

FINDING HEART

FADE IN:

INT/EXT. BAKERSFIELD, CA - SUNRISE

A tiny school bus drives by majestic mountains. The DRIVER yawns, and a PHOTOGRAPHER tinkers with his camera. Coach Lester, 50s, a dignified black man, stares blankly.

WILLIAM HEART 18, is intense and patient. He looks out the window.

FLASHBACK:

INT. MUSIC CLASSROOM - NIGHT

A younger William, 13, struggles with a locked filing cabinet. He uses a screwdriver and tries to force a drawer open. The screwdriver BREAKS. REGGIE 13, and BOBBY 13, grab some instruments. Reggie finds a synthesizer.

REGGIE

This has got to be worth at least  
a thousand...

Bobby accidentally knocks over a bookshelf which then falls towards a window. The window SHATTERS. An ALARM SOUNDS.

REGGIE

Bobby!

BOBBY

I didn't do it!

REGGIE

The hell you didn't! Come-on, lets  
go!

William still working on the filing cabinet. He finds a large screwdriver nearby.

Bobby exits with the synthesizer.

REGGIE

Will, forget about it! We got to  
go!

WILLIAM

There's at least eight thousand  
dollars in here from their fund  
raiser. If I don't get it, Dino  
will kill me!

REGGIE

Take these violins, I'll get the  
money.

WILLIAM

Are you sure?

REGGIE

Yea! Now get going!

William hesitates. Reggie lifts up a coat hanger.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Go! I'll be right behind you!

William exits as Reggie remains pounding on the locked cabinet.

EXT. SCHOOL CAMPUS - NIGHT

Raining. The ALARM still SOUNDS. A metal door opens. William runs out of the building. He carries 3 violin cases. DINO, 16, his face riddled with pockmarks, stands patiently. Bobby 13, and Duarte 13, are stand with Dino.

DINO

Where's the money?

WILLIAM

Reggie's trying to get it.

DINO

Where's Reggie?

WILLIAM

Right behind me.

Dino looks to see Reggie's know still in the building.

DINO

I hate loose ends...

BOBBY

Let's get out of here!

DINO

No! Wait here!

Dino pulls out a pistol.

WILLIAM

What's that for?

DINO

Insurance!

Dino runs to the metal door and opens it. He enters the building.

A moment and then the sound of GUNSHOTS can be heard from the building.

William looks scared.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

RAIN. The sound of THUNDER can be heard. A dozen red roses fall on top of a coffin which has already been lowered into the ground. William stands before the Coffin. A portrait of the young black student is seen. His name reads, Reggie Johnson. A dark green car stops. DINO is in the car with Bobby behind the wheel. Dino drinks from a brown paper bag. William stares down the car. The car speeds off.

RETURN:

INT. BUS (MOVING) - MOMENTS LATER

Will remains looking out the window.

COACH LESTER leans forward and places his hand on William's shoulder.

COACH LESTER

Are you ready son?

William remains silent still fixed out his window.

COACH LESTER

You know I never told you, but in all my years, you're the best I've ever seen.

WILLIAM

Thank you coach.

EXT. GYMNASIUM - MORNING

A line forms in front of the massive concrete building. A banner hoisted above reads 1963 STATE WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIPS. Signs are seen along side the road which read "Go! FLY! Go!", "FLYNN #1" and "The Mighty FLYNN!".

Four men with CREW CUTS, approach the bus and spit on William's rolled up window.

CREW CUT #1

Go home Nigger! You're not welcome here!

William jumps to his feet, slides down the window and swings his clenched fist outward.

WILLIAM

Stop the bus.

The two Skinheads drift behind the bus. They throw a rock. The back window breaks.

WILLIAM

Stop the bus!

CREW CUT #1

Come-on Coon! You too Old Man!

Coach Lester restrains William, then hesitates.

COACH LESTER

Did they just call me old man?

William punches his window. The glass shatters. The bus driver and student photographer look frightened. The bus slows down.

COACH LESTER

Will, what have you done son?

(to driver)

Don't you stop this bus!

(to Will)

Here, let me see. Jesus almighty.

Get me the first aid kit.

