

FROM THE DARKNESS WE HEAR --

REVEREND FINCH (O.S.)
Surely the seeds we sow during our
time here will determine the
harvest we reap come Judgment Day.

FADE IN:

INT. NORTH GEORGIA SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHURCH MORNING

Decatur, GA, 1985. JACKSON MACMURRAY, ten years old, sits obediently on a pew next to VAL, his restless fraternal twin. They're handsome, if uncomfortable, in their clip-on ties.

At the end of their pew sits the lovely young ABIGAIL, also ten, in a lovely blue dress.

REVEREND FINCH (O.S.)
Our souls, each and every one, are
waiting to be claimed.

Abigail slides a note to Jackson. Val, however, leans over and steals it. Jackson grabs at it, but Val stiff-arms him.

JACKSON
Hey! Give it back!

MRS. MACMURRAY, seated in front of them, turns around.

MRS. MACMURRAY
Jackson, Val - shush!

JACKSON
He took my --

She "zips" her lips. Jackson obeys. Val smirks.

We PULL BACK over the small congregation... over to the dais... and up to REVEREND FINCH, 40s, at the pulpit. What he lacks in fashion sense he makes up for in charisma.

REVEREND FINCH
We have a choice, brothers and
sisters. Which seeds will we sow?

We continue up to a statue of Jesus ascending to the heavens and hold there for a moment. Then back down to...

PRESENT DAY

... Reverend Finch, now in his 60s, but just as spirited...

REVEREND FINCH

Will we sow the seeds of
righteousness and allow the spirit
of the Lord to grow within us...

... back over the congregation to JACKSON, now 30 and still handsome in his clip-on. He knows this sermon well and mouths the words unconsciously. He feigns interest, but his eyes betray him and flit about the room.

They settle on ABIGAIL, now a lovely woman, at the end of his pew. Her blue dress, caught in her underwear, reveals a bit of lace from her thigh-high stocking.

Jackson tries not to stare. He's unsuccessful.

REVEREND FINCH (O.S.)

... or will the weeds and the
thorns of Satan choke the life from
your soul and drag it down to the
flames of hell!? Praise Jesus.
Let's sing.

They rise with everyone else and join in a rather drab and, well, churchy song.

Abigail's dress, still caught, is now quite revealing. Jackson motions to her, clears his throat. Nothing works. Finally he inches over to her and whispers -

JACKSON

Your dress.

ABIGAIL

You like? It's vintage.

JACKSON

It's caught. It's --

He eyes the area of scandal. She looks. Her panties are visible.

ABIGAIL

Those are vintage, too.

She smiles and fixes her dress. Jackson studies his hymnal.

EXT. NORTH GEORGIA SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHURCH LATER

Jackson holds the door for an OLD MAN. Another person follows. Another. And Jackson becomes the de facto doorman.

Jackson notices Abigail by her car. He catches a break in the line of people and jogs over to her.

JACKSON

Abigail! Hey - sorry about earlier.
With the dress.

ABIGAIL

Don't be. I'm glad you noticed.

JACKSON

Hope I didn't embarrass you.

ABIGAIL

Not at all. You're cute.

JACKSON

Okay.

ABIGAIL

Okay. I have a shift at the E.R. so
I should probably --

JACKSON

-- Of course. Yes. Me too. Going to
work, that is. Not --

ABIGAIL

-- How's life in customer service?

JACKSON

Good. Boring. Customers keep
complaining.

ABIGAIL

Mine keep dying.

JACKSON

Well. Guess I should go somewhere
else if I need medical attention!
I'm sorry. That wasn't funny. That
was - I'm sure you're a brilliant
doctor. I would see you. Your dress
is very nice. I'm going to stop
talking now.

ABIGAIL

It's okay. And you can come see me
whenever you want.

They turn as a SCREECHING CAR, hood smoking, whips into the parking lot and loses a hubcap before coming to a stop.

VAL MACMURRAY springs from the clunker, winded. The years have been a little harder on him. He's rough around the edges, but he means well.

He spots Jackson in the distance and hustles over to him.

VAL
Hey Jackie. Abby.

ABIGAIL
Val.

JACKSON
"Jackson" please. You know I hate --

VAL
-- Jackie, I need your car.

JACKSON
No. What's wrong with yours?

They all watch as the smoke from the car turns black and thick, the body lurches and its suspension collapses.

VAL
Oh it's fine.

JACKSON
Come on. I'll take a look at it.

VAL
No, Jackie, please. I gotta - and since when are you a mechanic? - I'm late. I gotta get going.

JACKSON
What's going on?

VAL
Nothing's going on. I just, you know... please.

JACKSON
I'll give you a lift. I'm not giving you my car again.

VAL
Fine. Give me the keys, I'll drive.

JACKSON
It's my car!

But Val is distracted. A black '65 Mustang Fastback rolls into the lot. Pulls up right next to Val's smoker. Shit.

Val ducks out of sight pulling Jackson down with him.

A BROAD-SHOULDERED MAN emerges from the Fastback, gnawing on a cigar. His movements are efficient, deliberate. He opens Val's car and inspects the interior.

VAL
(to Jackson)
Just give me the fucking keys!

Jackson begrudgingly obliges.

VAL
Where's your car?

Jackson points and Val nods for him to lead the way. Jackson makes to stand, but Val pulls him back down and the two creep off.

ABIGAIL
I guess I'll see you later, then.

Jackson raises a hand and waves in acknowledgment.

IN THE CAR

The boys slide in, Val in the driver's seat.

VAL
Stay down.

He drives slowly, cautiously, out of the parking lot.

INT. JACKSON'S COROLLA CONTINUING

This car has no interesting features. And an air freshener.

Val sits up straight. Jackson fastens his seat belt.

JACKSON
Is someone after you?

VAL
The more appropriate question now
would be "is someone after us?"

JACKSON
Is someone after us?

He glances out the rear window.

VAL
No. Take it easy.

JACKSON
Who was that guy?

VAL
I don't know. Thanks for giving me a lift, buddy. I owe you one. Hey, listen - could I maybe borrow your car for a few --

JACKSON
-- No! I'll drop you off and --

VAL
-- Just for a few hours!

JACKSON
Val, I've got to go to work!

VAL
Perfect! You won't be using it anyway. I can pick you up at - what time do you get off?

JACKSON
Seven, but I don't --

VAL
Seven o'clock it is. Now where's your office?

EXT. ESPRIT AIRLINES - CORPORATE OFFICES DAY

Jackson stands outside the car, talking to Val through the window.

JACKSON
Please don't be late.

VAL
Would you trust me? I just need to run some errands. I'll probably be early. But speaking of late...

Val looks to his watch, then to the building.

JACKSON
Yeah. Seven --

VAL
-- At the latest.

INT. ESPRIT AIRLINES - CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTER EVENING

Several clocks on the wall indicate times for cities around the world. The one for Eastern US reads: 7:38 PM.

Dozens of desks and chairs and computers and phones fill this joyless room from wall to wall. Customer service REPRESENTATIVES occupy each work station, taking calls, offering advice, registering complaints.

Jackson sits at his desk, wearing a headset and trying not to be seen. He checks his watch against the clock on the wall. He dials a number on his cell and gets a recording:

VAL (FILTERED)

It's Val. Leave a message.

He hangs up.

A boring man in a boring suit, clearly the SUPERVISOR, wanders the floor. He checks the status of his workers.

Jackson's work PHONE RINGS. He stares at it, trying to silence it with sheer will power.

Jackson glances over the top of his computer screen and catches the Supervisor glaring at him.

SUPERVISOR

It's not going to answer itself.

JACKSON

My shift ended at seven.

SUPERVISOR

Yet here you are. And since you are here, if you want to keep your job, you will do your job.

Jackson presses a button on the telephone.

JACKSON

It's a great day at Esprit Airlines. My name is Jackson. How can I help you?

ANGRY CALLER (FILTERED)

I'd like to know what you people did with my luggage!

JACKSON

Can you tell me --

ANGRY CALLER (FILTERED)
 -- Can you tell me how I'm supposed
 to enjoy a vacation in Hawaii when
 all I have are the clothes I put on
 in Detroit?

JACKSON
 I'll be more than happy to help
 you, sir.

The Supervisor smiles and moves on.

INT. CITY BUS NIGHT

Jackson sits alone at the back of the bus.

INT. JACKSON'S HOUSE MORNING

Persistent KNOCKING gives way to a DOORBELL RINGING, which
 finally rouses Jackson from sleep.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Jackson, in his pyjamas, shuffles to the front door. He opens
 it and Val enters.

VAL
 Where have you been?

JACKSON
 Where have I --

VAL
 -- I went to pick you up and you
 were nowhere to be found.

JACKSON
 When?

VAL
 Put some clothes on.

JACKSON
 Why?

VAL
 I brought your car back like I said
 I would - you're welcome, by the
 way - but I need a ride over to
 Gloria's. Come on. I'll drive.

JACKSON
Please tell me you're joking.

EXT. JACKSON'S HOUSE MORNING

Val drives the Corolla. They pull out of the driveway of the modest one-story house.

About half a block down the street, the black Mustang Fastback rumbles to life and rolls out after them.

INT. JACKSON'S COROLLA CONTINUING

The car idles at a red light. Jackson stares out the window, barely listening to Val.

VAL
I'm sorry, okay? There was an emergency, which I'll not bore you with, and put me back a little. It's not like you had anywhere --

He's cut short as the car JOLTS violently forward.

Both brothers turn around and see the black Fastback.

Val puts the pedal down and speeds through the red light, narrowly avoiding a couple of collisions and putting some distance between them and the Fastback. Barely.

INT. /EXT. JACKSON'S COROLLA CONTINUOUS

Val looks from the road to the rear-view mirror, veering in and out of his lane. The Fastback follows in pursuit.

JACKSON
What's going on? Val. Val!

VAL
Now someone's after us.

JACKSON
Well speed up! He's closing in!

VAL
Mason drives a 1965 Mustang Fastback and we're in a Corolla. I don't think we're outrunning him.

Val cuts down a side street, and then another.

JACKSON
What did you do?

VAL
Why do you automatically assume I
did something? Did you consider
that maybe this guy has me confused
with someone else?

JACKSON
How do you know his name is Mason?

VAL
Buckle up.

Val takes a sharp corner, passing a sign: DEAD END.

Jackson white-knuckles the dashboard. He's not used to this
kind of excitement. Or any kind of excitement, really.

Val pulls the car to the shoulder at the end of the road.

EXT. DEAD END ROAD CONTINUOUS

IN THE CAR

Jackson and Val turn around to the rear window.

JACKSON
Are you dealing drugs now?

VAL
No. Be quiet. Dealing drugs.

Val turns front and slumps down until his head is out of
sight. He watches the street behind them in the mirror.

JACKSON
Val.

Val turns off the engine.

VAL
I'm not into drugs, okay? I'm a
courier. Now get down.

Jackson, tired of this nonsense, gets out of the car. Walks
around to Val's side.

VAL
What are you doing? Get in the car!

JACKSON
Tell me what's going on.

VAL
Fine. Get in!

He splits his attention between the rear-view mirror and his stubborn brother.

JACKSON
A courier for who?

VAL
Shit!

Val digs further down into the seat. Jackson looks up just in time to see the Fastback pass by their little hideout on the street ahead.

Val peeks over the back seat. Stares for a moment. Nothing. He breathes a little easier.

VAL
Are you out of your mind?

He gets out of the car.

OUTSIDE THE CAR

JACKSON
What?

VAL
Are you out of your goddamn mind?
I'm obviously hiding from this guy
and then you stand there in plain
sight like some, some --

JACKSON
I'm sorry.

That stops Val, and they're brothers again.

Val slugs him in the shoulder then pulls him into a big embrace, taking Jackson a little off guard.

VAL
You dummy - come here! I thought
you were gonna get us killed.

JACKSON
Why is someone trying to kill you?

VAL
 No no no. It's an expression - you
 know. How the hell are ya? Driving
 the girls crazy?

Jackson sees the Fastback over Val's shoulder. It's back and
 it's turning down their street.

JACKSON
 Um, Val --

VAL
 -- What about that Abigail, huh?
 She grew up nice.

JACKSON
 Val.

VAL
 Yeah?

He notices Jackson's hundred-yard-and-closing stare and turns
 around.

VAL
 Jackie, get in the car.

But Jackson is frozen as he watches the Fastback pull to the
 side of the road, a dozen yards or so back.

The broad-shouldered man, MASON, emerges from the car. He's a
 big guy anyway, but at the moment he seems positively
 gargantuan.

A 9mm Beretta flashes in his hand.

MASON
 Why you making me chase you, Val?
 You know it just pisses me off.

VAL
 Would it make a difference if I
 made it easier for you?

MASON
 Not really. Let's have the money.

Jackson quickly chucks his wallet at Mason's feet.

JACKSON
 There's cash and my ATM code is one-
 two-two-five. Take it all. There
 may be a limit of five hundred per
 day or something.

MASON
(to Val)
Who's short-sleeves here?

VAL
He's nobody.
(to Jackson)
Get in the car.

JACKSON
I'm his brother.

Val looks back at him. Unbe-fuckin-lievable.

MASON
That's nice. Little family reunion
we got here.

JACKSON
I'm sure there's some kind of
misunderstanding that can be worked
out. A solution for every problem,
right? My brother here is a
reasonable man and nobody wants to
get hurt. If you can just tell us --

MASON
-- Stop talking. Jesus, you're
worse than he is. Look, Val's
brother --

JACKSON
-- It's Jackson.

MASON
Shut up.

He glances to Val who gives a shrug that says "I know - I've
put up with him my whole life."

MASON
Look, Jack - I'm a reasonable guy,
too. But my employer is, well, not
quite as understanding. More of the
vengeful, murderous bastard type
actually. And your brother, who, by
the by, is not the picture of
sensibility you think he is - got
himself into a bit of debt with my
employer.

JACKSON
How much? I can write you a check--

MASON
-- Three hundred and twenty
thousand dollars.

Oh.

VAL
I have the money.

JACKSON
You have three hundred twenty
thousand dollars?

VAL
(to Jackson)
What is wrong with you?
(to Mason)
Yes. I have the money. And
interest.

MASON
Let's see it.

VAL
It's not far from here.

MASON
Not good enough.

Mason raises his gun.

In a blink, Val pulls a gun from his back waistband and drops to his side.

Both men FIRE. Both men hit the ground.

Then Val moves. Gets to his feet and sidles cautiously over to his downed opponent, gun at the ready.

When he's close enough, he kicks the Beretta away from Mason's hand. A stain spreads from the single shot to the chest. He nudges the body. It was a successful kill.

VAL
Whoa. Whoa! Did you see that shot?
I can't believe I made that shot!

He turns to Jackson who lies still on his back.

VAL
Jackie? You okay?

He goes to him. Jackson's hand, covered in blood, holds an abdominal wound.

VAL

No no no no no no, Jackie no!

He drops to his knees and leans over his brother, afraid to touch him, afraid to leave him alone.

VAL

Hold on. Hold on. Are you... shit!
I don't know what to do. Okay.
Pressure. Keep pressure on, um --

Jackson's body is motionless. Slipping.

JACKSON

(barely audible)
-- Val.

VAL

You're gonna be okay. I'm gonna...
I'm gonna get some, uh --

He pulls his cell phone from his pocket.

JACKSON

-- Val.

VAL

(total attention)
Yeah, buddy? I'm here.

But it's too late. We PUSH IN on Jackson's face as his eyes flicker closed.

VAL

No! Jackie, stay with me. No no no!

Val's voice FADES AWAY.

We PUSH IN closer on Jackson's closed, lifeless eyes...

... which suddenly open. And we PULL BACK to reveal...

INT. P.C.P.C. - WAITING AREA DAY

... Jackson. Awake. Alert. And sitting in an unfamiliar office.

He takes in his surroundings: stark and simple. A single door leads off from this small room.

His shirt is clean. No blood. No hole. No wound.