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# **"Quest For Greatness"**

**By  
Greg Shepard**

**"A MOVIE IN THE MAKING"**

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**Greg Shepard**

## **MOVIE STATUS**

I have hired two consultants to help me. By the end of January, I will have hired a screen writer. Just to write a script costs \$25,000.00.

The script writer will have the same manuscript we are offering you. The novel will be the basis of the script.

## **SPECIAL PREVIEW**

Pages 22, 39 and 40 contain the first four chapters. Each BFS Journal will continue the "Quest for Greatness" story (36 total chapters).

I want every coach to love reading it as much as I did writing it. After all, it's about you and your athletes. It's also a Super Novel for athletes in English class!

# QUEST FOR GREATNESS

By Greg Shepard

## FORWARD

Quest For Greatness is based on true stories. Coach Shepard and his "Bigger Faster Stronger" (BFS) Organization have conducted over 300 clinics at high schools in all fifty states. Normally, Coach Shepard would stay with the football coach and his family. As a result, Coach Shepard has had a unique glimpse of what is happening with both the coaches and the athletes in our nation's high schools.

A BFS Clinic usually lasts seven hours. Tens of thousands of athletes have gone through these clinics. The athletes and coaches are given a detailed plan on how to reach their greatest potential not only physically but also mentally and spiritually.

Over fifty high schools have won state championships in football after participating in a BFS clinic. Quest for Greatness is a success story based on those many triumphs. It has two major purposes: (1) to illustrate the tremendous force for good that our nation's coaches are; and (2) to illustrate the great capacity our nation's youth have to commit themselves to positive goals. If given a chance and a dream to follow, high school athletes will go to incredible lengths to be the best they can be in the "Quest for Greatness."

## CHAPTER 1: The Red Lion

The adrenalin was pumping — the alarm was ringing. Travis Drake jumped out of bed! It was five a.m. and today was his day — his big interview!

He wondered about his sanity sometimes. Why would anyone want to be a high school football coach? But he knew why. Coaching was in his blood, and it had been ever since he could remember. Low pay and long hours; yet, he loved it! There were times, however, when he would think about leaving coaching to make some real money in business. Then Diana and the children could have a lot of extra things — material things. But, Diana would say that material things were not all that important. What was important to her was the love that existed in their family. With thoughts of his wife's support, Travis smiled as he finished shaving and showering.

He felt lucky to have a wife who understood his passion for coaching. He paused to look down at her. She was still asleep. Oh, how he loved her. He bent down and gave her a tender kiss on the forehead.

Travis paused at the mirror and chuckled at the thought of his outfit. The outfit he was going to wear for the interview consisted of bright-red pants, a white shirt, red tie, white shoes, and a bright-red sports coat! "I am really going to dazzle them!" He laughed to himself. "Where is my white belt?" The small closet was stuffed with clothes. Things were always getting misplaced, and he thought how they wanted a bigger closet. "Wait a minute. Here it is," Travis whispered in relief.

Diana was now awake and laughing almost uncontrollably.

"Travis, you know what you look like?" she taunted.

"I am a Red Lion from Hamilton," Travis roared as he jumped on the bed after Diana.

"Quiet, you'll wake up the kids."

For a long moment, they looked each other in the eyes. They both knew another move was possible, but Diana knew that was part of being a coach's wife. Nevertheless, finding a house (in addition to meeting new friends, getting the kids situated and finding a good doctor and dentist) was always tough. They had already moved three times in six years, and she was becoming an expert.

"You look nice, honey," she said. "The best 'red lion' I've ever loved."

"I love you," Travis responded embracing her tenderly.

"Can I fix you breakfast before you go?" Diana offered.

Travis shook his head and said he would pick something up on the way. They kissed, and Travis was out the door. Hamilton was a three hour drive — even for a "Red Lion."

## CHAPTER 2: In Bed

Rick Steadman lay in bed not moving. It was time for school. It seemed like just another day, and he would be late again. To make matters worse, he was supposed to get his two younger brothers and sister up. Now they would be late, too. "Heaven knows that Dad would not do it," moaned Rick.

Following the death of his wife several years ago, Mr. Steadman had rapidly gone downhill. Who could blame him. The economy being what it was and four kids to raise by himself. "It's enough to drive a man to drink!" Anyway, that was what Mr. Steadman kept saying. To make matters worse, he thought his kids were no good.

"Who gives a shit?" muttered Rick as he lay dazed in bed.

His head was ringing. Ten beers will do it every time. Rick was finding that out more and more frequently.

