

CIRCLE OF FAITH

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. GREYHOUND BUS - DAY

As the bus moves along the deserted landscape we find our way to the back, where HAROLD WILSON, forties, rests his head on the glass. Pensive. No facial expression. Clothes are about 20 years out of style.

EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

Harold exits behind other passengers.
Harold is frail. Meek. Shy. Nothing about him stands out.
He spies a REDHEAD WOMAN exiting the station.

HAROLD

Miss ma'am, happen to know where I
can get a payphone?

She gives him a weird look: are you serious? Shakes her head:
no. Goes about her business. While walking away:

REDHEAD WOMAN

(grossed)
Miss Ma'am? Ugh!

INT. BUS STATION - DAY

Harold steps to the glass where a young, portly CASHIER sits.
She's chewing the hell outta her gum.

CASHIER

(deep southern accent)
How can I help you, sir?

HAROLD

Hi, I'm looking for a payphone.

Cashier's about to screw her beak but before she does she
looks at Harold's outfit. Clearly years out of date.

CASHIER

Where be you from, sir?

HAROLD

Bushkill. Bushkill, Pennsylvania.

CASHIER

Well this here is West Virginia.
We don't have payphones 'round
these parts. 'Fact, I hadn't seen
one since my grade school years.

HAROLD

I ummm...
(pulls a card from his
pocket)
I have to make a phone call.

She gives him a look -- clearly he needs help. Sympathy
overcomes her.

INT. BEHIND THE GLASS - DAY

Harold hangs up the phone. Relieved.

HAROLD

Thank you.

She nods. Eyes him close as he walks out.

EXT. STREET - AFTERNOON

Harold strolls down the street. Taking in the scenery.
Literally appreciating every single second.

A sign in front of the SKYLIGHT MOTEL reads:
\$25 a night. Monday through Thursday.

Harold pulls some bills from his pocket - two hundred
dollars.

INT. SKYLIGHT MOTEL - FRONT DESK - AFTERNOON

Not the cleanest place. Small turn-dial TV plays. Antenna's
up.

Behind the counter, ROCMOND, a overweight burly man (in a
wife beater and puffing a cigarette) stares at a timid
Harold. A beat...

ROCMOND

Hurry it up, Springer's on!

It startles Harold. He jumps.

HAROLD

I can wait til' it goes off if I'm disturbing you.

That annoys Rocmond more. Who is this guy? Is he serious?

ROCMOND

Just c'mon dude. Good manners don't earn you no favors 'round here.

HAROLD

Just a room for the night.

ROCMOND

I.D. And fifty two dollars.

HAROLD

Sign says twenty-five.

ROCMOND

And the small little print underneath it says 'if you check in after six'.

The clock on the wall reads 3:36.

EXT. STREET - AFTERNOON

Harold spies a homeless man sitting in front of a church drinking a cup of coffee.

HAROLD

Would you like a water?

INT. CORNER STORE - MOMENTS LATER

Harold and the HOMELESS CHARLIE BYDEAWAY (*sounds like 'by the way'*) exit. Both have a bottle of water.

HOMELESS CHARLIE

(re: Harold's sweater)

I used to have a sweater like that. My wife gave it to me a week before she died.

HAROLD

How'd she die?

HOMELESS CHARLIE

Lung cancer.

Charlie lights a cigarette. Smoking and walking.

HOMELESS CHARLIE

Want a hit?

HAROLD

That church you were in front of,
what's it like?

HOMELESS CHARLIE

Not open for business on Sundays
yet. Think they remodeling or
something. Preacher's nice tho.
Brings me last nights' leftovers
every morning. Today's tacos.
Religious?

HAROLD

More Spiritual. You?

HOMELESS CHARLIE

Difference?

HAROLD

Maybe there isn't one. It's just a
matter of perspective. But I
respect tradition and some rituals.

HOMELESS CHARLIE

I'm Charlie Bydeahway - thats my
real last name. Everyone 'round
here calls me Homeless Charlie,
tho. Either is fine.

HAROLD

Harold.

HOMELESS CHARLIE

Ain't from here are you, Harold?

Harold shakes no.

HOMELESS CHARLIE

I can tell. I reads people pretty
good. Fifteen years on the street
taught me that if nothing else.
Know what I mean?

HAROLD

(re: preacher)

Can you introduce me to him?

Charlie takes a second - *who is he talking about?* Oh --

HOMELESS CHARLIE
 (mulls it over...)
 Don't go embarrassing me tho. Those
 are good folks. And they don't
 bring enough food for two.

EXT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - AFTERNOON

Pastor JIMMY SUNDAY and his second trimester wife, ANITA SUNDAY (both early forties) carry some paint cans and plastic. They set them in front of the church. Jimmy unlocks the gate and slides it up.

HOMELESS CHARLIE (O.S.)
 Preacher. PREACHER!

Jimmy turns. Not surprised to see Charlie heading to him. Following Charlie is Harold.

HOMELESS CHARLIE
 Need some help?

JIMMY
 Thanks Charlie.

Charlie picks up the cans and plastic and heads in. Anita follows behind him.

ANITA (O.S.)
 Foods in the car Charlie.

HOMELESS CHARLIE (O.S.)
 Tacos?

ANITA (O.S.)
 Yep.

...And left standing there, awkward and feeling out of place - Harold. He extends his hand. Jimmy shakes it.

HAROLD
 So you're Pastor of this fine
 church?

JIMMY
 Praise God I am. We're renovating
 at the time. But uh, we are only a
 few miles down yonder. We'd love to
 have ya -- Oh, I'm Jimmy. Wife
 calls me Jimbo, when she ain't
 angry with me. Either or is fine.

HAROLD
Pastor Jimmy.

Jimmy grins. Likes Harold's style already.

HAROLD
 I'm Harold Wilson.

And that's it. Harold says nothing else. After a few seconds of weird silence:

JIMMY
 Nice to meet you, Harold--

Charlie comes out carrying a pair of shoes. They look worn but not unbearable.

HOMELESS CHARLIE
 --Look what the wife gave me.

JIMMY
 Great. Now will you come to church?

HOMELESS CHARLIE
 Not til' I can get gussied up with a nice tie and shirt, Preacher. A full outfit.

HAROLD
 The Bible implies come as you are.

Their attention shifts to Harold. Jimmy grins.

JIMMY
 Can't debate scripture.

HOMELESS CHARLIE
 God don't want me in his house looking and smelling like this.

Jimmy hits the car alarm.

JIMMY
 Charlie your dinner's under the backseat.

Charlie searches for his food.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
 (not taking no for an answer)
 We'll be having our big family and friends service in two weeks Charlie. I want you here, alright.

HAROLD
Painting?

JIMMY
Yeah, gonna be here all night
unfortunately. Wife's doctor
appointment went way too long.

HAROLD
I can help.

JIMMY
'Preciate the gesture but we don't
really have it in the budg--

HAROLD
For free. No charge. I just want to
serve.

We hear the car door close.

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - VESTIBULE - AFTERNOON

Chipped gray paint. Dark and dreary.

Jimmy has on dirty clothes for him to paint in.

Harold is mixing the paint. Ready to work.

JIMMY
(re: clothes)
Sorry I don't have...

Harold waves him off. It's fine.

...A SHORT WHILE LATER...

Jimmy's on one side; Harold's on the other.

Jimmy is covered in paint. His face, clothes -- has paint
everywhere.

Harold rolls the paint on like Michelangelo. Nothing drips
from the brush, nothing splashes onto him. He's masterful
with the brush. It's like Harold's entranced -- in his own
zone.

Jimmy stops. Looks at Harold's work. Impressed.

Anita walks in. Stops. Admires with her husband.

ANITA
 (whispers)
 He's great. Where'd you find him?

JIMMY
 I didn't. He found me.

EXT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - NIGHT

Jimmy helps Anita inside the car. Harold stands by the door.
 Jimmy heads back to lock up.

JIMMY
 Where'd you learn to do that?

HAROLD
 It's really just patience. Once
 you're lost in it... like anything
 we do.

JIMMY
 A ride Harry?

HAROLD
 I'm fine.

JIMMY
 I don't mind. Really.

Harold waves him off: *it's fine.*

JIMMY
 Wish I could give you something.

HAROLD
 Can I come back tomorrow?

JIMMY
 ... and paint...? For free?

Harold nods. Jimmy smiles.

INT. STARLIGHT MOTEL - NIGHT

Harold, wrapped in a towel, washes his clothes out in the
 sink with a bar of soap.

The bath water is running and it's steaming.

Harold takes a cup-of-noodles and fills it up to the line.
 Opens his plastic fork, stirs it and chows down.

Harold, kneeled down praying at his bedside.

Harold gets in bed. Lies on his back. Staring at the ceiling.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Harold tossing and turning in the bed.

He looks out the window.

Harold wakes up. Clock says 5am. Pulls his clothes from the hanger they were drying on. They are extremely wrinkled.

He looks at the iron. Sets it up.

Harold tries to Iron but is having a hard time. He's overwhelmed with frustration.

Gets dressed, same wrinkled clothes as yesterday.
Makes another cup of noodles. This time with the water from coffee maker.

He pulls the curtain back, opens the blinds. Sits on the bed. Reflecting...

INT. PRISON - MESS HALL - FLASHBACK

Harold, in his prison jumpsuit, sits at a table by himself. There's a bunch of other PUNKS that decide to sit by him. They're the scary, washed up, exiled bunch.

Across the mess hall the BIGGER INMATES look at Harold. Licking their lips and winking their eyes. Then --

Fingers caress Harold's neck flirtatiously. Harold jumps. JELLY, a diesel man, bearded, whispers in Harold's ear.

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - SANCTUARY - MORNING

Wood floors. Dusty. Nothing about this is clean or nice. The walls need to be painted, too.

Anita puts flowers on the pulpit. Humming. Harold sweeps.

HAROLD

Miss Sunday.

ANITA

Anita's just fine Harold.

Harold nods. A beat...

HAROLD
White baby's breath.

ANITA
Huh?

HAROLD
The flowers. Those are 'white baby
breath' flowers.

Anita looks at the flowers. Those are the exact flowers she's holding. She continues to place the flowers.

ANITA
How'd you know? I had no clue.

HAROLD
Grandma was a florist.

ANITA
Where you from, Harold?

HAROLD
Bushkill, Pennsylvania.

ANITA
Would you believe I rarely leave
West Virginia? My husband travels
all the time but it's... I don't
know, I just hate flying.

HAROLD
I want to go on a plane one day.

Anita finishes the arrangement. Steps back and admires it.

ANITA
You grew up in church?

HAROLD
Jehovah's Witness. But I'm
Christian now.

ANITA
(smiling)
Life hasn't been the same since
Jesus stepped in. Been covered in
the blood 19 years now.

JIMMY (O.S.)
ANITA!!! HUN!

ANITA
How's that look, Harold? Good?

Harold nods his approval.

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - OFFICE - DAY

Just a desk and an empty bookshelf. Jimmy is hanging something on the wall.

JIMMY

Thought I'd add some class to the room? What you think?

Anita stands in the doorway, beaming.

ANITA

I love it.

It's a portrait of him and Anita, with his hand on her pregnant stomach. Anita looks behind her, sees Harold sweeping. Steps completely into the office, closes the door behind her.

ANITA

You notice anything strange about Harold?

Jimmy shakes: no.

JIMMY

Other than he likes to work for free? Why? Something wrong?

ANITA

Yeah- I mean, no... I think that's the problem: nothing's wrong.

JIMMY

Then why you worrying?

Anita shakes it off.

JIMMY

Come here.

She walks to him. He grabs her. Kisses her. Puts his hands on her stomach.

JIMMY

You know it would have been impossible for me to do this without you?

She knows he couldn't but she goes along with it. Feigns disbelief.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
 This gon' be the biggest church in
 West Virginia. I declare that in
 Jesus -

Jimmy twitches. Felt something. Anita grins.

ANITA
 (re: baby)
 She's been walking on the moon --
 (all day).

JIMMY
 (over)
 He.

ANITA
 Only time will tell.

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - SANCTUARY - DAY

Harold's painting. Headphones in his ears. He has on the appropriate clothing.

WENDY DOBSIN, early forties, saunters in. She's pretty without pretence. Well dressed. Frustration in her face. When she realizes that Harold's painting, she walks more carefully. Doesn't want to mess up her clothes.

She walks around out of frame for a few seconds. Then --

WENDY
 -- Pastor at?

Harold, in his own world, oblivious to her presence.

WENDY
 Young man!

Harold turns, startled and impressed - takes his headphones out his ears. Through his facemask:

HAROLD
 Yes, Ma'am?

WENDY
 Hi. Where is my Pastor?

HAROLD
 If he's not in his office I'm not sure where he is. Isn't a whole lot of places he could be.

She doesn't find his joke cute.

WENDY

Don't speak against the vision.

HAROLD

No, I wasn't. Just a bad--

WENDY

Now ain't the time. I need to see my Pastor. My phone's dead and I can't reach him.

Harold's slightly puzzled. Dead phone?

HAROLD

It's some batteries in the kitchen cabinet. What size you need? I can grab em--

WENDY

I need a charger! And my Pastor!

Just then, we hear the front door open. Wendy can see Jimmy entering. She speeds to him.

WENDY

Pastor. Oh, thank God you're here.

JIMMY

Sister Wendy, is everything--

WENDY

It's Brielle.

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - OFFICE/SANCTUARY - DAY

Wendy's sitting in front of the Pastors desk.

Harold paints the wall closest to the door. Can't help but hear what's going on. The walls are thin.

WENDY

I prayed this wouldn't happen. And God let me down... again.

JIMMY

Why now?

WENDY

Says she has questions I can't answer.

(beat)

WENDY (CONT'D)

This is part of her "journey as a woman." Something she feels she "HAS" to do.

JIMMY

I'll be honest, I completely get it. I get her reasons. But I want you to understand her. Put yourself in her shoes.

WENDY

I've tried, Pastor, I have. But I think she's making a horrible mistake.

JIMMY

Have you prayed with her?

WENDY

I have.

Jimmy's face: *and?*

WENDY

No change.
(getting more irate)
God can't do this to me now. NO!
Not my baby. I need my baby.

JIMMY

You're not losing her, Sister Wendy.

WENDY

You know my fear, Pastor. Everyone I love I lose; and Brielle's all I have left.

JIMMY

Sister Wendy, God is a God of love. My parents thought they'd lose me, too, but it brought us closer. God's not going to let that happen. But she's a woman now. You have to let her find answers. Seek and she'll find. And just like I found out -- there was no place like home. If you like I'll have a talk with her. Maybe Uncle Jimmy can give her some sound guidance.

Harold has stopped painting. He's listening close.

WENDY

Please, would you?

JIMMY

Anytime.

(A beat... then --)

So Sister Wendy, are you excited about our first service in *our* new building?

WENDY

Oh, you know I am. I can't wait to feel the presence of God in the new building. It's just gonna be so new and fresh.

JIMMY

Amen. Amen. That's what I like to hear. Fired up for the Lord. What about ummm... you know...?

Wendy exhales. Wanted to avoid this subject.

WENDY

You know Pastor, I don't feel right about that. Something about it just don't sit with my spirit.

JIMMY

(offended)

You think *your* pastor would have you do something God wouldn't approve of?

WENDY

No, of course not. It's probably just all that's going on--

JIMMY

You think God would tell me to do something--

WENDY

That's not (what I'm saying)--

JIMMY

(over)

I understand. I know what it looks like but I assure you that isn't what it is.

WENDY

Then what is it? Because I looked at it every way imaginable and I don't see an ounce of righteousness in it.

JIMMY

See, Sister Wendy. God gives vision to the head. So there'll be things I'll see that you won't understand until the vision manifests. I just need you to trust *your Pastor*; like you did when you felt God wasn't talking to you anymore, so your Pastor interceded on your behalf. Or like you did when Brielle needed a strong father figure in her life.

He puts his hand on hers. Covering it like paper does a rock. Gives her a sweet yet stern smile. She looks down.

INT. MOTEL FRONT DESK - NIGHT

Rocmond watches an episode of Scared Straight. Laughing. Harold reaches the desk.

ROCMOND

Would you believe some of the BS that goes on on these shows? Prison's nothing like this.

ON TV - a BIG BLACK MAN with no teeth screams in the face of a teenage boy. Bringing him to tears!

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON CELL - FLASHBACK

Lights are out.

Harold, bloodied shirt, bruised face, lies on the bottom bunk -- scrunched up like a ball, whimpering.

BIG STAN, his cellmate, in his boxers and socks, brushes his teeth. We see he has blood on his knuckles. He finishes his teeth. While climbing onto his bunk:

BIG STAN

Ease up. It'll feel more natural.

He laughs.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Harold makes his way to his bed. For the first time we see a long scar across his chest. Could be from surgery...or something far worse.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Harold strolls down the street. He passes a busstop.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Harold?

He turns. DOUG BANKS. Handsome. Manly. Harold strains to make out the face.

DOUG

Doug. Doug Banks. Bushkill High.
Class of 86. The hell are you doing
down here?

Harold gives a half shrug and speeds away.

Doug left standing there, *what the hell is wrong...?*

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Harold on the computer -- web surfing. Typing one finger at a time.

On the comp: *ADJUSTING TO LIFE AFTER PRISON*

Various articles pop up. Harold reads them.

BRIELLE DOBSIN, 19, cute with glasses, takes her seat at the computer next to Harold.

Harold quickly clicks his screen closed. Doesn't want anyone to know. He leaves. On his way out he turns and looks at Brielle. Stares for a moment.

EXT. LIBRARY - DAY

Harold sits on the bench. Reflective. Can of seltzer water in his hand.

Brielle walks out. Sadness on her face. Harold throws up right there. Some of it splashes on Brielle.

BRIELLE

God, mister!

HAROLD
I'm so sorry.

BRIELLE
This is disgusting!

He pours seltzer water on a napkin and wipes it off her leg.

BRIELLE
Get off me! Don't touch me!

A COP sitting in his patrol car, looks in their direction.

HAROLD
I'm so sorry. It was an accident.

Approaching them:

COP
Is there a problem ma'am?

HAROLD
No. It was--

COP
Wasn't asking you! Ma'am?

BRIELLE
He got this... filth on me. I just need to go to the doctor. He could of gave me something. Call an ambulance.

COP
Care to tell me the details of what happened?

BRIELLE
I could be dying here.

HAROLD
It was really just an accident. I apologize.

COP
Won't tell you again to keep your trap shut.

HAROLD
Sorr--

COP
Let me see some I.D.

Harold freezes.

HAROLD
I don't have any, yet.

Cop gives him a look: *What?*

HAROLD
Can I talk to you over here? Away
from the young lady.

COP
Hands behind your back.

HAROLD
Why.

BRIELLE
(to Cop)
What are you doing?

COP
He's coming down to the station.

BRIELLE
No. What for? It's not *that*
serious, okay!

The Cop gives her a look: *you started this.*

BRIELLE
I don't want to press charges. It's
no big deal. It just grossed me
out.

Cop is already stuffing Harold into the back of the car.

BRIELLE
You can't do this!

Cop closes his door and speeds off.

INT. PRECINCT - EVENING

Harold is in the holding cell. Angry.

Brielle rushes in with Wendy. They stop at the desk of
SHERIFF HARDAWAY (50's). He's the very opposite of Andy
Griffith.

SHERIFF HARDAWAY
Hey, you don't just come barging in
here!

BRIELLE
You arrested a innocent man--

WENDY
Honey, I got this. What are the charges?

SHERIFF HARDAWAY
I'm assuming you're referring to that two-bit drunk loser back there.

BRIELLE
He's not drunk!

Sheriff stands.

SHERIFF HARDAWAY
Bails set. Seventy-five hundred.

WENDY
Again, what are the charges?

SHERIFF HARDAWAY
Vandalism. That sidewalk he littered on, it's private property.

While Wendy argues with the Sheriff, Brielle is at the holding cell talking to Harold:

BRIELLE
Do you have someone we can call?
Anyone looking for you? A wife?
Kids?

Harold gazes up. Nervously shaking.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLDING CELL - QUICK FLASHBACK

A younger Harold when he first was arrested.

Two- CON'S are in his holding cell whispering and pointing at him.

CON 1
Hey! You that guy from the news, right? The one that--

CUT TO:

RESUME SCENE - PRESENT

HAROLD

I just want to get out of here.

Sheriff Hardaway, angry, opens the cell. Brielle smiles, gives the Sheriff a nasty look. Wendy and Harold make eye-contact. They recognize each other. Brielle recognizes their familiarity.

Harold walks out. Sheriff Hardaway whispers in his ear:

SHERIFF HARDAWAY

You better stay out of trouble. Cuz with your history I know I'll be seeing you again.

EXT. PRECINCT - EVENING

They all exit. Wendy walking fast, trying to get Brielle to keep up. She doesn't want Brielle to lag behind and talk to Harold like she is. Wendy pulls her arm.

BRIELLE

What mom?

WENDY

Come on.

BRIELLE

(to Harold)

Need a ride?

HAROLD

Sur--

WENDY

(pulling Brielle's hand)

No! Let's go.

INT. WENDY'S CAR - EVENING

Wendy starts the car. Fast. Pulls off. Harold left standing there. Looking.

BRIELLE

What's your beef?! We could at least get him home.

WENDY

We did enough, now stay away from him!

BRIELLE
Fine, but why?

WENDY
You don't even know him.

BRIELLE
What's the problem, mom?

WENDY
I don't want to see you around him.

BRIELLE
I said 'fine'. But I'm grown! You
keep forgetting that!

WENDY
Just trust me.

BRIELLE
He said he knows you from church!

WENDY
I'm calling Pastor. I have to tell
him!

Wendy hits a button on her steering wheel -- bluetooth.

WENDY
Call Pastor!

BRIELLE
-- Tell him what?!

The phone starts ringing.

WENDY
He's a convicted child molester
that just got out of prison a week
ago.

Brielle's face drops. Pastor Jimmy's machine comes on.

INT. THE SUNDAY'S RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - SAME

A cross hangs on the wall, over the bed. Scriptures and other
Christian artifacts adorn the room.

Jimmy's phone rings on the dresser...

We hear the shower running. Anita, in bed reading a book.

To her surprise the bathroom door opens.
She quickly throws the book across the room.
Jimmy just misses it.

JIMMY
What was that?

Anita shrugs and gives him a look: *I don't know.*

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Was my phone ringing?

ANITA
(hands him the phone)
Wendy.

JIMMY
What'd she want?

ANITA
Machine got it first. Can you
hurry, Jimbo? We're hungry.

JIMMY
Toss my brush.

Anita throws the brush towards him. He catches it and goes back into the bathroom.

On the floor, the book she tossed -- the Quran.

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

Anita and Jimmy sit across from MASTER PROPHET CHRONE, (56). He's flashy and smooth. Slick hair, manicured nails, some jewels.

A half empty glass of wine in front of Jimmy and Chrone. Chrone takes a sip. Mid-convo...

CHRONE
...and God told me to tell you both that there's a shift coming. He's maneuvering things in your life; bringing people around you. Taking your ministry to a higher level. Increase, I declare, is coming your way.

JIMMY
(hands raised)
I receive it.

Anita's not buying it. She gives a fake smile.

