

THE RIGHTEOUS ONE

Pilot: Chapter 1 - In the Beginning

Written by

J.A. BROWN

J.A. Brown  
(404) 964-3776  
jabrown@darktanionfilmgrp.com

Darktanion Film Group

FADE IN:

EXT. COBB COUNTY DETENTION CENTER - DAY

News vans are parked outside the Cobb County Detention Center, where local news reporter SHANICE NANCE (20s) is reporting.

SHANICE NANCE

This is Shanice Nance reporting live from the Cobb County Detention Center. We are just hours away from the trial of Rebecca Williams, the foster parent who made headlines earlier this year when she was charged with child molestation.

Shanice motions toward a crowd of PROTESTERS gathered near the building.

SHANICE NANCE (CONT'D)

As you can see by the many protesters on site, Rebecca's case has been a topic of debate across the state, and from everyone's legal perspective, this trial is going to set the precedence for caregivers for years to come.

INT. COBB COUNTY WOMAN'S DETENTION CENTER - DAY

REBECCA WILLIAMS (41) is led down a long corridor in shackles and a jumpsuit by two DETENTION OFFICERS. They approach an open door to an interrogation room and enter.

INT. DETENTION CENTER - INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rebecca takes a seat in the brightly lit room. The Detention Officers close the door and unlock Rebecca's handcuffs.

Rebecca looks around the room and her leg starts shaking up and down, nervously. The door opens again and Attorney ISAAC LEWIS (44) walks in and the other two Officers depart the room.

ISAAC

Hello, Becca. I just spoke to the nurse: they're going to move you to the infirmary until your trial. They said you stopped eating... is that true?

Rebecca wipes her running nose with her sleeve.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Rebecca, you have to eat something,  
you have to build up your strength  
for the trial.

Rebecca SNIFFLES and looks off, ignoring Isaac.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

I know you're depressed, but I  
can't defend you if you won't  
answer me. We're hours away from  
your trial, so we need to go over  
your testimony. I don't know what  
to expect once you're off your  
medication.

Rebecca still doesn't respond.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Hey, don't worry, it's going to be  
OK, but I need for you to do  
something for me.

Isaac leans in closer to Rebecca.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Rebecca! I'm talking to you! Why  
aren't you answering me?! Rebecca!

Extreme close up on Rebecca's tortured and crying face is  
seen.

TITLE CARD: CHAPTER ONE: IN THE BEGINNING

INT. COFFEE HOUSE - DAY

SUPER: Six months earlier

Rebecca sits drinking tea at a table by herself in the cozy  
little shop, reading the news on her tablet.

BILLY WILLIAMS (45) enters and spots Rebecca. He walks over  
to her. Rebecca acknowledges him.

REBECCA

Thanks for meeting me, Billy.

BILLY

Yeah. So, what's this about?

He slumps down in the chair across from her, making clear he isn't thrilled to be there.

REBECCA

I thought we agreed that I was handling Randy's college choices, so I'm confused as to why you're interfering all of a sudden?

BILLY

Interfering? Are you serious?

REBECCA

I have full custody of the kids, Billy, and I told Randy he could decide where he wanted to go!

BILLY

The scouts from Duke and Alabama contacted me, OK? They asked Randy to come take a look at their schools, and I thought their coaches could work with Randy to better hone his skills. The boy has an arm--

REBECCA

He does, but our son needs to use his head, too. I want him to experience an HBCU as I did. Alabama A&M wants him and we're going to see their school when we get back from our Jamaica trip in two weeks.

BILLY

Jamaica trip? Becca, I'm getting married next weekend! Why would you plan a trip the same time as my wedding?

Rebecca SLAMS down her cup of coffee on the table.

REBECCA

It's not my fault you couldn't wait for the ink to dry on our divorce paper before you decided to remarry! Dammit, Billy! That girl's only 10 years older than Randy!

BILLY

Don't start with this shit again!

REBECCA

I get it: you had your midlife crisis and so you went and got yourself a young one -- But I promise you, she'll never be me!

BILLY

Why can't you wish me well? Aren't you receiving the child support checks? Don't they come on time?

REBECCA

Fuck you, Billy!

BILLY

You're pathetic, Becca! This isn't about any schools, it's about your need to control everything!

Rebecca grits her teeth and narrows her gaze at Billy.

REBECCA

You know what's pathetic Billy? That you couldn't do something as simple as keeping your dick in your pants.

Billy stands up and walks toward the door.

BILLY

Goodbye Rebecca, tell the kids I'll call them later.

Billy walks out, leaving Rebecca fuming.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DRESSING ROOM - DAY

In the men's dressing room, RANDY WILLIAMS (17) is on his CELL PHONE while he tries on some swimming trunks.

RANDY

I'll miss you too, but we'll only be gone for two weeks... I'm still gonna see you tonight. We'll meet at your sister's house like before? I know bae... I love you too, bye.

Randy ends the call and continues to try on swimwear.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - LATER

Randy walks out of the fitting room and stands in front of Rebecca with some swim shorts on.

RANDY  
Momma, how do these look?

REBECCA  
(laughing)  
Boy, you look like a skeleton in shorts!

RANDY  
Very funny. Whatever!

REBECCA  
Do you have something to wear for your senior trip?

RANDY  
We're just going to the stupid Aquarium, I don't think I need to pick out any clothes for that.

REBECCA  
Just make sure you dress appropriately. You know I don't like your underwear showing.

RANDY  
That's the style, Momma, I know you don't like it, but I have an image to uphold.

REBECCA  
An image to uphold? Boy, please! That "style" is silly and it looks stupid and back in the day wearing your pants like that meant only one thing. Needless to say, no son of mine is going to be walking around looking like that, especially when you're going to Morehouse.

RANDY  
I got letters from other schools too, Momma. I don't know if I want to go there.

REBECCA  
I know, baby, but you know I want you to go to an HBCU.

RANDY

And like always, I do whatever you say, right?

REBECCA

Momma knows best; Son, Momma knows best. Now change your clothes and let's go.

EXT. MALL PARKING LOT - LATER

Rebecca and Randy proceed through the parking lot, toward Randy's Dodge Charger.

They place their bags and drive off.

INT./EXT. DODGE CHARGER - CONTINUOUS

The Dodge Charger comes to the intersection of PEACHTREE and PINE. Rebecca screams out.

REBECCA

Watch out, Randy! Watch out!

Randy turns to see what Rebecca is yelling about -- and sees a SEMI-TRUCK barreling toward them. It slams on its brakes and skids to a stop -- barely missing them.

The INTERSECTION LIGHT is green for both the semi-truck and Randy's Dodge Charger.

RANDY

Momma, are you OK? The traffic light is broken!

REBECCA

I'm good, Son, but somebody's going to get killed out here. I'm calling the city when I get home!

Randy shakes his head and they drive off.

PEDESTRIANS who saw the incident are now looking both ways as they cross the street.

INT. REBECCA'S RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Rebecca is sitting on the couch reading the NEWSPAPER. Randy enters.

RANDY

I'm going to hang out with my friends.

REBECCA

Can you drive Ellah to Jackie's house before you go? They're going to the movies.

RANDY

Come on, Momma, I'm going to miss the start of Atlanta Housewives. Can't Jackie's mom pick her up?

REBECCA

Atlanta Housewives? You and your boys watch Atlanta Housewives?

RANDY

Yeah, the women on there are fine and Kandi's got a big ol' booty.

REBECCA

Oh, Lord! Well, drop her off on the way.

Rebecca yells upstairs.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Ellah, Randy's going to take you to Jackie's house! Come on!

ELLAH

Coming!

ELLAH WILLIAMS (16) runs down the stairs and gives Rebecca a hug.

ELLAH (CONT'D)

Bye, Momma.

(to Randy)

Come on, mule face, let's go!

RANDY

I'm coming, Bucky.

ELLAH

Bucky?

RANDY

Have you seen those horse teeth of yours?

Rebecca and Randy laugh.

ELLAH  
Very funny!

RANDY  
I know.

Randy and Ellah disappear out the front door.

INT. DODGE CHARGER - EVENING

Randy and Ellah drive down the street.

ELLAH  
Can we stop at the store, so I can  
get me some candy for the movies?  
I'm not paying \$4.00 for one candy  
bar.

RANDY  
What am I, your chauffeur? Momma  
told me to get you to Jackie's  
house and that's it!

ELLAH  
Please, Randy!

Randy sighs and takes a right at the corner and proceeds in  
the same direction he came from earlier, passing the same  
faulty intersection light.

When they reach the intersection, Randy looks up and the  
light seems to be working fine.

ELLAH (CONT'D)  
Why are you slowing down? What's  
wrong with you?

RANDY  
I'm just being careful.

Randy pulls up to the dollar store and parks. Ellah gets out  
of the car and goes into the store.

INT./EXT. DODGE CHARGER - CONTINUOUS

Ellah returns to the car and Randy drives out of the parking  
lot. Randy's phone rings. He answers.

RANDY  
(on phone)  
What's up?  
(MORE)

RANDY (CONT'D)

I have to take my sister to her  
friend's house first. I'll be there  
in about 15 minutes.

Ellah turns on the car radio. The music THUMPS loudly through  
the speakers. Ellah dances in her seat, her seatbelt undone.

Ellah's phone rings, too.

ELLAH

(on phone)

What's up girl? Nothing, riding  
with Randy to Jackie's house, we're  
going to see that new movie with  
Michael B. Jordan. Girl, he's so--

Randy's car rolls through the PEACHTREE and PINE intersection  
-- and once again, all the lights on each side of the  
intersection traffic light are green.

Just then, Randy's car is violently hit by a truck.

Randy's car flips and Ellah is thrown through the passenger  
windshield as her body bounces off the road and skids like a  
rag doll down the street. Her body comes to rest on her back.

The car continues to roll several times, Randy is violently  
thrown back and forth in his car seat.

Randy hits the steering wheel flinging his body back as the  
car finally stops on it's rooftop. He looks over at Ellah's  
body and scrambles to unbuckle his seat belt, as gasoline  
spills in from the gas tank at the rear of the car.

PEDESTRIANS race over and try to help, but can't get the car  
door open. The car catches fire and Randy begins to yell and  
scream.

Fire and smoke engulf the cabin and massive flames roar out  
of the windows.

INT. REBECCA'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Rebecca looks over at the clock -- 2:00 AM is displayed. She  
picks up the phone and dials CASSANDRA COLE (44).

REBECCA

Hi Cassandra, sorry to wake you,  
but is Ellah still there?

CASSANDRA (V.O.)  
Rebecca, Ellah's not here. I  
thought she wasn't coming since she  
didn't show up.

REBECCA  
What do you mean she didn't show  
up? That's impossible, I told Randy  
to bring her to your house.

CASSANDRA  
Well, honey, she's not here.

REBECCA  
Can you please check with Jackie?

Cassandra gets out of bed and knocks on Jackie's door.

CASSANDRA  
Jackie, Jackie! Wake up and open  
the door.

JACKIE COLE (16) opens the door.

JACKIE  
Momma, what's --?

CASSANDRA  
Is Ellah in there with you?

JACKIE  
No.

Cassandra picks up the phone.

CASSANDRA  
Rebecca, Jackie just said--

REBECCA  
I heard her. I don't understand:  
she wouldn't go anywhere without  
telling me.

CASSANDRA  
Did you try calling some of her  
other friends? Did Randy come back?  
Maybe they went somewhere else.

REBECCA  
Without telling me? They know  
better than that. Thanks,  
Cassandra, I'll call you back  
later. Let me find out--

The doorbell rings. Rebecca turns on the upper-level light and walks down the stairs to answer the door. She looks through the peephole and sees two officers, OFFICER BERRY (30s) and OFFICER THOMAS (30s). Confused she opens the door.

REBECCA (CONT'D)  
Hi, can I help you?

OFFICER BERRY  
Yes Ma'am, are you Rebecca Williams?

REBECCA  
Yes.

OFFICER THOMAS  
Are you the mother of Randy and Ellah Williams?

REBECCA  
Yes...

OFFICER BERRY  
Mrs. Williams, I'm officer Berry and this is Officer Thomas with the Atlanta Police Department, we're sorry to inform you that there's been an accident...

REBECCA  
Accident? What do you mean, is everything OK? Where are my kids?!

Officer Berry and Officer Thomas exchange a solemn glance.

OFFICER BERRY  
Your children -- I'm so sorry to inform you that both of your children have died...

OFFICER THOMAS  
We need for you to come with us.

Rebecca stumbles backwards against the door.

REBECCA  
No, no, no! You must have the wrong address. Not my babies, no, not my babies. Dear God, not my babies!

Rebecca crumbles to the floor at the news.

Officer Berry consoles her, but the pain and agony are too much. Rebecca faints from the shock.

INT. REBECCA'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Rebecca comes to as Officer Thomas looks down at her.

OFFICER THOMAS

I know this is very difficult, Mrs. Williams, but you need to come down and make an identification.

OFFICER BERRY

Do you have anyone who can come with you?

REBECCA

I need to call my husband.

INT. BILLY WILLIAMS RESIDENCE - MORNING

Billy and his fiancée, GINA JOHNSON (27), are asleep in their bed. The phone rings and wakes them up. Gina looks over at the caller ID.

GINA

Why is she calling so late?!

Billy answers the phone.

BILLY

Rebecca, why are you calling this late? If you called to argue with me, then--

REBECCA (V.O.)

(crying)

Billy, there's been an accident.

BILLY

What? Why are you crying?

REBECCA (V.O.)

The children... are... dead!

She WAILS in pain. Billy sits up and cries out --

BILLY

No!

INT. WILLIAMS' RESIDENCE - MID MORNING

The doorbell rings and PASTOR RUSSELL WALTON (52) stands in the doorway.

CASSANDRA  
Pastor Walton, please come in.

PASTOR WALTON  
Thank you, Sister Cole.

Pastor Walton eyes the very populated room, walks over to Rebecca and sits down next to her. Rebecca has tears running down her face.

PASTOR WALTON (CONT'D)  
I am so very sorry for your loss.  
The entire church is here for you.  
God bless you, Sister Rebecca, and  
remember God is with you and Billy  
during these troubled times. Randy  
was a very special young man and he  
will be missed and your daughter  
too.

REBECCA  
Thank you, Pastor.

She dabs her wet cheeks with a tissue.

PASTOR WALTON  
I'm going to assign a grief  
counselor to you and Billy. Would  
that be alright?

REBECCA  
That's so kind of you. I've been  
struggling lately and haven't been  
myself.

PASTOR WALTON  
Sister Rebecca, grief can manifest  
itself in many different ways. No  
parent should bury their children,  
so it's understandable that you  
wouldn't feel like yourself. Your  
life has been interrupted in the  
most terrible of ways. Come, my  
dear, let us pray together.

Pastor Walton takes Rebecca's hand and begins a prayer.

INT. WILLIAMS' RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

The doorbell rings. Rebecca begrudgingly answers, revealing Billy on the other side. Rebecca is overwhelmed and pulls Billy close to her and cries on his shoulder.

REBECCA

Thank you for coming over Billy, I just can't believe this is...

BILLY

Jesus, Rebecca! Who were you yelling at? We heard you all the way down at the curb?

REBECCA

Who was I yelling at? No one, I was napping. I woke up when you rang the bell.

Walking around the ROSE BUSHES and coming into view is Gina. Her pretty young face and curvy frame is seen. She tilts her HEAD to the side and forward again as her LONG HAIR SWAYS and BOUNCE as she slowly struts towards the FRONT DOOR.

Rebecca's demeanor changes as she MEAN MUGS Gina.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Who is this?

BILLY

Rebecca, this is my fiancée Gina--

GINA

Hi Rebecca, I'm so sorry we're meeting under such unfortunate circumstances.

REBECCA

(yelling)

You have some nerve coming to my house. I don't want your Goddamn condolences, you home-wrecking bitch!

Billy grabs Rebecca's arm.

BILLY

Rebecca! What's gotten into you? Gina was only expressing her sympathy!

REBECCA

I'm sorry, but why would you bring her here after what just happened to my children?

GINA

You mean our children.

REBECCA

Excuse me?

GINA

Randy and Ellah were Billy's children too.

REBECCA

Billy knows what I meant. I've been up all night and my head has been hurting and--

Rebecca's thought drifts away. She looks down and backs up again, her demeanor drastically different. She is now TONI.

