

CONFESSION

By

Adam Rocke

BLACK SCREEN - SOUNDS OF HAMMERING

Carpentry nails into thick boards. Determined thumps!

FADE IN:

EXT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - DUSK

On the outskirts of a small, impoverished town perpetually bathed in gloom.

Dented and broken siding. Rust. Rampant weed overgrowth.

Amazing this shitty structure is still standing.

SOUNDS OF HAMMERING coming from within.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - DUSK

Cobwebs and pigeon shit abound.

LYNN -- seen in quick glimpses -- BUILDING SOMETHING with 2x4s, plywood, saw, hammer and nails.

Mid-20s Tomboy, pretty but hard. Many tats on her arms, including a CROSS WITH A SLASH THROUGH IT. Dark circles under her eyes, track marks on her arms...

We don't get a clear picture, but the picture is clear...
This gal's got issues.

Glimpses of her creation... Looks like a large dog house.

After a final nail in the boards, Lynn sets down the hammer and takes a long pull from a can of Pabst. Thirst sated, she moves to an OLD METAL BARREL filled with PIECES OF STYROFOAM.

Picks up a gas can, pours GASOLINE into the barrel. As the styrofoam begins to dissolve...

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Small town. Large church. All the money goes here.

An old Buick cruises into frame, parks in a space beside the handicapped spots, marked RESERVED. Out comes...

FATHER McCORMICK -- 60s, tall, stocky, grey.
Pillar of the community.

Approaching the church he stiffens... FRONT DOOR AJAR.

Lock broken, wood splintered. Looks kicked in.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Expecting the worst, Father McCormick turns on the lights...

Nothing looks out of place, until his gaze fixes on the...

BACK WALL, where an oversized NAIL protrudes. Around it, FADED PAINT in the shape of a LARGE CROSS.

A HANDWRITTEN NOTE skewered on the nail that held the cross.

Father McCormick retrieves the note, reads...

LYNN (V.O.)
I'm in desperate need of confession
but cannot come to church.

EXT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Father McCormick's Buick arrives at the warehouse. Buick's headlights illuminate a rusty metal '13' placard on its side.

LYNN (V.O.)
13 Old Mill Road. 9 PM. Please
Father, my soul is on the line.

Father McCormick exits the car, notices...

FAINT LIGHT emanating from within the warehouse.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

MANY LIT TEA CANDLES flickering in the slight breeze cast a spooky glow on the WOODEN STRUCTURE they surround...

A HANDMADE CONFESSIONAL BOOTH.

No frills. Wood raw and unstained.

Function not form.

Father McCormick walks around the structure, taking it in. About to enter the cubicle he spots something on the wall...

A LARGE ANTIQUE WOODEN CROSS WITH JESUS CRUCIFIED ON IT.

Father McCormick frowns, shakes his head. Then, he enters the confessional, pulls the door closed.

INT. CONFESSIONAL BOOTH

Just enough light to see Father McCormick trying to get his large frame comfortable within the cramped confines. When he's finally settled...

Dead silence.

Just the breeze passing through the old warehouse. Calming yet eerie. Soon...

FOOTFALLS. Growing louder until...

LYNN walks around the confessional - briefly visible through small gaps between the boards - and gets into the other side.

INTERCUT FATHER MCCORMICK AND LYNN

Lynn kneels in her side of the confessional.

A small, square FINE MESH SCREEN between the two cubicles.

LYNN

Thank you for coming, Father.

FATHER MCCORMICK

You said your soul was on the line.
What choice did I have?

LYNN

I take confession seriously.

FATHER MCCORMICK

Perhaps too seriously. The cross
you stole is for all of God's
children.

LYNN

Jesus owed me one.

FATHER MCCORMICK

Jesus died for our sins. He
doesn't owe us anything.

LYNN

So you say. Can we get on with it?

FATHER MCCORMICK

By all means.

LYNN
 (crosses himself)
 Bless me father for I have sinned.
 It's been fourteen years since my
 last confession.

This hits Father McCormick like a punch in the gut.

FATHER MCCORMICK
 Fourteen years? Did you lose your
 faith?

LYNN
 No. It was stolen from me.

FATHER MCCORMICK
 I don't understand.

LYNN
 You should. You're the one who
 stole it.

Father McCormick reacts to this. Beyond uncomfortable now.

FATHER MCCORMICK
 Who are you?

LYNN
 Were there that many?

The rise and fall of Father McCormick's chest has quickened.

FATHER MCCORMICK
 (a bit frantic)
 I'm a different person now.

LYNN
 Leopards don't change their spots.
 They just become old leopards.

FATHER MCCORMICK
 I've gotten help.

Lynn snorts derisively.

FATHER MCCORMICK
 So this is what? Revenge?

LYNN
 Relax, Father. This is about me,
 not you. I need to unburden myself
 but I don't want to go to prison.
 Figured our little secret would
 keep you quiet.

FATHER MCCORMICK
The seal of the confessional is
unwavering, regardless of our
history.

LYNN
History? That's an interesting way
of describing it.

Father McCormick is even more uncomfortable now than before.

FATHER MCCORMICK
As God is my witness, I am truly
sorry for --

LYNN
I killed a man.

Father McCormick sucks in a breath. After a beat...

FATHER MCCORMICK
Was it self-defense?

LYNN
Not even close.

FATHER MCCORMICK
Then why?

LYNN
Does it matter?

FATHER MCCORMICK
To God, murder is not only a
physical act but the condition of
one's heart towards another.

LYNN
Then I'm screwed 'cause I hated the
sonofabitch with every fiber of my
being.

