

Cultless

By

Jenn Charlene Jacobsen

(C)2009 Jenn Charlene Jacobsen

FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Rows of modern, middle class homes with manicured lawns line both sides of a street. MICHAEL, a thin man in his late 20s wearing blue jeans and a t-shirt, waters flowers in front of a house.

A modern car pulls into the driveway of the same house. ASHLEY, a pretty petite girl in her late teens wearing a bright sun dress, opens the car door and gets out of the car. She walks towards Michael and hands him a set of keys.

ASHLEY

Thanks for letting me use your car.

MICHAEL

Sure thing. Did you put some gas in it?

ASHLEY

I did.

MICHAEL

I still wish you would reconsider going to bible college.

ASHLEY

I've made up my mind.

MICHAEL

You have so much going for you in Denver. Your boyfriend, a good job, a great brother that lets you borrow his car.

Michael chuckles.

ASHLEY

I know, but it's something I've wanted for a long time.

MICHAEL

You know we'll all miss you.

ASHLEY

I'll miss everyone too. I'll be home for visits. I'm not going to the moon you know.

Ashley giggles and Michael laughs.

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

When do you leave?

ASHLEY

The bus is picking me up in about an hour. I need to finish packing.

MICHAEL

I'll be in when I finish watering.

EXT. BIBLE COLLEGE FRONT GATE, BIBLE CHURCH COMPLEX - DAY

A rural, tree lined, gravel road leads up to a chain link gate. The gate is across the road and a sign on it reads, "NEW LIFE BIBLE COLLEGE, NO TRESPASSING". Chain link fences topped with 3 stands of barbed wire extend on either side of the gate disappearing into the thick brush and mature trees.

A small school bus pulls up to the gate and stops. A sign on the side of the bus reads, "NEW LIFE BIBLE COLLEGE"

A SECURITY GUARD in a guard house, just behind the gate on the side of the road, waves at the bus driver. The middle aged security guard wears a black uniform and a gun strapped to his side. The gate opens and the bus drives through.

The bus stops in front of a large, simple, tan colored church complex with stained glass windows. A bell tower with a large cross tops the church.

BROTHER TIMOTHY, a heavysset man in his 40's wearing a white toga emerges from the front door of the church. He smiles and waves at the bus. He walks over to the bus and gets aboard.

BROTHER TIMOTHY

(warm)

Welcome to New Life Bible College.
My name is Brother Timothy. I'll be helping you get settled in. Follow me and I'll show you around.

Brother Timothy gets off the bus and the passengers including Ashley follow him.

INT. BIBLE COLLEGE SANCTUARY - DAY

On the front wall of a large room with stained glass windows, the sanctuary, a projected image reads, "PLEASE PUT ON YOUR HEADPHONES". A dozen RECRUITS wearing gray overalls sit at tables facing the projected image. Each clean cut and good looking recruit wears a pair of headphones.

(CONTINUED)

Ashley enters the room wearing gray overalls. She sits down at an empty table and puts on the headphones. On the headphones, a high pitched TONE varies in frequency slightly up and down.

Ashley looks around the room and nervously fidgets.

FATHER PETER, a thin man in his 50's wearing a white toga, enters the bible college sanctuary and stands behind a podium in front of the recruits. He raises his arms and folds his hands in front of him. He slowly bows his head while moving his folded hands to touch his forehead. He closes his eyes and silently mouths some words.

The recruits begin to look at each other and shrug their shoulders.

Father Peter slowly raises his head, opens his eyes, and drops his arms.

FATHER PETER

Welcome my children to your new home. You came here seeking solace from a world gone mad. Soon, a place in heaven will be reserved for all of you. The Creator has sent me, Father Peter, as a messenger to this world to spread the knowledge of the only universal religion. I am your guiding light and savior. I am the truth.

Ashley looks around the room and sees a telephone on the rear wall. She takes off her headphones, walks to the phone, and makes a call.

MICHAEL(V.O.)

Hello.

ASHLEY

Hi Michael, I made it.

MICHAEL(V.O.)

Hey Ashley. What's it like?

Ashley looks around to see if anyone is listening.

ASHLEY

It's not what I thought. It's kind of creepy.

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

I thought you wanted to go to bible college?

