

SONORAN SAINTS

(EPISODE THREE)

"HAIL MARY"

Written for film by:

John J, Sollecito Jr and Jeffrey I. Hoppenstand

Screenplay by

Jeffrey I. Hoppenstand

### EPISODE THREE

FADE IN:

INT. DANIEL'S OFFICE - NIGHT

It's empty and dark - though some moonlight shines in.

A key is heard UNLOCKING the door. It opens.

Sharon enters, carrying the found files-folder. In the dim moonlight, she takes in the clutter - her face displays disapproval and contempt.

The file-folder in her hands, she surveys the room trying to come to a decision. She lays it on a corner of Daniel's desk, then changes her mind. Under some textbooks, no.

Settling on Daniels renegade FILE CABINET, she opens a drawer and places the folder near the back, *subtly* higher than others, making it fit in - yet also be more visible.

Her hands free, she bends down and pulls the base of the cabinet inches further from the wall.

INT. DETENTION DORMITORY - NIGHT

JACOB'S ROOM - Jacob, deep in thought, plays with the wrapping on the food tray, making half-hearted attempts to unwrap it. Kish takes a seat in the single chair.

KISH

I can't guarantee the outcome a-hundred-percent. But you have nothing to lose. Right?

JACOB

I guess so.

KISH

No, FOR SURE. As of now, both of you are gone.

Kish loses patience with how Jacob is picking at the plastic wrapped tray. He *helpfully* pulls it to himself.

KISH (CONT'D)

Give it, let me help.

JACOB

They really announced it?

KISH  
That's not what I said.

JACOB  
Then how--

KISH  
Don't you listen, kid? I heard them talking, Cameron, Hadley and Brozac. The door was open, I -- I was just walking by.

Kish slowly but steadily starts picking at Jacob's now-unwrapped dinner.

JACOB  
Are you sure you heard it right?

KISH  
Right enough to hear Hadley say - that he spoke to your dad - who's coming here a week from Saturday to take you both home.

That hits Jacob like a punch in the gut.

JACOB  
(in disbelief)  
Saturday...

KISH  
(a forkful in his mouth)  
Uh huh.

JACOB  
How do you know it's really there?

Jacob rescues the SNAPPLE BOTTLE from the tray.

KISH  
Come on, a true mole never rats out his - fellow moles.  
(quickly)  
Plus "*there's no I in team*" yadda yadda. Jacob, **it's there**.

JACOB  
But where in the room? Exactly?

A dollop of mashed potatoes drops onto his shirt.

KISH  
Aw, shit.

He wads a paper napkin and dumps it in the water glass on Jacob's night-stand.

JACOB  
Why won't you tell me?

Kish is fully focused on trying to blot out the shirt-stain.

KISH  
Like I said...  
(wiping)  
I don't know.

JACOB  
It just doesn't sound... right. I--

KISH  
Jacob, have I ever lied to you?

JACOB  
We've never spoken.

KISH  
So that's a 'no.'

INT. SGT. ROBIN'S OFFICE - EVENING

A subdued Easton sits opposite Robin at her desk. This talk has been clearly *wearing her down*.

SGT. ROBIN  
Though it's not a pleasant thought - we're all liable to the demands of our time.

EASTON  
With all due respect, Sergeant - what in heck does that mean?

SGT. ROBIN  
In this case, it means you chose the very worst time to personally demonstrate why no one should ever believe in this school.

EASTON  
But it wasn't just me! It's not all my fault!

SGT. ROBIN  
Mr. Tannor--

EASTON

My stinking tool of a brother  
started it. You were there. You saw  
how he--

Easton should have seen it coming, but Robin suddenly stands,  
throwing back her chair, and--

SGT. ROBIN

*Neem-AHS-lee meh ha-shtuyot  
shel-cha!*

TRANSLATION

"I'm fed up with your  
bullshit!"

Easton is startled into silence - and a little scared.

SGT. ROBIN (CONT'D)

From the very first day you two got  
here, we all had to listen to this  
song with no end! The same tired  
excuse for every problem you have -  
for any trouble you get into.

(intentional deep breath)

I'm aware of your ambitions,  
Easton. They sound noble - IF IN  
FACT they are yours.

(she waits)

But in either case, until you start  
owning your own responsibility, I  
don't think you have much chance.

That gets in. Easton reflects.

EASTON

(timidly)

What should I do?

Robin takes a long moment to consider.

SGT. ROBIN

For a start - tell me your reason  
for so much hostility towards  
Jacob.

EASTON

I can't. I can't tell you.

INT. DETENTION DORMITORY - MOMENTS LATER

JACOB'S ROOM - as before: Jacob and Kish. The dinner plate  
next to Kish is half-empty.

KISH

That's how it be, take it or leave  
it. You find the banner.

(MORE)

KISH (CONT'D)

And once you fly it - everybody, especially the big shots who control your life are gonna see what you're made of.

JACOB

I'm not sure I even care anymore.

KISH

Hey, your daddy's gonna see it too. You'll be the uh, what is it...? The *redeemed* family hero.

JACOB

That would be something new.

KISH

Plus you can wave goodbye to your blood'n'guts brother. Watch them both drive off into the sunset. You'll keep your place here *and* be the man!

Jacob opens the Snapple bottle.

JACOB

(directly at Kish)

That's not what I want.

KISH

Jesus-mothers-of-invention Christ! Then why am I wasting my time, trying to help you save that golden Tannor ass?

JACOB

You're not, you're not wasting anything. Listen --

KISH

You make no sense to me!

JACOB

Paul, listen. I'm going to do this - I will. But for Easton. He's the one who belongs here.

He takes a gulp, then his face falls.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Uch, gross! It's warm.

Kish calmly takes the bottle from his hand.

KISH  
 (chuckling)  
 You, my friend, some day will feel  
 right at home with the bourgeoisie.  
 (drinks & shrugs - flatly)  
 We'll be sorry to see you go.

Kish mimes drawing his finger across his neck.

INT. MICHAEL CAMERON'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Cameron, looking even more humorless than usual, glares out across his packed classroom. There is an air of nervous expectation, something out of the ordinary is going down.

Sharon enters, carrying in both hands a neatly compiled and stapled stack of papers.

She hands them to Cameron with a ritualistic air. LOW MURMURS flow throughout the room.

Cameron seems lost in perusing a clipped bundle of four sheets - taken from the top of the pile.

CAMERON  
 Today, gentlemen - I'll be  
 returning your most recent book  
 reports.

The boys react with confusion and unease.

CAMERON (CONT'D)  
 Cadet Larry Greco. Please approach.

From the back of the room, Larry stands and complies, showing no emotion as he makes the trek to Cameron.

CAMERON (CONT'D)  
 I'm aware this report was assigned  
 by Mr. Cesta in his English lit  
 class.

From the pile, Cameron takes out a stapled pack of three sheets and hands it to Larry. As the boy turns to go, Cameron gestures for him to remain.

CAMERON (CONT'D)  
 Regarding this work of *fiction*,  
 "Cat's Cradle" - it seems to have  
 inspired many questions and  
 reactions which are beyond the  
 scope of Mr. Cesta's... expertise  
 in literature.

(MORE)

CAMERON (CONT'D)

(beat for effect)

As it has raised issues of religious attitudes, **I am best qualified** to address your concerns.

(turning to Larry)

Mr. Greco, please read aloud everything that's highlighted.

DURING LARRY'S RECITATION, Marty and Ryan exchange horrified looks of realization: the worst has occurred.

LARRY

"Question five. Is religion and its inherent belief in a supreme being a model for a positive, moral life or simply a crutch for the weak-minded and fearful?"

SHARON LOOKS READY to do the "exploding head woman" from TOTAL RECALL.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Is religious doctrine a framework within which to express gratitude for the rewards in our lives - or a tool for mental control over the masses? Can it be both?"

Larry stops, seemingly at an impasse. He looks at Cameron and indicates something on the paper.

CAMERON

By all means, Mister Greco. Read that too.

LARRY

"Your replies will be kept strictly confidential."

Cameron's SMUG SMILE sends everyone the clearest possible warning they should never forget! Among the boys, panic and hostility roll across in waves.

INT. BROTHER ZACH'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Brother Zach and Sergeant Hadley endure another session with Bishop Frederick and Pastor Mason.

PASTOR MASON

The diocese has been made aware of patterns of negativity which seem to be rampant here. They intend to--



BROTHER ZACH

Excuse me, Pastor. "Patterns of negativity..?" What does that mean?

BISHOP FREDERICK

Recent conflicts with local residents, for one.

HADLEY

(simmering)

I see. What efforts did you make to assess the inbred negativity patterns of local residents?

INT. MICHAEL CAMERON'S CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

As before, Cameron stands off to the side. The class listens to Larry reading.

LARRY

"Yes, it sounds really un-cool to some people, but I am made stronger from knowing that Jesus is always there to help me make a course correction - when ego or human imperfections fail me."

In their adjacent seats, Ryan and Marty are stunned.

RYAN

Holy Shit...

LARRY

"Now CAT'S CRADLE was kind of interesting; sometimes it was pretty funny. But how many people know that the author was clinically depressed from being a POW in World War II? Maybe it wasn't a pill he needed every day, but something or somebody more powerful."

MARTY

HOLY SHIT...

They look at each other, nearly speechless.

RYAN

Larry's been a NARC.

BRUCE

This whole time.

At the back of the room, Kish is immensely enjoying all this.

KISH  
 (mutters)  
 NO-body expects the Spanish  
 Inquisition.

INT. BROTHER ZACHARY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

BISHOP FREDERICK  
 Also we've been informed of the  
 recent violence occurring among  
 several cadets.

BROTHER ZACH  
 Two. Two cadets had a fight. No one  
 was -- seriously hurt. In fact both  
 are brothers.

HADLEY  
 Brothers are gonna fight. Ever hear  
 of Cain and Abel?

PASTOR MASON  
 Abel was slain by his brother.

HADLEY  
 Tremendous sense of drama. Just  
 swell...

BROTHER ZACH  
 (quickly)  
 It's an internal matter. We're  
 dealing with it.

BISHOP FREDERICK  
 What about your zero-tolerance for--

BROTHER ZACH  
**We're dealing with it.** There will  
 be no effect on the Diocese or  
 anyone beyond these walls.

INT. MICHAEL CAMERON'S CLASSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE ON a page with the title: "Analysis and Review of CAT'S  
 CRADLE by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. by Tommy Fiacetti".

PULL OUT TO SEE: Tommy, holding the photocopied pages - he  
 looks miserably at Cameron.

TOMMY

I don't want to--

CAMERON

What you want or don't want is irrelevant.

He grabs the paper from Tommy, turns to the last page and sticks it back in the boy's trembling hand. Cameron points.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

Read the highlighting.

TOMMY

(sotto voce, reading)

"It sounds really stupid at first but then--"

CAMERON

Louder, please!

TOMMY

(obeying)

"It sounds really stupid at first to make up something you know isn't real. Just to give people something to believe. But from the rest of the book..."

Across the classroom, the cadets' restlessness and anger is slowly overcoming their compliance. Murmurs and objections are getting louder. Here and there, some "boos."

TOMMY (CONT'D)

It shows that very bad stuff can happen when anybody just can pick and choose whatever he wants to believe. And I know--"

CAMERON

The Lord has chosen for us!  
Continue.

TOMMY

"And I know a lot of stupid people myself, so maybe they..."

INT. BROTHER ZACHARY'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

The *oversight meeting* is wrapping up.

BISHOP FREDERICK  
I'm hopeful you'll make it through  
to the next fiscal period on an  
even keel.

BROTHER ZACH  
We will, Your Eminence.

BISHOP FREDERICK  
No awkward publicity, no more  
visible conflicts - an emphasis on  
quiet order.

BROTHER ZACH  
We and our students share a mutual  
respect. They know we want only the  
best guidance for them.

The Bishop's stone expression shows NO validation.

BROTHER ZACH (CONT'D)  
And I feel we consistently earn  
their trust.

INT. MICHAEL CAMERON'S CLASSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

AS BEFORE: It's Marty's turn on *The Rack*. As it's now clear  
that resistance is futile, Marty complies - no objections, no  
pleas. Devoid of all affect, he begins with a backdrop of the  
previous low-volume GRUMBLING from the 'audience.'

MARTY  
"Reading about the super-dark comic  
world of San Lorenzo was like  
looking into a distorted mirror of  
my own life. It perfectly showed  
the exact same kind of bullshit  
they feed me every day here.

The room has gone ABSOLUTELY SILENT.

MARTY (CONT'D)  
Mister Cameron made us look at a  
lot of paintings by different  
artists who wanted to show Hell - I  
mean how each one thought it looks.  
One day I'll do that too, just by  
posting pictures of this place."

INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Pastor Mason and Bishop Frederick, accompanied by Brother Zach and Hadley approach the front doors. Pastor Mason holds out his hand for Hadley to shake.

PASTOR MASON

Despite how it might appear, I  
respect the important skills these  
young men learn from you.

Hadley gauges the *sincerity* of this and takes his hand in a powerful grasp.

HADLEY

I can tell. Why not come and drill  
with us at the next open house?

PASTOR MASON

Many thanks, but I'm on-call for  
His Eminence pretty much twenty-  
four-seven.

In the background, Sgt. Robin hurries from the staircase, dressed in off-duty jeans and T-shirt.

HADLEY

That's a packed duty rotation.

PASTOR MASON

Such is life for us "seconds-in-  
command." I'm sure you can relate.

She makes straight for Brother Zach. Seeing that, Hadley senses something's up.

HADLEY

No. Not at all.

Hadley releases his vise grip and now looks towards where Sgt. Robin has pulled Brother Zach away.

As she comes into view, the two visitors see her.

Now all eyes go to her as she and Brother Zach stare down with great concern at her phone. We dimly hear some sort of COMMOTION coming from the tinny speaker.

ON Sgt. Robin's PHONE. A video plays an excellent iPhone capture of the JACOB/EASTON BRAWL in all its raw brutality.

Brother Zach looks up as the two clergymen are upon them.

INT. MICHAEL CAMERON'S CLASSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Marty walks calmly out the door. The mood among the cadets is simmering to a boil. Angry voices are rising again.

CAMERON

It certainly seems we've been less than successful for some of you - many of you, in bringing the Lord's truth into your lives.

Bruce Govich attempts to gather his courage. He rises to his feet out of the sea of anger.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

What do you propose we do about the amount of sin I see before me?

BRUCE

You have no right to do this, Mr. Cameron!

CAMERON

Sit down, Mister Govich--

BRUCE

We wrote those for Mr. Cesta and he told us to be honest.

CAMERON

Sit down and be quiet!

BRUCE

You weren't supposed to see them.

CAMERON

None of you - have any standing to define my rights. And Mr. Cesta won't be able to give you his empty promises too much longer.

PHILIP

What's that mean?

CAMERON

That's not your concern. All you need to know is I'm here to save you from ignorance and the hell that awaits the souls who ignore God's truth. Next to His, your misguided so-called truths mean nothing.

Cameron consults the list again.

CAMERON (CONT'D)  
 Ryan Stultz.

Ryan stands up slowly. He's shaking terribly, but not with fear - it's rage.

CAMERON (CONT'D)  
 Your take on these essential issues  
 is worth sharing.

He beckons Ryan; but Cameron's belief in his unbreakable control - causes him to miss the obvious.

RYAN  
 Then you share it, Cameron! Unless  
 you really want...

Now Ryan begins to move. And the sight of his approach brings the first flash of FEAR to Cameron's eyes.

Other cadets come to their feet. PROTESTS get louder.

CAMERON  
 There will be silence here!

No. There won't. The tenuous thread of order is tearing from the heat of schoolboy outrage.

EXT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Brother Z, Hadley, Sgt. Robin and the two clerical guests stand nervously beyond the entrance. They all look towards-

THE CLASSROOM BUILDING - a hundred-fifty yards away. Students pour out into the quad. The scene is chaotic, filled with the mixed DIN of anger, resentment and fear.

From within, we dimly hear Cameron's raging voice exhorting all to come to order, to return to the classroom upon "pain of fire and brimstone," etc.

From classrooms in this AND OTHER BUILDINGS, more students come piling out to see what's happening. They approach and mix with the original group. Everyone is talking, spreading the *betrayal news*.

ON BROTHER ZACH'S GROUP APPROACHING - Hadley sprints and quickly leaves them behind.

AT THE CLASSROOM BUILDING - Michael Cameron exits, his face red and twisted. Sharon follows, close on his heels.

Even the sight of Hadley pushing his way in doesn't spur the boys to self-order. This world is getting even LOUDER.

EXT. DETENTION DORMITORY - MOMENTS LATER

Near SILENCE. On the wooded side, facing away from campus - all is pastorally peaceful & idyllic.

Some forty yards from the building, Daniel sits cross-legged on the ground, strumming an acoustic guitar. Greer sits nearby on a patch of grass, leaning comfortably against a tree, also playing the same.

Their voices blend, meet and diverge in quite decent harmony and unison:

DANIEL & GREER

*"So I walked on up to the doorstep,  
through the screen and across the  
flo-o-or. Summer breeze makes me  
feel fine, blowing through the  
jasmine in my mind. Summer breeze  
makes me feel fine..."*

Greer ceases and Daniel follows suit.

DANIEL

What up, something off?

GREER

It sounded like we both hit the B  
and I did the walk-down but you...  
climbed to the D. It worked but--

CADET (O.S.)

Mister Cesta! Sergeant Greer!

By the FRONT DOOR OF THE DORM, the on-duty cadet stands, holding high the wireless receiver.

CADET (CONT'D)

Phone for you - Urgent!

ON DANIEL AND GREER - approaching.

As the two double-time it to the building, we see the faces of Jacob and Easton in the background, peering out from the windows of two widely spaced-apart dorm rooms. Both boys' expressions' appear - *lost*.



## EXT. CLASSROOM BARRACKS - MOMENTS LATER

The previous chaotic setting is now far more orderly. Hadley's presence has had the necessary effect: several classes worth of cadets are lined up in formation. Hadley is deep in conference with Brother Zach.

Among the boys, fear and anger are still present; their discipline is tenuous. There is whispering and fidgeting. Hadley sends periodic scowls in their direction.

Michael Cameron paces, accompanied by Sharon. He stalks through the cadet lines, trying to appear intimidating - but many simply stare him down, giving it right back.

Sgt. Robin sits in a stairwell, out of the boys' sight. She's holding the stacks of their essays, reading through them.

The bishop and Mason are off by themselves, talking urgently.

## EXT. SCHOOL CAMPUS - CONTINUOUS

Daniel and Greer move quickly. Turning a corner, they're now in view of the tense scene by the classroom buildings.

DANIEL

There goes my hope that Robin was pranking us.

## EXT. CLASSROOM BARRACKS - MOMENTS LATER

As the two arrive, they're spotted by the cadets. Six of the nearest (including Ryan) break ranks and run toward them, calling Daniel's name. Hadley sees it, his voice booms.

HADLEY

No one moves!

In a comical tableau, the boys freeze. Ryan *spazzes out* and trips over his feet. Reaching for balance he takes the nearest one down with him. Annoyed, Hadley shakes his head.

Brother Zach looks straight at Daniel.

BROTHER ZACH

Mister Cesta, I need you over here.

DANIEL

(muttering)  
Rock and roll.

Hadley indicates to Greer that he is to patrol the line. He and Daniel split off.

GREER  
(to the boys)  
Back in formation. Quick time.

Greer herds the boys back; Daniel joins Brother Z and Hadley.

BROTHER ZACH  
Is it true what I hear?

DANIEL  
(genuinely flustered)  
I don't... What?

BROTHER ZACH  
That you make up your own rules  
when ours don't suit you?

ON SGT. ROBIN IN THE STAIRWELL

She's engrossed in reading a student essay. She looks up to see Daniel, Brother Zach and Hadley engaged in an agitated discussion. Daniel's body language is visibly defensive.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - EVENING

Daniel sits, 'called to the carpet.' His phone rests on the table.

Hadley and Cameron sit off to the side - along with Sharon, who takes notes. Brother Z looms over & occasionally paces.

DANIEL  
These boys are starving for someone  
here to care about how they feel.

Hadley snorts.

DANIEL (CONT'D)  
So many haul themselves around -  
day after day, feeling like nothing  
more than *ciphers*.

HADLEY  
(aside, to Cameron)  
That a ten-dollar word?

DANIEL  
And too afraid to say so.

CAMERON  
 (aside, to Hadley)  
 At least fifteen.

BROTHER ZACH  
 That may be worth exploring, Mr.  
 Cesta - some other time.  
 (beat)  
 But you promised our students  
 something which you know goes  
 against our policy. A policy which  
 is set by the Diocese.

CAMERON  
 You have NO authority to circumvent  
 the rules.

BROTHER ZACH  
 Thank you, Michael - I have this.

DANIEL  
 It was a judgment call.

CAMERON  
 (to Brother Zach)  
 Of course you do, Brother.

BROTHER ZACH  
 (to Daniel)  
 Before they enroll, our students  
 are made to understand not to  
 expect the same freedoms they'd  
 have in a public school.

CAMERON  
 That's right - and you don't get to-

BROTHER ZACH  
 (glaring Cameron silent)  
 You don't -- get to change that on  
 a whim.

Cameron looks smug that he got *something* in.

DANIEL  
 I didn't.

CAMERON  
 What?

DANIEL  
 It wasn't a whim.

Daniel picks up his phone, punches, scrolls and **reads**.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

*"I rely on your individual judgments to guide our students any way you feel is best."*

(to Hadley)

Sergeant, you could say I made a --  
"weighty decision with confidence."

Hadley, Cameron and Brother Zachary all share a *deer-in-the-headlights* look. After a few excruciating seconds...

SHARON

No. No, Noooo! COME - ON, fellas!  
We almost got him. We're there -  
don't be pussies!

INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - NIGHT

The building is deserted. OPPOSITE THE RECORDS OFFICE, Kish walks up quietly. He wears a hefty backpack and carries a plastic jerrican.

Setting down the can, he picks the lock and enters.

He closes the door behind him. After a moment...

KISH (O.S.)

You heartless bitch! Answer your phone!!!

EXT. SCHOOL CAMPUS - NIGHT

Cadets perform the flag lowering ceremony.

INT. BROTHER ZACHARY'S OFFICE - MORNING

CLOSE ON BROTHER ZACH at his desk.

BROTHER ZACH

Everyone has deliberated long enough. Rules exist for a reason - and if I can't in good conscience bend this one, then it's done. The Tannor's are expelled.

(beat)

So I ask, what can you bring to this now - anything we haven't already debated to death?

We now SEE ONLY SGT. ROBIN, sitting across the desk from him.

SGT. ROBIN  
Why not - pardon them?

BROTHER ZACH  
Please be serious. I'm too busy--  
(he looks at her closely)  
Oh. Sergeant, you know what Zero  
Tolerance means.

SGT. ROBIN  
What I know is - the one from MY  
tribe - that Jewish guy you're all  
such fans of... He was all about  
forgiveness - like, all the time.

BROTHER ZACH  
I'm responsible to others...

SGT. ROBIN  
Like it or not, Brother, there's no  
passing that first stone to anybody  
else. It's for no one but you to  
cast. Can you?

INT. STUDENT DORM HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Daniel stands outside Jacob's door. He knocks.

DANIEL  
Mister Tannor, Mister Tannor...  
Answer if you're there.  
(knocking again)  
Jacob! I'm coming in.

JACOB (O.S.)  
(faintly)  
Wait, just, just a second. I'm up.

DANIEL  
Open the door, cadet.

After some SOUNDS OF MOVEMENT, the door swings open. Jacob,  
dressed in official school pj's, looks like hell-warmed-over.

JACOB  
(weakly)  
Oh. Mr. Cesta, what time is it?

DANIEL  
Way past time you're supposed to be  
dressed and out front.

JACOB

I'm sorry, Sir. My stomach was killing me all night. I didn't sleep too good.

DANIEL

You know how consequential this morning's church attendance is.

JACOB

I do and I'm sorry but...  
 (in physical distress)  
 I just can't...  
 (again)  
 Can't manage to...

Jacob clutches his stomach and gives Daniel an inhumanly mighty shove which rocks him almost off his feet.

Jacob darts past him, speeds straight to the bathroom at the end of the hall. He disappears within.

INT. ACADEMY CHAPEL - LATER

As usual for a Sunday service, nearly the entire student population is in attendance. Kish's absence goes unnoticed.

Daniel sits in the crowd next to Easton; an empty seat waits for Jacob.

Brother Zach and staff are on the chancel, some in the front row. Matthias is asleep at Sgt. Robin's feet.

Bishop Frederick sits among them. Pastor Mason at the lectern delivers the closing words.

PASTOR MASON

...quod factum est ad eos ponite  
 corda vestra ut se fructum. Amen.

Brother Zachary comes forward to chancel center as Mason returns to his seat. He nods his thanks. Nervous expectation ripples through the crowd; all know what's coming.

Brother Zach's eyes focus deep among the crowd, making each cadet feel as though he sees into all of them.

BROTHER ZACH

If it's true that God never gives more challenges than we can handle, then I have no doubt He wants us to continue our work here.

He looks straight at Daniel next to Easton, noting Jacob's absence. Daniel sees Brother Z's look of concern.

BROTHER ZACH (CONT'D)  
Which means making the wisest  
decisions we possibly can.

To Brother Z, Daniel mimes the symptoms of a renegade stomach and nausea - then encores with the act of blowing chunks.

BROTHER ZACH (CONT'D)  
Good judgment is what we all owe  
each other - at the very least.

INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

In the deserted HALLWAY OPPOSITE THE RECORDS OFFICE, we again see a furtive figure working the lock to the office door. He cracks it easily, opens the door and steps inside.

The lights are off but he moves through a patch of incoming sunlight: we see IT IS JACOB. He's tense but physically fine. He moves to the INNER OFFICE.

INT. ACADEMY CHAPEL - MOMENTS LATER

Brother Zach continues his delivery to the campus community.

BROTHER ZACH  
It is human nature to become  
accustomed to a familiar path and  
never pause to re-evaluate the  
steps which have carried us well to  
a certain point.

(beat)

Of late, we have faced obstacles  
which remind us that pausing and  
reviewing one's traditions and  
rules are necessary. Even if it  
results in seeing a need for -  
course corrections.

A few students in the crowd brighten and exchange high-fives. An undercurrent of whispering is heard. Hadley shoots to his feet and wheels on the cadets.

HADLEY  
You're not getting cellphone  
rights, you chimps!

The boys elation quickly deflates. Some muffled retorts.

HADLEY (CONT'D)

And whichever one of you Hollywood wannabees posted our in-house fight club is gonna be very sorry--

BROTHER ZACH

Sergeant Hadley!

HADLEY

(turning to Bro Z)  
All yours, brother.

EXT. ACADEMY MAIN GATE - MOMENTS LATER

Peace & quiet. The gate is again manned by Tommy and Hector.

They sit by the guardhouse, watching the occasional car pass by out on the main road. Tommy is sullen.

HECTOR

You got any money down on the Tannor pool?

TOMMY

I'm not betting on what happens to my friend.

HECTOR

Ah, that's right, you two are buds. So you got any inside dope on--

Tommy stands, not hiding his annoyance well. Hector is clueless, anyway.

TOMMY

And I'm not TALKING about betting on what happens to him.

(beat)

You have the command. I gotta stretch my legs.

HECTOR

And make your bladder gladder too, right?

TOMMY

(flat)

Ten-four. Nothing like a glad blad.

HECTOR

I feel ya, Big Dog.

Tommy walks toward the main road.



Hector takes out a phone. We see him writing a text: "CHANGES IN ODDS SINCE BROZAC STARTED TALKING? OTB STILL OPEN?"

AT THE MAIN ROAD, Tommy is relieved by the distance increased from Hector, as well as the school boundary itself. He looks down the road in one direction - and then the other.

He spots a bent signpost and an UNNATURAL PINK COLOR amidst the green of the foliage. He peers in that direction.

Tommy's phone BUZZES a text: "HOLDING DOWN COMMAND POST - THE ENEMY SHALL NOT PASS!" - along with a selfie of Hector giving a thumbs-up and wearing a vapid, looney grin.

Tommy shakes his head and looks up. When he turns to peer down the road again, the pink 'stain' within the green **is gone**. Perplexed, he walks toward the spot.

INT. ACADEMY CHAPEL - MOMENTS LATER

Brother Z's address continues:

BROTHER ZACH

We have always prized the necessity  
of imbuing young men with -

BROTHER ZACH (CONT'D)  
a sense of community - along  
with allegiance to each other  
and to values which transcend  
individual pursuits.

BROTHER ZACH (CONT'D)  
Though as I'm sure you're now  
aware,

BROTHER ZACH (CONT'D)  
recent events may have proven  
that many of you are feeling  
as though your personal...

BROTHER ZACH (CONT'D)  
uniqueness is to be  
discouraged.

EASTON  
(whispering to Daniel)  
What's "imbuing?"

DANIEL  
Diffusing.

EASTON  
What's "diffusing?"

DANIEL  
Permeating.

Sharon looks increasingly incensed by Brother Z's words.

A low VIBRATION comes from Easton's back pocket - sensed only by him.

BROTHER ZACH (CONT'D)  
All of us will be working closely  
with Mr. Cesta to find a middle  
ground. One which encourages both  
your personal growth as well as--

SHARON  
 (muttering)  
 Sacrilegious.

BROTHER ZACH  
 --the elements of our traditional  
 curriculum.

INT. RECORDS OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob searches through the inner office. He moves around shelves packed with boxes of file-folders and early records.

He seems thwarted. Sweating, he stops to collect himself. He spots several tall stacks of footlockers, packed tight against a far corner. Some are stacked nearly to the ceiling

INT. ACADEMY CHAPEL - MOMENTS LATER

BROTHER ZACH  
 The recent - *rebellion* will be dealt with. And punishment is to be assigned as warranted.

Many cadets squirm and murmur resentfully.

BROTHER ZACH (CONT'D)  
 As to our earlier, violent conflict, we have decided--  
 (beat)  
 to "conditionally excuse" and retain both Tannors here with us.

CHEERS AND APPLAUSE erupt from the cadets. Hadley rises just a half-foot higher in his seat and the DIN quickly fades out.

BROTHER ZACH (CONT'D)  
 Everyone! This can be revoked at any time. And it will, should there be any more severe infractions of our rules - by *any* cadet. ANY cadet. Understand...

Some of the boys show confusion.

BROTHER ZACH (CONT'D)  
 For the remainder of this semester, you are all your brothers' keepers.

HADLEY  
(stands and turns)  
Get it? NO MORE BULLSH-- NO TROUBLE  
from anybody!

INT. RECORDS OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob has ransacked two of the footlockers - leaving a mess of strewn uniforms, fake weapons, papers, photos, etc., lined and piled on the floors. He makes for the next unopened one.

We ANGLE ON PLANTED SPY CAMERAS high above him.

EXT. CUDDLE COVE - MOMENTS LATER

Kish sits on a stone, smoking a joint. Around him are arrayed several electronic devices all connected to a laptop.

Six feet away in the dust, lies the *borrowed pink bicycle*.

He is focused with military precision on his "op." He mutters randomly - with a gradually quickening pace

ON THE LAPTOP SCREEN, Kish watches Jacob busy at his frantic search through yet another footlocker.

KISH  
Don't let us all down, soldier.

INT. ACADEMY CHAPEL MEN'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Finally alone, Easton takes his cellphone from his pocket to read the recent text. He looks puzzled and troubled.

EXT. CUDDLE COVE - MOMENTS LATER

Kish, observing Jacob's difficulty, becomes increasingly frustrated.

KISH  
Look left of the trophy shelf.  
(watching)  
I said left!

POV From OUTSIDE KISH'S LAIR

Someone is moving, spying on Kish's activity.

BACK ON KISH

Still watching Jacob, he checks over and arms what looks like a remote trigger.

ON THE COMPUTER - he brings up an e-mail page--

KISH (CONT'D)  
 Cue the hot aunt - and...  
 (louder DJ voice)  
 Coming to you live from the  
 Children's Crusade in a classified  
 command bunker --

He inputs an address and assigns the video feed for sending.

KISH (CONT'D)  
 You'll soon hear from correspondent  
 Suzanne Chen Stanton. Your scoop,  
 Susie, is coming at you in four,  
 three, two...

He CLICKS the final key.

KISH (CONT'D)  
 Now.

In the stillness, the sound of a FOOTSTEP, BREAKING A BRANCH is heard. Kish stops moving and listens closely.

JUST OUTSIDE CUDDLE COVE

The unseen watcher turns to retreat - now we see him: it's Tommy. As quietly as possible he moves away.

INT. ACADEMY CHAPEL CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Easton leaves the men's room and quickly heads for the side door of the building. Reaching it he exits.

INT. ACADEMY CHAPEL - MOMENTS LATER

Hadley is at the podium.

ON DANIEL - looking concerned that Easton hasn't returned.

HADLEY (O.C.)  
 You'll see a -- *revised* duty roster  
 posted no later than Wednesday at  
 oh-eight-thirty hours.

INT. RECORDS OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob reaches under stacks of discarded uniforms behind another footlocker to grab a corner of something unseen. He quickens his pace and frees a portion of the BANNER.

EXT. CUDDLE COVE - MOMENTS LATER

JUST OUTSIDE CUDDLE COVE - Tommy attempts to make a silent retreat from what he's seen.

He turns round a blind corner and there is Kish, blocking his path. Kish delivers a knock-out punch.

EXT. ACADEMY MAIN GATE - MOMENTS LATER

Easton runs up to Hector at the guard shack. They exchange words - Easton fires questions, the now-stressed boy keeps shaking his head - he has no answers.

Finally, Hector points in the direction taken by Tommy. Easton runs off that way.

INT. RECORDS OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob carefully unfolds his find - it IS indeed the **Battle Banner**. We see the words embroidered on it:

"NO QUESTION WHOM WE PROTECT - NO REGRETS FOR HOW IT'S DONE."

EXT. CUDDLE COVE - MOMENTS LATER

TOMMY'S POV/DARKNESS - as he struggles to consciousness. We hear WORDS, disjointed at first, then slowly cohering.

KISH  
(to himself)  
...it's so negligent, so  
undisciplined - barging into a  
delicate operation like this.  
(at Tommy)  
Strictly *need-to-know*.

As Tommy slowly comes to, Kish at his computer comes in and out of focus.

KISH (CONT'D)  
How to handle, how to handle?  
Later, a future luxury, stay on  
point, coordinate team.

(MORE)

KISH (CONT'D)

(beat)

For now... um, "disparate times call for desperate measures." Ha! Fuck funny, clever is better. "Clever's better - clever's better..." Ha, ha.

Kish notices that Tommy is 'back.'

KISH (CONT'D)

Sorry, kid. No hot coffee and a bear claw. Maybe after all troops return safely.

Tommy is bound in electrical cables. His mouth is gagged with duct tape. Kish sits him up.

KISH (CONT'D)

If it had to be anybody poking round to thwart my plans for world domination -- I'm kidding - that's way too much responsibility. I just want **a little happiness for myself.**

(thinking)

Kind of fateful it turned out to be you, Tommy. What's that? Why? I'll show you.

At the computer, Kish hits two buttons.

ON THE SCREEN - we see a recording of Kish in the Records Office with **unidentified devices** in his hands. He smiles and waves at the camera.

KISH (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Oh. No, this is for Monica's eyes only. *Maybe* her dad's, we'll see.

Kish taps some keys and the video is replaced by a different image: the LIVE feed of Jacob in the same location.

Tommy's reactions are muffled by the tape across his mouth. He struggles against the bindings.

KISH (CONT'D)

Shit! Wrong again - but I'm gonna need that on. So just another sec.

Kish clicks again, a new image comes to life -

KISH (CONT'D)

Third time's the bomb...

On A DIFFERENT MONITOR - it's a clip of Tommy and Jacob just:

OUTSIDE OF CUDDLE COVE. Though it's nighttime, the bright moonlight reveals their faces.

KISH (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Sorry about the poor audio.

TOMMY  
It's awesome how cool the air is.

JACOB  
Sure. But it'll get super-cold real soon. Like too cold to stay the whole night..?

TOMMY  
That's why I brought more than enough blankets. The coffee machine's battery powered. So, fresh Joe all night long.

Tommy (watching in the present) is frozen with fear.

ON THE SCREEN:

TOMMY (CONT'D)  
It's really okay, Jake - whatever you want to do. Or don't want. No matter what, we're best friends.

Tommy picks up a bakery box and opens it to show him.

TOMMY (CONT'D)  
Got a few of everything here. The bear claws are crazy-good.

THE PRESENT AGAIN:

The video continues playing for Tommy to watch - but Kish turns down the sound. The boy can also see, at the same time, Jacob tearing about in the booby-trapped room.

KISH  
(pointing several ways)  
Motion-sensitive cameras. For capturing wildlife. And - well, avoiding the obvious punch-lines, you two were a real unexpected catch.

At a keyboard, Kish pauses, his finger hovers over a key. His face is even more grim. He presses it - then a second one.

INT. RECORDS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

In the INNER ROOM (where Jacob is) we see the door to the outer office - we focus on its LOCK. A solid CLICK is heard.

EXT. CUDDLE COVE - CONTINUOUS

KISH

See, Tommy, I didn't especially want anybody getting hurt. But nobody was supposed to see this op. Now you forced me to re-evaluate the mission objectives.

Tommy, still uncomprehending, watches:

ON THE SCREEN SHOWING JACOB in the records room:

With the banner under his arm, Jacob is at the door. He tries to open it, nothing. IT IS NOW LOCKED; he's trapped.

Tommy lets out frantic but indecipherable sounds.

KISH (CONT'D)

Can we get on the same page here?

To reinforce the issue, Kish pauses

THE OTHER VIDEO at the moment Tommy's lips are inches from Jacob's face.

KISH quickly steps to Tommy. He rips the duct tape off Tommy's face. The boy's dry mouth tries producing sounds - with little success.

KISH (CONT'D)

Keep what we've seen-

He holds Tommy's face forcefully towards the paused screen.

KISH (CONT'D)

-to ourselves? I figure Jacob wants that. If I let him out.

TOMMY

HELP! HELP, SOMEBODY! JESUS CHRIST, HELP ME!!!



EXT. DESERT - CONTINUOUS

Easton is following the reverse path we saw the cadets take in their opening run. He enters THE COPSE (where he was first ordered to assist Jacob and Tommy). Faint CRIES reach him.

As he approaches the overgrowth, Tommy's CRIES - louder now - abruptly stop. Easton runs on.

EXT. CUDDLE COVE - CONTINUOUS

Kish re-tapes Tommy's mouth, but not as securely as before.

KISH

Shit, you're a kid. I can't expect you to understand how it rips you up inside when love goes all *fubar*.

(re the video)

I mean goddamn, you see how happy the two of you look?

Tommy's muffled screams somehow loosen one side of the tape. They get louder.

KISH (CONT'D)

(almost tearfully)

You're not leaving me any choice!

ANGLE ON BOTH MONITORS, then -

EASTON SHOOTS IN and tackles Kish. Kish rolls, then recovers. Both scramble to their feet.

FIERCE BACK AND FORTH COMBAT...

Ultimately - Easton lands a punch, Kish is **knocked out**.

ON THE MONITOR, he sees Jacob pounding on the door.

Easton pulls the tape off Tommy's mouth - and continues working at freeing him.

EASTON

What in hell is all this?

TOMMY

I don't know. He's crazy.

EASTON

I gotta find Jacob! You get to the gate, call it in.

As Easton struggles with the cables binding Tommy, Kish comes to - and grabs the nearest laptop.

TOMMY

Look out!

Kish chops the edge into the back of Easton's neck. He goes sprawling, but stays conscious.

Tommy, still partially bound, struggles to get free.

Kish and Easton's fight spreads to the electronic array set up. They knock over equipment, keys are pushed.

ONE KEY triggers incendiary explosives in the...

INT. RECORDS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

INNER OFFICE - Fires erupt around Jacob. He battles the door; it won't budge.

INT. ACADEMY CHAPEL - MOMENTS LATER

Students sing a final Sunday service hymn.

Matthias suddenly jolts awake, disturbed and alert.

SGT. ROBIN

Bad dream?

Agitated, Matthias WHINES.

SGT. ROBIN (CONT'D)

It's almost over.

IN THE NARTHAX - the inner doors open and Daniel exits.

DANIEL

Damn it, Easton. If you bailed out  
TODAY OF ALL...

He sniffs the air, then walks to the main doors.

I/E. ACADEMY CHAPEL ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Daniel steps outside - now it's obvious. His concerned expression deepens. There is smoke in the air.

EXT. ACADEMY SIDEWALK - MOMENTS LATER

Daniel moves about uncertainly, trying to locate the source.

Robin and Matthias catch up with him. The look she and Daniel exchange says they're both in sync.

Matthias is agitated, BARKING and leaping unhappily. Robin considers, then snaps a leash onto his collar.

Uncertain, they look around. Then Robin points in the direction of the main building. All three get moving.

EXT. CUDDLE COVE - CONTINUOUS

Easton and Kish continue (with even more brutality than the Easton/Jacob battle). There's no shortage of rocks and sharp objects around - and no adult to get between them.

(THROUGHOUT, WE HEAR FRAGMENTS OF inter-combat talk):

KISH

I won't let all of you fuck up my  
life any more!

EASTON

He's gonna die, you psycho!

KISH

Thought you were all about personal  
sacrifice...

Unseen by Kish, Tommy completes the process of freeing himself.

He does, then picks up a large rock and moves into position to smash Kish's skull from behind.

Finding his moment, he brings it down -- but the erratic fight-movements cause it to only nail Kish's shoulder - and it falls from the boy's hand.

Enraged, Kish faces Tommy.

KISH (CONT'D)

You selfish little shit!

Seeing it's now a two-front war, Kish rushes Tommy, plucks the boy entirely up off the ground and HURLS HIM AT EASTON.

KISH (CONT'D)

No regrets for how its done!

As the two crash together and get tangled on the desert floor, Kish scoops up his laptop and whatever else he can carry. In a flash, he stuffs them in his backpack, turns and beats it out of there.

Easton and Tommy struggle to recover. Easton bleeds from his forehead, he looks at Tommy with genuine concern.

EASTON  
Status report, soldier.

Before Tommy can answer, Kish suddenly appears again -

TOMMY  
Oh no!

But Kish doesn't attack. He takes two large steps to reach the bicycle and stands it up --

KISH  
Fuck all of you - leave us alone!

And he's gone again.

EXT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Daniel, Robin and Matthias stand at the locked front door of the building. Now they're sure they're in the right place.

Matthias is highly worked up now. Robin drapes the leash loosely over a shallow protrusion on the stair rails.

SGT. ROBIN  
Matthias, sit. Stay.

He obeys instantly, but continues to WHINE.

Robin takes out a key-ring and unlocks the door.

At the same time, Daniel gets his phone. Punches at keys.

EXT. ACADEMY CHAPEL - CONTINUOUS

Most have exited the chapel. Cadets mill about. A few begin to sense the air; curiosity and concern spreads.

Hadley comes out and stops at the top of the steps, his presence imposing. Responding to the VIBRATION from his pocket, he pulls out his phone and answers.

INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Daniel and Robin hurry through the hallway towards the Records Office.

The two reach it; through its one large window they see a thin layer of smoke in the outer office. The inner office door is closed - as it should be.

Robin tries unlocking the office door - no go, shaking, she searches for a different key.

EXT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Running, the entire campus population descends on the building in a drawn-out chaotic bunch (much like the *opening dawn run*). Hadley, unknowingly, is leading the group.

He reaches it, leaps the steps three-at-a-time. Opening the door, he wheels on everyone.

HADLEY  
Cadets! Fall in, now!

Pandemonium for a moment, then a slow congealing to order. Hadley locates Greer in the crowd.

HADLEY (CONT'D)  
Sergeant, move everyone back!

He turns and bolts inside.

INT. RECORDS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

THE INNER OFFICE, Jacob is trapped under a fallen shelf system which also wedges the door shut - a new peril. The folded flag lies next to him. Flames lick two of the walls. The room is filling with smoke.

INT. SUZANNE CHEN'S STUDIO APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON HER BLACK COMPUTER SCREEN - beginning to boot up.

We see Suzanne in the background, moving about. Wearing a robe and slippers, she pours her morning coffee. Wisps of smoke rise from her stove.

The screen comes alive with colors.

COMPUTER VOICE  
"You've got mail."

Relaxed, she fills a tray with her breakfast plates and coffee - then casually approaches the computer.

EXT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

AMONG THE LINE OF CADETS - Larry Greco is last in his formation. He *studies* the smoke seeping from the building.

He watches Greer carefully; when the sergeant's out of sight, Larry grips the collars of the two cadets in front of him.

He yanks them (Bruce and Marty) off their lines.

BRUCE

Hey!

MARTY

What the heck!

LARRY

Let's go.

He grabs the sleeve of Ryan at his side. To all:

LARRY (CONT'D)

Come with me.

MARTY

Who are you now, Moses?

LARRY

Today, yes.  
(w/sudden force)  
Get moving.

Larry takes off toward the far side of the building. All three exchange puzzled looks. Larry calls...

LARRY (CONT'D)

On the double, men!

Bruce and Ryan follow. Marty takes a shaky step forward - but glancing in Greer's direction, he then steps back in line.

ON THE FRONT STEPS - Matthias sees the boys running; he becomes even more agitated, but remains as commanded.

THE THREE disappear around the administration building. Matthias WHINES louder, inwardly debating orders versus duty.

Finally, he takes the leash handle in his teeth. In a single motion, he easily flips it off the handrail. He tears off after the boys, the leash trailing behind.

INT. RECORDS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

THE INNER OFFICE - Jacob, still trapped. The flames are worse. He is CRYING for help.

THE OUTER OFFICE - Hadley, Robin and Daniel have gotten in. Hadley is at the inner office door first. Jacob's CRIES are faintly heard.

Hadley tries to push it open. Neither the lock nor the door will budge.

DANIEL  
Who's in there?

Louder but still muffled CRIES. And coughing.

HADLEY  
Sound off, Cadet!

More of the same.

HADLEY (CONT'D)  
Can you open the door?

Weak CRIES...

DANIEL  
(overlapping)  
It's gotta be Jacob!

THE INNER OFFICE -

HADLEY (O.S.)  
Tannor, can you reach the door?

Jacob tries to talk, but now the smoke has taken his voice.

Sounds of EFFORT AGAINST THE DOOR are heard, but it's not moving. Jacob is terrified almost to death.

But now, NEW sounds of wood TEARING and then POUNDING are heard, this time coming from way across the room and high above the boy.

One tall stack of footlockers begins to shake. Soon AN ARM reaches in and painfully works at edging it to one side. The heavy chest moves just enough for us to see it has been covering a window. A SECOND ARM reaches in.

Through the smoke Jacob sees light and movement there.

THE OUTER OFFICE - Hadley and Daniel repeatedly throw themselves against the door.

DANIEL

This won't do it. We have to smash  
the lock.

HADLEY

(nods and points)  
The fucking tools are in there.

Robin stands behind, mentally *working something out*. She turns and bolts out of the office.

Hadley prepares to soldier-slam his shoulder again anyway.

Daniel looks around. In a far corner, he sees the CLASSIC WEAPONS DISPLAY CASE mounted on the wall. He lunges for it.

Breaking the glass door with an elbow, he reaches behind to unlock it.

Swinging it open, he grabs the barrel of the nearest rifle, the Arisaka.

INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Robin shoots from the Records Office. She sprints down the hall - toward the back entrance of the building.

INT. SUZANNE CHEN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Rapt, Suzanne watches the life & death horror playing in real time on her laptop. Barely taking her eyes from the screen, she moves to the couch and grabs her phone. She calls -

VOICEMAIL (O.S.)

You have reached the mailbox of  
Brother Zachary Felton at--

EXT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

BEHIND THE BUILDING, Robin bursts from the back door. Looking around, she quickly spots the three cadets ten yards away - beneath an open window ten feet above the ground.

REACHING THE WINDOW - Robin sees a strange human triangle composed of Bruce and Ryan at the base. Balancing on their backs/shoulders is Larry - well, most of Larry.

His hindquarters and lower torso are the only thing visible from that vantage point; the rest is inside the building. His legs are shaking and this 'structure' is anything-but-steady.



Matthias bounds around them; he wants in on the action.

Robin inserts herself into the human ladder as all are trying to facilitate Larry's access through the window.

ON BRUCE - miserable, scared and delighted all at once; he's never been this close to Robin in his short life (*Oh, the tales he will embellish!*).

INT. RECORDS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

THE INNER OFFICE - Jacob sees Larry's head poking through the now obvious window. Larry tries to steady himself.

METALLIC BASHING is heard from the other side of the door.

LARRY

Hang on man, we got you.

JACOB

(weakly)

Help me...!

LARRY

We got yo... wowhh!

EXT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Matthias is so enthused by Robin's participation, he bounds in, out, around and through their legs.

He and the 'support team' get **tied up in the leash** and THE WHOLE HOUSE OF CADETS - COLLAPSES.

Robin, Ryan and Bruce fall into a clumsy pile. Matthias licks her face. Annoyed...

SGT. ROBIN

We'll talk about this later.

Robin unhooks his leash, frees it of legs and tosses it.

INT. RECORDS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

THE INNER OFFICE - Larry's head in the window...

LARRY

Oh no.

He **tries** grabbing for a hold. And... he's gone.

EXT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Robin, Ryan and Bruce have struggled to their feet.

Just when Larry plummets into their midst, violently twisting his ankle and knocking all to the ground again.

INT. RECORDS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Hadley has been smashing at the lock with the butt end of the Arisaka - with little-to-no results. Only now does there appear to be some space created during each blow.

Hadley smashes and smashes. He begins to fatigue - though it's subtle. Daniel notices.

DANIEL  
(holding out his hand)  
I'm taking point.

HADLEY  
Like hell you are!

Hadley continues. He stops to breathe - and curse.

DANIEL  
Stand down, Sergeant Hadley!

One more (spiteful) blow - and Hadley retreats, handing the rifle to Daniel.

EXT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Robin directs Larry, Ryan and Bruce in forming another human pyramid against the wall.

INT. RECORDS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Daniel's hits have made progress. He hauls off; another blow.

The lock gives way! Simultaneously, the Arisaka stock shatters into pieces. A jagged edge tears into Daniel's upper arm. Blood flows from a three-inch gash.

With enough damage to the lock, Hadley and Daniel push the door open about an inch, though it wedges the cabinet in tighter against a couch on the side wall.

That slight bit lets Jacob free just a little of his leg.

EXT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Larry, Ryan and Bruce have finished forming a *living* assault ramp, capable of supporting Robin.

Matthias hangs far back (calculating geometry and physics).

LARRY

With God's help, this time...  
You're up, Sergeant.

Robin looks for her access point and prepares to make her move. But not quickly enough - because...

Matthias shoots forward, leaps on the human ladder - in two mighty Alsatian strides he's on the window sill.

He scrambles halfway through. A last scrape against the wall with his hind paws - and he's inside.

INT. RECORDS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Matthias leaps from one *shelf & locker-level* to the other, reaching the floor in no time.

Low-to-the-ground, he avoids the smoke. Now at Jacob's side, he sees the boy pulling at his trapped leg.

He understands the object keeping Jacob stuck and wedges his powerful body underneath it. Sparks rain down, singing his fur. Though in obvious pain, Matthias doesn't relent.

After a tense struggle, it lifts up enough and Jacob painfully pulls his leg out. Making a mighty effort to stand--

JACOB

(to himself)  
Walk it off, ca--

He collapses, HOWLING in pain.

The action has also moved the cabinet just enough for Daniel and Hadley on the other side to force the door open.

Both men break through. Jacob clutches the banner tightly to his chest. Daniel presses his wounded arm to his side, his shirt is rapidly soaking in blood.

EXT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

BEHIND THE BUILDING, the 'assault crew' look at each other in stunned disbelief. Then Robin shoots for the back door and all follow. Larry painfully limps, bringing up the far rear.

AT THE DOOR, Bruce is waiting for him.

BRUCE  
No man left behind.

He helps support Larry inside.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Kish w/backpack hauls ass on the bicycle through the moderate Sunday traffic. His face is grim, his eyes are wild.

Tearing through an intersection, he spots a POLICE CRUISER parked on the cross street corner. Two officers in the front seat look up, notice him.

Stay cool! He keeps going, looks ahead -- *no big deal*.

That's when **the roof lights go on** and the cruiser pulls into traffic, then makes a fast U-turn.

Now trailing behind him. The siren WHOOPS.

Kish wants to scream and his body seizes up so hard, he stops pedaling. As the bicycle slows, the cruiser pulls up behind - then passes him and shoots ahead (likely to a school fire).

EXT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - LATER

OPPOSITE THE FRONT STEPS, it's controlled chaos. Two fire trucks and ambulances are on the grass. One fire-fighting line moves from there up the steps; another stretches round the side of the building. The fire is nearly out.

ON BROTHER ZACH, quickly hurrying to an AMBULANCE. He sees a huddle composed of Daniel, Hadley, Robin and any of the boys daring enough to try to get close enough for a look.

Hadley looks up, glares, and the crowd shrinks back. It gives Brother Z the opening to get in.

JACOB ON A GURNEY - oxygen mask on his face, gauze on his arms and head.

His leg is stabilized in an EMT-equipped splint. Brother Zach appears in the frame. Jacob weakly focuses on him.

JACOB  
 (faintly to Bro Z)  
 I had it...  
 (in tears)  
 But I didn't get it to the  
 flagpole.

The EMT's hoist the gurney into the ambulance.

JACOB (CONT'D)  
 (coughing, crying)  
 Now I don't know where it is.

Hadley moves close to Jacob.

HADLEY  
Outstanding job, Cadet. We got it  
 from here. Rest easy.

EASTON (O.S.)  
 (distantly)  
 Hey!

ON EASTON AND TOMMY - approaching the area. Both are banged  
 up; Easton is bloody and staggering. Tommy supports him.

EASTON (CONT'D)  
 (pointing)  
 Is that my brother?

AT THE AMBULANCE - Daniel jumps in. Brother Zach nods at him.  
 The doors are closed.

ON EASTON AND TOMMY - They see the ambulance roll off. Easton  
 makes a resolute effort to run but goes down after one step.

EASTON (CONT'D)  
 Jacob! I'm sorry. I'm so sorry...

Now other cadets milling about begin noticing them.

Tommy helps him back up and they continue forward. Boys,  
 awestruck by Tommy and Easton's battle bruises and drying  
 blood, part to let them through.

Finally one freshman cadet emerges, grabs Easton's other  
 shoulder and helps the pair move forward.

ON GREER - he sees the trio appear through the crowd. He runs  
 to them.

Easton looks bereft and drained - Tommy shoulders most of his  
 weight. They suddenly realize that *Greer is in front of them.*

Easton straightens up, shaking off his escort. His demeanor returns to a soldier's focus - and he sharply salutes Greer.

EASTON (CONT'D)  
Sergeant. Tannor and Fiacetti  
present and reporting for debrief.

Just as EMTs arrive with two gurneys, Easton collapses. Greer catches him and helps ease him onto one.

BY THE REMAINING AMBULANCE, Brother Zach appears to be searching the crowd and grounds. The boys part again and --

Sgt. Robin and Larry approach, walking abreast two feet apart at a quick but even pace. Four feet behind, Bruce and Ryan do the same. It might even look synchronized, but for Larry's painful limp.

Each one of them securely grips a CRUMPLED CORNER OF THE TAUT BATTLE BANNER. Upon it, Matthias lies unmoving.

He is wheezing and scorched all over. He WHINES softly.

Brother Zach is frozen by the sight.

HIS POV: Now completely overloaded, he hears MUTED YELLING, senses people running from behind to assist the procession. He wants to move, but his legs feel rooted like trees.

YET HE'S TURNED AROUND somehow. As if in a dream from which he can't awaken, he has a blurry image of Matthias being gently lowered by many, the banner still cradling him.

Unable to approach, he can't tell if Matthias' body is moving or still. A woman with a stethoscope stands over him.

INT. AMBULANCE - CONTINUOUS

They're on the road. Daniel grips Jacob's hand with his unbandaged arm.

JACOB  
(painfully)  
Mister C...

DANIEL  
It's gonna be okay, Jacob. Just breathe.

JACOB  
Can Easton stay now?

EXT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

ON A BENCH, Brother Zach sits, still zoned out. He's *dimly aware* of being addressed by random people - in unclear sentences.

ANDREW

Matthias - he saved Jacob's life.

VICTOR

Larry went in after him, Sir.

MARTY

They're honest-to-God *fuckin' heroes*.

ROBBIE

Wow! Paul Kish really tried to nuke the school?

From behind and above, he hears:

BISHOP FREDERICK (O.S.)

This is NOT what I'd call a *low profile*.

Brother Zach... "comes back." He turns and looks up at Bishop Frederick and Pastor Mason, both standing over him.

PASTOR MASON

Thank you for making our visit so eventful.

EXT. CITY STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Kish pedals down ANOTHER STREET near the familiar CONSTRUCTION SITE. A second police car comes up on his left.

Looking straight ahead, Kish waits for it to pass. Yet it keeps pace with him for a few seconds; the officer in the passenger seat looks him over with a vague stare.

Kish hopes *only he* can hear the jackhammer THUD of his heart - a second later the patrol cruiser speeds up and drives off.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Around the table, Cameron, Sharon, Sergeant Robin, Sergeant Greer and Hadley are seated.

An acoustic guitar stands against the wall in the corner nearest to Greer.

All display varying degrees of despondence - as they (and we) endure an overlong and uncomfortable silence.

Greer takes the initiative. He stands, retrieves the guitar and strums a chord.

A LOUD CHORUS OF NASTY REACTIONS from everyone makes him stop instantly. Immediate return to silence, until...

Brother Zachary enters - his cellphone to his ear.

BROTHER ZACH

Yes, that's fantastic news. I understand. Thank you, Daniel. And you?

(beat)

By all means, stay with them as long as you wish.

(beat)

We'll pray for all of you.

Hanging up, Brother Zach looks around.

BROTHER ZACH (CONT'D)

Jacob Tannor has second degree burns on both arms and a hairline fracture of the right leg. But after his lungs are fully cleared, he's expected to recover.

CAMERON

The Lord has compassion for fools.

BROTHER ZACH

He was incredibly lucky, if not blessed with good judgment.

SHARON

What was this all about?

HADLEY

Sergeant Greer and I put *most* of the pieces together.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - MOMENTS LATER

About to veer off the main street, Kish stops to look around. He scans the cars moving by; nothing unusual. A police car passes, ignoring him.

He begins riding - his route quickly brings him to the spot where he made his "promise" to Monica.



He gets off the bicycle and takes a look around the retaining wall to the path leading straight to her home.

KISH'S POV - He sees no sign of any activity near her house or the street facing it.

He takes out his phone, is about to dial. He looks up and sees Monica walk out her front door.

Already on her phone, she's talking with someone. He's flustered, not sure what to do.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

All stare at the charred banner, now unrolled on the conference table.

SHARON

I don't understand. He was trying to burn this?

GREER

No. He was trying to find - and fly it.

HADLEY

Like Jeremy Chen.

A somber moment of reflection.

CAMERON

Then who set the fire?

BROTHER ZACH

Someone who needed my oversight badly - but never got it.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - MOMENTS LATER

Shaking with frustration, Kish watches Monica wander her lawn, happily passing the time with whoever's on the other end of her phone.

His patience gone, Kish punches in the call and focuses on Monica's reaction.

KISH'S POV - Monica gets the alert, takes a moment to see the CALLER ID, then hits IGNORE and returns to her conversation.

ANGLE ON KISH - Witnessing the ease with which she dismissed him, Kish's face contorts in pain and rage.

He jumps back on the bicycle and propels himself down the path -- straight for the front of Monica's home.

EXT. ACADEMY CHAPEL - AFTERNOON

Brother Zach and Hadley sit on the steps. They look out over the campus.

HADLEY

You're sure about that footage?

BROTHER ZACH

I am.

HADLEY

She's a reporter - who saw everything from the inside.

BROTHER ZACH

She is.

HADLEY

That must be *Grade-A Choice* news muck - and you're telling me you absolutely know she won't use it?

BROTHER ZACH

I know she won't.

HADLEY

What do you have on her!

BROTHER ZACH

No more than she has on me.

EXT. MONICA'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Kish shoots out of the wooded path, crosses the driveway and rides onto Monica's lawn.

She turns and sees him, her face goes white.

Three feet from her, Kish jumps off the bicycle and lets it fall. She turns for her front door - he blocks her path.

MONICA

I don't believe... You can't be here.

KISH

I kept my promise. I want you to see it. Right now.

MONICA  
What... what promise?

KISH  
Just stop, stop. You didn't forget.  
I blew up everything for us to be  
together. That freak show of a  
school won't be turning out any  
more bodies.

MONICA  
What did you do?  
(realizing)  
What happened to your face?

KISH  
(scoffs)  
Two loser soldier-boys jumped me,  
it's nothing. Come look at this.

He pulls off his backpack, dumps it on the ground and opens it. Monica steps toward her door. Kish sees it, grabs her arm and yanks her down onto the grass.

MONICA  
Daddy, come outside - please!

KISH  
Okay, fine. I guess he can see it  
now too--

Kish pulls out his laptop, Monica manages to stand up.

At that moment, the front door opens and MR. CHEN, Monica's father, appears.

MR. CHEN  
What's all the yelling about?  
(seeing Kish)  
Who's this?

As Kish stands and turns with the laptop--

KISH  
I'm Paul, Mr. Chen.

MR. CHEN  
Yes?

KISH  
Paul Kish.

MR. CHEN  
Okay. And who's Paul Kish?

KISH  
 (slow, stunned)  
 You don't know my name?  
 (to Monica)  
 Or that I even exist...

MR. CHEN  
 What do you want here?

Kish barely has an instant to look at Monica with **more hurt than we've ever seen** on his face.

TWO COPS approach from his left. Kish backs off, then breaks into a run for the street.

But now he sees the police cruiser parked in a neighbor's driveway. A THIRD COP gets out of the car and cuts him off.

He jumps into Kish's path and checks him to the ground. The laptop goes flying.

EXT. ACADEMY CHAPEL - CONTINUOUS

ON BROTHER ZACH AND HADLEY on the steps.

HADLEY  
 But the fire department knows it was arson. They'll blame Tannor.

BROTHER ZACH  
 I can persuade them that Jacob had nothing to do with it. He was only taking part in a - school exercise. Wrong place, wrong time...

HADLEY  
 You are one strange bro - Paul Kish tries to burn down a building, maybe kill people - kids! And you won't turn him in?

BROTHER ZACH  
 I believe he's still saveable. If I learn from my mistakes - which I intend to do.

EXT. MONICA'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Kish yells and curses as the police subdue him.

FROM THE CRUISER - Jenny emerges. She runs across the street and onto the lawn, straight for the cops and Kish.

THIRD POLICE OFFICER  
 Jenny, stop - you have to stay in  
 the car!

Ignoring and running past them, she reaches the bicycle and  
 lifts it off the lawn.

JENNY  
 (fighting tears)  
 Oh! It's all dirty. And scratched.

FIRST POLICE OFFICER  
 Remember, you can't have it back  
 right now. We told you.

JENNY  
 (her face grim)  
 I know.

With Kish immobile, the second officer is going through his  
 wallet. He doesn't see Jenny approach.

SECOND POLICE OFFICER  
 (off Kish's student ID)  
 Paul Kish, okay. You're under  
 arrest for larceny.

Jenny pulls back her foot and kicks Kish in the rib cage.

JENNY  
 You stole my birthday present, you  
 pus-bucket!

The second officer walks over, **holding up the laptop.**

SECOND POLICE OFFICER  
 We'll see what other mischief  
 you've gotten into, Paul.

INT. BROTHER ZACHARY'S OFFICE - SEVERAL NIGHTS LATER

Brother Zach sits behind his desk. Hadley slouches in a chair  
 off to the side. Both look drained. The office door is open.

Across the desk, Sharon and Cameron sit, their moods are  
 quite the opposite - like two giddy teenagers. Their patter  
 moves quickly.

SHARON  
 Cadet Kish's personal failure saved  
 us in the end. After all,

HADLEY  
 (gritting his teeth)  
Don't say it.

SHARON  
 The Lord does work in mysterious  
 ways.

Hadley's disgust wins by a nose over his anger.

CAMERON  
 He surely came through for us.

SHARON  
 Prayer does work.

Brother Zachary barely reacts.

CAMERON  
 (to Bro Z & Hadley)  
 How perfect is it? The bishop wants  
 a 'sacrificial offering.'

SHARON  
 And we'll get nearly everything we  
 requested.

CAMERON  
 With an increase next year. If we  
 keep--

SHARON  
 (overlapping)  
 Keep our house in order.

HADLEY  
 (lazily, to Brother Z)  
 Do you hear... Is somebody talking?

SHARON  
 And we have just the sacrifice all--

CAMERON & SHARON  
 All ready to go!

They both giggle.

SHARON  
 Daniel Cesta--

CAMERON  
 --will be GONE!

SHARON

Gone!

CAMERON

Hallelujah...

Both look at Brother Z, eager for him to join in.

BROTHER ZACH

(flat)

I have not decided yet what answer  
to give the Diocese.

SHARON

Oh, of course not. We know you need  
to consult--

CAMERON

(shooting up a hand)

I'm always available.

SHARON

--and pray on it. But I have no  
doubt you'll make the wise choice.

Hadley and Brother Zach share an exhausted look. Sharon and Cameron share a perplexed one.

Brother Zach looks past them - and it's as though life has been breathed back into him. He stands.

STANDING IN THE OPEN DOORWAY -

Are Sgt. Robin and Daniel, his arm bandaged and in a sling.

Cameron and Sharon's expressions remind us of uncomfortably guilty kids. The awkward silence is broken when...

MATTHIAS SLOWLY PADS IN - between Sgt. Robin and Daniel. His pain is obvious, each unsteady step is an effort.

With all eyes on him, he navigates around Cameron and Sharon, WHINING softly. He reaches Brother Zach, who has tears in his eyes. Brother Z sits again.

After one failed try, Matthias manages to hop up and plant his front paws on Zach's lap. Zach holds and kisses him.

EXT. ACADEMY CHAPEL - SEVERAL EVENINGS LATER

ON BROTHER ZACH AND HADLEY

The two sit at the top of the steps in silence, staring into the distance.

HADLEY

For the record, Zach, I'm not on board for washing out Daniel - we'd lose many cadets. And you KNOW I still ain't done with him.

Zach drops his head and buries it into his folded arms.

HADLEY (CONT'D)

You think the Bishop and his stooge would be satisfied with Cameron's scalp...?

Hadley realizes that Zach is trembling. Two deep SOBS come from him. When Bro Z raises his head, there's deep pain - but his face is composed, resolute.

For the **first time**, we see fear and dismay on Hadley's face.

HADLEY (CONT'D)

You are...? No, you can not do that.

TO THE SIDE OF THE BUILDING - IN THE DISTANCE, Matthias is making slow efforts to dig and painfully dropping objects into a hole in the ground.

EXT. SCHOOL COURTYARD - NIGHT

The moon is full and bright, illuminating the empty area.

TIME LAPSE -- to DAWN

INT. BROTHER ZACHARY'S OFFICE - DAWN

CLOSE ON THE WALL - A few framed photos and documents still remain, but we see empty spaces where others once hung.

A HAND removes another from its spot.

PULL OUT TO REVEAL BROTHER ZACHARY - studying the photo of Jeremy Chen, alert and confident in full-dress uniform.

An OPEN SUITCASE is filling with the removed framed pictures and documents.



EXT. SCHOOL COURTYARD - DAWN

The cadet population marches up the drive from the gate, returning from their early run.

As they enter the courtyard, the THREE FLAGPOLES are seen.

The two outer poles already fly their respective STATE OF CALIFORNIA and JESUIT ORDER crests.

Below the tallest middle flagpole, Hadley, Sergeant Greer, Sergeant Robin and Daniel stand in wait.

INT. BROTHER ZACHARY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Holding Jeremy's picture, Brother Zach moves to the window to look out over the courtyard.

Matthias slowly comes to his side, his wounds healing well. He rears back, planting his forepaws on the window sill. Looking out, he WHINES.

BROTHER ZACH

I know, Matthias. I know how much you wanted to go with them - one last time.

Matthias BARKS in agreement. His excited body language and VOCALIZING communicate a request.

BROTHER ZACH (CONT'D)

Of course - good idea.

EXT. SCHOOL COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

HADLEY

Company... Fall in!

Cadets form up *rank and file* opposite them - even while those still on the road continue flowing into the courtyard.

TOMMY is one of the last to enter and get into formation.

HIS POV: He spots Jacob and Easton moving between Hadley and Greer - though it's hard for him to see clearly from his position behind taller boys.

Then, above everyone's head he now does see movement.

ON THE MIDDLE FLAGPOLE. The Stars and Stripes rise; just below it is the school's BATTLE BANNER.

AT THE FLAGPOLES - Jacob and Easton complete the raising.

Jacob ties off the rope to the cleat hook. Both boys take a step back and come to attention.

Something catches Jacob's eye far behind Hadley. He quarter-turns to face the Administration Building's FRONT STEPS.

Jacob brings his hand up in a slow, deliberate salute. Now, Easton sees as well and does the same.

EXT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Brother Zach and Matthias stand on the top step, facing the courtyard. He sees the Tannor brothers' salute.

INTERCUT between SCHOOL COURTYARD and FRONT STEPS

Hadley now turns as well. Facing Brother Zach, his own salute comes up. Sergeants Robin & Greer and Daniel do likewise.

Brother Zach returns the salute.

Row by row the ranks of the cadets catch on and gradually do the same.

Matthias, excited, looks to Brother Zach, imploring.

BROTHER ZACH  
Say goodbye - go.

Matthias leaps down the steps and takes off for the courtyard. Despite his obvious pain, he soldiers forward.

We PULL BACK AND ABOVE to see the entire tableau. All remain at 'attention' and unmoving - except for the dark form of Matthias happily running toward the group.

SLOWLY PAN OUT - to encompass everyone, the school and the DESERT SUN climbing higher.

FADE OUT.

THE END