

FADE IN:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - EARLY MORNING

O.S. Sounds of ocean waves breaking, faint ocean breeze gently rustling palm fronds.

OPEN ON a sleeping male figure. He jerks in frustration as he repositions. He reaches for the clock turning it to view.

3:56 a.m.

He expels an aggravated groan.

SPANNING a standard hotel room, a soft cover brief case leans against the leg of a small desk.

The sound of ocean waves become prevalent as a soft breeze fans the curtains of a slightly cracked balcony door.

A towering ocean view overlooks the beach as a near full moon reflects brilliantly on the ocean.

O.S. Aggressive rustling is heard from the figure in the bed.

4:06 a.m.

Male figure jolts up.

MANDELL

What?

With frustration bordering anger, the male figure tosses away covers, and begins briskly pacing bedside.

MANDELL (CONT'D)

What?

Attempting to burn nervous energy, he starts exercising; jumping jacks, running in place ---

MANDELL (CONT'D)

What? What? What?

Continuing with a mild workout: push ups, squats. Pausing to see if the nervous energy has subsided --

MANDELL (CONT'D)

This ain't nerves... What?

An ocean breeze rustling the curtain catches him attention. The figure turns, sliding the curtain, gazes at the ocean. After a deep breath, he walks onto the balcony.

His silhouette leans against the balcony railing. With a deep exhale, his head drops in prayer.

As his head raises, ever so slowly towards the sky, the moon's reflection reveals his face for the first time.

MANDELL MOTLEY, male, 56, small church Pastor, career automotive industry professional, former inmate at San Quentin and Folsom.

MANDELL (CONT'D)
(calm frustration)
What are you trying to tell me.

Gazing back at the ocean, moon's reflection sparkles in his eyes as he takes a long inhale.

Exhaling slowly as his eyes close ---

MANDELL (CONT'D)
I'm listening.

The sound of waves and ocean breeze become continuously louder as he stills.

In a huff, he opens his eyes.

MANDELL (CONT'D)
I don't have time to write another sermon.

The sound of waves and ocean breeze become louder/stronger.

Huffing at the night sky --

MANDELL (CONT'D)
OK

Taking a seat at the small desk, turns on the lamp as he retrieves a notebook from the briefcase, flopping it on the desk.

Notebook cover: "Sermon Notes"

He aggressively rips out the written pages, crumples them in to a ball, dunking it in trash can. He begins to write.

CUT TO:

ROLL OPENING CREDITS

INT. MEGA CHURCH - CHURCH BY THE GLADES

BACKSTAGE

Stage left, over Mandell's right shoulder, praise team singing on huge stage; over left shoulder, congregation of 5,000 plus watches.

Mandell rolls eyes upward.

MANDELL

Now I'm nervous.

Stage manager, with clipboard and notecards, approaches Mandell.

Extending an index card.

STAGE MANAGER

Welcome, we are glad to have you.
I'm sorry I'm just now getting this to you.

Mandell offers a nervous smile and nods.

STAGE MANAGER (CONT'D)

(talking towards the index card)

We have 3 campuses. This one, Ft. Lauderdale. Our main campus in Coral Springs, and Homestead. Our Homestead campus is a women's correctional facility. You will be live streaming to all 3 as well as live streaming on-line.

Stunned ---

MANDELL

Oh, OK

STAGE MANAGER

The pastor is up next. He will say a few words then introduce you.

MANDELL

Thank you.

Stage manager exits. Mandell stares at index card.

Index card: "correctional facility"

With a faint chuckle, looking upward.

MANDELL (CONT'D)

I get it.

Song ends, congregation applauds.

PASTOR DAVID, male, mid 40's, enters from stage right to center.

Congregation quiets.

PASTOR DAVID

(with excitement)

Good morning! Welcome to Church by the Glades! I'm Pastor David, one of the pastors here at Church by the Glades. Thank you for being part of our church this week. We're so glad you're here whether you're a regular at one of our campuses, watching on line, or joining us for the first time. Thank you for being with us. We have thousands watching from America's prisons. If you're watching from one of our prisons right now, we want to welcome you and celebrate you. Thank you for being a part of our church. Today is the first day of a new series - Bloom where you're planted.

