

OPENING TITLE CARD

INSPIRED BY A TRUE STORY

CUT TO:

INT. WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

A 1950's regional mid-west crowd of a few thousand roar with fury as the abominable, heavy brow, buzz cut giant, **FRITZ VON ERICH (JACK ADKINSSON)** pummels his **OPPONENT**.

FRITZ grunts angrily at the crowd in a bad German accent and raises his giant, powerful right hand, making a rigid CLAW with his fingers. FRITZ guides his hand down onto the forehead of his wobbling OPPONENT and locks his thumb and pinky into the man's temple, clutching the head in the palm of his hand. The OPPONENT drops to his knees screaming in pain.

Sitting in the crowd are FRITZ'S sons, **KEVIN** (7) and **DAVID** (5). They are the only ones cheering on FRITZ. They turn and yell at the other fans for booing their father.

INT. ARENA CONCOURSE - CONTINUOUS

DORIS, FRITZ'S heavily pregnant wife, paces in the empty concourse.

INT. WRESTLING RING - CONTINUOUS

Back in the ring, blood drips from the OPPONENT'S head, over FRITZ'S hand. The OPPONENT finally collapses onto his back. The referee slaps down on the mat - ONE, TWO, THREE - and signals for the bell. DING DING DING DING. The referee raises FRITZ'S hand. The crowd boo the villain they love to hate.

RING ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
The winner, FRITZ VON ERICH.

HARD CUT TO:

TITLE CARD:

THE IRON CLAW

INT. DRESSING ROOM - LATER

A sweat drenched FRITZ sits alone on a wooden bench in a grimy locker room. Wrestling might be staged but there is nothing fake about the performance. These matches take a massive physical toll.

INT. ARENA EXIT - LATER

FRITZ, showered and cleaned up is heading out. His family, DORIS and the two BOYS, KEVIN and DAVID are waiting for him. The boys run and leap onto him. FRITZ scoops up KEVIN. DAVID hangs on FRITZ'S leg. FRITZ and DORIS kiss.

KEVIN

You crushed that guy Pop.

FRITZ

I sure did.

KEVIN puts a playful IRON CLAW on his dad.

FRITZ

So nice to have you guys here for once. You see anything Dotty?

DORIS

Not a chance. But it sounded like they were all very angry with you.

FRITZ

That's the idea.

THE FAMILY walk across the cold icy parking lot.

DORIS

What is that thing attached to our home?

FRITZ

You guys like it?

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

A BRAND NEW CADILLAC is attached to an OLD MOBILE HOME.

KEVIN

Oh Dad, it's incredible.

DAVID

Yeah, incwcredible.

KEVIN runs around the car. Little DAVID follows.

FRITZ

I had the boys switch it out during the show. Surprise.

DORIS

What are you thinking? We can't afford this.

FRITZ

Well, hear me out, I was talking to the promoter and he said if I want to be a star I need to act like a star. So he told me to rent a Cadillac.

DORIS

I'm not going to ask how much it costs.

They load the kids into the back seat. FRITZ gets in to the driver seat.

DORIS

How much does it cost?

She slaps him on the side of his arm.

FRITZ

It's going to be fine Dotty. I'm almost there. We need a real house, a safe place to raise these guys.

KEVIN sits in the back listening to his parents.

DORIS (O.S.)

How is blowing money on a fancy car going to get us a house -

FRITZ (O.S.)

The only way to beat this thing
that follows us -

DORIS (O.S.)

There is no THING that follows us-

FRITZ (O.S.)

The only way to beat IT is to be
the toughest, the strongest, the
most successful. The absolute
best. To rely on no one but
ourselves. I will get us there, I
will be the NWA world heavyweight
champion, and nothing will hurt us
ever again.

DORIS closes her eyes.

DORIS

*Let the morning bring me word of
your unfailing love, for I have
put my trust in you. Show me the
way I should go, for to you I
entrust my life...*

FRITZ watches adoringly as DORIS quotes the bible to
herself.

FRITZ

We have been through hell and we
are going to leave all that
behind. I promise.

In the back seat, We are close on KEVIN, listening,
absorbing...

CUT TO:

INT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - KEVIN'S ROOM - PRE DAWN

An ALARM SOUNDS like a ton of bricks waking KEVIN VON
ERICH, now in his 20s. Tall, lean, chiseled, athletic, with
a warm smile, and head of golden hair. He struggles to pull
himself out of bed, sore and stiff from last night's
wrestling match. His brother DAVID sleeps in the bed across

the room.

INT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - MORNING

A recent FAMILY PORTRAIT hangs above the fire place. Next to it a black and white photo from the 50's of their deceased son, JACK JR, age 8.

On one living room wall is A LARGE TROPHY CASE filled with the family's athletic accomplishments including FRITZ' wrestling highlights and the boys' childhood sports trophies. THIS FAMILY IS TEXAS ATHLETIC ROYALTY.

On the other wall is a GUN CASE, showing the impressive collection of hand guns and hunting weapons.

EXT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - DAWN

The sun is about to rise on the fairy tale **VON ERICH RANCH**. FRITZ' dream home just outside of Dallas, built with money made from his wrestling fame and fortune. Acres of wild land, woods for hunting, ponds for fishing, fields of grazing cattle and horses. KEVIN emerges in the landscape running, pushing himself into a full sprint.

KEVIN (V.O)

Ever since I was a child people said my family was cursed. We never talked about it. And I don't know if my brothers and I believed it back then. But bad things kept happening. Mom tried to protect us with God, Pop tried to protect us with wrestling, he said if we were the toughest, the strongest, the most successful nothing would ever hurt us. I believed him. We all did. We loved our father and we loved wrestling.

INT. THE SPORTATORIUM WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

A CAPACITY CROWD of 3000 adoring fans scream for their local hero KEVIN. FRITZ, now in his 50s, is in KEVIN'S corner.

Fierce boos ring out. **THE SHEIK** antagonizes the crowd. The famous **GENERAL SKANDOR AKBAR** is in the SHEIK'S corner.

The SHEIK hits KEVIN over the head with his championship belt, knocking KEVIN to the ground. The SHEIK spit polishes his Texas Title and the crowd goes ballistic.

The BELL SOUNDS, the match begins. We are close up on KEVIN, laying dazed on the mat.

INT. SPORTATORIUM WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

KEVIN, who wrestles barefoot, springs to his feet and delivers a brutal kick to the side of THE SHEIK'S head.

We see how special KEVIN is for a young wrestler. Large, quick, agile, and powerful - a lethal combination.

AKBAR climbs in the ring and tries to intervene but FRITZ steps in and clothes lines him over the top rope.

INT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - WEIGHT ROOM - EARLY MORNING

KEVIN lifts weights, pushing himself to his absolute limit on the bench press.

INT. SPORTATORIUM WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

KEVIN climbs onto the top rope and leaps across the ring with a flying cross body to take down, and pin THE SHEIK. The ref pounds on the mat: 1, 2, 3... The Bell sounds. The Sportatorium erupts. FRITZ rushes into the ring to celebrate as KEVIN lifts the Texas Heavyweight title belt.

RING ANNOUNCER

Ladies and Gentlemen, the winner,
and new TEXAS HEAVYWEIGHT
CHAMPION, Kevin Von Erich!

KEVIN is elated but exhausted. Struggling to catch his breath, his father holds him up in the middle of the ring.

FRITZ

You did well tonight son.

KEVIN

Thanks Pop.

FRITZ
This is just the start.

KEVIN
Of course.

FRITZ
Tomorrow you're back and working
harder than ever.

KEVIN
Yes sir.

FRITZ
Proud of you.

INT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - WEIGHT ROOM - EARLY MORNING

KEVIN finishes a set and lets out a guttural scream to push out the final rep.

INT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - KITCHEN / DINING ROOM - MORNING

DORIS, now in her 50s, cooks mountains of food for her giant sons and husband. THE BROTHERS roam the kitchen serving themselves before sitting to eat at the dining room table.

DAVID (20s), though younger than KEVIN, is the BIGGEST BROTHER. He only wears tighty whities as he scoops food onto his plate.

DORIS
Pants tomorrow please David. Thank
you.

DAVID
I couldn't find them Ma.

DORIS
They're in the wash, heard of it?

MIKE, the youngest, is less athletic than his big brothers. He survives this family with his sense of humor. He eats as quickly as he can.

DORIS

Michael, breathe. You eat like a starving mutt.

MIKE

(Mouth full of food)

If I don't eat quickly they take my food.

DAVID reaches over and steals a piece of MIKE's bacon as he sits. MIKE slaps his hand away. Then KEVIN, straight up from the gym, grabs a piece.

DORIS

Manners. Please. Who raised you animals?

FRITZ is at the head of the table with a smile on his face, basking in his family.

FRITZ

Mike, you need to hit the weights more kid, start filling out.

KEVIN and DAVID hate these comments.

DAVID

I'll always have your back Mikey.

FRITZ

You won't always be around.

DAVID

Mike's fine pop.

FRITZ

Kid won't be able to defend himself being that scrawny.

MIKE

Well, I might be scrawny but I can still eat the most.

FRITZ

It's not a joke. Kerry is about to become the family's first Olympian. Kevin is the NWA Texas champion -

KEVIN

Pop, come on.

FRITZ

- David is about to make his ring debut. You need to start thinking about what you're going to be. Now we all know Kerry's my favorite, then Kev, then David then Mike, but that can always change. Everyone can work their way up or down.

FRITZ has a charming way of delivering this that makes it an accepted part of the family dynamic.

EXT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - EARLY MORNING

THE BOYS do their SUNDAY MORNING RANCH CHORES. DAVID and KEVIN stack hay. KEVIN looks out at MIKE who fixes a fence. FRITZ is standing over him giving him a hard time.

INT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - LATER

MIKE is waiting in line for the bathroom pounding on the door.

MIKE

Come on DAVID!! I've got to take a dump.

KEVIN passes by him in the hallway.

INT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

DAVID is jerking off in the shower.

DAVID

Stop talking man, give me a second.

INT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

DORIS is getting ready for church. KEVIN enters.

DORIS
Good morning Kevin.

KEVIN
Morning Ma. Hey I've been thinking
about something. Can I talk to
you?

DORIS
Baby, that's what your brothers
are for.

KEVIN
I know but -

DORIS
I need to keep getting ready.

KEVIN
Dad's too tough on Mike Ma, you've
got to talk to him -

DORIS
That's between them. Now go get
ready, we're leaving in fifteen
minutes.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

The CONGREGATION gather in front of the church.

EVERYONE congratulates KEVIN for his recent victory. People try to meet FRITZ and welcome him to the CHURCH. As much as he does not want to go to church, he is there for his wife, there for his family. He is good at speaking with people in his community. They congratulate him on the success of WCCW, and the excitement of KERRY going to the Olympics.

DORIS is at the center of everything, she stands with the PASTOR greeting people as they file into church.

FRITZ looks at the doorway and braces himself.

INT. CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER

FRITZ, DORIS, KEVIN, DAVID and MIKE sit together. KEVIN watches his father look uncomfortable, swallowing his

pride. FRITZ looks straight up at the rafters, like he is
LOOKING UP TO GOD...

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. KEVIN'S TRUCK - DAY

KEVIN and DAVID drive up to a small suburban house in a
cul-de-sac, the neighborhood is pure seventies Americana.

A HIGHSCHOOL PROG ROCK BAND practices in an open garage. We
see MIKE is the lead singer and guitar player. He is good,
passionate. His big brothers watch on proud, they clap as
the song finishes. MIKE says goodbye to his bandmates and
jumps in the truck.

KEVIN

How was orchestra practice
Michael?

MIKE

It was good, thanks Mom... Man,
I'm starving. Can we get a burger
on the way?

KEVIN

There's food in the cooler.

MIKE

I miss Kerry, he'd eat a burger
with me right now.

DAVID

I'll eat a burger with you little
brother.

MIKE

Come on Kev.

KEVIN

Alright, alright, but just drive
through.

INT. KEVIN'S TRUCK - LATER

ECU: MIKE FLIPS THE CASSETTE.

KEVIN, DAVID and MIKE devour burgers as they drive, windows down, music blaring.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

The BOYS fly into the river from an old rope swing. They swim, happy together. OTHER PEOPLE float down the river on inner tubes, drinking beer. A summer ritual.

INT. SPORTATORIUM - BACKSTAGE - LATER

KEVIN is dressed in tights and a sequined jacket with his Texas heavyweight belt around his waist, looking ring ready. He stands next to BILL MERCER in front of a cheap backdrop.

BILL MERCER

Welcome back ladies and gentlemen, I've got the newly crowned Texas heavyweight champion, Kevin Von Erich here and he is scheduled to fight in a tag team match later on tonight against Gino Hernandez and Bruiser Brody. But his partner is still a mystery.

KEVIN

That's right Bill, first I want to say, Gino, you've been shooting your mouth off way way too long...

There is a slightly too long, awkward pause. KEVIN searches for the words.

KEVIN

And I'm here to take care of it. But boy oh boy, do I have a surprise for you tonight. Shall we try that again?

BILL MERCER

Yep, from the top... Welcome back ladies and gentlemen, I've got the newly crowned Texas heavyweight champion Kevin Von Erich here and he is scheduled to fight in a tag

team match later on tonight
against Gino Hernandez and Bruiser
Brody. But his partner is still a
mystery.

BILL delivers his lines like a machine, perfect every time. KEVIN'S delivery is a bit mechanical. He loses his charming personality when he speaks into a microphone. This is KEVIN'S one FLAW in the world of wrestling, and with the emergence of the televised main event, it is a costly flaw.

The SOUND MAN walks in and adjusts a mic. THE CAMERA MAN resets. We reveal DAVID, in street clothes, watching from behind camera. He is trying not to laugh.

KEVIN

That's right Bill, and I just want to say first that Gino has been shooting his mouth off way too much about me and my family, and tonight he's going to get it. It's not going to be all roses - Fuck.

KEVIN stalls again. The more he falters, the more nervous he gets.

KEVIN

David, I hear you. Stop.

DAVID

I didn't say anything.

BILL MERCER

It's ok. Let's go again. Welcome back ladies and gentlemen, I've got the newly crowned Texas heavyweight champion Kevin Von Erich here and he is scheduled to fight in a tag team match later on tonight against Gino Hernandez and Bruiser Brody. But his partner is still a mystery.

KEVIN

That's right Bill, I've got a big surprise to bring out for our home crowd tonight...

(Pause)

Something that's going to make them all very very happy, but first I just want to say, that Gino, you've been shooting y-y-your mouth off, sh, sh, sh - god damn it!

DAVID

Shooby dooby do.

KEVIN

You come try it then if it's so easy.

DAVID

Yeah, I mean, I'd love to but that will kind of ruin the surprise -

KEVIN

I know it will you big bastard, you're not helping. Just get out of here.

DAVID loves to wind KEVIN up.

EXT. SPORTATORIUM - NIGHT

A truck speeds towards the glowing red light gleaming "SPORTATORIUM." This is the first time we are seeing the exterior of our arena, a large shed-like structure in the shadow of the Dallas skyline. It doesn't look like much, but this is wrestling Mecca... The Camera is in the back of a pick up truck with a bunch of YOUNG PEOPLE. The parking lot is packed. Excitement is in the air. The camera jumps out of the car with a GUY who runs to the long ticket window line. The camera moves off of him and finds a CLUSTER OF FANS drinking, while others are trying to get close to some WRESTLERS entering the back door. They fight through the groping crowds to get inside.

INT. THE SPORTATORIUM - BACK STAGE - NIGHT

KEVIN and DAVID talk to two other wrestlers, **BRUISER BRODY** & **GINO HERNANDEZ**, in their tights and robes, ready to go on.

BRUISER BRODY

I'll have you in an arm bar,
really sell it. Spin out, give me
a knee, body slam, elbow drop,
I'll roll out, pick you up, shoot
you to the corner, charge, you
jump out and tag Kev.

KEVIN

I'll go straight up on the top
rope, don't give me too long -

GINO HERNANDEZ

I'll come charging across the ring
for the -

DAVID

And then the double drop kick -

BRUISER BRODY

Yep.

DAVID

And then the claw.

GINO HERNANDEZ

Can't wait. Your pop's been
coaching you on that one?

DAVID

A little bit.

BRUISER BRODY

Welcome to the show.

They all pat DAVID on the back.

INT. THE SPORTATORIUM RING - MOMENTS LATER

Cut in mid-match as BRUISER BRODY gives DAVID a big boot to the head. DAVID gets up and they exchange blows. The climax plays out how they planned it backstage... DAVID and KEVIN put a double drop kick on BRODY, knocking him out of the ring. GINO gets up dazed and steps right into DAVID'S IRON CLAW - DAVID grips his right hand around the temple of GINO. GINO submits. The bell sounds. THE AUDIENCE IS ELATED. DAVID is impressive and powerful on his debut.

BILL MERCER(O.S)

And a kick out from Gino. David picks up Gino but he pushes him into the corner. Here comes Brody charging across the ring. He misses him, he misses him and comes all the way back over to the other side. Kevin's getting up on the top rope. He knocks down Brody. The brothers line up a double drop kick. Blowing the roof off of this place. Can you hear these people? And here comes the Iron Claw, his father's notorious signature move. Oh and he slaps it on Gino. Look at him. The pain is too much, Gino taps out. And the Von Erichs win. Look out NWA, David and Kevin Von Erich are here.

RING ANNOUNCER (O.S)

And the winners, David and Kevin Von Erich!

FRITZ WATCHES ON FROM THE AISLE. HE SMILES, HE KNOW HE HAS SOMETHING SPECIAL ON HIS HANDS.

INT./EXT. SPORTATORIUM - LATE NIGHT

KEVIN and DAVID exit the backstage door after a match. The parking lot is mostly empty but for a few FANS. KEVIN signs autographs, he loves connecting with the fans. As they get away from the group, a young woman, PAM, approaches KEVIN.

PAM

Hi Kevin, can I get your autograph?

KEVIN

Sure.

He signs a piece of paper.

PAM

Well don't you want to ask me who to make it out to and all that?

KEVIN

Oh yeah, sure.

PAM

It's Pam.

KEVIN

Okay Pam.

PAM

You're supposed to say nice to meet you Pam.

KEVIN

Sorry, yeah, nice to meet you Pam.

PAM

Nice to meet you too Kevin.

KEVIN

Do you want my brother to sign -

PAM

No. Just you.

KEVIN

Ok then.

They stand in awkward silence.

PAM

Your folks not teach you how to ask questions?

KEVIN

Well, like what?

PAM

Like, who shall I make this autograph out to? Or do you want to have a drink with me some time, Pam?

KEVIN

You're asking me out?

PAM

Make me feel a little worse while you're at it.

She hits him on the arm.

KEVIN

Oh no, no, I'd love to go out with you, I've just never been asked before.

PAM

Well hopefully it will go well and then no one else will have the chance to ask you again.

Kevin laughs. He's in.

INT. SPORTATORIUM OFFICES - DAY

FRITZ counts cash from Saturday night's ticket sales. He divides up payments for each wrestler. He pays DAVID and KEVIN less than everyone else and slips the extra cash into a lock box. BILL enters.

FRITZ

Morning.

BILL MERCER

Morning.

BILL sits down.

BILL MERCER

David's good.

FRITZ nods.

FRITZ

David's good.

BILL MERCER

Saturday night's ratings came in, our best numbers yet. I got a call from someone over at ESPN. They want to offer us a national slot on Saturday nights.

FRITZ

That's great news. What does it mean?

BILL MERCER

It's a very good financial base.
We'll get ad revenue, we'll draw
bigger names passing through, but
if we perform, and have a world
heavyweight champion on our roster
we could be the biggest promotion
in wrestling.

FRITZ

Oh, we'll have a world heavyweight
champion, I can promise you that.
Let's move forward.

INT. BBQ PLACE - NIGHT

PAM and KEVIN are on a date. KEVIN signs an autograph on a
napkin for a passing FAN.

PAM

You this famous everywhere?

KEVIN

Uh, not everywhere. They're not
such big fans of us up in
Missouri.

PAM

You travel a lot?

KEVIN

Yeah, we go out on the road but we
don't need to as much now that our
show is doing so well.

KEVIN eats massive amounts of meat, fried chicken, ribs.
PAM finds it endearing but she can only eat the pecan pie.
They laugh.

KEVIN takes a bit from a massive beef rib.

PAM

So, what do you want in life Kevin
Von Erich?

KEVIN

More ribs.

Pam laughs. He finishes chewing.

KEVIN

I want to be the world heavyweight champion.

PAM

Can you explain that to me, cause isn't it all just fake?

The word FAKE is the most offensive word you can say to a wrestler. And she kind of knows it...

KEVIN

FAKE? No. Nothing is fake about what we do -

PAM

Sorry. Prearranged? Written?

KEVIN

You move up in any industry based on your performances right? Based on how audiences or clients respond to you. A belt, like my Texas title, is a job promotion. The promoters keep moving you up and up and if you reach the top, you become world champ as an award, because you are the best based on your ability. It's like an actor winning an Oscar. No one says that's fake.

PAM

So, is that all you want?

KEVIN

Course not. I want to be with my family. Be with my brothers.

PAM

That's sweet. What do you like to do with your brothers?

KEVIN

Anything. Just being together we can do anything. What about you?

PAM

I want kids. I want to have my own practice. I want a man who is ok with that.

KEVIN

Cool.

He just nods and chews.

PAM

So, would you be OK with that?

KEVIN

Damn right I am, we could be like one of those modern power couples. We can have our own ranch, everyone can come live with us, all my brothers and their families.

Pam laughs. It's sweet, but not what she has in mind.

PAM

You have oldest brother syndrome. You want to take care of everyone.

KEVIN

Maybe. I'm not the oldest though. When I was five my big brother Jack Jr. died.

PAM

My God, Kevin. I'm so sorry. I had no idea.

KEVIN

It's alright. I mean it's alright now. I don't really think about him anymore.

PAM

What was that like?

KEVIN reflects on this, maybe for the first time.

KEVIN

I don't know. It was strange as a kid; he just wasn't there to play

with one day. So, I'm not the
oldest. I must have the second
oldest brother syndrome.

PAM watches KEVIN feel all sorts of pain he's uncomfortable
with. She gets up from the table and walks around to sit
next to him. She hugs him. He doesn't know what to do at
first, he's never received this kind of affection or
empathy before.

PAM

I'm sorry.

After a moment he folds into her. They just hug. He tries
to make a joke of it.

KEVIN

It's a part of the family curse.

PAM

What's that?

KEVIN

Oh, I'm just kidding. Haven't you
heard about the curse of the Von
Erichs?

PAM

No.

KEVIN

It's this silly story. Pop changed
his name to Von Erich which was my
Grand Ma's name and I guess her
family had all sorts of tragedy so
when my brother died people
started saying it was this curse.
But that's stupid, it was just bad
luck.

PAM

Well, I don't believe in curses,
and I don't believe in luck. I
think we make our own luck.

KEVIN

You're lucky then.

They laugh and, despite a bit of BBQ sauce on his mouth, have their first kiss.

INT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - NIGHT

KEVIN comes into the house, floating from his date. FRITZ sits in the living room, waiting up for him, celebrating with a drink, feeling uncharacteristically jubilant.

FRITZ

Kev?

KEVIN

Yeah pop.

FRITZ

Get in here. Sit down son.
Big news for you.

KEVIN sits down across from his father.

FRITZ

I've booked Harley Race to come to the Sportatorium. You're going to fight the World Heavyweight Champion.

KEVIN

Pop, you for real?

FRITZ nods and KEVIN bounces out of his seat with excitement.

FRITZ

Your first match will be a non-title fight. But if you put a whoopin' on him, and show the world who you are and what you can do, you will become the number one contender for the world heavyweight championship and get your title shot.

KEVIN

Thank you Pop, I'll make you so proud.

FRITZ

I've dreamed of having that belt in this house my whole career but the NWA never gave me the chance I deserved. I got close many times, but they always robbed me over at the last minute. So you have to take this opportunity. You can be the one to bring it home.

KEVIN

Yes sir.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STUDIO - NIGHT

World heavyweight champion **HARLEY RACE** holds his championship belt and speaks directly into camera.

HARLEY RACE

I am the four-time World Heavyweight Champion, me, Harley Race. The real World Heavyweight Champion. Not any of this plastic nonsense that you all parade around with out there. You have all these guys walking around, talking loud about how they are the man. Ric Flair, Dusty Rhodes, Tommy Rich or one of your snot nosed Von Erich kids. Well, this belt is the only measure of who is the man. And that man is me. The World's Heavyweight Champion, Harley Race.

INT. THE SPORTATORIUM - NIGHT

ON A MONITOR we see the TV broadcast of WCCW's famous Saturday Night Show: The DRUMS, the bad graphics flying over the awkward picture of the globe, fading into a shot of the Sportatorium.

The camera pans around to find BILL MERCER sitting in front

of the WCCW backdrop. The DIRECTOR signals they are on air in 2, 1... BILL talks directly to camera.

BILL MERCER

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, welcome to an exciting night of World Class Championship Wrestling on ESPN for a momentous main event. NWA World Heavyweight Champion Harley Race comes to town to take on the Texas champion, Kevin Von Erich.

INT. THE SPORTITORIUM RING - NIGHT

KEVIN VON ERICH and The legendary **HARLEY RACE** are introduced in the ring to a packed house of screaming fans.

BILL MERCER (O.S.)

Here we go folks, you can feel the excitement here at the world famous sportatorium, right here in downtown Dallas Texas, as that man right there, local hero Kevin Von Erich faces his biggest challenge to date, four-time world champion, the indomitable Harley Race. What an occasion this is for the Von Erich Family, for the 3500 fans here in the building, and everyone watching at home, as we are broadcasting in 62 countries around the world. All eyes are on this contest. Now this is a non-title fight, the belt cannot change hands here tonight, but it is a tremendous opportunity for Kevin. If he can win, he would become the number one contender for the NWA world heavyweight title.

The two men lock up. HARLEY hits hard. KEVIN hits back. Things get heated between them.

The color of the ring mat and the lighting have changed. Everything is a little more colorful.

KEVIN has a good run of quick moves and overwhelms the world champion. But KEVIN hits HARLEY in the face and pisses him off. HARLEY gives KEVIN an unexpected LOW BLOW. KEVIN loses his breath.

HARLEY RACE

Let's take a walk.

HARLEY tosses KEVIN hard over the top rope onto the floor. HARLEY comes down to the floor and delivers one of his masterful suplexes onto the concrete floor. KEVIN was not expecting that. KEVIN is stunned, he has never felt so much pain. He cannot move.

HARLEY climbs back in the ring and taunts the crowd more. THE REFEREE starts to count KEVIN out. 1 -- 2 -- 3... Time slows down. KEVIN is trying to get up but still cannot move.

THE CROWD IS SCREAMING FOR HIM TO GET UP. PAM watches from the crowd. She is worried. DAVID and FRITZ stand in the aisle, looking on anxiously. We can tell by the expression on their faces that this is not planned.

THE REFEREE continues to count. 6 -- 7... KEVIN uses all his might, gets to his knees... 8 -- 9... and pulls himself back into the ring just in time to avoid the COUNT OUT, only to be met by a giant boot to the ribs.

HARLEY picks up KEVIN and is about to put him into another suplex when KEVIN slips out, HARLEY turns and KEVIN delivers a hard kick to the jaw. It knocks HARLEY down. KEVIN bounces off the ropes and dives into a splash on HARLEY. The crowd erupts. KEVIN pins RACE, 1 -- 2 --- HARLEY kicks out at 3. HARLEY knows he is in trouble so he tosses the REF who immediately disqualifies him. THE BELL sounds and the fans boo.

RING ANNOUNCER

The Winner by disqualification,
Kevin Von Erich.

HARLEY grabs a CHAIR from ringside and smashes KEVIN over the head with it. He does it again and again until... DAVID storms the ring. He lays a series of moves on HARLEY who falls out of the ring. The CROWD goes crazy. HARLEY grabs his belt and walks backwards to the dressing room, taunting the Von Erich Brothers as he goes.

KEVIN, back on his feet, grabs the MIC but is out of breath.

KEVIN

Harley Race... You coward...
Afraid I was going to beat you so
you cheated?

KEVIN takes a long nervous pause. With a small, but course changing action, DAVID takes the MIC from KEVIN. DAVID has immediate charisma and shines on the MIC where KEVIN stumbles.

DAVID

Harley Race, we showed you tonight what we are made of. You came into our building, with our fans, and my brother here put a good old-fashioned Texas whoopin' on you. You are the past, your days are numbered, we are the future of this sport. So keep running, high tail it out of here, but everyone sees you, and we'll catch you, whether you are man enough to stop back through Dallas, or if we have to chase you down in Missouri, Kevin deserves his rematch and he will fight you anywhere anytime for a fair shot at that NWA world heavyweight title. You can't mess with Texas and you can't mess with the Von Erich boys.

The crowd erupts. FRITZ WATCHES DAVID TALK, ELATED BY THE POTENTIAL HE SEES. HE KNOWS THAT DAVID'S PERFORMANCE HERE IS OUTSHINING HIS BROTHER, HE KNOWS WHAT HE HAS TO DO.....

INT. THE SPORTATORIUM - BACK STAGE - NIGHT

KEVIN is icing his back. DAVID is with him, bandaging a cut on his forehead. FRITZ enters, he feels preoccupied. The boys wait for the verdict.

FRITZ

You were long getting up.

KEVIN

I've never hit the floor that hard.

FRITZ

You got to take it and get up.

KEVIN

I know. He wasn't supposed to throw me out the ring. It caught me off guard. There was nothing I could do, I physically couldn't move.

FRITZ

This is how they test you.

KEVIN

Did I do enough to get my rematch?

FRITZ

We'll see what those rat bastards say. I'll chase them.

(Turns to David)

David. Great on the mic son. Really great. We'll get you out on the road. Get you some more exposure.

DAVID nods, FRITZ leaves.

DAVID

Dad's downplaying it cause he doesn't want to get your hopes up Kev, but you were incredible.

KEVIN

Why didn't you let me talk? You should have let me talk.

DAVID

Sorry. I was trying to help.

KEVIN stares at the floor. He knows it didn't go as well as it could have.

DAVID

Hey. Smile. You just beat the

world heavyweight champion.

This does make KEVIN smile.

EXT. OLYMPIC TRAINING FACILITY - DAY

KERRY VON ERICH, 20's, is younger than David and Kevin, older than Mike. An ADONIS, he stands totally still, posed like a statue ready to throw the DISCUS. A SHOT FIRES. He spins around, and around and releases the discus. He knows immediately it's a good throw. HIS COACHES, dressed in TEAM USA sweats, do too. KERRY has a huge smile that lights up a room.

They wait for the measurement to be signaled back from the field. VARIOUS ATHLETES practice their events around the facility. 100 meters, long jump, high jump etc.

COACH

65.5. Personal best Ker. Would of shattered your state record.

They clap, high five. KERRY, focused, sets up for his next throw. Driven to do better, to achieve greatness.

EXT. OLYMPIC TRAINING FACILITY - DAY

KERRY and his OLYMPIC TEAMMATES stretch on the field after a long day of training. Across the complex, A FRANTIC COACH runs out of the office and down the bleachers onto the field. He starts talking to other STAFF MEMBERS and a panic spreads around the camp.

ATHLETES standing near the COACHES catch wind of the news. Some just collapse on the ground. Some start to cry. KERRY looks over, knowing something is very wrong. He gets up and starts to walk with urgency towards the grieving athletes.

INT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

KEVIN, DAVID, MIKE, FRITZ and DORIS are watching PRESIDENT CARTER address the nation on TV.

PRESIDENT CARTER

In my judgement, what we are doing is preserving the principles and

equality of the Olympics, not destroying it. It is absolutely imperative that we and other nations who believe in freedom and who believe in human rights, let our voices be heard in an absolutely clear way and not add the imprimatur of approval to the Soviet Union and its government...

INT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

The family continues to watch the president's speech on TV. KEVIN feels devastated for his brother.

PRESIDENT CARTER (O.S.)
...While they have 105,000 heavily-armed invading forces in the freedom-loving, and innocent, and deeply religious country of Afghanistan. And I hope recognition of a grateful nation will at least partially make up for the sacrifice that you'll have to make this summer in not going to Moscow for the Summer Olympics. I can't say at this moment what other nations will not go. Ours will not go.

FRITZ is crushed by the news. He clenches his jaw. To him, this feels bigger than a single event...

INT. BUS - DAY

PRESIDENT CARTER'S speech trails off as we see KERRY ride a greyhound bus home. America passing by outside the window.

INT. BUS - NIGHT

KERRY rides the bus overnight.

EXT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - DAY

KERRY walks down the long and isolated ranch driveway.

KEVIN, DAVID and MIKE hang a sign over the front porch at FRITZ' direction - **WELCOME HOME KERRY.**

KERRY arrives home. The FAMILY embrace him with their condolences. FRITZ is visibly shaken. KERRY looks worried he let his father down. They shake hands.

KERRY

I'm sorry it didn't work out Pop.

FRITZ

Me too son.

KERRY reunites with his BROTHERS. They hug, forming a huddle. Happy to be together.

EXT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - EVENING

SATURDAY AFTERNOON FAMILY GATHERING. The BOYS play football. FRITZ plays quarterback. KEVIN and MIKE play against KERRY and DAVID. IT GETS COMPETITIVE. KEVIN outruns KERRY and playfully taunts him. KERRY takes offense and pushes KEVIN. They scrap. The other brothers break it up.

FRITZ

Fastest in the family Kevin. None of you could ever catch him. Still got it son.

FRITZ, loving the aggression, eggs them on.

FRITZ

You've got to put him on his ass before he breaks past you Kerry.

Next play, FRITZ throws a pass for MIKE and he drops it. FRITZ yells at him. MIKE waves in acknowledgement.

FRITZ

Oof, Mike, you could've dove for that one. You got to lay out for that.

Across the grass, the football game gets more competitive. KERRY lays a tackle on KEVIN. KEVIN bounces right back up. Focused.

FRITZ

Yes Kerry. Now that's a tackle my
boy, that's a tackle.

KEVIN and KERRY scrap but the other boys pull them apart.
It is all loving but competitive.

Next play, FRITZ throws a pass to MIKE but KERRY intercepts
it and runs it back for a touchdown. FRITZ is glowing at
his son's athleticism.

FRITZ

That's why you were the best
linebacker in the state Kerry,
Coach Royal called me from UT,
says, Fritz, why is the best
linebacker in the state watching
from the stands? Good job son.

EXT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - MAGIC HOUR

Bugs and dust hovering in the afternoon light. You can feel
the warmth, both of the air and the family being together.
They eat a feast.

PAM feels at home. She holds KEVIN's hand under the table.
They look into each other's eyes, falling in love. MIKE is
sweetly obsessed with PAM. No one has ever brought a girl
home.

MIKE

Hey Pam, I can pour you some more
lemonade or something?

PAM

Sure, thanks Mike.

He gets up and walks the jug of lemonade over and pours it
for her. FRITZ leans over to KEVIN and speaks quietly.

FRITZ

You keep hold of her son. She's a
good one. You put that down and
someone else will pick it up.

KEVIN

Yes sir.

KERRY

Man, I've been watching, the show looks great. Kev I was so proud watching you fight Harley.

KEVIN

Thanks.

KERRY

When's your rematch?

KEVIN

Still waiting. We haven't got the call yet.

He looks to FRITZ.

FRITZ

I'm working on it. It will happen.

MIKE

Ker, you notice the camera angles are all different now. It's really cool right?

FRITZ

We're talking about wrestling, not camera angles. Your brother fought the world champion on national TV, who gives a damn about camera angles?

DAVID bristles.

KERRY

And how's the music coming Mikey?

PAM

Oh, what do you play Mike?

MIKE

Lots of things. Viola. Violin. Piano. Some other instruments.

DORIS

Musical like his father.

All the boys look at DORIS, she's had a glass of wine and is smirking.

MIKE

Dad's musical?

They look down the other end of the table at FRITZ who almost looks embarrassed.

DORIS

When I met your father he was classically trained on the clarinet. He had a music Scholarship to the University of Texas but he turned it down to play football at Southern Methodist.

FRITZ

Decided there was no future in music. I chose sport and I was right.

FRITZ is embarrassed, playfully irritated at DORIS for telling them. She knows she has exposed his secret, she smirks.

DORIS

He used to play the most beautiful pieces for me when we first dated. He was such a well-rounded man, not like anyone else I'd ever met
-

FRITZ

Dotty please.

The boys love hearing this.

MIKE

Hey, I wanted to ask you guys, I've got this quartet I'm a part of from school, and we actually have a gig.

DORIS

That's great Michael, when is it?

MIKE

Well, it's tonight. At UT Dallas.

DORIS

You're too young to be setting
foot on a university campus on a
Saturday Night.

MIKE

Kevin went on a national tour at
17.

FRITZ

That was for work.

MIKE

This is work. We're going to get
paid.

KEVIN

I can go with him. He can just
play the gig and we'll leave right
after.

DORIS

The answer is no.

The BOYS and PAM all look at each other.

EXT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - NIGHT

All the lights are off. MIKE climbs out of his bedroom
window. DAVID and KERRY catch him as he jumps from the
roof.

They sneak to KEVIN's truck without making a sound. PAM
sits in the driver's seat and puts it in neutral. KEVIN,
MIKE, DAVID and KERRY push the truck down the driveway.
They build up speed and jump into the flat bed. When the
truck is far away enough from the house PAM turns on the
engine and they drive off.

INT. COLLEGE HOUSE PARTY - NIGHT

MIKE'S prog rock band perform. The crowd love him. DAVID,
KERRY, KEVIN and PAM drink beer and watch, proud.

CUT TO:

KERRY and DAVID do KEG stands, very drunk. KERRY rips his

shirt off and ties it around his head. GIRLS are falling all over him.

KIDS

One more stand! One more stand!
One more stand!

KERRY hands A KEG TAP to the closest GIRL, then does a KEG STAND, DAVID helps him get inverted. KERRY then does inverted push ups on the keg while a GIRL pours beer into his mouth.

KIDS

6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15

KEVIN and PAM watch, impressed, amused, but concerned.

PAM

He's got an appetite for drinking.

KEVIN

Yeah Kerry can put 'em back. Look at my beautiful brothers.

(Screams out)

Wooo!

KEVIN is a sweet drunk, he just gets a soft and happy.

PAM

Probably good he's letting off some steam.

KEVIN

So, what do you think? We're a lot.

PAM

I love your family Kevin.

PAM nuzzles in under his arm.

EXT./INT. KEVIN'S TRUCK - NIGHT

KEVIN and PAM sneak out of the party and climb into the truck. They are kissing passionately. She unbuckles his pants.

PAM

This OK?

KEVIN

Oh yeah.

Clothes clumsily start to come off.

KEVIN

Have you ever?

She laughs. He doesn't respond.

She stops and is overcome by a moment of rage because she thinks he is judging her.

PAM

Would that be a problem?

KEVIN

Oh, no, no, no, not at all. Not at all.

PAM

What is it then?

KEVIN

I've just -

PAM

Never?

KEVIN

Not never never, just like, not -

PAM

Oh, Kevin Von Erich you sweet thing.

They kiss and start to make love for the first time.

INT. THE SPORTATORIUM -OFFICES - NIGHT

FRITZ watches **RIC FLAIR** beat HARLEY RACE in a cage match for the world heavyweight title on TV. He is strangely calm. He has a plan.

EXT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - NEXT MORNING

Early Sunday morning ranch chores. KEVIN, KERRY, MIKE and DAVID dig post holes in the field. They are all painfully hung over. It is grueling work and the sun is hot already. KERRY throws up. They all burst out laughing. He looks around to see if FRITZ saw. He covers it up with dirt.

Across the field FRITZ works hard. A Deep anger is welling up in him. He makes a decision.

FRITZ walks across the field to the BOYS working.

FRITZ

Kerry, I don't know if you've been thinking about wrestling, but in terms of raw talent and power, you show the most promise of all your brothers. I wouldn't wish wrestling on any of you, I only wrestled to provide for you all and I always hoped you boys would choose another profession.

KEVIN and DAVID look at each other, smile and shake their heads. What a load of bullshit...

FRITZ

But the Olympics has been taken from you, the way professional football was taken from me and taken from Kevin too. The world is taking from us and I'm sick of it, I want to fight back and the more of us in it together the better. Kerry, I want you to join your brothers in the ring.

KERRY

OK.

FRITZ

It's a grueling life, but it has given us all this. So, if you're sure then I'll give you everything I can to help you be the greatest wrestler in the world.

KERRY

I'm sure. I'd love that.

FRITZ

Good.

KEVIN and DAVID embrace KERRY. MIKE feels left out.

KEVIN

Let's get you training little brother.

INT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Out the window, DORIS' car drives away. MIKE sneaks his hidden guitar amp from deep in his bed.

INT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MIKE plugs his amp into his parents record player. He puts on a brand NEW RECORD. The needle touches down....

INT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - WEIGHT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

KERRY lifts weights. Through the walls he hears the record play on full blast, the bass makes the house vibrate. KERRY finishes a set and sits up, he has an idea...

INT. THE SPORTATORIUM - NIGHT

The Sportatorium is ruckus, packed to the rafters, an energy like we have not seen. THE BROTHERS WALK THROUGH THE BACK STAGE AREA all wearing sequined jackets.

Just as they are about to enter the arena, "TOM SAWYER" by RUSH kicks in on the loud speaker. FANS look around, surprised, excited. THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME MUSIC WAS USED FOR A WRESTLING ENTRANCE.

KERRY, KEVIN AND DAVID EMERGE FROM BEHIND THE CURTAIN. They walk down the aisle to the ring. The crowd are in a frenzy. WOMEN storm the aisle to touch the brothers. KERRY is nonchalant, sexy. He plants a kiss on ONE WOMAN and she faints.

The BROTHERS storm the ring and start an all-out brawl with their opponents, THE FABULOUS FREEBIRDS - MICHAEL HAYES, TERRY GORDY, and BUDDY ROBERTS. The pace is exhilarating,

the style is a mix of high flying and chaotic back room brawling. They have it all. THEY ARE AT THE PEAK OF THEIR POWERS TOGETHER.

MONTAGE: A SERIES OF MATCHES WITH THE FREEBIRDS INTERCUTS WITH:

INT. THE SPORTATORIUM RING - DAY

DAVID, KEVIN, and KERRY train. Grueling repetitive moves. FRITZ drills them from ringside, pushing his boys to the extreme.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The tour bus passes by.

INT. BUS - DAY

The BROTHERS on a tour bus play poker with other WRESTLERS.

INT. WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

THE BROTHERS fight in street clothes in A LEATHER STRAP MATCH. It is brutal, bloody.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

DAVID buys pain pills and pops them. Drugs are openly sold in dressing rooms.

INT. THE SPORTATORIUM - OFFICES - DAY

FRITZ counts piles of cash, dividing up payments for wrestlers. He skims off the top of DAVID, KEVIN and KERRY's cash payments.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY BAR - NIGHT

DAVID, KEVIN, and KERRY party with WRESTLERS on the road. Wild and debauched in shitty hotel lobby bars. DAVID is arm wrestling with BRUISER BRODY. Both men refusing to lose, covered in sweat. WRESTLERS gather around them. GINO

HERNANDEZ cuts a line of coke for KERRY. KERRY snorts it and wants more. DAVID wins the arm-wrestling match. He jumps from table to table to celebrate, then falls knocking everything over. Everyone laughs. GINO confronts DAVID for stepping in his drugs. DAVID gets in his face and tries to start a fight. They get separated. KEVIN sits in the corner, more low key, watching, laughing.

EXT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - DAY

KEVIN, KERRY and DAVID lifts weights together.

EXT. STORE - DAY

The BROTHERS are on multiple MAGAZINE covers. PAM picks up a copy off the magazine rack, proud. KEVIN comes up behind her, embarrassed she is buying it but loving that she is.

INT. KEVIN AND PAM'S APARTMENT - DAY

KEVIN and PAM walk through the door to their brand new apartment with bags of groceries. A sunny two bedroom, lots of love and potential. They can't keep their hands off each other...

EXT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - WRESTLING RING - DAY

Close up on DAVID as FRITZ coaches him on the IRON CLAW. Sweating, exhausted, pushing his grip wider, the nerves in his forearm being stretched past their max. DAVID hits his breaking point. DAVID and FRITZ CLASH. FRITZ pushes DAVID down, gets him in order, and they start again.

DAVID WANTS THIS...

INT. THE SPORTATORIUM RING - NIGHT

We see the BROTHERS' signature moves:

KEVIN'S FLYING CROSS BODY

KERRY'S SPINNING PUNCH

DAVID'S IRON CLAW

INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

DAVID gets an injection into his back to deal with the pain.

EXT. HARLEY-DAVIDSON DEALERSHIP - DAY

KERRY drives a brand new HARLEY DAVIDSON out of the dealership.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

KERRY speeds down a Texas Highway on his brand new motorcycle.

INT. SPORTATORIUM - DAY

Pained and determined, DAVID tries to rip a closed PHONE BOOK in half. FRITZ sits across from him, willing him on. With an amazing show of strength, DAVID does it.

INT./EXT. SPORTATORIUM - NIGHT

The ticket office is sold out.

The BROTHERS fight their way into the Sportatorium through screaming fans.

Fans file into the building.

INT. SPORTATORIUM - NIGHT

BILL MERCER interviews the brothers. DAVID talks right into camera, KEVIN and KERRY on either side of him.

DAVID

Freebirds, ever since you've arrived in the WCCW, you've done nothing but lie, bully and cheat your way to victory. And we're sick of it. Now you've made this about Georgia versus Texas and it isn't. It's about filth versus decency. And you know it. And we're here today to restore

justice and order to the wrestling federation that our father built with his own two hands. The hands that were passed down to us. The hands that will deliver the Iron Claw to you.

INT. THE SPORTATORIUM - NIGHT

In the climactic sequence, THE BROTHERS wrestle for the NWA 6 MAN TAG TEAM BELTS.

RING ANNOUNCER

Welcome to WCCW. The only promotion being broadcast worldwide. To my left at a combined weight of 740 pounds from Bad Street, Atlanta, Georgia, the reigning NWA six-man tag team champions, The Fabulous Freebirds. And the challengers from Denton, Texas, weighing in with a combined weight of 690 pounds, Kevin, Kerry and David Von Erich.

KEVIN flies off the top rope knocking TERRY GORDY out of the ring. Then KERRY puts a spinning punch on MICHAEL HAYES who falls into DAVID's IRON CLAW. DAVID pins MICHAEL, and the boys win. THE VON ERICH BROTHERS are NWA 6 MAN TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS.

