

**PARADISE**

FADE IN:

EXT. JUNGLE- SUNSET

POV:

We open on a face-full of dark-red meat. Almost purple. Fibrous, raw meat. Sloppy sounds of viscous ligaments tearing. We see a glimpse of a black beak in front of us.

The motion of whipping our little head upwards and scanning the area allows us to see the source of this meat. Our angle is from atop the mound of a bloated stomach. It belongs to a dead steer. Black fur. That grey layer of skin before the meat.

We go back to eating. Breaking into a shiny, wet, maroon, whoopy cushion like thing. We eat some more. Something bubbles in our stomach. With two flaps of our wings, we're up.

Up, to that ember colored sky.

Soaring over jungle.

We glide for a minute.

For the enjoyment of those with fucking eagle eyes. If you look to your left. Two vehicles are driving into a small clearing.

An old red tractor, and a blue late sixties pick up truck behind it.

A dozen men who look like fucking ants jump off their respective vehicles.

We gag again. Travel a bit more.

If you look to your right. In the distance is another clearing. Plowed dirt. A crowd of about six hundred gathers around a large gazebo style structure. A public announcement system can be heard. It's faint

JOHN (O.S.)

We are holding a true revolution!  
The only revolution anybody has  
left!

Beside this "pavilion", is a nice little neighborhood of houses shaped like shoe boxes.

Like they were made with power tools. Big and rectangular.

A white truck takes off in a hurry. Kicking up a cloud of dirt.

We glide. A beautiful sunset. The orange shedding to red. We admire the beauty. A valley of endless green. Meeting perfectly in the middle with the fire red sky above.

The sounds of us taking a massive shit hits us. A nasty gooey shit. Our little stomach is groaning.

OUT OF POV:

A bird slams onto the forest floor, in the high brush. We are surrounded by trees. Pause. We hear something inside the tree line, flattening brush, etc.

A Scruffy man is running right at us. Seventies attire.

MICHEAL(30's), looks as if Shaggy from Scooby Doo got beaten to a bloody pulp.

He's sprinting, heading right towards the spot were that bird just landed. MIKE misses the bird.

He's at the tail end of a full sprint through the jungle. Exhausted. Stressed.

He collapses to his knees.

SUPERIMPOSED: 1972, SOUTH AMERICA.

Michael looks ahead. Trying to take in as much air as he can. He's drenched in sweat.

MICHEAL  
(Breathing hard.)  
Come on!(Big cough.)

He gives in, letting himself drop to the ground.

The sun completes it's vanishing act behind the hill.

MICHEAL (cont'd)  
(Out of breath.)  
Shit!

Michael gives the grunt of painful exhaustion as he sits up. His legs are putty.

TIME CUT:

The sky is pitch black. The stars are beautiful.

Micheal walks quietly through the jungle.

MICHEAL (cont'd)  
 (Out of breath.)  
 I need to make some kind of camp.

The whir of propeller blades.--

The sound slices through everything. A flock of birds can be heard flapping away in a panic.

Michaels head snaps upwards searching the starry sky for the source. We struggle to make out anything through the tree tops.

The sound flies past.--

Then there's silence. He waits.

We hear the faint sounds of automatic gun fire. Equally faint is the sound of the crowd. Barely audible echoes of horrific screams.

The sounds become steady. Mike slowly turns around and continues walking.

We take a look above the trees.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. HUMVEE, JUNGLE- DAY

Two South American police officers with shiny faces. Brown skin all oily from the sun. Both wearing dark aviator shades. They are scanning the fields. The edge of our jungle is on the horizon.

The tires bounce off of rocks buried into the ancient back-road. One officer points towards a fence at the edge of the jungle. There's a shirt hanging on the fence.

COP #1  
 (Heavy Caribbean accent.)  
 Look!(Points.) There's something  
 over there!

The vehicle slowly approaches. A man is barely visible inside the tree line. They're outside of a apple banana farm.

EXT. JUNGLE- CONTINUOUS

The Humvee stops fifteen-feet away. The officers walk up to the fence, carefully resting their arms on the top rung.

Michael is staring daggers into the police officers, not moving. He has been through hell. Covered in cuts and dirt. Probably reeks of armpit sweat, and shit.

He is sitting on a boulder buried in the jungle floor, a pile of apple banana peels to his left. TWO LARGE RED GYM BAGS with white straps on the other side.

COP #1

You have to come wit us!

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM- DAY

MARCH 13, 1979

Reporters stand around a queen-sized bed. The room is trashy as all hell. Brown shag carpeting. Wood print linoleum. The rancid vagina smell has penetrated every inch of the room.

The reporters are grabbing notepads and pencils, putting their bags down. They're nervous. They are looking to their left, off screen, worried.

As worried as they are, they are not sitting on that fucking bed.

We pan to the left.-- MICHAEL PROKES looks homeless. The blue denim jacket looks like he's been sleeping on the street, not an alley or the sidewalk, in the middle of the fucking road; and hasn't been washed in two years.

He looks over his one page statement.

REPORTER #1

Mike!

Mike snaps out of his trance and looks up from his note.

REPORTER #1 (cont'd)

We're ready.

MICHAEL

OK. I have a short statement.

He begins reading.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

The total dedication you once observed of me was not to John Sellers- it was to an organization of people who had nothing left to lose. No matter what view one takes of Paradise, perhaps the most relevant truth is that it was filled with outcasts- and the poor- who were looking for something they could not find in our society...

REPORTER #1

Wait a second.

All of them furiously catching up from memory. They finish and point their faces at him. They are ready to continue, emotionless to the context.

MICHAEL

And sadly enough, there are millions more out there with all kinds of different, but desperate needs whose lives will end tragically, as happens every day. No matter how you cut it, you just can't separate Paradise from America, because the Temple of Paradise was not born in a vacuum, and despite the attempt to isolate it, neither did it end in one.

REPORTER #2

What do you mean?

MICHAEL

(Looks up, sighs, and searches for the words.)  
I believe the State Department, or the CIA contributed heavily, and directly to the death of Paradise.

The reporters look at each other. Some in disbelief, others with skeptical smiles.

REPORTER #1

Wait, wait a second. You are saying that the United States government killed a thousand of it's own citizens? For being in a cult?

MICHAEL

Not for being in a cult.(BEAT.) For trying to build a better society.

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

By themselves.(Again, the skeptics grin.) They used their influence over the media to achieve their perfect ending. The appearance of self-destruction. I was contacted by someone when I first started attending the church. They wanted me to report to them any illegal activities.

REPORTER #2

Who?

REPORTER #1

How do you know they were government agents?

MICHAEL

I don't know. Excuse me.

He walks to the bathroom.

INT. MOTEL BATHROOM- CONTINUOUS

Michael turns on the faucet and sits on the toilet.

He's breaking down. Tears flowing. The end is happening here. In this tiny turquoise and peach; flower patterned bathroom.

He reaches into his left jacket pocket, pulls out a note, and places it on the floor. He reaches into his other pocket.

Michael pulls out a 357 snub nose, cocks the hammer back and places it up to his right temple. He takes a deep breath. Fires.

The head and neck fling violently to the left like a rag doll's. The blood ejected covers the wall. The heavy gun drops to the floor with a thud.

A pause.--

The door opens.

We pull back slowly. Showing the eight men cramming into the doorway. All trying to see the bloody show.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

(Reading from the suicide note.)

"Don't accept anyone's analysis or hypothesis that this was the result of despondency over Paradise.

(MORE)

MICHAEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
I could live and cope with  
despondency...

We continue pulling back. Into the old shaggy motel and out  
of the window.

MICHAEL (V.O.)  
-Nor was it an act of a "disturbed"  
or "programmed" mind - in case  
anyone tries to pass it off as  
that...

FADE TO BLACK:

MICHAEL (V.O.)  
The fact is that a person can  
rationally choose to die for  
reasons that are just, and that's  
what I did... (PAUSE) If my death  
doesn't prompt another look at what  
brought about the end of Paradise,  
then life wasn't worth living  
anyway."

TITLE: PARADISE

FADE INTO:

INT. TEMPLE OF PARADISE CHURCH- DAY

BLACK SCREEN.

SUPERIMPOSED: Temple of paradise congregation 1969.

The sounds of a large crowd.

It slowly fades away.

The score and it's corresponding image opens with a bang. A  
sweaty African American preacher named John Sellers screams  
like Pacino in the devil's advocate. A fit, forty year old  
black man. Stirring this crowd into a frenzied hive, adoring  
the man like he's helping them mainline euphoria.

Oddly, all we hear are the sounds of the ominous soundtrack.  
It's drowning him out as he preaches to the packed house.

We turn to see the church hall. Housing a congregation of 600  
strong. The crowd is mainly African American. More than half  
are elderly, and the rest are a diverse mix of adults, young  
adults, and children. All worshipping the man onstage.

The church is just a huge rectangular room.

We see RUBEN(19) sitting in the crowd next to a tall black kid, this is NICK(18). Ruben whispers something to Nick. Nick starts quietly cracking up.

A woman in a wheelchair screaming Amen! Her face is ferocious. Her screams drowned out by the soundtrack.

MAXWELL HALL(38) is holding his three year old son, MATTHEW, on his lap. Sitting in the front row. The score suddenly fades away. It's only there to show these people as a mob.

We close up on reverend Sellers as he begins his final point.

JOHN

(Preaching.)

Pray for your sins. Pray for a better world. "That's all we can do."- Against the racism. Against the inequality! Against the horrible things we see everyday. Centuries old institutions, telling us everyday that they are working tirelessly to bring the world faith; to bring it equality. The truth is. The evils of this world give them their power. Fear gives them their power! The world is falling apart under their rule. Yet, when you ask them: How do you fix the world? They say "Be more like me"?! Fuck them!

The crowd screams "Amen!"

JOHN (cont'd)

We are at a crossroads. Each and every one of us here today. We know we can't go on much longer. Living like this. Check to check. We did not choose to live in this system. Society gave us no other option... In this room are survivors of this profits over people system! Survivors of a broken government. Survivors of a hideous world; our corrupt institutions have kept from their rich communities. What we bear has been hidden from the world-like the proverbial bastard child! Our government abandoned us! Our churches have abandoned us!

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

We have no choice!- but to create  
the world they promised ourselves!  
We do it FOR ourselves! And when  
the world witnesses the paradise  
we've created here on earth! Maybe  
then they will follow.

The crowd erupts. Cheers and "Amen" fill the chamber.

CUT TO:

EXT. GHETTO, SAN FRANCISCO- DAY

CAR RADIO (V.O.)

Violence in New York, as the police  
raid a homosexual hotspot called  
the Stonewall Inn. Police were  
forced to engage the-

John turns the station. We hear "In the Ghetto" by Elvis  
Presley(or something from the sixties)for a second.

He is driving a maroon jalopy, a 1952 Mercury Monterey, to be  
exact. He's driving it through the most poverty stricken  
African American neighborhood in San Francisco.

The car parks in front of a apartment complex. A crowd of  
black people hanging out in front. It is a scorcher.  
Glistening skin under tank tops or spaghetti strap tops.

He untucks his dress shirt, unbuttons it and takes it off. He  
untucks his white under shirt and puts on a old baseball cap  
and shades.

He grabs the briefcase laying on the passenger seat.

--

We notice the expensive designer shoes and black dress pants  
as he walks across the street.

SLAM CUT TO:

INT. LOW INCOME APARTMENT COMPLEX- CONTINUOUS

The apartment complex's hallways are filled. This was before  
the internet. No tv. They spent all of their time socializing  
with the neighbors.

He gets some looks before he climbs the stairs to the second  
floor. Another crowd is hanging out on the balcony style walk  
way.

Door 213. That's his destination, conveniently located behind said crowd. He walks up to them. They start circling John in this small space. The main kid, Jamal, is a monster of a human being. Couldn't be a day over 20 years old.

John and the giant kid stare each other in the eyes. John isn't backing down.

GIANT BLACK KID  
I know what you are.

JOHN  
What is that?

GIANT BLACK KID  
You a house nigga.

Marcus opens the door of the apartment.

MARCUS  
I knew it got quiet out here for a reason. Lett'em through.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. -- MARCUS' HOUSE. -- CONTINUOUS.

John stands at the doorway behind the couch. Stiff posture, briefcase clinched.

A beautiful black girl. Afro, thick legs, and tiny jean shorts. Sitting sideways on the couch. Looking up at the distinguished looking black man.

Marcus comes out of his room with a big duffel bag. The noise from the giant 1950's TV, in the background. He hands the bag to John.

TV NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)  
President Nixon meets with the president of South Vietnam at a joint press conference announcing the reduction of US troops in Vietnam.

MARCUS  
(Looking at the T.V.)  
Can you believe this shit?!

John stares blankly into his eyes.

MARCUS (cont'd)  
Sit down, nigga! She don't bite.

The girl laughs. Her beautiful hazel eyes are fucking John.

GIRL #1

What's wrong suga? Why you so serious?

MARCUS

Come on brotha. Get yourself some pussy. It might loosen you up, to loosen her up.

Marcus chuckles at his own joke.

JOHN

Have you taken your father to church?

Marcus's demeanor changes.

MARCUS

From time to time. Why are you still fucking around with that-

John's jaw tightens.

JOHN

(Interrupts.)

You need to stop talking.(Beat.)  
Take him every time. An eighty five year old man in a wheel chair, having to take the bus. It's fucking disgusting.

John walks up to Marcus. Real close. There's intensity in his eyes.

JOHN (cont'd)

The next time you want to talk about what I do- It's you and whoever is the room.

Continues to Look Marcus in the eyes. Like a statue.

JOHN (cont'd)

Who's the big kid?

MARCUS

My cousin, Jamal.

JOHN

He just killed himself.(Beat.)  
Understood.

Marcus nods. John turns and walks towards the door.

MARCUS  
Thanks again. For everything.

BACK TO:

INT. LOW INCOME APARTMENT COMPLEX- CONTINUOUS

John walks through the gauntlet again. Jamal "the giant" steps to the side with a hateful glare.

--

John reaches the bottom floor and heads to the exit. A gunshot.

Upstairs. Followed by screams. The crowd stampedes down the steps and scatters.

CUT TO:

INT. VALLEJO TIMES, OFFICES- DAY

The cloud of cigarette smoke swirls around the fluorescent light fixtures.

The office is alive. The violent clacking of typewriters and twelve pound phones ringing. Small coffee mugs with giant hair do's.(you know sixties' shit)

Mike is at his cubicle going over a story.

ABBOT (O.S.)  
Mike!

He pokes his head out over the top of the cubicle wall.

ABBOT is a short, boxy man with tons of black hair growing everywhere but his head. He stands in front of his office door and signals Mike over with his hairy-ass finger.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. ABBOT'S OFFICE, VALLEJO TIMES- DAY

Mike stands nervously in front of Abbot's desk. Door closed.

ABBOT  
What do you got on whatever you've  
been working on?

Drops a folder on his desk.

MICHAEL  
I'm done with the Stonewall inn  
piece. I think.