Under the table Jimmy gently squeezes her hand, wanting her to participate more and not be so dull.

JIMMY

Amen, Bishop.

(re: clothes)

It's clear God is doing amazing things in your life.

CHRONE

Years of hard work and faithfulness. See, God has done amazing things for me because I have done amazing things for Him. Name for the baby yet?

ANITA

After her grandmot--

JIMMY

His. But I think we should name him after one of the prophets.

ANITA

Well if it is a he -- Malcolm.

JIMMY

No way. Absolutely not. Malcolm's not the name of a prophet.

(to Chrone)

Moses is in the running.

Snapping back:

ANITA

We've been over this. My child won't have an old sounding name.

Chrone sits back and looks at them. Surprised she's speaking to him this way and he's allowing it.

JIMMY

Your child? We'll see.

ANITA

We won't!

She gets up and leaves.

JIMMY

Nita, where you going?

ANITA

(walking out)

To the car. I'm sleepy.

Jimmy begins to go after her but Bishop Chrone motions for him not to.

CHRONE

You know you're the head of a church now. A preacher. Did I -- did God make the wrong decision?

JIMMY

She's just... it's her hormones. She's never like this.

CHRONE

A man who can't lead his home can't lead others. You have to rule your house first.

JIMMY

I do. Trust me. She listens--

CHRONE

But does she obey?

(A beat...)

A lot of this is about appearances. Not the clothes and the cars, but the structure. People will see you before they see God. So they'll want to be like you before they want to be like Him.

(re: Anita)

And that won't be tolerated. I don't know if you're ready to elevate. Prophet? Not sure Jimmy.

JIMMY

Bishop -- Master Prophet, I've been studying. I'M READY.

CHRONE

When's the baby due?

JIMMY

Roughly three months.

CHRONE

And the name you want?

JIMMY

(takes a moment)

Moses.

CHROME

We're gonna see how persuasive you can be. If you're a leader it'll show three months from now.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Harold on his knees. Praying out loud:

HAROLD

... and I ask you, God, to keep protecting me. Forgive me for the wrong I've done. The wrong I will do. Forgive me for my past; guide my future; cleanse me of all filth. Please. Help me with bad dreams; help me adjust to my freedom and deliver all the other innocent people wrongfully convicted. In Jesus name. Amen.

EXT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Harold, outside his door smoking a cigarette. Coming from next door is SHIRLY (a hooker in her late 40's). More sexy than beautiful. Her dress barely covers anything.

As she closes her door she looks Harold up and down, she sees him as a potential date. Decides to engage.

SHIRLY

You dating?

HAROLD

Just smoking. I hope God isn't watching.

Either it's a bad joke or he's naive. Either way it annoys her.

SHIRLY

Newports? Trying to break the habit.

HAROLD

Well I was. Then I did. Now I'm trying to not start again.

SHIRLY

I use to have a love affair with Potato Chips. Two big bags a day. Know what made me stop?

SHIRLY (CONT'D)

Not the diabetes or the high blood pressure. Giving em away. I would feel so guilty when others saw me doing what I swore I'd never do again... the shame. I'd just get angry and give em' to the homeless. Been clean four years now. Diabetes free. Normal blood pressure. See how powerful shame is.

This resonates with Harold.

SHIRLY (CONT'D)

Guilt keeps you human. So when I see you with that in your mouth...

HAROLD

I'll feel so guilty that I'll quit.

SHIRLY

Or get better at hiding it. But you don't strike me as that kind.

We see the light from a car pull up on the sidewalk. Shirly hustles to the car. Flirtatious voice:

SHIRLY

(almost at the car)

Hey Zaddy. Miss me?

Harold, left in thought -- watches as the car pulls away. He takes a long drag of the cigarette and tosses it.

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - OFFICE - DAY

The church is coming along. The walls are painted, chairs are aligned. The pulpit is set up. A few portraits adorn the walls.

We find Jimmy in his office, YOUTUBE ON THE COMPUTER. HE'S WATCHING: *How to prophecy effectively*. On the screen we hear a prophet:

PROPHET (V.O.)

...In spite of everything you've been told, Prophecy can be taught like other forms of ministry. And to learn how to prophecy effectively, go to my website for a free 'how to guide' on the spiritual and natural acts of prophecy.

PROPHET (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 With a donation of \$1,000 or more,
 one of our many prophets will talk
 with you over the phone and teach
 you step by step how to prophecy
 and get the most out of each word.
 Along with a certificate as an
 official junior prophet.

Jimmy writes down the number.

Goes to another website - Bank of America. Types in some
 info.

INSERT COMPUTER -

Checking Balance - \$492.00

Savings Balance - \$312.15

Jimmy pulls an envelope from his pocket. It's marked Harold.
 Jimmy tears open the envelope. Pulls out \$250. Has an idea.

INT. VESTIBULE - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy strolls in. Harold's replacing a doorknob on the
 kitchen door.

JIMMY

Doing a mighty fine job, Brother
 Harold.

HAROLD

Thank you Pastor Jimmy. It's
 turning out pretty well.

Jimmy slides his pointer finger across the wall, like he's
 checking for dust.

JIMMY

Ain't it funny how God works? How
 he uses people, ya' know?

HAROLD

Believe I do, Pastor.

JIMMY

So whyon't you tell me 'bout
 yourself, Harold? How did you learn
 to do all of this?

HAROLD

Trial and error. Repetition.

JIMMY

No school? Where'd you study?

Harold's feeling uncomfortable.

HAROLD

No, I never been to college.

JIMMY

Apprenticed?

HAROLD

If I must be honest, I learned while I was incarcerated.

JIMMY

No. You Harold? You're bout' the nicest guy...

HAROLD

I really prefer not to speak on it sir --

JIMMY

Now as your employer, don't you think I have that right? To ask...?

A long beat. Harold's legs are shaking from squatting down and nervousness.

HAROLD

You've grown to trust me and God has shown me favor in your eyes.

JIMMY

And that won't change.

Harold debates if he should be honest or not.

HAROLD

Child molestation and murder. I did twenty years for it.

An uncomfortable beat. Jimmy's silence is on purpose. Then Jimmy extends his hand. Harold reluctantly shakes it.

JIMMY

I respect your honesty, sir.

Harold looks down, shamed.

JIMMY

We won't judge you here. I won't judge you.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Truth be told, the church is full of sinners. It's a hospital for the sick, not a museum for the well. We all have issues.

Jimmy kneels down. Looks into Harold's eyes.

JIMMY

This still eats you up doesn't it?

HAROLD

Every day.

JIMMY

And it should.

Harold feels worse. He falls on his butt and into the wall. Sitting there like a man who just lost a loved one.

JIMMY

But God's grace is sufficient. What's the hardest part to deal with?

HAROLD

My innocence.

JIMMY

Let's not go victim blaming.

HAROLD

I take full responsibility for what I did but I didn't do that. I'm a victim of my own guilt. I just want to be free.

Jimmy puts his hand on Harold's forehead. Harold's tears are flowing. Lifts his hands.

JIMMY

Harold, I prophecy freedom into your life. The Lord tells me to tell you to fully trust him. Not man, not your own understanding, not money -- just Him. And in doing so, he will restore your name and make it great amongst the land. Do you receive that?

(Harold nods.)

Then say it. Shout to God! Tell Him you receive it!

HAROLD

I receive it.

JIMMY

Louder.

HAROLD

I RECEIVE IT.

JIMMY

HE CAN'T HEAR (YOU) --

HAROLD

(over)

I RECEIVE IT, LORD!

Harold burst out into tears. Crying. Jimmy puts his loving hand on Harold's shoulder. Pleased at his emotional manipulation.

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - OFFICE

Harold knocks and enters as Jimmy reads his Bible.

HAROLD

Wanted to see me Pastor?

JIMMY

I believe I have something you want.

Harold looks at a picture on the wall of Master Prophet Chrono and Jimmy.

HAROLD

You know Bishop Chrono?

JIMMY

Sure do. He's our overseer. Had dinner with him this week. Because of him this church is started. Anita and I were trying to conceive and couldn't. Long story short: I told Bishop. He told me to sow into the kingdom and God would grant me a harvest. I had maybe \$250 to my name. I sowed. All of it; and within three months, she was pregnant and I had every penny needed to buy this building. Cash.

A beat. Jimmy's letting that soak in... then--

JIMMY

I have your money here.

He hands it to him. Just as it gets into Harold's hand, Jimmy casually says:

JIMMY

So if you're believing God for anything rule number one is what?

HAROLD

Sow.

JIMMY

...INTO THE MINISTRY. Good soil only, Harold.

(pause)

Class dismissed.

EXT. PARK - AFTERNOON

Harold and Homeless Charlie play chess at a table. They both chomp down on sandwiches.

HOMELESS CHARLIE

For years I've been missing out. I wouldn't even read Charlotte's Web.

Harold laughs.

HAROLD

Pork is great.

HOMELESS CHARLIE

Eight years - no meat. Nineteen years of no pork. First night on the street, day after thanksgiving, nothing but chitterlings. Not even the strays would pick at those pales. I didn't have that luxury so Chitterlings it was. What a welcome, huh?

HAROLD

Check.

Charlie examines the board. An "are you serious" look on his face.

HOMELESS CHARLIE

You serious?

Charlie makes his move.

HAROLD

Mate.

Harold looks at the board. Exhales. Annoyed he missed that threat.

HOMELESS CHARLIE

You usually wipe me. What's wrong?
Problems with the preacher man?

(no response.)

Well get up. I want to make some money.

Harold sits in a nearby bench.

Charlie calls out to the people walking by:

HOMELESS CHARLIE

Chess games. Two dollars! Winner takes all. Come try your luck.

INT. PRISON CELL - FLASHBACK

Harold playing chess at a table full of INMATES. He moves a piece. Checkmate. The Inmates break into an uproar.

The LOSER is salty. Harold excuses himself and heads into his empty

CELL

*...where an ENVELOPE is on his bed. It's from the **OUT FOR JUSTICE ORGANIZATION...***

He's reading it:

HAROLD (V.O.)

Your case came across our desk...we'd love to meet with you and discuss your exoneration... If you --

He balls it up. Flushes it down the toilet.

INT. ISLAMIC STORE - DAY

A woman comes out the dressing room wearing a hijab. All we can see is her eyes and part of her nose. She poses in front of the mirror. We can see her cheeks curl up. She's smiling. As she unwraps it, it's Anita.

ANITA

(to the cashier)
I'll take it.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Brielle has been at this computer all day. Two cups of empty coffee, sweaty. Stressed and exhausted.

She scribbles on a notepad every few seconds. Writing something from the computer into the pad.

...LATER...

Brielle is the last person in there. The LIBRARIAN walks up behind her. Brielle jumps.

LIBRARIAN
Sweetie, we're closing.

Brielle exhales. Starts to put her stuff in her book bag.

LIBRARIAN (CONT'D)
I see you're in here every day. My son went off to college, you can have his old desktop.

BRIELLE
(grins)
I have my own laptop, but I think my mom has the house bugged.

INT. WENDY'S HOUSE - BRIELLE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Wendy is going through Brielle's closet and drawers. Carefully removing and putting things back the exact way they were.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Harold sits by the gate near the pool, staring into the distance.

We hear a car door slam and speed off. Heels click down the sidewalk.

Shirly, heading to her door, stops when she sees Harold.

SHIRLY
Who are you again?

HAROLD
Harold. From Bushkill, Penn--

SHIRLY

Pretty late to be out here just
staring into space, don't cha'
think?

HAROLD

Kinda been used to it.

SHIRLY

Have a good night.

HAROLD

You too.

Shirly continue's back towards her room. Opens the door...
Then stops...

SHIRLY

Hey, got a cig?!

HAROLD

Is that a trick question?

SHIRLY

Is that an insult?

Harold, confused at her question... Nevertheless he pulls out
a cigarette. Holds it out. She walks to it. Lights it.

SHIRLY

How many you had today?

HAROLD

Three.

SHIRLY

I can smell it on you.

HAROLD

What's your name?

SHIRLY

Shirly.

HAROLD

My ex-wifes name. I'm scared of
you.

SHIRLY

These ain't Newports.

HAROLD

Kools. I'm on a budget. I need a
financial breakthrough.

SHIRLY
 Sounds like some TV preacher talk,
 "financial breakthrough". You just
 need a job. You into church and
 stuff like that?

HAROLD
 (nodding)
 Believe in God?

Shirly scoffs. Harold looks at her: *what does that mean?*

SHIRLY
 Not sure right now.
 (a beat)
 Know what I mean?

HAROLD
 Suppose. I been there.

SHIRLY
 At the bottom of the barrel?

HAROLD
 For twenty years.

This piques her interest.

HAROLD
 Lost my wife, freedom, dignity--

SHIRLY
 How?

INT. HAROLD'S APARTMENT - FLASHBACK

This is the late 90's...

GETTA, twenties, dressed for work. Ready to go. Harold, in his twenties, rushes in. Security uniform on. He looks tired.

HAROLD
 Sorry I'm late. Been circling the
 block the last half hour. Had to
 park in front of a hydrant.

GETTA
 Holiday season, honey. Gotta go. I
 don't wanna miss my train.

HAROLD
 Where's princess?

GETTA

In her room, sleep. Allergies are awful. Gave her Benadryl.

They smooch and she leaves.

HAROLD (V.O.)

It was my step-daughter, Melissa. Loved her like my own. Benadryl had her out cold.

...LATER...

Harold peeks into her bedroom: MELISSA sleeps like an angel.

Harold in the kitchen. He flips the lightswitch -- it's blown.

INT. HAROLD'S APARTMENT BUILDING

Harold jogging down the steps. Shirtless. He leaves the apartment door slightly open.

At the bottom of the stairs is the mailbox. Uses the key to open the box. Gets his mail. Through the window (on the entrance door), he sees a parking attendant writing tickets. He's the only car parked on the non-parking side.

He zooms out the door and gets into his car just before the attendant reaches it.

INT. HAROLD'S CAR - EVENING

Harold circles the block. Nowhere to park. Shivering. Fiddling with the heat. Waiting for it to kick in.

INT. HAROLD'S APARTMENT - SAME

Black boots step into the apartment... The door slowly closes. A HAND locks the door.

HAROLD'S CAR - SAME

Harold gets stuck on a one way street where the cops block it off for construction. An OFFICER ahead is directing the traffic. Harold has nowhere to go.

HAROLD'S APARTMENT - MINUTES LATER

Melissa's bedroom slowly closes. We see a man zip up his pants (we never see him from the waist up). He paces out the apartment.

...A SHORT WHILE LATER...

Harold burst through the closed door. Mail in his hands. Shivering and out of breath. He ran here.

First thing he does is get some coffee. Everything seems fine. Nothings been touched.

HAROLD (V.O.)

I was so cold I never bothered to check back on her. Her door was closed, we lived in a safe area.

...LATER THAT DAY...

Harold watches TV when all the lights go out. A fuse blew.

Harold goes to the fuse box, which is by Melissa's bedroom. He switches the fuses. All of the lights come on. He checks to see if Melissa's is on. It's not.

Harold brings a battery powered light into the room. Sets it on the dresser.

Melissa is laying on her stomach. It's hard to see anything.

Harold feels around for her walkman. Vaguely sees it on the opposite side of the bed. He reaches across her and grabs the walkman.

He puts the batteries in the light and flips it on. Sets it on her desk. Looks at his hands -- bloody. Freaks out. Looks at the bed -- sheets covered in blood. Melissa isn't moving. Dead.

-- A knife on the bed, he picks it up out of sheer panic.

HAROLD (V.O.)

And that's what did me in. Raped and murdered.

EXT. STARLIGHT MOTEL - PRESENT

Shirly is in disbelief, looking at Harold strange.

HAROLD

When they proved my innocence I -

Shirly throws a cigarette in his face.

SHIRLY
I HATE PERVES LIKE YOU! YOU RUIN
LITTLE GIRLS LIVES! YOU SICK
ASSHOLE!

HAROLD
Shirly!

They get into a shouting match!

SHIRLY
Get out of here! You better leave!

HAROLD
I didn't (do it)!

SHIRLY
(over)
Because I know people! People that
hate people like you! Your time in
jail would be a vacation (compared
to what they'd do to you.)

HAROLD
(over)
I DIDN'T DO IT! IT'S PROVEN!

Shirly reaches her door. Slams it closed.

Rocmond runs out with a bat.

ROCMOND
The hell is all the commotion?!

Harold slams his door closed.

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - MORNING

Jimmy is opening the door when Harold pops up.

HAROLD
Pastor Jimmy, I need to speak with
you.

Before Jimmy can get the word 'yes' out --

HAROLD
I need a place.

JIMMY
What's wrong?

HAROLD

I shared my testimony with someone
and now she's got people out to
kill me. I need a place to stay.

JIMMY

Okay. Calm down. Come in.

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - OFFICE

They take their respective seats.

JIMMY

We really don't have a place for
you to--

HAROLD

I can stay here...

Jimmy leans back in his chair. Steeples his hands. Looks at his computer screen. The prophet he was watching on youtube is paused on the screen.

JIMMY

To be fair to the ministry, I'd
have to charge rent. Up-front.

Harold pulls the envelope from his pocket (the envelope Jimmy gave him). Quick. Hands it over.

JIMMY

I'm trusting you, Harold. Don't let
us down.

HAROLD

I promise.

JIMMY

There's a cot in the storage room.
I'll have Anita bring a pillow from
home... no company, Harold.

HAROLD

Pastor Jimmy, can you keep what we
said between us?

Jimmy leans in. Puts his hand on his chin. Nods. Agrees.

INT. THE SUNDAY'S RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Anita watches the TV with disgust. Jimmy walks in excited.

JIMMY

Guess what?

ANITA

Did you hear about this? Why aren't we speaking out?

Jimmy turns to the TV to see the story of "another unarmed black man shot" while pushing the wheelchair of his handicapped mother.

JIMMY

It's sad.

ANITA

It is! But what can we do to stop it from happening?

JIMMY

I'll send the mom some flowers. The church will do a two-day fast-

ANITA

Flowers Jimmy? If this were you, you think I would want flowers? I'd want someone to stand with me in my time of weakness. We're Christian right?! Christ-like behavior!

JIMMY

Okay. I'll reach out. But I--

ANITA

Liar.

She storms out. Jimmy, left standing there - *what's wrong?*

Anita heading towards the stairs.

JIMMY (O.S.)

ANITA! NITA!

Jimmy's behind her now.

ANITA

I'm tired of it. It's all so fake.

JIMMY

What are you speaking about?

ANITA

The whole Christianity thing. No Christian's are out there with that family.

ANITA (CONT'D)
 They're in their houses just
 "praying" it don't happen again.
 Muslims, strong Muslim men are out
 making a difference. Helping her.

JIMMY
 It just happened.

She shakes her head. In her mind he just doesn't get it.
 Makes her way up the stairs.

JIMMY
 Nita, help me understand. Because
 you're acting--

She stops halfway up the stairs.

ANITA
 No, you're acting, Jimmy! You're
 the actor -- the showman. You just
 want to build a big church. What
 about the people? What about those
 who don't believe in Jesus? They
 need love, too. But you're so
 blinded by your...
 (searches for the word)
 Selfish, small-minded views that
 you neglect that.

JIMMY
 What are you--

ANITA
 You said we would do this together!
 And we aren't. We never have. You
 never intended for us to. You used
 me to soften the hearts of those
 people so they'd sew into you.
 Convinced us all it was for
 ministry but it was for you -- all
 of it for you, Jimmy!

JIMMY
 Here, let's calm down. Get some
 rest. You're not making sense.

She walks down the stairs. In his face now.

ANITA
 Not making sense Jimmy?
 (threatening)
 You don't want to play these games
 with me. We both know...

Her threat lingers there...
 ...Jimmy walks away. Hurt. Angry with himself.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

It's after lam. Jimmy sits in the dark. Bible open. Glass of Bourbon beside it. He drinks as he reads the scriptures...

Then tears slowly fall down his face. Bottom lip quivering.

-- Jimmy burst into tears. Weeping. Takes a moment to gather himself...

JIMMY
 What have I become?

INT. KITCHEN - HOURS LATER

SUNDAY MORNING.

Now the glass is empty. Jimmy's asleep. Face down in the Bible. Same clothes on.

Anita walks in, dressed like a traditional first-lady -- hat, gloves, 2 inch-heels. She takes in the scene. Shakes her head, can't stand the sight of him. Not really wanting to, she nudges him.

ANITA
 Get up.

No response. A second...

ANITA
 Jimmy, get up. C'mon. You have to preach. It's the first Sunday in the new building.

He jumps up. Panicked. Frantic.

JIMMY
 Oh, God. Oh, God how do I lo--
 what am I-- what time--

ANITA
 Nine-thirty.

He speeds up the stairs.

JIMMY (O.S.)
 I gotta write a sermon.

INT. JIMMY'S CAR - DAY

Anita drives. Jimmy's in the backseat. Bible open. Notepad and pen beside him. He's taking notes. Writing things. Rushing. He exhales from frustration.

ANITA

Take some altoids. I can smell the liquor on your tongue.

EXT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - DAY

They pull up to the church. A line around the corner of people waiting to get in.

Jimmy takes that in. Proudful. Sits up, astute as the people watch the car pull up.

JIMMY

You believe it, baby? All these people are here to hear me preach.

Responding to his question:

ANITA

Not at all.

He ignores her jab. In his mind it's all about him right now. But as the car continues, he sees Bishop Chrone waiting outside. It's like he's looking straight at Jimmy --

JIMMY

Stop. STOP THE CAR!

She slams on the brakes. He gets out. Gathers himself.

CHRONE

(shaking his head)
Church 'posta started at 11. It's 10:23. Doors ain't open.

JIMMY

Look at this turnout, Bishop!
People from all over. All races.

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - SMALL ROOM

Harold gazes out the window and sees Jimmy and Chrone having a heated exchange as they walk towards the door.

EXT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - DAY

CHROME

People won't support mess, boy.

JIMMY

I've got this.

Jimmy stops at the door. Silences the crowd. Speaks loud.

JIMMY

We're going to start right away. I just want to apologize. I'm expecting. My wife had a scare this morning. Thought she may have went into labor early. We came straight from the hospital.

Someone from the crowd screams:

SOMEONE

Is she alright?

JIMMY

Yeah, in a lot of pain. But God is a healer.

They break out into "Amens".

Jimmy opens the door, welcoming them as they enter. Through his teeth:

CHROME

You got this, huh?

Jimmy nods. Still smiling at the crowd as they enter.

CHROME

Then why is your visibly pregnant wife walking?

Jimmy looks down the street and we can see Anita moseying up the block. It's difficult for her to walk.

CHROME (CONT'D)

You just told these people she was in pain. Yet, she troops up the hill by herself. Appearances young man. Appearances.

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - SANCTUARY

SERIES OF SHOTS

- Jimmy preaching. The people going wild. Chrono shaking his head side to side. Appearing to be just as into it. Playing the role.
- Jimmy, prophesying and laying hands. They fall out.
- Anita, on the pulpit watching. Can't help but be disgusted by his "sudden change" of ways.
- Chrono at the mic... soft organ playing...

CHRONO

Did y'all enjoy the move of God in this place today?

A group of "yeah's" and "Amen's"...

CHRONO (CONT'D)

Whееew it was mighty! When I plant a church and a leader, I don't just do it. I'm not franchising. I spend hours before the Lord seeking the right person. Sometimes when God gives me an answer, and I'll be real -- can I be real with y'all?

"Yeahs", "amens", "be real, preacher" -- the typical.

CHRONO

I say 'God why them?' And God'll just look at me. I feel Him. Look at me and say 'why you'?! So I just shutup. Because I know if he could use me and my unqualified self then-

Organ roars. People stand up. In agreement... Chrono tries to settle them down...

CHRONO

So it's only right that we sow into the life, the ministry -- into the family of this Man of God...YOUR man of God.

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES

Church is over. Anita counts the money along with Wendy.

WENDY
 ...First Lady.

ANITA
 Please don't call me that, Wendy.
 I've told you Anita's fine.

Wendy's uncomfortable calling her anything else.

WENDY
 Pastor sure did give a good word.

ANITA
 UmmmHmmm. He's an anointed man.

WENDY
 (re: money)
 Church didn't do too bad itself.

Anita nods. Senses Wendy wants to go deeper. Anita never makes eye-contact with her.

WENDY
 Being married and all -- and this
 is just a question, I hope it
 doesn't offend -- but do you tell
 each other everything?

ANITA
 If men told us everything they
 thought, we'd never marry them.

Wendy chuckles.

WENDY
 What about regarding ministry. Like
 if, lets say, a member was going
 through something tough -- a woman
 member -- and she needed to open up
 to you...

ANITA
 Never would I disclose private
 information that isn't life
 threatening. I don't feel that's
 my husband's business.

WENDY
 Well... What if technically it was?

Anita looks up. Stops counting.

ANITA
 What are we talking about?

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - BATHROOM

Harold opens the door and freezes when he hears a conversation going on...

BEHIND THE STALL

Chrono on the toilet. Pants around his ankles. Bluetooth in his ear.

CHRONO

Oh, I can convince them. People believe whatever you say when you're rich.

Harold can't believe what he's hearing:

CHRONO (O.C.)

His wife is his biggest obstacle. She'll be the headache. But women are easily forgettable in this hustle. Church is filled with em'. New ones wanting to be a first lady.

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - OFFICE

Jimmy sticks his head in. Neither woman looks too pleased.

JIMMY

You ladies done yet? Bishop needs to go.

Anita pushes him to the side as she walks out.

He gives her an annoyed look.

Wendy hands him a thick envelope.

EXT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES

Jimmy and Chrono walk. Jimmy gives him the envelope.

CHRONO

You've got it.

Jimmy's face lights up.

CHRONO (CONT'D)

I can use you all across the country. Once you learn how to prophecy.

JIMMY
Learning it now. As we speak.

INT/EXT. JIMMY'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Jimmy strolls to the car. Finds Anita sitting inside with an attitude.

She ignores his taps on the window. He taps HARDER.

JIMMY
C'mon!

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - AFTERNOON

Wendy locks Jimmy's office. Takes a final walk through before she locks up.

There's a SOUND coming from in the kitchen.
She grabs a broom as a weapon. Heads towards the sound.
Opens the kitchen door swinging wildly.

HAROLD
Wait, wait, wait! No! It's brother
Harold!

WENDY
I know!

He manages to snatch the broom from her. Angry.

HAROLD
What's your problem?!

WENDY
You, buddy, have the problem. What
are you doing here?!

Behind him is a tablet.

HAROLD
Just doing work for Pastor, Jimmy.

She looks at him like he's lying.

HAROLD
I know what you think you know. But
it's not that way.

WENDY
So you weren't in jail for murder
and rape?

HAROLD

That is true. But I was -- am innocent. You're a lawyer, aren't you?

WENDY

I know guilt when I see it.

HAROLD

May I show you something?

WENDY

If you pull out your penis--

HAROLD

Ma'am no! I'm not an animal!

WENDY

Anyone locked away that long becomes an animal, even if only by default.

Wendy begins backing away.

HAROLD

Philippians chapter 2 verse 3 and 4
You're a woman of God.

As he walks closer to her.

HAROLD

'Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.' Don't make this about you. You can help me.

Wendy's backed into a wall. Literally.

...LATER THAT NIGHT...

Wendy and Harold stare into a computer screen -- reading. A bunch of papers are being printed from the church's printer.

WENDY

But I don't understand, why did you stay? Why didn't you let them release you?

HAROLD

The Alford Plea.

WENDY

But that wouldn't apply to your situation. I don't understand.

HAROLD

Normally it wouldn't but by the time my innocence was discovered I only had a few years left. And DA still felt like there was enough to convict me, despite what the DNA proved.

WENDY

And if you accepted you couldn't sue the government.

HAROLD

Plus the 3-5 years it takes to establish freedom...

WENDY

You would of been out before it ever went through.

HAROLD

State wouldn't want to admit they were completely wrong. Suggested I make up some story that I confessed out of fear - to take the blame off their error. I still would of had to register as a sex offender. So by finishing my term I was free from that awful name. But the state still refused to expunge my record. So I'm no better off than if I had been released earlier.

WENDY

You could have sued and got millions.

HAROLD

And bring awareness to this generation. They would know about what happened. There's no innocence when you're accused of something so foul. Especially when there is no face to the crime.

WENDY

You didn't deserve this.

HAROLD

Maybe I did. It could have been my Karma; something I brought on myself. God saw fit -- for whatever reason -- that I endure it. Who am I to benefit financially from his lesson?

WENDY

God is not into injustice.

HAROLD

Most of me feels responsible for what happened. I know I'm not guilty but in my heart of hearts, I should have been more careful. Not so...
(breaking into tears)
she was like my own child.

Wendy holds him in her arms and comforts him.

INT. THE SUNDAY'S RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Jimmy and Anita lie in bed. Earphones are in Jimmy's ear, he's on his laptop.

Anita has a cold towel on her stomach.

INSERT - COMPUTER SCREEN

Jimmy prepping his sermon for the week...

...But that's just a front. He's really listening to a tutorial on how to prophecy.

ANITA

Jim. JIM. JIM!

He takes the buds out. Looks over.

ANITA

I don't feel well.

JIMMY

Just relax --

ANITA

No. It's... it's different.

He sets the computer to the side.

JIMMY

Want me to rub it?

She shrugs. He does it anyway.

JIMMY
He's so full of life.

She shoots him a sharp look: *it's a **her**.*

JIMMY (CONT'D)
God's got mighty things planned for young Moses. He will create the cure for cancer and every other demonic disease. In Jesus mighty name --

She shoves his hand off her belly.

ANITA
Please stop! I can't deal. It's so fake Jimmy!

JIMMY
You're doubting the call of God on our son's life?

ANITA
No. On yours! You were drunk this morning. You weren't prepared. You preached a message you got off Youtube. Verbatim. Where's the anointing in that --

JIMMY
(defensive)
The spirit led me to that!

ANITA
BS Jimmy! Don't make God out a lie because you're a lazy man that cares more about his image than souls.

JIMMY
Who are you to make such lucid claims? You barely believe anymore.

ANITA
Because I live with a hypocrite.

He puts his finger in her face. Angry.

JIMMY
Don't ever say that to me again --

She twists his finger. He screams.

Anita uses the headboard to help her sit up straight.

ANITA

People are dying left and right.
Mothers are losing their kids.
Families are being broken. And the
best we have to offer is: come to
church. We should be going to them.
We should be a pivotal force in the
community. We draw them to Him, not
to us.

JIMMY

Been listening to that damn
Farrakahn.

ANITA

And who you been listening to?
'Master Prophet send me \$599 and
you'll lie to the people like I
do?'

JIMMY

Lot lost his wife because she
looked back, because she didn't
heed the Word. A faithless woman is
of no use to her Christian husband.

ANITA

And a pulpit pimp is no use to the
Kingdom of God.

He stares at her. Sharp. If looks could kill...

ANITA

I'm done living your facade, Jimmy.

JIMMY

I'm done with you Anita! You
and your simple mindedness -- your
idiotic way of thinking; lack of
faith. Doubt. Are you even
Christian anymore?

A tear drops from her eye...

JIMMY

Save the damn tears. You can keep
the house. I just want out. For
whom the son sets free is free
indeed.

Jimmy snatches his pillow off the bed. It knocks down her
cellphone. Takes his computer and he's out.

INT. THE SUNDAY'S RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM

...Clock reads 3am...

Jimmy has over the ear headphones on, listening to prophecy tutorials (we can hear it). But he's asleep on the couch. Comfortable as ever.

A half bottle of Hennessey is on the floor beside him.

INT. SUNDAY'S RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - SAME

Anita is in pain. She jolts. Contractions? When she tries to get out of bed, a shot of pain prevents her.

Her eyes are fixed on her cell phone (the one Jimmy knocked over) on the other side of the bed. The five feet between her and the phone seems miles away. She screams:

ANITA
JIIIIIMMMMMYYYY!

She manages to get one foot out the bed... then another. Slowly rises.

CUT TO:

LIVING ROOM - SAME

Jimmy turns onto his side. Cozy. And then --

THUMP! From upstairs...

INT. THE SUNDAY'S RESIDENCE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DUSK

As Jimmy heads to the bathroom he steps in something. Turns the hallway light on. It's BLOOD...and it's a trail of it leading from his closed bedroom door. He rushes into the

BEDROOM

And finds Anita, on the floor, back against the bed. Legs open. Surrounded by blood.

MONTAGE

Jimmy in the HOSPITAL weeping...

Jimmy and Anita at home, at the dinner table, no one eats. They both stare into space. Lost and hurt.

Jimmy and Anita (dressed in her Muslim garb), stand in front of the congregation while the Elders surround them -- hands pointed at them. Master Prophet Chrono lays hands on them. Jimmy is receptive. Anita? Not so much.

INT. NEW BETHEL - AFTERNOON

Service is over. Chrono and Jimmy sit and talk. Jimmy still not 100 percent.

CHRONO

Membership has grown. One-hundred and twenty five percent. In two months.

JIMMY

(dry)
Yeah.

CHRONO

Son, I know this isn't easy for you. But God is going to work it out in your favor. It all works together for the good of those that love the Lord. You believe that, don't you?

A beat...

JIMMY

I don't know if I believe that I even love the Lord.

CHRONO

Now hush your voice. You can't say stuff like that around here. You never know who's listening. Now what's your problem?

JIMMY

I just don't care anymore. It's like life got worse for me the past few weeks.

CHRONO

You made a huge transition. That's expected.

JIMMY

My wife is Muslim. My congregation is growing but I'm dying. I lost my son. My faith is nowhere close to where it needs to be. I'm gaining what I always wanted and losing what means most at the same time.

CHROME

Balance. You have to balance, Jimbo. Now that wife of yours. She's no good for you. Knew that the first time I met her. She is what's gonna destroy you. Know why I'm not married? Because I wanted to be as much like Jesus as I could. And if I failed being like him, then at least I could be like Paul. See you have a good thing going here. People identify with you. They don't normally identify with preachers because we're seen as set apart. But we know that's bull. We're all held accountable for what we know. From the preacher to the new convert. But this miscarriage made you more human to them. That's why membership has been growing the way it has. In two months you have over 300 members. And they all give. That's the beauty of it.

JIMMY

Money was never Jesus' or Paul's motive.

CHROME

We need some Deacons. Someone that the people can identify with more. Someone that'll give them hope. How about that guy? The one that lives here.

(silence, snaps his fingers)

JIMMY ARE YOU WITH ME?!

Jimmy snaps out of it and nods.

NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - VESTIBULE

Wendy has a plate set to the side. She brings it to Anita who is at a table reading her Quran.

WENDY

First Lady... here you go. Made collards. Just for you.

ANITA

Thank you my good sister. But no thank you.

WENDY

No pork. Turkey meat. Try it out. Tell me how you like it.

ANITA

Not eating til' after sundown.

Wendy, uncomfortable, full of questions, but debating how to approach --

WENDY

I miscarried before. Three times if I'm going to be honest.

Anita closes the Quran. This sparks her interest.

WENDY (CONT'D)

The worst feeling in the world. No one understands unless they've been through it. You feel lonely, embarrassed. Shamed because you can't do the only things that were designed especially for women.

(Wendy takes a seat.)

I was where you are. No one knows this - well maybe very few do, but I was Jewish. So it was my duty, my only duty, to bear my husband's children. When I couldn't, I was of no use to him. Became a Pariah.

Wendy and Anita tear up.

WENDY (CONT'D)

First lady, it will get better!

Anita puts her head down; Wendy leans in close and hugs her.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Shirly closes the door as a TRICK leaves her bedroom.

Shirly, in a nightgown, lights a cigarette and takes a squat on her bed.

There's a KNOCK on the door.

SHIRLY

Go away.

The knob turns, the locks do too - Rocmond enters.

ROCMOND

You ain't paid all week.

SHIRLY

I got you Rocmond. Things don't look the best down there.

ROCMOND

Two days. Pay up.

SHIRLY

Three years... I ever been late before?

ROCMOND

We focusing on today.

He walks in closer.

ROCMOND

Got some stuff for me?

She goes inside the drawer and pulls out a bag of Cocaine. Holds it.

SHIRLY

How long will this buy me?

She dangles it. It's a half full ziplock bag.

SHIRLY (CONT'D)

It's the good stuff.

ROCMOND

Two weeks. But you still owe me body.

She throws the bag at him hard.

INT. BRIELLE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Brielle is on her laptop.

INSERT LAPTOP SCREEN -

How to tell if you're internet is being monitored

Whatever she finds frustrates her because moments later she smashes her laptop to the floor. Shattering it.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Harold is there. Coffee on his side. Charlie's with him, being a nuisance.

HOMELESS CHARLIE
But why you care, man?

HAROLD
This is why I've been in so much nonsense. Karma is real.

HOMELESS CHARLIE
That ain't got nothing to do with nothing.

HAROLD
I brought you here for support.

HOMELESS CHARLIE
Great friends are honest.

Charlie spots a sexy woman across the library. He nudges Harold.

HOMELESS CHARLIE
See that over there? Man, back in my heyday...

HAROLD
Charlie not now.

HOMELESS CHARLIE
Try facebook. That name ain't common. She prolly remarried by now.

HAROLD
What's a facebook?

HOMELESS CHARLIE
Scoot your rump.

Charlie takes over. Types. Charlie has a Facebook page. His profile picture: close up photo of him smiling.

HOMELESS CHARLIE
Social networking. It's the in thing.

HAROLD

You got one?

HOMELESS CHARLIE

You got to. It's the only way
people know you exist. I hope
someday, someone from my family
will reach out.

He clicks on his inbox - no messages (old or new).

HOMELESS CHARLIE

It's lonely out here.

(a beat)

Spell her name.

HAROLD

G-e-t-t-a.

HOMELESS CHARLIE

(as he types)

Like the gas stations?

Harold gives him a look. Doesn't know what he means.

A bunch of 'Getta's' pop up.

HOMELESS CHARLIE

Any of these look familiar?

Charlie slides off. Harold takes over. Reads.

HOMELESS CHARLIE

Just scroll down...

HAROLD

Thanks.

HOMELESS CHARLIE

So you thought about what you'd do
if you find her?

Harold takes a moment... he hasn't thought about it...doesn't
respond.

HOMELESS CHARLIE

What's going on with the Preacher
Man? Seems different doesn't he?
His ole' lady hasn't made a pork
chop in a while. Says it's no good
for me.

HAROLD

A lot of Getta's.

HOMELESS CHARLIE

She used to be there every day, now
he only comes. Sends the food with--

HAROLD

-- I think this is her!

It's a picture of an older Getta. Still pretty. Age hasn't
been cruel to her. Charlie clicks on her page, it's private.
He has to send her a request.

HOMELESS CHARLIE

Private page.

HAROLD

Can you send her a message?

INT. THE SUNDAY'S RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

A cradle, bassinet -- walls are painted light baby colors.

Anita cries, clutching her Quran, rocking in her rocking
chair.

...DOWN THE HALL... BATHROOM

Jimmy's laptop sits on the sink. He's online - Master
prophecy classes. He practices in the mirror. Different
smiles, trying to find the most convincing way to manipulate.

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - NIGHT

Harold vacuums the sanctuary. Humming and singing to himself.
Jimmy enters. Motions for Harold to shut off the vacuum.
Jimmy has a stern look on his face.

JIMMY

Have a seat.

Jimmy steps off the pulpit and takes a seat in the front row.

JIMMY

Some interesting news has come to
my attention. You know anything
about this?

Harold looks away. Ashamed. Embarrassed.

JIMMY

New Bethel Ministries has a growing
youth and young adult ministry.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

How do you see yourself playing into that?

HAROLD

I would love to help however I could.

JIMMY

But how could I trust you? How could the parents trust you with this reputation?

HAROLD

I know what it looks like but I'm the vic--

JIMMY

Don't you dare minimize that young girls death.

HAROLD

I loved her more than myself. I'd never -- who told you this?

JIMMY

How I know doesn't matter. It's public knowledge anyway. Harold we can't use you anymore.

Harold lets this soak in.

JIMMY

I'm sorry. Church has enough problems. We don't need this kind of publicity. This kind of controversy might...

Jimmy trails off into his own thoughts. Gets an idea.

JIMMY

You know what Harold, I'm gonna stand by you. You're a good brother. You've paid your debt and I trust you. But don't let this get out.

Harold is confused.

HAROLD

So I can stay?

JIMMY

Yeah...well, no. You have to move out. I'll set you up in a room down at the motel over there.

HAROLD

That's where I came from. People there want to kill me.

JIMMY

I'll take care of that. But yeah, go on and clean up. God's gonna make you over and you're gonna do great things for the kingdom. Amen?

EXT/INT. WENDY'S HOUSE/JIMMY'S CAR - DAY

Wendy and Jimmy sit in Jimmy's car.

WENDY

I don't agree, God doesn't work like that.

JIMMY

No one should be exiled from the Love of God.

WENDY

But he shouldn't be around young children.

JIMMY

Just look into it; you have those connections. Find out the facts. He still claims innocent--

WENDY

Would you ever confess to something so heinous? My skin crawls when he's around.

JIMMY

So you think he did it?

WENDY

Where there's smoke there's fire--

JIMMY

Well, not if it's a cigarette.

Jimmy smirks at his dry joke. Wendy finds no humor in it.

WENDY
 (pleading)
 Pastor, please. It's best for the
 ministry.

JIMMY
 We'll figure it out. On another
 note. I need a good PR.

WENDY
 I know a few.

JIMMY
 No-no. I need the very best. It's
 going to be a whirlwind.

Wendy exhales loudly. He just said they'd take care of this,
 now he's renegeing on his word? Jimmy's so lost in his
 thoughts that he didn't hear her exhaling.

WENDY
 Is first lady okay?

He begrudgingly snaps out of his thoughts--

JIMMY
 Who? -- oh, yeah-yeah, she's fine.
 Recovering well.

WENDY
 I sent flowers.

JIMMY
 We have a ton of stuff. Pretty sure
 we got em'. But thank you.

WENDY
 Life gives no warnings--

JIMMY
 Brielle?

WENDY
 I heard her smashing her computer.
 She's so violent now.

JIMMY
 God, she needs prayer. Have you
 fasted?

WENDY
 For two weeks now. Would you mind
 talking to her?

JIMMY
 Will you find the publicist?
 (Wendy nods)
 She home now?

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Harold unpacks his suitcase. That sweater we first saw him in is the first thing he hangs up.

While in the closet, Harold stares at the sweater.

INT. HAROLD'S APARTMENT - (FLASHBACK)

Christmas morning. A TREE, gifts around it - Getta hands Harold a box. He opens it, it's the sweater. They kiss.

INT. WENDY'S HOUSE - OFFICE - NIGHT

A pile of books and files are on Wendy's desk. She looks worn. Sipping coffee.

Brielle storms in. Stunned to see her mother at the table.

WENDY
 Where have you been, Brielle?!

Brielle breezes by her. Wendy reaches out her arm, grabs her and stops her. She stands.

WENDY
 I said 'where have you been?!

BRIELLE
 Out. Now let me go, can you?

WENDY
 I pay your phone bill. When I call you answer. No reason I should go days without hearing from you. You had me worried.

BRIELLE
 Every thing is always about you. Always about how you feel and how you see things.

WENDY
 Manipulation and diversion won't work this time. You will obey me or leave.

Brielle's eyes are focused on the files on Wendy's desk.

BRIELLE

Wait, what are you doing? Why are you bothering the man?

Wendy relaxes and takes her seat. She sits.

WENDY

Legal business.

BRIELLE

I know but what are you doing?

Brielle snatches a file off her desk.

BRIELLE

You told me to leave him alone and now you're investigating him.

As Wendy snatches back --

WENDY

It's not like that. Now go upstairs!

Brielle drops the paper and runs upstairs.

INT. THE SUNDAY'S RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jimmy has his clothes arranged on the bed: shirt, tie, pants.

Anita sits on her side of the bed. Muslim garb on her head. Unhappy. She cuts her eyes at his clothes.

Just as Jimmy exits the bathroom, blowing his nose:

ANITA

I want a divorce.

JIMMY

(nonchalantly)

Me too. But now's not the time.

ANITA

I've given enough time. I have none left to give. If you file it'll look better than if I do. -- And here I am, still putting you before me!

JIMMY

Anita!

ANITA

I won't step foot in that church --
that I built -- until--

JIMMY

Don't start. You know I have the Convention in the morning. I need a clear mind and people have already been asking questions. Lets keep it together for a teeny while longer. After that we can, you know -- And w-w-wait. You didn't build that church? I built that. You helped, yes. But my sweat, blood and tears labored for that vision.

ANITA

That's your problem: you want all the credit but don't want to share the responsibility.

JIMMY

Anita, I'm not discrediting you at all. I wouldn't be where I am if it weren't for you. But you wouldn't be where you are if it wasn't for me. It's a two way street, hun.

ANITA

You think I want to be where I am? Miserable. With a man that puts everything before his family. We lost a baby Saturday night, where were you on Sunday morning?

JIMMY

At the church--

ANITA

No, at that building you call 'the church'. There's nothing Godly about you, Jimmy. Not anymore. You used to be in-tune with God--

JIMMY

And this is coming from a
'backsliding Muslim --

ANITA

THIS IS COMING FROM YOUR WIFE! The woman that knows you better than anyone. What is a man without a good woman? Not much of anything. And I know I was good to you.

ANITA (CONT'D)

I nurtured you -- that ministry,
covered your drug habit, your lies,
- prayed for you time (after time) -

JIMMY

(over)

Is this your argument for alimony?!

ANITA

I don't want a damn thing from you
anymore!

JIMMY

Oh, you wanna serve 'Allah'? Go be
free. You won't take the church.

ANITA

That church is going to crumble.
You can't lead, Jimmy! You
manipulate, emotionally. Once
you're outed, people won't respect
you. You and your 'friends' prance
around here having fashion contest;
'who can wear the brightest socks
and the tightest pants'. Only a
matter of time.

JIMMY

I don't know what you're trying to
say but I rebuke every single
spirit in the name of Jesus.

Anita is way too calm now. She stares deep into his eyes.

ANITA

I see it. You were never able to
hide anything from me.

JIMMY

Not a thing to hide. I'm an open
book, available to be used by God
in whatever way he chooses.

ANITA

Straighten up, ol' Jimbo. Your time
is near.

JIMMY

You can make threats but no--

ANITA

I'm not making threats. What don't
you see?! I loved you Jimmy!

ANITA (CONT'D)
I'd never hurt you. But I can't
protect you from yourself.

Jimmy tosses her Quran off the nightstand. She doesn't budge.

JIMMY
That right there has your mind all
gone. I want that out of my house.
NOW ANITA!

Anita calmly heads to the pick up the Quran.

Jimmy goes into the closet. He feels a breeze. When he turns
around, Anita is poring something out the window.

JIMMY
Anita! Stop!

She's emptying a bag of cocaine out the window.

He runs to her but she lets the bag go. He watches, angry,
as it blows in the wind. He hates her right now.

INT. STARLIGHT MOTEL - FRONT DESK - MORNING

Harold's at the front desk when Rocmond and Jimmy come from
the back. Jimmy is startled, dressed in a suit. A bag of
cocaine in his hand. He hides it but not before Harold spies
it. Awkward silence, but Jimmy quickly tries to cover it up.

JIMMY
(shaking the bag)
I tell these dealers all the
time... Harold, me and uh, Rocmond
were just talking 'bout you. He
thinks you'll be a good fit; I do
too. To get more dope dealers into
the church, we're buying their
supply.

Jimmy flashes a grin. Hopes Harold's buying it. We can't tell
just yet. Jimmy paces out.

JIMMY
We gotta win souls by any means
necessary right?
(turns back)
So Rocmond I'll see you later? I'm
gon' head on down to the station,
turn this in to the boys in blue.

INT. JIMMY'S CAR - DAY

Jimmy's pulled over in an empty lot. Cocaine is sprawled out on the leather passengers seat. He's crying. Shaking. Fighting the urge but the urge is winning... finally, he snorts the cocaine.

Lies his head back onto his chair. The rush overcomes him. He takes it in as the tears roll down his face.

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - SANCTUARY

Praise and worship is going on. Jimmy walks in, Harold carrying his briefcase and bags. They settle into

JIMMY'S OFFICE

Where Jimmy takes a seat. His eyes bloodshot red. Speech is slurred. He's in no position to preach. His forehead meets his desk.

Bishop Chrone walks in seconds later.

CHRONE

You ready to -- oh, hell no.

Chrone slips all the way in. Closes the door behind him.

CHRONE

(to Harold)

The hell is wrong with him?

JIMMY

(head still on the desk)

I'm fine, I'm fine. Tell him I'm fine, Harold.

CHRONE

I got the finest, most well known preachers in the country back there. I'm not bringin' them to the front to embarrass them or myself. Lift your head up.

Chrone does it for him. Slams it back down. Not purposely but out of anger.

CHRONE

He's high!

Slams his fist into the desk.

CHROME

He's f- he's drunk. Now what do you expect me to do now? I'm not letting you go on like that.

HAROLD

Bishop, how about you preach?

CHROME

They didn't come here to hear me. They're here about the one that's coming after me -- Jimmy. And why would you call press here?!

JIMMY

Press was for Harold.

HAROLD

Me? Why?

JIMMY

(lifts his head)

This guy has a story everyone should hear.

HAROLD

What?

JIMMY

Put him up in my place.

CHROME

He's not a preacher. He's not a minister.

(to Harold)

What are you?

HAROLD

M.I.T.

CHROME

They don't even acknowledge those.

JIMMY

Look I got an idea.

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - SANCTUARY

It's Packed. Jimmy manages to keep it together enough to make it up to the front without arising suspicions.

JIMMY (V.0)

We'll do the usual.

Chrono is on the mike, charismatic as usual. Behind him sits the most prominent men in ministry. All seated on the pulpit. Jimmy sits center.

JIMMY (V.O.)
 Before I speak, after the offering,
 we'll have Harold get up.

Harold gets up and takes to the podium. He stands there, all eyes on him. He's nervous.

JIMMY (V.O.)
 He'll share his story. Add a little
 twist in it. Make him the victim.
 Leave out your last name and the
 part about why you were in jail.
 But stress the innocence and how
 your faith got you through; how
 meeting me was a life changing
 experience. And how God used me to
 bring you closer to Him.

There's not a dry eye in the room.

JIMMY (V.O.)
 By the time he finishes tugging at
 the heart strings, I'll get up.

Jimmy get up, slow and dramatic. Gives Harold a tight hug.

JIMMY (V.O.)
 I'll say the Spirit is leading us
 in a different direction. I'll lay
 hands, speak in tongues, blah blah
 blah, and we'll be dismissing.
 They're so emotional they won't
 realize no one preached.

Members are at the alter. Slain in the Spirit. Jimmy lays hands on some.

CHRONO (V.O.)
 That might work for them out there,
 but what about us that know what
 your doing?

JIMMY (V.O.)
 Preaching is part entertainment,
 working a room, sharing the Gospel.

...About an Hour later...

People are still laying before God in the Spirit. Speaking in tongues.

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - JIMMY'S OFFICE

A group of FOUR, all prominent Moderators and Bishops, surround Jimmy. They lay hands on him and pray for him.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - SAME

An empty room, although the light from the bathroom adds to the light the TV projects.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

In West Virginia a Youtube video of a convicted child molester, preaching, has gone viral. It's receiving a mixed reaction from the public. Some are posing the question: what kind of God will accept pedophiles but reject gays?

Just then, with a toothbrush in her mouth, Gretta (Harold's ex-wife) catches the tail end of it. She almost swallows her spit when she sees Harold's on the screen.

The camera finds Doug, (Harold's old classmate from an earlier scene), sitting up in bed.

DOUG

I told you I saw him, now didn't I!?

INT. WENDY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Brielle writes something on a piece of paper and rushes out.

INSERT - NOTE

I can't believe you would keep this from me. It all makes sense now.

INT. THE SUNDAY'S RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Jimmy comes in with his hands raised like he just won a fight. Anita comes out the kitchen. Stares at him.

JIMMY

You can have your divorce now.
(moving head side to side)
I don't need you an-ny-more.

Anita reaches in the closet, grabs her jacket and her already packed, suitcases.

ANITA
Glad you think so.

She slams the door on her way out.

Jimmy is perplexed. Shocked but quickly blows it off.

EXT. STARLIGHT MOTEL - NIGHT

Harold pulls up in a cab, he finds his room door open and people tossing his belongings. A news crew is on the scene.

A REPORTER interviews Shirly.

SHIRLY
He's a total creep...

Rocmond arrives on the scene, phone in hand.

IRATE MALE screams:

IRATE MALE
You're letting a pedophile live
here! I should give you some of
what I'll give him!

INT. CAB - SAME

CAB DRIVER
What's going on here?

HAROLD
Pull off. I'm gonna sleep somewhere
else.

EXT. BUS STATION - NIGHT

The cab leaves. Harold wanders out, nowhere to go. Alone.

INT. WENDY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Wendy rushes down the hall with the note in her hand.

WENDY
Brielle! Bree!

She knocks on Brielle's door... Opens it. No sign of her there. Wendy pulls out her phone.

INT. BRIELLE'S CAR - SAME

Brielle's behind the wheel. Phone ringing. It says 'Mom'.
Brielle turns the radio up to drown out the sound.

INT. WENDY'S BEDROOM

Wendy fumbles through the papers on her bed. Something is
missing. Her eyes widen. She reaches for her phone.

BRIELLE'S CAR - SAME

Phone's ringing off the hook. Brielle takes her eyes off the
road for a split second and that costs her --

Horns blaring -- lights stabbing at her -- she swerves -- the
car flips - she lands in a ditch --

WENDY'S BEDROOM

We hear an answering machine beep:

WENDY

Brielle it's your mother. Call me
baby. Please, just call me. I'm not
mad at you. Let me explain.

EXT. ROAD - SAME

DOWN THE ROAD, Harold is walking as all of this happens. He
picks up the pace.

AT THE SCENE

A TEENAGE BOY (17) and his FRIEND (16) get out the car.
They're who she avoided hitting.

FRIEND

We have to. We didn't do anything.

TEENAGE BOY

Either way I'm canned. I only have
a permit...

And to decrease his friend's chances of snitching:

TEENAGE BOY

And your dad, the city's top judge,
would kill you if he knew -

FRIEND

Yeah, we should leave.

They run to the car and speed off. Harold arrives a second too late -- can't make out a license plate.

DOWN THE DITCH

The car isn't flipped over, it's just crashed into a tree. The glass is shattered and the airbags are out.

Harold opens the Passenger side door...

HAROLD

Are you okay? Can you hear me?

No response.

Harold finds her phone, it's ringing. Says 'mom'. He answers.

HAROLD

There's been an emergency. An accident. I have to go.

WENDY (O.S.)

Who are -- what? Where's Bree --

Harold hangs up and dials 911.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The EMT'S breeze through the doors. The DOCTORS take over from here. Brielle's on a stretcher. Harold, trying to keep pace with the DOCTORS.

DR. GOODING

Sir, you have to stay here.

NURSE ANN

Is she your family.

Harold debates lying...

HAROLD

Yeah.

NURSE ANN

Wait out here. We'll keep you updated.

Harold watches as they take her into the ER.

Wendy runs inside, sweatpants on. Crying. Nervous. Angry when she sees Harold.

WENDY

What the hell were you doing with her?

HAROLD

I just happened to be passing by.

WENDY

I swear to God if I find out you tried to rape--

HAROLD

I would never!

WENDY

STAY AWAY FROM HER!

HAROLD

If it wasn't for me she'd be dead. Laying in blood.

WENDY

(re: his conviction)
Like the last one.

Wendy walks away but Harold grabs her arm. Tight. Strong.

HAROLD

Listen, you don't have to like me. But you won't continue to hold my past over my head. You know I'm innocent. So why you don't want me around? What's your real issue is with me?

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Wendy on one side; Harold on the other.

Anita walks through the sliding doors. Confused as to why they would both be here. Wendy stands to give her a hug. Relieved. Cries some.

ANITA

Have you spoken (to the doctors)...

Wendy's shaking "no."

WENDY
 (crying)
 I should've just told her.

ANITA
 No, it's not.

Wendy looks at Harold. Softness in her eyes.
 Harold looks back. His eyes are left to interpretation.

Anita and Wendy break.

WENDY
 (to Harold)
 Can I talk to you?

DR. GOODING
 Mom? Dad?

ANITA
 This is mom.

DR. GOODING
 (to Wendy)
 Mom. She's okay. Needs to rest; a fractured arm. Some miracle, especially since she wasn't wearing her seatbelt. Just some scrapes and bruises. Count yourself as lucky.

WENDY
 Can I see her?

INT. ER

Wendy pulls back the curtain.

Brielle is annoyed at the sight of her mom.
 Her arm is in a sling. And she has bandages around her head.

BRIELLE
 Can you leave?

WENDY
 Brielle...

BRIELLE
 You did this! How could-- how could you keep that from me?!? Why?

WENDY

I didn't know how to tell you. It hurt me to know why you cared so much. Our relationship was the most important thing to me. And when you wanted to Jeopardize that, I got jealous.

BRIELLE

But you knew. You knew all along.

WENDY

Before your father died he made me swear to never tell you.

BRIELLE

I don't believe you.

WENDY

I've kept things from you but I've never lied to you.

BRIELLE

But that? If I hadn't found my baby picture -- that you conveniently "hid" from me -- I would've spent my whole life thinking--

WENDY

I know. And maybe I'm wrong (for that)--

BRIELLE

(over)

Maybe?! You still can't admit when you're wrong.

WENDY

I know I hurt you, and for that I'm wrong and I'm soooo sorry Brielle.

BRIELLE

You knew I was going to meet him and that's why you kept calling me -
- it's your fault I'm in here.

Wendy looks on. Remorseful. Anita peeks in...

ANITA

Hey, Princess.

Brielle smiles. A smile Wendy wishes she gave her. Wendy excuses herself.

ANITA

No, I didn't mean to interrupt.

BRIELLE

No, you're fine, first lady.

Wendy cries as she walks out the ER.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Just as Wendy walks in, Harold's walking out. She hustles to catch him.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Harold looks back. Not in the mood. Walking...

WENDY

Wait, hold on.

HAROLD

I have to go. I need to get out of here. I felt better in jail.

WENDY

I'm sorry.

HAROLD

Forgiven.

WENDY

She hates me.

He gives her a look: he can see why.

HAROLD

Teenagers.

WENDY

Why did you come here?

HAROLD

What?

WENDY

Why did you come here?

HAROLD

Because I saw someone dying--

WENDY

No... to this town. Why here?

Harold's suspicious...

HAROLD

God sent me here. To start over,
Wendy.

WENDY

I'm a woman of faith but even I
don't think God sends people to
West Virginia.

HAROLD

Maybe your faith ain't as strong as
you think--

WENDY

What was his purpose? You don't
seem bent on proving your
innocence. You know... what is it?
What do you care about?

HAROLD

The work (of the Lord) --

WENDY

(over)

And don't give me that! Real
answers. Are you hiding?

A beat as they walk...

HAROLD

No. I'm used to being overslaughed.

WENDY

I don't get you -- where are we
going?

HAROLD

We?

WENDY

Nevermind. You're not like everyone
else around here. I've encountered
the worst criminals on earth. You
really didn't do it. So why not
fight for your innocence?!

HAROLD

I told you!

WENDY

That answer is bologna.

HAROLD

I deserved it okay! I deserved my punishment! I wasn't an angel. I've never physically hurt anyone. But I've ruined lives by my absence and being present would just ruin lives more... like I just did. I needed to get away. I had to be somewhere where I could watch my mistakes, and help them.

WENDY

Please be direct with me.

Harold starts to tear up.

He stops walking. Turns to go the other way, but she's on him like glue.

WENDY

C'mon, let it out. Purge yourself. That's where healing can begin.

INT. COURT - FLASHBACK

Harold and his LAWYER stand. The PROSECUTOR stands. The BAILIFF hands the JUDGE a sheet of paper.

HAROLD (V.O.)

I was confident I would be found innocent. My faith was in the right place; in the right person.

JUDGE

The jury finds the defendant GUILTY.

Just then Gretta, pregnant, clutches her stomach and throws up. She's a wreck.

HAROLD (V.O.)

I was sure I'd be seeing my family again. Gretta was three months when I was arrested, but when I was sentenced she was seven.

HAROLD (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Throughout the entire trial I
 believed she believed my innocence.
 She knew how much I loved...

INT. PRISON VISITING ROOM - FLASHBACK

There's a bulletproof glass separating them. Harold, bruised eye, picks up the phone. Gretta grabs hers. Harold puts his hand to the glass. She doesn't.

HAROLD
 I miss you so much.

Gretta just listens, doesn't say anything. Harold takes his hand down from the glass.

HAROLD
 The appeal's looking good.
 (no response)
 Sorry I haven't been calling you.
 We were on lockdown.
 (silence)
 You know I'm innocent, right? You
 believe me still, right?

Gretta gives a single head nod; Harold's partially relieved.

HAROLD (CONT'D)
 You look well, baby.
 So tell me, girl or boy?

Finally...

GRETTA
 Girl.

Harold's face lights up.

HAROLD
 Sonya. You named her Sonya, right?

Gretta tears up...

HAROLD
 Gretta, what... what's wrong?

GRETTA
 I can't do it no more, Harry!

HAROLD
 I'll get out soon. I promise. A guy
 in here, he's a lawyer, he told--

GRETTA
You murdered--

HAROLD
I DID NOT DO IT! I SWEAR TO YOU I
DIDN'T! I WOULD NEVER! Gretta
please.

GRETTA
You robbed me of motherhood.

Harold gives her a look. Puzzled. Can't believe she's not on his side.

Gretta puts the back of her left hand on the glass. She's not wearing her wedding ring. She lets the phone drop.

Harold's crying. Calling out to her:

HAROLD
Gretta!

GUARD (O.S.)
Convict, keep it down!

Harold now stands. Irate.

HAROLD
Gretta! The baby, where's our
daughter?!

The GUARD comes to escort Harold out.

GRETTA
I just couldn't do it.

Harold can't hear that...

HAROLD
What?
(to Guard)
My wife is talking. She's trying to
tell me --

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT - PRESENT

Harold and Wendy sitting on a bench.

HAROLD
My whole time in jail, all I
thought about was Sonya. How she
would hate me if she ever got to
know me.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

Would she want to get to know me? And why would Gretta give her up. I came to grips with why, but... I never saw Gretta again. My entire sentence, only visitors I had were lawyers and priests. I got saved in there. Started a ministry. My pianist on the inside was an I.T. Genius. He did some research and based on what he found, Sonya was adopted by a family in this town. Every day, for a year, I would call every family on the adoption list. I sold my body for phone privileges at times.

WENDY

And what happened?

HAROLD

One day I called a home and the sweetest little girl answered. My heart knew right away, but her dad snatched the phone...

WENDY

(to herself)

Charles.

HAROLD (CONT'D)

...I pleaded with him for a moment of his time but he refused. Next day I called back and the number was changed. My buddy said it was unlisted. I never forgot the sound of her voice. I imagined how it would sound as she aged. How she would look, but I really would have no clue. But I know she's somewhere around here. That's why God led me to this place.

WENDY

When I found out you were in jail, my heart was overwhelmed because I knew I'd never be in *this* position. But God worked on my heart. Said I had to aid you. I put your case in front of those lawyers. Helped prep it; they read the arguments I wrote. Once you were free, I thought me and peace would be joint at the hip.

WENDY (CONT'D)

But God had other plans, and I fought Him. You represented a hammer. A hammer that would shatter my world. When her-- when Charles died, we became closer than ever. I didn't think she needed a man in her life. Far as I was concerned, she had no business knowing she was adopted. But that day came and I had to face the monster.

HAROLD

So this explains it.

WENDY

I'm sorry.

HAROLD

Does she know?

WENDY

She was on her way to you when the accident happened.

EXT. THE SUNDAY'S RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Shirly exits. Her hooker heels clinking on the pavement as she hustles to a car waiting for her. Jimmy watches her leave. He keeps dabbling with his nose.

INT. THE SUNDAY'S RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

A big pile of cocaine is laid out on the table. Jimmy sniffs a line. Then--

BOOM! He falls to the floor.

LIVING ROOM...

Shirly creeps back inside, searching for something.

SHIRLY

Hey! I left my--

Shirly spies him on the floor. He's shaking, foam coming out his mouth -- having a seizure.

INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

Anita and Brielle chat...

ANITA
She does love you, Brielle.

BRIELLE
Why? Because she buys me things?
That's not love.

ANITA
What is love to you?

BRIELLE
Honesty. Forgiveness. TRUTH. It's
unselfish and giving. A commitment.

These words are touching Anita.

BRIELLE
You don't just run out when it's
difficult or start lying and
hiding. You love til' the end.

That resonates with Anita.

INT. HOSPITAL - LATER THAT NIGHT

Jimmy's on a gurney. He's being rushed inside.
Pupils dilated, a breathing mask over his face.
He's rushed into the

EMERGENCY ROOM

-- just as Anita comes from behind the curtain.
She sees him and stops--

ANITA
JIMMY!

DR. TIMMY
MA'AM MOVE OUT THE WAY! NOW!

ANITA
He's my husband.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Brielle's being released. Harold walks in as she's walking
out, flowers in his hand. Their eyes meet. He runs to her and
hugs her tight. Careful not to hurt her injured arm.

They cry together...

...Moments later...

Wendy pulls up. Takes a moment and watches them embrace.

She gets out and runs to them... stands on the outskirts of their hug.

They break grip and allow her in.

INT. OPERATING ROOM - NIGHT

Doctors are mumbling things we don't understand. They're operating on Jimmy.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - SAME

Anita removes her Muslim garb. She kneels down. Tears in her eyes. Hands folded.

ANITA

I...God, I'm sorry. I need you. I need to know you like I knew you before. I let other people's lives determine how I see you. But ultimately I turned from you; it was my decision. And I'm so sorry Jesus. Lord, I denounce all other forms of ungodliness. Anything that doesn't acknowledge Jesus as Lord and Savior - I denounce it. I come before you, asking you to heal my heart. Heal my husband. Heal our marriage. Help us pull through, Lord. Don't let him die like this--

A hand rests her shoulder. She looks up. DR. TIMMY, a gray haired medical expert, takes off his mask. The look on his face says "Bad News".

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - DAY

A casket sits front and center. Behind the pulpit is Harold. Preaching...

EXT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - DAY

The casket is being carried to the hearse.

EXT. GRAVESITE - DAY

Not a lot of tears. The only familiar faces are Wendy and Brielle.

Harold takes the sweater he wore earlier in the movie and drapes it on the casket.

INT. CAR - DAY

Wendy drives; Harold's shotgun. Brielle in the back.

WENDY

I know you're gonna miss him. He was a sweet soul.

HAROLD

Charlie was a ball of fun. He loved my sweater.

INT. HOSPITAL - AFTERNOON

A nervous Anita's on a gurney, being escorted towards the ER.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - AFTERNOON

Dr. Timmy gives Anita a letter...

DR. TIMMY

From your husband. He asked that you read it before we start.

Anita, on her gurney, nods. Opens the letter.

SERIES OF SHOTS

** Anita's VO plays over these shots**

- Anita going under the knife.
- Jimmy going under the knife in another room.
- Anita's surgery seems to go well. Doctors are optimistic.
- Rush and anxiety fill Jimmy's room. Doctors are talking strong. Something's not right...

ANITA (V.O.)

(reading)

Anita, my queen. You've been my best friend for many years.

ANITA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Most of those years I've taken you for granted and lost sight of what's very important - our relationship. Church had become my focus. Ministry. But my real ministry is what I lost; and I'm sorry. My love for you is unmatched. I wish we could be together again, but because of what you're doing for me - you'll always be a part of me; and I'll always have a piece of you. It matters most to me that your faith in God is restored. I wasn't the best example but I'm sorry. And I'm giving it all up to focus of my walk with Christ. Don't hold God accountable for my hypocrisy. Whether I live or die, you'll always be with me.

THE SCREEN GOES WHITE...

...Dr. Timmy goes into the

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM

Where Harold, Brielle and Wendy wait.

DR. TIMMY

It went well. They're both recovering.

They all exhale a sigh of relief.

WENDY

Can we see them?

DR. TIMMY

At this moment, no. They need their rest. In about an hour or so maybe. Kidney surgery leaves you extremely weary, especially for Mrs. Sunday. Her body has to adjust to functioning with only one.

WENDY

Thank you, Doctor.

Dr. Timmy walks off.

BRIELLE

Dad, we can go to the church and
get their essentials. Make them
feel comfortable at least.

Wendy's caught off guard and so is Harold.
He has a wide smile.

He leans in towards Wendy. In her ear:

HAROLD

(re: raising Brielle)
You've done a great job.
(to Brielle)
Yeah. We can do that... I'd love to
do that.

Wendy's eyes fill with tears - mixture of emotions.

Brielle embraces Harold. He hugs her tight. Kisses her
forehead. They head out... Brielle stops. They turn to Wendy.

BRIELLE

You coming mom?

Wendy lets the tears fall. She joins them. Harold looks to
the heavens.

HAROLD

(quietly)
Thank you Lord.

FADE OUT.

*