

STUMPTOWN

"Pentagrams and Dexagrams"

Written by

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INT. BEDROOM - DAY

A fight in a darkened bedroom. Disturbing religious symbols line the walls: an upside-down cross, a black sun, Jesus with his eyes crossed out. They all watch with judgment as...

Three MEN IN SKI MASKS struggle to pull a skinny HOODED PRISONER out of the room. The prisoner fights back.

SKI MASK #1

(chanting)

Those who do wrong will not inherit
the kingdom of God.

They drag the prisoner across the room.

SKI MASK #1 (CONT'D)

Those who indulge in sexual sin, or
who worship idols, or are thieves,
or drunkards, or are abusive--

SKI MASK #2

None of these will inherit
the kingdom of God!

SKI MASK #3

None of these will inherit
the kingdom of God!

They reach the doorway...

SKI MASK #1

Some of you were once like that.
But you were cleansed! You were
made--

...which slams open, DEX on the other side. She punches Ski Mask #1 in the face, and he goes down.

SKI MASK #2

...holy! You were made right with
God by calling on the name--

Dex knocks him out too.

SKI MASK #3

...of the Lord Jesus Christ and
by the Spirit of our--

Dex finishes this guy off with a kick to the jaw. No more chanting.

She starts to pull the hood off their prisoner, but before we see his face, our TITLE CARD interrupts:

"STUMPTOWN"

INT. BAD ALIBI - DAY (1 WEEK EARLIER)

Behind the bar, GREY mixes a drink for Dex. He sets it down in front of her.

GREY
How about something new?

Dex eyes it with skepticism. Grey looks over at ANSEL and winks at him.

DEX
What did you put in it?

GREY
Just try it.

As Dex leans in to take a sip, Ansel slips a plastic lizard down the back of her shirt.

ANSEL
Dex, I think there's a spider--

Dex shrieks and SPITS OUT HER DRINK all over Grey.

DEX
What? Get it off! Get it off!

Dex brushes the "spider" out of her shirt. The toy lizard falls to the ground.

ANSEL
April fools!

Grey laughs. Dex gives Ansel a noogie.

GREY
Now I have to change my shirt.

DEX
That was NOT FUNNY!

From behind Dex, a concerned woman who looks like she hasn't slept in days, CASSANDRA BOSEN (50s), clears her throat.

CASSANDRA
Dex Parios?

Dex spins around, composes herself.

DEX
Hi--yes, hello! That is me.

She shakes Cassandra's hand awkwardly.

CASSANDRA

My dear friend Penny gave me
your...address. Is there somewhere
we can talk? It's about my son.

DEX

Yes, of course.

OFF DEX, all business.

INT. BAD ALIBI - BOOTH - DAY

Dex sits down across from Cassandra, placing two glasses of water on the table. Cassandra gives Dex a wallet photo of her 20-year-old son.

CASSANDRA

My Preston. A good kid. Ever since
his father died, he fell in with
the wrong crowd.

DEX

Has he committed any crimes?

CASSANDRA

It's worse than that. Preston
joined a...

(air quotes)

..."prayer group." He shut himself
up in his bedroom, ate all meals
with his so-called new friends...
became distant. Then one day, I
went to pick him up at the library
after his classes like I always do,
and he wasn't there.

DEX

How long ago was that? Did you
file a missing persons report with
the police?

CASSANDRA

Oh, I know exactly where he is.
(portentous beat)
Bethlehem.

Dex is startled.

DEX

He went to Palestine?

CASSANDRA
North-west Portland. Bethlehem's
the name of his prayer group.
(lowered voice)
I think it's a cult.

Dex looks unconvinced.

DEX
Do you have evidence of that?

CASSANDRA
Drained his savings to pay for
membership. And it explains the
offensive religious symbols all
over his bedroom.

Dex raises her eyebrows.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)
Penny said you'll do whatever it
takes to uncover the truth. Preston
is my everything. I can't lose him.
I have to know what's going on.

This hits home for Dex. She glances at her brother, Ansel,
across the bar.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)
You have to bring my baby home.

Dex nods. She's in.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

COSGROVE finishes up a phone conversation (MOS) and crosses
to HOFFMAN who is typing a police report at his computer.

COSGROVE
Remember the boy who went missing
three weeks ago, Levi Wheeler?

Hoffman looks up from his computer screen.

HOFFMAN
The baseball player?

COSGROVE
That's the one. He just showed up
at the bottom of Blue Lake.

EXT. BLUE LAKE - DAY

A MEDICAL TEAM, CSI PEOPLE, a few cops, OFFICER NOLAN and OFFICER SAMUELS, surround a site at the edge of the lake.

Hoffman watches as a CSI OFFICER cuts open a net. Inside the net is the body of LEVI WHEELER, dead, soaking wet, wrapped in a white bed sheet. He looks younger than his 19 years.

CSI OFFICER
That your missing kid?

Hoffman nods, silent. Officer Nolan approaches.

OFFICER NOLAN
Detective, the guy down by the lake
found him.

Hoffman looks. Next to a moored boat is a weathered man, JERRY WHITLOCK, (60s), shifting his weight from one foot to the other. Hoffman walks over.

HOFFMAN
Caught something unexpected?

JERRY
Hoping for mackerel. When I started
to reel in the net, it was much
bigger than a fish.

HOFFMAN
Where did you pull him out?

Jerry points to the middle of the lake.

JERRY
I reckon the deepest part, before
it slopes up. The best fish know
where to hide down there. Out of
reach to most.

OFF HOFFMAN, looking out at the lake.

INT. BAD ALIBI - BOOTH - DAY

A FAMILY of five finishes up a large meal of tacos. They scrape their plates clean. Ansel sets down a few margaritas.

The son, JAMISON (12, over-excited), grabs Ansel's arm.

JAMISON
Compliments to the chef. Can we
talk to him? These tacos are the
best!

The daughter, CASEY (20), chimes in.

CASEY
The carnitas were unbelievable.

JAMISON
Is the chef back there?

ANSEL
One moment.

Ansel heads to the kitchen.

INT. BAD ALIBI - KITCHEN - DAY

TOOKIE throws ingredients at a pan, while chopping
vegetables, while also talking to Ansel.

TOOKIE
I can't go out there! Too many
orders! We didn't prep enough this
morning for me to take time off.

ANSEL
They want to talk to you. They seem
really nice.

TOOKIE
And this is the last of the pico de
gallo. Victor!

Tookie's sous chef VICTOR throws him a few tomatoes which he
catches and slams down on the cutting board, chopping.

TOOKIE (CONT'D)
Onion!

Victor rolls him two white onions across the counter.

ANSEL
But they want to see you. You're a
celebrity.

TOOKIE
A celebrity?

ANSEL
Everybody loves your food. They're
raving about you.

TOOKIE
Well, I'm sure I can spare a few
short moments.

Tookie wipes his hands and follows Ansel out of the kitchen.
Victor looks at Tookie, *are you serious?!*

INT. BAD ALIBI - BOOTH - DAY

Tookie is at the family's booth, beaming.

TOOKIE
Well, normally I don't pair lime
with the chipotle sauce.

More customers turn around, whispering. *Is that the chef?*

TOOKIE (CONT'D)
I thought I would give it a try.

Mother YVETTE (40s) protective and analytical, chimes in.

YVETTE
It was delicious. The sauce was
smokey, but citrusy too.

JAMISON
And creamy!

YVETTE gets out her cellphone.

YVETTE
Kids, let's get a picture with the
chef.

Other customers have stopped eating and are watching Tookie.

The family poses for a selfie. Yvette notices Ansel.

YVETTE (CONT'D)
Wait, wait... how about you? Why
don't you take it?

ANSEL
Sure thing.

Ansel snaps a picture of the grinning Tookie, surrounded by
his adoring fans.

INT. CASSANDRA'S HOUSE - DAY

Dex follows Cassandra through the neat-as-a-pin living room.

CASSANDRA
Thank you for coming. I'm just in
the middle of laundry.

Cassandra leads Dex into the hallway.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)
New bed sheets. Love the feeling
when they come out of the dryer.

Cassandra finishes shoveling sheets into the basket, and they head across the hall to a closed bedroom door.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)
Preston's room.

She opens the door. Dex steps in.

INT. PRESTON'S BEDROOM - DAY

We recognize the room from the teaser, decorated with
perverted religious symbols. Dex is taken aback.

Her eyes land on an open box of electronics, needles, and
pills on the desk.

CASSANDRA
That's Preston's insulin. He has
Type One diabetes.

DEX
He didn't take it with him?

CASSANDRA
Not everything.

DEX
Maybe he plans to come back.

CASSANDRA
Then why isn't he returning my
calls? Then texting me to leave him
alone? We were always so close...

DEX
You weren't kidding about the
religious stuff.

CASSANDRA
I raised him Protestant. He liked
going to church for the singing.
Nothing could've prepared me for...
(gesturing at the room)
This!

Cassandra's phone rings.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)
Excuse me. I have to take this.

Cassandra steps out.

Dex picks up a statue of the devil. She turns it over in her hands. *Eeeek!*

At the bookcase, she thumbs through a title called, "The Blood of Lucifer." All of the books are equally gruesome.

We hear Cassandra on the phone in the other room.

CASSANDRA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Yes. Still good for Friday. I have
someone working on it. Behavior.

Dex pulls religious books out from the front of the bookcase and finds a layer of books behind them. These are secular.

Some novels, some chemistry non-fiction books. And then, in the corner, a book is turned around so the title is hidden.

Dex pulls it out. The title: "God and the Gay Christian."

She raises her eyebrows. Puts the book in her bag.

INT. BAD ALIBI - DAY

Dex sits at the bar, glued to her laptop, talking to Grey.

DEX
I can't find a trace of this
Bethlehem cult anywhere.

GREY
Do cults usually avoid technology?
Social Media? Not creepy enough for
them?

DEX
Oh wait! I got it!

Dex zooms in on a Facebook page, with the title "Bethlehem." Pictures of smiling young people populate the screen.

DEX (CONT'D)
Doesn't look like a cult.

GREY
Let me see.

Grey examines the picture.

GREY (CONT'D)
Definitely a cult.

Dex keeps scrolling. And then -- in one picture, a group of students hand out pamphlets in front of a building.

Dex zooms in on the building. It reads: "Cascade Hall."

DEX
Gotcha!

Dex does some furious googling.

GREY
Got what? Do they describe
themselves as a cult? Case solved?

Dex reads from a webpage.

DEX
"Cascade Hall. Portland Community
College!" Let's hope they aren't
trying new recruiting locations.

GREY
Though it would be a better
business strategy.

Dex gets up to leave.

DEX
Let's hope they're bad at business.

And she's gone.

We hear something SMASH. Grey turns.

And there's Ansel, his face beet red, two drinks shattered on the floor. Tookie stands beside him with a tray of tacos.

ANSEL
I'm so sorry.

The customers, two bearded lumberjacks wearing flannels, verbally attack Ansel.

LUMBERJACK
You knocked our drinks sky west and
crooked, boy!

LUMBERJASON
What's with the service in this
place?

Grey and Ansel clean up the mess. Tookie serves their tacos.

GREY
We'll replace your drinks. No
reason for alarm.

LUMBERJACK
I need to talk to your manager.

GREY
I am the manager.

LUMBERJACK
You better serve it up, quick then.
I'm thirsty. Can't eat this without
a drink.

Grey looks as if he is about to argue with them. But then--

GREY
Of course.

OFF GREY, working on the drink, biting his tongue.

INT. BAD ALIBI - KITCHEN

Tookie fries empanadas, garnishes enchiladas, and stirs soup, all while keeping his eye on the growing number of tickets.

Ansel is in the corner, hiding from the bar. Grey enters.

GREY
It's okay, buddy. Mistakes happen.

ANSEL
But they got their drinks late.

GREY
Everybody slips up sometimes.

ANSEL
You don't.

GREY

I don't? Me? That's not true. I get things wrong all the time. Usually need your help to set them right.

ANSEL

I don't want to talk about it.

Grey looks to Tookie for support. But Tookie is hyper-focused on plating a gorgeous enchilada. Grey glares at him-- *A little help, here?*

Tookie holds up his hands-- *What?!*

TOOKIE

It's okay to drop a drink. It happens. And look at that! You got Grey to admit he messes up, too.

Ansel laughs. Tookie looks at a slip of paper on the countertop. He seems to be deep in thought, when --

ANSEL

What are you looking at?

Tookie jumps.

TOOKIE

My new recipe for "Sweet Potato Tacos." But they're inedible so far. Maybe sweet potato and jicama will never be friends.

GREY

See, Tookie makes mistakes, too.

Tookie glares at him.

ANSEL

Tookie, can you teach me how to make tacos?

Tookie and Grey exchange looks.

TOOKIE

That's some delicate work. Kitchen's been busy. I don't have the time right now.

ANSEL

But I want to learn from you. You're the master.

Tookie flips an empanada. Victor takes the completed enchilada dish from him.

TOOKIE

But at crazy times like these, it's good to leave the cooking to the masters.

GREY

And the mixing, too. We need you behind the bar. Everybody loves your margaritas.

ANSEL

They do?

GREY

Absolutely.

ANSEL

Okay.

Ansel gives Grey a forced smile.

EXT. CASCADE HALL - DAY

Dex walks into the open quad space. In front of the classrooms, in the same position from the photo, sits the BETHLEHEM BOOTH.

She scans the booth for Preston, but he's not one of the 5 college-aged students there. Dex strolls toward Cascade Hall, making sure to pass the booth.

A student waves a pamphlet toward her. This is JACOB WHEELER (23) charismatic, warm, jock-type.

JACOB

Looking for spiritual community?
Public meetings every Thursday.

Dex stops, feigns interest, takes the pamphlet.

DEX

What is this?

JACOB

We're a Bible study group with an inclusive, open-minded approach to Christianity.

DEX

That sounds great! Because my aunt was a crazy Catholic. You know how they are.

No response. Dex covers with a story.

DEX (CONT'D)

I've always had trouble connecting to Catholicism. I thought there was something wrong with me. But I loved the uh... God stuff. And the rituals.

JACOB

We hear stories like that all the time. People connect with the core of Jesus Christ's teachings, but are blocked by the interpretation of a particular sect.

DEX

Yes. I've always resonated with Jesus's core.

That came out weird. But Jacob is unfazed.

JACOB

Right! That's why at Bethlehem, we seek to expand the possibilities of what Jesus can mean to us. To me, it's all about love.

DEX

Love's not creepy!

Jacob laughs.

JACOB

Right.

A red jeep pulls up into the small parking lot behind the table. Someone gets out and walks to the booth. It's PRESTON (20), socially awkward, uncomfortable in his own skin.

Dex watches him carefully, making note of everything-- sweaty hands, red car, preppy outfit, his uneasiness.

JACOB (CONT'D)

How's it going, Preston?

PRESTON

Good, good.

But it looks like something's bothering him. The others at the booth greet him warmly. He unwraps one of the candies at the table and pops it in his mouth.

DEX

What kind of candies are those?

Preston hesitates-- *you talking to me?*

PRESTON

Oh. Jolly Rancher. I think.

DEX

They have a lot of sugar in them,
you know?

PRESTON

That's kinda the point. Want one?

Dex takes a candy from the table and pops it in her mouth.

DEX

Are you also in Bethlehem?

PRESTON

Of course. That's why I'm here.

DEX

Is everyone in the group from
Portland Community College?

Preston is uncomfortable with all the questions directed at him. He retreats toward the back of the group.

PRESTON

Yeah, for the most part. Not
everyone. Lucy isn't. I have class
in a few minutes, so.

Jacob takes over, trying not to lose Dex to the awkward Preston.

JACOB

Come on down tomorrow. The address
and everything is on the pamphlet.

Dex smiles. Preston looks at her with suspicion.

DEX

Well, I better be going. To where I
was... going.

She walks into Cascade Hall.

INT. CASCADE HALL - DAY

Dex goes down a hallway and makes a few turns, searching for a backdoor. She finds something that resembles an exit, but when she opens the door, it's a utility closet.

Dex doubles back, making a few wrong turns until she pushes open a door that leads to...

EXT. CASCADE HALL - DAY

Finally outside, Dex realizes that Preston and the Bethlehem Booth is in eyeshot. She ducks into the small parking lot to hide from view.

Pausing there to catch her breath, Dex spots Preston's red jeep a few cars down. She takes down the license plate number, then books it out of the quad.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Hoffman stands in front of a web of photos taped to a wall, all connecting people and places to the center photo of Levi Wheeler. We see his baseball team, his family, his school.

Hoffman tapes a new photo to the wall.

It's Jacob Wheeler, the young man who gave a pamphlet to Dex.

INT. WHEELER HOME - DAY

Hoffman sits down across from Levi's parents, MICHELLE and STEPHEN WHEELER. They both look similar, with sunken eyes and dry skin. They aren't coping well.

Stephen gives him a glass of water with a shaky hand.

HOFFMAN

Thank you.

STEPHEN

When he went missing, we hoped for the best.

MICHELLE

But feared the worst.

STEPHEN

This is the worst.

HOFFMAN

I'm so sorry about your son.

MICHELLE

What do you want to know?

STEPHEN

We'd like to do whatever we can to find out what happened.

HOFFMAN

What was Levi doing the night of March 11th?

MICHELLE

Well, he went for a walk.

Jacob Wheeler emerges from down the hall and makes his way to the kitchen. He is wearing a full soccer uniform. He fills up his water bottle, listening in on the conversation.

HOFFMAN

Around what time did he leave?

MICHELLE

Seven. I know because our television program starts then. We asked if he wanted to watch with us, but he said no.

HOFFMAN

Does he go for walks often?

MICHELLE

Yes. To unwind. Sometimes he'd walk to baseball practice.

STEPHEN

This is a safe neighborhood. He's a big kid. We never thought anything could happen.

HOFFMAN

Do you know where he was going on his walk? Is there a particular path he takes?

STEPHEN

I don't know.

Stephen looks down at his hands, choking up. Michelle holds eye contact.

MICHELLE

We never asked.

Jacob leaves the house unnoticed.

HOFFMAN

Did Levi have any enemies? Perhaps
a competing baseball player?

STEPHEN

He's well-liked. Charismatic. He's
a fair player.

MICHELLE

The star of his baseball team, and
the leader of his Bible study
group.

STEPHEN

Everybody loved him.

HOFFMAN

Bible study group?

OFF HOFFMAN, taking note of this new information.

INT. BAD ALIBI - DAY

Dex opens up her laptop and sits down at the bar. Grey pours
her a drink.

GREY

How's the definitely-a-cult
investigation going? Are they as
happy in person as in the pictures?

Dex doesn't respond. She types the license plate number into
her computer.

GREY (CONT'D)

Come on, Dex. I let you use my bar,
I give you free drinks. I expect
something in return. Maybe some
details? Friendship?

DEX

I found Preston.

GREY

That was easy. Case closed!

DEX

Not quite. I wanna find out what
this cult is up to.

GREY

Sounds like Dex. Over-complicating
everything.

DEX
Found it.

GREY
And what is it you found?

DEX
Preston's car...isn't his car.

GREY
(sarcastically)
Well, glad we cleared that up.

DEX
It belongs to a 19-year-old boy
named Levi Wheeler...

Dex continues looking.

GREY
Culty.

She lands on an article about Levi.

DEX
...who went missing three weeks ago
and was found dead. Yesterday.
Washed up at Blue Lake.

GREY
There we go. See, we're having a
normal, friend-y conversation. That
wasn't so hard.

Dex glares at him.

INT. BAD ALIBI - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Victor cleans the kitchen at the end of a long day. He puts a few cutting boards into a cabinet. Ansel walks in.

ANSEL
Victor.

VICTOR
Hey, Ansel.

ANSEL
Are you busy, too?

VICTOR
What? No, I'm just finishing up
here. Do you need something?

ANSEL
Can you teach me how to make a
taco?

Victor gives it some thought.

VICTOR
Tookie never came around, did he?

ANSEL
He says the kitchen is too busy.

VICTOR
I got you.

ANSEL
Really?

VICTOR
Yeah. Sure.
(leaning in)
What kind of taco?

Ansel grins from ear to ear.

INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - DAY

Dex enters. Hoffman is reading an article on Levi's baseball team. He doesn't hear Dex come in until she's at his desk.

DEX
Hey there!

Hoffman jumps.

HOFFMAN
You scared me.

DEX
Way to compliment a lady.

HOFFMAN
What do you want?

Dex pulls a chair up.

HOFFMAN (CONT'D)
Just make yourself at home.

DEX
What can you tell me about Levi
Wheeler?

This takes Hoffman off guard.

HOFFMAN
Levi? The baseball star?

DEX
You tell me.

HOFFMAN
He showed up at the bottom of Blue Lake yesterday. Death by insulin overdose.

DEX
Insulin? Was he diabetic?

HOFFMAN
No. It was injected into his right shoulder. Someone else must've done it. Why are you asking?

DEX
I'm investigating a cult. One of the members has Type One Diabetes. And I found him driving Levi's car.

HOFFMAN
Who is this?

DEX
Preston Bosen. His mother hired me to look into their Bible group and bring her son home.

HOFFMAN
Levi's parents said he was the leader of a Bible study group.

DEX
Might be doing more than just studying. I'm attending their meeting tomorrow to check for any cult activity.

HOFFMAN
Keep your eye on this Preston.

Dex nods.

HOFFMAN (CONT'D)
And no more sneaking up on me.

OFF DEX, not making any promises.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Hoffman types at his computer, finds something, prints it out. He revisits the map on the wall. More pictures surround the photo of Levi.

Hoffman puts up the new printed picture-- it's Preston Bosen.

INT. DEX'S MUSTANG - DAY

Dex experiences a rare drive in silence, when her phone rings. She looks down at the screen, and she sees this is the fourth missed call from Cassandra. Reluctantly, Dex picks up.

DEX (INTO PHONE)

Dex.

INT. CASSANDRA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Cassandra washes the dishes.

CASSANDRA (INTO PHONE)

Cassandra here. Checking in about Preston. How's it going? He can't go much longer without his insulin.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

DEX

I'm working on the nature of the group. Usually, I'll call when I come to any conclusive evidence.

CASSANDRA

Well this isn't usual, is it? I want to know what you're doing.

DEX

Are you familiar with a boy named Levi Wheeler?

CASSANDRA

No, honey. I'm not. I am paying you. I ask the questions.

DEX

It would help me get closer to the cult.

CASSANDRA
I'm not a filing cabinet. You want
information? You'll have to find it
somewhere else.

Dex clocks Cassandra's sudden shift.

DEX
So you recognize the name?

CASSANDRA
What about my son?

DEX
Your son is safe. He hands out
Bethlehem flyers at Portland
Community College.

CASSANDRA
You found him! They're changing
him. Bust that vile cult.

DEX
Don't worry. I'm in mid-bust as we
speak.

Dex hangs up the phone. She looks down at it with curiosity.
Something about Cassandra's insistence was a little... off.

INT. BAD ALIBI - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ansel, alone in the kitchen, places the last garnishes on a
lopsided-looking taco.

The door flings open. Ansel jumps, messing up the garnish.

GREY
Buddy! You still here?

Ansel tries to hide what he's doing.

ANSEL
Yeah.

But Grey sees the taco.

GREY
Did you make this? All by yourself?

ANSEL
Yes. You want to try it?

GREY

Me? I get to be the taste-tester?

Ansel hands the plate to Grey.

GREY (CONT'D)

Okay.

Grey takes a bite, half of the filling falls out the back of the taco.

GREY (CONT'D)

Yum.

Ansel smiles.

ANSEL

You like it?

GREY

It's very good.

Ansel looks at the plate.

ANSEL

Everything fell out. I want to try.

He scoops it back into the tortilla and takes a bite.

ANSEL (CONT'D)

It tastes like nothing.

GREY

It's good!

ANSEL

It's bland.

Ansel scrapes what's left of the taco into the trash can.

GREY

You'll get it next time, man. Time to go home and get some rest. It's been a long day.

Ansel nods, defeated.

INT. WHEELER HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Jacob leads Hoffman into the kitchen as he gulps down a protein smoothie.

JACOB

Didn't you already talk to my parents?

HOFFMAN

They said the night he went missing, Levi went for a walk. They don't know where. I'm wondering if you have an idea.

JACOB

I'm his brother. I didn't keep tabs on his every move.

HOFFMAN

But you talked. You were close. You might know something about Levi we don't.

Jacob looks at him for a moment, not sure if he trusts him.

HOFFMAN (CONT'D)

I'm looking for answers so you and your family can rest peacefully. Don't you want to know what happened to Levi... and who was behind it?

JACOB

Look, it's not what you think.

HOFFMAN

Enlighten me.

JACOB

You won't jump to any conclusions?

HOFFMAN

I don't jump. I come to conclusions carefully, with the support of evidence.

JACOB

Okay, then listen to this *carefully*. Levi was walking to Preston's house that night.

HOFFMAN

Preston Bosen?

JACOB

Yeah. Preston invited him over. Normally, we meet up at Hank's, the restaurant near "Bethlehem." But when I got to Hank's, Preston was there, too.

HOFFMAN

Why would Levi go to Preston's house if Preston wasn't there?

JACOB

Exactly. Should'a called Levi right away. But I didn't say anything.

He pauses.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Maybe I could have stopped... *it* from happening.

HOFFMAN

You can't blame yourself.

JACOB

If you knew Preston, you'd see he'd never hurt a fly.

HOFFMAN

Could something have happened between them in the time it took for you to drive to Hank's?

JACOB

I don't think so, sir. Preston was already there when I arrived. Look, I gotta head to a meeting.

Jacob walks Hoffman out.

OFF HOFFMAN, thinking it through.

EXT. CASCADE HALL PARKING LOT - LATE AFTERNOON

Dex waits in her car, watching Levi's red jeep parked outside the hall. She opens the glove compartment then closes it, opens it again, entertaining herself.

Finally, she sees Preston walk toward Levi's car, his head down. Dex jumps out of her car and rushes toward him, cornering him.

PRESTON
Oh, hey. It's you.

DEX
Nice car.

Preston avoids her eyes.

PRESTON
Thanks.

DEX
I would *kill* for a car like this,
wouldn't you?

PRESTON
Umm, I don't know. I'm actually not
much of a car person.

DEX
Did you kill Levi Wheeler?

Preston is shocked, then angry.

PRESTON
Levi? What? Of course not. How dare
you?

He takes a deep breath.

PRESTON (CONT'D)
I loved him. He was my boyfriend.

DEX
You--oh. Do you know what happened?

PRESTON
No, I don't. None of us do.

DEX
Why are you driving his car?

PRESTON
My mom kept me from getting my own
car. I had no freedom. Jacob said I
could borrow it. Who are you,
anyway?

DEX
Just a concerned citizen.

Preston is unconvinced. He takes a step closer to Dex.

PRESTON

You're working for my mom, aren't you? First, she follows me around like a stalker. When that doesn't work, she sends someone else. She's crazy.

DEX

She's worried about you.

PRESTON

You don't know anything.

DEX

She wants you home. She loves you. That's a lot more than most people get from their parents.

PRESTON

Look, lady, I have to go. You can tell my mom that I'm fine. Or that I'm not. I honestly don't care.

Preston gets in the car. Dex watches him drive off.

INT. HANK'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Hoffman sits at a booth in the homey, mostly empty restaurant.

Across from him is a heavy-set man wearing an apron: GARRISON FAULKNER. Faulkner runs his tongue across his gums. He squints at pictures of Preston and Jacob in front of him.

FAULKNER

Idunno, hard to tell which ones were here which day. Three weeks is a long time ago, Mister Cop.

HOFFMAN

Do you keep any records or receipts from that time?

FAULKNER

That wouldn't tell ya nothing. This Bible group comes in every week. They cover each other. Don't even bother to split the check. Close kids. Reminds me of older days.

HOFFMAN

Thank you.

OFF HOFFMAN, realizing he won't get anything from Faulkner.

EXT. HANK'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Leaving the restaurant, Hoffman notices a bank across the street. Outside the bank are a few security cameras. Bingo.

INT. BAD ALIBI - KITCHEN

It's late. Tookie and the customers have gone home. Victor coaches Ansel through his next taco as he adds seasonings.

VICTOR
You want a variety of different
flavors. Cayenne, paprika, cumin.

A razor-focused Ansel sprinkles cumin onto a finished taco.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
That's good. That's good. Don't go
overboard.

Ansel holds up the plate to Victor.

ANSEL
Try it!

VICTOR
Okay. Hang on.

Victor takes a bite.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
That's hot!

ANSEL
You like it?

VICTOR
Spicy! Very spicy.

Victor pours himself a glass of water and hastily chugs it.

ANSEL
Let me try.

VICTOR
No, no. Just take my word for it.

Ansel stares at the taco... the culprit. Victor fans his tongue.

INT. BANK LOBBY - NIGHT

It's empty except for a lone SECURITY GUARD at the front desk. He crunches loudly on a bag of Cheetos. Hoffman flashes his badge.

HOFFMAN
Detective Miles Hoffman, PPD. Do
the cameras capture footage of
Hank's restaurant?

The security guard pauses mid-bite and stares at Hoffman.

HOFFMAN (CONT'D)
Can I take a look at the feed?

The security guard pushes his computer around so Hoffman can see the grid of six video feeds, one of which shows the outside of Hank's restaurant. Hoffman points to that square.

HOFFMAN (CONT'D)
Great. Do you have access to that
footage from three weeks ago?

The security guard slowly turns the computer back. He resumes chewing his Cheeto. Swallows. He types something.

HOFFMAN (CONT'D)
I'm investigating a murder. Could
really use access to this footage
if you have it.

Finally, the security guard speaks.

SECURITY GUARD
What day?

HOFFMAN
The night of March 11. Just before
seven o' clock.

SECURITY GUARD
March 11. Let me see.

He pulls something up on the screen and slowly turns the computer back to Hoffman.

Not much is happening on the sidewalk outside the restaurant. A few people enter and exit.

HOFFMAN
Can you fast forward?

The security guard turns up the speed. Nothing, nothing, nothing...until --

HOFFMAN (CONT'D)

There!

The security guard stops the video. And there's Preston walking into the restaurant. Time stamped "6:49."

HOFFMAN (CONT'D)

That's my guy. He has an alibi.

INT. STARLIGHT COMMUNITY CENTER - NIGHT

A group of 30 people sit in rows of folding chairs, looking up at a small podium. Behind the podium is Jacob. He notices Dex walk in.

JACOB

Welcome, Bethlehem. Welcome, newcomers and loyal members.

Dex takes a seat in the back.

JACOB (CONT'D)

I know it's been a rough few weeks, but it's all the more reason to lean on the community. I have seen us lift each other up like never before. We truly are a family here at Bethlehem, and Levi would be proud of the love and strength we've shown.

Preston is in the front row, his head down. He's not doing too well. Dex watches him.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Priscilla will lead us in a prayer she chose for today.

A confident woman wearing bright colors, PRISCILLA WILLIAMS (28), walks up to the podium.

PRISCILLA

Page 13.

Dex looks around. Everyone opens small blue booklets. A kind boy next to her shares with Dex. Priscilla begins reading, and the prayer group joins in.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

Dearest Jesus...

PRISCILLA AND PRAYER GROUP
...who wept at the death of your
friend and taught that they who
mourn shall be comforted, grant us
the comfort of your presence in our
loss.

The boy next to Dex smiles at her as they read together. This isn't a cult. It's just a study group where everyone looks out for each other.

INT. STARLIGHT COMMUNITY CENTER - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The group lines up at the kitchen for refreshments after the meeting. Dex gets in line across from Preston. He notices her, avoids eye contact.

He places a huge slice of cake onto his plate.

DEX
What are you doing?

PRESTON
Excuse me?

DEX
Don't you have Type One diabetes?

PRESTON
What are you talking about? That's
my mom. Please leave me alone.

Preston shrinks out of the line.

Just then, Dex's phone buzzes. She opens her messages. It's a series of long texts from Cassandra, demanding that Dex send her son home "by tomorrow afternoon."

INT. BAD ALIBI - KITCHEN - DAY

Tookie and Victor frantically fold tacos. Six tickets are clipped to the shelf above them as they fill orders at lightning speed.

Tookie goes to the fridge and opens a new bag of peppers. He looks at them, then smells them.

TOOKIE
Red alert! Amarillo peppers are
bad.

Victor gestures to his plate of six tacos.

VICTOR
They requested extra spicy!

TOOKIE
Sometimes you have to face the sad,
hard truth. We need more peppers.

VICTOR
There are too many customers out
there.

TOOKIE
I'd rather cook nothing than cook
something with no flavor. We finish
these orders, then close the
kitchen. Victor, you come with me.
We have to replenish our bounty.

VICTOR
You're the boss.

OFF TOOKIE, jumping into action.

INT. BAD ALIBI - DAY

At the bar, Dex scrolls on her phone. Grey hands her a drink.

GREY
You've been spending a lot of time
on social media, Dex. You should
really focus on more genuine, in-
person connections.

He gestures to himself.

But Dex is unamused.

GREY (CONT'D)
More cult-stalking?

DEX
No. Mother-stalking.

GREY
There's a creepy cult mother?

DEX
It's not a cult. Just normal God
stuff. But I have to find out why
Cassandra lied to me. She said
Preston needed to come home for his
insulin, but she's the one with
Diabetes.

Dex turns her computer around.

DEX (CONT'D)

It looks like she's part of some super-Christian, anti-gay, anti-Islam groups.

GREY

Is that what AFA means?

DEX

Yeah. They're led by a kook named Bryan Fischer who believes in conversion therapy.

GREY

Disgusting.

He reads further down on Cassandra's page.

GREY (CONT'D)

The Christian Anti-Defamation Commission, Faithful Word Baptist Church, Concerned Women for America...

DEX

I'm concerned for the Concerned Women for America.

GREY

Me too. But why would she hire you?

DEX

I don't know.

Dex gets another call from Cassandra. She looks at Grey, then picks up.

CASSANDRA (V.O.) (THROUGH PHONE)

I need my son home tomorrow afternoon.

DEX (INTO PHONE)

Why tomorrow?

CASSANDRA (V.O.)

I ask the questions. Bring him home. By any means necessary.

DEX (INTO PHONE)

He will be there tomorrow. You have my word.

Dex hangs up, looks at Grey.

DEX (CONT'D)
I guess she hired me to reverse
kidnap him...

OFF Dex-- *how is she going to get out of this one?*

EXT. CASSANDRA'S HOUSE - DAY

Cassandra opens the door on an all-about-business Hoffman.

HOFFMAN
Detective Miles Hoffman, PPD. I'm
here to ask you a few questions.

Cassandra is caught off guard.

CASSANDRA
Questions about what?

HOFFMAN
The murder of Levi Wheeler.

CASSANDRA
Murder!? How awful.

Cassandra's phone rings in her pocket. She looks at the
Caller ID.

HOFFMAN
The night he went missing, Levi was
on his way to your house.

CASSANDRA
I'm sorry, who is Levi? I don't
know a Levi. One moment.

Cassandra answers the phone.

CASSANDRA (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
David. He *will* be at the house
today. I know it's expensive. I
don't care. All I care about is
helping Preston. Just a sec. I have
someone here.

She puts her hand over the phone and turns her attention back
to Hoffman.

HOFFMAN
Levi Wheeler is in your son
Preston's Bible study group.

CASSANDRA
Doesn't ring a bell.
(leaning forward)
And that group's a cult. They don't
follow the authentic teachings of
Jesus Christ.

HOFFMAN
Nobody came by your house the night
of March 11? About three weeks ago?

CASSANDRA
Oh, honey. I don't even remember
what happened yesterday...

Hoffman studies her.

HOFFMAN
Do you keep a calendar?

CASSANDRA
I'm not one of those busybodies. If
it's important, I remember it.

HOFFMAN
Can I come in, Ms. Bosen?

CASSANDRA
Don't you need a search warrant for
that? This is my property.

She stares at him. Guarded defiance masked by politeness.

HOFFMAN
Have a good day, then.

Cassandra closes the door. Hoffman turns to leave. But from
inside the house, he hears Cassandra yell into the phone.

CASSANDRA (O.S.)
David! I don't know what else to
tell you. I have a fantastic P.I.
on it as we speak. She gave me her
word.

Hoffman waits for a moment longer before walking to his car.

INT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

Dex waltzes right up to Hoffman.

DEX
Preston didn't do it. He was dating
Levi.

HOFFMAN
He also has an alibi.

DEX
But his mother who hired me--

HOFFMAN
She's hiding something.

DEX
She wants me to go after her son--
why?

HOFFMAN
She needs him home so he can meet
someone named David?

This is news to Dex.

DEX
David?

HOFFMAN
On the phone. He's not sure if he
should come to her house? But she
insisted you're bringing Preston
this afternoon.

DEX
Who is David?

HOFFMAN
Don't know. We could trace the
phone call, but I don't have enough
evidence to get my hands on the
records.

DEX
But *I* don't need enough evidence.

HOFFMAN
You don't.

Dex nods. She knows what to do.

INT. DEX'S HOUSE - MORNING

Dex is at the table flipping through a thick stack of printed
phone records-- Cassandra's.

She notices the same number appear multiple times every week, and then 17 calls back and forth from that number in just the last two days.

She texts the number to Hoffman.

INT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

Hoffman runs the number through his computer. The number is registered to an organization, not a person. It pops up on the screen: Right Mind Right Heart: God's Conversion Therapy.

Hoffman texts Dex the result.

INT. DEX'S HOUSE - MORNING

Dex researches the group, sees that Cassandra is a donor. She even finds their mission statement which reads, "To eliminate homosexual behaviors and thoughts, through *any means necessary...*" OFF DEX, taking a deep breath.

INT. BAD ALIBI - BAR - MORNING

Ansel pours a glass of whiskey for a regular.

At a booth, an older customer dressed in a suit waves Ansel over. Ansel hurries over to the ...

INT. BAD ALIBI - BOOTH - MORNING

ANSEL
How can I help you?

The customer, FRANZ GOLDSMITH, holds up his phone with the Yelp review of Tookie's food.

FRANZ
I heard this is the best place in town. I must try the cuisine. I drove here from Seattle.

ANSEL
Wow!

FRANZ
I'll begin with two carnitas tacos.

ANSEL
Well, actually, sir...

Ansel looks back at the kitchen. The sign says, "Kitchen Closed Temporarily. Culinary Emergency! Be back soon."

But Ansel makes a decision.

ANSEL (CONT'D)
Coming right up.

And he walks to the kitchen.

Grey notices, but stays put.

INT. DEX'S HOUSE - DAY

Dex calls Preston, but it goes straight to Voicemail.

PRESTON (V.O.) (THROUGH PHONE)
It's Preston. Leave a message or
send me a text.

Dex hangs up. She calls Jacob. He picks up.

DEX (INTO PHONE)
Jacob. Where's Preston?

JACOB (V.O.) (THROUGH PHONE)
Hi Dex. I'm glad you called. Did
you enjoy your first Bethlehem
meeting?

DEX (INTO PHONE)
Where's Preston?

JACOB (V.O.)
You just missed him. He's on his
way home. We convinced him to make
peace with his mom.

DEX (INTO PHONE)
No, no, no... don't do *that*! When
did he leave?

JACOB
I don't know, ten minutes ago? Why?

Dex hangs up the phone, sends a text to Hoffman, and rushes out the house.

INT. DEX'S MUSTANG - DAY

Dex hops into her car and pulls out. As "*I Get Around*" by the Beach Boys plays over the stereo, Dex goes flying through the streets.

We zoom out and see that Hoffman and the police are following her.

EXT. CASSANDRA'S HOUSE - DAY

Dex arrives at the house where she notices Preston's borrowed jeep parked next to a large van.

Dex parks and rushes into the house. She pushes the unlocked door open.

INT. CASSANDRA'S HOUSE - DAY

Cassandra is in the living room signing some paperwork.

CASSANDRA
Dex! Thank you for knocking some
sense into my Preston.

But Dex blows past her and toward the sound of struggle coming from down the hall.

She finds her way to Preston's room where she hears some muffled chanting. We've heard it before.

SKI MASK #1 (O.S.)
Some of you were once like that.
But you were cleansed!

Dex kicks the door open.

INT. PRESTON'S BEDROOM - DAY

It's the same creepy struggle we saw in the teaser, now from Dex's POV.

Three SKI MASK MEN drag a hooded Preston across the room.

SKI MASK #1
You were made-

Dex punches Ski Mask #1, knocking him out.

SKI MASK #2
...holy! You were made right with
God by calling on the name--

Dex knocks him down too.

SKI MASK #3
...of the Lord Jesus Christ and
by the Spirit of our--

Dex kicks him in the jaw.

She takes the hood off of Preston, revealing a frightened,
angry kid who looks at Dex with new eyes.

DEX
Let's get you out of here.

OFF THESE TWO, rushing out of the room.

INT. CASSANDRA'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

They run into Cassandra who blocks their way, talking to
Preston.

CASSANDRA
You joined the devil. You must be
purified. There's no escape from
God's holy light.

DEX
Actually, the escape is out the
front door.

CASSANDRA
Nobody's leaving. Preston, it's
just a retreat. Jesus is forgiving.

PRESTON
What's wrong with you? You're
trying to abduct your own son! And
what did you do to my room?

Dex's eyes bulge.

CASSANDRA
I was showing Dex how tainted
you've become.

DEX
To convince me to take the case.

CASSANDRA
I needed you to bring my Preston
home.

DEX
You set me up.

Preston glares at his mom.

PRESTON
I hate you.

Cassandra comes closer, changing tactics, speaking sweetly.

CASSANDRA
Now, now, baby boy. Take that back.
You love your mother. Haven't I
done everything for you?

Preston retreats backward toward his room. But Dex takes him strongly by the shoulders. Together, they dodge Cassandra and slip past her down the hallway. She runs after them.

EXT. CASSANDRA'S HOUSE - DAY

Dex and Preston meet up with a line of police officers in the front yard. Cassandra complains from the porch steps.

CASSANDRA
Levi took him away from me. The
cult took him away from me. And now
you, too.

Hoffman steps forward.

HOFFMAN
You said you didn't know Levi
Wheeler.

CASSANDRA
Of course I knew him. He was the
leader of that devil sex cult. But
he's not here anymore.

HOFFMAN
Because you brought him to your
house when Preston was away.

DEX
And murdered him with an insulin
overdose.

CASSANDRA
I was doing God's work!

Hoffman and Lee arrest Cassandra.

HOFFMAN
You have the right to remain
silent. Everything you say can and
will be used against you in a court
of law.

Preston watches, numb, as the cops lead Cassandra into a
police car. Dex puts her hand on his shoulder.

INT. BAD ALIBI - DAY

Ansel comes out of the kitchen carrying a beautiful taco.

He places it down in front of a hungry Franz.

FRANZ
What took so long?

He examines the food.

FRANZ (CONT'D)
Well, I guess the best of the best
is worth the wait.

Tookie and Victor enter with bags of peppers. Tookie realizes
the disaster that has occurred, and he rushes over to take
the taco from Franz.

Grey, walking back from delivering someone's drink, puts his
arm out, stopping Tookie.

Franz lifts the taco to his mouth. Everyone watches in horror
and anticipation. He takes a bite. Chews, swallows.

Silence. And then--

FRANZ (CONT'D)
Delicious.

Tookie, Victor, and Grey breathe a sigh of relief.

FRANZ (CONT'D)
Yelp's recommendations rarely do me
wrong. Good reviews coming your way
from Franz.

ANSEL
Thank you.

FRANZ
Compliments to the chef.

Ansel beams. Victor and Grey are proud. Tookie is perplexed.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Dex paces back and forth, waiting for Hoffman and Lee as they question Cassandra in the interview room.

She looks at Preston. He sits on a folding chair, surrounded by Jacob and a few others from the prayer group.

He looks up at her, nods his head in a silent thank-you. Dex nods back.

INT. BAD ALIBI - DAY

Tookie, Grey, and Victor stand by the bar, beers in their hands. They celebrate Ansel's achievement.

TOOKIE
What I want to know is, where did
you learn to cook such an
impressive taco?

ANSEL
Victor taught me.

TOOKIE
Behind my back?

Victor glances around, avoiding Tookie's gaze.

TOOKIE (CONT'D)
Well done, Victor.

He relaxes.

VICTOR
Thanks.

TOOKIE
How did I get so lucky? A great
chef, and a teacher, too.

GREY
And someone who does the right
thing.
(to Ansel)
We should have listened to you the
first time.

ANSEL
That's okay.

TOOKIE
I was trying to protect you. But
you don't need protecting.

Grey raises his glass.

GREY
To Ansel's taco.

TOOKIE
To Ansel!

Ansel smiles wide.

END OF EPISODE