

TREATMENT DRAFT 1

ACT I

1. **1985**, INT. Trailer Park, Southern Idaho. Two Irish women argue in the kitchen of a mobile home. DELILAH (late 20s), the younger woman with distinctive red hair and a temper to match, has two children with her, a boy of 5 and a girl of 8. JOAN (50s), Delilah's mother, world weary, with the same hair, though age and worry have deposited silver in among the bronze. They argue about Delilah's sudden reappearance on Joan's doorstep, about the man Delilah chose to marry, about the "doomsday cult in the woods" she joined as a teenager. Delilah pleads for help, even just shelter for the night.

Outside, around the corner, three men exit an ugly yellow van with a cross painted on the side door. Below, hand-painted text reads, "CHILDREN OF LIGHT". They don ski masks and stuff pistols into the waistband of their jeans.

Back in the trailer, Delilah's pleas fall on deaf ears. Joan wants nothing to do with the trouble her daughter has brought with her and waving grandchildren she's never met in her face won't change her mind. A knock at the door silences them both. Joan takes another look at the kids and her heart softens. She points to an emergency hatch on the ceiling and the kids scramble up.

One of the men, the self-imposed leader, calls Delilah's name like a lover. Joan opens the door, pokerfaced. She can't get a lie out before the man strikes her and barges in. Man #2 follows him in, searches the trailer, the other stays out to keep watch. Delilah lunges at the men, fights viciously, but is outnumbered and pinned to the ground. The leader removes his mask. "You broke my poor old heart," he says. He asks about the kids, "Where are the kids?"

"Halfway back to Belfast", Delilah spits at him. He doesn't believe her. "Time to go," says the man outside, panic creeping in to his voice. The neighbors have woken up. The leader stares at Delilah, conflicted, almost sorry. He pulls the trigger.

14 years later: 1999. EXT. Street Corner/ Various, Salt Lake City. Two men, PAUL and JOSEPH, stand in the Friday rush hour crowd of rumpled suits and haggard faces. The handsewn, out-of-date clothes they wear separate them from the rest. PAUL (18), sharp as a tack, almost handsome, the patron saint of repressed

people-pleasers everywhere, watches his father pass out "Jesus loves you" pamphlets to wholly disinterested passersby. This is JOSEPH (40s), charming in a sort of heart-on-his-sleeve, dorky way- the kind of guy who needs to pause and reload his finger guns after every 5 sentences.

Paul breaks away from this never-ending embarrassment under the pretense of finding a bathroom. He wanders the streets of SLC like a limping animal caught in the tractor beam of the city lights. Every billboard and skyscraper and police siren fights for his attention until... Before him stands a video store with posters in the windows. Paul seems magnetically drawn to a poster depicting Brad Pitt, bruised, shirtless, cigarette in mouth, you know the one. He studies the battered expression on his face, the tousled hair. As if of their own accord, his eyes drift down to sweaty shoulders and bloodied torso and...

Paul whips his head from the poster, picks a direction, and starts walking. He fixes his eyes firmly on the pavement, even as they begin to sting with shame.

I/E. Car, moving. Joseph and Paul drive through a canyon, tall pines on each side. "*Figaro Figaro Figaro!*" plays over the radio. Joseph sings directly at a sullen Paul in rapid-fire nonsense Italian. The gravel road gives way to dirt as they drive under a rusty metal arch that reads "Kimball Estate."

EXT Kimball Estate. They drive past a towering mansion, and a series of small cabins that surround it- a small, self-sufficient community. Joseph parks the ugly yellow van, and they disembark. As Paul closes the door, we glimpse a familiar cross and hand painted text, now weathered by 14 years of exposure.

INT. Kimball Estate- Paul's Family Cabin. Close on a sloppy frosting effigy of Jesus on a homemade cake, smiling up at Paul with fat fondant lips and beady eyes. *HAPPY 18th BIRTHDAY PAUL!!!* Frosting Jesus says in frosting letters. Paul blushes at the hideous baked deity; it was obviously made with love. His family crowds into a small kitchen- Paul, Joseph, CHELSEA (40), JEREMY (21), MARK (16), and ESTHER (11).

Chelsea, Paul's mother, beams with pride over the cake. She wheels her wheelchair to Paul's side. "I didn't want to put any candles on His face. It seemed like it would be wrong."

Joseph takes a candle from the counter, lights it, leads them in an off-key interpretation of the birthday song. Paul blows out the candle. A knock at the door interrupts the festivities. Joseph goes to answer the door as Chelsea divvies each person a slice of Jesus cake. After a moment, Joseph returns to the kitchen, pale.

"I'm sorry, Paul. The cake's gonna have to wait."

INT. Kimball Estate- Prophet's Quarters, Bedroom. A nurse attends to RAYMOND KIMBALL SR (80s), a once powerful and astute prophet, glazed over with old age. He's wrapped in oxygen tubes and feeding tubes. A golden record, the kind they give to best-selling recording artists, hangs on the wall next to a framed picture of Kimball Sr and his congregation. The plaque reads "Presented to Raymond Kimball to commemorate the sale of more than 1,000,000 copies of his single 'Lord Give Me Thine Strength.'" A guitar leans against the wall below.

Kimball Sr whimpers in pain. The nurse dabs his forehead with a wet cloth. Out the window, she spots a dust trail against the sunset. A caravan, at least 15 cars long, pulls up the long driveway to the mansion.

INT. Kimball Estate- Prophet's Quarters, Hallway. BOYD (65), gray and pious, stands with his back to the door at the head of the congregation and reads from the Bible. Comforting words. Church members are packed like sardines in the cramped hallway to the prophet's sickroom. Some pray, others cry. Around Boyd, the other APOSTLES face the crowd wearing serious expressions. The nurse opens the door and whispers to Boyd. Paul cranes his neck to get a glimpse inside the room, but the nurse closes the door too fast. Boyd looks shaken by the news. He hands the bible off to another apostle and excuses himself.

EXT. Kimball Estate- Mansion Driveway. Boyd stands on the steps of the mansion. He silently curses himself for coming out too early, now he stands there like an idiot waiting for the cars to pull up. As the caravan come to a stop, the occupants pile out. They stare up at the mansion, the cabins, the woods that encircle it all. A pair of expensive but scuffed leather shoes step out of the lead vehicle. The man they belong to is one we'll recognize as Delilah's killer: RAYMOND KIMBALL JR (40s).

Like the van, 14 years of exposure has chipped the paint of youth and left his ambition naked on his face. A saint only in name, Kimball's eyes dart from person to person in a constant search for gaps he can slip his piety through.

Kimball walks slowly to stand well within Boyd's personal space, forcing the latter to take a step back.

"Ah, Raymond."

"Boyd."

"We're so glad to have you back after so long. But, by now I'm sure you've heard about your father."

"Despite your best efforts, yes I have."

"Please understand, we tried to contact you sooner, but--"

Kimball understands, Boyd has wormed his way to the top in his absence. They exchange politely worded threats; Kimball wins this round.

Boyd, changing the subject: "Well, I see you brought company with you."

"That's why I was sent off in the first place wasn't it? To be a 'shepherd for lost souls?' Here is my flock."

INT. Kimball Estate- Prophet's Quarters, Hallway. Kimball leads a string of converts through the gathered congregation. Directly behind him is Sam. Whispers from the crowd: distrust of the new blood, surprise at Kimball's return. Kimball stops in front of Joseph, shakes his hand. Paul stares at a newcomer, SAM (18). He's unrefined but magnetic, towering over the rest of them though he's not much taller than Paul. There's just something about him... Sam catches him looking. Eye contact. Paul winces and tries to play it off. Kimball clocks this exchange over Joseph's shoulder. Sam glances at Paul again as the crowd shuffles past.

Kimball shakes each apostle's hand and disappears behind the door to the prophet's sickroom. The newcomers stand in among the rest of the congregation. Tense silence.

