

The Ice Man

Genre: Drama

Logline: Sometimes only the weak have enough power to melt a heart of ice

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A start up franchise in the new Federated Hockey League (FHL) has recently acquired NHL's bad boy--Jacques Beauchard-- to beef up their slumping ticket sales and help them obtain their first playoff berth in their brief but turbulent history. When his behavior goes array off the ice, he is sentenced to community service at a local children's hospital where he meets a terminally ill child who knows nothing of his brutality or fame and sees him only as someone hurting as much on the inside as he is hurting on the outside. As the child's simple innocence and intuitive presence begin to pierce his tough facade, the heart of the FHL's highest paid player begins to melt, placing him in jeopardy with the opponents he must face in the playoffs and with the very franchise that hired first and foremost for his brutal, animal like antics.

The New Owners of the Minnesota Grizzlies—one of the many teams in the new start up hockey league called the Federated Hockey League (FHL)--sit in a dimly lit, smoke filled conference room looking at film footage of various hockey players in action on a big Screen TV. They talk of the need of finding a goon, an enforcer, an NHL bad boy because of the need for more violence and its audience appeal-- and to compete with rougher teams in the league like the Chicago Blackjacks and the Milwaukee Millers. The talent scout suddenly stops the film and smiles pointing to Jacques Beauchard—The Ice Man--who was recently released from the Boston Bruins because of his off-the-ice conduct and excessive penalties and unnecessary roughness. He is ripe for the taking. The new owners of the Grizzlies then watch film clips of Jacques plastering an opponent into the boards again and again. They are quietly impressed with The Ice Man and sign him to the highest paid contract ever made in the newly formed league despite the fact that the season is already half way done.

Jacques arrives in Minneapolis on a cold January day and is greeted with a warm reception by hundreds of fans. Cool and aloof, he smiles at the camera showing no teeth wearing sunglasses as Minnesota's newest celebrity. He then kisses his middle finger as if kissing them off while new reports glow over his acquisition. But Jacques glowing accolades are short lived when he pushes a female traffic cop up onto the curb with his car in downtown Minneapolis the next day. As punishment, he is sentenced to community service at the local Children's Hospital where he is assigned to Sally, a pretty young charge nurse whose heart has become hardened from the eminent strain of all the deaths of little children she has experienced over the years.

She despises Jacques and prima donna athletes like him who see her and pretty women like her as simply objects of desire. After Jacques's second pass at her, she sets him straight telling him she controls how much time his community service will require of him ... or if it

has to be extended indefinitely. With their relationship and boundaries clearly defined, she assigns him to janitorial duties.

The following night the Grizzlies take on the Chicago Black Jacks and Jacques is in his element: checking, high sticking, yelling and fighting. He gets a cut above his eye and is bleeding profusely in a fight with Chicago's own goon-- 'The Mad Dog'. As the two drop the gloves and slug it out, the crowd goes wild as the refs simply look on knowing that "fighting" sells

Scarred and battered, he comes to the Hospital that night to put in his community service hours. As he pushes his broom past one of the open doors, he sees Sally changing the diaper of Peter, a 6 year old terminally ill child from Romanian who had come to the US with his mother who then abandoned him at the hospital having no means to care for his condition. When Sally asks Jacques for help, he obliges and sees the frailty of this little boy. When Peter is finally cleaned and dressed, he looks at Jacques and says in broken English "owe?" Thinking that Peter refers to the cut and bruises on his face, Jacques points to his cuts and bruises and says 'yes, owe' But Peter is isn't pointing at Jacques scares or cuts...he is pointing at his heart. For the first time in his life, Jacques is at a loss for words. On the way home that night, he drives his Lamborghini in silence, recalling his own youth and the fights with other kids on the playground; and then recalls the times when his own alcoholic father would beat him. Unable to see out his back window, he turns on the rear window defrost. As the ice slowly begins to melt, he starts to see things more clearly out his back window through the rear view mirror.

The next day in practice Jacques is not as physical, and the head coach asks the assistant coach if he notices anything different about Jacques. 'Just recuperating,' the assistant coach tells him. 'He had a hell of a game last night, give him a break.'

Game against the Denver Mountaineers the following night is ferocious. Jacques is penalized for fighting and is sent to the penalty box. A fan makes a comment from the stands and then pours beer on him. Jacques reaches over and pulls the kid into the penalty box and starts beating in him up. The fans and the refs all get in to the act and throw Jacques out of the game but not before he is hit on the head with a beer bottle and suffers a concussion. The doctors tell him if he gets into another fight light that he could lose an eye

The next day at the hospital, he finds out Peter's story from Sally and pays a visit to Peter who is watching cartoons on the TV mounted in his room and laughing. Jacques then starts making faces like a toothless cartoon monster and Peter laughs at his contorted and funny faces. Soon the two of them are laughing and that moment between them does not go unnoticed. Sally is beginning to see another side of Jacques the rest of the world does not.

That night, dinner with George (Jacques' agent) is all about numbers. The numbers are up and the owners are pleased. Jacques is the hottest item on the sports page. Jacques nods, but does not smile. 'Keep up the good work,' George tells him. Jacques eats like an animal asking if he wants his food. George shakes his head in disgust and Jacques smiles and eats

off his plate like a dog. George tells Jacques is also working with the attorney general's office to see if they can get his community service cut in half with good behavior. 'Don't mess up or it could be your last chance,' he tells him

The next day, Jacques enters the hospital in street clothes and enters Peter's room and sees him sleeping. He approaches cautiously with his pockets full of stuffed animals. Jacques stares at all the tubes running from Peter's arm. Uncertain about what to do, he suddenly lifts Peter's hand and places a few toys under it as Sally watches him from the doorway unnoticed. He turns to exit and sees Sally. Embarrassed, he tells her he just came to drop these off before he starts emptying the trash.

The next day during practice, Jacques stops a puck and skates the length of the ice with great speed and agility, putting on a number of great moves then shoots and scores on the goalie with a tremendous level of skill no one anticipated or had ever seen before. The assistant coach admires the moves and makes a comment about how great Jacques really is to the head coach, but the head coach shakes his head and yells at Jacques to quit goofing around and just do what he is paid to do—'We face Chicago in less than a week,' he yells to Jacques.

That night Jacques comes into the hospital with a hockey game wrapped in a big red ribbon. He heads to the playroom and sets it up. Soon Sally comes in and asks him what he is doing and why he's here so early since he is not scheduled to come until later. 'I wanted to show Peter how to play hockey,' he tells her then goes down the hall to Peter's room. Soon all of the kids including Peter are in the game room playing hockey and Jacques is the biggest kid of all showing everyone how to deek the goalie and put it in the nets... 'He shoots he scores!' he yells like a play by play announcer, then has all of the kids repeat it after him again and again while they raise their hands in victory.

In the final game before the playoffs, the crowd is cheering on Jacques and an opponent checks him hard in to the boards. The anger rises up in Jacques and he smears the opposing player against the glass while the owners up in the booth are smiling. When a fight breaks out, the fans rise to their feet and cheer him on until a referee breaks it up and gives him a penalty. Skating to the penalty box he nods to the crowd who are now shouting his name: 'Boo Shard! Boo Shard!'

After the game he gives a TV interview with the local announcer tells him that the player from the other team is a terrible fighter. As he continues talking, we see the staff at the hospital watching the interview from the break room and a few make remarks about his lack of intelligence and brutality. Sally remains silent.

After the interview, Jacques comes out of the arena and is greeted by hundreds of fans. Little boys and fathers are asking for his autograph. He bypasses them by for the ladies. He motions to a pretty brunette and together they get in his car and drive away.

A few hours later he is at the bar getting drunk then makes a pass at a woman escorted by another man. The two scuffle and soon the sirens are heard. Just before the police arrive, someone kicks Jacques in the head. Bleeding profusely, he staggers into his car and

somehow manages to drive away. Still drunk and bleeding he enters the Children's Hospital calling out for Peter in a drunken stupor. The security guards hold him down until the police arrive...'But I just want to see my little buddy.' he tells them as they put him in the squad car.

Later that night, outside the Police department, George picks him up having paid a great sum for bail. He bawls out Jacques in the parking lot and tells him is tired of covering up for him. 'Grow up damn it! When are you going to grow up?' Jacques says nothing and watches George drive off in his Mercedes.

The next day there is a staff meeting to decide if Jacques should stay or be let go. The head of HR department has decided that Jacques is too dangerous and that his time is over at the hospital. Like the movie *Hoosiers*, after all of the people have come forth to testify against Jacques; they take a vote and he is out—he will be thrown to the mercy of the courts who could suspend him indefinitely. As the group begins to disband, Sally suddenly speaks up. 'It will be a grave mistake to our hospital and to the rest of this community to get rid of Jacques,' she tells everyone. 'He loves Peter and the rest of the kids in here and that is more than I can say about a lot of us—even me. I think we've all become calloused seeing these kids come and go, but this man...this man really loves Peter. I think we should have another vote.'

And they do...Jacques will stay--at least for now.

As the opening series against the Milwaukee Millers approaches for the playoffs, Jacques spends more and more time with Peter. Peter's wisdom and intuitive nature far exceeds his years and his gently childlike nature stand in stark contracts to the burly and often grotesque nature of Jacques. As Peter's health digresses, the handwriting is on the wall and everyone knows it, but none speaks of it.

In the opening series in against the Millers in Minneapolis, Jacques checks one of their players hard into the boards and the fight begins. Jacques lands punch after punch and the camera catches it all. The refs try to break it up, but Jacques continues to land punch after punch as if in a mad frenzy. The player is hospitalized and Jacques is thrown out of the game and given a two game suspension. Bloodied, he raises his fist in victory at the crowd who cheer him on as he and skates off the ice. It is all caught on film.

That night in Peter's room, Sally is watching the news at 6 and sees results of the game and sees Jacques pummeling one of the players like a monster. Peter sees it all on his TV monitor as well and realizes for the first time the real monster in Jacques and he cowers under his blanket in fright.

That night Jacques enters the hospital and is all excited to see Peter, but when Peter sees him he cowers under his blankets. Jacques doesn't understand and tries to play with him. He does the monster face and Peter screams. Then Jacques looks up at the 10 pm evening news on the TV in the room and suddenly sees what Peter had seen before. He tries to reassure Peter that that is not him. He does the monster face and Peter cries even more so.

Security comes. Angry he pushed them aside, but when Sally arrives, he shakes himself free and walks out under his own power.

That night at the restaurant, George is more than excited about the news of next years even bigger contract, telling him how pleased the owners are with ratings going through the roof and tells him to keep it up in spite of the 2 game suspension "Take some time off and get out of here, he tells Jacques. Go back to Canada and take advantage of the suspension. Are you hungry? Here, take some of my food...What? Aren't you hungry?"

In a small Canadian town where he grew up, Jacques is the conquering hero and given anything he wants at a small town bar. He gets drunk and sleeps in the bar that night. The next morning he drives around town in his Lamborghini and sees his old playground and flashback start reoccurring about his alcoholic dad and his playground fights. When he parks on the local bridge, we see him as a child skating down the river with a puck and enjoying the beauty of the game itself. Jacques continues to drive and then sees an old skating arena with 3 little boys with their sticks and skates across their backs and laughing with each other and then sees himself skating with older kids and outmaneuvering every one of them.

That night he checks into a dump hotel--cold and alone. He calls the hospital in St Paul and asks to speak to Peter. The nurse gives the phone to Sally who finally lets him talk. The conversation is stilted and awkward. Jacques is trying to breakdown the walls and it starts to work. At the end of the conversation, Peter tells him about some new medicine he had today. Finished, Sally takes the phone back and Jacques asks her how he is doing, but she avoids the question. 'How is he doing?' Jacques persists, but she doesn't answer.

Two days later, Jacques enters the hospital with a new set of teeth and a new suit of clothes. When he enters Peters room he sees all the new tubes running to and from his body. Jacques smiles revealing all of his teeth and suddenly Peter smiles too

Jacques' 1st practice after the suspension with the league is cautious. The players are calling him 'Pretty Boy' with his new set of teeth. One thing that is beginning to emerge is that his great skating ability is beginning to surface with more finesse. The assistant coach points it out to the head coach who is blind because he is not seeing the aggressive play of his multimillion-dollar enforcer.

The Grizzly's hold a two to one lead in the best of 5 series against the Millers. In game four it becomes obvious that Jacques is not the same man or the same player he was before. He begins to back down from the fights, but skates with more authority and evasive moves and the head coach is the first one to notice his reluctance to be aggressive along with owners. As the game progresses, it is obvious that Jacques is not going to punish anyone in spite of the repeated attempts to pull him into a fight by the other team's goon. Then one of the Grizzlies pulls out and makes a break for the Denver goal...shoots and scores...With little

time remaining, the Millers skate with ferocity and reckless abandon pushing and shoving and checking. Jacques does nothing as their big man hovers in front of the goal and simply pushes the Grizzlies away hoarding his position. The coach is furious and yells at Jacques to get him out of there. The Millers finally pull their goalie and shot after shot is fired on the Grizzlies net. Miraculously, the goal tender makes save after save and the Grizzlies go on to win no thanks to Jacques who had failed to bully their big men out of position. The buzzer sounds and the Grizzlies have won the series. The coach eyes him fiercely walking out of the teams box, but soon gets caught up in the celebration of the moment.

As the Grizzlies are getting ready for Chicago Black Jacks for the playoff finals, time and again Jacques is confronted with fighting, but doesn't. The coach starts to yell at him to be more aggressive as Jacques continues to skate circles around the other players

That night at the hospital, Jacques feeds Peter who now has no use of his arms. It is a tender scene as Sally looks on.

Game one against Chicago both teams stand at attention during the national anthem. Mad Dog is eyeing Jacques with contempt. Jacques sees him out of the corner of his eye. When the song finishes, both teams skate off to their respective benches as the starting lineups approach the center ring. *Let's Play Hockey* is yelled over the loudspeaker. The puck is dropped and in their first encounter Mad Dog comes right at him and checks him hard against the boards. Jacques refuses to retaliate. 'I hear they call you pretty boy,' Mad Dog remarks... 'I'll have to take care of that,' and then starts to fight him...Jacques tries to skate away as Mad Dog gets called for a penalty. The Grizzlies coach is adamant: 'fight the bastard!' As the game continues Mad Dog is freed and makes a beeline to Jacques and knocks him over. He falls to the ground and hits his head. Disoriented he sees Mad Dog in slow motion continuing to pummel him now. The refs pull Mad Dog away as Jacques skates to the wrong bench. The crowd goes wild and starts to chant as the pipe organ music fuels the flame

In the locker room after the game, the coach comes in and reams the team out for losing and the pathetic play. He then singles out Jacques and gets in his face. He pushes Jacques as if trying to get him to get angry. Jacques allows himself to be pushed. The eye of the tiger is gone. The coach throws a towel at him in disgust and gives Jacques a warning. All the teammates are eyeing Jacques with contempt.

That night at dinner, George asks Jacques about his passive behavior on the ice....girlfriend problems? What is it? What's with you anyway?

During practice the next day, Jacques is skating circles around the other players and the head coach is upset and benches Jacques for goofing around.

During the next game the fans are noticing his non-aggressive play and boo him. Mad Dog is taunting him and now even the other players are having a shot at *The Ice Man* uncontested. His hockey ability however is beginning to assert itself, but is down played by the coach

who tells him to fight. The owners are also upset. In spite of Jacques poor performance, the Grizzlies win.

The next day the owners meet with George and tell him either your boy fights or we cancel your contract --Jacques was hired to fight--nothing less, nothing more.

Game three is more of the same non aggressive play and even some of the other players are checking Jacques into the boards. A fan throws a rubber chicken on to the ice. Chicago wins game three and the coach tells him his playing days are over

In Game four, Jacques is benched. The fans are throwing things at him in the box and calling him names. Grizzlies win and the 5th and final game goes to Minneapolis.

Jacques has bought tickets for everyone at the hospital to the 5th and final game against the Black Jacks. As all of the busses pull up, Peter is wheeled in.

It is the final game in Minneapolis. The hospital kids have excellent seats behind the goal and Peter is seated beside Sally. As the two teams are warming up, Mad Dog skates by the bench where Jacques sits and touts him to come out and play. The head coach shoos him away. The puck drops and Jacques watches from the bench. As the play continues, Mad Dog goes after the Grizzlie's goalie and the coach is furious. Get out there Jacques and nail the SOB. Jacques goes out on the ice and he sees Peter. Jacques is tempted, but continues to focus on the game. Mad Dog takes another cheap shot at the goalie and Jacques does nothing. The coach pulls him. The fans boo and the owners are furious.

During the first and second period, the coach tells don't even come out of the locker room...I don't want to see your face. When the team leaves for the second period, George comes down and disowns him as an agent and walks out—'you can do your own negotiating--and someone else can hold your hand because that's what you'll need. That's what you've always needed. You are nothing but an immature little boy inside a gladiator body. Have fun making it on your own.'

The rest of the game continues as Mad Dog reeks havoc on the Grizzlies single handedly pounding on the defense men and goalie and the refs are letting most of it go as he dominates the boards in a menacing manner. Jacques, however, is sitting on a bench listening in the locker room alone. The game then goes into a sudden death overtime. As the players come down to the locker room Jacques is still there sitting and still dressed. His own players eye him with contempt.

As the sudden death period begins, two of the Grizzlies defensemen get hammered by Mad Dog and are out for the game. Short of defensemen, the head coach tells the assistant coach to get Jacques out of the locker room. Jacques comes into the line up and then into the game. Mad Dog elbows him and then slashes him across the face knocking out his teeth. 'Who's the pretty boy now,' he taunts and gets called for a penalty. Disoriented, Jacques slowly gets up and takes his place on the ice as Mad Dog continues to taunt him from the penalty box.

When the two-minute penalty for Mad Dog expires, he files onto the ice mad as a hornet. Then, one of the Grizzlies is called for high sticking and is penalized. Now the Grizzlies are short handed and Jacques takes the face off opposite Mad Dog who continues to taunt him. In the two-minute flurry, Mad Dog continues to harass the goalie as Chicago takes shot after shot on goal, but Jacques is blocking shot after shot like a wild man. He finally takes a shot to the chest and recovers the puck and skates the length of the ice soaring and weaving like the great skater he really is. We then see a FLACHBACK to his youth while he skates down a Canadian river. Then, as he approaches the Chicago goalie, he puts on a move and beats him clean for the game-winning goal.

'He shoots...He Scores!!!' cries the TV announcer.

The place goes wild—and Jacques is beside himself looking madly about for Peter. Peter! he cries as he sees Sally and a few hospital attendants carrying his little body up the steps. 'Peter!' He continues to cry out as his teammates and fans maul him on the ice.

He rushes to the hospital and finds Sally in tears. When he approaches the room, other staff in attendance step aside and he sees Peter's lifeless body lying on his bed. Crying out in pain, he grabs his little body and holds him tight to his chest....The Ice Man has melted.

Weeks later, Jacques is packing his things in his apartment. There is a knock on his door and when he opens it, he sees Sally standing there wearing a dress. She tells Jacques thanks for helping her feel again. 'In my business it is easy to grow calloused after you have seen so many children die. Caring for Peter and the other kids like you have done has made me and others better people. I want to thank you for that.' There is an awkward silence between them that follows, and then Sally tells Jacques that there is something she wants to show him.

As they pull up to the hospital and park, Sally reaches out and takes Jacques reluctant hand, and together they walk into the hospital. As they enter, the staff and children break out in spontaneous applause. Before him sit children in wheel chairs and standing on crutches--all smiling and laughing and motioning to him to play his hockey game. Slowly, cautiously, Jacques takes his seat at the game and then reaches out for the controls and starts playing. Suddenly, he scores a goal and all the children shout and raise their hands and cry out together: 'He shoots. He scores!'

Jacques then rushes from his seat and high-fives everyone in celebration. When he gets to Sally, he high fives her then picks her up and twirls her around in his arms while the children clap.