

BOY ERASED

Written By

JOEL EDGERTON

Based on the memoir written by Garrard Conley

EXT. MEMPHIS SKY / CARPARK, 2004 - DAY

We hold on a big slice of MEMPHIS BLUE SKY. The only sound is the out of focus American flag whipped by wind in the distance. Soon after we hear, but don't see -

A car pull up on the gravelled asphalt and -

The beeping of the door as it opens. From it spills the radio sounding out the '90s country hit -

'Check Yes or No' by George Strait.

GEORGE STRAIT

*I think this is how love goes.
Check yes or no.*

And - a fresh faced young man, 18, stands up filling the frame, looking out into the distance.

This is JARED EAMONS.

He wears an ultra crisp white shirt buttoned to the neck with no tie. He is slim and wears his hair cropped short.

The camera moves slightly to take in an out of focus church cross atop a basic baptist steeple ahead of him. All the while - that distant American flag, flapping in the breeze, flanks him from behind.

A second door opens O.S., spilling out that music again -

GEORGE STRAIT (CONT'D)

*Now we're grown up, and she's my
wife. Still like two kids and stars
in our eyes.*

- and now -

Jared's mother NANCY steps into frame. She is made up to the nines: bottle blonde voluminous hair, hoop earrings and thick mascara. Underneath her heavy make-up we can see concern.

She slides on Jackie O sunglasses and looks out toward the steeple as Jared turns toward the flag. They both seem lost. Nancy hides her concern behind the shades, tries a bright smile and, out comes her chirpy southern voice -

NANCY

Are you ready, honey?

Jared looks away for a beat, then turns with a convincing smile and starts walking. They leave frame.

INT. L.I.A. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

L.I.A. is an acronym for 'Love In Action' -- But we should not know that yet. There is no signage.

Grey-blue carpet covers an expansive floor space. Stark white walls with no hangings or decorations. Some empty basic chairs lining one section of wall. Heavy doors lead off to unknown rooms. A potted plant in a corner seems an afterthought.

N.B.: For now we should see it as a dry, clinical facility. It should feel like a juvenile detention center of some kind.

-- Through the glass of the aluminum framed doors we see Jared and Nancy approach uncertainly - then enter.

Nancy's ensemble is elegant, if not a little gaudy and mismatched: a Southern Belle dress and a shoulder padded coat. She wears heels and clutches a white bedazzled purse.

Jared's white shirt is tucked into a pair of brand new khakis with no belt. He wears rubber soled black shoes and holds a book in a blue plastic shopping bag.

They look an odd pair: A tall 'Tammy Baker' mother escorting her awkward, ultra conservative, son.

MALE VOICE O.S

I help you? What's your name?

Nancy turns, taking her sunglasses off.

AARON (40s) stands inside a reception booth: Stocky, with a severe hair-cut, he puts a clipboard on the reception ledge.

NANCY

Nancy.

AARON

The kid I mean. Unless you're the one checking in.

Jared and Nancy, side by side at the reception desk, sign the clipboard document. Aaron stands erect with his authority inside the booth. He too wears khakis and a white shirt, along with a blue tie and a name badge. He sizes Jared up.

AARON (CONT'D)

Let's get you checked in properly
Jared. Wanna say your good-byes?

He comes out from the door of his reception booth.

NANCY
Can I see the place?

AARON
Afraid you won't be allowed beyond
the reception area Missus Eamons.
You can pick him up at five P.M.

On Nancy, uncertain --

JARED
It's okay mom.

NANCY
Call me if you need anything. I'll
be at the hotel and on my cell ph--

AARON
We'll be holding his cell-phone. If
there are any emergencies we will
contact you. Otherwise, five P.M.

Aaron punches a code into the door and the door mechanism releases with a mechanical buzz.

Jared and Aaron pass through the secure door to a hallway, leaving Nancy waving nervously goodbye.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jared walks ahead as Aaron follows him. When Jared turns, the blank expression on Aaron's face troubles him a little.

AARON
Door on the right.

They stop in front of the third door and Aaron knocks. Soon -

A tall, skinny blonde man (Michael, 24) answers the door. His shark grey, piercing eyes are almost permanently set in a judgmental frown, giving him a mean-streak air.

AARON (CONT'D)
Newbie. Eamons.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Michael picks through Jared's possessions, scrutinizing each thing placed down: coins; cash; gum; a plastic hotel key-card; the bag containing the book, and; his wallet.

He starts going through the wallet, while throwing the gum in the trash. Jared reacts.

Jared holds out his cell phone unsure who to give it to. Aaron takes it from Jared and puts it with the pile.

MICHAEL

Do you have any numbers or photos
we need to be concerned about?

On Jared. Thinks. Shakes his head slowly. It reads like he is not convinced. Michael's eyes drill into him.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

We will check this daily for any
'False Imaging' and call any
numbers we want to at random. So
best you be straight with all this.

JARED

There is nothing... And yeah, call
whatever numbers if you need to.

Michael, now back in the wallet, holds up a business card. And flips it... a handwritten cell number on the back.

MICHAEL

Who will answer if I call this
number?

JARED

Umm. It is my doctor.
(beat)
It's her off hours number. I forgot
it was even there.

MICHAEL

Anything else?

Aaron starts to pat Jared down. He finds something --

JARED

Oh. Yeah. This. It's...

From his back waistband he pulls a moleskin notebook. Michael takes it and flicks through. It feels like a personal intrusion to Jared, who leans forward.

JARED (CONT'D)

It's just... I write stories
sometimes. I'm at college studying
and... I forgot cause it's --

MICHAEL

You have to start getting a better memory. Trust is one of the key words around here. No journaling. We'll need to read this. Again, for any false imaging.

(to Aaron)

It's almost nine. -

JARED

Sure. Will I get this stuff back?

MICHAEL

Most things you get back at the end each day.

JARED

That's fine. It's just stuff I -

Aaron starts to usher Jared out.

MICHAEL O.S

Forgetting something else?

Hold. Jared already feels in trouble. Then Michael takes Jared's L.I.A. handbook from the plastic bag. On it we see a logo: an upside down triangle with a red heart in it.

MICHAEL

You need the handbook at all times. Good luck.

JARED

Thank you.

It's the only warmth Michael has offered thus far. Meager.

INT/EXT L.I.A. HALLWAYS - DAY

Jared is led by Aaron. As he turns the corner he looks back and sees another young person being led to the check in area.

- They walk out a door and under an awning toward a larger building.

INT. L.I.A. MAIN AUDITORIUM - DAY

Jared, wearing a name tag, finds a seat and settles into a semi circle of chairs with TEN OTHERS: a half dozen teens and young people; a few in their twenties and thirties, and; one guy in his forties. Three women. Mostly boys. They all take out their handbooks. We take in their faces as we hear -

- The rules read out, starting with Carl: super conservative (25), likely taking time out his retail managerial position.

CARL

'Sobriety. No smoking. No alcohol,
or drugs.'

And the CREDITS will appear over -

-- during the rules we will intercut with various *historical religious paintings and other images* --

The Last Supper by Dagnan-Bouveret, Jesus holds up a wine.

And now to Sarah... (tomboy-ish teenager - all of 16)

SARAH

'Off hours. All clients to remain
within the 'Safe Zone areas as
designated.'

Les Romains de la Décadence, Thomas Couture.

Credits continue over -- *An aerial shot of Memphis.* Then -
shots of basic, boring diners and hotels.

*Family Portrait by Gillis van Tilborgh. NB: The withering
look of the central bored male pilgrim facing the viewer.*

Now - Cameron. Cropped hair. All of 17, he is a hulking line-
backer in the making with a baby face. He reads nervously.

CAMERON

'Hygiene. Men to shave facial hair,
and women to remove underarm and
leg hair daily.'

*Toilette der Esther - Théodore Chassériau, depicting an
immoral woman with outstretched arms. No hair visible.*

CREDITS continue as we move to LEE. Lee is the SLIM BOY who
peeked at Jared in hall. Well: Lee is actually gender fluid.
Non-Binary. Most people, in fact, would have a hard time
being certain of Lee's gender. Lee's voice is no guide either
way. It is soft and intelligent.

LEE

'Attire. Men to wear long sleeves
and pants at all times.'

*Portrait of Jesus by Del Parson, where a blonde Jesus has his
hands outstretched in an almost 'you dig my robe?' gesture.*

LEE O.S

'Women's skirts must extend below the knee and bras are to be worn at all times.'

The Virgin Mary in the Rose Garden - Albert Edelfelt

We see a flash of a brassier catalogue: dry but sexual.

Now PHILLIP (30s. Balding and short. The guy from the hallway when Jared first arrived.)

PHILLIP

'Visitations and phone calls to be pre-approved by L.I.A. staff.'

The Religious imagery continues. Credits too.

And over to SIMON (40. I.T. Worker type)

SIMON

'Confidentiality. All matters discussed in therapy are to remain private.'

The Last Supper: Leonardo Da Vinci. Close on whisperings.

ANDERS, 17, is fidgety and freckled.

ANDERS

'Restrooms. Members must be supervised by staff during rest-room visits.'

GARY (20s). Even under the crisp khaki and white uniform we can still tell he is a 'Goth': dyed black hair; pale complexion, and; black converse. He is slight of frame, handsome and super smart.

GARY

'Sexual misconduct. No viewing of pornographic material.'

His reading carries a thinly veiled cynicism that tells us he does NOT believe L.I.A. and does NOT want to be here.

Jan Breughel & Marshall Paul Rubens: The Garden of Eden. Then

-

A flash of male pornography.

GARY (CONT'D)

'No masturbation. No physical contact with any members or non members at any time apart from the briefest of handshakes.'

The Last Judgement by Michelangelo depicting men kissing men. Push in. We may keep returning to this image -

TINA, 27 - super conservative librarian's hairstyle. Glasses.

TINA

'False Imagery. Cell phones will be checked in and out each day. Without exception.'

We see flashes of pornographic images PLUS innocent images of men in modern society with their arms around each other.

As the credits wind up it is Jared's turn now.

JARED

'Sinful, salacious and extraneous materials. All reading material, films and television are off limits while inside the program.'

Hold on Jared --

SYKES O.S

Very good. Let's leave it there.

Jared and the rest of the group respond to the voice. Someone new has entered.

Closer on The Last Judgement - Michelangelo.

CREDITS END --

INT. L.I.A. MAIN AUDITORIUM

Tight on the various faces as they listen to --

SYKES O.S

'I am using sexual sin and homosexuality to fill a God shaped void in my life.'

GROUP

(repeating)

'I am using sexual sin and homosexuality to fill a God shaped void in my life.'

Jared looks around to see the DOZEN or more people that have entered and line the back walls. Various men and women of all ages. Mostly young. A similar cross section to the seated group.

SYKES O.S

'But... I am not broken and God loves me.'

They repeat.

SYKES O.S (CONT'D)

Somebody tell me what this is.

And finally Sykes steps into frame. A man in his mid-forties. Greying cropped hair. Piercing eyes. A blue shirt and black pleated trousers. The only one deviating from the dress code here. He holds up a dollar bill.

SIMON

A dollar.

SYKES O.S

No matter how much you crumple up a dollar bill, you can never take away its value. Even if you rip it, which would represent our being severed from Christ, you can tape it back together.

Jared following the logic, soaking up all wisdom.

SYKES

Jesus puts us back together, and even though there is a scar, our value does not change.

Behind Sykes is the only signage: The same 'heart' logo from the handbook cover.

Jared looks across at the androgynous boy, Lee. Out of everyone Lee seems the most terrified.

SYKES (CONT'D)

You are somebody. You are worth something. And that's a fact.

The door opens, interrupting Sykes, and in jogs a young, attractive boy in his late teens. Breathless.

SYKES (CONT'D)

Nine-O-five Jon.

JON

Sorry. Had to run here. Apologies.

Jon takes a seat. Dressed the same as the rest of the group, his cowboy boots are the only thing that sets him apart.

Jared can't help but steal a look as Jon slouches in his chair. As Sykes continues, Jon hurriedly fixes the last couple of high buttons on his shirt. Sweat has rendered patches of the shirt see-through. Jon catches Jared looking, who turns away guiltily.

SYKES

Thank you Jon.

(beat)

Well, I want to welcome all you brave souls. I know the road here wasn't easy for many of you, but I promise you a smoother ride now that you are here. Welcome to 'The Refuge' program.

All of the men and women lining the walls follow Sykes's lead in applauding the NEWCOMERS that are Jared's group.

SYKES (CONT'D)

Okay, you guys. Get back to your schedules.

And with that, all of the men and women lining the walls start to file out. Jared watches them.

SYKES (CONT'D)

(to Jared's group)

So we can get down to business.

He crumples the dollar bill and throws it to Cameron, who catches it.

SYKES (CONT'D)

Don't spend it all at once.

Jared feels buoyed by Sykes's rhetoric and light energy in the room.

SYKES (CONT'D)

This may be the toughest but the most rewarding twelve days many of you will ever face.

(Jared and four others)

We have only one task. Simply to bring ourselves back to God. To invite Him back in. T'understand how he truly *meant* to create us.

(MORE)

SYKES (CONT'D)

Before those pieces got torn away.

(beat)

*'What sinful things have you done?'
And to ask God's forgiveness.*

(beat)

Discover who made you this way.

'Who led you into sin?'

(beat)

*And get you on the right path to a
life restored.*

(beat)

I tell you, we are all about to go
on a wonderful journey together.

Who's ready?

(smiles)

That was a question.

Everyone either raises their hands, nods, or utters 'yes.'

SYKES (CONT'D)

If you are ready, say 'Amen.'

EVERYONE/JARED

Amen.

SYKES

If you know you're worth a dollar,
say 'Amen.'

Jared feels suddenly good and swept up in the new atmosphere
in the room. For the first time we see him smile.

SNAP TO BLACK:

EVERYONE O.S

Amen.

TITLE: BOY ERASED

As the title disappears, a more personal silence develops.

JARED O.S

Please Lord, make me pure.

INT. L.I.A MAIN AUDITORIUM - MID MORNING

It's tea break. Jared sips tea as he looks around.

- Sykes speaks to a fellow staff member.

- Sarah sits alone, eating cut carrots and celery.
- Lee sits doing nothing. Totally lost.
- Nearby, Jon talks with Carl; the super conservative managerial type. Then Jon salutes him in a casual, military style. During this Jon and Jared catch eyes.

Sykes claps his hands together.

SYKES

Okay. Bring it in.

Jared approaches his chair. Next to him is the VERY large and very young, linebacker-type, CAMERON. A gentle giant.

The sneakers, the calloused hands, and the crew cut suggest he was probably blocking a touchdown rush last Friday night to the roar of his high school home crowd. Now, for reasons that he seemed to be puzzling in his head, he had found himself locked in at L.I.A.: The roaring stadium bleachers now replaced by a prison.

Jared and Cameron acknowledge each other. He is painfully shy, clutching his L.I.A. handbook, wishing it was just his team's playbook. Something he fully understood.

Jared catches eyes again with Jon, who gives him a mini salute.

SYKES O.S.

Who can tell us what a Genogram is?

INT. L.I.A. MAIN AUDITORIUM - AFTERNOON

On the group. Finally, Phillip raises his hand.

PHILLIP

A Genogram is like a family tree. Only, one that shows patterns of family behavior as well. But, like, an illustrated one.

SYKES

Someone read the handbook. Thank you, Phillip.

Michael moves through the room with big sheets of butcher paper and plastic tubs of colored sharpies for each member.

SYKES (CONT'D)

A Genogram shows hereditary patterns and behavioral clues in our families. It traces the history behind our sinful behavior.

(beat)

Be as expressive as you will, but write a list or draw these folk in your family. Anyone of influence to you as you grew up too. Blood or otherwise. First sexual partners even. Teachers. Coaches.

Jared looks across at the other members, curious of their various stories and histories.

Sykes goes to a board where Michael is furiously writing up a list of 'behaviors.'

SYKES (CONT'D)

Then write next to these people, their sins --

All members, old and young, start to sprawl out on the ground like children drawing. Jon and Sarah, already familiar with the task, are writing out family names and drawing etc...

SYKES (CONT'D)

Michael --

Michael's sounds out the codes.

MICHAEL O.S.

A. Alcoholism. P. Promiscuity. H for homosexuality. D for drugs. A Money sign for Gambling. M for mental illness. Big A little b for abortion. G slash C for gang or crime involvement. Big P little o for pornography.

Jared looks to big Cameron as he writes slowly -- M..o..m

SYKES

You're forgetting... oh 'Dv.'

MICHAEL

Oh, sorry. Big D little v for domestic violence.

Cameron now adds 'Dv' next to his Dad.

SYKES

Call them out in your Genogram.
Because I can guarantee, and you
may not even realize it yet but,
one or some of these people are to
blame for why you are here.

Jared looks down at his page. He has listed - *Dad, Mom, Grandpa W, Grandma W. Nan. Poppy. Uncle Chris. Aunt Minny.* Now, his hand wavers over what to mark any of them as. Sykes's feet step before Jared's poster.

SYKES O.S.

Search your mind and you'll find
something.

Sykes crouches down. Jared, out of fear of coming up blank, writes 'A?' Next to Uncle Chris.

SYKES

You know or you don't know. 'Uncle
Chris is an alcoholic.'

Jared erases the '?'. He looks at Sykes's feet, thinks, and then writes Chloe... 'P' - (promiscuous)

PRE-LAP - The roar of a crowd.

INT. ST. MARTIN'S AUDITORIUM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK - 2003)

Packed bleachers out of focus. Then in poetic slow motion we see a BEAUTIFUL YOUNG CHEERLEADER fly into frame. A sequined red, white and blue uniform with a big 'M' on the chest. She throws a shape in slow motion, beaming a THOUSAND WATT smile.

Title card : CHLOE

Gravity takes her away again, but soon she is back, bending into an even more brilliant and dynamic shape.

WAYNE O.S

Chloe wants to have sex with you.

She lands now, in real time and the sound returns to normal.

Jared sits on the bench, leaning into his friend Wayne. He didn't hear. Basketball players press in front of them.

WAYNE

I said Chloe is down to do it.
She's been asking Mindy and Mindy
has been positive for obvious
reasons. So you can thank me.

Before Jared can respond - The buzzer rings sounds and the
St. Martin's Colonels, basketball team are in a GROUP HUG.

Soon, friends and family members are among them offering
congratulations.

Jared's parents approach. We recognize Nancy but his dad we
will now meet: MARSHALL. He limps over in a mismatched blazer
and pants. A sturdy man in his 50s.

NANCY

Yay!!! You set up so many points. I
saw -

MARSHALL

- Most underrated component of the
game, assists. And you scored some
too. Congratulations.

A handshake turns into a hug. A rare commodity.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

That's victory sweat.

NANCY

Eww.

JARED

I only played five minutes.

Chloe approaches --

CHLOE

Yay!! Congratulations!!! Woo-hoo!!!

She hugs Jared still holding her pom-poms.

MARSHALL

(lights up re: Chloe)
And weren't you something. Another
underrated component of the game.

Nancy playfully hits her husband.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

Moral support. Seriously. How high
up were you just now?

NANCY

We were worried. What if they
dropped you?

Chloe takes Jared's hand.

MARSHALL

You kids going to celebrate?

Marshall holds up a Ford key. It's a big deal, his father
giving him the keys to the car.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

It's yours.

(off Jared's surprise)

The dealership are putting me in a
new Explorer Sport. You deserve it.
Have fun.

Jared launches in to hug his dad. Chloe joins.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

It was going to be for your
birthday. Congratulations.

JARED

Wayne!!

He holds up the keys to his teammate and friend, Wayne.

MARSHALL

No more people than it has seat
belts.

INT. JARED'S '02 FORD MUSTANG - NIGHT. ARKANSAS. SUMMER.

A JAMMED CAR. Just the opposite of what his father ordered.

Jared and Chloe ride up front. In the back are two couples:
Wayne and Mindy, along with Lance and Cheryl.

As they pass parked cars, and kids walking, we see a LAKE in
the B.G. KIDS are already stripping down and jumping in.

They park and everyone goes to get out. Chloe pulls Jared
back for a kiss. After a couple of attempts he pulls away.

JARED

Come on.

EXT. LAKE - NIGHT

A sprawl of wet, undressing youth all in bathers or underwear.

Jared strips down and heads for his teammates who are already splashing in the water. He passes -

A flat-bed truck that is reversed close to the water's edge. A couple of guys are trying to set up speakers. Meanwhile -

Chloe and the girls undress more carefully, hanging clothes in trees or folding them into neater piles.

Then the music BLARES, received with a victorious cry. Bring Me to Life - Evanescence. Another cheer rings out simply for the choice of song. Through the opening riff -

The girls continue to undress while -

In the lake other kids start to 'air-drum' to the song.

Jared and his mates tune in too, all playing their air guitars. Then, as the song shifts gear, Wayne splashes Lance and the others and they start to wrestle and play-fight -

Jared jumps into the fray, grappling with Wayne, fully committing to the camaraderie. Then - Wayne breaks free.

WAYNE

Holy.... Dude. Check it out.

And then Jared turns to see -

- what would normally make any teenage boy quiver immediately: Chloe in a white bra and panties, semi see-through when wet. She is full breasted and wading, barely hip deep, in the water. The boys all stare - at the trio of girls: pure teenage fantasies wading in the lake. Jared turns back to the guys.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

Bro. What's wrong with you? Go. Go.
That's the trophy.

The guys all push Jared toward Chloe. It's a slow approach.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

You know white is see through when
it's wet Chloe?

A few chuckles from the boys.

CHLOE

I heard that laugh before. I think on a documentary about hyenas... that were retarded. And their retarded friends.

Jared laughs like a goof at Chloe's joke.

WAYNE

You may as well take it off, cause we can pretty much see it all.

CHLOE

Shall I..? Okay...
(she teases)
Oh, But I wouldn't want you guys to pollute the water with all your...

WAYNE

Say it. You can't even say it.

CHLOE

Cum.

Shock. Off Wayne's expression she turns to the girls.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

See. He just did I bet. You guys actually have hard-ons right now don't you?

Blank expressions. Wayne gives an 'as if' response.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Prove it?!

Long pause. Jared certainly doesn't have a hard-on but wonders if he should. Chloe won't let up.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Stand up properly. All of you.

None of them are willing. Finally Lance goes up on his tip-toes. We don't see it but Chloe must be right because Mindy stifles a laugh and Cheryl turns away with an 'Ewww.' Lance drops back down into the water. He doesn't care.

LANCE

Damned if you do. Damned if you don't.

Then - Chloe splashes Jared, breaking the tension and they all start to wrestle, thrashing in the water.

EXT. LAKE-SIDE BEACH BONFIRE - NIGHT

Jared and Wayne by the bonfire. Lance and Nick dress close by. Wayne offers sage advice on sex -

JARED
What's it like?

WAYNE
We've done it four times now.

Jared nods. His friend is an expert.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
It's pretty awesome dude. I have to say. I mean, I'm sure it'd be even better just relaxing on a nice bed instead of in the corner of a barn or in some dark closet with an actual real fear of getting caught and shot by Mr. Riggs. But - Even still, it's a-mazing.

(beat)
It's like being in a place you've been told over and over is bad and then you get in there and you are like - 'how is this bad? I wanna be in here forever.'

LANCE
Like White Castle.

NICK
Like eating a burger??

LANCE
Like shut up.

NICK (CONT'D)
You compared sex with a girl to eating shitty food.

Lance punches Nick and Nick returns fire. Soon they are up wrestling each other. Wayne and Jared.

LANCE O.S.
Get off me, fag. Faggot!!

WAYNE
It's warm. And it gives you this amazing great feeling.

JARED
I bet yeah
(MORE)

JARED (CONT'D)

WAYNE

Plus, man. Listen. This whole no sex before marriage thing... would your dad expect a customer to buy a car without test-driving it? See. You almost have to try it.
(good point)
You won't wanna stop dude.
Seriously. Try it. You'll see.

This lands with Jared. The thought that maybe sex with Chloe could make him snap out of his thoughts aimed at men. He looks across at her on opposite side of the fire. She has finished dressing and wears his hoody.

INT/EXT JARED'S FORD / CHLOE'S FAMILY HOME - NIGHT
Elton John's - "Sad songs said so much" plays as Jared pulls up to Chloe's family home. Their hair is still wet.

CHLOE

Go back behind the tree.

JARED

I should get home. I -

CHLOE

We are fifteen minutes early.

He reverses so a large maple tree blocks the view from the house to the car. She immediately starts to kiss him. Jared engages. Then his eyes open, looking down --

A hand, Chloe's hand, is on his thigh. He stops her.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

What? I just wanna touch it.
(beat)
On the outside.

Jared keeps his hand on hers.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

If it's not hard, I can make it hard.

JARED

We should wait for that kind of -

CHLOE

I'm not asking you to put it inside
me, Jared. I just wanna feel it
through your jeans

(MORE)

CHLOE (CONT'D)

. Wayne and Mindy have gone all the way and they didn't get struck by lightning or put in prison. Cheryl has put at least three in her mouth that I know of.

JARED

Cheryl?

CHLOE

I just wanna feel it.

JARED

If we start that, then it's gonna be hard to stop. I want to but shouldn't we wait until, you know -

CHLOE

You asking me to marry you?

(beat. Silence)

That's what my parents think should happen. To keep us together through college.

Jared is at a loss for words. Then Chloe tries one more time. He stands his ground. She sits back defeated and opens the door.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

What is wrong, Jared?

Jared is left alone, aware this is an escalating issue.

INT. EAMONS FAMILY HOME - JARED'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jared, shirtless, staring at a screen. He types something quickly and bites his nails and checks the door.

Circa 2004 downloads were not so fast so it starts with the top inch of a man's face then, five seconds later, the neck and bare shoulders. A slow motion strip tease.

NANCY O.S

Jared honey?

Jared tries to shut the screen but gets the 'spinning wheel' The image is stuck halfway. He tries again but the image downloads one bar further. Nancy approaches. Thinking quick he turns the screen to black.

NANCY

I'm starting a new painting. Which one do you like best

(MORE)

NANCY (CONT'D)

She holds up two images (both of the family). He picks one
She stays there continuing to look at the photos.

JARED

Mom, I'm getting dressed.

On her way out.

NANCY

Make sure you pack for Dallas. I
think your father wants to go
straight from church tomorrow.

Nancy leaves. Did she see or not see the glistening muscular
man in the underpants ad? He brings the screen up again. The
image, no longer enjoyable, is a just source of guilt.

INT. EAMONS FAMILY HOME - LATER

Marshall sits at the breakfast table. Jared shuffles in
dressed in a similar shirt. Jared goes to the fridge.

MARSHALL

We'll detail that car today.

JARED

Dad, seriously, it's so awesome.

MARSHALL

Are you ready? I'll ride with you --

JARED

Why are we actually going to
Dallas?

MARSHALL

The architect has updated the
remodelling plans for the ministry
and we are taking a tour of two
similar churches there.

JARED

Do you think I could stay at
Chloe's when you go instead?
(Off Marshall's look)
It's okay. I can stay at Wayne's or
I'll just come. I'll just come.

MARSHALL

I'm okay with you staying there, if
they are. I think it's a good idea
(MORE)

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

EXT. EAMONS FAMILY HOME - DAY

Jared and his father get in Jared's car as Nancy waves to them. She is setting up her easel and paints beside Marshall's other hobby: a restored '65 Chevy Pick-Up.

MARSHALL O.S.
You are both mature kids.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Jared's car turns into the Ford dealership.

INT. EAMONS'S FORD DEALERSHIP - DAY

Jared walks through the dealership following his father. Jared shakes Big Jim's hand and is greeted by other workers.

MARSHALL O.S.
Who know how to conduct themselves -

MARSHALL
Big Jim. Lead us in prayer today?

JIM
Be proud to Captain. Jared.

MARSHALL O.S.
- and who know by now how the world works.

INT. DEALERSHIP FLOOR - LATER

There among the display cars Jared, Jim, AND FOUR OTHER CO-WORKERS, lock arms in prayer.

JIM
Dear Heavenly Father. Thank you for this day filled with sunshine --

OMITTED

INT. LUNCH ROOM - DAY

Jared devours 'To Kill a Mockingbird' over lunch --

MARSHALL O.S.

*You gotta learn to take small steps
toward manhood, so that you don't
have to run, panicking, when it
suddenly arrives.*

Across the table, a voluptuous female employee eats lunch reading a magazine. Jared shares an awkward smile with her.

OMITTED

OMITTED

INT. FIRST NATION BAPTIST MINISTRY - DAY

On Jared, flanked by Nancy, watches Marshall preach.

MARSHALL

Let's see a show of hands --

Wayne, who sits next to Jared, palms him something. A condom. He winks. Jared is mortified.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

Who knows they are imperfect?

Everyone's hands go up. Jared swaps the condom in his hands to comply with all the hands firing up in the air.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

And those that are?

No hands - a polite chuckle from the congregation -

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

Well, that seems like the perfect segue to my introduction. Jesus spoke to me the day I saw this man first speak, and said 'listen to, and learn from, this man.' Which I have done every week in this very church. He has helped me immensely and given me the strength to start my own mission at Mountain Home.

Jared catches eyes with Chloe -

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

He's about as perfect as any man
can get in this world and in his
true service to the Lord. My
mentor, Pastor Lynn Marks.

He passes the mic to the elder Pastor. Marshall then sits in front of Jared and turns with a smile and a weird high-five/handshake. Pastor Wilkes climbs the stairs.

PASTOR

Everybody stand up. On your feet.

And such is Pastor Wilkes' power: the congregation stand.

INT. CHLOE'S FAMILY HOME - NIGHT

Jared sits for dinner with Chloe, her parents ERIC and BRANDY and her fifteen-year-old brother CHRISTOPHER. Secretly, Chloe reaches her leg out to touch Jared's thigh.

ERIC

So a semester at Lyon, and then
Chloe was saying you hope to bridge
over to U.N.C by next year?

JARED

Yes, sir. They have a great writing
program. Journalism really
interests me -

ERIC

Well. We'll have to find ways to
keep you guys connected.

Looks all around. The conversation is loaded.

OMITTED

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S BASEMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

It's dark. Jared sits up to check on a sleeping Christopher. His phone receives a vibrating text -

CHLOE

'??? come up'

JARED
(texting back)
'okay.
(MORE)

JARED (CONT'D)

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Jared moves ever so quietly up the stairs. But then -

CHRISTOPHER O.S.

Where you think you're going?

Jared frozen, turns to see Christopher. Sprung.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Jared plays Dynasty Warriors III with Christopher. The music is synthesized and upbeat. The character, Zhang, looks like an Asian rock prince, clad in purple silks, wearing a slick hair topped by a tiara. He swings a four pronged sword.

CHRISTOPHER

What do you think of him? What's-his-face, Zhang He, there with his girly crown and pony tail in the purple outfit moving around like a dancer.

JARED

Yeah. It's a bit much.

CHRISTOPHER

A bit gay don't you think?

Jared looks at Christopher.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Don't you think?

They stare at each other. Something shared in the look. Dangerous and also tender. There is a wisdom to Christopher for a younger kid. The silence broken only by a text message.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

You wanna go and fool around with my sister, I ain't gonna stop you.

Hold.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S BASEMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jared stares at the ceiling, then finally turns to fall asleep. He's given up the attempted mission.

CUT TO

INT. L.I.A. MAIN AUDITORIUM - AFTERNOON (PRESENT)

Jared stands back from his Genogram and stretches. He making some notes on his L.I.A. notebook.

INT. L.I.A. ADMIN OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

Jared is handed a zip-lock bag containing his possessions by Michael. Jared opens his phone, just to check it.

MICHAEL
Tomorrow at nine.

Jared starts to walk toward the exit, as Michael moves back down the bowels of L.I.A. Jared turns, holding his Moleskin.

JARED
Um. Hey. You tore out the pages -

MICHAEL
False Imaging.

Jared looks at the book with the pages crudely ripped out.

JARED
They're just... stories.

MICHAEL
Sykes will decide that.

EXT. L.I.A. - AFTERNOON

Jared comes out quietly fuming, holding his bag of items. Jon is on the steps waiting. Jared sits a little way off.

JON
Whatever they took, you'll probably get it back. Don't sweat it.

Jared tries to let it go.

JARED
Were you in the military? I saw you salute. I thought --

JON
Oh. That. No. I could do the whole handshake thing. I'm just trying zero contact what-so-ever.

(MORE)

JON (CONT'D)

Twenty-three days now. So I -
(he salutes)
Salute instead
(MORE)

JON (CONT'D)

Jared nods awkwardly.

JON (CONT'D)

Sure it don't feel like it right now maybe but you'll love it here. You get all sorts but this group seems good.

JARED

Have you been here before?

JON

It's my second go round in the Refuge Program. I started a couple days late last time and -

(beat)

I'm actually waiting for a place to open up in one of the houses.

JARED

What houses?

JON

Down the back there, past the fence they got a couple houses for the long-stayers. New Hope house for the men. One for the women too.

(points)

Those others you saw earlier today, most of them stay there.

(beat)

Meanwhile, I'm at the Best Western while I wait for my spot. Assuming you're staying at one of the local 'safe zone' hotels with a relative too?

Jared takes this in.

JARED

How long will you stay for?

JON

That's not really up to me. Sykes decides - sometimes six months. Or else a year. You eighteen?

JARED

Just. Yeah.

JON

Then you can stay at the houses.

Off Jared's look -

JON (CONT'D)

Nobody explained that to you? This is just an assessment program, The Refuge. To see what to do with you next.

Just then - the doors open and out walks Sarah flanked by Aaron on one side and an older man, possibly a stepfather, on the other. Everyone watches as she gets 'put' in the car like an escorted prisoner. Jon takes it in.

JON (CONT'D)

Should'a seen her arrive this morning. She'll be fine. Like I said: 'all sorts.' Some are ready for it. Some not.

This hangs. Is Jared there by choice or by force? He catches eyes with Gary who leans against the fence.

JON (CONT'D)

Lean into it man. It's the only way to do it and win. S'only way it's possible. Just lean in.

(beat)

And it is possible. If you're on your heels you'll lean too far away and fall backwards into hell again. No point not leaning in when you get given the chance.

Jared absorbs Jon's optimism. He already has identified him as someone to look up to.

JARED

Yeah. No. I'm excited to be here.

Suddenly Nancy pulls up and leans out the window -

NANCY

Hey! How was it? Was it fun and interesting?

Jared stands up, a little embarrassed. She waves to Jon -

NANCY (CONT'D)

Hi. I'm the Mom.
(no response)
I'll turn around.

Nancy starts the turn as Jared gets set to leave -

JARED

You need a ride? I think we're just near the Best Western.

JON

Someone's on their way to grab me. Thanks though. And don't sweat the things they took. Lean in. Think of the bigger picture.

He salutes from his perch and Jared starts off -

Jared passes Cameron who gets into his Dad's suburban S.U.V. At a first glimpse, CAMERON'S DAD, a wealthy man, looks like an ex-football player.

JARED

See ya Cameron.

Cameron turns sweetly, flattered to be acknowledged. But his father turns sharply to assess Jared.

INT. NANCY'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Nancy's car pulls onto the highway, into the dimming Memphis sunlight, toward the glowing row of cheap hotel lights.

Jared winds down the window and puts his arm out, dancing in the breeze.

NANCY

Please don't do that. I've told you that makes me nervous. What if a truck comes and...

JARED

That is never going to happen.

NANCY

It's happened before. It has.

He pulls his arm back in and winds the window up.

INT. HAMPTON INN AND SUITES RESTAURANT - DUSK/NIGHT

Jared and his mother eat. She keeps looking at him. Jared puts his fork down decisively as if to say 'what?' --

NANCY

Well? I wanna know about your day
(MORE)

NANCY (CONT'D)

JARED

We're not meant to talk about it
outside of group.