REBECCA/TONI

Wait a minute, bitch! Aren't you the hoe that broke up Rebecca's family!? How dare you come into this house trying to correct somebody! You better hurry and get the fuck out of here before I cut yo' ass!

Toni storms off toward the kitchen. Billy follows.

BILLY

Rebecca! What the hell is your problem?!

Toni yells from the kitchen, where silverware is heard rattling around.

REBECCA/TONI

Nigga! Stop calling me that, you know that's not my name!

Billy takes Gina by the wrist and rushes towards the front door.

BILLY

Come on, Gina. I'm not putting up with her crap.

GINA

You're unstable, Rebecca, and you need help!

Toni comes back into the room with a butcher knife.

REBECCA/TONI

Bitch, you're gonna need some fuckin' medical attention in a minute!

Toni turns toward Billy wielding the knife at Gina.

REBECCA/TONI (CONT'D)

Don't you ever bring that stuck-up  
bitch back here again or the next  
time she won't make it out of here!

Billy and Gina run out of the house. Toni slams the front door and marches up the stairs.

INT. WILLIAMS' RESIDENCE - REBECCA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Toni enters and sits on the bed. Her head goes up and then comes down again. She's Rebecca now. Rebecca notices the knife and drops it on the floor, confused.

INT. BILLY'S MERCEDES - MINUTES LATER

Gina is reeling in the passenger seat while Billy drives away from Rebecca's house.

GINA

That bitch is crazy! I can see why  
you left her ass.

BILLY

Rebecca has never acted like that  
before: that wasn't my wife.

GINA

You mean your ex-wife?

BILLY

You know what I mean, dammit!

GINA

What about our wedding?

BILLY

Our wedding?

GINA

Yes, our wedding, Billy!

BILLY

Are you kidding me? My children are  
dead! How insensitive is that?

GINA

We have too much invested in this  
wedding.

(MORE)

GINA (CONT'D)

We'll be out \$20,000 if we postpone now, we can probably get the caterers to change the date, but--

BILLY

We don't have anything invested. I have everything invested. This wedding is costing me over \$30,000 with that damn gown, shoes, jewelry, makeup, the Goddamn personnel trainer -- and that fucking dog whisperer. So don't talk to me about money, Gina. I'm burying my children tomorrow and that's the most important thing to me -- not you or a GODDAMN WEDDING!

Gina huffs cross her arms and look out the window.

EXT. LINWOOD APARTMENTS - LATE AFTERNOON

LT. KATHERINE JONES (32) gets out of her patrol vehicle parked in front of the Linwood Apartment complex. She walks into the building.

INT. APARTMENT - LINWOOD APARTMENTS - CONTINUOUS

Lt. Jones enters an apartment and finds SERGEANT BERRA (29) talking with another OFFICER. She walks toward them.

LT. JONES

What's going on here, Sergeant?

SERGEANT BERRA

Home invasion. A 6-year-old Hispanic female was sexually assaulted here after school.

LT. JONES

Where is the child now?

SERGEANT BERRA

She's been taken to Grady Hospital for examination.

LT. JONES

Where are the victim's parents?

He points in the next room.

SERGEANT BERRA

Her father is in the Army, but her Grandmother's in there, Lieutenant.

Sergeant Berra and Lt. Jones walk into the next room to speak with LENA PEREZ (45).

SERGEANT BERRA (CONT'D)

Lieutenant, this is Lena Perez, the Grandmother of the little girl.

LT. JONES

Ms. Perez, I know this is a difficult time for you, but I have a couple of questions.

MS. PEREZ

Si, but have you heard anything about my Granddaughter Maria?

LT. JONES

No ma'am, nothing yet. Sergeant, what time did the little girl get home?

Sergeant Berra opens up a small notepad.

SERGEANT BERRA

She got home about 3:40 pm. The neighbor saw the child running out of the house naked at 4:15 pm.

LT. JONES

Why was she home alone, without supervision?

SERGEANT BERRA

She said she couldn't afford a sitter. Her older brothers and sister usually get home right around the time she does, but they stopped at a friend's house.

LT. JONES

Ms. Perez, are you a US Citizen?

MS. PEREZ

Si, I was married to my son's father. My oldest son, Manuel, is in the Army. He's stationed in Germany.

LT. JONES

So, your husband is a US Citizen?

MS. PEREZ

Si, but he died last year.

Lt. Jones picks up a picture of 6-year-old MARIA --

INSERT QUICK FLASH -- A SMALL BOY is struck by a bullet and thrown to the ground, bleeding.

Lt. Jones is frozen by the memory. She clutches the photo tighter, her eyes welling with tears.

SERGEANT BERRA

What do you want me to do about Ms. Perez, Lieutenant?

Lt. Jones doesn't respond, she just stares ahead in a daze.

SERGEANT BERRA (CONT'D)

Lieutenant Jones?

He waves his hand in front of her face. Lt. Jones snaps out of it, shakes the memory off.

LT. JONES

Huh? Oh, sorry. Did you say something?

SERGEANT BERRA

What do you want me to do about Ms. Perez, Lieutenant?

Lt. Jones composes herself, becomes all business.

LT. JONES

We'll have to place Ms. Perez under arrest, Sergeant. One count of child neglect, and one count of endangerment. A 6-year-old should have never been home alone.

SERGEANT BERRA

Yes, but her Granddaughter was just assaulted, these kids need their Grandmother, especially now.

LT. JONES

Sergeant, you heard me. Contact Child Protective Services and get them down here.

MS. PEREZ

Please, please don't take my Grandchildren! They have no one to care for them!

LT. JONES

I'm sorry, Ms. Perez, but that's  
the law.

Sergeant Berra signals to the other Officer to take Ms. Perez into custody. The other Officer places her in handcuffs.

LT. JONES (CONT'D)

Sergeant, get Officer Jenkins to check on the little girl at Grady Hospital. Have CSI send me their analysis of the crime scene. We have a child molester out there and I want this asshole caught ASAP!

EXT. LINWOOD APARTMENTS - LATER

Ms. Perez is placed into the back of a police car as the remaining PEREZ CHILDREN are placed into a waiting CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES VAN.

EXT. SWEETWATER BAPTIST CHURCH - DAY

FUNERAL GUESTS make their way toward the church entrance, dressed from head-to-toe in upscale black attire.

INT. SWEETWATER BAPTIST CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Two mahogany coffins are adorned with bouquets of flowers and smiling pictures of Randy and Ellah.

FAMILY, STUDENTS and FRIENDS take turns paying their respects, before returning to their seats for the service.

Rebecca SOBS in the front row. Across the aisle from her, Gina consoles Billy.

Pastor Walton steps forward to address the congregation.

PASTOR WALTON

To the mother, father, family and friends of Randy and Ellah Williams, there is a loss in your life that cannot be explained; for there is no greater loss than when a child as young as these two beautiful souls. Let us pray.

Everyone bows their heads.

PASTOR WALTON (CONT'D)

God of all mystery, whose ways are beyond understanding, lead us, who grieve at these untimely deaths, to a new and deeper faith in your love. Remind us of that love which brought your only son, Jesus Christ, through death and into the resurrection of life. Heavenly Father, you have not made us for darkness and death, but for life with you forever. Without you we have nothing to hope for; with you, we have nothing to fear. Speak to us now, your words of eternal life. Lift us from anxiety and guilt to the light and peace of your presence, and set the glory of your love before us; Our father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom comes, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. We pray in Jesus' name; Amen.

In harmony, the congregation says "Amen."

CRIES fill the church as everyone weeps for their departed friends.

Rebecca sways back and forth with her eyes closed. Billy breaks down and leans on Gina.

INT. SWEETWATER BAPTIST CHURCH - LATER

Jackie Cole steps up to the podium.

JACKIE

Ellah was my best friend. We've known each other since the 1st grade. She was so beautiful and the best friend I could have ever asked for. Last summer when my parents were having issues, she stood by me and kept me laughing.

(MORE)

JACKIE (CONT'D)

When they divorced, Ellah was the glue that helped me keep it all together.

Jackie looks back at Ellah's casket.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

Ellah, my beautiful sister, I love you and I'll miss you forever.

