

GOD WON'T SAVE YOU

God forgives. He doesn't

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WGAE - I385232

FADE IN:

EXT. SHANTY HOUSE - OUTSKIRTS OF DALLAS - TEXAS - LAST SUMMER
- NIGHT

A brutal summer night. Heat still rising off the dirt. A worn two-bedroom shanty crouches beneath a jaundiced porch light. From inside: the sultry pulse of "BLACK VELVET."

INT. SHANTY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sweat. Smoke. Whiskey. Cheap sex. Cheap furniture.

MARK DEVON, 36, sprawls on a couch like a bored king.

Fu Manchu mustache. Mullet. Black hair with one blond streak. Irish blue eyes. Compact and dangerous.

A tattoo on his right forearm reads: GOD WON'T SAVE YOU.

He wears a tank top. A cigarette hangs from his fingers.

HOOKER #1 is draped on his left.

HOOKER #2 leans against him on the right.

HOOKER #3 kneels between his legs, head below frame.

Mark barely reacts. Too calm. Too practiced.

The front door opens.

SAM "RUSTY" JORDAN, 45, enters.

Compact. Heavy. Dangerous. He doesn't raise his voice. He never has to.

Rusty grabs HOOKER #1 and flings her aside like she weighs nothing.

HOOKER #2 rises fast and backs away.

Mark has his hand on the head of Hooker #3. She keeps going.

Rusty clocks it. Scowls.

TYRONE, 42, Black, 6'2", thin, terrified, is thrown into the room.

He hits the floor hard. Shaking.

Rusty steps toward him.

RUSTY
My money.

TYRONE
I have it.

RUSTY
Then give it.

TYRONE
I just need a little time. Rent's
due. My kid's football camp--

MARK
Rusty, his kid plays ball with my
nephew. Team needs him.

Rusty looks to Mark.

Mark presses Hooker #3 down, using her back as a stabilizer.

Without urgency, he pulls a handgun.

BANG.

Tyrone SCREAMS -- hit in the left foot. He writhes on the
floor.

Rusty turns to Mark. A question in his eyes.

Mark leans back. Takes a drag off his cigarette. Hooker #3
keeps working.

Rusty stares at him for a beat. Then pulls his own gun.

BANG.

RUSTY
I--

BANG.

RUSTY
want--

BANG.

RUSTY
my--

BANG.

RUSTY
money.

Tyrone goes still. Silence.

Hooker #3 stops, rises, and exits without a word.

Mark stares at Rusty.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
Mark. Blessed are the righteous—
they will be the sons of God.

Mark doesn't look at him.

MARK
It's "peacemakers."

A beat.

MARK (CONT'D)
He got the message.

Rusty studies him. Gives nothing back.

Then— He takes out a knife. An orange. He begins to peel it.
Slow. Precise.

The blade slides just under the skin. No wasted motion.

Juice beads on his fingers. He keeps cutting.

RUSTY
We should send pizza.

A beat.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
Locker room. After a loss.

Mark doesn't react. Rusty keeps peeling.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
Keeps them together.

A beat.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
Otherwise, they start blaming each
other.

Mark shakes his head.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
Mark, where are you going?

Mark stands. Crushes out his cigarette. Throws back the whiskey.

MARK
Out.

Rusty keeps peeling. Doesn't look up.

RUSTY
You don't leave me.

Mark moves to the door.

A beat.

MARK
Hey Rusty. Watch me.

He opens it.

Stops.

Without turning—

MARK (CONT'D)
And it's "peacemakers."

He exits. The door shuts. Silence.

Rusty finishes peeling the orange.

Perfect.

Unbroken.

He separates a slice.

Eats it.

Behind him, Tyrone quietly bleeds out on the floor.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE - STATIONS OF THE CROSS

-- Rain in a Dallas alley. Mark stands over a LOCAL BOOKIE.

No rage. No speech. He calmly snaps the man's pinky finger.

The man screams. Mark looks bored.

-- Inside a stolen Cadillac, a RIVAL GANG MEMBER sits duct-taped in the passenger seat. Mark threads a silencer onto his pistol as he softly recites the Act of Contrition.

-- A rundown parochial school. Mark hands a thick envelope of cash to a NUN.

NUN
God bless you, Marcus.

MARK
He hasn't yet, Sister. Don't hold your breath.

-- A warehouse floor slick with gasoline.

Mark flicks a Zippo.

Flames ERUPT.

He lights a cigarette off the heat and walks away.

END MONTAGE

INT. DALLAS COURTROOM - DAY

A packed courtroom.

Mark sits on the witness stand.

Rusty sits at the defense table, stone-still, a suit wrapped around pure violence.

Mark leans toward the microphone.

MARK
Yeah. I shot him. In the left foot.

A beat.

MARK (CONT'D)
His kid and my nephew played ball together. Seemed worth keeping him alive.

Mark points to Rusty.

MARK (CONT'D)
He shot him dead. Four times.

Rusty's eyes never leave him.

RUSTY
There's nowhere you can hide. No
past you outrun.

He leans forward.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
Find God before I find you.

SMASH CUT TO:

HEADLINES SPIN --

"MOB BOSS GETS LIFE"

"STAR WITNESS TESTIFIES"

"FORT WORTH ENFORCER VANISHES"

INT. FBI OFFICE - DAY

A federal office. Clean. Colorless.

MARK sits across from AGENT JENNIFER CONNERS, 45, sharp,
Hispanic, all business.

A thick file lands on the desk between them.

JENNIFER
So this is the deal. You get a new
life.

MARK
That was the plan.

JENNIFER
Your life as you know it is over.

MARK
I get it. Dead man. Jesus, get on
with it.

Jennifer notices the tattoo on his forearm.

GOD WON'T SAVE YOU.

A tiny smile.

JENNIFER
Well. That's funny.

She slides the file to him.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
Meet the man you're going to be.

Mark opens it.

INSERT - WITNESS PROTECTION IDENTITY PACKET

FATHER ROSS WHITE. 37.

-- Orphaned at age ten after his parents were killed in a car accident on their way to church in Billings, Montana.

-- Raised in foster homes.

-- Amateur boxer.

-- United States Marine Corps.

-- Entered seminary at 33 after receiving "the call."

-- Assigned to St. Michael's Catholic Church, Boca Raton, Florida.

Mark reads. His face hardens.

MARK
What the fuck? You made me a priest?

JENNIFER
We made you invisible.

A KNOCK at the door.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
Come in.

The door opens.

SPECIAL AGENT RAFAEL MARTINEZ, 33, steps in.

Broad, smooth, deadly. Composed enough to be dangerous.

He takes Mark in with one look.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
Mark, meet your handler. Special
Agent Rafael Martinez.

MARK
Handler?

RAFAEL
Try not to make the word necessary.

Jennifer gathers her things.

JENNIFER
Rafael will walk you through the
transition.

MARK
I don't need a babysitter.

RAFAEL
Good. I don't babysit.

MARK
Fuck no.

Rafael smiles. Not offended. Amused.

RAFAEL
Oh, you'll want me.

MARK
No. No and no. Hell no.

Rafael steps closer. Leans in just enough.

RAFAEL
Step out of line--
(low)
you do NOT want me on your ass.

MARK
Damn right I don't.

JENNIFER
Well. You two seem to have hit it
off.

Jennifer exits.

The door closes.

Rafael opens the file. Flips to a flagged page.

RAFAEL
Father Ross White.
Thirty-seven.
Montana.
Foster system.
Boxer.
Marine.
Seminary at thirty-three.

A beat.

MARK
Yeah. I read the brochure.

Rafael taps the file.

RAFAEL
Then read it again.

A beat.

Mark studies him.

Something clicks.

MARK
Wait.

A beat.

