

WAYWARD

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FADE IN:

NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA

We're gliding over endless acres of cropland and cattle pastures, dotted with swamps and bursts of prairie trees.

It's mid-April in the heartland, green and alive.

Descending along a two-lane COUNTRY HIGHWAY, we lock onto -
A single PICKUP TRUCK heading east.

IN THE TRUCK

A woman lies across the seat, her head resting on the driver's leg.

She is CLAIRE (30s) and she watches the sky unspool across the windshield. Her dress flutters, tossed by the rush of breeze through the open windows. Barefoot, free and easy.

She peers up at the driver, ERIK (30s). The setting sun rings his scruffy hair in gold.

One of Erik's hands rests lazily on the steering wheel, the other caresses Claire's exposed shoulder. A subtle touch, but one that quickens Claire's heart rate, desire building.

Wherever they're going, they can't get there soon enough.

INT. RENTAL CABIN - DUSK

A rustic getaway, peacefully dormant. The last light of day slices through the windows. Then -

WE HEAR the sound of ERIK'S TRUCK rumbling to a stop outside.

Claire and Erik's playful VOICES, growing louder...

ERIK (O.S.)
C'mere!

CLAIRE (O.S.)
What are you doing?

A key rattles in the lock and the door swings open. Erik carries a laughing Claire across the threshold.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
You're going to hurt yourself.

With an exaggerated groan, Erik sets Claire on her feet. He closes the door, shutting them inside.

Claire's eyes sweep the room.

ERIK

So what do you think?

CLAIRE

It's cute. How do you know this place?

Claire drifts across the room, deliberate, conscious of Erik's hungry gaze on her.

ERIK

I used to hole up here every time I thought I could write a novel.

She peers out a window at a pristine lake. They're very alone here.

CLAIRE

And how much writing do you plan to get done tonight?

ERIK

I believe that's up to you.

Enough words. They come together in a fervid kiss, long-awaited. Clothes are hoisted off.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CABIN - MOMENTS LATER

Claire and Erik make urgent love on the floor.

Claire is on top of Erik, controlling their rhythm, fulfilling a deep need.

RAINDROPS dapple the windows, just a few at first...

INT. LIVING ROOM - CABIN - NIGHT

A RAINSTORM is now pounding the roof.

Claire and Erik lie on the floor, wrapped in a blanket. Claire stares at the FIRE crackling in the fireplace.

We hear ERIK TALKING, but it's muffled, distant. Then, Claire emerges from her trance -

CLAIRE

Hm?

ERIK

Your hands.

She sees he's examining her hand in the glow.

CLAIRE

What about them?

ERIK

I was saying they remind me of a
Mayan carving I once saw down on
the Yucatan. The goddess Ix-Chel.

CLAIRE

She's got stubby little fingers?

ERIK

She's got beautiful fingers. I love
her fingers.

He kisses her hand.

CLAIRE

I want to see that carving.

ERIK

Okay. We'll leave in the morning.

An exhilarating thought, one they live in for a beat.

ERIK (CONT'D)

You warm enough?

CLAIRE

(basking)

Mm-hm.

ERIK

Good, then I'll be right back.

He stands, begins dressing.

CLAIRE

Where are you going?

ERIK

Into the wild to slay us a feast.
(off her look)
There's a great barbecue shack up
the road.

CLAIRE
 You're leaving me for a rack of
 ribs.

He kneels next to her.

ERIK
 Of course not. I'm leaving you for
 the brisket.

Claire grabs him, they wrestle playfully. A final kiss.

ERIK (CONT'D)
 Don't go anywhere.

He heads for the door.

CLAIRE
 Don't come back without cornbread.
 Your goddess commands it.

Her eyes return to the fire.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Through the rain, we barely make out the sight of -

A MAN walking along the road, soaked to the bone, wearing
 frayed flannel and denim. He looks up to see -

ERIK'S TRUCK pulling onto the highway, disappearing down the
 road.

The man considers THE CABIN down the driveway. No lights on.

INT. BATHROOM - CABIN - NIGHT

Claire starts the shower, steps in.

EXT. CABIN FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

The man steps to the door.

His name is RONNIE and we see him clearly in the harsh glow
 of the porch light: 40s, hollow eyes. Water slicks off his
 greasy hair and beard.

RONNIE
 Hello - ?

No answer. He knocks again.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
Anyone here?

INT. SHOWER - CABIN - SAME

Claire can't hear the knocking over the running water.

EXT. CABIN FRONT DOOR - SAME

Ronnie tests the doorknob, locked.

He peers into a nearby window. He pushes on the sash, the window slides open.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CABIN - MOMENTS LATER

Ronnie moves through the darkness, over the strewn clothes.

He hears the sound of a RUNNING SHOWER. He steps to the BATHROOM DOOR, pushes it open a crack, looks in and sees -

A blurry CLAIRE, visible through the translucent curtain.

After a moment, Ronnie turns away, gets down to business:

He sifts through the pockets of their clothes. Steals an IPAD from Erik's backpack, digs through Claire's MAKEUP BAG and finds -

Her giant DIAMOND RING. Jackpot.

INT. BATHROOM - SAME

Claire turns off the shower, reaches for a towel.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Ronnie hears the shower stop. Frantic, he gathers his loot and hurries toward the exit just as -

The front door opens and ERIK ENTERS.

ERIK
(calling out)
Guess who forgot his wallet -

Then he sees Ronnie.

Both men freeze, taking in the reality of each other.

ERIK (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

RONNIE
Nothin', man. I'm just leavin'.
Don't look at my face.

Erik is hit with a wave of panic.

ERIK
(yelling)
Claire!?

RONNIE
I didn't touch her. I swear.

Erik instinctively reaches for a weapon - grabs a wrought iron FIREPLACE POKER.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
I lost my job today. I was just
lookin' for somethin' to pawn.

But Erik isn't hearing him.

BATHROOM

Claire has slipped into a t-shirt and underwear. Oblivious to the confrontation in the next room.

ERIK (O.S.)
Claire!

CLAIRE
Be right out.

LIVING ROOM

Ronnie drops the stolen goods to the floor.

RONNIE
Here, just take your shit.

He dashes to the BACKDOOR, but it's bolted shut. Dead end.

RONNIE (CONT'D)
Fuck.

Then, as he turns back -

The BATHROOM DOOR OPENS and Claire steps out, between Erik and Ronnie. Claire goes rigid at the sight of the intruder.

ERIK
 (to Claire)
 Get back in there!

Ronnie is a caged animal. He GRABS CLAIRE, wraps an arm around her neck. She flails, fighting to get away.

RONNIE
 Lemme through and I let her go!

ERIK
 You're choking her!

Erik stalks closer, wielding the poker.

RONNIE
 Drop that fucking thing!

Claire grasps for any piece of Ronnie. Her hand finds HIS EAR. She grabs it, digs in with her fingernails.

Ronnie YELLS, THROWS CLAIRE away from him. Her body SLAMS into a heap of firewood.

Erik drives at Ronnie with the poker. But Ronnie TACKLES ERIK against the wall. They lock up in a BRAWL, gouging, clawing.

ON CLAIRE

For a moment, she drifts in a haze. Her focus sharpens as oxygen returns to her brain. She turns to see -

Ronnie overpowering Erik.

ERIK
 Claire, go -

Claire considers the front door, then Erik. A choice.

She stands and rushes to Erik's aid. She grabs Ronnie from behind, fights to pry him off.

The whole cabin seems to sway as the three of them wrestle along the wall. And then -

It's like the wall holding them up vanishes. They fall into the BLACK VOID of the -

OPEN CELLAR DOOR

A violent clatter as three bodies crash down a FLIGHT OF STAIRS into -

DARKNESS

The sound of pressured breathing is all we hear. Then -

CLAIRE
Erik?

ERIK
I'm okay. Jesus Christ -

CLAIRE
Where is he?

ERIK
I've got him. Are you hurt?

CLAIRE
No.

ERIK
Get upstairs.

She scurries up the staircase. Feels for a light switch. She finds it and CLICK, the cellar is ILLUMINATED, revealing -

A battered Erik lies on top of Ronnie at the bottom of the stairs. Erik climbs off him to see -

Ronnie's NECK CONTORTED in a fatal position, eyes open and ghostly still. DEAD.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Wisps of smoke are all that remain of the fire. Rain continues to batter the roof.

Claire and Erik sit in the dark. The closed CELLAR DOOR looms large across the room.

CLAIRE
Everything they've done for me - I can't do this to them.

She looks at Erik with tortured, pleading eyes. Erik escapes to the far side of the room, calculating.

ERIK
(a solution)
Then I was here alone. He broke in, I defended myself.

He lifts her to her feet.

ERIK (CONT'D)
 It's going to be okay. But we have
 to get you home. C'mon -

THEN -

HEADLIGHTS slice through the blinds. Erik hurries to a window
 to see -

A CAR has pulled up outside.

INT. FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Erik cracks the door open. A chirpy woman (PATTY, 50s) steps
 to the cabin.

PATTY
 Hey, I'm Patty. I took your
 reservation.

ERIK
 Yeah, hi.

PATTY
 With this old roof, you're gonna
 need these to catch some leaks.

She holds up a stack of empty buckets. Erik takes them.

ERIK
 Alright, thank you.

PATTY
 I'da brought extra towels if I knew
 you had company.

ERIK
 It's just me.

PATTY
 Well, you must look prettier than a
 pie supper in that dress.

Erik follows her gaze to a chair where Claire's DRESS AND BRA
 are draped. He searches for words -

PATTY (CONT'D)
 (a knowing wink)
 Sorry to interrupt.

Patty heads back to her car. Erik closes the door, locks it.

Claire exits the bedroom where she's been hiding. She and Erik exchange a helpless look, as we -

CUT TO:

TITLE: WAYWARD

EXT. RANSOM, OKLAHOMA - MORNING

We're rolling through RANSOM, OKLAHOMA on a perfectly cloudless July day.

It's THREE MONTHS LATER.

Once a rough-and-tumble frontier town, Ransom is now an upbeat Tulsa suburb. The housing developments and big box stores say the city is thriving, but there's still an element of poverty that's been neatly pushed to the fringes.

But it's SUNDAY MORNING, and both rich and poor are headed in the same direction. Moving with them is -

A 1961 JAGUAR COUPÉ, a shiny collectible.

IN THE CAR

Claire rides in the passenger's seat. She wears a designer dress and heels, her hair and makeup precise.

There's no amount of makeup, though, that can hide the tired torment in her eyes. She mindlessly twists her WEDDING RING, a nervous habit.

Claire sneaks a look at the driver -

SETH LEWIS (30s). Claire's husband sits tall and in-control behind the wheel. But his fingers drumming the gearshift betray a worried mind.

CLAIRE

Just 'cause it's a big day doesn't mean you can't enjoy it.

It breaks Seth from his anxious daze.

SETH

I'm enjoying it.
(off Claire's look)
I am.

BEEWP! A MOTORCYCLE COP has pulled up next to the car. The officer gestures for Seth to follow him.

Seth tails the POLICE ESCORT around the gridlock of cars. Starstruck motorists wave as Seth and Claire pass.

SETH (V.O.)
How do you describe you?

EXT. NEW DAWN CHURCH - MORNING

A modern megachurch, the biggest show in town. Actually, by the looks of the traffic coming off the I-44 freeway, it's the biggest show within a hundred miles.

The cars funnel into a massive PARKING LOT. They're directed by cheery VOLUNTEERS in vests that read "Greet Team."

SETH (V.O.)
When you look in the mirror every morning, what's the first thing you say about yourself? "I'm tired? I'm old? I'm fat? I'm a failure?" Maybe some combination of those things.

EXT. NEW DAWN CHURCH - WELCOME GATES - MORNING

As they enter the sprawling property, visitors are met with signs: "You Belong Here!" and "You Are Loved!"

SETH (V.O.)
I'm giving you a challenge. Tomorrow morning when you drag yourself to that dreaded mirror, I want you saying just one thing: "I am saved."

EXT. NEW DAWN CHURCH - CAMPUS - MORNING

New Dawn's well-funded CAMPUS boasts a food court, childcare complex, fitness center, gift shop. FAMILIES play lawn games in the grassy common area.

SETH (V.O.)
It's the only description of yourself that will ever matter. Say it with me: "I am saved." And being saved makes you perfect in the eyes of God.

Overlooking it all is...

INT. SETH'S OFFICE - MORNING

Exact and orderly, the room's focal point is a polished GOLD SCULPTURE mounted to the wall. A shiny Pentecostal flame.

Seth is alone. He stares into the sculpture, rehearsing his weekly message to his own gilded reflection.

SETH

And there's no secret to it. It's right there for the taking. Like the blind beggar on the road to Jerusalem in Luke 18 who asked the Lord to restore his sight -

He trails off, checks the script on his IPAD.

SETH (CONT'D)

Like the blind beggar on the road to Jericho.

(furious with himself)

Jericho. JERICHO -

In here, Seth lets himself be vulnerable, naked -

There's a KNOCK on the door.

STAGE MANAGER (O.S.)

Pastor Seth. Fifteen minutes.

SETH

(gritted teeth)

Thank you.

Seth is derailed. He crosses to the guest couch, buries his face between the cushions -

AND SCREAMS. Releasing pent-up emotion into the upholstery.

Seth finishes, red-faced. He collects himself, tries on a confident look in the sculpture reflection. Then exits.

INT. READY ROOM - NEW DAWN - LATER

Thirty STAFF MEMBERS hold hands in a circle. Associate pastors, musicians, technical crew, coordinators.

Seth leads them in a PRE-SERVICE PRAYER. There's passion in his words, a faithful believer -

SETH

- may our words and music touch the hearts of those who came today.

Claire stands with Seth, their hands locked. Her head is bowed, eyes closed.

SETH (CONT'D)

And Father, as our ministry embarks on the next leg of its journey, may we continue to prove ourselves your worthy servants. We pray this in Jesus's name. Amen.

Claire whispers "Amen," along with the group.

STAGE MANAGER

Alright. Worship Team, to your marks.

The energy ratchets up, the frenzy of a busy newsroom.

Seth calls out -

SETH

Hey, Erik?

Claire turns to see -

ERIK,

moving toward them. Haggard, in need of a shave. The same despair in his face as Claire.

Erik and Claire avoid eye contact.

SETH (CONT'D)

Mornin', Erik. We baptizing you today?

ERIK

No, my soul's as clean as it's gonna get.

Seth laughs at their weekly banter. Claire does not.

ERIK (CONT'D)

(to Claire)

Good morning.

CLAIRE

Morning.

They share a charged look before Claire walks away.

We stay with Seth and Erik -

SETH

I want to try a different verse in the coda. Acts 2:38 was my dad's go-to.

ERIK

First John 1:9?

