

THE SINKING OF AMERICA: PILOT

Written by

Ian Keldoulis

iankeldoulis@pobox.com
646 337 4156

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. COFFEE SHOP — MORNING

A mid-size sedan pulls into a strip mall in Pasco County, Florida. CHAD MILLER, white, 40's, insurance adjuster and MEREDITH his bi-racial thirteen year-old daughter, step out.

MEREDITH

You said moving to Florida would energize you.

CHAD

It has.

INT. COFFEE SHOP — MORNING

The shop is a small step up from Dunkin Donuts, CHAD and Meredith are second in a short line ordering breakfast.

MEREDITH

Blueberry, Dad. And OJ,... no, apple. Tell me you're not getting the same thing again? Just once?

CHAD

(a little smug)
Nope.

MEREDITH

Don't you ever get tired of skim latte and a bran muffin? How do you even know it's a different day if they all start the same?

At the front of the line, PRUDENCE, thirty-something, intense stare and ethereal manner, gets her order and turns. She stops and looks directly at Chad.

PRUDENCE

(smiling)
Thirty two. Keep it in mind. It'll be big for you.

CHAD

What?

PRUDENCE

(still smiling)
You heard me.

Prudence sits down at a table with her coffee and croissant.

Chad, a little muddled, steps up and places his order.
Meredith nudges him.

MEREDITH
Who's she?

CHAD
I think she has an office down the
strip from mine.

The sales clerk takes CHAD's money and rings up the sale. The register shows the change as 32 cents. Meredith sees the register and tugs on her dad's sleeve.

MEREDITH
(half whispering)
Look!

Chad receives the change and drops it into the tip cup.

CHAD
A clever parlor trick. Heard you
say the order, did the math.

Chad and Meredith collect their order and move to a side counter to eat standing. Chad checks his watch.

CHAD (CONT'D)
We've gotta run.

Chad quickly finishes his muffin and heads to the exit clutching his coffee.

Meredith gulps her apple juice and rushes after her dad muffin in hand, leaving her almost empty juice cup behind.

INT. CHAD'S CAR - DAY

MEREDITH plays with her phone, CHAD tries to engage her.

CHAD
What's on today?

MEREDITH
Nothing. Researching my project.

CHAD
On physics?

MEREDITH
Cosmology and stuff.

CHAD
Sounds cool.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Prudence dumps her trash and heads out. She stops where Chad and Meredith were, puts her palm over Meredith's abandoned cup and closes her eyes.

EXT. PUBLIC SCHOOL - DAY

Meredith gets out of the car, slings on her backpack.

INT. SCHOOL LIBRARY - DAY

Meredith sits at a desk with a computer. She slides her phone across the desk beyond the keyboard. The phone's home screen is an image of her deceased mother, Sherryl, an attractive black woman, late 30's. Meredith rummages in her backpack.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Prudence opens her eyes. Agitated, she makes a phone call.

INT. SCHOOL STAFF ROOM - DAY

TEACHERS finish their morning coffee. MS. MCKENNA, the school librarian, early 30's, demure, exits as her phone rings.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

MS. MCKENNA answers her phone as she walks past STUDENTS heading to class. Shocked, she breaks into a run, pushing students aside as she rushes down the hallway.

INT. MARCUS TAYLOR'S TROPHY ANNEX - DAY

CHAD carrying an iPad in a faux-leather case trails MARCUS TAYLOR, a golf pro, through his wrecked trophy annex, a greenhouse-like addition to his McMansion. The glass dome and French doors are shattered. Golf trophies are strewn about broken. Marcus picks one up.

MARCUS
(wistfully)
Double eagle on the 14th. Now look
at it!

CHAD
FedEx cup semi-final at Quail
Hollow?

Marcus nods.

CHAD (CONT'D)
That 7 iron chip out of the sand
trap – legendary.

MARCUS
Thanks.

Chad glances at his iPad.

CHAD
Hmmm, you have the replacement
value as \$10,000. Gold plate and
acrylic? That's not gonna fly.

INT. SCHOOL LIBRARY – DAY

Meredith's desk jolts, as if someone has bumped it. Her phone
slides off the desk.

MEREDITH looks to see who has passed by but no one has. Her
gaze reaches the door, MS. MCKENNA bursts in, phone to her
ear. A terrified look on her face.

MS. MCKENNA
(yelling)
Get the hell out of here! Everyone!
Run! Run!

A great RUMBLING wells up. Walls shake. CHILDREN run out. Ms.
Mckenna turns and flees. Books fall from shelves.

INT. MARCUS TAYLOR'S LIVING ROOM – DAY

MARCUS and CHAD enter arguing. Local TV news plays in the
background.

CHAD
Totally with you about the hail.
Even though the bulk of the storm
passed six miles away, you somehow
got hit.

MARCUS
You guys don't let up!

CHAD
(shrugs)
Company policy to check. That's
all.

MARCUS
Those trophies are my life's work.
Ruined!

CHAD
Heartbreaking. I know. Material
things seem priceless, but they're
not. It's my job to...

The TV shows the outside of the Public School. It catches
Chad's attention. He stops. Then steps closer.

ON TV

A LOCAL REPORTER by a slew of emergency vehicles.

BACK TO CHAD

CHAD (CONT'D)
Shit... turn the volume up.

MARCUS moves a slider on a phone app.

ON TV

LOCAL REPORTER
...And we've just received
surveillance footage...

INT. SCHOOL LIBRARY/SURVEILLANCE CAMERA POV

Shaking, high-angle time-coded footage shows children running
from the room. The floor opens up, rapidly swallowing its
contents -- desks, chairs, computers, shelves and books
tumble into a deep dark hole.

Chad flings his iPad away, pulls his phone out and calls.

It RINGS and RINGS. No answer.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT 1

EXT. PUBLIC SCHOOL - DAY

Yellow police tape cordons off the school, emergency vehicles with flashing lights are present in large numbers.

A DEPUTY SHERIFF stands on the other side of the tape from a small crowd of onlookers. CHAD pushes through the crowd but when he tries to slide under the tape he is stopped.

CHAD
My daughter's inside!

DEPUTY SHERIFF
Sir, it's too hazardous to
continue.

Chad turns to the person next to him in the crowd, a PARENT with his arm around his DAUGHTER.

CHAD
Can you fucking believe this?

Chad addresses the deputy again. He points to the parent and daughter.

CHAD (CONT'D)
How did he get *her* out?

The deputy ignores Chad.

PARENT
Jesus saved her. God bless.

CHAD
What?!

A man in a hard hat, DWIGHT RANKIN, the county engineer, walks past the deputy. Chad recognizes him.

CHAD (CONT'D)
Hey, Dwight!

