

A LAW ABOVE THE LAW

The Case

by

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EMMETT (V.O.)

What would you do, if you find out,
that what believe in actually
supports the sexual abuse of
children? Again, what would you do,
if you find out, that what believe
in actually supports the sexual
abuse of children?

EXT. AFTERNOON. RETAIL/OFFICE PARK. SANDWICH SHOP.

San Antonio suburb. Dog Days of Summer. July 3. Pouring rain. Emmett stood next to a CUSTOMER, at the end of a counter at a busy and crowded sandwich shop, trying to enjoy his lunch and looking around for a free seat. As he takes a drink, he's approached by a PROCESS SERVER, that thrusts an official document toward him.

PROCESS SERVER

Good afternoon. Are you Emmett
Alexander Truman, Sr.?

Emmett sets his drink down and looks the Process Server dead in the eye, very annoyed that his lunchtime is disturbed.

EMMETT

Who wants to know?
Oh, it's you again.

Process Server, cheeky smile.

PROCESS SERVER

I have a subpoena, for you to
present documents and appear as a
witness in the case of Justina
Benitez vs. The Watchtower, The
Christian Congregation of Jehovah's
Witnesses, Inc. and The Almos
Congregation of Jehovah's
Witnesses.

Process Server looks Emmett dead in the eye for a moment.

EMMETT

What's your name?

WOMAN

Good Citizen. Happy 4th!

Process Server quickly exits. Customer looks at Emmett sympathizes, collects his rubbish, offers him the stool then exits, Emmett sits and reads the document.

CUT TO:

INT. LATE AFTERNOON. "SMART" ELECTRONICS STORE.

Preoccupied and in a semi-bad mood, Emmett enters the hi-tech, digital surveillance and security electronic communications store, that he co-owns in the shopping mall. Then quickly walks directly through, to the register and looks at the day's tally. TALIB BARRON, co-owner and fellow, Jehovah's Witness newbie. SOCK EYE and BOLO, store staff, are milling about, no customers in-store, till Emmett goes in his office.

TALIB

(to Emmett)

Hey! I thought you were gonna wait.
I got there and... You know I hate
eating by myself. Where ya been?

Talib notices a folded piece of paper in Emmett's shirt pocket, then wonders.

TALIB (CONT'D)

You alright, man? Emmett!

Emmett, back to reality. Looks at Talib.

EMMETT

Yeah, I'm fine. It's fine. I need
my laptop. Did you fix it?

TALIB

Why didn't you bring the printer?

EMMETT

Don't worry about it. Anyway, I can
use yours. Sariah said it's fine.

TALIB

When did she say that?

EMMETT

Me and your wife have an agreement
with that. It ain't got nothing to
do with you. I'm the one that
bought it, with my own money and
gave it to her. She's the only one
using it anyway. Not you.

Talib wonders where Emmett's attitude is coming from. Talib concedes and points to Emmett's office.

TALIB

In there. Good as new. For a dinosaur.

EMMETT

Don't start. You know, Jehovah didn't make no dinosaurs.

TALIB

I'm joking. Come on! Lighten up.

SOCK EYE

Then who made 'em then?

TALIB

It wouldn't hurt for you to use the internet for researching something besides porn.

Sock Eye, cheeky look at Talib.

BOLO

They weren't dinosaurs, they're dragons.

EMMETT

(to Sock Eye and Bolo)
And, if you get around to it, you two, sell something. We could use the money. I need somebody to fix my A/C. It's not cooling.

TALIB

Where, in your car?

EMMETT

No, we're alright in the car. At home.

TALIB

When did it go out?

EMMETT

Last night.

Everyone moans in sympathy.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Anybody? Y'all are no help.

Everyone shoulder shrugs. Emmett, frustrated, enters his office and closes the door.

SOCK EYE

Why don't he just open the windows?

BOLO

In his house, that's not what the windows are for.

CUT TO:

LATER. CLOSING TIME.

Emmett and Talib are at the door. Glad the work day is over. Emmett, in a better mood with his laptop in a shoulder bag. Talib locks the security shutter. They walk together to Emmett's car, a short distance away.

TALIB

Sariah asked, if I could pick up dinner. You mind?

EMMETT

No, that's fine. Dinah's not cooking. Man, it's a barn burner in that house. I found somebody for the A/C. He's coming day after tomorrow. I'm gonna have to pay extra for a Saturday call, plus the holiday weekend. I just hope it gets fixed. I can't go through the whole weekend in this heat.

TALIB

Say, why don't y'all come over and eat with us? Dinah can have Bible study with Sariah tonight, instead of tomorrow. Her folks are coming over.

EMMETT

Yeah, but, does Sariah want...

TALIB

Come on. You know she's cool. Don't worry. I'll text her. Check with Dinah.

Emmett gets his phone, calls DINAH and puts her on speaker.

EMMETT

Hey, Sug. Talib says, why don't we go over there tonight, for dinner. We'll pick something up, OK. And y'all can have her bible study, instead of doing it over zoom for a change. Plus, we can get a break from the heat.

CUT TO:

EXT. EMMETT'S HOUSE. BACK YARD.

Corner lot, two-story, well-appointed, very contemporary house, high end conversion from standard built neighborhood houses with garage. Glass and screened-in patio. Beautiful front yard landscaping and back garden (flowers, veg & herbs) water feature. In-ground swimming pool excavation and shed-to-cabana reconstruction, barricaded/off limits.

DINAH

What you talkin' about, WE? You've been in that store all day. I'm the one in there soaking wet. I blew up the pool. Me and Tristan stayed in it all day. We're still out here. Did Sariah okay, it? Cause during my last few weeks, I let it ALL hang out. And wasn't interested in seeing nobody.

EMMETT

He'll check. I'll drop him, then get y'all, OK.

TRISTAN

Ask him, please bring me a coconut slurpie.

DINAH

You heard Triste?

EMMETT

Yeah.

DINAH

Bring me an orange one, please.

EMMETT

OK. Bye.

DINAH

Alright, Hun. Bye.

Emmett disconnects.

BACK TO: SCENE.

EMMETT

What does she want to eat? It's on me.

TALIB

I'll text her, in the car.

They approach Emmett's tidy car (relatively new, mid-range SUV), he unlocks it. They open the doors, to let the heat out.

TALIB (CONT'D)

Man! It's hot.

EMMETT

And, you never get used to it, either.

Emmett, puts his laptop on the backseat, then his phone in the cupholder. There's a very worn and stained "Examining the Scriptures Daily" and a folded up, sheet of paper, in the cupholder. Emmett starts the car, switches on the A/C, then the music player, JW music plays in the background. (Song: 103 "Shepherd's Gifts in Men/Kingdom Melodies instrumental version). Talib gets in. They buckle up. Emmett drives off. Talib texts Sariah.

TALIB

What you wanna eat?

SARIAH

KFC, everything.

TALIB

She wants The Colonel. You know he wasn't a real colonel. Harland Sanders.

EMMETT

No joke.

TALIB

It was an honorary title given by the governor of Kentucky, for advancing the community.

EMMETT

It took me 25 years to make colonel.

TALIB

Well, with the new law - I had a shortcut. It took me, 20.

EMMETT

You're folks were officers, you were born and raised in Germany. And, being an Army brat didn't hurt none. You still speak German?

TALIB

(in German)

Ich spreche ein bisschen.

EMMETT

I only learned a word or two, after ALL that time over there. It woulda been nice, though. You know. Speaking another language.

TALIB

All this time I never asked, why did you enlist?

EMMETT

Well, it was the oil rigs or the military. I looked into it. But wasn't interested in being no roughneck, soaked in oil and covered dirt. And, it was the perfect time to sign-up, Project VOLAR. Instead of "Uncle Sam Wants You" it was, "Today's Army Wants to Join You."

Talib chuckles slightly.

TALIB

The NEW Army, post Vietnam.

EMMETT

I didn't see any action, it was "peace time." Except for that bit in Grenada, in '83. I wasn't no where around there. I travelled the world. And, learned all about electronics, right off Uncle Sam, taxpayer's money. The little bit of appliance repair, that I learned from Dad, got me set in the right direction.

TALIB

Well, I saw enough "action" for the both of us. Somalia, Afghanistan, Syria. Leaders, officers - a thankless job, that nobody wants.

Talib looks away.

TALIB (CONT'D)

I've seen enough bloodshed and mangled bodies, people begging to die.

EMMETT

That's all a long time ago and water under the bridge, for the both of us.

Pregnant pause.

TALIB

How did we even get on this topic?

Emmett, points to the KFC ahead, as they're stopped at a left turn, red light, in the middle of a long queue.

TALIB (CONT'D)

The Colonel. Speaking about underappreciated and desperate missions, from the powers that be. Brother Fergus called me, to talk about me, arranging visits on inactive publishers. So that him and me, can get them, back to the meetings and in field service.

EMMETT

Yeah, I know about it. It's procedure.

Emmett points to the folded up sheet of paper in the cup holder.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Take a look.

Talib takes the paper, unfolds and reads it.

TALIB

So there's no official form for this? (Talib joking, but sincere) Cause you know, The Organisation has a form for this, a form for that.

(MORE)

TALIB (CONT'D)

A protocol for this, and a directive for that. Hey, just like we did in the military. Where do they find the time to makeup all these forms? And record all this data? Who all reads this stuff, anyway?

EMMETT

Man, I dunno know. It's procedure. They've got all them volunteers in Bethel, New York, to do that.

Emmett pokes the paper.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Anyway, these were the ones he nor I, didn't have time to get to, before we had the Special Talk.

TALIB

That's dereliction of duty, brother soldier.

They chuckle.

TALIB (CONT'D)

When was the Special Talk?

EMMETT

It's ALWAYS right before the Memorial. A few months ago, in the spring.

TALIB

The Lord's Evening Meal, Passover.

EMMETT

Why do you always say, 'Passover' when it's called, The Memorial?

TALIB

Cause, I knew some Jews in the military and it kinda has the same meaning. Death. Blood sacrifice, animal, human. Matzah, the unleavened bread, purity. But in either case, the wine, that's fermented. No matter what.

EMMETT

Yeah, you can't get around that.

Pregnant pause.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

About the home visits. It's to get them back in the door-to-door ministry, regularly. No pressure, mind you. Just helping them along. (a bit cynical) Getting them more in the middle of the flock. So they don't stray off and get lost in this woods and eaten by wolves. Anyway, you gotta a way with people, Talib. Especially with the young folks. That's mostly who's on there. You're cool, man. You relate to them better. I knew that from back, when you were working for me. And, now we're partners.

TALIB

That was over a year ago, when we became partners. And started my bible study, with you. Davina was just born. Sariah didn't want nothing to do with me being a Witness. Or, Witnesses period.

EMMETT

But, she likes me and Dinah, and Tristan, though.

TALIB

Y'all are the ONLY ones, really. Being you're ex-military. And nice folks, friendly. And, Deirdre. She likes her, cause she's a midwife. But, the rest of 'em. She don't like too many people. She's picky like that.

Talib shrugs and shakes his head, then looks away.

EMMETT

That's alright. There's no need to be friends with everybody. Less chance for problems.

TALIB

Yeah, well. But, I'm still so new at this ministerial servant thing. It's only been a month. I don't even know most of these names. None of 'em, really. I like, helping out and all. But, I don't like going to people's houses like that. All in their business.

(MORE)

TALIB (CONT'D)

And, I guess they unload ALL their problems and - what not. Like confession. I never could stomach that.

Talib folds the paper and puts it back.

TALIB (CONT'D)

Besides, Fergus is too by the book for me. Most straight-laced folks like that, are hiding a load of secrets. Now, if it was you, more than happy. But, Fergus...

Talib scoffs.

EMMETT

He needs to be around someone like you. I know he's an old man and all, but that don't mean he can't learn a thing or two. He needs to...

TALIB

We're gonna butt heads. Tellin' ya.

EMMETT

I told him, "Look, me and you ministerial servants are doing everything else." All he does the Watchtower Study on Sundays and the book study. That's an hour each. A piece of pie. The least he can do, is to cooperate - with you.

Talib concedes.

TALIB

Well, what ya gonna do. There's always the odd one.

Talib and Emmett look at each other and concede. The light turns green, they move on, and continue to the KFC.

TALIB (CONT'D)

I bet, Fergus woulda been an absolute ass-, jerk, in the Army. He woulda been like - a retired general, by now. He's got you by what, 12/13 years?

EMMETT

Yeah, that's about right.

TALIB

Well then, to him, I'm still a boy.

They're stopped in the queue for the drive-thru. Talib looks at the list of names again, then re-folds and replaces it.

TALIB (CONT'D)

Say, where'd he get his money from?

EMMETT

Fergus? Capping oil well fires. He worked for Red Adair. In Korea, he was an EOD specialist. That's why his hearing's kinda bad.

TALIB

A bomb specialist. No sh-

Emmett give Talib, The Eye.

TALIB (CONT'D)

You know I'm trying my best. Cursing's been part of my vocabulary, since before I could really talk, probably. Ain't none of us perfect, Emmett.

Emmett chuckles and shakes his head.

TALIB (CONT'D)

Who's, Red Adair?

EMMETT

A famous firefighter for the oil and gas industry. That was a big deal, back in the day.

TALIB

Red A-dair, eh. I'll have to look him up. So, the Governing Body allowed him to do that, for work?

EMMETT

Well, they didn't totally reject the idea. There were some, probably still are, borderline issues. He's got a rifle rack and some ol' pistols from when his great great-grand Dad was a Union soldier. Which he ain't about to give up, for nothin' in this world.

TALIB

It still shoots?

Emmett shrugs.

EMMETT

But, he's provided for his family. Jacob used to work with him, before he got involved in fitness. Fergus sent him to blow up this big ol' oak tree stump, we had in the back yard, when we moved. Dinah wanted more room for her garden and sun for the plants.

TALIB

Well, he's not lacking for anything, from what I see and hear. That house of his, out in Walkill sounds like a nice spread, with horses and everything. Them ol' Talbot sisters give Sariah an ear full, when she comes with me, to the meetings. One of 'em lookin' to snag him or what?

EMMETT

Man, I don't get into stuff with these single folks and their love life. I got enough of my own, to worry about.

Talib chuckles.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

All that's, after the wife, then her parents died. It was their, old ranch. He sold off a lot of the land, when he got it. But, when he was in town, he was always at the meetings. Always regular, knocking on doors, taking the lead. And, whenever the congregation contributions were low, his checkbook was always handy. Dinah told me, that's even from way back in the day. Long before I became a Witness. And, way before I even met Dinah.

TALIB

Oh, okay. Yeah, you told me. She got you interested in it. Can't say I blame you. Y'all do make a handsome couple.

Emmett gives Talib, The Eye.

TALIB (CONT'D)

No, I'm serious. And, I admire you guys staying together what, 30 years. And, you're still a handsome couple.

EMMETT

Yeah 30, next month. Well, I did my 20 years in the Army. Then spent some time searching for some other kinda meaning and purpose in life. What she told me, it sounded good. A paradise on Earth with people that get along, for the most part. (looks at Talib) No more war.

Talib concedes. Emmett reminisces.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

And, she looked real good, too. So, I listened and learned. And...

Emmett stares off.

TALIB

Say, what happened with Fergus' son, Jacob? Getting excommunicated, sorry - disfellowshipped?

EMMETT

That happened years ago. Long time.

TALIB

So, he's been reinstated. He's back in, then? Officially.

EMMETT

Yeah, well. You're gonna see him at the meetings and in field service, at the conventions, from now on. And socializing, I guess. I can't tell them, but I'm totally against it. I don't care how many meetings he comes to or hours he does in field service. He's a bad seed. I said, give him the usual six months, let him prove himself. Fergus and Mordred couldn't wait to have him back. They were talking about him getting appointed one day.

TALIB

Jacob?

EMMETT

I put my foot down. This time the circuit overseer backed me. He appointed me chair for his reinstatement committee. And now, Mordred he's gone, just like that. Fergus is still bent out of shape, cause I made Jacob wait.

TALIB

But, you can't even be a ministerial servant, having been disfellowshipped, right?

EMMETT

The publishers don't know this, but there are exceptions.

TALIB

What? What is this, bending the rules to make them fit?

Emmett concedes. Talib, suspicious.

TALIB (CONT'D)

But, what's up with him? You knew him, right?

Emmett touches the paper in his pocket and becomes somber.

EMMETT

I saw him around the mall, before he even decided to 'come back' to the Kingdom Hall. Well, he's got what's called a "clean slate" now. But, yeah, I knew him very well. Fergus was raised a Witness and left it. Then he got drafted. He came back home and got married years later. She wasn't a Witness. Then, he came back in, got baptized. And raised Jacob up, as a Witness. But, he was a silly boy. That's grown up to be a... I don't really know what he is now. Fergus was dying for Jacob to be a ministerial servant, before he moved away. He was just 21. That was just not happenin'.

TALIB

In the Catholic church, ministerial servants are called deacons.

(MORE)

TALIB (CONT'D)

And elders - would be like priests, pastors. The governing body - they altogether, would be the Pope.

EMMETT

Got it. Look, I was never a churchgoer. When I was young, my mom tried. But, I was busy having fun with my dad, my brother and Uncle Ted - tinkering with radios and what not, in the shed on Sundays. I wasn't about to sit in no boring church, all day. It's only since I became a Witness, that I'm involved in religion. Jacob used to look up to me. He and his Dad didn't cut it.

TALIB

There's something about him, his body language. The way he carries himself, it's not quite right. He seems overly nice. Sticky sweet, you know. Always helpful. Even among Witnesses, who really acts like that?

Emmett ignores, Talib's comment. Before Emmett moves to the menu board. A YOUNG WOMAN approaches the pick-up truck in front of them with two WELL-MANNERED DOGS (Catahoula Leopard and Pittie) on leashes. She opens the driver's side door the driver moves over. The Dogs jump inside, then she gets in, closes the door and proceeds to the menuboard.

EMMETT

Now, that's a good-looking dog! That patch-work looking one. That's the kind, that Tristan's been talkin' 'bout. He wants a dog, bad.

Talib, aware that the subject's being changed on purpose.

TALIB

Yeah, nice. You gonna get him one?

EMMETT

Yeah. I think he can handle one, now. I'mma look into one like that, for him. That boy has so much energy. He's got nobody to play with. A dog would be good for him. When my kids were his age, we got one.

TALIB

Our neighbor, across the street has dogs like that. Catahoula Leopard. He breeds them. So, he knows all about 'em.

EMMETT

Yeah, OK. Catahoula Leopard.

TALIB

His wife works with Sariah, in the translation department. She's six months.

EMMETT

Pregnant? So, they can cover each other for maternity leave. Check for me, OK? About the dog.

Talib contemplating.

TALIB

Sure, no problem. But you can ask him tonight, if you want. You know, this year's Sariah's last one.

EMMETT

How long she's been in the program?

TALIB

Since we met. Five years.

EMMETT

Don't worry about the money. She'll find something else. Something's gonna turn up. Something's gonna turn up. Don't worry about it.

TALIB

She makes way more money teaching.

EMMETT

Maybe she'll even get, something she can do at home. She can stay with the kids.

Talib doubtful. Truck ahead, moves forward. Emmett is at the menu board.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

So, what we getting'? Man, I remember when Dinah was in her last weeks, she used to eat everything on the menu.

Emmett laughs. Talib grins and shakes his head.

TALIB

Job or no job, after this baby,
she's coming to the gym, with me.

CUT TO:

INT. EVENING. TALIB'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM.

Upper middle-class. Martha Stewart Living vibe. Emmett and Talib are sat on a sofa watching tv. Emmett's grandson, Tristan (age: 6/7) is falling asleep on a lounge chair. Emmett has his laptop bag, nearby. Davina, Talib's daughter (age: 1) is asleep on his shoulder. Dinah and Sariah in the kitchen having Sariah's bible study. End of nature program, adverts showing.

TALIB

So, what did he say about the dog?

EMMETT

They're very protective and active.
As long as their kept busy, they're
fine. And smart, too. I need to
talk it over with Dinah.

TALIB

So what happened with you, cutting
out on me, at lunch?

EMMETT

I told you, I had something to do.

TALIB

No you didn't. Remember, I was a
body language expert and I know
you, Emmett. We've been eating
lunch together everyday for the
past year and a half. And, you're
too tight lipped about Jacob.

EMMETT

So, you study folks all the time
like that?

Talib gives Emmett, The Eye. Emmett takes a deep breath.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

You know, I'm near retirement age.
I thought my 'daddy days' were
over. But, now, I'm raising my
grandson.

(MORE)

EMMETT (CONT'D)

I'm the coordinator of the body of elders, the secretary keeping ALL the records on everything. Plus, am conducting the Life and Ministry Meeting.

TALIB

That's way more, than the meetings that Fergus does.

EMMETT

I'm there, trying to teach these publishers how to talk to people and convert them to our side. And, I'm out there every weekend leading them and knocking on doors myself, putting my 20 hours a month. And, listening to all their personal and family problems and dealing with my own problems.

TALIB

And running your half of the business.

EMMETT

I know we're in a rough patch, now. Thank goodness Dinah's work is steady in the summer. And we've got rental property to keep us afloat.

TALIB

You've got a lot on your plate, all the time. But, what's...

Dinah and Sariah are finished studying, Sariah opens the door.

SARIAH

You guys want anything?

Talib looks at Emmett, he nods with a No.

TALIB

No, honey. Thanks.

Sariah and Dinah chat briefly.

EMMETT

(lowers voice)

I'll send Dinah and Tristan home, OK. You're a congregation servant now. And you're gonna be dealing with this, way sooner than later.

(MORE)

EMMETT (CONT'D)

You're the kinda of man that didn't go around, campaigning to the elders begging for a position. With you, it happened like it should. We, the elders, approached you and asked if you wanted it. You had nothing to prove to anybody.

TALIB

Was it like that with you? They, asked you?

EMMETT

Yeah. And, like you - I turned it down at first. But I could see where I was really needed. We're shorthanded, with just Fergus and me as elders. And you, Chilo. Chilo, he's always on the fence. He and Cecilia, all they want to do is, go to Bethel. Josh isn't ready for anything.

TALIB

Fergus has total control of him.

EMMETT

But you, you can handle it. And, folks, like you. You've got a lot of experience in keeping things on a "need to know" basis. Some, run their mouths too much. And others, when they should speak up, they don't.

TALIB

Well, the military taught us all about that.

Emmett concedes.

EMMETT

I've got a couple of things I need to show you. Come with me, tonight.

TALIB

Dinah doesn't mind, you leaving out at night like that. All of a sudden. No explanation?

EMMETT

She's used to it. She grew up with it.

(MORE)

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Her dad was a coordinator,
presiding overseer (we used to call
them that). And her uncles, her
brother, all elders, across town.
She knows whenever I go out like
that, there's a problem and I need
to handle it, right then. No
questions. Your wife, she's got to
learn to deal with it, too. For as
long as you want to do this.

Dinah and Sariah enter living room. Dinah, carrying her bible
and Life Forever book. Emmett and Talib interrupt their talk.

TALIB

(to Sariah)

How'd it go?

SARIAH

Fine. It was good. She's always
patient. I like to check the
translations, in Somali, Italian
and Arabic.

EMMETT

You speak Arabic?

SARIAH

Yeah. My colleague and I speak
together. She's Sikh, from
Pakistan. She picked it up there.

EMMETT

Teach me Arabic, would you? We have
a lot of customers come to the
shop.

SARIAH

Sure, anytime.

DINAH

You're just being nosey. You never
bothered to learn a word of
Spanish.

EMMETT

Your family's been in America so
long, all they speak is English.
And, they can't get over on me with
them random Spanglish words. I know
what they're sayin'.

Everyone laughs.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

No, I'm serious. Me and Talib were talkin' about it in the car. (to Talib) He speaks French and some German. She speaks (to Sariah) four languages. That's what? Six, seven including English, in one house. With all the travelling I did, I never learned even one other language. And that's a shame. (to Dinah) It wouldn't hurt you none, either. Especially selling real estate.

Dinah concedes.

DINAH

Yeah, you're right. Sign us up, Sariah.

Sariah smiles.

SARIAH

(to Talib)

How long has she been asleep?

Talib stands and rubs Davina's back.

TALIB

About an hour. I'll put her to bed.

Dinah goes to Tristan and rouses him.

DINAH

He's just about gone. We should go.

EMMETT

Ah, Talib and I need to go for a while.

DINAH

Yeah, OK. I'll drive us back then.

Tristan's dazed. Sariah's puzzled.

SARIAH

For how long?

EMMETT

An hour, hour and a half.

Sariah doubtful.

DINAH

He won't keep him. Field service is at the Hall, tomorrow at 10:00.

EMMETT

Neither of us are working this weekend. The guys can handle the shop.

SARIAH

I'm guessing, that I'm not asking, where you're going.

TALIB

I don't even know. We'll take my truck.

EMMETT

Don't worry. You won't have to call out a search party for us, OK.

Everyone chuckles.

TALIB

Good night, Dinah.

Talib gives Dinah a hug.

DINAH

Nite, Talib.

Talib brings Davina to her room. Emmett puts Tristan over his shoulder and complains about his heaviness. Emmett and Dinah (gets Emmett's bag) walk to the front door. Sariah follows.

CUT TO:

INT. LATER. KINGDOM HALL - FOYER.

Emmett carrying his bag, disarms the alarm and switches the lights on. Emmett walks ahead, Talib follows him to a small room with a library, that has several stacked chairs, a few arranged in rows and a small table in the corner. Plus, a locked 4-drawer, file cabinet in the corner. Emmett switches the light on, then gets the subpoena out of his shirt pocket, unfolds it, and hands it to Talib. Talib puzzled, takes it.

EMMETT

Read this.

Talib sits down and reads the subpoena. While Emmett unlocks the file cabinet, thumbs through the second drawer of files and takes a few out, skips some and pulls more, stacks them (3" thick) on top the cabinet, then puts them on a chair besides Talib. Then he drags the table close to Talib, moves the files on top and sits down and stacks the files in (3) categories. Talib is stunned and drops the paper on the desk.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

I'm the only one with a key. Fergus and Mordred never bothered. You remember a couple of weeks ago, I told you, I was going to visit my Uncle Ted, in Houston?

TALIB

Yeah. You said it was his 90th and they were gonna have a party for him on the base. Being it was a birthday party, Dinah couldn't make it. But you were going, after the celebration was over.

EMMETT

Well, they did have they party, but I didn't go. I couldn't go. I was at a lawyer's office nearly all day.

TALIB

What? The whole day? For what?

EMMETT

They had it video recorded, a court reporter was there and everything. The lawyers, back-and-forth getting into it. Justina's lawyer told me what it was gonna be like, but it was worse. I'm the key witness in her case. Man, when it was done, I just sat in the park for awhile. Then, went home.

TALIB

What happened?

EMMETT

It was a "conditional examination" and I had to present evidence.

TALIB

What's a "conditional examination"?

EMMETT

Like a deposition. They did it, just in case something would prevent me from testifying at the trial.

TALIB

What's she suing for?

EMMETT

Criminal negligence and malice. Against the Watchtower Bible & Tract Society, the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, this congregation and Jacob Ubel, for covering up child sexual abuse in her case, twice.

Talib is shocked.

TALIB

What? Why?

EMMETT

I've been holding all of this in, for nearly 25 years, since I've been an elder. I'm telling you this with all confidence, because I know what kind of person you are. And, I trust you. You and me, we come from a 'band of brothers' long before we were spiritual brothers as Jehovah's Witnesses. We know what it takes. What it really means to take an oath. A promise to serve.

Talib concedes.

TALIB

Go on.

EMMETT

What I'm gonna tell you now, is the real nitty-gritty. The dirty laundry. And when I found out, I complained. I was completely shut down - by every elder I knew. Even the circuit and district overseers I talked to warned me, "Don't you dare call or write New York. Cause, they'll tell us."

Talib, disbelieves.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

There are never any witnesses. And, it's not known to any other members, except those involved. So, if word gets around, it'd be through me. And I'll be - Xed for slander. And if any family member or anybody backs you, they'll be Xed, too.

Talib agitated.

TALIB

X-ed? Disfellowshipped. For what? Backing up a child that's been abused. And warning that a sexual predator is right here, among us.

Emmett agrees.

EMMETT

I was either chairman of, or was part of the judicial committee for all of these cases. But they're other ones in there. This goes back for decades, since this congregation was formed over 60 years ago. I'm just showing and telling you, about what I was present for and personally involved in, right here in this room.

TALIB

No hearsay. No gossip. So this is all official.

EMMETT

100%. Someone committed, either a crime or libel. And we, the elders handled it internally by procedure or as directed by the Governing Body through their Legal and Service Departments.

Emmett puts his hand on a dozen files, 2-in thick. (Stack 1)

EMMETT (CONT'D)

This is physical abuse, husband and wife vice-versa, and/or children. Drug-related. Alcohol - all of them.

Talib is shocked, but doesn't overreact. Emmett points to an inch stack. (Stack 2)

EMMETT (CONT'D)

These are fraud and slander cases.

Emmett takes a deep breath and exhales. Then takes two files from his bag, then holds up the one on top.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

These two are classified as murder cases. I was tracking him, he vanished. (tosses file on top) This one is on my daughter Freya. Yep, her attempted suicide is in here, too.

Emmett tosses the file on the desk.

TALIB

She was disfellowshipped? But, you said the first time, it was an accident. She was in the hospital, fighting for her life.

EMMETT

She wasn't sorry at first. It happened, after the decision was already made.

Emmett looks away.

TALIB

She must have been a very sensitive and empathetic soul. Overwhelmed by a lot of things. Sometimes folks like that, just can't cope, no matter what. Leaving this world is the only way for them to have peace.

Emmett puts his hand on Talib's shoulder.

EMMETT

You're the first Witness, that's said anything true and kind about her. And you didn't even know Freya. They, knew her ALL her life. And it was the longest before they even started to treat us like real "brothers and sisters" again.

Pregnant pause.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

By the way, zero reports to the police or professionals that could analyze, counsel and maybe help. Then you hear in some congregations, a few elders do report to officials. The pattern of inconsistency is telling of a bigger problem, that starts at the top.

TALIB

What exactly, do the elders do?

EMMETT

We read the bible and prayed with them.

TALIB

And those with addictions?

EMMETT

Mental health experts have never been praised by the GB, governing body. Dinah told me, until more recently, you never even read a Watchtower or Awake article mentioning anybody using professional help for mental or emotional issues. And, there's still a negative undertone about it, generally. It's the, "Jehovah is ALL you need" mentality.

TALIB

Why?

EMMETT

Personally. If a Witness goes to, say a psychiatrist, and starts talking about their life. It would take, all but two minutes for them to come to conclusion that the religion is a massive source of their troubles. And considering the significant amount of Witnesses that I know, with these kinds of issues, that's even after they came into "The Truth."

TALIB

And the GB, I guess, knows that the numbers would drop off, significantly. Mental health problems are a big issue.

Emmett concedes.

TALIB (CONT'D)

What about drug rehab programs?
Group therapy?

EMMETT

It might've helped some of them. Who knows. Maybe since they got put out, they found what they needed. But I'd never know, for one. Unless I see them on the street one day and go up to talk to them. Cause when any ex-Jehovah's Witness sees someone they know that's a JW, they will not speak to them. They won't even say, "Hello." They know the rule.

TALIB

Even if it's a business, customer situation?...Wait, I remember. That's how you were when what's her name; with that GPS system for her company. Ah, Lilly Mason, she came to the store that time. Long time ago. You just started having bible study with me. Long before we became partners.

EMMETT

You're supposed to act like you don't know them or get somebody else to help. It's what the GB interprets, that the bible says, they have to do. Cause if you talk friendly to them and any JW finds out. They'll spy on you, then get someone else to "witness" it. They'll, both of them together, tell the elders. Then there's a committee meeting. And you'll get axed, if you don't repent. Either that, or, you just never get caught doing it.

Talib ponders.

TALIB

You know you and I, we never talked about this. But, I used to go to group therapy, to help me deal with my PTSD. I would've stayed a complete mess without it.

EMMETT

Well, if you went now, since you've gotten baptized and you're a servant and the elders found out (not through me, of course), you'd be questioned.

TALIB

Really?

EMMETT

No joke.

Talib thinks for a moment.

TALIB

So, where's Jacob's file?

Emmett opens his bag and takes another file out.

EMMETT

This was the first judicial committee case I was in. Before you read what's in here, there are some things you need to know.

Emmett puts file on top and sits down.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

The Legal Department in Patterson, New York, they handle all the congregation's child sex abuse. Then, they pass along the information about the case, to the Service Department. They record them, along with ALL the other judicial committee cases in the US, in a database. In other countries, their branch office does likewise. But New York knows everything. They are sticklers for reports, everything is documented, just like the military. Just like you said, earlier today.

TALIB

Permanent records. And, I was only joking.

Emmett nods.

EMMETT

Yeah, well. When we get a report or accusation of child sex abuse from a publisher or anyone associated with the congregation, our protocol is - call the Legal Department before we do anything else.

TALIB

It's a crime. But, you're told to call them, not the police?

EMMETT

No. No police. No child protection services. You can, but you don't have to, tell the victim or their parents to. But you don't report it. Whether you heard it through a confession or hearsay.

TALIB

Did YOU tell the parents or the victim to call the police or child protection services?

EMMETT

I didn't. And, to my knowledge, and this is after being an elder for 25 years. No other elder I know personally, not even once. But, I've heard of it happening in very rare cases.

TALIB

Come on! What the hell? It's wrong. It's children for God's sake. All the parents need to know. We don't live in a compound, in a commune somewhere. We live, and work, and go about our business or whatever, within this community.

EMMETT

Legal isn't there to give you advice on protecting the victim.

(MORE)

EMMETT (CONT'D)

They're there to give legal advice to protect the elders from liability, in states where reporting CSA is mandatory.

Emmett gets the "Shepherding" book from his bag and puts it on top the file.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

This is the elder "bible" from The Society. According to them, you can't even read this if your not an elder. In Bethel, where this is written and they print them, sisters that work there, alongside the brothers, aren't even allowed to touch them.

Talib laughs.

TALIB

What's all the hush-hush, about?
It's ALL from the bible, ain't it?

Emmett scoffs.

EMMETT

It's like, there's the Ten Commandments and then ALL the others laws, that the Israelite judges made up, in the Mishnah.

Talib concedes.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

I marked the chapter on, Child Abuse.

TALIB

We can't hide this. It's complicity. It's criminal. (cynical) "Shepherd The Flock of God."

Talib stares Emmett in the eyes.

TALIB (CONT'D)

And, you know it's criminal. That's why you brought me here.

Emmett concedes.

EMMETT

Jacob's first case...

TALIB

First case?

EMMETT

Yeah. When he was in his early-teens, after he was baptized. The girl was little, so they were both minors. Then, he did it again, to the same girl. He was disfellowshipped the second time.

Emmett takes the book and turns to a page with highlighted text. As Talib reads, he gets indignant.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Read that.

TALIB

"CONGREGATION CONSIDERATIONS
When discussing child sexual abuse from a congregation standpoint, we are not considering a situation in which a minor who is a willing participant and who is approaching adulthood is involved in sexual activity with an adult who is a few years older than the minor. **Nor, generally speaking, are we discussing situations in which only minors are involved.** (See 14:29-30) Rather, we are referring to an adult guilty of sexually abusing a minor who is a young child, or an adult guilty of sexual involvement with a minor who is approaching adulthood but was not a willing participant." (Beat) This is mental! A child that wants to be raped!