SETH

First John -

He digs into his Bible, but Erik cuts him off -

ERIK

(from memory)

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive and purify us from unrighteousness."

SETH

I'm sorry, but you can't know your scripture that well and call yourself an atheist.

ERIK

Maybe I'm an atheist because I know my scripture that well.

Seth marvels at his non-believing sermon writer.

SETH

No, there's devotion in there. You're not hiding anything from me.
(back to work)
Okay, slug that verse into the script. Make sure Graphics has the change.

ACROSS THE ROOM

Claire waits alone, twisting her wedding ring.

GIDEON (O.S.)

Young lady, do you know who might have my sermon notes?

Claire turns to GIDEON LEWIS (70). The founding patriarch of New Dawn, now losing a battle with dementia. Despite his failing mind, Gideon still holds sway over this place.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

I can't seem to find them.

CLAIRE

Mr. Lewis, your son Seth is leading the service again this week.

GIDEON

Who's doing the preaching?

CLAIRE

Seth.

GIDEON

That doesn't sound right.

CLAIRE

He's been at it for a while now -

JUNE LEWIS swoops in. In her late 60s, Seth's mother is the picture of poise.

JUNE

Gideon, dear, why don't you sit down and relax a minute?

June helps him to a chair.

GIDEON

Alright, but I'd like to go over my sermon notes.

JUNE

(infinite patience)

I'll see if I can find them for you.

June moves off, returns to Claire's side.

CLAIRE

I hope I didn't confuse him.

JUNE

He's fine. As long as he's here, the man's in heaven. Wish it didn't make Seth so jumpy.

June studies Claire. There's a remoteness to her.

JUNE (CONT'D)

When's the last time he took you out? And not a donor dinner. A real date.

Claire thinks, but nothing comes.

JUNE (CONT'D)

He'll be hearing from me about that.

CLAIRE

Please, don't. This broadcast deal has him stretched so thin.

June recognizes a familiar echo.

JUNE

Married to a man that's married to his church. It's a quandary. And Lord, if you dare complain -
(a shrill impression)
"Can you believe that ungrateful preacher's wife? Her man don't gamble, he don't run around, he ain't a boozier. What's she got to bellyache about?"

Claire lightens, buoyed by their kinship.

JUNE (CONT'D)

They can't give love if they're not getting it. That's our job. We're the fuel source that can't run dry. But what do I say?

CLAIRE

God's got it.

JUNE

That's right, sweetie. God's got it.

Stage Manager enters the room -

STAGE MANAGER

Five minutes to worship.

INT. WORSHIP CENTER - DAY

A crowd of 4,000 CHURCHGOERS are on their feet, young and old, wealthy and poor. They sing along to lyrics projected onto screens around the auditorium.

On stage, New Dawn's WORSHIP BAND plays an OPENING ROCK HYMN. Choreographed lights and haze machines give the feel of a rock concert.

June and Gideon take their "reserved" seats in the front row. Gideon winces, disoriented by the lights and loudness.

INT. BACKSTAGE - SAME

Claire waits in the darkness of the bustling stage wings.

Across the room, Seth is fitted with a headset microphone.

Claire feels a presence next to her. It's Erik, eyes buried in a sermon script.

ERIK
(a whisper)
Did you see the news?

Claire stares straight ahead, their lips barely move.

CLAIRE
What news?

Erik muscles out the words -

ERIK
They found him.

Claire's heart drops through the floor.

ERIK (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, Claire.
(fumbling)
I didn't - I'm sorry.

Claire is blank, unable to react.

On stage, the band hits their final chord.

STAGE MANAGER
Seth and Claire, stand by.

Seth grabs Claire's lifeless hand.

STAGE MANAGER (CONT'D)
And, you're on.

Claire staggers forward as Seth leads her into the lights -

ON STAGE

Worshippers APPLAUD their favorite Christian couple.

Claire forces a smile, but she's haunted by Erik's words.

Seth escorts Claire to her special ON-STAGE SEAT near the band. She sits.

Seth turns his attention to his flock. They wait for it -

SETH
(finally)
Who's here for Jesus?

The crowd erupts with LOUD PRAISE, Bibles in the air.

SETH (CONT'D)
Good. You're in the right place.
(takes it in)
Lord, what a sight.

Seth is warm and folksy, a salt-of-the-earth vessel for God's word.

SETH (CONT'D)
A couple things before we get started: First, if you know me at all, you know how much my family means to me. Which is why I'm so thrilled to welcome home my big brother Ben.

He points to the FRONT ROW -

Sitting next to June and Gideon is BEN LEWIS (late-30s). Broad shoulders, tight haircut, world-weary eyes.

A camera projects BEN's face on the VIDEO SCREENS.

SETH (CONT'D)
After years of overseas defense work, Ben is back with us as our new Head of Security.
(audience applause)
I love you, buddy. It's good to have you home.

Ben nods, anxious to have his face off the screens.

SETH (CONT'D)
Another thing: My lovely wife still needs volunteers to help fill fifteen hundred Purpose Packs next week.

Claire snaps to attention. She's been lost in thought.

SETH (CONT'D)
Claire's been working her tail off all summer to round up food, clothing, and hygiene products for the needy of the Tulsa County area.
(MORE)

SETH (CONT'D)

So if you can lend a hand, call the volunteer office to find out all the wheres and whens.

Finally, the announcement he's been dying to make -

SETH (CONT'D)

One last thing - and this - well, it's an answer to prayer: Three Sundays from now, we'll be taping our first broadcast for nationally syndicated television.

A MURMUR goes up among the worshipers.

SETH (CONT'D)

The church my dad started in an empty shoe store forty years ago will now be seen in homes all across the country. It's going to be a new day for New Dawn.

ON GIDEON

He turns to June -

GIDEON

What's he talking about?

JUNE

All good things.

BACK ON SETH

SETH

And we couldn't have gotten here without your prayers and generosity. But we're gonna need more of both to keep it going. So when that plate is passed around later, I hope you'll give what you can so that we may shout the Lord's message into a world that so desperately needs it.

Seth basks in the crowd's excitement.

It takes all of Claire's energy to maintain a smile.

EXT. NEW DAWN COURTYARD - DAY

The service is over. Claire and Seth mingle with delighted church members.

Seth gives his undivided attention to everyone. It's easy to see why he's so loved.

Claire plays her part, but her mind is elsewhere...

INT. SETH'S OFFICE - DAY

Claire waits while Seth meets with New Dawn directors: DAVID (Operations) and LIZ (Media), along with a gathering of lieutenants.

We don't hear what they're saying, we're just fixed on Claire. Absent, she watches as -

An accounting clerk stacks CASH into a cube safe in the corner of Seth's office. Sunday's offering.

EXT. LEWIS HOME - DAY

Claire and Seth's mansion stands tall behind a set of gates. A lawn manicured to country club standards.

EXT. BACKYARD BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Seth shoots hoops on his private court, driving hard against an invisible opponent.

When he misses a lay-up, he immediately lines up the shot again. Striving for perfection.

EXT. PORCH - DAY

Claire huddles on a porch swing, knees to her chest. She swipes through her phone and lands on a NEWS HEADLINE:

"BODY BURIED ON RANCH IDENTIFIED"

She tenses as she reads the story, her head swimming. A line plagues her: **"...survived by daughter Adelaine Brooks..."**

Claire scrolls further and stops on -

A PHOTO

The scene of the body's discovery: Cops, a forensic team. Behind police tape, curious locals look on. Among them is -

A TEENAGE GIRL. Hand to her mouth, tears imminent, a girl whose world is falling apart.

Claire's eyes dampen as she focuses on the girl. Then -

 SETH (O.S.)
Hey, you busy?

Seth stands over her, sweat-drenched from his work out.

A startled Claire hides her phone screen.

 CLAIRE
No.

He pulls the swing toward him, rocking Claire into a kiss.

 CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Why?

He swings her into another kiss. She's thrown by the unexpected affection.

 SETH
I just got a calendar alert. It's Day Thirteen of your cycle.

Instantly less sexy.

 CLAIRE
I thought you had to be on a call.

 SETH
In twenty minutes.

He senses Claire's hesitation.

 SETH (CONT'D)
That book says it's a good day to try.

 CLAIRE
(gingerly)
I know - I'm just not feeling a hundred percent.

 SETH
I'll be the one doing all the work.

Seth stops the swing, holds Claire suspended away from him.

SETH (CONT'D)
(growing irritation)
I'm up there giving family advice
without a family of my own. How do
you think that looks?

A flash of his underlying temper. Claire relents before it
becomes a thing -

CLAIRE
Okay, I'll be right there.

Seth releases the swing and gives Claire a final kiss.

SETH
I feel good about this. Lucky
thirteen.

He heads into the house. When he's out of sight -

Claire deletes the BROWSING HISTORY on her phone.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Seth is on top of Claire, penetrating her. She lies there,
detached from the process.

When Seth finishes his work, he climbs off Claire, kneels
next to the bed. He takes her hand and prays silently.

After a moment, he stands, kisses Claire on the forehead. He
exits, leaving Claire to her nagging thoughts.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Claire is in the shower when she's hit with sudden dread. She
pulls back the curtain, scans the room, confirms she's alone.

She returns to her shower.

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Claire stands in a towel, frozen. Finally -

She wills herself to move. Reaches into a drawer and pulls
out a well-worn MAKEUP BAG.

INT. CLAIRE'S CAR (MERCEDES) - MOVING - DAY

Claire drives toward the prairie outskirts of town. She glances up to see -

A glossy BILLBOARD advertisement for NEW DAWN CHURCH.

SETH & CLAIRE'S FACES smile down from it, warm and welcoming.

Claire averts her look, accelerates past the billboard.

EXT. SAINT MARY MAGDALENE CATHOLIC CHURCH - MORNING

Off a forsaken country road -

The modest church is nestled into a grove of hackberry trees. Its white lap-siding is twenty years overdue for a fresh coat of paint.

CLAIRE'S CAR is parked behind the church, hidden from view.

INT. SAINT MARY MAGDALENE'S - DAY

Empty and silent. Relief sculptures line the walls: The Stations of the Cross, depictions of Christ's sacrifice, growing progressively more brutal.

A mahogany CONFESSIONAL stands in a dark corner...

IN THE CONFESSIONAL

Claire sits in the cramped blackness. She's looking at her phone, transfixed by the TEENAGE GIRL in the NEWS PHOTO.

The latticed window slides open. FATHER PEREZ (60s) appears on the other side, a face as cracked as Dust Bowl soil.

CLAIRE

Bless me, father, for I have sinned. It's been -

Perez knows the voice.

FATHER PEREZ

Three days.

CLAIRE

- three days since my last confession.

FATHER PEREZ
Are you here with the same sins?

CLAIRE
Yes.

FATHER PEREZ
It's not necessary to continue
coming back like this.

They've been through this before. Claire waits for something,
anything that will help.

FATHER PEREZ (CONT'D)
You've done everything I've
instructed?

CLAIRE
Yes.

FATHER PEREZ
You've ended your affair?

CLAIRE
Yes.

FATHER PEREZ
This incident you won't discuss
with me - you've taken it to the
Lord?

CLAIRE
More times than I can count.

FATHER PEREZ
Then you're forgiven, Claire.

CLAIRE
(unsatisfied)
So when do I start feeling
forgiven?

FATHER PEREZ
Perhaps when you decide whose
absolution you're after. Because
I'm not certain it's God's.

CLAIRE
Will you just say the words,
father?

FATHER PEREZ
If it's a police matter, speaking
to them may bring some relief -

CLAIRE

Please just say the words.

Perez gives her a pitying look. He relents, raises his hand.

FATHER PEREZ

May God give you pardon and peace.
I absolve you from your sins in the
name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Claire waits, but the comfort she craves doesn't come.

INT. CLAIRE'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

Claire drives a BACKWOODS ROAD, eyes searching. She approaches a gravel DRIVEWAY.

A decrepit MAILBOX dangles into the road, peppered with buckshot. The name "BROOKS" is barely legible on it.

The driveway leads to a RUNDOWN HOUSE, the weather-beaten look of a sharecropper shack.

Claire scans the property, taking it all in. Then, she sees someone in the yard -

THE TEENAGE GIRL, the one from the photo. The girl looks up at Claire's passing car.

Suddenly self-conscious, Claire accelerates away from the house. But -

She slows to a stop.

Behind the wheel, Claire twists her wedding ring. Her car idles, waiting for her to make a decision.

EXT. BROOKS HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Claire's car eases into the yard, shiny and out-of-place among the scrap metal heaps and overgrown weeds.

ADELAINA "ADDIE" BROOKS (the girl) steps forward, revealing something not obvious in the news photo: She's SIX MONTHS PREGNANT, in hand-me-down maternity clothes.

An uncertain Claire climbs out of the car.

CLAIRE

Hi, there.

ADDIE
You lost, ma'am?

CLAIRE
It's certainly possible. My name's
Claire Lewis. My husband is the
senior pastor at New Dawn Church in
Ransom.

ADDIE
I thought you looked familiar. I
see your picture all over.

CLAIRE
Are you Adelaine?

ADDIE
Only on my driver's license. You
can call me Addie.

CLAIRE
I read about your father, Addie.
And I wanted to tell you - on
behalf of our church - how truly
sorry we are for what happened.

Claire tries to govern herself, but she can't prevent real
emotion from escaping. Her sincerity touches Addie.

ADDIE
It's nice of you to come all the
way out here to say that. I've got
family just up the road who can't
even pick up the phone.

CLAIRE
Well, our doors are always open. We
have support groups, a lot of
resources that can help folks
dealing with a loss.

ADDIE
Thank you.

Addie catches Claire staring at her baby bump, grease smears
across her shirt.

ADDIE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry I look a mess. I've been
tinkerin' with this air
conditioner.

On the ground is a disassembled window AC unit, twisted
coils, beyond repair.

ADDIE (CONT'D)

If my daddy were here, he could fix it blindfolded.

CLAIRE

Is your mother home?

ADDIE

Nope.

CLAIRE

When do you expect her?

ADDIE

Three years, depending on her behavior. She's locked up at Bassett.

CLAIRE

You're here alone?

ADDIE

My boyfriend Kyle's been staying with me.

(doesn't want to elaborate)

You wanna come inside? It ain't much cooler, but at least it's out of the sun.

INT. BROOKS HOME - DAY

Claire sits on a tattered couch. She can't take her eyes off -

Addie, in the kitchen, scooping sugar into a pitcher of instant lemonade.

ADDIE

Don't look at the place. I'm not much of a housekeeper.

CLAIRE

You don't need to wait on me.

Claire scans the coffee table where NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS of Ronnie's killing are arranged in a ragged pile.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Have the police told you anything about the investigation?

ADDIE

No.

Claire carefully measures her tone -

CLAIRE

So you don't know if they have any suspects?

ADDIE

Not that I'm aware of.

Addie enters the room, hands Claire a lemonade.

ADDIE (CONT'D)

Here you go.

CLAIRE

Thanks.

Addie collapses into a worn chair, turns sullen.

ADDIE

Honestly, it could be anybody. A lot of folks hated my daddy. Around here they call my family *The Brooks Crooks*.

CLAIRE

How clever.

ADDIE

He was trying to change, though. When he found out he was going to be a granddad, he cleaned up, got a job. He was turning that backroom into a nursery. Things were looking up for the first time since mama got sent away -

Addie cracks, tears gather. Attention turns to her belly.

ADDIE (CONT'D)

I want to tell my boy to stay where he is. There ain't nothing good out here.

Claire fights her own tears.

CLAIRE

How old are you, sweetie?

ADDIE

I'm eighteen.
(moving on)
How's the lemonade?

CLAIRE
Nice and sweet.

They sit in silence. Finally, Addie's conscience gets her -

ADDIE
I'm seventeen. I say eighteen
'cause folks tend to judge. Sorry
for lying to you.

CLAIRE
I was born to a seventeen-year-old,
so you'll get no judgment from me.

A comfort to Addie. Their moment is interrupted when -

The front door opens and KYLE COLEMAN (20) enters, a practiced swagger, a wishful dusting of facial hair.

ADDIE
Hey, Kyle.

Addie tenses, suddenly alert around her boyfriend.

KYLE
Ads.

ADDIE
This is Claire.

CLAIRE
Hello.

He clocks her, suspicious. A boy playing a hard-bitten man.

KYLE
You from the bank, Claire?

ADDIE
She's from New Dawn Church.

KYLE
I saw that fancy car and figured
she was here to take the house.

CLAIRE
I came to offer my condolences.

ADDIE
(to Kyle, deflecting)
There's fresh lemonade if you're
thirsty.

Kyle stands like a guard dog next to Addie.

KYLE

I'll save you some trouble, Claire.
There was no life insurance payout
if your church is looking for a big
donation.

CLAIRE

I'm not here for money.

KYLE

(incredulous)
Alright, 'cause the funeral home
already stole what it could.

Addie is desperate to cut the tension.

ADDIE

I pulled apart that AC unit, but I
think it's shot.

KYLE

Then it's another night of fans and
ice packs. What time's your shift?

ADDIE

Four. But I can be a little late.

CLAIRE

(gathers herself)
I'm sorry, I'm keeping you.

ADDIE

You don't have to run off.

CLAIRE

It's okay. I should be getting
along.

Claire stands, hands Addie her lemonade glass.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Like I said, if there's anything
you need.

Addie smiles her appreciation. A prolonged look between them.

KYLE

(not so subtle)
Thanks for stopping by.

He's at the door, holding it open for Claire.

INT. ERIK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A nomad's home. No furniture, artwork leaning against walls where it's meant to hang.

Erik stands, drained of color, trying to take in everything Claire just told him.

ERIK

You were in his house.

Claire busies herself, tidying Erik's neglected mail, stacks of dirty dishes.

CLAIRE

(sheepish)

Yes.

Before he can react -

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

We left that girl with no one.
Except a boyfriend that stinks of
whiskey from ten feet away.

ERIK

Claire -

CLAIRE

She had to leave school. Six months
pregnant and she's mopping floors
at the creamery to pay the bills.

ERIK

We didn't do that to her. Her
father did when he broke into a
cabin and attacked two innocent
people.

CLAIRE

(innocent?)

Is that what we were?

ERIK

Yes.

Claire isn't so sure. Erik moves in close.

ERIK (CONT'D)

You have a beautiful heart and I
know it aches like hell for people
like her. But she's trouble for us.

CLAIRE

I grew up around men like her dad.
His case is nothing more than a
trailer trash feud to the police.
No one's looking in our direction -

ERIK

(cuts her off)

So let's keep it that way. We gave
up our chance to come clean the
moment I put him in the ground.

(catches himself)

I realize I'm in no place to give
orders. I said I'd deal with our
problem and I failed and that kills
me. But please, don't be the
arsonist who gets caught coming
back to watch the house burn down.
Stay away from that girl.

Claire hates to see him like this.

CLAIRE

Okay.

INT. ERIK'S GARAGE - LATER

Claire's car is parked inside. She sits behind the wheel.
Erik leans into her open window. A lingering goodbye.

ERIK

Why do you have to go?

He touches her, stirring desire in both of them.

CLAIRE

Erik.

ERIK

I'm sorry, I can't just turn it
off.

CLAIRE

You think that's what I did?

ERIK

I'm the one begging you to stay.

CLAIRE

I want to stay. I want to be the *me*
I am with you. What we had was
real, but it was wrong. And now
we're paying for it.

ERIK
 There's no divine punishment,
 Claire -

CLAIRE
 If it were easy to turn off, I
 would have done it months before
 the cabin.

Claire forces herself to start the car.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
 I have to go. He's probably
 wondering where I am.

ERIK
 We both know he's not.

A comment Claire can't refute.

Erik moves off. Before he slips into the house, he hits the
 automatic door opener. The garage door slides open.

Claire backs out into the dark night.

INT. SETH'S STUDY - LEWIS HOME - NIGHT

Seth watches VIDEO of one of his father's old sermons.

Claire enters.

CLAIRE
 Seth?

SETH
 Yeah?

Seth clicks off the video, self-conscious.

CLAIRE
 I was thinking - we haven't done a
 Monday movie night in forever.

Seth turns to the papers strewn across his desk.

SETH
 Wish I could, but - y'know -

CLAIRE
 "There's no taking a break when the
 devil's awake."

SETH

Nope.

As expected. Claire turns to leave -

SETH (CONT'D)

Hey, how you feeling?

She turns back. He's looking at her with genuine interest. Before she can answer -

SETH (CONT'D)

No morning sickness?

CLAIRE

Not yet.

A frustrated Seth returns to his work.

Claire realizes the conversation is over. She's dismissed.

EXT. LEWIS HOME - DAY

A sweltering July day, the hottest of the summer so far. An oppressive sun beats down on -

Claire, busying herself in her FLOWER GARDEN, weeding out the imperfections.

She stops, wipes the stinging sweat from her eyes.

Unable to shake the thoughts that gnaw at her.

INT. BROOKS HOME - DAY

An overheated Addie sits inches from a fan, a wet rag against her face.

There's a KNOCK on the door. She stands, opens it -

Claire is on the porch, a giant APPLIANCE BOX at her feet.

ADDIE

Claire.

CLAIRE

I'm sorry, but I can't have you burning up in this oven. Hold the door, please.

Addie watches as Claire wrestles the box into the house.

INT. BEDROOM - BROOKS HOME - DAY

Claire braces a new AIR CONDITIONER in the window. Addie sits on the bed next to her.

ADDIE

Kyle was riding bulls when we met. He was really making a name for himself. But he got stomped in San Antonio, tore his shoulder up real bad.

CLAIRE

Phillips head.

ADDIE

(hands her a screwdriver)
That pretty much ended his rodeo days.

CLAIRE

And how about you? What do you want?

ADDIE

Meanin'?

CLAIRE

For your future.

A question Addie is never asked. She's embarrassed to be voicing this -

ADDIE

I don't know. It sounds dumb, but - you ever been to Alaska?

CLAIRE

No.

ADDIE

Me neither. In fifth grade, though, I had to do a report on a state capital. I chose Juneau. I guess 'cause of the fancy French name - and it's about as far from here as you can get. I dunno, I'm sure it's like any other town, but it's always been this place I'd like to see.

Addie's been transported for a moment, but the reality of her stuffy little bedroom rushes in.

ADDIE (CONT'D)

If you're asking what I *don't* want,
it's my son growing up being called
a Brooks Crook.

Claire relates to the longing in her voice.

After a final adjustment, Claire plugs in the AC power cord.

CLAIRE

I think it's ready. Would you like
to do the honors?

ADDIE

Sure. Just pray we don't blow a
fuse.

Addie flips the power switch. A gust of icy air rolls out.
She closes her eyes, basking in the cold.

ADDIE (CONT'D)

It's incredible. Thank you.

Claire watches Addie enjoy the cool relief, curls of hair
fluttering.

The PRE-LAP sound of LAUGHING CHILDREN transitions us to -

EXT. BACKYARD - JUNE & GIDEON'S HOME - DAY

A garden party with the LEWIS FAMILY and FRIENDS. A world
away from Addie's shack.

Claire sits alone, watching the activity around her, an
island of solitude in the middle of it all:

- Happy GRANDKIDS splash in the pool.
- Seth is in a work conversation with CHURCH EXECUTIVES.
- Seth's father Gideon shuffles across the grounds, followed
by his live-in caretaker MARIO (20s).

Then Claire notices -

Seth's brother Ben, wandering the backyard, restless. He
lights a Marlboro and disappears into...

EXT. SHADED CORNER - MOMENTS LATER

Ben is on his knees, snapping dead leaves off a shrub.
Cigarette dangling from his lips.

Claire approaches from behind -

CLAIRE

Ben - ?

A coiled spring, he spins to face her.

BEN

(flustered)

Oh - hey.

CLAIRE

I didn't mean to sneak up on you.

BEN

You didn't. I'm - what's up?

CLAIRE

If you can spare it, I'd love to bum a smoke.

BEN

Sure, of course.

He fumbles out a pack, lights one for her.

As his sleeve raises, Claire notices A TATTOO on his forearm: Renaissance-inspired. A martyr tied to a tree, a dozen bloody arrows driven into his body.

CLAIRE

Saint Sebastian.

BEN

You know him.

CLAIRE

I was brought up Catholic. The martyrs were like comic book heroes to me.

(re: the tattoo)

That's a brutal way to go.

BEN

He actually survived the arrows. A woman came along and nursed him back to health. But when the Roman emperor found out, he had Sebastian's head beaten in with clubs. That did the trick.

Claire reacts to the violence that so casually rolls off his tongue.

BEN (CONT'D)
Sorry. I'm not good with party
chitchat.

CLAIRE
Neither am I. I suppose that's why
I'm hiding back here with you.

They puff their cigarettes, a pair of outsiders.

BEN
Catholic. So, you ever been to
confession?

CLAIRE
Once or twice.

BEN
Did it help?

Claire notes his hopeful yearning.

CLAIRE
Why, do you have something to get
off your chest?

Ben weighs a response. Then -

Gideon stomps past their hideout. Claire and Ben shield their
cigarettes like busted teenagers. When he's gone -

Claire notices Ben, still rigid, an old reflex.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
It can't be easy seeing him like
this.

BEN
He has no idea who I am, so we're
getting along better than ever.

He chuckles, but Claire sees the ancient pain.

CLAIRE
Honestly, I don't know you either.
Come have dinner with us some
night. I promise - no party
chitchat.

BEN
You know I'm the family black
sheep, right?

CLAIRE

That still makes you part of the flock.

A genuine kindness that Ben isn't used to.

BEN

Yeah, dinner sounds good. Thank you.

The sound of a SMASHING GLASS is followed by -

GIDEON (O.S.)

Don't tell me to calm down!

EXT. BACKYARD - SAME

An agitated Gideon stands over a shattered glass of iced tea. June is trying to reason with him.

GIDEON

One of you has my car keys.

Claire and Ben approach.

JUNE

We're all here, having a nice time, Gideon.

GIDEON

And I've got a mountain of work to get through.

Seth steps in to take charge.

SETH

Dad? How about I drive you to the office a little later? After everyone's gone home.

Gideon studies Seth for a confused moment. Then, the bitter recognition comes into focus...

GIDEON

You'll drive me. The piss-ant that stole my church is gonna drive me to my office.

JUNE

Nobody stole your church, Gideon.

GIDEON

Then why's he on my stage? He can't preach, he's got no spirit. All the lights and fanfare in the world don't make up for that.

Seth withers. Claire sees her husband take it, pitiful.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

You're all lettin' my ministry go to hell.

Claire can't help herself -

CLAIRE

Gideon - ?

SETH

(caution)
Claire.

CLAIRE

I think you'd be proud of the job Seth's doing. Attendance is up. People love his message.

Gideon fixes his imposing glare on her. No one ever contradicts him.

GIDEON

Is that right?

CLAIRE

And he's bringing your ministry to an even bigger audience. National TV.

GIDEON

He ain't ready for TV. That's just a bigger stage for him to fail on.

Gideon looks to Seth.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

This your wife?

SETH

(deflated)
Yes, sir.

GIDEON

Did you know she's been with another man?

Claire goes flush, all eyes on her, suddenly exposed.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
Saw it myself.

JUNE
Mario, I think it might be time for
a rest.

GIDEON
Tell me, how you can run a church
when you can't even keep your own
wife in line?

MARIO
Mister Lewis, why don't we go
inside for a bit?

GIDEON
Fine. It's all liars and whores out
here anyhow.

Mario guides Gideon toward the house.

Gideon notices Ben, points an accusing finger at him.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
That's him. That's the sonofabitch
right there. I saw those two making
eyes over cigarettes.

Ben hardens, a stranger to his father.

Gideon leaves, but his outburst still lingers.

Seth moves off. He's been carved out.

CLAIRE
Seth -

He exits, doesn't acknowledge her.

INT. BATHROOM - BROOKS HOME - MORNING

Addie does her makeup in the mirror, wears her nicest dress.

Kyle shambles in, hungover.

KYLE
Where you going?

ADDIE
Church.

Kyle beelines for the prescription bottles littering the counter. He shakes them, looking for pain relief.

KYLE

You gonna see what's-her-name?

ADDIE

I don't know. Probably.

KYLE

You figure out her angle yet?

ADDIE

Maybe she's just a sweet person.

KYLE

Nobody's sweet to trash like us unless there's something in it for 'em.

Kyle finds some pills, slurps them down.

KYLE (CONT'D)

It's her conscience, I bet. She's livin' in a mansion while her husband swindles old ladies out of their welfare checks. Buying shit for you probably helps her sleep at night.

ADDIE

If you say so.

KYLE

(disrespected)

I do. And I say we're fools if we don't try to get something out of it.

Kyle calculates. Addie dreads what he's about to propose -

KYLE (CONT'D)

Tell her you're gonna lose your daddy's house if you can't come up with - I dunno -
(pulls a number)
- ten thousand. Just to see what she says.

ADDIE

(a laugh)

Ten thousand dollars?

KYLE

Ten thousand is pocket change to those crooks.

Addie realizes he's serious.

ADDIE

I barely know her, Kyle -

KYLE

Ads, I can't get on a bull again without surgery. Soon as I get fixed up and start bringing home some winnings, you can quit that job and raise this baby. But that takes money that we don't currently fucking have.

Addie's familiar with his tone, knows better than to respond.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Now put on your warpaint. Go sing some church songs. And get us something better.

