

THE BELT

"Pilot Episode"

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THE BELT

ON BLACK:

The Hartford Institute for Religion Research shows that there are 31 Mega-churches listed in the state of Oklahoma with average attendances ranging from 1,800 to just over 30,000 and growing; roughly a quarter of the population.

TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. RIVER CROSS CHURCH/VARIOUS SHOTS - NIGHT

An old familiar religious hymn plays as a SERIES OF SHOTS take us through an empty church auditorium. The auditorium holds four large screens, some state-of-the-art lights and sound equipment, all infused with a trendy decor.

TITLE CARD: TULSA, OKLAHOMA THREE MONTHS AGO

Eventually, we find ourselves at the pulpit looking over the empty chairs. The music fades as a TV NEWS SHOW begins coverage of breaking events.

LYDIA (O.C.)

(hesitation)

Welcome back. This is the Brennan Gospel and we're following some devastating events. Senior Pastor Teddy Saul of River Cross Church and President of Edward Saul University was arrested yesterday evening. According to the DA, Pastor Saul and his wife, Elizabeth Saul are under investigation for tax fraud.

INT. COR CHANNEL NEWS STUDIO - NIGHT

LYDIA BRENNAN (35) tries to hide her hesitation during the special broadcast on her show. With straight blonde hair and sporting a black pin stripe power suit, at first glance one would think it's Ann Coulter; a closer look shows she could pass for a younger and much cuter version.

Lydia glances back and forth and her notes, determining how to proceed. She clears her throat before continuing. Not looking forward to it.

LYDIA

Pastor Saul also faces *possible* charges involving a student at ESU.

(rushing through)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LYDIA (CONT'D)

Her name is believed to be MaryAnne Galloway. We're not told the age of the student at this time.

CLOSE ON the notes in front of her is the full news statement of the events. Shown in clips across the screen as Lydia **crosses them out** with her pen:

-- Sex charges involving an **eighteen year old**, MaryAnne Galloway.

-- Illegal involvement in **local political campaigns** and lavish spending at donors' expense.

-- Misuse of funds for personal expenses.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - EVENING

NEWS FOOTAGE

PASTOR TEDDY SAUL (50), arrives in front of the courthouse, escorted by POLICE. He calmly ignores the onslaught of media and protesters. He wears an impressive suit and tie, clean shaven. But his hair, what's left of it, is a disheveled mess. Teddy's tired eyes focus on the judgement awaiting him at the courthouse doors.

INT. COR CHANNEL NEWS STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Lydia lets out a nervous cough.

LYDIA

Caleb Evergreen, the Pastoral Director at River Cross announced they will be closing their doors until further notice, while the Saul family sort things out. Many members of the congregation are attending various churches around town.

The segment ends. Lydia takes a moment to let out a frustrated sigh and crumples the notes. Then pulls out her ear piece and storms out.

OFF her exit...

EXT. THE LINCOLN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A modern two story suburban house.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

TITLE CARD: CALABASSAS, CALIFORNIA PRESENT

(CONTINUED)

CLOSE ON the black and white limbs of TWO BODIES entangled in passionate sex. The climax hits and they pull apart to breathe.

DAVID LINCOLN (late 30s, dark and fit; anxious eyes), stares up at the ceiling as APHTON LINCOLN (mid 30s, red hair, hard eyes and thin), snuggles close to him panting. David's mind has shifted focus and she can sense it.

Ahton watches him for a moment and then kisses him on the cheek. We get a glimpse of a CELTIC CROSS tattoo on the back of her right shoulder.

APHTON
Stop worrying.

DAVID
I'm not.
(then)
I haven't been in front of a pulpit
or prepared a sermon in a long
time.

APHTON
(continues kissing)
Ooo. Backslider. Repent now.

DAVID
I like being a teacher.

APHTON
So teach them.

DAVID
I'm still trying to wrap my head
around it--

APHTON
(faces him)
You're not suppose to wrap your
head around it. I know it's hard
seeing your mentor fall. But your
job is to help the church, not to
sort out Teddy.

David kisses her on the forehead.

APHTON (CONT'D)
We've prayed about this for months
and the Saul family has been in
agreement. God has chosen you for
this job. Trust Him.

(CONTINUED)

CLOSE ON David as he thinks it over. She's right, but he's not entirely convinced.

INT. CLAIRE'S BEDROOM - SAME

CLAIRE LINCOLN (16), the beautiful mixed daughter of David and Apton, lies asleep in bed as the REM cycle takes over.

DREAM SEQUENCE:

-- A dark sky at mid-day spreads across an open country field as *THREE TORNADOES* chase after an SUV.

-- The tornadoes approach the River Cross Church. David is in the parking lot. David stands glaring at the tornadoes as they approach. A *SINGLE BOLT OF LIGHTNING* strikes the church auditorium forcing--

CLAIRE to wake up panting as we...

END TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. SAUL HOUSE - MORNING

A mansion complete with a large intimidating gate and well kept lawns. There's a winding road leading to the front courtyard. The mansion is isolated by a forest of trees.

A Christian radio station is playing in the background.

ESU RADIO (V.O.)

Good morning again Tulsa. This is KC with some quick news for ya on this *humid* summer day.

INT. SAUL FAMILY HOUSE - RACHEL'S BEDROOM - MORNING

The room is large and bright. There's POSTERS of pop divas mixed with Amy Grant and various photos of her mother performing. A large LAPTOP is set on a neat desk with university folders and letters. She has a keyboard and mic set up near the window.

RACHEL SAUL (18) slowly wakes up to the sound of the radio playing in the living room. She's wearing her ESU MUSICAL THEATER shirt with a faded pair of cartoon pajama pants. Rachel is daddy's little girl, but would never admit that to anyone. Despite being an overachiever, she's a small town girl drowning under the pressure of her own big dreams.

INT. SAUL FAMILY LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Teddy, in his robe, lies awkwardly asleep on the couch with an open Bible, cell phone, and an open bottle of Scotch on the coffee table in front of him.

ESU RADIO (V.O.)

River Cross Church has announced its new pastor, David Lincoln, for next month's grand reopening. Let us know what you think. We'll be taking calls and e-mails all month.

Christian music begins playing and we see where it's coming from: AN ANTIQUE RADIO on a shelf.

ESU RADIO (V.O.)

You can follow us here at Edward Saul University Radio online or call. We're your place for great Christian music and news.

(CONTINUED)

The Bible is open to Psalm 51 and is heavily highlighted and marked.

The radio is turned off as Rachel enters and closes the bottle of Scotch.

Rachel glances at the open bible to see what her father has been reading then glances at him. Teddy continues his deep sleep, while she watches. Rachel closes the bible and kisses him on the forehead before leaving. The phone vibrates. He stirs a bit and barely glances at the phone then ignores it.

INT. EXPENSIVE HOTEL SUITE - SAME

ELIZABETH SAUL (40s), a Southern Belle fighting to get her charms back, sits on her bed fully dressed and makes a call. She wears her impeccable wardrobe like body armor. The better she's dressed, the safer she feels.

Next to her is a PRINTED LEGAL DOCUMENT, a manila folder, and a stack of old Christian MUSIC CDs with her on the cover.

There is a mini recording booth with a keyboard and mic set up in the corner of the suite.

ELIZABETH

(in the phone)

Theodore, I need you to bring the new registration sticker for the Lexus. Also, do not wear the Fendi tie with your Brooks Brothers Suit to court. In fact, don't wear that suit at all. Wear one of your old suits and leave the watch at home.

(sarcastic)

God forbid we appear prosperous in front of the judge, even though we've earned our status.

She hangs up and glances down at the document. It's a file for divorce.

INT. SAUL FAMILY LIVING ROOM - SAME

Teddy finally gets up. Rachel walks back in with a bottle of water and some Excedrin.

RACHEL

Mom called. She's gonna meet us there. I put your suit on the bed.

(CONTINUED)

TEDDY
 (off her look)
 She'll move back after this is all
 over.

RACHEL
 (comforting)
 I know.