"I'm going to be late for English class again. It will serve that scumbag Baker right," said Rick with his emotions beginning to rage.

"Ow!"

Mr. Steadman had come in and slapped Rick in the face screaming, "Get your lazy butt out of bed!"

"What's your problem?" whined Rick.

"My problem is you!" Rick's father retorted.

Usually Rick was good about getting his brothers and sister up. They lived in a cramped three bedroom mobile home. So when one person got up, everyone else just about had to get up too. But lately, things seemed to be changing. Things just were not going right. He could cope with his dad most of the time; but other people, adults especially, were really starting to affect him.



"Mr. Baker called last night and said you were flunking English. What the hell is wrong with you boy?" challenged Mr. Steadman.

"He's a scumbag! The guy never gives me a break. I turned in an assignment one day late," explained Rick, "What's the big deal?"

"What's the big deal? I'll tell you what the big deal is boy. You're screwin' up! You didn't play football this year. You're flunkin' classes. You're gettin' up late. You're startin' out late. You don't study. You don't take care of your brothers and sister like you ought to. You're a worthless bum, I tell you a worthless bum!"

"You been drinkin' too, boy, haven't you!" demanded Mr. Steadman.

Fed up, Rick glared at his father, which was unusual, and said under his breath, "So what!"

With that, Mr. Steadman gave Rick a sharp backhand to his right cheek.

"You better start to shape up boy. Get your butt outa here!" his father roared.

Bill, Rick's twelve-year-old brother, witnessed the entire incident; and it really got to him. The sad thing was, as much as Billy hated to admit it, his father was not all that wrong about Rick. Billy loved Rick and looked up to him. He had been much more than just an older brother for a long, long time. However, since he slept in the same bedroom as Rick, he was aware of some changes. Rick had always taken care of things for little Bobby, Sharon, and Billy. Rick would put out the cereal and milk for breakfast and even read them stories. Yep, Rick had been good to them; but now, even Billy was worried, really worried.

Rick seemed to shake off the past few moments and went to wake up Bobby and Sharon. They were already quietly getting dressed.

"I'll put out the breakfast for you guys, ok?" Rick offered.

"OK Rick, thanks."

Rick put on his jeans that he had worn the night before and bolted out the door. He was late; but if he hustled, it wouldn't be too bad. Maybe Mr. Baker would go easy on him.

"You're fifteen minutes late," stated Mr. Baker quite matter of factly. "And that will not help your flunking grade."

Rick slumped down in his chair. Now the whole class knew he was flunking. Hell, the entire school knew! He stared blankly out the window at the cold November morning. "Who gives a shit," he thought. "Who gives a shit."

## CHAPTER 3: The Drive

Travis Drake liked to drive. It gave him the time and freedom to think things out. Freedom from phones, from secretaries, from students, and even from family. Plus, he could listen to his country music, he thought. He smiled as he flipped in his new Willie Nelson tape. He used to like Rock and Roll, especially Credence Clearwater Revival. But a lot of what used to be rock and roll was now called country. In the last few years, he had become a big country fan. In fact, he had acquired a taste for fine country singing.

While listening to Willie, he would plan his attack.

How was he going to handle the interview? Over the years, he'd had his share. He'd made a few mistakes, both in interviewing and in coaching. But, he was a survivor. Twelve years of coaching attested to that fact.

"Man, did I ever screw up in my first year or two," he said under the drone of his music.

One thing for sure, he would be himself. The best way to conduct an interview was to take charge of it, to lay everything out and let the cards fall where they may.

"Yep, that's the right way," he nodded with assurance.

Heck, the way Travis saw it, if they believed in what he said and in his philosophy and hired him, that was great, but if they didn't then it was just as well that they didn't hire him. In this business, a coach can get trapped really easy.

Travis was just "a singin' away" as he pulled up to a red light. He really got into his music. In fact, he was bobbing up and down to the rhythm of old Willie when he noticed the people in the car next to him. They were staring at Travis like he was really weird. A few years ago, Travis might have been embarrassed, but not now. Why should he be? He was enjoying himself. Anyway, Travis just smiled and flashed them the peace sign. However, it did not mean peace to Travis Drake; it meant victory!

Travis had always maintained that the most important factor in turning a program like Hamilton's around was enrollment. Enrollment is especially critical in football, more so than any other sport. In basketball, one good athlete can make you a winner, but football takes numbers. One great athlete can be neutralized quite easily in football by a good coach.

