

YEAR ON ICE

Inspired by the book

A Year on Ice

By Gerald Eskenazi

"This game is slippery. It's played on ice."

- EMILE FRANCIS

INT. NEW YORK ARENA. NYC - NIGHT

It's **1969**.

The New York arena is new. It opened just a year ago on the rubble of the original, now-demolished, Pennsylvania Station.

The place is packed to the rafters with a rowdy crowd of HOCKEY FANS.

They're drinking beer and yelling down from the smoky tiers of wooden seats.

An American flag hangs vertically from the center of the ceiling.

DENNY PRICE is down on the ice. He's skating fast and focused with the puck in his stick.

His hair is drenched with sweat. No helmet. Leather skates.

Denny is the captain of the **New York pro hockey team**.

He's a dazzling player from working-class Alberta and he handles himself with authority.

But Denny is "*hearing footsteps*" - fraught with a familiar sensation of being pursued and on the run from trouble.

He's right to sense there are predators.

Three **BOSTON PLAYERS** with broken noses and missing teeth are SWOOPING UP FAST from behind him.

Denny accelerates but they close in on his back and RAM HIM violently into the boards.

Denny hits the wood so hard it SPLITS from the force of his chest. He gets the wind knocked out of him.

He manages to turn toward them and they RAM HIM even harder this time.

Denny's head snaps backward. It SLAMS against the plexiglass and his knees buckle beneath him.

The Boston players throw down their sticks and start in on pummeling him.

Denny can't see beyond the assault. But something is left inside him and he starts to peel off his gloves.

He's gaining strength for retaliation.

He gets to his feet, reels back his arm, and punches one of the Boston players explosively in the face.

Suddenly Denny has the force of an engine in his arm and he feels himself connect with a cheek bone.

His fist lands so hard, the Boston player's HEAD BREAKS IN HALF with an ear-splitting *crrack*.

One side of the guy's face shoots out in agony from the other side and the rest of his body collapses onto the ice.

Denny stares down at the misery and mess he has delivered.

INT. ROADSIDE MOTEL ROOM. ONTARIO - EARLY MORNING

Denny Price opens his eyes from this recurring DREAM.

He looks at the ceiling. He's in a modest motel room.

Text on the screen reads:

CANADA

A DOG wakes up on the floor at the side of Denny's bed.

She lifts her head. Denny drops his hand and rubs the dog's big ears.

Suddenly there is BANGING at the DOOR to Denny's room.

INT/EXT. ROADSIDE MOTEL ROOM. ONTARIO - EARLY MORNING

Denny pulls open the motel door.

It's **ROBBIE JURLEN, 39**, well-known goalie on the NY team.

Robbie is standing outside the door with his back to the parking lot in just his jeans. No shirt. Barefoot. His belt is unbuckled. His lip is bleeding.

He shoves inside and paces around in Denny's room. He's coming apart.

DENNY PRICE

What's going on man--

ROBBIE JURLEN

I just got robbed. That waitress in the tank top. With the maple leaf. She took my wallet. All the cash I had was in there.