

**NEW GODS AND OLD GLORY**

FADE IN:

AN AMERICAN FLAG

Small and simple as it flaps on the dashboard of a moving car.

INT. HATCHBACK- DAY

A setting SUN flashes like a warm strobe as they pass large trees. Every window is wide open.

JONAH PACE, 10 and handsome, rides in the backseat. Brown hair gently shifts on his forehead. His eyes are big and wide open to the world... they are connected to the serenity of the moment.

We catch the driver in a glance through the rear view mirror. BRYN PACE, a woman of simple beauty and fair complexion- no large rings, jewelry, or excessive make-up. A basic WEDDING BAND and ENGAGEMENT RING grace her left hand. The breeze from the drive teases her jet black hair.

She moves the mirror. The glass reflection tracks down the seats to her son. He looks up and gives a smile. On the return to its normal position, something grabs her attention.

A BLACK TOWNCAR drives behind them in the distance. THE CAR DRIVER is a faceless man. A PASSENGER rides with him. Her eyes return to the road.

EXT. HOUSE COMMUNITY- ENTRANCE- DAY (ESTABLISHING)

The HATCHBACK enters a housing community. Each TOWNHOUSE is identical to its brother... save a few small design elements.

EXT. HOUSE COMMUNITY- HATCHBACK- DAY

They close the doors to the car and walk toward one of the houses. There is little life. CARS and SUV's are in every spot. All windows and doors are closed. The only SOUND is the CENTRAL AIRCONTIONING HUM from each UNIT.

Bryn stops. She sees a six inch wide DIRT HOLE on the grass. Her eyes follow shoe-pressed grass... ANOTHER HOLE. She ponders for second.

Jonah walks up behind her. Bryn walks up the path to her house.

A small pile of LAWN ORNAMENTS block the entrance to the front door. FRESH HERB PLANTS pulled out from the roots. CRAFT SIGNS. IRON LANTERNS. IRISH AND ITALIAN FLAGS. She stops. Her eyes look around. The other HOUSES... similar piles are stacked in front of neighbors doors... just with different items.

In the distance, the same black car from before enters the community and drives slowly through down the main street. It's a slight distance from them, but she watches the suspicious driver navigate carefully. Reflection on the windows prevent anything from being seen inside.

Her face becomes uneasy.

On the front door is a SHEET OF PAPER. In large black font, it reads:

"HOME ASSOCIATION: New Rules & Regulations"

"President Samuel Whalen"

Bryn RIPS the sheet from the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE COMMUNITY- MAILHUT- MOMENTS LATER

Jonah opens the mail slot on the multi-user MAIL HUT. A car drives behind him. His head turns to catch the source of the sound... it's a BLACK TOWNCAR. He quickly shuts the mail door.

On the side of the car is the U.S. NAVY EMBLEM.

Jonah runs up to the house.

EXT. HOUSE COMMUNITY/PACE HOUSE- DAY

With controlled haste, Jonah approaches the house. His body can barely keep up with his legs.

Two UNIFORMED SOLDIERS walk up to the front door of the house. Jonah spots them. Beat. SOLDIER ONE turns to see him. Jonah's brow tightens. Beat. SOLDIER TWO turns around. Beat.

Bryn sees Jonah through the front window. His eyes find his feet. He walks past the front of the house. She follows Jonah with her eyes- ignoring the front door.

BRYN

Jonah!

She moves through the house to follow him as if nothing else mattered. We catch her pursuit through available windows on the side of the house.

BRYN

Jonah!

He moves briskly past a gate- SLAMS it open.

White bed sheets sway in the breeze. A flat, green lawn rests beneath them. A single RED DOME TENT stands in the back corner. Jonah moves towards it.

Jonah opens the flap, ducks his head and enters. He holds his legs tightly with his arms in the back of the tent. Each gentle breeze of wind moves the nylon flap entrance to reveal the two uniformed Soldiers. Each a dark silhouette. Their white caps give them away. They stare at the tent from the front yard. An AMERICAN FLAG waves from a house mounted pole.

AMBIENT SOUND grows louder. TREES RUSTLE in the breeze. BIRDS chirp. WIND CHIMES ECHO against the house.

Soldier One starts moving towards the backyard. Jonah slides further back into the tent. FOOTSTEPS ON THE GRASS from beside the tent grow loud and fast.

Two hands, smooth as silk, reach into the tent and open the flap. It's Bryn. Within seconds, she has an entire conversation using her eyes with her son. He takes her hand.

They emerge. Bryn hoists her son effortlessly. Her hand tucks his head into her neck. The marine grows closer. Her hand extends to him: STOP.

She carries Jonah across the lawn and through the sheets. Her face drops slowly and her lip curls under. Her eyes swell with tears, yet none fall. Her nerve is about to collapse as she clenches her young boy in her arms.

They enter the house. The Soldier enters the backyard. His figure is framed in the back door. Bryn allows the door to SLAM shut.

EXT. CEMETERY FUNERAL- DAY

Jonah, dressed entirely in a black suit, stands completely motionless. He watches two white-gloved SERVICEMEN fold the American Flag with effortless grace and precision.

He is dwarfed by its massive size. He stands alone as we watches the red, white, and blue reduce to a triangle no larger than his forearm.

A shadow walks up Jonah's body and face. One of the Servicemen kneel down before him. The gloved hands raise the triangle flag to Jonah. Jonah reaches and accepts.

The Servicemen move away. Jonah stares into space. We move in slowly. GUN FIRE- A VOLLEY. Closer now... Jonah jumps. ANOTHER VOLLEY...another jump. WE MOVE CLOSER. A FINAL ROUND...no reaction.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. PACE HOME- JONAH'S BEDROOM- NIGHT

Jonah looks through an upstairs window. FACELESS NEIGHBORS leave their homes and walk up to a small site on the front lawn.

A MAKESHIFT MEMORIAL is to the side of the walkway leading up to the house. VOTIVE CANDLES flicker. ROSES, LILIES, and CARNATIONS lay against each other to create a small hill. POSTERBOARD SIGNS flank the sides of the gifts.

His eyes follow a boy as he walks up to the front door with his father. They pass a man standing on the lawn. His face is unseen, while his shoulders are broad and looming. The man looks for a bit then approaches the home.

INT. PACE HOME- VARIOUS ROOMS- NIGHT

GUESTS, dressed entirely in BLACK SUITS and DRESSES, move about the house. Some of the men wear RED NECKTIES... most wear black. There are quiet conversations. YOUNG CHILDREN play quietly in the corner.

The NEIGHBORHOOD WOMEN are circled around Bryn and speak at her continuously.

A SMALL TABLE is set by the door. Its surface is decorated with BEAUTIFUL BOUQUETS, FRAMED PICTURES, a GUESTBOOK and a few important things that belonged to the Dad. A large, 8 X 10 FRAMED PICTURE of the Dad stands back and center. His eyes were large, bright, and kind.

TEACHER, 33, is a handsome man with a slight Mediterranean look. He extends a hand to Jonah. Jonah shakes it. Upon contact, the Teacher lowers to match up their sights

TEACHER

Jonah... I want you to know how sorry I am to hear about what happened.

(beat)

You know, when you're ready, I'd like you to talk to the class about your dad. I think it's important they understand why he did what he did.

Jonah takes a second. He turns and nods his head.

TEACHER

Hey Jonah. It's okay to ask why. Never be afraid to ask questions.

Jonah takes in the advice. He extends his fist and stops. Jonah meets it with his. Teacher smiles.

INT. PACE HOME- NIGHT- MOMENTS LATER

Jonah moves through the adults. He passes by several HUSHED CONVERSATIONS. Something grabs his eye. A few feet away, amid the BLACK SUITS, are two hands folded behind a man's back. The sleeves of his dress shirt are colorful. Each wrist is covered with an AMERICAN FLAG PRINT CUFF. A tacky GOLD WRISTWATCH slides down his large, masculine hand. Jonah follows the strange man.

His name is UNCLE SAM, and he carries himself like a soldier. He's an older man with thinning salt and pepper hair, eyeglasses, and carries the broad shoulders of a young linebacker. His face is worn and his eyes dark.

He seems to only shake hands with the red-tied gentlemen. All others are quick conversations that end with him sealing his lips in a smirk as the corners of his mouth press inward toward the cheeks.

An older woman meets his arm. She is frail yet attractive. Her name is AMBER...his wife. Guests catch a glimpse of him out of their peripheral vision and begin to move away. He's not well liked. Uncle Sam spots Jonah. He extends a stiff arm.

UNCLE SAM

Samuel Whalen. Although for sons of  
soldiers like yourself...I think it  
be best if you just used Uncle Sam.

He leans down and touches his shoulder. Jonah moves away as  
if the man's touch was ice cold.

Bryn's eye contact with the other woman in her conversation  
is broken by the sight. She gazes at Jonah- a dwarf next to  
Uncle Sam. Her shoulders tense.

UNCLE SAM

You have the eyes of a soldier...  
you'll make your father proud one  
day. The military needs more young  
blood.

Bryn's hands circle Jonah's shoulders. Uncle Sam looks up to  
see her straight face.

UNCLE SAM

Fine boy. We haven't met in person.  
My name is Samuel Whale...

She offers an attempted smile.

BRYN

Are you the person I need to see  
about my outdoor decorations and  
herb garden being piled up on my  
front porch?

Neighbors watch Uncle Sam and Bryn speak out of the corners  
of their eyes.

UNCLE SAM

I'm the president of this  
community...yes. Not to be  
inappropriate, but there are rules  
we need to adhere to Mrs. Pace.  
Anything outside your door is space  
I was elected to control. Property  
values need to be kept up to par.

Jonah watches Uncle Sam closely.

BRYN

Would it be possible to meet with  
you and discuss an event I would  
like to plan for the community?

Uncle Sam takes another look at Jonah.

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