CIRCLE OF FAITH

Written by

Robert L. McBride
INT. GREYHOUND BUS - DAY

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

EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

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

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

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

REDHEAD WOMAN
(grossed)
Miss Ma'am? Ugh!

INT. BUS STATION - DAY

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

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

HAROLD
Hi, I'm looking for a payphone.

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 Clearly years out of date.

CASHIER
Where be you from, sir?

HAROLD
CASHIER

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

HAROLD

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

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

INT. BEHIND THE GLASS - DAY

Harold hangs up the phone. Relieved.

HAROLD

Thank you.

She nods. Eyes him close as he walks out.

EXT. STREET - AFTERNOON

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

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

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

INT. SKYLIGHT MOTEL - FRONT DESK - AFTERNOON

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

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

ROCMOND

Hurry it up, Springer’s on!

It startles Harold. He jumps.
HAROLD
I can wait til’ it goes off if I’m disturbing you.

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

ROCMOND
Just c’mon dude. Good manners don’t earn you no favors ‘round here.

HAROLD
Just a room for the night.

ROCMOND
I.D. And fifty two dollars.

HAROLD
Sign says twenty-five.

ROCMOND
And the small little print underneath it says ‘if you check in after six’.

The clock on the wall reads 3:36.

EXT. STREET – AFTERNOON

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

HAROLD
Would you like a water?

INT. CORNER STORE – MOMENTS LATER

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

HOMELESS CHARLIE
(re: Harold’s sweater)
I used to have a sweater like that. My wife gave it to me a week before she died.

HAROLD
How’d she die?

HOMELESS CHARLIE
Lung cancer.

Charlie lights a cigarette. Smoking and walking.
HOMELESS CHARLIE
Want a hit?

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

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

HAROLD
More Spiritual. You?

HOMELESS CHARLIE
Difference?

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

HOMELESS CHARLIE
I’m Charlie Bydeahway – thats my real last name. Everyone ‘round here calls me Homeless Charlie, tho. Either is fine.

HAROLD
Harold.

HOMELESS CHARLIE
Ain’t from here are you, Harold?

Harold shakes no.

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

HAROLD
(re: preacher)
Can you introduce me to him?

Charlie takes a second – who is he talking about? Oh --
HOMELESS CHARLIE
(mulls it over...)
Don’t go embarrassing me tho. Those are good folks. And they don’t bring enough food for two.

EXT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - AFTERNOON

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

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

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

HOMELESS CHARLIE
Need some help?

JIMMY
Thanks Charlie.

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

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

HOMELESS CHARLIE (O.S.)
Tacos?

ANITA (O.S.)
Yep.

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

HAROLD
So you’re Pastor of this fine church?

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

Jimmy grins. Likes Harold’s style already.

HAROLD
I’m Harold Wilson.

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

JIMMY
Nice to meet you, Harold--

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

HOMELESS CHARLIE
--Look what the wife gave me.

JIMMY
Great. Now will you come to church?

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

HAROLD
The Bible implies come as you are.

Their attention shifts to Harold. Jimmy grins.

JIMMY
Can’t debate scripture.

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

Jimmy hits the car alarm.

JIMMY
Charlie your dinner’s under the backseat.

Charlie searches for his food.

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

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

HAROLD
I can help.

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

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

We hear the car door close.

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - VESTIBULE - AFTERNOON

Chipped gray paint. Dark and dreary.
Jimmy has on dirty clothes for him to paint in.
Harold is mixing the paint. Ready to work.

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

Harold waves him off. It’s fine.

...A SHORT WHILE LATER...

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

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

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

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

Anita walks in. Stops. Admires with her husband.
ANITA
(whispers)
He’s great. Where’d you find him?

JIMMY
I didn’t. He found me.

EXT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - NIGHT
Jimmy helps Anita inside the car. Harold stands by the door. Jimmy heads back to lock up.

JIMMY
Where’d you learn to do that?

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

JIMMY
A ride Harry?

HAROLD
I’m fine.

JIMMY
I don’t mind. Really.
Harold waves him off: it’s fine.

JIMMY
Wish I could give you something.

HAROLD
Can I come back tomorrow?

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

Harold nods. Jimmy smiles.

INT. STARLIGHT MOTEL - NIGHT
Harold, wrapped in a towel, washes his clothes out in the sink with a bar of soap.

The bath water is running and it’s steaming.

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

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

SERIES OF SHOTS

Harold tossing and turning in the bed.

He looks out the window.

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

He looks at the iron. Sets it up.

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

Gets dressed, same wrinkled clothes as yesterday.

Makes another cup of noodles. This time with the water from coffee maker.

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

INT. PRISON - MESS HALL - FLASHBACK

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

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

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

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - SANCTUARY - MORNING

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


HAROLD

Miss Sunday.

ANITA

Anita’s just fine Harold.

Harold nods. A beat...
HAROLD
White baby’s breath.

ANITA
Huh?

HAROLD
The flowers. Those are ‘white baby breath’ flowers.

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

ANITA
How’d you know? I had no clue.

HAROLD
Grandma was a florist.

ANITA
Where you from, Harold?

HAROLD
Bushkill, Pennsylvania.

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

HAROLD
I want to go on a plane one day.

Anita finishes the arrangement. Steps back and admires it.

ANITA
You grew up in church?

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

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

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

ANITA
How’s that look, Harold? Good?
Harold nods his approval.

**INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - OFFICE - DAY**

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

**JIMMY**  
Thought I’d add some class to the room? What you think?

Anita stands in the doorway, beaming.

**ANITA**  
I love it.

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

**ANITA**  
You notice anything strange about Harold?

Jimmy shakes: no.

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

**ANITA**  
Yeah- I mean, no... I think that’s the problem: nothing’s wrong.

**JIMMY**  
Then why you worrying?

Anita shakes it off.

**JIMMY**  
Come here.

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

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

She knows he couldn’t but she goes along with it. Feigns disbelief.
JIMMY (CONT’D)
This gon’ be the biggest church in West Virginia. I declare that in Jesus -


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

JIMMY
(over)
He.

ANITA
Only time will tell.

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - SANCTUARY - DAY

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

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

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

WENDY
-- Pastor at?

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

WENDY
Young man!

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

HAROLD
Yes, Ma’am?

WENDY
Hi. Where is my Pastor?

HAROLD
If he’s not in his office I’m not sure where he is. Isn’t a whole lot of places he could be.
She doesn’t find his joke cute.

WENDY
Don’t speak against the vision.

HAROLD
No, I wasn’t. Just a bad--

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

Harold’s slightly puzzled. Dead phone?

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

WENDY
I need a charger! And my Pastor!

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

WENDY
Pastor. Oh, thank God you’re here.

JIMMY
Sister Wendy, is everything--

WENDY
It’s Brielle.

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - OFFICE/SANCTUARY - DAY

Wendy’s sitting in front of the Pastors desk.

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

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

JIMMY
Why now?

WENDY
Says she has questions I can’t answer.

(beat)
WENDY (CONT'D)
This is part of her “journey as a woman.” Something she feels she “HAS” to do.

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

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

JIMMY
Have you prayed with her?

WENDY
I have.

Jimmy’s face: and?

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

JIMMY
You’re not losing her, Sister Wendy.

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

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

Harold has stopped painting. He’s listening close.
WENDY
Please, would you?

JIMMY
Anytime.
(A beat... then --)
So Sister Wendy, are you excited about our first service in our new building?

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

JIMMY
What about ummm... you know...?

Wendy exhales. Wanted to avoid this subject.

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

JIMMY
(offended)
You think your pastor would have you do something God wouldn’t approve of?

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

JIMMY
You think God would tell me to do something--

WENDY
That’s not (what I’m saying)--

JIMMY
(over)
I understand. I know what it looks like but I assure you that isn’t what it is.
WENDY
Then what is it? Because I looked
at it every way imaginable and I
don’t see an ounce of righteousness
in it.

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

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

INT. MOTEL FRONT DESK - NIGHT

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

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

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

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON CELL - FLASHBACK

Lights are out.

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

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

"BIG STAN
Ease up. It’ll feel more natural."

He laughs.
INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

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

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Harold strolls down the street. He passes a busstop.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Harold?

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

DOUG

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

Harold gives a half shrug and speeds away.

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

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

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

On the comp: ADJUSTING TO LIFE AFTER PRISON

Various articles pop up. Harold reads them.

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

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

EXT. LIBRARY - DAY

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

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

BRIELLE

God, mister!
HAROLD
I’m so sorry.

BRIELLE
This is disgusting!

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

BRIELLE
Get off me! Don’t touch me!

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

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

Approaching them:

COP
Is there a problem ma’am?

HAROLD
No. It was--

COP
Wasn’t asking you! Ma’am?

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

COP
Care to tell me the details of what happened?

BRIELLE
I could be dying here.

HAROLD
It was really just an accident. I apologize.

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

HAROLD
Sorr--

COP
Let me see some I.D.
Harold freezes.

    HAROLD
    I don’t have any, yet.

Cop gives him a look: What?

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

    COP
    Hands behind your back.

    HAROLD
    Why.

    BRIELLE
    (to Cop)
    What are you doing?

    COP
    He’s coming down to the station.

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

The Cop gives her a look: you started this.

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

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

    BRIELLE
    You can’t do this!

Cop closes his door and speeds off.

INT. PRECINCT – EVENING

Harold is in the holding cell. Angry.

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

    SHERIFF HARDAWAY
    Hey, you don’t just come barging in here!
BRIELLE
You arrested a innocent man--

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

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

BRIELLE
He’s not drunk!

Sheriff stands.

SHERIFF HARDAWAY
Bails set. Seventy-five hundred.

WENDY
Again, what are the charges?

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

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

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

Harold gazes up. Nervously shaking.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLDING CELL – QUICK FLASHBACK

A younger Harold when he first was arrested.

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

CON 1
Hey! You that guy from the news, right? The one that--
HAROLD
I just want to get out of here.

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

Harold walks out. Sheriff Hardaway whispers in his ear:

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

EXT. PRECINCT - EVENING

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

BRIELLE
What mom?

WENDY
Come on.

BRIELLE
(to Harold)
Need a ride?

HAROLD
Sur--

WENDY
(pulling Brielle’s hand)
No! Let’s go.

INT. WENDY’S CAR - EVENING


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

WENDY
We did enough, now stay away from him!
BRIELLE
Fine, but why?

WENDY
You don’t even know him.

BRIELLE
What’s the problem, mom?

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

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

WENDY
Just trust me.

BRIELLE
He said he knows you from church!

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

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

Call Pastor!  -- Tell him what?!

The phone starts ringing.

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

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

INT. THE SUNDAY’S RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - SAME

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

Jimmy’s phone rings on the dresser...

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

To her surprise the bathroom door opens. She quickly throws the book across the room. Jimmy just misses it.
JIMMY
What was that?

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

JIMMY (CONT’D)
Was my phone ringing?

ANITA
(hands him the phone)
Wendy.

JIMMY
What’d she want?

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

JIMMY
Toss my brush.

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

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

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

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

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

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

JIMMY
(hands raised)
I receive it.

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

Under the table Jimmy gently squeezes her hand, wanting her to participate more and not be so dull.
JIMMY
Amen, Bishop.
(re: clothes)
It’s clear God is doing amazing things in your life.

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

ANITA
After her grandmot--

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

ANITA
Well if it is a he -- Malcolm.

JIMMY
No way. Absolutely not. Malcolm’s not the name of a prophet.
(to Chrone)
Moses is in the running.

Snapping back:

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

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

JIMMY
Your child? We’ll see.

ANITA
We won’t!

She gets up and leaves.

JIMMY
Nita, where you going?

ANITA
(walking out)
To the car. I’m sleepy.
Jimmy begins to go after her but Bishop Chrone motions for him not to.

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

JIMMY
She’s just... it’s her hormones. She’s never like this.

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

JIMMY
I do. Trust me. She listens--

CHRONE
But does she obey?
(A beat...)
A lot of this is about appearances. Not the clothes and the cars, but the structure. People will see you before they see God. So they’ll want to be like you before they want to be like Him.
(re: Anita)
And that won’t be tolerated. I don’t know if you’re ready to elevate. Prophet? Not sure Jimmy.

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

CHRONE
When’s the baby due?

JIMMY
Roughly three months.

CHRONE
And the name you want?

JIMMY
(takes a moment)
Moses.
CHRONE
We’re gonna see how persuasive you can be. If you’re a leader it’ll show three months from now.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Harold on his knees. Praying out loud:

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

EXT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

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

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

SHIRLY
You dating?

HAROLD
Just smoking. I hope God isn’t watching.

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

SHIRLY
Newports? Trying to break the habit.

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

SHIRLY
I use to have a love affair with Potato Chips. Two big bags a day. Know what made me stop?
SHIRLY (CONT'D)
Not the diabetes or the high blood pressure. Giving em away. I would feel so guilty when others saw me doing what I swore I’d never do again... the shame. I’d just get angry and give em’ to the homeless. Been clean four years now. Diabetes free. Normal blood pressure. See how powerful shame is.

This resonates with Harold.

SHIRLY (CONT’D)
Guilt keeps you human. So when I see you with that in your mouth...

HAROLD
I’ll feel so guilty that I’ll quit.

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

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

SHIRLY
(almost at the car)
Hey Zaddy. Miss me?

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

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - OFFICE - DAY

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

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

PROPHET (V.O.)
...In spite of everything you’ve been told, Prophecy can be taught like other forms of ministry. And to learn how to prophecy effectively, go to my website for a free ‘how to guide’ on the spiritual and natural acts of prophecy.
With a donation of $1,000 or more, one of our many prophets will talk with you over the phone and teach you step by step how to prophecy and get the most out of each word. Along with a certificate as an official junior prophet.

Jimmy writes down the number.

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

INSERT COMPUTER -

Checking Balance - $492.00
Savings Balance - $312.15

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

INT. VESTIBULE - CONTINUOUS

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

JIMMY
Doing a mighty fine job, Brother Harold.

HAROLD
Thank you Pastor Jimmy. It’s turning out pretty well.

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

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

HAROLD
Believe I do, Pastor.

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

HAROLD
Trial and error. Repetition.
JIMMY
No school? Where’d you study?

Harold’s feeling uncomfortable.

HAROLD
No, I never been to college.

JIMMY
Apprenticed?

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

JIMMY
No. You Harold? You’re bout’ the nicest guy...

HAROLD
I really prefer not to speak on it sir --

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

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

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

JIMMY
And that won’t change.

Harold debates if he should be honest or not.

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

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

JIMMY
I respect your honesty, sir.

Harold looks down, shamed.

JIMMY
We won’t judge you here. I won’t judge you.
JIMMY (CONT'D)
Truth be told, the church is full of sinners. It’s a hospital for the sick, not a museum for the well. We all have issues.

Jimmy kneels down. Looks into Harold’s eyes.

JIMMY
This still eats you up doesn’t it?

HAROLD
Every day.

JIMMY
And it should.

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

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

HAROLD
My innocence.

JIMMY
Let’s not go victim blaming.

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

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

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

(Harold nods.)

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

HAROLD
I receive it.
JIMMY
Louder.

HAROLD
I RECEIVE IT.

JIMMY
HE CAN’T HEAR (YOU) --

HAROLD
(over)
I RECEIVE IT, LORD!

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

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - OFFICE

Harold knocks and enters as Jimmy reads his Bible.

HAROLD
Wanted to see me Pastor?

JIMMY
I believe I have something you want.

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

HAROLD
You know Bishop Chrone?

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

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

JIMMY
I have your money here.
He hands it to him. Just as it gets into Harold’s hand, Jimmy casually says:

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

HAROLD
Sow.

JIMMY
...INTO THE MINISTRY. Good soil only, Harold.
(pause)
Class dismissed.

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

HOMELESS CHARLIE
For years I’ve been missing out. I wouldn’t even read Charlotte’s Web.

Harold laughs.

HAROLD
Pork is great.

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

HAROLD
Check.

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

HOMELESS CHARLIE
You serious?

Charlie makes his move.

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

HOMELESS CHARLIE
You usually wipe me. What’s wrong?
Problems with the preacher man?
(no response.)
Well get up. I want to make some money.

Harold sits in a nearby bench.

Charlie calls out to the people walking by:

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

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

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

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

He’s reading it:

HAROLD (V.O.)
Your case came across our desk...we’d love to meet with you and discuss your exoneration... If you --

He balls it up. Flushes it down the toilet.

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

ANITA
(to the cashier)
I’ll take it.
INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

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

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

...LATER...

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

LIBRARIAN
Sweety, we’re closing.

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

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

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

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

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

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

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

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

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

SHIRLY
Who are you again?