Jackie steps down from the podium and walks over to Rebecca and Billy. They stand up and hug. Jackie returns to her seat. KEVIN JENKINS (17) stands up and walks to the podium.

KEVIN

Hello everyone, my name is Kevin Jenkins and I'm a senior at Northbrook High School. I'm a wide receiver on our football team. When I first met Randy my junior year, we were inseparable. He knew my secrets and I knew his. When I learned about the deaths of Randy and his sister I-- went into shock like most of you, but--

Kevin takes a deep breath and looks at Randy's casket, sobbing.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

I just wanted you to know that Randy and I loved each other very much and even though we knew we wouldn't be allowed to be ourselves if this-- I mean if our secret ever came out-- it didn't change the fact that I loved him and he loved me.

(cries loudly)

Randy and I were going to be together!

GASPS and MURMURS are heard in response. Billy gets up and rushes the podium, pulling Kevin away from it.

BILLY

What the hell is this? Shame on you! Don't you have any respect?

KEVIN

Mr. Williams, I'm sorry, but I had to find some peace. This is the last time I'll ever get to tell Randy 'I love you' out loud.

(MORE)

KEVIN (CONT'D)

I loved him deeply, sir, and Randy didn't know how to tell you about us. You set goals for him, but he had goals of his own.

Kevin turns to Rebecca.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Ms. Williams, he was going to tell you on your trip, but--

REBECCA

Have you no shame, young man!? We are burying our children and you disrespect my son this way, you have no right! My son was not gay!

BILLY

Get out of here!

KEVIN

You can kick me out and you can deny everything, but you can't deny the fact that your son and I were in love-- We were in love!

BILLY

Get the hell out of here, boy!

Kevin gives Rebecca a picture of him and Randy hugging.

KEVIN

You see, Ms. Williams, I'm not lying!

REBECCA

Get out of here! Someone get him out of here!

Kevin is led out of the church by some of the MEMBERS of the football team. The remaining mourners sit stunned as the church MUSICAL DIRECTOR begins to play.

EXT. SWEETWATER BAPTIST CHURCH - DAY

The two caskets are rolled out of the church and into two waiting hearses. The funeral guests follow behind and make their way toward their respective vehicles.

Billy and Rebecca get into a limousine.

INT. LIMOUSINE - CONTINUOUS

Billy and Rebecca sit back as the DRIVER starts the limo and drives away from the church.

BILLY  
I can't believe this!

REBECCA  
That our son was gay?

BILLY  
No, I can't believe that boy would ruin our service.

REBECCA  
This is the last time we'll ever see our children, Billy. This was their day, not ours, and definitely not his. Everything doesn't revolve around us anymore.

BILLY  
That's not what I meant, Becca. You always find a way to project this back on me. Didn't he take you by surprise?

REBECCA  
This past week has taken me by surprise. Our children are gone. If Randy loved him, then so be it. I'm glad Randy found love, who cares if it's with another man. It doesn't really matter now, does it? Our babies aren't coming back.

Overcome with emotion, Rebecca turns to look out the window. Billy does the same.

EXT. STREETS - CONTINUOUS

The limousine is followed by a long procession of cars. Followed by the flashing lights of a POLICE ESCORT.

INT. DAVIS RESIDENCE - CARLOS' BEDROOM - MORNING

The ALARM CLOCK goes off.

CARLOS DAVIS (12) stumbles out of bed. The bed is full of BOOKS, scattered on top of the covers, and there's a basket of unwashed clothes by the door.

Carlos goes over to the basket, pulls out some wrinkled clothes and gives them a sniff. He grimaces at the smell then shrugs and puts them on anyway.

INT. DAVIS RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Carlos opens the refrigerator and finds its empty, except for beer, wine and a box of baking soda.

Carlos closes the refrigerator. The WALL CLOCK displays 07:35. He opens the front door and leaves.

EXT. BUS STOP - MORNING

Carlos is standing at the school bus stop with his backpack. CHERRI JONES (16) walks up to him.

CHERRI

What are you looking at, Einstein?

CARLOS

Are you talking to me?

CHERRI

Damn right, I'm talking to you! My mom says your daddy smokes crack!

CARLOS

Your mother doesn't know what she's talking about.

CHERRI

Yes, she does. My momma saw your daddy a few nights ago smoking crack by the side of the building.

Carlos shakes his head, annoyed.

CHERRI (CONT'D)

How old are you? You look 19, that's old as hell and weren't you wearing those clothes yesterday?

CARLOS

I'm 12. And I had on a different belt.

Cherri holds her nose.

CHERRI

Jesus! What's that smell? Did you wash your ass today? You stink, you smell like a bunch of homeless bums on a hot ass day.

Several STUDENTS gather around them at the bus stop, overhearing Cherri's rants. They start to laugh and point. Carlos looks at the ground, doing his best to ignore it.

The bus pulls up and everyone except Carlos gets on.

Carlos picks up his backpack and starts walking to school.

EXT. STREETS - MORNING

Carlos walks down the street and sees his father's car parked outside a bar. He looks in the window and sees his father, MICHAEL DAVIS (35) at the bar drinking and talking to the BARTENDER. In the mirror of the bar, Michael Davis sees his son and races out of the bar.

MICHAEL

Are you walking to school? Did you miss the bus again? Goddammit, can't you do anything right?

CARLOS

I was at the bus stop on time, Dad--

MICHAEL

Then why the fuck are you walking?

CARLOS

There was a girl messing with me--

MICHAEL

For someone who's got a high IQ, you sure are one dumb motherfucker! You let some dumb bitch stop you from getting on the bus. You ain't nothing but a punk ass faggot!

CARLOS

She was talking about you, Dad; she said some mean things about you.

MICHAEL

What things? What did she say!?

CARLOS

That her mother saw you smoking crack.

MICHAEL

She's a motherfuckin liar, it  
wasn't crack! Now get your black  
ass to school!

Michael slaps Carlos across the face. Carlos runs off.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Wait until you get home tonight,  
you little bitch! Just wait!

Michael goes back into the bar and continues drinking.

EXT. HERBERT HOOVER HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING

Carlos runs toward the entrance in a hurry.

INT. HERBERT HOOVER HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING

Carlos arrives at school just as the SCHOOL BELL RINGS and  
the classroom doors aligning the halls close.

Carlos starts toward his class and is stopped by the  
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL (48).

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

I see you're late again, Mr. Davis.

CARLOS

Yes, Ma'am, but--

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

The bus driver said that you  
intentionally missed the bus, is  
everything all right?

CARLOS

I was--

Carlos spies Cherri watching him through the window of a  
classroom door.

CARLOS (CONT'D)

Everything is fine. I, um, left my  
chemistry book and had to go get  
it.

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Why is your face swollen? Is there  
something you need to tell me?

CARLOS

No, Ma'am, I just ran into the closet door this morning.

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Mr. Davis, I expect more out of my gifted students. Any more tardiness and I'll have to send you to detention and call your father, do I make myself clear?

CARLOS

Yes, Ma'am.

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

And please do something about your personal hygiene, Mr. Davis. Your body odor is out of hand.

CARLOS

Yes, Ma'am. I'll try.

The Assistant Principal shakes her head and walks away.

INT. FIRST PERIOD MATH CLASS - DAY

Carlos enters his MATH CLASS. MR. AIKEN (28), skinny and frazzled, stops teaching and looks at him.

MR. AIKEN

Come on in, Mr. Davis, and take your seat.

Mr. Aiken turns and addresses the class again.

MR. AIKEN (CONT'D)

Now, where was I? Oh yes, pull out your homework and turn your Algebra book to page 26. Your homework assignment was simple. Work on your zero and negative exponents...

Carlos takes his seat, which is right next to Cherri.

CHERRI

Hey, stank ass! I could smell you all the way from the hallway! Are you going to walk home after school or is your crack ass Daddy gonna come get you?

PATRICIA "PAT" THOMAS (16) sitting next to Cherri overhears.

PAT

Why don't you leave him alone, he's not bothering you.

CHERRI

Stay out of this, carpet muncher.

PAT

Humph, that's cute coming from you boo. Do you know that bullying is a crime and you could go to jail?

CHERRI

Do you know not minding your damn business gets you fucked up?

The STUDENTS around Pat laugh loudly.

PAT

Yeah, I heard that too, but I don't think you're going to do that.

Mr. Aiken hears the laughter and looks to the back of the class.

MR. AIKEN

(frustrated)

Calm down back there! Don't let me ask you again!

CHERRI

And why not, Ellen?

PAT

If you do that, then I'm going to clown you in front of everybody. Look down.

Pat leans over and whispers to Cherri.

PAT (CONT'D)

Between your legs, bitch!

Cherri looks between her legs and sees a red spot forming.

CARLOS

She's bleeding, do I need to call the teacher?

CHERRI

Shut the fuck up, Einstein!

Pat yells out to Mr. Aiken.

PAT

Cherri! Are you okay? Mr. Aiken,  
Mr. Aiken, I think Cherri popped  
her cherry!

The classroom roars in laughter. Cherri runs out of the room,  
glaring at Patricia the whole way. Mr. Aiken is visibly  
upset.

MR. AIKEN

Settle down class, I said settle  
down! Mr. Davis, come up to the  
board please.

Carlos looks over at Pat and then mouths to himself "What did  
I do?" he slowly stands up and walks towards the front of the  
class.

MR. AIKEN (CONT'D)

Since you want to disrupt my class,  
why don't you teach it!

CARLOS

Did you say teach your class, Sir?

MR. AIKEN

That's right, young man. I was  
discussing exponents to the class.  
Are you familiar with them.

CARLOS

Yes, but...

MR. AIKEN

Why don't you explain what they are  
to the class and give them an  
example. I'm sure they'd love you  
here this over your backroom  
chatter.

CARLOS

Ok, if you say so, Sir.

Carlos looks around the room and exhales.

CARLOS (CONT'D)

Exponents are a quantity  
representing the power to which a  
given number or expression is to be  
raised, usually expressed as a  
raised symbol beside the number or  
expression for example 3 in 2 cubed  
=  $(2 \times 2 \times 2)$ .

The class looks at Carlos in amazement. Mr. Aiken is taken aback.

CARLOS (CONT'D)

The exponent of a number says how many times to use the number in a multiplication.

Carlos writes on the CHALKBOARD.

CARLOS (CONT'D)

In 8 squared the "2" says to use 8 twice in a multiplication, so 8 squared =  $8 \times 8 = 64$ . In other words: 8 squared could be called "8 to the power 2" or "8 to the second power", or simply "8 squared" Exponents are also called Powers or Indices.

Mr. Aiken tries to quiet, Carlos, but he keeps talking.

CARLOS (CONT'D)

A negative exponent means how many times to divide by the number. For example: 8 to the power of  $-1 = 1 \div 8 = 1/8 = 0.125$ . Or many divides: For example: 5 to the power of  $-3 = 1 \div 5 \div 5 \div 5 = 0.008$ .

MR. AIKEN

(surprised)

That's, that's enough Mr. Davis, now please take your seat and keep quiet.

Carlos walks back to his seat and sits down. Pat looks at him and smiles.

PAT

Holy Shit, dude, are you a freaken robot? How did you learn to do that?!

CARLOS

Do what?

PAT

Math, all that exponent shit! I still have a hard time on my multiplication tables.

CARLOS

I don't know, it comes to me very easy. I see the numbers and understand how to explain and solve them.

PAT

I never seen anything like that before.

CARLOS

I never seen anyone talk to Cherri like that before. That was cool too.

PAT

Why do you take her shit?

CARLOS

Look at her, she's huge.

Pat laughs.

PAT

If you stand up to her she'll leave you alone.

CARLOS

Are you crazy? She has four brothers on the football team. They all look just like her!

PAT

Then you need to man up before you get hurt.

CARLOS

I can beat her in chess! But fighting her? I wouldn't know how.

Pat shakes her head.

PAT

I'll teach you. Meet me after school and we'll work on some moves.

CARLOS

What moves?

PAT

Looking at you, everything.

EXT. HERBERT HOOVER HIGH - FOOTBALL FIELD - AFTERNOON

Pat and Carlos are walking on the football field. Pat demonstrates several KARATE TECHNIQUES and shows Carlos some muscle strengthening drills.

Pat points to her throat.

PAT

If you hit someone here really hard, it'll stop them in their tracks and give you enough time to get away.

CARLOS

That looks dangerous. Can it kill them?

PAT

It depends on what you want to do and if you hit 'em hard enough.

CARLOS

For real?

PAT

Yes. Now, I need you to do some push ups, okay?

CARLOS

Okay.

Carlos gets down and attempts some slow, sad version of push ups, his body shaking through them.

CARLOS (CONT'D)

How did you learn all of this?

PAT

I had to protect myself from my Uncle.

CARLOS

Why?

PAT

He would come into my room late at night and touch me.

CARLOS

Touch you?

PAT

I had to keep him from touching me and my sister, that's why we had to transfer to this school. We were put into foster care by the courts.

An awkward beat.

CARLOS

So, where's your sister?

PAT

We got separated; the state said we were too old to be kept together. She lives in Lawrenceville, not far from where I live. Sometimes we see each other on the weekends. So, what does your mother do?

CARLOS

Momma died when I was 4, she was killed by a drunk driver.

PAT

And what about your dad?

CARLOS

Well, he's-- expecting me home soon. I should probably get going.

PAT

Remember what I showed you, Carlos. And work on your push-ups, they're really bad. You need to keep your body straight.

CARLOS

Okay, Pat. Thanks again. I'll see you on Monday.

Pat writes her phone number on Carlos's notebook.

PAT

Hey, if you need anything call me!

CARLOS

I will!

Carlos waves goodbye and takes off.

EXT. BANKHEAD TOWERS APARTMENTS - NIGHT

A CHEVY IMPALA swerves around the corner and drives through the front entrance of Bankhead Towers Apartments and parks.

Michael Davis gets out and staggers drunkenly to the door. He struggles to get the door open but finally does.

INT. DAVIS RESIDENCE - CARLOS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Carlos is in his room doing his homework.

MICHAEL (O.S.)  
Carlos, where you at!?

CARLOS  
In my room, Dad. I'm doing homework.

MICHAEL (O.S.)  
Goddammit! Get your black ass down here, you thought I forgot about you!?

INT. DAVIS RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Carlos slowly comes down the stairs peeping around to see where his father is and enters the kitchen.

Michael staggers toward Carlos, taking off his leather belt.

MICHAEL  
You little shit, you thought I was going to forget about you!? You done embarrassed yourself and me. You let that fat ass little bitch upstairs make you walk to school!? When I'm through with you motherfucker, you're going to remember this beating!

Michael tightens the belt around his hand and strikes Carlos with the buckle on his back. Carlos is thrown back into the kitchen table. Michael strikes him again and again -- with every hit of the buckle, Michael shouts out curses.

Carlos cries, winces in pain and tries to get away. Michael throws him back down and continues to beat him unmercifully. Somehow Carlos manages to defend himself and by sheer accident, punches his Father in his throat. Michael stops, grabs his throat and stumbles backwards, hitting his head on the pointy edge of the electric stove.

CARLOS  
(surprised)  
Dad... Daddy!?

Blood pours out of Michael's head and he slumps down to the floor. His body begins to twitch, the belt still wrapped around his hand. Michael's eyes are open as he lets out a long breath. Carlos now in shock, shaken and bruised starts to cry and runs out of the apartment.

INT. DAVIS RESIDENCE - MORNING

Lt. Jones arrives at the Davis residence. Her team is already onsite processing the crime scene. Michael Davis's DEAD body is slumped on the floor next to the stove. A FORENSIC PHOTOGRAPHER takes pictures of the body and the surrounding area.

SERGEANT BERRA  
(to Lt. Jones)  
Good morning, Lieutenant. The front door was found open by one of the neighbors. He came in and found him dead. The victim's name is Michael Davis; he has one teenage son named Carlos. He said he heard some shouting around 10 pm last night, but he was used to it and thought nothing of it. He said the victim beats his son regularly.

Lt. Jones notes the information and turns back to the Photographer.

LT. JONES  
Make sure you get a picture of the belt wrapped around his hand and the position of his head.  
(back to Sergeant Berra)  
Where's his son?

SERGEANT BERRA  
I'm checking on that now, Lieutenant. I'm waiting on an update.

LT. JONES  
Sergeant, look at his hand. He has a belt wrapped around it.

SERGEANT BERRA  
Yes, I saw that.

CORONER TALLEY approaches them.

CORONER TALLEY

Lieutenant, it seems his larynx was crushed. He must have fell and cracked his skull on the edge of the stove.

LT. JONES

Hmm, do you think it's murder?

CORONER TALLEY

Murder, it's possible, but could be self defense too. I don't want to rule any of those out.

LT. JONES

Put out an APB on Carlos Davis, see if you can contact any relatives and walk the neighborhood. He may be scared and hiding.

EXT. HERBERT HOOVER HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Carlos opens up the lid on a large garbage bin and climbs out. He spots an open lunchroom window and climbs through the window into the school cafeteria. He lays underneath a table and goes to sleep.

INT. REBECCA WILLIAMS' HOUSE - DAY

The doorbell rings. Rebecca wakes up in the bed of her daughter, Ellah. Rebecca looks down at the back of her hand. It is stamped with "club Push-It". She pulls back the bed sheets -- she's wearing cutoff jeans and a low-cut halter top exposing her cleavage.

The doorbell rings again. Rebecca grabs Ellah's robe.

REBECCA

Coming! I'm coming!

Rebecca walks down the stairs and unlocks the front door. It's Cassandra.

CASSANDRA

It's a Saturday girl! What are you still doing in bed and what's with those clothes?

REBECCA

I don't know. I don't know what happened. I was watching TV and then I got a terrible headache. The next thing I know I woke up in Allah's bed with my mouth tasting like cigarettes.

CASSANDRA

Well, that's a little strange...

REBECCA

I know. Do you want some coffee?

Cassandra nods and enters the house, following Rebecca toward the kitchen.

CASSANDRA

Maybe you need to get out and get some fresh air. I'm going to the mall, you want to come along?

REBECCA

Speaking of the mall, I got a letter from the city saying they fixed that traffic light.

CASSANDRA

(angry)

You should sue those bastards!

REBECCA

Oh, I have, and they've already offered a settlement. I told them to go to hell. I already spoke to Isaac and he said he would represent me.

INT. REBECCA WILLIAMS' HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Cassandra and Rebecca are seated, enjoying fresh cups of coffee.

CASSANDRA

You know, Becca, I heard the city is looking for foster parents...

REBECCA

Cassandra, I don't know--

CASSANDRA

Here me out, Girl. I know it's probably too soon, but I remembered that you and Billy were thinking about fostering a while back, and well, I think you'd be good at it. You still have so much love to give.

REBECCA

I'm still grieving, Cassandra, and I don't know if I have the strength to care for someone else's children. Not to mention, I haven't been feeling like myself lately.

She gestures to her clothes.

CASSANDRA

Well, give it some thought. I have a friend at Child Protective Services that can process your paperwork if you change your mind. She owes me a favor and I think it might help you heal or at least put you back into being a Mom again.

REBECCA

Thank you, honey, I'll think about it.

Cassandra smiles.

CASSANDRA

So, you want to go?

REBECCA

Go where? To the mall? Girl, go on without me, I have to lie back down and get rid of this throbbing headache.

They both get up and Rebecca leads Cassandra out.

INT. HERBERT HOOVER HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Carlos wakes up under the table and walks into the school kitchen, where he sees two huge locked refrigerators and some unopened cans of fruit cocktail sitting out.

He looks around to make sure he's alone, then opens the can. He grabs some little boxes of juice and packs of raisins and begins to eat. Carlos sees a Radio on the counter and turns it on. The morning news is reporting.

RADIO WEATHER MAN (V.O.)  
 ...It's going to be a great day for the park. Partly cloudy with temperatures in the high 60s. That's all for the weather. Ken, back to you.

KEN JACOBS (V.O.)  
 A body of a man was found in the Bankhead Towns Apartment complex last night. On the scene is David Barbour with the details.

DAVID BARBOUR (V.O.)  
 Thanks, Ken. The body of 35 year-old Michael Davis was found in his home at Bankhead Towers Apartments. The police suspect foul play, and the victim's son, 12-year-old Carlos Davis, is missing. The police have issued an Amber Alert, and ask that if anyone knows the whereabouts of Carlos Davis, please contact the Atlanta Police Department.

KEN JACOBS (V.O.)  
 Thank you, David, we'll be back after this commercial break.

Carlos turns off the Radio.

EXT. SWEETWATER BAPTIST CHURCH - DAY

Pastor Walton drives his customized BENTLEY PHANTOM up to the Sweetwater Baptist Church steps and parks. He gets out and enters the church.

INT. SWEETWATER BAPTIST CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Pastor Walton is greeted by CHURCH SECRETARY, RAY JOHNSON (19), and DEACON DEREK LANCASTER (35). They go into Pastor Walton's office.

PASTOR WALTON  
 How about some donuts and coffee, Deacon?

DEREK

Yes, Pastor?

PASTOR WALTON

Can you please go down to the donut shop and bring us back some coffee and donuts? I need to speak to Ray.

DEREK

Sure, Pastor, do you want cream and sugar in your coffee?

PASTOR WALTON

Yes, and bring back a few of those chocolate covered donuts too with sprinkles.

DEREK

Sure, Pastor.

Derek leaves the office and closes the door. Pastor Walton and Ray are left alone.

PASTOR WALTON

Ray, did you get my sermon typed for Sunday's service?

RAY

Yes, but I think it's missing a page, Pastor.

PASTOR WALTON

I gave you all of the pages yesterday, how incompetent are you? Jesus!

RAY

I typed what you gave me, and it looks like the last page is missing.

PASTOR WALTON

Come here, Ray!

Ray gets up and goes over to Pastor Walton's desk.

PASTOR WALTON (CONT'D)

You know I don't like incompetence. Turn around, bend over and pull down your pants.

RAY

Excuse me, Pastor?

Ray turns around and unbuckles his pants and exposes his butt to Pastor Walton. Pastor slaps Ray on his bare butt.

PASTOR WALTON

Why do you always have to talk back?

RAY

Sorry Pastor! It won't happen again!

PASTOR WALTON

When I ask you to do something, do it!

RAY

Yes, Pastor!

PASTOR WALTON

Now, hold still.

Pastor Walton walks over and pulls down his pants and stands behind Ray. He quickly pushes the door closed and as it closes, sounds of the movement of Pastor's desk is heard.

INT. SWEETWATER BAPTIST CHURCH - LATER

Derek enters the office area of the church with coffee and donuts in hand. Ray comes out of Pastor Walton's office smiling and holding a single piece of paper.

PASTOR WALTON

Now, Ray, I want two copies of Sunday's program on my desk before you leave today, is that clear?

RAY

Yes, Pastor.

PASTOR WALTON

And Ray, before retyping my sermon, can you please get my wife on the phone?

RAY

Yes, Pastor.

Ray picks up the receiver and dials. On the other end, MARGO WALTON (40) answers the phone.

RAY (CONT'D)  
Hello Mrs. Walton, this is Ray,  
Pastor Walton would like to speak  
with you.

MARGO (V.O.)  
Thank you, Ray.

Ray pushes a button and transfers the call to Pastor Walton.  
Pastor Walton picks up the phone.

PASTOR WALTON  
Margo?

MARGO (V.O.)  
Yes, Russell?

PASTOR WALTON  
Can you please get my suits out of  
the cleaners and get my shoes  
shined? I need to look my best  
tomorrow.

MARGO (V.O.)  
Is there anything else you need?

PASTOR WALTON  
Yes, I'm flying to New York Monday  
with two of my youth ministry  
students. We're going to Staten  
Island for a revival and returning  
on Friday. I forgot to tell you  
with everything going on with the  
Williams' family.

MARGO (V.O.)  
Russell, why are you taking two of  
your students? You're not--

PASTOR WALTON  
No, Margo, they want to become  
youth ministers and I want to give  
them the push that they need.

MARGO (V.O.)  
How old are they?

PASTOR WALTON  
You're never too young to serve  
God, Margo.

MARGO (V.O.)  
Please, don't start this again  
Russell, I--

PASTOR WALTON  
What time is dinner tonight, honey?

MARGO (V.O.)  
At 7:00, Pastor Rodney and his wife  
Kia are coming. Try and be on time.

PASTOR WALTON  
I'll see you this evening, Margo.

Pastor Walton hangs up the phone and calls Derek into his office. The door to Pastor's office stays open.

INT. 16TH PRECINCT - AFTERNOON

Carlos enters the 16TH PRECINCT and sits down on a wooden bench. DESK SERGEANT DANIEL RIVERA (42) looks over and sees him.

SERGEANT RIVERA  
Hello, young man, can I help you?

CARLOS  
My name is Carlos Davis. I'm here  
to turn myself in.

SERGEANT RIVERA  
Excuse me?

CARLOS  
I killed my father.

SERGEANT RIVERA  
You what? Come with me, son.

Sergeant Rivera escorts Carlos down the hallway and speaks with DETECTIVE BENJI WILLIAMSON (29).

SERGEANT RIVERA (CONT'D)  
Hey Saul, this kid says he killed  
his father.

Detective Williamson looks over at Carlos and then back at Sergeant Rivera.

DETECTIVE WILLIAMSON  
Thanks, Danny, I'll take it from  
here.

Detective Williamson walks over to Carlos.

DETECTIVE WILLIAMSON (CONT'D)  
Young man, I'm Detective Williamson  
with homicide. What's your name?

CARLOS  
My name is Carlos Michael Davis.

DETECTIVE WILLIAMSON  
You told the officer you killed  
your father?

CARLOS  
Yes, sir.

DETECTIVE WILLIAMSON  
How old are you, Carlos?

CARLOS  
I'm 12.

DETECTIVE WILLIAMSON  
Where do you live?

CARLOS  
I live at 3948 Bankhead Towers Lane  
in the Linwood Apartments.

INT. 16TH PRECINCT - INTERROGATION ROOM - LATER

Carlos sits down at a big metal table, opposite Lt. Jones who  
sits across from him.

LT. JONES  
Carlos, since you're not of legal  
age, do you want me to stop this  
interview so you can get an  
attorney? We can proceed without  
one too if that's alright with you?

CARLOS  
I want to tell the truth and you  
want me to tell the truth, so I  
don't need an attorney, right?

LT. JONES  
Carlos, do you know the difference  
between the truth and a lie?

CARLOS  
Yes, ma'am, I always tell the  
truth.

LT. JONES

That's good, Carlos. Then let's just get it out of the way now.

Lt. Jones turns on the tape recorder.

LT. JONES (CONT'D)

Carlos, I'm recording this interview. Anything you say to me now may be used against you if we decide to prosecute you. Do you understand what I've said?

CARLOS

No.

LT. JONES

It's simple, will you answer my questions?

CARLOS

Yes, ma'am.

Lt. Jones waves her hand at the two-way mirror behind her. CAPTAIN SMITH (45) enters the interrogation room and stands in the corner of the room.

LT. JONES

Don't be alarmed, that's Captain Smith, he's in charge of the station. He'll be reviewing our interview today. Carlos, please state your full name and age for the record?

CARLOS

My name is Carlos Michael Davis and I'm 12 years old.

LT. JONES

Can you tell me where you reside?

CARLOS

I live at 3948 Bankhead Towers Lane in Atlanta.

LT. JONES

Can you please explain, in your own words, what happened on the night of July 15th?

CARLOS

My dad came home drunk and beat me.  
I fought him back and I hit him, he  
hit his head, fell and I ran away.

LT. JONES

Did you know he was dead?

CARLOS

I didn't know. He was lying there  
with his eyes open and I didn't  
want him to get up again and hurt  
me, so I ran away.

LT. JONES

How often did your father beat you?

CARLOS

There are seven days in a week, so  
I got beat seven days.

LT. JONES

Why were you beaten?

CARLOS

I don't know, he would always find  
something wrong when he came home  
after work.

LT. JONES

What grade are you in?

CARLOS

I'm in the 12th grade.

Lt. Jones looks over at Captain Smith.

LT. JONES

The 12th grade? Aren't you a little  
young to be in the 12th grade?

CARLOS

I'm in an elevated program for  
gifted kids, well that's what my  
Principle says. She says I could go  
to college next year if I wanted  
to.

CAPTAIN SMITH

Son, do you know why you're--

LT. JONES

Did you hit and kill your father on  
the night of the 15th?

CARLOS

I guess-- I mean no, ma'am. I hit him, but I tried to block his swings. He kept on hitting me with the belt buckle.

LT. JONES

And what happened? What did you do?

CARLOS

I must have hit him in the throat with my hand. I used the moves my friend Pat taught me.

LT. JONES

Did he stop hitting you?

CARLOS

Yes, after he fell down.

LT. JONES

Did you try and help him?

CARLOS

No, ma'am, I ran out as fast as I could. I just had to get away. I couldn't get beat anymore, I had to get out of there.

LT. JONES

Why didn't you report your father to the police or to your school?

CARLOS

He was my dad, I couldn't do that.

LT. JONES

Did you hate your father?

CARLOS

Hate my dad? I could never hate him, no matter how messed up he was.

CAPTAIN SMITH

Why Carlos?

CARLOS

My dad's been through a lot since Mom died, he never forgave himself for her death.

LT. JONES

When was the first time he beat you?

CARLOS

I can't remember, but I think it started right after she died.

CAPTAIN SMITH

Do you have any living relatives? An Aunt, Uncle or Grandparents?

CARLOS

My Grandparents died some time ago and my dad had no one else except me. I never knew anyone on my Mom's side of the family.

The door opens and Sergeant Rivera enters.

SERGEANT RIVERA

Lieutenant, juvey and CPS are here. Which one is he going to?

LT. JONES

Carlos, is there anything else you want to add to your statement?

CARLOS

No, ma'am.

LT. JONES

Well, I have no choice but to send you to Juvenile Hall until we can sort all of this out with the D.A.

CARLOS

Juvenile Hall? Why? I didn't mean to kill my Dad. He was beating me!

LT. JONES

Sergeant Rivera, take Mr. Davis down to central booking until we can transfer him.

Sergeant Rivera looks at Lt. Jones.

SERGEANT RIVERA

Excuse me Lieutenant, this is clearly a case of child abuse and accidental death. Are you sure you want to do this?

LT. JONES

I'm sure, Sergeant: the Coroner says it's murder, so if the D.A says differently, then so be it. Until then, I'm going by the evidence presented.

SERGEANT RIVERA

Let's go, kid.

Carlos is escorted out of the room.

INT. LIEUTENANT JONES OFFICE - AFTERNOON

CAPTAIN SMITH knocks on the door and pokes his head in.

CAPTAIN SMITH

Kat, you got a minute?

LT. JONES

Sure, Captain. Come on in.

Captain Smith enters.

CAPTAIN SMITH

It's about the Davis boy. Why are you sending this case forward?

LT. JONES

I've seen cases like this while working with Special Victims. The kid is clearly hiding something.

CAPTAIN SMITH

From everything I've seen and heard concerning this case, Kat, and from meeting this kid face to face, his father has been abusing him for years. Let's not do what his father did, Lieutenant. I'm overriding you. Get the D.A on the phone and get this kid into CPS until a relative can be located. He's been through enough. Keep me updated on what's going on.

Lt. Jones sighs.

LT. JONES

Yes, Captain.

Captain Smith turns towards the door and looks back.

CAPTAIN SMITH  
 Are you feeling ok, Kat? You've  
 been a little edgy lately.

Lt. Jones' right hand begins to shake. She hides it under the  
 table and holds it still with her left hand.

LT. JONES  
 I'm fine, Captain. I'll contact  
 Child Services right away.

Captain Smith exits the office and closes the door.

Lt. Jones opens her handbag and pulls out several small  
 bottles of rum. She takes one, drinks the contents in one  
 gulp, and reaches for another.

INT. CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES - AFTERNOON

Several STAFF SUPERVISORS are assisting the cleanup of the  
 CPS living area inside the CPS Facility.

Groups of BOYS and GIRLS (ages 10-15) walk past them, headed  
 to the outside lobby with gloves on preparing for their  
 designated chores. Carlos speaks with DAMON PUGH (13).

CARLOS  
 Hi, my name is Carlos.

DAMON  
 What's up, man? I'm Damon.

CARLOS  
 What are we doing?

DAMON  
 We're separated into groups. Group  
 one takes the inside chores and  
 group two takes the outside chores.  
 They want to make us more  
 responsible. We just play the game  
 until we get out of here. You're  
 new here, right?

