

S E P T E M B E R 5

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INT. ABC SPORTS' 1972 OLYMPICS STUDIO, CONTROL ROOM - DAY

CLOSE UP: A gun is raised. BANG.

VOICE (O.C.)

Cut to 1.

WIDE SHOT: An Olympic swimming pool. The swimmers dive off their blocks. Freestyle. High speed.

SPORTS COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

That's a good start for Mark Spitz.

VOICE (O.C.)

Cam 2, close up Spitz. Cut to 2.

CLOSE UP: U.S. swimmer superstar Mark Spitz glides through the water with powerful strokes.

Camera pulls back to reveal we're looking at one of many screens on a monitor wall.

Focused STUDIO TECHNICIANS sit at a large console. Headphones over ears. Hands rest on buttons. Shirts soaked with sweat. All eyes on the numerous monitors up front.

An excited commentator's voice sounds from the speakers.

SPORTS COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

Now Spitz takes the lead. Look at that style. Those powerful moves.

A LIVE BROADCAST DIRECTOR gives camera instructions.

DIRECTOR

Cam 1 tighten in! Dolly, show me Spitz.

Mechanical chatter echoes every command: *Copy that! Confirm.*

It feels like we're in the heart of a huge machine, supplying the world with vital information. Every move perfectly coordinated. A masterpiece of timing and teamwork.

SPORTS COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

Spitz leaves the German swimmer far behind. He is about to write Olympic history here by winning his seventh gold medal... and he did it! Spitz wins!

DIRECTOR

Cam 2, ready for Spitz's close up.

Someone intervenes in a soft voice.

VOICE

No, the German first.

The command comes from a man in a tailored suit sitting right behind the director: ROONE ARLEDGE (41), President of ABC Sports. A visionary storyteller who knows how to captivate his audience. He speaks quietly and rarely, so his words have power. There is, however, something fragile about him.

The director looks back at Roone.

DIRECTOR
Sure? The German?

Roone confirms with a calm nod.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
(into headset)
Cam 2 - change of plans. Give me
the German swimmer.

On the main monitor: the hopelessly exhausted face of the German swimmer. The commentator immediately understands Roone's decision and rounds out the narrative.

SPORTS COMMENTATOR (V.O.)
*Werner Lampe is devastated. He
trained for years, but nothing
stops history. Spitz left him
behind. He left them all behind
today.*

The monitor shows the winner, his joy radiates all the more against the background of the disappointed competitors.

But Roone isn't satisfied yet.

ROONE
Tighter.

DIRECTOR
(into headset)
Cam 2, push in.

CAM 2
That's as far as she goes.

On the monitor Spitz runs towards his parents. Hugs them.

ROONE
I want to be in that hug.

The director is at a loss, but someone else has an idea:

JACQUES (O.S.)
We could try the mobile unit.

All eyes on the crew's freelance technical director: JACQUES LEMAIRE (50s). Experienced pro.

DIRECTOR
They're not prepared. It's gonna be too shaky.

ROONE
I don't care.

DIRECTOR
(into headset)
Alright 6, run over there.

JACQUES
(into headset)
Back him up, Charlie.

DIRECTOR
Put 6 in preview.

Preview monitor: The image starts shaking, camera moves towards Spitz.

On a different preview monitor a man with a camera and backpack that looks like he's from Ghostbusters crosses the frame. Two assistants trying to catch up with the cabling behind him.

Director doesn't even look at the monitor anymore, but at Roone who motions to push in.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
(into headset)
Tighter... Tighter... Tighter...
(off Roone's signal)
That's it, hold it. Now take 6!

Main monitor: Spitz collapsed in the arms of his parents. The camera is right in the middle, lens fogged up by Spitz's breath. This is the most important moment of his life. And we're part of it.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL SHERATON, MUNICH - NIGHT

It's the middle of the night.

We're in a small hotel room. The TV is on. Muted. Sports images flicker on the screen.

A MAN sits at the edge of the bed. Fully dressed. We can only make out his silhouette. In his hand a page scribbled with cryptic times, names and nations.

A phone rings. The Man picks it up. Clears his throat.

MAN
Thanks, I'm already awake.

He hangs up. Puts on one of two watches lying on the bedside table. Winds it. Reaches for the second one.

CLICK. He switches off the TV on his way out.

EXT. HIGHWAY / INT. RENTAL CAR - NIGHT

CLACK. A car radio is switched on.

The Man speeds down Munich's empty expressway. And for the first time we see his face. Intelligent eyes behind thick glasses. Tousled hair. Cigarette hanging in his mouth.

This is GEOFF MASON (27). A junior producer at ABC Sports, determined to keep climbing the ladder. He's energetic. Smart. And yes, a bit arrogant, but his enthusiasm is so contagious, that you can't help but like him.

As CCR's "Fortunate Son" starts playing on the radio, Geoff turns up the volume and takes the next exit.

EXT. PARKING LOT / INT. RENTAL CAR - NIGHT

Geoff parks in the Olympic Village's "press corps" area.

He throws on a pre-tied tie, looks in the mirror, smooths his hair. Realizes this is as good as it gets.

He takes out the scribbled note. Now we see it's a schedule of Olympic events.

One last look, then he puts it down and gets out.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

We follow Geoff to the ABC studio building. In the background is the mighty "Olympiastadion". Masts with the flags of all nations rise behind it.

INT. ABC TV STUDIO, CORRIDOR, HALLWAY - NIGHT

Geoff walks down a dark corridor into the hallway.

ABC Sports Operations' VP MARVIN BADER (45) already waits for him. Despite two decades in the TV business, Bader hasn't lost his moral compass. He exudes great kindness, with an occasionally sardonic sense of humor.

They instantly launch into a walk-and-talk.

BADER

You were supposed to be here before
the show ends.

Geoff looks at the two watches on his wrist.

GEOFF

Right, I'm a minute and thirty seconds early.

(taps second watch)

Hell, in New York I'm five hours early.

Geoff steers towards a table with lousy catering. Grabs a styrofoam cup and pumps himself a coffee.

BADER

(not in the mood)

Funny. If you screw this up, I'm the one in trouble with Roone.

(hands Geoff a schedule)

We need to go over the sche-

GEOFF

Day starts with Volleyball at 0930, Group D, covered by C Unit while B prepares the soccer pre-match at--

BADER

(convinced)

Alright, alright...

They stop at a heavy door with a glowing red "On Air" light.

Bader puts down his clipboard, and looks at Geoff, who seems a little bit overdressed.

BADER (CONT'D)

Going on a date?

GEOFF

Just got off one. Your wife says hello.

Bader can't help but grin, quietly opens the door and they slip in.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

An unexpected heat smacks Geoff in the face as he enters.

BADER

(whispers)

AC's broken.

Geoff loosens his tie knot and looks around the room.

The show is still on. It may be four in the morning here in Munich, but it's still prime time in New York.

The excitement of live reporting is gone and the crew works with half staff. Routine is in the air.

On the main monitor: A slow motion shot of young Soviet Gymnast Olga Korbut performing the backflip from the higher bar that would make her a legend. Sportscaster Jim McKay and Gordon Maddox are commenting:

GORDON (O.S.)
*... It's been a week since we
 witnessed this already historical
 performance. But it still takes my
 breath away...*

MCKAY (O.S.)
*Gordon, I think I speak for all of
 us here at ABC Sports when I say:
 What a sensation is Olga Korbut!*

GORDON (O.S.)
*I've said it before and I'll say it
 again: She deserved an Eleven!*

MCKAY (O.S.)
*She certainly did... Ladies and
 Gentleman at home...*

DIRECTOR
 Take 5.

On the screen we now see an aerial view of the Olympic Stadium at night. The floodlights are on, the stadium empty.

McKAY
*...this concludes our daily report,
 here at the Twentieth Summer
 Olympics.*

DIRECTOR
 Fade in bird caption.

Yellow letters appear on the monitor: LIVE VIA SATELLITE FROM MUNICH, GERMANY.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
 (into headset)
 Back to 1.

The main monitor cuts to McKay in the studio.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
 (into mic)
 Jim, set up the Spitz presser.

McKay smoothly slides in the information:

McKAY

*Mark Spitz, the American athlete
who set an all time Olympic record
by winning seven gold medals...*

DIRECTOR

(into headset)

Roll highlight tape.

On the main monitor the highlights of the swimming race start playing again, as McKay continues his comment:

MCKAY

*...the last one just hours ago will
be interviewed tomorrow. Only here,
on ABC Sports.*

Suddenly, the monitor goes black. Only audio keeps playing.

Nervous murmurs among the crew.

DIRECTOR

Not again... Jacques, what's going on? Is this on our feed?

JACQUES

No.

DIRECTOR

Then why is my screen black?

JACQUES

(shrugs)

Feed is clean.

He points at two consumer TVs positioned besides the monitor wall still showing the feed. These are the "network return monitors", which mirror the signal as people see it at home - one in color, one in black and white.

ROONE

Close with the trailer.

On the network return monitors, ABC Sports' 1972 Olympic trailer plays:

Dynamic shots of athletes in a wide variety of disciplines. Real time and in slow motion.

Over it, a powerful voice:

ABC ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

*This summer we're sending two teams
to the Olympics. America's finest
young athletes. Plus the finest
television sports team in the
world.*

Images of impressive camera setups at sporting events.

ABC ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
*ABC's unprecedented coverage of the
 Olympics will be the most
 comprehensive in history. You'll be
 able to experience as never before.
 Through ABC's exclusive color slow
 motion and stop action videotape.
 And for the first time in the
 history of television...*

Insert graphic: a satellite circles the Earth.

ABC ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
*Using a brand new satellite
 technology...*

INT. TRANSMISSION ROOM - NIGHT

ABC ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
*... we will bring the Games from
 another continent directly into
 your homes. Live and in color.*

Technicians plug cables into a huge console. Connect Munich with the world.

ABC ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
*The Summer Olympics: History being
 made!*

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

The ASSISTANT DIRECTOR says the crew's favorite phrase:

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
 And we're clear.

COMMUNICATOR
 (into telephone)
 Back to you, New York. Have a good
 evening, Skip.

DIRECTOR
 (puts down headset)
 Great job. It's B-Unit's turn
 tomorrow. Enjoy your day off.

Tension drops. People start moving everywhere again. Monitors now display color bars.

At the rear of the room a CR TECHNICIAN pulls a black curtain, revealing a large glass window. Behind it is the actual studio set where McKay is being filmed. We only catch a glimpse of him as he's walking off the stage.

The Director walks past Geoff on his way out.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
Good luck on your day, Mase.

GEOFF
Thanks Don, enjoy the alps.

Bader gestures to Geoff to come with him. They approach
Roone, who has his eyes fixed on a paper.

BADER
Roone, I'd like to do a handover
with Geoff, who--

ROONE
(not interested)
You check Jennings' Dachau piece?

BADER
Not yet.

ROONE
Watch it. See if it's any good.

BADER
Roone... Frankly, I do have some
concerns about cutting from sports
to the Holocaust.

Roone ponders for a moment, then:

ROONE
Spitz is Jewish, right?

Bader is irritated:

BADER
Since when am I ABC's expert on
Judaism?

Geoff jumps in.

GEOFF
He is. Spitz.

ROONE
What time is the presser?

GEOFF
Four PM.

ROONE
(to Bader)
There's your lead-in.

Roone grabs his jacket and walks towards the door:

BADER

So you want to ask a Jew about the Holocaust... On live television?

Roone turns around, shrugs:

ROONE

Yeah. Ask him how it feels to win Gold in Hitler's backyard... Walk with me...

Roone opens the door into the:

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Roone walks fast, Bader next to him, Geoff follows, trying to find space for himself in the hallway.

Roone turns around to Geoff.

ROONE

So? Talk me through the day.

Geoff is startled for a moment, then:

GEOFF

We start with volleyball, could be quite excit--

ROONE

No US Team.

GEOFF

Um, soccer, intermediate round.

ROONE

Who?

GEOFF

GDR vs Mexico. Denmark vs Morocco. Birma against Malaysia.

Roone sighs: *really?* He walks into his office. Grabs his briefcase. Geoff keeps on talking:

GEOFF (CONT'D)

But then there is boxing. The Great White Hope is in quarters. Against Teófilo.

Roone steps back into the hallway and continues towards the exit. Bader and Geoff follow.

ROONE

The Cuban?

GEOFF

Yeah. This guy's the real deal.
Knocked down Denderys in thirty
secs.

BADER

So we'll lose and the thing is over
in thirty seconds?

ROONE

Doesn't matter. It's Cuba... versus
the United States of America...

BADER

Sure you want to bring in politics?

ROONE

Not politics, Bader. Drama.
Emotions.

Geoff had that one prepared:

GEOFF

"The Cold War Heats up Again. Cuba
Launches a Missile at America's
Hope"

ROONE

Little long. But good direction.

They arrive at the studio's exit. Car waiting for Roone. The
driver holds the door open.

Roone, facing Bader, points a thumb at Geoff.

ROONE (CONT'D)

What's his live coverage
experience?

GEOFF

I-

Roone lifts a hand: *I'm not asking you.*

BADER

He's done golf tournaments. And
minor league baseball.

Beat.

ROONE

I'll come in for the boxing match.

Roone steps out into the night:

ROONE (CONT'D)

No calls before 10. Promised my
daughters.

He gets into the car and drives off. Bader and Geoff walk back into the studio complex.

Jacques passes by with a roll of cables.

GEOFF
Problem solved?

JACQUES
On it.

BADER
(to Geoff)
Alright. So you prep that tease
while I go rest my eyes on the
demise of my fellow Jews?

Geoff gives him a thumbs up. Bader checks his watch. Sighs.

BADER (CONT'D)
Guess I'm spending another night
here.
(mimics Roone as he heads
off)
No calls before ten. I promised
myself.

INT. VTR LIBRARY - NIGHT

A room full of videotapes and film rolls.

Geoff's fingers are gliding over the shelves. Looking for something specific.

INT. EDITING ROOM - NIGHT

Bader opens a film can labeled "Dachau Report". Threads audio and film strips into an editing table's rollers. Hits play.

The screen flickers and shows the Dachau concentration camp's entrance. On it the words "Arbeit macht frei."

JENNINGS (V.O.)
*Only about nine miles lie between
the "Serene Games"'s center and
Germany's darkest chapter in
history. Unimaginable atrocities
were committed at the Dachau
concentration camp.*

Now we see ABC journalist PETER JENNINGS (34) on site.

JENNINGS
(holds microphone, looks
at camera)
(MORE)

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

*And yet, 27 years after the war,
it's become a place of remembrance,
a place of reconciliation. Thanks
to the Olympic spirit.*

(beat)

*A spirit that makes images possible
that seemed impossible before.*

Now visible on screen: the Israeli Olympic team lays wreaths.

Bader, moved, watches the young athletes' faces.

A young man looks sympathetically into the camera. It's weight-lifter DAVID BERGER. A microphone is pointed at him.

DAVID BERGER

*That's exactly what the Olympics
are all about, you know. Like our
fencing coach Andrei says, we're
here and can talk to Germans, chat
with athletes from Lebanon or
Egypt. This is what we were
dreaming about.*

Now a German Official is speaking:

HANS KLEIN

*Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland
begrüßt die Welt zu diesen heiteren
Spielen als Freunde. Mit offenen
Armen. Nicht geschichtsvergessen,
aber mit dem Blick fest auf eine
gemeinsame, friedliche Zukunft...*

Bader pauses the reel and turns to the woman sitting at the screening table behind him.

She is watching an interview with the overjoyed 16-year-old Ulrike Meyfarth, whose gold medal stands out radiantly against the green BRD-tracksuit.

BADER

You're German, right?

The woman turns around. Meet MARIANNE GEBHARDT, 20s, translator for the German Olympic Center. She has a timeless look and a modern personality.

MARIANNE

(takes off her headphones)

Excuse me?

BADER

You're the new translator, right?

Marianne nods.

BADER (CONT'D)
Can you do me a favor? What's Hans
saying here?

Bader rewinds the reel. Plays the segment again.

MARIANNE
He is saying that the games are an
opportunity to welcome the world to
a new Germany, to move on from the
past.

BADER
Yeah, sure.

Marianne hesitates a beat, then:

MARIANNE
I mean, it's what we all hope
for... What else can we do but move
on? Try to be better?

The Dachau report flickers behind them. You can see the
barracks. A watch tower.

BADER
Your parents still around?

MARIANNE
Yes.

BADER
Let me guess, they didn't know
either?

She searches for words, then:

MARIANNE
Well, I'm not them.

Bader respects her will.

BADER
No, you're not.

He gets up to leave, reaches out his hand.

BADER (CONT'D)
I'm Marvin Bader.

MARIANNE
I know. Head of operations. I'm
Marianne Gebhardt... Nice to meet
you.

BADER
(nods)
Welcome to ABC.

INT. VTR ROOM - NIGHT

Geoff skillfully threads a magnetic tape into the VTR machine. Hits fast forward. Images of Fidel Castro, Cuba, communist parades fizzle across the machine's monitor.

JACQUES (O.S.)
I need to swap out all of the wiring.

Jacques is at the door behind him, frustrated.

GEOFF
(without taking eyes from monitor)
Then do it.

JACQUES
Grumpy has no spares.

GEOFF
(turns around)
He doesn't?

JACQUES
At least not for me.

INT. STUDIO STAGE - NIGHT

Geoff walks up to HERMANN JÄGER, examining the broken air conditioner system.

GEOFF
Hermann, you really don't have any cables?

No reaction.

GEOFF (CONT'D)
Hey, I'm talking to you. We need cables.

Hermann glares at him.

HERMANN
Nein. No Kabel.

GEOFF
That's crazy. What about--

Hermann turns back to the air conditioner.

HERMANN
Your boss fills out paper. Gives paper to my boss. You get Kabel.

Jacques gives Geoff an I-told-you-so look.

INT. EDITING ROOM - NIGHT

Marianne is typing on her typewriter when Geoff appears at the door.

GEOFF
Hey you, where's the old man?

MARIANNE
I'm afraid he already left.

GEOFF
Damn.

MARIANNE
Any way I can help?

CUT TO:

INT. STUDIO STAGE - NIGHT

Close up on Hermann ranting.

HERMANN
Wo dad ma denn da hin kommen, wenn
ein jeder nur noch mehr Zeug will?
Wissens was uns Deutsche die Spiele
kosten? Zwei Milliarden Mark. Und
dann würden die Amis daherkommen
und sich permanent nur beschweren.

We cut to see who's receiving this tirade.

MARIANNE
Ja, das verstehe ich natürlich. Sie
müssen sicher permanent auf viele
Befindlichkeiten eingehen.

Jacques and Geoff watch, excited by the stand-off. Neither understands a word.

Meanwhile Marianne gets through to Hermann.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)
Aber wissen Sie was: Die GANZE WELT
schaut hierher. Auf unser München.
Und SIE helfen maßgeblich dabei, es
möglich zu machen.

Hermann brightens. Pride in his gaze.

Geoff pats Jacques on the shoulder.

GEOFF
You got this, right?

INT. HALLWAY, CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Hermann leads Marianne and Jacques through the corridors. The place is now completely empty, except for a cleaning man wiping the floors.

Hermann unlocks a door, signals Marianne and Jacques to wait and disappears in the storage room.

Dimly lit. Marianne lights a cigarette and opens the studio back door. A gentle breeze blows in.

Hermann exits the supply room, cables in hand.

JACQUES
(plasters on a smile)
Merci!

The German nods - when suddenly there's an unusual noise:

TACK-TACK-TACK.

Mechanical clatter in the dark. Muffled. Far away. Scary.

Jacques, Hermann and Marianne pause. Listen.

Then again:

TACK-TACK.

Silence.

Jacques and Marianne exchange a look.

JACQUES (CONT'D)
Were those... shots?

Hermann waves it off. Shakes head at Marianne.

HERMANN
Sag dem Franzosen, dass ich noch
ganz genau weiß wie sich Schüsse
anhören.

Marianne stares out into the night.

We follow her gaze. Our eyes take a second to adjust to the dark.

Then the Olympic Tower rises from the shadows. Its television antennas soar high into the blackened night sky.

Fade in main title:

INT. VTR ROOM - NIGHT

A RED LIGHT flashes on a phone.

Geoff doesn't notice it. He's hard at work editing. Rewinding an atomic bomb explosion. The mushroom shrinks in on itself.

All we hear is the music in his headphones.

At last, Geoff sees the light, takes off his headphones. Now we hear the phone RINGING. He picks it up.

GEOFF

ABC. Mason.

He listens. Raises an eyebrow. Skeptical.

GEOFF (CONT'D)

No, we haven't heard anything.

(beat)

Sure, I'll let you know, Mr. Moore.
Thank you.

Geoff exits.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Sees Marianne and Jacques coming towards him.

GEOFF

Weird. Kenny Moore just called.

JACQUES

The marathon runner?

GEOFF

Yeah. He wanted to know if we heard gunfire.

Jacques' eyes widen.

JACQUES

We heard that, too.

GEOFF

What? Wait, what did you hear?

MARIANNE

Gunshots. In the distance.

No one says anything.

Then finally:

GEOFF
Maybe we should call the police?

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Geoff hands Marianne a phone. She dials.

MARIANNE
Ja hallo, mein Name ist Marianne
Gebhardt, ich rufe aus dem Studio
der ABC an. Wir haben hier Schüsse
gehört...
(listens)
Wissen Sie bereits Näheres?
(listens)
Verstehe. Danke.

She hangs up. Geoff eyes her eagerly.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)
Police already received several
calls and are investigating the
matter.

GEOFF
And?

MARIANNE
That's all they said.
(thinks)
The only ones working this late are
the radio people. I could walk over
to Bayerischer Rundfunk. See what
they know.

Geoff nods: *great*. He grabs a walkie talkie from the table
and hands it to her.

GEOFF
Do you know how these work?

MARIANNE
(flicks on the walkie)
I'm on channel two.

She heads out the door.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Marianne hurries along, almost collides into ABC Intern/
Runner, GARY SLAUGHTER (20), headphones over ears.

GARY
Sorry!

Marianne sees the portable radio in his hands.

MARIANNE
Hey, can I borrow that?

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Geoff sits behind the console. Jacques calls out from behind the monitor wall.

JACQUES
Still getting dropouts?

GEOFF
Yes.

JACQUES
How often?

GEOFF
(looks at black monitor)
Constantly. Can't we-

Gary enters. Geoff turns to him.

GEOFF (CONT'D)
Did you hear shots being fired?

GARY
What? No.

GEOFF
(to Jacques)
Maybe it was fireworks? Or, what did it sound like?

JACQUES
It sounded like gunfire, Geoff.

GARY
...what's going on?

The walkie crackles. Geoff snatches it. Jacques steps forward to listen.

GEOFF
(into walkie)
You there yet?

MARIANNE
(over walkie, sirens in the background)
No, I'm walking over the bridge.
But I can see dozens of police cars already.

GEOFF
What!? Driving into the village?

MARIANNE

Yes. Whatever happened, it happened here.

Geoff puts down the walkie. Stunned: this is really happening. Gunfire. At the Olympics.

Then remembers he has a job to do.

GEOFF

I have to wake Bader.

INT. STORAGE ROOM - DAWN

Bader lies on a cot, asleep.

The door flings opens. Light slashes into the dark room, startling Bader awake.

GEOFF

Marv! Get up! There's been-

BADER

What the hell, Geoff? I'm-

GEOFF

Shots were fired in the Olympic Village! Fucking shots!

Bader shoots up. Wide awake now.

BADER

What? You serious?

GEOFF

Yeah. There's a ton of police and--

The walkie in Geoff's hand crackles:

MARIANNE

Can you hear me?

GEOFF

(into walkie)
Listening.

MARIANNE

The phones won't stop at the Rundfunk. A friend here heard the shots were fired in the Israelis' apartments.

Bader grabs Geoff's walkie:

BADER

This is Bader. What are we talking about here? Is anyone hurt?

MARIANNE

Rumor is hostage taking.

BADER

What? Who?

MARIANNE

I don't know. But the BR will say something on their 6 o'clock news.

Geoff and Bader look simultaneously at their watches: 05:50.

BADER

(to Geoff)

Go to the control room and call Roone.

GEOFF

Roone? I thought...

BADER

Call him! I'll get Jennings!

Bader reaches for the nearest phone. Geoff rushes to the door, grabbing a radio on the way.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Geoff returns, hands Jacques the radio.

GEOFF

Tune in on BR.

He picks up the phone. Dials. Puts it on a phone amplifier.

RECEPTIONIST

Sheraton München. Was kann ich für Sie tun?

GEOFF

I need to speak to Roone Arledge, right away.

RECEPTIONIST

Mr. Arledge asked we block his calls until-

GEOFF

Trust me, Mr Arledge wants to be woken up for this.

The Receptionist hesitates.

GEOFF (CONT'D)

I need you to connect me. Now.

RECEPTIONIST

One moment, please.

More rings. Taking forever.

We hear Roone's deep voice.

ROONE

*(throat cleared, into
phone)*

I said not to disturb me.

GEOFF

There's a hostage situation in the Olympic Village right now.

ROONE

What're you talking about?

GEOFF

A hostage situation. And it gets worse. Word is it's in the Israelis' quarters.

ROONE

(long beat, then)

Is this confirmed?

GEOFF

No, but--

Jacques turns up the volume on the radio. A jingle announces the news.

GEOFF (CONT'D)

They're about to say something on the radio now.

Geoff wants to make sure Roone can hear. He holds the phone towards the radio's speakers.

NEWS REPORTER

Guten Morgen meine Damen und Herren, die Sechs-Uhr-Nachrichten.

The door opens. Bader, visibly exhausted, puts on his glasses. Runs a hand through his hair. Listens.

The newscaster's serious voice is a bad omen.

Geoff picks up the walkie:

GEOFF

Mary-Ann, can you translate this?

MARIANNE

Sure, let me check my radio.

Geoff now holds the walkie in one hand, the phone receiver in the other. He shrugs, puts them together. Now Marianne's voice and the radio crackle simultaneously.

<p><i>NEWS REPORTER</i> <i>.... erreichen uns immer mehr</i> <i>Meldungen, dass es einen</i> <i>Schusswechsel innerhalb des</i> <i>Olympischen Dorfes gab.</i></p>	<p><i>MARIANNE (CONT'D)</i> <i>There have been reports of</i> <i>shots being fired inside the</i> <i>Olympic Village.</i></p>
--	--

Everyone hangs on Marianne's words.

<p><i>NEWS REPORTER (CONT'D)</i> <i>Von der Polizei noch nicht</i> <i>bestätigte Meldungen besagen,</i> <i>dass es zu einem Überfall von</i> <i>sogenannten Terroristen auf</i> <i>die israelische Mannschaft</i> <i>gekommen sein könnte.</i></p>	<p><i>MARIANNE (CONT'D)</i> <i>Reports that have not yet</i> <i>been confirmed by the police</i> <i>say that the Israeli team may</i> <i>have been attacked by so-</i> <i>called terrorists.</i></p>
--	---

Breathless seconds pass.

ROONE
I'll be there in 20.

CLICK. Roone's already hung up.

Geoff and Bader look at each other.

BADER
Get the crew in.

Geoff nods and reaches for the phone again.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Through a cloud of nicotine we follow a tall, good-looking man down the hall. A certain confidence in his attitude.

PETER JENNINGS (34) is the only reporter from the ABC News division on the Sports crew here, one who believes being a newscaster is a noble and truly important role in society.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

The mood here has changed. The air's electric.

Geoff speaks eagerly into the phone.

GEOFF
Grab as many as possible. Priority
are camera ops. Bus leaves in 10.
And make sure you get Carter.

He hangs up as Jennings enters.

JENNINGS
Is it confirmed yet?

GEOFF
Yes. Definitely shots, definitely
the Israelis.

JENNINGS
And this is from...?

GEOFF
The German radio.

JENNINGS
We can't quote another station?
Second source?

GEOFF
Um...

Suddenly, there's a rattle from the AP Wire.

Gary moves to the teleprinter. Rips off the paper. Reads:

GARY
"One, Possibly Two, Israeli
Athletes Killed at Olympic Village.
Arab Guerrillas Likely Took
Hostages."

A beat, as everybody lets this sink in: People are dead.
Murdered. Just a few hundred meters away.

BADER
Peter, what're we dealing with
here?

JENNINGS
Could be PLO. PFLP.
(beat)
Or worst case Black September.

Bader takes a deep breath. Time to focus.

BADER
(to Jennings)
You know the political background;
you report from the inside.

CUT TO:

A MAP IS SLAMMED DOWN ON A TABLE.

Everyone hunches over it.

JENNINGS
Where are the Israelis housed?

BADER
Connollystrasse 31.

Bader points it out on the map. Jennings taps the building across from it.

JENNINGS
This should give us a good angle.

The walkie crackles.

MARIANNE
*Anyone there? Seems like the police
will seal the Village. Reporters
here are rushing off to get in now.*

JENNINGS
Fuck.

He immediately zips out the door.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

His gait is fast.

At the other end, Roone enters. Instead of his suit, he's now in an ABC crew windbreaker, sleeves rolled up.

ROONE
Hey, Peter, what's the-

JENNINGS
(as he crosses)
Can't talk. Searching for a
cameraman.

Roone hurries to the control room.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Roone steps in, sees how empty it is. Goes to Bader.

ROONE
Where's the crew?

GEOFF
First shuttle gets here any minute.

ROONE
When's Jim coming in?