He approaches the desk a bit.

Hands him the story.

ABBOT  
Alright. This one's perfect for  
you. There's this church. Some  
hoopla about the pastor being the  
next fucking Jesus tittie fuck my  
savior Christ.

MICHAEL  
Really.

ABBOT  
Yup. The community demanded a  
story.!

Michael approaches him.

MICHAEL  
(Whispering.)  
Sir. I really think you should  
think about my "Black hole of the  
Va-

ABBOT  
(Jumps on the question.)  
Absolutely fucking not! Your trying  
to get us all fisted!

MICHAEL  
(Immediately changing the  
sub.)  
Really?! The community demanded a  
story!

ABBOT  
Yup go find yourself a nice little  
church to pump some prayers out of.

Abbot starts cackling while reading the papers on his desk.

MICHAEL  
(Uncomfortable.)  
Thanks, boss.

CUT TO:

INT. THE TEMPLE OF PARADISE CHURCH- DAY

Michael is seated at the end of a row of metal framed chairs. Their across from the secretary's desk. The crypt keeper herself is sitting there reading.

There is a door beside Michael. The name on the door: ZOE WALLACE.

Pictures of their beloved JOHN cover the walls. He walks amongst protesters, hands out food to the homeless, speaks at rallies. There are also certificates of recognition from various organizations.

On the wall behind Michael are more pictures, Michael stands up to look at these. He sees one with a man he recognizes. The caption reads: John and Congressman Sinclair.

SMASH CUT TO:

E./I. PARKING LOT- CONTINUOUS.

John's maroon jalopy pulls in.

He puts the car in park. Looks around. Opens the glove compartment and pulls out a big bag of white powder. He forms a fat line on a mirror and snorts half into one nostril.

A knock on his window.

JOHN  
(Startled.)  
Fuck!

STEVEN(49) is standing there watching him. Steven is a short and balding white man, in a brown suit.

--

John steps out of the car.

STEVEN  
That's a good look.

JOHN  
(Clearing his nostrils.)  
You hid behind your car or something.

STEVEN  
I was standing right over there!  
You looked right at me!

John starts putting his dress shirt on.

He tries to tuck in the shirt before he buttons it up.

STEVEN (cont'd)  
How's it going to look-

JOHN  
Oh! Spare me the shit!

STEVEN  
Alright. We'll see next time.

JOHN  
Next time will be like last time.  
You already know.

STEVEN  
You sure that faggot ain't fucking  
my girl?

JOHN  
(Chuckling)  
Yeah.

STEVEN  
So what are the fuck are they  
always talking about?!

JOHN  
I don't know. How to jack a guy  
off?

John tries to hide the pressure that question puts on him.

JOHN (cont'd)  
You're a paranoid pain in the ass.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. ZOE'S OFFICE- CONTINUOUS

ZOE is a heavy set woman, in her late thirties. Flared glasses chained around her neck. She waddles her massive thighs back to her desk. Squeezing between it and the wall, to get to her chair.

They both reach their chairs and sit. It takes her a bit longer and a little more effort.

ZOE

That's mighty kind of the people;  
to provide us with the blessings of  
free publicity.

MICHAEL

Yeah.(Chuckles.) A co-worker of  
mine interviewed voters at that  
voting station at Vallejo High  
School, a couple of months back.

Mike immediately doesn't want to be there longer than he has  
to. He pulls out his notepad and pencil.

ZOE

We bused a little over Two thousand  
voters that day. Mr. Sellers has  
worked tirelessly to help hundreds  
of struggling families get food,  
and money for housing.

She smiles.

MICHAEL

That's amazing!

MICHAEL (cont'd)

How does he know Congressman  
Sinclair?

ZOE

(Thrown.)  
Not sure. Why?

MICHAEL

Curiosity. That is a connection I'm  
sure Sinclair benefi-

ZOE

(Interrupts.)  
We did not tell them who to vote  
for, if that's what you're  
implying. The Social services  
office refers a lot of needy people  
to our church for food boxes and  
free dinners. No matter who is in  
office...

Michael is immediately bored but doesn't interrupt her  
impending spiel.

ZOE (O.S.) (cont'd)

(Echoing.)  
We are not political Mr. Prokes.  
(MORE)

ZOE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
We work together with politicians  
to help our community. Some of-  
(Fading away.) Our values  
coincide...

CUT TO:

INT. THE TEMPLE OF PARADISE CHURCH- CONTINUOUS

Zoe opens the door to walk Mike back out into the main office area. Both smiling.

MICHAEL  
Thank you again, Miss Wallace.

ZOE  
No problem. I'll be looking for you  
this Sunday.

MICHAEL  
I'll be here.

John opens the door and strolls in like the man of the house. He's followed by two stoic men. Military swag as they say.

They are steely eyed blond haired psychos.

All three of them laughing. All of them wearing sunglasses. Steve enters and stands behind the group.

The three men freeze. Their dark glasses stare at Michael and Zoe.

ZOE  
How are you, mister Sellers?

JOHN  
Good. Is this a new "associate"?

ZOE  
This is Michael Prokes. He is a  
writer for the Vallejo Times. They  
want to do a story on our church.

JOHN  
Nice to meet you, Michael.

MICHAEL  
Nice to meet you, sir.

JOHN

I'm a little busy right now. These gentleman are interested in donating to our church.

MICHAEL

Oh, Yeah. I was going to ask if we can set up a time-

JOHN

Sure, I'll let you know. You're coming to mass aren't you?

MICHAEL

Yeah.

JOHN

Good. Zoe, Give him whatever he needs.

ZOE

Yes, sir.

MICHAEL

Thank you Mr. Sellers, I really appreciate it.

John gives him a friendly slap on the shoulder and leads the two giant men and Steve into his office.

CUT TO:

INT. MAX'S BEDROOM- DAY

MAX's(32) eyes are closed. He's a tall and thin ginger haired man. A crash in the kitchen. His face grimaces. His eyes snap open.

He throws off the sheet in a panic. Jumps out of bed and into

SLAM CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN- DAY

Max runs in with his burgundy silk pants. Matthew(3) is in the bottom kitchen cabinet, trying to find his bowl. He's half Black.

MAX

What are you doing, adorable guy.

MATTHEW

I want cereal.

TIME CUT:

Father and son are enjoying breakfast.

On the television is a news story about communism in South America.

Max eats his cereal at the counter. His mannerisms are a bit effeminate.

The phone rings.

MAX

Hall residence.

KYRA (V.O.)

(Distraught. Heavy  
European accent.)

I have to get out of here.

MAX

Sweetie. I know it's tough.

KYRA (V.O.)

(Crying.)

I can't be here anymore!

MAX

Listen to me! He must have something that shows what he makes from the church.

KYRA (V.O.)

(Snorting mucus.)

I'm trying! I can't find anything!  
No bills! No bank statements!

(She starts whispering.)

He's always on the phone. Always saying odd things. He is scaring me, Max.

MAX glances over at a small family portrait. There is a large black woman hugging Matthew and kissing MAX.

MAX

It's the unhappiness. It makes people do strange things.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S OFFICE, CHURCH- CONTINUOUS

John sits behind his desk. The others found seats. All of smoking cigars.

AGENT #1  
The doghouse is happy. If they're  
happy, we're happy.

JOHN  
Good.

AGENT #2  
Keep up the good work.

JOHN  
Will do.

AGENT #1  
We'll be back if the masters want  
us to crack the whip, so to speak.

Both men smirk. John's jaw clinches.

AGENT #1 (cont'd)  
Steven. Walk us out.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT- CONTINUOUS

Steven gets handed a large manila envelope.

CUT TO:

INT. THE TEMPLE OF PARADISE CHURCH- DAY

Michael downs two cups of water quickly at the water cooler.  
We follow him as he walks through the doorway,...

The menacing soundtrack throws us back into this frenzied  
atmosphere. The main hall is packed. The heat has these  
people ready to pass out after they vomit.

Sellers is sweating all over. His emphatic words drowned out  
by the music. The captivated crowd yells Amen and shuts up  
immediately.

Michael observes all of this.

EVERYTHING STOPS.

We cut to John right as he points to the girl in the wheel chair.

JOHN

Our Chelsie was in a car accident two years ago. The parasites told her that with a lot of luck. (Walks to Chelsie.) She might one day walk again. BUT if she had the money!...(Beat.) she would be as good as new in ten months!

He pauses in front of her for a bit. Stares in her eyes. He violently grabs her forehead.

JOHN (cont'd)

It's time to walk again Chelsie!  
Ask God to give you the strength!  
Ask the God within yourself to give you the strength!... Walk, Chelsie!

The soundtrack swells with our sinister theme. Michael has been sucked in. His eyes are wide and ready to witness this miracle.

JOHN (cont'd)

Chelsie! Let the Lord give you the strength! Let the room give you the strength!

Chelsie, grimacing, struggles to push herself out of the wheelchair. Some hold her arms, another the chair. Those knees are cracking like popcorn.

John still has his hand on her forehead.

JOHN (cont'd)

Get up! Get up!

She stands, wobbling. She struggles a bit to steady herself.

JOHN (cont'd)

Walk! Chelsie! Walk!

She starts taking small steps. The music crescendos. The crowd is erupting in astonishment. We see close ups of the frenzied, hypnotized mob. The tears of joy and ecstatic applause.

Michael is looking around at the power of this. The infectious energy, the libidinous force created in the masses to follow the rest towards anything coming our way.

That appeal to lose control along with your fellow primates for an Idea.

CHELSIE raises her hands like she just won the super heavyweight championship. The room erupts again. MIKE does the same, screaming...

MICHAEL  
YEEEEEEAAAHH!

He then starts clapping with a big smile on his face.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE TEMPLE OF PARADISE CHURCH, GYMNASIUM- NIGHT

The church's gymnasium is packed with devoted worshipers.

Michael sits at a table by himself. Notebook and pencil in hand.

Zoe approaches with a family. A short woman with glasses, named SAVANNA(42), her tall daughter VIVICA(25); AND TWO SMALL CHILDREN, JASON and LINDA.

Vivica has the beauty of a fashion model. Even through the Amish style fifteen layer outfit.

The two youngest run off to play with the other kids.

VIVICA immediately sends MIKE that vibe with a look. He reciprocates with a confused smirk.

ZOE  
Hi, Michael. Having a good time?

MICHEAL  
I am. I ate so much I can't move.

ZOE  
I was wondering if they could sit with you. Help with some of those interviews.

MICHAEL  
Sure. You're doing my work for me.

ZOE  
This is Savanna, and her daughter Vivica.

SAVANNA

We just can't wait for you to start spreading Reverend Sellers's beautiful teachings to the world.

MICHAEL

It'll spread him to two more people in the bay area, if that.

Savana laughs. VIVICA is still flashing those sapphire eyes deep into MIKE's soul.

SAVANNA

Well, he saved our family.

VIVICA

(Embarrassed.)

Jesus, Mom!

Savana tries to playfully slap her daughter. Vivica flinches hard. A little too hard.

SAVANNA

Stupid.(Chuckling nervously.)

Savana quickly consoles her by rubbing her back.

SAVANNA (cont'd)

My ex-husband was very abusive. We lived with him for Ten years. I started drinking to deal with the pain from the injuries. When I finally left him. My alcoholism got so bad; I lost my job at the school. We were about to lose our apartment. We had little food.- Anyway. We were referred to the church by welfare services. It changed our lives.

STEVE enters the gymnasium with his young and incredibly hot wife, KYRA(26). She is way, way out of his league. The skeavy guy special; blond drugged up narcissistic nympho.

MICHAEL

Who's that short guy, right there?

SAVANNA

That's Steven Brummet.

VIVICA

He's in charge of accounting, I think.

Micheal writes his name down.

SAVANNA

Yeah. He's not a real "people person".

MICHAEL

(Returns to the interview.)

So, what would you say John's political views are?

SAVANNA

He thinks the politicians aren't doing enough for people. Which is very true. But he doesn't blame them for everything. A lot of people get those confused.

John and his wife Julie(39) enter the gym. Julie is a short, brunette. Glasses.

A crowd quickly gathers around John.

Steve tries to whisper something to John. John nods and ignores him. He continues shaking hands and greeting. Then he greets Steve's wife and gives her a nice little smile. Steven notices.

Julie also notices, but continues greeting people. She does give a quick scowl towards John.

TIME CUT:

Michael sits across from a sweet old gray haired lady.

MICHAEL

So, Barb. What do you like about this church?

BARB

Oh my goodness. I love everything about it. The people. They are so kind and welcoming. I love Mr. Sellers. He is so sweet and profound. Very articulate. I like his wife and their son. I've never gotten a funny feeling from his son.

(MORE)

BARB (CONT'D)

You know sometimes you get a funny feeling from young negro boys. But he is such a nice and well behaved young man...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. GYMNASIUM, JOHN AND MAX- CONTINUOUS

John walks up to Max's table. His son is on a high chair. Zoe is sitting with them.

JOHN

Hey. How is the reporter doing?

ZOE

Don't worry. I think he's enjoying himself.

John turns to Max. Keeps a kind of homo-erotic eye contact.

JOHN

Zoe can you watch Matthew so I can speak to Max in private.

Max is flattered.

MAX

It'll only be a second.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. WALK IN PANTRY- CONTINUOUS

John leads Max into the isolated little area.

JOHN

What's going on with the Steve situation?

Max starts off eager to gossip but immediately remembers how sad the situation is.

MAX

Oh! Oh. She's really scared. Apparently Steve keeps every single document in a large safe in his office. She thinks he's losing his mind.

JOHN

Listen. I want you to look into what it would take, legally I mean, to get the congregation out of the country. Everyone.

Max is speechless.

MAX

Why?

JOHN

We can't really help them here. Even if we bring them stability. What's the value of stability if the whole world is burning down around you? It matters to me. If I conceive, I achieve! Right, baby.

MAX

So not anytime soon?

JOHN

Just see how difficult it would be to get all the passports.

He starts walking starts walking towards the door.

JOHN (cont'd)

Oh wait! This one you kind of have to worry about buddy. It's kind of a radical idea. Can you show me what a contract stating we can act as brokers and sellers of their property for liquid assets; to be used on their new home. Please bud. I just want to see it, talk to about it.

Now he walks through the door and closes it.

BACK TO:

INT. GYMNASIUM, MICHEAL- CONTINUOUS

The well behaved young negro is now sitting across from Mike.

MICHAEL

What is it that you like about this church?

NICK

I don't know. It's my dad's.

TIME CUT:

MICHAEL

What do you like about Reverend Sellers?

CHURCH MEMBER #1

Those other pastors want to say they are being true to the word of God. But their words do nothing for nobody. They would never lay their life down for any of us. John would.

MICHAEL

Have you been to other churches?

CHURCH MEMBER #1

Yeah. I got thrown out of one for stealing the money out of the collection basket. Judging me and shit.

Micheal writes that down.

CHURCH MEMBER #1 (cont'd)

What you writing?

CUT TO:

INT. STEVEN'S OFFICE- DAY

Steve opens the manila envelope. Empties it on his desk.

Pictures of John knocking on the front door of his house. KYRA opens the door. They kiss before they go in. Pictures of them in the bedroom.

Steve is working hard to restrain the outburst of pain and sorrow. The rage is evident.

He picks up the phone. Starts dialing.

-- KITCHEN

Kyra gently lifts the phone off of the receiver.

BACK TO:

INT. STEVE'S OFFICE- CONTINUOUS

STEVEN

Let's shut the thing down.

AGENT #1 (V.O.)

I knew you'd see it our way. He's careless. The whole thing was going to come down anyway. We just need to be assured of his silence. Careful, friend. If he smells us coming; he might start to talk. The hippie's boss is on Hoover's payroll. It's their friendly way of announcing that they know KUBARK has something going on at your church. The gig might be up.

STEVEN

His followers will probably believe it's Hoover's boys anyway.

AGENT #1 (V.O.)

Not if they can prove that he was with us. We need to have the whole thing implode. There is another problem a. These fuckers want to look at what the doghouse is chewing on. This new congressional -

The call starts fading

CUT TO:

E./I. MAX'S CAR, RURAL ROAD- DAY

Max is driving his 1966 Oldsmobile Tornado through farm country. His three year old son is in his clunky sixties safety seat in the back.

MAX

(Uses his baby voice.)  
Are those cows?!

MATT

Cows!

E./I. REDNECK'S TRUCK, DOWN THE ROAD- CONTINUOUS

Two diesel trucks rev their engines. Four young rednecks have split up into two teams and challenged each other to a diesel fueled pissing contest.

REDNECK 1  
You ready motherfucker?!

REDNECK 2  
Yeah, pussy! Let's fucking do thi-

Truck 1 take off.

REDNECK 2 (cont'd)  
Fuck!

Truck 2 follows.

E./I. MAX'S CAR, RURAL ROAD- CONTINUOUS

Max drives up to a four-way stop. There's a horse right by the fence, a couple of feet away from the car. Baby Matt is now loose in the backseat.

E./I. REDNECK'S RACE, DOWN THE ROAD- CONTINUOUS

At the end of a long curve sits Max's pussy ass car. Both teams see it. Redneck #1 is thinking he needs to pass his piece of shit friend before they get to that car.

REDNECK 2  
What you gonna do?!

E./I. MAX'S CAR, RURAL ROAD- CONTINUOUS

Max is infatuated with the horse as it gallops away. He turns to Matt.

MAX  
You see the horsey?

Max sees the unlatched belt.

MAX (cont'd)  
Matty. You took...

One of the trucks passes him full tilt. The car sways side to side. He looks up through the rear windshield. A truck is swerving and skidding right towards them. Max reaches to hug his child.

MAX (cont'd)  
No!!!

The truck stops a few inches from disaster. Max opens his eyes.

We see the baby staring back at us smiling.

E./I. RURAL ROAD- CONTINUOUS

Max exits his vehicle in a rage.

MAX

You fucking pieces of...

He sees the shotgun being grabbed off of the gun rack. It stops Max right in his tracks. They stare at each other for a bit.

MAX (cont'd)

I'm sorry. It's fine.

He speed walks back to his car and gets in. Before he can put it in drive, Redneck #1 reaches into his car and grabs Max's steering wheel. The shotgun in his other hand.

REDNECK 1

You had something to say?

MAX

No. I mean... Look, I have a...(Goes to look back at Matty. Immediately regrets it.)

REDNECK 1

Oh! You have yourself a little nigger baby... Well I sincerely apologize.(Long beat.) You have a nice day. Okay?

MAX

(Angry and terrified.)  
Yeah.

The man walks away.

REDNECK 1

(Does the redneck yell.)  
Yeehaa!

His friend in the truck laughs.

CUT TO:

EXT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT- DAY

Michael is writing on his typewriter. The television is on. The flickering wavy lines in the moving images of a military funeral.

The bold 1960's caption at the bottom: Congressman Ronald Sinclair died at 65.

It gets Michael's attention. John and Julie are in attendance.

If you want to play "Where's Waldo", Steve is somewhere in the background.

The phone rings. Mike answers.

UNKNOWN (V.O.)  
(Gravelly voice.)  
Keep your eyes open. The preacher  
is not what he says he is.

MICHAEL  
Who is this?

The caller hangs up.

FADE INTO:

EXT. JOHN'S APARTMENT- DAY

Michael sits in a cab. Raindrops the size of grapes hit the windshield. He is agonizingly bored. Rubbing his eyes. Blinking a bunch after.

POV: He then continues staring at the front door of an apartment building. Large windows let us see the mailboxes inside the lobby.

A taxi cab drives up. It drops off Sellers. Wearing his shades and a newspaper on his head. He stretches and then holds his lower back as he walks into the building.

He straightens right up when he spots a frail old woman, struggling with her groceries. John offers to help. He takes the bags up.

--

Mike watches that.

MICHAEL  
Later, toby.

TOBY

Later, man.

He gets out of his cab and runs across the street.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S APARTMENT- DAY

A knock at the door.

John opens it.

MICHAEL

Mr. Sellers. How are you doing tonight?

JOHN

Uh. Good. How may I help you?

MICHEAL

Michael Prokes from the Vallejo Times.

JOHN

Yeah.

MICHEAL

I'm writing that story on your church.

JOHN

Yep.

MICHEAL

I was wondering if you had some time for an interview? I don't mean to inconvenience, it only takes twenty minutes.

JOHN

Um. Yes. Of course, come in.

MICHEAL

Thank you.

Michael is greeted into a nice apartment.

John's son, NICK(18) sits on the couch, scowling at MIKE and JOHN before he goes back to watching TV. He's half black.

JOHN

This is my son, Nick.

MICHEAL

We met.

Nick stays quiet.

JULIE (O.S.)

John!

John's wife comes in from the hallway shuffling papers. Michael startles her a bit.

JOHN

Honey, this is Michael from the Vallejo Times.

John nervously rubs his eyebrow with his thumb for an instant.

JULIE

(Surprised.)

How are you?

MICHAEL

Good.

JOHN

We're going to do an interview really quick in my office.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S OFFICE, APARTMENT- CONTINUOUS

Certificates of recognition from the city hang on the walls. There are books everywhere. Titles include Mein Kampf, books by Lenin, Machiavelli, and Dostoyevsky.

Michael starts the interview as he puts his bag down and sits.

MICHAEL

I read a transcript of your speech at the congressman's funeral. It was nice.

JOHN

He was a great man. That made it easy.

MICHAEL

He never had a problem with some of your rhetoric towards our government?

JOHN

He was never fooled by the promised vicissitudes of capitalism. He knew capitalism was the best way, but a heavily regulated financial sector is the key. He knew there are innocent kids starving, because of the system. He was just(Beat.) too connected to the people running the show.

MICHAEL

(Shit eating grin.)  
Achieving the quotas of the machine, huh?

JOHN

Exactly.

Michael quickly shifts.

MICHAEL

How did you get here, John?

JOHN

(Confused.)  
I'm sorry?

MICHAEL

What made you want to be the leader of a agnostic quasi-communist church in San Francisco?

John smiles and stares blankly in Michael's eyes. He then stands up and grabs two more beers.

JOHN

It was a funeral. My father's.

MICHAEL

Really?

JOHN

Yeah. My father died. When I was (Thinks.)five, maybe.

FADE INTO:

EXT. FUNERAL- FLASHBACK

SUPER: SOMEWHERE IN INDIANA, 1928.

A black priest, giving a recently departed man's final prayer. A six year old John Sellers sits beside his mother. Staring at his father's coffin.

His coffin is a regular rectangle made out of fresh pine. No stain.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. JOHN'S INDIANA HOME- DAY

Young John carries a dead cat back home by it's tail.

His elderly black neighbors are watching him from their tiny porch. One of the few things to entertain them in the little cluster of shoe-box homes. John ignores them.

NEIGHBOR 1

There he go again. Lil preacher man.

NEIGHBOR 2

His momma gon' whoop his behind.

Turns the corner into his backyard.

He lays the dead cat in a nice shoe box, suspended by two sticks over a deep whole in the dirt. Flowers that he collected are placed around it. John stands dramatically.

There are little mounds of dirt all over the yard. This has been his favorite game for a while now.

JOHN

Dearly depar-

The back door of his house whips open.

JOHN'S MOM

You're doing it again, You little devil!

John's mom rushes out to kick his ass, with a bottle of jack in her hand. John darts away like a stray dog.

JOHN'S MOM (cont'd)

You're killing them ain't you?! Ya freak!

She punts the box. The dead cat flies out.

John spies on her from the trees as she kicks his funeral service everywhere.

JOHN'S MOM (cont'd)  
Come back here! Thurgood!

BACK TO:

INT. JOHN'S OFFICE, APARTMENT- CONTINUOUS

Michael is kind of repulsed.

MICHAEL  
(Whispers.)  
God damn!

JOHN  
That's fucked up, huh! You want another beer?

MICHAEL  
I'll have another.

JOHN  
Julie!(To the door.) Another two!

SMASH CUT TO:

FLASHBACK- EXT. LARGE FIELD- DAY

SUPER: INDIANAPOLIS, 1936.

A open field. A church group is setting up for an event. John(14) helps in unrolling a massive tent.

-- Sleeping tents.

A woman in an old dress is standing outside her tent. She's hammered. Standing with a glass cup, half filled with whiskey.

She stares at the builders.

John sees her, she smiles at him, he smiles back.

TIME CUT:

EXT.-- TENT CHURCH.-- CONTINUOUS.

The tent is built. It's crowded. The event now in full swing. Our drunk woman is on stage with an audience member.

MARY

Let the lord take control of your body! Scream whatever he passes through you. Don't think. Unleash the tongues of God flowing through your unconscious.

Mary palms the audience member's forehead as the man starts violently yelling gibberish. John is captivated.

John approaches her after she gets offstage. She's out of breath and full of adrenaline.

JOHN

That was amazing!

She smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. TENT CHURCH, SLEEPING TENTS- NIGHT

We see the red lights illuminate the residential tent area. Dozens of tents spread out across the field. People are starting to come out and see.

Three of the old police units have been dispatched. John sits on the ground. Face bloodied.

Mary is being arrested by force. Drunk and enraged, she screams and flails as cops drag her to their vehicle.

MARY

You fucking pigs!

Two officers throw her in the car. The higher ranking officer approaches John. This is Dan Mittrione(50). Built like a lumberjack. He stands tall over John.

DAN

You okay?

JOHN

Yeah. (Begins tearing up.) I don't know what happened.

DAN  
 You tried to get pussy from the  
 wrong white lady, that's what.

John is visibly traumatized.

DAN (cont'd)  
 How old are you?

JOHN  
 Fourteen.

The officers come back.

OFFICER #1  
 You want us to take him in also?

DAN  
 For what?

OFFICER #1  
 Rape, or something.

DAN  
 (Thinks for a second.)  
 Go book "Bloody Mary" over there.  
 (Turns back to John.) Have you  
 eaten anything?

SLAM CUT TO:

INT. DAN'S HOUSE, BED ROOM- CONTINUOUS

John is sitting on a twin bed. He looks around the room and  
 finds on a dresser the portrait of Dan's son. There are  
 trophies on the wall.

Dan brings in a pillow and blanket. His wife watches from the  
 hallway.

DAN  
 He died.

They both stay quiet.

JOHN  
 Do you think God meant for us to  
 meet this way?

DAN  
 I don't know(Beat.) We've been  
 there a lot.

(MORE)

DAN (CONT'D)  
 Sometimes she's the one who ends up  
 beaten half to death in the  
 hospital.(Another beat.) Crazy  
 bitch never chose someone as young  
 as you, I don't think. Just try and  
 get some sleep.

FLASHBACK ENDS.

FADE BACK TO:

INT. JOHN'S OFFICE, APARTMENT- NIGHT

Michael is enthralled.

MICHAEL  
 He adopted you?

JOHN  
 Yeah. He was a good man.

John stares blankly into a wall.

DAN (V.O.)  
 (Echoes. Distressed.)  
 Help us, help you! We need to prove  
 that you're on the right side.

He snaps out of it.

JOHN  
 A man from Philadelphia who called  
 himself FATHER DIVINE, took me  
 under his wing. I started preaching  
 there in Lynn. Then began  
 traveling. Spreading my message  
 anywhere people will listen.

TIME CUT:

John is in the middle of a call. Hunched over and agitated.

STEVE BRUMMET (V.O.)  
 That's all you told him?

JOHN  
 (Whispering.)  
 Yeah. But what if he starts asking  
 questions out in Indiana? How long  
 is it going to take him to find you-

STEVE BRUMMET (V.O.)  
 (Interrupts.)  
 What do you want me to do?

JOHN  
 What you always do.

STEVE BRUMMET  
 We can't do that here. Not right  
 now at least.

JOHN  
 I need to get out of here. Maybe I  
 can start again somewhere else.

STEVE BRUMMET  
 Can't do that either.(Sighs.) Maybe  
 it's over, John.- You, Julie, and  
 Nick should just disappear  
 somewhere.

JOHN  
 What do you mean, Steve?

Silence.

JOHN (cont'd)  
 Is that what they said?

Still nothing.

JOHN (cont'd)  
 (Starts whispering  
 angrily.)  
 I know you cleared out the people  
 on the ridge. I know you have that  
 land- If I go down, I will tell  
 EVERY fucking journalist,  
 everything. I will tell the feds to  
 drug test these people!

STEVE BRUMMET (V.O.)  
 She told you? Didn't she? Does your  
 wife know you're fucking my  
 wife?(Beat.) You have her head that  
 fucked up, don't you?

JOHN  
 (Still whispering.)  
 Fuck you! Tell your fucking masters  
 what I want. Or I'll go to the  
 fucking press!

Silence.

JOHN (cont'd)  
Do you hear me?! STEVE! (Screams.)

STEVE BRUMMET  
(Pauses.)  
Okay, what do you want?!

JOHN  
I want money.

STEVE BRUMMET  
(Another pause.)How much?

JOHN  
Ten million.

STEVE BRUMMET  
I can give you three.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S APARTMENT, HALLWAY- CONTINUOUS

John walks a little into the hallway and leans his back against the wall, overwhelmed. Julie gives him a tender hug.

JULIE  
What did he say?

JOHN  
We got the go ahead...

She looks up at him and smiles.

JOHN (cont'd)  
And the money.

JULIE  
That's great, honey! Why are you sad?

JOHN  
I'm not sad. I'm just tired...(Fakes a smile.) We did it.

They smile at each other and kiss.

CUT TO:

EXT. JOHN'S APARTMENT BUILDING, STREET- NIGHT

Michael exits the building. Nick sits on a bench outside.

NICK  
You guys sounded like you were  
having a good time.

MICHAEL  
Yeah. Your father is an incredible  
person.

NICK  
Have you figured out that he's a  
absolute psycho yet. (Getting up  
and heading inside.)

MICHAEL  
What?

NICK  
You're not a very good reporter  
then.(Walks into the building.)

MICHAEL  
Little prick.(Thinks for a second.  
Runs in the building.)

INT. JOHN'S APARTMENT BUILDING, LOBBY- CONTINUOUS

Michael catches up to him.

MICHAEL  
What the fuck are you talking  
about?

NICK  
He's a fucking drug addict! He  
cheats on my mom!(Starts tearing  
up.)

MICHAEL  
You've seen this?

NICK  
They fight about it all the time!

MICHAEL  
So your mom knows about this?

NICK  
She knows. He thinks he's a fucking  
god.(Beat.) Who can tell God not to  
do something?

Michael's face says it all. A look of mild curiosity to a shoulder shrug.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM, CATHOLIC COLLEGE- DAY

Vivica sits at her desk. She's absent mindedly sketching a circle in her notebook. A priest with the traditional black suit and white collar, stands in front of the chalkboard.

STUDENT #1

-Why would God prioritize us over everything else? Over the animals, over the planet?

PROFESSOR

We are God's children. He even holds us in higher regard than angels. Angels work for the lord. When you accept Jesus as your savior, you will live alongside him, when you go to heaven. As for the planet. God gave us dominion over earth.

The professor turns to Vivica.

PROFESSOR (cont'd)

What do you think about this Miss McMann?

VIVICA

(Thinks about it.)

I still don't understand why a system that offers eternal salvation; only does so in exchange for your loyalty.

PROFESSOR

What do you mean? He doesn't ask for your loyalty. He only asks for you to accept him into heart.

VIVICA

What if I also wanted to worship an Indian goddess, or Muhammad, but I still wished to meet my family in heaven.

PROFESSOR

You would only have to ask for forgiveness, he will always be there for you.

VIVICA

As long as I say I'm wrong for not believing in him.

The Professor tries to answer but Vivica interrupts.

VIVICA (cont'd)

It's like you knocking on my door and saying: "Help, someone is trying to kill me!" And I respond with: I will give you shelter, if you promise to worship me, and no one else.

The professor stares at her.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. PROFESSOR'S OFFICE- CONTINUOUS

The professor is at his wit's end. Exhausted by Vivica's continued Sinicism.

PROFESSOR

This is an expensive college, Miss McMann. Why are you here, if you don't want to be here?

VIVICA

My mom loves the-(Beat.) security of your dorms.

The professor is confused by the answer.

VIVICA (cont'd)

She wants to keep men away from me.

The professor leans back in his chair.

PROFESSOR

I can talk to her, if you want.

VIVICA

It'll just make it worse.

PROFESSOR

Doesn't she like that young man-

VIVICA  
 (Interrupts.)  
 Please, sir, please don't ever  
 mention that to my mother.

FADE INTO:

INT. TEMPLE OF PARADISE CHURCH, GYMNASIUM- CONTINUOUS

Michael is talking with Julie in a quiet corner.

Twenty large tables are on the basketball court for a  
 pancake/ baked potato bar luncheon. The typical banner above  
 the four table spread. The gym is packed.

JULIE  
 (Laughing in disbelief.)  
 What did he tell you?! You know, I  
 don't even want to know what kind  
 of crap he's telling you.

Julie laughs. You can see the moment she remembers what Mike  
 does.

JOHN  
 Is this what you're going to write  
 in your story?!

MICHAEL  
 No. Listen, I-I just wanted to let  
 you know what he told me. This is  
 all off the record.

TIME CUT:

Micheal sits across from Ruben at one of the long tables.

In the middle of their inaudible conversation, he spots  
 Vivica who is across the gym. She chose her most revealing  
 little sundress. Tiny straps with big cleavage.

She's staring back at Michael with a sexy little smile.

Ruben notices.

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
 (Clears throat.)  
 Ahem. You were saying?

Ruben is retreating into an angry shock. Eyes darting around  
 in the processing.

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
Uh-(clears throat, again.)

Everyone else at the table looks at each other.

We cut forward again.

Michael is now sitting across from Max. His adorable 3 year old plays with the pancakes.

MAX  
He's just that guy that gets the world, you know? He realizes how it is and how it should be. John thinks he can make the world how it should be. And he takes real steps towards making it a reality. Every single day. It's incredible how much that man is working.

--

Now there is a Charles Manson looking hippie sitting across from Mike.

RANDOM PERSON #1  
I love the pancakes.

CUTTING FORWARD AGAIN.

Micheal sits nervously across the sexiest thing he's ever seen.

VIVICA  
She was drinking a lot after she left my dad and got fired from her job at the school. They gave her a job here. There's a glow here. You can feel something profound.

MICHAEL  
(Trying not to look at her breast.)  
That's incredible.

VIVICA  
Do you want to hang out tonight?

Michael is caught off guard.

MICHAEL

Sh-Sure.

CUT TO:

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT- NIGHT

Vivica is laying naked in Michael's bed. Michael is next to her. Micheal takes a deep breath.

MICHAEL

Hey. What do you think about Nick?

VIVICA

What do you mean?

MICHAEL

You know him to be a liar?

VIVICA

He lied about having sex with me to some girl he liked.

MICHAEL

Hmm.

VIVICA

They're all two-faced. My mom says everyone knows Max likes men. Nobody ever says anything about it. Steve's wife was a stripper. We're all one big abusive fucking family.

CUT TO:

INT. VALLEJO TIMES, BULLPEN- DAY

Michael closes the door to his boss' office. He looks a bit disappointed as he walks to his cubicle.

He throws the papers he was holding in the trash bin and grabs his satchel.

CUT TO:

INT. MAX'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM- NIGHT

Max sits on the couch. In front of him is baby Matt, asleep in his bassinet.

He is drinking wine. The lights from outside projecting the pool onto the wall. Max is looking at the phone. He picks it up and dials.

SLAM CUT TO:

INT. STEVE'S HOUSE- CONTINUOUS

The phone rings. It's underneath a mountain of old mail and magazines. The whole living room is a disaster area.

Another ring. Kyra appears. Our Russian Blond is fresh out of the bath.

KYRA

Hello.

BACK TO:

INT. MAX'S HOUSE- CONTINUOUS

MAX

Where have you been?! I've been really worried about you.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. TEMPLE OF PARADISE CHURCH- NIGHT

John drives into the gravel parking lot. It stretches from the beginning of the property, beside the church, all the way to the gymnasium behind it.

There are four pick-up trucks parked in front of the gym.

Parked beside them is a medium sized freight truck. This is parked right in front of the doors. John drives all the way up to the gym.

He gets out of the car. He inspects the truck that's backed into the gymnasium double door. The truck reads PUEBLO CAFE, with a nice picture of coffee beans in burlap sacks.

He starts walking around to the back of the truck. He needs to squeeze a bit to get to the doorway. Before he can walk into the gymnasium brown hands yank John into the building by his collar.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. TEMPLE OF PARADISE CHURCH, GYMNASIUM- CONTINUOUS

A mountainous South American man holds a pistol to John's neck.

JOHN

Get your fucking hands off of me!

Other men stop their work for a second. They were separating gym bags from the coffee truck into four different piles. One for each truck outside.

BACK TO:

INT. STEVE'S HOUSE- CONTINUOUS

KYRA

I would kill that rat Steve before I killed myself.(Chuckles.)

MAX

That's good, I guess. Hey I'm going.

KYRA

Where?

MAX

To South America. With John, with the church.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. ALLEYWAY- CONTINUOUS

Michael is standing beside his motorcycle. He parked in a alley across the street from the church. He goes to step forward.

POV: MICHAEL.

Two men step outside to smoke cigarettes.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. GYMNASIUM, PANTRY- CONTINUOUS

A man in the large pantry has all of the church's drinking water, 10 water-cooler jugs, lined up on the floor.

He's holding a large brown medical bottle with clear liquid, and a long syringe. More bottles of the liquid are on the table beside him.

He can the events unfolding out in the gym and quickly closes the door.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. TEMPLE OF PARADISE CHURCH, GYMNASIUM- CONTINUOUS

Beside the closing pantry door, a shadowy figure appears. He was supervising from a distance, and speaks to John from the corner of the room.

NICARAGUAN #1  
(South American accent.)  
You are not welcomed here anymore.

JOHN  
Where's Steve?!

NICARAGUAN #2  
He's not here, mallate(Ma-ya-te).

The shadow tells his partner to drop John in Spanish.

NICARAGUAN #1  
You're not part of the hierarchy anymore Mr. Sellers. You are not authorized to be here, as they say.

The "good cop" (Nicaraguan #1) walks up to one of the bags they unloaded. He unzips it and pulls out a brick of cocaine. Throws it at John who catches it like Randy Moss.

NICARAGUAN #1 (cont'd)  
Last time, Mr. Sellers.

JOHN  
I need to talk to Steven. He was supposed to deliver money to me.

The two Nicaraguans look at each other. Nicaraguan #2 walks up to some gym bags. Red with white straps.

He picks them up, and drops them at John's feet.

NICARAGUAN #1  
This is the last time you can be here.

CUT TO:

I./E. STEVE'S HOUSE- CONTINUOUS

Kyra lights up a cigarette. She brushes her hair back and adjusts the phone to the other ear.

KYRA  
Don't trust him, Max. Don't trust  
any of them.

MAX (O.S.)  
Why?

KYRA  
They don't want to help those  
people. They only want power. The  
people they work for- they want to  
control the world.

--

OUTSIDE is a white van. Inside the van, men with headphones are listening to the call.

MAX (O.S.)  
(Static.)  
Who? They don't work for anyone.  
Who are you talking about?

--

Back inside. Kyra is pouring herself a drink.

There's a knock at the door.

KYRA  
I don't know.

She looks at the door with concern. Through the decorative windows, we see that there is a man trying to peek inside.

KYRA (cont'd)  
You are a good person, Max. You  
have a good soul. Don't let them  
destroy it. I have to go.

She hangs up the phone and starts walking towards the door.

CUT TO:

INT. ALLEY- CONTINUOUS

Michael watches John exit the building with the two gym bags.

-- FROM INSIDE OF THE TRUNK.

JOHN opens the trunk and drops the bags on us.

He unzips one.

The brick of cocaine sitting atop a mountain of cash. All staring back at him from inside of the bag. He gets the brick out.

Mike's POV:

John suddenly looks confused. He looks up towards the alley across the street.

BACK TO:

INT. STEVE'S HOUSE- CONTINUOUS

John enters the now familiar mini-mansion. It's in complete neglect. News papers and utility bills are thrown everywhere. Empty bottles of liquor, and ashtrays drowning in cigarette butts.

John looks around. On the wall there is a picture of his younger self and his adoptive parents, Dan and Tiffany.

He begins climbing the staircase.

We hear a conversation between him and FATHER DIVINE. It echoes over the swelling score.

JOHN (V.O.)

I feel like God gives everyone a mission.

John is cautiously walking up the stairs.

FATHER DIVINE (V.O.)

Are you looking for solace? Or are you looking for truth?

He continues climbing slowly.

FATHER DIVINE (V.O.)

If everyone has a God given mission. God has favored those with missions that are more... in line with human nature. You say your mission is to bring enlightenment to the world. To end violence...

John hears something from the bedroom, to the right of the stairs.

FATHER DIVINE (V.O.)  
Those missions are failing...

He continues to walk cautiously.

FATHER DIVINE (V.O.)  
The people whose missions are to maintain the status of their people. To restrict the access to power. To make the world an endless resource of disposable lives and money. These missions are being realized every day.

He reaches his hand out to open the door.

INT. STEVE'S HOUSE, BEDROOM- DAY

The drawers on the huge vanity station are all hanging down. Two packed bags sit on the bed.

Kyra is in the walk-in closet looking for something.

JOHN  
Kyra?

She pokes her head out... Walks out, angrily. She has a black eye and a bruised cheek.

KYRA  
What the fuck do you want?!

JOHN  
I'm looking for Steve. Did he-

KYRA  
I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE IS!

John pauses.

JOHN  
Did he do that to you?!

KYRA  
Don't pretend like you give a shit about me!

JOHN  
Fine! Is it him?! Putting all this sh-

KYRA

I don't know what you're talking about- And I don't FUCKING care!

JOHN

Is he putting all this shit in the papers?!!

KYRA

(Laughs.)

I don't give a fuck, what you need from me, or why you're here! Just leave! Like you always do!

She throws the clothes she was holding at John.

KYRA (cont'd)

You fucks, think you're big men. You and Steve are the most manipulative fucking monsters-

She runs up to him and slaps him in the face.

KYRA (cont'd)

You're nothing but a stupid fucking nigger. You two think you're gods. Such fucking geniuses, doing whatever it is you're fucking doing in the dark. As soon as your little dicks get hard. You two are just little fucking dogs.

She starts to turn her back towards him. John grabs her by the neck.

KYRA (cont'd)

Fucking let me go. What are you gonna do, huh? Are you going to kill me? "Mr. Preacher"?! Are you going to fucking do it yourself?!!

He lets her neck go. Then quickly grabs a handful of hair and tugs on it hard, holding it hostage. He pulls a baggy of cocaine out of his pocket.

JOHN

(Whispers.)

Is this what you want?

He starts kissing her neck.

KYRA

(Pulls away a bit.)

Fuck you.

He pushes her on the bed, reaches up her skimpy skirt, and yanks down her panties.

MINI MONTAGE:

Quick fades of them kissing. Of Kyra and John doing cocaine. Of them thrusting their naked bodies into each other.

TIME CUT.

They're in the middle of it. A passion filled release of everything. Hard fucking.

Kyra's eyes suddenly open wide and look towards the door. She tries to sit up. Trying to push John off. John notices and moves to turn around.

We hear the report. A bullet goes right through Kyra's head.

JOHN

Oh, God!

Steve is holding the gun. His face in shock. Maybe because it was an accident. Maybe he didn't think he had the balls to kill someone. Maybe he actually loved the toxic, jaded, fucking backstabber.

John is now on the floor. On his knees with his hands in the air. Kyra's lifeless head has fallen sideways.

Steve's eyes zero in on John. He aims the pistol.

JOHN (cont'd)

I was looking for you! I was leaving! I was loo-

STEVE BRUMMET

She served her purpose, right?(Beat.) She knew too much.(Chuckles.) You were just going to let her walk out of here after you fucked her. You think she was just going to disappear?(Beat.) As soon as her money ran out, she would come out of whatever rat's nest she was living in. Screaming about CIA and John Sellers and Church of Paradise. But you don't care about that. As long as you have some people near you that suck your dick and treat you like Jesus.

Points with the pistol, while staring at Kyra.

STEVE BRUMMET (cont'd)  
 I-(Beat. Eyes watering a bit.) I'm  
 a little annoyed that you hopped on  
 my tab without asking, but hey,  
 what are cousins for, huh?-(Another  
 beat.) You never gave a shit, did  
 you? You really never learned  
 anything. All you cared about were  
 your little sermons, the attention.  
 You really never saw the big  
 picture.

Steven drops the gun and leaves the room. John covers his  
 face.