MARK (CONT'D)
I'm... gay?

Rafael doesn't react.

MARK (CONT'D)
That's not who I am.

Rafael closes the file.

A beat.

RAFAEL
It's who you need to be.

Silence.

Mark watches him.

MARK
That's your pitch?

Rafael holds his gaze.

RAFAEL
It's your mask.

A beat.

RAFAEL (CONT'D)
You just have to wear it.

Rafael pulls out the chair opposite him and sits.

Calm. In control.

MARK
You don't get to say that.

RAFAEL
I do, actually. It's literally my
job.

Mark glares.

MARK
So what, now?

RAFAEL
Now you survive. And go to
confession.

A beat.

He stands.

RAFAEL (CONT'D)
Get used to "Father Ross." By
Sunday, half of Boca Raton will be
saying it with tears in their eyes.

Rafael heads for the door, then stops.

Turns back.

RAFAEL (CONT'D)
And Mark?

MARK
What.

RAFAEL
That tattoo is gonna save you.

MARK
How do I find you?

Rafael slides him a card.

RAFAEL MARTINEZ, Life Coach, 954-426-3537

Rafael exits.

Mark sits there, alone with the file.

He looks down at the name again:

FATHER ROSS WHITE.

Then at the tattoo on his forearm.

GOD WON'T SAVE YOU.

MARK
(under his breath)
Jesus Christ. Unbelievable.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE - THE MAKING OF FATHER ROSS WHITE - OPENING CREDIT
PLAY

-- A barber's cape snaps shut around Mark's neck.

-- CLIPPERS tear through the mullet.

-- The blond streak falls into a white sink.

-- Clean-cut. Cropped beard. Handsome in a way... The
physicality still visible beneath the collar.

-- Rafael knots a Roman collar into place, straightens it
with military precision.

-- Mark studies himself in a mirror. Doesn't recognize the
man staring back.

-- A file photo is stapled: FATHER Ross WHITE, ST. MICHAEL'S
CATHOLIC CHURCH.

-- Mark mouths unfamiliar words from a prayer card.

-- Rafael watches, arms folded.

-- Mark tries again. Less sarcasm. More stillness.

END MONTAGE.

Gun smoke and bullets merge into Incense and church bells.

INT. ST. MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH - BOCA RATON, FL - DAY

WHITE.

A wash of white slowly resolves into a PRIEST'S COLLAR.

SUPER: THREE MONTHS LATER

A full congregation.

At the altar stands FATHER GILBERT, 58, warm, seasoned, beloved.

Beside him --

MARK DEVON is gone.

Now he is FATHER Ross WHITE, 37.

Clean-cut black hair. Cropped beard.

Handsome in a way that turns heads without trying.

Black short-sleeve clerical shirt. Roman collar.

Black pants.

His physicality still visible beneath the uniform.

A fighter forced into the costume of a shepherd.

Father Gilbert addresses the parish mid-farewell.

FATHER GILBERT

...and it is with a heavy heart,
and hope for the future, that I bid
farewell to my parish family here
at St. Michael's, where I have
found a home these past twenty
years.

The congregation listens, emotional.

FATHER GILBERT (CONT'D)

I have been assigned as ship's
pastor for Bliss Cruise Line.

That gets a warm laugh.

FATHER GILBERT (CONT'D)
And I am quite sure I will see some
of you out there yet. Wear your
sunscreen.

A bigger laugh.

He gestures to Ross.

FATHER GILBERT (CONT'D)
Let me introduce your new pastor...
Father Ross White.

Applause.

Father Gilbert steps aside.

Father Ross approaches the microphone. He forces a slight
smile.

The church goes still.

Ross looks out at his new flock. For a second, his eyes
drift.

Then, in his head--

RUSTY (V.O.)
You're a walking dead man.

Ross grips the lectern.

FATHER ROSS
My new family.
Today, we inherit each other.

Silence.

A few parishioners exchange looks.

WOMAN #1
(whispering)
Father, what a waste.

WOMAN #2
(whispering back)
I want to go to confession now.

Ross hears them.

A beat.

Then he steadies.

He scans the room.

FATHER ROSS
...and so we look back... and say
goodbye to the past.

He scans the room.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
Today is the only truth we have.

The congregation leans in.

Ross stands at the altar-- trapped in plain sight.

FADE OUT.

INT. STATE PRISON - CHAPEL - DAY

A cheap crucifix. Folding chairs. Fluorescent hum.

RUSTY sits alone in the last pew, immaculate in prison khaki.

Like he owns the room anyway.

A GUARD waits by the door, careful not to look at him.

Across from Rusty: a YOUNG RUNNER, 24, sweating through a
legal visit.

The runner slides over a folded note.

Rusty opens it.

Reads.

No reaction.

RUNNER
They moved him fast. Federal.
No trail yet.

Rusty folds the note with surgical precision.

RUSTY
There is always a trail.

The runner swallows.

Rusty looks up at the crucifix.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
Men don't change.

He rises.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
Find what they dressed him as.

The runner doesn't move. Rusty turns.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
Today.

INT. ST. MICHAEL'S RECTORY KITCHEN - DAY

Daylight. Monday.

Father Ross stands over a coffee, eyes bloodshot, smoking.

MRS. ELAINE LYONS, 63, the church secretary, enters.

The kind of woman who has kept the parish functioning through six pastors, three scandals, and one roof fund.

She clocks the cigarette.

ELAINE
That'll kill you.

Ross exhales slowly.

FATHER ROSS
So I've been told.

ELAINE
Your nine o'clock is here. George Miles.

She turns to go.

FATHER ROSS
Who's George Miles?

Ross draws deep on the cigarette.

Smoke slips out through his nose.

ELAINE
Your Parish Life Coordinator.

A beat.

ELAINE (CONT'D)
Try not to let him coordinate you.

She exits.

Ross watches the smoke curl through the kitchen.

INT. ST. MICHAEL'S RECTORY - MEETING ROOM - DAY

GEORGE MILES, 47, thick white hair, a little overweight, eager in the way men who survive by being useful often are. Stands as FATHER Ross enters.

George offers a hand.

GEORGE
Father Ross. Good to meet you.

Ross looks at the white hair.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Premature white. Happened when I
was twenty-three. Car accident.
Scared the devil out of me.

Ross says nothing. Sits.

George slowly lowers his hand.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
George Miles. Parish Life
Coordinator.

A beat.

FATHER ROSS
Meaning.

GEORGE
I handle what you don't.

Ross opens a ledger on the table.

Scans.

Stops.

FATHER ROSS
Why did you pay yourself \$20,000
last month?

George blinks.

GEORGE
There must be some mistake--

FATHER ROSS

No. The mistake was thinking no one would look.

George shifts.

GEORGE

It was temporary. A bookkeeping issue. I can explain--

FATHER ROSS

You can return it.

George stares at him.

GEORGE

Father, that may not be possible.

Ross looks up now.

Still. Direct.

FATHER ROSS

Today. Three o'clock.

A beat.

Ross takes out a cigarette. Lights it.

Draws in. Lets the silence work.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)

You're sweating, George.

George wipes his forehead, realizing too late that he is.

George glances down -- sees the edge of Ross's tattoo at the cuff.

GOD WON'T SAVE YOU.

Ross notices George noticing.

FATHER ROSS

Put it back by three. Then we can discuss confession.

Ross stands.

George panics.

GEORGE

Father Ross--

Ross turns.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
What's your background?

Ross studies him for one cold beat.

FATHER ROSS
The kind that notices.

Ross exits.

George sits there, breathing hard.

Then snatches out his phone.

GEORGE
(into phone)
I need twenty grand by this
afternoon. Cash.
Don't ask questions.
We got a problem at church.

