

After-Life

Written by

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FADE IN.

INT. AN ABANDONED SHACK

JAMESON TUCKER - detective, mid 30s. He's on his knees, being held down by two THUGS. He struggles against the two men, he's still got some fight in him. The click of a gun's safety catch being released stuns him enough that he momentarily stops resisting. We see who's holding the gun. It's VICTOR, Jameson's partner and friend.

VICTOR
I am truly sorry it had to end
this way Jameson.

There's genuine regret in Victor's face, but it's too late. He's committed to the act. Jameson HAS to die, It's Victor or Jameson, and Victor is a big fan of self-preservation.

JAMESON
Fuck you.

There is only hate in Jameson's eyes. He attempts to break free, but the thugs keep his down.

VICTOR
This is just business. I need
you to know that. You will
always be my friend. It *kills*
me to do this.

Jameson looks Victor dead in the eye.

JAMESON
Go to hell you son of a bitch.

Victor's hand falters slightly, but only for a brief moment.

VICTOR
I'm sure I will.

Victor aims the gun, and we hear the inevitable shot, but we don't see the carnage because we -

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. A PARK - LATER

Jameson is walking through a park, hands in pockets, eyes to the ground. He passes smiling couples, people out for a walk, some walking their dogs. A ball rolls Jameson's feet. Looking up he sees a family reunion. Generations of family, spanning years and years,

reminiscing, happy. Some of them play football. They wave at Jameson, who looks at his feet and then grimaces. He flips the bird at the players. Before they have time to react, he's walking on, leaving the ball where it landed. Jameson continues his walk for a while, passing numerous interesting people. Knights, nuns, women in bathing suits, all types. This place is a melting pot, not only filled with citizens from all walks of life, they're from all eras of history. Jameson decides to take a rest, so he sits himself down on a park bench. He reaches into his coat, and pulls out a hip flask and without missing a beat takes a big swig. We start to pan out, up and away from Jameson, we see the whole park, and now the area around it. We see people going about their blissful lives. Happy and content. We zoom further out, too far to see the people, now we see the whole city - what a sight! It literally hangs in the clouds, it seems like its floating. A huge city, with green spaces surrounding it. It's more beautiful than anything you can imagine. As we zoom out we see a huge golden gate that stands on the edge of the city. We're looking down at Heaven, and it's truly a paradise.

CUT TO:

EXT. OMAHAH BEACH NORMANDY - 6TH JUNE 1944

This however, isn't paradise. We start on the grey skies, we hear the explosions, but we don't see them. ANDERSON narrates. He's Jameson's friend, but we don't know that yet.

ANDERSON (V.O)

That day in 1944. It was in
the air, death. All around me.
I could taste it. We all
could, but we had a job to do,
and by God we were going to do
it.

We now pan down and see the carnage, American troops land on the beaches of Normandy. Explosions all around, these men are heading straight into the jaws of death.

CUT TO:

EXT. LANDING CRAFT

We now see ANDERSON, our narrator. He's the leader of a company of men who cower in a landing craft, attempting to avoid getting shot before they are even ashore. Anderson stares straight ahead. Eyes on his goal. One man throws up.

ANDERSON (V.O)

We were US Army Rangers. Elite men, charged with an impossible task.

Our Anderson on screen grimaces. Pure grit. Pure determination.

CUT TO:

EXT. OMAHA BEACH - LATER

Anderson's men exit their landing craft, wading through the water and onto the beach. Some don't make it. They are hit and go down, staining the sea red. Anderson presses on, followed by the survivors. We look at their objective, a cliff, on top of which are mounted guns. These MUST be taken out for the invasion to succeed.

ANDERSON (V.O)

Our objective was to take out the Nazi anti-personal guns. Those things were firing huge shells onto the beaches, killing our men left right and centre. If we didn't get them destroyed soon, the whole operation would fail, and France would remain under the iron grip of the Nazi regime.

As Anderson narrates, his men deploy mortars. These don't fire shells, they fire grappling hooks that attach to the cliffs. With a series of bangs, the mortars fire, and sure enough, the hooks attach to the cliffs. Now it's a matter of climbing up those ropes. Anderson turns to the man next to him whose face we haven't seen yet.

ANDERSON

You ready Son? Up the rope! GO GO GO!

We now see his face. This is Jameson. Our detective friend. He doesn't respond. In fact, he's holding a glass of whisky, and takes an absent minded sip. Not what you'd normally do when getting shot at.

ANDERSON

Son?

All the gunfire stops. All the soldiers stand perfectly still, a bullet hangs in midair, time has STOPPED. Only Anderson moves. He shakes Jameson and we -

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. A BAR - NIGHT

Anderson sits at a bar with Jameson. Across the booth are two young women, who listen intently to Anderson's story. Anderson shakes Jameson, who's not really paying attention.

ANDERSON
Jameson!

Jameson comes round. He's irritated.

JAMESON
What?

ANDERSON
I was just saying that we had to grapple up the cliffside and take out the German guns.

Jameson isn't very interested. Instead of replying, he simply finishes his whisky, and leaves the table. He relocates himself to the bar, sitting on a stool with his back to the group.

GIRL 1
What's wrong with him?

ANDERSON
He's...still very affected by what we saw. He doesn't like to talk about it. I shouldn't say this, but...he...He didn't make it that day. Poor kid.

Anderson almost tears up.

ANDERSON
We lost so many good men...

Girl 1 grabs his hand reassuringly.

ANDERSON
Thank you.

GIRL 2
Are you okay to go on?

ANDERSON
I'll manage.
(Back to the story)
We began to climb the ropes, but they were slippery from the sea water. The rope cut your hands as you climbed and the salt water got in there, stung like a bitch. The bullets all around you didn't help either.

He lets go of Girl 1's hand and dramatically holds his palms out.

ANDERSON
I can still feel the
burning...

The women look at him with respect. He's a true war hero. Well, he isn't but they don't know that.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR - LATER

Jameson sits at the bar, drinking another whisky. In the background, Anderson finishes talking to the two women, who leave. He moves over to Jameson and sits down next to him. He triumphantly slams a napkin down on the bar. It's got two phone numbers written on it.

ANDERSON
Got BOTH their numbers. No
help from you I might add.

Jameson isn't happy. Anderson gestures to the paper.

ANDERSON
Three kisses! Three kisses
each. I'm predicting something
else with three in it. Can you
guess what it is?

JAMESON
Doesn't it bother you, lying
to them like that?

ANDERSON
It's not a lie! Those events
really happened! Just not to
me.

Anderson isn't a war hero. He's an actor. Not successful in the movies (his box office results were meagre) but with the ladies? That's another story.

JAMESON
(Sarcastically)
Well that's fine then. I take
it back.

ANDERSON
You are *always* such a downer.
Why do I hang out with you?

JAMESON
Why don't you just go tell
some more of your bullshit

stories to some unlucky
strangers? I'm fine here.

Anderson softens, despite the joking, he is Jameson's
friend.

ANDERSON

You have to let go...There's
nothing you can do. What's
done is done. Lets just go
have fun, we'll hit a club,
we'll -

JAMESON

You know I can't let it go
Anderson. You know that.

ANDERSON

(Exasperated)

Why can't you just enjoy it
here. It's perfect - look!

Anderson gestures to the previously empty bar, where
now sits an expensive bottle of champagne, it's just
appeared there. He picks it up.

ANDERSON

We've got all the booze we
want, lots of beautiful women
to meet, no need to work -
everything we'd ever want. We
are *literally* in paradise.

JAMESON

(bitterly)

Not everything!

ANDERSON

What do you want eh? What's
going to make you happy?

JAMESON

I want back in. I want back
down there. I want justice.

ANDERSON

You know that's not possible.

JAMESON

I'll find a way.

ANDERSON

You're not going to find it at
the bottom of that glass.

JAMESON

You're right there Anderson.

Jameson leaves the stool and heads to the exit.
Anderson calls after him.

ANDERSON
Jameson! Come ba-

The door slams. Jameson is gone. Anderson sighs,
shrugs, and then eyes the champagne on the table.

ANDERSON
Don't mind if I do.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE CLIFFS OF HEAVEN - LATER

Jameson stands at the edge of Heaven, looking down at
the clouds. He almost looks like he's going to jump. He
feels the light breeze on his face. He doesn't like
that. It's too fresh. Jameson lights up a cigarette.
After taking a drag, he stares down at the white
clouds.

VICTOR (O.S)
You come here pretty much
everyday. Why don't you jump
already?

Jameson looks to his right calmly, and Victor is
standing there. From Jameson's reaction we know that
it's not the real Victor. This is a ghost of Jameson's
imagination, taunting him, driving him on.

JAMESON
I don't know where it's going
to take me.

VICTOR
It could take you back to
Earth -

JAMESON
Or straight to hell.

Jameson throws his cigarette butt off the edge of the
cliff, and it soars through the air, a small orange
glow that extinguishes as it passes through the clouds
- never to be seen again.

VICTOR
Only one way to find out.

JAMESON
Not tonight.

Jameson turns, and walks away. Victor is gone. He was never there in the first place.

CUT TO:

INT. JAMESON'S APARTMENT - LATER

This apartment is sparsely decorated, as if the occupant doesn't intend to be staying for very long. A calendar on the side of the room has X's scrawled on every date that has passed. The X's aren't leading to anything, they're simply counting the days. On the bed Jameson is asleep, sprawled out over the covers, fully clothed. He's wearing the exact same outfit he was wearing the day before. A knock on the door. Jameson stirs, another knock.

JAMESON

Hang on!

Jameson clambers out of bed and answers the door. Anderson waits outside.

ANDERSON

Odd looking pajamas you have there.

JAMESON

You're lucky I don't sleep naked.

ANDERSON

I truly am. Come on, lets get breakfast, I've got something big to tell you.

CUT TO:

INT. DINER - LATER

Anderson shovels pancakes into his mouth, while Jameson watches him, disgusted. He's just having a black coffee.

JAMESON

I already knew you were a pig. You didn't have to give me a practical demonstration.

ANDERSON

(Mouth full)

Fuck off, I'm trying to help you here.

Anderson swallows his food.

ANDERSON
You really want out of here?

JAMESON
You know I do.

ANDERSON
I might know a way.

JAMESON
Bullshit. That's less
believable than your Vietnam
story.

ANDERSON
I'm serious man.
(Sees Jameson's
disbelief)
Look, this is legit.

JAMESON
Why are you just telling me
about this now, not...I don't
know, the forty times I
mentioned I didn't want to be
here?

ANDERSON
I thought you'd come around,
see some sense and get the
crazy idea of leaving here out
of your head, but you haven't,
so I'm gonna tell you because
I'm a nice guy and you are my
friend.

JAMESON
This is bullshit. Your acting
is crappy. You don't even
deserve to be off-off
Broadway. Is this a joke?

ANDERSON
(Annoyed)
Dude. I'm fucking serious -
and that stung. Don't say shit
like that. People said my turn
as the porter in Macbeth was
inspired.

Jameson eyes Anderson, unsure.

JAMESON
How do you know this guy?

ANDERSON
I don't know him exactly -

Jameson sighs. He goes to leave.

ANDERSON

Sit down! Listen to me for a damn second will you? A few months ago, I was playing poker -

CUT TO:

INT. A LIVING ROOM - A FEW MONTHS AGO

Five men sit around the table, playing Texas Hold Em. Anderson is one of them. Another of these men is JONES. MANN deals, STEVENS smokes a cigar, and the last man is MICKY. Proper cockney.

ANDERSON

Raise. 3000.

The other players all fold, except Jones who pushes all his chips forward.

JONES

All in.

Anderson doesn't even think. He's got great cards.

ANDERSON

Call.

Anderson flips over his cards, pocket kings. Jones flips his - 2,6 he's dominated. Mann flips the next five cards over: 3, Jack, 4, Queen, 5 - Jones gets the straight and wins the hand. He rakes in the large stack of chips, leaving Anderson with a minuscule amount. He isn't a happy man.

ANDERSON

You know what I miss about Earth? Proper poker - Where idiots like you don't call with shit like that, 'cause the money actually means something.

JONES

Whatever you say buddy.

Mann joins the conversation.

MANN

Any of you guys miss anything about Earth?

Jones considers.

JONES

My wife, but she's a good
girl, she'll be up here when
the time comes.

MANN

I miss my grandkids, but like
you said, I'll see them again,
when the time comes.

MANN begins shuffling the cards again.

STEVENS

I miss, tourism, visiting
places, I saw the Great Wall
of China once.

JONES

What did you think of it?

Stevens shrugs.

STEVENS

It was alright.

Micky joins the conversation.

MICKY

Let me tell you a fuckin'
story and a 'alf -

The others listen in while the cards are dealt.

MICKY

For a while, when I got 'ere,
I wanted back, I wasn't ready
to go yet, I convinced myself
that I still had shit to see
on Earth. I neva travelled.
Spent my whole life in London.
I was whining to everyone I
met. I was being more of a
bitch than Anderson is when he
loses a hand.

The group laugh, except Anderson, but he ignores the
insult, he wants to hear the end of the story.

MICKY

One day, I answer my door and
there's this guy just standin'
there. Hands me this card. I
fink I still got it.

Micky fumbles with his wallet, eventually pulling out a
white card. He places it on the table. The card reads
'Unexpected Journeys - 1543 Maple' There's a picture of
the planet Earth on the back of the card.

JONES
That's some creepy shit.

ANDERSON
Did you go?

MICKY
Fuck no! I thought about it
for a bit, and i realised,
this place is perfect. I was
mad to want to leave. Anyway,
it was probably just some
prick playing a prank.

ANDERSON
Can I have that card?

MICKY
Take it, I ain't got no use
for it. I Call.

Anderson folds his cards and takes the business card,
twirling it in his hand thoughtfully.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR -

We look at the same card, as Jameson holds it.

ANDERSON
What do you think?

JAMESON
Could just be bullshit, but
it's worth checking out.

Jameson stands, and punches Anderson hard in the arm.

ANDERSON
Fuck! What was that for?

JAMESON
That's for not telling me
about this sooner.

ANDERSON
A thank you would suffice.

Jameson puts the card in his pocket.

JAMESON
You coming or what?

Jameson leaves. Anderson sighs, and follows.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAPLE STREET - LATER

Jameson and Anderson stand on a pavement, looking at something off screen.

JAMESON
Here we are - 1543 Maple.

We see the building that the two men are looking at. A sign across the top of the building reads 'Unexpected Journeys Travel Agency.'

ANDERSON
How about that? It's actually there. I Wonder if it's busy?

JAMESON
Must be. The queue's out the door.

There's no queue at all, in fact people walk past the agency without even glancing at it. Anderson eyes the closed door of the building.

ANDERSON
Looks closed.

JAMESON
Nah, It'll be open.

ANDERSON
Howdya know?

Jameson has fire in his eyes, he's motivated, alert, excited, a far cry from the miserable man we first saw at the bar. He takes the card out of his pocket, and waves it at Anderson.

JAMESON
The customer's always right.
That's how I know. Lets go.

CUT TO:

INT. UNEXPECTED JOURNEYS TRAVEL AGENCY RECEPTION - LATER

Jameson and Anderson enter. The agency is empty. Chairs, a table, a nice potted plant in the corner - a bog standard reception. At the reception desk a young lady is asleep, she's rested her arms on the counter and is using them as a pillow while she snoozes.

JAMESON
Hello there.

No reaction.

ANDERSON

Hello?

Jameson walks up to the counter and slams it with his palm. The receptionist wakes up with a jolt. As she awakens she instinctively rattles off the company motto.

RECEPTIONIST

Welcome to Unexpected Journeys Travel Agency where the only thing that's expected is great service.

JAMESON

I'm looking to take advantage of your 'great service'.

The receptionist is very excited about this.

RECEPTIONIST

Absolutely sir, Absolutely. I'll just see if we have any free representatives.

She takes a look at her computer.

RECEPTIONIST

I should be able to squeeze you in. Is it the both of you who are traveling?

JAMESON

Just me.

RECEPTIONIST

(To Anderson)

If you could please wait here sir, we like our consultations to be with the customer only.

(To Jameson)

Right through here please sir, just call the lift. One of our representatives will meet you at the bottom.

The receptionist opens a door, and beckons for Jameson to enter, Jameson does just that. Anderson is not amused.

ANDERSON

Okay. I'll just wait here. That's cool Jameson. That's cool. I don't mind or anything. It's not like I found this place for you.

Jameson shrugs at Anderson as he walks down the corridor towards the lift. We stay in the reception.

RECEPTIONIST
Are you sure you aren't
looking to travel sir?

Anderson zones in on the receptionist. He switches gears; Jameson is out of his mind now. After a perfectly timed beat, Anderson gives a world weary sigh.

ANDERSON
I did more than my fair of
traveling during my time in
the military.

The receptionist bites.

RECEPTIONIST
Military?

ANDERSON
I don't like to talk about it
much...

(A beat)
The year was 1968, the place?
Saigon. I could smell death in
the air -

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

We hear Anderson continuing his story in the background. He's laying it on thick. Jameson arrives at the lift at the end of the corridor, he presses the down button and the door opens. Jameson steps into the lift and the door closes on us.

CUT TO:

INT. LIFT - CONTINUOUS

The lift begins to move.

VICTOR (O.S)
Going down.

Jameson turns to his right, and there is Victor, leaning against the side of the lift.

VICTOR
This is very professional.

JAMESON

Joke all you want. I'm coming for you.

VICTOR

Fat chance. I bet this lift isn't even moving. When the door opens, Ashton Kutcher is going to kick you in the balls and tell you that you've been punked.

JAMESON

There's no way that asshole made it up here.

Victor nods.

VICTOR

I can't disagree with you on that one, but come on Jameson, A travel agency in Heaven? Even you aren't stupid enough to believe that.

JAMESON

Laugh it up. Laugh it up - because soon -

Jameson mimes shooting Victor in the head.

JAMESON

I'm going to send you straight to hell.

Victor isn't amused.

VICTOR

I take it back. You are that stupid.

Victor vanishes as the doors to the lift open. As they do Jameson is suddenly met with rapturous applause. You'd think this was the second coming of Christ. Jameson is taken aback. A group of people are gathered around the lift. They are all dressed in smart blue polo shirts with name tags. Two of the polo shirts embrace. A single tear of joy slides down the face of another. Jameson retreats into the lift slightly. Maybe Victor was right? What's wrong with these people?

VOICE (O.S)

Out of my way, Out of my way!
Stop that clapping, you'll
scare the poor blighter!

As the clapping subsides, an older man shoves his way

through the group. He's also wearing a polo shirt. His name-tag reads 'MANAGER'. This is the aptly named MANAGER. He speaks with a posh English accent. He walks into the lift and hugs Jameson. Jameson is confused, but he pats the older man on the back gingerly. After a hug that goes on far too long, the man lets go of Jameson. The Manager starts welling up.

MANAGER

My boy. We've been waiting for you for a long time.

JAMESON

Flattered - but I'm only into chicks, and even then, only one a at a time. I'm not really into the orgy scene...

The Manger isn't listening to Jameson. He's turned to address his employees.

MANAGER

Back to your desks! I'll consult with Mr.....

JAMESON

Tucker.

MANAGER

Mr. Tucker.

The group of employees look disappointed.

MANAGER

Sho! Off with you!

He makes elaborate gestures with his hands. That seems to do the business, as the group of employees begrudgingly leave and head back towards their respective desks.

MANAGER

Come with me my boy.

The Manager puts his arm around Jameson and walks him out of the lift.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAVEL AGENCY - LATER

The Manager is leading Jameson through an office space, a bull pen. All the employees have returned to their desks, they pretend to type at their computers or read files, but they are all sneaking looks at Jameson and whispering amongst themselves. The Manager guides Jameson through the office, past various cubicles.

JAMESON

You all seem...enthusiastic to see me.

MANAGER

Of course my boy, you're a customer. We haven't had a customer in...

The Manager stops and thinks.

MANAGER

In...

He turns to an employee, JEFF, who is shredding blank paper at his desk.

MANAGER

Jeff my boy, when was the last time we had a customer?

Jeff stops his shredding.

JEFF

I don't think we've ever had a customer sir.

MANAGER

Ah yes! That's right. Thank you Jeff.

JEFF

No worries sir.

A beat.

MANAGER

Back to work then.

JEFF

Sorry sir, yes sir.

Jeff returns to shredding his blank paper as the Manager moves Jameson along.

MANAGER

Being a Travel Agent is a tough business when you are operating from paradise, people don't really want to leave you see...

JAMESON

I can imagine - but why do you do it? Why run a travel agency where nobody travels? It seems a bit redundant.

The two men arrive at the Manager's office. A sign reading 'Manager' is on the door. Did I mention this guy is the manager? I did? Just checking.

MANAGER

My boy, we do it, because for us, Heaven is a travel agency. Some people like to spend their days sunbathing, some like to play golf. We...

The Manager surveys his kingdom.

MANAGER

We make customers dreams come true, dreams of travel, dreams of adventure! We do what we do for free, because this is our passion!

JAMESON

If you had any customers.

MANAGER

(Annoyed)

Quite. This way please Mr. Tucker.

The Manager opens his office door and Jameson walks on in. Before following him the Manager looks out into the bullpen one last time.

MANAGER

Jeff! I don't hear any shredding!

JEFF (O.S)

Sorry sir!

The sound of the shredder starts up again. The Manager enters his office and closes the door behind him.

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The Manager takes his seat behind his desk and beckons Jameson to sit opposite. Jameson does just that.

MANAGER

I have to keep them busy you see, make sure their on their toes.

The office is decorated with posters of different destinations, China, America, Barbados, Italy, Japan.

MANAGER

Now Mr. Tucker, Where can I interest you in visiting for your holiday? Rome? Tokyo? Australia is nice at this time of year. Can I recommend a trip to our fair nation of England? Buckingham palace is not to be missed. The Queen is turning 116 this year, but I promise you, she doesn't look a day over 109.

JAMESON

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

MANAGER

Philadelphia.

JAMESON

Yes sir.

The Manager is disappointed, but he types on his computer.

MANAGER

Let's see what comes up.

His computer beeps happily.

MANAGER

Philadelphia - Home of the Liberty Bell, and (reading from his computer) 'Methamphetamine capital of the world'.

JAMESON

(Fondly)

That's the place.

More typing.

MANAGER

Yes - I can book you outgoing to Philadelphia, and it looks like, the next shuttle leaves tomorrow. Do you want me to book you on that?

JAMESON

Sure.

Type type type.

MANAGER

Lucky man! We have a free space; in fact, you'll be the

only passenger. Plenty of leg room for you.

JAMESON

I'm all about the leg room.

MANAGER

Now, before I confirm your booking I have to read you the terms and conditions of your trip.

The old man takes a deep breath before launching into the terms and conditions. He is looking at Jameson during this speech, he doesn't look at his computer once. This is all memorised.

MANAGER

Unexpected Journeys Travel Agency would like to remind you, our valued customer, that we are bound by the laws of paradise and must act within the confines of said laws. All holidays will last a maximum of 24 hours. When on Earth the participant of said holiday must not interact with family members, friends or acquaintances who still reside on Earth. The holiday participant must not in any way inform those still on Earth of the existence of Heaven, Hell, or any of their related subsidiaries. Any actions undergone by the holiday participant while on Earth are made of their own accord and Unexpected Journeys can take no responsibilities for those actions. Any sin committed while the holiday participant is on Earth *will* count towards their tally, and if too many sins are committed, the participant *will* after the 24 hours is up, be condemned to eternal damnation. If the participant disobeys any of these rules and regulations, they may be subject to eternal damnation. Unexpected Journeys Travel Agency is not to be held responsible if the holiday maker becomes subject to -

Jameson cuts in.

JAMESON
Eternal damnation?

The Manager raises a finger to stop Jameson. Then finishes.

MANAGER
Eternal damnation.

The old man takes a deep breath. He didn't breathe once through his monologue. You have to admire his commitment to his job.

JAMESON
You memorised that whole thing?

MANAGER
(Short of breath and sheepish)
There's not much else to do around here but memorise the terms and conditions...

He finishes catching his breath.

MANAGER
If you agree to these terms could you just sign...

He picks some papers out from his desk.

MANAGER
Here..Here...Here...and here.

Jameson does as he's told.

MANAGER
Fantastic.

JAMESON
So what now?

The Manager clicks his mouse, and the printer on his desk whirs into life.

MANAGER
Here's your boarding pass, and a map to the location of the shuttle station.

The Manager hands the papers to Jameson.

JAMESON
Thanks. Is that it? Am I okay to go?

Ding! The Manager has an idea.

MANAGER

We pride ourselves on customer service at Unexpected Journeys Travel Agency, and are interested in any feedback you may give us. Did you find your experience today A - Pleasurable, B - Satisfactory...

The manager continues, but Jameson simply gets up and leaves the office.

CUT TO:

INT. UNEXPECTED JOURNEYS TRAVEL AGENCY RECEPTION - LATER

Jameson walks through the door, back into reception. Anderson and the Receptionist are nowhere to be seen. Jameson heads towards the door.

JAMESON

You coming Anderson?

Jameson turns. Anderson pops his head up from behind the reception desk. We see a little of his neck and shoulders too. From this we can ascertain that he's naked.

ANDERSON

I'll meet you at the diner -
Give me like -

Anderson looks down behind the desk.

ANDERSON

5 minutes.

Jameson shakes his head, he doesn't want to admit it, but he's impressed. Anderson has GAME. Game built completely on lies, granted, but it's still game. Jameson pops a cigarette in his mouth and opens the door to exit.

RECEPTIONIST (O.S)

(From behind the counter)

Thank you for choosing
Unexpected Journeys!

Jameson exits.

CUT TO:

INT. THE DINER - LATER

It's the same diner that Jameson and Anderson were last in. Jameson is drinking another black coffee. He frowns then puts it down. There's something terribly wrong with his drink. Jameson has just the fix, he reaches into his jacket and pulls out his trusty hip flask. He pours a healthy dose of liquor into the coffee, puts the flask away and takes another sip. Better. The door to the diner opens and Anderson enters, looking a bit unkempt, but happy. He spots Jameson and sits down opposite him.

ANDERSON

Well?

JAMESON

They're nuts, but I think they can actually get me down to Earth.

Anderson looks worried.

ANDERSON

This is getting serious Jameson. Think for a second - If you do go down to Earth, if you do kill your old partner...What if you...What if you don't make it back up here.

JAMESON

If I go to hell? I'll manage.

ANDERSON

How can you be so blasé about your soul?

Jameson raises an eyebrow. Blasé? Did Anderson just say blasé? What kind of a word is that. Anderson notices that Jameson isn't paying full attention.

ANDERSON

Hey! Heaven to Jameson! Think for a fucking second! You'll burn for eternity. I can't even imagine what pain is down there, what they do to you. Why do you need to risk everything you have for petty revenge? Your partner will be judged when his time comes. He'll pay for what he did. You don't need to be involved. I'm begging you man, I don't think revenge will be so appealing when the devil is shoving

pokers so far up your ass that they tickle your tonsils.

JAMESON

I've been through this so many times with you Anderson. Victor is a corrupt cop. He killed me to cover his ass. Think what else he'll do to stay free and line his pockets! Think about how many people will die before their time just so he can go on living in luxury. Sure this place is 'paradise'-

Jameson says the word paradise as if it leaves a bad taste in his mouth.

JAMESON

But I was entitled to a full life on Earth. Victor took that away from me. He'll take that away from other people too, good people! You want me to wait for his time to come? Guess what. I *am* his time. You want to wait for him to be judged? I *am* judgment. I'll do what I have to do.

Anderson sees that fire in Jameson's eyes. He's not budging. His mind is set. Set like cement. Set like stone. Set like game set and match. That last one wasn't so great, but you get the drift. Jameson's mind is made up.

ANDERSON

I never should have given you that card.

JAMESON

Don't say shit like that. You helped me. Whatever happens after this, know that because of you, I found peace.

ANDERSON

Even if your version of peace involves you being the Devil's private sex slave for eternity?

JAMESON

You come up with some fucked up stuff Anderson. Even then.

Jameson finishes his 'coffee' and stands up. Anderson

does the same.

JAMESON
It's been a pleasure.

ANDERSON
I wish I could say the same.

Jameson allows himself a chuckle. He puts out his hand and Anderson shakes it.

ANDERSON
Good luck Jameson. I hope it all works out.

JAMESON
Thanks for everything Anderson.

ANDERSON
(Quoting Shakespeare)
I should count myself in nothing else so happy, as in a soul remembering my good friends.

The handshake finishes. Anderson nods at Jameson. This is getting quite emotional.

JAMESON
Is that Shakespeare? Stick with the war stories.

ANDERSON
I've got a great new one about the Korean War. It's going to make the finale of M*A*S*H look like garbage.

The two men share a laugh. Jameson turns and begins to walk out the door. He stops just by the door and turns.

JAMESON
Tom.

ANDERSON
Yes?

JAMESON
Your fly is undone.

Maybe not so emotional. Anderson does his fly up, and when he looks back up. Jameson is gone. He gives an army salute to where Jameson once stood. The diner hustles and bustles. A young lady enters and sits at the breakfast bar. Anderson locks on. She looks like she needs to hear about his harrowing experience (and

extreme heroism) during the battle of the Somme.

CUT TO:

INT. AN ABANDONED SHACK

We're back at the first scene again. It's the same - Exactly the same events play out. Jameson Tucker - detective, mid 30s. He's on his knees, being held down by two THUGS. He struggles against the two men, he's still got some fight in him. The click of a gun's safety catch being release stuns him enough that he momentarily stops resisting. We see who's holding the gun. It's VICTOR, Jameson's partner and friend.

VICTOR

I am truly sorry it had to end
this way Jameson.

There's genuine regret in Victor's face, but it's too late. He's committed to the act. Jameson HAS to die, It's Victor or Jameson, and Victor is a big fan of self preservation.

JAMESON

Fuck you.

There is only hate in Jameson's eyes. He attempts to break free, but the thugs keep his down.

VICTOR

This is just business. I need
you to know that. You will
always be my friend. It *kills*
me to do this.

Jameson looks Victor dead in the eye.

JAMESON

Go to hell you son of a bitch.

Victor's hand falters slightly, but only for a brief moment.

VICTOR

I'm sure I will.

Victor aims the gun, and we hear the inevitable shot, but we don't see the carnage because we

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. VICTOR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Victor's face, lying down on a bed. The room is dark. He opens his eyes suddenly, and we hear a baby crying.

Victor is sweating. He's reliving his past. Beside him there's movement. Victor's Wife BETH is also woken by the baby crying. She begins to sit up. Victor takes a gulp of air and composes himself.

VICTOR
It's my turn.

Beth groans a sigh of relief and flops back down on the bed.

BETH
Thanks honey.

Victor slides himself out of bed and makes his way over to the crib at the side of the room. He carefully bends down and picks up his infant daughter GRACE. While patting her back, he coos to her and exits the bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. VICTOR'S KITCHEN - LATER

Victor enters the kitchen and turns on the light. We see him clearly for the first time. He's older, wiser. His hair is greying around the temples. The lines around his eyes betray his past. He's seen things, done things people shouldn't see or do. While cradling the baby in one hand, he begins to prepare some milk on the stove.

CUT TO:

INT. VICTOR'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Victor sits on a chair in his living room, he feeds his little girl with the bottle. She's no longer crying. It's a peaceful scene.

CUT TO:

INT. VICTOR'S OFFICE - LATER

We focus on Victor's face. He's dozing. We only see his face, his office is a blur.

BETH (O.S)
They're ready for you honey.

With a start Victor comes to his senses.

VICTOR

Thank you.

Victor stands. We see him now. He's dressed in black, with a white clerical collar. He's a Reverend. Victor's days in the force are long gone. He adjusts himself in his desk mirror and takes a deep breath.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CHURCH - LATER

Victor surveys his congregation from behind his pulpit. Religion is alive and well here - it's busy, the audience watches Victor intently. In the front row sits Beth. Baby Grace sleeps calmly in her arms. Victor smiles to them both, and begins.

VICTOR

A while ago, I was walking by a river, and I saw a boy with a jar of bugs. I'm a curious man, so I asked him what he was going to do with the insects. The boy replied to me that he was going to feed them to his pet snake. I told the boy that I'd give him \$5 for the bugs and the jar. The boy seemed worried, Reverend, he said, these bugs aren't worth five dollars, they're small, useless. It wouldn't be fair to take your five dollars. I told him not to worry, and gave him the money. He gave me the jar and scampered off. That evening, I took the jar out to my back garden and I let those bugs loose. As they flew out of their prison, they glowed. They were fireflies. The boy told me these bugs were 'useless and small', but as I watched them fly towards the Heavens, their bright light seemed to speak to me. The light spoke of forgiveness, and redemption. We are all sinners, we have all sinned. We have all been sinned against.

CUT TO:

EXT. A STREET IN PHILLY - YEARS AGO

Victor continues, but we are watching flashbacks. All these events occur concurrently with Victor's sermon. No sound is heard at any point during this montage, all we hear is Victor's narration.

A younger Victor is in uniform. He takes a wad of cash from a street tough, and keeps walking.

VICTOR (V.O)
Our sin is woven into the
tapestry of our lives. Can we
take back our sins? Can we
unpick this tapestry?

CUT TO:

INT. DRUG DEN - LATER

Later, Victor sits opposite a large man, covered in gaudy chains. This is the KINGPIN. His business is narcotics, and he's doing pretty well for himself. The Kingpin sits at a gaudy desk, and behind him, stands a gaudy bookshelf. He's never read any of these books. I'm not sure if he can ever read. The Kingpin only has these books because he thinks it makes him look impressive. It doesn't. The Kingpin tosses Victor an envelope. Victor checks inside - it contains a huge wad of cash. He nods.

VICTOR (V.O)
No. We cannot, once we have
sinned, it cannot be undone.
The tapestry of life cannot be
unpicked.

CUT TO:

INT. EVIDENCE LOCKER - LATER

Victor is in the evidence locker. He makes sure he is alone and grabs some evidence from a box. He stuffs it into his waistband, covers it with his shirt and walks off.

VICTOR (V.O)
What we can do, is to add to
the tapestry, to add scenes of
forgiveness, redemption, and
repentance.

CUT TO:

INT. VICTOR'S OLD APARTMENT - LATER

A slightly bedraggled Victor sits on his sofa, lines of

cocaine are neatly laid out on his coffee table. He snorts them with a rolled up dollar bill. Classy.

VICTOR (V.O)
In this life we can only move
forward, we can look back
sure, but we always march
onwards.

CUT TO:

EXT. A STEEET - LATER

A promoted out of uniform Victor slams a PERP up against a wall. Another PERP hits the wall, this one pushed by Jameson. The two men handcuff their perps, and sling them into the back of their car. The two detectives fist bump.

VICTOR (V.O)
There's no harm in looking
back, but I urge you to make
positive changes to the
future.

CUT TO:

INT. CRIME SCENE - LATER

A bedroom. In the background we can see a bloody bed. A body wrapped in sheets. That's not what we focus on. We focus on Victor, who looks through a safe next to the bed. He grabs a wad of cash and pockets it. He looks up, Jameson is looking at him with interest. Did Jameson see him pocket the cash? Victor can't be sure.

VICTOR (V.O)
Forgiveness isn't easy. I know
first hand, that sometimes the
hardest thing to do is forgive
yourself.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - LATER

Victor sits at his desk, and watches in horror as the Kingpin is walked past him, in handcuffs, escorted by Jameson.

VICTOR (V.O)
As many of you know, I used to
work on the police force.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - LATER

Victor watches from his window as the Kingpin leaves the police station. Jameson watches with him. He slams his fist against the window. Looks like they couldn't pin anything on the Kingpin.

VICTOR (V.O)
I was on the force for 21
years, and they were long
years.

CUT TO:

INT. DRUG DEN - LATER

Victor's back in the drug den. The Kingpin slides a photo across the table. It's Jameson. Victor shakes his head. No. Not Jameson. Not his partner! Despite his protests, Victor knows he's got to do it. He's in *deep*. If Jameson keeps prying, Victor's going down...

Victor gives the Kingpin a weak nod. He'll do it.

VICTOR (V.O)
I saw a lot of good, but I
also saw a lot of evil. I
committed sin. I wasn't always
the best cop I could have
been.

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE CAR - LATER

Victor snorts some coke off a key. He's wired. The car door opens and Jameson sits down. Victor gives him a weak smile.

VICTOR (V.O)
I made mistakes.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ABANDONED SHACK - LATER

We see Jameson's final moments once again, briefly. Victor pulls the trigger.

VICTOR (V.O)
I look back at these mistakes,
I regret them, but mostly, I
look forward.

CUT TO:

INT. VICTOR'S APARTMENT - LATER

Victor is curled up in a ball on the floor of the apartment; it hasn't been cleaned in weeks. He sobs uncontrollably on the floor.

VICTOR (V.O)

There was a time when I
couldn't look forward. In my
darkest hour, it seemed like
there was no escape from my
sin. I felt trapped.

CUT TO:

EXT. A GRAVEYARD - LATER

Jameson's funeral service. Victor stands stoically while the minister gives his speech. A picture of a uniformed Jameson looking heroic is stood by the minister. Victor stares at the picture. It stares right back, judging Victor.

VICTOR (V.O)

It is in our darkest times,
that we are tempted to let go
of the faith in our hearts,
but it is also in our darkest
times that God's light shines
the brightest.

CUT TO:

INT. VICTOR'S APARTMENT - LATER

The apartment is still a mess. Victor sits on the sofa with his head in his hands. His table is stained with the remnants of coke, but it's not enough for him to use. He's all out. Victor looks to his empty table, around at the empty apartment. He evaluate his empty life and makes a decision. He stands, grabbing his gun holster and gun from the filthy floor as he does so.

VICTOR (V.O)

I found God. Or should I say
he found me. God showed me the
light.

CUT TO:

EXT. DRUG DEN - LATER

Victor stands outside the drug den he receives his bribes from. He walks purposefully towards the door which is guarded by a STREET TOUGH. This is one of the thugs who held Jameson down before Victor killed him.

The tough nods at Victor and opens the door for him. Victor removes his gun from his holster and thanks the man with a bullet to the head.

Victor doesn't pause. He moves into the house. This all occurs in *silence*. Victor continues his sermon over all of this.

VICTOR (V.O)
God offered me forgiveness. A
second chance at life, a
chance to be a better man.

INT. DRUG DEN HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Victor's a cop. Even in the madness of withdrawals he knows how to handle himself. He checks left and right, nothing on the left, but on the right there's a THUG who raises his pistol - too late. Victor guns him down. Another shot to the head.

Victor steps over the body and continues down the hallway. As he goes to turn a corner, the wall by his head silently explodes, blown apart by buckshot.

Rather than retreat or flinch, Victor turns the corner to face the shooter - Victor has a death wish. We new see the shooter, another THUG with a shotgun, it's pump action, the Thug pumps but not quick enough. Victor fires his pistol again with deadly accuracy.

The thug goes down, slumping against the wall. Victor steps over him and is faced with the door to the KINGPIN's office. With determination Victor slams his foot into the door, it flies off its hinges.

VICTOR (V.O)
Let me circle back to the
firefly story. In a way, we
are like the fireflies,
trapped in sin, but when you
repent, when you let your sin
go, when you look forward with
God in your heart, you can
shine. We all shine, just like
the fireflies. And you know
what? It's beautiful.

INT. DRUG DEN OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

This is where Victor did all his dirty dealings before. The office with the gaudy desk and bookshelf. The door flies into a waiting THUG, who blasts at it with his shotgun. The bullets hit the door, splintering it, but leave Victor unharmed.

As the Thug stumbles back, Victor takes him down with

another well placed bullet. The chaos is almost at an end.

Victor looks around the room. It seems empty, but he knows better than that. He walks past the desk and looks to the ground. There's the Kingpin. Big-shot drug dealer, cowering behind the desk. We focus on Victor's head. He fires. We know this but because of the blood splatter that hits Victor's face.

The carnage is over. Victor surveys his handiwork with disinterest, and then sits himself down on the Kingpin's desk, facing the gaudy bookshelf.

He raises his gun to his temple...closes his eyes...and - pulls the trigger. Nothing happens. The gun has misfired. Victor can't believe it. Why misfire? Why now? He opens his eyes again, and examines the gun. He checks the chamber. One bullet sits inside. It should have fired. Why didn't it fire?!

Victor looks up in disbelief and then he sees it, on the bookshelf, straight in front of him. The Holy Bible. It's like it's talking to him. He takes the Bible from the shelf gingerly, and cradles it in his hands.

Victor opens it at a random page. We focus on one verse. As does Victor. 'Luke 21:28 - When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh'.

VICTOR (V.O)

Be mindful of Luke 21:28: When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.

Realisation dawns on Victor. He's found his new purpose in life. Our montage ends.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CHURCH

We're back. Victor's audience give a collective amen, and then begins to applaud.

CUT TO:

The back of the audience. An older woman claps profusely. She turns to her neighbor.

OLD WOMAN

Isn't he amazing?

Her neighbor chuckles to himself, it's a chuckle of

disbelief. We focus on the source of the laugh. It's Jameson, who, true to form, is lighting a cigarette.

JAMESON
He's definitely something.
That's for sure.

CUT TO:

INT. VICTOR'S HOUSE - LATER

We're in the dining room that links into the kitchen. Little baby Grace giggles in her high-chair. Victor sits next to her, cooing. He's wearing the same outfit as he was at church, minus the collar. He has his top button undone. Beth is in the kitchen, cooking dinner. We can see from the view out the houses windows that it's night.

BETH
Your sermon today, it really got the congregation going.

VICTOR
You think they liked it?

BETH
For sure - Just one thing though, why didn't you invite me to watch the fireflies with you? ' ' It would have been very (sexy voice) *romantic*.

Victor turns his attention away from baby Grace.

VICTOR
You know I wouldn't miss any romantic gesture. It was when you were away at your moms, a month before Grace was born.

