

LIGHTNING RAY

Written by

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FADE IN.

INT. PRESENT DAY. EXAMINING ROOM OF DR. RUBIN WEISS - DAY

RAYMOND KOWALSKI, 59, 5'10", overweight by 30 pounds and fully clothed is sitting on the examining table. He looks down and focuses on his stomach, poking at it with his right index finger. He turns to his left and sees his reflection in a chrome cabinet and notices his droopy arm. Dr. RUBIN WEISS, 58, 5'7", fit, enters the room, clipboard in hand.

DR. RUBIN WEISS
Raymond, I don't have good news.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
I have cancer. I knew it... I have cancer.

DR. RUBIN WEISS
No. No cancer. You have an abundance of adipose tissue.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
Adipose tissue?

DR. RUBIN WEISS
You... are... overweight. Obese. The *not nice* term is: fat. You are also prediabetic, you have high blood pressure and your blood has very little iron but lots of sugar. You exhibit shortness of breath due to your smoking. Any questions so far?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
That's how my people are. My people are a bit chubby. I can't help it. It's in my genes, doc.

DR. RUBIN WEISS
Fat is in your j-e-a-n-s. *Your* people die young from smoking and being overweight. Smoking causes lung cancer. The extra weight puts extra pressure on the heart - which causes heart attack and stroke. The extra sugar in your blood harms all of your vital systems. But... there is good news.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Good news - you just told me that I'm everything except in the ground. What's the good news?

DR. RUBIN WEISS

Everything is reversible. Stop these unhealthy ways and your body will repair itself. Here is a diet.

Dr. Weiss hands Ray 2 pieces of paper stapled together.

DR. RUBIN WEISS (CONT'D)

Go to the link I've highlighted on the paper and watch this stop smoking video. Take this prescription to the drug store - it's for blood pressure medicine. When you get your weight down and stopped smoking, I will take you off the pills. You can change, Ray. Will you?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

I don't think so. I'm OK. I don't have any problems.

DR. RUBIN WEISS

Problems that you can feel or see... right now. You **have** shortness of breath. These bigger problems take a while to show themselves. And when they do... it's usually too late. Raymond... throw the smokes away and stop eating like there's no tomorrow. Exercise.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Exercise? Like what?

DR. RUBIN WEISS

Walk. Play basketball. Hike. Treadmill. Golf... without a cart.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

I like to *watch* people do those things. (Small laugh) Does napping count? How long will it take me to be "not be so close to death?" Two or three hours? I'm in.

DR. RUBIN WEISS

It's not funny, Ray. The first three weeks will be tough. Very tough. It will be like somebody put you in your own private hell - after those three weeks - the change to a healthy lifestyle will get easier. In about 12 short weeks you will look and feel like a new man. Everything will be better.

Dr. Weiss raises his eyebrows and smiles.

DR. RUBIN WEISS (CONT'D)

Everything, will be better Ray.
Everything.

I/E. INSIDE OF HIGH POWERED 1966 DODGE CHARGER - DAY

Ray drives his car next door to the donut store and leaves - VROOM- burning rubber, with a box of donuts. He quickly eats two chocolate covered donuts, then lights up a smoke. He drives to his middle class neighborhood and pulls up to his ranch style home.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF MIDDLE CLASS HOME WITH CONTEMPORARY FURNISHINGS. - DAY

LINDA KOWALSKI, 55, medium brown hair and above average looking, enters the room.

LINDA KOWALSKI

What did Dr. Weiss say?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

He said that I was... you know... in good shape.

LINDA KOWALSKI

Then I better call the licensing board for medical doctors. (Pause) I thought that you love me, Ray. Your not going to be around to love me if you don't stop kidding yourself.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

I... I... I do love you.

Ray walks over and slightly hugs his wife. He talks to her face to face.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI (CONT'D)

OK. OK. You know I love you. I'm gonna'... do... it. I'm changin' my ways.

I/E. FROM INTERIOR OF KITCHEN TO DRIVEWAY - DAY

Ray is putting items from his car into a large black garbage bag. Ray goes into the garage and comes out moments later with the bag almost filled.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF RAY'S HOME - DAY

Linda Kowalski is reading a magazine while sitting on the couch. She hears Ray in the kitchen.

LINDA KOWALSKI

What'r you doin', Ray?

Ray walks into the living room holding a large over stuffed black garbage bag. He just stands there with a slight smile on his face.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Throwin' some stuff away.

Linda gets up and walks over to Ray. She opens the bag and sees cookie containers, two cartons of cigarettes, 20 candy bars, four bags of chips, two boxes of donuts and three large bottles of soda. She smiles at Ray. Ray smiles.

LINDA KOWALSKI

Your taking a step in the right direction, Ray. Just keep on taking those steps.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

I'll do it, hon.

INT. FUNERAL HOME VIEWING ROOM - DAY

Ray walks up to a casket and sees himself in the casket eating a cookie. Ray's eyes open wide.

INT. KITCHEN OF RAY'S HOME - DAY

Ray sits at the kitchen table with a slightly sad face.

LINDA KOWALSKI

You look like a truck just ran over your puppy.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

I don't know how to beat being a smoker... and my food problem. I'm still sneaking food. I'm still smoking. This change is hard.

LINDA KOWALSKI

You made your own thriving business. You found a woman, me - who adores you and you have a son who has a great life - partially because of you. You have a grandson and a daughter in law who love you. You want to be alive and have this life? (Pause) You have a lot to live for, Ray.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

I don't know if I'm tough enough.

EXT. MIDDLE CLASS NEIGHBORHOOD, SIDEWALK - AFTERNOON

Ray is walking and reading the note from Dr. Weiss. The words "Walk - 12 miles a week - about two or three miles a day" are highlighted.

EXT. MIDDLE CLASS NEIGHBORHOOD SIDEWALK - AFTERNOON

Ray is eating a candy bar. He finishes taking a bite, rewraps the candy bar and hides it in the top of his sock.

EXT. PARKING LOT OF RAY'S MOTOR CITY CUSTOMS - MORNING

Ray pulls his black 1966 Dodge Charger into the parking lot of a white 15,000 square foot building in an industrial area. He parks under his name "Ray", carved onto a small wooden plaque that is screwed onto the block wall.

INT. RAY'S MOTOR CITY CUSTOMS - MORNING

Ray walks into the building. Eight 1960's era cars are being in various states of being rebuilt. Four muscle car engines are off to the left. A bald, Hispanic worker, JULIO ARROYO, 50, is sanding a quarter panel of a 1966 Mustang Fastback. Julio nods his head at Ray as Ray walks slowly around the car.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Good morning, Julio. Nice work. (Pause) Looks like it'll be ready to paint. Before noon?

JULIO ARROYO

Code "A" - Raven Black. Paint at about 11. Then, late lunch with the crew at Xochimilco Restaurant. You wanna come with us?

INT. DINING AREA OF XOCHIMILCO RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON

Ray looks at the Mustang and sees, with wide eyes, a display of tables, steaming with Mexican food and 15 dinners. He sighs.

INT. RAY'S MOTOR CITY CUSTOMS - AFTERNOON

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

I packed my own lunch today, Julio. Thanks - but, I'm eating here. Be back on time.

JULIO ARROYO

We'll be back at one. We pre-ordered the food. Jeff is in. He wanted to show you something.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Thanks.

INT. JEFF KOWALSKI OFFICE - DAY

JEFF KOWALSKI, 39, is looking at his computer. Ray sits at the chair in front of Jeff's desk.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

(Warmly) What does my wonderful son want to show to his father?

JEFF KOWALSKI

Come look at the screen, Dad, and I'll show you.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Just tell me. I trust you.

JEFF KOWALSKI

We are up 45 thousand from last year at this time.

(MORE)

JEFF KOWALSKI (CONT'D)

The payables went out. We need to get three more advances regarding the work in the shop.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

You are on top of it, Jeff. Good. When can I see the new website... two, three weeks?

JEFF KOWALSKI

Now. Come around over here and I'll show it to you.

Ray walks and looks at the computer screen.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

This is good, Jeff. Real good. Show me more...

Jeff pushes buttons on the computer. Ray smiles and pats his son on the back.

JEFF KOWALSKI

One to ten. Where is the web site, Dad?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

11. Write yourself a ten grand bonus.

JEFF KOWALSKI

How about 75 hundred? We need to buy more a few things for the shop.

Ray smiles and leaves the room.

INT. LUNCHROOM -RAY'S MOTOR CITY CUSTOMS - AFTERNOON

Ray is seated, looking at a plate of vegetables and a small piece of plain chicken on his plate. Ray eats the food with a slight snarl on his face. Ray stands up and takes the plate to the sink and sees an open pack of cigarettes. He takes a cigarette out of the pack and lights the cigarette on the electric stove. He inhales and hears his grandson A.J., 20, calling him. He is 6'1" and thin.

A.J.

Papa Ray. Papa Ray.

Ray quickly blows smoke out of his mouth and waves it away with his hands. He drops the cigarette on the floor and puts his right foot on it.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
My favorite grandson!

A.J.
I'm not stupid, PaPa.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
Nobody said your stupid. What's
with the "I'm not stupid"?

A.J.
I can smell the smoke. I know you
still smoke.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
I'm quittin' - today or tomorrow.
Today.

A.J.
You gonna live long enough to see
me graduate from fire fighter
academy?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
Fire fighter school?

A.J.
Yep. 6 months. Classes and physical
training.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
Fire fighting is a noble
profession. (Pause) What about
this?

Ray motions with his hand across the shop.

A.J.
This is you and my Dad - I like the
cars, but I'm gonna' be a
firefighter. I like what they do,
PaPa.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
What kinda' money do firefighters
make?

A.J.
40+... and I can work during my off
days if I want to.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
OK. Good. Good for you, A.J. When
do you start this fire school?

A.J.

I'm saving money for tuition...
eight months from now. Dad's got
bills to pay, so I gotta -

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

I'll get you goin'. I'll pay so you
can start firefighter school now,
but you gotta' work here 16 hours a
month. Just four hours a week.
Deal?

A.J. hugs Raymond Kowalski.

INT. RAY'S MOTOR CITY CUSTOMS - NIGHT

A.J. carefully sweeps the floors and tidies up the shop.

EXT. BACKYARD OF RAYMOND KOWALSKI'S HOME - DAY

All events in quick time... Ray is finishing tying up steel rebar that lays in a wooden frame that is 20 foot by 30 foot wide. Ray then directs the concrete that is poured over the rebar. A.J. helps Ray assemble the steel frame on the perimeter on the concrete. A steep steel roof covers the steel walls. A 60 foot high oak tree stands nearby and has limbs that are a just a few inches from the roof trusses. Jeff Kowalski enters the scene and helps put on the steel roof. Ray Kowalski smiles and gives a Jeff small pat on the back.

INT. STEEL FRAME WORKOUT ROOM STRUCTURE - NIGHT

JEFF KOWALSKI

Lookin' good, Dad.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Now I have space for my *workout stuff*. Five position weight machine over here... treadmills, yes, I'm puttin' two in here... and over here a small fridge to keep some water cold. Big screen TV over here - to watch car shows while I'm - we're - on the treadmill.

JEFF KOWALSKI

Gees. You are serious about your change.

Ray looks to the house and takes a few steps out of site of the kitchen window. He takes a cigarette out of his wallet and lights it.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
Don't tell your Mom I'm doin' this.

JEFF KOWALSKI
Yeah. OK Dad.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
Your old mans' gettin' in shape - and you or A.J. can join me. 5:30 to 7 A.M. Treadmill 5 days a week, weights - 4 days a week. I'm doin' this!

JEFF KOWALSKI
Your still smokin' - Dad - inside of your workout place.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
So... I'm still smoking. Rome wasn't built in a day.

JEFF KOWALSKI
You'll be real serious when you put those coffin nails down for good. You had three friends die in the last year from cancer. Dad, do you need a sledge hammer to your head?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
Gym equipment gets here tomorrow. Today is my last day for...

JEFF KOWALSKI
Coffin nails and fast food?

Ray smiles.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
Everything has a beginning, middle and an end. I'm serious, Jeff. Today at midnight is the end for the smoking and fast food binging.

JEFF KOWALSKI
Dad, remember when you told me that you can lie to anyone else in the world but you can't lie to yourself?

Ray nods "yes".

EXT. MCDONALD'S DRIVE THRU.- NIGHT

Ray is seen pulling into McDonald's drive thru. Thick smoke is in the car. Ray checks his digital watch. The time is 11:20. Ray is ordering food. Ray passes money and gets back two large paper bags. He pulls into a parking spot and wolfs down the burgers and fries. Three packs of cigarettes are on the seat as well as five burgers and fries. Ray looks up and sees a Taco Bell. He looks at his watch. The time is 11:45. Ray puts the car in gear. He hops the curb, cuts across traffic and pulls into the drive thru and ends up with a hard stop -SCREECH- at 11:46. Ray passes money and gets back two large paper bags. He pulls into a parking spot and wolfs down the tacos. He smokes a cigarette and looks at his watch: 11:58 P.M. Ray smiles.

