

EXT. OLYMPIC STADIUM TRACK 4X4 RELAY- -- AFTERNOON

Fade in on GERALD TINKER'S eyes. They have a intense focus and stare directly ahead into space. As he blinks, a drop of sweat drips from his forehead in slow motion. The camera closes in on one of his eyes until all we see is the black of his pupil. A gun shot goes off and echoes in repetition.

EXT. COCONUT GROVE DRUG STORE -- NIGHT

Police cars pulling up to a drug store with lights flashing and sirens wailing. Several policemen run from their cars with guns drawn and enter the store.

EXT. COCONUT GROVE DRUG STORE -- MOMENTS LATER

Police exit the drug store with JIMMY, a handcuffed black youth of eight. A crowd has gathered and jeer the officers as they escort the youth to a waiting patrol car. An older black woman, BESSIE TINKER, sixty-five with salt and pepper hair, steps through the surrounding crowd and calls out to the boy.

BESSIE

Jimmy, is that you? Lord, what have you done now?

Bessie walks with a limp, dragging one foot on the ground as she moves towards an older Black Officer, who seems to be in charge of the situation.

BESSIE (CONT'D)

Bud Hill, what's going on with this boy?

Officer BUD HILL is a black officer in his fifties. He turns and sees Bessie approaching.

OFFICER HILL

Ms Bessie? I haven't seen you for years. What brings you back to the Grove?

BESSIE

I came to hear the choir sing at the church and was just leaving when I heard all this commotion.

Bessie stares giving Jimmy the once over.

OFFICER HILL

Well now, Ms Bessie, the owner of this here store says this boy was playing a prank with a water gun, and scared the hell out of his customers. I reckon we're going to have to take him in.

BESSIE

Officer Hill, I've known you for over thirty years. This boy should be home with his family. You give him to me and I'll straighten him out.

OFFICER HILL

We can't do that. The store owner is really mad. He wants these boys around here to learn a lesson. Juvenile hall will teach this little troublemaker a thing or two.

The officer points to the owner who is standing in the doorway with a scowl on his face.

BESSIE

You let me worry about the owner, and take these cuffs off this boy right now.

Bessie ambles over to the doorway and exchanges a few words with the owner. She takes out a few dollars and tries to push it in his hands. He declines the money, and waves Officer Hill over to the doorway.

STORE OWNER

Let the boy go, I think Ms. Bessie has a mind to set things right. She's done this neighborhood right proud with her children. I'll take a chance with her discipline.

The officer shakes his head and calls for the other policemen to un-cuff Jimmy and let him go.

OFFICER HILL

Ms Bessie, I'm going to let this boy go in your custody. I hope you teach him right from wrong. These kind of pranks only get worse when they get older.

BESSIE

Thank you, Bud. I'll make sure he stays out of trouble.

Bessie walks her way over to Jimmy and roughly grabs him by the back of his neck.

BESSIE (CONT'D)

Come on, Jimmy, let's go.

Jimmy resists her and she hauls off and smacks him up side his head. He is startled by the force of the blow and is in shock that she has hit him.

BESSIE (CONT'D)

If you want some more of that, just keep on acting the fool. Now let's go.

Bessie starts to walk off with Jimmy in tow. He rubs the back of his head, as they walk away from the store.

JIMMY

You didn't have to hit me. I was coming. I was just embarrassed.

BESSIE

You're going to be more than embarrassed when your mama finds out you were playing pranks.

Jimmy rolls his eyes.

BESSIE (CONT'D)

Always getting in one mess or other. Where is your mother?

JIMMY

She had to go to Miami for two days, to sing with her church choir.

BESSIE

Two days? Why didn't she take you with her?

JIMMY

I hid out. It's so boring going to all those church functions. She probably thought I went to my brothers house, like I normally do on the weekends.

BESSIE

Your going to stay at my house tonight. There is no way you should be running the streets like some urchin. Your mother would be worried sick, if she knew where you were.

Jimmy starts to argue, but is cut off sharply by Bessie.

BESSIE (CONT'D)

Jimmy, I don't know what your problem is. You don't have any hobbies, and you don't play any sports. They say the devil makes work for idle hands.

Jimmy shoves his hands in his pockets and kicks dirt as he walks. He has heard all this before.

BESSIE (CONT'D)

Aren't you interested in a future?  
Don't you have any dreams you want  
to live?

JIMMY

I'm from the projects. I ain't GOT  
no future. Nobody cares what happens  
to me, so what is there to dream  
about? Sports? I get all the exercise  
I need running from those cops.

Bessie stops walking, turns around and looks lovingly into  
Jimmy's eyes.

BESSIE

You're wrong, Jimmy. I care. I believe  
you have a future. All you need is a  
dream to follow. Something to hold  
on to inside. I'm going to tell you  
a story. A story about my baby,  
Gerald. How would you like an ice  
cream soda? I'll make you my favorite  
treat.

Jimmy's eyes light up. Bessie puts her arms around him as  
they walk down the sidewalk.

BESSIE (CONT'D)

Gerald's story really starts when I  
was born. So I have to start at the  
beginning. The beginning of my life.

INT. BESSIE TINKER'S HOME-- NIGHT

Bessie and Jimmy enter the house. Bessie leads him to the  
living room and ushers him to a seat on the sofa. Bessie  
exits to the kitchen, while Jimmy looks around the room. The  
walls in the room are a shrine of medals, awards, trophies,  
pictures, and framed news paper articles on the walls. Bessie  
returns with ice cream, soda, and glasses. She begins telling  
her story while she prepares the treat.

BESSIE

.....When I was a little three year  
old, my mamma and daddy were migrant  
workers.....

EXT.: MIGRANT WORKERS IN A STRAWBERRY FIELD IN CAUDELL GEORGIA --  
MORNING

It is humid hot in the fields where the workers are picking  
strawberries. Bessie's mother and father, BEAULAH and WILLIE,  
are picking the fruit. Several blankets have been laid near  
the edge of the fields. There are several children on them.

One of the children begins to cry, and the BEAULAH hears.

She comes out of the fields to see if it is her child. A white field supervisor sees her as she goes to the child.

MR CHARLEY

BEAULAH, we didn't hire yawl to be  
runnin' off takin' care of no chilin.  
I told you when I hired you, we wanted  
workers who did some work!

Willie exits the fields to see what is going on.

WILLIE POWELL

Sorry Mr Charley. Bessie was causing  
such a fuss, we thought to quiet her  
down some. It won't happen again, I  
promise.

MR CHARLEY

It had better not. I'm not growing  
any damn pickininies. I'm growing  
STRAWBERRIES! Now get back to work!  
(storms off)

BEAULAH

Hush, Bessie, we need to have this  
job, hush now.

Beulah tries to quiet Bessie to no avail. As she pats her  
and tries to comfort her, she pulls away a DEER TICK from  
her neck. Beulah opens her shirt and sees five more ticks.

She screams in horror as she hurriedly takes off the ticks  
from the crying Bessie.

BESSIE

Willie! Willie, these bugs are eating  
our little girl alive.

Willie comes over to her, and tries to comfort the distraught  
Beulah, who is rocking the crying Bessie. The camera pulls  
back from them and we get an overview of the fields and  
workers, as we hear the crying baby.

INT: DOCTOR'S OFFICE 1939-AFTERNOON

A poorly outfitted doctor's office, where BESSIE and her  
parents are talking to a doctor.

WILLIE POWELL

We don't have much money, Doc, but  
we'll scrape up whatever it costs  
for any medicine that will help my  
little girl.

DOCTOR KITCHEN

I know yawl want the best for Bessie.  
(MORE)

## DOCTOR KITCHEN (CONT'D)

But there's not much I can do for her. There is no cure for lime Disease. It paralyzes the neurological systems in the body. Bessie can still achieve some happiness in her life, she should have use of most of her extremities.

## BEAULAH

Dr. Kitchen, I know this child will have a life. She's special, and I know the good lord will take care of her.

## WILLIE POWELL

Amen, Beulah, Amen.

## INT. BESSIE TINKER'S HOME-CONTINUOUS

Bessie has finished making root-beer floats. She hands Jimmy his and sits down and begins to eat her's. Jimmy enjoys his float as Bessie continues the story.

## BESSIE

It was a hard life in those times for a girl who had Lime disease. I grew up not being able to use part of my upper body and I carry a limp to this day. But I managed, even found a man who used to take me on bike rides. Gerald was my second born. He was a very inquisitive child,

## EXT. BESSIE'S MOTHERS HOUSE CAUDELL GEORGIA -- AFTERNOON

## BESSIE VO

In 1957 Gerald's daddy finally got up the nerve to marry a cripple woman. Back then appearance counted. As a cripple I was the odd women out.

GEORGE and Bessie are approaching on a bicycle. Bessie rides on the handle bars with flowers in her hand. She has a huge grin on her face.

They are twenty yards from the house where a strapping six year old GERALD, waits with a small puppy. Gerald starts to run alongside the bike, while the puppy tries to keep up.

## YOUNG GERALD

Mamma, where you been with my daddy?

## BESSIE

I went to see a COW about a MULE. Now I'm married to the mule!

Bessie laughs. George starts to peddle faster, as Gerald tries to keep up.

BESSIE (CONT'D)

Slow down, George, or your new bride  
won't be in one piece for the party.

George speeds up and whoops with delight. Gerald gets the idea that the race is on and picks up his running.

George pedals full speed, but Gerald keeps pace. The camera sees his feet fly past the turning spokes of the bike.

Gerald beats them to the porch of the house, where a small crowd of family and friends are waiting. They all clap as a panting George and Bessie pull up on the bike.

WILLIE POWELL

yawl gonna have to do better then  
that if you want to best my grandson  
in a race. He's part greyhound!

Willie hugs Gerald, as the family congratulates the newlyweds.

Beulah serves drinks and the festivities begin.

INT. BESSIE TINKER'S HOME-- CONTINUOUS

Jimmy is slurping his ice cream soda as Bessie tells her story.

BESSIE

You see, George Tinker was Gerald's  
daddy, but we weren't married. I had  
three children by him. Elaine, GERALD,  
and Joyce. George wasn't the kind of  
man you could cage. Even after we  
got married, I knew in my heart it  
would be up to me to raise the  
children. He was a handsome man, a  
good man, and I loved him like a  
Georgia sunrise.

Jimmy toys with his straw and wonders aloud.

JIMMY

If all that happened in Georgia,  
when did you move to Coconut Grove?

BESSIE

George got a job as a care taker in  
a mansion near Miami. He moved the  
whole family from Georgia to Coconut  
Grove. George lived at the mansion,  
so Gerald hardly ever saw his father  
after that. He came around less and  
less, so we eventually drifted apart.

EXT. BESSIE'S HOME COCONUT GROVE -- DAY

BESSIE

It was hard on all of us, especially Gerald. The only man he ever got to know was his Grandpa Willie, who always came to visit us

Grandpa Willie pulls up in an old truck. Bessie and Gerald come out of the house to greet him. Willie gets out and throws his grandson in the air hugging him .

INT. BESSIE'S TINKER'S HOME LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Jimmy has finished his float and is scraping the sides of the glass with his spoon.

BESSIE

You're scraping that glass like you haven't eaten in a month. I think we should have some dinner.

Bessie clears away the glasses and brings them to the kitchen.

Jimmy gets up and starts to look at some pictures on the wall.

INT. BESSIE TINKER'S HOME-- MOMENTS LATER

JIMMY

Where was this picture taken?

The picture on the wall shows a small home with Bessie and her children sitting on the porch. Gerald and his sister JOYCE have medals with ribbons on. Bessie enters with sandwich fixings and sets them on a table.

BESSIE

That was the house George moved us to. We moved right across the street from a huge park. By the time Gerald was eight, he was playing football and running in local track meets.

But even at ten, he couldn't out run his sister JOYCE.

JIMMY

You mean Uncle Gerald was my age and he couldn't out run his little sister?

BESSIE

That's right, Jimmy. She was faster than Gerald. She won just about every local, city, and state track meet there was!



EXT. GRAND AVENUE PARK. AFTERNOON

Gerald is ten years old. He is lined up with his six year old sister JOYCE, and some other local boys for a race. A whistle is blown and they take off. Joyce beats them all.

YOUNG JOYCE

You call yourself boys. How could you let yourselves be beat by a girl?

Laughing, Joyce turns to join some other girls.

NEAL COLZIE

Tink, your sister is so fast, I'm going to quit running with her!

KENNY

Her legs must be part locomotive....

NEAL COLZIE

Or part cheetah. That's got to be a boy inside her.

YOUNG GERALD

Hey, that's my sister. Don't talk about her like that.

KENNY

Come on, we was just jokin' you.

YOUNG GERALD

Yeah, well, if you think a black eye is a joke, then keep on talking.

Gerald leaves his friends and exits the park dejected.

BESSIE-VO

Gerald couldn't beat his sister in a race, but he was still protective of her and made sure nobody talked mean about her or made fun of her. Her speed was god's gift. Gerald hated losing to his little sister, but other sports started to interest him.

EXT. GRAND AVENUE PARK- -- AFTERNOON

There is a football scrimmage in progress. Gerald watches from the sidelines. The Parks Department Coach, TRAZ POWELL, 50, an imposing black man, is coaching the game, smoking a pipe.

TRAZ

(blows whistle)

Come on, hit the gap, hit it, make your move and break through the line.

The players line up and set up for another play. Gerald has wandered closer to the action. Traz blows his whistle to start the play and spots Gerald watching intently. The running back gets the ball and sprints up the sideline for a touchdown. (Cheers and cat calls by the team)

TRAZ (CONT'D)

That's what I want to see, Now give me five laps and we'll do it again.  
(groans from the team)

The team starts to run and Traz turns to Gerald.

TRAZ (CONT'D)

Hey, you, boy. Yeah, you over there. Did you like that run?

YOUNG GERALD

Yes, sir.

TRAZ

Would you like to help out and be a trainer?

Gerald walks over with a bright smile and wonder in his eyes.

YOUNG GERALD

Yes, sir, I would love to be a part of this. What do I have to do?

TRAZ

Be here at 3:00 PM sharp, and you can help with balls and equipment.

And you'll also be in charge of my pipe.

YOUNG GERALD

Your pipe?

TRAZ

That's right, my pipe. You think you can do it?

YOUNG GERALD

Yes, sir, 3:00 PM, balls, equipment and ...pipe.

TRAZ

That's what I like to hear. I'm Traz Powell, you can call me *coachee*.  
*What's your name?*

YOUNG GERALD

My name is Gerald, Gerald Tinker.....COACHEE?

TRAZ

Well, Gerald, I'm going to call you  
Tinker. See you tomorrow at three.

They shake hands. Tinker heads out of the park in jubilant  
spirits.

STATE FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP - EVENING -- 12

BESSIE VO

Gerald had made a very special friend.  
Coach Powell took him under his wing.  
In less than a month, Gerald went to  
his first big game. He was besides  
himself with excitement. He had  
made up his mind. He wanted to play  
football and he wanted to be *good*.

The two teams are clashing on the field. Coach Powell sends  
in a play as Gerald watches on the sidelines. The ball is  
snapped, and the running back breaks through the crease. He  
races right past Tinker for a touchdown. The crowd of ten  
thousand cheers. Tinker's team all hug, including him in the  
celebration.

BESSIE-VO

That was Gerald's first taste, his  
first taste of glory.

INT. BESSIE'S KITCHEN - LATER THAT NIGHT

BESSIE

That coach is a nice man to take you  
to the game, Gerald. I hope you were  
respectful, and thanked him.

YOUNG GERALD

Yes Ma'am. Momma, there was so many  
people there. It was great! When our  
team scored, the whole place went  
wild. I really want to play football.

BESSIE

Gerald, you have two good hands and  
two good feet.

Bessie pats her crippled arm as a reminder to him.

BESSIE (CONT'D)

You can do anything you want to. All  
you have to do is put your mind to  
it.

YOUNG GERALD

Don't you worry, mama. Coach is  
teaching me the moves.

(MORE)

YOUNG GERALD (CONT'D)

One day I'm going to be a football player and make the crowd go crazy. I'll buy you your dream house and you'll never have to worry about anything.

BESSIE

From your mouth to God's ears.

Bessie looks up towards GOD, and hugs Gerald close to her.

EXT. GRAND AVENUE PARK -- AFTERNOON

BESSIE-VO

Gerald's dream was more cloud than substance. His body was willing, but his mind wasn't ready.

It is the middle of a track meet. Gerald and his sister Joyce are neck and neck. Ten feet from the finish line Joyce sprints ahead of him to win by several strides. A park supervisor hands out ribbons. Joyce receives a blue first place ribbon, while all the other participants receive yellow ribbons. Gerald receives his honorary ribbon dejectedly.

Gerald pouts, and leaves the park with Joyce.

EXT: BESSIE'S HOME-A LITTLE LATER.

