

WACO

Chapter 1: "The Strangers Across the Street"

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OVER BLACK:

Speakers amplified with the most horrific assembly of sounds intentionally designed to drive people insane, including:

Blaring sirens. Screams of rabbits being slaughtered. Buzzing dental drills. Crying babies. Off-the-hook telephone signals. Islamic and Buddhist chants. Train horns.

And finally, a blast of Nancy Sinatra's "These Boots Are Made for Walking."

TEXT: APRIL 19, 1993 - WACO, TEXAS

TEXT: DAY 51

INT. MOUNT CARMEL BEDROOM - NIGHT

It's 5 a.m.

DAVID THIBODEAU, 23, a gaunt, exhausted, wickedly intelligent drummer, lies awake in his room as those horrible sounds are blasted at him from speakers outside. His breath hangs visibly in the air despite being indoors.

The room lights up. Goes dark. Lights up. Goes dark.

Thibodeau notices the blanket over the window has started to fall. He tucks the end back up, blocking out some of the intensity of the high-powered searchlights.

He looks at a half-eaten MRE ("Meals-Ready-to-Eat" - a low-end military food replacement bar). He tries to eat a bite, but it doesn't sit right.

Thibodeau reaches under the bed, pulls out some drumsticks.

He quietly taps along as the speakers outside play another round of Nancy Sinatra. Thibodeau is obviously a skillful drummer.

Between the sounds, he hears an owl hoot. Listens. Another owl hoot. Something seems wrong about it.

He sits up and moves to the window, pulls it slightly open.

ANGLE ON:

Outside, high-powered spotlights pan and swish past the windows as giant stadium speakers project those horrible sounds.

And then he sees it -- a hulking black mass silhouetted against a swipe of light. TANK!

THIBODEAU
Oh shit. Something's happening.

He shakes his roommate awake.

THIBODEAU (CONT'D)
Jamie, something's happening!

INT. MOUNT CARMEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Thibodeau rushes out into the ramshackle hallway where he finds 4-year-old SERENITY JONES. She shivers from underneath her wool blanket.

THIBODEAU
You should get back in your room,
Serenity.

SERENITY
It's too loud in there.

THIBODEAU
Wake your mom up. Tell her
something's happening.

INT. MOUNT CARMEL ENTRYWAY - NIGHT

Thibodeau steps up to the front door of the house. The stadium lights illuminate bullet holes in the door.

Lifting a blanket that hangs over the adjacent window, Thibodeau looks out to see A PAIR OF M60 TANKS OUTFITTED WITH 30-FOOT-LONG BOOMS MOUNTED TO THE CANNONS.

JUDY SCHNEIDER
What are those long poles sticking
off the tanks?

Thibodeau turns to find **JUDY SCHNEIDER**, late 30s, a pretty, soft-voiced mother with more grit than her petite frame would suggest, watching over his shoulder.

THIBODEAU
I don't know. Where's Mayanah?

JUDY SCHNEIDER
Sleeping.

THIBODEAU
 Might want to stay close to her
 until we know what's going on.

Judy leaves.

INT. MOUNT CARMEL ENTRYWAY - NIGHT

A PHONE RINGS. Thibodeau answers it after one ring.

FBI VOICE (O.C.)
 I need to speak to Steve right
 away!

Thibodeau drops the phone, rushes into the adjoining room and wakes **STEVE SCHNEIDER**, 43, a handsome blonde theologian with an athletic build and a Midwestern accent.

DAVID KORESH MIGHT BE THE SPIRITUAL LEADER AT MOUNT CARMEL,
 BUT STEVE IS THE TRUE LEADER IN ALL THINGS PRACTICAL.

THIBODEAU
 They say they need to talk to you.

Steve is sleep-deprived and annoyed, but he can tell from Thibodeau's tone it's no time to complain.

WAYNE MARTIN, 42, a black Harvard Law grad who left a good job as an assistant law professor to move here with his wife and 7 kids, rushes into the room.

WAYNE MARTIN
 The tanks are approaching!

Steve hurries to the window and looks through to find:

TANKS CHARGING FULL SPEED TOWARD THE COMPLEX.

STEVE SCHNEIDER
 Shit!

Steve Schneider picks up the phone.

STEVE SCHNEIDER (CONT'D)
 Yeah?!

FBI VOICE (O.C.)
 Steve, we're going to insert tear
 gas into your building. We're...

STEVE SCHNEIDER
 What do you mean?! We've done
 everything we said we would!

FBI VOICE (O.C.)
 It's time for you and David to lead
 your people out of there. This is
 just...

STEVE SCHNEIDER
 Why are you doing this?! WE HAVE A
 DEAL TO SURRENDER!

IN A FIT OF RAGE, STEVE SCHNEIDER RIPS THE PHONE OUT OF THE
 WALL, OPENS THE FRONT DOOR AND THROWS IT OUT.

STEVE SCHNEIDER (CONT'D)
 Get your gas masks on! Now!
 Everyone!

EVERYONE INSIDE RUNS LIKE HELL TO THEIR ROOMS.

INT. MOUNT CARMEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Steve sprints upstairs to David Koresh's room.

He swings open the door and speaks with the true leader of
 this community, David Koresh, who remains off camera.

STEVE SCHNEIDER
 Dave, it's happening right now.

EXT. MOUNT CARMEL FIELD - NIGHT

A TANK RUNS OVER the phone Steve threw outside and CRUSHES
 IT.

INT. GARY NOESNER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A phone rings in the dark.

GARY NOESNER, 40s, the FBI's best negotiator, turns on a
 bedside lamp. Blessed with a quick mind and cursed with a
 good heart, this isn't the first time he's been called into
 action in the middle of the night.

GARY NOESNER
 Gary Noesner here.

His wife, JULIE NOESNER, sits up.

JULIE NOESNER
 (quiet)
 Coffee?

He holds up a finger. Hold a beat.

GARY NOESNER

What do you mean they're going in?!

Noesner puts his hand down. Time to get to work.

GARY NOESNER (CONT'D)

In all due respect, sir, I am
telling you in no uncertain terms--
if you gas that building, people
will die there today!

INT. MOUNT CARMEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

As Thibodeau runs past rooms...

THIBODEAU

Wake up! Put your gas masks on!
They're going to gas us! Wake up!

From outside, the speakers announce:

FBI VOICE (O.C.)

(through speakers)

The siege is over. We are going to
put tear gas into the building.
This is not an assault!

Judy Schneider stumbles around in the hallway beside a SMALL
PACK OF CHILDREN and old women, most of them crying, all of
them terrified.

CYRUS KORESH, 8, David Koresh's oldest son, sees the adults
grabbing their gas masks.

CYRUS KORESH

I don't have a mask!

JUDY SCHNEIDER

I'm sorry honey, they don't make
them small enough for kids.

Judy turns to Thibodeau, freaked out and angry.

JUDY SCHNEIDER (CONT'D)

I thought we had a deal to
surrender!

THIBODEAU

We do!

BOOM! THE BUILDING SHAKES VIOLENTLY. A long metal pole crushes through the wall beside them, almost hitting Judy.

They retreat back into the building as concrete and debris almost fall on them.

Clouds of white smoke start to fill the room. This is CS GAS-- so caustic, it's banned by Geneva Convention.

FBI VOICE (O.C.)
 (through speakers)
 The gas will make your environment uninhabitable! The siege is over. David and Steve, lead your people out of there!

Steve Schneider races through the hallway.

STEVE SCHNEIDER
 Judy, David wants you to take the kids out through the storm tunnel. That should be the safest way out!

JUDY SCHNEIDER
 Okay. Where *is* David?

STEVE SCHNEIDER
 In the chapel. I'm going there now.

Steve grabs Judy, pulls her into a warm embrace. There is history here. Judy kisses Steve on the forehead, looks to him sadly, then turns and leads the kids back toward the storm tunnel.

INT. MOUNT CARMEL STAIRS - NIGHT

Thibodeau rushes up the stairs to the second floor hallway.

INT. MOUNT CARMEL 2ND FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Thibodeau runs out into the 2nd floor (the women's floor). He quickly looks into rooms decorated with kids' drawings, toys.

He sees Wayne Martin and his son WAYNE MARTIN JR., 20, black, confident and studious, with their gas masks on their heads as they quickly wet T-shirts and blankets and frantically try to cover the other 4 Martin kids' faces.

WAYNE MARTIN
 Keep this over your face! They're going to gas us!

THIBODEAU
Is anyone else still up here?! We
need to take...

BOOM!

THE HALLWAY IN FRONT OF THIBODEAU CRUSHES TOGETHER AS A TANK
PUSHES ITS WAY THROUGH THE FLIMSY STRUCTURE.

THIBODEAU (CONT'D)
Aaah!

FBI VOICE (O.C.)
(through speakers)
This is not an assault! Do not fire
on us or we will be forced to fire
back!

Clouds of CS gas billow toward Thibodeau. He straps his gas
mask to his face as he runs back to the stairs.

INT. MOUNT CARMEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Smoke makes it hard to see where he's going.

Thibodeau slams into Jamie Castillo (his roommate). Jamie
vomits violently, tears running down his face.

JAMIE
My mask isn't working! Oh God! Help
me!

He vomits again.

THIBODEAU
I have an extra one under my bed!
I'll get it!

Thibodeau races back through the hallway to his room.

FBI VOICE (O.C.)
(through speakers)
Come out with your hands up. This
is not an assault!

INT. MOUNT CARMEL BEDROOM

Thibodeau rushes back into his bedroom to find --

THE ENTIRE WALL HAS BEEN RIPPED OFF THE BUILDING. This
bedroom he was lying in a couple hours ago now holds a view
of what looks like a FULL-SCALE WAR.

FBI VOICE (O.C.)
 This is not an assault! This is not
 an assault!

FADE OUT.

TITLE CARD: WACO

INT. GUITAR CENTER ON SUNSET BLVD., HOLLYWOOD

Thibodeau, chubbier than he was in the opening scene, plods along Sunset Blvd. to the Guitar Center, the musician Mecca of Los Angeles.

TEXT: 2 YEARS EARLIER - HOLLYWOOD, CA

INT. GUITAR CENTER HOLLYWOOD DRUM ROOM

Thibodeau takes a seat at a drum kit in the soundproof drum room. He tests out a couple pairs of drumsticks, while trying not to disturb the TWO OTHER MEN in the room - one in a suit, the other in jeans. The men look at him.

The man in the suit is Steve Schneider. THE MAN IN JEANS, WITH LONG WAVY HAIR, A TWO-DAY BEARD, AND LARGE GLASSES - IS **DAVID KORESH**, 31.

STEVE SCHNEIDER
 Are you a drummer?

THIBODEAU
 Yeah.

STEVE SCHNEIDER
 You any good?

THIBODEAU
 Not bad.

STEVE SCHNEIDER
 You mind playing a little something
 so we can hear how it sounds?

Thibodeau nods. No problem. He plays a little at first. Then picks it up. Before long, he's rocking out like John Bonham. David nods to Steve.

STEVE SCHNEIDER (CONT'D)
 My name is Steve Schneider. This...

He points to the handsome man in the T-shirt.

STEVE SCHNEIDER (CONT'D)
 ...is David Koresh.

Thibodeau shakes hands with both of them.

STEVE SCHNEIDER (CONT'D)
 David here is a guitarist. I'm his
 manager. We're looking for a
 drummer for our band.

Steve Schneider hands Thibodeau a business card. It reads,
 "Messiah Productions" and it's covered with Bible quotes.

THIBODEAU
 "Messiah Productions." Oh wait, you
 guys are a Christian band?

Thibodeau hands the card back. Steve doesn't take it.

STEVE SCHNEIDER
 Surely you have some kind of
 spiritual curiosity?

THIBODEAU
 This isn't really my kinda thing.

As David Koresh speaks, one can hear a soft, down-to-earth
 Texas twang.

DAVID
 Look, it's like this. I've been all
 over the world and talked to lots
 of people. I feel that, basically,
 if you're spiritual, that's all you
 need. I'm not out to convert
 anyone. I'd just like to play music
 with you and see where it goes.

Thibodeau takes the business card back.

INT. CONVENTION CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

FBI Negotiator Gary Noesner speaks to a room full of law
 enforcement professionals from all over the country. A slide
 projected behind him reads, "Negotiation Techniques."

GARY NOESNER
 Any time a perp finds themselves
 negotiating with the FBI, you can
 bet it's the worst day of their
 lives. Things have gone way out of
 control, maybe there's a hostage,
 or worse.

(MORE)

GARY NOESNER (CONT'D)

Now, as officers of the law, you have a choice: escalate the violence, or simply *listen* to them. And I'll warn you, there's a paradox to power: the more force you bring *into* a situation, the more resistance you're likely to be met with. Our job, as negotiators, is de-escalation. And there is no better tool toward that end than your ability to listen to and understand another human being.

Someone raises a hand. Gary points at him.

COP

But... how long do you give a perp before you have to resort to force?

GARY NOESNER

Forever. Time is our friend. Never give a time limit. I did that once, and... don't ever do that. Unless someone is about to be killed you just keep 'em talking. As long as it takes.

EXT. TEXAS PLAINS - MORNING

TEXT: WACO, TEXAS - May 1992

The yellow, grassy expanse of the Texan plains can almost give a man vertigo. It's eerie out here. A bit hellish.

A lone UPS VAN plays country music as it kicks up dust on a seemingly endless dirt road.

INT. UPS VAN - MORNING

The UPS Van hits a pothole, bouncing a package off a shelf in the back, crushing it against the floor. The van stops.

The UPS DRIVER steps back into the cargo area. As he picks up the CRUSHED PACKAGE, a seam gives way, spilling HAND GRENADES out onto the deck of the cargo area.

UPS DRIVER

Oh shit.

He carefully flips the CRUSHED PACKAGE over. It's addressed to: **Mount Carmel, C/o Steve Schneider, Double EE Road, Waco, Texas.**

INT. STEVE SCHNEIDER'S CAR - DAY

Thibodeau rides shotgun in Steve Schneider's car through the outskirts of Los Angeles.

TEXT: POMONA, CALIFORNIA

THIBODEAU

You guys really live outside the city.

STEVE SCHNEIDER

Oh we don't live here. We live in a little hellhole in the prairie of Waco, Texas.

THIBODEAU

You live in a hellhole?

STEVE SCHNEIDER

Yeah. It's pretty cool, though. We call the place Mount Carmel. We think of ourselves as "Students of Scripture."

Thibodeau looks at Steve, still not sure what to make of this whole thing.

THIBODEAU

How'd you and David meet?

STEVE SCHNEIDER

My wife Judy and I were living in Hawaii. I was getting my PhD in theology when someone gave me a tape of David's interpretation of the Seven Seals, and it just blew my brain back. So I met David and drove him nuts with millions of questions. You know, I doubted him at first, and I was trying to catch him out. I even brought one of my professors to argue with him, but David... he understands scripture like nothing I've ever seen. He actually memorized the entire Bible by the time he was 11! Who does that?

Steve laughs easily.

STEVE SCHNEIDER (CONT'D)

Didn't take me long to realize something...

(MORE)

STEVE SCHNEIDER (CONT'D)
miraculous was happening here. So
Judy and I packed up and moved to
Waco.

THIBODEAU
Miraculous?

Steve shoots Thibodeau a friendly look.

STEVE SCHNEIDER
I'll put it a different way -- do
you believe things can happen that
are beyond our capacity to
rationalize based on our current
temporal view of reality?

THIBODEAU
I guess so, yeah.

STEVE SCHNEIDER
You spend some time with David, and
you will see things like that.
Miracles.

INT. POMONA BAND SPACE - DAY

Steve and Thibodeau enter a band rehearsal space to find David Koresh on lead guitar and vocals. The equipment is brand new, top of the line.

People hang out around the edges of the room, sipping beers and listening.

Everyone seems to be taking a break except David, who plays his new song, "Book of Daniel." He strums the gentle melody with real feeling. He's actually quite good.

DAVID
(singing)
I've got a secret.
That I'd like you to understand.
See -- the book.
There in the Angel's hand.
Book of Daniel...

David opens his eyes to find Thibodeau standing in the doorway. He smiles kindly to Thibodeau as he continues to sing. Thibodeau smiles back, touched to feel so warmly welcomed.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 Has got a Message.
 Message for you.
 A Message for you!

Off Thibodeau -- there really is something kind of magical happening here. If nothing else, it's interesting.

PRE-LAP THE DRUM LEAD-IN TO THE KNACK'S "MY SHARONA."

INT. ROCK ROOM - MORNING

Thibodeau kicks into "My Sharona" with gusto.

Jamie Castillo (Thibodeau's future roommate at Mount Carmel) joins in on bass.

David rips in on a lead guitar airbrushed with a sexy female angel surrounded by supernovas. This is actually a pretty tight band. David steps to the mic.

DAVID
 (sings)
 Oooh my little pretty one, pretty
 one, when you gonna give me some
 time Sharona...

Say what you will about David Koresh -- the guy *does* have stage presence.

He looks over at Thibodeau, impressed with the new talent. Thibodeau basks in the glow of approval.

EXT. POMONA BAND SPACE PATIO - NIGHT

Thibodeau and David sit on patio chairs drinking beer and relaxing.

DAVID
 You can tell a lot about someone by
 the way they play music. Wanna know
 what your playing tells me?

THIBODEAU
 Sure.

DAVID
 You play loud and aggressive.

Thibodeau smiles. It's true.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Like you're scared if you don't
make enough noise, the world might
just forget about you.

This touches a deep nerve. Thibodeau struggles for a moment
to keep his eyes from welling up.

THIBODEAU

Yeah.

DAVID

If I had to guess, I'd bet you
kinda raised yourself up. I can
tell 'cuz I kinda raised myself up
too.

Thibodeau nods.

THIBODEAU

I didn't really have a dad growing
up, and my mom worked nights... I
remember one night, when I was like
12, eating dinner by myself and
seeing our neighbors through the
blinds, sitting in their perfect
little dining room, eating together
without a care in the world and it
just... bugged me. So I opened all
the windows and I played loud as
you've ever heard anyone play.

Thibodeau smiles gently.

THIBODEAU (CONT'D)

They could have that perfect dinner
at the end of their perfect day,
but... from that night on, they'd
be thinking of me.

David smiles. Puts a hand on Thibodeau's shoulder.

DAVID

You don't have to play that loud
anymore. We know you're here.

This means something to Thibodeau.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I want you to be the drummer in
this band, but you have to
understand where I'm coming from
and what my message is.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

Next month, two hundred people from all over the world are going to Waco, Texas. I'd love to have you join us. We'll study, but we'll also have some fun, play music. After that, you'll have to make a decision.

THIBODEAU

I still don't know about all this.

DAVID

I'd be worried if you did. Think about it?

Thibodeau nods.

THIBODEAU

Yeah. I'll think about it.

INT. ATF CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

CHUCK SARABYN, the tightly-wound TACTICAL COMMANDER OF THE ATF, enters a conference room and takes a seat at the head of the table. Chuck is a tough redhead with wiry frame, moustache and thin feathered hair.

CHUCK SARABYN

So what do we know about these guys?

DAVY AGUILERA, a stocky Hispanic ATF investigative supervisor, presents his file on the Branch Davidians.

DAVY AGUILERA

We know that they're a Seventh Day Adventist offshoot called the Branch Davidians living just outside Waco, Texas. Their leader is David Koresh...

He holds up a mugshot of Koresh.

DAVY AGUILERA (CONT'D)

...one prior for armed assault. His followers think of him as a Christlike figure. He calls himself a "Sinful Messiah."

PHILLIP CHOJNACKI, the other commander of the ATF, a true bureaucrat with a thick head, no neck, and a lazy eye, chimes in.

PHILLIP CHOJNACKI
 "Sinful Messiah?" That's rich.

DAVY AGUILERA
 And apparently they have a lot of guns. One former member of the group estimated they've spent close to 200 grand on guns and parts in the last couple years.

CHUCK SARABYN
 Whoa.

The investigators look at each other, pretty real.

PHILLIP CHOJNACKI
 What are they planning on doing with all those guns?

DAVY AGUILERA
 Evidently, these guys are regular fixtures at regional gun shows.

CHUCK SARABYN
 And the grenades?

DAVY AGUILERA
 Those were dummies. But they also bought 90 pounds of powdered aluminum which could be used to turn those dummies into the real thing.

CHUCK SARABYN
 I like this one. Keep pushing this downfield. Let's see if there's more there.

INT. SILVER EAGLE TOUR BUS - DAY

The silver Messiah Productions tour bus, crosses through the Texan plains as LIVINGSTONE FAGAN, an intelligent black Brit with neatly-wound dreadlocks and a PhD level understanding of David's teachings, talks Thibodeau through some passages in the Bible.

LIVINGSTONE FAGAN
 According to Isiah, Cyrus was a "Messiah," a word that means "anointed one" in Hebrew. And in Hebrew, "Cyrus" is "Koresh," the name David took last year.

THIBODEAU
 Koresh isn't his real name?

LIVINGSTONE FAGAN
 That's exactly what it is. David is
 the reincarnation of Cyrus - the
 one who will confront Babylon.

THIBODEAU
 Babylon?

LIVINGSTONE FAGAN
 The political and military powers
 that rule the world.

Thibodeau isn't too sure about any of this.

PAUL FATTA, 35, the best business mind of Mount Carmel,
 wearing a "David Koresh Rocks" T-shirt, sees something out
 the window and points it out to Thibodeau.

PAUL FATTA
 Here we are. Mount Carmel.

Thibodeau looks out the window to see --

EXT. MOUNT CARMEL FIELD - CONTINUOUS

A LARGE, TAN AND WHITE HOUSE THAT LOOKS LIKE IT WAS PUT
 TOGETHER BY A HIGH SCHOOL SHOP CLASS.

THIS IS **MOUNT CARMEL** - THE ICONIC BUILDING MANY WILL REMEMBER
 FROM THE NEWS.

Thibodeau notes the flagpole on which flies a blue and white
 flag depicting a Star of David with a snake coming out of it.

Thibodeau and the others get off the bus. The playful ALASKAN
 MALAMUTE DOGS are the first to greet the new guests.
 Thibodeau pets one affectionately.

DAVID
 I told you it was a hellhole.

Thibodeau turns to find David behind him. Thibodeau smiles.

THIBODEAU
 You weren't lying.

DAVID
 Think of it as a stumbling block on
 the path to virtue.

Thibodeau laughs. That's a nice name for it.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I wanted to keep it kind of rough and unfinished. That way the people coming here are coming for one reason. They're coming to learn something.

David walks off, leaving Thibodeau on his own. There are a lot of children here. Young mothers. Hard to tell who belongs to who.

SERENITY JONES, 3, approaches.

SERENITY

What's your name?

THIBODEAU

David Thibodeau.

SERENITY

Ti-bi--

THIBODEAU

Thibodeau.

SERENITY

Ti-bi-do.

THIBODEAU

Yeah, that's it.

Serenity rushes off to play with kids. Though the people seem nice, Thibodeau can't help but feel like this place is a real shithole.

LIVINGSTONE FAGAN (O.C.)

Don't look so disappointed.

Thibodeau laughs, a little embarrassed to be called out.

LIVINGSTONE FAGAN (CONT'D)

Mt. Carmel is fashioned for purposes of holistically transcending our present artificial and sensory-based consciousness. The transcendence of the sensory-based human perceptions opens the mind to a higher truth.

BRAD BRANCH, a toughie with a handlebar moustache who would look more at home in a biker bar than here, smiles to Thibodeau.

BRAD BRANCH

Don't try too hard to understand
what the hell Livingstone's talking
about. It'll just hurt your brain.

Thibodeau smiles.

INT. MOUNT CARMEL CHAPEL - DAY

The Mount Carmel chapel looks like a small classroom. The room is packed with people of all colors, from many nations. Some have notebooks and pens.

David enters in jeans and flip-flops. So ordinary-seeming to be commanding such attention. Everyone goes quiet, waiting for his first word.

DAVID

You know, I hate black people.

Thibodeau looks around, shocked. *Holy shit, what have I gotten myself into?!*

Everyone else feels the same, one third of them being black. Thibodeau looks to Wayne Martin, Mount Carmel's black lawyer who sits with 4 of his kids. He's hard to read.

DAVID (CONT'D)

And I hate yellow people.

Everyone waits to see what's next.

DAVID (CONT'D)

And I hate white people. The people I value are people of light.

Thibodeau breathes a sigh of relief as do the others.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Are you people of light?

David looks around the room. They're in.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Because that's why we're here,
right? To find a way to escape the
man in the mirror? We want to go
from here to a place of freedom
where we're no longer in bondage to
the flesh, our stupidity, our
vanity.

David lifts a well-worn Bible.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Scripture is the key to get from here to there. This thing works like a car engine. To fire it up, get the wheels moving, you have to have the plugs, pistons, gears, transmission, all operating in sync. Otherwise all you have is a junker. Our souls are junkers stuck in neutral until we get our spirits in sync with scripture.

David shakes the Bible in front of himself.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Most people see this book as two pieces of leather with pages in between.

He presses the Bible to his brow.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I hold this book to my head and I see it instantaneously, panoramically, all the events happening now. The written Word of God and the Mind of God are harmonized in my brain, and all I can do is show it to you.

Thibodeau is intrigued. This is definitely more interesting than his life back in Hollywood.

DAVID (CONT'D)

So, let's get to work. In Isaiah 45...

INT. WEAVER CABIN, RUBY RIDGE, IDAHO - DAY

STRIKER, a young yellow lab barks wildly at the window. SAMMY WEAVER, 14, rushes to his beloved dog's side.

TEXT: RUBY RIDGE, IDAHO - AUGUST 21, 1992

SAMMY

Whatcha see out there, Striker?

Sammy looks, but doesn't see anything.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

Dad! Striker sees something. I'm gonna go get us some dinner, okay?

His father answers from the other room.

RANDY WEAVER (O.C.)
Alright. Be careful.

Sammy grabs a rifle and gets almost to the door when family friend KEVIN HARRIS joins him.

KEVIN HARRIS
And when Sammy's done shooting
trees, I'll hit the deer for him.

SAMMY
You wish.

Sammy opens the door for Striker.

EXT. RUBY RIDGE WOODS - DAY

Striker rushes into the woods. Sammy and Harris, both armed with rifles, run after him.

SAMMY
Go get 'em, Striker! Find that
deer.

The yellow lab makes a beeline for some bushes down the path. POP! THE DOG WINCES AS IT JUMPS BACK FROM THE BUSHES, THEN FALLS DEAD.

Sammy rushes toward his dog, not sure what just happened.

Suddenly, a MAN IN FULL CAMOUFLAGE GEAR, ARMED WITH AN M16, RISES FROM THE BUSHES. Sammy realizes his dog has been shot by this man.

Sammy loses it.

SAMMY (CONT'D)
You killed my dog, you son of a
bitch!

Sammy raises his weapon and fires a shot, missing the man. Another Camouflaged Man steps out of the woods with an M16.

POP-POP-POP-POP! AND SHOOTS SAMMY IN THE ARM.

KEVIN HARRIS
The fuck are you doing?!

HARRIS SHOOTS THE MAN WHO JUST SHOT SAMMY, DROPPING THE MAN.

Another Camouflaged Man appears from the woods and SHOTS AT HARRIS, who takes cover behind a tree.

Sammy, terrified, turns back toward the cabin and starts running away.

SAMMY

DAD!

RAT-AT-AT-AT! Sammy doesn't get more than five feet before THE 14-YEAR-OLD GETS HAMMERED IN THE BACK WITH MACHINE-GUN FIRE. DEAD.

Kevin Harris raises his weapon and angrily fires on the man who just shot Sammy. Three other men, all in camouflage appear from seemingly every direction.

CAMOUFLAGED MAN

Stop! U.S. Marshals!

Harris rushes to Sammy's side, feels for a pulse, finds none, and races back to the cabin.

INT. MOUNT CARMEL TV ROOM - NIGHT

A thunderstorm rages outside as David, Thibodeau, and the other Branch Davidians watch the TV news about the events progressing at Ruby Ridge. Flashes of lightning and bursts of thunder accentuate the ominous mood tonight.

TV NEWS

The standoff in Idaho continues tonight two days after a gun battle ended in the death of a Federal Agent. The FBI is surrounding a cabin where a fugitive named Randy Weaver is holed up with his family. The FBI says it will not leave until Weaver is in custody. Neither side seems willing to back down.

David turns the volume off on the TV. He looks at those present.

DAVID

Take a good look at this. Why go so hard on a small family hiding out in the woods in Idaho?

Nobody has an answer.

DAVID (CONT'D)

The government brought tanks and
snipers and helicopters for what?

PERRY JONES, 64, a wiry elder statesman here, speaks up.

PERRY JONES

It's a damn tragedy.

DAVID

This...

David points at the TV.

DAVID (CONT'D)

...is a dress rehearsal for what
they're gonna do to us here at
Mount Carmel.

He lets that land.

DAVID (CONT'D)

See, I'm unlocking the meaning of
the Seven Seals from the Book of
Revelation for you. A teaching
unlike anything the world has ever
known. And the forces of evil will
stop at nothing to keep us from
getting that message out to the
world.

David picks up his Bible.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Just like the news gives you the
hot scoop about what happened
yesterday, scripture gives you a
hot scoop on the future. The Bible
is a book of prophesy. And it talks
about us. I don't mean us as in
humanity or something. I mean these
prophets, thousands of years ago,
talked about *us*, the people sitting
right here in this room. Because
we're the ones who have been chosen
to open the Fifth Seal.

He lets that land a moment. Then reads:

DAVID (CONT'D)

*"And when he had opened the Fifth
Seal, I saw under the altar the
souls of them that were slain for
the word of God."*

He looks at them seriously.

DAVID (CONT'D)
"Slain for the word of God." The
opening of the Fifth Seal will end
in our deaths.

He sets down the Bible and looks to everyone gravely.

DAVID (CONT'D)
It's a hard fate, but perhaps
inevitable, and somehow
magnificent.

Thibodeau eyes the gathered crowd. They feel just as uncomfortable with this as he does. Yet they all seem to believe David.

INT. RUBY RIDGE COMMAND - DAY

DICK ROGERS, cold blue eyes on a fleshy face, the head of the HOSTAGE RESCUE TEAM or "HRT" (the FBI's super SWAT force) listens to something on his headset.

DICK ROGERS
Three adults have left the cabin.
Form a perimeter and shoot to kill.

LOCAL FBI TACTICAL
Shoot to kill?

The Local Tactical Agent takes a moment to process the request.

LOCAL FBI TACTICAL (CONT'D)
No sir, my guys will follow the
standard rules of engagement.

DICK ROGERS
The rules of engagement have been
adjusted for this situation.

LOCAL FBI TACTICAL
But... you can't do that.

Dick Rogers looks across the room to LON HORIUCHI, a stocky Japanese American HRT sniper. Lon nods, grabs his rifle bag and walks out the door. As he turns the letters "HRT" are visible on his back.

EXT. RUBY RIDGE WOODS - DAY

The camera follows Lon Horiuchi's camouflaged rifle bag--with "HORIUCHI" stitched into the side of it--as he walks it briskly to a good vantage point.

Horiuchi takes position and preps his sniper rifle in seconds. He's ready.

INT. WEAVER PROPERTY SHED

RANDY WEAVER, 40s, his daughter SARA WEAVER, 16, and Kevin Harris wash the dead Sammy Weaver's wounds. Randy struggles to hold his emotions back.

RANDY WEAVER
Oh, my boy.

Kevin Harris puts a hand on Randy's back.

KEVIN HARRIS
I should have seen 'em.

Randy shakes his head.

RANDY WEAVER
I shoulda been there.

Now done cleaning the boy off. Randy kisses the boy's forehead.

KEVIN HARRIS
We should get back before they see us out here.

SARA WEAVER
Dad...

Randy covers Sammy with a blanket. They turn toward the door.

EXT. RUBY RIDGE WOODS SNIPER POSITION

Lon Horiuchi holds his rifle's crosshairs at the door of the shed.

Randy, Sara and Kevin Harris sneak out of the shed. Kevin is armed, but none of them pose any real threat, as they make their way back toward the cabin.

Horiuchi takes aim at Randy Weaver as Randy walks through the woods. He squeezes the trigger.

POP! Randy stumbles as he's shot. Kevin reaches out to help him. POP! Kevin takes a hit too.

EXT. RUBY RIDGE WOODS

Randy and Kevin, both shot, realize they're about to be killed. They grab Sara and run like hell for the cabin.

RANDY WEAVER
Vicki! Open the door!

EXT. RUBY RIDGE WOODS SNIPER POSITION

Horiuchi tries to line up the rifle's crosshairs on Randy or Kevin, but with them moving so quickly through the woods, he has no shot.

He moves the crosshairs to the cabin door, knowing that's where they're going. He'll catch them at their final position.

INT. WEAVER CABIN

VICKI WEAVER, Randy's wife, early 40s, holding her baby girl, hears her name called from outside. She looks anxiously to her 12-year-old sitting next to her.

VICKI WEAVER
Was that Dad?

Vicki rushes to the door, still holding the baby.

EXT. RUBY RIDGE WOODS SNIPER POSITION

Horiuchi waits as Randy, Sara, and Harris run toward his crosshairs. He gets his finger ready on the trigger.

EXT. RUBY RIDGE WOODS

Randy, Sara and Harris sprint through the woods.

RANDY WEAVER
Vicki, open the door!

EXT. RUBY RIDGE WOODS SNIPER POSITION

The sniper's crosshairs remain on the cabin's door, waiting for Randy to land there.

And just as he does: The door opens, REVEALING VICKI WEAVER, Randy's wife, holding the baby.

POP! VICKI'S HEAD BUCKLES.

INT. WEAVER CABIN

Hearing the shot, Sara covers her head with her arms. Randy pushes her into the cabin and follows. He and Harris quickly close the door behind themselves.

Sara shakes all over. She looks into the room as the baby starts wailing.

SARA WEAVER

MOM!

EXT. RUBY RIDGE WOODS SNIPER POSITION

Horiuchi takes his eye off the eye piece. He wasn't intending to kill the mother, but he's pretty sure that's what just happened.

In the distance, from inside the cabin, Randy howls like a wounded animal.

INT. KGBS RADIO BOOTH - DAY

In the pre-dawn morning, **RON ENGELMAN**, 40s, "Dallas's own 10-gallon mouth," a handsome talk radio personality who doesn't take anyone's word for anything, argues passionately with his loyal following through a microphone.

CALLER (O.C.)

Are you trying to tell me that if you're convicted of a crime and you don't want to face the consequences, it's just fine for you to hole up in...

ENGELMAN

No, my question was, is the level of force commensurate with the crime committed? Bringing someone to justice for missing a court date shouldn't end in killing his kid and wife.

CALLER

And dog!

ENGELMAN

And dog! You ask me, the problem is the FBI has this new super SWAT force. They call it the "Hostage Rescue Team," or "HRT," but there's no hostages here. No, this HRT is *the* greatest tactical force ever assembled by a nation to police its own people. And I can't help but ask myself, "When did our government become so scared of us?"

INT. FBI JEEP - RUBY RIDGE - DAY

Gary Noesner sits in the back seat of a military jeep as he's driven through the rainy mountains toward Ruby Ridge.

The jeep turns a bend to find NEWS VANS and PROTESTERS:

Skinheads and rednecks with signs reading: "Your home is next." Some have little kids with them with construction paper targets on their chests that read, "Am I next?"

Gary can't help but shake his head.

GARY NOESNER

All this because a guy sawed a couple barrels off some guns? ATF really screwed us on this one, didn't they.

A PONYTAIL REDNECK rushes the jeep.

PONYTAIL REDNECK

Baby killers!

An angry librarian-looking FEMALE PROTESTOR rushes forward.

FEMALE PROTESTER

You're a disgrace to your country and your race!

The Female Protester throws a McDonald's milkshake at the jeep's window.

EXT. RUBY RIDGE WOODS

An FBI Agent leads Noesner through the rain toward the negotiators.

Noesner sees JB, a weathered FBI negotiator, with 3 members of the negotiation unit tucked behind a big tree with a tarp over them.

JB speaks through a megaphone toward the Weaver's cabin 50 yards away.

JB
(through megaphone)
Mr. Weaver, talking this through with us is going to give you the best outcome. We regret the things that have happened. We wish they hadn't. Let's work together to avoid any more problems here.

JB sees Noesner watching on, waves. He hands the megaphone to one of his guys and hurries over to Noesner.

JB (CONT'D)
Some mess we have up here, huh?

JB leads Noesner back behind a tree so they can speak privately and safely.

NOESNER
They freezing you out?

JB
Can you blame 'em? We were making some headway with the wife, but then those yahoos in HRT shot her. We had no idea it even happened. Wasted 2 days trying to get her to talk to us when she was already dead on the floor.

NOESNER
How the hell did they accidentally shoot an unarmed mother holding a baby?

JB
You didn't hear?

NOESNER
Hear what?

JB
That head of HRT...

NOESNER
Dick Rogers? Yeah I know him.

JB
He changed the Rules of Engagement.

NOESNER
What do you mean?

JB
He issued a kill on sight command.

NOESNER
With imminent danger?

JB
No. You see a Weaver with a gun,
you kill them. Even if they don't
pose a threat.

NOESNER
That's illegal.

JB
Ya think?! All the local agents
refused the order saying they
didn't sign up to murder civilians,
but his HRT will do anything he
asks them. They were trying to
shoot Randy Weaver in the back of
the head as he returned from
visiting his dead son, when Vicki
opened the door for him and took
the hit.

NOESNER
Jesus.

JB
And now they're planning on gassing
the cabin, and then dismantling it
with the family still inside.

NOESNER
Dismantling it?!

JB
By ramming tanks into it.

NOESNER
They'll wind up killing the whole
family.

JB
Not sure that would trouble them
too much.

EXT. MOUNT CARMEL SHOOTING RANGE - DAY

Koresh empties a clip from an AR-15 into a target on the shooting range behind Mount Carmel. He pulls the target in. Hearts and heads. Good shots. He smiles at WAYNE MARTIN.

WAYNE MARTIN

Not bad.

DAVID

Not bad?! Let's see what you got.

Wayne takes aim. Empties his AR-15. Pulls the target in. Holes everywhere.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Oh, Wayne. Is this how they teach you to shoot at Harvard?

WAYNE MARTIN

No. They taught me to sue at Harvard. Shooting guns isn't part of the law school's curriculum.

DAVID

Well you might want to have your glasses looked at. Might need something stronger.

Steve approaches.

STEVE SCHNEIDER

You wanted to see me?

DAVID

Yeah, will you grab me that clip there?

Steve grabs a clip for the gun, hands it to David. David hands it to WAYNE MARTIN JR., 20, Wayne's handsome, confident and studious son.

DAVID (CONT'D)

(to Wayne)

Let's see if this boy of yours can shoot any better than his old man.

Wayne Jr. points at his father's target.

WAYNE JR.

I could shoot better than that with a blindfold on.

David laughs. Wayne does too.

DAVID
Okay, then let me get you a
blindfold.

WAYNE MARTIN
Don't you dare.

David grabs a T-shirt that's been left behind and tosses it to Wayne, Jr. who playfully ties it around his head as David speaks with Steve.

DAVID
(to Steve)
I was thinking... wouldn't it be
fun to get some go-karts around
here? Let's have the guys clear a
path around the property and you
can look for a good deal.

Steve smiles.

STEVE SCHNEIDER
Alright, I'll start looking around.

DAVID
And Steve, just so you know, Judy
and I have been blessed. We're
gonna have a baby together.

Steve's face drops. He stands frozen, trying to contain the crushing agony he's feeling.

WAYNE JR.
Okay, ready.

David turns back to the Martins.

DAVID
Let's see what you got.

Steve turns and walks away as David and the others continue shooting.

As Steve approaches the house, he sees, through a window, a group of women hugging and congratulating Judy on the news. Judy is so happy.

Steve stands frozen. Devastated.

INT. RUBY RIDGE FBI COMMAND - DAY

Gary Noesner attempts to reason with the Commander at Ruby Ridge as HRT agents suit up for assault.

COMMANDER

You're too late. It's already been approved.

NOESNER

But... Have you seen the news? We killed an unarmed mother. Now you're planning on getting into close combat with children in there?

Dick Rogers, head of the HRT listens in.

DICK ROGERS

We weren't trying to shoot the mother.

NOESNER

But you did, Dick. It's why we have rules of engagement that we don't change on the field.

DICK ROGERS

You're out of line.

Noesner turns back to the Commander.

NOESNER

What changed since yesterday? Why go in now? I know you feel like you have to do something, but sometimes the most effective thing to do is nothing.

DICK ROGERS

We already tried negotiations. And they failed.

NOESNER

Negotiations *can't* fail! It is impossible for negotiations to fail. Even if we just stall the perp for ten minutes, that's ten minutes of positioning and planning we've bought you. That's still a success. The fact that you've had 8 days to plan for a possible assault is due to the success of negotiations.

COMMANDER

What are you proposing?

NOESNER

Just... give me a day.

DICK ROGERS

(scoffing)

You really think you're gonna just talk them into walking right out?

NOESNER

Of course not. They'll never trust anyone from the FBI ever again.

You've seen to that.

(to Commander)

No, we need to find someone they *do* trust to explain to them how it's in their best interest to come out.

The Commander thinks about it for a long moment.

NOESNER (CONT'D)

And if it doesn't work, you can still go in with this gas and attack plan.

INT. DAVID'S '68 CAMARO - DAY

David drives Thibodeau down the long driveway that leads from Mount Carmel to the main road.

DAVID

Think you could remain celibate if you stayed here?

THIBODEAU

Seriously? No.

David smiles. He was expecting this reaction.

DAVID

A few years ago, I had a revelation that really shook things up around here. I lost some dear friends of mine.

(beat)

I had this vision. That we're all slaves to our own sexual desires. Our sexuality keeps us bound to the lower parts of our beings. Like Jesus, we need to let the animal parts of ourselves go so that we can become the light.

He looks to Thibodeau.

DAVID (CONT'D)

It's not easy for anyone. But you know what? Without sex, it all opens up. Becomes clear.

THIBODEAU

What about the married guys?

DAVID

They're celibate too. I have assumed the burden of sex for us all, but only to generate the inner circle of children who will rule the coming kingdom to be established in Israel.

THIBODEAU

I'd have to think about it. I mean, if it's part of the deal... if I understand its purpose in the whole scheme...

DAVID

It's a toughie. But I hope you'll come to understand its purpose.

EXT. WEAVER CABIN, RUBY RIDGE, IDAHO - DAY

Gary Noesner watches as BO GRITZ, a very far right, Christian Militant speaks through a megaphone as he approaches the Weavers' cabin.

BO GRITZ

Okay Randy, it's just me, Bo, here, walking to your front door. Here I am.

Bo knocks at the door.

BO GRITZ (CONT'D)

Now come on out like we said. It's time.

The door opens. RANDY WEAVER, hands raised, surrenders to the FBI, followed by his living family members and Kevin Harris. It's over.

Noesner can't help himself. He looks over at Dick Rogers to find Rogers glaring at him. Noesner nods. Rogers approaches.

DICK ROGERS

I would have ended this conflict three days ago.

Rogers keeps walking. Noesner really doesn't like that guy.

INT. ATF CONFERENCE ROOM

Chuck Sarabyn watches the televised press conference on the surrender at Ruby Ridge. FBI AGENT RICKS, the FBI's spokesman, speaks to cameras and microphones.

FBI SPOKESMAN RICKS (ON TV)

Today Randy Weaver and his family surrendered peacefully to the FBI, ending the 11-day standoff that began when the ATF ordered his arrest. The FBI enlisted the help of Bo Gritz, a right wing presidential candidate sympathetic to the Weaver's cause, to negotiate the surrender.

Chuck Sarabyn turns it off angrily.

CHUCK SARABYN

How did we become the assholes?! The Marshals shot Sammy Weaver, the FBI killed Vicki. How did we become the assholes on this one?

PHILLIP CHOJNACKI

Because it was our shitty case.

CHUCK SARABYN

I know it was a shitty case! We were just trying to get Weaver to turn state's witness!

PHILLIP CHOJNACKI

It didn't work.

CHUCK SARABYN

No shit.

They think for a long moment.

PHILLIP CHOJNACKI

Best thing we can do is just keep moving forward.

He looks to Davy Aguilera.

CHUCK SARABYN

Where we at with that Sinful Messiah group in Waco?

DAVY AGUILERA
We've spoken with their gun dealer
as well as...

CHUCK SARABYN
Is there a case there?

DAVY AGUILERA
I think there is. We believe
they're converting semi-automatics
to autos.

PHILLIP CHOJNACKI
That's legal in Texas though, isn't
it?

DAVY AGUILERA
Not without a permit. Which they
don't have.

PHILLIP CHOJNACKI
A \$25 permit violation?! That's all
we got on them?

CHUCK SARABYN
And powdered aluminum? And dummy
grenades? These guys are planning
something.

DAVY AGUILERA
They also... they're crazy. This
Koresh guy is the only one allowed
to have sex in the group. He's
having babies with the other guy's
wives and even some underage girls.
There's fucked up stuff going on in
there. Personally, I don't care
what the charge is. If we have a
chance to break this thing up, we
should.

CHUCK SARABYN
You mentioned there's a defector
from the group? Let's bring him in.
I want to talk to him.

INT. KGBS RADIO STATION

Engelman speaks heatedly with a caller.

ENGELMAN

Hell yes, I call that entrapment!
An ATF officer gave Randy Weaver
two shotguns, paid him to saw the
barrels off and then arrests him
for converting sawed off shotguns!

CALLER (O.C.)

But they were trying to get him to
be an informant for them.

ENGELMAN

So they entrap a guy to try to
force him to be a witness against
the Aryan Nation, and when he tells
them, in no uncertain terms, to
shove it in their asses, they
assault him from all sides, ending
in the deaths of multiple family
members. This is like something out
of Communist Russia!

(Russian accent)

You inform for us or we kill your
family.

(normal voice)

This isn't law enforcement. This is
unconstitutional punishment! Plain
and simple.

INT. MOUNT CARMEL KITCHEN - NIGHT

Thibodeau eats cereal late at night, alone in the kitchen.
Steve Schneider enters, picks through the fridge. Something
seems wrong about Steve. He's not making eye contact.

THIBODEAU

Everything alright, Steve?

Steve turns to him.

STEVE SCHNEIDER

You have no idea how hard it's
been.

Tears gush from his eyes.

STEVE SCHNEIDER (CONT'D)

I love Judy. Giving her up is the
hardest thing I've ever done, but
now this?!

Steve looks away, trying to contain his emotions.

STEVE SCHNEIDER (CONT'D)

We were lovers for close to 20 years, married for 10, and never made a baby. Now, suddenly, she's having his child.

THIBODEAU

David's?

STEVE SCHNEIDER

That's why Marc Breault split. He chose to marry Elizabeth rather than stick around. Maybe he was right.

THIBODEAU

Do you really mean that?

Steve shrugs. He takes a jar of peanut butter and a loaf of bread, and the two of them make sandwiches.

Wayne Martin enters and pokes around in the fridge.

THIBODEAU (CONT'D)

Why do you accept it? I mean, going without sex is bad enough, but giving up your wife?

STEVE SCHNEIDER

If your wife had a chance to marry the Lamb, would you want to hold her back?

From his tone, it's hard to tell if he's being sarcastic or serious.

WAYNE MARTIN

You have to understand that David himself didn't welcome this revelation. All common sense told him it would cause massive upheavals, desertions, outrage. In the category of "stumbling blocks" it was a monster. But it's David's calling to do what the message dictates, as each level is revealed by his inner vision. And it did separate those who were willing to go all the way with this, from those that weren't.

STEVE SCHNEIDER

It was easier for you than for me.
You had your children already and
your relationship was more low-key.

WAYNE MARTIN

We all have our own way in the
withering.

STEVE SCHNEIDER

(chuckles harshly)
Ain't that the truth!

INT. ATF CONFERENCE ROOM

MARC BREault, blind, with thick dark hair that's fluffy on top and long in the back, sits across from Chuck Sarabyn, Phillip Chojnacki, and Davy Aguilera. He speaks into a tape recorder.

MARC BREault

Marc Breault. Spelled B-r-e-a-u-l-
t, but pronounced "bro."

CHUCK SARABYN

Thank you Mr. Breault. What was
your relationship with David
Koresh?

MARC BREault

I was a little like the Trotsky to
David's Lenin.

CHUCK SARABYN

You're communists?

Marc can't help but chuckle to himself.

MARC BREault

No. Probably the wrong simile to
use with a federal agency. I just
meant that David had a lot of ideas
but they were a bit all over the
place. He and I worked very hard
together to give those ideas
coherent shape so they could be
passed on.

CHUCK SARABYN

Tell us about the weapons at Mount
Carmel.

MARC BREault

They deal guns at gunshows and have a shooting range out back of the house. But they're also training themselves, both in body and spirit for what David calls an inevitable confrontation between them and the armies of Babylon.

CHUCK SARABYN

Babylon?

MARC BREault

Yeah. You know, you. Basically.

PHILLIP CHOJNACKI

And when did you leave?

MARC BREault

I left after David's "New Light" Revelation.

PHILLIP CHOJNACKI

What was that?

MARC BREault

I guess the short version is David would be the only man allowed to have sex. Marriages would be nullified. All the women were his wives from then on. Steve Schneider and I both agonized over it. You know, we were both happily married men. Elizabeth and I decided to leave. But Steve and his wife Judy stayed.

Chuck looks over his files.

MARC BREault (CONT'D)

But you're asking the wrong questions. What you should be asking me is why this particular religious group poses an inherent danger.

CHUCK SARABYN

Well, then enlighten us.

MARC BREault

The New Light was a test of faith. Those still at Mount Carmel passed that test. They're the true believers.

(MORE)

MARC BREAUULT (CONT'D)

What happens when the next test includes killing people in a shopping mall? Or a church? If David asks them to do it, they will. They believe God directs David's every action. And who are they to question God?

INT. ATF HALLWAY - LATER

Chuck, Phillip and Davy talk further. Phillip still isn't convinced.

CHUCK SARABYN

Just imagine what 100 well-trained people with fully automatic weapons could do to an unsuspecting crowd.

PHILLIP CHOJNACKI

But we can't prosecute "could."

DAVY AGUILERA

He's having babies with 14 year olds!

PHILLIP CHOJNACKI

But that's legal in Texas, right? With parental consent?

They all look at him.

PHILLIP CHOJNACKI (CONT'D)

I'm not saying it's right! I agree it's a bad deal, but I'm just saying that's the law. And if it wasn't, that would hardly fall in our jurisdiction. Guns. That's us.

CHUCK SARABYN

This Koresh guy already has a prior for armed assault and these people think he's God. This is dangerous. And we can stop it.

PHILLIP CHOJNACKI

Then get me more evidence.

Chuck looks to Davy.

CHUCK SARABYN

Let's start surveillance immediately, and I want an undercover guy in there.

INT. WALMART - DAY

David Koresh and Thibodeau wander the aisles of Walmart with a shopping cart.

A CRYING KID roams around in a panic by himself.

DAVID
You lost, little buddy?

The kid nods.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Well don't you worry, we can help
you find your mama.

MOTHER
VERNON!

She rushes up, and violently lifts the kid up and spanks him.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
You don't wander off like that!

It's hard to say for sure, but she might have a couple drinks in her. She carries the crying boy off. David watches them go, something about it taps a real nerve for him.

DAVID
You know, my name, growing up, was
Vernon? Vernon Howell.

THIBODEAU
Yeah.

DAVID
My mom had me when she was 14 and
my dad split soon after.

He continues pushing the cart. As they talk, David puts industrial-sized bags of popcorn and oatmeal and ice cream into the cart.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Growing up was tough. I stuttered
when I got nervous, and the kids
all started calling me Mr. Retardo.

THIBODEAU
I was fat. They called me "tub-o-
dough."

DAVID
So you know.

THIBODEAU

Yeah. I know.

DAVID

I failed the first grade twice and failed the second grade too. So they put me in a special school. I remember the first day of recess, running outside and all the kids on the playground yelling, "Hey, here come the retards!" I turned around to see who they were talking about, but I was the only one there.

Despite the years, it's still painful looking back.

DAVID (CONT'D)

It was just instant night. When my mom came to pick me up after school, she tried to reassure me, that I just had a learning disability. But she didn't snow me. No, I knew I was a retard, plain and simple.

THIBODEAU

My mom sent me to a counselor for eating disorders.

David smiles kindly to Thibodeau.

DAVID

We oddballs gotta stick together.

David sees a rack full of baby dolls. He stops the cart and looks at them.

INT. MOUNT CARMEL CHAPEL - EVENING

The chapel is full of people.

Steve Schneider helps a very pregnant Judy into the chapel. If you didn't know better, you'd think them still married.

Serenity joins all of the littlest girls who hold THEIR MOST TATTERED AND BELOVED DOLLS as David speaks to them.

DAVID

These are your very favorite dolls?

The little girls all nod.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Now I'm going to ask you for something. This might be hard, but I want you to make a good example for these grown-ups. Okay?

The girls nod as David unconsciously glances to Steve. He then looks to Serenity.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Serenity, will you give me your doll?

She's confused.

SERENITY
Forever?

DAVID
Yes. Forever.

She thinks it over for a moment. Then reluctantly nods, pained by the loss.

David takes it. He turns to the next girl.

DAVID (CONT'D)
How about you Dayland? Will you give me your doll?

She does. He asks the next.

DAVID (CONT'D)
And Star? How about you?

She does.

DAVID (CONT'D)
How about you, Bobbie Lane?

Bobbie Lane, 2, clutches it tightly.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Will you give me your doll?

She shakes her head. Hating all the attention on her, she tries to seek refuge in the crowd, but David holds her in place, keeping her out front and center.

Steve, in a kind of expectant father mode, feels especially sensitive to the shy girl's pain.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Is there anything I can say or do
to get you to change your mind?

She shakes her head.

Steve, sitting in the audience right behind Judy, watches on--
pretty sure this whole lesson is for his benefit.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Okay Thibs, will you grab the bag?

Thibodeau brings his big bag up front.

David reaches into the bag and pulls out A BRAND NEW DOLL. It
looks pretty impressive beside the old tattered dolls the
girls handed to David.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Serenity, because you were willing
to let go of your favorite doll,
I'm giving you this new doll. And
you know what? I don't really have
any need for the doll you gave me,
so you can have that one back too.

He turns to the next girl.

DAVID (CONT'D)

And same for you Dayland. You get a
new doll and your old doll back.

(to the next)

And you too Star.

He then turns to Bobbie Lane, the girl who wouldn't give up
her old doll.

DAVID (CONT'D)

And Bobbie Lane, you get to keep
the doll you wouldn't let go of.
You get exactly what you wanted.

She looks like she's about to cry because she's the only one
not getting a new doll.

David looks directly at Steve.

DAVID (CONT'D)

God asks us all to let go of things
to make way for better things. But
when we cling to the stuff of the
world, we refuse His offerings.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)
By trying to hang on to what we
think of as *ours*, we lose what's
truly meant for us.

Steve looks at Bobbie Lane, crying there with her old doll
beside the girls with new dolls.

INT. WOMEN'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Judy looks exhausted but radiant, her new baby girl, MAYANAH
(pronounced "Myna"), on her chest.

STEVE SCHNEIDER
She's beautiful.

Judy smiles at Steve. Takes his hand.

JUDY SCHNEIDER
Wanna hold her?

STEVE SCHNEIDER
No, I shouldn't...

JUDY SCHNEIDER
It's okay.

She hands Steve the baby and Steve just melts. This is all he
ever really wanted. A baby with Judy.

STEVE SCHNEIDER
She's so little.

Judy smiles. Steve kisses Mayanah's head. David enters.

DAVID
Let's get a look at her!

Steve moves to hand her over, but David shoos it off, not
necessary. Mayanah makes some baby noises.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Your name will be Mayanah. Like the
Myna bird that talks and talks.

Others in the hall who followed David in, laugh a little too
enthusiastically.

DAVID (CONT'D)
God has big plans for you Mayanah.
You will be one of the 24 elders
who will sit in judgement at the
End of Days. Please judge us
kindly.

David leaves the room to celebrate with the others. Steve continues to hold the baby.

STEVE SCHNEIDER

Want me to hold her for awhile
while you get some rest?

JUDY SCHNEIDER

Really? That would be great.

Steve takes a seat across the room and rocks the baby gently while Judy closes her eyes. Steve stares at this baby, his wife's baby.

He takes the opportunity to whisper privately in the baby's ear.

STEVE SCHNEIDER

David might be your daddy by blood,
but I'm gonna love you more.

Steve looks to Judy to find her watching him, a gentle smile on her lips.

JUDY SCHNEIDER

She's lucky to have you.

STEVE SCHNEIDER

Yeah. She is.

EXT. MOUNT CARMEL FIELD

Thibodeau stretches out in the field in front of Mount Carmel as the Malamutes snuggle up, greedily trying to get more rump scratches out of him.

Paul Fatta (the business mind of the group), and his 14-year-old son, KALANI, approach with dog food. The dogs go crazy when they see the food bowls.

PAUL FATTA

Easy there. Okay, Kalani, stay in
control. They'll feel it if you're
scared of them.

KALANI FATTA

Sit. Easy. Easy.

PAUL FATTA

Good. Now wait for them to calm
down, then you can put the bowls
down.

KALANI FATTA

Sit!

A Malamute sits. Kalani is proud of himself, and Paul takes pleasure in seeing his son growing up.

PAUL FATTA

Good.

Paul Fatta notes Thibodeau stretching.

PAUL FATTA (CONT'D)

You going for a run with David?

THIBODEAU

Yeah.

Paul quickly gathers his things with a wry smile.

PAUL FATTA

(to Kalani)

Let's get out of here before David ropes us in too.

THIBODEAU

(sarcastic)

Great.

PAUL FATTA

Have fun.

Just as Paul and Kalani turn to leave with the dog food --

David comes outside.

DAVID

Hey Paul and Kalani! Why don't you join us?

Paul quickly looks for a good excuse.

PAUL FATTA

Oh, but we were just...

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNT CARMEL DRIVEWAY - DAY

David Koresh jogs easily along the long gravel driveway from Mount Carmel to the main road as Paul Fatta follows close behind, roped in after all. Thibodeau and Kalani huff and puff behind them, trying to keep up.

DAVID

You're doing great Thibs. You got this!

THIBODEAU

If you say so.

They all rush to the side of the small road as A GROUP OF MEN RACE BY IN GO-KARTS, LAUGHING AND BANGING INTO EACH OTHER.

This is a common sight around here, but it's still kinda funny to see their friends racing with complete competitive abandon.

DAVID

Getting those go-karts was the dumbest idea I've ever had.

PAUL FATTA

No, I've seen you have dumber.

They all laugh.

EXT. DOUBLE EE ROAD - DAY

The jogging men cross off the Mount Carmel property, out onto Double EE Road.

David notes THE RANCH HOUSE ACROSS THE STREET.

DAVID

Looks like someone moved in.

David slows down. Lets the others catch up.

A light glints off something in the window of the house. David notes it. Suspicious.

David stops jogging.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Pretend like you're listening to me, but look at the big window behind me.

They do.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Does that look like a camera behind the window?

PAUL FATTA

I see what you're seeing. Might be.

Fatta looks back toward Mount Carmel.

PAUL FATTA (CONT'D)
You think they're watching us?

THIBODEAU
All their trucks are backed into
their spaces.

David looks at him. *What does that mean?*

THIBODEAU (CONT'D)
Cops do that. I think they're
trained to do that.

Something's not right here.

DAVID
Let's head back.

They turn back toward home.

INT. MOUNT CARMEL OFFICE - DAY

A couple of old computers make this room the office.

Wayne Martin, the resident lawyer, consults with David and Steve.

WAYNE MARTIN
But *why* would they be watching us?

STEVE SCHNEIDER
Who the heck knows. There's a
number of people here from other
countries whose visas have expired.
Could they be looking into that?

WAYNE MARTIN
Doesn't really make sense to set up
a surveillance house for visa
violations. Doesn't sound right to
me.

David grabs a phone. Dials.

DAVID
Hi, can I talk to Sheriff Harwell?
This is Dave Koresh over at Mount
Carmel.

They wait.

DAVID (CONT'D)

(to phone)

Hi Sheriff. Good, good. Hey, there's some boys staying in the house across the street from us, and it looks like they're photographing us or something and so I wanted to ask you, are you guys putting us under surveillance for some reason?

David listens.

DAVID (CONT'D)

No, I didn't expect you were. 'Cuz you know, we're an open book here. If you want to know anything you can just come on down any old time. I'll show you anything you want. We got nothin' to hide down here.

Listens.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Yeah, I know you know that. I just wanna make sure. Thanks Sheriff.

David hangs up.

DAVID (CONT'D)

It's not them.

WAYNE MARTIN

We might just be making something out of nothing here.

INT. ATF OBSERVATION ROOM

Chuck Sarabyn waits anxiously with Davy Aguilera. Phillip Chojnacki enters.

PHILLIP CHOJNACKI

We got our search warrant.

Chuck and Davy get ready to celebrate, but Phillip holds up a finger. *One sec.*

PHILLIP CHOJNACKI (CONT'D)

But it's a knock and serve.

CHUCK SARABYN

A knock and serve?!

PHILLIP CHOJNACKI

Best I could do.

CHUCK SARABYN

Fuck. It'll take them *minutes* to dismantle the illegal weapons. We knock and serve, we'll find shit.

DAVY AGUILERA

We could arrest Koresh away from the compound. Pick him up when he's in town having lunch. Or out jogging.

CHUCK SARABYN

It's not like he's going to have the guns on him.

DAVY AGUILERA

I mean arrest him in town and then serve the search warrant when everyone at the compound has no leader.

CHUCK SARABYN

But... for all we know, they might kill themselves without him. Like those Jonestown people.

PHILLIP CHOJNACKI

Chuck, then what do you suggest?

CHUCK SARABYN

There is another option.

They look at him, waiting.

CHUCK SARABYN (CONT'D)

Dynamic entry. We take the place by force.

DAVY AGUILERA

I don't know...

PHILLIP CHOJNACKI

The Attorney General will never sign off on that.

CHUCK SARABYN

When we come out of there with an arsenal of guns and a bunch of underage girls with babies, the Attorney General will be the first one in line to pat us on the back.

EXT. MOUNT CARMEL GROUNDS - DAY

Go-karts cut wildly through the grounds at Mount Carmel.

Thibodeau laughs as he guns his go-kart right in front of PETER GENT's, 24, Aussie. Then Wayne Jr. slams into them from behind. They wind around the large pond on the property, driving with an aggressive stupidity that goes hand in hand with go-karts.

As they curve back around near the property entrance, Thibodeau sees **ROBERT RODRIGUEZ**, 30, a former college linebacker with short trimmed hair, walking sheepishly onto the property.

Thibodeau lets the others race onward as he slows to a stop.

THIBODEAU

Can I help you?

RODRIGUEZ

Sure. I just moved in across the street and I'm looking for a horse walker. I was told you guys might have one for sale.

THIBODEAU

You have a horse over there?

RODRIGUEZ

Not yet. But we're getting one.

THIBODEAU

(skeptical)

You're ranchers?

RODRIGUEZ

No. Students. At Texas A&M.

THIBODEAU

Yeah?

RODRIGUEZ

Uh huh. In agriculture.

THIBODEAU

Got it. Okay, well yeah, we have a bunch of stuff over there beside the pond.

EXT. MOUNT CARMEL POND - DAY

Rodriguez follows Thibodeau past a bunch of agricultural equipment. Rodriguez looks at a piece of equipment.

RODRIGUEZ

This looks good. I think this might be just what we're looking for.

THIBODEAU

But... this isn't a horse walker. A horse walker is a post you put in the ground and tie a horse to so it can walk in circles all day.

RODRIGUEZ

Oh, yeah. I know. I was just thinking this might be something else we need.

THIBODEAU

Huh.

DAVID (O.S.)

Who sent you?

Rodriguez spins around to find David Koresh behind him.

RODRIGUEZ

What... I just...

DAVID

Deep down, you're probably not sure. But I know.

RODRIGUEZ

I was...

DAVID

God sent you.

David smiles gently. Rodriguez doesn't know how to respond.

DAVID (CONT'D)

You might think you're here for other reasons. To see what we got around here or whatnot. But that's not why you're really here. I betcha, you have questions that you haven't been able to answer. Questions about life. Your place in the universe. The Bible has the answers to all that. And I can help show you where.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

Why don't you come by tonight.
Study a little with us. We'll see
if we can answer some of those
questions for you.

Rodriguez just nods as David walks off.

INT. ATF HOLDING AREA - DAY

Phillip Chojnacki leads Chuck Sarabyn through an airplane hangar the ATF has co-opted as their holding area. Almost every single ATF agent in the entire country has come here for what has ballooned into the largest operation in their history.

There is an excitement in the air. The spirit is jovial, fraternal. Agents who have never seen more action than a broken stapler are being fitted with combat gear.

SHARON WHEELER, the ATF's press secretary--a bulldog in high heels and makeup, with teased up hair and a southern drawl--clomps up quickly in her high heels.

SHARON WHEELER

They're going to run the "Sinful
Messiah" article in Sunday's paper.
Front page.

CHUCK SARABYN

Good. And TV?

SHARON WHEELER

Three outlets confirmed. One
cameraman will be on hand later
today.

Chuck nods to her. *Damn she's good.*

CHUCK SARABYN

Nice work.

SHARON WHEELER

This is an easy one from the press
side. The world is going to hate
these people.

EXT. ATF HOLDING AREA - CONTINUOUS

Outside, Phillip points to a line of pickup trucks with soft-top cattle trailers attached.

PHILLIP CHOJNACKI

What's this?

CHUCK SARABYN

This is how we're going to protect the element of surprise. Cattle trailers.

Phillip smiles as he looks inside one of the trailers.

CHUCK SARABYN (CONT'D)

The approaching driveway is so long, they'll see us coming, but this'll make it look like a couple ranchers who got lost. Then when we get close, agents jump out and storm the house.

Chuck smiles like a kid in a candy store.

PHILLIP CHOJNACKI

That's pretty good.

INT. MOUNT CARMEL OFFICE - DAY

David approaches Wayne Martin and Steve Schneider.

STEVE SCHNEIDER

Wayne, tell David what you told me.

WAYNE MARTIN

I ran their license plates. All their trucks are leased from the same building downtown. Tax exempt. Those guys are feds.

DAVID

Of course they are.

STEVE SCHNEIDER

We should be careful about bringing that guy in. He's just here to spy on us.

DAVID

And what's he going to see? A bunch of nice people hanging out studying the Bible? That doesn't scare me.

STEVE SCHNEIDER

Yeah, but...

DAVID

He might have found his way here because he's working for the government. But he's searching for answers, and I have those answers. He belongs here as much as any of us.

EXT. MOUNT CARMEL DRIVEWAY - EVENING

Undercover agent Robert Rodriguez walks the long driveway toward Mount Carmel. He looks around to make sure nobody's around, then pulls a small hand-drawn map out of his pocket. It's a crude drawing of Mount Carmel with an "X" in the middle top room with a label that reads, "Gun room."

Rodriguez looks at the real life room indicated. A light is on in there. Then turns off. He puts the map away.

EXT. MOUNT CARMEL FRONT DOOR - EVENING

Rodriguez approaches the front door. He knocks. Wayne Martin answers it. Looks at Robert for a moment, trying to place him.

WAYNE MARTIN

I don't think we've met. I'm Wayne. Are you one of the new college students from across the street?

RODRIGUEZ

Yeah. Robert.

They shake.

INT. MOUNT CARMEL ENTRYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Rodriguez enters with Wayne.

WAYNE MARTIN

David's starting a study in a few minutes. Chapel's up there. Make yourself at home.

Rodriguez nods and Wayne rushes off.

This is Rodriguez's chance to snoop. He enters deeper into the house. Crosses the hallway toward the kitchen.

INT. MOUNT CARMEL KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

A bunch of people rush to finish eating before the upcoming Bible study. Rodriguez tries to look inconspicuous as he scans the room and hallways for any sign of weapons.

JUDY SCHNEIDER (O.C.)
You look lost.

Rodriguez spins around to find Judy Schneider, carrying a six-month-old Mayanah.

RODRIGUEZ
Oh, yeah. I was looking for the bathroom.

JUDY SCHNEIDER
Just down the hall on your left.
But hurry up, David's about to start a study and you won't want to be late.

Rodriguez nods as he moves toward the bathroom.

JUDY SCHNEIDER (CONT'D)
Oh, and just wash it down with the pail of water next to the toilet.

RODRIGUEZ
Okay.

INT. MOUNT CARMEL BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Robert finishes peeing. He looks around, finds the pail Judy was talking about and uses the water from it to "flush." *I guess there's no running water here.*

INT. MOUNT CARMEL HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Rodriguez finds himself with a rare opportunity: everyone is at the Bible study, leaving the house unguarded. He sneaks to the stairs.

INT. MOUNT CARMEL STAIRWAY - CONTINUOUS

Rodriguez takes the stairs two at a time as quietly as he can until he gets to the top floor.

INT. WOMEN'S FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Rodriguez tries to walk without making the floor creak as he carefully walks the top floor hallway.

He looks into the first room. Bunk beds, kids drawings, dolls. No weapons here.

He takes a few steps to the next room. Even more beds in here. Some women's clothes draped over a bed.

Through the floors, he can faintly hear the muffled sound of David starting the study in the chapel downstairs.

He nervously whips the map out of his pocket. Counts rooms to the "gun room." He puts the map away. Counts the rooms in this hallway. Doesn't quite match. The gun room might be one of two rooms.

He sneaks to the first one, one of the floor boards squeaks so loud, he almost gasps.

Rodriguez looks inside another room. At first he sees nothing out of the ordinary, but then:

Something under the bed. Metal. Could that be...

JAMIE (O.C.)

Aaaah!

Rodriguez's eyes whip up to find JAMIE MARTIN, 11, the severely disabled 11 year old son of Wayne and Sheila Martin. He lies in a little cot beside the window, his favorite spot, but he's staring right at Rodriguez.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Aaah!

Rodriguez's first impulse is to run, but...

SHEILA MARTIN (O.C.)

You can't be up here!

Rodriguez spins around to find SHEILA MARTIN, a gentle-natured black mother of 7 (and wife of Wayne Martin) behind him.

SHEILA MARTIN (CONT'D)

This is the women's floor. Men aren't allowed here.

Rodriguez is way too nervous for this to be an accident, but he tries.

RODRIGUEZ
I was trying to find the chapel.

SHEILA MARTIN
Down the stairs.

She takes a careful look at Rodriguez then hurries back into her room to calm her son.

Rodriguez rushes back downstairs.

INT. MOUNT CARMEL CHAPEL - AFTERNOON

Rodriguez nervously enters the chapel. David turns to see him there.

DAVID
Hi Robert. Why don't you grab a seat. I was worried you might have gotten lost.

Rodriguez nods and takes a seat.

Sheila Martin enters, holding Jamie like one would hold a baby. She approaches David and says something to him privately.

David nods. Rodriguez is kind of freaking out a little bit.

David grabs something off a counter. Looks a little like a switch. He thrashes it around in the air making it whoosh like a whip.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Somebody here has broken a rule.
And to make an example, I'm going to give him a licking.

Silence. Rodriguez tries to breathe through his anxiety.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Follow me.

David leaves the room. People rise from their seats, not sure about this. They tentatively follow David out into the hall.

INT. MOUNT CARMEL KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

David leads them all into the kitchen. It's a tight fit in here.

Rodriguez can't tell if some of the bigger men are actually surrounding him or if they just happen to be standing near him.

DAVID

I hate being forced to do this, but sometimes the only way people learn is by getting a licking.

Rodriguez tries to inconspicuously look for a doorway out. Doesn't see one. David opens the fridge, pulls out a tub of ice cream, pulls the lid off it, revealing a bunch of it has been eaten.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Who snuck in here and ate the ice cream?

At first nobody fesses up, but people are nervous. Rodriguez is completely confused.

David eyes the group until Wayne Jr. steps forward.

WAYNE JR.

I'm sorry David. I did.

David shakes his head. He whips the switch through the air a couple times showing the power of the coming punishment.

DAVID

Placing one's own personal desires ahead of the group separates us from each other.

David takes a deep breath, dreading what he's about to do.

DAVID (CONT'D)

You ready for your licking?

Wayne Jr. nods.

David moves as if to whip Wayne Jr. but as David raises his hand, he drops the switch, revealing a spoon in his hand. He scoops a scoop of ice cream and holds it out in front of Wayne Jr.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Here's your licking.

People exhale. Some chuckle.

DAVID (CONT'D)

You placed this lick ahead of all those in this room.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)
 Your punishment is to take a
 licking in front of all of them.

Wayne Jr. eats the spoonful of ice cream somberly.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 But if we are really one body here,
 then we should all share this
 punishment. Wayne Jr.'s sins are
 all our sins. We're all guilty of
 putting ourselves first. And for
 that, so that we won't forget the
 lesson, we're all going to get a
 licking.

David takes a spoonful and gives it to Judy. Then to Thibs.
 Then to Wayne. It becomes a strange kind of communion line,
 people lining up to get a lick of ice cream from David.

Rodriguez has never seen anything like it. But he too takes
 his licking.

INT. MOUNT CARMEL CHAPEL - NIGHT

Later, David plays guitar and sings his song "Sheshonahim"
 for the gathered group.

DAVID
 (singing)
 Sheshonahim,
 She's the only one to see
 Sheshonahim,
 She's the only one to hear
 Sheshonahim,
 She's the only song to sing
 Sheshonahim,
 She's the only one - one for him.

David looks around the room. Everyone listens.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 (singing)
 I see the sun arising in the
 morning.
 I see the king sitting on the
 throne.
 He's sitting there, sitting all
 lonely.
 Wondering why he has to reign
 alone.

David looks to Judy.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Judy.

She steps to the mic, carrying Mayanah.

JUDY SCHNEIDER

(sings)

Sheshonahim,
She's the only one to see
Sheshonahim,
She's the only one to hear...

DAVID

Thibodeau.

Judy takes a seat to light applause, as Thibodeau replaces her at the mic. Thibodeau has fun with this.

THIBODEAU

(sings)

She's the only song to sing
Sheshonahim,
She's the only one - one for him.

DAVID

Robert.

Robert Rodriguez's eyes go wide. *Me?!*

He looks around in a panic, all eyes on him. David continues to strum, filling the sonic space.

RODRIGUEZ

I don't... sing.

DAVID

Never?

RODRIGUEZ

Not... in front of people.

DAVID

But you do sing sometimes by yourself, don't you.

RODRIGUEZ

I guess.

DAVID

Shyness is a sin, Robert. It's really just pride. You have an idea of yourself.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

And you like that idea of yourself,
and you're afraid if you look
stupid in front of other people,
they won't think you're as slick as
that image you have of yourself.
But here, we don't judge people. At
least that's what we strive for,
isn't it Brad?

Everyone chuckles. Obviously an old joke.

DAVID (CONT'D)

You're safe here, Robert. Let go of
your pride, and be free. Even if
just for a minute.

This is landing.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Come here.

He hesitates.

DAVID (CONT'D)

(playful)
Come on!

Rodriguez reluctantly agrees. He steps up in front of
everyone.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Everyone, this is Robert. He lives
across the street. I can tell he's
a real good guy with lots of
questions. Who wants to be his
friend?

Everyone, young and old, raise their hands. Rodriguez seems
moved.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Now, don't be shy with him, and he
won't be shy with you.

People nod. David continues to play, the chorus coming around
again.

DAVID (CONT'D)

(sings)
Sheshonahim-

He holds the mic for Rodriguez. Whispers the line quickly to
him.

RODRIGUEZ
She's the only one to see-

DAVID
Sheshonahim-

RODRIGUEZ
She's the only one to hear-

DAVID
Sheshonahim-

RODRIGUEZ
She's the only song to sing-

DAVID
Sheshonahim-

RODRIGUEZ
She's the only one - one for him.

By the last line, Rodriguez seems to be giving in to it. He's really singing. Everyone cheers.

David pats him on the back with a smile.

Rodriguez walks back to his seat.

JUDY SCHNEIDER
You were great.

RODRIGUEZ
Thanks.

He looks almost giddy with himself - feeling the glow that comes with surpassing one's comfort zone.

EXT. SURVEILLANCE HOUSE - NIGHT

Rodriguez walks home to the surveillance house in the dark, whistling the melody of "Sheshonahim."

He opens the door.

INT. SURVEILLANCE HOUSE - NIGHT

Inside the surveillance house, there are long-lensed cameras and other surveillance equipment all over the place. Pizza boxes and empty beer cans compliment the musty smell. One ATF AGENT flips channels on the TV as ANOTHER AGENT mans the cameras monitoring Mount Carmel.

Davy Aguilera leans against a desk, waiting anxiously for Rodriguez's return.

DAVY AGUILERA

Well?

Rodriguez seems hesitant.

RODRIGUEZ

They seem... nice.

DAVY AGUILERA

Nice?! Shit. Nice?! Did you see any weapons?

RODRIGUEZ

No.

DAVY AGUILERA

Anything? Anything we can use?

RODRIGUEZ

Not that I saw.

The ATF Agent watching TV interrupts.

ATF AGENT

Hey guys!

He turns up the volume.

NEWS JOURNALIST (ON TV)

The ATF finds itself under siege from within and without.

They all stop and watch.

Angle on--

INT. FRONTLINE EPISODE - DAY

A NEWS JOURNALIST speaks -- intercut with B-roll imagery of the ATF performing various duties.

NEWS JOURNALIST (V.O.)

The beleaguered agency is fighting multiple class action lawsuits brought forth by its own agents, citing everything from sexual harassment to corruption to racism.

A shot of Congress in session.

NEWS JOURNALIST (V.O.)

But the ATF's greatest threat might just be from a Republican Congress conspiring to shut the agency down.

REP. BOB BARR OF GEORGIA talks to the interviewer.

REP. BOB BARR OF GEORGIA

At this point do we really need the ATF? This agency for "Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms" was set up during prohibition to prosecute rum runners. But prohibition ended 60 years ago. Why are we still footing the bill? Last year, we spent over half a billion dollars on an agency that confiscated 10,000 guns from - almost exclusively - people with no criminal records. We spend some dumb money as a nation, but we might not spend any dumber money than keeping the ATF afloat.

Shots of Clinton shaking hands with congressmen.

TV VOICE OVER (V.O.)

Recently inaugurated President Clinton has hinted privately that one of his first acts as President will be to support Congress in closing the ATF's doors on March 15, the day Congress is scheduled to vote on the matter.

INT. SURVEILLANCE HOUSE

Still watching - something clicks together for Davy. He finally gets what's happening.

DAVY AGUILERA

Son of a bitch.

Davy rushes to the door. Then stops, turns to Rodriguez, very seriously.

DAVY AGUILERA (CONT'D)

Get back over there tomorrow and *find us something.*

Davy leaves the house. Rodriguez doesn't feel right about any of this.

INT. MOUNT CARMEL ROCK ROOM - NIGHT

Surrounded by musical instruments in the "rock room" at Mount Carmel, Steve stands on a guitar amplifier to look out the window through military-grade binoculars as David, Wayne, and Sheila Martin wait.

STEVE SCHNEIDER

Someone's leaving Robert's house.
There's definitely something going
on.

DAVID

His heart is torn. He wants to help
us. He just doesn't know how yet.

SHEILA MARTIN

He was definitely snooping around
for something upstairs.

WAYNE MARTIN

I don't like this.

DAVID

I can reach him.

INT. MOUNT CARMEL KITCHEN COLD STORAGE - DAY

Paul Fatta stands in the kitchen's cold storage unit. This is the gun inventory room.

There are mannequins wearing ammo vests and a lot of guns, most of which remain in their packaging.

Paul counts the guns and notes them on an inventory sheet as Steve Schneider enters.

STEVE SCHNEIDER

Hey Paul, I don't think I can join
you for the gun show. I feel like I
need to stick around here - you
know with those guys across the
street and all.

PAUL FATTA

You want me to stay too?

STEVE SCHNEIDER

No, we already paid for the spot.
Maybe you could bring your son. I'm
sure Kalani would love to join you.

PAUL FATTA

I'm sure he would. Alright then,
see you in a couple days.

STEVE SCHNEIDER

And would you mind pushing the
vests a little harder? We've barely
sold any in months.

PAUL FATTA

They're crappy vests.

Steve chuckles.

STEVE SCHNEIDER

Don't tell the ladies that. It took
them four days to sew those ugly
things together. Just try?

PAUL FATTA

Sure thing.

Steve leaves. They don't know it yet, but they will never see
each other alive again.

EXT. MOUNT CARMEL FRONT DOOR - AFTERNOON

David jogs down the long driveway that leads from Mount
Carmel to the main road. As he makes the turn, he sees:

RODRIGUEZ AND TWO OTHER UNDERCOVER ATF AGENTS--ARMED AND
WAITING FOR HIM.

David freezes. Looks them over. Sees their weapons. Is he
being arrested?

DAVID

Hey Robert, what's up?

RODRIGUEZ

I heard you guys have a shooting
range here. I just got this new gun
at a gun show and I'd love to try
it out.

David steps closer.

DAVID

This is your new gun?

RODRIGUEZ

Yeah.

DAVID
Can I see it?

David reaches his hand out.

Rodriguez looks to the other agents beside him. He reluctantly hands David his gun. David ejects the clip. Looks at it. Puts it back in.

DAVID (CONT'D)
It's loaded.

RODRIGUEZ
Yeah.

DAVID
You should always warn a man when you hand him a loaded gun.

RODRIGUEZ
Oh. Sorry.

David cocks the gun. The undercover agents on either side of Rodriguez grip their guns tighter. David smiles.

He fires a couple shots at a tree. The agents getting tense with each shot.

David examines the gun. He dismantles it with the fluidity of an expert, and then reassembles it.

DAVID
You didn't get this at a gun show. This thing here is illegal. See, the trigger has been modified to be extra sensitive. This is a sniper's weapon.

David hands the weapon back.

DAVID (CONT'D)
The shooting range is out back. Stay as long as you like.

RODRIGUEZ
Why don't you grab some guns and come shoot with us?

DAVID
I'm going for a jog.

David looks back to Rodriguez's gun.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Don't get caught with that thing.
Get in some real trouble for
something like that.

David jogs off.

The undercover agents look to each other. Rodriguez exhales.

EXT. FORT HOOD, TEXAS TRAINING FACILITY - AFTERNOON

About 50 ATF and National Guardsmen train for assault at a U.S. Army training facility.

First, the cattle trailers pull up into 3 different positions in front of the training structure. Chuck Sarabyn leads a group out of the first trailer.

CHUCK SARABYN
(into walkie)
"Operation Showtime" will commence
once I give the go ahead. Then we
pull onto the property. Team one,
into position.

A group of agents rush the front of the mock up building.

CHUCK SARABYN (CONT'D)
Go, team two.

Team two races around the house. They throw a ladder up against a wall and use it to climb into the second story window.

Chuck approaches Sharon Wheeler, the press secretary. She looks out of place here in the mud in her high heels. Beside her stands **JIM PEELER**, a television camera man for KWTX-TV, holding a giant 1993 video camera to his eye.

Chuck points to the men breaking through the second story window.

CHUCK SARABYN (CONT'D)
Make sure you get the dynamic
entry.

Sharon nods as the Peeler points the camera higher.

CHUCK SARABYN (CONT'D)
Our informant says the arsenal is
in that room there.
(MORE)

CHUCK SARABYN (CONT'D)
When our agents find the guns,
they'll hold one out the window.
Make sure you get that on tape.

SHARON WHEELER
(to Peeler)
You have a good shot of that from
here?

PEELER
It's a bit of a tough angle, but...

SHARON WHEELER
Where would you want it?
(to Chuck)
Can they pause a sec?

CHUCK SARABYN
(into walkie)
Everyone hold your position.

Peeler awkwardly looks at the dynamic entry from a couple
different angles as everyone else stands in place, waiting.

PEELER
Here would be good. Gives a good
view of both sides.

Sharon looks to Chuck who nods. *Got it.*

CHUCK SARABYN
(into walkie)
When we pull into the grounds, I
need trailer 2 to land here, so we
can get video into the right
position.

SHARON WHEELER
What if we could get video cameras
mounted to the agents? The footage
rushing through the house could be
incredible.

CHUCK SARABYN
Yeah, I like that.

Davy Aguilera pulls up in his rental car, and approaches.

DAVY AGUILERA
Chuck, can I talk to you?

CHUCK SARABYN
Not really a great time.

Davy speaks anyway.

DAVY AGUILERA

Chuck, tell me this isn't just for the publicity.

CHUCK SARABYN

Excuse me?

DAVY AGUILERA

I've been trying to figure out why we don't just arrest Koresh when he's out jogging, or having lunch in town. Just doesn't make sense. But arresting a jogger doesn't get headlines. That's the reason, isn't it? This raid is just a big PR stunt.

CHUCK SARABYN

Special Agent Aguilera, we are a government agency. Our job is to make elected officials look good for supporting us. Everything is a publicity stunt.

DAVY AGUILERA

But there's kids in there.

CHUCK SARABYN

Who are being abused!

DAVY AGUILERA

Okay then let's *protect* them. Don't lead an armed assault into their home!

Chuck loses his patience.

CHUCK SARABYN

Listen to me very carefully. The last thing any of those Washington assholes remember about the ATF is that colossal fuck up at Ruby Ridge. It's going to be the death of the agency if we don't do something big. Right now.

Davy is struggling to believe what he's hearing.

CHUCK SARABYN (CONT'D)

These are the bad guys. They're illegally converting guns, and we're gonna get 'em.

(MORE)

CHUCK SARABYN (CONT'D)
Either you get with the program, or
you stay the fuck out of my way.

DAVY AGUILERA
But people could die.

CHUCK SARABYN
Die?! No one's gonna die.

Chuck motions to the sheer numbers and size of the troops
they're commanding.

CHUCK SARABYN (CONT'D)
Who in their right mind would fight
back against *this*?

INT. MOUNT CARMEL HALLWAY - EVENING

The sun is going down as Steve Schneider and David watch
Rodriguez and his undercover ATF agent friends as they leave
the shooting range.

STEVE SCHNEIDER
What are they up to?

DAVID
You don't think it's about
immigration?

STEVE SCHNEIDER
No, I don't.

DAVID
You think they're coming to get me,
don't you?

Steve nods solemnly.

DAVID (CONT'D)
When?

STEVE SCHNEIDER
Soon. Very soon.

FADE TO BLACK.