

THE JUDAS BRANCH

Pilot Episode:
The New Camelot

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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. UNIVERSITY - SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY

An historic, religious school. Rich in history with century buildings and manicured lawns. Only the modern clothes of the students remind us of the present.

THREE UNIVERSITY KIDS (male, early 20s) strut the grounds. Two of them loud and boisterous, egging on the third. Feature: JASON MICHAELS. Quieter, more mature.

1ST KID

I'm telling you -- the beaches in Mexico. Tequila, cerveza. Hot and cold running chicas.

SECOND KID

Last summer you couldn't score hot and cold running water.

JASON

(to 1st kid)

Come overseas with me and do missionary work.

A group of attractive, YOUNG GIRLS (20s) move towards them.

1ST KID

(leering)

Oh, please!... Jason Michaels - our shining Christian light. Missing opportunity to feed poor, ungrateful peasants. You born-again bleeding hearts have no sense of priorities.

They laugh and tease, push each other about and continue on.

INT. HALL - NIGHT

Pure euphoria! The final stop on a campaign trail. People packed shoulder to shoulder waving flags and shouting "Campbell."

OLIVER CHURCH (late 60s, Washington aristocracy) stands behind a podium on a raised stage.

CHURCH

Good evening. My name is Oliver Church.

Applause and cheers fill the room.

CHURCH (CONT'D)

It is an honor for me to introduce the man, come November 8th, who will be the next President of the United States. Ladies and gentlemen. John -- Patrick -- Campbell!

The crowd erupts! Presidential challenger JOHN PATRICK (J.P.) CAMPBELL (40s) emerges. The 21st Century Kennedy. Magnetic, charming and groomed to political perfection. Hand in hand with him his wife RENATA CHURCH-CAMPBELL (40, glamorous).

He makes his way to the podium. She stands in the b.g. in silent support.

CAMPBELL

(struggling over crowd)

Thank You. Thank You... Traveling across our fifty states as I have these last few months, I've been fortunate to meet the people that make up the fabric of this country. And, even though our differences divide us, what I see most is what we share in common. And, what we share most -- is frustration.

Applause and cheers thunders through the auditorium.

EXT. DESERT IN BHASHAR - MILITARY ENCAMPMENT - NIGHT

A grainy video image shot by an overseas, Islamic military group shows a different political world.

FOREIGN SOLDIERS in balaclavas DRAG a blindfolded prisoner into a desert clearing lit by jeep lights and chain him to a post.

The unseen cameraman zooms in for detail. The soldiers step back. The prisoner struggles to free himself.

CAMPBELL (V.O.)

The American people have fallen on the sword too many times. They want leaders with vision, not ones that expect blind loyalty.

INT. HALL - CONTINUOUS

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)

Blind loyalty led us into a war that is taking the lives of our sons and daughters!

An explosion of APPLAUSE. Relentless -- deafening. Campbell glances to his wife. They give each other a knowing look. Church stands off to the side, smug and confident. The election has just been won.

EXT. DESERT - MILITARY ENCAMPMENT - LATER

A COMMANDER steps forward. He pulls off the hood and reveals the face of Jason Michaels. The boyish looks now replaced by blood and bruises.

CAMPBELL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And, I also believe, the war of words -- the political battles on the home front, can only be won through change.

A FIRING SQUAD forms. Rifles raised. Jason's struggle is now desperation.

The commander steps back. He drops his arm and gives the order. Flash! GUNS FIRE in unison. Jason's body buckles. His struggle is over.

CAMPBELL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Change is the start of a new beginning. A new beginning is the start of a new future.

A soldier steps forward with a burning American flag. He throws it at the feet of Jason's body.

CAMPBELL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

A future, that will begin with the return of American troops, back on American soil and the end of bloodshed overseas!

INT. HALL - CONTINUOUS

An explosion of cheers. Campbell's wife steps forward to join him as he backs away from the podium. They hold hands, raised in union as the crowd cheers.

END OF TEASER

ACT 1

INT. CATHEDRAL - DAY

A 19th century cathedral plays host to a 21st century spectacle. The funeral of Jason Michaels is transformed into a multi-media event reserved for the celebrity elite.

Among the large crowd of mourners sits JAMES MacDONALD (49, black). A Washington, B-list celebrity hungry for more.

Newly elected President Campbell stands at the podium to read the eulogy.

CAMPBELL

It is an honor for me to be here.
Not to mourn a death, but to
celebrate a life... Some of us know
Jason Michaels as a humanitarian.

EXT. MONTAGE - WASHINGTON STREET - DAY

- A wall of outnumbered POLICE in riot gear face off against PROTESTERS waving pickets and banners with slogans like; "stop the war", "end the killing", "peace".

- Protesters push forward and topple petitions.

- Riot shields are raised and TEAR GAS fired.

- Protesters strike. Blows are exchanged -- police batons draw blood.

- A gun fires into the crowd.

- People run for safety. Police and protesters are pushed and trampled to the ground.

CAMPBELL (V.O.)

A humanitarian who went to symbolize
peace to a part of the world that
knows nothing but violence.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. CATHEDRAL - CONTINUOUS

CAMPBELL

And, like many who symbolize peace --

EXT. WASHINGTON STREET - LATER

Injured police and rioters lie motionless. Pooled in blood and surrounded by scattered picket signs.

CAMPBELL (V.O.)
Came to a violent end.

EXT. OUTSIDE CATHEDRAL - DAY

The casket is carried by PALLBEARERS, including James MacDonald, to a waiting hearse.

CAMPBELL (V.O.)(CONT'D)
Jason Michaels is not the first
American to die during this war, nor
will he be the last.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

The casket lies across a dug grave and is slowly lowered.

CAMPBELL (V.O.)(CONT'D)
But, I hope the qualities, that he
embodied in his short time,
overshadows our anger and grief, and
gives all of us who know him --

From the bottom of the grave looking up we see the casket descend until the screen turns black.

CAMPBELL (V.O.)(CONT'D)
All Americans, a sense of pride.

INT. (ICB) BUILDING - SECRETARY'S OFFICE - DAY

Secretary JANET BAILEY (early 30s, professional) sits behind a desk working at a computer. She's interrupted by a ringing telephone.

JANET
(into phone)
Internal Crime Bureau. Field
Supervisor Williams' office...
Yes, I'll tell him.

She puts down the phone, picks up some files and walks towards Williams' office. She enters without knocking.

INT. INTERNAL CRIME BUREAU (ICB) BUILDING - TONY WILLIAMS' OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

An office reflective of rank. Professional, but nondescript. Reserved for middle men on the way up, or on the way out. The second home of --

Former CIA operative TONY WILLIAMS (40s). A man in a love/hate relationship with his job and the system. He sits behind his desk trying to read a file without glasses. A battle of age vs vanity.

Janet approaches the desk.

JANET

Proofed and politically corrected.
Censored when necessary. Also, level two and three approvals.

Williams nods to the growing pile on his desk. She lays them down with the others.

JANET (CONT'D)

Director's back top floor.

WILLIAMS

Tell him I'll be right up.

Janet turns around and moves towards the door.

INSERT: TV BROADCAST.

EXT. MONTAGE - WASHINGTON STREETS - DAY

- Smoke and fire from torched buildings and overturned vehicles fill the air.

- RIOT POLICE violently take down demonstrators.

- People wander in shock. Dazed, bleeding, crying.

ANCHORMAN (V.O.)

This was the scene yesterday in Washington. Sparking outrage throughout the country and around the world.

An ANCHORMAN sits behind a news desk in front of a collage depicting the brutality of the events. Prominent is the caption "Washington Aftermath".

ANCHORMAN

Good morning. Peace demonstrations turned violent on what marked the anniversary of former U.S. President Edward Blake, announcing military action against the country of Bhashar. But, unlike like other demonstrations, yesterday's march was marked with violence and tragedy.

EXT. MONTAGE - WASHINGTON STREET RIOT - DAY

- PEOPLE in makeshift, emergency medical centers being treated.
- Sheets cover the bodies of killed demonstrators.
- EMERGENCY WORKERS load the injured into ambulances.
- FIRE DEPARTMENT put out isolated fires.
- BOMB SQUAD with dogs survey the area.

ANCHORMAN (V.O.)

Over two thousand people were taken to area hospitals with minor injuries. Eleven protesters were killed including four who died of gunshot wounds. Bomb threats, as well as arson and looting, were reported throughout--

The TV gets turned off and the screen goes black until --
A knock at the door.

HAMPTON (O.S)

Come in!

BACK TO SCENE:

INT. ICB BUILDING - DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

An office out of place in the modern world. Decorated in cultured taste with fine furniture. Volumes of books fill the walls along with four decades of photos and distinctions in the intelligence field.

A man of education and formal upbringing, ICB Director BENJAMIN HAMPTON (black, 60s) sits behind an antique desk. He's just watched the news on TV.

Williams enters with a file in hand.

HAMPTON
You wanted to see me Antony?

WILLIAMS
Yes! The execution video of the
charity worker --

HAMPTON
(over)
Hopefully he's found some peace,
unlike the rest of us.

WILLIAMS
(hands over file)
If he has, he's a sound sleeper.

HAMPTON
(skims report)
How did we get this?

WILLIAMS
A pair of eyes in the Network.
That's all we have for now. I've
turned it over to investigation.

HAMPTON
Jason Michaels -- real name Michael
Jacobs? Age twenty six -- Special
Activities Division?

WILLIAMS
The poster child for the peace
movement is a company man.

EXT. MONTAGE - ARM RECRUITMENT - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - DAY

A series of small, southern towns. Hot beds of conservative
tradition and patriotic values. The perfect breeding ground
for --

A-R-M (The American Reform Movement). Dressed in matching
uniforms of black pants, white shirts and black ties.
The epitome of wholesome, clean-cut America. In reality, a
dangerous, totalitarian group.

- Groups of ARM MEMBERS hand out leaflets displaying their
logo of a clenched fist and boldly reading "Concern Through
Strength".

- Other members staple leaflets to poles and put them on car windows.
- ARM recruiters stand outside meeting halls shaking hands, welcoming people as they step in.

END MONTAGE

INT. ICB BUILDING - INVESTIGATIVE OFFICE - DAY

A flurry of activity housed in a large, disheveled bullpen. Nicknamed, The Hog Pen. Each agent is assigned a cordoned section called "a stall". Furnished with a desk, computer, phone and a couple of chairs.

Williams enters. He moves towards TOM STIRLING (late 20s). A by the book straight shooter who's climbed the first rung of the ladder.

Stirling sits behind a desk covered with magazines, paper work and coffee cups. He tosses the file he's holding, mumbling obscenities under his breath.

Williams picks up the nameplate on his desk. Name and new rank "THOMAS STIRLING", "INTERNAL AFFAIRS INVESTIGATOR" stand out in embossed letters.

WILLIAMS

Impressive.

Stirling shrugs it off

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

Don't take promotions lightly. Shows ambition.

STIRLING

(takes nameplate back)

After three years my ambition was for an office, not a stall in the hog pen.

Williams pulls up a chair and studies the overflow on the desk.

WILLIAMS

And, a secretary to clean up? Any light on Agent Jacobs?

STIRLING

(from desk files)

More shadows than anything. Or, deep black. Michael Jacobs has been erased from every database in this country. No birth certificate, bank records, tax returns. Basically -- he never existed.

WILLIAMS

No office is that high and deep.

STIRLING

Meaning, multiple departments?

WILLIAMS

And, maybe top chairs.

STIRLING

On the other side, his cover detail is volumes.

He rummages through the paperwork on his desk. Photos and pieces of a man who never existed.

STIRLING (CONT'D)

College transcripts, family photos, personal letters. And...

He picks up a page.

STIRLING (CONT'D)

"Through in-depth interviews with friends and colleagues we experience a story of "Lost Innocence", the life and death of Jason Michaels. From an orphan at sixteen to his final moments in the war ravaged middle east, his journey is one of courage and inspiration, to our country and the entire world."

He hands the page to Williams who tries to read without glasses.

WILLIAMS

This puts the National Anthem to shame.

STIRLING

That's the press release from that film about him last year.

(MORE)

STIRLING (CONT'D)

The guy's become an industry.
Movies, books, magazines...

Williams tosses the page on the desk, stands and moves a few steps to a coffee machine against the wall.

STIRLING (CONT'D)

What kind of pomp and circumstance do you think underpaid civil servants like us will get as a send-off?

WILLIAMS

When you work internal affairs nobody misses you when you're gone. Nope. The only chance I'll get for a twenty-one gun salute is if my ex-wife improves her aim.

STIRLING

Not to mention other former partners.

As he pours a cup he reads a homemade sign on the wall. An internal joke but a painful truth.

INSERT - SIGN

"Welcome To The Hog Pen! The job only stinks because you're knee deep in--". The last word is replaced by a graphic of a hog farmer knee deep in muck surrounded by horse flies and pigs.

BACK TO SCENE

STIRLING

Whitewash aside, immigration does have him landing overseas and joining The Children of War Foundation.

WILLIAMS

What's a Children of War Foundation?

STIRLING

It's a volunteer, religious order. I spoke to their director. And, to paraphrase the good Reverend, he was a model Christian soldier.

WILLIAMS

So, they took him on faith -- literally?

STIRLING

Made him part of the fold, sent him overseas -- never seen again.

Williams moves back to desk.

WILLIAMS

Until our troops found Michaels, or Jacobs, strung to a post last year.

STIRLING

And, that execution video surfaced on line.

Williams picks up a faded photo from Stirling's desk of a young, pre-school Jason Michaels standing with his parents (early 30s) in a park.

The clothing and hair styles look twenty years out of date. In the b.g. are distinctive concrete flower beds and a large, public gazebo.

He flips the photo over. It reads "Age 4" in faded pen. It disturbs him in a strange way.

WILLIAMS

(re: photo and files
on desk)

But, why all this? Why the drama? His cover was established. All they needed was a passport to get him overseas. And, if he was exposed, shred a few files and deny everything.

STIRLING

Business as usual?

WILLIAMS

Exactly! I think most of this was done after the fact.

Stirling picks up a portfolio and loads files from desk.

STIRLING

Obvious question, why?

(beat)

Riots, looting, shootings... All because of a few seconds of film.

WILLIAMS

Watts burned in '65 from a drunk driving charge.

(MORE)

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

Detroit in '67, L.A in '92. All it takes is the right spark.

STIRLING

But, those were real people -- real issues.

WILLIAMS

So is our boy. At least to the public. And, that's the spark. Shock, anger --

Williams looks at the photo once more. He tucks it into his inside jacket pocket, almost subconsciously.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

Manipulation.

STIRLING

(pause)

We could try and outplay them. A well placed leak in the right corridors? Let them know we know.

WILLIAMS

See if any sharks head for deep water?

HAMPTON (O.S)

That would not be sanctioned.

Williams and Stirling turn.

Hampton stands behind them wearing an overcoat and carrying a briefcase. Beside him are TWO ARMED SECURITY OFFICERS.

INT. ICB BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

A busy area of SECRETARIES AND EMPLOYEES going about their business.

Hampton walks along the corridor leading Williams and Stirling. His security men trail out of ear shot.

HAMPTON

The new administration wants this kept immediate family. No use of networks, outside agencies or shared information.

WILLIAMS

So, don't ask questions just find answers? The young lions are sounding a lot like the old dogs.

HAMPTON

Real or not, Jason Michaels is an American hero. It's vital to preserve his public image, at least for the time being.

WILLIAMS

Is it his image they want to preserve?

Hampton stops, making Williams and Stirling pause in their tracks. In the b.g. the security men stop and maintain distance.

HAMPTON

Give us a moment Thomas.

Stirling steps back and joins the security people.

Hampton and Williams continue walking. Stirling and the security men stay in place.

HAMPTON (CONT'D)

Just because our people are trained to look the other way doesn't mean they turn a blind eye. Don't raise issues you may one day have to answer for.

WILLIAMS

Like questioning unqualified desk soldiers?

They stop walking. Hampton looks out a window with his back to Williams.

HAMPTON

You still have a short climb to the top floor. Make sure it's not a long fall, or a fatal crash. Let your sharks think they've weathered the storm, for now.

WILLIAMS

And, the ones out of their depth? Local police, civilians? The next group of protesters?

Hampton turns to face Williams.

HAMPTON
Everything possible will be done to protect public safety. You know that as well as I do.

WILLIAMS
But, not at the expense of discretion? Or, embarrassing the New Camelot?

HAMPTON
Is that a question or judgment?

Hampton and Williams walk a few more steps.

HAMPTON (CONT'D)
If voters elected the wrong man they'll learn the hard way, as will we. Then another will come. And, another after that. All equally promising. And, more often than not, equally disappointing.

They stop in front of an elevator. Hampton raises his hand to wave Stirling and security people in.

HAMPTON (CONT'D)
I don't think either of us wants National Guard deployment against unarmed, civilians. An option that has also been put on the table.

Stirling and the security men have now joined them.

HAMPTON (CONT'D)
Find answers without raising questions. For them and for us.

Hampton continues down the corridor with the two security men close in step.

INT./ EXT. ICB BUILDING - ELEVATOR - DAY

Williams and Stirling step on. Stirling presses the down button and the doors close.

STIRLING
He seems genuinely concerned.

WILLIAMS
They always are when they first
start.

STIRLING
What were you when you first started?

Stirling innocently hits a nerve.

Elevator stops. Doors open.

WILLIAMS
Younger.

EXT. ICB BUILDING - DAY

Williams and Stirling exit the building and make their way
to their car.

STIRLING
Where do we start?

WILLIAMS
For honest answers? Another town.

STIRLING
Don't they know confession is good
for the soul?

WILLIAMS
They only support the theory, not the
practice. A vengeful God is more
forgiving than the American taxpayer.
And, less likely to judge.

Williams and Stirling reach their car.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)
Do you have a name and address on
that filmmaker?

STIRLING
(opens portfolio)
Yeah... Producer slash director is
one James MacDonald. His office is
just outside Arlington.

WILLIAMS
Get R-I-D digging into him as well.

STIRLING
Why him?

They climb into the car to drive off.

WILLIAMS

Right now, curiosity. Anyone who can interview friends and colleges of a man who never existed is definitely a curiosity.

END OF ACT 1

ACT 2

INT. CHURCH GYM - NIGHT

A small town GROUP OF ABOUT ONE HUNDRED sit side by side. Predominately middle aged males, all white working class.

ALEXANDER ELIAS (50) stands behind a podium. The leader of ARM starts his climb up the totalitarian ladder. Deceptive and dangerously intelligent. Casually dressed with a down to earth manner.

In the background sharing the stage are members of ARM in matching black and white clothes under a large banner reading "Concern Through Strength".

ELIAS

I want everyone in this room to give me a round of applause if you love this country.

Applause fills the room.

ELIAS (CONT'D)

I love this country. I love it's people. I even love the people who hate me! I bet you didn't know one man could love that many, did you?

Laughter from the crowd.

ELIAS (CONT'D)

What I have no love for, are the foreign influences that have taken over this country. How they've led the people we put in power down the wrong path. And, how it's led to the abuse of authority and the breakdown of our rights and freedoms.

INT. FILM PRODUCTION OFFICE - DAY

An executive office suite. Housed with expensive furniture, modern art and attitude.

Williams and Stirling enter. "FRONT LINE FILMS" reads boldly on the door as they step in. Exiting are TWO MEN (20s, flamboyant) who stare them down. They're out of place and feel it.

They step towards the SECRETARY (20s, icy, artsy).

SECRETARY.
 (sizing them up)
 Can I help you?

WILLIAMS
 (starts to reach for
 ID)
 Yes, my name is Tony Williams and
 this is Tom Stirling. We'd like to
 see a Mr. James MacDonald. We were
 hoping he could speak to us about --

SECRETARY.
 Mr. MacDonald is not here, and not
 available to just everyone! If you
 would --

WILLIAMS
 Do you know when he'll be available?

RECEPTIONIST
 No, I don't. If --

WILLIAMS
 (enthusiastic)
 Now, that is very impressive!

Williams moves past the receptionist's desk.

RECEPTIONIST
 You can't come back here!

Along the back wall is a portrait of MacDonald posed beside
 a tank in camouflage gear holding a film camera. To one
 side are signed photos of U.S. politicians. To the other
 are shots of overseas war zones. Some graphic and
 disturbing, others patriotic.

WILLIAMS
 (studies photos
 carefully)
 Look at these photos! Politicians --
 past Presidents. All of them signed.
 And, the places he's been?

She gets up from the desk and moves near him as Williams
 fixes his eyes on the picture of MacDonald.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)
 Is this Mr. MacDonald? Was this
 taken overseas? That is him, isn't
 it?

RECEPTIONIST
 (ushering him out)
 Yes, it was...I mean...it is.
 If you would please--

WILLIAMS
 (over)
 What an incredible man.
 (beat)
 I can't believe these people. This
 history! How long have you worked
 here? You must love your job?

RECEPTIONIST.
 I've only been here a few months.
 Now, I'm very busy, I must ask you--

WILLIAMS
 (over)
 He must be well respected?

RECEPTIONIST
 Yes, he is very well respected, in
 film and government circles.

She tries to usher him out once again.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)
 If you would --

WILLIAMS
 (over)
 I never heard of him until recently.

RECEPTIONIST
 Most of his work has been behind the
 scenes as a correspondent.

WILLIAMS
 Really? I never knew that.

She tries to usher him out yet again. Williams this times
 follows and starts to leave.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)
 You wouldn't catch me over there.
 At least, not with just a camera.

Williams suddenly stops and almost knocks her off her feet.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

Is he involved in any projects right now? My partner Thomas and I are filmmakers --

RECEPTIONIST

He is not available and I don't know when he'll be back. Now, would you please leave!

INT. DELI - DAY

Lunch hour in a busy downtown deli. Williams and Stirling sit at a window table.

A WAITRESS arrives with a lunch tray. She serves them and walks off.

WILLIAMS

Not eating?

Stirling ignores his food and nurses his coffee. A slight tremor in his hand is visible.

STIRLING

Not hungry.

Williams shows a moment of concern and studies the shaking hand.

WILLIAMS

What did you think of the photos in MacDonald's office? Cheap publicity stunts -- all the signatures fake.

STIRLING

Probably his way of impressing investors.

WILLIAMS

Or, he uses them to draw attention to himself? He craves the spotlight.

STIRLING

Your psychology degree is showing. Remember, he's well respected. In film and government circles.

WILLIAMS

In government, well respected means you haven't been caught yet. In film, it means your best years are behind you.

STIRLING

Until that documentary and the internet fame. Now, he has money -- prestige. Not bad for someone no one heard of less than a year ago.

WILLIAMS

Safe to gather his ambitions go beyond film?

STIRLING

All celebrities want to be politicians and all politicians want to be celebrities.

WILLIAMS

Yeah, gives new meaning to the term bipolar.

(beat)

People who crave the spotlight will usually do anything to achieve it?

STIRLING

That only makes him an opportunist.

Williams looks back without answering. Lost in thought.

INT. MEETING HALL - NIGHT

Elias and ARM have graduated from small town meeting rooms to large urban halls seating hundreds.

The blue collar, country crowd is replaced by richer, upper class professionals. Most noticeable is the increased number of women and minorities.

Elias is bolder and projects more confidence. His look has changed from casual to custom tailored.

ELIAS

There are many in this room, who can speak more about oppression than I can.

An older, BLACK MAN stands to challenge him.

MAN

What do you know about it? What can a white boy like you tell me about oppression? How can you say you know what I've been through?

Rumbling from the crowd. A few people cheer the black man on as he sits back down.

ELIAS

(points at man)

What do I know about it? I know how it begins. It begins with intimidation. Intimidation used to suppress and strip people of their constitutional rights. And, how the loss of those rights, beat generations of minorities into submission, broke their spirit and robbed them of their freedom of speech.

The crowd starts to rally behind him. The reaction he wanted.

ELIAS (CONT'D)

We analyze the past, but rarely learn from it.

(beat)

Every person in this room. Every law-biding, U.S. citizen who stands with us, will be labeled a person of interest. The country you love, the people you put in power, will view you with contempt. You will be the new minority. You will be the ones profiled, singled out and accused. But, you can also be the future. The choice is yours.

INT. ICB BUILDING - RESEARCH & INFORMATION DEPARTMENT - DAY

Another large area of desks, computers, people and filing cabinets. Walls covered in maps, screen monitors and bulletin boards. Where the Hog-pen lacked order this is meticulous and disciplined.

BOOKS

Damn it!

R-I-D Supervisor MATTHEW BOOKS (50s) jumps from behind his desk as scolding hot coffee goes down the front of his shirt. A man with a tongue as sharp as his mind.

Stirling and Williams step forward as Books continues to clean himself off.

WILLIAMS

(jokingly)

You'd get faster results if you'd stop drinking.

BOOKS

Aspects of this job make me consider starting.

WILLIAMS

I take full responsibility.

(slight beat)

I know at times I can be demanding and never show appreciation -- and this is one of them. This is suppose to be Research and Information. So far I haven't seen either.

BOOKS

(hands file and disc)

I, Matthew Books, and my entire department, exist to serve you.

Williams scans the file, squinting at the pages. Books continues cleaning himself off.

BOOKS

I had them print it large. That's your MacDonald file. Biography and biology. And, a copy of that film you wanted.

Books gets up from behind his desk and moves to a filing cabinet. He opens a drawer and pulls out some papers.

BOOKS

(hands another file)

Also yours.

WILLIAMS

(hands Stirling first file)

What's this?

BOOKS

A related concern.

Williams opens the new file as Stirling reads over his shoulder.

BOOKS (CONT'D)

That's the file on your war protesters. Also, a few scraps I found in some locked file cabinets. Mostly S-A-R's.

WILLIAMS

Suspicious Activity Reports? What were they doing, preaching without a permit?

BOOKS.

It's financial. This new flower power movement is a multi-million dollar network of tax exempt charities. Until the riots Uncle Sam was more concerned about their money than their politics.

WILLIAMS

(distracted - reading)

Some of the names here are interesting, and familiar. Politicians -- celebrities. And, having internal issues?

BOOKS

That's the concern. The leadership has split into two camps. Most are still the pacifists -- relatively harmless. The splinter group branched into something called ARM, The American Reform Movement. They're the little league militants who finally woke up the FBI.

Williams comes upon the photo of Elias attached to a thick pile of government inquiry papers.

WILLIAMS

Founder, Alexander Elias.

BOOKS

The messiah for the misinformed.

STIRLING

I've read about his "Heritage and Cultural Movement." The guy's a crackpot.

WILLIAMS

A crackpot with a P-H-D in communications and a criminal law degree.

BOOKS

Also, eight hundred thousand registered followers in the U.S.. And, a war chest of millions in tax-free donations.

WILLIAMS

How hard line are they?

BOOKS

Mostly rhetoric and grandstanding, but escalating. Apparently the trouble at the rally started when the two groups came head to head.

WILLIAMS

Just what we need, a pacifist civil war.

BOOKS

The ballistic reports from the rally are in there as well.

WILLIAMS

(more pages turn)

They were hit with 38's.

STIRLING

Our locals use 9mm. So, the shots came from the crowd?

WILLIAMS

(hands Stirling second file)

Or, their own people?

(beat)

Get that filmmaker in here. Don't go yourself you'll be recognized. Tell them to play to his ego. I don't want any 5th Street lawyers in the room.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

A later time and a much larger, more impressive room for Elias and his message.

Commanding a raised stage Elias and MEMBERS OF ARM now have visible SECURITY AND LOCAL POLICE GUARDS. The crowd is large and vocal. Hungry and eager to follow.

ELIAS

Your future -- the future of this country, is a matter of choice. You chose to come here tonight. To listen, to learn. Your next choice will be to either stand -- or walk. Open your eyes, or blindly follow. But, whatever you choose, never choose to be silent. Never surrender your freedom of speech. When people in power have chosen the wrong path, silence only makes them stronger. God bless you and good night.

Elias ends his speech and pulls back from the podium. Applause and cheers ring out with religious fervor.

Elias basks in the moment. He moves back to the podium, pausing for effect.

ELIAS (CONT'D)

What started as a handful of men and women with vision, grew to hundreds. Then, thousands.

Crowd reaction building. Applause swelling.

ELIAS (CONT'D)

Now, hundreds of thousands!

Elias fights to be heard over the crowd.

ELIAS (CONT'D)

Because they will never intimidate us and never break our spirit!

The crowd is on their feet. Deafening, militant, defiant.

INT. ICB HEADQUARTERS - INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

A large room of cement walls and barred windows. Blank and sparse. Through a window in the b.g. we see RAIN and hear LIGHT THUNDER in the distance.

In the center is a conference table with a stack of files and three chairs. A small table sits in the corner with a coffee machine and ceramic cups.

Film producer James MacDonald enters. Looking older than his airbrushed, office portrait. He's confident and poised. Dressed young and stylish with a damp overcoat on his arm.

Stirling greets him and shakes his hand.

STIRLING.

Mr. MacDonald. We appreciate you coming in on a rainy night. This is Agent Williams.

MacDonald turns and shakes hands. Williams offers him a chair which he hangs his overcoat on.

WILLIAMS

Thank you for taking the time to come in.

Williams & MacDonald take seats around the table. Stirling remains standing.

STIRLING

I know these rooms are a bit unnerving. Can we get you something?

MACDONALD

Just black coffee, please.

WILLIAMS

Same for me. Thanks.

Stirling moves to the coffee machine.

MACDONALD

I was told you needed assistance regarding film production? How can I help you?

Stirling moves to table with coffee for MacDonald and Williams and pulls up a chair.

WILLIAMS

We normally don't bring in outsiders, but people we've spoken to give you high praise. In particular, your film work on Jason Michaels.

MACDONALD

It's a tragedy what happened to him.

WILLIAMS

You were a pallbearer at his funeral?
I saw it on the news.

MACDONALD

Yes! It was an honor.

(slight beat)

The final few seconds of a man's
life, captured on film, has literally
changed the political landscape of
this country. The old guard has been
finally been swept away and replaced
by younger, more liberal thinkers.

WILLIAMS

Well you've earned two new fans.
But, I have be honest, I don't know
how you pulled it off.

(to Stirling)

Did you know from the time of
Michaels' death to the release of the
film, was less than nine weeks?

(to MacDonald)

How did you manage that?

MACDONALD

There's no secrets. It's what I've
always done. Investigate, learn the
truth, report it.

WILLIAMS

Those first person testimonials --
they were powerful. Someone as
passionate as you must develop a
deep, emotional connection with these
people?

MACDONALD

It's impossible not to. You get to
know them, feel their sense of loss.

WILLIAMS

Two of the people you interviewed.
Rachel and Patrick Wilson. They were
friends of Jason Michaels? Brother
and sister? Both from his hometown?

MACDONALD

Yes, that's right.

WILLIAMS

Would you know how we can contact
them?

(MORE)

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

Even with our resources, we can't locate them anywhere. No residency, no voter registrations... How were you able to find them?

MACDONALD

I've had no interaction with anyone from that film since those interviews. I might have information back --

WILLIAMS

Oh, come on! You're the one who found them in the first place.

Stirling gets up and reaches the corner table with the coffee machine.

Crash! He knocks over some of the ceramic cups but makes it look accidental. The shattering sound reverberates through the cement room and rattles MacDonald.

Williams ignores it and continues.

WILLIAMS

You went to them for the interviews, right? We saw it in the film. They invited you into their homes? You made that -- emotional connection we talked about? Felt their sense of loss? And, now you can't tell us where to find them?

(beat)

We're the interviews real or scripted?

MACDONALD

(starts to get up)

That doesn't even deserve an answer.

Stirling is now behind MacDonald. He touches his shoulder and guides him back into his chair.

STIRLING

Please, sit down Mr. MacDonald.

Tensions grow as Williams' approach becomes harder.

Stirling slowly starts pacing back and forth behind MacDonald.