Gerald and Joyce walk up to the house.

EXT: BESSIE'S HOME COCONUT GROVE -- DAY

They walk up the steps to the porch. Bessie is sitting in her rocker.

BESSIE

So how did you all do at the meet today? Ohhh, what pretty ribbons. You all did very well for yourselves.

Joyce shows off her winning blue ribbons, and goes inside the house.

BESSIE (CONT'D)

What's the matter Gerald? Those are some very pretty ribbons you have there. You and sister are both very gifted. You should be proud of yourself.

YOUNG GERALD

Ah, mamma they give these yellow ribbons to anybody who shows up. All you have to do is run the race....

Dejected Gerald sits next to Bessie.

GERALD

I'm tired of my little sister winning.  
Everybody always talks about how  
fast she is and how good an athlete  
she is.

BESSIE

Don't you worry about Joyce. You  
should be happy she's a good runner.

Bessie hugs a listless Gerald.

BESSIE (CONT'D)

Gerald, mark my words. Your time  
will come. You just be the best  
that you can be and the rest will  
follow.

YOUNG GERALD

Yeah, I just hope it's sooner than  
later.

Despondent, Gerald goes into the house.

INT. BESSIE TINKER'S HOME -- LIVING ROOM --

Tinker enters the front door and Joyce confronts him with  
some new sneakers.

JOYCE

I can't wait to break in my new  
sneaks. Race your me tomorrow and  
your little sister will whup some  
big brother behind!

Mad, Tinker walks off to the bedroom room and closes the  
door.

EXT. BESSIE TINKER'S HOME -- MORNING

Gerald is on the side of the house suppressing laughter.  
Joyce runs out of the house barefoot with Bessie right behind  
her. She points up to the telephone wires where her new  
sneakers dangle from their shoe laces.

BESSIE

Tinker! Gerald Tinker! I'm going  
to warm your bottom. Gerald, you  
come here right now...

Panicked, Gerald runs off in an opposite direction before  
Bessie can spot him.

BESSIE VO

Boys will be boys...But the bickering  
got worse between Gerald and Joyce.  
All on account of her running ability.

EXT. GRAND AVENUE PARK -- MORNING

Gerald is warming up with some other boys before an intermural track meet. Traz Powell walks toward the group with another man.

TRAZ

You boys come over here. There is someone I want you to meet.

Gerald and the boys walk over to meet them.

BIILY ROLE

This is Bob Hayes. He's come over here to give you boys some pointers.

YOUNG GERALD

You mean BOB Hayes from FLORIDA A&M?

BOB HAYES

That's me, alright. How you all doing?

Gerald's eyes go wide with recognition.

YOUNG GERALD

Wow, I SAW YOU ON TV! You won the hundred yard dash at Florida State! They gave you a medal!

BOB HAYES

(flattered)

That's right. Set a state record. What's your name?

Bob reaches to shake Gerald's hand. Gerald is in awe as they shake.

YOUNG GERALD

Gerald, Gerald Tinker.

BOB HAYES

Ok, Gerald, you can call me BOB.

Gerald's eyes light up. Bob addresses the boys....

BOB HAYES (CONT'D)

First of all, you have to want to win more than anything in the world. You have to want it bad.

Gerald nods his head in understanding.

BOB HAYES (CONT'D)

Sometimes you have to step up and pull from within. Having a big heart is part of competition. Use your desire to drive you on....

Bob puts his hand on Gerald's shoulder.

BOB HAYES (CONT'D)

Alright, we are going to talk about lifting your knees when you're running, and getting maximum torque with your arms when you're pumping them.

Gerald is drinking down every word BOB says.

BESSIE-VO

When Gerald met Bob Hayes, it was the first time he felt running and winning were possible. Shaking a winner's hand made winning a tangible thing...

EXT. GRANT AVENUE PARK -- LATER

It is the near the end of a race. Gerald is in second place.

Bob Hayes looks on and exhorts the boys to run faster.

BOB HAYES

Come on guys step it up! Let's see your high gear.

Gerald speeds up at the very end of the race and nips the leader by a nose. Bob Hayes looks on with Traz Powell.

EXT. GRAND AVENUE PARK

Gerald is lined up with two other boys, Bob Hayes gives them ribbons. Bob Hayes places a small gold medal around Tinkers neck. Tinker grins ear to ear.

BOB HAYES

You're a winner Gerald!

BESSIE-VO

Gerald went on to win that day. Now he was inspired, not just determined. The seed for his dream had been planted.

EXT. GRAND AVENUE PARK -- LATER

Gerald shows off his medal to a group of younger kids. A youth reaches up and touches Gerald's medal. Gerald swats the boys hands away.

GERALD

Hey! Don't touch that! You got to be a winner to touch this!

Gerald saunters off admiring his medal.

INT. BESSIE TINKER'S HOME

Bessie has finished making some very tasty looking sandwiches.

She gives Jimmy a plate and points to some pictures on the wall of Gerald in his high school football gear.

BESSIE

When Gerald was in high school, he was on the track and football teams. He was sixteen and he was having more success with football than track. He was frustrated that Joyce was till faster than him.

EXT. TRACK FIELD CORAL GABLE HIGH -- MORNING

The track team is stretching and working out. The coach calls for them to gather around. Gerald is now sixteen is with

COACH

All right, listen up. We have a meet coming up in two weeks, and we don't have enough 4x4 relay guys.

Do you guys know anybody in school we can tap to run with us for the meet?

KENNY

What about Richards on the basketball team?

COACH

Too slow.

CHARLIE

How about Ben, the baseball team?

COACH

He'll fold in the stretch. Any other suggestions?

KENNY

What about Gerald's sister, Joyce? She's the fastest in the school for all the events we run in.

The whole team laughs and Gerald grimaces with disgust.

CHARLIE

Hey, coach, if we dress her right and cut her hair, nobody would know the difference.

There are more catcalls and jokes among the team. Gerald is not amused and he shows his anger.



GERALD

I told you guys about making jokes about Joyce. The next one of you that cracks a wise one is history.

KENNY

Oh, come on, Tink, we're just having some fun... We don't mean nothing by it, we.....

Gerald stands up and faces Kenny off. Gerald pushes him.

The coach moves in to hold him back.

HIGH SCHOOL COACH

Ok, take it easy, Tink.

GERALD

I don't play that mess, so if you want to play, I got something for you. Let me go!

HIGH SCHOOL COACH

Everybody hit the showers. we'll do the best we can with who we have.

The coach lets Tinker go. Some of the athletes drift off with the coach, others go toward the school for showers. Gerald is still seething, and stares at Kenny.

GERALD

I told you about that. The next time, your behind is mine.

KENNY

Hey, man, I didn't mean to....

Gerald turns and walks away in mid sentence.

EXT: CORAL GABLE HIGH SCHOOL TRACK -- AFTERNOON

**CAMERA POV:** Coral Gable Track & Field

Gerald is stretching with several team members. The track coach is twenty feet away talking to his sister Joyce. Kenny and another team member, approaches Gerald.

KENNY

Hey, Tink, have you heard the news?

GERALD

What news?

KENNY

Coach asked your sister to run the 4x4 relay with us.

GERALD

Kenny, I told you about talking about my sister. If you want it here and now, let's get it on.

Gerald gets up and is ready to fight.

KENNY

No, man, you got it all wrong, coach called the State Track Association to get permission to let her run. Nobody ever asked to put a girl on a boy's team before. Looks like the state is going to grant it.

Gerald is stunned. He picks up his jacket and walks away.

KENNY (CONT'D)

Hey, Tink, where're you going, what's up?

GERALD

I'm going to class, and I'm sure as heck not going to run track any more.

KENNY

You mean you'd quit the team?

GERALD

Consider me gone. There is no way I'd run track with my little sister on the team. I'll just play football.

Gerald leaves Kenny with his mouth open.

EXT. CORAL GABLES TRACK AREA - CONTINUED

Joyce runs up to Gerald. She is a little short of breath.

JOYCE

Your track coach told me I am the fastest person in the whole school! I'm on the team!

GERALD

I just quit. I'm only going to play football.

JOYCE

What? The only reason I joined was so I could whip your sorry butt.

GERALD

Yeah, well, you won't get that chance. I don't run against girls.

Joyce stops him and points her finger in Gerald's face.

JOYCE

You're just afraid everyone at school  
will know your little sister is faster  
than you.....

Gerald pushes past Joyce and walks towards the school. Joyce  
continues to talk to him, yelling as he walks away.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

You'll never be faster than me big  
brother. Never!

INT. BESSIE'S HOUSE COCONUT GROVE -- NIGHT

BESSIE-VO

Gerald concentrated very hard on  
football. But there were other  
distractions he had to deal with.

Gerald comes into the kitchen with his football gear and  
drops it in a chair. He opens the refrigerator and there is  
only a lone bottle of water. He looks over to the sink and  
sees a pile of dirty dishes, and shakes his head. Bessie  
enters as he closes the fridge door.

GERALD

Mamma, how come there's no food, but  
plenty of dishes?

BESSIE

Gerald, you had your dinner. The  
lord provides for us everyday.  
There's just not enough left over  
for snacks and such.

GERALD

What about those dishes?

BESSIE

Since your father doesn't send us  
enough money, I have to take in  
children. I watch them now for fifty  
cents a day.

GERALD

How come daddy doesn't send us more  
money? I even got to share a room  
with sister! That ain't right. Why  
can't one of them do the dishes?

Bessie is tired and starting to get mad.

BESSIE

Your sister has other chores to do.  
I don't see you cleaning this house,  
or doing the laundry, or cooking.

(MORE)

BESSIE (CONT'D)

You should be happy you have a roof over your head. The good lord provides for us the best he can. Now your new job is to wash those dishes when you get home at night.

GERALD

Me? You have got to be kidding, I didn't even get to eat off them!

BESSIE

Gerald, as the lord is my witness, I will bring a switch to your surly behind if you don't get started on those dishes! I'm tired and I have ten children coming here tomorrow.

Gerald looks at her and then to the dishes. He hesitates.

BESSIE (CONT'D)

Did you HEAR me, boy?

Bessie takes one step towards Gerald and he jumps to the sink, turns the water on and begins to scrub. Bessie turns around and walks to her room.

BESSIE (CONT'D)

Don't forget the garbage.

BESSIE-VO

Gerald managed his chores, school work and sports programs the best he could but there were other distractions.

EXT. MAXINE THOMAS'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Gerald sneaks up to the window and taps lightly. The window opens and MAXINE, a fourteen year old, black, light skinned cutie of a girl emerges.

GERALD

Come on Max, no one will ever know.

Max giggles and climbs out of the window and they run off hand in hand into the night.

EXT. MAXINE THOMAS'S HOUSE -- LATER

Gerald and Maxine run up to the window. Gerald opens it and helps her climb into the window. She blows him a kiss and closes the window, drawing the shade. Gerald turns to leave and Mr. Thomas is standing right in front of him pounding his fist in his hand. Gerald goes wide eyed!

SMASH CUT:

INT. BESSIE TINKER'S HOME -- KITCHEN -- MORNING

Brooding with a black eye, Gerald sits eating corn flakes.  
Bessie enters and sits down at the table with him in silence.

BESSIE  
What happened?

GERALD  
Nothing.

BESSIE  
Even your black can't hide a black  
eye. What happened?

GERALD  
Nothing.

BESSIE  
Okay, if that's the way you want it.

Bessie gets up to leave.

BESSIE (CONT'D)  
(over shoulder)  
If I were you, I would make sure I  
wasn't messin' around with Mr.  
Thomas's Maxine. He don't think  
it's nothing.

Embarrassed, Gerald drops his spoon and massages his bruise.

EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM- ORANGE BOWL -- EVENING

BESSIE-VO  
Gerald's high school went all the  
way to the state championship, and  
on to the national championship.  
Gerald broke so many records they  
had to throw away the book.

**Coral Gables Game Collage:**

Gerald receives a kick off and returns it for a touchdown.  
The quarterback hands off the ball to Gerald. Gerald is  
momentarily stopped in his tracks and gets blasted by an  
opposing linebacker. Gerald manages to keep his balance and  
stay on his feet scoring a touchdown.

Gerald receives a kick off and runs it back for a touchdown.  
He is handed the ball for a running play and scores another  
touchdown. Gerald catches a thirty yard pass play for yet  
another touchdown.

BESSIE-VO (CONT'D)  
Gerald was like a duck in water.  
They kicked it to him, handed it to  
him and threw it to him.

**INSERT:** Score Board reads "Coral Gables 55 Visitors 0"

BESSIE-VO (CONT'D)

Gerald broke records for kick-offs,  
punt returns, and running back.  
Coral Gables High went on to win the  
state championship game fifty-five  
to zero. A Florida state championship  
record that has never been broken!

The team mobs Gerald and he is carried off the field a hero.

BESSIE-VO (CONT'D)

But even all that glory couldn't  
fill Gerald's heart.

INT. BESSIE'S HOUSE LIVING ROOM -- MORNING

Gerald is sitting in a chair looking up at his sister's medals  
and ribbons displayed on the wall. Bessie sits across from  
him in her rocking chair. Gerald is despondent.

GERALD

Mamma, I'm sixteen years old and I  
can't even beat my little sister in  
a race. I've tried every starting  
position, different strides,  
different...

BESSIE

Gerald Alexander Tinker, you listen  
to me! Stop feeling sorry for  
yourself. You need to find your  
inner strength and that comes from  
your heart. The good lord gave us  
the ability to pull from within.  
Tell yourself, YOU ARE THE BET YOU  
NC BE , YOU ARE A WINNER...and believe  
it. Now get on out of this house so  
I can have some peace.

EXT. GRAND AVENUE PARK -- LATER

Gerald is eating a honey bun doughnut. Joyce sneaks up behind  
him and steals it out of his hand, as his friend look on.

GERALD

Joyce, don't mess with my food. You  
had better give that back.

Joyce teases him by handing it to him and taking it back  
several times.

JOYCE

The only way you're going to taste  
this sweet roll is to beat me in a  
race, and for that to happen the sun  
won't rise and the stars won't shine.

Joyce laughs with others in the park. Gerald gets up and stretches. He is confident.

GERALD

Ok, bet. Let's do it. 50 yard dash right now. You have beaten me for the last time.

JOYCE

Sure you're up to it, big bro?

Joyce takes off in a fluid motion, Gerald takes up the chase, but is at least ten steps behind her at the start. In slow motion, he begins to gain on her, until he is striding with her, stride for stride. In the last ten strides, he hears his mother's voice in his head and pulls away for the win.

BESSIE-VO

YOU ARE THE BEST YOU CAN BE, YOU ARE A WINNER.

Both runners pull up and stare into each other's eyes, Joyce is in shock. Gerald triumphantly snatches the sweet roll from her hand and bites into it.

GERALD

Ahhh, sweet victory. I hope that sun you were talking about wasn't listening, cause I got some early classes!

A small crowd gathers around Gerald, and relives the race.

CHO-CHO

Tink, you was blazing.

TUB

Man, them Lamborghinis got nothin' on you.

CHO-CHO

Two weeks ago, the newspaper said Joyce was ranked seventh of all the girls her age range in the country!

TUB

You bad boy, you baddd...You think you could do it again?

Gerald finishes his sweet roll, and smiles to Joyce.

GERALD

If I had a stack of bibles, I'd swear to you, Joyce will NEVER beat me in another race as long as I live.

The comradery continues with Gerald's friends jawing with him. As they talk, Joyce steals off into the night.

She is upset. She knows what he says is true.

BESSIE-VO

And it was true. Joyce never could  
beat Gerald again, in any race they  
ran. It was the end of her running  
days, but Gerald... he had only begun  
to run.

INT. CORAL GABLES GYM -- MORNING

Gerald is shooting some hoops with some friends when the  
coach comes on the court and waves him over.

HIGH SCHOOL COACH

Listen, Gerald, the State  
Championships are in three weeks,  
and we could really use you on the  
track team again. What do you say?

GERALD

Well, I don't know coach, I'm really  
just into playing football.

COACH

Football season's over, and you won't  
have practice for at least three  
months. Come, on we're short a 220  
man. It was just an idea to use your  
sister on the team. We really need  
you, Tink.

Gerald thinks it over while he shoots a basket. It is a dead  
aim swish.

GERALD

All right, coach, I'll give it another  
chance.....To be honest, it was my  
sister who motivated me to run fast,  
just so I could beat her in a race.  
I think I'm ready to try the team  
again.

COACH

Hey, whatever it takes for you to  
get it up.  
(laughing)

EXT. FLORIDA STATE CHAMPIONSHIP TRACK -- DAY

Gerald is at the starting line, and as the gun goes off, we  
see him lead the pack. The announcer describes the action  
for us. There are several scouts in the stands with stop  
watches.



ANNOUNCER-VO

The runners are off, and breaking to a fast lead is ..Gerald Tinker.. Leon Coleman in second, Oscar Anderson in third. The three leaders separate from the pack. It's TINKER, LEON, and OSCAR in the third position.