INT. RECTORY KITCHEN - DAY

Father Ross pours coffee.

Elaine enters with a clipboard.

ELAINE
Father Ross, you have the noon
Mass.

FATHER ROSS
Already?

ELAINE
It happens every day around then.

Ross looks at her.

FATHER ROSS
Every day?

ELAINE
Weekdays at noon. Saturday at four.
Sunday at eight-thirty, eleven, and
six.

Ross absorbs that.

FATHER ROSS
That's a lot of guilt.

Elaine smirks.

ELAINE
We prefer "guidance."

Ross nods, looks around, thinking.

FATHER ROSS
How far is Gulfstream?

Elaine clocks him.

ELAINE
The casino?

FATHER ROSS
Do I look like I gamble?

ELAINE
You look like you used to.

A beat.

Ross almost smiles.

FATHER ROSS
I'm looking for lost souls.

Elaine studies him for a moment.

ELAINE
Father Ross... we're all betting on
you.

Ross looks at her.

FATHER ROSS
Long shot.

Elaine takes his coffee.

Then the cigarette.

Disposes of both.

ELAINE
Gulfstream fifty minutes. Noon Mass
is in ten.

She exits.

Ross looks at the empty spot where his cigarette was.

Then at the clock.

FATHER ROSS
(under his breath)
Christ.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - MID-AFTERNOON

Father Ross sits with a large iced coffee.

Sweat on the glass.

Rafael enters.

Scans the room.

He orders.

Comes over.

Sits.

They look at each other.

Silence.

RAFAEL
You adjusting?

Ross nods.

Sips his coffee.

Doesn't break eye contact.

RAFAEL (CONT'D)
You playing by the rules?

Ross doesn't answer.

Just watches him.

RAFAEL (CONT'D)
You gonna make me do all the
talking?

FATHER ROSS
I let the sinner confess.
(then)
Then we decide what to do about it.

Rafael studies him.

Not amused.

RAFAEL
How's celibacy?

Ross leans back slightly.

Takes another sip.

FATHER ROSS
Long fast...

A beat.

He sets the cup down.

Condensation ring forming.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
For a man who used to eat well.

A beat.

They lock eyes.

Something shifts.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
I'm getting used to the hunger.

Silence.

Rafael glances at the cup.

The condensation slowly drips down the side.

He reaches out- wipes it with his thumb. Not looking at Ross.

RAFAEL
Careful. Hunger like that never
stays quiet.

Rafael stands.

He leaves.

Ross watches him go.

Then, finally exhales.

At a nearby table --

TWO RETIREES talk over coffee.

RETIREE #1
Blackjack comp rooms are back.

RETIREE #2
Only if you know when to go.

Ross hears it.

His eyes drift.

Then --

Ross grabs the untouched coffee.

Heads for the door.

INT. RECTORY - EVENING

A knock.

Father Ross opens the door.

MIAMI ARCH BISHOP THOMAS KELLY, 60s, silver-haired, warm-eyed, expensive in a modest way, stands there with a soft smile and a hard gaze.

BISHOP KELLY
Father Ross White. I thought I
should come see for myself what
Providence dropped into my parish.

FATHER ROSS
Your Excellency.

Ross steps aside.

The Bishop enters, taking in everything in one sweep:
the room, the order, the man.

He extends his hand -- expecting the ring kiss.

Ross looks at it. A beat.

Then gives him a firm handshake.

The Bishop registers that.

BISHOP KELLY
I do apologize for the surprise.
Sudden transitions make me uneasy.

FATHER ROSS
They make everybody uneasy.

A beat.

The Bishop smiles at that.

BISHOP KELLY
Father Gilbert spoke warmly of the
people here. He did not, however,
tell me I'd be inheriting a
mystery.

FATHER ROSS
I wasn't aware I was one.

BISHOP KELLY
Late vocation. Billings. Marines.
Boxing. Boca Raton.

A pleasant smile.

BISHOP KELLY (CONT'D)
Forgive me. I do admire God's
imagination.

Ross holds the smile, just barely.

FATHER ROSS
Bishop, powerful institutions
prefer patterns. God is usually the
one blamed when something doesn't
fit.

Now the Bishop really looks at him.

BISHOP KELLY
St. Michael's is a generous parish.
Generous people can become...
possessive.

FATHER ROSS
In my experience, people don't give
for free.

The Bishop lets that sit.

BISHOP KELLY
Foster care.

No reaction from Ross. The Bishop looks, questions.

FATHER ROSS
Yes? We all come from somewhere.

Ross stands.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
I have obligations.

BISHOP KELLY
Really? I'd love to see my new
priest in action.

FATHER ROSS
Another time.

Ross heads for the door, opening it for him.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
Elaine will find a place for you on
the calendar.

The Bishop doesn't move yet.

BISHOP KELLY
You're not what I expected.

Ross meets his eyes.

FATHER ROSS
Neither is St. Michael.

A beat.

The Bishop smiles again -- this time smaller.

BISHOP KELLY
Everything unusual reaches me
eventually.

He exits.

Ross closes the door.

EXT. BOCA RATON ALLEY - EARLY EVENING

Dim service lights. Humid air. The distant wash of traffic.

FATHER Ross rounds the corner and stops.

WILL, 16, a kid from the parish, is pinned against the wall
by an OLDER THUG, 20s, wiry, mean, one fist twisted in Will's
shirt.

Will's fear is trying hard to look like defiance.

THUG

You think you can steal from me and walk?

FATHER ROSS

(easy)

Let him go.

The thug turns. Sees the collar. Laughs.

THUG

Ain't your business, Father.

Ross clocks everything:

the hand position, the angle, Will's split lip,
the twitch in the thug's jaw.

FATHER ROSS

It is now.

Ross rolls one sleeve.

THUG

Who the hell made you the boss?

Ross rolls the other.

FATHER ROSS

Last time. Let him go.

THUG

Go back to your church. Bet you're like the rest of them.

FATHER ROSS

Careful.

(to Will)

Go.

Will hesitates.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)

Go.

Will slips free and backs to the mouth of the alley --
but doesn't leave.

THUG

Kid owes me.

FATHER ROSS
Then you can take it up with me.

The thug grins. Starts toward Ross.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
Back off.

The grin fades.

THUG
Or what?

FATHER ROSS
You don't want this.

A SWITCHBLADE glistens.

The thug lunges.

Fast. Ugly.

Ross redirects the arm, shoves him off-line, locks the wrist -

The thug comes again.

Rafael enters the alley.

RAFAEL
Mark!

Ross sweeps him back.

The thug stumbles, slams hard against the metal edge of a dumpster --

the back of his skull CRACKS.

Stillness.

Will freezes.

Ross freezes too.

Then drops to his knees beside the thug.

FATHER ROSS
Hey. Hey.

He checks for a pulse. Blood seeping through his fingers.

Rafael steps in.

RAFAEL
What did you just do?

Ross doesn't answer.

Still trying to revive the thug.

FATHER ROSS
Come on—

Nothing.

Rafael looks down.

Then at Ross.

A beat.

RAFAEL
He's gone.

Ross freezes.

Then he senses someone watching.

He turns.

Will stands at the mouth of the alley, pale, stunned.

Ross and Will lock eyes.

In Will's face: fear, awe, confusion, and gratitude.

In Ross's: a warning. A plea. A secret.

No words.

WILL
Father Ross.

FATHER ROSS
You okay?

WILL
Yeah. Yeah, I'm fine.

FATHER ROSS
No, you're not. Try again.

RAFAEL
Kid.

Will looks at him.

RAFAEL (CONT'D)
You didn't see anything.

WILL
I called 911.

A beat.

Rafael exhales.

RAFAEL
Of course you did.

Sirens in the distance, getting closer.

