.

DON

Harley? Look at me. You've
got the stuff, but guts and
grit alone won't do it. Every
day's an uphill marathon. The
best trained with the best
genetics can't possibly hope
to survive this hell, let
alone win it without...
vitamins. It's a show, and
the people need their super
heroes.

HARLEY

I've always held my own.

DON

Look farmboy - and Im sorry
to be so harsh - but this is
the Big Hairy Taco we're
talking about, not an all-
night skate in Walla Walla.
If you're sick, the doctor
prescribes medicine, right?
Well, riding the Tour is a
kind of sickness. You're
going to need drugs just to
finish. You're going to need
A LOT of drugs to help me
finish in yellow.

HARLEY

Well, I have been taking the whole line of your Mindstrong potions, powders and gels. That's got to count for—

DON

Excuse me but that counts for shit. That stuff is all snake oil. You want to live longer? Drink this. Want to fuck harder? Slather this on. The masses are asses, and you sell them pixie dust.

HARLEY

Damn. (shakes head). My mother warned me about city slickers like you.

DON

(adopting aggressive tone and demeanor)

You give me 5 minutes with your Mom and I'll have her sucking Egomania II off my man root.

Motions to a bottle of Mindstrong™ Egomania II energy drink on the table.

HARLEY

(sarcastically)

Charming. Look. I gotta go train. For you. For us.

DON

Take your vitamins. Double doses. You won't do me any good off the back, limp-dicking in with your clean conscience.

DB exits. Suit on.

KIDS

(yelling in chorus)

Daddy, I'm hungry!!

DON

BUD! Goddammit, find an In n'
Out and feed these pissa-
...people. [Stops himself,
keeps striding down the
hallway]

CUT TO JAY LENO Behind his desk, starlet to his right.

LENO

And now, please welcome 5-
time winner of the hardest
sporting event in the world,
Athlete, Inspiration, and
Family Man, Don Boss!

Crowd erupts.

Boss strides up, air kisses
Starlet, and shakes Jay's
hands.

LENO

Welcome. Welcome. I imagine
that chair is about the
softest seat you're going to
have for a while.

DON

That's right. I'm going to
enjoy it while I can.

LENO

People are saying that this
year's Tour De France will be
the hardest ever. Is that
right?

DON

Yep. More mountains. More
uphill time trials. But no
sweat. I've been "secret
training." (cutesy)

Crowd laughs.

DON

(looking into camera, feeding
off crowd energy)

That's right Germany, Spain,
France, Mother Russia - come
get me!

Crowd erupts

LENO

Well you certainly know how
to work a crowd. You look
good.

DON

Feel good. You know, strong
mind, strong body.

LENO

Now I look at this race,
which is basically the
cycling equivalent of running
21 marathons back to back,
with the Alps thrown in for
good measure, and say no way
could I finish a single stage
without taking drugs, lots of
drugs...

DON

(gives The Look, combative)
Jay, is that what we're going
to talk about?

LENO

(uncomfortable)

Well, there are rumors. I
mean...

DON

Look, I've been tested more
than any athlete in the
world. I've peed more than an
elephant with a bladder
infection. And I'm clean. My
discharge, Jay Leno, is
clean. Clean enough to bottle
and sell.

LENO

Okay, well, I'm going to pass
on that just for the moment.
Don, I don't want to argue

with you, but some people say it's impossible for anyone to do that race without drugs.

DON

A tough race requires a tough mind.

LENO

But everybody who's won before has admitted to doping.

DON

Not true. LeMond never doped. And as for some of those other guys, whose names I can never pronounce, they were soft. Weak. They took the easy road. (taps his vein on forearm to mimic doping). And they sure as heck never played Texas high school football. (Crowd laughs.) Look, Jay, I prefer the hard road. What am I on? I'm on my bike. I'm fighting 8 hours a day, for all the hard working people who've, who've, never won anything.

Crowd erupts

LENO

(smart ass)

So you're doing it for the rest of us...losers?

DON

Look, I'm here to show the world that if you dedicate your mind to it, and take daily supplements from my full line of Mind Strong Yellow Jersey potions, powders and gels, anything's possible. You, too, can win.

Don winks at Starlet, who rolls her eyes.

LENO

Well one thing we have in common, we both love to ride our Harleys. Hah! How is your new work horse, Harley Turner coming along?

DON

Harley's doing fine. In fact I just saw him. He said since he started taking my Mindstrong vitamins he's never been stronger. He wanted to know if he could double his dose, so to speak. I said, sure, but he might need to wear a lead belt to stay on the ground. Stuff makes you fly!

Chap 15: The Ever-present Fear

The Douchebags are leaning against the wall in the basement hall of a hotel on the morning of a race, after the Anti doping agency agents/vampires wake them up early to test for blood or urine. They're sleepy and cranky. Everybody's wearing compression pants, long sleeve shirts. Kent is wearing his neurostimulator headband. THE BOSS, followed by Bud and his retinue, strides through the crowded hallway. Harley's been chosen for the blood room, along with Don. Harley's waking pass the Douchebags for the blood room.

ART

(forlornly)

One day, one day.

Kent rouses himself from sleep, pulling off his neurotransmitter headband

KENT

One day what?

ART

One day they'll want my blood.

TOBIAS

(knowingly)

And mine. Frankly, I'm sick of being in the Piss line.

The Piss line for the Pack
Fodder. They don't want your
blood less you're on the
podie. They get all the
attention. Have you heard
about this Phlebotomist? She
does the house calls. I hear
she's got a great...bedside
manner.

ART

(considering)

I've a mind to sit in and
attack. For myself. Go for a
stage victory.

KENT

Surefire way to find yourself
off the team, my friend.

ART

(forlorn)

How are any of us going to
break through? What about
those Michelin Man
compression suits?

Image of himself in full body inflatable compression suit.

That might do it.

TOBIAS

(rubbing his nuts)

You need a story, man. Not a
fetish. You need a hook.

KENT

Like, a narrative. "I was
sorely abused by chickens as
a child, but I overcame, and
now I eat them."

ART:

Or I was raised by wolves in
Alaska.

TOBIAS

Or I was raised by Mennonites
in Oregon, who told me not to

trust the snares of this
forsaken world.

KENT

Hey, keep your voice down,
man. Harley's been talking to
other teams. PhoneHack
offered him One Large. The
Boss is aware...and he's not
happy.

ART

How's The Boss know?

KENT

(looking at Art like he's an
idiot)

The Boss knows what you ate
last night, man. The Boss
knows what Beyonce ate last
night. The Boss knows
everything.

ART

So why are we whispering?

KENT

(whispering)

I don't know!

Chap 16: The Skim

Don is talking to his lawyer Bud Crown in the comfort of the Gulfstream, aka, "Air Force Won". Don puts down his copy of the Wall Street Journal and picks up a copy of Rolling Stone. On the cover is Don mugging with a rock starlett. Bud has a worried look on his face. Shot of the gulfstream with the moniker "Air Force Won" near the nose.

BUD

Just got the fuel bill on Air
Force Won.

DON

(not looking up,
perfunctory)

What's the damage?

BUD

Running over \$250K a month.
Turns out being an
international rock star is
expensive.

DON

Just charge it to the team.
Send It loves the exposure.

BUD

We need to be careful about
that.

DON

About what?

BUD

Well we're also spending
about \$150k a month on
the...vitamins.

DON

I don't see the problem.

BUD

We can't exactly line item
the drug bill and submit it
to the Feds for payment.

DON

(pauses, considers)
Didn't Blade just give us
some bikes?

BUD

Yes. Road, Time trial,
wheels, the whole shebang.

DON

Sell 'em.

BUD

(grunts, not quite
understanding)
But they're for the
team. Blade paid us to use
their products.

DON

My boys don't need all that
fancy stuff.

Don looks at Bud sternly.

Equipment doesn't win races.
Heroes win races. Thin as
skeletons, hard as metal.

BUD

Um, okay. (Pause) Yours too?

DON

(looks up at Bud, explaining
as though to a moron)
Do you really think that's a
good idea, Bud? After all,
the whole team needs me to
perform. I do need the fancy
stuff. I'm the "aero
innovator."

BUD

(sighs)

I don't know Don, the boys
are already grumbling...you're
getting over half the team
sponsorship money, plus all
the endorsements.

DON

Bud, I know this is hard for
them to process, but their
MINDS ARE STRONG! (Laughs)
Just keep repeating that.
They'll figure it out.

BUD

Ok, Don, I'll figure out a
way to move the bikes. Use
the vig to buy the vitamins.

DON

(reaches out for Bud's
paperwork)

Hey, could I see that for a
minute?

Examines the bills Bud hands him, then shakes his head
sadly.

I hate to say this, but we're
going to have to deduct the

cost of the vitamins from their paychecks, plus a 10% handler's fee. I'm the one carrying all the risk around here.

Chap 17: Punching the Gift Horse in the Mouth

It's the 2004 Tour de France, the night of stage 17 after Harley's gone ape shit on the front all day and nearly won himself, but instead led Don out for the mountain top victory (film clips of Harley powering up the climb on point with Don Boss and the contenders struggling to hold on, attacks, chasing, a break of 5 charging hard toward the finish line on top of a mountain lined with fans, Harley relentlessly chasing down a solo attack with Don on his wheel, Don jumps in the last 200 meters and passes his chief rival at the line for the stage victory). Team Send It is the talk of the Tour.

The Commentators for the TDF coverage, Liggett and Sherwin, are summarizing the day's stage excitedly on Velo TV.

LIGGETT

(English accent)

Turner's been just amazing. Setting pace the whole day; breaking away, and then leading Boss out for the win.

SHERWIN

(English accent)

This is what make the Tour special - sacrifices like we just saw by Harley Turner. The stage victory goes to Donald Henderson Boss, but everyone who watched today saw Harley Turner delivering one of the grittiest performances ever in the history of the Tour. Harley gave up a lung, a kidney and a big spoonful of liver today for his leader Don Boss.

LIGGETT

You just have to ask yourself how long the phenomenally talented Harley Turner is

going to be willing to labor in Don Boss's considerable shadow before breaking out on his own.

Cut to post-stage news conference.

NEWSMAN

Don, how instrumental was Harley in your victory today? He shouldered the laboring oar most of the race, carried you up the final two climbs, and nearly pulled out a solo win for himself.

Don barely manages to suppress a grimace, but he controls himself.

DON

(uncomfortably)

Harley's The Man. He was great today. I asked him if he wanted to win a stage of my, I mean the Tour. He said yes, so I told him to ride it like he stole it. He totally delivered. In fact, I should probably dedicate this stage to him. But I don't think I will. Harley's a country boy. Aren't you Harley? [Pointing to the clearly annoyed Harley] The guy's so modest he would probably pass out from embarrassment. And I need him for tomorrow... (fake laugh).

Cut to Don and Harley back in their hotel room. Don sticks a finger in Harley's chest.

DON

What the fuck was that?

HARLEY

What the fuck was what?

DON

On the run up that last
mountain, you crashed Pinkus!