TEDDY
 I still think you should accept
 that music scholarship from NYU.
 You don't need to be here for this;
 especially at ESU in the Fall.

RACHEL
 Go take a shower, dad. And I'll
 drive.

INT. COURTHOUSE - HALL - LATER

The Saul family are talking with their ATTORNEY.

ELIZABETH
 What happened in there?! They want
 to move it to August 8th? Why? The
 church reopens that weekend.

ATTORNEY
 That's why. Look, you said you have
 someone qualified to run things for
 you while we do this.

ELIZABETH
 Yes. But--but that was not part of
 the plan. I thought we'd have some
 time to ease him into it.

TEDDY
 David will be fine. I trust him and
 Caleb.

ELIZABETH
 (re: Teddy)
 Will he be released under his own
 recognizance by then?

ATTORNEY
 It's very unlikely now.
 (to Teddy)
 You'll have to remain under house
 arrest for at least the duration of
 the trial.
 (to Elizabeth)
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ATTORNEY (CONT'D)
 Are you planning to stay at the
 hotel during it?

Elizabeth glances at Teddy.

ELIZABETH
 I don't know.

ATTORNEY
 Well just make sure you at least
 show up together in court. The
 judge needs to see there's still a
 family.

The Attorney walks away.

INT. LINCOLN'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Claire sits at the table slowly eating a bowl of cereal and drinking A GATORADE. There's an open magazine on cinematography and a classic novel next to her. Claire glances at it intermittently and turns the page. She wears a hoodie from a SCI/FI television show.

MOVING BOXES are stacked around the kitchen and dining room.

David enters casually dressed and goes to the refrigerator. Although, he carries himself like a comfortable and well adjusted adult in his late thirties, there's a constant dissatisfaction in his eyes that often betray his confidence.

DAVID'S POV: There are SEVERAL HALF EMPTY BOTTLES OF GATORADE scattered on the shelves with other items.

RETURN TO SCENE

He shakes his head and grabs an apple.

DAVID
 Queenie, can you at least consider
 consolidating some of the Gatorades
 into one or something?

CLAIRE
 It's not the same.

DAVID
 Of course.
 (then)
 Did you have any problems sleeping
 last night? I thought I heard--

Then he begins brewing some coffee.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE
 (stops eating)
 I had a dream about you.

DAVID
 (freezes)
 Oh. Um--well, I guess it's--

CLAIRE
 We were chased by tornadoes.

David sighs relief and continues brewing the coffee.

DAVID
 (sotto)
 Oh thank God.
 (to Claire)
 I used to have those dreams too,
 when I lived in Tulsa--

CLAIRE
 (facing him)
 You were standing in front of a
 church trying to stop them from
 destroying it.

She begins trembling and he holds her hand.

DAVID
 Did I?

CLAIRE
 I don't know.

He kisses her forehead and checks on the coffee.

DAVID
 Listen, it's just your dreams
 manifesting your fears of moving to
 a new place.

CLAIRE
 (with some comfort)
 I guess so.

DAVID
 I told you not to read like that.
 It strains your eyes.

CLAIRE
 This novel is on the Freshman
 reading list at ESU and this issue
 just came in.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID
 (sitting next to her)
 Your generation praises
 multitasking to its detriment. Read
 one at a time.

She takes a drink from the Gatorade bottle.

CLAIRE
 (back to normal)
 Could you and mom get a hotel next
 time you do it? I could hear her
 over my ipod last night.

Aphton enters on this statement.

APHTON
 Hear what?

Aphton, now wearing a white robe, goes to the coffee maker. She is the quintessential Irish woman; complete with bright green eyes and fiery red hair. Her intensity is matched by her disarmingly soft voice. But when she does raise her voice, you know hell will follow.

CLAIRE
 Dad says you're too loud and that
 you guys should get a hotel next
 time.

She turns a page in her novel while looking at David.

APHTON
 Really?

CLAIRE
 (to David)
 And, no, it doesn't strain my eyes.

David glares at Claire and she returns it with a grin.

DAVID
 (to Claire)
 Traitor.
 (to Aphton)
 I've gotta clear out some more
 stuff at the campus.

APHTON
 Hurry. We're meeting that realtor
 from the college at one.
 (to Claire)
 Honey, how are you feeling? Did you
 take your medication?

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE

Yes!

David's phone rings.

DAVID

(on the phone)

Hello...yes, Pastor Saul--

APHTON

Don't snap at me, young lady!

CLAIRE

(surrender)

Sorry. I just hate being reminded
all the time.

David exits to the Living Room.

APHTON

It's necessary to your health, so
get over it.

CLAIRE

It gives me nightmares.

APHTON

You said it helped alleviate them?

CLAIRE

I-I don't know anymore.

LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

DAVID

I was planning to fly out this
weekend...I understand...not a
problem. I'll leave tomorrow.

OFF David's nervous look...

INT. SAUL HOUSE - STUDY - DAY

Teddy is looking over paperwork at his desk, then makes a
call.

EXT. PRIVATE GUN CLUB - CONTINUOUS

A SHOTGUN BARREL rises to take aim. It's owner is

CALEB EVERGREEN (50s). Caleb is wearing a flannel shirt
rolled up with wrangler jeans and cowboy boots. This is his
element.

(CONTINUED)

A GEORGIA BULLDOGS CONFERENCE FOOTBALL RING on his left pinky, tells us Caleb is a proud Georgian. He speaks with a light southern accent. Perhaps, to hide it?

We're at the **SHOTGUN RANGE** section of the club.

CALEB

Pull!

A Clay pigeon flies through the air and Caleb shoots it out of the sky with ease.

His cell phone vibrates on the table behind him.

INTERCUT WITH CALEB AT GUN CLUB

TEDDY

August 8th the trial begins.

Caleb gives the Shotgun to his NERVOUS ASSISTANT.

CALEB

That's the day after we reopen church doors.

TEDDY

Yes and it's too late to change anything. Mr. Lincoln arrives tomorrow. Get him caught up on everything. Where are we with the staff?

CALEB

Same as before. Just the three department heads and Alan Wells.

TEDDY

What are the numbers now?

Caleb walks onto the dusty parking lot. A WHITE ESCALADE is moving toward the range from a distance.

CALEB

Thirty-seven percent of the congregation still stands behind you and believe it's an attack of Satan. The rest are uncertain or planning not to return.

TEDDY

And where do you stand?

Caleb hesitates.

(CONTINUED)

TEDDY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. You've been with us since the beginning. You don't have to--

CALEB

I stand with Christ, who judges all men.

TEDDY

Good answer.

PARKING LOT:

The Escalade parks next to Caleb and Lydia steps out.

CALEB

Focus on the trial. I'll take care of everything.

TEDDY (O.C.)

And no interviews. As much as we can avoid it anyway.

CALEB

Agreed.

He hangs up.

SHOTGUN RANGE:

Lydia approaches Caleb. She's in jeans, a blouse, cowboy boots and shades. This is her element too.

LYDIA

I want an interview with you and the David Lincoln.

CALEB

You seem to have misplaced your manners, Ms. Brennan. A gentle "hello" goes a long ways.

LYDIA

I'm serious. A full hour.

CALEB

We have a PR person for that arrangement.

LYDIA

I know, but he's not as handsome.

(CONTINUED)

CALEB

Flattery goes a long way too.

LYDIA

(shades off)

Have you done your homework on David? He's a registered Democrat and his only attempt at running a church failed. It was something tied to his brother, Christian, who, I kid you not, is the raging alcoholic actor/producer of several horrific premium cable shows--

CALEB

Make me Governor and it won't be a problem.

LYDIA

His brother is in rehab right now. Classic.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

Patience. I'm gathering the mayor and other power players to your corner. Right now we need you to make sure this church stays with us during the primaries.

CALEB

(turning toward her)

You want me to baby-sit the liberal.

LYDIA

I pulled a lot strings and ran *serious* damage control the past three months for River Cross! You're the Pastoral Director. Direct him.

He grabs a box of ammunition from a case.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

Why is David being chosen? I mean other than God's will and being Teddy's pet during college years ago?

CALEB

(loading his gun)

I take the will of God seriously, Ms. Brennan.

(CONTINUED)

LYDIA
 You believe David is the right
 choice to replace Teddy? Why not
 you?

AN EMPLOYEE hands Lydia ear muffs. She declines.

CALEB
 I'm called to govern.

LYDIA
 Then let it be done.

CALEB
 PULL!

BANG. HIT. Lydia watches unshaken by the crashing sound of
 the shotgun and collision of clay.

LYDIA
 I just need to make him seem more
 conservative than he is. Then he'll
 have to follow our lead.

CALEB
 PULL!

BANG. HIT.

LYDIA
 I'll get you the campaign info and
 set up a meeting.

CALEB
 Pull!

BANG. MISS.

EXT. EDWARD SAUL UNIVERSITY - DAY

Panoramic overlooking the campus near the Arkansas River and
 the nearby River Cross Church. It's larger than life and
 takes up a city block.

In the center of the campus grounds is a large statue of LION
 standing on a book. Written on the book's spine is: HOME OF
 THE GOLDEN LIONS.

We push in to follow Rachel as she walks into the campus
 theater, cleverly named: THE ELIZABETHEAN THEATER; with an
 artistic portrait of Elizabeth Saul next to it.

INT. CAMPUS THEATER - LOBBY - DAY

SEVERAL STUDENTS hang around practising their vocals and stretching. Rachel steps inside and everyone sneaks a glance at her and whisper with bewilderment. She takes a proud moment to let everyone realize she's really auditioning.

RACHEL'S POV: She scans the room and then glances at the sign on the door: MUSIC AND DRAMA PROGRAM AUDITIONS.

RETURN TO SCENE

TWO FEMALE STUDENTS approach her as Rachel checks the time on her phone and puts it on silent.

FEMALE STUDENT

Aren't you suppose to be at NYU?

RACHEL

Guess not.

FEMALE STUDENT 2

I'd get as far away from here as I could, if I were you.

RACHEL

(so true)

I know.

FEMALE STUDENT

Have you spoken to MaryAnne at all? They're gonna put her on the stand to testify.

RACHEL

Ummm.

FEMALE STUDENT 2

She's gonna get expelled for a year and put on house arrest for the whole trial.

FEMALE STUDENT

I read her Facebook status. She quoted Psalms 34:19! Like she even knows what that means!

Rachel drowns them out and plays with her phone.

FEMALE STUDENT 2

You guys were friends for so long. I can't believe she would do that to you and your family. She's such a Jezebel!

(CONTINUED)

FEMALE STUDENT
It's just the devil's attack
against your family.

RACHEL
What? Oh yeah. Totally.

A STUDENT steps out the door of the black box.

STUDENT
Rachel Saul?

FEMALE STUDENT
We'll be praying for you.

RACHEL
Thanks.

FEMALE STUDENT 2
Break a leg.

The two student girls go back to gossiping as they watch her leave.

INT. LAX INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - SAME

David boards his plane.

INT. CAMPUS AUDITORIUM - BLACK BOX - SAME

Rachel begins her audition with the old hymn, "It Is Well
With My Soul"

INTERCUT WITH DAVID ON THE PLANE

-- David is writing his lecture notes on an iPad and reading his bible.

-- Rachel is singing her heart out as the judges make their notes. It's everything she feels. Her emotion and voice transcend the song. It's personal and everyone feels it.

-- Suddenly, the plane experiences extreme turbulence during the flight. The plane dips dramatically. Then the movement is slow now as Rachel's voice penetrates the scene. The breathing masks fall from above everyone. Panic everywhere. David puts his on and helps the person next to him.

CLOSE ON David's panic as we...

FADE OUT.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. AIRPLANE - SAME

The plane continues its horrific descent. Everyone is wearing their breathing masks and gripping their seats tightly. Some are screaming and crying.

David breaths heavily, but remains calm. He closes his eyes.

INT. LINCOLN'S HOUSE - DAY

Aphton and a REAL ESTATE AGENT are doing a walk through of the house.

REAL ESTATE AGENT
I closed the deal with that family
at the church this morning.

APHTON
That was fast.

REAL ESTATE AGENT
One of the their kids is a student
of David's at the bible college.
(off Aphton's silence)
You sound disappointed. It's a
great deal.

APHTON
I know. I was just hoping maybe--

REAL ESTATE AGENT
Second thoughts about selling--

APHTON
About moving to Oklahoma.

REAL ESTATE AGENT
Oh. I can imagine. But I thought
your husband got a good job offer
there?

APHTON
(convincing herself)
He did. It's just--

Claire interrupts them.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE

Mom. I think we need to pray. It's about dad. I just feel there's something wrong.

Apton glances at Real Estate Agent then back at Claire.

REAL ESTATE AGENT

I'll call you later.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Claire and Apton sit on the couch and begin to pray.

INT. AIRPLANE - SAME

The plane begins to smooth out and the turbulence stops. The plane returns to its normal course. David opens his eyes.

INT. CAMPUS THEATER - LOBBY - LATER

Rachel walks out of the black box and calls for the next girl. She glances at the previous two girls and continues out the door without stopping. Her phone rings.

EXT. CAMPUS GROUNDS - CONTINUOUS

Rachel answers her phone while walking toward the parking lot.

RACHEL

Hello...Maryanne? Um...sure. I--I just have to see my mom first....okay.

She continues on, bewildered.

INT. TULSA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - EVENING

JOANNA MAY LINCOLN (70s), but doesn't look a day over 40, overhears other passengers talking about the flight, as she waits for David. She stands up to look through the passengers until she finally sees David.

Normally, reserved and gentle, but at the sight of her eldest son, she's giddy.

JOANNA

(hugging him close)
I heard about your flight. Welcome home. I prayed that the angels surround that plane and protect it all the way here.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

Trust me. I was praying the same thing.

JOANNA

I started dinner. We'll eat and then you can unpack. I'm sure Teddy has plenty for you to do.

INT. EXPENSIVE HOTEL SUITE - EVENING

Elizabeth sits up in her bed typing on her laptop as one of her songs plays on the music list. Books and CDs are spread on the bed along with the same DIVORCE PAPERWORK. The door knocks and she goes to answer it. Rachel enters with a small shopping bag.

RACHEL

(giving her the bag)

Hi mom. I got the re-writable CDs and some blank DVDs.

ELIZABETH

Did you say something to NYU?

RACHEL

(walking past her)

Uh, I don't know.

ELIZABETH

Well, I spoke to some lady at the admissions office and she said that you turned them down. I told her that's not true at all--

RACHEL

Mom! Stop!

(crashing on the bed)

ESU is taking a few late auditions for the music and drama program. So I--

ELIZABETH

Why would you do that? You already committed to NYU! They have a much better program--

RACHEL

I auditioned. We should really change the name of the theater. It's not clever anymore.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

It's not for me.

(CONTINUED)

ELIZABETH

That's not true.

(off Rachel)

What about USC? They loved you.

Rachel shakes her head.

RACHEL

I'm okay.

(then)

I just--after dad's arrest, I felt that I should be here. At least for a semester or two.

She rolls over to see the folder with DIVORCE PAPERWORK.

ELIZABETH

Honey, you should--

(re: divorce paperwork)

I haven't decided yet. Your father doesn't know.

RACHEL

Waiting on God's timing?

ELIZABETH

(sitting next to her)

Don't be smug. We're not Catholic. Under the circumstances, divorce is certainly viable. I spoke to Alan about it and he agrees--

RACHEL

Alan doesn't know anything about marriage, especially since his wife died three years ago--

ELIZABETH

Rachel Elizabeth Saul!

RACHEL

It's the truth! And he's too young. Dad should have kept him as youth pastor.

ELIZABETH

Alan is a certified counselor and has saved many marriages in our church.

RACHEL

Except yours.

(hugs her mother)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I'm sorry mom. That was--I--I'm just scared and angry.

ELIZABETH

I know baby, but this too shall pass.

(beat)

I wrote another song today. My old manager said that it's possible I could do a comeback album.

Rachel sits up at this comment. She glares at Elizabeth. "Are you serious?!" Then her phone vibrates. She gets a TEXT from MaryAnne: *ETA?*

RACHEL

I have to go.

ELIZABETH

Just listen to the first verse.

RACHEL

(walking away)

I'll see you tomorrow, mom.

I/E. JOANNA'S CAR - EVENING

CLOSE ON David looking pensively out the window, as Joanna drives through the freeway. She plays the radio as they take a call. There are billboards announcing the coming governor election with several candidates shown. She plays the radio as they take a call.

ESU RADIO (O.C.)

Hey, you're on the air. What's on your mind?

CALLER (O.C.)

Hi! Thanks for taking my call. I live in Broken Arrow, but my family and I have been members of River Cross for eleven years.

DAVID'S POV: He watches the sunset behind the scattered Tulsa skyscrapers that loom over the flat Midwest city landscape.

CALLER (O.C.) (CONT'D)

I just wanna say that I believe God has great plans for our new pastor. And I pray that he takes on this attack from Satan and--

RETURN TO SCENE

(CONTINUED)

David turns it off. Joanna glares at him but he just looks away and she lets it go this time.

EXT. JOANNA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

It's a simple family suburban neighborhood. It's lined with large old trees and well manicured lawns.

The two-story house is David's childhood home. We know this because there's a TREE STUMP in the front yard.

 DAVID (O.S.)
When did you have the tree cut
down?

 JOANNA (O.S.)
After you moved out--
 (then)
the second time.

This holds weight, even if we don't see them on screen.

 DAVID (O.S.)
I didn't notice.

Joanna pulls up into the driveway in her SUV.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

David finishes his dinner and gets up to put away his dishes.

 JOANNA
You know who's responsible for
attacking that plane?

 DAVID
Yes, ma'am. I do.

 JOANNA
God's hand is upon you, David. But
so is Satan's eye. He doesn't want
you here. You have a strong
purpose. Do *not* back down.

KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

David stops washing the dishes and stares out the window.

 JOANNA
What's troubling you--

 DAVID
I'm a theology professor at a
community college.
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DAVID (CONT'D)
 Why would God send me back here?
 And why is everyone hearing from
 God except me?

JOANNA
 (annoyed)
 You could have said no to Teddy and
 stayed in California. But you're
 here.

She walks over to him.

JOANNA (CONT'D)
 You *know* you're suppose to be here.
 Teddy might have lost his way, but
 God still got through to him and he
 called you. Not the Pastoral
 Director. *You*.

DAVID
 I know.

She pushes him aside and continues the dishes.

JOANNA
 It disgusts me when men of God
 whine like babies about their
 calling to the ministry. Stand up.
 Rise to the challenge. You have a
 responsibility.

He goes back to the

DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

David cleans off the table. On the wall is a FAMILY PHOTO. He
 glances at it while Joanna continues.

JOANNA
 That's why you failed the first
 time you were here. You forgot how
 to listen.

He walks over to Joanna and kisses her on the cheek.

DAVID
 I'm gonna go by the church.

JOANNA
 Call your brother this week. He
 gets out of rehab at the end of
 this month.

OFF David's sigh of regret.

EXT. MARYANNE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Old part of midtown across from one of the major parks.

INT. BEDROOM - SAME

MARYANNE GALLOWAY (18), sits up in her bed watching videos on her laptop. Pale skin with black hair, dark eyes, and even black fingernail polish, she's bewitching and would might have even been a Wiccan if the bible belt hadn't grabbed her first. Rachel feels this aura when she walks in the room. *When did Maryanne turn into this??*

Rachel feels this aura when she walks in the room. Posters of CHRISTIAN ROCK BANDS, FRANK PERETTI novels, and CLASSIC MOVIE POSTERS fill the room, along with incense candles.

RACHEL

Where's your mom?

MARYANNE

She went to Brookside to get dinner. Do you want anything? I can call her.

RACHEL

No. I'm fine.

MARYANNE

Someone posted this video parody of me and your father on Youtube. It's really disturbing and has over ten million views. I'm reading all the comments now and I can't decide if people like the video because it's funny or because they think Christians deserve it?

Rachel sits on the bed next to her.

RACHEL

Does it matter?

MARYANNE

Look, I logged in and commented on it anonymously, just to fan the flame.

The video plays and we hear sex noises with the old Christian hymn, *"Nothin' but the Blood"* playing in the background. Rachel quickly covers her mouth in disbelief and disgust.

(CONTINUED)

YOUTUBE VIDEO

"Oh, precious is that flow. That makes me white as snow. No other fount' I know; nothin' but the blood of Jesus."

RACHEL

Oh my God. Turn it off.

MARYANNE

Wait. You have to read what I wrote.

RACHEL

(closing the laptop)
Seriously!

MARYANNE

Fine.

RACHEL

What did you want?! Why--why am I here??!

MARYANNE

I haven't seen you since--since you know? Except in a courtroom. I just miss my best friend.

Rachel is shaking. Then:

RACHEL

How did you even find time to sleep with my dad?!

MARYANNE

I didn't sleep with your dad. It wasn't like that! I was confused. It was--

RACHEL

I mean we had sleep-overs. You--you were SIXTEEN! We led you to Christ after your Dad left.

MARYANNE

I had given up on God. And--and I loved being around him and your family. He just made me feel safe again. I'm sorry.

Rachel gets up to leave.

MARYANNE (CONT'D)

I'm not gonna testify against your dad. My lawyer wants me to, but--

(CONTINUED)

RACHEL
 (sarcastic)
 Thanks.

MARYANNE
 But I guess I'll have to agree to
 go to some Christian girls boot
 camp in Texas after the trial.

RACHEL
 Good!

She turns toward the door.

MARYANNE
 Do you forgive me?

RACHEL
 Don't ask me to do that.

MARYANNE
 Wait. It happened one night. That's
 all.

Rachel's face goes pale. She *did* ask the question first.

RACHEL
 Okay.
 (then)
 When?

CLOSE ON Rachel as she prepares to hear the story.

EXT. CHURCH GROUNDS - NIGHT

David walks through the parking lot toward the front of the building. His phone rings but he doesn't recognize the number. Let's it go to voice mail, then listens.

CHRISTIAN (O.C.)
 Hey, David...I hear it's *Pastor*
 Lincoln now. Good for you. Well,
 Mom told me to call you, so...there
 ya go.

INT. MARYANNE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rachel sits attentively on the bed, while Maryanne begins her story.

EXT. LAKE HOUSE - FLASHBACK - EVENING

TEDDY and Maryanne (17) exit the house followed by Elizabeth and Rachel.

(CONTINUED)

Maryanne is in her swimsuit top and shorts. She's carrying overnight bag.

MARYANNE (V.O.)

It was last summer before my eighteenth birthday. I got sick after being out on the boat all day.

RACHEL (V.O.)

Oh God. So you lied about being sick?

INT. MARYANNE'S APARTMENT - RETURN TO SCENE

Rachel sits pensively on the bed as Maryanne paces about.

MARYANNE

No! I mean--I thought I was gonna be sick. And I--I figured I'd feel better if I went home to your house.

RACHEL

*(sighs)
Whatever. Go on.*

INT. TEDDY'S CAR - SUNSET

Teddy drives with the windows down, letting Maryanne's hair blow in the wind. He glances at her and grins. She returns it with a giddy smile.

INT. THE SAUL HOUSE - RACHEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Maryanne sits up in bed, watching a movie on the laptop, when Teddy walks in with a cup of tea and a sandwich on a tray.

MARYANNE

Thank you. You didn't have to--

TEDDY

It's okay.

He sits next to her on the bed. She watches him, while taking a sip of her tea. Waiting.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

How are you feeling?

She puts down the tray and moves closer to him. They lie next to each other now and she snuggles close to him. Then Maryanne kisses him and it progresses to heavy embraces.

(CONTINUED)

END FLASHBACK

INT. MARYANNE'S APARTMENT - RETURN TO SCENE

Rachel glares in shock at Maryanne.

MARYANNE
And soooo, it just--

RACHEL
In my ROOM!

Maryanne hesitates. Shameful.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
You were never sick that day and
there was never any traffic coming
back coming back to the lake--

MARYANNE
I SWEAR I didn't plan it that way.
And I had no idea how long Pastor
Evergreen had been onto us!

RACHEL
I gotta go.

She rushes to the door again.

MARYANNE
Rachel, wait!

Rachel, trembling again, glares back at her. Maryanne starts to speak, but there's really nothing else to say. She exits.

HOLD ON Maryanne's guilt and regret.

INT. SAUL FAMILY HOUSE - NEXT MORNING

Teddy sits at the kitchen finishing his breakfast, while Rachel quickly grabs a Smoothie drink from the refrigerator. She tries to avoid looking at him.

RACHEL
I'm picking up Noah from the
airport today. Do you need anything
while I'm out?

TEDDY
Could you grab some Salt and
Vinegar chips?

RACHEL
Okay.

(CONTINUED)

TEDDY
Is this your boyfriend, Noah?

RACHEL
(grabbing his dishes)
Same one.

TEDDY
Are you still a virgin?

Now she glares at him confused. "*Seriously?!"*

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Our family is under the microscope
now. I don't want any surprises.

RACHEL
Wow. Um, yes, Dad. I'm still a
virgin.

TEDDY
Good. You should consider breaking
up with him until the trial is
over.

RACHEL
Why?

The doorbell rings and Teddy goes to answer it.

TEDDY
David. Good to see you! Come on in.
We'll go to my office.

Rachel grabs her purse and starts to leave.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
You remember my daughter. Rachel.

DAVID
Yes. Good seeing you again.

RACHEL
Welcome to back to Tulsa.

And she's gone.

INT. TEDDY'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

David is sitting across the desk from Teddy as he shuffles
through some paperwork.

(CONTINUED)

TEDDY

So your plane almost crashed
somewhere over western Oklahoma,
but suddenly regained its control
and you arrived here safely?

DAVID

Yes, sir.

TEDDY

Well, they say that's how you know
you're following God's plan when
something tries to take your life.

DAVID

It seems to be happening to you.

TEDDY

That's different. I brought this on
me. I was weak and lost my way.
(off David's look)
Eh, I was never cut out for a
pastor anyway. I should have been a
playwright. Or a professor?

DAVID

I'm meeting with Caleb and the
staff later.

TEDDY

Here are some copies of the budget,
tithe records, and notes on the
series I was teaching. Caleb will
get you set up with an e-mail
account and connect you with the
rest of the files.

DAVID

Great. I'm still writing my sermon
now.

TEDDY

That should help.
(beat)

My father had a saying. Or was it
my mother? Anyway, "*the devil on
your back can make you move toward
God.*"

DAVID

Or it can lead you astray.

TEDDY

Ahhh. Only if you're weak.

(CONTINUED)

Teddy gets up to escort David out.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

Be bold. Set the pace. They need a leader.

DAVID

I will.

TEDDY

Aaaand be careful around Caleb. I don't think he likes people from California.

David exits. Teddy sits at his desk and stares into space. His face tenses and lets out a sigh.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

My God, have you forsaken me?

INT. PASTORAL LOUNGE - LATER

Caleb and a FEW MEMBERS OF THE STAFF are finishing lunch.

CALEB

Send e-mail reminders out to the university faculty about opening weekend. We'll do a special lunch with church staff and faculty on Saturday.

STAFF MEMBER 1

Only half of the worship team is returning.

STAFF MEMBER 2

We still don't have a youth pastor.

ALAN WELLS (30s), a melancholy boy scout, speaks up.

ALAN

I can do it.

STAFF MEMBER 2

Are we gonna have a youth service?

David enters.

DAVID

Yes, we will. Students will be arriving this week for the start of the semester. We'll do a Sunday morning adult service and evening youth service.

(CONTINUED)

Everyone gazes at him for a moment. Alan approaches David.

ALAN

I'm Alan. Marriage Counselor and former youth pastor. Welcome to the family.

DAVID

Thank you. Can you handle the youth service as well?

ALAN

Sure can.

DAVID

Good.

Caleb looms in the back as everyone does a quick introduction.

CALEB

I'll show you to your office while they finish lunch here.

EXT. TULSA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

NOAH GARRISON (20), tall and athletic, stands at the curb with his luggage. He's wearing an ESU SOCCER t-shirt and aviator shades.

Rachel drives up next to him and gets out. They do a quick hug and kiss before loading his luggage and driving off.

I/E. RACHEL'S CAR - LATER

Rachel drives. Noah rides. We see more signs and billboards promoting different candidates for governor.

NOAH

So what did you tell him?

RACHEL

I told him yes. I'm still a virgin.
We haven't done anything.
(off his look)
It's true.

He gazes at her and smiles.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Why are you looking at me like that?

(CONTINUED)

NOAH
Well, we've done *something*--

RACHEL
(coy)
What has gotten into you?

NOAH
I mean, hell, we're suppose to want sex. Your dad clearly understands that--

(oops)
Shit. I'm sorry. That was way too soon. I mean crap. I didn't mean to curse.

RACHEL
No. It's fine.

NOAH
Do you think we should break up or take a break until the trial is over?

RACHEL
Did you get rid of your porn stash?

NOAH
You mean the flash drive?
(lying)
Yeah. That men's group has really helped.

RACHEL
Good. That stuff makes me sick. I can't imagine you looking at me the way you do those girls.

NOAH
What's wrong with a little bit of lust in our relationship?

RACHEL
Noah! That's not the point.

Beat.

NOAH
Okay. Okay.
(then)
So are you gonna break up with me?

She careens into an ice cream parlor, cutting off several cars.

(CONTINUED)

RACHEL
I want ice cream first.

OFF Rachel as she grins back at him.

INT. CHURCH OFFICES - LOBBY - DAY

Caleb and David step into an elevator.

CALEB
You'll get your own set of keys
later, but for now just keep using
Teddy's. Did you look at the
budget?

DAVID
Briefly. It's not looking good.

CALEB
Nope.

DAVID
We're in the red.

INT. CHURCH OFFICES - FIFTEENTH FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

David follows Caleb out of the elevator and down the hall.

DAVID
We should take salary cuts and--

CALEB
No.

DAVID
Why not? We can put that money into
some of the--

CALEB
I said no. We're not taking a
socialist approach. This is your
office.

DAVID
Socialist?

They walk into a large executive suite overlooking the church
grounds, university campus, and the Arkansas River.

David walks around and then settles at the desk.

PLAQUES, PAINTINGS, and OLD PHOTOS line the walls.

(CONTINUED)

CALEB

I don't mind if you voted for Obama, but keep in mind that the majority of our church members did not; which means they have a certain expectation.

Caleb sits in one of the sofas.

CALEB (CONT'D)

(condescending)

You're familiar with how the tithe works, correct?

DAVID

Yes. Is this going to be a problem?

CALEB

That's up to you. It's my responsibility to keep you on track at this church. And not to repeat the past your past.

DAVID

Are you questioning my faith or my political preference?

CALEB

One influences the other.

DAVID

But there's a law that separates them.

Beat.

CALEB

They'll be plenty of time for that discussion later.

(getting up)

Lydia Brennan, of COR Channel News, has asked us to be guests on her show this week before we reopen. She'll be here tomorrow to discuss things. We need to be on the same page.

Caleb exits. David walks over to the window and we...

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE**EXT. RIVERSIDE PARK - NIGHT**

Rachel and Noah are eating ice cream in a small wooded area on the edge of the Arkansas River. The night time humidity is causing the ice cream to melt fast and drip everywhere.

Noah is shirtless and sweating all over his well defined torso. Rachel glances at it then eats a large spoon of ice cream.

RACHEL

(mouthful)

What time do you have to be at the dorms?

NOAH

Like an hour. They've shortened the curfew this year. It's gonna suck for Freshmen.

RACHEL

Yaaay. Lucky me.

NOAH

So are you still gonna talk to Maryanne?

Rachel's ice cream drips onto her bare thigh and Noah watches her scoop it with her fingertip and lick it.

RACHEL

I don't know. How was Galveston?

NOAH

Ehhh, it was alright. I wish you could've come. My mom says hi and that she's praying for your family.

RACHEL

That's nice. I like your mom.

She finishes her ice cream and sets it down. Then watches Noah eat his.

NOAH

(off her gaze)

Uhhh, do want the rest?

RACHEL

Oh my God, yes.

(CONTINUED)

She devours the rest of it while Noah just watches in half amusement and half confusion.

NOAH
 (putting his shirt back
 on)
 I saw the youtube video. I can
 never sing that song in church ever
 again.

RACHEL
 I can sing it to you.

She smiles then leans into him and nestles her head under his arm.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 Ugh. I want more ice cream.

He kisses her on the forehead.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 You're--you're still a virgin,
 right? Like you didn't, you know?
 While you were at tournaments and
 stuff?

NOAH
 What?! Why would you--

RACHEL
 Nothing.

NOAH
 Okay?

RACHEL
 So is that a yes or no?

NOAH
 Yes. I'm still a virgin. No. I
 didn't do anything at any soccer
 tournaments. What's wrong with you?

She looks up at him and then kisses him on the cheek. He returns the look and they begin making out, slowly then heavily. She sits up a bit and pushes him down to straddle him and then he stops her.

NOAH (CONT'D)
 Wow. Uh--

(CONTINUED)

RACHEL
 We--we should go--I--the park is
 closing soon. I'll take you back to
 the dorm.

She quickly gets up and steps on one of the empty ice cream
 cups.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 Crap!

Noah slowly gets up, trying to hide his erection.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 Come on!

NOAH
 Okay. Okay.

She rushes back up the path through woods.

EXT. CHURCH GROUNDS - PARKING LOT - MORNING

TITLE CARD: MONDAY. WEEK BEFORE OPENING.

David arrives in his mother's SUV and walks toward the main
 building, while on his phone. He grabs a CAMPAIGN FLYER
 floating by him.

DAVID
 (into phone/looks over the
 flyer)
 Hello...I'm looking for Christian
 Lincoln. He's one of your
 patients...I'm his brother.

Alan sees him from across the lot and rushes toward him.

ALAN
 Pastor! Pastor Lincoln!

DAVID
 David Lincoln...No, I'm not
 scheduling a visiting time. I just
 want to talk to him.

ALAN
 (catching up)
 Pastor!

David finally turns to see him and stops.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

He's in a group session? No, that's okay...I'm sure. Just let him finish...I don't want to interrupt. I can try another time. Thank you.

ALAN

(out of breath)
I've been calling your name.

DAVID

Sorry. I'm still getting use to the title.

ALAN

Understandable. It's a strong name.
(takes a breath)
I just spoke to the facilities manager. The youth center is still being renovated. It won't be done by this Sunday.

DAVID

(re: flyer)
Are any of these candidates members of our church?

ALAN

Not that I know of.

They continue walking and David tosses the flyer in the trash.

They continue walking into the

INT. CHURCH - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

And stop for a moment.

DAVID

Then we'll move it here.

ALAN

But we'll need a space on Wednesday nights too.

DAVID

We'll move something around.

ALAN

Great. I also wanted to go over some notes for my message when you get a chance.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

Sure.

A Staff member approaches them.

STAFF MEMBER 1

'Morning Pastor. Our adult worship leader is on medical leave and won't be back until September. I'm working on a replacement but--

ALAN

Rachel leads youth worship. She could do it.

DAVID

Good. Tell her to take over this weekend.

Alan walks away.

STAFF MEMBER 1

Have you looked at the schedule?

She follows him into the

INT. PASTORAL LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

David goes to the BREAKFAST TABLE SPREAD.

DAVID

Yes, can we change that at all?

STAFF MEMBER 1

To what? We normally do three adult services. One Saturday night. Two on the Sunday. One in the morning and one in the early afternoon.

DAVID

(grabs an apple)

I know, but can't we just do one big service?

CALEB

(stepping in)

Our average attendance is over fifteen thousand each service. Or at least it was.

STAFF MEMBER 1

Morning, Pastor.

(CONTINUED)

CALEB
Good morning.

DAVID
(to Staff member)
I'm kidding. The schedule is fine.

STAFF MEMBER 1
(to David)
Oh. You also do a senior citizen
brunch every first Saturday morning
of the month and attend
university's Wednesday morning
chapel service.

David pours a cup of coffee for himself.

DAVID
But there's also a night service
here on that same day?

STAFF MEMBER 1
Correct. I'll also get you the
breakdown for each service.

DAVID
Thanks.

Staff member exits.

CALEB
Ms. Brennan is in your office.

DAVID
Great.

INT. DAVID'S OFFICE - LATER

Lydia and Caleb sit across from David.

LYDIA
(to David)
Your wife is Irish, right?

DAVID
Yes. Why?

LYDIA
So am I. Catholic or Protestant?

DAVID
Her mother was raised Catholic and
her father was raised Protestant.

(CONTINUED)

LYDIA
Are they still together?

DAVID
Yes.

LYDIA
Good for them. I was raised Catholic.
(beat/glances at Caleb)
Well, I'm doing a live segment this Thursday night about the reopening of the church and--

DAVID
What does this have to do with me?

CALEB
We need to let the public know that we're not afraid and will continue to serve our community--

DAVID
Afraid of what?

LYDIA
River Cross is well known across the nation. No mega-church has ever closed it's doors and then reopened after a scandal. This is your chance to speak about it and reassure peoples' faith in churches again especially here in the Bible Belt.

DAVID
What does Teddy say about it?

Caleb starts to answer but Lydia cuts him off.

LYDIA
I read your book that was published about a decade ago, "*Religion versus Relationship: Why The Individual's Relationship with God Matters More Than The Institution.*" Provocative read. I can do a quick promo on it.

DAVID
Thank you. Why is this necessary?

Caleb glares at Lydia. She's either off track or stroking David's ego. He can't tell.

(CONTINUED)

LYDIA

We'll make it a theme: Inspiring professor returns home to rescue his fallen mentor's church.

David starts to speak but instead leans back in his chair to consider.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

And it's good to see more interracial couples in the church.

EXT. MALIBU DRUG AND ALCOHOL REHAB CENTER - MORNING

CHRISTIAN LINCOLN (35), clean shaven and shades, exits the building as several PAPARAZZI await. AN ATTENDANT carries all three of his Burberry suitcases. He's a rock star in T-shirt and shorts. He finishes a cigarette as a black Lincoln Town Car pulls up to him.

E! HOSTESS

Christian Lincoln, the former star of the hit drama show "Vitals", has been released from Malibu Drug and Alcohol Rehab Center. There's yet to be any official statement as to whether he or the show will return for another season. However, the network is still positive about moving forward with the show.

The DRIVER steps out and takes his bags. Christian tosses his cigarette butt at one of the paparazzi and enters the car.

INT. TEDDY'S OFFICE - EVENING

Teddy is drinking his Scotch again while on the phone. His COMPUTER SCREEN shows a written document, in the form of a play in progress.

TEDDY

(in the phone)
The Brennan Gospel Show?

INT. JOANNA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

INTERCUT WITH TEDDY AT OFFICE

David is sitting in the back patio.

DAVID

(in the phone)
Yes, sir. I don't think I should do it.

(CONTINUED)

TEDDY

No. No. You should. I think Caleb could be right about this and you need to get comfortable in front of the camera as well as behind the pulpit.

DAVID

I suppose.

TEDDY

There's only going to be more of this and everyone's watching, so don't screw up or say anything that might cast a bad light on the church or Christianity.

(off David's silence)

I'm kidding. Hey, I started a play.

DAVID

Why are you so calm? Your trial is in a few days.

TEDDY

"I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time for every purpose and for every work."

INT. LINCOLN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Apton and Claire are packing. Claire struggles with one of the boxes and gets frustrated. She stops.

CLAIRE

Can I stay in the dorms at ESU in the Fall?

APHTON

I don't know, babe. You're two years younger than most of the Freshmen. You know how your father feels about it.

CLAIRE

It's just two years! I hang out with kids at your bible college twice my age! Damnit! It's not fair!

APHTON

Claire!

Claire storms away followed by Apton and into

INT. CLAIRE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Claire crashes on the bare mattress and weeps silently.

APHTON

Honey.

APHTON'S POV: She sees the full bottle of PILLS on the floor.

RETURN TO SCENE

APHTON (CONT'D)

You have to take the pills.

CLAIRE

Why won't God do something about it?!

APHTON

Baby, you--
(beat)
You have to trust Him.

CLAIRE

To do what?

Ahton lies on the bed next to her.

APHTON

Maybe God is speaking through your dreams even if they are frightening at times.

HOLD ON Claire's tears.

INT. NOAH'S DORM ROOM - EVENING

Noah sits up in his bed watching a movie on his laptop. His ROOMMATE puts on his running shoes and prepares to leave.

ROOMMATE

I'm gonna go for a run. Are you staying in, cause I'm gonna leave my key?

NOAH

Yeah, I'll be here.

He exits and as soon as the door closes, Noah jumps up to lock it, then rushes back to his bed and pulls out a FLASHDRIVE.

(CONTINUED)

Noah places his laptop on his chest as lies he down. He props his head up with large pillow against the wall. Then he plugs in the flashdrive and quickly brings up a VIDEO FILE.

FROM THE DOORWAY we PUSH IN as low sounds of a PORN VIDEO playing from the laptop. Noah begins stroking himself from under the covers.

We continue to PUSH IN until he climaxes and grips the laptop with his free hand. Then Noah quickly pulls out the flashdrive and SHUTS the laptop. He hides the flashdrive and reaches for his BIBLE.

HOLD ON Noah muttering a quick prayer.

EXT. LYDIA'S TOWN HOUSE COMPLEX - NIGHT

Her white escalade drives into the parking garage.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

CLOSE ON the book, *"Demonic: How the Liberal Mob is Endangering America"*

We pull to reveal Lydia reading it on her couch. Her son, STEPHEN BRENNAN (11) enters. There's a FAMILY PHOTO of Lydia and late HUSBAND, in full Marine uniform, holding Stephen as a baby.

STEPHEN

Mom, can we go to the Snowcone stand?

LYDIA

After dinner.

Stephen crashes on the couch next to her. There's a stack of campaign flyers (the same we saw before) on the coffee table. Stephen methodically stacks them in a neat order.

STEPHEN

What are you reading?

LYDIA

Research.
(holding him close)
Where do you want to eat?

STEPHEN

I don't care. I'm starving.
(re: her book)
Why are you reading about demons?

(CONTINUED)

LYDIA
 (closing the book)
 It's not about real demons. Pick a
 place to eat and let's go.

She kisses Stephen on the forehead and gets up.

INT. CHURCH - MAIN AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Rachel walks onto the stage and sits at the piano. She looks out at the empty pews, then begins to play a classic secular ballad. This is her comfort and refuge.

Alan stands in the back of the auditorium listening for a moment, then exits.

I/E. CALEB'S CAR - NIGHT

Caleb drives through downtown Tulsa.

TITLE CARD: THURSDAY

LYDIA (O.C.)
 You should have been in make up ten
 minutes ago.

CALEB
 Once again. Your manners are weak.

LYDIA (O.C.)
 Just tell me we're still on the
 same page.

CALEB
 You worry about your show.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

David and Caleb receive last minute instructions from THE FLOOR MANAGER as Lydia begins her live broadcast on the main stage.

LYDIA (O.C.)
 I also have tonight, two special
 guests. The new Senior Pastor of
 River Cross Church, David Lincoln
 and the Pastoral Director, Caleb
 Evergreen.

Caleb glances at David and walks onto the stage as we...

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR**INT. COR CHANNEL NEWS STUDIO - NIGHT**

David and Caleb sit on high chairs across a desk from Lydia. She's spent the whole hour setting up for this moment to trap David.

LYDIA

If you're just joining us, I'm talking with the lead pastors of River Cross Church and their thoughts on the expected reopening this weekend.

(to David)

Now, River Cross has long been a leader in the war against the left's relentless and often vulgar attacks on the church.

INT. TULSA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - EVENING

We follow Christian as he walks down the hall and under the large sign: WELCOME TO TULSA.

INT. JOANNA'S HOUSE - EVENING

Joanna sits on her couch, crocheting while watching the show.

LYDIA (V.O.)

Do you believe, as a former professor called by God into this important leadership role in the ministry, that you can continue the church's expectations?

INT. SAUL FAMILY LIVING ROOM - SAME

Teddy watches while munching on a bag of Salt and Vinegar chips. Rachel enters and stops to watch after hearing the question.

INT. COR CHANNEL NEWS STUDIO - SAME

David hesitates for a moment.

DAVID

Well, I can't say anything about the political nature of the church, given this particular setting.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DAVID (CONT'D)

However, I believe my responsibility is to act as a shepherd to the members of my church according the scriptures given to us by God.

INT. LINCOLN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Aphthon and Claire sit closely together against the wall of the empty living room. They watch live streaming of the show on a laptop.

INT. COR CHANNEL NEWS STUDIO - NIGHT

Lydia shows a sinister smile and glances at Caleb.

LYDIA

And that responsibility demands the church upholds its position against the demonic forces smothering our country right now--

INT. LUXURY SUITE - NIGHT

Christian turns on the television and crashes on the bed. The downtown Tulsa skyline looms through the open window.

The interview is showing on the television.

CALEB (V.O.)

Exactly. It's a responsibility that we take very seriously at River Cross--

DAVID (V.O.)

Well, only to a certain degree that's true, but I think the problem is more internal. The church is causing more damage to itself because--

LYDIA (V.O.)

It's letting liberal ideology creep into its doctrine.

We PUSH into the television.

INT. COR CHANNEL NEWS STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

With frustration setting in, David glances at Caleb then continues.

DAVID

No. Not necessarily. It's--

(CONTINUED)

CALEB

We're making strong efforts to protect our church from allowing this misguided doctrine of tolerance to impact the role of the church.

Lydia grins at Caleb as David becomes annoyed. This clearly is not the agenda he was told.

CALEB (CONT'D)

As a strong soldier of God, our new senior pastor is fully capable of carrying out that task.

Lydia and Caleb look for David to respond.

INT. LINCOLN'S LIVING ROOM - SAME

Claire jumps up.

CLAIRE

They're totally setting him up!

APHTON

I know.

CLAIRE

There's no way he can do that! He's not supposed to.

APHTON

I know.

INT. SAUL FAMILY LIVING ROOM - SAME

Rachel sits next to Teddy and grabs the bag of chips from him.

RACHEL

You shouldn't have let him on this show.

TEDDY

No. This is good for him. It's only going to get harder.

INT. COR CHANNEL NEWS STUDIO - SAME

All eyes are still on David as he formulates his response.

DAVID

Well--you make it sound so easy.

(CONTINUED)

Audience laughter. A momentary diffuse, but David is still really uncomfortable.

LYDIA

Mr. Evergreen, I believe you have a big announcement to make?

This catches Caleb and David off guard. Lydia gives Caleb a "go with it" nod.

INT. SAUL FAMILY LIVING ROOM - SAME

Teddy starts to grab the chips back but stops at Lydia's question.

RACHEL

Did you know about any announcement??

Teddy shakes his head.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

What is Caleb doing?

INT. COR CHANNEL NEWS STUDIO - SAME

Caleb glances at Lydia again for confirmation.

CALEB

(unsure)
I will be--

Then clears his throat.

CALEB (CONT'D)

I *am* announcing my decision to run for Oklahoma's Governor in the coming election.

The studio audience applauds.

LYDIA

Congratulations! Let's go to commercial break.

As they go on break, David disconnects his Mic and starts to leave.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

Where the hell are you going?!

