

Witch Hunt  
by  
J. E. Clarke

FADE IN:

INT. BOARDROOM - DAY

A TV hangs high on the wall. KEVIN PARRIS, CHRISTY OSBORNE and MAIDI BURROUGHS sit at a table, eyes glued to the screen.

They make an odd combination. Christy's clad in jeans - middle aged, and middle class. Maida's youngish 40s - Jamaican, dressed in traditional garb.

Kevin (20s) is the youngest of the three. Clothed in his Armani best - pure politician, from head to toe.

INTERCUT BETWEEN THE TELEVISION AND THE BOARDROOM.

A reporter stands on marble steps, blonde and perfect.

REPORTER

Nickie Williams here, reporting on the steps of Congress. Tensions run high as the nation enters Day Thirteen of the Investigation into Supernatural Activities...a committee some pundits have called a politically motivated witch hunt.

A MAN and WOMAN race up the steps, chased by cameras. He's thin, scrawny and scared. The woman - Haitian - seems at ease.

The reporter leans in the camera's direction.

REPORTER

Today's testimony includes Ghislaine Cardozo and Arnold Wellington - two of the more mysterious figures named as members of the Cauldron Ten. Will they succumb to pressure on the stand? Only time will tell. You'll see it here - on CMN.

KEVIN (O.S.)

Enough of that.

Christy watches Kevin pace.

CHRISTY

Kevin, stop. You're making us nervous.

KEVIN

They're going to crack. You know that, right?

MAIDI

Arnold will. Not Ghislaine.

CHRISTY

(to Kevin)

Put us on the stand, let us help!

KEVIN

And watch all four of you go down together? Leave the administration with nothing? Great strategy, Christy.

Christy pulls out a dream-catcher, plays with it.

KEVIN

Put that away. They could walk in, any minute.

He grabs the catcher, tucks it in a briefcase.

CHRISTY

We have to band together. It's not Stregheria versus Wiccan anymore. Kitsune-Mochi versus Santeria.

KEVIN

Someone has to be sacrificed, for the greater good. You want to take a hit for Arnold? The guy's Republican. Voted Tea Party, for Christ Sakes!

CHRISTY

Please don't invoke that name, Kevin. And it's not Democrat versus Republican anymore. It's us versus them.

MAIDI

We're talking Senator Gangrene. You know he won't stop. We have to close ranks.

She stands up, goes toe-to-toe with Kevin.

MAIDI

Funny how it's always the people of color you're willing to throw to the wolves. Like Ghislaine....

The door opens. A CONGRESSIONAL AIDE peers in.

## CONGRESSIONAL AIDE

Session's starting. They want you on the floor.

The women glare at Kevin, stalk from the boardroom.

## INT. CONGRESSIONAL CHAMBERS

The place swarms with media. Kevin, Christy and Maldi sit in the front row.

Arnold shivers at the witness table. SENATOR NEWT GANGRENE sits several feet away, white haired and proper.

## SENATOR GANGRENE

I ask you again. Are you, or have you ever been, a witch?

## ARNOLD

Never, I swear...

## SENATOR GANGRENE

Have you ever associated with witches?

Newt holds up a picture of Arnold, standing next to a woman in a Wiccan gown.

## SENATOR GANGRENE

How do you explain this picture of you standing next to Gabrielle Moonshine, a known dealer in magick? Do you think it came from a pixie?

## ARNOLD

(stammers)

Could counsel please define what a pixie is?

## SENATOR GANGRENE

Oh, I think you may already be an authority on such things...

Members LAUGH from the Republican side of the chamber. Christy wrings her hands, nervous.

## SENATOR GANGRENE

Mr. Wellington, I have it on good faith that you have been a practitioner of Feri Witchcraft for over fifteen years.

SENATOR GANGRENE (CONT'D)  
Utilizing this skill, you have assisted  
the current administration in  
manipulating many economic matters that  
concern this great nation. Do you deny  
these charges?

The Senator holds up a paper, shows it to the room.

SENATOR GANGRENE  
I have in my hand a list of two hundred  
and five people known to be members of  
the Supernatural Community. Many who  
have appeared before this Committee as  
Fifth Amendment Magick Users....

He turns to Arnold, who shrinks in his chair.

SENATOR GANGRENE  
I expect you to sign the loyalty oath and  
confirm these names, Mr. Wellington.  
Before the sun goes down today...

Arnold trembles, his eyes wide.

INT. BOARDROOM - LATER

Kevin, Maida and Christy sip from coffee cups. Maida  
slams a Starbucks down on the table.

MAIDI  
Doesn't he realize he's hurting his  
party, too? Think they can govern the  
nation, with magick users crippled?

KEVIN  
Brinksmanship. He's trying to shut down  
the administration, at least until the  
election. He doesn't care if he brings  
down the nation with it.

CHRISTY  
Thank Goddess, Arnold's small potatoes.  
We never let him in the inner circle. He  
can't finger anyone.  
(pauses, looks at Maida)  
Figuratively anyway. I mean, he is a  
Feri...

Maida wrinkles her nose.

MAIDI  
Ghislaine can. And she's up next.

