

'MORNING LIGHT'

Treatment for a Feature Film

By David Goossen

Based on an Original Story

by David Goossen with Tom Goodwin

Registered WGC #2570

Sunset, 1910, Mississippi River delta shanty town. A young, handsome black man, **LUKE MODINE**, carrying an ornate leather guitar case, moves slowly through the sweltering heat to the door of a smoker set on the bank of the river. Confidently, he enters the smoky, boozy club. An old man is on stage, playing Mississippi steel blue guitar.

The town's Bujawoman joins him at the bar, curious about the stranger. He wants to know how to play the blues and he's willing to give up anything to learn. She laughs in his face and walks out. Intrigued, he follows her to her medicine shack. She tells him that he isn't the first, to come here looking to become a bluesman. They all have the desire, but none have the time. Before she can explain, Luke's confused look turns into one of abject terror.

Present day. In the backstage darkness of a club, a man identical to Luke Modine lights up a cigarette. It is a modern day version of the smoker, a smoky crowded blues nightclub. In the packed audience, **PETER NORRIS** and **RACHEL** sit and wait. Peter is in his late forties, she in her late thirties. Both are drinking, both are smoking.

Luke takes the stage. He is introduced as Lucas 'The Reverend' Martine. Rachel seems rather bored with the whole scene, but Peter is totally engrossed in the performance. He is truly a bluesman. He once had a hit record, years ago, but hasn't worked since then. During a pause in the band, Peter notices a stunning blonde woman sitting at the reserved band table. He can't take his eyes off of her. When she leaves with Lucas, Peter follows but can't find them in the alley outside the club.

In the next block, a personable young man, **TONY**, wanders up to a tall blonde hooker. They banter and then walk back into the privacy of the alley. There, without any remorse, he tears her neck open with his fanged teeth.

Peter is sitting behind the counter of a small blues record shop. He is playing steel guitar along with a record. Confused about something, he digs up an old, faded album with an ancient photo of

Lucas on it. But the title says, Luke 'The Saint' Modine. But the album sounds identical to the Lucas he heard last night. Before he can figure this out, **JAMES GILLARD** enters the store. They are old friends, same age, same attitude, but James is a cop. He wants to know if Peter saw anything odd, since another hooker got her throat slit last night.

That night, Peter is back at the Savoy, this time with James, waiting for Lucas to take the stage. Seeing the blonde at the band table, Peter takes the opportunity to join her and the rest of the band. He is known by some of them. He is introduced to Lucas and makes his knowledge of the blues clear. The blonde's name is **KIRSTA ARNOLD**. A bit more questioning by Peter reveals that Luke Modine, the old album Peter was listening to, was Lucas Martine's grandfather. That night, Tony kills another woman, again ripping her neck open.

The next night, Peter is questioning Lucas on his grandfather. Lucas deflects the questions by asking Peter to join his band on stage. Peter agrees and has a fantastic time. Back at Lucas and Kirsta's apartment in the ornate domed top of the 1930's Sun Tower, Peter gets to see the ornate steel guitar that Luke Modine had on the cover of his album. Lucas plays it identically, much to Peter's confusion - no one can play blues identically...

The next night, in the middle of the bands set, Tony arrives. Peter watches from the stage as he joins Kirsta at the band table. She is thrilled to see him and stops watching Peter on stage. Tony has just arrived from Alaska where he was living. It also turns out that he is a skilled blues harmonica player and he joins the band up on stage.

That night, while Lucas and Tony head off to meet some people, Kirsta and Peter make love. They are becoming quite a couple, spending their evenings at the club and night at Kirsta's place. One night as they are leaving the club, Peter runs into Rachel. She is furious at him for dumping her, but doesn't want to have anything to do with him any more and storms off. While waiting for a cab, Lucas offers to phone one for her and she snaps at him, still furious. He leaves her alone. While Peter is waiting for Kirsta, Rachel, feeling guilty about how she treated Lucas, is nice to Tony and is killed.

The next day, James arrives to tell Peter that Rachel was killed last night. He takes it pretty hard and retreats into a bottle and a guitar until Kirsta calls and wants to get together. Later, at a trendy coffee bar, feeling totally out of place, Peter and Kirsta meet. She is telling him about Lucas and her travels through Spain, Finland and now Vancouver, but he is too distracted

to really listen. Finally she gets upset and demands to know what is bothering him. He tells her that his ex girlfriend was killed last night, but he's dealing with it. She gets furious at him, acting like nothing can affect him, he the bluesman, not willing to let anyone else help him, even if he really needs it. He suddenly stands up and walks out on her.

That night, Peter is off in own world, drinking too much, not joining in. James arrives to tell him that the police have found out that the last person Rachel was seen with was Lucas Modine. Peter lashes out at James, then at Lucas, who backs off quickly. Kirsta drags Peter off to a dingy Chinese diner to talk. She tells him how she's spent all of her life watching bluesmen die, sick, poor, none asking anyone for help. She just doesn't want to be dragged down again. She is wise beyond her years.

Then Peter tells her what James said, that the police think Lucas is behind all the murders. She is shocked and insists that Lucas wouldn't have done anything like that. She tells him that Lucas' father changed the family name to Martine, because he was the bastard son of Luke Modine and the white plantation owner's daughter that he ran off with. After some love making to distract him, Kirsta sends him home. Lucas sends Kirsta to talk to Tony. He's angry.

The next day, Peter gets a shipment of records and books, including one called 'The History of the Blues Legends'. He isn't able to read it, but instead phones Lucas, leaving a message on his machine to join him in some old record listening.

Another woman's body is found. Down at the police station, James is getting raked over the coals by his Chief because he can't find a single clue to help find the killer. And Lucas Martine's alibi is pretty tight. Peter had better find something, and fast.

That night, Lucas and Peter have a great time, jamming before the show. Lucas is relaxing and is telling stories about old blues players. He starts to change for the show and reveals a huge cross tattoo on his shoulder. When Peter asks about it, Lucas laughs it off says it's why he's called 'The Reverend', he's been touched by God.

While Peter and the band perform, Tony is chatting up a couple of beautiful girls. They excuse themselves from him and go to the bathroom. While in there, they both shoot up. Peter, Kirsta and Lucas head back to their apartment while Tony takes one of the girls home. She is pretty wired. As Kirsta sings along to Peter and Lucas playing guitar, Tony kills the girl, drinks her heroin laden blood and tosses her body off her balcony. Peter heads home

to finish some paper work. Tony wanders the streets, totally wired on the doped blood.

In the early predawn, Tony clammers up the fire escape on the Sun Tower to the small cupola on the top. He watches, babbling to the city, as the dawn begins to light up the tips of the mountains to the north. He hasn't seen the sun in so many years that he is captivated by the sight. Suddenly the sun breaks the horizon, lighting up the entire cupola. Tony barely has a chance to scream before he explodes in a massive hissing ball of flame.

A few hours later, James and another officer stand at the bottom of the fire escape looking up at the cupola. With a sigh, they both start climbing. At the top, the entire cupola is blackened and there is more ash than you would expect, knowing what happened. James picks up a burnt and melted watch, confused.

Sunset. Lucas is trying to play guitar but can't get it right. He's getting very angry, very quickly. He flings a guitar across the room with unnatural force, shattering it against the wall. Kirsta charges out of the kitchen, furious. They are both on a manic edge because of Tony's death, flinging accusations back and forth across the room. Lucas pulls it together enough to take a call from Peter, telling him about Tony and that they were cancelling the show that night. After hanging up, they start fighting, again.

Peter wiles away the night, watching tv, and reading his new Blues History Book. Suddenly, he sits up, concerned. He has found a strange quote from Lucas Modine about his guitar, one of the rarest guitars ever. Grabbing a bottle of Scotch, Peter spends the night digging through his extensive collection of blues history. In a battered old book, he finds something that makes him run into the bathroom to vomit. The book has a picture of Luke 'The Saint' Modine and the plantation daughter he ran off with. Her name was Kirsta Arnaud and she looks exactly, precisely, like Kirsta Arnold.

At the police lab, James is waiting for the test results on the ashes from the Sun Tower. It turns out that they are the ashes of a eighty or ninety year old human. And, as far as the technician can tell, he was killed by some sort of intense burst of heat, like a flame thrower or something like that.

Peter tries to phone Kirsta but just gets the phone machine. Exasperated, he grabs his coat and heads out. Meanwhile, James is getting grilled by his chief, again. If he can't come up with something really soon, he's off the case. Peter is taking a cab to very ethnic, quirky part of town. He is dropped off in front

of a tiny, hole-in-the-wall occult shop, very similar to the Bujia woman's shack. The old woman behind the counter gives him the name of someone who might help a confused Irish Catholic with a strange problem. The name of a man who will help, even if you don't want him to.

Peter takes the name and goes to the address. It is for a small Ukrainian Catholic church. Peter steels up his nerve and enters. A rugged looking sixty year old priest is praying in Latin. Peter waits, uncomfortable in the alien surroundings, until he is finished. It is very difficult for Peter to explain his problem but he tries, taking about his blues background, his upbringing and finally, what he found. That Kirsta Arnold and Luke Martine are dead ringers for Kirsta Arnaud and Lucas Modine. After listening, the priest leans forward, intently, and tells him to tell him it all again.

Later that evening, Peter finally leaves the church. The priest is soothing him, telling him to go home, get some sleep, try and relax. Meanwhile, Lucas and Kirsta are still extremely irritated and at each other's throats. Once Peter leaves, the priest hurries back to his room and starts searching through all sorts of archaic texts. Lucas has cancelled his show, again. Peter is staying home, bored. Kirsta floats in her bathtub, underwater, for minutes on end, intentionally biting her lip, sucking on the blood.

The priest makes a phone call to New Orleans, asking for info on the disappearances of Luke and Kirsta, years ago. And about any murder sprees around that time. Across town, James is pulled off the case after a lurid headline sets off the chief. Everyone is marking time, not knowing what to do.

Suddenly, the sleeping priest is woken by a phone call from New Orleans. The news, shocks him out of his complacency and he unconsciously genuflects in horror. Peter arrives at the church and the priest starts to tell him what he's found out. That Lucas and Kirsta are vampires. Peter explodes, exasperated. All he wanted was some advice, not horror stories about vampires. He storms out of the church, the priest calling for him to come back.

Peter goes to see Kirsta and Lucas. Kirsta answers the door and he starts telling what he has just gone through. Finding the photo, going to the priest, everything. Kirsta suddenly turns and walks into Lucas' bedroom. The two come out and Lucas starts questioning Peter without any hello's. Peter still thinks that the priest mentally lost it, but Kirsta and Lucas seem very concerned. Peter tells them what the priest said, that they were vampires, laughing it off. Kirsta and Lucas don't laugh. The

three head out for food.

While in the elevator, Lucas suddenly leans over and stops the car. Kirsta asks Peter if he's ever had a major life decision made for him, one that he's had to live with the results. Learn to live with it. Before he can answer, Lucas tells him a story. A story about himself, and how, in 1910, he went to a Bujia woman and became a vampire. And how, when he met Kirsta, he made her one also. Peter stares at them both in disbelief. They both open their mouths, showing their long fangs.

That night at the Savoy, Peter is still dealing with the information he was just told. Kirsta is trying to tell him nothing has changed, just his perception of it. That night Peter is unable to have sex with Kirsta, having just a bit too much on his mind. Kirsta tries to explain that she may be a vampire but she is also a woman who loves him. Peter moves out onto the couch to sleep. He wakes up, later, and goes to get a drink of water.

As he returns, he looks up to see Lucas, fangs glistening, floating down from the high ceiling, telling him, that it is time for him to join the eternal night. Lucas swoops down onto Peter as Peter screams. He is unable to combat the inhuman strength of Lucas. Suddenly Kirsta is floating down towards him. It is time. One bite and he's with them forever. She lunges towards his neck and Peter jolts upright, lying alone on the couch, sweating. It was a nightmare. He gets himself a drink of water and returns only to find Lucas and Kirsta hanging upside down, near the ceiling, asleep. Peter can't handle any more and leaves.

The next morning, James wakes Peter up. Peter looks like shit, struggling to wake up. Peter suddenly asks James if he would want the blues shop should Peter suddenly die. James tries to laugh it off, but Peter is serious and James agrees, if only to humour Peter. That settled, Peter falls asleep and James leaves, concerned about his friend.

The Priest finds an advertisement for Lucas Martine at the Savoy in the morning newspaper and sends a Sister to get some Holy Water. While she is getting that, he opens an ancient wooden box. Inside are a polished wooden stake, a sack of dirt and an ornate vial. He puts everything in his overcoat pocket and exits. After the show, Lucas, Kirsta and Peter are wondering what to do. Lucas is wary about taking his precious guitar out into the rain and decides to leave it behind.

They step out into the alleyway. Suddenly, a figure in an overcoat steps out of the darkness and lunges at Kirsta. Peter pushes her out of the way as the Priest, screaming in Latin,

throws the contents of the vial at Kirsta. Peter stops most of it as the Priest turns and runs off. Kirsta gets to her feet and they stare off after the Priest. They have a problem.

That night, as Peter and Kirsta lie curled up together, Peter has another nightmare. He jolts awake and tells Kirsta that he has to go. That he can't stay. He heads down to the lobby, to wait for his cab. Kirsta come out and floats up to join Lucas, sleeping up near the ceiling. As Peter is being driven away, he spies the Priest walking towards the Sun Tower. He gets the taxi driver to loop the block and jumps out. The Priest is kneeling in the elevator, praying. While Peter waits for the elevator to return, the Priest climbs out a window and breaks into Lucas and Kirsta's apartment. Through the broken window, a bright beam of morning light cuts across the room. Peter is pacing in the elevator, watching the floor lights slowly change.

The Priest is busy dragging a huge mirror out of the bathroom, and trying to position it to bounce the sunlight up towards the sleeping two. Peter breaks down the front door and tackles the Priest. The two fight as the reflected light beam slowly tracks across the ceiling. The mirror shatters and Peter ends up pinning the Priest. As they argue, the Priest can see that a shard of glass is reflecting sunlight almost onto Kirsta's face. Peter suddenly notices the Priests smile and looks up to see the sunlight touch Kirsta's long hair, making it smoke. Peter slams the Priest down, knocking him out and lunges across the floor, knocking the mirror shard out of the way, gashing open his hand in the process.

Darkness. The apartment is dark again. The Priest awakes, looking around, in fear. Peter is sitting across the room from him. Peter says he isn't a vampire. Then Peter lets him go.

Rather than leave them alone, the Priest goes directly to the police station and is directed to James. He relates the entire story to James, who does not believe a word of it until the Priest mentions that he just battled with Peter Norris, who is under the spell of these two. While Peter is over at the church, trying to find the Priest, James is getting approval from his superior to look into the Priests story.

Lucas and Kirsta are in their apartment, just awoken, listening to their phone messages. James and the Priest, with two cops, are heading up the elevator towards their apartment. Peter arrives outside the Sun Tower, only to find two police cars guarding the main entrance. In the apartment, a message from Peter comes on. He is telling them that the Priest has gone to the police. Suddenly, James pounds on the door. Lucas and Kirsta react.

Suddenly, in the still, empty apartment, the front door shatters open. The cops come charging in. The police and Priest spread out to search the apartment while James starts playing the phone machine. Peter's voice comes out, telling Lucas and Kirsta to run, and he'll stall the police. James sighs, takes the tape and leaves, telling one policeman to stay until the lab arrives. The Priest is nowhere to be seen and they assume he must have left.

The police cars leave the front of the building and Peter walks on in, not seeing the unmarked police car up the block. Inside the apartment, the policeman hears a noise, gets up only to be confronted by Kirsta floating down from the ceiling. Before he can react, Lucas floats down and bites his neck.

All of a sudden the Priest comes out of the bathroom, wielding another vial of Holy Water. He flings it at Kirsta. She tries to deflect it, but the water splashes across her arm. Her skin starts to violently bubble and hiss. She screams and collapses to the ground. Lucas is still struggling with the dying cop. Peter screams for the Priest to stop from the front door. With the Priest distracted, Lucas drops the dead cop and flies across the room, propelling the Priest against the far wall. He drops to the ground, dead. Peter rushes to Kirsta. She's going to be ok.

At the Savoy, policemen wait outside, patiently. Inside, James and a cop wait in the changing room. James finds Lucas' precious guitar. Meanwhile, Lucas and Kirsta are efficiently emptying a number of wall safes into a valise. They already have bags packed for events like this. As Peter helps the weakened Kirsta, Lucas heads out of the apartment, for the last time. Suddenly he stops. Where is his guitar?! He's got to go get it from the Savoy. But Kirsta won't let him go by himself, and in the end, they all go.

Outside, the unmarked police car spies them leaving and starts his engine. They arrive at the Savoy and sneak in the back fire exit. It turns out that Lucas also owns the Savoy. Kirsta waits outside while Peter and Lucas go inside. While they're gone, a police car comes up the alley, stopping in front of her. Lucas and Peter arrive in the dressing room, to find James play the guitar and singing some old blues. He's pretty good. Lucas wants his guitar back. James doesn't want to give it back. Peter calmly introduces James to Lucas and then tells Lucas that James is a cop. Lucas turns back to see James holding a gun, and the guitar.

Outside, the cops are busy frisking Kirsta. Finally he stops and Kirsta swings around, grabs his neck and tears it open. The other cop tries to get his gun out of the holster as Kirsta lunges at him. The gun goes off, very loudly. Inside, James reacts to the

gunshot, looking away from Lucas for just a second. That's all he needs, blurring across the room, grabbing the gun and knocking James back onto the floor. In an instant, he's sitting on top of James looking down at him.

Sighing, Lucas tells James he should have picked the blues rather than the law, because you can't be both. James tells him back that the place is surrounded and that they're not going anywhere alive. Lucas mentions he isn't alive anyways, and leans down to kill James. Peter stops him. He won't let Lucas kill his friend. But something has to be done. Another cop is coming through the club to find James. An alarm goes off. The cop runs in to find James unconscious on the floor and the fire door open.

Outside, Kirsta pops up inside the police car. Lucas and Peter hop in as another police car races around the corner and takes chase. Kirsta guns the car and they take off with the other police car in fast pursuit.

After some of intense driving, Kirsta spins the car onto a gravel road paralleling the river bank. It looks unnervingly like the Mississippi River Delta. Suddenly, Kirsta spins the wheel and aims the car at an abandoned ferry jetty. Without slowing down, she races up the ramp and shoots out into the water. The car starts to sink as the police car arrives at the dock. The policemen jump out and scan the water for any survivors. No one comes to the surface.

Morning. A barge is struggling to stay steady in the current and dredge. James is standing on the bank looking on. He's got a bloody bandage on his neck, but he is standing in the morning light and is unaffected. He isn't a vampire. Later, in the chief's office, while the chief is content with the outcome of the case, James arrives, tosses his badge and a letter onto his desk and walk out. He's quit. No more police work for James.

The blues shop. Behind the counter, James, now forty five years older, is sitting playing slow blues on a battered guitar. Through the door come a couple of school kids who need some info on blues players for a school project. James sits back and tells them what they want to know.

Paris airport, forty five years in the future. Down the concourse come a pair of battered boots, faded jeans. Swinging beside them is a leather guitar case, hand tooled. Beside it are a pair of girls legs in a mini skirt and another pair of man's legs. They move down the walkway. It is Lucas, Kirsta and Peter. They all look exactly the same as they did in 1993. Kirsta is holding Peter's hand. They all smile at each other and continue on.

THE END

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