

THE CHOIR

Pilot - "Ante" (Sample)

TEASER

Written by

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TEASER

ON A TELEVISION SCREEN:

EXT. BRIDGE - DUSK

A pretty young blonde REPORTER is talking to us from beside a channel - a DRAWBRIDGE in the UP position is seen in the background. In front of the bridge is a long line of concrete barricades, shutting off access. Armed private security patrols the perimeter.

REPORTER

So as the last barricade is put into place, Operation Tough Love is officially underway, effective as we speak. Nobody is allowed in or out of the city until the barricades are removed. Officials have confirmed that anybody not a resident of St. Jude has been removed from the city. The segregation comes after ongoing hysteria due to corruption in all levels of municipal government. In fact, it has some people calling St. Jude a "no man's land".

An interview clip plays. An African American male with white hair and glasses speaks with distinction. Beneath him are his credentials: CURTIS BARKSDALE, FEMA SPOKESPERSON.

CURTIS

This was an incredibly difficult decision, but we feel for the safety and salvation of everything around St. Jude, the only definitive action we can take without going to war with our own people is to give them a bit of tough love while they sort themselves out. We will offer no support of any kind, save for natural emergencies. For better or worse, they're on their own.

We pull out into...

INT. REAL ESTATE OFFICE - MEANWHILE

A crisp realtor's office, modern and affluent. Glass desk, wall-mounted plasma.

CHASE WEATHERS (30), blonde hair and a white blazer, rests his polished shoes on the desk and watches the newscast. He's got a beer in one hand.

Past the open door walks TYLER DUNNE (27), a chiseled, tough Mexican who fills out his shirt well. He pokes his head in.

TYLER
Yo, you still here?

CHASE
(re: the TV)
You seeing this?

TYLER
Only a matter of time, man. Place
had it comin'.

Chase stares at the screen, silent. Tyler notices.

TYLER (CONT'D)
I mean, 'cept for that girl you
keep talkin' 'bout. One you lived
with? Vanessa was her name?

CHASE
Vaughan.

TYLER
I had the V, yo.

ON THE TV:

A commercial - Chase hands a set of keys to a newlywed couple outside a large, gorgeous home. Everybody smiles.

CHASE
(re: the commercial)
Oh, here it is! Here it is!

TYLER
Yo, you look huge, man!

CHASE
Shh!

They watch silently as Chase is now handing keys to another couple outside of another home.

TYLER
So what's up with Vaughan? You
still talk with her?

CHASE

I doubt she even remembers me.

CUT TO:

INT. RED CARPET PLEASURES - VAUGHAN'S ROOM - MEANWHILE

A beautiful young girl gazes at the same commercial, as the blue flicker gives us hints of a life lived too hard for someone of her age and grace. This is VAUGHAN STACEY (25), with blue doe eyes and short brown hair.

She sits on a dirty mattress on the floor, watching the small tube. She SILENTLY MOUTHS the phone number on the screen over and over, until--

KNOCK-KNOCK-OPEN.

A lanky middle-aged black British woman in a pencil skirt peers in. She has stiff shoulders and a dated haircut. This is FIONA (45). Vaughan immediately stops mouthing the number when she enters.

FIONA

Lights out. You have an appointment in the morning.

VAUGHAN

Yes ma'am.

Fiona looks to the TV, which has just returned to the news broadcast.

FIONA

(re: the news on TV)
Quell your surprise. You must have seen this coming.

Fiona shuts off the light and closes the door. Vaughan shuts the TV off and lays down on the mattress, reciting the phone number again.

CUT TO:

INT. MALBEC HOTEL - ROOM #402 - MORNING

Vaughan KNOCKS on the door. A bald, pudgy man opens it.

We don't know it yet, but this is MAYOR BROFORD (45). He looks like what you might imagine Santa would, if his face swallowed his suit and he shaved his head.

BROFORD

Vaughan. Great to see you again.
Come.

SMASH TO:

INT. MALBEC HOTEL - ROOM #402 - LATER

Vaughan fakes an orgasm.

CUT TO:

INT. MALBEC HOTEL - ROOM #402 - LATER

Broford lays in bed, almost gasping for breath. Vaughan's smile is well rehearsed.

VAUGHAN

That was great, baby.

BROFORD

Sometimes I surprise even myself.
I'm gonna shower.

Broford gets up and moves to the washroom. Once he's out of sight, Vaughan continues mouthing the phone number.

CUT TO:

INT. MALBEC HOTEL - LOBBY - LATER

Vaughan steps out of the elevator and walks through the high-end hotel lobby. She stops at the Concierge desk.

VAUGHAN

Excuse me, may I use your phone?

CONCIERGE

Is it a local call?

VAUGHAN

Just the next town over.

The Concierge looks at her funny.

VAUGHAN (CONT'D)

We're still allowed to call people,
aren't we?

CONCIERGE

Of course.

The concierge turns the phone to her. She dials.

CUT TO:

INT. REAL ESTATE OFFICE - MEANWHILE

Chase sits shoes-on-desk and talks with a PREGNANT COUPLE.

CHASE

I won't lie - I think 580 is pretty low. So if we go in at 575, it looks like we're just doing the normal bargain thing, and I'm still saving you money.

HUSBAND

575 is still pretty high for us, though. Our cap really has to be around 530.

WIFE

(patting her belly)
College isn't cheap.

The office phone RINGS in the background. We can hear Tyler's responses sporadically through Chase's conversation.

TYLER (OVERLAP)

Chase Weather's office.

CHASE

Oh, I hear you. But keep in mind that when I'm driving the price down to 575, I'm eating into my own pay, here. Now if 530 is where you need to be, that's fine, but it's going to move you into a less-desirable neighbourhood.

TYLER (OVERLAP)

I'm sorry, he's in a meeting.

CUT TO:

INT. MALBEC HOTEL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Vaughan is still on the concierge's phone. She smiles politely at him as he can't help but eavesdrop.

VAUGHAN

It's an emergency. Tell him it's
Vaughan calling.

CUT TO:

INT. REAL ESTATE OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Chase shows the couple some CITY PLANS.

CHASE

Now this area here is going to be
another suburban development, so
you'll have other kids around to
play with...

WIFE

Jacob.

CHASE

Very nice. Little Jacob there.

Tyler knocks and opens the door.

TYLER

Sorry, Mr. Weathers. There's a
phone call--

CHASE

Tyler, I'm in a meeting.

TYLER

Chase - it's Vaughan.

This changes everything for Chase. He takes a moment to let
the weight of this set in. He nods to Tyler, who leaves.
Chase rolls up the city plans, sits at his desk and puts his
hand on the receiver.

CHASE

(to the couple)

I hate to do this, but can you come
back tomorrow?

END OF TEASER