RING ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

The winner and new NWA world's six-man tag team champions, Kevin, Kerry and David Von Erich!

FRITZ storms the ring to celebrate with his sons. MIKE, dressed in street clothes joins them. BILL gets in the ring with the MIC to interview the Brothers. TRUE ELATION, UNTIL... FRITZ picks up the mic and with a crazed intensity, looks directly into the TV camera.

FRITZ

Freebirds! Tonight, you saw the strength and resilience of this family. We're sending a message to Sam Muchnick and every other

territory out there in the NWA,
WCCW is the best in the business,
the Von Erichs are the best in the
business, and we are coming for
you all.

The crowd erupts for the VON ERICHS.

BILL MERCER (O.S.)

Wow, Fritz, calling out the man
who runs the NWA by name on air is
a bold and unprecedented move.

FRITZ

It's necessary Bill. Because I
will
make it my life's work to see to
it that David Von Erich will be
the next NWA world heavyweight
champion.

KEVIN is stunned by FRITZ. He tries to stay in character but *
he is disoriented, his world just flipped.

FRITZ

And then each and every one of my
sons, starting with Kevin, then
Kerry, then Mike, all, one day, will
lift the world heavyweight title
because the Von Erichs are, and will
forever be, the greatest family in
the history of wrestling.

KEVIN looks over at DAVID who feels awkward he was just named
as next in line to challenge. DAVID leans in.

DAVID

I'm sure he didn't mean me first.

KEVIN

Pop doesn't make mistakes like
that.

FRITZ turns and catches them.

FRITZ

Is there a problem?

The BOYS shake their heads. They shift back to PUBLICLY CELEBRATING their new 6-man tag team championships.

INT. THE SPORTATORIUM - LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

THE LOCKER ROOM IS EMPTY. DAVID, KEVIN and KERRY enter. TIME HAS PASSED. WE FEEL THE GRIND. THEY sit down in the dressing room, sweat-drenched, sore, and exhausted after another grueling match. Their hair is a little longer, costumes a little brighter. KERRY is covered in blood. KEVIN straps ice bags to both knees. DAVID'S back has seized up. He gets an injection to deal with the pain. He pops some pills.

FRITZ enters with news. He is buzzing.

FRITZ

Boys. I've got good news. We are finally getting a world heavyweight title shot with Ric Flair. And they want it to be you, David.

DAVID feels bad for KEVIN, but this is what he wants. He looks to KEVIN for some approval.

FRITZ

Don't look to your brother. This is your time. Your opportunity. You have been chosen. You earned it.

KEVIN can't look at DAVID.

FRITZ

You'll go on the road and feud with Flair in every territory in America over the next six months. Then you'll go to Japan. You can't be world champion unless you win over Japan. Then you'll fight with Flair at Parade of Champions in May at Texas Stadium. Are you up for it?

DAVID

Of course I am.

FRITZ

I've waited my whole life to have the Von Erich name on that belt. We have had a couple of setbacks, but I can feel it, this is our time. If you perform, the title will be ours.

DAVID

I Love you Pop.

FRITZ

Love you too son.

FRITZ and DAVID come together and hug, a moment of rare affection. FRITZ turns to KERRY and KEVIN.

FRITZ

This wouldn't be happening without the two of you. You've made your brother better and your collective effort has pushed him to the top. Keep it up out there. You never know when your opportunity will come.

FRITZ leaves. KERRY is ecstatic for DAVID. He runs over and picks his brother up giving him a bear hug and swinging him around.

KERRY

Fuck yeah David. FUCK, YEAH.

DAVID looks to KEVIN, concerned.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

CHURCH BELLS RING. KEVIN and PAM leave the church JUST MARRIED. A small gathering of family and friends crowd the steps.

INT. TOWN HALL - WEDDING RECEPTION - DAY

KEVIN and PAM dance like goofs, totally free together. Everyone crowds around having a great time. KERRY takes DORIS by the hand and they jump onto the dance floor and

join.

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

KEVIN, joyful and drunk, walks into the bathroom and takes a piss at the urinal. Someone VOMITS in the stall.

KEVIN

Too much to drink already, it's still early. Who is that?

KEVIN peeks through the open stall door to see it is DAVID.

KEVIN

Shit brother, you alright?

DAVID

Yeah, just some stomach cramps, I'll be good.

KEVIN pushes open the door. DAVID gags, then vomits again. There is BLOOD.

KEVIN

Jesus man. You got to see a doctor.

DAVID

I'm fine.

KEVIN

You're not fine.

DAVID

It's just a bug I picked up on the road. Don't worry.

KEVIN

Maybe you're pushing too hard. You need some rest.

DAVID

I'm almost there.

KEVIN

You think it's going to slow down if you become champion?

DAVID

I'm fine Kevin. Seriously. I'm just sick today.

KEVIN

I don't think you should go to Japan next week.

KEVIN means it but they start to laugh. They know it's a ridiculous idea.

DAVID

You're stupid.

They gently slap box each other, laughing, sitting on the floor of a toilet cubicle.

KEVIN

Hey Dave, I just wanted to say, I didn't take it so well, you jumping me and all.

DAVID

I understand.

KEVIN

I've been pretty angry, not at you, just at the situation, but I didn't even want it that bad. I just love being out there with you guys. Nothing else really matters to me.

DAVID

Married two hours and already losing your competitive edge.

KEVIN

Maybe. I'm pretty happy to focus on my family though.

DAVID

Family?

KEVIN

Turns out this is a shotgun wedding, just don't tell anyone.

DAVID puts KEVIN in a loving headlock and messes up his

hair.

DAVID

You rat bastard. Good for you
guys, God damn that makes me happy
Kev. Come on, we got some dancing
to do.

INT. WEDDING RECEPTION - DAY

DAVID, KEVIN, PAM, KERRY, and MIKE dance a TEXAS LINE
DANCE. The wedding party cheer. FRITZ and DORIS watch.

DORIS

Look how lovely she looks when she
puts a little effort into her
appearance.

FRITZ

They are a great couple. Reminds
me of a couple I knew once. How
about we get out of here, Dotty.

DORIS

Well, I could use some air.

DORIS is having a hot flash. FRITZ takes her sweater off
her shoulders. She loosens her collar.

FRITZ

We could take advantage of the
situation.

DORIS

No boys in the house. And I don't
have to worry about you getting me
pregnant anymore, you big stud.

DORIS and FRITZ KISS. They look back at their sons having a
wonderful time. The CAMERA PANS ACROSS THE BOYS' FACES IN
CU and comes to rest on DAVID.

EXT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - MORNING

KEVIN drives up the long ranch driveway towards the house.
He sees a MAN leave the house and walk to A CAR he does not
recognize. The CAR drives down the driveway passing KEVIN.

KEVIN sees the look in the MAN'S face. He knows something is wrong. KEVIN parks and runs into the house.

INT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - CONTINUOUS

KEVIN walks inside. It is quiet. He looks around for someone. At first it seems empty until he realizes FRITZ is sitting in the living room, completely still...

KEVIN

Pop?

FRITZ just shakes his head.

KEVIN

What is it?

FRITZ

David.

KEVIN knows. He sits down - this cannot be happening.

KEVIN

What happened?

FRITZ

He died in his hotel room in Japan. It looks like he had a ruptured intestine. We'll know more soon.

KEVIN

How does that happen?

Both men are shattered but show no pain.

They can hear DORIS walking around upstairs. FRITZ looks at the ceiling, frozen with fear, knowing he has to deliver the news to his wife.

INT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - DAY

KEVIN, numb, is dressed in a black suit waiting for the family to be ready. Amongst the flowers and food that have been sent to the house is a pile of recent unopened mail. A postcard catches his eye. He is pulled towards it. It is from Japan. A lump in his throat. He is afraid to read it.

But he does:

Kev, Sorry I sent this to the house, I couldn't remember your new address. I miss you Brother, you got to come with me next time, it's wild over here. Someone asked me for an autograph today because they thought I was you. Made me very happy. I'll probably be home by the time you get this so this is stupid but just wanted to send. See you soon.

This is too much for KEVIN to bear. He slips it back into the pile.

INT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

DORIS gets dressed for the funeral. A long sleeve BLACK DRESS, black gloves and a black veil. She looks at herself in the mirror. She digs deep to put on a strong face. She has cried for hours, has no tears left, pulling herself out of the hell of a lost child.

EXT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - FRONT PORCH - DAY

PAM sits with KEVIN, KERRY, and MIKE, all wearing sunglasses. DORIS and FRITZ walk outside.

FRITZ

Take those glasses off. No hiding.
All of you. I don't want to see
any tears.

KEVIN takes off his glasses but can't look at his parents. He can't stomach the family rallying cry he knows is coming. He pushes down the pain and makes himself numb. PAM cannot believe what she is hearing.

FRITZ

The lord decided it was time for David to move on. We have to accept that. In his 25 years he lived 75 years' worth of life. He never got the chance to be world champion here but he'll be the world champion of the afterlife, that's for sure.

INT. LIMO - DAY

The FAMILY travel together in a LIMO to the funeral. DEVASTATED FANS line the streets paying their respects to the family, waving TEXAS FLAGS and YELLOW ROSES, desperately trying to touch the car as it moves slowly through the procession. KEVIN starts to panic, he cracks the window and desperately tries to breathe some fresh air, trying to stay calm. He looks up at the news helicopter flying above.

CUT TO:

A HIGH ANGLE SHOT FROM THE HELICOPTER LOOKING DOWN TO REVEAL THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE TURNING OUT TO MOURN DAVID VON ERICH.

INT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - DAY

KEVIN lies like dead weight on DAVID'S BED, soaking up what is left of his brother's scent. PAM finds him and peels him off the bed with all her might.

PAM

Come on Hon.

He struggles to sit up.

PAM

I'm here when you want to talk.

KEVIN

No. I'm good. I'm good.

EXT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - NIGHT

FRITZ and THE BOYS sit on the front porch drinking beer. Everyone's exhausted from the day, lost in their own heads.

FRITZ

It's hard to see clearly in this dark moment, we cannot let this tragic moment define us. Our greatness will be measured by our response to adversity. Now, David's title match against Ric Flair at parade of champions is a moment of a lifetime. We still

have a chance to bring the world
heavyweight championship home if
one of you will step up and take
over from David. Everything we
have ever worked for in the ring
is riding on this moment.

KEVIN is broken. Over his shoulder he sees a **FIREFLY**
hovering in the dark. A second later it is gone. He wants
to protect his brothers, he digs deep, he will bear the
burden...

KEVIN

I'll do it Dad. I can do it.

KERRY

I can do it too.

KEVIN looks up, surprised to see KERRY is eager, energetic,
empowered by his father's words. He wants it.

KEVIN

Kerry, I'll do it.

KERRY

I'm ready. I want it.

KEVIN

You don't have to, it's my match
Kerry -

KERRY

No. I deserve it too.

FRITZ

Boys, boys, it's a tough decision.
You are the oldest Kev but Kerry has
been getting the most attention
lately.

KEVIN is in too much pain to fight it.

FRITZ

We're going to flip a coin. It's
the only fair way to decide. Heads
for Kerry. Tails for Kevin.

KEVIN AND KERRY STAND OFF. FRITZ flips the coin. It tumbles

into the night sky...

CUT TO:

INT. TEXAS STADIUM - PARADE OF CHAMPIONS - BACKSTAGE - DAY

The roar of 34,000 fans can be heard... The camera moves up to reveal KERRY, oiled up and ready to go. KERRY won the toss. KEVIN stands behind him in support. The entrance music plays and KERRY walks through the curtain, out into the stadium. KEVIN stays backstage and waits.

EXT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - DAY

Empty. Still. Haunted. In the distance we can hear the TV playing inside, BILL MERCER'S commentary of the Match.

INT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - DAY

DORIS watches THE MATCH on TV.

ON TV: both men try to toss each other with a hook, neither works, then KERRY gets FLAIR in a full nelson, and turns him over into a back slide and pins him, 1,2,3. The Bell sounds.

BILL MERCER (O.S.)

Dreams do come true. Dreams do come true. Kerry Von Erich is the new heavyweight champion of the world, what a pleasure it is for me to say that.

Back to DORIS watching, she feels nothing. THE GHOST OF DAVID STANDS BEHIND HER, OUT OF FOCUS IN THE DOORWAY. She feels something behind her. She turns and looks. Nothing is there. She turns off the TV.

INT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - DINING ROOM - THAT NIGHT

The house is quiet. KEVIN walks through the dark hallway and finds KERRY at the dining room table drinking, still buzzing, staring at THE NWA WORLD HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE BELT.

KERRY

Hey, didn't know you were still here.

KEVIN

I was just helping Pop. I'm about to head home. How you doing?

KERRY

Having trouble coming down.

KEVIN

I bet.

They look at the BELT.

KERRY

I can't believe it's finally in our family.

KEVIN

Yeah.

KERRY

I think I'm going to go for a ride or something.

KEVIN

Alright. Be careful.

(Beat)

Hey Ker, you were great today brother.

KERRY

Thanks Kev.

KERRY leaves. KEVIN looks at THE NWA WORLD HEAVYWEIGHT BELT, the thing his family has coveted his whole life. He almost feels disdain. He doesn't want it in the house, but it is mythical, it has a pull. KEVIN, in a trance, can't help but get closer to it. He reaches out and touches the belt.

Outside, KERRY'S Harley Davidson fires up. It startles KEVIN, snapping him out of it.

FADE IN:

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

KERRY RIDES HIS MOTORCYCLE DOWN AN EMPTY TEXAS HIGHWAY. THE BIKE GOES FASTER AND FASTER AND FASTER AND FASTER...

CUT TO:

INT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - EARLY MORNING

KERRY wakes in discomfort. He sits up and reveals he is scraped all over his body. He has been in some sort of accident.

KERRY takes several pain killers. He puts one aside, crushes it up and snorts it.

KERRY hobbles into the kitchen. He gets a bowl of cereal. We see that his right foot has been AMPUTATED, he now just has a BANDAGED STUMP.

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

KEVIN, PAM and the BABY approach a teller window. They hand over their driver's licenses and the TELLER on the other side slides out a draft of the BIRTH CERTIFICATE.

TELLER

Is everything correct?

KEVIN reads the paper and makes a decision.

KEVIN

Actually, his last name will be Adkisson. It's my Birth name.

TELLER

Do you have your birth certificate?

KEVIN

Yeah.

He slides it to her.

TELLER

Let me update it, I'll be right back.

The Woman goes back and makes copies. PAM is looking at KEVIN surprised.

PAM
You sure you want to do that?

KEVIN
No. But, I think I'll feel safer for him.

PAM
Kev, it's got nothing to do with the name.

KEVIN
I know. I'd just like to do this.

INT. THE SPORTATORIUM - RING - DAY

KEVIN is teaching MIKE technique in the ring. KEVIN is a good teacher. MIKE is trying but it looks UNNATURAL. KEVIN is generally patient but gets frustrated with MIKE for not being able to perform a simple hip toss.

KEVIN
Come on damn it!

MIKE
Sorry. I can't get it.

KEVIN is tired, he composes himself, digs deep for some patience. He looks at MIKE. He doesn't have it. He wants to send him home. But he doesn't. He keeps pushing.

KEVIN
It's fine Mikey. You're doing great. Let's keep going.

INT. THE SPORTATORIUM - NIGHT

THE SPORTATORIUM IS HALF FULL. The ESPN camera teams have gone. It all feels very local again. KEVIN and MIKE wrestle in a tag team match. It lacks tempo and skill. MIKE is an insufficient replacement for DAVID. He should not be in the ring. MIKE does a series of drop kicks on each of the opponents. On the third drop kick, he lands awkwardly and HIS SHOULDER POPS OUT. The ref calls off the match as KEVIN

signals for the medical team.

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - DAY

FRITZ and KEVIN wait for MIKE to come out of surgery. A DOCTOR walks in.

KEVIN

Hey. How'd it go doc?

DOCTOR

Fritz, Kevin. We completed the surgery as planned. We repaired the shoulder, but it was trickier than we anticipated. Mike's temperature skyrocketed, we worked hard to bring it down, but it was close to 107 for almost two hours. We believe he suffered toxic shock syndrome.

FRITZ

What does that mean?

DOCTOR

I'm sorry to say that Mike is in a coma.

KEVIN

What? How? It was a routine shoulder surgery.

DOCTOR

It's rare, but it happens. All we can do now is wait and pray he pulls through. I'm very sorry.

EXT. HOSPITAL - EARLY MORNING

KEVIN sits on the curb in front of the hospital. He's been up all night. He's tired, lost in thought, angry, overcome.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

KEVIN walks down the hall, aimless, pacing.

KEVIN sits in the phone booth quietly, talking to PAM.

KEVIN

Why is this happening to us? Why
does it just keep happening?

PAM (O.S.)

Baby, stay with me, OK.

KEVIN

But it keeps happening. It's
taking over.

PAM (O.S.)

It's a terrible accident. Nothing
more.

KEVIN

He shouldn't have been in the ring.

PAM (O.S.)

It's not your fault. If you want
to blame someone blame your
father. But it's not your fault.

KEVIN

I should have stopped him.

PAM (O.S.)

What could you do Kevin? There is
no getting through to that man.

KEVIN looks across the room at FRITZ, sitting alone.

INT. KEVIN AND PAM'S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

The Baby cries... KEVIN lays awake in bed, staring at the
wall. PAM is dressed in vet scrubs standing over him with the
BABY.

PAM

I'm sorry hon, I'm late for work
and I can't get him to settle.
Will you take him for me?

KEVIN

I can't?

PAM

What? Just take him till your mom gets here. I have to go.

KEVIN

I can't.

KEVIN doesn't want to touch the baby.

PAM

Kevin.

KEVIN

I'm sorry. It's OK.

She passes him the crying BABY. KEVIN can't get the baby to calm.

INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - DAY

MIKE and KEVIN sit behind a folding table for a MAKESHIFT PRESS CONFERENCE. KEVIN is jubilant, so thankful his brother is OK that he is bursting.

KEVIN

Thank you all for coming. And thank you all for your love and support.

PRESS (O.S.)

So Mike are you feeling OK?

MIKE

Yuh.

KEVIN

We're all just so excited our brother pulled through, shows how much of a fighter he is. After losing David it's too much to think we almost lost Mike too.

MIKE struggles to speak. He is reaching.

MIKE

I'm moved my whole family is here, and with me through everything and...

His delivery suggests he sustained MILD BRAIN DAMAGE. KEVIN watches, worried. He stays positive, hoping this will pass.

MIKE

... That you all out there sent flowers. I'm thankful to everyone.

REPORTER

So what is the time frame for your return to the ring Mike?

FRITZ stands off to the side, out of view of the reporters, eyes steadily on his sons.

MIKE

I know I'll be back. Um. Soon. Yeah. Soon.

KEVIN

Mike's a fighter more than people even realize. He'll be back in the ring in no time.

INT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - NIGHT

A FAMILY DINNER... DORIS, FRITZ, KERRY, MIKE, KEVIN, PAM and THE BABY sit at the table. MIKE IS A ZOMBIE. They know something is wrong, but no one will say it. PAM and KEVIN make eye contact, heartbroken by MIKE'S condition. The hope it would pass is fading.

FRITZ EATS, HEAD DOWN. HE CAN'T LOOK AT HIS TWO BROKEN SONS.

KEVIN FEELS PARANOID. He feels something behind him. He looks over his shoulder and stares at an empty doorway leading to a long dark hallway. The baby starts to cry.

INT. THE SPORTATORIUM - NIGHT

KEVIN wrestles with his new, stand in Tag Team partner LANCE. KEVIN waits to be tagged back in, but LANCE doesn't tag him. LANCE gloats, soaking up the fans, making the most of his moment. He is loving the attention. He doesn't get the Von Erich way. KEVIN struggles to take part in the charade but pushes through, waiting to be tagged in. But LANCE doesn't tag him in. KEVIN is forced to just watch this imposter finish the match by himself.

INT. THE SPORTATORIUM - NIGHT

KEVIN is the last person in the building. He sits alone in the locker room. He can't bring himself to go home.

KEVIN walks through the dark empty hallways of the Sportatorium.

INT. THE SPORTATORIUM OFFICE - NIGHT

KEVIN pulls a blanket out of the desk drawer and goes to sleep on the floor.

EXT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - GYM - DAY

KERRY attaches a PROSTHETIC FOOT fitted into an old boot.

EXT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - DAY

Determined, KERRY hobbles around the fields getting used to his fake foot. He starts to jog and falls over. He gets up and keeps jogging. He is in severe pain. He lets out a primal scream.

INT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - DAY

MIKE stares at the watercolor painting. Doris brings him lunch.

DORIS

That's the house I grew up in. I painted it.

MIKE

Why didn't you tell anyone?

DORIS

I had my reasons, but I can't remember them now.

MIKE

I'm scared Mom.

DORIS

God loves you Michael. There is

nothing to be scared of.

MIKE
I'm not David.

DORIS
What?

MIKE
Everyone wants me to be David, but
I can't replace him.

DORIS thinks about this for a moment, but it's too much to really confront.

INT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - MIKE AND KERRY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

MIKE sits on his bed struggling to strum his guitar. It is clear his hands no longer work the same way. He is scared, frustrated, angry.

INT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - BATHROOM

MIKE takes a pill. He looks down at the bottle and takes another pill. Then another. And another. And another. And another... He has written a note that sits on the side of the sink:

I'm sorry if I hurt you, but I am going to a better place.

EXT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - WRESTLING RING - NIGHT

KEVIN and KERRY train in their back yard ring. KERRY is back on his feet working with KEVIN. KERRY grits his teeth and pushes through the pain. His boot comes off with his prosthetic in it.

KERRY
FUCK!!

KERRY falls over and just lays on his back.

KEVIN
I see how painful this is. It's
going to take time. We can't rush
this-

KERRY

No. I'm ready. I'm ready. Let's go.

KERRY slips his leg back on. HE stands. The sheer pressure of his leg meeting the prosthetic is painful. It is hard for KEVIN to see.

KEVIN

Maybe God is trying to tell you to slow down. Maybe you should consider doing something else with your life?

KERRY

Why? So you're the only brother left in the ring? So you get all Daddy's attention. Fuck you.

KEVIN

I want you in the ring. It's impossible doing this by myself.

KERRY pushes KEVIN.

KERRY

Come on! Let's keep going.

KEVIN

You can't just hide this Kerry.

KERRY punches KEVIN in the side of the head with real force. KEVIN loses his cool and retaliates with a kick to KERRY'S chest. KERRY falls flat on his back, winded. KEVIN stands over him.

KEVIN

Come on, you want back in then get up! You want back in then get up!
Get up!

KERRY jumps up and they lock up. KERRY's leg holds up, he gets his strength back, he is determined. They push each other but neither relents...

In the distance, in the field, we see a flashlight.

EXT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - CONTINUOUS

MIKE walks through a field in the middle of the night holding a sleeping bag and a flashlight. He is determined and decided. He is not coming back.

EXT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - DAY

A small search party including KEVIN, KERRY and FRITZ canvasses the land looking for MIKE. They find him.

INT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

DORIS stands in her underwear. She stares at the SAME BLACK FUNERAL DRESS laid out on the bed. She starts to shake. She physically cannot put it on again. PAM knocks and enters.

PAM

Doris, honey, we should go.

PAM sees DORIS has broken. She takes her hand and tries to comfort her.

DORIS

I can't put it on, everyone will recognize it, I can't, I can't. I need a new dress.

PAM

Honey, people here love you, they don't care. We all love you Doris. Come on.

PAM hugs her. They cry together.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

DORIS walks up to a small podium wearing the same BLACK DRESS and VEIL she wore to DAVID's funeral. She addresses the attendees.

DORIS

Today we are here to lay to rest our son Michael Brett Adkisson, my sweet, beautiful boy. Kind, funny and truly good...

PAM is exhausted by the party line. She looks over at KERRY

and KEVIN watching on, no sadness left, just numb.

EXT. CEMETERY - LATER

After the service, people gather and talk. PAM approaches KEVIN. They speak quietly, close together so no one hears.

PAM

You going to come home tonight?

KEVIN

I'm not sure.

PAM

I know how painful this is, I do.
I'm trying to be patient but this
doesn't work for me.

KEVIN

I'm sorry. I know.

PAM

Just come home. Just be with us.

PAM tries to get through to him.

PAM

Hey.

KEVIN

(Gesturing to the BABY)

I don't want him to get it. I
don't want you guys to catch it.

PAM

Kevin. You can't be serious?

She touches his face but he flinches. He is losing it...

INT. THE SPORTATORIUM - NIGHT

KEVIN bounces off the ropes, building up speed,
crisscrossing the ring, back and forth, back and forth,
furious, possessed.

KEVIN does push-ups. Over and over and over again. ALONE in
the empty Sportatorium. Machine.

KEVIN (V.O.)

Ever since I was a child people said my family was cursed. It never seemed to bother my father. He said if we were the toughest, the strongest, the most successful nothing would ever hurt us. I believed him. We all did. We loved our father and we loved wrestling.

KEVIN working out by himself is intercut with images of FRITZ and THE BROTHERS all training in the same ring together.

CUT TO:

KEVIN sits alone in the ring, sweating, breathing heavy. Determined...

CUT TO:

INT. THE SPORTITORIUM - BACK STAGE

KEVIN waits backstage ready for a match. He looks different - bigger, more focused, fiercer.

RING ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

This match is scheduled for one fall, and is for the NWA world Heavyweight Championship... First, entering the ring, the champion, Ric Flair.

CUT TO:

ON TV MONITOR: BILL MERCER INTERVIEWS RIC FLAIR WHO SPEAKS DIRECTLY TO CAMERA.

BILL MERCER

Now, Ric, there's been a lot of talk that you've been resisting coming down to the Sportatorium to defend your title against Kevin Von Erich.

RIC FLAIR

It is so hard to be humble when you're looking like Ric Flair. You see the difference between me and a lot of these so-called big-time stars is that I'm custom made from head to toe. That's why I've got the biggest house, on the biggest hill on the biggest side of town. That's why this sports coat costs \$800. And I don't know what that costs! I'd be ashamed to wear it! That's why I've got on Lizard shoes and a Rolex watch, and I've got a limousine out there, a mile long with 25 women in it. Just dying for me to go, wooh. Now, let's get to the less pretty facts of life. Kevin, your daddy got together with the powers that be and ordered me back down here to Dallas, a nothing-happenin' second rate sports community. I am the World's Heavyweight Champion because I am the greatest wrestler alive today. The toughest wrestler alive today. I have bled and sweat for this title and no daddy's boy is going to take that from me. This is professional wrestling. It is the most grueling of all professional sports. I've been stabbed, hit by chairs, beat up by everybody. I don't cry. I don't complain. I carry on. But the bottom line is...

BILL MERCER

You're denying...

RIC FLAIR

I am talking right now. Hey, listen to me. Listen to me. I'll tell you what, you like talking to me on the show. You'll listen to me talk while I'm out here. The bottom line is, if you're a man,

you take the ups and downs. If you're a real man, you'll never go down. You'll just stay up. That's why I am the World's Heavyweight Champion. And I can go through Kevin Von Erich, or any Von Erich on the worst day of my life. Whoo. Whoo. Whoooo. Walk the aisle, daddy's boy! Walk the aisle!

INT THE SPORTATORIUM - NIGHT

THE SPORTATORIUM IS ONCE AGAIN FULL, LIKE THE GOOD OLD DAYS.

RIC FLAIR parades around the ring, his famous WHOOOOO echoing through the building. He takes off his elaborate robe to reveal the new, bigger, shinier world heavyweight title belt.

RING ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

And the challenger, your very own,
KEVIN VON ERICH.

KEVIN charges to the ring - no music, no parade, all business. THE CROWD goes crazy, grabbing at him, but he doesn't stop to acknowledge them.

KEVIN jumps into the ring and attacks RIC FLAIR. He is ferocious. Shocking. KEVIN LETS OUT ALL OF HIS RAGE ON THE WORLD CHAMPION. The match is brutal and only escalates. KEVIN kicks FLAIR in the head and connects above his eye. BLOOD DRIPS DOWN FLAIR'S FACE.

KEVIN puts the IRON CLAW on FLAIR. The crowd erupts and cheers him on. FLAIR falls to his knees and after a moment inches himself to the edge of the ring so he can grab hold of the ropes. The REF tells KEVIN to release. (The rule is you must release a submission hold when your opponent grabs the ropes.) But KEVIN refuses. He digs deeper and harder on FLAIR'S forehead. Blood pouring out over his hand, FLAIR'S face unrecognizable.

The REF warns KEVIN again to let go. He doesn't. KEVIN just shouts in FLAIR'S face. The crowd is losing energy now. They are not sure what to make of this HORROR SHOW. The REF offers one final warning, but KEVIN can no longer hear him.

He has lost it. The referee rings the bell.

RING ANNOUNCER

The winner, by disqualification,
and still NWA World Heavyweight
Champion, Ric Flair. Kevin Von
Erich has been disqualified.

The crowd boos. TWO other officials are now in the ring
trying to pull KEVIN off of FLAIR. But KEVIN just screams,
it feels like AN EXORCISM - an absolute release of years of
pent-up anger.

FRITZ and KERRY run to the ring and get involved. They
finally rip KEVIN away. He pushes them off too. He's like a
wild animal. They contain him and carry him out of the
ring.

INT. SPORTATORIUM - LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

KEVIN sits staring at the floor. He is still. Calm. Almost
serene. KERRY sits by his side. FRITZ sits across from
them, furious, fuming.

KERRY

What happened?

KEVIN

I don't know.

KEVIN is not talking about the match - a fog has lifted.

RIC FLAIR comes into the locker room, covered in blood,
laughing. The BIG GOLD BELT around his waist.

RIC FLAIR

Oh, Kevin, oh man, you are crazy.
You are one crazy son of a bitch.
I mean I always thought you were a
little soft but baby you got it.
I'll give you a rematch any day,
Christ. Let's get a drink. Where
can we get fucked up around here.

KEVIN

No. I'm good thanks.

RIC FLAIR

Alright well you change your mind
you let me know, I'll be down at
the Holiday Inn.

FRITZ looks at the belt. Disgusted it's not in his
possession. He gets up and taps KERRY on the shoulder.

FRITZ
Come on son.

FRITZ and KERRY walk out. KEVIN is left alone. He looks
down at his hand, his blood covered Iron Claw. After a
moment he laughs to himself. He can see clearly now...

EXT. KEVIN AND PAM'S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

KEVIN approaches his apartment. He knocks on his own front
door. PAM opens it. She is on the phone, holding the BABY.
The dog runs out and jumps up on KEVIN. PAM walks back
inside. KEVIN steps in. She hands over the BABY while she
finishes talking on the phone. He overcomes a moment of
hesitation and takes the BABY, looks at him, and holds him
tight once again. PAM hangs up the phone.

FADE IN:

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

KEVIN picks up his **TWO SONS**, now FIVE and SIX from school.
They run to him and give him a hug. He scoops them up and
carries them to the car.

INT. KEVIN AND PAM'S APARTMENT - EVENING

KEVIN prepares dinner to his TWO SONS. He almost trips on the
dog, then a football. The kitchen is tiny. They have outgrown
their home. He is frustrated, but sits and eats with the kids,
loving their company. PAM arrives home in her scrubs,
exhausted. The dogs jump up on her. She kisses her three boys
on the head.

KEVIN
How was your day?

PAM
Long. You?

KEVIN

Fine.

They look around the crowded tiny apartment. It's unsustainable.

KEVIN

We need to make a change.

PAM

We need a bigger boat.

INT. THE SPORTATORIUM - NIGHT

KEVIN is now the boss, dressed in khakis and a button down - OLDER, WISER, WORN. KEVIN is rooting through the FINANCIAL RECORDS. He comes across something that does not make sense. He cross references to the previous year. And the year before that.

INT. THE SPORTATORIUM - NIGHT

Bill interrupts.

BILL MERCER (O.S.)

So what did you decide Boss?

WCCW has downsized. It is just KEVIN and BILL in the office.

KEVIN

I think we need to cut down again and move to one show a week. Two shows is still too many. We can get the guys touring during the week and then bring them home for the Saturday night show.

BILL MERCER

I think it's painful, but smart. The numbers just haven't been there since Kerry went to the WWF. Jerry called again this morning, it's a good offer you should think about it.

Like his father before him, KEVIN stands in the floor to

ceiling window looking down at wrestlers training in the empty Sportatorium.

INT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - DAY

KEVIN'S BOYS sit on the floor in front of the TV watching their uncle KERRY wrestle in the WWF against MR PERFECT for the INTERCONTINENTAL CHAMPIONSHIP. He looks better than ever. KEVIN and FRITZ sit on the couch. KEVIN builds up the nerve to confront his father.

KEVIN

Hey Pop, so we have an offer on the table from Jerry Jarret. He wants to buy us out.

FRITZ

Son, don't you even think for a second about selling the company.

KEVIN

I need to think about my family Dad. I'm almost broke. I need to do what's best for the kids. For our future. We need a house, we can't fit in that apartment anymore.

FRITZ

If you sell, you can forget about stepping through these doors again. Damn well almost forty years old and still can't take care of yourself -

KEVIN is furious.

KEVIN

I've been through the books and things don't add up. I didn't make nearly what it says I did.

FRITZ

I did what was right all along. You think living here was a free ride? Don't you dare question me.

Just then, ON TV the climax of the match happens. They stop talking and watch on as KERRY beats MR PERFECT. The BOYS and FRITZ jump up and celebrate. But KEVIN is seething. FRITZ turns back to him.

FRITZ

Atta boy Kerry. That's how you do it. Look at your uncle boys.

KEVIN doesn't respond. But he knows what he will do.

EXT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - DUSK

The Ranch at last light on a chilly winter night. The glow of Christmas inside. KEVIN and PAM are there with DORIS and FRITZ. KERRY arrives home for Christmas to A HERO RETURNS.

FRITZ

Hey! Welcome home champ. We've been watching every match on the TV.

KERRY

Thanks Pop. Guys, this is Tania.

TANIA, KERRY'S new girlfriend, is with him. They are both drunk and maybe high. TANIA is overly aggressive in hugging each member of the family.

TANIA

It's so nice to meet you all.

FRITZ

Let me get a look at you. You look strong son. WWF Intercontinental Champion, second biggest title in wrestling now that your brother ruined our promotion. I knew it was time to retire when I did.

KEVIN and PAM share a glance in disbelief at FRITZ's rant.

TANIA

Kerry can you get me a drink honey.

KERRY goes to the Kitchen to grab beer from the fridge.

KERRY (O.S.)

Oh, Dad, Dad, I got something for you for Christmas, but I can't wait. I really want to give it to you now. Is that OK?

DORIS

Kerry, wait till Christmas morning. Don't be silly.

KERRY comes back in and gives a beer to TANIA and drinks another. Now everyone realizes he's drunk. FRITZ is upset.