HARLEY

Crashed Pinkus?

DON

He went down right in front
of me, and I nearly rode over
his head. Inches from
stacking and cracking.
(points to his collarbone)

HARLEY

(befuddled)

Pinkus was 5 riders behind
me. You were behind him. I've
been on the point for 80
miles over 4 mountain passes.
I'm focused on the road in
front of me. Like you hired
me to do...like you pay me to
do. Now you're saying I
crashed a guy a couple of
dinks behind me?

DON

You were going too fast,
Farmboy. Fred got dizzy.
Blacked the fuck out. Fell
like a sack of...What are you
trying to do? Show me up?
Crash me out?

HARLEY

I just heard you tell the
press you encouraged me to
"ride it like you stole it."

DON

I don't think you understand
the drill here, Corn Pone...

Starts to circle him, like a wolf circle a wounded elk.

You know why I hired you for
this team, don't you?

HARLEY

(glaring, defiant)

You tell me Donnie.

DON

After I emerged from my
coma...my journey from
darkness to light, I found I
had an unlimited, God given
desire to win. (Voice rising)
BUT I ALSO...calming slightly)
I also discovered that I
could detect that same desire
in other people, I can feel
it pouring off them, I can
smell it, like fine perfume
on a beautiful woman.

Starts to circle Harley again. Gets behind him, drops his
nose to Harley's shoulder. Takes a deep whiff running his
nose from Harley's shoulder blade up to his neck.

HARLEY

(squirming)

Actually, Don, I'm seeing
someone at the moment..

DON

(cont., almost viscious)
I can smell your will to win,
Hayseed. You reek of it.
You'll stop at nothing to be
the best. I've given you
everything, But all you care
about is your FUCKING self.

HARLEY

Yeah, well Boss, I did the
best I could and you won your
fucking stage so why don't
you go back to your hotel
room and get yourself a nice
long...massage. (gesticulates
jerking off)

DON

Harley, you really don't
believe do you? In anything
except yourself? And actually
you're just a tiny slice of

Not-Much, which is what
you're going to discover out
there on your own.

HARLEY

Hey Golden Boy, you're not
the only ringer's got a bored
I-banker battling a mid life
crisis with a fat checkbook.

DON

(smiles without humor)
Let's see how that works out
for you, Farmboy. Go ahead.
Get your new team. Surround
yourselves with...friends.
Mates. Good guys. Be all nice
to your teammates. See how
sharing the glory - and the
deserts - works out for you.
Pissants. (spits on the
ground).

Cut to Don's hotel room. Don conversing with the team's
blood doping MD. Don nervously closing the blinds in his
hotel room and checks all the vents for microphones and
cameras.

DON

(nervously)

Doc, your cell phone off?

MD

Of course.

DON

Good. Give everyone The Gear
Doc, but pull back on Harley.

MD

Harley?

DON

He doesn't need it. He almost
dropped me today on Galibier.
He's getting too aggressive.
Narcissistic. Too much face
time on ESPN will do that.

MD

How much should I give?

DON

About a half. Just make sure that he doesn't beat me in the time trial.

MD

You can't just ask him to slow down?

DON

I don't ask anyone to do anything. I tell them. And I've told him, and he's got a head like a rock so I'm not wasting my time anymore. Just slow him the fuck down.

Next morning, sun up, Inside the Team Send It bus. Blinds are up. The MD goes down the aisle giving out The Gear to the 10 riders. He comes to Harley, in the back, sitting with Kent, who's reading Captain America comics. Harley's listening to Cash's Folsom Prison Blues on his headphones.

MD

(holding the needle port)
You ready?

HARLEY

Sure, tune me up. Whatever The Boss wants.

MD

(whispering conspiratorially)
The way you're riding, you really don't need any. Fifth place after riding point all day on the hardest climbing stage? Are you kidding me?

HARLEY

Well I'm sure the Boss ordered you to add a little more filler to my meatloaf.

MD

(sighs)
No comment.

HARLEY
(snorts)

We can't have the hired help
making the Mastuh look bad,
can we?

Chapter 18: The Hot Phlebotomist

Scene is Don's Dallas mansion, early in the year, in the
afternoon.

HARLEY (V.O.)
When we're not racing, we
still get drug tested by the
Dope Control. The blood
takers are called
"phlebotomists."
We call them Vampires. They
knock on your door at all
hours. Everybody hates them.
But not Don Boss. He looks
forward to it. He has a
special arrangement with Otto
Ubermann. Otto's hand-picked
Vampira has been swapping out
Don's tainted blood for clean
blood. Same for urine.

Don is on the phone, at his mansion, achingly, checking his
watch.

DON
When you coming over?

HP
I'm at the door.

DON
Be right down.

Don opens door. A voluptuous blond is on the stoop,
carrying a medicine bag. Don scans the neighborhood, gives
the woman a nervous handshake, hurries her upstairs to the
bedroom, past all the trophies and sculptures and pictures
with Bill Clinton/Sting/Jesus/Elizabeth Taylor back in the
day. His palace is known as "The Boss's Hand Job." There's
a marble sculpture of him prominently displayed in the
foyer of Don Boss as The Thinker. She's in front of Don and
he's pushing her buttocks, groping her as they scurry
upstairs.

HP

Mr. Ubermann says I have to get a real specimen this time.

DON

Fuck him. He got his money. I got my get out of jail free card. The sponsors are happy. Everybody's making bank.

HP

Mr. Ubermann's upset. Says you breached their deal. You were supposed to win the yellow and retire. That was three years ago.

DON

What's the Overlord of our Fair Sport going to do? Drop a dime? Turn me in? He blows the whistle on me, he might as well check himself into the nearest...Gulag.

HP

Some journalist is poking around at the lab. Belgian guy. Says he can prove your urine sample is actually somebody else's. He says he talked to a guy who said we'd been testing his piss to get the clean results.

But Don is distracted by her prominent breasts. He's groping her and barely able to think.

DON

Don't worry about journalists. Nobody believes 'em.

HP

Mr. Ubermann says you need to take this seriously.

DON

I think I need to take THESE
seriously. Repeatedly.

He grabs her buttocks and pulls her in close, looks down
into her cleavage.

HP
Yumm. You doubled up on your
testosterone again, didn't
you?

Camera pans up to the mirror on the ceiling. We see
fleeting glimpses of flying clothing and intertwined bodies
rolling into and out of view.

DON
You want a specimen?

HP
Don. What about the kids...?

DON
(harshly)
I'll give you a specimen!

He's admiring himself in a full length mirror.

DON
Who's the Boss?

HP
You are! (shrieks)

Cut to a shot of the HP walking out the door (straightening
out her bra) as his wife, hunkered down with grocery bags,
with three little kids hanging on to her, beating each
other up, rough-housing, is walking in. She gives the
phlebotomist a look, like she knows the scam.

18A--The Joy of Going Down

Daytime, Air Force Won, Gulfstream. Clips of Don Boss
winning the 2004 Tour De France. Clips questioning whether
Harley will bolt out on his own. Don's reading the sports
pages from newspapers in English, French and Italian. Don
wants to win one more Tour, but he needs Harley's help.
He's talking to Bud, scheming of a way to force Harley to
stay on Send IT one more year.

BUD

(hangs up his cell phone)
Looks like Harley's out.
Phone Hak offered him twice
what we're paying him.

DON

I need him one more tour.
Then I'm out.

BUD

Could match what Phonehak's
paying but...

DON

But what?

BUD

But I don't think there's any
amount of money ... [presses
down his right thumb] He
wants out from under-

DON

--Me. That's what I thought.
It's all about him.

BUD

(laughs)

Just sounds strange hearing
that... from you. "all about
him..."

DON

Well, while you're braying
like a jack ass, I've got a
plan. Send Megan over there.
With those... lips.

BUD

To do what?

DON

I don't know, bring him in.
Seduce him. He's never had a
girl, far as I know. They
could go for a butter ride.
She flatters him, he aw
shucks her, the rest is

biology. (flicks his hand
perfunctorily)

BUD

(sarcastic)

Just win. Whatever it takes.
Even if it means loaning out
your ...mistress.

DON

Hey, man. If Harley likes
her, he can have her. There's
plenty of souls out there in
need of my salivation.
(laughs at his own faux
cleverness).

The next scene: Day time. At the base of a mountain on a narrow road. Harley and Megan are on bikes. Harley's training right after the 2004 tour. He hasn't announced he's leaving SEND IT for PHONE HAK. Harley's wearing a "plain wrap" kit. Unassuming. Megan's in full kit and looks sexy. Lips glossy red. She's wearing a jersey emblazoned with her alma mater; Stanford. It's a sunny day. They're pedaling up a steep mountain pass in the French Alps.

HARLEY

(encouraging)

This is the part that sucks,
going uphill. But you're
doing great.

MEGAN

(huffing)

Thanks. I feel like I'm going
to fall over.

HARLEY

No, no. You're doing great.
Have you been, uh, riding
with Don?

MEGAN

(half joking)

No, but he's been taking me
for a ride.

HARLEY

(sensing her romantic
displeasure)

Yeah, well maybe it's time to ride away.

MEGAN

So you are jumping ship.

HARLEY

Yep, time to captain my own boat. I mean, shoveling coal in the boiler room was fun and all but...

MEGAN

(genuinely soothing tone)
...but you want ... room to breathe.

HARLEY

(startled)

Yeah, exactly. Like right now, going up this mountain, I only want to hear the sound of my own breath. Can't take all the noise. Don behind me, cracking the whip: "More, more, me, me..."

MEGAN

You know, there are advantages to sticking with Don. You're at the top of the food chain, Harley. Or almost the top. That counts for something. He is connected..

HARLEY

Index finger against lips, then grips handlebars and his face relaxes.

Shhh. No noise. Go into your robotic-hypnotic state.

Shuts his eyes, pedaling robotically.

MEGAN

I don't have that state.

HARLEY

(whispers)

Sure you do. Everyone does.

They ride in silence until they reach the summit. They stop. Megan's looking at Harley in a new way. He's sensitive, a free spirit, and fiercely independent. They're getting ready to descend a narrow winding road through a glacier valley. The roads don't have any barricades other than intermittent reflector poles. You can hear the cowbells clanging.

MEGAN

Here's where you tell me this is the "fun part." But I hate it.

HARLEY

You hate going down hill?

MEGAN

I hate the idea of flying off the edge. Losing control. Harley, I'm scared shitless. Honestly, if you weren't here, I'd get off and walk down.

HARLEY

Well, Megan, let's map it out. The only time you really need to brake is right before the turn.

MEGAN

Right. I'm hurtling down this mountain at 50 miles per but I'm not supposed to touch the...

Slow motion cut of Harley taking a turn at high speed with textbook perfection.

HARLEY

That's right. Just before you hit the turn, at the last second, you slam on both brakes, lean the bike into the apex, your body back and away, weight shifted to outside pedal, dive your knee into the turn, eyes locked 50 meters downhill -- not the road under your front wheel -

- and let it go. Rinse and repeat.

MEGAN

I slam on the brakes and I'm going to launch off like getting thrown from a horse.

HARLEY

Hah! But No. Just get low and lean back and you'll be fine. Try it.

Scenes of Harley screaming through a turn perfectly, and then Megan comes through, much slower, but she's practicing what Harley taught about hitting the brakes hard at the last second, leaning the bike in, the body away, and eyes downhill. They get to the bottom.

MEGAN

(elated)

Holy Sh--! I see what you mean!

HARLEY

(proudly)

Yeah?

MEGAN

I get it! Drugs and deprivation will get you up the mountain. But, to go fast down 'em, ya gotta have big guts and skill. That was crazy!

HARLEY

Wow. You did great. You're uh, that's uh, I didn't really tell you any...Don must've taught you a few things.

MEGAN

Don? He's taught me a lot of things. Like, making sure he's not within arm's length of a camera when he starts to kiss you.

HARLEY
(stunned speechless)

MEGAN
And you know what's it like
to do all the work...

HARLEY
He likes to, uh, record you
two...?

MEGAN
Not us two. Him.

HARLEY
And you...?

MEGAN
(laughs)
I'm not the sex-tape type,
Harley. No.

HARLEY
I hope you know what you're
doing. You two still thinking
about tying the knot?

MEGAN
Thinking, sure. It just never
seems to happen. Harley, you
know why I'm here.

HARLEY
I do. And it's still no.
Ain't going back to the
boiler room.

MEGAN
I didn't think so. But, all
the same, thanks for
the...advice.

HARLEY
Any time. You want to try it
again?

Pointing back up the mountain.

MEGAN

I would. If you promise to join me for a glass of wine tonight?

HARLEY

(Shakes head)

Always on the clock, aren't you?

MEGAN

No, this one's on me.

They mount bikes and ride off together up the steep mountain.

Chap 19: Harley Agonistes

HARLEY (V.O)

The Boss went on to win that Tour, without me, by a comfy margin. And I went on to become The Boss of another team. I was seriously going to whip his ass, but I had a little problem on a training ride. Cooked a corner extra crispy and hit a chipmunk with a death wish. I slid out like a baseball player stealing home, wound up fracturing my femur just at the base of my femoral ball. It was pretty fucked up and despite my thirst and anger I couldn't generate the power. The Boss won his eighth tour and hung it up. It seemed as if even greed had its limits. Probably wanted to run for President. Or overthrow Hugh Hefner. I got back in shape for the 2006 tour. This time this sure as shit wasn't going to be a lame fuck around.

Images: daytime, we see Harley racing down the switchbacks from Tombstone Pass in the Cascade Mountains. Hunched over bars, scrunched up on the top tube. Clocking 60 mph downhill, a chipmunk runs out from nowhere, but he adroitly

manages to skid rather than fly over the guardrail to instant death.

Hospital scene. Harley has bloody bandages on head, chin, shoulders, forearm, hips, ribs and quads.

SURGEON

What happened this time, Mr. Turner?

HARLEY

(distressed)

I need to get out of here. I need to be training.

SURGEON

Still refusing to tap those brakes? What is it with you?

HARLEY

(irritated)

If you're braking, you're faking.

SURGEON

Looks to me like if you're not braking, you're aching. (He chortles at his own joke.)

HARLEY

I gotta go. If I can walk, I can ride.

SURGEON

Mr. Turner - Harley -- I can't hold you here. And, frankly, I don't need to. The way you're going, sooner or later you'll be back and unable to walk out of this hospital under your own power. Is that what you want?

HARLEY

Save your reasonable advice for a rational guy. I'm a got damned lunatic whose got to win the got damned Tour De France!

Harley looks at the surgeon, who stares back steely-eyed at Harley. Cut to a shot of a group of doctors in surgical scrubs, screaming like banshees and waving machetes, chasing Harley down a hospital corridor. Harley gingerly rises out of the hospital bed, broken, like an old man. A surgeon in scrubs looks at films.

SURGEON

We'll get you through the '06
tour, but after that, you're
going to need a new hip.

Chap 20: Over the Guardrail and into the Flames
TV helicopter aerial video clips of French Alps from TDC
VELO TV race coverage, introducing the day's sstage. 2006
Tour De France. Graphic -- Stage 16, le Bourg-d'Osiens -
Las Toussuire, 182KM. Images of Harley grab assing with his
new teammates on his new team, PhoneHak. Shots of Harley
and mates riding, laughing, goofing off. The peloton rolls
amidst the pageantry. Film footage of map of course,
helicopter shots of glaciers, craggy peaks, peloton rolling
out in quaint French mountain town, Harley loose and
relaxed.

LIGGET

(English accent)

Good afternoon from France,
folks. We're here today to
see if America's new two-
wheeled hero, Harley Turner,
can hold on to his narrow
lead in the Tour. Stage 16 of
the Tour de France, a 182
kilometer mountain stage in
the Alps.

The peloton is down to 18 riders. Huge, animated crowds
line both sides of the road. The Devil (guy dressed up in
red devil costume). The Syringe (guy dressed up as large
hypodermic needle). Duck Boy (guy dressed up in Oregon Duck
costume). Marble Sack boy (tall skinny guy naked except for
black speedo). Mennonite Man (flat brimmed black hat,
beard, white preacher color long sleeve shirt, black vest,
very stern). Marble Sack Boy running beside, shouting at
him ("Sack up!"), Syringe Man ("Doper!"). Duck Boy (Oregon!
Beer!). The Devil ("Straight to Hell!"). Spray painted on
the pavement, he sees: "Fuck the Boss!", "American
Dopers!", "Nihilist," "Amish Mafia," a giant squirting
penis with letters H*A*R*L*E*Y inside shaft, and "For a
Good Time, Call 666."

Fast forward to last 10k of the stage. Harley, wearing yellow, is at the end of a 10 man group, struggling, up a steep climb. Images of Harley, sitting down, standing up, clearly uncomfortable with the pace, his head has dropped, eyes fixed on road below, not concerned with action on the front.

HARLEY

(downcast, pasty, mumbles to
teammate Ang Manx...)
Not feeling so good.

MANX

(flemish accent)
I know. Just hold on my
wheel. Don't let go.

Harley's pedaling squares compared to his rivals. The top rivals begin to ramp up the pace. Harley's at the end his rope, painfully fatigued.

HARLEY

Sleepy. Just wanna take a
nap. Dizzy. Shoulda had
more...gruel... water.

MANX

(looks back, sees Harley
losing wheel)
Wake up Harley! Only 10k to
go! Hold on!

Manx slows down next to Harley, begins pushing Harley's butt until Manx finally pops, drifts back. Harley begins paper boy zig zagging. He looks over to the roadside and see's a stern and stoic Mennonite couple, Man and Wife, formally dressed, shaking their heads in bitter disapproval.

Meanwhile the TV commentators continue their play by play analysis. We hear their voices as we watch the race unfold live.

LIGGET

Harley has cracked! Harley
has popped! The Yellow Jersey
is in tatters!

SHERWIN

(English accent)

The big guns have smelled the weakness and attacked. They're leaving Harley in the dust. With less than 10k to go, Harley has got to summon the strength to hold on or all is lost.

LIGGETT

Harley has no teammates. His rivals now emboldened are flying up the mountain. Oh he's in a spot of bother now, Paul.

SHERWIN

If that's a spot of bother, I'm the royal garter inspector. Harley Turner is going down in flames!

Switch to Harley's face, caked in salt, head down, delirious.

HARLEY

(to himself)

Fuck I hate climbing. Gotta drag on. Tired. Hungry. Why didn't I drink? Goddamn hot bikie sugar water. Need cold water. Cold beer.

Rambunctious fans along roadside close in close enough to touch, screaming, pushing him, "Rally!," "Unleash it!" Send it! Kick!

These fucking people...
There's no kick. ...No last second rally.. I'm toast. I was fucking toast two hours ago...

HARLEY

(shouting angrily)

Don't fucking touch me asshole! (swats at an earnest fan who's trying to push him from behind). I'll cave in your fucking skull!

The fans quickly call him a fuckwad and tell him to fuck off, dooper. They turn on him.

As Harley continues his death slog, Sherwin and Liggett call the play by play.

SHERWIN

Harley's got to hold on.
Shickensheiss way up the road
will win the stage.
Wienherder will move up and
be in Harley's Yellow Jersey
tonite. I'm not saying it's
over, Phil, but this looks
very bad for the Oregonian.

LIGGETT

And look who's coming up
beside him. It's Kent
Gandolph, with the No. 1
number pinned to his Send It
jersey. I don't need to tell
you that's the same number
worn by Harley's former
mentor and teammate Don Boss.

Kent looks at Harley's dead eyes. His mouth opens as if he's going to speak.

Harley turns head to look and listen. Begins to hallucinate. Don Boss' face suddenly replaces Kent's. He imagines the following:

DON

Well, Farm Boy. Look who
didn't take their vitamins.
How's that Heart and Grit
treating you now?

A motorcycle pulls up beside him. Harley imagines it's being ridden by a movie director in a striped shirt with a mustache and the iconic beret, shouting a few inches from his face, through a bullhorn, in heavily accented English:

FRENCH MOVIE DIRECTOR

More agony, American! More
agony! Show us the suffering!
The humiliation! The misery!
Show us! You are a dead man!
You are completely kaput!

Harley imagines dialogue between Sherwin and Liggett.

LIGGETT

Harley's taking it up the ass
hard here Paul.

SHERWIN

Oh mercy, the poor lad's
taking a stiff bugging
indeed.

Switch to a scene of Harley descending. He's mothering both brake levers, and he's imagining horrific crashes (actual footage of racers flipping over guardrails, flying off the road, sliding out in the turns...).

As Harley's melt down lingers on, Harley imagines, in sequence, on the side of the road (analogous to Willy Wonka's scary boat ride in the tunnel)

- A guillotine blade dropping down and chopping his head off.
- A Mennonite Husband and Wife in traditional garb shaking their head in stern disapproval.
- Godzilla snatching up Harley in
- his jaws and thrashing him about
- Harley strapped down on a side of a mountain with a Raven plucking out his liver.
- Megan dressed in a skin tight leather cat suit hissing at him like an angry cat.

Fast forward to Finish Line. Harley limps across line behind Manx setting pace, 10 minutes down on the winner, Shickensheiss, and 8:10 behind Oscar Weinherder, the new Yellow Jersey wearer.

Freeze Frame on Harley's face, wan, dry, eyes sunken, salt encrusted, head down, deflated. Voice over from TV commentators.

LIGGETT

There's a picture of a broken man. He must've made several deals with the devil just to get himself up those final agonizing 10 kilometers.

SHERWIN

I've never seen a more dramatic collapse by the Yellow Jersey. Like sharks, his rivals seized on his weakness and tore him apart. Tomorrow's the hardest stage of the Tour. I wouldn't want to be inside Harley Turner's head right now. He's dropped from first to 11th in the time it takes to say "lights out."

Harley crosses the line, leans on a fence, throngs of fans and reporters crowding his breathing space. The graphic shows that Harley has dropped to 11th place having lost 9 minutes to the new leader, Oscar Weinherder.

Harley depleted and dejected. But he wants to act like it's no big deal, only a stupid bike race. Reporters hover around.

REPORTER

(concerned)

Harley, what happened?

HARLEY

(shaking head, sarcastic)

I don't know. Went soft.

Must've been that cupcake I ate last week.

REPORTER

(earnestly)

What are you going to do?

HARLEY

(full on smart ass, looking up into the sky)

Well, there's a few more hours of sunlight, I could get a little more training

in. Anyone know where I can find a Stairmaster round here? (shakes his head in disgust)

That night, scene with Harley sitting in his hotel room, swigging whiskey straight from the bottle. He's got several of his teammates lounging around in the room, in their tights, using rollers to massage their quads, stretching, drinking water, quiet, depressed. Harley's in his bed, fondling a black and white picture in the newspaper of Don and Megan dressed to the nines at a Hollywood party on the red carpet. He caresses the picture of Megan and takes a belt from the bottle.

His cell phone rings. It's Don. Split screen:

DON
(smug)
Hey, Muskogee. How you
feelin'?

HARLEY
Like someone just dropped me
from a bridge.

DON
That's too bad, brother. I
thought you had the Tour just
about sewed up. But listen.
You did the best you could,
right? With what you had to
work with.

HARLEY
(bitterly)
It ain't over, Asshole. Stay
tuned.

Harley hangs up and is visibly angry. He turns to his crestfallen, wounded and waifish teammates, and addresses them like the alpha male General he's supposed to be, like Don would.

HARLEY
Tomorrow were gonna donkey-
punch these peckerheads. In
the neck!

(His teammates utter half-hearted "yeahs" in various languages).

Harley stands up and startss tinkering with his bike, using an allen wrench to remove his front brakes. All eyes are on him. His teammates are a bit cowed. They don't know what to say. Finally, Manx speaks up.

MANX

Harley, what're you doing?

HARLEY

Dead weight. I don't use my front brakes going uphill, and I sure as shit ain't gonna tap 'em going down.

MANX

You're crazy! Men have died going down these Alps. Strong men.

HARLEY

Exactly. (He laughs, eyeballing his right index finger, which he pulls as if firing a revolver.) But I have the touch. Or lack thereof.

MANX

You can't win going down fast. You know that. You gotta climb fast. With the, what do you call 'em, the whippets.

HARLEY

(confidently addressing the team)

I know it looks bad. I know you think it's over. Everybody thinks its over. We've been counted out. That's why we're going to win. You guys just ride it hard until you can't anymore. I mean full fucking stick. Blow it up. Just get me to

the front. You do that, and
I'll finish this fucker.

Finishes off the bottle and goes to bed. Dream sequence follows. In a dream, Harley hauls his bike up to the summit of Madonna Del Ghisallo. We see the Italian shrine to bicyclists featuring all the greats, including Fabio Casartelli-who crashed during the 1995 TDF and died. He dreams of riding his bike fast down the hill, with a gallery of tycoons, fancy women, depraved paparazzi, his mother, all trying to bribe him to stop. He imagines Megan Marshall pleading with him to apply the brakes. The Grim Reaper pulls even with him on a motorcycle and warns him that haste makes waste. And that his star which has burned so very, very bright is about to burn out. Harley sees Don smiling in his yellow jersey as he's pressing his lips to the back of Harley's mother's neck, as if he has mounted her, we see Don's hands have transformed into hooves, hooves of a goat.

Chap 21: The Biggest Stage in the World

Daytime. Another quaint French village. Stage 17, 2006. Weinherder is wearing yellow, laughing, joking, the king of the pack. The peloton rolls out at a leisurely pace.

MANX (to Harley)

Don't be an idiot, man. This
isn't going to work.

HARLEY

I don't care if it's going to
work. It's gonna rock. I'm
going to leave this place in
shambles.

Television commentary

LIGGETT

(English accent)

Welcome to stage 17 of the
Tour De France. The longest
and toughest stage of the
tour. These riders will be
racing 200 kilometers over 5
mountain tops in the Alps.

Peloton rolls out from Sant-Jean-de Maurienne. Footage of early 14 man break forming at the 12k mark. During the roll out, riders are offering condolences to Harley in a variety

of languages, as if his family had been wiped out by a drunk driver. He's humble but miffed. "Yeah, thanks." He keeps repeating in a monotone voice, as if he doesn't want to admit to himself this race is the most important race in his life.

Voice over with footage of the race live, as well as flashbacks to the melt down the day before.

LIGGETT

I gotta tell you Paul, it's good to see Harley back in there. After yesterday's epic melt down, part of me wondered whether he'd be back to pin his number on and flip his leg over the saddle.

SHERWIN

He's a game lad, is Harley Turner. Doesn't say much, lets his legs do the talking. Unfortunately, the only thing his legs had to say yesterday was "I surrender." But something tells me we haven't heard the last of him. Oscar Weinherder in yellow. His Lean Sausage team is setting pace. A breakaway of ten goes early and opens up a 5 minute gap. At the base of the first climb, the break has 11 minutes on the peloton. Camera close up on Harley, his teammates feeding him bottles of water, and he's drinking copiously. Harley surrounded by 8 Phonhak teammates, very eager, ready for the signal to unleash the terror.

Harley sidles up to Manx, a new ferocity in his voice:

HARLEY

Tear the ass out of this dog!
Rip it the fuck up!

His teammates respond by moving to the front of Lean Sausage/yellow jersey. They go as hard as they can, single file, each PhoneHak teammate riding to failure, and replaced by another, until all 8 are used up, spent and discarded. The last teammate, Manx, peels off, utterly spent, but summons the energy to shout:

Drink! Drink! Water, Harley!
Don't forget!

As we leave Manx, you can faintly hear him scream : "Harley you crazy mutherfuck...!" Footage of Harley attacking up the climb. He's followed by the Major Players. Weinherder in the Yellow jersey shakes his head as if to say, "this has no chance and Im not going to waste my energy," and he begins to coast, waiting to be re-absorbed back in the main peloton where his teammates can guard him.

Meanwhile, Harley is out of the saddle climbing fiercely. Sits down in the saddle, looks back, sees his major rivals glued to his wheel.

HARLEY

(to himself, sarcastically)
No problem. 130k to go over 4
Alpine peaks with 5 of the
best climbers in the world
sucking my wheel. Nothing's
fucked here...

(Television commentary. Harley is on the point, driving the pace, while the podium favorites look at each and seem to reach an accord that this is unwise and decide to slow down and let Harley pursue his suicide mission solo)

LIGGETT

Harley has attacked again,
followed by the heavy
hitters. Is this real pluck,
Paul, or is he just trying to
save face from yesterday's
implosion?

SHERWIN

Well it looks like the Podium
Favorites are dropping back
to the safety of the peloton.
They obviously don't think
this break is for real.
Perhaps they're letting him

have his moment in the sun.
You know, Harley is a
likeable guy and he and
Weinherder roomed together on
PhoneHak last year.

Footage of Weinherder and the hitters shaking their head in
the pel as if to say "no way in hell can Harley hold that
gap." But, up the road, Harley catches the most of the
breakaway group, and blows right by fragments from the
early 11 man breakaway.

LIGGETT

I think Harley's on a
mission.

SHERWIN

He's starting to make a
believer out of me. Look at
the way he's screaming down
the Col des Saises. He's in a
full aero tuck gripping the
top of his bars and
absolutely refusing to brake.
Some call Harley the Kestrel
because of the incredible
speeds he reaches descending,
like a raptor in pursuit of
his prey.

Close up image of Harley's hands. He's gripping the top of
the handlebars on the descents, fingers no where near the
brake hoods. Tucked up, his butt on the top tube, totally
aero, very nervy. His fingers are not on the brake levers.
He's removed the left brake hood for the front brake. At
times he's going so fast through S turns he's skidding his
rear wheel. Harley imagines a downhill skier busting
through the gates. Then he imagines a comet streaking
across the sky.

LIGGETT

Kestrel? Why a kestrel? A
falcon's much faster.

SHERWIN

Kestrel's lighter.

LIGGETT

Of course. It's funny you say
that Paul. Harley once told

me he only goes uphill fast
so he can be the first to go
down. He likes a clean
downhill without timid riders
clogging up his line. Calls
descending a "fairly
controlled death spiral."

SHERWIN

Well the gritty lad from
Oregon just may get himself
back into this race, and
perhaps into trouble. Take a
look Paul, Harley's
apparently removed his front
brakes. Can't say I've ever
seen that before.

LIGGET

(almost forlornly)

Harley's prepared to take
whatever risk, Paul, to get
back into this race.

Footage of Harley summiting over the 3rd col, the Col de la Colmbiere. The remaining four riders from the early breakaway are clinging to Harley's wheel, but soon are falling off. Harley doesn't look back. He's determined. He has a 5.30 gap on the yellow jersey. Graphics at the bottom of the screen display the gaps between Harley on point, and the yellow jersey behind, and the time Harley needs to overtake the yellow jersey (9 minutes).

Harley rips down the mountain like a demon and sheds two of his hangers on. He's in the classic balled up aero tuck, very aero but highly risky. Harley's rear wheel is wobbling badly, but he doesn't panic.

LIGGETT

Oh my. Look. Harley's rear
wheel has pretzled. Must've
broken a spoke.

SHERWIN

But the mechanic in the team
car was on it like bangers on
mash. He's got a whole new
bike. Look at his composure.
He looks...confident.

Harley again catches the four breakaway riders and roars past them. The gap grows to six minutes. His coach in the motor car is screaming at Harley to drink, drink! Constantly handing him up bottles from the PhoneHak teamcar.

Harley's pouring bottles over his head, water streaming down. Shouting to team car: Hose me!

LIGGETT

It's a hot day out there
Paul, over 93 degrees
Fahrenheit. At those temps
the tarmac melts. He's got to
be careful on those hairpins,
he can easily slide out.

SHERWIN

Something tells me Harley's
in the zone. He sees it all,
hears nothing and nothing can
stop him. I'll tell you one
thing for sure, he's not
getting any blisters on his
fingers from braking.
(laughs).

Ongoing tv coverage, with the details flashing on the bottom of the screen. At the summit of Colombiere, Harley's lead is 8.30. He stretches it to 9 minutes on the descent, making him the virtual leader of the tour. He's a bad ass on two wheels. On the flatter sections, he's locked into his preying mantis time trial mode. On the descents, he's scrunched up with his butt on the top tube in a perilous aero tuck. The footage is from LIVE TV.

(Live coverage of the peloton behind) Weinherder, in the leader's yellow jersey, is panicking. He screams at his teammates. He's gesticulating up the road and screaming in German, so we don't know exactly what he's saying, but we know he recognizes that he's in trouble.

Harley is now dancing up the final climb. 10k to go. He's been off the front now for almost four hours. The TV graphics provide the data (time gap between Harley and the yellow jersey).

The same motorcycle we saw the previous day pulls up next to Harley.

FRENCH DIRECTOR WITH
BULLHORN:

You are maniac, American!
Punch ze demons that haunt
you! Spray water in your
face! Purge! You will be
remembered forever! Madman!
Delirious! Exuberance!
Ecstasy!

HARLEY

Get that fucking horn out of
my face, Fucknut! (pause)
Hey! You got a ham sandwich
in there?

French Director primly says "D'accord," and hands him a
panini.

HARLEY

That's awesome. Merci.

Harley's looking down. He's close. He's reading the
graffiti on the pavement. The crowds are collapsing,
creating a narrow passage way. The Duck Boy gets in front
of him and clears a path through a throng of nearly naked
Dutch in orange. Syringe Man approaches him aggressively
and Harley punches him with his right forearm, knocking him
down. The Devil tries to run beside him but there's a
putrid smell that forces Harely to gag and speed up. And
finally Marble Sack Boy runs beside him and tries to steal
Harley's water bottle. Harley looks at him and says "All
you had to do was ask.."

The graffiti reads: Harley's My Hero! Damn Braces; Bless
Relaxes! Uphill- Downhill-Stoopid. Pounding Idiots! Hank
For President! Gritty Not Pritty. Pound/Flail. Fuck the
Don. Grit! Heart! Crush! No Chain! Tsup Dawg? One Dick
Slapping. Steal it.

(TV Graphics). Harley crests the Col De Joux-Plane (2k to
finish). He's ripping down the mountain, he sees the 2k to
go, he's in his tuck, taking all the right lines, never
breaking. He smiles serenely.

HARLEY

(to himself, ecstatically)
65 mph! Focking A! Can't
believe they're paying me...No
brakes Muthufuckuhs!

Live TV video of Harley punching the air as he crossed the finish line in Morzine atop the Col de Joux-Plane. The clock starts ticking that measures the time gap between Harley and Weinherder. Harley needs 9 minutes to take the lead and put himself back in yellow.

HARLEY

Fuck Yeah!

At the same time, The Boss is in his Gulfstream in the air, again a blonde between his legs, watching the final few K on TV. He's outraged. Fans going crazy watching on TV. Duck Boy and the Devil jubilantly running towards Harley. Mennonite Man smiles and hugs his happy wife. The Cop in Dallas cheering. Megan Marshall is crying tears of joy. Even the Phlebotomist is cheering. But Bud is worried, mumbling about the loss of endorsements and sponsorships. Inside the Gulfstream:

BUD

Ah fuck. There goes the Pepsi sponsorship.

DON

What do you mean, "There goes the Pepsi sponsorship"? It's a single fucking stage, man.

BUD

Our countrymen are beer-addled morons whose sports knowledge extends to the last Super Bowl. They can barely keep the name of one American cyclist in their encephalitic heads. You've just become the American cyclist whose name they forgot.

DON

(glaring at the TV)
This is unacceptable.

The voiceover is of Liggett and Sherwin excitedly declaring that this is the greatest comeback they've ever seen in the history of sport. Recap footage of Harley attacking, climbing, descending and driving hard to the line to scoop up every second.

Footage of Weinherder finally crossing the line. The graphic shows that Harley has beaten him by 8:30. Which means Harley is in 2nd, only .30 down, with a time trial the next day, which Harley specializes in, while Weinherder is renown for being a mediocre at best time trialist.

SHERWIN

Turner has done the unthinkable! 120 miles, by himself, against the entire peloton, over four cols and 10,000 feet. Nobody has climbed mountains like this since Hannibal. He has taken 8 minutes and 30 seconds out of Weinherder's lead, moving up to second place, with the time trial tomorrow, an event Harley excels in, while Weinherder is mediocre at best. It looks like Harley has again reversed his fortune, and barring another disaster should be wearing yellow in Paris.

LIGGETT

Once the dutiful domestique of Don Boss, Harley Turner has emerged as potentially the greatest cyclist ever. Boss himself has admitted he was the best at "following wheels" - which is to say, for you viewers out there who might not know this, that as a team leader Don Boss settled himself comfortably in the slipstream of other strong riders who pulled him along. Seven winners' jerseys, yes, magnificent, but for all those wins he probably spent less than two minutes off the front by himself. And today we've seen in ONE stage the gritty Mr. Turner off the front solo - for five grueling hours!

SHERWIN

It's breathtaking, Paul,
simply breathtaking. Even
Turner's mentor, his former
leader, Don Boss, has to be
doffing his cap.

LIGGETT

Yes, I'm guessing right now
Don feels like a proud papa
watching his boy hit his
first home run.

Meanwhile, in the Gulfstream, Don, righteously, to Bud
Crown:

DON

Harley needs to be ratcheted
down a few notches. Bud, dial
up The Uberdork.

BUD punches in the numbers, hands the cell phone over to
Don.

DON

Otto, for fuck's sake, Harley
Turner must be stopped. Call
in the Phlebotomist. Time for
a little blood.

BRIDGE to finish line area where Harley is being mobbed by
his teammates, handlers and fans who truly love him. A
reporter asks Harley for a recap.

HARLEY

(all smiles)

Hey, I've been training for
this all my life. All I did
was drink a little fire water
last night. Lots of cold
water today. And go downhill
fast. Faster 'n anybody.

Chap 22: Downhill Fast

TDF. After stage 17, when Harley makes up 8:30 minutes, and
is in second 30 seconds behind Oscar Weinherder who's not a
good time trialist, Harley is certain to take the yellow
jersey back just before the final run into Paris. Don, in
his private jet, on the cell phone.

DON
(emphatically)
Ubermann, what's the latest?

UBERMANN
Don't worry. We're getting
the sample. It's going to be
fine.

DON
How soon you gonna report the
positive test?

UBERMANN
Probably within a few days of
the Champs D'Elysee.

DON
He gets on the podium!?! With
the Star Spangled banner? And
the doll? The furry lion?

UBERMANN
I can't stop him from
winning. He's going to crush
Weinherder in the time trial.

DON
I won't have it. He's gaming
the rules Otto. That thing he
does with his forearms raised
up, like he's praying, that
Praying Mantis thing. It's
unsafe. Kids are watching.
Ban it.

UBERMANN
On what grounds? It's
actually safer than your
position, and even less
aerodynamic. And we all know
this sport could use a little
prayer.

Next day. Daylight. Mob at start line of the decisive time
trial. Harley in full aero gear with bullet time trial
helmet. He walks his sleek Blade aero bike to the start
gate. Harley's official start time is in 30 seconds. The
clock will start whether he's there or not. Time precious.
A mechanical delay could steal precious seconds which could

result in Harley losing his grip on the yellow jersey. A stern French Gendarme halts Harley

GENDARME

Messeur Turner, the angle on your bars violates UCL rule 24.12.4(1). You must conform the bars to the rules now or you will be disqualified.

HARLEY

(laughing)

No problem, Officer. I was wondering when you were going to show up.

He breaks out an allen wrench, loosens a few bolts, lowers the aero bar, and laughs, making it to the start line with 10 seconds to spare. As soon as he takes off, he calmly pulls the bars back into his preferred Praying Mantis position and chuckles. Harley goes on to win the TT and the TDF. (the graphics will show that Harley's time trial time was a 4 minutes faster than Weinherder's, resulting in Harley moving from 2nd into first place, making him the owner of the yellow jersey.

Chap 23: The Dime is Dropped

Video of the Podium presentation on the Champs D'Alysee, Harley', dressed in the yellow jersey, waving the furry lion doll, surrounded by his teammates, as the crowd cheers. The 2nd and 3rd place racers on the podium shake and spray the ceremonial bombers of champagne, but Harley pops the cork and commences to guzzle from the giant bottle, and hands the rest to his teammates.

A day later, in the afternoon, in Paris, Harley's coming out of a hotel, signing autographs. His cell phone rings. It's Don.

Footage of Harley talking into cell phone while working the Sharpie with adoring fans. Harley's wearing a baseball cap with the flat brim turned around.

DON

Hey Big Guy. It's me.

HARLEY

(laughing)

Calling to congratulate me?

DON

(starts to laugh himself)
Calling to give you a heads
up.

HARLEY

What, that I'm about to get a
call from the President?

DON

No, numbnutts, You're about
to become the first winner of
the Tour ever to get busted.

Harley pauses. Stops signing autographs.

HARLEY

(violently, lowers voice)
You just couldn't stop at
three. You had to have more.
It's never enough with you.
You greedy, rat fucking
bastard.

DON

Listen up crybaby. You need a
friend right now. And I'm all
you've got. You're about to
get a call from Otto
Ubermann. You tested positive
for T. Deny everything.

HARLEY

Funny.

DON

What's funny?

HARLEY

T. Testosterone. That's the
one drug I didn't take.

DON

(ignores him)
Remember, Harley: Omerta. You
protect me. We protect you.

HARLEY

You protect me? Right. Like
the fox protecting the

chickens. It's your Coop,
Padron. Do I have a choice?

DON

Nope. My world, as per. One
thing?

HARLEY

What?

DON

For fuck's sake, turn that
hat around.

HARLEY

What hat?

DON

The baseball cap. You look
like an idiot.

HARLEY

Dude, it's my "who gives a
damn" Kid Rock thing.

DON

Harley, I've got Kid Rock
sitting next to me. He says
you're making him look bad.

Chap 24: Working for the Man

Bend, Oregon. Coffee Shop down by the river on a bright
sunshiny day.

We meet a new character, USADA Prosecutor Timmy Transkind,
who is sitting down with Harley for coffee and pastries.
Harley has gained a little weight in the face. Timmy is a
balding, nervy, wormy overweight lawyer whose cheap suit
hangs loosely on him.

TIMMY

We've got the goods on you.

HARLEY

(stone faced)

I'll fight you to the end.

TIMMY

But we don't want you.

HARLEY

(on his 12th espresso)
I've got my lawyers. They'll
enjoy fucking with you for
sport.

TIMMY

We want The Boss.

HARLEY

I want world peace.

TIMMY

We're not the French, or the
Italians, or the Germans
(bitter emphasis) or those
scum sucking Russians. We're
the United States of America.
We can't be bought.

HARLEY

Can't be bought? That's a
laugh. Ever test those Marvel
comic freaks in your NFL?

TIMMY

The NFL's not in the
Olympics. If they were, under
our charter from Congress, we
could test them, too.

HARLEY

And before you know it, the
fans would prefer to shell
out \$100 a seat to watch
Frisbee golf. Or maybe get
outside and play themselves.

TIMMY

I'm not saying it's a perfect
system. I am saying The Don
is being protected by
my...let's just say less
scrupulous colleagues across
the pond.

HARLEY

Welcome to the fun house, Boy
Wonder. (Pauses.) Since we're

just talking here, what are you...suggesting?

TIMMY

You testify against Don Boss. Tell us when he gave you the gear, where'd he get it, how often, so on. The whole sack of dirty laundry.

