



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: Vincint “Vince” Lupin

Age: Late 20s

Occupation: Recently Paroled; Works in a Fence Installation Business

Vincint “Vince” Lupin carries himself with a confidence that feels just slightly too polished—almost rehearsed. He speaks boldly, as if he always knows what he’s talking about, but there’s something performative in the way he commands attention. Standing about **5’9”** with a **solid, muscular build** honed from years of weightlifting in prison, Vince cuts an imposing figure. His **dirty-blonde hair**, buzzed to half an inch, frames a face that seems to watch and calculate before acting.

In a crowd, Vince often lingers in the corners, observing through **narrowed eyes** until someone draws him into conversation—then he flips the switch, suddenly charming, loud, and magnetic. To some, he’s the life of the party; to others, he’s someone they can’t quite trust.

On the surface, Vince is a **hard worker**, showing dedication to his job and a rough-edged charisma that attracts people. But beneath that outgoing front lies something darker—an undercurrent of **insecurity and control**. His efforts to be likable often feel strained, as if he’s overcompensating for something buried deep. When he gets close to someone, his friendliness can shift into manipulation.

During his time in prison, Vince’s need for dominance turned destructive. His aggression and sexual oppression of other inmates eventually led to **18 months in solitary confinement**—a secret that wouldn’t come to light until after the events that inspired this story.

Underneath his bravado, Vince is a **deeply damaged man**, scarred by a childhood of **physical and sexual abuse**. The trauma left him with lifelong **self-esteem issues and explosive anger**, a dangerous combination when mixed with his charm and impulsivity. He believes he can control the world around him through force of will and manipulation—but his thinking is **irrational, self-serving, and ultimately doomed to fail**.

Vince Lupin is a man constantly at war—with others, with his past, and most of all, with himself.

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.

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

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 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.

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.

The CAMERA drifts back: two men at a fire, framed against the looming trailers and dark hills. A portrait of "companionship"... but in the firelight, Vince's shadow swallows Elliot's.

SUPER: DAY 1 SATURDAY

1 6 INT. FENWICK HOUSE - DINING ROOM - SATURDAY EVENING

1 6

The room glows warmly. Candles flicker in mismatched holders, and leaves and gourds decorate the table. The table is set with roast chicken, steaming vegetables, and glasses of iced tea. GUESTS laugh, chatter overlapping, and silverware clinks. Plates of steaming food are passed, laughter layered over the clink of silverware.

ELLIOT sits at the head of the table with a practiced smile. At his right is SARAH, glowing with hostess pride. Next to her is CHRISTI, hair neatly brushed, though her eyes wander, restless.

Across: PASTOR JONATHAN and MAGDALENA, genial, engaged, hands folded politely.

At Elliot's left: VINCE LUPIN. The CAMERA glides along the table, faces glowing in warm lamplight — until it finds VINCE LUPIN. A collared shirt, sleeves rolled. He carves the roast with ease, laughing at a story Jonathan tells, passing the platter with a charming nod. He sits too still. His smile is precise, his eyes calculating. A shadow from the storm-darkened window cuts across his face, deepening the hollows.

SARAH

(raising her glass, beaming)
To friends, to family, to God's provision.

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.

The line lands like a slap. Christi's face crumples. She reaches– But Elliot recoils. For a heartbeat, he forces a stiff, empty hug. Then peels away.

Vince slides the VAN DOOR – SHHHUNK. He climbs in, smirk thinning, eyes still on her. Elliot follows, head bowed.

Christi SLAMS her fist against the metal – THUD. Her mouth opens in a scream, but a PASSING TRUCK devours the sound.

ENGINE IGNITES. The van lurches, spraying dust. Taillights smear red through the haze.

Christi stands alone in the settling dust, trembling. Small. Defiant. Silent.

HOLD – until the lot is empty, traffic rushing on indifferent.

CUT TO BLACK.

3 4 INT./ EXT. FENWICK HOUSE - FOYER / PORCH -

3 4

Muted light spills across scuffed tile. The house holds its breath.

In the HALLWAY MIRROR, SARAH stands half in shadow, arms braced, eyes fixed.

ELLIOT stuffs shirts into an open DUFFEL. His movements are hurried, jerky.

VINCE fills the doorway behind him, body blocking half the light, his stillness coiled, watchful. The ZIPPER rasps shut. Elliot glances up—via reflection. His broken half-smile flickers like apology.

Sarah doesn't move. Her hand presses flat against the wall, knuckles white. Finally, she steps into the open. Voice low, firm.

SARAH

Not him. Not in my house. I want him out of my house.

Elliot falters, duffel half-slung. Vince tilts his head, faint grin curdling.

VINCE

(soft, mocking)

This is Elliot's house too. He wants me here. Not you.

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.

VINCE leans halfway in, nostrils flaring. His eyes dart to a faint reflection in a chrome tray – the blurred outline of a CAR parked far back in the lot, barely visible through the blinds. He stiffens. The CHIROPRACTOR steps in, filling the doorway, voice firm.

CHIROPRACTOR

Just storage. You need samples? Back pain cream. Free.

Beat. Vince holds his gaze. A thin smile.

VINCE

Maybe later.

He shuts the door. Sits. His eyes burn into Elliot while the Chiropractor resumes the adjustment.

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 still echoing. 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:

77 INT. HOTEL ROOM - FRIDAY EARLY MORNING

77

Dim light seeps through heavy curtains. The cheap bedside CLOCK reads 5:47. On the nightstand, ELLIOT FENWICK's cell phone VIBRATES. The screen glows: UNKNOWN NUMBER. He stiffens on the edge of the bed, shirt half-buttoned. His hand hovers, trembling. The phone BUZZES again. Finally, he snatches it up, pressing it to his ear. Silence. A faint HUM. Then—

VINCE (V.O.)

Elliot... don't hang up, Please.

Elliot jolts, glances at SARAH and CHRISTI stirring in their beds. He slips into the BATHROOM, shutting the door soft. The LOCK clicks.

78 INT. HOTEL BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

78

ThePHONE pressed tight to his ear, his lips tremble.

VINCE

I didn't know you were so... uncomfortable. I'm sorry. I thought you loved me. I guess I was wrong.

Elliot whispers, voice low, broken.

ELLIOT
I do love you, Vince.

VINCE (V.O.)

No... you don't have to say it. I see now—you could never leave Christi. And Sarah... (a small laugh) I guess she won. Don't worry about me. I'll transfer parole. I'm going back east. Family will take me in. Months, maybe. But I'll be gone. Until then... Could I still work for you? I have no money.

The FAUCET drips. DRIP.

DRIP. DRIP.

ELLIOT
It wouldn't work, Vince. I'm sorry. We never foresaw this.

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.

82 INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - FRIDAY MORNING

82

Back in the store, Christina collapses, the phone slipping from her bloody hand. The call remains open, recording everything.

ANGLE ON CHRISTINA FLOOR LEVEL — eyes wide, mouth open

Her breath rasps but no words form. Only customer's screams, Vince's snarls.

VINCE

Ask Elliot Fenwick! He killed his daughter!

The answering machine at Sarah's house records it all – a final, unbearable message, end with a beep.

Back in the store, Christina collapses, the phone slipping from her bloody hand. The call remains open, recording everything.

ANGLE ON CHRISTINA FLOOR LEVEL – eyes wide, mouth open

Her breath rasps but no words form. Only customer's screams, Vince's snarls.

VINCE

Elliot Fenwick! He killed his daughter!

Children scatter. Some hide. Others scream. Christina's body jerks under the relentless blade. Sixteen strikes in her back. Then deafening silence. VINCE stands above her, chest heaving, He shouts to the bystanders, triumphant, cracked:

VINCE

It's not my fault! Ask Elliot Fenwick– who killed his daughter!

He drops the knife. The thud reverberates. Then, calm, almost gentle, he walks through the glass doors and sits on the curb as sirens swell. Picks up and sips a drink he had left on the curb. As people walk by.

VINCE

It's not my fault. Ask Elliot Fenwick.

Police cars skid to a halt. Guns raised. Vince lifts his hands serenely, eyes closing.

VINCE

(a whisper, almost to himself)
Ask Elliot Fenwick.

Vince picks up a drink he left on the curb and sips it. DISTANT

SIRENS swell, BYSTANDERS scream, scattering.

Police CRUISERS fishtail into view. OFFICERS swarm with GUNS drawn, shouting commands drowned by the storm. Vince doesn't flinch. A smirk forms on his face.

CAMERA PULLS WIDE — Vince, a lone silhouette under buzzing sodium lights, surrounded by police.

CUT TO BLACK.

86 INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

86

Harsh fluorescent light. FLASH CUTS:

- A DETECTIVE slams a case file shut, pages scattering.
- Vince's face in a freshly snapped MUGSHOT — smirk curling, eyes dead.
- A stack of crime scene PHOTOS slapped onto a desk, splattered red against glossy prints.

VINCE sits cuffed to the table, shirt still streaked with CHRISTINA FENWICK's blood. His posture is loose, almost casual. His voice calm, almost proud.

Across from him, DETECTIVE SEAVER stiffens with each word, pen gripped tight in his hand.

VINCE

I never meant to leave town. That was a lullaby— to put them to sleep. Last night... I planned to kill them all. I waited and waited but they never came home. I wanted to kill that wife first, oh how I wanted them to watch that. She just could not take the fact that I had won! Kept praying and praying to get him back, calling and whispering in his ear. Well she can have him. Christi Testy little thing, she moved her self to the front of the line, with that mouth of hers, but she was the perfect target. You see

— Elliot loved her more than anyone. His pride. His joy. So killing her, was the best, he'll carry it forever. Every breath— a reminder. My masterpiece.

Vince leans back in his chair, a faint chuckle rising from his throat.