EXT. METRO VOCATIONAL SCHOOL - DAY

INT. FIREFIGHTER GYMNASIUM - DAY

Ranging in age from 19-30, 20 white male, seven black male and four Hispanic females are sitting in the wooden bleachers. 17 of the white males are in good shape and seven of the males are slightly muscular. All of the females are in average shape. A.J. Kowalski's thin physic stands out. ROBERT G. SELLERS, 48, in top physical shape, speaks to the group.

ROBERT G. SELLERS

I'm Robert G. Sellers, Chief Training Instructor. You will refer to me as Mr. Sellers or Sir.
(Pause) Within three weeks... five of you will quit. At about eight weeks about four more of you will quit. About 15 of you will become firefighters/E-M-T's. Physically, this eight months will be so tough - that those of you who stick with the training will likely cry every night. If you don't like doing weights, running, heights or blood - I advise you to quit now. Mentally - all of the information will be new to you - so you may quit because of the bookwork. Look to the left and look to the right, either you or the person next to you probably won't make it. So... quit now and avoid the fear and pain or become a firefighter/E.M.T. and be the person who runs into buildings that are on fire and saves lives.

One of the white males stands up. TERRY RYAN, 20, slightly overweight, speaks.

TERRY RYAN

I... don't do heights or blood.

Terry Ryan walks out of the gym.

ROBERT G. SELLERS

All of you, start running on the perimeter of the gym. You will stop when I'm tired of watching.

The group gets up and walks to the edge of the gym.

ROBERT G. SELLERS (CONT'D)

Is that how your gonna moves when there's a fire. Move! Move! Move!

A.J. is last in the group of runners. He runs a bit awkwardly.

INT. METAL EXERCISE BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Linda Kowalski walks in front of Ray Kowalksi and looks at the bench press, exercise bicycle, treadmill, dumb bells, wide screen wall mounted TV and refrigerator. Jeff Kowalski enters the metal building. Linda quickly opens the refrigerator to reveal 48 bottles of water. She looks at Ray and speaks.

LINDA KOWALSKI

I'm glad that you love yourself and your family to do what you have to do in here.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Linda... you always back me. It's time I do what I've been puttin' off for years.

Ray takes off his long sleeve shirt to reveal a short sleeve exercise shirt. Ray kicks off his shoes and takes off his pants to reveal exercise shorts.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI (CONT'D)

I'm not startin' tomorrow. I'm starting now.

Rays puts on a pair of tennis shoes. Over the tennis shoes he puts on a pair of thick rubber boots and begins waking on the treadmill.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI (CONT'D)
 Two miles. Might take me two hours
 but I'm doin' it. Two miles.

Linda Kowalski and Raymond Kowalski smile their approval.

LINDA KOWALSKI
 I'll see you when your done
 walking. Dinner is in one hour.
 Salad with roasted chicken. One or
 two pieces for you?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
 1.

JEFF KOWALSKI
 Get it done dad. (Pause) I had to
 ask - why the big rubber boots?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
 The weight - they're heavy. I'm
 wearing them to help me work
 harder. And, they'll catch sweat.

JEFF KOWALSKI
 Kinda makes sense. Go get your two
 miles Dad.

Ray Kowalski gives a thumbs up and continues walking.

EXT. METAL EXERCISE BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Linda and Jeff Kowalski walk around to the only window. A large tree limb is moving just a few inches from the metal roof. Linda and Jeff Kowalski look in the window to see the back side of Ray Kowalski walking on the treadmill. His shirt is darkened from sweat.

LINDA KOWALSKI
 He's doing it, Jeff. He's walking.

JEFF KOWALSKI
 This is great, mom.

INT. METAL EXERCISE BUILDING - AFTERNOON

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
 One point nine, Come on two. One
 point nine. Come on two.

Ray walks on the treadmill and does a fist pump while reading two point zero on the meter of the machine.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI (CONT'D)

Two point one. Two point one.

The meter shows two point one. Ray smiles, pushes the off button and gets off of the machine. Ray walks out of the metal building.

EXT. METAL EXERCISE BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Ray walks to the back of the building out of view of his home. He takes a pack of cigarettes of his pocket. He takes a lighter out of his sock. He flicks the lighter and a flame appears.

INT. MIDDLE CLASS HOME WITH CONTEMPORARY FURNISHINGS - AFTERNOON

LINDA KOWALSKI

The suspense is killing me. I'm going to go check up on your father. I mean - see how he's doing.

JEFF KOWALSKI

Mom - we are spying on him. (Pause)
I'm in!

Linda and Jeff walk out of the house into the metal workout building.

INT. METAL EXERCISE BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Jeff walks up to the treadmill.

JEFF KOWALSKI

Ma - look at this.

Jeff points to the blinking meter on the treadmill.

LINDA KOWALSKI

Wow!. Two point one miles. He's doing it.

JEFF KOWALSKI

Way to go Dad. Where is he?

LINDA KOWALSKI

He's not in the house.

EXT. METAL EXERCISE BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Jeff and Linda begin to walk around the metal building. Both of them see smoke and make nose twitches.

JEFF KOWALSKI
That's cigarette smoke. He's...

LINDA KOWALSKI
He's smoking.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
I'm fat - not deaf. I can hear
both of you.

With a shovel, Ray Kowalski is holding a pack of burning cigarettes. A small hole in the grass is in front of Ray.

LINDA KOWALSKI
We thought...

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
I don't blame you. I tried to quit
smoking and begin exercising about
100 times.

Ray, Linda and Jeff watch as the cigarettes burn to ashes in the shovel. Ray tips the shovel and the cigarettes into the hole. Ray pulls the loose dirt over the ashes and pats down the area.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI (CONT'D)
I set 'em on fire and buried 'em
before they buried me.

JEFF KOWALSKI
Well said, Dad.

Linda rushes over and hugs Ray. She kisses Ray.

INT. RAY'S MOTOR CITY CUSTOMS - AFTERNOON

A.J. Kowalski walks up to his PaPa Ray who is inspecting the paint on a 1970 red Plymouth Barracuda.

A.J.
Do you ever not like all these old
cars, PaPa Ray?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
I liked 'em a long time ago and I
still like 'em now. Plus...
(MORE)

RAYMOND KOWALSKI (CONT'D)

I'm a part of every car that rolls
outa here.

A.J.

You wanna be a part of these cars
like I want to be a firefighter and
E-M-T.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Puttin' out fires and savin' lives -
now that's important.

A.J.

Yeah... well if I'm gonna be a
firefighter, I have to get more
muscle on me - and my favorite PaPa
Ray has a private gym.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

So, waht'r you saying, A.J.?

A.J.

Can I work out by myself in your
gym... or with you?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Sure. You are not a little kid
anymore. You're a responsible man.

Ray takes a key off of a key ring and throws it at A.J.

A.J.

No lecture with the key?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

No lecture with the key, but a butt
kicking if you lose the key or
leave the door unlocked!

A.J.

Wasn't that a lecture PaPa Ray?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Yes - I guess it was.

A.J.

Can I leave the light on?

Ray smiles.

INT. METAL EXERCISE BUILDING - MORNING

Ray finishes walking on the treadmill and looks at the meter reading of Two point three miles. Ray smiles.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
(Muttering quietly) Time to do the weights.

Ray puts 15 pounds of weights on each side of the bench press bar and begins using the weights. When he pushes the bar up, on the third repetition he sees that the weights are a few inches from the slanted steel trusses of the building's roof.

ONE MONTH LATER

INT. METAL EXERCISE BUILDING - DAY

Ray is quickly walking on the treadmill wearing large rubber boots. The meter on the treadmill reads: three point nine miles. Ray smiles. Ray is less overweight. Ray takes off his boots and pours the sweat from his boots just outside of the entrance door. He puts the boots back on and walks over to the bench press. He puts a 45 pound weight on each side of the bar and does seven quick repetitions.

INT. FIREFIGHTER GYMNASIUM - WEIGHTROOM - DAY

A.J. is struggling with the 50 pounds of total weight on the barbell. Standing next to A.J. is ROCCO TRAVATEENE, 20. Rocco is muscular and 6 foot tall.

A.J.
These weights are kickin' my ass. I can do three reps total. With the bar and two - 35's, that's only about 90 pounds.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
Are you benching three or four times a week?

A.J.
Yea. But - I got a skinny build. I've gotta build more muscle.

A.J. flexes but the muscles on his body are small.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
A.J., I can help you.

A.J.
You'll work out with me?

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
That might help a little bit, but I
have something else in mind.

Rocco walks over to A.J.'s ear and whispers.

A.J.
(Loudly) Steroids?

Rocco and A.J. look around to see that no other person is in the room. They both see that the entrance door is closed.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
(Quietly) Let's go for a ride and
we'll talk.

I/E. ROCCO'S MUSTANG - AFTERNOON

Rocco is driving a hot rod new Mustang. A.J. sits in the passenger seat.

A.J.
Steroids... hmmm. They're against
the school's no drug policy. I've
heard they can make a guy act crazy
- and you might not be able to have
kids - you know - the steroids
affect your...

A.J. points to his crotch.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
A.J. - yea... steroids are against
the school's no drug policy. But,
the school doesn't test everybody.
They only test people when they
have reason. Like - if you start
acting crazy - which you won't -
because I will be watching you.

A.J.
Steroids could get me thrown out of
firefighter school.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
Could. Yeah... could. Check this
out. All of us will be getting more
muscle... all of us are working out
with weights.

(MORE)

ROCCO TRAVATEENE (CONT'D)

Your not going to stick out, but -
you probably won't do well in the
strength department. Unless - you
let me help you.

A.J.

(Pause) I... can't... do this
steroid thing.

Five male and three female firefighter students walk into the
gym.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE

A.J. look at your muscles and look
at the muscle on the other
recruits. Some of the girls have
more muscle than you.

A.J.

Drop dead, Rocco.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE

(Quietly) You can say "drop dead,
Rocco" - but look at them. Are you
more muscular or stronger than
anybody in that group? (Pause) Are
you? You wanna be a firefighter?

A.J.

Yeah. Steroids? I could get in
trouble... or get sick. I'll just
work harder and bulk up with food.
I'll get there.

ONE MONTH LATER

INT. METAL EXERCISE BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Ray just enters the exercise building and a clap of thunder
is heard. Ray is a bit wet from the rain. A.J. walks in and
speaks.

A.J.

PaPa Ray - you look a bit
different.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Five or six days a week I come here
and work out. Plus - I'm not
sneakin' junk food into my mouth
any more. Your lookin' good. How's
firefighter school?

A.J.

Good. Real good. The weights are tough. But I'm gettin' better. Ah... ah, PaPa could I get an advance?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Watchca need? 50 -100 bucks?

A.J.

200. Something special. Someone special. Please, PaPa Ray?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Yeah. Sure. Gotta impress the ladies.

Ray walks to his refrigerator and pulls out a fake can of diet Coke. Ray unscrews the cap and takes out four, 50 dollar bills.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI (CONT'D)

Here.

Ray gives the money to A.J.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI (CONT'D)

Don't forget. You have sweeping to do at the shop.

A.J.

Thanks, PaPa. Gotta go before it gets too stormy to drive.

Ray waves goodbye to A.J. A.J. smiles at Ray.

EXT. METAL EXERCISE BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Dark clouds are dropping large amounts of rain. Thunder BOOOM- is heard and VEF lightening is seen. The branch that is near the roof is heavy with rain and scrapes the roof.

INT. METAL EXERCISE BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Ray walks up to the weight bench and speaks.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Time to step up to the big boys weights. I got this.

Ray puts a 45 pound weight and a 10 pound weight on each side of the bar. Ray does two repetitions of the weights that touch the slanted steel roof.

EXT. METAL EXERCISE BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Rain is coming down quickly and steadily. A loud thunderclap-BOOM is heard. Lightening VFX strikes the tree over the metal shed and follows down the VFX branch that touches the roof.

INT. METAL EXERCISE BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Ray pushes the bar with the weights above his head and touches the supporting metal truss at the same time that the lightning strikes -BOOM- the metal roof. Ray lets go of the weights -CLANG- on the supports of the bench.

Int. RAYS BODY - AFTERNOON

An electrical impulse races from Ray's hand through the nervous system in his body. His body pulses and wiggles from his head to his feet.

INT. METAL EXERCISE BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Rays sits up and open his eyes.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
I'm alive. Whhhhhh.

Ray stands up and takes a few steps.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI (CONT'D)
I can walk.

Linda Kowalski, slightly wet from the rain, enters the metal building.

LINDA KOWALSKI
I just heard the loud thunder and saw the lightning flash. Are you OK?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
(Quietly) Fine. Just fine. Just a little lightning strike to my hands.

Linda walks closer to Ray.

LINDA KOWALSKI

What do you mean... just a little lightning strike? Your hands have a mark on them.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

(Quietly/matter of a factly) A little lightning hit the tree which I suspect was touching or near the roof. I had the barbell touching the metal roof support. Then zap. I was zapped.

LINDA KOWALSKI

We're going to the emergency room at Plymouth General Hospital.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

For what? I'm OK. You go to the hospital when you are sick. I'm... not... sick.

LINDA KOWALSKI

Ray - you just had a cajillion volts of electricity go into you.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

A cajillion? I must be pretty tough.

