

# JOHN THE BAPTIST

Episode 1

"Calvary"

by

McKenzie Hamilton

*A small-town pastor moves his family to the big city to replace the revered minister of a legendary mega-church in Dallas but finds himself entangled in a dark power struggle and the heated spotlight of national right-wing politics.*

mkzhamilton@gmail.com  
323.457.3425

**TEASER**

EXT. COURTYARD - MEGA-CHURCH - DOWNTOWN DALLAS - NIGHT

A towering cross sits atop an elaborate water fountain in the courtyard of the famed Calvary Baptist's sprawling campus.

INT. PASTOR'S OFFICE

The office is dark. The only light comes from a small LCD television sitting on a table in the corner of the room. The sound of a CHEERING CROWD emanates from the small TV.

ON TV SCREEN

is a broadcast of election night coverage. A chyron says...

**Governor of Texas, Richard Stone elected President.**

With his hair slicked back and an American flag pin on the lapel of his stylish, shiny suit, GOVERNOR RICHARD STONE (60) stands behind a podium ready to address the crowd.

The crowd CHANTS: USA! USA! USA!

The Governor speaks into the mic...

GOVERNOR

Thank you, thank you. I-I just  
received a call from the senator--

The crowd CHEERS louder. The Governor smiles...

GOVERNOR (CONT'D)

This was a close race. I appreciate  
the phone call. This was indeed a  
hard-fought campaign.

ON SCENE

TWO MYSTERIOUS MEN, one in black slacks and the other in gray, walk around in the darkness with their dress shoes draped in disposable shoe coverings.

Behind an eccentric, hand-carved antique desk, an unidentifiable male body leans back in a desk chair facing the wall. The blood-drenched hair drips on the desk below it.

The sound of the speech continues...

GOVERNOR (CONT'D)  
 But, oh, what a historic night. The  
 people have spoken. They have sent  
 a clear message...

The two men arrange the scene like a suicide as the new  
 President-elect enthusiastically SPEAKS to the crowd.

GOVERNOR (CONT'D)  
 They have chosen that they want  
 traditional values again. They have  
 chosen that they want end the  
 politics of fear and division...

Black slacks wipes down the desk edges with a cloth while  
 gray slacks inspects the body.

GOVERNOR (CONT'D)  
 Their message, your message, is  
 clear. We must come together. We  
 must unify as one country...

Black slacks approaches the TV.

GOVERNOR (CONT'D)  
 I'll be a President who puts God  
 first--

With his hands in latex gloves, he mutes the tv and picks up  
 a cellphone lying on the table beside it. He dials 911.

BLACK SLACKS  
 (frantic voice)  
 I think I just heard a gunshot--  
 (listens)  
 Yes...I think you should send  
 someone out...I-I live downtown.  
 Across from that big mega-church.  
 Uh, Calvary Baptist.  
 (listens)  
 No, I-I don't want to--No. I--

He hangs up the phone. Puts it in his pocket. Gray slacks  
 approaches. Unmutes the TV then they exit the office.

GOVERNOR  
 --With his amazing grace, he set me  
 on this path--this road. To lead  
 this country. It's been a long road  
 to get here, but with his help and  
 yours, we will succeed.

**END TEASER**

EXT. COURTYARD - CAVALRY BAPTIST - DOWNTOWN DALLAS - DAY

On a sunny morning in the courtyard, hidden speakers PLAY an instrumental version of the hymn "Just As I Am" for anyone strolling through the amenity.

Bustling traffic passes Calvary Baptist as WORKERS on scaffolding modernize the historic campus and erect the cross atop the water fountain.

INT. PASTOR'S OFFICE - CALVARY BAPTIST - DAY

Behind the eccentric, hand-carved antique desk, an elderly pastor, DR. HARLAN A. SIMPSON (80s), sits in the dark, leaning back in his studded, burgundy leather swivel chair.

Wearing an out-dated suit, the senior pastor stares with his tired eyes at the modern water feature through the only window providing light.

ON WATER FOUNTAIN

The fountain sprays the cross above as water drizzles down.

ON SCENE

Two church elders, THOMAS REDMOND (50) and JACOB TAYLOR (60), dressed in suits, sit in front of the desk as they converse.

THOMAS

Pastor?

Dr. Simpson continues to stare out the window. *Troubled by the news these two youngsters have brought him.*

On the desk, by a tray of hard candies, sits a gold desk plate...

**DESK PLATE: DR. HARLAN AMOS SIMPSON III, SENIOR PASTOR**

JACOB

Uh...sir?

THOMAS

We know this is tough news to--

Jacob interrupts him as he puts his hand up to Thomas.

JACOB

Sir, have you been listening--

DR. SIMPSON

Of course...I'm not an imbecile.

JACOB  
Well, sir, I know this news is  
unpleasant--

DR. SIMPSON  
Unpleasant?

Dr. Simpson SNICKERS sarcastically and turns toward them.

DR. SIMPSON (CONT'D)  
I became pastor of this church at  
twenty-eight. All the members who  
were here at my first sermon have  
long-since passed--I presided over  
all their funerals.

Jacob INHALES as he's lectured by the renowned pastor.

DR. SIMPSON (CONT'D)  
And, because of an off-handed  
comment--that was shortened to make  
it sound worse--I'm supposed to  
step down? After sixty years?

Dr. Simpson SLAMS his hand down on his large, black Bible a  
top his desk. He leans back in his chair again.

JACOB  
Pastor--

Dr. Simpson interrupts. Loudly pronounces...

DR. SIMPSON  
Doctor Simpson--

JACOB  
Dr. Simpson, we know--you--you've  
been one of the longest tenured  
pastors of all-time--

THOMAS  
And, most influential--

Dr. Simpson gives Thomas a brief glance of contempt.

JACOB  
You've led this church into the  
twenty-first century--but--it--

Thomas SIGHS.

THOMAS  
Elders and deacons of the church  
have all voted. It's final--

DR. SIMPSON  
 You think God put you in this  
 position?

Dr. Simpson stares back and forth at them. Points up.

DR. SIMPSON (CONT'D)  
 You think He put you here? To oust  
 me? You two don't know the first  
 thing about leadership. What it  
 takes to lead--

JACOB  
 Sir? You'll still be pastor  
 emeritus...You--you--on occasion,  
 can still preach--

Dr. Simpson leans back again. Sarcastically retorts...

DR. SIMPSON  
 Thank you for that.

THOMAS  
 You're eighty-eight--

DR. SIMPSON  
 I'm eighty-seven.

Thomas lets out another SIGH.

THOMAS  
 You'll be eighty-eight next month  
 and--and you should enjoy your  
 remaining years--

DR. SIMPSON  
 Remaining years?

THOMAS  
 You know what I mean. Other  
 professions, you'd have retired  
 over twenty years ago--

DR. SIMPSON  
 This isn't a profession, son--It's  
 a calling...I was appointed by God.  
 And now? Voted out by sniveling  
 sycophants.

From a dark corner, a voice from a male silhouette with arms  
 crossed interrupts them.

VOICE  
Membership is down. Way down--

CHARLES MARSHALL (60s), in an expensive quarter-zip sweater and slacks, approaches the desk. Thomas gets up from his seat and as Marshall confidently sits in replacement.

DR. SIMPSON  
 (to Marshall)  
 There's more to this ministry than  
 butts in the pews, Charles, and you  
 know it.

Marshall grabs a candy from the tray on the desk. UNWRAPS it.

MARSHALL  
 Maybe...but the number of butts in  
 Calvary's pews hasn't been this low  
 in over fifty years--

Marshall puts the candy in his mouth. Sucking on it...

MARSHALL (CONT'D)  
 From over twelve thousand twenty  
 years ago to a measly few thousand  
 now...on an Easter Sunday.

He spits the candy back in the wrapper. With a sour face,  
 sets it back on the tray.

DR. SIMPSON  
 Culture has changed. Everyone's  
 moved to the suburbs.

Mashall stands. Paces over to the wall of photos. Scans them.

MARSHALL  
 The three parking garages we had to  
 build over the years beg to differ--

ON WALL

Framed certificates, diplomas, and photos adorn the wall of  
 this decorated man of God. One prominent photo is of him with  
 President Reagan and Reverend Billy Graham.

ON SCENE

DR. SIMPSON  
 You conveniently ignore the six  
 huge churches built in the suburbs  
 over the last twenty years--

Marshall turns back to Dr. Simpson. Serious tone...

MARSHALL  
 No. No, Amos. I'm specifically not.

Dr. Simpson glares at him. Beat.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

Last year, since membership was down significantly, tithes were down thirty-percent--

DR. SIMPSON

This is a ministry. Not a country club--

MARSHALL

(louder)

Last year, we were force to cut contributions to our main ministry outreach group by...guess how much?

Dr. Simpson angrily shakes his head as he looks away.

Jacob shyly says to Marshall...

JACOB

Was it thirty-percent--

MARSHALL

(taps his nose)

Ding-ding-ding...Give the man a hard candy.

Marshall picks up a candy from the tray. Tosses it at Jacob.

Frustrated, Dr. Simpson spins his chair away from them.

DR. SIMPSON

Get the hell out of my office.

MARSHALL

Sure, Amos, sure. I've got more important things to do anyway.

Marshall quickly exits. Jacob and Thomas slowly follow.

Back to them, Dr. Simpson stares out the window again.

DR. SIMPSON

Stop.

He spins around. Jacob and Thomas freeze in the doorway.

DR. SIMPSON (CONT'D)

Who'd you morons get to replace me?

Jacob and Thomas stare at each other.



EXT. BASEBALL DIAMOND - SMALL TOWN TEXAS - DAY

In an old baseball cap and dad jeans, John enthusiastically hits grounders from home plate to his sons, JAY (15) and HENRY (17).

The tall, lanky Henry fields from the mound as his athletic-build, adopted African-American brother, Jay, covers second.

As they practice, John praises Jay as he nabs up the ball John just hit up the middle.

JOHN  
Great grab, Jay!

ON JAY AND HENRY

Henry runs to first as Jay underhands him the ball to simulate beating a runner to the bag.

ON JOHN

Bat on his shoulder, John smiles.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
There you go. You guys are getting  
faster and faster at that.  
(prepares to hit again)  
Here we go!

John hits another ball up the middle. Henry snags it close to the mound. Jay runs to first and Henry fires the ball to him.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
You got him--

John's phone vibrates from his back pocket. He walks away from the batter's box as his sons play catch in the field.

Staring at the phone, he leans the bat on the fence. Answers.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
(into phone)  
This is Dr. Fulton.

John listens. Beat.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Hello...Yes, it's a good time.

He smiles as he takes a deep breath. Nods.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 I-I really appreciate this. I'm  
 definitely looking forward to  
 working with all of you as well.

He listens and nods some more.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 Yes, Barbara's gonna be thrilled.

In the distance, Henry and Jay walk toward home plate.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 Sure...I'll see you tomorrow.

John hangs up the phone. Henry and Jay approach him.

JAY  
 Who was that, dad?

John holds back a smile.

JOHN  
 Let's talk about it at home with  
 your mother and your sister.

John motions and they grab their gear to leave.

INT. FULTON HOME - SMALL TOWN TEXAS - DAY

John paces in the living room as his family gathers. Jay and Henry enter and sit on the couch. Their sister, REBECCA (15), enters the living room.

REBECCA  
 What's this about? I have a ton of  
 homework.

JOHN  
 Just...sit down.

Rebecca SIGHS and sits by her brothers. BARBARA (45), their mother, enters and stands next to John. He puts his arm around her as he smiles.

REBECCA  
 (sarcastic)  
 We adopting another loser?

Jay leans over Henry and lightly shoves Rebecca. She GIGGLES.

BARBARA  
 (chastising)  
 Rebecca?

Henry, a bit sullen, sinks into the couch with crossed arms.

HENRY  
 We're moving aren't we?

Jay and Rebecca quickly turn to their parents.

JAY  
 Are we?

REBECCA  
 You're kidding?

Rebecca, with wide eyes, looks at Henry.

REBECCA (CONT'D)  
 You're kidding, right?

John puts his hands up.

JOHN  
 Settle down.

REBECCA  
 (a bit frantic)  
 But, the semester just started.

JAY  
 Where? Where are we going?

John glances at Barbara. She flashes a grin as he turns back to the kids.

JOHN  
 I've taken a new position. I've accepted an offer to be the senior pastor at Calvary in Dallas.

The room gets quiet. Beat.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 I-I've prayed about this. Your mother has prayed about this. We believe we're doing what God wants us to do.  
 (pauses)  
 Ask away...Anything.

HENRY  
 The season was just about to start--

JOHN  
Calvary Academy's baseball season  
is just about to get started too--

Henry SIGHS as he uncrosses his arms.

REBECCA  
(shaking her head)  
You've got to be kidding me...When?

JOHN  
Uh...within the next couple weeks.

Silence again. Beat.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Guys, this is a good thing. You'll  
love Dallas. All kinds of things to  
do there--

Henry pops up.

HENRY  
Anything else I need to know?

John steps closer to him as Henry begins to leave.

JOHN  
No, uh, not right now.

John pats one of Henry's drooped shoulders as he exits.  
Everyone notices Henry's disappointment.

Rebecca SIGHS.

REBECCA  
He'll be fine...We all will.

JOHN  
I'm glad you feel that way, Becca.

Jay and Rebecca stand. They start to exit. Jay turns around.

JAY  
We get our own rooms?

REBECCA  
(to Jay)  
Tired of sharing with Henry?

JOHN  
Your mom found us a place. Yes, you  
all have your own rooms. In fact,  
you all have your own bathrooms.

They both smile as they continue exiting and chatting.

JAY

(to Rebecca)

No more waiting for you so I can  
get in the bathroom before school.

REBECCA

Whatever!...Like, anything you do  
in there helps anyway.

After they leave, John SIGHS then smiles at Barbara.

BARBARA

Becca's right. They'll be fine.  
Henry will be fine.

John nods. Barbara exits. He takes a deep breath.

INT. MAIN SANCTUARY - CALVARY BAPTIST - DAY

The congregation SINGS an upbeat hymn as TROY MCDANIEL (45),  
the music minister, enthusiastically leads from the stage.  
Behind him, the CHOIR, dressed in maroon robes, SING along.

When the song concludes, Troy descends the steps to his seat.  
The choir and congregation sit.

John in a tailored charcoal suit and bright shiny tie, slowly  
walks to the pulpit. With Bible in hand, the modern-day,  
polished pastor steps behind the pulpit.

JOHN

It's a real pleasure to be with you  
this morning...Amen?

The congregation responds AMEN.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Lets begin with Paul's letter to  
the Ephesians--Chapter four.

John opens his Bible. Reads...

JOHN (CONT'D)

"I, a prisoner for the Lord, urge  
you to walk in a manner worthy of  
the calling to which you have been  
called, with all humility and  
gentleness, with patience, bearing  
with one another in love, eager to  
maintain the unity of the Spirit in  
the bond of peace."

John steps out from behind the pulpit. Paces the stage.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 Paul was commanding the Ephesians  
 to be unified in the Lord. In their  
 faith. In their calling.  
 (pauses for effect)  
I've been called to this pulpit.

John steps behind the pulpit. Grabs it with both hands.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 The Lord has indeed blessed me and  
 my family. It was a tough decision  
 to leave our old church family.  
 But, the Lord told me this was  
 where I was needed.

John smiles. Bible in hand, he paces the stage again.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 Years ago, on a cold winter  
 morning, I-I was walking to my  
 office at the church when I noticed  
 a boy playing on our playground--  
 Eight years old or so--All alone.  
 Climbing on the jungle gym. So, I  
 walked over to him. Asked him where  
 his parents were. He told me his  
 mother was working--Didn't mention  
 a dad so I didn't pry. I took him  
 to get breakfast. We chatted. Made  
 a connection. He attended church  
 that next Sunday morning. Started  
 coming Sunday nights. Eventually,  
 Wednesday nights. He instantly  
 became part of our church family.

John scans the congregation.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 I tell you this story for two  
 reasons. First, that boy became my  
 son. Part of my family.

John motions to his family in the congregation.

ON CONGREGATION

Barbara, Henry, Rebecca, and Jay sit in the first few rows.

ON SCENE

John smiles at them.

JOHN (CONT'D)

His mother passed away so we took him in. We love him as if he were born to us. Second reason I tell you this story? We went through a rough patch. Bringing someone into your family's difficult. Same thing will happen here. We're gonna have times where we disagree...but, we must unify. Become one in the Lord.

The congregation CLAPS as John returns to the pulpit.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I wanna do something a little different this morning. I want to meet each and every one of you-- Shake your hand. So, in a few minutes, I'll be in the fellowship hall and would like everyone to come by and say hello. After this song, everyone is dismissed.

The music PLAYS as the congregation rises to their feet. John takes his bible from the pulpit and returns to his seat.

INT. TV STUDIO - TALK SHOW - DAY

An info graphic appears. A TV broadcast.

**TV INFO GRAPHIC - GOOD MORNING DALLAS**

In a talk-show style setting, a female talk-show host, JANE, sits in a stylish chair and begins the segment.

JANE

Welcome back to Good Morning Dallas. We have with us, the newly appointed pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in downtown Dallas...

She turns to her two guests, Dr. Fulton and wife, Barbara.

JANE (CONT'D)

Dr. John R. Fulton, welcome to Dallas.

In his slate suit, he nods as his wife dons her million-dollar smile.

JANE (CONT'D)

And, to your beautiful wife, Barbara...welcome.

BARBARA

Thank you. It's a real pleasure to be here.

JANE

Dr. Fulton, Calvary Baptist Church, one of the oldest mega-churches in the country, has had a sharp decline in membership over the past decade. At one time, it had a membership of twelve thousand. Recently, it has sunk below four thousand. Were you brought in to turn that around?

JOHN

It really is a pleasure to be here, Jane. Thank you. No...I-I'm not here to try and increase membership for the church. God led the elders of this church to bring in a new voice--

JANE

And, you're replacing a legend, Dr. H. A Simpson, who's been at the pulpit of Calvary for sixty years--

JOHN

No, no, I'm not here replacing anyone--I-I'm here to bring a new voice--

JANE

But, isn't he stepping down--

JOHN

No, he--he will still be senior pastor, er, pastor emeritus and I'm sure, I will learn so much from this man of God that I've respected my whole career.

Dr. Fulton smiles.

JANE

Recently, he made a comment stating that mormons go to hell, do you agree with that statement?

John hesitates slightly.



JOHN

I believe the statement has been made to sound a bit harsher than he actually stated--

JANE

(looks at her card)  
He did say that they go to hell--

JOHN

As Christians, we believe everyone has an invitation to heaven. You simply have to accept Christ in your heart as your Lord and Savior...From what I understand about the mormon faith, they believe salvation is through grace and their own good works. The comment he was making was based on that--Maybe said a bit harsher than I would have stated it.

