

SALVATION

"UNORTHODOX"

TEASER

BLACK SCREEN

Title card:

**In 1954, Billy Graham traveled to London  
to preach at Haringay Arena.**

**For 3 months, he delivered nightly  
messages to record-breaking crowds.**

**This is the story during that time.**

FADE IN:

INT. HARRINGAY ARENA - NOSEBLEED SECTION - EVENING

Bird's eye view. Arena seats are empty. Folding chairs fill the middle of the arena floor. People on a mission hurriedly weave in and out of the chairs. Last-minute preparations are definitely underway before the doors open to the public.

INT. HARRINGAY ARENA - CEILING - CONTINUOUS

Looking down from directly above the stage is a massive CHOIR in white robes. They share the stage with musicians.

STAGE HANDS and OTHERS briskly walk around the stage area.

INT. HARRINGAY ARENA - FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Down on the floor, coming into frame along a row of seats are VOLUNTEERS. They're laying pamphlets at breakneck speed on the seats of folding chairs. A sticker on the shirt of a CLEAN-CUT MAN reads "Volunteer". He places a pamphlet on a seat.

On the pamphlet: **SALVATION**

INT. HARRINGAY ARENA - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

On the stage, a hectic and frantic atmosphere. Two stragglers rush into position in the Choir as a impatient CHOIR CONDUCTOR waves a wand for them to get into their spot.

CHOIR LEADER

Places everyone! Focus here,  
please.

She motions a four-count introduction. The choir SINGS a whole note in the key of G. The Choir Leader's wand silences their voices with the precision of her wand.

CONTINUOUS:

Next to the choir, a sound check is happening. MUSICIANS grip instruments. An ORGANIST plays a few notes then turns her attention to a CELLIST who gently draws a bow across strings.

CONTINUOUS:

A CHOIR MEMBER rushes past the Cellist to reveal a podium with a bouquet of microphones. An AUDIO GUY stands at the podium. He TAPS a microphone. The taps ECHO in the arena.

AUDIO GUY

(into microphones)

One. Two. Three. Check. One. Two  
Three.

His voice ECHOS. He nods in approval at what he hears. Gives a thumbs up. Mics are good to go. He steps around the podium.

Front of podium reads: "**Billy Graham Crusade**".

CONTINUOUS:

Audio Guy walks down a set of free standing steps leading onto the arena floor. He passes by...

INT. HARRINGAY ARENA - FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

PRAYING GROUP.

The group is huddled with their eyes closed. An intense black preacher, Bishop Tabor prays in the group with an assertive waving of the Bible.

BISHOP TABOR

Lord, show us your love tonight!  
Give Billy Graham the words...

His voice trickles off as a WHITE PREACHER in a pinstripe suit taps Tabor on the shoulder and whispers exciting news.

BISHOP TABOR (CONT'D)  
(quickly)  
Amen.

Bishop Tabor, now in a hurry leaves behind the prayer group and hustles towards the lobby.

INT. HARRINGAY ARENA - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Together, the White and Black Preachers cut a path through a flock of VOLUNTEERS in the lobby until a young FEMALE VOLUNTEER slams into the Bishop Tabor. Her stack of Salvation pamphlets drift to the floor. The Bishop - unfazed by the mess. He pulls out a white handkerchief from his pocket. He's transfixed straight ahead. Wipes his sweaty forehead.

BISHOP TABOR  
(under his breath)  
Jesus, help us.

Preacher's P.O.V.: A swarm of reporters outside the entrance.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. NORTH LONDON - MAGIC HOUR

The sun sinks behind a landscape of apartment buildings.

Title card:

**London, England - March 1, 1954**

EXT. NORTH LONDON - CONTINUOUS

Street sign: Vale Grove. The back of people standing in line. Men in suits. Women in dresses.

Street sign: Hermitage Road. Another line of people wrap around the corner of a building.

Street sign: Finsbury Park Avenue. Another line. This one alongside an apartment building.

EXT. STREET INTERSECTION - CONTINUOUS

CROWDS stretch from one corner of the street to the other. Cars wiggle their way through the intersection.

Honking. But no one is eager to move out the way. More cars honking. Crowd reluctantly separates.

BOBBIES swarm the crowd waving batons for them to get off the street and onto the sidewalks. The crowd is sluggish. But obedient.

BOBBY #1 blows a whistle and starts to direct vehicle traffic from the middle of the street.

BOBBY #2, and BOBBY #3 split the crowd. Vehicles can now pass through the intersection.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

A BILLBOARD plastered to the side of a brick apartment building showing a dashing picture of Billy Graham with a warm smile.