He holds her look. A direct order.

INT. WORSHIP CENTER - NEW DAWN - MORNING

Addie sits near the front, eyes glued to THE STAGE, Claire in her usual seat behind Seth.

SETH

And while the Collection Team gathers this week's offering, I invite you to greet those around you with the peace and goodwill of Jesus Christ.

As COLLECTION PLATES are passed around, churchgoers turn to each other with smiles and greetings.

Addie is surprised as the MAN next to her extends a hand -

MAN

Good morning. It's nice to see you here.

ADDIE

(shakes his hand)
Thank you.

It's followed by more handshakes, welcoming words. Addie is overwhelmed by the outpouring of warmth.

Addie catches Claire's eye with a wave. A beaming Claire waves back from stage.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

Claire sits on a swing, Addie in the grass beside her, still in their church dresses. They eat Braum's ice cream sundaes.

CLAIRE

I haven't had one of these in twenty years.

ADDIE

That's why you're so skinny.

Claire senses something troubling her.

CLAIRE

What's on your mind?

Addie considers the countless replies. She goes with the honest one -

ADDIE

My dad, mostly.

Claire tightens, pushes her ice cream around.

ADDIE (CONT'D)

Back in his drinking days, he'd get loud and mean and I'd lie in bed listening to him fight with mama. On really bad nights, I'd hide under my covers and pray that God would strike him dead. Just wipe him off the face of the earth.

Addie shudders, welling up with tears.

ADDIE (CONT'D)

I was a kid. I didn't know what I was asking for.

CLAIRE

That's not how God works, honey. You didn't do that.

ADDIE

I'm still not proud of myself for it.

Claire understands too well. After a moment -

CLAIRE
Got time to take a ride?

EXT. DIRT LOT - DAY

Claire and Addie climb out of the car, their gaze on -

A burned-out ROADSIDE BAR, charred black. A half-melted sign reads "STARLITE TAVERN".

CLAIRE
See that window up there?

She points to the CORNER WINDOW of the upstairs apartment, also torched.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
That was the bedroom I shared with my mother. She'd lock me in there at night so she could go downstairs and drink until closing. Some mornings, I'd wake up and she wouldn't have come back. So, I'd pound the floor with a broomstick until the early bartender would come up and let me out.

Addie follows Claire toward the bar, fixed on her story.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Then I found New Dawn - and Seth - and I got to feel like I was above all this.

Claire peers into the charred ruin.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
I left my mother here with her Wild Turkey and her big rig drivers. I didn't even invite her to our wedding.

She stops at the stairway that leads upstairs.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
We were on our honeymoon when I got the call that this place burned. They figure she was too drunk to get out on her own. And there was no one here to help her.

Addie looks at her, their kindred connection deepening.

INT. LEWIS HOME - NIGHT

Claire enters the silent house. She passes the LIVING ROOM and jumps at the sight of -

ERIK, staring at her from the couch.

CLAIRE
What are you doing here?

He doesn't answer. Claire's panic swells. Then -

SETH (O.S.)
We're working.

Seth reveals himself, in the room with Erik.

CLAIRE
(collects herself)
I just - it's late.

SETH
We're making TV in two Sundays,
Claire.

CLAIRE
Even God took a day of rest.

SETH
It's too big a stage to fail on.

Gideon's words continue to haunt him.

SETH (CONT'D)
(back to Erik)
Read everything back, please.

Claire exchanges a look with Erik before exiting the room.

INT. BATHROOM - LEWIS HOME - NIGHT

Claire zips her MAKEUP BAG closed, drops it into a drawer -

ERIK (O.S.)
Claire.

Erik stands in the doorway, wild-eyed.

CLAIRE
(shaken)
You can't be up here -

ERIK
He took a phone call.

He enters the room with her, pushes the door closed.

CLAIRE
Erik -

ERIK
I feel like I'm drowning.

CLAIRE
Go back downstairs. Please.

ERIK
What if there's some trace of us on
that body? During the fight - did
he scratch you?

CLAIRE
No, I don't think so.

ERIK
No, or you don't think so? Which is
it?

CLAIRE
No, he didn't. Let's talk about
this tomorrow -

ERIK
Have you seen her again?

CLAIRE
(holds his stare)
No.

She touches him.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
You need to get some sleep.

Then, from the other side of the door -

SETH (O.S.)
Hey, Claire?

Claire and Erik freeze.

CLAIRE

Uh-huh?

SETH (O.S.)

Have you seen Erik?

CLAIRE

I heard the backdoor open. You might check by the pool.

They hear Seth GRUMBLE, shuffle away.

Claire inches the door open, peers out. Turns back to Erik.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Please go.

INT. BEDROOM - BROOKS HOME - NIGHT

Addie sleeps in the chill of the new AC unit. Then -

The sounds of a LOUD ENGINE and DRUNK VOICES wake her. She squints out the window to see -

Kyle stumbling out of a friend's truck.

Addie braces herself as she hears him enter the house.

The bedroom door opens. Kyle stands silhouetted against the hallway light.

KYLE

Got any news for me, darlin'?

ADDIE

I was sleepin'.

KYLE

You talk to her?

(no response)

Ads.

She rolls over, faces the wall.

KYLE (CONT'D)

(realizes)

I see.

ADDIE

I have work tomorrow.

KYLE

(a laugh)

You think she's your friend. Christ almighty. Tell me why she'd want to be friends with a hillbilly halfwit like you?

When she doesn't answer, he kicks the mattress.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Huh?

Addie's simmer goes full boil. She sits up.

ADDIE

If you want money so bad, why don't you get a job?

KYLE

The fuckin' mouth on you -

ADDIE

But why do that if you can just loaf around my daddy's house for free -

KYLE LUNGES at her. She scampers away from him.

ADDIE (CONT'D)

Don't touch me!

But he catches her. She swings wildly to fight him off.

He BACKHANDS HER across the face, then THROWS HER to the floor. She slams into her childhood dresser. Old photos and keepsakes rain down on her.

KYLE

Still feelin' superior?

He staggers out as Addie sobs in a heap on the floor.

SETH AND CLAIRE,

staring directly at us.

SETH

As the book of Psalms says, "Shout for joy to the Lord, all the Earth.

(MORE)

SETH (CONT'D)

Worship him with gladness and come before him with joyful songs." And y'know what, we can't think of a better way to describe the mission of our ministry -

LIZ (O.S.)

I'm sorry, Seth. Can I stop you?

We're here -

EXT. COURTYARD - NEW DAWN CHURCH - MORNING

It's a VIDEO SHOOT. Media Director Liz monitors from behind the CAMERA CREW. Seth and Claire stand together.

LIZ

Claire, could I get you to look at Seth while he's talking? Not the whole time, just occasionally. When it feels right.

CLAIRE

Why am I looking at him?

LIZ

To punctuate what he's saying. Like he's an authority we should be listening to.

CLAIRE

Okay, but Liz, is it weird that I'm not saying anything?

LIZ

Just standing there supporting your husband says it all.

CLAIRE

(bristles)
Right.

LIZ

Great, let's take it from the top of Atlanta.

Seth and Claire reset. Big smiles.

SETH

Hello to all our friends in the Atlanta area. Claire and I are so excited to share New Dawn's message with you today.

As Seth talks, Claire looks at him. As directed.

SETH (CONT'D)

As the book of Psalms says, "Shout for joy to the Lord, all the Earth. Worship him with gladness and come before him with joyful songs." And y'know what -

The DING of a cell phone text alert. It came from Claire.

CLAIRE

I'm sorry. Let me just -

Claire fishes the phone from her pocket. Seth watches her, struggling to mask his irritation.

Claire's face falls as she reads the text.

SETH

Are we ready?

CLAIRE

I have to - I'm sorry, everybody.

Claire wanders from her mark.

SETH

(losing patience)

What are you doing, sweetie?

CLAIRE

I - have to go.

SETH

What?

Claire hurries off.

SETH (CONT'D)

Claire.

But she's gone.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - DAY

An anxious Claire waits. Through the GIFT SHOP WINDOW, she locks eyes with a cute PLUSH KITTEN holding a sign that reads, "This Too Shall Pass." Then -

Addie and an OB-GYN DOC (female, 40s) enter. Claire stands to meet them.

DOCTOR

The baby's fine. But I told
Adelaine that if she feels any
sharp pains in the next few days,
she needs to come in immediately.

CLAIRE

Alright.

The doctor notes the unmistakable SWELLING on Addie's face.

DOCTOR

Get some ice on that bruise.
(knowing)
And do what you can to avoid -
further mishaps.

She tosses a glance to Claire who nods her understanding.

CLAIRE

Thank you for squeezing us in,
Gail.

DOCTOR

Of course. See you Sunday morning.

The doctor exits, leaving Claire and Addie in silence.

INT. LEWIS HOME - DAY

Claire leads Addie through the house.

CLAIRE

I don't want you climbing too many
stairs, so I'm putting you down
here.

ADDIE

This is the nicest home I've ever
been in.

CLAIRE

(stops, looks around)
Yeah, me too.
(continues the tour)
You'll have your own bathroom, all
the privacy you need -

Addie's cell RINGS. She checks the caller ID.

ADDIE

It's him.

CLAIRE

Probably wondering where his meal ticket ran off to. Want me to answer it?

ADDIE

Would you?

She hands over the phone, Claire answers it.

CLAIRE

Kyle, I hope you're sober enough to get all this, because I'm only saying it once -

CROSSCUT WITH:

INT. BROOKS HOME - SAME

Kyle, on the phone.

KYLE

Who's this?

CLAIRE

It's Claire Lewis. Addie's blocking your number, so don't bother calling again.

KYLE

Now hold on -

CLAIRE

She's done talking to you. She's done taking care of you. She's done being afraid of you.

KYLE

Just put her on the goddamn phone.

CLAIRE

And you're done giving orders, asshole.

Claire hangs up with authority, hands the phone back.

A stunned Addie looks at her, then lets out an involuntary laugh. The first time we've seen her truly joyful.

INT. BEDROOM - LEWIS HOME - NIGHT

Claire is in bed. Seth enters, finally home from the office.

SETH

Why is there a pregnant girl
scrubbing down our kitchen?

Claire climbs out of bed, throws a robe on.

CLAIRE

Her name's Addie. She's a new
member who just lost her father.
I'm letting her stay here until
things quiet down for her.

(heads for the door)

And I told that girl to stay off
her feet.

Seth stops her, a million questions.

SETH

And how old is she?

CLAIRE

(convincing)

Eighteen.

SETH

So, old enough to get her own
place?

CLAIRE

She'll stay out of your way.

SETH

Is Addie the reason we had to
cancel the shoot this morning?

CLAIRE

I'm sorry. I'll call Liz to
reschedule.

Seth moves around the room, in constant motion, changing into
work-out clothes.

SETH

You don't understand what I'm
dealing with, do you?

CLAIRE

I understand better than anyone -

SETH

I bet everything on this broadcast
deal. And if we lose, we lose big.
We're selling apple pies in the
park to keep the church lights on.

He stands in front of her.

SETH (CONT'D)

But you clearly want my attention,
so here it is. Go ahead. What am I
being punished for?

CLAIRE

No one's punishing you, Seth.

SETH

It's not because I wouldn't see
that marriage coach?

CLAIRE

No.

SETH

Then what is it? What's been going
on with you?

Claire tries to put words together. Then she sees -
Addie, in the doorway.

CLAIRE

Hey, hon. Do you need something?

ADDIE

Just saying goodnight. And thank
you both.

CLAIRE

Goodnight, Addie.

SETH

'Night.

Addie moves off. Seth's attention is back on Claire.

SETH (CONT'D)

If you need someone to take care of
so badly, why don't you see that
fertility doctor and find out why
we don't have a baby?

He turns, out the door.

EXT. LEWIS HOME - NIGHT

A VAN rattles past Claire and Seth's mansion -

IN THE VAN

Kyle is behind the wheel, scoping out the property.

Spite rising up in him. As Seth's words fade in...

SETH (V.O.)

What are you hiding? What's that dark little secret you'd never want the person sitting next to you to know? Something you did, something you desire.

EXT. NEW DAWN CHURCH - SUNDAY MORNING

It's early in the day, but the heat is already unbearable. Churchgoers file into the cool comfort of the Worship Center.

SETH (V.O.)

It may be buried so deeply, it's not even known to you anymore. But it's known to God.

INT. WORSHIP CENTER - DAY

Seth glides across the stage, preaching his weekly message. Claire seated behind him.

SETH

As Hebrews 4:13 tells us, "There is nothing in all of creation that's hidden from God's sight." To many, that's a terrifying thought.

Claire scans the crowd and finds ADDIE. She's attentive, hanging on Seth's words.

Claire's attention turns to A FIGURE moving through the crowd, finding a seat -

It's KYLE.

SETH (CONT'D)

But not to us. We know that he looks past our hidden sins and sees the potential for his work in our hearts.

Claire squirms at the sight of Kyle.

INT. WORSHIP CENTER - LATER

The band hits their final chord. The service is over. Worshipers shuffle to the exits.

Seth holds out a hand to lead Claire off, but SHE'S WATCHING - KYLE moving through the crowd TOWARD ADDIE.

In a burst of resolve, Claire climbs offstage into -

THE CROWD

Claire weaves around worshipers, focused on getting to Addie before Kyle does.

CLAIRE
Excuse me - sorry.

But Kyle is closing in.

Claire is almost to Addie when an eager CHURCHGOER stops her.

CHURCHGOER
Such a beautiful service, Mrs. Lewis. Y'know, we drove all the way up from Ada this morning -

CLAIRE
I'm so glad you enjoyed it. Excuse me -

She sidesteps him, just as -

Kyle gets to Addie first.

KYLE
Ads.

A startled Addie turns, backs away.

ADDIE
What are you doing?

KYLE
I came to find out why you turned the power off on me?

ADDIE
'Cause I want you out of my house.

KYLE
 That ain't very Christian of you.
 (reaches for her)
 C'mon, let's go home.

ADDIE
 No.

KYLE
 You made your point, alright? I'm
 sorry. Now let's go.

CLAIRE ARRIVES, grabs Addie's hand.

CLAIRE
 This way, Addie.

KYLE
 Look, it's your guardian angel.

Claire drags Addie away from Kyle.

KYLE (CONT'D)
 Really? She can't even talk to me?

Kyle goes after them.

ON STAGE

Seth notices the commotion, his wife at the center of it.

IN THE CROWD

Claire and Addie push through the worshipers.

Kyle follows faster, his anger focused.

KYLE
 Get back here, Addie!

Claire sees BEN near the stage.

CLAIRE
 Ben?

He peers through the crowd, sees the urgency on Claire's
 face, sees Kyle -

KYLE
 I got the goddamn right to speak to
 my baby's mother!