INT. CONGRESSIONAL CHAMBERS

Ghislaine sits at the table, stoic. Senator Gangrene pulls his microphone forward, clears his throat.

SENATOR GANGRENE

During your employment with the Treasury, do you admit to ordering a dozen newt eyes in 2002, imported from Africa?

GHISLAINE

I did.

SENATOR GANGRENE

And what did you do with them?

GHISLAINE

Nothing. I'm in requisitions; we never handle final product.

The Senator looks around, feigns astonishment.

SENATOR GANGRENE

You ordered Newt eyes, and found nothing strange about that?

GHISLAINE

Compared to other things I've seen on the Hill? No sir, definitely not.

SPECTATORS GIGGLE from the Democratic side of the room. The Senator turns red.

SENATOR GANGRENE

Ghislaine. Interesting name. You're Haitian? Familiar with Voodoo?

GHISLAINE

Voodoo economics, perhaps. I did serve under the Reagan administration...

More TITTERS from the audience.

SENATOR GANGRENE

Admit it. You are a Voodoo Priestess. A practitioner of the dark arts!

Ghislaine smiles, unphased.

GHISLAINE

I suppose it depends on what your definition of "is", is...

The Senator explodes.

SENATOR GANGRENE

Enough games, Ms. Cordozo! Your kind  
have exploited the American public long  
enough!

Kevin grabs Maida's hand, prevents her from rising.  
Maida curses darkly under her breath.

GHISLAINE

My kind?

SENATOR GANGRENE

Undocumented aliens, manipulating the  
economy. If immigration had done it's  
job, protected our borders...

Ghislaine's eyes flash with anger.

GHISLAINE

I served during OPEC. You think it  
failed on it's own?

SENATOR GANGRENE

Using ungodly methods to usurp our  
capitalist system...

GHISLAINE

Thank "Lwa" we have your back. How long  
do you think credit default swaps would  
last, without "our kind" to keep them  
solvent?

Ghislaine leaps to her feet, nose-to-nose with the  
Senator. Kevin waves "no" - she ignores him completely.

GHISLAINE

Madoff. Lehman. Do you think your  
precious Bernanke can save you???

A gavel POUNDS. The CHAIRMAN'S voice echoes from far  
away.

CHAIRMAN (O.S.)

Have you no decency, sir? Assassinate  
this lady no further...

SENATOR GANGRENE

(to Ghislaine)

You're a scourge on the earth, due for  
cleansing...

A GUARD grabs Gangrene's elbow, pulls him away.

CHAIRMAN (O.S.)

I call recess. Twenty minutes - everyone to chambers.

INT. BOARDROOM - LATER

Christy watches Arnold walk by the door with the congressional aide. They seem terribly chummy.

Christy and Maida swing on Kevin, alarmed.

MAIDI

Get Ghislaine recused. Now!

KEVIN

Thought you said she wouldn't crack?

MAIDI

You saw the senator - he's out for blood. Pushing her buttons to get a reaction.

Kevin fiddles with his briefcase.

KEVIN

Can't you just...give Gangrene a case of pox or something?

CHRISTY

You know the rule of three, do no harm. You have to do something. Before it's too late.

KEVIN

We can't appear partisan before the committee...

Christy looks up at Kevin, helpless.

CHRISTY

Please?

The aide walks by again, this time alone. Kevin waves him over and whispers.

INT. CONGRESSIONAL CHAMBERS

Kevin sits on the stand, before the Senator.

SENATOR GANGRENE

You're telling me you ordered the newt eyes? Personally?



Kevin nods, the picture of confidence.

KEVIN

For a diplomat's party. Exotic Hors  
D'oevres, a national delicacy.

SENATOR GANGRENE

And Ms. Cordozo's role?

KEVIN

Strictly administrative.

He hands a folder to the Senator, filled with invoices.

KEVIN

Here's the paper trail, for submission  
into evidence. Signed by the President  
himself. Ms. Cordozo orders a lot of  
things. Copy paper, Newts Eyes, Cruiser  
Missiles. Doesn't mean she uses them  
personally. She's a stock clerk, nothing  
more.

The senator looks around the chamber, suddenly unsure.

KEVIN

Unless you mean to accuse the President  
of lying...?

The chairman BANGS a gavel.

CHAIRMAN

Any further questions, Senator?

Gangrene's face falls. He steps away.

INT. BOARDROOM

Kevin packs his briefcase, hands the dream-catcher back  
to Christy.

CHRISTY

Thanks. For everything.

MAIDI

Especially Ghislaine.

Kevin walks out the door, flanked by the women.

EXT. SENATE STEPS

They head down the steps, now cleared of reporters.

KEVIN

You know, there is such a thing as quid pro quo. We'll want something in return.

MAIDI

And what would that be?

KEVIN

The housing crisis. Can you do anything?

CHRISTY

We're already keeping interest rates down, as low as they'll go.

KEVIN

Just - do something for the 99 percent. Give home values a nudge. Powder some pixie dust on the stimulus package?

Christy smiles, and takes his arm.

CHRISTY

Order some bat wort. We'll see what we can do.

FINAL FADE OUT: