

INTERIMS



TV Pilot Script
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TEASER

COLD OPENING://

1 INT. CHURCH CLASSROOM - CHURCH - DAY

1

Sunlight filters through stained glass windows, casting warm hues across the floor of a large classroom inside a church.

The walls are adorned with religious symbols and colorful artwork. A picture of Jesus is prominently displayed at the back of the room.

The classroom is full of disgruntled people sitting in rows of metal chairs awaiting the arrival of the minister.

The door opens and REVEREND JOAN BROWN (white, slender, tall, woman in her early 60s) walks in. She goes to the front of the gathered assembly, takes a deep breath, and turns around.

REV. BROWN

Okay. You have called me here to discuss my son.

Immediately, the crowd starts to make noises of agreement, and a woman, JANE ALLEN (Mid-30s, white, heavy-set) raises her hand.

REV. BROWN (CONT'D)

Jane.

JANE

Yes, we appreciate your work as a minister, and all, but we don't think your son is a positive influence on our children.

Reverend Brown nods her head a little and then folds her arms.

JANE (CONT'D)

Yeah, I don't mean to be...mean...or

A man in the back, BILL LANDRIO (Mid-30s, white, heavy-set) interrupts Jane.

BILL

He's telling our kids all this woke stuff. He's woke!

Reverend Brown looks at the faces in the group, most nodding

in agreement. She takes a deep breath.

REV. BROWN

Well, maybe your kids are misinterpreting what he's trying to tell them.

BILL

Nah, he's got them thinking the world is mean and nasty, and God doesn't really love them. They should be embarrassed to be white.

REV. BROWN

With all due respect Bill, I don't think he does that...

JANE

He told my daughter that Jesus didn't like rich people and that we are all immigrants. You know...feel bad about how good we have it.

REV. BROWN

I assume, my son, was talking about some of the passages in the Bible...

The door opens and SIMON (a little person-dwarf, white, late-thirties) comes waltzing in.

SIMON

My ears were burning! You talking about me?

All eyes turn to look at Simon, and he smiles back.

REV. BROWN

Simon, we were having a discussion about some of the counseling you are giving their children.

SIMON

Cool! Whatcha wanna know?!

All faces turn away from Simon, except for Bill.

BILL

You told my son that God doesn't love him.

An elderly woman, FRANCIS, sitting in the front row looks up

at Simon.

FRANCIS

My grandson told me, that you are an
atheist. You don't believe in God.

Simon looks at his mother and smiles. He turns back to face
the crowd.

SIMON

I'm not an atheist. I'm an agnostic.

BILL

What's the difference?

SIMON

Let me tell ya Bill!

Simon pulls an empty chair from the row and stands on it.

SIMON (CONT'D)

I'm a licensed child psychiatrist who
has seen every type of screwed up kid
you could ever raise, and some of you
have raised some screwed up kids.

The crowd grumbles, and Bill shakes his head.

SIMON (CONT'D)

I tell the kids, if there is a God, he
doesn't have a sense of humor, he's
mean, he's a bully. He ain't Santa
Claus.

Simon jumps off the chair and runs over to Francis.

SIMON (CONT'D)

(to Francis)

He's not the Easter Bunny either.

FRANCIS

God isn't mean.

Simon runs back up onto the chair.

SIMON

Bill, I am an agnostic. I don't know
how the universe was created and
whether or not divine beings exist.

The crowd grumbles.

SIMON (CONT'D)

And I do tell the children there is no way a boat carried two of every species of animals and floated around until the water level dropped.

Reverend Brown looks at Simon and shakes her head.

JANE

He shouldn't be in our church talking to our children.

REV. BROWN

He is here to counsel children with emotional needs. He has helped quite a few of our troubled youth in our congregation.

Bill stands up.

BILL

He needs to go!

SIMON

Hey! I'll go. No worries.

Simon jumps off the chair, pushes it back into the row. The chair SCREECHES as it slides on the floor. Once he stops pushing the chair, he puts his two hands together, and bows to the group.

SIMON (CONT'D)

May the Force be with you.

He walks out. The crowd CLAPS LOUDLY. Reverend Brown stares blankly and shakes her head.