HAROLD
Harold. From Bushkill, Penn--
SHIRLY
Pretty late to be out here just staring into space, don’t cha’ think?

HAROLD
Kinda been used to it.

SHIRLY
Have a good night.

HAROLD
You too.

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

SHIRLY
Hey, got a cig?!

HAROLD
Is that a trick question?

SHIRLY
Is that an insult?

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

SHIRLY
How many you had today?

HAROLD
Three.

SHIRLY
I can smell it on you.

HAROLD
What’s your name?

SHIRLY
Shirly.

HAROLD
My ex-wifes name. I’m scared of you.

SHIRLY
These ain’t Newports.

HAROLD
Kools. I’m on a budget. I need a financial breakthrough.
SHIRLY
Sounds like some TV preacher talk, “financial breakthrough”. You just need a job. You into church and stuff like that?

HAROLD
(nodding)
Believe in God?

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

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

HAROLD
Suppose. I been there.

SHIRLY
At the bottom of the barrel?

HAROLD
For twenty years.

This piques her interest.

HAROLD
Lost my wife, freedom, dignity--

SHIRLY
How?

INT. HAROLD’S APARTMENT – FLASHBACK

This is the late 90’s...


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

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

HAROLD
Where’s princess?
GETTA
In her room, sleep. Allergies are awful. Gave her Benadryl.

They smooch and she leaves.

HAROLD (V.O.)
It was my step-daughter, Melissa.
Loved her like my own. Benadryl had her out cold.

...LATER...

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

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

INT. HAROLD’S APARTMENT BUILDING

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

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

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

INT. HAROLD’S CAR – EVENING

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

INT. HAROLD’S APARTMENT – SAME

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

HAROLD’S CAR – SAME

Harold gets stuck on a one way street where the cops block it off for construction. An OFFICER ahead is directing the traffic. Harold has nowhere to go.
HAROLD’S APARTMENT - MINUTES LATER

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

...A SHORT WHILE LATER...

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

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

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

...LATER THAT DAY...

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HAROLD (V.O.)
And that’s what did me in. Raped and murdered.

EXT. STARLIGHT MOTEL - PRESENT

Shirly is in disbelief, looking at Harold strange.

HAROLD
When they proved my innocence I -
Shirly throws a cigarette in his face.

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

HAROLD
Shirly!

They get into a shouting match!

SHIRLY
Get out of here! You better leave!

HAROLD
I didn’t (do it)!

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

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

Shirly reaches her door. Slams it closed.

Rocmond runs out with a bat.

ROCMOND
The hell is all the commotion?!

Harold slams his door closed.

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES – MORNING

Jimmy is opening the door when Harold pops up.

HAROLD
Pastor Jimmy, I need to speak with
you.

Before Jimmy can get the word ‘yes’ out --

HAROLD
I need a place.

JIMMY
What’s wrong?
HAROLD
I shared my testimony with someone
and now she’s got people out to
kill me. I need a place to stay.

JIMMY
Okay. Calm down. Come in.

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - OFFICE

They take their respective seats.

JIMMY
We really don’t have a place for
you to--

HAROLD
I can stay here...

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

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

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

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

HAROLD
I promise.

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

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


INT. THE SUNDAY’S RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

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

Guess what?

ANITA

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

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

JIMMY

It’s sad.

ANITA

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

JIMMY

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

ANITA

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

JIMMY

Okay. I’ll reach out. But I--

ANITA

Liar.

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

Anita heading towards the stairs.

JIMMY (O.S.)

ANITA! NITA!

Jimmy’s behind her now.

ANITA

I’m tired of it. It’s all so fake.

JIMMY

What are you speaking about?

ANITA

The whole Christianity thing. No Christian’s are out there with that family.
ANITA (CONT'D)
They’re in their houses just “praying” it don’t happen again.
Muslims, strong Muslim men are out making a difference. Helping her.

JIMMY
It just happened.

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

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

She stops halfway up the stairs.

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

JIMMY
What are you--

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

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

She walks down the stairs. In his face now.

ANITA
Not making sense Jimmy?
(threatening)
You don’t want to play these games with me. We both know...
Her threat lingers there...
...Jimmy walks away. Hurt. Angry with himself.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

It’s after 1am. Jimmy sits in the dark. Bible open. Glass of Bourbon beside it. He drinks as he reads the scriptures...

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

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

      JIMMY
What have I become?

INT. KITCHEN - HOURS LATER

SUNDAY MORNING.

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

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

      ANITA
Get up.

No response. A second...

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

He jumps up. Panicked. Frantic.

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

      ANITA
Nine-thirty.

He speeds up the stairs.

      JIMMY (O.S.)
I gotta write a sermon.
INT. JIMMY’S CAR – DAY


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

EXT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES – DAY

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

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

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

Responding to his question:

    ANITA
    Not at all.

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

    JIMMY
    Stop. STOP THE CAR!

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

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

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

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES – SMALL ROOM

Harold gazes out the window and sees Jimmy and Chrone having a heated exchange as they walk towards the door.
EXT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - DAY

CHRONE
People won’t support mess, boy.

JIMMY
I’ve got this.

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

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

Someone from the crowd screams:

SOMEONE
Is she alright?

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

They break out into “Amens”.

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

CHRONE
You got this, huh?

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

CHRONE
Then why is your visibly pregnant wife walking?

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

CHRONE (CONT’D)
You just told these people she was in pain. Yet, she troops up the hill by herself. Appearances young man. Appearances.
INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - SANCTUARY

SERIES OF SHOTS

- Jimmy preaching. The people going wild. Chrone shaking his head side to side. Appearing to be just as into it. Playing the role.

- Jimmy, prophesying and laying hands. They fall out.

- Anita, on the pulpit watching. Can’t help but be disgusted by his “sudden change” of ways.

- Chrone at the mic... soft organ playing...

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

A group of “yeah’s” and “Amen’s”...

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

“Yeahs”, “amens”, “be real, preacher” -- the typical.

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

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

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

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES

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

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

Wendy’s uncomfortable calling her anything else.

WENDY
Pastor sure did give a good word.

ANITA
UmmmHmmmm. He’s an anointed man.

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

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

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

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

Wendy chuckles.

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

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

WENDY
Well... What if technically it was?

Anita looks up. Stops counting.

ANITA
What are we talking about?
INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - BATHROOM

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

BEHIND THE STALL

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

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

Harold can’t believe what he’s hearing:

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

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - OFFICE

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

JIMMY
You ladies done yet? Bishop needs to go.

Anita pushes him to the side as she walks out.

He gives her an annoyed look.

Wendy hands him a thick envelope.

EXT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES

Jimmy and Chrone walk. Jimmy gives him the envelope.

CHRON
You’ve got it.

Jimmy’s face lights up.

CHRON (CONT’D)
I can use you all across the country. Once you learn how to prophecy.
JIMMY
Learning it now. As we speak.

INT/EXT. JIMMY’S CAR – AFTERNOON
Jimmy strolls to the car. Finds Anita sitting inside with an attitude.
She ignores his taps on the window. He taps HARDER.

JIMMY
C’mon!

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES – AFTERNOON
Wendy locks Jimmy’s office. Takes a final walk through before she locks up.
There’s a SOUND coming from in the kitchen.
She grabs a broom as a weapon. Heads towards the sound.
Opens the kitchen door swinging wildly.

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

WENDY
I know!

He manages to snatch the broom from her. Angry.

HAROLD
What’s your problem?!

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

Behind him is a tablet.

HAROLD
Just doing work for Pastor, Jimmy.

She looks at him like he’s lying.

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

WENDY
So you weren’t in jail for murder and rape?
HAROLD
That is true. But I was -- am innocent. You’re a lawyer, aren’t you?

WENDY
I know guilt when I see it.

HAROLD
May I show you something?

WENDY
If you pull out your penis--

HAROLD
Ma’am no! I’m not an animal!

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

Wendy begins backing away.

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

As he walks closer to her.

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

Wendy’s backed into a wall. Literally.

...LATER THAT NIGHT...

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

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

HAROLD
The Alford Plea.
WENDY
But that wouldn’t apply to your situation. I don’t understand.

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

WENDY
And if you accepted you couldn’t sue the government.

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

WENDY
You would of been out before it ever went through.

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

WENDY
You could have sued and got millions.

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

WENDY
You didn’t deserve this.
HAROLD
Maybe I did. It could have been my Karma; something I brought on myself. God saw fit -- for whatever reason -- that I endure it. Who am I to benefit financially from his lesson?

WENDY
God is not into injustice.

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

Wendy holds him in her arms and comforts him.

INT. THE SUNDAY’S RESIDENCE – NIGHT

Jimmy and Anita lie in bed. Earphones are in Jimmy’s ear, he’s on his laptop.
Anita has a cold towel on her stomach.

INSERT – COMPUTER SCREEN

Jimmy prepping his sermon for the week...

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

ANITA
Jim. JIM. JIM!

He takes the buds out. Looks over.

ANITA
I don’t feel well.

JIMMY
Just relax --

ANITA
No. It’s... it’s different.

He sets the computer to the side.

JIMMY
Want me to rub it?
She shrugs. He does it anyway.

JIMMY
He’s so full of life.

She shoots him a sharp look: it’s a her.

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

She shoves his hand off her belly.

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

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

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

JIMMY
(defensive)
The spirit led me to that!

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

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

ANITA
Because I live with a hypocrite.

He puts his finger in her face. Angry.

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

She twists his finger. He screams.
Anita uses the headboard to help her sit up straight.

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

**JIMMY**
Been listening to that damn Farrakahn.

**ANITA**
And who you been listening to? ‘Master Prophet send me $599 and you’ll lie to the people like I do?’

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

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

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

**ANITA**
I’m done living your facade, Jimmy.

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

A tear drops from her eye...

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

Jimmy snatches his pillow off the bed. It knocks down her cellphone. Takes his computer and he’s out.
INT. THE SUNDAY’S RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM

...Clock reads 3am...

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

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

INT. SUNDAY’S RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - SAME

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

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

ANITA
JIIMMMMMYYYY!

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

CUT TO:

LIVING ROOM - SAME

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

THUMP! From upstairs...

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

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

BEDROOM

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

MONTAGE

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

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

**INT. NEW BETHEL - AFTERNOON**

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

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

JIMMY
(dry)
Yeah.

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

A beat...

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

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

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

CHRONE
You made a huge transition. That’s expected.
JIMMY
My wife is Muslim. My congregation is growing but I’m dying. I lost my son. My faith is nowhere close to where it needs to be. I’m gaining what I always wanted and losing what means most at the same time.

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

JIMMY
Money was never Jesus’ or Paul’s motive.

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

(silence, snaps his fingers)
JIMMY ARE YOU WITH ME?!

Jimmy snaps out of it and nods.

NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES – VESTIBULE

Wendy has a plate set to the side. She brings it to Anita who is at a table reading her Quran.
WENDY
First Lady... here you go. Made collards. Just for you.

ANITA
Thank you my good sister. But no thank you.

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

ANITA
Not eating til’ after sundown.

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

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

Anita closes the Quran. This sparks her interest.

WENDY (CONT’D)
The worst feeling in the world. No one understands unless they’ve been through it. You feel lonely, embarrassed. Shamed because you can’t do the only things that were designed especially for women.
(Wendy takes a seat.)
I was where you are. No one knows this – well maybe very few do, but I was Jewish. So it was my duty, my only duty, to bear my husband’s children. When I couldn’t, I was of no use to him. Became a Pariah.

Wendy and Anita tear up.

WENDY (CONT’D)
First lady, it will get better!

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

EXT. MOTEL – NIGHT

Shirly closes the door as a TRICK leaves her bedroom.

Shirly, in a nightgown, lights a cigarette and takes a squat on her bed.
There’s a KNOCK on the door.

SHIRLY
Go away.

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

ROCMOND
You ain’t paid all week.

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

ROCMOND
Two days. Pay up.

SHIRLY
Three years... I ever been late before?

ROCMOND
We focusing on today.

He walks in closer.

ROCMOND
Got some stuff for me?

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

SHIRLY
How long will this buy me?

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

SHIRLY (CONT’D)
It’s the good stuff.

ROCMOND
Two weeks. But you still owe me body.

She throws the bag at him hard.

INT. BRIELLE’S BEDROOM – NIGHT

Brielle is on her laptop.

INSERT LAPTOP SCREEN –
How to tell if you’re internet is being monitored
Whatever she finds frustrates her because moments later she smashes her laptop to the floor. Shattering it.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

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

HOMELESS CHARLIE
But why you care, man?

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

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

HAROLD
I brought you here for support.

HOMELESS CHARLIE
Great friends are honest.

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

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

HAROLD
Charlie not now.

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

HAROLD
What’s a facebook?

HOMELESS CHARLIE
Scoot your rump.

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

HOMELESS CHARLIE
Social networking. It’s the in thing.
HAROLD
You got one?

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

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

HOMELESS CHARLIE
It's lonely out here.
(a beat)
Spell her name.

HAROLD
G-e-t-t-a.

HOMELESS CHARLIE
(as he types)
Like the gas stations?

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

A bunch of 'Getta's' pop up.

HOMELESS CHARLIE
Any of these look familiar?


HOMELESS CHARLIE
Just scroll down...

HAROLD
Thanks.

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

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

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

HAROLD
A lot of Getta's.
HOMELESS CHARLIE
She used to be there every day, now
he only comes. Sends the food with--

HAROLD
-- I think this is her!

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

HOMELESS CHARLIE
Private page.

HAROLD
Can you send her a message?

INT. THE SUNDAY’S RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - NIGHT
A cradle, bassinet -- walls are painted light baby colors.
Anita cries, clutching her Quran, rocking in her rocking
chair.

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

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

JIMMY
Have a seat.

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

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


JIMMY
New Bethel Ministries has a growing
youth and young adult ministry.
JIMMY (CONT'D)
How do you see yourself playing into that?

HAROLD
I would love to help however I could.

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

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

JIMMY
Don’t you dare minimize that young girls death.

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

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

Harold lets this soak in.

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

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

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

Harold is confused.

HAROLD
So I can stay?
JIMMY
Yeah...well, no. You have to move out. I’ll set you up in a room down at the motel over there.

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

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

EXT/INT. WENDY’S HOUSE/JIMMY’S CAR - DAY
Wendy and Jimmy sit in Jimmy’s car.

WENDY
I don’t agree, God doesn’t work like that.

JIMMY
No one should be exiled from the Love of God.

WENDY
But he shouldn’t be around young children.

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

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

JIMMY
So you think he did it?

WENDY
Where there’s smoke there’s fire--

JIMMY
Well, not if it’s a cigarette.

Jimmy smirks at his dry joke. Wendy finds no humor in it.
(pleading)
Pastor, please. It’s best for the ministry.

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

I know a few.

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

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

Is first lady okay?

He begrudgingly snaps out of his thoughts--

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

I sent flowers.

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

Life gives no warnings--

Brielle?

I heard her smashing her computer. She’s so violent now.

God, she needs prayer. Have you fasted?

For two weeks now. Would you mind talking to her?
JIMMY
Will you find the publicist?
(Wendy nods)
She home now?

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

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

While in the closet, Harold stares at the sweater.

INT. HAROLD’S APARTMENT - (FLASHBACK)

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

INT. WENDY’S HOUSE - OFFICE - NIGHT

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

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

WENDY
Where have you been, Brielle?!

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

WENDY
I said ‘where have you been’!

BRIELLE
Out. Now let me go, can you?

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

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

WENDY
Manipulation and diversion won’t work this time. You will obey me or leave.
Brielle’s eyes are focused on the files on Wendy’s desk.

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

Wendy relaxes and takes her seat. She sits.

WENDY
Legal business.

BRIELLE
I know but what are you doing?

Brielle snatches a file off her desk.

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

As Wendy snatches back --

WENDY
It’s not like that. Now go upstairs!

Brielle drops the paper and runs upstairs.

INT. THE SUNDAY’S RESIDENCE – BEDROOM – NIGHT

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

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

Just as Jimmy exits the bathroom, blowing his nose:

ANITA
I want a divorce.

JIMMY
(nonchalantly)
Me too. But now’s not the time.

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

JIMMY
Anita!
ANITA
I won’t step foot in that church -- that I built -- until--

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

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

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

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

JIMMY
At the church--

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

JIMMY
And this is coming from a ‘backsliding Muslim’ --

ANITA
THIS IS COMING FROM YOUR WIFE! The woman that knows you better than anyone. What is a man without a good woman? Not much of anything. And I know I was good to you.
ANITA (CONT'D)
I nurtured you -- that ministry,
covered your drug habit, your lies,
- prayed for you time (after time) -

JIMMY
(over)
Is this your argument for alimony?!

ANITA
I don’t want a damn thing from you
anymore!

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

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

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

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

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

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

ANITA
Straighten up, ol’ Jimbo. Your time
is near.

JIMMY
You can make threats but no--

ANITA
I’m not making threats. What don’t
you see?! I loved you Jimmy!
ANITA (CONT'D)
I’d never hurt you. But I can’t protect you from yourself.

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

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

Anita calmly heads to the pick up the Quran.

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

JIMMY
Anita! Stop!

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

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

INT. STARLIGHT MOTEL - FRONT DESK - MORNING

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

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

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

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

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

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

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES – SANCTUARY

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

JIMMY’S OFFICE

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

Bishop Chrone walks in seconds later.

CHRONE
    You ready to -- oh, hell no.

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

CHRONE
    (to Harold)
    The hell is wrong with him?

JIMMY
    (head still on the desk)
    I’m fine, I’m fine. Tell him I’m fine, Harold.

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

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

CHRONE
    He’s high!

Slams his fist into the desk.
CHRONE
He’s f- he’s drunk. Now what do you expect me to do now? I’m not letting you go on like that.

HAROLD
Bishop, how about you preach?

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

JIMMY
Press was for Harold.

HAROLD
Me? Why?

JIMMY
(lifts his head)
This guy has a story everyone should hear.

HAROLD
What?

JIMMY
Put him up in my place.

CHRONE
He’s not a preacher. He’s not a minister.
(to Harold)
What are you?

HAROLD
M.I.T.

CHRONE
They don’t even acknowledge those.

JIMMY
Look I got an idea.

INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - SANCTUARY
It’s Packed. Jimmy manages to keep it together enough to make it up to the front without arising suspicions.

JIMMY (V.0)
We’ll do the usual.
Chrone is on the mike, charismatic as usual. Behind him sits the most prominent men in ministry. All seated on the pulpit. Jimmy sits center.

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

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

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

There’s not a dry eye in the room.

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

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

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

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

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

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

...About an Hour later...

People are still laying before God in the Spirit. Speaking in tongues.
INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - JIMMY’S OFFICE

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

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - SAME

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

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

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

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

DOUG
I told you I saw him, now didn’t I!

INT. WENDY’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

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

INSERT - NOTE
I can’t believe you would keep this from me. It all makes sense now.

INT. THE SUNDAY’S RESIDENCE - NIGHT

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

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

Anita reaches in the closet, grabs her jacket and her already packed, suitcases.
ANITA
Glad you think so.

She slams the door on her way out.

Jimmy is perplexed. Shocked but quickly blows it off.

EXT. STARLIGHT MOTEL - NIGHT

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

A REPORTER interviews Shirly.

SHIRLY
He’s a total creep...

Rocmond arrives on the scene, phone in hand.

IRATE MALE screams:

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

INT. CAB - SAME

CAB DRIVER
What’s going on here?

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

EXT. BUS STATION - NIGHT

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

INT. WENDY’S HOUSE - NIGHT

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

WENDY
Brielle! Bree!

She knocks on Brielle’s door... Opens it. No sign of her there. Wendy pulls out her phone.
INT. BRIELLE’S CAR – SAME

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

INT. WENDY’S BEDROOM

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

BRIELLE’S CAR – SAME

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

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

WENDY’S BEDROOM

We hear an answering machine beep:

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

EXT. ROAD – SAME

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

AT THE SCENE

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

FRIEND
We have to. We didn’t do anything.

TEENAGE BOY
Either way I’m canned. I only have a permit...

And to decrease his friend’s chances of snitching:

TEENAGE BOY
And your dad, the city’s top judge, would kill you if he knew -
FRIEND
Yeah, we should leave.

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

DOWN THE DITCH

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

Harold opens the Passenger side door...

HAROLD
Are you okay? Can you hear me?

No response.

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

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

WENDY (O.S.)
Who are -- what? Where’s Bree --

Harold hangs up and dials 911.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

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

DR. GOODING
Sir, you have to stay here.

NURSE ANN
Is she your family.

Harold debates lying...

HAROLD
Yeah.

NURSE ANN
Wait out here. We’ll keep you updated.

Harold watches as they take her into the ER.

WENDY
What the hell were you doing with her?

HAROLD
I just happened to be passing by.

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

HAROLD
I would never!

WENDY
STAY AWAY FROM HER!

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

WENDY
(re: his conviction)
Like the last one.

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

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

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Wendy on one side; Harold on the other.

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

ANITA
Have you spoken (to the doctors)...

Wendy’s shaking “no.”
WENDY
(crying)
I should’ve just told her.

ANITA
No, it’s not.

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

Anita and Wendy break.

WENDY
(to Harold)
Can I talk to you?

DR. GOODING
Mom? Dad?

ANITA
This is mom.

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

WENDY
Can I see her?

INT. ER

Wendy pulls back the curtain.

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

BRIELLE
Can you leave?

WENDY
Brielle...

BRIELLE
You did this! How could-- how could you keep that from me?!? Why?
WENDY
I didn’t know how to tell you. It hurt me to know why you cared so much. Our relationship was the most important thing to me. And when you wanted to Jeopardize that, I got jealous.

BRIELLE
But you knew. You knew all along.

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

BRIELLE
I don’t believe you.

WENDY
I’ve kept things from you but I’ve never lied to you.

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

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

BRIELLE
(over)
Maybe?! You still can’t admit when your wrong.

WENDY
I know I hurt you, and for that I’m wrong and I’m sooo sorry Brielle.

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

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

ANITA
Hey, Princess.

Brielle smiles. A smile Wendy wishes she gave her. Wendy excuses herself.
ANITA
No, I didn’t mean to interrupt.

BRIELLE
No, you’re fine, first lady.

Wendy cries as she walks out the ER.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

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

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

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

WENDY
Wait, hold on.

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

WENDY
I’m sorry.

HAROLD
Forgiven.

WENDY
She hates me.

He gives her a look: he can see why.

HAROLD
Teenagers.

WENDY
Why did you come here?

HAROLD
What?

WENDY
Why did you come here?

HAROLD
Because I saw someone dying--
WENDY
No... to this town. Why here?

Harold’s suspicious...

HAROLD
God sent me here. To start over, Wendy.

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

HAROLD
Maybe your faith ain’t as strong as you think--

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

HAROLD
The work (of the Lord) --

WENDY
(over)
And don’t give me that! Real answers. Are you hiding?

A beat as they walk...

HAROLD
No. I’m used to being overslaughed.

WENDY
I don’t get you -- where are we going?

HAROLD
We?

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

WENDY
That answer is bologna.

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

WENDY
Please be direct with me.

Harold starts to tear up.

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

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

INT. COURT - FLASHBACK

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

HAROLD (V.O.)
I was confident I would be found innocent. My faith was in the right place; in the right person.

JUDGE
The jury finds the defendant GUILTY.

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

HAROLD (V.O.)
I was sure I’d be seeing my family again. Gretta was three months when I was arrested, but when I was sentenced she was seven.
HAROLD (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Throughout the entire trial I believed she believed my innocence. She knew how much I loved...

INT. PRISON VISITING ROOM - FLASHBACK

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

HAROLD
I miss you so much.

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

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

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

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

Finally...

GRETTA
Girl.

Harold’s face lights up.

HAROLD
Sonya. You named her Sonya, right?

Gretta tears up...

HAROLD
Gretta, what... what’s wrong?

GRETTA
I can’t do it no more, Harry!

HAROLD
I’ll get out soon. I promise. A guy in here, he’s a lawyer, he told--
GRETTA
You murdered--

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

GRETTA
You robbed me of motherhood.

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

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

Harold’s crying. Calling out to her:

HAROLD
Gretta!

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

Harold now stands. Irate.

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

The GUARD comes to escort Harold out.

GRETTA
I just couldn’t do it.

Harold can’t hear that...

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

EXT. STREETS – NIGHT – PRESENT

Harold and Wendy sitting on a bench.

HAROLD
My whole time in jail, all I thought about was Sonya. How she would hate me if she ever got to know me.
HAROLD (CONT’D)
Would she want to get to know me? And why would Gretta give her up. I came to grips with why, but... I never saw Gretta again. My entire sentence, only visitors I had were lawyers and priests. I got saved in there. Started a ministry. My pianist on the inside was an I.T. Genius. He did some research and based on what he found, Sonya was adopted by a family in this town. Every day, for a year, I would call every family on the adoption list. I sold my body for phone privileges at times.

WENDY
And what happened?

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

WENDY
(to herself)
Charles.

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

WENDY
When I found out you were in jail, my heart was overwhelmed because I knew I’d never be in this position. But God worked on my heart. Said I had to aid you. I put your case in front of those lawyers. Helped prep it; they read the arguments I wrote. Once you were free, I thought me and peace would be joint at the hip.
WENDY (CONT'D)
But God had other plans, and I fought Him. You represented a hammer. A hammer that would shatter my world. When her-- when Charles died, we became closer than ever. I didn’t think she needed a man in her life. Far as I was concerned, she had no business knowing she was adopted. But that day came and I had to face the monster.

HAROLD
So this explains it.

WENDY
I’m sorry.

HAROLD
Does she know?

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

EXT. THE SUNDAY’S RESIDENCE - NIGHT

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

INT. THE SUNDAY’S RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

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

BOOM! He falls to the floor.

LIVING ROOM...

Shirly creeps back inside, searching for something.

SHIRLY
Hey! I left my--

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

INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

Anita and Brielle chat...
ANITA
She does love you, Brielle.

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

ANITA
What is love to you?

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

These words are touching Anita.

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

That resonates with Anita.

INT. HOSPITAL - LATER THAT NIGHT

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

EMERGENCY ROOM

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

ANITA
JIMMY!

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

ANITA
He’s my husband.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

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

They cry together...

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

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

They break grip and allow her in.

**INT. OPERATING ROOM - NIGHT**

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

**INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - SAME**

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

**ANITA**

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

A hand rests her shoulder. She looks up.

**DR. TIMMY,** a gray haired medical expert, takes off his mask. The look on his face says “Bad News”.

**INT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - DAY**

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

**EXT. NEW BETHEL MINISTRIES - DAY**

The casket is being carried to the hearse.
EXT. GRAVESITE - DAY

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

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

INT. CAR - DAY

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

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

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

INT. HOSPITAL - AFTERNOON

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

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - AFTERNOON

Dr. Timmy gives Anita a letter...

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

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

SERIES OF SHOTS

* Anita’s VO plays over these shots*

- Anita going under the knife.

- Jimmy going under the knife in another room.

- Anita’s surgery seems to go well. Doctors are optimistic.

- Rush and anxiety fill Jimmy’s room. Doctors are talking strong. Something’s not right...

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

THE SCREEN GOES WHITE...

...Dr. Timmy goes into the

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM

Where Harold, Brielle and Wendy wait.

DR. TIMMY
It went well. They’re both recovering.

They all exhale a sigh of relief.

WENDY
Can we see them?

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

WENDY
Thank you, Doctor.

Dr. Timmy walks off.
BRIELLE
Dad, we can go to the church and get their essentials. Make them feel comfortable at least.

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

He leans in towards Wendy. In her ear:

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

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

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

BRIELLE
You coming mom?

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

HAROLD
(quietly)
Thank you Lord.

FADE OUT.  *

92.