Carlos nods.

DAMON (CONT'D)  
 You should stay in my group, I'll  
 show you what to do around here.

CARLOS  
 How long have you been here?

DAMON

Six months. No one wants an older kid.

CARLOS

Really?

DAMON

I'm told if you're over the age of 13, you get overlooked.

Damon points out the window to a CHUBBY BLACK KID raking leaves.

DAMON (CONT'D)

Patrick over there, he's been here the longest. Over a year.

CARLOS

Could I be here that long?

DAMON

If you have relatives then they will release you to them. Some of the kids here are runaways and most of them are abused kids that are taken from their families or some other legal shit. Whatcha in for?

CARLOS

I... I killed my father.

DAMON

Damn, dude! You're Tony Montana and shit?

CARLOS

No, my name is Carlos Davis.

DAMON

Yeah, alright.

A male CPS supervisor, TERRENCE MCCOY (30), approaches Carlos and Damon.

TERRENCE

Stop yapping you two and finish cleaning, I want this bathroom spotless. Now get to it, let's go!

Terrence sees another group of kids not working and leaves Carlos and Damon in the bathroom and goes over to them.

DAMON

That's Mr. McCoy: last week he put one of the kids in the hospital for not following the rules.

CARLOS

What happened?

DAMON

Some of the older kids decided to go over to the girl's side of the facility. Two of them were caught having sex. Mr. McCoy caught one of them and fucked him up real bad.

CARLOS

We better get to work then.

DARRYL WATSON (11) enters and looks over at Carlos.

DAMON

Darryl, what are you doing up here? You're supposed to be in the other group.

DARRYL

I'm switching places with the new kid.

DAMON

No you're not, he's with me. Get out of here!

DARRYL

It's a lot of work out there, plus I've been here longer.

Darryl looks down at Carlos and kicks him.

DARRYL (CONT'D)

Hey new guy, you hear me talking to you?

DAMON

Stop it, Darryl! I said he's with me! I'm teaching him the ropes, now go back outside and finish your chores.

Darryl looks at Carlos. He knocks over a can of scrubbing powder on the floor.

DARRYL

Clean this shit up!

Darryl walks out of the bathroom.

CARLOS  
He really needs a hug.

Damon starts to laugh and they finish cleaning the bathroom.

EXT. THE PROFESSIONAL BUILDING - AFTERNOON

INT. PSYCHOLOGY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Rebecca is in the waiting area. The RECEPTIONIST (23) looks over and acknowledges her.

RECEPTIONIST  
Ms. Williams, Dr. Patterson will see you now. Right, this way, please.

REBECCA  
Thank you.

The Receptionist escorts Rebecca into Dr. Patterson's Office.

INT. DR. PATTERSON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The door opens and Rebecca enters. She's greeted by DR. PATTERSON (50) who sits behind his desk.

DR. PATTERSON  
Hello Ms. Williams, I'm Dr. Patterson. How are you feeling today?

REBECCA  
I'm okay.

DR. PATTERSON  
May I call you Rebecca?

REBECCA  
Yes.

DR. PATTERSON  
Rebecca, may I offer you a bottled water, some coffee or a soda?

REBECCA  
No thank you, nothing for me.

DR. PATTERSON

I read about your case in the paper. I'm sorry for your loss. How are you and your ex-husband coping?

REBECCA

We're handling it.

DR. PATTERSON

You're "handling it"? Both of your children died and your marriage of 19 years abruptly ended -- All of that plays on your psyche, Rebecca. You could suffer serious backlash on your mental state.

REBECCA

So you want to get inside my head? You're right, I've lost everything. But it's not like I'm becoming a hoarder or anything, Doctor.

Dr. Patterson eyes her intently.

DR. PATTERSON

But you're still here seeking help. So what is going on then?

REBECCA

I've had some nights where I don't remember things.

DR. PATTERSON

You're experiencing black-outs?

Rebecca nods.

REBECCA

Last week, I woke up in my daughter's bed. I remember having a headache and lying down on the couch, but the next morning, I woke up in Allah's room in jeans and a flimsy top with a stamp from some club on my arm. I'm 44 years old, I don't go to clubs anymore.

DR. PATTERSON

Hmm. Do you mind if we talk about your past a bit?

REBECCA

Sure.

DR. PATTERSON

Tell me about your divorce. What changed after your marriage ended?

REBECCA

I don't know, I was under a lot of stress. I started having intense headaches and Randy and Allah needed me more so than usual.

DR. PATTERSON

Was the stress money-related?

REBECCA

No, the child support and alimony checks were paying the bills, so I wasn't concerned about anything like that.

DR. PATTERSON

Interesting. And these headaches, how long have you been having them?

REBECCA

They started right after the divorce, but have become more intense after Randy and Allah died.

DR. PATTERSON

Can you describe the headaches, Rebecca?

REBECCA

They usually happen when I'm stressed or tired. I get a chilly feeling through my body and then it becomes very hot... and then the unbearable throbbing sets in.

Dr. Patterson studies Rebecca for a long moment then jots something down in her file.

INT. PSYCHOLOGY OFFICE - LATER

Rebecca is in the waiting area, speaking with the Receptionist.

RECEPTIONIST

All right, I've got you down for Monday. Same time.

REBECCA

Thanks, I'll see you then.

She smiles and walks off.

EXT. THE PROFESSIONAL BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Rebecca exits the building and begins making her way toward her car. Her cell phone rings.

REBECCA  
(on phone)  
Hello?

CASSANDRA (V.O.)  
Do you remember our conversation  
about becoming a foster parent?

REBECCA  
You were serious about that?

CASSANDRA (V.O.)  
I just received a call from my  
soror at Social Services. She's  
interviewing potential foster  
parents today.

REBECCA  
I don't know, Cassandra, I'm still  
going through things. Plus, I  
haven't run this by my Doctor yet.  
What if it doesn't work?

CASSANDRA (V.O.)  
All I'm saying is give it a try,  
Becca. You can't stay cooped up in  
that big ass house all by yourself  
honey. Just meet me there in an  
hour. What do you have to lose?

Rebecca ponders the thought as she gets into her car.

REBECCA  
I suppose it could be nice, having  
someone to mentor again...

CASSANDRA (V.O.)  
That's the spirit, Becca! I'll see  
you in an hour.

Rebecca sighs, hangs up the phone and gets into her car.

INT. PASTOR WALTON RESIDENCE - AFTERNOON

MARGO WALTON walks down the staircase into the large living room, where the TV is on and a breaking news headline is seen.

NEWS ANCHOR TIM JENNINGS

Breaking News! A local leader of a renowned megachurch is accused of molesting several members of his congregation. Channel 8 reporter Jim Bannister is at the scene, Jim--

JIM BANNISTER

Thanks, Tim. I was contacted by an unknown source associated with the church, who reported that Pastor Russell Walton of Sweetwater Baptist Church has been accused of molesting several boys in the youth ministry.

Several suggestive photos of Pastor Walton and THREE BLURRED OUT UNIDENTIFIED YOUNG BOYS are seen hugging and wrestling.

JIM BANNISTER (CONT'D)

According to our confidential source, Pastor Walton takes several under-aged members on unscheduled trips and provides them with alcohol in exchange for sexual favors. These explosive allegations are rocking the core of this mega church and its controversial Pastor...

Margo turns off the TV and frantically grabs her cell phone and calls the church. Derek answers.

MARGO

Derek, what the fuck is going on!  
Is Russell, there!?

DEREK (V.O.)

He's out at the moment, Margo.

MARGO

Derek, do you know what's going on!?

DEREK (V.O.)

Yes, the phone won't stop ringing.

MARGO

What do you know about this,  
Derek!?

DEREK (V.O.)

Margo, I can't--

MARGO

You can't what, Derek? Tell Russell  
about us, or you can't tell me  
about him fucking those boys?

DEREK (V.O.)

I can't talk about this now, Margo.  
Meet me later.

MARGO

Shit, I'm going to have to cancel  
my dinner, so meet me at 8:00 at  
the spot.

DEREK (V.O.)

Okay. See you then.

Margo angrily hangs up.

MARGO

Shit! Not this again!

END CHAPTER ONE.