



IN A CELL

Written by Brian Gallagher

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Press Kit

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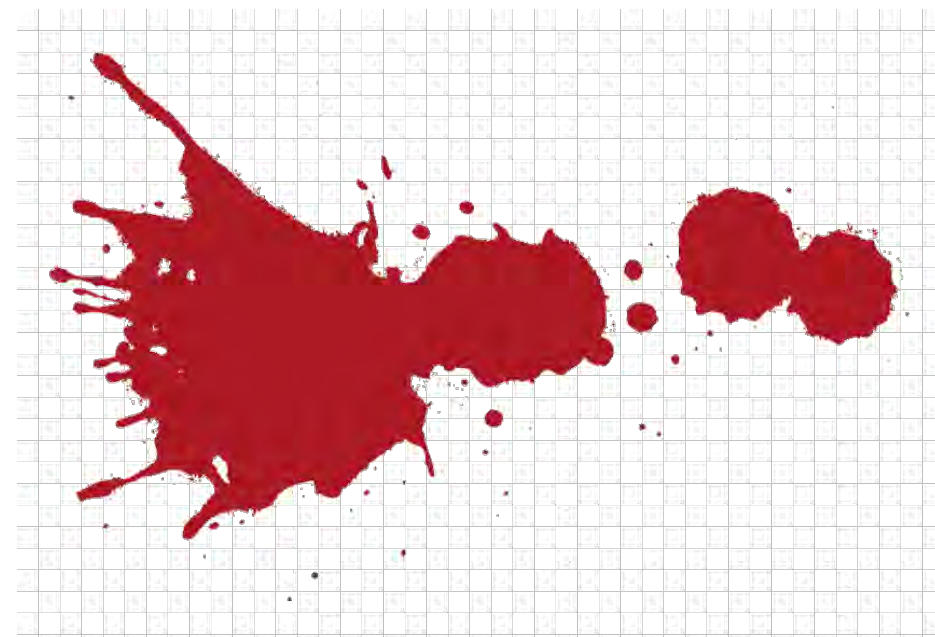
The image features a dark, vertical background of prison cell bars. The bars are arranged in a grid pattern, with horizontal bars at the top and bottom, and three vertical bars in the center. The text is overlaid on this background.

*First the cell
Then to hell*

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FIRST STOP: THE CELL. THEN, STRAIGHT TO HELL.

LOGLINE: A young newcomer and older professional trapped on Death Row debate the severity and authenticity of their sins, arguing whether their lives truly end here.





BRIEF DESCRIPTION

After his trial is made the subject of a media circus, Azura finds himself on Death Row, locked in the same cell with one of his “fans” – Noah. Coming from different generations, Azura and Noah immediately enter a philosophical conflict. As they divulge their pasts, the two vehemently debate the merits and influence of God, coincidence, and divine punishment on the fate of their lives. Tensions rise between both men, and as no guards stand to monitor their cell, neither one is completely averse to violence as a means to resolve this altercation...

LONGER SYNOPSIS:

After his trial is made the subject of a media circus, Azura, a young and handsome man, finds himself on Death Row. Unfortunately, he is not alone. Azura's holding cell is occupied by a scraggly, one-eyed old man, Noah. From the moment Noah speaks, Azura and him do not see eye to eye. Simple mockery escalates to chastisement when Noah discovers that Azura is an atheist. Wanting Azura to repent before his death, Noah brandishes a knife and demands Azura listen to why he believes in God. Azura, seeing no way out, reluctantly obliges.

Noah recalls the moment his belief in God solidified. As a younger man, he was involved in a larger bank heist with several co-conspirators. The operation was progressing smoothly, until Noah tried to rob a crucifix necklace off a hostage. Instantly, his fate was sealed. The moment Noah takes the cross, one of his colleagues shoots and kills a civilian. Chaos falls upon the scene. Trying to run away, Noah accidentally shoots one of his eyes out, leaving him bleeding on the ground and down one eye.

In the present, Azura refutes that story as anything other than anecdotal evidence. Tension rises as Noah tries to coax Azura into telling the story of his crime. As they continue to bicker, Noah's caustic comments push Azura to punch him in the face. Rather than fight back with his knife, Noah just laughs and waits for Azura to tell his story.

Azura recalls coming home drunk one night to find his wife and child dead. While his explanation is simple and logical, Noah pokes holes and inconsistencies in his story. He points out how "There is no such thing as coincidence". Just as God must have intervened to punish Noah years ago, the incomprehensible level of circumstantial evidence around the murder of Azura's family suggests no other perpetrator: Azura must have done it himself.

As things are about to escalate again physically, a guard escorts Noah out from the cell. His time has come. Upon leaving the cell, Noah informs Azura that there is a Bible under his bed he should try reading. Although Azura does try to read the holy book, he finds no comfort in its words and remains staunchly atheistic. However, in his final line, he does admit aloud that "For your sake, old man, I hope you're right." – reflecting that perhaps he wishes his mind could be changed.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT:

This film was inspired by personal anxieties I had at age sixteen once I realized after a decade of Catholic school that Jesus was not my cup of tea. Originally, one page of this script was written as a brief writing exercise during my senior year of English class – a restriction which would intrinsically force the film to pose difficult questions rather than definitive answers. As a result, the film is bound to generate questions in the minds of both apostates and believers alike, instilling the same introspection and quandaries I faced as a teenager.

The world feels much different about God than it did even two decades ago. Recently at a Phoebe Bridgers concert, between songs, the artist said, “Believing in nothing is stupid, but God isn’t real.” Immediately, thousands of people erupted into a roar of applause. While that second clause may be shocking, I think it would be wise to not forget the first part of her quote: “Believing in nothing is stupid...”

I think this speaks to a broader human sentiment; even those who don’t believe in God find the idea of being alone in this universe terrifying. In creating this film, I hope to better expound upon the concept of belief – to ask religious people if their beliefs make sense to them, and ask non-religious people if they are truly comfortable with the absence of all beliefs.



FILMMAKER'S BIO:

Brian Gallagher is an emerging screenwriter and editor from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Brian has been writing scripts since high school and in college has written several shorts, both inside and outside of the classroom. In addition to editing done for his coursework, Brian has also edited videos for Temple Smash, a sketch comedy group on Temple's campus. During his spare time, he has written and edited video essays posted to YouTube, the latest of which accumulated over 37,000 views in six months.





CHARACTER BIO: AZURA

Azura is a handsome 28 year old man who had “his whole life ahead of him” until his wife and child were killed. With his future gone, Azura appears irritable, impatient, and impulsive. With nothing left, there are few boundaries he won’t consider crossing; there are almost no ethical lines he respects. Additionally, as a younger man, he is far more disillusioned with religion than the older folks around him.

CHARACTER BIO: NOAH

Noah is an unkempt, greasy, long-white haired old man who has “seen it all”. Having already lived through the majority of his natural life, Noah finds humor in his predicament. For a man who is about to die, he is remarkably calm – although in his case, he believes this is but the start of a new beginning. His composure allows him to play the witty, wisdom-bearing old man, acting as the antithesis of the main character.





LOOK BOOK
IMAGES: (1/4)

This still represents how the cell should feel. The cell should have stark lighting, dynamically opposing the two leads side-by-side.

(Taken from "Hunger" 2008 dir. Steve McQueen)



LOOK BOOK IMAGES: (2/4)

While the set may not be perhaps as grandiose, the bank is certainly meant to feel less stark compared to the cell. It should be a more evenly lit setting, with more hope, feeling less dour.

(The Dark Knight – dir. Christopher Nolan)

LOOK BOOK IMAGES: (3/4)

This ad has the right look for the kitchen at night. While there is still some color, the room feels somewhat dim and ominous. The room feels a little too pristine, suggesting something may be awry out of frame.



(Late Night Snack – dir. Brigg Bloomquist)



LOOK BOOK IMAGES: (4/4)

This shot captures how the prison should look: dingey, grungy, and dirty. The smears on the wall sell the audience on how this area is not well managed, and the wide framing helps the characters feel removed from the larger world.

(OldBoy – dir. Park Chon-Wook)

A photograph of a tunnel with a bright light at the end, creating a strong perspective effect. The tunnel walls are dark and textured, and the light at the end is a bright, glowing orb.

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(All images sourced from online)