Dwight stops and looks at Chad. Dwight doesn't immediately recollect him.

CHAD (CONT'D)
Steve Harding's step-brother. From
the barbecue. Chad.

DWIGHT
Oh, yeah, yeah. Of course.

Chad motions he wants to join Dwight on the other side of the police cordon.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
(to the deputy)
It's okay. He's with me.

DEPUTY SHERIFF
He needs a hard hat.

DWIGHT
Right on it, officer.

Dwight gives the deputy a cheery salute as Chad scoots under the tape. They walk away from the deputy toward the building.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
Third one this month. Real doozy.
Gonna be a bitch to stabilize it.
That's if we can.

Chad looks extremely worried.

EXT. STAFF PARKING LOT - DAY

The staff parking lot is around the other side of the school building away from the crowd.

At the rear of an ambulance with its doors open, CHAD embraces MEREDITH who has a blanket draped over her. They hug for a while. Chad fights back tears.

As Chad kisses Meredith on her forehead he spies the school principal, URSULA ALVAREZ, petite, late 30's, understated stylish, with a few signature pieces of jewelry and status-conscious high heels talking with a female EMS WORKER nearby.

It's clear Chad finds Ursula attractive.

Chad gently directs Meredith to sit down on the rear bumper of the ambulance. Then he steps toward Ursula and the EMS worker.

EMS WORKER
(to Chad)
Mild shock. To be expected.

Chad nods, his face brightens as he makes eye contact with Ursula.

CHAD
(attempting humor)
Well, she's never been separated
from her phone before.

URSULA
Ha! They're all like that, Mr.
Miller.

Ursula warms to Chad. The EMS worker excuses herself and
returns to the ambulance.

URSULA (CONT'D)
I haven't had much time for our new
students yet. But I can tell
Meredith's a special girl.

CHAD
(chuckles)
She takes after her mother.

URSULA
Well, you must be doing something
right, all on your own.

CHAD
When I saw the news I thought I'd
lost Meredith, too.

Chad becomes a little upset. But quickly composes himself.

CHAD (CONT'D)
(halfheartedly joking)
Well, you know what they say,
losing one is misfortune, but
losing two is careless.

Ursula touches Chad's arm to comfort him.

URSULA
As principal, even losing one would
be careless. Especially Meredith.

Ursula lets go of Chad's arm as the local FIRE CHIEF and
SHERIFF approach.

URSULA (CONT'D)
Excuse me, Mr. Miller...

CHAD
(interrupting)
Call me Chad.

URSULA
...Chad...I have to go deal with
the chaos.

As Ursula walks toward the Fire Chief and Sheriff she turns her head and calls back.

URSULA (CONT'D)
Meredith tells me you're with
Radiant. So's our school's policy.

CHAD
(under his breath)
Shit.

Chad gives Ursula a wan smile and a lackluster thumbs up.

EXT. STAFF PARKING LOT- CONTINUOUS

MEREDITH and CHAD walk away from the ambulance and head back towards the other side of the school.

ERICA CADENA, Latina, 13-years old, decked out in crucifix earrings and necklace rushes out from the side of the building to give Meredith, her BFF, a huge hug.

ERICA
Oh my God! Oh my God! You had me so
scared. I tried to IM you! And
Snapchat and text you!

Erica's mother, MRS. CADENA, early forties, conservatively dressed with a weary look, has been slowly following about ten paces behind Erica. She catches up.

MRS. CADENA
Praise Jesus! We prayed for you!

Mrs. Cadena embraces Meredith.

Meredith introduces Chad to Mrs. Cadena.

MRS. CADENA (CONT'D)
(to Chad)
You must come to our church and
give thanks.

Chad smiles awkwardly.

ERICA
Mom! They have their own church.

Chad nods and starts to move away.

CHAD

It was great to meet you. I'm so glad the girls are safe.

Erica and Meredith hug again. Then part.

Erica and Mrs. Cadena head off while Meredith and Chad continue through the parking lot.

CHAD (CONT'D)

She's very religious. Born again?

MEREDITH

Erica? She's just keeping her mom happy.

CHAD

I know what your mother would think.

They walk a few steps in silence. Chad puts his arm around Meredith's shoulder.

CHAD (CONT'D)

I'm taking to you Grandpa's.
They'll keep an eye on you while I'm at work.

MEREDITH

Dad! I'm fine. Really.

As Meredith and Chad leave the parking lot, further down the row of parked cars we see MS. MCKENNA being consoled by PRUDENCE. They are standing by Ms. McKenna's car but it seems that Ms. McKenna is too shaken up to drive and Prudence convinces her to hand over the keys.

Meredith observes the transaction.

INT. CHAD'S CAR - DAY

CHAD is driving through the town and MEREDITH looks out the window.

MEREDITH

So, can I get the new iPhone?

CHAD

Whoa! Too expensive.

MEREDITH

I can claim it, right?

CHAD
Accidental loss? Uh, uh.

MEREDITH
It's not lost. It's in the big hole
under the library!

CHAD
Right.

MEREDITH
I need my phone! I have to know
what people are saying. This is the
biggest thing, ever!

Chad looks down and sees Meredith's hand is trembling. He
puts his hand on her shoulder.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
If mom were around she'd buy me
one.

EXT. GORDON AND LORNA'S HOUSE — DAY

CHAD is slowly walking backwards down the garden path waving
goodbye. MEREDITH stands in front of her grandfather, GORDON,
in his 80s with deteriorating health, and her step-
grandmother, LORNA, a spry 75, on the porch steps of their
well-appointed modernist waterfront home.

LORNA
We'll keep her out of trouble.

Lorna looks at Meredith with a false warmth in her
expression.

GORDON
Just as well it's happened now. The
new place won't be as big.

CHAD
We should talk about that, Dad.

LORNA
Steve knows what he's doing.

Chad turns and walks normally as he passes a real estate sign
in the front yard with a SOLD sticker on it.

CHAD
(sarcastic)
I bet he does.

INT. RADIANT OFFICE - DAY

Venetian blinds do their best to keep the Florida sun out of the modest office composed of a few workstations plus a separate kitchen area that doubles as a photocopying and fax center. The main space is loosely divided into three functional zones - claims, sales and administration - which correspondingly progress from orderly to slightly disorderly to confusingly cluttered.

NOAMI - plump, white mid-50's office administrator and PETE, white, lanky, late 20's salesman, and CHAD sit at their desks while the visiting regional manager SANDRO BURROS light-skinned latino, 40's with a belly, stands near a whiteboard and chews them out about their performance.

SANDRO

You know what they're saying in Jacksonville?

Pete and Naomi brace themselves.

SANDRO (CONT'D)

We should pull out of this freaking swamp.

Sandro starts writing on the whiteboard in red marker annunciating the key words.

SANDRO (CONT'D)

H-u-r-r-i-canes! F-l-o-o-ds! S-i-n-k-holes! Subsidence? It's all built on fuckin' swiss cheese. We're lucky to be standing here.

Sandro points at Pete.

SANDRO (CONT'D)

You! Stringbean. You sell any - any - damage policies you *have to* bundle them with auto and theft. Life, if you can. Whatever. Got it?

Pete nods sheepishly.

SANDRO (CONT'D)

(shakes head)

Repeat after me: No unbundled damage policies.

Pete swallows nervously.

SANDRO (CONT'D)

Come on.

PETE
Ah, no unbundled damage policies.

SANDRO
Good. You've learned something.

Sandro directs his attention to Chad.

SANDRO (CONT'D)
(sarcastic)
And Mr. Miller. Welcome to Florida.

CHAD
Thanks.

SANDRO
Claims. We're hemorrhaging money.

Sandro goes back to the board. He draws a squiggly bracket next to his list of disasters.

SANDRO (CONT'D)
Triage.

Adjacent to the bracket, Sandro draws a big "32%" and circles it with a flourish.

SANDRO (CONT'D)
Cut claims by this much and your
job is secure.
(beat)
Comprende?

EXT. GAS STATION — DAY

CHAD fills his car at the pump. The screen on the pump ticks over to \$31 then slowly creeps up by pennies toward \$32 as PRUDENCE pulls up to the pump on the opposite side of the service island. Chad observes her get out and he likes what he sees.

CHAD
(joking)
Are you stalking me? Or is this a
coincidence?

Chad finishes pumping gas but with his attention on Prudence he fails to notice the total is \$32.

PRUDENCE
Mr. Miller, I don't dabble in
coincidence.

CHAD
You know my name?

PRUDENCE
Facebook.
(smiles)
It's the psychic's best friend.

CHAD
(laughs)
So you're stalking me on Facebook,
too! Call me Chad.

He offers his hand. She accepts.

PRUDENCE
Prudence.

CHAD
The school today, terrible. Nobody
hurt – a miracle. My daughter was
right there.

PRUDENCE
So you believe in miracles?

CHAD
Ha, no. I mean, it's an expression.

PRUDENCE
Energy, Chad. It's all connected.
That's why we're here. Isn't it?

Prudence stares at him and smiles enigmatically.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)
Excuse me while I top up my tank.

Prudence steps to the pump on her side.

Chad takes his receipt from the pump's slot and looks at it
for a little longer than necessary. And then he looks over to
Prudence a puzzled expression on his face.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT 1

ACT 2

EXT. URSULA'S HOUSE – DAY

It's late morning, as CHAD's car pulls up and parks on the street outside the Ursula's leafy bungalow. Chad sits in the car, engine off, to get his courage up.

INT. URSULA'S LIVING ROOM – DAY

URSULA lives alone with her well-trained boxer dog, HELIX. Due to her garden's thick vegetation the interior is dark, she compensates with furniture covered in vibrant tropical prints and a collection of similarly-hued Central American folk art – a strategy only partially successful in dissipating the gloom.

As Ursula escorts CHAD into the living room, Chad nods approvingly at the orderly rows of color-coded manila folders filled with school-related business that cover most of the flat surfaces, including part of the couch.

CHAD

Hmm, a tight ship, despite rocky seas.

The manila folder situation forces Chad and Ursula to sit in close proximity at one end of her couch.

URSULA

I used to envy women who work from home.

Chad pulls his iPad from his briefcase and puts his briefcase on the floor next to his shoe away from Ursula.

URSULA (CONT'D)

How's Meredith doing?

CHAD

Shaken up. Mostly she's bugging me for a new phone. What's the situation at school?

URSULA

Stable.

(beat)

I really don't know. We're relocating to the old aerodrome. No air conditioning.

CHAD

Meredith won't like that. But generally she's adapted to the climate better than me, I think.

URSULA

I'm sure you've had bigger adjustments to make. How long is it since your wife passed?

CHAD

A little over a year.

URSULA

You're a strong man.

CHAD

Do I have a choice?

Chad smiles. Then looks at his iPad and taps it.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Let's start with the easy stuff. An inventory? You have one?

URSULA

Digital? Print out? Or straight from my head? How do you need it?

Chad scrolls down on an electronic claims form then shares the iPad with Ursula.

CHAD

Begin with furniture. Desks?

Ursula opens up a folder and enters some numbers while Chad holds the iPad.

We see a montage of Chad scrolling and Ursula entering information from various folders for an assortment of fixtures— chairs, lamps, shelving units, computers etc. It's an oddly intimate choreography of tapping, swiping and leaning over each other.

Their activity comes to a conclusion, tallied on the iPad at \$77,394.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Not a bad start.

Ursula gets up and walks to the kitchen. The fridge door OPENS and CLOSES.

HELIX saunters over to Chad. Chad puts the iPad down and pets him.

Ursula returns carrying two large glasses of white wine. She hands Chad a glass and sits down even closer to him.

CHAD (CONT'D)
Are we playing hooky?

URSULA
We can claim relocating under our policy, right?

CHAD
Well... In Florida, the geology can be... it's kind of like a "pre-existing condition."

URSULA
Anything I can do to make the process go smoothly?

CHAD
You need to claim more, so I can deny you more.

URSULA
(slyly)
Oh, is that how it works?

Ursula and Chad make heavy eye contact while taking big sips of wine.

EXT. PASCO COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING — DAY

Establishing shot of the local government building.

INT. PASCO COUNTY BUILDING RECORDS OFFICE — DAY

The words BUILDING RECORDS are etched on a frosted glass partition. We look through a small service window onto rows and rows of floor to ceiling filing cabinets. A CLERK walks to the window carrying a large stack of folders.

CLERK
Here ya go, lot 937BF19.

The clerk passes the stack to CHAD who stands hunched on the other side of the hatch.

CLERK (CONT'D)

A real page tuner.

CHAD takes the stack of folders and heads to a desk in the small reading area.

Chad flips through the stack placing several folders to the side until he comes upon one marked "Geological Survey".

He pulls out his phone and takes pictures of pages as he flips through a large document of geological diagrams and tables of numbers that's held together by a staple in the top left corner.

ON DOCUMENTS

Chad takes a shot of page 30, then 31. He flips to the next page. It's 33. He examines the document and sees there's a tiny tab of paper under the staple remaining from where page 32 has been torn out.

ON CHAD

He looks up, puzzled and alarmed.

EXT. STRIP MALL PARKING LOT- DAY

CHAD walks toward his office. As he passes the Psychic sign he stops. (A beat.) He walks toward Prudence's office. Outside he hesitates, then slowly turns the door knob.