HARLEY

You're asking me to rat him out.

TIMMY

I'm asking you to tell the truth.

HARLEY

He's an arrogant prick and a con man, but I'm not sure I want to live the rest of my life in the witness protection program.

TIMMY

(handing him a card)
This is my private number.
Call me. One more thing.

HARLEY

(impassive)

TIMMY

We need you to wear a wire.
(Harley stone-faced)
To record incriminating admissions.

(Harley stone-faced)

You need to pick one out yourself. Maybe at RadioShack.

(Harley stone-faced)

We're on a tight budget.

(Harley stone-faced)

But we'll pick up the tab
today (motioning to the
coffee).

HARLEY

(explodes)

Morons! I'm being prosecuted
by morons!

TIMMY:

We'll include the muffin
(pointing at it)

HARLEY

And let's say hypothetically
I bought a wire, at Radio
Shack, and copped a few juicy
quotes from The Boss. What do
I get?

TIMMY

You'll be eligible to compete
in one month.

HARLEY

Make it two weeks, and I'll
pay for the coffee, and the
muffins, AND throw in the
batteries on that wire thing.

TIMMY

OK: deal. (extends hand for
shaking). But one more, other
thing.

HARLEY

(perturbed)

Now what?

TIMMY

Can I take a selfie, you and
me? It's for my kid. Big fan.

HARLEY

(Shaking head in resignation)
Yeah, sure.

TIMMY

Yes! Hey, uh, can I get a pic
of the surgery scar on your
hip, too?

HARLEY

(looks up plaintively)
Why God? Why?

Harley takes the card.

Graphic on bottom of screen: One Year Later.

Harley is overweight and wearing a three-day beard. He's clearly out of sorts. He's sitting at a dimly lit table with a bottle of Jack Daniels in his A-framed cabin beneath Suicide Rock. Split screen. Harley dials up Bud Crown, who's sitting behind a big desk with pictures of Don and all sorts of trophies, awards, and Mindstrong products everywhere.

BUD

Some balls calling me,
Harley. If Don knew...

HARLEY

(plaintively)
What am I supposed to do?
Remember Omerta? He asked me
to protect the Lie. He
promised to protect me. The
Drug Police offered me a
deal. I could've been on my
bike in a week. All I had to
do was give up The Boss. But
I kept my mouth shut. I bled
out the eyeballs, earholes
and asshole for that big
giant dick! And this is how
he repays me.

BUD

Harley, you're upset.
Understandably. But we're
doing everything we can.
Right now you're toxic. The
sponsors won't touch you.
We're trying.

HARLEY

That's bullshit. You're sitting on a pile of cash and I'm eating beans from a tin can. Flat busted. They took my car. I need to ride. For somebody. I don't care who. Word is, the Boss has me blackballed. Nobody will cross him.

BUD

That's a ridiculous allegation and I deny it categorically. But I'll talk to Don. We'll find you somebody. In the meantime, keep endorsing Mindstrong™ Come Back recovery drink.

Switch to a press conference at the Mindstrong™ headquarters. Don, dapperly dressed, is at the podium, facing a dozen microphones.

DON

We're all very concerned about Harley. He's saying things that he knows are not true. His manager committed suicide. His Mother won't speak to him. He's filed bankruptcy. He's alone. And desperate, and I can understand that.

REPORTER

There are rumors that he's about to come clean, admit everything, including - that you - allegedly - were the drug kingpin who taught him how to cheat.

DON

Harley's a sick man. Very sick. His mind is weak. There's no room in this sport for liars.

REPORTER

You were his mentor. You recruited him when he was nobody. And brought him along. Can you give him any personal advice, as a friend.

DON

Well, I can't give him any advice, because he won't take it. But if he was to ask me, I tell him to consider Mindstrong's "12 Steps to Humility" seminar, which you can log into on any hand held device. I'll gladly pay half.

Chapter 25. The Unabiker Plots his Comeback

We see an A-frame cabin in the Deschutes National Forest, below Suicide Rock. (signage). Sounds of large bore handgun exploding. Harley's lawyer, Max Kash, enters the unlocked cabin. Harley is on the cantilevered deck, firing a .44 Mag into an abandoned refrigerator. Harley's wearing a bathrobe. He has the TV on, with The Big Lebowski playing. He's drinking from a carton of milk.

MAX

Hey, Dude, howya doing?

HARLEY

You know, strikes and gutters. (Puts down the handgun, takes a swig of milk.)

MAX

Nice bathrobe.

HARLEY

Yeah, it really ties my wardrobe together.

MAX

Hey I'm here about your case. As you know, it's complicated.

HARLEY

Yeah, lots of facets, ins and outs and what have you's.

MAX

Seriously, we gave it all we had - experts, lawyers, and cash, but the US Drug Police beat us on every count. Badly.

HARLEY

(shrugging)

Hey, easy come, easy go.

MAX

It gets worse.

HARLEY

The plane crashed into the mountain?

MAX

Nobody will touch you. No sponsors. No money. The Don made sure of that. He put the equivalent of a mob hit out on you. Any sponsor who touches you he buries.

HARLEY

(shaking his head)

Shit, I gotta rash.

MAX

How's the hip?

HARLEY

(showing the train track scars)

It's pretty good when I don't bend it.

MAX

(surveys the dump)

Have you been on the bike at all?

HARLEY

I rode down into town for a beverage. I must of gotten a lift back. Havent seen my rig since.

MAX

(picking up trash)
You gotta clean yourself up.

HARLEY

(mocking)
Hey Im sticking to a fairly strict drug regimen.

MAX

Seriously, the douchebags, the press, your old friends, they're all taking bets.

HARLEY

Betting on my big comeback?
To put The Don down?
(Pugilist pose, baritone voice) Across this line you WILL NOT...!

MAX

Betting that you'll do the Dutch, right here in this shithole cabin, in the shadow of Suicide Rock, with that fucking hand cannon.
(pointing to a huge large bore handgun).

HARLEY

Nothing's fucked here, nothing's fucked! They're all a bunch of amateurs!

MAX

You know there's still one card we haven't played.

HARLEY

Brace the fucker and beat it out of him?

MAX

Sort of. Team Send It was a government contractor. As such, they promised to abide by the law. Including the ban on performance enhancing drugs. The Don even signed a contract that they would not do drugs. And yet drugs were most assuredly done. And thus they breached a number of bylaws. We can use the Whistleblower statutes. Triple recovery, Dude. [Mutters as he does the math in his head.] ... 5 years, \$40 million, times three, that's \$120 million. Not bad.

HARLEY

Far fucking out. It's time to fight the fuck back. This, uh, this unchecked aggression, will not stand, man.

Chap 26: Subpoena Envy

Los Angeles. Palm trees. Mid afternoon. The Douchebags, dressed in full kits, are in a coffee shop, arguing about who's been deposed/subpoenaed, and who's more important.

FRED

Dude, have you been subpoenaed? The feds are all over me.

ART

Of course, man. I was subpoenaed before you were subpoenaed.

FRED

Only because they know I'm more loyal. And know more.

KENT

Are you kidding me? I was shoving caffeine suppositories

up my rectum before the Don
ever drank a Red Bull.

ART

(forlorn)

I haven't been subpoenaed.

KENT and FRED

(simultaneous)

You haven't?

ART

(defensively)

It makes no sense. I did the
same drugs. Maybe more. And I
got decent results! Better'n
Tobias, that Poser.

KENT

I heard they showed the Poser
a pair of handcuffs and he
cried like a baby. Begged to
sign whatever plea bargain
they put in front of him.

FRED

You should talk. I heard you
were privately recording all
the conversations with the
Don. And snapping photos. And
you turned it all over,
without being asked.

KENT

Well I heard you "came clean"
only after Don's lawyer's
scrubbed the affidavit. And
you gave Don a 60% cut on the
tell-all bio his ghost is
writing for you.

ART

I've already written my
manifesto. My lawyer says
I'll get a 25% bump in book
sales if I get subpoenaed.
Damn those dimwitted federal
troglodytes!

Chap 27: Don Confesses

Don is appearing on Hello Aline!, a massively popular afternoon television program that closely resembles the Oprah Winfrey Show. He is nervous. Aline is a portly, cherubic fifty-something Hispanic woman with a solicitous manner and a ready smile, known to be an easy crier. Don sits facing her, his legs crossed, in an Italian suit. Occasionally he rubs the instep of one of his shoes. We join the interview in progress.

ALINE

Okay, so it's been hard. I get that. Your best friend is now saying you doped to win all those bike races, and your sponsors are cutting you loose. But that's not why you're here, is it? I get the feeling you have something to share with us.

BOSS

I do. I do. (He looks down at his hands.) And frankly, it's very difficult.

ALINE

(scanning the audience sympathetically)

I'm sure it is. Take your time.

BOSS

(pauses as if to control his emotions)

I wasn't always truthful with you, Aline. And I wasn't truthful with myself. And maybe that's what hurts most of all.

ALINE

(skeptically)

Yourself?

BOSS

It's the competition, Aline. We let it go too far. We got...we got caught up in it.

We wanted to win. You know that. You know how bad we wanted to bring that jersey back to the U.S.A. And...

ALINE

Go ahead...

BOSS

There were times when we were no better than our competition.

ALINE

What are you trying to say, Don? Was there doping? Did you dope?

BOSS

There was doping involved. And I take responsibility for that. I was the leader. I was the fiercest competitor of all, and maybe the biggest patriot of all. And I let it get the best of me. And for that I am sorry...

ALINE

This is a major admission. This is...

BOSS

I know-

ALINE

Huge.

BOSS

But it had to be said. And I'm the only one who can say it.

ALINE

How do you feel?

BOSS

Well, I feel very let down. (There is utter silence in the studio.) I feel like I

let myself down. I let you down. And I let down my countrymen. And the only way it's ever going to be better is if I make it better.

ALINE

How is that going to happen?

BOSS

Aline, it's time we took a good long look at ourselves in the mirror. That's something I like to do every once in a while, and maybe it's been too long.

All over this country, we're letting the ends dominate the means—as I think I must have done when I was bringing home those jerseys. We're letting the final score completely outweigh the beauty of athletic participation for its own sake.

That's why I'm putting up my own personal funds to start the Sweat Equity Foundation: an organization dedicated not to aggrandizement of the few and spectacular, but to empowering the least among us to get out and grab a ball, or run a lap, or, yes, get on a bike.

We'll be lobbying for re-inclusion of P.E. in school curriculums, and for reinstatement of the President's Physical Fitness Test. We will build sandlot baseball fields in our inner cities, and veloways in our rural areas.

We expect to sign a deal with the Punt, Pass and Kick

Foundation very soon. Because
guess what: it's not about
me. It's about... them...it's
about these guys...

A dozen young kids of all races and both genders enter the studio from a back door, all wearing Sweat Equity orange t-shirts, and gather around Don Boss, laughing and smiling, chomping on MindStrong Brain Candy™ bars. Aline is clearly charmed. The audience claps wildly. Boss grins and rubs a kid's head. "Sweat Equity!" he shouts. "You heard it here first." He knows he's won again.

