

INT. COURTROOM

(The courtroom is a large, dimly-lit circular chamber, lined by a steadily-increasing set of seats, in each of which is sat a robed man. In the centre of the room is a podium. At its head there is another, with the man standing at it - the BISHOP OF WYOMING. A rectangle of light appears at the other end of the room, at floor level, and a shabby man in chains - CHRISTOPHER - is shoved roughly through.)

WYOMING

You will stand at the podium.

(Christopher steps warily forward to the podium.)

WYOMING

Christopher Clarke, you are hereby charged with the sins of invoking the name of the Lord, our God, and of cursing thine parents.

CHRISTOPHER

I--

WYOMING

You do not have opportunity to plead. Your guilt and sentence have been predetermined. In the name of the Lord, our God, ye be guilty, and you are hereby sentenced to be stoned to death outside the walls of the city of Cheyenne at the ninth hour of tomorrow morning, whereafter your soul shall suffer torture eternal in Hell. This judgement is as decreed by the Lord, our God, as is written in the holy books of Leviticus and Exodus, and cannot be refuted. Begone.

(Two CLERICS in head-to-toe body armour, evoking a more modern version of the Crusaders, enter and flank Christopher. When he does not move, they grab him by the arms and drag him out.)

WYOMING

Bring in the next defendant.

(The door opens and a woman - CLAIRE - again in chains and rags, is pushed through.)

WYOMING

You will stand at the podium.

(She does so.)

WYOMING

Claire Griffith, you are hereby charged with the sin of being raped within the walls of a city whilst engaged to another man. You do not have the opportunity to plead. Your guilt and sentence have been predetermined. In the name of the Lord, our God, ye be guilty...

(At this point the words and picture begin to fade out, the picture into the next scene.)

WYOMING

...and you are hereby sentenced to be stoned to death outside the walls of the city of Cheyenne at fifteen minutes past the ninth hour of tomorrow morning, whereafter your soul shall suffer torture eternal in Hell. This judgement is decreed by the Lord, our God, as is written in the holy book of Deuteronomy, and cannot be refuted. Begone.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

(A great many men walk about, tightly-packed between the ruined buildings. Each side of the street is sparsely lined with market stalls and carts, some of which have women, clad in loose-fitting brown dresses, examining wares.)

SUPERIMPOSE

CHEYENNE, WYOMING, A.D. 2067

(A MAN rushes through the street, pushing past people as he yells.)

MAN

The Bishop! The Bishop is coming!

(The people on the street begin to rush to the sides and stand to order. The BISHOP OF WYOMING rounds a corner, conversing with a black-clad Priest - FATHER GARRICK. They are flanked by four armed CLERICS.)

WYOMING

I apologise, Father Garrick, but I will not be able to address the clergy today.

GARRICK

But, my Lord, surely they must be informed of--

WYOMING

Father, the presence of the Bishops is required today at the Capitol by His Holiness the Prophet Philip himself. If I do not attend, I shall likely not maintain this post for much longer.

GARRICK

Very well, my Lord.

WYOMING

Tend to the morning's executions.

GARRICK

Yes, my Lord.

(Garrick turns and walks back in the opposite direction, accompanied by a Cleric.)

EXT. SEMI-ARID WASTELAND - DAY

(A podium stands outside the city wall, at which FATHER GARRICK sits, visibly distressed. In front of it stand five CLERICS, each wearing a small satchel. CLAIRE stands facing them. Another CLERIC drags the corpse of CHRISTOPHER away and carelessly tosses it into a pit of bodies before joining the rest. To one side, a group of manacled prisoners stands, waiting to die.)

GARRICK

Claire Griffith, you are aware of why you have been called here?

CLAIRE

Yes.

GARRICK

I shall grant you one opportunity to repent for your sins in the eyes of the Lord, our God. Do so now and I will appeal for your survival.

(Claire raises her shackled hands.)

CLAIRE

What the Hell kind of God would allow this to happen?

(Garrick looks away, shocked yet ashamed.)

CLAIRE

Your God is a petty, cruel, insecure man.

(Garrick looks at her sympathetically, but he can't understand.)

GARRICK

...Kill her.

(The Clerics each take a large rock from their satchel and prepare to throw it, when a gunshot comes out of nowhere, hitting one of them in the head. The other five each drop the rocks and draw guns from hip-mounted holsters. Garrick ducks down under the podium, covering his head. Another Cleric is shot dead. The surviving four turn to the wall and spot the gunman on top of it, and shoot at him. He grabs his rifle and runs. Behind the execution area, a van pulls up, and a group of people in mismatched outfits with mismatched weapons. Unlike the uniformly white male Clerics, they are a mix of ethnicities and genders. They shoot at the Clerics. Garrick cowers by the podium.)

GARRICK

Oh God oh God oh God oh God oh God oh God

(One of the Clerics calls for backup on a radio clipped to his belt, before being shot in the back by a Native American woman - NAIRA - wielding a small handgun.)

NAIRA

We're about to have company!

(A large Japanese man - SOTA - shoots out the prisoners' leg shackles and moves them along.)

SOTA

Come on, quickly!

(GARRICK peeks out from his cowering and tries to run, but is stopped by the sniper from earlier - RICK.)

RICK

Where do you think *you're* going?

(A pair of cars rounds the corner of the city walls, and a squad of CLERICS piles out of each. Everyone piles into the back of the van from earlier, Sota getting into the driver's seat. The van pulls away as the Clerics fire assault rifles at its wheels.)

EXT. CAPITOL BUILDING - DAY

(Everything's sort of - grey. All very drab. A large metal cross has been erected in front of the dome.)

DISCIPLE

(V/O)

Order! Order!

(The sound of a gavel banging against a desk.)

INT. SENATE CHAMBER

(50 BISHOPS - one for each state, collectively the CONGREGATION - are seated in identical ceremonial gear before a podium, at which stands the DISCIPLE, in front of an ornate blue curtain. A number of CLERICS line the walls.)

DISCIPLE

The register shall now be passed around. Once each State's presence has been ascertained, we shall begin.

(A soft buzzing noise.)

DISCIPLE

Ah - pardon me a moment.

(He heads behind the curtain.)

INT. ROOM BEHIND THE CURTAIN WHICH HAS NO BETTER NAME

(The DISCIPLE bows to a figure, over whose shoulder the camera is positioned - the PROPHET PHILIP.)

PHILIP

Rise, my child.

(The Disciple does so.)

DISCIPLE

What for did You wish to see me, Your Worship?

PHILIP

Are they all present?

DISCIPLE

The register is being passed around as we speak. I believe I counted all fifty of them, however. Why do You ask?

(He suddenly realises his informal manner of speech and bows slightly.)

DISCIPLE

...If You don't mind my inquisitiveness, Your Worship?

PHILIP

I wish to address them.

DISCIPLE

Very well. I assume You have prepared a speech for me?

PHILIP

No.

DISCIPLE

Then how will You--

PHILIP

I wish to address them personally.

(The Disciple's eyes widen in surprise.)

DISCIPLE

A-are You certain, Your Worship? After all, there are protocols in place for-- for a reason. It would be a great shame for every one of us if You were to expose Yourself and fall ill...

PHILIP

I assure you, I shall be protected by the divine hand, for the message I have received must be delivered by the Prophet Himself.

DISCIPLE

V-very well, Your Worship.

(He steps to the other side of the curtain.)

INT. SENATE CHAMBER

(The DISCIPLE emerges from behind the curtain, looking slightly worried. A CLERIC hands him the register.)

DISCIPLE

Thank you.

(The Cleric bows his head and marches back into position.)

DISCIPLE

Now, this is... most irregular, but... it would appear that... well. Um... (he swallows.)  
Gentlemen, His Holiness the Prophet Philip wishes to personally address the congregation today.

(The CONGREGATION reacts in various ways -- some gasp, some begin to frantically attempt to make themselves presentable despite already basking in their own splendour, while still others merely tilt their heads or raise an eyebrow.)

DISCIPLE

Um... so. Um... I suppose... He'll be through when He's ready. In the meantime... are there any matters any of you wanted to bring up?

(A few BISHOPS raise their hands - WISCONSIN, SOUTH DAKOTA, KENTUCKY, and NEW HAMPSHIRE.)

