

Notes

TWO HOURS: MAY 6, 2017

- 1 an estimated 13 million people: Take all audience estimates with a grain of salt, but 13.1 million is Nike's official tally of viewers tuned into the live stream on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube during the race. Another 6.7 million watched the video over the following week, and that number doesn't include China, where a substantial (but untracked) audience watched.
- 2 What would happen, Joyner wondered: "Modeling: Optimal Marathon Performance on the Basis of Physiological Factors," Journal of Applied Physiology 70, no. 2 (1991).
- 2 "A lot of people scratched their heads": This and other details are from multiple conversations with Joyner, but he repeats this quote here: Michael Joyner, "Believe It: A Sub-2 Marathon Is Coming," Runnersworld.com, May 6, 2017.
- 3 published an updated paper: Michael Joyner et al., "The Two-Hour Marathon: Who and When?," Journal of Applied Physiology 110 (2011): 275–77; the thirty-eight responses followed in the same issue.
- 3 Runner's World magazine asked me: "What Will It Take to Run a 2-Hour Marathon?," Runner's World, November 2014.
- 3 biggest sports brand in the world: The Forbes Fab 40 pegs Nike's brand value at \$15 billion, well ahead of ESPN in second place.

CHAPTER 1: THE UNFORGIVING MINUTE

- 7 If you can fill the unforgiving minute: From the poem "If—," by Rudyard Kipling, in Rewards and Fairies (London: Macmillan, 1910).
- 7 the quintessential "nearly man.": Sebastian Coe, "Landy the Nearly Man," Telegraph, January 26, 2004.
- 7 "four-minute mile is beyond my capabilities": As quoted in Neal Bascomb, *The Perfect Mile* (London: CollinsWillow, 2004). This definitive account is also the source of subsequent details about Landy's races.
- 9 Ernest Shackleton's ill-fated Antarctic expedition: Alfred Lansing, Endurance (New York: Basic Books, 1959).
- 10 "the struggle to continue against a mounting desire to stop.": Marcora cites this as the definition of an "effortful cognitive process," drawing on a definition of stamina from Roy Baumeister et al. in "The Strength Model of Self-Control," Current Directions in Psychological Science 16, no. 6 (2007).
- 10 LeBron James's biggest foe: Cork Gaines, "LeBron James Has Played More Minutes Than Anyone in the NBA Since 2010, and It Isn't Even Close," Business Insider, June 4, 2015; Tom Withers, "LeBron James Pushes Himself to Total Exhaustion in Win Over

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Hawks," Associated Press, May 25, 2015; Chris Mannix, "Do LeBron, Cavaliers Have Enough Left in the Tank to Survive NBA Finals?," *Sports Illustrated*, June 12, 2015.

- 10 "Negative Acceleration Phase.": Jimson Lee, "From the Archives: Maximal Speed and Deceleration," March 17, 2010, and "Usain Bolt 200 Meter Splits, Speed Reserve and Speed Endurance," August 21, 2009, SpeedEndurance.com; Rolf Graubner and Eberhard Nixdorf, "Biomechanical Analysis of the Sprint and Hurdles Events at the 2009 IAAF World Championships in Athletics," New Studies in Athletics 1, no. 2 (2011).
- 10 Bolt's 9.58-second world-record race: Bolt's late-race surges can be partly explained by the fact that he reaches a higher top speed, which means that even if his *relative* deceleration in the final 20 meters is the same as everyone else's, he'll continue to pull away. But expert consensus is that he's also uniquely good at late-race "speed maintenance"
- 11 Even in repeated all-out weightlifting efforts: I. Halperin et al., "Pacing Strategies During Repeated Maximal Voluntary Contractions," European Journal of Applied Physiology 114, no. 7 (2014).
- 13 the prospects of a sub-two-hour marathon: For the analogy to the four-minute mile, see Claire Dorotik-Nana, "The Four Minute Mile, the Two Hour Marathon, and the Danger of Glass Ceilings," PsychCentral.com, May 5, 2017. For skeptical takes, see Robert Johnson, "The Myth of the Sub-2-Hour Marathon," LetsRun.com, May 6, 2013; and Ross Tucker, "The 2-Hour Marathon and the 4-Min Mile," *Science of Sport*, December 16, 2014.
- 13 Spanish star José Luis González became the three hundredth man: According to the list maintained by the National Union of Track Statisticians, https://nuts.org.uk/sub4-dat.htm.
- 14 TV coverage of the 1996 Trials is on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8d SLUVmK1Ik (but please don't watch it; it wasn't my finest hour).
- 14 "It should be mathematical,": Michael Heald, "It Should Be Mathematical," Propeller, Summer 2012.

CHAPTER 2: THE HUMAN MACHINE

- 17 After fifty-six days of hard skiing: Details of Worsley's 2009 expedition and Shackleton's 1909 expedition are from Worsley's 2011 book, *In Shackleton's Footsteps*, unless otherwise noted.
- 17 just 112 miles from the South Pole.: the figure is often reported as "97 miles" because Shackleton (and Worsley) reported their distances in nautical miles, which are about 15 percent longer than the more familiar statute miles. All mile distances in this book are statute unless otherwise noted.
- 18 "The decision to turn back,": From an archived interview broadcast on BBC Newsnight on January 26, 2016: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O3SMkxA08T8.
- 18 between 6,000 and 10,000 calories per day: Timothy Noakes, "The Limits of Endurance Exercise," *Basic Research in Cardiology* 101 (2006): 408–17. See also Noakes in *Hypoxia and the Circulation*, ed. R. C. Roach et al. (New York: Springer, 2007).
- 19 an account of their research on lactic acid: W. M. Fletcher and F. G. Hopkins, "Lactic Acid in Amphibian Muscle," *Journal of Physiology* 35, no. 4 (1907).
- 19 what's found inside the body is actually lactate: L. B. Gladden, "Lactate Me-





tabolism: A New Paradigm for the Third Millennium," *Journal of Physiology* 558, no. 1 (2004).

- 19 Berzelius noticed that the muscles of hunted stags: This anecdote shows up in many modern textbooks (e.g., The History of Exercise Physiology, ed. Charles M. Tipton, 2014) but proved unexpectedly hard to trace. Berzelius first published the observation of lactic acid extracted from the muscles of slaughtered animals in 1808 (in his Swedish book Föreläsningar i Djurkemien, p. 176), but many chemists didn't believe it. When the German chemist Justus von Liebig tried to claim credit for the discovery in 1846, Berzelius wrote an indignant response pegging the year of his own observation as 1807 (Jahresbericht über die Fortschritte der Chemie und Mineralogie, 1848, p. 586). But Berzelius himself never published the claim that the amount of lactic acid depended on the severity of pre-death exercise. Instead, this observation, attributed to Berzelius, first appears in the 1842 textbook Lehrbuch der physiologischen Chemie, by Carl Lehmann, on p. 285. In 1859, the physiologist Emil du Bois-Reymond wrote to Lehmann asking for the source of this statement; Lehmann replied that he had received a personal letter from Berzelius himself reporting that the muscles of hunted animals contained more lactic acid than normal, while animals whose legs were immobilized in splints before death had less lactic acid (reported in Journal für praktische Chemie, 1859, p. 240; reprinted in the 1877 book Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur allgemeinen Muskel- und Nervenphysik with a footnote describing the exchange of letters on p. 32.).
- 19 *chemists were still almost a century away:* An oft-cited benchmark in the understanding of acids is Svante Arrhenius's definition, an extension of work that earned him the 1903 Nobel Prize in Chemistry.
- 19 Berzelius himself subscribed to the idea of a "vital force": Berzelius's views on vitalism were actually quite nuanced and evolved over time, as discussed in Bent Søren Jørgensen, "More on Berzelius and the Vital Force," *Journal of Chemical Education* 42, no. 7 (1965).
- 20 German scientists collected their own urine: Dorothy Needham, Machina Carnis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972).
- 20 measure lactate in real time: Linda Geddes, "Wearable Sweat Sensor Paves Way for Real-Time Analysis of Body Chemistry," Nature, January 27, 2016. It's not yet clear, though, how closely lactate levels in sweat correspond to what's happening in your blood-stream or muscles.
- 20 first to complete the 320-meter circuit: Christopher Thorne, "Trinity Great Court Run: The Facts," *Track Stats* 27, no. 3 (1989). There are different schools of thought on the "correct" route around the courtyard, so Fletcher's corner-cutting shouldn't be taken as a mark against his character.
- 21 the importance of oxygen was confirmed: Leonard Hill, "Oxygen And Muscular Exercise as a Form of Treatment," British Medical Journal 2, no. 2492 (1908).
- 22 He ultimately made twenty-two attempts: "Jabez Wolffe Dead: English Swimmer, 66," New York Times, October 23, 1943.
- 22 "[E]very living being has from its birth a limit": T. S. Clouson, "Female Education from a Medical Point of View," Popular Science Monthly, December 1883, p. 215, cited by John Hoberman in Athletic Enhancement, Human Nature, and Ethics (New York: Springer, 2013), p. 263.







- 22 he hated his name: William Van der Kloot, "Mirrors and Smoke: A. V. Hill, His Brigands, and the Science of Anti-Aircraft Gunnery in World War I," Notes & Records of the Royal Society 65 (2011): 393–410.
- 23 In 1923, Hill: A. V. Hill and Hartley Lupton, "Muscular Exercise, Lactic Acid, and the Supply and Utilization of Oxygen," *Quarterly Journal of Medicine* 16, no. 62 (1923). Details in subsequent paragraphs are also from this paper unless otherwise noted.
- 23 "it may well have been my struggles and failures": A. V. Hill, Muscular Activity (Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins, 1925).
- 23 an eighty-five-meter grass loop in Hill's garden: In Hill's 1923 QMJ paper, he describes the experiments taking place "around a circular grass track 92½ yds. (84½ metres) in circumference." Hugh Long, a coauthor and experimental subject in Hill's Manchester studies, recalls "running up and down stairs, or round the professor's garden while at intervals healthy samples of blood were withdrawn from my arms"; quoted in "Archibald Vivian Hill. 26 September 1886–3 June 1977," Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society 24 (1978): 71–149.
- 23 "reaches a maximum beyond which no effort can drive it": Hill, Muscular Activity, p. 98.
- 24 an analysis of world records: A. V. Hill, "The Physiological Basis of Athletic Records," *Nature*, October 10, 1925. For Hill's ideas on muscle viscosity, see *Muscular Movement in Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1927). For details of the hacksaw blade timing system, see Hill's article "Are Athletes Machines?," *Scientific American*, August 1927.
- 26 He rode a Harley, taught needlepoint to prison inmates,: Stefano Hatfield, "This Is the Side of Antarctic Explorer Henry Worsley That the Media Shies Away From," *Independent*, January 31, 2016.
- 27 "As you probably are the first to reach this area": Edward Evans, South with Scott (London: Collins, 1921).
- 27 a botched "scientific" calculation: Lewis Halsey and Mike Stroud, "Could Scott Have Survived with Today's Physiological Knowledge?," Current Biology 21, no. 12 (2011).
- 28 On November 13, he set off on skis: Details of Henry Worsley's Shackleton solo trip are from the daily audio dispatches he posted at https://soundcloud.com/shackleton solo (the last five days have been removed). Further background details about his trip are at shackletonsolo.org.
- 29 "we don't do it because it is useful . . . ": Hill, Muscular Movement in Man.
- 29 funded by Britain's Industrial Fatigue Research Board: See author notes in A. V. Hill, C.N.H. Long, and H. Lupton, "Muscular Exercise, Lactic Acid, and the Supply and Utilization of Oxygen," *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* 96 (1924): 438–75.
- 29 established in 1927: Charles Tipton, ed., History of Exercise Physiology (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2014).
- 29 Citing Hill's research as his inspiration: David Bassett Jr., "Scientific Contributions of A. V. Hill: Exercise Physiology Pioneer," *Journal of Applied Physiology* 93, no. 5 (2002).
- 30 blood sugar levels in Harvard football players: Alison Wrynn, "The Athlete in the Making: The Scientific Study of American Athletic Performance, 1920–1932," Sport in History 30, no. 1 (2010).
- 30 "New Records in Human Power": S. Robinson et al., "New Records in Human Power," Science 85, no. 2208 (1937).







- 30 As MIT historian Robin Scheffler recounts: "The Power of Exercise and the Exercise of Power: The Harvard Fatigue Laboratory, Distance Running, and the Disappearance of Work, 1919–1947," Journal of the History of Biology 48 (2015): 391–423.
- 30 thirteen workers died of heat exhaustion: A. D. Hopkins, "Hoover Dam: The Legend Builders," Nevada, May/June 1985; Andrew Dunbar and Dennis McBride, Building Hoover Dam: An Oral History of the Great Depression (Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2001).
- 31 The most notorious of these wartime studies: Todd Tucker, The Great Starvation Experiment (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).
- 32 "there is good reason for not trusting the subject's . . .": Henry Longstreet Taylor et al., "Maximal Oxygen Intake as an Objective Measure of Cardio-Respiratory Performance," *Journal of Applied Physiology* 8, no. 1 (1955).
- 32 "men must have certain minimum physiological requirements": W. P. Leary and C. H. Wyndham, "The Capacity for Maximum Physical Effort of Caucasian and Bantu Athletes of International Class," South African Medical Journal 39, no. 29 (1965).
- 32 "... more in athletics than sheer chemistry,": Hill, Muscular Movement in Man.
- 32 "those qualities of resolution . . .": A. V. Hill, C.N.H. Long, and H. Lupton, "Muscular Exercise, Lactic Acid, and the Supply and Utilization of Oxygen—Parts IV–VI," *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* 97 (1924): 84–138.
- 33 on the verge of dropping out: From interviews with Michael Joyner; see also Ed Caesar, *Two Hours* (New York: Penguin, 2015).
- 35 what pushed him over the edge: Worsley's widow, Joanna Worsley, has suggested that a burst ulcer triggered the infection that killed him: Tom Rowley, "Explorer Henry Worsley's Widow Plans Antarctic Voyage to Say a 'Final Goodbye,'" *Telegraph*, January 7, 2017.
- 36 "did Worsley not realize . . .": Jill Homer, "Henry Worsley and the Psychology of Endurance in Life or Death Situations," *Guardian*, January 26, 2016.
- 36 "The machinery of the body . . .": Hill, Muscular Movement in Man.
- 36 "I said, now hold on . . .": Quotes are from my visit to Noakes's lab in Cape Town in 2010.

CHAPTER 3: THE CENTRAL GOVERNOR

- 37 Diane Van Deren needed to cover 36 miles: The Mountains-to-Sea Trail run is recounted in Mackenzie Lobby Havey, "Running from the Seizures," *Atlantic*, December 12, 2014; and Chris Gragtmans, "Diane Van Deren's Record-Setting MST Run," *Blue Ridge Outdoors*. Her background story is told in Bill Donahue, "Fixing Diane's Brain," *Runner's World*, February 2011; John Branch, "Brain Surgery Frees Runner, but Raises Barriers," *New York Times*, July 8, 2009; Hoda Kotb, *Ten Years Later* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013).
- 39 Noakes started out as a collegiate rower: most biographical details are from my interviews with him, with additional information from his 2012 memoir (with Michael Vlismas), Challenging Beliefs.
- 39 gathering of sports scientists before the 1976 New York Marathon: "The Marathon: Physiological, Medical, Epidemiological, and Psychological Studies," whose proceedings were published in volume 301 of the Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences in 1977.





- 39 the case of Elanor Sadler: Noakes's initial report, "Comrades Makes Medical History—Again," appeared in SA Runner in September 1981. The case first appeared in a scientific journal in 1985: T. D. Noakes et al., "Water Intoxication: A Possible Complication During Endurance Exercise," Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise 17, no. 3 (1985).
- 40 *a handful of deaths*: An exact count of deaths due to hyponatremia during endurance exercise is hard to pin down, but one 2007 study tallied eight confirmed and four suspected cases: Mitchell Rosner and Justin Kirven, "Exercise-Associated Hyponatremia," *Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology* 2, no. 1 (2007).
- 40 the limits might reside in the contractility: T. D. Noakes, "Implications of Exercise Testing for Prediction of Athletic Performance: A Contemporary Perspective," Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise 20, no. 4 (1988).
- 40 Lore of Running, *a 944-page doorstopper*: The book has gone through many editions. The fourth edition, published in 2002, has 944 pages.
- 40 the J. B. Wolffe Memorial Lecture: "Challenging Beliefs: Ex Africa Semper Aliquid Novi," Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise 29, no. 5 (1997).
- 41 Gage was "no longer Gage.": "Recovery from the Passage of an Iron Bar through the Head," Publications of the Massachusetts Medical Society 2, no. 3 (1868).
- 42 "You must have just come through those tornadoes back there,": Quoted in Havey, "Running from the Seizures."
- 42 "is the hardest thing I have ever done.": Quoted in "900+ Miles Later, Diane Van Deren Reaches Jockey's Ridge," greatoutdoorprovision.com, 2012.
- 43 "Well, shit—I don't feel pain?": Quoted in Kotb, Ten Years Later.
- 43 "I could be out running for two weeks,": Quoted in Andrea Minarcek, "Going the Distance," National Geographic, December 2009/January 2010.
- 43 *largest, oldest, and most prestigious ultra-race:* First run in 1921, Comrades earned a place in the Guinness record books in 2010 with 16,480 starters and 14,343 finishers within the twelve-hour time limit. In 2000, prior to Guinness certification, more than 20,000 people finished, according to the official results at www.comrades.com.
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- 45 Alan St. Clair Gibson: See, for example, T. D. Noakes, A. St. Clair Gibson, and E. V. Lambert, "From Catastrophe to Complexity: A Novel Model of Integrative Central Neural Regulation of Effort and Fatigue During Exercise in Humans," *British Journal of Sports Medicine* 38, no. 4 (2004).
- 45 Frank Marino: See, for example, "Anticipatory Regulation and Avoidance of Catastrophe During Exercise-Induced Hyperthermia," Comparative Biochemistry and Physiology-Part B 139, no. 4 (2004).
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- 46 *cyclists started at a slower pace:* R. Tucker et al., "Impaired Exercise Performance in the Heat Is Associated with an Anticipatory Reduction in Skeletal Muscle Recruitment," *Pflügers Archiv* 448, no. 4 (2004).
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- 51 "In the parlance of my North American colleagues,": Roy Shephard, "The Author's Reply," Sports Medicine 40, no. 1 (2010).
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CHAPTER 4: THE CONSCIOUS QUITTER

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- 57 I drove 120 miles through Australia's Blue Mountains: I wrote about this trip





and my subsequent experience with Marcora's brain endurance training in the October 2013 issue of *Runner's World*.

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CHAPTER 5: PAIN

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- 86 The most iconic record of all: Owen Mulholland, "Eddy and the Hour," Bicycle Guide, March 1991; William Fotheringham, Merckx: Half Man, Half Bike (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2012); Patrick Brady, "The Greatest Season Ever," Peloton, February/March 2011.
- 87 British journalist and cycling fan Simon Usborne: Simon Usborne, "As Sir Bradley Wiggins Attempts to Smash the Hour Record—Our Man Takes On the World's Toughest Track Challenge," *Independent*, May 30, 2015.
- 87 Among the first to study pain perception in athletes: Vivien Scott and Karel Gijsbers, "Pain Perception in Competitive Swimmers," *British Medical Journal* 283 (1981): 91–93.
- 88 Martyn Morris and Thomas O'Leary: Martyn Morris et al., "Learning to Suffer: High- But Not Moderate-intensity Training Increases Pain Tolerance: Results from a Randomised Study," presented at the American College of Sports Medicine annual meeting in Denver, June 2, 2017.
- 89 "When I'm hurting like crazy,": Jesse Thomas, "Damage Control," Triathlete, August 12, 2015.
- 90 plain old Tylenol: A. R. Mauger et al., "Influence of Acetaminophen on Performance During Time Trial Cycling," *Journal of Applied Physiology* 108, no. 1 (2010).
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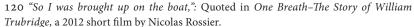
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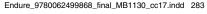




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