JANE

There's a rumor that he wasn't even consulted about your hire--

JOHN

I-I don't know about that. I wasn't involved in their search--

JANE

Did you ever interview or have a discussion with him before--

JOHN

Well, no, but he's a very, very busy man, as you know.

Jane nods then flashes a toothy smile.

JANE

Barbara, what do you think about the move to the big city?

BARBARA

Oh, it's been a dream. I--

JANE

Have you picked out a house yet?

Barbara gives Jane a look, but it turns back to a smile.

BARBARA

Yes, we found a nice home in Highland Park and getting settled in now. We--

JANE

Dr. Fulton, you were pastor at Valley Hills Baptist, a large church in a small town, what do you hope to bring to the legacy of Calvary Baptist?

JOHN

It was hard to leave my Valley Hills congregation, but when God calls...

(chuckles)

...I pick up the phone.

He grabs his wife's hand and squeezes it as he smiles at her. She stares at him lovingly.

JOHN (CONT'D)

And, my family has been nothing but supportive. We're really happy to be in Dallas. I think we just hope that we can make a difference in people's lives here and bring as many people to the Lord as we can.

JANE

Well, we're certainly happy to have you both here.

Jane turns to the camera.

JANE (CONT'D)

We'll be right back with Chef Dean, who's going to make us up some delicious, but healthy options for breakfast, on the go.

EXT. FULTON HOME - HIGHLAND PARK, DALLAS - DAY

MOVERS unload boxes and furniture from trucks in front of a large two-story early American classic home with towering trees surrounding it.

INT. JOHN'S STUDY - FULTON HOME - HIGHLAND PARK, DALLAS - DAY

John unloads books from a box in his study and stacks them on his bookshelf. He glances through some as he unloads it.

Barbara, carrying a large gift basket, enters. She sets it on the desk.

JOHN  
Who's this from?

She picks up the card from the basket.

BARBARA  
Don't know...Card says...  
(reading the card)  
"Welcome to the Calvary family. -  
Charles and Vicky Marshall?"

JOHN  
Ah, I've heard of him. One of  
Dallas' richest billionaires. Oil I  
think? He's a long-time member.

BARBARA  
Was he there Sunday?

JOHN  
Nah, I didn't see him there.

Barbara nods. Starts to exit. Turns back to him.

BARBARA  
Dinner?

John digs in the basket. Pulls out sausage and cheese.

JOHN  
Summer sausage and cheese?

Barbara glares at him. Shakes her head. He smiles.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Whatever's fine with me.

BARBARA  
I still have a lot to do in the  
kitchen...Let's go out.

JOHN  
We could order pizza?

BARBARA  
No...I want to get out. I-I'm just  
a bit overwhelmed.

John puts his book down on the desk. Approaches her and puts his arm around her.

JOHN  
Everything all right?

BARBARA  
Yeah, yeah. Just a lot of pressure--

JOHN  
Sure, let's go out. It'll be nice.

Barbara forces a smile. Exits.

INT. REBECCA'S BEDROOM - FULTON HOME - NIGHT

John's daughter, Rebecca, sits on her bed in her room. On her phone. Boxes all around. Pink walls. Warm incandescent glow.

Her adopted brother, Jay, KNOCKS quickly. Pokes his head in.

JAY  
Dad said we're going to eat.

REBECCA  
(focused on phone)  
I'm not hungry.

Jay enters. Sits on the bed.

JAY  
School go ok?

Rebecca sets her phone down. She SIGHS.

REBECCA  
Yeah, I guess.

JAY  
Uniforms are a little weird--

REBECCA  
I hate the uniforms.

Jay LAUGHS.

JAY  
I like em'. I can just wake up. Not  
have to think about what to put on.

Rebecca smiles.

REBECCA  
You would.

Silence. Beat.

REBECCA (CONT'D)  
You like your classes?

JAY  
Yeah, I think so. I mean, I'm the  
new guy so--

REBECCA  
Felt like a spotlight all day.

JAY  
You're not the only black kid in  
your class so--

REBECCA  
Seriously?

JAY  
(smiling)  
There's two Mexican kids and  
another, think he's Indian? I'm  
definitely a couple shades darker.

Rebecca LAUGHS. Scoots closer and puts her arm around him.

JAY (CONT'D)  
It's all right. I think being the  
new pastor's kid is a bigger hurdle  
than that.

REBECCA  
Yeah, I felt that too. Everyone was  
way too nice...It won't last--

JAY  
Ya think?

REBECCA  
Just use the time to make friends.  
Gives us a bit of a head start, but  
the pastor's kid grace period will  
expire at some point.

Jay EXHALES.

JAY  
Talk to Henry?

REBECCA  
No...Giving him some space.

JAY  
Yeah, me too.

INT. HENRY'S ROOM - FULTON HOME - NIGHT

Henry puts clothes in his dresser. Most of his boxes are empty. Clean room. Neat, organized.

Multiple trophies on a desk nearby. Certificates hang above.

His phone VIBRATES on the dresser. He grabs it up.

ON PHONE

Picture of a teen boy's face - FaceTime call from "Chad".

ON SCENE

He smiles as he swipes to answer. Holds the phone up.

Quickly, his dad, John, appears in the doorway.

JOHN  
Hey, kiddo. We're...

Startled, Henry closes the phone. Tosses it on the bed.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
...going out to eat in a bit.

HENRY  
Oh, yeah, sure, Dad.

He grins. John enters. Looks around.

JOHN  
Wow, you moved in quick.

The phone on the bed VIBRATES again. Henry looks down at it.

ON BED

Chad again. FaceTime.

ON SCENE

John doesn't notice as he approaches the trophies.

Henry grabs up the phone and closes it.

John picks up one of the trophies.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
I remember this one. You struck  
out, what, twelve?

Henry nods as he types a text on his phone. Sends and puts the phone in his pocket.

HENRY

Uh, yeah. That was a rough one.

John sets the trophy down.

JOHN

I talked to Calvary's coach. He's excited to have you on the team. He said they're struggling with their pitching.

HENRY

Yeah, he told me that too.

John squeezes Henry's shoulder. Pats it.

JOHN

Jay's hitting is getting better. You just need to help him with his fielding. I think he could start.

Henry nods. John begins to exit. Turns around once more.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Thought anymore about Baylor?

HENRY

I don't know, Dad. I--

JOHN

They have a great choir too. I think you could do both.

HENRY

I-I was thinking USC? They--they have a great music school--

John smiles through a SIGH.

JOHN

That's a long ways away, but--

HENRY

Yeah, I-I--

JOHN

We can talk about it some more.

John smiles at his son then exits.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH - DAY

John enters. Jeans and polo. Thomas, the church elder from the teaser, sits at the table along with the pastor's admin, WENDY, music minister, Troy, an unknown, MICHELLE SIMPSON (30), and several other church STAFF MEMBERS.

JOHN  
Good mornin' everyone.

John turns to Troy first.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Music was great Sunday.

Troy smiles as they shake hands.

TROY  
Thanks...How's the family?

JOHN  
Settling in good, thanks.

John notices someone new. Reaches out his hand to her.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Don't believe we've met?

Michelle, a blonde who looks like she could be a Fox News anchor, shakes his hand.

MICHELLE  
I'm Michelle Simpson--

JOHN  
Ah...Dr. Simpson's daughter?

Michelle nods as they all sit. John grabs a donut from the box on the table. Michelle sips from a huge latte.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
You're a...a political advisor? To Governor Stone, right?

MICHELLE  
Strategist...I'm helping his Presidential campaign.

JOHN  
So, what brings you to our little staff meeting?

Always enthusiastic, Wendy, the admin, interrupts.



WENDY

Michelle joins us when she's in town. She helps with the church's political direction.

JOHN

Political direction?

THOMAS

We'll get to that, sir...Let's start off with the numbers?

John nods.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

This week, we had a little over twenty-seven hundred in attendance with about six thousand attending online. Those numbers are about thirty percent higher than last week and also thirty percent over last year this time...We expected your first Sunday would be up though.

JOHN

I thought the meet and greet after the service went well?

THOMAS

Yes, we had some great comments about it. Tithes for the week were four-hundred, eighty-one thousand. Year to date, we're just over eighteen million. Down over where we were last year.

JOHN

We can get those numbers up.

John scans the table. Wendy smiles big as she takes notes.

WENDY

Definitely!

THOMAS

We're lagging behind Hillcrest--

JOHN

Hillcrest? Hillcrest Baptist?

THOMAS

(nods)  
Yes...attendance.

MICHELLE

This is why I'm here this morning.

JOHN

(skeptical)

Because we're lagging behind  
another local church?

MICHELLE

No, no. Just in general. I've been  
tasked with strategy to increase  
membership numbers.

John shifts in his seat. Pours himself some coffee.

JOHN

I mean, this was just my first  
Sunday. Can't we--

THOMAS

From a budget perspective,  
according to Lighthouse, we're  
significantly behind last year--

JOHN

Lighthouse?

THOMAS

Yes, Lighthouse Capital. They  
manage all of the churches  
financials, recurring tithes, staff  
paychecks, online giving, and all  
of our investments.

JOHN

Ah, ok.

(thinking)

But, we're up thirty percent?

THOMAS

Attendance last week. And, you know  
that was inflated for your first  
Sunday. We have to keep--

MICHELLE

(cuts him off)

We have to keep the numbers up.  
I've scheduled you on Ingraham's  
show for tomorrow night.

