

BIG LOVE

Episode 1.10

"BAPTISM"

written by

Dustin Lance Black

"THE BAPTISM"

FADE IN:

INT. MARGENE'S HOUSE - DAY

All her curtains are drawn. In a bathrobe, laying on a couch munching on a bucket of left over KFC and watching a Mexican daytime Soap, Margene is WAY too engaged.

Margene unwraps a pack of cigarettes. The babies are naked on the floor. THE DOORBELL RINGS. Shock, horror! She stashes the cigarettes. She's nowhere near presentable.

Margene opens the door just a crack: it's Lois with an old suitcase and several MEXICAN MARKET BAGS. A yellow cab in the driveway. Margene is stunned. She doesn't open the door an inch further. In her cheeriest.

MARGENE

Hi.

LOIS

I don't bite, Margene. Open up...
You have forty dollars for the cab?

INT. BARB'S KITCHEN - DAY

Lois proudly unpacking cheap Mexican pottery wrapped in newspaper for Barb. Margene is still in her bathrobe.

LOIS

Look! It's for your doorstep. They wanted twenty-seven, but I got em' down to six fifty. See the noses for handles?

BARB

Lovely. Did you two like Mexico?

LOIS

Oh yes! It was nice to go back to the old stomping ground. You know, we all hid out there for a year when my father was facing arrest. Their eggs still don't taste like our eggs, though.

BARB

And where's Frank?

CONTINUED:

LOIS

(grandly, with importance)

He stayed on to attend to "compound business" for Roman. And where the heck is Bill? It's two hours to get home, and Wanda's gonna have that baby any minute.

With as natural a smile as she can muster, Barb calls upstairs. It's: "Get her out of here", but comes out:

BARB

Bill, time to go! Family first, work can wait.

INT. BILL'S CAR - INTERSTATE 15 - DAY

Still working, Bill is driving with his cell phone pressed to his ear as he and Lois drive out of SLC.

BILL

Yeah, fax came through. Thanks, Lee. Don't worry about me. Best Behavior. Like a Boy Scout.

He hangs up. Silence.

LOIS

Look at all those houses. Heavens. Who do you suppose lives in all those houses?

BILL

Dunno.

LOIS

Good night!

A beat.

LOIS (CONT'D)

(what's going on?)

You're awfully quiet, Bill.

BILL

Mom, I'm want to take you into my confidence.

LOIS

What is it?

CONTINUED:

BILL

Take a look at this and tell me who you know.

He hands over a piece of fax paper from his pocket. At the top: "UEB PRIESTHOOD COUNCIL ROSTER". Lois's concern doubles.

LOIS

On the UEB Council? Bill?

BILL

Just anyone who's a holdover from Grandpa's days? Preferably who speaks the language of cold, hard cash?

LOIS

I thought you and Roman settled things.

BILL

It's become personal now.

LOIS

(wary, hands paper back)
Drop it.

BILL

Is there someone whose loyalties aren't firm? Who might be willing to talk to me?

LOIS

I sat you down six years ago, I warned you when you married Nicki, don't you get into bed with that family, but you wouldn't listen.

(half-beat)

Bill, you remember, this is Joey's time.

(half-beat, curious)

What *exactly* are you up to?

BILL

I'm just looking to play the same way Roman does. Under the radar, and for keeps. I want eyes on the UEB Council.

LOIS

A mole? Oh no. You listen. That's playing with fire.

BILL

I know.

A beat.

LOIS

Let me see the list.

INT. BARB'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Margene is sitting at Barb's table waiting for a wives meeting to begin when the phone rings. Teenie rushes downstairs to answer it first. Margene notes her urgency.

TANCY

Henricksons, who may I ask is calling? You tell me first. Oh, hi, Aunt Cindy. Yes, it's Teenie. Okay.

Barb, filling a glass with ice from the freezer, mouths the words:

BARB

Tell her I'm outside.

TANCY

(not looking at her mom)
Aunt Cindy's visiting.

Tancy puts the phone down and leaves. Barb picks up the phone, and gives her most cheery:

BARB

Hi Cindy! What are you doing here?
General Conference was last month.
(crunch, crunch on ice)
No law against it, just used to
once a year. Twice is great.
Good... Yeah, great... So Great.
(crunch, crunch on ice)
No, it's just ice. I know it will.
I know you do. I'm sorry.

Nicki walks in the back door for the meeting. Not wanting to say the next word near her, Barb quickly walks in the family room.

BARB (CONT'D)

(hushed)
There's the place by mom's house--
(half-beat)
No, downtown's fine, too.

(MORE)

CONTINUED:

BARB (CONT'D)
(back to cheery and loud)
Okay, great. See you at one.

Barb hangs up and joins Nicki and Margene at the table.

BARB (CONT'D)
Student-teacher conferences.

Barb puts her glass down on the table. It's still only filled with ice. Nicki notes it. Barb opens her meeting list and without skipping a beat:

BARB (CONT'D)
Okay. Number one. Teenie's baptism on Saturday.

NICKI
We need to clean the pool.

BARB
Benny'll do that. And we need Bill's white shoes and pants and a nice white shirt. Starched and pressed.

NICKI
Margie? Would you like to run with that? Washing and readying Bill's whites?

MARGENE
Sure.

Barb and Nicki share a glance re: Margene's depressed manner.

BARB
We need to go grocery shopping for her party--

MARGENE
(hopeful)
A party? What kind of party?

BARB
Like a birthday party, but it's a baptism reception.
(to Nicki)
Would you mind?

NICKI
Just make out a list.

Marge shrinks. Barb notes it.

BARB

Most of all, I want to get her her own Bible as a gift. Would you care to do that, Margene?

MARGENE

Is that all?

BARB

(again, a glance to Nicki)
That's all.

MARGENE

Okay. I have things to do, then.

Margene jumps up and bounds out of the room. Barb gives Nicki a "what was that?" look. The back door closes.

BARB

Did you see that? I tried to make her feel included, to feel important. How much longer is this going to go on?

NICKI

It's just a show for that 2-1 vote issue, or rather, NON-issue. I say we take advantage of it while it lasts. Make HER clean the pool too.

INT. MARGENE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Margene, still depressed, holds Lester in one arm while she unloads Bill's white shirt, pants and socks from the washer with her other. Lester is holding/chewing on a red crayon.

MARGENE

"Do Bill's whites, Margene. This is very important, Margene. Oh we couldn't do this without you, Margene."

(to Lester; "any half-wit could do this")

They think Mommy's a moron.

ANGLE on Lester, his hand now in his mouth. No more crayon. Unaware, Margene scoops up the clothes tosses them in the dryer, shuts the lid and turns on the machine.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SLC - DAY

Barb, bustling down a downtown sidewalk. She stops to check her reflection in the window of Sam Weller's Zion Bookstore. She nervously adjusts the large, conservative scarf she's tied around her neck. Then steps on and enters a restaurant.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Barb sits with her sister, Cindy, who's in a floral dress and a soft smile, a perfect LDS, Texas transplant. Cindy pulls out photos of her three kids. The older two (16,14) look like clones of Mom. The third, 8, is a Vietnamese girl.