(to student

photographer)

Would you get up and get me the

first aid kit!

The Student Photographer jumps to his feet and rushes to the front of the bus. He returns with the first aid kit. Blood everywhere. A large shard of glass imbedded between his knuckles. Coach removes the glass. Bandages immediately cover the wound.

PHOTOGRAPHER

It's like a mob out there.

COACH LESTER

Will, what are you thinking?

WILLIAM

I have listened to this my whole life. I'm tired of it coach, they don't know me?

COACH LESTER

They don't know you and they don't give a damn about you!

COACH LESTER (CONT'D)  
 But You mark my words, win today  
 and they will know you. Win and  
 they will never forget the day  
 William Heart came to their town.

WILLIAM  
 Coach?

William looks up at Coach Lester.

WILLIAM  
 Now I'm ready.

INT. GYMNASIUM - STANDS - MORNING

JOHN STONE, 30s, reads a newspaper. MARTIN ST. DENNIS,  
 30s, watches a match.

JOHN  
 Martin, have you read this?

MARTIN  
 Not now!

JOHN  
 Michael Flynn, undefeated all  
 three years of high school, ranked  
 fourth in the country. Have you  
 ever seen him before?

MARTIN  
 Never.

JOHN  
 Get this, it actually says here he  
 wrestles like a God?

Michael Flynn enters the floor area accompanied by his  
 coach. The fans stand and cheer with excitement. The  
 wrestling match underway is interrupted. One of the  
 wrestlers is distracted by the commotion. He's pinned by  
 his opponent.

MARTIN  
 No, God has mercy.

Michael, a 6'3" Irishman, built like a tank, begins to  
 stretch.

Coach Lester and William enter the Gymnasium with the  
 student photographer close behind.

The match ends and the referee slaps the mat hard. The  
 victor's arm is hoisted in the air to signal the end of  
 their match. The crowd APPLAUDS.

William gets ready. He stretches.

COACH LESTER  
Let me have a look.

Coach Lester redresses William's hand.

COACH LESTER (CONT'D)  
Will, you beat this guy. Don't  
hold nothing back, you hear me?

William nods as coach finishes his work.

COACH LESTER (CONT'D)  
How does it feel?

William raises his wounded hand.

WILLIAM  
Gonna take more than this to stop  
me.

COACH LESTER  
Good. I dressed it tighter than  
normal so be easy on it.

ANNOUNCER (MICROPHONE)  
Ladies and gentlemen, your 1963  
middleweight champion, John Cain  
representing El Modena High.

FANS CHEER.

COACH LESTER  
Will, what I'm about to say to you  
got me through Korea and a  
divorce. When you're out there  
today I want you to remember  
something. Look at me. These  
words, Ain't nothin but a thang.  
Words have power and those words,  
they can make anything, I mean  
anything, seem possible.

WILLIAM  
Ain't nothin But'a Thang Coach.

COACH LESTER  
That a boy. Now lets bring one  
home for the Panthers.

CENTER MAT.

ANNOUNCER (MICROPHONE)  
And now for the heavyweight  
division.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)  
 Representing the South Central  
 Panthers and weighing in at one  
 ninety one, William Heart!

William removes his sweats. He is very lean and in  
 fantastic shape. He walks onto the mat to the center.

ANNOUNCER (MICROPHONE) (CONT'D)  
 And, representing the beautiful  
 city of Bakersfield and a perfect  
 record for the entire year, and  
 your defending state champion...

APPLAUSE ring out.

ANNOUNCER (MICROPHONE) (CONT'D)  
 At two hundred and twenty three  
 pounds, ladies and gentlemen I  
 give you Michael - THE FLY -  
 Flynn!

Fans go wild with a standing ovation as Michael makes his  
 way to the center of the mat.

CHEERLEADERS  
 Go, Go FLY, Go-Go-Go FLY! Go, Go  
 FLY, Go-Go-Go FLY!

More cheers. The referee walks onto the mat to talk to  
 the wrestlers.

REFEREE  
 Boys?

MICHAEL FLYNN  
 Hey Pete.

The referee smiles at Michael.

REFEREE  
 Alright listen up, we've already  
 had one D.Q. earlier so keep it  
 clean. You both know the rules so  
 lets have a good match today.  
 Shake hands then take your  
 positions. Michael, you will be  
 HOME. Gentlemen, good luck.

William and Michael shake hands but Michael doesn't let  
 go.

MICHAEL FLYNN  
 Hear that? They came to see one  
 thing...

He squeezes hard on the hand which is covered with  
 bandages.



MICHAEL FLYNN (CONT'D)

For me to beat the Nigger.

William winces then finally with his left hand breaks Michael's grip. The Referee steps in.

THE CROWD

Boo...

REFEREE

We got a problem already Will?

COACH LESTER

(shouting)

What was that Ref? He wouldn't let go of his hand?

REFEREE

It's called shaking coach.

William shakes his injured hand.

REFEREE (CONT'D)

We got a problem Will?

WILLIAM

No problem.

Off to the side, Coach Lester speaks into the Photographers ear.

COACH LESTER

We've got a problem.

The wrestlers move in and stand in neutral wrestling positions, waiting, waiting, then...

The Ref blows a WHISTLE. Michael makes the first move and scores a quick 2 points for an aggressive take down on William. Now on his stomach, William tries to escape however Michael overpowers him. William works hard to keep from being flipped over onto his back, as he smartly stretches his foot outward - outward - he barely reaches the out of bounds line. The Ref BLOWS a WHISTLE. The match stops.

They prepare to restart but this time in the referee position with Michael on top.

The WHISTLE BLOWS.

Michael quickly moves first and forces William to the ground for another 2 points. William manages to pull off an escape which awards him 1 point. The WHISTLE BLOWS twice to signal the end of the first period. The scoreboard reads Home 4 to Visitors 1.

CROWD

Let's go Michael! Come-on Michael!

The wrestlers adjust their headgear as Coach Lester brings the two wrestlers in close. The referee pulls out a coin.

REFEREE

Michael, you will call the toss for the 2nd period position.

MICHAEL FLYNN

Tails!

The coin land. The Ref picks it up.

REFEREE

It's tails Michael, your choice.

MICHAEL FLYNN

I'll start on top, just like I'll finish.

The WHISTLE BLOWS and again Michael makes the first move but this time William maneuvers out to a standing position. Michael then grabs William in a Full-Nelson and brings William to his knees and gets yet another take down with the score now 6 to 1.

A small spot of blood begins to seep through the bandages on William's right hand.

William then scores a point for a strong escape as he stands up and rips through Michael's Full-Nelson hold. William then scores his first take down by driving his head into Michael's rib cage. Both fall to the ground. They both slowly make their way up off the mat as Michael steps on William's injured hand.

MICHAEL FLYNN

You best stay down!

The WHISTLE BLOWS. Michael illegally grabs William and lifts him off the mat. The referee jumps in to break it up. The two wrestlers fall HARD to the ground, Michael on top of William. The Referee turns beet red and BLOWS his WHISTLE so hard he hyperventilates. Coach Lester runs over as the Ref recovers, then walks over SCORING JUDGES. Words are exchanged.

COACH LESTER

I hope you're taking away some points for that bullshit!

REFEREE

You watch your mouth coach, this isn't the ghetto.

The referee looks at the clock.

REFEREE

(to the Score Judge)

No deductions.

(to arena)

That's it! That's the end of the 2nd period everybody!

COACH LESTER

What do you mean that's it, no deductions? Are you insane?

REFEREE

I will not warn you again, watch your mouth Coach.

The referee then approaches the wrestlers as William is the slowest to get up.

REFEREE

Keep it clean guys I will not warn you again.

COACH LESTER

Come-on Ref, what the hell was that, Jesus...a warning?

The Referee blows his whistle.

REFEREE

One more word and you're gone!

COACH LESTER

Blah!

William, holds his side while he turns to his coach. His hand begins to show more blood through the bandage.

CROWD

Go FLY Go! Go FLY Go! Go FLY Go!

STANDS

John turns to Martin.

JOHN

The kid's good, he does wrestle like a God.

A moment as Martin gazes at William.

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