

# **WARRIOR**

(The Life And Times Of Jim Thorpe)

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*DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF GRACE THORPE*

## Guide to Musical Sections

1. Welcome (Choral Theme)	p. 5
2. My America is Gone	p. 6
3. Hiram's Lament	p. 8
4. Your Daddy's Demons	p. 10
5. 'Tis a gift	p. 11
6. No where to go	p. 12
7. Pop's Theme	p. 13
8. Song of Home	p. 14
9. Forty-nine to Nothin'	p. 14
10. Song of Home (Reprise)	p. 16
11. Easy to Fall, Hard to Rise	p. 16
12. What's Not to Love About Jim	p. 18
13. Superman	p. 19
14. Rush	p. 20
15. Thanks, King	p. 20
16. Rush (Reprise)	p. 21
ACT 2	
17. The Wedding Day	
18. Thanks, King (reprise)	p. 24
19. To Hit or Miss A Curve	p. 26
20. Iva's Lament/Child in Winter	p. 28

21. I'm Leavin' Your Town	p. 30
22. The Boys from the Factory	p. 32
23. Runaway/(reprise)	p. 34
24. Nowhere to go (reprise)	p. 38
25. How a Man Outta Die	p. 40
26. American Lullabye	p. 41

#### (PROLOGUE)

(As the lights fade we hear the steady drumbeat and the Indian pipes. Stage lights come up on Jim standing on a pedestal in the same position as the statue of Jim Thorpe at the NFL Hall of Fame. Three actors dressed in traditional Native American dress approach the pedestal and in a ritualistic manner, change Jim's clothes to those of a traditional Native American's chief's clothing...except for the headdress.

As this ritual is going on other members of the cast appear in the shadows. We hear the following lines, without seeing their faces...)

AVERY: It was never personal...just a matter of ethics. Jim Thorpe is a dead issue.

POP: When I heard...well it hit me pretty hard. I had some guilt you see. I made a lot of money off that boy.

COL. PRATT: He is a testament to everything we are doing here at Carlisle! He is no longer a savage, he is a citizen of this Great Nation, and does honor to his race.

IVA: Lying next to at night asleep...he was the strongest, fastest body God ever created.

MAN: He died poor as dirt. He come into this world with nothin', and he left with less.

CANTON TEAMMATE: 'Poor Jim'...folks say, 'poor Jim'...what a load of crap if you ask me. Jim stood on high ground, and saw things few men ever see. He never asked for anyone's pity!

HIRAM: Go make something of yourself , boy. 'Sides...if you stay, I might have to kill you.

MAYOR: I hear folks say we should return his body to Oklahoma. Well we paid hard cash for it. Jim's staying right here in Pennsylvania...fair is fair!

WOMAN: He was a drifter.

INDIAN: Jim belongs in Oklahoma.

MAN: He was a loving father.

WOMAN: He was a drunk.

JACK WARNER: He was the All-American!

HIRAM: He was a Warrior!

(SCENE ONE)

(Carnival Barker takes the traditional headdress and ritualistically hands it to Jim. Jim puts it on his head. Suddenly the stage is filled with light and color . The drums and flute stop. The music shifts to the strains of 'WELCOME'. The set changes to tent flaps expressing a carnival midway perhaps with large banners flown in reading and illustrated as 'Bearded Lady', 'Pharaoh's Treasure' and 'The Reptile Man'!

It is the Ohio State Fair in 1949. As the crowd comes together, the circus barker draws attention to a series of circus freaks, which include among other things, Old Jim Thorpe, dressed as an Indian Chief and doing traditional dances and giving a lecture about his own life story.)

JIM: [scat singing]: *Hey yeh yeh...*

CHORUS: [response]: *Hey yeh yeh...*

CHORUS: *Ooh, Ooh*

BARKER: Welcome to your 1950 State Fair good people of Ohio, land of the presidents; land of the buckeye tree and the beautiful river; birth place of professional football...the American game! If you've already beheld the bearded lady, been bedazzled by the Pharaoh's treasure, or glimpsed at the amazing Reptile Man, step right up and meet a living legend, descendant of the Great Chief Black Hawk...out of the mouth of Kings, "the greatest athlete who ever walked the earth..."

[Welcome]

CHORUS: *Well, we come (we come) from small towns (from the), farms (cities), and fields (factories), dirt roads (highways), cornrows (high rise), and green valleys (we're returning)...to this table (table) called (we call) America (our America), we share (we share) the bounty (bounty) beneath the sun. We come, we come...welcome.*

(A sixty-three-year-old Jim in full Indian regalia, dances and chants, as the crowd pours in)

JIM: *Hey, yeh, yeh, yeh...Hey, yeh, yeh, yeh...  
Hey, yeh, yeh, yeh... Hey, yeh, yeh, yeh...*

BARKER: Step right up, step right up! Only a nickel, a shiny nickel. Thank you, enjoy yourself, sonny. Step right up young lady...yes, that's right; he is a real Indian. No young lady, he won't scalp you. Here's your change, thank you very much. Thank you. Watch your step there, miss. Come ahead, folks.

[My America is Gone]

JIM: *Hey, yeh, yeh, yeh... Hey, yeh, yeh, yeh...  
Hey, yeh, yeh, yeh... Hey, yeh, yeh, yeh...*

*Daddy was a wild man  
And I am a wild man, too.  
I come from a time you can't remember  
And a place you never really knew  
Where Tee-Pees line the riverbanks  
And above the wood smoke blows  
Before there are roads, and Sooners and laws  
Where the wild sage grass grows*

*My America is gone now  
My America is just a dream*

*My Daddy traded horses  
He sold bootleg on the side*

*He had children up and down the territory  
And I lost track of all of his wives  
He gave me these scars, but he taught me to fight  
And to never admit defeat  
And he just might be the last man I ever knew  
Who was free...*

*My America is gone now  
My America is just a dream*

*Hey, yeh, yeh, yeh... Hey, yeh, yeh, yeh...  
Hey, yeh, yeh, yeh... Hey, yeh, yeh, yeh...*

*Daddy sent me to a nearby Indian school, but I ran away  
So he beat me with his belt and buckle  
And he put me on a train  
And he sent me to a school so far away  
I could not run home*

*And riding away from my childhood fields  
I'd never felt so alone*

*Cause my America was gone  
My America was just a dream  
I wake up in a cold sweat  
To the sound of my own heart beating  
My America is gone  
It was only a dream.*

CARNIVAL BARKER: An old man telling his life story for a few dollars at a State Fair, dressed up in war feathers and dancing around...may seem pathetic to some, but it's honest enough work. And, it's a helluva story! But you have to hear right from the beginning. You see, he rose out of the mud along the winding banks of the North Canadian...a Warrior, like his great-grandfather, Black Hawk. He was born in 1887, three years 'before' the Massacre at Wounded Knee!

HIRAM: Actually, there were two of them, twins, Jimmy and Charlie (two young silhouettes

in the background) but times being what they were, Charlie caught the fever, and dying, he gave his life spirit to little Jim (the two silhouettes become one). With the strength and agility of two young men, the Warrior had no equal when it came to running and wrestling and all the other forms of horseplay common among Indian boys. It wasn't long before Jim was too much for me to handle...I decided to send the boy away,...far away!

(Scene shifts to the Indian Territory (Oklahoma) circa 1907. A fence with horse gear and a blazing 'cyc' lights the stage. Jim's father Hiram, a giant of a man, fiery, brawling, half-breed. Jim is brought in against his will by two of Hiram's men. Lights reveal two men holding Jim by the arms bringing him to Hiram. Jim shrugs them off)

MAN 1: He ran away from school again.

MAN 2: Says he ran all 27 miles home.

JIM: I aint going back...there nothin for me there!

HIRAM: I'm sending you to school in the hills of Pennsylvania...I'm giving you a chance, boy.

JIM: Why can't I stay, daddy? Why you keep sendin' me away? I could work for you.

HIRAM: Runnin' whiskey? I don't think so.

JIM: We could farm?

HIRAM: [laughing] It's just dust out here in the territory.