JOHN

Fox News?

MICHELLE  
Yes...I pulled some strings--

WENDY  
Oh, wow! I love her!

JOHN  
But I...

MICHELLE  
I'll prep you before--

JOHN  
I don't know.

THOMAS  
Pastor, you were brought in to stop  
the hemorrhaging.

JOHN  
Surely, there's another way?

John shakes his head. Starts a statement...

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Politics--

MICHELLE  
(interrupts)  
Increases numbers.

John SIGHS.

JOHN  
What's the interview topic?

MICHELLE  
She wants you to comment on the  
recent court decision in Ohio where  
a gay couple sued a church for not  
allowing them to use their venue--

JOHN  
(slight annoyance)  
Homosexuality?

MICHELLE  
A lot of our members are worried  
about this decision and with how  
the Supreme Court has leaned  
lately, it could be a problem.

John leans back in his chair. Relents. Nods.

JOHN  
Let's talk about this week's  
sermon. I've been reading Acts and--

THOMAS  
We need you to do a sermon on the  
same topic as the show.

John stares at Thomas. EXHALES.

MICHELLE  
We think the interest from the show  
and--

JOHN  
Got it...But, I was told that I  
would choose my own sermons--

THOMAS  
And you will...Have you done a  
sermon on homosexuality before?

JOHN  
It's been a couple years, but yes.

THOMAS  
I know this isn't ideal, but we--

MICHELLE  
(finishes his sentence)  
We believe this will give you some  
media coverage and spark interest  
in attendance.

John begrudgingly nods.

JOHN  
All right. I'll pull out my old  
notes and--

MICHELLE  
Can you get us an outline tomorrow?

JOHN  
Uh, sure.

MICHELLE  
We just want to frame the narrative  
for any media coverage we'll get.

Michelle stands up. Snaps up her folio and latte.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)  
Gotta run to another meeting.

The human Energizer bunny scurries to exit then turns...

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Oh, before I forget, my dad's back  
in town today. He's in his office.  
Wants to talk to you this morning.

John nods. Michelle smiles and exits.

John turns to the table to finish the staff meeting.

JOHN

Garrett, how was the youth turnout?

INT. SIMPSON'S OFFICE - CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH - DAY

John enters Simpson's office. Dr. Simpson, with bifocals slid to the end of his nose, is focused on his laptop. He slowly types. Two finger, old man typing.

DR. SIMPSON

(staring at his laptop)  
Have a seat.

John sits. Waits as Dr. Simpson continues typing. Beat.

Dr. Simpson finally closes his laptop. Sets his glasses down.

He holds out his hand. John stands. Shakes. Sits back down.

JOHN

I-I just want to say that I'm a big  
admirer of yours. I have enormous  
respect--

DR. SIMPSON

I'd expect nothing less.

The smug statement confuses John. John starts to CHUCKLE then stops. *Was he kidding? Sarcastic?*

Uncomfortable silence. Beat.

JOHN

Look, I-I know this might be a bit--

Dr. Simpson flashes a disarming grin.

DR. SIMPSON

It's not...I was planning to retire  
soon. I just didn't like being told  
to retire.

John's smile flattens as he nods.

JOHN

But, I need you. I really do. I-I don't want to screw this up.

DR. SIMPSON

Oh, you are going to screw this up. Everyone does. I did sometimes. The goal is to manage your screw ups.

Dr. Simpson grabs two tumblers from under his desk. Sets them on the desk. Grabs a hidden bottle of scotch. Pours in each.

He slides a glass over to John.

JOHN

Oh, I-I don't drink--

DR. SIMPSON

Years ago, I was praying here in my office and God informed me that my office is Methodist...So, drink up.

John sheepishly takes the glass. Sips.

Dr. Simpson downs his. Pours himself a bit more.

DR. SIMPSON (CONT'D)

Good, huh?...I'll get you a bottle to hide in your desk.

John is silent. Doesn't argue. Dr. Simpson leans back.

DR. SIMPSON (CONT'D)

When you go fishing with a baptist, know how you keep him from drinking all your beer?

John shakes his head.

DR. SIMPSON (CONT'D)

(grin)  
Bring another baptist.

John CHUCKLES. Dr. Simpson smiles. Takes a drink.

DR. SIMPSON (CONT'D)

Ok...so...the biggest advice I can give. Don't get involved in politics. Stay out of it.

John intently listens.

DR. SIMPSON (CONT'D)  
But...you're gonna fail that.  
Probably already have and don't  
know it...You know, the black  
churches have been doing it for  
over a hundred years. They're good  
at it. We still don't know our ass  
from a hole in the ground.

JOHN  
I already have an interview on Fox  
News set up.

DR. SIMPSON  
(chuckles)  
Michelle?

John nods. Dr. Simpson shakes his head as he grins.

DR. SIMPSON (CONT'D)  
Thankfully, she got her looks from  
her mother, but unfortunately also  
her tenacity.

Silence. Beat.

DR. SIMPSON (CONT'D)  
When Kennedy ran for President,  
cocky kid that I was, I said it  
would be dangerous to have the  
Catholics running this country.

Dr. Simpson looks out the window. Points.

DR. SIMPSON (CONT'D)  
Years later, I stood right out  
there on Elm street watching his  
motorcade the day he was shot...  
After that, I tried to stay out of  
politics...but, I failed.

Dr. Simpson's chair CREAKS as he leans back.

DR. SIMPSON (CONT'D)  
Nineteen-seventy-two--maybe it was  
seventy-three, finally feeling  
confident here as pastor--Guess I'd  
been here...over a decade. I got  
asked by a local reporter about Roe  
versus Wade. Know what I said?

John shakes his head. Listens.

DR. SIMPSON (CONT'D)

This Southern Baptist preacher told that young newspaper reporter that I felt it was only a child after it was born and had a life separate from its mother. I guess now-a-days that'd be considered liberal.

JOHN

Really? That's surprising--

DR. SIMPSON

Years later, I had to alter my view to become the president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Moral majority took over.

(nods)

They'll want you to run the convention. I'm sure of it.

JOHN

Politics sound unavoidable.

DR. SIMPSON

In this day and age of obsession with cable news, it is.

(stares at him)

But...the church will tell you what to say.

JOHN

The church?

Dr. Simpson LAUGHS. *Like he knows a secret.*

DR. SIMPSON

When you're speaking, either from the pulpit or to the media, you're speaking for the church. Not your own views...Our goal is and should always be to reach as many people as we can and teach them the Gospel. Bring them to the Lord. Everything else is just in the way. Unfortunately, you have to wade through the slough of despond to get to where you want to go.

John lightly SIGHS.

DR. SIMPSON (CONT'D)

Other advice?...keep your dick in your pants.



Surprised. John perks up.

DR. SIMPSON (CONT'D)

I had my vices...

(raises his scotch)

...but I never cheated on my wife. Don't know if you experienced this at your small town church, but here, at times, they'll throw themselves at you. It's the devil testing you. Don't give in.

JOHN

I won't.

DR. SIMPSON

You don't want to have a moment like that crying idiot, Swaggart.

John nods.

DR. SIMPSON (CONT'D)

You like men?

Surprised again. John squints his eyes.

DR. SIMPSON (CONT'D)

If you do, just resign...now. This pulpit's no place for a homosexual.

JOHN

No...I'm only attracted to my wife.

DR. SIMPSON

(chuckle)

Sure, sure...Troy, the music minister, he's one.

JOHN

I guess, I kinda--

DR. SIMPSON

Yeah, he's very active. We know he visits a local gay club and has a boyfriend on the side.

Dr. Simpson EXHALES and shakes his head.

DR. SIMPSON (CONT'D)

Don't get my wrong. Homosexuality is the least thing to dislike about that man. Everyone has temptations. But...his poor wife and kids.

(sighs)

(MORE)

DR. SIMPSON (CONT'D)

He's a predator. Been trying to get rid of him for years.

JOHN

Why haven't you?

DR. SIMPSON

It's not that easy. Just be careful what you do and say around him. Last thing...probably the most important. First Timothy six, ten--

JOHN

"For the love of money is the root of all evil."

Dr. Simpson nods.

DR. SIMPSON

About ten years ago, we had to cover up embezzlement from a piece of shit youth pastor. It was bad. He knew things. Things that would have set our progress back decades. So, he extorted us...He moved to Miami I think, but we paid him off...Disgraceful.

Dr. Simpson shakes his head in disgust.

DR. SIMPSON (CONT'D)

You want money? A private plane?  
(points to the window)  
Go to Forth Worth and work for that snake in a shiny suit, Copeland.

Dr. Simpson downs his last drink of scotch.

JOHN

No, I-I won't--

DR. SIMPSON

(nodding)  
We know you won't.

JOHN

What do you mean?

DR. SIMPSON

The church did their homework.

JOHN

Homework?

DR. SIMPSON

You were followed for weeks--  
Private investigator. Looking for  
affairs, money problems, skeletons.  
After I found out about my  
retirement, I did my research too.  
You seem like a Godly man.

Dr. Simpson stands and holds out his hand.

DR. SIMPSON (CONT'D)

I couldn't have picked a better  
replacement myself.

John stands and shakes his hand.

JOHN

Thank you, sir.

DR. SIMPSON

My door's always open...but leave  
my scotch alone. Now, get out. Let  
me enjoy retirement.

As Dr. Simpson sits, John smiles then exits.

EXT. BASEBALL DIAMOND - CALVARY BAPTIST ACADEMY - DAY

Baseball practice. Henry finishes a strike out of one of his  
TEAMMATES. He walks behind the mound and then goes for the  
rosin bag. The CATCHER tosses the ball back to Henry.

BRADY (17), his next TEAMMATE, steps up to the plate. Big  
guy. Clean-up hitter. Full of pride.

Brady stares at Henry as he crouches at the plate. COACH PHIL  
(55) watches from the dugout.

COACH

(clapping)

Let's go guys.

Henry throws the first pitch. Fastball. Upper corner. Strike.

COACH (CONT'D)

Strike one!

Brady steps back. BREATHING HEAVY. Determined.

He steps back to the plate. Another pitch.

Swing and miss on a sharp breaking ball.

COACH (CONT'D)

(claps)

Damn, Henry. Beautiful breaking ball.

Brady looks mad now. Grips the bat tight.

Next pitch. Ball outside.

COACH (CONT'D)

Ball.

Next pitch. Fouled off by Brady. Beat.

Henry eyes Brady. They lock eyes. A battle.

Henry sets. Stretches. Next pitch.

Brady hits it hard. Drives it deep to left field. Deep. Deep, but foul.

Henry wipes his brow. Close one.

Brady has some confidence now. Cocky.

BRADY

Throw me that breaking ball again.

Henry silent. Eyes the catcher. Shakes off a sign. Shakes off another. Nods to the next one.

He sets. Pitches. Slow change and Brady is way out in front of it. He looks bad.

COACH

Yeah! Great pitch!

Brady slings the bat. Angry.

BRADY

Fuck you, faggot!

Coach leaves the dugout.

COACH

Hey, no call for that, Brady!

Brady paces around the batter's box. Coach approaches him.

COACH (CONT'D)

You do that again and you're suspended. Hear me?

Brady ignores him. Stares at Henry. Coach grabs his jersey.

COACH (CONT'D)

Hear me?

Brady finally nods to Coach.

COACH (CONT'D)

You hit the showers. Now!

Brady heads for the showers.

Henry stands on the mound. The catcher pumps his fist in celebration to Henry. Henry smirks. Adjusts his hat.

INT. BOY'S LOCKER-ROOM - CALVARY BAPTIST ACADEMY - DAY

Practice is over. Coach walks around while the BOYS undress for the showers.

Henry, somewhat shy, lingers. Waits for some of the boys to leave. He disrobes. Wraps in a towel.

Brady, fully changed, grabs his bag and walks out. He lightly bumps Henry as he leaves the lockerroom.

Coach approaches Henry.

COACH

Looked great out there today,  
Henry. I think we just need to work  
on your endurance.

The catcher nearby chimes in. Enthusiastic.

TEAMMATE

Yeah, man. I don't think there's  
anyone else in our league who can  
throw as fast as you.

Henry grins at him. Proud.

COACH

That breaking ball too. You're  
definitely gonna be striking kids  
out. I just want your arm to last  
more than three innings.

HENRY

(still smiling)  
Sure thing, Coach.

Coach pats him on the shoulder and walks away.

In only a towel and a smile, Henry walks toward the showers.

In the corner, Troy, the music minister, loiters. He walks up from behind Henry.

TROY

Thought you looked like Kershaw out there. You looked good. Real good.

Troy stands in front of him. Blocking the showers. Henry's smile fades a bit. Uncomfortable. Quietly says...

HENRY

Thanks.

Troy steps close. Looks around the locker-room.

TROY

If, uh, you want to come by my office later, we can work on your solo some more.

HENRY

I-I don't know. I got a lot of homework.

TROY

Oh, bring it, I can help you out.

Coach re-enters the room. Notices Henry is uncomfortable.

COACH

(to Troy)

Get out. No-one but the team in here right now.

TROY

(puts hand up)

Chill out, Phil...I'm just one of the guys--

Coach steps closer. Firm...

COACH

No...no you're not. Out.

Troy gives Coach a glare then slithers out.

Henry looks at the coach. Thankful eyes. Coach SIGHS and pats him on the shoulder.

COACH (CONT'D)

Go on. Shower up and head home.

Henry nods and walks toward the showers.

INT. OFFICE - CALVARY BAPTIST - NIGHT

John, in a suit, sits in an office with a camera in front of him and a green screen behind him.

Michelle, headset on, puts a mic on his collar. Steps back.

MICHELLE  
Test the mic.

JOHN  
Uh, testing...testing.

Michelle gives thumbs up to him. Looks at her watch.

MICHELLE  
Ok, we're going live in thirty seconds...You're gonna do great.

Michelle holds her ear piece. Listening. Multiple beats.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)  
Oh, one slight change--I'm just learning about this. But, I guess they also have a professor on who agrees with the court decision.

JOHN  
(nervous)  
Wait? So...so it's a debate?

Michelle grits her teeth apologetically. The camera light turns on as she gives him the thumbs up.

ON TV SPLIT SCREEN INTERVIEW

LAURA INGRAHAM begins her show segment. John is in one panel of the screen and DR. JILL HARDIN is in another.

INGRAHAM  
I want to welcome Dr. John Fulton ...He's the new pastor of one of the oldest and most beloved churches in the United States, Calvary Baptist in Dallas. He recently replaced the influential Dr. H. A. Simpson as senior pastor.

John flashes a smile and nods.

INGRAHAM (CONT'D)

Also with us tonight, we have Jill Hardin of the Cathedral of Unity and she's a professor at NYU in religious studies.

Dr. Hardin meekly smiles.

INGRAHAM (CONT'D)

Welcome to both of you. Pastor, let's start with you. This decision in Ohio by a lower court judge in favor of this gay couple who sued a local baptist church is really troubling to religious freedom. What do you think about this decision and its potential ramifications?

JOHN

Thank you, Laura for having me. It's a pleasure to be with you tonight. And, while I've never met Mrs. Hardin--

HARDIN

Doctor--

JOHN

Dr. Hardin...It's a pleasure to meet you. Yes, I-I was troubled by the judge's decision here. I felt it was over-reach. As a church, we should be allowed to choose who we decide to marry and who we allow the use of our facility. We're simply exercising our religious freedom to marry only those we deem are worthy of marriage in our place of worship. I think this decision will easily get reversed on appeal.

INGRAHAM

Dr. Hardin, what say you?

HARDIN

Obviously, I'm very excited about this decision and am appreciative of the judge's interpretation on it. I'm also very appreciative of the plaintiffs in this case and their courage to face such a challenge.

(MORE)



HARDIN (CONT'D)

No one should be discriminated  
against purely based on the person  
they want to love--

John smiles and shakes his head in disagreement.

JOHN

That's simply not at issue here--

HARDIN

But, you would be discriminating  
and not allowing gay people the  
ability to be married in your  
church simply based on the fact  
that they're gay.

JOHN

Yes, that'd be one of the reasons  
we would not marry two individuals.  
We will only marry two people when  
we believe that in the eyes of God,  
they should be married--

HARDIN

(scoffs)

Again, that is discriminating--

JOHN

Absolutely, we're discriminating  
when we decide who can use our  
church for their marriage. But, it  
is not unfairly discriminatory.  
This is no different than denying  
previously married couples,  
divorced, polygamist, or even just  
couples who we feel may not be  
ready for marriage. To be married  
in our church, every couple must go  
through three months of training  
classes. They attend classes on  
Sunday mornings before church and  
then do private counseling  
sessions. Then, the counselor  
decides whether or not that couple  
should be wed in our halls. We're  
not stopping anyone from getting  
married...Just not in our church.

HARDIN

But...beyond your members, you  
accept money from the public for  
the business purpose of performing  
weddings and deny that to some  
couples simply because they're gay.

JOHN

Of course, we accept money to pay for the venue and the staff. But, marriage is about more than a wedding day. A lot of people see a nice pretty church with stained glass windows and picture their wedding photos from that. Our church is more than a steeple, rafters, and stained glass. When we accept a couple to be married by our ministers and in our sanctuary, we are declaring before God that we believe their marriage is holy.

HARDIN

No matter how you frame it, it is discrimination--

JOHN

Laura, if the federal government begins to coerce churches into how we decide to facilitate our religious values then how can we as Americans say that we have religious freedom?

Dr. Hardin shakes her head.

INGRAHAM

He makes a valid point, Dr. Hardin. How do you answer that?

Dr. Hardin still shaking her head...

HARDIN

Whether we want to admit it in this country or not, churches do business with the public. They should not be exempt from anti-discrimination laws just like every other public business.

INGRAHAM

Dr. Fulton, I'll give you the last word.

JOHN

I think the real problem here is that Dr. Hardin doesn't like the fact that churches are classified as non-profits by the government.

(smiles)

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

Laura, this country's foundation is based on religious freedom and our founders rebelling against a tyrannical government who infringed on that freedom. Protected under the first amendment, we cannot allow our government to interfere with how our religions choose to practice. That goes for Christian, Muslim, Buddhist--any practicing faith. In this case, Dr. Hardin is flat wrong.

Dr. Hardin tries to SPEAK.

INGRAHAM

(cuts her off)

Thank you both for a spirited debate. Dr. Fulton, congratulations on your new position and please come back to see us soon.

JOHN

Absolutely. Thank you, Laura.

INT. OFFICE - CALVARY BAPTIST - NIGHT

In front of the green screen, John sits in his chair as the camera light goes off.

Michelle enters. Mouth gapes. She's impressed.

MICHELLE

Wow. I-I wasn't expecting that.

John SIGHS.