LINDA KOWALSKI

Ray don't joke around. Let's go.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Look... I'm fine.

Ray quickly spins around five times on one foot.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI (CONT'D)

If I'm sick tomorrow, we'll go to the hospital.

LINDA KOWALSKI

You might be dead by tomorrow.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

I feel good - real good. Kinda *charged up*. I'm fine.

LINDA KOWALSKI

You're not going - are you? I can't drag you there. I'll call 9-1-1.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

They'll see that I'm OK. You will look silly and we will get a \$900 bill for a false 9-1-1 call. Honey, *I know me*. I'll be inside the house in two or three minutes. Just going to put the weights on the rack.

LINDA KOWALSKI

If your not inside in five minutes, I'll assume you died. And... I'll be left without a loving husband because my husband - (loudly) who was stuck by lightning - wouldn't go to the hospital.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Be there in a few...

Linda leaves the metal building. Ray easily picks up a 45 pound weight with 1 hand. He looks at the weight and puts the weight on the floor. He stares at the number 45 on the side of the weight. He picks up the weight easily with his left hand. He easily curls the weight 3 times. He picks up a 45 pound weight in his right hand. Simultaneously he curls the 45 pound weights with his right and left hands. His eyes get big and he smiles. Ray leaves the metal building.

INT. MIDDLE CLASS HOME WITH CONTEMPORARY FURNISHINGS - NIGHT

Linda and Ray are sitting in the living room. The TV is on in the background. Ray is looking at a hot rod car magazine.

LINDA KOWALSKI

It's been about an hour and you look... OK.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

(Smiles) Just a little shock.

LINDA KOWALSKI

Ray - if you feel off - just tell me - I'll take you to the hospital. Try to forget about "I'm the big tough man - I don't get sick".

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

(Warmly) If I feel off or even a little bit not good, I will tell you... and I will go to the hospital.

LINDA KOWALSKI

Good. I'm really tired. I'm going to get ready for bed. Will you join me soon? Falling asleep on the sofa with your mouth open looks funny... and usually hurts your neck.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

My wife... the comedian. I'll finish this article about superchargers while you shower. Then I'll shower and hop in bed with my caring wife.

LINDA KOWALSKI

Good.

Ray hears the shower going and begins to smile. Rays takes off his shirt while walking to the bathroom.

INT. BEDROOM OF MIDDLE CLASS HOME - NIGHT

Linda is sitting up in bed smiling. Ray is sitting up in bed.

LINDA KOWALSKI

You - don't - need - to - go - to
the - hospital - Ray.

Linda takes a deep breath, then exhales and smiles. She leans over and kisses Ray on his cheek.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Good night, Linda.

Int. RAY'S MOTOR CITY CUSTOMS - MORNING

Ray is at his desk. He uses the intercom.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Julio please come up to the front office. Julio, please come to the front office.

Julio Rodrigues walks into the front office.

JULIO ARROYO

What's up, boss?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

You've seen the north wall with all those extra mag wheels, doors and hoods and fenders. And sheet metal...

JULIO ARROYO

Yes. Is there a problem?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

It's messy. I want racks made out of square tube steel. There's enough in the shop to do the job. Stack the spare parts in an orderly fashion. Take the 4 cars that are in house to a reasonable stop work point. Tonight. Tomorrow we - that is everybody... will put up racks and all those parts on the racks. I Everybody works late tonight.

JULIO ARROYO

Stay late tonight? No Warning? People have wives. People have kids that have practices and games. Some of them will not want to do it.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

You are the shop foreman. Make it happen - if they don't work tonight they don't have a job tomorrow. Go.

JULIO ARROYO

Got it.

Julio leaves the office. Julio speaks to himself.

JULIO ARROYO (CONT'D)

(Quietly) What got into him?

THE NEXT DAY

Int. RAY'S MOTOR CITY CUSTOMS, NORTH WALL - MORNING

Ray walks into the building, puts the lights on and looks at the square tubing he needs to cut and weld. With triple speed and strength, Ray picks up a 20 foot piece of steel easily with one hand. Rays eyes get big and he keeps on picking up steel -CLANG-CLANG- until his arms are full and he can barley see over the top of the pile in his arm. He easily places the steel on a huge table. With triple speed, Ray measures and cuts the steel to precise pieces and places six piles of steel in front of the piles of auto parts.

He welds the pieces together into three sections each 15 feet high and 12 foot deep. Ray welds wheels on the racks. Julio comes in as Ray is admiring his work.

JULIO ARROYO

Nobody told me that they were staying late to make these racks. Nice work, though. You pay 'em triple time?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

No, I did it. The guys can wash and sort the parts. You and I will help. Then, the parts will be put on the racks. Got it?

JULIO ARROYO

Got it.

Working triple speed, Ray lifts two large truck doors at a time and moves them to a wash area. He carries -CLANG-CLANG four steel bumpers at a time to the wash area. The workers stop and stare at Ray, amazed at his strength and speed. Ray notices the workers not working.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

(Warmly) Gentlemen, get back to work.

The workers get back to work as Ray cuts his arm on a sharp edge of a bumper. Julio Rodrigues, nearby Ray, notices. He points to a worker.

JULIO ARROYO

Hurry! Get me a two clean towels. Run.

Julio sees the seven inch long wound. Julio compresses Ray's wound with both of his hands. The male worker gives Julio two clean shop towels. Julio wraps the wound. A three square inch blotch of blood appears.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

I'm OK. Thanks, Julio.

JULIO ARROYO

(Sternly) No, Ray, your not OK. This is not a fix it with a bandage wound.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Really... I'm OK.

JULIO ARROYO

Really - your not OK. I don't care
if you fire me, I'm taking you to
the hospital.

Ray smiles as a worker and Julio begin to walk Ray to the
door.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Take me to Dr. Weiss's office. He's
closer. Take my Charger. I'll give
you directions along the way.

I/E. INSIDE OF HIGH POWERED 1966 DODGE CHARGER - MORNING

Julio quickly -VROOM- drives two point two miles to Dr.
Weiss's office, -VROOM-VROOM spinning tires, running through
two red lights and narrowly missing cars along the way.

JULIO ARROYO

How many horses, Ray?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

The dynamometer said 650 -VROOM- at
62 hundred R-P-M. Turn here.

INT. OFFICE OF DR. RUBIN WEISS - DAY

Julio and Ray rush into the office of Dr. Weiss.

JULIO ARROYO

We need to see Dr. Weiss.

Office Manager/Nurse, SHERYL GREEN, 58, speaks.

SHERYL GREEN

Dr. Weiss, we have an emergency.

DR. RUBIN WEISS

I'm coming. I'm coming. (Pause) Ray
Kowalski. Let's have a look. Follow
me. Nurse Green, please assist me.

Dr. Weiss leads Ray to an examination room.

NURSE SHERYL GREEN

Mr. Kowalski, I'm going to remove
the towels.

DR. RUBIN WEISS

It's three inch laceration. The
bleeding has stopped.

(MORE)

DR. RUBIN WEISS (CONT'D)

We'll clean out the wound and put
in four stitches.

Julio Rodrigues and Ray look at the wound and each other in
astonishment. Nurse Green cleans the wound. Dr Weiss quickly
stitches the wound.

DR. RUBIN WEISS (CONT'D)

You two look like you've seen a
ghost.

JULIO ARROYO

That cut was twice as big 20
minutes ago. At least twice...

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Maybe 3 times as big.

DR. RUBIN WEISS

Gentlemen, when people who are not
health care professionals see an
injury for the first time, their
mind sometimes exaggerates the size
of the injury.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Maybe he's right.

JULIO ARROYO

My eyes don't tell lies. Six or
seven inches at least.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Dr. Weiss, this is Julio Arroyo,
the foreman at my shop.

DR. RUBIN WEISS

Nice to meet you, Mr. Arroyo.
Please excuse us for about 15
minutes - I need to see Raymond
alone for some private
consultation.

JULIO ARROYO

I understand.

Julio leaves the room.

DR. RUBIN WEISS

Ray, you look like you've lost
weight. You must be following the
eating and exercise plans.

Dr. Weiss, chart in hand, listens to Rays heart and lungs as he talks to Ray.

DR. RUBIN WEISS (CONT'D)

There's something else that's happening inside of you. According to my chart, your heart is beating a bit faster, not a lot faster - but a bit faster - since you were last here. Your breathing is different than last time I checked. You might have damage - however slight - that I can't pick up with this stethoscope. (Pause) Ray, are you noticing something profoundly different about your body? Anything big happen?

Ray drops his head and doesn't speak.

DR. RUBIN WEISS (CONT'D)

Ray - I've been taking care of you and your family for 15 years. You need to tell me.

Dr. Weiss puts his arm on Ray's shoulder.

DR. RUBIN WEISS (CONT'D)

Tell me Ray.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

I... was... hit... by... lightning. There was a storm. The lightning hit the tree - the tree branch touched the metal roof on my workout building. I touched a weight to the metal roof at the same time the lightning hit the roof. Zap.

Dr. Weiss looks at Ray's quick healing arm and paces while rubbing his own chin.

DR. RUBIN WEISS

Any thing else special happen to you since the lightning strike?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

It's kinda private.

DR. RUBIN WEISS

You mean...

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
(Smiling) Yes. Yes. Yes.

DR. RUBIN WEISS
Anything else?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
Yes. Plus I can carry large amounts
of steel and I'm faster when I
move.

DR. RUBIN WEISS
Like any other electrically-
conductive object, a human body can
store electric charge if insulated.
(Pause) Were you wearing thick
rubber boots or shoes? Is the tree
that carried the electricity very
big with many branches and many
leaves?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
Yes, I was wearing thick rubber
boots and the tree is huge. So,
what are you putting together, Doc?

DR. RUBIN WEISS
I am by no means an expert on this
topic, but... I think that... I
think that - the huge tree with
their thousands of leaves
dissipated the voltage. Your thick
rubber boots insulated you. And for
some reason, your body is storing
that enormous amount of energy for
you to use when you want to use it.
Basically, humans store about 100
watts of energy. For you, Ray,
right now, you store a lot more
than 100 watts of power.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
So... people are like a car's
electrical system?

DR. RUBIN WEISS
(Smiling) I'm not versed in car
anatomy... please explain.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
(Quickly) The alternator produces
the charge because the engine spins
the alternator with a belt.
(MORE)

RAYMOND KOWALSKI (CONT'D)

The alternator sends a controlled amount of power to the battery that saves the energy. The electrical energy is distributed to the spark plugs and accessories as needed.

DR. RUBIN WEISS

Thanks Ray. You just taught me something. (Pause) But, there's one thing I want you to watch out for.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

What's that, Doc?

DR. RUBIN WEISS

I can't tell you when you will run out of this huge amount of stored energy from the lightning. You could go for a day more or... quite a long time. Ray, would you come with me to the hospital for some tests?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

(Strongly/Warmly) No. My visit to you is between you and the guy you are looking at right now.

DR. RUBIN WEISS

Of course, Ray. Medical info is private info. Just be careful and let me know if your situation changes.

Ray shakes Dr. Weiss's hand and walks out to the waiting area where Julio Rodrigues sits reading Road and Track magazine.

INT. WAITING ROOM AREA OF DR. RUBIN WEISS - MORNING

JULIO ARROYO

What'd he say? How's your arm?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Dr. Weiss said that I am OK and that my arm will heal soon.

JULIO ARROYO

But, *I'm* driving back to the shop, boss.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

OK. But this time, take it easy.

I/E. INSIDE OF HIGH POWERED 1966 DODGE CHARGER - MORNING

As Ray enters his car, the bandage rubs on an exterior mirror and falls off. Ray sits down and looks at the wound which is now an inch long. Julio looks at the wound and into the wide eyes of Ray Kowalski.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
I'm a quick healer.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI (CONT'D)
(Quietly) I hope I get shocked again.

JULIO ARROYO
What'd you say?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
(Tiny cough) I hope... I get to the shop by ten.

INT. FIREFIGHTER GYMNASIUM - WEIGHTROOM

15 fire fighters-in training are working out -CLANG-CLANG- on weights. A.J. looks around the room and sees that every person is getting more muscular and doing about 50% more weight than he is doing. A.J. sees Rocco.

A.J.
Let's go for a ride, amigo.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
Where?

A.J.
(Smiling) Around here.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
(Fake tough smiling) Around here... where?

A.J.
No more questions. Let's go.

A.J. and Rocco leave the building.

I/E. ROCCO'S MUSTANG - AFTERNOON

A.J.
Put your hand out, palm up.

Rocco puts his hand out, palm up. A.J. slaps \$200 into Rocco's hand.

A.J. (CONT'D)
200 bucks. Count it. How much muscle will I get for 200 bucks?

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
I doesn't work like that. But, 50 a week will cover you for... five weeks.

A.J.
I won't go crazy and my dick and balls won't be affected?

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
I'm not giving you that much. No shots. Pills. Pills in appropriate doses.

A.J.
(Smiling) Appropriate doses? Where did you go to medical school?

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
At a gas station in the Bahama islands. Don't worry - I won't goof you up.

Rocco reaches under his seat and grabs a paper bag. He shakes the bag. Pills can be heard moving in a plastic bottle.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE (CONT'D)
One a day in the morning with food - every other day. You will see a difference in ten days or so.

A.J.
Cool.

TEN DAYS LATER

EXT. FIREFIGHTER TRAINING FACILITY, OUTDOOR TRACK -
AFTERNOON

A.J. is running in the middle of the pack of 25 would be firefighters. He passes five runners.

INT. FIREFIGHTER GYMNASIUM - WEIGHTROOM

A.J. places a 35 pound weight on the left side of the bar on the bench press while Rocco puts a 35 pound weight on the other side of the bar.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
90 pounds total. Do 15.

A.J.
12. I'll do 12.

A.J. completes 12 repetitions.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
You are strong, dawg.

A.J.
Stronger. I'm getting stronger.

Robert G. Sellers, Chief Training Instructor enters the gym and speaks. 20 white male, seven black male and four Hispanic females, ranging in age from 19-30, are working with weights. He walks into the center of the group and speaks.

ROBERT G. SELLERS
In 10 days, all 31 of you will do the **70 pound dummy carry**. Look to the far right corner of the gym and you will see a 15 step ladder with one red step. The ladder will be bolted to the floor. Safety mats will be placed around the ladder. Each of you will carry a 70 pound dummy up the ladder to the red step and ring the bell. Then you will descend the ladder to the floor. Those of you who fail to perform this activity will learn how to conquer the activity. There is no "I can't" in this academy. An e-mail with the specifics will be sent to all of you. Any questions?

AVON PORTER, 29 speaks.

AVON PORTER
(Loudly and strongly) Sir, may I ask a question?

ROBERT G. SELLERS
Yes, Miss Porter, ask.

AVON PORTER

Will we be given instruction on how to carry the 70 pound dummy?

ROBERT G. SELLERS

Good question, Miss Porter. Yes - two hours directly before the event you will be given group and personal instruction. Any other questions?

A.J. looks at Rocco.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE

Carrying 70 pounds up and down a ladder is harder to do than a bench press with 90 pounds.

A.J.

(Quietly) Do you know how much of that stuff to give me?

ROCCO TRAVATEENE

Yeah- I wouldn't hurt you.

Ext. PARKING LOT OF RAY'S MOTOR CITY CUSTOMS - MORNING

Ray looks at the 125 foot long 18 feet high side of the building. The wall paint is good, but the words "Ray's Motor City Customs" are faded and in disrepair. In triple time -VFX- Ray outlines, with masking tape, the shape of a 75 foot long six foot high detailed retro car. Ray is painting over and between the tape with three colors: purple, pink and gray. Ray hand paints the name of the business above the car. Four workers arrive and have astonished looks on their faces as they stare at the side of the building. Ray is noticeably thinner and more muscular. Jeff Kowalski, Ray's son walks out of the building.

JEFF KOWALSKI

Hey, Dad. Good morning. Just getting my cell phone from...

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

You're in early.

JEFF KOWALSKI

Just going over the paint purchas... purchases.

Jeff, standing near the entrance, notices a bit of the graphic. He walks backward 40 feet to look at the entire image. A smile covers to his face.

JEFF KOWALSKI (CONT'D)
This looks great.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
Well, I'm glad you like it, or I would have to change it. I really should have shown you a sketch of it first.

JEFF KOWALSKI
Thanks. It's great. Amazing. But, you didn't paint **Ray's** on the wall. There's no "**Ray's**", dad.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
The shop isn't Ray's anymore. (Pause) Father and Son's Motor City Customs is too many words. I'm still here, so I thought: Motor City Customs was enough. New ownership papers come in tomorrow.

Jeff's eyes become watery.

JEFF KOWALSKI
Partners?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
51 - 49. When I'm gone - the place is yours.. but, for now, we split the profits and losses, 51-49.

Ray puts his arm on the shoulder of Jeff.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI (CONT'D)
(Smiling) Right now, Jeff, get this mess of tape and stuff cleaned up.

Jeff looks into his father's eyes and speaks.

JEFF KOWALSKI
(Loudly) Kenn... Devin... gentlemen, clean up this area.

KENN JACOBS, 50 and DEVIN GOLDEN 52, walk up to Jeff and Ray.

DEVIN GOLDEN
We getting T-shirts with the new logo on 'em?

KENN OOSTERHOUSE
On mine, I want "K-e-n-n" right here. My wife Claire will get a T-shirt. C-L-A-I-R-E.

Kenn points to the upper left side of his chest.

JEFF KOWALSKI

Yep. We're getting T-shirts. Every employee gets two free... *in their size*. Nine bucks for your wife's shirt, Kenn.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Spoken like a true partner.

JEFF KOWALSKI

Dad, I can see a big difference in you. You painted that huge car and the lettering on the side of the building in two hours. You've been hitting the weights and using the treadmill. Good for you. You've been moving a lot faster lately.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

You noticed. 40 waist to a 36. I couldn't fit into my clothes. (Tiny cough) I do feel a bit charged up.

JEFF KOWALSKI

Keep it going.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

I'm going to be in that two point five K run and weigh lifting deal for men and women who are 55 and up. We meet at the Saint Peter and Paul's Activity building this Saturday.

JEFF KOWALSKI

You'll do well. But don't hurt yourself. I need you here at the shop.

INT. MIDDLE CLASS HOME WITH CONTEMPORARY FURNISHINGS - NIGHT

Ray is watching TV with Linda. Linda is also reading a book. Weathercaster, TV host SONNY ELLIOT, 45, talks about the weather.

SONNY ELLIOT

During the next 2 hours a huge thunderstorm will be passing through metro Detroit like an angry ex-wife who's missed getting 3 alimony checks. Stay inside and don't go near any live wires.

LINDA KOWALSKI

Sonny says to stay inside... I'm going to read for a while and you, Ray?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

20 minutes on the treadmill and I will be in.

LINDA KOWALSKI

I'm proud of you Ray. Your sticking to your exercise plan... and your diet.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Thanks, hon. See you in a few.

INT. METAL EXERCISE BUILDING - EVENING

Ray hears the storm. He puts on his thick rubber boots. Ray puts his hand on the building.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI (V.O.)

This is going to be the dumbest thing I ever did or the smartest thing. Zap me. Zap me.

26 minutes of time passes shown via a digital clock. Thunder - BOOM- is heard and -VFX- lightning flashes are seen through the window and door. Ray gets -ZAP- zapped.

INT. RAY'S BODY - EVENING

Electricity -VFX-runs through the nerves in Ray's body.

INT. METAL EXERCISE BUILDING

Ray falls to the floor. He wiggles and shivers. A clock -VFX shows that Ray is on the floor for three minutes. Ray crawls to the seat of the bench press and struggles to sit up.

INT. BEDROOM OF MIDDLE CLASS HOME - EVENING

Linda finishes her book, looks at the clock and realizes that Ray is still in the exercise building. Linda rushes to the metal shed and opens the door. Just before Linda opens the door, Ray gets up off of the floor and sits on the bench of the bench press.

LINDA KOWALSKI
(In a poor Arnold Schwarzenegger)
So how is Arnold Shawrzenager
doing? Bench pressing 300?

Ray slowly smiles.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
(A bit groggy) 225. Usually 12
times. Oh... I just got zapped by
lightning. Again. On purpose.

Ray points to the steel wall where there is a black outline of his hand.

LINDA KOWALSKI
Ray. I don't know - you can't keep
on... Are you OK?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
The first strike did wonders... so
I thought that number two would
keep me going in the same
direction.

Linda cries into her hands, then speaks to Ray.

LINDA KOWALSKI
I'm not the sharpest knife in the
drawer, but, I do know this. You
are playing with fire.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
I know.

LINDA KOWALSKI
If you have a death wish, tell me.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
Hon, no. No way.

Linda walks up to Ray. She hugs him, then takes a step back and speaks.

LINDA KOWALSKI
 I never thought that I would say
 this to you... (warmly) no more
 lightning jolts or I'm leaving.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
 (Smiling) OK, OK... two lightning
 jolts are enough.

LINDA KOWALSKI
 And, I'm telling Jeff about this
 lightning activity, (sarcastically)
 so he will understand why you might
 be found dead at your desk.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
 He needs to know.

LINDA KOWALSKI
 And... how about you not doing the
 weights and treadmill any more
 today?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
 No more exercise today?

LINDA KOWALSKI
 Come in the house. I want you to
 have a bowl of Butter Pecan ice
 cream with me. One bad eating day a
 week is OK.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
 (Matter of factly) I've been doing
 these weights and using the
 treadmill 5 or 6 days a week. I'm
 not a big fat guy who smokes
 anymore. I'm a better Ray - but
 I've got a ways to go. And you,
 Linda, are a big part of the reason
 why I'm a better Ray. So... my
 answer to a *small* bowl of Butter
 Pecan ice cream with you is... yes.

LINDA KOWALSKI
 A small bowl... good.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
 A small bowl. I need to be ready.

LINDA KOWALSKI
 Ready for what?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
Ready so that I can do well at our
church's short run and weight
lifting event in 3 days.

EXT. SAINTS PETER AND PAUL PARKING LOT - MORNING

A 50/50 group of 20 men and 10 women, all 55 plus, are crowded around FATHER REDWIG, 56, the in shape pastor of the church and master of ceremonies for the event. 100 other people, men, women and children are watching the event.

FATHER REDWIG
Let us begin with a prayer.
Heavenly Father, bless these men's
and women's bodies - so that there
are no injuries. Bless these people
who gather in fellowship to run two
point five miles and lift weights.
Amen.

20 men and ten women, all speak in unison.

GROUP OF ATHLETES
Amen.

Father Redwig speaks in his head.

FATHER REDWIG (V.O.)
Almighty God, as the leader of this
flock, let me be first in the run
and bench press the most weight.

RICH SMITH, 61, speaks in his head.

RICH SMITH (V.O.)
(With conviction) God bless me so I
will be first in the run.

ROBERT FITZPATRICK, 49, speaks in his head.

ROBERT FITZPATRICK (V.O.)
God, please don't let these guys
find out that I'm 49. Plus, have me
bench press the most weight. Amen.

PATTY ALLEN, 56, speaks in her head.

PATTY ALLEN
God, please let me beat 15 men.
Amen.

FATHER REDWIG

Gentlemen and ladies, this friendly walk or jog or run - whatever you choose, goes around the church, past the park and Wal Mart and back to this table of cold water and cookies - donated by Wal Mart. Follow the red cones. Volunteers will also guide you along the route(Pause) Gentlemen. Ladies. We will start when Sister Natalie fires the starting pistol. Are you ready?

Father Redwig sees that the people are ready.

50 MEN/WOMEN

Yeah. Yo! Ready!

Father Redwig nods at Sister Natalie. Sister Natalie fires the pistol. The group of men and women begin to run. Ray sees a man wearing an "Eastern Michigan University Track Team" jersey, a man wearing a "Michigan State University Track Team" jersey and a woman wearing a "University of Michigan Track Team" Jersey.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI (V.O.)

I'll just beat the three college runners.

Ray easily gets to the middle of the pack and stays there next to the three "University" runners. With a half mile to go Ray trips on a high piece of sidewalk. Ray sees his wife Linda, son Jeff, Jeff's wife, Cindy and grandson A.J. as he is laying on the ground. He gets up quickly and sees that Mr. E.M.U. is #one. Mr. M.S.U. is #two and that Miss U of M is number #three in the race towards the end of the run. Ray passes all three university runners with one foot to go in the "fun run". A.J., Linda, Jeff and CINDY KOWALSKI, 38, make their way through the crowd to see Ray.

A.J.

(Cheering) You beat all of 'em!

A.J. fist bumps Ray. Jeff pats Ray on the back, Linda gives Ray a small kiss on his cheek and Cindy hugs Ray.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

(Ray coughs) My favorite grandson. Thanks for coming. Jeff, Cindy - Linda, wow - my people are here to see me.

Ray smiles.

A.J.
 You gonna kick every one's butt in
 weight lifting PaPa Ray?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
 I'll try. Weight lifting starts in
 15 minutes.

Ray walks to the bench press and is met by Dr. Rubin Weiss
 along the way.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI (CONT'D)
 (Sarcastically) Dr. Weiss - I
 didn't know that you belong to
 Saints Peter and Paul church.

DR. RUBIN WEISS
 I don't - Father Redwig hired me
 just in case one of you older
 athletes had a problem. So far, I'm
 getting paid for my good looks.
 (Whispering) I see that you are
 still Superman.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
 (Coughs) Yep.

DR. RUBIN WEISS
 Let me listen to your chest. I've
 checked about 15 people so far.
 They see the stethoscope and figure
 that I'm a doctor and here to help.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
 Go ahead.

Dr. Weiss listens to Ray's heart and lungs.

DR. RUBIN WEISS
 Ray, can you make it by my office
 on Monday before you go to your
 shop? I want to give you a book
 about people who have been struck
 by lightning.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
 OK. Gotta go kick some butt doing
 weight lifting.

DR. RUBIN WEISS
 Be careful, Ray.

