

UNTITLED
PILOT

Written by
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TEASER

*

FADE IN:

EXT. URBAN ATLANTA NEIGHBORHOOD - EVENING

The neighborhood haunts buzz with business: VERNON'S BARBERSHOP, SMOKEY'S BBQ, MONK'S JAZZ BAR, and the heartbeat of the neighborhood, GREATER HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - EVENING

A neighborhood basketball pick up game in play a couple of blocks from the church. Ballers are on the court. On the fringe, spectators wait for 'next.'

BIG E, early 60s, fit with old school swag, gets his weekly exercise ballin' with the young bloods from around the way.

He plays a game of five-on-five with some young cats from the neighborhood, Vernon's Barbershop and also LEVI STERLING, 35, buttoned up type, but can ball, as one of his teammates. And TAJ, 17, a member of the church youth program.

Big E is guarded by JABARI MORRIS, mid 30s, urban bling, and second in command to the neighborhood heavy.

BIG E
(to Levi)
C'mon with it! Come get me.

Levi sprints over and sets the screen. Big E shoots off the screen and misses. Jabari recovers the ball, but dares not throw it to his teammate, MILES CALLOWAY, 30s, music phenom, not a natural baller.

JABARI
You think you can hang with this?

BIG E
Of course I can hang. I was playing this game when you were just an itch in your daddy's pants.

JABARI
(sotto to Big E)
Don't forget the clock is ticking on you, Old Man.

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EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

A dark ominous figure in a parked car watches the game from his rearview mirror. None of the players on the court seem to notice.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

Jabari now guards Levi as he gets in sync with the ball.

LEVI

You might need to fall back J.
You're getting in over your head.

JABARI

Oh, so now you're gonna swoop in
and save the day? This ain't
squash, Big Time.

LEVI

Too bad. Because your girl didn't
mind when I squashed it last night.

The spectators react to Levi's diss. Levi makes another shot.

Their play gets more competitive.

JABARI

Ok. Let's see how you feel when I
squash you with game point.

Jabari dribbles towards the basket for game point.

MILES

Hey, over here. I'm open.

JABARI

You watchin' this?

Jabari makes the shot.

JABARI (CONT'D)

Gay-um POINT! Play times over.
Booyah!

Jabari gloats in his victory. Levi groans in defeat. Yet they leave the trash talk behind, as they man-hug and head off the court.

EXT. BASKETBALL BLEACHERS - EVENING

The players have thinned out. Big E says his goodbyes, throws his gym bag over his shoulder and heads off the court. He walks to his car in the church parking lot.

EXT. SIDEWALK - EVENING

A few beats later, he hears someone running up behind him with intent. Nervous, he turns to confront who it is, one hand reaching stealthily into his gym bag.

It's Taj.

BIG E

Taj, you nearly gave me a heart attack.

Big E pulls his hand out of his gym bag as his cell phone begins to ring.

TAJ

Sorry, I was just trying to catch up to you to see if I could get a ride home?

Big E answers call.

BIG E

(into phone)

Hello.

(to Taj)

Yeah, sure. Meet me at the church parking lot.

TAJ

Cool, thanks. Let me go grab my stuff from the court.

Taj heads to court.

BIG E

Hey, yeah, I found a new source. We're all set ahead of schedule now.

Big E passes a mailbox en route to his car, then pulls an envelope addressed to MRS. ELLA JOHNSON out of his gym bag and puts it into the mail. He continues with the caller as he approaches his car.

EXT. GREATER HOPE CHURCH, PARKING LOT - EVENING

BIG E

This time tomorrow, everything will
be all good.

Big E arrives at his car and slides behind the driver's seat.

INT. BIG E'S CAR - EVENING

Big E places the key in the ignition and pulls the seatbelt
across his chest. A beat later, a figure appears from the
backseat. The figure holds a gun to the back of Big E's head.

Silent panic.

The gunman cocks the hammer of the gun.

BIG E

Wait, no. It wasn't supposed to be
like this.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

SUPER: "ONE WEEK EARLIER"

EXT. GREATER HOPE CHURCH, SANCTUARY - SUNDAY MORNING

The choir's song crescendos and we burst through the doors of GREATER HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH! Church is in session! Miles is singing his soul to glory as he leads the MASS CHOIR. The entire congregation is electrified by their song.

PASTOR EVAN JOHNSON has his back to the congregation as he bounces to the choir's amazing vocals. Finally the Pastor turns to face the congregation. It's Big E from the basketball game! *

The church continues to rock for a few moments more. Pastor Johnson continues to feel the spirit in tandem with the church choir's amazing vocals.

PASTOR JOHNSON
Lord, we like to have a good time
at Greater Hope. Don't we? Say
Amen.

CONGREGATION
Amen.

PASTOR JOHNSON
Give it up for our award winning
MUSICAL DIRECTOR, Miles Calloway.

The congregation cheers for Miles.

PASTOR JOHNSON (CONT'D)
And also give it up for the First
Lady of Greater Hope, my lovely
wife, LADY ELLA. And our beautiful
daughter, CHRISTIE. *

Lady Ella regally nods to the congregation in acknowledgement. Christie, seated next to her mother, lovingly blows her father a kiss from the pew. *

The congregation, having a good time reaching a spiritual high, enjoy this moment.

PASTOR JOHNSON (CONT'D)
Oh, can you feel the spirit this
morning?

CONGREGATION

Yes.

PASTOR JOHNSON

Feels so good to be a christian
this morning. Amen.

CONGREGATION

Amen!

The room begins to calm. Pastor Johnson cues Miles to start
the "Call to Christ" music.

PASTOR JOHNSON

Amen, brothers and sisters. Amen. I
want to extend my hand to you and
ask, "Do you need Jesus?"

Pastor Johnson extends his hand to the crowd.

PASTOR JOHNSON (CONT'D)

If you want to walk with Jesus,
your first step starts here. I
wasn't always the man you see
before you. Many years ago I heard
the call from God to turn around my
life and walk with Jesus. It all
started with one simple step. Make
that simple step for yourself this
morning and make Christ the light
of your life.

CONGREGATION

Preach.

PASTOR JOHNSON

Come join our family of fellowship,
here at Greater Hope Baptist
Church.

CONGREGATION

Yes Lord.

PASTOR JOHNSON

We welcome all saints and sinners
to join us and hold onto God's
unchanging hand.

CONGREGATION

Amen.

A member of the congregation stands up and heads down the aisle towards Pastor Johnson. The congregation joyfully applauds.

CONGREGATION (CONT'D)

Praise him.

Pastor Johnson continues.

PASTOR JOHNSON

With God, all things are possible,
Amen.

CONGREGATION

Amen.

CUT TO:

INT. GREATER HOPE CHURCH, FOYER - LATER

Church services have ended and the congregation is filing out of the sanctuary. Each congregant shakes the Pastor's hand on the way out of service. *

Lady Ella and Christie stand next to the Pastor in the recessional line, greeting and hugging church members as they exit and spill out onto the church steps. The first family works the crowd. *

PASTOR JOHNSON

Nice to see you this morning.

LADY ELLA

God bless you.

CHRISTIE

Have a blessed day.

Most of the church congregation joyfully empty the church. There is A STERN FAMILIAR FACE in the recessional line that is approaching the Pastor. Lady Ella and Christie are oblivious to this stranger in the crowd. *

With every handshake, he inches closer to the Pastor. Finally he is in front of the Pastor and shakes his hand, HARD. *

STERN STRANGER

Nice sermon today, Pastor. Keep the blessings flowing. You know what I'm saying? *

Pastor Johnson makes eye contact with this man and understands exactly what this stranger is saying. He nods at him knowingly. Then ushers him along in the line, praying his wife and daughter didn't register this stranger's presence.

CUT TO:

INT. GREATER HOPE CHURCH, HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Pastor Johnson walks the church halls to his office. His brow furrowed in thought.

INT. GREATER HOPE CHURCH, PASTOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Pastor Johnson enters his office to find the CHURCH TRUSTEES counting the church offering for the day as per usual. They are protective and organized like a casino count room.

Beautiful STACKS OF MONEY line the counting table as they reconcile the totals to a LEDGER.

PASTOR JOHNSON
Hello gentlemen.

TRUSTEE #1
Hey Pastor, great sermon. *

PASTOR JOHNSON
Thank you. You boys carry on.

Pastor Johnson removes his minister robe and hangs it on the coat rack near his desk. One of the trustees breaks away from the count table holding TWO ENVELOPES.

He hands the envelopes to Pastor one at the time. The first envelope says 'Pastor' on it. The second envelope is blank. The trustee hands Pastor a folded slip of paper with the second envelope. *

Pastor reads it, checks inside the envelope, nods to the trustee, and hands back the slip of paper and the envelope. Trustee #2 exits the office, envelope in hand. As he exits, Lady Ella enters.

LADY ELLA
Praise the Lord, gentleman. How's everybody?

Lady Ella greets the trustees with the perfect amount of southern charm.

TRUSTEE #1
Hi Lady Ella.

Pastor Johnson crosses the room to greet her. Lady Ella addresses the room.

LADY ELLA
So sorry to interrupt. Do you gentlemen mind if I have a moment with the Pastor.

*

TRUSTEE #3
Of course, no problem.

They secure the count table and exit. Once the door closes behind them, Lady Ella whips around to face the Pastor and slaps him hard across the face.

*

LADY ELLA
I should kill you!

Pastor Johnson is stunned by Lady Ella's slap. He looks at her with a WTF look on his face.

LADY ELLA (CONT'D)
Do you think I'm stupid?

PASTOR JOHNSON
What?

LADY ELLA
Did you think I wouldn't notice the missing money from my campaign account, Evan?

Pastor Johnson stares at her, caught, looking for the perfect words to calm her down.

PASTOR JOHNSON
It's not as bad as you think.

LADY ELLA
You better explain, quick, fast, and in a hurry, because you are leaning on my last nerve with this mess.

INT. GREATER HOPE CHURCH, HALLWAY OUTSIDE PASTOR'S OFFICE

ANGELA PARKS, 24, the new church secretary. Cute and efficient, yet nosy, sidles up to the Pastor's door to eavesdrop on his heated conversation with Lady Ella.

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INT. GREATER HOPE CHURCH, PASTOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Pastor chooses his words carefully.

PASTOR JOHNSON

I needed to make some moves for the church. And there was no other cash available.

LADY ELLA

For the church? Do you really expect me to believe that?

PASTOR JOHNSON

Ella, you don't always know what's going on around here.

LADY ELLA

Well then why don't you enlighten me, Evan?

Lady Ella sits down and positions herself to listen to his epic excuse.

PASTOR JOHNSON

Do you think it's easy to keep up with the demands of you and this church?

LADY ELLA

Demands?

PASTOR JOHNSON

The shopping, the dinners, the \$1,000 a plate charity functions. How do you think that gets paid? You're more than happy to spend up everything I have coming in.

LADY ELLA

Don't try to turn this around on me.

Lady Ella stands up and steps to Pastor Johnson.

LADY ELLA (CONT'D)

Do you think I don't know about your dirty ways all these years? All the gambling an gutter deals you do behind closed doors. I grew up in this church watching my father do the exact same thing. I know all about it.

(MORE)

LADY ELLA (CONT'D)

I'm not going to sit back and let
you wreck this opportunity for me.

She prepares to exit.

LADY ELLA (CONT'D)

After everything, I thought we were
still a team. Now I see it's every
man for himself. Well, game on.

She EXITS Pastor's office. Pastor Johnson sinks down at his
desk, letting Lady Ella's words sink in.

INT. GREATER HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH, FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Trustee #2 is walking towards the Stern Faced Stranger with
money envelope in hand. He stealthily passes it to the stern
faced stranger and then they each head their separate ways.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - CONTINUOUS

The stern faced stranger walks a couple of blocks away from
the church and into VERNON'S BARBERSHOP.

INT. VERNON'S BARBERSHOP - CONTINUOUS

He strides past the barbers nodding hello, then continues on
to the back room.

INT. VERNON'S BARBERSHOP, BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The back room is a makeshift gambling den run by the
neighborhood heavy, REX LIMENY, 60s, a calm and deliberate
talker with beadie eyes and an oral fixation.

The stern face stranger makes a beeline to Rex and hands him
the envelope. Rex moves the toothpick around in his mouth
with his tongue as he examines the contents of the envelope
he's just been handed. His face is not happy.

INT. GREATER HOPE CHURCH, PASTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Pastor Johnson sits at his desk pondering the fiasco he's
created. Levi enters.

LEVI

You wanted to see me, Pastor?

*

PASTOR JOHNSON

Hey Levi, how's everything coming with the ribbon cutting ceremony for the clinic tomorrow?

LEVI

Everything's in place. The Mayor and the press are booked. Have you had a chance to review your speech?

PASTOR JOHNSON

I have. Great job on that. I can always count on you, Levi.

LEVI

Thank you.

PASTOR JOHNSON

I really need your help with something else.

LEVI

Name it.

PASTOR JOHNSON

What you did for me last time, I need you to do it for me again.

Levi is uncomfortable with this request.

LEVI

I thought you said the last time was the last time.

PASTOR JOHNSON

I know, but things have changed. I took some risks that didn't pan out. Now I'm in a bind and you're the only one I can turn to.

LEVI

How bad of a bind?

PASTOR JOHNSON

Fifty Thousand.

LEVI

What do you mean? We just got straight.

Levi breathes a big frustrated sigh.

LEVI (CONT'D)

When do you need it?

PASTOR JOHNSON

It's already past due.

LEVI

Past due to who?

PASTOR JOHNSON

I had to go to Rex.

Levi is a little stunned.

LEVI

You're late with money to Rex
Limeny? How could this happen?

PASTOR JOHNSON

It was a mistake I had to make.
Desperate times call for desperate
measures. You, of all people,
should understand that.

Pastor hits a little below the belt with this comment.

LEVI

Pastor, you mean everything to me.
But I can't do this for you now.
All the trouble I'm in back east.
My attorney is involved, and the
SEC. I can't do this for you right
now. I just can't.

PASTOR JOHNSON

Not every crime against man is a
crime against God, Levi. You're the
only hope I have for getting out of
this mess.

Levi heavily ponders what to do.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. VERNON'S BARBERSHOP, BACK ROOM - LATER

Rex is playing a game of dominoes with a few regulars. Jabari enters and walks over to Rex.

REX
(to patrons)
Let us have a minute.

The patrons obediently leave the table. Jabari takes a seat across from Rex.

REX (CONT'D)
Do you know why you're here?

JABARI
Not exactly. What's up?

REX
The Pastor's payment is late and
light. You have anything to say
about that? *

Jabari begins to look worried.

JABARI
I've been leaning on him hard.

REX
Doesn't look that way from where
I'm sitting. Or maybe we have
different definitions of 'lean
hard.'

The room collectively gets uncomfortable. Jabari doesn't like the turn the conversation has taken.

JABARI
No, I don't think so.

REX
Oh, you don't think so? Well let's
find out.

Rex scans the room of gamblers. His eyes rest on one and he calls him over to the table.

REX (CONT'D)
Zeke, come here a minute.

Zeke reluctantly obeys.

REX (CONT'D)
Zeke, what do you do for a living?

ZEKE
I'm a mechanic.

REX
So people depend on your skills to
make sure they travel safely and
get to where they need to go,
right?

ZEKE
Yes.

REX
So if you don't do your job, they
can't do their job?

ZEKE
Yes.

Rex gets up and picks up a HAMMER from the adjacent table.
The room falls silent.

REX
You provide a service, and they pay
you for that service, correct?

ZEKE
Yes.

REX
Have you ever given a person back
their car when they don't have the
money to pay you?

ZEKE
No.

Rex walks towards Zeke with the hammer. Steps close to his
face and speaks. *

REX
Yet you play in here for free when
you owe me money.

Zeke is sweating now and swallows hard. The room is frozen.

REX (CONT'D)

Zeke, do you have the money you owe me?

Zeke is too terrified to answer, but Rex is relentless.

REX (CONT'D)

Did you hear me, Zeke? I asked if you had my money.

Zeke barely finds his voice.

ZEKE

(almost a whisper)

No.

REX

No? Hm. Maybe all you need is a reminder. Have a seat.

Zeke obeys.

REX (CONT'D)

Stretch your hands out in front of you on the table there.

ZEKE

Please no.

A beat later, Rex is pummeling Zeke's hand with the hammer in front of the entire room. His excruciating screams are heard all the way out into the barbershop.

INT. VERNON'S BARBERSHOP - SAME

Both patrons and barbers freeze at the sound of the blood curdling screams coming from the back room. They all shoot each other looks of panic.

INT. VERNON'S BARBERSHOP, BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

When Rex is done mangling Zeke's hand, he looks up at Jabari splattered with Zeke's blood and breathing fire like a demon. *

REX

THAT'S how you lean on someone.

Rex gives Jabari an ice cold stare.

REX (CONT'D)

Go get my money.

EXT. GREATER HOPE CHURCH, ENTRY STEPS - NEXT DAY

MISS JILL, homeless woman, 50s, unusually jovial, sings a catchy beggars jingle to solicit money.

MISS JILL
(singing)
Help the homeless.
(clap, clap, clap)
Help the homeless now! Help the homeless.
(clap, clap, clap)
Help the homeless now! Help me, help me. Help me.

She shakes the can of change in her hand to the beat of her song.

MISS JILL (CONT'D)
(rapping)
Nickel, dime, quarter, penny! Hey!
Nickel, dime, quarter, penny! Ho!
Help the homeless...

Miles arrives at the church and rushes up the church steps.

MILES
How you doin', Miss Jill? *

Miss Jill waves hello, still bouncing to an imaginary beat.

MILES (CONT'D)
Your song is sounding good. Might have to put you in my choir.

MISS JILL
(still singing)
Help me, help me.

Miles puts a couple of bucks in Miss Jill's money cup. A shady figure in a hoodie focuses in on Miss Jill's money cup as Miles heads inside the church.

MILES
Ok, see you later, Miss Jill. *
(under his breath)
Dang, she always be gettin' me.
That song is good though.

Miss Jill's 'homeless jingle' sticks in Miles' head. He starts singing it as he heads towards the choir stands.

MILES (CONT'D)
(singing)
*Help the homeless. Hey! Nickel,
dime, quarter, penny! Ho!*

Miles' voice trails off as he enters the church.

INT. LEVI'S GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Levi finishes getting dressed for the day and heads downstairs.

INT. LEVI'S GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE, STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS

As he descends the stairs, family photos cover every wall, a narrative of his childhood. Births, weddings, graduations.

Levi stops a moment at a joyful pic of himself and a college pal. Then continues on a trail of half finished 'fix it' projects in his wake.

INT. LEVI'S GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Sizzling bacon, scrambled eggs, and perfectly timed toast. Levi eats alone.

The 24-Hour News Channel rattles off its usual rants on the small kitchen TV. A familiar name jumps out at Levi from the broadcast. *

TV ANNOUNCER
...Blake Scott was taken into custody late last evening. Scott, a stock trader at Klein and Smith, is the third arrest so far amidst the pending money laundering and stock manipulation scandal that rocked Wall Street nearly two months ago. Sources say that this arrest appears to be only the tip of the iceberg. The tally of yet to be named defendants in this case has risen to nearly fifty, and spans across three different firms.

Levi hangs on every word coming out of the TV Announcer's mouth.

EXT. GREATER HOPE CHURCH, PARKING LOT - MORNING

Still deep in thought, Levi coasts into his parking space in the church parking lot. It reads, "*Levi Sterling, Church Administration.*" Once parked, he puts on his game face and hops out of his car ready for action. On his way to the church entrance, he delegates to the church grounds keeper, CORNELIUS BIGGS, 75, the church caretaker for the past forty years. Continuing in motion.

EXT. GREATER HOPE CHURCH, ENTRY STEPS - CONTINUOUS

LEVI

Cornelius. Just the man I wanted to see. You made sure that new water heater you installed was tank less, right? The church gets an automatic rate deduction from the city for switching to tank less.

CORNELIUS

Yes sir. Sure did. I left the paperwork on your desk.

Levi bounds up the stairs of church.

LEVI

Thanks Cornelius, I can always count on you.

After Levi disappears into the church.

CORNELIUS

And good morning to you too, sir.

EXT. GREATER HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH, PARKING LOT - DAY

Pastor Johnson and Lady Ella arrive at Greater Hope Baptist Church and park in their usual assigned spot, right next to Levi. Lady Ella is still peeved, but does her duty as the First Lady of the church. *

Before they can fully exit the vehicle, ANGELA, the church secretary, is practically sprinting their way. She falls into step with Pastor as they walk across the parking lot to the church clinic and briefs him on the day's events.

ANGELA

Morning, Pastor. Morning, Lady Ella.

PASTOR JOHNSON
Good Morning, Angela.

LADY ELLA
Good Morning, Angela.

Angela takes the garment bag Lady Ella is carrying, throws it over her arm and keeps moving.

ANGELA
Everyone is excited about the ribbon cutting ceremony for the clinic today. People are already lining up to watch!

PASTOR JOHNSON
That's good news.

ANGELA
Also, there are some news reporters that want to interview you on camera about the clinic after the ceremony.

PASTOR JOHNSON
Ok, fine.

Angela feverishly tries to keep up with their stride.

PASTOR JOHNSON (CONT'D)
What else is going on?

ANGELA
The Mayor arrives at 2pm. News crews are scheduled to arrive at 2:30pm. Also, the newspaper wants to get a photo op of both of you with the Mayor and her husband.

*

LADY ELLA
Thanks, sounds perfect.

ANGELA
(eagerly whispers)
Will you be announcing your run for mayor next election today as well, Lady Ella?

LADY ELLA
No, today is Pastor's day. My day is coming soon.

*

EXT. GREATER HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH, ENTRY STEPS - CONTINUOUS

They arrive at the church entrance. Miss Jill is still going strong.

MISS JILL
Nickel, dime, quarter, penny.

Pastor Johnson greets Miss Jill with respect as he, Lady Ella, and Angela climb the church steps.

PASTOR JOHNSON
Good Morning, Miss Jill.

He drops a little cash in her cup and continues his stride as they approach the church entrance. Pastor opens the door for Lady Ella and Angela.

INT. GREATER HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH, FOYER/VESTIBULE/SANCTUARY - DAY

Once inside, we hear the voice warm ups and rehearsal of the CHURCH MASS CHOIR. They walk through the rehearsal on the way to Pastor's office. The choir sounds like heaven on earth.

PASTOR JOHNSON
Sounds excellent, Miles.

MILES
Thanks, Pastor.

Miles gives a side wink to Angela out of the Pastor's view. Angela rolls her eyes and keeps moving.

Some of the choir members roll their eyes as well at Miles' behavior while never missing a beat with the song.

PASTOR JOHNSON
Ok Angela, is that everything?

ANGELA
Yes, Pastor.

PASTOR JOHNSON
Ok. Thank you.

As they approach Pastor's office, Christie meets them in the hallway. They all arrive at Pastor's office. Pastor Johnson greets Christie with a loving embrace upon approach. Christie kisses her mother hello.

*

*

*

CHRISTIE

I still don't know how I let you
talk me into this?

LADY ELLA

Now you know we have to represent
as a family on your daddy's big
day. And it's your big day too.
People are going to take notice of
you in this town after this. Maybe
find you a husband. You've been in
those books so long and now you're
always working. You forgot to get
yourself a life. Well mama's
always looking out. We're gonna
get your life today! I brought some
dresses for you to try. Come on
now.

PASTOR JOHNSON

Ok ladies, I'm going to head into
my office to prepare for the
ceremony.

Pastor tries to kiss Lady Ella goodbye, but she turns her
face away. Christie misses this exchange, but Angela
definitely notices this shade.

Lady Ella ushers Christie down the hall to get changed.
Angela trails behind holding the garment bag. Christie looks
back at her father desperate for help. He smiles back and
shrugs. Can't fight city hall (a.k.a. Lady Ella).

INT. GREATER HOPE CHURCH, PASTOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Pastor Johnson disappears inside to prepare for the cameras.
Pastor takes a deep breath to get camera ready. He sits at
his desk in an oasis of silence. He grabs his bible for
inspiration and then begins to write on a yellow legal pad
like his life depends on it.

Moments later, Pastor has poured his soul onto the page. He *
stares at what he's written for a beat. Then folds the note
pages into thirds and slides it into an envelope. He licks
the envelope, then flips it over and writes, 'Mrs. Ella
Johnson' on the front. He pulls open his side desk drawer to
place the envelope inside. Once the drawer is open, a .38
SMITH AND WESSON GUN is visible and nestled in a DUFFEL BAG
with RUBBER BANDED STACKS OF CASH and a PASSPORT.

Suddenly Angela enters the Pastor's office. Pastor stealthily *
slides the desk drawer closed and out of Angela's view.

ANGELA

They're ready to start the ceremony, Pastor Johnson.

PASTOR JOHNSON

Ok Angela, I'm ready.

Pastor stands up and escorts Angela out of his office.

EXT. CLINIC OF HOPE, FRONT - DAY

Pastor Johnson and Lady Ella approach the clinic entrance and the media looking every bit the first couple. Christie, looking dolled up and uncomfortable, tries to save face as her mother mouths to her to smile.

Lady Ella has been waiting for a moment like this her entire life. Waving to the crowd, she puts her personal grievances with Pastor Johnson aside to play the good wife. REPORTERS swarm.

REPORTER #1

Pastor Johnson, may I have a moment?

REPORTER #2

Pastor Johnson, does your clinic support Obamacare?

Pastor Johnson, Lady Ella and Christie continue towards the entrance of the clinic as reporters jockey beside them. They work the crowd like pros and greet MAYOR PAMELA CLAYBORNE, 50s, a fair skinned black woman with tight curly hair, and a fierce political prowess. And her husband, TRAVIS FORD, 50s, a charismatic former running back for the Atlanta Falcons, who looks like a Ken doll come to life. The ladies politely hug and the gentlemen grasp hands and shake. They all step up to the elevated platform. The Mayor heads to the podium to get things started.

MAYOR CLAYBORNE

Today is a very special day for our community.

Levi and Miles are among the spectators. Both their eyes fall on Christie as they listen to the mayor's speech.

MAYOR CLAYBORNE (CONT'D)

This city has always been in need of a helping hand.

(MORE)

MAYOR CLAYBORNE (CONT'D)

And for as long as I can remember, Greater Hope Baptist Church has grabbed this community by the hand and lifted it up. Today we officially say thank you by christening this building as the "Evan Johnson Jr. Clinic of Hope." I am very proud and honored to issue a key to the city to Pastor Evan Johnson today for his hard work and diligence that made this clinic possible.

Huge applause from the crowd. Mayor Clayborne hands Pastor Johnson the KEY TO THE CITY mounted on a plaque. They pose for PHOTOGRAPHERS. The applause subsides and Pastor Johnson addresses the crowd.

PASTOR JOHNSON

Giving honor to God. We started this clinic to support our community that has always supported us. Being here with all of you today reminds me of what is truly important in life.

As Pastor Johnson confidently addresses the crowd, he notices one stern face that looks out of place.

PASTOR JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Love, family...

He lovingly grabs Lady Ella's hand. She fakes the funk and smiles sweetly back at him.

PASTOR JOHNSON (CONT'D)

...health and happiness.

He grabs Christie with his other hand when he mentions health.

PASTOR JOHNSON (CONT'D)

My family and I have been blessed with all these things. And God is so pleased that we are able to bring these same blessings to our surrounding community. We feel your love and we love you back.

Crowd applauds again. Pastor is handed an enormous pair of scissors.

MAYOR CLAYBORNE

And now, the moment we've all been waiting for. Welcome to the Evan Johnson Jr. Clinic of Hope.

Pastor Johnson cuts the satin ribbon and the crowd cheers. Everyone funnels into the clinic to check out the new facilities. Pastor Johnson is immediately bombarded with questions from reporters.

REPORTER #1

When will the clinic be open?

PASTOR JOHNSON

The clinic will be open starting tomorrow at 8AM. And we're offering extended hours of operation. So no one needing healthcare will ever be turned away.

REPORTER #3

Your daughter is the primary doctor here at the clinic?

Lady Ella pulls Christie in front of the cameras.

LADY ELLA

Yes, she is. Our family is so proud of what we've been blessed to do here.

*

REPORTER #2

What kind of treatment can patients expect to receive?

CHRISTIE

The clinic is full service for our community's health needs, Monday through Friday. In addition to myself, we have two more doctors from HUNTINGTON GENERAL HOSPITAL that rotate hours at the clinic every week. We also have a dentist that sees patients once a week for now. But we are hoping to add more days as soon as we can.

REPORTER #1

Is the healthcare completely free?

CHRISTIE

It isn't completely free. But it is definitely affordable for all.

Lady Ella skillfully whisks Pastor Johnson and Christie inside the clinic doors.

INT. CLINIC OF HOPE - CONTINUOUS

The Greater Hope Baptist Church First Family pose for the perfect photo op. Christie hates this part. *

CHRISTIE
(talking through a fake
smile)
Are we done yet? *

LADY ELLA
Just keep smiling Christie, we're
almost done.

Christie reluctantly obeys. Finally the photos cease.

PASTOR JOHNSON
Thanks sweetheart. I appreciate you
putting up with this.

He kisses Christie on the cheek.

CHRISTIE
Sure, daddy. Congratulations. *

Pastor Johnson shakes a few more hands before leading the media crowd outside like the Pied Piper.

Christie lets out a huge sigh of relief once the door closes behind them.

INT. GREATER HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH, COMMON ROOM - LATER

The Greater Hope Baptist Church staff carry on their weekly church meeting. Miles, Angela, DEACONS, Trustees and also Levi, await the weekly church meeting to begin.

MOTHER HARRIS, 70, slightly hard of hearing, and also known as 'Mother Bad Cook,' enters bringing in her latest baking catastrophe. *

MOTHER HARRIS
Good morning, everyone. I brought
some fresh baked muffins today.

Mother Harris is greeted with groans masked as gratitude. She hands a muffin to every person in attendance.

MILES

Oh my goodness. No you didn't.
Mother Harris, you be doing too
much.

Miles strokes her ego a bit.

MILES (CONT'D)

The only thing sweeter is you.

Levi gives the muffin in front of him a second thought. Miles stops him.

MILES (CONT'D)

(sotto, to Levi)

Uh, uh, don't eat that. Follow my
lead.

(to the room)

Wait a minute. Did ya'll give
thanks for this bountiful blessing?
Let us pray.

Miles turns to Mother Harris and speaks loudly into her good ear.

MILES (CONT'D)

We praying, Mother Harris.

*

Everyone bows their head in prayer.

While Mother Harris' eyes are closed, Miles starts a mock prayer and an assembly line of muffins being passed down to the end of the table and in the trash.

MILES (CONT'D)

Dear heavenly father...

A beat later, Pastor Johnson walks in. Saved! The meeting is called to order.

DEACON SMITH

Congratulations on the opening of
the clinic, Pastor. That is truly
wonderful.

PASTOR JOHNSON

Good afternoon everyone. And thank
you. Sorry I'm a bit late. I'm
still getting used to how these
media events work. Glad to see you
got started. Let's get down to
business. Angela, can you read the
minutes from last week's meeting?

Angela rises.

ANGELA

Church membership continues to rise each week. The mass choir continues to increase in popularity. Right now they're in rehearsals trying for their third consecutive win at Gospelfest.

MILES

Amen.

PASTOR JOHNSON

Very nice job, Miles.

MILES

Thank you, Pastor. And congratulations on the opening of the clinic. That's pretty amazing.

PASTOR JOHNSON

Thank you, Miles. I'm proud to say we have even more exciting things happening for some of our church programs these days.

The room perks up to listen.

PASTOR JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Thanks to Levi's diligence securing low cost equipment and supplies, Christie is going to be ready for anything over there. Please continue, Angela.

ANGELA

A new program that is really in need is our Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

PASTOR JOHNSON

We need to break the cycle of our youth and young adults giving up on themselves. We need to let them know they are a part of something bigger than themselves.

DEACON SMITH

Yes, Lord.

Levi nods in agreement.

PASTOR JOHNSON

We need a leader for them that can show them anything's possible.

MILES

Well...

PASTOR JOHNSON

What our youth needs is someone they can identify with. Connect to. Build trust with. Encourage hope and faith in their lives.

MILES

Don't you mess around and have church in here now, Pastor.

The entire room is titillated by his words.

PASTOR JOHNSON

We have been discussing a replacement for Executive Pastor ERNIE LESS as he retires after eleven years on the job.

*

Ernie takes a small bow in the room as they acknowledge his many years of service with an applause.

Miles straightens up his posture as he is sure Pastor Johnson will be passing the Executive Pastor torch to him.

PASTOR JOHNSON (CONT'D)

I think God has sent us the right soul for the job in Levi.

A wave of shock and disbelief floods the room. Even Levi is shocked.

LEVI

Wait, me?

PASTOR JOHNSON

Yes, Levi. This is a great platform for you. It's directly in your wheel house.

*

MILES

How you figure he has skills? He can't even keep his own life together.

LEVI

Excuse me?

MILES

Ain't you running from the law or something?

PASTOR JOHNSON

Miles, that's enough. Levi has something that no one else here can teach, experience on getting out of the neighborhood. And you didn't have to rap or play ball to do it. Our young people can benefit from your financial expertise. Kids around here don't have a place to go to get financial knowledge so they can be functioning adults in the future. You could effect change for generations to come.

MILES

I still don't understand how any of that qualifies him to be Executive Pastor. Didn't he blow up his own finances in New York?

*

PASTOR JOHNSON

Let he who is without sin cast the first stone. Levi is going to lead as Executive Pastor. And that's final.

Levi and Miles exchange tense stares.

CUT TO:

INT. CLINIC OF HOPE, WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Miles enters with 'Mother Bad Cook's' muffins in tow.

MILES

Special delivery.

Christie sees the muffins and immediately knows where they came from. She finishes chatting with the last of the clinic looky-loos, then crosses the room to Miles.

*

CHRISTIE

You better get those things out of here. I've got enough sick people to take care of today.

They embrace.

MILES

Girl, you know I'm just messing with you. I love an excuse to make you smile.

The hug is platonic, but their eyes say more.

CHRISTIE

What would make me smile is if you got rid of those things.

They share a laugh. The last few people finally exit, leaving Miles and Christie alone.

MILES

Your mom was in serious trip mode on Sunday.

CHRISTIE

What? Why? What are you talking about?

She walks around the clinic to make sure all is secure before she locks it up for the day.

MILES

I heard she stormed into Pastor's office mad as a hornet, ready to sting your pops, for real.

CHRISTIE

About what?

MILES

They were behind closed doors. So I don't know for sure.

Christie wonders what's going on with her parents, yet remains focused on securing the clinic.

CHRISTIE

Sometimes they trip, but they love each other.

MILES

Yeah, they looked full of love on Sunday. So much so, I might have to turn my church reporter loose on this gossip to get to the real story.

CHRISTIE

Shut up, they're fine. That's just what happens in marriage sometimes, I guess.

They share a slightly uncomfortable look. Miles changes the subject.

MILES

Well, let me ask you something else then.

CHRISTIE

What?

MILES

Why is your pops so gung ho on Levi?

CHRISTIE

You know he's always been the golden child around here.

MILES

Yeah, but why? I'm just trippin' on it because I don't really see the big deal. He's basically here licking his wounds, right? After he got busted for all that insider trading stuff.

CHRISTIE

How do you know anything about that?

MILES

I honestly don't know what it's all about. But it's a mess. I googled it.

CHRISTIE

Levi's a good guy. He's just having a rough time.

MILES

See, now he got you under his spell too!

Christie laughs.

CHRISTIE

Are you worried?

Miles accepts the flirtatious challenge.

MILES

Don't get bit, girl. Looking all
sexy in that doctor's coat.

*

Christie smiles coyly and walks across the room to lock the front door. She takes Miles' hand and leads him to an empty exam room.

INT. CLINIC OF HOPE, EXAM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

*

They enter the exam room, then close and lock the door behind them. They are all over each other the minute the lock engages. Now this is the kind of visit Christie likes.

MILES

Damn girl, it's hard to watch you walking around looking all sexy and I can't do nothing about it. I be wanting to make all kinds of moves.

CHRISTIE

Really? Show me.

Christie lets her lab coat drop to the floor and starts to unbutton her shirt.

MILES

Oh, yeah girl. That's what I'm talking about.

CHRISTIE

Shh. Kiss me.

They have sex standing up against the wall of the examination room.

INT. GREATER HOPE CHURCH, ENTRY STEPS - DAY

Levi is on the church steps skyping on the phone with his daughter, SAVANNAH (8 years old).

SAVANNAH

(via skype)

When are you coming home, daddy?

LEVI

I'm not exactly sure, but I'm working real hard on it, banana.

SAVANNAH

Mommy says you're in the dog house.
Did you get a dog out there, dad?

Levi chuckles at her sweet naivete.

LEVI

No, I wouldn't get a puppy without
you.

SAVANNAH

Then why did mommy say that?

LEVI

It's just an expression. It means
daddy made a mistake and has to fix
it before he can come home.

SAVANNAH

Can you fix it fast? Because I
really miss you.

This kind of sweet encouragement is few and far between these
days for Levi. Talking to Savannah always brings a smile to
his face.

LEVI

I miss you more.

Savannah smiles. A beat later, a HOODED TEEN races by and
snatches his SACHEL. *

Levi jumps up and goes after the Hooded Teen. *

LEVI (CONT'D)

Hey! Hey! Come back here!

Levi's phone crashes against the church steps. Levi chases
the Hooded Teen down the street, behind the church, and down
towards the alley. This kid is fast! *

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Levi taps into his inner high school track star. After
zigging and zagging, he finally tackles the Hooded Teen to
the ground. *

They take a hard tumble. Hooded Teen wrestles to escape
Levi's grasp. *

HOODED TEEN

Hey, let me go. Get off me.

Levi now realizes who he thought was a boy is a girl. Slightly stunned, he addresses the teen.

LEVI
Hey, you're a girl.

HOODED TEEN
So are you. Or at least you run like one.

LEVI
Easy. I'm not the enemy. You stole from me.

HOODED TEEN
Are you going to call the cops? Whatever, I don't care.

This kid talks tough, but is the human equivalent of a wounded puppy.

On second glance, Levi notices the deep bleeding gash on her arm.

LEVI
Nobody's calling the cops. Come on. I know a place to get patched up.

HOODED TEEN
What? Why?

LEVI
It's either that or bleed out on the pavement. Your choice.

Levi escorts her towards the health clinic. They're both a bit banged up from their tumble.

EXT. GREATER HOPE CHURCH, FRONT - CONTINUOUS

*

They hear the church choir rehearsing on their way to the clinic.

INT. CLINIC OF HOPE, EXAM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Christie and Miles finish their sexy romp, and pull themselves back together before stepping out.

*

INT. CLINIC OF HOPE, WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Christie exits the exam room wearing her lab coat inside out and looking very relaxed.

Levi arrives unannounced at the clinic just as Miles is about to exit the exam room. Christie shoves him back in and shuts the door, then crosses the room to greet Levi.

Christie is a little thrown to see Levi, especially with this troubled teen in tow.

CHRISTIE

Levi, what are you doing here?

Christie scans the surroundings for Miles.

LEVI

Hey Christie, do you have time for a patient in need? My friend here-

Levi looks at Hooded Teen waiting for her to insert her name.

HOODED TEEN

Jesse.

LEVI

Jesse has hurt her hand a bit and needs some medical attention.

Christie's a little jumpy and stressed.

CHRISTIE

Ok fine, no problem. Let me take a look.

Christie speeds through the motions while examining Jesse.

CHRISTIE (CONT'D)

(to Levi)

Hey, you might need some patching up too.

Levi has no idea what she's talking about.

CHRISTIE (CONT'D)

You have a cut near your eye.

Christie pulls Levi to the mirror. Levi can see the cut. *

LEVI

Oh, wow. I didn't even feel anything happen.

CHRISTIE
(examining cut)
You're going to need a stitch.

Christie cleans and bandages Jesse's wound, then turns her attention to Levi and quickly preps him for a stitch.

LEVI
How are those new X-ray machines
working out?

Miles cracks the exam room door to see if the coast is clear. Shoot, it's not. And Jesse just saw him peek out the door. *

CHRISTIE
They're really great. Thank you.

Levi notices Christie acting weirdly anxious. Jesse notices too and starts to connect the dots.

LEVI
You okay, Christie?

CHRISTIE
Me? Yes, I'm perfect. You?

Jesse interrupts.

JESSE
(to Levi)
Hey, what's your name again?

LEVI
Levi. And this is Doctor Christie Johnson. You should thank her for patching up your arm.

JESSE
Oh yeah, thank you. Pretty lucky you weren't examining any other patients before we got here.

Christie shoots Jesse a look and starts to realize she knows what's up. Their eyes connect knowingly.

LEVI
(oblivious)
Yes, very lucky.

JESSE
Anyway, Levi, can we go? I'm starving. Is there any place to eat around here?

LEVI

Oh, this is definitely your lucky day. We have the best ribs in Atlanta just two blocks up. Let's go. See you, Christie. Thanks.

*

They begin to walk out. Christie and Jesse share a final knowing look. Then Levi stops in his tracks.

LEVI (CONT'D)

Wait..

Christie fears Levi just figured out what's going on.

INT. CLINIC OF HOPE, EXAM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Miles holds his breath in the exam room, thinking they are caught. He looks around to hedge his escape options.

INT. CLINIC OF HOPE, MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

JESSE

What?

LEVI

(to Jesse)

Aren't you forgetting something?

Jesse seems perplexed and looks at Christie for answers.

LEVI (CONT'D)

You forgot to thank Dr. Christie.

Christie, Jesse and Miles let out a collective sigh of relief.

JESSE

Oh, thank you, Doctor Christie.

*

CHRISTIE

Your welcome.

Levi and Christie head out the door. Once the door shuts behind them, Miles exits the exam room.

MILES

Damn, you think they saw us?

Christie looks at Miles concerned, not exactly sure what to say.

CUT TO:

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE, OUTER OFFICE - DAY

MAYOR PAMELA CLAYBORNE (late 40s) stands in the bullpen of her outer office, discussing her schedule with her secretary.

MAYOR CLAYBORNE

Are we confirmed this Thursday with the Governor?

CAMPAIGN SECRETARY

Yes. Confirmed. On Friday, the school district wants a sit down about the pending teachers' strike.

Across the room, Lady Ella enters. She makes her way over to the Mayor and interrupts.

LADY ELLA

Your honor?

MAYOR CLAYBORNE

Mrs. Johnson. Hello.
(to secretary)
Are we through here?

CAMPAIGN SECRETARY

Yes, your honor.

MAYOR CLAYBORNE

Right this way, Mrs. Johnson.

They walk and talk on their way to the mayor's private office. Secret service trail behind their walk.

LADY ELLA

Thank you for seeing me on such short notice.

MAYOR CLAYBORNE

I'm always thrilled to help. What's our cause today?

LADY ELLA

Well, we have quite a few promising students in our 'Run The World' program, where we give inspiration to teens and girls about taking their lives to the next level.

MAYOR CLAYBORNE

Really? Sounds like a worthwhile cause.

LADY ELLA

It really is. And if you could attend our annual dinner, it would really help our fundraiser.

INT. MAYOR'S PRIVATE OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Leaving the mayor's security detail behind, they finally have privacy. Both of their demeanors instantly become more relaxed.

LADY ELLA

You got the highlights. They look good.

MAYOR CLAYBORNE

Thank you. I wasn't sure at first.

LADY ELLA

I told you, you can't go wrong with Mr. Patrick.

MAYOR CLAYBORNE

What's going on?

LADY ELLA

I need a favor.

MAYOR CLAYBORNE

What kind of favor?

LADY ELLA

I need your help with buying me a little time to sort it out.

MAYOR CLAYBORNE

How much time?

LADY ELLA

How much time can you give me?

MAYOR CLAYBORNE

You know I have to announce my bid
for Governor soon.

LADY ELLA

Yes, I know.

MAYOR CLAYBORNE

Followed by my endorsement of you.
In order for me to do so, your
platform must be above reproach.
If you don't think it's the right
time, I need to know right now.

Feeling the heat, Lady Ella asserts herself.

LADY ELLA

I am ready. And it is the right
time for me to run. Some wiggle
room is all I'm asking.

MAYOR CLAYBORNE

Whatever it is you need to figure
out, do it quick. I can slow things
down a day or two, but then it's
out of my hands.

LADY ELLA

Thank you!

MAYOR CLAYBORNE

Now, is there anything else you
need?

LADY ELLA

Just you.

Lady Ella walks over to Mayor Clayborne and stands behind her
slightly too close.

Mayor Clayborne turns around to face Lady Ella.

They share an intimate kiss.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. LEVI'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - MORNING

The clock ticks its way to 6AM. Levi lies wide awake in bed.

His smart phone begins to ring. The screen saver is a picture of Savannah. The display says the caller is his wife, 'ELIZABETH STERLING.' He answers the phone.

LEVI

Hello.

ELIZABETH (PHONE)

I knew you'd be up already.

LEVI

Hey. What's up?

ELIZABETH

Did you hear about Blake Scott?

LEVI

Yeah, I saw it on the news.

ELIZABETH

I wasn't sure I was even going to tell you. You okay?

LEVI

Yeah. I'm alright.

ELIZABETH (PHONE)

I spoke to my source in the DA's office, and they said he's cutting a deal to name names. I'm getting really scared Levi.

LEVI

That isn't going to be me, Liz. Trust me, I don't want to be here any longer than I have to. I'm working on getting back home to you and Savannah as soon as I can.

ELIZABETH

You don't know that. Dammit, I just wish you would have listened to me, Levi.

He feels her frustration.

LEVI

I know. I'm sorry things went down like this. I'm going to figure it out. I promise.

ELIZABETH

That's the exact same thing you said that got us into this mess in the first place.

LEVI

I know. Just give me a chance to make things right. I love you. Kiss Savannah for me.

ELIZABETH

I love you too.

Levi hangs up the phone. He struggles to figure out his next move.

CUT TO:

EXT. GREATER HOPE CHURCH, ENTRY STEPS - DAY

*

Miss Jill is in full swing. Levi arrives at the church and spots Jesse. He confronts her.

LEVI

I was hoping you learned your lesson yesterday. Especially since I didn't call the cops.

Jesse has trouble looking Levi in the eye.

People entering the church keep threading past them. Every time the church doors swing open, we hear a little snippet of the choir's rehearsal song.

JESSE

Yeah, well I just wanted to say sorry about that.

LEVI

Tell you what. We can forget all about it if you come inside the church with me. They're having choir rehearsal. Our choir is famous! Two-time National Gospel Choir Champs.

JESSE

What is that?

LEVI

You don't know about gospel choir competitions? What are they teaching you kids in school these days? Come on, I saw you tapping your feet a second ago.

JESSE

No I wasn't.

At that moment, she notices TAJ heading into church. Immediately, sparks fly.

LEVI

We have a choir too. They're always looking for new members.

JESSE

I don't do choirs or church.

Levi clocks the sparks between the two and holds the door open for Jesse.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Ok. Maybe for just a minute.

They enter the church.

INT. VERNON'S BARBERSHOP - DAY

Pastor Johnson sits in the barber's chair, waiting to be edged up. Sportscenter is on the TV. There's the usual suspects around: PATRONS, BARBERS AT THEIR STATIONS, GUY SELLING BOOTLEG DVDS.

Pastor Johnson settles into the chair and talks sports with VERNON.

PASTOR JOHNSON

There are too many free agents. I can't tell who's on what anymore. It's more about the players, not the team.

VERNON

That keeps the game exciting. Any team's got a shot at the championship.

PASTOR JOHNSON

See, the game isn't only about winning. It's also about sportsmanship.

BARER #2

Those dudes are winning either way with those fat contracts they be having.

VERNON

And the endorsements. Oh my God! Oh, sorry Pastor.

PASTOR JOHNSON

It's alright. I understand what you mean. Those endorsements are no joke.

The room chuckles.

BARER #2

You should come shoot hoops with us, Pastor. I know you got game.

PASTOR JOHNSON

You young bloods can't handle my game.

The room laughs harder.

BARBER #1

For real, Pastor. You should come out.

REX LIMENY enters and the mood instantly changes. Patrons and barbers scatter until the room is completely empty except for Rex and Pastor Johnson.

REX

What's up, Easy.

PASTOR JOHNSON

Hey Rex.

Rex pours himself and Pastor Johnson a drink.

REX

How's the family?

PASTOR JOHNSON

Everyone's good.

REX

Ella keeping you on your toes?

PASTOR JOHNSON

Always.

REX

That prodigal son of yours keeping
it thorough?

PASTOR JOHNSON

He's trying to keep his head down.

REX

I hear you got problems.

PASTOR JOHNSON

Just a little money source problem.
It's handled.

REX

It's not handled until I get my
money.

PASTOR JOHNSON

You'll get your money.

REX

When?

Suddenly, the fun has left the room.

PASTOR JOHNSON

I just need some time to move
things around.

REX

All I've given you is time. Times
up. What I look like? I'm not the
one who got in over his head and
can't back it up.

Pastor Johnson starts to get agitated.

PASTOR JOHNSON

Hey, I told you I got it worked out.
You don't need to come at me like this.

REX

The hell I don't. I agreed to two
weeks because we boys as it is. I
need my money in twenty-four hours.

(MORE)

REX (CONT'D)

After that, I cash in the
collateral.

PASTOR JOHNSON

Rex, you can't do that!

REX

Watch me.

PASTOR JOHNSON

Rex, what am I going to do if
someone checks the church deed and
finds out I turned it over to you?

REX

That's not my problem.

Rex downs the rest of his drink and stares Pastor Johnson right
in the eyes. Pastor Johnson knows his time is almost up.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. LEVI'S GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - MORNING

Levi wakes up restless in his bed. Annoyed by the sound of the roof creaking and cracking, he heads to the roof to check it out.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - MORNING

Out for her morning run, Christie spots Levi on the roof and jogs over.

EXT. LEVI'S HOUSE, FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

CHRISTIE

Hey. What are you doing up so early?

From the roof, Levi turns to see Christie standing in the front yard.

LEVI

I'd ask you the same, but it's pretty obvious. Come in and have a coffee. I'll come down and let you in.

*

Christie walks across the lawn to the front door and notices the 'FOR SALE' SIGN. The front door swings open.

CHRISTIE

I can't believe you're selling your grandmother's house.

LEVI

Yeah I know. It could be yours for the right price.

CHRISTIE

Remember when you climbed that tree running from EJ and fell and broke your arm?

LEVI

Oh yeah, I almost forgot about that.

They chuckle a bit as Christie enters.

INT. LEVI'S GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - MORNING

*

LEVI

I remember being impressed that you
didn't gross out.

CHRISTIE

Yeah, I was always the skinny
awkward girl following you and EJ
around.

LEVI

You weren't always skinny.

Christie nervously changes the subject.

CHRISTIE

I used to come by and check on your
grandmother after you left.

LEVI

I know. She told me.

Levi gets a CUP OF COFFEE for Christie. They head to the
roof.

INT. LEVI'S HOUSE, STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

As they walk through the home to the roof. Christie comments
on all the old photos framed on the walls.

CHRISTIE

Wow, these photos take me back.

Christie gets a slide show of Levi's childhood as she looks
at all the photos on display. Her eyes rest on a photo of
herself and Levi as teenagers.

LEVI

That's a great pic.

CHRISTIE

I really miss those days.
Everything was so much simpler
then.

LEVI

Yeah, I definitely miss the simple
life.

Christie and Levi share a weighty stare, remembering their history as each other's 'first'.

EXT. LEVI'S GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE, ROOF - MOMENTS LATER

*

Levi and Christie share coffee on the roof. Waxing nostalgic.

CHRISTIE

Wow, I can't believe we're up here again. We used to sit up here forever fantasizing about our dream jobs.

LEVI

Your dad is really proud of you. And I think Lady Ella is too. Hard to tell with that beauty queen smile permanently on her face.

CHRISTIE

Ha. Mom does enjoy her PR moments. How have things been going for you being back at the church?

LEVI

I'm grateful for the work. But I don't think your dad understands I'm only here until I get this house sold.

CHRISTIE

Can you blame him? His dream has always been for you to follow in his footsteps.

Christie uses a mock preacher's voice.

CHRISTIE (CONT'D)

You know the Lord works in mysterious ways.

LEVI

Oh, not you too now.

CHRISTIE

Couldn't resist. So what's the next move?

LEVI

I wish I knew.

CHRISTIE

Well, whatever it is, I'm sure
you'll land on your feet. You
always do.

Christie holds up an embarrassing photo of Levi in extremely
tight gymnastics pants.

LEVI

Oh wait. That was a phase. Nobody
knows about that.

They laugh together. Levi tries to playfully wrestle the
picture away from Christie.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT (ESTABLISHING)

EXT. JOHNSON ESTATE, DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Pastor Johnson arrives to his upscale home in a quiet
neighborhood, and rolls to a stop in his driveway. Finally
he's safely home after a long day.

He exits the car, then hears a car engine roar to life. A
second later, headlights pierce the dark night. This
immediately grabs Pastor Johnson's attention.

The car rolls slowly past the home. The driver silently
stares at Pastor Johnson as he rolls by.

Pastor Johnson watches the car roll out of view. Now he's
seriously worried.

INT. JOHNSON ESTATE - NIGHT

Pastor makes his way upstairs to his bedroom.

INT. JOHNSON ESTATE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lady Ella lies in bed, already asleep. Trying not to disturb
her slumber, he moves silently through the room and begins to
undress. Suddenly, Lady Ella speaks.

LADY ELLA

What's wrong?

Pastor is startled that she's awake, and even more startled
by her question.

PASTOR JOHNSON

What?

Lady Ella responds sleepily, never moving her sleep position.

LADY ELLA

You smell like cigar smoke. You
only smoke cigars when something is
really bothering you.

Lady Ella sits up in bed, then turns on the side table lamp
so she can see his face.

Pastor is loving her and cursing her for knowing him so well.
It's a tender side of their relationship most never see. He
looks into Lady Ella's eyes, unable to hide his worry.

INT. JOHNSON ESTATE, BEDROOM - MORNING

Pastor sleeps peacefully alone in his bed.

Suddenly, A BUCKET OF ICE COLD WATER is thrown in his face.

He's startled awake, not knowing what's going on.

Soaking wet, he clears his eyes and looks at the figure
standing in front of him holding the empty bucket. It's the
same guy from the car the night before.

Pastor looks past him to see a SECOND INTRUDER covering
terrified Lady Ella's mouth and holding her back.

All three are staring back at Pastor.

INTRUDER #1

Where's the rest of the money?

INTRUDER #1 takes out a huge scary looking knife.

Lady Ella's blood curdling scream is muffled by the second
intruder's hand over her mouth.

Intruder #1 moves closer to the disoriented Pastor Johnson
and asks the same question again.

INTRUDER #1 (CONT'D)

Where's the rest of the money?

This time, he presses the knife HARD against Pastor's wet
cheek. He begins to methodically dig the knife into his face.

Pastor Johnson's eyes become huge as he clarifies the moment.

Lady Ella still struggles, her muffled screams in the background.

Intruder #1 digs the knife into his cheek even harder and draws blood. It trickles down Pastor's face. The gravity and pain of the moment sync up and he starts to panic. *

INTRUDER #1 (CONT'D)
Don't make me ask you again!

The knife is dug even deeper now.

Pastor Johnson can no longer withstand the pain. He shuts his eyes tight and screams loud.

INT. JOHNSON ESTATE, BEDROOM - MORNING

Mid-scream, Pastor Johnson opens his eyes. The room is quiet and empty. He was dreaming. Thank God!

Lady Ella wakes up startled next to him.

LADY ELLA
Are you okay?
(slight beat)
You've been restless all night.
What's going on?

Relieved he was only dreaming, he calms himself, then looks at his wife, his breathing labored, staring at her as if he has something to say.

He holds her tight for a beat, then whispers in her ear.

Lady Ella's face reacts in horror to what she's being told.

Music enters the scene. Off her reaction, we:

CUT TO:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD SIDEWALK - EVENING

Taj grabs his belongings off the basketball court.

INT. BIG E'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

The hammer of the gun is cocked at the back of Pastor Johnson's head.

PASTOR JOHNSON

Wait, no. It wasn't supposed to be
this way.

The gunman pulls the trigger.

BANG!

END OF EPISODE

MAIN TITLES: "SAINTS AND SINNERS"