Early in his coaching career, Travis had found out the hard way that it was tough playing week after week against schools with larger enrollments. The first thing Travis did was check out Hamilton's enrollment. It was 800 in grades 9-12. The conference had two larger schools, two about the same, and three smaller. Hamilton's enrollment was also in the top third in the state's 3-A schools. Clearly, enrollment was not the reason for Hamilton's losing record, and that pleased Travis.

Coach Drake also liked one-high-school towns. If a coach prepared adequately, the whole town would rally behind the team. However, Travis also knew that in a small town, a coach could not hide when things went wrong. In a big city, high school football was just one of many things going on. In Hamilton, the "Lions" were the "only game" in town. Travis was an optimist; therefore, this negative thought flickered only briefly through his mind. Travis chose to spend his energy on positive thoughts and actions.

The questions yet to answer were how good were the available assistants and how committed was the administration. The purpose of his interview was to answer these questions. Travis was deep in thought now and completely oblivious to the music. Even Willie singing through his nose couldn't break through Travis' intense concentration.

"I have to make sure the principal and superintendent are supportive," mused Travis. "They have got to understand what I want to accomplish for the school and to allow me to do it my way."



## QUEST FOR GREATNESS: Continued from Page 39

According to Diana, Travis spent 36 hours a day with football and with kids. He would work with them on their schoolwork and on their personal problems. He worked with them through their trials; he delighted in their successes, and he cried over their failures. To put it simply, Travis Drake wanted "his kids" to be the best they could be at everything they did. However, administrators could sometimes make that goal frustrating for him as a teacher and as a coach. But coaching still had its rewards.

The thought of rewards caused Travis to think about his family. How fortunate he was to have such a supportive wife and such fine children. He was really proud of his kids. All three were well behaved in school, each was getting good grades, and they were all healthy. As Travis thought about his kids, he began to chuckle to himself. Last night when he went to kiss them goodnight, Andrea and Shauna had tricked him. Their feet were where their head was supposed to be. Travis bent down and said, "I love you," and inadvertently kissed their feet. "They really thought they had put one over on me," he reflected. "They must have laughed for 30 minutes." "Diana had only laughed for 10."

He was still thinking about his family when he pulled the old Toyota up to the Administration Building.

It was nine o'clock — time for the interview.

## CHAPTER 4: The Kegger

It was third period. Rick Steadman headed for his physical education class. Tom Miller was the teacher and had been an assistant coach the past year. Rick liked his enthusiasm; and because Coach Miller was young, Rick felt he could relate to him better than to his other teachers. Anyway, he would not get hassled for not doing homework.

This was Coach Miller's third year at Hamilton. At times he thought about leaving and getting a fresh start. Things at Hamilton were kind of negative. Football season had been a real bummer. He had considered applying for the head coaching job, but he knew he was not quite ready. Besides, coaching at Hamilton was a losing proposition. "Geez," he thought, "I can't believe that came into my mind." "Come on Tom, cut this negative crap out and start thinking positive," he said to himself as his class came into the gym.

Tom liked Coach Hudson in spite of the fact that he was rather negative with the kids. They did not have much fun playing, nor did they win many games. Still, the coaching staff had worked hard — they just weren't productive. Tom couldn't quite put his finger on the problem. Maybe Coach Hudson was right. Maybe he should quit and go into business. "There you go again you twink," he chastised himself. "Don't give up on these kids; they deserve all we can give!"

After he had called roll and had taught several basketball drills, the class began "league play," which would last for his six-week basketball unit. He smiled as he alertly sat in his coach's chair and watched the games flow smoothly. His student referees were doing OK, so he settled back to

watch the action.

His eyes focused on Steadman. What a shame, Coach Miller thought. He should have played football again this season. Coach Miller had coached Rick on the sophomore team. He had thought highly of Rick's ability and had told Coach Hudson that Rick could be a starting running back on the varsity team. Coach Miller remembered being shocked and really disappointed when Rick did not turn out. He had tried to talk to Rick, but he would not open up. But Tom knew he could not blame the bad season on Rick or on any one person.

It was no secret. One of the big reasons for the lack of success was the numbers — or the lack of them. How can anyone win with only 27 juniors and seniors on the team. "One thing for sure, I do not envy the new coach — whoever he is," he reflected thoughtfully as he watched Rick go to the basket.

"Nice move, Rick," praised Coach Miller.

"There's the shower bell."

"Go on in!"

For the first time today, Rick felt good. He enjoyed sports, and he had made some good shots during the game. Even though it was just "gym class," he felt good. The hot shower beat down on him, and his youthful body had almost completely recovered from last night's binge. Rick knew instinctively that he should not be drinking so much. "But look at me," he smiled, "I can handle it, so what's the big deal!" He finished showering and began to dress.

"Hey, Steadman, you got five bucks?" asked Eddie Troutman.

"What's up?"

"You wanna party don't you Steadman?" laughed Troutman, almost snickering.

Rick did not really like Eddie that much. He never did much but party and screw around. Troutman was fairly popular, but Rick still thought he was a dork. However, Rick knew a party was a party.

"Sure, Eddie," Rick finally said, "What you got goin'?"

"We got a kegger, man," Eddie triumphantly announced.

"Lay a five here and you're in," he exclaimed as he extended his palm to Rick.

"Don't got it right now," Rick shrugged.

"Gotta have it by Thursday, OK Steadman, or you'll just have to miss the party and Becky," grinned Troutman.

"You can be a real dork sometimes, Troutman."

"You goin' to come or not?" demanded Troutman.

"Yeah, yeah, I'll have it!"

Rick closed his locker and headed for math. He'd never admit it to Troutman, but he looked forward to partying at the kegger. Nothing else was going on; and besides, Becky was some fox. Rick had taken her to a dance once before, and he couldn't quite get her out of his system.

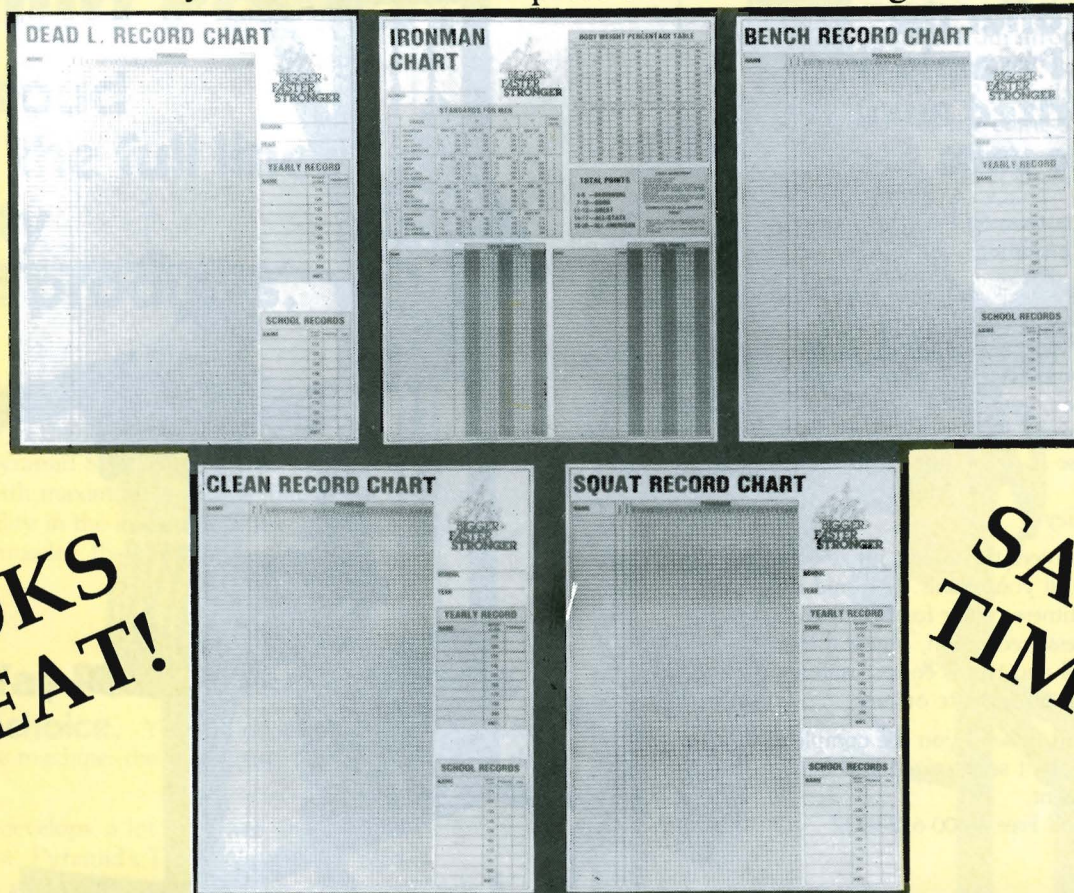
He quickly forgot about Becky and the kegger as he sat down in his math class and studied the math problems on the board. It seemed like a long time since he'd gotten up that morning, and math just made it longer and more difficult to endure.

## MORE IN NEXT ISSUE!



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