

INT. KITCHEN

Grease drips down a quarter pound patty and sizzles on the grill. MALCOLM (18) flips the patty with his spatula. Steam rises off the grill, Malcolm reaches above, grabs the bread -- walks over to the cheese. As he's dressing the burger, JERRY (40's) the store owner and manager walks in.

JERRY

Hey Malcolm.

Malcolm glances up at him -- smiles.

MALCOLM

What's up boss? I was just bout to come looking for you. I need a restroom break.

JERRY

Ok, don't take forever in there, I want you to prep during the last hour of ya shift.

MALCOLM

I'll be in and out.

JERRY

Ok. Before you go, I need somebody to stay later tonight -- you mind?

MALCOLM

You know typically I wouldn't but I can't. I have church at 7 tonight, remember?

JERRY

Damn, I forgot you was one of those religious folks.

MALCOLM

A'ight now Jerry, don't you start!

Jerry laughs.

JERRY

I don't get why you people practice and worship that mess.

MALCOLM

Well let's see Jerry, I praise Jesus Christ because it is he who died for my sins, and I praise God for it is his mercy, grace, and forgiveness that's got me where I am today.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

Simple.

Malcolm finishes dressing the order.

JERRY

You know something I discovered about the grace and forgiveness of God...

MALCOLM

What?

JERRY

It has the power to create both sinner and saint -- The saints pray to be protected from the same sinners y'all's God just keeps on forgiving. It makes no sense, and that's why I hate religion. It ain't nothin but a way out of the accountability and all the guilt that comes with it for the monsters of our communities that submit to that mess.

Malcolm, offended, draws back.

MALCOLM

Everyone deserves forgiveness no matter how much we may feel otherwise, and the average Christian isn't a monster Jerry.

Malcolm takes off his gloves, hair net and apron.

JERRY

Well what else do you call the men that preach out of greed and abuse their power and influence to get what they want.

MALCOLM

I think that's what you call human Jerry.

JERRY

Human (chuckles) Ok... what about the husbands who beat their wives and children to pulps...

We ZOOM onto Malcolm's face as he stares at Jerry perplexed, then CUT TO --

INSERT: FLASHBACK

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 2000

Malcolm's father, CHARLES (20's) kneels over his mother, DEBRA (20's) striking her in the face over... and over... and over again. A young Malcolm watches in the distance.

BACK TO MALCOLM

Malcolm clenches his jaw tight.

MALCOLM

I don't kn--

JERRY

-- and let's not forget about the
wives, who in turn, scorn their
children to no end...