On July 22, 2012, Bradley Wiggins made history as the first British cyclist to win the Tour de France. Ten days later, at the London Olympic Games, he won the time trial to become his country’s most decorated Olympian. In an instant, “Wiggo”—now Sir Bradley Marc Wiggins—became a national hero.

Outspoken, honest, intelligent, and fearless, Wiggins has been hailed as the people’s champion. In My Time, he tells the story of the remarkable journey that led him from his lowest ebb to win the world’s toughest race.

Wiggins opens up about the personal anguish that has driven him and what it’s like behind the scenes at Team Sky: the brutal training regimens, the sacrifices, and his views on his teammates and rivals. He talks too about his anger at the specter of doping that pursues his sport, how he dealt with the rush of winning Olympic gold, and above all what it takes to be the greatest.
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Sample from My Time by Bradley Wiggins
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It is the last hour before the final time trial of the Tour de France, and I am within reach of my open road. In every race, that’s what I’m looking for: that sense of having clear space in front of me. That’s when I feel truly in control. That open road can be the moment in a summit finish in the mountains where my last teammate peels off the group and it’s all down to me; it can be the point where the strongmen in a stage race emerge and the fighting for position stops, or the moment when I have to come out of the jostling pack, and ramp the pace up so that Mark Cavendish can nail a finish sprint. That’s where the physical side takes over and all I have to do is turn the taps on full.
The routine for this time trial is the same one I’ve built and perfected over fifteen years; as I go through it thoughts and images flash through my mind. These moments are ones you live so intensely, and it’s surprising what details stick. I can still see the sun coming through the one-way window of the team bus, and the woman standing outside the warm-up area. She’d been waiting for an autograph for a while, and I think she’d been there the day before, so I found a spare race number in my suitcase and asked the mechanic to take it over to her.

I can remember every minute of every time trial in 2012. It is all so precisely timed. In each time trial, screens tick over the minutes in front of the turbo trainers where the team staff set up the fans to cool us down and the bottles of energy drinks. The first thing the staff do as soon as they arrive at the start area in the morning is to sync all the clocks with the start clock on the ramp. There’s no point in timing your warm-up using your watch. It might be five minutes fast, in which case you’d arrive at the start with eight minutes to go instead of three and be sitting around for too long; worst of all, if your watch is slow, you’d get there late.

My routine counts back from the warm-up. In my head that’s when my race starts: the moment when I leave the bus and get on the turbo at precisely the right second. The warm-up starts exactly half an hour before I go down the ramp; if my start time is three minutes past three, I’ll get on the turbo at two thirty-three on the dot.

I like to get to the bus early, soak up the atmosphere, chat with the mechanics, make sure everything’s OK with
the bikes, chat through my warm-up with my trainer Tim Kerrison, make sure I know about fuelling and hydration, and then go and sit down and listen to some music. At this point we get taped up by the physios using Kinesio tape; it’s like putting on your armour before going into battle. Then it’s a bit of stretching in the back of the bus. Get the numbers on the suit, get changed, smear on the chammy cream, leave the suit unzipped, put a vest on.

Every now and then little demons appear in my head. Something in my mind says: what if you puncture? What if the chain snaps? What if I lose two minutes? – silly little things like that. I try to put these worries to bed, but it’s a constant background noise. I’ve stopped thinking rationally.

Half an hour before warm-up: I start listening to my playlist. It’s a dance-music mix that my former teammate Steve Cummings did for me a couple of years ago at the Tour of Lombardy. I always start listening to it at exactly the same time; any earlier and I begin getting into the zone too soon.

Twenty minutes to warm-up: shoes on.
Ten minutes to warm-up: lace them up.
Zero hour: out of the bus and on to the turbo. My warm-up takes exactly twenty minutes. I’ve done it for fifteen years, the same ramping up in power. It’s like a test on the old Kingcycle, the rig they used at British Cycling in the 1990s. I push myself up to threshold and then I’m totally in my own world. I am in the zone.

As I turn the pedals on the turbo trainer, people pass by but I see no one. Most of the time my eyes are closed. I’m
going through the ride in my head: sitting on the start ramp, flying down off it. I’m constantly sensing what it’s going to feel like, imagining lying on the time-trial handlebars, or skis, as we call them.

I always pick a power to ride at. If it’s 460, 470 watts, I’m imagining being there, at that power. In my head it’s feeling strong, flowing, everything’s working. It’s easy, I’m floating along, I’m gliding, it’s feeling great. I can sustain this feeling for up to an hour.

Ten minutes to start: off the turbo, into the bus, have a piss; overshoes on, gloves on, wipe down, sit down for a couple of minutes. Calm down.

Six minutes: Tim comes in. ‘Let’s go.’ Clip on visor, go down towards the cordoned-off area around the ramp, find a chair straight away; keep going through the start process in my head. This time I remember to turn the chair round to get away from the photographers’ flashbulbs. My eyes are closed under the visor but they annoyed me last time. Vincenzo Nibali, who is 3rd overall, is just starting.

Three minutes: Chris Froome comes down the ramp; I go up the steps. I’m looking at him in the distance and the car following him, and as they get further and further out of sight my mind gets really positive, really aggressive: I’m coming after you, I’ll be seeing that soon – that kind of feeling.

Chris is my teammate but there are no teammates in time trialling: it’s you against the clock and you against everybody else. You are in your own little world from the moment you get on the bus in the morning. I’m concentrating and thinking it through and at that point I don’t give a monkey’s
about anyone else in the team and what they’re going to do out there today.

In this race on this specific day Chris is like the rest of them and he is my closest competitor. And I am going after him.

One minute: clip into the pedals. Go to the starter. My directeur sportif Sean Yates is in the radio earpiece: ‘Come on, Brad, let’s go and get them.’ I don’t need reminding; I want to nail it.

Five seconds: throw the body back on the bike; push back on to the guy holding the saddle as if my back wheel is locked into a start gate on the track.

Three: deep breath in. Fill the lungs.

Two: deep breath out.

One: breathe in, deep as I can.

Winning the Tour de France is one good ride away.
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“Fascinating. Direct but eloquent. An absorbing read.” — Road Cycling UK

“My Time is a well written and easy to digest account of Wiggins’ ascent to success.” — Sports Gazette

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