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THE FINAL COMMUNION

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. ALONG GEORGIA INTERSTATE 16 - DAY

It's a clear, sunny day, with almost no other traffic. On either side of the highway are fields with cows, horses, pigs, and occasional llamas.

There may be some cotton fields, corn, soy beans, or peanuts, as well.

There are not many buildings, and most of those would be sheds or barns or silos.

INT./EXT. CHEEVER'S SUV - DAY

It's a relatively new car. The back is full of boxes awkwardly taped shut and labeled. "KITCHEN." "BEDROOM." "HOME OFFICE."

SIMON CHEEVERS (38, acts as if he put a red candy in his mouth expecting strawberry and it turned out to be cinnamon) glances at his GPS.

He keeps hitting the "search" function on his radio but all it'll come up with are country music, oldies, or talk radio.

GPS

In one mile, prepare to turn right.

CHEEVERS

(muttering)

Right. Oh, right. Definitely doing that.

There's a sign next to the road, "Hartsell, next exit."

Cheever takes the next exit, driving up the off ramp to the road. There's another sign, "Hartsell." With an arrow pointing right.

GPS

Turn right now.

CHEEVERS

(muttering)

I know. Stupid bitch.

Cheever makes the turn. There's another sign. "Hartsell - 43 miles."

CHEEVERS (CONT'D)
Jesus Fucking Christ. What have I
gotten myself into?

The map on his GPS shows the route he is to take, down a two-lane paved road.

LATER

The GPS screen is now gray, with "NO CONNECTION" appearing in the middle.

CHEEVERS (CONT'D)
(mutter)
Where the fuck is this place?

He's approaching a big sign. "Welcome to Hartsell, Georgia!" He drives past it, not slowing down, even though there's another sign right behind the first that says, "Speed Limit 35 mph."

Blue lights appear in the rear view.

CHEEVERS (CONT'D)
(muttering)
God damn it.

EXT. SHOULDER OF ROAD JUST INSIDE HARTSELL - DAY

He pulls over, getting out his license and insurance card. The cop -- a Matthews County deputy -- parks his car on the shoulder of the road behind him.

CHEEVERS
(muttering)
Please be a stupid, fat redneck.

INTERCUT - CHEEVER'S CAR, AND ROAD SHOULDER

The deputy gets out. He's large, solidly built, but with an impressive pot belly. He's also white. This is Deputy JASON COOK (26, Caucasian, and there is nothing about him Cheevers got wrong).

CHEEVERS (CONT'D)
(muttering)
Thank you, Jesus.

Cook saunters up to the driver's side as Cheevers rolls the window down.

CHEEVERS (CONT'D)
Is there a problem, deputy?

COOK
License and proof-of-insurance,
please.

Cheever hands him the requested documentation.

COOK (CONT'D)
Sir, do you know how fast you were
going?

CHEEVERS
I'm sorry, Deputy (squints at name
plate) Cook. I just drove up from
Lakeland, Florida.

Cook's looking at the license, reading the name on it.

COOK
You were doing 75 in a 35. In this
state that's reckless endangerment.

CHEEVERS
What? Oh, no! Deputy, I'm sorry,
but I'm late. I'm the new pastor at
the Hartsell Communal Church, and
I'm supposed to meet Bishop --

Cook brightens at that.

COOK
Hey, I go to that church! Okay.

He hands Cheever his license and insurance card back.

COOK (CONT'D)
Just remember to slow it down when
you hit the city limits, okay,
Reverend?

CHEEVERS
Sure. Thank you, Deputy. Could you
tell me how to get to --

COOK
Up about a half mile you'll see a
gas station on your left. Turn left
there. Take the next right and
follow that until it turns into a
dirt road. About three miles.
You'll see the sign to the church.

CHEEVERS
Great. Thank you, Deputy.

COOK
See you Sunday!

Cook returns to his car as Cheevers rolls his window back up.

INT./EXT. CHEEVER'S SUV - DAY

Cheevers' hands are shaking as he puts away his license and insurance card as Cook drives past him, honking his horn. Cheevers waves.

CHEEVERS
(muttering)
Holy fucking shit, Simon. Calm
down. Thank you, Jesus.

Cheevers continues to sit there a moment, gathering himself, before he puts the car back in drive and pulls back onto the highway.

EXT. HARTSELL CHURCH OF THE ETERNAL COMMUNION - DAY

The church is a small, brick building with some recent additions built along the back. It's situated next to a dirt road, and the parking area is all grass.

There's a cemetery on the other side of the dirt road.

Behind the church is the parsonage, a small brick house.

There are two vehicles parked at the church. One is a big four wheel drive pickup truck, late model with a large extended cab, but showing dents and dirt -- this is a relatively new truck that works for a living.

The other is a large, high-end Buick or Chrysler, plum-colored, clean, and brand new.

The owners of the vehicles are standing nearby, talking. The pickup truck owner is BILL HORTON (36, tall and solidly built, with a pot belly, he'll get most jokes but he won't laugh at them).

Horton is dressed for work, in coveralls, flannel shirt, work boots, and a baseball cap.

Horton's youngest son, DALTON (5, dressed like his dad) is running around nearby with a toy airplane.

The owner of the plum-colored car is Bishop PAUL CLEMENT (66, tall and gaunt, likes to drive his giant car in the fast lane at 45 mph).

Clement is wearing a tailored suit, a couple of expensive if not overly showy rings, and an expensive but not gaudy watch.

The two men are talking as Cheevers drives up.

Cheevers parks next to Clement's car and starts getting out as Clement and Horton come over.

CLEMENT

Simon! Made it in one piece, I see!

Cheevers turns to shake hands with Clement. Clement hugs him and kisses his cheek before releasing him.

CHEEVERS

Yep! It wasn't easy, though. The GPS isn't very useful.

CLEMENT

Yeah. No cell service and whatnot around here.

Horton approaches, with Dalton cowering behind him shyly.

CLEMENT (CONT'D)

Oh, Simon. This is Bill Horton. He's got the big farm just up the road. He's your head deacon.

Horton extends a hand and Cheevers shakes it.

CHEEVERS

Pleased to meet you, sir.

HORTON

I heard some good things about you, Rev. Cheevers. Looking forward to hearing you preach.

CHEEVERS

Glad to hear it.

Dalton is hiding behind his father's legs, peeking around to get a look at Cheevers.

HORTON

Yeah, since Rev. Billingslea left we've been taking turns preaching, until Bishop Clement decided on who was going to be our next pastor. It was my turn this Sunday, so I'm glad to see you! The Lord gave us all gifts, but he didn't give me the gift of preaching.

Cheever and Clement chuckle.

CHEEVERS
(looking at Dalton)
And who is this young man?

HORTON
Oh, this is my youngest boy.
Dalton, say hey to Rev. Cheever.

DALTON
Hey, Rev. Cheever.

Embarrassed, the boy hides back behind his father and Cheever laughs.

CHEEVERS
Well, hello there.

HORTON
He's shy. Dalton, you need to be more confident. Step up and shake the man's hand, like daddy did.

CLEMENT
If it's all right with you, Mr. Horton, I'd like to introduce Simon to his new church.

HORTON
Dalton. You heard me.

Dalton reluctantly steps forward, and extends a hand. Cheever takes it and shakes it.

DALTON
Pleased to meet you.

CHEEVERS
Pleased to meet you, too.

DALTON
Daddy, did I do okay?

HORTON
You did fine. Now get in the truck.
We're going home in a minute.

Dalton runs to the truck, opening the passenger's side door.

HORTON (CONT'D)
Sorry. We're trying to help him get over being so shy. Don't know where he gets that from.

CHEEVERS
That's quite all right, Mr. Horton.

CLEMENT
(to Cheevers)
Let me show you the inside.

Clement heads towards the church doors.

CHEEVERS
(to Horton)
Well, it was nice to meet you. I'll
be seeing you Sunday.

Clement has reached the church doors and is standing there, watching silently.

HORTON
Maybe sooner. We're planning on
having a "Meet the new preacher"
barbecue here tomorrow night.
Everybody should be here.

CHEEVERS
I'm looking forward to it!

The truck horn starts blowing, Dalton playing with it.

HORTON
Okay, I reckon that's my cue to hit
the road. See you soon!

Horton starts walking towards the truck, exiting.

HORTON (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Dalt, I done told you about playing
with that horn!

The horn blares a couple more times.

Cheevers half jogs to join Clement. When he gets there
Clement opens the doors.

CHEEVERS
They're not locked?

CLEMENT
No need.

INT. HARTSELL CHURCH OF THE ETERNAL COMMUNION - DAY

The interior is dark, with several rows of pews. There are a couple of stained glass windows, and on the wall in the apse at the very back is a crucifix. The crucifix is set up over the baptismal fount, behind the choir loft.

There's a large print of da Vinci's The Last Supper on the wall to one side.

On one side of the choir area is a piano. On the other is an aging electric organ.

To one side of the podium is an altar with a pair of empty collection plates sitting on top.

There are a couple of big, throne-like chairs behind the podium, on either side of it.

On one wall is a board containing the numbers from the last service, using old and stained lettering: SUNDAY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE: 14, STUDIED LESSON: 12, COLLECTION LAST SUNDAY: \$34.17.

CLEMENT

This is it.

CHEEVERS

Wow.

CLEMENT

I know, not very impressive. Things have fallen off a bit.

CHEEVERS

Looks like.

CLEMENT

This is the oldest congregation in our church. It's existed for over two hundred years, in one form or another.

CHEEVERS

Yeah, I knew that.

CLEMENT

They still practice rituals here that haven't been part of our dogma for over a hundred years. An older, purer form of our faith.

CHEEVERS

I'm not surprised.

CLEMENT

I won't deny that this church is struggling. We're having to commit resources here that we'd rather use elsewhere.

CHEEVERS

I understand.

CLEMENT

Something else you need to understand. You remember why you're here, right?

CHEEVERS

Uh, yes. I do.

CLEMENT

Good. Anything else happens like Lakeland, there will be more serious repercussions. Understand?

CHEEVERS

I understand. I'm planning on focusing on my mission, Bishop Clement. Nothing else.

CLEMENT

Good. Getting you out of that mess cost us a lot of ... resources. We may not be able to do it again. But if you behave yourself here I can see great things in your future. Your near future.

CHEEVERS

Really?

CLEMENT

I'm thinking about retiring, Simon. And I'll have a great deal of influence over who my successor will be.

CHEEVERS

Ah. Interesting.

CLEMENT

So, stay on the straight and narrow, get those numbers on the board to go in the right direction, and you may find yourself in a very good place in a couple of years.

(MORE)

CLEMENT (CONT'D)

So, let me show you the rest of the church, and then I'll show you the parsonage out back.

EXT. HARTSELL CHURCH OF THE ETERNAL COMMUNION PARSONAGE - DAY

It's a small brick house with a tiny lawn and garden.

The door is open Cheevers and Clement are exiting.

CLEMENT

Sorry it's so small.

CHEEVERS

It's big enough for me.

They walk back towards the church.

CLEMENT

You've got movers bringing your belongings?

CHEEVERS

Yeah. They should be here any time. I got some stuff in my car, too.

CLEMENT

Okay. Well, I'll let you get to it.

Clement extends a hand and Cheevers shakes it. They embrace again, Clement kissing Cheevers's cheek before releasing him.

CLEMENT (CONT'D)

Don't hesitate to call if you need anything, Simon.

CHEEVERS

Thank you. I will.

CLEMENT

Good.

Clement leaves, Cheevers watching him go.

INT. HARTSELL CHURCH OF THE ETERNAL COMMUNION PARSONAGE DEN - DAY

The den is next to the kitchen, a bar with a couple of stools separating them.

Any furniture is cheap and old.

Cheever enters through the open door, carrying the big box with "HOME OFFICE" written on it.

The blinds on the window are open and his car can be seen outside, the hatch open.

Cheever puts the box down on the floor against a far wall and goes back to shut the door before returning to the box.

He tears into it eagerly and a little desperately, finding a metal box for holding files inside.

He takes his keyring out of his pocket and uses a tiny key to unlock the box.

There are some manila folders with papers in them, and a few large envelopes. He sorts through these, finally taking one out and opening the flap -- it wasn't sealed.

Inside the large envelope are several smaller envelopes, standard mailing size. All of these are closed by two paper clips, one on each end, instead of being sealed using the glue on the flap.

Each envelope has a boy's name handwritten on it.

He takes an envelop out with "GLENN" is written on it. He carefully removes the paper clips and opens it.

Inside is hair, like the shavings left over from a hair cut. He sniffs it, then reaches inside and fondles it, closing his eyes and smiling.

There's the sound of a truck pulling up outside and he quickly closes the envelope, replaces the paper clips, puts it back in the box, and puts the box back in the larger box.

Through the window a moving van can be seen backing up to the front door. Cheever puts the larger box on the floor against a wall, touching it gently before going to the front door.

EXT. LAKELAND FLORIDA POLICE DEPARTMENT HQ - DAY

It's a low, utilitarian-looking building, with a lot of squad cars in the parking lot, along with some unmarked cars and a few vans.

INT. LAKELAND FL PD SQUAD-ROOM - DAY

It's a big room, cluttered with desks and filing cabinets and boxes. The walls need to be painted. The lieutenant's office, with closed blinds across the windows, is in the back.

There are several desks, some occupied with detectives taking statements from civilians or uniformed officers, talking on the phone, or working on their computers. There's the quiet buzz of conversation and phones ringing.

At one desk sits Detective PRESTON HOLMES (35, African-American, exhausted but doesn't know it.) His suit's jacket hangs from the back of his chair.

He's staring intently at his computer monitor.

He's reading an article from the online version of a newspaper, MACON NEWS AND WEATHER. The headline is, "HARTSELL CHURCH OF THE ETERNAL COMMUNION WELCOMES THEIR NEW PASTOR!"

The article has a headshot of Simon Cheevers. Holmes is staring at that picture.

The Lieutenant's office opens and Lieutenant DERRICK JACKSON (40, African American) sticks his head out.

JACKSON
Holmes! My office!

Holmes quickly closes his browser, after glancing back at the lieutenant to see if Jackson had seen him, but Jackson has already retreated back into his office, leaving the door ajar.

Holmes grabs his jacket, slipping into it as he exits towards Jackson's office.

INT. LAKELAND PD, LT. JACKSON'S OFFICE - DAY

The office is small, taken up mostly by Jackson's old steel desk. There are a couple of equally old file cabinets. There are a few awards and photos on the wall.

Jackson's desk contains a few small photos of his family but is otherwise bare, except for his desktop computer off to one side.

Jackson is sitting in his chair as Holmes enters.

JACKSON
Come in. And close the door.

Holmes does as he's told, settling into one of the visitor's chairs.

HOLMES
What's up, Lieu?

JACKSON

I just got off the phone with
Jacksonville PD. Glenn Beltrane
committed suicide last night.

HOLMES

Oh, my God.

JACKSON

He used a towel for a ligature
strangulation.

HOLMES

Has anybody told him yet?

He emphasizes the "him" with a bit of contempt.

JACKSON

I doubt it. Once his mother reached
an agreement with the church
everything was sealed and the
church lost interest, so I doubt
they're keeping up with him.

HOLMES

Has anybody talked to her yet?
Maybe now she'll be willing to --

JACKSON

No. We're going to leave the poor
woman alone.

HOLMES

The Medical Examiner can check --

JACKSON

Yes. I requested that as part of
the autopsy. But even if he finds
something it won't prove that he
was the one who did it. I doubt
there's any DNA evidence left after
all this time. He did leave a note.

HOLMES

Did it --

JACKSON

I was told it didn't contain
anything new or useful as far as
the case goes. But they'll be
scanning it and emailing it to you,
so you can see for yourself.

HOLMES

I want to tell this prick. I want to hit him with this, point blank.

JACKSON

I knew you would, Preston. Remember what the Captain and the DA told you.

HOLMES

I know there are others. Other boys that got swept under the rug by that damned church. We just need to find them.

JACKSON

Without a complaint it would be considered harassment.

HOLMES

I don't fucking care. Lieu, let me go tell him.

JACKSON

I don't even know where he is.

HOLMES

I do. They moved him to this little town in Georgia.

JACKSON

That's out of our jurisdiction.

HOLMES

Just let me go tell him. Let me see his reaction.

Jackson looks away, staring at the windows to the outside, thinking. Then he turns back to face Holmes.

JACKSON

No. You've got actual cases to work, Holmes.

HOLMES

Lieu, I --

JACKSON

Dismissed.

Disappointed, Holmes gets up and exits. Jackson turns to stare out of the window again.

INT. LAKELAND FL PD SQUAD-ROOM - DAY

Holmes goes back to his desk, sits down, and logs back onto his computer.

He opens his browser and signs onto the Lakeland PD personnel website and opens a form that has "REQUEST FOR TIME OFF" across the top.

EXT. HARTSELL CHURCH OF THE ETERNAL COMMUNION RECEPTION HALL - NIGHT

There are a couple of rows of tables draped with bed sheets holding dishes, paper plates, cups, ice chests, and gallon jugs of tea.

There are plates of potato salad, some hamburger and hot dog buns, along with condiments.

A small table off to one side holds the desserts, mostly cakes with a couple of pies, along with paper plates.

Many of the locals are there, most of them dressed casually. All of them are white. A small portable CD player is playing gospel music.

There are several grills set up to one side, each cooking something different -- chicken halves, hamburgers, hot dogs, and some steaks.

Bill Horton is overseeing the chicken as Cheevers approaches.

HORTON
Hey, Reverend!

CHEEVERS
Hey, Bill. What have you got there?

HORTON
What we have here are some nice, fresh chickens. These was running around in Al's yard until this morning. His wife spent most of the day cleaning them.

CHEEVERS
I see.

HORTON
Nothing like fresh killed meat. I reckon you never had anything like that before.

CHEEVERS

No, I can't say that I have.

HORTON

I'll be spreading my own home-made
sauce on them once they get closer
to done.

Horton chuckles as he continues his grilling. Dalton runs up
to Cheevers, his hand extended, standing straight.

DALTON

Pleased to meet you.

Cheever takes the hand and shakes it.

CHEEVERS

Pleased to meet you, too.

DALTON

Daddy! Did you see me?

Horton hasn't turned around.

HORTON

Sure did, son. Good job!

Dalton has noticed that his father hasn't even turned.
Dalton's shoulders sag and he turns and walks away.

LATER

Cheever is standing next to a table that now holds the
cooked meat. The others there are gathered around him,
leaving a big circle with him at its head.

CHEEVERS

I just wanted to thank all of you
for this meal. I've been smelling
it for a while and I can't wait to
finally eat some of it!

Chuckles from those assembled.

CHEEVERS (CONT'D)

I've met some of you already, and
I'm looking forward to meeting the
rest of you in the coming days.
Now, please bow your heads while I
ask the blessing.

They all bow their heads. Cheever does, too, but looks up
and glances around as he speaks, eyeing the boys assembled
there.

CHEEVERS (CONT'D)

Father, we ask that you bless this food that we are about to receive, that we eat and drink in remembrance of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Several of the others mutter "AMEN" as well.

HORTON

All right, y'all, let's eat!

LATER

Cheever is sitting at the table, a plate with barbecued chicken and potato salad in front of him, a plastic cup with sweet tea next to him.

NICHOLE HART (30, heavy-set, losing the battle to ignore the sounds of her biological clock, ticking away) sits across the table from him.

NICHOLE

Rev. Cheever! Hello!

CHEEVERS

Hi!

NICHOLE

I'm Nichole. Nichole Hart. I'm the church's secretary. At least I hope I still am. If you decide to keep me.

CHEEVERS

Oh, I'm sure you're fine.

NICHOLE

I see you got some of Bill's chicken. You're going to love his sauce. His granddaddy came up with it. (whispering) Some say he used to make it with moonshine.

Cheever chuckles.

CHEEVERS

Sounds delightful.

Horton settles next to Cheever, his own plate loaded with food. Next to him is Dalton, and next to Dalton is Horton's wife, DONNA (34, white, heavy-set).

NICHOLE

I was just telling Rev. Cheevers
about your granddaddy's sauce,
Bill.

HORTON

I make it just like he did.

NICHOLE

Moonshine, too?

HORTON

Now, that's just a story, Nicki.

Horton winks at Cheevers as he says it.

HORTON (CONT'D)

Nicki, I think Cal's having a
problem.

NICHOLE

What?

She turns to see her nephew, CALVIN RANIER (10), at the table with the food, trying to pick up a full plate and a cup of tea at the same time. The plate is threatening to fall apart under the load he's dished up onto it.

NICHOLE (CONT'D)

I swear!

She gets up to go over to help. Horton leans over to mutter to Cheevers.

HORTON

Calvin's her nephew. Nicki ain't
married. And you're a widower,
right?

CHEEVERS

Yeah. Eight years.

HORTON

Maybe it's time you took a new
bride, Preacher. Pardon me for
speaking out of turn.

CHEEVERS

That's quite all right.

HORTON

I think she's already got her eye
on you. Just letting you know.

(MORE)

HORTON (CONT'D)

She ain't had a man since she broke up with that fellow she was seeing from Dublin, a few months back.

CHEEVERS

Thanks for telling me.

Nichole returns, carrying Calvin's plate and putting it next to hers. Calvin is carrying his plastic cup of tea.

Cheever's attention immediately fixates on Calvin, as the boy digs into his food.

HORTON

So, how are you settling in?

CHEEVERS

I got most of the unpacking done. Still get a few things to do.

HORTON

You ain't one of them Internet people, are you?

CHEEVERS

I'm sorry, I don't know what you mean.

HORTON

One of them people that spends all their time on that Internet. Looking at pornography. Or hobnobbing with atheists and such as that.

CHEEVERS

Oh, no. I find the Internet useful when I was researching sermons and stuff like that, but I don't spend all that much time on it.

HORTON

Well, there's a really good library in Macon, about forty miles away, if you need to research. We don't let them cable companies lay their cables here, just like we don't let them cell phone companies put their towers in our fields. Just because the rest of the world is going to hell, don't mean we have to go with it.

NICHOLE

Bill's been to college. He knows.

CHEEVERS

College?

HORTON

University of Georgia. I got a bachelor's degree in Agriculture. Minor in business. I learned a lot of useful stuff there, but I also learned a lot that I had to unlearn. Like evolution. Garbage like that.

CHEEVERS

Oh, yes. I understand.

Cheever is still staring at young Calvin, who is oblivious, shoveling his food into his mouth.

HORTON

How's the chicken?

Cheever pinches off some of the meat from his chicken and pops it into his mouth. He smiles.

CHEEVERS

Wow. Yeah, that's really good.

He takes a gulp of his tea and struggles with not making a face.

HORTON

That tea sweet enough for you? It's my wife's.

CHEEVERS

Oh, yes. It's plenty sweet enough. Thank you.

HORTON

I reckon we don't do things quite like they do down in Florida.

CHEEVERS

No, but that's a good thing, Bill.

HORTON

Good.

There's a buzz of conversation as others settle down around them to eat. Cheever finally catches Calvin's eye.

The boy smiles and looks away, and Cheevers finally breaks out into a full-blown grin.

INT. HARTSELL CHURCH OF THE ETERNAL COMMUNION CLASSROOM - DAY

It's a small room with a table and a few chairs, used for Sunday School. There are children's drawings on the walls of various religious themes.

Hymns being played on the piano can be heard from outside as services are about to begin. There's a quiet buzz of conversation as the congregants settle into the pews.

There's a small print of da Vinci's The Last Supper on the wall here, too.

On the table is a small, fancy dish with a single communion wafer. Next to it is a tiny cup with purple fluid in it -- grape juice.

Cheevers, wearing a modest suit, is standing next to the table. He's holding a large Bible.

Horton is there. There are the other two Deacons, FRED SIMMONS (40, Caucasian, heavy-set) and ALFRED HODGES (35, Caucasian, heavy-set). All of them are wearing suits.

The three Deacons are standing around Cheevers.

HORTON

Simon Cheevers, do you accept the responsibilities and honor of becoming the Christ's representative for the Hartsell Church of the Eternal Communion?

CHEEVERS

I do.

Simmons picks up the dish with the wafer and hands it to Horton. Cheevers closes his eyes and leans his head back slightly.

HORTON

Do you accept the body of Christ, to become one with Him and become Him, to deliver His message to His people?

CHEEVERS

I do.

Cheever opens his mouth and sticks out his tongue slightly and Horton places the wafer there. Cheever eats it quickly.

Simmons hands Horton the tiny cup.

HORTON

This is the blood of Christ,
through which our sins are purged.
Do you accept this, to become one
with Him and become Him as you
minister to and guide His church?

CHEEVERS

I do.

Cheever extends a hand and Horton gives him the cup. Cheever drinks the juice down, then hands it to Simmons, who puts it on the table.

HORTON

Welcome, Rev. Cheever.

The three Deacons pat Cheever on the back.

HORTON (CONT'D)

Okay, let's hear your first sermon
to your new church home.

INT. HARTSELL CHURCH OF THE ETERNAL COMMUNION - DAY

The pews are mostly full, people there to see the new preacher in action.

Cheever enters from the door to one side, with the three Deacons following. He goes up to sit in one of the chairs behind the podium while the Deacons join their families in the pews.

There are about ten people in the choir loft behind Cheever wearing robes. Most of them were at the reception the night before.

Jason Cook, in a suit, is sitting in a pew.

Everyone in the building is white.

Sitting together on the front pew are four boys, from eight to twelve years old, wearing ornate robes. One is Calvin.

The choir begins a hymn, the PIANIST (70, female) playing along, as Cheever looks over the crowd.

The choir director, JIMMY FIELDING (40) stands in front of the choir, conducting them.

The choir finishes and sits, Fielding coming over to sit in the other chair behind the podium.

Cheever gets up, carrying the Bible to the podium, putting it down and opening it to the place he had bookmarked.

CHEEVERS

Happy Sunday morning, everyone. And for me it's an especially happy Sunday morning. Because this is the day I begin a new life with my new church family. I've already met many of you, and I'm looking forward to meeting the rest of you in the coming weeks. It is so good to be here, in a community where the word of God is still held in such reverence. Where people believe what the Bible actually says. Since this is a new beginning for me, and for you, I thought we should start at the beginning. Genesis. Chapter one. Verse one. "In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth." No room for any doubt, is there? Nothing ambiguous. Words that mean what they say. Nothing more, nothing less.

There are a few "AMENS" from those assembled. Horton, sitting with Donna, along with a fidgety Dalton.

Horton is smiling, liking what he's hearing so far.

CHEEVERS (CONT'D)

In fact, if you look throughout this book, there is no room for argument anywhere. It's only when you decide to inject false ideas, incorrect and invalid teaching, where you start running into trouble. That's where you get Evolution. Catholicism. Abortion. Homosexuality. People are so troubled. So full of doubts. Well, just pick up one of these (picks up his Bible to show the crowd). Spends some time with it. Read it. Your questions will be answered and your doubts will be removed.

A few more scattered "Amens" from those in attendance.

MONTAGE - CHEEVERS IN ACTION Cheevers delivering the hellfire-and-brimstone, with dramatic hand gestures, working up a sweat. The congregation looks on approvingly, especially Horton.

LATER

CHEEVERS (CONT'D)
 (praying)
 ... for thine art the kingdom, the
 power and the glory, forever and
 ever. Amen.

The pianist begins playing.

Those assembled in the pews stand as the four boys on the front row get up and get the collection plates.

Two boys go to one side of the church, the other two go to the other side, each boy taking one end. One boy hands the collection plate to the person sitting at that end.

As they pass the plate down, tossing checks and cash into it, Cheevers continues to preach.

CHEEVERS (CONT'D)
 Giving up riches here builds up
 riches in Heaven. Help your
 brothers and sisters in need. Help
 us minister to the sick, to those
 imprisoned, to the hungry and the
 homeless.

When the collection plates reach the end of a pew the last person hands it to one of the boys, who moves to the next pew.

CHEEVERS (CONT'D)
 Dig deep. Think of your brothers
 and sisters in need. Think of the
 suffering you can help. Think of
 how we can bring the Word to those
 who have never heard it before.

After the plates have made it down each pew the boys bring them up to the front and put them back on the altar. They remain standing there, Cheevers coming down to stand across from them.

CHEEVERS (CONT'D)
 Let us pray.

The pianist stops playing. All of the people bow their heads and close their eyes.

CHEEVERS (CONT'D)

Our Father, help us to take this offering, to use it as you would have us use it, to further your will. Amen.

The four boys exit, Cheevers following young Calvin with his eyes.

CHEEVERS (CONT'D)

"And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them; and they made ready the passover. And, in the evening, he cometh with the twelve."

The boys re-enter, two carrying a tray with communion wafers, the other two carrying a tray with tiny plastic cups with a little grape juice in each.

They place the trays on the altar, then turn to face the assembly.

CHEEVERS (CONT'D)

"And as they did eat, Jesus took the bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. Come, now, to eat and drink the body and the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ."

The pianist starts playing again.

Beginning with the first pews those assembled come to kneel at the altar, the boys holding the plates of wafers, then the plates with the cups.

Most take a wafer and eat it, then a cup and drink it, though some refuse.

Afterwards they rise and go back to the pews, sitting this time while those behind them go to kneel at the altar.

Calvin glances back at him, seeking his approval, and Cheevers smiles and winks at him.

EXT. HARTSELL CHURCH OF THE ETERNAL COMMUNION - DAY

The congregation is leaving. Cheevers is standing at the open doors, greeting everyone with a handshake and a few words.

Calvin, no longer wearing the robes, emerges with his parents LORETTA (28) and DAVID (30).

DAVID

Good sermon, Rev. Cheevers.

CHEEVERS

Thank you.

LORETTA

Yes, I could almost see Heaven open up while you spoke.

CHEEVERS

Well, thank you. You're Calvin's parents?

LORETTA

Yes. I'm Loretta, and this is my husband, David.

CHEEVERS

Pleased to meet you both. I wanted ask if you would be interested in young Calvin participating in a special educational program that I'm planning to start. It's something I've done before and most kids find it really interesting.

DAVID

Sure. What kind of education?

CHEEVERS

Biblical. An in-depth study of the Word. Come by to see me tomorrow if you have time and I'll tell you all about it.

DAVID

Is this going to cost us anything?

CHEEVERS

Oh, no.

DAVID

Okay. Sounds good. We'll come by tomorrow.

CHEEVERS
Good. I'll see you then!

He musses Calvin's hair as they leave. He greets the next person in line but he keeps glancing at the retreating figure of young Calvin.

EXT. WAFFLE BARN RESTAURANT - DAY

It's a prefab structure on the outskirts of Hartsell, with lots of windows but not much else of significance. There are a few cars in the parking lot -- two of them are Matthews County Sheriff's Department cars.

Cheever drives up and parks, getting out and going inside.

Holmes drives up and parks a few spaces away, having been following Cheever. He sits in his car, watching Cheever as Cheever goes inside and settles in a booth, alone.

Holmes gets out of the car and heads for the door.

INT. WAFFLE BARN RESTAURANT - DAY

The place is only moderately busy. One booth has Deputy Cook along with three more deputies, all of them white and in uniform, having coffee and eating.

The deputies are situated so that Cheever has his back to them.

The SERVER (20, female, Caucasian) had just left a menu with Cheever when Holmes enters and approaches, settling down across from him.

HOLMES
Good morning, Rev. Cheever.

CHEEVERS
Detective. Funny meeting you here.

HOLMES
Yeah. Such an odd coincidence,
isn't it?

CHEEVERS
What brings you to Hartsell?

HOLMES
Just passing through. I thought I'd stop and get some coffee. Maybe a waffle or two.

The SERVER comes by with a coffee mug.

SERVER
(to Holmes)
Oh, sorry. You want some coffee?

HOLMES
Sure.

SERVER

HOLMES
Yeah. I think --

CHEEVERS
He won't be staying.

HOLMES
Just the coffee.

SURE THING. YOU KNOW WHAT YOU WANT,
PREACHER? THE USUAL?

CHEEVERS

SERVER

The Server takes the menu from Cheevers and leaves. Cheevers and Holmes have a quiet conversation.

HOLMES
"The usual." Looks like you're
making yourself at home.

CHEEVERS

HOLMES

CHEEVERS
Why are you here? I know it's not
for the waffles.

HOLMES
I got some bad news for you. It's
about Glenn Beltrane.

CHEEVERS

HOLMES

He's dead. He killed himself.

CHEEVERS

Oh, my God.

HOLMES

Does that upset you?

CHEEVERS

Of course it upsets me! What do you think I am?

HOLMES

You know what I think you are.

CHEEVERS

He was such a troubled young man. Such a tragic end to a tragic life.

HOLMES

You already have the next one all picked out, don't you? Maybe you're already grooming him, getting him ready.

CHEEVERS

I'm not sure what you mean.

HOLMES

A lot can be determined by an autopsy, you know. Not just cause of death. Like in Glenn's case, he had calluses. You know what that means?

CHEEVERS

I'm sorry, Detective, but I don't.

HOLMES

I bet you do. Fourteen years old, and he'd had anal sex so often that he had calluses. In his rectum.

CHEEVERS

Like I said. Troubled. I'll pray for him and his mother.

HOLMES

I'd never even heard of this so-called church of yours until a couple of years ago. And you got millions of members, all over the world.

CHEEVERS

We aren't here to advance ourselves
in this world.

HOLMES

I see where your Council of Bishops
is under investigation by several
Federal agencies for how they're
using the money they collect.

CHEEVERS

Our Bishops spend that money under
the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

HORTON

According to the Justice Department
the Holy Spirit guides your Bishops
towards purchasing high-end cars
and expensive vacations.

CHEEVERS

Secular authorities never
understand matters of the spirit.
There's a purpose behind all of it.

HOLMES

I did some checking on you, too.
This tragic story you tell people,
about your poor dead wife. Cancer,
right?

CHEEVERS

Right.

HOLMES

I can't find any record anywhere of
you ever being married.

CHEEVERS

What can I say? Some places don't
keep records as well as others.

HOLMES

Where were you married? What state?

CHEEVERS

Rhode Island, I think? Wait.
Massachusetts. No. Wait. It was
when we were in Mexico. We took a
trip right after I got out of
seminary.

HOLMES

I think I know why that story is so important to you. I figured it out. Other than the obvious sympathy it makes people feel for you, I mean.

The Server comes by with Cheevers's order of waffles and eggs and bacon. The Server puts a cup of coffee on the table in front of Holmes.

Back behind Cheevers, Deputy Cook is watching the conversation while his companions laugh and joke with each other.

SERVER

Just give me a holler if you need anything else.

The server leaves and Holmes leans forward, lowering his voice even more.

HOLMES

It gives you an excuse not to date. You can say you're still grieving over your poor, dead wife. So nobody will ever know.

CHEEVERS

Know what?

HOLMES

That you can't get it up with a real, grown woman.

CHEEVERS

That's one of the most disgusting things anyone has ever said to me.

HOLMES

It's true, isn't it? You probably can't even get aroused with anyone over a certain age, can you? Male or female. Because you are a pedophile.

CHEEVERS

This is inappropriate, Detective. And ungodly.

HOLMES

"Ungodly?" Like what you've been doing for years with all those boys? How many have there been, Reverend? Or do you keep count?

CHEEVERS

I'm sorry, Detective, but you are
being rude and disgusting.

Cook is now standing next to the booth, fingers hooked on his belt, glowering down at Holmes.

COOK

Preacher Cheevers, is this ...
person ... bothering you?

Holmes glances up at Cook. He takes out his badge.

HOLMES

Detective Preston Holmes, Lakeland
PD, Deputy.

COOK

You're a little out of your
jurisdiction, ain't you?

HOLMES

Just having a friendly chat with
the pastor, here.

COOK

It don't look so friendly to me.
Maybe you need to move it along.
Detective.

Holmes sighs, getting up, holding his hands out.

HOLMES

Okay, okay. I'm going. No harm
done.

He slides past Cook, who pointedly does not move out of the way. Holmes turns back to Cheevers.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

The coffee's on you, Reverend.

Holmes exits, under the hostile gaze of Cook.

COOK

(to Cheevers)

He bothers you again, you just let
me know. We can put a stop to it.

CHEEVERS

That's good to know, Deputy. Thank
you.

COOK

You enjoy your meal, Rev. Cheevers.

CHEEVERS

Thank you, Jason.

Cook goes back to rejoin his companions. Cheevers turns and sees through the window Holmes getting into his car outside.

EXT. WAFFLE BARN RESTAURANT - DAY

Holmes gets into his car, looks up to see Cheevers watching him through the window. Cheevers is smirking and raises his coffee mug in a silent toast in Holmes direction.

HOLMES

(whispering)

You motherfucker.

He gets into his car, closing the door, starting it, and then leaving, peeling out a little bit as he drives away.

INT. HARTSELL CHURCH OF THE ETERNAL COMMUNION PARSONAGE DEN - DAY

There are a few pictures on the walls now -- mostly paintings of scenes from the life of Jesus. On another wall, the only picture there, is a large print of The Last Supper

There's an old couch and a couple of chairs, a coffee table, and a pair of end-tables. A cheap bookshelf stands against one wall, with some church texts, a large Bible, and a few old novels.

Cheevers is sitting on the couch, a sketchbook open on his lap. He's using a pencil to draw sketches of Calvin. He's doing a good job, even though he's working from memory.

The doorbell rings and he closes the sketchbook on the pencil and slips it quickly under the couch where it can't be seen before getting up to answer it.

It's Loretta and David, with Calvin in tow. Loretta is holding a plastic cake carrier with a caramel layer cake.

CHEEVERS

Hi! Good to see you!

LORETTA

I hope it's not a bad time.

CHEEVERS
Oh, no. Come on in.

They enter, glancing around at the furnishings.

DAVID
I love what you've done with the
place.

CHEEVERS
Thank you.

Loretta hands him the cake carrier.

LORETTA
I made this for you. I hope you
like caramel cake!

CHEEVERS
I love it. Thank you.

He puts the cake on the bar nearby.

CHEEVERS (CONT'D)
Calvin, if you go back in the room
at the end of the hall I think
you'll find all kinds of stuff a
boy your age would like.

CALVIN
Cool!

Calvin runs up the hall.

LORETTA
Don't you break anything!

CALVIN (O.S.)
I won't!

CHEEVERS
Why don't we all sit down so we can
talk.

Loretta and David settle onto the couch while Cheevers sits in one of the chairs.

DAVID
You said something about giving
Calvin an in-depth study of the
Word.

CHEEVERS

Yes. Right. Well, it's a little more than that. More urgent.

LORETTA

What is it? I think you're scaring me a little bit.

CHEEVERS

I'm sorry. That's not my intent, Loretta. It's just that ... I've been around. I've seen the world that's out there. There are threats that we don't talk about. That's why I wanted to have you come here instead of meeting me in my office at the church.

DAVID

What kind of threats?

CHEEVERS

Demonic. We all know how active Satan is in the world today. I'm here to tell you, though, that, as bad as you may think it is, it's worse. Much worse.

LORETTA

My God.

CHEEVERS

Calvin is a special boy. I can sense it, as an anointed man of God. He has powerful spiritual gifts that he is growing into.

DAVID

I always suspected that.

LORETTA

He's always been special. Even if the other kids and his teachers think he's slow.

CHEEVERS

He's not slow. Oh, no. He's just got angels whispering in his ears.

LORETTA

My goodness!

CHEEVERS

Yes. He's born to be a powerful warrior for God. But that also means he'll be in danger. Great danger. Satan wants his soul. He wants that power for himself.

DAVID

Can you help?

CHEEVERS

Yes, I can. I can give him the tools he'll need to resist.

DAVID

So, you can save him?

CHEEVERS

The only person who can save Calvin is Calvin, David. But I can take him through the Word. A deep dive through the lessons God has given us. It's like giving him a suit of armor to fend off Satanic attacks.

LORETTA

And that'll protect him?

CHEEVERS

If he decides to use it. That's the danger. He may not want to fend off Satan's advances. He may give in.

LORETTA

He would never do that. I'm raising him right.

CHEEVERS

Don't underestimate Satan's wiles. He's clever. He's a master of lies, as you well know.

DAVID

You can train him, though, right?

CHEEVERS

Yes, I can. I'm warning you, though, that he should have been going through training for a couple of years by now. He can catch up, but it'll be pretty intense.

LORETTA

Please, do whatever you have to do,
Rev. Cheevers!

CHEEVERS

David, are you on-board with this?

DAVID

This training will help him to
fight off demonic influences?

CHEEVERS

It will. But we have to start as
soon as possible.

DAVID

What all would be involved?

CHEEVERS

He'll come here three days a week
and we'll spend time in the Word.
I'll teach him some lessons that
are more advanced than what most
people get in church.

DAVID

Okay.

CHEEVERS

I may need to take him on a field
trip every now and then. Never
overnight or anything, though. And
I'll tell you before.

LORETTA

Uh, okay.

CHEEVERS

One more thing. We all need to keep
this between us. If everyone else
finds out it could cause undue
alarm. And if the other kids find
out they would ... well, you know
how cruel kids can be.

LORETTA

Yeah. Calvin gets pushed around
enough.

DAVID

He needs to man up. Once he fights
back those other kids will leave
him alone.

CHEEVERS

See, that's what I'm talking about.
He's so much more spiritually
advanced than other boys his age.
He turns the other cheek. Just as
Jesus instructed us to do.

LORETTA

My goodness.

CHEEVERS

So, shall we call Calvin in here
and tell him what's going on?

DAVID

Yes. Let's do that.

LORETTA

He's going to be thrilled.

DAVID

Calvin! Come in here, boy! We got
something to tell you!

INT. LAKELAND FL PD SQUAD-ROOM - DAY

There's the low-level buzz of conversations as officers and
detectives do their jobs.

Sitting at her desk is Detective DARLA MARKS (32, African
American). She's on the phone but keeping an eye on the front
door.

MARKS

Yeah I know. I'm still checking.
But everything so far checks out.

Holmes enters through the door and heads for his desk.

MARKS (CONT'D)

Of course he wants a deal. That's
what you do, right? I've got to go.
I'll call you back.

Marks hangs up and gets up, picking up a case file full of
papers, photos, and reports. As Holmes is settling at his
desk she approaches him.

MARKS (CONT'D)

Hey, Holmes. How was the time off?

HOLMES

Not bad, I guess. I didn't get any calls, so I guess nothing happened while I was away?

MARKS

I wouldn't say that.

She hands him the case file and he opens it, flipping through it, scanning the pages.

HOLMES

This is a low-level drug case.

MARKS

Yeah, so it seems.

HOLMES

Why would I care about this?

MARKS

Because the dude is desperate and talking about his clientele.

HOLMES

Yeah? Anybody interesting?

MARKS

Yeah. A few, really. Look at the suspect's name.

Holmes checks the folder again, at the suspect's information. The suspect's mugshot is attached. He is CARLTON CHAMBERS III (20, Caucasian, sneering slightly at the camera).

HOLMES

Damn. Carlton Chambers. Of the --

MARKS

The Miami Chambers family.

HOLMES

And he was selling drugs?

MARKS

Yep. He has millions in a trust fund and he's out selling cocaine and Ecstasy. But his clientele are pretty high end.

HOLMES

Really?

MARKS

Yeah. Including a certain preacher
man I know you have an interest in.

HOLMES

What? He sold drugs to Simon
Cheevers?

MARKS

He says he did. Cocaine, mostly.
Some X.

HOLMES

Shit.

MARKS

So, what do you say? Take this to
the lieutenant?

HOLMES

Oh, hell yes.

He gathers up the file and they head towards Jackson's office.

INT. LAKELAND PD, LT. JACKSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Jackson is looking at something on his computer screen when there's a brief knock and Marks enters, Holmes right behind her.

JACKSON

Welcome back to work, Holmes. How
was your time off?

The two detectives settle into the visitors' chairs.

HOLMES

It was okay. I came back to some
interesting news.

JACKSON

Let me guess. Detective Marks, you
are going to regale me with tales
of the high end clientele that your
latest bust has been giving you.
Correct?

MARKS

Lieu, this kid is connected. He's
not the typical scum you find on
the street dealing this stuff.

JACKSON

Just because his family has money that doesn't mean he's a cut above your average street dealer. He may dress a bit more stylish but deep down they're all the same.

HOLMES

He said he sold to Simon Cheevers, Lieu.

JACKSON

So?

HOLMES

We can use this to have the Georgia State Police arrest him and extradite his ass back down here!

JACKSON

(to Marks)

Do you have any evidence to corroborate this?

Marks

No. Not yet.

JACKSON

There's your answer. Until we have evidence beyond your suspect's word, we have no case. And you both know it.

HOLMES

If I can find corroborating evidence you'll make the call?

JACKSON

If you find corroborating evidence I'll consider making the call.

HOLMES

Yes!

JACKSON

But! I'm telling you that as soon as Mr. Chambers calls his daddy, his daddy will call the most powerful law firm in town and pay them a large retainer and they will advise your suspect to keep his mouth shut.

(MORE)

JACKSON (CONT'D)

And he will suddenly develop memory loss regarding anything he has told you. Understood?

MARKS

This kid is terrified of his dad, Lieu. He's not going to call him unless he has to.

JACKSON

Understood?

MARKS

Understood. Sir.

JACKSON

Good. Now, I presume you're going to interview this young man. Be careful. And the second he invokes his right to remain silent, the interview is over. Clear?

HOLMES

Clear. Sir.

JACKSON

Good.

The two detectives exit. When they close the door Jackson shakes his head and goes back to looking at his screen.

INT. LAKELAND PD HALLWAY OUTSIDE OF INTERVIEW ROOM 2 - DAY

There's a window with one-way glass, where people in the hallway can see into the room.

Sitting at the table in the interview room is Carlton Chambers III. Chambers is tapping the tabletop nervously. There's a half empty bottle of water near to hand.

Holmes and Jackson stand at the window, watching him. Holmes is holding a case file, full of papers and photos.

JACKSON

I busted him last night. Got his number from one of his customers and called in an order.

HOLMES

(chuckling)

What?

MARKS

Yep. He came driving up ten minutes later in his four year old Lambo. Like he was delivering pizza or something. Sold me a gram. And he had twenty more in the car.

Holmes chuckles.

MARKS (CONT'D)

He tries to be arrogant and bossy but he's a scared little boy.

HOLMES

Figures. Okay. Let's talk to him.

INT. LAKELAND PD INTERVIEW ROOM 2 - DAY

There are three other chairs around the table. The light is stark and unforgiving. Chambers glares at Jackson as she enters, Holmes behind her.

CHAMBERS

About time. How long am I going to have to be in here?

MARKS

We're still confirming the information you gave us, Mr. Chambers. That will take some time.

CHAMBERS

So I'm supposed to just sit here?

MARKS

Yes. To help you pass the time, though, I thought I'd introduce you to Detective Holmes.

Chambers looks at Holmes appraisingly.

CHAMBERS

Who the hell are you supposed to be?

MARKS

I could be a good friend to you, Carlton. If you want me to be.

Holmes settles into the chair across from Chambers, Marks walking casually around the room.

CHAMBERS
What do you want?

Holmes opens the case file and turns it around so Chambers can see the picture paper-clipped to the inside of the front cover.

It's a mug shot of Simon Cheevers.

HOLMES
Do you know this man?

CHAMBERS
Yeah. I do.

HOLMES
How?

CHAMBERS
I sold him drugs. Cocaine, mostly.
X, too, sometimes.

HOLMES
Really?

CHAMBERS
Yeah. I did a few hits of X with
him over the last few months.

MARKS
Tell him what you told me. (to
Holmes) I've been saving this part
for you.

CHAMBERS
Yeah. Once the X hit he'd get
talky. He thought we were friends.

HOLMES
What did he talk about?

CHAMBERS
Boys. He loved the boys. He said he
liked them just before they hit
puberty. Before their voices
started to change and they started
growing body hair everywhere. Gave
me the fucking creeps, man.

MARKS
Yeah, you're one to judge.

CHAMBERS

Hey! I was just bringing some joy
to some people's lives. Helping
people to deal with the bullshit
they have to deal with.

HOLMES

Did he mention names?

CHAMBERS

I was high at the time so ... there
was this one boy, Glenn, I think he
said. He said he had to cut him
lose. Said he stayed with him a lot
longer than he should have.

HOLMES

Because he hit puberty.

CHAMBERS

Yeah.

HOLMES

Son of a bitch.

CHAMBERS

Does that help you?

HOLMES

Did he tell you anything else?
Anything at all?

CHAMBERS

Like I said, I was high! I don't
remember all of it.

HOLMES

Think, Carlton. I need to know
everything he said.

Carlton squints his eyes closed and lowers his head onto the table-top.

CHAMBERS

What do you want from me?

HOLMES

I want something I can hit Cheevers
with. Something I can tell him, to
prove to him that I know what he
does.

Chambers raises his head.

CHAMBERS

If I tell you, will you drop the charges?

HOLMES

That'd be up to the DA's office.
And Detective Marks.

CHAMBERS

I just thought, since you're the guy --

MARKS

What the fuck, Carlton?

HOLMES

Detective. Please. He's exhausted, aren't you, Carlton? It's been a really long night.

CHAMBERS

It has. Oh, God, it has.

HOLMES

And the last thing Carlton wants is for us to make a call to Miami, right?

CHAMBERS

No! Don't do that. Don't call daddy -- dad.

HOLMES

Right. So, let's see what we can do. Rack that cocaine-addled brain of yours, and tell me anything Cheevers said to you.

CHAMBERS

Like what?

HOLMES

What does he do? What does he like? Anything at all will be helpful.

CHAMBERS

He tried to tell me what he does but I shut him up. I don't want to hear that shit. But -- oh, yeah. He calls them his Nephilim. It's something from the Bible.

HOLMES

See? That helps. That really helps me, Carlton. Let me go check that out, okay?

CHAMBERS

Are you going to get me out of here?

HOLMES

Like I said, that's up to Detective Marks and the DA.

CHAMBERS

Jesus fucking Christ. I'm never getting out of here.

Holmes grabs the case file and gets up.

HOLMES

Thank you for your help. I'll see what I can do.

CHAMBERS

Thank you.

MARKS

Be back in a few minutes, Mr. Chambers.

The two detectives exit, closing the door behind him. Chambers lowers his head on the table-top and cries, silently.

INT. LAKELAND PD HALLWAY OUTSIDE OF INTERVIEW ROOM 2 - DAY

Holmes and Marks stand at the window for a moment watching Chambers weep.

MARKS

Can you use what he gave you?

HOLMES

I don't know. Maybe.

MARKS

How are you going to play it? You can't even talk to him.

HOLMES

I'll figure something out. Don't worry.

INT./EXT CHEEVERS' CAR - NIGHT

Cheever is parked in a dark alley. He's got his seat leaning back slightly, and there's sweat on his face.

The back of a person's head becomes visible through the steering wheel, just for a second, before it sinks back down behind the dash.

Cheever is getting oral sex from SANDY (40, female), a prostitute he picked up on the street.

Cheever grunts, not in pleasure but in frustration, and reaches down to grab Sandy's head. He pulls her up off his lap.

CHEEVERS

Okay, that's enough. It's not happening.

Sandy sits up, wiping her mouth with the back of her hand. Then she reaches down into Cheever's lap.

SANDY

C'mon, baby. I'm just getting started.

Her arm is moving suggestively.

CHEEVERS

Get out. We're done here.

SANDY

Hey, c'mon. I know tricks nobody else does. Let me --

CHEEVERS

I said get out!

SANDY

Okay. Your loss.

Sandy gets out of the car, slamming the door while Cheever adjusts his clothing and the seat, zipping his pants. Then, he leans forward, putting his head down on the steering wheel.

CHEEVERS

(whispering)

Goddamn it.

EXT. BELTRANE RESIDENCE - DAY

It's a modest home in the suburbs, with a nice, well-manicured lawn. Parked in the driveway is a new car.

Holmes, carrying the Cheevers case file, walks up the short walkway from the sidewalk to ring the doorbell.

There's the sound of the door unlocking and it opens slightly, BETH BELTRANE (36, Caucasian) looking Holmes over.

HOLMES

Ms. Beltrane? Can I come in for a minute?

She has to think about it.

BETH BELTRANE

Sure, Detective. Come on in.

She opens the door wider and steps aside, letting him enter.

INT. BELTRANE RESIDENCE LIVING ROOM - DAY

It's a modest house, clean and well-maintained. The living room is comfortable, with a TV, a couch, and a couple of easy chairs.

Holmes sits in one of the chairs, holding a pen and a notepad, the case file in his lap.

Beth sits on the couch, a mug of something on the end table next to her, within easy reach.

BETH BELTRANE

Are you sure you don't want some tea, Detective?

HOLMES

I'm good, thank you, Ms. Beltrane.

BETH BELTRANE

What can I do for you, then?

HOLMES

First of all, I was so sorry to hear about Glenn. Such a tragedy. He was such a promising young man.

BETH BELTRANE

Thank you. I guess we all have our demons. Glenn's were just too strong --

She fights with her urge to break down, struggling to contain her sobs.

Holmes keeps his voice low and calm and quiet.

HOLMES
I can't even imagine.

BETH BELTRANE
Is that why you're here? To offer condolences?

HOLMES
Partially. I hate to bring this up now but I wanted to check with you again to see if maybe you've changed your mind.

BETH BELTRANE
Changed my mind about what?

HOLMES
Prosecuting.

BETH BELTRANE
What good would that do, Detective?
Really? It won't bring Glenn back.

HOLMES
No, but it'll keep it from happening to somebody else.

BETH BELTRANE
Glenn was possessed by a devil, Detective. I know you don't believe that, but it's true. He fought with it since he was nine years old. He finally lost the battle.

HOLMES
Glenn was sexually abused by a pedophile. Starting when he was nine. Ending when he was thirteen.

BETH BELTRANE
I do not permit language like that in this house.

HOLMES
You came down to our precinct to file a complaint against Simon Cheevers. We began our investigation and arrested him.
(MORE)

HOLMES (CONT'D)

Then you withdrew the complaint and stopped cooperating with the investigation because you made a deal with the Eternal Church of the Communion.

BETH BELTRANE

Which means I'm not permitted to talk about it.

HOLMES

As of this morning you have five hundred and eighty-two thousand dollars in the bank. Serious money.

BETH BELTRANE

I've been doing well lately at work. The economy is picking up.

HOLMES

Please stop lying to me, Beth. You're not very good at it.

Beth starts crying for a moment before regaining control of herself.

BETH BELTRANE

What do you want from me?

HOLMES

I want you to reinstate the complaint against Cheevers. Give me what I need to arrest him.

BETH BELTRANE

I can't do that.

HOLMES

Why not?

Beth sighs. She gets up and walks over to a bookshelf that has a picture of herself and young GLENN (8).

She looks at the picture, tears glistening in her eyes, before turning back to face Holmes.

BETH BELTRANE

I have no idea where Glenn's father is. Or even who he is.

HOLMES

Because he raped you. In an alley. When you were coming home late one night. The case is still open.

BETH BELTRANE

Yes.

Beth sits on the couch, hiding her face in her hands.

HOLMES

Yet you chose to have that
monster's child, Beth. You could
have aborted him.

BETH BELTRANE

No. That would be murder.

HOLMES

You could have given him up. But
you didn't. You took this child and
raised him in a loving, supportive
home. You're a hero, Beth. I am in
awe of your love and compassion.

BETH BELTRANE

I tried. I tried so hard.

HOLMES

What happened to you was not your
fault. It's the fault of the son of
a bitch who raped you. Just like
what happened to Glenn wasn't your
fault. Or his.

Beth fights off a couple more sobs before getting control of
herself again.

BETH BELTRANE

It is my fault, Detective. I'm
being punished. All my life God has
been punishing me.

Holmes gets up and walks towards her, putting the notepad and
pen in his pocket. He sits on the couch next to her.

HOLMES

Punished for what?

BETH BELTRANE

When I was thirteen. I met this boy
after school. We --

She chokes and sobs.

HOLMES

What? You had sex with him?

BETH BELTRANE

Yes. I just wanted to know what it
felt like.

HOLMES

That was years ago. And it's
something a lot of girls have done.

BETH BELTRANE

But that's other girls. I'm
supposed to be different. I'm
supposed to be above all that.

HOLMES

Why?

BETH BELTRANE

Because when daddy found out he
left us. He left my mother and me.

Beth starts crying, very hard.

HOLMES

I'm so sorry, Beth. I know you're
wrong about that, but I also know
there's no way I can prove that.
But something like that wouldn't
cause a man to abandon his family.

BETH BELTRANE

Sure.

Beth makes an effort to regain her composure.

HOLMES

You've got a beautiful home here.

BETH BELTRANE

Thank you.

HOLMES

I'm glad you're putting that church
money to good use.

Beth recoils as if he'd slapped her. Then anger replaces the
grief on her face and she stands.

BETH BELTRANE

Get out! Now!

HOLMES

Think it over. You know how to
reach me.

BETH BELTRANE
Get out of my house!

Holmes exits, closing the door quietly, as Beth goes back over to her spot on the couch, where she sits and resumes weeping bitterly.

INT. HARTSELL CHURCH OF THE ETERNAL COMMUNION PARSONAGE,
DEN/KITCHEN - DAY

The kitchen is clean, rarely used. There's a plastic cake carrier with another caramel layer cake inside, only a few pieces missing.

Cheever has a small dish on a counter. Next to it is a package of communion wafers and a tiny disposable communion cup. There's a bottle of red grape juice, too.

Cheever fills the cup with a little juice, then drops a tiny blue tab of Ecstasy into it. He picks up the cup and swirls it around, watching the hit dissolve.

Then he opens the pack of communion wafers and puts one on the plate.

CALVIN (O.S.)
I'm ready!

CHEEVERS
Just a second!

He arranges the cup and dish with the wafer on the bar and goes into the living room.

CHEEVERS (CONT'D)
Okay. Come on in.

Calvin emerges from the back room. He's wearing his altar boy robes.

It doesn't appear that he's wearing anything underneath.

CALVIN
I don't like this.

CHEEVERS
I know, it feels weird. But it's necessary.

CALVIN
Can I at least put on my underwear?

CHEEVERS
No.

Cheever looks Calvin over and smiles. He picks up the plate with the wafer on it.

CALVIN
What do we do now?

CHEEVERS
I give you your first communion.

CALVIN
I'm too young for communion.

CHEEVERS
This is a special communion.
Remember how I told you that you
were special?

CALVIN
Yeah . . .

CHEEVERS
So you get to take communion before
the other boys your age.

CALVIN
Wow.

CHEEVERS
Remember what I told you.

CALVIN
I remember.

CHEEVERS
What did I tell you?

CALVIN
What we do here is secret. I can't
tell anybody.

CHEEVERS
Yes. What will happen if you do?

CALVIN
The devil will hear and he'll come
after my mom and dad and take them
to hell.

CHEEVERS

Yes. So, you have to keep the rituals that I'm going to teach you secret. You can't tell your parents or anybody else what I'm teaching you. Do you understand?

CALVIN

I understand.

CHEEVERS

When you take this special communion you will be filled with the Holy Spirit.

CALVIN

What will that feel like?

CHEEVERS

You'll feel God's love. You'll feel like you're surrounded by angels. Because you will be. You'll be protected from all harm.

CALVIN

Then what?

CHEEVERS

There are certain rituals I can only show you when you're in that state. When you're full of the Holy Spirit. Do you understand?

CALVIN

I think so. What kind of rituals?

CHEEVERS

A whole new level of communion. One almost nobody gets to experience.

CALVIN

I don't know if I'm ready for this.

CHEEVERS

I know right now it's scary and strange, Calvin. Soon it'll be the most normal, most natural thing in the world to you.

CALVIN

Okay.

Cheever picks up the dish with the modified wafer. He carefully picks up the wafer.

CHEEVERS

"Take of this, and eat, for this is my body." Close your eyes and open your mouth, Calvin.

Calvin obeys, Cheevers putting it on Calvin's tongue. Calvin eats it.

He picks up the cup and hands it to Calvin.

CHEEVERS (CONT'D)

"Take of this, and drink. This is my blood."

Calvin drinks the juice, then hands Cheevers the cup.

CALVIN

Okay. What now?

Cheevers wads the cup up.

CHEEVERS

The Holy Spirt will fill you in a few minutes. I've got some preparations to make myself now.

CALVIN

I'm so excited!

CHEEVERS

Me, too!

Cheevers takes the cup over to the trash can and tosses it in.

CALVIN (O.S.)

I think something's happening.

CHEEVERS

Yeah. Something's definitely happening.

INT. LAKELAND PD, LT. JACKSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Jackson is behind the desk. Assistant District Attorney ANDREA VANCE (35, female, Caucasian) is also there, along with Marks.

The door opens and Holmes peeks in.

HOLMES

You wanted to see me?

JACKSON

Yeah, Detective. Come on in, and close the door.

Holmes comes in, closing the door and sitting in the vacant chair next to Marks.

HOLMES

ADA Vance. Good to see you.

VANCE

Good to see you, too, Detective.

JACKSON

We were just talking about the Cheevers case and thought we'd bring you in to brief us.

HOLMES

There isn't a Cheevers case, Lieu.

JACKSON

So you say to my face, Detective. But you interviewed Chambers about him and you spoke to Glenn Beltrane's mother, too. After I told you not to.

HOLMES

I got something from Chambers, Lieu. Something that may be useful.

VANCE

And what might that be?

HOLMES

Cheevers calls the boys he's raping his Nephilim.

VANCE

How does that help us?

HOLMES

I got that from Chambers. He said they were both high as kites at the time. If I can hit Cheevers with that, I'm sure he'll crack. He probably doesn't even remember saying that to anybody. He may give up something else.

VANCE

There are a lot of "mays" and some wishful thinking there, Detective.

MARKS

A lot of other stuff Chambers told us has proven out.

VANCE

As soon as Chambers' daddy finds out about him being arrested he'll hire high-end legal talent and get the case thrown out.

MARKS

How? I went by the book. It was righteous.

VANCE

I'm sure it was. And I'm sure that won't matter as soon as that old Chambers money starts getting thrown around. And when that happens, his new attorney will tell him to stop cooperating with us. Which means he will not be willing to confirm his statements to us regarding his customers. He won't be available to testify.

MARKS

But --

VANCE

And even though we have written statements from Mr. Chambers, he will not corroborate them in court. Which makes them inadmissible. Which will cause every case you've built based on the information he's given you to collapse.

MARKS

We've been able to keep his arrest out of the papers. If the info he gives us pans out and we make some high profile arrests I'm sure Vance would offer him probation. The old man will never find out.

VANCE

Do you really want to bet who knows how many drug cases based on that?

HOLMES

All that means is I need to hit Cheevers with this as soon as possible.

VANCE

You hit Cheevers with this and even if he does give it up, you'll lose it. I swear to you, Detective. You go after Cheevers and you lose it it's going to cost you. Dearly.

HOLMES

The man's a pedophile, Vance! We can't --

VANCE

He's a pedophile with no complaining victim, Detective. No hard evidence. No confession. No video or audio. No computer records. Nothing but a statement that was withdrawn and then sealed under court order.

HOLMES

Because of a deal that crazy church made with his mother!

VANCE

But which has been confirmed and approved by a State of Florida Superior Court judge.

HOLMES

But he can't just --

JACKSON

Everybody? Could I speak to Detective Holmes privately?

VANCE

Sure.

MARKS

I'll be at my desk.

The other two leave, closing the door, and Jackson stares at Holmes.

HOLMES

Lieu, I --

JACKSON

Shut up. You think I don't know about that stunt you pulled?

HOLMES

I --

JACKSON

Going up to that little town and approaching Cheevers while he was eating? Think the sheriff up there didn't call me about that?

HOLMES

I'm sorry, Lieu. I was there as a private citizen, though.

JACKSON

Then why did you flash your badge?

HOLMES

Because this idiot deputy was --

JACKSON

I know. Let me tell you something, Preston. When it comes to those small towns like that, just because someone is wearing a badge, it doesn't automatically make them on our side. In places like that, there's only black and white.

HOLMES

I understand.

JACKSON

Do you? Because I think you already knew all this before you ignored my specific instructions and used your time off to drive up there and harass a private citizen who wasn't bothering anybody.

HOLMES

There's already another boy up there who is getting abused just like Glenn Beltrane was. And when that boy hits puberty he'll get dumped just like Glenn did, while Cheevers finds another one. And that boy will spend the rest of his life trying to overcome what happened to him.

JACKSON

Are you listening to yourself?
You're calling him Glenn.

HOLMES

He was a kid, Lieu!

JACKSON

You're too close to this, Preston.
It's becoming personal to you.

HOLMES

How could I not take it personally,
Derrick? I got to know the kid. He
was smart. He was talented. He
could draw pretty much anything he
wanted. He could sing like an
angel.

JACKSON

All you're doing is proving my
point, Preston. It's a tragedy, and
I don't doubt that some other poor
kid is getting abused just like he
was. But it's a kid in a different
jurisdiction. Which means, like it
or not, it's not our problem. Look,
eventually somebody will finally
nail the motherfucker. When they do
that they'll come to us for help.

HOLMES

After at least one other boy has
had his life destroyed.

JACKSON

What do you want me to do? We have
these laws for a reason. We have --

There's a quiet knock on the door and it opens a few inches.
It's Marks.

MARKS

Lieu? I know you're in a private
meeting but there's someone here to
see you and Detective Holmes.

She opens the door wider so Holmes and Jackson can see,
standing at Marks's desk in the squad room, Beth Beltrane.

INT. LAKELAND PD INTERVIEW ROOM 2 - DAY

Beth is sitting at the table, a cup of coffee nearby. She
looks like she's been crying.

INT. LAKELAND PD HALLWAY OUTSIDE OF INTERVIEW ROOM 2 - DAY

Holmes, Jackson, Vance, and Marks are watching Beth through
the window.

MARKS

She just came in and said she wanted to talk.

JACKSON

Looks like you got to her.

VANCE

Handle her carefully. If she's here because she wants to reinstate the complaint, remember that she can change her mind again and we'll be right back to where we were.

HOLMES

Got it. Marks? Let's go in.

MARKS

Give me a second.

Marks exits.

INT. LAKELAND FL PD SQUAD-ROOM - DAY

Marks goes over to her desk and opens a drawer, taking out a box of tissues, and exiting.

INT. LAKELAND PD HALLWAY OUTSIDE OF INTERVIEW ROOM 2 - DAY

MARKS

Okay, let's go.

INT. LAKELAND PD INTERVIEW ROOM 2 - DAY

Holmes and Marks enter, Marks carrying her box of tissues that she places on the table near Beth before they sit across from her.

HOLMES

How are you doing, Ms. Beltrane?

BETH BELTRANE

Not good, Detective.

MARKS

That's entirely understandable.

BETH BELTRANE

We went to that church. For eight years. Gave them money, every Sunday. And he was so nice.

(MORE)

BETH BELTRANE (CONT'D)

He took an interest in us. In Glenn. I thought it was because he saw Glenn the way I did, that he was special, that he was a blessing.

HOLMES

I know.

BETH BELTRANE

When I found out what he was doing to my son, when I came down here to file a complaint, they disowned me. That church. People I've known for years, they ignore me when they see me on the street. They think it's our fault. They think Glenn ... They think Glenn somehow seduced him. Or that he was lying.

Beth starts crying. Marks slides the box of tissues closer and Beth takes one, blowing her nose on it.

HOLMES

I'm so sorry, Ms. Beltrane.

BETH BELTRANE

Life is ... I just don't care any more. Everything is dying.

HOLMES

I need to ask, why are you here?

BETH BELTRANE

To hell with the money. To hell with the agreement. To hell with the church. I'll tell you everything I know.

INT. HARTSELL CHURCH OF THE ETERNAL COMMUNION PARSONAGE
LIVING ROOM - DAY

Cheevers, wearing sweat pants and a T-shirt, opens the door to Loretta Ranier. She's holding a pan covered in aluminum foil.

LORETTA

Hey, Rev. Cheevers. How did Calvin do?

CHEEVERS

He was perfect. Just perfect.

LORETTA

I brought you some of my famous
sausage casserole.

CHEEVERS

Wow. Thank you.

LORETTA

Where is he?

CHEEVERS

He's in the bathroom. Should be
right out. I'll go check on him.
You can put the casserole on the
bar over there.

INT. HARTSELL CHURCH OF THE ETERNAL COMMUNION PARSONAGE,
BATHROOM - DAY

Calvin is standing at the toilet, looking down in it. He's
now wearing his regular clothes.

Calvin can see his reflection in the water. His face is
expressionless.

There's a quiet rap on the door.

CHEEVERS (O.S.)

Calvin? You okay in there, buddy?
Your mom is here.

Calvin opens the door. Cheevers kneels down so that he's eye
level with him.

CHEEVERS (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Remember what we said. Don't tell
your parents. Understand?

Calvin nods. Cheevers stands, mussing Calvin's hair. They
exit towards the living room.

CHEEVERS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Okay, so I'll see you again
Thursday then.

INT. HARTSELL CHURCH OF THE ETERNAL COMMUNION PARSONAGE, DEN -
DAY

Loretta is standing at the bar, casserole dish behind her,
smiling at her son.

LORETTA

Cal? I heard you did really well
today.

CALVIN

I guess so.

CHEEVERS

It's a bit tiring. He's had to
absorb a lot in a short amount of
time.

CALVIN

I want to go to sleep.

LORETTA

You can take a nap when we get
home.

CALVIN

Can we go now?

LORETTA

Uh, sure. I guess. Do you have
anything to tell me, Rev. Cheevers?

CHEEVERS

No. Not a thing. Except I'll see
this young man again after school
on Thursday.

LORETTA

Calvin? Say thank you to Rev.
Cheevers.

Calvin hugs his mom, closing his eyes, but says nothing.

LORETTA (CONT'D)

Calvin? We raised you better than
this. Say thank you to Rev.
Cheevers.

CALVIN

Thank you.

He starts crying quietly.

LORETTA

What in the world is wrong with
you?

CHEEVERS

It's all right. He was just introduced to a whole new world and it's overwhelming. He just needs some rest.

LORETTA

Okay, if you say so. You're the expert.

CHEEVERS

And I'll have that casserole for dinner shortly. And have a slice or two of Nichole's caramel cake for dessert.

LORETTA

We'll have you fat as a pig in no time!

Cheever chuckles.

CHEEVERS

I don't doubt it!

LORETTA

Well, we'll see you Thursday!

CHEEVERS

Until then!

Loretta leads Calvin out and Cheever quietly closes the door behind them. Then he exits towards the bedroom.

INT. HARTSELL CHURCH OF THE ETERNAL COMMUNION PARSONAGE - BEDROOM - DAY

The bedroom is small, with only a bed, a desk, a chest of drawers with mirror, and a small desk there.

The bed is unmade, the linens twisted and tangled. There is some blood on the sheets.

Atop the desk is a laptop computer, an old-fashioned external dialup modem next to it. There's a number 10 envelope in the middle of the desktop, with two paper clips and a pen. There's an aluminum chair at the desk, and Cheever settles onto it.

He opens the lowest drawer on the desk and takes out the small metal box with the folders, putting it on the desktop and opening it.

He turns the envelope over so the flap side is down, uses the pen to write "CALVIN" on the envelope.

He looks inside the envelope, which contains a lock of Calvin's hair, and then closes the envelope, using two paper clips to hold the flap shut, and putting it into the small metal box with the others.

He finds a small mirror in another drawer that he places on the desktop, along with a tiny packet of cocaine and a razor blade.

He lays out a couple of lines on the mirror, tidying them with the razor, then takes a short straw that he uses to snort it.

Then he awakens the laptop and opens a word processing software package, and starts typing. "MARRIAGE IS BETWEEN A MAN AND A WOMAN."

He looks at the title a moment and then chuckles, and starts typing again.

INT. LAKELAND PD, LT. JACKSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Jackson is behind his desk, Vance behind him again, Marks and Holmes in the visitor's chairs.

HOLMES

Well?

JACKSON

(to Vance)

What do you think?

Vance thinks it over.

VANCE

She didn't really give us anything we can use.

HOLMES

What?

MARKS

Oh, come on!

VANCE

She didn't actually see anything. All she knows is what Glenn finally told her. And he's not around to corroborate her testimony.

HOLMES

He's not around because of what
that motherfucker did to him.

VANCE

If we can bring him in her
testimony may help convict him, but
it won't be enough in and of itself
to persuade a judge to sign an
order to have him extradited.

HOLMES

Well, this was a whole lot of
nothing.

VANCE

I wouldn't say that. Since we now
have a formal complaint maybe --
just maybe -- I can talk to my boss
and have him call the DA in
Matthews County. Maybe he can
persuade him to have Cheevers
brought in by the local Sheriff's
department to be interviewed by
you. And maybe, with what you know
now, you can shake him up enough to
give us enough to make an arrest.

HOLMES

Maybe, maybe, maybe ...

JACKSON

It's more than you had before,
Detective.

VANCE

I just want to remind you what
happens if Chambers recants his
statement, or if Ms. Beltrane
decides she doesn't want to give
the church their money back after
breaking her agreement with them.
It all falls apart. My boss will go
on the warpath because he will be
seen as working with the police
department to harass a man of God.
Certain people in this room right
now may wind up having to find new
jobs. Understood?

JACKSON

I think we all get it, Andrea.

VANCE

Good. Okay, I'll let you know.

Vance exits. Jackson looks at Holmes and Marks.

JACKSON

I hope you two know what you're doing.

HOLMES

We got this, Lieu.

JACKSON

Yeah. "We got this." You'll be driving to Hartsell with my paycheck in your mouth.

HOLMES

I won't forget.

JACKSON

You better not. I'm too old to start over with a new department.

INT. HARTSELL CHURCH OF THE ETERNAL COMMUNION PARSONAGE, BEDROOM - DAY

Cheever is sitting at the desk, using the laptop. He enters his user ID and password on a screen, then gets "DISCONNECTED. RECONNECTING FIRST ATTEMPT IN 5 SECONDS."

Then the dialup modem starts attempting to reconnect, making the customary sounds of an analog connection.

CHEEVERS

(muttering)

Goddammit, connect! Jesus fucking Christ!

After several attempts it finally connects and Cheever starts typing in a URL when there's a knock on the door.

He gets up and exits.

INT. HARTSELL CHURCH OF THE ETERNAL COMMUNION PARSONAGE, DEN - DAY

Cheever opens the door to see Deputy Cook standing there. Cook is wearing his civilian clothes, and his pickup truck instead of his squad car is parked behind him.

CHEEVERS

Jason! What can I do for you?

COOK

Sorry to bother you, Reverend, but I need you to come down to the office with me.

CHEEVERS

Why?

COOK

I don't know. The sheriff just told me to come down and pick you up. That's why I came in my truck instead of the county car, so it don't look official.

CHEEVERS

Okay. Sure. Give me a second to get ready.

COOK

Sure. I'll just wait right here.

Cheever closes the door and exits.

BEDROOM

Cheever enters and sits down at the laptop and logs it off. Then he gets up and looks at himself in the mirror, especially checking his nose and upper lip for visible cocaine residue.

Then he grabs his keys and wallet, putting them in his pocket and exiting.

INT. MATTHEWS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT, RECEPTION - DAY

The room is too brightly lit, the walls need painting, and the chairs are old, cheap, and uncomfortable.

One end of the room has a locked door and a window, behind which an officer or assistant would sit.

Occupying two of those chairs are Detectives Holmes and Marks, who look like they've been there a while. Holmes has the Cheever case file in his lap.

HOLMES

How much longer are we gonna have to sit here, you think?

MARKS

The local DA swore the sheriff was on-board with bringing him in. He'll probably be here any minute.

The door next to the window opens, DEPUTY PAUL HARRIS (26, Caucasian, tall and heavy-set), in uniform, enters.

HARRIS

Detectives? Y'all want to come on back?

HOLMES

Sure! Thank you, Deputy.

They get up to follow Harris, who stands out of the way so they can slide past him into the squad room.

INT. MATTHEWS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT, SQUAD ROOM - DAY

There's the sound of several young men laughing and talking, which grows quiet as the two detectives enter.

There are six desks in this long but narrow room, plus a station with a CB radio. At the front is a log-in book with names and dates of people who had signed in.

Counting Harris there are five deputies there. All of them are large, overweight, and white.

They all look at Holmes and Marks with undisguised hostility.

HARRIS

Y'all need to sign in. Security.

HOLMES

Yeah. I guess you're so security conscious around here.

HARRIS

Can't be too careful.

MARKS

(muttering)

Can't recognize sarcasm, either.

HARRIS

Say what?

Holmes signs in, then gives the pen to Marks, who starts signing in, as well.

HOLMES

Nothing, Deputy. Sorry. It's just a long drive up. Is our suspect here?

HARRIS

Cook just called in. He's bringing him in now. I hope y'all know what you're doing. You'll need to check your weapons, too.

Holmes and Marks take out their pistols and hand them to Harris, who takes them over to a big cabinet and uses a key to unlock it.

HOLMES

(muttering)

I hope we don't need those.

MARKS

(muttering)

Yeah. It's a good ol' boy convention in here.

Harris opens the cabinet and puts the pistols inside, closing and locking it afterwards.

HOLMES

Uh huh. Where's the interview room?

HARRIS

Right through here.

INT. MATTHEWS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT, HALL - DAY

On their way up the narrow, carpeted hall, Holmes and Marks can hear a couple of men's voices, talking and laughing.

There's an open door to one side and Harris pauses, knocking on it.

HARRIS

Sheriff? Them detectives from Florida are here.

INT. MATTHEWS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT, OFFICE OF SHERIFF ADAMS - DAY

The office is large, and well-appointed, with a heavy oak desk and a big chair behind it. On the wall is a large framed picture of Donald Trump.

In one corner is an American flag. There are a couple of upright storage lockers and a few filing cabinets.

Behind the desk, occupying the big chair, is Sheriff LAWTON ADAMS (60, Caucasian, could be the source DNA for all of his deputies), who is eyeing the detectives with a forced grin on his face.

Adams is wearing an expensive suit and jewelry.

In one of the comfortable-looking visitor's chairs is Bishop Paul Clement.

INTERCUT - conversation between hallway and sheriff's office

CLEMENT

Detective Holmes! Good to see you again!

HOLMES

Mr. Clement? What are you doing here?

CLEMENT

I was in town and the sheriff here notified me that you wanted to speak with Christ's representative to the people of Hartsell.

MARKS

(muttering)

What is he talking about?

HOLMES

(muttering)

That's what they call their pastors.

CLEMENT

I'm just here in case I'm needed.

MARKS

What would you be needed for?

ADAMS

Detective, you are addressing a man of God. A high-ranking one. Show some respect.

MARKS

Sorry.

ADAMS

Deputy, maybe you should escort our visitors to Interview One.

HARRIS

Yes, sir. Y'all follow me.

INT. MATTHEWS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT, HALL - DAY

Harris leads them up the hall until it ends in another, intersecting hallway.

INT. MATTHEWS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT, 2ND HALL - DAY

A few feet up this hall there's a door that's closed, with a window in the wall next to it.

Underneath the window is a small speaker, with a switch.

The hall ends in another intersecting hallway, where a couple of vending machines full of candy bars and sodas stand.

HARRIS

I reckon y'all know how this works.

HOLMES

Yeah, we do. Thank you, Deputy.

Harris opens the door.

HARRIS

Jason will be here with the Reverend soon.

HOLMES

Thank you, Deputy.

MARKS

Yes, thanks.

They go past him into the room and Harris closes the door.

INT. MATTHEWS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT, INTERVIEW ROOM 1 - DAY

It's a small room, with an old table that has four chairs. The light is harsh and fluorescent, and there is a single, small, empty trashcan in a corner.

The window on this side is like a mirror.

MARKS

I hope he didn't lock us in here.

Holmes tries the door. It opens easily. Holmes closes it goes over to sit in one of the chairs.

Marks sits in the chair next to him.

HOLMES

I am sensing a definite hostility towards us.

MARKS

Tell me about it. Is it because we're black? Or because we're here to question their preacher?

HOLMES

I think that'd be a "yes," Marks.

INT. MATTHEWS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT, HALL - DAY

Cook is leading Cheevers down the hall. The door to the sheriff's office is open.

CHEEVERS

How long do you think this'll take, anyway?

COOK

Probably a couple of hours.

Cook stops at the open door to the sheriff's office, and Cheevers stops, standing next to him.

INT. MATTHEWS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT, OFFICE OF SHERIFF ADAMS - DAY

Clement is sitting in one of the visitor's chairs. There's no sign of Adams. There's a disposable cup of coffee on Adams's desk near to Clement's hand.

Clement sees Cheevers and smiles.

CLEMENT

Simon! Please, come in. Sheriff Adams said I could borrow his office.

Cheevers enters and Cook closes the door behind him, remaining outside of the room.

Clement gestures at the other chair, and Cheevers goes to sit in it.

CHEEVERS

When did you get into town?

CLEMENT

This morning. I got a call from someone in Lakeland letting me know about this. Do you know what this could be about?

CHEEVERS

I have no idea.

CLEMENT

Are you sure? Is there something you haven't told me?

CHEEVERS

No.

CLEMENT

Those detectives are out for blood.

CHEEVERS

They won't get any. Not from me.

CLEMENT

They have no cause as yet to arrest you, or they would have already. They're hoping you'll admit to something, say something that will give them enough to arrest you.

CHEEVERS

You know a lot about this.

CLEMENT

If they make an arrest they can't just throw you in their car and haul you back to Lakeland. They'll need to make a formal extradition request, which you can fight and maybe get quashed.

CHEEVERS

They won't get anything from me.

CLEMENT

Good. Sheriff Adams says I can act as your spiritual advisor.

CHEEVERS

Thank you. I appreciate that.

CLEMENT

Are you ready?

CHEEVERS

As ready as I'll ever be.

CLEMENT

I'll be here.

CHEEVERS

That's a great comfort to me.

Cheever gets up and exits.

Clement turns his back to the door, sighs, and lowers his head. He steeplest his hands in front of him in an attitude of prayer, his lips moving silently, eyes closed.

INT. MATTHEWS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT, INTERVIEW ROOM 1 - DAY

Holmes and Marks are still sitting at the table. Holmes is looking through the case file as Marks responds to an email on her phone.

There's a quick knock on the door and it opens, Cook standing there. He steps aside, gesturing for Cheever to come in.

COOK

Okay, if y'all should need anything, give me a holler.

HOLMES

Will do, Deputy. Thank you.

COOK

All right.

Cook pulls the door closed as Cheever enters.

HOLMES

Hello, Rev. Cheever.

CHEEVERS

Detective.

Holmes indicates Marks.

HOLMES

This is Detective Marks. I don't believe you've met.

Cheever nods at her.

CHEEVERS
Detective.

Holmes gestures at the chair across from him.

HOLMES
Why don't you come over and have a seat?

CHEEVERS
How long is this going to take?

HOLMES
Not all that long, I'm sure.
Please?

Cheever comes over and sits in the indicated chair as Holmes closes the case file and leans back in his own chair, looking at Cheever with his head lowered.

The silence becomes almost painful and Cheever shifts uncomfortably in his chair.

CHEEVERS
Maybe if you went ahead and asked me what you wanted to ask me?

HOLMES
Okay. There's some question about the death of Glenn Beltrane.

CHEEVERS
I thought it was suicide.

HOLMES
Oh, it was. As you said before, a tragedy. The end of a troubled young man's life.

CHEEVERS
Yes. I pray for him and his family every day.

MARKS
Pray for them? You pray for them?
You mother --

HOLMES
Marks? Calm down.

MARKS
It just pisses me off.

CHEEVERS

Why? I'm a man of God, Detective.
When I stand in the pulpit, when I
give voice to the message that God
has laid on my heart, I become
Christ. Sanctified. Holy. Washed
clean of my sins.

MARKS

Not enough water in the world to
wash you clean, Cheevers.

CHEEVERS

You have faith, don't you?

MARKS

I'm Catholic.

CHEEVERS

Saint worship. Mary worship. When
you should be worshiping God, and
His only begotten Son --

HOLMES

We are straying off point, here.
Marks, could you get me a bottled
water? I think there are some
vending machines up the hall.

Marks gets up and glares at Cheevers.

HOLMES (CONT'D)

(to Cheevers)

Do you want anything?

CHEEVERS

I'm good. Thank you, Detective.

Marks leaves, closing the door.

INT. MATTHEWS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT, 2ND HALL OUTSIDE
INTERVIEW ROOM ONE - DAY

Marks stands at the window, pushing the button to turn on the
speaker. Leaning against the wall behind her is Cook.

Marks is cool and calm, all traces of her earlier anger gone.

HOLMES (O.S.)

(filtered)

Sorry about her, Reverend.

(MORE)

HOLMES (O.S.) (CONT'D)
She hasn't been a detective all
that long. She lets her feelings
overcome her professionalism.

INT. MATTHEWS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT, INTERVIEW ROOM 1 - DAY

CHEEVERS
It's quite all right, Detective. It
must be difficult, in cases like
this. A young life cut short so
suddenly.

HOLMES
Yes, it is. It's part of the job,
probably the worst part.

CHEEVERS
I pray for you, too, Detective.
Every night.

HOLMES
Really? I find that surprising.

CHEEVERS
Why?

HOLMES
Because of our history.

CHEEVERS
Because you consider yourself my
enemy? Christ commands us to love
our enemies. I love you, Detective.

HOLMES
I see. Like you loved Glenn?

CHEEVERS
I'm not sure what you're asking.

HOLMES
What was it that you saw in him?
Was it the way he smiled, maybe?
His voice? His hair? What?

CHEEVERS
What are you implying?

HOLMES
You know full well what I'm
implying.

CHEEVERS

You'll need to be more specific
because I am in the dark.

HOLMES

There was something about Glenn
Beltrane. Something that made you
want to give him some special
attention. Something that made you
decide that he was going to be your
next Nephilim.

Cheever gasps slightly, his head jerking back a little as if Holmes had slapped him.

INT. MATTHEWS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT., HALLWAY OUTSIDE OF
INTERVIEW ROOM 1 - DAY

MARKS

Gotcha.

INTERCUT - INTERVIEW ROOM ONE AND HALLWAY OUTSIDE OF
INTERVIEW ROOM ONE

CHEEVERS

My next what now?

Holmes consults his notes.

HOLMES

Genesis 6:4. "The Nephilim were in
the earth in those days, and also
after that, when the sons of God
came in unto the daughters of men,
and they bore children to them; the
same were the mighty men that were
of old, the men of renown." You're
a man of God, as you say. Surely
you know what the Nephilim were.

CHEEVERS

Oh. Yes. That. Lots of lore about
those creatures out there. Movies
and TV have distorted the truth
about them.

HOLMES

What is the truth?

CHEEVERS

They're extinct. They all died in
the Flood.

(MORE)

CHEEVERS (CONT'D)

Nephilim were the result of fallen angels -- demons -- interbreeding with humanity. What does this have to do with me?

HOLMES

That's what you call them, isn't it? The boys you rape?

CHEEVERS

That's the most disgusting thing I've ever heard, Detective.

HOLMES

How did you do it? Persuade Glenn to give in to you? I'm guessing you dosed him with something. Am I right? Ecstasy, maybe?

CHEEVERS

He was a troubled young man, Detective. Like I told you before. That's why I was counseling him.

HOLMES

You were dosing him. So he'd be compliant when you'd do the things you did to him.

CHEEVERS

That's a monstrous thing you're accusing me of.

HOLMES

You wormed your own way into his life. You became like a father figure to him. For a while.

Cheever is beginning to sweat.

CHEEVERS

Detective --

HOLMES

You took advantage of that poor, troubled boy. You became the father he never had. To get what you want. To satisfy your sick desires.

CHEEVERS

I don't --

HOLMES

What happened? His voice started changing? Body hair? Glenn was a late bloomer, I know that much. He didn't hit puberty until he was around thirteen. But when he did hit puberty, you dropped him.

CHEEVERS

I --

HOLMES

Because he wasn't the little boy with the little boy's voice and the little boy's face that gets you all hot and bothered. You became like a father to him and when he was no longer attractive to you, you abandoned him and moved on.

CHEEVERS

I was more of a parent to Glenn than anybody else! Nobody loved him like I did!

MARKS

(muttering)

Stupid son of a bitch.

Cheever is sweating heavily now, and panting.

HOLMES

What kind of love are we talking about, here?

CHEEVERS

Love is love, Detective. Sexual, familial, fraternal, it's all the same. Love is love.

HOLMES

So, what you did to Glenn was love?

CHEEVERS

I made love a powerful presence in his life. He was the one who decided it wasn't enough. I didn't leave him. He left me.

HOLMES

He left you? How?

CHEEVERS

He became someone I didn't know.

HOLMES

He started growing up.

CHEEVERS

I'm very tired. Could I have a few minutes?

HOLMES

What?

CHEEVERS

A few minutes. I need some water and I need to catch my breath.

Cook knocks on the door and opens it as Marks turns and glares at him.

COOK

Detective? The man said he needs a break.

HOLMES

Okay. Fine. We'll resume in ten minutes.

Holmes gets up. Cook sticks his head in the room.

COOK

I'll get you some water, Reverend.

CHEEVERS

Thank you, Jason.

Holmes exits the interview room and Cook closes the door as Holmes joins Marks at the window, looking at Cheevers. Cook goes to get Cheevers's water.

MARKS

(muttering)

What now?

HOLMES

(muttering)

We give him his ten fucking minutes. After that, we arrest his ass. Mirandize him. And get him to tell us again what he just said.

INT. MATTHEWS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT, INTERVIEW ROOM 1 - DAY

Cheevers has his head in his hands. He's sweating heavily.

CHEEVERS
(whispering)
Nephilim. Nephilim. How the fuck
... Oh, God. How?

He lowers his head onto the table. The door opens and Cook comes in with a bottle of water. Without a word, Cook uncaps the bottle and puts it down near Cheevers.

Cook closes the door behind him as he leaves and Cheevers raises his head, taking the bottle and, his hands shaking, lifts it to his mouth for a drink.

Then he lowers it and looks at it.

INT./EXT. CHAMBERS'S CAR (FLASHBACK) - NIGHT

Chambers's car is a high-end sports car that is a few years old -- still frightfully expensive but not the latest and greatest.

The car is parked in an alley, headlights off. Chambers and Cheevers sit in the front seat. In the cupholder between them is a bottle of water, same brand as the one Cook brought Cheevers.

Cheevers is holding a small blue pill in his palm, looking at it skeptically.

CHEEVERS
The last batch didn't look like
this.

CHAMBERS
That supplier got busted. These are
better anyway.

CHEEVERS
I don't know

CHAMBERS
Take it yourself, see what happens.

CHEEVERS
You take one.

CHAMBERS
Okay. Sure.

Chambers fishes a plastic bag up from under his seat that has ten or twenty more hits of Ecstasy, taking one out. He pops it in his mouth and grabs the bottled water, taking a swig to wash it down.

Cheeverstares at him a second before taking the one he's holding, using the same bottle to wash it down.

LATER

The drug is hitting. Both men have sunk down a bit in the seats, staring ahead. When they speak their words are slurred and they chuckle and giggle at nothing in particular.

DENISE THE STREETWALKER (36) walks up to Chambers's side of the car. He rolls down the window.

DENISE THE STREETWALKER
Hey, baby. You holding?

CHAMBERS
You got some cash?

She reaches in and puts her hand on Chambers's thigh.

DENISE THE STREETWALKER
I thought maybe we could take it out in trade.

CHAMBERS
Not tonight, Denise. Though maybe my friend, here . . .

Chambers looks over at Cheeverst, who had been nodding, almost asleep.

Cheeverst jerks awake.

CHEEVERS
Say what?

Chambers tilts his head toward Denise.

CHAMBERS
You want some of this, Preacher Simon? It won't cost you anything.

CHEEVERS
No. Sorry. Not interested.

CHAMBERS
(to Denise)
Sorry. You heard the man.

DENISE THE STREETWALKER
Okay. Your loss.

She exits and Chambers rolls the window back up.

CHAMBERS

I can't believe you turned down a free blow job, dude.

CHEEVERS

You turned it down, too.

CHAMBERS

Yeah, but that's because I have to take cash only. I got people who will get really pissed with me if the money doesn't total up.

CHEEVERS

You were going to let her do me.

CHAMBERS

Yeah. Well. Okay, it's like this. I like a certain type. Tall. Muscular. Male.

CHEEVERS

You're homosexual?

CHAMBERS

Yeah. Thing is, the fashion with the guys I like, the guys with the muscles, is they shave off all their body hair and I hate that. Man, give me a big, muscular chest, a splash of those little curly hairs across it, and I just fucking melt.

CHEEVERS

See, I'm the opposite. Body hair just makes me want to gag.

Cheever nods, closing his eyes and leaning back into the headrest, rolling with the drug.

CHEEVERS (CONT'D)

Why do you do this, anyway? Looking at this car, you don't need the money.

CHAMBERS

I'll answer that if you answer a question for me.

Cheever considers it.

CHEEVERS

Okay. What the fuck. What's your question?

CHAMBERS

Why did you say no to Denise?

CHEEVERS

I could say it's because I'm a man of God.

CHAMBERS

And I'd say that's bullshit.

Cheever chuckles.

CHEEVERS

Right. Well, she doesn't do anything for me, either.

CHAMBERS

Are you gay, too?

CHEEVERS

No. She's ... too old for me.

CHAMBERS

What? You like teenagers?

CHEEVERS

Kind of.

CHAMBERS

Oh, my God. Kids?

CHEEVERS

And she was the wrong gender for me.

CHAMBERS

Jesus fucking Christ. You like boys.

CHEEVERS

When they're still boys. Once they start getting hairy

Cheever shudders in revulsion.

CHAMBERS

Holy Christ, man.

CHEEVERS

Like you haven't done worse in your life. Why do you deal drugs? Your family has money.

CHAMBERS

Shit. Yeah. Dad bought this car for me, but it's four years old. He pays for my college and gives me a little money to play with. But not much. I have needs, you know? And I know people so I make good money. If dad ever found out

CHEEVERS

What do you think he'd do?

CHAMBERS

Let's just say I don't know what would be worse -- dad finding out I'm gay, or finding out I sell drugs. Either way, it would be really bad for me.

CHEEVERS

So, we got something on each other now.

CHAMBERS

Yeah. I guess we do. You know how I make my money, and I know about your, uh --

CHEEVERS

My little Nephilim. My boys.

CHAMBERS

What?

CHEEVERS

Nephilim. It's in the Bible. Half-human, half-angel.

CHAMBERS

I think I saw a movie about that.

CHEEVERS

Yeah. I'm sure you did.

INT. MATTHEWS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT., INTERVIEW ROOM 1

Cheever raises his head, gets up and walks over to the window, rapping on it with a knuckle.

CHEEVERS

I want to speak with my spiritual advisor now, please.

INT. MATTHEWS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT, 2ND HALL OUTSIDE
INTERVIEW ROOM ONE - DAY

Holmes is leaning against the wall next to the window, Marks across the hall from him, as Cook leads Clement in.

Cheever is visible through the window, sitting at the table, leaning back, arms across his chest.

Clement pauses to glance in the window, then looks at Holmes and smiles.

CLEMENT

Detective.

HOLMES

Bishop.

CLEMENT

I trust the microphones in the interview room will be turned off? To protect the confidentiality of a conversation between a man and his spiritual advisor.

HOLMES

Of course. Go on in.

Clement goes past him, entering the room, as Cook closes the door.

Through the window Clement can be seen settling into a chair across from Cheever. Cheever and Clement lean towards each other and begin a conversation.

MARKS

You know, it'd be really easy for somebody to lean into that button to turn the mic on. By mistake.

HOLMES

No.

MARKS

I'm just saying.

HOLMES

Then don't say it anymore, Marks.

INT. MATTHEWS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT, INTERVIEW ROOM 1 - DAY

Cheever is much calmer now, not sweating anymore.

CLEMENT

Are you sure?

CHEEVERS

Yes. Pretty sure.

CLEMENT

How do you know he's the source?

CHEEVERS

Because he's the only person who would know ... certain things.

CLEMENT

I see. I won't ask.

CHEEVERS

You know what to do?

CLEMENT

Yes. If you're wrong about this, Simon, there won't be much more I can do for you.

CHEEVERS

It's the only thing that makes sense. He's cooperating with them. Which means they've arrested him and the old man doesn't know. Or they wouldn't be here.

CLEMENT

Very well. Is there anything else?

CHEEVERS

No. Nothing else. Thank you.

CLEMENT

I thought maybe you'd want me to pray with you.

CHEEVERS

Oh! Yes, of course.

Cheever lays his arms on the table and Clement does the same, reaching forward until they are holding hands. They lower their heads and whisper their prayers.

INT. MATTHEWS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT, 2ND HALL OUTSIDE
INTERVIEW ROOM ONE - DAY

Holmes and Marks are watching the two men pray through the window. Off to one side is Cook, leaning against a wall casually.

HOLMES

What are they doing?

MARKS

Praying.

HOLMES

I guess that means they're nearly done.

MARKS

Yes.

Clement gets up, says a final word to Cheevers before exiting. Cheevers settles back down, lowering his head and closing his eyes.

Clement heads back up the hall and pauses, looking at Holmes.

HOLMES

Done?

CLEMENT

Oh, yes. Thank you, Detective.

HOLMES

Thank the Supreme Court.

CLEMENT

I will do so in my prayers. I'll also pray for you, Detective Holmes. And you, Detective Marks. May your souls find peace.

MARKS

Why don't you --

HOLMES

Thank you, Mr. Clement. I'll accept any prayers that are offered.

CLEMENT

Spoken like a true man of faith, Detective. I wish you well.

Clement exits.

MARKS

I wonder what secrets that fucker
is hiding.

COOK

That is a most holy servant of our
Lord and Savior, Detective.

HOLMES

And he's not the suspect this time.
So, let's do this.

INT. MATTHEWS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT, INTERVIEW ROOM 1

Holmes and Marks enter, Holmes going to stand sit across from Cheevers, Marks staying near the door.

Marks is holding her handcuffs.

Holmes opens the case file and removes a form and slides it across the table to Cheevers, who takes it and looks it over.

CHEEVERS

What's this?

HOLMES

That is a Miranda waiver. Simon
Cheevers, I'm placing you under
arrest for sexual abuse of a minor.
You have the right to remain
silent. If you give up the right to
remain silent . . .

INT. MATTHEWS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT, HOLDING CELL - DAY

It's dark, the walls stained. In one corner is a steel toilet and sink.

There are a pair of bunks. There's a small metal desk and chair.

One wall is bars and a door. Across a short hallway is another, similar cell, empty.

Cheevers is the only occupant. He's wearing an orange jump suit and sitting in a chair at the desk.

Standing in the hallway are Marks and Holmes.

HOLMES

Yeah, don't get too comfortable,
Simon.

(MORE)

HOLMES (CONT'D)
You'll be heading back to Florida
with us. Probably tomorrow morning.

CHEEVERS
Really? Good. It'd be nice to go
back down there. I miss Florida.

HOLMES
I need to ask again, though -- are
you sure you want to waive your
right to an attorney? You can
change your mind, you know.

CHEEVERS
God is my judge, Detective, and
Jesus Christ is my attorney.

HOLMES
I see. Well, we'll see you soon.

They exit, leaving Cheevers sitting in his cell quietly and
calmly.

INT. MATTHEWS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT, 2ND HALL - DAY

The door to the holding area closes behind Holmes and Marks.
They pause, standing there next to the door. Holmes takes out
his smart phone and starts checking for messages.

MARKS
Confident bastard, isn't he?

HOLMES
Maybe. Got a text from the
Lieutenant. He wants me to call.

MARKS
He wants an update.

Holmes makes the call.

HOLMES
Hey, Lieu, what's up?

INT. LAKELAND PD, LT. JACKSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Jackson is sitting at his desk, ADA Vance in one of the
visitor's chairs. Their expressions are grim.

JACKSON
Bad news, Holmes.

INTERCUT - phone conversation between Holmes and Jackson

HOLMES
What happened?

MARKS
What's going on?

HOLMES
Shh!

JACKSON
Somehow the old man found out about
young Carlton's arrest.

HOLMES
What? How?

JACKSON
I think the 'somehow' in my
previous statement implies that I
don't know, Detective. However, the
result is as predicted.

HOLMES
He's withdrawing his statement.

JACKSON
He's got high-end legal
representation now and he has
withdrawn any and all statements
he's made and will not testify in
any cases where he provided
information.

HOLMES
But we still got --

JACKSON
You got nothing, Preston.

HOLMES
It can't be! We're so close, Lieu!

JACKSON
I don't know what you were
expecting. This whole thing was a
house of cards. You took it a lot
farther than I thought you would,
but it's finally collapsed. You and
Marks come on home.

HOLMES
But --

JACKSON

An order is being faxed to the Matthews County sheriff's office right now from Judge Nelson ordering Cheevers's immediate release and a dropping of all charges. And you and I have an appointment with Chief Holloway tomorrow morning.

HOLMES

Lieu --

Jackson disconnects the call.

INT. MATTHEWS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT, 2ND HALL - DAY

Holmes slips his phone back into his pocket.

HOLMES

Motherfucker.

MARKS

What is it?

HOLMES

It's over.

Harris is approaching from the hall, along with Cook, both of them wearing smug grins.

HARRIS

Detectives.

Harris unlocks the door and both men go into the holding cell area. The door closes automatically behind them.

HOLMES

Let's go. I don't want to be standing here when they lead him out.

EXT. MATTHEWS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT - DAY

The Sheriff's Department is a new, low building with a parking lot full of squad cars and a few unmarked cars.

One of the vehicles is Jason Cook's big four wheel drive.

Clements's plum-colored beast is parked there as well.

Another car, away from all the others and furthest from the door is the Lakeland PD unmarked car where Holmes and Marks sit, watching the doors of the building.

The doors open and Cheevers emerges, back to wearing his own clothes instead of the jumpsuit, escorted by Clement. The two detectives watch Cheevers and Clement get into Clement's car.

Clement drives past them. Holmes sighs and starts the car and leaves, going the other direction.

INT. MACON PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

It's a large building, full bookshelves, a desk with a librarian, and with a few children running around. One of those children is Dalton Horton.

Cheevers is sitting at a public computer, reading an article from the LAKELAND DAILY NEWS website.

The article has pictures of Holmes, Marks, and Jackson, and the headline is, "LAKELAND PD DETECTIVES SUSPENDED."

INT. EXT CHEEVERS' CAR - DAY

Cheevers is driving down I-16 again, passing a billboard that has a huge picture of him standing there, arms out to either side, head thrown back, in mid-sermon.

The picture was taken in the church, with the podium next to him.

Under the picture are the words, "JOIN REV. SIMON CHEEVERS, EVERY SUNDAY MORNING LIVE 11:00 RADIO WPRP AM 1490!"

Dalton Horton is in the passenger's seat next to him.

INT. HARTSELL CHURCH OF THE ETERNAL COMMUNION - DAY

Cheevers is getting ready to administer the Communion.

Calvin Ranier has been replaced by Dalton as one of the boys who helps with the ritual. As Cheevers speaks he comes over and places a hand on Dalton's shoulder, smiling.

In the pews, Calvin glares at Dalton.

EXT. RANIER FAMILY FARM - DAY

A barn has nearly been destroyed by fire. There's still smoke, and a fire truck is there, firefighters watching the remains for hotspots.

A Matthews County Sheriff's Department car is there, Calvin sitting in the back, expressionless. Loretta and David stand nearby, shocked looks on their faces.

Cheever drives up, getting out of his car and trotting over to Calvin. They share a look before Calvin turns away.

Cheever goes over to talk with the parents.

MONTAGE - the Church begins to come around

Cheever standing in the pulpit, preaching, with the congregation getting more and more numerous. The numbers on the board -- especially the amount taken in collection -- are going up.

Simmons and Hodges installing speakers on the exterior of the church, where people who arrive too late for a seat stand outside to hear the sermon.

Cheever standing in the baptismal fount, baptizing people who are lined up for the ritual.

A few of those people are adults but many of them are children.

The congregation watches him preach, many with tears streaming down their faces. The crowd outside grows.

Clement watches, a big smile on his face.

INT. HARTSELL CHURCH OF THE ETERNAL COMMUNION PARSONAGE, BEDROOM (TWO YEARS LATER) - NIGHT

Cheever is putting away the mirror and straw he uses to snort coke when there's a knock at the door.

He gets up to answer it.

INT. HARTSELL CHURCH OF THE ETERNAL COMMUNION PARSONAGE, DEN - NIGHT

Cheever opens the door to find Bill Horton there. Horton is wearing a suit.

CHEEVERS

Bill! This is a surprise!

HORTON

Hey, Reverend. Could you come over
to the church?

CHEEVERS

Is something wrong?

HORTON

Wrong? Oh, no. We just have a
surprise for you.

CHEEVERS

Can I grab my coat?

HORTON

Sure.

Cheever exits quickly.

BEDROOM

Cheever glances around, checking to be sure the drawer where
he stashed the drug paraphernalia is closed completely. He
locks the drawer.

CHEEVERS

(muttering)

This has got to be about that
raise. Please be about the raise.

He has a light jacket in a chair that he grabs and shrugs
into as he exits.

EXT. HARTSELL CHURCH OF THE ETERNAL COMMUNION - NIGHT

Horton's truck is parked there, along with two more, slightly
smaller trucks. The two men start walking towards the church.

CHEEVERS

So, what's this about?

HORTON

You know, we are one lucky church.
First Rev. Billingslea, and now
with you. Two powerful preachers to
guide us.

CHEEVERS

It's just the Holy Spirit speaking through me, Bill. I'm merely the vessel.

HORTON

Well, before Rev. Billingslea we had one preacher after another who didn't have a clue. Wanted us to desegregate the congregation. Allow black folks. Mexicans. One even wanted us to allow queers. I ain't never heard such as that.

CHEEVERS

Yeah. Satan's influence.

HORTON

Yeah.

They pause outside the front of the church.

HORTON (CONT'D)

It was upsetting to me. I didn't think we'd ever find somebody to lead us. Help us find our way. Rev. Billingslea was a great preacher. He was strong and he understood our ways. I was worried about the next pastor. But then, praise the Lord, we got you.

CHEEVERS

Bill, I --

HORTON

Just let me finish, please, Rev. Cheevers. When you preach I can see the Holy Spirit up there, in that pulpit. You become Christ and your words are anointed by Him. God has truly blessed our little community. So, we deacons had a little meeting and decided it was time to have a special communion, one we've only had twice before, in my lifetime. It's something the other churches in our denomination don't do anymore.

CHEEVERS

A special communion?

HORTON

Yes.

Horton pushes the door to the church in, and steps to one side and gestures for Cheevers to precede him.

Cheevers goes inside, Horton following him, closing the door.

INT. HARTSELL CHURCH OF THE ETERNAL COMMUNION - NIGHT

Some of the lights inside are on. Simmons and Hodges stand at the front, near the altar where the communion is administered.

There's already a dish with a single communion wafer, and a tiny cup with a bit of red liquid that could be grape juice.

Their expressions are solemn but not angry.

Cheevers approaches the two men, followed by Horton.

HORTON

After we administer the communion
we're going to go to a special
ceremony at the Old Church.

CHEEVERS

The Old Church?

SIMMONS

The remains of the first church
that was set up in this community.
Over two hundred years old.

HODGES

Rev. Cheevers? Could you come over
here, please, and accept the flesh
and the blood of Christ?

CHEEVERS

Sure.

Cheevers comes over and opens his mouth, and Hodges places the wafer on his tongue. Cheevers swallows it.

Hodges hands him the tiny cup and Cheevers tosses it down, then makes a face as if it had an unexpected taste before putting the cup back on the altar.

SIMMONS

Okay, let's go. Bill, you're
driving.

INT. EXT. BILL HORTON'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Horton is driving, Simmons in the seat next to him. In the back seat of the extended cab are Hodges and Cheevers.

They are driving down a narrow clay road through a heavily wooded area.

CHEEVERS

It's really dark out here.

HORTON

It gets darker than Egypt at night back through here. No power lines for security lights.

CHEEVERS

I'm not feeling well. Maybe we could do this another time?

HORTON

No, tonight's the night. You'll manage.

CHEEVERS

But I think -- fuh -- I fuh --

Cheever is having trouble speaking. Then he leans forward, unable to sit up straight.

The truck turns off the road down a driveway that has tall grass growing up in the middle.

After driving a hundred yards or so the ruins of the old church appear. It's a shell of a building, most of it having been burned down years before.

There are several other cars there, arraigned so that their headlights can illuminate the interior of the building through the gaps in the walls.

HORTON

Okay, we're here!

They get out of the truck, with Hodges and Simmons dragging a limp Cheevers who is still trying and failing to speak.

There are a couple of barbecue grills set up on one side, lit and being tended by a couple of men in their Sunday best suits.

There's nothing cooking on the grills. Yet.

There is a small table set up with a dish like the one used for communion wafers, except this one is old and covered with strange symbols. It is empty.

There are a couple of trays holding several of the tiny disposable cups for the juice. All of them are empty, too.

Horton drives up and parks.

INT. RUINS OF THE OLD CHURCH - NIGHT

Inside the church, on one wall, is an amateurish if enthusiastic attempt to reproduce da Vinci's painting The Last Supper.

Where the pews would be is a long metal table, with grooves along the sides and a hole at the head.

Underneath the table, under the hole, is a clean five-gallon bucket, empty.

At the head of the table is a leather pouch, closed with a tied string.

Near the table stands Donna Horton, holding a plastic smock.

Hodges and Simmons carry Cheevers to the table and lay him on it, his head near the head of the table. The other people assembled there gather around.

HORTON

Tonight, Simon Cheevers, you will become a part of this community forever.

Horton approaches, going to his wife and allowing her to put the smock on him over his suit, and then to the leather pouch and untying the tie, opening it up.

Cheevers manages to roll his head so he can see what is in the pouch -- a wicked-looking assortment of knives, cleavers, saws, and skinners. Cheevers tries to move but can't do more than jerk a little.

Simmons and Hodges each have a pair of scissors. After removing Cheevers's shoes and socks they use these to begin cutting off his clothes.

Hodges recites as he works.

HODGES

"After taking the cup, he gave thanks, and said, 'Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.'"

Horton leans forward until his lips are near Cheevers's ear.

HORTON

(whispering)

If you were a pig you'd be dead already, so you'd never feel it. I'm sorry about the pain. But you understand that your suffering will sanctify your soul, just like the agony of Christ on the Cross.

Horton selects a hacksaw from the pouch.

HODGES

"And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.'"

Now Cheevers is completely naked. Simmons positions one of Cheevers's feet on the table top, holding it in place while Horton takes aim at Cheevers's ankle with his saw.

HODGES (CONT'D)

"In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.'"

As Horton begins sawing, Cheevers manages to scream.

As Cheevers continues to scream blood runs down the grooves on the table and drains into the five-gallon drum underneath. It starts as a few drops, and slowly becomes a steady stream.

EXT. HARTSELL CHURCH OF THE ETERNAL COMMUNION (FOUR MONTHS LATER) - DAY

Clement stands at the front of the church, watching a car -- a used SUV -- approach, a small smile on his face.

Parked nearby is a brand new purple Chrysler or Buick, newer than Clement's previous car.

The car pulls up, a young man getting out of it. He is REV. MICHAEL LONG (32).

REV LONG
Bishop Clement! Thank you for meeting me here!

He approaches Clement and they embrace, Clement kissing him on the cheek.

CLEMENT
I know this is a big adjustment for you, after Austin.

He puts an arm around Long and starts guiding him toward the doors of the church.

REV LONG
But it's one I need. I promise you, you won't regret giving me another chance. I've learned my lesson.

CLEMENT
I'm sure you have, my boy.

They go inside the church, the doors closing firmly behind them.

FADE OUT: