WEEKEND WARRIOR

an original screenplay

by Dana Therese Johnson
FADE IN:

EXT. PROSPECT PARK - BROOKLYN - DAY

A quiet multi-acre expanse of sloping woodlands, lakes and meadows encircled by a winding course where, at any given time of the day, you’ll see runners, walkers, skaters and cyclists performing their daily exercise routines.

Eastside of the park, near the popular Wollman Skate Rink, a crowd has gathered, waiting for the first “finishers” of the annual New York City Skate Marathon.

COURTNEY JAMES, a handsome 44 year old woman, remarkably fit and athletic, “pulls” the BROOKLYN SPEED SKATING TEAM in a pace line as they take the lead entering the final lap in today’s race.

Cheering explodes from the crowd as they glimpse the oncoming skaters. ALLISON KRAUSE, 40ish, lovely, petite, personifies tradition and class. She and her ten-year-old deaf daughter SUSAN, stand among the large crowd of spectators.

Now, each skater breaks free of the skate pack and attempts to cross the finish line first.

Courtney makes her break from the pace line; her technique and speed are extraordinary.

She expertly crosses the finish, placing fifth.

Meanwhile, Allison and Susan jump up and down excitedly as Courtney crosses the finish line. Allison takes Susan’s hand and guides her past a rapidly growing crowd of skaters and well wishers as they begin their search for Courtney.

EXT. PROSPECT PARK - THE WOLLMAN RINK - DAY

Many of her challengers and friends on the skate team congratulate Courtney. She is exhilarated from her remarkable finish.

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MARCIA WOODSON, early 30’s, tall and physically attractive. An athletic, champion skater and popular star on the skate team. This woman exudes sex appeal. She pushes through her teammates and kisses Courtney. The kiss lingers longer than necessary for a mere congratulation.

Allison, meanwhile, sees “the kiss.”

ALLISON
(singing/voicing)
Come on, I found Mommy.

She and Susan shoulder their way through the dense crowd. Courtney gently pushes Marcia aside. She spots Allison and Susan pressing through the crowd to get to her.

COURTNEY
Okay, enough.

MARCIA
Congratulations, lover.

A MALE SKATER, wearing the same team skins as Courtney, skates over to her and Marcia.

MALE SKATER
You did great out there Courtney. You should be proud of yourself.

MARCIA
We’re all very proud of her.

COURTNEY
Thanks man, I was flying — what a rush.

MALE SKATER
Good thing you’ve got the skate diva here training you — doesn’t get any better than Marcia.
CONTINUED:

MARCIA
I can’t take any credit for ... Okay maybe a little, but Courtney’s done very well.

MALE SKATER
FYI, you two, the team is headed over to the River Cafe for dinner and drinks, can you make it?

Courtney suddenly becomes nervous as she watches Allison and Susan get nearer.

COURTNEY
No, I — I can’t make it, but thanks anyway.

Marcia turns to see what Courtney is looking at, sizes up the situation and quickly collects her skate gear.

MARCIA
Count me in — my plans seem to have changed.

COURTNEY
(to Marcia)
I’m sorry. Have a good time. And thanks again — my glory today couldn't have happened without you.

MARCIA
You got that right. You owe me. And you will pay up.

Marcia and the male skater wave goodbye as they skate off.

Susan finally reaches Courtney giving her a tremendous hug. Allison hangs back a little.

COURTNEY
(to Susan, signing/voicing)
How’s my girl?

(continues)
CONTINUED:

Courtney, ready to leave, bends down to pick up her gear, but Susan beats her to it and carries the bag for her. Courtney and Allison, silent, position Susan between them as they walk off.

INT. COURTNEY AND ALLISON’S BEDROOM – NIGHT

Courtney and Allison are in bed. Courtney attempts to embrace Allison, hoping to make love. Allison pushes her away.

COURTNEY
What’s up? Come on, you can’t be tired?

ALLISON
What’s her name?

Courtney bristles realizing what Allison is asking.

COURTNEY
Oh, I see what this is about. You saw her kissing me. She’s a teammate. She was congratulating me.

Allison gets out of bed, puts on her robe, and opens the bedroom door.

COURTNEY
Allison, wait.

Allison is almost out of the door when –

COURTNEY
Her name’s Marcia. She’s the team’s lead skater. A champion.

ALLISON
I only wanted to know her fucking name. I could care less about the rest.

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COURTNEY
She’s my trainer. She’s helped me a lot.

ALLISON
You’re sleeping with her!

COURTNEY
Listen, what I’m doing requires skill and timing. And at my age, I have so much to learn. I need training — from the best.

ALLISON
So, fucking her is part of your training?

Courtney is speechless. Allison storms out of the room slamming, the door behind her.

EXT. KITCHEN PATIO – DAY

Allison prepares the morning breakfast. She sets the patio table for three. She moves around the kitchen patio efficiently, but she is clearly upset about last night’s argument.

Enter Courtney, nervous and reluctant to face the music this morning, treads carefully towards the coffeepot.

COURTNEY
-guarded-
Morning.

ALLISON
Sit down, I’ve got breakfast started.

Courtney sits at the table as commanded. Allison walks over to the table with the coffeepot, slams down a coffee mug in front of Courtney and begins to pour, glaring at Courtney the whole time.

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Courtney’s hands, resting on the table, tremble slightly. Drawing them back under the table, she fixes her eyes on the mug — as Allison pours the coffee — praying it doesn’t end up in her lap.

ALLISON
When my grandfather was 55, he had a series of affairs. I can remember my grandmother and my mother crying for days over that nasty business.

Courtney slumps further into the chair, both hands clearly trembling now.

COURTNEY
Allison ...

ALLISON
She did not leave him or throw him out.

COURTNEY
Listen ...

ALLISON
After all the crying was over, they just went on with their lives.

COURTNEY
Please ...

ALLISON
Why she put up with it, I’ll never know.

Allison sits down at the table and stares Courtney dead in the eye. Courtney sucks in her breath, disarmed.

ALLISON
When I fell in love with you ten years ago, I planned on it being forever.

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CONTINUED: (2)

COURTNEY
Allison, please ...

ALLISON
But, I’m telling you right now
Courtney — I won’t be crying
over you.

INT. RESTAURANT BAR – RIVER CAFE – NIGHT

Marcia and OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SKATE TEAM sit at a big
round table, eating, drinking and conversing about the
afternoon’s practice.

Marcia is very lively. She’s glowing after a hard workout
and this makes her charming and sexy. She playfully flirts
with everyone at the table.

Courtney, on the other hand, broods at the bar, belting
back one too many shots of Jack Daniel’s.

MALE TEAMMATE
Hey Marcia, looks like your
protégé’s in the dumps.

MARCIA
I know how to fix that.

Making her way over to the bar, she manages to charm a
male patron off his stool, then sidles up next to
Courtney.

MARCIA
Hey, sour puss.

She gives Courtney a long deep kiss but her magic doesn’t
work.

MARCIA
I thought for sure that’d cheer
you up.

Courtney manages a smile, but it soon fades.

COURTNEY
We have to talk.
INT. MARCIA’S APARTMENT – NIGHT

The apartment is empty and, except for a hint of light streaming in from a window somewhere, dark. We hear keys turning a lock. A door opens letting light in from outside. Marcia and Courtney enter the apartment. Marcia, wasting no time with formalities, turns and embraces Courtney.

COURTNEY
Marcia?

MARCIA
Yes, darling.

COURTNEY
Turn on the fucking light.

MARCIA
I like it better this way.

COURTNEY
Never mind, I’ll do it myself.

Courtney breaks away from Marcia's hold.

MARCIA
No, I’ll do it. Damn, what’s with you, anyway?

The apartment lights are turned on. Marcia takes off her coat, drops her bag onto a chair. Courtney remains standing in the middle of the living room.

MARCIA
Better now?

Marcia walks over to Courtney and tries to take off Courtney’s jacket. Courtney shrugs her off.

COURTNEY
Don’t, I’m not staying.

MARCIA
You’re not?

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CONTINUED:

COURTNEY
Marcia ... Allison knows about us.

MARCIA
Don’t be so dramatic. You want a drink? God knows I do.

Marcia walks over to a quaint little bar set up in the corner of her living room. She starts pulling out drinking glasses, liquor bottles and ice trays. She expertly mixes drinks for her and Courtney.

COURTNEY
This is serious, Marcia. In the ten years I've been with Allison, I've never cheated. Then, I met you. God, what if she leaves?

MARCIA
One Jack Daniel’s, on the rocks.

Marcia walks over to Courtney and hands her a drink. Courtney snatches the glass from Marcia’s hand, spilling most of it onto the carpet.

MARCIA
Shit, I hope that doesn’t stain.

COURTNEY
Are you even listening to me?

Marcia stands facing Courtney. She sweeps her fingers through Courtney’s hair, then across her face, brushing her lips.

MARCIA
When we met, two months ago, you were so hungry for support and reassurance....

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CONTINUED: (2)

MARCIA
Needing me so much. You’d say, “Teach me to be a winner, Marcia. I want to be a winner.” That was your mantra, baby. It was all you thought about — not Allison, not your family.

Marcia embraces Courtney and kisses her. The kiss ends as abruptly as it began.

MARCIA
And now, lover, because of me, you are a winner. You really want to give that up?

COURTNEY
(confused)
I — I don’t ...

She tries to speak but can’t find any words. Finally, offering no resistance, Marcia leads her by the hand into the bedroom.

INT. MARCIA’ S BEDROOM – DAY

It’s very early in the morning and we see Courtney and Marcia curled up in bed asleep. Courtney jolts awake with a sudden feeling of dread. For a moment she studies Marcia sleeping soundly, then she turns to check the clock. Panic overcomes her.

COURTNEY
Allison … Shit.

INT. COURTNEY/ALLISON’ S KITCHEN – DAY

Allison sits at the kitchen table, drinking a cup of coffee. She is furious that Courtney did not come home last night.

Suddenly, the FRONT DOOR OPENS then CLOSES. Allison looks up and sees Courtney walking into the kitchen.

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CONTINUED:

Courtney stops, bracing herself for what’s coming.

ALLISON
I want you to stop racing.

COURTNEY
I can’t believe you mean that.

ALLISON
Quit that damned team – or get out.

COURTNEY
What about everything I’ve been working for in the past two months?

Allison gets up from the table and walks to the door where she turns to Courtney.

ALLISON
Whether or not we stay together ... our child’s life must remain as normal as possible. Now, you decide how that’s going to happen.

Allison leaves the kitchen without giving Courtney another thought.

EXT. PROSPECT PARK – DAY

In the daybreak, Courtney, a lone skater, expertly glides through the park’s course. Her pace is fast, fluid, meticulous. She looks pensive, yet exhilarated with each stroke. For her, this moment is pure absolution from the rest of her life.

EXT. PROSPECT PARK – THE WOLLMAN SKATE RINK – DAY

The rest of the skate team arrives. Most of the skaters begin their warm-up routine, but a few stop to watch Courtney.

(CONTINUED)
Marcia, straggling behind the TEAM'S COACH, an attractive older man with a slight beer gut, notices Courtney skating alone. She waves to get Courtney’s attention.

Courtney, seeing the team arrive, starts to skate over but suddenly feels uneasy when she spots Marcia waving.

Marcia and the COACH meet up with Courtney. Marcia playfully greets her with a kiss on the cheek. Courtney reacts nervously.

COACH
Morning, you looked pretty relaxed out there just now — I don’t think I’ve ever seen you skate better. Keep this up and you’ll soon be ready for the US Open Marathon Championship.

COURTNEY
You really think so, coach?

COACH
Keep working with Marcia and you’ll get there. No doubt about it.

MARCIA
(to Courtney)
Hear that?

COACH
Now, this morning, I have you two paired up for today’s practice run. Marcia will decide how hard to push but I don’t want any injuries.

The coach walks away and joins the rest of the team. Marcia moves closer to Courtney.

MARCIA
You left in an awful hurry this morning.

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CONTINUED: (2)

COURTNEY
I had to go home Marcia — hello, remember Allison?

MARCIA
Okay.... Maybe, we should just talk about race strategy.

COURTNEY
Allison was waiting for me ... angry.

MARCIA
I suppose we could cool it for a while.

COURTNEY
I’m quitting the team.

MARCIA
What? With all the time this team has invested in you? I have invested in you? Look, come home with me after practice — we can talk about it.

COURTNEY
(shaking her head)
Marcia, I’m sorry. I — I really fucked up.

MARCIA
Only loser’s quit.

Courtney thinks hard about Marcia’s words but eventually shakes them off and skates away.

INT. COURTNEY AND ALLISON’S HOME — LATER THAT DAY

Courtney quietly reclines on the couch watching TV. Susan enters the room and sits next to her.

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SUSAN  
(signing/voicing)  
Mom, anything good on?

COURTNEY  
(signing/voicing)  
The US Olympic trials.

SUSAN  
Really? Can I watch with you?

Courtney gestures for Susan to come sit with her. Susan climbs next to Courtney on the couch and starts to cuddle up to watch television but stops and looks at Courtney curiously.

SUSAN  
You’re not skating today?

COURTNEY  
Don’t feel like it.

SUSAN  
You sick, Mom?

COURTNEY  
(shrugs)  
I prefer staying home, today.

SUSAN  
But you love skating, more than anything....

COURTNEY  
That’s not true. Who told you that?

SUSAN  
It is true, Mom. You’re never here. You’re always at the park, skating.

The little girl sits back in Courtney’s arms and watches television but then looks up at Courtney, thoughtfully.

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CONTINUED: (2)

COURTNEY

What?

SUSAN

Will you teach me how to speed skate?

COURTNEY

Sure, if that’s what you want.

SUSAN

Yes, that way, I can be with you every day, and Mother will stop being mad at you.

COURTNEY

(stunned)

My God, when did you get to be so grown-up?

She pulls Susan closer to her, wrapping her arms around her, then, the two of them settle down to watch TV.

EXT. PROSPECT PARK – THE WOLLMAN RINK – MONTHS LATER – DAY

It’s a beautiful day on the Eastside of the park where we find Courtney and Allison joining a small mob of parents hoisting portable DV camcorders. The anxious spectators gather outside The Wollman Rink waiting for the winners of today’s Junior Speed Skating 10K race.

Susan, wearing colorful racing skins, takes the lead in the pace line as it turns into the final lap. Suddenly, all the young skaters “break out” of the skate pack charging for the finish, but Susan effortlessly crosses the finish line first.

Cheers erupt from Courtney and Allison as they run to catch up with Susan. Courtney lifts Susan into her arms and spins her around and around, as Allison, laughing, marks the moment with her DV camera.

FADE OUT.