JOHN

Good or bad?

MICHELLE

You're kidding me, right?

John shakes his head.

JOHN

I, I think I did ok--

MICHELLE

You knocked it out of the park.  
(holds up her phone)  
I've gotten ten or twelve texts since the interview started.

John smiles.

JOHN  
Yeah, I mean, I felt good.

Michelle stares at her phone.

MICHELLE  
(excited)  
Governor Stone wants you to speak  
at his fund raiser next week.

She starts typing on her phone. John stands.

JOHN  
(taking off the mic)  
Uh, yeah, sure.

MICHELLE  
I've just gotten an email from  
another network wanting you on.

Michelle, staring at her phone, speeds out of the room.

INT. CLASSROOM - CALVARY BAPTIST ACADEMY - DAY

In school uniform, Rebecca enters her class. Book bag over her shoulder. She hunts for a seat. Classroom is near full of STUDENTS.

ON FRONT ROWS

Her brother, Jay, sits in the second row. No empty seats around him as he LAUGHS and CHATS with the KIDS beside him.

ON SCENE

Rebecca sits next to a spiky-haircut boy, DREW (15). He's dressed in the uniform, but that doesn't stop his own style. Some tattoos peek out from under his sleeves. He looks bored.

Rebecca sets her book on the table. Glances over at him. He looks back. She politely smiles and nods.

DREW  
(somewhat sarcastic)  
Lucky me, I get to sit by the  
pastor's daughter.

Rebecca is a bit put off.

REBECCA  
Well, there's no other seats so--

DREW  
Chill out...I'm just teasing you.

Rebecca turns her attention toward the front as the TEACHER starts the LECTURE.

DREW (CONT'D)  
(whispers)  
Becca, right?

Rebecca ignores him at first and listens to the teacher.

Drew gives up and turns toward the teacher. Listens.

Rebecca, thinking twice, whispers back.

REBECCA  
Becca...er, Rebecca.

Drew smiles and continues the quiet chat.

DREW  
Isn't that your brother down there?

ON JAY

Jay sits. Attentively listening to the teacher.

ON SCENE

Rebecca nods while listening to the teacher and taking notes.

DREW (CONT'D)  
Are you sure?

Rebecca glances at Drew and furiously nods.

DREW (CONT'D)  
Looks like you guys left him out in  
the sun a little too long.

Rebecca doesn't laugh. Gives him an evil eye.

DREW (CONT'D)  
(snickers)  
I'm just playin'.

Rebecca rolls her eyes at him.

DREW (CONT'D)  
I actually met Jay earlier. Cool  
guy. Seems to be making friends  
here pretty easy...I'm Drew.

Rebecca leans over, but keeps her attention on the teacher.

REBECCA  
Nice to meet you.

DREW  
I'm new too...Started here a few weeks ago.

Rebecca turns to listen to him.

DREW (CONT'D)  
Yeah, my, uh, my mom got remarried recently--She sings in the choir. So, I got moved to this school.

Rebecca squints at him.

REBECCA  
That sucks.

DREW  
It's not too bad. He's rich so I got a nice room out of it.

REBECCA  
Wow...nice.

DREW  
(flirty)  
Yeah, you should come check it out some time.

Rebecca gets a little louder. Smirks.

REBECCA  
If you're thinking the pastor's daughter is a whore, well--

The teacher hears her and stops for a moment.

TEACHER  
Ms. Fulton? Eyes and ears up front.

Drew CHUCKLES as they both straighten up and face forward.

REBECCA  
(whispers)  
Asshole.

Drew smiles and holds in a laugh. She smiles too.

INT. HALLWAY - CALVARY BAPTIST ACADEMY - DAY

Rebecca is at her locker. Putting her books away. Door open.

Jay approaches.

JAY  
Hey, sis.

REBECCA  
Do I know you?

Jay squints at her. She grins.

JAY  
You in my Bible class?

REBECCA  
No, I have English Lit next.

Jay starts to walk away.

JAY  
I'll catch up with you after.

ON JAY

Jay walks away. He passes a couple kids who were sitting by him in the previous class - TRACEY (15) chats with MARK (15) at his locker.

MARK  
What's up, Jay.

JAY  
You two coming to class?

MARK  
Be right there.

Jay smiles and continues down the hall.

ON SCENE

Rebecca starts to close her locker as she overhears Tracey and Mark. She hides behind her locker door to listen.

ON KIDS

TRACEY  
He seems nice, but why are you so buddy-buddy with him already?

MARK

(shrugs)

I don't know. He does seem like a nice guy.

TRACEY

Trying to piss off your parents?

Mark CHUCKLES.

MARK

I don't have any black friends.

TRACEY

(smirks)

Ah, piss off the parents with the token black friend?

They grab their books and begin to walk away.

MARK

Pissing off my parents is just a benefit.

They LAUGH.

ON SCENE

Rebecca shakes her head. Watches them walk away as she closes her locker.

INT. SANCTUARY - CHOIR PRACTICE - CALVARY BAPTIST - NIGHT

From the back of the church, John watches his son, Henry, practicing with the choir on stage.

ON STAGE

With the choir behind him, Henry beautifully SINGS a solo on a hymn. Troy, the music minister, stops everyone and approaches Henry. He's instructing him. Walks behind him and puts his hand on his diaphragm area. He rubs it.

ON SCENE

John watches with slight concern. He hears a voice...

MAN

Seems the music minister wants to fuck your queer son.

John turns. Charles Marshall approaches the pastor.



MARSHALL  
Charles Marshall.

John, put off at the comment, nods, but turns back to watch the stage.

Now standing next to John, Marshall points to the choir.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)  
My wife, Vicky, is in the choir.

ON STAGE

VICKY (35), a blonde trophy wife, smiles at him as she sings.

ON SCENE

Marshall smirks as he winks and waves back at her.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)  
She can't sing worth shit, but she tries...My step-son goes to school here at the academy too.

Silence. Beat.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)  
Sorry, that comment about your son was a little crass...But, not hard to see it though.

Marshall stands next to John. They finally shake hands.

JOHN  
John Fulton.

Charles nods and they both watch the stage. Beat.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
I-I don't know about him. I think--

MARSHALL  
I think it's about time we handled our fruity music minister.

John, a bit uncomfortable, continues to stare at the stage.

INT. JOHN'S OFFICE - CALVARY CHURCH - NIGHT

John stands behind his desk. Troy, the music minister, enters the office.

TROY  
You wanted to see me, pastor?

John takes a DEEP BREATH.

JOHN  
Yes, I do...Uh--

TROY  
How'd you like that last number we  
did tonight? Thinking that will  
lead into your sermon on Sunday.

JOHN  
Yeah, it--it was great--

TROY  
Henry's solo is gonna be amazing.

JOHN  
That's what I want to talk to you  
about actually--

TROY  
He sure does have a set of pipes.

John freezes. Silence. Beat.

JOHN  
(firm)  
I want you to leave my kid alone.

TROY  
What are you talking about?

John SIGHS.

JOHN  
Let's don't do this...Play this  
game.

Troy grins.

TROY  
I don't know what you're inferring,  
but--

JOHN  
Yes, you do.

TROY  
You know, I was really starting to  
like you--

JOHN

There's no reason that we can't  
have a professional relationship.

Troy starts wandering around John's office. He stops at a family picture on the wall.

ON FAMILY PHOTO

The photo is a professional picture of John and his family.

ON SCENE

Troy stares at it.

TROY

Such a lovely family...Good-looking family.

JOHN

(politely)  
Thank you.

TROY

I can definitely see where he gets his good looks...He's what now? Seventeen?

John, now angered, steps out from behind the desk. Troy notices.

JOHN

Like I said, stay away from my son.

TROY

Like I said, I don't know what you're talking about. I'm a happily married man with a family.

Troy walks to the door.

TROY (CONT'D)

Not sure why you're asking me to stay away from your...legally-adult age son.

Troy stops in the doorway before leaving.

TROY (CONT'D)

(cocky)  
We'll have you all over for dinner one night...Great talk.

Troy winks at John. Exits.

INT. JOHN'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

John drives his car as Henry sits passenger side.

JOHN  
You sounded great earlier.

HENRY  
Yeah, thanks. I've been practicing  
that one a lot.

Silence. Beat.

JOHN  
If, uh, if you don't want to do  
choir anymore and focus on other  
things, your mother and I would  
understand.

Henry quickly turns to him.

HENRY  
What? No...I-I love choir.

JOHN  
I know, but I'm just saying if you  
have other things you want to focus  
on. You could take a some time off.

HENRY  
But, I don't so why would I do  
that?

John SIGHS.

JOHN  
How do you like working with  
everyone there?

HENRY  
It's fine I guess.

JOHN  
And, you like working with Troy?

HENRY  
I guess. He's kinda odd sometimes,  
but everyone seems to like and  
respect him.

JOHN  
Odd...odd how?

HENRY

I don't know, like, he's kind of critical of me sometimes.

JOHN

Oh?

HENRY

Yeah, it's no big deal I guess. He just wants me to do my best.

JOHN

Well, I know you always do your best--

HENRY

He even said I could practice in his office some time too.

JOHN

(innocently)  
His office?

HENRY

Yeah...but, I think that might be kinda weird...singing in front of one person in a tiny office.

John, concerned, nods.

JOHN

Yeah, might be.

John drives. Grits his teeth as he stares toward the road.

EXT. CHURCH OFFICE - CALVARY BAPTIST - DAY

Mid-morning, John walks the side walk toward the church.

As he approaches the church building, he spots a CROWD around the front entrance.

He looks up and spots the church billboard above them...

ON BILLBOARD

**BILLBOARD: "Please join us this Sunday. This week's sermon, 'Gay? Pray it Away!'"**

ON SCENE

John frowns. Stops dead in his tracks. EXHALES.

He pulls out his phone. Dials a number. DIALING.

JOHN  
Michelle? Who authorized that  
billboard title?

He listens.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
I-I don't care if it gets us media  
buzz...That wasn't in my notes.

John listens. Looks at the protesting crowd.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
We have people protesting.  
(listens)  
Yes...in front of the building.

On the phone, John paces. Frustrated.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Get it taken down. I'm not trying  
to start a culture war here.

John hangs up the phone and continues toward the church.

The crowd includes a couple REPORTERS and CAMERAMEN.

INT. LIVING ROOM - FULTON HOME - DAY

Barbara unpacks boxes and sets up framed pictures on a table.

Carrying a briefcase, John enters. Looks around.

JOHN  
Wow, this looks great.

He sets the briefcase down and kisses her on the cheek.

BARBARA  
Yeah, still a lot to do, but it's  
coming along.

Barbara continues unpacking.

BARBARA (CONT'D)  
Oh, some of the wives are throwing  
me a welcome party next week. Can  
you be home for the kids?

JOHN  
Real Housewives of Dallas?

Barbara gives him a glare. John grins.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Of course.

(pauses)

The Governor wants to meet with me.

Barbara perks up. Turns to him.

BARBARA

Really?

JOHN

Yeah, he, uh, wants me to speak next week at the Anatole.

BARBARA

His fundraiser?

JOHN

Yeah.

BARBARA

Are you sure you want to get involved in that?

JOHN

(hesitates)

No...I'm not sure.

Barbara SIGHS.

BARBARA

I do think it'd be good for the church. You just have to tread lightly.

JOHN

I think--I know you're right, but--

John looks around.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Where's the kids?

BARBARA

Jay's upstairs studying. Becca's in her room and Henry isn't back from baseball practice yet.

JOHN

(concerned)

There's something else.

Barbara tilts her head.

BARBARA  
What? About the kids?

John SIGHS. Nods.

JOHN  
Henry.

BARBARA  
(flippant)  
What now?

JOHN  
No, it's not like that. It's...it's  
the music minister...Troy--

Barbara squints at John. Confused.

BARBARA  
What about him?

All of a sudden, Barbara realizes. She GASPS.

BARBARA (CONT'D)  
Did something happen?

JOHN  
Don't think anything, yet.  
But...he's being extra nice to  
Henry...Too nice.

BARBARA  
How sure are you?

John's jaw clinches as he nods. Barbara gets angry.

BARBARA (CONT'D)  
You have to stop this. He's just a  
boy. Our little...confused...boy.

She tears up. Grabs John's arm.

BARBARA (CONT'D)  
Please. You have to take care of  
this. I will if you won't.

John SCOFFS.

JOHN  
Of course, I will. I'm not gonna  
let anything happen to our son.



BARBARA  
What are you going to do?

John SIGHS.

JOHN  
I don't know yet.  
(pauses)  
Marshall gave me a number to call.

BARBARA  
Marshall?

JOHN  
Charles Marshall.

BARBARA  
What do you mean?

JOHN  
He knows about this--Gave me a  
number to call...I-I think it may  
be a reporter.

INT. HENRY'S BEDROOM - FULTON HOME - DAY

Later, John enters Henry's bedroom. Casually waltzes in as Henry sets his gym bag on his bed.

John, nervous, looks at a picture hanging on the wall.

JOHN  
That was such a great night.

Henry, doing homework on his bed, nods.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
You sounded great...Maybe one day  
when you're a parent, you'll  
understand. But...hearing your  
child do something so spectacular.  
It's--it's the best feeling in the  
whole world.

Henry sits silent. John turns to him.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Look, I-I know you're getting  
older. I-I remember when I was your  
age. Think I spent more time in the  
bathroom after school than--

HENRY  
Dad, that's disgusting.

JOHN  
No--no, I was your age once.

John SIGHS.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
But, it's--it's ok. Really.

He sits on the bed next to his son.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry that I've been so busy lately too. I know this move has been rough on you kids. I'll get tickets to the Rangers for you, me, and Jay. Would you like that?

Henry nods. Beat.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
I know these talks can be uncomfortable, but--

His son SIGHS.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Just, hear me out.

John puts his arm around him.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
I know...I know you're having urges. Urges for...for girls.

His son perks up. *Seems to want to say something.*

John holds his hand up.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Just listen. I-I know you have urges. Er, thoughts. But, you have to realize, when you become an adult, you have to control them. It's one of the challenges that many adults fail to control.

Silence. Beat.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
You have these urges and--and you--

Silence. Beat.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 Son, I-I need you to control them.  
 Otherwise, it's going to cause a  
 lot of problems.

John pulls him closer.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 I want you to know--Look at me.

John waits for him to look. Henry finally glances at him.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 There's nothing--nothing--that you  
 can ever do to make me not love  
 you. Don't you ever forget that.

Silence as Henry tears up slightly.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 I mean that with all my heart. I  
 may not agree with you wanting to  
 pursue...uh, those desires, but, I  
 love you. That will never change.

John hugs his son tight. Pats him on the back.

INT. JOHN'S OFFICE - CALVARY BAPTIST - DAY

John enters his office and sits behind the desk. Opens his Bible. Beat.

Wendy, the pastor's admin, rushes into his office.

JOHN  
 Yes, Wendy?

WENDY  
 He...he's here.

JOHN  
 Who?

WENDY  
 Governor...Governor Stone.

John looks a bit confused.

JOHN  
 Here now?

WENDY  
Yes...to see you.

JOHN  
Well, uh, send him in.

John puts his Bible down. Straightens his desk.

He notices a bag under the desk. He picks it up and slides out the contents.

ON ITEM

It's a bottle of scotch from Dr. Simpson.

A booming voice...

MAN  
You gonna crack that thing open?

ON SCENE

John looks up and at the doorway. Governor Stone enters.

John sets the bottle down. Stands and holds out his hand.

Governor Stone shakes it.

JOHN  
It's a real pleasure, sir.

STONE  
Likewise.

Stone smiles.

STONE (CONT'D)  
I liked how you kicked that lesbian cunt's ass on Ingraham.

John freezes.

JOHN  
Well, uh, that wasn't my intention.

STONE  
(points)  
That's what's so great about it.

John smiles uncomfortably.

STONE (CONT'D)

Kicking someone's ass while looking like you aren't even trying is a talent. I'd be afraid of you if you were running for office.

JOHN

Well, you don't have to worry there. I have no intention--

STONE

You better not. You're too nice. I'd kill you with negative ads.

Stone walks around John's office. Looking around.

Stops and stares at John's pictures on the wall.

STONE (CONT'D)

That's why I'm a powerful governor and leading the GOP Presidential nomination polls and you're a good natured pastor.

JOHN

That sounds like an insult?

Stone looks at John.

STONE

Not at all...I want you on my side. Will you speak at my fundraiser?

JOHN

Sure, but I have to warn you, I'm not ready to endorse any political candidate.

Stone LAUGHS.

STONE

Not right now? I get it. At some point, you will though.

JOHN

I-I don't know--

STONE

You'll come around.

(points at John)

I'm going to be the most Christian-centric President this fucking country has ever seen.

John looks confused by that statement.

JOHN  
That'd be a breath of fresh air.

STONE  
I need the evangelicals. I can't win without them. I need you to help me get their vote.

JOHN  
Like I said, I-I'm not ready to endorse anyone from the pulpit. Let's just start with the fundraiser and go from there.

Stone flashes a cocky smile. Winks.

STONE  
You're tough.  
(nodding)  
Sounds like a good plan. My campaign will send you what to say--

JOHN  
No, no...I don't work that way--

STONE  
Well...Marshall told me--

JOHN  
Marshall, doesn't speak for me.

Stone goes silent. Beat.

STONE  
My campaign will want to at least approve your speech.

JOHN  
Sure, sure. I can send it to them beforehand.

Stone nods and smiles. They shake hands again.

STONE  
Send the speech to Michelle--

John nods.

STONE (CONT'D)  
She'll review it with Marshall.

John freezes. Slight surprise.

JOHN  
How's Marshall involved in all  
this?

Stone CHUCKLES.

STONE  
Marshall? Billionaire in oil,  
natural gas, owner of Lighthouse  
Capital? The man has pull.

JOHN  
Marshall owns Lighthouse Capital?

STONE  
He also runs the largest Super PAC  
supporting me.

John nods.

JOHN  
I guess I need to get to know my  
members a little better.

STONE  
You'll learn soon enough.

JOHN  
Well...it was great to meet you.

Stone walks to the exit. Turns in the doorway...

STONE  
Same here...See you at the  
fundraiser.  
(loud and proud)  
Let's get this country back on  
track.

Stone exits.

INT. DINING ROOM - FULTON HOME - NIGHT

Barbara, Henry, Jay, and Rebecca sit at the family dining  
room table eating from full plates in front of them. A place  
is set for their dad at the head of the table. Beat.

John finally enters and sits.

JOHN  
Sorry I'm late.

The family continues eating as he sits. He scans the table. They all freeze and bow their heads with him.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Our heavenly Father, please bless this food to the nourishment of our bodies. Bless the beautiful hands that prepared it. Thank you for the cross, your son, Jesus, and his sacrifice upon it. In your precious and holy name...Amen.