WILLIAMS

Don't misunderstand.

(MORE)

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

It had to be asked. We just do what you do. Investigate, learn the truth, report it.

INT. ICB BUILDING - VIEWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Hampton stands alone in a small darkened room behind two way glass observing and listening.

Suddenly, the door opens. Oliver Church enters.

CHURCH

Good evening, Ben.

HAMPTON

Oliver! I thought Presidential advisers kept banker's hours?

The men shake hands and exchange greetings.

CHURCH.

This investigation is being monitored very closely. The President himself sent me here to observe.

HAMPTON

I didn't realize I was under scrutiny.

CHURCH

You're not our concern.

(beat)

"Exceptional abilities but dismissive of consequences resulting from personal conduct." "Failure to acknowledge responsibility and disregard for protocol will prove to be a hindrance for future advancement."

HAMPTON

You've read Antony Williams' evaluation file?

CHURCH

Myself, and others.

HAMPTON

You have no reason for concern.

CHURCH

I hope so. Your bureau hasn't many supporters within the ranks. Don't let him be the ammunition they need to have you phased out. Good night Ben.

Church turns and leaves the room. Hampton feels uneasy and unsure what to think.

INT. ICB BUILDING - INTERROGATION ROOM - LATER

WILLIAMS

What's our file say? You're what -- mid forties?

STIRLING

Forty nine.

WILLIAMS

(opens file on desk)

You've been in the industry a long time. But, more a lightweight than a contender. Your record as a correspondent is -- exaggerated? You might not ask too many questions if a controversial, political piece fell into your lap. The publicity alone would make you famous overnight.

MacDonald cold stare turns to a smile. He breaks into loud laughter.

MACDONALD

Don't you think I know what's happening here?

The loud laughter turns to anger.

MACDONALD (CONT'D)

How the system works? The political lynch mob. The white police state. No Judge, no lawyer. No rights!

INT. ICB BUILDING - VIEWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MacDonald hits a nerve with Hampton who continues to watch.

INT. ICB BUILDING - INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

WILLIAMS

(turns pages in file)
Sounds like something Alexander Elias would say. You've donated quite a bit of money to ARM?

MACDONALD

How I spend my money is no concern of yours.

WILLIAMS

You're right. But, your politics intrigue me. That says more about you than anything on paper. You must know what he is -- what he represents?

MACDONALD

And, how is this different? Traditions that never change. Prejudices that go back generations. A man like Elias represents the future. Your type -- your system belongs in the past. Moving from the back of the bus to the front doesn't make the view any better, only clearer.

Williams gets up and circles behind MacDonald.

WILLIAMS

You want to make this black and white? Okay, we can do that. But, I'd rather stay in the gray areas. Not all heroes are created equal, are they?

MACDONALD

What are you talking about?

WILLIAMS

When a black kid is killed overseas it's a shame. But, when a white boy dies for God and country, that's a tragedy. Captured on film, it's a windfall. They all bleed red, but white blood makes headlines.

Williams leans in closer

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

All those years as a journalist, you saw the hypocrisy. "Traditions that never change." "Prejudices that go back generations." But, you also saw opportunity. And, you knew how to use the system. All you had to do was color the facts.

MACDONALD

No!

WILLIAMS

A legitimate film career. Part of the Washington circle. Respect, money, position. That kind of temptation is color blind.

MACDONALD

Enough!

WILLIAMS

To hell with moving from the back of the bus. You used that kid to make the ride a whole lot easier!

CRASH. MacDonald EXPLODES! KICKS back chair and pushes the desk over.

MACDONALD

(stares Williams down)

No more!

He moves towards the door but Stirling blocks his path.

WILLIAMS

Was it worth it? To be as important as those people on your office wall?

MacDonald turns back and locks eyes with Williams. Pure hatred.

MACDONALD

You know nothing about me!

WILLIAMS

Really?

Williams steps up and gets in MacDonald's face.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

"Sweep the old guard out?" "Make way for younger, more liberal thinkers?"

(MORE)

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

Like yourself? Use your film success to open the door then climb the ladder? You certainly wouldn't be the first. But, others didn't do it at such a high cost. Riots, arson, looting --

MACDONALD

I had nothing to do with that--

WILLIAMS

Demonstrations, bomb threats--

MACDONALD

The film was to make people think--

WILLIAMS

Kids getting killed--

MACDONALD

I'm not--

WILLIAMS

Cops being targeted. Revenge shootings--

MACDONALD

That's out of my control.

WILLIAMS

All in the name of peace? Is that the new political landscape you're so proud of?

MACDONALD

(explodes)

They didn't know that would happen!

Dead quiet.

WILLIAMS

They?... Since they aren't here to tell you, I will. Living a lie is one thing, conspiracy is another. But, that's nothing compared to what public reaction will be if we expose you as a fraud, and we will. Or...I can make this all disappear.

Williams turns away from MacDonald. He picks up MacDonald's chair and offers it to him but MacDonald stays frozen.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

It says in the file you have a daughter. Nine years old? Lives with your former wife? You can still be her hero. You're more valuable to me as a pair of eyes than a disgraced, public figure.

Williams goes to coffee machine and pours another cup.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

Give me the names of the people responsible for creating Jason Michaels and why. That way, we won't have to investigate, learn the truth, report it.

MacDonald pushes Stirling aside hard, slams door open and storms out.

INT. ICB BUILDING - VIEWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Hampton continues watching through the two way glass.

INT. ICB BUILDING - INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

STIRLING

Was all that necessary?

WILLIAMS

Dirty, but necessary. Is he tapped?

STIRLING

Cell phone, office and apartment.

EXT. ICB BUILDING - NIGHT

POUNDING RAIN with THUNDER in the background. MacDonald moves fast to his very high end sports car. He fumbles for his keys. His raincoat has been left behind. His expensive clothes are soaked and he's unnerved.

WILLIAMS (V.O.)

Right now he's losing everything. His career, his reputation. When the fear sets in, he'll run to where he feels safe.

INT. DARK HALLWAY - NIGHT

A long, dimly light hallway with an eerie quiet and desolate feel. Muffled thunder can be heard in the b.g..

A MAN steps into frame. His face is never seen. He knocks lightly on a door and speaks through it.

MAN

I know it's late, but I need to speak to you.

INT. CAR INTERIOR - NIGHT

MacDonald's in his car. Flash! The inside of his car lights up from behind. The rear view mirror shows HEADLIGHTS from behind and fear in MacDonald's eyes.

INT. MacDONALD'S FILM OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

FIRE glares across the screen. The crackle is deafening. GASOLINE is THROWN around the room by THREE ARSONISTS feeding the flames. The result is fierce and fast.

EXT. ICB BUILDING - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

A cloud of exhaust fills the screen and the SOUND OF BURNING RUBBER as MacDonald's car speeds away.

INT./ EXT. MACDONALD'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

The rear view mirror keeps showing the same headlights following. He INCREASES SPEED. The car skids on the wet asphalt.

The sound of racing motors and car horns from surrounding traffic is deafening, increasing his panic. The headlights stay behind him, glaring in the rear view mirror.

INT. MACDONALD'S FILM OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Fire is out of control. The wall portrait of MacDonald is swallowed by flames and crashes off the wall.

EXT. MACDONALD'S FILM OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The firebugs run out of the burning office into the POURING RAIN to a parked van. The sole, visible face is the waiting driver - MacDonald's secretary. They tear off.

EXT. UNDERGROUND GARAGE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

MacDonald squeals to a stop at a drive-way of a high end apartment complex. He sees the headlights have disappeared from the rear view mirror.

The rain now is a calming sound, replacing the deafening street noises. He's breathing hard trying to calm himself down. He pushes a button. Doors open to an underground garage. He drives in and parks.

INT. UNDERGROUND GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Getting out of his car his false sense of security is still intact until --

Flash! A set of headlights hit him from the back making him turn. Another flash. A second set of headlights from the right. Then a third set of lights the from the left.

The fear returns. He's spinning, confused.

CAR HORNS fill the air one after another. The sound reverberates in the garage.

He runs to a waiting elevator. The doors take forever to open. He POUNDS at the button and CLAWS at the door.

A MOTOR STARTS. In terror he looks behind him. Then a second, then a third engine. They GUN THE MOTORS for maximum noise. His fear intensifies while the horns continue.

One car suddenly accelerates towards him. The tire squeals echo in the garage. He hears a sound that could be a backfire or a gunshot. The elevator door suddenly opens and he bolts inside.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

He leans into the back of the elevator. He can still hear the deafening horns and racing motors as the doors close.

Suddenly, there's LOUD POUNDING on the door. He slips to the floor and curls into a fetal position.

The sound of the pounding gets louder while the car horns and racing motors continue into a deafening haze.

The confidence and facade are gone. He's soaking wet, scared, shivering and fighting tears. He's been broken. THE POUNDING on the door BECOMES LOUDER. Predominant over all other noise.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

INSERT - An elderly woman's hand pounding on a door

BACK TO SCENE

We now see an elderly CLEANING WOMAN, pounding on the door to an apartment.

CLEANER
(scared - panic)
Sir. Sir! Are you in there?
Please answer! Sir!

INT. MACDONALD'S APARTMENT - DAY

A dead MacDonald lies on the floor naked to the waist.

Three beams of sunlight come through cracks in the drapes. Two from the sides, one from the center. Resembling the staging of the headlights from the garage. The man who craved the spotlight has died in it.

Distant car horns and motors can be heard faintly in the background with other street noise.

END OF ACT 2

ACT 3

INT. ICB BUILDING - TONY WILLIAMS' OFFICE - DAY

Stirling sits waiting for Williams. The door is open to the outer reception area.

He's hung over but tries to hide it. His hands have a faint tremor. He pops something and drinks it down quick with coffee.

Janet steps into the office with files in her hands.

JANET

Why are you in so early?

STIRLING

Waiting for the hog-pen to come up with MacDonald's phone records. They better hurry. The boss's meeting with the Director should be winding down.

JANET

In that case, I better get his coffee.

STIRLING

Does it help?

JANET

No, but it gives me an excuse not to be here. Anything you want?

STIRLING

Yeah, to escape with you. Think of it as our first date.

JANET

Take it like a man.

STIRLING

On a first date?

Williams comes into the office. Not having a good morning.

STIRLING

'Morning leader.

JANET

Your first gallon of coffee will be arriving shortly. Can I get you anything else?

Williams puts his briefcase down on his desk, goes around and pulls out his chair.

WILLIAMS

Yeah, a large bottle of painkillers. Might be the only way I'll be able to sit down again.

Janet leaves the room and closes the door behind her.

STIRLING

The old man's in a sharp mood today?

WILLIAMS

He's the only person I ever met who can deafen you in argument without raising his voice.

(slight beat)

A flash demonstration took place last night.

STIRLING

I heard about it coming in this morning.

WILLIAMS

What you didn't hear is the building MacDonald had his office in was torched.

STIRLING

That's a hell of a coincidence.

WILLIAMS

Too much. A contained, after hours fire with minimal damage to the surrounding block? No demonstrators playing to the cameras? No one claiming responsibility?

STIRLING

You think MacDonald's running scared? We did push him hard.

WILLIAMS

We did what was necessary.

STIRLING

Necessary? Against someone who might only be a patsy?

WILLIAMS

You made your point! Round him up before our new Director starts advertising for volunteers.

STIRLING

I think our new Director probably regrets volunteering for his job right now.

WILLIAMS

How many applicants do you think stepped forward to head up the bastard child of U.S. Intelligence? They don't call us the Judas Branch out of respect. Trust me, he didn't volunteer.

Telephone rings on William's desk. He picks up.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Williams... When did all this happen?

Williams reaches for pen and paper.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

Okay... What's the address?
Alright... Got it. Thanks.

Williams puts down the phone and tears a page off the note pad.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

We have to get to the apartment of that filmmaker.

INT. MACDONALD'S APARTMENT - DAY

A luxury loft. With the finest furniture and modern art. A desk with a computer and paper sits to one side. Classic movie posters on the walls remind us of MacDonald's passion.

Chief Investigator ANGELA STURGESS (30s) is crouched down, facing the open door of the apartment.

Near her is the dead body of MacDonald, lying on his back with a sheet over his head. UNIFORMED OFFICERS and CSI people move about in the b.g..

Williams and Stirling arrive at the apartment. A YOUNG, UNIFORMED POLICE OFFICER steps in front of them to deny them access.

STURGESS

(stands up)

It's alright officer, they're government. They go where they want.

The young cop makes them sign in before they enter. Williams pats the officer on the shoulder as he steps aside to let them through.

WILLIAMS

Tom Stirling, meet Washington's finest detective and best looking badge, Angela Sturgess.

STURGESS

I'm flattered.

WILLIAMS

You should be, I only flirt with the best. Especially when I'm stealing their cases.

STURGESS

You can have it. We just heard another demonstration is planned for tonight, so Spring Valley suicides aren't a high priority.

Speaks to CSI member walking by.

STURGESS (CONT'D)

Get them some gloves. Is he one of yours?

Williams and Stirling are handed gloves and put them on.

WILLIAMS

Not ours. But, we think he worked for the family.

Williams crouches down over the body and pulls back the sheet. He examines the body, particularly the hands and head very closely.

STURGESS

What are you, the mafia?

WILLIAMS

Sometimes, there's not a lot of difference. So, what happened?

STURGESS

Anti depressants with thirty year old scotch as a chaser. We found the bottles in the bathroom.

WILLIAMS

Stripped bare -- shredded the facade. Very symbolic.

STIRLING

And, ran to where he felt safe.

Williams glares back at Stirling then tosses the sheet back.

STURGESS

Your card was on his desk, so I gave you a call.

WILLIAMS

(stands up)

It's appreciated.

STIRLING

How long has he been dead?

Williams is upset but tries not to show it. He moves into the b.g. examining decor, personal effects.

STURGESS

The coroner estimates less then a few hours.

WILLIAMS

Look at this place!

Williams walks over to side-by-side framed, film posters of Citizen Kane and his own Lost Innocence. The graphic showing a man tied to a post with a burning flag at his feet.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

His own personal Xanadu. What were the pills he used?

Sturgess pulls three bottles wrapped in a plastic evidence bag from a pocket.

Williams steps over to take them from her.

WILLIAMS
Imipramaine -- Wellabutrin --
Xanax.

Williams hands the bottles to Stirling.

STIRLING
These were filled two days ago. He
emptied the bottles.

WILLIAMS
(scans the apartment)
Those things combined with alcohol
would have hit him like a train.
But, nothing's knocked over or out of
place.

Williams moves closer to the body.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)
Any letter left behind?

STURGESS
Nothing we could find.

WILLIAMS
(points to desk)
He has a laptop computer -- a desk
full of paper... But, doesn't write
a line?

STIRLING
Most suicides don't.

WILLIAMS
But, this doesn't feel right. It's
out of character.

(beat)
MacDonald was all about image.
The photos in his office -- this
apartment. He was passionate --
theatrical. And, what's more
theatrical than suicide. He would
have staged his final scene. From
the clothes right down to the
scripted letter.

STURGESS
Well, I never studied drama, so it's
all yours. Wrap it up, it belongs to
the feds.

Sturgess moves towards the door. Officers in b.g. start to pack and leave.

WILLIAMS

Have our own people come in. See if the locals missed anything.

STIRLING

Are we looking for evidence or excuses?

WILLIAMS

You have something to say?

STIRLING

I think we pushed him too hard and you're refusing to see it.

WILLIAMS

You mean I pushed him too hard?

STIRLING

I'm saying, you wanted results. Maybe we're looking at the end result. You don't have to hold a gun to a man's head to be responsible for pulling the trigger.

They stare each other down for a second until a cell phone rings from Williams' jacket pocket and breaks the tension. He pulls the phone out of pocket and reads a text.

WILLIAMS

We'll talk about this later. MacDonald's phone taps are in. He made one call from here last night.

EXT. OVERSEAS VILLAGE - DAY

Remnants of a poverty-stricken village in the war torn country of Bhashar. A scene of derelict huts and bombed out buildings.