Cut to shot of Harley watching TV in a bar. He shakes his head in dismay, disgust and, yes, admiration. He shrugs and raises his beer mug toward the TV.

HARLEY

Just when I thought it
couldn't get any better...

Chap 28: IMPASSE

US Federal Courtroom after Don's confession. A judge in robes is addressing the lawyers for the Feds and Boss. Don Boss is standing up as the Judge speaks directly to him.

JUDGE

Mr. Boss, last month you
agreed to pay \$18 million to
settle this matter. Since
then, you've admitted to the
world that you are the
biggest fraud in sports
history. Or at least in the
top three. What's your offer
now?

DON

(triumphantly)

Did you watch it? I was
brilliant. The training. The
Set Up. The Execution. Top
Three my ass! It was the
greatest lie of all time. The
people, my people, loved me
for coming clean so . . .
cleanly.

JUDGE

(shaking head)

This is a confidential hearing. You can leave your ego at the door. The maximum recovery allowable exceeds \$120 million. Please be serious.

DON

(glowering)

I'm deadly serious. The public loves me now more than ever. I'm human. Sympathetic. Caring. I have five kids. Three legitimately. Way better than your average NBA all-star. I've changed. The tables have turned. I'm going to win. Again. You're going to lose (pointing to the Fed lawyers). Carpe Diem! Im on a roll, again. Wait til my new line of "Power of Forgiveness"™ tapes come out. Blockbusters! My offer, Judge, is nothing. Nada.

JUDGE

(exasperated)

Is this your position at the, uh, advice of counsel?

DON

I'm no longer listening to those losers. They got me into this mess in the first place.

JUDGE

Mr. Boss, Harley Turner has alleged that the ring leader of the Send It drug conspiracy was not you. He claims it was underwriter of the team, Tiger Gates. The billionaire. There is plausible evidence that you, along with the Billionaire, conspired to defraud the

Federal Government. By law the minimum liability you're facing is \$60 million. I'm sure your counsel has advised you that this is not a dinner bill you want to pick up by yourself.

BRIDGE to TIGER GATES in his villa, on the phone, watching Wolf on CNN asking a panel of legal experts whether Don Boss will turn over evidence to the Court that implicates Tiger Gates as the mastermind behind the doping conspiracy on the US Send It™ bicycle racing team. Tiger is dressed in a bathrobe, drinking a glass of fresh squeezed orange juice.

TIGER

It was fun. We beat the Europeans. My lab rats exceeded expectations. But this little hobby no longer amuses me. Karl, make the calls. Wire the money from the offshore accounts. Make this go away.

Switch to the Judge signing an ORDER in the matter of Harley Turner vs. Don Boss, finding in favor of the federal government for \$57 million, plus attorneys fees and costs. Headline reads: TURNER TO COLLECT \$14 MILLION FOR PART IN QUI TAM SUIT.

Chap. 29: The Tide Turns

Don is at his Dallas mansion. Megan, dressed in jeans and t-shirt, knocks on door. Don opens.

DON

(angry)

What took you so long?

MEGAN

I stopped to put my self-respect in storage. They got this little place out on the Stemmons Freeway.

DON

What are you talking about?

MEGAN

I'm talking about fuck toys,
Don. You promised me you were
giving that up.

DON

You're talking about the
Brazilian girl?

MEGAN

Among others, yes. And I have
to say, I'm thrilled I get to
find out about your latest
fucking fuck toys in USA
Today.

DON

Yeah? So what do you think
you are? You could have had
some press too, you know. You
had to keep everything top
secret.

MEGAN

The divorce isn't final. Call
me old-fashioned, but I'm not
comfortable being typecast as
the home wrecker to the
stars.

DON

Well, that's your deal, not
mine. I'd be proud to have
you on my arm, anywhere - on
the red carpet, Cannes,
Facebook, anywhere.

MEGAN

I know. I'm sorry. I'm an
idiot.

DON

You're also an attorney, and
a damn good one. I want you
on my side. We make a good
team.

MEGAN

Is that what we are?

DON

Oh my God. How many times
have I heard this?

MEGAN

Fine. I won't bore you any
longer. I'm sorry about the
arbitration order. It
was...harsh. Tiger, you know,
can be...ruthless.

DON

No. Tiger's rich. He doesn't
have to be ruthless. He has
people to do that for him.

We see boxes everywhere. Don is clearly packing up.

MEGAN

Going somewhere?

DON

I thought it might be a good
time to take my operations
overseas. Maybe Switzerland.

MEGAN

You know they can still get
collect every penny, even
over there.

DON

I've been thinking. What if
they don't have to?

MEGAN

I don't follow.

DON

What if Puddinhead was to
waive all rights to collect
his judgment?

MEGAN

Puddinhead?

DON

Cornpone! Barney Fife!

MEGAN

Ah. Harley. You're asking me if Harley Turner would waive his rights to collect \$14 million? Harley may be simple, but he's not stupid.

DON

(grabs her and pulls her in close)

No, he's exactly that stupid. I have an idea. (Don goes to kiss her, but she turns away).

DON

(laughs):

Now that I'm down a few mil, toxic, right?

MEGAN

Please. You think that's what this is about?

DON

Fine. Pout all you want. You're still going to help me.

MEGAN

Sure, I'll help you. I'll file a lawsuit against Harley Turner on Monday. I'll sue him and his whole pissant legal team for excessive ass-kicking.

DON

A loser like Harley never wins, Megan. He may get a whiff, but never a taste. You're gonna go up there to Moose Balls, Oregon, as my counsel, to work out a deal. I'm giving you a second chance.

Last time, you and Harley go for a bike ride, next thing he signs with Phonehak. This

time ride more than a bike if you have to, but come back with Harley buttered up and ready to deal.

And while you're there you're gonna confirm that Harley Turner is still stuffed in a bottle of Jack Daniels. Then I'm going to make a call. And then I'm going to keep my fortune.

Next Scene, Late afternoon,. Megan driving her Mercedes up a winding road Up Tombstone Pass to Harley's A-Frame in the woods beneath Suicide Rock.

MEGAN knocks on the door. She's dressed in a provocative business suit. She notices a clean, custom Blade bike with aero wheels suspended from a bike repair stand. Harley answers. He's wearing bike shorts and no shirt. His chest is glistening. Plainly he's just returned from a training ride. He's still slightly overweight, but not sloppy.

HARLEY

(nervously)

Well, if it isn't the Kitten. Welcome to my...uh. You've had all your shots?

MEGAN

Congratulations on your win, Harley. Nobody thought Don could be beaten, inside or outside the Courtroom, including me.

HARLEY

I think I'm supposed to say something about the power of the truth here. But me and the truth don't speak much anymore.

MEGAN

Looks like you're back on the bike.

HARLEY

(laughs)

I'm riding, yeah. That's what I do. The Don's making a comeback. Thought I might, too.

MEGAN

You find any sponsors?

HARLEY
(coolly)

All right. I'll ask you again. What are you doing here?

MEGAN

That wasn't a dig, Harley. Just a question. And officially, I'm here as Don's counsel.

HARLEY

Yeah? So what are you here as unofficially?

MEGAN
(laughs)

To be determined.

HARLEY

Determined by what?

MEGAN

Did Don ever talk about the team with you? You know. Loyalty to the Team. All for one? One for all?

HARLEY

Oh, man. So he's done with you as well, huh?

MEGAN

Hard to believe, right? These legs?

HARLEY

That's what he liked about me too. And boy I put out for that man.

MEGAN

I know you did, Harley. You
dumb sonofabitch.

Megan looks at Harley for a long time. Finally she sits
down on the only uncluttered chair in the room. The sun is
setting over the Cascade Mountains. Birds are chirping.
Flowers blooming.

MEGAN

Please tell me you've got
some alcohol in this log
cabin.

The next morning, Megan, wearing one of Harley's grey t-
shirts, is driving down Tombstone Pass, talking on the cell
phone.

MEGAN

Hey Don, it's your favorite
secret agent, in the field,
reporting for duty.

DON

Well, has the dog been
keeping our boy under the
porch?

MEGAN

He's scruffy all right.

DON

Brain addled on drink?

MEGAN

Harley's never been the
sharpest knife in the drawer.
But yes, I'd say he's still
addled. I nearly broke my leg
tripping over the pile of
whiskey bottles.

DON

(mischievous snicker):
This is going to be like
stealing candy from a baby.

Chap 30: Duel in The Dirt

After meeting with Megan who falsely reports that Harley is sloppy and unfit, Don calls Harley, ostensibly to negotiate a settlement on the amount owed. Don has a plan to avoid paying a dime on the judgment.

SPLIT SCREEN:

HARLEY

Calling to congratulate me again?

DON

(reluctantly)

It was a good win. Your lawyers did a nice job. The Judge was obviously bought, but I can respect that. I would have bought him myself if I'd thought of it.

HARLEY

Wow. Have you been skipping your Angry Pills?

DON

A good win...on paper. Of course you'll never see a dime of it. I'll cut off my nuts before I pay you a penny.

HARLEY

As long as you don't cut off mine, Don, we'll be good. Why the call?

DON

I have a proposition. You always enjoyed a good downhill. And you've never actually beaten me mano a mano. How about a wager?

HARLEY

My momma warned me about deals with the Devil. I ignored her the first time. Won't the second.

DON

This time the odds are in your favor. I hate mountain bikes. You love 'em. I hear there's a challenging course right there in Bend. WHOOPS.

HARLEY

(warming up)

WHOOPS does kick ass. Momma, hush up. Terms?

DON

Winner take all. You beat me, I pay your portion of the judgment in two weeks, plus a year's supply of Mindstrong Go Juice. I beat you, I don't pay you a thing. And I give you TWO YEARS' supply of Go Juice, on the house.

HARLEY

Hah! I know you. You've been chatting with the Douchebags. They're taking odds on Do I do the Dutch when I don't collect...

DON

Take it or leave it. A man with your big old heart and down country grit - I'm sure I don't stand a chance. And you always told me you didn't care about the money anyway.

HARLEY

Yeah, and you always said you didn't mind that the critics attributed three of your yellow jerseys to my lead-outs.

DON

That's because those people were idiots. Losers. Like you, Harley.

HARLEY

Well then. It's on. See you
at WHOOPS, Boss.

Next scene is at the top of a mountainous 5 mile downhill single track. The course is lined with fans and the press. Mindstrong has been selling tickets. It's a carnival. The announcers are whipping up the buzz. Vegas odds in favor of Boss 5 to 1. The Boss is ripped and fit.

Harley is wearing a loose fitting jersey and baggy board shorts. He doesn't look as scruffy as Megan reported. Boss has a retinue of handlers massaging him, IVs in his arm, warming up. Harley is tightening his Chuck Taylors and drinking a can of Worthy Lights Out Stout. This is a famous downhill course.

The buzz is all about the Hole Shot, i.e., who comes out of the gate first, and holds the line. Usually the guy in front wins because on a twisty single track, the guy behind doesn't have space to pass.

At the starting gate, Don is dressed in full downhill gear, with shoulder pads, face mask, and a tricked out bike. The Boss is an innovator - he has a fantastically tricked-out bike with a computerized suspension system. [Harley rides up on his crappy old Stump Jumper that was outdated 10 years ago. He puts on his old blue helmet (the converted football helmet). He looks surprisingly confident.

HARLEY

(Sizes up Don with his hand)
Well you're looking all
Spidermanny.

DON

(sniggering with his
handlers)
And, as usual, you're an
embarrassment. A retro-
idiotic retard. Millions are
watching. Hell, I'd of loaned
you the proper bike and gear
if I knew you were going to
mock my sport.

HARLEY

Philanthropic impulses noted.
But I'm good.

DON

How do like my ride? (two geeks in white lab coats are tinkering with the suspension) It's got a gyroscopic-levitation shock absorber that automatically adjusts to uneven terrain.

HARLEY

Perfect. We can't inconvenience The Don with bumps in the road.

DON

(disgusted, shaking head)
When are you going to put away your tinker toys and grow up?

The Announcer counts off the seconds until start. The crowd is going wild. 10...9...8. Close-ups on Boss flexing his forearms, gripping his handlebars, gritting his teeth. Harley puts a bolt of Beech Nut chewing tobacco between his teeth and gums. Don, disgusted, farmer johns a snotball towards Harley, which lands on his shoe. Harley looks down.

HARLEY

(fiercely)

Hey fuckball. My Momma bought me those.

The gun goes off. Bang! Boss furiously sprints to the front, kicking up rocks, bike swinging violently. Harley slots in behind, breathing hard, as they approach the first high bank. Don has a big lead.

Helicopter and trailside views of Boss tearing through the high banks, you can feel the g-forces. He hesitates somewhat on the steep drops that lead up to table tops that requiring jumping. Harley is sucking wind. He's losing ground on the flatter areas that require fitness. But on the steep drops and jumps, he's gaining time.

Boss looks back. It's a twisty course in the thick forest. He doesn't even see Harley, and smiles. He has a film crew in a trailer who's feeding him the status. They warn him to keep it steady, nothing daring, as in their view Harley is "toast." Just finish, they advise.

2K to go. The final 2k is the steepest, most treacherous section. On the TV graphic the viewer can see that Don has almost a 30 second gap, which is a "lifetime." The announcer predicts an easy win. Harley is out of shape. Shots of his belly wiggling. While Boss is ripped, his armor intimidating, and his focus maniacal.

As the Boss enters the final drop, the camera closes in on his grip of the handlebars. He's clearly riding the brakes, and he appears to be slowing down. Switch to Harley. Harley's right index finger is nowhere near the brake lever. The camera closes in on his left hand. He does not even have a front brake.

Harley begins to have a conversation, with visions, flashbacks, of his youth, his mom and dad, the chores, the grim prospects, and the exhilaration of going downhill fast, taking chances, keeping his nerve, and smiling with self satisfaction when he adroitly maneuvers a man eating switchback. Harley's leaning his bike over on the banks to where his inside handlebar is scraping the dirt.

*Poor man wanna be rich,
rich man wanna be king,
And a king ain't satisfied,
till he rules everything,
I wanna go out tonight,
I wanna find out what I go*

Harley begins to rally (AINT NO SIN TO BE GLAD YOU'RE ALIVE, the soundtrack begins to pump up). Harley's face changes. He goes from worried to calm, as if to say, "I got this."

He's flying over the table tops. On the whoop-to-do's, instead of riding each one, he's flying over 3 or four at a time (contrast to Boss who's conservatively keeping both wheels on the ground).

*Honey, I want the heart, I
want the soul,
I want control right now
Talk about a dream,
Try to make it real.*

Harley now has closed to within a few seconds. The TV commentators are worked up that Harley's mounting a comeback and coming in hot. There's only 600 meters to go. Boss' coaches are screaming at him in his earphone. "Outrigger the elbows! Don't let him by! Jam him!" Harley

accelerates up onto Don's wheel. The track is radically serpentine. No space to safely pass. Running out of real estate. Harley tries to pass but Don chops him and nearly sends him into a tree. Two scenes where Harley tries the left and right but is chopped down, with Harley shaving trees, breaking branches, lacerating his arms, legs and fingers. We feel the danger, risk and speed.

The final 150 meters is a steep downhill, jump, and then series of 4 feet whoop to do's. Harley realizes he's only got one move.

*You wake up in the night,
with a fear so real,
Spend your life waiting,
for a moment that just don't
come,
Well, don't waste your time
waiting,*

They approach the steep drop. Harley comes up on Boss' rear wheel as they approach the ramp. Boss senses the encroachment and angles for the corner of the ramp so Harley doesn't have a clean launching spot. Harley predicts the chop and floors it, all he's got to surge to the corner. Boss too preoccupied with what's going on behind him, not what's ahead. Harley calmly reaches out with his left hand against Boss' right hip to prevent him from crashing him. Boss with his right fist smacks Harley in his gut. The blow forces Harley to swerve to his right, off kilter.

They go airborne. Harley has to adjust mid air as he's sideways and headed for a crash landing.

*I wanna find one face that
ain't looking through me
I wanna find one place,
I wanna spit in the face of
these badlands*

Boss hits the ground first and starts furiously pedaling over the final 5 whoop-to-dos. Harley lands roughly and somehow keeps his momentum. He accelerates for all he's worth over the first whoop. Camera slows down. Slow motion. Head-on shot of Don feverishly pedaling while Harley sails over 3 whoops, lands' perfectly.

Whilst in midair, Harley hocks a loogie in Don's pathway. Action slows down and freezes on loogie. Harley was chewing

BeechNut. To the sound track: "I'd like to spit some beech nut in that Dude's eyes cuz a country boy will survive.." The action speeds up as Don Boss, wearing expensive golden tinted Oakley wrap arounds, rides into the loogie, and it splats across the Don's lens. Harley crosses the finish line with the same fist pump from Stage 17. Don Boss crosses, defeated, and enraged. He's punching his handlers and the press like a mad bear. He's rubbing his face and eyes and shouting:

DON:
Harley cheated! I'm blinded.
I'm blinded!

HARLEY:
(Laughing to himself)
Blind-sided you mean...heh heh.

Harley rides into a swarm of fans who mug him happily. He spots Megan. She spots him. She comes up to him demurely and hands him a fuzzy lion doll.

MEGAN
Here's your lion, you tiger.

They kiss as everybody mugs and cheers.

Chap 31: The Takedown

The Boss's Estate in Dallas. The Dallas Metro Cop who managed to get his job back is executing a levy on a judgment against Don for \$57 million. He knocks on the door. Don answers. The Cop shows the papers with a smile.

COP
(grinning)
Do you know who I am?

Scene of officers hauling out Italian paintings, Faberge eggs, tapestries, the high colonics machine, dollies loaded down with boxes of drugs, creams, potions and powders, oxygen and nitrogen canisters, a mechanical bull, a mechanical cock bicycle contraption, and the marble sculpture of Don Boss. Don glaring darkly in a room emptied of possessions.

SON
Dad, Why are they taking your jerseys?

DON

Because they're weak, son.
Because they never had the
balls to win anything for
themselves.

SON

But you always said weaklings
have no mind, and no power.

DON

(righteously)

Son! Are you satisfied?

SON

(startled)

Uh.. yes? Nnn- I don't know.

DON

You better NOT be.

SON

(pleading)

I'm not! I swear. I'm not.

DON

Son, the state of
satisfaction is the
equivalent to DEATH. As long
as you are breathing, you
should be DISSatisfied. You
know who's satisfied? A
loser. Never, ever, ever be
satisfied. Or content. Every
day, somewhere, out there, in
here (points to his own
head), there's a war to be
won. And you need to win it.

SON

I will Dad. I will never be
satisfied.

DON

Good. Always be winning.

Chap 32: The Supreme Ecstasy of the Downhill Racer

Just as at the beginning of the movie, we see a Subaru
Forester making its way up a highway in the Cascade

Mountains. The car pulls over, Harley gets out and grabs his bike. It's a chipped-up beater. He's wearing a blue t-shirt and gray sweats, an old school helmet, and Chuck Taylor sneakers. He leans into the driver-side window. It's Megan in the driver's seat. "Fiction?" says Harley. "Friction," says Megan. He kisses her, climbs on his bike, and starts riding down Tombstone Pass, where he crashed earlier after hitting a squirrel.

HARLEY (V.O.)

Anyone can go uphill fast.
All you have to do is starve
yourself, avoid pleasure,
glorify pain, take plenty of
drugs. But where's the honor
in being the hamster who logs
the most hours on the wheel?
Who fears the freak who can
do 10 hours a day on a
Stairmaster?

We see Harley descending. As he speaks the following monologue he morphs back and forth between the lean mean Harley of the Tour and the post-Unibiker Harley with the t-shirt and the scraggly beard. There is the possibility that this a dream sequence, though it might also be real.

He is pedaling hard through a calamitous descent, in the zone. We hear his heart rate slow down as the roads get steeper and more curvy. The camera switches back and forth between an overhead helicopter shot and close ups of Harley with mountain scenery flying by. Camera closes in on his right index finger. It's NOT feathering the brake. His left hand is gripping the handlebar. No feathering.

HARLEY (V.O.)

I could go uphill as fast as
any of the juiced-up eunuchs
that surrounded Don Boss. I
know because I was one of
them, once upon a time. But
Climbing wasn't my thing.
I liked to DESCEND, and I
liked to do it as fast as I
could. That's when I felt
totally alive ... that's the
tree where I picked the
ripest apple, the mine where
I found the brightest stone.
One bad line or errant shake

of the hips, one rock in the road, one heat-seeking squirrel...and it was lights out.

Any chemically-fueled skeleton with a heartbeat can go uphill fast, but it takes a badass to fly down a mountain without squeezing the brakes. If this should end badly, please don't say I died doing what I loved. I love this part - the Bad Ass descent. But even a bad ass doesn't like to have his skull crushed against a giant rock or concrete abutment.

Harley approaches a blind turn. Coming uphill is a pack of skinny pro-am "dreamers" in their shiny kits. They've hogged the entire road, and two riders are actually over the yellow line in the oncoming/downhill lane. Harley has angled his bike to hit the apex of the inside turn and come out just on or over the yellow line. When he comes out of the turn, his line takes him into a head on collision with a skinny boy racer wannabe. Harley calmly swerves to his left between the two riders, but the adjustment forces him to take a line directly into the guardrail that overlooks a steep, deep river canyon.

We see him launch off the bike, soar into the void, separating from his bike, stretching out like a diver. Freeze frame.

HARLEY

Turns out Happiness is not aerodynamic. It ain't a parachute, either. But here I am flying. It's not so bad. Gravity and I have learned to get along. In fact, we've come to an agreement. It keeps pulling me down, and I just keep getting back up. So far, anyway.

Fade to Black