JIM [holding onto his father, pleading]: Cattle, horses?

HIRAM [pulling away]: Listen, boy. You know how we shoot a coyote?

JIM: Yeah.

HIRAM: Then we hang his corpse on a post...

JIM: Sure. Keeps the other coyotes away.

HIRAM: Don't you smell it?

JIM: What?

HIRAM: Death. It's in the air. There's nothin' here for you. Go make something out of your life, Jimmy. 'Sides, if you stay, [pause] I'll probably end up killin' you.

JIM: Don't you love me, Daddy?

HIRAM [to Man1]: ,... take him to the train. [Hiram tosses Jim the bottle] Here, ...there's all the love you need.

(Jim catches the bottle, and looks down at it...Hiram continues)

When it hurts real bad,...whiskey eases the pain. Even when everyone deserts you...you'll see.

MAN 2: How you gonna pay for the ticket, Hiram?

HIRAM: Same way's I always do. Tell Sam there'll be a bottle waiting for him when he gets back. [Man 1 and Jim head off to the train] And see that he stays on that train!

MAN 1: Oh, he'll stay on the train. I'll make sure of that.

(Jim steps onto the train, crosses to the other side of the stage,... sits in his seat...commences drinking)

HIRAM: (reading his letter)

'To The U.S. Indian Agent'  
Sac and Fox Agency, Oklahoma Territory

December 13th, 1903

"Dear Sir- I have a boy that I wish you would Make rangements to Send to School Some Ware Carlyle or Hampton I dont Care ware He went to Haskill but I Think it better one of the former plases so he cannot run a way-he is 14 years old and I Cannot do any thing with him So please at your Earlest Convence atend to this for he is getting worse very day- and I want him to go and make somthing of him Self for he cannot do it hear-

Respectfully yours  
Hairm Thorpe

His Name is James Thorpe"

(YOUR DADDY'S DEMONS)

HIRAM: *Your Daddy's demons are with you even now  
They are sitting right beside you on this train  
And I know, that you will travel far  
So the important thing is knowing where they are*

*Your Daddy's demons are like small towns you pass at night  
There's always room under the neon lights  
But you find that it's hard to ride away  
There's something about that place  
That makes you want to stay*

*Your Daddy's demons are stars that never fall  
Forever in the night, you hear them call  
You look outside the train window and search the sky  
Til' you see your constellation  
The dark stars that never die...they never die.*

.....

(SCENE 2)

(Lights reveal Jim, Iva, and several Indian children at the Carlisle School (1907) as female superintendent cuts their braids below a banner that reads, "The Carlisle Indian School." Carlisle founder, Col. Pratt, is also present across stage.)

['Tis the gift]

CARLISLE STUDENTS: *'Tis the gift to be a Christian  
'Tis the gift to be a saint  
'Tis the gift to be blonde, blue-eyed  
All the things we ain't  
'Tis the gift to strip our buckskin,  
Burn our beads, cut our braids  
To forget our native tongue  
And never speak our given name*

*When true simplicity is gained  
To bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed  
To turn, turn, will be our delight  
'Til by turning, turning we come round right.*

SUPERINTENDENT: At the Carlisle school, Indian children are being transformed. Beneath their heathen darkness, all is pure and bright.

COL. PRATT: The Indian in America is neither a child, nor a savage. He is neither innately noble, nor innately depraved. Given equal social conditioning, the Indian will prosper in white America!

HIRAM: Early on, Jim had trouble with rules at Carlisle, often spending the night in the guardhouse- his defiant nature made him a favorite with the other boys...and one particular lady.

[Jim is locked up behind a door in the Carlisle guardhouse. Iva brings him his dinner; she cannot see him]

JIM: Is that you, Gus? Did you bring a bottle?

IVA: No, it's not Gus. It's just me... with your dinner.

JIM: Who are you?

IVA: My name is Iva,... Iva Miller.

JIM: Have we met?

IVA: I don't think so.

JIM: What do you look like?

IVA: What do I look like?

JIM: Are you beautiful?

IVA: What kind of a question is that to ask a girl?

JIM: I'm sorry, but... You have a beautiful voice, and I can't see you.

IVA: I guess I'm about like any other girl. Here's your dinner.

(Iva slips it under the door)

JIM: Wait, let me look at your hands.

(Jim takes her hands, both kneel, divided by the door)

IVA: Why? What are you doing?

JIM: What tribe are you?

IVA: Cherokee, but some of the other girls make fun of me- say I don't have any Indian blood.

JIM: No, no, they're wrong. I can see it. There's Indian blood here...daughter of a chief.

IVA: [pause] Can I have my hands back, now?

JIM: Yeah, sure. [He lets go]

IVA: [starting to leave]: What's your name?

JIM: Jim. Jim Thorpe.

IVA [aside]: Looking back, it seems like such a little thing. I mean, the way

we met...but honestly, I think I fell in love with Jim that day...even then,  
there was a wall between us.

[Nowhere To Go]

IVA: [sung]: *It's not enough I need you so much  
It's not enough I have to dream of you  
But then to be just a girl  
To be only me...  
For you deserve some kind of angel  
Someone to never let you down  
And I'd walk away  
If one could be found*

*Until then I'll tell you  
The only words I can say  
Broken and honest  
Standing in the rain  
I will never love another young man  
Never love another soul  
And darling, if you ever leave me  
If you leave me, I will have nowhere to go  
Nowhere to go.*

COL. PRATT: (Spoken to Jim as the Colonel releases him from the Guardhouse)  
I believe in immersing the Indian in our civilization. When we  
get you under, we will keep you under until you are thoroughly  
soaked. In breaking Indian custom, there is no room for sentiment.

IVA and JIM: *Until then I'll tell you  
The only words I can say  
Broken and honest  
Standing in the rain  
I will never love another young man/woman  
Never love another soul  
And darling, if you ever leave me  
If you leave me, I will have nowhere to go  
Nowhere to go, nowhere to go, nowhere...*

(Blackout.)

.....

(SCENE 3)

(Scene shifts to the Carlisle athletic field, and lights up on Pop with a whistle around his neck. Jim is in background approaching track practice in overall and work boots.)

[Pop's Theme]

HIRAM: They call him Pop,... Pop Warner, at the Carlisle School. He coached football, baseball, track, and did some groundwork; hell, whatever. And he had some fine athletics too. A fifteen year old Jim Thorpe walked up to my track practice in work boots and overalls, one day.

JIM: Hey, mister, is it ok if I jump over this pole?

POP: Name's Pop, son...and that pole is the high jump set at the school record. The boys and I laughed at this hayseed. [laughs] It's a free country, boy. Careful not to chip your teeth on the way down! [Jim jumps over the pole easily.] Well, I'll be damned! Take your boots off, son, and run that track. [aside to the audience] The hundred in ten flat.

Well, hell, Jim made the Track Team, soon collecting gold medals all over the country. He was a natural at every event...a kind of athletic genius...a freak of nature, I guess. Why, once, we just took Jim to compete against Lafayette College, all by himself. He won the meet, collecting 12 gold medals and one bronze. Then he wanted to play football.

JIM: Hey Pop, how 'bout letting Jim play a lil' halfback?

POP: Now, son, you're too valuable to the track team...you might get hurt.

JIM [interrupting] I ain't gonna get hurt.

POP: But what if you do get hurt?

JIM: Who's gonna hurt Jim?

HIRAM: Now, Jim took being told "no" kind of hard. He'd get down and threaten

to go on back home to the Territory...that is, Oklahoma. Pop thought it was an Indian kinda thing...found out it was a "Jim kinda thing."

[Song of Home]

JIM and CHORUS [singing]: *I travel straight for my home  
I know the path, the way to go  
I hear a lullaby, like a church bell soft and low  
My spirit knows the song of home*

POP [tossing Jim a football]: All right, boy, have it your way. You can give the varsity tacklin' practice.

[Jim exits]

Well, the first time he handled the ball, he went 60 yards for a score, leaving Carlisle boys all over the field... thought it was a fluke, so I gave him the ball again, and he did it again!

JIM: (Jim returns wearing football gear) Nobody tackles Big Jim!

POP: Well, hell, Jim made the football team...ran a kick back 90 yards on his first college touch, made Walter Camp's third team All-American in his first year. After a hiatus from Carlisle, Jim returned to dominate the game like no man ever has...on offense and defense, kicking field goals for us, and sometimes 'catching his own punts!'...he kicked 'em so high and far, and he covered them so fast.

We beat the eventual National Champs, Harvard, in 1911, with Jim coming off the bench, injured, tearing off his bandages. The only way to really know how good he was, is to hear an opposing coach give a half-time pep talk!

(Lights reveal an opposing coach and a bench of tired, bloody, muddy football players circa 1911. The coach offers a pep talk)

[Forty-nine to Nothin']

COACH: *We're only losing 49 to nothin'  
That isn't too one-sided at all  
And when we go out for the second half  
It's our turn to play with the ball.  
Now, I don't mind Big Jim intercepting our passes  
Don't mind Jim causing fumbles and such  
But when you hide behind the goal post, boys,  
Well, that's too damn much!*

COACH & PLAYERS: *We're only losing 49 to nothin'  
That isn't too one-sided at all  
And when we go out for the second half  
It's our turn to play with the ball.*

COACH: *Now some of you have friends and family out there  
'Cause they're the only ones who will show  
Unless we play these damn Carlisle Indians  
And then the stadium overflows  
Now I'm sick and tired of reading about  
Jim Thorpe, the red man's salvation  
Let's give 'em an Anglo-Saxon ass-whoopin'  
And send 'em back to the reservation*

PLAYERS: *We're gonna whip those Carlisle Indians  
We'll show them that we're rugged and tough  
This half we won't cry like little girls  
When we get the shit kicked out of us*

COACH: *Yeah, I don't mind Jim braggin' in the papers  
Pokin' fun at the coaches and me  
But I'd rather be dead in my cold, cold grave  
Then to watch that Injun runnin' free...runnin' free*

PLAYERS: *We're only losin' 49 to nothin'  
That isn't too one-sided at all  
And when we go out for the second half  
It's our turn to play with the ball*

PLAYERS: *We're gonna whip those Carlisle Indians  
We'll show them that we're rugged and tough  
This half we won't cry like little girls  
When we get the shit kicked out of us*

COACH: *Yeah, I don't mind Jim braggin' in the papers  
Pokin' fun at the coaches and me  
But I'd rather be dead in my cold, cold grave  
Then to watch that Injun runnin' free...runnin' free*

*Stop that son of a bitch, you hear, boys  
Get on out there and give 'em hell!*

(Players run out at the end of the song, as Pop starts up again)

POP: Now, you'd think that with all that success and hoopla, Jim would be

pretty pleased with things. But he was drinkin'. I'm not talkin' 'bout a couple beer, he was drinkin' the hard stuff. Most of the boys enjoyed a libation after a victory, or a rare defeat, but it was different to Jim...it could take the light right out of his eyes, you know?

HIRAM: So, at the end of the season, he just left school, came back to Oklahoma and he hired on as a cowboy breakin' horses. One day someone tells him out that his daddy had died, ...of snakebite or some goddamn thing...only nobody had bothered to tell him. His girl, Iva, well, she feared for him out there alone, so Pop went after him.

(Lights reveal Jim and Pop standing at Hiram's grave...)

[Song of Home (reprise)]

JIM [with Chorus of Mourners offstage]: *I travel straight for my home  
I know the path, the way to go  
I hear a lullaby like a church-bell soft and low  
my spirit knows the song of home  
my spirit knows the song of home.*

JIM: I ain't comin' back.

POP: You gotta come back, Jim. There's nothin' for you here.

JIM: You got something for me, Pop? You got something for Big Jim?

POP: The Olympics, Jimmy. I can get you a try-out with the Olympic team. You can show the whole world what's inside you!

JIM: When he sent me to Carlisle, he said someday I might amount to somethin'. He whispered it in my ear; whispered it, like it was real important...like it was a prayer. [Jim drinks out of a flask].

POP: You can show 'em, Jim, you can show 'em all. Nobody can stop you, boy!

JIM: If I come, I do it my way...

POP: Do it for yourself, do it for Iva.

JIM: My way...

POP: Shouldn't we... say a prayer or something?

[Easy to Fall, Hard to Rise]

JIM: (spoken) What are we gonna tell God  
That He don't already know about this man  
About you, or about me  
What are we gonna say to Him?

*We run and we jump  
We try to touch the sky  
And if there is a God up there  
A God with father's eyes  
He knows how easy it is to fall  
And just how hard to rise...yeh, heh*

(spoken) My Daddy wasn't a church-goin' man  
The only time I seen his soul set free  
He was riding wild across the Oklahoma plains

JIM and HIRAM: *We kick off the dust  
We bind the wound, we get back up  
For if there is a God out there  
A God who loves to ride*

*He knows how easy it is to fall  
And just how hard to rise  
Yeh, heh...to rise  
Yeh, heh...*

Blackout.

.....

(SCENE 4)

(Lights reveal the deck of the ocean liner, FINLAND, 1912, carrying the US Olympic team to Stockholm. The following narrative is read as the set changes.)

REPORTER #1: This Indian is the marvel of the Age, the red blood of his father, who in years begone buried the war hatchet and watched with dimming eyes the plow point of civilization desecrating his hunting grounds. The red blood still courses through the veins of a remnant few, asserting themselves in the more war-like of peaceful pursuits!

REPORTER #2: Reporting from aboard the ocean liner, 'Finland', headed for the Olympic games in Stockholm, Thorpe is the most indifferent athlete we have ever had. While the rest of his athletic comrades engage in strenuous calisthenics, he makes no special preparations, meanders carelessly about. The handsome Indian swings idly in a hammock, enjoying libation after libation.

PASSENGER: What are you doing Jim,...thinking of your Uncle, Sitting Bull?

JIM: I may have an aversion to work, but I also have an aversion for getting beat.

WOMAN #2: I've heard he trains under the cover of night.

WOMAN #1: That's what they say.

WOMAN #3: I've heard he's the very epitome of male virility.

WOMAN #1: Honey, you have no idea.

(Scene aboard the ocean liner, women surround Thorpe)

[What's Not to Love About Jim?]

WOMAN #1: *What's not to love about Big Jim?  
He's exotic, erotic  
He's everything my folks said to stay away from  
But we're drifting away from the mainland*

*On a romantic voyage to the games in Sweden  
So nobody needs to know about the company I'm keepin'  
And what's not to love; what's not to love  
What's not to love about Big Jim*

WOMAN #2: *What's not to love about Big Jim*

*What a mystique, what a physique  
I bet he knows what he's doing in the bedroom at night  
You know, a girl goes crazy for the strong silent type  
If I could get Big Jim to notice me  
I'd be his little white squaw in a silk teepee  
What's not to love; and what's not to love  
What's not to love about Big Jim*

WOMAN #3: *What's not to love about Big Jim*

*He's a rebel, a troublemaker  
Reporters come by; he's on his back  
Swingin' in a hammock with a bottle of apple jack  
Reporters say, "You're gonna need more than charm!"  
Jim flashes a smile, flexes his arm  
As soon as they leave, he's running the track  
Boy's got it figured out, that's a fact  
What's not to love about Big, what's not to love about Big  
What's not to love about Big Jim.*

REPORTER #1:

(The crowd assembles on stage in stadium seat and cheer each of Jim's feats)

Arriving at the stadium in Stockholm, Jim is the sensation of these 1912 games, attracting great crowds wherever he goes. He can put the shot 44 feet, broad jump over 23 feet, run the hundred in ten flat, the high hurdles in 15 and a half seconds, negotiates the 220 in 25 seconds and can high jump 6 feet 5 inches...all with panther-like grace and his trademark half smile. Thorpe and two other decathletes pose for the finish line of the 1500 meters. Jim is the clear winner, with Avery Brundage a distant third.

IVA: [Writing in her diary] It's the middle of the night, and I can't sleep my love.  
This day you will change the world and I wonder, Jim, when the world is changed, will you still love a simple girl like me?

[Superman]

IVA [sung]: *If ever I learn to walk on water*

*You'll be the first to know it  
I will run and skip for you  
Across the ocean blue*

CROWD: [In affected, European accents]: *Ooh, ooh  
I've never seen a man  
So fleet of foot and yet so strong  
Perhaps he's some new evolution  
A kind of superman  
He doesn't ever seem to try  
While others bleed and sweat  
He glides around so effortlessly...  
A kind of superman*

CROWD: *Ooh, ooh*

IVA: [spoken]: Whatever happens today, Jim, I want you to know you can always come home. That I will always be here for you...with love, your Iva.

*[sung] If ever I learn to fly my love  
You'll be the first to know it  
I will lift on wings of joy  
into the wild blue*

CROWD: *Ooh, ooh  
I've never seen a man  
So fleet of foot and yet so strong  
Perhaps he's some new evolution  
A kind of superman  
He doesn't ever seem to try  
While others bleed and sweat  
He glides around so effortlessly...  
A kind of superman  
Ooh, ooh*

IVA: *If ever I learn to walk on water  
You'll be the first to know it  
I will run and skip for you  
Across the ocean blue.*

REPORTER #2: After devastating one field in the pentathlon, American Jim Thorpe is one event away from collecting the gold medal in the decathlon to claim the title, "World's Greatest Athlete." Only the grueling 1500 meters stands between the Indian hero and Olympic immortality. And now, the final act.

(Thorpe moves from the posed finish to the awards podium to sing, "The Rush of

Love.”)

[The Rush of Love]

JIM: *To be the best  
Just for a day  
To hold the moment in your arms  
And never let it slip away  
To be the first  
In someone's life  
To set the sun, and raise the moon  
In thousands of eyes  
To leap off this mountain top (Ooo's)*

JIM and CHORUS: *And feel the rush of love  
To taste the holy kiss  
I could never get enough  
Of this, this rush, this rush*

REPORTER #1: Ladies and Gentlemen, his majesty, King Gustav!

(The King of Sweden places the laurel wreath around Jim's neck, as the two losers (including Avery Brundage) take their lesser positions on the awards podium)

KING GUSTAV: You, sir, are the greatest athlete in the world.

JIM [receiving the laurel wreath]: Well, ...thanks, King.

(Avery Brundage emerges from the podium to sing)

[Thanks, King]

EVERY: *When I think of the years I spent training for the Olympics  
To hear my name, Avery Brundage wins gold, my only dream  
Just to watch this half-breed from Oklahoma  
Whip us all at the decathlon  
By the widest margin ever seen*

*It makes my blood boil just to think of it  
Jim standing there with a laurel wreath about his head  
His majesty, the King of Sweden  
Calling him the world's greatest athlete  
And do you know what that renegade said  
Thanks, King; thanks, King*

*In front of his betters, Mr. Buckskin and feathers  
Gave his majesty a shit-eating grin  
And said, "Thanks, King."*

HIRAM: Look at my boy there!...worshipped by the crowd and hailed by kings,  
Jim stood alone on the mountaintop reigning supreme over the athletic  
world!

[The Rush of Love (reprise)]

JIM: *To stand alone  
And fight the fight  
To hear the roar of the crowd  
In your dreams at night  
To break the surface  
And breathe the air  
To feel the rush of love  
To taste the holy kiss  
I could never get enough  
Of this, this rush, this rush*

CHORUS: *To be the first in someone's life* (JIM: I could never get enough)  
*To set the sun in someone's eyes* (of this, this rush)  
*To be the best if for a day* (I could never get enough)  
*To never let it slip away*

JIM: *To be the best  
Just for a day  
To hold the moment in your arms  
And never let it slip away*

JIM: [scat singing]: *Hey yeh, hey yeh...*

HIRAM: *My Jim returned to America a Hero! They gave him a ticker-tape  
parade down Broadway...imagine that. Hell, he wasn't even a full American  
citizen.*

(Crowd cheering wildly)

JIM: I never knew I had so many friends!

Lights fade. End of the first act

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ACT 2

SCENE (5)

(House lights fade as we hear the drums and flute again. Spots on Iva in her wedding dress, and Jim in dress pants and shirt, but no jacket. The rest of the company are scattered throughout the stage in silhouette. Hiram approaches Jim and hands him a flask. Jim drinks.

Then the drums and flute stop. The women gather around and fuss over Iva. The men gather around Jim. One man struggles to get Jim's jacket over his shoulders)

[The Wedding Day]

CROWD: *We will sing the songs that we all know  
We'll say the prayers of a thousand years.  
And we will shine, if for a time  
We'll live to love  
The wedding day has come, has come  
The wedding day has come*

(Underscoring continues as Iva frets. Groomsman struggles to help Jim with his tie)

MAN: C'mon Jimmy, you don't want to be late to your own wedding.

HIRAM: (apart from the crowd) You're not afraid are you boy?

JIM: (straightening his jacket and taking another swig from his flask) I'm not afraid of nothing!

(He strolls over to Iva and takes her arm. The crowd forms the wedding party. The Priest prays and blesses them during the next verse of the song).

CROWD: *We will sing the songs that we all know  
We'll say the prayers of a thousand years*

*We will shine, if for a time  
We'll live to love  
The wedding day has come, has come  
The wedding day has come.*

(Suddenly we hear the voice of Pop calling out for Jim. The drums begin. On hearing the Coach's voice, the men strip off their jackets, down to their undershirts)

POP: Jim, Gus, get over here!

JIM [finishing a kiss]: I gotta go.

IVA [As he leaves]: Promise me you'll be careful out there, Jim. We have our future to consider, and a family.

JIM: I promise, Iva. I promise.

IVA: They're all 'out for you'! You know that, don't you?

JIM: Nobody's gonna hurt Jim. Besides...this one 'aint a game. This one's 'war'.

(Lights reveal a reporter and Pop Warner on the sideline. Jim and Gus and the rest of the men are in a Carlisle huddle. Dwight Eisenhower is in a defensive stance awaiting the next play)

POP: You understand these are the same men that raped and murdered your ancestors...Sand Creek, Wounded Knee! They don't think of you as men at all. They think you are animals. These West Point boys tried to wipe your kind off the map, and damn near succeeded! Now what the hell are you gonna do about it?!

(Wild cheers from the Carlisle boys)

REPORTER: It's the game of the Century. The undefeated Carlisle Indians led by All-American, Jim Thorpe, against the Black Knights of Army and their great halfback, Dwight Eisenhower, who's been wreaking havoc all day in the redskin line!

POP: Time out, ref! Time out! God-Damnit, Gus and Jim, get over here!

(Gus and Jim go to the sideline with Pop)

POP: Look boys, Eisenhower has stopped Jim twice in a row on the same end run. Gus, can't you call some other play? Here's a thought,...here's a wild-

ass thought!...- fake the son of a bitch out! Fake the ball to Jim...right?....  
and run a bootleg Gus, huh?!  
Now c'mon boys, I got a lot of money riding on this game!

GUS: Got it, Pop!

JIM: Good call, Coach.

(Jim and Gus return to the huddle)

POP: Dumb Injuns!

GUS: [in the huddle]: All right, boys, we're gonna run a bootleg.

JIM: Give me the ball, Gus.

GUS: Jim, you heard Pop.

JIM: Yeah, I heard him. Don't worry about Ol' Pop. You just give me the ball.  
[pause]

GUS: You heard him, boys, sweep right on two, break!

REPORTER: I don't believe it, folks. Jim Thorpe is coming to the  
scrimmage line, pointing at Eisenhower! He's telling those Army boys  
where the play is coming! There's the snap, they're running the same  
sweep around the right end...here comes the cadet defensive charge. Oh!  
What a collision! Thorpe is running free down the sidelines. Eisenhower is  
down on the field. It doesn't look good, folks. Looks like they're gonna  
need a stretcher!

POP: I swear, walkin' off the field that day I was more Indian than white man. I  
was so proud of all my boys, and their pride ran deep; a couple hundred  
years deep. You could see the warrior spirit in Jim's steady gaze; his set  
jaw. As the army boys walked away beaten, he was somewhere else that  
day...standing on some bloody battlefield. But I guess no man is allowed  
to fly too high.

HIRAM: After the season, well, the roof caved in, a news story out of  
North Carolina challenged his amateur status. A few years back, away  
from Carlisle, he played some minor league ball for loose change. Ol' Pop  
knew all about it, and he should have protected him, or at least taken the  
fall!  
Instead, he made him apologize.

NEWSBOY: Extra! Extra! Read all about it: "Redskin Olympian

caught red-handed in bush-league ball scandal. Extra! Extra!"

(Avery Brundage and an associate are walking down the street when he hears the newsboy. He stops and pays for a newspaper at a street vendor and leaves a big tip).

EVERY: Keep the change, Sonny.

NEWSBOY: Well, thanks, Mr. Brundage!

Avery tells the big news to his associate.

[Thanks, King (reprise)]

EVERY: *It says here they're gonna take away  
Jim's Olympic prizes  
For playing bush league ball  
In the pines of North Carolina  
He didn't have the sense to sign a card  
With someone else's name  
Like all the other "amateurs"  
Who want to make a drinkin' dollar  
A lil' loose change  
Just goes to show you  
There really is a White God  
When you can't LIE and CHEAT  
and STEAL your way to the top!*

*I hear Pop's got him some damn deal  
Playing baseball for McGraw's Giants  
New York will chew him up  
And spit him out  
We've heard the last of Jim, I promise.*

*Thanks, King; he said, "Thanks, King."  
In front of his betters, Mr. Buckskin and feathers  
Gave his majesty a shit-eating gin  
And said, Thanks, King."*

(Lights reveal Jim and Iva sitting together talking)

IVA: What are we gonna do, Jim?

JIM: I'm gonna fight it.

IVA: But the papers say it's on record...that you signed something.

JIM: It wasn't real money. Just enough to live on...all the boys were playin' farm ball. I told Pop all about it years ago, and he said 'don't worry about it'.

IVA: Well, I don't trust Pop, and I do worry! I'm afraid they're gonna take everything away. I don't want people to forget what you've done.

JIM: [Takes hold of Iva]: Listen, Iva. I had a dream last night [Pause, Iva is confused] I dreamt I was an old man walking down a deserted street. I came to this building, and the door was wide open, so I walked in. There, in the hallway was a statue, a statue of a man running. I thought it was beautiful, so I went closer...and it was a statue of me...of Jim Thorpe.

IVA: Sounds like a dream about a tombstone.

JIM: No, honey, I was dreamin' about being alive! Look, ....do you love me?

IVA: Of course I do.

JIM: Then, I'm gonna keep fighting...for the two of us.

IVA: The three of us, Jim. I'm pregnant.

(Jim embraces Iva)

JIM: Don't you worry, Iva, Ol' Pop knows how to handle this kind of thing. He'll fix it, you'll see.

(Jim and Iva kiss. Jim heads into Pop's office)

JIM: Hey Pop

POP: Jim.

(Pop hands Jim a piece of paper. Jim looks it over)

JIM: I ain't gonna sign it.

POP: You gotta sign it.

JIM: Will they let me keep my medals?

POP: Jim, I don't think you understand. This is a lynching party. They're out for blood. You gotta forget the medals...the medals are gone.

JIM: I won 'em fair and square.

POP: You're goddamn right you did! That's what you hang on to...nobody's ever gonna forget what you did over there. It was...beautiful!

JIM: What about you, Pop... you in trouble too? [Pause]

POP: Not if you sign it.

JIM [beat]: I see.

POP: Look, Jim, I'm gettin' on in years. You have your whole life ahead of you.

JIM: You got something for Big Jim?

POP: I told you...a contract with the majors. Only folks won't forgive you if you don't apologize. [Points to the paper] Look, I wrote it all out for you. All you gotta do is sign here.

JIM: I ain't ashamed. Not sorry.

POP: I know son. Do it for yourself...do it for Iva.

JIM: [reads aloud] "I realize now what a big mistake I made by keeping the pro-ball I played a secret. I hope I'll be forgiven. [To Pop] I was just a poor, Indian schoolboy."

(Jim signs the paper)

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SCENE (6)

(Lights reveal New York Giants coach, John McGraw, at a bar celebrating after a game, with female admirers, Hiram, reporter-types, and the NY Giants team.)

HIRAM: Pop did have something for Jim...turns out it was just a lark...and the first of many freak shows!

WOMAN: Raise your glass for the New York Giants! Headed straight for another pennant!

JIM (pulls Coach aside): Look, Coach, I need to talk to you. I'm glad we're winning ball games but I don't understand why I'm sittin' on the bench. I need to be out there playin'!

[To Hit or Miss a Curve]

MCGRAW [spoken over the intro of the song]:

Look here, Jim, football is a game for those with certain savage instincts, common among Redskins and Darkies. But baseball requires some thinking, and therefore is a white man's game. I signed you with no real intention of playin' you, just as a kind of sideshow attraction. Haven't I introduced you to the finer things, upgraded your taste in whiskey and women?

Besides, in the end, you're just a big, dumb Indian, with the usual problems amateurs have upon reaching the Bigs.

(Jim has to be restrained by teammates from taking a swing at McGraw. Hiram brings him a drink to settle him)

*[sung] Screw ball, spitter, knuckle ball  
He sends them screaming over the wall  
Fastball, throw one seam or two  
You'll find it on the stadium roof  
And don't bother with the side-arm slider  
Off the left field wall he'll line her  
And if you brush him back, watch out  
A hot come-backer might knock you out*

*But one pitch seems to leave him cross-eyed  
Bothered, puzzled and confused  
In the dug out, talkin' to himself  
Like he lost his nerve  
Truth is, boys, Jimmy can't hit a curve  
Can't hit it, can't see it  
He'll whiff it, feel the breeze*

(Jim joins the party, gets a drink and concerns himself with the women at the bar)

WOMEN: *Be she blonde or brunette  
Raven black, fire red  
Dress in heels, braids and barefoot  
Easter bonnet on her pretty lil' head  
Willing waitress, blushing farm girl  
Flirting fiancé of a friend  
Low cut dress or a tight skirt  
Flash of fishnet stocking from a shapely leg*

*You'd think he'd suffer from whiplash  
To see how fast his head turns  
I've seen him crash his car  
Swerve to wave at a pretty girl  
Truth is, folks, Jimmy don't miss a curve*

MCGRAW with BOYS: *Can't hit it*

WOMEN: *Don't miss it.*

MCGRAW with BOYS: *He'll whiff it.*

WOMEN: *Blow a kiss at it.*

MCGRAW with BOYS: *Feel the breeze.*

WOMEN: *Hand on my knee.*

MCGRAW with BOYS: *Strike Three!*

WOMAN: *Oh, look...his hotel key!*

MCGRAW, BOYS, and WOMEN: *La la la la la la la la  
Some things are never gonna change  
Some folks will never learn  
Like JIMMY*

(The following "Men" and "Women" sections are sung simultaneously)

MEN: [sung] *Screw ball, spitter, knuckle ball  
He sends them screaming over the wall  
Fastball, throw one seam or two  
You'll find it on the stadium roof  
And don't bother with the side-arm slider  
Off the left field wall he'll line her  
And if you brush him back, watch out  
A hot come-backer might knock you out*

WOMEN: *Be she blonde or brunette  
Raven black, fire red  
Dress in heels, braids and barefoot  
Easter bonnet on her pretty lil' head  
Willing waitress, blushing farm girl  
Flirting fiancé of a friend  
Low cut dress or a tight skirt  
Flash of fishnet stocking from a shapely leg*

MEN and WOMEN: *La la la's...  
Some things are never gonna change  
Some folks will never learn  
Like JIMMY, JIMMY, JIMMY*

(Bar scene fades...all exit, except Jim and Iva. Jim comes home from the party drunk, stumbles up to the doorstep. Iva is waiting for him).

[Iva's Lament/Child in Winter]

IVA [sung]: *If you really loved me  
There would be no others  
No other woman's name cried out in the dark  
If you really loved the children  
You'd come home  
For they fly by so fast  
Angels in our arms  
If you really loved me  
You'd give up the drinking  
Just the taste of me on your lips  
And in your heart, in your heart  
In your heart, in your heart.*

[spoken] I know about the drinking with the boys; I know what kind of women follow famous men. Look, Jim, I'm trying to hold on, but it is too much. I

still love you, and I've prayed things would change, and we could start over, but ever since little James, since we lost little James, I think we buried more than just the child that day.

(Lights reveal Hiram. The underscore ends)

HIRAM: It's influenza. There was nothing the doctors could do.

(Iva starts to break down. Jim holds her for a moment, then takes her downstage. Their hands release, as they both make the sign of the cross. Underscoring begins again and they sing)

JIM and IVA: *I will not see this child in winter  
I will not hold my boy in the spring  
I will never run my fingers through his hair again  
Not again, never again  
I will not think to myself and smile  
I will not hear a song in the wind  
For I can never press this child to my lips again  
Not again, never again.*

IVA [spoken]: Nothing is changin', Jim, it's just more drinkin' more time on the road, hotel rooms, bars...it's the same story. I can't do this anymore. [Jim leaves to pack his things.]

JIM: Iva you know I love you.

IVA: I want to believe you...I do...but it doesn't stop the pain. It's too late Jim, it's just too late.

IVA and WOMEN: *If you really loved me  
There would be no others  
No other woman's name cried out in the dark  
If you really loved the children  
You'd come home  
For they fly by so fast*

*Angels in our arms  
If you really loved me  
You'd give up the drinking  
Just the taste of me on your lips  
And in your heart, in your heart  
In your heart, in your heart.*

(Jim packs his suitcase, and takes a seat on the train; HIRAM is there with him...underscoring 'Your Daddy's Demons')

HIRAM: I told you, Jimmy...they'll all desert you in the end.

JIM: She didn't desert me . Iva didn't run off on me. I'm the one who has to leave.

HIRAM: So, where are you headed Jimmy? Back to the big city? Back to NY? How 'bout we go home and pitch a tent along the Canadian...take the dogs and do some huntin' and fishin'!

JIM: I'm headed to Canton, Ohio.

HIRAM: Now, why in the hell would anyone want to go to Canton, Ohio !?

JIM: They're starting to play professional football...the Canton Bulldogs.

HIRAM: Well, that deserves a toast. [Pulls out the flask] Care for a shot ? You thirsty?

JIM [Taking the flask]: I'm always thirsty.

HIRAM: That's more like it. That's my boy.

(Hiram leaves. Everything is darkened except Jim)

[I'm Leaving Your Town]

JIM: *The last time I was innocent  
I was in my mamma's arms  
Frightened by the demons in my room in the dark  
Now my demons are my buddies  
I take them out for drinks at night  
And we lay down next to you  
With the smell of whiskey in the morning light  
And this ain't no way to live; this ain't no way to love*

*So I'm leaving your town  
'Cause it's the best thing that I can do  
To show you that I love you  
I just don't want to let you down  
So, I'm leaving your town.*

*Sometimes I feel like I am two persons  
And neither of us deserves you,  
So busy being forgiven I forget to be a man  
That ain't no way to live*

*That ain't no way to love*

*So I'm leaving your town  
'Cause it's the best thing that I can do  
TO show you that I love you*

*I just don't want to let you down  
So I'm leaving, I'm leaving,  
I'm leaving your town.*

(Scene shifts to Avery Brundage's office at the US Olympic Committee. Avery is bent over some paperwork. An office worker knocks on his door)

DAVID: Mr. Brundage, may I come in?

EVERY: Of course, David. Please.

DAVID: I wanted to be the first to congratulate you on your position. Everyone at the Olympic committee is excited to have you at the helm.

EVERY: Well, that's very thoughtful of you.

DAVID: We're all proud to have a real athlete in charge; someone who knows what it's like out on the field.

EVERY [suspicious]: Is there something I can help you with, David?

DAVID: Well, I just thought...Actually, a number of us thought that it might make a positive impact if you were to consider returning Jim Thorpe's medals. We receive so many petitions...

EVERY: [Interrupting]: So, that's what this is about?

DAVID: There's been such a public outcry to return the medals, from politicians, and press, and...

EVERY: [Interrupting, angry]: David!

DAVID: Yes, sir?

EVERY: Are you interested in keeping your job here?

DAVID: Yes, sir, I am.

EVERY: Then listen close. I am only going to say this once. Thorpe broke the rules. He trampled on the spirit of the games, humiliated his fellow athletes

and countrymen, he humiliated...me!

DAVID: But sir, with all due respect...

AVERY: With all due respect, if the man were on fire I wouldn't waste the piss to put him out! [Pause] As long as I'm around, I will never, never return those medals to that goddamn lying redskin, Thorpe. Are you clear?

DAVID: Yes, sir.

AVERY [Returning to his work]: We're done here. Close the door on your way out, ...please.

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SCENE (7)

(As Indian drums underscore, lights reveal Charlie Smith, an African American football player, emerges with four other football players, circa 1920, to form an offensive line facing the audience).

PLAYER #1: He hit our tailback Billy, so hard, that our coach stopped the game and demanded that the refs check and see if Jim had metal bars sewn into the shoulders of his jersey. We all said, "We got him this time..." but the refs couldn't find anything.

PLAYER #2: Jim had this all-Indian team- the OORANG INDIANS. We were sponsored by a dog kennel. Jim liked dogs about as much as people, and at half time, we'd come out and do a war dance, and then a dog show. Dogs jumpin' through fire hoops, walkin' on hind legs, crowd goin' crazy!

[The Boys from the Factory]

PLAYERS & CHARLIE: Down. Set. Hut. Hut.

CHARLIE SMITH: [sung] *We stood for the kickoff  
And the Ohio snow did swirl  
Jim's Canton Bulldogs against Massillon  
For the championship of the whole damn world*

*And the people were freezing  
But they came by the thousands to see  
Three Indians, a black man  
And the boys from the factory.*

CHARLIE SMITH and PLAYERS: *You should have been there  
To see Jimmy run  
Over, around, and through  
The snow, the mud and the blood  
And when it was over  
Fist in the air  
He was just like a God  
But you had to be there*

CHARLIE SMITH: You had to be there

PLAYER #3: I made the mistake of tackling Jim in a game and kind of gloatin' over him. Next play, he ran me over on the way to the end zone! I was lying there, dazed and bloody, and Jim comes up smiling and says to me, "Now, you let Big Jim run, the people pay to see Big Jim run!".

PLAYER #4: When his playing days were over, he'd come out at the half-time of some pro games with a big sack of footballs. Then he'd stand at the 50-yard line, and drop kick 5 balls through one goal, then turn and drop kick 5 balls though the other goal. He had to be 60 years old...that's the honest to God truth!

PLAYERS and CHARLIE SMITH: Down. Set. Hut. Hut.

CHARLIE SMITH: [sung]: *On defense, he stood like a wall  
He laid low great men like a fast moving train  
And many were carried off the field  
Never to return to the game  
And you won't believe it, I know  
But I was there and I swear that it's true  
Jim kicked a punt over 95 yards in the air  
Off the point of his old leather shoe*

CHARLIE SMITH and PLAYERS: *You should have been there  
To see Jimmy run  
Over, around and through  
The snow, the mud, and the blood  
And when it was over*

*Fist in the air  
He was just like a god  
But you had to be there.*

CHARLIE SMITH: *You had to be there.*

(Over Indian drumming, lights reveal Jim entering and ordering a drink from the bartender. Three men converge)

BARTENDER: What can I get you?

JIM: Whiskey...straight up!

BARTENDER: Any special flavor?

JIM: 'Old Crow' if you got it.

BARTENDER: Wait a minute now, aren't you?...Well, it's on the house for Jim Thorpe. I seen you play at the polo grounds, never seen anything like it. Here you go [hands Jim a drink].

JIM: Thanks, mister.

BARTENDER [continuing]: Hey, I was reading 'bout how you once were playing pro baseball, and how you hit three home runs, into three different states! One into left field, one center field, and one...

JIM: [interrupting]: Right field into the state of Oklahoma, center into Arkansas, and left into Texas. That's a true story.

BARTENDER: Well, I'll be damned.

JIM: Oh, and a foul ball into the Gulf of Mexico. [laughs and drinks]

MAN #1: Well, if it isn't Sittin' Bull.

MAN #2: Sittin' Bullshit, you mean.

MAN #3: That's good, Kerry. I like that. Sittin' Bullshit.

HIRAM: You gonna let 'em talk to you like that, Jimmy!?

JIM: Why don't you boys take it easy before someone gets hurt? Bartender, a round for these boys on me.

BARTENDER: Yes sir, Mr. Thorpe.

MAN #3: Where's all your friends, Jim? You got any Injun' buddies hidin' around here?

MAN #1: Any of those Canton Pollocks? Why you're a regular league of nations.

MAN #2: You shouldn't be out in Chicago alone, Jim. You ought to know better than that.

BARTENDER: Why don't you leave him alone, boys, he's just havin' a drink.

MAN #2: I don't suppose the "world's greatest athlete" would refuse a bare-knuckle challenge?

(MAN #2 taps Jim on the chest. Jim finishes his drink and stands up facing the challenger)

JIM: OK. Let's go.

(Jim cold-cocks Man #2; knocks other two men down. Gets on top of Man #2, beating him... Hiram holds him back.)

HIRAM: That's enough. That's enough. It's all right. C'mon, Jimmy, it's over. It's over!

(As Hiram and Jim leave the bar, Jim lays some cash on the counter and takes the bottle from the Bartender. He walks off with Hiram, and sits on the edge of a bed, at a cheap hotel,...drinking. Underscoring is 'Your Daddy's Demons')

HIRAM: Warriors aren't supposed to grow old. It 'should' have ended for Jim on that Olympic podium, or, in 1912, on the field that fine day against the Black Knights of West Point... or even in '23, bloodied but unbeaten on that frozen gridiron in Canton against rival Massillon, champion of the brutal professional game he had almost single-handedly, ushered in!  
But there would be no final charge, no tragic last line of defense...just the slow passage of time and the inevitable decline of his physical gifts.

There were odd jobs, two more wives, beautiful children, but Jim was wandering. Jim played football well into his forties. He played until he got tired of tasting his own blood at the hands of lesser men; men whose spirits and bodies he would have broken in his prime. In the end, he was just an old Indian, and the stories of his prowess turning slowly into myth, or some Carnival side-show...or worse,.... forgotten.

[Runaway]

HIRAM : *Don't you ever feel like you've been here before  
Like you're walking in circles,  
And not sure what for.  
You've been searching for heaven,  
Like music in the air, far off, yet familiar  
You've got to get there*

*Feels like, you're a runaway, passing on the highway,  
Wounded dreamer, a hopeful soul,  
Trying to find your way back home.  
Suddenly you stand still, open your eyes and say  
"I have been here before"...you have been here before*

*So you think to yourself  
That's what heaven must be  
A lot like your home town, the same hills and fields  
Where you play with your children, and bury old friends  
But try as you will,  
You can't get back again.*

*Feels like you're a runaway, passing on the highway  
Wounded dreamer, a hopeful soul  
Trying to find your way back home.  
Suddenly you stand still, open your eyes and say  
"I have been here before"...you have been here before*

HIRAM: Just when it seemed that old Jim Thorpe would disappear, return to the bars and saloons and dirt roads of Prague, Oklahoma, or sink back into the mud along the winding banks of the North Canadian River...America decided to take one last look back at Jim Thorpe, the 'All-American'!

(Scene shifts to Jack Warner's office at Warner Bros. Studios, Hollywood, 1950)

SECRETARY: Right this way, Mr. Thorpe. Mr. Warner will be right with you. Can I get you anything? A refreshment?

(HIRAM brings Jim into Jack Warner's office at Warner Brothers film studios. Jack comes barging in)

JACK: C'mon in. Yes, c'mon in, Jim. Good to see you ol' friend. Have a seat. Right there's fine. How 'bout a drink? Huh, let me guess, whiskey? A couple ice cubes?

JIM: Hold the ice cubes.

JACK: Goddammit, Jim, that's what I love about you. You don't mince words. I got all these faggot lawyers around here, from Yale and Harvard and Jesus, what a load of bullshit they serve.

SECRETARY: Mr. Warner, the usual?

JACK: Yeah, honey, the usual.

(Jack leers at her as Secretary saunters off)

JACK: Not bad, eh Jim?

JIM [nodding]: What can I do for you, Jack?

JACK: It's not what you can do for me. It's what I'm gonna do for you! [Pulls a seat close to Jim] Listen, so I'm having a drink with Cagney the other night, and we get to talkin' 'bout who's the greatest athlete of all time. He says, "the Babe," and I say, "no way- that fat son of a bitch!" I say it's Jim Thorpe, plain and simple! Hands down! We get to arguing and I say, I'll prove it!

JIM: How you gonna prove it?

JACK: That's when it hits me. A movie! I'm gonna make a movie about your life [Gets up, excited!] "The All-American!" That's my working title. You like it?

JIM: Jack, I don't know what to say.

JACK: You don't have to say anything. I decided it's time for me to do something to help your people.

JIM: My people?

JACK: Indians, redskins, you know. They need a hero, and it's gonna be you. We'll show how you came out of nowhere to set the world of sports on fire! I'm gonna show how they stole those medals, and how that damn Avery Brundage, runnin' the Olympic committee, how he's just a sourpuss for getting his ass kicked at the games.

JIM: Jack, don't you think I'm too old to play myself as a young man?

JACK: Jesus! Of course you're too old, can't act worth a shit either. You'd make a hell of an extra but you're too honest to act. Burt Lancaster's signed on.

(Secretary comes back in with the drinks)

SECRETARY: Here you are, boys!

JIM: You're gonna tell the whole story?

JACK: Well, not 'everything'. It'll be a love story with you and your first wife, Iva, ...aren't you remarried Jimmy?

JIM: Twice, actually.

JACK: Oh...well, we won't get into your personal life. I mean, nobody's gonna buy tickets to see a story about an old drunk. Am I right?

JIM: No, 'course not. (Jim puts the drink down) But someone ought to make sure Iva's OK with it.

JACK [walking Jim to the door]: Oh hell yeah, I got people around here take care of all that crap. Now, listen...there's only room for 'one' love story, you follow me? it's gotta be squeaky clean! Squeaky fucking clean I tell you ! An Indian hero, the All-American! See the irony?

JIM: I see it.

JACK: Just need you to sign over the rights to your story. We'll give you a few bucks, a little 'jack' from Jack Warner! Now, get outta here. You're gonna be a star, Jimmy!

(Jim heads out of the office, and finds a pay phone. Dumps in some change, pulls a crumpled piece of paper from his pocket, and can just barely make out the numbers. Jim dials the number. We hear the sound of a ringing phone, which is then picked up by a man offstage)

VOICE: Hello.

JIM: Hi, is this the Miller home?

VOICE: No, it's the Scott residence. Are you looking for Iva Miller?

JIM: Yes, could I speak with her?

VOICE: Well, Iva's not here right now. But I'm her husband, may I ask who's calling?

JIM [pause]: Just an old friend.

VOICE: Well, I could take a message for her.

JIM: No, no. Thanks anyway. I, uh...

(Jim hangs up the phone)

JIM: *Feels like I'm runaway, passing on the highway,  
Wounded dreamer, hopeful soul,  
Trying to find my way back home,  
Suddenly I stand still,  
Open my eyes and say 'I have been...here before,'  
'I have been here..before.'*

.....

SCENE (8)

(Lights reveal ABC Studios, 1950, a radio jock interviews with Pop Warner live on the air. Pop has been drinking.)

RADIO JOCK: (POP'S THEME) With the news of Jim Thorpe being voted the ABC Top Athlete of the Half Century, and with the upcoming Hollywood blockbuster film of his life in the works, we are here today to interview, Pop Warner, the great master-mind of the Gridiron, and Thorpe's coach in Football and Track and Field at the Carlisle School,...what can you tell us about Jim Thorpe?

POP: Is this thing live? Are we live?

RADIO JOCK: Why, yes we are Mr. Pop Warner...what can you tell us about what it was like coaching. the great Jim Thorpe!

POP: What was it like? What was it like coaching Jim Thorpe? I didn't coach Jim Thorpe, the lazy son-of-a-bitch coached himself. (Radio jock puts his hand over Pop's mic)

RADIO JOCK: Mr. Warner, we cannot have you using obscenities over the air.

POP: You want my interview or not, son? (Pause, and shoves radio jock's hand from his mic) Now,...Jim Thorpe, he was a hard-headed cuss too. It was like trying to coach a mountain lion, or a panther or something. He wasn't like the rest of us, he was some other kind of, 'wild' creature. Watching him run, he was more animal than a human being.

RADIO JOCK: Are you trying to say...?

POP: (interrupting) I'm not 'trying' to say shit...I'm telling you the God's honest truth, you never seen anything like it! The greatest Track and Field athlete of his era, the best all around football player America's ever seen, eight

year's of professional baseball in spite of that asshole McGraw benching him all those years..., basketball, lacrosse, soccer, ...hell he'd have been All-American at 'hop-scotch' if they had such a thing! I tell you there wasn't anything that boy couldn't master! He was a scratch golfer, for Christ's sake! I even read somewhere that he won one of those ball-room dancing contests at something like 60 years old...imagine that! Jim Thorpe, ball-room-fuckin'-dancing!

(Scene shifts to a ball-room dancing contest, where Jim Thorpe stands prepared to waltz with his lovely dancing partner, a young lady, half his age)

DANCING PARTNER: ('Nowhere To Go'/reprise)  
(underscored) *He was such a lovely man,  
He had to be at least sixty years old,  
But he moved with such grace and agility,  
All I had to do was take hold.*

*The Judges seemed to love us  
As Jim swept me across the marble floor,  
He looked at me, with great emotion  
And I thought I saw a tear form.*

*It was as if he were staring,  
Deep into someone else's eyes,  
Perhaps someone he once loved very much...  
The Judges awarded us, 'first prize!'*

(Iva Miller taps the Dancing Partner on the shoulder, and takes her place dancing with Jim)

IVA: *It's not enough I need you so much  
It's enough, I have to dream of you,  
But then to be just a girl to be only me*

JIM: *For you deserve some kind of angel  
Someone to never let you down  
And I'd walk away  
If one could be found*

JIM and IVA: *Until then I'll tell you  
The only words I can say  
Broken and honest  
And standing in the rain  
I will never love another (woman) young man,  
Never love another soul,  
And darling if you ever leave me*

*If you leave, I will have...  
Nowhere to go...  
Nowhere to go...  
Nowhere to go.*

.....

SCENE (9)

(The finale. The flute and drums resume. Jim Thorpe lays down on a table as cast members surround his body. They pantomime a Saulk Fox burial ceremony.)

REPORTER: March 28, 1953, Jim Thorpe is found dead of his third heart attack in his Lomita, California trailer home just two years after being the subject of the Hollywood blockbuster, "The All-American." Third wife, Patricia, takes Jim's body from the funeral ceremony in Oklahoma...

(Patricia enters the ceremony with 2 men and directs them to take Jim's body)

PATRICIA: My husband is cold. Bring him to me!

HIRAM: Patricia then tries to find a burial site in Oklahoma, but the Governor refuses. Desperate, she then tries to shop Thorpe's remains to the highest bidder, but finds no one is interested in paying her for her husband's body. Finally, the little Pennsylvania town of East Mauch Chunk, pays Patricia for Jim's remains,... and the town is hereafter known as Jim Thorpe, Pennsylvania. Now, 'aint that the damndest thing. My boy Jim never stepped foot in that town while he was alive!

(The pedestal is returned, and the ritual of dressing Jim in his football uniform takes place. Characters from Jim's life enter the bare stage with their final thoughts)

AVERY: It was never personal, strictly a matter of ethics...Jim Thorpe is a dead issue.

POP: When I heard, well, it hit me pretty hard. I had some guilt, you see, I made

a lot of money off that boy.

COL. PRATT: He is a testament to everything we are doing here at Carlisle! He is no longer a savage, he is a citizen of this Great Nation, and does 'honor' to his race!

IVA: Lying next to me, asleep at night, he was the strongest, fastest body God ever created...

MAN: He died poor as dirt. He came from nothin' and ended with less!

CANTON TEAMMATE: "Poor Jim," people say, "poor ol' Jim." Bunch of crap. Jim stood on high ground, Saw things few men ever see. He never asked for anyone's pity!

HIRAM: Go make something of yourself boy. Besides, if you stay here...I just might kill you.

MAYOR: I hear folks say we should return the body to Oklahoma. Well, we paid hard cash for it. Jim's stayin' right here in Jim Thorpe, Pennsylvania! Fair is fair.

WOMAN: He was just a drifter.

INDIAN: Jim belongs in Oklahoma!

MAN: He was a loving father.

WOMAN: He was a drunk.

JACK WARNER: He was 'the' All-American!

MAYOR: Fair is fair!

(Drums cease but the flute music continues.)

HIRAM: Actually, there's nothing fair about it. But what is that to the Warrior, the odds...the risks? All you can ask for is a chance to look your enemy in the eye. I don't know if Jim saw the enemy in the end, but...he died a fighter!

And I guess they're still fighting over where his body belongs, but I can tell you where his Spirit is...it's gone back into the dark soil along the winding banks of the North Canadian River! There's no more wrestling with my demons. Jim is finally at rest, next to me...with his Momma Charlotte, his brother Charlie,...and all his kin.

I loved the boy. I suppose I had some part in his demise, but then, I had a lot of help...just like on the football field, it took a lot of us to bring Big Jim Thorpe down.

(Hiram retreats)

[How a Man Should Die]

CHARLIE SMITH: *It ain't fair, it ain't right  
For a man to die like that  
All alone, in a mobile home  
Dead from a broken heart attack  
A few lines on a newspaper page  
A cold body in search of a grave*

*It ain't fair, it ain't right  
For a man to die like that*

*AVERY: On January 18, 1983, eleven years after Avery Brundage retired as President of the International Olympic Committee, and thirty years after Jim Thorpe's death, the IOC finally reinstated Jim as the gold medal winner of the Pentathlon and the Decathlon at the 1912 Olympics.*

*CHARLIE SMITH: A man like Jim ought to die like a warrior  
On some battle field  
Looking straight into the enemy's eyes  
Until the death blow  
He drops to his knees [Jim drops to his knees, arms outstretched]*

*And darkness comes like an answer to a prayer  
Children weep, women wail  
Tear their clothes and hair*

CHARLIE and JIM: *Now that's a fair, that's right  
That's how a man ought to die  
Now that's fair, that's right  
That's how a man ought to die*

*POP: Jim Thorpe was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame, in Canton, Ohio, in 1963. A larger than life statue of Jim was placed in the rotunda...it is the first thing to greet the eye when one enters the building!*

*Now that's fair, that's right  
That's how a man ought to die  
Now that's fair, that's right  
That's how a man ought to die*

JIM: [scat singing]: *Hey yeh yeh...*

The End

EPILOGUE:

(Cast sings the song 'American Lullabye')

CAST: *Wake up America  
Like a lover I long for you  
Like a lover, please be true  
To your dreams, to your dreams*

*I've been driving across America  
From slaveries shores  
Through the reservations  
Past crowded cities, with their stumbling poor  
I close my eyes  
I dream some more*

*For as a child, I was a wandering pilgrim  
And far away, I often dreamt of home*

*Now I'll give America*

*To my children, and their children  
Walk her hills  
Fish her streams  
Lie in the cool grass, in her cool arms  
And dream of America  
For like a lover I long for you  
Like a lover, please be true...  
To your dreams  
Your dreams  
Your dreams.*