EMMETT

I marked 14:29, too.

Talib turns to it.

TALIB

"SEXUAL MISCONDUCT INVOLVING ONLY MINORS. What steps should elders take when minors engage in sexual misconduct with one another? As stated earlier, two elders should immediately call the Legal Department even when both persons are minors.

(MORE)

TALIB (CONT'D)
 MINORS WHO ENGAGE IN SEXUAL
 MISCONDUCT WITH ONE
 ANOTHER **ARE NOT GENERALLY
 CONSIDERED BY THE CONGREGATION AS
 HAVING ENGAGED IN CHILD SEXUAL
 ABUSE.** However, regardless of the
 ages of those involved, such
 misconduct is serious and may even
 warrant congregation judicial
 action. The body of elders should
 work with the parents to ensure
 that the minors **receive spiritual
 assistance.**

Talib "what the fuck did I just read" look and slams the book close.

TALIB (CONT'D)
 What the hell is this? Are they so
 stupid not to know, there are
 juvenile sex offenders. That girl
 you mentioned, she's the one that's
 suing, right?

EMMETT
 Yeah, Justina. I knew her and her
 mother well. Dinah studied with
 her, Cara.

TALIB
 I hope she bleeds them ALL dry.

EMMETT
 The CO, had an elder from a nearby
 congregation chair the first
 judicial committee case. Brother
 Kennedy, he spoke Spanish, too.
 He's dead now. Mordred and I sat on
 it, too. Mordred chaired the second
 one.

TALIB
 So the circuit overseer decides the
 elders for the committee?

EMMETT
 Yeah. The first time, Jacob
 confessed. The girl's mother
 confronted him, herself. He denied
 it at first. Then, she told him she
 was going to tell the elders. Jacob
 sat there with these crocodile
 tears. But his attitude was
 disgusting.

(MORE)

EMMETT (CONT'D)

He still blamed her, an eight-year-old. He was 13. Fergus made all sorts of excuses for him. And his mom, she already gave up on him. Justina was messed up... And her mother, devastated. At the time, her English wasn't good. Dinah helped a lot.

TALIB

What was the judgement?

EMMETT

Private reproof. Second time, she was raped, she just turned 16. I think it happened on her birthday. When she got home, her mother took her straight to the police, then the hospital.

TALIB

Thank goodness.

Emmett nods.

EMMETT

She and my Freya were good friends. Freya was like a big sister to her, ten years or so age difference.

TALIB

The father?

EMMETT

Absent. In here, it's a case of - everybody trusts, everybody. Naïve. They're downright fooled by these sexual predators. I was, too. A mother, allows her innocent daughter, to go with my innocent daughter, to the house of the kid that was good-looking and "cool" and had lots of friends. Plus, everything he wanted. He's an only child. And he came to his parents late in life. Justina had a crush on him. Freya said, she used to talk about him a lot. He is a monster, that looks like the guy next door. But, more than charming, when things go his way.

TALIB

What was she like? Justina.

EMMETT

She was shy. Pretty girl. Sweet as could be. She loved our dog. Her mom said, they couldn't afford one. They're really poor. But, you never had to tell Justina twice. Obedient, like a good little soldier. She couldn't swim, she wanted to learn, but she was scared. She just loved hanging on to the edge, bobbing up-and-down, being around all the other kids. Freya wasn't much for getting in, with all them kids splashing around. Jacob was a good swimmer though, a natural. You see how fit he is, even now. He was training to be a lifeguard at one point.

TALIB

How convenient.

Emmett and Talib scoff.

TALIB (CONT'D)

Where was the mother, in all of this?

EMMETT

Cara, she was a single parent, struggling hard, stressed out, working two jobs. Dinah helped find her housekeeping jobs, through her clients. She was trying so hard to make the meetings and field service. I don't know how she found the strength. She and the husband couldn't see eye-to-eye with her being a Witness. So, he split. It happens.

TALIB

A divided front. That's why I wanted Sariah, to join in.

EMMETT

But, religion isn't to blame. They're couples with different beliefs living together. It's some religions that causes the problems. Cause, they constantly keep them aware of the differences.

(MORE)

EMMETT (CONT'D)

And, sometimes folks find out, they're just not a good match for each other.

Talib concedes.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Anyway, Fergus had a swimming pool put in, at the house they used to live in. Jacob was always bragging to everybody about it. And, back in the day, they had pool parties almost every other weekend and during the week, in the summer break. All the young people, like a dozen of them from the hall, were always invited.

TALIB

You went?

EMMETT

Me and Dinah went a couple of times. But it was mostly for the kids, you know. Jacob's mother, her name was, May. She'd fix them food and all. Then she'd go back in the house. She did that to appease Jacob, mostly.

TALIB

Spoiled brat. What was she like?

Emmett reminisces.

EMMETT

She was a petite woman. And she suffered with real bad migraines. She used to give Dinah bales of hay from her parents farm. That was her secret to grow these really sweet and juicy strawberries. Dinah still grows them. Fergus couldn't stand her garden. I've never seen a man that hated grass and plants so much.

TALIB

Maybe that was his punishment when he was a kid. Pulling weeds, that was mine. Couldn't stand it. Now, I'm looking to get ridda weeds.

EMMETT

May, was a kind person. You know. Simple, down-to-earth, no fuss. Did everything he said. She was afraid of him and the boy.

TALIB

Was she baptised?

EMMETT

She was never interested in being a Witness. Never went to church. Never came up in here. But she had a Witness funeral anyway.

TALIB

Really. That's interesting.

EMMETT

Well, Fergus made sure of it. He got permission from the circuit overseer on that. Brother Kennedy, he did circuit work sometimes. She was really nice to the kids and they loved her. Fergus, he didn't care one way or another, about all those kids going over there, all the time. When he was home, he stayed inside. He drank - a lot and ignored everything.

TALIB

How'd you know?

EMMETT

Freya. She was the only single, young adult, sister in the group. All her friends were married already in their late teens. Some of 'em, with kids already.

TALIB

Well, if they want to have sex and their single, they get kicked out.

EMMETT

So, they get married and get miserable. Anyway, Freya was a regular pioneer. Always out in the ministry, she took it seriously. And, I bought her a secondhand car. She wasn't working at the time. I was teaching her what I knew about programming.

(MORE)

EMMETT (CONT'D)

She wanted to, but college was a big fat no, no. She asked, but the regular circuit overseer said, they'd take her off the pioneer list, if she enrolled.

TALIB

They changed their tune on that.

Emmett shrugs.

EMMETT

Yeah but, they still don't approve. I've heard elders say that Witnesses that go to college are mentally diseased.

Talib scoffs.

TALIB

What an idiot! Where do they get this bullshit thinking from.

EMMETT

These are people who are programmed to think that all knowledge, aside from the bible and these books, is evil. I know, university isn't for everybody. But, everyone has the right, to make a choice about their career in life.

Talib concedes.

TALIB

So, Freya she was the unofficial babysitter, chaperone - for them kids over there at the Ubel's pool.

EMMETT

Besides Jacob, they were good kids, though. Deirdre, Jacob's girlfriend was one of them. Em, was just a toddler, then. I think Fergus physically abused, May. She wore huge, dark sunglasses even inside the house.

TALIB

With his drinking and domineering, she might've had more than migraines.

EMMETT

Freya didn't like that Jacob was always trying to run everything at the house. Acting older than his age. Bullying the other kids. She complained to his parents. But that boy, ran the house. I guess they felt guilty, with Fergus gone half the time. So, that's the scenario. Now, for the real miscarriage of justice and abuse of power.

Emmett gets up and goes to the library and gets, The New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures, then turns to Numbers 35:30. After each scripture is read, he gives Talib the next one, Talib turns to them, then reads aloud each one. Deuteronomy 19:15, Matthew 18:15-17, John 8:17, 2 Corinthians 13:1, Hebrews 10:28, then 1 Timothy 5:19. As Talib reads, simultaneous inaudible flashbacks.

FLASHBACK LOCATIONS NO.1 INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR OF FERGUS' OLD HOUSE. Early 1990s, upper middle-class, single-level modest houses. The backyard and covered patio is surrounded by a 5-ft wooden fence and 8-ft of dense hedges, average-sized constructed in-ground swimming pool with water slide, a bit of lawn at both sides of the house and on the borders of a large vegetable and floral garden well appointed, totally private. LOCATION NO.2 FREYA'S USED COMPACT CAR IN GOOD CONDITION IN A NICE MIDDLE-CLASS NEIGHBORHOOD. Car parked on the curb. LOCATION NO.3 INTERIOR OF JUSTINA'S MOTHER'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM. Mid-1990s, tidy, but impoverished area, single-level, secondhand worn-out furnishings.

Emmett hands the book to Talib, takes it.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Please read this.

TALIB

Numbers 35:30 Whoever kills a person should be put to death as a murderer on the testimony of witnesses, but no one will be put to death on the testimony of just one witness. Deuteronomy 19:15. No single witness may convict another for any error or any sin he may commit. On the testimony of two witnesses or on the testimony of three witnesses the matter is established. Matthew 18:15-17 Moreover, if your brother commits a sin, go and reveal his fault between you and him alone.

(MORE)

TALIB (CONT'D)

If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. If he does not listen, take along one or two more, so that on the testimony of two or three more every matter may be established. If he does not listen to them, speak to the congregation. If he does not listen even to the congregation, let him be to you just as a man of the nations and as a tax collector. John 8:17 Also in your on Law it is written: "The witness of two men is true." 2 Corinthians 13:1 This is the third time I am coming to you. "On the testimony of two or three witnesses every matter must be established." 1 Timothy 5:19 Do not accept an accusation against an older man except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. Hebrews 10:28 Anyone who has dis-regarded the Law of Moses dies with compassion on the witness of two or three.

FLASHBACK PART 1 OF 5 (SIMULTANEOUS WITH TALIB'S READING)

EXT/INT. FERGUS'S HOUSE. BACK YARD AND INTERIOR.

MAY (late 50s) wearing very large dark sunglasses, in the kitchen fixing trays of sandwiches and snacks for a DOZEN KIDS (including YOUNG JUSTINA and DEIRDRE, 8). Well-mannered, playful (age: 8-12, half girls and boys) swimming in the pool, others are sat on the patio waiting patiently to eat.

FREYA (17) dutiful, polite, going back-and-forth helping May sort the trays and organising things.

JACOB (12/13, athletic). Jekyll & Hyde, acts deceptively nice to get his way, when people go against him he's a terrorist. Jacob chasing Justina around the patio and yard, then out of sight at the side of the house on the lawn (where the A/C condenser is blowing). She finds it amusing at first, then terrifying. Jacob grabs her wrist and pushes her down on the ground, pins her by straddling her, grabs her wrists and hands together and pushes them over her mouth. She skirms and wriggles, telling him to stop. She screams (can't be heard over the condenser) and can't free herself. Freya calls out for her. Jacob warns her to shut up. May rushes over to Jacob and Justina, sees them and shouts at Jacob. Jacob lets her loose. Justina runs to Freya, crying but saying nothing. Freya hugs and consoles her. The other children are puzzled and confused. Jacob and May in a shouting match on the patio.

Jacob throws a massive tantrum and wrecks most of the food. Then takes a hand full of potato salad and flings it at Justina's face. Freya gets a spray of it. Justina cries. Jacob storms inside, May follows and shots at him. Fergus, zoned-out in a Barcalounger drinking Bourbon and watching a rodeo on TV. Freya grabs napkins and wipes off Justina and herself, then gets her handbag and Justina's clothes and towel. Then tells half the kids to collect their things. As they're all ready to go, Jacob re-enters (calm and nice) with two water cannons (tempting the Other Boys) and apologises directly to Justina. Justina turns to Freya for protection. Jacob pleads to Justina, then apologises to everyone else. Other Boys beg Justina to let them stay. She agrees, they put their things back, get some food, then sit on the patio eating. May re-enters, very motherly, consoles Justina, and salvages what she can, then brings more food out. Freya hugs and takes Justina aside, to a large chaise lounge and comforts her. Young Deirdre and another girl, fix two plates and drinks for Freya and Justina and bring them over. Then get their plates and join Freya and Justina, the Other Girls join them. Jacob jokes around with the Other Boys and fills the water cannons.

FLASHBACK PART 2 OF 5

EXT. FERGUS'S HOUSE. BACK YARD.

Freya (20) and CAMILO (18, very slight-build, Casanova wannabee) are sat under the patio cover. Camilo is trying to chat her up. Freya's nonchalant, ignoring him, reading a Watchtower. He leaves the house, after a beat. Freya exits, inside the house.

Jacob (13, taller than average and muscular) stood on the edge, throws a few doubloons in the pool, one near Justina, intentionally. The Other Kids (a few of the same, incl. Deirdre) dive for them. He dives for the one near Justina. He grabs it, rises to the surface, puts it halfway in, between his teeth clinching it, swims to Justina (with flotation donuts on her arms, hanging on by the shallow edge). He approaches her with a suspicious look, but she's not afraid. He coaxes her to yank the doubloon out of his mouth. She does so, timidly. The doubloon falls from her hand and lands underneath her, Jacob hurriedly dives for it and slowly comes up, puts his head between her legs, then grabs her knees and holds her on his shoulders. Justina jumps and shouts, loses her grip, struggles to hold on again, then tells Jacob to quit. He turns her loose, then aggressively splashes water in her face. Concurrently, MOTHER (mid-20s) enters with TWO SMALL KIDS (Age: 3 & 5) ready to swim. Everyone greets her and the Kids. She gets them in the pool with her, near the stairs.

Mother hears Justina shout at Jacob after she gets away from him. Mother inquires. Justina complains. Jacob denies. Mother tells Jacob to stop splashing, then tells Justina to come over to her. Jacob goes to the Other Kids at the deep end, jokes around, and make fun of Justina. The Other Kids semi-ignore him.

FLASHBACK PART 3 OF 5

INT. FERGUS'S HOUSE.

Jacob (15) enters the house, soaking wet in his swimming trunks, to get a tin filled with doubloons from his bedroom. En route, he hears his parents in their bedroom, their door is ajar. He creeps up undetected, sees Fergus drunk and shirtless, wearing boxers. May is wearing a loose-fitting sundress, hair messed up, she dishevelled and panicked. Fergus has her held tightly by her wrists, bent over and pinned on the edge of a dresser. He's rammed up against her. A look of violent gratification on his face with a look of terror on hers.

FLASHBACK PART 4 OF 5

EXT./INT. AFTERNOON. EARLY SUMMERTIME. AVERAGE "SAFE" NEIGHBORHOOD/JUSTINA'S CAR.

Car-group witnessing. Freya is driving, Deirdre front seat passenger, Cecilia (18) middle, Justina - left, Jacob - right. making return visits. Car is parked, driver's side to curb. Justina and Deirdre are asleep, heads resting on the car door. Freya and Cecilia have exited the car and are at the door of a nearby house, on a return visit with HOUSEHOLDER (woman, average build, 20s) for sometime and are about to return to the car. Jacob's checking that the coast is clear and starring at Justina's legs (she's in a laxed position). Before he slowly slides himself to her, he makes sure Deirdre is asleep. He pulls Justina's dress back, then touches the inside of her leg as he stares at her face (implying that he continues to reach farther up and touch her crotch). Justina jumps up. Jacob jumps. She shouts for him to stop and stay away. Jacob acts innocent and returns to first position. Deirdre wakes up, groggy and turns around. Justina complains. Freya and Cecilia return in a hurry. Cecilia looking at her watch, going on-and-on about getting home, to cook for Chilo. Freya apologises to the children for staying longer, but the Householder was interested and "sheep-like." Justina complains to Freya about Jacob, as she and Cecilia re-enter the car. Freya upset, investigates and questions the children. Jacob, denies everything. Cecilia stays neutral, but insists on getting home.

FLASHBACK PART 5 OF 5

INT. AFTERNOON. JUSTINA'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM.

Living room, Camilo (25) has made the sofa into a bed. With a few of his personal things scattered about. Camilo (wearing a button-front shirt with a top pocket) goes to a table takes a few, new Mardi Gras doubloons and puts them in his pocket, gets his wallet and exits.

CUT TO:

EXT. FERGUS'S HOUSE. FRONT AND BACK YARD.

Jacob (21, more muscular), angry, cutting the front lawn, with Fergus (early 60s) supervising and harshly criticising him. Warning him to hurry up with the very bad weather impending, then exits into the house.

Backyard and shed (Jacob's makeshift cave, in need of repair). There's an old coffee can with doubloons on a shelf. Old portable radio in the shed, blaring music. Some demolition and excavation work in progress, for a proper, large cabana, foundation extension prep work. Building materials stacked for the new shed on the patio. Camilo angrily confronts Jacob about what he did to Justina. Jacob adamantly denies everything, and pushes the lawn mower to the shed, Camilo in hot pursuit. Camilo takes a doubloon and puts it in his mouth (as Jacob did to Justina). While the two of them are in the shed. Jacob punches Camilo. The doubloon is knocked from his mouth. Jacob and Camilo, duke it out. Stuff gets knocked around. Jacob has the upper hand. He hits Camilo with a jab to the neck, with his elbow. Camilo stumbles, falls backwards and hits his head on two sledgehammers atop a large stack of concrete blocks. Camilo is unconscious. Jacob panics, rambling in a state of confusion. He sits down and rocks back-and-forth.

Fergus, desperately looking for Jacob, enters shed and see's what's happened. He shouts at Jacob, grabs and pulls him up, to his feet. Then pushes and slaps him, throws him out of the door and kicks him away. Fergus checks Camilo's pulse, he's dead, looks at the gapping wound in his head. Then assesses the shed, switches the radio off. He sees a very large hay bale bag, quickly formulates a plan of action. Then goes to his wife's garden (where part of the back lawn was, in Part 1) uproots the rest of her plants, makes a mess, to aggravate May and keep her away. He hurriedly gets a shovel and feverishly starts digging a hole deep enough for the hay bale/body bag. Drags out all of the soil and sand bags in the shed, plops them on the side. The wife arrives, comes out and questions him, he snaps back at her.

She's desperately trying to save her garden, he shoves her out of the way, she falls and hurts herself. She yells at him in her defeated way. Then goes inside the house, frazzled, shaking and upset. She takes a couple of pills with some booze, goes in her bedroom and slams the door. He finishes digging the hole, then padlocks the door. Late at night, before the storm turns severe, Fergus re-enters shed. He dumps the stuffed, large jute Cashel's hay bale bag. In his struggle to lift the body, he hits the shelf with the doubloons and an old and worn out, "Young People Ask" book. The doubloons and book, fall to the floor. A few doubloons fall on Camilo's shirt, one on his exposed chest. As Fergus lifts and struggles to get the body in the bag, the single doubloon slides down inside Camilo's shirt and others fall from his shirt pocket. Fergus gets blood on his hands. The other doubloons fall off the body, onto the ground. Fergus picks them up, looks around for others and sees the one that Jacob knocked out of Camilo's mouth (it's imprinted and dented from his bite). He picks up the book, child porn photos fall out. He and tosses everything in the bag. He struggles and finally gets the body in, then zips it. He throws the sledgehammers in the hole, then buries the body. Takes all the soil and sand bags and spreads them out evenly. Re-enters the shed to make sure it's in order. The thunderstorm hits, with the heavy overnight rain the area ground is all even and packed down. Midday, a work crew arrives to pour the cement foundation, in the place of half the garden. END OF FLASHBACKS.

TALIB

The two witness rule. I've read these scriptures before. But, there's no way in hell, that a child who's been raped or molested, is going to have anybody around to be a witness. They'd either be, another abuser, or in on it some kinda way. Or, another victim being abused, too. We're talking about children, no matter what age, alone - with folks that they know and trust, not strangers. As a parent, I trusted all of them, up till now.

Emmett concedes.

EMMETT

And that's why I kept it. (points to the file) Listening to a child testifying, and in front of a sex criminal is...

TALIB

It gets that detailed?

EMMETT

I can't even describe what it was like. Seeing her, a little eight-year-old, in emotional distress, going through the trauma again. And, of course her mother or any sister wasn't present. It's only men, she's talking to.

Talib shakes his head.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

When you read the file, you'll know. You'll know everything.

TALIB

Elders aren't qualified for this. They're not social workers. Catholic priests do get family counsel training, at least. But religious leaders, clergy, whatever can't take the place of experts, professionals, that know.

EMMETT

The GB is out of their minds, to ever think that some reading scriptures and saying prayers are enough. Some idiot elders even say, it's cause the wife needs to have more sex with the husband. Then we wrap up the counsel, by saying what the GB use as the elixir for ALL our troubles, "We leave the matter in Jehovah's hands."

Talib disgusted.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

I'm traumatized just talking about what happened, after all these years. Justina and Cara, I hope they have the strength to see this through.

TALIB

I can't get my head around any of this.

Talib closes the bible, gets up, puts it back in place. Then looks at all the books on the shelves and thinks.

EMMETT

About the only thing that has changed, just recently.

TALIB

Is, what?

EMMETT

Minors don't have to go face-to-face with the adult predator.

TALIB

And, a juvenile, one?

EMMETT

No updates, on that. Instead of reprinting the book, they send out the updates in letters. You see that library. It's half of what it used to be. All the old books, ones that Dinah's family donated. Going all the way back to the early 1900s, up to the 50s, they've all been removed. I have them at home, in boxes.

Talib looks at Emmett, puzzled.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

The GB have told ALL Witnesses worldwide to destroy them. There's a list. The inconsistency, it's a sign of a much bigger problem.

TALIB

Incrementing evidence.

Emmett agrees. Talib sits down and opens the file and looks at the first page, entitled "CSA Intake Questionnaire"

TALIB (CONT'D)

Wait, right of the bat, this says, "**ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGE** and Confidentiality Notice." Shouldn't it say "Clergy"?

Emmett scoffs.

EMMETT

Yep. But remember, JWs don't believe in clergy. That's what "false" religions have.

(MORE)

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Someone named John, from the Legal Department in Brooklyn, at that time, that's where they were located.

TALIB

John, who?

EMMETT

I asked, but he wouldn't tell me. No matter how many times you ask, they refuse tell you last names, without explanation. Anyway, he called me after the first case of Jacob sexually abusing Justina. Kennedy had moved away by then and Mordred was unavailable. Anyway, he told me to burn that file. Then, he asked if I had any notes. I had lots of hand-written notes, but I didn't tell him. He said, if I did, they should be destroyed, too. And, he told me to repeat the directive back to him, word-for-word.

TALIB

Did you?

EMMETT

Yeah, I did. And the conversation ended. After that, I made copies of everything. Justina was 16, he was 21, the second time. He was disfellowshipped. And shortly after, he wasn't at the meetings or field service for awhile. Fergus said he was very ill and his mother was caring for him. The next thing I heard was, he left town, went to southern LA.

Talib scoffs. Emmett pointing to the file.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

I've kept that hidden for 20 years. It starts with the last case. This is no, "he said, she said." This is documented evidence. His confession, the first time. And Justina's testimony, both times. The second one, he outright denied he raped her and said she consented. He gave her a roofie.

TALIB

Did he admit he drugged her?

EMMETT

No. The first time, I think he confessed and repented, to make it all look good on paper. He was already a con-artist at 13.

TALIB

Since he was privately reprovved, the congregation didn't know what he did the first time?

EMMETT

No, they didn't specifically know. I gave a talk about immorality, at the midweek meeting. Folks that are awake and aware can read between the lines. They would just assume it was about him, if they knew anything about what happened. But, none of them did. It's an underhanded, veiled and vague attempt at warning everyone, that the GB tell elders to use.

TALIB

Someone evil is about, but you don't know who. So you just suspect everyone. Then gossip starts. And that creates a bad situation. But then I assume everybody forgets and...

EMMETT

Elders always give talks like that, after someone in the congregation has been disfellowship, disassociated or publicly reprovved. But, the confidentiality that the GB insists on, isn't broken. And that's all they care about.

TALIB

Everyone else treated him like normal. Except for Cara and Justina. You, Dinah, Freya and Emmett Junior, when he got older?

EMMETT

We made sure that none of us ever crossed paths with him.

Talib flips through the pages of the file and notes the signatures on the last pages.

TALIB

With over 100,000 congregations, there could be thousands of child sex criminals in these Kingdom Halls. It's no wonder they're all these Watchtower articles and publications and talks about child sex abuse.

EMMETT

Whenever there's an internal problem or problems, that are getting outta hand, that's what they do, that's their method.

TALIB

In that second rate animated video. They have the predator drawn like a shadowy monster. When in fact, it's the brother or sister sitting next to you and your kids, smiling at you. And these, governing body say, "We love our young ones. It's being handled. Jehovah is taking care of things." Here I'm thinking, all of this has been reported to the authorities.

EMMETT

Of course, that's the upright and conscientious, thing to do. The rank-and-file Jehovah's Witness, they'd be shocked to know the truth about why, victims are suing.

Talib imitates Stephen Lett.

TALIB

On JW Broadcasting, GB says, "Ex-JWs are just greedy apostates spreading hate speech and lies."

Talib shakes his head.

EMMETT

Before they're settling out-of-court for most of them. They had to, to save face. But, things are happening, the truth is coming out.

(MORE)

EMMETT (CONT'D)

The cases are going to trial, cause more legal counsel are willing to take these religions on, in Court.

Talib looks at the folder.

TALIB

Where do you think all of this is headed?

EMMETT

Dinah's dad, they called him, Grand pa Leto. He was in and out of it with the Alzheimer's and lymphoma. Well, he woulda lived longer if he had blood transfusions. But, he told me one thing that's stuck with me, for these past two years since he died. He said, "The Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses have a lot to answer for. I'm not talking about what we believe in. Their prophecies that were totally wrong, that they won't own up to. I'm talking about what we, the elders have tolerated and what we've covered up. The elders take the fall, in the end. And, you've gotta live with it."

Talib is visibly stunned.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

I was stunned, too. I didn't know what to make of that. So, I asked him, "What are we covering up?" He said, "It's like gardening. When you dig deep enough, you'll find all kind of things. But, most people hate gardening."

Talib concedes.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Not long after he died, Freya died. I would visit her and Tristan. She was disfellowshipped, but - I went anyway. When you an elder, they think your trying to get them t come back. I didn't care what anybody said. She loved her granddad. As strung out as she was, she always talked about him. "How's Papi Leto?" she asked every time.

(MORE)

EMMETT (CONT'D)

When I told her, he died. She went into a state. That's when we got custody of Tristan.

TALIB

She never came out of it?

Emmett silent, holding back the tears.

EMMETT

Ever since that ol' man told me that and she died, I've been in a state of mind, I can't explain. I just pulled myself up, by the bootstraps, had to. I didn't have time to think, cause I had my grandson to help raise. I kept going to the meetings, in field service, helped those that I could, in the congregation. I met you, at the sandwich shop that day. We struck up a conversation. I studied with you, helped bring you in, here. Doing what I'm supposed to do, you know. Or, what I believed, I'm supposed to do.

TALIB

I can't imagine what it feels like to lose a child. I just can't imagine losing any of my kids. Do you think, maybe. Maybe, Freya saw something? Or...

EMMETT

Every time Justina said he touched her, he denied it. She knew Justina was not lying. She was the one that warned me about Jacob bein a Jekyll and Hyde. Freya always spoke up, when she knew something wasn't right. But, anything Justina told her, would've been considered as hearsay, anyway. She wasn't a witness to it.

TALIB

Nothing?

Emmett shakes his head.

EMMETT

Freya was just like her mother, outspoken.

(MORE)

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Some of these sisters used to tell her and Dinah to watch her mouths. You're not following headship. The bible says, the men are in charge. You're outta your place, as a woman. They didn't pay them no mind. Dinah's gotten to the point where she could care less about what any of them say, anymore. I think Freya felt guilty, because she **didn't** see anything.

Pregnant pause.

TALIB

What happened to Justina's mom? And her brother?

EMMETT

After it happened, she and Justina were irregular, then eventually, inactive. Camilo, the son, he was much older, from a previous marriage. A couple years younger than Freya, he only came round a couple of times. I guess Cara begged him.

TALIB

You knew him?

EMMETT

She asked me to come round and talk to him. He was no way interested in the slightest in the religion or much else, but looking for girlfriend. A nice girl to dump on.

TALIB

Freya?

EMMETT

She wasn't interested him, in the slightest. Some of these parents make deals with their older, estranged kids. If they come to the Kingdom Hall, they'll give them this or they'll get that.

TALIB

Concessions. Trade-offs.

Emmett concedes.

TALIB (CONT'D)

What was he like?

EMMETT

On the rebellious side. She couldn't keep tabs on him. And he wasn't telling her anything. He loved his sister, though. And, didn't care for Jacob, either. But, he just vanished. Left his stuff, split. Justina told him, what Jacob did and he confronted him one day. After that, the mother never knew where he went. She called his dad, he didn't know either. A few of his friends, nothing. She reported him missing. But, the police said he was an adult. And...

Emmett shrugs.

TALIB

Where do they live?

EMMETT

In, Portillo. In the same house. After all these years.

TALIB

You're good people. You and Dinah and Tristan. You've been through so much in the past couple of years.

Talib looks at the subpoena.

TALIB (CONT'D)

Man, this has got me. It's like somebody sucker punched me. I need to dig, like the ol' man said. Good thing I ended up liking gardening after all. Since they're covering up all these child abuse cases, I wonder what else they're covering up? Who or what, are they really protecting?

Talib touches the file.

TALIB (CONT'D)

So now, this sex predator, criminal low-life, is back. I have my little girl and another one on the way. You have Tristan. And all these children in this congregation.

(MORE)

TALIB (CONT'D)

A lot of single-parent, vulnerable families, need to be warned. The community needs to know.

EMMETT

I have a feeling there might more cases that we don't even know about. Jacob is manipulative and deceptive.

TALIB

Classic child sex predator behavior. First they groom the parents, then the child. It can take years and cost them all sorts of money. Buying loads of gifts, anything the kids wants, showing them a good time. It doesn't matter. Cause once they're in, there in. And the abuse begins little by little. They're always testing how far they can go and get away with. With the parents and the child.

EMMETT

These children, they don't deserve a bunch of ol' men, off in New York or wherever, conspiring to hide the truth, making rules and decisions that scar them for life.

TALIB

They're up there, protected from the real world, distancing themselves from all this and calling the shots. It's us Emmett, the boots on the ground, that need to stand up and do what's right. There are no governing body member or their lawyer signatures on any of these forms. It's a corporate stamp. So, they don't even accept responsibility for what they directly tell elders to do. They throw y'all under the bus, to get rolled over.

Talib closes the file.

TALIB (CONT'D)

As far as this goes. I'm not gonna let this rest, I'm gonna find out everything I can, Emmett.

(MORE)

TALIB (CONT'D)

I'm telling you. I'm gonna do whatever it takes. Whatever it takes, to protect our children. You hear me.

EMMETT

We have four weeks, then the trial. One day, I thought I saw Jacob hanging around the shopping center.

TALIB

When?

EMMETT

Just after New Year's, long before I got his letter to request reinstatement back into the congregation. He was talking to this little girl in the play area. Her mom was on the phone, in another world, yakkin' away. I sat, not to far off. He acted like he didn't see me and left the girl alone. He was bookin' it, but I followed him.

TALIB

And?

EMMETT

He gave me the slip. I couldn't keep up with him. I described him to security, at the mall. To keep a look out. But, if anything would've happened, the elders woulda said, it's my word against his.

TALIB

Don't worry, he's gonna get caught. He's too sure of himself. Doing it in public like that.

EMMETT

Or maybe, he saw how risky doing that is, and decided to come back to his ol' sex predator stompin' grounds.

TALIB

Here, in the Kingdom Hall.

Emmett concedes.

TALIB (CONT'D)

Makes perfect sense. It's like fish in a barrel, for him. The ones that's been around, they already know and trust him.

EMMETT

They'd have him sitting right next to their grandkids, even. And, they'll tell the newer ones, he made some wrong turns. But look, he's returned. We need to forgive and forget. The prodigal son.

TALIB

And what a nice brother he is. And how much fun they had swimming over there. And how Justina and her mother are weak and inactive. They've fallen out of The Truth, anyway. I hate that condescending behavior.

EMMETT

Yeah, holier than thou. Well, tomorrow's my last day of knocking on doors, going to a meeting, an assembly, a convention, giving talks, all of it.

TALIB

You're sure?

EMMETT

Never been so sure of something in all my life. I know what Jacob's done through the years. Once you read through all of that, you'll know, too. And I know what the elders in this congregation, this circuit, all the way up to the Legal and Service Departments and the GB, and myself, let him get away with. I cannot tolerate being here with him or support the cover-up anymore. That's why I'm testifying in Court.

Talib concedes.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

And to think it's only because you have some kinda rank, that you're the only ones privy to this intel. And, you can't warn anyone, cause of threats from the GB. After I got that subpoena today, I took a walk and told myself, I just can't do this anymore. I went home, got that murder file, made copies and went to the police. That's been 10 years. But, at least I can put that to rest.

Talib agrees.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

I wrote my letter of resignation as an elder. And my letter of disassociation from the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, when I got back from lunch.

TALIB

No wonder you were acting like that.

EMMETT

I'm just waiting, so you and Dinah and I can talk. I'm not doing anything else before then. I want us to talk about all this. Sariah can come if she wants to.

TALIB

I'm gonna she were she stands with the Organization. I was so excited that she even decided to have a bible study. Automatically thinking, this is it, she's comin' on in. I've never stopped to ask what she really thinks or how she feels about it. But, I'll come by tomorrow, as soon as I can.

EMMETT

Whenever you're ready, I'll be waitin'. I need to sort through my pc and delete all those other Watchtower files. Find all those forms, publisher record cards. All those ridiculous forms.

(MORE)

EMMETT (CONT'D)

And put them in something, to give
to Fergus.

Emmett collects the other files and puts them back in the cabinet. But, leaves Jacob's on the table for Talib and the book. Then turns to Talib and looks at him.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

You woulda been in a little boy
running around, in Germany then.
But in the US, in the early 70s,
there was this song, it went,
"Bless the beasts and the children.
For in this world, they have no
choice, they have no voice." you
know, we owe them that.

CUT TO:

INT. MORNING. TALIB'S HOUSE. BEDROOM.

Sariah wakes up, Talib's not in bed. She gets up, checks on Davina (asleep in crib) in her room, then goes downstairs and sees Talib on the back porch, sitting at the table on his laptop, with the file and notes on the table. He looks like he's done an all-nighter, but very focused, but anxious. As Sariah approaches, he hears her and changes his screen to a neutral tab. Sariah opens the back door and approaches him from behind, gives him a hug, a cuddle and a kiss on the cheek. Talib rubs her arm.

SARIAH

Good morning.

TALIB

Morning. How you two feeling?

SARIAH

I'm tired. Oh, my back. She was
kicking so hard last night. You
want breakfast?

TALIB

I fixed something already. I left
you some fruit. And there's coffee.

SARIAH

Thanks. You've been up all night?
Every time I felt, you weren't in
bed. You, okay?

TALIB

Couldn't sleep. I'm doing research. It's really important. So, I'm not going in field service this morning. Then, I'm going over to Emmett's later, for a while.