Gerald makes a move and has a two step advantage.

ANNOUNCER-VO (CONT'D)

This is a fast pace. Holy toledo, Tinker is leaving them all in the dust. This may be a record!

Gerald turns on the jets and opens up a huge lead. The crowd reacts. He blows through the finish line, and high-fives his teammates.

ANNOUNCER-VO (CONT'D)

Ladies and Gentlemen we have a new state record. In the 220 yard dash. Gerald Tinker is the new state champion!

Gerald takes a victory lap, while the crowd voices their approval. He waves to Bessie, Grandpa Willie, and JOYCE who are in the crowd. Bessie is happy, Grandpa Willie is proud, and Joyce is quietly sad.

BESSIE-VO

Gerald astonished everyone. He had not run track for almost five months. With almost no practice, he went on to become State Champion and win national titles. He was then invited to the AAU Nationals, with his cousin, Larry. They were the only high school athletes invited to this important National event.

EXT. AAU TRACK MEET -- AFTER THE RACE

Gerald is packing up his clothes, when one of the scouts from the stands approaches him. SPOOK MURPHY is an Italian southerner who has a military bearing. He wears a bristle haircut and smokes a fat cigar.

SPOOK MURPHY

Gerald Tinker?

Gerald nods his head.

GERALD

Yes sir. What can I do for you?

SPOOK MURPHY

I'm Spook Murphy. *Memphis State* athletic director. That was some mighty fine running today. I have been following your football career, and was really surprised how fast you are. You smoked them today.

GERALD

Thank you, Mr. Murphy.

SPOOK MURPHY

You think you would be interested in joining our sports program?

GERALD

I thought Memphis didn't have many black athletes?

SPOOK MURPHY

Son, we like all GREAT athletes. How would you like a full scholarship to MEMPHIS STATE?

GERALD

A full scholarship? Could I play football and run track too?

SPOOK MURPHY

I don't see why not. In fact we could fly you up to MEMPHIS STATE to check it out.

GERALD

Fly me up there?

SPOOK MURPHY

Sure, we have our own jet. Gerald, we'll take good care of you... and your family! There's lots of perks for an athlete with your talents. Just say the word and I'm sure we can get you whatever you want.

GERALD

Whatever I want?

SPOOK MURPHY

That's right, just about whatever you want that's in my power to get is yours!

There is a devious twinkle in Gerald's eye as he weighs the possibilities.

EXT. GRAND AVENUE PARK -- DAY

Gerald pulls up to the park on his new YAMAHA motorcycle.

There is a small crowd of people hanging out. His sister, Joyce, is sitting on a picnic table with some street types nearby.

CHO-CHO

Yamaha's here. The speed king himself.

KENNY

Yamaha, let's start to par-tay!

CHO-CHO

We got the goods, let's make some music!

(turns on a radio)

Cho-Cho and Kenny break ut some beer and reefer. Gerald takes the reefer and contemplates it. He passes it back to Cho-cho.

GERALD

No, thanks. You guys know I don't do this stuff. I got to be ready to kick some butt when I go to MEMPHIS STATE.

KENNY

Tink, you going to be the first brother to play football for them white boys?

GERALD

That's right, the first brother to play ball and run track at the same time.

Several police cars screech up to the park entrance. Four policemen jump out of their cars and run for Joyce and some hoodlum types at the picnic table. They all scatter in different directions, but the police run for Joyce. Joyce takes off and leaves them in the dust. One by one, the officers return to their cars panting and exhausted from the chase. There are cat calls from the brothers who were watching.

CHO-CHO

You boys can't catch her. All you got was some wind.

KENNY

Don't you know who that was?

CHO-CHO

That there was one of the fastest girls on the planet!

The police get in their cars and slowly drive away.

GERALD

How come those cops were chasing my sister?

CHO-CHO

Yamaha, Joyce has been hanging with Motor Wheel, and you know where he's at. He likes the big C.

KENNY

Joyce been dealing coke for Motor Wheel a couple months now. The police been trying to catch her for weeks, but she's too damn fast.

GERALD

My sister's hanging with that punk Motor Wheel? How come you guys didn't hip me to this before?

There is a silence. After a few seconds.....

CHO-CHO

You've been too busy for us. You know, work outs, curfews, all that training stuff.

KENNY

None of us have seen, you Tink.

Gerald looks them over and shakes his head.

GERALD

So much for my brothers watching my back.

Gerald puts his helmet on and blazes out of the park on his bike.

INT. JOYCE AND GERALD'S ROOM -- LATER

Joyce is curled up on her bed. Her medals and ribbons are now strewn across her dresser in disarray. There is a knock at the door.

JOYCE

Come in.

Gerald enters and stands by her bed.

GERALD

Joyce, Cho-Cho and Kenny just told me you're selling drugs. Is it true?

Joyce does not answer. She curls up with a pillow into a fetal position.

GERALD (CONT'D)

If you have a problem, I want to help you. I know that you have been depressed, but drugs can't help you solve your problems.

JOYCE

What do you know? You're too busy trying to be Mr. Track and Field.

Everybody loves you. Even mamma doesn't care about me anymore.

GERALD

Joyce, that's not true. I care about what happens to you.

Gerald goes to her bed and sits on it close to her.

GERALD (CONT'D)

Joyce, we all care about you. Mamma, Mamie, Grandpa Willie, the whole family. What are you doing to yourself?

JOYCE

You don't know what you're talking about. Nobody cares.

GERALD

I know that whatever your problems are, drugs can't help them. Neither can that PUNK, Motor Wheel. Your family is here for you, whatever you may think.

Gerald gently strokes her hair for a few seconds. She starts to cry, and then pushes his hand away from her.

JOYCE

GET OUT! I don't need your sympathy, and I don't need your advice. Just leave me be.

Gerald gets up from the bed and goes to leave the room. On the way out, he sees her medals and ribbons strewn on her dresser. He turns to her.

GERALD

These are the proof that you CAN be the best you can be.

JOYCE

Those are the proof of what I was. I'm someone else now. Get out of my room. Get out of my LIFE!

I'm someone else now. Get out of my room. GET OUT OF MY LIFE!

GERALD

It ain't your damn room, and it ain't  
your damn life. IT'S OUR LIFE!

Gerald closes the door behind him. Pausing at the closed door he can hear her sobbing. Pausing, Gerald reaches out and touches the door.

EXT. BESSIE'S HOUSE NIGHT

A car pulls up to Bessie's house and Joyce gets out. She staggers up to the porch and falls down. She is high as a kite.

P.O.V.: GERALD OPENS THE FRONT DOOR AND BLOCKS JOYCE'S PATH.

GERALD

Where do you think you're going, all  
drugged up?

JOYCE

Get out of my way. You don't own  
this house.

GERALD

There is no way you're going to come  
in this house all drugged up. Take  
your sorry behind over to Leatha's  
house. Momma shouldn't have to see  
you this way.

JOYCE

GET OUT OF MY WAY. I'm sick and tired  
of you telling me what to do.

Gerald blocks the door and won't budge. Joyce tries to push past him, but he holds his ground. Joyce steps back and slaps him across the face. He pushes her away from him.

GERALD

You try that again, and I'll give  
you the beating you never got from  
daddy.

Joyce steps back down the stairs. She spies a tire iron and picks it up with menace.

GERALD (CONT'D)

Ok, that's it. I'm going to whip  
your ass.

Gerald goes down the steps after her. Joyce swings the tire iron at him. He ducks and knocks it away from her. He is about to grab her when he hears Bessie in the doorway.

BESSIE

GERALD, please don't hurt her...please  
don't.

Gerald turns back to Bessie. He growls at his sister in disgust and walks away. He picks up the tire iron and flings it as far as he can. He continues to walk away, shaking his head.

INT. GERALD AND JOYCE'S ROOM-- MORNING

Gerald is packing suit cases. Gerald carefully packs his boyhood medal. Bessie and Grandpa Willie look on in admiration.

GRANDPA WILLIE

A full scholarship to MEMPHIS STATE.  
Everything's included! Coach Murphy  
said that the boosters club will fly  
your mother up to every game too.

Gerald is ecstatic. He hugs BESSIE and starts to do some football moves.

BESSIE

Gerald, this is a great opportunity  
for you, but I want you to remember  
that you're going to school to learn  
something, and get an education.

GERALD

Yes, ma'am. I plan to be the  
smartest, fastest black man, that  
they ever saw. In fact I plan to be  
so fast they won't even see me!

Gerald, Bessie, and Grandpa Willie share a good laugh.

BESSIE

Gerald, I have to finish my roast,  
you and grandpa finish packing.

Bessie exits the room.

GRANPA WILLIE

Gerald, just remember what I told  
you.....

GERALD&WILLIE

When a white man in a position of  
authority stops you, you say, "yes,  
sir," AND BE QUIET!

Grandpa Willie, slaps Gerald on the back and they hug.

GRANPA WILLIE

You make me proud, Gerald. I'm going  
to miss you.

GERALD

You're like a father to me, grandpa.  
I'm going to miss you too.

Gerald returns to packing. Grandpa Willie sits on the bed.

GRANPA WILLIE

Gerald, it's a great thing, you going to Memphis. In my day, college was just a dream. Black men were just lucky to make two bits and stay away from the lynch mob's noose... I am a little concerned about your sister Joyce.

GERALD

I know. She has started to hang with a pretty tough crowd. I'll think of something, before I leave grandpa.

Gerald, sits on the bed and smiles at his grandfather. Grandpa Willie puts his arm around Gerald.

GERALD (CONT'D)

Don't you worry. It will all work out.

Grandpa Willie starts to pray.

GRANPA WILLIE

The lord is my shepherd, and he will tend his flock. Lord, please look after my little lamb. She needs your help. We all need your help. Amen.  
(concern)

GERALD

Amen.

EXT. GRAND AVENUE PARK -- EVENING

Motor Wheel rinks beer while selling drugs by a picnic table. A buyer walks away after a sale. A couple home boys are hanging with him.

Joyce saunters up to the table and asks him for drugs.

JOYCE

Hey, baby, what's happening? I need to re-up.

MOTOR WHEEL

Re-up? Where's the change from the last three bags I gave you?

JOYCE

Don't worry about them. I have some cash coming in from some other scores.

Motor Wheel laughs and turns to his home boys, who pick up the cue and laugh with him.



MOTOR WHEEL

I'm not worried about it. But you should be. I need to get paid. In fact I need to get paid NOW!

Motor Wheel grabs Joyce by the shirt and holds her face to his. There is malice in his eyes.

MOTOR WHEEL (CONT'D)

You had five days to give me my money. Every time I ask you for what's mine you give some excuse and always want more product! I want my cash NOW! If you don't have it, I'll take it out in trade.

Motor wheel throws his beer away and starts to drag Joyce to a large group of bushes.

JOYCE

What are you doing? I'll get you the money. Stop it. Stop it. Let me goooo.

Motor Wheel smacks her hard across the face and drags her to the bushes. He throws her on the ground and stands over her. He leers at her as he unzips his pants.

MOTOR WHEEL

Time to pay up. Bitch!

Joyce tries to get up, but he grabs her and pushes her down.

She starts to scream, and he slaps her again. Motor Wheel rips her shirt, and straddles her as she cries.

EXT. BESSIE'S HOUSE COCONUT GROVE- PORCH -- LATER

Joyce is sitting despondently on the steps. Her clothes are dirty and torn. She has a bruised and swollen cheek. Gerald pulls up on his motorcycle and starts to walk up the steps.

He passes Joyce and turns back around.

GERALD

What happened? Who did this to you?  
Joyce, who did this to you?

Joyce is stoic and says nothing. Gerald walks back down the steps and takes a good look at her. He sees the extent of her trauma, and reacts.

GERALD (CONT'D)

Are you OK? Let me see your face.

Gerald's hand tries to move her face toward the light. He sees the swelling and Joyce pulls her face away.

GERALD (CONT'D)

There's going to be one less BROTHER  
in the world by tomorrow.

JOYCE

It wasn't his fault. I owed him some  
money. I shouldn't have.....

GERALD

Money? Money has nothing to do with  
this. Nobody has the right to do  
this to you Joyce. NOBODY!

Gerald jumps on his motorcycle and pulls off in a hurry.

Joyce stands up and yells after him.

JOYCE

What are you going to do? It's my  
fault. Leave him alone. Stay out of  
my business.

Gerald is long gone by the time she finishes calling out to  
him. She sinks down on the steps and pulls out a glassine  
baggy of cocaine. She opens it and gets ready to snort.

EXT. GRANT AVENUE PARK -- MOMENTS LATE

Gerald pulls up to the park spots Motor Wheel, and drives  
over to him.

MOTOR WHEEL

Well, if it isn't the speed demon.  
Nice bike. What is it a Honda?

Gerald gets off his bike and walks up to Motor Wheel. He is  
not in a mood to be trifled with.

GERALD

Motor Wheel, I'm going to make this  
plain and simple. Stay away from  
Joyce. I don't want her involved  
with the trash you do. You come near  
her again and I'll kill you.

MOTOR WHEEL

Whoa, bro, Joyce and I just kick it  
from time to time . It's no big deal.  
She owed me some money, so I took it  
out in trade.

He laughs with his two homies.

GERALD

I'm going to tell you ONE MORE time.  
Don't MESS with my sister. I don't  
care what she owed. You have to  
answer to me!

MOTOR WHEEL

You think you're bad because you  
play ball and you can run fast? That  
don't mean squat.

Motor Wheel pulls out a switch blade and points it at Gerald.

MOTOR WHEEL (CONT'D)

Boy, go home to your mamma, cause  
you ain't fast enough for my blade.

Two of Motor Wheels henchmen stand up, backing him up.

MOTOR WHEEL (CONT'D)

Just in case you think you're bad  
enough for me, my boys here weren't  
too happy I didn't share your  
sister... It made them mad. Maybe  
next time....

He chuckles.

GERALD

You're messing with the wrong brother!

Gerald launches himself at Motor Wheel and crushes him with  
a cross body check. Motor Wheel goes down, the knife flies  
out of his hands. He tries to get up, but is winded.

Gerald then kicks him viciously in the side. Home boy #1  
tries to grab Gerald from behind, and he is thrown over  
Gerald's back. Gerald kicks him in the stomach, as Home boy  
#2 takes a swing at Gerald's head. Gerald ducks and smashes  
him in the nose. Gerald repeatedly smashes both Home boys  
with rights and lefts. Beaten, they run off into the night.

Motor Wheel is still on the ground. Gerald kicks him again  
in the side and pulls him up into a head lock.

GERALD (CONT'D)

I could snap your head like a twig,  
and I should, but I want you to put  
the word out. If I ever hear anyone  
messing with or sniffing around my  
sister, I'll beat them so bad, they'll  
wish they were dead.

Motor Wheel's eyes are bulging out of his head as he gasps  
for air.

GERALD (CONT'D)

You understand me?

Motor Wheel is choking in Gerald's hold, but he makes a  
supreme effort to nod his head, yes. Gerald drops him to the  
ground and turns to leave. Before he leaves, Gerald kicks  
him one more time in the side.

GERALD (CONT'D)

It's a YAMAHA. Honda's ain't got no speed.

Gerald picks up the switch blade and puts it in his pocket.

He gets on his bike and leaves Motor Wheel choking in a cloud of dust.

INT: BESSIE'S KITCHEN -- LATE

Gerald is filling out some forms for school when Joyce comes in. She is angry.

JOYCE

You had no right to do what you did.  
I can take care of my own problems!

GERALD

What I did, I did for me. And I did it for mamma. It was time for someone to step up and do the right thing.

JOYCE

Don't try to help me any more. All you do is mess things up. Motor Wheel is a friend of mine.

GERALD

Well, I don't think you'll be doing any more business with him. By the way, do all your friends attack your blood family with knives?

Gerald throws Motors Wheel's knife on the table.

GERALD (CONT'D)

Do you know how sick and worried mamma's been since you started your little drug escapade? I found these empty envelopes in our room.

Gerald throws two glassine envelopes on the table.

JOYCE

She doesn't care. None of you do. All they care about is the big college boy and his scholarship.

Joyce points to the glassine envelopes.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

That takes the pain away.

Gerald stands up and his presence fills the room.

GERALD

Joyce, sit down. Now!

Joyce is shocked at his demeanor and sits.

GERALD (CONT'D)  
 You know what YOUR problem is? You were always faster than me ON YOUR FEET. When I figured out how to control my mind. I know I could beat you! You lost and couldn't cope with the fear of losing again. So you gave up. You quit! These drugs replaced the high you got from winning.

Joyce looks away.

GERALD (CONT'D)  
 LOOK AT ME!

Joyce turns back to Gerald with tears in her eyes.

GERALD (CONT'D)  
 Our mamma was paralyzed and still raised us with dignity and respect. You're stronger than this. Don't you see...drugs just cover the pain.

Joyce starts to quietly sob.

GERALD (CONT'D)  
 I'm here for you, the family is here for you. Sometimes you need to feel the hurt, and face the pain.

Gerald holds out his hand to JOYCE and she slowly takes it.

Joyce stands and they embrace. Gerald gently strokes her hair and comforts her. At the entrance to the kitchen Bessie has witnessed their reunion. A tear of joy rolls down her cheek.

EXT. MEMPHIS STATE ESTABLISHING SHOT- -- MORNING

A busy campus bustles with activity. Tinker hustles across campus to a gym building.

EXT. MEMPHIS STATE TRACK AND GRAND STANDS -- DAY

FULL SHOT : MEMPHIS STATE TRACK MEET OVERVIEW

BESSIE-VO  
 Gerald arrived at MEMPHIS STATE, and tied a World record in the first race he ran in.

This is the first meet of the season, the stands are full.

The athletes are lining up to begin a race. Gerald is among them.

As the gun goes off, Gerald IMMEDIATELY takes the lead and "GAPS" THE OTHER RUNNERS. He wins the fifty yard dash, and ties a WORLD RECORD! His new, mostly white teammates mob him in celebration.

BESSIE-VO (CONT'D)

It was a short lived celebration,  
because Gerald was about to experience  
the rearing of racism's ugly head.

INT. LOCKER ROOM MEMPHIS STATE

The MEMPHIS STATE track team are getting dressed, some are getting massages. Gerald approaches his track coach LARRY WRIGHT and four of the training staff.

GERALD

Hey, Larry, my legs are a little  
tight, I'd like to get a rub down.

LARRY WRIGHT

No problem Tink. These guys will  
take care of you.

Larry walks off, to talking to some other athletes.

The trainers are aghast. They look from one to the other, barely able to believe that they should have to rub down a black man.

GERALD

Which of you guys, gives the massages?

The trainers do not move a muscle. All eyes go to the head trainer.

HEAD TRAINER

Well what are you all waiting for?  
It's no big deal.

The head trainer walks over to a counter and pulls out latex surgical gloves. None of the other trainers in the room have gloves on. He makes an elaborate show of putting them on. He ushers Gerald to a table and motions for him to get on.

Gerald reluctantly lies on the massage table. The HEAD Trainer takes a big glob of balm plops it on and starts to massage Gerald.

HEAD TRAINER (CONT'D)

You see, there's nothing to it. All  
you have to do is dig in. They're NO  
DIFFERENT.

The other white trainers look on with nausea. One walks out.

Gerald is grimacing from the force of the massage, the head trainer is not doing it nicely.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD MEMPHIS STATE -- DAY

Gerald is playing in a scrimmage. He is handed the ball and breaks the line. Several white linebackers try to nail him with ill intent. He glides away from them effortlessly and scores a touchdown. A whistle is blown and one of the trainers waves Gerald over.

TRAINER #2

Gerald, Coach Murphy wants to see you. Before you hit the showers.

GERALD

What's the coach want? Weren't we supposed to run some more plays?

TRAINER #2

He just said he wanted to talk to you before the end of practice.

ANGLE ON : GERALD WALKING FROM THE SCRIMMAGE TO THE LOCKER ROOM. THE COACH WHO HAS BEEN WALKING TOWARDS HIM MEETS HIM HALFWAY.

EXT: OUTSIDE SPORTS FIELD -- CONTINUOUS

GERALD

You wanted to see me Coach?

SPOOK MURPHY

Gerald, we really like the work you're doing here. You're already breaking records, and paying dividends to the school. I wonder if you could do the school and myself a favor?

GERALD

Sure, coach, what do you need?

SPOOK MURPHY

Well, tomorrow's Martin Luther King's birthday. We have a problem with some student agitators. We wanted to give you a couple of baseball bats and have you stand at the school flag to make sure no subversive students try to lower the flag.

Gerald can't believe his ears!

GERALD

What did you say? If I heard you right, forget it.

SPOOK MURPHY

Think of it as a favor.

(MORE)

SPOOK MURPHY (CONT'D)

A couple white guys from the team will be there to help out,... and I thought it would help if we had a "brother" with them, to discourage any agitators.

GERALD

No way coach, and you can't force me to do it.

Gerald turns around and walks away. Spook calls after him.

SPOOK MURPHY

HEY, where are you going? Nobody says NO, to me.

Gerald walks farther away. Spook Murphy turns a dark shade of red.

EXT. PRACTICE FIELD MEMPHIS STATE -- AFTERNOON

Coach Spook Murphy is putting the football team through a workout. He blows his whistle and motions for some of the wide receivers to come over to him. Gerald is among them.

SPOOK MURPHY

Some of you guys were running like little girls out there. We need to build up your stamina. Glenn, Wes, and Tink, take a break.

He turns to a black Wide Receiver, Stanley Davis.

SPOOK MURPHY (CONT'D)

Stan, give me five laps, and then we'll do some sprints.

STANLEY

Coach, I haven't had a break since eleven. It's almost three o'clock.

SPOOK MURPHY

I'm the damn coach. If you want to play, you'll run. NOW get moving!

Stanley shakes his head and starts his laps. Gerald approaches the coach

GERALD

Coach, why you being so hard on Stan?

SPOOK MURPHY

Because I'm the coach!

GERALD

Yeah but you don't bust my chops like that.



The coach smiles and slaps tinker on the back.

SPOOK MURPHY

You're special Tink! You ought to know that.

GERALD

Coach, Stan's been hitting it all morning...

SPOOK MURPHY

You let me worry about my players.

Spook walks off clip board in hand.

EXT. PRACTICE FIELD MEMPHIS STATE -- LATER

Stanley is winded. He finishes his laps and Spook waves him over to do sprints.

SPOOK MURPHY

Alright, Stan, let's do some sprints.

Stan is still huffing and puffing. Spook blows his whistle and Stan starts to run. After about twenty yards he pulls up and clutches his side. He kneels down on one knee and grimaces in pain. Spook, Gerald, and several team members run over to him.

SPOOK MURPHY (CONT'D)

What the hell are you stopping for?

Get your butt up and get back to work.

STANLEY

I can't, coach...I don't feel so good.

SPOOK MURPHY

Come on, Stanley, you can do it. Get up and let's go to work.

Stanley gets up very slowly. He gets ready to run as his teammates look on.

SPOOK MURPHY (CONT'D)

Alright, get ready, get set. Go!

Stanley runs about fifteen steps, clutches his side and keels over, in great pain.

The rest of the team runs over to help to help him.

EXT. PRACTICE FIELD -- LATE

Paramedics are loading Stanley onto a gurney. They lift him into an ambulance with flashing lights. One of the paramedics approaches Spook, Gerald, and teammates.

PARAMEDIC

I'm not a doctor, but it looks pretty serious. We think it's his appendix. We radioed the hospital and set up for an emergency appendectomy.

The paramedic gets into the ambulance and it leaves in a hurry, sirens wailing.

SPOOK MURPHY

Well, I guess that finishes his season.

GERALD

You didn't have to push him that hard, Coach.

SPOOK MURPHY

At least we found out what he was made of NOW. I would hate to start the season and try and fill his position after the season started.

GERALD

Stan's life may be in danger and all you can think of is football?

Spook glares at Gerald.

SPOOK MURPHY

That's the breaks. Mistakes get made, and somebody has to pay for them.

Most of the team drifts off, leaving Spook alone with Gerald and another black teammate, Bruce Johnson.

GERALD

Coach, It's not fair the way you pushed Stan.

OK MURPHY

Life ain't fair! And what I do is my business, nobody else's. Stan was a lower high school pick. I wanted to see what he really had in him.

Spook smiles.

SPOOK MURPHY

I guess we found out.... he couldn't compete.

Spook walks away with a bounce in his step. Gerald's teammate BRUCE JOHNSON, talks to him.

BRUCE JOHNSON

Yeah, Tink, that's the way he does us.

GERALD

What do you mean?

BRUCE JOHNSON

Spook will run a BROTHER into the ground to get rid of him.

GERALD

But Stan is a decent player. Why knock him out of the box like he did?

BRUCE JOHNSON

Spook did the same thing last year. He has to recruit a certain amount of brothers to play ball, to get the black high school coaching caucus off his back. Once he does that he burns out whoever can't take it. I almost didn't make it last year.

GERALD

Why didn't he do that to me?

BRUCE JOHNSON

Because you're a marquee player.

Stan's just a country boy, no one has ever heard of. Remember, Spook doesn't want too many of US on his teams.

Gerald looks up to the sky in frustration.

GERALD

Man...that's a bunch of.....bull.

INT. MEMPHIS STATE CAFETERIA -- A FEW DAYS LATER

Gerald and Bruce Johnson are having lunch.

GERALD

I can't believe Spook did that to Stan. He'll be out for the rest of the season.

BRUCE JOHNSON

Hey, get this, Tink, no black athlete has ever been inside the head coach's office.

GERALD

Get out of here. You're telling me no brothers have ever been inside Spook's domain?

BRUCE JOHNSON

That's right.

(MORE)

BRUCE JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Even when they recruited me, he only took me around the gym and sports facilities. We never went inside his office.

Gerald grins and evil smile.

GERALD

Well, hurry, up and finish your lunch, because we're about to make history. It's time for the brothers to make a showing.

INT. SPOOK MURPHY'S OUTER OFFICE- -- LATER

Gerald and Bruce walk into the outer office and an old time southern secretary, ADA MAY, looks up from her typing.

ADA MAY

Can I help you BOYS with something?

At the mention of the word BOY, they both look at each other.

GERALD

Yes, ma'am, is Coach Murphy in?

ADA MAY

Yes, he is, but he only sees you BOYS by appointment. And he's much too busy at the moment....You can't go in there, you...

Gerald and Bruce walk right by her, open the Coach's door, and go in. Spook looks up from his desk, confused.

GERALD

Coach Murphy, I heard a rumor that no black athlete has ever been in your office before. Is that true?

Spook sits at his desk ramrod straight. A vein pulses in his forehead. He answers very slowly.

SPOOK MURPHY

Why, hell no, TINKER, there is no truth to that rumor at all. You two are the living proof that black athletes have been in here.

GERALD

Well, thank you, coach. We just wanted to clear that up.

Gerald and Bruce exit Murphy's office. Once in the outer area, they break into uncontrollable laughter. The secretary glowers at them as they leave the outer office.

INT. SPOOKS OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Spook Murphy is steaming. He is almost shaking, he is so mad. The tension in him builds, and he snaps the pencil in his hand. He sits and stewes with the veins in his neck throbbing.

BESSIE-VO

No black runner was going to get the best of Spook Murphy. He wasn't just going to get mad, he was going to get even. Gerald was in a war he couldn't win.

Spook pulls out a file that has Gerald's name on it and begins to read. A smile creeps across his face.

EXT. MEMPHIS STATE FOOTBALL GAME IN PROGRESS -- AFTERNOON

The Memphis State quarterback hands the ball to Gerald.

Gerald executes an "end around sweep", and makes a thirty-five yard touchdown run. The crowd and Gerald's teammates explode in frenzied appreciation.

Spook Murphy watches from the sidelines. He calls Gerald over.

SPOOK MURPHY

Great run, Gerald. Four touchdowns in one game, and over two hundred yards on the ground! Way to go.

GERALD

Thanks, coach.

SPOOK MURPHY

Gerald, I want you to think about playing football in our spring program.

GERALD

How am I going to play football and run track at the same time?

SPOOK MURPHY

Come on, Gerald, think of the team. We'll be a better spring squad if you're playing. Think about it.

GERALD

Coach, I came to run track AND play football. You told me I could do both.

SPOOK MURPHY

Look, just think about it.

Spook walks off to talk to some of the other players. Gerald is left standing there, dumfounded.

INT. SPOOK MURPHY'S OFFICE -- SEVERAL DAYS LATER

Spook is sitting at his desk, cigar in hand, as Gerald enters.

GERALD

Coach, I've made my decision.

Spook looks to Gerald expectantly.

GERALD (CONT'D)

If I have to choose between football and track, I would have to choose the sport that does the best by me.

SPOOK MURPHY

Great, Gerald, I am glad you decided to come around. We....

GERALD

Coach, the sport that does best by me is TRACK. So I have decided to quit the football team, and just run track. Larry Wright is a great coach and I am going to keep training with him.

Spook Murphy recoils in horror at the prospect of Gerald quitting.

SPOOK MURPHY

What are you talking about? You have the National punt return record. You also ran for 11.3 yards per carry as a running back. Your sport *is* football.

Spook is starting to become rattled. Gerald is calm.

SPOOK MURPHY (CONT'D)

We recruited you *for* football. Running track this spring is out of the question. I need to prepare for the upcoming football season.

GERALD

Well, you can prepare for it without me. Coach Wright has me clocked pretty quick in the sixty yard dash. I'm just going to run.

Gerald's eyes meet Spook's, and they lock in silence....Finally Spook speaks.

SPOOK MURPHY

All right, Gerald, if that's the way you want it. You can continue to participate in both sports.

Gerald shakes his head as he gets up to leave. Spook pulls out a file that says "Coaches" on it.

EXT. TRACK FIELD MEMPHIS STATE -- LATER-

Spook Murphy is having an animated discussion with (Larry Wright) Gerald's track coach, who is white.

SPOOK MURPHY

Football carries this schools sports programs. I need Tinker in the spring football program.

LARRY WRIGHT

We promised Tink that he could play both sports.

SPOOK MURPHY

He's not running track! I don't care what I promised him!

LARRY WRIGHT

I can't in good conscious renege on what we told him at recruitment.

SPOOK MURPHY

Then your out'a here.

Vehement, Spook pantomimes a baseball umpire's outta here call, and stalks away.

INT. GERALD'S DORM ROOM -- MEMPHIS STATE -- EVENING

Gerald is on the phone with Grandpa Willie. They are in the middle of a conversation.

GERALD

I let him down, mamma. Larry lost everything he had, because of me.

GRANPA WILLIE

Gerald, it's not your fault. You have to do what's right. They made a deal, and broke their side of it. I think you may need to leave that school if you're that unhappy.

GERALD

Maybe you're right, grandpa. I still have some of the phone numbers from the other scouts. Maybe I should give them a call? What do you think?

GRANPA WILLIE

Gerald, sometimes you just have to follow what your heart says. I can't make this decision for you.

EXT. OHIO STATE TRACK MEET. -- MORNING

There is a race in progress. Gerald has pulled away from the pack and breaks the finish line tape with a final surge.

EXT. MISSOURI STATE TRACK MEET--AFTERNOON

A MEMPHIS STATE runner hands a baton off to Gerald. Up to this point, it is a very close race. Gerald takes the hand off, and "GAPS" the other runners, winning the race.

EXT. GEORGIA STATE TRACK MEET -- MORNING

Gerald is leading the other runners in the hundred yard dash.

His last few strides are uneven. He breaks the winner's tape with a grimace of pain on his face.

INT. MEMPHIS TRAINERS ROOM -- DAY

A trainer has just finished rubbing Gerald down. He is in obvious pain. He goes into the trainer's office and makes a phone call.

GERALD

Hi, Larry? It's TINKER. How you doing, Coach?

LARRY WRIGHT (V.O.)

Just fine, TINK. How did GEORGIA STATE go?

GERALD

I won. But I am having a problem with my right hamstring. It's getting real tight when I make my final push at the tape.

There is concern in Larry's voice.

LARRY WRIGHT (V.O.)

It's still bothering you? Are you stretching well enough? I hope you're getting the massage treatments we talked about.

GERALD

Yeah, all that good stuff. I also added more potassium to my diet, but it's still cramping up real bad.



LARRY

Well, a lot of times the hams just need some rest to bring them back to full speed. I suggest you lay off for a while. Take a rest.

GERALD

Yeah, well, the team is counting on me. We have some big meets coming up. It's the end of the season.

LARRY

TINK, forget the season! If you tear your ham muscles, you'll be out a lot longer than a month. Take it easy for a while.

GERALD

Thanks for the advice, Coach. I'm going to try to cut back some. You take care, I'll talk to you soon.

Gerald hangs up the phone and rubs the back of his sore leg.

He walks over to the head coach's office.

INT. TRACK COACH'S OFFICE MEMPHIS STATE

The track coach is in discussion with Spook Murphy. They are talking about Gerald.

INT. MEMPHIS STATE TRACK COACH'S OFFICE -- MOMENTS LATER

Gerald walks through the door and is waved to a chair by the track coach.

MEMPHIS TRACK COACH

How's the leg, TINK? Did the rub down help it any?

GERALD

Not really, coach. I think I might need to lay off running for a while.

MEMPHIS TRACK COACH

These things come and go, TINK. The best thing for that ham is to use it, so it won't atrophy.

GERALD

Coach, I was talking to Larry Wright, and he thinks I should take the rest of the season off. The strain on my leg could do permanent damage.

SPOOK MURPHY

Gerald, you happy here at MEMPHIS?

Gerald nods his head.

SPOOK MURPHY (CONT'D)

Now I know you may not like the fact that LARRY WRIGHT is no longer employed here, but when you came aboard, didn't we go out of our way to help you get in the right classes? Didn't we make sure you got everything you needed to make your transition comfortable?

Gerald nods his head again.

MEMPHIS TRACK COACH

Well, we've done our part. Full scholarship, special perks to get you up to speed in your classes.

How about doing the right thing by us? We know your not one hundred percent. It's just part of pitching in for the team.

GERALD

Coach, the school and the personnel have been great here. I just don't want to get a permanent injury that will take me out for good.

SPOOK MURPHY

Well, it's your choice, of course, but we have an evaluation coming up very shortly. It would be a shame to lose part or all of your scholarship, because you were unable to perform.

Gerald can't believe what he is hearing.

GERALD

Are you saying if I don't run, even though I'm injured, the school will pull my grants?

MEMPHIS TRACK COACH

What we are really saying is that THE SCHOOL, might invest its resources....

SPOOK MURPHY

.....differently. The name of the game is PRO-DUC-TIVITY! We love your work. We just need to see your effort applied now, near the end of the season.

Gerald is depressed. He gets up to leave.

COACH

Think of the team, TINK, the team.

After Gerald has left.....

SPOOK MURPHY

I want you to push him. Gerald's one of the fastest guys we have!

COACH

Don't worry. I'll get him out there, but if he gets injured, it's on you.

EXT. TRACK MEET IOWA STATE-RACE IN PROGRESS -- MORNING

Gerald is nearing the finish line. Suddenly he grabs his back leg and tumbles to the ground in pain. Other runners pass him by on the ground.

Gerald is on the ground, clutching the back of his leg. Two trainers and the Head coach run over and try to massage the pain out of his leg. Gerald is in agony.

INT. BESSIE'S KITCHEN -- MORNING

MEMPHIS TRACK COACH

Come on, TINK, breathe..breathe...It's just a charley horse.

Gerald is in major pain, and angrily decries his situation.

GERALD

This ain't no damn charley horse! I pulled something. If you hadn't forced me to run the last few weeks, my ham's would have loosened up.

Most of the pain is gone now, and the trainers help Gerald up.

COACH

TINK, suck it up. You only have two more races for the season. You'll be fine.

(Under his breath, as Gerald limps away.)

He better finish the season if he knows what's good for him.

Gerald overhears the track coach and shakes his head warily.

BESSIE-VO

Gerald made a valiant effort to compete. His injury took its toll on him, physically and mentally.

Gerald walks away with a pronounced limp.

## BESSIE-VO (CONT'D)

His right leg was inconstant pain  
and he got no support from the Memphis  
staff. Gerald finally decided to  
leave Memphis State.

INT. GERALD'S DORM ROOM -- MEMPHIS STATE -- EVENING

Closed eyes, Gerald is deep in thought. Fifty recruitment letters are on the desk in front of him. Gerald's eyes snap open. Shuffling through the letters he grabs one and reaches for the phone. The clock on the wall reads 9pm.

**Insert:** Letter head reads "Kent State Athletic Program"

INT. GERALD'S DORM ROOM -- LATER

The clock on the wall read 12pm. Gerald speaks on the phone to DOUG RAYMOND, head of the Football department at Kent State.

GERALD

Thanks for taking the time to explain  
your programs. Are you telling me I  
can play *both* Football and run Track?

COACH RAYMOND (V.O.)

Absolutely. You can enroll at Kent  
State and do both sports *and* we'll  
give you a full ride! But we have  
to follow NCAA rules.

GERALD

I have had a change of feelings toward  
at KENT STATE, and would like another  
opportunity to join your program....I  
realize I would be ineligible to be  
coached by the track staff for this  
season.

COACH RAYMOND (V.O.)

Right. Red-Shirt for the rest of  
the academic year for football and  
track Although you are ineligible  
to run for us, you could get private  
coaching.

GERALD

Private coaching? I know just the  
man for the job!

COACH RAYMOND (V.O.)

Can you get up here in two weeks?

GERALD

.....Coach Raymond, I'll see you in  
two weeks.

(MORE)

GERALD (CONT'D)

I am looking forward to being part  
of the sports program at KENT STATE.

INT. SPOOK MURPHY'S OFFICE -- MORNING

Spook Murphy is working on some charts. His intercom buzzes.

ADA MAY-VO

Mr Murphy. One of your BOYS is out  
here, and he doesn't have an  
appointment.

SPOOK MURPHY

Who is it?

ADA MAY-VO

The boy says his name is Tinker. Do  
you want me to send him away?

SPOOK MURPHY

No, tell him to come in.

As Gerald enters, Spook lights up a cigar.

SPOOK MURPHY (CONT'D)

What's on your mind, Gerald?

Gerald stands in front of Spook's desk and looks down on  
him. He has the look of a man in charge.

GERALD

I want an immediate release from  
this university, from all sports  
programs.

Spook laughs.

SPOOK MURPHY

Great joke, Tink. Get out of here.

GERALD

I *am* out of here.

SPOOK MURPHY

No way Gerald. You couldn't buy a  
release from me. You're stuck here,  
in my little pond. So get used to  
it.

GERALD

Well, I'm leaving. And that's for  
sure!

SPOOK MURPHY

Your not going anywhere.

(MORE)

SPOOK MURPHY (CONT'D)

You got scholarships from us and that means you have obligations. So cut the crap and get out of here.

GERALD

Coach, you are a greedy selfish hypocrite. And you're a LIAR to boot. You pretend to give everyone a fair shake, while you sabotage any player of color you don't like.

SPOOK MURPHY

Watch your mouth, BOY.

GERALD

If you don't give me my release, I'll tell the State Athletic Board, the NCAA, and the press all that you have done for me, and a lot of the other athletes at MEMPHIS STATE. I'll tell them how you fix grades and how you run people out the program. Like Stan Davis!

SPOOK MURPHY

You can't prove any of that.

Gerald leans over Spook's desk. In rapid fire succession he rattles off his charges.

GERALD

What about my motorcycle? THE CARS, THE MONEY, THE TRIPS, CLOTHES, RESTAURANTS, even LIQUOR! I know all the GUYS WHO GOT! Grey Saunders, Billy Steel, Leroy Harris, Jimmy Weathers...Should I go on?

Spook is visibly shaken.

SPOOK MURPHY

You wouldn't do it. You wouldn't hurt your own teammates. You're just trying to threaten me.

GERALD

My mamma told me not to make threats, SO I AM GOING TO MAKE YOU A PROMISE! If you don't give me an immediate, release the six o'clock news won't have enough time to tell all the news I've got to give'em

Spook is besides himself with rage. As he stammers out his answer, he crushes the cigar in his hand.

SPOOK MURPHY

Well,..If that's the way you feel...If  
that's the way it's going to go...  
You can have the release. Your making  
a big mistake!

Gerald turns around and walks out of the office. His parting  
shot is over his shoulder. He never looks back.

GERALD

I'll pick up those papers at  
9AM...Sharp!

EXT. KENT STATE CAMPUS -- MORNING

**Title Up: KENT STATE 1970**

The campus is a seething cauldron of protest activity. Flower  
power and peace signs adorn placards of protesting students.

Several soapbox Hippies rail against the Vietnam war. Gerald  
walks by them and heads over to the track in the distance.

EXT. KENT STATE LOCKER ROOM -- DAY

Gerald enters the locker room.

INT. KENT STATE LOCKER ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Tinker enters and walks to a row of offices. He comes to a  
door marked "COACH DOUG RAYMOND". He knocks.

INT. KENT STATE TRACK COACH'S OFFICE.

COACH RAYMOND

Well, it's good to have you aboard  
Gerald. We have a meet in about a  
week. Are you up for it?

GERALD

Sure thing, Coach, I'll give it one  
hundred percent.

COACH RAYMOND

Gerald, you don't mind if I call you  
TINKER, do you? We have a mutual  
friend.

The coach smiles and give Gerald a wink. The coach lets him  
in on a secret.

COACH RAYMOND (CONT'D)

Larry and I worked together at another  
university. He filled me in quite  
nicely on your progress. Spook Murphy  
had to answer a lot of questions  
when their TOP athlete decided to  
transfer out of Memphis.

Coach Raymond smiles.

COACH RAYMOND (CONT'D)

It seems as though his ethic of having his athletes playing in pain got him in trouble.

Gerald is happy at that prospect.

COACH RAYMOND (CONT'D)

Being ineligible means our staff can't coach you for a year, but you can still run meets. Do you have anybody that can help you out?

GERALD

Well, Larry, said he would coach me by phone.

COACH RAYMOND

Football season doesn't start until the summer. So we are going to concentrate you on TRACK. Larry said he thinks you're ready to go to the next level. We've come up with a comprehensive program to put you in the best physical shape of your life. The stuff up here.....

He points to his head.

COACH RAYMOND (CONT'D)

.....is up to you. You think you're ready?

GERALD

Coach Raymond, Larry Wright was my pardner, and if you're running with him, then I'm running with you. Whatever you guys cooked up is good by me.

The Coach stands up and shakes Gerald's hand.

EXT. KENT STATE CAMPUS -- LATER

Gerald is walking around the campus looking for a class. He comes upon a Memorial to the four slain students, who were killed during a protest by the National Guard. Gerald stops to read an inscription on a placard. In the background, a black soapbox protester speaks through a bull horn. A small group of students is listening to him.

PROTESTER

Those who died here did not die in vain. They died to expose the fascist government.

(MORE)



PROTESTER (CONT'D)

A government that exploits the masses,  
and terrorizes the very freedoms  
they say they fight for. The  
government claims they fight for  
freedom! Freedom for who? I AM NOT  
FREE!

He points to Gerald.

PROTESTER (CONT'D)

Are you free? Brother, I'm asking  
you, are you free?

Gerald does not answer.

PROTESTER (CONT'D)

He can't say it. Because he's shackled  
to the system. He is oppressed by  
the very nature of his being, the  
very nature of his blackness.

Gerald starts to drift off. As he walks around the campus,  
there is protest everywhere.

BESSIE-VO

I always taught Gerald not to put  
limitations on himself. Just because  
he was black didn't mean he couldn't  
stand up and be counted.

EXT. KENT STATE CAFETERIA -- DAY

Gerald is eating lunch with some of the football team. TERRI  
SMITH and her parents, enter looking bewildered. Gerald and  
his teammates size them up.

JAKE DAVIS

Ooooh baby, I like her.

MIKE POOL

She is definitely a cutie pie.

JAKE DAVIS

She has a great body. I think I'll  
try to get with her.

MIKE POOL

Jake, if you look closely, you'll  
see her father looks like an ex-  
marine. I wouldn't try it.

JAKE DAVIS

That's OK I always wanted to go to  
BOO-TIE camp.

As the athletes share a hearty laugh, Gerald inspects her.

Terri, is a beautiful shapely freshman girl. Terri and her parents also have several large suitcases with them. Gerald can't take his eyes off her.

GERALD

While all you talkers talk, I think  
I'll walk the walk.

Gerald walks over to a distraught Terri and her parents.

They are looking at a campus map. His friends talk trash behind his back.

GERALD (CONT'D)

Hi. My name is Gerald Tinker. Would  
you like some help with these bags.

Mr. Smith, eyes Gerald, and brushes him off.

MR. SMITH

No, thank you. I think we can find  
our way.

TERRI

Thank you, we could use some help.  
This campus is so big. I'm late for  
orientation.

Gerald is wearing a cut off T shirt, muscled and cut and picks up the bags effortlessly.

GERALD

No problem at all. We'll get you  
over to your dorm first, and then  
I'll take you over to the  
administration building for the  
orientation. What's your name?

TERRI

Terri Smith, and these are my parents.

Gerald puts the bags down and shakes their hands.

GERALD

It's a pleasure to meet you, Mrs.  
Smith, Mr. Smith.

Mr. Smith just gives him the "fathers stare".

GERALD (CONT'D)

If you have time after orientation,  
I would love to show you around the  
campus.

Mr. Smith is about to say something when his wife cuts him off with a scowl.

MRS. SMITH

That would be very nice. We didn't get to do much when Terri first came up here to see what KENT STATE had to offer.

Gerald picks up the bags and they start to walk. Mr. Smith is still not happy with Gerald's help.

MRS. SMITH (CONT'D)

What do you major in, Gerald?

GERALD

Municipal recreation. I also play football and run on the track team here at KENT.

MRS. SMITH

It's so nice to meet young people with manners. I really think Terri is going to like it here.

As they walk, Terri says nothing. She only has eyes for Gerald. Mr. Smith dejectedly trails after the three of them.

EXT. KENT STATE TRACK -- LATER

Gerald is practicing with Coach Raymond.

COACH RAYMOND

Gerald, the first five steps to the race are the most important. It's that initial momentum that gives you the edge you need to win.

Gerald reacts to the whistle blown by Coach Raymond, and takes off. The coach calls him back and they try it several times.

COACH RAYMOND (CONT'D)

Remember, the first five steps give you the edge.

INT. GERALD'S DORM ROOM. -- MORNING

Gerald sits dejectedly with a letter in his hand. There is a knock at the door. The door opens and Terri enters. She can sense Gerald's stress.

TERRI

Hi Gerald. I just stopped by for a visit. What's wrong?

Gerald hands her the letter.

GERALD

I'm not doing so well with my academics. If I don't pull my grades up they won't let me play sports.

TERRI

Gerald, all you have to do is study. I can help you.

GERALD

How am I supposed to understand some olden day guy like Shakespeare?

Terri picks up an english book and opens it.

TERRI

You can do this. Come on Gerald, let's go over Romeo and Juliet.

Gerald reluctantly picks up a pen and prepares to work with Terri.

INT. KENT STATE TRAINING ROOM -- AFTERNOON

Gerald is on a stationary bike and is sweating bullets. Coach Raymond looks on.

COACH RAYMOND

We'll attack your conditioning with the bike and....

EXT. RUGGED OUT DOOR TRAILS -- MORNING-MEDIUM RAIN

Gerald is running through rough trails, while Coach Raymond paces him.

COACH RAYMOND

These trails help build up your endurance. They're not uniform, so it forces the body to work harder at different intervals.

Gerald's sweat has totally soaked through his workout gear.

While running through a rough area he almost slips on a rock, but keeps his balance, and runs on.

INT. KENT STATE LIBRARY-- DAY

Terri is tutoring Gerald. She is very serious, until Gerald starts to make faces at her. She tries to suppress a smile, but ultimately ends up laughing out loud with Gerald. Gerald puts his hand on Terri's hand. They share an intimate moment together, before she slowly pulls her hand away from him and opens another book.

INT. KENT STATE LOCKER ROOM -- SEVERAL MONTHS LATER

Gerald walks back from the showers to his locker. His body is lean and cut. Coach Raymond walks up to him as Gerald is getting dressed.

COACH RAYMOND

Great race Tink! A new national record.

GERALD

Yeah, I got a great start, coach, I knew I was going to win. Spook Murphy must be turning over in his grave.

Gerald shares a hearty laugh with Coach Raymond.

COACH RAYMOND

You're looking good out there, TINK. How is your leg holding up?

GERALD

Everything's feeling good, coach. I think the extra training has paid off.

COACH RAYMOND

Next week we put the pedal to the metal. This is what we've been waiting for.

GERALD

The U.S. Track and Field invitational! I hope I'm ready.

COACH RAYMOND

Hey, Gerald, we took extra care in bringing you back, and you have six event wins under your belt for the season. Relax. You're ready.

Coach Raymond looks at Gerald with a mischievous grin.

COACH RAYMOND (CONT'D)

By the way, I have a little surprise for you.

The Coach exits the locker room, leaving Gerald curious.

INT. GERALD'S DORM ROOM KENT STATE -- EVENING LATER

Gerald is being tutored by Terri. They are sitting on the bed with some open books.

TERRI

That is very good, Gerald. Your punctuation has gotten much better.

GERALD

My grades have gone from B's and  
C's, to almost all A'S.

As Terri closes a book, a pencil falls off the bed. She picks it up and hands it to Gerald. He takes the pencil, but keeps hold of her hand.

GERALD (CONT'D)

Terri, we've known each other for  
two months now. How come you don't  
call me TINK, or by my nickname?  
Yamaha?

TERRI

I don't know. I'll call you that if  
you want me to.

GERALD

Terri, there's a lot of things I  
want.

Terri blushes and toys with Gerald's hands.

TERRI

And what might those thing be?

GERALD

Well, I want good grades.... I want  
to win track meets, and  
I....want...you.

There is a lull, in the conversation. They look lovingly into each other's eyes as Gerald moves in for the kiss.

TERRI

I want to be part of your life. But  
I need a real relationship, with  
commitment.

Gerald is momentarily flustered.

GERALD

My commitment is to track and  
football.

Terri is hurt by his words and draws away from him.

GERALD (CONT'D)

Terri, I want you to know...You are  
no flash you are the pan.....

Gerald takes her hand and places it over his heart.

GERALD (CONT'D)

.....You're more then part of my  
life. You're part of my heart. I  
want you to be my girl. My only girl.

They kiss again passionately. Gerald pushes the books and papers off the bed and lays down with her. They gently kiss and embrace.

EXT. U.S. TRACK AND FIELD INVITATIONAL-- MORNING

Gerald is warming up on the field with the rest of the KENT STATE team. The twenty top schools from out of five hundred are invited to compete. The other teams are also on the field. The spectator stands are overflowing their capacity.

The air crackles with an electric anticipation.

BESSIE-VO

Gerald had worked hard to rebuild his injured leg, and he was ready to compete. His confidence had returned. He was about to show what determination and hard work was all about.

EXT. MID SOUTH COLISEUM-- MOMENTS LATER

Gerald exits through a tunnel entrance and hears a familiar voice. He turns to see Bessie, Grandpa Willie, Larry Wright, Doug Raymond, and Joyce.

BESSIE

Gerald, is your head so big you can't give your mamma a hug?

COACH RAYMOND

I told you I had a surprise, Gerald.

Gerald is completely taken by surprise. Gerald goes to hug Bessie, Grandpa Willie, then Joyce, and finally Larry Wright.

Their reunion is cut short when the loud speakers announce..

ANNOUNCER-VO

Will the runners for the Fifty yard dash please report to the officials.

GERALD

That's me. I have to go.

Grandpa Willie has a coughing fit for a few seconds. Gerald looks concerned and starts for him. Grandpa Willie waves him off.

GRANPA WILLIE

I'm fine. Just go out there and make us proud.

As Gerald kisses his mother goodbye, she whispers in his ear.

BESSIE

Gerald, I know how much you want this. Go out there and be the best you can be....For yourself.

Gerald smiles at her and nods. He waves goodbye and heads for the race.

EXT. MID SOUTH COLISEUM TRACK -- CONTINUOUS

Gerald is on the starting line for the fifty yard dash.

As the gun goes off, Gerald takes off ahead of the pack (the first five steps are in slow motion). His lead is immediate and insurmountable. Gerald nears the finish line, and the spectators in the stands roar their approval.

Gerald breaks the tape and jumps high in the air with his hands held high in victory. The other runners finish in a pack, split seconds later.

Bessie, Grandpa Willie, Larry, and Joyce are cheering in the stands. Grandpa Willie's coughing increases with the exertion of his cheering. Bessie pats his back and looks concerned.

ANNOUNCER-VO

We have a new World Record. In the fifty yard dash. Gerald Tinker, from KENT STATE, has broken the World record. This is amazing. The record was set back in 1941, by Bill Atwell. This is history folks, a new world record!

ANGLE ON -THE WHOLE STADIUM- THERE IS PANDEMONIUM AND CELEBRATION.

INT. LOCKER ROOM -- LATE

Gerald is sitting at his locker. He takes his good luck medal from the locker kisses it and puts the medal in his pocket. Doug Raymond enters with two official looking men.

COACH RAYMOND

Gerald, these two gentleman would like to have a word with you.

Gerald stands up.

OFFICIAL #1

Gerald, you're a very gifted athlete. You showed world class speed.

OFFICIAL #2

Yes, sir, your country could use someone with your kind of speed.



GERALD

My country?

COACH RAYMOND

These gentlemen represent the U.S.  
Olympic track team.

OFFICIAL #1

Gerald, we would love for you to  
come to the trials for the U.S. track  
athletes.

OFFICIAL #2

With your speed, we would have a  
great chance in the 4x4 relay.

OFFICIAL #1

Not to mention the 100 or 200 yard  
dash.

Gerald's mouth is open.

COACH RAYMOND

Well? What do you say, Gerald?

Gerald's mouth goes from shock to a broad smile.

GERALD

Just tell me when and where. I'm  
ready yesterday.

They all shake hands and discuss details.

EXT. OLYMPIC TRIALS- TRACK STADIUM -- MORNING

Gerald is walking towards DOUG RAYMOND, when TERRI, runs up  
and jumps into his arms. They kiss.

TERRI

Gerald I can't believe I'm really  
here with you. I am so happy to see  
you.

Terri is love struck and holds onto his arm. He is happy to  
see her, but a little embarrassed as his coach walks up to  
him.

COACH RAYMOND

Gerald, your first heat is in about  
twenty minutes. You have the outside  
lane.

GERALD

Thanks, coach.

COACH RAYMOND

Who might this be?

The coach struggles to suppress a smile.

GERALD

Ahhh, coach, this is Terri Smith.  
She's...well.

Terri pulls on Gerald's arm.

GERALD (CONT'D)

Terri's my girl, coach. Terri Smith,  
this is my track coach, Doug Raymond.

Terri and the coach size each other up.

COACH RAYMOND

Well, this must be the best kept  
secret at Kent State! Nice to meet  
you, Terri.

GERALD

Terri is a Special Education major  
at Kent.

TERRI

I've been helping Gerald. He's been  
getting much better grades.

Terri gives Gerald a loving look.

GERALD

She helped me with my Math and English  
classes, Coach.

COACH RAYMOND

That's great, Tink. It was really  
nice to meet you, Terri, and I hope  
Gerald lets us see more of you.

Terri gives him a coy smile.

TERRI

I'll let you get ready, Gerald.  
Good Luck! Nice to meet you Coach  
Raymond.

Terri kisses Gerald goodbye, and walks away.

COACH RAYMOND

Nice girl, TINK.

Gerald is not so sure.

GERALD

Don't encourage her, coach.

COACH RAYMOND

Why not? She seems like a nice girl.  
(MORE)

COACH RAYMOND (CONT'D)

Cute, smart. What's the matter?  
You think she's too good for you?

GERALD

No. it's not that. I just think she  
needs too much commitment. I really  
like her, but I need to focus on my  
training. She doesn't understand  
that.

COACH RAYMOND

Commitment can be a good thing, TINK,  
if it's the right person.

GERALD

Right person, coach, WRONG time!  
All I want is a gold medal.

COACH RAYMOND

And after the Gold?

Gerald has a cat like grin and starts to stretch.

GERALD

I've got to focus on the tasks at  
hand.

EXT. OLYMPIC TRIALS-100 METERS -- AFTERNOON

Gerald awaits the starter's pistol. As the gun goes off, he  
stumbles. Gerald loses precious time in getting into gear.

The Camera pans down to his athletic shoes. Gerald's feet,  
in five steps, catch up to the other runners. In a tight  
race, Gerald nips the leader at the finish line to win the  
race.

INT. TRACK SIDELINES OLYMPIC TRIALS--AFTERNOON

Terri is on the sidelines waiting for the race to start.

INT. OLYMPIC TRACK TRIALS -LATER -- AFTERNOON

Gerald is running in the 100 yard dash. He is leading. He  
feels the presence of some other runners behind him and turns  
slightly to take a peek to see where they are. Three other  
runners pass him by. He is FOURTH crossing the finish line.

As he slows down, Gerald is angry and demoralized.

BESSIE-VO

Gerald had qualified to be on the  
Olympic team. Unfortunately, he  
would only be assigned to run the  
4x4 relay. He would be an alternate  
in the 100 meter event.

(MORE)

BESSIE-VO (CONT'D)

His cousin, Larry Black, also made the team. It would be a family affair. All Gerald had to do was focus on his dream.

INT. DINER KENT STATE- EVENING-

Gerald and Terri are eating a burger together, enjoying each other's company. Gerald starts to drift off.

TERRI

You must be so excited. You're going to the Olympic games! Only the best of the best go. Oh, Yamaha, I'm so proud of you.

Gerald has a sour look on his face.

TERRI (CONT'D)

What's wrong, baby? You don't look happy.

GERALD

I took a peep.

TERRI

You took a what?

GERALD

A peep. I turned around to take a look, and they beat me. I let them beat me.

TERRI

Yamaha, it's all right. You're still going.

GERALD

Yeah, but I would have qualified for the hundred meter event. If I didn't take that one little look.

They hold hands without saying anything.....

TERRI

I hope when you get back, we'll still be together....Maybe I could come visit you while you're training.

GERALD

Terri, I'm going to be in New Brunswick, MAINE. The whole U.S. Olympic delegation will be there. I don't Boudin College has any spare rooms.

TERRI

I just want you to know that I'm there for you if you need me.

GERALD

I know that, Terri.

(beat)

But I have a lot of training to get in. We only have two months to get ready. I need to concentrate.

Terri pulls his hand closer to her.

TERRI

If there is anything I can do for you, I would like to help. Can't we see other while you train?...Or is there someone else?

GERALD

That's crazy. There's nobody else. I just need to focus. Our time will come later.

TERRI

I hope there is a later. I see the way all the girls on campus look at you. I just don't feel very secure anymore. There must be something I can do to help you. I just want to help you with this part of your life.

She buries her face in her hands and starts to cry.

TERRI (CONT'D)

I love you, Gerald, and I'm going to miss you.

GERALD

Look, it's not fair to you, the way things are.

Gerald stands up, throws some money on the table and prepares to leave.

GERALD (CONT'D)

I really appreciate that you have been there for me when I needed somebody.... I feel a lot for you.....There has never been any woman, besides my mother in my life that just wanted me for who I was.

Gerald starts to choke up. He fights his emotions.

GERALD (CONT'D)

But right now, I only have time.... or eyes, for the GOLD MEDAL.

Gerald kisses her on the cheek and walks out, as she continues to sob.

BESSIE-VO

The only thing that Gerald had on his mind was hitting it, and I don't mean with the girls. He wanted to hit his stride, and hit it at high speed.

EXT. BOUDIN COLLEGE---US OLYMPIC TRAINING SITE -- AFTERNOON

Gerald is stretching with other athletes on the track team.

There are various athletes using the javelin, some are doing laps, others stretch or mingle. The track coach is lecturing.

OLYMPIC COACH

Remember, during your closing kick, posture should be straight up and down. You'll lose speed if you lean too far forward. The body cannot propel itself at the pinnacle of its performance if your form is bad... And don't look back!

He looks at Gerald who drops his head.

OLYMPIC COACH (CONT'D)

Use your peripheral vision. The minute you turn your head, you'll lose the race.

Gerald nods in agreement.

OLYMPIC COACH (CONT'D)

Let's talk about the Olympic village.

The coach is holding a map of the olympic village.

OLYMPIC COACH (CONT'D)

Our team will be staying right in the middle of the compound. The Olympic committee encourages interaction between athletes. So feel free to mingle. Get to know some, other country's competitors. That's what it's all about.

Gerald and the team disperse in different directions.

BESSIE-VO

They wanted interaction, but not the kind they were going to get. These Olympic's would be famous for more than the breaking of records.

(MORE)

BESSIE-VO (CONT'D)

It was the breaking of so many hearts  
that would live on in the minds of  
generations to come.

INT. BOUDIN COLLEGE GYM WEIGHTS ROOM. -- EVENING

Gerald is doing burn out reps with his arms. His cousin LARRY BLACK enters and joins him.

BLACK

Yamaha, we got the same room  
assignments! We be bad!

Gerald continues to work out as they talk.

GERALD

They could put me on the roof, don't  
matter. I'm coming home with a Gold  
Medal.

BLACK

Them German babes are fine, and they  
like brothers too! Maybe we'll have  
time to make the scene and score?

Gerald puts his weights down and wipes the sweat from his brow.

GERALD

Larry, let me make this clear. I  
don't care about chasing woman, I  
don't care about partying, I don't  
care if I never see anything but the  
stadium and the locker room. All I  
want is a Gold Medal. Bob Hayes once  
told me when I was a boy, "You have  
to really want it bad to win."

Gerald picks up his weights again and starts his reps.

GERALD (CONT'D)

Well, that's my dream, and... I want  
it real bad!

Larry looks at Gerald and shuts up. He starts to work harder.

INT. BOUDIN COLLEGE TRACK FIELD -- MORNING

Gerald has just finished some laps. He is breathing hard and sweating. He starts to stretch as Larry comes running up to him with the Olympic Track coach.

BLACK

Yamaha! Hold it up a minute.

OLYMPIC COACH

Gerald, I have some bad news. I thought since Larry was your cousin, it would be better if he told you.

The coach backs off and walks away.

BLACK

Our Grand daddy is gone, man.

GERALD

What?

BLACK

Our Grand daddy passed away last night.

Your mamma called a little while ago. The funeral's tomorrow. I don't think your mom is taking it so good.

Gerald stops stretching. He starts to slowly walk away.

BLACK (CONT'D)

Yamaha, where you going?

Gerald continues to walk. Larry yells after him.

BLACK (CONT'D)

YAMAHA, WHAT YOU GOING TO DO? We got a twelve o'clock meeting.

EXT. CEMETERY WILLIE POWELL'S FUNERAL-NEXT DAY -- AFTERNOON

The funeral eulogy has just finished. A light rain is falling as people disperse. Bessie is helped to a waiting car by friends and family members. Gerald remains forlornly at the at the open grave site. He is deep in thought as Joyce approaches him.

JOYCE

Hey bro.... it was nice of you to come.

Gerald acknowledges her with a nod and continues to stare at the grave site.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

I know it must be hard for you.

GERALD

Harder than anyone will ever know. He was like my father.

There is a silence between them, as Gerald stares off into space.



GERALD (CONT'D)

Grandpa was a good man. A strong  
black man born in hard times. I'll  
miss him.

Gerald trembles and fights back a tear. He wipes away the  
misting in his eyes.

JOYCE

How long you staying for? I know you  
have to get back to your training.

Gerald is silent.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

How's it going up there for you?

GERALD

It's going OK, but I don't know when  
I'm going back.

JOYCE

What? What are you talking about?  
You trained your whole life for this.  
If you don't go back you won't be  
ready in time to compete in the  
Olympic games.

Gerald throws a rose on the grave and turns to walk away.

Joyce grabs his arm and confronts him.

GERALD

Mamma needs me now. She's pretty  
broke up over this and I think that  
I should be here for her.

JOYCE

But what about the Olympic's?

Gerald breaks away from her grasp.

GERALD

What about them? My family needs me,  
and they come first. Daddy didn't  
even show up. Somebody has got to do  
the right thing...I guess it's me.

Gerald turns and starts to walk away.

JOYCE

Gerald, you can't do this. You have  
to go back.

Gerald stops and turns back to her.

GERALD

All I HAVE to do is black and die.  
There is nothing more important than  
my family!

Joyce looks at him with tears in her eyes.

JOYCE

Gerald, I know how important the  
Olympic's are to you. Don't throw  
it all away. You have worked so hard  
to get where you are. Everyone in  
Coconut Grove, Coral Gables, even in  
Miami is counting on you.

GERALD

They can count all they want, Mamma  
needs me here NOW.

JOYCE

You told me that the family would be  
there for me. Well I'm here for the  
family.

Gerald stares at her, not comprehending.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

It's my time to step up, Gerald. I  
can take care of mamma. I want to  
do the right thing. I need to do  
this. For the family, and for me.

GERALD

I don't know, Joyce.

JOYCE

And our Mamma? The best tonic she  
could get is a trip away from here.

The Mayor even came by our house and set her and Larry's Mom  
up with plane tickets and hotels all over Germany.

GERALD

Joyce, what are you talking about?

JOYCE

Since you've left for training, the  
whole town has gone crazy with  
excitement. Both you and Larry on  
the same team. It's never been done  
in the U.S. before. The newspapers  
are going WILD with stories about  
"The Family of Gold" and "The Cousins  
Who Are Making History"... You will  
break mamma's heart if you don't go  
back.

Gerald is speechless.

GERALD  
 (disbelief)  
 I didn't know anything about this.  
 No one said anything.

JOYCE  
 There is one more reason you need to  
 go back and finish your training.

GERALD  
 What's that?

JOYCE  
 You need to do it for me.... Before  
 you left for MEMPHIS, I was so screwed  
 up. If it wasn't for you, I never  
 would have... cleaned up. I'm clean  
 now because of you, Gerald. I'll  
 never be able to be what I was. But  
 you can be the best you can be...For  
 both of us.

Gerald is in awe of what she just told him.

JOYCE (CONT'D)  
 Mamma is a survivor. She will get  
 by. We all need you to go back,  
 Gerald. Because we live through  
 YOUR dream.

Gerald lets out a long sigh, opens his arms and Joyce fills  
 his embrace. He closes his eyes and says....

GERALD  
 I can and I will. For all of us.

EXT. MUNICH AIRPORT - SEPT '72 -- MORNING

A plane taxis to an appropriate spot. A stair ramp is brought  
 to the plane door. The U.S. Team deplanes. Gerald is in the  
 middle of the athletes. They are all dressed in USA attire.

EXT. OLYMPIC COMPOUND MUNICH -- AFTERNOON

Gerald and his cousin Larry are walking around the compound.

Other athletes are walking around in sweats, some have their  
 country's local attire on as well. Two Arabs ABDULH and FAHAD,  
 greet them as they pass.

ARAB #1  
 Salaam Alecum.

GERALD  
 Alecum Salaam Gerald waves to them  
 and smiles.

They walk on.

GERALD (CONT'D)

This is great. So many TOP athletes  
from around the world are here.

Some women from the Swedish swim team pass them and smile.

BLACK

Yeah, and some of the finest woman  
in the world are here too!

Gerald gives him a look that could kill.

GERALD

I told you about that, Larry. Wait  
until after we score!

Larry continues to pursue the female sights.

BLACK

Oh, we're going to score all right,  
no doubt about that! By the way how  
did you know how to answer that Arab  
guy?

GERALD

I read the culture briefs they gave  
us.

BLACK

You read that stuff? I thought it  
only told you what food not to eat.

Gerald shakes his head at Larry. They continue to walk.

INT. GERALD'S ROOM OLYMPIC VILLAGE -- NIGHT

Gerald is wide awake. He looks over to Larry who is snoring  
like a buzz-saw. He gets up and goes out on the balcony in  
his boxers and T-shirt.

An Israeli athlete, JOSHUA, is directly across from him,  
forty yards away on the opposite balcony. An Israeli flag  
hangs from his balcony. He waves, and Gerald waves back.  
Gerald drifts off in thought.

EXT. OLYMPIC TRAINING GYM MUNICH --NEXT MORNING

Gerald and Larry are with several athletes of different  
countries. They are talking and laughing. Gerald and Larry,  
start to lift some light weights with Joshua the Israeli  
athlete Gerald waved to the night before.

GERALD

This is great! Everybody is here to  
compete but there's a common bond  
between us. It's like a United WORLD!

JOSHUA

Every athlete I have met here is really nice. All the problems we face in Israel are gone. No one cares what your religion is, or where you're from. It is like we are all family. We are living a dream to be here.

Gerald looks at him and smiles.

GERALD

I know what you mean.

BLACK

Yeah, everybody is cool. Didn't you say you had a sister?

Gerald gives Larry a dirty look. But Joshua laughs and says.

JOSHUA

Sure I have two. Take your pick. My big sister is tree hundred pounds and the other sister is a butcher. She is very good with meat!

Gerald and Joshua look at Larry and start laughing.

EXT. GERALD AND LARRY'S BALCONY OLYMPIC VILLAGE -- NIGHT

Gerald is on the balcony alone. He hold his childhood medal.

BESSIE-VO

Gerald was in awe that there was so much comradery among the athletes at the Olympic village. He felt a sense of peace, and serenity he had never felt before.

Gerald looks up to the stars.

GERALD

Thank you, for all you've done. Lord. I know that you help those who help themselves. Just let me be the best that I am capable of....and I will bring home what I came here for, my dream.

Gerald takes a deep breath and pockets his medal. After a pause he returns inside his room.

EXT. OLYMPIC TRACK TRIALS 4X4 RELAY -- AFTERNOON

Gerald awaits the hand off. He takes the baton and wins his section of the heat by five strides. His teammates celebrate with him as the field announcer speaks. The announcements are made in sequence, first English, then German, then Spanish.

## ANNOUNCER-VO

That is the last heat of the day,  
for the 4x4 relay. The American team  
has qualified for the finals.

The other teams that have qualified for the finals in this event, are the Russian team, the Polish team, East Germany, West Germany, France, Jamaica, and Italy.

EXT. GUARD SHACK, SERVICE ENTRANCE TO OLYMPIC VILLAGE. --

## LATER

A laundry truck pulls up to the guard shack. The occupants of the truck have company uniforms on. These are the same two ARABS Gerald had said hello to earlier. A guard steps out with a clipboard.

## GUARD

Aren't you fellows a little early?  
I don't have a pick up scheduled  
until tomorrow.

The guard looks at his clip board.

INT. LAUNDRY TRUCK -- CONTINUOUS

Inside the truck, Fahad in a laundry uniform on the passenger side, readies a hidden nine millimeter pistol, underneath a laundry bag near his side.

## ABDULH

Nobody told you? Some of the last load wouldn't fit on the truck, so we came back to get the rest. These games got us pretty busy.

## GUARD

Yeah, I know what you mean. Here's a temporary parking pass. This color is good for twenty minutes.

The guard smiles and gives him a pass waving the truck threw.

## ABDULH

Thanks a lot.

The barrier gate is raised. As they drive through, Fahad relaxes his hand on the pistol.

CAMERA REVEAL: HEAVILY ARMED COMMANDOS are in the rear of the laundry truck.

EXT. OLYMPIC VILLAGE -- MOMENTS LATER

Abdulh drives to the back of the ISRAELI COMPOUND and parks.

EXT. ISRAELI COMPOUND -- CONTINUOUS

Abdulh gets out and scouts out the entrance way. He gives the all clear to Fahad, who opens the back of the truck. The commandos spring out of the truck, wearing ski masks and Army Fatigues. They spread out, heavily laden with weapons and ammunition.

Abdulh hustles into the building and he waves for them to follow.

EXT. OLYMPIC TRACK 220 METER RACE -- CONTINUOUS

It is the end of the 220 race. Larry Black, finishes second and celebrates with Gerald and the rest of the American team.

INT. ISRAELI COMPOUND -- CONTINUOUS

The Terrorists kick open a door to the compound lounge. They use their weapons to intimidate athletes and coaches. They run room to room, rounding up all who are in the building.

Some of the terrorists take up defensive positions on the roof, others guard the terrified screaming hostages. JOSHUA protests and is beaten. Abdulh walks into the room and fires a shot to silence the screams. The terrorists tie up the Israeli hostages.

JOSHUA

My government will never let you get away with this.

ABDULH

Then we will all die! Bind and gag them, so they can not warn their friends. Shoot them if they move. Bring that one for me.

Abdulh points to Joshua with evil malice. Joshua is secured by Fahad.

FAHAD

There are so many infidels at these games, we should strike more targets.

ABDULH

NO! We are here for one purpose only. To free our brothers from Zionist jails. There will be time for other missions in the future, ALLAH willing.

Terrorist #2 runs into the room. He motions Abdulh to the window. They look below and see two security guards talking about the laundry truck.

ABDULH (CONT'D)

THIS IS IT! Tell the others to get ready. May Allah be with us!

EXT. MUNICH RESTAURANT

Larry, Gerald, and the track team are celebrating the team's wins of the day. Huge platters of food adorn the table. It is a festive occasion.

GERALD

I propose a toast to those who were  
victorious today,.....

Everyone applauds.

GERALD (CONT'D)

.....and to those of us who will be  
victorious tomorrow.

More applause.

GERALD (CONT'D)

Also to my cousin who turned on the  
jets, to get the Silver!

Hoots and hollers, people congratulate Larry.

INT. ISRAELI COMPOUND -- CONTINUOUS

Abduhl breaks a window with his machine gun. He lets a burst fly towards the guards. The guards dive for cover and crawl to nearby safety. They hide as they use their walkie-talkies.

EXT. ISRAELI COMPOUND -- CONTINUOUS

Abduhl continues to fire his machine gun out the window.

The security guards try to hide as they speak on their walkie-talkies.

GUARD

We are being shot at, in sector C.  
I don't know how many but...

Another burst of fire comes his way. He ducks.

GUARD (CONT'D)

There may be multiple shooters. We  
need back up now!

More security arrive. They try and take up defensive positions, but are fired upon by the well concealed commandos.

EXT. OLYMPIC CHECK POINT -- LATER

Gerald, Larry, and the U.S. Track Team are stopped at the check point. The track coach gathers them together.

GERALD

What's going on coach?



## OLYMPIC COACH

Listen up, a situation has come up at the village. Some hostages have been taken, and there are ongoing negotiations...No Americans are involved that we know of. THESE GENTLEMAN will escort us to our rooms, and will be there if we need any assistance.

The team sees a heavily armed contingent of German Special Forces. There is some panic among the team members. Gerald is in shock. The Commando Captain orders his platoon to take up flanking positions on either side of the delegation. Weapons ready, they lead the group to their compound. As they near their compound the police and military activity heightens.

## COMMANDO

I don't want you to be alarmed, everything is under control. Just stay in your rooms tonight, and you will be fine.

The group stops outside the American compound They can hear the commotion directly across the courtyard at the Israeli compound.

## EXT. ISRAELI COMPOUND OLYMPIC VILLAGE -- CONTINUOUS

The compound is now surrounded with all sorts of personnel.

Security, Police, and Plain Clothes Officers. Special Forces wearing body armor arrive and take up position. Abdulh appears on the roof. He has Joshua hostage with a gun to his head.

## ABDULH

We have the ISRAELI athletes. If you try to storm the building, we will kill them ALL. When our demands are met, we will free these hostages unharmed. Make no mistake, we will KILL them if you try use force against us.

He violently grabs Joshua's hair and drags him back from the edge of the roof. As Abdulh exits the roof, Fahad calls to him.

## FAHAD

They are on the phone in the office. They want to negotiate!

Abdulh claps his arm in kinship.

ABDULH

Check the hostages, and make sure  
the others keep watch for Zionist  
treachery.

Abdulh runs off to the office to negotiate.

EXT. AMERICAN COMPOUND-- CONTINUOUS

The commando captain ushers the team into the compound with  
urgency.

COMMANDO

Get me the Army's Special Response  
Team on the line.... We have the  
American track team. We'll get them  
in their compound, and lock it down.

Gerald is very concerned, as he passes the commando captain,  
he asks a question.

GERALD

Who is being held? Are they all right?

COMMANDO

It's the Israeli team. We don't know  
if there are any casualties as yet.  
Please hurry to your rooms.

Gerald's head is reeling, as he and his team are herded into  
the compound. The commando continues to issue orders to his  
team as the last of the team goes into the compound.

COMMANDO (CONT'D)

Double the security at all  
checkpoints. No one goes in or out.

INT. GERALD AND LARRY'S ROOM OLYMPIC VILLAGE -- MOMENTS LATER

Gerald and Larry lay on their beds with the light off. In  
the distance they can hear ABDULH yelling at the negotiators.

They feel the tension.

EXT. ISRAELI COMPOUND-BALCONY -- CONTINUOUS

Abdulh is negotiating with some officials, while holding a  
gun to a JOSHUA'S head.

ABDULH

You want these people to die? Because  
we will kill them.

He pushes the gun harder into Joshua's head.

ABDULH (CONT'D)

You want this one dead?  
(MORE)

ABDULH (CONT'D)

I WILL KILL HIM IN ONE HOUR if our demands are not met! We want our brothers released and a helicopter to take us to an International Airport. YOU HAVE ONE HOUR!

INT. GERALD AND LARRY'S OLYMPIC VILLAGE -- CONTINUOUS

Gerald is peeking out of the balcony window. He can see Abdulh holding Joshua with the gun to his head. Both athletes can hear what he says.

BLACK

Tink, get away from the window! That commando guy said to lie low.

Gerald sits down on his bed across from Larry.

GERALD

We came all this way, but it seems we haven't gone anywhere at all.

BLACK

What are you talking about, TINK?

GERALD

We came all the way from the lynch mobs of the U.S. for the peace and brotherhood of the Olympic world games. But hate doesn't know any country. Those guys who got Josh aren't any different than the Klan, or the next bully on the block. They use bullets instead of reason. I thought we could make a difference...I was wrong.

BLACK

AHHH, TINK, everything is going to be alright. They have five million army and police out there. These guys are going to give up in a heart beat.

Gerald looks at his watch.

GERALD

We'll see.

EXT. OUTSIDE GROUND FLOOR OF THE AMERICAN COMPOUND. -- CONT.

Several high ranking officials are in attendance discussing Abdulh's demands. Gerald and Larry overhear this conversation from their room.

NATO MAJOR

If we show any weakness at all, those athletes are as good as dead.

POLICE CAPTAIN

You can't just storm that compound. They have the whole Israeli team in there.

SPECIAL FORCES GENERAL

Our policy is not to negotiate with Terrorists. It only encourages them.

NATO MAJOR

As soon as they kill any hostages, I say we go in through the side and take them out.

They continue to discuss options.

INT. ISRAELI COMPOUND-ONE HOUR LATER

Abdulh checks his watch. He grabs Joshua who is blindfolded and drags him to the balcony.

ABDULH

Now we will show the Zionist pigs we mean business.

He stands behind Joshua and cocks his gun.

ABDULH (CONT'D)

Let the fighters of ALLAH prevail!

INT. GERALD AND LARRY'S ROOM OLYMPIC VILLAGE. -- CONT.

Gerald is looking out from his room and can see Joshua across the compound on the opposite with the gun to his head. He turns away as a shot rings out. The shot is followed by a full scale battle.

Gerald is horrified. He and Larry sit in the dark as gunfire and explosions rock the complex.

The light from the explosions make eerie patterns on the wall of their room. After two minutes of battle, there is quiet. Larry whispers to Gerald.

BLACK

I guess I was wrong. They didn't give up.

There is a pause between them.....

GERALD

Dead wrong, Larry. Dead wrong.

They sit in silence.

INT. GERALD AND LARRY'S ROOM OLYMPIC VILLAGE. --CONT.

They hear Abdulh shouting as they sit on their beds in the dark.

ABDULH-VO

Your treachery has cost you the lives of eleven of the ISRAELI athletes! You have butchered them, along with the soldiers you have sent. Your stupidity has killed them all! We are willing to die for our cause... If we don't have a helicopter in one hour we will kill the remaining hostages. You have one hour!

Gerald looks to Larry in the shadowed light of the room.

GERALD

They killed Josh, Larry. Killed him in cold blood.

Larry is speechless. Gerald sits against the wall and fights back tears.

GERALD (CONT'D)

I never missed home more than right now.

Both athletes sit in a dazed silence.

EXT. GERALD AND LARRY'S ROOM BALCONY-A LITTLE LATER

Various Army, Police, NATO and Special Forces commanders are setting up a small command post below Gerald's room. Gerald, LOOKS DOWN on the activities. He overhears their planning.

POLICE CAPTAIN

Spotters have confirmed at least twelve hostages are already dead, and we've lost five friendlies, with eleven wounded.

SF GENERAL

I say we give them the helicopter and play for time.....Let them take off, and divert them to a remote airfield.

NATO MAJOR

That could work out nicely. We'll put some assets on the ground, and pick them off when they land.

SF GENERAL

OK, call Rienstag, and get the Chopper.

(MORE)

SF GENERAL (CONT'D)

Put some snipers on the ground at the diversion airfield and let's pray this doesn't screw up. Move the athletes out of their rooms in the surrounding compounds just in case.

EXT. ROOF ISRAELI COMPOUND--TEN MINUETS LATER

Gerald watches from afar. ABDULH and the terrorist have separated the hostages into two groups on the roof. They use them as human shields. ABDULH hears the helicopter. He grabs Fahad's arm in anticipation.

ABDULH

They are sending the helicopter! We will not be visiting ALLAH TODAY!  
Get the team ready to go.

As the helicopter approaches, the Terrorists prepare to leave.

EXT. AMERICAN COMPOUND -- CONTINUOUS

The commando captain and his team, escort Gerald, Larry and the American team out of the compound.

INT. OLYMPIC COMPOUND LOUNGE AREA--MOMENTS LATER

The lounge is crowded with athletes from all nations. They are glued to the many televisions that are broadcasting a speech by GOLDA MIER. Gerald, Larry, and the American team look on. This could be from live footage, or...

GOLDA MIER

..... This is a sad day for ISRAEL. The pain of our nation has been felt by many other nations of the world. We thank you for your support in this crisis. Our athletes are soldiers and understand that they are at war. The German government has my authority to use whatever force is necessary to bring about an end to this terrible crisis. We regret the loss of life to the brave forces engaged in resolving the situation. Thank you for your prayers and support...

The screens in the room change back one by one to news anchors and reporters covering the story in different languages.

GERALD

I can't believe they are going to give up on their athletes.

LARRY

What do you mean, Tink?

GERALD

Those athletes trained their hearts out. For what? So their own country could walk out on them? They deserve better.

EXT. ROOF TOP ISRAELI COMPOUND -- MOMENTS LATER

The helicopter circles and lands on the roof. Fahad runs over and checks it out. When he is satisfied, he signals the others to board. THEY WALK TO THE HELICOPTER SURROUNDED BY THE LAST TEN HOSTAGES. They board without incident. The Helicopter takes off, and heads away from the compound.

INT. HELICOPTER IN FLIGHT. -- MOMENTS LATER

ABDULH holds a gun on the pilots, as he shouts instructions to them over the din of the chopper.

ABDULH

I WANT TO GO TO MUNICH INTERNATIONAL!

He is looking at the gauges in the cockpit.

PILOT

We have to make our approach from this direction. There is a lot of AIR TRAFFIC in the vicinity.

ABDULH

You had better be telling the truth or I will kill more hostages. Give me the radio now!

Abdulh takes the radio.

ABDULH (CONT'D)

We demand to have a 707 fueled and waiting. We will kill more hostages if you do not give us what we want.

INT. COMMAND POST OLYMPIC VILLAGE -- CONTINUOUS

The brass are all massed near a large speaker. ABDULH has just finished speaking.

SF GENERAL

Take out their leader in the air.

He's in the cockpit. Our ground snipers will have a clear shot at the diversion site!

The police Captain shakes his head.

POLICE CAPTAIN

If we go while they are in the air,  
everyone on board could get killed.

SF GENERAL

That's a chance their government is  
willing to take. Our spotters confirm  
twelve hostages got on the chopper.

The NATO MAJOR picks up a military phone.

NATO MAJOR

You have a green light to fire.  
Shoot To Kill. Clearance is  
authorized.

INT. HELICOPTER IN FLIGHT -- MOMENTS LATER

The helicopter flies towards an airfield. It approaches a  
smoke flare and hovers. Snipers are concealed at various  
locations near the landing site. ABDULH looks out the window  
confused.

ABDULH

Where are we? What part of the airport  
is this? Where is our 707?...

He starts to get very angry, pointing his gun at the pilots.  
The windshield shatters and Abdulh is thrown back.

EXT. HELICOPTER HOVERING OVER RIENSTAG AIRFIELD --

CONTINUOUS

The helicopter is being peppered  
with bullets. A bullet strikes a  
fuel line. The chopper wobbles  
slightly and explodes in a ball of  
flame. It drops like a stone.

Emergency, Fire and Army vehicles appear out of nowhere.

They swarm the burning wreck. A commando is on a military  
phone to his superiors. He watches the burning hulk in  
disbelief.

COMMANDO

General Sir? They're all gone... The  
chopper sir, it blew up. No one got  
out. No sir, there are no survivors.

INT. OLYMPIC VILLAGE GERALD AND LARRY'S ROOM -- LATE

Gerald is sitting on his bed with a blank stare. There is  
knock at the door. He does not answer. Another knock, and  
he still sits on the bed, unmoving.



GERALD

Go away. I don't want to talk to anybody.

The door opens slowly, and Bessie comes into the room.

BESSIE

Are you alright?.....How are you feeling, Gerald? Do you need anything?

Gerald doesn't say anything. Bessie sits on the bed next to him. She takes out a telegram, and tries to hand it to Gerald. He just holds it and stares out into space.

BESSIE (CONT'D)

You should read that telegram, It's from that nice girl from Kent State.

Bessie takes the telegram back from Gerald and reads it to him.

BESSIE-VO

Dear Yamaha. Congratulations on making the finals for the 4x4 relay. I know you are closer to your dream now than ever before. My heart and soul are with you there. Best of luck. Love and kisses Terri.

She puts the telegram down, and holds his hand.

BESSIE

Gerald, what's the matter? Larry says you don't want to run tomorrow.

Gerald speaks in a whisper.

GERALD

They're all gone...When those athletes died, a part of me went with them.

Gerald closes his eyes and struggles to continue.

GERALD (CONT'D)

I lost something.

BESSIE

You can't lose what you have inside, Gerald. Don't let this beat you.

Gerald opens his eyes.

Bessie takes both of Gerald's hands and summons up all her strength. Gerald opens his eyes.

BESSIE (CONT'D)

Those people who lost their lives  
would want you to be the best you  
could be...Maybe you can full fill  
your dream...and their's.

Bessie leans over and kisses Gerald on the forehead. She  
stands up to leave.

BESSIE (CONT'D)

Your family will stand behind you no  
matter what you decide. Get some  
rest.

Bessie exits and turns out the light. Gerald sits on the bed  
in the dark, deep in thought.

INT. GERALD AND LARRY'S ROOM OLYMPIC VILLAGE. -- MORNING

It is early morning. Gerald is still sitting on his bed,  
staring out in space. Larry enters.

BLACK

Tink, they're having a big mass in  
about twenty minuets. You coming?

GERALD

No.

BLACK

Come on, Tink, the Olympic Committee  
canceled all the events for today.  
Everyone is going, and there's a  
delegation meeting after.

GERALD

Well I'm not. I'll do my praying on  
my own.

Gerald is still holding his medal. He feels it's weight in  
his the palm of his hand, pauses and makes a well thrown  
toss into the trash basket in the corner of the room.

BLACK

Your not the only one hurting. The  
whole world is grieving. Why the  
hell did you come over here if you  
didn't want to fight for something?

Larry angrily exits. Gerald stands up and goes to the balcony.  
He looks out and sees the ISRAELI COMPOUND across the way.  
The balcony has been blackened by explosives and pocked marked  
by gun fire. Gerald sits down he lets out a long sigh.  
Closing his eyes he begins to pray.

GERALD

Dear God....

INT. OLYMPIC LOUNGE -- A LITTLE LATER

Gerald is alone in the lounge. All the TV's are on and reporters in different languages comment on the tragedy, and the unified prayers that are ongoing. The coverage could be archive footage.

INT. OLYMPIC COMPOUND MEETING ROOM -- LATE

Gerald is standing at the back of the room. His head is bowed. All the American athletes are together. The head of the U.S. Delegation speaks.

US OFFICIAL

This has been a terrible tragedy.  
But the games will go on. Anyone  
who feels they don't want to continue  
or is unable to continue can leave.  
We have made special arrangements,  
to get those of you who want  
transportation...home.

The whole room is still.

US OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

There is no shame in leaving. I  
know dreams die hard, but it may be  
better to leave than stay and suffer  
emotionally.

Two woman athletes get up and walk out, one is crying. As the meeting breaks up,

US OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

That's about it. See my assistant to  
make arrangements to go home.

Gerald begins to make his way to the door exit in the front of the room, we can hear his HEARTBEAT. It intensifies in sound. Gerald is halfway to the door when he hallucinates a vision of grandpa Willie sitting among the athletes. Willie holds out Gerald's worn childhood gold medal.

Gerald continues on and see Joshua sitting among the athletes, he to holds out Gerald's old medal. Gerald is confused at what he thought he saw. He turns around to check and they are not really there.

Making his way to the exit, Gerald's heartbeat becomes a deafening roar. Before he is able to walk out Gerald hears Larry call out to him.

BLACK

Tink, you forgot something.

Larry tosses Gerald's old medal high in the air. The medal sparkles as it spins in slow motion. Gerald catches it in his open palm and the heavy heartbeat sound stops.

**INSERT:** Gerald's palm holds the shiny medal.

Gerald closes his fingers around the medal tightly. Gerald eyes now beam a steely determination. His fire has returned. His gaze meets Larry's. Their eyes lock.

GERALD

Ok, cus, let's take care of some business.

BLACK

You the man, Tink. It's time to score.

They high five and embrace.

EXT. OLYMPIC TRACK WARM UP SESSION -- LATER

Gerald is warming up. The track coach walks up to him.

OLYMPIC COACH

You alright, Tink? Larry told me you were pretty upset.

GERALD

I'm OK, coach. Just had to get my bearings back.

OLYMPIC COACH

I just want to make sure that you can run the race tomorrow.

Gerald stops his warm up and looks him dead in the eye.

GERALD

Coach, I gave up a lot to come here. A semester at school, my girlfriend, and personal life, I came here for one reason and one reason only. I came here to win a gold medal!

The coach nods his head in understanding.

OLYMPIC COACH

Gerald, it looks like you got your fire back. Could you give the guys a pep talk before the race?

GERALD

Sure thing coach.

EXT. OLYMPIC TRACK WARM UP SESSION -- NEXT DAY -- MORNING

Gerald is warming up with the 4x4 relay team, Larry Black, Eddie Hart and Robert Taylor.

BLACK

That service was really sad yesterday.

GERALD

Put that out of your mind. Larry  
what did I tell you we came for?

BLACK

Gold Medal.

GERALD

That's *right*. We're here to win a  
GOLD. Forget the politics. I  
believe Joshua and the Israeli team  
would have wanted us to compete. *No  
matter what.*

Tinker motions for a power-hand shake and they all put their  
fists in. He revs them up.

GERALD (CONT'D)

Who are we?

GROUP

USA!

GERALD

Who trained the hardest?

GROUP

USA!

GERALD

Who's gonna win?

GROUP

USA!

GERALD

Who own's the gold?

GROUP

USA! USA! USA! USAAAAAAAAA!

Exhilarated, the team jumps up and down high five-ing!

EXT. OLYMPIC 4X4 RELAY FINALS -- AFTERNOON

The athletes are all lined up in their starting positions.

The camera works its way from the runners in the first  
position, along to the second position and so on to the fourth  
leg runners. The camera settles on Gerald. There is sweat  
on his brow, as he awaits the start of the race and his  
eventual hand off.

The starter's gun goes off, and the runners take off, Gerald's  
cousin, Larry, has the first leg for the American team.

ANGLE ON GERALD AS WE HEAR WHAT'S IN HIS MIND:

## MIND THOUGHTS-GERALD

**Spook Murphy**, - "You're in my little pond. **Bob Hayes** - "You've got to want it bad!" **Spook Murphy**, - "Think of the team Tink, the team." **Grandpa Willie**, - "This boy is part greyhound."

The second runner (Robert Taylor American team) gets a hand off. The number two runner is now running.

## MIND THOUGHTS-GERALD (CONT'D)

**Joyce**, - "We live our dreams through you." **Spook Murphy**, - "It would be a shame to lose your scholarship." **Olympic Official**, - "Yes, sir, your country could sure use an athlete with your speed." **Bessie**, - "You have to stop feeling sorry for yourself". **Joshua**, - "It's like living a dream".

Gerald tenses up. The thoughts in his mind are coming faster and starting to overlap.

## MIND THOUGHTS-GERALD (CONT'D)

**Coach Raymond**, - "The first five steps are the most important." **Larry Wright**, - "If you tear your hamie you'll be out for the season." **Protester**, - "Can you say you're free?" **Bessie**, - "Look in your heart for your inner strength."

The second runner is approaching Gerald's third position. A drop of sweat falls from Gerald's brow (in slow motion) as he awaits the baton. The camera follows as the drop falls towards the ground.

## MIND THOUGHTS-GERALD (CONT'D)

**Bessie**, - "Gerald, you WILL be the best you can be."

As the drop hits the ground it explodes, Gerald's hand takes the baton from the hand off, and he is launched like a rocket.

(REAL FOOTAGE)

ANGLE ON GERALD FROM ABOVE

Gerald's lead is increasing. He almost seems superhuman. As he passes the baton to teammate (Eddie Hart), he has a five stride lead.

## MIND THOUGHTS-GERALD (CONT'D)

**Bessie**, - "One day your time will come."

Gerald celebrates with arms held high. The Last American runner finishes with a five stride lead. The team jumps for joy together.

EXT. OLYMPIC STADIUM -- U.S TRACK TEAM CELEBRATION - INTERCUT -  
BESSIE IN THE SANDS

BESSIE

Thank you, Lord, you have given my  
boy wings for his feet. Thank you,  
Jesus!

She turns to hug Larry's mother- MAMIE- who is also crying.

INT. TERRI SMITHS DORM ROOM KENT STATE.-CONTINUOUS

Terri is clutching a picture of Gerald, watching television and crying.

TERRI

Yamaha, I am so proud of you.....

EXT. JACK DUNN'S FAMOUS STEAK HOUSE - FLORIDA

Cho-Cho and Kenny are watching TV, with a hundred other locals. They are yelling and screaming and congratulating each other.

CHO-CHO

YAMAHA and LARRY!

KENNY

Fastest brothers on the block!

They high five each other and slug down shots.

INT. KENT STATE TRACK OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Coach Raymond is high fiv-ing it with his staff.

COACH RAYMOND

I told him, it's those first five  
steps.

INT. SPOOK MURPHY'S OFFICE MEMPHIS STATE -- CONTINUOUS

Spook Murphy is sitting at his desk. The TV is on and his mouth is open. There is a crushed cigar in his hand.

SPOOK MURPHY

We sure could have used that boy.

EXT. OLYMPIC MEDAL PODIUM -- LATE

The athletes are lined up, receiving their medals. The American anthem is playing. Gerald receives his medal last.

As the ribbon is placed around his neck, a lone tear rolls down his cheek. The anthem finishes, and the spectators cheer.

BESSIE-VO

Gerald had finally tasted the dream he so desperately longed for. THE GOLD MEDAL. He had set a record for the fastest third leg run at an Olympic game. He had a record and he had his self respect. Gerald had overcome all the obstacles that had blocked his path. He was going home fulfilled.

INT. BESSIE'S HOME- GUEST BEDROOM -NIGHT

Bessie is tucking Jimmy into bed.

JIMMY

That's a great story. But I don't understand how winning the gold medal helped get Uncle Gerald some cash to live better than before. Did he sell the Gold Medal?

Bessie sits on the bed and pets Jimmy's hair.

BESSIE

Winning that Gold Medal was only a part of his dream. Let's go to the park tomorrow morning, and I will tell you the rest of the story.

Bessie kisses Jimmy good night, and turns out the light. He falls asleep immediately. She lingers a moment before she leaves.

P.O.V. KENNEDY AIRPORT. -- MORNING

A plane has arrived, and a stair ramp is pushed to the door.

There is a crowd of well wishing fans and reporters waiting for the athlete heroes. Gerald and Larry step off the plane. to cheers and TV coverage. As they step on the tarmac, Gerald kneels down and kisses the ground.

BESSIE-VO

When Gerald and Larry came back home, they were given the keys to the city of Miami. Gerald graduated from Kent State, Gerald became the number one draft pick for the ATLANTA FALCONS football team.

INT. ATLANTA FALCONS PRESIDENT'S OFFICE -- AFTERNOON

Gerald is seated in front of the Presidents desk with his lawyer.



The owner nods to the President and he passes a check to Gerald. Gerald's eyes light up. He smiles and shakes hands with The President, Owner, and Head Coach.

EXT. BESSIE'S NEW HOME- VIRRICK POOL PARK FLORIDA

Gerald drives up to a home with Bessie in a top of the line El Dorado. They get out. The home is brand new. Bessie is overwhelmed by emotion. She screams, laughs, and hugs Gerald, at the same time.

BESSIE-VO

When we drove up to my new home, it was one of the happiest days of my life. Gerald had made one of MY dreams come true. My boy, my greald, my baby...

Gerald hands her the keys and they go inside.

EXT. GRAND AVE PARK -- MORNING

Bessie and Jimmy are sitting in the park. A recreation counselor is lining some boys up for a race. They are about Jimmy's age. Bessie waves to the counselor, who waves back to her.

BESSIE

This is where it all began for Gerald. Those Boys are just abut the same age as he was when he started in the park program.

JIMMY

You mean run with them, right now?

Jimmy looks at her skeptically. Gerald Tinker walks over and gives his mother a kiss.

GERALD

This is the boy? Hi Jimmy. I'm Bessie's son Gerald Tinker.

Gerald sticks his hand out and shakes Jimmy's hand.

GERALD (CONT'D)

You ready to run with these boys?

JIMMY

Right here, right now?

GERALD

Mmm-hmm, right here, right now...

Gerald opens a hard plastic case and pulls out his Olympic gold medal, showing it to a wide eyed Jimmy.

GERALD (CONT'D)

...If you want to get one of these.

BESSIE

Your dream has to start somewhere.

Jimmy starts to walk over to the boys. He stops, turns around and looks back at Bessie and Tinker. Tinker winks at him.

Jimmy walks over to the line of boys. The counselor waves him to an end position. Some of the boys snicker at him because of his street clothes.

BOY #1

Who he think he is? He don't even have shorts.

BOY #2

Maybe he's afraid to show his legs.

More snickers.

BOY #1

We'll beat him so bad, his own mamma won't want him.

Jimmy's jaw tightens as the camera closes in on his eyes.

We hear the starter's whistle. Jimmy's eyes match an overlay of Gerald's eyes from the beginning of the film. As he runs in slow motion, he leads the pack. We cross fade from Jimmy running to Gerald running as a young boy.

Gerald is racing with Joyce. They are running hard in slow motion. They are running to a smiling Bessie. Joyce and Gerald reach Bessie at the same time. They all hug.....

FREEZE ON THEIR EMBRACE. FADE TO BLACK.

BESSIE-VO

Gerald was a fine boy, who became a very special Man. A man who fulfilled his dream.....but ohhhhh, how I loved that boy.

THE END

**Gerald Tinker's records for national titles and world records scroll over pictures of Gerald in his Atlanta Falcons and Greenbay Packers uniforms. Other pictures include the Gerald at the Olympic games and various Track meets.**