INT. Kimball Estate- Prophet's Quarters, Bedroom. Kimball Jr watches his father, the prophet, wheeze and whimper and wither away. There's no pity in Jr's eyes, no sympathy. He's lost deep in thought. The nurse excuses herself to let them be alone. We follow her out, let them have their moment in privacy.

EXT. Kimball Estate- Lawn. Members help the new converts pitch tents on the lawn of the mansion to accommodate the new arrivals. Sam's band tee and jeans and Paul's conservative handstitched clothing make for an interesting contrast. Paul sneaks glances at Sam as they work with a group of members to heave and ho a repurposed big top circus tent up on the mansion lawn. Diegetic sound cuts out, replaced with the slow beep of a heartbeat monitor. Panning up from the commotion below, we see Kimball Sr looking out a second story window from his sickbed. He watches the people below- a mix of modern clothing and the old-fashioned Children of Light garb- intermingle. Below, they pull on ropes and hoist the canvas up. The top of the big top tent blocks our view of the prophet's face. The beeping speeds up, the monitor's screen flashes red. His legs jerk under the covers in a last fit of visceral fear, then he goes limp. Flatline tone.

EXT. Woods surrounding the Kimball Estate. The flatline tone continues, drowning out Boyd and his (no doubt stirring) prepared eulogy. Kimball Sr's guitar lay on top of his casket, dozens of flowers woven into the strings by the stem. Kimball Jr studies the faces of the congregation as their once-invincible prophet is lowered six feet under. The tone dies out. Paul stares at the hole in the dirt. Silence.

INT. Kimball Estate- Boardroom. Hard Cut To: the apostles shouting over one another. Kimball Jr watches them bicker, silent. Topic of the day: establishing a line of succession. Boyd, who has been running the church since Kimball Sr got sick, calls the men to order and asserts himself as a viable successor. Kimball Jr tears him off his high horse with a verbal dressing down. We learn that Boyd convinced Kimball Sr to send Kimball Jr on a "prolonged mission" (AKA punitive banishment) in the outside world 5 years ago because he was making waves in the church with doomsday rhetoric.

WHITTAKER (60s), a gruff and sweaty apostle, backs Kimball Jr. because he's young, he was raised to be prophet, and he already brought in an injection of fresh blood to the church with the batch of converts he brought back with him. Other apostles grumble in agreement.

They put it to a vote. Kimball wins.

INT. Kimball Estate- Chapel. It's a full house this Sunday. There's a camcorder on a tripod in the back, the REC light blinking red. Kimball mans the pulpit, plays the part of kindly pastor. The congregation hangs on his every word, all except Paul. Paul sits with his family, staring at the back of Sam's head a few rows in front of him.

"It's hard to believe my old man started all this with a few country songs and a love for people. But God works in such mysterious ways, don't he? Each person in this chapel is exactly where they need to be right now. Each person in this chapel, even if it's your first time here, has received a divine calling from God. Being his chosen people, that calling comes with responsibility."

Kimball reminds the members of the biblical signs they've been waiting for, signs of the Second Coming. He twists scriptural doctrine to back up his ascent to prophet, and publicly shames Boyd and the other apostles who were against him, before dropping the real bombshell on his followers; The world will end in 3 weeks, January 1st, 2000, 12:00 AM.

The energy in the room shifts. Paul squirms under Kimball's hard stare in the stunned silence. Kimball savors the reaction. His demeanor hardens over the course of his sermon, grows increasingly militant.

I/E. Kimball Estate- Various. Kimball's sermon continues in voiceover. Members stack sandbags along the entrance to the estate. Kimball berates the congregation for growing lax during his absence. Whittaker signs a check, hands it to Joseph. Joseph returns a few hours later with a van full of boxes of vodka. Kimball commands that each able-bodied man be ready to fight. He vows to tear down the evil institutions of the Adversary to prepare the way for God's wrath. Paul is one of many solemn young men in a line, passing boxes from the van to a shed, where the vodka is placed next to oil drums full of gasoline- all the makings for hundreds of Molotov Cocktails. Rifles adorn the wall of the shed, and crates of ammo are crammed wherever they can fit.

INT. Kimball Estate- Chapel. Paul's knuckles turn white as he grips the armrest of his chair. Chelsea comforts a crying Esther. Kimball looks out over his congregation as if daring someone to speak up. No one can, or at least, no one does.

INT. Paul's Family Cabin. Paul sits at the table, the last piece of Jesus cake in front of him, untouched. Frosting Jesus' eyes bore into Paul's. It's almost more than he can stand. Joseph and Chelsea whisper in the kitchen, just out of earshot. The hair on Paul's neck stands up. Then, a knock at the door.

HARD CUT TO: Kimball sits in Paul's spot at the table. He brings the last forkful of Jesus cake to his lips. Across the table, Joseph, Chelsea, Jeremy, Paul, Mark, and Esther anxiously watch the prophet chew and chew and swallow and wash it down with a loud gulp of milk.

"Delicious."

Chelsea forces a smile. The family sits in silence for a moment more. Under the table, Chelsea nudges Joseph. He begins to speak up, but Kimball interrupts. Kimball tells them that Boyd and a few others have run off. That he's looking to fill the newly vacant spot in the Apostles. Joseph, humble as ever, suggests a few names for consideration, but Kimball shoots them all down. He wants Joseph for the job. Joseph graciously accepts.

"The only thing now is, who's going to take your spot tomorrow? Can't have my right-hand man running off like that." Kimball asks Joseph.

Chelsea appears confused. "Tomorrow? Doing what?" She's ignored.

"Paul." Joseph says.

"What?" Paul is confused, too.

"Joseph?" Chelsea grabs her husband's arm.

Kimball looks Paul over. His face is unreadable. "Are you ready Paul?"

"Ready for what? Joseph! What is going on?" Chelsea grows frantic.

"He's ready." Joseph says, firmly. "Right Paul?"

Paul looks to his mother, then his father, then Kimball.

"Yes, I-I'm ready."

I/E. Van, moving. Whittaker sits in the front seat. Two rows of young men sit facing each other in the back. Paul turns the revolver over in his lap with shaking hands. He thumbs the cylinder release open, sending the cylinder rolling across the floor. Sam stops it with his boot, picks it up and offers it to Paul. Paul can't bring himself to make eye contact.

"T-thank you."

"Nervous?"

Paul shakes his head. We hold on Sam as he studies Paul.

EXT. Alleyway, Salt Lake City. The van pulls up to another identical van and Whittaker and the boys pile out. The driver of the other van leans against the "Children of Light" logo painted on the door.

Whittaker shakes the driver's hand.

"Where're your boys?"

The driver juts his thumb to the van behind him. "Prayin'."

"Hmm. We should've prayed too."

Behind him, the boys yank ski masks over their heads. Sam pulls at the itchy fabric. Paul is the only one without a mask.

"Got an extra mask for Joseph's kid?" Whittaker asks the driver.

"He can have mine. This face is gonna be famous."

Whittaker pounds on the other van. "Alright, pray on the way. Let's go!"

EXT. Street, Salt Lake City. Whittaker leads the boys, about ten in all, down a busy street. A few of the boys have guns, most carry golf clubs or baseball bats. They stop in front of a rundown brick building.

Whittaker turns to the driver. "Take your boys around back. Our guy should've propped a door for you. Rest of you, with me."

INT. TV Station, Reception Area. An elderly receptionist click-clacks away at an old Macintosh. The wall behind her sports a neon sign- KRTW 12 UTAH. The entry doorbell rings. The sound of the street outside roars for a second, then the door closes and silences it again. The receptionist looks up from her typing to see the barrel of Whittaker's rifle pointed at the bridge of her coke-bottle glasses.

Paul looks ashen, queasy. All around him, the boys spring into action. They pull the blinds shut, pile chairs in front of the door, rip the phone out of the wall. Sam and another boy drag the receptionist down a hallway and into an office. Whittaker motions for the rest to follow him, leaving one boy behind to keep watch. Paul stumbles after them.

INT. TV Station, News Set. Two news anchors belly laugh under studio lights. An "ON AIR" light blinks red in the darkness beyond the camera. On a monitor, we see graphics of their names- PAUL KURESH, the weatherman, and STEPHANIE BENNETT, sports. Paul Koresh wears a ridiculous green shirt the same shade as the green screen behind him. A storm system moves across his chest, bisected by his rubber ducky tie. Paul K and Stephanie are very pleased with this visual gag. Stephanie wipes laughing tears from her eyes, careful not to disturb her mascara. Behind the camera, a camera op looks to his colleague at camera 2 and shrugs.

A noise behind them draws both of their attention. In the tech booth, they see the driver. He waves at them, then shows them the pistol in his hand as he places it against the temple of a crying broadcast technician.

Whittaker emerges from the darkness and the boys follow him under the studio lights. They grab the camera ops and any other workers floating around the set, and herd them into the tech booth. The laughter from the anchors stops.

In the tech booth, the driver and his crew corral the employees. He sets a VHS tape in front of the terrified technician.

"If you cut to commercial, I shoot you. If the feed is interrupted, I shoot you. Anybody back there moves an inch and I shoot you and then I shoot them. Mmm-hmmmkay hon?"

Whittaker, Paul, the rest of the boys file in behind the anchors. One boy mans the camera. The storm animation on Paul Kuresh's shirt plays on a loop. The bright lights make our Paul sweat; the mask makes it hard to breathe. He's beginning to panic. Whittaker hands Stephanie a sheet of paper, a manifesto for her to read on air. She refuses. He strikes her. Her mascara runs and her hands shake, but still she looks Whittaker in the eye and refuses. Paul Koresh interjects, says he'll read it.

"Don't do it, Paul. Don't give them what they want." She pleads.

Paul, at the sound of his name, whips his head. He sees the terror in Stephanie's eyes, and it sets the room spinning. Images flash by in Paul's POV (partially blocked by his mask): the red "ON AIR" sign, the driver with his gun, the reflection in the camera lens which flips the whole scene upside down. Paul stumbles out of frame, toward the door.

Whittaker watches him go, then slides the manifesto to Paul Koresh. "Read it."

INT. TV Station, Office. In voiceover, we hear Paul Koresh read the manifesto: "I, your na... uh, Paul Koresh, am a c-cancer on the eyes and ears of the American public. As a mouthpiece for Satan and forces on Earth, I spread obscene lies and lead God's sheep further from the light of His love..." He continues reading, voice shaking.

Sam stands over one of the boys, who lays unconscious at his feet. The receptionist watches him with wide eyes. "It's okay, see? I'm not going to hurt you."

Footsteps in the hallway outside, running. He peeks through the blinds just in time to see Paul run past, rip off his mask, and crash through the door into the men's room. Sam turns back to the receptionist.

"I need to use your phone."

INT. TV Station, Bathroom. Paul bursts into the dingy bathroom and throws himself into the nearest stall. The door opens just in time and Paul vomits- all over a security guard and his copy of People Magazine.

"Oh."

INT. TV Station, News Set. "... the true Prophet of God, Raymond Kimball Jr." Paul Koresh finishes the manifesto.

In the tech booth, the driver perks up. "Hey! That's our cue. Play the tape."

INT. TV Station, Bathroom. The security guard, pants around his ankles, lunges at Paul. Intercut their desperate struggle with grainy camcorder footage of Kimball's sermon. They wrestle and punch each other bloody as Kimball preaches.

INT. TV Station, Office. Sam cradles a landline phone with his shoulder and scribbles an address on his hand. A gunshot rings out. The receptionist flinches.

"Ten minutes, I'll be there." Sam hangs up, turns to the receptionist. "Wait here."

He slips out the door and runs toward the bathroom. The receptionist watches him go, then without wasting a second opens a window and clambers out, crashing into the bushes below.

INT. TV Station, Bathroom. Sam enters the room, gun drawn. Paul sits in the corner, knees to chest, eyes vacant. The security guard writhes in pain. His knee is a bloody, spurting mess. Sam gives Paul a loaded glance, gears spinning wildly in his head. After he takes a moment to collect himself, he grabs handfuls of paper towels and shoves them into the guard's wound. They're soaked through in moments.

"Give me your belt." Sam says to Paul. "Your belt, hurry."

Paul stands like an automaton and follows Sam's directions. Sam cinches the belt just above the guard's knee tight enough to make the guard scream, then tighter- a makeshift tourniquet.

"Keep your knee off the ground. You'll catch sepsis or gonorrhea or something." Sam wipes off his bloody hands on Paul's shirt. "Let's go. Peelers'll be here any minute."

"Peelers?"

"Fuzz. Cops. Police. Whatever, let's go."

"What about him?"

The guard chimes in, "Fuck you both."

"He'll be alright. Let's go."

EXT. TV Station. The receptionist runs into the road, waving her arms above her head. Three police cars swerve to avoid her. She screams at the cops about "the terrorists in the lobby."

INT. TV Station, News Set. Whittaker finishes up this evening's programming with an enlightening how-to-make-a-bomb-from-household-materials seminar.

"I hope you folks at home have been taking notes. Now you've heard our message. You've heard the good news. And you've heard how you can help. Listen for God's promptings and you'll know just what to do."

The power cuts out. The ON-AIR sign blinks off, as do all the other lights. Some hostages scream.

[Sam and Paul somehow escape just before the police raid the building. Whittaker is killed along with a few of the other boys. The rest are arrested.]

INT. Abandoned Store. Newspapers cover the windows of an abandoned store. Two silhouettes darken the doorway. Sam peers through a tear in the newspaper membrane, surveys the interior.

"Okay, in here."

Sam pushes the door open. A bell tinkles, heralds their arrival to the dusty shelves and the mice that scurry along them out of sight. Paul stumbles in behind him, prods the budding bruise above his eye, and winces. "Do you think he'll be okay?"

"The guy you shot with his ass out? His breakdancing career is over, but he'll live."

"I think he gave me a concuss--"

Crack! The butt of a gun makes spirited contact with the side of Paul's face. He slinks headfirst into a shelf, limp and heavy like a wet towel.

Sam sighs, "Come on, Annie..."

EXT. Paul's Family Cabin, Backyard (Begin dream sequence). A YOUNG PAUL (5) runs along the fence that encloses the Kimball Estate. The landscape is fragmented, half-remembered. Another YOUNG BOY (5), face obscured, chases him with a stick. He raises the stick at Paul and makes machine gun noises. Paul throws himself against the fence in playful agony, which makes the other boy laugh.

A woman runs across the yard, verging on frantic. Her face, like the boy's, is obscured. Her hair is a familiar shade of red...

Delilah scoops up the boy. "It's time to go, honey. Your sister packed your clothes for you. Is there anything else from the house you need? No? Good."

She kneels in front of Paul, takes a letter from her pocket, and extends it to Paul.

"Can you give this to your mother for me, Paul? It's very important, but something tells me I can trust you. I can trust you, right?"

"I'm dead right now, Sister Kimball."

She sniffles as she stuffs the letter in his tiny motionless hand. "I'm so sorry Paul, Sam and I have to go now. Say goodbye, Sam."

"Goodbye, Sam." Both boys say in unison.

(End dream sequence)

INT. Abandoned Store. Paul opens his eyes. His wildly mismatched pupils prove his hypothesis about the concussion. The blood that drips from his nose collects on his shirt like a Rorschach inkblot.

As his eyes adjust, that same shade of red hair is the first thing he sees. As he fights to focus his vision, it's not Delilah's ghost that stands before him, holding his head up by a fistful of bloody hair. It's ANNIE (22)

[We find out Annie is Sam's sister, and they are both Delilah's children. They've been plotting to kill Kimball long before he became prophet as revenge for their mother's murder. Annie wants to kill Paul, but he convinces them he can be of help to them. He agrees to help Sam find the other two men that were in the trailer that night. An uneasy alliance is formed.]

END OF ACT I