SARIAH

OK. (deep sigh) Remember my folks are coming by. Then, we might all, go visit my grandpa this evening. It's too much to bring him to the reunion, tomorrow.

TALIB

Sorry, Hun. I have to do this today. But, I'll be back in time.

SARIAH

I know how you are with your research. Look, I'm going back to bed.

Sariah goes to exit.

TALIB

Sariah, do you think what you're learning from your bible study, is really the truth?

SARIAH

(a bit suspicious)
Are you testing me?

TALIB

No, I'd just...I'd really like to know. That's all.

SARIAH

I don't want to offend you, Dinah or Emmett or any Witness. I'm halfway through that study book, on the chapter about who goes to heaven. I know that "heaven" is just an enlightened state of consciousness. Hell is a lower one.

TALIB

You never told me that.

SARIAH

(non-judgemental)
You've decided what you want to know and I've decided what I know.

Talib concedes.

SARIAH (CONT'D)

But there are some principles in the Bible and in those publications that are the same. Like in Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, or any of the religions, that I investigated since I've been searching for answers. For me, the bottom line is, they all have a strange concept about what "God" or deities are. God is a man, a creator/father-figure. And a destroyer all at the same time. Where's the good in that? It's like someone, that's in outer space somewhere, with multiple personality disorder, that rules over our world? That's fucked up. And, if that were true, humans are forever fucked.

Talib, taken aback.

SARIAH (CONT'D)

And, there's always some kind of a physical connection - a group to hang on to. A book of rules to follow or a building to go to for salvation. And money to give. Honestly, I don't think there's any person or group, religious or not, that knows all truth, all of the time. I feel it's such a huge burden to put on ourselves as people. We're here to do good and help others as much as we can.

Talib's a bit disappointed, but considering.

SARIAH (CONT'D)

It's the only thing that's going to make this world a better place. Well, that's my two cents worth.

Sariah rubs Talib on the shoulder, Talib touches her hand. She exits. He looks at her and thinks as she goes to the kitchen, gets the fruit, then goes upstairs.

CUT TO:

INT. MID-MORNING. KINGDOM HALL - AUDITORIUM.

Emmett, Dinah and Tristan are sat (in the front on the left side) Fergus is sat opposite, at the Kingdom Hall field service meeting. Hall is half-filled with PUBLISHERS (random group of JWs and their children 1/3 of the group), including CECILIA, Chilo's wife, CHILO is stood at the rear. JACOB arrives during the prayer and waits to sit down near Fergus, after the meeting is finished. JOSH (nervous, but trying to be a smart ass) is finishing the "Daily Text and Comments" then says a short and very nervous prayer. EVERYONE says, "Amen" when he's done.

JOSH

Since Brother Emmett is with us today. Takin' a break from making all that money, eh. His group can break off and go to him. You all have the largest amount, from what I can tell. Brother Fergus Ubel's group can go over by him. He's sat up here, on the right. I'll be with your group. (Josh looks through the audience.) So, Brother Talib Barron isn't here.

EMMETT

Don't worry about who's here and who's not. Chilo is helping me out. He already knows.

Emmett stands and turns around to audience.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Remember everybody, it's hot out there. Keep yourselves hydrated. If you feel like your gonna pass out, tell your partner. Find a spot to sit down. And let your partner get help. Let's look out for each other.

Emmett sits down. Publishers chatting with each other momentarily, before they approach Emmett's or Fergus' groups.

DINAH

What happened to Talib? Did Sariah, go in?

EMMETT

Don't worry they're fine. He's taking care of something. He's gonna come by later, for a while.

Emmett sees Jacob approaching Fergus and watches keenly. Jacob makes no eye contact with Emmett. A few Publishers welcome Jacob. Dinah sees him and scoffs.

DINAH
(under breath)
Look at him. Yeah, run to Daddy.
Like you always do.

TRISTAN
Mommie Dee, you, all right?

DINAH
Yeah baby, I'm fine. Just stay
close to us, OK. You hear?

TRISTAN
Yeah, I heard. (pointing) You see
that man over there. The one in the
blue shirt, with the real short
hair?

DINAH AND EMMETT
Yeah.

TRISTAN
He was by our schoolyard one time,
after school.

Emmett sits down and leans in to Tristan.

EMMETT
When was that?

TRISTAN
Ah, it was wintertime. Before
Christmas.

DINAH
What was he doing?

TRISTAN
He was walking his dog. Well, it
was really a puppy, maybe this big.

Tristan demonstrates with his hands (2-month old dog's size).

TRISTAN (CONT'D)
Like the one I showed you at the
pet shop. Near your store, in the
mall. Remember? And he told some
kids, he had more puppies. You
think he still has the puppies?
(MORE)

TRISTAN (CONT'D)

We could get one of him, instead of the one at the shop. It's better to get one from someone you know. Isn't it?

Emmett and Dinah stare at each other. Oh shit, moment.

DINAH

Ah, yeah, it is. You're right Triste.

EMMETT

(to Dinah)

We're not gonna be anywhere near them.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Son, did you talk to him?

TALIB

No, Pops. I never. I saw the dog. He was all excited cause the kids were petting him. I saw it was a boy dog. Then, I was just going to see it and I heard him say he had puppies. My friend Jake was there. Then a teacher came up and asked him, if he had children to pick up. I don't know what he said. He left. Like he had somewhere to go all of a sudden. That's all.

DINAH

Well, he doesn't have any puppies with him now. But you tell us more about it when we get home, OK. Right now, we need to in field service. But, don't go off and talk to him about puppies or anything. You, stay with us. You hear me, Tristan.

TRISTAN

Yeah. I heard you Mommie Dee.

Publishers approach Emmett, he stands and greets everyone. Chilo approaches Emmett with an 8x10 online territory assistant map printout (<https://youtu.be/7XiGk8MU4oI>)

CUT TO:

EXT. LATE AFTERNOON. EMMETT'S HOUSE, FRONT YARD/GARAGE.

Emmett finished washing cars (SUVs same make, slightly different colors, relatively new) Emmett sat in a folding camping chair at the open garage door, reading a RV magazine, looking at campsites. The front yard sprinkler is on. Beautiful front garden and lawn. Jazz music playing on the radio. Talib's car pulls up in front of the house. He parks, exits the car with two file folders (Jacob's file, the other thick with printouts from research), the Shepherding book and his laptop. He wearily approaches Emmett.

TALIB

Hey man, how you doing?

Emmett looks relieved, he closes the magazine, puts it aside and approaches Talib.

EMMETT

Hey. I'm good. You, OK? You look tired.

Emmett gives him a hug and a pat on the back. Talib somewhat comforted.

TALIB

Well.

EMMETT

Come. Let me get you a chair. How's Sariah?

Emmett gets another folding camping chair with drink holders. Sets it out for Talib. Talib sits down, then Emmett.

TALIB

She's good. Her mother and sisters came over, cleaning everything. Her aunt's here, visiting from Punjab, trying to see everybody she can. It's been a long time since they've seen her. She's leaving Monday afternoon. I'm not going to be at meeting tomorrow. Her family's having a big reunion. They're at the grocery now. Where's everybody?

EMMETT

Dinah's out back, checking out the excavation for the pool and the cabana. Tristan's over by his other grandma's, till tomorrow evening.

TALIB

Man, I know you wish that pool was done already.

EMMETT

That's why I said, go with the gunite. But she insisted, the constructed one is better, in the long run. And, it'll add so much more value of the house, so. She's always looking for me to do more work round here. Man, I'm so tired of DIY, till it ain't even funny.

TALIB

You do alright. How long you've been living here?

EMMETT

30 years. Did I tell you what a dump this place was.

Talib chuckles.

TALIB

Nearly every time.

Emmett concedes.

EMMETT

That's why we got it for such a steal. But this pool, that ain't on me at all. I'm completely out of it. Thank goodness. She's handling everything. I just wanna lay back and back stroke, when its done. But we'll be lucky if it's finished before summer's out. Man, them guys are slow.

TALIB

End of summer? Round, November. They're not slow. You're just impatient, for a man of your age.

EMMETT

Give 'em a break.

They both laugh.

TALIB

I swear, if Sariah's family wasn't living here in San Antonio, ain't no way I woulda retired down south with this heat and humidity. It's almost as bad as the desert. But, sweaty, like a wet sauna. Geez 'em. We should be living somewhere with normal weather.

EMMETT

Ain't no such place, these days.

They both chuckle.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

You want a cold one?

TALIB

Read my mind.

Emmett goes to the fridge and opens the door and pulls out two different beer bottles.

EMMETT

Your usual or my new favorite?

TALIB

I'm due for a change. Wait! Warsteiner?

Emmett smiles opens the beers, then hands one to Talib and rests his in his cup holder. Talib takes a sip of beer.

EMMETT

Well?

TALIB

It's been a long time. I looked all over this beer. Didn't think anybody sold them, here in the States.

Emmett pleased.

EMMETT

Hey, you want something to eat? I made my potato salad. And, I bar-be-qued some of those German sausages and some hamburgers. I got enough for a couple of days.

TALIB

What took you so long? It's only been since summer started, that I gave it to you.

Emmett smirks.

EMMETT

Man, gimme a break.

Talib looks at Emmett suspicious.

TALIB

Did you fire the coals like I told you, with the starter thing I gave you? No lighter fluid? That stuff is toxic. It makes the food taste like gasoline.

EMMETT

I let the coals burn for about 15 minutes then I added the more and let them get hot. Look, I was starving, by then. I didn't burn anything, though. Dinah wasn't gon' cook inside in that heat.

Talib gives Emmett, The Eye.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Man, don't look at me like that. I'm learning, alright. And, Dinah seasoned everything. So...

TALIB

Well then I know it's good. But you can't rush the grill, man. I'll show you how, the ol' school way. And season, and marinate that meat. And, how to make my sauce. Next time, OK. You plan it.

EMMETT

Now we talkin'. Let me go fix you a plate. Wait, let me get stand for your stuff. You want a burger or sausage?

Emmett gets two folding tables and hands them to Talib.

TALIB

You got 'em from that German place I always go to?

(MORE)

TALIB (CONT'D)

Did you get some bread? That's
where you got the beer!

Emmett smiles.

EMMETT

They just started stocking it.
Pumpernickel and the red cabbage. I
thought you might be a little
homesick.

Talib grins.

TALIB

But, don't pile on all that food.
Like you do. Then make me feel bad,
when I don't eat it all.

EMMETT

This heat is gonna melt pounds off
me. I tell ya that much.

TALIB

What happened with the A/C guy?

EMMETT

Monday afternoon. He needs another
part.

TALIB

Geez 'em. Monday? You could lose a
whole dress size by then.

Talib laughs. Emmett smirks.

EMMETT

Oh, shut up skinny.

Emmett exits. Talib sets the tables up, then rests his laptop and the folders on it. Then savours his beer and looks around the neighborhood. The house in the next block, across the street has a birthday party. Everyone's having a good time. There's a massive blow-up party tent (takes up nearly the entire front lawn), kids playing and running around, a group of teenagers out front around a car listening to music, dancing, chatting, joking and messing around. Then Talib looks at the sprinkler and stares.

CUT TO:

INT. DAY. FITNESS CENTER GYM SWIMMING POOL.

Water from the sprinkler becomes an indoor swimming pool at a gym. Talib's daughter, Davina (5/6) in the pool swimming to the far end. While Jacob is walking at pace with her, watching her intently and meets her at the end, then kneels down to her, staring at her cunningly like a predator.

CUT TO: BACK TO
SCENE.

Emmett enters (Talib snaps back) with a normal-portioned, plate of food, the sausages all cut into bite-sized pieces, utensils and napkins for Talib. And a small plate and a fork with a small portion of potato salad for himself, he eats randomly.

EMMETT

There you go, Goldie Locks. Not too much, not too little. And I cut 'em, so it's easier.

Talib takes the plate and utensils.

TALIB

Thanks. I haven't eaten since early this morning.

Talib eats. Emmett sets his plate on the table, then takes a drink of beer and looks at the house with the party.

EMMETT

You know, we should go camping.

TALIB

How did you get that RV?

EMMETT

The guy that Dinah bought that last duplex from, he threw it in with the sale.

TALIB

You gonna fix that house up?

EMMETT

I dunno it needs a lot of work. If Em and me, could...You guys and us. We could go before school starts again, for Tristan. But, somewhere in the mountains. Sariah ever been camping?

TALIB

I dunno know. I never asked. She likes hiking, though. Yellowstone, would be nice. My son Mark, from my first wife, is a ranger there. And my daughter and her family live in a cabin, not far. Close to the rest of my relatives. She and her partner, they have a lodge up there and cabins, a campgrounds.

EMMETT

Yeah. You showed me the pictures one time. Man, that's nice.

TALIB

My older kids, they're like 10 years apart. I'm so glad Sariah and I decided to have ours close together.

EMMETT

We could camp on the way up, then stay in the cabins. It'll be good to get away, after what's going to happen in the next couple of weeks.

TALIB

If the baby's fine and all, I don't see why not. We took Davina out, two weeks after. And stayed with her folks for a while. Sariah gets crazy, all cooped up.

EMMETT

You know, it's not gonna be rough with this lawsuit, even for me. Justina and her mother; they might like to come with us. They can't afford much, but I'd help them out. Justina's had a lot of emotional step backs from all that happened. After the second time she tried suicide. Pills.

Talib looks at Jacob's file and sighs.

TALIB

I went through everything.

EMMETT

I know you did.

TALIB

And from what I've found online,
about all the child sexual abuse
cases and the way they've been
handled by The Organization. It's
downright ugly, in the worse kinda
way, ever.

Dinah enters.

DINAH

Hey, Talib! How you doing?

Talib goes to get up, Dinah waves him off.

TALIB

I'm good, now.

DINAH

How'd we do?

TALIB

Couldn't've done better myself.
He's got no excuse now.

DINAH

Next time, he needs to do it all by
himself, though.

Everyone laughs. Dinah gives Emmett a hug and pats his face.
Emmett blushes.

EMMETT

Don't worry, we got a plan. He's
gonna show me.

DINAH

Good! You got my keys? I picked the
strawberries. I'm gonna run and get
us some ice cream.

EMMETT

You don't need to get ice cream, I
got some.

Emmett goes in the freezer and gets a tub of ice cream and
feels it.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

It's like a brick!

Emmett puts it on the work bench.

DINAH

Let me get some bowls.

Dinah exits. Emmett gets up and finds another chair, then makes space for her in-between for Dinah.

EMMETT

You know how THEY tell us, don't watch nothing online that's not JW.org Broadcasting, cause it'll shipwreck your spirituality?

TALIB

Yeah. Well from what I found out today, it's no wonder they use them scare tactics.

EMMETT

You're right. I looked a couple of times before.

TALIB

And?

EMMETT

I want her to know what you've found out, too. Cause, I know its way more than I did. All of this coverup and secrecy, stops in this house, from now on.

TALIB

It's like I had an epiphany. I light bulb went off in my head. And I can't switch it off.

EMMETT

I know what you mean. It happened to me, with this lawsuit.

TALIB

I won't fault the members, your everyday, rank-and-file, Jehovah's Witness. They're the nicest, most trusting folks I've ever met, outside the military. And they'd do anything to help each other out, just out of kindness. That's what attracted me and why I've been so attached.

EMMETT

And they'll do anything, anyone in authority asks.

(MORE)

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Totally co-operative. That's the religious programming.

TALIB

But, therein lies the problem. Completely relying on and trusting a group of leaders, that answer only to a self-appointed, small group of powerful men at the top, with motives that are questionable. It's a pyramid scheme.

EMMETT

Yet, that group will not be questioned. They won't stand for it, at all, period.

TALIB

Because any question, no matter what, is considered a threat to their authority, insubordination and a charge of dismissal without appeal. Labelled an evil apostate. And worse yet total rejection. No contact whatsoever with anyone. Family or friends, that obey this twisted programming. That's repeated over-and-over again, at the hall, the assemblies, in the publications and now these videos. After years and years, it's hard-wired into your brain. Now, it becomes your soul's, operating system.

Pregnant pause.

TALIB (CONT'D)

Emmett, you know we had all kinds of extreme punishment in the military for disobeying orders.

EMMETT

Yeah, some of that was just downright ridiculous, crazy shit.

TALIB

But this stuff? Even a dishonorably discharged, gets a hug from their mother, no matter what they did. Let me show you somethin'.

EMMETT

Wait for Dinah, I want her to see.

Talib, puts his plate down, then finds a Youtube video (<https://youtu.be/Nf92AD1NeXk?t=182>). Emmett turns the music off. Talib hear Dinah approaching, puts the video on pause, then continues eating. Dinah enters with the bowls, strawberries and spoons, then places them by the ice cream. Emmett gets the bowl of strawberries, eats a few and then offers Talib. Talib takes some and eats.

TALIB

These are so sweet!

EMMETT

It's the straw. Straw-berries. Like May told her.

DINAH

With all the evil Jacob did. And Fergus being such an asshole. It's no wonder May, is dead already. She probably kept all of that in, it made her sick. And, I guess they both terrorized her.

TALIB

When did she die?

DINAH

About 10 years ago.

TALIB

Jacob left before she died?

EMMETT

He came back for the funeral. He was still disfellowshipped.

DINAH

No Jehovah's Witness elder, ministerial servant, circuit or district overseer, department head, governing body member - none of them, should be involved in counselling or judging any of it. It's not a case of pettiness or dispute between Witnesses. Above everything, it's a criminal accusation for the police. And the professionals they use, to deal with that. It's got nothing to do with religion at all.

Emmett and Talib concede.

DINAH (CONT'D)

And what parent, in their right mind, is gonna sit in a Kingdom Hall with their children or grandchildren, knowing there's a child sex offender, right in there with them. Those halls will be virtually empty.

EMMETT

It'll ALL collapse, GB knows that.

DINAH

Cause the only people they can bank on, to increase JWs numbers - are the children who've been indoctrinated by their parents. Just look at who gets baptized at these assemblies. A bunch of kids. Children are their ONLY future. Once the parents leave with the kids to get away from these sex offenders, that's it.

EMMETT

But, only the strong will abandon the programming. And survive being totally cut of from their family and friends, who are still stuck in that operating system.

TALIB

You have to disengage from that entire way of thinking and doing things. And build yourself up, from there.

Talib, turns his laptop so Dinah and Emmett can see.

TALIB (CONT'D)

Here, have a look.

DINAH

This is JW Broadcasting. Their tele-evangelist channel. The way they used to rag on Billy Graham, Farwell and Baker. "Would Jesus use these "worldly" methods to preach the Word? No, he went directly to the people. And that's what Jehovah's Witnesses do.

(MORE)

DINAH (CONT'D)

Go from house-to-house, door-to-door." And now, this.

TALIB

But, they need a good-looking brother, though. Lett? Sorry, but he ain't cuttin' it.

EMMETT

Let, him keep the voice-over roles. With that southern bible-belt accent.

TALIB

The rest of them are too ugly. But, Morris is funny as fuck with his warmongering fetish. What's wrong with him? He didn't see enough blood and gut in Vietnam? Maybe, what's his name _____ or _____.

EMMETT

No Man, they gotta have that accent and be a real charismatic charmer, to be authentic. They need to find a POC. Hey, maybe that'll be their diversity ticket.

Everyone laughs.

DINAH

You know, they have a film production studio. Wait no, it's not a studio. It's an **entire complex** with a residence building, fitness center, and space for 1,000 volunteer workers, in Upstate New York, near Walkill. 1.5 million square feet.

EMMETT

1.5 million square feet! How big is that?

DINAH

You remember the o2 Arena in London, where we went to Michael Jackson's last concert? JW Studios is even bigger than that.

Emmett's jaw drops.

EMMETT

Tyler Perry, eat your heart out.

TALIB

Is it a real production company, though?

DINAH

Oh yeah. JW Studios, LLC.
Registered in New York, 2017.

TALIB

Geez 'em. I guess they'll be adding a Kingdom Hall in there. So they can stage services, too. You know, with a place that big and ALL the volunteer crew and unpaid actors, they could do a Ten Commandments reboot. For little or nothing really.

DINAH

I'm ready for my close-up Mister DeMille.

Everyone laughs.

EMMETT

(to Dinah)

How much is it worth?

DINAH

I'm working on it. I can imagine they're still getting MJ money. Prince too, maybe.

TALIB

How so?

DINAH

Wills, trust funds. And, they have close family that are still JWs. So...

TALIB

But, listen to this.

Talib plays video, then he eats and pauses after "on that."
Time 3:18.

TALIB (CONT'D)

Apostasy, that's exactly where he was heading with bull shit logic.

(MORE)

TALIB (CONT'D)

Ultimately, this shakes the foundation of religious beliefs that support clerical confidentiality, to the core. Just like with the Catholic church and Catholic school, when my family moved back to the States. It's the sacrament of confession. Yet, Jehovah's Witnesses say that they don't have a clergy or laity class.

DINAH

And, they don't do confession. The hate, that Jehovah's Witnesses have for the Catholic church goes way back. It must be envy. Being, The Vatican has way more money and their real estate portfolio is off the charts.

Talib concedes, then shows Dinah the CSA questionnaire title.

DINAH (CONT'D)

"Intake questionnaire?" that sounds like a term an institution would use. "Attorney-client?" Who's the lawyer? What the hell kinda wording is this? Is this a legal document?

EMMETT

Yeah, basically. But, in it's entirety, it's inadmissible in Court. Classified information copyrighted by The Organization. When an elder calls the Legal Department, you have no idea who you're talking to. They refuse to give their full name.

Dinah closes the file and sets it back.

TALIB

(to Dinah)

They say, "they're not clergy." But, at the same time they use clergy penitent privilege as the legal loop hole to not produce evidence like this or testify in court, against child sex criminals in the congregation.

EMMETT

They're taking and leaving these mandates and using legal loopholes to their convenience. To avoid punishment, fines, paying lawsuits, bad press, decrease in membership.

DINAH

And, No.1 losing contribution money.

Emmett and Talib concede.

TALIB

I printed this stuff so you can read for yourselves. Especially since, you've got the background and the patience to unravel some of this legal lingo, Dinah.

DINAH

You mean, legalese. It's confusing, on purpose. To leave the uninitiated in ignorance. In real estate, it's the same.

TALIB

There's so much online about this whole sex predator thing. All over the place, the US, England, Canada, Australia, Germany. My head is spinning. Survivor's testimony, Whistleblowers, researchers, academics, ex-elders, ex-ministerial servants, ex-Bethelites, ex-pioneers, children of elders, victim's family, relatives. And, there's even a case of a teenaged girl that was sexually abused by an incestuous child sex "couple."

Emmett and Dinah, repulsed.

DINAH

Oh, my goodness.

TALIB

You name them, they're online. It's so eye-opening and depressing at the same time. I made a playlist, I'll send you the links, Emmett.

Talib lifts up the next stack of papers.

TALIB (CONT'D)

These are recent, major court case documents and information, on the governing body coverup of over 23,000 child sex crimes, since 2002. It's estimated that by now that number could be 40,000. In Australia alone, there's over 1,000 unreported cases.

Emmett and Dinah sink, in dread. Talib hands Dinah the printout. Dinah takes it and scans.

TALIB (CONT'D)

This is the latest CSA case I found. It's a recounting of an ex-elder's experience attending a trial in, Thompson Falls, Montana. The son and daughter were sexually abused by the step-dad.

EMMETT

So, we'll see what gives with that one. It's in Appeals Court where the cases gets bounced.

TALIB

I wanted to see just how far back this "dirt" goes. Now, I had to really take a step back on this. Cause this guy has seemed to fade from ALL the more recent publications.

DINAH

Who?

TALIB

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania was where, just to refresh your memory, in 1884 that Charles Taze Russell incorporated Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. The parent corporation for what was later called, Jehovah's Witnesses in the US. Along with The International Bible Students and later on, the individual, 100 publishing branches throughout the world.

EMMETT

Then there's Watchtower, one-word, Bible and Tract Society of New York, Incorporated, a subsidiary. Handling publishing and real estate operations. And the more recent, Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses that handle the operations of all the congregations.

TALIB

Well, it gets better. And it's no wonder they've buried Russell, "12-feet under" in their publications. He had a sexual predator past. He called himself a jellyfish. Bragging about how he could float around and get any woman he wanted. Plus, other un-Christian like behavior.

DINAH

A jellyfish! Was that what they called a "player" back in them days?

EMMETT

You saw his picture? Man, he was a major looker.

Everyone laughs.

TALIB

He kicked his wife out of their house. There was a warrant out on him for skipping alimony payments. Their divorce lasted five years, cause he was doing his best to cut her out. He robbed her of everything, including her share of half the stock in Watchtower.

EMMETT

While he told his followers to sell everything cause the world was gonna end in 1914. Why was he "storing up treasures on earth, that rot away" by having stocks?

TALIB

Well, not ALL his investments rotted away.

(MORE)

TALIB (CONT'D)

It seems he cleverly disguised, part ownership in a gold mine in California. After he died, it got passed on to his successor.

DINAH

Forget them! I'm gonna learn all I can about investing in cryptocurrency.

Everyone laughs.

TALIB

Russell's teachings are just an amalgam. A bit of this and that. Heavily influenced by teachings of Millerites, Second Adventists, the Bible Student and Sacred Name Movements. And, Pyramidology. He took that from William Miller.

EMMETT

Like the size of the Great Pyramids?

DINAH

The actual dimensions?

TALIB

Yeah!

EMMETT

I always wanted to know, why did somebody go through all the trouble to break the Sphinx's nose off, like that?

DINAH

Maybe somebody really hated the shape of its nose. And, it's not like they could reshape it.

Pregnant pause.

TALIB

Anyway, that's how they calculated The Gentile Times and the 1914 end of the world. The numbers are wrong anyway, cause Jerusalem was conquered in 687 BC, not 607.

EMMETT

Well, that blows that off, right there.

DINAH

He was the one that said, "Jehovah God has ALWAYS had one true organization on earth." So, when Russell didn't find the one he thought was true, he made one up. And called it, The Truth.

TALIB

The Miller Light dude and Russell's uncle were Freemasons. There were symbols used by the Masons, in early Watchtower publications. Other societies use these "hidden" meaning, symbols, too. Russell did some of his lecture tours, at Masonic Lodges. Something that Freemasonry doesn't allow, if there isn't support or cooperation with their Society.

EMMETT

And the, JW Library and even ex-JW sites are always saying, there's no connection.

TALIB

Well, it's a secret society so they're not gonna tell you everything. You've got to know someone on the inside, that knows the trigger words and the symbols.

DINAH

Where did the "governing body" concept come from?

TALIB

That's patterned after the Sanhedrins. The Jewish high-court system, the final authority on Jewish Law. Any elder that opposed them was executed. Anybody else had to go and get an animal, kill it or have it killed, then burn it on the altar at the temple. But, why would they just let good meat burn and go to waste like that?

EMMETT

They cooked it, like bar-be-que. And then the priests, the Levites ate it. They took a vow of poverty. So, didn't have no land or nothing.

DINAH

Well, Emmett consider yourself lucky. You, woulda been executed, if you were living back in them days.

Everyone laughs.

TALIB

And here's another weird thing associated with Russell. His granite memorial stone, not his tombstone. He's buried somewhere else. Anyway, it's a pyramid, seven feet tall on a 9-foot square base. It was commissioned by his successor, Judge "Joe" Rutherford. King of cancel culture, misogynist and racist. Who seems to have schemed, to gain control of the publishing company, Watchtower. And, turn the entire operation upside down.

DINAH

Yeah, I heard that before.

TALIB

But, Russell wanted nothing to do Rutherford. Before he died, Russell secretly dismissed him from Watchtower, to save face. Rutherford, he was nothing but two-faced, conman. That book he published before World War Two...

DINAH

The Finished Mystery.

TALIB

Yeah. In it he said, the bible says that Christians must be strictly neutral. Not supporting war or engaging in politics. Yet later on, when you read the whole letter he sent to Hitler, it says that Hitler had the "right to destroy the Jews."

DINAH AND EMMETT

What!

DINAH (CONT'D)

Wow! All my life, I never ever knew that!

TALIB

Playing both sides of the fence landed him and some other Watchtower officials in the pen, in Atlanta. Where some of the worst criminals in history, were sent. He was charged with sedition. And no doubt his big mouth, resulted in the horrors that happened to Witnesses in Germany back then, in the concentration camps. They were sentenced to 20 years. But, get this, they only did 9 months.

EMMETT

And they wear what happened in Nazi Germany like a badge of honor.

DINAH

I wonder what kinda deal they made to get themselves off the hook. That's a serious charge. That's federal, not a two bit local or state law. And that was just after World War One, when patriotism is at it's highest.

TALIB

And on top of that, he wasn't a judge. Russell named him that. In Missouri, where he practiced law, when the sitting Circuit Judge was absent, the county court would select from a pool of attorneys, a "special" judge. To hear minor or routine cases or perform routine duties.

EMMETT

Judge for a Day. No wonder he lost his case and got sent to the Big House. After nine months, highfalutin people like that, they couldn't cut it in there. They must've cooperated some kinda way.

TALIB

But, the "Judge for the Day" thing was shared among the local Bar members.

(MORE)

TALIB (CONT'D)

They didn't presume it made them a judge. He never attended law school, like what the Proclaimers, JW history book says. He was a court reporter, that's what he studied. It was in this Circuit Court, is where he learned - whatever he learned, as an apprentice, to a judge. And somehow "passed" the Bar. It's a small town, everybody knows everybody. And, Joseph Rutherford, before he was a Bible Student, ran for Circuit Judge and State Representative. Lost the election both times, easy defeat. Voters didn't even like him.

EMMETT

No wonder.

TALIB

There's all kinds of unethical legal, dodgy business and financial stuff, he practiced and was involved in. Before and during the time he was the second president of Watchtower. He was a power hungry, deluded, womanizer and a white privilege advocate. And, he was no stranger to being publicly drunk at drinking binges in Bethel. Some REAL crazy shit and quackery was going on under his command.

DINAH

He's the one that named the Jehovah's Witnesses, in 1931.

TALIB

While he waited for end of the world, that didn't happen again - in 1929. He separated from his wife and son, toured Europe, and then the US, in his Cadillac with Mrs. Peale.

EMMETT

1929, while most of the poor and small businessmen were dealing with e Great Depression. But, it was a corporation protected by a religion. So...

TALIB

This woman, Berta Peale left her husband to go to Bethel. He divorced her on grounds of abandonment. She became Rutherford's, 24/7 dietician, nurse, and along with her good friend, Bonnie Boyd, his secretary, his constant companions.

EMMETT

What the hell?

TALIB

A mange a trois. For awhile at least. Boyd married an heir to Coca-Cola and brought him, to live with her, in Bethel. Other Bethelites were shocked. BTW, Peale had no training as a dietician or a nurse. And, he already had a nurse. But, he was a guy, so. Plus, he had an entourage of women with him at Beth Sarim.

DINAH

Nothing but a player.

EMMETT

What's *Beth Sarim*?

Talib opens his laptop, to a file with photos of *Beth Sarim*, then shows Emmett and Dinah.

TALIB

After *le gran tour*, he moved to this fabulous *hacienda*, built by Watchtower, from donations, in San Diego called, *Beth-Sarim*. In English, The Prince's House. And the adjacent land called, *Beth-Shan* (House Undisturbed). Where he ran Watchtower and waited after the end of world (that didn't happen), 1929. He was waiting for, get this King David, Samson and Joseph with the coat. Here are the pictures of the house and property. There's Rutherford.

Jacob points to the screen.

TALIB (CONT'D)

So these guys, they would be resurrected there and move right on in. Cause the property deeds were already in their names. And then they'd rule the world. Instead, that's where he got sick and died. Nobody that really knew or they didn't tell, where his body went. It might be somewhere, illegally buried on the property.

DINAH

But how would folks know it was them? David, Samson and Joseph.

TALIB

They'd have to show some kinda ID.

DINAH

Talib, you are blowing my mind.

Dinah and Emmett laugh. Talib finds his notes and reads aloud.

TALIB

My last thing about his Honor, the Judge. Get this load of shit; about this nut job. After he died this was written: "*For more than forty years he had left a NATION-WIDE POLITICAL CAREER WITH THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY and devoted his life to the Lord as a Christian.*" Consolation magazine, May 27, 1942, page 5.

Everyone laughs hard.

DINAH

Consolation, is now Awake magazine.

EMMETT

We're gettin' our own "New Light" today.

TALIB

Oh, I'm just getting started.

Talib holds another stack of stapled sheets.

TALIB (CONT'D)

These are the court documents, nearly two weeks of 'em.

(MORE)

TALIB (CONT'D)

Of some, of the child sexual abuse cases, CSAs. This is the landmark case of 2012. This is major. I'll run it down.

Talib reads from his notes.

TALIB (CONT'D)

Candace Conti v. Watchtower, CCJW and Fremont, California congregation, 2012. First to win the largest single victim CSA case, that went to court, against a religious organisation ever, in US history. Court finding, Jehovah's Witnesses leaders, "consciously disregarded the rights and safety of children." Awarded \$28 million in punitive damages from Watch Tower, then lowered to \$21 in Appeals Court. Then lowered to \$15.6, then \$8.6, finally \$2.8.

DINAH

From 28 to 2.8 million? Come, on! Tell me the Courts are not in on this.

They all scoff.

TALIB

Watchtower said, under State law, they weren't obligated to report this incident of child abuse to the community. The abuser, a trusted JW, who also previously, molested his step-daughter and removed as a ministerial servant. Congo not told anything about him being a sex predator. He went to jail...

DINAH

At least!

TALIB

Wait. For beating up his step-daughter's boyfriend. Elders and ministerial servants said, "they watched him." And, he was a friend of her father. They socialised on several occasions with Candace, after he and his wife split up.

(MORE)

TALIB (CONT'D)

The brothers from his old congo sent his new congo a letter stating, in part - he's good with kids.

EMMETT

A glowing recommendation. I wonder how much money he was stuffing in the World Wide Work and the regular contribution box.

Emmett and Dinah shake their heads and scoff. Talib takes another sheet of hand-written notes and reads from them.

TALIB

2015, another case in California Appeals Court. This one, is it. Watchtower said, their case files are part of their own religious judicial system. And, they would rather pay a fine, than produce documents that incriminate them in a child sex abuse case. The court fined them \$4,000 dollars a day till they produced them.

DINAH

Good!

TALIB

Wait for it. Then Watchtower turned around and said the fine was too extreme, on top of the \$13.5M judgement. But the judgement amount was taking into consideration the fact that they wouldn't give up the documents.

Talib rests the paper down.

TALIB (CONT'D)

Their representative didn't deny having them. He said it would take too long to retrieve them, out of the tens of thousands of files in their database.

DINAH

So they admit the keep these records. Did they give them up?

TALIB

They finally produced redacted documents, that had no valuable evidence for the plaintiff's case.

EMMETT

First point. Watchtower contests, that the documents are part of "internal church governance" protected under the First Amendment. Anything connected to the First Amendment affects EVERYONE, whether they realize that or not.

DINAH

People know so little about the Law. Witnesses know even less. Cause we're told stay away from the "World." So actually, the First Amendment is protecting clergy, that use their own secret court and/or private confession, as an excuse, not to report criminals.

