Jericho

Ву

Will Ball

EXT. MOTEL FRONT, ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

Torrential downpour engulfs a dilapidated motel. Pieces of siding are missing. Wooden planks barricade broken windows. Several inches of rain flood the parking lot.

In front of the motel, a sign reads "THE RAHAB MOTEL." A strong gust of wind topples the sign and it crumbles into pieces. The encompassing wind carries away the debris.

All of the rooms are vacant except for one. Its curtains barely conceal the light from inside.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

JOSHUA (50's) sits on a twin sized bed and reads a Gideon Bible. His clergy suit just barely conceals his lanky figure. His thick glasses magnify his kind eyes. His skin is blacker than black.

Hymnal music plays in the background.

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

Joshua peers away from his Bible and gazes at the front door. KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

Joshua sets his Bible face down on a nearby nightstand and gets up from the bed. He walks to the window and peaks through the curtains.

Joshua opens the door. The chain lock prevents him from opening it fully.

Outside his door stands a black prostitute named ABABUO (18). Sopping rags adorn her body. Plastic bags cover her feet. A bandana conceals the left side of her face.

JOSHUA

(in a thick African accent) What is it?

ABABUO

Please sir, may I come inside?

JOSHUA

I am sorry. But you must go.

But sir, there is no where for me to go.

JOSHUA

You cannot stay here. For you serve the desires of the flesh and I the desires of-

ABABUO

The Lord. Please, gaze upon me and search your heart.

A bolt of lighting illuminates the stormy skies. Tumultuous THUNDER immediately follows.

ABABUO

Please sir. Even the savior of mankind found himself in the company of prostitutes.

Joshua SIGHS.

JOSHUA

Okay. Okay. But you cannot stay here over night.

## LATER

Ababuo sits on a chair near the window. She's wrapped in a plethora of blankets.

Joshua enters the room with two mugs of coffee in hand. He gives one to Ababuo.

JOSHUA

May I ask what happened to your face?

ABABUO

Somebody hurt me. Somebody from my past.

JOSHUA

A client?

**ABABUO** 

Something like that.

Joshua returns to his spot on the bed.

Ababuo notices the Bible on the nightstand.

What are you reading?

JOSHUA

The Bible.

**ABABUO** 

I mean, what are you reading specifically, within the Bible?

**JOSHUA** 

The story of Jericho. Are you familiar with it?

**ABABUO** 

No.

Ababuo sips her coffee.

JOSHUA

The city of Jericho was a godless city, full of Canaanites. One day the Lord instructed his people to destroy it. However the city of Jericho was surrounded by several large walls.

ABABUO

Then how did they overtake it?

JOSHUA

For seven days the Israelites marched around the walls of Jericho. On the seventh day, the Lord instructed them to blow their ram's horns seven times. And on the seventh blow the walls came tumbling down.

**ABABUO** 

And then what happened?

JOSHUA

God's people stormed the city and killed everyone inside.

**ABABUO** 

The women and the children too?

JOSHUA

The women and the children too.

Does that explain this weather? Is this our judgment?

Joshua LAUGHS.

JOSHUA

No. This is more like Noah and the arc.

ABABUO

Where are you from? Your accent. It's not from around here.

JOSHUA

Nigeria.

ABABUO

Nigeria? Why didn't you return home before the storm arrived?

Ababuo gulps her coffee.

JOSHUA

I made a commitment to the Lord. I promised him that I would travel to the Americas and save these people. To save our people.

JOSHUA

What about you? Are you from around here?

ABABUO

Born and raised.

JOSHUA

So why didn't you leave?

**ABABUO** 

I have no where to go. My family abandoned me. I have no friends. There is work to be done here. So I might as well stay here.

**JOSHUA** 

Even in a time like this?

Ababuo holds up an empty mug.

ABABUO

Do you mind?

**JOSHUA** 

Go ahead.

Ababuo gets up and walks to the electric coffee pot. She retrieves the pot and approaches Joshua.

ABABUO

Would you like a refill?

JOSHUA

No thank you. This one cup will keep me up long enough.

ABABUO

Maybe I can help.

**JOSHUA** 

What?

Ababuo raises the coffee pot high into the air. She swings it with all of her might and smashes it into Joshua's face. Glass shatters. Coffee SIZZLES. Joshua falls to the floor, completely unconscious.

## LATER

Joshua opens his eyes. He's surrounded by darkness. The room is silent except for the PATTER of rain and the HOWLING of wind outside.

Joshua tries to move but he's been restrained. Rope binds him to a chair.

JOSHUA

Hello?

No answer.

JOSHUA

Is anybody there?

Only the wind replies.

**JOSHUA** 

Please! Somebody! I need help!

A flashlight turns on, revealing Ababuo's face just inches away from Joshua. Her unconcealed eye stares back at him, emotionless and cold.