Ben waves Claire toward him -

BEN
Over here.
(into his radio)
I need back-up, stage left.

Kyle knocks a churchgoer to the ground.

He's only a few feet from them, when -

Claire and Addie arrive at Ben. He whisks them through a curtain, into a STAFF ROOM.

Kyle tries to follow, but Ben stands in his path.

BEN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, but you're not allowed
back there.

KYLE
Outta the way, big boy.

BEN
The service is over. It's time to
leave.

Another SECURITY GUARD joins Ben. Kyle sizes them up.

KYLE
Motherfucker, I've taken on sixteen
hundred pound bulls. You think I'm
scared of you two.

BEN
(done with this)
Alright, let's go.

He grabs Kyle's arm.

KYLE
Get your hands off me.

Kyle HITS BEN with a sucker punch. Bad move. In a blink -

A crazed Ben TACKLES Kyle to the ground, batters him with
ferocious PUNCHES.

Shocked onlookers scatter. The guard tries to pull Ben off.

GUARD
Ben, he's good -

But Ben is possessed, shelling Kyle with swinging fists.

GUARD (CONT'D)
He's had enough, pal.

The guard finally rips Ben off him.

A seething Ben looms over the bloody and groaning mess that is Kyle.

ON STAGE

Seth stares in disbelief at the chaos in his church.

INT. STAFF ROOM - SAME

Claire leads Addie away from the mayhem. Staff members circle them to help.

Claire shares a look with ERIK, who realizes the truth of her bond with Addie. Before he can say anything -

CLAIRE
(a whisper)
I'll try to get out tonight. I'll
explain everything.

She moves Addie past Erik, his eyes begging for answers.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - NEW DAWN CHURCH - LATER

Claire sits across from the church's inner circle - Seth, June, David, PAULA (Communications Director), a couple ATTORNEY-TYPES.

DAVID
This young lady's living in your
house.

CLAIRE
For the moment, yes.

Seth sits motionless, eyes locked on Claire, fuming.

DAVID
You know we have outreach programs
for girls like her.

CLAIRE
David, you saw what just happened.

DAVID
(still reeling)
Yes I did.

CLAIRE
A weekly counseling session won't
keep her safe from that.

Claire scans the room of judging looks.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Am I in some kind of trouble?

DAVID
No, we're just trying to
understand.
(looking for back-up)
Seth, where are you with this?

SETH
My wife knows how I feel about it.

The room sits with the tension until Paula chimes in, a
saccharine-sweet bullshitter -

PAULA
Personally, Claire, I think it's
lovely what you're doing for this
girl -

CLAIRE
Her name's Addie.

PAULA
- for Addie. But from a PR
perspective, it concerns me if word
gets out that you're letting
desperate strangers into your home.

CLAIRE
The Bible I read says we're
supposed to help desperate
strangers.

PAULA
In a reasonable way, yes.

CLAIRE
What's a reasonable way to *love thy*
neighbor, Paula?

PAULA

(heated)

I don't think you realize how visible this media launch is about to make you and Seth -

JUNE

Ladies, that's enough.

PAULA

When there's a line of vagrants outside your front gate looking for a place to sleep -

CLAIRE

A line of vagrants - really?

June SLAPS the table, barks at the room -

JUNE

I said that's enough.

The room quiets, startled by this version of June.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Everyone's made their point. My daughter-in-law's had a stressful morning and I don't want her badgered any further about this. Got it?

She stares everyone down, especially Seth.

JUNE (CONT'D)

(to Claire)

Darlin', don't ever apologize for having a generous soul. Now go enjoy your Sunday.

The final word.

INT. HALLYWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Claire exits the conference room.

A concerned Ben is there, waiting for his turn to go in. He stands to meet Claire.

BEN

If I made it all worse, I'm sorry. I don't always handle things correctly -

CLAIRE
(cuts him off)
If you hadn't been there -

When words fail, she hugs him.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Thank you.

Ben takes in her sincere gratitude.

EXT. LEWIS HOME - NIGHT

A walled-in castle. Cozy and protected.

INT. KYLE'S VAN - SAME

Parked on the street outside the Lewis Home. Kyle sits behind the wheel, his face wrecked from the Ben beating.

He lights a cigarette, violent thoughts churning. Then sees -

The ENTRY GATE slides open, Claire drives out. Kyle watches her for a moment, then -

He turns the ignition and drives after her.

INT. VAN - MOVING - LATER

Kyle follows Claire's car. He sees it pull into the OPEN GARAGE of Erik's house. The garage door closes her inside.

A perplexed Kyle parks his van.

EXT. ERIK'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Kyle stalks through the darkness outside the house, tracking the sound of VOICES.

He stops at a window where he sees CLAIRE AND ERIK arguing inside THE GARAGE.

ERIK
You told me you hadn't seen her.

CLAIRE
I'm sorry.

ERIK
So we're lying to each other now?

CLAIRE
I said that to ease your mind.

ERIK
(dark amusement)
Ease my mind.

Kyle recognizes something between them. Something to be used.

ERIK (CONT'D)
I went there last night.

CLAIRE
The cabin?

ERIK
I broke in and bleached that cellar
floor again.

He's falling apart in front of her.

CLAIRE
Erik, please don't be the arsonist
who gets caught going back -

ERIK
I'm not the one who adopted the
guy's daughter.

CLAIRE
She needs me.

ERIK
I need you!

He explodes, ripping a wall of TOOLS to the floor.

ERIK (CONT'D)
I need you to make what I did worth
it!

Erik sees he's frightened her. He softens.

ERIK (CONT'D)
Every time I close my eyes, I see
it on a loop: That first shovel of
dirt hitting his face, how it sunk
into his mouth, like an hourglass.
Like quicksand. I prayed out there
that night. Can you believe that? I
prayed he'd just cough it out, that
God would wake him up so I wouldn't
have to keep shoveling.

He breaks down. Claire moves in, holds him.

OUTSIDE - A stunned Kyle can't believe what he's hearing.

INT. ACTIVITY CENTER - NEW DAWN - DAY

The room is stacked with food and clothing donations. A team of upbeat VOLUNTEERS is filling Purpose Pack boxes.

Claire is among them, staring into space, depleted.

A RECEPTIONIST enters -

RECEPTIONIST

Excuse me. Mrs. Lewis? There's a gentleman on the phone for you.

Claire joins the receptionist.

CLAIRE

Did you get a name?

RECEPTIONIST

No, he just said he's an old friend of Ronnie Brooks.

Claire goes pale.

EXT. RODEO TRAINING PEN - DAY

Young BULLRIDERS take turns on training bulls. COACHES bark orders at them from the sidelines.

Claire and Erik search the perimeter of the dusty pen, wary strangers to this world.

A WHISTLE draws their attention. They turn to see -

KYLE, perched on the fence, watching the riders. His cowboy hat is pulled low to hide his beaten face.

Claire and Erik approach, guarded.

KYLE

You made it.

CLAIRE

Why are we here?

But Kyle's attention is on the bullriders.

KYLE

Watch this kid. Betcha he doesn't last three seconds.

ACROSS THE PEN -

A nervous YOUNG RIDER is in the chute, straddling a bull. He fidgets with his rope. Finally, he gives the nod. The gate opens and the bull LAUNCHES into the arena.

The kid is immediately THROWN OFF the animal. He lands in the dirt and manure, a crumpled heap.

KYLE (CONT'D)

See that? He ate shit 'cause he was ridin' scared.

(turns to them)

Like you two. You been ridin' scared for a couple months now.

ERIK

Are we supposed to know what you're talking about?

Kyle laughs off his predictable ignorance.

KYLE

Buddy, have you seen yourself? You look worse than I do.

Kyle hops off the fence to face them.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Y'all are being too hard on yourselves. Ronnie was no big loss. He was more fun in his drinkin' days. 'Course he loaned me forty bucks, which I don't have to pay back now, thanks to you.

CLAIRE

(poker face)

What do you want?

KYLE

To the point. Okay. I want a hundred thousand dollars.

(correction)

Minus the forty bucks. I'll let that slide.

Claire and Erik stand shocked. Claire manages a response -

CLAIRE
A hundred thousand dollars. For
what?

KYLE
To keep your secret.

CLAIRE
(sputtering)
Whatever secret you think you know -

KYLE
That cabin. It wouldn't take much
for the police to track it down.
You may have cleaned it, but they'd
find something that proves Ronnie
was there. And as ragged as you two
seem, I wouldn't expect you to last
too long under questioning.

They're stunned silent.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Everyone looks down their nose at
me until they realize who they're
dealin' with. They always end up
like you: Tongue-tied with a stupid
look on their face.

Kyle relishes his newfound power.

KYLE (CONT'D)
You have 'til Sunday to sort out
the money.

He fixes his bloodshot eyes on Claire, amused.

KYLE (CONT'D)
It looks like I'm back to givin'
orders.

ACROSS THE PEN, another terrified rider is thrown off a bull.

CLAIRE'S FACE,

staring straight at us. Tortured.

SETH (O.S.)
Hello to all our friends in the
Nashville area. Claire and I are so
happy to share New Dawn's message
with you today.

WIDER - NEW DAWN COURTYARD - DAY

Seth and Claire are re-shooting video intros. It takes everything Claire has to muster the required smile.

SETH

As the book of Psalms says, "Shout for joy to the Lord, all the Earth. Worship him with gladness and come before him with joyful songs."

Seth's voice continues under...

INT. BEDROOM - LEWIS HOME - NIGHT

Seth is on top of Claire, trying to impregnate her.

SETH (V.O.)

And y'know what, we can't think of a better way to describe the mission of our ministry...

Claire is lost in her head, worried thoughts swirling.

INT. WORSHIP CENTER - NEW DAWN - DAY

Final prep is underway for the broadcast taping:

Technicians hang new lights, lay cable, set up cameras.

A CONTROL ROOM is completed, an imposing wall of monitors.

EXT. LOADING DOCK - NEW DAWN - DAY

Claire and Ben smoke, hidden from sight. They watch as TV PRODUCTION GEAR is wheeled into the church.

A gloom hangs over both of them.

CLAIRE

Do you ever wonder if you're good enough for this place?

BEN

I don't have to wonder. I've known the answer a long time.

They sit in silence, inhaling smoke.

INT. ERIK'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Parked on a service road. A FREEWAY OVERPASS roars above it.

Erik sits behind the wheel, Claire next to him.

ERIK
We'll leave tonight.

CLAIRE
And go where?

ERIK
South. I want to show you that
Mayan carving, the one with your
hands. After that, we'll make our
way down to Panama.

She looks at him, a man grasping for straws.

CLAIRE
(incredulous)
Panama?

ERIK
People can disappear in a place
like that.

The HEADLIGHTS of an oncoming car approach. Claire lies
across the seat to hide. Erik instinctively puts a hand on
her - it stirs a memory for both.

ERIK (CONT'D)
We either run away together or get
locked up apart.

CLAIRE
Those aren't the only options.

ERIK
Seth controls your money. And even
if you had a hundred grand to give
this kid, what's to stop him from
asking for more?

The car passes, Claire sits up.

CLAIRE
If you have to go, I understand.
But I can't disappear on Addie.
She'd end up back with Kyle,
trapped in that house with no way
out.

She grabs Erik's hand, reassuring.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

We're in this because of me. And I'm deeply sorry for that. But I'm going to take care of us. I'm going to figure something out.

ERIK

That's what I said and look where we are.

But Claire has made a choice.

EXT. BROOKS HOME - DAY

Kyle is working on his van. He looks up from the engine block to see CLAIRE'S MERCEDES parking in the yard.

Claire steps out and approaches with a BAG under her arm.

KYLE

Got my money?

CLAIRE

I need you to promise something first.

KYLE

Oh, you're making demands.

CLAIRE

Once you have it, you vanish from Addie's life. You never speak to her again. She learns nothing about any of this. If you can do that, I can promise you at least two hundred thousand dollars.

KYLE

Two hundred?

Kyle tries his best to play it cool, unsuccessfully. Pretends to think it over.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Okay, sure, I can agree to that.

CLAIRE

Yeah, I thought you could.

Claire tosses the bag to Kyle. He reaches in and pulls out -

A New Dawn HAT and HOODIE.

KYLE
What's this?

CLAIRE
The routine is always the same: New Dawn's cash donations from the week are counted on Thursday mornings. That's five services worth of cash.

She continues under...

INT. SETH'S OFFICE - DAY

The accounting clerk loads blocks of cash into Seth's safe.

CLAIRE (V.O.)
Once it's tallied, it's brought to my husband's office and placed in a cube safe - the same safe his father bought when he started the church.

INT. SETH'S OFFICE - DAY

The cash is strewn across Seth's desk.

CLAIRE (V.O.)
After Seth recounts the cash, he prays a blessing over it.

Seth holds a hand over the money, says a silent prayer.

INT. SETH'S OFFICE - DAY

Seth stacks the cash into the safe.

CLAIRE (V.O.)
Then he locks the money back up until the next morning when an armored car comes for it.

Seth shuts the safe door.

EXT. BROOKS HOME - PRESENT

Kyle interrupts -

KYLE
Why you telling me this?

CLAIRE
They never bothered bolting that safe to the floor. I guess they figured God had his eye on it. But you're going to walk out of New Dawn with it tomorrow night.
(off Kyle's stunned look)
I've scheduled a big load-out. If you do as I say, you'll blend right in as just another volunteer.

KYLE
You want me to rob your husband's church.

CLAIRE
I want you to stay quiet when this is over. This guarantees it.

KYLE
Sounds like I'm taking all the risk here.

CLAIRE
Two hundred thousand. Minimum.

It's hard for Kyle to argue with that number.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
But like I said, you're gone from Addie's life.

Kyle picks up the hat, considers the New Dawn logo on it.

EXT. NEW DAWN CHURCH - TWILIGHT

Pastel-pink clouds move across the darkening sky, drained of color with each passing second.

EXT. FLOWER GARDEN - LEWIS HOME - TWILIGHT

Claire is weeding, desperate to keep her mind occupied. Then she sees -

A JACKRABBIT gnawing a nearby vine of flowers. The little bandit stares back at Claire, daring her to chase it off.

But she just watches the animal devour its dinner.

INT. LOADING DOCK - NEW DAWN - NIGHT

A team of church VOLUNTEERS loads boxes of Purpose Packs onto a moving truck.

INT. KYLE'S VAN - NIGHT

Kyle is parked at New Dawn, his narrowed eyes watch the LOADING DOCK. He wears the hat and hoodie, a fresh shave.

He dashes a bump of crushed SPEED onto his hand, snorts it.

Now ready, he pulls a HANDGUN from beneath the seat, tucks it into his pants.

INT. LOADING DOCK - NIGHT

Kyle enters, pushing a two-wheeled dolly. It's a madhouse of activity in here.