TALIB

In Delaware, there's was a CSA case of a "sister" with a teenaged boy. The elders disfellowshipped him.

Emmett and Dinah shake there heads.

TALIB (CONT'D)

There's a woman, she's CEO and Director of Child USA. It's a thinktank on preventing child abuse and neglect. Her name is, Marci Hamilton. And she's written a book, "God vs. The Gavel." I haven't read it. But it's about the fact that religion is above the Law. And the Law, has designed it that way. They've built a fortress around themselves, making it difficult to prosecute child sex criminals that they're in fact, harboring.

EMMETT

While anyone else that's not protected by a religious hierarchy, must adhere to a different set of rules.

DINAH

So justice, isn't blind. It's one-eyed.

TALIB

Second point. And, Emmett knows this, too. Listen to this new loophole, Dinah. With the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, the CCJW. This is a separate corporate entity with its own board of directors and bank accounts.

DINAH

So, when any ex-JW sues Watchtower, they're also suing, The CCJW. Which is ALL the 100,000+ congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide. All 8 million plus, JW's.

TALIB

You got it. Cause to them, the name Watchtower, is and has been only associated with publishing, since 1884.

EMMETT

They made sure to add the "Christian" part. Since people don't think Witnesses believe in Jesus, anyway.

TALIB

So, that means they're suing a religion. To the majority of the public and the justice system, deference and preference are given to religion over any other group, political or social, whatever.

DINAH

Well, it makes no damn difference to me. Whatever the hell they call it. It's the governing body's way of passing the buck. You elders are screwed.

EMMETT

They've represented themselves in court, all this time as Watchtower. Now all of a sudden, they're a religion?

(MORE)

EMMETT (CONT'D)

I'm sure it's their legal counsel, and not Jehovah's holy spirit, that's advised them to make that conniving move. No wonder, in early 2015, WT sent that letter out, looking for any JW that are licensed as an attorney or paralegal, to work in HQ. They knew this was coming. Somebody tipped them off.

DINAH

Oh, I remember that! You told me, Emmett. They were looking for folks working in law that knew, litigation, corporate matters, or real estate transactions.

TALIB

Third point. And this will blow your mind, Dinah. It involves anyone that's a publisher since, 2017. And being the congregation secretary you already know, Emmett.

Talib looks at Emmett. Dinah puzzled.

TALIB (CONT'D)

It's called, HuB. Publisher ID, Digital Foundation.

DINAH

Digital, I don't like it already.

TALIB

And when any, thinking Witness finds out, they won't either. But, it's already been approved by the Governing Body. It's an extension of their central data base, that's been established for judicial committee judgements, including the CSA cases. It has legal implications of gross data privy issues, written all over it.

EMMETT

Their hole is getting deeper and deeper. This sounds like an NSA link.

TALIB

Any publisher that has any kind of appointment, elder to pioneer, to international convention attendee, construction worker or just working on the site. As long as you've applied for anything. The elders have made an assessment of your personality and their observations of you. Those details are stored in this special data base.

EMMETT

How many people are we talking about?

TALIB

This is only for the US, as far as I know. Thanks to the Patriot Act everyone in the US, their personal data, is open season. Interesting thing though, in 2017, in the European Union, every JW publisher had to sign this very detailed agreement to give them permission to collect personal data. Because the EU has strict data privacy access laws. So whoever signed-off on it...

DINAH

They're screwed.

TALIB

I checked, that's more than 1.6 million Witnesses over there. I think the Organisation is planning on doing the same there. The EU was just a test to see who would question the reason for the agreement.

DINAH

No, I don't like that at all.

TALIB

You know, that's were I first heard about The Witnesses, in Germany. From a childhood friend, on base. Her mother was a Witness and the dad was in the Army. She gave me, that - My Book of Stories, when I was a kid. The same one I read to Davina, from.

EMMETT

There's global potential, for the HuB, no doubt. Being that the GB has gotta have everybody on the same page, at the same time. Like everyone being like a single, military unit, operating in unison. No, individuality.

DINAH

Back in the day, they were called, units. Not congregations.

TALIB

So it was the Almos Unit, before?

DINAH

Yeah. I'm gonna go through those old books and see if I can find an old handbill. That we used to hand out in field service, with the meeting schedule, and show you. What is their obsession keeping ALL these records? And worse yet, personal information.

EMMETT

Imagine if you were in a judicial committee meeting, disfellowshipped or disassociated? All the personal information that's written on those "intake" forms.

TALIB

In the US, back in 2017 there were roughly 600,000 publishers in the Hub. And they were working on the remaining 200K. That still leaves 200K more or less unaccounted for.

EMMETT

The software, it came from the Computer Department at Watchtower headquarters? Not a third-party?

TALIB

Yep, it's all internal. The personal data was gathered from ALL six of the committees up there, Coordinators, Publishing, Personnel, Service, Teaching and Writing.

DINAH

So this is something different than the Publisher ID, that you use, to go on the JW.org website?

TALIB

Totally. You get your ID after the congregation secretary verifies identity. Then they get a "log-in" number, to go something like, a "need to know only" section." To apply for whatever position or volunteer assignment they want. At Bethel, building projects - whatever. And they can modify or update any of their own personal data.

EMMETT

Say a brother wanted to volunteer to build a Kingdom Hall somewhere. So, instead of getting a form from me, as the secretary. He would get a log-in number from me, after I identify him as legit. Then, he goes online and applies. The application goes to HQ, they have access to his background and okay it.

TALIB

But, only if he's applied before, though.

EMMETT

OK. So if he hasn't...

TALIB

The e-form gets sent to the Service Department. The application processors review it, then send it to you and the circuit overseer, for approval. Then it goes back to HQ and they send him the assignment. So now, he's in the HuB and can apply directly, from then on. The secretary's not involved anymore, after that. But this is going to be for ALL JWs.

EMMETT

It sounds like less work for the secretary. But, that may not be a good thing.

TALIB

Suppose he's a child sex criminal, masquerading as "Brother Always Helpful and Good to Have Around." That's gotten off scot free, for not admitting to having raped or molested a child. No judicial action has been taken against him, no kinda reprove, warning, nothing. The child victim is deemed a liar, cause he's "Brother Reliable." Say, he moves to another congregation where nobody knows him. As sex predators routinely do.

Emmett and Dinah concede.

TALIB (CONT'D)

He pretends to be someone that's been studying with JW's, but moved, got disconnected, blah, blah. He knows the JW conversion system. So he makes rapid progress, meeting attendance, then field service - always there. Then baptized. He's officially in. And ready to get on with sexual predator grooming, from that point forward.

DINAH

Seems like a lot to going through.

TALIB

These CSOs, once they assess the potential for a victim or victims, within a group, especially in a church. Trusting, complacent, economically depressed, mostly naïve folks, they'll spend years and loads of money grooming the parents, then the child or children.

EMMETT

Being a publisher or a deleted elder, ministerial servant. He wouldn't have a letter of recommendation.

TALIB

Cause, there's no point. So he goes to an elder and give them a fake name and details.

(MORE)

TALIB (CONT'D)

Cause they're only gonna bother you, if you miss meetings or field service, so you keep up the charade. Evade anybody that gets too nosey, prying into your personal life. Especially when you're not married, no kids. Or, there's bound to be a single mother in the group. Several, no doubt. You chat up the one with the child victim of your preference.

EMMETT

Jackpot!

TALIB

You get in good with everybody else, especially the elders. Volunteering to help out, whatever. Cause you know they're always in need. Entertaining the kids. Giving the parents "a break" "taking them off their hands" for awhile. Everybody trusts you now, you're in. And on to what you came there for in the first place.

Dinah, stunned.

DINAH

Grooming the parents and a child for sexual abuse. Smooth criminal.

EMMETT

What did the Legal Department have to say about this HuB thing?

TALIB

They laughed.

DINAH

How stupid. None of these people have children of their own to care for. They don't give a rat's ass. And they're mentally programmed as "yes" men. So they don't attempt to rock the boat. And of course, women aren't allowed.

TALIB

I'll send you the link to the video. Cause the Computer Department has major plans for the Hub.

(MORE)

TALIB (CONT'D)

Even down to managing cleaning schedules for the Kingdom Halls. That's if, the video manages not to get pulled. These ex-JW whistleblowers, they have to be so careful. They get demonetized, like that.

EMMETT

Cleaning the hall? Come, on. You put the word out, "we're cleaning." And whoever shows up, shows.

DINAH

That's been the case since my parents and their parents have been Witnesses. They don't do cleaning or gardening.

EMMETT

Watchtower is in so much breach of trust already. And this Hub thing, it's the nail in the coffin.

TALIB

Same thing with the Catholic church. The Boy's Scouts is nearly defunct.

DINAH

Bury the whole thing, 12-feet deep
Oh, I forgot the ice cream.

Dinah puts the papers down, serves up the ice cream, then places the bowls on the stand and then sits down. They eat it randomly.

DINAH (CONT'D)

I never told you this Emmett, but now is as good a time as any. I had a friend; she was a Witness. We met when we were kids, 12 and 14 years old, in Houston, at an international convention back in the 70s. She's a few years older than me. We stayed in touch for a long time. Their congregation was named, Downtown. Not far from the tourist area in New Orleans.

EMMETT

The 70s, you're going way back, then.

DINAH

Her grandmother, mom and brothers, their wives, were Witnesses. The dad was an "unbeliever." He used to travel abroad for his work. I visited her in New Orleans several times when I was in my late teens. And, she came to visit me, too. They were such a really nice family, even the dad, for the times he was there. I was a regular pioneer, just out of high school. She became one later. Her family was well-known, brothers were elders, congregation coordinator (overseer, back then), head of departments at assemblies and conventions, very responsible. And, she travelled a lot. Went to New York Bethel several times and Watchtower Farms. First thing she told me that was strange, from when she went to visit Bethel, the first time. There was this hotel that the Society had, somewhere near 124 Columbia Heights.

TALIB

They had a hotel? Not a Bethelite residence?

DINAH

Yeah. Nothing fancy by any means. More like a B&B without the breakfast. They had breakfast, lunch and dinner at Bethel.

EMMETT

Like we did, when we went?

DINAH

Yeah.

TALIB

Y'all stayed at a Bethel Hotel?

DINAH

No, we were on our anniversary celebrating. We stayed near Broadway. Went to some plays.

EMMETT

The Theater District, that's where all the action is, Man.

DINAH

He picked the hotel. Anyway, her family, they knew a lot of Witnesses. So, she and her mother stayed at the B&B. Her Bethel friend said, that Bethelites weren't running the place. But, these non-Bethel brothers from New York, that were financial consultants, ran it. And they were also in charge of "investing Watch Tower assets."

TALIB

You mean holdings, financial portfolios. There are some trust funds with companies that are questionable, as far as bible principles are concerned. But this is what I have a problem with. We, Jane and John Q. Publisher are told, not invest our energy in this "worldly" system.

DINAH

Yeah.

TALIB

The money we make or receive is from using our energy, to earn it. Watch Tower is taking money from trust funds, which is someone else's money. Being given to them, that was earned by somebody's else's blood and sweat and energy. Then, they take that money and invest it, in the financial system of this "world." Of which, Jehovah's Christian Witnesses, is to be no part of. Since it's ALL gonna be destroyed at Armageddon, that's still coming. You see the blatant hypocrisy.

DINAH

Absolutely. You know in the 70s when all this new way of investing money and financial speculation started. The organisation said, they weren't getting "enough" money from poor Jane and John Q. Publisher to operate the "kingdom interests." Instead of them cutting back, the begging was relentless.

(MORE)

DINAH (CONT'D)

Then a couple of world-famous people became JWs. And boom, all this worldwide expansion and real estate portfolio stuff. The first major purchase after that was, the Stanley-Warner Theatre in Jersey City.

EMMETT

We went there in 2013, when they re-opened it.

DINAH

After the upgrades and digital a/v technology. I'm gonna find out what the value of it is. But, I'm guessing, in the \$30 million range.

TALIB

What is it?

EMMETT

It's an assemble hall.

DINAH

It's a Golden Age, Hollywood Glamour, grand, old-fashioned, Venetian-style, movie palace. Massive, well-appointed, first-class all the way. When the lights go down, there's a starry ceiling, to boot. With the fiber optic lights.

TALIB

Impressive.

EMMETT

100%.

DINAH

My friend, she went after it first opened, in the mid-80s. It took 2,000 volunteers to restore it. She used to work in architecture, so she was very keen on seeing it. While visiting some friends in New Jersey, that were volunteers, and attended a circuit assembly there. She never paid attention the entire time, from staring at how beautiful it was and still is.

(MORE)

DINAH (CONT'D)

There are Bethelites there permanently, for the security and routine maintenance. It's on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places. It cost us, JWs \$1.8US million. It was a steal back then. Because, it was in such a deplorable shape. There were showing grind movies. It's now classified as an educational facility. And, since it was a restoration, re-use project of a rated, historical building. There was also a tax subsidy, state funded. By the way, Stanley-Warner used to own it.

TALIB

As in the Warner Brothers?

DINAH

And during that time, there was also the whole Walkill/Warwick complex build, in upstate New York. My friend, she saw the model of it in the lobby at the 124 building. She knew back then, in the 80s, WT publishing, admin and GB. Then afterwards, all the Bethelites were going to leave Brooklyn. The publishing, got farmed out overseas.

EMMETT

What do you call it?
Gentrification. Reclaiming warehouses to move in, suckers for high-priced condos.

DINAH

Basically. I've been keeping up with their real estate portfolio, ever since I got my real estate license, 20 years ago. That's what got Em, interested in architecture. I used to take him along to all the beautiful houses that were on the market. He had the renovation plans, for this house, from when he was in architecture school.

TALIB

It's a really nice design. Is he gonna work on your new duplex?

DINAH

Yeah, we've been discussing it. He's a bit busy right now, though. So, from visiting Watchtower Farm, she said it's gorgeous up there, in the Catskill Mountains. I saw her pictures. No wonder they were all gonna abandon the city for the country life.

TALIB

When did they leave?

DINAH

2016, I think.

TALIB

How much we're talking about? The property values in Brooklyn.

DINAH

Well, for Brooklyn Heights, Adams Street, DUMBO six-building complex, \$375 million. The whole Squibb Complex, Columbia Heights, on the Hudson, \$340 million. Of their 37 properties in Brooklyn Heights, for the **disclosed** amounts, \$2.19 billion, total. Like I said, that's not the grand total, cause some of the selling prices are undisclosed.

Talib's jaw drops.

DINAH (CONT'D)

Matt Damon has a penthouse in, The Standish Hotel. That was a residence building for Bethelites. Emily Blunt owns a condo in one of their other old buildings. And Etsy, has their offices in the old factory complex on Adams Street. Gensler Architects did the conversion and tech upgrades.

EMMETT

Ain't no ghettos round there either.

DINAH

And, they just sold off the very last piece, in 2018. 74 Adams Street.

(MORE)

DINAH (CONT'D)

It was a garage and another parking lot for the Watchtower's - fleet of cars. I calculated, it was about 43,000 square feet. It sold for \$91 million. So, that's roughly \$2,000 per square foot. (Dinah points) About the size of that slate sample right there. That's gonna go on the floor in our cabana.

EMMETT

What's the buyer gonna turn it into?

DINAH

A 26-story luxury condo. WT had their own 20 something story hotel, too. Another Bethel residence, guess. Or, it coulda been a hotel for Bethel visitors from out-of-town.

Talib's mind is blown away.

DINAH (CONT'D)

That's prime real estate we're talking about. Views of the Manhattan skyline. Those on Columbia Heights, facing the Promenade. It's just like in the movies.

EMMETT

(to Talib)

Blows the mind, doesn't it?

TALIB

All the donations from 8 million mostly poor and paycheck-to-paycheck, Witness cannot amount to money like this. No way! It's got to come from somewhere else for it to be so constant.

EMMETT

The money miraculously just grows and grows and grows, for the "kingdom interests." Like the 3 loaves and 2 fishes.

DINAH

Then, there was the start of the, cookie-cutter, JW.org branding, quick-build Kingdom Hall project scheme. And back to my friend in New Orleans. These interior decorator brothers were in on that, too. Charging the us JWs, a profit for supplying interior furnishings and what not, at cost plus. She said, they made a killing. They might still be, for all you know. You name it and the Society was doing "kingdom expansion work"/building construction, additions, or restoration, adaptive re-use everywhere.

Pregnant pause.

DINAH (CONT'D)

I think every publisher should demand to know exactly what kind of investments are made. How much are the returns. And how much Watch Tower is receiving from worldwide fund contributions. And how much from trust funds. Then, they can ascertain how much is coming from hedge funds.

TALIB

And stop giving them a dime, until it's all revealed.

DINAH

Anyway, back to my friend. I got a phone call from her, in the spring of '84. She visited northern and southern California a couple of times. Then moved to the San Francisco Bay Area for awhile. We woulda been 23/21 then and both single. The single brothers were after her. But she wouldn't be bothered with any of them. I wasn't either, no goals, boring as hell. She looked just like a super model and she dressed like one, too.

Emmett and Talib doubtful.

DINAH (CONT'D)

She had photographers approach her, to get into modelling. One, was a brother in her congregation. And, I was with her one time when one did. And he was legit. Of course, she couldn't do that, cause that was a "worldly" job, that compromises Christian principles. And today this fashion model, Coco Rocha - is a Jehovah's Witness.

Emmett shakes his head.

DINAH (CONT'D)

I remember, she showed me the Awake magazine article. It said something like, "Christian qualities are of greater gain than the short-lived REWARDS of physical beauty."

TALIB

Oh, it's still a "worldly" job. But, they don't mind her donations.

EMMETT

There's all these celebrity JWs, now. Actors, singers, athletes, business moguls, you name it. Well, like you said - the price is right. If they get their cut.

DINAH

Anyway, I was talking to her on the phone. And, she said, "Guess who's living here and at our congregation?" I said, "Who?" She said, "Leo K Greenlees." I said, from the governing body, Bethel? She said, "Yes!" He was over at their house, having lunch and dinner a lot of times, even after the Memorial.

TALIB

Like you had, when we all came over here, after the Passover. Lord's Evening Meal.

EMMETT

So an ex-governing body member was over at their house?

DINAH

Yep. And he was going in service, leading in prayer at the Memorial (But they had to get permission from the GB, for that.) When they ate, it was, OK. She worked along with him in field service. She said he knew all about British history. I think she said he was Irish. Her family is part British.

TALIB

So, this man was a member of the governing body, the "faithful and discreet slave" the anointed remnant one of the 144,000? That's going to rule with Jesus in his kingdom, so he ate the bread and drinks the wine. And a GB, the highest in the JW command?

DINAH

He was third highest, secretary-treasurer. Frederick Franz was president. And he was on the Executive Committee, that was the structure, back then. And, he taught the missionaries at the Gilead School.

EMMETT

And according to "New light," the 144K are going to be a battalion of warriors to kill non-believers at Armageddon.

TALIB

144,000 soldiers. That would be like having six-and-a-half infantry divisions on the battlefield.

EMMETT

And the enemy is, the whole world of 8 billion people.

TALIB

Minus, the 8.1 million, JWs, of course.

DINAH

Yeah. Good luck with that. Oh, wait! There's gonna be, none of that hand-to-hand combat shit, no weapons.

(MORE)

DINAH (CONT'D)

They're gonna be like super heroes with special killing powers. They're gonna look at the enemy and just zap 'em. Into a cloud of smoke. Like Brother Tony, said.

EMMETT

Don't give the GB no ideas. They'll come out with a special talk, "The 144,000 Justice for Jehovah League."

Everyone laughs.

TALIB

So, why was Greenlees living in New Orleans?

DINAH

I'm getting to that. He was in New York Bethel for something like 20 years. He was from Nova Scotia and was at Canada Bethel, 30 years before that. So that's like 50 years in an official position of leadership.

TALIB

OK, so.

DINAH

Anyway, she said that all of the publishers were so shocked at seeing him there, outta the blue like that. These men are set for life, living in Bethel. Not a worry in the world, about paying bills, keeping a real job. GB members they have helpers, assistants for whatever job they're doing up there. And, once they get old enough to need one, they also have an aide, a personal attendant 24/7. Their family can't care for them up there. Only one of them even had a child, at Bethel, back in them days.

EMMETT

A GB raised a kid in Bethel? I thought if you got pregnant. You out! That's what I told Chilo. They wanna go to Bethel so bad they're dying till they do.

DINAH

Shroeder, did. He son was, Judah. So now, back to Greenlees, in New Orleans. He stayed with this brother, in his 30s more or less, who also thought he was going to heaven. This is way before they came up with the "overlapping generations" thing, though. Back then, they had a cut-off date, for people going to heaven.

Talib puzzled.

EMMETT

Cause the GB had this thing, that anybody born after 1935 would not be going to heaven.

DINAH

So this pioneer brother, that I'm talking about, woulda been too young. And, it would only be a rare exception, that didn't ever happen, that a replacement was needed, to keep the number 144K. And, there woulda been older JWs on list, waiting to be picked, in other words.

EMMETT

But now, they have this convoluted "overlapping generation" thing. They've extended the cut-off period, so that the younger GB members (the ones in their 60s) could still say they have the right to go to heaven and rule up there with Jesus. Over the JWs, in the congregations, from heaven.

DINAH

Hell, I'm old enough, I could be one of 'em, too. With the new rule.

TALIB

(joking)

If you woulda told me all this shit...

DINAH

Anyway, the same obnoxious, single brother, Greenlees roomie.

(MORE)

DINAH (CONT'D)

That couldn't keep away from the sisters that didn't like him. He had a crush on my friend. I knew him from going there to visit. Creepy.

EMMETT

Like how?

DINAH

Always wanting to be with single sisters, paired off, alone in his or her car. He mainly latched on to the emotionally needy ones. So he never made headway with my friend. There were reports, but nothing stuck. It was always a, "she said, he said" situation. They could never get him in the act.

EMMETT

The good ol' two witness rule. Well, Greenlees found the perfect roommate. Another sexual predator. Birds of father, flock together.

Pregnant pause.

DINAH

Anyway, the elders and this brother, all know that Greenlees didn't resign and just leave. He got kicked out. And they knew why. She also had another friend, in Bethel during this same time. And he left there, not long after all this, and came back to New Orleans. He knew why, too.

EMMETT

But he wouldn't tell. Confidentiality, he was in Bethel, an appointed position.

DINAH

So, the word got around that Greenlees had some sort of disagreement with the other governing body members. On whether or not, when two married people die and get resurrected in the New Order, will they still be married, bull shit.

(MORE)

DINAH (CONT'D)

But, there was another GB that left and some other key brothers in New York, over bible interpretations. Misinterpretations, I should say.

EMMETT

This is another one of those, change in mid-stream things.

TALIB

New Light.

DINAH

Oh, this was a huge topic. When you look at how many Witnesses are married.

TALIB

Well, it's the only way they can have sex without being "grossly immoral." *Porneia*, which is also their classification for child sexual abuse.

Dinah puzzled.

EMMETT

To the governing body, CSA, which is a crime. Has the same level of sin, as two consenting single people, that aren't married, that had or are having sex.

DINAH

Please! But in hindsight, the post-Armageddon thing, was only used as a distraction. Months passed, maybe even a year and Greenlees is still there. But he couldn't take the summers, the heat. She said he stayed, sweaty and red in the face. But, at one point he was living in Mexico.

EMMETT

From the frying pan into the fire.

TALIB

Guilty conscious. On the run.

DINAH

So, he left New Orleans. Emmett, brace yourself. Sometime later, he moved to Nova Scotia. Cause, that's where, it turns out, that his - gay lover, Percy Chapman was living. Who was also a Bethelite.

EMMETT AND TALIB

What!

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Gay!? And, in Bethel.

Emmett is floored.

DINAH

That affair was going on for a long time. And the rest of the GB said nothing. He died in the late 80s. None of this is in Raymond Franz's book. No wonder he called it, "Crisis of Conscience." I read it.

EMMETT

With all the damnation and the evil that they preach about gay people. How much I love my son. But was taught by them, to hate him for who he is. That's 15 years of wrongfully rejecting him, that I have to undue.

Emmett upset.

DINAH

Em, loves you. He never stopped loving you. He knows what you're up against. He's been hoping that you'd finally see through the delusion. I never shunned, Em. I just didn't give a damn what they said. He's our boy, till the day we die.

TALIB

It's programming, conditioning to hate.

DINAH

(to Talib) You know, Witnesses disfellowshipping, only started in 50s, anyway.

TALIB

What happened before then?

EMMETT

People just left. That was it.

DINAH

We're gonna be fine, Emmett. Now, this is the one that tops them all. Get ready guys. Greenlees wasn't kicked out of Bethel and the governing body cause he was gay or having a conflict on bible interpretation with the other GB. He was a child sex predator. He assaulted several boys over many years. The GB knew. They covered it up for the longest. It wasn't until one of boy's parents, threatened to tell. Then, they had to make him leave and resign as a GB member.

TALIB

What else?

DINAH

Now this is like, 30 years later. So she and I had drifted apart. I was thinking about her, so I called her. Well, she levelled with me that she'd always had doubts about Jehovah and the bible, even as a child. She was baptized in '75 as a teenager, at few years before me.

EMMETT

(scoffs)
1975.

DINAH

(to Talib)
That's when Brother Franz was president of Watchtower. And, he said, we don't know when the world was going to end.

EMMETT

When it wasn't gonna ever happen, again. Just like all the other times. He just didn't want any fingers pointed at him. That's their deceit tactics.

DINAH

Absolutely, the year 1975 was written down, in black-and-white, in a lot of publications.

TALIB

It's that same Millerite "doomsday" mentally.

EMMETT

They've said the world's ending at least 7 times before. Waiting for Armageddon to come is like waiting for Godot.

TALIB

What years, they said?

DINAH

Oh, I know 'em by heart. 1874, 1914, 1918, 1920, 1925, 1931, 1975. The motto was; Stayin' Alive Till '75.

EMMETT

(cynically, singing)
"Ah, ah, ah, ah, stayin' alive, stayin' alive." But, didn't come out till '77.

Dinah looks at Emmett, shakes her head and chuckles briefly.

DINAH

Emmett. And more recently, any time during the 20th century. They make these massive preaching campaigns leading up to the predicted year.

EMMETT

Like a marketing scheme, to increase membership and donations.

TALIB

So, this '75 thing, is a conspiracy?

DINAH

Oh, absolutely! Before '75, JWs sold homes, businesses, some parents even took their kids out of school, some moved to the country. But, the Borg had all their dough and zero to worry about. Then nothing happens.

(MORE)

DINAH (CONT'D)

The Ws are the ones, flat out broke. Some abandon the religion. The GB call them apostates and spread hate speech about them. Saying, "they've abandoned serving God, Jehovah with a date for the end of the world (that they told them was rock solid), as motivation." Typical. Thank goodness my folks knew better.

TALIB

What a head job.

EMMETT

I just found that out a few months ago, about the 1975 thing, online. And it got me seriously and justifiably, doubting things, that the governing body prophesies. And everything else they say and tell the elders to do.

TALIB

I don't blame you, Emmett. But, the things that Witnesses don't tell the people they study with.

DINAH

Yeah. That's not in the Workbook. It's bait and hook. Like I said I'm guilty. I did it. I'm done with it.

TALIB

This is a lot of shit for me to hear. The internet is good. But, I'm also glad I'm getting it from you two.

EMMETT

A lot of what you found is new to me, Talib. I appreciate it.

DINAH

You did a brilliant job.

EMMETT

Confiding in you and giving you those files and all that, is my way of apologising for getting you involved.

Pregnant pause.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Realising all these things, made me doubt myself, first of all. For you it's a year, or so. Me, over 20 years.

DINAH

Me, all my life. Can you image how much de-programming it's gonna take for me. (to Emmett) A therapist might help us.

Emmett concedes.

EMMETT

I'm not for debating JW doctrines. People can believe whatever they want. Lies and ALL. They have that right. It's where The Organization is side-stepping these legal and moral issues, that gets me. They're a lot of ex-JWs online with a serious axe to grind. You're friend, is she one of them?

DINAH

No. She's a live and let live kinda person. The only thing she really hated about being a Witness kid, was school. Not being friends with the kids, no holidays, no birthdays. Her uncle said the Witnesses believe pretty much the same, as the Freemasons.

TALIB

Really?

DINAH

Her mom and him, argued about that all the time. Her mother broke off from all her non-Witness relatives. She didn't want them coming round anymore. But, her dad didn't have any of his family in New Orleans, most of them were abroad. So, there was a lot of stress there. But less so, when she was older. Her Dad lightened up and became friends with the Witnesses they knew.

EMMETT

Your relatives are all Witnesses. So you can't relate to that.

DINAH

Yeah, that's true. But, her mother. She was too controlling, even for a Witness. She was just the opposite. Easy-going like her dad, was.

TALIB

Her dad still alive?

DINAH

No, both parents are long dead now. And, she got kicked off the pioneer list cause she went back to college to further her degree in design. She admitted she was struggling with her hours anyway. It was 90 hours a month, back then.

EMMETT

Yet, the Society welcomes college graduates to work at Bethel.

DINAH

In '96, I heard from her again. She was on private reproof for *porneia*. But she got herself back in good standing a couple months after. Then, in 2015 we talked again. About all that had happened in our families. I was much less judgemental of her. But...

EMMETT

Still clinging to the "truth?"

Dinah concedes.

DINAH

Her mom was baptised when she was 7, back in the late 60s. But, she wasn't fully indoctrinated from childhood, like I was.

EMMETT

Not having both parents as Witnesses, probably helped her.

DINAH

Maybe so. As a child, she could never get how this god, Jehovah is supposed to be a loving father and at the same time sanctions killing? Through "righteous" war, genocide and infanticide.

(MORE)

DINAH (CONT'D)

Like in the Israelites days, them invading and killing, so-called "pagans." And Jehovah, sending this "angel of death" to kill Egyptians and their children. Telling Jesus to kill people at Armageddon. If any if it, is even true, anyway.

EMMETT

Murder and massacres. Tagline for the bible.

DINAH

Well, she couldn't believe any of it anymore.

Pregnant pause.

DINAH (CONT'D)

Anyway, what she said got me thinking. But, I couldn't imagine the thought of what would happen to me, if I left The Organisation. What would Emmett say? Too afraid to ask what he really felt about any of it? Worried sick, that that would ruin our marriage. And what would my relatives say? Knowing how they would they treat me, if I left? I was frightened, just thinking about it. So, told her she should come back to the "truth."

TALIB

What did she say?

DINAH

"I'm never coming back to the borg; she called it. I've disassociated myself. I've sent an official letter to my congregation, certified it, to make sure it wouldn't get lost in the mail."

EMMETT

Good on her.

DINAH

And, instead of hanging up on her, like any good Witness would. I asked her what really made her do it. She used to study and research like you wouldn't believe and she had a memory, just the same.

(MORE)

DINAH (CONT'D)

So, she told me she found out a lot of things about the Jehovah's Witness. And the origins of their occult beliefs. The Pyramidology. She had some non-Witness family members that were into the occult and she compared their dogma. And found some of the same beliefs. And where some of the Society's contribution money, involved in financial investment holdings that they keep secret. About the ownership of Assembly Halls and Kingdom Halls.

EMMETT

They're all owned by the Society. Not the local congregations.

DINAH

Yet, the publishers take out loans from the Watch Tower and have to pay that money back. Even though the Organisation says it operates as a not-for-profit and relies on member donations and trust funds.

EMMETT

That's why they can dissolve and consolidate them, like they do. The congregation members have no say and no choice in the matter.

DINAH

And why there is a New York and a Pennsylvania Watch Tower Corporation.

TALIB

OK?

DINAH

Because that's where the Board of Directors is. It's Watchtower PENN, pulling the strings, that the GB are tied to. They're just the mouthpiece. We aren't even told who these people are. If they're Witnesses or not. You can't get in black-and-white.

TALIB

They've made sure of that.

DINAH

But think, about if, Talib. And I've mentioned this to Emmett, before. You've got a multi-billion dollar, global corporation, with branches operating in nearly 100 countries. Properties numbering in the tens of thousands and valued at who knows how much. Just Brooklyn HQ was more than \$2 billion. And you're gonna leave ALL that, in the hands of now, eight men - with nothing more than a basic public school education. Come on!

Pregnant pause.

DINAH (CONT'D)

This racist elder in her congregation was a Watchtower stockholder for most of his life, till he died in the 90s sometime.

EMMETT

Why'd she call him racist?

DINAH

Cause one time, and this was in the early 70s, after integration really took hold in the South. This young black brother came to their Hall to give a public talk. But before he started his lecture he said, "It's so nice to finally be welcomed here. The last time I came here to speak." And pointing out the brother. He said, "I was told that I was not allowed to give talks here. Being, black." You could hear a pin drop.

EMMETT AND TALIB

Damn!

DINAH

Oh, that's not the only time with him. When the first one in her family was getting married, they were a multi-racial couple. The bride's dad was racist, too. He came round though. She gave him credit. And, they've been married for decades.

(MORE)

DINAH (CONT'D)

But this same, Brother Racist, who was egged on by the bride's father. He held a committee meeting to inquire, as to whether or not the groom was of proper Christian conduct to marry the bride. But, she, the bride was never targeted. Oh, he had the parents up in the meeting and everything.

EMMETT

What the hell?

DINAH

The groom's mom, told the circuit overseer about what happened. The CO said, the racist elder should have been deleted for that.

Emmett and Talib concede.

DINAH (CONT'D)

Well, in over a hundred years, that infamous misogynist, Brother Herd, is the only token, person of color ever on the governing body. None of their "helpers" are POC. He just got appointed in '99. And, just like in the rest of the population, the majority of JWs are people of color. So, where's representation for all the other folks of color? It's supposed to be a "worldwide" brotherhood.

EMMETT

(joking)

More colored folks in positions of authority, in the GB? To save face? Dinah you're going to far.

Dinah thinks for a minute.

DINAH

'99. That's the year my friend quit going to meetings, too. I'll have to reminder her of that. She cut out, when they finally let a brother in.

Everyone laughs.

TALIB

Besides what she experienced, she found a shit load. I thought I found some stuff, man.

DINAH

It took her leaving New Orleans and moving to London, away from all her family and friends. Plus, ten years of solid investigating and research, to "come out" with this stuff. And since I talked to her, early this year, she's still digging. Finding "new light" all the time. We should have her come and visit soon. You'd love her. She's a bookworm, but she's fun.

EMMETT

She should come for the trial.

DINAH

Oh, she'd love that!

TALIB

I've got a lot more digging to do. Having a lot of ex-JWs online helps. Cause, they've already done the hard work.

DINAH

She doesn't concern herself with their religious beliefs anymore, cause that just goes on-and-on. And she's not interested in religion or, how did she put it, "the concept of deities."

TALIB

That's interesting. Me and Sariah were talking about that, this morning. Sariah thinks the same way.

DINAH

One of her brothers, that was an elder said for decades, in New York they run the Jehovah's Witness religion, just like a business. She also knew about how the personal data system for the 23,000 CSA files. She saw that on a BBC program. And, that now it's probably way more.

(MORE)

DINAH (CONT'D)

(to Talib) Like you said. And that they, refuse to report to authorities and save children from being raped and molested. Yet, the magazines are rife with reports on the same sort of coverup in other religions and organizations.

TALIB

Even in Court. What they get is a slap on the wrist.

DINAH

Yet, Romans 13:1 says and they tell Witnesses, "be obedient to the superior authorities. Cause they are appointed by God." That's just a downright criminal conspiracy in your face.

EMMETT

You know, you say the word conspiracy and folks get all up-in-arms. Like it's an imagined story by paranoids. The word simply means, two or more people involved in a scheme to harm or to damage the reputation of someone else. This happens in our twisted society all the time. It's a fact. But, the government and the media use the word to downplay and detract from what's really going on and who's responsible. That whole Jeffrey Epstein child sex ring, used to be a "conspiracy theory." Nobody in the media believed it. And now.

TALIB

How long ago did she tell you all this?

DINAH

2015.

EMMETT

Why didn't you say anything to me?

DINAH

I kept hoping what she said was wrong. A "conspiracy" like they say. And she told me, she wished it all were.

(MORE)

DINAH (CONT'D)

Cause reading all that and seeing videos of survivors stories. Reading testimony from elders that were in those committee meetings and know what happened, she felt so betrayed and confused. I told you, it took her five years after knowing all this, to finally disassociate herself, in 2015. And she thought there was no need to formally disassociate. But, then she thought about the records they keep. And, still having her name listed as a baptized Jehovah's Witness? So she sent it.

TALIB

It's the programming.

DINAH

This religion doesn't allow you to have a normal, natural self-determination of consciousness, for what you perceive is right or wrong. It's like you aren't capable of knowing that. So they have to tell you. And she felt she was guilty of not even thinking to go to the police after she knew...

TALIB

Knew what?

DINAH

She was friends with three sisters that were abused. Two by their non-Witness father from childhood and another one, by her stepfather. No police were ever mentioned. No therapy. None of that.

TALIB

No rehabilitation, either.

EMMETT

Rehab, what. WT is not thinking about having anybody deprogrammed, out of their control. And re-programmed in someone else's borg.

DINAH

The two sisters, they told the mother. She ignored the whole thing.

(MORE)

DINAH (CONT'D)

Even after they were divorced for years and years. Even up until they were grown women and on their own. Both their parents are dead now. The step-dad case, he vanished overnight.

TALIB

What kind of mother lives a lifetime, in denial like that?

DINAH

Some of these women of sexually abused children, in their own home by family, that don't want to see. I don't get it. The things she found out about Greenlees literally made her sick to her stomach. She said, "I would have never thought this man was a criminal. You can just imagine a child's thinking. He was a very short man, white-haired, average size, non-imposing.

EMMETT

Like a tiny little ol' grandpa, right?

TALIB

A nice old man. The majority of child sex predators look just like the guy or girl next door. Not a stereotype, sinister looking, ugly monster. They are very appealing and charming.

DINAH

From how she describes him, that's exactly right. Her two little nephews sat at her mother's dinner table with him. No fear. The Witnesses brag that they're the only religion that knows truth. But you can't even trust their leaders, this is from back in the 80s. And now, here we are talking about the same thing and nothing has fundamentally changed.

TALIB

Within the congregation, elders can sometimes warn congregation parents of a pedo sex criminal, if they consider them dangerous.

DINAH

They can?

EMMETT

But they don't. Doing it on occasion, that's not a change. Again, that's just inconsistency.

TALIB

But at least in some states, the laws are changing in favour of the abused victims. Here, in the state of Texas, there's no statute of limitations for a victim that was assaulted twice, within 30 days, when they were a minor. It's 20 years in all other cases.

DINAH

So, the laws of Texas have more moral consciousness than the churches do.

Pregnant pause.

DINAH (CONT'D)

Well, at least Justina has a chance.

EMMETT

You know about her case?

DINAH

I never stopped talking to her mother. Just because I was told that Cara was "marked" as "bad association," that don't mean I listened. No Jehovah's Witness, can come between two grieving mothers. I'm the one that knocked on her door.

TALIB

Emmett told me, you studied with her?

DINAH

Yep. And, that led to her getting into this nightmare. She and I are friends, we always will be. Nothing's gonna ever change that. She told me absolutely everything, in confidence.

(MORE)

DINAH (CONT'D)

I wish I had broken that promise and told the police, myself. Her daughter has suffered so much and she's still suffering.

Dinah tears up.

DINAH (CONT'D)

My daughter suffered emotional anguish and died. More than anything else, from what Jacob was allowed to get away with. His bad choices, ruined lives. I hope, this is the time, for him to pay, for what he did to our girls.

Talib's phone pings, he looks at his phone.

TALIB

It's Sariah. She and Davina are back home.

Talib makes ready to exit.

TALIB (CONT'D)

Just to let you know, Sariah's not 100% convinced that what she's studying is really "the truth."

DINAH

I can tell. I know that she'd tell me, sooner or later. I never quit anybody. It's up to them.

TALIB

No hard feelings?

DINAH

Not in the least. I've helped to bring like 20 plus people into what I was taught was, "the Truth". But, since Freya died, to be honest, I've just been going through the motions. Doing this on auto-pilot.

EMMETT

Me, too.

DINAH

Physically attached, but mentally absent. I'm tired of the pretense, for my own self.

(MORE)

DINAH (CONT'D)

And, if we're all honest with ourselves, this child sex abuse coverup is our wakeup call. (to Emmett) I'm writing my letter for disassociation. And, I'm going to cite all of this. You'll print it for me, Talib?

TALIB

Just email it to me.

EMMETT

(to Dinah)

I already typed mine. And my elder resignation. I'll send them on, Talib. We can stop by the hall and hand deliver them to Fergus, after the meeting tomorrow.

TALIB

I'll leave them in the mailbox. We're gonna leave by 10. (to Dinah) We have a family reunion tomorrow.

DINAH

Oh, yeah. She told me. That'll be so nice. All the family, together. You guys enjoy yourselves, OK. Even though the rest of my family are all Witnesses, we've drifted apart. Please don't let that happen to you guys, with your families.

TALIB

The Witnesses have lost some really good people in all kinds of positions, from the top, down. It takes a lot of soul searching and making sense of what's really going on, to have the courage to leave behind something you believed in or were told was truth, for so many years. But after looking at the whole picture, the evidence tells you - it's not. I need sit down and talk about all this with Sariah. Looking back, I gave her a lot of grief for the time she wasn't interested. And now...

Talib stands, then Emmett and Dinah.

EMMETT

Don't beat yourself up. Sariah loves you. She'll forgive you. It's you, that have to forgive yourself. I hope you'll forgive me, too.

Talib and Emmett look at each other. Both a bit emotional, he hugs Emmett, then Dinah and exits. Dinah and Emmett watch him get to his car, he waves at them, they wave back. Talib buckles up, starts the motor and drives off.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

They'll be fine, they have a strong relationship. And their families will be more than happy for them.

Pregnant pause.

DINAH

Justina and Cara know how much you tried to expose Jacob.

EMMETT

I did, I really did. All the frustration I felt for not being listened to, by any of them.

Emmett deeply shaken. Dinah comforts him.

DINAH

By the way, Em and Kev. They had a surrogate mother, and they have twins now, a little girl and a boy. Just turned one.

EMMETT

Twins?

DINAH

They're beautiful.

Dinah and Emmett hug and hold back the tears.

DINAH (CONT'D)

They named her Freyanna. And he's Emmett the III. I didn't tell you about it because... You know Witnesses just don't talk openly about their real feelings.

Emmett concedes.

DINAH (CONT'D)

I know how seriously you take responsibility. And, I felt you...It would've jeopardized you. And, you might've never forgive me. I thought it would've broken us apart. I don't know what my family's gonna think. But, now I know, we're in this together.

Pregnant pause.

EMMETT

I've been subpoenaed to present evidence and to testify against Jacob, in Justina's case.

DINAH

Justina told me.

EMMETT

If I had 'obeyed' and destroyed that file like the Service Department told me to, with all my notes. They're actually minutes of meeting from both judicial committees. Details, dates, who said what, when, where, everything. All my testimony, would just be words.

CUT TO:

EXT. MID-MORNING. KINGDOM HALL, PARKING LOT.

Emmett drives through the lot with Dinah (in Dinah's car). Jacob and a few OTHERS, are by their cars, near the hall entrance. Emmett and Dinah, ignore Jacob, then give a quick hail the OTHER JWS. Emmett parks under the porte cochere. Emmett and Dinah exit car, calm but determined and focused. Each holding a white envelope in hand (Emmett also has a thick folder with papers), then enter the hall to speak with Fergus.

OTHER JWS: a small mixed-group (incl. a young family with three kids). And a couple of low-budget cars parked close together, including Fergus's vintage Cadillac and Jacob's truck.

EMMETT

Just remember to keep calm. Don't let him upset you. He's gonna come out with shit. I know it.

They approach Fergus, alone in the auditorium, collecting his Watchtower magazine and bible, putting them in a 'witnessing' bag, that's resting on a chair on the front row. Fergus speaks a bit louder than normal.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Hello, Fergus.

FERGUS

Emmett, Dinah. We missed you today.

EMMETT

We need to talk to you briefly.

FERGUS

You want to go in the back?

EMMETT

No, this'll do. I'm here for three reasons. In this envelope are: 1. My resignation as an elder from this congregation. 2. My letter of disassociation from the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witness. And, 3. These are congregation records and The Society's forms, that I had at home. They're for whoever.

Emmett hands the envelope, then the folder to Fergus, he takes them, then puts the folder on the chair. Dinah moves more forward, hands the envelope to Fergus and speaks louder than normal for Fergus' sake.

DINAH

My letter of disassociation from the Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witness. They're all signed. And I had them notarized.

EMMETT

Please read them. And I hope that you'll make the announcements, this Thursday evening at the meeting.

FERGUS

(more put off than shocked)
Have you both really thought this over and prayed about all this? It's such a shock. We need you, Emmett. I can't....

EMMETT

No. No, you need...

FERGUS

(condescending)

I hope it's not about your son being an homosexual and your daughter, after all this time. Well, she totally lost her way on drugs. Jehovah doesn't forgive suicide, there's no hope for her. But, you know that already. However, your son could come back. If he leaves that disgusting, sinful lifestyle and gets himself on track. If not, he'll be destroyed with ALL the rest of Jehovah's enemies, at Armageddon. So, you just think about that, you two.

Fergus waves the envelopes.

EMMETT

It's got nothing at all to do with either of our children. They've always been loved and accepted by us, despite being told otherwise. You, need to worry about your own son and yourself.

DINAH

Now that I'm no longer under your thumb of submission. And, "a Devil woman who wants to be a man." Let me just say this. Jacob is a criminal, you know it. And he's dragged you into his cesspool of evil. If you're not careful, you'll be paying for what's been done. Just like he will.

FERGUS

How so? He confessed and repented. And there's never been any proof of any other wrongdoing, in all these years.

EMMETT

Yeah, cause you've seen to it. And he's made sure to cover his tracks. And JW.org has been more than glad to overlook everything. In exchange for your generous monetary contributions.

FERGUS

That money goes toward kingdom interests.

EMMETT

Kingdom interests. Fergus, you have no idea, or maybe you just ignore what most of those interests really are. You already know about the worldwide child sex abuse coverup, from the governing body on down. I blame elders like you, who are part of the entire conspiracy. To keep child sex predators right here in your midst and the community. Ruining the lives of innocent children and destroying their families' trust. If the congregations knew, what's really going on, this would all unravel. I'm so glad, I'm finally washing my hands of all of it.

FERGUS

You're making a big mistake. Both of you.

EMMETT

The only mistake I made, is not doing this sooner. Like I said, read the letters, fill out the S-77's, make the disassociation announcements and the resignation announcement on Thursday, like you're supposed to. Fill in the S-77a with Thursday's date and send everything to the Service Department. Do what you want with the file. We're done here.

FERGUS

Aye-aye, sir.

Dinah exits just ahead of Emmett, both calm. Fergus puts the envelopes and folder in his bag. In a beat, Jacob enters, anxious and meets up with Fergus. Fergus takes his bag in hand and stomps toward the door.

JACOB

What happened?

FERGUS

I'm handling it.

JACOB

Does he suspect anything?

FERGUS

Some of these ex-military types are extremely good at keeping a lid on things.

JACOB

Good thing his junky daughter is dead. She's the only one the police questioned, the rest of them kids didn't know anything, anyway. Or, were too scared to say. Always hanging around. You couldn't get rid of them. They never knew when to go home. On Thursday, I go to my lawyer's and see who's testifying against us. Once Justina sees me in Court, she'll be terrified.

CUT TO:

INT. MORNING. TALIB'S HOUSE, KITCHEN.

Divina is in her high chair, Sariah's feeding her berry puree. She's fussy and not interested in eating. Sariah's trying to coax her to eat. Talib is stood drinking his last bit of coffee with something on his mind.

TALIB

You're going with them to the airport?

SARIAH

I was, but Davina... She's in a bad mood. (speaking in Arabic), *What's the matter my darling? It's your favorite. Come on, have one. Just a little bit. Please, for me.*

Sariah feels Divina's head.

SARIAH (CONT'D)

(in English)

Her temperature's fine.

TALIB

Well, she slept through the night. Maybe, she's just not hungry. She'll be fine.

Talib sees a flyer from the gym on the counter.

TALIB (CONT'D)

What's this?

Sariah turns to Talib and sees the flyer.

SARIAH

That's for the swimming classes I've been telling you about. I'd really love for her to start, Talib. We could go to the Sunday afternoon class. It's cheaper than Saturdays.

Talib smiles and stares at Sariah.

TALIB

You mean, me.

SARIAH

Well, I'll be there for support. You don't want me to have my water birth in that pool. Do you?

TALIB

I'll take a look at it, OK.

Sariah looks at Talib.

TALIB (CONT'D)

What? It's just, I don't want to start her with these lessons, then when Solana comes, then we have to stop. Then we start all over again. Or, we could just wait till she's old enough. And they can both go together.

Sariah rolls her eyes.

TALIB (CONT'D)

Look, Emmett and Dinah'll have their pool, soon. And he can teach them. He's trained. And, it'll be free. We can bring lunch and some beers or something.

SARIAH

We've already been putting this off. She's already two years old. I want somebody that knows how to teach babies, how to swim. Not grown women and men how not to drown in mortal combat. Just take it and read it, OK.

(MORE)

SARIAH (CONT'D)
 I know you, Talib Arthur Barron.
 What's going on with you?

Talib smirks. A car horn blows.

TALIB
 I'm gonna look into it, OK.

SARIAH
 Saved by the bell.

Talib takes the flyer, his phone and keys. Talib kisses Davina, then Sariah and rubs her belly.

TALIB
 Love you. My beautiful mermaids.
 Have fun at the airport.

Talib exits.

CONTINUOUS.

Emmett is waiting in front of the house. Talib gets in the car, rests the flyer on the drink holders. Then buckles up, they drive off.

TALIB (CONT'D)
 Good morning.

EMMETT
 Morning. How's it going?

TALIB
 OK. You?

Emmett looks at the flyer.

EMMETT
 That's your gym?

TALIB
 Yeah, it's a flyer for baby swimming lessons. Sariah wants Davina to start, asap. I wanna wait, so they'll both go at the same time. Maybe we can get a discount.

EMMETT
 The Water Babies. That's a good idea. With the way it floods around here, she's right. I had Em and Freya do 'em, from before they could even walk.

(MORE)

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Dinah and Tristan don't know how. I'mma be teaching them, when the pool is done. You know that could be a nice deal for me, when I retire. I get re-certified. Then I could have a couple of parents and their babies for private lessons. Adults are so ashamed and embarrassed to admit, that they can't swim.

TALIB

You mind if we stop by after work? Just so I can say I went.

EMMETT

I'd like to see how they do it and all. And, by the time I get back, the house'll be cool. We're the last on the list, for the repair guy, today.

CUT TO:

Music.

INT. MIDDAY. TALIB'S HOUSE.

Sariah at home, she and Davina are dressed, and in the dining room with Davina on her hip, ready for the airport trip. Talib left an empty print cartridge box on the table. She picks up the box, then looks on the printer tray then sees a sheet of paper. She turns it over. It was the last page of some information that Talib found online regarding JW pedo sex coverup (from jwwatch.org. <https://jwwatch.org/news/governing-body-of-jehovahs-witnesses-named-as-defendants-in-child-abuse-lawsuits>). The page shows "Nicholson Re-Offends While Incarcerated." She takes it from the tray and reads. After a beat, the doorbell rings, she sets the page back. Then goes to the front door, opens it, it's her sister, PIETRA. They greet, Sariah hands her, Davina, then goes back to the printer, folds the page and puts it in her pocket.

CUT TO:

Music stops.

EXT/INT. LATE EVENING. FAMILY FITNESS CENTER - ENTRANCE.

Talib and Emmett rush to enter the gym, before closing. The front door is open, they enter. No one's at the reception desk, they look around, Talib calls out, no response. They go right up to the security gates. Talib calls out, no response.

TALIB

Just get right on my back, maybe we can both get in.

Talib gets his member card and passes it through the gate, card reader. The gate opens, they rush through and continue hurriedly to the pool. As they pass by the community-sized swimming pool, only the lights in the pool are on.

TALIB (CONT'D)

Let's see if he's checking the changing rooms. This way.

EMMETT

Man, it's quiet.

TALIB

Mo, should still be here, though. He's one of the owners.

EMMETT

This is nice.

TALIB

It's all privately-owned, no franchise. They took over from the previous owners and expanded it.

MO comes through the double-doors of the dressing rooms, from the other end of the pool.

MO

Sorry, we're closed guys. Talib? Is that you, man!?

TALIB

Yeah, Mo. It's me. Got my friend with me. He's my partner, too.

They meet halfway and greet.

TALIB (CONT'D)

Hey, how ya doing?

MO

I'm good, just making my rounds and all. We've got a new guy. So, I'm just double-checking.

TALIB

This is, Emmett.

They shake hands.

EMMETT

Nice to meet you.

MO

Likewise. Moses. Everybody calls me, Mo. Hey, how'd you both get in?

EMMETT

I nearly piggy-backed him.

They laugh.

MO

I'm gonna have to block that from happening though. I keep this place as secure as I possibly can. From "undesirables." No offense, Emmett.

EMMETT

None taken. You gotta good thing going here.

MO

Thanks, man. It's kinda late, otherwise I'd give you a tour.

TALIB

No, that's alright. I'm interested in the Water Babies class. Sariah wants our little girl Davina, to take 'em. Well, she's been wanting... I just wanted to check it out. What's it about and all.

MO

Sure thing. Come in my office. So, your Davina's what, 2/3 now?

TALIB

She's two. And the next one is due, like anytime now.

MO

No wonder I haven't seen Sariah around. We gotta get her back in here. We're doing a new program for post-delivery fitness.

TALIB

OK, I'll let her know.

They walk back toward the entrance, to Mo's office.

TALIB (CONT'D)

Emmett was Special Forces, Combat Diver. Then he became an IT specialist.

They pause.

MO

An IT and Intel man. That's a match made in heaven. Good thing y'all teamed up. Welcome brother.

Mo and Emmett fist bump.

TALIB

Mo was Navy Seal, CPO. I met him on my last tour. That's why, this is the only gym I come to. Anything happens, Mo's The Man.

EMMETT

You must've felt like a fish outta water, over there in the desert.

MO

Yeah, you right Bro.

They laugh. Mo opens the door, lets Emmett and Talib in, they sit down and get comfortable on the over-sized settee.

MO (CONT'D)

Y'all want something to drink?

TALIB

Yeah, gimme one of them iced cappuccinos.

EMMETT

Thanks. I'm fine.

Mo goes to his mini-fridge and gets the coffee and juice for himself, then hands Talib his drink and sits down.

MO

Yeah. So, about the classes. What we do with them is basically, empower parents on how to teach their kids to swim.

TALIB

So the instructor isn't teaching?

MO

It's more like, show and tell, play is learning, kinda thing. The parents love it, too. Moms and Dads. Their confidence level increases as they're actually showing their kids.

EMMETT

So, do all the parents know how to swim?

MO

No, not all of them. And even so, they're on different skill levels. Babies are naturals. They've been living in water for nine months and they float no matter what. But knowing that your child's safety is literally in your own hands, makes for a connection and commitment like you wouldn't believe. I think every parent should do it.

EMMETT

When my kids were babies, I had them in classes. I'm building a pool at home. It should be done before summer's out.

MO

Nice.

EMMETT

I'm thinking, when school's back in, I could start with one or two lessons, especially for parents that have pre-school kids and infants. And a couple of private, adult lessons, too.

Mo concedes.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

I want to retire in a couple years. I'm gonna still own the business with Talib. But, this is something that I really enjoyed doing before, in the Army. And I could make some money outta it, too. I'll see how it goes.

MO

That sounds great. Glad you didn't go the gunite route, with the pool. Man, we got way to much swamp land around here. All that water, can push them pools, right out the ground.

Talib chuckles.

TALIB

His wife told him.

Emmett gives Talib, The Eye.

EMMETT

I need to get my lifeguard recertification. Man, it's been many, many, moons since I was active duty.

They chuckle.

MO

You can get all your training, right here. Your Lifeguard Certification D-Class. That's 200 bucks for a couple days, all day. And the Child Water Safety instruction is, 370.

EMMETT

So that's, 600. Not bad.

MO

We charge 30 an hour for each parent and child lesson. The Water Babies head instructor is my wife, Moselle, Mosie. We're co-owners in the business. Both our families put together and helped out, to get this all going. Some of them work here, too. The Martial Arts Master is my brother, Big Bubba.

Mo shows a picture framed on his desk of him and Big Bubba.
Then another of him and his wife and (4) kids.

MO (CONT'D)
This is Mosie, my wife.

EMMETT
(to Talib)
She reminds me of Freya.

TALIB
Yeah, she does.

EMMETT
Good looking family. That's what I
call being in shape. Especially,
y'all two. No steroids?

MO
No need. We can do the same for
your family.

EMMETT
I'm raising my grandson, he's six.

MO
I'll give you guys a month free
membership. If there are medical
issues, let me know.

EMMETT
None, yet.

MO
Then, just get 'em on in here.
We've got all kinds of activities
for the kids, any age. You, get
yourself in shape first, then the
training.

EMMETT
My Dinah, she'd love your wife.
She's looks like our daughter, did
when...

Emmett, a bit saddened.

MO
You'll like her. She's ex-Navy,
too. We met in the UK. She was
trained over there. They have the
best swimming instruction program,
in the world, for children.

(MORE)

MO (CONT'D)

Hands down. It's serious. We go back there, so she can get refreshers.

Emmett, nestles in his chair.

EMMETT

Diga, mi.

MO

First of all, they put you through assessments and an interview, before you even get in the water. To see how committed you are to this sort of niche. Working with and being in contact with children, anywhere from 0-6 years old. And, with parents that don't have any training or professional skills, for the most part.

TALIB

Like me. When we were kids, we used to go to the lake. My brother just pushed me overboard and said, "just kick your legs and swim for Christ's sake."

They chuckle.

MO

Then it's six weeks, of online courses. Learning about everything from pool equipment to risk management. How to assess and manage a crisis situation. Then, the candidate shadows a mentor for no less than 10 hours.

EMMETT

That's good. When do I get face-to-face, in the pool?

MO

After eight, 10-hour days of in-pool lessons. And, after class observations, techniques, learning about child development.

EMMETT

You ain't done, are you?

MO

Then you need, a minimum of 22 lessons supervised by your mentor. That can take a week or two, depends. More book study. And finally, you get your Blue, Top Teacher qualification.

EMMETT

Wow! That's serious, Man.

MO

It's the only program that meets the Swim England, Level 3 Teaching Advanced Qualification. The highest civilian swimming instruction there is.

TALIB

You might as well learn from the best.

MO

(to Emmett)

You should come by during the day, any weekday, Mosie's here then. She can go through all the details with you.

Mo gets Mosie's business card and hands it to Emmett. Emmett takes it and reads it.

EMMETT

Moselle Munro-Beckett.

Emmett puts the card in his phone cover.

MO

I'll tell her about you.

EMMETT

You have any graduates, working here?

Mo points on the wall, to the gym's staff.

MO

That's all of us, up there. Administration and Marketing. That's my niece, Susanne. Big Bubba's daughter. The smart one. She just started law school. That's Weight Training & Martial Arts.

TALIB
 (to Emmett)
 That's Big Bubba, again.

EMMETT
 It's everything, having a big
 brother like that. I lost my older
 brother in Nam.

Mo sympathises. Pregnant pause.

MO
 I'm still learning moves from him.

TALIB
 Big Bubba's, knows his stuff.

MO
 There's Cardio Aerobics & Stamina,
 Nutrition & Diet, Wellness
 Assessment. Youth Fitness, and our
 real money maker, the Swim Team.

Emmett and Talib simultaneously see the picture of Jacob,
 then look at each other.

TALIB
 We know that guy, Jacob Uber.

MO
 Yeah, he's our newbie. One of the
 best swimmers I've ever seen. He
 started in high school, here in San
 Antonio. He's been a certified
 lifeguard for 10 years. And, quick
 thinking in a crisis situation. You
 can't get better than the CSLSA,
 and in LA, no less.

Talib and Emmett look puzzled.

MO (CONT'D)
 Lifeguard training. I checked him
 out completely. He finished his
 Water Babies qualification before
 he started working, three weeks
 ago. So, he's been with us a month
 and a half, now. He fast tracked
 the whole thing, with flying
 colors.

Emmett and Talib to Mo, look of intense dread.

MO (CONT'D)

Come, on! What could be so bad?
What, he's a thief? Ain't much to
steal up in here...Supplements,
maybe.

Pregnant pause.

MO (CONT'D)

What? Wait. No. Don't tell me, this
guy's a pedophile.

Emmett and Talib concur. Mo outraged.

MO (CONT'D)

What! How in the hell did you find
out? I do a complete background
check and a hair sample test,
before I let anybody work here. If
they've got assault charges,
they're ass is out. Unless it was
self-defense. If they don't pass
the drug test, I tell them to go
straight to rehab. And after, I do
spot checks. They don't pass,
they're out. You gotta have your
shit together, to work with us.
And, we don't want no hotheads in
here. There's too much liability,
in this business, for shit like
that.

Mo gets a membership application, a guest pass form, and an
employee application, then hands them to Emmett. Talib looks
on.

MO (CONT'D)

On all membership applications its
highlighted. Look! "Anyone with an
criminal assault record (unless
under self-defense), is not allowed
membership or entry. A criminal
background check and clearance is
required for entry by ALL members
and quests." Same with the employee
app. See!

TALIB

Yeah, I remember when I signed up.

MO

Susanne's studying all about this
kinda civil law stuff. You gotta
know the law.

Emmett sets the applications on the coffee table.

TALIB

I need to get with her and pick her brain. I'm committed to preventing this abuse. I have two little girls, that've have just come into this world. I want to know as much as I can, about how the law works, with all of this.

MO

My cousin's on The Force. He's a police sergeant on the Sex Crimes Unit. So, I know who these scumbags are, before they can get in here and do damage. Or, lose it and go off on somebody. This is a family-friendly environment. We keep it safe for everyone. I get a file from Cousin Sergeant, every week. That he gets from the National Sex Offender Registry. A hundred-mile radius. When one pops up, in the area, I review it with Susanne and our staff. To make sure we keep on the look out. How do YOU guys, know somebody like that?

TALIB

He goes to our church.

EMMETT

Well, he came back to it. After 10 years and doing goodness knows what else.

MO

What the hell kinda church, don't report on child sex criminals? Cause that's the only way he's under the radar, like this. And, who the hell sits in a church with a known pedophile or child sex offender? Parent or no parent. The parents should be checking online regularly, anyway. As far as I'm concerned, tell ALL the churchgoers and just watch them churches go up for sale.

TALIB

According to the First Amendment, NO clergy, has to report an alleged child sex criminal, that's revealed a crime, during confession. It's called, penitent privilege.

MO

Like doctor-patient and lawyer-client privilege, you mean.

EMMETT

Nor do they have to direct a victim, seeking their counsel, to go to the police.

MO

Wait, that's the law for the Church? Well, that's fucked up. Look, I was only in the church when I was a little kid. But, thing is, laws can be interpreted all kinda different ways. Just like the bible. But, where's their own moral compass? No matter what The Law says.

Emmett and Talib concede.

EMMETT

Unless you've had to deal with the law in this kinda situation you wouldn't really know. As a church pastor, I didn't report it, in the past.

TALIB

In Texas, it's only recently that the statute of limitations are being extended in these child sex abuse cases. So that adult survivors get to have their day in court. Because generally, child sex has only recently been considered as being a serious crime. And some folks are still fighting that. Some psychologist even call it, a sexual deviancy. By the time most victims can't even deal with a lawsuit till they're 30 to 50 years old. There's so much emotional scarring.

MO

When I was about 7/8, I had an uncle, my mother's brother-in-law, he tried to touch me once. I got away from him. He was drunk. The second time he tried, drunk or not, I told my mom. Next day, my dad and his brother, Derek. Cousin sergeant's Dad, came home with their hands all busted up. I never saw him again. And nobody ever talked about him again, not one word. No pictures of him, nothing.

TALIB

You're one of the lucky ones.

MO

Yes, I was blessed. Cause I personally, know a lot of grown men with kids of their own, can't talk about it. Some of 'em come here, for gym. And we get together and talk about it, sometimes. That's why I go through whatever I need to, to keep this place safe, it's for the kids. I want them to come here and play without fear. Even when they're too little to even have to be worried about that. The older ones who are more aware, can have fun, make friends, grow their abilities, learn to compete, be a team player. And learn to defend themselves from these predators - family, friend or whatever.

Mo looks at Jacob's picture.

MO (CONT'D)

I have to get rid of this guy.

EMMETT

And you gotta do it without him suing you. Until the lawsuit goes public. I'm a business-owner, too. I know.

MO

There's gonna be a trial?

EMMETT

Yeah, first one in SA. I'm a key witness. A civil action against him and the church.

MO

Man. Shit! Everything's been going so good. I'm just gonna have to keep him with the adults, for now. Till we figure out what else we can do.

TALIB

Mosie, will watch him like a hawk.

MO

Man, I'll have to stop her from killin' him.

TALIB

And, you.

MO

I know! She's gonna blame me, for hiring him. But there's no public record. So, how did y'all know what happened?

EMMETT

I'm a soon to be ex-pastor in the Jehovah's Witnesses Congregation in Almos. I was involved with both of his sexual assault cases, handled within the church. The first time, he was a juvenile offender, she was a little girl. He confessed. But, he still put the blame on her. The second time, same girl - she was a teenaged minor and him, an adult. He denied the entire thing. Even drugging her.

Mo shocked.

TALIB

I'm a deacon, same congregation. Emmett gave me the have file on him from when he was a kid, till his early 20s. I made a copy of it, scanned it, locked it away on my hard drive. So nobody can get to it but, him, me and the attorney.

MO

Damn! That's good. You said, he was gone for 10 years. From his W-2s that's how long he was in California. In all that time, if he was "repentant" he coulda at least got himself in rehab, if he wanted to. And, he wouldn't come up in here...

TALIB

Wanting to work with little kids.

MO

Especially. I didn't put two and two, together. He's single, no kids. Less to worry about. Workaholic-type. I'm not gonna complain. I'm just admiring his athletic abilities as an asset to the gym. I'm thinking this guy's gonna be great. Our customers are gonna love learning from somebody, like him.

EMMETT

These sexual predators are so devious and cunning and nice. I know both sides of this dude. I've seen him in action.

MO

You know, that's how my uncle was. Even when he wasn't drinking too much. Buying all kinds of stuff, that my parents didn't have money for. Especially for me, being the youngest son. It was just us two boys. Then he turned into this monster. And, Jacob he's always going the extra mile. Here, I'm thinking he's just trying to impress us. New job and all.

TALIB

He's been grooming y'all.

EMMETT

They see the tiniest crack and slip on through. I'm testifying for the plaintiff and presenting confidential, hand-written records, that Talib mentioned. And, were supposed to be burned.

(MORE)

EMMETT (CONT'D)

As I was ordered, by the higher-ups. The trial is in a few weeks.

MO

Ordered? By the higher-ups? What kinda military church, set-up is that?

Emmett scoffs.

MO (CONT'D)

(to Talib)

You still in it?

TALIB

He just told me about this 4 days ago. I didn't just take his word for it or what's written in the file. I investigated all I could for myself. I still am. I've been investigating the entire conspiracy. Going as high up as I possibly can and from when it started. There's a lot out there. But of course, THEY tell us not to go looking online at anything they don't authorise. Maybe Susanne can help me get ahold of cases that they settled out of Court.

MO

Yeah, man. Just ask her. And, I'll let her know what you're working on. So, you're suspicious now. Man, you were in intelligence. Ain't nobody gon' tell YOU, not to look. That's a given, bro. You're a fuckin' blood hound.

TALIB

Mo, man I'm still in shock. You wouldn't believe how nice the regular church members are, though. Nicer than military folks. I haven't even talked to Sariah, about it yet.

MO

Talib, man, you gotta bounce outta that. Sariah's in that? I thought she was a Sikh?

TALIB

No, she left off that. She was studying the religion with Emmett's wife for a couple of months. But she's not interested in joining, anything.

MO

And, your wife?

EMMETT

She "bounced" with me on Sunday. We wrote letters and signed them, plus had them notarized. They'll announce it on Thursday. Saying that we're no longer members.

MO

All that formality?

EMMETT

That's procedure. The higher ups, they live for paper trails and electronic data recording.

MO

That's intense, for some ol' church. Ain't it?

TALIB

They announce it ALL present, from the pulpit, that you're excommunicated. For something like this.

MO

They should be doing that, for them pedos. Like the do in prison.

EMMETT

They want the entire congregation and every Jehovah's Witness they know, that they don't approve of you anymore. They don't even speak to you anymore. Family or friend.

MO

Damn, that's harsh! Very harsh. That sounds like a violation of basic human rights. If you get the right kinda lawyer, you can fight that. That's even higher than First Amendment stuff. We're talking about The World Court.

TALIB

There's an ex-JW in Belgium that took them to Court for that. He won. But, he's gonna take it to the EU Court of Human Rights.

MO

More power to him. But, these are the same people that knock on my door, waking me up on Saturday mornings. For nothing.

EMMETT

Sorry to say, I might've been one of 'em.

MO

Even though I tell them every time, I'm not interested in no Watchtower, no Awakening magazines, no books, no bibles. Or, listening them go on about - what they call it, "the true good news of God's kingdom?" The world is gonna be a paradise. Nobody sick or dying.

TALIB

It sounds too good to be true.

MO

(to Talib)

I do agree with you, they are nice and all. But, I don't wanna hear nothing about no religion, from nobody, period. There's always some catch. Your money or your time, or your life or all three. All of it, is mind control. I told you that, back when we were in Afghanistan, Talib. We used to talk about that stuff with that Jewish, woman chaplain. You remember, in Iraq, all them times.

TALIB

Yeah, I remember. Well, it's estimated they're at least 40,000 cases that have gone unreported to the authorities, regarding child sex criminals. And there's 100,000+ congregations of Witnesses, in the world.

(MORE)

TALIB (CONT'D)

So yeah, there's some of 'em knocking on doors of the houses of their own neighbors.

EMMETT

But the rank-and-file, they don't know nothing about the files, the cover-up and how the internal investigation is handled, unless it's happened to their child or children.