Behind him a super sized screen, center stage, begins a series of photos looping supporting the theme.

--- A single flower blooming in the desert.

--- A lotus flower blooming in the muck.

--- A seedling on the side of a rock mountain and others.

PASTOR DAVID (CONT'D)

We have a guest speaker to kick us off. A church member first told me about his incredible story months ago. I reached out to him to learn more. We've been corresponding ever since and have become good friends. I can't think of a better person to start us off than someone who bloomed in San Quentin, of all places. The worst of the worst American prisons. His experience is a true testament of God's love and grace. God's power to reach HIS children no matter where they are.

(MORE)

PASTOR DAVID (CONT'D)

Please give a big Church by the
Glades welcome to Pastor Mandell
Motley.

Mandell enters, greeting Pastor David with a hand shake and
shoulder bump.

CENTER STAGE

Congregations applauds.

MANDELL

(to Pastor David)

Thank you. Thank you for having
me.

(to the congregation, with
enthusiasm)

And thank you Church by the Glades
for the warm welcome. I have to
admit, it's quite humbling to speak
to such a large crowd and knowing
this is being broadcast to multiple
campuses, prisons on-line....
WOW.... Just.... WOW.... God's
awesomeness never stops blowing my
mind.

He makes the head explode hand gesture/sound.

Congregation affirms with applause, amens, woots. Pastor
David exits.

MANDELL (CONT'D)

When Pastor David first asked me to
speak, I was so honored, and so
excited. I immediately began
working on my message. I had it
prepared, practiced, and ready to
go.... Until last night. After 7
hours of tossing, turning, feeling
like I wanted to jump out of my
skin, I got up around 4. No matter
what I tried, I couldn't sleep, I
couldn't burn off what I thought
was nervous energy. God was trying
to tell me something and I wasn't
listening. When I couldn't stand
it any more, I forced myself to be
quiet and listen.

(MORE)

MANDELL (CONT'D)

You see, I had originally planned to talk about how we, ourselves, build our own obstacles but God wanted me to tweak the message. It wasn't exactly how HE wanted it.

Behind him the screen changes to whiteboard. An artist begins to draw as Mandell continues to speak.

Do y'll remember years ago, there was a commercial about life coming at you fast.

Congregations responds with affirmations.

MANDELL (CONT'D)

Sometimes that "fast" is simply because we are just going about life unaware. Not paying attention. Hangin' with the wrong people. Trustin' the untrustworthy. When you're going about your life, la la la, carefree and not paying attention, suddenly you wake up - and BAM, you're in prison.

Whiteboard drawing of non gender figure with an obstacle forming its path (e.g. boulder, stone wall)

MANDELL (CONT'D)

Either literally or figuratively. You know, we can live in prisons of our own making. Either way, there will come a day when you *will* wake up. It'll seem sudden to you. But other people'll be like, I saw that comin'. Reality has a way of smacking you in the face... hard... Sometimes its a gut punch. But always the purpose is to make you wake up. PAY ATTENTION. Let me tell you about my wake up call.

Whiteboard drawing continues with obstacle.

CUT TO:

INT. COURT HOUSE MARIN COUNTY CA - DAY

HALLWAY

Waist down, shackled feet walk, escorted by law enforcement on each side.

Near distance door held open by another officer.

Shackled feet turn to enter open door.

COURT ROOM

Empty defendant seat awaits.

Sounds of the courtroom buzz become muffled as sound of breathing and heartbeat is amplified.

Slow motion intensifies walk to defendant's chair.

Loud breathing and heart beat continue as legal counsel attempts friendly greeting, which is barely discernible through breathing and heart beat.

Stop slow motion and distorted sounds, as Baliff begins to speak.

BALIFF

All rise for the honorable Judge
Whomever

Judge enters, takes seat at bench.

Insert court dialog with case #, reading and sentencing.

Gavel slams down with a bang akin to a bomb detonation.
Courtroom sounds become suppressed.