Where is he?

JOSHUA

Excuse me?

ABABUO

The inyanga of Eket. Where is he?

JOSHUA

I am sorry, but I have no idea what you are talking about.

Ababuo strikes Joshua in the face.

ABABUO

Time is running out. Tell me where the inyanga of Eket is located.

JOSHUA

Please, let me go. I am but a humble priest.

ABABUO

You are no man of god Joshua.

**JOSHUA** 

Now there is a name I have not heard in a long while.

**ABABUO** 

You don't remember me, do you?

Joshua scans her face in bewilderment.

ABABUO

Maybe this will help.

Ababuo unties the bandana around her head. The left side of her face is pink and severely scarred. Chunks of flesh are missing, including her ear. Her left eyeball is completely white.

ABABUO

About ten years have passed. Erase the scars and go back in time. Can you still picture the faces of your countless victims? Or are there too many to remember?

Joshua looks away. Ababuo grabs his head and forces him to look at her.

Stare into my blank eye Joshua and you will find the answers you are looking for.

Joshua peers into Ababuo's deformed eye. He falls into a trance.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

YOUNG ABABUO (8) kneels in front of a makeshift cross. She SOBS into her hands.

Ababuo's father, MOGO (40's), stands behind her and places his hand on top of his daughter's head.

MOGO

Your mother was a blessing from the almighty.

A single tear rolls down Mogo's cheek.

A YOUNGER JOSHUA (40's) lurks towards Mogo. He wears a clergy shirt and carries a Bible. He whispers into Mogo's ear.

**JOSHUA** 

If you need anything, my door is always open. Remember, you may have questions, but the Lord has answers.

INT. CHURCH, JOSHUA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Joshua sits behind a mohogany desk. Expensive religious relics adorn his office. Mogo stands across from him.

MOGO

Witchcraft? Surely, this can not be.

JOSHUA

Like the snake in the garden of Eden, evil resides in your house.

MOGO

But how?

JOSHUA

The devil does not just appear. He has to be invited. Did you invite the devil into your home?

MOGO

No, never!

JOSHUA

Then it must have been your daughter. She is the cause of your wife's death.

MOGO

What are you saying? Have you lost your mind?

JOSHUA

Watch your tongue when speaking to a prophet of the Lord.

MOGO

I'm sorry father. What can I do?

**JOSHUA** 

Bring your daughter to me. The elders and I will perform an exorcism.

MOGO

There must be another way.

Joshua SIGHS.

JOSHUA

Mogo, do you believe that your wife is in heaven right now?

MOGO

I know it to be true.

JOSHUA

Would you like to be reunited with your wife once you leave this Earthly realm?

MOGO

Of course. I think about it every day.

JOSHUA

So remind me, how does one get into heaven?

MOGO

By following the Lord's word.

JOSHUA

And what does the Lord's word say about his preordained leaders?

MOGO

To obey them without question.

**JOSHUA** 

Then it is settled. If you want to see your beloved wife again, then you must do what I ask. You will bring your daughter to the church one week from today.

Mogo bows his head in defeat.

MOGO

How much?

JOSHUA

Forty thousand naira.

EXT. CHURCH FOREGROUND - NIGHT

Mogo and Ababuo walk up to the church hand in hand.

ABABUO

Father, where are we going?

MOGO

Hush child. Now is not the time.

The two are greeted by Joshua and several ELDERS. They all wear black robes.

JOSHUA

Did you bring the money?

Mogo reaches into his pocket and retrieves a wad of nairas. He hands it to Joshua.

**JOSHUA** 

Good. Elders, grab the girl.

The elders swarm Ababuo and take her by force. She kicks and SCREAMS, but she is too weak.

Daddy! What is going on?

JOSHUA

You may leave now Mogo.

MOGO

But-

**JOSHUA** 

I said leave! We will return your daughter to you once the exorcism is complete.

Ababuo reaches for her father.

**ABABUO** 

Daddy don't go! Don't leave me!

Mogo turns around and begins to walk away.

**ABABUO** 

Where are you going daddy? I'm afraid! Help me!

Mogo looks back at Ababuo and SIGHS. He then continues to walk away.

ABABUO

Daddy no!

Joshua and the elders take Ababuo inside the church and slam the wooden doors behind them. Ababuo SCREAMS at the top of her lungs.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN - NIGHT

Joshua dumps a black duffle bag onto a pile of garbage. The zipper breaks open and Ababuo's head spills out. Her face has been severely burned. Her flesh still SIZZLES and smokes.

Joshua walks away. Ababuo COUGHS.

BACK TO PRESENT

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Ababuo breaks eye contact. Joshua awakes from his trance.

**JOSHUA** 

Ababuo.

**ABABUO** 

The one who returns. The inganya found me outside the city walls after you left me for dead.

JOSHUA

But how? How did the inyanga bring you back from the clutches of death?

ABABUO

Through the very thing that supposedly got me there. White magic.

JOSHUA

You let the devil save you? You fool! You will be damned for all eternity.

ABABUO

I'll admit, there were consequences. But the inyanga's magic made me stronger. Gave me a power unknown to any man.

JOSHUA

Is that you how found me? With your deformed eye?

ABABUO

I know you kidnapped the inyanga and took him to the Americas. I saw glimpses of it. So I followed the glimpses to this place. To this motel. And that's where my visions stop.

**JOSHUA** 

If you want to know where the inyanga is, why don't you just tell me yourself?

ABABUO

Because my vision has become cloudy. I don't know why or how.

(MORE)

ABABUO (cont'd)

But I plan on finding out. By any means necessary.

Ababuo picks up a sliver of broken glass and points it at Joshua's face.

ABABUO

Tell me where he is and I'll be on my way.

Joshua starts to laugh. It begins as a CHUCKLE and quickly evolves into a full belly LAUGH.

JOSHUA

If you must know, the inyanga is in the bathroom. Taking a bath.

Ababuo stares at Joshua suspiciously.

JOSHUA

Seriously. Go see for yourself. I'm not going anywhere.

Ababuo walks towards the closed bathroom door. She uses the flashlight to guide her path.

She jiggles the handle. It's locked.

JOSHUA

You might need to break the lock. The inyanga locked himself in there hours ago. He likes his privacy.

Ababuo BANGS on the door. The door doesn't budge.

She then slams the door with her body. Still doesn't open.

Ababuo takes a step back. She kicks the door with all of her might. The lock breaks and the door flies wide open.

Ababuo shines the flashlight into the bathroom. She GASPS in sheer horror.

The INYANGA (70) lays dead in a bathtub. There's a wide gash in his neck. Blood scales the walls, floor, and even the ceiling. Flies BUZZ around the inyanga's naked corpse.

JOSHUA

Can you see clearly now?

Ababuo storms over to Joshua and holds the glass to his throat.

Motherfucker! Why did you do it?

Joshua CHUCKLES.

JOSHUA

Because I am a servant of the lord. And a man of god cannot employ the devil's handiwork.

ABABUO

Devil's handwork? His magic was not black. He only used white magic. Magic that saved my life.

**JOSHUA** 

Foolish girl. Witch craft is witch craft.

ABABUO

The inyanga was a good man. He would never harm anyone. Which is more than I can say for you.

**JOSHUA** 

If that were true, then why did he cast black magic upon this city?

Ababuo releases Joshua from her grips.

**ABABUO** 

What are you talking about?

JOSHUA

The rain, the thunder, the lightning. All of it was conjured by the inyanga.

ABABUO

He would never do such a thing...intentionally.

A light bulb goes off in Ababuo's head.

ABABUO

That's why you kidnapped him. You needed him for his magic. But you did not know the magic yourself. So you kidnapped him, took him to the Americas, and forced him to summon the storm against his will.

I should stab you in the throat right now.

Ababuo points the rusty blade towards Joshua's Adam's apple.

JOSHUA

Then I'll become a martyr. The ultimate reward for the ultimate sacrifice.

Thunder BOOMS outside.

**ABABUO** 

How do I stop it?

**JOSHUA** 

What's done is done. There is no stopping it.

ABABUO

Why? Why would you cast a spell on a city you know nothing about?

JOSHUA

Because it's my Jericho.

ABABUO

You are delusional.

JOSHUA

Am I? Open your good eye and see this place for what it really is. The alcohol runs rampant, women sell sex in the streets, godlessness is everywhere.

**ABABUO** 

What about the children? Do they deserve the fate of their fathers?

JOSHUA

In order to rebuild, one must destroy. It is the only way I can save our people.

A SIREN blasts seven times. Ababuo looks around in fear. Joshua counts the horns and smiles.

JOSHUA

Seven siren blasts. Just like the seven calls from the ram's horn.

Then what happens? Do the walls come tumbling down?

JOSHUA

Worse. The levees break. New Orleans belongs to the lord my god once more.

Ababuo walks behind Joshua.

ABABUO

And what about you Joshua? What will you do when the waters rise?

JOSHUA

I do not know. But whatever happens, the lord shall deliver me.

ABABUO

Your arrogance cripples you. Haven't you heard the biblical verse, "Pride comes before the fall?"

Ababuo slashes Joshua's Achilles heel. Joshua SCREAMS and topples forward.

Ababuo walks to the front door.

ABABUO

I wouldn't bother praying if I were you.

Ababuo opens the front door. Several inches of rain rush in.

ABABUO

Because you're going to need more than God's help to make it through the night.

Ababuo exits through the front door and into the storm outside.

FADE OUT.