

HIDDEN TREASURE

24-DE01-W01

Evan is a young businessman who is all about the money. When a suspicion of wrongdoing gets him suspended from his job, he finds himself lost and running the streets looking for answers.

EXT. PARK WALKING PATH - DAY

YOUNG EVAN, age 10 dressed in 1990's clothes, walks along a park path carelessly.

EVAN (V.O.)  
Money was never a problem. It  
always seemed to come easily to me.

Young Evan sees a dollar on the path. He joyfully picks it up and inspects it. Looking a little more closely, he finds a few coins.

INT. ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM - DAY

Young Evan is in class with a little knowing smile. He slowly raises his hand and answers the teacher. She affirms his answer. He looks down at his worksheet and draws a dollar sign next to the problem.

EVAN (V.O.)  
Even in school math was easy for me  
because I thought of it like money.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

TEEN EVAN, age 16, is surrounded by a group of other teens. He's receiving money from some. He looks self-satisfied as the center of the attention.

EVAN (V.O.)  
In high school, money became  
business. It seemed like I always  
knew where my life was going.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

EVAN, age 32, wears a sharp business suit and confidently walks the hall of the office. Evan has a boyish charm and good looks that have followed him through the progression.

EVAN (V.O.)  
Of course, college was the thing  
that launched me into a career in  
finance. It's always been my thing -  
until this afternoon.

Evan knocks on the door to the office of his boss GLENN.

GLENN  
Come in.

Glenn, middle 50's, sits behind the desk of the well-appointed office. He has a magnificent city view. Standing next to the desk with his arms crossed is AGENT THURLOW, dressed in a black suit with a black tie.

GLENN (CONT'D)

Sit down, Evan. I've got some serious news. This is Agent Thurlow from the FBI.

EVAN

The FBI, what's this about?

GLENN

We have some serious allegations about you from a number of your clients.

EVAN

Allegations?!? What have I done?

AGENT THURLOW

We can't get into all the details. The investigation is ongoing. Let's just say it involves the misappropriation of funds along with other potential charges.

EVAN

Charges?!? What? Are you arresting me?

AGENT THURLOW

Not at this moment. But as of noon today all of your assets have been frozen, and we'll be taking your computers.

EVAN

My computers!? Frozen my assets!? Glenn, tell me what this is about.

GLENN

I'm afraid it's pretty serious, but I've asked them to take it easy on you.

EVAN

Easy? This is taking it easy?

AGENT THURLOW

We have enough to take you in custody right now, but your boss says that you're not a flight risk.

GLENN

I think they've got the wrong guy, Evan. Just go home and lay low for the next few weeks. Oh, and I'll need the keys to the company car.

EVAN

Lay low? I've got no money, and now, no car. I guess, I've got no choice. Do I need to hire a lawyer or can Shelly work with me?

GLENN

Shelly is the corporation's attorney. She might become a witness. And don't talk to any of the other employees about what's happening. That could be held against you or them.

Evan stands up. He reaches into his pocket and tosses the keys on the desk. Ready to walk out, JOHN appears at the doorway. JOHN, early 30's, is Evan's work partner and friend. He's not aware of the details.

JOHN

Did you need me, boss?

GLENN

Can you escort Evan back to his office? He can take anything that's not company property. No questions.

John shakes his head but looks stunned. He and Evan head back down the hallway.

JOHN

(In a hushed tone)  
What's going on?

EVAN

Can't talk about it.

JOHN

Are you getting fired?

EVAN

No, worse.

John gives him a confused look. The two enter Evan's office.

INT. EVAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Evan grabs an expensive leather satchel and starts putting things in. He pauses and looks around thinking. He throws his cell phone in and closes the satchel.

EVAN

I'm coming back. That's all I need.

JOHN

Can I text you?

EVAN

You can but I can't say anything. You heard the man, no questions. I don't want you implicated in all this.

John looks more stunned as Evan blows past.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Evan steams out of the building and doesn't look back. He gets to the street and pauses.

EVAN

No car. No money. I can't even Uber home. I guess I'm walking. It's only 22 blocks.

He looks around to get his bearings and heads to the corner. Out of nowhere a YOUNG THUG dressed all in black dashes past Evan and grabs the satchel.

Evan gives chase. The thug is fast, but Evan is no slouch. The chase takes them down several city streets. At certain obstacles, the chase resembles parkour as the Thug jumps a low wall and over another. Evan matches his moves. The Thug makes a daring leap into the channel and then runs into an underground tunnel.

I/E. CITY DRAINAGE TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

Evan follows but pauses at the entrance to the tunnel. It looks dangerous. He hears the footsteps and follows. The tunnel gets dark fast.

EVAN (V.O.)

I should have never gone into that tunnel. But everything was in that bag - my cell phone, my ID, my passport.

The daylight streams into the tunnels occasionally as Evan attempts to follow the sound. The footsteps get too distant and eventually stop.

EVAN (V.O.) (CON'T)  
I got so turned around down there.  
I had no idea where I was. I also  
had no idea who was down there with  
me.

Evan squints to catch a glimpse of a few shadowy figures. They step into a better-lit area and we make out HUNTER and his two gang members.

HUNTER  
Looks like you're in the wrong  
place.

EVAN  
You could say that. I'm trying to  
get out.

HUNTER  
The only way out is past me.

We see that Hunter is holding a pipe.

EVAN  
Look, I don't want any trouble.

HUNTER  
Well, you found it. Give me your  
wallet and that watch.

Evan turns to run in the opposite direction but is stopped by BIG JOE who grabs him. Hunter approaches.

HUNTER  
Looks like you've got some nice  
shoes too. I'll take those.

The gang proceeds to take everything from Evan's pockets. They take off his watch and even his belt. Big Joe wheels him around and flattens Evan with a single blow.

BIG JOE  
Night, night mister business dude.

The gang escapes into the blackness of the tunnel.

EXT. CITY SKYLINE TIMELAPSE - EVENING

INT. CITY DRAINAGE TUNNEL - NIGHT

Evan opens his eyes and rubs his chin. He shakes his head trying to reorient himself. He looks around hoping that he's alone and out of danger. He stands, picks a direction, and heads down the tunnels. A light catches his eye. Seeing a way out, Evan heads through the opening.

EXT. TUNNEL ENTRANCE NEAR THE CHURCH - NIGHT

Evan comes out looking dirty and disheveled with no shoes. He spots a lone figure, RUSTY sitting on the curb close by.

EVAN

Hey. Can you tell me what street this is?

RUSTY

This is Church Street.

Rusty's clothes and rough appearance give away his homeless status. He's slightly wild-eyed and you can't tell his age. His speech is slightly slurred. He's not intoxicated, but he's less than coherent.

EVAN

I don't know any Church Street downtown.

RUSTY

(Pointing)

There's the church and this here's the street. This is church street.

This is not a joke. It's Rusty's way of orientation.

EVAN

Do you know where the Commerce Bank Building is, or the courthouse?

RUSTY

Nope. Probably down that way.

Rusty points back into the tunnel.

EVAN

Listen. I just got robbed. I have no idea where I am.

RUSTY

Oh! You're lost. You need the church.

EVAN

No. I definitely don't need church.  
I need help.

RUSTY

That's the best place to get some  
help. They help me all the time.

Evan rolls his head and sighs.

EVAN

What about the police? Do they come  
by?

RUSTY

Oh, the police NEVER come here  
after dark. It's too dangerous.

Rusty lets out a strange, cackling laugh.

RUSTY

Some folks make sure of that!

Evan looks around and sees that the church is the only place  
with lights on, so he heads on over.

EVAN (V.O.)

So that's the story. I lost my job,  
got robbed...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STRAIGHT FROM THE STREETS CHURCH - NIGHT

We realize that Evan has been telling his story to PASTOR  
WILLY, who is sitting in an adjacent pew. The small church  
shows years of wear. It has some ornamentation as if it were  
once a more traditional house of worship but now houses the  
inner city ministry.

EVAN

...and accidentally wound up in  
your church.

Pastor Willy is a big African American preacher in his late  
50's. He's bald with a graying beard. He's dressed casually,  
but his worn shoes show that he doesn't have much to spend on  
his wardrobe. He shakes his head in disagreement.

PASTOR WILLY

Son, no one comes into this church  
by accident. God directs your  
steps.



EVAN

I'm sorry, but I'm not really into the God thing, you know. I just need a little help. Can you do anything?

PASTOR WILLY

You need a lot of help and that's why you're here. God is trying to untangle you from your treasure.

EVAN

What is that supposed to mean?

PASTOR WILLY

The good book says, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also". The first thing you said to me when I asked why you were here, was about your relationship to money.

EVAN

I just thought you should know that I wasn't homeless or something.

PASTOR WILLY

Oh, I can tell if a homeless man a mile away. I can also see when a man is running from God.

EVAN

I'm not. I mean God was important to me, but that was a long time ago. God is fine for my mom, but I just don't need him.

PASTOR WILLY

But you came walking into His house this evening and you needed something.

EVAN

I just need a ride or a phone so I can call someone.

While the two have been talking people have been slowly filing into church. The members look very inner city. People are from all ethnicities. No one is dressed up. Even Rusty comes in and sits in the back.

PASTOR WILLY

I can give you a ride to wherever you need to go, but our prayer meeting is about to start. If you listen in, God just might give you an idea of why you're here.

Evan stays seated and uncomfortably looks around. Pastor Willy gets up to greet people. He makes his way up to the front and stands behind a music stand that acts as a pulpit.

PASTOR WILLY (CONT'D)

Good evening my family! I hope you're having a good week. It's time for our P-3: Praise, Prayer and Potluck. My wife has made some delicious meatloaf and mashed potatoes.

As the pastor booms, the congregation replies with "yes" and "amen". When he announces the food there's a round of "Hallelujah" and applause.

PASTOR WILLY (CONT'D)

The first order of business is praise. Who's got something?

Hands go up all around. Pastor Willy points to an older woman on the first row.

PASTOR WILLY (CONT'D)

Sister Wilma. How has the Lord been blessing?

Wilma is in her 80's and her body shows the wear. She rises slowly and hangs on to her walker.

WILMA

Oh, Pastor. The Lord has been so, so good. As you all know I had surgery last month.

The crowd reacts.

WILMA (CONT'D)

The doctor didn't know if I was even gonna make it. He thought I was too old for the surgery. I told them to go ahead. If I don't make it, I'll be the the presence of my Lord. Well, as you can see I did make it.

More crowd reactions.

WILMA (CONT'D)

I was at the doctor this morning and he said I was healing up, and there was not even a trace of that tumor. He said that I just might make it another 20 years!

Wilma raises a hand and the church erupts in praise and applause. Pastor Willy remains at the front and simply points to a young girl, CIERRA, age 8 who pops up.

CIERRA

I want to praise the Lord for my friend, Amber. She was out of school for a long time. She told me that she tried to commit suicide.

There's a gasp from the crowd. We see Evan with a look of serious concern.

CIERRA (CONT'D)

I prayed for her every day. I saw her on Monday and she said that she doesn't want to die anymore. She also said that she wanted to know more about God. So I've been telling her. Every day.

The crowd applauds again. Evan is looking more confused now.

PASTOR WILLY

How about one of the men? Who's got a praise? Ahmer, do you want to share your story?

Pastor Willy points to the back to a young, thin man in the back of the church, AHMER. He's a refugee and his English is broken but he speaks well.

AHMER

Thank you, Pastor. Yes. The Lord has been so kind. I was in my house just a few months ago. I do not know how I was going to pay. The government do not pay me enough. I cannot get a job. Last week, I come to church. We pray. Today there is envelope in the mail with all the money I need for three months! Praise God!

The congregation erupts again. We go through a series of quick takes of various members of the congregation who are telling their stories. Each time we see Evan reacting.

PHILLIS

I want to give praise to for God  
healing my sister...

LYDIA

...for bringing my husband back...

RONALDO

...for helping us financially...

JOSE

...for getting me a job...

OPAL

...for helping my kitty come  
home...

Evan is now near tears. The testimonies are having a powerful effect. Pastor Willy is looking around the room now. It seems as if everyone has had a turn. Evan looks like he wants to.

PASTOR WILLY

Is there anyone else? Any more  
praises before we pray? I feel like  
there's time for just one more.

Willy looks straight at Evan. As their eyes meet, Evan has a knowing smile and slowly he raises his hand.

FADE TO:

INT. CHURCH FELLOWSHIP HALL - NIGHT

Evan is sitting at a table eating with a few of the church members. Evan has on a sweat jacket that is too large for him and a pair of slightly worn tennis shoes. These were donated items from the church's lost and found. Pastor Willy heads for him.

PASTOR WILLY

Hey Young man, are you going to be  
ready to leave in a little bit?

EVAN

Yes sir. Do I have time for more  
meatloaf? This is the best!

PASTOR WILLY

Don't tell me, tell my better half.

Pastor Willy motions toward his wife who's handing out food.

PASTOR WILLY

You'd better hurry, I don't know  
how much is left.

EVAN

I will

Evan jumps up and heads toward the serving line. The pastor  
goes with him.

PASTOR WILLY

I never asked you. What do you do  
exactly? You said it was financial.

Evan looks at him.

EVAN

You know, for the first time, I'm  
not really sure.

FADE TO BLACK.

