

MARTYR  
A Screenplay  
by  
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WGAW 2069986

**EXCERPT:**

FADE IN:

INT. SUBURBAN RESIDENCE / LIVING ROOM - DAY

Humble starter home somewhere in suburban Virginia, near Washington, D.C.

FAWN MCKAY BRODIE (28) pecks at a typewriter. Hers is a makeshift workstation: a folding table and chair. She is surrounded by paper documents, emblematic of both method and madness. Fawn is the consummate multi-tasker, a woman way ahead of her time, determined to be both breadwinner and domestic servant.

A toddler (DICKIE) slobbers on wooden blocks in a playpen beside her. Next to the playpen is a highchair.

Dickie fusses and tugs on Fawn's arm. She stops what she is doing and picks him up. She carries Dickie into the kitchen.

INT. SUBURBAN RESIDENCE / KITCHEN -- DAY

Fawn slices a bagel and slips it into a toaster.

She retrieves creamed cheese and lox from the refrigerator. She slices a red onion.

She picks up a full coffee pot and exits the kitchen.

INT. BERNARD'S OFFICE -- DAY

A bona fide office with a nice desk and organized shelves.

BERNARD BRODIE (33) types a manuscript of his own, absent interruption. He is professorial.

Fawn enters, a pot of coffee in her right hand, a baby in her left arm. She fills his cup.

BERNARD

Thanks dear. Would you mind getting  
me some cream?

INT. SUBURBAN RESIDENCE / KITCHEN -- DAY

Fawn retrieves half and half from the refrigerator.

INT. BERNARD'S OFFICE -- DAY

Fawn pours cream in Bernard's coffee. He is too focused to acknowledge her.

INT. SUBURBAN RESIDENCE / KITCHEN -- DAY

Fawn prepares the bagel with creamed cheese, onion, and lox.  
Dickie fusses.

FAWN

I know, Dickie. I know. I'll get to  
you in a second.

INT. BERNARD'S OFFICE -- DAY

Fawn serves Bernard his bagel. Bernard doesn't take his eyes  
from his work.

BERNARD

Thanks, Fawn.

INT. SUBURBAN RESIDENCE / KITCHEN -- DAY

Fawn mixes a bowl of baby cereal.

INT. SUBURBAN RESIDENCE / LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Fawn puts Dickie in the highchair. She feeds him two bites of  
cereal, then reorients herself with the sheet of paper in her  
typewriter. She types a few more words.

The doorbell rings.

FAWN

This could be our lucky day, Dickie.

She hurries to answer the door.

INT./EXT. SUBURBAN RESIDENCE / FRONT PORCH -- DAY

EDGAR (60) stands on the porch. He wears a lawyerly business  
suit. He holds a well-worn Book of Mormon in one hand and some  
mimeographed papers in the other.

EDGAR

Are you Fawn McKay Brodie?

FAWN

Yes. Who are you?

Edgar extends his hand.

EDGAR

I'm Edgar Kimball. Your branch president.

Fawn shakes his hand.

EDGAR (CONT'D)

I recently received copies of your church records.

FAWN

Who sent them to you?

EDGAR

Oh, that's not important.

FAWN

It is to me.

EDGAR

A member's records have a way of winding up in the proper place. You know how that goes.

Fawn says nothing. She is dismayed on many levels.

EDGAR (CONT'D)

At any rate, I'm here to let you know the Sunday meeting schedule starts at nine a.m. I can pick you up myself. Say eight-thirty?

FAWN

That won't be necessary.

Dickie cries and demands attention from his mother. That doesn't deter the man at the door. He writes his phone number on a slip of paper.

EDGAR

Here's my phone number...in the event  
that you change your mind.

She doesn't accept it.

Dickie gets louder.

FAWN

Kind of busy.

INT. SUBURBAN RESIDENCE / LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Fawn returns to her work station. She resumes feeding cereal  
to Dickie, one eye on her manuscript.

Bernard calls from his office.

BERNARD

Who was at the door?

Fawn calls back.

FAWN

The branch president!

BERNARD

Who? I can't hear you!

Fawn gets up yet again and walks to the doorway of Bernard's  
office.

INT. BERNARD'S OFFICE -- DAY

FAWN

It was the branch president.

BERNARD

The branch president of what?

(pause)

Is that a Mormon church thing?

FAWN

Yes, he was here to invite you to  
priesthood meeting.

BERNARD

Sounds sinister. Will they cast a  
spell on me if I don't show up?

Dickie pounds on his tray and demands to be fed.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE -- DAY

JACOB WEINBERG, MD (60) has an immaculate office. A walnut desk and matching bookshelves. Leather furniture. He sits opposite Fawn with a notepad on his lap. A framed picture of Sigmund Freud hangs on the wall behind him.

FAWN

I'm writing a book.

WEINBERG

What kind of book?

FAWN

A biography.

WEINBERG

About whom?

FAWN

The founder of Mormonism. The  
prophet, Joseph Smith.

WEINBERG

Why him?

FAWN

It's an obsession, I suppose.

WEINBERG

Constructive or destructive.

FAWN

To be determined. He's always been  
present in my consciousness...not  
unlike Jesus...or Santa Claus, for  
that matter.

Weinberg takes notes.

WEINBERG

Fascinating juxtaposition.

FAWN

I want to understand how one person...or persona, as it were... could inspire both fanatical adoration and venomous hatred.

WEINBERG

Are you detached enough from your subject that you can be a dispassionate messenger?

FAWN

Frankly, no. But my husband is. He's the real writer in the family.

INT. BERNARD'S OFFICE -- DAY

Bernard types away.

TIGHT on two books on his desk:

*Seapower in the Machine Age* and *A Layman's Guide to Naval Strategy*, both authored by Dr. Bernard Brodie.

FAWN (V.O.)

He writes educational manuals for the US Department of Naval Intelligence.

INT. SUBURBAN RESIDENCE / LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Visible from Bernard's office, a TEEN GIRL (15) babysits Dickie. They sit on a blanket on the floor, playing with wooden blocks.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - DAY

WEINBERG

Would you say you and your husband have a competitive relationship?

FAWN

Oh no. Bernie has his interests, and I have mine.

The doctor senses she has more to say.

FAWN (CONT'D)

Okay, sometimes I envy him.

WEINBERG

Keep going.

FAWN

Men don't have to bear children. Or take care of them day and night at the expense of everything else.

WEINBERG

Do you wish you were a man, Fawn?

FAWN

I wouldn't put it like that.

WEINBERG

How would you put it?

FAWN

I'm a proud woman.

The doctor lets her talk.

FAWN (CONT'D)

Motherhood has brought me greater joy than anything I've accomplished in my academic life.

INT. SUBURBAN RESIDENCE / LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Fawn types at her workstation. Dickie stands on her lap and repeatedly slaps her face. She does her best to concentrate.

Bernard works without distraction in his office.

The doorbell rings.

FAWN

I'm certain of it, Dickie. This is our lucky day.

She deposits her toddler in his playpen.

She hurries to the front door and opens it.



INT./EXT. SUBURBAN RESIDENCE / FRONT PORCH -- DAY

ELDER KRAMER (20) and ELDER SMYLY (19) stand on the front porch, holding Books of Mormon. Cheap suits, wrinkled shirts, tattered shoes, black nametags.

ELDER KRAMER

Hello. The Holy Ghost led us to your house today.

FAWN

Oh really? Perchance was the ghost's name Edgar Kimball?

ELDER KRAMER

(bashfully)

I'm Elder Kramer, and this is Elder Smyly.

FAWN

I can read your nametags.

The missionaries are not sure how to react.

FAWN (CONT'D)

Wait here, I have something to show you boys.

She disappears, leaves the door open. She returns thirty seconds later, Dickie in her right arm, some research papers in her left hand.

FAWN (CONT'D)

You boys like Sunday school, don't you?

ELDER KRAMER

Yes...we do.

Fawn consults her papers.

FAWN

Because I'm going to give you a Sunday school lesson. Some things I found in the Library of Congress.