MO

Well, that don't sound like no "good news in the Kingdom" to me. So, only the higher-ups have these files...

EMMETT

Yeah. Digital files, even if the paper ones are destroyed. That's what the headquarters has, in New York

MO

So, it's even more of a threat among their members, than the community. Cause they're in direct contact with the kids at Church, what - every week. But, the local pastors have the intel on pedos but they're told by HQ, not to say nothin'. Well then, the higher-ups, they don't give a shit. Don't they deal with kids?

EMMETT

They only have single folks and childless couples up there. It's not a child-friendly environment. Adults only. I've visited there myself, with my wife.

TALIB

There's meetings three times a week, plus the door-to-door thing. That's ALL family-oriented. All of 'em are involved in that. The higher ups, too.

MO

Three times a week, plus!? Man, that's too much church.

(MORE)

MO (CONT'D)

But the higher-ups the come in contact with kids when they're at church, right?

TALIB

Right.

MO

So then, there's got to be predators in the top brass, that's gotta be the reason. Otherwise, why the cover-up.

EMMETT

We recently found out that there was, years ago. Because, they also socialise with the families, in their congregation. And, when they go to re-visit people that, unlike you, have interest in their message, they take along someone else. And sometimes that person, is a minor.

MO

So they're alone with the kid, while officially carrying out their church duties? Pastor, deacon or a member?

TALIB

And after, they might take them for a treat. The opportunities are there, no doubt about that. I saw a case, where the child was molested in the back seat of the car. While the parents were in front and the child was asleep.

EMMETT

Thing is, these parents trust that their kids are in good hands. It's a "family" environment. Everybody calls each other "brother" or "sister." But, they are dominated by a strict fundamental code of rules, aside from what they interpret from the bible.

MO

They can't fool us. We're all ex-military people.

(MORE)

MO (CONT'D)

We wrote the book on organizational hierarchy, compartmentalization, "need to know basis" shit. We've set traps just to bust our own people, so we can take out our own trash. THEY, need to do the same thing. But the whole operation, the command structure and code of ethics, sounds seriously flawed.

TALIB

You cannot question them or stage a mutiny. They'll kick you out. Your only recourse is to sue them in Court.

EMMETT

One survivor told their story of being sexually abused by a top brass. It's online. (to Talib) Dinah found it. There wasn't then or since, been a public admission of guilt, by Watchtower. Even though he resigned and they subsequently dismissed him from living at their headquarters and residence. The alleged top brass that was named, is long dead. That happened in the 80s.

MO

Well, good riddance to bad rubbish. They must have lawsuits comin' outta their asses, then.

TALIB

Big time. Big money, too. Millions.

MO

How much, in the case with you?

EMMETT

I don't know what the lawyer is askin' for, yet. The trial is the end of this month. I just hope she can have some peace. I knew the girl very well, she was friends with my daughter. And him, if he can't be rehabilitated - prison justice.

MO

Oh, don't worry, just between us,
my cousin can see to that, if she
wants. You know what they do to
COMOs.

CUT TO:

EXT. LATER. IN FRONT OF TALIB'S HOUSE.

Emmett parks in front of Talib's house. House positioned two or three houses from the corner. Lovely front garden well tended. Sariah's SUV (relatively new, parked forward) and Talib's truck (Dodge Ram Dually, several years old, behind) parked in the driveway. Talib deep in thought.

EMMETT

You worried about Sariah?

TALIB

I still just, don't know to tell
her all of this. I hope...

Talib's phone rings.

TALIB (CONT'D)

It's Mo.

Talib connects the call.

TALIB (CONT'D)

Hey, Man. What's up?

MO

Yeah, look. Emmett still with you?

TALIB

Yeah.

MO

Put me on speaker, OK.

Talib switches to speakerphone.

TALIB

Go ahead.

MO

I've been thinking how I'm getting
rid of this pedo. And I don't want
him coming back at me no kinda way.

(MORE)

MO (CONT'D)

And Susanne talked to one of her law professors, she's also a customer here. And, I've got a friend, she's a regular at the gym. A freelance journalist and an activist for child abuse. Being that the case is pending, I'm gonna see if she can be a, Snoop Dog, Spin Doctor on this. And get us something in print, like in the paper. That I can use as proof, against him.

TALIB

I hope it works.

EMMETT

Every bit helps.

MO

He'll be off till Thursday. I'll get back with you guys.

Talib disconnects. Pregnant pause.

EMMETT

I've got a gut feeling that Jacob might try something. I hope I'm wrong.

TALIB

Well, after reading that file, he's got serious anger management, hostility problems and anti-social behavior. When he don't get his way.

Pregnant pause.

EMMETT

I was always puzzled about what happened to Justina's brother. He was a smart ass punk, basically. And, a drifter, but still. You know, the police investigators came by and questioned me and Freya about him. I was there, alongside her. They asked if she had any contact with him at the time before he was known to have disappeared.

TALIB

You remember what she said?

EMMETT

She said, no she didn't, on the day it happened. But she did give him Jacob's address several weeks beforehand. It was odd, cause he didn't like Jacob, so she asked why. Camilo wanted to give him some of these trinkets he got. These big fake coins from Mardi Gras, in New Orleans, when he went there.

TALIB

Oh, you're talkin' about doubloons. They throw them off the floats during the parades. And people catch them or pick 'em up, off the street. I've was stationed in New Orleans for a while, during Mardi Gras, so I've been.

EMMETT

OK. Doubloons. Yeah, well Jacob used to toss them in the pool, they'd sink to the bottom and the kids used to dive in and get them. It was a game they played. Jacob didn't have too many of them. So, the kids would be scrambling for 'em.

TALIB

Innocent enough.

EMMETT

Yeah, well. It was from Mardi Gras. Witnesses kids shouldn't have been playing with them.

TALIB

How'd they get them, then?

EMMETT

Fergus, I guess. Working in the oil business, he went there from time to time.

TALIB

How'd she seem? Was she, OK with the questioning.

EMMETT

I remember she was nervous. She'd never been in a situation like that before. Afterward she was upset. Cause it just brought back all the feelings she had. About not having witnessed anything that could be used against Jacob.

TALIB

Well I wouldn't underestimate him. He's been able to convince a lot of people for a long time, that he's a sheep. Yeah, he's a sheep alright, but in wolf's clothing.

EMMETT

Till you make your decision to stay or leave, just keep your eye on him. Especially on Thursday when the announcements are made. It's gonna be very brief, just before the last song. Fergus will say our names and then he'll say we're no longer Jehovah's Witnesses. And I've been deleted as an elder.

TALIB

That's it?

EMMETT

Yep, short and sweet. Of course, it'll be like a shockwave hit the congregation. But I'd like to know Jacob's reaction.

TALIB

Don't worry. I'll be watching.

EMMETT

You know, when I was at the lawyer's office, even before the meeting they had at Court. Justina's lawyer, she asked me, if Jacob had ever made any kind of threat to me or my family at any time. He hadn't.

TALIB

Just between you and me and Sariah. I know I was supposed to get rid of my gun, like I said I did.

EMMETT

Say no more.

Talib opens the door.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Good night.

TALIB

Yeah, see ya tomorrow.

Talib closes the door and walks inside. Emmett drives off.

CONTINUOUS.

INT. TALIB'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM.

Talib enters. Very intimate and revealing heart-to-heart. Sariah laid down on the sofa, watching tv. Talib pensive, sits with her and rubs her belly and gives her a fat kiss.

SARIAH

Hey, honey.

TALIB

Hey, baby. How you doing? How's my girl?

SARIAH

Baby's all right. I'm all right.

TALIB

Davina's sleeping?

SARIAH

Yeah. She had a good time today.

TALIB

So, she's alright then? You didn't call.

SARIAH

Yes, she fine. I guess she's starting to get a bit picky about what she eats. I wonder where she gets that from?

Talib chuckles, then takes the flyer from his pocket and puts it on a nearby table with his phone.

SARIAH (CONT'D)

You hungry? I made some rice and lentils and samosas.

TALIB

Yeah, I'll get something. Why'd you go through all that trouble?

SARIAH

It was alright. I just felt like eating some. Pet and the kids, stayed and helped. Did you find out about the swimming class?

TALIB

Oh, yeah. Mo told us all about it. And, Emmett's gonna be an instructor. He'll get certified and everything.

Sariah approves.

SARIAH

That's good. I'm glad. Then we can both do it with her.

TALIB

Yeah. We can take turns. It's gonna be fine.

Pregnant pause.

SARIAH

Tali. Tell me what's really going on? I saw Emmett get an envelope out of the mail box on Sunday morning. And I found this...

Sariah takes the printout she found on the printer tray out of her pocket, unfolds it and hands it to Talib.

SARIAH (CONT'D)

I read this. What's going on, in this religion?

TALIB

I was rushing so much, I didn't mean to leave that.

Talib contemplates, then takes a breath.

TALIB (CONT'D)

Emmett has been subpoenaed to present evidence and testify in Court against Jacob, Fergus' son, in a few weeks.

SARIAH

What!? Why?

TALIB

He's a child sexual predator, for sure.

Sariah' shocked, then sits up, Talib helps her and switches off the tv.

SARIAH

Wait! How can he be at the Kingdom Hall? And, around all the kids, and...

TALIB

Sariah, there's more. You know how, when you go to the meetings they always talk about the Governing Body.

SARIAH

The Jehovah's Witness, leaders.

TALIB

Yeah, them. They have files of maybe 40,000 cases of child sex crimes e-filed, in New York. And, they don't tell the police, if the offender confesses.

SARIAH

Oh, Tali. I can't go along with that. That's morally wrong. It's against the whole concept of being of higher consciousness. Doing the right thing. Taking the high road.

TALIB

I know you didn't get to this point in your studies. But, if you state, that you disagree with what the Governing Body does - you can't be a Jehovah's Witness anymore. And, they ban you from talking to any of them about it. Or, any kinda association with them

SARIAH

Then what you gonna do?

TALIB

I investigated and researched as much as I could, after Emmett and me, left the Kingdom Hall the other night.

SARIAH

Why did you have to go to the Hall?

TALIB

He wanted to show me how they keep files, of cases that the elders handle, about wrongdoing in the congregation. The files are in that room in the back of the Hall.

SARIAH

But pedophilia is a crime. It's not some disagreement for a church mediator to help straighten out.

TALIB

Absolutely. The Legal Department in New York, that records these cases, told Emmett to destroy Jacob's file but he didn't. He was on the committee for Jacob, both times.

SARIAH

Twice! This is crazy! I had no idea that this kind of thing goes on. Look, I know that no one's perfect and definitely not religious organizations. But having so many, this is a massive coverup. It's not just an isolated problem. Did you know about all of this, before you got baptised?

TALIB

No, I didn't.

SARIAH

So they study with you. You get converted, then you find out the dirt. Typical.

Sariah scoffs.

TALIB

It's ALL, confidential. Just like in the Catholic church.

(MORE)

TALIB (CONT'D)

You know, Emmett wasn't suppose to tell me either. Twenty years, he's had no one to talk to about this.

SARIAH

Well, he trusts you.

TALIB

He's tried, but no elder would side with him. Not a one. They even warned him he'd be put out, if he told any of the brothers and sisters. He's been holding all of this in, for 20 years, Sariah.

SARIAH

He couldn't even tell Dinah?

TALIB

You know women don't have no place in anything in most religions. They say they respect women. But deep down, they don't trust them or think they're incapable of handling responsibility on their same level. Just like most religious clergy.

SARIAH

That's another thing. That's why I left all that behind. And the bible is full of glorifying the abject submission of women, condoning slavery and discrimination against people of color. They can interpret it any way they want. But it's in there, plain and straight.

TALIB

Your 100% right. When I went over to there on Saturday, we talked about it together. And they decided to leave. Emmett's not an elder anymore, either. If you're a baptized Witness, it's best to give the congregation elders a letter to say that you're disassociating yourself. And then, they announce it at the midweek meeting.

SARIAH

To make it official.

TALIB

That's what Emmett took from the mailbox on Sunday. I wasn't sure what time he'd come by. And he didn't want to disturb us from our plans. They've been in this religion a long time and they both know a lot of seriously bad things that's been going on. Dinah even more so.

SARIAH

Cause she grew up in it.

TALIB

But this trial, I think, is their tipping point. And, it definitely got me going in the same direction.

SARIAH

So their letters are going to be read on Thursday?

TALIB

They should be.

SARIAH

I'm going with you. I want to see for myself. So now, you're in shock. The people that helped convince you to be in the "true" religion, have left it. And you see it's ALL sham.

TALIB

That's why I was asking you about it, Saturday morning?

SARIAH

I like learning from their publications, in the different languages. About stuff in the bible that I never knew anything about, at all. I'm still searching for more knowledge about what's really going on in the world and our society. How we've come to live in such an imbalanced situation. The haves and the have nothing or just getting by. When we ALL need to be thriving. I feel there's greater understanding to be known.

(MORE)

SARIAH (CONT'D)

More than what I was taught as a Sikh or from the bible and those Watchtower books, for sure.

TALIB

What did you really get outta it?

SARIAH

Studying with Dinah? I'm aware of more possibilities as to why things are as they are. But I was never going to become a Jehovah's Witness. And this, totally turns me off.

TALIB

Dinah said she knew you weren't 100% with it.

SARIAH

Some of what they believe about our world, I agree with. But, that's the physical world. What's on the outside. Which to me, is still superficial. And it's controlled thinking that they're teaching. Going by what's written in black-and-white. It's all coming from a book, written by goodness knows who. And whatever else, that's been handled down, generation to generation. Following written or verbal traditions; without even questioning anything. It's the same sort of thing in all religions. I'm looking for spirituality. Inner guidance for good. A deep spiritual connection from within, not some religion.

TALIB

I have to leave it. Cause I can't condone this kinda thing. And the governing body is set, they are not changing. Their stubbornness, just does not make any sense to me. When you see how much harm that does, now or later.

SARIAH

I know how you stick to your decisions about things like this. Cause you gather so much research, think it through and analyze.

(MORE)

SARIAH (CONT'D)

Don't let your ego beat you up,
 Tali. The deception is not on
 Emmett and Dinah. They've been
 hoodwinked, like the rest. It's
 good that they finally saw through
 it and got out. For all our sakes,
 I hope we find a spiritual
 connection that we can really hold
 onto. One that's way better than
 what either of us ever had before.

Music.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE: 1. Early morning. Talib's in the kitchen making cappuccino. He gets a call from Mo. He tells him to get his newspaper and where to find the article about the trial. Talib gets it, sits down, switches on the speakerphone and discusses with Mo, briefly. He disconnects, takes a picture of it, and sends it with a message, to Emmett.

2. Morning. Mo is sat on a bench at the entrance of the gym, with the newspaper beside him, folded to the article about the trial and waiting for Jacob to arrive. Big Bubba is stood just inside the entrance, just in case. Jacob approaches Mo. Mo invites him to sit down. Mo shows Jacob the article. Jacob gets defensive and vehemently denies the charges. Mo sticks to his guns and tells him to hand over his passkey and keys. Jacob gets irate. Takes the keys from neck and card from his wallet, then slams them to the ground in front of Mo, then gets in Mo's face shouting. Big Bubba comes out. There are threats from Jacob and a serious pushing-and-shoving match between Big Bubba and Jacob. Bubba quickly gets control and swiftly lands Jacob on the ground. Mo picks up the keys and card and restates his position. Jacob gets up, threatens Mo. Then exits. Mo and Bubba watch, as he peels off the property.

3. Early afternoon. Dinah, going through the bookshelves and collects all of the JW.org publications and puts them in a box, that's already nearly full. Her worn out Life Forever and Truth books are on the top and old NWT bible versions. She comes to, her Dad's old extra-thick, green covered, NWT bible. She's ready to toss it on top the heap. Then thumbs through it and finds an old handbill with the old details about Almos Unit and puts it aside. She thinks for a beat, then puts the handbill back and the bible, on an empty shelf.

4. Late afternoon, Sariah is online with ex-JW website tabs open and looking at a video, "The Royal Commission's Report on Jehovah's Witnesses" (<https://youtu.be/QO9DqHB5dUA> & <https://youtu.be/47t9YKvAuhI>), and eating fruit, while Davina is playing on the floor with a Temari "Flower of Life" ball.

Music stops.

CUT TO:

INT. EVENING. KINGDOM HALL - AUDITORIUM.

The "Living As Christians" section of the meeting has just ended. Josh continues with the closing comments. Sariah (not feeling well but enduring) and Davina (a bit restless) are sat on the last row on the end, with a chair on the aisle, left for Talib. Jacob is sat a row ahead, in the aisle seat, opposite. Next to him is: Sissy (5, asleep on Jacob's arm), DEIRDRE (mother, 30s), BUBBA (10, head bobbing). Deirdre's annoyed at Sissy sitting next to Jacob and sleeping on his arm, cause she's trying to flirt with him. Josh is at the podium, insecure, shuffling through and reading off his notes. Nervously looking up, at the audience, briefly. Fergus slowly approaches the stage, then stands at the edge, with papers in-hand, very solemn. Josh sees Fergus, then gets more nervous and loses his place.

JOSH

Sorry, bear with me. This is my first time conducting this meeting. Through the direction of the faithful slave, the Governing Body, we strongly appreciate how precious and highly valued our young ones are. But more importantly, to Jehovah our God they are treasured. However, we haven't seen many of you school-aged publishers in the field ministry. We encourage you young ones, to take advantage of your summer holiday and make time to join us in the midweek preaching work, as much as possible. And even if you have been out there with us, can you do more? You have so much time on your hands and no responsibilities. For those of you that aren't baptized yet. You should be prayerfully considering, what's stopping you, from dedicating you life to your God, Jehovah. A set that as you main, first priority among your other spiritual goals to achieve in your youth and vigor. Thank you. And now brothers and sisters, before we conclude the meeting in song and prayer, Brother Fergus needs our attention.

Josh looks at Fergus, Fergus nods. Josh nervous, collects his things, then leaves the stage and sits down nearby, with his things in-hand, very anxious. Fergus goes up on stage and stands behind the podium. Talib's holding a roving microphone and stood just beside Sariah. He rubs Sariah's shoulder, she holds his hand. Fergus stands behind the podium, then places the resignation letter, the S-77 and S-77a forms on the podium, then clears his throat. Talib sits down and briefly looks at Sariah, then nods. They both look at Fergus, then Jacob.

FERGUS

(talks loud, volume's
adjusted)

This announcement is to inform
that, Brother Emmett Alexander
Truman, Sr is longer serving as an
elder.

Fergus places the paper aside. Congregation is shocked.

FERGUS (CONT'D)

This announcement is to inform
that, Emmett Alexander Truman is
longer one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Fergus places the paper aside. Congregation, loud gasp.

FERGUS (CONT'D)

This announcement is to inform
that, Dinah Angelica Franco-Becerra
Truman, is longer one of Jehovah's
Witnesses.

A loud gasp and murmuring is heard throughout the congregation. Fergus gathers all the papers together. Then sees Jacob take his bag and exit. Sissy's head falls when Jacob grabs his bag, Deirdre catches her, as Jacob gets his bag. She's shocked at his sudden departure. She grabs for his arm, but misses. He completely ignores her. Fergus exits the stage, then the hall. Sariah and Talib look at Jacob as he exits. Then Talib looks at Josh. Josh re-takes the podium, very nervous.

JOSH

We will conclude the meeting by
standing and singing. Let's stand
for song number 134, please.
"Children Are A Trust From God."
Afterwards, Brother Fergus will
conclude in prayer.

Music starts. Josh turns to the song in his songbook, then keeps looking toward the back, till he makes eye contact with Chilo. They nod to each other, both a bit panicked. Talib gives his microphone to Chilo, stood the a/v station behind the chairs opposite of where he was seated.

CONTINUOUS.

Jacob in the parking lot, digging in a tool bag in the back seat of his truck, which is parked front-to-front with Sariah's car. Fergus approaches Jacob.

JACOB

I told you, he decided to testify.
You coulda returned the favor and
gave me a heads up, about that
announcement. You owe me that much.

Fergus furious, like he's going to slap Jacob.

FERGUS

I owe you nothing. Look, you idiot!
If you do anything stupid again...

Jacob points to Sariah's car.

JACOB

They, got me fired. They go to the
same gym. Look at the gym bag. And
I've seen them in his truck. As for
Emmett, it's just a warning, that's
all. Maybe it'll knock some sense
into him, before he goes through
with it. Besides, it's already
done. Neither of us are stupid
enough to get caught. You best go
back and pray.

Fergus leaves Jacob and enters the hall.

BACK TO: SCENE.

INT. KINGDOM HALL.

The congregation is stood singing. Sariah remains seated, not singing and feeling more unwell with back pain. Davina is restless and starts cry. Talib tends to Davina and talks to Sariah, briefly. Sariah's feels very uncomfortable, she stands and slowly exits to the restroom. Davina's crying. Talib exits the hall with Davina. Talib sees Jacob in his truck digging around for something and Fergus walking to the entrance, he passes Talib en route, as he's stood under the porte cochere. Davina's stopped crying, but still restless.

FERGUS

Well, I guess you're next.

TALIB

Nah. You and your son, will beat me to it, for sure. If you haven't already. Like they say, a chip don't fall far from the block.

Fergus scoffs and exits, then stands in the front row. The song is playing in the background. Cecilia exits the hall, looking for Talib.

CECILIA

Talib, Sariah's looking for you.

Cecilia hurriedly re-enters the hall, then takes her place and sings. Talib re-enters. Jacob goes to plant a small explosive device on the inside of Sariah's car tire, driver's side rear. But, the car parked on that side is too close. So, he goes round and puts the device on the passenger's side front tire, then hurries back to his car and drives off.

BACK TO: SCENE.

TALIB

Your water broke?

SARIAH

No. I just want to go home. My back is killing me.

TALIB

I'll get the car. And Chilo, to help you, OK.

Talib collects his books and Sariah's mommy bag. Chats briefly with Chilo, then exits the hall. Song ends. Josh looks up and sees Chilo calling him to come, he nods. Fergus stands, then walks on the stage. Josh hurries to Chilo. Fergus is behind the podium and starts to pray. Josh stands in place for the prayer.

CUT TO:

EXT. LATER. INTERSTATE, THREE-LANES.

Random traffic. Talib is driving home with Sariah (passenger seat) and Davina (car seat). Mood: Sariah unwell and aftershock from announcements at the hall. When he turns off the road and onto the Interstate, he's driving a bit faster than he normally would (not above the limit). He wants to get Sariah home.

He moves into the left lane, then comes to a stretch of highway where there's no shoulder and a rough patch. Just when a car (Prius-type, new) is alongside him, suddenly there's an explosion at the front passenger-side tire, it's a blowout. Then a flapping sound.

SARIAH

Oh, my goodness!

TALIB

What the hell is that!?

Davina's crying. There's a cloud of dark smoke. The other DRIVER in the car alongside him and another car alongside her, in the right lane, that speeds up and gets out of the way. The other Driver looks at Talib's car, in shock. Talib has no control, the car shakes violently, his car veers right, tire debris is flying, it hits the other Driver's car. Talib moderately hits the other car on the driver side rear-half with the passenger side front part of his car. Both drivers hit the brakes. The other Driver is just ahead of Talib's, so the front passenger side is clear of his. Talib looks intensely at Sariah.

TALIB (CONT'D)

You, OK?

Sariah somewhat disconnected.

SARIAH

Yeah, yeah. I'm OK.

Talib and Sariah turn around and look at Davina. Talib shuts the engine off and puts on the hazard lights. Then unbuckles and gets Davina out of her car seat and sits down.

TALIB

We gotta get out! Can you open the door?

Sariah tries the door.

SARIAH

It won't!

Sariah unbuckles her seatbelt, holds the lever back and pushes her weight against the door. EMT NO.1 has stopped, behind the other Driver's car. She gets out with her phone and calls 911, runs over to Talib's car and looks at the tire. She pulls on the door for Sariah to get out, it's jammed. EMT NO.2 wearing her ID lanyard, opens the door the passenger side, rear door, enters the car, then reaches forward for Davina.

EMT NO.2
 (hurriedly holds up her ID)
 Here, hand me the baby! We're both
 EMS technicians at Almos General.
 Off-duty. Don't worry. How many
 weeks, Mom?

Talib sees her ID.

SARIAH
 Any day now.

Talib hands over Davina. EMT NO.2 gently takes Davina. Then gets out and stands at a safe distance. Talib grabs Sariah's mommy bag and climbs over the seat, exits car, gives EMT No.2 the bag, then tries to open Sariah's jammed door. EMT NO.1 leaves the door to Talib, then and continues with the 911 operator, as she checks on the other Driver, who's in shock, EMT No.1 reassures her that help is on the way. EMT No.2 goes to EMT No.1 and takes her phone, to continues the 911 call, informing of the status of the situation, Sariah's late-stage pregnancy and a seemingly incoherent, other Driver. In the meantime, she approaches Talib.

EMT NO.2
 Have you been on the road long?

TALIB
 No. 10 minutes, max.

EMT NO.2
 So, it's not burning then.

EMT NO.1
 (to Driver)
 Are you hurt?

Driver is hearing impaired, uses American Sign Language.

DRIVER
 No, I don't think so.

EMT NO.1
 (Signing)
 Wait!

She goes to her car and gets her ID, then shows it to the driver.

EMT NO.1 (CONT'D)
 (rusty, Sign language)
 Please, let me open the door and
 check on you.

Driver hesitant. EMS No.1 opens the door. Driver turns and looks at her.

EMT NO.1 (CONT'D)

(Signs)

*I just want to make sure you're OK.
Can you unbuckle your seatbelt,
then turn and sit, facing me?*

Driver nervously unbuckles, slow and shaky, turns toward EMT No.1. Talib is desperately pulling on the door, it won't budge. He's frustrated, but reassures Sariah. Sariah's anxious, but trying to keep calm. Davina stops crying as EMT No.2 stands, so that Davina can see Sariah. TRAFFIC CONTROLLER parks a distance behind Talib's car, then quickly approaches Talib.

TRAFFIC MANAGER

What can I do?

TALIB

Get the reflectors and manage the traffic. The keys, just take them.

Talib points at the keys in the ignition. TRAFFIC MANAGER hurries inside Talib's car to get the keys and release the hatch.

TRAFFIC MANAGER

(to Sariah)

We're going to get you out.

Sariah nods. TRAFFIC MANAGER exits, to get the hazard signs, then places them on the highway. Traffic piles up, rubber necking, horns blow. A police car speeds by with siren and flashing lights, going in the opposite direction. HANDYMAN in a construction work-truck, pulls up behind the Traffic Manager, then rushes up to Talib.

HANDYMAN

Jammed?

TALIB

Yeah, it won't budge. She's pregnant.

HANDYMAN

I've got tools.

TALIB

Hang on, Honey! We're gonna pry it open!

SARIAH

OK.

Handyman goes to his truck and gets two large crowbars, then comes back. He hands one to Talib. They set them in place.

HANDYMAN

(to Sariah)

Move over, in case the glass breaks.

Sariah, scoots as much as she can.

TALIB

Wait! There's a blanket.

Talib re-enters the car and gets the blanket and puts it over Sariah. She helps sort it out. Talib exits back to help. They both have a go at prying open the door. The Fire Department Rescue Squad arrives in the distance, with the EMS and police.

CUT TO:

INT. LATER. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM.

Not busy. Curtains drawn. Sariah laying on hospital bed, head slightly elevated, relieved, trying to keep calm but concerned. Talib sat anxious and concerned, with Davina's asleep on his shoulder. NURSE NO.1 nearly finished checking Sariah's blood pressure.

TALIB

(to Sariah)

Chilo and Cecilia called to check how you were. I told them what happened. Josh sent a stupid GIF.

SARIAH

Don't mind him. He's just...

TALIB

I called Emmett.

Talib looks at his watch.

TALIB (CONT'D)

He should be here any minute now.

Sariah nods. Nurse No.1 finished checking Sariah's blood pressure, then unloosens the band off her arm and sets it aside.

NURSE NO.1

Your doctor said, if your pressure wasn't down by now, we'd have to keep you. Good news, it's back to normal.

Sariah smiles. Nurse No.1 gets her clipboard then writes down the numbers.

NURSE NO.1 (CONT'D)

And, since your ob/gyn said the baby's vitals are fine and she's still in position, like she should be. So that's all good. She'll sign the release, so you guys can go home.

Sariah and Talib, simultaneous sigh of relief.

NURSE NO.1 (CONT'D)

I'll lift your head and lower the bed. It'll make it easier for you.

Nurse No.1 operates the bed.

TALIB

How's the other driver? She's, OK?

NURSE NO.1

She's fine. Just a bit shaken up. Maybe, when you can't hear in a situation like that, I guess things can be hairy.

TALIB

Yeah, I bet. It was really crazy. It happened so sudden. I'm still trying to figure it out. I'm just glad nobody's hurt.

NURSE NO.1

Yeah, you're all fine. It took a while to get an interpreter for her. But her family came and they helped out. She's gone already.

The bed is sorted. Sariah sits on the bed with her feet on the floor.

NURSE NO.1 (CONT'D)

Better?

SARIAH

Yes, thanks.

Talib gets up and sits on the bed with Sariah. Sariah gently rubs Davina. Nurse No.1 puts the BP monitor back. NURSE NO.2 comes to the curtain and peeks in.

NURSE NO.2

Excuse me. Mrs. Barron you have a visitor. Emmett? Should I let him come through?

SARIAH

Yeah, just let me change my clothes, alright.

NURSE NO.2

Will do.

Nurse No.2 exits. Sariah turns her back and Talib unties her hospital gown. Talib helps Sariah stand up, as she wrestles to get out of bed and changes back into her dress.

TALIB

In all these years of driving, I've never had a blowout. That feeling of not being in control, it's scary as hell.

SARIAH

I've never had one either.

NURSE NO.1

Same here. How'd you manage?

TALIB

I just held onto the wheel, till the car stabilized. It was shaking like crazy. I just let it coast. It veered right, I hit the other car. We hit the brakes. That's it.

SARIAH

You did good, honey. Real good. We're all safe.

TALIB

We were lucky, Sariah. It could've been a lot worse. Especially with my side of the road not having a shoulder. Thank goodness that woman could see the smoke, at least.

SARIAH

I wonder if she felt, the explosion?

Talib shrugs.

TALIB

If it happened a little further up though, I woulda had to steer to the left and we coulda ended up in that ditch. Rolled on the side. And goodness knows... While they took you, I went online, through this checklist about what causes blowouts. It just doesn't add up. Tomorrow I'll get with the insurance company and get a rental. I guess we're gonna need a lawyer, too.

SARIAH

Yeah. Just in case. But, I don't need a car. I can't drive anyway. We can just use your truck. Maybe the tire was faulty. And, the other ones could be, too.

TALIB

Who knows.

Emmett stood by the curtain.

EMMETT

(reassuring)
Sariah, you decent?

SARIAH

Just give me a sec, Emmett.

Sariah buttons up the front of her dress.

TALIB

(to Emmett)
Sorry I was short on the phone. But once we got here, they were asking me all these questions and...

EMMETT

No problem. Where's your car?

TALIB

It's in, not too bad a shape. So, I had them tow it home.

EMMETT

Yeah, why not. It's as good a place as any, for now. It's still running?

TALIB

Yeah.

SARIAH

(to Emmett)

Come on in.

EMMETT

Hey, so you guys alright, then?

Sariah takes a deep breath.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

How's your headache, Talib?

TALIB

They gave me something. It's much better now.

SARIAH

Thanks for coming.

EMMETT

Sorry I couldn't do much else.

TALIB

We're, OK. The babies are fine.

EMMETT

The nurse said, your doctor gave you the greenlight. So, what happened? Didn't you get new tires, 'bout a month ago?

TALIB

Yeah.

EMMETT

Did you hit a pothole or something?

TALIB

No. You know that road from the hall to the highway is smooth. It just got black-topped. There was rough patch on the highway for a bit. I've been trying to figure it out. It just doesn't add up, though.

EMMETT

I heard you say "lawyer" when I was coming in. I can ask Justina's lawyer to recommend one, if you want?

Talib looks at Sariah. She concedes.

SARIAH

Yeah. Instead of getting one online, out of the blue.

EMMETT

I'm surprised one didn't "happen to be in the neighborhood" when it happened.

Sariah and Talib chuckle.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Oh, and Dinah asked, if you guys want to, come over on Sunday? We're gonna have a little celebration. Sort of a JW.org Independence Day. Justina and her mom Cara, are coming. And, my son Em and his husband are coming with their little twins. It's gonna be so good to finally...

Emmett gets a bit choked up. Sariah comforts him.

SARIAH

Twins! That's so nice. We can finally meet everybody.

TALIB

Yeah, sounds good. Say, man we outta go workout Sunday morning. I'll come round and get you. Leave, Sariah and Davina with Dinah.

SARIAH

I won't be much help, to Dinah. Talib, don't forget to take out her car seat from my car.

TALIB

Yeah.

EMMETT

Oh, don't worry. Cara I'll there early, cooking. It's gonna be Mexican food. And Justina, she'll help.

TALIB

They have a kid's exercise and defense class, you can bring Tristan.

EMMETT

He'll be so excited.

SARIAH

(excited and pleased)

So you gonna do the Water Babies training?

EMMETT

Yeah. But, I need to get in myself in shape, first.

TALIB

Guess you have to ride in my truck for the next few days. It's my week to drive.

EMMETT

I don't mind your hillbilly truck. You've been through enough tonight. I'll come by in the morning. What happened, got me thinking. Dinah's car has new tires. But, next week Tuesday, my tire guy's back in town. So, I'm gonna get mine changed out. I'm not taking any chances.

TALIB

I've got a feeling that there must've been something I'm overlooking. Something I missed. By the way, you shoulda seen Jacob run out as soon as Fergus made the announcements.

Nurse No.1 re-enters with a release in-hand and ORDERLY enters with a wheelchair.

CUT TO:

INT. MID-MORNING. EMMETT'S STORE.

Talib on the phone with his insurance company's adjuster. Emmett is nearby. BOLO and SOCKEYE are helping CUSTOMERS. One customer has a HIP-HOP FRIEND, looking at phones near Talib and Emmett.

TALIB

How long till the report gets filed?...Up to 5 days...

(MORE)

TALIB (CONT'D)

OK...And the rental is a \$40
dollar-a-day kinda car?...A
what?...Forget about that. My wife
can't drive now, at this stage of
her pregnancy. So when are you
sending someone to look at the
car?...Look, I got a business to
run. My wife's home, but she could
go into labor any minute
now...Monday? Can't you get
somebody tomorrow?

EMMETT

Don't worry. The report might be
done by Monday.

TALIB

Alright, then Monday, 10:00.
Thanks.

Talib disconnects.

TALIB (CONT'D)

I'm wondering how much it's gonna
cost for a new door, bodywork.

EMMETT

Plus, a new paint job. I haven't
been in a car accident in so long.
I have no idea.

TALIB

This is my first time. Believe it
or not.

EMMETT

How long you been driving?

TALIB

Since I was 16.

SOCKEYE

Go, on! Man, you deserve a medal.

TALIB

At least my rates have been low.
(to Emmett) Was is it your fault?
The accident.

EMMETT

No, this guy, DUI and on the phone.
Oh, the lawyer should be here any
minute. He texted me.

TALIB

Well, on his paper, the officer put down - blowout, driver - no fault. I saw it.

HIP-HOP BROWSER

So, your insurance shouldn't increase then. It depends on the company, though. But, if they do, I'd bounce in a minute.

DAN/Lawyer enters, not messing around, approaches Emmett and Talib.

DAN

Good morning, gentlemen. I'm Dan Wilson. Myra Alejo told me to come by.

EMMETT

Hi, Dan. I'm Emmett. A witness in one of her cases. This is Talib Barron, my business partner.

Talib and Dan greet, then Emmett and Dan.

TALIB

Let's go in my office.

Talib and Dan go in the office. Talib closes the door, they sit down.

CONTINUOUS.

DAN

So you had the accident last night?

TALIB

Yes. Me, my wife, she's nine months pregnant and our three-year-old girl, were in the car. I hit a woman, that's also hearing impaired. The police said it was ruled as "no fault."

DAN

So I heard, from Myra. And there were no injuries. Thank goodness. The cause was a blowout?

TALIB

Yeah, boom! Just like that! The front, passenger side tire. Then this kinda flapping sound.

(MORE)

TALIB (CONT'D)

And the steering was uncontrollable, cause of the shaking. I took my foot off the gas. Let it coast. No shoulder on my side. We veered right. Then hit the car in the middle lane, that was just a bit ahead of us. Her rear half, got hit, on the left side.

DAN

Was it burning?

TALIB

It smelt a little bit like burnt sugar. We'd only been on I-10, like 10 minutes. I was within the speed limit. It was smoking some. But, it was totally ripped to shreds.

DAN

In what kind of condition were the tires in?

TALIB

Fine, a month old. It's my wife's car. She never had problem with them before. All she does is, drive back-and-forth to work, about 40 miles roundtrip. And run errands.

DAN

What does she do?

TALIB

She's a foreign language specialist at the base. She teaches, too. Military spouse employment program.

DAN

And, you?

TALIB

I'm a computer technician, a second career for me. I'm a retired, Army Colonel. Intelligence Department. I wasn't interested in the CIA.

DAN

Well, I'd like to an investigation. I want a complete forensic analysis on the tires, first off.

(MORE)

DAN (CONT'D)

To see if it's a manufacturing defect, an installation problem, or something else.

Talib, non-committal.

TALIB

The claim adjuster is coming out, on Monday. The car is at my house.

DAN

As soon as that's done, let me know. And we'll step in.

TALIB

How much is this gonna cost me?

DAN

If there's negligence, you're completely off the hook. It's best if we settle out of Court. Win, win. But, if we find it was just a random road hazard.

TALIB

Oh, I did come across a bit of a rough patch on the highway. Just as it happened.

DAN

We'll keep that in mind. So, it would be my time and the lab analysis. \$500 and we call it a day.

Talib doubtful.

DAN (CONT'D)

I talked to Myra. The case she's on...Well, what I can say is, it's very - significant for our client and the firm. We hope there's no connection between your blowout, and subsequent crash, and your association with Emmett, his testimony and the other parties involved. But, we don't rule anything out. If that is the case, we'll subpoena you to testify. And your wife, if she's able.

Dan gets his business card and hands it to Talib. He takes it and reads.

DAN (CONT'D)

Here's my card. If you'd like me to represent you, give me call, OK. Thanks for time, Mr. Barron. I hope I'll hear from you soon. But if not, congratulations on your new baby.

Dan gets up, Talib stands. They shake hands. Talib opens the door. Dan goes to exit, stops and turns in the doorway.

DAN (CONT'D)

Mr. Barron, how much do you know about Mr. Truman's testimony?

TALIB

It's what I don't know, you should be asking.

Dan grins, smacks the door frame and leaves Talib, then stops for a brief but polite farewell, shakes Emmett's hand and exits. Talib re-enters the shop floor with Emmett.

EMMETT

How'd it go? What did he say?

Talib nods.

TALIB

All I need to find out how many cases he's won. Then, I'll let you know.

CUT TO:

EXT/INT. AFTERNOON. EMMETT'S HOUSE. BACK YARD AND INTERIOR.

Celebration. Emmett, Tristan, EM, Kev, Talib, Sariah, CARA (petite, slim), JUSTINA (very thin and petite) are outside under the patio eating, drinking and talking, having a good time. The thick green bible is on the table with the handbill on top. After a beat, Dinah comes out with a couple of thick photo albums and boxes of pictures, then sets them on the table. Everyone looks at the pictures. Davina, FREYANNA and EM III are on the ground playing.

SARIAH

Look at how nice you all used to dress.

EMMETT

Those were our, go to meeting clothes.

CARA

I got rid of all mine, now I have *nada*. And the trial is coming up. I got nothing to wear.

DINAH

Flaca! Just raid my closet. Since I'm selling corporate real estate now, I really gotta dress sharp. I just need to work off a couple pounds.

EMMETT

And I thought, all this time, you were impressing me.

EVERYBODY laughs.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

Don't worry. I'mma get you in that gym. Bubba's gon' kick-box you, into shape, baby. Show, 'em, Triste. Show *arbuela* what she's in for. Come on, Dee!

Tristan and Dinah stand face-to-face, away from everyone. Tristan shows her a couple of simple defense moves.

DINAH

OK, let me see, what all this kick-boxing is about.

TRISTAN

I learned this today. Like this! Ready? Just follow me, OK.

Dinah follows the moves a bit shaky, but pretty well. Then Dinah and Tristan pay fight for a bit. Dinah gets tired and sits down.

DINAH

I like this! It's gonna be you and me. Duking it out, Triste.

Everyone laughs. Talib's phone rings, he looks at it, then steps aside, to answer. Chat's briefly with Bolo about a pc repair.

TALIB

Hey, Bolo. What's up?

EMMETT

So, what's next with the pool, Em?

EM

I've got the drawings in the shed.
Come see.

Emmett, Kev, then Tristan, join Em. Em explains the construction process, en route. Talib disconnects his call and joins them. The guys stay within earshot of the women and children. Justina leaves the table with an album and sits by herself looking at pictures.

CARA

(to Dinah and Sariah)

Thanks so much for offering the clothes. Cause the money, with this case...That day-service job at the law office is the break we needed. Myra got me and Justina the job. Otherwise, the regular attorney fees, we'd never afford it.

DINAH

Her's was the last residence I sold and that office, was my first corporate lease.

CARA

She just became an Associate. They have 60 lawyers working there. Lots of meetings tend to and cater. It's a huge firm. She's been helping us out so much. But, sometimes, Justina just can't... Since the case, sometimes it's...My sister comes in and helps.

Cara shakes her head.

DINAH

Myra, she's such a nice person. You've been working for their family for so many years. I still keep her house, too. On the side.

Dinah pats Cara on the shoulder. Sariah gets up and checks on Davina briefly, then sits down again.

DINAH (CONT'D)

(whispering to Cara)

Should I put the pictures away?
There's none of Jacob in there. I burned them a long time ago.

CARA

No, don't worry. She's fine.

DINAH

Does she need some nice clothes for the trial?

Cara nods.

DINAH (CONT'D)

Justy, come over here with us.

Justina brings the album with her and sits down at the table.

DINAH (CONT'D)

We're going shopping for clothes on Tuesday, at The River Center. You wanna come?

JUSTINA

Yeah. I haven't worn any nice clothes since we quit going to the Kingdom Hall.

DINAH

We can make a day of it. Sariah, you wanna come?

SARIAH

I won't be shopping. But, I'd love to walk along the river. I haven't been there in a long time.

DINAH

Tristan can go with Emmett to the shop. I'll get Sariah first. She's just 10 minutes away. Then, I'll come by and get you girls, by 11.

JUSTINA

I've been online with a lot of the ex-JW groups, about the trial. They're organizing a rally with speakers and everything. They're coming from all over the place, for support, about the cover-up.

Women react positive.

DINAH

I need to sign-up to some of those groups. Send me the links, OK.

Pregnant pause. Justina sees a picture of her and Freya dressed in swimsuits at Fergus' old house. Sudden dull mood with the women. Emmett hears the momentary silence, he's distracted.

JUSTINA

Yeah, I will. You know, it's odd, how all those swimming parties at the Fergus house ended just after Camilo disappeared.

Emmett looks at Justina. She looks at him briefly, then continues.

JUSTINA (CONT'D)

When the Court finds out that Jacob confessed to sexually abusing me, the first time, Emmett's testimony can't be used against him in a criminal trial. If the elders found out through hearsay, it would be admissible. But, a confession...

Justina shakes her head.

SARIAH

So there's no chance for a criminal one, then?

JUSTINA

The charge would never stick. Me and the lawyers went over it. First time, I was an innocent eight-year-old with a crush on him. And, he knew it. Cause I told Deirdre and she told him. She was always envious of me, anyway.

SARIAH

That's all he needed to hear.

JUSTINA

The second time, I just turned 16, on the day. I knew what he did before was wrong. I was over him, completely. But, I didn't want to stay bitter and hateful. He tricked me. I was just prey, for him to take advantage of.

CARA

He was a predator. He lied. He drugged and raped you.

(MORE)

CARA (CONT'D)

Emmett tried, but the other elders did nothing. It could've all been prevented, in the first place. Years ago, when you were little. If they warned the congregation.

Pregnant pause.

EMMETT

(loudly)

Well, this should all be done by Labor Day. So we can plan our first pool party!

The guys rejoin the women. EVERYBODY'S mood picks up. Dinah raises her glass. Everyone gets their glass and raises them.

DINAH

Here's to a future, filled with all celebrations we missed!

EVERONE

Salud! Cheers!

EMMETT

Talib and I were talkin' last week, about going on a camping trip, up to Yellowstone. We can stay at his daughter's lodge, when we get up there.

SARIAH

The cabins are so nice. Way up in the mountains. It's so beautiful. She and her family are so nice. You guys will just love them. They love entertaining people.

TALIB

Our camper can take six.

DINAH

In the RV we can take four, easy.

EMMETT

Well, we've got these two little ones with us now. And, I'd love for them to see all that.

SARIAH

And, these two!

KEV

I am definitely in. Look, I was an Eagle Scout, so...

EMMETT

Well, you can take charge of the whole camping thing. Cause all us ex-Army know, is basic survival.

Emmett and Talib chuckle.

CARA

It'll be OK, for the new baby, Sariah?

SARIAH

She's fine so far. After her two week check-up, checks out; we're ready to hit the road.

JUSTINA

What you gonna name her?

TALIB

Solana. That's gonna be her name.

SARIAH

Oh, here we go! This is gonna be the first child ever born - without a name, till she picks one herself.

Everyone laughs.

CUT TO:

EXT. MID-MORNING. TALIB'S NEIGHBORHOOD/HOUSE.

Sariah's car is ready to be towed away. TOW TRUCK DRIVER and Talib wave off each other. Talib has a car seat, a couple of toys for Davina, Sariah's gym bag, the blanket. He puts the car seat on the porch, then puts the other things in his truck. Shakes out the blanket, tosses it in. Gets in, buckles up, starts, drives off. A few beats later a group of (six paired up: Chilo and Cecilia, Jacob and Sissy, Deirdre and Bubba) Jehovah's Witnesses in field service (public proselytizing) just turning the corner, coming toward Talib's house. Deirdre and Sissy wearing matching cotton sundresses, Cecilia dark polyester top and skirt. Guys wearing short sleeve shirts with ties and black trousers. All carrying witnessing bags. They're all sweating and casually strolling. Sissy is fanning herself with a Watchtower and whining, Bubba is dragging slightly behind.

Cecilia doesn't look well, melted, red in the face, struggling, drinking iced water from a bottle. But, not complaining. Everyone notices the tow truck with the car, driving by. Jacob a bit edgy at the mention of Talib and Sariah, though charming, in full grooming mode. Deirdre flirting with Jacob, every chance she can.

CHILO

Oh, this is Brother Barron's neighborhood. The one with the nice garden.

Chilo points.

CHILO (CONT'D)

That's the house there. That must have been Sariah's car.

SISSY AND BUBBA

Let's go visit!

JACOB

We ALL don't need to go. We're out here for field service. Looking for people who need to open their doors and listen to what we have to say.

DEIRDRE

(to Sissy and Bubba)

You heard, Brother Jacob. We're to preach the good news. Not play around. We're trying to help save their lives, before Armageddon comes. Then, the Paradise earth will come. And we won't have to preach anymore. Cause only good people are gonna be in the Paradise. Right, kids?

SISSY AND BUBBA

(groan)

Right, mama.

CHILO

These first two houses are "do not calls." We'll go and check on Sariah and Davina. You all can continue with the house after theirs. And then do the houses across the street, till we get back. Here's the map. Their loads of "do not calls" across the street. So, mind them.

Chilo hands map to Jacob, he takes it. Chilo and Cecilia go to Talib house, press the bell and wait. Jacob and the others continue.

CHILO (CONT'D)

Since Dinah's out of the picture, maybe you can take over Sariah's bible study. That's why I picked this territory today. You need to work on getting more bible studies, to help get your time in. You're a regular pioneer, now. If you'd stick to the schedule I made you, you'd only need 70 hours till September, like me. Now, you need 100 this month and the next. We're never gonna get to Bethel if you don't keep up. You're holding us back, as a couple.

Chilo rings the bell, again. Cecilia marginally listening, she feels very weak and sweating profusely.

CHILO (CONT'D)

She's gotta be home. She might be ignoring us.

CUT TO:

SISSY

It's hot! I'm tired. I wanna go home.

BUBBA

Look! I'm soaking wet!

DEIRDRE

Stop the whining you two!

JACOB

Whoever quits complaining, when we're done. I'll take you for ice cream.

DEIRDRE

Starting now, I'm keeping count. The one with the low score, wins.

JACOB

Then, when you come over to my house, you can play with my puppies. And, the pony is old enough to ride, now.

SARIAH

I'm riding her first!

BUBBA

That's not your house. It's Brother Fergus' house. You don't have a house. You're still living with your Pa.

Jacob smiling and charming Deirdre.

JACOB

I started building one, on his land. We're clearing it now.

DEIRDRE

Too bad I have to work. I'd love to see.

BUBBA

What? There's nothing to see. He ain't built it yet. It's nothing but tree stumps. And I'm not helpin' ya move no logs. Or, stack no more firewood.

JACOB

Come on, Bubba. I thought you liked doing that. And blowing out stumps with the dynamite. Like I showed you.

BUBBA

It's so hot!

DEIRDRE

Strike one.

BUBBA

You can strike me out, right now. I don't care about seeing them puppies. Or, riding no horses. I want to get outta this heat.

Deirdre puts up two fingers for Bubba to see.

JACOB

Well, that's alright, son. Your mama's pulling a double shift today. So, y'all gonna be staying overnight, anyway. Your little sister will be on her best behavior. Cause she loves the pony and those puppies. Don't you?

Sissy nods, yes, then holds Jacob's hand. Deirdre looks on slightly suspicious/jealous as Jacob pats the Sissy on the head, strokes her hair and pulls her closer to him.

JACOB (CONT'D)

You're such a good little girl. I might even let you ride my stallion. I won't have any trouble with you. Will, I?

Sissy very excited, nods her head, no.

JACOB (CONT'D)

I might even give you a puppy. If you're really good. That's if it's okay with your mom?

DEIRDRE

Oh, that would be so nice of you, Jacob.

Sissy uber excited. Bubba indifferent.

CUT TO: BACK TO
SCENE.

Cecilia is just about to collapse from heat exhaustion with labored breathing, bent slightly at the waist, hand pressed against the wall for support. Sariah rushes to the front door holding Davina and dressed to go. She peeks through the peephole, then opens the door, a bit flustered.

CHILO

Sorry, I kept ringing your doorbell. But...

Chilo holds on to Cecilia. He's in a bit of a panic. Sariah takes charge.

SARIAH

Cecilia, you look awful! Come in!
Come in! Sit her down!

Cecilia nearly passing out, Chilo helps her to the sofa, she sits down. Chilo takes her bag, and puts it down, along with his, on the floor nearby.

SARIAH (CONT'D)

Cecilia, you alright? Cecilia!

CECILIA

(weak, but coherent)
Yeah, yeah.

Cecilia sits back, a bit more relaxed.

SARIAH

Take her shoes off! Put her feet up! Get her comfortable. She's got blood sugar issues, doesn't she?

Chilo takes her shoes off. Cecilia turns and Chilo helps her lay down.

CHILO

She's hypoglycemic. But, I've never seen her like this.

SARIAH

It's just to hot out there for her. She shouldn't be out, when it's like this.

Sariah points to the gym flyer on the table.

SARIAH (CONT'D)

There, fan her with that.

Chilo takes the flyer and fans Cecilia.

CHILO

She's a regular pioneer. She has to make 100 hours this month and next to stay on track. We just started July and she's already behind. You have to get your time in, early in the day, early in the week, early in the month, early in the year. I keep telling her. She's never gonna make it, at this rate.

Sariah looks at Chilo like he's crazy, then pities Cecilia. She points to the kitchen.

SARIAH

Just, go in the kitchen and get her a cold towel with ice. The ice machine is next to the fridge. And there's some grapes on the counter. Just bring the bowl.

Chilo quickly exits.

SARIAH (CONT'D)

I was drying Davina's hair. That's how come I didn't hear the bell at first.

(MORE)

SARIAH (CONT'D)

Talib gave her a bath, earlier. You just missed him. They came and took my car.

CHILO

Yeah, we saw.

SARIAH

She has so much hair. I hate to use the blow dryer on her. Dinah's coming over, to take me to the grocery. She should be here soon. Talib's truck is so high up off the ground. It's too hard for me to get in and risky to get out. I just wanna get some last minute things, with the baby coming any day now. I don't want Talib to worry, running around getting stuff. My mom and sister are coming from Houston to help out, for awhile. How you're feeling, Cecilia?

Cecilia nods, but still out of sorts. Chilo re-enters. He hands the towel to Cecilia, she puts it on her forehead. After hearing Sariah talk about Dinah, Cecilia and Chilo become defensive, panicked and judgemental.

CECILIA

Did you say Dinah's coming?

SARIAH

Yeah. She and Tristan. You forgot the grapes. She needs sugar. We don't use regular sugar. And I don't buy fruit juice. Here, let me get you some natural sugar. I don't keep it out. Talib will use it all. It's expensive, compared to the...

Sariah goes to get up.

CECILIA

No. No, that's OK. Please, don't bother. I'll be fine. This towel is more than enough. Thank you so much. I really appreciate this. Just give me a minute to cool down.

CHILO

Yeah, we need to get back out there with the others. We've got our preaching work to do.

SARIAH

She needs to get indoors. It's what, about 12:00 now? The hottest time of the day.

CHILO

Well. You're not a Jehovah's Witness or an unbaptised publisher, so it doesn't matter to you. But, we don't want to be anywhere near Dinah or Emmett. Their son's been disfellowshipped for a long time. So, if that's their problem.

CECILIA

And, their daughter? We ALL knew her. She was nothing but a...

SARIAH

What happened was tragic. And they way you all treated her, was a disgrace. Dinah is like a second mother to me. So, there's nothing that can keep us apart. And Emmett is a dear friend to both of us.

CECILIA

Does your husband know she's coming here? He's a ministerial servant and your head. You have to stay subject to him. If you're associating with her and he doesn't know, that's deception. It'll ruin your marriage. And damage him spiritually.

SARIAH

This religion is doing more damage to his spirit, than anything else. All this child sex crime cover-up is another disgrace, from the top, down.

The doorbell rings. Sariah struggles to get up with Davina. Cecilia gives Chilo the towel, then hurries to get her shoes on, stands and puts her book bag on her shoulder. He hurries and puts the towel in the kitchen sink, then comes back and takes his bag in-hand. Chilo and Cecilia walk to the front door, anxious to exit. Sariah opens the door, it's Deirdre.

SARIAH (CONT'D)

(expecting Dinah)

Oh! Hello, Deirdre!

Deirdre and Sariah friendly chat about Sariah's delivery and friendly with Davina. Then Deirdre, Chilo and Cecilia turn very defensive after Jacob being a pedophile, is mentioned.

DEIRDRE

Hi, Sariah. How's everything going?
Wow, she's dropped! Hi, Davina! Hi,
sweetie!

Sariah rubs her belly.

SARIAH

She's okay. I'm just ready,
waiting, you know. Miserable.

Sariah and Deirdre laugh. Chilo and Cecilia are relieved it's Deirdre, they make their way past Sariah and Davina and exit, then stand with Deirdre. Sariah notes their rudeness.

DEIRDRE

Yeah. Well, if she comes before
midnight, I'll be attending at the
birthing center. I'm on duty from
noon. After that, I go across town,
to our other center, for another
12-hour shift. I'm doing a double.

SARIAH

You're gonna be exhausted.

Deirdre shrugs. Chilo and Cecilia, impatient.

DEIRDRE

I do it twice a month. I really
need the money. (to Chilo) I just
came to check where else they need
to work. We did the houses across
the street. Nobody's answering.
Jacob's gonna take the kids. I have
to get to work.

CHILO

We're just leaving.

Deirdre points.

DEIRDRE

They're waiting down the street at
the corner. By that big tree. (to
Sariah) Jacob's trying to get Bubba
to help clear stumps from his land,
to build his house. He even offered
to pay him. But, all he's doing is
complaining about the heat. I...

SARIAH

Deirdre, keep your daughter away from Jacob. You hear me! He's a pedophile!

CHILO

Don't be gossiping in the congregation, spreading lies.

CECILIA

That's slander!

SARIAH

Those elders and the governing body have been covering up his crimes since he was a teenager. Because the Law tells them, they don't have to report child sex offenders if they confess to them. That's why Emmett and Dinah quit. They know everything and their conscience couldn't take it anymore. There's gonna be a trial in a couple of weeks. It's ALL gonna come out! You need to warn all of the parents!

Dinah drives up, parks in front the house and leaves the engine running. Everyone looks her way. She's preoccupied making space for the car seat in the back. Tristan is in the back seat helping her.

CHILO

Come on! We need to go!

Chilo, Cecilia scurry to exit. Deirdre goes to leave. Sariah goes to Deirdre and holds her by the arm, she's listening in denial.

SARIAH

Look, I know you're a single mom. And you're looking for a man. I saw you sitting with Jacob and flirting with him, at the meeting, Thursday. I'm telling you, keep your daughter away from him! He's grooming you and her. He's a conman. It's the little girls he's after.

Deirdre goes to pull away, Sariah grabs her arm tighter.

SARIAH (CONT'D)

Listen to me! If you don't, you'll only have yourself to blame. It's already in the papers.

(MORE)

SARIAH (CONT'D)

Check it for yourself. There's gonna be a lawsuit. When the jury finds them guilty of malice, the Organisation will have to pay. It's happened so many times. They cover it up by telling Witnesses that the victims are greedy, apostates. Now, that's slander. Go on Youtube, you'll see for yourself. And tell the parents. Protect the little girls.

Deirdre tugs her arm away from Sariah. Sariah lets go. Deirdre looks intensely at Sariah, then pulls away slowly, angry, but thinking. Then hurries to catch up with Cecilia, lagging behind, Chilo. Sariah waddles to Dinah's car.

CHILO

(looks back and shouts)
Come, on! Jacob's waiting!

Deirdre runs to catch up with Chilo and Cecilia across the street. Dinah exits her car and sees Chilo, Cecilia, then Deirdre hurrying away from her, as she approaches Sariah and Davina. Dinah opens the doors, curbside. Tristan, sat behind Dinah, playing a game on her phone.

DINAH

(chuckles)
Look at 'em, scared to death of me. They won't come within 20 feet, at least. Like I've got the plague. I saw Jacob standing on the corner with her kids, under the oak tree.

SARIAH

I guess they stopped by to check on me. But Cecilia nearly collapsed from heatstroke. Hi, Tristan!

TRISTAN

Hi, Sariah. Hi, Davina.

Dinah takes the car seat and sorts it in the car.

DINAH

That's always happening to her. She doesn't have the kind stamina to keep dragging herself out here in this heat, pioneering.

SARIAH

And he's no help. You'd think he'd have enough sense to take her home.

DINAH

Oh, he pushes her, "Get that time in. Make them hours." She makes herself feel guilty, since she can't manage working full-time anymore, with her health issues. He probably brought her here to take over your bible study, since I'm out. A bible study, that's at least 4+ hours a month, right there. I was a pioneer for nearly 20 years. They don't fool me.

Dinah shakes her head and chuckles.

SARIAH

I told them why you guys left. And, I warned her. They're just so...

DINAH

Blind. They don't wanna hear that. They work for Fergus. Chilo on his farm. And Cecilia cooks and cleans for him and Jacob, I guess. And Deirdre, she's in love with Jacob.

SARIAH

Double-blinded.

DINAH

Maybe she'll open her eyes. After he's raped her girl.

Sariah and Davina keep looking at them, till they're out of sharp focus. Jacob and the kids are in the distance.

DINAH (CONT'D)

You're ready?

SARIAH

Yeah, just let me get the stroller and my bag.

Sariah hands Davina to Dinah, then re-enters the house. Dinah plays with Davina as she puts her in the car.

CUT TO:

INT. EVENING. TALIB'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM.

Sariah is folding clothes on the sofa. Davina's in her walker. Talib and Emmett enter.

They greet Sariah and Davina, Emmett sits down. Talib has two reports in his hand, from the tires analysis. He's in a state of controlled distress.

TALIB

This is the report on the tires.

Talib hands tire report to Sariah, she looks at it.

SARIAH

Tread wear: normal, all remaining tires. Inflation: standard. Separation: not present. Compression: standard. So, nothing's wrong with them?

Talib concedes, then sits next to Sariah.

TALIB

Dan had another lab test done. For what was left, of the blowout.

Talib hands Sariah the second report, she takes it and scans.

SARIAH

Traces of nitroglycerin and diatomaceous earth? What?

TALIB

That's dynamite, basically. The nitro, is what gave me that terrible headache. I was near the tire for the longest, breathing that in. Dan's checking who else had one.

SARIAH

For goodness sake, Talib. Where'd this stuff come from? You can't just go buy that outright, can you?

TALIB

The diatomaceous earth you can buy at an animal feed store. They use it on farms to keep fleas and ticks away.

SARIAH

Who's got a farm around here? This is the suburbs.

EMMETT

The only one we know of, is Fergus. His farm is outside the city limits. He's actually out of the congregation's territory. That's rurals around there. We used to go in field service out that way every other year or so. Almos is the closest Kingdom Hall to him.

SARIAH

But the nitroglycerin, why would he have that?

TALIB

He use to blow up oil wells. And he was an explosives expert in Korea. He can't hear good. That's why he talks so loud. Chilo has to turn the volume down when he's up there talkin'.

EMMETT

There's a lot of old mesquite and oaks on his property. Maybe he's cutting some down, blowing up stumps. Him and Jacob don't get along. I don't know how they could live under one roof. Jacob's been back, since before Christmas. Maybe he's building himself a house or something. Fergus has plenty enough land.

SARIAH

What a minute! Deirdre was by here this afternoon with Chilo and his wife. She said that Jacob was going to mind her kids, while she went to work. And, he was trying to get her boy to help him, haul trees. I warned all of them about him.

Talib and Emmett look at each other. Talib takes the reports.

TALIB

Sariah, we're just gonna go and ask Jacob a couple of questions. That's ALL.

SARIAH

Please, Emmett. Just don't let him do anything crazy.

Talib and Emmett exit.

CUT TO:

EXT. LATER. TALIB AND EMMETT IN TALIB'S TRUCK.

In a steady downpour, Talib's driving on a gravel and dirt road, to Fergus' big country house in the pitch black. Only lights are from the house in the distance. Emmett climbs over in the back seat and crouches down. Fergus has a light dimming alarm, when a vehicle rolls over it, to alert him. Fergus looks out the window, but he doesn't know Talib's truck. He gets his double-barreled shotgun from his rifle rack. Talib parks in front of the house, shuts the engine off. Fergus comes around from the side of the house behind the truck and creeps up. Talib looks forward as if Emmett's not there. They talk very low, briefly. Talib opens his door with the reports in-hand. Fergus cocks his rifle and points it at Talib. Fergus recognises him. Everyone talks louder that normal for Fergus' sake.

FERGUS

What are you doing here? Coming to my house in the dead of the night.

TALIB

Hold on Brother Fergus. I came here to talk to Jacob.

FERGUS

A phone call woulda been better?

TALIB

What I have to talk to him about, he most likely woulda never answered my call.

FERGUS

So, this is a confrontation, then?

TALIB

Yep.

FERGUS

Well, he's in there sleeping. We've been working all day. Clearing land for his house, over yonder.

Fergus points with the rifle, then lowers it.

TALIB

Have you? Lotta mesquite around here.

(MORE)

TALIB (CONT'D)

I could use some for when bar-be-que. How you gonna get rid of all them stumps?

FERGUS

Blast 'em! With dynamite. That's what folks around here do.

Talib nods.

TALIB

I'll keep that in mind. If I ever have the need.

FERGUS

You didn't come all the way out here to ask Jacob about no firewood for your bar-be-que or blowing up stumps.

TALIB

No sir, I didn't. I came here to ask him, why - on Thursday night, when I was driving us home from the meeting. A tire on my wife's car got blown off the rim, with dynamite. Not much, just a little bit. But, it ripped it to shreds. And these lab reports prove it.

Talib holds up the reports. Jacob comes to the front door, stands in the door frame open shirt and jeans on, being rude.

JACOB

What's going on? What are you doing here, Talib? In the middle of the night. Folks asleep and all.

Bubba hears the talking, wakes up and creeps to the landing to hear, then sees Jacob downstairs at the front door.

TALIB

It ain't that late. You stay up way later than this, watching kiddie porn. Don't you? Turn yourself in. Tell the police what you've done. How your Dad mistreated you and your ma. Everything. Get yourself some help.

Talib holds up the reports, again.

TALIB (CONT'D)

No real harm was done to my family.
So, I'll let that go.

FERGUS

Get back inside, Jacob!

JACOB

You didn't come out here alone.
Who's in the truck with you? It's
Emmett ain't it? Emmett, he can't
never leave well enough alone and
mind his own business.

FERGUS

Jacob, get back inside and close
the door! And shut up! You gonna
wake up them kids. And they gonna
complain to their mama. So, get!
I'm handling this.

Jacob curses, shams the door and goes to his room,
downstairs. Bubba sneaks downstairs, to the front window and
peeks out.

FERGUS (CONT'D)

Well, I guess you and Jacob have
got nothing to talk about, then.
And, if it's just the two of you,
no police with a warrant, I'm
guessing. Then, you're uninvited
intruders, trespassers. So just get
back in your truck and go home. I
gotta right to defend my property.
So don't go telling the brothers,
that I pulled a rifle on you.

TALIB

Why would I do that?

EMMETT

(shouts)

Unless you ain't suppose to be
having one.

FERGUS

That's never stopped me, all these
years. So, you best shut up,
Emmett. Cause you're an apostate.
You ain't nothing to any of us
anymore. No elder, no Witness and
no eye witness, either.

EMMETT

Don't worry. I'll be doing plenty of witnessing at the trial. And that's all that matters.

TALIB

Just to let you and Jacob know. If anything else, accidentally happens to his family or mine. Just remind your son that my wife is due any day. So any danger to her is a danger to our unborn child. He'll be convicted of murder.

Talib gets in the truck, closes the door, starts and slowly drives off. Fergus watches Talib drive off. Bubba crouches down and hides, scared shitless. Fergus enters the house. Emmett does a brief playback of the recording, then climbs back over, into the passenger seat. Talib looks up Mo's number and dials, then puts the phone on speaker. Mo answers.

MO

Yeah, Talib. That's you?

TALIB

Yeah, it's me and Emmett. We're on speaker, OK.

MO

You guys, OK?

TALIB

Yeah, we're fine. I know it's kinda late. But, I got those reports on the tires.

MO

On Sariah's tires?

TALIB

Yeah. And there were traces of dynamite.

MO

What the fuck?

TALIB

Yeah, I know. It turns out that Jacob's ol' man was a demo expert in Korea, then he worked in the oil fields. Jacob learned the business, too. They live in El Campos.

MO

Way out in the sticks.

EMMETT

Jacob's building a house for himself, out there. It's their family farmland.

TALIB

Anyway, we paid them a visit just now. The dad thought we were trespassing.

EMMETT

Which we were. So he pulled a rifle on us.

TALIB

Anyway, they're using dynamite to blow up tree stumps on the property.

MO

How'd you find out?

TALIB

Straight from the horse's ass himself.

EMMETT

I got the whole thing recorded. It's studio quality, too. Can't miss a word.

MO

Damn good! I'll call Sergeant, to see if we can shake up Jacob and the ol' man.

TALIB

I'm wondering if Jacob might've also used an alias or something. Cause tonight, he acted brazen. I've never seen that side of him. Like he had some other kind of personality.

MO

You never know. I'll tell Sergeant.

EMMETT

The way he acted tonight - that's his REAL, asshole personality.

(MORE)

EMMETT (CONT'D)

What you see at the hall, that
Brother Nice Guy shit, is fake.

TALIB

OK. Remember, Dinah said her friend
lived in LA. I wonder if she knows
anything about him? Maybe she can
help. She might have some apostate
friends, out there.

EMMETT

I'll ask Dinah.

TALIB

Talk later, Mo.

MO

Alright.

Jacob disconnects.

CUT TO:

INT. FERGUS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM.

Homey interior, cluttered, hoarded, old knick-knacks. Fergus
puts his rifle back in the rack and locks it with a key. Then
gets a flashlight.

CUT TO:

INT. FERGUS' BARN.

Markedly tidy and sorted, from Chilo's work, keeping it in
order. Fergus enters, switches on the light, goes into a
storage area where he has farm supplies, including the
diatomaceous earth. He notices some earth is spilled on the
ground and the work bench. Inside a cabinet, he unlocks a
small combination safe. Inside are, thick cardboard tubes
(like toilet paper). He takes a small worn, wooden padded box,
opens it. It has a dozen, small nitroglycerin vials, some are
missing. Fergus is angry.

CUT TO:

INT. FERGUS HOUSE.

Jacob shuts down his laptop, opens the desk drawer and puts
two small devices in his shirt pocket, and notices how quiet
everything is. He checks around the house for Fergus, sees
his not in the house.

Gets the pistol and a handful of bullets. Then storms like a bat outta hell, loads the pistol enroute to the barn, then tucks it in his waist behind him. Bubba goes back upstairs, gets his phone, switches on its light, quickly checks on Sissy, on the far side of the house, she's asleep in bed. There's a camera set-up on a tripod for filming with umbrella lights (makeshift studio). Bubba exits.

CONTINUOUS.

EXT. BETWEEN FERGUS HOUSE AND BARN.

Bubba hurries to follow Jacob. Jacob startles Fergus, then enters the storage area. Jacob grows more sinister, Mr Hyde. The conversation escalates into an attack on Fergus, then Bubba.

Jacob enters the storage area and surprises, Fergus. He shows Jacob, the earth and nitro vials.

FERGUS

What the hell did you do, boy?

JACOB

I told you. It was only a warning. He said, nobody got hurt.

FERGUS

He's already got proof. He's got lab reports. Even if I dump this, all the police have to do is test anywhere around here and they'll find traces.

JACOB

There's loads of military folks living around here with access to that stuff.

