

OF MARTYRS AND MIRACLES

A Screenplay by

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REVISED FIRST DRAFT

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FADE IN:

MONTAGE OF PHOTOS

A black and white snapshot of a squinting young boy in an ill-fitting sport coat, white shirt, and bow tie. He holds an unlit Communion Candle.

ADULT JACK (V.O.)

This clueless dweeb was me on the day of my first Holy Communion. My name is Jack O'Neill and I was born in the USA, smack in the middle of the twentieth century.

Eisenhower. Mickey Mouse Club. Davey Crockett. Cars with enormous tail fins. Etc.

ADULT JACK (V.O.)

To grow up Catholic at that time – and at any time, I suppose – was to live a life filled with arcane rituals...

Ash Wednesday. The Rosary. Little girls in their lacey First Communion dresses. St. Blaise blessings. Etc.

ADULT JACK (V.O.)

...and stories...mostly about the Holy Martyrs...

Famous paintings of church martyrs. By Caravaggio et al.

ADULT JACK (V.O.)

...and the Miracles of the Church.

Lourdes. Fatima. Guadalupe. Stigmata. Etc.

ADULT JACK (V.O.)

Through the Sixties, the martyrs kept right on coming.

JFK. Martin Luther King. Bobby Kennedy. Etc.

ADULT JACK (V.O.)

But the miracles had pretty much dried up. And if they ever *did* occur it was a safe bet that it wouldn't be anywhere near me.

A trailer park just off a busy suburban thoroughfare.

SUPER: WEST ALLIS, WISCONSIN 1968

ADULT JACK (V.O.)

This was my hometown.

A Large Streamlined Mid-Century Modern house trailer.

ADULT JACK (V.O.)

And this was where I lived with my mother, Janet, and my little sister, Catherine Claire or "C.C."

Janet: (Early 40s). Attractive. Weary. And C.C: (6 or 7), a sweetie.

ADULT JACK (V.O.)

My dad, Kenny, died when I was 8 and C.C. was still a newborn. Hit-and-run accident. He was gone before he hit the pavement.

Kenny O'Neill: 30s, Blue Collar type, seemingly invincible.

ADULT JACK (V.O.)

His death left the family in a bad way. Life insurance barely paid for the funeral. Mom had to sell the house, and we could no longer afford parochial school tuition.

A "For Sale" sign in front of a modest suburban tract house.

ADULT JACK (V.O.)

But by '68 mom had managed to pretty much put the pieces back together. We moved from our sorry little apartment, and although the trailer wasn't a house, it was ours, paid for free and clear. And mom had made it a home.

Janet, an older Jack, and C.C. smiling for the camera in front of the gleaming trailer.

ADULT JACK (V.O.)

And although I no longer attended parochial school I was still able to join the corps of altar boys at our parish, a rare honor for a public school kid, and one that made my mother especially proud.

An older Jack in Cassock and Surplice, with his mother in front of the parish church, ST. ROBERT'S.

ADULT JACK (V.O.)

But since I didn't attend the parish school the only time I was able to serve was at the 5:30 weekday morning mass.

END MONTAGE

EXT. STREET — EARLY SEPTEMBER — PRE-DAWN

JACK (mid-teens) rides his bike through pools of streetlamp light. Not much traffic. He listens via earplug to a small transistor radio tucked in his jacket pocket. And perhaps we hear some SCRATCHY SUGGESTION of late-sixties rock and roll.

ADULT JACK (V.O.)

Getting up that early every school day was certainly no picnic, but once I arrived I found it peaceful and eventually...even *miraculous*.

He pulls off the street into the church parking lot. Parks his bike, locks it up, turns off the radio and enters the church sacristy through a side door.

INT. CHURCH SACRISTY — CONTINUOUS

Very dim lighting. Quiet. Jack enters the altar boys' dressing cubical. Apparently he's the first to arrive.

INT. CHURCH PROPER — A SHORT TIME LATER

Overhead lighting dimly illuminates the altar and chancel. But except for a display of lit votive candles near the narthex, the rest of the church remains largely in shadow.

Only the occasional COUGH or SHUFFLING OF FEET reveals a human presence in the darkness.

Jack enters the sanctuary in cassock and surplice carrying a long candle lighter. He genuflects before the altar and ascends the steps.

Suspended above the tabernacle is a large crucifix. Wooden cross. White Plaster-of-Paris figure.

After Jack lights the candles he stops for a moment to study the play of flickering candle light on the face of the crucified Jesus. For a moment it almost seems to animate his sorrowful features.

INT. THE FOOT OF THE ALTAR – MASS IS BEGINNING

The PRIEST, FR. DRISCOLL (30s), faces the altar between the kneeling altar boys, Jack and TOM GEIGER.

DRISCOLL

Intoíbo ad altáre Dei.

THE ALTAR BOYS

(in unison)

Ad Deum qui lætíficat...

Jack delivers his response with deep solemnity, causing Tom to steal a wary glimpse of him from behind the priest's back.

THE ALTAR BOYS (cont.)

...juventútem meam.

INT. SACRISTY – AFTER MASS

FR. DRISCOLL: fresh out of seminary and looking as if his own altar boy days were not all that long ago, pokes his head in the altar boy cubicle.

DRISCOLL

Nice work today, fellas. Thanks a lot.

Jack smiles at Tom, who simply turns and leaves. Jack shrugs.

EXT. TRAILER PARK – LATE AFTERNOON

Jack pulls his bike into the park and hops off. A now-empty MILWAUKEE JOURNAL delivery bag is slung over his shoulder. He walks the bike to his trailer, parks it, and enters.

INT. THE TRAILER – CONTINUOUS

His mother, JANET, has just returned from her day job, and is preparing dinner.

JANET

Hi sweetie, how was your first mass?

JACK

Great. The priest seemed nice. The other kid didn't seem to like me much.

JANET

Oh I'm sure it'll be okay. He just doesn't know you yet. These things take time.

JACK

I guess.

JANET

Got homework?

JACK

Did it in study hall.

Jack heads to his bedroom at the far end of the trailer.

JANET

Dinner should be ready soon.

EXT. TRAILER PARK – LATER

Twilight. A pretty evening. Jack takes an after dinner stroll through the park. Eventually he hears BEATLES MUSIC apparently coming from an unfamiliar trailer: Gleaming silver. Sleek. Shaped like an airplane fuselage.

Sitting next to the trailer is a psychedelically painted VW mini bus and, next to that, a young man, CHRIS ELLISON: (20s). Hippy. Long hair. Cool.

He sits in a lawn chair with the tabletop radio at his side. He is carefully sanding a large handcrafted wooden bowl. He notices Jack. Waves.

JACK
I like your trailer.

CHRIS
Thanks. It's a '47 Air Stream. A Classic.

The song on the radio comes to an end.

JACK
Classic song, too.

CHRIS
Man, you sure got that right.
(he extends his hand)
Chris Ellison.

They shake hands. Chris lowers the volume on the radio.

JACK
Jack O'Neill. When did you move in?

CHRIS
Couple days ago. Time to settle down.
I've been on the road way too much lately.

He points to the bowl.

CHRIS (cont.)
Ya see, Jack, I'm an artist, well, actually I prefer 'craftsman.' I work with wood. I guess you could say it's a passion. But to make a buck you've gotta hit all the art fairs and what have you. Can really get to be a drag sometimes. It'll be nice to have some place to come home to.

JACK
What's the story on the VW?

CHRIS

The Freak-Mobile? Shit, dude, that
WAS home until I got the Air Stream!

They both LAUGH.

JACK

So, you like the Beatles, huh?

CHRIS

It's *more* than that, man. I mean, I'm
not like a groupie or anything, and I
dig lots of other bands, but these guys?
There's something really special about
THESE guys. I've actually developed a
theory about them.

JACK

Yeah? What's your theory?

Getting pretty dark now, and before Chris can answer...

JANET (O.S.)

(from afar)

Jack! Time to come home!

JACK

(embarrassed)

My mom.

CHRIS

Hey, no problem man. When ya gotta go,
ya gotta go. But hey, stop in anytime.

JACK

Great, I want to hear your theory.

CHRIS

Oh, It's *out there*, man. Gonna blow
your mind.

Jack smiles and heads back home.

INT. ALTAR BOYS' CUBICLE — ANOTHER MORNING — AFTER MASS

Jack hangs his cassock in the closet and puts on his
jacket. A different altar boy, LOGAN FINDLAY — apparently
in a hurry — quickly zips his jacket and turns to leave.

JACK
See ya later.

LOGAN
(barely audible)
Mmm-hmm.

Logan departs. Jack scans the area, grabs his breakfast, turns out the light, double checks the sanctuary, and leaves.

EXT. SACRISTY DOOR – CONTINUOUS

Jack opens the door. Raining. Hard. He glances over at his bike. It's getting drenched. Jack opens his bag and begins to eat his post-mass breakfast beneath the door's awning. The rain intensifies.

A WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
John!

Jack glances up. Across a narrow alley stands the parish school and standing in one of the side doors is a nun, SISTER GRACE: (40s). She beckons to Jack, who – mistaking it for a wave – waves back.

The school door closes, then quickly reopens. And now Sr. Grace steps out into the rain with a large black umbrella. She opens it and races across the alley to the sacristy door.

SR. GRACE
John, you needn't eat your breakfast
out here! Come with me.

With some reluctance, Jack puts his pack of Pop Tarts back into the lunch bag, and joins the nun as they jog quickly across the alley and into the school.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA – A BIT LATER

Jack sits at one of the tables finishing his last Pop Tart. Sr. Grace joins him, having first gone to the kitchen to bring him a half pint of milk.

SR. GRACE
Here you go. Something to wash down
those...whatever they are.

JACK
(grinning)
Pop Tarts.

Sr. Grace smiles. Like most nuns of the time, she wears a full habit: Ultra-starched wimple. Flowing Black Veil. Black floor-length tunic. Intimidating. But her face radiates warmth and kindness.

Jack pulls a banana from his bag.

SR. GRACE
John, please know that whenever the weather is like this, you are free to have your breakfast in here.

JACK
(sheepishly)
Okay, thank you...But Sister?

SR. GRACE
Yes?

JACK
Um...people usually call me 'Jack.'

SR. GRACE
I see. Your given name is John, but you prefer Jack?

JACK
Is that okay?

SR. GRACE
Of course. Just like President Kennedy, right?

JACK
Yeah, I guess.

SR. GRACE
(sadly)
A wonderful man, President Kennedy.

JACK
Yes, he was.

A brief reflective silence.

SR. GRACE

Well...anyway, that's settled. I hereby christened thee *Jack, The Altar Boy!*

They both chuckle.

SR. GRACE

So Jack, Tell me. How do you like being an altar boy?

JACK

I like it a lot, Sister.

SR. GRACE

I'm so sorry that we're only able to schedule you for the early mass. You understand why we have to do that, don't you?

JACK

Sure. But actually I like the early mass.

SR. GRACE

(skeptical)

Really?

JACK

Yeah, I like the darkness and the quiet. It's...I don't know...'*spooky?*' I'm sorry, That probably sounds really disrespectful.

Sr. Grace smiles tenderly.

SR. GRACE

No, not at all. I completely understand, although a better word might be '*mystical.*'

Jack considers this thoughtfully.

JACK

Hmmm, '*Mystical.*' I like that.

They exchange smiles.

EXT. TRAILER PARK — LATE THAT AFTERNOON

Still damp and gray, but no longer raining. Jack returns after delivering his papers and before going home, rides his bike past Chris' Air Stream. But it appears as if no one is there, and the VW bus is gone. Jack heads for home.

INT. SUPPER CLUB KITCHEN – EARLY THAT EVENING

Janet – at her second job as a waitress – has just finished talking with the restaurant MANAGER

JANET

Um, sure, yeah. I'm just going to have to call my kids and let 'em know. Okay?

MANAGER

Thanks Janet, you're a saint. And, by all means, call your kids.

He hands Janet a dime and she walks to a nearby pay phone.

INT. THE TRAILER – CONTINUOUS

Jack sits at the kitchen table finishing up with his homework. C.C. is watching TV. The Phone Rings. He answers.

JACK

Hello?

INT. SUPPER CLUB – CONTINUOUS

JANET

Hi, honey, it's mom. Hey look, there's a banquet of some kind tonight. A bunch of big shots evidently. Ronnie has asked that I stay. It might get kinda late.

INTERCUT – PHONE CONVERSATION

JACK

Oh Mom, that's not fair! You already put in eight hours at the bank. I'm worried about you.

JANET

Don't be, sweetie. I'll be fine and, besides, I'll probably make a bundle in tips.

JACK

Well, don't tell C.C. She'll probably ask you to by her a pony!

JANET

(laughing)

...or something even crazier! And speaking of C.C., you'll have to fix something for dinner that she'll actually eat. And make sure she gets to bed on time.

JACK

Okay, Mom.

JANET

Thanks, sweetie. You're my rock. But, like I said, this could get pretty late. So don't feel like you've got to wait up for me, okay?

JACK

Okay. Don't work too hard.

JANET

Only enough to get those pony tips, I promise. Anyway, I should go. I love you.

JACK

Love you too, Mom.

INT. THE TRAILER - LATER

Jack rises from the table and takes his dish to the sink. C.C. is still working on her dinner.

C.C.

I wish you would cook every night.

JACK

(chuckling)

Yeah, so you can have macaroni and cheese every night?

C.C.

I love macaroni and cheese!

JACK

You're gonna turn *into* macaroni
and cheese one of these days!

C.C. giggles and finishes up. She takes her dish to the sink.

C.C.

You want me to do the dishes?

JACK

Um, thanks, but no. They'd end up dirtier than they already are.

C.C.

(pouting)

Nuh, uh!

JACK

Oh relax! I'll do 'em later, when you're in bed.

(beat)

So, what do you wanna do in the meantime?

C.C. breaks into a huge smile.

C.C.

Play Wizard of OZ!

Jack's shoulders droop. Apparently this is something they've done before. Often.

JACK

(reluctantly)

Ok, but first get into your P.J.s and brush your teeth.

C.C.

Yay!

C.C. bolts joyfully to the bedroom.

A BIT LATER — THE LIVING ROOM.

Jack, apparently in the role of the Scarecrow dances alongside C.C.'s joyful Dorothy.

BOTH OF THEM

(singing)

*Weeeeeeeee're off to see the wizard,
the wonderful Wizard of Oz. We hear he
is a wiz of a wiz if ever a wiz there
was. If ever, if ever a wiz there was
the Wizard of Oz is one because, because,
because, because, because, becaaaauuse!
Because of the wonderful things he does!
Da-deedle-dee-deedle-dee-dee. We're off
to see the wizard, the wonderful Wizard
of Oz!*

LATER – MASTER BEDROOM

Jack tucks his little sister into one of the twin beds in the room she shares with her mother.

JACK

Okay, did ya have fun tonight?

C.C.

Yeah! Can we do it again tomorrow?

JACK

I'll see. Now go to sleep, Okay?
Love ya, Dorothy.

C.C. wraps her tiny arms around Jack's neck and gives him a big squeeze.

C.C.

Love you too Scarecrow. I think
I'll miss you most of all.

Jack playfully musses C.C.'s hair, get's up, turns out the lights and leaves the room.

EXT. CHRIS' AIR STREAM – ANOTHER AFTERNOON

Sunny day. Warm. Chris steps out of his trailer carrying two bottles of Coke. Gives one to Jack who has been waiting for him in one of two lawn chairs.

CHRIS

So, yeah, it was an art festival in
Des Moines. Did pretty well too.
Actually really well. Sold a shitload!

JACK
That's great!

CHRIS
Yeah, it's nice being able to eat
again. So, anywho, you want to hear
my Beatles theory, huh?

JACK
Yeah. Blow my mind!

Chris smiles and theatrically looks around, as if he's
about to spill a shocking secret.

CHRIS
Ever heard of a '*harmonic convergence*'?

JACK
A what?

CHRIS
Yeah, that's what I thought. Okay, a
harmonic convergence. That's when all
the planets line up in a straight line.
Very rare. Once every ten billion years
or something. It's a really big deal when
it happens. Earth shattering!

JACK
Okay, so?

CHRIS
So I believe the Beatles are a kind of
harmonic convergence.

JACK
I don't get it.

CHRIS
Well, it's got nothing to do with the
planets and all that crap. But I do
think they are a once-in-a-billion-year
phenomenon.

JACK
Yeah, okay, I think I understand.

CHRIS
Oh, but there's more!

Again, Chris glances around to see if anyone else is in earshot.

CHRIS
(in a whisper)
I think the Beatles might be...I don't know...*angels*?

JACK
Come on!

CHRIS
No, think about it. Out of all the musicians in Liverpool in the late 50s, and there were like a trillion of 'em, It's *these* guys...these unbelievably *talented* guys that somehow find each other!

MONTAGE OF PHOTOS

Early Scruffy Beatles. Black Leather, Greasy Elvis Up-Dos.

CHRIS (V.O. cont.)
...And *then*, they keep running into *all* the right people to help them. Brian Epstein, the perfect manager...

Brian Epstein in his record store.

CHRIS (V.O. cont.)
...George Martin, the perfect producer...

George Martin in the recording studio.

CHRIS (V.O. cont.)
...and even that cool German chick and her friends in Hamburg.

Astrid Kirchher. Klaus Voormann. Jürgen Vollmer.

CHRIS (V.O. cont.)
You know the ones that pretty much gave them their look and style?

The evolving Beatles. Hair combed forward. Suits and Ties.

CHRIS (V.O. cont.)

And then, after Kennedy was killed,
the whole world falls into this deep-ass
funk, right?

JFK in Dallas. The funeral. The grieving masses.

END MONTAGE

CHRIS (cont.)

And everyone was dying for something
to come along and give them hope, and
give them permission to be happy again.
And at *just* that moment who comes along?

JACK

The Beatles.

CHRIS

Bingo! But there's even more.

Jack is now pretty much enchanted.

CHRIS (cont.)

After some of the most successful years
in show biz history, their music starts to
change in unbelievable ways. They start
writing songs like "Yesterday" and "In My
Life," songs that sound like they're coming
from these old, old men, at the end of their
long, long lives! Except that when Paul and
John wrote these songs, they were in their
early twenties! And both of them have said
that sometimes they had no idea where their
ideas were coming from!

JACK

Yeah, I read that somewhere.

CHRIS

And *then*...they start writing songs about
Love. And I'm not talking about just
romantic, kissy-face '*I-Want-To-Hold-Your-
-Hand*' love. But *real* love. *Cosmic* love.

JACK
Cosmic love?

CHRIS
Transformational Love! The Love that ends
hatred, racism and war! The Love of God!
See, I really believe that God himself
selected the Beatles, groomed them,
encouraged them, and inspired them to
do nothing less than save the world! To
preach a new Gospel! They're angels,
dude! Heavenly-fucking-beings!

Jack mimes an exploding head.

INT. ALTAR BOYS' CUBICLE – ANOTHER MORNING – BEFORE MASS
Jack enters. Already present – and in full gear – is the
other altar boy, Tom Geiger.

JACK
Hi.

Tom holds a finger to his lips.

TOM
(whispering)
Ya know who's sayin' mass today?

JACK
No, who?

Tom shushes Jack and gestures to the next room in the
sacristy where the presiding priest vests. The conversation
continues all in WHISPERS.

TOM
Father Bouchard!

JACK
The pastor? Wow!

TOM
I know! He never pulls the graveyard
shift!

JACK
You think Father Driscoll is sick?

TOM

No! He came *in* with the big guy!
But he left a couple minutes ago.

JACK

Have you ever served for him before?

TOM

Once. I was sweating like a pig. I mean, this is the guy who's trying to save the Latin Mass! He's famous! My dad even thinks he might be Pope someday! He's like a God around here. So just make sure you get everything right.

Jack nods solemnly.

INT. THE PRIEST'S VESTING AREA – CONTINUOUS

FR. PAUL BOUCHARD (mid-50s). Tall. Imposing. Radiates Authority. He Softly whispers his prayers, putting on each vestment article with a sense of solemn purpose.

At last he regards himself in a full-length mirror, adjusts a little here and there and nods. He is ready.

INT. THE ALTAR – MIDWAY THROUGH THE SERVICE

At the right side of the altar, the symbolic washing of the priest's hands is in progress.

From a glass cruet in one hand, Jack pours a small stream of water over Bouchard's extended hands. In Jack's other hand is a small glass basin to catch the overflow.

Tom, standing to Jack's left, then hands a white linen towel to the priest for him to dry his hands.

Tom notices that although it was he who handed Bouchard the towel, the priest still has his eyes locked on Jack.

INT. ALTAR BOYS' CUBICLE – AFTER MASS

Jack and Tom remove their surplices and cassocks and return them to the closet.

TOM
(whispering)
Man, I'm glad that's over!

JACK
We did okay, didn't we?

TOM
Hard to tell. But I gotta get going.
I got homework to finish before
class starts.

Tom throws on his jacket and bolts from the room. As
Always, Jack carefully checks his surroundings, turns down
the lights in the sanctuary, puts on his jacket, picks up
his breakfast and starts to leave. And just then...

BOUCHARD (O.S.)
Mister O'Neill, is it?

Jacks turns to find Fr. Bouchard standing right behind him.

JACK
(startled and nervous)
Yes Father. Jack, I mean, John O'Neill.

BOUCHARD
You must be the public school altar boy
I've been hearing so much about.

JACK
Yeah. I mean, yes Father.

Bouchard gestures toward Jack's lunch bag.

BOUCHARD
So, what's for breakfast?

JACK
Peanut butter and jelly sandwich,
some cookies and an apple.

BOUCHARD
Hmmm. I'll tell you what. How about you
save that for your lunch and join me for
a healthy *hot* breakfast at the Rectory?

Jack is clearly startled by the invitation.

JACK

Um, that would be great Father. But I, I really need to get going.

BOUCHARD

That's not entirely true now, is it John?

JACK

Um...well...I mean...

BOUCHARD

Now John, I happen to know for a fact that unlike our poor altar boys here at St. Robert's, you *HAVE* no classes today. "Teachers' In-Service Training" or some such thing. I'm correct about that, aren't I?

JACK

Yes, Father.

BOUCHARD

So, what's your preference? Bacon and Eggs? French Toast? A nice omelet perhaps?

JACK

I don't know. French Toast, I guess.

BOUCHARD

Excellent choice. Shall we then?

INT. THE RECTORY – LATER

Grand but stodgy. Quiet as a Funeral Home. Bookcases and dark wood. Antiques and flower vases. Religious artwork. Chandeliers. Candelabras. Etc.

THE DINING ROOM – CONTINUOUS

Jack and Bouchard sit facing one another across a massive oaken dining table covered with fine linen. Standing next to the table is the rectory housekeeper and cook, MRS. GRETA HÜBER (60s). Unassuming. Kind.

GRETA

So, may I take your order, gentlemen?

Jack and Greta exchange nods and smiles.

BOUCHARD

Yes, Greta, John will be having French Toast this morning, and it would be nice if you didn't burn it for a change.

Bouchard winks at Jack.

GRETA

Of course father. And for you?

BOUCHARD

I shall have the usual: two eggs the consistency of chalk, three strips of limp, gelatinous bacon, and a pot of that fetid brownish dreck you regularly try to pass off as coffee. Oh, and some fresh-squeezed orange juice for the both of us. Thank you.

GRETA

Of course, father. Coming up.

And she shuffles from the room.

BOUCHARD

Oh, I tease Mrs. Hüber, but it's all in good fun. And besides, it keeps the ridiculous old crone on her toes. A "win/win," wouldn't you say?

And, from a small crack in the kitchen door, Mrs. Hüber catches Bouchard's remark.

LATER

Bouchard sips his coffee from an elegant china cup. Jack is just finishing his French Toast.

BOUCHARD

Well, how was it?

JACK

It was Great!

BOUCHARD

Excellent, glad you liked it.

The priest puts down the cup, places his elbows on the table, laces his fingers together and rests his chin on his

hands – gazing at Jack the whole time. He begins to speak just as Mrs. Hüber enters to clear the table.

BOUCHARD

Thank you, Greta that was very fine.

JACK

Yes, thank you. Best French Toast
I ever had.

GRETA

(ignoring the priest)

Well, thank *YOU*, young man. It was a
pleasure.

And Mrs. Hüber leaves the dining room. Bouchard waits until she's gone.

BOUCHARD

So, John, do you know why you're here?

JACK

Um, to have breakfast?

Bouchard smiles, but shakes his head.

BOUCHARD

No, I mean, here...as an altar boy
at St. Robert's?

JACK

(embarrassed)

Oh...well, My family joined the parish,
and I signed up for the program. And...
now I'm an altar boy.

BOUCHARD

Yes, and you realize, don't you, how
unusual it is for us to accept a public
schoolboy?

JACK

Well, I know I'm the only one.

BOUCHARD

You are indeed. In fact, you are the
first public school altar boy we've
ever had.

JACK

Really?

Bouchard nods slowly.

BOUCHARD

You said that your family belongs to the parish, but it isn't a full family is it, John?

JACK

I'm not sure what you mean Father.

BOUCHARD

I mean that there isn't a '*Man Of The House,*' as they say.

This stings Jack, and it shows.

JACK

No Father. My dad...well...he died.

BOUCHARD

Yes, yes, so tragic. So terribly tragic. I imagine you must miss him very much.

JACK

Sure, but it happened when I was only 8. I'm starting to forget what he even looked like. But I do remember his laugh.

Jack smiles briefly but then buries his head in his hands. Bouchard places a hand on his shoulder.

BOUCHARD

John, this brings us back to the '*WHY*' of it all. Why you have been brought on as one of our altar boys.

Jack raises his head and wipes the tears from his face.

BOUCHARD (cont.)

We've taken you in, John, to save you from the perils of a fatherless life ...to ground you for your life ahead in a world that seems to have gone dangerously off the rails. And I've
(more)

BOUCHARD (cont.)
decided to become personally involved,
to provide you with that *masculine*
presence that is so tragically lacking
in your life.

JACK
I don't know what to say.

BOUCHARD
You don't have to say anything, my son.
I simply want you to come to me with any
problems you might have taken to your
father...to think of me as something
other than your pastor. To regard me as
a *friend*.

JACK
Of course, I mean...I would be honored.

BOUCHARD
The honor is mine, son. Believe me.
Now before you leave this morning, I'd
like to share something with you...
something in my office.

Bouchard draws away from the table and invites Jack to do
the same. And together they proceed to his office, where
Bouchard makes way for Jack to enter first.

And once again, from the kitchen door, Mrs. Hüber watches
as Bouchard follows Jack into the office and slowly closes
the big oak door behind him.

We hold on the closed door for a long beat.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO

EXT. PUBLIC PARK — MID-OCTOBER — DAY

Autumn in all its splendor. Piercing blue sky. Trees ablaze
with color.

A touch football game takes place in a large clearing. The
priests, Bouchard and Driscoll, are playing with a small
group of ALTAR BOYS, including Jack.

Bouchard, in jeans and a Notre Dame sweatshirt, captains one team. Driscoll the other.

Driscoll's team huddles, breaks and comes to the line.

DRISCOLL
 (calling signals)
 Blue 46! Blue 46! Z-Switch-eroo!
 Omaha! Omaha! 23-Skidoo! Overlord 6...

The boys on both teams start LAUGHING.

DRISCOLL
 (having great fun)
 ...Green Zone 5! Green Zone 5!

BOUCHARD
 (annoyed)
 Just give him the ball already!

DRISCOLL
 Hike!

Driscoll takes the ball. Surveys his options. Finds Jack open down field. Passes.

As soon as Jack catches the ball, he is scooped up by Bouchard and carried clownishly back to the line of scrimmage.

BOUCHARD
 No gain! Second Down!

The boys are now giddy with LAUGHTER.

DRISCOLL
 (laughing)
 No way! Throw the flag! That's *GOTTA*
 be a penalty! Throw the flag!

Bouchard puts Jack down. Driscoll repositions the ball up field and calls his team back to a huddle.

DRISCOLL
 (to Jack)
 Nice catch, Jack! Way to go!

Tom Geiger pats Jack on the back. Jack smiles faintly.

DRISCOLL

Dave, you quarterback this one.

Dave is DAVID NAZARIO, another altar boy.

DAVE

Okay guys, bombs away! Break!

The team steps to the line.

DAVE

Okay...Hike!

The center, a boy named GARY, seems to be daydreaming.

DAVE

Any time at all, Gary!

(then singing)

Any time at all, Bom, Bom, Bom,

Any time at all, Bom, Bom, Bom! Bom!

Dave's version of the Beatles' song triggers more LAUGHTER.

DAVE

Any time at...Hike, Already!

Gary finally hikes the ball. And, as the team races downfield, they too start singing.

DRISCOLL'S TEAM

(singing)

Any time at all, Bom, Bom, Bom,

Any time at all, Bom, bom, Bom! Bom!

Dave launches a long pass, way beyond anyone's reach. And on their way back to the line of scrimmage the boys on Bouchard's team join in.

BOUCHARD'S TEAM

*Any time at all, all you gotta do is
call, and I'll be there!*

Bouchard looking perplexed, starts waving his hands above his head.

BOUCHARD

Okay, okay, enough of that.

The boys stop singing, but continue to chuckle.

BOUCHARD
What is that you're singing?

DAVE
Oh, that's a Beatles' song, Father.

Bouchard's demeanor darkens instantly.

BOUCHARD
Well that, gentlemen, will be the end
of *that!* Do you understand me?

The merriment immediately ceases.

BOUCHARD
I don't want to hear another note of
that so-called music again. Am I making
myself clear?

DRISCOLL
(chuckling)
Oh, they were just having fun, Father.

BOUCHARD
I'm surprised at you, Father. You should
know better.

Driscoll lowers his head. Wipes the smile from his face.

BOUCHARD
The Beatles – and it nauseates me to even
say their ludicrous name – are demons
straight from the depths of Hell! You
think I'm joking, don't you? Well you're
wrong! Trust me, gentlemen, listening to
their records is nothing less than a sin!
A serious sin! And I will expect you to
treat it as such when you enter my
confessional.

(beat)
The game is over.

The boys, stunned and chastised, slowly go their separate ways.

EXT. TRAILER PARK – LATER THAT DAY

Chris' Air Stream glistens in the autumn sun. And from its open windows: a raucous combination of ROCK MUSIC and the loud WHIRRING and GRINDING of some type of machinery.

Jack walks up to the door and, when he peeks inside, the noises begin to diminish, and then stop.

CHRIS (O.S.)
(from inside the trailer)
Hey, Dude! Come on in!

INT. THE AIR STREAM

The place is more of a workshop than living quarters. Tools everywhere. Table saw. Jigsaw, A Lathe. Sawdust everywhere.

Jack enters. He appears listless and remote.

JACK
Hey Chris.

Chris, who had been turning a tall candleholder on his lathe, Removes his goggles and blows some fine sawdust off the beautifully-crafted piece.

JACK
(pointing to the candleholder)
That's nice.

CHRIS
Thanks. I sell a lot of these babies.

Jack sits down on one of Chris' lawn chairs, now doing double duty as living room furniture.

CHRIS
Can I get you anything? Soda? Chips?

JACK
Nah, I'm good.

Chris pulls a Coke for himself out of a battered ice chest and takes a seat in the other lawn chair.

CHRIS
So where you been hiding yourself these days? I haven't seen you around lately.

JACK

Oh, nowhere much. Stuff at church mostly.

Chris studies Jack's face for a beat.

CHRIS

(softly)

You okay, man?

JACK

Yeah, I'm okay. It's just...

CHRIS

I'm listening.

JACK

Well, I was playing football in the park earlier. Some of the kids from church and a couple of the priests. And we were having fun...I guess. But then one of the other kids started singing a Beatles song and then everybody kind of joined in and... One of the priests got really mad.

CHRIS

Because they were singing?

JACK

No, because it was the *Beatles*.

CHRIS

Guy's got a problem with the Beatles?

JACK

He *HATES* 'em! Called 'em *demons*.

Chris laughs so hard that he sprays Coke out of his mouth.

JACK

I'm not joking. Demons straight from the pits of Hell!

Chris rises to get some paper towels to clean up his mess.

CHRIS

I think the guy's got a screw loose.

JACK
Everyone at church thinks he's like
a saint or something.

CHRIS
Wait, this isn't that Bouchard guy,
by any chance?

Jack winces at the name.

JACK
You know about him?

CHRIS
Sure, he's the one with the hard-on
for the Latin Mass. Ultra conservative.
I read about him in the paper.

JACK
He's the pastor.

CHRIS
He's an *asshole*.

JACK
He's got a lot of power. A *lot* of power.

CHRIS
And that makes him dangerous. You gotta
be careful around people like that.

JACK
(softly)
I know.

CHRIS
I'll tell you one thing, though. Anyone
who calls the Beatles 'evil' is not only
dead wrong. He's also *projecting*.

JACK
I don't know what that means.

CHRIS
It means he's covering up for his
own evil...And he knows it.

Jack nods his head slowly. Seems to understand.

EXT. STREET — DAY

Another beautiful fall day. A late-fifties sedan pulls off the street and into the St. Robert's parking lot, where a fund-raising car wash is taking place. The driver rolls down her window. Janet. With C.C.

JANET

Jack!

Jack is one of about a dozen other TEENAGERS who are washing the cars. Jack waves and walks over to the car.

JANET

Hi, honey, how's it going?

JACK

Okay I guess. You want our car to get washed?

JANET

That's why I'm here.

JACK

Okay, Just pull up behind that blue one. You'll be next.

Janet watches as Jack and the others soap up the blue car. There is a lot of horseplay between the kids. Lots of LAUGHTER. Janet smiles at the sight of Jack interacting with his friends.

When the car is hosed off, the kids take it up a notch. Everyone is getting soaked. LAUGHTER and SCREAMS.

After the blue car pulls away, Jack waves Janet over. She drives the car forward, parks and exits with C.C.. Janet heads for a card table from which Fr. Driscoll is serving as cashier. C.C. races to the playground swing set.

JANET

Hi Father. What's this going to set me back?

DRISCOLL

Hi Janet. Two bucks should do the trick, unless you actually want your car to get *clean*.

A teenage girl's delighted SHRIEK draws their attention and they both chuckle.

DRISCOLL (cont.)

I mean considering *this* crew here you may wish instead to take it to a *real* car wash and cough up a fiver.

Janet chuckles and passes him the money.

Another car pulls into the lot: A huge, immaculate, gleaming, top-of-the-line black Cadillac. Father Bouchard.

He pulls off to the side, parks and joins Janet and Driscoll at the card table.

JANET

Hello, Father Bouchard. Beautiful day, isn't it?

BOUCHARD

It is indeed, Mrs. O'Neill, it is indeed.

More SQUEALS of merriment from the washers.

JANET

Father, I've been meaning to thank you for the attention you've been giving my Jack. It means a lot to me.

BOUCHARD

Think nothing of it. John's a fine boy. We're glad he's able to spend so much time with us.

Jack keeps nervously glancing over his shoulder as Bouchard talks with his mother. He seems relieved when Janet departs to join C.C. at the playground. Just then a cute giggling teenage GIRL sneaks up behind him and wrings out a large soapy sponge over his head. Jack turns to playfully retaliate. And just then...

BOUCHARD

(suddenly right on top of them)
Alright, that's enough! Miss Stuart, that was uncalled for! Apologize at once.

JACK

It's okay Father. We were just fooling around.

BOUCHARD

(to the girl)

I said apologize!

GIRL

(embarrassed)

I'm sorry.

BOUCHARD

Not to me, you dunce. To him!

GIRL

I'm sorry Jack.

BOUCHARD

Alright, now I think it's time that you called it a day, young lady. And I mean right now.

The girl nods sadly and leaves. Bouchard turns to Jack.

BOUCHARD

And you do *NOT* want to get mixed up with a tramp like that. Believe me. She would make your life an unrelenting nightmare. Do you understand me, John?

JACK

(softly)

Yes.

BOUCHARD

(menacingly)

I said, do you understand me?

JACK

Yes Father.

BOUCHARD

Good. Now I think it would probably be best if you went home as well. You can return with your mother.

Jack drops his sponge and walks away from the car.

EXT. TRAILER PARK — DAY — NOVEMBER NOW

Still pleasant, but autumn has passed its peak.

INT. THE TRAILER — CONTINUOUS

Janet. Casually dressed. Curlers in her hair. She is vacuuming the living room carpet. The PHONE RINGS. She turns off the vacuum and picks up the receiver.

JANET

Hello?

INT. CHURCH RECTORY — CONTINUOUS

Bouchard, on the phone.

BOUCHARD

Good afternoon, Mrs. O'Neill, this is Father Bouchard. How are you today?

INT. THE TRAILER — CONTINUOUS

Janet self-consciously (and ridiculously) begins taking out her curlers.

JANET

Very well Father. And you?

INTERCUT — PHONE CONVERSATION

BOUCHARD

I'm very fine. Say, I don't suppose John is around, is he?

JANET

Oh, I'm sorry, Father, he isn't. He delivers papers this time of day.

BOUCHARD

Of course. Well, perhaps you could relay a message from me.

JANET

I certainly will.

BOUCHARD

Next Saturday I intend to take a number of my better altar boys on a field trip to St. Dominic's. And I would be delighted if John could join us.

JANET

To the seminary? Oh my, Father! He would love that!

BOUCHARD

Wonderful, tell him I shall pick him up about 10 O'clock.

JANET

Oh I will! And thank you Father. This will mean so much to him!

BOUCHARD

Well, he certainly deserves it.

INT. THE TRAILER — THAT EVENING

Janet, Jack and C.C. at the kitchen table. Dinner time. C.C. waves a stuffed monkey over her head, humming and ignoring her plate. Jack — downcast — has barely touched his food.

JANET

C.C., put your monkey down and eat.

She obeys.

JANET

(to Jack)

And how come you're not eating?

JACK

Not hungry.

JANET

Are you okay, honey? You've been so quiet lately.

JACK

(snapping)

I'm fine, okay?

C.C.
(oblivious)
Jack, can we play Wizard of Oz tonight?

JACK
Not tonight, C.

C.C.
Aw, why not?

JACK
'Cause I don't feel like it.

C.C.
Aw, please? Pretty please?

JACK
No.

C.C.
But it's fun.

JACK
Some other time.

C.C.
But! It's! Fun!

JACK
No it isn't! It's *NEVER* been fun,
okay? I only do it to shut you the
hell up, for Christ's sake!

JANET
John Kenneth O'Neill! What's gotten
into you?

C.C. sadly leaves the table and runs from the room.

JACK
Sorry.

JANET
How could you do that to her? She
worships you! You're the closest thing
to a father she's ever had!

A deafening silence falls over the table.

JACK

Mom, why did you tell Father Bouchard that I could go on that field trip?

JANET

Is that what this is about? The field trip? I thought you'd love to go! And besides, it's such an honor. He called you one of his best altar boys.

JACK

(beneath his breath)

I'll bet he did.

JANET

What?

JACK

Nothing. It's just that I'm gonna have to find somebody to do my route that day. And I'm gonna have to pay him. And sure, I guess it's a big deal to be invited. But it's not like I'm ever gonna be a priest. I just wish you'd asked me first.

JANET

You're right. I should have. But sweetie, it might turn out to be great.

Jack looks up sadly and nods.

INT. CAR — SEVERAL DAYS LATER.

A cold and gray morning. Bouchard steers his huge Cadillac into the trailer park. With him are altar boys: Tom Geiger, Logan Findley, Dave Nazario, and a fourth, RICK STODDARD.

TOM

Is this really where he lives?

BOUCHARD

It is indeed.

A MOMENT LATER

The car pulls up to the trailer.

Jack leaves the trailer and walks over to the Caddy. Bouchard has arranged for him to sit in the front seat. The others file into the still spacious back seat. The car continues on.

LOGAN
(sarcastically)
So you live in a trailer, huh? Cooooool!

JACK
(good naturedly)
Yup. I live in a trailer. With all the other White Trash losers.

The boys all LAUGH.

BOUCHARD
You're hardly a loser, John.

JACK
Oh this is just the usual routine.

BOUCHARD
The 'usual routine?'

JACK
Sure. Next comes the part about me being a "Public."

BOUCHARD
Well now, what on earth is a 'Public?'

DAVE
You *know* Father. There are only two religions in the world: Catholic...and 'Public.'

The boys LAUGH loudly at this one.

RICK
Depends on where you go to school, see? He goes to a public school, so he's a 'Public.'

BOUCHARD
That's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard.

Still more LAUGHTER.

EXT. LATER – ST. DOMINIC'S SEMINARY

Bouchard's Caddy pulls into the parking lot. The riders exit. And as they walk...

BOUCHARD

As you know gentlemen, I received my undergraduate degree from Notre Dame. But St. Dominic's is my true *Alma Mater*. Does anyone know what that means?

Clueless.

BOUCHARD (cont.)

Alma Mater means '*Nourishing Mother*.' And she nourishes me still.

The group arrives at the Administration Building. Bouchard holds the door for the boys.

INT. – CONTINUOUS

Meeting the group upon their arrival is the Seminary Rector: FATHER JAMES VINCENT (50s).

VINCENT

(to Bouchard)

Paul, how wonderful to see you again. You've been away far too long.

The men shake hands.

BOUCHARD

Oh, you know how it is, Jim. No rest for the wicked.

VINCENT

(chuckling)

Of course. And who are these fine young men?

BOUCHARD

These are some of my stalwart young acolytes, Jim: Thomas Geiger, Logan Findley, David Nazario, Richard Stoddard and John O'Neill.

Each, in turn, shakes hands with the Rector.

BOUCHARD

Thought I might give them the Grand
Tour today, if it's alright with you,
of course.

VINCENT

Oh, by all means. And you've picked a
wonderful day. Our full choir will be
rehearsing a bit later in the chapel!
So, please, enjoy yourselves and take
all the time you need. And please avail
yourselves of our cafeteria. Lunch is
on me.

BOUCHARD

Thank You, Jim.

INT. THE LIBRARY – LATER

Massive. Modern. Quiet as a tomb. The boys gaze at the
imposing stacks.

BOUCHARD

(in hushed tones)

St. Dominic's is regarded by many as
the 'West Point' of American seminaries,
and the course load is every bit as
rigorous. So, as you might imagine, I
spent many, many hours in here.

INT. THE CHAPEL – LATER

Huge. Beautiful. Soaring. The title 'Chapel' doesn't do it
justice.

Despite the grayness of the day the place is filled with
soft refracted color from enormous stained glass windows.
It also REVERBERATES with the ethereal sound of GREGORIAN
CHANT: The CHOIR, practicing as promised.

One cannot help but be moved. And the boys are.

INT. BELL TOWER – LATER

Up a dizzying spiral staircase to the top. A sweeping panoramic view of the seminary campus and surrounding countryside.

The boys are dazzled.

BOUCHARD

Quite a view, isn't it? A 'God's Eye View' one might say.

Bouchard points to a large wooded area adjacent to the campus.

BOUCHARD

If the weather holds, I'll take you through the woods later. We called it '*Savio's Jungle*,' after St. Dominic. The color was magnificent a couple weeks ago but believe me, it's a magical place — any time of the year.

INT. SEMINARY CAFETERIA — LATER

Like the chapel, the seminary 'cafeteria' is undersold. Spacious. Warm. Inviting. The group is served their lunch.

BOUCHARD

And who shall say Grace, this afternoon? John, might you care to lead us in prayer?

Jack recognizes an offer that cannot be refused. He agrees.

JACK

(with reverence)

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit: Bless us O Lord, and these thy gifts which we are about to receive, from thy bounty, Through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

MONTAGE — VARIOUS

INT. CAFETERIA — Lunch continues. Animated conversation. Laughter. Jokes.

INT. DORM ROOM — Small but Tidy. A seminarian reads on one of the beds. Rises to welcome the tour group.

INT. GLASSED-IN BALCONY — Overlooking an Olympic sized swimming pool. A swimmer does laps. The group is impressed.

INT. GYMNASIUM — A pick-up basketball game in progress. The boys cheer after one of the seminarians hits a long rainbow jump shot.

END MONTAGE

INT. BACK AT THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING — LATER

Bouchard shows the boys a large portrait of St. Dominic Savio. The saint is really just a boy.

BOUCHARD

This, gentlemen, is the seminary's namesake, St. Dominic Savio, a very pious and virtuous young man. He died a little more than a century ago of natural causes. He was only 14, but his devotion to God and the Church was so notable, so...*superhuman*, one might say, that people who knew him thought they were already in the presence of a saint. Look how beautiful he was.

The boys glance at one another uncomfortably.

INT. SCIENCE LAB — TOUR ALMOST OVER

Empty. Quiet. Beakers, vials, test tubes and other paraphernalia.

Bouchard leads the group to a counter with formaldehyde-preserved animal specimens in large glass containers. The boys draw in close to inspect.

BOUCHARD

As you may, or may not know, gentlemen, St. Dominic's also operates a high school for those young men who received their callings earlier in life. And their education is as well-rounded as you would find at any of the nation's finest prep schools.

He reaches into a pocket and pulls out a ring of keys.

BOUCHARD

I'm now going to show you something that not everyone gets to see.

He unlocks a cabinet and carefully withdraws another glass container, this one containing a human fetus, nearly full-term. The boys are stunned.

DAVE
Is that real?

BOUCHARD
Yes. It was stillborn. Do you know what that means?

DAVE
I'm not sure.

BOUCHARD
It means that it died before it was even born...to an unwed mother. And so, boys, one must regard this as something of a blessing. You see, our God is a loving God but he will not be mocked! And the Holy Bible tells us that the wages of sin is death. So the price that this wicked woman paid was the death of this poor creature before it even so much as took a breath.

The boys look on in horror.

BOUCHARD (cont.)
A dramatic example of God's righteous anger, wouldn't you say? And a powerful lesson to those on the brink of adulthood.

Bouchard allows this all to sink in for a moment, before returning the container to the cabinet.

BOUCHARD
(buoyantly)
So...onwards to Savio's Jungle!

EXT. THE WOODS — MOMENTS LATER

The group works its way through the woods and its blanket of fallen leaves. Quiet.

BOUCHARD

Being here brings back many wonderful memories. This is where we would come to work off some of the stress of seminary life. It was our refuge.

And here, he pulls from his overcoat a black gun. The boys eyes widen dramatically.

LOGAN

Wow! Is that real?

BOUCHARD

Well, it's only a pellet gun. But if you're a squirrel or a bird you can quickly learn that it's real *enough*.

TOM

Did you ever hit anything?

BOUCHARD

Oh, we did indeed. Great fun. So keep your eyes peeled, men, you never know what dangers might be lurking here in the jungle.

The boys chuckle and the hike continues.

LATER - STILL IN THE WOODS

Rick, out in front of the others stops in his tracks and looks closely at a downed tree trunk. He waves the others over.

LOGAN

Did you find something?

Rick points to the tree trunk and an almost perfectly camouflaged tree toad sitting motionless. Bouchard catches up to the group.

BOUCHARD

What do we have here?

Again, Rick points out the toad.

BOUCHARD

Stand aside, men.

The priest stands over the tree trunk with the pellet gun and FIRES it point blank into the back of the toad's head, killing it instantly.

BOUCHARD
(chuckling)
Filthy animal.

TOM
Whoa!

DAVE
Bye-Bye, Mr. Toad!

Rick, Logan, Tom and Dave all LAUGH and WHOOP triumphantly. Jack appears stricken.

INT. CAR — DUSK

The car pulls to a stop in front of a spacious suburban colonial.

LOGAN
Thanks Father. I had a great time.

BOUCHARD
You're very welcome, Logan. Say hello to your parents for me.

LOGAN
I will.

Logan departs and the car pulls away from the curb. Of the group, only Jack remains. The two ride in silence for a time. Jack turns his head away from the priest to look out the side window. Maintains this position for the entire ride.

BOUCHARD
Well John, what did you think of St. Dominic's today?

JACK
(impassively)
I didn't realize how big it was.

BOUCHARD
Impressive, isn't it?

JACK

I suppose.

BOUCHARD

So, can you envision yourself going there someday?

JACK

I don't think so.

BOUCHARD

Oh, don't be so sure. God may call you yet. It sometimes happens when you least expect it. He works in mysterious ways.

Awkward silence.

BOUCHARD

You know, you remind me of St. Dominic.

Jack, still turned away from the man, rolls his eyes.

BOUCHARD

You've impressed a lot of people at St. Robert's. Your poise, the precise and solemn way you conduct yourself during mass, your noble self-sacrifice in serving that tiresome early service. It's really quite something.

Silence.

BOUCHARD

You may think the other boys don't care for you, but I think they may actually be in awe of you. I can see their respect.

JACK

Hmmm.

BOUCHARD

A young man with your gifts can be such a positive influence on others. Just like St. Dominic was with his peers.

JACK

I'm tired Father. Can we just go home?

BOUCHARD

Certainly. But first, let's stop off at the rectory. We could enjoy some cocoa, perhaps, and finish our talk. What do you say?

Jack closes his eyes. Tight.

EXT. STREET — LATER — DARK NOW

The Cadillac pulls into the rectory parking lot.

DISSOLVE TO

DREAM SEQUENCE — VARIOUS

Throughout the sequence GREGORIAN CHANT drifts in and out.

INT. THE SEMINARY CHAPEL — Jack stands in the center aisle gazing up at the soaring vaulted ceiling. He is utterly alone.

JACK

Hello?

His voice ECHOES.

JACK

(louder)

Where is everybody?

INT. ST. ROBERT'S SANCTUARY — Dark except for Candlelight flickering over the face of the crucified Jesus.

SR. GRACE'S VOICE

A better word might be 'mystical.'

FROM THE SEMINARY BELL TOWER — Dizzying, vertiginous sweep of the seminary grounds.

BOUCHARD'S VOICE

...the perils of a fatherless life.

THE PORTRAIT OF ST. DOMINIC

BOUCHARD'S VOICE

I want to share something with you.

INT. A DARK ROOM – Bouchard. Sweating. Grinding. Eyes rolling back in his head.

BOUCHARD'S VOICE
...a young man with your gifts.

INT. A DARK ROOM – A Home movie camera on a tripod, running, WHIRRING.

BOUCHARD'S VOICE
...tragic, so terribly tragic.

INT. SCIENCE LAB – THE FETUS

BOUCHARD'S VOICE
This poor creature.

THE PORTRAIT OF ST. DOMINIC

BOUCHARD'S VOICE
How beautiful. How beautiful he is.

FROM THE BELL TOWER – Spinning view. Faster. Faster.

BOUCHARD'S VOICE
...what dangers might be lurking.

INT. DARK ROOM – A bank of home movie flood lights. Bright. The camera still WHIRRS somewhere off screen.

BOUCHARD'S VOICE
Trust me. Trust me. Trust me.

THE PORTRAIT OF ST. DOMINIC

BOUCHARD'S VOICE
This poor creature.

INT. A DARK ROOM – Bouchard. Sweating. Grinding. Orgasmic.

INT. THE HOME MOVIE CAMERA AGAIN – Still running.

BOUCHARD'S VOICE
...no rest for the wicked...no rest.

Deep, malevolent LAUGHTER.

INT. SCIENCE LAB – THE FETUS AGAIN

BOUCHARD'S VOICE
 ...this wicked woman.

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY – The sorrowful face of Jesus.

SR. GRACE'S VOICE
 A better word might be 'mystical.'

INT. SCIENCE LAB – THE FETUS – Turns within the jar. Opens its eyes. Smiles demonically.

BOUCHARD'S VOICE
 How beautiful. Look how beautiful.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. THE TRAILER – JACK'S ROOM – NIGHT

Jack awakens with a start. Eyes wide in terror.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. CHURCH – MIDNIGHT MASS – CHRISTMAS

The church is packed. Candles. Poinsettias. Bows. Garlands.

Jack sits in one of the pews with Janet and C.C. For all the festivity he appears distracted, even cheerless.

CHURCH CHOIR
 (singing)
*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
 And ransom captive Israel
 That mourns in lonely exile here.
 Until the son of God appear.
 Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
 Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. THE TRAILER – SPRINGTIME – DAY

A glorious Wisconsin Spring morning. Jack, in sport jacket, white shirt and tie, stands next to a smiling C.C. in her First Holy Communion dress. Janet arranges them in order to take a snapshot.

ADULT JACK (V.O.)

It had been a long, cold lonely winter,
but the sun finally returned bringing
with it life, warmth, and – in our
family's case – another sacred rite of
passage.

The photo session over, Janet waves the kids over to the car.

JANET

Oh, Catherine Claire, you look so
beautiful! Your daddy in heaven must
be so proud of you today!

C.C. smiles angelically and skips to the car.

INT. ST. ROBERT'S CHURCH – A BIT LATER

A Very Big Day. Overflow crowd. Flowers everywhere. Young boys in suits and sport coats that apparently itch and not quite fit. Young girls, radiant and poised in spotless white lace.

As the organist plays a spritely PROCESSIONAL the new communicants file, row by row, to the sanctuary communion railing.

From his seat, Jack has a clear view of C.C. kneeling at the railing. The two priests distribute communion. Fr. Driscoll, gentle, smiling and seemingly overwhelmed by the sheer innocence of it all, approaches to place the communion wafer on C.C.'s tongue. Driscoll, *NOT* Bouchard. And Jack appears relieved.

EXT. ST. ROBERT'S – AFTER MASS

More photographs with PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS and other RELATIVES. Janet takes picture after picture. For C.C. this will never get old. But Jack seems more than ready to leave.

INT. THE TRAILER – LATER

The small living room is uncharacteristically full. Joining C.C. and her family for the celebration is an assortment of GRANDPARENTS, AUNTS, UNCLES, IN-LAWS AND FRIENDS.

Janet makes the rounds passing out cake. A KNOCK at the door. Chris Ellison bearing a wrapped present

JANET

Oh, Chris! Please come right in!
(to the room)
Everybody, this is our friend Chris.

Hellos are rapidly exchanged.

JANET

Take a seat, Chris, if you can find one.
Would you like some cake?

CHRIS

Cake? Are you kidding? Sure!

C.C., eyes fixed on the present, approaches Chris.

CHRIS

Hey, congratulations, C.C. You look
beautiful, if I may say so.

C.C. still eyeing the gift.

JANET

C.C., what do you say?

C.C.

Thank you.

CHRIS

You're wondering about this, aren't ya?

C.C. nods and giggles.

CHRIS

What, you think this might be for you?
Maybe it's for that joker over there.

He points to Jack.

C.C.

(laughing)
No it isn't!

CHRIS

Oh, alright. Here ya go. I hope you
like it.

C.C. carefully unwraps the gift: A beautiful, handmade jewelry box with an elaborate inlaid pattern on the lid.

JANET

Oh my, how lovely. You didn't make that, Chris, did you?

Chris, a bit embarrassed, nods.

C.C.

Thank you, Chris. I love it.

CHRIS

I'm glad. Now open it.

She does, and discovers that it's also a music box. The tune? "*SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW.*" C.C.'s eyes grow wide. An impressed and appreciative reaction sweeps the trailer. Chris blushes.

LATER

Not so many guests now. Chris takes an open seat next to Jack.

CHRIS

You've been pretty quiet over here. Everything okay?

JACK

Sure. Big Day. Great gift, by the way. It's really beautiful.

CHRIS

Thanks, dude. But, I'm serious. What's the matter?

JACK

I don't want to talk about it. Maybe one of these days, okay? Just not yet.

CHRIS

I hear ya. Some other time.

He gently pats Jack's knee and rises to leave.

JANET

Taking off, Chris?

CHRIS

Yup, time to go. Thanks for the invite,
Mrs. O.

JANET

Oh, and thank you for that beautiful
gift. I'm afraid C.C. doesn't realize
how truly special it is.

CHRIS

Well, tell her that someday, when I'm
famous...and *dead*...it'll be worth
millions.

JANET

Oh, you are just *terrible!*

CHRIS

That's what everybody tells me.

Janet smiles and shakes her head. Chris gives her a short
wave and heads for the door. But before he leaves, he bends
down and WHISPERS into Jack's ear:

CHRIS

Take those broken wings and learn to
fly, Jack.

(beat)

Talk to ya later. Okay?

Jack nods. Chris departs.

INT. WEST ALLIS TRUMAN HIGH SCHOOL — SEVERAL DAYS LATER

Jack's Freshman English class. The teacher is LAUREN MCKAY
(late 20s) Competent. Engaging. She reads aloud from *The
Catcher In The Rye*.

MISS MCKAY

*"I keep picturing all these little kids
playing some game in this big field of
rye and all. Thousands of little kids,
and nobody's around — nobody big, I mean
— except me. And I'm standing on the edge
of some crazy cliff. What I have to do, I
have to catch everybody if they start to
go over the cliff — I mean if they're*

(more)

MISS MCKAY (cont.)
*running and they don't look where they're
 going I have to come out from somewhere
 and catch them. That's all I do all day.
 I'd just be the catcher in the rye and all.
 I know it's crazy, but that's the only
 thing I'd really like to be."*

She closes the book and places it on her desk.

MISS MCKAY
 Now, of course, this is the passage from
 which Mr. Salinger took his title. So *HE*
 certainly wanted the reader to know that
 Holden's dream is important to the overall
 story. But why? What is Holden's dream...

A student, JENNY HAZELTON, raises her hand to interrupt.

MISS MCKAY
 Jenny?

JENNY
 My parents said we shouldn't even be
 reading this book.

MISS MCKAY
 Did they say why?

JENNY
 Because it's dirty.

Some GIGGLING among the students. Miss McKay raises her
 hand to quiet them.

MISS MCKAY
 Okay, everybody, that's enough.
 (to Jenny again)
 But they both signed the permission
 slip I sent home with you.

JENNY
 I don't think they ever read it before.

The class, really involved now, turns from Jenny to Miss
 McKay.

MISS MCKAY

Well Jenny, let me ask you this. Do YOU think it's dirty?

The class tenses. Eyes on Jenny.

JENNY

Um...I guess. I mean a little. Mostly I think it's just sort of...I don't know...*grown up*?

MISS MCKAY

(smiling)

And that, Miss Hazelton, is a very fine answer. A very '*grown up*' answer. It says a good deal about your maturity.

Jenny smiles, relieved as much as proud.

MISS MCKAY (cont.)

But I think we should be getting back to our discussion. Jack, we haven't heard from you in a while. Why do you think Holden's dream is important? And what do you think it's really about?

Jack appears distant and disengaged. Has spent most of the class gazing blankly out the window. But he WAS listening.

JACK

I think...I think he's afraid of grownups. Maybe afraid of *becoming* a grown up. He thinks they're all phonies and evil, and he wants to protect the children from them or *becoming* like them.

Miss McKay is taken aback.

MISS MCKAY

That is...that is *excellent*, Jack. Just *excellent*. And I think Mr. Salinger himself would agree.

The school BELL RINGS. And the students gather their stuff and head for the door. Miss McKay stops Jack as he is about to leave.

MISS MCKAY

Jack, can I have a word with you.
You'll make it to your next class.
I promise.

He holds back until all the other students have left.

MISS MCKAY

Jack, you gave a very fine answer
just now, but that's not why I asked
you to stay.

Jack shuffles nervously and looks only at the floor.

MISS MCKAY

Jack, I'm concerned about your performance
of late. Yes, you stole the show today, but
ever since the beginning of the term your
grades have steadily declined.

JACK

I'm sorry, Miss McKay. I'll try harder.

MISS MCKAY

My concern is that you may be trying
too hard. Maybe not in this class, but
with all the other things in your life.
I'm right, aren't I, that in addition to
your studies, you also have an after
school paper route, and that you've
become very involved at your church? And
that you often help your mother by
babysitting for your sister?

JACK

Yeah, I guess.

MISS MCKAY

Well, maybe you're spreading yourself
too thin. And maybe you're not spending
enough time on yourself.

Jack glances up from the floor.

MISS MCKAY

Will you think about what I've said? If
you can maybe relax a bit I just know
the grades will take care of themselves.

JACK

I will, Miss McKay. And thank you.

MISS MCKAY

Good. Now hurry up and get to your next class.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. ALTAR BOY'S CUBICAL - ANOTHER MORNING - AFTER MASS

Jack and Logan return their vestments to the closet. Fr. Driscoll pokes his head around the corner. Smiles.

DRISCOLL

Nice work today, fellas. Thanks a lot.

And he departs.

LOGAN

(chuckling)

The poor guy says the same stupid thing after every mass.

JACK

Yeah, but he's nice. At least he tries.

Jack checks the sanctuary, dims the lights, closes the closet doors, grabs his lunch and heads out.

EXT. THE CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

He opens the sacristy door to find Bouchard just about to enter.

BOUCHARD

Why if it isn't my dear friend, John O'Neill.

JACK

Hi Father.

He tries to walk around the priest and down the steps to his bike. Bouchard blocks his way.

BOUCHARD

Yes, by all means, hurry off. Everyone is in such a terrible rush these days.

JACK

Oh, you know Father, I just have to get to my classes.

BOUCHARD

Certainly. Of course. Must not undervalue the great importance of a public school education.

JACK

I'm trying not to.

BOUCHARD

All kidding aside, John, I've missed your company at breakfast. Seems like you're rarely available anymore. You believe me, don't you John? That I miss your company? That your company is *important* to me?

JACK

Yes Father, I do. But I really have to get going.

He skirts past the priest, jumps on his bike and leaves. Bouchard watches until he is no longer in sight.

INT. A DARK ROOM – NIGHT

A home movie projector faces forward casting its images upon an unseen screen. The sprockets CLICK as the film courses its way through the projector. There are no other sounds.

Sitting in front of the projector and a bit off to the side is Paul Bouchard, watching. He smokes a large cigar and sips brandy from an enormous snifter.

We cannot see what he sees. Only a suggestion of the action is reflected in his glasses. He is pleased and perhaps even aroused.

Caligula in a Roman Collar.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD – LATE AFTERNOON

Jack is delivering papers. It is collection day so, rather than simply tossing the papers on the lawn as he rides his bike, he must walk up to each door...

And RING the door bell.

A door opens. It is a large burly man, CLAUDE EVANS (40s). Conservative. Nicely dressed. Jack hands him his paper.

JACK

Hi, Mr. Evans. Collect?

EVANS

Oh, sure. Hang on a second.

He reaches for his wallet and pulls out a couple bills. Hands them to Jack.

EVANS

...and keep the change. You deserve it.

JACK

Thanks, Mr. Evans. I try.

EVANS

Say, Jack. Your family belongs to St. Robert's parish, right?

JACK

Yes we do.

EVANS

Of course I'm a Lutheran, so I don't really have a dog in the hunt, as they say — when it comes to the Latin Mass, I mean. But that Father Bouchard really seems like a principled guy. A great man. Do you know him?

JACK

Well, I'm one of the altar boys, so I guess I *better* know him.

EVANS

I heard him on the radio today. Very impressive.

JACK

The radio?

EVANS

He was being interviewed about his position on the Latin Mass, and like I said, that's neither here nor there to me. But he also said some very interesting things about our country and the problems we have with all these anti-American protests and these damn hippies with their drugs, and boys looking like girls, and that horrible vulgar music. You ever hear him talk about stuff like that?

JACK

All the time.

EVANS

You agree with him, don't you Jack?

JACK

Father Bouchard doesn't really give us any other choice.

EVANS

Ha! I'll bet! And you must've heard about the press conference he's planning to hold.

JACK

Ah...actually, no I haven't.

EVANS

Well, turns out he's going to talk to the media, but not about the Latin Mass. This time he's going to announce his plan to go after this so-called counter culture with everything he's got. And God bless him for it! Anyway, you should tell him he's got supporters out there who aren't even Catholic. Think he'd like that, Jack?

JACK

Oh I'm sure he'd like that. I'll let him know.

EVANS

Great! Well, it's been nice talking to you, Jack. Keep up the good work.

EXT. STREET — EARLY MORNING — STILL DARK

Jack, on his bike, heading for church. He pulls off the street and into the church parking lot.

INT. ALTAR BOY'S CUBICAL — LATER

Taped up to the closet doors are a number of flyers announcing Bouchard's press conference to be held the following day. Jack sees them. Shakes his head.

The other altar boy, Dave Nazario, enters. Sees the flyers. Points to them and rolls his eyes. Jack chuckles softly. Then a loud COUGH in the adjoining room catches their attention. Bouchard.

DAVE

Oh man! Is he saying mass today?

Before Jack can answer, Bouchard enters the cubicle.

BOUCHARD

Good morning, gentlemen.

THE BOYS

(together)

Morning Father.

BOUCHARD

Say, David. I noticed that the brochure rack in the vestibule is a bit sparse. Would you mind restocking it please? You'll have plenty of time before Mass starts. You know where the supply is right?

DAVE

Yes Father.

Dave departs, and Bouchard turns to Jack.

BOUCHARD

Not a very bright boy, David. And this little chore should keep him busy for a while. It'll give us a chance to catch up, right? So John, how have you been?

JACK

The same, I guess.

BOUCHARD

I would imagine by now that you've heard about my press conference tomorrow.

Jack points to the flyers.

BOUCHARD

Of course. Hard not to notice, I suppose. Anyway, we'll be holding it in the school cafeteria. I would've preferred the sanctuary actually, but I want to make sure that I have the broadest possible audience. What I have to say is for all of America, not only us Catholics.

JACK

Yes, Father.

BOUCHARD

I'm expecting a pretty good turn out, too. I've heard from both local papers, and all the local television stations. Radio will be well represented too. And I even think a reporter or two may join us from Chicago.

JACK

(blandly)

Wow.

BOUCHARD

Actually, anyone can attend, and I'm especially hoping that you'll be there, John

JACK

Why me?

BOUCHARD

Because you *need* to hear the things I will be talking about, John. You see, the peculiar scheduling habits of the public school district have made it
(more)

BOUCHARD (cont.)

impossible for us to enjoy our breakfast
get-togethers of late, and there is much
I've been meaning to share with you about
the dangers our society faces at this
perilous time in our history.

JACK

(unconvincingly)

I'll try.

BOUCHARD

You'll do more than try, John. I'm afraid
I must insist upon it. The stakes are too
high. Souls are imperiled. You're soul is
imperiled. Do you understand me? Your
immortal soul!

Just then Dave returns to the cubicle.

DAVE

All done Father.

BOUCHARD

It's the End of Days, gentlemen...

Bouchard looks piercingly from one boy to the other.

BOUCHARD (cont.)

...the End of Days.

And he walks out.

DAVE

(whispering)

What was *that* all about?

JACK

He thinks he's God.

DAVE

(chuckling)

Maybe he *IS* God.

JACK

He isn't.

(beat)

I'm going to go fill the cruets.

INT. THE SANCTUARY — A BIT LATER

Jack enters carrying two cruets. One water. One wine. He genuflects before the altar and ascends the steps. After positioning the cruets, he stops and glances up at the crucifix.

As always, the flickering light of the candles seems to bring some life to the inanimate figure. Jack, as always, is fascinated by the effect. But this time it seems especially intense, until Jesus actually lifts his head and turns toward Jack.

JESUS

RUN!

Jack takes a sharp backward step, almost losing his balance and falling down the steps. After he catches himself, he glances back at the pews to see if anyone in attendance had seen the same vision. Apparently not.

Again, he looks up at the cross. Plaster of Paris. Wood. Completely inert. Jack looks as if he may be ill.

He hurriedly leaves the sanctuary, skipping the required genuflection, and reenters the sacristy.

INT. ALTAR BOYS CUBICAL — CONTINUOUS

Jack races in and starts removing his vestments.

DAVE

Whoa! Where do you think you're going?

Jack, pale and sweating profusely, turns to face Dave.

JACK

I'm...I'm sick! I'm really sick! I can't do this today! I can't do this *anymore!*
I'm really sorry. I just can't!

EXT. THE CHURCH — SECONDS LATER

He bolts out the sacristy door, gets on his bike and frantically leaves. Across the alley, from a second floor

classroom window, a very concerned looking Sr. Grace watches him ride away.

INT. ST. ROBERT'S SCHOOL CAFETERIA — THE NEXT DAY

The place is filled. CAMERA CREWS and REPORTERS. On a small stage at one end of the cafeteria is a wooden lectern and microphone stand. Bouchard strides to the lectern.

BOUCHARD

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen,
and on behalf of the parish of St.
Robert's, I bid you a very warm welcome.
I have asked you here today so that I
might speak of the grave issues we face
as a society at present; and what I believe
must be done to counter the forces of evil
that have brought this calamity upon us.

Some stir in the audience at the word '*calamity*.'

BOUCHARD (cont.)

Although profoundly grateful for the
opportunity granted to me by the
Archdiocese of Milwaukee to share my
thoughts with you today, I feel it
important to state that I come before
you, not as a representative of the
Catholic Church, but rather as a deeply
concerned citizen of this country; and
one with an extensive background in
Sociology and Cultural Analytics, as
outlined in the handout you've all been
given.

And now, some raised eyebrows.

BOUCHARD (cont.)

It would be remiss of me if I did not
also extend my deep gratitude to the
local media for the enthusiastic
response to my invitation to meet with
you. I believe it speaks well of this
community's commitment to itself — and
the world — that so many of you have
joined me today.

EXT. STREET — CONTINUOUS

Jack on his bike, pedaling feverishly. Determined.

INT. CAFETERIA — A BIT LATER

BOUCHARD

...the problems are so vast and seemingly beyond our ability to control, that we are tempted to surrender before we've even begun. And this, my friends, is *exactly* what I believe Satan is counting upon.

Reporters in the audience frantically take notes.

BOUCHARD (cont.)

The truth of the matter is that our problems are not as innumerable as they may sometimes seem. Because when looked at carefully and analytically those problems all stem from a *single source*.

EXT. STREET — CONTINUOUS

Jack still on the bike. Faster and faster.

INT. CAFETERIA — LATER

REPORTER #1

Fr. Bouchard, are you actually saying that the Pop group, The Beatles, are entirely to blame for the evils of the world?

BOUCHARD

I would say that most of the blame rests upon the shoulders of the entity that sent them, and by that I mean Satan. But they have clearly been extremely willing participants.

Quite a commotion at this remark.

EXT. ST. ROBERT'S CHURCH — CONTINUOUS

The parking lot is filled with cars and trucks bearing the logos of local newspapers, television and radio stations.

Jack turns into the church parking lot and leaps off the bike without first bringing it to a halt. As the bicycle falls in a heap, he runs to another building on the church campus. The Convent. He knocks on the door. Impatient.

INT. THE PRESS CONFERENCE – CONTINUOUS

Borderline chaos now. Hands waving frantically. Bouchard selects a reporter.

REPORTER #2

As I'm sure you know, Father, there are so many other rock bands at the moment, each with its own following.

BOUCHARD

But they were the first of this wave. And they've spawned a legion of cretinous, androgynous copy cats that have swept across the land like a plague with their filthy celebrations of mind-altering drugs and lascivious sexual depravity.

EXT. THE CONVENT – CONTINUOUS

A NUN answers the door. Jack speaks to her briefly before handing her an envelope. She nods her head, takes the envelope and closes the door. Jack picks up his bike and leaves.

INT. THE PRESS CONFERENCE – CONTINUOUS

BOUCHARD

Gentlemen, in addition to Latin, I am also fluent in ancient Hebrew and biblical Greek. I have been to the Middle East many times and have studied some of the most ancient of texts. And it is my learned opinion that the ancient prophets foretold – with absolute precision, mind you – the phenomenon that today we refer to as 'The Beatles.' Needless to say, these prophecies are very dark indeed.

We're over the border now. TOTAL CHAOS. Bouchard selects another reporter.

REPORTER #2

I'm just wondering, Father, how much of your animosity toward the Beatles stems from the comment Mr. Lennon made several years ago: that the Beatles were more popular than Jesus. As you no doubt recall, he apologized for that statement.

INT. THE TRAILER - LATER THAT NIGHT

Janet irons while watching the evening news. The story of the moment is Fr. Bouchard's earlier press conference. Jack also watches from a living room armchair while C.C. plays with dolls at his feet.

BOUCHARD (On TV)

Lennon's so-called apology was a sloppy and insulting publicity stunt, pure and simple. Plus, listen to what he actually said. He refers to God as a 'thing!' An 'It!' And Jesus Christ as merely 'a person!' And everybody just blithely accepted it and went right on as if nothing had ever happened. Everybody but me, that is.

Jack rises and turns the television off.

JANET

My, he sure was worked up today. It was a side of him I hadn't seen before. I'm not sure I liked it all that much.

JACK

I think what he said about the Beatles was...crazy.

JANET

Yes, he *did* overstate things a bit.

JACK

Mom, I need to tell you something.

JANET

Of course, honey. What is it?

She turns off the iron and takes a seat near Jack.

JACK
(hesitantly)
I...I quit being an altar boy today.

JANET
You quit? But why?

JACK
I just can't do it anymore.

JANET
It's that early mass, isn't it? I know why they schedule it that way, but it still doesn't seem very fair.

JACK
It's not only that. Well maybe it *is* that. At least part of it.

JANET
You do seem tired a lot lately.

JACK
I am, Mom. My English teacher...

JANET
Miss McKay? Oh, I like her.

JACK
Yeah, she's nice. Anyway, she said she thought I was too busy, and that it was hurting my school work. And she's right, Mom. You've seen my latest report card.

JANET
Oh, but Jack, quitting the altar boys? Maybe we could talk to Fr. Bouchard and work something out about the schedule.

JACK
No! If I talked to anyone it would be Sr. Grace. She's the one that makes out the schedule. But there's nothing she could do about it either. The other masses take place when I'm at school.

JANET
Maybe you could sell your paper route.

JACK

And what would I do for money? Not that I have any time to spend it.

Janet smiles tenderly.

JACK (cont.)

I just had to do this, Mom. I hope you understand.

JANET

Of course I do sweetie. We'll figure this all out, I promise.

EXT. THE TRAILER — A WEEK LATER — RAINING

INT. THE TRAILER — CONTINUOUS

A relaxed family Saturday. Jack sits cross-legged in front of the living room stereo, wearing ear phones. Beatle albums strewn across the carpet. C.C. watches cartoons on television. Janet is at the kitchen table, writing. The phone RINGS. Janet answers.

JANET

Hello? Oh Hi Ronnie.

(beat)

Sure. No problem. Be happy to help.

(beat)

Ha! They better be big spenders!

(beat)

Okay. Yep. Okay, see ya later.

Bye-bye.

Janet hangs up the phone, walks over to Jack and taps his shoulder. He turns off the stereo and removes the ear phones.

JANET

Hey, sweetie. Ronnie just called and told me there's another banquet at the restaurant tonight and asked me to stay late again. I told him I would. But I'll arrange for C.C. to have a sleepover at Angela's tonight...

C.C. SCREAMS for joy.

JANET (cont.)

...They've been bugging us for weeks about it, so tonight would be perfect. Anyway, you aren't on babysitter duty tonight. Okay?

JACK

'Kay Mom.

Jack puts the ear phones back on and turns on the stereo.

EXT. TRAILER PARK — A LITTLE LATER

A large, black Cadillac pulls up to the O'Neill trailer. Bouchard.

He exits the car, comes to the trailer door and KNOCKS.

INT. THE TRAILER — CONTINUOUS

Only Janet responds to the knock. She goes to the door.

JANET

Father! Please, come in.

He does. Jack is still lost in his music, C.C. in her cartoons. Bouchard notices the array of Beatles' albums just as Jack notices him. He glares from the albums to Jack.

And if looks could kill...

Jack removes the earphones and turns off the stereo.

JANET

Jack, Father Bouchard is here.

JACK

Yeah, I see. Hi.

Bouchard nods.

JANET

Can I get you some coffee, Father?

Bouchard glances around the trailer barely concealing his contempt. His gaze returns to Jack.

BOUCHARD

I wonder, Mrs. O'Neill, if it would be possible for me to speak with John privately.

JANET

(brightly)

Oh, well, as you can probably guess, Father, there's really no such thing as privacy in a house trailer. To give you *complete* privacy, my daughter and I would have to leave the trailer altogether, but I'm afraid — with the rain and all — that's just not going to happen. But the offer of coffee still stands!

BOUCHARD

(agitated)

Perhaps, Mrs. O'Neill, you are unaware that your son has given up the singular privilege of being an altar boy at St. Robert's.

JANET

(taken aback)

Of course I know, Father. And to tell you the truth I was more than a little disappointed myself when he first told me. But he and I have discussed it, and I think he's made the right decision.

BOUCHARD

(frustrated now)

Maybe John and I could go somewhere else, so that we might have some privacy. The church rectory, perhaps.

JACK

(firmly)

No, Father. We can talk right here.

Janet seems struck by her son's forcefulness and maturity.

BOUCHARD

Who put this idea in your head, John?
Some girl I imagine?

Janet bristles a bit at the priest's insinuation and tone.

JACK

This was my decision, Father. *Mine*. My grades are suffering. I'm tired *all* the time. And I never have time for myself. I'm finishing up my first year of high school and I've never been to a football game. I've never been to a basketball game, or even a school dance...

Bouchard grimaces at the word 'dance.'

JACK (cont.)

...I might even want to *play* a sport one of these years. But I would need a lot more sleep than I've been getting lately.

Janet can barely contain her pride. Noticing this, Bouchard attempts another tact.

BOUCHARD

John, as I believe I've told you before. You have been such an important addition to our roster of mass servers. None of the other boys has your...your grace and respect for the mass. From the moment I met you I could tell you were extraordinary. A born leader. And perhaps, one day, even a priest yourself.

No response.

BOUCHARD

Very well, then. It looks like you've made up your mind. Such a pity. Such a pity.

He rises to leave.

BOUCHARD (cont.)

Good afternoon, Mrs. O'Neill.

JANET

And to you, Father.

And as he departs, he tosses one last menacing glance back at Jack.

INT. THE TRAILER — THAT NIGHT

Jack paces through the living room. Alone. Troubled. Kneading his forehead. The phone RINGS. He answers it.

JACK

Hello?

INT. A DARK ROOM – CONTINUOUS

Close on a man, in silhouette, holding a receiver. Silent.

INT. THE TRAILER – CONTINUOUS

JACK

Hello!...Who is this?

Jack hangs up. Back to pacing. The phone RINGS again.

JACK

Who is this? What do you want?

Jack hangs up. The phone RINGS again.

JACK

LEAVE! ME! ALONE!

Another hang-up. Another RING.

EXT. THE TRAILER – LATER THAT NIGHT

Janet returns home. The trailer is dark. At the door, she holds out her keys, only to discover that the inner door is ajar. She enters. Turns on the lights.

The hallway to the back bedroom is strewn with debris. She races to the room, turns on the light. Jack's room has been completely ransacked.

Jack himself is missing. And is that blood on his pillow?

Janet SCREAMS.

EXT. TRAILER PARK – THE NEXT MORNING

Chris, running frantically through the park.

He arrives at the O'Neill trailer to discover a crime scene. Police squad cars: Roof-top lights on and rotating. An ambulance: also lit up. Barricade tape around the lot.

A growing mob of ONLOOKERS at the perimeter. Chris approaches one of them.

CHRIS
Does anyone know what happened?

ONLOOKER
They're saying it might be a kidnapping.

CHRIS
(terrified)
What, you mean C.C.?

The onlooker is unfamiliar with the reference.

CHRIS
...the little girl!

ONLOOKER
Oh...no...I hear it was the boy.

CHRIS
Jesus!

INT. THE TRAILER – CONTINUOUS

A veritable army of FORENSIC INVESTIGATORS: Taking photographs. Dusting for fingerprints. Taking samples of the blood stains. Etc.

On a sofa in the living room Janet is talking with a police lieutenant, MATT RUSSO (40s) Tactful. Thorough.

RUSSO
I know you've been answering questions all morning, Mrs. O'Neill, And you must be exhausted. But I'll be leading this investigation and there are just a few things I need to clear up before I leave. Would that be okay?

JANET
Of course, Lieutenant.

RUSSO
And please know we will do our very best to find your boy and return him safely to you.

Janet nods and smiles faintly. Russo takes out a notepad and pen.

RUSSO

You don't mind if I take a few notes,
do you Ma'am?

Janet shakes her head.

JANET

Not as much as I mind being called
'Ma'am' at least.

RUSSO

(gently smiling)

Noted. Now, excuse me for asking,
but is there a *Mr. O'Neill*?

JANET

My husband died years ago.

RUSSO

I'm sorry.

Janet acknowledges this with a sad nod.

RUSSO

Now, about your son. Had you noticed
anything different about him lately?
His behavior, his attitude, his mood?

JANET

Are you asking me if he was involved
with drugs, Lieutenant?

RUSSO

I'm sorry Mrs. Russo, I have to ask
these questions. Because in cases where
drugs are involved, scenes like this
are not uncommon.

JANET

I understand Lieutenant, but the answer
is no. I'm absolutely certain of it.

RUSSO

So, as far as you know, everything
was fine?

JANET

Well, my son is a teenager, Lieutenant.
Are any teenagers ever...*fine*?

Russo

(a polite chuckle)

No, I suppose not.

JANET

He *HAD* complained recently that he felt so tired all the time...that he felt he was doing too many extracurricular activities. In fact, he just recently decided to stop being an altar boy at St. Robert's for that very reason. Our pastor was heartbroken. He had been giving so much attention to Jack.

RUSSO

The pastor at St. Robert's. That's the *Famous* Fr. Bouchard, isn't it?

JANET

That's right. He had become almost like a father to Jack.

RUSSO

Maybe I could talk to him.

JANET

Good luck. He's pretty much in demand these days.

RUSSO

So I gather. So I gather.

(beat)

Mrs. O'Neill, I can only imagine how trying this whole thing must be for you. But you have been so gracious and so very helpful this morning. Now you have my card, so if you can think of anything else that may be important, please do not hesitate to call. Okay?

He rises to leave.

JANET

I won't. Thank you Lieutenant.

EXT. ST. ROBERT'S RECTORY — ANOTHER DAY

A group of maybe two dozen PROTESTERS march in front of the rectory, carrying signs And SINGING: "ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE."

A car pulls up and parks on the street. Lieutenant Russo. He wades carefully through the stream of protesters and to the rectory door. He RINGS the doorbell.

INT. THE RECTORY — CONTINUOUS

Mrs. Hüber answers the door.

RUSSO

Good afternoon, Ma'am. I'm Lieutenant Russo of the West Allis Police Department. I believe we may have spoken on the phone earlier.

GRETA

Of course, Lieutenant. Please come in.

She escorts him to a quiet salon.

GRETA

Make yourself comfortable. Fr. Bouchard will be with you shortly.

The protest can still be heard in the background. A new song now: "YELLOW SUBMARINE."

Bouchard enters the salon. Russo rises.

BOUCHARD

Lieutenant Russo, is it?

The men shake hands.

RUSSO

Yes Father.

Bouchard gestures toward the chair in which Russo had been sitting. They both take a seat.

BOUCHARD

I'm very sorry Lieutenant, that you had to contend with today's version of the lunatic brigade.

RUSSO

No problem Father. They're pretty harmless.

BOUCHARD

I must disagree with you on that point, sir. Foolish though they clearly are, I think they represent the very downfall of Western Culture. But you're not here to discuss such things, are you?

RUSSO

No Father, I'm not. I'm here to discuss the disappearance of the O'Neill boy.

BOUCHARD

Yes, the O'Neill boy. Disturbing thing, that.

RUSSO

His mother told me that he had recently left your ah...team of altar boys.

BOUCHARD

Yes, that is true. A shame too. He was a very pious and devoted young man.

RUSSO

I imagine he still is.

BOUCHARD

I pray that he is. Of course.

RUSSO

According to Mrs. O'Neill, You took a bit of umbrage at her son's decision.

BOUCHARD

I was disappointed, to be sure. But I understood his reasons.

RUSSO

And what were the reasons as you saw them?

BOUCHARD

I'm afraid young Mr. O'Neill has succumbed to the temptations of our age,
(more)

BOUCHARD (cont.)

Lieutenant: Rock music, girls, and probably psychotropic intoxicants as well. If you ask me, this is simply a case of another lost youth who ran away from home.

RUSSO

Hmmm. Mrs. O'Neill said it was because he had a little too much on his plate and it was wearing him down. Affecting his school work and so on.

BOUCHARD

Well, sometimes parents, and especially *mothers*, I fear, are too close to the situation to truly understand what motivates their boys once they reach adolescence.

Russo scribbles furiously while – from a room nearby – Mrs. Hüber listens in.

EXT. THE RECTORY – LATER

Bouchard has walked Russo to the door where they shake hands and Russo departs.

The group of protestors has grown a bit since he arrived. Takes a little longer to negotiate his way through them. The latest SONG, louder than before is: "*NOWHERE MAN.*"

INT. THE RECTORY – CONTINUOUS

Bouchard walks to his office, unlocks the center drawer in his desk and removes a 9x12 manila envelope. He nervously glances around, notices the still open door and moves to close it.

From the envelope he pulls three sheets of typing paper each bearing a message consisting of letterforms cut from newspapers and magazines – as in a ransom note.

The first reads: "*They KNOW it's you!*"

The second: "*They're CLOSE! Closer than you think!*"

And the third: "*They KNOW about Fond du Lac!*"

Bouchard, ashen and jumpy, places them back in the envelope and returns it to the drawer.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT — THE NEXT DAY

Russo sits at his desk, tending to paperwork. Another cop, LANCE IVERSON (40s) stops by and drops a 9x12 manila envelope on his desk.

OFFICE COP

Just came in today, Matt. I think you need to see this.

Russo studies the envelope. Addressed only to "The West Allis Police." Postmarked Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. He opens the envelope to find three sheets of typing paper each bearing a pieced together ransom-note styled message.

The first reads: ***"Help, I need somebody! Help, not just anybody! Help, you know I need someone! Help! JOJO"***

The second: ***"He's a real Nowhere Man, sitting in his nowhere land...Making all his nowhere plans for nobody."***

The third: ***"You're CLOSE! Closer than you know! Ask the Holy Innocents."***

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT CONFERENCE ROOM — A LITTLE LATER

The small group of cops sitting around the conference table includes Russo, Iverson, Detective FRED GALLO (40s) and Lieutenant OSCAR DUBICKI (50s). Scattered on the table: The messages.

RUSSO

So, any ideas what the hell this crap is? We're 'close?' To what? To who?

GALLO

Could it have something to do with the O'Neill thing?

RUSSO

Why would you say that?

GALLO

I don't know, wishful thinking probably.
But look at this one. "Help." It's from
a Beatles song, by the way.

RUSSO

Christ, Freddy, even I know that!

GALLO

Anyway, it's a call for help, right?
And it's *signed* - if you can call it
That - 'JOJO.'

DUBICKI

So?

GALLO

So J. O. J. O!...Jack O'Neill?

DUBICKI

I don't know, Fred. Seems like a reach.

GALLO

Of course it's a reach, but what else
we got?

DUBICKI

And 'Holy Innocents?'

IVERSON

Wait, this was sent from Fond du Lac,
right? There's a Catholic Church in
Fond du Lac called The Church of the
Holy Innocents.

Russo picks up one of the other messages.

RUSSO

(almost to himself)

Nowhere Man.

GALLO

Yeah. What about it?

RUSSO

When I saw the priest yesterday those
protestor kids were singing that song.

The other cops are at a loss.

RUSSO

How can we find out where Bouchard
served before he came to St. Robert's?

INT. THE TRAILER — DAY

C.C. seems almost in a trance. Sits in the middle of the living room opening and closing her music box. Opening and closing. Opening and closing. "*SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW*" broken into pieces.

Janet and Chris are at the kitchen table drinking coffee.

JANET

She's been like this for days.

CHRIS

Poor little kid.

JANET

I'm trying to stay optimistic for her sake, but it's hard Chris. I'm starting to lose hope myself. I mean, maybe he did fall in with the wrong crowd, and I was too blind to see it.

CHRIS

Come on, Mrs. O., that's not who Jack is. You *know* that.

JANET

I know. You're right. But this just doesn't make any sense. It doesn't make any sense at all.

The Music Box: Opening and closing. Opening and closing. Janet breaks into SOBS. Chris places a hand on her shoulder.

INT. ANOTHER CHURCH RECTORY — DAY

SUPER: FOND DU LAC, WISCONSIN

Gallo has been talking to FR. JAMES REINHOLD (70s), the pastor of Holy Innocents.

GALLO

So, according to diocesan records, Fr. Bouchard left Holy Innocents in April of 1959, but didn't start at St. Robert's until nearly a year and a half later. Isn't that unusual?

REINHOLD

Not necessarily.

GALLO

The records say he was on 'administrative leave.' Does that ring a bell?

REINHOLD

Yes, that's right. He was on administrative leave.

GALLO

And what is that, exactly? Like a vacation or a sabbatical or something?

REINHOLD

He was on administrative leave.

GALLO

(smiling)

You don't know? Or you're not willing to tell me?

REINHOLD

(defiantly)

He was on administrative leave.

In his notebook, Gallo writes: *"Hiding something."*

EXT. ST. ROBERT'S RECTORY — DAY

The protest has grown significantly. Things are orderly and the police are on hand to monitor the situation, but things have definitely gotten LOUDER. The SINGING CONTINUES unabated. The song of the moment: *"HEY JUDE."*

INT. BOUCHARD'S OFFICE — CONTINUOUS

The music from the protest can clearly be heard within the rectory. Bouchard turns up a radio playing CLASSICAL MUSIC in a vain attempt to drown it out.

He fidgets nervously with several new mailings. Cryptic as before. And again, there are three.

The first reads: *"Nobody seems to like him. They can tell what he wants to do. And he never shows his feelings. He's the Fool on the Hill."*

The second: *"He's as blind as he can be. Just sees what he wants to see. Nowhere Man, can you see ME at all?"*

And the third: *"crabalocker fishwife, pornographic priestess, boy, you've been a naughty girl you let your knickers down."*

INT. DIMLY LIT ROOM – NIGHT

A pair of gloved hands carefully assembles another of the cryptic messages.

EXT. THE RECTORY – ANOTHER DAY

Russo arrives at the front door. Mrs. Hüber welcomes him in.

INT. THE RECTORY – A LITTLE LATER

Bouchard enters the salon where Russo has been waiting. They shake hands and sit down.

BOUCHARD

Well, Lieutenant, to what do I owe the pleasure of your visit?

RUSSO

Father, I want to get right to the point.

BOUCHARD

Splendid. So much time these days wasted on chitchat.

RUSSO

For about a week now, the police have been receiving odd mailings that seem to have some bearing on the O'Neill case.

BOUCHARD

Is that right? *Odd*, you say? In what sense?

RUSSO

They're pieced together, you know,
like ransom notes in the movies.

Bouchard stiffens.

RUSSO (cont.)

They also often reference the Beatles.

BOUCHARD

Is that all anyone can talk about
these days?

RUSSO

(smiling)

Well, you seem to have played a part
in that trend lately.

Bouchard concedes the point.

RUSSO (cont.)

In any case. The most recent batch was
filled with references not only to the
Beatles but to *altar boys* as well. So we
asked your Sr. Grace – who we understand
oversees the program – if we might show
them to some of your young men.

FLASHBACK

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT CONFERENCE ROOM – DAY

Officers Russo and Gallo sit at the table with altar boys:
Tom, Logan and Dave, and their respective FATHERS.

The boys are pouring over three messages (which for the
moment remain unseen to us). After a while Tom notices
something and points it out to the others. They glance up.

END FLASHBACK

INT. THE RECTORY – CONTINUOUS

RUSSO

Well, to make a long story short,
Father. The boys felt that the messages
seemed to be about...you.

BOUCHARD

(offended)

You cannot be serious! And since when did teenage altar boys become forensic experts anyway? Besides, If these weird messages are so incriminating shouldn't *I* have had a chance to see them?

RUSSO

Well, as I said, Father, the messages referenced altar boys and the Beatles. Who better to decipher them? But yes, you do deserve to see them as well. And I'd be happy to drop them off tomorrow.

BOUCHARD

Lieutenant, every time you visit me you must first make your way through a throng of juvenile miscreants who would like nothing better than to see me locked up for one imagined crime or another. Please tell me you understand that.

RUSSO

Simply trying to do my job, Father.

BOUCHARD

And please tell me that you can see how easily these strange messages could have been – and almost certainly *WERE* – sent to you by one of the shrieking lowlifes you see outside that window right now.

RUSSO

I assure you, Father, we have ruled out nothing at this point in the investigation.

Bouchard stares. Red-faced. Silent.

INT. THE RECTORY – LATE AT NIGHT

Bouchard descends a hinged and folding staircase into a very dark space. He holds a large brandy snifter about half full. He is very unsteady. Intoxicated. He turns on a light.

There is a rack of fine wines and liqueurs, but one would be hard pressed to describe this place as a 'wine cellar.'

It is filled with hardcore homoerotic art and paraphernalia. There is also a movie camera on a tripod, a bank of movie lights, a film projector, a plush easy chair and rows and rows of film in labeled boxes.

He tops off the snifter and starts feeding one of the films through the projector and up into the take-up reel.

BOUCHARD

(muttering sarcastically)

"The messages seem to be about you, father. Simply trying to do my job, father."

He turns the projector on and the lights off, and awkwardly stumbles into the easy chair. The CLICKING of the projector is the only sound until...

From the darkness behind the projector, an angelic, pristine choirboy's VOICE.

THE VOICE

(singing)

*When I find myself in times of trouble,
Mother Mary comes to me. Speaking words
of wisdom. Let it be.*

BOUCHARD, startled, rises from the chair and turns around. The now out-of-focus film is projected directly onto him.

BOUCHARD

Who's there?

Again, from the darkness...

THE VOICE

(singing)

*And in my hour of darkness, She is
standing right in front of me. Speaking
words of wisdom. Let it be.*

BOUCHARD

(clearly alarmed)

Who are you?

A young boy emerges from the darkness, looking as if he stepped directly from his portrait at the seminary. It is ST. DOMINIC SAVIO.

Bouchard drops to his knees and crosses himself.

BOUCHARD

Dominic! My Dear lovely Dominic. Is that really you?

DOMINIC

(singing)

Words are flowing out like endless rain into a paper cup. They slither while they pass, they slip away across the universe.

Bouchard holds out his arms in greeting.

BOUCHARD

Oh, Dominic, how often I have dreamt of meeting you.

DOMINIC

(singing)

Pools of sorrow waves of joy are drifting through my opened mind, possessing and caressing me.

Bouchard begins to speak. Dominic silences him with an upraised hand.

DOMINIC

I was never capable of doing big things, but I wanted to do everything, even the smallest things, for the greater glory of God.

BOUCHARD

Yes! I remember how you used to say this! I read it many, many times. But now to hear it from your own lips!

DOMINIC

You, father, *HAVE* been capable of great things, but it has *never* been for the glory of God, has it?

BOUCHARD

No, that's not true! I have dedicated
my entire life to the glory of God.

Bouchard rises and steps toward the apparition.

DOMINIC

SIT!

Visibly stunned, Bouchard immediately backs down into the
easy chair. Dominic walks around to face him, and as he
does the blurry bumping and grinding of the film is now
projected onto him. Bouchard cringes at the profane
juxtaposition. Dominic glances down at the images on his
chest.

DOMINIC

You know well enough that even one look
is enough to stain your soul for all
eternity...

BOUCHARD

Yes, yes! I remember how you chastised
those prurient boys at your school with
those very words.

DOMINIC

...and yet you go feasting your eyes on *this*.

BOUCHARD

But, but...

DOMINIC

(in Bouchard's voice)

"Our God is a loving God, but he will not
be mocked."

(in his own voice)

And you, Paul Bouchard, have mocked the
Lord God!

BOUCHARD

No, no, I haven't! Please!

DOMINIC

Silence!

Bouchard is now truly terrified. And it shows.

DOMINIC

Billy Tannehill, father. Do you remember him? The Fond du Lac boy? He was beautiful and innocent and he trusted you. But how did you repay that trust?

BOUCHARD

I loved him, and I believe he loved me.

DOMINIC

He despised you!

BOUCHARD

No, Dominic, that's not true.

DOMINIC

He was terrified of you. He felt trapped. And the shame eventually became too much for him to bear. Ultimately he took his own life, did he not? But even *that* was not enough to stop you.

Bouchard is speechless.

DOMINIC

There have been others too, including the O'Neill boy, but you were too blinded by your own lust to change your ways.

BOUCHARD

No, Dominic, you don't understand.

DOMINIC

Oh, but I do! And so much better than you could possibly know. You see, I too was the victim of a monster such as you. I was only saved by the death I prayed for each and every day. It was a *HOLY* death, Father Bouchard. Holy in ways yours – *THIS VERY NIGHT* – can never be.

BOUCHARD

No, Dominic, no! Please!

DOMINIC

(in Bouchard's voice)

The Holy Bible tells us that the wages of sin is death.

The moving image projected onto Dominic morphs into one of hellfire and torment accompanied by SCREAMS.

DOMINIC

And tonight the bill has come due.

Bouchard's eyes widen as he clutches at his chest. Dominic bends over Bouchard, looks deeply into his eyes and presses his index finger to his heart

DOMINIC

And in the end, Paul. The love you
take is equal to the love you make.

Bouchard looks at the saint in utter bewilderment. And dies.

EXT. THE RECTORY – DAYBREAK

Things are quiet at the moment. Only a few protestors have arrived and they simply mill around drinking coffee while waiting for the others.

INT. THE RECTORY – CONTINUOUS

Mrs. Hüber prepares a pot of coffee until she hears a faint FLICKING sound coming from Father Bouchard's office.

She knocks at the door. No answer. She opens it.

On the floor, a large Persian rug has been pushed aside to reveal an open trapdoor. The sound is coming from below.

She carefully inches her way down the staircase into Bouchard's "wine cellar." And there, in the easy chair sits Fr. Bouchard. Dead. His face a rictus of pain and confusion. The FLICKING is from the tail end of the film as it spins on the still running take-up reel. Mrs. Hüber throws a hand over her mouth in shock.

INT. THE RECTORY – LATER

At the front door, Fr. Driscoll somberly greets a small group of PRIESTS and LAYMEN: a Diocesan Contingent.

DRISCOLL

Thank you so much for coming so quickly.

One of the priests, FR. DRAKE, introduces Driscoll to the others.

DRAKE

Fr. Driscoll, may I introduce Monsignor Stallings, our Diocesan Information Director; Fr. Wilder – Archbishop Daniel's Chief of Staff; Dr. Gertz, our Diocesan Medical Advisor; and Richard Deere, one of our Diocesan Attorneys.

Solemn handshakes all around.

DRISCOLL

Well, if you follow me gentlemen, I suppose I should just take you to him.

He leads them to the wine cellar.

INT. WINE CELLAR

Dr. Gertz checks Bouchard with a stethoscope. Nods to the others who scan the appalling contents of the cellar.

STALLINGS

Well, clearly we've got to get him out of *here*.

INT. BOUCHARD'S BEDROOM – A BIT LATER

Bouchard's body now lies peacefully in the bed. His eyes have been closed and he has been dressed in tasteful pajamas.

DEERE

Okay, *NOW* we can notify the police. But no one, gentlemen, and I mean *no one* can know about the basement. We'll deal with that later.

EXT. THE RECTORY – LATER

The protest group is larger now, but silent. All eyes are on the ambulance and police cars that have gathered. A team of PARAMEDICS, accompanied by several POLICE OFFICERS push a gurney to the rectory door.

INT. THE RECTORY – CONTINUOUS

Fr. Driscoll greets the men at the door and leads them up the stairs to the bedroom, where they are met by Fr. Drake.

DRAKE
(to Driscoll)
Thank you, Father. We'll handle
it from here.

Drake discretely leads the young priest to the door and closes it behind him.

Driscoll is, at best, confused.

INT. THE RECTORY – AN HOUR LATER

The paramedics carefully carry the covered body on a stretcher to the ground floor and place it on the gurney.

They open the front door and are just about to depart when...

DRISCOLL
(stepping forward)
He didn't die in his bed!

The men of the diocesan group turn and look at Driscoll in sheer astonishment.

GRETA
I found him in the wine cellar.

At first, a stunned silence. Then...

OFFICER #1
Well, I guess we're going to have
to take a look at this wine cellar.

DRISCOLL
(gently)
Greta dear, why don't you show the
police officers where you found him.

The diocesan contingent glares at Driscoll with barely concealed rage.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT – SEVERAL DAYS LATER

Russo sits at his desk, his investigative team gathered around him.

RUSSO

So the kid is back home with his family. Said he'd been hiding out the whole time in those woods south of the trailer court.

GALLO

Matt, we swept every inch of those woods.

RUSSO

Well, then we didn't sweep carefully enough. Or the kid was hiding somewhere else. The point is he was hiding. And he *should've* been. Turns out the saintly Fr. Bouchard was actually a depraved maniac with a fondness for teenage boys. I mean, Christ! You guys saw some of those films.

EXT. THE TRAILER — DAY

Jack is reunited with Janet and C.C. before a delighted gathering of NEIGHBORS and MEDIA REPORTERS.

ADULT JACK (V.O.)

To this day, I find it miraculous that everyone bought the story I told them about hiding out in the woods. Me! A kid who had never been camping in his life! A kid who wouldn't have been able to survive in those woods for ten minutes, let alone ten days. But I guess everyone was just happy that the story resolved itself without me turning up dead.

FLASHBACK MONTAGE — VARIOUS

INT. THE TRAILER — THE NIGHT IT BEGAN — Jack pacing nervously.

ADULT JACK (V.O. cont.)

That night, I was terrified. I saw the way Bouchard looked at me when he left our place that afternoon. Then after those phone calls — which I *knew* were from him — I just panicked.

EXT. THE O'NEILL TRAILER — Jack bolts out of the door and runs through the park.

EXT. CHRIS' AIR STREAM — Jack pounds frantically at the door.

The lights come on. Chris takes him in. Draws all the blinds.

INT. THE AIR STREAM – Jack speaks wildly and at length. Chris listens patiently.

ADULT JACK (V.O. cont.)

I told Chris everything. How Bouchard had molested me; How he would never take 'no' for an answer; How trapped I felt; And how I had actually thought about killing myself. It was all so humiliating to say out loud, but so liberating in a way to finally get it off my chest.

INT. THE AIR STREAM – Chris now does the talking and Jack listens.

ADULT JACK (V.O. cont.)

But it turned out that Chris had known all along, or at least suspected. Because it happened to him too when he was younger. He could see it on my face. He could see it in my eyes. I guess it really does takes one to know one.

INT. THE O'NEILL TRAILER – Jack and Chris quietly trash Jack's bedroom. Jack cuts his hand in the process. Wipes the blood on his pillow.

ADULT JACK (V.O. cont.)

Chris came up with the idea to fake the kidnapping and try to frame Bouchard for the thing. It was insane, but I was just scared, angry and desperate enough to go along with it.

INT. THE AIR STREAM – A pair of gloved hands carefully assembles one of the cryptic messages (we've seen this shot before). Chris' hands as it turns out.

ADULT JACK (V.O. cont.)

The idea to use all the Beatle stuff, was Chris' idea too. No real strategic reason. I think he just wanted to drive Bouchard over the edge.

EXT. CHURCH OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS – Detective Gallo leaves the rectory and walks to his car.

ADULT JACK (V.O. cont.)
 Chris guessed that I couldn't have been Bouchard's first victim. He said people like that were *SERIAL* assholes. So he did some digging and found out the guy had been at a church in Fond du Lac before coming to St. Robert's.

INT. THE AIR STREAM – Close on the message reading: "**They KNOW about Fond du Lac.**"

ADULT JACK (V.O. cont.)
 It was strictly a shot in the dark.
 But it was right on the money.

EXT. FOND DU LAC STREET – A twentysomething HIPPIY GIRL walks to a mailbox and drops in a 9x12 manila envelope.

ADULT JACK (V.O. cont.)
 Chris knew an artist in Fond du Lac, a painter he'd met on the art show circuit. She was the one who relayed our messages to Bouchard and the police so they couldn't be easily traced back to us.

INT. THE O'NEILL TRAILER – Chris talks to Janet at the kitchen table.

ADULT JACK (V.O. cont.)
 Although Chris was committed to carrying the charade to the limit, he was troubled by what it was doing to my family. So on the day he visited to convey his staged sympathy and concern, he instead ended up telling my mom everything; that I was safe in his trailer and that I had been all along. He also gave her some sense of the things Bouchard did to me, which couldn't have been easy.

A BIT LATER – A tearful but thankful Janet hugs Chris.

ADULT JACK (V.O. cont.)
 And my mom, God love her, went straight into Mama Grizzly Bear Mode. She instantly went from wanting her missing son returned
 (more)

ADULT JACK (V.O. cont.)
 to wanting her *abused* son *avenged*. So from that point she never let on for a second that she knew exactly where I was and that I was completely safe. She went all in.

INT. THE POLICE DEPARTMENT – Russo, Gallo in the conference room with Jack's altar boy friends.

ADULT JACK (V.O. cont.)
 I still feel bad about all the trouble we put the police through. My mom said they were all such nice people and they were all working so hard on what turned out to be nothing more than a wild goose chase.

Russo shows the boys the last three mysterious messages.

The first: A wild collage pieced together from magazine photographs of jungle scenes, many small Xerox copies of young altar boys, and a photo of a toad with its eyes scratched out and a representation of blood spurting from his head. Snaking its way through the collage is a pieced-together caption: **"Hey, Bungalow Bill, what did you kill, Bungalow Bill?"**

The second is also a collage: photos of laboratory equipment, more Xeroxes of altar boys, and in the very center, a drawing of a large jar containing another cutout photo. This one of a human fetus.

The caption for this one reads: **"Was she told when she was young That pain would lead to pleasure?"** and **"This Wicked Woman, This Poor Creature"**

The third bears only a photo of a priest in a black cassock and biretta. A black rectangle conceals his eyes.

The caption: **"Here's another Clue for you all. The walrus was Paul."**

ADULT JACK (V.O. cont.)
 But Chris was sure proud of these particular pieces. And I had to admit, they were pretty cool.

EXT. ST. ROBERT'S CAMPUS – Bouchard's body is removed from the rectory and placed in the ambulance.

ADULT JACK (V.O. cont.)
We never planned to kill Fr. Bouchard.
Mostly we just wanted his crimes exposed.
And one way or another I guess they were.
So maybe his death was just another
miracle...

INT. ST. ROBERT'S SANCTUARY — Jesus lifts his head from the
cross and looks down at Jack.

ADULT JACK (V.O. cont.)
...and, by that time, I had come to realize
that miracles were not that rare after all.

PHOTO: THE BEATLES — In full Sgt. Pepper's regalia.

ADULT JACK (V.O. cont.)
And then there were The Beatles. Bouchard
believed they were from Hell. Chris,
that they were from Heaven. But the point
became moot when, not long after these
events, the band split up and went their
separate ways. I guess we *all* go our
separate ways in the end. But I do know
one thing: The Beatles may not have saved
the world, but back in the spring and
summer of 1969, they inspired a gifted
young craftsman from West Allis, Wisconsin.

(beat)

And he sure saved *me*.

END FLASHBACK MONTAGE

FADE OUT

THE END