He's trying to climb down from the adrenaline of certain  
 death. He looks over to Kyra's emptied vessel.

CUT TO:

INT. THE TEMPLE OF PARADISE CHURCH, GYMNASIUM- DAY

Top members of the congregation sit in the dark gymnasium.

David Attenborough's 1955 film "A journey into Guiana" plays  
 on the roll down projection screen. Images of beautifully  
 lush hills, green forests, waterfalls, and exotic animals.

The reel ends. The screen flashes as the film flaps those  
 couple of seconds before someone turns the projector off.

The lights come on and we get a look at John's face. His eyes  
 are extremely bloodshot with dark rings around them.

JOHN  
 This will be our new home.

The whole staff snap their heads toward John.

ZOE  
 What do you mean?

JOHN  
 We have to, Zoe.

ZOE  
 This community needs us...

JOHN  
 This community needs to stay the  
 way it is for the cops to keep  
 getting their funding. For the city  
 officials to keep their jobs.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

We've been flying under the radar because of how little change we're actually affecting.

ZOE

But, why so far?...

JOHN

If we fix a couple of families' lives. They still live in a neighborhood where they can get robbed, or murdered. Where their children can get addicted to drugs-

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. TEMPLE OF PARADISE CHURCH- CONTINUOUS

Michael is in the middle of a conversation with Julie. They're sitting in a pew in the church hall.

JULIE

That's awfu-

MICHAEL

I hate that place anyways. There's not many places I feel comfortable. I feel something different here. I can't explain it.

JULIE

Something profound.

MICHAEL

Yeah! I feel like I-(Beat.) I experience something life changing every time I'm here, even though I'm just talking to people.

JULIE

I know what you mean.

MICHAEL

I'm just a little concerned about what he said.

JULIE

Nick? He's just struggling with the lack of attention from John.

MICHAEL

I mean- Nick really sounded like he was-

JULIE

That's what he does! He manipulates people to get attention.

MICHAEL

So, none of it is true?

JULIE

No.

MICHAEL

Okay. I'll shut up about it.

JULIE

Trust me. John doesn't have time for anything like that.(Chuckles.)

CUT TO:

EXT. THE TEMPLE OF PARADISE CHURCH- CONTINUOUS

Michael is late to the meeting. Vivica is waiting for him outside of the gymnasium. They spot each other. They meet in the middle of the field in between the church and gym. Before Michael can say anything she plants a heavy kiss on his lips.

MICHAEL

What's going on?

VIVICA

Come on.

MICHAEL

Where are we going?

They go into the custodian's shed. The kissing is getting more intense. Vivica starts unbuckling his belt. His pants come down. She reaches under her dress and takes off her panties. Michael presses her against the wall. He uses his hand to direct his penis in.

They start getting into the groove. They look into each others eyes.

VIVICA

Michael.

MICHAEL

(Breathing heavy.)

Yeah.

She looks him in the eyes.

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
 Something wrong?

He stops thrusting.

VIVICA  
 No. I-I mean, I'm pregnant.

MICHAEL  
 Really?!

VIVICA  
 Yeah.

MICHAEL  
 That's amazing!

VIVICA  
 I'm thinking about leaving  
 California.

MICHAEL  
 Where are we going?

They look in each other's eyes then go in for a kiss. He slowly starts humping again.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CONGRESSMAN PAZ'S OFFICE, WAITING ROOM- CONTINUOUS

Steven is sitting on a tweed cushioned, metal framed chair.

Nervously twirling his thumbs. We listen in on a phone call between Steve and Agent #1.

AGENT #1 (V.O.)  
 Your new local congressman has  
 taken an interest in our  
 activities.

STEVE BRUMMET (V.O.)  
 What activities?! The ones here?!

AGENT #1 (V.O.)  
 Does it matter?

He looks at the secretary, mouths the words "okay" and walks into the office.

BACK TO:

INT. THE TEMPLE OF PARADISE CHURCH, GYMNASIUM- CONTINUOUS

JOHN

If we become a beacon of hope for every black neighborhood in America. We will invite every government agency and white supremacist to take shots at everyone in this room!

The room stays quiet.

JOHN (cont'd)

Who ever wants to do something; I mean, really wants to do something to help our congregation. Please spread the word. Get them to contribute whatever they can. This is the only way to really make a difference. We are a part of something special here. We are going to change lives. Nothing we can ever do for them will be this helpful; this important. It's up to us.

Max enters the room.

JOHN (cont'd)

Thank you everybody.

The staff gets up from their chairs and start exiting the gymnasium.

EXT. THE TEMPLE OF PARADISE CHURCH- CONTINUOUS

MAX

I'm in. I want to help.

JOHN

That's great.

MAX

John!

JOHN

Yeah. What?

MAX

I want to go with you, to Guyana!

JOHN

You're making the right choice.

MAX

I thought you'd be more excited-

JOHN

Listen, there's just so much shit we have to get done-

MAX

(Interrupts.)

I get it. You look terrible, by the way.

JOHN

I know, everyone's been telling me that. Listen-

MAX

(Interrupts again.)  
I'm worried about Kyra.

JOHN (cont'd)

We need to get things moving fast.

JOHN (cont'd)

What? Why?

MAX

She's just been sounding really stressed out with the STEVE situation. She also sounded really scared last night before she hung up the phone.

JOHN

It's alright. I'll talk to her. We need to get contracts written up. Find out what we'll need to get everyone through the borders. ASAP.

MAX

What's going on? Why the rush?

JOHN

We just need to make this happen right away. We need to get away from this place.

Both walk to the church.

After a few seconds Michael and Vivica exit their custodial love shack.

MICHAEL

What the fuck is happening?

VIVICA

I don't know. I'll ask my mom.

MICHAEL

Call me.

They kiss and go separate ways.

CUT TO:

INT. TEMPLE OF PARADISE CHURCH, SAVANNA'S CAR- CONTINUOUS

Vivica enters the passenger seat of her mom's car.

SAVANNA

Where were you?

VIVICA

Gossiping with the girls.

Michael exits the church. He smiles at Vivica as he walks to his little crotch rocket. Savanna notices the smile, and how Vivica avoids looking in his direction.

SAVANNA

What was that?

VIVICA

What?

Savanna slaps Vivica hard in the face.

VIVICA (cont'd)

What the!...

SAVANNA

Have you been messing around with that reporter man?!

VIVICA

No!

SAVANNA

You little slut!

VIVICA

I said no, mom!

SAVANNA

You're lying to me, you fucking slut!

VIVICA

I'm sick and tired of this shit! I can't have a life because you decided to have kids!?

(MORE)

VIVICA (CONT'D)

I have no friends because of you! I can't talk to anybody!

SAVANNA

You think what I do to you is bad? My small ass hands hurt you?! I barely even touch you! These men will fucking brake your face! And then rape you!

VIVICA

He's not like that-

SAVANNA

You think he loves you?! You silly fucking child!

Savanna goes to slap her again, but Vivica quickly grabs her wrists. The kids start crying in the backseat.

VIVICA

(Screaming at her.)

I am not going to let you hit me anymore!

Savanna's eyes grow wild.

SAVANNA

Let. Me. Go.

VIVICA

If you hit me one more time. I swear to God I will fucking leave! And you will never see me again.

SAVANNA

(Starts to cry.)

We need you Vivi. Your family needs you. I just want to protect you. You don't know- I just don't want you to be like me-

VIVICA

I will never be like you.

They both take time to process what just happened.

SAVANNA

John wants us to move to South America.

Vivica faintly reacts.

SAVANNA (cont'd)  
 It'll be different there. It'll be  
 safe. You can go out with  
 friends.(Beat.) Find a nice boy  
 there. There will be lots of  
 parties...

Vivica turns and stares out of the window.

SAVANNA (cont'd)  
 Parties with people your age. I'll  
 have plenty of help with the  
 kids.(Beat.) Please. We-

VIVICA  
 I don't want to talk about it right  
 now. Can we go home now?

CUT TO:

INT. VALLEJO TIMES, OFFICES- DAY

Michael walks in. He's carrying the morning edition. Walking  
 with fury.

MICHAEL  
 Eric!

A tall bald man in his cubicle pokes his head out. The rest  
 of the office stops. They know this tone brings with it a  
 shit-show worthy of spectating.

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
 What the fuck is this?!

ERIC  
 First off, watch your fucking tone.  
 Go talk to Abbot.

MICHAEL  
 Who did you talk to?

ERIC  
 I don't have to tell you shit,  
 hippie! Why don't you go back to  
 that cult of yours.

Mike looks like he's about to punch him.

ABBOT  
 Michael!

Mike turns.

ABBOT (cont'd)  
You're fired! Pack your shit and  
get the fuck out!

Mike walks up to Abbot with the same hostility.

MICHAEL  
Who paid you to run the story?

ABBOT  
Fuck you. (Walks in to his office.  
Slams the door.) I'm calling the  
police!

CUT TO:

INT.-- JOHN'S APARTMENT, OFFICE.-- NIGHT.

John is putting on his jacket. Julie walks in.

JULIE  
Where are you going?

JOHN  
I have to go talk to Max.

JULIE  
About what?

JOHN  
(Getting annoyed.)  
Getting everybody out. I'll be back  
in a while.

JULIE  
You are not going to see Max!  
You're lying!

JOHN  
What are you talking about?

JULIE  
Or are you fucking Max now too?

JOHN  
Shut your fucking mouth!

His eyes intensely violent.

JULIE

Go ahead! Hit me! Maybe the reporter will hear about it!(Silence, anticipation.) It's all getting exposed now! How you can't keep your little black dick in your fucking pants! Do you know what your son said to that reporter? Everything you're doing is getting out!

INT. JOHN'S APARTMENT- CONTINUOUS

John angrily charges out of the hallway towards the kitchen.

JULIE (O.S.)

John! I took care of it!

Nick is in the kitchen. He quickly pulls out two knives from a drawer. He grips them with all his strength. John stops right in front of him. Julie stops at a safe distance behind John.

JULIE (cont'd)

Nick! Put those down!

NICK

I will fucking kill you if you touch me.

JOHN

You won't do a fucking thing! You little fucking boy. I will punch you in the face and leave you crying like a little fucking baby.

They all pause. Standing in the dark kitchen.

JULIE

Please, Nick! Put those down!

JOHN

What are you going to do, huh?

FADE INTO:

INT. TEMPLE OF PARADISE CHURCH- DAY

The church hall is empty. John, Max, Zoe and Savanna are having a meeting in the main aisle. John takes a sentimental look around the place.

ZOE

That skinny little f-fuck-bitch Steve hasn't showed up for weeks. And that whore Kyra won't answer my calls! Every small newspaper in California has a story about us abusing our members.

MAX

Where's the reporter?

SAVANNA

We should never let that dooper in here again. He comes here wreaking of marijuana and writes this bullshit story.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

I didn't write it.

Michael walks up to the meeting.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Read the name on the article...

SAVANNA

You have some nerve.

MICHAEL

You're just angry because you know I've been seeing Vivi-

SAVANNA

I will call the cops you piece of shit! If you don't stay away from her, I will have you arrested!

MICHAEL

She comes to see me.

MAX

What are you doing here? I thought you finished your story already. Tell your boss to expect a libel-

SAVANNA

He was sent here to get more information! Don't warn him! (As If Max is the moron.)

Savanna starts approaching aggressively.

SAVANNA (cont'd)

Get the-

JOHN  
Let's calm down.

John turns towards Michael. Stares him down.

MICHAEL  
I didn't know about the story. I wrote mine and gave it to my editor. He didn't like it and that was it.

SAVANNA  
Don't lie!

MAX  
How could you not know someone from your paper was writing a story on the same church?!

MICHAEL  
I didn't. I confronted the guy and he wouldn't tell me who he talked to.

SAVANNA  
He's fucking lying!

MICHAEL  
Fuck you!

MAX  
I don't see how you couldn't have known.

MICHAEL  
I'm not hiding anything! Unlike you fucking people!

MAX  
What does that mean?

MICHAEL  
Don't, Max. I'm warning you...

John is smiling, sunglasses still on.

MAX  
(Voice climbing as he gets angrier.)  
Just say what you mean.

Turns his body towards Mike and takes a semi aggressive stance.

JOHN  
Okay! That's it!

SAVANNA  
I told you! You need to get rid of him!

JOHN  
STOP! Lets talk about the buses!

SAVANNA  
I can't believe this!

JOHN  
I said STOP! We got no time for this bullshit. We gotta get to work, getting as many of our people out of the country as possible.

SAVANNA  
John. Can I talk to you in private?

JOHN  
I know, Savanna!-I know! We'll work something out. I have to go and try to find Steven. Let's call it a day. We'll continue this after the weekend. Mike, I want you here with us.

Michael thinks of an answer.

JOHN (cont'd)  
Think about it. See you all Monday.

MAX  
You need any help?

JOHN  
No, I'll be fine. Just help Zoe get more contracts signed.

CUT TO:

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT- CONTINUOUS

Michael is at his little desk, reading the contract. There's a knock at the door.

He opens it to find Vivica on the other side. She has a black eye and lumps on her face.

Micheal immediately tries to get past Viv.

VIVICA  
No! No, Michael!

Michael shoves her hand away.

VIVICA (cont'd)  
She'll call the cops and say it was  
you!

Michael and Viv are sitting on his bed. She's holding his  
hands.

VIVICA (cont'd)  
We can go with them. We can leave  
the church when we get down there.

MICHAEL  
John is doing something.  
Something's not right with him.

VIVICA  
He wants to take us to South  
America! From there we can just  
leave. Go somewhere beautiful, like  
Argentina, or Bolivia.

MICHAEL  
Can I slap your mom before we  
leave?

Vivica laughs

MICHAEL (cont'd)  
(Sighs) I guess there's no reason  
for me to stick around here  
anymore. (Looks Into her eyes.) If  
you're not going be here.

.

SMASH CUT TO:

MONTAGE: GOING TO GUYANA.

EXT. TEMPLE OF PARADISE CHURCH- DAY

A very wide shot of the crowd gathered in the parking lot.  
Five buses are at the center of the celebration. John is  
praying beside one of the buses.

His hand on it as he squeezes his eyelids closed. The crowd cheers at the end. John hugs Nick. Nick jumps on the bus.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT.-- MEXICO.-- DAY.

The buses stop at a intersection. A homeless man starts washing the windshield on the lead bus. Ruben jumps out. He starts helping the man by climbing the bus and lifting the windshield wipers. Grabbing some of the hobo's newspaper and wipes the other side of the glass.

The bus driver pays the hobo. Ruben holds his hand out for his cut. The hobo says no and walks away. Nick and the rest of the bus laughs.

WE PAUSE THE MONTAGE.

CUT TO:

INT. SENIOR LIVING FACILITY- CONTINUOUS

Zoe sits in her mother's a room. They are having a tearful conversation.

ZOE

I really want to help, but I don't think I can leave.

ZOE'S MOM

You don't have to worry about me, sweetie.

ZOE

I love you, mom.

SMASH CUT TO:

MONTAGE RESUMES: I/E. TEMPLE OF PARADISE CHURCH- DAY

The buses are back. Another celebration. Another large group of church members say their good-byes and board the buses.

INSIDE.--

John shows the staff in the gymnasium pictures of their unfinished new home in South America.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. MATTHEWS RIDGE, GUYANA- DAY

Nick, Ruben, and the rest of the construction team have fun building the huge center pavilion in their new community.

FROM THE JUNGLE.--

An old, gray haired man watches from a distance with binoculars. He is obviously American. His side parted haircut, Banana Republic khaki shirt, and expensive watch. The dark shades resting on his forehead.

MONTAGE ENDS.

FADE INTO:

INT. TEMPLE OF PARADISE CHURCH, JOHN'S OFFICE- DAY

John snorts a line of coke. He's thinking. Spacing out- in a manic gaze towards nothing. There's a knock on the door.

JOHN  
Just a minute!

Starts wiping off his desk. While also wiping his nose.

SAVANNA (O.S.)  
Okay.

John fixes himself up a bit then opens the door.

JOHN  
Come in.

SAVANNA  
I wanted to talk to you about Vivica.

JOHN  
Yeah, of course.

SAVANNA  
I can't have her in the same place as that good-for-nothing hippie. I don't know how you trust him...

John slowly walks behind her.

JOHN  
We have a house in Georgetown.

SAVANNA

Really?!

She tries to turn around but John gently grabs her shoulders.

JOHN

Yeah. I can have you there as our contact.

His hands move down to her hips.

JOHN (cont'd)

I do need a favor from you Savanna. I'm in need of something... I know what you must think of me right now. But I am in desperate need of you.

SAVANNA

What about Julie?

JOHN

This is my sin. The fact that you know this, will only bring us closer together.

He begins feeling up her breast from behind. He lifts up her dress and starts unbuckling his belt.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM- NIGHT

John is lost. A thousand yard stare, deep into the ceiling. Julie notices this. They're laying in bed together. Julie starts playing with John's chest hair.

JULIE

I wonder how Nick is doing?

John continues to stare upwards. He takes his time answering.

JOHN

I'm sure he's doing fine. He's got Ruben there.

JULIE

It's a big step.

John starts thinking out loud.

JOHN

I was thinking about that night we  
all got into a fight.

JULIE

Yeah?

JOHN

It's funny. How life throws things  
back at you. He came up to me while  
I was at the table drinking. I  
poured him one.

Julie gasps and smacks him in the arm. She gets over it  
quickly.

JULIE

His first drink.

JOHN

(Laughing.)

That is not his first drink!

JULIE

Oh shut up!

JOHN

You seriously think that was his  
first drink?!

John cackles.

JULIE

Fine. Third drink.

We cut forward.

JOHN

It reminded me of a night with DAN.

FADE INTO:

FLASHBACK: INT. DAN MITTRIONE'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM- NIGHT

The family is having dinner. Dan(68) is having his third  
glass of whiskey. His head is swaying. John(20) is a young  
Black man in the middle of a Norma Rockwell painting.

Dan and Tiffany(56) are now the typical 1950's upper middle  
class elderly couple.(Except for the Black kid they adopted.)

DAN

Listen, I know what you are going to say. But; you can't just be out there on a sidewalk screaming about God for the rest of your God damn life.

JOHN

I'm getting plenty of donations. And a couple of people from a church say they might want me to give my sermons there.

DAN

A nigger church.

JOHN

I'm black, aren't I?

DAN

Enough with that shit! While you are under my roof, you do as I say! You are going to be a cop. Do some real good.

JOHN

I don't want to be a cop-

DAN

Are you scared? It's not that bad. You're a big kid. You'd be perfect. That Julie will open her legs to you real quick.

TIFFANY

(Offended.)

Dan!

JOHN

And you think your racist partners would want me on-

DAN

(Interrupts.)

A black kid, living in a white neighborhood, should not be preaching to a bunch of old niggers! If they find out where you're from, They'll be down here looking for you!

JOHN

That's what this is about. You don't want a bunch of niggers popping up in your neighborhood.

TIFFANY

Dan! Just be quiet already! You're drunk!

JOHN

A preacher named FATHER DIVINE is going to help me find a place-

DAN

(Interrupts again.)  
Father what?!

JOHN

Divine.

Dan calms down. Slouching back in his chair.

DAN

Sounds like another dumb nigger.

JOHN

So I'm a dumb nigger now?

TIFFANY

He's drunk, honey.

DAN

If you think those old darkies want you speaking at their church, you are wrong. They know where you're from.

JOHN

At least I'm not out there robbing convenience stores! My congregation tells me all the time about how bad their kids are. How I can be an example. Show them that young people can think deeper than they expected.

DAN

What store?

JOHN

What?

DAN  
Some of those old ladies telling  
you about their kids? Little wild  
negroes, committing crimes!

JOHN  
Y-yeah? N-Not specifics.

DAN  
I think I know how you can help us,  
help you, son.

JOHN  
What are you talking about?

DAN  
What you are doing is going to  
affect us. It will get us kicked  
out of this community. If they peg  
you as a communist; I can lose my  
job, so could your mom!(Beat.) Help  
me. You can continue doing what you  
are doing if we have a record of  
you helping us.

TIFFANY  
(Looking ashamed.)  
He's right, John. People are  
starting to talk.

JOHN  
You two are fucking craz-!

Dan throws his glass at the wall and stands up aggressively.  
John's face is in disbelief.

DAN  
(Utter rage.)  
Give me a fucking name!

John doesn't speak. Dan grabs him hard by the collar.

JOHN  
(Calmly.)  
Let me go.

DAN  
(Starts to plead.)  
Help me. If you want to do this,  
fine. Let's put it to use! Make us  
safe!

John pushes Dan as hard as he can. The small of Dan's back slams into a piece of furniture with a flower vase. Dan falls to the floor. He can't get up. Tiffany screams.

A second passes. John thinks.

JOHN  
(Hesitating.)  
Mrs. Jordan told me her son was  
into some bad things. Andre, I  
think.(Beat.)

FLASHBACK END.

FADE TO:

INT. COMMUNICATIONS ROOM, UNKNOWN- UNKNOWN

A document comes through a telex in a dark office. The first word reads:

FLASH.

Superimposed at the top of the screen is our key.

CODE WORDS FOR LEVEL OF URGENCY IN DESCENDING ORDER: 1.CRITIC  
2.FLASH 3.IMMEDIATE 4.PRIORITY 5.ROUTINE

The key fades as the document continues. [Words in brackets are superimposed beside the underlined codewords. THEY ARE NOT ON THE DOCUMENT.]

Forward to KUBARK. [Central Intelligence Agency]

Sellers leaving country. KUGOWN [Propaganda] underway. Contact ODACID [U.S. Embassy] in KMGUY [Guyana]. LCFLUTTER [Truth serum] will continue to be distributed.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMP SITE MATTHEWS RIDGE, GUYANA- NIGHT

The building crew eats dinner sitting around a fire. Nick and Ruben mingle with the younger members of the crew.

ABOUT A MILE AWAY from The construction site.

A truck drives towards the camp, The headlights illuminate a thin dirt road, surrounded by jungle.

One of the passengers riding in the truck bed lights a cigarette, The light from the flame reveals an assault rifle.

The truck pulls up. The two men in the back hop out. Pointing the weapons.

BUILDING MEMBER #1  
What's going on?

One of the armed men marches toward the brave soul who opened his mouth.

BUILDING MEMBER #1 (cont'd)  
Wait, wait.

The butt of the rifle slams against the brave man's face.

The driver and passenger get out of the truck. The passenger side is nearest the camera. We immediately recognize the monster exiting.

Nicaraguan #2 exits the last tent, irate.

NICARAGUAN #2  
(Spanish.)  
Nothing. Fuck!

He marches up to Nick.

NICARAGUAN #2 (cont'd)  
Where is it?!

NICK  
Where's what?

He grabs Nick by the shirt and yanks his tall, lanky body off the ground. Throwing him on the ground. He then bends down and gives him a heavy punch to the face. Nicaraguan #1 runs to pull him away from the kid.

NICARAGUAN #1  
(Spanish.)  
Stop!

He gives a hard push. Nicaraguan #2 almost falls on his ass.

NICARAGUAN #1 (cont'd)  
You need to calm down. He probably still has it with him.

NICARAGUAN #2  
(Spanish.)  
Let's take the kid.

Nicaraguan #1 is horrified by the ineptitude of his colleague.

NICARAGUAN #1

(Spanish.)

What the fuck is your problem?! We should not even be here! We need to keep the line with the agency.

NICARAGUAN #2

Fuck!

The two get back into the truck. Followed by their acolytes.

FADE INTO:

I./E. BUS- DAY

John boards the bus. Savanna quickly jumps to hound him with a problem.

SAVANNA

There's a man sitting in the back that I've never seen before. I asked him who he was and he won't tell me.

He spots the old man in dark shades. Michael overhears and turns around, immediately spotting the old man also. It's the same man who was dosing the water in the pantry.

JOHN

It's fine.

John looks at the doctor for a bit. Michael watches.

John smiles at the "doctor" and then settles in his seat at the front of the bus. Michael is grins.

SLAM CUT TO:

EXT THE TEMPLE OF PARADISE CHURCH, PARKING LOT- CONTINUOUS

The buses take off. Zoe and the five people who stayed behind wave them goodbye.

CUT TO:

EXT. MATTHEWS RIDGE, GUYUNA- DAY

The buses pull up to the compound. The crowd has gathered to welcome John and the rest. The doors open.

The passengers are exhausted, but muster the energy for hugs and smiles with the welcoming crowd.

SLAM CUT TO:

INT. SLEEPING HOUSE, PARADISE- CONTINUOUS

Michael and Vivica found a little private time in one of the sleeping houses. Basically a shack full of bunk beds. They're naked, Viv laying on Michael still feeling the orgasmic energy they have waited for the entire trip.

MICHAEL

I've been waiting so long for this.

VIVICA

Me too.

MICHAEL

I love you.

VIVICA

I love you. This is going be incredible. Our son growing up in paradise.

MICHAEL

Not this one though, right?

VIVICA

No, not this one. We have to get the fuck away from my mother.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

VIVICA

(Mimicking the unenthused response.)

Yeah.

MICHAEL

(Chuckles.)

It's going to be amazing.

They cuddle.

CUT TO:

EXT. MATTHEWS RIDGE, GUYUNA- DAY

We follow Nick. An over the shoulder shot as he approaches his father John and best friend Ruben. They're standing by a tree in the jungle. A crudely made bird house hanging off of a branch.

Ruben is hunched over. John reacts to his son approaching. Ruben stands up with his hand putting pressure on his nostrils as he sniffs.

JOHN  
What's going on?

NICK  
The bus driver is angry, he wants his money now. And Teddy wants to talk to you.

JOHN  
Who's Teddy?

RUBEN  
The guy who got hit with the rifle.

INT.-- JOHN'S HUT.-- CONTINUOUS.

The crew that was held at gunpoint are all gathered in John's shack. A bare light bulb assists the dying light from the evening sky.

They are twenty of the strongest in the community. All in their mid twenties. John sits on his two person cot.

JOHN  
This isn't easy for me to say...(Looks around the room.) We have to consider certain outcomes to this. Outcomes that the others aren't strong enough to know about yet. Those people that came here. They came here for me. The CIA is against us now.

He struggles to stand up. He's sweating. The eyes behind sunglasses are bloodshot.

JOHN (cont'd)  
There are things we're going to have to prepare for...

He's looking his people in the eyes. He passes a bowl filled with white powder to the right of him.

JOHN (cont'd)

For those who have never done it,  
take some of it on your finger and  
breathe it in through your nose.  
Ruben and I have to go into town.  
Grab some rifles. When you get  
yours, try not to bring too much  
attention to yourself.

CUT TO:

EXT. -- DOCTOR'S HUT. -- CONTINUOUS.

Julie is arguing with the doctor outside of his hut. She has  
a boy in front of her. Her hands on his shoulders.

JULIE

This poor child is traumatized!

DOCTOR

John! Come here and control your  
woman!

John marches angrily towards the doctor. He grabs him by his  
shirt collar and throws him down to the dirt. A cloud of dust  
flies up. John cocks his fist back and aims the hammer.

JOHN

(Whispering.)

You fucking piece of shit! I don't  
have time for your FUCKING BULLSHIT  
right now!

DOCTOR

What you are about to do might  
bring an early conclusion to this  
little experiment. They're coming.  
It's over already. But if you do  
this-

JOHN

If this ends like that. I highly  
doubt you'll be important enough to  
seek any special retribution for.

DOCTOR

Didn't you ever wonder if it's the  
LSD that has these people wrapped  
around your little finger like  
this? Maybe I'm the one you owe for  
this little dream here. Boy, is it  
turning into a fucking nightmare,  
isn't it?



JOHN

I need Ruben here. But you'll be in charge out there, and I'm giving you money for a nice hotel.

NICK

I don't know what to say, daddy-o. (Turns to Ruben.) Sucks for you, jive turkey.

CUT TO:

I/E.-- DOCTOR'S HUT.-- DAY.

We see Michael's navy and white Converse All-Stars. In front of them is a trail of blood.

INSIDE.-- We see him slowly open the door. In the corner of the room, the doctor is a bloodied mess. He's sitting on the ground. Legs stretched out, his head tilted to the side.

DOCTOR

(Slurring.)  
Get the fuck out!

MICHAEL

You're awfully rude for a guy who looks like he was already taught a lesson. You okay?

For the first time, the doctor seems a bit worried.

DOCTOR

I'm fine.

MICHAEL

I overheard you and John on the bus. Who sent you here?

The doctor doesn't respond.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Who do you work for!

DOCTOR

We're all going to die here.

Ruben bursts through the door. He points aims the rifle at Mike. Another gunman comes in.

RUBEN

Tie his fucking hands. Take'em to the tool shed.

(MORE)

RUBEN (CONT'D)

Make sure you move anything he can use out of there. It's time for the doctor to leave us.

MICHAEL

Hey-

RUBEN

Tape his fucking mouth shut and put a bag over his head.

CUT TO:

EXT.-- JUNGLE. -- CONTINUOUS.

John drives up to five of his henchmen. They're waiting by a fence. A dead horse in the distance. John pulls a bag of coke out and starts sharing.

JOHN

How's it going.

HENCHMEN

The Sulfuric Acid seemed a little painful. Blood came out of it's mouth.

He pulls a vile of liquid out of his pocket.

JOHN

Try this one. It's Cyanide. I saw a cow a couple miles down the road. Pay the owner for it before you do anything... (Starting to walk towards the truck.) I need you to go into town and get some Flavor-ade. A lot. And be at the pavilion for the meeting tonight.

CUT TO:

INT. -- SLEEPING HOUSE, PARADISE. -- CONTINUOUS.

Mike is tied up in the corner of the shed. He's getting beat. His hands tied over his head. Leaving his face and ribs exposed to the punches and kicks.

CUT TO:

EXT. -- PAVILION, PARADISE. -- NIGHT.

The entire community has gathered in the pavilion. Some of them still finishing their dinner. They're all drinking the Flavor-ade. We see Max and his son. John sits at the only full wall of the structure, which serves as the stage. Julie sits behind her class.

There's love. One big family, celebrating their first months since their emancipation from a corrupt society. John stands and calls for quiet with his hand. The crowd settles down.

JOHN

It's been a couple months now. Is everybody happy?

The crowd erupts with a positive response.

JOHN (cont'd)

We do have a couple of challenges to worry about. The world we left behind is angry that we are succeeding in our new society. They want to put an end to our new lives. We cannot allow that to happen.-

The energy changes.

JOHN (cont'd)

We WILL not allow that to happen! That's why we have just committed revolutionary suicide! We have all just drank poison. It's a painless poison. We will slowly fall asleep.

The crowd is stone silent. The shock is setting in. Whispers grow. Some people are panicking a little faster than others.

CROWD MEMBER

We will die with you John!

A large portion of the crowd cheers. Many are still grasping the fact that their lives might be over. There's a lot of chatter and some crying.

Max is starting to panic. He turns Matthew around and looks into his eyes.

MAX

Are you okay Matty? How do you feel? Are you okay?

Max looks up at John angrily. Then looks at one of the congregation members.

MAX (cont'd)  
Is he serious?

Julie is starting to hug some of the kids closest to her. Looking up at John, confused and terrified.

JOHN  
Thank you for your commitment to this. This was a test... But this might be necessary. If they come for us, they will end our lives. They won't arrest us. They will end our lives! Let's not give them that satisfaction. We will choose how we die! Not them!

Silence takes hold of the compound.

FADE INTO:

INT.-- JOHN'S HUT.-- NIGHT.

John was having another secret meeting in his hut. This time it's crowded. The room is full of debate. Many of the henchmen are quiet. Securely holding their rifles.

Max is there, witnessing the demise of their utopia in this volatile gathering.

JOHN  
We need to safeguard ourselves from these monsters!

CONGREGATION MEMBER  
Not like this! This is crazy!

HENCHMEN #1  
We were held at gunpoint!

CONGREGATION MEMBER  
When?!

HENCHMEN #1  
Before any of you got to the camp!

MAX  
Were they military?

JOHN  
Most likely.

MAX

What does "most likely" mean?!

HENCHMEN #1

You think they're going to come in here and introduce themselves as the government?!

JOHN

We are talking worst case scenario here. (Beat.) I want us prepared for anything. I cannot stress the level of savagery that we are dealing with. These people cannot take us alive. Not here.

MAX

Why are we here then, John?

JOHN

TO BUILD A BETTER WORLD! And they are trying to fucking kill it. What?! Did you think this was going to be easy?!

MAX

We didn't think there was going to be people trying to kill us!

JOHN

We're dealing with it.

MAX

By you killing us instead of them! That would've been a mass fucking murder John! That wasn't suicide, you didn't give us the choice!

JOHN

You got a better idea?

MAX

How bout we just go back?

JOHN

You don't want to fight Max? Your life is too precious to sacrifice itself for a perfect world.

MAX

What?! No!

JOHN  
No one is leaving. We will keep you  
safe.

CUT TO:

EXT.-- JUNGLE. -- DAY.

Again we're away from the compound. John and his handful of henchmen stare at a lone cow. The cow staggers a bit and lays down slowly.

RUBEN  
That's the second cow we've tried  
it on. It seems to be painless.

JOHN  
Alright. Good work.

CUT TO:

EXT.-- GEORGETOWN, CHEMICAL DISTRIBUTION PLANT.-- DAY.

Ruben loads the Paradise cargo truck with two containers. The labels read "Potassium Cyanide".

John walks out of the building and jumps into the truck. He takes off without warning, Ruben is still on the flatbed and holds on for dear life.

TIME CUT: EXT.-- GEORGETOWN, RUSSIAN EMBASSY.-- DAY.

The dramatic music starts.

We're looking through a black and white lens. It's positioned across the street taking pictures of John. A plaque beside the door reads EMBAJADA USSR.

John walks to the truck and they take off.

CUT TO:

INT.-- GEORGETOWN, PARADISE HOUSE, VIVI'S BEDROOM.-- DAY.

Vivica sits on her bed. She caresses her belly bump. Looking out of the window.

-- KITCHEN.

Savanna is trying to organize the mess in their new home. Her two young kids are crying.

The phone rings.

                  SAVANNA  
Shut up! Yes. Hello.

                  ZOE (O.S)  
Savanna?

                  SAVANNA (CONTD)  
Yes. Zoe?

SLAM CUT TO:

EXT.-- GEORGETOWN, PARADISE HOUSE.-- CONTINUOUS.

The truck pulls up in front of the house. John takes a bump of coke. He gives one to Ruben.

                  JOHN  
Take the kids and Viv somewhere.  
Come back in an hour.

                  RUBEN  
You got it.

BACK TO:

INT.-- GEORGETOWN, PARADISE HOUSE.-- CONTINUOUS.

Savanna is still on the phone.

                  ZOE (O.S)  
Congressman Paz is on his way down  
there to talk to John.

There's a knock on the door.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT.-- RIVER.-- CONTINUOUS.

Vivica and Ruben sit on the truck bed.

                  RUBEN  
I was always afraid of you-

VIVICA

(Interrupts.)

Yeah, well he wasn't like you said!

RUBEN

(Throws the Hail Mary.)

I know. I'm sorry you had to go through this. But we're at the end. And I know where John has two million dollars. (Beat. Viv is speechless.) With him it'll always be promises. I can give you and the baby the life you want. I don't care if it's his. I will love it like it's my own. Because I love you more than anything in this world.

SLAM CUT TO:

INT.-- SHED/ TORTURE ROOM.-- CONTINUOUS.

Ruben throws a vicious kick at Mike's ribs. He might have broke a couple.

JOHN (O.S.)

That's enough, Ruben.

Michael vomits. We see John. He is sitting on a chair a few feet away from Mike.

JOHN (cont'd)

You know, I was in Brazil, around 12 years ago. Steven posted me at a church in Belo Horizonte. We were teaching local law enforcement how to find and interrogate communists. One day, I spot a guy sitting in his car, taking pictures of us. He was a journalist. Working on a story about the CIA in Brazil. (Beat.) You think you know the way the world works. Then you see them beat this man bloody, strip him naked, cover him in pork fat, and throw a rabid dog in his cell. They got him to admit he was a communist. (Another beat.) You're gonna cooperate, Mike.

CUT TO:

EXT. -- PARADISE COMPOUND. -- CONTINUOUS.

A wide shot of one of John's minions running out of the radio room. He finds the truck arriving at the compound. John tells the driver something and gets out of the truck. Ruben hops off the back with his rifle.

The man from the radio room talks to John and Ruben.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. -- SLEEPING HOUSE, PARADISE. -- CONTINUOUS.

Max has started a Coup. They gathered ten brave dissenters.

MAX

We just tell him we didn't sign up  
for this shit!

DISSENTER #1

He's losing his fucking mind!

A group of John's henchmen walk into the room with their rifles.

RUBEN

What's going on?!

The room stays quiet. The dramatic music that has been playing in the background builds.

RUBEN (cont'd)

Max! John wants to see you.

The goons lift their weapons a bit.

MAX

(Shocked.)

Ruben-

DISSENTER #1

(Interrupts.)

We all want to see John.

HENCHMEN #1

I'll let him know. Max. Come on!

The group looks at the three men with rifles for a moment. Max decides to go peacefully.

SLAM CUT TO:

INT.-- JOHN'S HUT.-- CONTINUOUS.

Max is now in front of the king. John glares at Max from behind his sunglasses. The king's men are the young African Americans in the commune. Everyone is sweating. The bare bulb has moths orbiting.

MAX

A couple of-

RUBEN

I found him with about ten members. They were wanting to ask you if they could leave. They want to go back home. Prokes was there too.

JOHN

A Congressman is coming in a couple of days. If he asks if anyone wants to leave we're all going to say no.

MAX

John,...

JOHN

(Interrupting.)

We can talk about you and the rest of the fucking cowards leaving, after the Congressman gets the fuck out.

He lowers his head to the table beside cot and cokes up.

MAX

Okay.

JOHN

(Sitting up.)

You're not taking Matty with you.

The room stays quiet. Max is not sure what to say. After a second...

MAX

What the fuck-

JOHN

You want to take him back to black-hating-America?

MAX

He's my son!

JOHN

No, he's not. (Beat.) Do you know?  
Why Cece killed herself, huh  
Max? (Beat.) Because you're a fag!  
And she didn't want to tell you  
that I'm that baby's father!

MAX

(Beginning to tear up.)  
You're a fucking liar!

JOHN

You're not a fag? Maybe you're just  
secretly a racist? That's why you  
want to take Matthew back to those  
white people. You gonna betray us  
Max? Sells us out to them.

The room's energy is getting hostile. Rifles are slowly  
lifting.

JOHN (cont'd)

Or maybe you're both. Why don't you  
prove to us you're neither of  
those, Max. There's a beautiful  
sister right there.

A lone black woman stands in this room of mounting tension.

JOHN (cont'd)

Why don't you lick her beautiful  
pussy?

RUBEN

(Sinister smile.)  
Get in there Max.

Smiling, she lowers her panties revealing a bloody mess in  
them. The men behind Max start pushing him forward. He has no  
choice at this point.

FADE INTO:

EXT.-- JOHN'S HUT.-- CONTINUOUS.

Max walks away from the hut traumatized. Blood on his mouth  
and cheeks.

CUT TO:

EXT.-- PAVILION.-- DAY.

The sinister score overlays the happy people.

We hear Julie's class as they rehearse a Christmas song for Congressman Paz. The song is "Pablo the reindeer". The kids do a little dance as they sing "*Pablo does the CHA-CHA-CHA. He makes all the kids laugh HA-HA-HA.*"

FADE INTO:

EXT.-- GUADALAJARA AIR FIELD.-- DAY.

SUPER: GUADALAJARA, MEXICO.

Congressman Arthur Paz, his aide, and a camera crew are boarding a small plane. It's a dirt air field.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT.-- PARADISE COMPOUND.-- NIGHT.

John's voice comes through the speaker system.

JOHN

White night. Everyone to the pavilion. White night.

EXT. -- PAVILION, PARADISE. -- NIGHT.

The whole commune drinks their entire cup of Flavor-aid together. The adults who have children, hug them afterwards. The ones without hold hands. The soundtrack drowns everything out.

Max is holding back tears hugging his son tightly. Michael looks around at the descending madness. We see through his eyes for a bit. The fanatics closing their eyes, raising their hands, and waiting for death.

Others sob uncontrollably. There are some that are numbly spectating. And others who are running around naked. Skipping up and down like they're in a big field, skipping through the flowers.

FADE INTO:

INT. -- SLEEPING HOUSE, PARADISE. -- DAY.

The "traitors" meet in their usual spot. Everyone sweating. Max is in shock. The group is getting desperate.

DISSENTER #1

(Whispering.)

We can't risk it. If we don't ask him for help, and he leaves. John can just change his mind and keep us here...

DISSENTER #2

Keep us here as fucking slaves! The rest of the camp is not gonna do anything about it!

A young girl in the group starts bawling. The two around her try to console.

GIRL

(Weeping.)

We should've never came here.

DISSENTER #2

Shhh. It's okay sweetie. It'll be okay.

DISSENTER #1

We should make a run for it, while the congressman is here.

DISSENTER #3

It's a hundred and fifty miles to the next town! If they catch us in the jungle-

DISSENTER #1

We can steal a truck, then!

MAX

We need to hand him a note.

Everyone looks at Max.

MAX (cont'd)

Even if they shoot that person, the rest of us have a chance after. I don't know how John is going to react. Let's just be prepared for the worst.

DISSENTER #2

Who's going to do it?

Everyone looks around.

MAX

I will.

DISSENTER #2

What about Mat?

He thinks about the question. What will happen to his little boy?

CUT TO:

EXT.-- AIR FIELD, GUYANA.-- DAY.

The small air plane lands. Chris Dwyer awaits the group in his shades and fancy khakis.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT.-- AIR PLANE.-- CONTINUOUS.

Congressman Paz gets up from his seat and stretches his back. He playfully slaps the seat of the camera man who tagged along.

ARTHUR PAZ

(To his aide.)

Theresa! Wake up! We're here!

CONGRESSMAN'S AIDE

(Groggy.)

Yeah. Okay.

BACK TO:

EXT.-- AIR FIELD, GUYANA.-- CONTINUOUS.

The camp's truck parked near the shed. Henchmen in the back.

Ruben walks up to the plane as the door opens. The tall Congressman is the first through the tiny door. The rest of the "fact finders" follow behind him.

RUBEN

Hello!

ARTHUR PAZ

Hi. Are you from the paradise commune?

RUBEN  
Yes, sir. Here to give you a lift.

ARTHUR PAZ  
What's your name?

RUBEN  
Ruben Burns.

Art looks him in the eyes for a bit.

RUBEN (cont'd)  
Hop on.

The pilot is not approaching the truck.

RUBEN (cont'd)  
You too.

ARTHUR PAZ  
No, he's staying. He needs to make  
sure the plane will be ready to  
leave.

Ruben signals one of the henchmen off of the truck. He gets  
really close to Ruben.

RUBEN  
He does not go near that door.

The man nods.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT.-- JUNGLE. -- CONTINUOUS.

The sites are beautiful. Teresa loves everything around her.  
She takes her camera and starts snapping pictures.

For a moment she forgets about the world. Until she looks at  
one of the chaperons. He's staring at her, and smiles when  
she catches him. She smiles back to avoid making him angry.

CUT TO:

INT. -- GEORGETOWN, PARADISE HOUSE. -- DAY.

Savanna dresses her young daughter and son in their Sunday  
best. Vivica walks by the room. She has on a beautiful sun  
dress and a picnic bag for groceries.

VIVICA  
I'm going to the market.

SAVANNA  
Okay. Be back quickly.

VIVICA  
Why? What are we doing today?

SAVANNA  
Just be back as soon as possible,  
Vivica!

VIVICA  
Okay!... Jesus! (Starts walking  
away.) I thought we moved here so  
you didn't have to freak out  
anymore?

INSERT CUT:

EXT.-- GEORGETOWN, PARADISE HOUSE.-- CONTINUOUS.

Vivica walks out of the Two-story South American home,  
located in a middle class neighborhood.

BACK TO:

INT. -- GEORGETOWN, PARADISE HOUSE. -- CONTINUOUS.

Savanna finishes dressing her son. She starts choking up.  
Tears roll down cheeks.

JASON  
Why are you crying, Mommy?

SAVANNA  
No reason. You know Mommy loves  
you, right?

JASON  
Yeah.

SAVANNA  
Whatever I do, I do to keep you  
safe.

CUT TO:

EXT. -- PAVILION, PARADISE. -- CONTINUOUS.

Julia's class sings "Everywhere, everywhere Christmas". They finish the song. The crowd applauds.

JOHN

They have been working hard all week. Along with their teacher; My incredible wife Julia. Stand up honey.

Julia stands and bows as the crowd applauds again. She then waves the applause back to the children.

TIME CUT:

Paradise is now having lunch. The Congressman's visit has been a success for the camp. The camera man smiles as he documents the festivities.

In the far corner of the pavilion, the exiles are sitting together. Never touching the food in front of them. Max and the group are very tense. They look at each other, then around the pavilion.

Ruben and John are entertaining the Congressman. The guards enjoying themselves in the same area.

Max pulls the note out of his pocket. The group is staring at him. Max gets up from his seat. He starts walking. Moving through the festive crowd, we begin to hear the John.

JOHN (O.S.) (cont'd)

(Mid conversation with the Congressman.)

Capitalism turned humans into lab rats for the corporations. Now we have a society of strung out consumption addicts. Who think happiness comes from something new and shiny.

He reaches the forbidden zone.

Two of the henchmen notice. Their faces immediately disfigure into powerless anger. They know who Max is going for but don't want to make a scene.

JOHN (cont'd)

All I wanted-

Max gets there.

MAX

Mr. Paz...

John and Ruben's faces are trying to hide the shock.

MAX (cont'd)

I just need to give you this.

Ruben grabs Max by the shoulder.

RUBEN

What the fuck are you doing,  
traitor?!

The pavilion fades to silence almost immediately.

ARTHUR PAZ

Whoa! Whoa!

Ruben tries to pull Max away by his shirt. Max is holding both hands up, showing he's not a threat.

JOHN

Ruben! It's okay!

ARTHUR PAZ

Hey! Let him go!

JOHN

(Points at Max.)  
Congressman. That lazy, ungrate-

ARTHUR PAZ

John. John. (Gently restraining.)  
Listen to me. This isn't for  
everybody. You don't have to take  
that personally. Hey, I love this  
place. I would love to come back  
here some day, if you'll have me.

JOHN

(Flustered laugh.)  
Of course...

ARTHUR PAZ

So, let's do this. Any one who  
wants to leave, should write their  
name down on a list that we'll  
make. I think we can take seven  
today. And we'll arrange to take  
anyone else later.

The pavilion's silence is overwhelming John. A thousand people all with their eyes on him. He's sweating and panicking behind his trusty shades.

JOHN

Fine. Take that pack of traitors with you. I can guarantee you'll be leaving by yourself next time you come congressman.

He looks at Ruben.

JOHN (cont'd)

Ruben, come with me.

CUT TO:

EXT.-- AIR FIELD, GUYUNA.-- CONTINUOUS.

The henchman feels his stomach rumbling. We hear it.

HENCHMEN #2

Hey, I gotta go take a shit. Don't touch anything over there.

Points at the shed.

The pilot acts like he is looking around for something. He then looks at the pad lock on the door. The key is hanging from a string. He opens it. Then slowly opens the door.

INSIDE THE SHED.--

Michael is in the corner of the dark shed. He is in the fetal position with a sack over his head and his wrist tied in front of him.

REFUGIO hurries to him and pulls the hood off. Michael's eyes lock with Refugio's and fill with hope. Refugio unties his wrists. He helps Mike up, puts his index finger up to his mouth. Signaling Mike to be quiet.

REFUGIO

(Whispering.)

Vete, go, go!

Mike runs out of the shed and into the jungle.

Refugio quickly closes the door and locks the pad lock.

TIME CUT:

The henchman returns, to find Refugio supposedly working on the engine. He looks at the door. Then looks at Refugio. He then walks towards the shed... and sits on the chair next to the door.

INSERT CUT:

EXT.-- MARKET PLACE, GEORGETOWN.-- CONTINUOUS.

Shots of Vivi enjoying life as she shops at a busy outdoor market.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT.-- AIR FIELD, GUYANA.-- CONTINUOUS.

The trucks arrive at the airfield. The pilot is sitting by the small refueling and tool shack.

ARTHUR PAZ

We're leaving, Refugio. Is the plane ready?

REFUGIO

(Whispering.)

Si. Senor, I found a man being held prisoner in the shed. I let him out.

ARTHUR PAZ

Good job. Let's load all their stuff and get out of here.

REFUGIO

De volada.

Refugio gets to work.

The crew is loading the last things through the back of the plane.

INSIDE THE PLANE.--

Most of the group are in their seats. We cut to, Max he is looking at a wallet sized picture of Matthew. He starts crying. Dissenter #1 sits next to him.

DISSENTER #1

You can come back for him Max.

BACK OUTSIDE.--

Refugio notices two vehicles approaching. A tractor and a pickup truck loaded up with what looks like a dozen locals.

REFUGIO  
Senor Arturo!

Everyone looks towards the road. The journalist looks at the camera man. The camera man pulls out his camera and turns it on.

Art pokes his head out to look.

ARTHUR PAZ  
(To his crew.)  
They're not from Paradise!

FACT FINDER #1  
Thank god.

He walks out to the open area beside the plane to greet the strangers. The vehicles come to a stop beside the plane. The men are all armed with automatic rifles. They pause for a bit.

ARTHUR PAZ  
What's going on?

The thirteen men open fire on the crew. They're spraying every single member outside. Bullets are tearing through the plane. Refugio's face and chest are shredded immediately. The crew packing outside are being shot by the gunmen who were on the tractor.

INT.-- AIR PLANE.-- CONTINUOUS.

The people inside take cover wherever they can. Max and others hide in the luggage stacked in the back of the plane.

The murderers enter the plane.

These wild eyed killers pause for another second. Instead of wasting time finding everyone they decide to open fire on the entire inside of the plane. Shredding through the seats and luggage.

EXT.-- AIR FIELD, GUYANA.-- CONTINUOUS.

There's a few men executing the victims outside. The lazy psychopaths who sprayed the inside, are exiting the plane.

The hit squad mounts their vehicles and leave the scene.  
Bloodied bodies laying all around the small plane.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT.-- PAVILION, PARADISE.-- CONTINUOUS.

The final reports from the air field are being heard.

CUT TO:

INT.-- JOHN'S HUT.-- CONTINUOUS.

John is snorting some more cocaine. Julie opens the door.

JULIE

This is what you're doing!?

JOHN

Don't worry about it.

JULIE

What were those gunshots John?!

JOHN

We don't know what happened. Just  
get to Georgetown. I'll take care  
of this.

JULIE

How does this end, John? You're  
gonna kill us all, aren't you?

JOHN

Trust me. If the Congressman is  
dead. The people who will come for  
us, will do much worse to those  
kids than the poison.

Julie pulls a knife from her waistband. She attacks John.  
Throwing stabs she slices his fore arm.

JOHN (cont'd)

Aah!

John grabs her wrist and punches her hard in the face. The  
Henchmen bursts into the room.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. -- PARADISE COMPOUND. -- CONTINUOUS.

The sun is starting to set. The doomsday device is being armed. A fifty gallon black plastic drum is being filled with water, flavor-aid, and cyanide. Henchmen #1 is handing out syringes to the rest of his crew.

The entire community is walking to the pavilion. We hear the chatter of the crowd.

TIME CUT:

Dusk. The crowd is buzzing with curious chatter as they await their leader. John steps up to the small stage. His forearm wrapped in a bloody shirt.

JOHN

Everyone line up to get your drink.

CHURCH MEMBER #1

(Concerned.)

What are we doing, John?

JOHN

We are lining up and getting our drinks.

One of the henchmen goes to the elderly woman who asked the question and gestures her towards the line. The lines start forming as John's men start handing out the poisonous cocktail. The people who already have their drinks sit back down in the pavilion.

SLAM CUT TO:

INT. -- GEORGETOWN, PARADISE HOUSE. -- CONTINUOUS.

Vivica comes into a dark house.

VIVICA

Hello?

She turns on the light in the living room.

VIVICA (cont'd)

(Yells to the second floor.)

Mom?... Jason?... (Starts walking to the stairs.) Linda?

She starts walking up the stairs.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT.-- PARADISE/JUNGLE.-- CONTINUOUS.

Ruben is sneaking out of the compound with the red gym bags, rifle hanging from his shoulder. We can see the pavilion at a distance behind him.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. -- PAVILION, PARADISE. -- CONTINUOUS.

John sits on a chair on stage, looking over his people.

JOHN

We cannot let these monsters take our lives. Take our children's lives. We need to show them, that they can't take some people. They don't have power over us. They may have power over millions of their ignorant demons.

The crowd looks at each other. The gravity of the situation is evident to most of the crowd. Some start weeping. Julie is weeping, hugging the kids with a swollen face.

JOHN (cont'd)

But not us. We are holding a true revolution! The only revolution anybody has left! The one that no one has the courage to take. A revolutionary suicide. We will show them what true power is! It's the choice! The choice to not live in a world where we have to answer to a hierarchy! To a entitled institution. Especially a institution that lies to you! That feeds off of the poor! And leaves them stranded in miserable lives!

JULIE

(Screaming.)

Please, not the kids!

JOHN

These kids will suffer a merciless death at the hands of the people who are coming for us... We have to go out our own way...

JULIE

John!

JOHN

We have to be strong. We cannot  
leave them to the fate of these  
monsters...

The crowd is panicking. Darkness now covers the compound. Those who aren't ready for death are becoming more aggressively outspoken. The crying is getting louder.

JOHN (cont'd)

It's time!

The lights turn on. Half of the crowd disperses in a complete panic. Anarchy ensues, as the crowd scatters. Shots are fired.

A large number of people are drinking their cocktails. Julie starts screaming as John's henchmen inject the kids. One of the monsters grabs her.

JULIE

Let me go!

He injects her.

JOHN

It's okay! There is no need to fear  
death! There's no need to fear  
nothingness!

Four hundred people are now running into the jungle. The rest are either dying or patiently awaiting death. One elderly woman is eerily sitting with her legs crossed, watching the mayhem with wide eyes. Everyone around her is dead.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. -- GEORGETOWN, PARADISE HOUSE. -- CONTINUOUS.

Vivica is now upstairs. She looks into the kids dark bedroom and turns on the light. We see a quick glimpse. Horrifying splatters of blood. The kids are in the corner of the room with their throats slashed. Their little heads tilted. It's just a horrific split second flash.

Vivica gives a blood curdling scream. Savanna jumps out of her room with a knife. She attacks her daughter and immediately stabs her in the stomach twice as they trip over each other.

Vivica catches her mom's hand. They both hold the knife halfway in Viv's stomach.

Vivica bites her mom in the face. Savanna lets go of the knife. Vivica pulls it out and winds up. She waits a second for her mom to recover from the bite.

POV: WE ARE WAITING FOR SAVANNA TO OPEN HER EYES. We can see the severely torn flesh on the nose. The eyes open. The knife is quickly and brutally thrust into her face.

Savanna falls off of Vivica.

Again we only see horrible flashes of the brutal stabs to the face Vivica is unleashing on her psychotic mother.

She's not stopping. She exhausts herself. Starts crying.

VIVICA

You fucking bitch!...(Gasps then unleashes an angry scream.)

Vivica stabs her mom one last time, then lays down beside her. She coughs up some blood, and looks at the ceiling of the house.

CUT TO:

EXT. -- PARADISE COMPOUND. -- CONTINUOUS.

From the sky we see the people still running into the jungle. The Door's "Crystal ship" starts playing in the soundtrack as the helicopter's shadowy blades fly in front of our view.

From the camp we see the rope falling from the chopper. The men sliding down the rope. Landing in the jungle to cut off the crowd.

JUNGLE. --

The spec ops team are armed with flashlight helmets, shooting people with some sort of poison dart gun. They're shooting everything that moves. The bodies are dropping. Further into the jungle we hear machine gun fire. Meaning a team was waiting further down to make sure no one escapes.

WE SEE THE MASSACRE AT THE SMALL CLEARING.

The same hit squad from the air field. They're waiting in that small clearing north of the camp. They too are shooting indiscriminately.

CUT TO:

EXT. -- PAVILION, PARADISE. -- CONTINUOUS.

John is still sitting on stage.

POV: John hears the screams.

He sees the bodies of the already deceased. Watches two of the military team enter the doctor's hut. The two military men exit the hut with the document chest.

Another member of the spec ops team is walking towards him. He pulls a pistol holstered on his lower back. Points it right at us. He pulls the trigger. The muzzle flashes.

FADE IN:

EXT.-- JUNGLE.-- DAY.

Ruben is taking a break. Familiar red gym bags on the ground.

IN THE BRUSH.--

Michael's tenderized face peaks out. Ruben is looking out into the hills, rifle in hand. He's probably trying to get his bearings.

Michael looks down. There is a softball sized rock near his foot.

Ruben puts the rifle down and walks up to the very brush Mike is hiding in. He starts unzipping his pants.

INSERT CUT:

EXT.-- JUNGLE.-- CONTINUOUS.

POV: RUBEN.

Mike jumps out at us and smashes us in the head with the mini boulder. We keel over.

We then see Michael on top of us. The large stone slamming into the camera. The blood splatters flying onto Michael's face and clothes.

Exit POV.-- We see the split skull. The loose, detached skin. The soil, drowning in blood.

He continues as we...

FADE INTO:

EXT.-- STREAM.-- CONTINUOUS.

He found a small stream. His clothes drying on a tree branch. The bags sitting near him. He looks at the water. Numb.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT.-- POLICE JEEP, GEORGETOWN.-- CONTINUOUS.

Michael sits quietly in the back seat. The Jeep passes by the paradise house. Police are out in front of the house. Roping it off. The coroner loads a covered body into their van.

Michael's eyes widen.

MICHAEL

Do you know what happened there?

They stay quiet.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Do you know what happened at that house?! Is that the paradise house?!

The officer in the passenger seat whips around aggressively.

COP #1

Callate gringo!

Michael sits back.

CUT TO:

EXT.-- AIR FIELD, GUYANA.-- DAY.

The rescue team looks at the massacred group. The two inside the plane move bags off of hiding victims. Max is pale. One of them feels his pulse.

RESCUE TEAM #1

(Caribbean accent.)

This one here is alive!

They put him on a stretcher. His eyes open as the team works together to get him off of the plane.

CUT TO:

INT.-- SLEEPING HOUSE, PARADISE.-- CONTINUOUS.

The hut looks empty. We see movement from underneath one of the other beds. The dissenter who was bawling at their final meeting, hid under the bed with a couple of kids.

They stand up. Their bodies breaking loose from having to compress under a bed for a day and a half. They open the door.

Sunlight floods in. The brightness overwhelms them.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT.-- JOHN'S HUT.-- CONTINUOUS.

The door opens. The light invades the dark room. The beam of light exposing the dust as it widens. They find a small figure hiding under John's desk. Matthew.

CUT TO:

INT.-- PARADISE, CALIFORNIA OFFICE.-- CONTINUOUS.

ZOE and her small crew are shredding all the documents.

FADE TO BLACK.