

AMEN

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INT. CHURCH - PULPIT - DAY

The reverend, **ELIJAH MILES, mid 50's white**, stands before a packed congregation giving a sermon.

His hands grip the podium, his voice thunders while sounding calm at the same time.

Reverend Miles is an authority.

People nod, and clap in intervals. There's an "Amen" heard from the congregation at times, mixed with a "Praise Jesus."

His followers are a colorful crowd. Mostly black members. Dawned in their Sunday's best.

REVEREND

God did not create man to walk
alone! He did not place us here to
ignore the cries of the weak, the
oppressed, the lost!

INTERCUT: HIDDEN CAMERA FOOTAGE - HOTEL ROOM

Grainy surveillance footage:

The Reverend lets someone into the door. It's a woman. They share a kiss, and they are off to the task at hand. Clothes start to come off.

BACK TO THE
CHURCH

REVEREND

It is our duty - our calling - to
uplift, to protect, to stand for
what is right!

INTERCUT: THE FOOTAGE - HOTEL ROOM

Moans can be heard. Softly. They are making love.

BACK TO THE
CHURCH

REVEREND

(he calms a bit,
reflective)
The righteous...

The Crowd reacts to the dramatic pause.

CROWD

Preach, Reverend.

REVEREND

(Still calm)

Well... The righteous man stands firm. Can I get an Amen?

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. NEWS STUDIO - DAY

NIA HARRIS, mid-30s, sharp, sits across from a flustered **SENATOR**. They are sitting under interview lighting. Cameras are around them, and Monitors are documenting what the cameras are seeing.

NIA

Did you pocket the money, Senator?
Yes or no?

The Senator stammers. Dead air.

NIA (CONT'D)

Your constituents would like to know.

The Senator gets on the defensive.

SENATOR

What would you know about politics.
I only came on this little show to prove I had nothing to hide.

Nia laughs a silent laugh. A scoff even.

SENATOR (CONT'D)

Sure laugh it up.

Nia interrupts the bullshit he's trying to throw her way.

NIA

YOU, senator only came on MY largely syndicated show because you wanted to try and one up me.

Senator tries to speak.

SENATOR

Well I don't know about that...

Nia reads from her notes.

NIA

Isn't that why you posted, "Going on Nia Harris' show to tell her how real Americans, America?"

Nia pauses to give the Senator a chance to speak then continues when it's clear he's not going to.

NIA (CONT'D)

I am a real American, Senator. With that in mind I feel I actually represent the voiceless. While you steal from them blindly... to their face no less. For all to see. Remarks?

The Senator is searching for the words. His eyes are darting around looking for words that don't exist that will help him get out of this situation.

The Senator stands up in a huff and leaves. Leaving Nia to gloat quietly, yet with dignity.

Nia looks into the camera to wrap up her show.

NIA (CONT'D)

The truth is in fact, just the truth. We now know more of it today. Thank you for tuning in, I'm Nia Harris.

INT. NEWSROOM HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Nia walks with her, **COLLEAGUE**, who is ecstatic and grinning ear to ear.

COLLEAGUE

Damn, you just buried that guy.

A MANILA ENVELOPE is handed to her from the Colleague. No return address.

NIA

What's this?

COLLEAGUE

Could be anything when it comes to you. A promotion, anthrax, a Christmas card. Your life is a different type of animal.

NIA

And I wont be making many friends
after that shit back there for
sure.

COLLEAGUE

But you looked good doing it.
Congrats.

They share a smile.

INT. NIA'S OFFICE - DAY

She rips the envelope open. A stack of GRAINY PHOTOS spill
onto the desk. The REVEREND. In bed. Undeniable.

A tiny SD CARD falls out with a note: "Your next big story."

CLOSE-UP: NIA'S FACE. A flicker of shock. Then... a slow,
knowing smile.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. CITY HALL STEPS - DAY

The reverend is on stage speaking to a crowd of people about
injustices in the black community. His rep, **JORDAN, mid 40's**,
is standing on the side watching. Jordan gets a call towards
the end of the speech.

REVEREND

My brothers and sisters, we cannot
call ourselves followers of Christ
and turn a blind eye to the
suffering of our Black neighbors.
The scriptures teach us that
justice is not optional—it is the
very foundation of God's throne.
Yet, too often, this nation has
built walls where there should be
bridges, has met cries for dignity
with silence, and has allowed
injustice to fester where love
should have reigned. If one part of
the body suffers, we all suffer.

(MORE)

REVEREND (CONT'D)

And so I stand here today not just to acknowledge this pain, but to say clearly: it is our duty, as people of faith, as people of conscience, to stand against the systems that oppress, to listen before we speak, and to use whatever power we have to lift up those who have been pushed down for far too long.

Jordans phone rings. He answers.

JORDAN

(listens for a moment)

Nia Harris, how can I help you?

Jordan listens

JORDAN (CONT'D)

Appreciate the call, Ms. Harris, but the Reverend isn't interested in engaging in tabloid rumors...

INTERCUT: NIA IN HER OFFICE**NIA**

It's not a rumor. And I think he knows that.

Jordan stays silent for a beat then hangs up.

BACK TO CITY
HALL

Jordan slides his phone into his pocket, turning to the Reverend who is coming off stage to applause. A silent look passes between them.

JORDAN (QUIETLY)

It was her.

The Reverend exhales slowly. He nods.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

But I told her we wouldn't engage.

REVEREND

Invite her to my office.

JORDAN

But, Rev...

REVEREND

This isn't going away. My office.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. PRIVATE OFFICE - DAY

NIA sits in a lavish waiting room.

The walls adorned with awards and framed photos of the Reverend shaking hands with world leaders.

A **STAFFER** appears.

STAFFER

He'll see you now.

NIA

(smiles)

Thank you.

INT. REVEREND'S OFFICE

A dimly lit room. The REVEREND sits behind his desk, composed, unreadable. NIA steps in.

STAFFER

Nia Harris, Reverend.

REVEREND

(to the staffer)

Thank you. Give us a moment please.

STAFFER

Sure, Reverend.

Nia makes her way to towards the seating area of the room. It has oval office vibes. Couches facing each other. They meet in the middle of the room. Reverend extends his arms offering a seat.

REVEREND

Please, sit.

NIA

Thank you.

They get comfortable.

REVEREND

Can I offer you a drink of water, or anything?

NIA

No, Thank you, Reverend.

REVEREND

Ok.

NIA

You know why I'm here so we can skip the pleasantries.

REVEREND

(charming)

I assume it's not to hear Sunday's sermon early.

NIA

This isn't a parable. It's a story with receipts.

REVEREND

Do you think a man is only his worst sin?

NIA

No. But I think when a man builds a pulpit out of his goodness, his sins are the cracks that bring it all down.

They sit in temporary silence.

NIA (CONT'D)

You are running for office correct?

The reverend looks up but doesn't answer.

NIA (CONT'D)

It's the logical next move. I didn't need sources on this one.

The reverend shows a crack in his otherwise strong exterior.

REVEREND

Like the sources that tried to extort me, and when I said no, gave you the info you needed?

Nia gives a knowing shrug.

REVEREND (CONT'D)

And what happens when I fall? What happens to the people who need what I've built? Not to be too terse, but your people, Ms. Harris.

(MORE)

REVEREND (CONT'D)

Have you thought about what happens to them?

NIA

Are you saying you're the only one who can help them, because where I sit you might cause more damage than any meaningful good.

Reverend starts shaking his head during her speech.

REVEREND

No, no. Not what I'm saying at all. What I'm saying is I am in a position now, and now is always the right time for justice. There were others before me, and will be others after me. But right now, I am here.

Nia mulls this over. Then delivers her judgment.

NIA

The truth isn't about what helps the most people, Reverend, it's just the truth.

A long silence. The reverend decides that is the last thing that needs to be said. Apparently Nia does too.

NIA stands. She doesn't gloat. She leaves.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. CHURCH - BACKROOM - DAY

The REVEREND sits with

Jordan. Outside, his congregation waits for his announcement.

JORDAN

She's leaving it up to you to tell the truth before she drops her story?

The Reverend exhales. Nods.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

That's almost a win dealing with her. What are you going to do. Does your wife know?

REVEREND

I told her after the meeting. It didn't go well, but that was to be expected. But as far as what I'm going to do I haven't decided yet.

JORDAN

Rev, you're going on stage right now. You have to decide.

REVEREND

I know.

The Reverend stands to meet his congregation, and the press.

INT. CHURCH - PULPIT - DAY

The Reverend steps onto the stage to applause and the shutters of cameras.

The Reverend puts up his arms in the "calm down" motion. The crowd calms, and sits. Shutters still fire off with flashes being seen.

A beat of just a few shutters firing.

REVEREND

A man's existence... is for a reason.

The crowd murmurs.

REVEREND (CONT'D)

But that reason... is written in flesh and blood.

A ripple moves through the crowd.

REVEREND (CONT'D)

Not in stone. Not in sermons. Not in titles.

REVEREND (CONT'D)

A man... is not his deeds alone.

REVEREND (CONT'D)

Nor his sins alone.

A long silence.

CLOSE-UP: NIA in the crowd.

The Reverend looks over the congregation. The weight of choice sits heavy on his tongue.

He leans forward into the microphone.

He gives out a long exhale.

CUT.

THE END