Words "10 years" and "San Quentin" begin to echo separately but on top of each other. Ten years, ten years, San Quentin, ten years, San Quentin.

CUT TO BLACK

INT. MEGA CHURCH - CHURCH BY THE GLADES

CENTER STAGE

VIEW: White board only.

Artist completing unsurmountable obstacle.

MANDELL V.O.

Now you're forced to deal with the
obstacle in your face. There's no
way around it.

PULL BACK to see Mandell pointing at unsurmountable obstacle.

MANDELL

After the why me's; how'd I get here's, and all of the million other things racing through your head... it's up to you what you next. God never takes away our free will. You will always have a choice.

Artist begins to draw hammer and chisel. Turning back to the congregation ---

MANDELL (CONT'D)

You're no longer unaware. The reality smack woke you up. What'da ya do now?.....You can continue to stand here *focused* on the obstacle, focused on yourself...why me? Me, me, me,... maybe one day you can chisel your way through... or you can turn your *focus* on God.

Artist abruptly erases figure, then begins redrawing figure turned around with the obstacle at its back.

MANDELL (CONT'D)

If you choose to turn your eyes and focus on God, get ready. And I mean GET READY! Get ready for things beyond belief. Get ready live in God's awesomeness. As long as there is breath left in your body, it's never too late.

Whiteboard artist adds clouds/sun beam shining directly on figure.

CUT TO:

INT. SAN QUENTIN CELL - DAY

Accompanied inmate D68175, Mandell, enters empty cell, personal hygiene kit in hand. In a shock like gaze, takes in the sight of the dreary, lifeless cell in disbelief.

Guard gives muffled instructions as Mandell stands in paralyzed shock while cuffs are being removed.

DAY GUARD

Hey! Are you listening to me.

Snapping back to the present, Mandell looks at the guard, expressionless.

DAY GUARD (CONT'D)
You're in close custody, do you understand?

Mandell shakes head no.

DAY GUARD (CONT'D)
It means someone will be by every 40 minutes. If it's dark, you need to turn on the light so we can see you. Got it.

Mandell nods. Cell door clanks closed.

DAY GUARD (CONT'D)
You too young to be in here. How old are you?

Mandell turns to speak, a meek sound escapes. After clearing his throat, he tries again --

MANDELL
Twenty-two

DAY GUARD
How long you got?

MANDELL
Ten

Guard shakes his head as he exits.

Mandell sit on gloomy bed with a razor thin mattress, tossing hygiene kit on sink.

Motionless he sits, still in shock, staring at nothing specific, like a deer frozen in headlights.

A few moments later, Patrol Guard passes for head count.

Mandell lays on his back. Tears begin to flow as his eyes close.

BEGIN FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

--- Sentencing hearing, loud gavel bang, echo of 10 years, San Quentin

--- Mother's devastating reaction to his call about the sentencing

--- Getting arrested with his girlfriend in hotel hallway by 20+ cops, yelling "she's pregnant", "she's pregnant"

--- Telling girlfriend "I've got this, you know nothing", "promise me, you know nothing"

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE ENDS with echos of 10 years, San Quentin.

BACK TO SCENE

Mandell rolls to his side as full blown sobs consume him.

MANDELL (CONT'D)
I'm gonna die in here.

Massive sobs continue.

Catching a breath between sobs, through his watery vision, his eyes lock on what appears to be a "glowing" personal hygiene kit resting on the sink.

Wiping his eyes, he looks at the empty hall, then back to the hygiene kit.

Taking a deep breath, he sits up. Again, eyeing the hall then hygiene kit.

MANDELL (CONT'D)
(whispered mumble to himself)
Every 40 minutes

Cautiously approaching the sink, Mandell begins placing the items from the hygiene kit onto the sink's ledge.

Retrieving the razor, Mandell pauses.

After quick side eye glance to the empty hallway, he stares at the razor.

Razor in hand, he rolls his wrists slightly, exposing the veins.

CUT TO BLACK:

O.S. Foot steps approaching.