Ross keeps his eyes on Will. He motions for Will to go. Will doesn't move.

Ross snaps his fingers once -- low, urgent.

Will finally backs away and disappears.

RAFAEL (CONT'D)
I'll handle this.

Ross looks at him.

INT. STATE PRISON - COMMON AREA - NIGHT

Muted chaos. Cards. Shouting. Metal tables.

On a mounted TV -- LOCAL NEWS.

NEWS ANCHOR (ON TV)
This just in out of Boca Raton -- a local priest is being hailed as a hero after stepping in during an assault involving a teenage boy in a downtown alley.

Rusty looks up.

On screen: shaky cell footage. Flashing lights. POLICE TAPE.

NEWS ANCHOR (ON TV) (CONT'D)
The alleged attacker later died at the scene from blunt force trauma. Witnesses say the priest attempted to render aid before officers arrived.

A photo flashes up:

FATHER ROSS WHITE in collar, half-turned.

Then --

A zoomed shot of his forearm.

The tattoo.

GOD WON'T SAVE YOU.

Rusty goes very still.

A beat.

He reaches into his tray.

An orange.

A small, dull plastic knife.

He begins to peel it.

Slow.

Precise.

The blade slides just under the skin.

NEWS ANCHOR (ON TV)

The phrase, now spreading across
social media, has already sparked
debate --

Rusty doesn't blink.

Peel spiraling.

Unbroken.

RUSTY

There you are.

He finishes the peel.

Perfect.

Holds it in his hand.

Then--

drops it.

Stands.

The room shifts.

No one speaks.

Rusty turns and walks toward a PRISON GUARD near the exit.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
I need a phone.

GUARD
Get in line.

Rusty steps close.

No rush.

RUSTY
Wrong answer.

The guard smirks—

Rusty buries a punch in his gut. The guard folds.

A vicious uppercut splits his lip.

Rusty catches him before he hits the floor.

Still controlled. Still calm.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
I won't ask again.

The guard nods.

Rusty releases him.

Rusty walks him out.

Behind them—

the orange peel rests on the metal table.

Long. Unbroken.

EXT. ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH - COURTYARD - DAY

Mass has just let out.

Parishioners stream through the courtyard, greeting FATHER Ross, who stands at the doors shaking hands, offering smiles, blessings, and practiced warmth.

Then he sees him.

RAFAEL MARTINEZ -- linen shirt, tailored slacks, expensive loafers, Ray-Bans, Boca ease with federal eyes underneath.

Rafael steps into line.

RAFAEL
I'd like to make a donation.

GEORGE, 47, parish bulldog in a polo shirt and church badge, appears instantly.

GEORGE
I can take care of that.

Ross looks at George.

FATHER ROSS
It's all right, George.

A beat.

George doesn't love it, but backs off.

Ross leads Rafael toward the side courtyard, out of earshot.

RAFAEL
You were supposed to stay quiet.

Ross says nothing.

RAFAEL (CONT'D)
You killed a man.

FATHER ROSS
I told him to walk away.

Rafael studies him.

RAFAEL
That isn't what I said.

FATHER ROSS
He was working over a kid from my parish.

RAFAEL
So now we're freelancing?

FATHER ROSS
So now I'm doing the job.

Rafael takes off the sunglasses.

RAFAEL

Your job is to disappear. Not make
the six o'clock news with a dead
body and a tattoo.

Ross doesn't blink.

FATHER ROSS

Then stop putting me in rooms full
of the desperate and acting
surprised when I notice.

RAFAEL

You don't get heroic on me. Heroes
get remembered.

FATHER ROSS

He was sixteen.

Rafael stares at him.

INT. SACRISTY - MOMENTS LATER

DAVID MILLER, 14, altar boy, hurriedly hangs vestments.

Father Ross enters.

FATHER ROSS

David. You were late on the bells.

DAVID

Sorry, Father. I was thinking.

FATHER ROSS

I noticed.

David keeps working.

The door opens.

DAVID MILLER SR., 45, firm, military bearing.

DAVID SR.

Junior. Let's go.

Ross clocks the tone instantly.

FATHER ROSS

What branch?

DAVID SR.

Marines.

FATHER ROSS
Thought so.

A beat. Respect recognized.

DAVID SR.
Iraq. '07.

FATHER ROSS
You did your time.

David Sr. softens slightly.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
I need a few minutes with your son.
Church business.

DAVID SR.
Junior? Talking? Good luck.
(then, to David)
And get your grades up. The car's
running. You got 5-minutes.

He exits.

Silence.

Ross waits.

FATHER ROSS
You ok?

DAVID
When did you know?

Ross studies him.

FATHER ROSS
Do they?

DAVID
God, I hope not.

A beat.

DAVID (CONT'D)
He'd kill me.

INT. RECTORY KITCHEN - DAY

SUPER:

SATURDAY - 2:00 PM

Elaine enters.

Father Ross stands with his back to her in a faded black T-shirt.

He turns.

Across his chest:

LEAVE THE GUN, TAKE THE CANNOLI.

Elaine just stares.

Ross notices.

Doesn't care.

ELAINE
They're waiting.

He checks his watch.

FATHER ROSS
It's two.
Mass is at four.

ELAINE
Confession is at two.

FATHER ROSS
Jesus.
All you people do is sin around
here.

Elaine doesn't blink.

Ross grabs a half-eaten pastry.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
Though your sins are like scarlet-

He heads for the door.

ELAINE
Father Ross.

Gestures to shirt

Ross takes another bite.

FATHER ROSS
(with a mouthful of
pastry)
Relax, Elaine.
It'll be under the alb.
They won't see a thing.

INT. CONFSSIONAL - CONTINUOUS

The room is tight. Smells of old wood and Lorraine's aggressive perfume.

Ross sits, his stole barely covering the "Leave the Gun" logo on his chest. He looks at Lorraine. Legs crossed, a stiletto dangling.

LORRAINE
Forgive me, Father. It's been... a
very long time.

Ross leans back. He doesn't look like a shepherd; he looks like a man scanning for a wire. She notices the t-shirt. Smirks.

FATHER ROSS
Skip the preamble.

He makes the sign of the Cross.

She barely follows.

LORRAINE
(A feline smile)
You look like you've handled more
than rosaries.

FATHER ROSS
State your sins, Lorraine. We got a
line outside.

LORRAINE
My sin? I have... impure thoughts.

She leans forward. His gaze is a dead bolt.

FATHER ROSS
Lust is a lack of imagination. It's
boring.

LORRAINE
So I'm boring you?

Ross leans in, his voice dropping to a gravelly threat.

FATHER ROSS

The man you're looking for died a long time ago.

LORRAINE

So what's it going to be? Ten Hail Mary's?

Lorraine stands, smoothing her skirt.

FATHER ROSS

And stop cheating at Bingo. You don't need the money.

LORRAINE

But I do like to win, Father.

Lorraine exits, the click of her stilettos echoing like a countdown.

FATHER ROSS

One down.

Ross lets out a breath he didn't know he was holding.

He tugs at the Roman collar—it looks like it's choking him. He glances down, adjusting the stole to better hide the "Cannoli" line on his shirt.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)

(Sotto voce, to himself)

Face-to-face.

Might as well paint a target on the chair.

He hits the buzzer for the next "penitent."

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)

(Voice raised, back to 'Priest' mode)

Next. Come in.

A man enters. VINNY "THE VULTURE" CAPUTO (50s). Cheap silk suit, smelling of menthols and desperation. He doesn't sit. He paces the three feet of available space.

VINNY

Forgive me, Father. It's been... since I got out of Rahway.

Ross freezes.

Rahway. New Jersey.

His posture changes.

FATHER ROSS
 (A voice like cold
 concrete)
 You're a long way from the Jersey
 Turnpike, Vinny.