He's spotted by the VOLUNTEER CAPTAIN -

CAPTAIN
Hey, buddy.

Kyle stops, ready to fight or flee.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
Thanks for coming. Just head into the Activity Center and they'll get you loaded up.

Kyle nods and moves off.

INT. ACTIVITY CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

Kyle now wheels a large Purpose Pack box on his dolly.

He pulls his hood up to hide his face just before passing under the SURVEILLANCE CAMERA Claire warned him about.

He opens an unmarked door into a MAINTENANCE HALLWAY.

INT. KITCHEN - LEWIS HOME - NIGHT

Claire enters to find Addie frozen, standing at the sink.

ADDIE
(a whisper)
Claire. C'mere.

Claire joins her.

ADDIE (CONT'D)
He's kicking up a storm tonight.

Addie takes Claire's hand, places it on her belly. After a moment, Claire beams. She felt it.

The sublime moment is broken by -

SETH (O.S.)
Hey, Claire?

He calls out from across the house.

SETH (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Can I talk to you?

INT. SETH'S OFFICE - NEW DAWN - NIGHT

Kyle enters the dark room through a SIDE DOOR. He clicks on a flashlight, searching, until he finds -

THE SAFE

He dumps out the Purpose Pack contents, then slides the empty box over the safe. A perfect fit.

He wedges his dolly under the box/safe. He's about to wheel it out the door when -

His flashlight reflects against something. The gold FLAME SCULPTURE, mounted to the wall.

Kyle ogles the sculpture. It looks really fucking valuable.

INT. SETH'S STUDY - LEWIS HOME - NIGHT

Claire walks in. Seth sits behind his desk.

SETH
Close the door, please.

She closes it.

CLAIRE
What's going on?

SETH
Sit down.

She does as she's told, growing concern.

SETH (CONT'D)
Do you have anything to confess?

CLAIRE
(*where to start?*)
No.

SETH
Nothing at all?

CLAIRE
What's this about?

He holds up Claire's MAKEUP BAG, the one seen earlier.
Claire's stomach drops.

Seth keeps his eyes on her as he unzips it, pulls out a PACK OF PILLS.

SETH
Why do you have birth control pills?

She tries to speak, but nothing comes.

INT. SETH'S OFFICE - NEW DAWN - NIGHT

Kyle pulls the sculpture from the wall. It falls to the floor with a CLANG. The sound wakes up -

THE MAN that's been asleep on the visitor couch. He sits up, a ghostly shadow.

Kyle is unaware of him, until -

GIDEON
I'm sorry, did we have an appointment?

Kyle practically leaps out of his skin.

KYLE
Jesus -

He instinctively pulls his gun, aims at Gideon.

GIDEON
It seems I nodded off.

Then Gideon grows aware - the gun, the sculpture...

GIDEON (CONT'D)
 Young man, what are you doing in
 here?

Time to go. Kyle abandons the sculpture. Grabs the dolly and heads for the side door.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
 (standing)
 Fella, I asked you a question.

The FRONT DOOR opens and a SECURITY GUARD looks in -

GUARD
 Did you call for me, Mr. Lewis?

The guard notices Kyle. Shit.

Kyle FIRES A SHOT at him. The round shreds the drywall next to the guard's head.

Kyle breaks for the exit. The guard calls for help -

GUARD (CONT'D)
 (into his radio)
 We've got an intruder on two. He's
 armed and heading down the south
 maintenance hall.

INT. SECURITY OFFICE - NEW DAWN - SAME

Ben hears the distress call. Springs to his feet.

INT. SETH'S STUDY - LEWIS HOME - NIGHT

Seth's eyes bore into Claire, the pills clenched in his fist.

SETH
 How long?

CLAIRE
 (barely audible)
 About a year.

Seth does the math.

SETH
 So, since we started trying. Or
 since I started trying.

CLAIRE

It was temporary, just until we could fix us.

SETH

Deceiving me out of a family. That was your solution for fixing our marriage.

CLAIRE

My solution was for us to get help.

SETH

We don't need help. We have prayer.

He stands, paces the room.

SETH (CONT'D)

What else are you hiding from me?

CLAIRE

Nothing.

INT. MAINTENANCE HALLWAY - NEW DAWN - NIGHT

Kyle wheels the safe as fast as he can. He throws open a door and exits into -

THE LOADING DOCK,

where volunteers continue to fill the truck. Kyle blends in with the others, all wheeling Purpose Packs.

Ben rounds a corner, ARMED with his own gun. Frantic, he searches the group. Finally, HE SEES -

Kyle peels off from the group and heads for the exit.

BEN

Stop!

Kyle turns and FIRES AT BEN.

Volunteers scream and scatter as Ben takes cover. He aims, FIRES BACK at Kyle.

Kyle HOWLS as one of the shots tears into HIS HAND.

He ducks out the exit and into -

THE PARKING LOT,

pulling the safe behind him. A desperate escape.

INT. SETH'S STUDY - LEWIS HOME - NIGHT

Seth is a thundercloud ready to rip open.

SETH

I don't know why I'm surprised. I married the daughter of a roadhouse whore.

He looms over Claire, eyes damp with rage.

SETH (CONT'D)

You should be grateful I'd even consider letting you have my children.

CLAIRE

I may not be the saint your mother is -

SETH

That's for damn sure.

CLAIRE

- but you're fast becoming your father.

SETH

(boiling)
Don't talk about him.

She levels him a sympathetic look.

CLAIRE

And I'm sorry, but turning into the man won't make him love you more.

Too far. With a VIOLENT SWIPE, Seth clears the surface of his desk. Framed photos shatter, his laptop crashes to the floor.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NEW DAWN - NIGHT

Kyle yanks open the van. His hand pours blood as he struggles to hoist the safe inside.

Ben exits the building. Kyle turns and FIRES his remaining rounds at him.

Ben falls back behind a dumpster, RETURNS FIRE, exploding the van's rear window.

Kyle heaves the safe into the back. Slams the door shut.

IN THE VAN

Kyle climbs into the driver's seat. He floors it, speeds away as BEN FIRES SHOTS.

Out of range, Kyle pulls off the hood and hat. Gasping for breath, sweat-drenched.

At the sight of his bloody hand, he loses all toughness, scream-cries like a child.

INT. SETH'S STUDY - LEWIS HOME - NIGHT

Claire cowers while Seth TRASHES THE ROOM. He attacks a bookshelf, sends antique books flying.

The door opens. IT'S ADDIE, terrified and small. Claire rushes to her.

CLAIRE

It's okay. Come on.

Claire whisks Addie out of the room.

Seth collects himself, surveys the wreckage. Then -

His cell phone RINGS. From somewhere. He digs it out from under a pile of rubble, answers it -

SETH

Yes?

(after a beat)

Wait, slow down -

INT. NEW DAWN CHURCH - VARIOUS - NIGHT

The church is a CRIME SCENE.

A dazed Claire drifts through it, taking in the chaos she set in motion:

- POLICE OFFICERS take statements from witnesses, collect the scattered bullet casings.

- June and Mario try to calm an agitated Gideon.

- Frightened volunteers console each other.

INT. EXECUTIVE WING - NEW DAWN - NIGHT

Seth stares into his office. Off limits. The police are inside, dusting for fingerprints.

Ben stands next to Seth, a beaten dog look.

BEN

I'm sorry.

SETH

For what, Ben? Letting someone cart the family safe out the door? Or turning the church into a war zone?

BEN

All of it. Everything.

Seth watches the investigators dismantle his office.

SETH

Why was Dad here?

BEN

On bad nights, I bring him by to calm his nerves.

SETH

And why are you here?

BEN

What do you mean - ?

SETH

Back home. In our lives.

BEN

Mom asked me to come.

SETH

I told her you couldn't handle this, but she begged me. She said you're a changed man. And she's not wrong. You're somehow dumber and more dangerous than the day you left.

His words open an old wound.

BEN

You sound just like him.

SETH

Well, I'm starting to understand why he had to be such a bastard.

Claire joins them, lays a comforting hand on Ben's shoulder. He composes himself, quick to wipe a tear.

CLAIRE

Can I get you anything? Water, a coffee?

BEN

I'm alright, thank you.

SETH

(aimed at Claire)

People I can trust are in short supply right now, Ben. I'd like to be able to trust my brother.

Claire exchanges a look with Seth. She moves off.

BEN

Tell me what I can do.

Ben forces eye contact with Seth, years of unspoken history.

BEN (CONT'D)

There are things I've done that I'm never going to make right -

SETH

Keep your voice down.

BEN

- but let me try with this one. Whatever you need.

Seth considers the offer.

SETH

I need you to keep an eye on everyone.

(pointed)

Everyone.

Ben follows Seth's gaze to Claire. It's an unexpected order, but one Ben dares not question.

ACROSS THE ROOM -

Claire watches the aftermath, never more alone.

JUNE (O.S.)

Claire.

June approaches, full of tender concern.

JUNE (CONT'D)

How you holding up?

Claire can't answer. A single word would break the dam.

JUNE (CONT'D)

I know.

June wraps a comforting arm around Claire.

JUNE (CONT'D)

There are people out there that mean us harm. It's never easy being reminded of that. But God's got it, honey. His plan always prevails.

Claire lets herself rest in June's embrace.

REPORTER (PRE-LAP)

Directly behind me is the sight of the robbery-turned-shootout that took place just after nine o'clock Thursday night.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NEW DAWN - DAY

NEWS CREWS broadcast from the scene. A REPORTER to camera -

REPORTER

According to police, multiple shots were exchanged between the intruder and New Dawn security. At this point, no suspect has been named and church officials have said very little about the incident -

INT. WORSHIP CENTER - DAY

The full NEW DAWN STAFF is gathered.

David addresses the group, Seth and Claire by his side.

DAVID

No one gives interviews. If a news outlet contacts you, please direct them to Paula's office. Is that clear?

Nods from the group.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I know the police have talked to a number of you already. We want you to tell them anything that might help their investigation.

SETH

David?

DAVID

(gives him the floor)
Go ahead.

Seth steps forward, examines his team.

SETH

Make no mistake, people. This was the work of The Enemy.

The preacher in him emerges -

SETH (CONT'D)

The devil knows that tomorrow is tape day and he's bound and determined to keep our message from being heard. But we have the most holy god on our side, don't we? And our god will not be silenced.

Inspired "amens" go up from the group.

SETH (CONT'D)

The man who took from us will be caught and punished, along with anyone affiliated with him.

Seth's eyes sweep over the crowd, hunting for a Judas.

SETH (CONT'D)

I will not turn the other cheek on this one.

Claire stands rigid next to him, twisting her ring.

SETH (CONT'D)

(back to business)
Today's our last chance to get tomorrow right. Full camera run-through starts in thirty minutes. I need my message team. Where are you, Erik?

No answer.

 SETH (CONT'D)
Has anyone seen Erik Ray?

 DAVID
Not in a couple days.

Seth goes dark, shoots Ben a look. A silent command.

EXT. PORCH - LEWIS HOME - NIGHT

Claire lies on the porch swing, adrift.

The only sound is the distant DRUMBEAT of a basketball...

EXT. BACKYARD BASKETBALL COURT - SAME

Seth shoots hoops. Clearing his head.

His cell phone RINGS. He answers it -

 SETH
Yes?

EXT. PORCH - SAME

Claire strains to hear Seth's muffled conversation.

After a moment, she hears him enter the house with a SLAM.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Claire walks in to find Seth digging through his wallet.

 CLAIRE
What's going on?

 SETH
David called. The police named
their suspect. Kyle Coleman, the
boyfriend of our houseguest.

Seth finds what he's looking for - a police department
business card.

 SETH (CONT'D)
It's a helluva con, actually. She
gets a gullible sap like you to
take her in.

 (MORE)

SETH (CONT'D)

Once she finds the money, she sends
in Billy the Kid to haul it away.

Seth dials his cell.

CLAIRE

Addie had nothing to do with it.

SETH

(into phone)

Detective Hailey. It's Seth Lewis.
There's an intruder in my house I
believe you'll want to talk to.

CLAIRE

Seth -

SETH

7612 South Fifth. Country Club
Estates.

Claire watches, conflicted. Then, rushes out of the room.

EXT. RANSOM - NIGHT

CLAIRE'S CAR weaves down residential streets.

IN THE CAR

Claire drives, a distressed Addie next to her.

ADDIE

I wasn't part of it, Claire. I
promise.

CLAIRE

I know.

Claire keeps her eyes on the rearview mirror.

ADDIE

I didn't mean to mess things up
with you and Seth.

Claire pats her hand.

CLAIRE

That mess was made long before you
came along.

Claire pulls up to -

ERIK'S HOUSE

She notices a light on inside.

INT. ERIK'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

A KNOCK on the front door. Erik opens, eyes widen at the sight of Claire on his porch.

CLAIRE

I thought you may have left -

Erik tries to pull the door closed, but she won't let him.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Erik. I know I don't have the right to ask you for anything -

ERIK

You shouldn't be here.

CLAIRE

Please. I need a place for Addie, just for tonight.

ERIK

(through gritted teeth)
Go away.

There's venom in his voice like she's never heard before. She backs away.

Erik shuts the door on her.

BEN (O.S.)

What did she want?

Erik turns to BEN, who glares at him from across the room.

ERIK

Couldn't tell you.

Ben looks out the window, watches Claire climb into her car. He moves past Erik, who tries to slow him -

ERIK (CONT'D)

Hold on a minute.

But he's out the door, after Claire.

EXT. PARISH HOUSE - SAINT MARY MAGDALENE'S - NIGHT

A tiny cottage next to the church, the priest's residence.

INT. KITCHEN - PARISH HOUSE - SAME

Perez washes his dinner dishes, a baseball game on the radio.

He looks out the window to see -

CLAIRE'S CAR, pulling into the empty church parking lot.

INT. BEDROOM - PARISH HOUSE - NIGHT

Addie sits on Perez's twin bed. Claire is across the room, finishing a phone call -

CLAIRE
(on the phone)
Yes, thank you for your help.

She ends the call, turns to Addie.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
We'll be on a flight to Juneau by
nine a.m.

ADDIE
You'll miss your TV taping.

CLAIRE
It's not my taping. I'm just window
dressing.

Claire senses a reluctance in Addie.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
You alright?
(off Addie's shrug)
Hey.

ADDIE
You don't think I should reach out
to the police? I'm sure I could
help 'em find where Kyle's hiding
out.

After a moment of calculation -

CLAIRE
They'll haul you in if they think
you're involved.

ADDIE

But I wasn't.

CLAIRE

It doesn't matter. To them, you're a Brooks Crook - and that makes you guilty of something.

It kills Claire to manipulate her like this, but -

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

You could do the responsible thing and tell them what you know. Or you could get your son away from this place before he's branded with the same iron.

A troubling thought. It's enough to convince Addie.

EXT. SAINT MARY MAGDALENE'S - NIGHT

Father Perez sweeps the church's front steps. Claire wanders over, sits on the step.

CLAIRE

Thank you for this, father.

FATHER PEREZ

What kind of innkeeper would I be if I turned away an expecting young mother?

(nothing)

A Christmas joke.

Claire appreciates his effort to lighten the mood.

FATHER PEREZ (CONT'D)

That girl. It's her absolution you're after?

Claire doesn't have to answer. It's obvious.

FATHER PEREZ (CONT'D)

But she doesn't know.

Claire shakes her head - *no*.

CLAIRE

I wouldn't even know what to say.

FATHER PEREZ

Getting God's forgiveness is easy. Another person's?

(MORE)

FATHER PEREZ (CONT'D)
I'm afraid I don't have the magic words for that.

He finishes his sweeping.

FATHER PEREZ (CONT'D)
There's a cheap bottle of scotch above the stove. Help yourself.

CLAIRE
Where will you sleep tonight?

He cocks his head toward the church.

FATHER PEREZ
Those old pews aren't as uncomfortable as they look. Good night, Claire.

CLAIRE
'Night.

He opens the church's front door, disappears inside.

INT. BEDROOM - PARISH HOUSE - NIGHT

Addie watches THE NEWS on Perez's outdated TV.

NEWS ANCHOR
The Ransom P.D. has named a suspect in the burglary shoot-out at New Dawn Church. Twenty-year-old Kyle Coleman remains at large this evening.

An OLD MUGSHOT of Kyle appears on the screen.

Addie seethes at the sight of him.

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)
According to authorities, Mr. Coleman was wounded during the incident. He's considered armed and dangerous and anyone who comes into contact with him should proceed with caution -

A furious Addie grabs her cell phone, scrolls to "KYLE"...

EXT. SAINT MARY MAGDALENE'S - NIGHT

Claire sits alone on the church steps, listens to the summer night. A rare moment of peace.

As a truck rumbles past the church, its headlights reveal -

A PARKED CAR on the road. Silent and suspicious.

Claire stands, moves cautiously toward the car. As she nears it, the door opens and -

Ben steps out. He marches toward Claire. Not relishing this.

CLAIRE

What are you doing here, Ben?

BEN

There's something you need to know about me -

CLAIRE

Why did you follow us?

BEN

There's no time. Please just listen.

Claire yields to his urgency.

BEN (CONT'D)

The day I turned eighteen, I was driving my dad's old Buick. I was drunk and I took a corner too fast.

He's trying to get it out before he loses his nerve -

BEN (CONT'D)

There was a boy on his bike. Ten-year-old kid, riding home from Little League. I didn't know what to do.

(sickened by the memory)

So I left him there. I just drove away.

(off her look)

I told you I don't always handle things correctly.

CLAIRE

People make bad decisions when they're scared.

BEN

When I told my father, he said he wasn't going to let my wickedness ruin what he was building. So he had the car stripped down - and had me sent off to boot camp. He got to build his church and I got to keep my life - for whatever that's worth.

CLAIRE

Oh Ben -

BEN

I owe a heavy debt to my father and his ministry. And that comes with certain obligations.

A CAR rolls into the lot. Claire recognizes it as -

SETH'S JAGUAR

Claire looks at Ben, betrayed.

BEN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

Seth steps out of the car.

SETH

Come on, Claire. It's time to go home.

(off her hesitation)

Help me get through tomorrow. You owe me that.

CLAIRE

I'm not fit to be up there with you. I don't deserve it.

Seth fights to keep his cool.

SETH

You're my wife. You made a pledge. What's it look like if you walk out on me?

CLAIRE

It looks like we're a struggling couple.

SETH

We don't get to be a struggling couple.

(MORE)

SETH (CONT'D)
 (out of patience)
 I'm done with this. Let's go.

He reaches to grab her, she pulls away.

CLAIRE
 No.

Seth hardly recognizes his wife. He looks around, notices the parish house.

SETH
 Where's the little thief? She in there?

He heads toward the house. Claire goes after him. Ben follows, unsure of his role here.

CLAIRE
 Leave her alone.

SETH
 (yelling out)
 Hey, Addie!

Claire beats Seth to the door, blocks his entry.

CLAIRE
 Seth. Please. Just go away.

A shadow fills the screen door behind her. It's Addie.

SETH
 Where's my church's money, Addie?

A catatonic Addie doesn't seem to hear him.

ADDIE
 Claire - ?

CLAIRE
 Addie, stay inside. Lock the door.

But she doesn't move. Eggshell fragile, she stares at Claire through the screen.

ADDIE
 Did you do it?

CLAIRE
 What - ?

ADDIE
 You and Erik. Did you kill my dad?

For Claire, time seems to stop.

SETH
What is she talking about?

Claire's entire focus is on Addie.

CLAIRE
Where did you hear this?

ADDIE
Kyle. And he said you helped him
steal that money.

Seth and Ben can't believe what they're hearing.

CLAIRE
(floundering)
This is - no. Kyle is a liar. You
know that -

ADDIE
I can tell when he's lying. This
was different.

SETH
What is going on?

Claire turns to Seth -

CLAIRE
Will you give me a minute with her?

ADDIE
Is it true?

Claire's silence, her lack of denial is thunderous.

Horrified, Addie bolts toward the bedroom.

CLAIRE
Addie.

Claire throws open the door, runs into -

THE PARISH HOUSE

Seth follows her inside.

Claire rushes to the closed bedroom door. She tries the knob,
locked. She pleads through the door -

CLAIRE
Sweetie, please.

ADDIE (O.S.)
What was all this? What were you
doing with me?

CLAIRE
Open the door. Let me explain.

At the sound of Addie's SOBS, Claire falls apart. She can only whisper to a closed door -

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I'm sorry...

Claire hears shuffling from inside, a window sliding open.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Addie?

No answer. She's gone.

Claire turns and flies past Seth, still trying to digest everything he just heard.

EXT. PARISH HOUSE - NIGHT

Claire sprints out of the house, sees -

Addie, running toward the highway. Claire goes after her.

CLAIRE
Addie!

Addie heads for oncoming HEADLIGHTS of a truck, arms waving.

Claire pursues - but not fast enough.

The TRUCK slows to a stop. Addie climbs in.

Claire watches the truck drive Addie away, taillights disappear down the highway.

Ben arrives. Grabs Claire by the arm, pulls her away.

BEN
You're going home.

INT. SETH'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Seth drives, but he's not here. A lost man, reeling from a punishment he can't comprehend.

Claire rides next to him. Broken, beyond apology.

Neither says a word.

INT. READING ROOM - JUNE & GIDEON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

June sits stoic in a nightgown. Seth lies next to her, head in her lap, BAWLING like a child. She strokes his hair.

Gideon shuffles into the room.

GIDEON
What's all this?

JUNE
Go back to bed, Gideon.
(calling out)
Mario!

Gideon notices Seth's tears.

GIDEON
What's he carrying on about?

JUNE
It doesn't concern you.

GIDEON
If it's happening in my house, I'd say it concerns me.

JUNE
(snaps)
It doesn't concern you!

Gideon shrinks at her outburst.

Mario hurries in.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Get him out of here.

MARIO
I'm sorry, ma'am. Here we go, Mr. Lewis. Back to bed.

Mario leads a rattled Gideon out of the room.

INT. HALLWAY - LEWIS HOME - NIGHT

Claire opens her bedroom door to find -

A New Dawn SECURITY GUARD (NICK) waiting in the hallway.

CLAIRE

Nick? What are you doing here?

NICK

Is there something you need, Mrs. Lewis?

CLAIRE

Yeah. Something to help me sleep.

NICK

(thinks)
Okay, go ahead.

Claire heads down the hall. Then, realizes Nick is following her, not letting her out of his sight.

Shadowed, a prisoner in her own home.

FADE TO BLACK

EXT. NEW DAWN CHURCH - SUNDAY MORNING

Daybreak brings life to the church campus -

Energized staff members arrive. The Greet Team straps on its vests and headsets, ready to take their positions.

The Worship Center is opened, lights come up.

The big day begins.

INT. BEDROOM - LEWIS HOME - MORNING

Sunlight cuts through the blinds. Claire wakes to find -

Seth seated at the end of the bed, bent over his Bible.

CLAIRE

What's he telling you?

Seth looks up from his reading.

SETH

That he takes care of his flock.

He's softer than last night, a surrender.

SETH (CONT'D)
That he'll keep us safe.

CLAIRE
How do you know?

SETH
I don't. But I have faith. "He shall be our refuge and our fortress."

CLAIRE
What about you and me?

Seth closes his Bible, sits with her question for a moment.

SETH
I spoke to Erik last night. He told me everything: How he chased you, how he snared you in a moment of weakness. That it was all his doing.

Claire looks away.

SETH (CONT'D)
And I'm choosing to believe him.

Seth stands, straightens himself.

SETH (CONT'D)
We'll start over. We'll see that marriage coach, we'll do our Monday movie nights. It can be good again.
(this one is hard for him)
And I won't force you to have children if you're not ready. You'll keep all of this. As long as you're on that stage with me every Sunday.

Claire considers the deal he's proposing.

SETH (CONT'D)
If you can find a way to live with that, I'll need you downstairs in thirty minutes.

He exits, leaving Claire with a choice.

INT. TOOL SHED - BROOKS HOME - MORNING

Addie bandages Kyle's wounded hand. He jabbars, drug-fueled and feral.

KYLE
Motherfucker's lucky he didn't hit
my rope hand -

Addie's phone buzzes. She checks the ID - "CLAIRE."

KYLE (CONT'D)
Who is it?

ADDIE
No one.

She hits IGNORE on her phone and resumes her work...

INT. BEDROOM - LEWIS HOME - SAME

Claire's call to Addie goes to voicemail.

She hangs up, dejected. So much she wants to say.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - LEWIS HOME - DAY

Seth buffs out a blemish on his Jaguar. Waiting, watching the front door of his house. Finally -

It opens and Claire steps out. She looks radiant in her Sunday best, but there's a dead resignation in her eyes.

Relieved, Seth opens the car door for her.

SETH (V.O.)
"Why does God have to test me?"

INT. WORSHIP CENTER - NEW DAWN CHURCH - DAY

The BAND plays through a final sound check. CAMERA OPERATORS practice their moves.

SETH (V.O.)
"I thought I was saved, Pastor
Seth. Shouldn't my life be sweet
and easy?"

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

The DIRECTOR and TECHNICAL CREW check shots, make final adjustments.

SETH (V.O.)
 God tests us to make sure we have
 the stomach for his work.

INT. SETH'S OFFICE - DAY

Seth rehearses into the gold flame sculpture, mounted to the wall again.

SETH
 It's an exhausting and often
 thankless job. But if we do it
 well, it's a job that promises full
 benefits.

The sculpture lacks some radiance, scratches that can't be polished out.

INT. READY ROOM - DAY

Seth leads the team in the weekly prayer ring. Head bowed, Claire holds Seth's hand.

Claire looks up to see June enter the room. Sheepish, Claire eyes her - *how much does she know?*

SETH (V.O.)
 Because, if we fulfill our purpose
 and glorify his name, our payoff is
 a place in his eternal family.

Then - June joins the circle, taking Claire's other hand. A gesture of solidarity.

INT. WORSHIP CENTER - DAY

On stage, the band plays an OPENING ROCK HYMN.

The crowd is on their feet, all energy and anticipation for this historic service.

INT. BACKSTAGE - SAME

Claire follows Seth to the stage wings, when -

Someone grabs her wrist, pulls her into the shadows.

It's ERIK. Claire reacts, afraid to be caught with him.

CLAIRE
Erik - we can't -

ERIK
(urgency)
I know, but I had to see you before
I left.

She notices his split lip, bruised cheek.

CLAIRE
What happened to you?

ERIK
We - negotiated my exit.

Claire studies him, full of questions.

ERIK (CONT'D)
Seth made a pay-off deal with Kyle
and Addie. I'm taking the cash to
them this morning. My last
assignment.

CLAIRE
Please be careful. I don't trust
Kyle.

ERIK
I will.

CLAIRE
So she went back to him.

Erik senses the pull inside her, the need to intervene.

ERIK
Claire, I want you to go out on
that stage and smile, okay? Just
play your part, don't make trouble.
Enjoy all the nice things it gets
you.

Their eyes meet for a quiet moment. Everything that's
happened, everything that could have been.

Then he sees something over her shoulder -

ERIK (CONT'D)
My ride's here.

BEN has found Erik. He grabs him, yanks him away from Claire.

CLAIRE

Ben -

But he's made of stone, refuses to look at her.

Claire and Erik share a fleeting glimpse - then Erik's gone.

STAGE MANAGER (O.S.)

Mrs. Lewis.

The stage manager appears, flustered.

STAGE MANAGER (CONT'D)

We need you on your mark.

Claire follows him, haunted by her exchange with Erik.

INT. STAGE - DAY

Seth and Claire step out, hand-in-hand. They're greeted by more lights, louder cheers than ever.

Claire forces that expected smile. The loyal pastor's wife. She takes her on-stage seat.

SETH

Who's here for Jesus?

The congregation ROARS.

SETH (CONT'D)

I'd like to welcome everyone here -
(to a camera)

- and to our new friends watching
from home. It's a blessing to be
part of your day.

(the elephant in the room)

There's no sense in ignoring it.
You've probably seen the news. Our
church was tested this week.

He clocks Gideon in the front row, next to June. Gideon is distracted by the sweeping cameras, the production lights.

SETH (CONT'D)

But my dad had a saying: "Let God's
test - ?"

The congregation responds: "- bring out your best."

SETH (CONT'D)

That's right. Let God's test bring out your best. "But Pastor Seth, I thought I was saved. Shouldn't my life be sweet and easy? Why does God have to test me?"

Seth reflects, an uncomfortably long pause. Claire senses a glitch in him, a vulnerability. Back on track -

SETH (CONT'D)

God tests us to make sure we have the stomach for his work. And -

He stops. Then takes an unplanned detour.

SETH (CONT'D)

And scripture tells us that his work is serious business. Like here -

Seth scrambles for his Bible, flips through it.

SETH (CONT'D)

In Mark chapter three, we're warned that "every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire." Nothing sweet and easy about that, is there?

INT. CONTROL ROOM - SAME

There's confusion among the church executives.

DAVID

What's he doing?

LIZ

I don't know. He's off-script.

INT. STAGE - SAME

Seth flips to another page.

SETH

Later John says that "God's winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Claire is unsettled by the darkness in his tone.

SETH (CONT'D)

Are we up for the challenge? Can we be as ruthless in our faith as God is in his expectations of us? Will God's test bring out our best? Lord, I hope so.

The auditorium is silent. *What is happening?*

SETH (CONT'D)

Please join me in prayer. Father, give us the strength to do the painful, unpleasant work so that we may bear fruit for you.

He chokes up, barely holding it together.

SETH (CONT'D)

Forgive us when we fail your tests. And comfort us when we pass them. Make our purpose clear, Lord. In your son's name. Amen.

The band begins A HYMN, mercifully breaking the tension.

Claire continues to study Seth, deep concern.

Finally, she crosses the stage to him. Leans in, private.

CLAIRE

What did you do?

Seth holds his smile, their conversation covered by the song.

SETH

Go back to your seat.

CLAIRE

What did you send Erik into?
(no answer)
Seth.

SETH

God's got it, Claire. Now go sit down.

There's an edge to his voice that fills Claire with dread.

She moves off, numb. Instead of returning to her seat, she changes direction and STORMS OFFSTAGE.

ON JUNE AND GIDEON,
Watching Claire leave the stage.

GIDEON
And where's she going?

June has no answer.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - SAME

The production team reacts.

DIRECTOR
What's happening?

LIZ
I don't know. Can you just go tight
on Seth?

DIRECTOR
(into the com)
Marco, I need you to frame out the
wife's seat. Pat, can you find out
if she's coming back?

David and Liz exchange looks.

INT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

Claire flies past the stage manager, his headset chattering.

STAGE MANAGER
Mrs. Lewis, the booth would like
you back on stage.

June arrives, calls after her -

JUNE
Claire - ?

But Claire doesn't hear her, heading for the exit.

INT. NEW DAWN SEDAN - MOVING - DAY

Ben drives. Erik sits beside him, a GYM BAG in his lap.
Erik unzips the bag and peers in. Full of CASH.

INT. SETH'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

Claire speeds, weaving between cars on the highway.

She's on the phone to the police -

CLAIRE

I realize that. I don't know what
I'm reporting, but I think
someone's going to be hurt.

(beat)

Can you please just help me?

INT. BROOKS HOME - DAY

Kyle peers through curtains, sees the New Dawn sedan pull up.

He calls out to Addie -

KYLE

They're here!

He checks his HANDGUN, confirms he has a chambered bullet.
Readies himself.

INT. BROOKS HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Addie holds the door as Erik and Ben enter. Erik carries the
bag of pay-off cash.

Ben scans the room, uneasy, his soldier's intuition buzzing.

ADDIE

That the money?

ERIK

This is it.

He offers the bag, impatient to finish this. Ben stops him.

BEN

Where's Kyle? He's supposed to be
here.

ADDIE

(a bad liar)

I haven't seen him.

BEN

The agreement was to give it to
both of you.

ADDIE
I don't know what to tell you.

BEN
Then the deal's off.
(to Erik)
Let's go.

He moves toward the door.

KYLE (O.S.)
Christ almighty. Hold up.

Kyle enters the room, gun in his hand.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Lift up your shirts. I don't wanna
see any guns.

Ben and Erik lift their shirts.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Turn around.

They spin, clean. Kyle waves his bandaged hand at Ben.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Hello again, old friend.

No love lost between them.

INT. SETH'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

Claire rockets down the COUNTRY ROAD toward Addie's house.
She can see the NEW DAWN CAR parked outside.

INT. BROOKS HOME - DAY

Erik turns to Ben.

ERIK
Everyone's here. Can we do this?

Ben nods. Erik hands the bag to Kyle.

KYLE
You'll excuse me while I check your
work.

He unzips the bag, begins pulling out the cash.

ADDIE
It looks square, Kyle.

KYLE
Shut up while I'm counting.

Kyle is transfixed by the most money he's ever seen. He lets his gun go lazy.

KYLE (CONT'D)
It's funny. Y'all can't shut up about how "Jesus saves" and here you are paying me to save your asses.

THEN -

In a single fluid motion, Ben lifts a 9MM HANDGUN from his ankle holster, and -

POP! He BLASTS A BULLET through Kyle's skull.

His dead body collapses at Addie's feet. SHE SCREAMS.

One down...

Ben pivots toward Erik, who realizes Ben's intention -

ERIK
Ben! No -

Ben TAKES AIM -

Erik scampers across the room as BEN FIRES at him. The first shot misses. Erik runs for the open BEDROOM DOOR.

Ben pursues, FIRING SHOTS. One round finds its target -

ERIK SHRIEKS, HIT IN THE LEG. He falls into the BEDROOM. He forces the door closed as Ben stalks toward him.

EXT. BROOKS HOME - DAY

Claire is out of the car, hears the SHOTS and SCREAMS.

She sprints to the front door and bursts into -

THE HOUSE

Claire takes in the chaos:

- KYLE'S DEAD BODY pools blood.

- BEN FIRES SHOTS into the bedroom door to finish off Erik.
- ADDIE HUDDLES ON THE FLOOR, tears cascading down her face.

Claire rushes to help Addie.

Ben senses movement and turns. The unexpected sight of Claire rips him from his killer's daze.

BEN
What are you doing?

Claire shields Addie's body with her own, eyes locked on Ben.

CLAIRE
Addie, stand up.

Addie climbs to her feet, cowering behind her rescuer.

BEN
You're not supposed to be here.

CLAIRE
(to Addie)
It's okay. You're just going to hold onto me.

Ben trains his gun on them, conflicted.

BEN
I was given an order.

Claire eases Addie toward the door. Always keeping herself between Addie and Ben's barrel.

BEN (CONT'D)
Stay away from that door.

Claire continues inching Addie toward the exit.

He FIRES A WARNING SHOT into the wall. Claire freezes.

BEN (CONT'D)
Please. Stop moving.

Claire stares into Ben, clocks his deep turmoil.

CLAIRE
The boy on the bike. What was his name?

BEN
I don't know.

CLAIRE
Yes, you do. What was his name?

Ben relents -

BEN
Scotty Palmer.

CLAIRE
Does killing this girl make up for
Scotty Palmer? Does it pay your
debt?

Claire notices -

A WOUNDED ERIK

Crawling from the bedroom toward Ben. Claire gives a subtle
shake of her head to wave him off. He stops.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
I don't know about you, Ben, but
I've never needed one of these more
than right now.

She reaches for Kyle's MARLBOROS on the table.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
So here's what's going to happen:
We're going to let Addie walk out
the door -

BEN
That's not how it's supposed to go.

CLAIRE
I don't care what Seth ordered you
to do. You're going to give Addie
the chance Scotty never got. This
is one you're going to handle
correctly.

Ben's gun drifts, his mission growing hazy.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
We're going to sit down and smoke
this pack and you're going to tell
me everything you've needed to say
all these years. You're going to
get your absolution today. How does
that sound?

An appealing thought to Ben. Before he can answer -

The door opens, sunlight pours in. Ben aims his gun at the figure in the doorway...

JUNE
Put that thing down, Benjamin.

Ben quickly obliges, lowers his gun.

JUNE enters. She shudders as her eyes adjust to the carnage.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Oh, no - oh, dear -

BEN
I'm sorry, mama.

CLAIRE
It's okay, June. He's not going to hurt anyone else. Are you, Ben?

Ben doesn't answer. Only looks to his mother.

JUNE
Let's give him some space.
Benjamin, I'm taking her outside.

Claire nudges Addie toward the door. But June stops Addie with a gentle touch.

JUNE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, dear. This isn't for you. Claire and I have things to discuss.

June offers a hand to a confused Claire.

Then Claire realizes. June sees it in her face.

JUNE (CONT'D)
It's the last thing any of us wanted.

Claire reels, the veil lifted.

CLAIRE
You did this.

JUNE
Actually, honey, you did this. Your poor judgment made it necessary. But we forgive and move on because we're family.

Claire backs Addie away.

CLAIRE

No - not if this is what you are.

JUNE

You know what we are. You see the good we do for people, all the lives we save.

(a rush of memories)

But my family paid dearly for that privilege. I stood by a man who hurt me and my children in every way. Didn't he, Benjamin?

Ben gives a faint nod.

JUNE (CONT'D)

That was our investment in the Lord's work. And I'm sorry, but I will not see it wasted.

CLAIRE

Covering up Scotty Palmer - was that the Lord's work?

June shifts a glare to Ben.

JUNE

You were never to mention that name.

Ben looks off, scolded.

JUNE (CONT'D)

(back to Claire)

I've prayed endlessly about that boy. What we did kept our ministry saving souls. So yes, I believe it was the Lord's work.

June moves to the open door.

JUNE (CONT'D)

But his work is never done. And that generous soul of yours is going to help millions, Claire.

(extends a hand)

So come on.

Addie clings tighter to Claire.

ADDIE

Don't leave me - please.

CLAIRE
I'm not going anywhere.

June goes inward, playing through every option. The room waits for her response. Finally -

JUNE
If it has to be.
(an order)
Benjamin.

Her decree is clear: *Claire takes a bullet too.*

Claire staggers away from her, horrified.

Ben wavers, not what he'd planned.

BEN
Wait - shouldn't we talk to Seth about this?

JUNE
He'll have to understand. She wouldn't be reasoned with.

BEN
But she's been decent to me.

JUNE
If she'd been decent, we wouldn't be here. We gave her everything and look how she treated us. I'll be outside, Benjamin.

June steps out the door, slams it shut behind her, sealing the darkness inside.

Ben looks sick, wrestling over what to do. He moves toward Claire and Addie.

CLAIRE
Ben?

Ben checks his gun's magazine. Four rounds remain -

BEN
I'm sorry.

Erik crawls toward him -

ERIK
Hold on, Ben! Stop!

Claire and Addie scurry to the corner, drop to the floor.

CLAIRE
Please. Don't -

But he hears nothing. He pulls back the gun's slide -

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Ben!

EXT. BROOKS HOME - SAME

June walks from the house, when -

THREE GUNSHOTS are heard, dull and distant.

For June, the sound offers no satisfaction. She teeters for a moment, but hardens herself.

INT. BROOKS HOME - SAME

It's pin-drop quiet as WE FOCUS ON -

THE WALL that Ben shot earlier - and its THREE NEW BULLET HOLES.

Everyone's breathing resumes...

Claire, Addie, Erik - all still alive.

Ben kneels next to Claire and Addie.

BEN
Please make sure Scotty's parents
know what happened.

Claire accepts with a nod.

BEN (CONT'D)
I want that absolution.

He stands, opens the door and steps -

OUTSIDE

On the front porch, he pauses to absorb the daylight.

June turns to see him.

JUNE
You're a good boy.

BEN
Thank you, mama.

He presses the gun under his chin and FIRES his last round.
His DEAD BODY drops to the porch.
June lets out an unholy SHRIEK.

JUNE
Benjamin?!

She rushes to her son. Cranes over his body, howling.

IN THE HOUSE

Claire hears JUNE'S CRIES, realizes what Ben did.
She stands, looks back at Addie and Erik, both in need.

ERIK
Get her out of here. Go.

Claire lifts Addie to her feet.

CLAIRE
Come on, stand up.

Claire looks out a back window, a RUSTED PICKUP is parked behind the house.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
That truck. Does it run?

Addie nods - yes.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Okay, we're going out the back.

She leads Addie toward the door.

ERIK
Claire.

He points across the room where the BAG OF MONEY lies next to Kyle's body.

EXT. BACK OF HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Claire helps Addie into the driver's seat of the truck.
Urgent, she hands her the bag of money.

CLAIRE

Don't go too long without eating,
okay? Keep the gas above a quarter
tank -

ADDIE

What about you?

CLAIRE

(ignoring)
And if you end up in Juneau,
promise me you'll buy a good, thick
coat before winter hits. I can't
worry about you freezing to death
up there -

ADDIE

Claire.

Claire faces the distress in Addie's eyes. She puts a hand on Addie's belly.

CLAIRE

This little boy is your only
concern.

Claire reaches into the truck, turns the ignition. The engine growls to life, ready for the road.

Claire takes in the sight of Addie behind the wheel, a resilient young warrior.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

You're going to be an incredible
mother.

They stare at each other, Claire searching for words.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

If there were a way to give back
what I took from you -

Addie cuts her off with an embrace.

ADDIE

I've got what I need.

They separate, both in tears. Claire slams the door shut.

They share a final look. Then Addie shifts the truck into gear and drives away.

Claire watches her disappear in a cloud of gravel dust.

She heads into the house -

INT. BROOKS HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Claire kneels over Erik, applying pressure to his wound.

ERIK
Why didn't you go with her?

CLAIRE
You need my help more than she
does.

Erik gazes up at her through the blood-loss fog. She looks transcendent to him.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
You could be on a beach in Panama
right now. Why didn't you leave
when you had the chance?

ERIK
I didn't want to be where you
weren't.
(can't believe he's saying
it)
You make blind devotion seem
reasonable.

Erik examines her hand, imprinting it on his mind. Their wistful silence is interrupted by -

Distant POLICE SIRENS. Erik musters a smile.

ERIK (CONT'D)
And Panama's too hot anyway.

CLAIRE
You need an ambulance.

ERIK
Stay with me. They'll find us.

They listen to the sirens approach. The bittersweet sound of finality.

ERIK (CONT'D)
Since when do you smoke?

She shrugs, self-conscious.

ERIK (CONT'D)
You're full of secrets.

CLAIRE
Not for long.

The SIRENS arrive outside the house.

SETH (V.O.)
And now, my friends, may the Lord
bless you and keep you -

EXT. BROOKS HOME - DAY

Two DEPUTIES approach Ben's body, an unresponsive June huddled over him.

SETH (V.O.)
May the Lord make his face shine
upon you and be gracious to you -

The deputies circle June and Ben.

DEPUTY
Ma'am, can you hear me? Ma'am.

No answer.

INT. ADDIE'S TRUCK - MOVING - DAY

Addie cruises west across the Oklahoma plains.

SETH (V.O.)
May the Lord lift up his
countenance upon you -

She's moving forward, eyes fixed on a hopeful future.

INT. WORSHIP CENTER - NEW DAWN - DAY

Seth is on stage, Claire's chair sits empty behind him.

SETH
- and may he give you his peace.
Amen.

The band launches into the FINAL HYMN of the service.

Seth looks out over the sea of worshipers, cameras, and then -

He sees a pair of POLICE DETECTIVES arrive on the stage wings, waiting to talk to him.

Seth's face goes blank. His greatest triumph and defeat colliding in the same instant.

But he won't be robbed of this moment. He closes his eyes and sings passionately with his congregation.

The HYMN continues under -

INT. DEPUTY PATROL CAR - MOVING - DAY

Claire rides alone in the back. She's in custody, but free of the lies, weightless.

She lets her head relax against the seat, watching the countryside unspool outside her window, the Sunday morning warmth on her face...

EXT. NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA - DAY

...as we glide high above the patrol car,
the country road,
and the endless acres of green.

FADE OUT