KERRY

It's just so good. And Tania and I are going to Mexico for Christmas.

FRITZ

I thought you were home for Christmas.

KERRY

I am, this is Christmas. We just got a great deal for a Christmas day flight to Mexico and we need some rest. I've been hitting it hard out there, you know.

KERRY digs through his bag and pulls out a GIFT.

KERRY

Please take it now, Dad. Please.

KERRY is so eager, like a child looking for approval. FRITZ reluctantly unwraps it. It is a beautiful REVOLVER.

KERRY

It's a Smith and Wesson .357 50th anniversary! What do you think?

FRITZ

It's great son, thank you.

FRITZ puts the gun in the living room GUN CASE.

KERRY

Don't do that. Let's shoot it now.

FRITZ

I don't want to shoot it now.

KERRY

You always shoot a gun when you get it.

FRITZ

I don't want to shoot it, Kerry.

KERRY

Why the fuck not?

DORIS

Kerry! What is wrong with you?

KERRY

Me? What's wrong with him?

FRITZ

Watch it son. You've brought company to the house, and we don't want to be rude. Just settle down, and we can have a nice dinner that your mother worked hard to prepare.

KERRY

Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Okay.

FRITZ

Now come tell me, when are you getting your world title shot over there? I see your old tag team partner Hellwig's holding, that guy's got nothing on you, never has.

KERRY

Soon Pop, soon.

KERRY goes to the kitchen to grab another beer. KEVIN follows.

KEVIN

Hey!

KERRY

Hey! Sorry brother, I'm excited to be home.

They hug. A CHRISTMAS ALBUM plays from the living room.

KERRY
You look good.

KEVIN
You too.

KEVIN looks at him hard, there is something missing behind KERRY'S eyes.

KERRY
Stop it.

KERRY cracks three beers and hands one to KEVIN. They cheers and sip.

KEVIN
You OK?

KERRY
Never been better man.

INT. KEVIN AND PAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

THE PHONE RINGS. KEVIN wakes and picks up before it can wake the house.

KEVIN
Hello?

KERRY (O.S.)
Oh good, I wasn't sure you'd be up.

KEVIN
I'm up, I'm up. What's going on Ker? Where are you?

INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

KERRY sits on the edge of the bed. He's drunk, high.

INTERCUT:

KERRY
I'm back in Dallas. In a hotel.

KEVIN

You Ok?

KERRY

I'm Ok, course I'm OK.

KEVIN

Hey, why didn't you tell us you lost the belt. We could of been there for you.

KERRY (O.S.)

I don't know. Didn't think about it.

KEVIN just shakes his head. KERRY starts to cry.

KEVIN

Kerry?

KERRY (O.S.)

I'm scared man. I'm out of control.

KEVIN

You've got to get some help.

KERRY

I'm in pain man, I'm in pain all the time. I'm fucking deformed. It takes so much to hide it -

KEVIN

It doesn't show in the ring.

KERRY

I'm not getting a new contract. They're sticking me in house shows from now on. They don't want me anymore. I've got nowhere to go. I've got no one.

KEVIN

Where's Tania?

KERRY

Who?

KEVIN

Tania.

KERRY

That wasn't anything.

KEVIN doesn't know what to say.

KERRY

I need someone, I need family.

KEVIN

Come here. Stay with us.

KERRY

I can't. Your boys can't see me like this.

KEVIN

Let's go get some breakfast or something. Or meet me at home. Mom can cook us up some pancakes.

KERRY

I just want it all to end.

KEVIN

No you don't. You don't mean that.

KERRY

I do. I'm alone. All alone.

KEVIN is losing patience.

KEVIN

You got us.

KERRY

I'm a piece of shit. I'm fucking cursed. I want to die.

KEVIN

How are you going to say that to me, after everything?

KERRY

It's in me. It's taken over.

This hits a nerve. Outside the sun rises. KEVIN digs deep - calms down.

KEVIN

Kerry, just tell me where you are
and I'll come get you.

KERRY hangs up. KEVIN thinks for a moment, then calls home.

FRITZ (O.S.)

Hello.

KEVIN

Dad, Dad. Sorry for the early
call.

FRITZ (O.S.)

It's OK. I'm heading out to do
some work.

KEVIN

Where's Mom?

FRITZ (O.S.)

Sleeping.

KEVIN

Look, I just spoke to Kerry. He's
in a pretty bad state. I'm worried
about him. I'm going to come out
there. We need to figure out how
to help him -

FRITZ (O.S.)

I'm working Kevin. I don't have
time for this. You boys need to
work it out between yourselves.

KEVIN

Just look out for him Dad. I'll be
out there as soon as I can.

FRITZ hangs up.

INT. KEVIN'S TRUCK / EXT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - MORNING

KEVIN drives out to the ranch. He sees his father working
in the field. He looks towards the house and sees a rental
car parked strangely on the front lawn. The front door to

the house is wide open. KEVIN gets out of his truck and walks up to the rental car. Nothing inside. He walks towards the house, steps onto the porch, and is about to enter through the door when a GUN SHOT GOES OFF. HE freezes. Looks around. He starts to search when he sees KERRY, laying limp under the tree they called CHUCK HOWLEY.

KEVIN runs to his brother and finds him laying limp, a bloody mess, gun shot through the chest. The gun he got his father for Christmas is the weapon.

KEVIN

NO!!

KEVIN turns to see FRITZ lumbering across the field towards them. KEVIN is overcome by rage. He rushes FRITZ and tackles him knocking him flat on his back. FATHER AND SON FINALLY FIGHT.

KEVIN

I told you to stop him, to look out for him. You didn't take care of him, you didn't take care of any of them.

FRITZ, still strong as an OX, rolls KEVIN over.

FRITZ

He called you and you didn't help him. You killed Kerry, you took my favorite son from me.

KEVIN

You were here, you could have stopped him.

FRITZ

You coward, blaming me. Always blaming me, never looking at yourself. If you were brave like your brothers, you'd kill yourself too.

KEVIN, with a surge of rage overturns the giant FRITZ VON ERICH and slams him down. KEVIN strangles FRITZ for a long moment, seeming like he won't ever let go. FRITZ struggles to breathe and submits. Just as FRITZ is about to run out of air, KEVIN let's go. FRITZ lays still, breathing heavy.

Defeated.

KEVIN picks up KERRY and walks away. FRITZ sits up and stares at the blood and the gun on the grass.

INT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

KERRY'S SUICIDE NOTE IS IN PLACE OF THE GUN:

I don't know what is on the other side, but I can't be here anymore. Tonight I walk with my brothers.

KEVIN puts KERRY'S BODY on the dining room table. KEVIN looks down at another lost brother. He kisses his mouth.

KEVIN
I love you Kerry.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - MAGIC HOUR

THE CAMERA floats through the field as KERRY'S SOUL walks. He looks down and sees his foot is back. He jumps up and down on it, happy.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVER - DUSK

KERRY sits in a small boat drifting across the water. A FIREFLY guides him. He turns a corner revealing a DOCK, the same dock where they swam as kids. MIKE and DAVID sit, waiting for him.

KERRY
Brothers.

DAVID/MIKEY
Hey brother.

CUT TO:

KERRY steps out of the boat and onto the dock. They hug and kiss each other on the cheeks. Each hug is tender, physical and loving and gentle, unlike anything in their life.

MIKE is healthy with long hair wearing a pink bandana, guitar strapped over his back. He looks like a 70s rock star.

KERRY

Mikey.

DAVID towers even taller, looking his best, a strapping cowboy. He wears a massive GOLD CHAMPIONSHIP BELT.

KERRY

World Champion of the afterlife.
Dad said you would be.

DAVID

Finally.

KERRY

Where's Jack Jr?

The BROTHERS gesture towards the FIREFLY. The firefly disappears and then KERRY feels a tap on his back. He turns to look down at a sweet scruffy little boy, around 6. This is JACK JR.

KERRY

I guess you're my oldest brother
Jackie.

KERRY picks him up. He is pure and gentle sweetness.

KERRY

Good to meet you.

The FOUR brothers huddle together. Reunited.

INT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - CONTINUOUS

KEVIN sits at the table, alone, holding KERRY's hand, looking out the window, comforted by the thought of them all being together.

INT. THE SPORTATORIUM - OFFICES - DAY

The Sportatorium is completely empty. KEVIN signs over the business to a wrestling promoter, JERRY.

JERRY

Thanks Kevin. I'd love for you to stay on wrestling if you want.

KEVIN

I appreciate it. I could use the extra work.

JERRY

Hey, just so you know, your daddy called me out to the ranch. Tried to intimidate me out of buying this from you.

KEVIN just laughs. Shakes his head.

KEVIN

He never stops. Glad it didn't work.

They look around the building.

JERRY

I'm not going to be using the Sportatorium so you might want to get out of your lease. Though I don't know what else they can use this place for.

KEVIN

Yeah.

JERRY steps away. KEVIN takes one last look at the empty arena.

KEVIN

See ya old pal.

INT. THE VON ERICH RANCH - EVENING

THE HOUSE FEELS COLD, DARK, EMPTY. FRITZ arrives home from a day of working in the fields. The lights are off, the house feels different.

FRITZ

Doris?

DORIS (O.S.)

I'm in here.

He walks through to the kitchen to find her painting. He has never seen this in their 45 years together.

FRITZ
What are you doing?

DORIS
Painting.

FRITZ
What's for dinner?

DORIS
I didn't make anything. I'm not hungry.

FRITZ sits down across from her. The couple sit together in silence.

EXT./INT. KEVIN AND PAM'S HOUSE - DAY

A NEW DAY...KEVIN and PAM lay in bed entwined. PAM is heavily pregnant. Dogs and cats all around. All love. KEVIN whispers to her belly, trying not to wake the kids.

The BOYS burst into the room and jump on their parents.

PAM
Careful, careful.

SON
I'm hungry, I want pancakes.

OTHER SON
Yeah pancakes.

PAM
How about a good morning?

BOYS
Good morning.

KEVIN scoops them up into a power slam. The boys play wrestle on the bed.

EXT. KEVIN AND PAM'S HOUSE - DAY

A beautiful afternoon in the back yard. KEVIN watches his SONS play football like the uncles they didn't get to know. It fills him with joy but also breaks his heart. He is boiling over with emotion and finally, for the first time, KEVIN begins to cry. His BOYS notice. They stop playing and walk over to him, confused.

SON

You OK dad?

KEVIN

I'm sorry. I'm sorry boys, you shouldn't see this. A man doesn't cry, I'm sorry.

SON

It's OK dad, really it's OK. You can cry. Everyone cries.

OTHER SON

Yeah, what are you talking about, we cry all the time.

The BOYS get on either side of him and hug him. He sobs * harder, letting it all out. The BOYS are naturally * affectionate and don't hesitate to show him warmth.

SON

Why do you think you're sad?

KEVIN

I guess cause I used to be a brother, and now I'm not a brother anymore.

SON

Oh. Well, we'll be your brothers, Dad.

OTHER SON

Yeah, we'll be your brothers Dad.

The BOYS and KEVIN hug. He holds them tight.

KEVIN

Thanks boys. Thank you.

KEVIN gives them each a kiss on the cheek. He looks at them. He feels love and feels loved. Something lifts. KEVIN and the BOYS get up and start playing football together. The camera rises up. PAM walks out into the grass with the dogs to join them. The camera keeps rising to reveal the beautiful land where they now live. It is humble and idyllic, full of warmth, love, and possibility. The camera continues to rise up and up and up.

CUT TO BLACK.

END TITLE CARDS

In 2009 The Von Erich Family was inducted into the WWE Hall of Fame.

To this day they are considered one of the greatest families in the history of wrestling.

Kevin and Pam have been married for over 40 years.

They bought a ranch and everyone came to live with them.

All four children and thirteen grandchildren.