

FOSTERING TALENT

A FILM ABOUT AMERICA'S FOSTER CARE SYSTEM VIEWED THROUGH THE PRISM OF RAW TALENT



A SOUL STREET PRODUCTION

DIRECTED BY HAMILTON VON WATTS AND PATRICK REYNOLDS



CONCEPT



Fostering Talent is a feature length documentary, ostensibly about the foster care system in the United States, but told via four separate, but interwoven stories of talented young musicians in or from foster care environments.

Each of the subjects will represent a different element of the system and each will illuminate what is indeed beautiful about it and what is sometimes heart wrenching and tragic.

The film will be narrated by award winning playwright/actor/outreach worker **Willie Round** who has a great deal of experience with foster care, particularly in the urban environment. Willie will also conduct the interviews and be a quasi-character in the film.

Willie's talents and experience are custom made for a project like this. He brings compassion, empathy and credibility; in addition, his skills as an actor make him comfortable on camera and will be an interesting and compelling component to the story and how it's presented.

CONSTRUCT



The film will bounce around between four young subjects in different parts of the country all pursuing similar but different goals in the field of music. What they have in common is that they are all passionate about music and have all been raised inside the foster care system. Besides that, they are on their own paths

Through Willie Round's narration, which will be informed by credible sources, and the personal journeys of these bright young people, the audience will get an understanding of what it's like to grow up without biological parents in this society.

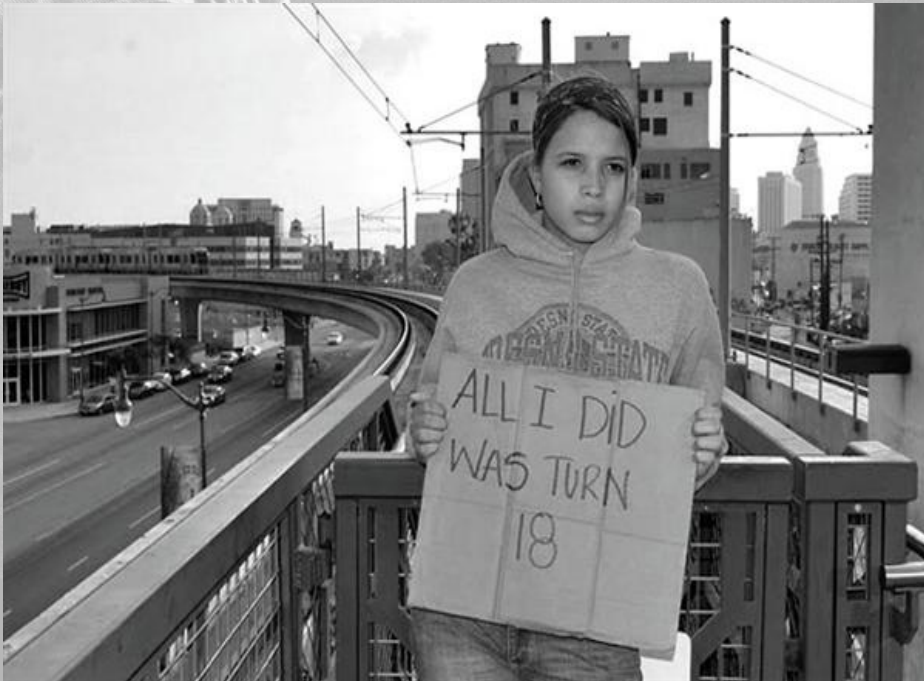
The kids will tell the reality of their situations, which is at times heart wrenching and tragic. But through it all optimism, passion and perseverance wins the day.

The story will move along with pace as there are many elements to cut to. The audience will be following four different stories, plus Willie's presence and interactions with the kids will keep the story compelling and absorbing at all times.

The broader message of Foster Care in America will be told through four separate perspectives, but within that, four sub plots of our subjects trying to reach their own goals and objectives will be inspiring and heart-warming.

Proper casting will be imperative.

REALITIES



Although *Fostering talent* is a film about hope and aspiration, the reason those attributes will resonate is because of the hard realities that lie within. According to Foster America, one in seventeen children in the United States enter foster care and among the black population it's one in nine.

Over 70% of kids who have found themselves in the juvenile justice system have also been part of the child welfare system and 50% of foster youth will not graduate from high school on time and sometimes not at all.

Pregnancy rates of girls in foster care are more than concerning - 48% become pregnant by 19 and 60% of child trafficking victims have histories in foster care.

If that weren't enough 33% of homeless young adults were previously in foster care and kids in foster care are four-times more likely than other children to attempt suicide.

These statistics are jarring and they are the reason why we believe it's important to make this film and make it in this manner. Audiences don't want to face these realities, but within a package that inspires, maybe the pill can be swallowed and change can occur.

Over the past few decades certain documentaries have evoked true change. We're hoping *Fostering Talent* does the same by illuminating a nationwide dilemma and asking a conversation to take place about it.

CASE & POINT



Dreion

Singer/songwriter Dreion Murrell is a good example of the kind of subject that *Fostering Talent* is all about. This young talent of American Idol fame is a product of the foster care system and through the many challenges he has faced and survived, he came out the other side with an articulate and valuable telling of the experience.

Today Dreion is a staunch and outspoken advocate of revamping and improving the foster care system. Although much of what he went through was tragic and horrible, Dreion understands the big picture and can speak credibly to the urgency of positive change in this arena. His journey was at times brutal, but his ability to find such a positive perspective makes his story one of inspiration.

The idea is to reflect from these young people the various forms foster care can take. There are children who were saved through the noble selfless acts of foster parents, and others that found themselves in a system that was full of trauma.

Fostering Talent will highlight professionals in the field to discuss the pitfalls and triumphs of this important aspect of our society, to help us better understand and bring awareness to something so precious; the protection and rearing of a child.

THE FILMMAKERS



Hamilton Von Watts is a writer/director/producer and former actor who starred in many movies and television shows over the past 20 years. He has also produced feature films and documentaries, and is the founder of Soul Street Foundation, a non-profit production company that is altruistic in structure.

After leaving the world of Hollywood acting, Von Watts turned his attention to his family business where he often speaks the mantra that work is love made visible and he has taken this same philosophy into the realm of documentary film. He is currently in pre-production on a variety of docs that all share one common denominator....soul.

Von Watts is the proud father of two wild boys who do their best to match their dad's boundless energy.



Willie "Prince Roc" Round is a playwright, actor, filmmaker and hip-hop artist hailing from the West Side of Chicago. He has performed across the country opening for Grammy Award-winning artist Lil Wayne as well as Gucci Mane.

When not performing or writing, Round does extensive outreach in the North Lawndale neighborhood in Chicago (also known as "The Holy City") and has mentored inner city youth as part of the College Mentoring Experience, as well as his own youth movement called MUD LIFE (Motivating the Urban to be Determined).

He holds a B.A. in Communications, Radio, and Television Broadcasting from Central State University. His award winning play *Broke Down Drone* (co-written with G. Riley Mills) was recently turned into a short film that won many awards and selections



Patrick Reynolds is a Los Angeles based filmmaker who has written and directed numerous award winning shorts and recently completed a feature documentary entitled *Hendrie*, featuring Bill Hader, Judd Apatow, Kevin Pollack, Henry Rollins and others. He specializes in small-footprint journalistic style shooting with an artistic bent.

From shooting B unit footage in Mexico for *The French Exit* starring Michelle Pfeiffer, to driving across the United States photographing street musicians for the documentary *Soul Street*, Reynolds is constantly creating.

Reynolds was also the cinematographer for the upcoming feature film *You Are Always Right Here* by writer/director Nana Ghana and is working with filmmaker/Actor Melora Walters on a forthcoming feature narrative that will star Christopher Backus.

PRODUCTION



Because the Soul Street Foundation owns nearly all of their own equipment and has in-house editors and shooters, the production costs are much less terrifying.

It's safe to say that we can make a feature documentary for considerably less money than most production companies. In this case, the bulk of the expenses will revolve around travel to the various locations that the subjects reside in.

There shouldn't be much expense for clearances and locations, and hopefully, based on the nature of the film, there might be some good will associated with music rights and other assets.

This film won't utilize expensive animation or extravagant post production work. It will be a relatively straight forward production that tells a story effectively and succinctly.

END GAME



Like all projects that Soul Street Foundation endeavours to produce, the end game is as important as everything that came before. As opposed to many other productions companies, SSF is non-profit, so once the film is made, the sole goal is to provide some sort of benefit to the world at large,

In this case, any and all back-end revenue generated from *Fostering Talent* would go towards foster care foundations that are credible and vetted by trusted sources.

It's our mission to not only make quality films that spur awareness and entertain, but to create a product that can generate revenue and benefit those who are in need. And although this method of production/filmmaking might be misperceived as advocacy, we believe, through our choices and execution, we are still objective documentary filmmakers who subscribe to credible honest journalism and story-telling.

Fostering Talent is a perfect example of this. This story will illuminate the good and bad of the foster care system all while shining a light on the talent, perseverance and resilience of kids that have gotten dealt a tougher hand than most