



Grace in the Shadows

A Groundbreaking Faith-Based Noir Film

Grace in the Shadows is not just another faith-based movie—it's a daring reimagining of Christian cinema. Shot in a striking **noir style**, this powerful film exposes the depths of human sin while revealing the unstoppable light of God's grace in a way never before seen on screen.

Inspired by the true events chronicled in *Murder in the Church*, this story ventures where most Christian films refuse to go—into the raw, unfiltered darkness of deception, betrayal, and brokenness.

At its heart lies the personal testimony of **Pastor Chris J. Schimel**, who courageously shares the painful struggles within his own church community. Through shattered trust and spiritual warfare, his journey reveals a single, timeless truth: **only the love of God can redeem what sin has destroyed.**

Grace in the Shadows is more than a film—it's a wake-up call, a testimony, and a cinematic experience that will challenge and inspire audiences to see God's grace in places they never imagined.

Character Profile: Elliot Fenwick

Age: Late 40s

Occupation: Self Employed – Fence Builder

Elliot Fenwick is somewhat shy but can be outspoken and opinionated. At first glance he appears about 5'9" tall, a bit stocky, with a full head of neatly-combed dark brown hair. He spends most of his time in the background. He often appears to be surveying the scene, which makes him seem mysterious to some. He has somewhat of a gruff voice and people will sometimes say of him, "He scares me."

In daily life Elliot can be found tinkering in his workshop, if not working on fence preparation, fixing something. Friends would describe him as quiet, stern but with a dry kind of humor. He will often be found with mild dissenters, but has a giving heart and a soft spot for those down on their luck.

Beneath the surface, however, Elliot struggles with self-esteem issues. He feels inadequate, but tries to appear confident. This stems from a troubled childhood where he was abused physically and mentally. And this is, no doubt, why he is often found with nay-sayers; and he has a way of finding something wrong with things, especially in the church he attends.

Sides

3 EXT. CHURCH SIDE LAWN - SAME

3

ELLIOT FENWICK (40s, solid but weary) hunches over a partly-assembled wooden bench. He stretches his back, wincing.

Beside him, VINCE LUPIN (late 20s, wiry, tattoo faint under rolled-up sleeve) works with easy strength, driving a bolt with quick precision.

ELLIOT wipes sweat from his brow, grimacing as he lifts a plank. His back twinges. VINCE LUPIN steps in smoothly, steadying the weight. Vince grins, steadying the beam so Elliot doesn't strain.

VINCE

Careful, boss. Don't want you down
before the hymn-sing. I got it.
Don't push too hard.

Elliot chuckles weakly, grateful.

ELLIOT

That's what I pay you for, right?
Strong back, bad jokes.

They laugh. Vince's hand rests on Elliot's shoulder just a fraction too long, framed like camaraderie. His smile lingers

— to everyone else: harmless. To us: a shade too fixed.

7 INT. FENWICK HOUSE - DINING ROOM - EVENING

7

Warm light glows. A table dressed with fall leaves in a jar, a meager but carefully arranged meal: chicken thighs, bread, applesauce. SARAH serves with quiet care. ELLIOT sits stiffly, rubbing his lower back, weary from the day's work.

The mantel is trimmed with pumpkins and a harvest wreath. Norman Rockwell surface. The silence is heavy. Forks scrape. Sarah gathers courage.

SARAH

(soft, careful)

Elliot... Christi wants to go on the
youth trip--A week in Mexico,

building houses. The other girls
are signing up. I'd love for her to
go. It would be good for her, you
know, and her relationship with
the Lord.

She sets down her fork, searching his face.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I told her we'd pray about it.
But... there's a deposit. Soon.

Elliot stops chewing. His eyes tighten.

ELLIOT
(flat, weary)
Money again. Always money.

Sarah leans forward gently, voice soft, not pushing.

SARAH
I just thought... maybe if business
picks up—Vince seems to be
helping...

SMASH FLASHBACK

9 INT. FENWICK HOUSE - DINING ROOM - EVENING

9

Elliot's fork clatters against the plate. His eyes burn,
seeing not Sarah, but the shadow of his father.

ELLIOT
(voice rising)
So now I'm too stupid to
provide? Is that it?

Sarah flinches, startled.

SARAH
Elliot—no. That's not what I—

11 INT. FENWICK HOUSE - DINING ROOM - EVENING

11

Elliot jolts back. He pushes back from the table, chair legs
scraping harsh against the floor.

ELLIOT
(angry, pained)
Every time. You don't see what I do.
You don't see how hard I work —
just not enough.

Sarah's eyes glisten, her voice breaking.

SARAH
(pleading)
I only wanted to help Christi

ELLIOT His jaw clenches. His breath is ragged.

He can't separate Sarah's concern from his father's scorn.

He snatches his jacket from the back of the chair, storming toward the door.

SARAH
(quiet, aching)
Elliot... when did we get so far
apart?

DOOR SLAMS. The sound reverberates unnaturally long, like in his flashback.

12 EXT. JOB SITE TRAILERS - FALL EVENING

12

The foothills are dark silhouettes. A chill wind skims through the pines. In front of two dented trailers, a FIRE PIT glows low, embers crackling.

ELLIOT FENWICK slumps into a camp chair, jacket collar turned up, eyes hollow. Across from him, VINCE LUPIN pokes the fire with a stick, easy, casual, like they're on a hunting trip.

VINCE
(quiet, coaxing)
Rough night?

Elliot exhales, long, weary. His voice is thin.

ELLIOT
Same as always. Sarah's... never
satisfied. Money. Business.
It's never enough.

Vince nods, listening, not judging. He leans back, smoke curling around his face.

VINCE
You're carrying too much, man.
Anyone can see that.

ELLIOT
Feels like she's calling me
stupid. Always has.

Vince leans in, his voice dropping, calm but firm.

VINCE
You're not stupid, Elliot. You
built all this with your own
hands. You gave me work when no

one else would. That's not a weakness. That's a strength.

Vince gestures toward Elliot's back with his chin.

VINCE
And that pain in your back?
That's not weakness either.
That's the price of hard work.
You've earned the right to
rest. Let me shoulder some of
it.

Elliot studies him. His breath catches — the first hint of relief.

VINCE (CONT'D)
Teach me the business. Let me take
some weight. I learned accounting
inside the joint. Even got a
certificate. Numbers make sense to
me. I can help.

He tosses another log onto the fire. Sparks whirl upward like fireflies.

14 EXT. JOB SITE TRAILERS - FALL EVENING

14

Elliot stares at the sparks, his face lit orange.

ELLIOT
Maybe you're the only one who sees
me.

Vince's hand rests briefly on Elliot's shoulder — casual, "friendly," but lingering.

VINCE
I've got your back. Always.

His eyes flicker — shame, need, and something dangerously close to gratitude.

She pauses. His tone freezes her. She sets the plates aside, wipes her hands on her apron, and sits across from him at the table.

VINCE lingers in the doorway to the hall, silent, arms folded. Candlelight flickers across his face, unreadable.

ELLIOT
(halting)
I've... made some decisions. About
the business. About... us.

Sarah blinks, leans in slightly.

ELLIOT

I've signed papers tonight. Vince...
will be half-owner. Starting now.

SARAH

(steady, low) Half
owner?

ELLIOT

(pressing, sharper now)
He's earned it. He understands
things I don't. He'll help keep it
afloat.

Silence. The fire pops. Sarah's hands tighten on the edge of
the table.

ELLIOT

(voice tightening)
And... I can't go on here, Sarah.
Not like this. I'm filing for a
divorce.

Her breath catches — but she does not flinch.

ELLIOT

I'll come back for the rest of my
things tomorrow. And you'll need...
to sign these divorce papers.

The word lands heavy.

Warm lamplight, autumn décor, a family home glowing. But
behind Elliot, VINCE stands like a shadow sentry, the wolf
already inside. Behind Sarah, the fire flickers like a
host of unseen wings.

Sarah exhales slowly. When she speaks, her tone is calm,
impossibly even.

CLOSE ON: Elliot's face — sweat beads his temple. His lips
move, but his eyes flick sideways to Vince.

CHRISTI

(pleading, louder)
Say it to me. Look me in the eye
— I need to hear it from you.

Elliot's jaw works. His voice cracks, thin.

ELLIOT

I... don't know who I am anymore.
But when he's here... I feel less...
lost.

Vince's hand slides onto Elliot's shoulder, slow,
possessive. His eyes never leave Christi.

Christi steps forward, fearless, voice breaking.

CHRISTI

He's not saving you,
Dad. He's stealing you.

Pain flickers in Elliot's eyes. He half-lifts a hand toward her.

ELLIOT

You were always my brave one.
I wanted to protect you... but now—

Vince leans, shadow falling across them both. His voice low, silken.

VINCE

Careful, little girl.
The world's not always what it
seems. Lets just leave it there for
all of our sake.

Christi's chin lifts. She refuses to break.

CHRISTI

Dad?

The word hangs. Elliot's face collapses — torn between daughter and predator.

ELLIOT

(whisper, ashamed) I'm
sorry, Christina.

SARAH

(locks eyes, cold)
Elliot! He is the other woman. A
thief. A homewrecker. Step across
this threshold—I call the police.

A silence, taut as wire. Wind rattles the shutter.

Vince freezes. Rage flickers—then something else, a flicker of fear. He recalibrates. Retreats a step. Begins to PACE on the porch, circling like a caged animal, boots crunching leaves.

Elliot slips inside the door, trembling. His whisper cracks.

ELLIOT

(hoarse, breaking)
Sarah... I do love you.

Sarah steadies, breath catching. She presses a folded NOTE into his palm—scripture verses, handwritten.

SARAH

Keep them. Read later.

Elliot tucks it into his pocket, eyes shining, then glances toward Vince's pacing shadow across the glass.

ELLIOT sits hunched on the edge of a chair, phone pressed hard to his ear. Behind him, VINCE paces like a caged predator, his shadow gliding along the wall. Elliot's tone is rigid, formal, yet trembling underneath - coded.

ELLIOT

Just calling to let you know...
a lady rescheduled her hair
appointment.
Two o'clock today.
Thought you should be ready.

Floorboards CREAK under Vince's weight.

Elliot glances sideways. Vince's pacing shadow slides closer.

ELLIOT

No. We worked late. Couldn't get
there. I'll go today. We'll quit
early. I'll be there this
afternoon.

Vince stops - looming just behind him. Elliot's eyes drop,
voice shrinking.

CUT TO:

ELLIOT

Yes, Sarah. He does close early on
Wednesdays. Vince swivels slowly
toward Elliot.

CUT TO:

Elliot falters, the mask slipping

ELLIOT

(soft, almost human)
Okay... good-bye, I guess.

CLICK. The line dies.

SARAH slips inside, hood up. She clutches a SEALED ENVELOPE. The CHIROPRACTOR - massive, steady - looks up from paperwork. She crosses quickly, presses the envelope into his palm. Their eyes lock: her fear, his reluctant resolve. Before she can leave - The FRONT DOOR CREAKS. SARAH freezes. VINCE LUPIN strides in, Elliot trailing behind like a tethered shadow. Sarah ducks. The Chiropractor jerks his head toward the back. Sarah darts through a side door, vanishing into the STORAGE ROOM.

Vince's gaze sweeps the room. Suspicion. Hunger. The bell above the door still trembles. The CHIROPRACTOR forces casual warmth.

CHIROPRACTOR

Hi, Elliot. I'll be right with you. Just finishing paperwork.

(He rises, massive,
smiling too wide.)

And who's your friend?

ELLIOT

Oh - this is Vince. He... works with me.

VINCE

(low, lingering
handshake)

Appreciate you making time.

The grip lingers a beat too long. The Chiropractor nods stiffly, gestures Elliot toward the exam room. Dim blinds filter bruised daylight. Thunder rumbles. The Chiropractor cracks his knuckles, signals silence, slips the ENVELOPE into Elliot's hand. Elliot tucks it into his jacket, fingers trembling. The faintest CRINKLE betrays him. ON THE FROSTED GLASS: Vince's shadow stops pacing. Turns. Inside, Elliot freezes. Hand clamps his pocket. The Chiropractor moves fast - CRACK, an adjustment. Bones snap. Elliot exhales, covering the sound. The shadow lingers... then pivots toward the STORAGE ROOM door.

ELLIOT FENWICK sits stiff in the passenger seat, chest heaving. Silence presses in. On the dash: VINCE'S CELL PHONE glints faintly. Elliot stares. Swallows. Then SNATCHES it, trembling fingers dialing fast.

ELLIOT

(whispering, frantic) Sarah - what are you doing? You'll ruin everything. He made me a deal. Said I could go east - if he comes too. He knows how I feel about you. He's nervous. Suspicious. If you want me

back- you must stop the
restraining order.

His breath quickens. Sweat beads. He glances out the rain-streaked windshield.

ABRUPTLY-

The VAN DOOR YANKS OPEN. Vince towers in, triple burger clutched in his fist, grease and ketchup dripping thick - red smears splattering his knuckles. The call cuts dead.

DEAD TONE

Vince CHEWS slowly, never breaking his stare. Neon light streaks his face in red bars. CLOSE ON - ketchup dripping down his shirt, vivid as fresh wounds.

65 INT. VINCE & ELLIOT' S APARTMENT - WEDNESDAY NIGHT

65

Dim light. Cigarette smoke coils. A single bare bulb hums above the table. On the table: a cell phone. It RINGS - sharp, metallic. Each peal reverberates like the montage sounds stillechoing. VINCE sits back, wolfish grin curling. His hand settles heavily on ELLIOT' S shoulder.

VINCE
(low, calm) Pick it
up.

Elliot obeys, fingers trembling. He clicks the speaker.

OFFICER (V.O.)
(tinny, distant)
Mr. Fenwick? Your wife called.
She fears someone may be holding
you. Are you being held by
force?

Elliot glances sideways. Vince's grip tightens - bone-deep.

ELLIOT
(too calm, rehearsed) No.
Of course not.

OFFICER (V.O.)
Are you speaking freely?
Or is someone... influencing you?

Vince leans close, his shadow blotting Elliot's face. Elliot stiffens, voice cracking under pressure.

ELLIOT

I'm speaking entirely for
myself. No one is influencing
me.

A long pause. Vince watches his lips, grip grinding harder.

OFFICER (V.O.)
Very well. You'll call us if you
need help--won't you?

ELLIOT
(quick, broken) Yes.
I will.

SOUND FX: CLICK. Dead tone.

Elliot lowers the receiver slowly, shoulders slumping. The
silence is suffocating. Vince leans in, lips almost brushing
Elliot's ear.

VINCE
(whisper, venom)
That wife of yours... she isn't very
smart. She'd better watch herself.
Or she might wind up in deep
trouble. And it will be your
fault.

His hand lingers – not comfort, but claim. Eyes darting,
pale, trapped without chains. Smoke curls upward, blotting
out the light.

FADE TO BLACK.

71 EXT. ELLIOT & VINCE' S APARTMENT - THURSDAY NIGHT

71

Police HEADLIGHTS slice across the grim apartment block. The
KNOCK echoes down the corridor. The door CREAKS open. VINCE
LUPIN fills the frame, leaning smugly against the jamb.
Cigarette smoke curls. His grin is thin, mocking.

SEAVER
Evening. Welfare check. Is Elliot
Fenwick here?

Vince chuckles, spreading his hands in mock innocence.

VINCE
Sure. He's right here. Nothing to
hide.

He turns, sing-song:

VINCE
Elliot--couple of officers want a
word.

Elliot rises slowly from the couch inside. His eyes dart to Vince, shoulders hunched. He shuffles forward, head bowed.

SEAVER
Are you Elliot Fenwick?

ELLIOT
Yes.

SEAVER
Step outside with me. Alone.

Elliot hesitates. His gaze flicks to Vince. Vince smirks wider, voice smooth.

VINCE
You don't need my permission.
You're a grown man.

The smile lingers, cruel. Elliot follows Seaver into the yard. Another OFFICER remains, eyes locked on Vince in the doorway.

CUT TO:

74 INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY - THURSDAY NIGHT

74

ELLIOT stumbles in, shaking.

He collapses into the front pew beside SARAH, who immediately gathers him close. Elliot curls into himself, rocking, clutching his chest as though to keep it from splitting. His voice spills in broken fragments.

ELLIOT
(whimpering,
between sobs)
Thank you... You saved me. Saved my
life. I don't deserve it. But thank
you.

SARAH strokes his hair, whispering.

SARAH
Hush now. You're safe. You're
here. That's enough tonight.

CHRISTI
Dad... I told you, I'm not afraid of
him. But you are. You need to stay
with us.

Elliot shakes, sobbing harder, then gasps the words through clenched teeth:

ELLIOT
You don't know... what he's capable
of.

JONATHAN kneels, steady, pastoral, but probing like Father Brown.

JONATHAN
Elliot—did Vince
threaten you? Threaten
Sarah?

ELLIOT
No, he said he'd ruin me. Ruin us.
And if I left— I'd be sorry. Sorry
forever.

Jonathan exhales, eyes narrowing.

VINCE (V.O.)
Then... I need to go. Maybe I'll
write. Goodbye. And for what it's
worth... love you, too.

Elliot stares at the black screen. His shoulders sag, then
straighten too quickly, a smile cracking wide — boyish,
fragile.

79 INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

79

The door opens. Elliot steps out, phone still in hand, grin
stretched across his face. SARAH sits up, arms folded, eyes
narrowed. CHRISTI lies back on her pillow, watching him
sharply.

ELLIOT
He's leaving. He's going Back
east. Three thousand miles. We'll
never see him again.

He blurts it, too eager, too relieved. Sarah doesn't
share the smile. Her tone cuts through.

SARAH
We're still going to the police.
Add the names. Today.

ELLIOT
Most definitely, yeah.

He nods too fast, gathering clothes, almost giddy. Christi
looks at her mother, then at her father. The FAUCET DRIPS in
the bathroom, faint but relentless.

DRIP

.

DRIP

.

DRIP

.

CHRISTI

He's not gone, Mom. Not yet.

HOLD on Christi's watchful hopeful face.

FADE OUT.

INT. CHURCH OFFICE - FRIDAY MORNING

Muted daylight filters through half-closed blinds, striping PASTOR JONATHAN BRANT'S face with shadows. His DESK is cluttered: open Bible, scribbled notes, a coffee mug gone cold. The PHONE rests between his shoulder and ear. Jonathan's hand hovers over his notes, PEN tapping rhythmically - too fast, too sharp. ON THE LINE - ELLIOT'S VOICE (FILTERED), too cheerful, almost buoyant.

ELLIOT (V.O.)

Everything's fine now,
Pastor. Sarah's calmer,
Christi's doing better... You
don't need to worry.

Jonathan doesn't answer right away. His pen JABS the paper with nervous taps, leaving ink dots scattered like bullet holes. CLOSE ON - his brow furrowed, jaw clenched, eyes dark with doubt.

ELLIOT (V.O.)

(forced chuckle)
Vince isn't a problem anymore.
I've got it under control.

Jonathan leans back, the phone pressed tighter to his ear. His eyes drift to the CROSS on the wall - silent, steady - while Elliot's false cheer drones on. Jonathan's face says everything: he doesn't believe a word. He finally mutters, low, almost to himself:

JONATHAN

Lord... give me wisdom.

The call continues, Elliot's upbeat voice echoing against Jonathan's silence. The PEN STOPS tapping -

FADE OUT

INT. POLICE STATION - FRIDAY MORNING

The room is stark - HARSH FLUORESCENTS hum overhead, casting sickly light on gray walls and metal chairs. The air is dry, institutional.

SARAH and ELLIOT sit side by side at a battered desk. They look small under the glare, swallowed by bureaucracy.

A POLICE OFFICER in uniform works through paperwork with mechanical precision. Each STAMP of his rubber seal echoes like a gunshot in the silence.

STAMP.

ELLIOT

(voice cracking,
desperate)

I know what you guys must be thinking about me and your right whatever it is. I've been dealing with this hidden sin for many many years and somehow God extended grace to me. Things happened to me when I was a boy but instead of dealing with it I wrestled with it secretly. Then finally this guy comes along and well it was the enemy coming and I did not see the shadow it cast on me and my family. I was prepared to deal with my consequences but never thought the price would be the ones I love.

JONATHAN

Listen brother we have all sinned and come short of His Glory but when we open the door for the enemy we don't control what happens once he gets in. We are here for you let us know how we can support you and your family.

ELLIOT

I must confess... before them all. The whole church. I have to tell them. All of it. The church. This Sunday, if they forgive me—good. If not—I'll understand. But I have to confess. If I don't tell them, it will kill me.

He motions Elliot in. Elliot collapses into a chair, wringing his hands. A long silence. The elders watch, waiting.

Jonathan leans forward, voice quiet but cutting.

JONATHAN

Elliot... tell me plain. Please help us understand how this all happened. Elliot flinches, eyes

darting. He tries to speak,
stammers.

87 EXT. FLASHBACK - PORN BOOKSTORE - NIGHT

87

Elliot's van parked outside of an adult Book store he gets
out looking around making sure no one sees him.