INT. PRUDENCE'S WAITING ROOM - DAY

CHAD stands in the small waiting room, with just two chairs a magazine rack and watercooler near a large framed poster of Tibetan mandala.

Chad overhears a conversation occurring on the other side of a wooden door.

PRUDENCE (O.S.)

I'm very concerned. You're attracting a lot of negative energy.

MS. MCKENNA (O.S.)

Yesterday was terrifying. I'm so grateful to you.

PRUDENCE (O.S.)
Your aura. It's extremely dark.
You're like a black hole.

CUT TO:

INT. PRUDENCE'S OFFICE - DAY

It's a small well-lit space with every conceivable religious and mystical reference - Buddha, pyramids, astrology, Christian iconography, African charms etc.-tastefully displayed and neatly arranged on shelves or in picture frames. PRUDENCE and MS. MCKENNA are seated on two comfy chairs separated by a small coffee table with Tarot cards laid out on it.

MS. MCKENNA
What can I do?

Prudence turns over a Tarot card. Its face shows the moon with a dog and wolf howling.

PRUDENCE
We need to stabilize your psychic energy.

MS. MCKENNA
How?

PRUDENCE
There's a cleansing process.

Prudence gets up and walks to the shelves on the wall opposite. She plucks two dark blue vials of oil from a shelf. She holds this first bottle up.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)
Take this oil. Sixteen drops in your bath. Once a day for a week.

Prudence walks back and hands the vial to the Ms. McKenna. Then sits down. The Ms. McKenna points to the vial still in Prudence's hand.

MS. MCKENNA
And that one?

PRUDENCE
This is for me... I don't mean to be rude... But I've been in your presence.

The Ms. McKenna looks very disturbed.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)
(smiles)
After a week, you'll be pure enough
for the next step.

CUT TO:

INT. PRUDENCE'S WAITING ROOM — DAY

WIND CHIMES make noise outside. CHAD moves closer to the door to hear better.

PRUDENCE (O.S.)
I want you to draw away the
darkness with a this.

CUT TO:

INT. PRUDENCE'S OFFICE — DAY

PRUDENCE reaches beside her chair and picks up a purple silk drawstring bag about 6 inches in diameter. She opens it and removes a large quartz-like crystal.

PRUDENCE
From a meteorite that struck the
earth during a full solar eclipse
in the house of Aquarius. Very
rare. Exceedingly powerful,
combining all the elements.

MS. MCKENNA nods.

Prudence raises the crystal head high and slowly turns it.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)
It will eventually continue its
journey through the universe taking
the negative energy with it.

Ms. McKenna reaches toward the crystal. Prudence pulls it away.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)
No! Not until you're cleansed.
Please!

MS. MCKENNA
Sorry.

PRUDENCE

It's okay. I've gone to a lot of trouble to get this for you. Someone else was also after it.

Prudence leans conspiratorially toward the Ms. McKenna.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)

(whispers)

In life there has to be winners and losers.

CUT TO:

INT. PRUDENCE'S WAITING ROOM — DAY

CHAD cups his hand to his ear and listens against the door.

CUT TO:

INT. PRUDENCE'S OFFICE — DAY

PRUDENCE

And, well.... You're just too important.

MS. MCKENNA

Thank you. Honestly, for everything you've done. I'd be dead. And my students...

Prudence returns the crystal to its bag and puts it back beside her chair. She then clasps Ms. McKenna's hands in hers.

PRUDENCE

(smiles)

So, stabilize. Cleanse for a week. Come back with five thousand dollars and I'll demonstrate how to transfer all your negative energy to the meteorite.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRUDENCE'S OFFICE - DAY

CHAD shakes his head and walks out.

EXT. STRIP MALL PARKING LOT - DAY

A few hours later, LORNA, GORDON and MEREDITH pull up near the Radiant office in Gordon's late-model Lexus with Lorna at the wheel. Meredith steps out of the rear passenger door with her school backpack and blows a kiss at her grandfather in the front passenger seat who waves back. They drive off.

Meredith watches the car drive past the Radiant sign. She turns and walks over to the Psychic's office.

EXT. PRUDENCE'S OFFICE - DAY

MEREDITH is about to knock on the door when it opens. She is a little startled.

Prudence stands before her.

PRUDENCE
Come in. I've been expecting you.

INT. PRUDENCE'S OFFICE - DAY

MEREDITH stands in the middle of the small room taking it in. She looks at all the exotic objects on the shelves and walls, her eyes come to rest on a Buddha. PRUDENCE is seated on one of the comfortable chairs by the small coffee table.

PRUDENCE
(smiling)
It's your mother, isn't it
Meredith?

Meredith nods.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)
Come, sit down.

Meredith obliges and sits down on the other comfy chair with her backpack still on.

MEREDITH
I used to have her last voice mail
on my phone. But... I lost it.

PRUDENCE
You have questions for her you'd
like answered.

MEREDITH
Yep. Tons.

INT. URSULA'S HOUSE - DAY

URSULA is on her couch her feet up on the coffee table, she has a closed manila folders on her lap and her phone next to her ear.

URSULA
Really? No. I came on board two
years after it was built.

Ursula starts unconsciously rubbing her feet together, sensuously.

URSULA (CONT'D)
Hey, why don't we talk about this
over dinner?

CUT TO:

INT. RADIANT OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

CHAD on the phone watches MEREDITH with her backpack on plunk herself down in the seat in front of his desk. They make eye contact.

CHAD
(a little nervous)
Ah, yeah. That would be great,
Ursula. Your chicken today was
delicious.

Meredith sits up when she hears the name of her principal.

CHAD (CONT'D)
Uh. No. Not tonight.

Meredith starts silently mouthing her words in an exaggerated way as she makes a hand gesture to indicate the phone.

MEREDITH
(silently)
Is that my principal?

Chad nods his head.

Meredith rolls her eyes.

CHAD
Tomorrow. Sure.

Meredith opens her mouth and performs a mock gagging gesture.

CHAD (CONT'D)
(frowning at Meredith)
I'll make sure Meredith stays with
her grandparents.

Chad hangs up. He looks bothered as MEREDITH sits leaning on his desk, her face on top of crossed elbows, eyes like a sad puppy.

MEREDITH
It's too gross. How can you even do
this? Mom's only just gone a year!

CHAD
Your mother would be fine with it.
She told me so.

MEREDITH
Yeah, well. I want her to okay it.

CHAD
What? Sit up. You're acting like a
six-year old.

Meredith slowly sits back up.

CHAD (CONT'D)
She and I talked things through
before she passed.

MEREDITH
Well, I told that woman down the
mall about her...

CHAD
You did what?

Chad stands up, angry.

EXT. PRUDENCE'S OFFICE — DAY

CHAD pounds on Prudence's door.

PRUDENCE opens it and stands before Chad.

CHAD

(angry)

If you so much as step near my daughter. I'll have you...

PRUDENCE

(interrupting)

I'm in the middle of a session, Mr. Miller.

Prudence steps closer to Chad and closes the door behind her. Her proximity takes Chad off guard and he loses some of his steam.

CHAD

Taking advantage of a grieving teenage girl is the lowest...

PRUDENCE

I told her to go away. I have no interest in her case.

CHAD

She told me...

PRUDENCE

The last thing I need is to bring your dead wife back here.

Prudence turns and moves toward the door.

Chad grabs her shoulder.

CHAD

I don't know what cockamamy shit you're pulling. \$5000 for dime store junk. But you stay clear of me and my family.

Prudence turns takes Chad's hand of her and grabs his tie and leans in close.

PRUDENCE

Probability? Bullshit. 9,999 people won't have a problem. But you fleece them every single day. And then the one person comes along. What do you do? Deny them their claim.

She lets go of his tie.

We're in the same game, Chad.

(MORE)

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)

I just know who that one person is
and you don't.

She turns, enters the door and closes it.

INT. PRUDENCE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

The bathroom is a glow with candle light, candles are liberally placed on shelves, the window sill and surround the deep antique claw-foot tub in which PRUDENCE is soaking, its surface strewn with rose petals.

The little blue vial from her office rests near the faucet. Prudence turns a faucet and runs a little more hot water into the tub. She then lies back and closes her eyes.

As Prudence rests, slowly the petals in the tub begin to line up. They then gradually start to swirl between her outstretched feet.

The swirling gets faster and faster. It grows into a small whirlpool in the tub.

Prudence opens her eyes wide in horror and gasps.

Prudence looks down at her feet. The water is still but there are petals distributed around the rim of the tub.

FADE OUT.

END ACT 2

ACT 3

INT. RADIANT OFFICE – DAY

CHAD walks in to find MS. MCKENNA seated in front of his desk, clasping her handbag, exuding nervousness.

Chad goes to his seat. Before he gets to welcome her, Ms. McKenna opens her handbag, removes a copy of her life insurance policy and places it onto the desk.

MS. MCKENNA
How quickly can you redeem this?

Chad takes the policy and speaks while reading it.

CHAD
Welcome to Radiant, Mrs. McKenna.

MS. MCKENNA
(interrupts)
It's Ms. I want the full value.
\$5000.

Chad holds up the policy, flicking his finger on some fine print.

CHAD
Early redemption penalties.

MS. MCKENNA
It's my money. I've paid into it.

CHAD
If you hang onto this until you retire, it'll be worth a lot more. Why trade your future in now?

Ms. McKenna looks flustered.

MS. MCKENNA
I almost died the other day. Do you know how I feel about the future?

CHAD
That's not likely to ever happen again.

MS. MCKENNA
Likely? I want to prevent it! Can your policy do that?

Chad slides the policy back in front of her.

INT. URSULA'S LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

Soft Latin jazz PLAYS. Dim lighting lends the room a warmth and coziness absent earlier.

An intimate dinner is over but the plates have yet to be cleared. Helix is passed out on the floor.

CHAD and URSULA, her legs tucked under, are seated close together on the sofa, no longer covered in stacks of folders. A single, almost finished bowl of ice cream with two spoons sits on the coffee table between them.

Chad leans to the table, picks up a wine glass and settles back on the sofa, even closer to Ursula.

URSULA

I mostly meet fathers. But they
tend to come paired up already. The
single men around here? Hmmph.
There's a reason they're single.

She takes a sip of her wine and snuggles up to Chad.

CHAD

With Meredith, my time is limited.
I figured dating apps might help.
But I don't even know where to
begin.

Ursula takes another sip, looking at Chad.

URSULA

Just as well.

Chad finally takes the cue, puts his arm around Ursula and kisses her.

INT. GORDON AND LORNA'S HOUSE – NIGHT

LORNA and GORDON have both fallen asleep in front of the TV showing local weather.

MEREDITH, in pajamas, walks into the room and spies Lorna's phone abandoned on her arm rest. Very stealthily Meredith picks up the phone.

INT. GORDON AND LORNA'S GUEST BEDROOM – NIGHT

MEREDITH lies on the bed IMing her BFF ERICA. Meredith types a message.

ON SCREEN

"Dad wont let me"

A new message arrives.

ON SCREEN

"U dont need her"

Meredith back to Erica.

ON SCREEN

"4 real?"

A new message arrives.

ON SCREEN

"DIY seance"

Meredith back to Erica.

ON SCREEN

"Awesome! How?"

The door to the bedroom opens, it's LORNA.

LORNA
Meredith, I need my phone.

EXT. RESTAURANT TERRACE — DAY

The outdoor space is busy. CHAD, dressed from the night before, is having brunch with URSULA. They are relaxed and enjoying each other's company. Ursula is just getting a little tipsy.

URSULA
How do you feel about that? You're like an indentured servant.

CHAD
I wouldn't put it that way. I'm mean, yes, Sherryl's illness put me in the hole.

URSULA
One hundred grand is a hell of a hole! And you're still an employee.
(MORE)

URSULA (CONT'D)
Now you're working for them to pay
off what they wouldn't give you.

Chad is distracted by something along the terrace.

CHAD'S POV

PRUDENCE and A MALE COMPANION are settling their check at another table. The Companion heads to the bathroom. And Prudence makes eye contact with Chad.

ON PRUDENCE

Prudence walks toward Chad.

Chad continues talking to Ursula his voice trailing off as Prudence approaches.

CHAD
Well, they were good about time off
and... the whole... relocation.

Prudence politely introduces herself.

PRUDENCE
Prudence, you're Ursula Alvarez,
from the school. Nice to meet you.

Prudence and Ursula shake hands.

URSULA
(to Chad)
What passes as celebrity here.

Chad becomes the center of Prudence's attention.

PRUDENCE
Your professional boundaries are
blurring, Mr. Miller.

URSULA
Excuse me?

PRUDENCE
(smiles at Ursula)
I'm sorry, this isn't about you.

CHAD
This doesn't concern you, either,
Prudence.

PRUDENCE

When a man denies a woman what's rightfully hers, that does concern me. Very much.

URSULA

What are you talking about?

CHAD

It's nothing.

PRUDENCE

(to Ursula)

Every woman has a right to her own money, wouldn't you agree?

CHAD

Look, I'm helping her make the right decision.

PRUDENCE

Really?

(to Ursula)

One of your employees, Ms. McKenna. Comes to me for counselling.

CHAD

That's what you call it?

URSULA

Barbara? After the other day— she needs it!