DISCIPLE

Ah... yes, Kentucky?

KENTUCKY

I have heard news of an outbreak of Islamic activity in Illinois. I was wondering, if such blasphemous acts can be allowed in the state, is this man (he gestures towards ILLINOIS, who sits a few seats down from him) truly fit for office?

ILLINOIS

(Indignant)

How dare you!? I impose the strictest regime in the Midwest! If your slander was true - which, I wish to assure the Congregation, it is most definitely not - I would gladly submit office.

KENTUCKY

You are, of course, aware that you are under oath?

ILLINOIS

Of course I'm aware! How does that make the slightest bit of differen--

KENTUCKY

And may I inform that I have evidence of the Islamic activity from your state?

(He draws an Arabic document from his robe.)

KENTUCKY

I had a clergyman translate this for me. It details plans to enforce Halal conditions upon meat killed in the state, plans to permit the wearing of burqas, and even to depose the clergy!

ILLINOIS

I... I...

KENTUCKY

And who has granted his support to this heinous scheme but the Bishop himself!

ILLINOIS

What?

KENTUCKY

Not only are you a pathetic, ineffectual, ruler, you have committed the cardinal sins of perjury and blasphemy, the penalty for both of which is death.

ILLINOIS

But I...

KENTUCKY

(To the Disciple)

Permission to forgo the trial period, your honour?

DISCIPLE

Granted.

ILLINOIS  
Please... I...

(A Cleric draws his gun and shoots Illinois in the head. The Congregation and the Disciple just watch.)

DISCIPLE

It appears that we need to hold a selection process for a new Bishop of Illinois. And, er, Clerics? Remove the body and clean up the blood. I'm sure His Holiness the Prophet Philip would rather not see that.

(Three Clerics set about doing as they are bid.)

DISCIPLE

Now... were there any other points?

(The same Bishops as before, bar Kentucky.)

DISCIPLE  
Wisconsin?

WISCONSIN

What are His Holiness the Prophet Philip's plans regarding the sudden outbreak of Freethinkers in a number of states? Not including my own, might I add.

DISCIPLE

The Freethinkers are a state matter, not a federal one. Now--

FLORIDA

If you'll pardon the interruption, your honour, but how can it be a matter for individual states when there are so many clearly connected groups across the country?

PHILIP  
(From behind the curtain)  
Might I answer that?

(The Disciple turns and steps to one side as PHILIP emerges. He is incredibly old, with a long, grey beard stretching down to his hips. He wears simple beige robes. He basically looks like how people like Abraham and Noah are usually depicted. The Congregation stands and bows their heads, hands folded in prayer. Philip gestures for them to sit back down; they do so. Philip surveys them and turns to the Disciple.)

PHILIP  
I thought they were all here?



DISCIPLE

Ah, we had Illinois executed, Your Worship.

PHILIP

Ah. Well, I'm sure he deserved it.

DISCIPLE

He did, Your Worship.

PHILIP

In any case! The fate of our esteemed colleague Illinois is not the matter which concerns me today. I am here to make a great announcement.

(The Congregation stares intently, almost sycophantically.)

PHILIP

Our scholars have analysed the holy books of First Thessalonians and Revelation and have come to the conclusion that the Rapture will arrive in exactly one week.

(Whoops of joy and gasps of shock arise from the Congregation until they are silenced by Philip.)

PHILIP

However! It is not as was previously thought! The righteous will not be taken to Heaven on the occasion.

(Much confusion among the Congregation.)

PHILIP

Instead, the Lord, Jesus Christ, will descend and make Earth as it is unto Heaven. We must prepare for His presence! Go now! (The Congregation gets up and filters out of the room.)

Spread the word! Slay those who are not worthy! Only then will we be blessed with His presence!

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

(Extreme close-up of a hessian sack. The camera slowly zooms out and the sack is roughly pulled away, revealing GARRICK's head beneath it. He blinks a few times and blearily opens his eyes, his head lolling about a bit. A bucket of water is splashed over his head and he splutters. POV shot from Garrick as he looks around the room. His head's motions are uncontrolled and he is blinking frequently. The room is small and mostly empty, apart from an old wooden coffee table in the left-hand corner, upon which is a lamp, not turned on, a jug of water, some cups, and some small instruments that can't quite be seen clearly.)

RICK

(Offscreen)

Hey. Hey!

(The camera looks to the right and up at RICK's smiling face. The door is positioned behind him.)

RICK

Hello! Good to see you're awake, buddy.

(Shot from the coffee table. Rick walks across the dusty floor towards the door, leaving Garrick alone briefly. There are more chairs behind him. Garrick looks down at himself to see that he is tied up, and begins to struggle against his bonds. Rick opens the door slightly.)

RICK

(Head sticking out the door)

Hey! Guys! He's awake!

(Rick walks back towards Garrick.)

RICK

They'll be through in a minute. Meantime...

(He wanders over to the coffee table and picks up the water jug, pouring himself a drink.)

RICK

Drink?

(Garrick nods. Rick pours another glass of water out, then walks back over to Garrick without it. He pulls up a chair from behind Garrick and takes a sip of his drink.)

GARRICK

...Well?

RICK

(Mock confused)

Well, what?

GARRICK

Where's my drink?

RICK

(Nodding his head towards the table)

Over there.

(Beat.)

GARRICK  
(Exasperated)  
...Well?

RICK  
(Mock exasperated)  
Well, what?

GARRICK  
I want my drink.

RICK  
Go get it then.

GARRICK  
I'm tied to a chair.

RICK  
Well, I didn't tie you to it. Not my problem

(NAIRA and SOTA enter.)

RICK  
Ah, here we are!

(He gets up and goes over to the table. He pushes it over to Garrick, revealing the instruments. On the left hand side of the table is the glass of water, the jug and the empty glasses. On the right hand side are a set of ten small clamps.)

RICK  
So here's the deal. I'll be going in a minute, and then Naira will ask you some questions. For every question you answer truthfully, you'll get to drink some water. For every question you refuse to answer, or lie about, Sota here will attach one of these clamps to your fingers. When the glass of water is empty, we'll let you out of here. When all ten clamps are attached... well, I'll leave that up to Sota. So. Have fun!

## **PROSE**

She ran.  
There was something coming for her.  
She didn't know what it was.  
Maybe there was more than one.  
Whatever it was, it was after her.  
So she ran.

She could hear it shouting after her. She couldn't hear what it was saying, though. Maybe it wasn't saying anything. Maybe it was just screaming at her.

She saw the wall in front of her just in time to stop. She looked around. Everything was black. The walls, the floors were moist. She couldn't tell if she was inside or outside. She didn't care. The thing had slowed down now, sensing, perhaps, that its prey was trapped. She could hear it breathing. A horrible, strained sound like a once-great predator, stricken with disease and struggling for life as the scavengers gathered around it. She looked more frantically. The thing smelled like the rotting remains of a chain-smoker's lungs. Her thoughts, however, were much simpler.

*Jesus fuck that's unpleasant.*

She ran to the wall to her left and felt around frantically. The creature let out the triumphant roar of a steam train pelting down a steep hill. She could almost feel the clingy heat of its breath against her neck when her hand fell through an opening in the wall. She twisted herself around and squeezed in, edging through the claustrophobic hallway. She let out a yell when the thing's hand reached in after her. It wasn't really a hand, *per se*, more a misshapen lump of muscle and cartilage, with stiff, claw-like 'fingers' of mottled white jutting out at irregular intervals. The middle one just missed cleaving her arm off. She continued down the passageway as the thing roared again, this time in despair at its prey's escape. She heard it stalking off. She looked towards both ends of the passageway with some effort - it was so tight that her nose scraped against the sandpaper-like wall when she turned her head. She concluded that the end she was already headed towards was closer and, wishing to be out of this passage as soon as was humanly possible, continued onwards, cursing herself for wasting time.

Finally, she made it. She gasped with relief, finally able to breathe properly again. Her hands and back were covered in grazes. She wanted to stop, to give up and sit down, but she couldn't. The thing was still hunting her, and she still had no idea where she was, or how to get home. She had to find answers. She had to escape. She had to.

The fight was far from over.