Adults look for handouts, others wander aimlessly along dirt roads. In contrast, younger children run and play in filthy clothes.

FOSTER (V.O.)

In this part of the world, where almost 90% of the population is unemployed, children are one of the nation's leading commodities.

MONTAGE - BHASHAR - VARIOUS LOCATIONS

A) EXT - DESERT SETTING - DAY - We see young, pre-teen boys armed and marching in makeshift, military gear.

B) EXT - DIRT ROAD - DAY - Dirty and thin young boys under eighteen in prison gang digging trenches being guarded by armed military.

C) EXT - RED LIGHT DISTRICT - NIGHT - The other side of the same world. Young girls, some pre-teen, in the streets applying prostitution. Over this;

FOSTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

War orphans as young as eleven are often sold to the military for food. Others turn to theft and end up in prisons. Many girls turn to prostitution. All in the name of survival.

END OF MONTAGE

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

RICHARD FOSTER (early 60s) stands with a walking stick in front of a small village hospital and speaks directly to the camera.

FOSTER

Hello, I'm Richard Foster, Chairman of The Children of War Foundation. Our foundation is a non profit, organization that aids in the rescue of abandoned and orphaned children in war ravaged areas throughout the world. Our success is a result of hundreds of hours of hard work and dedication from volunteers and concerned people, like you. As our mission in one area comes to a close, I'm forced to say, sadly, that our work will never truly be over.

(MORE)

FOSTER (CONT'D)

We thank you for your generosity,
your prayers, and ask for your
continuing support. Thank You! And,
God Bless.

INT. CHILDREN OF WAR OFFICE - DAY

FLASH! A light blinds the screen. The war ravaged area and homeless children disappear. Foster is now on a monitor standing in front of a blank, chroma-key screen. It was all fake.

We now see Foster and a group of THREE MEN standing in front of editing equipment. In the b.g. is a small GROUP OF PEOPLE at desks conducting office work.

FOSTER

Once we're done with the editing
we'll have a rough cut to look at.

WILLIAMS (O.S.)

Very stirring.

Foster and others turn to see Williams, Stirling and a YOUNG WOMAN off to the side.

YOUNG WOMAN

(upset)

They pushed their way in here and--

FOSTER

What are you doing here?

Foster moves towards Williams.

The woman moves into the b.g. while Stirling stands visible to the side.

WILLIAMS

Following a trail. Which I never
imagined would lead to you.

The three men beside Foster move towards Williams and Stirling. One of them has a slightly open jacket, revealing a shoulder holster.

WILLIAMS

A religious order with armed staff?

Foster waves them down.

FOSTER

You have no business being here.

WILLIAMS

And, I have no desire to be here.
But, since I am, tell me about an
agent named Michael Jacobs.

FOSTER

Never heard of him.

WILLIAMS

Maybe you're more familiar with a
film director named James MacDonald?

FOSTER

Never heard of him.

STIRLING

He was found dead in his apartment
this morning.

FOSTER

Tragic.

STIRLING

We have his phone records. We know
he called this office and spoke to
someone last night.

FOSTER

Don't bait me kid. You're not good
enough at it!

Foster takes a couple of steps towards Stirling.

Williams raises his hand to Foster's chest to stop him in
his tracks.

WILLIAMS

(stares Foster down)

I-C-B agent Tom Stirling this is.
Special Operations, Group Supervisor,
Richard Foster. Richard was always
the one, honest man in the committee.
Not normally so economic with the
truth. But, it has been a long time,
hasn't it?

Stirling tries to shake Foster's hand and gets rejected.

Foster starts circling Williams.

FOSTER

I'm curious, what do they call you now? Snitch -- weasel?

Foster is now behind him.

WILLIAMS

Only to my face. Behind my back it usually worse. And, if I remember right...

Williams turns to look back at Foster.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

The CIA does everything behind people's backs.

FOSTER

You have no idea what you've walked into.

WILLIAMS

I can make a few, safe guesses. What I can't figure out is why.

FOSTER

Get out of this building!

WILLIAMS

Not that I expect you to tell me anyway. You're too much of a company man for that. But, I am curious. What divine intervention makes a thirty year career man trade bullets for bibles?

(looks at cane)

Or, does an aging legend see the light when he discovers his own mortality?

FOSTER

You damn well know which buttons to push, don't you?

WILLIAMS

I'm guessing you do as well? Ones that can erase one man's identity, and create another.

FOSTER

At least I never pushed a witness to suicide!

(MORE)

FOSTER (CONT'D)

(beat)

You think you're the only one with eyes everywhere? You've been walking the high ground for so long you don't want to admit how dirty your own hands are. Because of your own reckless behavior you now have a dead witness and a dead case.

Foster's men start laughing under their breaths.

Stirling begins to feel outnumbered by the agents around him.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

I hand picked you back in the day just to have you turn into this? Didn't have what it takes to climb the ladder, so you crawled into the sewer?

Foster lunges at Williams. The agents and Stirling all reach for their guns. They face off against each other as Williams and Foster realize the situation and break clean.

WILLIAMS

Alright -- hold it -- enough!

Williams makes a motion to Stirling to put his gun away as Foster gets his agents to back down.

FOSTER

You have no friends left in any agency. Get out of here! Now!

The truth packs the hardest punch on Williams.

WILLIAMS

Don't think we're going away quietly.

EXT. CHILDREN OF WAR BUILDING - DAY

Williams & Stirling walk towards their car.

STIRLING

What the hell was that?

WILLIAMS

A difference of opinion.

STIRLING

Have you two always hated each other?

WILLIAMS

Actually, no...

Williams looks across the road to a small park area and sees something familiar as Stirling continues and steps in the driver's seat.

Williams leans on the roof of the car. He pulls out the childhood photo of Jason Michaels from his jacket pocket.

He holds it up to make a comparison. The gazebo, the shrubbery. A perfect match.

WILLIAMS

He was best man at my wedding.

He puts the photo back in his pocket without telling Stirling what's he's discovered and climbs in the car.

END OF ACT 3

ACT 4

INT. ICB BUILDING - WILLIAMS' OFFICE - NIGHT

Williams sits behind his desk. It's after hours and he thinks he's alone in the building.

He reaches in a desk drawer to pull out a book and is surprised by something else. He pulls out a pair of reading glasses. Attached to them is a note reading... "In case you have trouble seeing the obvious -- Janet".

William smiles as he tries them on. The battle of age vs vanity has been lost. He reaches in the drawer again and pulls out a book.

A knock on the door.

WILLIAMS

Yeah.

Stirling comes in with two cups of coffee and hands one over the desk. He sees the new glasses but decides best not to say anything.

WILLIAMS

Poison?

STIRLING

(pulls up chair)

Peace offering. Then again, I made it myself, so the results could be the same. What are you reading?

Williams hands the book across the desk.

STIRLING (CONT'D)

"Tools of The Cold War" by Dr. Richard Shirer.

WILLIAMS

The late, Dr Shirer describes propaganda as the political marriage of psychology and technology.

STIRLING

(from back cover)

"As advancements in communication progresses it is vital to remember it's proven ability to both influence and corrupt the masses.

(MORE)

STIRLING (CONT'D)

It is the responsibility of the individual, as well as government and educators, to recognize and safeguard future generations against the abuse of media, by ideologies based on personal ambition, intolerance or political motivation."

WILLIAMS

That was 1962. Imagine how he'd feel today?

Places book down on desk close to Williams' cell phone.

STIRLING

I wonder if he lived long enough to see the end of the cold war?

WILLIAMS

The cold war never ended, it just became internal. One day we might discover we've been our own worst enemy all along.

STIRLING

We could blame it on flawed intelligence, it's worked in the past.

WILLIAMS

You're too young to be that cynical, or observant.

STIRLING

It must be the corrupting influence in my life.

(pause)

If we did push MacDonald to it, I don't feel very proud of myself right now.

WILLIAMS

Neither do I. But, guilt won't bring him back. Truth is, we may never know what happened in that apartment. But, first we have to deal with something that should have been dealt with a long time ago.

STIRLING

What's that?

WILLIAMS
I think you should step away for
awhile. For your own good.

STIRLING
What? Why--?

WILLIAMS
(over)
Lack of appetite, mood swings, self
loathing, guilt. Maybe a drink or
two during work?

STIRLING
How about coldness and detachment?

WILLIAMS
(tosses down glasses)
Do you know how many people agencies
like ours lose to alcohol and
depression -- even suicide?

STIRLING
You don't know--

WILLIAMS
(over)
I do know, from personal experience.
I am not going to let this job
destroy you--

STIRLING
You have no right --

WILLIAMS
(over)
I have every right! And, the
authority. Right now it's a personal
concern. Make me take it to the top
floor and you could lose everything.
I can give you the name of someone to
talk to. There's no shame in it.

BOLTING out of his chair, Stirling SLAMS the door as he
leaves the office.

Williams leans back on his chair looking tired and beaten.

On his desk we see his cell phone lying next to the book
with it's title clearly visible. The phone screen reads
"Private & Confidential."

Williams picks up the phone and recognizes the number. A puzzled look comes upon his face.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Williams drives up a long, dark stretch of dirt road in a remote area of farm country. A dimly lit, century farmhouse slowly comes into view. Painter's scaffolds, lawnmowers and obvious signs of renovations becomes evident as he draws closer.

Pulling up near another car a darkened figure gets captured in the headlights. He gets out and moves towards him.

WILLIAMS

How many years now have you been
talking about fixing up your family
house?

As Williams moves closer we see Richard Foster slowly coming into view walking with a cane. The mood is subdued but with underlying tension.

FOSTER

Last year we started renovating the
inside. Another four months, I turn
60 and hang up the cloak and dagger.
I'm going to sit on that porch in a
rocking chair and become a lecherous
old man while I'm still young enough
to enjoy it. You see, at my age,
women feel you're safe and the wife
believes you don't think about that
kind of thing anymore.

WILLIAMS

That's why they call it counter
intelligence.

FOSTER

Where's your young partner?

WILLIAMS

On leave.

FOSTER

He's damaged goods you know? Let's
walk a bit -- doctor's orders.

They start to walk the property.

WILLIAMS

Why the truce?

FOSTER

Maybe I'm getting soft in my old age. But, if I can get you to cap this investigation, it's better than the alternative.

WILLIAMS

When a man disappears it raises questions.

Foster reaches in his pocket and conceals a gun in his hand.

FOSTER

True! But, either way I can't let you go any further.

They stop walking. Foster turns and Williams now sees the gun by his side.

WILLIAMS

There's only so many bodies you can bury, Richard.

Williams pulls the childhood photo of Jason Michaels out of his pocket and hands it Foster.

WILLIAMS

How long do you think it'll be before my replacement knocks at your door? Or, even your own people? Who better to sacrifice than an agent at the end of his career.

(beat)

You've done your time. You don't owe these people anymore.

Foster pauses and gathers his thoughts. The gun slides back in his pocket. He crumbles the picture and tosses it to the ground.

FOSTER

Three years ago The Agency set up a network of religious charities as False Front Operations.

FLASHBACK MONTAGE - VARIOUS LOCATIONS

- INT. AIRPORT HANGER - NIGHT - A group of men load wooden crates marked "Medical" and "Religious Literature" onto medical, cargo planes. One of the men is Jason Michaels.

- INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT - A different group assemble and load the contents of the boxes. Packed between bandages and bibles are see the real tools of the trade -- rifles and grenades.

FOSTER (V.O.)

Hiding the wolves among the sheep was an effective way of getting agents into hot zones and gaining the trust of the local population.

END FLASHBACK:

EXT. FARMHOUSE AREA - CONTINUOUS

WILLIAMS

Ethically questionable.

FOSTER

The best plans usually are.

They continue walking again.

WILLIAMS

Why was it so important to get our people in there?

FOSTER

One of our agents intercepted a geology report commissioned by the State. Bhashar was sitting on one of the largest pools of untapped resources in the world. Over 50 billion barrels of oil and trillions of cubic feet in natural gas.

WILLIAMS

And, we wanted it?

FOSTER

Not for the reasons you think. Yavari had ambition but no economic base to play the game. Tapping those reserves would have given him unlimited resources against Middle Eastern targets, and us.

WILLIAMS

Any local resistance we could have organized?

FOSTER

(laughs)

A political coup? Academics inspire dialogue but have no stomach to lead the charge. No, we had to go in. So, we tested the waters. Vague rumors of military build-ups -- leaks to foreign outlets --

WILLIAMS

Operation Mass Appeal.

FOSTER

Effective for MI6 back in the day. Once everyone believed we were acting in their best interest, the country that swore never again led the attack.

WILLIAMS

When did it fall apart?

FOSTER

We committed the ultimate war crime -- arrogance.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

MONTAGE - BASHAR - VARIOUS LOCATIONS

- EXT. CITY STREET - OVERSEAS - DAY - Masked terrorists and civilians square off against U.S. soldiers in street combat as Molotov cocktails are thrown and gunfire exchanged.

- EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - OVERSEAS - DAY - We see an American soldier lying along the side of the road. A foreign soldier kicks him over to ensure he's dead.

- INT. BUILDING - DAY - Jason Michaels and other members of The Children of War Foundation are rounded up violently and beaten by masked, guerrilla factions.

FOSTER (V.O.)

Yavari had fifteen years to turn a nation of peasants into killers. They saw us as invaders, not liberators.

(MORE)

FOSTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Our promise of no boots on the ground
became a year of guerrilla warfare,
suicide squads and roadside
bombings...

END FLASHBACK:

EXT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

WILLIAMS
Where did MacDonald fit into this?

FOSTER
The President wasn't about to
shoulder the responsibility for
leading this country into another
war, he wanted us made accountable.
So, we had to deflect attention
away from the agency. The cold
blooded murder of an innocent
missionary was more effective in
swaying public opinion than the death
of a spy.

WILLIAMS
And, Jason Michaels was born?

FOSTER
The execution footage was seized when
a U.S. battalion raided a guerrilla
encampment. We leaked the original
video then recruited MacDonald to
assemble his film. And, with the
Presidential race in a dead heat it
was easy to get Campbell on board.
When the public finally saw the
uncensored truth, public opinion
turned overnight and the
administration was buried.

WILLIAMS
And, if the President came forward to
reveal any deception --?

FOSTER
He would also have to admit
involvement. Either way he was
finished.

WILLIAMS

One President creates a war,
another steals an election with
black propaganda.

FOSTER

Hard to judge the lesser of two
evils, isn't it?

WILLIAMS

(beat)

The kid in the video. How come his
family hasn't come forward or asked
questions?

FOSTER

Most of his cover story was true.
Both parents dead -- no living
relatives -- bit of a loner...
More damaged goods.

WILLIAMS

And, the others in the Children
of War front?

Both men stop walking and arrive at Foster's car.

FOSTER

Most were discovered, like Jacobs.
The actual missionaries and medical
people were judged equally guilty --
and dealt with the same way.
Forty nine in all.

(beat)

Don't look so shocked. The game is
changing. And, being taken over by
people who play by far less rules
than we do.

Foster pauses to look at the old farmhouse which seems to
give him a brief sense of peace.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

Just be thankful it's not on your
conscience.

Foster climbs into his car.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

Tomorrow morning the President is
calling a press conference announcing
the start of troop withdrawal.

(MORE)

FOSTER (CONT'D)

Stock market numbers are starting to rise, the economy is rebounding. This new President is good for business, no matter how he got the job. And, all that could come crashing down because one man files a report.

(beat)

Sometimes when you step back the bigger picture becomes clearer. It's your call.

Foster shuts the door and starts the car. He drives off and gets swallowed by the dark. Williams stands frozen in stunned silence.

The camera pulls back further and further making Williams appear smaller and smaller until finally, insignificant.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

A group of about fifty are gathered in a dimly lit, sparse warehouse.

A man sits behind a large desk. As the camera moves in we see his face - Alexander Elias.

ELIAS

Peace is built on the ashes of aggression. Very few have the vision to see that. But, the ones in this room do. Every revolution starts with a single action. And, you've done that by coming here tonight.

THE END