BETH
Ah, that makes sense.

Grace makes a happy little squeal.

VICTOR
Grace wants to know what's cooking.

BETH
Does she now?

VICTOR
Yes. Although she's very happy with her -

Victor picks up the jar of baby food he's placed on the table and reads the label:

VICTOR
'Creamed cottage pie'

Victor pulls a face.

VICTOR
She'd like to know what we're having to eat.

Grace makes an indecipherable noise.

VICTOR
Oh good point - She also wants to know what we're having for desert.

Beth giggles.

BETH
You can tell Grace that we're having spaghetti bolognese, like we always do on a Sunday! Desert is ice cream. I got double chocolate.

VICTOR
Grace says that she wants you to put extra sauce on my bolognese.

BETH
She didn't even say anything that time!

VICTOR
Yes she did! Didn't you?

Grace sits silently.

VICTOR
uh ho! Rumbled.

BETH
Stop messing about and go take out the trash. Dinner's almost ready.

Victor stands up.

VICTOR
Yes ma'am.

He turns to Grace.

VICTOR

Don't go anywhere.

CUT TO:

INT. VICTOR'S HOUSE HALLWAY - LATER

Victor is now carrying a large rubbish bag in his left hand. He opens the door to the house and steps out into the night.

EXT. VICTOR'S FRONT GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Victor walks out into his front garden, closing the door behind him. There's not a cloud in the sky tonight. Victor surveys his front garden with a smile. This is his kingdom. We see his view, the street is deserted. We're following behind Victor now as he begins his walk to the bins. Suddenly he stops, his smile instantly disappears. Victor tenses, something is setting off his police instincts. Something is amiss. In Victor's eyes we see a little of that madness that was there all those years ago in the drug den. Victor is now standing perfectly still. The sound of insects going about their business, a car somewhere in the distance, the wind blowing through the hedges. Nothing else. Victor stands still for a long beat, but he doesn't hear anything. Victor relaxes and heads towards the bin and deposits his trash. Just as he's about to turn back towards his house -

JAMESON (O.S)
Evening Vitor.

Victor tenses once again. It can't be! With disbelief he turns, and sees the impossible. Jameson Tucker, in the flesh. Silhouetted against the moonlight, pistol aimed at Victor, unlit cigarette in his mouth.

VICTOR
Jameson?!...

Jameson doesn't reply. He simply reaches into his pocket, grabs a lighter, and lights his smoke. The orange glow illuminates his face.

JAMESON
You know your Bible don't you
Victor?

VICTOR
How? -

JAMESON
Silly question. Of course you
do. I was reading it today, at
Church - great service by the

way - and there's one passage
in there that really caught my
eye. Let me see if I can
remember it...

Jameson pauses to take a puff on his cigarette.

JAMESON
'Behold, I am coming soon,
bringing my recompense with
me, to repay you for what you
have done'. (a beat) Poetic,
isn't it. Fitting too.

Victor goes to speak again, but Jameson just continues
talking.

JAMESON
I'll give you one thing Vic, I
never pegged you as the family
type.

VICTOR
I -

JAMESON
Then again, I never pegged you
as the murdering type, but you
surprised me there, didn't
you?

Jameson is enjoying this. This is the moment he's
dreamed about for years. His time has finally come, and
boy, does it feel good. Victor is shaking. He is
literally seeing a ghost.

VICTOR
How are you still alive?

Jameson laughs - a short barking cold laugh.

JAMESON
I'm not alive Victor. I've
come from up there -

He gestures up with his free hand.

JAMESON
To send you down there.

He gestures down with his hand.

VICTOR
Impossible -

JAMESON
Call it what you want.

Victor's eyes dart around the garden, how can he get out of this? Is this a dream?! Another nightmare?

JAMESON

There's another Bible saying I like: An eye for an eye. It's good, but it's a bit antiquated. Let's update it for the 21st century: A bullet for a bullet.

Jameson clicks off his safety. He's ready to end this. Suddenly -

BETH (O.S)

Victor? Who are you talking to?

Jameson and Victor whirl round, Jameson instinctively hides his gun behind his back.

Beth exits the house, and begins to walk towards Jameson and Victor.

VICTOR

(Hushed voice)

Please - Jameson, not in front of Beth.

JAMESON

(Hushed)

You piece of shit. I should kill you right now while she watches.

Jameson's words are empty. He isn't going to do that.

Beth reaches the two men. She looks confused.

Victor's got a chance at escaping alive from this now. Jameson would never risk hurting an innocent. Victor maneuvers himself next to Beth, and puts his arm around her shoulder, partially blocking Jameson's shot.

VICTOR

Beth, this is uh, one of my colleagues from my police days - I just ran into him outside, such a coincidence.

Beth goes to shake Jameson's hand. From the back we see him shift his gun from his right hand to his left. He reaches out with his now free hand and returns Beth's handshake.

BETH

A pleasure to meet you -

JAMESON

Tom - Tom Anderson.

BETH

Mr. Anderson, a pleasure. Any friend of Victor's is a friend of mine. It's awfully dark out here - why don't you come in and have some dinner.

JAMESON

I couldn't-

BETH

Nonsense! I've made too much anyway. I won't take no for an answer.

Silence. Jameson adjusts his grip on his gun. Victor pounces on this opportunity. If he can get back into the house might be able to survive this...

VICTOR

Yes! Tom, you have to come in, Beth makes a fantastic bolognese!

BETH

It's not all that, I try my best but it's nothing special. I mean I do make the sauce myself which so many people don't do - We should head inside, I don't want to leave Grace on her own for too long.

Jameson doesn't move. What is he going to do?

BETH

Come on Mr. Anderson, I said I wouldn't take no for an answer.

Jameson's turn to weigh his options. He's not going to let Victor get away. He only has a few hours before he will be taken away from Earth. Jameson doesn't want to risk hurting Beth, but this is Jameson's last chance at justice.

Victor is careful to keep Beth between him and Jameson as he makes his way back into the house. Jameson makes his choice, he stows his gun into the back waistband of his trousers. He takes a last drag of his cigarette, flicks the butt away before following the couple into their house.

INT. VICTOR'S HOUSE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Victor enters first, Beth close behind, Jameson enters last.

BETH
Can I take your jacket?

JAMESON
Sure.

Jameson removes his jacket, being careful not to reveal his firearm. While this occurs, Victor edges backwards, towards a small table in the hallway with a flowerpot stood on top of it. He keeps his eyes on Jameson, but feels for the table's edge with his hand. Jameson is also trying to keep an eye on Victor, but Beth is fussing over him, blocking his view.

BETH
Dinner shouldn't be more than
a few minutes, why don't you
go sit down at the table?

While Beth talks to Jameson, Victor edges his hand under the table, we pan down and see what he's trying to grab for. It's a handgun, held to the table by a magnetic holster. Looks like Victor is prepared for a visit from his past. We see Victor's hand grab the handle of the gun, and - baby Grace calls out from the other room. Beth ushers Jameson into the dining room.

BETH (O.S)
There she is! Do you like kids
Mr. Anderson?

Victor scowls.

CUT. TO

INT. VICTOR'S DINING ROOM - LATER

We pan down from the ceiling, until we're level with the table. Jameson sits at one end while Victor sits opposite. Baby Grace giggles and bounces in her high-chair. Beth is bustling about the kitchen. Jameson and Victor stare daggers at each other, each calculating their options. The camera pans down again, past the table, revealing the lower halves of Jameson and Victor. Jameson has his gun pointed at Victor, who in turn, points his weapon at Jameson. The camera slowly moves back up as the conversation progresses, until we cannot see under the table anymore. Jameson and Victor speak with hushed tones.

JAMESON
You know I've got my gun aimed
at your chest right?

VICTOR

Ditto.

Victor raises his hand just high enough to show his weapon.

JAMESON

Look at that. You got yourself a gun. You're as slimy as ever Victor.

VICTOR

The way I see it, you aren't going to shoot me. Not in front of Beth and the baby. They aren't part of this. They don't need to see any bloodshed.

JAMESON

Only the lowest of the low uses his family as a shield. I might not fire the first shot, but the second you pull that trigger, I'll empty my clip into you before I hit the ground, that's a promise.

VICTOR

You'd be risking hitting Beth or the baby.

Jameson doesn't like Victor's tone, there's a cold, calculating quality to it. Jameson doesn't show any emotion. He needs to play the part.

JAMESON

If you fire that first shot, it's on you. I'll have no qualms about gunning you down, and I'm pretty fucking accurate.

VICTOR

Really?

JAMESON

Only one way to find out.

Beth bustles back into shot. She's carrying two plates.

BETH

Here you go Mr. Anderson.

She puts the plate down in front of Jameson.

JAMESON

Thank you.

She places the other plate in front of Victor.

VICTOR

Thanks honey.

Beth hurries away.

VICTOR

Jameson, please, I have a family. You can't do this to them, they need me! Just stand up and leave. Never come back. We both walk away from this alive. Nobody gets hurt.

JAMESON

I'm not sure your family would be so keen on you if they found out what you've done.

VICTOR

I've changed Jameson, what I did to you, it, it was the worst decision of my life. I regret it everyday. I know I'll pay for my sins one day, but on Earth, I've dedicated myself to God's work.

JAMESON

You? Change. Ha. What's the old saying? You can put lipstick on a pig but Victor Manning is a bullshitter who's going to get a bullet between the eyes. I think that's how it goes. I'm not going anywhere. Send Beth and the baby away right now and let me put you down like the rabid dog you are.

Beth returns carrying a third plate, she sets it down on the table and then sits in the empty seat next to baby Grace.

BETH

Tom, would you do us the honor of saying Grace?

Grace giggles to herself.

JAMESON

Oh, I couldn't I -

BETH

Nonsense, don't feel pressure
because Victor is a man of the
cloth! Anything you say will
be fine.

Looks like Jameson isn't going to get out of this one.

JAMESON

(Uncomfortably)

Dear Lord, we uh thank you for
this meal, and...your
blessings. Yeah.

Beth (ever positive) smiles.

BETH

Thank you Mr. Anderson. That
was (a beat) lovely. (another
beat) Tuck in everybody.

Beth takes a mouthful of food. Victor and Jameson don't
touch theirs. They've got other more pressing matters
on their minds.

BETH

so Tom - do you mind if I call
you Tom?

JAMESON

Not at all.

Jameson turns to speak Beth, but all his attention is
still aimed at Victor.

BETH

Are you still on the force
Tom?

JAMESON

No. I left a few years ago.
Unforeseen circumstances.

BETH

So what are you doing now?

JAMESON

(Giving Victor a
death glare)

Waste disposal.

Beth misses the death glare, and continues happily
chatting.

BETH

Is there good money in that?

JAMESON

Not really, but I don't do it
for the money. I do it for the
job satisfaction.

Beth nods.

BETH
Did you leave the force before
or after Vic?

JAMESON
Funny coincidence - it was
about the same time.

Beth notices that Jameson and Victor haven't touched
their food.

BETH
Eat up! I haven't stood over
the stove since 5 for nothing.

A beat. Neither Victor or Jameson make a move to eat. A
clock ticks in the background, Grace bounces up and
down in her chair and gurgles to herself. This awkward
stand off lasts longer than is comfortable. Finally,
Victor takes his fork and puts a mouthful of food in
his mouth. Jameson follows suit.

BETH
I hope you don't mind me
asking, but I've only known
Victor since left he the
force. What was he like back
then? I can't imagine my Vic
arresting anybody. He's a
puppy dog!

JAMESON
Oh Victor - he was a tough
cop. Not afraid of getting his
hands dirty - Tell me Vic, why
was it that you left the
force?

Jameson gives Victor a probing look, and takes another
mouthful of food.

VICTOR
It was after my partner was
killed.

JAMESON
That must have been hard for
you.

Victor is almost pleading to Jameson here.

VICTOR

It was. After he died, I went
to a very dark place. I...It
changed me. I left the force,
I found God, I met Beth. I
left my old self behind. I
became a new and better man.

Beth stares lovingly into Victor's eyes.

JAMESON
(Doesn't buy it)
That's sweet.

Grace gurgles loudly.

BETH
Oh! Somebody wants feeding.

Beth grabs the baby food Victor was playing with
earlier. She unscrews the top and spoons some out. She
begins to feed Grace.

BETH
(To Grace in a goo
goo voice)
Who's hungry?

Victor and Jameson don't take their eyes off each other.
You can practically feel the itching of their trigger
fingers.

JAMESON
How did you and Beth meet?
She's such a lovely young
lady, what did you do? Kidnap
her family?

Jameson half wants to hear the story, half wants to buy
time so he can work out how to end this without hurting
any innocents.

VICTOR
I'm sure Tom doesn't want to
hear that.

BETH
Go on Vic, tell the story!

JAMESON
Yes, Vic. Tell the story.

Victor frowns. Looks like he's got no choice but to
tell the story.

VICTOR
It was three years ago, I had
just finished seminary school

and it was my first service in front of my new congregation.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CHURCH - THREE YEARS AGO

We flash back to three years ago. Victor stands in front of the congregation, he's a little younger, but his eyes, they're still old beyond his years. He scans the pews, taking in the crowd.

VICTOR (V.O)
I'm about to start my sermon, when I see, this, this vision sitting on the very last seat of the very last pew.

Victor sees Beth sitting at the very back of the church. She's dressed in her Sunday best. He catches her eye and she gives him a smile.

CUT TO:

INT. VICTOR'S DINING ROOM

We're back in the dining room, Victor continues to recount his story, Beth is still spoon feeding Grace. Jameson sits stoic. He knows that Victor is trying to plead to him, convince him that he's a different man, but Jameson's mind is made up. He won't be swayed.

VICTOR
I'm totally awestruck, I say a prayer in my head, I asked God, please let me meet this woman -

BETH
I love this part.

VICTOR
So I'm half way through my sermon, and I look up from my notes, and she's gone, vanished, I thought she had just walked out, that my sermon was so bad, she left.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CHURCH - THREE YEARS AGO

Sure enough, the seat on the edge of the pew is empty. Victor has stopped speaking, the crowd looks expectantly at him, but he doesn't say anything.

VICTOR (V.O)
I took that as my sign.

INT. VICTOR'S DINING ROOM

Back in the dining room. Beth has put Grace's spoon down on the built in table of the high-chair, so she can focus fully on the story. Baby Grace picks it up and starts waving it around in the air like a magic wand.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH HALLWAY - THREE YEARS AGO - LATER

Victor walks through the church hallway.

VICTOR (V.O)
So I finish my service, and I greet the congregation, then I decide that I'll drop in on the sunday school.

Victor reaches the door to the sunday school room, and enters quietly.

INT. SUNDAY SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

The classroom is decorated with children's paintings of events in the Bible. Crudely drawn noah's arks, nativity scenes, a depiction of Heaven and Hell, with smiling stick figures on top of a cloud, and sad stick figures in the orange flame. A group of children sit cross legged on the floor. Beth, the 'vision' from the last pew sits on a stool in front of the children, they all focus on her, no fidgeting, no play fighting, they give Beth their full attention. She's holding a book, we can make out a cartoonish depiction of David and Goliath on the pages. Beth looks up for a second as Victor enters and gives him that same smile she did earlier, the same smile that she still gives Victor as he recounts the story.

VICTOR (V.O)
There she was, the girl from the last pew.

CUT TO:

INT. VICTOR'S DINING ROOM

Back in the dining room.

BETH
He waited to the end of the
class - Tell Tom what you
said.

Baby Grace throws her spoon to the floor. Beth notices and instinctively bends down to pick up the spoon. We INTERCUT, with Victor walking up to Beth at the end of the class, she looks up at him, he goes to open his mouth...

VICTOR (V.O)
I said -

We cut back to the dining room before Victor finishes his sentence. Beth has noticed Victor's gun. She recoils in horror.

BETH
Oh my God!

She grabs Grace from her chair and steps back against the wall. No point hiding it now. Victor and Jameson jump up from their seats. Their Mexican standoff has now moved above the table.

BETH
What is this?!

JAMESON
Get out of here Beth. You
don't want to what's about to
happen.

Beth cradles Grace against her chest, the baby has started crying - Beth doesn't move. She's a deer in the headlights.

JAMESON
Victor! Tell Beth to leave. Do
it now!

Beth looks towards Victor, confused, scared. Victor weighs up his options. The presence of Grace and Beth is the only thing stopping Jameson from taking a shot at him.

Something snaps inside Victor. God has a plan for him. He can't die now. Beth will understand - what he's about to do is necessary. It's for the greater good. Jameson is a test from God. A test that Victor must survive.

Almost robotically, Victor move his gun away from

Jameson, and aims it at Beth.

BETH
(In horror)
V..Vic?

JAMESON
What the fuck are you doing
Victor? Are you out of your
mind?!

VICTOR
Put your gun down Jameson, or
I'll shoot her.

JAMESON
You wouldn't...

VICTOR
Don't FUCKING test me!

JAMESON
Stop pointing the gun at your
wife Victor! This has nothing
to do with her!

VICTOR
Why did you come here Jameson?
What are you gaining from
this? Revenge on me for what I
did to you. What about Grace?
Are you here to make sure she
grows up without a father?

JAMESON
You stopped being her father
the second you pointed that
gun in her direction Victor.

VICTOR
Just as the Lord tested
Abraham and Job, he is testing
me. The Lord has a plan for
me. He saved my life once, and
now he is testing my faith.
Put the gun down Jameson.
Don't make me demonstrate my
faith in the Lord. I assure
you, it's absolute.

Jameson falters. He can't risk Beth and Graces's life.

JAMESON
You're going to burn Victor.
There's a special place in
Hell reserved for you. I
promise you that.

VICTOR

Put the gun on the floor. Now.

Beth holds Grace tight, silently weeping. We can still hear Grace's muffled cries. Jameson holds Victor's gaze for a number of seconds - Will Victor actually shoot his own wife? Jameson can't risk finding out.

JAMESON

Okay, okay, just turn your gun back on me first!

VICTOR

Nice try. Once you've put the gun down. Not until then.

Jameson slowly lowers his weapon to the ground. Then stands up again, hands held up at his chest, palms out.

JAMESON

There!

VICTOR

Kick it away.

Jameson kicks his gun towards the doorway that leads out into the hallway. It stops just inside of the dining room. Victor turns his aim back on Jameson.

VICTOR

Leave Beth. I don't want you seeing this.

Beth breaks her silence.

BETH

Why would you ever point a gun at me! AT GRACE! WHO ARE YOU? I thought we had a life together!

VICTOR

Get out of here! Now!

BETH

God has no plan for you! You're a monster.

Beth is only met with silence from Victor.

BETH

I...I loved you.

This one hits Victor, he falters, his eyes darts away from Jameson, towards Beth for a fleeting second. That's all the opportunity Jameson needs - Out of nowhere he launches a kick, hitting the dining table and knocking it along the floor and into Victor,

jolting him, causing him to lose his balance.
Instinctively Victor fires a shot - it misses totally.

Jameson is now on the move, he jumps onto the crooked table, and before Victor can adjust his aim, launches himself at his old partner, smashing into him, and causing both men to hit the ground hard. Victor's gun clatters to the floor, spinning out of reach of the two men.

JAMESON
(To Beth)
Get Grace out of here!

Beth doesn't need telling twice. She hurries out of the room with Grace cradled in her arms. Before Jameson can do anything else, Victor slams him with a vicious right hook, knocking him flat on the floor.

Victor scrambles for his gun, but Jameson grabs hold of one of his legs, pulling him back.

Victor uses his free leg to smash Jameson straight in the face, causing him to lose his grip. Victor, now free, scrambles for the gun, but just when he's about to grip the handle, Jameson, who has managed to get himself on his feet, kicks it away.

Victor grabs at Jameson's foot, pulling him down to his knees, and allowing himself to get off the ground, Victor uses his advantage to launch a brutal kick, straight into Jameson's side, the impact is so brutal that Jameson is lifted off the floor for a second before crashing back down to earth.

Jameson doesn't let this phase him. To kill Victor is his sole purpose to exist. This is his last chance. He scrambles to his feet - there's no pain, only hate. He barrels towards Victor, slamming him into a glass cabinet. The glass shatters, shards big and small hit the ground. Jameson lands a few hits on Victor, but Victor kicks him away, staggering Jameson.

Victor steadies himself on the remnants of the cabinet. Both men are now on their feet. Jameson spits blood from his mouth.

JAMESON
What now Victor? Even if you
survive this, I don't think
any amount of marriage
counseling is going to fix
what you just did.

Victor stays silent.

JAMESON
You never did tell me how that

story ended, what *did* you say to Beth the first time you met? I'm sure it wasn't anything related to putting a gun in her face. She didn't seem to partial to that.

Victor's done listening to Jameson's wisecracks. With a roar he launches a furious attack at Jameson - this isn't a kung fu movie, these guys are not trained hand to hand fighters, this is not elegant. It's pretty much a street fight - anything goes.

Victor viciously pushes Jameson back with a number of blows, left, right, left, left - he keeps hammering them home. Jameson falls back until he's trapped against the wall. Victor throws a right and somehow Jameson manages to duck it. Victor's hand hits the wall with a CRACK. Something's broken, and it isn't the wall.

Jameson takes this opportunity to hit back, and hit back he does, a punch straight into Victor's gut, causing Victor to keel over, and as he does his face is met with Jameson's elbow, as he drives it up - another CRACK, Victor stumbles back.

Jameson comes at Victor again, ready to land a finishing blow, but Victor has other ideas. As Jameson flies towards him, Victor grabs a shard of jagged glass from the floor and plunges it into Jameson's stomach. Instantly, Jameson goes limp, his eyes widen, and the blood drains from his face. Jameson collapses, but Victor catches him mid fall. His mouth to Jameson's ear.

VICTOR

Shh...Shh...

Jameson's mouth opens and closes, he tries to say something, but the words escape him. Calmly Victor pulls the shard of glass out of Jameson, and gives him a push. Jameson falls backwards, slumping against the wall of the wrecked dining room. His wound is bleeding profusely. There's no recovering from this, Jameson has minutes left. Victor is breathing heavily, but he composes himself. He drops the glass shard and retrieves his gun from the floor of the dining room.

VICTOR

Tough luck Jameson.

Victor wipes his bloody nose on his sleeve.

JAMESON

(Weakly)

Go...to...hell.

Jameson looks around the room groggily. Is there anything he can do to stop Victor? Out the corner of his eye he notices Beth - Standing in the doorway to the dining room. A look of horror on her face.

JAMESON
(Weakly)
Your own wife...your own
daughter.

Jameson enters a coughing fit.

JAMESON
What kind of monster are you?

VICTOR
Our Lord God is merciful and
forgiving. He has a plan for
me. A purpose for me, Beth
will understand that what I
had to do was for the greater
good.

JAMESON
Since when was the greater
good saving your own sorry
ass?

Victor ignores this.

VICTOR
You know, I regretted killing
you before, I really did - but
this time? I won't be shedding
any tears.

Jameson is keeping an eye on Beth, she's shaking with horror and rage. We see the conflict take over her entire being. She's dedicated herself to this monster, he used her, his own child as collateral. He used God as an excuse to point a gun at a *child*. He's evil.

VICTOR
Goodbye Jameson.

Victor raises his gun. Almost without realising what she is doing, Beth kicks Jameson's gun along the floor, it skids towards the dying man, who grabs as soon as it's within reach. Before Victor can react, Jameson is unloading an entire clip into Victor. Victor falls to the floor. Dead. The sound of bullets evaporate until we only hear Jameson's heavy breathing, and the tick of the clock. After a beat, Jameson drops his gun to the floor. The sound of sirens approaching can now be heard in the distance.

JAMESON
Get out of here Beth, you

don't want to get caught up in
this.

Beth goes to speak.

JAMESON
(Coughing)
Quickly.

Beth nods, and begins to leave the room.

JAMESON
(Quietly)
Thank you.

Beth falters for a second, before exiting. The sirens increase in volume. While coughing, Jameson reaches weakly into his pocket, and retrieves his pack of cigarettes. His bloody hand stains the packet red.

Shaking, he manages to remove a cigarette from his pack, and place it into his mouth. Jameson drops the packet to the floor. He now reaches into his other pocket. Every passing breath he takes grows weaker, more labored. Jameson retrieves his lighter, and holds it up to the cigarette. One attempt at creating a flame. Nothing, just sparks. A second attempt just leads to more sparks. Finally, on his third attempt Jameson manages to get the flame to stay.

Jameson lights his cigarette, and takes a long, hard drag. The sirens get louder, the ticking of the clock is now drowned out. Jameson removes the cigarette from his mouth and blows away the smoke. A smile graces his lips. He's happy. He's got his revenge. Whatever awaits Jameson in the next life, he's ready for it, be it Heaven, Hell or anything in-between.

We begin to pan down, through the floor of the dining room, into the basement. The sirens go silent. We can't hear them down here. The basement is dark, but we can just about make out objects. We pan down until we're focusing on a shelf, On this shelf stands a jar, it's sealed. We stay on this jar, but we can't see inside it just yet. A beat. The jar begins to glow a dull green - the light comes from a single firefly inside the jar. The firefly illuminates the jars contents. Dead fireflies. The light from the jar grows stronger, and then, it's gone. Darkness returns once again.

FADE OUT.

END