NANCY

I don't need gossip. You can speak
generally.

JARED

I'm going to lean into it. And
there are some good people, and
yeah. I like it.

They go back to eating, Nancy relieved. He seems happy. Jared
thinks a beat and finally takes a piece of paper from his
pocket and places it beside Nancy's plate.

JARED (CONT'D)

Do we have people in the family who
had issues with any of this stuff.

Nancy examines it, getting her reading glasses.

NANCY

'Pornography?'

The people at the booth behind turn and she lowers her voice.

NANCY (CONT'D)

'Drugs.' 'Gang affiliations?!' What
is this?

JARED

I need to know for homework.

NANCY

Gang affiliations?

OMITTED

INT. HAMPTON INN AND SUITES HALLWAY - DUSK/NIGHT

Jared and his mother walk the long hall to the room.

NANCY O.S.

Why does the family matter? Our
family is so... normal.

As Nancy enters the room, Jared clocks Sarah and her
stepfather a little way down the hall

INT. HAMPTON INN AND SUITES ROOM - NIGHT

Jared puts his schedule on the wall. He takes his L.I.A. handbook and homework and piles them on the nightstand. He weighs his own books he brought for the stay -- now certainly 'off limits.' About to place them in the trash, he thinks better of it and piles them over on his mother's nightstand.

Nancy enters from the bathroom and places a piece of paper on the top of his L.I.A. handbook: Jared's Genogram homework.

NANCY

Sleep well. Big day tomorrow.

As she walks away, he examines the paper.

NANCY (CONT'D)

I was only with the gang for a year or so... Until I went down for drugs, and got sent to prison.

JARED

Ha ha.

Jared leans over and switches off the lamp. Then after a pause in the near darkness we hear -

NANCY O.S.

I put your Uncle Victor down there. We never see him. He moved to Louisiana. We always figured he might have been... well, he was very feminine-like you might say.

Jared stares at the ceiling, the traces of light outlining his face.

SYKES O.S.

What is a real man?

INT. L.I.A. MAIN AUDITORIUM - MORNING

CLOSE ON JARED'S GENOGRAM. It now has a handful of 'A's added and 'Dm' in both grandparents lines. And a new BOLD addition... **UNCLE VICTOR -- 'H.'** (Homosexuality)

SYKES O.S.

What defines a 'real' man?

Close on Cameron's child-like drawing of his dad: Brutish.

SYKES O.S. (CONT'D)
 Perhaps being close to the flames
 of hell and finding your way back
 forges a great strength --

Jared and the others pin their work to the back wall. From his position near the big open door, Jared can see the fence line outside: A big black Chevy pickup parks outside.

OMITTED

INT. L.I.A. MAIN AUDITORIUM - DAY

Close on the members of the group as they keenly watch the 'newcomer.'

SYKES O.S.
 And if so... if this isn't a real
 man, I don't know what is.

Sykes is almost too excited to introduce their guest staff member. And we finally see him -

SYKES
 Meet Brandon Ellis.

There is no mistaking, Brandon is a hard man, who's lived a hard life, and walked a hard road. That 1% that makes most self-proclaimed men feel 'less than.'

SYKES (CONT'D)
 Over to you Brandon.

Sykes tries a tough-guy handshake. It is comfortable on Brandon. Not with Sykes.

BRANDON
 Thanks Sykes. Mighty kind of you
 and... God bless.
 (beat)
 A 'real man' to me is a man of God
 first and foremost. I'm a man of
 God no doubt. But, I wasn't once.
 If I was ever listed on my own
 son's Genograms - God forbid I was
 and that he were here -

In that comment we see not just Brandon's thinly veiled disgust for homosexuality

BRANDON (CONT'D)

- But *if I was*: Drugs. Violence. Prison time. Gang crime... I'd have so many letters next to my name, it would look like qualifications from some university.

(pause for effect)

And I actually believe that to be true. I'm qualified to be here, not maybe because I have ever had the kinds of thoughts and feelings that y'all are wrestling with. Or that your other guidance counselors have overcome.

There is the disgust again. PLUS it dawns on Jared that most of the staff may be ex-gay. He steals a look at Sykes.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

But I've had all sorts of my own trials that took me so far from the Lord, it is a true miracle that I am standing here before you. But I am.

INT. L.I.A. SHORT BUS - DAY

Jared and the gang all ride the short bus. Brandon and Sykes flank the aisles near the front. Aaron drives. We are not sure where they are headed. Jared turns for a moment and looks down the aisle - perhaps to see Jon.

INT. OUTDOOR FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The whole group are in a line. Brandon moves along spreading the guys' stances wider, and correcting posture while Sykes and Aaron and the girls sit on the concrete bleaches.

BRANDON

Standing. Leaning. Sitting. It's all the same idea. Triangles are the strongest shape. This.

(he shows a wide stance)

Not this.

(a narrow one)

Okay, hand or hands on hips. Go.

Brandon claps and each boy/man lifts their hands to hips in their own manner. It's a drill they're being subjected to

BRANDON (CONT'D)
 (to what he sees)
 Fingers forward not backwards
 S'just the way it is. Elbows out.
 Not back. S'just the way it is.
 Triangles. Triangles.

Sykes watches with his hands on his hips. Not exactly the picture of manliness, he adjusts his own elbows out a little.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
 Think of the shapes you are making
 and ask yourself... 'Is this a
 manly shape I am making?' Or, 'is
 this a girly or a feminine shape?'

On Sarah frowning. She is sitting this one out. But she'll serve another purpose.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
 Sarah? I want you to arrange these
 guys in a line in terms of
 masculinity if you will. Least to
 most.

Jared and the others look around, wondering where they might fall on the line. Sarah tentatively starts in on the task.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
 Myself, and other alcoholics and
 addicts put their faith in AA. Get
 familiar with this phrase -
 (beat)
 'Fake it until you make it.'

Sarah struggles in deciding who is on what side of the MANLY evolutionary chain of L.I.A.

SYKES
 Do it Sarah. Don't think. Just do.

Sykes's authority seems diminished by the mere presence of Brandon, the clear biological ruler here.

Jared is moved along by Sarah. He is placed somewhere in the middle next to Gary. They share an awkward friendly nod. Sarah has placed Lee at one end and Jon and then Cameron at the 'Most' end. Cameron gets the crown.

Sarah stands back and Brandon steps forward. He walks the line starting with Lee... his face hides nothing in his confused assessment of Lee. As he completes the line -

BRANDON
Perrrrr-etty good.

Brandon moves to face Cameron, who stands at least five inches taller than him. He reads his 'sticker' name tag.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
So. You think 'Cameron' here wins?
(beat)
You think being big and tall and overeating immediately just puts a guy at the front of the line?

Brandon lets it hang then moves away addressing the group. Cameron, relieved to have Brandon out of his personal space.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
In prison I knew men who could shop at Gap for Kids, by that I mean *little guys*, who were pound for pound tougher than any linebacker. Swear to the mighty Lord.
(aside)
Now, Jesus was a tough dude. Don't get me started on that.

He looks up at Cameron. Tries to make eye contact.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
It's more than triangles and posture and *genetics*.

He offers to shake Cameron's hand, to which Cameron offers a 'limp' shake. Brandon casts it aside with disgust.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
Firm handshakes. Eye contact. Not too much. Looking at women at the right times. The wrong times too.

Meanwhile he pushes Cameron fourth down the line.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
No offense son. All a process. Fake it. Make it.

Jon now takes the prize of 'manliest.' Brandon offers a hand shake. Jon wants to... but he's on his 'no-touch' promise. After a tense pause, he offers one of his salutes.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
Military man. G'bless son
(MORE)

BRANDON (CONT'D)

EXT. BASEBALL BATTING CAGE - DAY

Jared and the others line up outside of a batting cage fence.
We hear the ball being shot out and the grunt of -

Simon, who misses the ball, then miserably hits the second.

BRANDON

Who you are on the inside can be
affected by the outside. Next.

Lee look bewildered, realizing it's time to step up to the
plate. Simon hands Lee the helmet.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Outside in. Fake it till you make
it. Adapt to survive.

Lee enters as Brandon slides another coin into the slot.
There is a terrible anticipation and the first ball comes
SHOOTING out. Lee startles.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

And you kids and folk, being what
you are afflicted with --

Lee spins disoriented by the second. Then the third makes
awful body contact, tilting the helmet from Lee.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

- better learn how to survive.
Become the man you are not.

Jared sees Brandon smirk, amused, and unwilling to turn off
the machine. Lee is swamped and scared. Gary goes in to help.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

When you are in a prison, you would
surprise yourself --

On Jared absorbing all this as we hear -

METALLIC NOISES. GUNS in fact. Guns being loaded. CHK.CHK.
Magazines being locked. CHK. Firing bolts being racked.

EXT. FLAT BED TRUCK - DAY (FLASHBACK - 2002)

An array of HUNTING RIFLES placed on the flatbed tray. There
are four in total, laying side by side.

BRANDON O.S.
What you can do to fit in
(MORE)

The rifles are grabbed by their various owners.

EXT. FOREST - DAY (2002)

Big Jim, Marshall, Jared and a FOURTH MAN edge along a river, deeper into the woods. They split into two groups.

- Later, Jared following Marshall, pulls up to rest. Marshall urges him on. A SHOT volleys out over the valley. Jared looks back.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Jared helps Jim and his father winch a DEAD BUCK onto the back of one of Jim's trucks

INT. CARMEN'S STOP - AFTERNOON

Jared, dressed in his hunting gear, finishes off his fries as he sits alone. Marshall is at the counter with his glasses on paying the check and using easy charm with the WAITRESS.

Beside Jared's table is A YOUNG MAN, barely 25, his three KIDS and young wife. There is also two men sitting at a window booth that Jared particularly notices. Just then -

CHERYL, who works in the diner, comes up to the table.

CHERYL

Hey Jared.

JARED

Oh. Cheryl. Hey.

CHERYL

Y'daddy's pickin' up everyone's checks again. So sweet. He's even paying for those two queers -

JARED

You think they're...?

CHERYL

They have to be. Actually quite nice though.

Marshall, now shaking hands with the OLD MAN, calls Jared over. He's ready to leave. Jared passes the male couple, making eye contact with one of them. An awkward smile.

EXT./INT CARMEN'S STOP / MARSHALL'S TRUCK - DAY

Once in, Marshall takes a pile of religious pamphlets from the glove compartment. On one he writes a bible reference Romans 1:27.

MARSHALL

There are two men sitting by the window. I just paid for their lunch. Tell them I'd appreciate them taking a look at this paper and this verse. For their sake.

Jared wants to ask why, but is unable. He knows.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

Men committed shameful acts with
other men and received in
themselves the due penalty for
their error.

INT. CARMEN'S STOP - DAY

Jared walks back into the diner. He looks to where the men
enjoy their lunch. Jared looks out the window to where his
father's truck is in clear view, watching. He moves in their
direction holding the pamphlet behind his back.

JARED

You guys travelling?

MAN 1

We are on our way to a wedding in
New Orleans.

JARED

Oh. Cool. Um... My father... my
father just paid for your lunch.

The two men look strangely at this kid in hunting gear.

MAN 1

What's the catch?

JARED

Nothing. Just... He's out there -

The two men wave out the window. He pockets the flyer.

MAN 1

Well. Tell him thank you.

JARED

Yes Sir. Safe travels.

MAN 1

Thank you.

INT. MARSHALL'S TRUCK - LATER

Jared gets back into the truck. Marshall is staring at him.
After a long silence --

MARSHALL

What did they say?

JARED

They said to say thank you.

The moment hangs. Does he know that Jared failed the task?

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD/L.I.A. COMPOUND - DAY

Feet hit gravel. Jared and the new group run in a somewhat military formation with Brandon as their commander. Aaron follows them driving the short bus.

INT. HAMPTON INN AND SUITES - DAY

Jared brushes his teeth - his shirt is off. He examines a bruise on the back of his shoulder: a baseball strike? But he enjoys the wound, like a new sense of his manhood.

Then - he catches himself with one hand on his hip. He clamps down on the tooth brush and stands ala Brandon: two hands on hip; hand back; legs wide - proudly faking it. Soon Nancy joins and they both brush side by side.

INT. L.I.A. MAIN AUDITORIUM - DAY

The words "Fake it till you Make it" written on the board. Then - Sykes steps into frame, perusing -

The bewildered faces of the group staring back.

SYKES O.S.

Moral Inventory.

(beat)

Now the real work starts. Catalogue your sins and ask God's forgiveness for your wrongs. Sarah --

Sarah hesitates to get out of her chair. She finally does and passes Aaron who is setting a video camera on a tripod. His secondary task here seems to record significant events.

CUT TO:

Sarah facing the group, reading from a handful of papers. She is mid-flow. It is painfully awkward hearing her read. She is trying to motor through it as fast as humanly possible.

SARAH

...and it was there that I had sinful thoughts of other girls

(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)

. I would look at other girls in the changing rooms before gym. And in the showers. My biggest sin is one that I am also thankful for because it has led me to Love In Action.

(beat)

I had run away from my uncle's house and stayed with some girls I knew whose parents were away. And it was there that for a few days I finally acted on my homosexual thoughts.

(breathes)

I renounce these sinful thoughts and actions and I ask God to forgive me all these things -

Jared watches. He knows that he'll be up there soon cataloging his own sins.

OMITTED

INT. L.I.A. MAIN AUDITORIUM - DAY

Sykes sets up the 'LIE CHAIR' exercise. Two empty chairs facing each other: a role-playing exercise.

Sarah takes one of the seats, waiting with dread.

SYKES O.S.

Go Sarah. There he is in that chair --

CUT TO:

We smash right into the exercise. Jared watches Sarah be *BERATED* by Sykes to engage with an invisible family figure. Sarah grips the side of her chair. White knuckles.

SYKES

- staring right back at you.

He isn't. Opposite her is literally an empty chair.

Jared turns to check on Jon, who leans forward in his chair. Gary beside him, leans back biting his nails.

SYKES (CONT'D)

There he is. Use your words. Spit them out with purpose. Personal pronouns like I said. '*YOU*' wronged me. '*YOU*' showed me sin.

(MORE)

SYKES (CONT'D)

But Sarah keeps thinking. Paralyzed.

SYKES (CONT'D)

Don't over think it. Nobody's judging Sarah. But God is watching.

SARAH

I'm trying...

SYKES

He's watching. And He's waiting.

SARAH

I'm trying to find the right words.

Sykes unleashes a trial mock tirade on the empty chair.

SYKES

'You wronged me. You wronged me Uncle...' what was his name?

SARAH

Joe.

SYKES

'You wronged me Uncle Joe -- You took me into the care of your home and locked me up for ---

SARAH

It was two of them. Joe and Leila.

SYKES

'You wronged me Uncle Joe and Aunt -
(stops himself)
Aaron? Bring me that empty chair.

Aaron hustles and Sykes puts it next to the other empty chair. Two chairs for two imaginary people. Behind him we hear a laugh. He swivels, catching Tina with a smirk.

SYKES (CONT'D)

You think this is funny Tina? You think the reason y'all are here is funny? Take these exercises seriously. Do not waste my time. Each other's time. God's time. We are trying to help you.

He clicks his fingers in front of Sarah.

SYKES (CONT'D)

'You wronged me Uncle Joe and Aunt
Leila.' Go!

(MORE)

SYKES (CONT'D)

We wait for Sarah to GO... Instead she starts to tear-up.

SYKES (CONT'D)

Yes. Yes. Let it out.

SARAH

Leila wasn't my aunt. She was my cousin that lived with Uncle Joe.

SYKES

(sighs)

Alright. Let's take a break.

He checks his watch. Aaron turns off the camera.

SYKES (CONT'D)

Sarah can try again tomorrow. Every day, two of you will walk into the arc like Noah's animals. And get refuge from damnation. This is the ticket of entry. No free rides.

He taps the empty chair and meets with Michael who has an urgent issue. Sykes turns, concerned.

OMITTED

INT. L.I.A. MAIN AUDITORIUM - DAY

It's tea break, Jared walks over to a shaken Sarah.

JARED

You want anything? I'm making a cup of tea.

She shakes her head, and as he walks away she stops him -

SARAH

You're at the Hampton right? I seen you there.

(off his look)

Seven o'clock can you meet me by the ATM in the dining area. Bring your phone. Please.

Jared nods and moves away, conflicted by the encounter.

Through the open door Jared sees Sykes with two PARENTS. It's somewhat heated: admonishment by the father. Then we see Lee, backpack on. The father turns on Sykes --

LEE'S DAD O.S.

We told you that!! Unacceptable.

As Sykes moves back toward the door, everyone disperses.

INT. HAMPTON INN AND SUITES RESTAURANT - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Jared and Nancy eat dinner, Jared scarfing down food while doing his L.I.A. homework and referring to the HANDBOOK.

Headphones on, he flicks through his Moleskin with the ripped out pages. We see his notes --

Moral Inventory and... Without going into 'graphic detail,' catalogue all immoral and sexual experiences & He adds... 'How you came to be at L.I.A.?'

He checks his watch. Almost seven --

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Jared walks into the hallway leading to the bathrooms. It is empty apart from the ATM. Then the bathroom door opens up and Sarah peeks through. Seeing Jared she marches over covertly and puts her hand out. He hands her his phone and just as quickly she disappears into the bathroom. He waits. Awkwardly. That's when he sees -

Sykes, with a woman and kids, ages six and four. They move into the restaurant. Seemingly, an average American family.

Jared nervously hides behind the ATM and waits guiltily. What is he doing? What if he gets caught?

Finally Sarah emerges wiping her eyes. She hands Jared the phone and utters -

SARAH

Don't you dare tell anyone.

Jared watches her sneak away like she was never even there.

INT. HAMPTON INN AND SUITES DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jared gathers his things, aware of Sykes's presence.

JARED

I'll finish this in my room. You ready?

(MORE)

JARED (CONT'D)

(beat)

The head guy is here

(MORE)

JARED (CONT'D)

And Jared is gone. Nancy follows but looks around wondering:
'Why is that a bad thing?'

Sykes, hearing clatter, looks up. Did he see Jared?

INT. HAMPTON INN AND SUITES - NIGHT

In the room, Jared sits on his bed. We push in on him,
knowing what his homework is.

The building intro of - The Red Hot Chili Peppers - 'Can't
Stop.'

We see Jared's pen move over a fresh page. He writes 'HENRY.'

HENRY O.S.
Yo. I got you pal.

INT. STAIRWELL, LYON COLLEGE - DAY (FLASHBACK, FALL 2003) 55

Music, emanating from a nearby room continues over --

Jared is struggling up some stairs with two full drawers.
Things have started to fall and topple when a fit and tanned
guy, Henry, bounds up the stairs toward him. Perfect timing.

HENRY
Here. I can take the top stuff.

Jared accepts the help with an awkward thanks. Henry looks in
a drawer as he carries it. It is mainly full of books.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Which room? Just learned a bunch of
things about you in half a second
looking in this drawer by the way.

JARED
Oh yeah? I'm in three-four-six.

HENRY
I'm in two-three-seven. You run?
People who run know about Asics.

There are Asics on Jared's feet.

HENRY (CONT'D)
I saw you unloading from that car
with the Razorbacks sticker. You
from Arkansas? I'm there a lot
(MORE)

HENRY (CONT'D)

INT. JARED'S DORM ROOM 346 - MOMENTS LATER

The room has a double bunk beds. There is no one else there.

HENRY

First one in gets to choose. You got a girl? If so you might wanna apply for a room without bunks.

JARED

Just broke up.

HENRY

(winks)

Good timing. Before college.

They head for the door.

HENRY O.S.

I got cousins in Mountain Home.

EXT. LYON COLLEGE, ARKANSAS - DUSK

Jared and Henry go for a run. We are behind them.

TITLE CARD: HENRY

Jared and Henry at one end of the run, sweat heavily and gasp for air. They occasionally look at each other.

HENRY

We're a good fit. Hate running with slow pokes. Or speed freaks.

(beat)

Tell you what. Race you on the way back. Last one back has to go to the other one's church. Serious.

JARED

Why? What kind of church is it?

HENRY

You game or not?

Jared smiles goofily

HENRY (CONT'D)
 Ready? After three. One, two,
 Three, GO!

CUT TO:

INT. THE HEALING HANDS PENTACOSTAL CHURCH - DAY

The opening POWER CHORDS of a Christian Rock band's opener.

Jared and Henry sit among many YOUNG PEOPLE who throw their hands in the air, CHEERING. A Pentecostal Church meeting in full swing. More a party than a service.

LEAD SINGER
 Get on your feet for Jesus.

Everyone stands and Henry does too. Jared is a beat behind like a guilty outside observer. His dad would HATE this kind of worship. Henry offers Jared a hand to stand. Jared stands and watches as Henry, euphoric, cuffs the young TEEN in front of him and lets out a 'whoop.'

HENRY
 (beaming)
 Radical huh?

The minister, the YOUNG charismatic FRANK, 35, on the stage -

FRANK
 Let's sing it for Jesus --

HENRY/EVERYONE
 Amen/Amen!

Henry puts his manly arm around Jared who allows himself to smile and start to enjoy it. He relaxes and puts his arm around Henry too. It's a brotherly embrace that feels safe in this environment. But --

The music turns to something synthesized and ominous.

EXT. LYON COLLEGE CAMPUS - NIGHT

Jared and Henry on a run, jog around trees, deflecting cherry blossom tree branches to cut a smoother line.

Later -

At the end of their run, they stare at each other as they stretch and search for oxygen. Jared tries a smile. But it's a little long and Henry frowns, a tad suspicious

INT. JARED'S DORM ROOM 346 - LATER

That ominous music is a SYNTHETIC LOOP from TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL.

Jared and Henry are still dressed in sweats. We see from behind as Jared controls the game and Henry watches, sipping a beer. A lone player makes his way through the green and blue glow of an underground concrete facility. Jared steals a look at Henry's face, glowing in the screen's light.

Henry checks his watch. Sips his beer. He's tired.

HENRY

Y'said your roommate's not coming
back till tomorrow?

JARED

On some golf trip. You wanna crash?

Jared moves to turn off the game.

HENRY

You keep playing.

Henry gets up and we hear the sounds of Henry climbing up the bunk ladder.

Jared watches, turns down the sound and then goes back to his game, conflicted. He's attracted it's clear. But Henry is straight and Jared has ZERO experience with ANYONE.

JARED O.S.

Am I in trouble?

INT. L.I.A. ADMIN OFFICE - DAY (PRESENT)

Tight on Jared's face as a door opens and shuts O.S.

JARED

Have I done something wrong?

MICHAEL O.S.

Here he comes now.

SYKES O.S.

Morning Jared.

Sykes sits carrying a file. His demeanor is supremely casual and friendly. Not the 'man on show' he is in the group sessions. The only sound is a ticking clock

SYKES

No reason to be worried. Around day three I just check in with the new recruits. See how they're getting along. Little private chat.

A poster behind Sykes linking AIDS to homosexual deviant behavior draws Jared's attention for a moment.

SYKES (CONT'D)

So, how is it going for ya?

JARED

It's good. I'm finding it all... helpful, yeah.

SYKES

How is your Moral Inventory coming along? Are you ready? You wanna go today? Dive right in?

JARED

Oh... I, um.. I'd like to watch a couple more people do theirs I think, if that's okay. I haven't completed everything yet.

Sykes pulls out a handful of papers from his file: Jared's journal stories. He selects a page and holds it up.

SYKES

What is this?

JARED

It's a story.

SYKES

It's a love story about a boy and a girl. Were you thinking about two boys when you wrote this?

(hold)

Is this a true story?

JARED

No. It's just a story.

(off Sykes)

Will I be able to get them back?
They're assignments for college.

SYKES

Yes, I noticed your list of books
here. A reading list I assume.

(holds it up

(MORE)

SYKES (CONT'D)

Some of these books -- considering everything that's going on for you, I wonder if this is really the right thing for you to be pursuing at all. Perhaps a year with us is a better use of your time. Something to think about.

This troubles Jared, but he nods. Sykes reads him, his eyes narrowing a little and then the smile returns -

SYKES (CONT'D)

Listen. I want you to know, I've had conversations with your parents in the lead up to you being here, and I know a little of your story somewhat.

(smiles)

I know there are discrepancies from what your parents were *told* and what you have said to them. And they are really unsure what to believe. But, I know there is a bigger story. Or *stories*. Right? We're not here based on mere thoughts alone.

(beat)

You know, the ones that get the most out of this, are the ones who are brave. The ones who fess up to what God already sees, Jared.

His friendly concern has somehow taken on the air of threat.

SYKES (CONT'D)

You really gotta put it all on the table here. That way we can really assess what is the best future for you.

INT/EXT. HALLWAY/SYKES'S OFFICE - DAY

SLOW MOTION: Jared walks out. We read his disappointment -

GARY O.S.

Dear heavenly father, today I ask your forgiveness for my sins.

Jared takes the corner

GARY O.S. (CONT'D)
*For a year we lived under the cover
of being 'roommates' though we
weren't using separate rooms.*

INT. L.I.A. MAIN AUDITORIUM - DAY

Gary goes through the process of reading his Moral Inventory. He has tears streaming his face. To the side - Aaron is filming with his small mounted camera.

GARY
Much like a normal couple we lived that way and for a time... it felt normal... Until my family discovered the truth. But I was fooling myself. Being fooled. I was seduced into sin... by all sorts of sinful people... I knew in my heart I had forsaken Jesus for Satan.

Jared listens, frowns. This just seems like a regular, caring relationship being described. He looks across to Jon who we can see has a minor black eye. Jon won't engage.

GARY (CONT'D)
But I am awake to my sins. I can't believe the disgusting person that I once was. I ask --

The haunting SYNTHETIC music of 'SPLINTER CELL' Pulses --

SYKES O.S.
Lesbian. Gay. Bi --

INT. L.I.A. AUDITORIUM - DAY

On the board is a circle with several WORDS inside of it: *Marriage, Children, family, support, caring.* In an opposing circle is another list: *Rape, child molestation, promiscuity, AIDS , loneliness, zero children --*

Sykes writes Heterosexual over the 'Good/LIFE' circle, and 'Homosexual' and LGBTQ over the other. He adds 'D' and 'P' as well, literally as a joke.

SYKES

Transgender, Queer... Dolphins...
Pandas, Unicorns. Cupcakes. So much
choice over here

(MORE)

SYKES (CONT'D)

It's designed to make everyone laugh, and most don't but Jared and Jon do. Sykes adds 'DEATH' above the circle.

SYKES (CONT'D)

Talk about one way to ruin your dollar bill. To burn it by falling right back into hell. Inviting this behavior into your life --

Move in on Jared as the 'SPLINTER CELL' theme riffs. We will recognize it and it will take us back to -

INT. JARED'S DORM ROOM 346 - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

We are taken back to the night Henry crashes in Jared's dorm.

Jared plays alone for a beat but then finishes a game and turns the console off, casting the room into darkness.

Later - Jared is lying on his bunk, still awake. Noises come from the springs above: Henry moving. Turning. After a while -
-

JARED

Can't sleep, huh?

(no answer)

Probably shouldn't run so late at night.

Then the figure of Henry jumps down in the darkness. A weird moment of pause as Jared turns to look at his silhouette.

HENRY

Um...

Jared frowns. Something in the air. Then -

Suddenly, Henry lunges forward and clamps a hand over Jared's mouth. Almost gently the command comes -

HENRY (CONT'D)

Shhhh. Shut up.

In a weird and almost silent flurry, Jared is forced to flip over by Henry. His sweats are pulled down and Henry is on him.

During the rapid and silent rape Jared's head is knocked against the upright strut arm of the bunk. Then it is over. Henry recedes. And all we hear is -

Damn it. HENRY O.S.
 (MORE)

HENRY O.S. (CONT'D)

Hold on Jared. Paralyzed. His forehead trickles blood.

-- We hear Henry climb back up on the top bunk.

Jared is confused. What the hell just happened? We hold on this for the longest time. Until -

Henry starts to cry. Finally, Jared moves ever so slightly.

HENRY O.S. (CONT'D)

What is wrong with me? What the hell is wrong with me?

Jared rolls over onto his back. He listens to Henry cry.

HENRY O.S. (CONT'D)

I'm going to be in so much trouble.

JARED

Are you okay?

HENRY

Oh man.

JARED

Henry?

(beat)

Have you done that before?

Silence. Long.

HENRY

I need to confess. I'm going to have to... will you hear me? Can you keep this between us?

Jared thinks and utters 'Mhmm.' And Henry jumps down. He sits on Jared's bed. Jared doesn't move.

HENRY (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry.

Hold.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Remember that kid from church. The one in front of us..?

INT. JARED'S DORM ROOM 346 - MORNING

Jared wakes. Cautiously he stands to see -

Henry has gone. The bunk is neatly made, and there's a note - when Jared unfolds it, it merely says - "Run @ 6?"

The door opens, startling him: The ROOMMATE, carrying golf clubs, back from his trip. They exchange 'hellos'.

INT. LYON COLLEGE, AUDITORIUM - DAY

Jared sits in a class as it is filling up. We push in on him.

Later - he sits alone in the now empty space.

Later - he sits outside against a wall, alone.

OMITTED

OMITTED

EXT. TRACK, LYON COLLEGE - DUSK

Henry limbers up. Stretches for his run. He looks around for Jared: a no-show. He begins texting. Then -

JARED O.S.

Hey. Sorry.

HENRY

Thought you weren't coming.

JARED

I nearly had to head home.

Henry - curious. Jared starts to stretch.

JARED (CONT'D)

It's all good. My aunt's a bit sick. I'll probably head back in the morning for a couple days.

HENRY

Let's stretch and pray.
(off his expression)
Why not? For your Aunt.

Henry takes a knee, but it doubles as a quad stretch.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Dear Heavenly Father..
(MORE)

HENRY (CONT'D)

EXT. LYON COLLEGE, CAMPUS - NIGHT

Jared and Henry run at a medium jog. We follow behind.

HENRY V/O
We pray that you remove all
obstacles from our path.

They take a bend.

HENRY V/O (CONT'D)
And we give thanks for our freedom,
for our youth, and our health,
whereas others are less fortunate.

We continue to lead them now as Henry looks across to Jared. It is clear he is concerned for Jared's withdrawal.

HENRY V/O (CONT'D)
We pray for Jared's aunt, that she
may be restored to health and we
dedicate this run to her recovery.

INT. JARED'S FORD MUSTANG - DAY

Jared drives his car. We are behind him.

HENRY V/O
We run guided by your love and
lifted by your spirit. Each step a
prayer that all of your children
share the same abundance.

The pair move down a rise and disappear into darkness.

INT. LYON COLLEGE, HALLWAY - DAY

Henry moves with a purpose. A swagger. We follow as he raises a flip cell phone to his ear.

HENRY/JARED V/O
Amen. Amen.

EXT. JARED'S FAMILY HOME - DAY

Jared gets out of his car and moves to the house where he is greeted with great warmth by his mother

INT. LYON COLLEGE, HALLWAY - DAY

Henry on the phone -

HENRY

Yo. Hey, you remember a kid called
Jared Eamons? Ginger haired kid.
Your year at St. Martins?

INT. EAMONS FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY

Jared dumps his bag as he moves through the house.

HENRY O.S.

I'm looking to get a hold of him.

INT. LYON COLLEGE, HALLWAY - DAY

Henry walks the hall dialing a new number.

INT. JARED'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jared takes his sneakers off and turns on his computer. The faint O.S. sounds of a phone ringing.

INT. EAMONS FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY

The phone rings in the kitchen. We follow Nancy as she wipes her hands and moves to answer.

NANCY

Hello?

INT./EXT. HALLWAY / LYON COLLEGE COURTYARD - DAY

Henry opens the wide doors to the college courtyard where hundreds of kids enjoy the sun.

HENRY

Hi. Is that Missus Nancy Eamons?

INT. EAMONS FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY

Nancy is chirpy but somehow senses something ominous.

NANCY

This is she. Who am I speaking to
(MORE)

NANCY (CONT'D)

We hear Henry's mumbled voice on the other end of the line.

We move in on Nancy's 'not so great' portrait of the family, now hanging on the wall.

NANCY (CONT'D)
Yes? What about him?

INT. EAMONS FAMILY HOME/JARED'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

Jared sits on his bed reading. A knock comes to the door.

MARSHALL O.S.
Jared?

Something in the tone of his voice makes Jared concerned.

INT. EAMONS FAMILY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

We SMASH INTO A FIERCE FAMILY ARGUMENT. Jared IS AT WAR with his father. Under interrogation. Nancy is the bystander.

JARED
Did he give you a name?

MARSHALL
Answer my question?!

JARED
If he gave you a name... I'm just saying, why wouldn't he give you -

MARSHALL
Answer me. Are you doing all the things he says?

JARED
Did he give you his name?

MARSHALL
Enough. I command you -

JARED
- command me all you want. I'm asking questions too.

Marshall makes a move toward Jared.

NANCY
He didn't give me his name.
(wavers)
I don't think.

They both look to Nancy

JARED
The guy is full of shit!

MARSHALL
Nancy. Leave the room.

JARED
I'll leave the room.

MARSHALL
No. You sit down.

JARED
It's bullshit, dad.

MARSHALL
LANGUAGE!

<p>NANCY He just said 'counselor'. I asked for his name --</p>	<p>MARSHALL (CONT'D) (a warning) -- Nancy.</p>
--	--

NANCY
--- and a number but...

<p>JARED See.</p>	<p>MARSHALL NANCY!</p>
-----------------------	----------------------------

Nancy starts to retreat. Finally she leaves.

JARED
I can't believe this.

Marshall tries a new tactic, trying to focus the conversation.

MARSHALL
Okay son... Let's sit and talk
calmly. Man to man.

JARED
No. Dad, because it's --

MARSHALL
-- Is it true? He said you've
been... that you are a homosexual.

Jared sighs deeply. He gets up and moves for the door.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)
Hey. We are not finished.

JARED

I am. Because you won't listen
(MORE)

JARED (CONT'D)

Jared tries to go to his room. Marshall tries to intercept him. Nancy watches from the hallway.

Jared tries to force the door shut which results in a physical battle now with his father. The door hits Marshall's face, knocking him backwards and bringing renewed fury.

Marshall forces Jared against the wall.

MARSHALL
Answer me! What this man
says...

JARED (CONT'D)
(correcting)
- What this full-of-shit *guy*
who is not a counselor and -

MARSHALL
Is it true?

JARED
Who didn't have the spine to
give *his own name* -

MARSHALL (CONT'D)
Son!!

JARED
Who *raped a kid* at his Pentacostal
church group. And... God knows who
else.

Marshall, still grips his son, but is rattled into stillness.

JARED (CONT'D)
Dad, you're hurting me.

Questions rage in his father's grip. But the thought of hurting his son wakes him from the attack.

JARED (CONT'D)
Dad. It's not true. The guy is
lying. I can tell you --

As Marshall slowly releases, Jared steps forward. He takes in his mother and father flanking him.

JARED (CONT'D)
His name is Henry Wallace. He's not
a counselor. He's a student too. He
told me he did some bad things.
(beat)
I think he thinks I'm going to tell
on him.

Pause. The dust settles finally. But, Marshall's radar is tuned to the fact that he doesn't have ALL the information

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jared is playing a game on his PLAYSTATION 2: FINAL DOOM - Level 9 with its dread filled pipe-organ theme track. Roaming the pit, he blasts demon soldiers and fiery skulls with a double barrel shotgun. Computer blood flows freely. He is deep in burying his reality when his father walks in.

MARSHALL

Your mother is making dinner.

JARED

I'm okay. I'm not hungry.

He pauses the game as Marshall sets down a note pad and pen.

MARSHALL

I want you to write down this boy's name and the name of this Pentecostal Church. If he did what you say then it needs to be reported.

JARED

I don't want you to talk to him.

MARSHALL

I think this matter is a little too important for us to get into the business of protecting anyone.

Jared looks at the paper and pen. Marshall moves to leave.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

Eric is coming over tomorrow to discuss rewiring for the new ministry.

(beat)

I extended the invitation to Chloe and Brandy too. I'd appreciate it if you stuck around another -

JARED

I really should get back.

MARSHALL

If you can miss one day of classes, I'm sure one more is not going to end the world.

(beat)

(MORE)

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

Why did you come back in the first
place? Mid-week?

The way he asks it still feels like he mistrusts his son

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

You know there is nothing like the
feeling of... being with a woman.
If you knew what it was like -

JARED

Dad. It's not true.

Jared goes to put his head phones on.

MARSHALL

You know what I think about those
kind of games too.

Marshall leaves. Distracted, Jared is swamped by soldiers.
Game Over. He sits in silence for a moment and then -

Jared explodes. The closest thing we have seen to rage. He
rips the cord from the controller out of the system and
throws it across the room.

INT. EAMONS FAMILY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Marshall looks at his ministry architectural plans while
Nancy preps dinner. A somber mood. Broken as -

Jared enters and drops the ENTIRE gaming system on the table,
cords and all. BAM.

JARED

You want me to stop with the games?

His parents are puzzled.

JARED (CONT'D)

Ok... I'll stop with them.

Pause.

JARED (CONT'D)

I don't want to see Chloe.

(beat)

We broke up.

And he exits, leaving his parents confused. But then -
Moments later he is back ---

JARED (CONT'D)

We broke up because... I think I'm.
In fact, I'm pretty sure that I'm -

Jared is trying to find the words. It's hard, but he's going to stay until the message gets across. Finally

-

Marshall swoops up his architect plans, and leaves the room. There is a long pause. Until Nancy awkwardly pipes up.

NANCY
Are you sure honey?

INT. JARED'S ROOM - FAMILY HOME - NIGHT

Jared is watching through a crack in the door. He sees -

In the kitchen his father sitting, embracing his mother. Then he hears a car and moves to the window. He is alarmed to see -

Two men approach the house: Big Jim and Pastor Wilkes. Marshall walks to greet them. It's definitely conspiratorial. And it's definitely something to do with Jared. He moves to the landing to watch them enter the house, careful to avoid being seen.

MARSHALL
Thanks for coming Jim. Pastor.

INT. L.I.A. OFFICE - AFTERNOON (PRESENT)

The daily pick-up. Jared goes to collect his cell phone as Jon is leaving the pick-up area, already having taken his. We see that bruised eye more closely. Jon nods goodbye.

EXT. HAMPTON INN AND SUITES PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

Jared and Nancy in profile shuffle back after a long day. Jared's eye catches something and he stops briefly.

The BEST WESTERN sign. He and Jon are neighbors.

INT. HAMPTON INN AND SUITES ROOM - NIGHT

Jared stands at the window staring at the blue and yellow lit tower of the BEST WESTERN: Jon's temporary home.

NANCY O.S.
We are trying a new place.

EXT. HAMPTON INN AND SUITES, PARKING LOT - MORNING

We follow Jared and Nancy toward the BEST WESTERN. Nancy, always dressed like it's dinner, even when it's breakfast.

NANCY O.S.
 - in search of the perfect soft-boiled egg.

INT. THE BEST WESTERN, BUFFET ROOM - MORNING

Nancy holds a bedazzled phone in overly manicured hands. Bangles rattle and rings knock against bigger rings. Meanwhile, Jared scans the room, looking for Jon.

NANCY
 We're about to find out.

As Jared cracks the top off a soft-boiled egg, Nancy stretches out those hands in suspenseful expectation: The pantomime of 'Did they get it right?' One of their many 'games.' Off Jared's reaction, she clenches her fists: 'foiled again.'

NANCY (CONT'D)
 Overcooked.
 (into the phone)
 If they have an office in Memphis, I could check the color swatches down here. I think a muted green is a good match with oak. Blue is always a little dominant, regardless of shade.

Jared goes back to scanning the room. Then he finds -

Jon. Trailed by a guy (20s). An older brother Jared guesses: an even manlier version of Jon. The brother hangs back to talk on his cell, as Jon hits the buffet.

INT. THE BEST WESTERN - MORNING

Jared plants himself at the buffet waiting to be seen.

JON
 Plate?

Jared almost answers but then realizes it's not an offering for him. Instead - Jon's brother brushes past.

BROTHER
 I said I'll look after myself.

JON
 You want a juice?

And so it comes to be that Jon COMPLETELY IGNORES JARED

BROTHER

Look after yourself. I got mine.

Jared hangs, self-consciously filling his plate, until it's safe to walk back to the table.

INT. THE BEST WESTERN, BUFFET ROOM - MORNING

Jared sits back down at the table, stung. He is handed the phone by Nancy.

JARED

Hey Dad. How's the remodeling going?

He looks across one last time for Jon. No luck.

JARED (CONT'D)

I'm sorry I'm not there to help.
 (listens)
 Huh? Oh yeah. Good. It's fun.
 (beat)
 I said it's fun.

PRE-LAP: the SOUNDS OF A GROWN MAN WEEPING. DEEP PAIN.

INT. L.I.A MAIN AUDITORIUM - DAY

Tight on Aaron's video camera. Its red light on. Recording.

Phillip sits crying while Aaron films him.

The faces of Jared and others as they react to the LIE CHAIR exercise and catharsis. Cameron bites his nails.

PHILLIP

(in between sobs)
 I hate you. I hate you. I --

Phillip gives his last bit of energy and SOBS now, uncontrollably. Broken. Sykes tentatively helps him up.

SYKES

Good job Phillip. We love you.

EVERYONE

We love you Phillip.

SYKES

See. Good job. Go wash up if you
need. Michael -
(MORE)

SYKES (CONT'D)

Michael steps forward to escort him. They walk out together with Aaron.

Jared looks across at Jon, who won't make eye contact with him. He looks pissed. He then sees an empty chair. He looks around. Jared turns to look around. Sarah is missing.

INT. L.I.A. MAIN AUDITORIUM - DAY

Jon is grabbing a boxed lunch. Jared come up beside him.

JARED

No one knows where Sarah is.
Have you heard anything?

He eyeballs Jared briefly. Jared feels scolded.

JON

Is this all a game to you? What
were you doing over there anyway?

JARED

We got sick of the breakfast at our
place.

JON

(moving off)
Okay. You tell yourself that.

MOMENTS LATER, Jared sits drinking tea on his own.

JON O.S.

Listen, man -

Jon plants himself in another chair.

JON

You gotta think about why you went
there. Seriously. You don't think I
wasn't fishing for where you were
staying when I told you my hotel.
These are the urges we gotta stamp
out. Whole reason we're even here.
Gotta control this.

He taps his head too hard. Admonishing.

JARED

We were just looking for somewhere
that could do boiled eggs properly.
Seriously.

(MORE)

JARED (CONT'D)

JON

True ownership man. That's what Moral Inventory's about. Owning your shit. If you want a boiled egg then tell your place how long you want them cooked. They got a kitchen and eggs and a chef. Don't come to my place pretending. Or else you gotta add it to your M.I.

Jon gives a 'sure you were' grunt then jumps up seeing Cameron is throwing a football inside with Tina. He joins. We see Cameron, suddenly relaxed and happy to have a football in his hands.

Jared stands too... beside Jon. They take turns throwing back to Cameron who is now joined by Tina. The group keep throwing, but suddenly STOP when they hear the door open.

SYKES

You don't have to stop.

In the B.G., Sykes starts re-arranging chairs with Michael.

SYKES O.S.

Football is okay. S'long as you don't break anything. In fact --

Sykes jumps in and starts throwing with them. It becomes awkward but sort of fun. The whole group encouraged to join in. Some do. Some don't. Jared watches the madness. Then --

SYKES

Cameron!!

He throws the ball to Cameron, who catches it happily as --

SYKES O.S

You're up. Moral Inventory and Lie Chair.

And the carefree smile turns to paralyzing fear.

INT. L.I.A. MAIN AUDITORIUM - DAY

Cameron is in the chair now. He is doing the Lie Chair exercise. Cameron reads from a piece of paper --

CAMERON

You wronged me dad and I hate you --

It's so quiet that everyone has to lean in to hear him.
Aaron, behind the camera, gestures to Sykes: 'volume'

SYKES

We can't hear you Cameron!

CAMERON

- hate you for the way you have
treated me since you found out
about my problems.

SYKES

'About my sins.' Say it Cameron.

Cameron looks like he wants to disappear. Jared intervenes.

JARED

I can go. I don't mind -

SYKES

(shutting him down)
Everyone gets a turn. This is
Cameron's turn. Cameron? 'Found out
about my sins' --

CAMERON

Found out about my sins.

SYKES

Louder.

CAMERON

(trying, still soft)
-- I hate you because you never
listen to me, or acknowledge me. Or
if you do acknowledge me it's to
make fun of me --

SYKES

'IT'S TO MAKE FUN OF ME!!'

CAMERON

-- in front of other people, or -
You just yell at me --

Sykes decides to let Cameron work at his own volume.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

When you told me you wished I
hadn't been born, that really hurt.

Cameron stops reading from his notes. He looks at Sykes.

SYKES

Well, you say that you are angry,
but frankly I don't see it. *'That
really hurt.*

(MORE)

SYKES (CONT'D)

(nothing from Cameron)
I wanna see you express it.

Cameron sighs. Something is definitely inside of him -

SYKES (CONT'D)

Only then can we have a chance to
tell these people in the real world
how they have affected us.

Cameron's wraps his arms around himself.

SYKES (CONT'D)

Where is that anger Cameron? You
wanna learn and grow? Well?

(turns away)

I guess not. Oh, well.

(to the group)

S'up to you.

Sykes urges the others to go on break and they all file
around Cameron who sits, feeling a failure in the chair -

But then - they hear an almighty noise and turn to see -

- Cameron bring the chair crashing down like a pick-axe, on
the empty chair opposite, POUNDING it repeatedly. Everyone is
in shock. When the dust settles, they all stare at Cameron,
and Cameron back at them --

CAMERON

Um. Sorry.

Cameron looks around like he has made a mistake. He retreats
into apologies, and starts to pick up what he's broken.

SYKES

It's okay. It's okay. Take a break
Cameron. I'll get that.

CAMERON

I'm sorry. That's just how I
express my anger so --

SYKES

That's on me. It's okay. Good job.
We love you Cameron.

GROUP

We love you Cameron.

Cameron passes by, watched by Brandon and applauded by Jon.

Jared watches Cameron retreat back into his massive shell

INT. L.I.A. BATHROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Jared steps up to pee. Unbuttoning, he sees a shape pass the high window. Curious, he hoists himself up, and can see -

Sykes, alone and in the magical afternoon light staring at the tree line. Hands on his hips. Jared immediately wonders about him. Then the door swings open and Jared steps down -

BRANDON O.S.

You're meant to attend bathroom breaks with a staff member.

Brandon eyes him cautiously, and Jared goes to exit --

BRANDON

What, you not gonna pee now?

Jared realizes his mistake. Looks at his unbuttoned pants.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Or were you gonna do something solo? That's why they make the rules.

Jared turns back to pee. It's a fearful *stop-start* pee.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Sounds like Morse code. You sending me a message, faggot?

Finished, Jared goes to walk out. Brandon turns on the tap to for him to wash. He complies. Now Brandon gets awful close and hands him a paper towel.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

I do not get you guys at all. Too much mothering and not enough fathering. I can't be both for you.

Finally Jared is allowed to leave.

INT. NANCY'S CAR - DAY

Jared rides back from L.I.A. deep in his head. Nancy drives wondering if she should respect the silence or probe --

NANCY

It's still early. Do you want to watch a movie

(MORE)

NANCY (CONT'D)

JARED

I got homework still. Plus,
I can't anyway. The rules say all
movies contain 'sinful content.'

NANCY

What about an animation?

JARED

'What'd you do last night?' 'I was
hanging at the Hampton Inn watching
The Lion King with my mom.'

Jared winds his window down. Nancy turns off the air -

NANCY

You want fresh air?

Jared reaches out his hand and his hand dances with the air.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Honey... You know I don't like -

JARED

Mom! Who did that happen to and
when? Seriously!? Do you know!?

Nancy retreats into silence. But Jared is spoiling for a
fight.

JARED (CONT'D)

Seriously. Do you actually know who
that happened to? Do you? For real?

After another silence -

JARED (CONT'D)

It was Nobody. From Nowhere Town.
(beat)
On Highway Zero. It never happened.

Now she feels the right to bite back.

NANCY

Parents want to protect their kids.

JARED

So they feed them lies.

NANCY

I think those are okay lies.

Jared, realizing he's been unfairly combative, pulls his hand back just a little bit

JARED

You know the whole thing you and Dad are paying for here is all about how messed up we are by our parents. They want to know about you. That's why you can't know all about it. Cause then they wouldn't get their money out of you.

NANCY

What have I ever done to you? I'm not a drunk or a divorcee. Your father and I don't fight. We barely even raise our voices.

(beat)

Talk about me however you want, *my* conscience is clean.

Nancy stops. She hit 'my' a little too hard. Silence.

NANCY (CONT'D)

I think I should read the book too.

(beat)

See what it's all about. Read these rules and what not.

(no answer)

They get to discuss *us*. I think we should know about *them* too. We are paying for it, and trusting them with your care.

Jared winds his window up: Happy? He leans against the glass.

INT. HAMPTON INN AND SUITES - NIGHT

Jared and his mother schlep down the hallway. Five steps behind his mother Jared's step is heavy and tired.

INT. HAMPTON INN AND SUITES - ROOM - NIGHT

Jared sits on his bed as his mother showers in the bathroom -

Jared flips open his phone and finds the number Sarah dialed two days before. He presses dial after a moment of deliberation. Waits... Then -

YOUNG FEMALE VOICE

Hello? Sarah?

(beat)

Sarah is that you??

Jared hangs up. Soon he turns to find Nancy there

NANCY

Honey. Is everything okay?

He nods. She holds up the handbook. That's when he notices she has taken it from the nightstand.

NANCY (CONT'D)

I'm reading it. No debate. I need to know what's inside of it.

JARED

I don't see why anyone would read it unless you absolutely had to.

INT. HAMPTON INN AND SUITES - NANCY'S ROOM

We push slowly toward Nancy's room as -

JARED O.S.

You can read it at night when I'm here if you seriously want to.

(beat)

There are tons of spelling errors in it. I almost wanna mark up a copy for them. But -

Nancy reads the Love In Action handbook with interest by her bedside light. She frowns as we hear -

JARED O.S. (CONT'D)

- that would take away the only real enjoyment you get from reading it. Cause, I guess, it's actually not much fun to be there.

Whatever she has read - a rule, a task, or an ideology - it troubles her. She looks across at her son.

JARED O.S. (CONT'D)

At least if you turn to page '87' you can enjoy that the goofball that transcribed it was typing so fast -

Nancy, remembering, guiltily turns the page to eighty-seven --

JARED O.S. (CONT'D)

- he wrote 'Dog' instead of God.

We read the line as Nancy's manicured finger runs along it. "...and so we always come back to Dog's true design..

JARED O.S. (CONT'D)
It'd be a shame to ruin the next
poor kid's fun.

Tight on Nancy as she smiles ruefully and whispers --

NANCY
 Almighty Dog.

INT. THE EAMONS FAMILY HOME KITCHEN - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Nancy washes dishes. We move in on her slowly from behind. The clatter of dishes. Then she stops, rock still.

She is crying.

And we pull back - there behind her on the table is Jared's gaming console. It's the night Jared declared himself.

TITLE CARD: NANCY

She hears men entering the house and turns so we see her mascara stained cheeks. She leaves the room.

O.S. Sounds of Nancy vomiting.

INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - NIGHT

Nancy post vomit, steps up to the mirror and, redoes her eye-liner. With each application she calms herself with -

NANCY
 Everything. Is. Going. To. Be --

Hearing noise she puts on her happy voice.

NANCY (CONT'D)
 One minute.

JARED O.S.
 Mom?

NANCY
 Oh. Yes honey?

JARED

Why are Pastor Wilkes and Jim
Picard here

(MORE)

JARED (CONT'D)

NANCY

I think your father is having a meeting.

(no point lying)

Because of that call today and what you just told us.

(beat)

Pastor Wilkes has dealt with this kind of thing before. Jim's son Sam. When you were just a boy.

JARED

What did they do to him?

Nancy smiles and then laughs. She embraces him.

NANCY

Oh, silly. They didn't do anything to him. They did things *for* him.

Just like your father is wondering what to do *for you*. To help you.

(beat)

You go to your room. Everything is going to be okay. I promise.

INT. STAIRWELL LANDING - NIGHT

Jared sits on the stairs, listening to murmured conversation but not being able to hear clearly. Suddenly Marshall appears at the base of the stairs.

MARSHALL

Can we see you in the kitchen please.

INT. EAMONS FAMILY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jared, led by his father, enters the kitchen -

MARSHALL

You know Pastor Wilkes and Jim obviously.

Jared says his 'ellos', curious about the stack of brochures of a 'Christian Nature' that are piled on the table. The L.I.A. logo of the heart in a triangle is prominent here.

His father seems strung out and tired, but there is a paternal care and gentleness that still exists, despite

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

We have one question and then I'll let you sleep. It's been a big day. I've shared our conversation with these two fine and trustworthy men and asked for their guidance. Now, we don't have all the answers but you hold the key to the next step.

(beat)

In your heart, do you wanna change?

Hold. It is a big question.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

And I have to be forthright here before you answer. I don't think continuing to live and be part of things at home is going to be easy for you if the answer is 'no.' I don't wanna make that a more bitter pill to swallow, but, if the answer *is* 'no' then I have to be tough and protect my needs with the ministry taking flight and my commitment to my whole flock.

(beat)

Your mother and I can't see a way to have you under this roof and attending service and working at the dealership and driving that car if you go against the grain of our beliefs.

There it is - an ultimatum. Jared looks at his mother, who can't bear to look at him. In that moment he feels alone.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

Well son?

LONG Pause.

JARED

Yes. Yes, I wanna change.

MARSHALL

I was hoping for a quicker answer. But, okay.

(beat)

Can you be free in the morning for your mother to take you to see Dr. Muldoon?

(Jared frowns/nods)

(MORE)

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

Then Pastor Wilkes has invited us
to accompany him to the jail
tomorrow.

(the Pastor's steely look)
Take a seat -

They all link hands.

PASTOR WILKES

Heavenly Father. Look down on us
now with your wisdom and unleash
your power for one of your flock
Jared, who has lost his way. We
pray Lord that you make him pure.

Sound starts to fade out --

PASTOR WILKES (CONT'D)

And deliver him safely back to us.
See the errors of his mind as
nothing more than what it is - a
momentary straying...

EXT. ARKANSAS STRIP MALL - MORNING

Jared and his mother walk. We follow them. Nancy puts on her
dark glasses. She turns to look over her shoulder, like she
is nervous they are being watched. That people know.

INT. DR. MULDOON'S WAITING ROOM - MORNING

Jared sits in a waiting room with a couple other folk. The
door opens and Nancy and Dr. Beverly Muldoon (45) come out.

DR. MULDOON

Jared.
(to Nancy)
I'll see him alone if that's okay.

Nancy takes Jared's seat.

INT. DR. MULDOON'S OFFICE - DAY

Jared sits opposite doctor Jane.

DR. MULDOON

Your father has asked me to take
some of your blood and check for
testosterone levels Jared. Is that
okay with you
(MORE)

DR. MULDOON (CONT'D)

He shrugs.

DR. MULDOON (CONT'D)
You know, anything we discuss here
is just between you and me. Both
ways. I hope that's okay?

He nods. She leans forward with kindness.

DR. MULDOON (CONT'D)
I'm in a little bind here Jared.
And I said this to your mother too.
Now I'm a religious woman no
question, but I've also been to
medical school. So I guess you
could say I hold science in one
hand and God in the other. And
that's not always an easy balance.

Jared seems confused so she drops the round-a-bout speak.

DR. MULDOON (CONT'D)
We won't find any answers in your
blood Jared. I wish I could say
otherwise. And then send you to the
pharmacy for a pill that will
magically fix you. But that's not
going to happen.

On Jared.

DR. MULDOON (CONT'D)
I'm going to take your blood and I
know what it will tell me. That you
are a perfectly normal and very
healthy teenage boy. It's not my
place to tell you your parents are
wrong. But...
(beat)
There is a different opinion - a
medical one - that says that they
are wrong. And well -
(it hangs)
What happens next is still your
choice. It may not feel that way,
but it is. That's all.

Jared hears what she is saying. He's just not sure yet
exactly what the 'next' is.

DR. MULDOON (CONT'D)
Do you have any questions for me
(MORE)

DR. MULDOON (CONT'D)

He doesn't. She looks at him with a maternal air and then, knowing what may be ahead of him, offers him this -

DR. MULDOON (CONT'D)

Well, just know you can call me any time. Now or anytime in the future.

She slides her card writing her cell number on the back. (*We saw this card during Jared's induction into L.I.A.*)

DR. MULDOON (CONT'D)

Okay. Which arm you want me to excavate?

INT. CAR DEALERSHIP/LUNCH ROOM - DAY

Jared, alone, eats. His sleeves are rolled up and a cotton bud taped in the crook of his left arm. He watches -

Through the glass, Nancy and Marshall in conversation with Big Jim. Jim heads for the lunch room.

JIM

Hey pal. Your father wanted me to show you something.

(beat)

I think your mom told you about my son Sam. Ten years ago he was in the same spot you're in pretty much. Here -

Jared looks at the photo Jim hands him. A happy family portrait. A smiling middle-aged guy, a slightly overweight woman and their three children: a girl 8, and twin boys 5.

JIM (CONT'D)

This is him today. Happy as a clam.

(beat)

Don't know if that helps. But... it's all possible my friend.

Marshall knocks on the door. 'Ready?' Jim tucks the photo back in his pocket, and pats Jared on the shoulder.

JIM (CONT'D)

I'm rooting for ya pal.

INT. PRISON - DAY

Jared trails Pastor Wilkes and Marshall as they go through the prison security check

. A big multi-bag of peanut M&M's gets scanned along with three King James Bibles and pamphlets.

MARSHALL

Candy to anyone who can recite at least two verses from the bible.

(beat)

If a want for candy tricks them into finding truth in the gospel, then -- We have to appeal to their lower natures before we can appeal to their higher ones.

Jared nods. Marshall, seeing Jared's fear, offers him a reassuring pat on the shoulder.

INT. PRISON HALLWAY - DAY

Jared, terrified and wary, stands carrying the M&M bags. He watches as his father consoles a prisoner with truly great compassion. Then he hears his name called. Pastor Wilkes needs a bag of M&M's. Jared steps closer to the cell he is in, trying not to make eye contact with the prisoner.

PASTOR WILKES

This is where the fallen land. You see? Look around you son.

INT. MARSHALL'S CAR - DAY

Marshall and Jared approach the car. Marshall eats M&M's. Then hands the bag to Jared, who is still deep in memory of the pastor's warning. They get in -

MARSHALL

You going to stay for dinner? Or --

JARED

I should probably make a start today.

Hold. Marshall puts his hand on Jared's shoulder.

MARSHALL

We'll get through this son.

Then Marshall turns on the radio: Credence Clearwater revival blasts out: There's a Bad Moon on the Rise

INT./EXT. JARED'S CAR/HIGHWAY - DAY

Jared on the side of the highway, where people only usually stop because their car has broken down. He is in the midst of a panic attack: trying to regulate his breathing.

He gets out and closes the door, leaning against the car. He manages to calm himself a little.

VRrrrrmmm. The sounds of trucks racing past by catches his attention. Soon he steps forward, until -

He is very close to the edge. Might he just step forward and solve all his problems on the grill of a speeding semi? One driver HONKS a warning. Finally -

Jared walks back to the car, kicking out at the side mirror, breaking it. He gets back in the car and starts the ignition. His complicated life must keep going.

INT. HAMPTON INN AND SUITES - MORNING (PRESENT)

Nancy wakes up. She looks around. Jared is gone.

On his freshly made bed, she finds a note -

JARED

Decided to walk x c u @ 5. Sorry I was mean.

She finds a screwed up paper on the floor and unfurls it.

PAPER

'Moral Inventory.' 'Henry' and 'Xavier.'

Henry has been scratched out. Nancy seems concerned. She moves to the bed and covers herself entirely with the sheet. Hold.

EXT. HIGHWAY - MORNING

Jared walks along the gravelled edge of the highway. He reads a handful of pages, rehearsing for his Moral Inventory.

Then - A pick-up pulls next to him. Jon's brother's car.

JON

Yo. Need a ride?

Jared sees Jon's brother in the driver's seat, eyes front

JARED

Thanks, but I got a little while. I thought I'd walk. Looking through my stuff for today.

Jon understands: 'Okay.' The pick-up pushes on. Then -

Up ahead, it slows and stops. Then Jon gets out, slamming the door. His brother blasts the horn and completes a screeching U-turn as Jon walks toward Jared. Shrugs it off.

CUT TO:

EXT. PATHWAY/PARK - DAY

Jared and Jon have taken a short cut through a park. Jared waits as Jon finishes peeing behind an old abandoned car.

JON

So, I got all these feelings in me, obviously. Toward men and so on. Have since I was thirteen or so. But I never did anything about it. Then, when I got older and discovered booze, I'd get real drunk and I'd let my guard down. Basically I'd wrestle guys and fight just to get the contact in a way that seemed okay. But, you know, people started to notice and talk. Guess I'd go too far too often.

(beat)

Then, one party, I get *real drunk*, I mean like super crazy drunk and, while a bunch of people are cheering me and watching me wrestle this kid, *I kiss this dude*, like full on, on the mouth.

(beat)

I think in my haze I thought it was okay 'cause I figured it would look like a domination over a kid everyone was already suspect over.

Jared listens, deeply curious.

JON (CONT'D)

Then I guess, I realized in the
moment how it looked to everyone
and I tried to start the wrestling
charade again

(MORE)

JON (CONT'D)

. But when I saw it wasn't working,
I had to do something and so --

(He sighs deeply)

I really started to whale on this
kid... like choked him out and beat
his face in... like bad, bad, bad,
bad, bad. Bad.

(beat)

And when it was done I remember I
stood up all messy, and put my fist
in the air like I'd just won at the
U.F.C or something whack... and I
was waiting for the cheers, and --

Jared waits - walks -

JON (CONT'D)

Everyone's faces were like... dead
still. Like -'What the fuck just
happened!?!?'

Pause.

JON (CONT'D)

I haven't been home since.

(beat)

I'm sorry for it. But it's also
what got me to where I am. So...

Pause.

JON (CONT'D)

And I'm committed, I'm not here to
waste anyone's time, don't get me
wrong, but -

(beat)

- I am what I am. I don't think
there is any changing me and my
thoughts and whatnot. But I do know
by staying off the drink and making
certain choices, I can just choke
that side of me away. Put it aside.
There is a difference. Whether you
can actually change or just choose
different things.

Jared absorbs this. Jon knows he can't change. He just
believes he can put his desires in a drawer.

JON (CONT'D)

Haven't touched another guy since.
That's why I don't even shake hands
you know. I've just decided that's
it for me. Whatever it takes

(MORE)

JON (CONT'D)

Jon kicks a rock.

JON (CONT'D)

What you got?

(beat)

What's your big crazy story?

Jared absorbs what he has on his meager pages...

JON (CONT'D)

Sykes's gonna decide you know,
based on what you say today,
whether you stay another month,
three months, six. A year.

Finally, Jared stops.

JARED

I don't really have a crazy story.
We, ah, probably shouldn't walk in
together.

And they walk in silence for some time --

EXT. L.I.A. HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Jared approaches to see Sykes on the steps conferring with two OLDER MEN. One, a striking man with silver hair and sharp features and, a shiny-bald stocky man. Both in their fifties.

Sykes sees Jared.

SYKES

Today's going to run a little
differently. I'll be inside soon.

INT. L.I.A. MAIN AUDITORIUM - DAY

There is trash bag in the center of the room and, from it, the members of the group are trying on black and dark-blue blazer coats as instructed by Michael and Aaron.

JON

What's going on Michael?

MICHAEL

Sykes can tell you. Try this on.

Jon and Jared try on coats. They are handed ties too as -
Sykes enters looking troubled

SYKES

Everybody sit down. Michael. Aaron.
You can start on the windows.

Jared sees a MASSIVE roll of black material. Duct tape etc...
He wonders: "what the hell is going on?!?"

And then the door opens and a couple of STAFF lug a funeral
casket into the room. Aaron runs to help.

SYKES (CONT'D)

Okay. We haven't got much time and
I need your help.

Sykes signs for the casket. Then he turns to the group.

SYKES (CONT'D)

There's been a situation with
Cameron overnight.

Everyone sinks. Is Cameron dead?!?!

SYKES (CONT'D)

Cameron has broken some serious
rules and in conference with his
father and their church elders,
we've decided to offer him a
chance. To shock him into recovery.

Jared is confused.

SYKES (CONT'D)

Today Cameron is going to choose to
be dead to his life and to his
family or to truly surrender.

INT. L.I.A. MAIN AUDITORIUM - DAY

The room is now cast in darkness, the windows blacked out.
Candles flicker and dim lamps otherwise illuminate the room.
The centerpiece is the casket. Slivers of sun infiltrate.

Jared, Simon, Jon, Carl... all are in attendance.

Jared looks across to a handful of NEW PEOPLE: CAMERON'S
FAMILY and CLOSE FRIENDS: An OLDER BROTHER and SISTER. And
TWO YOUNGER SIBLINGS. The two younger ones are confused and
are teary-eyed. CAMERON'S MOTHER also attends along with
Cameron's LOCAL MINISTER (the balding man we saw earlier.)
Plus a couple of FOOTBALL TEAMMATES, along with their COACH.

Sykes enters. He gestures for everyone to stand. He grabs a chair and sets it down beside the casket, facing the group

SYKES

Here?

The BALD MAN nods approval. Sykes is not in control here.

Then a knock at the door alerts him --

Sykes opens the door. Cameron, BLINDFOLDED, is led by his FATHER and Rev. Neil, the silver haired man.

Jared looks deeply concerned: It looks more backyard, improvised and pagan-like than truly Christian.

Brandon starts a classic funeral dirge on the Hi-fi system: OPUS 35 - Chopin.

Cameron is taken to his seat by the casket. They unmask him and, when he sees his family gathered together plus the casket, his weeping deepens. Understandably, he is scared.

Jared squirms.

REVEREND NEIL

Sadly, we are gathered here today
to say farewell to our son, our
brother and friend Cameron Van
Huessen who, by his own making,
last night fell prey to Satan's
wishes, falling farther away from
God.

(beat)

But, the Heavenly Father in the
wisdom of his mercy hasn't had his
last word on this boy's soul -

Jared watches as --

-- Music starts drowning out the 'service.' The beatific --
Moonlight Sonata by Beethoven.

----- as it plays, we see -----

Various images in slow motion to the music.

- Cameron wraps himself in his big arms and folds over. Sykes attends him, holding him in place.

- Cameron's sisters hug each other.

- The bald Minister opens the coffin as Cameron is led there by Sykes and Rev. Neil. A pantomime where the message is clear. Does Cameron want to DIE or BE REBORN.

- Cameron shakes his head fervently. He doesn't want to die

- They crowd around Cameron, offering an ultimatum. He nods his head, still in tears, fully submitting.
- Sykes gestures to Aaron and Michael who rip the black material off the walls letting the light in.
- Cameron kneels, eyes shut, hands up, surrendering himself. Rev. Neil places a hand on Cameron's head. In a wild, jolting gesture he PUSHES to CAST the demons out.
- Others join him, doing the same.
- Cameron's Father pushes Cameron's head aggressively. Cameron falls backwards to the ground.
- Cameron's brother is handed a bible. He strikes Cameron with it. Cameron's anguished face as he rolls over, tears streaming.
- Various people are encouraged to strike Cameron with bibles and other books. Harder and harder they strike.
- Later: Cameron vomits in a trash can held by Brandon. Rev. Neil brings him back to his knees.
- Jon is handed a bible. He stands, Jared watching him.
- Jon strikes Cameron with the bible.
- Cameron stands with the help of those around him. His sisters are close.

The music carries through -

EXT. DRIVEWAY/STREETS - LATER

- Cameron walks the street, propped up by his father and others. The full congregation snakes behind.

Jared is right up the back. Sarah near him. They share a look.

- They walk up the path toward a house: New Hope House. The Men's 'long stay' house we have been hearing of. Follow into -

INT. NEW HOPE HOUSE - DAY

Seen, through Jared's P.O.V.: A suburban house with all doors removed and closed circuit surveillance cameras in the corner of EACH ROOM. HE notices, as they pass -

The ONLY DOOR in the house. It has two PADLOCKS securing it.

INT. NEW HOPE HOUSE, BATHROOM - DAY

Jared watches through the crowd as Cameron is placed in the basic shower bath-tub of the small bathroom.

There he is baptized with his father and mother close, encouraged by Rev. Neil to place their hands on him.

His big body shudders and his strong arms reach out for the water. Like a massive baby. Full surrender.

Jared watches mute.

The only thing that makes this even remotely bearable is that Cameron, seems ecstatic and accepting of his REBIRTH. His arms clawing for God, reaching for a loving embrace.

Beethoven's music underpins the whole horrible, beautiful, scene.

Jared sees Sykes on the edge of the action, involved but not really. Jared turns to go, unable to watch anymore. Interestingly, Sykes doesn't try and stop him. But -

Jon does. He grabs for Jared's arm. Jared shakes him off.

EXT. NEW HOPE HOUSE, HALLWAY - DAY

Jared moves into the hall, escaping the horror. He is alone.

GARY O.S.

Starting to see it for what it is?

Gary is standing by the corner.

GARY

They catch him with another boy in a steam room and what do they do?

(beat)

You seem smart. You want my advice? Tell them everything they need to hear and play the part. You're up any day now. Let them know you're understanding your mistakes, getting better, that it's working. Think all my stories and my tears were real? 'Fake it to make it'. None of *this* is going to help any. The sooner you are out of here and home the better.

(MORE)

GARY (CONT'D)

And the sooner we are all out of
home and somewhere else the better -
(that hangs
(MORE)

GARY (CONT'D)

You don't want to end up at one of these houses for any amount of time. I've heard the stories and they are not good.

A muffled chorus and shout comes from the bathroom.

GARY (CONT'D)

Unless you really think you can change. Or want to.

INT. HAMPTON INN AND SUITES - NIGHT

The music continues as -

Jared walks the hall with his mother. Seen from behind they walk away and enter the room, leaving an empty hallway. Hold.

And the music ends on a deep base note -

EXT. MEMPHIS MOTEL MILE - NIGHT

Jared runs, exorcising the days events. Hood up, he pounds the pavement past the various motels. The rushing oncoming cars WHOOSH past like his dark thoughts.

Later: As he passes a bus shelter he comes to a stop. A strip mall in the background. Not a soul about. He takes a seat on a bench to catch his breath and when he looks back he sees -

On the outside of the bus shelter: a beatific advertising image of a SHIRTLESS GUY, lit and inviting. Jared looks away but something draws him back. His nature.

Then, something fierce wells up in him, and he gets up as if he is looking around for something. Leaves frame. Hold. We hear noises of effort.

He soon returns with a heavy paving stone. He is about to launch the missile at the advertising image. However --

On the approach, the poster slides to the NEXT ad... a woman in a swim suit. It railroads his intentions.

JARED

Arghhhh.

He throws the paver anyway and it bounces off the Perspex shield, doing minimal damage. He sits down drained. Defeated

JARED (CONT'D)

Fuck.

(turning skyward)

Fuck you. I hate you. Fuck you.

FUUUUUUCK!

He waits. Nothing. Then -

The advertising image slides back, to the beatific male image. But, now buckled by the assault, its mechanism falters and sticks halfway. We move in on Jared. Recognition. Memory. The man, the face, albeit obscured with fracture glass, reminds him of something. Someone.

SNAP TO BLACK:

INT./EXT. JARED'S CAR/COLLEGE DORM BUILDING - LATE AFTERNOON (FLASHBACK)

Jared parks the car. He is dressed as he was the day of the prison visit. The day he had his panic attack on the highway and had thoughts of suicide. We know this too because when he gets out, he inspects the freshly broken side window.

INT. COLLEGE DORM BUILDING - EARLY EVENING

Jared lugs his overnight bag, dragging his feet. Depleted.

He lumbers past a bulletin board, then stops. Backs up.

An image of Christ. It's a western depiction of Jesus where the man himself could have signed with a California modeling agency. The words 'God vs. Science' pop out.

He steps closer and takes the flyer in his hands. It is advertising for a college art exhibition.

EXT. JARED'S DORM ROOM 346 - NIGHT

Jared unlocks his room. He notices, behind him, TWO STUDENTS whisper gossip about him. Has word gotten around somehow? Then he looks into the room -

INT. JARED'S DORM ROOM 346 - NIGHT

Inside, his room has been trashed. He enters cautiously.

Then he stops - Just above his bunk bed mattress is a crudely spray-painted message: '*DIE HOMO*.'

- He corrects a fallen chair and finds a bottle of wine.
- Room fixed up, Jared sits on his bed holding the bottle. He turns over the flyer in his hands then puts it aside. He opens the bottle sniffing the booze: 'Die Fag' behind him.

INT. LYON CAMPUS, ARTS BUILDING FOYER - NIGHT

A section of the Fine Arts building turned gallery space. People mill about. A decent crowd. Jared steps into frame.

He raises a glass of wine to his lips. He is staring at -

The Mormon style image of Jesus. The same ultra-color Blonde depiction as the flyer. The actual artwork is five feet by six. HUGE. We see that in Jesus's hand is an image of a CELL PHONE. It's controversial in a playful way.

To Jared it is distasteful and somewhat irrelevant. Trite. He turns and places his drink down and suddenly stops, seeing --

A BEAUTIFUL BOY (20), gesturing to a small group about an image: MARY. Arms in offering, a Virtual Reality system on her face. Someone in the group shakes his hands in congratulations, and he nods humbly in thanks. This is the ARTIST. Xavier.

Jared is transfixed. Not by the image, but by Xavier.

And then Xavier catches him and looks right back. He steps in front of the image so that he appears Jesus-like. Divine: Mary's offering arms seem to be his.

TITLE CARD: XAVIER

Jared does not turn away. Xavier gestures 'cheers' with his wine and moves away. Jared keeps staring.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jared walks an expansive hallway alone. Soon -

Xavier comes into frame, following. Then he takes the lead.

INT. XAVIER'S STUDIO ROOM - NIGHT

They walk in together. As the door closes the music stops

There is minimal improvised and eclectic furniture in this studio space. Beyond it Jared can see at the far end, a bed room lit by warm lamp light.

Xavier puts on Otis Redding - Change is Gonna Come. Vinyl.

XAVIER O.S

I'm having some wine. Do you want some more?

When Xavier speaks he has a slight European accent: French. Swiss? It is hard to tell.

Jared looks around at the motley pictures hanging: Subversive religious images; magazine cut-outs, plus; sketches of people and shapes. Curated by a novice, yet somehow captivating.

JARED

Where are you from Xavier?

XAVIER O.S

I lived in thirteen countries before I left high school. Born in Vienna. Ended up in Canada. Now here.

He approaches with a red wine. Jared takes it.

JARED

Do you believe in God?

XAVIER

Serious.

JARED

Why is that serious?

Jared is buoyed by drink. It is a bold side of him we have never seen. Perhaps some things are possible with booze that otherwise are not, as we may remember from Jon's tale.

Like with that - this encounter should carry an edge that carries the possibility of that same danger.

JARED (CONT'D)

Do you believe in God or not? Your whole art thing is --

XAVIER

I do. I was raised with religion and I question it, but I still believe in God

(MORE)

XAVIER (CONT'D)

JARED

Who created the earth?

Xavier laughs. That's a BIG question?

XAVIER

You like a little small talk, huh?

JARED

I don't think you can believe in science and religion equally.

Xavier frowns, not ready to engage in the seriousness.

JARED (CONT'D)

Don't you think you have to pick a side? Don't they cancel each other out.

XAVIER

Well, paper beats rock. Then no one can believe in God.

JARED

Why?

XAVIER

Because science has shown itself and God has not.

JARED

Sure he has.

XAVIER

Not all the time. Science shows itself all the time. It's always around us developing. Does God show himself enough? Where is He?

(off Jared's expression)

Wait till you really suffer.

Jared seems to be getting either angry now or emotional. He may lash out, physically OR sexually... or totally crumble. It is hard to tell.

Xavier walks away.

When he comes back, he has a joint. He lights it. Jared has never been this close to drugs.

XAVIER (CONT'D)

Do you believe in the devil?

Jared's silence is a yes

XAVIER (CONT'D)
Does he look like me?

JARED
I don't know.

XAVIER
Because he also doesn't show
himself.

Jared surprises us by taking the joint. He takes a toke.
After a long beat.

JARED
You know Job? From the Bible.

XAVIER
Not personally.

Jared sees the humor in it.

XAVIER (CONT'D)
I hear he's not great company.
Always complaining.

Jared cracks up. Then gets real. He has to make his point.

JARED
I imagine I'm him sometimes. That
God and the Devil are having a bet
over me. That one day he'll show
himself to me and let me in on the
experiment he was having to test
me.

XAVIER
You just summed it all up.
(beat)
People hoping someone is watching
over them. That hard times are part
of a design.
(beat)
I think we are our own test. Our
own judgement. Our own god. Meaning
I think he is in us. All of us. Not
somewhere watching and hiding.

Jared thinks about this.

XAVIER (CONT'D)
Stay with me.

Jared is not flinching

XAVIER (CONT'D)
Nothing needs to happen. I swear.

Nothing from Jared.

XAVIER (CONT'D)
I'll prove to you that God won't
strike you down.

JARED
What if you are the devil?

XAVIER
Then you are too.

He backs away.

XAVIER O.S.
We are the same. I could be you or
you could be me.

Soon, Jared looks back for the door, but instead he watches
Xavier who disappears into the warm glow of his bedroom den.

INT. XAVIER'S BEDROOM DEN - NIGHT

From above, Jared and Xavier lie down. The music filters in
from the other room.

They look at each other.

They hold hands. And that's it.

INT. XAVIER'S DEN - MORNING

Jared wakes up to full sunlight. Xavier is facing him asleep.
Jared looks down. They are still holding hands, and still
fully clothed. Jared slowly releases his hand from Xavier's.

He stares for some time then finally moves out of frame.

INT. ARKANSAS STREET - DAY

Jared walks the street and lifts his phone to his ear.

JARED
Dad. I'm ready. I'm coming home.
I'll go wherever you need me to
(MORE)

JARED (CONT'D)

EXT. LYON COLLEGE, LAKE PONTOON - DAY

Jared naked from the waist up.

JARED

Please Lord, make me pure.

And falls backward, right into the icy college lake. His clothes left piled on the shore nearby.

INT. HAMPTON INN AND SUITES, BATHROOM - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Jared, dripping wet, stands before the mirror in his running gear, staring at himself. The shower runs in the B.G. Then we realize that he is looking at a card. It is the business card of Dr. Beverly Muldoon. He turns it over in his hands. Contemplating. Phone poised he actually starts to dial. Then he thinks better of it and takes off his shirt, walking into the steam.

INT. HAMPTON INN AND SUITES HALLWAY - MORNING

Behind: Nancy, in her Jackie O's, and Jared walk the hall.

INT. L.I.A. HALLWAY - DAY

Behind: Jared walks the L.I.A. hallway.

INT. L.I.A. MAIN AUDITORIUM - DAY

Jared sits in his chair, clutching his papers and handbook, a purposeful steely look in on his face. He looks across and -

Cameron slowly eases himself into an empty seat. He acknowledges no one and sits, arms across his massive torso.

Sykes moves to his podium.

SYKES

I don't know about y'all, but today
I feel invigorated. I feel hopeful
that so much is possible.

Jared steals a look at Cameron. Cameron does not seem to be sharing the same vigor. He seems truly sunk.

SYKES (CONT'D)
Cameron. How do you feel
(MORE)

SYKES (CONT'D)

CAMERON

I feel *great*, Sir.

SYKES

Do you feel the true presence of
God in your heart?

CAMERON

Yes sir.

SYKES

It feels great don't it?

CAMERON

Yes sir. It does for sure.

Jared catches Gary's eye. A shared skepticism. Then he catches Jon's eye, but Jared turns away almost coldly. Things have shifted between the two of them. Broken.

SYKES O.S.

Ready when you are, Jared.

INT. L.I.A. MAIN AUDITORIUM - MOMENTS LATER

Jared's hands squeeze his papers for his Moral Inventory.

We hold on Jared's face through --

JARED

I had thoughts of men.

(beat)

Boys at school. On T.V. On the
street. In my imagination. At
college I held the hand of a boy
and I stayed through the night. In
his bed.

(beat)

For these thoughts and this action,
for which I felt regretful, I -

SYKES O.S.

Hold on. And..?

The faces of others. Of Jon. Aaron filming.

JARED

I never... I stayed the night with
the boy from college but we never
did anything more. That's the only

(MORE)

JARED (CONT'D)

SYKES

Come on Jared. Don't hide your sins. God sees everything. What else?

Jared stews. He really is telling the truth. What happened with Henry was Henry's sin.

JARED

I lied on my Genogram. My uncle Chris wasn't an alcoholic.

Sykes sighs.

JARED (CONT'D)

It's true. How do you know?

SYKES

You want to waste everyone's time?

JARED

I'm not.

SYKES (CONT'D)

And mock everyone who has got up here being honest and brave.

JARED

I could make something up. Is that what you want me to do? Isn't that a sin too?

He eyeballs Sykes. A new strength of defiance.

JARED (CONT'D)

If thoughts are a sin, I ask God's forgiveness for that, but I'm not making anything up.

On Sykes. He eyes Jared: It seems like a stand off.

SYKES

Okay then.

He moves off to get the lie chair. He sets it down in front of Jared. And places another chair beside Jared.

SYKES O.S

There's your father. Sit down.

Jared sits, albeit reluctantly.

SYKES

Tell him how he's affected you.
Tell him how angry you are
(MORE)

SYKES (CONT'D)

(hold)
Tell him you hate him for --

Jared stands back up again.

SYKES (CONT'D)
Sit down.

JARED
But, I'm not angry and I -

SYKES
Yes you are -

JARED
- he's done things that upset me and he's let me down, but -

SYKES (CONT'D)
- you are angry and -

JARED
Why do I have to be angry?

SYKES
Sit down Jared. Sit.

JARED
I'm not a dog.
(beat)
And I don't think anyone is responsible for me. So -

Jared continues to hold his ground.

JARED (CONT'D)
I don't see how it's going to help.
Picking someone to blame or hate.
Pretending we're angry at someone.
(to Aaron)
Can you stop filming me -

Aaron, tracking him, does not stop filming.

JARED (CONT'D)
I don't hate anyone.

SYKES
Then why all this anger -

JARED
Because, you are making me angry.

SYKES
Then use it
(MORE)

SYKES (CONT'D)

JARED

You are not listening to me.

MICHAEL

No! Stop!! You are not listening to him! You are not taking this seriously.

JARED

I am taking it seriously.

MICHAEL

You're not. You're pathetic, and a liar. And you don't wanna change at all. He doesn't want to change -

JARED

I do. I am. I just don't agree. I'm not going to pretend to be angry. I love my father.

SYKES

I don't think you do.

JARED

You don't know me. You are all crazy. All of you.

Tina's jaw is wide open. Gary smirks. Cameron is raising his eyebrows.

Jared moves a few steps toward the door.

SYKES

Where are you going? You're not going anywhere until --

JARED

You're in my chair. There you go. I hate you. But how does that help?

Jared is starting to breath heavily. Panic.

JARED (CONT'D)

I really want to go.

SYKES

Just take a minute.

JARED

I mean, how does any of this help? It's crazy.

And he walks out

EXT. L.I.A. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The office door is locked. He knocks. Panic rising.

Sykes comes from the main auditorium. He is oscillating between tender and hard tactics. Tender it is -

SYKES

Jared? Son?

(beat)

Don't open -

A FEMALE CLERK opens the door. Jared moves past.

JARED

I want my things.

SYKES

We'll get your things, just come back and have a talk with me first.

JARED

I want my things now. And I want -

Jared just walks around and opens a drawer and finds various bags of people's belongings. At one stage Michael rushes in and tries to intervene and Jared scuffles with him.

Finally, Jared finds his bag and grabs his cell phone from it. He leaves the room -

INT. L.I.A. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Sykes blocks his way to the exit. Jared retreats.

INT. L.I.A. MEN'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jared storms into the bathroom and finds a stall and locks himself in. His breath is short now. Panicked.

JARED

(on the phone)

Mom. It's me. I need your help.

Come get me please. Like now.

(beat)

Please. I'm in trouble.

He waits. For a long time there is silence. Then voices on the other side of the door. Soon the door opens.

Go away JARED (CONT'D)
 (MORE)

JARED (CONT'D)

SYKES

Jared?

(beat)

Jared.

(quietly)

Michael, get Brandon.

Jared is scared now. Shit. He has to get out. He prepares himself and then storms out past Sykes back into --

INT. L.I.A. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jared's way to the exit is blocked by Brandon and Aaron. Behind Jared are the other group members, all too scared to help or comment in any way. It's a stand off: staff on one side, blocking the exit. Clients on the other side.

JARED

I wanna leave, okay? Please.

SYKES

You are just having a rough moment.

JARED

'A moment?!' A moment?

SYKES

Steady on. I know it feels -

JARED (CONT'D)

I don't wanna talk. I wanna go.

SYKES

I don't want you to.

JARED (CONT'D)

I read the rules and none of them say you can stop me from leaving.

Sykes turns to Brandon. Mutters something. It's certain he is asking Brandon to use his muscle to contain Jared.

JARED (CONT'D)

And if you or anyone puts their hands on me. I have witnesses.

(phone rings)

Mom? Where are you? If I put him on they might take the phone.

(listens)

How far away?

Heavy screeching outside and a minor collision. Then a door slam and -

Jared! NANCY
 (MORE)

NANCY (CONT'D)

Heavy POUNDING comes from the other side of the exit door.

NANCY O.S.
(breathless and LOUD)
JARED!!! Honey? What's happening?

JARED
Mom!! They won't let me out.

NANCY O.S.
What!? Why? Who's there with you?!

Sykes walks toward the door. Jared tries to too but Brandon blocks his way.

SYKES
Jared is having a moment born out of a role-play task. He thinks he wants to go because it brought up some issues for him but I think it's best for his development that he doesn't --

JARED
No. That's not... Mom? Tell him he has to open the door.

SYKES
I'll call Mr. Eamons, and you and I and Jared can all sit down to --

NANCY O.S.
Who exactly am I speaking to?

SYKES
This is Victor Sykes. We spoke on the phone a few weeks back.
(beat)
Missus Eamons. I think the thing to understand here --

NANCY O.S.
Open the door Mr. Sykes. Now!
Before I call the police.

Hold. Jared waits. Sykes remains unmoved.

Then Cameron steps forward.

CAMERON
Open the door.

It's a HUGE moment: Cameron rebelling. He moves forward and -

Puts his MASSIVE FRAME between Brandon and Jared, challenging the tough guy who once belittled him.

CAMERON (CONT'D)
He wants to leave.

Hold. Brandon stands his ground. But then something shifts. He knows, in this moment, he is the weaker of the two men.

NANCY O.S.
Jared!?

CAMERON
Come on.

JARED
We're coming.

Cameron escorts Jared all the way to the exit door.

Sykes too steps aside, having been overpowered by forces on both sides, allowing Cameron to open the door,

The reveal of Nancy is AMAZING. She wears sweats and no make-up or jewelry. This is what Nancy looks like when she doesn't have to present. The real her. Naturally beautiful.

Jared shakes Cameron's hand and then hugs him tight: Thanks. He eyeballs Sykes: 'You got a problem with this?'

Now Jared joins Nancy as they start to move for the door. Then she turns sharply -

NANCY O.S.
What actual qualifications do you have Mr. Sykes? I never asked.

Hold. Great question. It hangs.

NANCY
Are you a doctor? A psychologist? A real proper one?

Nothing --

NANCY O.S.
Just as I thought. Shame on you.
Shame on you.

It's true. No disputing it. Nancy and Jared continue to exit

EXT. L.I.A. HEADQUARTERS - MOMENTS LATER

Jared and Nancy walk fast from the door to the car.

NANCY
They following?

JARED
No.

NANCY
Don't look at me. I'm a mess.
(beat)
You said hurry.

They get in the car. And they drive away as fast as Nancy will drive. Maybe one spin of the tires.

Music starts -

INT. THE PEABODY HOTEL, MEMPHIS - EARLY EVENING

Jared sits alone in the affluent, green and cream dining hall of the famous hotel. It is early and almost empty.

WAITER
Can I help you?

JARED
I'm not sure if I'm staying or going.

Then Nancy arrives. Jared waits expectantly. She is done up again now, albeit a conservative version of herself.

NANCY
Your father wants you to go back.

Hold. We can see Jared's crest fall. Nancy sits.

NANCY (CONT'D)
I told him... we'll see him at home. I told him you are not going back.
(beat)
That night Pastor Wilkes and Jim came to the house?
(MORE)

NANCY (CONT'D)

Those men decided what to do with
you, and I just fell into line like
I usually do. Sometimes they say
you gotta hurt a child in order to
help them

(MORE)

NANCY (CONT'D)

. And that may be so with some things, but a mother knows when something isn't right, and I knew in my bones it wasn't hurting to help. I was just letting you down and I kept my mouth shut. I'll always regret that.

(beat)

So I'm going to do a different thing now I have a chance. I'll handle your father. He can fall into line with me for a change.

Jared allows his mother's embrace. Now she lifts the mood.

NANCY (CONT'D)

I bet this hotel is "*off limits?*"
Out of the "safe zone."

He smiles at her use of the L.I.A. jargon.

NANCY (CONT'D)

We may as well have a drink.

(small laugh)

One of my ideas, one of my many ideas, that I know would have made a lot of money... 'Minister's Wives Gone Wild.'

She gets up heroically, not an ounce of fear, and turns as if the brave should follow the brave - 'come on'

NANCY (CONT'D)

Let's go to the bar.

Jared smiles and stands, buoyed by her support.

INT. EAMONS FAMILY HOME - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Jared and his mother and father eat.

Given what's happened you would think that there would be much discussion. Instead there is none. Maybe it's already been had. Maybe it is to come. Or maybe not.

Finally, Marshall takes his plate and leaves. Nancy and Jared share a look, and she keeps eating unperturbed.

Music continues

INT. JARED'S ROOM/EAMONS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jared sits on his bed. He unzips his L.I.A. bag. He raises his white shirt. Throws it in the trash. Behind him now as he unpacks, we hear a doorbell ring. He turns to register it but doesn't pay too much mind. Moments later he hears a knock at his door.

NANCY
(knocking)
Honey.

Jared turns -

NANCY (CONT'D)
Do you know a boy by the name of
Cameron Van Huessen?

JARED
Is he here?

NANCY
No honey. That's a sheriff. He's
come to ask you some questions.
Apparently this Cameron boy killed
himself today.

The world drops away. And much like Cameron's fake funeral,
we absorb his death in a similar fashion: slowly --

-- Jared sits to talk to a young sheriff. The sheriff takes
Jared's statement. Behind the sheriff -

-- Jared sees him father move away up.

-- The Sheriff is seen to the door and the whole family
disperses into separate rooms.

- Jared walks into his room. He turns and sees his father
watching him. Jared closes his door.

SNAP TO BLACK:

OMITTED

OMITTED

FADE TO BLACK

EXT. BROOKLYN STREETS - NIGHT (THREE YEARS LATER)

We follow Jared. A black coat. If it isn't apparent, it will be as we take in his profile, and then his face full frontal as he turns the corner, that it is a few years later.

TITLE CARD: JARED

It's not so much that he has aged. More that he wears a new confidence that wasn't apparent before. Under his arm he carries a six pack of craft beer and a bottle of wine. He approaches a building in an industrial area --

Jared puts a phone to his ear. An iPhone 1. (It is 2008)

JARED
I left my keys. They fixed the
buzzer.

He buzzes and is buzzed up. We pull sideways to take in - New York City. The vast skyline.

OMITTED

INT. JARED'S SHARED APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jared and friends share a drink, post dinner. They are playing a board game.

Improvised scene from which --

We move back to see this action now in B.G. From a bedroom we discover is Jared's. His phone sits beside his computer and a stack of papers. Perhaps we see certain things in the glow: An article with Jared's name on it in an open journal magazine; a photo of him and his Mom posted on a board; Another of him and a boyfriend. Then, as we reach his iPhone and push in - it lights up and rings faintly. The vibration moves it toward the desks edge, until it finally stops teetering over the lip. The glow of the 'unknown number' finally goes away.

Back with Jared and his friends. Unaware of who was calling him and what it would potentially mean, Jared continues laughing and playing.

LATER: The kitchen is empty. The bottles and dishes can wait for another day. We hear Jared farewell a friend O.S

OMITTED

INT. JARED'S BROOKLYN BEDROOM - LATER

Jared works. Now lit by the screen of his desktop, we see evidence of the writer Jared has become. We pick off various things including a post-it note saying 'write what you know!!'

Jared types furiously and when an email pings he immediately switches to his email page: an email from - Nancy Eamons: "URGENT -- I WAS RIGHT!!" How could he not open it -

A news article: A BOY WHO LOST HIS ARM, HANGING IT OUT OF A CAR IN IBIZA.

Then another PING: He sighs, she has hooked him again, dragging him from work into a text chat.

MOM: Are you coming for Thanksgiving?

JARED: I don't know I can.

MOM: Your dad would love to see you.

JARED: I'll come when Dad is away at the convention.

Then the phone rings. He snatches it up -

JARED
Mom! I'm working.

Pause. Then a PING on the computer - Again it is -

MOM: Okay. Goodnight.

Then, who is on the phone!

VOICE
Is this Jared Eamons?

JARED
Yeah. Who's this?

Jared walks out to the fridge in the darkened kitchen to grab another beer --

VOICE
From L.I.A. a few years ago?

He stops. Moves back to the bedroom and turns off the music.
Now there is utter silence

JARED
Who is this?

VOICE
It's ah... It's Victor Sykes.

Hold.

SYKES
Before you hang up. Please hear me
out. I've been contacting as many
ex-clients as I can...

Jared listens and Sykes' call drowns out. We move behind
Jared's head as he listens and we hear faint traces --

When we come across to Jared's other side of Jared we hear a
fierce and firm drum snare SNAP!

THEN TO BLACK:

Then a drum roll rumbles over -

EXT. BROOKLYN STREET - DAY

A truck passing reveals Jared's face cautiously standing on
the street keenly watching something. He puts his phone to
his ear. Another drum beat and we see - the drumming actually
comes from a TEEN BOY right by Jared. Jared looks at him for
a moment.

Jared's friend, one we saw from the night before steps up.

FRIEND
He's in there. Well, from your
description, I think he is.
(Jared tenses)
You don't have to do this you know.

And with that, Jared moves off.

FRIEND (CONT'D)
Call if you need back up.

INT. BROOKLYN CAFE - DAY

Jared pokes his head in. He looks around --

Jared turns the bend cautiously and looks around.

A man stands -- It is Sykes. He looks different. A new haircut. A grey goatee. Loose clothing. Transformed.

SYKES

Jared. Thanks for this.

JARED

How did you get my number?

SYKES

I tried the one I had on file.

They sit.

SYKES (CONT'D)

I'm sorry to jump out of nowhere
and contact you.

Sykes seems interminably nervous. Not his L.I.A. self. He rummages through a shoulder bag.

SYKES (CONT'D)

I said I had some things for you.

Jared is just watching and waiting. Uncomfortable.

SYKES (CONT'D)

There's a few things about me you
don't know. And, well, reading the
article I figured it was about time
I made contact with you.

(beat)

Try and make some kind of peace.

Sykes finds what he wants to give, handing it over: The torn out pages of Jared's Moleskin from all those years ago.

SYKES (CONT'D)

I kept everything. When I left --

Jared is trying to compute everything.

SYKES (CONT'D)

I couldn't recognize it at the time
but they really were... are very
good. The stories.

(beat)

You look well. And seem good. So --

(beat)

Listen, I don't know where to start
but I want you to know that I've
left the ministry and L.I.A. and
well, I guess you could say I've
turned my back on all of it.

On Jared, absorbing

Sykes pushes a picture across the table - Jared picks it up. A picture of - Sykes with his arm around a man.

Jared, feelings welling, gets up and heads for the restroom.

INT. RESTROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jared closes the door. And it is here, of all places, and in this moment that Jared finally releases emotion. His shaking hands wipe a tear and he tries to suppress it. But then -

It's too much and IT ALL COMES OUT.

INT. BROOKLYN CAFE - CONTINUOUS

Sykes waits patiently at the table. He peruses the menu. Then his phone rings.

INT. RESTROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jared wipes his eyes and speaks on the phone.

JARED

It's Jared. Hey. I, um... no offense, but could we try this some other time.

INTERCUT WITH Sykes. Empathetic, he listens. Something ironic in the image of him now facing an empty chair.

SYKES

I understand. Of course.

INT. BROOKLYN CAFE - CONTINUOUS

Sykes slowly gets up from the table and makes his way out.

INT. RESTROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jared has calmed now. He steadies his breathing, until he's ALMOST calm again. As we see this, we hear --

OMMITTED

OMMITTED

EXT. EAMONS FAMILY HOME - DAY

Jared's car pulls into the family driveway.

JARED O.S.
Where is he?

INT. EAMONS FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY

Jared stands in the kitchen table, on a mission. Fierce. (NB: Nancy is slightly less 'made-up' these days)

NANCY
Honey. It's Sunday. If it's urgent,
you'll have to go to the church.

JARED
I'll wait for him to get back.

NANCY
You haven't even seen it. Not with
all the fittings and filled with
people. He's so proud of it.
(beat)
Like he's proud of you.

JARED
Mom, he lost part of his
congregation on account of me.

NANCY
You've made that a bigger deal than
it ever was. Honey -
(beat)
What is the matter? Is everything -

JARED
Why aren't you there? At church.

NANCY
I don't always go. I do to support
your father sometimes. But, he
knows. I have my own religion.
(off Jared's expression)
Everyone else creates religions to
suit themselves, so I figured, why
couldn't I.

INT. NANCY'S CAR - DAY

Nancy at the wheel. The sun sheds a warm glow on Nancy

NANCY O.S.

I love God and God loves me. And I
love my son.

Nancy turns to smile. Jared returns the look.

INT. EAMONS FAMILY KITCHEN - AS BEFORE - DAY

Jared listens to his mother's religion -

NANCY

And if He doesn't love my son too,
then I will stop loving Him.

Jared wipes a tear, trying not to be drawn into feeling -

NANCY (CONT'D)

For your father it is a little more
complicated than that.

EXT. ARKANSAS HIGHWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Nancy's car travels the highway. Her car peels left and we
continue up the highway.

NANCY

Your call. Church left. Or right if
you wanna go see a movie instead.

INT. HOPE SPRINGS FIRST BAPTIST MINISTRY - LATER

Jared enters from the podium side with his Mother as The
choir belts out the final bars of - 'Someday'

As Jared sits, he catches eyes with Chloe who enters with
Wayne (a new couple). Chloe, surprised, offers a small smile.
Wayne, however, blanks him. Then the crowd settles: Marshall
is heading down the aisle, greeting folk when --

He sees Nancy and offers a smile, before spotting Jared. He
freezes a beat, but then covers and offers a mini salute.

Jared turns back, focusing his eyes to the front as --

MARSHALL

The night before the crucifixion.
Jesus and the disciples are heading
down the Kidron Valley toward the
Garden of Gethsemane. Vines are
everywhere.

(MORE)

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

On Jared, aware that his presence has created a stir.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

So Jesus pointed to the vines and said these words: 'Just like those grapes depend on the vine, so should you depend on me.'

On Jared focusing on his father, in his element. You can tell he is charismatic as the congregation hang on his words.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

'Be fruitful' is the subject of today's sermon.

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT - EARLY EVENING

Jared and Chloe walk in silence until they reach Nancy's car.

WOMAN O.S.

Goodbye, Jared.

Jared turns and waves to the WOMAN getting in her car.

CHLOE

See? Not everyone wants you to burn in hell.

She hits him playfully. They hear a car horn BLAST. A large pick-up cruises in the background: Wayne. As Jared and Chloe hug goodbye, Wayne sounds the horn, sharply, one more time. Jared watches Chloe totter to the car. Once she's in, the car lurches and stops. Then Wayne gets out. He approaches Jared.

WAYNE

Yo. Chloe wanted me to apologize.

JARED

It's okay Wayne.

WAYNE

Just shake my hand.
(he does. Wayne grips)
Stay away from her. Yeah? We don't wanna see you again around here. Or you and me got trouble.

JARED

You're on *my* father's property.

WAYNE

Your father agrees with me. You are
an abomination. Don't come near us
(MORE)

WAYNE (CONT'D)

(heading for the car)
Or, I swear to God I'll get my M-4
and put one in your skull.

True hate right there. But Jared meets it with kindness.

JARED

You know Wayne. You or anyone
could'a been born just the same.

WAYNE

Then I'd shoot myself.

NANCY O.S.

*We could arrange that Wayne. I'm
sure there's plenty of guns here.*

Jared turns to see Nancy has arrived back at the car.

NANCY

Okay. Sorry. Sorry.

JARED

It's okay. Wayne was just leaving.

EXT. EAMONS FAMILY HOME - PORCH - NIGHT

The yard is dark and still in the approaching winter. Jared
sits alone, ruminating on all things when the door opens.

MARSHALL

I've got some work to do and then
I'm going to turn in.

JARED

Ministry looks good, Dad.

MARSHALL

Glad you could make it. Well, if I
don't see you early, I'll see you
in a few weeks at Christmas.

JARED

I won't be here for Christmas.

Marshall stops. Nods. It is what it is.

JARED (CONT'D)

Did you hear about the article in
the Times I've got coming out?

(hold - he does)

Do you know what it's about

(MORE)

JARED (CONT'D)

MARSHALL

(he knows)

Listen I don't want to get into a fight. Your mother told me about -

JARED

It's not a fight. I'm just doing the right thing. Letting you know.

(beat)

I've written more, and the publishers are talking about me putting together a whole book. You don't need to read any of it, but I just needed you to know that it might be out there. And --

MARSHALL

Yeah. Well, now I know.

Jared is arming up for a confrontation. Hard as it is.

JARED

But, it might be good for you to read... because you also never really asked what went on there.

(beat)

You never really knew the staff or -

And Marshall continues inside, leaving Jared unresolved.

INT. EAMONS FAMILY HOME KITCHEN - NIGHT

Marshall makes notes for a sermon, his bible beside him. Suddenly, a newspaper placed down: Jared's article (A few in fact). Nancy holds Marshall's look. She picks up the bible.

NANCY

I think you've read that one.

He goes to take her hand but she moves off. We see Jared in the background, like he did the night Pastor Wilkes and Jim helped determine his fate, peering through the door.

EXT. EAMONS FAMILY HOME - EARLY MORNING

Jared loads his car. He closes the trunk. He looks to the house. His dad is not coming to say goodbye. He hugs his mom.

Jared is about to drive away. But his mom knocks on the window and Marshall appears at the passenger window.

MARSHALL

You mind driving me to the dealership? Got some stuff to organize.

Marshall gets in and they pull away. Nancy waves good bye.

OMITTED

INT. JARED'S CAR - EARLY MORNING

Jared drives and looks across to - Marshall deep in thought, his eyes trained to the front.

EXT. CAR DEALERSHIP - MORNING

Jared gets out of the car as his father moves toward the entrance. His father turns --

MARSHALL

Come on in for a second.

INT. MARSHALL'S DEALERSHIP - MORNING

Marshall turns, looking around in the expansive showroom. He seems confused. Agitated.

JARED

Is there anything you need help with? Otherwise I should --

Jared turns hesitantly, to leave. But then -

MARSHALL

Hold on. This was going to be for Christmas.

(he hands Jared keys)

It's an Explorer. Your mother said you and your friends drive up --

JARED

Dad. I live in New York. I don't need a car.

(beat)

I don't want to pretend anymore. It's okay Dad. I'm okay without all this.

(MORE)

JARED (CONT'D)

Unless we are going to speak to
each other properly. Like -

(beat

(MORE)

JARED (CONT'D)

I'm gay. I'm gay and I'm your son.
And neither of those things are
going to change.

Hold. Marshall breathes. He looks out over the dealership -

MARSHALL

This was all going to be yours you
know?

(beat)

Still will be. I meant, to run and
make a living from. But, I know you
got other fish to fry.

(beat)

I ran your grandfather's mill, like
he wanted, until I had the gall to
tell him I didn't want that.

He is still looking around, not making eye contact. Then --

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

I stayed up all night trying to
think of good reasons to convince
you to keep everything to
yourself... the book and whatnot...
but then I thought that would be
like your grandpa forcing me to run
the mill.

Jared listens.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

I like to do what I want, so who am
I to get in anybody else's way?

He turns to Jared.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

The truth is I do want you to do
well and have a good life. I know
we don't agree on a handful of
things. And, I realize by what's
happened, I've set myself up to
lose you. I had to ask myself and
God if I was ready for that.

(beat)

Your mother said a prayer that she
got comfort from. Whether it was
her that needed to change and not
you... My prayer didn't so much
give me comfort. I don't think I am
ready to lose you and so I wanted
to let you know -

(MORE)

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

Marshall is not the eloquent man he was in church.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

-- that I am going to try. I'm
sorry it's not more, and I
understand if that is not good
enough for you. That's on me.

(beat)

Son, I tend to be more eloquent in
front of full congregation than
this. I guess, I prepare for that.

He takes a big breath in and out. Smiles ruefully.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

'I'm trying' is the subject of
today's sermon.

Marshall hangs his head. Jared steps forward and hugs him.

JARED

Mom is coming to New York for
Christmas. You are welcome to come
too. Have a think about it.

Hold wide as father and son embrace. Then Jared removes
himself and sets the keys down.

If It Be Your Will - by Leonard Cohen as sung by Antony and
the Johnsons starts and carries through --

INT. JARED'S CAR - DAY

Jared drives free and alone along a stretch of Arkansas
countryside. He cracks the window to let in the warm breeze.

And his hand goes out the window to dance in that breeze.

CUT TO BLACK:

----- CREDITS -----

Footnote. L.I.A. was dismantled in 2012.

*Despite being discredited by the American Psychiatric
Society, it is still legal in 45 states of America for
parents to commit their children to conversion therapy.*

*Practices of electric shock, solitary confinement, and
various other forms of physical and psychological abuse have
been reported*

Sykes left L.I.A. in 2005. He is now openly gay and married to a man in Paris Texas, U.S.A.

This film is dedicated to all the victims. Alive and dead.

*Leonard Cohen --- If it be your will. If there is a choice.
Let the rivers fill. Let the hills rejoice.*