DISSOLVE TO:

SHOW OPENING://

CUT TO:

ACT I

2 INT. BISHOP'S OFFICE - CHURCH - DAY

2

The interior of a small office is dimly lit by the sun coming through stained glass windows. A golden desk lamp illuminates the cluttered desktop of a large desk.

BISHOP MICHAEL LUDDEN (white, overweight male, in his late 60s) is hunched over a laptop computer. He carefully uses his pointy finger to move the cursor and then types anxiously as if each keystroke would destroy the keyboard.

The bishop is wearing an old sweater, full of holes. His reading glasses are sitting precariously on the end of his nose. There is a KNOCK on the door and he looks up.

BISHOP LUDDEN

Come in!

The door opens and REVEREND JOAN BROWN slowly walks in. She is dressed in business casual attire.

REV. BROWN

Hello, Bishop Ludden?

The bishop doesn't look up.

BISHOP LUDDEN

Yes...sit down.

Rev. Brown is carrying a leather notebook. She sits in a chair in front of the desk, as the bishop is frantically typing with one finger.

BISHOP LUDDEN

Sorry, but I've got to answer this email.

REV. BROWN

No worries.

Rev. Brown opens up her binder, then looks up and watches the bishop's face as he grimaces.

BISHOP LUDDEN

Dammit...

The bishop looks up over his reading glasses to see if Rev. Brown has reacted to his foul language. She doesn't react.

BISHOP LUDDEN (CONT'D)

Sorry...excuse me...

The bishop begins to TAP the delete key repeatedly as if he's removing hundreds of words. His frustration grows. He stops. Takes a breath. Then slams the laptop lid down, looks up, and smiles at Rev. Brown.

REV. BROWN

Do you want me to come back later?

The bishop takes off his reading glasses and with KA-THUNK he tosses them on the desk.

BISHOP LUDDEN

No...no...I'm sorry.

He calms himself, then picks up the glasses setting them down next to the lamp.

REV. BROWN

I can come back later.

The bishop struggles to see Rev. Brown because of the bright lamp next to him. He turns off the light. It is very dark in the room. He can't see Rev. Brown very well.

BISHOP LUDDEN

Could you turn on the overhead lights?
The switch is behind you.

REV. BROWN

Sure.

Rev. Brown gets up and walks to the door. She flips on the overhead fluorescent lights and the room turns sterile. She returns to the chair.

BISHOP LUDDEN

That's better. I don't like the blue light when I write. I need to feel warm, you know?

REV. BROWN

Sure. It's good to feel warm.

The Bishop leans forward, folding his hands beneath his chin. He hesitates. He tips his head down and squints as if he's afraid of her reaction.

BISHOP LUDDEN

I have another assignment for you.

Rev. Brown's shoulders drop. Her eyes look downward and away from the Bishop. A fake smile slowly grows on her face.

BISHOP LUDDEN (CONT'D)

I know, you just got here, but there is an emergency and the other bishops feel that you would be a good fit.

Rev. Brown doesn't move. She looks at the old man and shakes her head until she realizes she's shaking her head.

REV. BROWN

I'm sorry Bishop but what's the emergency?

BISHOP LUDDEN

One of our clergy, someone you don't know, is undergoing cancer treatment and we need to send someone down to be the interim until he gets well.

Rev. Brown closes her binder and leans back in the chair.

REV. BROWN

Where am I going?

The bishop copies her body movement, leaning back in his chair, resting his elbows on the arms, and cradling his hands in his chest. He pushes his head back and the chair CREAKS. He starts to rock the chair.

BISHOP LUDDEN

Would your son go with you?

Rev. Brown surprised by the question, dismissively looks at the bishop.

REV. BROWN

Depends on where we are going.

The bishop nods and wiggles his fingers.

BISHOP LUDDEN

Well, I hope that you understand that your son can be...

The bishop struggles to make eye contact. Rev. Brown shakes her head.

REV. BROWN
Michael. Where am I going?

The bishop stops rocking. He sits up.

BISHOP LUDDEN
Arkansas. Deerpoint, Arkansas.

Rev. Brown drops her head.

REV. BROWN
Arkansas?

BISHOP LUDDEN
It is a large congregation...on paper.
Not many showing up these days.

The bishop looks at the back of his hand.

BISHOP LUDDEN (CONT'D)
Probably because the Reverend Wisinski
is not feeling well, missed a few
services. Cancer. You know.

The bishop doesn't look at Rev. Brown, as he tries to avoid
eye contact.

REV. BROWN
Arkansas.

BISHOP LUDDEN
Yeah...we need someone who can liven
up the congregation, you know. You do
such a good job. We are sorry to see
you go...

The bishop looks up.

BISHOP LUDDEN (CONT'D)
It is a perfect fit for you...and your
son.

The reverend looks annoyed at the bishop.

REV. BROWN
My son? In what way?

BISHOP LUDDEN
Well, you know...he's a child
psychologist and well...

REV. BROWN

Well, what?

BISHOP LUDDEN

Well, the church runs the Christian School in town. They need a child psychiatrist.

REV. BROWN

Why?

BISHOP LUDDEN

Lots of bullies. I've been told.

Rev. Brown looks around the room.

REV. BROWN

And so...you send my son to Arkansas, with me, to stop bullies?

BISHOP LUDDEN

Perfectly said. He needs a place where he's useful, and where you can concentrate on your job. So, will he come with you?

The bishop taps his fingers. Rev. Brown takes a deep breath.

REV. BROWN

My son can do what he wishes.

The Bishop doesn't hesitate to respond.

BISHOP LUDDEN

Yes, well...

REV. BROWN

I know, he's a disturbance in the church, at times. But he is a good psychiatrist and he helps me...occasionally...with parishioners.

BISHOP LUDDEN

There should be a separation between faith and psychiatry. Just as long as you both understand that.

REV. BROWN

Sometimes people need more than faith, and that's when I send them to my son.

The bishop laughs.

BISHOP LUDDEN
And then they lose their faith.

REV. BROWN
My son is a brilliant psychiatrist. He serves a special need.

BISHOP LUDDEN
He's a PK. Preachers' kids are always the worst, you know that. My son was a hell-raiser. If I told him the sky was blue, he'd say it was aqua.

There is an awkward silence. Rev. Brown searches for Deerpoint, Arkansas on her phone.

BISHOP LUDDEN (CONT'D)
I know that this is difficult but the job of an interim minister is to be flexible, you know, move from place to place, filling in the voids.

REV. BROWN
(under her breath)
Voids. I fill in voids.

Deerpoint, Arkansas appears in Wikipedia. The Reverend reads the article.

REV. BROWN (CONT'D)
Population two thousand and fifty-five.

She lifts her head and involuntarily curls her lips.

BISHOP LUDDEN
It's a quiet place. You'll like it. Well, it's only temporary.

Rev. Brown doesn't like what she hears and her face can't hide her feelings.

REV. BROWN
I'm a Jersey girl. Five years from retirement and you are sending me to Arkansas. I bet their idea of Italian food is Pizza Hut.

BISHOP LUDDEN
 Maybe you'll get lucky and there will
 be an Olive Garden.

Rev. Brown laughs sarcastically.

BISHOP LUDDEN (CONT'D)
 I know this is not what you want. I
 promise you, a year...tops. It will go
 fast, and you'll be back North.

Rev. Brown looks back down at the article.

REV. BROWN
 This says it's a suburb of Little
 Rock. And the majority of the churches
 are Southern Baptist. What's the size
 of the congregation?

The bishop looks down and takes a deep breath.

BISHOP LUDDEN
 Fifty. (pauses) Fifty.

REV. BROWN
 Fifty families?

BISHOP LUDDEN
 Fifty members.

REV. BROWN
 Oh, Lord.

The room becomes silent as the reverend looks back at the
 article on the phone. The bishop sits patiently waiting for
 Rev. Brown to look up.

REV. BROWN (CONT'D)
 My son will have a hard time in this
 place. You seem more interested in him
 going to Deerpoint.

BISHOP LUDDEN
 I've spoken to the superintendent of
 the school. That really could use him
 right now.

REV. BROWN
 In what way?

BISHOP LUDDEN

The pandemic amplified all the bad stuff. The kids are mean, bullies. Loneliness. Depression. There is real concern over more school shootings.

Rev. Brown puts her phone away.

REV. BROWN

He hates bullies. His father, you know.

BISHOP LUDDEN

Joan. I've known you for a long time. We've spent many hours discussing your ex-husband. I know what happens if we split you and your son up. Trouble.

There is a long silence as Rev. Brown looks blankly at the bishop. Rev. Brown stands up. She puts her cell phone in her pocket and readjusts her clothes. She stands in an almost military stance.

REV. BROWN

I'll go wherever the church sends me because I have a calling, to serve. But every time I take my son with me, it's like I bring a tornado.

BISHOP LUDDEN

He does cause a lot of problems. But, you've always left a church better than when you found it.

REV. BROWN

With all due respect, you better be there when we need you this time.

BISHOP LUDDEN

You call and I'll be there.

The reverend walks out of the room.

3 INT. KITCHEN - PARSONAGE - NIGHT

3

The kitchen in the parsonage is lit by a crystal lamp hanging above the kitchen table. SIMON is sitting alone, reading a book labeled, "**Manifest and Latent Functions in Groups**".

REV. BROWN opens the back door that leads to the kitchen. Simon looks up.

SIMON

Mom?

Rev. Brown walks into the kitchen. She stops, standing behind the chair on the opposite side of Simon.

REV. BROWN

On the way home tonight, I wondered why a grown man still lives with his mother.

SIMON

Good question.

REV. BROWN

And I also wondered why an educated man, a psychiatrist, acts like a teenager.

SIMON

Another good question.

The two look at each other for a moment. Rev. Brown turns and opens up a cabinet.

REV. BROWN

Looks like we are going to get another coffee mug.

SIMON

No.

Rev. Brown takes out a coffee mug. She reaches for a Keurig cup and puts it in the machine.

She turns on the machine and puts the mug in place.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Shipping us out again?

REV. BROWN

Yup.

The machine sputters and spews a small cup of coffee. Rev. Brown takes the coffee and sits down.

REV. BROWN (CONT'D)

This isn't working. You need to go on your own, buy a house, or whatever. Start a practice in Hawaii.

SIMON
You kicking me out?

REV. BROWN
I'm tired.

Rev. Brown takes a drink of her coffee.

SIMON
I'm here because of Dad, and that
stalker chick that keeps following
you. I'm not leaving you alone until
they stop harassing you.

The two sit in silence for a moment.

SIMON (CONT'D)
I don't like this any more than you
do. We tried it once and you ended up
in a hospital.

REV. BROWN
And you ended up in jail.

SIMON
I'm just a juvenile delinquent
masquerading as a dwarf with a lots of
fancy degrees.

REV. BROWN
You're a punk psychiatrist.

Simon smiles as if he's been caught with a cookie.

SIMON
Where are we going this time?

REV. BROWN
Arkansas.

Simon stops smiling.

FADE OUT:

ACT II

COLD OPENING://B

4 INT. PARSONAGE - DEERPOINT CHURCH - DAY

4

The Deerpoint, Arkansas parsonage is a turn-of-the-century extension of the cathedral. It's more like an apartment than a house. The decor is dated, circa the 1980s, and the living room is cramped with a couch and cabinets.

The door opens with a BANG. REV. BROWN props the door with her foot as she juggles a heavy box. She clumsily walks into the parsonage with the box and sets it down on the couch.

She leans back and lets out a deep breath. Then listens, hears nothing, puts her hands on her hips, and looks up at the ceiling.

REV. BROWN

Simon!

There is no response.

REV. BROWN

Simon!

The SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS echoes and grows louder from upstairs. Behind Rev. Brown is a staircase. SIMON rushes down the stairs. He almost falls at the bottom.

Simon stands at about three feet in height, with long hair, wearing a t-shirt and shorts. The t-shirt has the face of Sigmund Freud with the words, "Mommy issues?"

SIMON

What?!!!

REV. BROWN

What are you doing?!

Simon stands at the bottom of the stairs and flails his arms at his mother.

SIMON

I thought you were hurt!

Rev. Brown rubs her brow with her hand.

REV. BROWN

Why aren't you helping me unpack?

Simon turns around and heads back up the stairs.

SIMON
I've got stuff I got to do. I need to
fix up my room.

REV. BROWN
Simon!

Simon comes back down the stairs.

SIMON
What?!

REV. BROWN
Help me.

There is a pause as Simon thinks about his response.

REV. BROWN (CONT'D)
Simon, help me.

SIMON
Simon says, say please.

REV. BROWN
Simon, help me, please.

SIMON
There you go, that's how we play this
game.

Simon does a little dance, then heads out the front door.

REV. BROWN
(to herself)
Lord, give me strength.

Rev. Brown walks over to the far side of the room and looks
out the window. Simon comes in the door with a box.

REV. BROWN
Simon.

SIMON
Yes, mom?

REV. BROWN
What's in the neighbor's backyard?

The box in Simon's arms is clearly marked SIMON with a

permanent marker. It is heavy and Simon struggles to hold it.

SIMON

I don't know. What's in the neighbor's backyard?

REV. BROWN

It looks like a junkyard.

Simon doesn't respond but walks quickly up the stairs with his box. Rev. Brown looks out the window again.

REV. BROWN (CONT'D)

What a mess.

A middle-aged white man, DWIGHT WARTON, wearing a plaid shirt and a black VETERAN cap, appears at the door entrance. He KNOCKS on the door frame.

DWIGHT

Hello.

Rev. Brown turns around quickly, and defensively.

REV. BROWN

Hello! May I help you?

Dwight walks into the room.

DWIGHT

Yes, ma'am, I just wanted to introduce myself. Dwight Warton. I live next door. Jus' wanted to say hi, and welcome y'all.

Rev. Brown doesn't walk toward Dwight but keeps her distance. The sound of Simon's footsteps grows louder as he reaches the top of the staircase.

REV. BROWN

Thank you, Dwight. I appreciate the welcome.

DWIGHT

Is the reverend here? I'd like to meet him. I'm a Baptist, but...if he's a man of the cloth, well, I think I'd like to meet him, maybe chat.

REV. BROWN

Well...actually...

Simon comes storming down the staircase and rushes over to Dwight. He reaches out to shake hands.

SIMON

Well, howdy neighbor! Please to meet you.

Dwight doesn't respond, as he stares at Simon. Simon reaches out his hand again.

SIMON (CONT'D)

It's a pleasure to meet y'all.

Simon smiles and bobs his head a little. Dwight reaches out and gingerly shakes Simon's hand.

DWIGHT

Nice, to meet you Reverend.

The two shake hands in a clumsy way.

SIMON

Well, it is sure a pleasure to meet you. I will send a prayer to God right now, to let Him know you are a neighborly neighbor.

Rev. Brown takes a quick step toward Simon and grabs him by the shoulders. She pulls him away from Dwight.

REV. BROWN

Dwight, I'm sorry. This is my son. I am Reverend Joan Brown.

Rev. Brown reaches out her hand to shake Dwight's hand. Dwight looks confused. He doesn't shake her hand right away but keeps looking at Simon.

DWIGHT

Your son?

REV. BROWN

Yes, he's a bit of a kidder. He likes to make jokes.

SIMON

Hey, do I need to bring my dwarf friends to clean your backyard? I can ask Snow White if it is okay, she'll bill you...

Rev. Brown cups Simon's mouth with her hand.

DWIGHT

Well, I...just wanted to make your acquaintance.

Dwight takes a step back and heads to the door.

REV. BROWN

Thank you for stopping by. I hope to see you at church on Sunday.

DWIGHT

Yea. Yes ma'am, well, actually, like I said ma'am, I'm a baptist...

REV. BROWN

That's okay, Dwight...once we get settled, we'll sit and chat. I'd like that.

DWIGHT

Yes ma'am. Have a blessed day.

Dwight leaves the house. Simon pushes himself away from his mother. She turns to face him.

REV. BROWN

We haven't been here an hour and you are already being a little prick.

SIMON

C'mon. I'm born to be the little prick.

REV. BROWN

Knock it off, Simon. Your self-pity is a worn-out record.

Simon smiles triumphantly, then heads out the door. Rev. Brown walks over to the couch and sits down. Simon returns with a box labeled KITCHEN. He disappears down the hallway.

5 INT. KITCHEN - PARSONAGE - DAY

5

The kitchen is rather large but very old. The refrigerator and stove look as if they were bought in the 1970s, both are lime green.

Simon puts the box down on the kitchen table and starts to unpack. The box is full of coffee mugs.

SIMON

Mom! If each of these mugs are from one of your churches, this has to be like number forty? What number is this one?

No answer.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Mom! Do you care where the coffee mugs go?! 'Cause I want them low, so I can reach them. You know...

No answer.

SIMON (CONT'D)

I know it will be a bit tough for you to reach down, and get a mug, but I think, in the long run, we'd both be happier. Is that okay?!

Simon puts the cups away and takes the empty box with him as he leaves the room.

6 INT. PARSONAGE - DEERPOINT CHURCH - DAY

6

Rev. Brown has her elbow resting on the edge of the couch as she holds her forehead. She is crying. Simon walks in from behind her, still holding the empty box. He sees his mother, puts the box down, and walks over to the couch.

She doesn't look up at him as he sits down next to her.

SIMON

I'm sorry.

REV. BROWN

Simon. We have to make this work.

SIMON

I know.

Simon reaches into his pocket and pulls out a roll of Lifesavers. He unravels a mint and hands it to his mom. She reaches out and takes it. She puts it in her mouth.

SIMON

We will make this work.

FADE OUT:

ACT III

COLD OPENING://C

7 INT. SANCTUARY - DEERPOINT CHURCH - DAY 7

The sanctuary is dark. The twelve rows of white pews on each side of the aisle are somewhat visible. A stained glass window of Jesus, above the pulpit, shines brightly from the sunlight.

The lights come on, revealing REV. BROWN is sitting in the back row. CAROL ALLAN (mid-twenties, white woman, dressed in a skirt and blouse) walks into the sanctuary. She is surprised when she sees Rev. Brown in the pew.

CAROL

Ahhh!

Rev. Brown gets up and turns toward Carol.

REV. BROWN

I'm sorry...I'm sorry...I didn't mean to scare anyone.

Carol is backpedaling as she speaks, reaching down and grabbing a hymnal to protect herself.

CAROL

I'm okay...who are you?

Rev. Brown waves her hands in front of her chest like a sailor on an aircraft carrier.

REV. BROWN

No...no, I'm so sorry. I'm Reverend Joan Brown. I'm the interim.

Carol stops her retreat. She keeps the hymnal and raises it up to her chest, like a schoolgirl.

CAROL

It's nice to meet you.

8 INT. CHURCH OFFICE - DAY 8

The church office looks like a former classroom that was converted into an office. A worn-out copier stands in the corner, surrounded by boxes of paper. There are two empty desks in the room. Each desk is covered with old bulletins.

REV. BROWN walks into the room with CAROL. Carol rushes over to one of the desks and starts picking up the old bulletins.

CAROL

I'm so sorry Reverend Brown. I haven't had time to clean up, you know with all the changes going on. I really do apologize, ma'am.

REV. BROWN

No problem, Carol.

Carol takes the bulletins and throws them in the trash.

REV. BROWN

That's a lot of bulletins. Did you cancel a service?

Carol doesn't respond right away but stands awkwardly, looking away from Rev. Brown.

REV. BROWN (CONT'D)

Carol?

The door on the other side of the room opens and JIM WRIGHT (early eighties, black, man) walks in. He looks at Carol and then at Rev. Brown.

JIM

I'm sorry. I don't mean to disturb you, but, we have a bit of a problem in the sanctuary.

Carol turns and looks at Rev. Brown.

REV. BROWN

What type of problem? And you are?

The old man steps to the middle of the room. He smiles at the Rev. Brown.

JIM

Ma'am, I'm Mister Jim. Jim Johnson. I am the caretaker of the property. Mind you, I'm not a Presbyterian, but please don't think ill of me.

The two women smile at each other. Jim wipes his forehead and then points in the air.

JIM (CONT'D)

I've been working here since I was a little boy. This place is my home.

The old man nods his head.

REV. BROWN

I'm Reverend Joan Brown. Thank you for welcoming me into your home.

JIM

Y'all are welcome, ma'am.

REV. BROWN

So, what's the problem in the sanctuary?

The old man smiles a sheepish grin.

JIM

We don't have a minister in the pulpit.

Rev. Brown shakes her head and laughs. Carol is confused.

REV. BROWN

Well, Jim, I think the problem is solved. It is such a pleasure to meet you.

The old man looks proud of himself and puts out his hand to Rev. Brown. She reaches out and they shake hands. The old man looks at Carol and then back at Rev. Brown.

JIM

If you need something, let me know. I will come running.

REV. BROWN

You will be the first person I call. Thank you, Jim.

JIM

Thank you, ma'am.

Carol tosses more bulletins in the trash. Jim turns and walks back out the door he came in. Rev. Brown walks over to her desk and sits down.

There is a THUMP as more bulletins go in the trash.

REV. BROWN
 Carol, what's with all the bulletins?

The young woman collapses in the chair at the other desk.

CAROL
 I'm a youth pastor, Rev. Brown. But
 there is no youth. I'm wasting my
 life.

There is an awkward silence.

REV. BROWN
 Well, I need you, Carol. I need you to
 help me get started here, and then we
 will find you some youth.

Carol smiles. There is a CRASH outside the office. The two
 women look toward the door. SIMON walks in with a big smile
 on his face.

SIMON
 Hello!

REV. BROWN
 Did you break something?

SIMON
 No...what makes you think that?

The mother and son stare at each other for a second, then
 Rev. Brown bobs her head toward Carol.

REV. BROWN
 Carol, this is my son, Simon.

Carol chuckles. Simon's happy face turns to a gaze.

SIMON
 Hi Carol. Do I amuse you?

CAROL
 Yes...(pause)...NO! No! Not at all, I
 mean...

SIMON
 Oh, Carol, you had me at yes.

Simon turns to his mother.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Ok. Mom. I have a meeting at the school, like right now. I'm taking the car.

REV. BROWN

Ok, thanks for telling me.

Simon turns to look at Carol. He squints at her.

SIMON

I can drive.

CAROL

That's great.

Simon pulls out his keys, tosses them in the air, and snatches them.

SIMON

I'm an excellent driver.

He turns and walks out of the room. Carol awkwardly looks at Rev. Brown.

REV. BROWN

You'll get used to him.

DISSOLVE TO:

9 INT. HALLWAY - DEERPOINT MIDDLE SCHOOL - DAY

9

The school is in session but the halls are empty. SIMON is walking toward the principal's office when the bell rings.

Immediately, Simon has a look of fear as the doors open and middle school students come flooding out. It looks like a cattle stampede.

The world slows down for Simon. The loud SHRIEKING of students becomes muffled as their faces, their smiley, twisted faces, look at him, mocking him.

KID #1

Look at the dwarf!

KID #2

Is the circus in town?!

KID #3

Haha

The echo of their voices forces Simon to close his eyes, as he steps blindly down the hall.

KID #4
Let's toss him!

KID #5
Who can toss him the furthest!!!

KID #3
Haha

Simon squints his eyes as if he's being hit with objects or walking through a blizzard. The mob of students solidifies around him, in a moving circle into a scrum of screaming, laughing children.

KID #1
What's your name? Ewok?

KID #2
His name is Yoda!

KID #3
Haha

There are no adults in range, and the scene becomes uglier when a taller student picks up Simon by the underarms from behind.

Simon opens his eyes in rage.

SIMON
Put me down!

KID #6
Look what I caught!

With a quick heel kick to the kid's groin, the bully lets go of Simon. Simon falls as the kid screams and curls up on the floor. Simon lands on his feet. He grabs the books of a student next to him and holds them like weapons.

SIMON
Back off!

The group of kids laughs at Simon.

Behind Simon, BILLY BARNARD (middle-school, nerdy, heavy-set, white student) is in panic mode. He holds up his books to escape from the scene. Simon turns and sees Billy.

One of the bullies knocks the books out of Billy's hands and pushes him to the ground. Simon rushes over to Billy. He stands between the cowering student and the bully.

SIMON

Back off!

The bully laughs and then slams Simon up against the lockers. The crowd WOOS. Simon gets back up. Billy runs away.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Hit me again. I dare you.

The bully is about to hit Simon.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Have you ever watched Lord of the Rings?

The bully looks puzzled at the question, then slams Simon against the locker. Simon slowly gets back up. He points to the ceiling.

SIMON (CONT'D)

We've got camera footage. You just assaulted me. That's a year in juvie...no Mommie, no Daddie, no video games...

The bully is about to hit Simon when the school security guard, FLETCHER FITZGERALD (early 40's, skinny, Don Knotts-looking kind of cop) grabs the bully.

FLETCHER

Jesse Snyder, that's about enough of that...

The crowd parts as the principal, JOHN BROOKLEDGE (mid-fifties, professionally dressed, black man) helps Fletcher control the bully.

JOHN

(to Fletcher)

Put him in my office. I will call the police. Don't leave his side.

Simon looks defeated. He leans up against the lockers.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Get to your next class! All of you.

John stands in the middle of the hallway, with his hand raised, finger pointing at the students.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Anyone left in the hall in the next minute will go to detention. Get to class!

The crowd disperses quickly. John looks at Simon.

JOHN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry about that. You are Simon Brown, right?

SIMON
Yes sir. You are John Blackledge?

JOHN
Brookledge.

SIMON
Sorry. My brain is a bit jostled.

John smiles, then shakes his head.

JOHN
Do you really want to work here?

SIMON
No.

There is a pause.

JOHN
Why, then...if you don't mind me asking.

Simon looks up at John and then down the hall. He points.

SIMON
That kid. Not the one you led away, but the kid that crumbled up on the floor. I'm here for that kid.

JOHN
What do you mean?

SIMON
The next mass murderer, the next serial killer, is that kid.

JOHN
I don't understand.

SIMON
Put the bullies in jail and fix the
damaged child. It's the only way to
stop school shootings.

John nods his head.

SIMON (CONT'D)
You saw my resume. This is what I do.
I am an expert on bullies and
psychopaths. You lucked out.

JOHN
Lucked out?

SIMON
I wouldn't be here if my mom wasn't
sent here. You have me on loan. I'm an
interim. My mom and I are interims.

The bell rings.

JOHN
I'm glad you are here. Let's talk in
my office.

The two men walk down the hallway to the principal's office.

FADE OUT:

ACT IV

COLD OPENING://D

10 INT. KITCHEN - PARSONAGE - NIGHT

10

Mother and son are sitting at the kitchen table, both look exhausted.

SIMON

You did order a pizza?

REV. BROWN

I ordered a pizza.

SIMON

Did you get bread and dipping sauce?

REV. BROWN

No.

SIMON gets up and walks to the refrigerator. He opens the door and takes out a beer. He puts the beer on the table.

SIMON

I had a rough day. I got the snot kicked out of me and then I became a bully. I need to chill.

REV. BROWN

You are a bully.

SIMON

You want a glass of wine?

REV. BROWN

That would be nice.

Simon takes a step stool and puts under the cabinets. He climbs the stool and gets a wine glass.

REV. BROWN (CONT'D)

First day at work, is always a rough day. Be careful!

SIMON

You know I wrote my dissertation on manifest and latent function in groups. All these church moves to different places proves my theory.

He takes the glass, and steps down.

REV. BROWN
Proves it?

SIMON
Yup.

He puts the glass on the table and walks over to the wine stand. He pulls out a bottle of wine, shows it to his mother and she nods approval. Simon pulls off the seal.

REV. BROWN
Can you dumb it down for me?

SIMON
Latent functions are unintended by-products or consequences of a social pattern or institution, and they often go unnoticed by society.

Simon uses the bottle opener, pulls the cork and pours wine into his mother's glass.

REV. BROWN
I'm a latent byproduct of having you for a son.

The door bell rings.

SIMON
I'll get it, I'm starving. Money?

REV. BROWN
I already paid online.

SIMON
Even the tip?

REV. BROWN
Yes, even the tip.

Simon runs out of the kitchen.

11 INT./EXT. FRONT DOOR/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

11

The PIZZA DELIVERY GUY, a white man in his late fifties, is at the door holding a large pizza. SIMON opens the door.

SIMON
Dad?!

THE END: