

THE LAST SAND GRANULES

by

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INT. MCCLEAN RESIDENCE - DAY

BRIAN MCCLEAN (8), clean cut, dark hair, sits frozen in time on the family room sofa staring at the front door. A dozen wilting floral arrangements fail to cheer up the room.

MARY MCCLEAN (35), statuesque, blond, sun dress, catches her son out of the corner of her eye. She makes the sign of the cross before gathering herself. She sits next to Brian.

MARY

He's never coming through that door again.

BRIAN

I know. I was just hoping.

She gives him a tight hug.

MARY

Come on. I'll make ya a big breakfast.

IN THE KITCHEN

The blinding sunlight blasts through the kitchen window onto a hanging wooden crucifix, a prayer entitled "AN OLD IRISH BLESSING", and a motto entitled "The Broken Chain."

Plates of steaming eggs, bacon, and sausage are on the kitchen table as Brian and Mary say grace.

MARY

...ever this day be at our side to light, to guard, to rule and guide. Amen.

Brian looks at a family portrait on the wall which includes his father in decorated military fatigues.

BRIAN

And please take care of Dad in Heaven.

MARY

Please watch over Dad.

They dig in to their food.

EXT. MCCLEAN RESIDENCE - DAY

The sun glistens off the ranch-style home with neatly manicured landscape. Brian receives a long hug from his mom on the front porch.

MARY

Have a nice day at school, son.

BRIAN

Thanks mom.

MARY

Study hard.

BRIAN

I will.

She watches Brian bounce down the front steps and onto the sidewalk in his salt and pepper corduroy pants and white, short sleeve dress shirt.

EXT. STREET - DAY

A homeless border collie begs for food. Brian removes his backpack and pulls out his lunchbox. He tears a piece of lunch meat from his sandwich and feeds the dog. He packs up his lunchbox, pats the dog, and continues on.

EXT. SCHOOL BUS STOP - DAY

Brian tries to scurry unnoticed past the public schoolkids waiting for the school bus. Four of the schoolkids, MORGAN EHLERS (12), JOHN ANTON (12), BILL NEWCOMB (11), and OLIVER (OLLIE) GRUNDY (11), block his path.

OLLIE

It's the Our Lady Queen of Angels kid.

BILL

Hi queenie.

JOHN

Same clothes, different day.

Bill takes Brian's backpack and tosses it to Morgan who tosses it to John. The game of keep away goes on for a while until Brian finally intercepts it and runs off.

JOHN

See ya tomorrow mean queen.

They all laugh.

INT. O.L.Q.A. CATHOLIC SCHOOL - DAY

Brian and several students listen to SISTER FRANCIS BERNADETTE (28), black dress and veil, teach religion. The Ten Commandments are listed on the chalkboard.

SISTER FRANCIS BERNADETTE

The next commandment is Thou Shall Not Kill. Someone who kills another is killing the Lord, because the Lord is inside every one of us.

Brian nods in agreement.

SISTER FRANCIS BERNADETTE

There's a camera filming each of you throughout your entire life. At the end of your life you'll sit down with God and watch your life's film. He'll then decide if you make it to Heaven or go to hell.

INT. MCCLEAN RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Mary hands Brian plates of corn on-the-cob and chicken. He takes the plates into the dining room.

DINING ROOM

Mary and Brian sit down at the table, fold their hands, and close their eyes.

MARY

Bless us 'O Lord and these our gifts which we are about to receive from thy bounty through Christ our Lord, amen.

Brian reaches for an ear of corn.

MARY

Angel of God...

Brian folds his hands again and peeks through one eye at his mom and then closes the eyelid.

MARY

...our guardian dear to whom his  
love commits us here, ever this  
night be at our side to light, to  
guard, to rule and guide, amen.

They make the sign of the cross. Brian picks up an ear of corn. He holds it at each end as he rotates it on a stick of butter. There's deafening silence.

Mary watches Brian fidget with the skin on his chicken as she butters her corn on-the-cob with a butter knife.

BRIAN

Why are public schoolkids so mean?

MARY

Maybe they haven't learned about  
God, yet.

BRIAN

Can't they just go to a Catholic  
school and learn about him?

MARY

It's not that easy. Catholic  
schools are expensive and people  
have different beliefs.

BRIAN

Will they go to hell if they don't  
believe in God?

MARY

Only if they do something bad.  
Even then they could still change.

Brian looks at the family picture on the wall.

BRIAN

Did Dad kill people?

MARY

Well--

BRIAN

Sister Francis Bernadette says if  
people kill, they can't go to  
Heaven.

MARY

Well, I'm sure he prayed for forgiveness.

BRIAN

Do you really think he's in Heaven?

MARY

I do. And we'll both be there with him someday.

Brian digs in to the chicken.

KITCHEN

Brian helps Mary do the dishes.

BRIAN'S BEDROOM

Mary helps Brian do his homework.

LATER

Brian sits up in bed as Mary stands nearby. A wooden crucifix hangs on the wall behind Brian. On the nightstand is a framed picture of Brian's father. Brian reads from a worn card in his hand.

BRIAN

You left us peaceful memories,  
your love is still our guide,  
and though we cannot see you,  
you are always at our side.

Our family chain is broken  
and nothing seems the same,  
But as God calls us one by one  
the chain will link again.

Brian tucks the card in the frame of his father's picture.

MARY

Say your prayers.

Mary kisses Brian on the forehead, turns off the light, and exits.

BRIAN

Lord, please let my Dad be in Heaven.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

MONTAGE - MARY AND BRIAN AT THE BEACH

-- Mary and Brian build sandcastles. Mary buries Brian up to his neck in sand.

-- Mary and Brian fly a kite.

-- Mary teaches Brian how to body surf.

-- Mary teaches Brian how to swing a bat.

Brian and Mary play catch with a football. Mary gets distracted. The football hits Mary in the stomach. She doubles over in pain. Brian runs over to her aid.

BRIAN

Are you okay?

MARY

I don't know. That really hurt.

She sits on the sand. Brian holds her.

LATER

Mary and Brian towel off their feet at the car. They shake sand from their beach towels.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Mary and Brian stand in a pew singing. Brian sees Ollie with his family across the aisle. Brian looks up at the giant crucifix behind the altar.

BRIAN

(singing)

Shepherd me oh God, beyond my  
wants, beyond my fears, from death  
into life.

Mary grimaces as she feels her stomach.

INT. MCCLEAN RESIDENCE - DAY

Mary uses a towel to dry the dishes. She grabs her abdominal area and grimaces. She lifts her shirt to show a baseball size bruise.

INT. DOCTOR SIZEMORE'S OFFICE - DAY

DOCTOR SIZEMORE (60), examines Mary's bruised stomach.

DOCTOR SIZEMORE  
When did this happen?

MARY  
About a week ago. I thought it'd  
be healed by now.

DOCTOR SIZEMORE  
We better run some tests to be  
safe.

ONE WEEK LATER

Doctor Sizemore pulls x-rays out of a manila envelope and slaps them onto a lighted x-ray board.

DOCTOR SIZEMORE  
I'm afraid it's not what we had  
hoped for. You have a tumor in a  
tricky spot.

Doctor Sizemore points at a hot spot on an x-ray.

DOCTOR SIZEMORE  
It's in close proximity to vital  
organs. I don't know if we'll be  
able to surgically remove it.

MARY  
I can't take any chances. I've  
got a young boy at home.

DOCTOR SIZEMORE  
If we can't, we'll hit it hard  
with chemotherapy.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

A school bell SOUNDS. Hundreds of joyful children in school uniforms, including Brian, spill out from their classrooms. Brian rides his bike next door to the church.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Brian kneels in the front pew in the empty church. He looks up at the giant crucifix behind the altar.

BRIAN

Please make her get better, Lord.

SUPER: SIX YEARS LATER

Brian (14), prays in the same front pew as he looks up at the giant crucifix.

BRIAN

Why aren't you making her better,  
Lord?

INT. MCCLEAN RESIDENCE - DAY

There are several bills on the kitchen table. Mary (41), looks at an Our Lady Queen of Angels tuition bill stamped "PAST DUE" for six hundred dollars. Brian sees his mom fighting back tears.

BRIAN

What's wrong, mom?

MARY

We can't afford your tuition  
anymore.

BRIAN

I'll still be able to go to Heaven  
if I go to the public school,  
right?

MARY

Yes.

BRIAN

Then I'll go to the public school.

She hugs him.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Brian walks to school with a backpack. He sees Bill.

BRIAN

Please help me, Lord.

BILL

Where's your uniform, queenie?

BRIAN

Don't need it.

Bill catches up to Brian.

BILL  
You're going to the public school?

BRIAN  
Yup.

Bill sees Morgan.

BILL  
Morgan! Look who's going to our  
school!

Morgan walks over.

MORGAN  
Father O'Brian!

The three walk. Bill mouths something to Morgan and the two sandwich Brian with hard shoulders to his body. Brian grimaces.

MORGAN  
Do you know anyone that goes to  
Corona del Mar High School?

BRIAN  
Nope.

Morgan mouths the signal to Bill. They smash hard off Brian again with their shoulders. Brian fights through the pain.

MORGAN  
Well, if you wanna survive at  
school you otta join a group.

BILL  
Let's test him tonight.

MORGAN  
You got it.

Out of the corner of his eye, Brian sees Bill mouth the signal to Morgan. Brian stops abruptly. Bill and Morgan crash into each other.

INT. MCCLEAN RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Brian and Mary eat dinner. Brian looks at his watch. He eats quickly and takes his dishes to the sink.

BRIAN

I'm meeting some friends. Be back  
in a while.

Brian hustles toward the door. He pulls a rosary out of his pants pocket and takes a long look at it before tossing it onto the coffee table. He exits.

INT. MORGAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bill, Morgan, John, and Ollie crumble newspapers into balls and toss them at Brian who stuffs them into pants and a shirt.

MORGAN

Pack 'em tight.

Morgan secures a Styrofoam mannequin head on the body.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The five pass the church. Brian glances over at it. They arrive at the bottom of a hill and lay the dummy face down in the gutter. They lay a bike next to it. A car's headlights beam around a corner.

OLLIE

Spin it!

Brian spins one of the bike's tires and the five run for cover in nearby bushes. The approaching car screeches to a halt near the dummy. The driver's and passenger's doors fling open. A MAN and WOMAN jump out.

MAN

Get back in the car!

WOMAN

I used to be a nurse.

The five cover their mouths to keep from laughing. The man approaches the dummy.

MAN

Are you okay? Are you okay?

The man turns over the dummy and the head rolls off. The man SCREAMS, jumps in his car, and burns rubber. The five bust out in loud LAUGHTER.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

Brian throws a rope down from the top of a building and climbs down. He ties the rope to a doorknob. He runs to Morgan, Bill, John, and Ollie who are lying on their stomachs in a field.

A custodian walks around the building and sees the rope attached to the doorknob. The custodian looks up, tugs on the rope, and yanks hard. A bucket of water cascades onto him.

The custodian slams the bucket down and enters the building. The five laugh.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Morgan hands Brian a roll of wide masking tape and hides in some bushes. Brian tapes one end to the street sticky side up. He unrolls the tape across the street and tapes the end down. He sprints to the other four in the bushes.

JOHN

Oh, no.

BILL

Oh, no.

A police car runs over the tape which sticks to the tires and makes a flat tire KA POO KA POO sound. The police car stops. The officer gets out and sees the tape wound around his rear tires. The five take off laughing.

MORGAN

You're in Brian.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Brian stands in the lunch line. BULLY ONE (17), stocky, and BULLY TWO (17), stocky, stroll over to Brian.

BULLY ONE

We need money for lunch.

Bully One and Bully Two put out their palms.

BRIAN

I don't have any money for you guys.

BULLY TWO

We're not asking for money, we're  
telling you to give us money.

Morgan, Bill, John, and Ollie see Bully Two get up in  
Brian's face and hustle over to Brian and surround Bully One  
and Bully Two.

MORGAN

You got a problem with our friend?

BULLY ONE

No, we don't.

MORGAN

Then leave.

Bully One and Bully Two leave.

BRIAN

Thanks you guys.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Mary kneels with a rosary in her hands. Brian sports an  
earring and long hair. He pays no attention to the priest  
as he looks around at the mostly elderly parishioners. He  
spots Ollie alone in the back of the church.

EXT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Brian, Morgan, Bill, John, and Ollie pull up on their bikes.  
Brian sweats and shakes as he parks his bike.

BRIAN

You're sure we're not going to get  
caught?

MORGAN

Don't be such a chicken. It's  
easy.

The five enter the store.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

The five enter the cookie aisle. Bill and Ollie act as  
lookouts at each end of the aisle. Brian sweats profusely  
and trembles as he stands between Morgan and John.

Brian checks each end of the aisle back and forth for customers like he's watching a tennis tournament. Bill signals Brian with his hand to hurry up. Brian loosens his belt and slowly pulls a bag of Oreo cookies off the shelf.

Brian carefully places the bag of Oreos down his pants. Morgan and John grab more bags of Oreos and shove them down Brian's pants and into his jacket. The five walk out with Brian walking stiff like a bloated astronaut in a spacesuit.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Bully One and Bully Two see Brian on the playground during Physical Education class and stroll over to him. Ollie sees the bullies approaching Brian and runs over.

OLLIE

You do anything to him and you  
know what'll happen.

Brian turns around and sees Bully One and Bully Two. Bully One and Bully Two stop in their tracks, and after a moment leave.

LATER

Morgan, John, Bill, and Ollie huddle around Brian.

MORGAN

This isn't Catholic school  
anymore, Father O'Brian.

JOHN

We're not always gonna be around  
to watch over you.

Morgan looks over Brian who wears a jacket zipped halfway up.

MORGAN

Right now, you're a sitting duck.

BRIAN

How?

Before Brian can react, Morgan grabs Brian's jacket with both hands below the lapels and turns it inside out over Brian's shoulders. The makeshift straitjacket renders Brian's arms immobile.

Morgan, Bill, John, and Ollie teach Brian some karate moves.

MONTAGE - BRIAN/MORGAN/BILL/JOHN/OLLIE DO MORE CRIMES

-- Brian steals beer from a supermarket.

-- Brian steals a baseball glove from a sporting goods store.

-- Brian steals money from an unattended purse in a shopping cart.

SUPER: THIRTEEN YEARS LATER

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Brian (27), sports a couple tattoos, earrings, and long hair as he sits at a desk across from SUPERMARKET MANAGER (40).

SUPERMARKET MANAGER  
I'm sorry Brian, but we need  
someone who can show up for work  
once in a while.

BRIAN  
I had to take care of my mom.

SUPERMARKET MANAGER  
That's not my problem.

INT. MCCLEAN RESIDENCE - DAY

Brian enters with the mail. The house is unkempt with worn furniture.

He scans through the envelopes which are mostly stamped "BILL ENCLOSED." He tosses them on the kitchen table. He hears COUGHING.

MARY'S BEDROOM

Mary lies in bed in her pajamas. She has lost a lot of weight.

MARY  
Where have you been all day?

BRIAN  
Out running errands. What do you  
need?

MARY  
I need to refill my prescriptions.

Brian leaves and fakes like he's going to punch the wall as he storms down the hallway.

IN THE KITCHEN

Brian has a telephone to his ear.

BRIAN

...you used to always reimburse us  
for this medicine! She needs it  
for her chemo! She could die if  
she doesn't get it!

He slams the phone down.

INT. PHARMACY - DAY

The cashier rings up several prescriptions. Brian winces when he sees the total on the register monitor. He pays the cashier.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Brian passes the church without noticing it. Ollie exits the church and spots Brian.

OLLIE

Brian!

Brian turns around as Ollie skips down the front steps.

BRIAN

Hi Ollie. You still see Morgan,  
Bill, and John?

OLLIE

See 'em? I live and work with  
them.

BRIAN

Doing what?

Ollie pulls Brian in close to him.

OLLIE

Robbing banks.

BRIAN

Shoot! You guys--

OLLIE  
I know, I know. Before I knew it  
we went from stealing cookies to  
knocking off banks.

BRIAN  
Ollie.

OLLIE  
How are you doing?

BRIAN  
I just got fired. We've fallen  
behind on all the bills...damn  
insurance companies.

OLLIE  
Let's talk to Morgan. Maybe  
they'll let you in on some jobs.

BRIAN  
Are you kidding? I can't do that.

OLLIE  
Why not?

BRIAN  
I gotta look after my Mom.

OLLIE  
We know a fence who used to buy  
stuff from us before we starting  
doing banks.

BRIAN  
What kind of stuff?

OLLIE  
The usual stuff, mostly silverware  
and jewelry. Morgan decided to  
eliminate the middle man and hit  
banks.

BRIAN  
I don't know. I can't do--

OLLIE  
How's your Mom doing?

BRIAN  
Not good.

OLLIE

How are you gonna pay for her  
medicine?

INT. CAR - DAY

Morgan sits behind the wheel with Brian riding shotgun with a backpack on his lap. Bill, John, and Ollie are in the back seat. Morgan pulls to the curb near an expensive bike chained to a pole. They check to see if the coast is clear.

MORGAN

You're good to go.

Brian hesitates with his hand on the door handle. He sees his church in the distance.

BILL

What are you waiting for?

MORGAN

Shut up, Bill! You've gotta do  
this for your Mom.

Brian exits and heads toward the bike.

JOHN

How many bikes have we just lifted  
up over the pole without having to  
cut the chain?

BILL

About a quarter of them.

Morgan and the others watch as Brian takes giant bolt cutters out of his knapsack and cuts the chain. He rides off on the bike.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Brian rolls the stolen bike into a hidden room. FENCE (50), sleazeball, looks at the bike and then hands Brian a bill.

EXT. PARKING STRUCTURE - NIGHT

Brian uses a brick to smash out a window on a car. The car alarm BLARES. He jumps in the car and uses a screwdriver to pop out the ignition. He burns rubber.

EXT. PHARMACY - DAY

Brian exits with a shopping bag. He checks the receipt and slams it into the shopping bag.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

Brian cases houses in his Mom's station wagon. He pulls to the curb. He gets out with his knapsack and walks through the side of the house to the backyard. He uses a crowbar to force open a back door.

INT. LADY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Brian carefully places silverware into a bag.

IN THE BEDROOM

A lady wakes up, hears a sound, and dials the phone.

IN THE KITCHEN

Brian hears a car door shut. He sees a police car in the street.

EXT. LADY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

He runs out of the house with the bag. The policeman gives chase. Brian jumps over the backyard fence narrowly escaping the policeman who struggles to get over the fence.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Brian hands Fence the bag. In the background, men use a powersaw to slice apart a Porsche. Fence pours the contents of the bag onto a desk. Silverware falls out. Fence examines the items.

FENCE

I'll give ya two hundred.

BRIAN

Come on! I almost got busted getting this.

Fence picks up a knife from the pile.

FENCE

This stuff doesn't cut it anymore.  
I need the good stuff.

BRIAN

Give me the two.

Fence pulls a thick wad out and peels off two bills. Brian snatches the money from Fence's hands and storms out.

INT. MORGAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Brian, Morgan, Bill, John, and Ollie watch TV and drink beer. There are ski masks and guns next to a pizza box on the coffee table. Morgan counts large stacks of bills as the others laugh.

JOHN

I still can't get over that young teller. I mean, here's a gun in her face and she asks if small bills are okay.

BILL

As if we're gonna turn down fives and tens!

JOHN

And Morgan's face! He looks around to see if he's on Candid Camera!

BRIAN

What are you doing with all your money?

He examines one of the guns.

MORGAN

I'm investing mine. They're blowing theirs.

BRIAN

Ever had to use one of these?

BILL

Never. How's your mom doing?

BRIAN

Not so hot.

MORGAN

It's just a matter of time before you get busted doing the small stuff.

BRIAN

But if I get busted I won't spend as much time in prison.

JOHN

Haven't been caught yet.

OLLIE

And only work once a month.

BILL

You'd only need one or two big jobs with us.

Brian looks around the room at the nice furnishings.

BRIAN

I can't.

EXT. WAL-MART - NIGHT

Brian pulls around the back of a Wal-Mart in his Mom's station wagon. He sees an eighteen wheeler backed in to a loading dock. The back door of the truck is open.

Brian sees a black, video surveillance camera ball on the building.

Brian puts on a pair of sunglasses and a baseball cap. He gets out of the station wagon, hops onto the loading dock and doesn't see anyone in the back of the building.

He grabs a TV box out of the back of the truck and slides it across the ground to the back of his car. He lifts it into the back of the car.

He runs back and grabs another TV box from the truck. MAN INSIDE THE BUILDING (30) obese, sees Brian.

MAN INSIDE THE BUILDING

Hey! Stop!

Brian slides the box across the ground. Man Inside The Building gives chase for a short distance, but doubles over exhausted. He dials his cell phone. Brian shoves the TV box into the wagon, hops in, and rockets from the area.

INT. STATION WAGON - NIGHT

Brian hears sirens as he gasps for breath. He hand cranks the driver's window up to deaden the sound.

A police car with its lights on passes in the opposite direction. Brian looks in his rear view and sees the police car continue to drive away from him. He exhales deeply.

INT. BANK - DAY

Brian enters and walks to a table in the center of the room. He fills out a slip as he observes the cameras and the layout of the bank. He watches a teller count out a large number of bills. He discards the bank slip and exits.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Brian sits on a lifeguard stand eating a sandwich as he looks out over the ocean. The wind blows clouds of sand.

LATER

Brian hops down off the lifeguard stand, discards his trash into a trash can and heads off the beach. He washes the sand off his feet in an outdoor beach shower. The sand goes down a drain.

INT. MCCLEAN RESIDENCE - DAY

Brian enters with lots of mail. Some of the envelopes are marked "FINAL NOTICE." Brian hears COUGHING from another room.

KITCHEN

Brian walks past the kitchen table which has piles of bills and late notices. He pulls a beer out of the refrigerator, looks at one of the bills, and chugs the beer.

MARY'S BEDROOM

Brian is antsy as he tends to pale and frail Mary who lies in bed coughing. There's a crucifix on the wall above Mary.

BRIAN

When's your next chemo?

MARY

Tomorrow, if I'm strong enough.

BRIAN

I need to borrow your car.

He kisses her forehead. She sees that he's perspiring.

MARY

What are you up to?

BRIAN

Nothing.

MARY

Brian.

BRIAN

Get your rest Mom.

He looks at the rosary next to the car keys on the dresser. He takes the car keys and exits.

EXT. MORGAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Morgan, John, Bill, and Ollie wait with several duffel bags. Brian pulls up in a beat up station wagon.

INT. CAR - DAY

A rosary hangs from the rear view mirror. Brian takes down the rosary and tosses it into the glove box which overflows with junk. The four get in and pull guns and ski masks out of the bags.

BRIAN

I appreciate you guys want'n to help, but--

JOHN

It's Bank of America that's gonna help you.

There's nervous LAUGHTER.

BRIAN

There can't be any shooting.

BILL

Let's do it.

BRIAN

I'm serious. No shooting.

MORGAN

Just do as we taught ya. We'll  
handle the rest.

The car pulls out.

EXT. BANK - DAY

The station wagon pulls to the curb.

INT. CAR - DAY

Brian shakes uncontrollably. Ollie switches seats with  
Brian behind the wheel.

BRIAN

Why do you get to drive?

OLLIE

I don't want to kill anyone.

BRIAN

I don't want to kill anyone.

MORGAN

Calm down. He always drives.

Morgan, Brian, John, and Bill put on ski masks.

BRIAN

Remember, no shooting.

Morgan checks the passenger side view mirror as the others  
watch the nearly empty street. A dirty, black and white  
border collie barks outside Brian's window.

BRIAN

Damn it!

Brian takes off his mask.

EXT. CAR - DAY

Brian gets out and chases the dog away.

BRIAN

Get outta here you stupid dog.

INT. CAR - DAY

Brian gets back in.

BILL

This bank is a fire hazard with  
all the paper that's inside.

JOHN

Let's be good citizens and remove  
that hazard.

John cocks his shotgun.

MORGAN

Shut up you guys! Ollie, keep the  
car running.

Brian makes the sign of the cross.

EXT. BANK - DAY

The two curbside doors open and the four men hustle out.

INT. BANK - DAY

Bill opens the door as the other three sprint past the armed  
guard. Bill points his shotgun at the guard before he can  
react.

BILL

Lock the door and close the  
drapes.

The few customers SCREAM.

MORGAN

Don't do anything brainless!  
Tellers, load up the bags!  
Everyone else lick the floor!

The guard's hand shakes uncontrollably that he takes awhile  
to get the key in the keyhole. He closes the drapes over  
the front doors.

John and Brian hurry to the tellers' windows and toss the  
tellers the bags. The customers lie on their stomachs.

BRIAN

Come on! Move it!

He strikes a female teller's arm with his shotgun. She speeds up. The tellers throw money into the bags. John passes the filled bags over the counter to Morgan and Brian who set them on a table.

Sirens WAIL in the distance. John jumps over the counter as the other three grab the bags and make their way toward the door. Morgan turns back toward John.

MORGAN

Let's go! Let's go!

INT. CAR - DAY

Ollie prays out loud as he watches his partners.

OLLIE

Please get me out of this safely,  
Lord!

Ollie leans over and opens the two curbside doors. The sirens get louder and louder. Ollie sees a police car turn onto his street and head toward him.

EXT. BANK - DAY

The police car skids to an abrupt stop in front of the station wagon. OFFICER GARNER (32), flings open his door to act as a shield as he points his gun at Ollie.

OFFICER GARNER

Let me see your hands!

Bill holds open the door as the others race by. John fires at the officer who returns fire. Bullets ricochet off the bank building and blast out the front doors. Bill shoots. Officer Garner drops his gun and clutches his chest.

BRIAN

No!

Brian pushes Bill's gun away as Officer Garner writhes in pain on the ground. Ollie is stunned by everything he sees and gets out. The four gunmen dash toward the car and dive headfirst through the open car doors.

INT. CAR - DAY

The four are surprised that Ollie is gone. They see Ollie tend to the downed officer.

JOHN  
What's he doing?

MORGAN  
Get back in the car Ollie!

EXT. BANK - DAY

The officer looks up at Ollie. The sirens grow louder.

INT. CAR - DAY

Morgan slides behind the wheel.

BRIAN  
I said no shooting!

Morgan sticks his head out the driver's window.

MORGAN  
Get in now, Ollie!

EXT. BANK - DAY

Officer Garner chokes up blood and bleeds profusely from the chest area. Ollie takes off his shirt. John opens his door and takes a few steps toward Ollie.

MORGAN  
Leave him!

John sees an approaching police car and jumps back in the car.

JOHN  
Sorry, Ollie.

The station wagon burns rubber and fishtails around the police car. The others look back at Ollie who presses his shirt against the gaping hole in the officer's chest.

Several police cars with sirens BLARING skid to stops around Officer Garner's patrol car. The officers jump out with guns drawn. Witnesses point at Ollie.

An officer tackles Ollie who unsuccessfully tries to go back to aid Officer Garner. Other officers wrestle him to the ground.

INT. STATION WAGON - DAY

The police cars gain on the slower station wagon. Morgan checks his rear and side view mirrors. Bill and John ready their weapons while Brian sits dazed in a fog.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The station wagon moves too fast to negotiate a turn. It caroms off the guard rail and rolls over several times before coming to a stop upside down in the middle of the road. A rear bumper sticker reads: JESUS IS MY SAVIOR.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Mary prays with her rosary. The five defendants sit at a long table with their lawyers. The PROSECUTOR walks over to the jury.

PROSECUTOR

Oliver Grundy was trying to strangle Officer Garner with his bare hands. He was not trying to stop the bleeding.

The jury listens attentively.

PROSECUTOR

He didn't want there to be any witnesses.

LATER

The jury enters and sits down in the jury box. The JUDGE (55), bald, looks at the JURY FOREMAN who stands.

JUDGE

Has the jury reached a decision?

JURY FOREMAN

We have your honor. In count one, bank robbery, we find the defendants guilty.

MARY

No!

Brian shakes uncontrollably. His attorney tries to comfort him.

JURY FOREMAN

Count two, murder of a peace officer. We find the defendants guilty.

MARY

No Lord!

Brian collapses into the arms of his attorney. He sees Mary blubbering as he's lead out of the courtroom by several bailiffs.

EXT. PRISON - DAY

A giant gate opens. A bus enters through the gate. The gate closes. The bus stops near a building. Two guards stand on each side of BERNIE (40), skinhead, who wears khaki pants and a white t-shirt. He holds a box under an arm.

Brian, Morgan, Bill, John, and Ollie get off the bus wearing arm and leg shackles and accompanied by several armed guards. Brian and Bernie make eye contact as they pass each other.

Brian turns around and watches Bernie get on the bus without the guards. A guard slams the butt of his rifle into Brian's kidney to prod him. Brian grimaces. The bus leaves.

INT. PRISON - DAY

The five new prisoners exit a room with a San Quentin logo and sign on the door which reads "PROCESSING." They walk single file in blue jumpsuits carrying sheets, towels, and a bar of soap.

GUARD BAKER (35), muscular, and two other guards escort the five down a corridor lined with cells on each side.

GUARD BAKER

We don't want any problems from you guys.

Black prisoners JOE (30) and JESSE (28) taunt them from their cells while another, DON (25), extremely obese, looks on. Joe chews gum and blows a bubble.

JESSE

Welcome to hell!

JOE  
 You boys scared? Which one of  
 you's the cop killer?

Jesse eyes Ollie.

JESSE  
 I'm tagging the short one right  
 now.

JOE  
 Bet you don't make it to sunset.

JESSE  
 Give me at least one night with  
 him, Joe.

GUARD BAKER  
 Those are our enforcers.

Prisoner SYD (30), a lanky black man with a shiner, stands  
 outside his open cell. He looks up at WARDEN JOHNSON (57),  
 who nods once at him. Syd approaches the five new inmates  
 with several Bibles.

SYD  
 May God watch over you.

He extends a Bible toward Morgan.

MORGAN  
 Take a hike, pal.

He pushes Syd's outstretched arm away.

BRIAN  
 Get outta here!

Brian slaps Syd's hand causing the Bible to fall to the  
 ground.

BRIAN  
 As if I can be changed.

JOHN  
 I sure hope this place isn't  
 filled with a bunch of holy Joes.

BRIAN  
 If it is, Bill will shoot'em.

Bill and Ollie take Bibles. Syd picks up the Bible and  
 carefully dusts it off with his shirt.

OLLIE

I'll take holy Joes over mean Joes  
any day.

SYD

May the Lord find you.

Syd enters his cell and the door shuts.

LATER

A bell RINGS. Cell doors open, the prisoners exit their cells and stand at attention. Prison guards write on clipboards as they do a headcount.

EXT. PRISON YARD - DAY

The prisoners are in self-segregated groups throughout the bland yard. Several prisoners stare down the convicted bank robbers.

BRIAN

Forty to life in this hellhole  
because you had to kill a cop.

Brian grabs a fistful of Ollie's shirt.

BRIAN

And all you had to do was drive  
the damn car.

MORGAN

Don't cause waves. I don't want  
forty years of problems.

BRIAN

I'll cause all the problems I  
want! I'm not staying in this  
dump with these lowlifes.

Guard Baker approaches the five who scope out the other prisoners.

GUARD BAKER

Welcome to the playground. I  
strongly recommend you keep to  
your own kind, except for Syd. He  
can be a big help to all of you.

BRIAN

I won't be going outside my kind.

MORGAN  
How do we find this Syd?

GUARD BAKER  
You already have.

Guard Baker points to the man who tried to give them each a Bible, preaching to a group of men in the center of the yard.

MORGAN  
What's he in for?

GUARD BAKER  
Don't ever ask him...only the warden knows.

Guard Baker walks away.

OLLIE  
Let's check it out.

BRIAN  
I have no use for God anymore.

MORGAN  
Me neither.

JOHN  
I'm staying right here.

BILL  
I don't mind protection.

Bill wanders over to the group keeping a look out over his shoulder.

MORGAN  
I don't know if that's protection or a target.

Joe, Jesse, and Don watch Bill as they lift weights.

JOE  
That's the cop killer.

JESSE  
Gotta be worth a lotta cigarettes.  
How much are the cops pay'n?

JOE  
A one year supply.

INT. BRIAN'S CELL - NIGHT

Brian writes a letter addressed to his mom.

PRISON GUARD ONE

Lights out!

The cell lights go out. A cockroach scoots across the floor.

Brian takes a spoon and knife out of his pillow case. He scrapes at the grout between the bricks in the wall with the spoon. It bends easily in half. He scrapes the same area with the knife. It snaps in two.

Brian slides under his blanket and fights back tears. Other blubbering cries echo throughout the cells.

EXT. PRISON YARD - DAY

Brian scopes out the perimeter wall and the guard towers. Some black prisoners walk toward him. He moves in a different direction. Morgan, John, Bill, and Ollie walk up to him.

MORGAN

Don't even think about it.

Brian scans the minority prisoners.

BRIAN

I'm not gonna hang around with these guys.

He scopes out the barb wire on top of the wall.

JOHN

You're wasting your time.

BRIAN

Yeah, I'm so busy with all kinds of appointments.

OLLIE

Brian--

BRIAN

It's bad enough I'll probably die in prison, but to spend my afterlife in hell...Who's gonna take care of my Mom?

MORGAN

You should've thought about that ahead of time.

Brian storms off.

JOHN

He was a good kid...until we corrupted him.

BILL

Everyone's gotta be responsible for their own actions.

OLLIE

You think we're gonna make it through this?

Morgan looks around at all the sleazy inmates.

MORGAN

Forty years is a long time. I'd say no.

INT. PRISON MESS HALL - DAY

The five slide trays with plates and bowls down the buffet line. Joe, Jesse, and Don stand behind them. Cooks on the other side of the steel flashing pour slop into the bowls. Joe smacks on his gum.

JOE

Ain't no way you guys make forty years.

Jesse slaps Ollie on the rear.

JESSE

I'll help you enjoy the forty years.

Joe laughs and then Jesse sings.

JESSE

(to the Humble Pie tune)

Forty years in the hole! Forty years in the hole!

Brian wheels around, but Bill grabs his arm and turns him back around.

BRIAN  
This isn't happening.

BILL  
Yes it is.

BRIAN  
I bet you wanna shoot the food.

BILL  
Or you.

BRIAN  
Bet now you wish you had floored  
it instead of helping the cop.

OLLIE  
I couldn't go to Heaven if he  
died.

BRIAN  
Well he died, so we're not going  
to Heaven.

MORGAN  
C'mon you guys.

Brian looks over toward Joe and Jesse. Joe blows a bubble with his gum. Jesse blows an imaginary kiss at Brian.

BRIAN  
Now we gotta deal with Gumby and  
Pokey.

Syd watches Brian take the long way around the black section to get where the white prisoners eat. Brian sits at a long table with the other four. He examines his food.

BRIAN  
Damn it. I'm not gonna rot with  
these lowlifes eating this crap.

MORGAN  
There's nothing you can do about  
it.

BRIAN  
I've got nothing to lose. My  
Mom's not gonna be around forever.

Brian sips the soup.

BILL  
Say goodbye to your Mom's  
homecooking.

Brian spits it out.

BRIAN  
This is crap!

JOHN  
You'll acquire a taste for it.

EXT. PRISON YARD - DAY

Syd walks to the center with Bill at his side. Joe watches the group as Jesse and Don lift weights.

SYD  
Even though we've all failed our  
Lord, we can still find  
redemption.

BILL  
It's never too late to change for  
the better and find salvation in  
Heaven.

Joe pops a stick of gum into his mouth.

JOE  
The cop killer is getting too cozy  
with Syd.

Guards watch Joe, Jesse, and Don get up and approach Syd's group. The guards turn and walk away. Syd and Bill see the three approach and try not to look at them.

SYD  
There will always be those who  
spit on you, but the ultimate goal  
of eternal life should remain your  
priority.

Joe pushes his way through the group and punches Syd in the face sending him to the ground. The concerned group watches as Syd struggles to stand. Don watches with a concerned look.

JOE  
The Bible says you're supposed to  
turn the other cheek.

Joe punches Syd's other cheek sending him to the ground.

JOE

This man is sending you down a road that doesn't exist. We can't change. We're criminals and we're all going to hell.

The three walk off while a concerned Don looks back.

INT. PRISON LIBRARY - DAY

Brian sits at a long table with several open books and a legal pad in front of him. A bruised, puffy-faced Syd walks up to Brian with his trusty Bible.

BRIAN

You've got guts...or a lack of brains.

SYD

Never pay back evil with evil. If your enemy is hungry, feed them. If they're thirsty, give them something to drink, and they'll be ashamed of what they did to you. Don't let evil get the best of you, but conquer evil by doing good. Romans twelve, seventeen through twenty-one.

BRIAN

Goodbye Syd.

SYD

I'd like to read you a passage from Matthew.

BRIAN

Not today.

SYD

Come on.

BRIAN

No!

SYD

Change is a bad word to most because they have to leave their comfortable world behind.

Syd sets a Bible down and walks away. Brian shoves the Bible which zips across the table and onto the floor.

EXT. PRISON YARD - DAY

Brian and the other four stand in the white prisoner section keeping a lookout on other prisoners. The Hispanic and black groups do the same. Bernie walks up to the five.

BRIAN

Didn't you just leave this place?

BERNIE

Yeah, but I always end up stealing or something when the money they give runs out. Name's Bernie.

He shakes hands.

BRIAN

Name's Brian. The preacher took quite a beating the other day.

BERNIE

Syd? He gets beat up all the time. He won't hit back...something about it'd be like hit'n God.

BRIAN

So you've listened to him preach.

BERNIE

Yeah, but it never seemed to help.

JOHN

Why beat him up?

BERNIE

Because he keeps prisoners in line. That's their job.

Bernie points at Joe, Jesse, and Don.

BERNIE

The guards give them treats for keeping us in line...makes their job a lot easier.

MORGAN

So Syd's the competition.

JOHN

Why don't they just kill him?

BRIAN

Yeah, Bill will do it.

MORGAN

No one wants to stay here any longer than they have to.

BRIAN

A lifer could do it.

MORGAN

They have nothing else to look forward to.

Morgan watches as Joe, Jesse and Don lift weights.

Syd walks by with his followers.

SYD

Let's listen to the word of God.

Brian walks toward the library. Bill follows Syd. Armed guards watch the prisoners from their towers. Brian enters the building.

INT. BRIAN'S CELL - NIGHT

Brian reads a letter from his mom. He looks at a wallet size picture of his mom. He gets out a pen and paper.

GUARD BAKER

Lights out!

The lights go out. Brian slides into bed with the picture. A mouse scurries across the floor. He cries. Other cries echo throughout the prison.

EXT. PRISON YARD - DAY

Brian watches Syd and Bill walk to the center of the yard carrying Bibles. Very few prisoners gather. Other prisoners watch Joe, Jesse, and Don lift weights.

JESSE

We gonna beat 'em up?

Joe rubs his knuckles.

JOE

Naaa. Syd's head must be made of concrete.

More prisoners gather around Syd when they see the three continue to lift weights.

SYD

We've all sinned. It's never too late to ask for forgiveness.

INT. PRISON LIBRARY - DAY

Syd looks on as Bill walks over to Brian who's seated at his usual table with many books and a legal pad.

BILL

I was hoping that maybe you'd help do some preaching with Syd and me.

BRIAN

So I can get worked over? No thanks.

BILL

You're not gonna get worked over.

Syd walks over.

SYD

I'd like to read you that passage from Matthew.

BRIAN

No Syd, I'm busy.

SYD

Too busy for God?

BRIAN

He did a lot of good having me sent here.

BILL

Maybe you sent yourself here.

BRIAN

Maybe four high school buddies did.

Syd and Bill walk over to other prisoners at another table and sit down. Prison Guard Baker strides over to Brian.

GUARD BAKER

Your mom's waiting for you in the  
visitor's box.

Brian darts from his chair.

INT. VISITOR'S BOX - DAY

A large Plexiglas partition separates Brian from a gaunt  
Mary. They each put a palm against the glass in hopes of  
touching the other. They pick up hanging telephones.

MARY

How are they treating you?

BRIAN

Lousy. I have to plug my nose to  
eat the food.

MARY

Why Brian?

BRIAN

What else could I do? We were  
strapped.

MARY

So you'd rather rot in Hell for  
the murder of a police officer.

BRIAN

If God really exists, He wouldn't  
have let me get caught...or given  
you cancer. If He exists, why  
does He let anything bad happen?

MARY

He exists. We just don't know His  
overall plan.

BRIAN

I don't believe it.

Mary pulls the worn card that Brian kept on his nightstand  
out of her purse. She presses it against the glass.

MARY

I'm praying that somehow you'll be  
with me and Dad.

A guard stands next to Mary.

MARY

Please, Brian. Our family chain  
must link again.

The guard escorts Mary away. Brian and Mary lock eyes until she leaves the room.

INT. BRIAN'S CELL - NIGHT

Guard Baker walks by with the mail. Brian springs from his bed.

BRIAN

Wasn't there any mail for me?

GUARD BAKER

Not today.

EXT. PRISON YARD - DAY

Syd and Bill preach to their followers in the center of the yard. Joe, Jesse, and Don lift weights.

JOE

Don't these guys ever learn?

Joe, Jesse, and Don get up from the weight benches. Joe and Jesse hide shanks in their hands. The three march toward Syd's group. Don stops and goes back. The followers back away as Joe and Jesse walk up to Bill.

Joe stabs Bill in the side which sends him to the ground gasping for air. Both men stab Bill repeatedly on the torso and the palms of his hands as he hopelessly tries to block the rapid strikes.

Don drops his head. There's chaos as ear-splitting alarms BLARE.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

A guard races past Brian who's seated at a table. Brian stands up and looks out a window. He rushes out the door.

EXT. PRISON YARD - DAY

Brian races to a large group of prisoners who cheer in the center of the yard. He sees Bill bleeding. Tear gas canisters send out plumes of white smoke. Guards with gas masks tend to Bill while other guards restore order.

Brian fights his way closer to Bill who looks at Brian. Bill bleeds on his side and hands which are palms up away from his body.

BILL  
Sorry for changing your life.

BRIAN  
It's alright.

BILL  
I'm going to meet my Creator.

BRIAN  
Don't talk.

BILL  
You can change, Brian.

Bill's face gets white. He dies.

Joe and Jesse are hauled away by guards.

INT. DON'S CELL - NIGHT

The cell door opens. Don enters. On the bed are several cartons of cigarettes. Don crushes the cartons with his hands and throws them against the wall.

INT. PRISON LIBRARY - DAY

A bruised Syd limps up to Brian who reads several books at a table.

SYD  
Still too busy for God?

BRIAN  
How do I get a knife?

Syd points at Brian's chair.

SYD

You're sitting on about twenty knives, but if you kill someone don't expect to go to Heaven.

BRIAN

I'm not going to Heaven. Are Joe and Jesse gonna be in solitary?

SYD

For a long time.

BRIAN

Why don't you ever fight back?

SYD

Hitting someone is like hitting God, because he's inside each of us.

BRIAN

Those are blacks beat'n a brother.

SYD

Hasn't there been any white people you didn't like?

BRIAN

The four I came in with hassled me all the time growing up.

SYD

Well, there you go. You have to love one another as yourself, not just the ones of your choosing.

BRIAN

Can't believe he's gone.

SYD

I've seen men have their throats slashed right in front of me. When ya see a man lose his life, it changes your life forever.

EXT. PRISON YARD - DAY

Brian sits alone at a table. Nobody is at the workout area. Morgan, John, and Ollie listen to Syd preach. Don listens to Syd from the back of the group. He walks over to Brian.

BRIAN  
What do you want?

DON  
I had nothing to do with it.

BRIAN  
You could've stopped it.

DON  
I'd get beat up every day if I  
wasn't hanging with them.

BRIAN  
You let a man die for some  
cigarettes?

DON  
You let a policeman die for money.

Syd's group breaks up. Morgan, John, and Ollie hustle over  
to Brian and Don.

MORGAN  
Syd says you got a shot at Heaven!

Brian perks up. Morgan glares at Don.

MORGAN  
What do you want? Fat piece of...

JOHN  
You may have to spend some time in  
Purgatory.

OLLIE  
We all might have a shot.

BRIAN  
I can't get to Heaven.

OLLIE  
Why?

BRIAN  
You went to church. Thou shall  
not kill.

OLLIE  
Is that what you think?

MORGAN

I always thought if you did more  
good than bad you went to Heaven.

OLLIE

Bein' golden.

Some of them have confused looks.

BRIAN

Live by The Golden Rule.

DON

There's gotta be more to it than  
that.

BRIAN

Obey the Ten Commandments.

DON

No one in here has.

MORGAN

Doesn't anyone know what it takes  
to get to Heaven?

BRIAN

Why does it matter? We're all  
damaged goods. That's why we're  
going to hell.

OLLIE

God wants us all with him.

JOHN

Maybe prison is Purgatory on Earth  
and we go straight to Heaven.

BRIAN

You guys are dreaming.

DON

Nobody knows what'll happen.

MORGAN

We'll know at life's end.

JOHN

Isn't it worth the chance to be  
with your Mom forever?

INT. BRIAN'S CELL - NIGHT

Brian enters and the steel door slams shut. An envelope is on his bed. He opens it and takes out the worn motto card he kept on his nightstand as a youngster. He reads the enclosed letter.

INSERT THE LETTER

Dear Brian McClean,

You have our deepest sympathy as we regret to inform you that your mother, Mary Geraldine McClean, passed away Friday, November 26 due to a heart attack.

Sincerely,  
Gerald Johnson, Warden

He falls on his bed and clenches his fist around the letter. A rat runs across the floor.

He kneels and makes the sign of the cross.

EXT. PRISON YARD - DAY

Brian, Morgan, John, and Ollie stand in a circle with their backs to each other as they watch for possible ambushers.

MORGAN

Sorry about your mom.

JOHN

Sorry.

Brian wheels around to the backs of the other three.

BRIAN

Robbing that bank was the stupidest thing I ever did.

OLLIE

We all know better now.

BRIAN

Why couldn't we just get jobs like everyone else?

He looks around at all the questionable characters.

BRIAN

Now she's in Heaven and I'm here.

JOHN  
Cause we have to be rehabilitated.

BRIAN  
Prison isn't for rehabilitating.  
It's to punish you.

MORGAN  
People in here have changed.

BRIAN  
From San Quentin? What, one in a  
thousand?

MORGAN  
More than that.

BRIAN  
Even if they do change, they're  
still going to hell.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A small caravan of cars park. A van with steel bars across the windows parks. Two men in black suits help Brian, in prison garb, exit the van. One of the men removes Brian's ankle shackles, but keeps him in handcuffs.

LATER

One of the men stands next to Brian while the other is a short distance away. Brian and the small crowd watch the casket get lowered. The two men in black suits escort Brian away.

INT. PRISON LIBRARY - DAY

Syd carries his Bible as he walks up to Brian who's seated at a table with several open books.

SYD  
You'll never stop looking for a  
loophole.

BRIAN  
Hey Syd.

Brian writes on the legal pad.

SYD

Why don't you face the fact that you're gonna be here a long time?

BRIAN

I'm not gonna stop trying. Either that or just end it all.

SYD

You think you'll go to Heaven if you kill yourself? Remember, God's inside you.

BRIAN

If I breathe I can't go to Heaven.

SYD

Heaven isn't some fast food joint that accepts any warm body, and God isn't some convenience to bail you out when you're having problems and ignored when times are good.

BRIAN

Why me?

SYD

No one said life was gonna be easy. All these books, but you're missing the most important book.

He taps his Bible.

BRIAN

I was involved in a murder. It's too late for me to get to Heaven.

SYD

You don't know what God will decide for you.

BRIAN

Hell. That's what he'll decide.

SYD

What do you have to lose?

BRIAN

I was taught--

SYD

Who cares what you were taught?  
What you do here on Earth for  
seventy years is nothing compared  
to what awaits you in Heaven for  
eternity.

Brian pulls out the chair next to him.

BRIAN

I'll read the Bible just to prove  
you wrong...and to maybe save some  
of the lighter offenders.

Syd sits down and Brian slides the books away. Prisoners snicker at Brian as they pass by. Brian slides a large book back, opens it, and hides the open Bible inside the large book.

LIBRARY - NEXT DAY

Syd points at a page in the Bible. There are only a couple of books on the table in front of Brian.

INT. BRIAN'S CELL - DAY

Brian lies in bed. A prisoner pushes a book cart just outside his cell. Brian points at the cart. The prisoner hands him a Bible between the steel bars. Brian opens the Bible.

INT. PRISON LIBRARY - DAY

Brian and Syd read their Bibles. Brian's Bible is hidden inside a larger book. There are no other books on the table.

SYD

Does God embarrass you?

BRIAN

I just don't want to get beat up.

SYD

The bruises last a few days, but  
if you believe in Him you'll have  
eternal life. If God loves you,  
and he does, who cares what  
anybody else thinks?

Brian sets the large book down exposing the Bible.

BRIAN

This is a hard book to understand.

SYD

Take it slowly and make some notes.

Syd slides a legal pad toward Brian. Brian looks blankly past his book. His eyes get moist.

BRIAN

Do you think any of these guys are going to Heaven?

Syd slips a tasseled bookmark in his Bible and closes it.

SYD

Almost all of us can make it if we have faith.

BRIAN

Almost all of us? God doesn't take bank robbers and murderers, does he?

SYD

Maybe not murderers, I mean, the actual killer.

BRIAN

So Bill may not make it?

SYD

I've been praying for Bill since he got here. Killing a human is like killing God.

BRIAN

He's not going to Heaven, is he?

SYD

That's up to God. Bill changed his ways...had faith at the end. He'll probably spend some time in Purgatory.

Brian puts a tasseled bookmark in his Bible and closes it.

SYD

We can't edit out our mistakes, but we can make the most of our lives from this moment forward.

BRIAN

My Mom wanted me to get to  
Heaven...to be with her and Dad  
again.

Brian looks around the room at the shady characters.

BRIAN

I want all of them to get to  
Heaven, but let's face it, they're  
not going to Heaven.

SYD

Help them get to Heaven.

BRIAN

I don't even know what it takes to  
get to Heaven. Some people think  
you just gotta live by the Ten  
Commandments. Others say you  
gotta live by the Golden Rule.

SYD

So find out. You're only spinning  
through space on this blue and  
white marble for so long.

EXT. PRISON YARD - DAY

Prisoners stand around in groups watching for possible  
ambushers. A slimmer Don sweats profusely as he jogs inside  
the perimeter wall. Brian and Syd sit at a table reading  
their Bibles.

BRIAN

You think there's a God?

SYD

There's a God.

BRIAN

But--

SYD

We've all had strange miracles  
happen to us, so there's a God.

BRIAN

I know, but--

SYD

Come here.

Syd and Brian get up and walk up steps to get a view over the perimeter wall. Syd points at the beautiful sunset over the harbor.

SYD

Who do you think created that? It wasn't a man.

NEXT DAY - PRISON YARD

Brian carries a Bible over to prisoners standing around. Some of the prisoners follow him to the center of the yard. Brian and Syd preach to a large group which includes Don.

INT. PRISON - DAY

Four prisoners are escorted by three guards out of the room marked "PROCESSING." They carry blankets, sheets, and soap as they approach Brian who holds several Bibles. Brian looks up at Warden Johnson who nods.

Brian offers a Bible to each of the four prisoners as they walk by. The first three push away the Bibles or shake their heads. The last prisoner accepts the Bible.

EXT. PRISON YARD - DAY

Syd and Brian preach to several dozen prisoners including Don. Don sees Joe and Jesse exit a building and immediately heads straight for the weights.

Several others see Joe and Jesse and quickly leave the sermon. Joe and Jesse glare at Syd and Brian. Brian trembles and abruptly leaves for his usual bench.

SYD

Now go out and tell the others the good news.

Syd sees Joe and Jesse join Don at the weights. He walks over to Brian.

SYD

What are you doing?

BRIAN

I can't do it Syd.

SYD

Not even for God?

BRIAN

My purpose in life is not getting  
killed.

SYD

You said you wanted to help the  
others get to Heaven.

BRIAN

Not that badly.

LATER

Syd and Brian preach to a group away from Joe, Jesse, and Don on the far side of the yard. Brian keeps an eye on Joe, Jesse, and Don who lift weights.

Joe, Jesse, and Don stop lifting weights and walk toward the group through the white and Hispanic sections without a care in the world. Brian sees the men approach and hastily moves over to his usual bench.

Joe and Jesse push Syd around and knock him to the ground while Don acts as a lookout. Joe, Jesse, and Don leave.

INT. PRISON LIBRARY - DAY

Syd and Brian preach to a group around a table. Joe, Jesse, and Don burst through the front door. Brian tries to leave, but gets thrown back in his chair by Joe. Joe and Jesse pummel Brian and Syd while Don acts as a lookout.

EXT. PRISON YARD - DAY

Despite numerous black and blue marks, Syd and Brian preach to a group in the yard center.

Joe, Jesse, and Don lift weights, see the group, and heads toward them. Brian sees Joe, Jesse, and Don approach. He trembles but stands his ground.

Joe and Jesse pummel and kick Syd and Brian sending both men to the ground. Don scurries back to the weights. Guards rush in and haul away Joe and Jesse. Morgan, Bill, and Ollie tend to Syd and Brian.

SUPER: THIRTY-THREE YEARS LATER

Brian (61), Bible in hand, preaches to a young, mixed group in the center of the prison yard. Joe, Jesse, and Don (58) all showing the wear and tear of prison life, sit back to back looking for ambushers.

PRISON GUARD ONE (40), athletic, notices a large group of Hispanics lifting weights and studying Brian's group. He wanders over to a frail Syd (64) sitting at a table.

PRISON GUARD ONE  
Word is the new kids may be  
planning to bury Brian and  
company.

He strolls on. Syd scans the Hispanic group.

LATER

Armed tower guards keep a keen watch over the yard.

The large Hispanic group watches Joe, Jesse, and Don sit back to back at a table scanning for ambushers. Several of the Hispanics get up from a table and walk one direction while several others walk in the opposite direction.

The remaining Hispanics walk straight toward Joe, Jesse, and Don. All three Hispanic groups pick up speed as they converge on Joe, Jesse, and Don like a swarm of killer bees. The Hispanics kick and thrust shanks into the men.

Tear gas canisters bounce on the asphalt sending out contrails of white smoke. Alarms BLARE as the prisoners sit still on the asphalt. Don tries to run away, but is quickly kicked, beaten, and stabbed by the mob.

It takes an army of armed guards to finally control the prisoners. The battered bodies of Joe, Jesse, and Don are hardly recognizable as they lie in their pools of blood.

INT. PRISON LIBRARY - DAY

Brian and Syd read their Bibles.

BRIAN  
Why did you get into preaching?

SYD  
Guys would get out and always end  
up right back in here. I wanted  
them to make a real change...to  
find God.

BRIAN  
Do any of 'em change?

SYD  
Some.

BRIAN  
Why are you here?

Syd swallows hard and takes an eternity to respond.

SYD  
I looked and looked for a job.  
Nobody would hire me. We had no  
food. One day after mass, I stole  
the collection money. Father  
McCarthy startled me from behind.  
There was a struggle, he slipped,  
and hit his head on some marble.

BRIAN  
You killed him?

SYD  
I promised God I'd change and be  
his replacement here in prison.

BRIAN  
You can't go to Heaven?

SYD  
It's in his hands. Every day I  
pray he shows mercy on me.

BRIAN  
Neither one of us are going to  
Heaven, are we?

SYD  
I don't know.

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Syd sits in front of WARDEN SEGERSTROM's (55), desk. The warden looks out his window at the prison yard where Brian preaches to a large, mixed group of prisoners.

WARDEN SEGERSTROM  
I trust your opinion Syd and we've  
always appreciated your help in  
keeping a peaceful prison.

SYD

Brian's group wouldn't hurt anyone  
if you let 'em out.

WARDEN SEGERSTROM

I know they wouldn't. I'm not  
making any promises, but I'll see  
what I can do.

SYD

Thank you, sir.

The two watch Brian gently dunk a prisoner's head into a  
bowl and then makes the sign of the cross on the prisoner's  
forehead.

WARDEN SEGERSTROM

How does he get them to come  
together like that?

SYD

Sir?

WARDEN SEGERSTROM

He brings the different races  
together at his meetings.

SYD

I told him not to look at a  
person's skin color; only the  
person.

WARDEN SEGERSTROM

You still don't want a board  
hearing for yourself?

SYD

My work here still isn't  
done...probably never will be.

EXT. PRISON YARD - DAY

Syd and the four play checkers and chess. Prison Guard One  
walks up to the men and hands Morgan a yellow piece of  
paper.

PRISON GUARD ONE

Looks like it's time for another  
hearing boys.

Brian looks up at the sky with folded hands. John and Ollie  
try to read the yellow paper over Morgan's shoulders.

JOHN

These things never pan out.

MORGAN

No one wants to be responsible for us killing someone if we get out.

BRIAN

You never know.

INT. PRISON HEARING BOARDROOM - DAY

Brian sits shackled at a long table opposite the hearing board members which includes a bespectacled BOARD CHAIRWOMAN (60).

BOARD CHAIRWOMAN

Congratulations Mr McClean. We feel you are no longer a threat to society.

Brian looks up to the ceiling with both hands folded.

BRIAN

Thank you, Lord! I will do your work.

IN THE HALLWAY

Guards keep an eye on Morgan, John, and Ollie who sit shackled on a bench. An ecstatic Brian exits the boardroom with a guard. The three spring to their feet and hug Brian.

INT. MESS HALL - DAY

The different races sit integrated at the long tables eating off trays.

BRIAN

...to light, to guard, to rule and guide. Amen.

SYD

Amen!

Syd and the four are in a jovial mood. PRISON GUARD TWO walks up to their table.

PRISON GUARD TWO

The only reason you guys are being let out is because you're old and we don't have the space, not

PRISON GUARD TWO  
because you're not a threat.

MORGAN  
We don't have to be young and  
strong to fire a gun.

The two stare each other down.

PRISON GUARD TWO  
You'll never contribute anything  
to society.

JOHN  
Hope we don't find out where you  
live.

Prison guard two stares John down before leaving.

BRIAN  
You didn't need to say that.  
Thirty-seven years should've  
taught you better.

MORGAN  
I'm not going to miss this place  
one bit.

OLLIE  
I'll be the first one out the  
gates.

JOHN  
We otta stay together and get an  
apartment or something.

OLLIE  
Where are we going to go? Where  
are we going to stay?

MORGAN  
We can pool the money they're  
gonna give us when we leave. We'll  
come up with a place.

Ollie notices Brian gazing across the room. He waves his hand in front of Brian's face which snaps him back.

BRIAN  
I was just thinking of the time  
before prison...and knowing we  
don't have a lotta time left.  
Maybe we shouldn't hang out

BRIAN  
together anymore.

JOHN  
What?

OLLIE  
Why not?

MORGAN  
Father O'Brian has had an  
epiphany.

They laugh.

BRIAN  
I'm thinking of joining the  
seminary.

OLLIE  
What if you're too old?

MORGAN  
They won't take an ex-con.

Brian shrugs his shoulders.

MORGAN  
We can grab a cheap place far from  
this hellhole. Our moving  
expenses shouldn't be much.

The others laugh.

JOHN  
It's called jump on a bus and go.  
Either that or hitchhike.

BRIAN  
They don't hitchhike anymore.

OLLIE  
Too many bad guys.

MORGAN  
We just spent thirty-seven years  
behind bars. We are the bad guys.

Syd scans the four like a drill sergeant.

SYD  
There's going to be a lot of  
people out there racing to work,  
getting the kids to school. Don't

SYD  
let 'em forget about God. Where  
are you headed?

BRIAN  
Back to Newport Beach.

SYD  
Good luck, those people are  
furthest from reality.

INT. BRIAN'S CELL - NIGHT

Brian reads the worn motto card in bed.

BRIAN  
...but as God calls us one by one  
the chain will link again.

Brian looks at the worn, wallet-size picture of his mom and the worn motto card. Brian puts the photo and motto card in his Bible and closes it. He sets the Bible on his nightstand.

BRIAN  
Please watch over us tonight,  
Lord, and please give food to all  
the starving people in the world.

PRISON GUARD TWO  
Lights out!

The lights go out.

BRIAN  
Lord, please forgive Syd. Please  
forgive all of my sins and help me  
find a way to serve you.

Sniffles are heard throughout the cell block. They grow louder into blubbering CRIES echoing off the corridor walls.

EXT. PRISON YARD - DAY

Syd stands with the four prisoners. Morgan, John, and Ollie have a dirt, cross shape on their foreheads. Syd bends down and rubs his thumb in the dirt. He stands and makes the sign of the cross on Brian's forehead.

SYD

Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return. Go back to your life before you derailed. Go back to God.

BRIAN

Thanks for everything Syd. I'll never forget you.

Brian and the others hug Syd.

SYD

Time's running out. Get to confession and receive the Eucharist right away, and live by the Golden Rule.

MORGAN

Don't ever change Syd.

BRIAN

It was a blessing in disguise that I was sent to prison so I could find God again through you.

SYD

Everything happens for a reason.

Prison Guard Two escorts the four prisoners, dressed in new khaki pants and white t-shirts, toward the giant front gates. The guard looks at Brian.

PRISON GUARD TWO

You'll never make it to Heaven.

Each inmate carries a cardboard box and stares glass-eyed at the threshold.

JOHN

This is unbelievable.

BRIAN

My dad used to take us camping in the Sierra Nevadas. Home always seemed so different after being gone only a week.

OLLIE

What's the world gonna look like after so long?

Their pace slows down. The gates open and the four walk through the wide threshold.

PRISON GUARD TWO

We'll see you back here shortly.  
Even if we don't, you're going to  
vaporize in hell.

Brian waves goodbye to Syd who makes the sign of the cross. The guard goes back inside the compound as the giant gates close behind him. The four walk back toward the massive wall. Morgan barely touches the wall.

MORGAN

The last time I saw this side of  
the wall was when they brought us  
here.

The four gaze at the wall.

OLLIE

What are we gonna do now?

The sound of an approaching prison bus causes them to turn around. The bus waits for the prison gates to open. Bernie looks out one of the bus windows at the four. The bus enters the prison. The gates close.

They creep down the street like baby chicks afraid to leave the nest, some with both hands behind their back as though still handcuffed.

EXT. STREET - DAY

John looks in his box as they stroll along a storefront sidewalk.

JOHN

We got enough old items to open an  
antique shop.

OLLIE

We could pool the eight hundred  
bucks and try our luck in Vegas!

The other three give him "you idiot" looks.

The four wander along a dirty, graffiti-filled street. They approach a lady walking a small dog in the opposite direction. The four find it difficult to make eye contact, but at the last second Brian tips his hat.

The lady ignores them and continues on.

BRIAN

This place has gone down the tubes.

They see several Hispanic men loitering nearby.

OLLIE

When did it become such a toilet?

Two teenage boys approach. The four slowly make eye contact.

BRIAN

Hello.

The two boys don't respond and continue on their way.

INT. BUS - DAY

Like curious toddlers, the four ex-cons people watch the other passengers and gaze at the rural landscape.

EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

The four get off the bus and are intimidated when they observe well-dressed people with sleek cell phones and I-Pods. Some of the people look at the four, snicker and snub them.

INT. HOMELESS SHELTER - DAY

Morgan, John, and Ollie sit at a bench table finishing their meals. Brian talks to the HOMELESS SHELTER MANAGER (60), short and bald.

HOMELESS SHELTER MANAGER

We don't need any more help.

Brian walks back toward the other three. He sees all the homeless people eating. He walks over to a broom in the corner and sweeps the floor. The homeless shelter manager watches him.

EXT. HOMELESS SHELTER - DAY

Morgan sees a sports bar across the street.

MORGAN

We haven't had hops in four decades. Let's hoist one for Bill.

INT. SPORTS BAR - DAY

They enter and immediately receive funny looks from the patrons. Like scared rabbits, the four head straight to the men's room.

INSIDE THE MEN'S ROOM

The four do their business.

They don't see any flush handles. They step away and the toilets flush automatically.

BRIAN

We're in a different world.

They put soap on their hands, but don't see faucet handles. They watch a man swipe his hands under a faucet and see water come out. The man puts his hands up to a paper towel dispenser and paper towels spring out. They wash up.

AT THE BAR

The four sit on bar stools at the long bar. Dozens of TVs play.

OLLIE

Look at all the TV's.

MORGAN

Four Falstaffs.

BARTENDER

Falstaff? What's that?

MORGAN

How 'bout four Lucky beers?

BARTENDER

Never heard of it.

JOHN

Pabst?

OLLIE

Brew 102?

BRIAN

Look, bud--

BARTENDER

Got Bud.

The bartender reaches into a small refrigerator, opens, and disperses four Budweiser beers. The four raise their bottles.

MORGAN

To Bill.

JOHN

Here, here.

OLLIE

We love you, Bill.

BRIAN

I hope you're in Heaven with your family.

MORGAN

I'm glad I'm on the right side of dirt.

OLLIE

When I go, I don't want you guys spending a lot of dough on my funeral.

BRIAN

We'll just throw a sheet over ya.

They laugh. John looks over a menu and almost spits out his beer.

JOHN

Five bucks for a beer! We used to get half a case for less than that!

Morgan grabs the menu.

MORGAN

We're going to have to watch every dime from here on out.

EXT. SPORTS BAR - DAY

The four exit. Three kids including RICARDO (12), skinny, run past carrying spray paint cans. They are chased by HARDWARE STORE OWNER (50), who gives up the pursuit.

HARDWARE STORE OWNER

You're gonna end up in jail! Damn kids.

Morgan spots a Wells Fargo bank across the street.

MORGAN

Wells Fargo!

Morgan runs across the street. The others follow.

OLLIE

We're not going to rob 'em, are we?

OLLIE

Cause I don't have another forty years.

INT. BANK - DAY

The four sit and stand around a BANKER'S desk. Ollie points at the monitor on his desk.

OLLIE

That's a computer!

MORGAN

Don't mind him. He doesn't get out much.

A secretary delivers a check to the banker who promptly hands the check over to Morgan.

BANKER

Here you are Mr. Ehlers. We always wondered what happened to you.

The four grin with wide eyes at the check.

BANKER

It's a pleasure to have finally met you. Let us know if we can ever do anything for you.

EXT. BANK - DAY

The four look at the check again as if they need to be pinched.

MORGAN

There might be more heading our way boys.

INT. PRIMERICA OFFICE - DAY

An account executive sits at a large desk across from the four.

PRIMERICA ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

E. F. Hutton was bought out by American Express and then we bought it from them.

A secretary hands a check to the account executive who looks it over before she hands it to Morgan.

PRIMERICA ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

You're an excellent example of buy and hold investing, Mr. Ehlers. A long-term investor today is someone who holds a stock for an hour.

Morgan and the others gasp at the check.

MORGAN

I thought Chevron and Exxon would do well.

EXT. PRIMERICA OFFICE - DAY

The four walk out grinning.

JOHN

Now we can get a place.

OLLIE

And have all the women and booze we want.

BRIAN

Wait a minute. This is Morgan's money.

They look at Morgan.

MORGAN

I've lived the last forty years  
with you guys. I'm not going to  
abandon you now.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Brian kneels down at his mother's grave site.

BRIAN

I'm sorry I let you down. I hope  
God will let me be with you again  
someday.

INT. HOMELESS SHELTER - DAY

Brian finishes eating. He collects his dishes and other  
discarded dishes and takes them to the sink. The homeless  
shelter manager watches Brian rinse the dishes. Brian wipes  
down the tables.

HOMELESS SHELTER MANAGER

Thanks for doing this.

BRIAN

I'm happy to earn my keep.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Brian walks on the sidewalk toward an intersection. A car  
waits at the red light. A young girl in the back of the car  
smiles at Brian.

INT. MORGAN'S HOUSE - DAY

John, Brian, and Ollie move a sofa into place against a  
wall.

JOHN

Glad that's done.

They sit down on the sofa.

MORGAN

Here.

Morgan hands each of the three an envelope. They open them  
and expose large bills.

JOHN  
Holy cow, Morgan!

MORGAN  
We spent so much time locked  
up...ordered around...told when to  
eat and shower. I want you to  
enjoy the time you have left.

BRIAN  
A little girl in a car smiled at  
me today. It made me think how I  
missed out on having a wife and  
kids.

MORGAN  
I'm afraid we all missed out on  
that.

BRIAN  
We hurt our families. It was bad  
enough we stained our names, but  
it wasn't right to take them down  
with us.

MORGAN  
How many times were they asked  
where we were? How come we don't  
see Morgan anymore?

BRIAN  
What'd they tell 'em?

MORGAN  
I was overseas in the military or  
something.

JOHN  
I was an international banker  
always out of the country.

OLLIE  
My family said I was a pitcher for  
the Baltimore Orioles.

JOHN  
You?

OLLIE  
That didn't last long cuz they  
couldn't find my name on the team  
roster.

They laugh.

BRIAN  
I can never forgive myself for  
what I've done.

EXT. STREET - DAY

An HISPANIC GARDENER (50) smiles at Brian who walks along a store-lined street and looks in the windows of some shops. Graffiti is spray painted on some windows. One window is broken.

He sees a fruit stand worker, WENDY (40), in front of a store.

BRIAN  
Good morning, ma'am.

Wendy glances at his clothes and then looks away. Brian looks at his clothes and moves on. A lady, JUDY (35), and her daughter SARAH (10) approach from the opposite direction.

BRIAN  
Hello.

Judy and Sarah look at Brian's unkempt hair and look away.

EXT. THRIFT STORE - DAY

Brian exits wearing nicer clothes.

EXT. BARBER SHOP - DAY

Brian exits sporting a new haircut.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Brian sees a schoolgirl, CAMI (10), waiting on the bench.

BRIAN  
Hi.

Cami glances at Brian's tattoos and then looks away. Brian looks over the bus schedule on a pole and then looks at Cami.

BRIAN

Do you know how to read this thing?

Cami ignores him. Brian reads the schedule. Bus number twenty-three approaches.

BRIAN

Bus twenty-three is as good as any.

The bus pulls to the curb, the doors open, and he gets on.

INT. BUS - DAY

Brian walks up the steps and scans the packed, yet quiet, bus. A sticker at the front of the bus reads: PASSENGERS MUST BE SEATED AT ALL TIMES.

JESUS (8), Hispanic, needy, sees well-dressed kids JOSH (10), and CORY (11) stroll down the center aisle toward him. Jesus pulls out a red, decorative, heart-shaped box from his backpack. He rubs the box.

Cory smacks Jesus on the back of his head.

CORY

Illegal alien.

JOSH

Nice clothes.

Brian pulls a bill out of his wallet and tries to give it to the driver DAVID (30), fat, unshaven.

DAVID

I don't take it! Put it in there!

He points at the bill acceptor. Brian tries to figure out where to put the money into the machine. In the right side view mirror, David sees an old lady running toward his bus. David grabs the bill and feeds it into the machine.

DAVID

Sit your ass down!

The passengers stare at Brian. Some of the passengers snicker. Brian sits in the front row next to DELORES (50), fat, heavy makeup.

BRIAN

Hello, I'm Brian.

Delores looks out the window. The old lady catches up to the bus. David floors it leaving a plume of black smoke in her face.

Blacky watches the bus leave until it's out of sight. She lies down.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Brian exits the bus. He looks at the trees, buildings, and people. A man approaches.

BRIAN

Good morning.

The man walks past. Brian sees a lady, CINDY (40), with a little girl, KENDRA (7).

BRIAN

Nice day, isn't it?

Cindy sees Brian's arm tattoos and pulls Kendra in close to her side as they walk by. Another lady approaches.

BRIAN

Morning.

The lady sees his tattoos and looks away.

INT. MORGAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Brian sits on a couch with a phone to his ear. Morgan, John, and Ollie listen nearby.

SEMINARY PERSON (V.O.)

I'm sorry sir, but with the recent history we're screening priests more closely.

BRIAN

I understand. Well, thank you.

He hangs up.

MORGAN

Don't worry about it.

BRIAN

I'm not too worried. He'll help me find my purpose.

INT. MORGAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Brian and Morgan sit at the kitchen table. John enters with pizza boxes and sits next to Ollie on the couch watching the news on TV. The TV NEWSCASTER reports.

ON SCREEN

TV NEWSCASTER

A ten year-old girl was the victim  
of a driveby shooting today...

BACK TO SCENE

BRIAN

Let's kill the TV and eat together  
at the table.

Ollie turns off the TV and sits down with John at the table. Morgan opens one of the pizza boxes and takes out a slice of pizza.

MORGAN

Let's dig in.

The others take out pizza.

OLLIE

It looks good!

BRIAN

I'd like to say grace.

The other three look at him and then set their pizza down.

MORGAN

Go ahead Father O'Brian.

Morgan, John, and Ollie watch Brian make the sign of the cross, fold his hands and bow his head. They do the same.

BRIAN

Bless us O Lord and these our  
gifts which we are about to  
receive from thy bounty through  
Christ our Lord, amen.

The other three raise their heads and reach for the pizza.

BRIAN

Angel of God our guardian dear...

The three fold their hands again.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Several well-dressed people hustle past a church with sparse, bland landscape. The dirty sign out front reads "OUR LADY QUEEN OF ANGELS CATHOLIC CHURCH." Modestly-dressed Brian walks up the church steps.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Brian enters the dim, cavernous building, dips his hand into a holy water bowl, makes the sign of the cross, and kneels with folded hands in a pew. He looks up at the giant crucifix behind the altar.

BRIAN

Lord, please forgive me for all my sins. I'm sorry I let you down.

He sees two short lines of people outside of confessional boxes. He walks over and fidgets as he waits in one of the lines. The door opens and a young girl exits. The girl looks at Brian's arm tattoos. Brian looks at his arms.

INSIDE CONFESSIONAL BOX ONE

Brian enters and kneels down. FATHER O' MALLEY (70), slides open an opaque window revealing another opaque window with several small holes.

BRIAN

Bless me father for I have sinned. The last time I went to confession was over forty years ago.

FATHER O' MALLEY

Forty years! Don't you love the Lord?

BRIAN

Yes father, but--

FATHER O' MALLEY

Do you ever read the Bible?

BRIAN

I do when I get a chance.

FATHER O' MALLEY

What do you do for work?

BRIAN

I don't have a job.

FATHER O' MALLEY

Then you should have plenty of time to read the Bible. Do you have a family?

BRIAN

No, father.

FATHER O' MALLEY

So you have no wife, no kids, and no job? What have you been doing the last forty years? Sitting in prison?

BRIAN

No.

Brian immediately squints and drops his head. He leaves the confessional box and enters the confessional box next door.

INSIDE CONFESSIONAL BOX TWO

Brian kneels down. FATHER KEN (40), black, slides open an opaque window revealing another opaque window with small holes.

BRIAN

Bless me father for I have sinned. The last time I was at confession was thirty seconds ago.

OUTSIDE CONFESSIONAL BOX TWO

Brian waits as Father Ken exits. Father Ken puts his arm around Brian. The two walk to a nearby pew where they sit down.

FATHER KEN

I agree that if you were a priest it would strengthen your chance at Heaven, but I just don't think the seminary is going to accept someone with your past.

BRIAN

I understand. I used to go to this school. I never thought I'd have the life I've had.

FATHER KEN

I commend you for changing your ways. To love others is to love God.

BRIAN

Father Ken, how can I love one another as myself if people won't even say hello?

FATHER KEN

If you wait long enough, people will show you their good side. I think all the negative news out there has people afraid of one another. Some of it's the gangs.

BRIAN

I saw the graffiti.

FATHER KEN

Maybe your calling in life is to make sure these kids don't make the same mistakes you did.

INT. FRUIT STAND STORE - DAY

Wendy sits at a desk with several envelopes marked "FINAL NOTICE, SECOND NOTICE", etc. With one swoop of her hand she flings the envelopes across the room.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Brian lies in a dentist-style lounge chair with a bright light on both arms. A doctor in a white coat rubs an ointment on Brian's arms and uses laser tools to remove his arm tattoos.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Two boys approach tattoo-less Brian from the opposite direction.

BRIAN

Hi.

The boys look away. Brian crosses the street to the fruit stand. Wendy bends down to pick up a loaded apple box. Brian rushes over.

BRIAN

Let me help you!

WENDY

That's okay.

She picks up the box without looking at him.

BRIAN  
Everything looks so fresh!

Wendy doesn't look up from arranging apples in a basket.

WENDY  
We get this stuff all the time.

Brian picks an apple out of a basket, reaches into his pocket, and hands some change to Wendy who doesn't look up.

BRIAN  
Well, it all looks great.

Wendy watches him cross the street. Brian walks down an alley loaded with weeds. He sits on the curb with his head in his hands and moist eyes.

BRIAN  
Help me, Lord.

He looks up to the sky.

BRIAN  
Why do you make things so hard?  
Where's the overflowing love  
you're supposed to have?

Brian hears WHIMPERING from behind a giant commercial trash can. He looks behind the trash can and sees a dirty, bloody border collie tied to a chain link fence with barbed wire around its neck and body.

BRIAN  
Oh, no.

He carefully frees the dog from the barbed wire.

BRIAN  
Why would anyone do this?

Brian pets the dog which licks his hand.

He carries the blood-soaked dog to a nearby hose and washes it down, paying special attention to the bloody neck. The skinny dog drinks a lot of water and shakes water off its body. Brian takes off his shirt and pat-dries the dog.

BRIAN  
You should be okay.

Brian shakes out his shirt, puts it back on, and walks away. The dog follows close behind.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Brian sees Cami on the bench. He reads the bus schedule and turns to Cami.

BRIAN  
Do you have the time?

Cami looks at Brian's bloody shirt, the somewhat bloody dog, and looks away. Brian pets the dog which licks his face. Bus twenty-three pulls up.

BRIAN  
Stay away from your owner.

He pets the dog one last time. The doors open and he boards the bus. He looks back at the dog.

INT. BUS - DAY

The bus is packed, but quiet. Jesus looks at the dog and then Brian.

BRIAN  
Good morning.

David turns away to look out the window. David honks his horn at a car blocking the road.

DAVID  
Come on! Move!

Brian slides a bill into the bill acceptor. He sits down in the first row next to Delores.

BRIAN  
Good morning.

Delores looks out the window.

DELORES  
So, you wanna meet for dinner tonight?

BRIAN  
Okay.

DELORES

Where do you wanna meet?

BRIAN

I'm new around here. You tell me.

Delores turns toward Brian wearing a Bluetooth earpiece phone.

DELORES

Did you say something?

LATER

The bus stops and Delores gets up.

BRIAN

Have a nice day.

A hint of a smile appears on her face. She exits. Brian moves closer to the window. He people watches, gazes at buildings, and observes the city activity.

INT. BUS DEPOT - DAY

Brian buys a ticket and hops on a bus parked under a sign which reads "CLEVELAND NATIONAL FOREST."

EXT. BUS - DAY

The bus kicks up a lot of dirt as it travels along a rural, dirt road in the hills.

INT. BUS - DAY

Brian enjoys the scenery. The bus slows down. A flock of white sheep blocks the road. The bus stops.

Brian watches a border collie corner a lone, black sheep in the distance. The shepherd catches the black sheep and carries it back to the flock which continues on.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

The bus pulls to the curb. Brian exits. The border collie he rescued sees Brian and rushes over.

BRIAN

Have you been here all day?

The dog licks him wildly.

INT. MORGAN'S HOME - DAY

Brian gets a bowl out of the cupboard. He opens the refrigerator and puts leftover sausage and ham in the bowl.

BRIAN

Here you go.

He places the bowl on the floor. The dog finishes the meal in no time. Brian gets more food out of the refrigerator and places it in the bowl. The dog eats.

BATHROOM

Brian gives the dog a bath paying special attention to the wounded neck and body.

BRIAN

I still don't know how anyone  
could tie you to a fence with  
barbed wire.

John and Ollie poke their heads in the room as Brian dries the dog with a towel.

JOHN

How could anyone rob a bank and  
pop a cop?

OLLIE

People do stupid things.

JOHN

Are you going to keep him?

BRIAN

If it's okay with you guys.

The dog slides out from the towel and licks John and Ollie.

BRIAN

She's trying to talk her way in to  
it.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Cami waits at the bus stop. Her face lights up when she sees the newly-bathed dog.

CAMI  
Your dogs looks  
terrific...compared to before.

BRIAN  
I rescued her yesterday. Isn't  
she beautiful?

CAMI  
She sure is.

Bus twenty-three arrives. From their windows, Jesus and Delores see the dog and smile.

BRIAN  
See you later Whitey.

The doors open. Brian gets on. The doors close.

INT. BUS - DAY

The bus is packed with the usual people and quiet.

BRIAN  
Good morning.

Brian puts a bill in the machine.

DAVID  
(mumbles)  
Morn'in.

Brian sits down in the front row next to Delores.

BRIAN  
Hi.

DELORES  
Hello.

Jesus gets out of his seat and sits across the aisle from Brian.

JESUS  
Hi!

BRIAN  
Hi. I'm Brian.

JESUS

My name's Jesus. Do you think I can play with your dog when I get back from school?

BRIAN

Sure. Did you see Whitey yesterday?

JESUS

Yeah. I wanted to pet her, but she just waited for buses.

BRIAN

Go ahead and play with Whitey when you get back.

Brian pulls a dog biscuit out of his pocket and hands it to the boy.

BRIAN

Give her this snack so she'll know you're a friend of mine.

JESUS

Thanks. Why do you call her Whitey? She's more black than white.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

The bus stops. Brian gets off.

INT. BUS - DAY

The passengers on the silent bus observe Brian and Jesus wave at each other.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Brian walks along storefront windows. There's more graffiti and broken store windows. A man and woman approach.

BRIAN

Good morning.

The couple continues on. Shop owners, including the hardware owner look at the vandalism.

HARDWARE STORE OWNER  
Damn kids! They should be thrown  
in jail.

Brian sees the same church. Several people hustle past the building.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Brian kneels in a pew. Father Ken walks over and they both sit in the pew.

BRIAN  
I finally got someone to say hi to me.

FATHER KEN  
Good! I was wondering if you'd like to be our sexton.

BRIAN  
I'm not that kind of guy.

FATHER KEN  
You'd help take care of the church and school.

BRIAN  
I'd love to.

FATHER KEN  
Great!

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Whitey waits. A bus approaches. Whitey perks up. The bus pulls to the curb. The doors open and Jesus gets off.

JESUS  
Hi Whitey!

Whitey continues to watch the doors until they close. The bus leaves. Whitey lies down and waits.

Jesus takes the treat out of his pocket. Whitey smells it. Her tail wags. Jesus gives her the treat which she eats. Whitey picks up an old tennis ball and drops it in front of Jesus. Jesus throws the ball and Whitey retrieves it.

INT. BUS - DAY

Brian looks out the window.

BRIAN

Oh my God.

A crowd gathers to watch as Whitey leaps high and catches the tennis ball.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Whitey and Jesus run over to the bus stop and wait. Brian gets off the bus. Whitey leaps into Brian's arms and licks him.

BRIAN

I'm changing her name to Blacky.

JESUS

Blacky can do a lot of tricks  
Brian! Watch.

Jesus gets down on all fours, taps his back and simultaneously throws the tennis ball up in the air. Blacky runs at Jesus, jumps off his back like a springboard and catches the ball. More passersby stop and watch.

BRIAN

That's terrific!

JESUS

That's nothing. Watch this.

Jesus pulls a Frisbee out of his backpack. The red, decorative, heart-shaped box falls out. He carefully brushes it off with his fingers before placing it back in the backpack.

Jesus flings the Frisbee which Blacky tracks down before making a leaping catch.

BRIAN

Unbelievable!

JESUS

She gets every one I throw!

Brian notices other passersby, including Josh and Corey, who stop and watch. A BUTCHER turns to Wendy.

BUTCHER  
Aren't you the fruit stand lady?

WENDY  
Yes, I'm Wendy.

The two shake hands. Others converse and point at Blacky. Josh and Corey walk over to Jesus.

CORY  
Can we play with her?

JESUS  
Sure.

Jesus hands the Frisbee to Josh. Josh throws the Frisbee and Blacky retrieves it. Brian observes all the smiling faces.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Brian, Jesus, and Blacky walk down a street. Jesus tosses the tennis ball into the air and Blacky catches it. An Hispanic WINDOW CLEANER (22) smiles at Brian.

WINDOW CLEANER  
Hi. Love your dog.

BRIAN  
Thanks. I'm Brian.

The two shake hands.

BRIAN  
I'm going to be working at the Catholic church. We'd love to see you there.

LATER

Brian and Blacky walk. WILBUR (40), a tall, black man runs up to them.

WILBUR  
Hey!

Blacky jumps into Brian's arms and snarls at the gigantic figure.

WILBUR  
That's my dog!

BRIAN  
I found her bleeding and tied up  
with barbed wire.

WILBUR  
You stole my dog!

BRIAN  
I didn't steal her! She was  
whimpering for help.

Wilbur lunges for Blacky who barks and snaps at his hands.  
Wilbur backs away.

WILBUR  
I tied her up because she stopped  
doing tricks.

BRIAN  
With barbed wire?

WILBUR  
That's my dog!

Blacky barks at Wilbur.

BRIAN  
Well, it doesn't look like she  
wants you as her owner.

Brian turns and takes a couple steps.

WILBUR  
I want three hundred bucks for  
Killer!

Brian turns around.

BRIAN  
Killer? I'll get your money.

He gets in the face of the huge man.

BRIAN  
And her name's Blacky.

Brian walks away. Blacky gets in one last snarl over  
Brian's shoulder then licks the side of his face.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Brian walks with Blacky at his side. The same gardener as before smiles at Brian who smiles back. Judy and Sarah approach from the opposite direction.

SARAH

That must be the trick dog!

BRIAN

Yes, she is.

JUDY

What's her name?

BRIAN

Blacky, and I'm Brian. I just got her.

They part ways. Josh and Cory approach.

BRIAN

Hello.

JOSH

Hi.

CORY

We like Blacky.

BRIAN

Thanks. Call me Brian.

Blacky licks the boys' hands.

INT. MORGAN'S HOME - NIGHT

Brian, Morgan, John, and Ollie sit around the table eating pizza. Brian gives Blacky a piece of pepperoni.

BRIAN

I'm going to move to the church tomorrow. I'm going to watch over it and the school in exchange for room and board.

OLLIE

Good for you, Brian.

JOHN

Will they let you take Blacky?

BRIAN

Yup.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Brian takes several dying plants and flowers off the altar steps.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Brian plants and waters the dying plants and flowers in the garden by the front steps. Blacky walks up to a passerby. The passerby pets Blacky, looks up at the church, and walks up the church steps.

LATER

Several uniformed students watch Brian clean the "OUR LADY QUEEN OF ANGELS" sign as they walk to school.

Brian polishes a giant steel cross. The reflection from the shiny cross catches passerby Wendy's attention. Wendy enters the church.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Schoolkids play at recess. The church is in the background. Brian washes classroom windows. He sees a MOTHER (40) walk out of the principal's office with her MISCHIEVOUS SON (8).

MOTHER

How do you expect to get to Heaven?

MISCHIEVOUS SON

I'll just run in and out and in and out and keep slamming the door until Saint Peter says, 'For Heaven's sake, come in or stay out.'

Several schoolkids approach and pass Brian.

BRIAN

Hi. How are you?

A nun, SISTER ROSEMARY (30), sees the schoolkids snub Brian.

## INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Rosemary sits at her desk while the students take an exam. A STUDENT approaches Rosemary with her test. The student points at her test. Rosemary shrugs her shoulders. The student leaves the classroom with her test.

## EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

The student runs across campus to a shed filled with mops and cleaning supplies. Brian is startled to see the student.

STUDENT

What's your name?

BRIAN

Brian.

STUDENT

Nice to meet you Brian.

The student writes on her test and takes off. Another student runs past her in the opposite direction toward Brian's shed. Several students run toward Brian's shed.

STUDENTS

What's your name?

BRIAN

Brian.

STUDENTS

Thanks Brian.

More students run up to Brian.

STUDENTS

What's your name?

## INT. CHURCH RECTORY - NIGHT

Brian and the priests sit with hands folded and heads bowed at the kitchen table. There is fish, bread, and wine on the table.

FATHER KEN

...ever this night be at our side  
to light, to guard, to rule, and  
guide, amen.

They serve themselves the food.

FATHER KEN  
How's it going so far?

BRIAN  
Fine.

FATHER KEN  
If you love one another as  
yourself, you'll have no problems.

BRIAN  
If everyone loved one another,  
there'd be world peace.

FATHER O' MALLEY  
The ultimate measure of a human is  
their love.

FATHER KEN  
You were put here for a reason.  
We're all part of His master plan.

FATHER O' MALLEY  
God's masterpiece is that He gives  
each of us a special purpose. We  
have to find it. If we don't seek  
it, it's like we're spitting in  
God's eye.

FATHER KEN  
Our lives are God's gift to us and  
what we do with our lives is our  
gift back to God.

FATHER O' MALLEY  
Be fully committed to God by  
giving your life to him. Use your  
talents to help others. Be like  
Jesus every day.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Brian dusts the altar in the dim church. A candle flickers in a red vase. He wrings out a mop and mops around the altar using a back and forth motion.

He hears one of the rear doors open and close. A small figure enters and sits in the back pew to warm himself against the radiator. Brian hides out of sight in an area just off from the altar.

The giant crucifix behind the altar attracts the attention of the small figure who moves up to the front of the church. Brian sees that it is Jesus. Jesus kneels in the front pew and folds his hands.

JESUS

Lord, please get my brother out of the gang so he doesn't get in trouble. Just so I know you've heard my prayer, would you please leave me a toy car? I'll be back at the same time tomorrow to pick it up.

Jesus makes the sign of the cross and gets up. He kneels back down.

JESUS

Oh, and could you please put a man in it? Thanks.

He makes the sign of the cross, gets up, and exits.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The gardener smiles at Brian and Blacky. Blacky walks over and licks the gardener's hand.

HISPANIC GARDENER

Hola, senior.

BRIAN

Hi.

Blacky stops and looks at the alley where Brian rescued her. She catches up to Brian.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Bus twenty-three pulls to the curb. Brian pets Blacky. The doors open.

BRIAN

Be a good girl.

CAMI

Have a nice day, Brian.

BRIAN

You too, Cami. Make someone smile today.

Brian gets on the bus.

INT. BUS - DAY

The people are a little more talkative.

SARAH

Hi Brian.

BRIAN

Hi Sarah.  
(to David)  
Good morning.

DAVID

Good morning.

Brian puts his bill in the bill acceptor and sits in his usual front seat.

BRIAN

Good morning.

DELORES

Good morning.

Jesus sits across from Brian.

JESUS

Hi Brian. How's Blacky?

BRIAN

She's doing great. Jesus, do you have any brothers or sisters?

JESUS

I've got an older brother, Ricardo.

BRIAN

How about your parents?

Jesus looks away.

JESUS

My dad's never home...works three jobs. My mom died of cancer a couple years ago.

BRIAN

I'm very sorry to hear that.

Jesus unzips his backpack. He takes out the red, decorative box and a wallet. He opens the wallet and shows a picture to Brian.

JESUS

That's her.

Brian studies the photo.

BRIAN

I'm sure she was special.

Jesus gazes at the red box.

JESUS

She still loves me, even from Heaven.

BRIAN

I'd like to meet your family.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Brian and Blacky walk along the residential street. Brian sees a girl with a missing arm.

BRIAN (V.O.)

Lord, please help this girl throughout her life.

Blacky stops and looks up the alley where Brian rescued her. Brian follows Blacky down the alley past the large, commercial trash can where she was tied up.

BRIAN

Where are you going, girl?

Blacky stops on the doorstep of a house. Brian rings the doorbell. Wilbur opens the door.

BRIAN

I've got your money.

Brian opens his wallet and hands Wilbur the money.

WILBUR

It was stupid of me to treat her that way. My wife passed away recently. I guess I took it out on her.

BRIAN

I'm sorry to hear about your wife.

Brian sees several cans and bags of dog food inside the house.

BRIAN

You still got some dog food. Why don't you rescue a dog from the pound?

Brian walks away. Blacky walks up to Wilbur who reaches down toward her. Blacky licks his hand and leaves with Brian down the alley.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

There is more activity as Brian plants more flowers and plants. Passing students wave to Brian. A passerby admires the new landscape. Blacky ushers the passerby up the church steps as others descend the steps.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

The candle flickers in the red vase. Father O'Malley observes Brian from behind the altar area. Brian pulls a toy car out of a plastic bag. He places the toy on the altar steps.

He dunks a mop into a mop bucket and squeezes the excess water out. He mops the marble floor around the altar using a back and forth motion. Brian looks up at the crucifix. Brian kneels on the altar steps and folds his hands.

BRIAN

I'm sorry about Officer Garner.  
Please forgive me.

LATER

Brian mops. He hears the back door open and close. He hides behind the area just off the altar. Wendy walks down the center aisle and kneels in the first pew. She cries as she looks up at the giant crucifix. Brian walks over.

BRIAN

What's wrong, Wendy?

WENDY

I'm going through foreclosure on my house.

Brian comforts her.

LATER

Brian mops. He hears the back door open and close. He hides behind the area just off from the altar. A small figure enters the last pew and warms himself against the radiator.

The small figure walks toward the altar. Jesus moves faster as he gets closer. He jumps up the altar steps, picks up the toy, and grins at the giant crucifix.

INT. RECTORY - NIGHT

Brian looks at his face in a mirror. A picture of Jesus Christ on the wall behind him reflects in the mirror.

DINING ROOM

Brian and the priests sit at the table with lots of food. Blacky lies on the floor near Brian. Brian tosses Blacky some food which she snatches out of the air and chomps on.

FATHER O' MALLEY

I don't know if I'd do that even for God.

FATHER KEN

Turning around gang members is a great idea.

FATHER O' MALLEY

Better wear a priest's collar for protection.

FATHER KEN

You may keep some from going to prison.

FATHER O' MALLEY

You've asked for forgiveness from God and you've received it.

BRIAN

I have?

FATHER KEN

You may think you hurt God from things you did in the past, but God's love for us is so strong that he forgives all of us no

FATHER KEN  
matter what we did.

BRIAN  
He does?

FATHER O' MALLEY  
Sure. God's love leaves no one  
behind, but you haven't forgiven  
yourself.

FATHER KEN  
He made your life the way it is  
for a reason so shed your past. It  
will help you move forward.

INT. WELLS FARGO BANK - DAY

Morgan, Brian, Wendy and the banker sit at the banker's desk. The four stand and the banker shakes hands with Wendy.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Judy and Sarah approach Brian and Blacky. Sarah runs to Blacky.

SARAH  
Hi Blacky!

Sarah pets her. Blacky licks Sarah's hand.

BRIAN  
Hello Judy.

JUDY  
Hi Brian.

They go their separate ways.

SARAH  
I want a dog just like Blacky.

The butcher hoses down the sidewalk.

BUTCHER  
Hi Brian. Here you go girl.

He tosses a piece of meat to Blacky who gobbles it up.

BRIAN  
Thanks.

WENDY  
Hi Brian!

BRIAN  
Hi Wendy. Everything looks fresh!

WENDY  
Thank you! I really appreciate  
you and Morgan putting in a good  
word for me.

She tosses Brian an apple.

BRIAN  
We're glad to help. See ya at  
mass.

Brian has a skip to his step.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Cami waits for the bus. Brian and Blacky arrive.

BRIAN  
Hi Cami.

CAMI  
Hi Brian. Hi Blacky.

Cami pets and hugs Blacky.

BRIAN  
Okay, Blacky. Be a good girl.

Bus twenty-three pulls up, the doors open, and Brian waves  
to Blacky as he hops on. Blacky wags her tail and watches  
the bus leave.

INT. BUS - DAY

Brian places a bill in the bill acceptor. There is more  
talking and even some laughing on the bus.

DAVID  
Good morning, Brian.

BRIAN  
Good morning.

From the side view mirror, David sees the same old lady running to catch his bus. Brian sits in his usual front row seat next to Delores.

DELORES

Hello Brian.

BRIAN

Hi Delores.

David waits for the winded, old lady and helps her onto the bus.

Jesus sits across from Brian in the front row.

JESUS

Hi Brian. How's Blacky?

BRIAN

She's doing great. Are you going to play with her today?

JESUS

Sure.

BRIAN

Why don't we take her over to your place so Ricardo can play with her?

JESUS

Well...

BRIAN

I'd like to meet him.

JESUS

Okay.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Blacky cruises the store-lined street. The butcher tosses a sausage to Blacky who gobbles it up. Pedestrians pet Blacky. A shop owner puts a bowl of water out for Blacky who drinks from it.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

A crowd watches Blacky perform tricks with Jesus. Blacky's attention is diverted at a bus that pulls up to the bus stop. Brian gets off. Blacky races over to him and licks him.

BRIAN

Hi girl!

EXT. STREET - DAY

Brian, Jesus, and Blacky walk along a tree-lined residential street.

JESUS

How old's Blacky?

BRIAN

I don't know. I'll ask Wilbur.  
Dogs don't live very long.

JESUS

That's too bad.

BRIAN

Your time is your life, don't  
waste it...you can't get it back.

JESUS

Ever since mom died Ricardo isn't  
very nice.

BRIAN

How so?

JESUS

He and his friends are always  
getting into trouble.

EXT. JESUS'S HOUSE - DAY

Jesus, Brian, and Blacky walk up the dilapidated steps. Paint is missing off the building. An oxidized Chevy is parked on the front lawn surrounded by a rusty, chain link fence.

INT. JESUS'S HOUSE - DAY

Brian and Jesus enter the dingy structure. Several Hispanic men wearing t-shirts, blue jeans, and work boots watch TV and sleep.

JESUS  
They rent rooms from my dad.

BRIAN  
Where's your dad?

JESUS  
He's working.

BRIAN  
Where's Ricardo?

JESUS  
Probably in his room, if he isn't  
spray painting the town.

They walk down the hallway. Jesus knocks and opens a door.

RICARDO'S ROOM

Jesus and Brian enter. Ricardo lies on his bed. There's a beer on his desk next to him. There are several cans of spray paint throughout the untidy room. Brian picks up one of the cans.

BRIAN  
Gonna do some painting?

RICARDO  
Who's he?

JESUS  
This is Brian, the guy with the  
dog.

RICARDO  
Can you pick me up some beer?

BRIAN  
Nope. I just wanted to talk to  
you. Will you excuse us Jesus?

Jesus exits and closes the door.

Ricardo takes a sip of his beer.

BRIAN

Your brother's worried about you.  
He doesn't want you to end up in  
prison.

Ricardo laughs.

BRIAN

I don't want you in prison.

RICARDO

I don't need this.

Ricardo tries to take a swig of his beer. Brian grabs the  
bottle.

BRIAN

Do you wanna end up in prison like  
me...always worried someone's  
gonna sneak up on ya with a knife?

RICARDO

Leave.

BRIAN

You're heading down the wrong  
path.

RICARDO

Get out!

BRIAN

I'm just doing what I wish someone  
had done with me. This is coming  
from a guy who's spent  
thirty-seven years in prison.

IN THE HALLWAY

Brian exits Ricardo's room with the beer bottle and walks  
with Jesus.

JESUS

You were in prison?

EXT. JESUS'S HOUSE - DAY

Brian walks down the front steps as the screen door closes  
in front of Jesus.

BRIAN

It's not something I'm proud of.

He pours the beer out and tosses the bottle in a trash can.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Brian sweeps near the altar. The candle flickers in the red vase. Blacky sits next to some rags and a mop bucket.

BRIAN

Bring me the bucket, girl.

Blacky nudges the mop bucket across the floor with her snout.

BRIAN

Thanks girl. I'm glad God put you  
in my life.

Blacky looks up at the giant crucifix. Brian looks up at the crucifix, kneels down, and makes the sign of the cross.

BRIAN

Lord, thanks for giving me Blacky,  
my health, everything. Please  
help me get to Heaven, Lord.

The candle flickers quickly in the vase. Brian wrings out the mop in the bucket strainer and mops using an infinity sign motion instead of his usual back and forth method.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Brian, Morgan, John, Ollie, and Blacky hide behind the hardware store. Morgan, John, and Ollie roll up their sleeves to expose tattoos. Morgan sees Ollie struggle to make his bicep bulge.

MORGAN

We wanna scare 'em, not make 'em  
laugh.

The four see Ricardo and another boy spray paint a building. They sneak over to Ricardo and the boy and grab the paint cans from them. Blacky barks at Ricardo as the other boy runs off.

BRIAN

Go get 'em!

Blacky chases after the other boy.

BRIAN

This is how I started out...doing pranks.

Blacky catches up to the other boy. Ricardo tries to walk away. John blocks Ricardo's path.

JOHN

Where are you going?

Ricardo stops.

BRIAN

You're blowing your life.

MORGAN

We know a little about prison...wasting away with no end in sight. Our friend was killed in prison.

OLLIE

Is that the life you want?

Blacky corners the other boy using her ranching instincts.

BRIAN

You're not setting a good example for Jesus. You wouldn't want him to go to prison.

RICARDO

No.

BRIAN

Think your Dad wants to pay for all this with his hard earned money? Would your mom be happy?

Ricardo tries unsuccessfully to not let the men see his watery eyes by turning away.

BRIAN

Haven't you ever ignored an adult's advice, found out they were right, and wished you had listened to them?

Ricardo's lips quiver as he holds his breath.

BRIAN

It's okay, let it out.

Ricardo exhales loudly.

BRIAN

My mom had cancer, too. I don't want you to end up like us.

RICARDO

I know.

BRIAN

Stop the vandalism, study in school, and get a part-time job. You take care of the first two, I'll work on getting you a job.

RICARDO

Alright.

Blacky brings the other boy back. Ricardo and the other boy walk away.

INT. BUS - DAY

Everyone is in a jovial mood. Jesus and Brian sit in the same row. The usual passengers are all on board.

BRIAN

Didn't you say that you worked for the downtown association?

DELORES

That's right.

BRIAN

What are the odds of getting some kids jobs cleaning up downtown?

DELORES

I'm sure we can find them something to do.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Brian wears a florescent yellow vest and holds up a red "STOP" sign as he walks kids across a street. Blacky sits next to a fold up beach chair on the corner. School kids pet her.

BRIAN

Have a nice day at school. Stay  
out of trouble. Make someone  
smile.

An SUV MOM drops off kids and waves out her car window.

SUV MOM

Hi Brian!

Brian waves to her and returns across the street. He walks  
another group of kids across the street. Cami is in the  
group.

CAMI

Hi Brian. How's Blacky?

BRIAN

She's great. Make someone smile  
today.

CAMI

I will.

INT. BUS - DAY

Everyone talks, laughs, and sits up front with Brian.

DAVID

Why do you always say hi to  
everybody?

It gets quiet as they wait for an answer.

BRIAN

I don't like the feeling that I'm  
missing out on meeting a new  
person since God's inside each of  
us.

DELORES

Don't you ever get angry at  
people?

BRIAN

Once in awhile, so I do what the  
priests do; eat extra Eucharists  
to get more of Christ in me.

They all laugh. Brian scans the bus at all the smiling  
faces.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Ricardo lies in a dentist-style chair with a bright light on both arms as a doctor in a white coat uses tools to remove his arm tattoos.

WAITING ROOM

Brian reads a magazine with other tattooed kids.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Brian, Ricardo, and Jesus stand in the checkout line with various supplies.

BRIAN

How much money do you have?

RICARDO

Twenty bucks.

BRIAN

Pull out ten.

Ricardo reaches into his pocket.

BRIAN

You gotta pay for your mistakes.

Ricardo pulls the money out of his wallet and hands it to Brian who places it on the checkout counter.

BRIAN

There's consequences to everything we do in life.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Brian, Ricardo, and other kids help store owners take out and replace broken store windows. They wash windows, scrub off and paint over graffiti. They sweep the sidewalks and gutters.

Wilbur walks up with a dog on a leash. Blacky and the dog get acquainted.

BRIAN

Hey! You took my advice.

WILBUR

This is Lexie.

Brian pets Lexie.

BRIAN

She's beautiful. She's counting  
on you to take good care of her.

WILBUR

I'm going to, Brian. I've been  
taking anger management classes.

EXT. STORE - DAY

Brian, Ricardo, and Jesus exit and see the Hispanic gardener  
hard at work. They stroll down the main street with Blacky.  
People wave at the group and pet and feed Blacky.

MONTAGE - BRIAN HELPS IN THE COMMUNITY

- Brian helps an elderly shop owner hang a sign.
- Brian serves Thanksgiving dinner at the homeless shelter.
- Brian places a carton of lemonade and a plastic cup on a  
wall near the Hispanic gardener. Brian waves to the  
gardener.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

MONTAGE - RICARDO AND HIS FRIENDS FIX UP THE CHURCH

- They sand and stain the pews.
- They paint the church.
- They buff the floor.

Ricardo crosses the center aisle wearing a breathing mask.  
He stops, looks up at the crucifix, genuflects, and makes  
the sign of the cross.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Ricardo teaches schoolkids to stay away from drugs.

RICARDO

Just say no when offered this  
poison.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

The garden is fresh and well-manicured. Modestly-dressed Brian greets parishioners at the top of the steps. Several people enter the church. Wendy and Delores walk up the steps.

BRIAN

Hello Wendy. Well, hello Delores!

WENDY

Hello Brian.

Cami walks up the steps in a choir outfit.

BRIAN

Hi Cami. I want to hear you loud and clear.

CAMI

Okay, Brian. Make someone smile.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The church is immaculate. Cami walks up the back stairs and joins the rest of the children's choir. Several people enter the church. The conductor waves her hand and the children sing.

CHILDREN'S CHOIR

God of great and God of small, God  
of one and God of all...

Several seated parishioners including Wendy, Judy, Delores, and the window cleaner turn their heads back toward the choir.

CHILDREN'S CHOIR

...God of land and sky and sea,  
God of life and destiny...

Brian enters the church and helps usher the people into pews.

CHILDREN'S CHOIR (V.O.)

...God of silence, God of sound,  
God of whom the lost are found,  
God of day and darkest night, God  
whose love turns wrong to right...

More smiling faces including Cindy and the Hispanic gardener turn around. Brian smiles up at Cami who smiles back.

## CHILDREN'S CHOIR

...God of Heaven and God of earth,  
 God of death and God of birth, God  
 of now and days before, God who  
 reigns for evermore...

## LATER

Brian and well-dressed ushers collect money in baskets from the parishioners. The parishioners smile and wave at Brian. The ushers combine the money into Brian's basket and leave.

Brian looks at the money before he dumps it into a plastic bag and seals the top. He takes the bag up the center aisle, bows to the giant crucifix, and disappears off to the side of the altar.

## BACK ROOM

Brian drops the plastic bag into a lock box marked "USHER'S DROP BOX."

## EXT. STREET - DAY

Brian holds his red "STOP" sign as he walks schoolkids across a busy street. Brian waves to parents and kids who call his name from all directions.

WENDY

Hi Brian!

SARAH

Hi Brian!

BRIAN

Hi!

JUDY

Hi Brian!

BRIAN

Hi!

KENDRA

Hi Mr. McClean!

BRIAN

Hi Kendra!

JOSH

Hi!

BRIAN

Make someone smile today, Josh.

JOSH

I will.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

A few elderly people kneel in prayer in the dimly-lit church. A female CHURCH SINGER (35), dressed in faded blue jeans and t-shirt, and a pianist practice while Father Ken listens nearby.

A young girl hustles over to Father Ken. Father Ken quickly genuflects, makes the sign of the cross and exits. The singer and pianist walk over to the girl.

People walk over. People start to trickle into the church and talk to others. Some people kneel in pews. The pianist sits at the piano and plays. The singer steps up to the microphone and sings as more people enter the church.

CHURCH SINGER

Shepherd me, o God, beyond my  
wants, beyond my fears, from death  
into life...

INT. RECTORY - DAY

Father Ken hustles over to Father O'Malley in the hallway. Father O'Malley makes the sign of the cross.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Father Ken gets into a car carrying a wooden crucifix and rosary. The window cleaner and others hustle over and briefly speak to him. Father Ken drives off.

CHURCH SINGER (V.O.)

God is my shepherd, so nothing  
shall I want, I rest in the  
meadows of faithfulness and love,  
I walk by the quiet waters of  
peace...

INT. CHURCH - DAY

More people enter including the Hispanic gardener, the butcher, and the hardware store owner. Some people cry and hug one another.

CHURCH SINGER

Gently you raise me and heal my  
weary soul, you lead me by  
pathways of righteousness and  
truth, my spirit shall sing the  
music of your name.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

A crowd surrounds Blacky. A bus pulls to the curb. The doors open. Jesus jumps off the bus and runs to the crowd.

CORY

Brian's not coming back today  
Blacky.

CINDY

He may never come back.

Confused, Blacky tilts her head from side to side.

JESUS

What happened?

JUDY

Brian had a heart attack. He's at  
Hoag Hospital.

Jesus takes off running.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

More people, including Wilbur and Delores, enter the church. Father O'Malley and other priests console parishioners.

CHURCH SINGER

Though I should wander the valley  
of death, I fear no evil for you  
are at my side...

EXT. STREET - DAY

Jesus races down the store-lined street. People gather in clusters in front of the stores and talk on cell phones.

CHURCH SINGER (V.O.)  
 Shepherd me, o God, beyond my  
 wants, beyond my fears, from death  
 into life.

MONTAGE - JESUS THINKS OF TIMES WITH BRIAN

-- Brian waves to shop owners.  
 -- Bus passengers laugh with Brian.  
 -- Brian and Jesus play catch with Blacky.  
 -- Crossing guard Brian walks children across the street.  
 Jesus runs toward the hospital.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Jesus runs down a long corridor.

CHURCH SINGER (V.O.)  
 You have set a banquet of love in  
 the face of hatred, crowning me  
 with love beyond my power to hold.

BRIAN'S HOSPITAL ROOM

Jesus enters. Brian lies in bed hooked up to machines with tubing coming out of his nostrils. Father Ken gives him Eucharist. There are two burning candles in an open wooden crucifix and an hourglass low on sand on a table.

FATHER KEN  
 Lord, may our brother Brian safely  
 reach your kingdom of light and  
 life. We ask this through Christ  
 our Lord. Amen.  
 (to Brian)  
 May the Lord Jesus protect you and  
 lead you to eternal life.

Father Ken makes the sign of the cross and then holds Brian's trembling hands.

BRIAN  
 I tried to touch a lot of people.

Father Ken looks at the hourglass and then at Brian.

FATHER KEN

Coaches practice for the final two minutes because they're the most important. It's the same with life because you have to make amends before you meet your Creator.

BRIAN

But no one really knows when they're gonna die.

FATHER KEN

We have to be ready for him at all times. Like a burglar in the night, we don't know when he'll strike.

A doctor enters and starts to turn over the hourglass. Father Ken grabs the doctor's wrist. The doctor and Father Ken lock eyes before the doctor puts the hourglass down without turning it over and leaves.

FATHER KEN

I believe you'll enter the gates of Heaven.

BRIAN

Do you really think so?

FATHER KEN

You need four things to get to Heaven. You have to be baptized. You have to accept Jesus Christ. You have to repent your sins, and you have to acknowledge Jesus Christ as your savior to someone.

BRIAN

I haven't done the last one.

FATHER KEN

Say it to me.

With moist eyes, Brian exhales loudly.

BRIAN

Jesus Christ is my savior.

Father Ken blows out the candles and packs away the crucifix.

FATHER KEN

Put in a good word for me with the man upstairs.

A smile quickly disappears from Brian's face.

BRIAN

You gotta tell Morgan and Ollie and John the four things! Tell them to get the word to Syd in prison!

FATHER KEN

I will.

BRIAN

Tell everyone! Tell everyone the four things!

FATHER KEN

That's why I became a priest.

Father Ken leaves. Jesus walks over to Brian.

BRIAN

I've got something for you.

Brian takes the photo of his mom and the worn motto card out of his Bible and places them over his heart.

BRIAN

I want you to have this.

He hands Jesus his Bible.

JESUS

Thanks, Brian.

BRIAN

We spend a short time here thinking everything is so important when really this is just an audition to get to the big show.

JESUS

Is this the last time I'm going to see you?

BRIAN

We'll meet again in Heaven...if you treat people well. Do anything you want in life, just don't hurt anyone.

JESUS

I won't, Brian.

BRIAN

Do what is right and you'll never go wrong.

Jesus unzips his backpack and pulls out the red, heart-shaped box.

JESUS

I want you to have this.

BRIAN

I don't think I can have chocolate.

Jesus hands Brian the box.

JESUS

My mom gave me it before she died.

Jesus smiles broadly as Brian opens the empty box.

BRIAN

What is it?

JESUS

It's love. It'll keep you warm when you're lonely and safe when you're scared.

Brian gives Jesus a long hug.

BRIAN

Are you sure you saved enough for yourself?

JESUS

Sure, besides, that hug just gave me a lot more. Tell my Mom I miss her.

BRIAN

I will.

The last sand granules fall in the hourglass.

CHURCH SINGER (V.O.)

Surely your kindness and mercy  
follow me all the days of my life,  
I will dwell in the house of my  
God forevermore.

Brian's hand goes still over the photo and worn motto card. The heart monitor flat lines and BLARES an alarm. The doctor and nurses rush in. Jesus sobs.

EXT. BUS STOP - NIGHT

Blacky lies on the sidewalk. She perks up when a bus approaches. The bus doors open. A man gets off. The doors close. The nearly-empty bus leaves. Blacky lies down.

LATER

A bus approaches. Blacky sits up. The empty bus doesn't stop. Blacky lies down.

LATER

A bus approaches. Blacky sits up. The bus pulls to the curb. The doors open. Jesus gets off.

JESUS

Hi girl.

Blacky darts past Jesus and springs onto the bus.

JESUS

Blacky!

INT. BUS - NIGHT

Blacky whimpers LOUDLY. The bus driver turns around to see Blacky running up and down the center aisle checking the rows of empty seats. Jesus hops back on the bus.

JESUS

Blacky! Come here!

Blacky obeys and the two step off the bus.

EXT. BUS STOP - NIGHT

Blacky lies down and waits. Jesus pets her.

JESUS

It's okay Blacky.

Jesus takes Brian's Bible out of his backpack and let's Blacky sniff it.

JESUS

It's gonna be alright.

Blacky perks up. The two take a few steps before Blacky stops and looks back. Blacky takes a few more steps and looks back.

JESUS

It's never too late to change.

Jesus walks with Blacky close to his heels down a tree-lined street.

FADE OUT.