CINDY

Joseph finally got his Varsity patch for cross country, and Jennifer is short stop on the JV softball team. A freshman on the JV team is really, really good, but she was disappointed. I told her it doesn't mean she can't make an Olympic team one day. But look, our golden lion, Kim-Ly is eight now. Such beautiful skin, like a doll, and her accent is almost completely gone. She'll be saying "y'all" by the 6th grade I think.

(laughs, then seriously:)

So good in music and math, wow. Asian children are just more talented in certain areas. That's what I tell Joseph and Jennifer. Let's see yours.

BARB

I don't know what I have here.

Barb pulls out her pocketbook and flips quickly past a picture of ALL the kids, Bill and the three wives.

CINDY

Show me. Show me that one.

BARB

That's of everybody.

CINDY

Oh. Okay. No problem, honey.

CONTINUED:

Cindy covers her unease. She clearly doesn't want to see them. Barb finally lands on one of just her kids, and privately breaths a sigh of relief.

BARB

Here we go.

CINDY

Oh my goodness. They've grown up to be so good looking. You fighting the boys off Sarah with a stick? I know I am with Jennifer.

BARB

She's making straight A's. Ben's team captain in baseball, and Teenie's a handful, but that's to be expected from a child in the GATE program. Gifted and talented. Handful. She turned eight, so she's getting baptized this weekend. They grow up so fast.

CINDY

So true. And who's baptizing her?

BARB

Bill... Like the other two.

Cindy tries hard not to be blatant in her disapproval. The harder she tries, the more she fails.

CINDY

WHERE will she be baptized?

BARB

In our back yard.

Cindy bites her tongue and lifts the children's photo up.

CINDY

Mom would love to see this, Barbie.

BARB

I have more. Take it. Please.

CINDY

I wish you knew how bad she feels about this... estrangement. She prays every night that she'll have you in her life again.

BARB

Me too. Birthdays, baptisms, if Ben wins a game, I just want to call and tell her. But.

CINDY

She misses Ben and Sarah and she hardly knows Teenie outside of little clues like this.

(putting their photo away)

I think everyone feels this lack of communication has gone on way, way, way too long.

BARB

I haven't had my family since I left that hospital bed. Seven years. You survive something like that, and you want your family with you more than anything in the world, and then they're gone.

CINDY

Well lets talk straight for a second. You didn't just leave the hospital, you left the hospital and followed Bill into polygamy. You couldn't have shocked us more if you'd put a towel over your head and converted to Islam.

Cindy forces out a trademark smile. A beat. Barb regroups.

BARB

It's... Do you really think it might be time for me to come by?

CINDY

I don't know if mom's ready to see YOU just yet. She takes things slow. It's mom. How about we start with the kids.

BARB

Oh. Just-- the children?

CINDY

They're her grandkids. They shouldn't be put in the middle.

BARB
(wounded)
No. Right. I'll think about it.

Cindy puts a consoling hand on Barb's. To Barb, it feels more like weight than comfort.

EXT. BRYNN'S HOUSE - DAY

Ben has walked Brynn home from school. He puts down his things to hand her a wrapped gift out of his backpack.

BEN
Open it now.

Brynn unwraps the gift. It's a little birch jewelry box. Her name spelled out with drill holes on the top.

BRYNN
Christ, Ben, did you make this?

She kisses him. She's aggressive, biting his lip a little for play. Bashful about it, he takes the box to explain:

BEN
That's why I stayed late the past couple days. I still want to sand off some of the glue drips and re-stain it. I could do it in a night, maybe.

She goes for it again. A kiss, a grab.

BEN (CONT'D)
Seriously, stop it. Your mom could be watching.
(off her teen skepticism,
but re: the box)
You don't like it?

She sits back on the brick planter, grabs his hand and strokes it, trying to get him to see things her way.

BRYNN
We've had eight dates, Ben. And back and forth from school almost every day now for... months. But we're stuck. We're going backwards.

She kisses his hand. Brynn's mom, MRS. BARRY, pulls into the driveway and takes her time getting out and unloading shopping bags. Not wanting to talk in front of her, quietly:

BEN

Can we go to your room and talk?

BRYNN

Yeah. But I don't want to talk.

(a demand, a seduction)

Benny, I'm ready. And so are you. I want to give you my virginity.

BEN

Seriously. Why can't we just wait?

BRYNN

Do you know how it feels to have a guy say no to that? It feels like shit.

(letting go of his hand)

I can't tell you you're screwing up your life, cause maybe you're not. But you need to date somebody who wants what you do.

BEN

I don't want to date other girls.

BRYNN

It's fine. You should date Shelby Scoggins. Church girl... wears turtlenecks all summer...

BEN

No. I really, really like YOU.

Mrs. Barry is finally out of her car with bags in hand.

MRS. BARRY

Hi, Benny. Come in. I got Raspberry Crispies.

BRYNN

He's leaving, mom.

Mrs. Barry grins at them both and continues inside with her bags.

Brynn looks in Ben's eyes, and waits for him to change his mind. He's frozen. He hands her the box again: a "please don't do this" plea.

BEN

I made it for you. I want you to have it.

She hesitantly takes the box. Not wanting to be persuaded otherwise, she gets off the fence and starts toward her house.

BRYNN
It'll be all right. We can still be friends. Okay?

Brynn disappears into her house. Ben is blind-sided. He stands there frozen with all his school things.

INT. MARGENE'S KITCHEN - SAME

Margene pops open the dryer. One after the next, she pulls out white clothes stained with streaks of red. Bright, vivid red.

EXT. PAM'S HOUSE - DAY

Margene's on Pam's doorstep. Pam opens her door with a smile.

MARGENE
Disaster mode. SERIOUS disaster.

PAM
Material, personal, or hygienic?

MARGENE
I don't know. Crayons.

PAM
Where?

MARGENE
In the dryer.

PAM
Goof-Be-Gone.

MARGENE
Excuse-me-what?

PAM
Goof-Be-Gone. You just spray it on, and stains come right off. Aisle six at Fields. And I have one for you.

MARGENE
What?

PAM

It's about your neighbor.

MARGENE

Barb?

PAM

No, Barb's sweet. The other one.
"The Braid". The missionaries I
referred to her... She's
fundamentalist. Polygamist. On our
street. Isn't it terrible?!

MARGENE

Oh. Yes. I mean, I've read a little
bit about it. It's bad, right?

PAM

Yes!

MARGENE

What's the worst part about it?

PAM

Well, they're like cockroaches--
No, I don't mean that in a harsh
way, I mean they come in and try to
hide. They're secretive, probably
because of the shame and all. It's
so sad, and that's exactly what she
does, poor thing.

MARGENE

Poor thing. How do we know for
sure?

PAM

Oh honey, you can just tell. They
say that sometimes they spread
their wives out over the community
for discretion. Have you ever seen
a man come and go?

MARGENE

No. Absolutely not.

PAM

On the one hand, we can't pass
judgement until we know for sure,
that'd be wrong. But on the other,
we've got to keep an eye out for
our own safety.

MARGENE

We have to be safe.

PAM

I'm going to mention her to the neighborhood crime watch-- just to keep an extra set of eyes out. They can be ruthless-- kidnapping and all kinds of unspeakable acts when they fight with each other. Are you alright?

MARGENE

No, I'm okay. Thanks. I guess that's what we should do. A crime watch on "The Braid".

PAM

I'll ask Barb to keep an eye out too. And you share a fence! Lets go in your back yard and see what we can see. Ooo, is that bad?

MARGENE

I just have to go to the store.

PAM

Oh, right. Go. *Goof-Be-Gone.*

INT. JOEY'S CABIN, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Lois bursts in the door, Mexican gifts in hand. She's greeted by a full house. Midwives, Sister-wives, all their Children, and (playing the matron in Lois' absence) Adaleen. Bill walks in behind her.

LOIS

Did we miss it?

ADALEEN

Not yet. She's eight hours in, and no sign of the bundle of joy.

Joey walks in from the bedroom, frazzled. Lois hugs him.

JOEY

You made it.

LOIS

I got gifts. One for you.
(calls out to bedroom)
Wanda, I got you a pot!

WANDA (O.S.)
(through the pain)
Thank you! Oh. Oh!

ADALEEN tries to distract the children from the frenzy by sitting down on a stool and spreading her dress like mother goose to tell a story.

ADALEEN
Oren and Katie. Children. You two.
Come over here. This is sister
Henrickson. No two families have a
closer bond than hers and mine.

Bill backs up to Joey and puts a hand on his shoulder.

BILL
How are you holding up?

JOEY
She's doing all the work.

Back on Adaleen and the kids:

ADALEEN
A long time ago, Sister
Henrickson's father, Orville, was
the prophet of our church. He
taught me to love the lord. And my
husband, Roman, was his devoted
follower. One day, Orville needed
to go back home to his Heavenly
Father. But who would lead us here
on earth?

On Bill, quietly to Joey:

BILL
Can we talk, privately?

Joey nods. They slip out. ADALEEN continues:

ADALEEN
One night, Orville and Roman were
on a drive together and a bright
light shown down from heaven. And
the Holy Spirit came into their
truck and passed the torch of
leadership from Lois' Orville to my
Roman.

(MORE)

CONTINUED: (2)

ADALEEN (CONT'D)

Then he took her dear dead, cold
precious father back up to heaven.
Lois, aren't we blessed to have
this special connection?

LOIS

Wholly sanctified.

OFF Lois.

EXT. JOEY'S CABIN - SAME

Bill stands with Joey beside the Cabin. Bill stays close to his brother, talking in whispers. He shows Joey the list of Council members. There are now three red circles on it.

BILL

Mom circled these three.

JOEY

Lucas Miller? Don't go there. Two of his wives are Jacobsons-- two or three of Roman's wives are Jacobsons, too. They'll rat you out faster than he will.

BILL

Sam Tilson?

JOEY

He seems all right, but I don't know who all he's married to.

BILL

We have to find out. He's gotta be clean. No ties. Could you look at the genealogy records in the library?

JOEY

Roman's wives run the place, and it's not like I'm a big reader. They'll notice me.

BILL

Tell them you want to look at the genealogy records for your baby. Look up Tilson and this one, Holloway. See who their wives are. Who they're related to. I want no connection to Roman.

JOEY

We should wait. Wanda knows this stuff a lot more than I do.

BILL

Now's the time. If you don't want to be involved, I'll understand, but I wouldn't ask you to do it if I didn't trust that you could do it without drawing attention.

WANDA (O.S.)

Joey!

A door opens. Bill stands, pretending that they were never talking. Lois peeks around the corner.

LOIS

Joey, get in here. And get that Adaleen and her grandchildren out.

JOEY

(nervous to Bill)
Can I think about it?

BILL

Of course.

Joey hustles in the house. Off Bill and Lois:

INT. BARB'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Barb and Nicki iron across from each other at dueling ironing boards, sharing the joint can of starch and mister bottle. Barb is moody, her ironing precise. Nicki senses it as she sprays her starch a bit too long. Eye contact.

NICKI

I knew that's who it was. It's so obvious, Barb. I saw you leave and I thought who else but Cindy would you wear a scarf like that with anymore?

(more excessive starch)

Well, you're certainly not going to give into such a horrid request.

BARB

It's their Aunt and Grandma.

THE PHONE STARTS RINGING in the other room.

NICKI
It's a ridiculous thing to ask.

BARB
Where's the phone? Teenie!

Teenie runs in, hands the phone to Barb, and waits.

TEENIE
It's just dad.

BARB
(into the phone)
Hi. No, no, no. I understand.

INT. JOEY'S CABIN - NIGHT - **INTERCUT**

Bill is on the phone.

BILL
It shouldn't be much longer but I'm
clearly not coming home tonight,
and Joey wants me to stay for the
blessing after all this, so...

Wanda is well into hour 11 behind him. The midwife, Lois, and
Joey attend. It looks like a war zone.

WANDA
(out of it)
Tell her I love her.

BARB
Should you get her to a doctor?

BILL
If it goes much longer, I will.

BARB
Okay. I love you. Get some sleep.

BACK TO ONLY BARB'S HOUSE: Barb passes the phone to Nicki.

NICKI
I love you too. Good night.

She hangs up. Teenie snatches back the phone. Exchanged jabs:

NICKI (CONT'D)
What? Is your boyfriend calling?

TEENIE

No. Is yours?

A Nicki/Teenie glare off. Teenie's up the stairs. Barb irons.

NICKI

Don't let your sister near those kids, Barb. She's judgemental, and she only makes you feel bad about yourself. You don't have to let her back in.

(ironing, ironing)

And I can't stand her either.

INT. JOEY'S CABIN - BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Lois wraps a washed up, newborn baby boy in a blanket, and hands him to an exhausted Wanda. Joey is by the bed. Bill's behind him holding a football they were just tossing. None appear to have had much rest.

WANDA

Is he all right?

LOIS

He's perfect. Just perfect.

(to Bill, whispers)

He's gonna live, this one.

Afraid to hold or touch his son yet, Joey stands up and watches from afar. Lois shows Wanda how to get the baby to start to breast feed. The baby latches on.

WANDA

Ow. Really?

BILL

(to Joey)

You won't break him.

Joey bends down and pets the fuzz on his son's head.

JOEY

You're gonna be all right little man. I'll make sure of it.

BILL

What's his name?

WANDA

Joey Junior. He bites down just like you. Oh good Heavenly Father.

INT. MARGENE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Margene sprays Bill's crayon stained white clothes with an aerosol can of *Goof-Be-Gone*. She covers her nose; it has an overwhelming scent.

INT. BARB'S HOUSE - MORNING

Barb is on the phone. Listening. She pulls open a shade, and looks out the window into the back yard. Into the phone:

BARB

I'll think of it as a first step...
Right. A first step in the healing
process... How about three thirty?
I'll have them home from school by
then if you want to pick them up...
Love you too.

Barb hangs up. She's given in. She opens up the sliding glass door. The breath of fresh air she was looking for is tainted by an overwhelming smell. Coming from?

INT. MARGENE'S KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Barb finds Margene kneeling by the red crayon stained dryer, cleaning it out with *Goof-Be-Gone*. At the bottom of the dryer, there is already a puddle of the cleaning fluid. Marge has a rag over her nose.

MARGENE

(through the rag)

It's just crayon, I've got it under
control, Barb. See. "Removes crayon
with ease."

Barb lifts the can of *Goof-Be-Gone*, reads, and then, as if scolding her own daughter:

BARB

Back. Away. From. The dryer.

MARGENE

What?!

Barb turns the can around. "WARNING: HIGHLY FLAMMABLE"

BARB

Outside. Now. Where are the kids?

EXT. BACKYARD - LATER

Barb stands outside the back door with Margene and the kids.

BARB
Cleaning a DRYER with flammable
liquids? Margene? You could have
blown up the whole house.

MARGENE
(embarrassed; dressed
down)
Can I go back in now?

BARB
No. Wait for Nicki.

MARGENE
God.

BARB
And watch your language.

Nicki comes out the back door with the dryer on a dolly. She plops it down outside the door with a bang.

NICKI
Margie. I swear... Worse than a
child!

Margene drops her jaw in protest.

NICKI (CONT'D)
You want equality, Margie, and we'd
love to give it, but you've got to
earn it.

BARB
Nicki--

NICKI
Barb--
(back to Marge)
Trying to get us all killed is not
exactly batting a thousand. Now
please just show some
responsibility.

MARGENE
I'll fix it.

BARB
No. Don't touch it.

NICKI
I'll fix it tomorrow.

Barb and Nicki head back to their own houses. Off Margene, completely dejected.

EXT. JOEY'S CABIN - DAY

Bill watches, a bit nervous as Joey pulls out wads of papers from his shirt. Marriage documents, birth documents, genealogical charts. In the adjacent room, it sounds like people have gathered. In hushed tones Joey relates:

JOEY
I got 'em. Adaleen kept coming in and out. I didn't have time to write stuff down without her seeing what I was looking at, so I just took them.

Bill walks back to shut the door, but Lois catches it.

LOIS
Joey, don't ignore your guests. Come bless that baby.

BILL
(covering)
Just going over the prayer.

LOIS
Oh please. What do you two have?

She marches over and picks up the genealogical records. She starts inspecting them.

LOIS (CONT'D)
You stole these from the library? Leave a bread crumb trail right back to the house while you were at it?!

JOEY
No. She didn't see.

LOIS
You know what they'll do if they find out what you're up to? They'll rub us out!

CONTINUED:

JOEY

(don't turn on us)

Mom. I asked her to photocopy our family tree, and I stuffed it all in my shirt while she was gone.

BILL

These are Tilson's wives-- Any connection to Roman?

LOIS

Nannette Henley-- her brother was evicted last year; she's terrified of Roman. And his wife Chloris is only 18. Tilson's impotent and Roman still gives him young wives. An impotent man in his seventies is not gonna be jumping to rat out the man who put him in bed with a teenager.

BILL

What about Holloway?

LOIS

He ran the physical fitness program at the Academy til it was shut down. Little off in the noggin. Had shingles and went raving mad for few years.

(pointing to genealogy)

Only one new wife in ten years. Either he's gotten his fill, or he's been cut off. Can't be sure.

Bill considers the information. Lois collects up the papers.

JOEY

Mom, I gotta get those back.

LOIS

You--? Forget it.

(half-beat)

Rookies.

EXT. NICKI'S HOUSE - DAY

Nicki peeks out a window at a car that is parked in front of the houses. Cindy is in the driver's seat wearing giant sunglasses and chirping along to her radio.

CONTINUED:

Nicki steps with purpose from her house, and right up to Cindy's car. Cindy kills the radio and rolls down her window. In their less than convincing "pleased to see you" voices:

NICKI

Hello, Cindy. What are you doing?

CINDY

Well, hello, Nicki. I'm picking up Barb's kids. Running early. Like always.

NICKI

Come in, I'll tour you around the new places until they get home.

CINDY

No thank you. I'm fine here.

NICKI

(laid on thick, plotting)
Of course you are. But it'll be my pleasure.

EXT. THE BACK YARDS - MOMENTS LATER

Through the back windows into Nicki's house: Cindy follows Nicki into the kitchen. Wayne's on the counter. Raymond's on the dinner table playing "Who is taller?".

NICKI

Wayne, Raymond, get down and say hello to your Aunt Cindy.

WAYNE

(who is this woman?)
Hi, Aunt Cindy.

NICKI

You should really come around more often. Family is SO important. Don't you agree?

CINDY

Certainly.

NICKI

It must be so hard to leave your kids when you travel.

CINDY

We have a terrific nanny.

CONTINUED:

NICKI

I can't imagine not raising my own kids. Okay, this way is the back yard, and look how big!

Nicki flings open her sliding glass back door revealing the giant unfenced backyards.

NICKI (CONT'D)

You should bring your boy out. He and Ben could toss the football. Without the fences it's almost a regulation field.

CINDY

Most certainly is.

NICKI

So it goes me, Margene, and then Barb on the far end. Three sister wives in a row. No fences. Kind of a metaphor for sisterhood. Working together. Bringing down the walls. Acceptance. Love. Oh my goodness, stop me. I sound like a greeting card. But you know what I mean.
(pretends to catch herself)
Oh, of course you do. You're her REAL sister, right? Obviously.

CINDY

Of course.

NICKI

(passing Margene's)
This is Margie's. Have you met Margene yet?

CINDY

No. Not yet.

NICKI

Well, you know, number three's always such a dear blessing. We'll stop in!

CINDY

Suuure. And the last one's Barb's?

Abandoning the tour, she trots on. Nicki stays a pace behind.

INT. BARB'S FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

They walk in the back door just as Barb is getting home with Teenie, Sarah, and Ben. All are carrying bulk groceries. Tennie unloads quickly and hugs her Aunt. Cindy breaths a sigh of relief as she dives into the kids.

BEN/SARAH
Hi, Aunt Cindy./ Hey.

TANCY
Did you bring treats?

CINDY
You've all gotten so big!

NICKI
Hello, Barb.

BARB
(busted)
Hello, Nicki.

Nicki follows Barb back to the garage door. Quietly:

NICKI
You weren't going to fill me in?

BARB
It's a first step.

NICKI
It's a terrible idea. She'll try
and put things in their heads.
About us. And if you think for one
second I'm going to sit idly by and
let that woman walk all over you
and US, and them, you're wrong.

BARB
They'll be fine, Nicki.

Sarah walks in on them.

SARAH
Do we seriously have to go?

BARB
Just play nice on this trip, okay?

Cindy's wasted no time. She's at the door with the kids.

CONTINUED:

CINDY

Let's go Sarah. Bye, Barb. I'll have em' back tonight safe and sound.

BARB

No. I'll pick them up.

CINDY

(ever the martyr)

I'll drive em' both ways. Small steps, you know? Small steps.

Cindy is out the door. Barb is crushed again. Nicki notes it. As they walk into Barb's kitchen:

NICKI

Assert yourself, Barb. You can't straddle this fence if it's not who you are. It'll drive you crazy.

BARB

I know. I'm sorry, Nicki--

NICKI

Not to me. It's those poor kids who have to be in a car with her for an hour. I personally enjoy watching her mouth get all pouty.

INT. MARGENE'S KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Holding onto her last shred of self respect, Margene opens the washer she put the *Goof-Be-Gone-ed* clothes in earlier.

She pulls out the pants. Where the red stains were, there are now pink spots with yellow halos. She holds them up to the light. Yup, the stains are worse. She touches one, and the fabric dissolves. Disaster. She's devastated. She lays her head down on the washer and whines.

INT. MARGENE'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE ON: A lighter flame leaps up. A puff to light a cigarette. First from a pack, the wrapping goes in the trash. The pack is hidden in the medicine cabinet. When the door closes, Margene is greeted by her own reflection. She blows smoke in the mirror, and tries to stop her quivering chin.

Reveal: Her babies stand in the bathtub. Attempting defiance:

CONTINUED:

MARGENE

We're gonna run away. We can't live here anymore. We'll go far, far away to a place where there's no neighborhood watches.

EXT. BARB'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - DAY

Barb sits in her car anticipating a showdown. Cindy walks out of the house and up to the car.

CINDY

I said I'd drive them back.

BARB

I can't keep doing this. I need to see Mom. Please go tell her that I'm coming in.

CINDY

She's taking a nap right now.

The kids come out the door and toward the car.

BARB

Well then wake her up.

CINDY

Selfish, Barb. This isn't about you.

The kids catch a bit of this as they get in the car.

BARB

I just want to talk to my mother.

CINDY

(sweet as honey, with vinegar)

Oh, Barbie, if anything ever happened to you, your babies would be MY responsibility. I'm doing everything in my power to live up to what you've handed me. What's between you and our mother, that goes much deeper. Those were your choices.

Cindy kisses her own hand and pats each kid on the cheek.

CINDY (CONT'D)

Bye Teenie, Sarah, Ben. Think about what we talked about, okay Bennie?

CONTINUED:

Up front, Teenie kisses Cindy's hand. She's had fun. In back, Sarah hardly masks her disgust. Ben nods. He's a little disturbed, but masking it well enough. Cindy goes back in the house before Barb can respond. Once alone with her kids:

BARB

Are you okay?

BEN

Yeah.

SARAH

She basically told us we're, "Going to hell in a hand basket" if we baptize Teenie in the pool. Oh, and I'm the devil. Period. But she loves Benny now that he's in Seminary. OH! And she makes a killer peach cobbler. Figures.

BARB

(to Ben)

What did she want you to think about?

BEN

Moving out to Texas for the summer.

Ben has flipped open his cell phone in the back seat.

TANCY

I left my Gameboy in there.

BARB

We'll get you a new one.

TANCY

Do we really have to live with her if something happens to you?

BARB

Nothing's going to happen to me. Take a nap. It's a long ride home.

Ben checks his cell phone: "(0) New Messages" We go out on Ben out the back window. Frustrated. Hurt.

INT. MARGENE'S KITCHEN - EVENING

Margene waits impatiently as Sarah looks through the yellow pages:

CONTINUED:

MARGENE

We need these exact brands in the exact same sizes by tomorrow. Do you think it's under "B" for baptism?

SARAH

(flipping through pages)
I think it's under "D" for department store. It's just a white suit, Margie. Just the white suit I was baptized in. The thing my father wore when he welcomed me into eternity with the rest of the family. The suit you have officially killed.

MARGENE

I'm so sorry. Don't tell your mom I screwed up, Okay?

SARAH

You're good. Don't worry.

MARGENE

Sarah? Do you think of yourself as
(as if it's a dirty word:)
a polygamist?

SARAH

No. Kinda. For the longest time, I said I wasn't, my family may be, my parents may be, but I'm not, but then, it's like, I'm living here, so whether I like it or not, I kinda am.

MARGENE

That's the weird part. I never did, but I kinda do, now, and now I don't know what I think about it all. I mean, I fell in love with your dad, and I love your Mom and Nicki, and you guys--

(Sarah's smile)

But I never really thought of myself that way, you know? Then I woke up and suddenly realize, I'm 23, I'm a polygamist-- woah, what's going on?! Did I choose this, or did it just happen to me?

SARAH

I think you chose it.

MARGENE

I guess so. I mean at first we were all together in one house and I just sorta thought we were all, like, roommates. Like "Three's Company".

SARAH

Are you going to leave?

MARGENE

No! Why would you ask that?

SARAH

Before you married dad, Nicki bet my mom you'd leave within six months. Guess she was wrong.

MARGENE

Yeah, she was wrong.

Sarah picks up the ruined pants, and clicks on the phone.

SARAH

This has no tag. What size do you want?

MARGENE

(about to cry)

I don't even know his sizes. I'm a terrible wife. I should never have married your father.

(half-beat)

And your mother.

SARAH

And Nicki.

MARGENE

Especially Nicki.

The two share a nod.

INT. BEN'S ROOM - LATER

Ben sits at his desk. Cell phone to his ear. Into the phone:

CONTINUED:

BEN

Hi Brynn. Can you please call me back. I just need to talk for a minute. Just one minute, okay? Good night.

EXT. HOLLOWAY'S HOME - MORNING

Joey and Bill arrive at a ramshackle, cluttered house. An ancient, bygone world. They park next to a barbed cyclone fence across the dusty road from the house.

Bill pulls a wad of cash out of the center console and shoves it in his pocket.

BILL

"Ernest" Holloway, right?

JOEY

Yeah. You want me to come with you?

Bill nods, and gets out of the car. Joey follows. Bill warily looks down the street. A movement gets his attention. HANNA, an ancient sisterwife with a garden hoe disappears behind the house. Bill and Joey walk up the front stairs. Bill knocks on the door. Nothing. He knocks again.

Suddenly behind them, a little old man, ERNEST HALLOWAY (84), on his people mover. Plump belly, pants pulled up high, thick glasses, and a hearing aid. As if ready to pull a gun:

HOLLOWAY

How may I help you two?

BILL

I'm Bill Henrickson. Orville Henrickson's grandson. I wondered if you and I could talk.

INT. HOLLOWAY'S LIVING ROOM - A BIT LATER

Lace doilies cover holes on ancient furniture. Paths are carved through stacks of papers and books for Holloway's scooter. Holloway zips from his bookcase, where's he's pulled down a book, back over to Bill where he delivers a copy of Dick Francis' Rat Race.

HOLLOWAY

I love a good mystery novel. Borrow it. I consider it one of his best.

Hanna carries in a large pitcher.

CONTINUED:

BILL

I'll take a look.

(to Hanna)

Let me help you with that.

HANNA

Thank you.

Bill pours his and Holloway's glasses. TWO OTHER AGED WIVES linger nervously in the background. Bill watches them watching him.

HOLLOWAY

The boys and girls who call this place home need good physical education. It builds strong bodies AND character. Their bodies need physical exertion. It killed me when the council voted P.E. out of the Juniper Creek Academy.

BILL

I understand, Brother Holloway.

HOLLOWAY

We had a full gymnasium. I wanted to build a pool. I spoke before Council Member Dorothy "Dot" Campbell. President's Council on Physical Fitness. Everyone thinks Jack Kennedy started the program, but it was President Eisenhower.

BILL

I want to help you, Ernest.

HOLLOWAY

(Cranking his hearing aid)

One more time.

BILL

I want to help. I came from here, and now I've had some success in life and it's time to start giving something back. I want to make a donation.

Bill pulls out the stack of cash from the ATM.

BILL (CONT'D)

Seed money to launch a new program.
And I think it best we keep these
donations anonymous. We'll do this
with a handshake. Trust among
brothers.

The phone rings. Holloway ignores it as he counts the money.
A wife comes out and answers the phone with whispers.

HOLLOWAY

Do you always travel with so very
much cash?

BILL

There are things I need as well.

HOLLOWAY

We hardly know each other, Bill.
Ladies.

The wives take their cue and disburse to the back rooms. The
one on the phone puts the receiver down on the counter
instead of hanging up. Almost in a whisper, Bill continues.

BILL

I need to know what Roman is up to
on the Council.

HOLLOWAY

(turns up his hearing aid)
Speak up, son. What kinds of
things? And to what end?

BILL

Business dealings. Any and all of
them, but particularly the ones
that pertain to me.

The sound of a screen door closing. Bill waits. Hanna enters,
whispers in Holloway's ear, makes brief eye contact with
Bill, and leaves. Holloway considers, then sharpens.

HOLLOWAY

I think it's time for you to leave.

Holloway puts Bill's money back down on the coffee table.

HOLLOWAY (CONT'D)

The man you hope to harm is the one true prophet of our most holy church, and your evil hath not the power to destroy such truths. May our Heavenly Father forgive you for this trespass.

BILL

I sincerely apologize. I was mistaken.

HOLLOWAY

Gravely so. May I have my book back please?

Bill hands him back the mystery novel.

EXT. HOLLOWAY'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Hanna walks Bill and Joey out to the porch. Bill is pale. Joey is shell-shocked.

HANNA

May the Lord be with you both.

She returns inside. They continue out to Bill's car. Bill is almost shaking. This was a giant mistake.

JOEY

They left that phone off the hook.

BILL

I know. I'm sorry, Joey. I need to get you home to your family.

EXT. THE THREE HOUSES - DAY

Establish.

INT. TANCY'S BEDROOM - DAY

The phone rings. REVEAL: It's under Teenie's pillow. She lifts the pillow and answers the phone.

TANCY

Henricksons, who may I ask is calling?

WOMAN (V.O.)

Patty Barnes from Sandy Elementary.
Can I speak to Barbara Henrickson?

TANCY

I'm sorry. Mrs. Henrickson is still out of town, can I take a message?

WOMAN (V.O.)

Is this Tancy?

TANCY

No. Can I take a message?

Teenie looks down through the alley between the houses.

INT. MARGENE'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Margene is looking out her window at a clearly paranoid Teenie who is burying an official looking letter from her school in the alley between Barb and Margie's houses.

E/I. THE BACKYARDS - MARGENE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Margene steps out of her house. Teenie freezes. Busted. Her letter gripped tightly. A silent stand off. Teenie runs. Margene chases her. Squeals of fear from Teenie as they circle the pool.

TANCY

Leave me alone!

Margene corners Teenie like a wild animal.

TANCY (CONT'D)

You can't have it.

MARGENE

Calm down. I'm not going to take anything. Just sit down.

Teenie slowly does. Margene sits down beside her.

MARGENE (CONT'D)

You don't want to tell me what's in that?

TANCY

It's a secret.

MARGENE

It looks like a bad secret, right?

TANCY

Maybe.

CONTINUED:

MARGENE

Yeah, those are the worst. But you know what makes them better? If you can tell someone, it just goes POOF! And starts to get better.

(Teenie's not budging)

I have a bad secret too. Really bad. Your Mom would kill me if she knew. Wanna know what it is?

TANCY

What?

INT. MARGENE'S GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Margene pulls out a hidden carton of cigarettes.

MARGENE

Look. I bought this whole carton of cigarettes, and I've been smoking them. I haven't told anybody about it but you, and you know what? I feel better now that I told you.

Margene gives Teenie a "your turn" look.

TANCY

You won't be mad at me?

MARGENE

I promise.

Tancy hands the letter over. Margene opens it up.

TANCY

It was a class project. We had to write an essay on why our mom deserved to be Mother of the Year.

MARGENE

(reading the letter)

"Statewide finalist for best mother of the year." You put your Mom up for Utah Mother of the Year?

TANCY

She's a finalist, and I don't know what to do. I'm sorry.

MARGENE

You just tell her.

TANCY

No. Not her. It's you and Nicki.
You're our moms, too, and I don't
want you guys to hate me.

MARGENE

You see me like a mom?

TANCY

Yes.

Margene gives Teenie a HUGE hug, and then a kiss.

MARGENE

You didn't do anything wrong.

EXT. THE BACKYARDS - MOMENTS LATER

The dryer on a dolly, Nicki rolls toward Margene's. Seeing Margene's side garage door ajar, she heads down the alley between the houses.

INT. MARGENE'S GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Nicki steps into the garage. A stunned Margene is sitting on the ground next to Teenie SMOKING A CIGARETTE. She tries to lower the cigarette out of sight. Too late. She's busted. Nicki GASPS.

NICKI

(stern)

Teenie, go home.

Teenie runs out of the garage, still gripping her letter.

MARGENE

What?!

NICKI

What kind of example are you
setting? Margene, you're grounded.

MARGENE

Excuse me?

NICKI

Or, you're on probation. You do not
involve our kids in your filthy
habits.

CONTINUED:

MARGENE

No way. You have no authority over me. Boss Lady, maybe, but not you. How about, YOU'RE grounded.

NICKI

"Authority"? You wait just one minute-- I'm second, you're third-- get it?

MARGENE

Second's not first. It's nothing.

Nicki GASPS at the affront to her status.

NICKI

Vicious.

Nicki, choking on the smoke, hits the garage door button and the door starts sliding up.

MARGENE

You have no authority over me. If you have a problem, you can talk to our husband about it.

NICKI

Oh?! You listen to me, Margie. I'm not a cream puff like Barb. I don't like a lot of people. Maybe even most people, but I liked you, and I eventually wanted you in this family because I grew to love you. But in the last three years, I've never known you to make a single. Adult. Decision.

The garage door fully open, Margene notes Pam with a shopping cart filled with little American flags stopped midway through jamming one into the lawn a few paces away across the street. (Most of the other houses on the block already have flags.) Pam turns back to the flag. Did she hear the whole thing? Margene suddenly shifts, cutting Nicki off:

MARGENE

Okay, well, it was good talking to you, Nicki. See you around, right?

Marge gets Nicki to notice Pam. They look at each other with suspicion all around.

INT. BRYNN'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ben sits on the edge of a bed. The room's not all pink and ribbons, it's hip, more of a college girl's room. It also looks ill prepared for guests. Clothes strewn about, etc. Standing at the doorway is Brynn's mom, MRS. BARRY, 40.

THE SOUND OF THE FRONT DOOR OPENING, then:

MRS. BARRY
(down the hall)
Brynn? You have a guest.
(softly to Ben)
Remember. Just tell her how you really feel. Honesty's the best policy. She's lucky to have you.

BEN
Thank you, Mrs. Barry.

Brynn walks in the room. Mrs. Barry smiles at them both and leaves. Ben and Brynn make eye contact. She's less than pleased to see him.

BRYNN
What are you doing here?

BEN
Even friends call each other back, right?

BRYNN
I don't have anything to talk about.

BEN
(a communication)
I know. It's okay. I don't want to talk anymore either.

Extended eye contact. Brynn closes her door. Ben stands up, and kisses her. She stops him, turns her radio up loud, and locks her door. Ben stands there almost shivering.

BRYNN
Close those.

BEN
Now?

BRYNN
Yeah.

CONTINUED:

Ben closes the blinds. Tight. Brynn sits on her bed, thinks, and then throws all of her pillows on her floor. Ben is still standing up in front of her.

BRYNN (CONT'D)
Okay, you first.

BEN
Me first?

Ben pulls off his shirt and stops. She takes off her own.

BRYNN
It's okay. I've seen one before.

BEN
Whose?

BRYNN
It doesn't matter. I didn't touch
it. Keep going.

Ben pulls off his pants. Brynn does the same. They look at each other in their socks. What's next? She lays down onto the pillows on the floor. No turning back.

BRYNN (CONT'D)
For more room.

Ben lies down next to her, and kisses her. He keeps kissing, not knowing what to do next. She reaches down and figures it out for them both. He doesn't move.

BRYNN (CONT'D)
Slow.

Instincts take over. (In that 15 year old, we don't know how these body parts work, sort of way.) He lowers his cheek to hers. Their faces beside each other, he can't see that it hurts for her. He's just trying to do his best. For a moment she wonders why she wanted this so badly. He finishes.

BRYNN (CONT'D)
Did it happen?

BEN
Yeah.

Part love, part relief, she kisses him. He lies on her chest.

INT. BRYNN'S ROOM - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

As Ben steps out of Brynn's room, and into the hallway, he straightens his shirt. In the moment there is a deepening self-awareness. Will he be caught on this walk of shame?

Almost home free, Brynn's mom steps out of the hall bathroom.

BRYNN'S MOM

Oh, how'd it go?

BEN

Fine.

BRYNN'S MOM

Did she hear what you had to say?

BEN

I think so. Thank you, Mrs. Barry.

BRYNN'S MOM

Anytime, Benny.

Ben walks down the hall, and out of the house.

EXT. JOEY'S CABIN - DAY

Bill pulls up in front of Joey's house. Immediately, a car pulls up in back of him, blocking him in. Up on Joey's doorstep sits Alby. Waiting. He stands. Wanda sits looking out their window. Joey gets out of the car.

ALBY

Your wife and your beautiful new baby could use your attention, Joey.

BILL

(off Joey's look)

You should go inside. I'm fine.

Joey walks past Alby, and into his house. Alby climbs in the passenger side door and sits next to Bill. The air is deadly still. Bill struggles to be subservient, yet not weak.

ALBY

(brittle, erratic)

Bill, you can keep pushing, but I will always be a step ahead of you. I believe you can see this clearly now.

CONTINUED:

BILL

I can see that clearly now.

ALBY

I'm gladdened that you can.

BILL

If I've done anything to offend you, I just ask that you leave my brother and his family out of this. They've done no wrong.

Alby lifts Bill's hand, grabs it with his other hand, and holds it. Finally, he shakes, holding Bill's hand a second longer than necessary, communicating -- a kind of love? A desire to be loved? Something erotic? He lets go.

ALBY

I know what you want. I feel what you're thinking. We're more alike than I ever thought.

Alby opens his car door and steps out. He then turns back to Bill before closing the door.

ALBY (CONT'D)

No more playing dirty, right, Bill? You get home to your family safely.

Alby closes the door. As he walks away, the car blocking Bill in pulls out of the way. Bill pulls away

INT. BILL'S CAR - LATER - **INTERCUT**

Bill is on the phone with Joey, trying to maintain composure as he drives home.

BILL

I just wanted to make sure you were okay.

INT. JOEY'S CABIN - **INTERCUT**

JOEY

Wanda's real shaken up, but we're fine, really.

BILL

Just lock up tight tonight. I'm afraid I stirred the flames.

CONTINUED:

JOEY

Don't start a war, Bill.

BILL

It might be too late for that. I'm
sorry Joey.

INT. BARB'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Nicki brings in a giant cake and sets it on a table in the living room that is already covered with chips and food, etc. Barb hands Teenie the white baptismal dress.

BARB

You can wear it now, but you have to be very careful not to get anything on it until your father gets home.

The doorbell rings. Teenie disappears.

Jump to: Barb answers her door. Standing there cradling Teenie's gameboy is Cindy. Her loving, warm smile ever present. She's trying her best.

BARB (CONT'D)

Hi, what a surprise. Come in.

Cindy hesitatingly does. Wayne is helping Nicki hang a "Happy Baptism" banner they've homemade.

CINDY

I just wanted to bring by Teenie's game before I head back to the airport. She left it in Mom's room.

TANCY

My game!

Half in the dress, Teenie runs with abandon to grab her game.

BARB

Careful, Teenie.

CINDY

Is that your baptism dress?

TANCY

Yes it is, Aunt Cindy. Thank you.

Teenie marches off, defiantly straightening her dress.

CONTINUED:

CINDY

Barb, really. A baptism in a swimming pool is the silliest thing I've ever heard. I talked to mom, and she said Milton would be more than happy to baptize Teenie in their ward's font.

BARB

Who's Milton?

CINDY

Mom's new boyfriend. Or fiance, or whatever they are now. Barbie, the children are innocent. You shouldn't include them like this.

BARB

There is nothing wrong with our back yard. Any body of water is as righteous as the next.

CINDY

Really, what kind of example are you setting for your them? Sarah is so OVERTLY independent and headstrong now. She said she might become a Southern BAPTIST, Barb!

BARB

It was a joke.

CINDY

That only reinforces my point. And Teenie's following right in her footsteps. And poor Ben.

Nicki starts walking up. Cindy lowers her tone.

CINDY (CONT'D)

He's the only one that shows any signs of redemption, and not to quote that dreadful man, but I could just Feel. His. Pain.

NICKI

Hello, Cindy. Not staying for my punch?

CINDY

No.

NICKI

Then please leave our house.

CINDY

This is not your--

Margene walks in holding a new white suit and a new bible. She watches Cindy, the voice of "respectability", and Nicki, the voice of "family".

NICKI

Shush it. There is NOTHING wrong with OUR children. They are perfectly strong minded, independent works of art, much like their mothers. And I would hazard--

CINDY

Excuse me? Barb?

NICKI

I said shush. Our children are at least three times as cared for, and Barb is ten times the mother. Where are your children when you skip town every week on "business." Family first, right? Then how about you get back to yours and leave us to our own.

CINDY

My dear, polygamy 100 years ago was quaint. Polygamy today is foul. That's just the way it is. If God--

Margene, taking it all in...

BARB

You should go now, Cindy.

CINDY

(not stopping; to Nicki)
--forbid anything were to ever happen to my sister, those children are MY responsibility, not yours, and I will do everything in my power to insure they grow up to be good, strong, MORAL young people.

NICKI

God forbid. Now get out.

Cindy looks to Barb. Barb is in agreement. With that, Cindy leaves the house in a huff. As she flings open the front door, she finds Ben. How long has he been listening? She hugs him, and in her overdramatic way:

CINDY

Benny, choose the right. Always.

Ben musters a nod for his frenzied aunt. Cindy jumps in her rental car, and in her flustered, discombobulated hurry to depart, drives off the curb with a big BANG.

On Barb: A breath to regroup. Eye contact with Ben. Then a laugh of relief: "what the hell did she just do to the curb?"

NICKI

I'm sorry, I just can't listen to her call my Boss Lady "Barbie".

Nicki makes eye contact with Margene. She holds out the secretly new white clothes and the Bible.

MARGENE

Here's the Bible, and Bill's baptism clothes. They're all clean and pressed.

BARB

Thank you Margene. Benny, go get ready.

BEN

Okay.

OFF Margene, thinking over Nicki's fierce defense of family, watching the family get back to business. Then:

Margene looks out the window: Pam is in the front yard with her hose paying no attention to her lawn. She saw the whole scene unfold. She watches Bill pull into the driveway.

Margene cuddles up close to the window and watches her friend. A sense of distance, of loss.

EXT. PAM'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Margene is with Pam on the lawn.

PAM

Oh no! It works great on walls.
Honey, I'm so sorry.

CONTINUED:

MARGENE

No, it's fine.

Pam gives Margene a big hug. Margene wants desperately to give one back, but she knows what she's there to do.

MARGENE (CONT'D)

I don't think I can be friends with you anymore, Pam.

PAM

No. no. no. I'll pay for the clothes that got ruined, Margie.

MARGENE

It's not the clothes.

PAM

Then why?

MARGENE

I am who I am, and you are who you are, and I can't be me when I'm with you. Not a hundred percent me.

PAM

Of course you can.

MARGENE

No. I can't, because I'm just barely starting to understand the real me. And maybe I just need alone time to do that for a while

PAM

(baffled, trying)

You could try and do that with me.

MARGENE

I don't think so.

(half-beat)

And Pam, Nicki's a good person, not a cockroach. I'd never do anything to hurt her, and I'm very sorry if I led you to believe that I would.

Marge falls into her arms. They hug for a little bit, and then Margene lets go.

MARGENE (CONT'D)

Good-bye, Pam.

PAM
Good-bye, Margie.

Margene crosses the street. As she does, Pam looks past her to the THREE HOUSES in a row, Margene's house in the middle, her three odd neighbors. She's putting it all together.

OFF Margene's sadness, the sacrifice of her friend...

INT. BARB'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Bill changes into the all white shirt and slacks. The "secretly-new" pants are a few inches too short, and a little tight in the waist. Bill pulls at them. "Did I grow?" "Am I fatter?" Barb is on the bench by the window inscribing Teenie's new Bible.

BARB
We need to talk about the children.

BILL
Big talk or little talk?

BARB
Kind of big I guess.

BILL
Are you sure this is the time?

BARB
Yes. If anything ever happened to us, I don't want them going to my sister anymore. I want them to stay here with their family. I want to look at our will.

Bill kneels down to Barb.

BILL
It brings me a great deal of joy to hear you say that. A great deal.

Nicki comes in the room looking a little flushed.

NICKI
Bill, there's someone in the driveway in a van. Compound people.

Bill's face turns to concern.

CONTINUED:

BILL

Get everybody in the back yard for the baptism. I'll be right out.

NICKI

What's going on, Bill?

BILL

Just get everyone in the backyard.

EXT. BARB'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dressed all in white, Bill locks his front door on his way out. He walks down the driveway. Sitting in the passenger seat of the beat up old Astro Van is Holloway. Two of his wives (60s) drove him. They step out of the car and walk down to the curb, standing like ghostly guardians as Bill approaches.

HOLLOWAY

Hello again, Bill.

BILL

Brother Holloway. Is there something I can help you with?

HOLLOWAY

I am prepared to do as you ask of me.

BILL

(still wary)
Why?

HOLLOWAY

Near the end of one's life, one must set the record straight. Can you provide for my protection, Bill?

BILL

I believe I can.

HOLLOWAY

The compound is corrupt. The Academy was closed so they could use the building for a sewing plant for the Prophet. P-r-o-f-I-t.

(half-beat)

Your Grandfather's death sat high on my mind last night.

(MORE)

CONTINUED:

HOLLOWAY (CONT'D)

Orville and Roman were not alone on that final trip. Our Heavenly Father was in that truck when your Grandfather passed away. He saw how Roman wrestled his way to where he is now. Mighty his wrath will be come judgement day.

Bill digests this information as best he can.

BILL

Brother Holloway, in my world, such allegations need substantiation.

HOLLOWAY

I'm a man of faith, Bill. Willing to risk blood atonement for the truth. Your heart knows if you should trust me.

Holloway nods to his wives. They start back to the car to return home. Holloway pulls out an old journal and hands it to Bill.

HOLLOWAY (CONT'D)

This was your Grandfathers. You should know that he saw something very special in you. He wasn't shy about that.

Bill opens the journal. On the first page is a child's hand print in bright red ink. Below it: "Bill's hand at eight". Bill turns a page. Stuck in the seam is a picture of him as a boy with his grandfather.

BILL

Thank you.

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

The family is assembled in their Sunday finest. Ben stands by the edge of the pool. In the pool, Bill places Teenie in front of him. She plugs her nose. He raises his right hand in the air and recites:

BILL

Tancy Henrickson, having been commissioned of Jesus Christ I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

CONTINUED:

And then kurplunk! He dips her under. A beat, and Bill lifts her back up. Teenie gulps up air. Bill looks to Ben. Ben nods.

BILL (CONT'D)

I want to be the first to welcome you in as an adult member of our family for all of eternity. With all the responsibilities and privileges of family and faith...

A SLOSHING NOISE as Margene steps forward, then wades quickly into the pool and up to Bill.

BILL (CONT'D)

Margie?

MARGENE

Me next. I need to be baptized. Now. Right this minute. Sorry Teenie. Bill, when I married into this family, I guess I must have thought I was just marrying you.

(then to everyone)

Your husband. Your dad.

(half-beat)

Now I realize I was marrying all of you. I was marrying sisters. My sisters. My children. That's what my choice was, and I'd choose that right now, all over again. And I know, I know, I've made a lot of mistakes lately, or just always, but I can get better, I will, because I want to be with you guys forever too. I love you guys, and I need you guys, and I never ever want to not be in this family. Here or in Heaven. Now. I'm ready.

Bill looks at her. Then to the wives.

BILL

Hold your nose.

(she does)

Margene Hoffman, having been commissioned of Jesus Christ I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

Kurplunk! We see Margene under the water for what seems like eternity. Eyes wide open, blissfully letting go, a new beginning, and then finally, she comes up. Clean. She looks up to Nicki and Barb who have joined hands in what looks like approval. Then, she lays one on Bill.

As Margene, Teenie and Bill climb from the pool, Ben slips off into Barb's house.

INT. BEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The sounds of the party downstairs. Music, laughing. Ben opens his window, then kneels by his bed. There is weight around him. Finally:

BEN

Dear Heavenly Father, I have
knowingly sinned against you.
Please, I will follow your path
wherever you want me to go if
you'll tell me a prayer or way to
have back my virtue, my virginity.
Please dear lord, I need you with
me now.

FADE OUT.