ASHLEY

This isn't bible college. I don't know what it is, but I want to come home.

MICHAEL

No problem. How do I get there?

ASHLEY

Take highway 115 east---

MICHAEL

Hold on, let me get a pen.(pause)
OK

ASHLEY

Take highway 115 east out of town, about 30 miles. Hang a left at a sign that says "NEW LIFE BIBLE COLLEGE". It's a gravel road.

MICHAEL

OK

ASHLEY

Follow it for about 20 miles until you come to a chain link gate and guard house. Ask the guard to open the gate.

MICHAEL

Alright.

ASHLEY

Drive through the gate and across a bridge. Keep going about a half a mile to the bible college. It's on your right.

MICHAEL(V.O.)

Got it. It'll take me a couple of hours to get out there.

ASHLEY

Thank you so much for this.

MICHAEL(V.O.)

Only for my favorite sister. See ya soon.

(CONTINUED)

ASHLEY

Bye.

Ashley returns to her seat. Father Peter looks at Ashley and touches both of his ears repeatedly. Ashley puts on the headphones.

Father Peter lights several candles beside the podium. He lights a bundle of incense and begins slowly walking around the room blowing the smoke in the direction of the recruits.

He gets back to the podium and places the incense near the candles. He changes the slide on the overhead projector and a large image of himself displays on a screen in front of the room. He turns on a tape recorder, turns off the sanctuary lights, and leaves the room.

FATHER PETER(V.O. HEADPHONES)

Quiet your minds and rejoice. You are at the beginning of finding true happiness. Leave your thoughts of the evil world behind. Join me on a journey to heaven. I am your guiding light and savior. I am the truth.

The high tone changes frequency slightly faster.

FATHER PETER (V.O. HEADPHONES)

I am your guiding light and savior.
I am the truth.

The high tone changes frequency faster.

FATHER PETER (V.O. HEADPHONES)

I am your guiding light and savior.
I am the truth.

The high tone changes frequency even faster. One by one the recruits including Ashley close their eyes.

EXT. BIBLE COLLEGE FRONT GATE - DAY

Michael drives his car and stops at the front gate. The security guard emerges from the guard shack and walks up to Michael's car. Michael rolls down his window.

SECURITY GUARD

(stern)

State your business.

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

I'm here to pick up my sister.

SECURITY GUARD

No one's allowed in without
permission from Father Peter.

MICHAEL

Can you call him and tell him
Ashley Moore's brother is here to
pick her up?

SECURITY GUARD

I'll be right back.

The security guard walks to the guard shack. He makes a phone call and returns to Michael's car as the electric gate opens. He points his finger down the road.

SECURITY GUARD

Follow the gravel road about a
mile. It goes around a couple of
curves and crosses a bridge about
half way there. The bible college
is a large building on your right.
You can't miss it.

MICHAEL

Thanks.

The security guard walks back to the guard house as Michael drives through the gate.

INT. BIBLE COLLEGE HALLWAY, BIBLE COLLEGE CONFERENCE ROOM -
DAY

Inside the church complex, a long hallway is lined on either side with doors. Brother Timothy walks down the hallway and enters one of the doors with a sign that reads "CONFERENCE ROOM".

Inside, Father Peter sits at a small table covered with folders and papers. As he reads one of the files, Brother Timothy enters the conference room.

BROTHER TIMOTHY

Hi Father.

FATHER PETER

Hello Timothy.

(CONTINUED)

BROTHER TIMOTHY
How are the new recruits doing?

FATHER PETER
It's always difficult to tell at
this stage. There's a pretty blond
girl I have my eye on.

BROTHER TIMOTHY
That must be Ashley.

FATHER PETER
I want to have a meeting with her.
Have her come to my office.

BROTHER TIMOTHY
Yes father.

Brother Timothy leaves the conference room.

Father Peter picks up the papers and folders and leaves the
conference room.

INT. BIBLE COLLEGE HALLWAY, FATHER PETER'S OFFICE - DAY

Off the hallway in a small cramped office sits a messy desk
next to a love seat. Behind the desk, in a glass picture
frame, hangs a diploma that reads "FATHER PETER, NEW LIFE
BIBLE COLLEGE".

Father Peter enters the office and sits at his desk and
hears a KNOCK on the door.