Ray walks to the weight lifting area. Linda, Jeff, Cindy and
 A.J. Walk with Ray. Father Redwig speaks.

FATHER REDWIG

I see that none of you have gone to your maker during the run.

The crowd laughs.

FATHER REDWIG (CONT'D)

12 of you have gathered around the weight bench. You will notice that there is one 45 pound weight on each side of the bar. 45 plus 45 equals 90, add 20 for the bar and the total is 110 pounds. There will be no extra weight added to see who can lift the most weight.

CROWD, boos.

CROWD

Boo! Boo!

FATHER REDWIG

The challenge here is to see *how many...* not how much. The rules are simple. Do as many as you can. You can rest - for no more than ten seconds with the weight in hand and with your arms extended. Am I understood?

The crowd is silent. Father Redwig takes off his Notre Dame sweatshirt and reveals a T-shirt covered, toned and muscled upper body. Six women wolf whistle. One woman, SANDY SMITH, 35, yells.

SANDY SMITH

Hey Father - You busy later?

FATHER REDWIG

(Sternly) I am a Catholic priest.
(Warmly) I am *not* busy later.

The crowd laughs. Father Redwig lays down on the bench and moves the weights up and down 12 times.

CROWD

11, 12.

ARTHUR JOHNSON, 60, quietly talks to Ray.

ARTHUR JOHNSON

I was tenth in running. I saw that you were first. I'm Arthur Johnson.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

I'm Ray Kowalski. Nice to meet you, Arthur.

ARTHUR JOHNSON

Those are my five grandchildren standing over there, plus my daughter Mary and her husband Anthony. They came to Detroit all the way from central Florida.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Wow. Big group. Nice for you to be supported.

ARTHUR JOHNSON

We buried my wife, Elizabeth three days ago. They family will be here until Tuesday. My daughter said I need to be active... so I'm here.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Sorry to hear about your loss. For right now, Arthur, focus on the weights. Do 'em for your wife, Elizabeth.

ARTHUR JOHNSON

Good idea, Ray. I will.

ARTHUR JOHNSON (CONT'D) (V.O.)

Sob stories usually work.

Arthur Johnson smiles as Ray turns his head.

FATHER REDWIG

OK. Time for our first strong man.

Ten men and two women are in line. Arthur Johnson is second from last. Ray Kowalski last in line. The ten competitors lift the weights.

FATHER REDWIG (CONT'D)

OK folks... The most repetitions so far is 21 - David O'Shawnesee.

The crowd claps.

FATHER REDWIG (CONT'D)

Next is... Arthur Johnson. Go ahead Arthur.

Arthur whispers to Father Redwig.

FATHER REDWIG (CONT'D)
 Arthur asked me to say a special
 prayer of thanks to God because
 nobody was hurt so far
 today. (Pause) "God we all say thank
 you for our safe competition today.
 Amen. Arthur... go ahead.

Arthur Johnson completes 23 lifts.

CROWD
 Yeah. Wow. Yeah!

FATHER REDWIG
 Our last competitor is Ray Kowalski
 who was first in the 2.5 K run. Go
 ahead Ray.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI (V.O.)
 This will be easy.

Ray completes 18 repetitions and holds the bar in a locked
 position with his arms outstretched above his head.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI (V.O.)
 I can do 50, but that would be
 showing off. I could beat Arthur by
 just one, but his wife just died -
 he needs a victory. Here I go.

CROWD
 19, 20, 21, 22.

The bar and weights rest on Rays chest. Arthur Johnson jumps
 and fist pumps into the air.

INT. OFFICE OF DR. RUBIN WEISS-- MORNING

DR. RUBIN WEISS
 Here is that book, Ray.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
 Thanks, Doc.

DR. RUBIN WEISS
 May I check and listen to your
 insides?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
 (Cough) What for? I feel great,
 Doc.

DR. RUBIN WEISS
I'm a doctor. It's what we do.

Dr. Weiss places the stethoscope on two spots of Ray's chest and two spots on his back. Doctor Weiss listens -THUMP-THUMP-THUMP- while making a stoic face. Dr. Weiss then shows Ray images of a good lung and a lung with a large dark area. Dr. Weiss puts his arm on Rays shoulder. Ray's eyes get watery.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
I only smoked three or four a day.
I don't understand.

DR. RUBIN WEISS
The lightning was the culprit. It combusted your lungs, but not completely. I'm thinking about 60%.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
Two times.

DR. RUBIN WEISS
Two times what?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
I shocked myself a second time with lightning from the last storm.

DR. RUBIN WEISS
The two lightning strikes combusted the better part of your lungs. I'm sorry, Ray.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
So... how long do I have?

DR. RUBIN WEISS
Ray, you don't have a "good until" date tattooed on the bottom of your foot.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
Me getting a second lightning strike was extra stupid.

DR. RUBIN WEISS
You thought that one lightning strike was good - you were stronger and faster - so, it made sense to you that a second strike would help make you stay strong and fast. I can see your rationale.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
What's going to happen to me now?

DR. RUBIN WEISS
Tests at the hospital. Possible
treatment.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
So... there's hope? 50%?

DR. RUBIN WEISS
For recovery?

Dr. Weiss looks at Ray and doesn't speak.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
(Angry) Talk to me. Tell me!

Ray grabs the lapel of the white lab coat of Dr. Weiss.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

Ray lets go of the lapel.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI (CONT'D)
Tell me.

DR. RUBIN WEISS
3 to 6 months. Could be a few more.
Could be years.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
I don't understand. I can run fast -
work quickly... and I'm strong.
But, I'm dieing?

DR. RUBIN WEISS
You have 3 forces in you. Your will
to survive. The decay of your lungs
and your extra "battery power".
(Pause). Plus an outside source.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
What's the outside source?

Dr. Rubin Weiss tilts his eyes upward.

DR. RUBIN WEISS
The man upstairs. He decides... I
don't.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Will you ask him something special for me?

DR. RUBIN WEISS

What do you want, Ray?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Ask him if he'll put me be in the top three in the Michigan Men's Top 55+ Athlete competition. The top three are going to be on TV.

DR. RUBIN WEISS

You... in an athletic competition... with weakened lungs? That competition could take the last bit of life right out of you. I took an oath - to help people.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

I'll ask if you won't. I never was a good athlete, but now...

INT. MIDDLE CLASS HOME WITH CONTEMPORARY FURNISHINGS - MORNING

Ray is in the kitchen. The digital clock reads 3:14 A.M. Ray looks through the window and sees A.J. inside of the metal workout building. Ray walks outside.

INT. METAL EXERCISE BUILDING - MORNING

Ray enters the metal building as A.J. pops a pill with a gulp of bottled water.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Vitamins are always important.

A.J.

Yep. Gotta have those vitamins.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

I'm sure your kickin' all their butts down at the firefighter academy.

A.J.

Well, not all their butts.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

You've grown some muscles.

Ray grabs A.J.'s arm.

A.J.
Some muscles.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
Fireman have to

A.J.
Firefighters, PaPa Ray...
firefighters.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
Firefighters have to do all sorts
of physical stuff. I'm glad your
getting some muscle on you. Do they
check you for strength... or speed?

A.J.
In two days at two o'clock in the
gym I have to carry a 70 pound
dummy up and down 15 steps on a
ladder.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
You'll do it.

A.J.
Thanks, PaPa. I can see that you've
slimmed down and you've got bigger
muscles.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
I was headed to the grave yard in a
high powered hearse. I was too fat.
I smoked. No muscle. Now... well, I
can almost beat you.

A.J.
Let's see who can do more at the
bench press. How about a 45 pound
plate on each side? That's 110 with
the bar.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
You first. I wanna see what I have
to beat.

A.J. and Ray put a 45 pound weight on each side of the bar.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI (V.O.)
First the guy in the parking lot,
now I gotta have A.J. beat me.

A.J. pushes the weights 30 times.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

30. Geees, A.J. I didn't know that you are that strong. You got me beat. 30!

A.J.

Don't quit before you start - remember when you said that to before the grade school football games?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

(Mocking a young A.J.) Those boys are way bigger than me, PaPa Ray. OK... I will (cough) try to beat you.

A.J.

No "this is my grandson - I cant beat him because he'll cry" crap. If you don't try and beat me, I'll tell MiMi I saw you smoking. I'll know if your acting.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

(Seriously, yet smiling) Toss me those gloves. I use those when I give people a butt kicking when I compete against them in weigh lifting.

Ray puts on the gloves and bench presses the bar 28 times. After the last lift, the bar rests on Ray's chest.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI (CONT'D)

(In a shallow voice) Get this offa' me. A.J. Get it offa me.

A. J. runs to Ray's left side and easily pushes the weight over and off his grandfather in a quick strong move. The bar and weight clang on the floor ten feet from the bench press.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI (CONT'D)

Holy crap. Thank's A.J. You are strong. Geese! I've seen the light on in here early in the morning and late at night. You've been puttin' in the work... those vitamins helping you?

A.J.

Yep - that's why I take 'em.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
Give me one - I wanna get stronger.

A.J.
Ahh. That was my last one.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
What kinda' vitamins are they? The weight lifting magazines all say to take GT-40 and 426-H. Are you taking those vitamins?

A.J.
Yeah. GT-40 and 426-H. I just took the GT-40. I took the 426-H about an hour ago. I gotta go PaPa. Study group.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
See ya, grandpa saver.

A.J.
See ya'.

A.J. leaves.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
(Inside of Ray's head) He's lying.

Ray looks at a group of muscle car images on the wall. He focuses in on 2 side by side images. To the left is an image of a GT-40 Ford race car. To the right is an image, labeled "426 Hemi Racing Engine".

INT. FIREFIGHTER TRAINING FACILITY - AFTERNOON

A 15 foot high ladder has a 70 pound human like dummy next to it. The ladder is surrounded by soft safety mats. The group of would be firefighter trainees stand nearby.

ROBERT G. SELLERS
You all understand how to properly carry the dummy.

The GROUP OF TRAINEES respond.

GROUP OF TRAINEES
(Loudly) Yes, sir.

ROBERT G. SELLERS
Good. Let's begin.

Robert G. Sellers looks at his clipboard.

ROBERT G. SELLERS (CONT'D)
Avon Porter.

Avon walks to the ladder, grabs the dummy and easily puts it over her shoulder. She struggles with the first step, but then climbs to the high red step and then down the ladder. Spontaneous cheers erupt from the group.

GROUP OF TRAINEES
Way to go, Avon. Yea. Wooo.

4 more trainees are seen carrying the dummy up and down the ladder. Skinny, 5'8", STEVE MORRISON, 26, drops the dummy on the 3rd step up the ladder.

ROBERT G. SELLERS
Next time, Morrison. You'll get it next time.

STEVE MORRISON
(Sadly) Yes, sir.

Robert G. Sellers hears Steve Morrison's sad reply.

ROBERT G. SELLERS
What was that Morrison?

STEVE MORRISON
(Positive/with enthusiasm) Yes, sir.

Ray Kowalski stands behind the bleachers looking at the event. Robert G. Sellers speaks.

ROBERT G. SELLERS
25 of you properly completed the 70 pound dummy carry. 5 did not. The last person is... A.J. Kowalski.

Ray watches A.J. as A.J. effortlessly lifts the dummy and climbs quickly to the red step. A.J. Makes his way down, but trips and falls with three steps to go. Ray takes a step forward and sees that A.J. is unharmed. A.J. sees Ray.

ROBERT G. SELLERS (CONT'D)
Tough break, A.J. You'll get it next time. You have to take deliberate steps.

A.J.
Yes, sir.

EXT. PARKING LOT OF FIRE FIGHTER TRAINING FACILITY -
AFTERNOON

Ray is leaning on his car parked next to A.J.'s 2010 Camaro.
Ray speaks.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
Tough break.

A.J.
(Angrily) That event was not open
to the public.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
I wanted to see how you were doing.

A.J.
I fell. (Angrily) Is falling OK?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
A.J., what's with the attitude?

A.J.
(Toughly) I don't have any
attitude.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
A.J. - I'm on your side. I love
you, so I support you. What are you
angry about?

A.J.
I fell. I looked stupid in front of
people. I can't take that moment
back. Now I'm a weak dumb ass.
That's what I'm angry about.

Ray sees a weak 40 year old male in a mouth controlled
wheelchair.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
Look over your shoulder.

A.J. looks over his shoulder.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI (CONT'D)
That guy has a right to be angry.
Not you, A.J. What are you going to
do about conquering the 70 pound
dummy lift?

A.J.
Right now? Today?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Right now... today. What are you going to do?

A.J.

I'm going to chill. Play video games with Rocco and couple of the other trainees. We have the rest of the day off.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Winning in life doesn't work that way. You gotta tackle your problems. When you don't try - you lose. You have to move when you're to scared to move.

A.J. looks at Ray. A.J. takes out his cell phone and punches in numbers.

A.J.

Rocco. See you in 15. Susan and Tommy are going to be there. Do you have enough beer?

A.J. listens to his phone.

A.J. (CONT'D)

See you guys in a few.

A.J. then shuts off the phone. He opens his car door, gets in starts the car then burns rubber -VROOM- as he drives away.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI (V.O.)

So that's what you get when you mix a 20 year old with steroids who falls off a ladder in front of his fellow firefighter trainees.

I/E. INSIDE OF HIGH POWERED 1966 DODGE CHARGER - AFTERNOON

Ray takes out his cell phone and calls his son, Jeff.

JEFF KOWALSKI

Hey, Dad. What's up?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Our favorite 20 year old is what's up.

JEFF KOWALSKI

What'd ya' mean?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

He's on steroids. Illegal, bad for your body... steroids. Using steroids is cheating. He's cheating to do well at the academy. He grew huge muscles over six weeks.

JEFF KOWALSKI

You sure? I don't want to come down on him if your not sure.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

My skinny grandson, your son - popped a pill in my workout building. I asked him if it was a vitamin... a GT-40 or a 426-Hemi.

JEFF KOWALSKI

Dad, a GT-40 is a race car and a 426-Hemi is an engine.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

You and I both know that, but A.J. followed my lie... with his lie.

JEFF KOWALSKI

I could just tell him to stop taking the steroids.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

I don't think that you telling him to stop will do the trick. This isn't a "eat your food or no ice cream for you" problem".

JEFF KOWALSKI

So... You got any ideas?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

I'll think about it.

JEFF KOWALSKI

You can think, but, I'm the Dad. I gotta do something.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Jeff, think this through. You can't just bully him or yell at him.

JEFF KOWALSKI

(Slightly irritated) That's what you did to me.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
Jeff, calm down. Relax.

JEFF KOWALSKI
(Sternly) This isn't work. Your **not**
my boss now.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
Jeff. Jeff.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI (CONT'D) (V.O.)
Now, I'm *the goof ball*.

Jeff pushes the red button on his phone.

JEFF KOWALSKI (V.O.)
I'll just talk to A.J. He's
smart... he's reasonable.

I/E. ROCCO'S MUSTANG - EVENING

Rocco is driving and A.J. is sitting in the passenger seat.

A.J.
I'm now in the middle of the pack
at the academy. I want to carry the
flag on graduation day.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
Best student and number one in
physical tests. (Pause) You're the
top student - you've got that.
Highest scores on the physical
tests, well...

A.J.
The flag carrier can get a job at
any firehouse in the country. You
got pills for that?(Slight laugh)

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
No pills. Something better. Open my
glove box. In the back... in the
leather pouch.

A.J. moves two flashlights, three candy bars and ten
receipts. He takes the leather pouch out and lays it on his
lap.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE (CONT'D)
It's not a gun. Open it. It's the
way your going to be the flag
carrier on graduation day.

A.J.
That's a syringe... for needles.

A.J. looks left then right. He hurriedly puts the instrument in the leather pouch and lays it on his lap.

A.J. (CONT'D)
Your scaring me.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
It's a syringe. The steroids go here.

Rocco points at the syringe.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE (CONT'D)
You put a needle in it and jam the needle where you want larger muscles. You do want larger muscles... right?

EXT. PARKING LOT OF MCDONALDS - EVENING

Rocco and A.J. walk into the McDonald's restaurant.

INT. MCDONALD'S DINING ROOM - EVENING

Rocco and A.J. are seated at a table eating burgers, fries and sucking down shakes. Rocco eats using big bites. Food is on the lower part of his face. He eats fries by the mouthful. Food is falling from Rocco's mouth. A muscular 27 year old man is seated 6 rows away. Two pretty 25 year old girls sit on either side of him.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
A.J. - You see the guy with the muscle shirt? More importantly - do you see the two hot babes with him?

A.J.
Yes. I see the guy. I see the two hot chicks.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
Chicks like big muscles. Or big money. Or both.

A.J.
Chicks like nice smart guys. You've got food on your face.

Rocco wipes the food off with his hand.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
That's why you had eight chicks
lined up for senior prom.

A.J.
Ahhhh. "To the victor goes the
spoils".

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
What?

A.J.
"To the victor goes the spoils"
means - when you win - you get
belongings... stuff.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
So you wanna win? And carry the
flag?

A.J.
Is the Pope a Catholic?

Rocco stands up and gestures like he is holding, with his
hands ten inches apart, an invisible flag from his waist. He
marches four steps, stops and speaks.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
I can see you carrying the flag.

A.J.
Stop doing that. You look weird.

Rocco stops his gestures.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
One more thing.

A.J.
Yeah...

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
The results are quicker. Much
quicker.

A.J.
Let's do it.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
Now?

A.J.
I've got cash. My PaPa Ray gave me
200 bucks to tuck away in my wallet
when I need cash for... whatever.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
Go into my office.

Rocco points to the men's rest room.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE (CONT'D)
See you in three minutes. In the
last stall.

A.J. walks to the men's room and opens the door.

INT. MCDONALD'S MEN'S RESTROOM - NIGHT

A.J. walks to the last stall, opens the door and stands.
Rocco walks into the men's restroom holding the leather pouch
and sees A.J.'s feet.

A.J.
I'm here.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
I hear you. I'm coming in.

Rocco opens the A.J.'s stall door. A.J. locks the stall door.
The muscular man from the dining room walks into the restroom
and up to a urinal. As he urinates, he hears movement. He
turns his head and listens.

A.J.
What do I do now?

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
Lower your pants.

A.J.
OK. Now what?

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
I'm gonna stick it in you.

A.J.
I'm a bit scared.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
Don't worry it won't hurt. It's
small.

A.J.
I feel it. It's just a little
prick.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
That was good. Pull your pants up.
Take off your shirt.

A.J.
OK. Where now? The front?

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
You just stand there. I'll find a
spot. Stay still - it's small. I
don't want to waste it.

A.J.
Go ahead.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
That didn't hurt, did it?

A.J.
No... I could do this two or three
times a week.

MUSCLE MAN, 27, is standing near the exit door and watches as A.J. and Rocco open the door of the stall and walk toward the exit. Muscle Man speaks. A.J. and Rocco stop walking.

MUSCLE MAN
(Warmly) I heard everything.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
Good for you.

MUSCLE MAN
(Smiling) I'm happy for both of
you.

A.J.
Happy? You think... what do you
think?

MUSCLE MAN
I don't care about who you love.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE
We're not-

MUSCLE MAN
Come on... don't deny. But next
time, get more privacy in a hotel.
Or in the park near the river bend.

ROCCO TRAVATEENE

We are not... not, you know....
OK... (Pause) we **are very much** - in
love.

MUSCLE MAN

Good. Honesty. Every so often...
I'm that way too.

Muscle Man leaves the restroom.

A.J.

In love?

ROCCO TRAVATEENE

Very much in love.

A.J.

You are funny, Rocco. Very funny.

INT. MOTOR CITY CUSTOMS - DAY

Ray has the hood open to his 1971 Dodge Challenger with the words: "Motor City Customs" painted on the passenger and driver's side doors. Ray looks and checks the spark plug wires with his right hand. Jeff walks up to Ray and stops. Jeff has a clipboard with papers attached to it.

JEFF KOWALSKI

I'll need your signature on these
three checks.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

(Smiling) You're a partner now -
you can sign.

Jeff turns walks away. Ray speaks. Jeff stops but doesn't
turn around.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI (CONT'D)

I made a mistake. I'm sorry.(Pause)
You're an adult man and a dad.

Jeff turns around and looks at Ray. Jeff speaks.

JEFF KOWALSKI

I lost it.(Pause) I'm sorry.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

We're good. Hey... I'm going to
race tonight at Detroit Dragway.
Wanna come with me?

JEFF KOWALSKI

Sure. Grudge race against Frank and his yellow Camaro?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

This time I've got him. Nitrous. 200 extra horsepower.

JEFF KOWALSKI

May I make a suggestion? Perhaps I-

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Hey Jeff, don't tip toe around because we had a little problem. Talk to me.

JEFF KOWALSKI

200 extra horses may win the race - but you could blow up that engine. 12 grand if that 4-40 ends up all over the track. I think you'll just need an extra 100 extra horses.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

100 should do it.

JEFF KOWALSKI

What time are you leaving?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

4:30.

Jeff sees Ray looking at the engine. Jeff then walks away. Ray pretends to do some adjustments. Ray looks over his shoulder as Jeff walks further away. Ray closes the hood of the car.

EXT. DETROIT DRAGWAY - NIGHT

Raymond is driving -VROOM- his bright red 1971 Dodge Challenger. He is third in two lines of cars pulling up to the starting line. Jeff stands at the fence watching Ray. Ray's car gurgles -VROOM- with power as he gets closer to the starting line. Four other racers give Ray the thumbs up as they walk by his car. Ray's car suddenly shuts down. Ray get's out of the driver's seat and opens the hood. In the other line of cars is a stunning, yellow, 1971 Chevrolet Camaro driven by FRANK CORTEZ, 56. Ray is side by side with Frank. There is one race to finish before they start.

FRANK CORTEZ

You can't keep that Mopar running,
Ray. I'll give you 2 grand - right
now - for that junk yard clunker.

Ray hooks up a loose wire and closes the hood. He starts -
VROOM- the car and revs -VROOM- the engine.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

(Yelling) How about two grand for
the winner of this race, Frank?
Unless of course you're scared.
Give me a thumbs up if your in.

Frank gives Ray a thumbs up. Both of the move -VROOM- up to
the start line. The starting lights turn red then green, then
red then green. Frank is 1/2 a car a head of Ray. Ray pushes
a button that says **Nitrous** and the car -VROOM- leaps ahead,
but smoke is coming out of the sides of the hood. Frank is
catching up -VROOM- but Ray is still ahead. Ray pushes the
Nitrous button again and his car -VROOM- beats Frank's car by
2 feet. Frank pulls up -VROOM- to Ray in the pit area as Ray
looks into the engine compartment of his car. Jeff stands
next to Ray.

FRANK CORTEZ

Here's your two grand Ray.

Frank peels off 20 hundred dollar bills on to Ray's hand.

FRANK CORTEZ (CONT'D)

Too bad you blew your engine up
beating me. That'll cost you ten or
15 thousand.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

(Smiling) Just a valve cover gasket
leak. A 28 dollar fix. Let's do it
again sometime, Frank.

Frank walks away.

JEFF KOWALSKI

(Warmly) You blow it up or was it a
valve gasket leak?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Sometimes, I listen to my son.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI (CONT'D) (V.O.)

This wasn't one of those times.

Ray points to where the oil was leaking out of the engine.

EXT. TELEGRAPH ROAD - EVENING

Ray is driving a Dodge Ram truck pulling the red Challenger on a trailer. Jeff sits next to Ray.

JEFF KOWALSKI

Nice win.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

A win and I didn't blow it up or kiss the wall.

JEFF KOWALSKI

I hope I have a win tomorrow.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

A win? What'r you doing?

JEFF KOWALSKI

Meeting A.J. - for breakfast.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Does he know why?

JEFF KOWALSKI

I told him that I wanted some son - dad time... and when the time is right, I'll explain why he should stop the steroid thing.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

(Sincerely) I hope your plan works. I really do.

JEFF KOWALSKI

Thanks.

Jeff looks in the rear view passenger side mirror.

JEFF KOWALSKI (CONT'D)

It's your buddy, dad. He's coming up on your side.

Ray looks in the driver side mirror and sees Frank Cortez pulling his Camaro. Ray's window is down. Ray speaks when Frank is along side his truck.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

Thanks for the two thousand. Hey Frank - this is the second time today that I saw you in my rear view window.

Jeff and Ray laugh. Frank scowls.

INT. SUNRISE CAFE - MORNING

The 50 seat restaurant is full of people eating breakfast. Jeff Kowalski sits in a booth facing the door. Jeff looks at his phone in his left hand. Jeff looks up and sees A.J. wearing a sleeveless "Firefighter Academy" shirt and running shorts. Jeff is stunned. A.J.'s muscles are big and defined. 50% of the diners look at A.J. as he walks toward Jeff. A large man wearing motorcycle attire steps almost nose to nose with A.J. The motorcycle man steps aside to let A.J. sit in the booth with Jeff.

JEFF KOWALSKI

Good to see you, A.J.

A.J.

Yeah.

JEFF KOWALSKI

PaPa Ray raced yesterday.

A.J.

How'd he do?

JEFF KOWALSKI

He won - beat the guy with the yellow Camaro.

A.J.

Good. We gonna eat?

JEFF KOWALSKI

Sure.

Jeff motions for the waitress. DIANE FRITZ, 27 and pretty, walks up to the table. She lightly touches A.J. on his shoulder.

DIANE FRITZ

Well... I didn't know that the male model convention was in town.

A.J.

It's not... but I'm here.

DIANE FRITZ

What'll you have, handsome?

A.J. points at the menu and speaks.

A.J.

The number seven... eggs over easy.
Coffee.

JEFF KOWALSKI
I'll have the same.

Diane writes on a pad and gives A.J. a small piece of paper.
She walks away.

JEFF KOWALSKI (CONT'D)
(Half joking) What'd she give
you... her number?

A.J. reads the paper to Jeff.

A.J.
I get off at two. 313-867-5308.
Call me - Diane. And she drew a
picture of a little heart.

Diane delivers the food to the table. She touches A.J.'s
shoulder as he stands close to him.

DIANE FRITZ
Enjoy your food. (Whispers) Call
me.

JEFF KOWALSKI
Girls do that now these days?

A.J.
Yeah. To me. Dad... it's muscles,
hot cars or money. Five girls gave
me their numbers over the last
three weeks.

Jeff eats his food and looks up at A.J.

JEFF KOWALSKI
(Calmly) A.J. - I know. I know how
you got this way.

A.J.
What way?

JEFF KOWALSKI
The muscles. You've got big muscles
all over you.

A.J.
I know. I'm doing weights at the
academy.

JEFF KOWALSKI
(Calmly) You can't get those kind
of muscles over six weeks.

A.J.
Seven weeks.

JEFF KOWALSKI
(Calmly) I know your using steroids.
You might not be able to have kids
if you keep using that stuff. Do
you want liver, kidney, heart and
head problems?

A.J.
No. But what if I am using?
(Angrily but quietly) I was a
skinny guy - with no chance of
getting through the academy. No
chance. And no girls.

JEFF KOWALSKI
That stuff will hurt you in the
long run. And It's hurting you now.

A.J.
Now?

JEFF KOWALSKI
You're probably the strongest in
the group.

A.J.
Yeah... how is that bad?

JEFF KOWALSKI
You're cheating - lying to the
other trainees and the academy
about your strength. Can you live
with being a liar to your
classmates?

Three cute girls wave and smile at A.J. from two booths down
in the restaurant. A.J. waves back at the girls. MARY
RICHARD, 20, talks to A.J.

MARY RICHARD
Are you a firefighter?

A.J.
Not yet. In about 30 days.

MARY RICHARD
That's cool. You must be brave.

A.J.
Most people run *out* of fires, I'll
be running *into* fires.

MARY RICHARD

Wow.

A.J.

I'm also training to be an E.M.T. -
E.M.T's are like doctors.

JEFF KOWALSKI (V.O.)

This isn't going to be easy.

A.J.

I'm here with my Dad... give me
your number. We'll get together
later.

Mary Richard looks at Jeff.

MARY RICHARD

Are you a firefighter, sir?

JEFF KOWALSKI

No.

A.J.

Fire fighting isn't for everybody.
He works at a desk... for my
grandpa. I don't want to be too
blunt, but I'm here to talk with my
Dad.

A.J. smiles at Mary, then looks down and begins eating again.
Jeff looks at A.J. but doesn't eat. A.J. looks up and sees
Jeff looking at him.

A.J. (CONT'D)

What?

JEFF KOWALSKI

(Calmly) A.J. - you're cheating.
And lying.

A.J.

(Quietly) I have to use the stuff.

JEFF KOWALSKI

Nobody is putting a gun to your
head. You know the difference
between right and wrong.

A.J. takes his cell phone out of his pocket. A.J. shows Jeff
a recent picture of his mother, Jeff and himself at the
beach. A.J. is very thin.

A.J.
Look at this picture.

Jeff looks at the picture. A.J.'s eyes become watery.

JEFF KOWALSKI
Don't live a lie.

A.J.
I want to be a firefighter. And if you haven't noticed - the girls like me now. I don't think you're going to have some magic words to change my mind.

JEFF KOWALSKI
Maybe I do.

A.J.
Yeah what words?

JEFF KOWALSKI
"Sometimes adversity is what you need to face in order to become successful." - Zig Ziglar and "I would prefer even to fail with honor than to win by cheating."
-Sophocles

A.J.
Zig who and Soffa somebody? Those words aren't from you.

Jeff gives A.J. a small card that is one and a half by two and a half inches long. Mary Richard walks up and puts a slip of paper in front of A.J.. He picks up the paper, doesn't read it and jams it into his pocket.

A.J. glances at the card that Jeff gave to him. Both quotes are printed on the card.

A.J. (CONT'D)
I suppose that you want me to keep this.

JEFF KOWALSKI
It doesn't matter what *I* want. It's what you want. Keep it or throw it away.

Jeff looks at the waitress.

JEFF KOWALSKI (CONT'D)
Check, please.

Diane rips the check off of her pad and gives it to Jeff.
Jeff stands up.

JEFF KOWALSKI (CONT'D)
Your life is a group of choices.
Good choices and bad choices.

A.J. KOWALSKI
I know what I'm doing.

EXT. PARKING LOT OF FIRE FIGHTER TRAINING FACILITY - EVENING

OFFICER JOSEPH DIXON, 39 stands to the right side of a Detroit police car as OFFICER SUSAN LESSENGER, 38, escorts Rocco Travateene into the police car. Four male and one female student, stop, and watch Rocco be arrested.

EXT. FIREFIGHTER TRAINING FACILITY - MORNING

The sun is coming over the horizon and shines on a ladder truck that has the ladder extended to 100 feet. The trainees, dressed in full firefighter gear, are gathered around the truck. All of the trainees look to the top of the ladder. Robert G. Sellers, Chief Training Instructor, speaks to the group.

ROBERT G. SELLERS
We've trained on shorter ladders.
You've seen how the cable that's hooked up to a firefighter can handle 2,500 pounds. Now is the time. When I call your name, you will be securely hooked up to the cable at the bottom of the ladder. Climb your way to the top, then down. A climb to the top is mandatory to graduate from this firefighter academy. This is not a timed activity. Do not rush and do not move at a snail's pace.

Eight trainees move up and down the 100 foot high ladder.
Robert G. Sellers looks at his list and speaks.

ROBERT G. SELLERS (CONT'D)
A.J. Kowalski.

A.J. is hooked up to the ladder line.

ROBERT G. SELLERS (CONT'D)
Go.

A.J. looks up and down the ladder and up again. A bird is circling high over the ladder. A.J. doesn't move. Robert G. Sellers walks up to A.J. and speaks quietly yet firmly.

ROBERT G. SELLERS (CONT'D)
 Whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger. (Pause) You climb this ladder to the top and you can do anything. Do it. Climb.

A.J. slowly climbs 20 feet up and stops. Two trainees begin to rhythmically clap. Five more trainees join CLAPPING. The rest of the group CLAPS. A.J. slowly climbs and get to 80 feet and stops.

A.J. (V.O.)
 I can't do this.

A.J. takes a foot off a rung and begins to move down.

EXT. PARKING LOT OF FIRE FIGHTER TRAINING FACILITY -
 AFTERNOON

RAYMOND KOWALSKI (O.S.)
 Winning in life doesn't work that way. When you don't try - you lose. You have to move when you're too scared to move.

A.J. pauses, then brings his leg up and continues climbing to the top of the ladder.

CROWD
 Yes. Cheer.

The crowd CLAPS. A.J. climbs down the ladder. Robert G. Sellers directs A.J. five steps away from the group.

ROBERT G. SELLERS
 How do you feel, A.J.?

A huge smile comes across A.J.'s face.

ROBERT G. SELLERS (CONT'D)
 I'm proud of you, A.J.

A.J.
 I quit two times. I almost came down before I got to the top.

ROBERT G. SELLERS
 Let me make this clear. Listen very carefully. You paused.
 (MORE)

ROBERT G. SELLERS (CONT'D)

A pause is time used to think or rest. It's temporary. A *stop* is quitting what you're doing. You didn't quit. You understand?

A.J.

Yes, sir.

ROBERT G. SELLERS

One last thing - you almost came down means that *you got to the top without quitting.*

A.J.

You have to move when you're too scared to move.

Robert G. Sellers smiles and walks away.

I/E. DETROIT STADIUM COMPLEX - BROADCAST BOOTH - AFTERNOON

STEVE LANE, 61 and ELI ZARRET 60, are TV commentators in the broadcast booth high above the stadium. A banner with the words Michigan Men's Top 55+ Athlete is seen just below the booth. The stadium is 75% filled with people.

STEVE LANE

Good Afternoon. This is it, the finals of Michigan Men's Top 55+ Athlete. 987 men applied and the three men you see today are the finalists for the state of Michigan's top Male 55+ Athletes.

ELI ZARRET

Some special rules apply for this event. A contestant must born in Michigan or moved to Michigan before they were 10 years old. No current or former professional athletes are part of this competition.

STEVE LANE

And... None of these men ever put on a uniform for a college team.

ELI ZARRET

They must weigh in at under 260 pounds and must be six foot two inches tall or less.

(MORE)

ELI ZARRET (CONT'D)

They've all been checked - and came up negative - for illegal and performance enhancing drugs. These men are all 55 years or older as of January first.

STEVE LANE

There are three events.

ELI ZARRET

The bowling pin toss... the bicep curl and the very tough dash and press.

STEVE LANE

First place in an event is ten points. Second place is seven points and third is 0 points. Getting disqualified is minus three points.

ELI ZARRET

I don't see these competitors losing concentration and getting disqualified. It could happen... Steve, tell us more about the dash and press.

STEVE LANE

The 100 yard dash is combined with a bench press of 150 pounds, ten times at the 25, 50 and 75 yard marks.

ELI ZARRET

Strength and quickness are combined... an amazingly tough event. Our chief judge for our competition today is Detroit born Grace Murray - the first female NFL referee.

ELI ZARRET (CONT'D)

Let's meet the contestants.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF DEVIN GOLDEN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Devin Golden, Kenn Oosterhouse, Julio Arroyo are watching Michigan Amateur Men's Top 55+ Athlete on TV while drinking beer and eating snacks.

KENN OOSTERHOUSE

These guys all look in shape. But,
Ray's gonna win.

DEVIN GOLDEN

Ray's got the - look at this guy...

I/E. TV SCREEN IN DEVIN GOLDEN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

STEVE LANE

Gary Silver is a former high school
weight lifting athlete and a top
ten finisher in the state high
school 100 yard dash.

ELI ZARRET

You don't see that combination
often. He look's like he's 40 years
old, but his birth certificate said
58. He owns a health club. He's
married. Gary Silver - could be the
man to beat.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF DEVIN GOLDEN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

JULIO ARROYO

(Sadly) This Gary guy... he's gonna
be trouble for Ray.

Kenn Oosterhouse quietly begins to cheer.

KENN OOSTERHOUSE

Let's go, Ray. Let's go, Ray.

Julio and Kenn join in.

JULIO, KENN AND DEVIN

Let's go, Ray. Let's go, Ray. Let's
go/

KENN OOSTERHOUSE

Hey, quiet. He's going to introduce
Ray.

I/E. DETROIT STADIUM COMPLEX - BROADCAST BOOTH - AFTERNOON

ELI ZARRET

Our next competitor is Ray Kowalski
from Detroit. Ray owns a custom
bump shop. He's 59 years old. Ray's
married.

(MORE)

ELI ZARRET (CONT'D)

He's a father and grandfather. He never competed in high school sports. Ray says that his fitness history is "recent" - which is better late than never.

STEVE LANE

Our third competitor is Dave Manns, a football coach, specializing in strength and agility at nearby Eastern Michigan University. Dave is 57 years old, married and he has three children.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF DEVIN GOLDEN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

JULIO ARROYO

Kick their butts, Ray.

KENN OOSTERHOUSE

I bet that Ray is playing that "Rocky" song in his head.

DEVIN GOLDEN

Da, da da, da da, da da da. Alexa, play: Eye Of the Tiger.

ALEXA

Here's: Eye of the Tiger, by Foreigner... on Amazon music.

Alexa plays -MUSIC-: Eye of the Tiger. Julio, Kenn and Devin play "air instruments" and dance, in time, to the music.

I/E. DETROIT STADIUM COMPLEX - BROADCAST BOOTH - AFTERNOON

ELI ZARRET

It's time for our first event. Let's go down on the field to Sandy Oliver.

SANDY OLIVER, 35, speaks, standing near the three competitors. She is holding a bowling pin.

I/E. DETROIT STADIUM COMPLEX, TRACK/FIELD - AFTERNOON

SANDY OLIVER

Our competitors each get 1 throw.

Sandy points at the foul line.

SANDY OLIVER (CONT'D)

This is the foul line. (Pause) If a competitor touches or go past the foul line with any part of your body touching the ground - that toss is disqualified. The safe landing area is marked with a white line.

Sandy points to foul line around the field.

SANDY OLIVER (CONT'D)

Our first competitor is Ray Kowalski. He has 90 seconds to throw the pin. Here is Ray's toss...

Ray grabs a bowling from a nearby folding table. He looks at the foul line and fakes a quick baseball throwing style toss. He walks ten feet back from the foul line. Ray runs to within one foot from the line and throws the pin with his right arm. As Ray releases the pin, he loses his balance and almost fouls, but regains his balance before almost falling over the line. GRACE MURRAY, 27, measures the throw with an electronic device. Grace speaks.

GRACE MURRAY

62 feet, 1 and 3 quarter inches for Raymond Kowalski.

Dave Manns takes two steps and throws the bowling pin. The digital stadium scoreboard reads 51 feet and one inch for Dave Manns.

SANDY OLIVER

Gary Silver is the third competitor. Gary needs to beat 62 feet one and three quarter inches to win this event.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF DEVIN GOLDEN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

JULIO ARROYO

Maybe this Gary guy will foul.

KENN OOSTERHOUSE

Toss it short.

DEVIN GOLDEN

Ten feet. Ten feet. Ten feet.

JULIO, KENN AND DEVIN

Ten feet. Ten feet. Ten feet.

I/E. DETROIT STADIUM COMPLEX - BROADCAST BOOTH - AFTERNOON

ELI ZARRET

Let's see if Ray Kowalski's toss is good for first place in this event.

STEVE LANE

Gary Silver will be sending a strong message if he can best Ray's throw. It looks like he's setting up to throw the bowling pin - hammer throw style.

Gary Silver spins 2 and a half revolutions and throws the bowling pin. Grace Murray measures the throw with an electronic devise. Grace speaks.

GRACE MURRAY

60... three feet and one inch for Gary Silver.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF DEVIN GOLDEN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

JULIO ARROYO

Crap.

KENN OOSTERHOUSE

This bowling pin loss is going to fire up Ray. That's how he is.

DEVIN GOLDEN

There's no quit in Ray. Ray digs in when things get tough.

I/E. DETROIT STADIUM COMPLEX - BROADCAST BOOTH - AFTERNOON

The three contestants are each sitting at a biceps curling station. Each station has a judge standing in front of it.

ELI ZARRET

It's time for our next event... the biceps curl. Let's see if Gary Silver can hold his slim lead.

STEVE LANE

All of these men will start with 35 pounds. When the judge in front of each competitor raises their right arm, the curl has been approved. Ten pounds will then be added.

ELI ZARRET

Each competitor has 20 seconds to start and complete their next curl.

I/E. DETROIT STADIUM COMPLEX, TRACK - AFTERNOON

All three competitors quickly and easily complete the curl at 35 pounds. A 45 pound weight is placed in front of each competitor and is easily lifted by Ray Kowalski. Gary Silver struggles to complete the lift but, completes the lift with four seconds to spare. Dave Manns struggles, but completes the lift.

STEVE LANE

55 pounds is the next level. Let's see who stays in the competition.

Gary Silver quickly completes the 55 pound lift, while Ray Kowalski struggles but completes the 55 pound lift with two seconds left before being disqualified. Ray speaks.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI

If my competitors approve, I'd like to add 20 pounds.

Gary Silver nods a weak "yes". Dave Manns adds a very weak "yes" nod. Grace Murray, the official gives a thumbs up.

I/E. DETROIT STADIUM COMPLEX-LOWER STANDS - AFTERNOON

JEFF KOWALSKI

Dad's settin' these guys up. Take them down, Dad.

CINDY KOWALSKI

Make it happen, Ray!

LINDA KOWALSKI

Do it Ray, do it.

A.J.

Take it to 'em, Pa Pa Ray.

A 75 pound dumbbell is put on the arm curl stands for Ray Kowalski, Gary Silver and Dave Manns.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF DEVIN GOLDEN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

JULIO ARROYO

(Yelling at the TV) Everything you've got, Ray.

KENN OOSTERHOUSE
 (Yelling at the TV) Unload now Ray.
 Unload. You got this.

DEVIN GOLDEN
 75 pounds. This is easy for you. Do
 it.

I/E. DETROIT STADIUM COMPLEX, TRACK - AFTERNOON

GRACE MURRAY
 Competitors, you have 20 seconds
 after I say "go". Ready. Get set...
 go!

Ray grabs the 75 pound weight and curls it down as does Gary Silver. Ray slowly but surely curls the weight to the top of the biceps curl stand. Ray smiles. Dave Manns drops the weight -THUMP- at the low level. Gary Silver curls the weight up 80% of the way, but stops and lets go -THUMP- of the weight.

I/E. DETROIT STADIUM COMPLEX-LOWER STANDS - AFTERNOON

JEFF KOWALSKI, LINDA KOWALSKI AND A.J.
 KOWALSKI
 Yes! Yeah. All right!

INT. LIVING ROOM OF DEVIN GOLDEN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

JULIO ARROYO
 They're tied. Ray and this Gary guy
 are tied. You guys hungry? I'm
 hungry.

KENN OOSTERHOUSE
 Ray winning the biceps curl makes
 me hungry. You got more nachos,
 Devin?

DEVIN GOLDEN
 So... you get hungry when you see
 people win a sports event on TV?

KENN OOSTERHOUSE
 Yeah.

DEVIN GOLDEN
 Me to. Here are the nachos. Leave
 some for me.

Devin Golden bring three plates of nachos to the coffee table. The three men quickly eat the nachos.

I/E. DETROIT STADIUM COMPLEX-BROADCAST BOOTH - AFTERNOON

Steve lane and Eli Zarret are down on the field at the end of the 100 yards. In the background, an ambulance is parked. At the 25, 50 and 75 yard line there are twin sets of bench presses, each with 150 pounds of weight. Each bench press has a judge.

STEVE LANE

The Michigan Men's Top 55+ Athlete champion will be decided right now with the Dash and Press.

ELI ZARRET

Ray Kowalski is going up against Gary Silver and Dave Manns.

STEVE LANE

I see Silver having the speed advantage, but Kowalski having the strength advantage. Dave Manns is challenging the two leaders.(Pause) The action is just about ready to begin on the field.

Official MARY DRAZEK, 51, speaks to Gary Silver and Ray Kowalski.

MARY DRAZEK

Gentlemen, the rules are simple. Run to the 25, 50 and 75 yard line and complete ten bench presses. A complete bench press is awarded when the bar touches your chest and is raised to a locked position. Begin the competition when you hear the gun fire.

Starter THOMAS PEMBERTON, 36, raises his right hand that's holding a starting pistol.

THOMAS PEMBERTON

On your mark, get set...

Thomas Pemberton fires -BANG- the starting pistol. Gary Silver gets out to a quick three foot lead which Ray Kowalski shortens to a one foot lead at the 25 yard bench press station. Dave Manns trails. Ray finishes ten bench presses and leaves the station while Gary is at eight bench presses. Gary finishes ten bench presses.

Ray runs quickly and gets a five foot lead that diminishes to two feet at the 50 yard line.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF DEVIN GOLDEN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

JULIO, KENN AND DEVIN
Go, Ray. Let's go, Ray.

JULIO ARROYO
This is where Ray is going to kick
butt.

DEVIN GOLDEN
Everything you've got, Ray.

Int. TELEVISION SCREEN IN DEVIN GOLDEN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Ray quickly does eight bench presses.

INT. INSIDE OF RAY'S BODY - NEAR RAY'S HEART - AFTERNOON

Ray's heart quickly slows down, THUMP-THUMP-THUMP and the veins show blood moving slowly. Ray's heart speeds up, THUMP-THUMP-THUMP, and blood is quickly flowing.

Int. TELEVISION SCREEN IN DEVIN GOLDEN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Ray completes two more bench presses to make it 10 bench presses.

I/E. DETROIT STADIUM COMPLEX, TRACK - AFTERNOON

Ray runs faster and is tied with Gary at the 75 yard mark. At the 75 yard mark, Gary struggles to complete the last five bench presses of the required 10. Ray struggles to complete the last three bench presses. Both men begin running to the 100 yard finish line. Dave Manns is behind by 20 yards. Gary is one foot ahead of Ray, but stumbles and regains his footing with 12 yards to go.

INT. INSIDE OF RAY'S BODY - NEAR RAY'S HEART - AFTERNOON

Ray's heart slows down -THUMP-THUMP-THUMP- and the veins show blood moving slowly.

I/E. DETROIT STADIUM COMPLEX, TRACK - AFTERNOON

Gary passes Ray and is ahead by one foot.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF DEVIN GOLDEN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Julio, Kenn and Devin are standing and cheering while holding chips and drinks. The chips and drinks are flying out of their hands.

JULIO, KENN AND DEVIN
Go Ray, go. Go Ray, go.

I/E. DETROIT STADIUM COMPLEX - LOWER STANDS - AFTERNOON

A.J., Linda Kowalski, Jeff Kowalski and CINDY KOWALSKI, 38 are watching Gary and Ray. Dr. Rubin Weiss watches the event from 2 rows of seats lower.

A.J.
Everything, PaPa. Everything you've got.

Jeff Kowalski BANGS his fist on the rail as he yells.

JEFF KOWALSKI
Now, Dad. Now!

CINDY KOWALSKI
Ray! Ray! Ray! Ray!

I/E. DETROIT STADIUM COMPLEX, FIELD - AFTERNOON

RAYMOND KOWALSKI (V.O.)
Everything. Now!

Ray pulls ahead by six inches and wins the competition. Ray collapses just after he passes the finish line. Dr. Rube Weiss runs past the stadium guard onto the field. Official Chris Worthington waves at the ambulance. The ambulance makes it's way over to Ray. Dr. Rubin Weiss is kneeling at Ray's side on one knee. E.M.T. RUPERT JONES, 31, with a stethoscope draped over his neck, runs over to Ray and kneels at his side.

RUPERT JONES
I'll need some room to work.

Dr. Rube Weiss grabs the stethoscope from Rupert Jones neck and places the earpieces into his own ears and presses the diaphragm onto Ray's chest and listens-THUMP-THUMP-THUMP.

DR. RUBIN WEISS
Do you have nitroglycerin spray?

RUPERT JONES
Yes.

DR. RUBIN WEISS
Administer the spray now, then take
him to emergency at Plymouth
General hospital. (Pause). I'm Dr.
Rubin Weiss, Ray's primary care
physician.

Rupert nods his head "yes" and places Ray on a wheeled
stretcher with the help of another E.M.T., Emergency Medical
Technician, DOUG DAVIS, 27.

INT. PLYMOUTH GENERAL HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Raymond Kowalski is hooked up to three monitors -BEEP-BEEP-
BEEEP. His breathing is being assisted with nose tubes. Dr.
Rubin Weiss, Jeff Kowalski, Cindy Kowalski and Linda Kowalski
are standing near Ray's bedside. A male nurse stands in the
background.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
(Strained)How dumb can a person be?
God, give my body a second lightning
strike - one was not enough.

DR. RUBIN WEISS
You did what you thought was right.
Ray, don't look back.

Ray gasps for breath.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
When will A.J. be here?

JEFF KOWALSKI
A minute or two. He's on his way.

Ray's heart begins to slow down. Ray closes his eyes. His
breaths are shallow.

LINDA KOWALSKI
Ray! Ray! I love you.

A.J. walks into the room.

A.J.
(Whispers)How is he? How long does/

Linda Kowalski bursts into tears.

DR. RUBIN WEISS
(Whispers warmly) There is no clock
for these matters.

A.J.
PaPa Ray - can you hear me.
(Crying/almost yelling) Can you
hear me?

Ray slowly opens his eyes and sees A.J. looking at him. Ray
smiles.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
You know why I'm here?

A.J.
Yeah. Dad told me a couple of weeks
ago.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
About the second lightning strike?
So... you know how stupid I am.

A.J.
You're not stupid PaPa. I learned
something from you.

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
What did you learn from an old bump
and paint shop guy?

A.J.
Today I was sixth place for putting
the fire hose back on the truck.
Third place for carrying two full
oxygen tanks around the school and
second place for pull ups. Ron
Eastwood will be the flag bearer.
He beat me with a 97 on the last
classroom test and best firehouse
athlete by two seconds on the
oxygen tank carry. I quit using
steroids about three weeks ago.
PaPa, will you be there for
graduation tomorrow?

RAYMOND KOWALSKI
I don't need to be there tomorrow.
You... (Whispering) graduated.

The heart monitor flat lines -BEEEEEEEEEP- and Ray stops
breathing with a smile on his face.

EPILOGUE
12 YEARS LATER

Int. FIREHOUSE - DAY

The firehouse is decorated for a party. The large doors are open. Rain is coming down. Food is laid out on three tables. Ten firefighters are walking around with 30 civilians. The exiting gray haired CHIEF MIKE FITSIMMONS, 62, speaks at the podium.

CHIEF MIKE FITSIMMONS
34 years, 390 fires, 1,150 calls
for emergency medical help, 1,600
false alarms. I wouldn't have
traded the time I spent with the
courageous, hard working men and
women of fire station number three
for all the money in the world.
(Applause and Pause) Thank you. It
is now my honor to introduce you to
the new Chief - A.J. Kowalski.

The crowd claps. A.J. walks from behind a fire engine.

A.J.
Thank you Chief Mike for 34 years
of service to the people of
Detroit. Let's hear it again for
Chief Mike.

The crowd claps.

A.J KOWALSKI
(Pause) I dedicate this day to
those special people in your life
who helped get you to where you are
today. If they are here now, thank
them - if they passed away - think
of them. (Pause) Three of my
special people are here today -
Linda Kowalski, Cindy Kowalski and
A.J. Junior.

Linda Kowalski, Cindy Kowalski and A.J. Junior all smile at
the mention of their names.

A.J.
In my life, one has passed away -
my grandfather, Raymond Kowalski.
Thanks, PaPa Ray. Thank you, to my
father, mother, wife and son.
Now... let's celebrate!

LIGHTNING is seen, quickly followed by THUNDER.

A.J. (CONT'D)
(Quietly) Thanks... I was hoping
that you would be here.

FADE TO BLACK
12/02/2022 5:31 PM, EST

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