CHAD

My point exactly. She's in no state of mind to make important financial decisions.

URSULA

Chad, her quick thinking saved Meredith's life.

PRUDENCE

And now she wants some of her own money from her own policy.

URSULA

(to Chad)

Go on, it's hers. Let her live a little!

Ursula drains her mimosa.

INT. MILLER HOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

MEREDITH, with her backpack on, and CHAD still in last night's clothes, enter the modest kitchen with its outdated appliances. Meredith gets juice from the fridge while Chad habitually tosses his car keys into a small dish on the counter.

CHAD
Run that by me again?

Meredith pours juice into a glass. Leaving the carton on the counter.

MEREDITH
Ms. McKenna ran in screaming at us
to leave, just the minute the hole
opened up.

Chad leans against the counter and thinks for a moment.

CHAD
Are you saying she knew in advance?

MEREDITH
Yeah. I guess. She was on her
phone.

Meredith takes her backpack off.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
Lorna's buying me a new phone.

A beat.

CHAD
(annoyed)
What?

MEREDITH
She ordered it already.

CHAD
Did it occur to either of you to
ask your father?

Peeved, Chad picks up the juice carton, drains it in a few gulps, then tosses it in the trash.

INT. PRUDENCE'S OFFICE — DAY

PRUDENCE leads CHAD into her office indicating for him to sit on the chair reserved for clients and taking her customary seat. Chad surveys all the religious artifacts in the room before taking his seat.

Prudence picks up the deck of tarot cards on the little table between them and cuts it, so the two top cards show.

CHAD
I'm not here for a reading.

Prudence glances at the cards.

PRUDENCE
Of course not. But there's a lot on your mind.

CHAD
Very perceptive.
(beat)
Did you call the librarian before the sinkhole occurred?

Prudence takes her phone out of her bag and taps it.

ON PHONE SCREEN

We see the list of recent calls scroll to Ms. McKenna, date and time is a minute before the sinkhole, 9:04.

BACK TO PRUDENCE

PRUDENCE
The sinkhole happened at 9:05.

She hands the phone to Chad.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)
Is this the hard evidence you're looking for Mr. Miller?

Chad stands up and walks around the room looking at the religious objects. He stops at the Buddha and while thinking, casually raises his hand and in an almost absent-minded way rubs its belly with his fingertip.

CHAD
My wife was Buddhist.
(beat)
I was fine with that. It's a philosophy not a religion.

PRUDENCE
Did she believe in reincarnation?

Chad turns back to Prudence.

CHAD
How did you know about the
sinkhole?

PRUDENCE
I felt something.
(beat)
And I've felt it again.

CHAD
Really?
(beat)
Where? When?

Prudence takes a tarot card up off the pile closest to her
and looks at it, then puts it down.

PRUDENCE
Don't you want to talk about Ms.
Mckenna's policy? Let's get that
out of the way first.

EXT. PRUDENCE'S OFFICE — LATER

MS. MCKENNA hands PRUDENCE an envelope stuffed with cash,
which she places in a draw that slides out from the small
table with her tarot cards on it.

Prudence picks up the meteorite in its velvet bag.

PRUDENCE
Do everything exactly in the order
I told you. But remember, most
important, finish your cleanse,
first!

She hands the velvet bag to Ms. Mckenna.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)

Don't so much as open the bag and
look at it until you're done.

INT. RADIANT OFFICE – DAY

PRUDENCE enters the Radiant office, smiles at NAOMI and PETE as she walks to CHAD at his desk. He puts down some papers and looks up at Prudence as she takes a seat.

PRUDENCE
6723 Osteen Rd.

CHAD
Are you sure?

Prudence gives a wan smile.

Chad types the address into the computer on his desk.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

The image of a small evangelical church, The Church of God's Harvest appears beside the address: 6723 Osteen Rd, New Port Richey.

Underneath the image is the Radiant logo and policy Number: A70490032.

ON CHAD

CHAD (CONT'D)
Shit!

END ACT 3

ACT 4

EXT. MS. MCKENNA'S HOUSE - DAY

MEREDITH and ERICA rest their bicycles against a tree shrouded in Spanish moss in the front yard, walk to the door of the purple colored double-wide and ring the bell.

INT. MS. MCKENNA'S HOUSE - DAY

MS. MCKENNA hears the DOORBELL and puts down the smoking smudge stick she has been cleansing the house with and walks down a narrow hallway lined with books, she opens the door.

EXT. MS. MCKENNA'S HOUSE - DAY

MEREDITH and ERICA talk to MS. MCKENNA with the screen door between them.

MS. MCKENNA

Hello. Couldn't wait for the new school to open? A pleasant surprise. How can I help you young ladies?

MEREDITH

Well, um, we want to, ah...

ERICA

Her dad won't let her talk to that psychic woman.

MS. MCKENNA

Well, that's a pity. What did you want to talk to her about?

MEREDITH

We want to make contact with dead people and thought you might know.

MS. MCKENNA

A séance? Huh?

(beat)

Hang on, I have something for you.

Ms. McKenna disappears down the hallway. We can vaguely see her perusing her book shelves.

MEREDITH
(whispers to Erica)
Why you'd mention my dad? Your mom
thinks she's a witch!

Erica shrugs.

Ms. McKenna returns with a book and opens the screen door.

MS. MCKENNA
Here, before you go messing with
spirits read this.

Ms. McKenna hands the book to Meredith, who looks at the cover.

ON BOOK

The occult looking title reads, "Bardo Thodol: the Tibetan Book of the Dead."

ON MS. MCKENNA

MS. MCKENNA (CONT'D)
If anybody asks, you found it in a
thrift store.

INT. RADIANT OFFICE - DAY

CHAD is immersed in work, spreadsheets on his computer, files open on his desk a calculator and legal pad at hand.

PETE walks into Chad's workspace and hands him a folder.

PETE
I pulled the details on the church.
Take a look at the geo report.

Chad flips through photos of documents in the folder. When he gets to the geological report, the pages have been torn out, just like for the school. Pete and Chad share a look.

Chad punches a few numbers into his calculator.

CHAD
Double their premium.
(beat)
And triple the deductible.

EXT. RADIANT OFFICE- LATER

The white van of Church of God's Harvest is parked outside.

INT. RADIANT OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

PETE is seated with the Rev. Williams, who is in no mood to negotiate. The reverend puts down the newly revised policy on Pete's desk.

REV. WILLIAMS

That's no explanation. Outrageous!
Cancel the policy.

Pete looks flummoxed and waves CHAD over. Chad comes joins them.

CHAD

What can I do for you?

PETE

Explain our new rates to the Rev.
Williams.

CHAD

As you know, there's been an
upswing in geological activity in
Pasco County, the school...

REV. WILLIAMS

(interrupts)

You know why the school?

The reverend gives Chad a sly, sideways look.

REVEREND WILLIAMS

Where did it happen?

CHAD

Well, under the library,
principally. Where the substrate...

REV. WILLIAMS

You ever see the books in that
library? Monkeys into people. Acts
against nature. Heathen words
shouting down the gentle voice of
our Lord.

CHAD

If the books contributed anything,
it was their weight.

REV. WILLIAMS

You science guys got it all figured
out, huh? When was the last time
you opened the one true book?

CHAD

I have an advanced degree in
mathematics. I've read dozens of
books that contain proofs,
Reverend.

Rev. Williams gets up and into Chad's face.

REV. WILLIAMS

You can take your god-damned policy
and put it where the light don't
shine. The end times will not be
summoned by your mathematics, sir.

Rev. Williams picks up the policy again, tears it in half
storms out.

REV. WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

(over shoulder)

Only God protects.

PETE

(calling after him)

Ah, legally you still need the
third party liability coverage...
even if its not with us.

CHAD looks relieved.

INT. SANDRO'S CAR - DAY

SANDRO drives down Route 19, an endless strip mall.

INT. RADIANT OFFICE - DAY

CHAD picks up his phone at his desk.

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SANDRO

You're not making me happy, Miller.

Chad taps a few keys on his computer keyboard.

CHAD

Look. I cut 32% out of the school's
claim. And they've agreed.

SANDRO

Should be 100%.

CHAD

From here on, it's lawyers. And if they take it to trial, what juror isn't going to side with a school?

SANDRO

What school can wait four years for its money? They'll settle long before a trial ever happens.

CHAD

It was a catastrophic collapse, Sandro. The engineer's report is in. We don't have a choice.

SANDRO

Clearly, you're still in the dark about how insurance works in the sunshine state.

CHAD

I'm getting enlightened, fast.

SANDRO

That why you just lost us the church? You know the expression bully pulpit, Miller?
(beat)

You just punched Pasco County's biggest bully in the face.

INT. RIVERFRONT TIKI BAR - NIGHT

Sun is setting along the Cotee river as URSULA and CHAD have drinks in brightly colored plastic containers under the thatched roof.

CHAD

How's the big relocation shaping up for tomorrow?

URSULA

Like clockwork.

Ursula laughs.

URSULA (CONT'D)

An old, hard to wind clock. Not a digital one. But yeah.

CHAD

I guess anything is easy compared to dealing with kids.

URSULA

Everyone thinks being a principal is all about kids, but running a school, it's mostly logistics. Timing. In the end, that's what everything comes down to.

Chad looks a little unsettled by this. He excuses himself.

CHAD

Time to visit the men's room.

Chad walks out of Ursula's line of sight.

EXT. RIVERFRONT TIKI BAR/MENS TOILET – NIGHT

CHAD takes his phone out and calls Prudence.

INT. PRUDENCE'S BATHROOM – NIGHT

PRUDENCE is soaking in her claw foot tub surrounded by candles when the phone resting on her closed toilet buzzes.

Prudence sighs and reaches for the phone.

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION

CHAD

Prudence, I worried about the timing. I'm taking a lot of heat. Things have moved fast.

PRUDENCE

How so?

CHAD

After I applied pressure, the church— you know, at 6723 Osteen Rd— ditched its policy.

PRUDENCE

Well that's good. I guess.

CHAD

My boss doesn't see it that way. Until there's a sinkhole, I'm losing the company money.

PRUDENCE

Should we get together and talk?

EXT. RIVERFRONT TIKI BAR — NIGHT

CHAD rejoins URSULA.

URSULA

You know what you can do to help?

CHAD

Tell me.

URSULA

Come back to my place and load some boxes. We can order in. BBQ? How about it?

CHAD

Gee. I'd love to but I have to collect Meredith from her grandparents.

INT. PRUDENCE'S LIVING ROOM — NIGHT

Prudence's home is a softer version of her office with clean modern lines. The biggest difference is her eclectic collection of religious objects focuses on erotica: Friezes of the Kama Sutra from Indian temples, suggestive pre-Columbian art, and sensual pagan rituals decorate the walls.

CHAD, fidgets in an easy chair, while PRUDENCE sits on a sofa dressed in a silk robe, her hair still a little wet.

PRUDENCE

I'm sorry I can't be more specific.

CHAD

You can tell me where but not when? What kind of bullshit is that?

PRUDENCE

I didn't tell you to raise their premium.

CHAD

You said it would be huge. What else am I supposed to do?

PRUDENCE

Where and how big.

(sigh)

So I can't tell you when. Two out of three isn't bad. I'm not God, you know.

INT. MEREDITH'S ROOM - NIGHT

In semi-darkness, lit only by her bedside lamp, MEREDITH lies reading the Tibetan Book of the Dead.

Her door opens. CHAD half enters.

CHAD
Here, this came today.

Chad tosses Meredith a delivery box. She struggles to catch it and the box bounces on the bed.

CHAD (CONT'D)
Remember, Lorna may have bought it.
But your father is paying for the
data plan.

Chad closes the door and walks off.

Meredith puts down her book, excitedly opens up the box and takes out the phone.

INT. MILLER HOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

CHAD opens a cupboard takes out a bottle of whisky and pours himself a drink.

INT. MEREDITH'S ROOM - NIGHT

MEREDITH lies on her bed, glued to her new phone. She sends ERICA a text.

INT. CHURCH OF GOD'S HARVEST - NIGHT

Bible study is coming to an end and a small group of believers, including MRS. CADENA and ERICA are stacking folding chairs. Erica stops and pulls her phone out of her jacket pocket.

INTERCUT TEXT CONVERSATION:

FROM MEREDITH ON SCREEN:

Downloaded app

BACK FROM ERICA

Awesome. 2morro? UR place?

FROM MEREDITH ON SCREEN:

6:30 k?

INT. CHURCH OF GOD'S HARVEST — NIGHT

ERICA

Mom, is it okay if I go to
Meredith's tomorrow night and
study? We have a test on Friday.

Mrs. Cadena continues putting away folding chairs.

MRS. CADENA

Is studying going to get you ready
for the Rapture?

ERICA

Mom, my test isn't on the Rapture!

MRS. CADENA

All right. But you should bring
your friend here. And soon! There
isn't much time left.

INT. MEREDITH'S ROOM — NIGHT

MEREDITH taps her phone.

ON SCREEN:

The Ouija Board app loads.

INT. AERODROME — DAY

URSULA stands in the middle of a large hanger. There are
several rows of school desks lined up before her in the giant
space.

Trucks at the rear of the hangar are unloading more school
equipment, blackboards and teacher's desks.

DAN STRUTHERS, trim, early 60's in a white polo shirt and
baseball cap with an aviation logo approaches URSULA.

URSULA

I can't thank you enough.

DAN

We love getting youngsters
interested in aviation.

(MORE)

DAN (CONT'D)
But remember, this is a "fly-in
community".

Dan points out to the runway at the end of the hangar.

DAN (CONT'D)
All roadways on the east side are
also active taxiways, so folks can
park their planes at home. And
planes have right of way.

INT. MEREDITH'S ROOM - NIGHT

The blinds are drawn the room is dark, lit by a single candle
on the bedside table. MEREDITH and ERICA sit with their legs
crossed on Meredith's bed, between them is Meredith's phone
with the Ouija Board app running.

ERICA
Tap, "yes".

Meredith taps the screen. The haunting sound of a THEREMIN
emanates from the phone. The girls giggle, nervously.

INT. CHURCH OF GOD'S HARVEST - NIGHT

The REVEREND WILLIAMS is leading call and response with a
small group of BELIEVERS including MRS. CADENA.

REVEREND WILLIAMS
(shouts)
And who can deny the light?

BELIEVERS
Nobody!

REVEREND WILLIAMS
And who can withstand his
punishment?

BELIEVERS
Nobody!

INT. MEREDITH'S ROOM - NIGHT

MEREDITH and ERICA are transfixed by the phone.

ON PHONE SCREEN

The Ouija app displays the letters "S" then "H"

ERICA

Oh my God!

Next comes the letter "E".

MEREDITH

It's spelling out Sherryl! My mom!

INT. CHURCH OF GOD'S HARVEST — NIGHT

As the REVEREND WILLIAMS is about to speak to the BELIEVERS a LOUD CRASH is heard and the church hall shudders for a few seconds.

Everything falls quiet.

A CAR ALARM from outside breaks the silence.

The congregation rushes to the door.

But as they reach the threshold, one of the Believers screams out.

BELIEVER ONE

Stop!!

EXT. CHURCH OF GOD'S HARVEST PARKING LOT — NIGHT

A huge sinkhole has opened up in the parking lot, the edge is right at the door of the Church, where the crowd of BELIEVERS teeter trying to not to fall in.

The church's white van has been swallowed whole. It's headlights beaming upwards illuminating the facade of the church, its CAR ALARM blaring.

INT. MEREDITH'S ROOM — NIGHT

MEREDITH and ERICA are still sitting crossed-legged on the bed with Meredith's phone between them, the Ouija app displayed.

Erica's own phone buzzes. She takes it from her jacket and puts it to her ear. A look of horror comes across her face.

ERICA

(to phone)

Thank Jesus you're alright! Oh my God!

Erica slowly lowers her phone, she's in a state of shock. She points down at Meredith's phone.

ERICA (CONT'D)
Turn that thing off!

MEREDITH
What happened?

ERICA
It's evil. Turn it off!

Meredith complies but is puzzled.

ERICA (CONT'D)
The devil just tried to eat my
mother! And it's our fault.

Erica bursts into tears.

Meredith blows out the candle and turns on the light.

END OF ACT 4

ACT 5

INT. RADIANT OFFICE – DAY

CHAD is at his desk with SANDRO sitting opposite.

SANDRO

You're a friggin' genius! I was about to fire your ass, and now this? I heard the Church moved to Citizens just before the shit hit the fan. They better pay up or that preacher will bring fire on their asses!

CHAD

Thanks.

SANDRO

I didn't think you'd figure it out. Too much New England bullshit in your head.

CHAD

New Jersey's really Mid Atlantic.

Sandro waves a "whatever" gesture. He leans forward, conspiratorially lowering his voice.

SANDRO

The truth is, insurance companies here, we don't really want to insure anybody.

Sandro sits back and laughs.

CHAD

What about the school?

SANDRO

Look, I hate to admit it, you're probably right. I thought about it. We may beat them down some, but we're still stuck with the legal fees. And if it does go to court in a bazillion years, then we lose and pay all *their* legal fees, too. Fucking lawyers!

(beat)

Process it. Shit, we might even get some publicity for doing good.

CHAD
That's great. Appreciate it.

Sandro gets up to leave, then turns with a final word.

SANDRO
I don't want to know how you did
it. Just keep doing it.

EXT. AERODROME - DAY

CHAD is in his car, parked in a long line of parents waiting to collect their kids. MEREDITH, opens the door and throws her back pack in the rear seat and hops in.

CHAD
Where's Erica?

MEREDITH
Her mom won't let her come with us.

CHAD
What? Why not?

Chad starts the car.

Meredith shrugs.

Chad pulls out.

CHAD (CONT'D)
How about some ice cream?

INT. ICE CREAM SHOP - DAY

CHAD and MEREDITH are eating ice creams by the window as PRUDENCE walks by and sees them. Prudence enters the shop. She walks over and gestures at their cones.

PRUDENCE
Almond, pistachio and...

MEREDITH
Mine's vanilla with cookie dough.

CHAD
Is your batting average always two
out of three?

PRUDENCE
Kind of... I need you to do
something.

CHAD

For you?

PRUDENCE

For both of us. And Meredith.

Prudence looks around a little nervously, then opens her handbag. She pulls out a piece of paper and hands it to Chad.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)

Don't look at it till later, then follow the instructions.

CHAD

Why? What is it?

PRUDENCE

Honestly, if I could explain it to you I would. We've stirred something. People are a lot more frightening than spirits.

Prudence gives a very unreassuring smile, then leaves.

INT. MILLER HOUSE — NIGHT

CHAD sits in a chair with a drink.

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out his wallet. He removes Prudence's note from his wallet and reads it.

He takes a swig.

INT. MILLER HOUSE KITCHEN — NIGHT

CHAD rummages through a kitchen draw and finds a lighter. He tests it and it works. He puts it in his pants pocket.

INT. MEREDITH'S ROOM — NIGHT

MEREDITH is asleep in her bed.

CHAD enters the room and looks at her for a few moments. He walks to her bed, leans over and kisses her gently on the forehead without waking her.

EXT. CHURCH OF GOD'S HARVEST PARKING LOT — NIGHT

CHAD's car pulls up near the lot. He turns his lights off and waits a few moments.

Chad gets out of his car and walks toward the cordoned off sinkhole. He steps under the rope and stands at its edge. Then takes out his wallet.

He removes a twenty dollar bill, a ten and two single bills from his wallet and carefully places them together. Thirty two dollars. Then folds them once, crease running down the center.

Looking around, he surveys the scene. No one is watching.

He pulls the lighter from his pocket and carefully sets the bills on fire.

The paper flares up, momentarily illuminating the cross on the door of the church.

Chad tosses the burning money into the hole.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END