FATHER PETER
Come in.

Ashley opens the door.

FATHER PETER
It's Ashley isn't it?

Ashley nods. Father Peter points at the love seat.

FATHER PETER
Have a seat.

Ashely sits down and looks around the office.

FATHER PETER
I'm very happy you have joined our
community. If there's anything you
need please let me know.

(CONTINUED)

ASHLEY

I need to go home.

FATHER PETER

You just got here. Give it a little time.

ASHLEY

(terse)

This place is not for me. My brother is coming to pick me up shortly.

FATHER PETER

Ashley, I assure you, after a few days you will feel right at home.

ASHLEY

(angry)

I want out of here.

FATHER PETER

If that's how you really feel, Timothy will escort you to a waiting area.

Father Peter makes a phone call and Brother Timothy enters the office.

FATHER PETER

Brother Timothy, please take Ashley to the study room until her brother gets here.

BROTHER TIMOTHY

Yes father.

Father looks at Brother Timothy and nods and Brother Timothy nods back. Brother Timothy and Ashley leave the office.

INT. BIBLE COLLEGE STUDY ROOM - DAY

Brother Timothy and Ashley enter a room with a sign on the door that reads "STUDY ROOM". The dimly lit study room has several empty desks with computers and headphones. The bare walls of the study room are painted flat black.

Brother Timothy points to a nearby desk.

BROTHER TIMOTHY

Have a seat. Father Peter will come and get you when your brother

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BROTHER TIMOTHY (cont'd)
arrives. Would you like to watch a
movie to pass the time?

ASHLEY
OK.

Brother Timothy types on the computer keyboard and helps Ashley put on headphones. A video starts up on the computer monitor of Father Peter.

FATHER PETER(V.O. HEADPHONES)
Welcome to the New Life BIBLE
COLLEGE. We are here to guide your
spiritual journey to heaven. There
are about 90 members making their
home here. Some have have been with
us for over 10 years. We serve 3
hot meals a day in our cafeteria
and we have services and study time
every day. Brother Timothy is my
assistant and your point of contact
if you need anything. Our daily
services and study sessions are
designed to ease you into your new
spiritual awareness.

The video dissolves to a multicolored fractal and a high pitched TONE varies in frequency slightly up and down.

FATHER PETER (V.O. HEADPHONES)
I am your guiding light and savior.
I am the truth.

A high pitched TONE varies in frequency faster.

FATHER PETER (V.O. HEADPHONES)
I am your guiding light and savior.
I am the truth.

The TONE's frequency varies even faster as Ashley closes her eyes.

Brother Timothy types a few keys on the keyboard of Ashley's computer. The video and sound stop and he gently removes her headphones.

BROTHER TIMOTHY
Ashley.

Ashley slowly opens her eyes. She stares blankly at Brother Timothy.

(CONTINUED)

BROTHER TIMOTHY
Would you like to stay with us for
a while.

ASHLEY
Yes Brother Timothy.

Brother Timothy takes Ashley's arm and they exit the study room.

INT. BIBLE COLLEGE BUNKHOUSE - DAY

Brother Timothy and Ashley enter the bunkhouse. Brother Timothy points to an empty bed.

BROTHER TIMOTHY
You can rest here for a while.

ASHLEY
Thank you Brother Timothy

Ashley walks over to the bed, gets in, and closes her eyes.

Brother Timothy exits the bunkhouse.

EXT. FRONT OF BIBLE COLLEGE COMPLEX - DAY

Michael drives his car and parks in front of the bible college complex. Michael gets out of his car, walks up to the front door, and rings the bell. Brother Timothy opens the door.

BROTHER TIMOTHY
You must be Ashley's brother. Come
in.

Brother Timothy opens the front door wide and extends his arm pointing inside.

INT. BIBLE COLLEGE ENTRY ROOM, FATHER PETER'S OFFICE - DAY

Michael enters the doorway. The sparsely furnished entry room has a couch and a large fireplace. Several pictures of Father Peter hang on the walls. Brother Timothy points to the couch.

BROTHER TIMOTHY
Have a seat.

Michael sits down and Brother Timothy makes a phone call on his cell phone.

(CONTINUED)

FATHER PETER (V.O.)

Yes?

BROTHER TIMOTHY

Ashley's brother just got here.

FATHER PETER

Bring him to my office.

BROTHER TIMOTHY

Yes father.

Brother Timothy looks at Michael.

BROTHER TIMOTHY

Please come with me.

Michael follows Brother Timothy to Father Peter's office and they both enter.

BROTHER TIMOTHY

Father Peter this is Ashley's brother.

FATHER PETER

She's told me a lot about you. Have a seat.

Father Peter points at the love seat and Brother Timothy leaves the office.

MICHAEL

I don't need to sit down. Ashley called me and wants me to take her home.

FATHER PETER

Most of our members are a little nervous at first. They need a little time to get acclimated.

MICHAEL

(terse)

She doesn't want to acclimate. She wants to go home. Where is she?

FATHER PETER

She's tired from her trip and wanted to rest.

MICHAEL

(angry)

You bring her to me right now.

(CONTINUED)

FATHER PETER
OK Michael. If you wait in the
entry room I'll go and get her.

Michael exits Father Peter's office.

EXT. BIBLE COLLEGE ENTRY ROOM, FRONT OF BIBLE COLLEGE
COMPLEX - DAY

Michael looks all around the entry room then opens the front door. He looks at the front of the bible college complex where he parked his car. He sees an empty parking area and his eyes get wide with shock.

He runs out the front door and runs around the building frantically looking around.

He looks in the trees and bushes surrounding the building. He pulls back some brush exposing the chain link fence and in the process touches the fence. This results in a loud ELECTRIFYING NOISE, sparks, and a bright flash as he falls unconscious.

INT. BIBLE COLLEGE CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

In the conference room, Michael comes to as he lies on a table. Brother Timothy looks at Michael.

BROTHER TIMOTHY
Are you OK?

MICHAEL
What happened?

BROTHER TIMOTHY
You got an electric shock. You gave
us quite a scare.

MICHAEL
I don't remember anything.

BROTHER TIMOTHY
Your clothes got burned when you
were shocked. You can wear these.

Brother Timothy hands Michael a gray pair of overalls then uses his cell phone to make a phone call.

BROTHER TIMOTHY
Father Peter? (pause) Michael Moore
is awake now. (pause) Yes father.

(CONTINUED)

Brother Timothy looks at Michael.

BROTHER TIMOTHY
Please come with me, I have
something to make you feel better.

Michael gets up off the table and they both exit the conference room.

INT. BIBLE COLLEGE SANCTUARY - DAY

5 recruits wearing gray overalls and headphones sit at a table in the sanctuary. On the front wall, a large projected image reads "PLEASE PUT ON YOUR HEADPHONES".

Michael enters the room wearing gray overalls. He sits down at an empty desk and puts on the headphones. A high pitched TONE varies in frequency slightly up and down.

FATHER PETER(V.O. HEADPHONES)
I am your guiding light and savior.
I am the truth.

Michael gets a puzzled look on his face. He takes off his headphones and sets them down in front of him.

One by one, the new recruits close their eyes.

Michael looks around the room at the recruits wearing headphones. He looks at his headphones laying on the table in front of him, squints his eyes, and nods.

He stands up and cautiously walks out of the sanctuary.

INT. BIBLE COLLEGE BUNKHOUSE - DAY

Brother Timothy enters the bunkhouse and walks towards Ashley's bunk.

A LOUD BELL goes off.

The bell startles Ashley awake.

ASHLEY
What's that bell?

BROTHER TIMOTHY
That's the meal time bell. I was
just coming to get you. Walk with
me and I'll show you the cafeteria.

Brother Timothy escorts Ashley as they leave the bunk bed and exit the building.

INT. BIBLE COLLEGE CAFETERIA - DAY

In a cafeteria several bible college members, some wearing togas and some wearing gray overalls, wait in a line. Brother Timothy and Ashley enter the cafeteria. Brother Timothy points at the line.

BROTHER TIMOTHY

There's the line for food. Enjoy.

Brother Timothy exits the cafeteria as Ashley walks to the back of the line. Several BIBLE COLLEGE members sit at tables eating. Father Peter talks to one of the groups. He notices Ashley and walks over to her.

FATHER PETER

Hi Ashley. You settling in?

ASHLEY

I'm not really sure. Things are so confusing.

FATHER PETER

Give it a little time. Things will get better.

ASHLEY

I hope so. I'm not thinking too clearly.

FATHER PETER

Do you have any questions?

ASHLEY

Why am I feeling so confused?

FATHER PETER

Come over to my office after you finish eating. I can help you sort out your thoughts.

ASHLEY

Yes father.

INT. FATHER PETER'S OFFICE, BIBLE COLLEGE STUDY ROOM - DAY

Father Peter sits at his desk reading a file in his office. Ashley enters the office.

FATHER PETER
There you are.

ASHLEY
Hello father.

FATHER PETER
I have an advanced study video for you. Let's go over to the study room.

They both exit Father Peter's office and walk to the study room. Father Peter points to a desk.

FATHER PETER
Have a seat.

Ashley sits down and Father Peter helps her put on the headphones. He types a few keystrokes on the computer. He waves to her and exits the study room.

On the headphones, Ashley hears 3 TONES of varying frequencies. She watches as the computer monitor begins displaying multiple colors and geometrical patterns. She stares blankly at the monitor.

FATHER PETER(V.O. HEADPHONES)
I am your guiding light and savior.
It's time to completely let go. Let go of the evil given to you by the sad world. Let go of your journey to hell. I am your guiding light. I am the truth and the path to heaven.

FATHER PETER (V.O. HEADPHONES)
I am your guiding light and savior.
I am the truth. (pause) I am your guiding light and savior. I am the truth.

Ashley closes her eyes. Her eyeballs move all about under her closed eyelids.

INT. BIBLE COLLEGE HALLWAY, BIBLE COLLEGE STUDY ROOM - DAY

Michael cautiously walks down the hallway looking in the windows of each room he passes. He hears somebody coming from around the corner of the hallway. He ducks inside the nearest room, the study room, and sees Ashley with headphones on.

MICHAEL
(happy)
Ashley!

He runs up to Ashley and hugs her and then takes off her headphones. She slowly opens her eyes.

MICHAEL
(excited)
Ashley, I'm so glad to see you.
We've got to get out of here.

Ashley stares blankly at Michael.

MICHAEL
(stern)
Ashley!

Ashley continues staring blankly at Michael.

MICHAEL
You're coming with me.

Michael grabs Ashley forcibly by her arm and they run out of the study room and down the hallway.

EXT. REAR OF BIBLE COLLEGE COMPLEX, BIBLE COLLEGE FRONT GATE
- DAY

Michael and Ashley emerge from the back door of the church complex as he continues to hold her by the arm.

MICHAEL
(excited)
We have to find my car.

They run as they look for the car all around the main building and the bunk house.

MICHAEL
They've hidden my car. We've gotta
make a break for it.

(CONTINUED)

He continues to take her by the arm and they run down the gravel road toward the chain link gate. They come to the bridge and stop. Michael and Ashley bend over as they breathe heavy and fast.

MICHAEL

I need to catch my breath.

ASHLEY

So do I. But I am thinking clearly again. I felt like I was in a different world.

Michael looks closely into Ashley's eyes. Her life filled eyes and normal blinking return his look.

MICHAEL

That run must have snapped you out of it. Let's keep going.

They start to run individually and round the last curve before the chain link gate. The security guard spots them and exits the guard house. He starts running towards them.

SECURITY GUARD

(yelling)

Where are you going. Stop.

The security guard draws his gun and points it at Michael and Ashley. They both freeze and raise their hands in the air.

SECURITY GUARD

Hold it right there.

MICHAEL

Let us out of here.

SECURITY GUARD

That's for Father Peter to decide.

The security guard escorts them under gun point to the guard house. He goes inside the guard house while keeping the gun trained on them. He makes a phone call.

SECURITY GUARD

I have a guy and a girl here. They were trying to escape. (pause) Will do.

The security guard hangs up the phone and exits the guard house keeping his gun trained on Michael and Ashley.

(CONTINUED)

SECURITY GUARD

(stern)

Brother Timothy will be here shortly.

MICHAEL

(angry)

You can't hold us against our will.

SECURITY GUARD

That's for Father Peter to decide. Both of you. Sit on the ground with your backs facing each other.

Michael and Ashley sit back to back on the ground. The security guard walks back to the guard house while keeping the gun trained on them and takes a sip of coffee.

Brother Timothy pulls up in a golf cart.

BROTHER TIMOTHY

What's going on Ashley?

ASHLEY

I want to go home.

BROTHER TIMOTHY

There are better ways to do it than running away. Come with me back to the sanctuary and we can discuss it.

ASHLEY

We're not discussing anything. This place is a prison for freaks.

The security guard waves the gun at Michael and Ashley.

SECURITY GUARD

(stern)

You're both going to see Father Peter.

The security guard keeps the gun pointed at Michael and Ashley as they join Brother Timothy in the golf cart. The golf cart drives off towards the bible college sanctuary.

INT. FATHER PETER'S OFFICE, BIBLE COLLEGE HALLWAY - DAY

Michael and Ashley sit on the love seat in Father Peter's office. Father Peter leans back in his chair as he taps a finger on his desk.

FATHER PETER

What am I going to do with you two?

MICHAEL

Let us out of this prison.

FATHER PETER

Neither one of you are going anywhere.

MICHAEL

Yes we are.

Michael jumps out of the love seat and shoves Father Peter. Father Peter and his chair fall backwards crashing onto the floor. Michael grabs Ashley's arm and they run out of the office. Michael hears STEPS in the hallway.

MICHAEL

Come this way.

Michael and Ashley run down the hall, duck into the study room, and hide behind a table.

Suddenly, Father Peter burst through the study room door. Michael stands up and a fight ensues with Father Peter.

FATHER PETER

(straining)

You are full of demons.

MICHAEL

(straining)

You and this bible college are.

They continue fighting and Father Peter traps Michael against the wall near the door.

Brother Timothy walks down the hall and hears the commotion in the study room. He opens the door and enters. He sees the fight, grabs a chair and raises it in the air. Father Peter sees Brother Timothy with the chair.

FATHER PETER

(excited)

Hit him! Hit him!

(CONTINUED)

Brother Timothy hits Father Peter with the chair. Father Peter falls unconscious to the floor as blood gushes from a head wound. Michael and Ashley look at each other with shock.

BROTHER TIMOTHY
(excited)
I need to call an ambulance.

Brother Timothy uses his cell phone to dispatch an ambulance. While he's talking on the phone, Michael and Ashley race out of the study room.

EXT. BIBLE COLLEGE FRONT GATE - DAY

An ambulance pulls up to the front gate with it's lights flashing and siren WAILING.

The security guard waves at the ambulance driver, the gate opens, and the ambulance drives through the gate.

INT. BIBLE COLLEGE STUDY ROOM, BIBLE COLLEGE ENTRY ROOM - DAY

Father Peter lays bleeding profusely on the floor while Brother Timothy looks at him.

Michael and Ashley run down the hallway and through the entry room. They stop just inside the front door. The ambulance lights flicker through the stained glass windows.

ASHLEY
What are we going to do?

MICHAEL
Fake like you have appendicitis.
Bend over and hold your stomach.

Ashley bends over and holds her stomach. Michael opens the door and helps her outside.

EXT. FRONT OF BIBLE COLLEGE COMPLEX - DAY

The PARAMEDICS rush over to Ashley.

PARAMEDIC
What happened?

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

(excited)

I think she has appendicitis or something.

The paramedics get a gurney from the ambulance and bring it to the porch. They strap Ashley to the gurney and load her inside the ambulance. Michael gets in the ambulance and the ambulance drives off.

INT. BIBLE COLLEGE STUDY ROOM - DAY

In the study room, Brother Timothy picks up a chair and hits Father Peter repeatedly and watches as Father Peter bleeds to death on the floor.

EXT. BIBLE COLLEGE FRONT GATE - DAY

The ambulance pulls up to front gate. The security guard waves and gate opens. The ambulance drives through the open gate leaving the bible college.

INT. FATHER PETER'S OFFICE - DAY

Brother Timothy leaves the study room and walks to Father Peter's Office. He takes down the sign on the outside of the door that reads "FATHER PETER" and goes inside the office. He returns outside the door and tapes on a hand written sign that reads "FATHER TIMOTHY".