GEOFF
It's his day off so I didn't-

ROONE
(to Bader)
We need Jim for this.

Bader nods to Geoff: do it. Geoff dials a number. Quietly talks into it while Roone continues with Bader.

ROONE (CONT'D)
When do we have the bird today?

BADER
3pm. 10am Eastern.

ROONE
We need the breakfast slot.

BADER
Then you need to sweet-talk CBS.

Roone rolls his eyes.

Geoff covers his phone receiver, calls out to Bader:

GEOFF
Jim is in the pool, doing his morning laps.

BADER
Who're you talking to?

GEOFF
His wife.

Bader takes the phone, indicates he's got it.

BADER
Margaret, it's Marv. Will you please be so kind and get him out of the pool for me?
(beat)
Thanks, I'll stay on the line.

Jennings comes back in. Accompanied by a Camera Assistant (BEN, 21) carrying robust, silver cases.

JENNINGS
We're ready to go, but still no cameramen here yet.

Roone glares at Geoff, incredulous: you didn't get the cameramen here first?

Roone addresses the Camera Assistant.

ROONE
What's your name?

CAMERA ASSISTANT

Ben.

ROONE

Can you hold a camera, Ben?

Ben nods.

ROONE (CONT'D)

Know how to change film?

BEN

Definitely.

ROONE

(to Jennings)

Ben's your cameraman. Go.

Ben is thrilled.

JENNINGS

(about to go, to Roone)

I guess News will want to take over soon.

ROONE

I'll talk to them. But right now Sports is here.

Jennings nods, waves Ben to come with him.

Bader hears a noise on the phone, lifts it to his ear.

BADER

Yes, Margaret, I'm still here. Did-
(beat)

As soon as he can. Thank you so much. I hope we didn't ruin your-

She's hung up.

BADER (CONT'D)

Jim's gonna anchor.

Roone nods to Bader: nice work.

ROONE

(next topic)

We need someone at the press center.

BADER

I doubt Hans is releasing anything at this point.

ROONE

Then maybe you should go. You know him. If anything happens, we need to be the first to know.

BADER

Alright. Let's have Geoff coordinate the setup while I'm gone.

ROONE

Not on his first day. Where's Ohlmeyer?

BADER

Hiking trip in the Alps.

ROONE

Maddocks?

BADER

We keep trying him. No answer. I mean it's 5 in the morning.

Roone looks at Geoff, seems this is who he's stuck with.

ROONE

(starts walking out)

I'll handle CBS and the satellite. You make sure we have something to feed that bird.

And with that he's gone.

Bader turns to Geoff, who's already planing ahead, excited to be in charge:

GEOFF

So what do we air?

BADER

Whatever info I get from Hans Klein.

GEOFF

I'm talking visual. We can't just have Jim talking. The footage Ben shoots on his 16 mil takes twenty minutes to develop... and we need live images of what's going on.

GARY

Can we use that mobile unit? The guys with the backpack?

GEOFF

They can only do wide-angle. We need a long lens... I mean it's happening right there!

He points at a spot on the map.

They pause, thinking. Then Geoff's finger starts to move on the map.

GEOFF (CONT'D)

That's us, right?...Let's roll out one of the studio cams.

(marks another spot)

Place it somewhere over here.

(looks at Bader, excited)

And we get a live shot of the apartment.

Bader gives a thumbs up: *Good thinking.*

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Bader walks down the hall, sees Marianne enter from outside.

BADER

Anything about the hostages yet?

MARIANNE

Only mixed information.

BADER

Then call around to get things double checked.

He hands her a walkie as he reaches her.

MARIANNE

I already have one.

BADER

Let's open our own channel. Run things by me before you pass anything on.

(heads off)

Channel four.

INT. ROONE'S OFFICE - DAY

Roone goes straight to the phone and dials an extension.

ROONE

Coffee, aspirin and a timetable of today's slots on the sat.

He quickly hangs up, instantly dials the next number.

While waiting for someone to answer the phone, he switches on the television in the corner. A color TV, rare in Germany for the early 70s. ABC plays on the screen.

INT. BACKSTAGE AREA - DAY

The first swarm of crew arrives at the studio, emerging from a shuttle bus that has stopped outside.

Geoff hurries up to welcome them.

GEOFF
You heard what happened. Get to work. I need four men in the studio.

But nobody seems to listen to him.

CARTER (O.S.)
You're the big boss now?

Geoff turns, relieved to see CARTER JEFFREY (mid-20s), an innovative tech from the camera department.

INT. STUDIO STAGE - DAY

Geoff and Carter stare at one of the three gigantic studio cameras.

CARTER
You know how heavy those are?

GEOFF
Let's find out.

He grabs the camera by its wheeled pedestal, starts pushing. Carter helps him.

CARTER
Wiring could be tricky.

GEOFF
You'll figure it out.

He sees Jacques watching them, skeptical.

GEOFF (CONT'D)
C'mon. You, too.

Jacques rolls his eyes.

INT. VTR LIBRARY - DAY

Marianne picks up a phone from the desk and dials a number.

MARIANNE

Ja, hallo, hier ist Marianne vom
DOZ. Könnten Sie mich zu Michael
Korth durchstellen?

(beat)

Ja, danke, ich warte.

She clamps the receiver to her ear. Grabs a press kit showing headshots and short bios of the Olympic participants.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Geoff, Jacques and Carter wiggle the heavy camera out of the studio into the corridor. Geoff's walkie crackles:

BADER

Geoff, you there?

GEOFF

(into walkie)

Talk to me, Marv.

BADER

*I'm at the press center. Hans Klein
got word from the Olympic
Committee: "The Games must go on."*

CARTER

*Do they really think anyone will
care about sports today?*

BADER

*Good news is that two Israelis
escaped during the attack. Also I-
(noise in his background)
Hold on a sec.*

Over the walkie we hear a distant voice.

BADER (CONT'D)

*They just confirmed the injured
coach died. Mosche Weinberg. Shot
twice in the head, once in the gut.*

They look at each other in horror.

BADER (CONT'D)

*The terrorists demanded Israel
release 200 Palestinian prisoners
by noon. If not they kill one
hostage every hour.*

GEOFF

*Jesus Christ. Are there
negotiations happening?*

BADER

Don't know.

GEOFF

So should I pass all that on to
Roone?

BADER

*Geoff, you have to be the center of
everything now! Not just the
control room. All communication,
everything.*

This is more than Geoff was prepared for.

BADER (CONT'D)

Geoff?

GEOFF

Got it. All communication,
everything.

INT. ROONE'S OFFICE - DAY

Roone, electric shaver in his hand, listens to the phone on
loudspeaker. This is the part of the job he hates.

CBS

*.... I'm sorry, there is nothing I
can do about it. We've had that one
booked for months.*

ROONE

(into phone)

But this is a story of public
interest. People need to see this.
And they need to see this live! And
right now, we're the only ones who
can do that.

His ASSISTANT enters the room, puts down a coffee and a
timetable of the booked satellite slots in front of Roone.

ROONE (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Hold on, Claire. I got the schedule
now.

(to Assistant)

The aspirin?

ASSISTANT

We ran out of them.

Roone holds in his anger.

ROONE

Never mind.

(back to phone, checks
timetable)

This is what we're going to do: We
swap slots. You get 3, we get noon.

CBS

You're sure it'll be done by then?

ROONE

(into phone)

You know the Germans. They'll have
the situation quickly under
control.

His AP Wire starts rattling. Roone reaches for it. Starts
reading.

ROONE (CONT'D)

(into phone)

So we got a deal?

CBS

(beat, then)

*They're all asleep now, but I'm
doing my best.*

ROONE

(into phone)

Appreciate it, Claire. ABC owes CBS
on this one.

He hangs up. His Assistant still stands there. Knows Roone
won't like what he has to say:

ASSISTANT

Starger's office called. They want
News to take over.

ROONE

(waves it off)

Tell them I'll be in touch.

He continues reading, as a loud noise is heard from the-

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

The enormous camera is shoved down the hall by Geoff, Jacques
and Carter.

ROONE

What the hell are you guys doing?

GEOFF

We're going to get a live shot of the apartment. It'll be cutting edge--

ROONE

Who are the hostages?

GEOFF

Bader just confirmed that one of them died. A coach. Um-

ROONE

Mosche Weinberg. I read the Wire. But who's inside that apartment?

GEOFF

I don't think we know yet.

ROONE

Then we find out. Who are they? What's their background. Do they have family?

(re: camera)

There's no point aiming that thing at a building if the viewer doesn't know the people inside.

Geoff knows Roone is right. How could he not think of this?

The Assistant appears in the doorframe behind Roone.

ASSISTANT

News is on the line again. Can't hold them back anymore.

Roone doesn't turn around. Keeps his gaze fixed on Geoff.

ROONE

Don't fuck it up, Mason. I got the bird. Live at noon.

Geoff glances at the clock.

GEOFF

(Fuck)

No problem.

ROONE

(heads back to office)

I have to deal with this bullshit.

He closes the door behind him. Geoff pulls his walkie.

GEOFF

Marv, do we have any info on the hostages yet?

But another voice responds.

MARIANNE
I'm on it.

GEOFF
Where are you?

MARIANNE
VTR Library.

GEOFF
(into walkie)
Coming.
(nods at camera)
Get this mother outside.

He hurries off. Jacques and Carter look at the massive camera: *Great.*

INT. VTR LIBRARY - DAY

Marianne has the Israeli delegation in front of her. She circles profiles and takes notes, while on the phone:

MARIANNE
Du hast von zehn Geiseln
gesprochen, in Apartment eins?

Geoff charges in.

GEOFF
What you got?

MARIANNE
(motions: one second)
Dann bleiben exakt fünf
Kraftsportler übrig.

She circles another headshot. Geoff realizes what she's doing, eagerly turns the page so he can see it.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)
(beat)
Danke, Michael. Ich schulde dir
was.

Marianne hangs up. She gently turns the page back to herself.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)
I need to confirm this first.

GEOFF
Do that later. I need it now.

MARIANNE

I'm sorry. It shouldn't take long.
 (into walkie)
 Mister Bader, can you read me?

Geoff, ready to burst, realizes he just has to wait this out.

BADER

Marianne, what've you got?

MARIANNE

(into walkie)
 My source at the BR told me there
 are ten hostages. Five coaches.
 Five athletes.

BADER

OK. Lines up with my info.

MARIANNE

(into walkie)
 Also...
 (scans Olympic housing
 map)
 We've been told the Palestinians
 attacked apartment 1 and 3...

Geoff bounces on his toes, impatient.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

(into walkie)
 After cross-referencing that with
 the housing plans and who slept
 where...

Now Geoff's walkie crackles:

JACQUES

Jennings made it inside!

GEOFF

(into walkie)
 Great. Coming.
 (to Marianne)
 I want all this information in the
 control room when you're done.

He speeds off. Marianne moves on, stays focused:

MARIANNE

(back into walkie)
 So I'd say the five athletes being
 held are Romano, Slavin, Friedman,
 Berger and Halfin.

BADER

Berger? David Berger?

MARIANNE

Yes. Why?

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

The crew people have started up their work again. A Stage Runner ("JJ") passes coffee mugs around.

As Geoff rushes in, Jacques hands him the phone. Geoff puts it on the amplifier.

GEOFF

Jennings, it's Geoff Mason.

JENNINGS

You're running things?

GEOFF

Yeah. So tell me, where are you?

JENNINGS

A balcony in the Italian compound. It's a good spot. I've a direct view of 31. And I'm not alone up here. The other balconies are full of reporters and photographers, all waiting for something to happen.

GEOFF

So nothing's going on?

JENNINGS

No. Police are just milling around. Doesn't seem like they even started negotiating yet...There's an eerie silence; you can actually hear the clicking of the cameras.

Marianne enters, hands Geoff the pages of the hostages. He takes a quick look at the headshots.

GEOFF

Too small.

He passes the pages to JJ:

GEOFF (CONT'D)

Get these to Judy. Three times bigger.

The Assistant nods and rushes out. Geoff turns back to the phone, when he realizes Marianne's still standing there. Is she waiting for him to say thanks?

MARIANNE

There's a report Mister Bader
watched earlier that has an
interview with one of the hostages.
David Berger, a former American.

This helpful info catches Geoff off-guard. Before he can
respond, Marianne heads for the door, when-

JENNINGS

There's movement at 31...

Everyone in the control room stops to listen. Even Marianne.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

*... the door on the second floor
balcony is opening... Someone's
peering out... And-*

For a moment, Jennings loses his voice.

GEOFF

Jennings, what's happening?

JENNINGS

*Someone's on the balcony. Wearing
some kind of mask, slowly looking
around... going back in now...*

(beat)

*That... that was terrifying. Ben
down there caught it on 16 mil. I
wish you could get this shot,
Mason.*

GEOFF

I'll send a runner.

JENNINGS

*No chance. Police sealed off the
entire area. Only athletes can get
past.*

Geoff's mind whirrs: what to do, what to do.

INT. BACKSTAGE AREA - DAY

Gary stands uncomfortably. A US weightlifter's tracksuit
hangs on him. It's way too big.

GLADYS DEIST (29), ABC Graphics, cuts out a narrow green
stripe from an official Olympic catalog. Places it over the
blue stripe on Gary's press ID badge.

Fits perfectly. She reaches for tweezers and glue. Her every
move deliberate, as if defusing a bomb.

Nothing ever ruffles Gladys Deist.

Carter hands Gary a USA sports bag, containing:

CARTER

Loaded mags, walkies, eight rolls,
long lens, changing bag, sandwiches
... and cigarettes.

GARY

So what if they search me?

GLADYS

Don't worry. You're now officially
an athlete.

She hands him the fake ID, adjusts his enormous tracksuit.
Can't help but smile.

DARK ROOM - DAY

MONTAGE: An ASSISTANT EDITOR (Judy) places the headshot of a
hostage under a table camera -- CLICK -- Next one -- CLICK --
The enlarger projects light through the negative on a
photographic paper -- an enlarged headshot starts to emerge
in the developer bath.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

The room is increasingly filling up with staff. Hermann sets
up fans to counter the rising heat.

Everyone listens intently to Jennings' descriptions:

JENNINGS

*A man is stepping out of the
apartment now. White suit, white
hat, face painted black. Could be
the group's leader... Cameras
clicking like machine guns now...
He looks around at all the press,
waves his hand. Seems like he
enjoys the attention.*

JJ returns with the headshots of the hostages. Geoff signals
him to put them on the wall.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

*A policewoman's walking up now. All
by herself. Unarmed. Looks like
she's handling the negotiations.
(beat)
And, oh God, he seems to have a
grenade in his hand.*

Silence, as everyone realizes even fellow crew are in danger.

GEOFF
(concerned)
Jennings, how close are you?

JENNINGS
Maybe 100, 130 feet.

GEOFF
You should get away from there.

JENNINGS
*Kill radius is only 16 feet. I've
been in the Middle East.*

GEOFF
Ok. But be careful.

Gladys enters the control room.

GLADYS
Gary's on his way.

Geoff turns to Jacques.

GEOFF
Are there operators on the tower
yet?

JACQUES
(nods)
Channel 6.

GEOFF
(switches channels on his
walkie)
Tower - show me the western gate.

TOWER CAMERAMAN
Copy that.

On the monitor we see the tower cam pan over the Village.

Focuses on the gate at the fence. Lots of photographers,
cameramen and onlookers, all desperate to get in.

Gladys points at someone in a tracksuit sprinting up.

GLADYS
Yeah. Go, Gary!

Gary's in the thick of the fray outside the gate. He fights
his way to the front guard. Shows his ID.

Then he's allowed in and immediately begins to run again.

Some of the crew clap. Another win for Geoff. The team's
alive with excitement. It all feels like a great adventure.

The camera pans with Gary.

Bader bursts in, returning from the press center:

BADER
BR's airing the police chief's
first official statement. Now.

Jacques immediately snaps on the radio, turns it up. The press conference is already running. The voice of Munich's police chief, Manfred Schreiber, echoes from the speakers.

Marianne, not missing a beat, simultaneously translates:

SCHREIBER
*Die Täter fordern, dass 200
Personen freigelassen werden.
Sie sind in israelischer
Hand. Wenn diese 200 Personen
nicht freigegeben würden,
dann würde man ab zwölf Uhr
jede Stunde eine Geisel
erschießen.*

MARIANNE
The terrorists demanded 200
prisoners be freed from
Israeli prisons. If not,
they'll start killing one
hostage every hour starting
at noon.

GEOFF
Yeah, yeah. Can't he tell us
something we don't know?

A question from a journalist is heard:

JOURNALIST
*Warum waren die
Ordnungskräfte nicht
bewaffnet? Und würden Sie
sagen, dass das ein Fehler
war?*

MARIANNE
Someone's asking if the chief
of police thinks it was a
mistake that the Olympic
village had no armed police.

Jacques is quicker with his answer:

JACQUES
Of course, it was!

Marianne eyes the floor briefly. It builds in her. She can't let that comment slide.

MARIANNE
... I guess they didn't want the
world to be reminded of the last
time armed Germans patrolled
fences.

JACQUES
So Germany's shiny new image was
more important than people's
safety?

Bader feels the tension. Doesn't want it to escalate.

BADER
People, this isn't our business.
That is our business:

He points to the two clocks with Munich and New York time.

BADER (CONT'D)
In less than an hour we go live.

INT. ROONE'S OFFICE - DAY

Roone, upset, phone on speaker.

ABC HEADQUARTERS
*Roone, this is not your field. Just
send News the highlights.*

ROONE
You kidding? I'm here in Munich.
Hundred yards away from where it's
happening. We're not giving it to
News. We're not giving it to
anybody. Sports is keeping this.
That's it.

He hangs up and rushes out of the room in anger.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Jennings continues to report over the phone:

JENNINGS
*Now it looks like there are
negotiations happening. German
politicians and the leader in the
white suit are talking. But
whatever they're discussing, I
can't imagine Prime Minister Golda
Meir and her parliament, the
Knesset, will respond in any way to
blackmail.*

Roone enters, nods hello to Bader, as Jennings continues:

JENNINGS (CONT'D)
*It's ironic. I have been a Middle
East expert in Beirut for 5 years,
yet I have never gotten this close
to the Arab-Israel conflict.*

ROONE
Peter, I want your voice live when
we go on air.

Geoff eyes sound engineer HANK HANSON (40): can we do that?

HANK
I'll give it a shot.

He grabs the next rotary phone and starts unscrewing the earpiece.

BADER
Jennings, any idea how many
Palestinians are inside?

JENNINGS
*We've seen a lot of heads popping
out of the windows. These men are
clearly professionals. I suspect
they're deliberately trying to
create confusion.*
(beat)
*Now a second commando is at the
window. Brandishing his submachine
gun like a threat.*

HANK
(without looking up)
Fucking Arabs.

JACQUES
Hey watch it. My mom is from
Algeria.

HANK
Come on, you know I'm not talking
about your mom.

JACQUES
Ah, just the bad Arabs?

JENNINGS
*What he's saying is that whatever
conception you have of Arabia or
Arabs is... you need to understand
how sensitive this situation is. Do
you realize what is at stake here?
This is no longer the Olympics...*

Bader interrupts Jennings:

BADER
Thank you for clarifying Peter. And
it actually does bring up a
question: What should we call them
on air?

JENNINGS
*In News we would refer to them as
commando guerrillas.*

Bader looks questioningly at Roone.

ROONE
(shakes head)
Sounds like we're in the jungle.

Geoff has an idea, turns to Marianne.

GEOFF
What did the Germans call them? On the radio?

MARIANNE
They used "terrorists".

Roone is immediately convinced.

ROONE
Perfect. Let's go with that.

JENNINGS
That's a charged term, Roone. Terrorism is the organized and systematic use of violence against civilians to effect a political goal.

A beat as everybody tries to make sense of what he just said.

BADER
(hesitant)
But... isn't that pretty much what's happening here?

JENNINGS
*Look, nobody knows yet what is happening here. So we have to be very careful about everything we say on air. We have a journalistic responsibility here.
(finally says it)
And no offense guys, but you're Sports. You're in way over your head. News should take over.*

Roone's had enough.

ROONE
Standby, Peter.

He cuts off the connection.

BADER
He might be right.

Roone's struck. He looks around the room. Sees the crew's faces. Many clearly agree with Jennings too.

ROONE

Look, I know this isn't a responsibility that everybody wants. But does it make more sense to have a talking head from News take over from halfway across the fucking world?

He looks at his crew.

ROONE (CONT'D)

Our job is to tell the stories of these individuals. Whose lives are at stake. A hundred yards away. And our job is really straightforward. We put the camera in the right place. And we follow the story as it unfolds in real time. News can tell us what it all meant after it's over. And I'm sure they're gonna try.

He looks each and every one of his crew in the eyes as he continues.

ROONE (CONT'D)

This is our story. And we're keeping it.

Roone rushes out and Geoff steps forward.

GEOFF

Alright everyone, you heard the boss. We have 45 minutes left. Do we have an opener yet?

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

WHAM - The large studio door flies open. Gary swoops in, gym bag in hand.

The Assistant Editor already waits for him.

Gary hands her the film magazines from the gym bag. She disappears with it into a darkroom.

INT. DARKROOM - DAY

Pitch black except for a weak green light.

Film strips run through a developer bath. In the emulsion the images slowly form. Still shadowy.

ASSISTANT EDITOR
(into walkie)
Footage ready for review in five.

INT. EDITING ROOM - DAY

The Assistant Editor skillfully threads the newly developed film into the Steenbeck.

Behind her stand Geoff and Jacques. Nobody says a word. Eagerly awaiting the first images.

The Assistant Editor steps on the foot pedal. The film platter whirrs.

The playback monitor projects the perforated blank film leaders, frames with flares, scratches, the Kodak logo briefly pops up, and then finally:

FLASH -- Jennings holds a clapboard -- FLASH -- police cars driving into the village -- the Connollystrasse 31 building from outside -- FLASH -- police officers setting up barriers -- PAN across to reporters and photographers crowding on opposite balconies, all lenses pointed at building 31 --

Then a hectic SWISH PAN -- ZOOM to 31's balcony door just as it opens -- a figure steps out -- so blurry he almost looks like a ghost --

Then the camera focuses on an image that would become the day's most famous one.

An image that would be burnt into the collective consciousness. A symbol of this atrocity. An icon of terror:

The masked man on the balcony.

All eyes are fixed on the monitor. Fascinated and unsettled simultaneously.

No one can speak.

Until:

GEOFF
That's our opener.

CUT TO:

11:50 AM

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

INSERT: An unscrewed phone earpiece. Next to a stripped audio cable. Hank aims the soldering iron at the earpiece. A thin thread of smoke rises.

The control room is now packed. The entire crew is back.

Only minutes until they go live.

CAM 2's monitor now shows a live view of the apartment. But Geoff's not satisfied yet. He grabs one of the three walkies lined up in front of him.

GEOFF

Cam 2 - good, but the balcony needs to be at the very center, Charlie.

CAMERA OPERATOR

You got it, Kubrick.

GEOFF

(into second walkie)

Tower cam, get nice and close on that roof.

The tower monitor's image zooms in until the roof of the Israeli housing fills the frame.

Roone and Bader enter.

BADER

(takes off his jacket)

Jesus, it's even hotter here than yesterday.

Roone sits right by Geoff, demands:

ROONE

Talk me through.

Geoff takes a quick breath, then begins, pointing to each corresponding monitors as he mentions them:

GEOFF

We got Cam 1 covering Jim. Cam 2's outside with live images from the apartment. Tower cam has the Village aerial and can zoom in. 16mm footage is on tape machines 3 to 6.

He reveals Hank's finished telephone receiver construction.

GEOFF (CONT'D)

We now can hear Jennings live on the air. And...

Points to the pages of the Israeli athletes on the wall.

GEOFF (CONT'D)

We have an overview of the hostages.

(MORE)

GEOFF (CONT'D)

And a pre-recorded interview with one of them, David Berger, ready for playback.

A beat. Then Roone actually nods approvingly.

ROONE

Good work.

Geoff only allows himself a second to enjoy it. Then he turns to the crew.

GEOFF

Five minutes, everybody.

People scurry about, finish last-minute touches.

Geoff puts on his headset.

GEOFF (CONT'D)

Tower cam, I want you to start with an establishing pan over the spectators. And then push in. I want a gut-punch close-up of that terrorist.

Bader leans towards Geoff, speaks softly. His concerns should not be noticed by anyone.

BADER

Uh, Geoff, can you turn it down a notch? It's not track and field. They threatened to kill people.

Geoff turns to Bader, covering the mic of his headset.

GEOFF

Is the noon deadline confirmed?

Bader nods.

GEOFF (CONT'D)

What do I tell the cameras?

BADER

What do you mean?

GEOFF

(matter of fact)

Can we show someone being shot on live television?

Simple question. Long silence.

ROONE

We can't control what happens...

BADER
No, wait, wait, wait. We're the
only station going live with this.
Which means everyone will be
watching us. Including the
hostages' families.

Roone hates being second-guessed in public.

ROONE
Okay, okay. Hallway.

Bader and Roone exit.

GEOFF
(to the crew)
Alright, everyone, stay on your
headsets.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Bader and Roone step out into the hallway.

BADER
You don't want anybody to see their
kid being executed on live
television.

ROONE
Of course not, Marv.

BADER
I don't know about the Israelis,
but David Berger's folks are in
Ohio. So I'm pretty sure they'll
watch.

ROONE
Then somebody should tell them not
to watch it. We have a bigger
responsibility here.

BADER
What about the sponsors?

ROONE
The sponsors are not gonna be
concerned. All they care about are
viewers.

Geoff opens the door behind them:

GEOFF
Guys. We have two minutes.

Roone senses he needs backup. Signals Geoff to come out.

BADER
So, is that what we're trying to
achieve here? Ratings?

ROONE
No. We just...We're following the
story wherever it takes us.

Gives Bader a thought.

BADER
Alright, then let me ask you this:
Black September; they know that the
whole world is watching, right?
That's why they chose the Olympics.

A beat.

BADER (CONT'D)
If they shoot someone on live
television, whose story is that? Is
it ours, or is it theirs?

This makes Roone think.

Geoff eyes his watch. Time to be practical:

GEOFF
How about this: If things get tense
we only leave the 16mm running.
That'll give us plenty of time to
decide whether we air it or not.

A long beat. Then:

ROONE
Alright.

Bader is relieved. They go back in.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

The three men burst in. Geoff resumes control.

GEOFF
30 seconds to the open. Is Jim
ready?

A Stage Assistant (LARRY) standing at the stage door shouts
in:

LARRY
Last looks.

Geoff glances at the preview monitor: Jim McKay sits in his
announcer's seat, covered by a MAKE-UP PERSON adjusting his
hair.

GEOFF
 (into headset)
 Cam 1, tight on Jim. 2 on preview.
 Tower, stay wide on building 31.
 (switches channel)
 Gladys, opening title on 1.

INT. EDITING ROOM - DAY

Gladys sits at the Title Generator. Headset on, eyes focused on the preview monitor.

GLADYS
 Title 1 ready for insert.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

A caption appears on one of the screens on the monitor wall.

Geoff shifts his gaze to the "network return monitors". On them we catch the ending of a commercial: camera flies towards New York's Twin Towers as the Texaco logo appears.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
 Aaand in ten, nine, eight...

As the countdown continues, Roone leans forward to Geoff, whispers:

ROONE
 If someone's shot, have the live
 cams pan to the onlookers for
 reaction shots.

Geoff glances at Bader uncomfortable, but:

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
 ... three, two, one.
 (to Geoff)
 And we're hot.

All eyes on Geoff. A beat. Then.

GEOFF
 (into headset)
 Roll 5. Insert title 1.

FULLSCREEN LINE MONITOR: The masked man on the balcony.

Title appears: TERRORIST ATTACK AT THE OLYMPICS

GEOFF (CONT'D)	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
(into headset)	In 3... 2... 1
Ready 1... take 1.	
(into mic)	
Jim, you're on.	

CLOSE UP: Jim McKay looks at us professionally.

McKAY

*Good Morning, I'm Jim McKay
speaking to you live at this moment
from ABC Headquarters just outside
the Olympic Village in Munich, West
Germany. The peace of what's been
called the "Serene Olympics" was
shattered just before dawn this
morning around 5 o'clock when...*

GEOFF

Cam 2 on preview. Balcony pan.
(checks preview)
Ready 2, take 2.

Live Cam 2: Pan across the balcony of building 31.

McKAY (V.O.)

*...a group of terrorists armed with
submachine guns, faces blackened...*

GEOFF

Dissolve to 3.

Crossfade: Tower cam. Wide shot Connollystrasse.

McKAY (V.O.)

*...climbed the fence into the
Olympic Village...*

GEOFF

2, close up door. Good. Hold it,
hold it.... And take 2.

Crossfade Live Cam 2: The entrance door.

McKAY (V.O.)

*...headed to the Israeli team's
quarters...*

GEOFF

Studio on deck. Take 1.

McKAY

*...and immediately killed one man:
Moshe Weinberg, a coach. Two shots
to the head, one to the stomach.
They are holding ten more hostages
and the latest report is that one
more has been killed.*

(beat)

*Peter Jennings is inside the
Village. Let's go to Peter now.*

GEOFF

Ready 2, Take 2.

The telephone receiver construction sends Jennings' voice over the air.

JENNINGS

Jim, I'm directly across from the Israeli building. It will be a famous number before long. It is 31. It is on Connollystraße. The reports here vary dramatically as to what is going on.

MCKAY

Peter, do we already know who is responsible for the attack?

Geoff signals the SOUND TECHNICIANS in the audio booth to turn up the volume on Jennings.

JENNINGS

There is a great deal of speculation one could indulge in, which would be risky, but if I were to guess I would most likely narrow in on a group called "Black September". That however is pure speculation.

GEOFF

Back to 1.

Jim McKay in the studio:

MCKAY

Thank you, Peter. Something that is not speculation is that one of the hostages is David Berger, 26 years old, a former United States citizen, we are told by the Israelis. Moved there about two years ago. Is in the light heavyweight class.

GEOFF

Roll tape 5.

INT. VTR ROOM - DAY

A VTR TECHNICIAN stands at one of one of the gigantic VTR Machines. Tape starts rolling.

MCKAY
 (over speakers)
 After receiving a law degree
 from Columbia University,
 Berger failed to qualify for
 the US team. To fulfill his
 dream of the Olympics, he
 emigrated to Israel. Two days
 ago, he was interviewed by
 Peter Jennings for an ABC
 color piece.

VTR TECH
 (quietly into headset)
 Rolling, ready in seven,
 six,
 five,
 four,
 three,
 two,
 one. 5 ready to go.
 GEOFF
 (over headset)
 Hit it.

The Technician pushes a button on the machine.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

David Berger now appears on the main monitor. The segment
 from the Dachau report:

DAVID BERGER
*That's exactly what the Olympics
 are all about, you know. Like our
 fencing coach Andrei says, we're
 here and can talk to Germans, chat
 with athletes from Lebanon or
 Egypt. This is what we were
 dreaming about. It is not just
 about sports, you know?*
 (smiles into camera)
*Or as my mother always says: You
 may not be the world's best
 weightlifter, but you're certainly
 the smartest!*

GEOFF
 Back to 1 clean.

Bader's satisfied to see Geoff's really good at this. He
 stands up, whispers to Roone:

BADER
 I'll get back to Hans Klein, wait
 for the latest.

Roone nods, focuses back on Geoff who's going full-steam.

GEOFF
 Bird caption on my cue... And now.

Caption: LIVE VIA SATELLITE FROM MUNICH, GERMANY

MCKAY
*Ladies and Gentlemen, these dreams
 have been shattered by this
 terrible, terrible attack.*
(MORE)

MCKAY (CONT'D)

The terrorists have demanded the release of some 200 Arab guerrilla prisoners in Israel in exchange for the lives of Israeli athletes. They had set a deadline of noon. That deadline obviously has passed. Nobody knows what is going to happen now.

Tension builds as everybody watches the screen. Waiting for something to happen.

INT. EDITING ROOM - DAY

Marianne listens to the radio in the quiet room. Taking notes. Behind her Hank scans the shelves, looking through audio tracks. Carter enters with newly developed film rolls.

He threads the film into the Steenbeck. Hits play.

Marianne quiets the news as both she and Hank turn to watch the Steenbeck's monitor:

Next to the Leader we now see for the first time the Policewoman who is handling the negotiations.

HANK

Can you believe this lady's the negotiator? She doesn't strike me as the hard boiled type.

MARIANNE

(sees something else)
If the terrorists underestimate her like you do, she might have a chance to get inform--

HANK

Just look. She's asking him for cigarettes! Can you believe that?

The white-suited Leader gives the Woman a cigarette. She takes it. He lights hers, then lights one up for himself.

MARIANNE

No, no, she's earning his trust.

Hank shakes his head, sure, returns to his work.

On the screen the Leader goes back inside. The Policewoman pulls out a walkie.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

I just wish I could hear what she's saying.

Carter looks at Marianne, inspired.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Geoff stares at the Main Monitor:

MCKAY

*The Olympics at this moment are
still continuing.*

GEOFF

(nods, into headset)
Take 3. Roll Tape 4.

The screen now shows aerial shots of the Olympic village.

MCKAY

*There is a very strange atmosphere,
we're only 500 yards away from this
building here. And within 200 yards
from that building there is a man-
made pond, very lovely, with little
ducklings, where the athletes lay
out and take sun.*

Images of athletes sunbathing.

MCKAY (CONT'D)

*And that's what they're doing right
now. They're swimming, talking
technique with other athletes and
yet this grim terrible thing is
taking place right there inside the
village.*

Roone glances at the clocks beside the monitor wall.

ROONE

(gets up, to Geoff)
I'll make sure we can stay on the
bird.

He walks out. Geoff looks at the two clocks. Then he turns to
the COMMUNICATOR.

GEOFF

What is he talking about? Don't we
still have 3pm?

COMMUNICATOR

(shakes head)
He swapped slots.

All of a sudden:

TECHNICIAN (O.S.)

Uffffff!

Geoff turns around to see what's going on. TWO TECHNICIANS in
the back row are watching a table monitor, excited.

One of them turns the monitor, so Geoff can see: It's the boxing match between Téofilo and Bobick. Téofilo has just landed a knock-out. The referee is counting down.

INT. TRANSMISSION ROOM - DAY

INSERT: The housing of a transistor radio is removed.

Hank twiddles with the condenser, while Carter connects the antenna to an improvised extension wire.

Marianne stands nearby, surveys the huge transmitting console flowing with cables, sending out images across the globe.

Hank can't get more than static from the radio.

HANK

Damn it!

(deep breath)

Can you get us some coffee, please?

He fixes on Marianne. She looks around. Yes, he means her.

MARIANNE

Um, okay.

Marianne goes.

Hank keeps tweaking. Suddenly, the policewoman's voice comes out of the radio:

POLICEWOMAN (CB)

Der Anführer verlangt Verpflegung.

Hank and Carter turn their heads to room's control monitor: The live image shows the policewoman speaking into her walkie talkie. They receive her message simultaneously over the radio:

POLICEWOMAN (CB) (CONT'D)

*Laut seinen Angaben für insgesamt
20 Personen.*

Carter looks at Hank.

CARTER

Great. And you sent away the one
person who could understand this.

A beat. Then Hank rushes out.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Jennings excitedly reports over the phone:

JENNINGS
*Something's happening here in
 Connollystrasse.*

Geoff and the crew take their eyes off the boxing match back to the monitor wall: the live cameras show German officials walking up to the terrorist Leader. Followed by two Men in chef's hats carrying baskets of food.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)
*It seems like they're bringing food
 now. If you ask me, these are
 policemen dressed up as cooks.*

GEOFF
 (into headset)
 Tower keep tracking them.
 (aside to Jacques)
 Jesus Christ, my half-blind grandma
 could see that those "cooks" are
 cops.

INT. ROONE'S OFFICE

Roone has the phone to his ear. Tense.

ROONE
 Change it! That's my fucking
 suggestion. They can't have the
 slot. You guys think of something,
 I have to keep going.

He hangs up and looks at the TV: The German officials taste the food as the Leader watches.

JENNINGS
*Looks like they're proving the food
 isn't poisoned. Now the cooks seem
 eager to carry in the food... but
 the leader takes it from them, goes
 in alone...Whatever the Germans
 tried to achieve here, it failed.*

Roone shakes his head and changes channel. Sees something that triggers his interest.

INT. CONTROL ROOM

Phone in front of Geoff rings.

ROONE
 (over amplifier)
 Check Channel 11. Who is he?

Geoff turns to the table monitor behind him. The BACKROW TECHNICIAN switches channels: Israeli station *Channel 11's* Anchorman interviews a tired-looking heavysset man.

Geoff checks the profiles up on the wall.

GEOFF
Looks like Tuvia Sokolsky. One of
the Israelis who escaped.

ROONE
Why don't we have him?

GEOFF
(turns to crew)
Damn. Someone run over to their lot
and grab him!

Larry runs off.

GEOFF (CONT'D)
(shouts after him)
And tell JJ we're hungry.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

JJ is at the catering table, peanut buttering slices of toast at impressive speed.

INT. TRANSMISSION ROOM - DAY

The CB by Marianne crackles:

POLICEWOMAN
*Der Anführer hat das Ultimatum auf
17 Uhr verlängert.*

Steaming coffee cups are placed in front of her and Carter. By Hank, who looks at Marianne apologetically.

HANK
What's all that mean?

MARIANNE
New ultimatum is 5pm.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

The crew watches the main monitor: Zoom in on the balcony.

MCKAY
*We're moving in now on the windows,
behind which nine terrified living
human beings are being held
prisoner. And the demands are--*

The window opens and someone peeks out.

MCKAY (CONT'D)

Peter, there is someone right now.

(beat)

*Certainly has to be one of the
terrorists. One of them is believed
to be a woman.*

JJ enters the room. Handing out sandwiches to the crew.

MCKAY (CONT'D)

*And this has happened time and time
again. The door opening, the head
coming out to see what is going on.*

Geoff takes a bite of his sandwich, while looking at the monitor: The terrorist's head disappears behind the window again.

GEOFF

(into headset; chewing)

*Hey Chuck, play that back to us in
slo-mo, will ya?*

INT. VTR ROOM - DAY

The VTR Technician stops the tape. Grabs two checkers. Sticks one in each roll. Uses them as handles to pull the tape through the rollers in a steady, slow movement.

VTR TECHNICIAN

(into headset)

Take it.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Main monitor: The shot plays forward in slow motion. Marked with a big flashing REPLAY.

MCKAY

*We see the moment again here in our
slow motion.*

JENNINGS

*It's been such a terribly
tantalizing symbol of this
situation. What's going on inside
of that head and that mind...*

COMMUNICATOR

(phone receiver in hand)

*Master Control wants a block of
five. Now.*

GEOFF
 (into mic)
 Jim, commercial break in 10.

MCKAY
*We're going to take a very short
 station break at this point. And
 hopefully when we get back we have
 at least some answers for you.*

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
 And we're off. Back in three
 minutes.

The commercial starts: A young Michael Douglas rushes through
The Streets Of San Francisco, the new ABC crime show starting
 soon.

A Technician switches on the fans. The propellers begin to
 whirr.

Geoff turns to the table monitor in the back row.

GEOFF
 Let's check the competition.

He flips through the channels. Most TV stations report on the
 situation in the Olympic Village, but Geoff is happy to see:

GEOFF (CONT'D)
 Seems like we're still the only
 ones providing live images.

Jacques stops at German Broadcaster ZDF, showing a special
 report from inside the village.

ZDF COMMENTATOR (O.S.)
*Unterdessen wächst der Druck auf
 das Olympische Komitee, die Spiele
 abzubrechen.*

We see a crowd of protesters holding up "stop the games"
 signs. One of the protesters is interviewed:

PROTESTER
 (broken English)
*That is the best solution towards
 the situation if you stop the game.
 You focus the attention on the
 situation and make the people
 realize at the games that two
 athletes were killed...*

Now we see an athlete being interviewed. Title caption:
 "Mohamed Tarabulsi, Lebanese Weightlifter".

MOHAMED TARABULSI

My heart is very heavy today... As an athlete and as an Arab, I would like to express my solidarity with my Israeli colleagues. I pray that everything ends well.

Gladys walks in, as the ZDF reporter interviews the next athlete:

ZDF REPORTER

May I ask you if you heard anything this morning in the village?

Suddenly everyone in the control room starts smiling, as they realize it's:

GARY

Um, no.

ZDF REPORTER

You're here with the US delegation?

Gary's obviously uncomfortable with the situation, but nods to keep his cover.

ZDF REPORTER (CONT'D)

What is your discipline?

And poor Gary in his oversized tracksuit can't think of anything better to say than...

GARY

Weightlifting.

Everyone in the room laughs, until:

LARRY

(serious voice)

He's here.

Geoff gets up. Goes to the rear of the room. Takes the curtain and pulls it open, revealing the large pane of glass. Beyond it:

McKay left his seat. He stands with his back to us and welcomes someone who just walked in the door: we catch a glimpse of TUVIA SOKOLSKY, followed by a TRANSLATOR.

More crew appear next to Geoff. Like police officers observing through a one-way mirror, they watch how Sokolsky slowly takes Jim's hand.

McKay leads the surprisingly small weightlifting coach to a chair. The man squints against the spotlight.

Geoff turns to the crew.

GEOFF
Somebody bring him some water.

Larry goes through the door to the stage.

Geoff returns forward to his chair. Sits down. Obviously more comfortable watching over the monitor.

He waves behind him. The curtain is drawn again.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

GEOFF
(back to business)
30 seconds.

Roone comes in for this. He sits next to Geoff.

ROONE
(into mic)
Jim, this is as close as we get to
the hostages. Make something out of
it.

Slight nod from McKay on the monitor.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR	GEOFF
Back to us.	On my cue.

FULL SCREEN LINE MONITOR

McKAY
*We're coming to you live from ABC
Headquarters in Munich, West
Germany. I'm sitting right now with
a man who has just come in to the
studio. His name is...*

GEOFF
(into headset)
1, open up on all three.

Zoom out: McKay, Sokolsky and his translator.

MCKAY
*Tuvia Sokolsky. He is on the
extreme left here. The gentleman in
the middle is Nasim Javidi,
translator for the Israeli team.
Mr. Sokolsky does not speak
English. He is the coach of the
weightlifters and came out of that
room today...*

The Communicator quietly addresses Roone, telephone receiver in hand.

COMMUNICATOR

Roone... They want to talk to you.

Roone has the receiver handed to him.

ROONE

(into phone)

Arledge.

(listens)

That's your solution? Seriously?

(listens)

I'm not gonna do that. This is our story.

He covers the receiver.

ROONE (CONT'D)

(to Geoff)

We're losing the sat. Tell Jim.

GEOFF

What!? We can't stop this now.

ROONE

In a few seconds, all viewers in the US will see a black screen. Jim has to say something. Now.

Geoff still hesitates. Roone pushes him aside. Presses the intercom.

ROONE (CONT'D)

(into intercom)

Jim?

CUT TO:

FULL SCREEN LINE MONITOR

Sokolsky talks in Hebrew, when suddenly McKay interrupts him, as he received the information over his earpiece.

MCKAY

I'm sorry, we'd like to continue the interview on tape. And we're having it later. We are losing the satellite right now.

He turns to the camera. Sokolsky beside him is confused.

MCKAY (CONT'D)

The Arab Guerillas are still in the Israeli quaters. One man is dead. Mr. Javidi tells me another man is now definitely dead. We don't know his identity yet.

(MORE)

MCKAY (CONT'D)

The tension regarding the 5 o'clock deadline continues, which is in an hour an 45 minutes.

(beat)

Jim McKay, as the Olympics continue in Munich, West Germany.

And after an intense look from Jim McKay, the monitor switches to a colorful ABC logo. Beeping can be heard.

Back to: Turmoil in the control room. Everyone is talking at once. Shouts, shaking heads, frustration fill the room.

GEOFF

What are we doing here?

HANK

We can't just choke that poor man off.

ROONE

CBS insisted on their slot. They'll only give it to us if we share our feed. I'm not gonna do that.

Gladys approaches Roone and Geoff through the chaos:

GLADYS

We can give it to CBS, but show our logo in the stream.

ROONE

What do you mean?

GLADYS

Put "ABC" up there. And leave it in. Constantly. In the top corner.

GEOFF

What signal are we talking?

GLADYS

Output only. Put a permanent superimpose on it.

Roone's already sold.

ROONE

Do it.

Gladys rushes out.

INT. EDITING ROOM - DAY (FORMERLY 55)

Gladys speeds to the Title Generator. Carefully lays a tiny "ABC Sports" Logo on the top corner of the board. Swiftly slides it underneath the table camera. Frames it.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Gladys reports over the walkie:

GLADYS
Logo ready on 4.

Geoff looks intently at Roone, who is on the phone.

ROONE
Then we are in agreement.

He hangs up. Looks at Geoff without expression.

ROONE (CONT'D)
Back on the bird within the minute.
Start with the interview. As if
nothing happened.

COMMUNICATOR
10 seconds 'til they take us.

On the main monitor an ABC jingle plays. Logo fade-in. And the interview with Sokolsky begins again.

GEOFF
(to Jacques)
Fly logo in.

Jacques pulls a lever - and there it is: the "ABC Sports" logo appears in the network return screen's corner.

GEOFF (CONT'D)
(to Roone)
You own the story now, Roone.

CUT TO:

FULL SCREEN LINE MONITOR

Close up Sokolsky. He speaks Hebrew. Struggles with his emotions.

TRANSLATOR
He hasn't got any real practical suggestions. He feels that one should not give in. And he leaves the whole affair in the hands of the professionals. On the other hand he yearns for the moment his friends and all his colleagues, these athletes whom he had known for so many years, family men, will be outside safely.

A beat. Everyone in the room is looking at the broken man on the monitor.

MCKAY

I can see the emotion, that he's feeling. It's very high in this room. I can't tell you how much I appreciate Mr. Sokolsky taking the time to tell the story to us.

(beat)

Thank you!

TRANSLATOR / SOKOLSKY

Thank you.

The moment is disturbed when the AP Wire rattles. Phones ring. The Communicator looks at the news wire.

COMMUNICATOR

They're suspending the Games!

INT. TRANSMISSION ROOM - DAY

The CB by Marianne crackles:

POLICE CHANNEL

(Voice #2)

Die Massen ausm Stadion laufen alle rüber in Richtung Connollystrasse.

(Voice #3)

Tor 30 bestätigt. Die Situation wird unkontrollierbar.

(Voice #2)

An alle Einheiten. An alle Einheiten. Grünes Licht für Sonnenschein.

She reaches for the walkie. Alarmed.

MARIANNE

(into walkie)

The police just gave green light for some action.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

But Hank doesn't hear her on his walkie. He stares at the monitor, as does everyone in the room:

Footage of crowds gathering on a hill overlooking the apartment. Police officers shout through megaphones, trying to keep the situation under control.

MCKAY

The important thing right now is that the games of the 20th Olympiad have now been officially suspended and as you can see from this footage that has just reached us, the situation around the apartment is becoming increasingly confusing.

INT. TRANSMISSION ROOM - DAY

Marianne continues to listen to:

POLICE CHANNEL

(Voice #1)

Olympischer Ordnungsdienst in die umliegenden Gebäude. Die Presse muss weg.

MARIANNE

Scheiße!

Marianne jumps up and runs out of the room--

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

-- bumps into ABC staff in the hall. No time to apologize. She rushes to the control room door, wrenches it open.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

MARIANNE

Police are clearing all press out of the buildings.

Everybody looks at her.

Then Geoff grabs the phone:

GEOFF

You need to hide, Peter.

JENNINGS

What, why?

At that moment over the speaker we hear violent knocking and muffled shouts:

POLICE MARSHALL

German Police. Open up! Aufmachen.

Click. Beep.Beep.Beep.

The call's disconnected.

The whole room looks at the phone.

Absolute silence. Just the fan's whirring.

JACQUES

Guys, check the tower cam.

All eyes flash to the Tower Camera's monitor:

Men in tracksuits climb onto the apartment's roof. They carry weapons, some wear WWII steel helmets.

Geoff looks at Marianne.

GEOFF

Get back to the police scanner. Do not take your ears off it.

She speeds off, as the phone finally rings. Geoff answers it.

GEOFF (CONT'D)

What happened?

JENNINGS

We're ok. We managed to hide.

GEOFF

Great, but it looks like now the police are making a move. Get back on the balcony.

(into mic)

Jim? Check your preview.

PREVIEW MONITOR: the Men in tracksuits carefully cross the roof gravel, assault riffles in hand.

McKAY

We're told that there are men on the roof.

(beat)

I... I'm not sure if these men have guns or cameras?

GEOFF

(into headset)

Tower. Push in.

The camera zooms in.

McKAY

Those are guns alright.

JENNINGS

They're walking cautiously on the roof. Hopefully not being heard in the rooms below.

The control room team observes on screen how the gunmen move across the roof. One loses part of his gear on the roof gravel. Another drops a gun magazine.

GEOFF

They don't seem prepared at all.

MCKAY

This is happening now. If you can possibly believe it. At the Games of the 20th Olympics.

GEOFF

(into headset)

Gladys. Bird caption.

The yellow caption appears on the main monitor: LIVE VIA SATELLITE FROM MUNICH, GERMANY.

INT. TRANSMISSION ROOM - DAY

Marianne arrives out of breath. Sits by the CB radio, listening to the German police communicate.

POLICE CHANNEL

(Voice #3)

Gitter ist entfernt.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

The disguised police give hand signals to each other, take positions. Their tracksuits glow on screen in bright colors.

Jacques looks at the B/W monitor on network return.

JACQUES

What a shame that most people see this in black and white.

GEOFF

Not in the US, buddy. By now, every bus driver has his color TV.

HANK

And the athletes here. The Germans placed a color TV in every apartment.

This gives Geoff a thought.

GEOFF

So, are they're seeing what we're seeing?

HANK

What are you talking about?

GEOFF
Are they watching us in *this*
apartment?

He points at the monitor.

Silence.

COMMUNICATOR
They don't receive ABC here.

HANK
Oh, they do. There's an inner
circuit, so everyone can watch
their home station.

The control room crew exchange looks.

INT. TRANSMISSION ROOM - DAY

More waves of German voices rustle over the CB radio.

POLICE CHANNEL
(Voice #4)
*Hier Reich. Habe freie Sicht auf
das Fenster. Hier flackert Licht.
Könnte von einem Fernsehgerät
kommen. Wolf, habt ihr den Strom
nicht ausgeschaltet?*
(Voice #2)
Negativ.
(beat)
Eine Einheit ist unterwegs zur ABC.

Marianne freezes. Carter looks at her alarmed.

CARTER
Did... did they just say "ABC"?

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Four uniformed German POLICE OFFICERS storm down the hall --
run to the door with the glowing "On Air" light.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Door slams open as the Police charge in. Geoff and the crew
look at the armed men, shocked. Geoff gets up.

A Policeman points to the tower monitor --

POLICE OFFICER
Die Kameras aus. Aus.

GEOFF
What's the Problem?!

POLICE OFFICER
Die Kameras aus!

GEOFF
Calm down! What's going on here?

POLICE OFFICER
(tone building)
Ausmachen. Jetzt!

The Officer points his gun at a Technician by the monitors.

Geoff immediately steps in front of the Technician. Defending his team.

GEOFF
Have you lost your fucking mind?!
Don't point your gun on my crew!

POLICE OFFICER
AUSMACHEN. AUSMACHEN! AUSMACHEN!

Geoff looks around the room at his crew. Debating. Jacques shakes his head: let it go.

GEOFF
...Alright, for God's sake.
(into headset)
All live cams off. Turn it off,
Charles. Same for tower.

The live cam monitors go gray.

GEOFF (CONT'D)
Happy?

Roone bursts in. Sees the Police Officer still aiming the gun at Geoff. Roone charges up to the Officer. Right in his face.

ROONE
Get the fuck out of my studio.

He glares at the Officer until the cop finally leaves with his men.

Jennings' voice echoes from the phone:

JENNINGS
The policemen are climbing down from the roof now. They seem to be calling off their attack. Looks like this was yet another failed attempt by the Germans to get the situation under control.

The room's mood has changed. For the first time maybe they've actually had an effect on these proceedings.

Jacques voices the question that's hanging in the air.

JACQUES
Was that... our fault?

Silence. Guilt washes over them.

ROONE
(walking out)
Certainly not.

But Geoff doesn't seem so certain.

GEOFF
Um, ok everybody, commercial break.
Back in five.

He gets up, grabs a walkie:

GEOFF (CONT'D)
Marv, can we talk?

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Geoff and Bader talk quietly in the hall.

BADER
They should have cut the
electricity in the apartment. It's
not up to us to double-check on
them.

GEOFF
That doesn't mean it's okay if we
made it worse. We don't interfere
with what's happening. Even Roone
says that.

BADER
Listen, we don't know why they
called it off. The Germans seem
generally pretty overwhelmed.

MARIANNE (O.S.)
They are.

They turn to see Marianne walking up to them, angry.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)
I heard it all on the police radio.
It's local cops doing things
they've never done before.
(MORE)

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

The German Army gave them sniper rifles and had to instruct them on how to use them.

GEOFF

Why not use the army itself?

MARIANNE

They're not allowed to operate here. German constitution.

GEOFF

That's crazy.

BADER

Rumor is Israel even offered to send a special unit to help out. But Germany refused it.

MARIANNE

They're just making one mistake after another. Trying to act like they've got it all under control.

Any doubts from Geoff and Bader have vanished. No more time to dwell on this.

GEOFF

They can turn off our cameras, but they can't take us off the air.

BADER

(nods, heads for exit)
Everyone, back to your stations!

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

McKay is on the main monitor, while the live monitors show nothing but black. Geoff listens to Jennings descriptions.

JENNINGS

(over phone)

The Germans are back to negotiating. This time Interior Minister Genscher is joining them.

Marianne and Carter enter with the CB. Geoff motions for them to set it up right next to him. Hank grabs his tools.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

The leader only seems willing to talk to Gensch...

(beat)

Wait. Put me live!

GEOFF
(into mic)
Jim, Peter has breaking info.

On the screen, McKay reacts immediately.

McKAY
*I just got word something's
happening at Connollystrasse.
Peter, you have news?*

JENNINGS
*Thanks, Jim. Yes. Moments ago a
window opened. And for the first
time now we're seeing some of the
hostages.*

GEOFF
No, we're not. We might as well be
listening to fucking radio.

He looks at black monitors, frustrated. Presses the walkie:

GEOFF (CONT'D)
Cam 2, Tower, either of you have an
angle on this?

CAM 2
Clear shot, Mase.

TOWER CAM
Clear as crystal.

Great. And Geoff can't use either one.

INT. ROONE'S OFFICE - DAY

Roone's TV shows McKay in the studio as we hear Jennings:

JENNINGS
*We've seen two hostages so far.
They were led to the window one
after the other. One guerrilla with
an AK-47 behind them. It's a
terrible sight....*

ROONE
This is ridiculous.

Roone grabs the phone. Short number.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Phone rings. Geoff snaps it up. Hears what he wanted to hear.

GEOFF
You got it, Boone.

He hangs up. Hastily speaks into the headset.

GEOFF (CONT'D)
All cams back on!

Jacques eyes him skeptically, but Geoff doesn't notice.

The whole crew looks at the monitor, excited to be back in the game.

Seconds later it blinks on - and shows a horrific image:

A defeated man stands at the apartment window. Torn undershirt. Hands tied. Behind him a masked man holds a machine gun to his back.

All conversations fall silent.

Geoff stares at the monitors.

This is real. This is about people's lives.

Geoff pushes away his feelings before they can overpower him.

GEOFF (CONT'D)
Anyone know who that is?

MARIANNE
...the fencing coach.

She goes to the profiles on the wall, takes down his photo and hands it to Geoff.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)
Andrei Spitzer. Age 27.

GEOFF
(turns to Gladys)
Can you make a caption?

He passes her the photo.

INT. EDITING ROOM - DAY

Gladys hurries to the title generator. In record speed she pins letters to the board.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Jennings continues to describe the events at the scene.

JENNINGS

It looks like Spitzer wants to tell Genscher something.

Geoff hears Gladys come in over the walkie:

GLADYS

Caption ready!

GEOFF

Air it.

The finished caption pops up: *ANDREI SPITZER, FENCING COACH*

On the monitor we see Andrei Spitzer standing at the window. Seeming to talk to Interior Minister Genscher.

Then Spitzer is roughly yanked back into the room.

JENNINGS

Now he's dragged away from the window and the curtains are closed again. Genscher is talking to the leader. He seems furious.

TSCHHHHHH. The now connected CB roars away.

HANK

Police CB ready!

On the monitor: the Policewoman from earlier stands next to Genscher, talking into her walkie. We hear her over the CB.

POLICEWOMAN

Minister Genscher hat sich als Austauschgeisel angeboten. Das Gesuch wurde abgelehnt. Er bestand jedoch darauf, persönlich nach dem Wohl der Geiseln zu sehen.

MARIANNE

Genscher offered to swap himself for the Israeli hostages, but the terrorists refused the offer... Now Genscher insists on going in to see how the hostages are.

The monitor shows Genscher enter the building.

JENNINGS

The leader's taking Genscher and another official into the apartment now.

The monitor shows the apartment's facade. All stands still.

POLICE RADIO

(Voice #1)

Wurde bereits ein Ziel für den Flug genannt?

(Voice)

Negativ.

MARIANNE

They just mentioned they're flying
them out of the country!

Questions come at her all at once, like "They're flying
out?", "With hostages?", "Where to?"

Marianne waves them off as she futilely attempts to focus on
the CB. She switches to headphones to hear. But still can't.
People's discussions are only getting louder. It's enough-

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

EVERYBODY SHUT THE FUCK UP!

Instantly calm returns. All eyes aimed at her. Damn, she's
taken it to the next level.

Marianne puts her hands on her headphones. Listens intently.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

They're giving orders... The
policewoman has to delay, tell the
leader it takes time to prepare the
plane... they mentioned two
helicopters... to take terrorists
and hostages to an airport...

GEOFF

Airport? Which airport?

MARIANNE

They didn't say.

At that moment Jennings' voice is heard:

JENNINGS

*They're coming back out. Genscher
seems shocked. God only knows what
horrors he saw in there.*

On the screen we see a devastated Genscher in talks with the
policewoman. She speaks into her CB again.

Marianne listens, then:

MARIANNE

Cairo!... They named Cairo as their
destination.

GEOFF

(adrenaline back)

All right, guys, listen up - I need
to know where in the village these
choppers can land and which airport
they will fly to for the transfer!

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

An Assistant rushes through the aisles. Maps under her arm.
We follow her into the buzzing control room --

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Carter runs towards her and takes the maps.

CARTER

Thanks!

He prepares them on the console in the middle of the room.
Marianne looks at it, the cable of her CB headphones is taut.

It's a map of Munich and the surrounding area.

GEOFF

Riem airport is the obvious choice,
but I doubt it... too much plane
traffic.

CARTER

Augsburg?

MARIANNE

Too far away...

Marianne presses the headphones tighter to her ear, she
intercepts a radio message.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

... they mentioned a flight time of
5-7 minutes for the helicopters.

HANK

(turns to Carter)

What was the name of that small
airport in the middle of nowhere?
Where we picked up the equipment?
Something like Farsteinfeld Bragg.

MARIANNE

Fürstenfeldbruck!

CARTER

Exactly!

MARIANNE

That's a military airport.

GEOFF

It'd make sense. No people nearby.

CARTER

Guys!
 (looking up)
 ...Do you hear that?

A low whir. Quiet, distant. Then it gets louder...

GEOFF

The choppers!

It builds...

INT. ROONE'S OFFICE - DAWN

... becomes a booming noise, coming from all sides. Roone looks at the ceiling lamp. It's slightly shaking.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

The roars become deafening. The action outside has come very close to the small studio. Gladys comes back in, followed by Roone:

ROONE

 (over the noise)
 Do we have eyes on these choppers?

GEOFF

 (into headset)
 Tower?

TOWER OPERATOR

Negative.

GEOFF

 (into walkie)
 Guys, we're blind here.

At that moment a new voice pops up on the walkie. Sharp. Forward. A tinge unpleasant. HOWARD COSELL (54), ABC Sports commentator.

HOWARD

Gentlemen, can you read me?

GEOFF

 (picks up walkie)
 Loud and clear, Howard.

HOWARD

*I see them! They just came around
 that tall administration
 building... slowly descending-*

GEOFF

Where exactly are you? Are you inside the village?

HOWARD

Yes. They let me in after the boxing match. Ran into Gary here, I'm taking over his channel.

CAM 2 OPERATOR

Mase, I got them. Take me.

Geoff gives Jacques a sign. The main monitor shows a helicopter quickly descending on the Olympic Village. Captured in a hectic pan.

The Police Channel crackles in Marianne's headphones.

MARIANNE

They're talking about a bus now...a bus escorting them to the helicopters.

GEOFF

(into walkie)

Howard, are the police clearing the area?

HOWARD

No, it's packed. There are people with cameras everywhere. It's like Elvis has landed...

MARIANNE

They'll use the parking level below the apartments!

(points to map)

There's the next staircase. Building 12.

GEOFF

Howard, turn around. Do you see a staircase?

HOWARD

Yeah.

GEOFF

Head down there and look for a bus.

HOWARD

Got it.

Jennings' voice is on the phone:

JENNINGS

The second floor light is on. Looks like they're leaving the building.

HOWARD

I'm on the stairs and... It's a madhouse down there.... Police and press everywhere... Men with cameras next to men with guns.

ROONE

Put him on the air.

Geoff turns to Hank.

HANK

There's no connector.

Geoff considers. Then shrugs and holds the walkie to a microphone. Gives a sign to the audio booth.

ROONE

(into intercom)

Jim, Peter, we've got Howard in the loop.

McKay begins his introduction:

McKAY

Word is they're flying out both the hostages and the terrorists. Let's hear Peter Jennings on this.

JENNINGS

Thank you, Jim. My colleagues and I are scrambling to put the pieces together. But Howard Cosell is currently on location.

(beat)

Howard, this is Peter. Do you have something to report from there?

Geoff's mic sends Howard's voice from the walkie out live:

HOWARD

I certainly do, Peter. I'm in the parking garage... Terrorists and hostages are arriving. Their hands tied together. The police are here in almost platoon-like numbers. We're building up to what I think will be quite the clim-

(beat)

The bus just came in! They're bringing the hostages to the bus. The terrorists have submachine guns. Pushing the young athletes onto the bus.

(beat)

And off they go!

McKay bridges the break.

McKAY

*According to unconfirmed reports,
Cairo was named as the flight
destination. There are helicopters
waiting to bring the hostages and
the terrorists to a military
airport for the changeover.*

TOWER CAM

I have eyes on the bus.

Main monitor: the image of a bus coming out of an underpass, flanked by police cars. Journalists and spectators are crowded on the bridge above.

A little further away, a helicopter is waiting. Red light flashes on the rotors.

HOWARD

(breathes heavily)

*Jim, I just ran on the bridge.
I can see them. One Arab is getting
out. Flashes from the cameras are
hitting him from every direction.
He almost looks like a rock star
walking on stage...*

(beat)

Now I can see the Israelis.

(beat)

*I hear something. People shouting
from the windows and balconies.
They're...What are they saying?*

We also hear the shouts that echo in the night between the houses of the Olympic Village.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

*Shalom. It's shalom. The Hebrew
word for peace.*

His words hang in the air. The room's crew pauses, touched.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

*The propellers begin to turn... A
chopper is lifting off.*

(beat)

*These Israeli athletes are leaving
the Olympic Village -- not as free
and proud competitors of their
country -- but as victims of a
brutal act of terror.*

The crew watches the tower monitor: a shaky image of a helicopter launching into the Munich night.

JENNINGS

*The first helicopter now proceeding
out over the main Olympic stadium.*

(MORE)

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

The second helicopter's following him. Flying around this tremendously high Olympic Tower. Flying to what seems like the last chapter of a nerve-racking day.

The crew watches the helicopters disappear into the night on the screen.

Suddenly the thumping sound is heard again. Getting louder.

ROONE

For once I want to see history
through more than just a camera.
(goes towards door)
Stretch the show with sports until
we have news from the airport.

GEOFF

Sports!?

ROONE

(as he heads off)
Jim'll make the transition smooth.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Geoff turns to Jacques.

GEOFF

Sports? Is he fucking serious?

JACQUES

(shakes head)
It's nuts.

The droning noise of the helicopters gets louder.

JACQUES (CONT'D)

Screw it, I want to see it, too.

He goes towards the door.

Gladys shrugs and follows him. More and more crew leave the room.

CAM 3

Mase, we're losing the choppers.

Geoff grabs Carter and waves at Marianne:

GEOFF

Carter! Marianne!

Both turn towards him.

GEOFF (CONT'D)
(to Carter)
Grab a 16mm. Get footage from the airport.

Carter nods: *Got it!* and rushes off.

GEOFF (CONT'D)
(hands Marianne car keys)
Mary-Ann, I need you to go with Carter. You're the only one who speaks German. Take my car.
(off her hesitation)
You got this?

Marianne nods, takes the keys.

MARIANNE
Where is it parked?

GEOFF
Back lot. Blue BMW.
(pauses, thinks)
Do you think they'll fly them out?

MARIANNE
We can't "fly out" the problem. It would be even more of an embarrassment than it already is.

GEOFF
So they might finally use those sniper rifles?

Marianne thinks. Hesitates. Nods.

Geoff looks at her worried. We expect him to tell her to be careful. But:

GEOFF (CONT'D)
You'll need sound.

EXT. STUDIO MAIN ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The ABC studio crew gathers around Roone at the studio's front door. For the first time since the early hours of the morning we catch a glimpse of the outside.

They all look up. See the flashing dots floating in the sky. The helicopters fly away behind the Olympic Tower.

Marianne exits, pushes her way through the troupe. Followed by Carter, carrying camera cases, and Hank with a boom.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Geoff, alone in the room, has his eyes still fixed on the monitor.

GEOFF
(into headset)
Tower, keep tracking them.

CUT TO:

22:23 PM

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

On the main monitor Jim struggles making the transition from terror to sports:

MCKAY
ABC Sports News will be keeping you informed as this day and evening go on. We will be here whenever whatever is going to happen...does happen. But nonetheless, we have a responsibility as a sports channel. Especially when the biggest sporting event in the world has been taken hostage. So we decided to show a summary of the competition that actually did continue until mid-afternoon before the Games were suspended.

GEOFF
(into headset)
Roll...
(to Jacques; covering mic on headset)
Which machine has the damn boxing match?

JACQUES
(into headset)
Roll tape 4.

In the background we see Gary who has returned. He takes off his track jacket.

Geoff picks up the walkie.

GEOFF
Peter? We need you here in the studio. To provide some analysis.

JENNINGS
Already on my way.

GEOFF
 (into headset)
 Let's roll 2 back in. We need her
 in the studio.

GLADYS (O.C)
 Hey Geoff! You want to see this.

She turns up the sound on one of the monitors showing the international channels.

It's an American local TV station: We see a man stand on his porch. Surrounded by journalists, microphones and cameras.

INTERVIEWER
*Mr. Berger, you've sat in front of
 your TV set most of the day, trying
 to get information. Have you gotten
 any help from the government?*

DAVID BERGER'S FATHER looks haunted, lost.

DAVID BERGER'S FATHER
*No. All the information we have has
 come from the news on television.
 (an anguished plea)
 I just hope they get the situation
 under control and we hear from our
 son soon.*

Bader was right after all, whatever happens, this man will hear it from them first.

Geoff, desperate for answers, grabs his walkie:

GEOFF
 Mary-Ann, can you hear me?

No answer.

JACQUES
 Forget it, they're out of range.

On the main monitor the highlights of the boxing match keep playing.

MCKAY
*Duane Bobick, the American
 heavyweight, had his toughest
 scheduled bout in the boxing
 competition meeting. Teófilo
 Stevenson of Cuba.*

Geoff can't believe the absurdity of them airing this now. Impatient, he again grabs a walkie:

GEOFF
 Marv, what have you got?

BADER
Hold on just a second.

Through the walkie we hear a muffled announcement, but can't make out what it is.

Then there are gasps and shocked voices.

BADER (CONT'D)
(voice nearly cracking)
Geoff... supposedly hell has broken loose at the airport. There's shooting.

GEOFF
 Oh god.

Everybody stops what they're doing.

All hope for a bloodless resolution is gone.

Now the other walkie crackles.

CARTER
(distorted)
... am I back in range... guys?

INT. ABC STUDIO / HALLWAY - NIGHT

The mighty studio camera is being rolled back in when Carter appears behind it and runs into the hallway, carrying a film can.

Geoff rushes to meet him.

CARTER
(takes off motorcycle helmet)
It's crazy out there. Massive traffic jam, hundreds of people blocking the road. Police couldn't even get through with their tanks.

GEOFF
 Tanks!?

INT. EDITING ROOM - NIGHT

FULL SCREEN. We're in a car. Marianne is driving, Hank sits shotgun with the boom. Filmed from the backseat.

MARIANNE
Was zur Hölle ist denn hier los?

The camera pans, now looks out of the windshield, reveals a massive traffic jam ahead.

We hear Carter's voice from behind the camera:

*CARTER (O.S.)
Are those journalists?*

*MARIANNE
I don't know. But I think the ride
ends here.*

White flash. New footage: We're outside now. Hundreds of cars block the road. People with binoculars stand on car roofs. They all stare at a distant glow across the fields.

*CARTER (O.C.)
See those lights? That's the
airport.*

We cut to see Geoff watching the screen. Carter stands next to him, biker helmet under his arm.

*CARTER (CONT'D)
Everyone just left their cars
behind and walked there.*

*GEOFF
How did you get here?*

*CARTER
Marianne convinced some guy to lend
us his moped.
(points to the screen)
There they are!*

Camera pan to two police tanks that roll towards the gridlock. No way through. The lead tank swivels its steering axle. Drives onto a field. The other tanks follow.

*GEOFF
That's great stuff, Carter. We need
more of it.*

Carter nods, puts his helmet back on.

*CARTER
But this is useless there.
(tosses Geoff the walkie)
Saw some pay phones. We'll call as
soon as there's any news.*

As he speeds off, Geoff looks at the monitor, where the camera chases...

MATCH CUT TO:.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Fullscreen main monitor:

...the camera chases silhouettes through the night. Towards the faint glow in the distance. Tanks roll across the fields, heading in the same direction.

It looks like scenery from a war movie.

FLASH.

Marianne stands in the midst of a densely packed crowd at the airfield's fence. Camera flashes everywhere. Excited voices.

Suddenly the same eerie noises we heard in the morning. Shots of AK-47s. This time it's not just one shooter.

The camera zooms in on the airport. Catches muzzles flashing in the dark.

McKAY

That was the footage we've gotten so far. Our reporters on site will keep us updated on any new developments.

Then the footage ends.

The studio camera now shows Peter Jennings.

McKAY (CONT'D)

With me now is Peter Jennings, who reported the whole day for us directly out of the Village. Peter, what conclusions do you draw from these recordings?

Jennings nods thoughtfully.

JENNINGS

Clearly, the German authorities want to end this here and now, Jim. But now they have to improvise. And so far, they haven't proven themselves to be very good at that.

Geoff's phone rings.

GEOFF

Yeah?

(beat)

Yes, we have the footage on the air right now...What?!

(beat)

Mary-Ann, that's huge. Hold on.

(stands up)

Everybody! Listen to this!

The crew senses Geoff's excitement.

He puts the phone on the amplifier.

GEOFF (CONT'D)
Go again, Mary-Ann.

MARIANNE
*For the last hour we've been
hearing gunshots. A few minutes ago
the shooting suddenly stopped. Then
a man from Hans Klein's office came
up from the airport and said the
hostages are all free.*

Geoff and Jacques look at each other, smiles growing.

GEOFF
Is that confirmed?

MARIANNE
*I don't know, Geoff. People are
celebrating. Everyone here is--*

Over the phone we hear people knocking against the phone booth. We hear them shouting.

MARIANNE (CONT'D)
*Verdammt nochmal, such Dir doch
Deine eigene scheiß Telefonzelle!*
(beat)
*I have to go, Geoff. This phone
booth's in high demand.*

Another phone rings. It's Roone:

ROONE
*Check the Germans. ZDF. Now. Don't
know what they're saying, but they
sound damn happy.*

GEOFF
(into phone 1)
What?
(into phone on amplifier)
Wait, Mary-Ann.

Geoff turns to see the backrow monitor: ZDF's news anchor listens to a correspondent excitedly report live over the phone.

GEOFF (CONT'D)
Turn it up!

The Backrow Technician turns up the volume on the TV. Geoff grabs the phone from the amplifier and holds the receiver towards the TV so Marianne can hear.

ZDF CORRESPONDENT
*...es scheint festzustehen, dass
bei einem Schusswechsel alle
Geiseln entkommen sind.*

Geoff puts the phone to his ear to hear Marianne:

MARIANNE

He says it too. They're all free!

GEOFF

(into other phone)

Roone? ZDF says they're free. Let me check with Bader.

The excitement in the room grows.

Geoff tucks one of the two phone receivers between ear and shoulder and grabs the walkie.

GEOFF (CONT'D)

Marvin?

BADER

Yeah. We're watching it.

GEOFF

So, it's official?

BADER

Not yet. I can see Klein's press staff buzzing on the phone. Seems that they have serious doubts.

(beat)

Don't air it yet. Wait for the confirmation.

GEOFF

(into phone)

It's not confirmed yet.

ROONE

Then we have Jim use the phrase "as we're hearing".

Feeling it's settled, Roone hangs up.

GEOFF

(into walkie)

Marvin, we need to go on air now. I'll have Jim use "as we're hearing" for wording.

BADER

Where is Roone? Let me talk to him.

(no response)

Geoff, do you read me? Don't air it. We need two confirmed sources.

GEOFF

It's on ZDF. They're airing it. Roone just called anxious to get it out.

BADER

Geoff, if we air it, then everybody else will.

GEOFF

So we let NBC or CBS get the scoop?

BADER

This isn't a competition. Wait for confirmation.

GEOFF

(thinks)

Sorry Marv, we need to go on air now.

Geoff clicks off the walkie-talkie and speaks into the mic:

GEOFF (CONT'D)

Jim...

Over the main monitor we see McKay push on his earpiece.

GEOFF (CONT'D)

We've got good news. It seems like the hostages are free. But use the phrase "as we are hearing".

We stay on Geoff's face. Notice his unease as he listens to:

McKAY

As we are hearing now it appears that the Germans were able to free all hostages, but we don't know just yet what exactly happened there.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Bader storms in, walks straight towards Geoff.

BADER

Everybody is reporting it now. They are all following our lead.

GEOFF

Good thing we were first, then.

BADER

Klein can't even find that man at the fence who broke this. We're talking major worldwide news. Based on the word of one mysterious man. And no one has been able to confirm it.

GEOFF
(starting to be unsure)
But Boone wanted—

BADER
You! You pulled the trigger. Not
Boone.

GEOFF
It's on ZDF, Marvin! That's German
state television.

BADER
And this is ABC! I vouched for you,
Geoff!

GEOFF
But we used "as we're hearing"...

BADER
That's a fucking technicality!

Geoff looks around the Control Room. Anxious: *What if he
really was wrong?*

Everyone's uncomfortable.

The AP wire's rattle breaks the tension.

Jacques rips off the paper, reads. Beaming, hands the paper
to Geoff. Geoff looks at it, eyes wide:

ALL ISRAELI HOSTAGES HAVE BEEN FREED. BRUNDAGE CONGRATULATES
GERMAN CHANCELLOR.

GEOFF
(to Bader)
It's official. Look! THEY'RE FREE!

Jacques is the first to clap. Little by little everyone joins
in. Applause rings through the control room.

GEOFF (CONT'D)
Marvin...

BADER
Forget it. I've gotta find Boone.

He grabs the Wire and jogs out of the room.

Geoff watches his colleagues cheering and clapping, looks
into the relieved faces of the entire team.

Then falls back in his chair. All the day's tension releasing
in one fell swoop.

INT. ROONE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Bader charges in, excitedly waving the AP Wire. Roone is on the phone, smiling, showing the AP Wire in his hands.

ROONE
(covers phone, to Bader)
It's Starger.

Bader nods knowingly: this could be big.

EXT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

The Assistant Director, phone in hand, announces:

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
German Press Secretary is on his
way.

Jacques hands a beer to Geoff, smiles.

Geoff turns to the room. More beers are passed around. Geoff raises his bottle:

GEOFF
Cheers, everyone. Good job!

Everyone raises a beer.

GEOFF (CONT'D)
But we're not done yet. Conrad
Ahlers is here any second. We need
access to the cops from the
airfield. I'm talking interviews,
behind the scenes information,
anything.
(thinks)
Maybe we can even talk to the
hostages. So get on your phones and
start making calls.

INT. ROONE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Roone hangs up the phone. Can't stop smiling.

BADER
What? What'd he say?

Roone savors the moment, enjoys keeping Bader in suspense.

ROONE
He said that we made broadcast
history. Probably more people have
seen this than Armstrong stepping
on the moon.

BADER

So you gonna get a big bonus now?

Roone gets up and grabs a bottle:

ROONE

I'm getting a fucking drink,
Marvin.

Roone finds two glasses. Wants to start pouring:

ROONE (CONT'D)

Mason still on deck?

Bader nods. Roone starts pouring.

ROONE (CONT'D)

Kid's good.

The two men toast.

BADER

Ahlers is here.

On the TV screen CONRAD AHLERS (49) sits now next to Jim McKay in the studio.

Roone turns up the volume on the TV. The two men start watching:

McKAY

*With us in our studio is Chancellor
Brandt's Press Secretary, Conrad
Ahlers. It's an honor.*

Ahlers looks uncomfortable on screen. Nods politely.

ROONE

Actually Starger mentioned that
they could use some help at ABC
News.

Bader is not surprised.

McKAY

*Mr. Ahlers, when was it agreed to
allow the guerrillas to go from the
building to the helicopters?*

Bader and Roone now focus on the screen.

AHLERS

*Well, just two hours ago. Of course
that was part of the game. We never
meant to let them go free out of
this country...*

Ahlers struggles awkwardly as he continues to speak:

AHLERS (CONT'D)

..and I'm very glad, as far as we can see now, this police action was successful.

Bader turns to Roone, concerned.

BADER

"As far as we can see"?

AHLERS

(struggles even more)

Of course, it's an unfortunate interruption of the Olympic Games, but if all comes out as we hope it will or has come out, I think it will be forgotten after a few weeks.

MCKAY

And if the reports, as we hear them, are true, the Games will continue probably by tomorrow.

BADER

"As we hope it will"...

AHLERS

Well I'm quite sure and you must understand that..ahm.. for us Germans it was a tragic situation that all that happened to Jewish people... You know after all our past of course it was our main idea to get these Israelis free, otherwise some of the old memories might have come back.

MCKAY

And I think the people of the world are well aware that those volunteers who were trying to free the Israelis today were German.

BADER

This doesn't sound right.

AHLERS

Yes I hope that they won't, that they won't forget it.

MCKAY

Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary. Appreciate the time you took to talk to us.

ROONE

Hmm...It's the Chancellor's Press Secretary.

BADER

The IOC really wanted the games to continue.

ROONE

Not even Brundage is that cold-blooded.

BADER

(shrugs)

Maybe they were just a little bit too optimistic about the situation.

(beat)

Can I use your phone?

Roone nods.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

On the line monitor McKay finishes with Ahlers. The commercial break starts.

GEOFF

Ok. Thanks, everyone.

(speaks to back row)

Where are we at with the airport police?

COMMUNICATOR

Can't get through.

CONTENT MANAGER

Same here. Been on hold for twenty minutes.

GEOFF

What about the hostages?

JACQUES

Don't you think we should give them a break?

GEOFF

You might be right there.

(thinks)

What about the bus drivers or helicopter pilots? Guys, get creative, we have a story to tell.

The crew gets busy again.

INT. ROONE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Bader's on the phone. The tension's back.

BADER

No, let me talk to Hans. Why-

(beat)

What do you mean?

(MORE)

BADER (CONT'D)
Conrad Ahlers just announced it on
live television. In our studio!

Bader can't believe what he's hearing.

BADER (CONT'D)
What'd you just say?!

Bader's eyes widen. He turns to Roone. Horrified.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Roone sprints down the hallway. Faster, more desperately,
than anyone we've seen today.

He bends the corner -- bumps into a crew member -- throws
open the control room door --

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Bursts in, immediately delivering the news:

ROONE
They're still shooting at the
airport!

A collective shock hits the room.

ROONE (CONT'D)
Bader just got the info directly
from Klein's office.

Geoff looks at him. Face deathly white.

Murmurs of horror and disbelief.

ROONE (CONT'D)
Jim has to correct it. Immediately.

This is no longer about "wanting to be first." We can see how
distracted he is.

Geoff is stunned. Roone runs to his station and grabs the
mic:

ROONE (CONT'D)
Jim, Peter, this is Roone.

INT. ROONE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Bader screams into the phone:

BADER
... I know that's not true! I got a
fucking TV set too!
(MORE)

BADER (CONT'D)
Just tell me what happened!
(beat)
Don't give me that shit.

Bader realizes he's getting nowhere with this.

Calms down, breathes deep. Then appeals in clear words:

BADER (CONT'D)
Hans...

His voice shakes.

BADER (CONT'D)
... I'm asking you. As a friend.
Please tell me what happened.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

The crew watches McKay reporting on the unclear situation:

McKAY
The latest word we get from the airport is that quote "all of Hell was broken loose out there," that there's still shooting going on, that there's a report of a burning helicopter, but all seems to be confusion. Nothing is nailed down. We have no idea what has happened to the hostages.

Then Bader's at the door. Completely pale.

BADER
Geoff...Roone...hallway. Please.

Geoff and Roone start walking to the door.

They don't want to spread any nervousness, but this silent procession feels ominous to everyone in the room.

We follow them into--

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

--the empty hallway. Roone closes the door behind them. Bader looks at the ground. Removes his glasses. Can't even start to talk.

ROONE
How many?

An endless beat, until Bader finally says it:

BADER
... All of them.

Silence.

Roone stops breathing. Feels the world is spinning.

Geoff jumps in. Can't just accept this.

GEOFF
What if this is just another rumor?
There was an explosion, gunfire, no
one--

BADER
Klein heard it from three separate
sources.

GEOFF
We-- We can't rely on other people
anymore, we--

BADER
Geoff, it's over.

GEOFF
(losing it)
You don't know that! We have to
investigate-- And what about
Marianne? Why haven't we heard from
her?

As Geoff rambles on, Bader looks at him helplessly.

GEOFF (CONT'D)
Lets send another team out -- I'll
go with them!

JACQUES (O.S.)
... Geoff?

GEOFF
(not hearing)
We have a journalistic
responsibility here. This is our
chance, right here, right now.
Roone.

JACQUES
Geoff!

Finally Geoff turns. Jacques stands stoically in the control
room doorway. Never has he seemed so serious.

JACQUES (CONT'D)
Marianne is on the phone.

Those words slam into Geoff. Takes a moment for him to move.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

He walks to the phone like a man about to be hung. All eyes on him. He picks up the receiver.

GEOFF

Marianne?

He listens. Dips his head. Hangs up.

Feeling the crew's questioning looks, he faces them.

Then, with a slight nod, he gives the horrifying answer.

On the monitors, Jim McKay is discussing with Jennings, but the room falls into vacuum-like silence.

Geoff struggles not to fall apart. From the corner of his eye he sees Bader and Roone. Devastation has hit everywhere.

Geoff, fighting back emotions, sits down by the intercom. Just now notices how much his hand shakes--

Roone sits next to him.

A moment later, Bader joins them.

The three men just sit silently looking at the monitor.

Finally Geoff pushes the button. Hand shaking.

CUT TO:

FULL SCREEN LINE MONITOR

JENNINGS

...small groups of people, with a maximum of power over a minimum period of time to control the destinies of so many other people.

McKay suddenly interrupts him. Cut to:

McKAY

I've just gotten the final word.

(beat)

When I was a kid, my father used to say, "Our greatest hopes and our worst fears are seldom realized."

He breathes deep, then stares straight at the camera. At us.

McKAY (CONT'D)

Our worst fears have been realized tonight. They've now said there were eleven hostages;

(MORE)

McKAY (CONT'D)

two were killed in their rooms this morn-- yesterday morning, nine were killed at the airport tonight. They're all gone.

We see the faces of the crew. They still can't believe what happened. Perplexed, they listen to McKay. Some with tears in their eyes.

MCKAY (CONT'D)

It's all over. The Israeli Olympic team is destroyed. Much of it. But what will happen to the Games of the Twentieth Olympiad? None of us know what effect this will have on the course of world history.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

The show is over.

Geoff watches the crew members leave the building, dejected.

He looks through the storage room window to see two worn faces:

Hank and Carter unloading equipment, drawn from their mission at the airport.

He walks to the room, stops in the doorway.

INT. STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

Geoff notices Marianne at the Steenbeck. She's packing up her typewriter.

GEOFF

Are you alright?

Marianne looks at Geoff, her gaze reveals how deeply shaken she is.

MARIANNE

No. Innocent people died. In Germany. Again. And we failed. Germany failed.

GEOFF

Marianne, I'm sorry I sent you out there. I can only imagine the things you saw.

MARIANNE

I saw nothing. I was there with hundreds of people.

(MORE)

MARIANNE (CONT'D)

We stared into the night. We were waiting for something to happen, because we wanted to take a picture of it.

Geoff lets this sink in, feeling the weight and scale of all they've reported today.

ASSISTANT (O.S.)

Geoff, Roone would like a word.

Roone's Assistant appears in the doorframe behind them.

Marianne grabs her bag and walks past Geoff toward the exit.

She stops. Pulls out car keys from her jacket pocket. Puts them in Geoff's hand.

They look at each other. A brief moment of recognition that they have been through this together.

GEOFF

See you tomorrow?

MARIANNE

Yes.

Marianne leaves.

INT. ROONE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Geoff enters. Roone's on the phone.

ROONE

(into phone)

Hold on one second.

Roone puts his hand on the receiver, hands Geoff a wire.

ROONE (CONT'D)

There will be a commemoration at the stadium. Tomorrow at 10 am. I got us the bird. Jim and Jennings will anchor.

(beat)

And you'll be in charge.

Geoff has no idea how to deal with that. He is completely perplexed.

Roone notices. Wants to clear things up.

ROONE (CONT'D)

I know it doesn't feel like it, but you did a hell of a job today.

GEOFF

But... But it was a catastrophe.

ROONE

Get some rest.

Geoff is stunned. Doesn't know how to respond.

Someone knocks. It's Jennings.

JENNINGS

Roone, I wanted to talk to you
about an hour-long special for
tomorrow. I have a few approaches.

Geoff realizes Roone's already moved on to Jennings.

Geoff leaves.

INT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Geoff walks out of Roone's office.

He hears Jennings continuing through the open door behind him
as he walks down the hall.

JENNINGS (O.S.)

I'd take a flash unit out to the
airport to see the place in
daylight. The helicopters will
certainly still be there. At least
what is left of them....

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Geoff grabs his jacket. About to go when he pauses. Looks
back.

The room's completely empty now. Like a ghost town. Pieces of
paper scattered on the floor. Half-empty coffee mugs
everywhere. One screen still flashes, showing ABC NY's live
late night programming.

On the wall the pictures of the Israeli delegates still hang.
Geoff goes up to them. Tries to take it in. Can't.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAWN

The front door opens. Geoff steps outside for the first time
on this long journey. Almost 24 hours later.

The night is clear like yesterday. But the world is
different.

Geoff heads toward the parked cars.

INT. RENTAL CAR - DAWN

Geoff drops into the driver's seat.

He closes his eyes. Needs to.

CUT TO BLACK