FATHER MCCORMICK
And the reason for your hatred?

LYNN
You writing a book?

FATHER MCCORMICK
You asked me to hear your
confession. Do you just want me to
hear your words, or do you want me
to understand your actions?

LYNN

The man was a monster. Murdered a child. So I returned the favor.

FATHER MCCORMICK

Lex talionis... Fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. Is that it?

LYNN

Sounds better when you put it like that.

FATHER MCCORMICK

Vengeance and wrath are best left to God.

LYNN

God dropped the ball with you. Figured I'd handle this one myself.

FATHER MCCORMICK

Do you expect confession to absolve you of the guilt you're feeling?

LYNN

That's the thing, Father... I don't feel guilty. I don't feel anything. It was just something I needed to do, like taking out the trash.

FATHER MCCORMICK

Equating murder with a simple chore makes you sound like a monster.

LYNN

I know. I spent years planning it, down to the very last detail, but I hoped that when it came time to actually do it, I wouldn't be able to. That I'd suddenly find forgiveness. Or that something would prevent it. You know, like divine intervention.

FATHER MCCORMICK

And what happened?

LYNN

You showed up.

TIGHT ON FATHER MCCORMICK'S FACE

Eyes go wide. He tries to push open the door but...

LYNN PULLS A STRING and...

EXT. CONFSSIONAL BOOTH

THREE 2x4s drop down into slats, IMPRISONING Father McCormick inside the confessional.

INT. CONFSSIONAL BOOTH

Father McCormick beats against the door, to no avail.

Throws his body against it again and again and again...

Wood groans and creaks but doesn't give.

EXT. CONFSSIONAL BOOTH

Lynn leans against the 2x4-barred door leading into Father McCormick's cubicle.

LYNN

That's exactly how I felt all these years. Trapped. Inside myself. Knowing the man I looked up to, the man I trusted, could do something so horrible to me. Again. And again. And again!

FATHER MCCORMICK

Please, don't do this. I'm begging you!

LYNN

That's not begging. That's groveling.

Father McCormick maneuvers in the tight space and, with some difficulty, gets onto his knees.

FATHER MCCORMICK

I'm on my knees begging for your forgiveness.

We see the hope in Father McCormick's eyes.

LYNN

Like I said, I don't feel a thing.

Father McCormick rages against his confessional prison, kicking and smashing his feet and hands against the boards, doing everything in his power to escape.

But the boards hold.

Eventually, Father McCormick collapses back onto the narrow ledge-like seat and begins sobbing.

LYNN

God's not there for you, Father.
Just like he wasn't there for me.

FATHER MCCORMICK

(laced with sobs)

I thank you, Lord, for all that
you've given me, and I hope that
you can forgive me for some of the
things I've done...

LYNN

Are you praying?

FATHER MCCORMICK

...And I pray you will forgive her
for what she's about to do.

LYNN

Christ, you really are praying.

FATHER MCCORMICK

I hope my service to you has
brought some light to the darkness.

LYNN

What about the darkness you brought
to others?

FATHER MCCORMICK

I ask you, my Lord, to accept and
embrace me into your loving arms.

LYNN

Amen.

Lynn walks to the wall where a TETHERED ROPE has been wrapped around a nail. Unhooks the rope from the nail, tugs on it...

Rope is connected to the OLD METAL BARREL seen earlier, now SUSPENDED IN RIGGING above the confessional booth.

Pulled rope FLIPS THE BARREL, DUMPING ITS CONTENTS...

GALLONS OF JELLY-LIKE OOZE splat onto the confessional booth.

INT. CONFESSIONAL BOOTH

Jelly-like ooze drips through the gaps in the boards, covering Father McCormick. He SMELLS the ooze and...

FATHER MCCORMICK

No! NO! Not like this!

Father McCormick attacks his enclosure with renewed vigor, desperate to escape. Once again the boards hold.

Exhausted, he slides to the floor, crying - blubbering - still beating against the door, hands now raw and bloody.

EXT. CONFESSIONAL BOOTH

Lynn stares at her creation - reacting to the occasional thump from within. It's obvious she's torn...

Torn between vengeance and forgiveness.

Tears now flowing, stream of tears increasing when she...

LIGHTS A CIGARETTE - takes a deep drag - holding the still-lit match.

Lynn exhales an acrid cloud.

LYNN

I can't guarantee you'll go to hell, but I can damn sure make you feel like you did.

THROWS THE MATCH, arcing towards the confessional booth...

POOF!

ERUPTS IN FLAMES - HOMEMADE NAPALM conducting the flames with lightning speed. Within moments virtually every inch of the confessional booth is a raging fireball, inside and out.

AGONIZING SCREAMS from Father McCormick as he spins and slams within the confessional, fire burning him alive.

Creeping into every orifice, every pore.

Flames eating through flesh, muscle, sinew...

Burning down to his bones.

A section of the wall burns away, allowing Lynn and Father McCormick to momentarily lock eyes.

A haunting final image.

Finally - thankfully - the screaming and the movement stops.

The confessional is now a raging bonfire which Lynn watches transfixed, casually smoking her cigarette.

When only a stub remains, Lynn throws the cigarette into the flames and walks to the stolen crucifix hanging on the warehouse wall. From under her shirt she removes...

A .38 REVOLVER.

Crying harder now, she looks up at Jesus.

LYNN

I'm sorry.

TIGHT ON THE CROSS - JESUS'S FACE

A few beats and...

BANG!

BLOOD SPLATTERS the crucifix. Some hits Jesus's face...

BLOODY TEARS cascading down.

THE END