The man stops pacing. He looks at the back of Ross's head, squinting through the dim light.

VINNY
 How'd you—? (shakes his head)

Vinny pulls out a cigarette. Goes to light it. Ross looks. Eyebrow goes up. Vinny puts the smoke behind his ear.

Look, I did something. Something
 bad.
 I was collecting from a jeweler in
 Highland Beach.
 He came up short.
 I lost my temper.

FATHER ROSS
 You lost your temper or you did
 your job?

VINNY
 (Voice trembling)
 He's in a dumpster behind a Publix.
 I got followed.

Ross closes his eyes.

He knows exactly what this is.

FATHER ROSS
 (Leaning in, dangerous)
 "The wicked flee when no man
 pursueth: but the righteous are
 bold as a lion." Proverbs 28:1.

VINNY
 What's that mean?

FATHER ROSS
 Lions are coming for you. You
 didn't come here for forgiveness.
 You came here for a place to hide.

Ross turns his head just enough for Vinny to see the sharp, lethal edge of his profile.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
Get out. If I see you back here,
this lion is gonna roar.

Vinny doesn't argue. He bolts.

Ross stands up, ripping the stole off. He looks at his watch.
2:15 PM.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
Jesus, give me strength.

He scoffs at himself.

INT. CONFSSIONAL - MOMENTS LATER

The door clicks shut. DAVID SR. sits. The silence is heavy,
mechanical.

DAVID SR.
Forgive me, Father. It's been... a
month.

Ross doesn't answer immediately. He's looking at his own
hands, scarred and steady.

FATHER ROSS
A month. A lot can happen in thirty
days, David. How's the boy?

A beat of silence. David Sr. shifts. The wood creaks.

DAVID SR.
He's soft, Father. I'm trying to
forge something there, but the
metal... It's flawed.

David gets up.

DAVID SR. (CONT'D)
God, it's hot in here.

FATHER ROSS
So is hell.

DAVID SR.
I find myself losing my patience.
Disciplining him.
Harder than I should.

FATHER ROSS
(Cold, level)
"Harder than you should" is a wide
zip code. You leaving marks, David?

DAVID SR.
(Sharply)
I'm trying to make him a man. You
wouldn't know about that.

FATHER ROSS
You'd be surprised what I know.

DAVID SR.
The world out there? It eats kids
like him. I'm just preparing him
for the fight.

Ross leans forward.

FATHER ROSS
The kid wants your attention.

David sits. Ross sits.

DAVID SR.
(Defensive)
I'm doing my best. He's... different.
He's heading down a path I can't
follow.

FATHER ROSS
(A dangerous whisper)
Right now, you're the only monster
he's afraid of.

DAVID SR.
You don't understand. You're a
priest. You have no idea what it's
like to try to straighten a bent
nail.

FLASH of the silencer twisting and the Act of Contrition.

BANG.

FATHER ROSS
I've seen what happens when you hit
them too hard.
They don't get straight.

Ross leans even closer, his face shadowed, his eyes like
flint.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
Your penance isn't prayers.
You go home.
You listen.
And if you break that boy --
you're not a soldier.
You're a bully.

DAVID SR.
(Stunned)
Father.

FATHER ROSS
Act of Contrition. Say it. Own it.

David leaves.

Ross breathes deep.

INT. CONFESSIONAL - CONTINUOUS

Dim light through wood slats.

Ross sits still.

A beat.

He reaches into his pocket.

Pulls out a card.

RAFAEL MARTINEZ

Life Coach

954-426-3537

He turns it between his fingers.

Studies it.

A faint smirk- then gone.

The door opens.

Rafael enters.

No prayer. Just presence.

He sits.

RAFAEL
Forgive me, Father.

Another beat.

RAFAEL (CONT'D)
(low and gravel)
For I know *exactly* what you've been
doing.

Ross doesn't turn.

FATHER ROSS
This is for confession. Not
surveillance.

RAFAEL
Then call it disappointment.
Brightline to Miami. Brickell.
Tables you shouldn't be near. Do
you want to be found?

Ross exhales.

He loosens the collar slightly.

Just a fraction.

FATHER ROSS
A man needs air.

RAFAEL
The collar is the only thing
keeping you breathing.
And Vinny?

Ross turns now.

Eyes sharp.

FATHER ROSS
He brought heat to my door.

RAFAEL
You're not a boss anymore.
You're a shepherd. Not a lion.

Silence.

Rafael leans closer.

RAFAEL (CONT'D)
Start acting like one.

A long beat.

Rafael taps the divider.

Once.

Twice.

He stands.

RAFAEL (CONT'D)

Fix it.

Stops.

Turns back.

RAFAEL (CONT'D)

I'll be out there.

A thin smile.

RAFAEL (CONT'D)

Let's see what you have to say
about mercy.

He exits.

The door THUDS.

Silence.

Ross sits there, breathing.

FATHER ROSS

(quiet)

Deliver me from the violent man.

He looks down.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)

Problem is, I'm both.

INT ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH - THE SERMON

Ross scans the room. His eyes land on the Miller family.
David Sr. is stone-faced. Beside him, David Jr. slowly unzips
his windbreaker.

Underneath, the boy isn't wearing a Sunday polo. He's wearing
the black T-shirt with the jagged white text: GOD WON'T SAVE
YOU.

The boy's eyes are wide, terrified. He's looking at Ross like a plea for help—or a warning.

Lorraine's hungry gaze, and Rafael in the back, arms crossed, a shark in a suit.

Ross grips the edges of the lectern. His knuckles are white.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
"Lazarus, come out."

He lets the command hang in the air. His voice is low, carrying the gravel of a Jersey cigarette.

FLASHBACK: Tyrone's blood seeping onto the floor.

BACK TO PRESENT

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
Imagine being that guy.
Four days in the dark.

The congregation looks around.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
Then you hear a voice calling you
back.

He locks eyes with Rafael.

RUSTY (V.O.)
You can't outrun your past.

FATHER ROSS
Everyone thinks the miracle is that
he lived.

The congregation starts to hush-chatter.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
I think the miracle is that he
didn't run back into the cave.

He glances at David Jr., then back to the congregation.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
The Gospel doesn't tell us what
Lazarus did the next day.

David Sr. and Ross lock eyes.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
I'll bet you he spent every night
looking over his shoulder,
wondering when the stone was gonna
roll back into place.

He leans in, his shadow stretching over the front pews.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
Because once you've been on the
other side... you realize the only
thing harder than dying... is
staying "forgiven" in a world that
never forgets a debt.

His sleeve slips back.

The ink stark against the white fabric.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
You see this?
It was written by a man who didn't
believe. Who thought the cave was
the only home he'd ever have.

He looks directly at David Jr.—a silent promise of
protection.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
But the miracle isn't being saved.
The miracle is having the guts to
save someone else and keep living.

He looks to Rafael.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
God help you if you don't save each
other.

FADE TO BLACK.

SFX THE SOUND OF THE HEAVY CLICK OF A HANDGUN.

EXT. ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH - RECEIVING LINE - CONTINUOUS

Father Ross shakes hands as parishioners file past.

DAVID JR. and DAVID SR. step up.

Ross clocks the GOD WON'T SAVE YOU shirt under David's
jacket.

FATHER ROSS
Interesting shirt.

David, Sr, plants a hand firmly on the back of young David's neck.

David Sr. smiles, oblivious or pretending to be.

DAVID SR.
Father, we're doing a little
cookout tonight.
Nothing fancy.
You should come by.

Ross looks from father to son.

FATHER ROSS
Sure. I'll bring a watermelon.

David Jr. glances up -- grateful, worried.

They move on.

Rafael steps into line.

RAFAEL
Strong sermon, Father.

Ross shakes his hand.

SFX: Church bells bleed into the metallic CLANG of the prison yard.

EXT. PRISON YARD - DAY

Rusty racks dumbbells. Sweat. Veins. Control.

Around him, conversation dies.

A GUARD approaches.

GUARD
Jordan. Warden wants you. Now.

Rusty sets the weights down.

He follows the guard.

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

WARDEN JEFF STONE, 60s, hard-built, green-eyed, stands at the window overlooking the yard.

Rusty enters.

The guard stays at the door.

Stone keeps looking outside.

WARDEN
I don't like you, Sam Jordan.

RUSTY
It's Rusty.

Stone turns.

WARDEN
Not in here.

A beat.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
Somebody with reach wants you
moved.
I said no.
Then I saw the number.

Rusty says nothing.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
You're being transferred. Paul
Rein. Pompano Beach, Florida. One
week.

The first flicker in Rusty.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
Fifty thousand.
Two days.
Buy yourself sunshine.

RUSTY
For what.

WARDEN
For air.
For grass.
For the privilege of arriving
alive.

A beat.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
You pay me, you travel.
You don't, you disappear in Texas.

Rusty turns to leave.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
Jordan.

Rusty stops.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
Don't make me repeat myself in my
own office.

A beat.

Rusty exits.

INT. ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH BASEMENT - NIGHT

Fluorescent lights hum.

Half-eaten donuts.

A FUN FAIR poster with a badly drawn chicken.

At the table:

MRS. GABLE, 70s, parish royalty.

TONY, 40s, tracksuit contractor swagger.

SARAH, 30s, drowning in clipboards.

SARAH
The choir girls wanna know if
Father White's doing the dunk tank.

TONY
Of course they do.

SARAH
Tony—

TONY
I'd pay twenty bucks for three
throws.

MRS. GABLE
He is a priest.

TONY
He's a priest with shoulders.

SARAH
And a tattoo.

MRS. GABLE
You don't know that.

TONY
I can read upside down.

SARAH
I thought it was a cross.

TONY
It's a threat.

MRS. GABLE
The children adore him.

TONY
Children adore fire trucks too.

SARAH
Bishop's office says he came from
Orlando.

TONY
My cousin says sealed file.

MRS. GABLE
Your cousin sells ketamine.

TONY
And yet he's rarely wrong.

SARAH
Mrs. Higgins saw a man leave the
rectory at three A.M.

MRS. GABLE
Mrs. Higgins sees lust in weather
patterns.

TONY
Twenty bucks. Three throws. Or
fifteen minutes in the--

The door CLICKS open.

Silence.

Father Ross stands there.

Taking in the room.

TONY (CONT'D)
(flat)
Confessional.

One eyebrow rises.

Nobody breathes.

FATHER ROSS
I hope I'm not interrupting
Christian charity.

Nobody moves.

In the distance --

A CAR BACKFIRES.

Ross's eyes flick instantly to the exit.

Tony catches it.

Their eyes hold.

TONY
Father Ross, will you be dealing at
the card table.

FATHER ROSS
My son, never let the devil gamble
alone.
Now back to your confession.

MRS. GABLE
I know what you are.

FATHER ROSS
That makes one of us.

FADE OUT.

INT. LOCAL APARTMENT - BOCA RATON - NIGHT

Low light. Quiet hum of the AC.

RAFAEL sits at the kitchen table in a black T-shirt and shorts, barefoot, a file open in front of him.

A half-empty bottle of vodka.

A rocks glass with lime and melting ice sweats onto the wood.

STEVE, 35, tan, thick through the chest, shirtless, a PUERTO RICO star tattoo on his left pec, leans in the doorway.

He knows this mood. Hates this mood.

STEVE

Papi. You need to relax.

No response.

Steve crosses to the table, glances at the paperwork, reaches for the file.

Rafael takes it from his hand without looking up.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Who is this guy?

Rafael says nothing.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Because I already hate him.

A beat.

RAFAEL

You should go.

STEVE

Come to bed.

RAFAEL

No.

Steve studies him. Message received.

STEVE

You only look at files like that
when you wanna sleep with the
problem.

That's how you found me.

He grabs a shirt. Pulls on sneakers.

Then sunglasses -- at night.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Fine. I'm gonna go find trouble.

He heads out.

The door shuts.

Rafael sits there one more beat, staring at the file.

Then he throws on a shirt, grabs his keys, and goes.

MONTAGE - THE DISTANCE CLOSES

-- INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

A duffel bag opens.

Stacks of cash.

Warden Stone says nothing.

Just counts.

-- EXT. PRISON TRANSFER BAY - PRE-DAWN

Rusty is shackled hand and foot.

Escorted by ARMED OFFICERS in body armor.

He moves with eerie calm.

-- INT. ARMORED TRANSPORT - MOVING

Rusty sits caged behind reinforced mesh.

Expressionless.

Like a king.

-- EXT. TEXAS INTERSTATE - DAWN

The transport tears down the highway.

ON SCREEN: 1267 MILES TO BOCA RATON, FL

-- INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - LATER

Stone at his desk.

Phone buzzes.

A text:

PAID.
NO LOOSE ENDS.

Stone Smiles.

The guard from before enters.

Gun already drawn.

A muted POP.

Stone slumps forward into the cash.

-- EXT. BOCA RATON - NIGHT

Rafael's car sits across from the rectory.

Engine off.

Watching.

-- INT. RECTORY - FATHER ROSS'S ROOM - NIGHT

Ross drops for pushups.

Slow. Controlled. Punishing.

-- A row of saint cards on the dresser.

St. Michael.

St. Jude.

St. Sebastian.

-- Ross at his desk, sweating through a white undershirt,
writing in a legal pad: "Forgiveness is not forgetting."

He crosses it out.

-- Outside, in the car, Rafael watches the lit window.

-- Inside, Ross stops writing.

Looks up at the saints.

Like he's waiting for one of them to answer.

Flashback to Mark the silencer threading on a gun.

END MONTAGE

INT. MILLER HOUSEHOLD KITCHEN - MORNING

David Sr. stands at the stove making pancakes.

Too carefully.

DAVID SR.
David. Lois. Breakfast.

David Jr. and LOIS MILLER, 44, enter.

They stop.

Dad plates pancakes. Kitchen towel over shoulder.

Nobody speaks.

DAVID SR. (CONT'D)
Easy.
Dave, grab the OJ.
Lois, I forgot napkins.
We're eating outside.

He lifts the plates.

Trying to make it look normal.

Heads toward the pool.

DAVID
Who is that?

LOIS
(softly)
The man I married.

A beat.

LOIS (CONT'D)
Sometimes.

They follow outside.

DAVID SR. (O.S.)
I thought we'd take the Brightline
to Miami.

DAVID (O.S.)
Why?

DAVID SR. (O.S.)
Because I should've asked sooner.

A beat.

DAVID SR. (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Science museum. Beach. Whatever you
want.

LOIS (O.S.)
You made protein pancakes?

DAVID SR. (O.S.)
Internet said boys need fuel.

DAVID
I'm right here.

A small laugh.

Real.

Fragile.

Sunlight glistens off the pool.

EXT. REST STOP - I-10 - DAY

The sun glares off Rusty's sunglasses.

He smiles.

Looks down at the handcuffs.

Leg chains.

CLINK.

He climbs back into the transport.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A white FEDERAL TRANSPORT VAN barrels down an isolated, pitch-black stretch of highway.

INT. TRANSPORT VAN - CONTINUOUS

RUSTY JORDAN sits in the rear cage, completely still despite the vibrating steel. Shackles clink against his ankles.