EXT. STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

Caleb follows David to his car.

CALEB

What do you think you're doing?!

DAVID

I didn't sign up for this.

CALEB

For what? Being a pastor or a follower of Christ?

DAVID

Waging war against the liberals and sinners has never been effective!

CALEB

Oh grow up! The church *is* at war! And has been for centuries.

DAVID

Why governor? Why didn't you tell me?

CALEB

The world is not a peaceful place. Sometimes loving your neighbor means correcting him. The time for tolerance is over, Mr. Lincoln. You're either wearing the armor of God or the damage it inflicts.

HOLD ON David as Caleb walks back toward the studio.

INT. DAVID'S OFFICE - NIGHT

David sits at his desk working on his sermon notes. Frustrated, he stops typing and paces around the room. Then glances out the window.

DAVID'S POV:

He looks toward the campus and sees the Lion statue, all lit up, in the center of the grounds.

RETURN TO SCENE

Then goes back to his desk and begins to pray.

DAVID

God, give me wisdom and clarity.

(CONTINUED)

He stops for a moment and opens his bible to Psalms 57. He reads it aloud.

INT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Lydia introduces Caleb to THREE POLITICIANS at a dinner table.

DAVID (V.O.)
*"My soul is among lions; and I lie
 even among them that are set on
 fire, even the sons of men, whose
 teeth are spears and arrows, and
 their tongue a sharp sword.*

One of the politicians hands Caleb a campaign packet.

DAVID (V.O.)
*They have digged a pit before me,
 into the midst whereof they are
 fallen themselves.*

INT. DAVID'S OFFICE - RETURN TO SCENE

David returns to his desk.

DAVID
*My heart is fixed, O God...I will
 sing and give praise.*

He closes the bible and leans back in his chair. Then goes back to his notes.

INT. SAUL FAMILY KITCHEN - MORNING

TITLE CARD: SATURDAY

Teddy is trying miserably to cook himself breakfast. He hears the front door open and Elizabeth's voice.

ELIZABETH (O.S.)
 I really think you should open with
 a strong traditional hymn, like
 "The Old Rugged Cross" then
 something modern.

RACHEL (O.S.)
 We've already rehearsed the set.

They enter the kitchen to see Teddy struggling. Rachel is pulling a mid-sized SUITCASE.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 Look who I brought.

(CONTINUED)

TEDDY
 (to Elizabeth)
 Welcome back. Bacon or sausage.

Elizabeth looks at Teddy wearily.

ELIZABETH
 I miss my kitchen. And when this is
 over, I want a divorce.

TEDDY
 (beat)
 Fair enough. For now let us break
 bread.

RACHEL
 On a lighter note, I got into the
 music and drama program at ESU.

ELIZABETH
 Of course you did, honey. That
 wasn't the point.

She takes the suitcases from her and exits.

TEDDY
 I'm proud of you.

Rachel studies her father for a moment.

RACHEL
 Did you really love her?

TEDDY
 Your mother and I have a very--

RACHEL
 Not her.

TEDDY
 (returns to cooking)
 Yes.

Rachel exits.

EXT. TULSA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - MORNING

The sky is overcast with dark clouds.

INT. TULSA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

Apton and Claire walk through the hall to see David waiting.
 Claire rushes toward him.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID
Thank God you're here.

CLAIRE
I miss the sun and the beach.

DAVID
I know.
(to Apton)
How was the flight?

APHTON
Bumpy.

DAVID
Yours too?

CLAIRE'S POV:

Through the WINDOW she sees *the **EXACT SAME** BOLT OF LIGHTNING from her dream, strike the church auditorium on the horizon.*

HOLD ON Claire's worry as we...

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE**EXT. TULSA COUNTY - NEXT MORNING**

Aerial shot of a WALL CLOUD forming.

TITLE CARD: SATURDAY

INT. PASTORAL LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

David and the staff are gathered around.

ALAN

One has already landed in Jenks and
the Doppler radar is showing
another storm.

Caleb glances at David.

DAVID

I'll make the call to Channel 2
News. There's no need to risk it.
We'll open tomorrow.

EXT. TULSA COUNTY - NIGHT

Aerial shot as the TORNADO SIREN goes off.

INT. JOANNA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

David, Aphton, and Claire rush downstairs to meet with
Joanna. The house is dark and Joanna has a flashlight and a
small radio giving the News.

JOANNA

We can fit in the bathroom.

They rush into the bathroom and close the door.

EXT. RIVER CROSS CHURCH - NIGHT

A moment of silence, then the sound of POWERFUL WINDS rush
through the church grounds. Trees are bent. Debris rushes
through the parking lot and toward the main building. Light
fixtures begin to fall under the power of the winds.

The TORNADO is upon it.

INT. JOANNA'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

The family is snug close. Claire begins to panic.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE

Dad. I'm sorry. I didn't know the nightmares--

David holds her close and she begins to weep as the winds pick up speed.

EXT. EDWARD SAUL UNIVERSITY - SAME

The university campus experiences the same disaster.

CLOSE ON the Golden Lion as it stands still against the wind pressure and flying debris.

EXT. CHURCH GROUNDS - NEXT MORNING

TITLE CARD: SUNDAY

It's a bright and clear morning.

ESU RADIO (V.O.)

Good morning, Tulsa. I hope everyone was able to keep safe from the tornado last night. Fortunately, there were no casualties.

VARIOUS SHOTS of the aftermath. Tree branches and various debris cover the parking lot. Most of the windows on the main building are destroyed. Most of the damage is done on the front of the building.

ESU RADIO (V.O.)

We've been told that River Cross will be holding services today. So if you can make it, please, please do. Stay tuned for more commercial free music.

David walks through the halls and lobby, glaring at some of the tornado damage. SUN RAYS stream through the broken windows. There's significant window damage and debris all along the hallways.

AUDITORIUM ENTRANCE

David sees that the doors have been damaged as well. He beats his way through the doors with a large piece of debris and stumbles through.

CHURCH AUDITORIUM - MOMENTS LATER

David is sitting in the front pew. His suit is stained with dirt and sweat.

(CONTINUED)

David looks over his lecture notes and checks his watch. Finally, he gets up as someone walks through the entrance. Aphton and Claire, in Sunday best, walk toward him. Then Alan and Joanna.

ALAN
It needed remodeling.

Alan picks up a piece of broken wall and smiles at David. Claire pensively takes in the scene of damage and the size of the auditorium. Then glances at David.

DAVID
(to Claire)
It's okay.

APHTON
Well, there's still a pulpit.

She kisses David and finds a seat in the front row with Claire and Joanna.

Rachel enters. Everyone watches her.

RACHEL
Hi, I saw more people coming in the parking lot.

Noah enters with a group of STUDENTS following behind him.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
I brought some guys from the soccer team to help clean up. Maybe after you give your message, we could start cleaning.

DAVID
Okay.
(to the boys)
Thanks guys.

NOAH
No problem.

JUMP CUT TO

David stands down from the podium and stage to address the small but growing congregation. His family, along with Rachel, Noah, and Alan sit in the front row.

Caleb sneaks in from the back as he begins.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

"Many are the afflictions of the righteous...but the Lord delivers them out of them all". This church has seen many of these, and will continue to see more. The church's biggest enemy right now is the church. We're in the bible belt and it's suppose to hold this nation together. Inheriting your faith is no longer good enough. We have to know where we stand and rise to the challenge together.

Caleb sits in the back row. He makes eye contact with David.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I know many of you saw the Brennan Gospel Show Thursday night and wonder where do we go from here. I assure you, I was asking myself the same thing. But this has to be a place of refuge and trust again.

EXT. JOANNA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A CAB pulls up to the house. Christian gets out and looks at the tree stump in the yard, then lights up a cigarette.

DAVID (V.O.)

So we get up. We rebuild. We resurrect and move forward. Welcome to River Cross Church.

"Who Will Comfort Me" by Melody Gardot begins playing...

INT. COURTHOUSE - NEXT DAY

The Saul Family enter the courtroom together.

Music continues as we...

END EPISODE