He puts his napkin in his lap. The family continues eating.

John scans the table as the kids EAT and CHAT.

He smiles as he reaches over and rubs Barbara's arm. She continues to eat.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Jay, how you gettin' along in your studies?

JAY

Going good, Dad. Got a history test next week...Civil War.

JOHN

If you need any help--

REBECCA

I can help you out. I have to study for the same test.

JAY

Sure...I feel so behind.

JOHN

(sincerely)

Thanks, Becca.

REBECCA

He should get an "A" just for being the only descendant of slavery in our white-bread class.

Henry and Jay CHUCKLE. She smiles as Barbara glares at her.

JOHN

(half mad, half laughing)

Becca, come on, no call for that.

John shakes his head.



JAY  
 (to Rebecca)  
 I saw you sitting with Drew.

REBECCA  
 Whatever.

JOHN  
 Becca, you were sitting with a boy?

REBECCA  
 It's nothing, dad.

JOHN  
 Well, I...

Barbara squeezes his hand. He changes the subject.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 Henry, how's practice going?

HENRY  
 I think it sounds great. Last few  
 times, I went over it, I didn't  
 miss a word.

JOHN  
 That's, uh, good...What about  
 baseball practice?

HENRY  
 It's going great too. Struck out  
 just about everyone on the team.

JOHN  
 Be careful. Might make some enemies  
 doing that. Toss a couple  
 grapefruits to em' now and then.

Henry smiles as he eats.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 (to Barbara)  
 Governor came by today.

Barbara listens as she eats. The kids CHAT with each other.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 He wants me to help him win.

Her brow furrows as she eats.

BARBARA  
 You...help him win?

JOHN  
He thinks he needs evangelicals to  
win and that I can deliver them.

BARBARA  
I think he's right...He needs them.

JOHN  
If I get involved, I'll have to  
travel.

Barbara looks at John. Questioning look.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
He already has Texas wrapped up.  
I'm sure he'll want me in some of  
the more religious swing states.

BARBARA  
Do you like him?

JOHN  
Like him?--

BARBARA  
Yes...Do you feel a connection?

JOHN  
I guess.

BARBARA  
What do you really know about him?

JOHN  
I don't I guess--

BARBARA  
You better be sure before you  
endorse him--

JOHN  
Yeah.

BARBARA  
Better be sure he's the type of  
Godly man you'd associate with.

He puts his hand on hers.

JOHN  
You're always right.

She pulls her hand away slightly.

BARBARA

A conservative without a good marriage is dead in the water--

JOHN

What do you mean--

BARBARA

Maybe I can help out with the campaign. If you travel with him, I'd think you want to be seen with your better half there.

Taken aback, John quickly scans the kid's reactions. Nothing.

JOHN

(quieter)

We--we do have a good marriage.

BARBARA

Of course...You know what I mean.

John continues eating.

INT. KITCHEN - FULTON HOME - NIGHT

Most lights are out. John stands at the kitchen island. Eating a slice of cake and reading the mail.

Comfortable clothes and pony tail, Barbara enters.

JOHN

Want me to get you a piece of cake?

She shakes her head. Grabs a bottle of water from the fridge.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Kids all asleep?

She opens a cabinet and gets a pill from a bottle.

BARBARA

Yeah, think so.

She takes the pill with the water.

John watches her leave. SIGHS. Continues eating.

He flips through the mail and finds a large envelope.

He curiously looks at the front. Opens it up and pulls out the documents.

ON DOCUMENTS

On the forms, it says "Lighthouse Capital" with a fancy logo and headline "Welcome to Calvary Baptist Church's Profit Sharing and Retirement Investment Plan."

At the page's bottom, is "A Marshall Enterprise Subsidiary."

ON SCENE

He continues to look through the documents.

INT. JOHN'S STUDY - FULTON HOME - NIGHT

Barbara sits at John's desk in the study. Only a lamp on the desk is on. Deep in thought. Looks around the room. Beat.

She picks up John's cell phone. Navigates on the screen.

She dials a number.

BARBARA

Hello? This is John's wife,  
Barbara.

(listens)

Marshall told us to give you a call  
if we decided to--

Barbara listens intently. Beat.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Yeah...our music minister. Please,  
just take care of it. Whatever  
needs to be done.

Barbara hangs up the phone. Sets the phone down.

INT. HALLWAY - FULTON HOME

Bible in hand, John strolls the hallway to his kid's rooms.

INT. REBECCA'S BEDROOM - FULTON HOME

All lights out, Rebecca is curled up asleep in her bed. Light from the hall enters as her door cracks open.

John peeks in on her. He smiles and then closes the door.

INT. JAY'S BEDROOM - FULTON HOME

Jay is up and playing a video game in his dark room. John opens his door.

JOHN  
Hey, just a few more minutes and  
then get to bed, son.

JAY  
Sure thing, Dad. Good night.

JOHN  
Good night.

John closes the door.

INT. HENRY'S BEDROOM - FULTON HOME

With the lights out, Henry is in his bed, but his phone is glowing. He is CHATTING quietly with someone.

Finishing his rounds, John looks in on him. Henry quickly puts his phone face down, but John notices.

JOHN  
Hey, off your phone, time to go to  
sleep.

HENRY  
Ok, Dad...Night.

John starts to close the door. Pauses.

JOHN  
Hey, uh, Henry?

Henry sits up in bed.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
I-I know you've been having a rough  
time these past few weeks. If you,  
uh, if you want your friend, Chad,  
to come stay next weekend, your  
mother and I'd be ok with that.

HENRY  
Really?

JOHN  
Uh, yeah...but, with some rules.

HENRY

Rules?

JOHN

We-we can talk about it tomorrow.

Henry smiles wide.

HENRY

Sure...thanks, Dad.

JOHN

(nods)

Good night.

John closes the door. Henry picks his phone back up to finish his chat.

INT. HALLWAY - FULTON HOME

John walks down the hall. Peeks into the master bedroom.

ON MASTER BEDROOM

It's near dark. Only a book light as Barbara is passed out on the bed. A book is in her lap.

ON SCENE

John enters and approaches his sleeping wife.

He puts her book on the nightstand. Turns off the book light then covers her up with the comforter.

He kisses her forehead. Briefly watches her then exits.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM

John enters the guest bedroom. Sets his Bible down.

Opens a dresser drawer. His clothes are in it. He gets out a t-shirt and shorts.

Moments later, now in his t-shirt and shorts. He turns off the light. Lays in the bed. Alone.

He stares at the ceiling.

ON CEILING

The ceiling fan and its shadow slowly spins. Hypnotic.

ON SCENE

John, eyes wide open, can't sleep. Sadness. Beat.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

A bit later, John is asleep in bed. His phone starts to VIBRATE on the nightstand beside him.

Groggy, he reaches over. Grabs it. Looks at the screen.

He sits up and answers the call.

JOHN

Wendy?

(listens)

Calm down. What's the--Ok.

As he listens to her, he grabs the remote. Turns on the small TV on the guest room dresser. Changes to the right channel.

ON TV SCREEN

On a late-night news report, a REPORTER stands in front of a house. An info graphic at the bottom says "Local Music Minister Spotted at Gay Sex Club."

REPORTER

Supposedly, earlier this evening, the popular music minister of one of the biggest mega-churches in the country was spotted at a sex club frequented by gay males. He's married with kids and the lead music minister of a church known for its harsh tone against the homosexual lifestyle.

ON SCENE

With Wendy still CHATTERING on the phone, John hangs it up. Stares at the screen.

EXT. GARAGE - FULTON HOME - NIGHT

Midnight. Now dressed, John approaches his car in the driveway in front of the garage.

BEEP BEEP. He unlocks it with the remote.

As he opens the door, there's a GRAY CROWN VIC parked across the street. He notices. *Doesn't think much of it.*

He gets in his car. Closes the door.

EXT. COURTYARD - CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH - NIGHT

John strolls around the lit-up water fountain in the dark courtyard. Music from the courtyard speakers PLAYS softly.

He sits and watches the water. He glances down and notices a patina plaque at the base. He squints as he reads it.

**PLAQUE: DONATED BY CHARLES MARSHALL**

His brow furrows a bit. The music continues PLAYING. Beat.

He pulls out his cellphone. Opens a browser.

ON IPHONE

He types in the Google search - "Calvary minister"

A couple results load about Troy, the music minister. A few down from those results, one reads "Former Calvary Baptist Youth Pastor's Wife Questions His Suicide."

He scrolls to it. Touches it and it loads a Miami news report dated almost ten years ago.

ON SCENE

John starts breathing a bit harder. Stares forward. Stands.

A nearby POLICE SIREN BLARES. Startles him. Fades to echoes.

He scans the streets. Spots a car approaching.

ON STREET

On the downtown street across from the courtyard, he sees the same GRAY CROWN VIC from his neighborhood pull up and park. Hard to tell who is driving. Dark siloette.

ON SCENE

Still holding his phone, John marches toward the street.

Headlights off, the GRAY CROWN VIC slowly pulls away.

John freezes. Watches it drive down the street.

Light bulb moment as he stands in the street. Beat.

All of a sudden, a woman's voice behind him...



WOMAN

John?

John spins around. Agent Hernandez stands on the sidewalk.

HERNANDEZ

John, I'm Special Agent Maria  
Hernandez with the FBI...We need to  
have a long talk.

She holds up her FBI shield. John stares at it then her.

**END OF EPISODE**