A close-up portrait of Bradley Wiggins, a professional cyclist. He has short brown hair and a well-groomed beard. He is wearing a dark blue and red cycling jersey with the word 'SKY' on the shoulders and 'rapha.' on the collar. The background is a clear blue sky.

BRADLEY WIGGINS

MY HOUR

MY HOUR

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About the Book

For 60 minutes this summer, the British public stopped what they were doing, switched on their radios, their TVs, refreshed their Twitter feeds and followed Bradley Wiggins's attempt to break one of sport's most gruelling records: The Hour.

The premise is simple enough: how far can you cycle in one hour. But it is thought to be one of the toughest events an athlete can endure, both physically and psychologically. Eddy Merckx, cycling's über-champ, called it the hardest thing he ever did. Wiggins, like many before him, discovered the unique pain of pushing yourself as hard as you can for 60 minutes.

In this revealing book, Bradley Wiggins takes you behind the scenes of his record attempt. From planning to preparation, to training to execution, Bradley shares his thoughts on his sacrifices, his heroes, and the people who have supported him along the way as well as what's to come as he heads towards the twilight of his stellar career.

Supported by stunning photography, *My Hour* is a fitting celebration of one of Britain's best-loved sportsmen in his finest hour.



About the Author

Sir Bradley Wiggins grew up in Kilburn in London. He won the World Junior Pursuit title before going on to win seven Olympic medals including four golds spanning four games, and seven World Track Championship titles. In 2012 he became the first Briton to win the Tour de France. He was awarded the OBE in the 2005 New Year's honours list and the CBE in 2009, before being knighted in 2012. He currently lives in the north-west of England with his wife, Cath and their two children Ben and Isabella.



For Cath, Ben and Bella



BRADLEY WIGGINS
MY HOUR
with William Fotheringham



Yellow Jersey Press

0 minutes

INTRODUCTION BY
CHRIS BOARDMAN



Even though I've known him for more than a decade, Sir Bradley Wiggins still remains something of an enigma to me, which is why I find him fascinating.

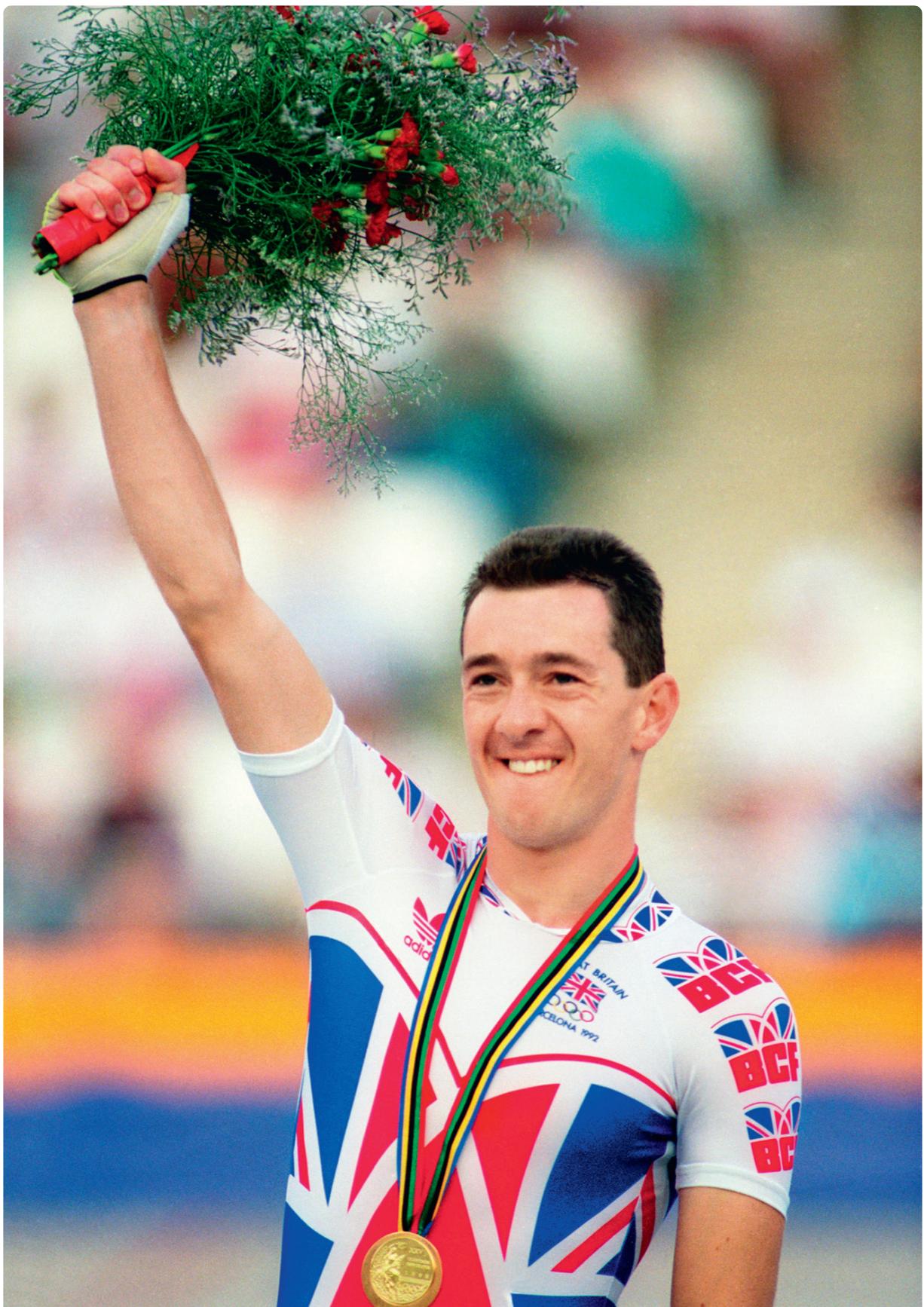
He's an incredible athlete and in many ways unique. After everything he's done, including winning the Tour de France, the greatest race in the world, with all the ambition and passion that must have taken, he's comfortable with coming to a race like the Tour of Britain – as he did at the end of 2015 – and riding around being a team rider like anyone else. He is a bundle of contradictions. I remember attending the BBC Sports Personality of the Year, when Brad was nominated. Each athlete walked on to the brightly lit stage to do their bit with Sue Barker, where they thanked their teams, sponsors, families and coaches, a totally understandable but undeniably bland thing to watch. Then Brad steps on to the platform and everyone holds their breath. Is he going to swear, put two fingers up, or give the most eloquent speech you can possibly imagine? Bland Brad is not. Some might find his volatility unsettling – some sponsors probably do – but one thing Brad isn't is boring and, in this PC day and age, that is something worth watching, the kind of character I think we need in the world of sport: someone who offers more than athletic prowess and politeness, someone who shows character.

It was after a phone call in January 2003 from the then Great Britain Performance Director Peter Keen – who had been my coach when I was riding – that I began working with Brad and his then coach Simon Jones. 'We've got this lad who is very good, podium standard in fact, but he's frustrated by finishing second and has decided he wants to ditch working with the GB squad and go to ride for a French pro team full time. Listening to him, it all seems really woolly and he's so close to making a breakthrough, I'm worried he's going to throw it all away. You've done all the things he is trying to achieve so he'll listen to you; would you mind having a word with him?'

Our first conversation at the velodrome in Manchester later that month confirmed Pete's concerns: the passion was there but the plans to achieve his stated goals just didn't add up. It sounded very much like someone

reverse engineering a rationale to justify the actions they wanted to take ... and it wasn't very convincing. But it wasn't me who had to be convinced.

I think the biggest advantage I had over Brad's advisers at the time (who were all smarter than me) is that I wasn't really bothered if he succeeded. I had no direct interest in the outcome, which might sound callous, but often to fix something you have to be prepared to break it. Who better to take that risk than someone who is expendable?





I could afford to be honest to the point of being offensive, and the worst that could happen was that they wouldn't want to speak to me again.

Sitting at a table in the Manchester Velodrome canteen, I asked Brad to outline his ideas for me. To his credit and to my surprise, he was brave enough to put up with my blunt and dogged probing of his plans, such as they were. Why are you going to France? How is riding that stage race there going to help your preparation for the pursuit? Is that enough time to recover? Where is your rest period? The conversation was followed by a written plan and – I'm embarrassed to say now – I went through it with a red pen in the most patronising way. Again to my surprise, he stuck with it, willing to subject himself to harsh criticism and examine his own ideas. Realising that many of them were pretty flimsy when put under the spotlight, it was less than a week before he came to the conclusion that his proposed actions were not likely to bring him the success he was after. He would stay with his coach Simon Jones and together they'd tackle the 2003 season. And that was it: they were off. By the end of the year he had become pursuit champion of the world and 12 months later an Olympic gold medallist.

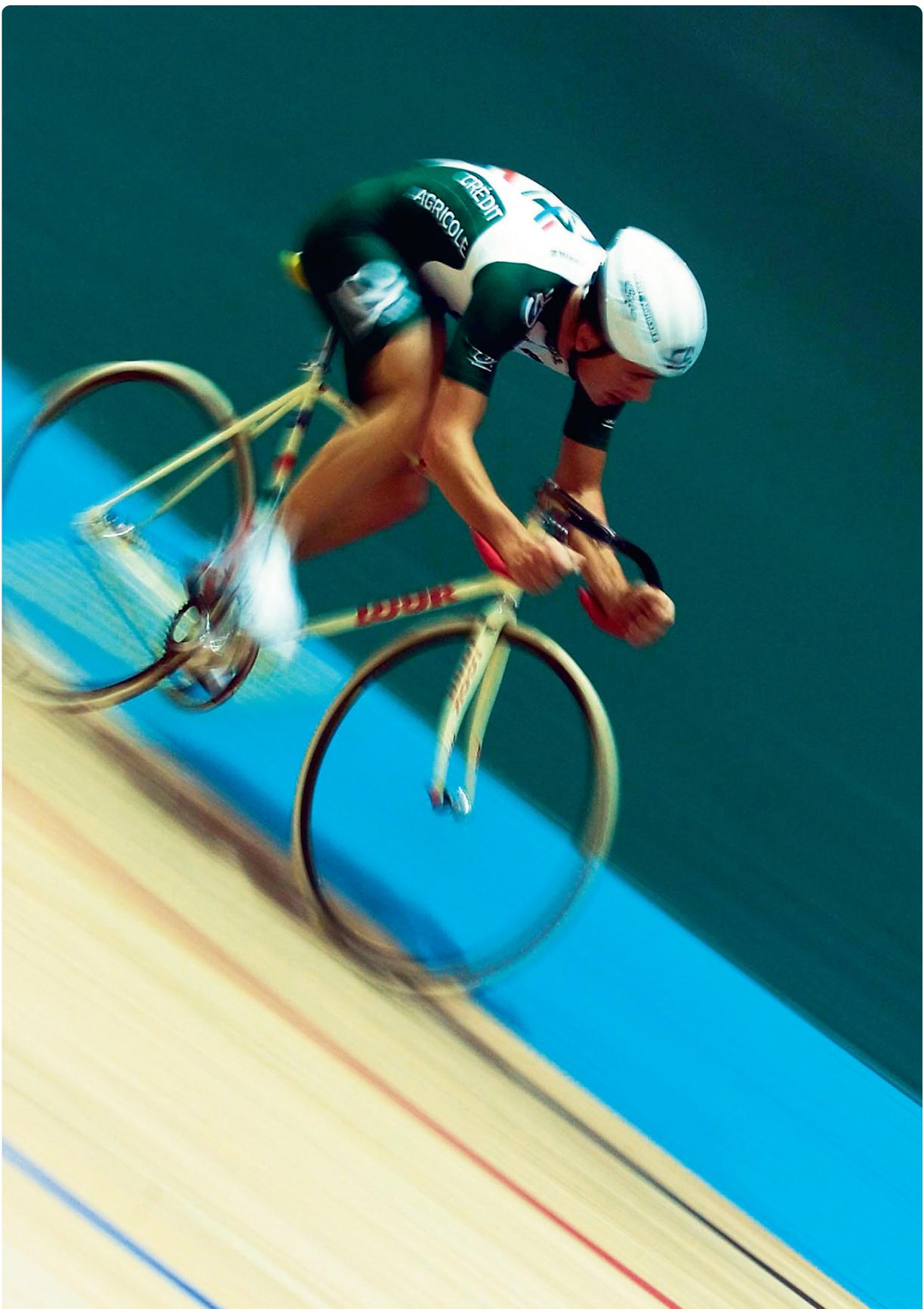
Over that amazing period, my role with the pair was minimal; they gave me a mandate to act as sounding board and hold up the mirror. I was someone they knew they could get honest feedback from, someone who had done the things that they were setting out to achieve, and someone who clearly had nothing riding on the result.

Even after he became Olympic pursuit champion, I certainly wouldn't have predicted that Brad would end up winning the Tour de France. I doubt he would have either. Even as late as 2010, when Dave Brailsford started Team Sky with the stated goal of winning the Tour in five years with a British rider, I'm not ashamed to admit that I raised my eyebrows along with everyone else.

Coming from the track to win the Tour was something that simply didn't happen in modern cycling. But together, Dave, Brad and their team approached the tasks as they had every sporting challenge so far: one step at a time. As soon as a goal was achieved, they reached for the next one, like climbing a mountain, focusing not on the summit, just on the next few

steps. Brad went from winning prologue time trials, to stages, to becoming a stage-race overall contender. Each success had its own reward, for sure, but each led immediately to the next, even more stretching challenge, until amazingly, in that incredible summer of 2012, they found themselves challenging for the top step of the most important podium in the world for a cyclist: the Tour de France.

I didn't work with Brad for those last few years; once he had become Olympic champion he had all the confidence and self-belief he needed, so my part was done; but he kept working with smart people, was always part of a cutting-edge team of coaches, managers and mentors, people who came to realise that if they put the work in, this man would deliver. And that ability to perform under pressure attracted some of the very best: Simon Jones, Matt Parker and, most recently, Tim Kerrison.





In many ways, the Hour was the perfect project for Brad: it tapped into a career's-worth of learning, everything he was good at could be utilised in this most specialised of challenges. In late January 2015, I made a brief visit to a Team Sky training camp in Majorca and we sat down for an hour to talk about his plans for the event I was probably more familiar with than anyone else in the world. Again, I just asked questions about the project but, unlike the gangly youth I'd known in 2003, this time he had all the elements in place. In fact, everything he'd been doing for the last decade was about to come into play: pursuiting had taught him pace judgement and technical skill, hours in the wind tunnel had honed his position, and dealing with the pressure in the Tour de France would allow him to cope with the unique stresses of this event. The only element beyond his control was the weather

...



Perhaps unavoidably for a high-profile sportsperson, Brad was obliged to commit to a date rather than look for a window of opportunity for his attempt, and, as it turned out, luck was not on his side. His scheduled start time coincided with one of the highest air pressure days London had experienced that year and, as 90 per cent of the energy expended by a rider is used up pushing the air out of the way, that fact cost him close to a