FERGUS

None of them have a motive, but you.

Fergus grabs Jacob by the scruff. Jacob shoves Fergus up against the cabinet and pins him with his elbow pressed hard against Fergus' throat. Bubba's in hearing range, just outside the barn and stops to eavesdrop.

FERGUS (CONT'D)

Look, boy! I told you already. The first time couple of times, that was nothing.

(MORE)

FERGUS (CONT'D)

Then you really screwed up and I covered your sick ass. You were young and plain ol' stupid then. When you told me what you did, the first time, what did I tell you?

Pregnant pause. Jacob lets Fergus loose.

FERGUS (CONT'D)

I said, go and confess. They're not gonna touch you. Cause I know the governing body policies on juvenile sex offenders. The mother didn't have a leg to stand on. But, the second time, you were so scared that girl and her mother were gonna rat you out. You idiot! You denied the whole thing. That's not the way it works with these folks. You have to use the "repentant sinner" routine, to stay on their good side when you screw up as bad as you did. If you woulda let me handle things. I woulda sorted it out, with that girl, and her Ma. Look how poor they were. They still are. I woulda gave them whatever they wanted. And everything would been fine.

Jacob regretful, momentarily.

FERGUS (CONT'D)

But, when her boy came over and confronted you. You weren't thinking about consequences then. Were you? What happened, happened.

Jacob's anger builds.

JACOB

It's too late now.

FERGUS

No it's not. That's why I sent you away. The girl and her Ma, fell out of The Truth, anyway. They were weak, barely holding on. And, as time passes, the rest of us forget and move on.

JACOB

She didn't forget. Her Ma didn't forget. And neither has Emmett.

(MORE)

JACOB (CONT'D)

So, I'm gonna fix that, for good.
There's gonna be no testimony from
him.

FERGUS

Jacob, you're a grown man. I'm not
doing it again. I'm not covering
your ass, cause it's all exposed,
now. All I've got to do, is tell
the police to go digging at the ol'
house and you're done for. You
heard me. The only reason I haven't
made a phone call is - if you go
down, I might go down, too. Either
way, my name's gonna be mentioned.
And I don't care for that.

JACOB

You could've done it, just as well
as I did.

FERGUS

Difference is, I ever touched that
girl. You couldn't keep away from
her. Leave ALL of them alone! I
don't care if the jury rules in her
favour. The Court, better not give
them a cent. I've given so much of
my hard earned money to that
congregation. I've got the checks
and the transfers, to prove it.
Watchtower better make sure she
gets nothing. And get your life
sorted out!

JACOB

So, you've been thinkin' about
ratting me out, eh. Well maybe,
Emmett ain't the only one that
needs to keep his mouth shut.

Jacob pushes Fergus back against the cabinet, presses his
hand against Fergus face and wedges his leg between Fergus,
then rams the pistol in Fergus's mouth and cocks the trigger.
Bubba enters. Jacob turns and freezes, lowers the pistol,
then let's Fergus loose, then points the pistol at Bubba.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Don't you say nothing you hear. Not
a word. If you tell your Mama or
anyone, about what I did with this
this gun - she's as good as dead.

Jacob releases the trigger and tucks the pistol in his waist. Bubba shakes.

JACOB (CONT'D)

I told you to go to sleep. But you never listen, Bubba. What is wrong with you, son? Say you're sorry for barging in on us and eavesdropping?

BUBBA

I didn't see nothing. I didn't hear a word. I swear to God.

JACOB

Don't you ever swear to God. It's not Christian. I bet your little sister is sleeping now. Being the perfect little girl that she is. She cried for her Mama at first. But then I told her, everything's gonna be fine. That's why I show her so much love and attention. To me, she's perfect. I got in her bed and I told her a nice bedtime story. Then I showed her this special toy I have. And how little girls are scared of it at first. But if they play with it like I teach them to. It makes me real happy. And, I always treat 'em real nice. With the puppy dogs, ice cream, pony rides. And hat makes them happy. Then they forget about everything else. And, if you don't tell, I'll get you anything you want. You just name it, Bubba and it's yours. Just for you, if you keep it all a secret. We tell NO one. You hear.

FERGUS

Jacob quit this! You're goin' crazy!

BROTHER

(cheeky)

What kinda special toy, you've got?

JACOB

Always with the smart mouth, this one. You need a daddy to slap some manners into you, boy. Right, Dad? It's gonna hurt me, more than it hurts you.

(MORE)

JACOB (CONT'D)

But, you deserve a firm backhand
slap across the mouth. Don't he?
Like this.

Jacob looks at Fergus, slaps Bubba hard, then scoffs. Bubba is knocked hard, into the wall, then hits the ground hard. He holds his face and winces in pain.

JACOB (CONT'D)

(to Fergus)

That's how you used to do it.
That's how it's done. Right, Dad?
(to Bubba) It ain't none of your
business, what kinda toy. But, I
might show you how it works one
day. When you get a bit older.
You're too young for that sort of
thing right now. You practice with
the animals, first. Just the
females. It's so good with them,
cause they don't move, they don't
squeal, and they don't scream. But,
when you get older, you'll find
your toy - very useful. It's just
for little girls. Some women, they
need you to play hard, too. But
little girls are the best. That's
how you love them. (to Fergus) But,
good ol' Dad here, that's how he
use to "play" with Ma, right? You
had her terrified of your toy. I
don't think she much liked you or
your toy.

FERGUS

Stop it, Jacob!

JACOB

Shut the up, ol' man! I've had
about had enough of you. I'm
talkin' to my future son, here.
Your Mama can't wait for me to
finally walk her down the aisle;
make a decent woman of her. And
have a man in the house. Ain't I
right?

Jacob squats down and pulls Bubba by the scruff with both hands to his face and holds him. Bubba struggles to nod, "Yes."

JACOB (CONT'D)

See, Dad. I'm gonna be a Papa, too. Nobody's ever gonna believe a kid, over a grown man. Especially a little punk like you. I know, cause the same thing happened to me, when I was a kid. You know what they're gonna tell you, Bubba?

BUBBA

No, sir.

JACOB

"Kids are liars," that's what grown ups believe. Especially them naïve ones, at the Kingdom Hall. To them, the only thing a child needs to be is, obedient.

Jacob stands and pulls Bubba to his feet, then sorts his clothes and stares at him.

JACOB (CONT'D)

If you call your Mama tonight and tell her anything. She's gonna call me. When she comes, I'll tell her, that you came in here, in the middle of the night. You must've started playing with the dynamite and you blew this barn up. Kaboom! And you died in here. You hear me.

Jacob points the pistol for Fergus to stand with Bubba.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Now, get in the house!

Fergus shocked. Bubba petrified. Jacob puts the barrel up to Fergus', then Bubba's forehead.

JACOB (CONT'D)

(psycho)

I said, you and you - out of my face and in the house! Now!

As they go to exit, Jacob points the pistol to the ceiling and fires it. Fergus and Jacob, jump. Jacob uncocks the trigger and throws the pistol on the bench, then makes the two bombs.

Music.

CUT TO:

EXT. WEE HOURS. EMMETT'S STREET.

Jacob wearing a hoodie and mask, driving very slow in his truck, as he passes Emmett's house. The lights are off, everything's quiet. He parks a short distance away, exits, covers his license plates and brake tags, puts the two bombs in his pockets, then exits. He walks cautiously to what he thinks is Emmett's car (it's Dinah's) parked in front of their house. He plants a device, each one on the front tires on the inside. Then double-checks they're secure, then re-enters his truck and exits.

CUT TO:

EXT. LATE AFTERNOON. I-10 SOUTH - DINAH'S CAR ACCIDENT.

Medium traffic. Dinah's driving in the center lane, with Cara sat in the front. Sariah behind Cara, Justina behind Dinah and Davina in the middle in her car seat. They've come from shopping. The car behind her is too close. RUDE DRIVER vile gesture. Dinah sees the left lane is open, she quickly switches lanes, just as the Rude Driver does. Then crosses over the same area of rough patch (as Talib did). SLOW MOTION: the blowouts happen simultaneously on the tires. Dinah's car is rear ended by the Rude Driver. It's thrust into the rear of a large delivery van in front of her. Dinah turns herself right, to protect Cara, she looks back and sees Sariah thrust forward, Davina is secure. In the rear view mirror she sees Justina thrust forward and the Rude Driver. The airbag (Takata defective replacement) explodes. A large metal projectile hits Dinah on the left side of her head and tears through her cheek and jaw, ear, side of her head and upper neck. Then rips through the her headrest. As Justina is thrust forward with her neck bent, the same projectile hits the top of Justina's head. Other metal projectiles miss Davina. Break the glass or lodge in the body of the car. The car stops.

CUT TO:

INT. LATER. ALMOS HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM.

Managed chaos. Dinah on a stretcher wheeled in with EMTs and hospital emergency medical staff. Justina on a stretcher wheeled in with EMTs and hospital emergency medical staff. Sariah in labor on a stretcher wheeled in with EMTs and hospital emergency medical staff.

CUT TO:

INT. LATER. ALMOS HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM - WAITING AREA.

Emmett, Em and Tristan. Cara wearing a neck brace, is holding Davina in the waiting room, pending the results for Dinah and Justina.

CUT TO:

INT. LATER. ALMOS HOSPITAL DELIVERY ROOM.

Sariah about to give birth with Talib by her side.

CUT TO:

INT. LATER. ALMOS HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM - WAITING AREA.

Music.

MONTAGE (no dialogue): Mood is bittersweet. 1. Talib enters to give the good news about the baby's safe birth and good condition of Sariah. Cara hands off Davina to Talib. He takes and holds her (never let her go, moment). 2. Then takes Davina to see Sariah. 3. Mo, Mosie and Sergeant enter and approach Emmett. Everyone gets introduced. 4. Dan and MYRA (lawyers) approach and get introduced. They talk for a while about the accident and status of Dinah and Justina, cautiously optimistic. Kevin enters with his right sleeve rolled up, from donating blood to Dinah. A DELIVERY NURSE enters, to escort them all, to see the baby in the Nursery. 5. Everyone at the Nursery window trying to be cheerful, looking at BABY SOLANA. Talib enters with Davina after a beat.

CUT TO:

INT. LATER. ALMOS HOSPITAL FAMILY WAITING AREA.

Emmett, Em, Tristan and Cara are sat looking at TV.

DOCTOR NO.1 enters and approaches Emmett, then shakes his hand. Emmett introduces Em. Doctor gives stabile but critical condition of Dinah. DOCTOR NO.2 enters and approaches Cara shakes her hand, gives stabile but serious condition of Justina.

CUT TO:

INT. LATER. ALMOS HOSPITAL - DINAH'S PATIENT ROOM.

Emmett, Em and Tristan visit with Dinah in a coma. Somber, but hopeful.

CUT TO:

INT. LATER. ALMOS HOSPITAL - JUSTINA'S PATIENT ROOM.

Cara visits with Justina. She's awake, bandaged, on pain IV. After a beat Emmett, Em and Tristan visit with Justina.

Music stops.

CUT TO:

INT. EVENING. TALIB'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM.

Talib is sat on the sofa with Davina watching tv. Sariah is in their bedroom with Solana, her mother MARTA and Pietra. The door bell rings. Talib puts Davina on the floor, then checks, it's Deirdre. She's concerned about the accident, but has something else on her mind, then reveals what's happened with her kids and Jacob. Talib's aware this visit must be something very important. He opens the door.

TALIB

(mildly cheerful)

Hi, Deidre. Good evening.

DEIRDRE

How're you Brother Talib? How's your family doing?

TALIB

We're all fine. Sariah and the baby are home, a few days now.

DEIRDRE

A girl?

TALIB

Yeah, we have another girl. So sorry we couldn't have the water birth and all. Sariah was so excited for it. I was, too. Especially since she'd done it with Davina.

DEIRDRE

I was excited for y'all, too. She was so into it. You know.

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)

So, how's Dinah?

TALIB

Still in a coma. Her brain activity is normal, though. She could come out of it any day now, or who knows. She's suffered trauma to her head, the left side. Her ear, face and upper neck. Her jugular vein was severed.

DEIRDRE

Oh, no!

TALIB

Yeah. The only thing that saved her was, she wasn't sitting directly in line with the steering wheel, when the airbag exploded.

DEIRDRE

Thank goodness.

TALIB

But, it was touch n' go for awhile. She lost a lot of blood and needed a blood transfusion. She has AB-, very rare. Lucky, her son's partner Kevin, has the same blood type. She wouldn't have made it. No way.

DEIRDRE

Yeah, well. When I was studying for midwifery, I know that white blood cells are in mother's milk. So, children are literally drinking their mother's blood, to help build up their immune system.

TALIB

I never thought about. But, that's okay with the governing body.

Talib and Deirdre concede the irony.

DEIRDRE

I think, what the no blood thing's, about, is red blood cells. There's something taboo about red blood that goes way back in human history or culture.

TALIB

That's interesting.

Pregnant pause.

DEIRDRE

It's only in the lab, that the components of blood can be separated. But, it's ALL the same. Blood is blood. I was gonna be a nurse at one point. But...

Talib hears Davina and looks her way, briefly.

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)

Was Dinah's a Takata airbag? I had mine replaced with another brand.

TALIB

Yeah. A replacement from the first recall. They're still, deadly. It's the moisture that builds up inside and makes them unstable. Especially in this humid weather. But, that's gonna be huge lawsuit. Takata is bankrupt.

DEIRDRE

How's Tristan? My Bubba misses him so much.

TALIB

Tristan was with us at the shop.

DEIRDRE

I heard there were to other people, two inactive Witnesses in the car? They're involved in, that lawsuit.

TALIB

Yeah, Justina and her mother, Cara. Cara's, OK. Justina was injured, but not nearly as bad as Dinah. She was sitting behind her. She got discharged from the hospital today. She's doing alright. She was lucky, too. The same projectile from the airbag, struck her at the top of her head. Cause she was thrust forward and her head was bent forward. She had a concussion and terrible whiplash.

DEIRDRE

I'm glad things look promising.
Please tell Emmett I wish them all
the best.

TALIB

I will. I'm sorry I have you
standing outside. And, I'm wasting
the AC. You wanna come in? You can
see Dinah and the baby, if you
want. I'll tell her you're here.

Deirdre hesitant, then agrees. Talib let's her in, then gets
Davina.

TALIB (CONT'D)

Can I get you something to drink?

They go into the kitchen and sit down.

DEIRDRE

Just water, thanks. I just got off
work and I need to get my kids.
Talib, I did stop by to check on
all y'all. But, I came for
something else, too.

Deirdre somber and anxious. Talib gets Deirdre a glass of
water.

TALIB

Go on.

DEIRDRE

When I was here last week, in your
neighborhood, we were in field
service. I came by to look for
Cecilia, cause she and Chilo had
stopped to visit with Sariah. And
ask about continuing her bible
study.

TALIB

Yeah, I remember. She told me.

DEIRDRE

What she said about Jacob, I was so
shocked. I couldn't believe it. How
could she say such a thing. But
after, I started thinking. How he's
so... How he was with my daughter.
Not, with my son. Just, Sissy.

(MORE)

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)

In fact with him, he was just the opposite. Always trying to toughen him up.

TALIB

Rough housing.

DEIRDRE

Yeah, but real aggressive. He'd stroke her hair and cuddle her, sit her on his lap. Tickling her so much, she could hardly breathe. I always had to make him stop. It was too much. Their Pa, wasn't a Witness. After I decided to come back to the Kingdom Hall, he didn't come around much. We were very disconnected, then. So she just took to Jacob being so nice and affectionate. Buying her clothes and toys. Taking them out, doing things with them, and me. And fixing things around the house. I was so grateful.

TALIB

No doubt.

DINAH

Well, later that same day, Jacob was minding them, over at Brother Fergus. They spent the night, cause I had a double-shift. I went straight from work, to get them, early that morning. As tired as I was.

TALIB

All the way out there?

Deirdre concedes, then drinks some water.

DEIRDRE

I don't know, something just told me, that I had to go and get them. I was straining to stay awake, at the wheel. But, I made it.

Sariah's sister enters to get something for the baby.

PEITRA

Sorry to interrupt. Sariah forgot this.

TALIB

Pet, this is Deirdre. A friend of ours, from the Kingdom Hall. She was gonna be Sariah's midwife. Pietra, is Sariah's sister.

PEITRA

Nice to meet you.

DEIRDRE

Nice to meet you, too.

TALIB

Their mom, Marta is here, too. Helping us out. We're so thankful they're here, with all that's happened. And, I've got the shop to run by myself, till Emmett gets back.

DEIRDRE

You look so much like Sariah.

PRI

We take after our Mom.

Pietra smiles and gets the item.

DEIRDRE

(to Pietra)

I'm glad to know Sariah and the girls are fine. Tell her "Hello" for me, please.

PRI

I will. You want me to take Davina?

TALIB

Yeah, please.

Pietra holds Davina and exits.

DEIRDRE

Anyway, when I go to pick my kids up, they're so anxious to come home. They're never like that, when they go over there. They're usually still running around, playing with the horses and Jacob's dogs. They love it out there. And since Jacob's clearing land to build a house, I was curious and wanted to see. But, he was anxious to get rid of me.

TALIB

I thought he was your boyfriend?

DEIRDRE

Well, he ain't no more.

TALIB

What happened?

DEIRDRE

He hardly said a word, to me. Which was odd. He was trying to give Sissy a puppy. But she flat out refused it. I couldn't even beg her. And then, I saw Bubba's face was all red on one side and swollen. So I asked him about it. I remember he looked at Jacob for the longest time. Then he turned to me and said that he was running and fell and hit a branch on the ground. But he was all right. Jacob said the same. So we said, "Bye" and left.

TALIB

Where was Brother Fergus?

DEIRDRE

His car was there, but he never came out.

Talib scoffs.

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)

Anyway, several days passed. I was home going through some boxes of their ol' toys. To give them to younger kids at the Hall. They had them from when I was living with their dad. Before I was baptized. So, I came across this toy pistol of Bubba's. It was so real looking. Well, when he saw it, he ran up to me and slapped it outta my hand, so hard. He hurt me.

TALIB

Hmm.

DEIRDRE

Then he started shouting and crying, then ran to his room. So I went to talk to him.

(MORE)

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)

Sissy heard him and she came in his room, too. It took him the longest to stop crying. I had to calm him down. I begged and pleaded with him, to tell me what's wrong.

Talib very attentive.

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)

Brother Talib. I believe in my kids, 100%. They are not liars. He told me, that that night, two men. He couldn't make out who they were. But they came to Fergus' house and they were saying something about the tree stumps, a report and someone might get hurt. Brother Fergus had his shotgun. And Jacob wouldn't talk with them. Brother Fergus told them to leave or he'd shoot them.

TALIB

It was me and Emmett, we went there to talk to Jacob. But, Fergus wouldn't let us.

DEIRDRE

Was it about that happened when we were kids?

TALIB

No, something else.

DEIRDRE

Anyway, Bubba is so curious. I swear it's gonna really get him killed one days. And now, he's been threatened.

TALIB

Threatened, by who?

DEIRDRE

He snuck outta the house, after Jacob and followed him to the barn. He overheard Fergus talkin' about something buried at their old house and if it was found, he and Jacob would be in big trouble. Instead of going back in the house, Bubba went inside the barn, cause he heard the two of them fighting.

(MORE)

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)

When he gets inside Jacob's trying to ram a pistol, down his father's throat. He stops when he saw Bubba. Then he starts talking crazy. Bubba didn't understand what he was saying.

TALIB

Crazy? Like what?

DEIRDRE

First he scolded Bubba for not being in bed, like Sissy. Then he said, he got in her bed to tell her a story and play with his special toy.

Talib putting things together.

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)

Bubba asked him, what kinda of toy? Jacob said he had no business asking. Then slaps Bubba so hard it knocks him to the ground and he hit his face.

TALIB

Where was Fergus?

DEIRDRE

He just stood there. Cause Jacob had the gun.

TALIB

What!

DEIRDRE

I know. Then he told him. He said, the toy is only for little girls. And they're scared of it at first. Then they like to play with it cause he shows them how. And if they play with it properly, it makes him happy and he gives them treats.

TALIB

Oh, shit!

DEIRDRE

He told Bubba, he'd show him one day. But, he don't listen. Then he told him, if Bubba told me.

(MORE)

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)

He'd say that the he went in the barn, played with the dynamite and blew himself up, in the barn. Then, he told Bubba, he'd kill me.

TALIB

He's a psychopath.

DEIRDRE

Oh, it gets worse. Sissy told me what he did to her. Sariah warned me and I wouldn't believe her.

Sariah enters the kitchen.

SARIAH

It's about Jacob isn't it.

Deirdre cries.

DEIRDRE

Y'all might not know, but, I was raised in The Truth. I was good friends with Justina when we were kids. We were in the same classes in grade school. And, we all went over to Brother Fergus house all the time, after they got that pool. Freya used to pick us up and bring us over there and watched over us. Jacob was always such a bully when he was with us kids, I couldn't stand him.

TALIB

A bully. Like Emmett told me. I woulda never believed that now.

DEIRDRE

Oh, he was. But, at the hall, the brothers and sisters adored him. He'd help out, cut everybody's grass, make it look nice. It was ALL pretend. He was always teasing, flirting - with Justina. I was jealous of that, then. She's always been so beautiful even when she was a child. Then we grew up. Jacob left. And I left, The Truth. Hooked up with this guy, had my kids. Then, I made my way back to it, after 12 years and got baptized.

TALIB

At the district convention. Same as me.

DEIRDRE

Yep. Sure was. Well, Jacob comes back, like a totally different person. No bullying. A single brother, so nice, no kids. Financially stable and he's building a house. I'm struggling, working two jobs, no father in the picture. He hates the Witnesses, anyway. I'm trying make ALL these meetings, doing my ten hours a month preaching, regular.

TALIB

So the elders don't get on your case.

DEIRDRE

Yep. Studying with my kids, studying for these meetings. Trying to juggle all this. I feel like a hamster on a wheel. I looked at Jacob and thought, Jehovah sent him, to me.

Deirdre disgusted with herself. Pregnant pause. She tears up, then starts to cry.

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)

I took Sissy to the doctor this afternoon. There's redness and bruising. She's still, intact. He used a condom. He made her put it on him. Bubba saw a camera and lights set up, in the room where she was sleeping. He must have filmed it. And gave her a bath afterwards. He, he, washed her, with his...

Deirdre gestures with her fingers.

TALIB

The doctor has to report it to the police. Check your tires carefully before you go anywhere. Every time. Every time. You hear?

Deirdre concedes.

DEIRDRE

When I asked my kids, why they didn't tell me. They said, "You told us you love him. Be nice and do what he tells you. He's gonna your daddy one day."

Sariah and Talib, deep sigh.

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)

And he told us not to tell anybody and cause trouble for the congregation. They'll say we lied and made the whole thing up.

Everyone sinks. Sariah hugs her and gets her a towel. She wipes her face and nose.

TALIB

Where are your kids?

DEIRDRE

Their with Cecilia, at their house.

TALIB

Have you told Chilo?

DEIRDRE

Yes, they both know. They don't believe a word of it. He, both of them, worship Fergus and they love Jacob. Without Fergus they'd have no work, with them helping him out with that farm and that house. Jacob don't wanna do none of that. I have no one but y'all to talk to. And I've got no one else to leave them with, when I go to work. I'm off for the next two days. But, after that I dunno know. I went to the police, just before I came here. My kids...

Deirdre cries again.

TALIB

Well, you need to keep them away from Chilo and Cecilia. Jacob's always with them. Find somebody else.

SARIAH

Just bring them over here. My sister and mother will help.

TALIB

Don't go to any elders. And when they call or come by, DO NOT talk to them, ever. They ALL know about Jacob. Throughout the whole circuit, they know. Even in New York. And they'll convince you to keep quiet. They don't want the congregations or the public to know about these child sex predators.

SARIAH

Remember what I said. And, Dinah said the same thing, after you ran away from us.

Deirdre concedes.

TALIB

If any elder reports the abuse, they cannot testify against him in criminal court.

DEIRDRE

What?

Deirdre looks at Sariah, Sariah concedes.

TALIB

I've done a lot of research into who's mandated to report child sex abuse. In Texas, when spiritual advise or a criminal report is given to clergy, by way of a confession. And they report it, they can't testify in criminal court, period. It's in black-and-white. That's the hitch in the law. Jacob confessed to them about his first offense, that's loop hole. No doubt Fergus knew that. If it's a CIVIL lawsuit, like Justina's, clergy testimony stands, by confession or hearsay.

DEIRDRE

So I need to decide whether or not to tell the elders.

TALIB

You'll regret it, if you do. This is Jacob's third time, that we know of. Do you want him locked up?

Deirdre concedes.

SARIAH

Do you trust the elders enough, to stand in your daughter's corner? Where does their loyalty stand? With the children? Or, with the governing body?

Deirdre exhales deeply, doubtful. Talib's phone rings, he checks it.

TALIB

Yeah, Mo. You alright?

MO

I'm just calling to tell you that Mosie and I have been subpoenaed by Jacob's lawyer, to testify in his defense.

TALIB

What?

MO

Yeah, as character witnesses.

TALIB

You gotta be kiddin'.

MO

I wish I was. His evaluation was, perfect trainee and model employee. So, what else is going on?

TALIB

Emmett said, they're investigating the airbag. The replacement was made by the same company and it's still killing and maiming drivers.

MO

I had a Takata in my car, too. I paid to change brands. I don't want nothing to do with them.

TALIB

My lawyer said, the test on Dinah's tires have the same results as Sariah's. Justina, went home today. Wait a second, Mo. I'm gonna put you on speaker, OK.

Talib puts the phone on speaker.

TALIB (CONT'D)

We have a friend of ours here, Deirdre. Jacob raped her daughter about a week ago. The girl finally told her. The doctor examined her today. And she reported it to the police.

MO

How old is she?

DEIRDRE

Six.

TALIB

(to Deirdre)

Tell him what your boy overheard? About Fergus and Jacob digging something up?

DEIRDRE

Fergus said, that if they'd dig at their old house. They'd be in trouble.

MO

What's there?

TALIB

Justina said that the swimming pool parties at the Ubel's ol' house, was where Jacob assaulted her the second time, in the cabana. He had it set up like his cave. And they stopped having the parties, just after her brother disappeared. And not long after that, Jacob left town.

MO

Sergeant has to know all this. I'm writing this down. What's your name, Miss?

DEIRDRE

Deirdre, Deirdre Sanders. My girl's name is, Caroline Ferguson.

MO

We've got to nail this guy and his father or whoever else is involved. I'll talk to you later.

TALIB
 Alright, Mo.

Talib disconnects.

Music.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE: 1. FERGUS' OLD HOUSE. HOMEOWNER with warrant in-hand anxiously observing and complaining to the male POLICE OFFICERS as they search the backyard, but find nothing. 2. TALIB'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM. Talib with Davina on his knee as he writes his letter of resignation as a ministerial servant and disassociation. 3. POST OFFICE. Talib certifies the letter, then mails them to congregation. 4. ALMOS KINGDOM HALL Chilo arrives at Hall for weekday field service, picks up the letter. Fergus comes shortly afterwards, Chilo gives him the envelope, Fergus reads the letters. 5. FERGUS HOUSE/LAND. Jacob on his land clearing trees with Chilo helping. 6. DEIRDRE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN (very basic) Deirdre cooking with Sissy and Bubba helping, trying to cope.

Music ends.

CUT TO:

INT. MORNING. ALMOS HOSPITAL - DINAH'S ROOM.

Dinah's conscious in her hospital bed. Tristan laid back in the bed with Dinah. Emmett sitting on her other side. Em, Kev, the Twins at her feet.

DINAH
 That's good to hear. I'm glad she's home. How's her memory?

EMMETT
 She's remembering more, now.

DINAH
 Sariah and the girls are fine?

EMMETT
 Yeah, they're good.

DINAH
 What did they name the baby?

EMMETT
 Solana.

DINAH
Sariah finally gave in.

Everyone chuckles.

TRISTAN
Mommie D, the doctor said that you might not remember everything that happened before the accident. But, do you remember you said that I could get a puppy from Brother Talib's neighbor? Sorry, Talib.

EMMETT
We've gotta get used to not saying that.

EM
Yeah, it took me the longest to get that outta my head. And a lot of other things, we used to say. Trigger words.

DINAH
(to Tristan)
Yes, I said you can get one. And Pops said you could get one. As soon as I get stronger, we'll go over there and you can pick one, OK.

TRISTAN
How long that's gonna be?

DINAH
I dunno, yet. But, as soon as I'm able. I promise, OK.

EMMETT
Oh, the pool is coming along. They just poured the floor and the foundation for the cabana.

DINAH
It looks good?

EMMETT
Yeah. It hasn't been raining for the last few days. So the contractor said, they'll be able to move along, faster.

DINAH
How does it look, Em?

EM

It looks real good, Mom. They're doing a great job. I told you, they're the best.

KEV

The pool tiles will be ready in a few weeks. The Chinese slate for the cabana, is in. And we need to work out the wood stain for the cabana. When you're ready.

Dinah smiles and reminisces.

DINAH

To think, if you would've stayed a Witness, all your talents would've been wasted. No architectural school. No degree. No studio. And you probably would've never met such a good partner, raising your beautiful children together.

KEV

I'm lucky to have him, them. And, all of you.

Everyone concedes.

EM

Ma, it's getting late. We better go and feed them.

KEV

We'll get things ready for you at the house. I'll have lunch ready and dinner, for later, OK. I've been putting food in the freezer, too. So, it's there already.

TRISTAN

Uncle Kev, is a good cook.

KEV

And you, eat everything. That, makes me feel good.

Em, Kev, Tristan and Twins say farewell and exit. Emmett leans in and holds Dinah's hand.

EMMETT

How's the headaches?

Dinah exhales deeply.

DINAH

It's a constant throbbing since I've been awake and talking with you guys. Right now, I can sense it's gonna go off soon.

Emmett checks his watch.

EMMETT

It's been about 5 minutes, since you've been up. The doctor said, 5/10 minutes. That's about as much as pain you'll be able to stand for now. Then, it'll increase. They have you on Demerol. Just press that, when you need it, OK.

Emmett shows Dinah the button for her patient controlled analgesia. Dinah concedes.

DINAH

Yeah, OK.

EMMETT

The doctors are hoping that at least, they won't be as severe, as you get better. But there are no guarantees that it will go away altogether.

Dinah sighs.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

They don't know at all, about your hearing loss. That has to be tested when you're healed. And, you're going to need reconstructive surgery. There could be other complications down the road. They just don't know. But, if you didn't turn like you did, you would've died. It would've totally crushed your head.

DINAH

I remember the that crazy, lunatic driver, riding me on my tail. I was just trying to get out of his way.

EMMETT

There are witnesses to the whole thing. Plus, the cameras.

DINAH

I hit the rough patch on the road.

EMMETT

It was the same place that Talib crossed.

DINAH

The blowouts, they happened at the same time. The intense shaking of the steering wheel, then getting rear ended. I moved and stretched my right arm out, over Cara. Turned around to look at Sariah, she was thrown forward, too. Saw Davina; she was, OK. The, Justina thrown forward, and the other car in the rearview mirror. Hearing the airbag explode. I felt the the impact. And that's it.

EMMETT

Dan, Talib's lawyer is also handling the case with the airbag manufacturer. All the replacements, are faulty. You're on the list. It's gonna be a huge lawsuit.

DINAH

Settling out of court?

EMMETT

Yeah, we don't need anymore Court dates. Justina's trial starts next week. In a week from now, we'll be there, hearing opening statements from the lawyers. So much has happened.

DINAH

The blowouts, what caused them?

EMMETT

Same as what happened to Sariah's tire.

DINAH

Dynamite?

EMMETT

Yeah. We're sure that Jacob did it. The police just need evidence, to arrest him.

(MORE)

EMMETT (CONT'D)
 Something other things have
 happened, since you've been, out.

DINAH
 Like what?

EMMETT
 Brace yourself. It's no use me
 keeping any of it from you. Cause
 you'll only be more upset if I
 didn't tell you now.

Dinah impatient.

EMMETT (CONT'D)
 You remember, Deirdre?

DINAH
 Yes. The last I saw her she was
 running away from me. When I was
 picking up Sariah and Davina, to go
 to the grocery.

EMMETT
 Well, her son.

DINAH
 Ah,... She has a girl, too. Right?
 The names...

Dinah frustrated.

EMMETT
 Don't worry. Just listen, OK. Her
 kids were at Fergus' house later
 that same day. And they stayed
 overnight. The son, Bubba -
 overheard an argument between
 Fergus and Jacob, after Talib and I
 left their house. Fergus said that
 something is buried in the backyard
 of their ol' house. And if the
 police find out, they'd be in
 trouble.

Pregnant pause.

DINAH
 You think?

EMMETT
 Talib's friend, the guy that owns
 the gym. His cousin is a police
 sergeant. He got a warrant.

(MORE)

EMMETT (CONT'D)

They had all kinds of equipment to check subterranean. But, they came up with nothing.

Dinah holds the side of her head, pain increasing. She presses the medication release button.

DINAH

But, did they check the original layout of the property? To see if anything has been added or changed.

EMMETT

I dunno know.

DINAH

You know, if Justina went, she could tell them. They should go back there, with her.

Dinah in sudden extreme pain.

EMMETT

Hold on, Sug. Let me get the nurse. They don't even know you've been awake.

Emmett exits. Dinah's pain begins to ease.

CUT TO:

Music.

EXT. FERGUS'S OLD HOUSE.

EXCAVATION TEAM waiting on the street, in front the house. Justina, Cara, WOMAN POLICE INVESTIGATOR, FORENSIC ANALYSTS (2, one with a camera) exit cars. Investigator knocks on the door, Homeowner answers, Investigator serves her with another warrant. Homeowner takes it and reads it, then makes a phone call. Justina escorted to back yard, Cara in tow, then the Analysts. The Homeowner, very concerned and curious, meets them in the backyard (still dug up from the first dig) and quietly observes. Justina slowly looks around, stares at the pool briefly and the backyard. Then, notices the changes and the expanded and rebuilt cabana/detached porch. Investigator takes notes. Analyst No. 2 take photos. They enter the cabana and look around. It's more of a storage/junk shed, now. Justina sees the old doubloon tin and the old portable radio, points at them. Analyst No.1 takes them and passes them to Analyst No.2, he exits with them and momentarily, then returns. Justina looks on the ground and sees that the flooring has a hump, then drags her foot across it.

The Investigator moves everything along the hump, from end-to-end of the cabana. The Investigator and Analysts exit momentarily. Cara stands beside Justina and holds her hand. Cara finds an ice chest for them to sit on and wait. The Investigator and Analysts re-enter with (2) Excavation Crew, carrying tool kits. They move everything out or to one side and peel back the sheet vinyl flooring, revealing a seam, and see the difference between the new and old foundations. Analyst No.2 takes photos. Justina and Cara hug and cry. Investigator escorts them from the cabana. Then stops to briefly direct the Analysts on the excavation and exit the property. Analyst No.1 tells the Homeowner to relocate personal items and helps her move them. Analyst No.2 directs the Excavation Team to begin work.

FADE TO BLACK.

Music ends.

END OF PART 1. PART 2: A LAW ABOVE THE LAW: THE TRIAL (TO FOLLOW)