

CROSSING THE RED LINE

an original screenplay by

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FADE IN:

EXT. FARM WORKSHOP - NIGHT

Visible looking in from outside, through a grungy window: farm implements; an ice hockey goal with tattered net; a well-stocked workbench.

Posters of hockey greats plaster the wall. Gordie Howe. Wayne Gretzky. Steve Yzerman. Also ads for tomato seed varieties. Canadian Tire flyers.

Beneath a hooded light, YOUNG ADAM COOLEY (16) – a strapping farm boy – wrenches on a small pump. Unruly blond hair. Work shirt and overalls. Focused on his task like a dog with a bone.

Lightning flashes. Thunder rumbles in the distance.

From the POV outside, we see another man saunter into the shop – PADDY (early 30s), an Adonis in dungarees. He sidles up to Adam. Whispers something to him.

Adam smiles.

Paddy kisses Adam's neck as his hands move on Adam's body. Unbuttoning and unclasping. Adam forgets the pump.

Outside, a hand cleans the glass to get a better view.

The hand clenches into a raging fist.

INT. FARM WORKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

Paddy strips Adam's torso bare to the waist. Adam leans back against the workbench as Paddy tongues his way down Adam's treasure trail.

Adam closes his eyes, his face euphoric...

Lightning flashes, illuminating a big man – ELIJAH COOLEY (40s) – as he storms toward them.

ELIJAH

You defiler!

He grabs a length of frayed Romex wire from the workbench. Slashes at Paddy, ripping his face and tearing his eye open.

Paddy screams. Covers his savaged face. Stumbles from the shop as Adam struggles to pull on his clothes.

Elijah advances. Corners Adam. Slashes him across the chest.

ELIJAH
 YOU FUCKING FAGGOT! I'll beat you
 'til you can't move!

Elijah flays Adam's back with the wire. Adam screams. Tries to protect himself. Blood spatters the window and runs down the glass in gory lines.

Then Adam bolts. Toward his father, bowling him over. He scrambles over Elijah and flees the workshop.

INT. BARN - MOMENTS LATER

Young Adam climbs between animal stalls. Stumbles over farm implements. Terrified.

ELIJAH (O.S.)
 YOU FILTH WHORE! I'LL FIND YOU!

Adam peers from behind a stack of hay bales. Finds an old t-shirt and barely stifles his agony as he pulls it on. Blood soaks it immediately.

Adam crawls to a late-model, turquoise-over-silver pickup truck. Pulls himself to his feet. Carefully opens the door.

EMMA (O.S.)
 Adam, what's happened? Your father's
 raging, looking for the shotgun.

Adam faces his mother — EMMA COOLEY (40s), a faded beauty, stern and concerned.

She sees the blood.

EMMA
 What did you do? Where's Paddy..?

ELIJAH (O.S.)
 (distant)
 You can't hide, boy.

Emma shoves Adam into the pick-up.

EMMA
 You have to run.

YOUNG ADAM
He'll kill you, Ma --

EMMA
-- Wait a minute, then go. Drive to
the Soo, to Aunt Jean's. She'll
take care of you.

Emma slams the pick-up's door shut. Dashes from the barn.

PICKUP TRUCK - LATER THAT NIGHT

Adam drives, his face blood-spattered and tear-stained but resolute in its purpose.

The pick-up truck races into the night. Its headlights flash on a sign as it passes: "SAULT STE. MARIE: 450 km."

SUPER: THREE YEARS LATER

INT. HOCKEY ARENA - SUNDAY AFTERNOON

The capacity crowd roars as the OHL's Soo Greyhounds ("Hounds") battle the Sarnia Sting on their home ice. Fans wave towels. Some pound on the glass, thirsting for action.

In the maintenance area near the locker room, kids wait for autographs with their mothers. Young women on-the-make (the "Pucks") primp to flaunt their wares.

*

ROXIE (18) - a stunning First Nation woman in demure leather - files her nails indifferently.

On the Zamboni, JAYSON (30s) - a lanky hunk of hockey past - smokes a joint as he waits for intermission. He winks at one of the Pucks. She thrusts out her boobs and poses, thrilled to be noticed even by a rink rat.

ON THE ICE - CONTINUOUS

Adam (19) - older, bigger, harder - stares down an imposing OPPONENT (20) across a face-off circle.

OPPONENT
That puck's mine, candy-ass.

ADAM

That's what I told your whore
girlfriend last night.

The REFEREE drops the puck. Adam expertly clears it to his
teammate, then knocks the center on his ass.

Adam leaps over his fallen opponent. He receives the puck.
Crosses the red line, his blades slashing the ice.

He spins around another Sting player. Plants a perfect pass
on the stick of his team's captain. A quick slap shot. He
SCORES!

INT. CORPORATE SUITE - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON TWO HANDS as they frame the retired number of Wayne
Gretzky where it hangs from the rafters.

MR. MCINESS (O.S.)

He was our best player. Still is.

BEVERLY HAINES (late 40s), a tanned California blonde, lowers
her hands and accepts a beer from MR. MCINESS (50s), the
portly GM. A stylish blazer and scarf set her way apart
from the sweatshirt and jeans crowd in the suite.

BEVERLY

Hot dogs following the filet mignon.
I've been there.

She grudgingly sips her beer.

MR. MCINESS

More like unfilled casings, just
kids who left home to billet with
strangers. Some with family, but --

BEVERLY

-- Billet? Like the army?

MR. MCINESS

Yeah, sorta. Billet families house
and feed the players, get them to
school, to the arena. Molding them
into NHL pros ain't a walk in the
park, ma'am. Kinda like that fairy
tale, turning straw into gold..?

BEVERLY

Rumpelstiltskin.

MR. MCINESS

Yeah. Heck, they all say they wanna go pro but their focus is the next pizza slice and blow job -- sorry...

BEVERLY

I get it. Food and sex are motivation and influence. Teenagers understand that better than anyone.

MR. MCINESS

We have some billet families here.

The GM guides Beverly over to a group of adults who watch the game.

GALEN (mid 40s), bearded and amiable, shakes her hand warmly as does MRS. EAMES (70s), a spry sexagenarian, her sweater-vest festooned with Hound paraphernalia.

BEVERLY

(to Mrs. Eames)

Forgive me but, you house one of the players?

MRS. EAMES

Yes ma'am: the rookie Blake Santorini. He's a dear boy. I've housed 17.

GALEN

Adam Cooley's my nephew -- my wife's sister's son actually. We're lucky to have him. You got kids?

BEVERLY

Mr. Cooley's quite a firecracker. Nine assists already?

GALEN

He's a handful, as teenagers are. Join us?

BEVERLY

I wish we could, but...

MR. MCINESS

What? Oh, right, we should -- things to discuss.

They excuse themselves.

MR. MCINESS

It's a good, tight team, great chemistry. Should make the finals this year, and we'll send a couple kids to the Entry Draft.

He fingers his tie absently. Notices a stain on it.

MR. MCINESS

This documentary thing. I know the league wants to raise hockey's profile, especially in the States.

BEVERLY

When I'm done, Wayne Gretzky will be a distant memory. Don't worry.

She pats his arm reassuringly. Abandons the beer on a table. Turns her attention to the players.

BEVERLY

What I need is a name.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - LATER

A clubhouse for young warriors. Player stalls surround the perimeter, each personalized with photos and mementos.

A table filled with energy bars, fruit and Gatorade sits in the center of the room.

The players pour in. They throw off their uniforms, revealing 18 young Caucasian men with hockey imprinted in their DNA. Sweat and testosterone are the cologne of the hour.

Adam – the only player still in full uniform and skates – eats a protein bar as if reluctant to shed this skin.

Team captain KEITH "CRACKERS" McCRACKEN (20), a man mountain whose goatee barely hides his cherubic face, lets out a victorious whoop.

CRACKERS

Yeah! Suck it, Sarnia!

Adam gives Crackers a high five.

COACH BUNSON (38), a still-fit former player, and his staff work the room.

COACH BUNSON

Nice teamwork, men. Really stuck it to those pussies.

MATTY (18), freckled and bespectacled, nudges BLAKE "SANTE" SANTORINI (16), a burgeoning Italian beefcake.

MATTY

You want pizza?

SANTE

Mrs. Eames said I gotta study but screw it, I'll go with ya.

STEWIE (20) – bawdy, blue-collar and already down to his jock – turns on some hip hop and begins dancing on a bench.

CRACKERS

Give it a rest, Beyonce. I'm gonna lose my lunch.

STEWIE

More room for dinner, baby.

Mr. McIness enters the locker room followed by Beverly. She gets an eyeful of Stewie's ass.

MR. MCINESS

Gentlemen...

CRACKERS

(yelling)

Stewie, turn it off!

Stewie clicks off the music and plops onto a bench. Modesty is not in his play book.

MR. MCINESS

This is Beverly Haines, a filmmaker from Hollywood. The league has asked her to produce a documentary about...

He spreads his hands indicating the team.

SANTE

We're gonna be in a movie?

BEVERLY

You bet! A grand spectacle about your efforts to make the Entry Draft.

MATTY
Is it for CBC?

SANTE
I'll get laid every night.

CRACKERS
There better be extra
dough in this.

STEWIE
Damn, you shootin' locker
rooms and showers and shit?

BEVERLY
Think of it, boys! NHL scouts will
see your best skills, playmaking --

ADAM
-- You mean you'll film every screw-
up and piece it together for prime
time. I'm not doing it.

MR. MCINESS
You don't have that option, Cooley.

ADAM
Ice dancing in some movie? We'll be
the joke of the league.

COACH BUNSON
-- ADAM. Shut your hole.

Beverly holds Adam's icy stare.

BEVERLY
I'll keep your salchows and lutzes
to a minimum mister, Cooley, is it?

CRACKERS
Questions over here, ma'am.

BEVERLY
Do your worst, boys.

EXT. ARENA - LATER

Adam crashes out of the arena, a backpack over his shoulder.
He stalks past the Memorial Tower, its torch glowing in the
autumn sunset.

Crackers follows Adam with his arm around Roxie. Roxie smokes
a slim Vogue cigarette.

CRACKERS
Dude, where's the fire?

ADAM
We lifting or what?

CRACKERS
C'est dimanche, n'est-ce pas? You
e-mail your mom?

ADAM
Dang it, no. I'm such an idiot.

Adam accesses his iPhone and begins to type. Nearby, Stewie shops Sante to the flock of young women as Matty paces.

CRACKERS
Pucks all gotta ride the rookie.

ROXIE
They should aim a little higher.

CRACKERS
Like you, Rox?

ROXIE
Caught me a film star. Suppose they
need any extras?

Adam shoves his iPhone into a pocket.

ADAM
I'm gonna need a shave. C'mon!

PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

"WEEDS" WEIDERMANN (32), grungy with a shaggy goatee, leans against the broken grille of Adam's pickup truck. He snaps a bracket of photos as Adam stomps toward him.

ADAM
That's my truck.

WEEDS
I'm with the documentary. Shooting
background? I'm Weeds --

ADAM
-- Move it, dandelion. Before you
make the grille worse.

Weeds steps away from Adam's vitriol and tumbles over his camera bag. Adam watches with dismay as he hits the pavement.

ADAM

Geez, I'm sorry. Are you hurt?
Your camera?

WEEDS

I'm okay. Ego's a bit bruised.

Adam extends a hand and pulls Weeds to his feet.

ADAM

I'm not usually such an ass -- it's
been a weird, crappy day and I'm --
I gotta go.

Weeds steps out of the way as Adam mounts his truck and roars
out of the parking lot. Weeds snaps photos as he goes.

INT. CRACKER'S BASEMENT - LATER

A carpet remnant and yard furniture comprise the decor of
this damp cellar. A simple weight bench sits beneath a single
light bulb.

Adam struggles with bench presses as Crackers spots for him.

CRACKERS

Push it, champ. Kick its ass.

Adam succeeds. He stands and takes two big gulps from a
carton of chocolate milk.

CRACKERS

You need a Roxie.

ADAM

Like an Inuit needs an ice tea.

Adam pulls a stress ball shaped like a tomato from his
backpack and squeezes it.

CRACKERS

Been over a year and it feels good,
y'know? Just wish she'd put out.

ADAM

Her moon in the wrong wigwam or what?

CRACKERS

She's saving herself. Wants a ring.