On the billboard: **Hear Billy Graham / Harringay Arena / Nightly 7:30 / The Chance of a Lifetime / All Seats Free**

EXT. HARRINGAY ARENA - SIDEWALK - EVENING

The main entrance to Harringay Arena is filled with REPORTERS and PHOTOGRAPHERS. They step on each others' shoes. Various shots of fingers clicking shutters on cameras. Clump of reporters FORCE themselves towards a simple-looking Ford sedan.

EXT. HARRINGAY ARENA - STREET - CONTINUOUS

The sedan slowly pulls up to the curb. The windows are tinted. The car parks directly in front of unruly reporters.

EXT. FORD SEDAN - WINDSHIELD - CONTINUOUS

A barrage of flash bulbs like gunfire rapidly pulse off the windshield.

EXT. HARRINGAY ARENA - SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS

Faces of Photographers are now hidden behind cameras. They elbow each other to get closer to the Ford. Burly SECURITY GUARDS hold them back. At least until collectively, reporters push the guards up against the Ford.

EXT. FORD SEDAN - WINDOWS - CONTINUOUS

Reporters reflect off the sleek tinted windows of the car.

EXT. HARRINGAY ARENA - SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS

Security guards shove back reporters. There's now enough space for the back passenger door to slowly open.

EXT. FORD SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

Shinny shoes step onto the curb. CAMERA tilts up to reveal BILLY GRAHAM, age 35, smiling from ear to ear in a modest suit and tie. He looks exactly like the picture on the billboard seen earlier on the side of the building.

He waves to the crowds, reporters and fans. He takes a deep breath and is very humble to be here.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. NEWSREEL - DAY/NIGHT

[Newsreel has various interior and exterior shots]

For the following all images match what the reporter describes.

BBC REPORTER (V.O.)

A capacity crowd of eleven thousand stood for hours in line today. Then one by one they slowly crammed inside Haringay Arena to hear American evangelist, Reverend Billy Graham.

Billy Graham stands behind the podium on stage.

BBC REPORTER (V.O.)

(beat)

It's the Reverend's first meeting in Britain. Graham, wearing a modest gray suit and simple tie, makes his address from a purple draped stage.

Closer shot of Billy. His face fills the frame.

BILLY GRAHAM

Greetings, friends. I'm honored to be here tonight. We're delighted to have newspaper people here. It's been a long time since revival and Christ and God was front page news around the world. And we thank God for it!

Massive choir SINGS softly behind the following V.O.

BBC REPORTER (V.O.)

Billy Graham's unorthodox methods may not be to everyone's taste. But he and his team, backed by a massive choir, believe they will fill Haringay Arena each night during their meetings - which Mr. Graham calls "crusades".

GEORGE BEVERY SHEA, also called BEV. Standing at the podium where Billy previously stood. He sings. But we can't hear him because of the BBC Reporter.

BBC REPORTER (V.O.)

The Reverend is not alone. Among Graham's team is Mr. Beverly Shea.

(MORE)

BBC REPORTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

His renowned booming baritone voice  
opens and closes each meeting.  
Here... Mr. Shea leads the crowd in  
a song.

We hear Mr. Shea sing the end of the song: *How Great Thou Art*.

BEV SHEA

(singing)

*"How great thou art."*

Various shots of Catholic clergy seated on stage listening to Billy Graham. They're distinguished by their robes.

BBC REPORTER (V.O.)

Graham and his team were invited to London a year ago by several clergy, including the Archbishop of Canterbury and Bishop Connor of Dublin.

This scene plays into the next.

INT. GREEN ROOM - HOURS LATER

On TV: Catholic clergy on the tv screen.

The television is shut off by Beverly Shea. He sits down next to Billy. Standing next to them are FOUR CHURCH LEADERS: JOHN, HAL, MIKE, and PAUL. They were also watching the BBC news report with Billy and Bev. John, Hal, Mike and Paul are all skeptical about Billy.

BEV SHEA

We're off to a good start, buddy.

Billy nods. Others agree.

BEV SHEA (CONT'D)

I'm gonna get some water.

(to Billy)

You want some?

Billy rubs his throat. He's parched.

INT. GREEN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bev weaves through the busy green room passing more CHURCH LEADERS. Several of them mingle amongst each other. Munching on snacks and sipping water. They stare at Bev as he passes.

INT. GREEN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bev pours one cup of water. CHURCH LEADER THOMAS elbows him.

CHURCH LEADER THOMAS

You may want to rescue the  
reverend.

Bev looks back. On the other side of the room, the Four Church Leaders are barraging Billy with questions. Pointing fingers. Arms flail. The conversation is getting heated.

BEV SHEA

Thank you.

And he's off to rescue Billy.

INT. GREEN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Billy Graham standing in the center of a circle of church leaders.

BILLY GRAHAM

It's just like I said a moment ago.

CHURCH LEADER JOHN

But how do you read the Bible?

BILLY GRAHAM

Just like everyone else. One word  
at a time.

A chuckle from everyone. Billy rubs his throat.

CHURCH LEADER HAL

Let's not get cynical.

BILLY GRAHAM

Now if you're asking my methods for  
interpreting the Bible, then it's  
very clear. I ask the Holy Spirit.

CHURCH LEADER MIKE

Reverend, what you should be doing  
is studying the original text, like  
me.

CHURCH LEADER HAL

(challenging)

Did you hear that fellas?

(to Billy)

(MORE)



CHURCH LEADER HAL (CONT'D)

I can't understand people gathering in the tens of thousands to listen to your messages. You're not saying anything new about God.

BILLY GRAHAM

Any description of God is always new, when it is spoken or conceived in the imagination.

CHURCH LEADER HAL

How so?

BILLY GRAHAM

Because words when spoken, are being brought to life in that very moment.

(coughs)

Sorry, fellas. But I'm very thirsty.

CHURCH LEADER PAUL

So - what are your thoughts on sex?

BILLY GRAHAM

It's meant to be enjoyed. But only as God intended it to be.

Bev hands Billy a cup of water. Breaking up the inquisition.

BEV SHEA

So back to that report on the BBC. The coverage was very favorable.

BILLY GRAHAM

Thanks for the water.

Billy guzzles the water. Everyone stares at each other.

BILLY GRAHAM (CONT'D)

You know, I really believe we won't hear a single drop of negative reporting during our stay in London.

Overhearing the conversation is BISHOP CONNOR, a venerated clergyman from Ireland. He loves to speak his mind. He steps into the circle of inquisitors.

BISHOP CONNOR

(to Billy)

I agree. But to a point though, reverend.

BILLY GRAHAM  
Please, Bishop, call me Billy.

BEV SHEA  
Welcome to the conversation Bishop  
Connor.

BISHOP CONNOR  
Thank you.

BISHOP CONNOR (CONT'D)  
Billy, I appreciate your optimism.  
But these days, we can always  
expect the unexpected to happen.

BILLY GRAHAM  
(abruptly)  
I disagree.

BISHOP CONNOR  
But Billy think about it. Good  
streaks snap just like a...

BILLY GRAHAM  
Nope. No. No, Sir.

Church Leaders across the room stop chatting. Heads turn.

BILLY GRAHAM (CONT'D)  
Pardon me for cutting you off  
Bishop Connor. But if you're going  
where I think you are in your  
advice... well... I frankly don't  
want to hear it.

Church Leaders scoot closer to the confrontation. Billy in  
the middle of the room, has sucked up all their attention.

BILLY GRAHAM (CONT'D)  
(sincerely)  
With all due respect, Bishop, we  
can expect some doozies here and  
there. But like the good book says,  
all things work out for the good of  
those who believe.

BISHOP CONNOR  
Oh, Billy. You're still a young  
hopeful lad.

BILLY GRAHAM  
Young to you, but I'm a solid 35  
years old.

BISHOP CONNOR

What I mean is you have the misguided energy of the younger generation.

He's now walking around Billy.

BISHOP CONNOR (CONT'D)

It could be because you've only preached to America's youth over the last several years. But as Americans say when talking about baseball, "You're now in the big leagues, son."

Face-to-face with Billy.

BILLY GRAHAM

What do you mean Bishop?

BISHOP CONNOR

I'm saying you're now entering onto the world stage. And my boy, you need to watch yourself. Even the news reports call you unorthodox.

BILLY GRAHAM

Unorthodox by whose standards? Surely not God's. In the scripture, Jesus overturned tables in the temple to get his point across.

Bishop Connor hooks his arm around Billy's and leads him away from Bev and the Four Church Leaders.

BISHOP CONNOR

Take it from someone who's been in the public eye for decades. You're a hero today, and the next day a villain.

BILLY GRAHAM

I can only be a hero. It's my destiny. Perhaps that's not yours.

A few church leaders listening are offended. Billy is eager to escape the conversation.

BILLY GRAHAM (CONT'D)

I should be going. Bless you, Bishop.