Up front, OFFICER TRAVIS grips the steering wheel. His knuckles are white. He looks in the rearview mirror, checking the headlights of the FBI CHASE CAR trailing fifty yards behind them.

Travis reaches down and flips a hidden toggle switch under the dash.

Under the hood, the engine COUGHS. Smoke billows from the vents.

TRAVIS
(into radio)
Transport One to Chase Control.
We've got a blown head gasket.
Losing oil pressure fast. Pulling
over at mile marker 42.

EXT. HIGHWAY 287 - CONTINUOUS

The transport van screeches to a halt on the dark shoulder. The FBI chase car pulls up behind it. Two ARMED MARSHALS step out, flashlights cutting through the smoke.

Travis steps out of the driver's seat, lifting the hood.

Suddenly, a blacked-out SUV roars from the tree line with NO HEADLIGHTS.

Before the Marshals can draw their weapons—MUZZLE FLASHES illuminate the dark. SILENCED GUNSHOTS punch through the air. The two Marshals drop into the gravel.

Travis freezes, hands in the air.

A HEAVY-SET MOB THUG steps out of the SUV, holding a smoking pistol and a pair of heavy bolt cutters. He moves straight to the back of the transport van, wrenches the door open, and cuts Rusty's main cage chain.

Rusty steps out into the night air. He looks at Travis, who is trembling.

TRAVIS
(pleading)
You said my family would be safe,
Rusty. We had a deal.

RUSTY
They are safe. But a deal requires
a clean slate.

Rusty calmly takes the pistol from the thug and fires ONE SHOT. Travis drops.

Keys. Chains drops. Cuffs fall.

Rusty tosses the gun into the weeds, steps into the passenger seat of the black SUV, and slams the door. The SUV guns its engine, vanishing into the night.

FADE TO BLACK.

ROAD SIGN:

FLORIDA STATE LINE - 40 MILES

Tires spin.

Wheels turn.

INT. FBI FIELD OFFICE - MIAMI - DAY

The bullpen hums with keyboards and low chatter.

AGENT JENNIFER CONNERS (30s, sharp, exhausted, sleeves rolled up) stands before a white board pinned with surveillance photos of SAM "RUSTY" JORDAN.

AGENT RAFAEL (40s, holding a paper coffee cup) approaches her.

RAFAEL

Texas Highway Patrol just found the transport van outside Fort Worth. Officer Travis and two of our Marshals are dead on the shoulder.

Jennifer stiffens. Her jaw tightens. She moves to the desk, ripping open the folder. Her eyes scan the forensic photos of the bloody highway.

JENNIFER

It wasn't a standard prison break. Look at the casing patterns. This was an ambush execution. Rusty didn't slip through a crack, Rafael. He bought an inside man and erased the evidence.

RAFAEL

Dallas Field Office thinks he's heading south to the border. They're locking down Laredo.

JENNIFER

No. He's not running. Rusty doesn't run, he settles scores. Who is the highest-value asset he has left on the board?

RAFAEL

Mark Devon. But Devon's deep in the wind. Witness Protection scrubbed him clean.

Jennifer traces her finger down a map of the Gulf Coast, stopping directly on the state of Florida.

JENNIFER

The transport van was abandoned, but state troopers flagged a stolen black SUV hitting the I-10 corridor six hours ago. He's tracking Devon. And if Rusty finds him before we do, our star witness is a corpse.

Jennifer grabs her badge and service weapon from the desk.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Get local field offices on standby in Jacksonville, Orlando, and Miami. I'm getting on a plane.

Plane wheels landing merge into a roulette wheel spinning.

FLASH CUT TO:

A roulette wheel spinning at the FUN FAIR.

FLASH CUT

Roulette wheel turning at FUN FAIR.

INT. ST. MICHAEL'S GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

FUN FAIR in full swing.

Popcorn.

Wine.

Money.

A neon sign glows:

FATHER ROSS'S CASINO NIGHT TEXAS HOLD 'EM

Behind a curtain --

Father Ross stands alone at a green felt table.

Clerical shirt.

Roman collar.

Looks more pit boss than priest.

He cracks a fresh deck.

FATHER ROSS
(under breath)
Where your treasure is...

ON SCREEN: Matthew 6:21

He shuffles one-handed.

Fast.

Too fast.

ELAINE enters with a cash box.

ELAINE
Slow down, Father.
You'll scare the retirees.

Ross shuffles.

ELAINE (CONT'D)
George Miles is here.
Brought developers from Brickell.

FATHER ROSS
Then let's hear confessions.

She clocks him. Exits.

Ross buttons his cuff tight.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
Let's see who's betting on
miracles.

He pulls the curtain.

ROAR of the fair.

CUT TO:

The table packed.

Ross deals.

Never looks at the cards.

Only the players.

DAVID SR. bloodshot, rigid.

GEORGE sweating through his polo.

BRICKELL MEN looking cool.

RAFAEL in shadow, watching.

Ross burns a card.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
Check or bet, George?

GEORGE
Five hundred.
For the roof fund.

FATHER ROSS
Roof's been paid for three times.

George freezes.

Ross turns to David Sr.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
Pair of Jacks.

DAVID SR.
You don't know what I've got.

FATHER ROSS
I know exactly what you've got.

David Sr. folds.

Gets up.

Leaves.

Ross flips the river.

ACE OF DIAMONDS.

He reaches over.

Turns George's hand face-up.

Nothing.

FATHER ROSS
King high.
Pay penance.

He drags the pot.

George bolts.

Rafael steps forward.

RAFAEL
You're getting sloppy.

People see the ink.

FATHER ROSS
Let them.
Maybe fear finally found a church.

EXT. ST. MICHAEL'S PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Luxury SUVs.

Minivans.

The distant music of the Fun Fair.

Father Ross stands near the rectory door.

Lights a cigarette.

DAVID SR. (O.S.)
You think you're a man wearing that
trash?

DAVID JR. (O.S.)
It's just a shirt--

SLAP.

THUD.

DAVID SR. (O.S.)
Get up.

Ross moves.

Rounds a Tahoe.

David Jr. curled on the pavement.

Oil on the GOD WON'T SAVE YOU shirt.

David Sr. looming over him.

Belt in hand.

FATHER ROSS
The boy's right.
God won't save you.

David Sr. turns.

DAVID SR.
Stay out of this.
Family business.

FATHER ROSS

Guess I'm part of the family as of right now.

David Sr. swings.

Ross slips it.

KNEE to the gut.

David folds.

Ross drives him into the Tahoe.

Forearm across throat.

His sleeve rides up.

GOD WON'T SAVE YOU.

FATHER ROSS
You touch him again—
you disappear.
Do you understand me?

David Sr. nods, choking.

Ross lets go.

David collapses.

Ross turns.

Offers David Jr. a hand. The boy takes it.

FADE OUT.

INT. ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH - RECEIVING LINE - DAY

Father Ross greets parishioners as they file past.

Smiles. Handshakes. A baby in his arms for half a beat.

DAVID SR., sporting a black eye, steps up with LOIS and DAVID JR.

He gives Ross a small nod.

DAVID SR.
Father Ross.

FATHER ROSS
How about you all join me for
dinner?

Lois smiles politely.

LOIS
Thank you, Father, but we're
staying in. Bringing back game
night.

FATHER ROSS
Let me guess.

Sorry?

LOIS
That obvious?

FATHER ROSS
Come on, Lois, I'm a priest.

They move on.

Father Ross smiles, hands the baby back to its mother, keeps the line moving.

The passenger window lowers.

Just enough.

Sunglasses glint in the sun.

Then the window slides up.

The SUV keeps moving.

Ross clocks it.

Then turns back to the next parishioner.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
Good to see you, Mrs. Gable.

MONTAGE - FATHER ROSS BECOMES ST. MICHAEL'S

-- Ross officiates a wedding. The bride beams. Ross clocks the groom's shaking hands.

-- A FUNERAL. Ross at graveside. Wind catches the stole. He speaks with unexpected authority.

-- CHURCH BINGO NIGHT. Old women laugh too loud. Ross calls numbers deadpan. They adore him.

-- CONFSSIONAL. A teenager cries behind the screen. Ross says nothing at first. Then: "Start where it hurts."

-- -- Parish council meeting. Ross says nothing. Everyone else does too much.

-- The Bishop at the back of the church, observing.

-- Rafael across the street in sunglasses, unseen by most.

-- Will lighting a candle. Ross notices.

-- Ross opening a drawer full of saint cards and handwritten names.

-- Communion line. Longer than last week.

-- George watching from the rectory window.

EXT. BOCA RATON MIDDLE SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Kids spill out.

DAVID walks with LESLIE and CARL.

A BLACK SUV idles down the street.

LESLIE
This is my turn.

CARL
I'll walk you. You need help in math. That isn't his strong suit anyway.

DAVID
Yeah, yeah.

They split.

David puts in earbuds.

Head down.

The SUV rolls slowly.

A SHADOW falls behind him.

David turns—

BLACK OUT.

INT. SUV - MOVING

Dark interior.

DAVID, mouth taped, panicked.

RUSTY sits across from him.

Still.

Calm.

Two men in front. Silent.

A beat.

Rusty flicks a switchblade open.

SNAP.

David flinches.

Rusty sees it.

Says nothing.

Then—

He reaches into the console.

An orange.

Turns it in his hand.

The blade rests just under the skin.

Not cutting yet.

RUSTY

Easy.

David freezes.

Rusty holds up a phone photo:

David.

Lois.

David Sr.

A beat.

Rusty studies the kid.

Then—

RUSTY (CONT'D)
Look at me.

David forces himself to.

Rusty leans in—

not aggressive.

Certain.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
You're going to help me.

A beat.

Rusty slices into the orange.

Clean.

Juice beads instantly.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
Blessed are the righteous...

A beat.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
...for they shall be called sons of
God.

Silence.

David tries to repeat—

shaking.

DAVID
Blessed are the righteous—

Rusty watches him.

Not correcting.

Not helping.

Just watching.

RUSTY
Close enough.

Then—

a hand from the front seat.

Needle.

A hand clamps over him --

BLACKOUT.

INT. RECTORY KITCHEN - DAY

Father Ross drinks coffee with Elaine.

Trying to look ordinary.

His phone BUZZES.

He checks it.

PHONE TEXT:

You need to get to confession now.
You can't outrun your past, Mark.

Ross goes still.

FATHER ROSS
David needs to make his confession.

Elaine sees it.

ELAINE
What is it?

Ross already moving.

FATHER ROSS
If I'm not back in fifteen minutes,
call this number.

He pulls Rafael's card from his wallet.

Hands it to her.

ELAINE

Ross--

FATHER ROSS

Fifteen minutes.

He exits fast.

Elaine looks at the card.

RAFAEL MARTINEZ Life Coach

INT. CONFSSIONAL

Father Ross enters.

Scans.

Finds David slumped in the corner.

FATHER ROSS

Jesus, what have I done?

He goes to David. Shakes him gently.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)

Come on buddy. Come on.

David is groggy and wakes a bit. He mumbles.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)

David who did this to you? What happened.

DAVID

(weak)

Blessed are the righteous...
they will be called...
the sons of God...

Ross freezes.

The words hit him.

A memory flickers.

Ross leans in. Quiet. Controlled.

FATHER ROSS

Blessed are the peacemakers...

A beat.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
They will be called the sons of
God.

Ross looks up.

Not at David.

At the room.

Like someone else is already in the room.

INT. RECTORY - DAY

Ross KICKS the door shut behind him.

Carries David to the sofa.

The boy is pale. Barely conscious.

ELAINE
Oh my God.

FATHER ROSS
Call that number.

ELAINE
Already did.

Ross checks David's eyes.

His pulse.

Finds the needle mark.

FATHER ROSS
Shit.

David. Stay with me.

ELAINE
Should I call Lois?

FATHER ROSS
No.

ELAINE
No?

FATHER ROSS
Not yet.

EXT. RECTORY - MOMENTS LATER

A sedan SCREECHES in.

Rafael out before it stops.

INT. RECTORY - CONTINUOUS

Rafael bursts in.

Straight to David.

Checks pulse.

Breathing.

Pupils.

RAFAEL
What was he given?

FATHER ROSS
I don't know.

He was in my church.

Inside the confessional.

RAFAEL
Okay.

FATHER ROSS
Okay?
How is Rusty here?

ELAINE
Who is Rusty?

FATHER ROSS
Elaine--

RAFAEL
Stay put.

Rafael moves into the next room.

Already dialing.

RAFAEL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Tell me he isn't in Florida.

Ross kneels by David.

FATHER ROSS
Come on, buddy.
You're my soldier.

RAFAEL (O.S.)
Transferred?
Who signed it?

INT. RECTORY - MOMENTS LATER

Rafael returns.

RAFAEL
Transport breach.
Warden got paid.
Then got buried.

Elaine grips the counter.

RAFAEL (CONT'D)
Elaine.
Look at me.

She does.

RAFAEL (CONT'D)
Mark, he's breathing.
That's the win.

FATHER ROSS
He quoted scripture.

RAFAEL
What?

FATHER ROSS
Sermon on the Mount.
He got it wrong.

Rafael goes still.

RAFAEL
One view is noise.
A pattern is signal.

ELAINE
Mark?

Ross freezes.

FATHER ROSS
He used a child
to send a message.

RAFAEL
Low profile.
You went public.
This is the bill.

Ross swings.

CRACK.

Rafael hits the floor.

RAFAEL
Good.
Be angry, Mark. I need that man.
Still your fault.

Rafael rises.

CRACK.

Returns it. Ross hits the wall.

ELAINE
Enough!

They stop.

She points at David.

ELAINE (CONT'D)
I don't care what happened before.
I don't care who you are now.
If we lose this child,
God help both of you.

Silence.

Rafael wipes blood from his lip.

RAFAEL
Rusty's not coming for the priest.
He's coming for the man
who testified. His right hand.

FATHER ROSS
I'm not that man.

RAFAEL

Then the boy is already dead.

He heads for the door.

FATHER ROSS

What do I tell his parents?

RAFAEL

Lie.
You're practiced.

He exits.

Silence.

Ross looks at David.

Then the crucifix.

Then kneels.

Pry bar.

Loose floorboard.

The Glock.

Elaine watches.

ELAINE

Father Ross?

Ross checks the magazine.

FATHER ROSS

Faith without works is dead.

ON SCREEN: James 2:26

INT. BLACK SEDAN - NIGHT

Father Ross drives.

David beside him.

Groggy. Pale.

FATHER ROSS

David.
You're my soldier.
I'm not asking you to lie.
Just let me talk first.

David nods weakly.

EXT. MILLER HOUSE - NIGHT

The sedan pulls up.

Front door FLIES open.

Lois and David Sr. rush out.

David Jr. steps from the car.

Lois grabs him.

LOIS

Oh my God.
My boy.

DAVID

Mom, I'm okay.

CRACK.

David Sr. drills Ross.

Ross slams across the hood.

LOIS

David!

DAVID SR.

What did you do to him?
Who the hell are you?

FATHER ROSS

Get him inside.
Now.

That authority lands.

David Sr. turns to his son. Carries him in.

INT. MILLER HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

David Jr. in a chair.

Water in his hands.

Lois shaking.

David Sr. crosses to a hallway cabinet.

Punches a hidden latch.

Removes a handgun.

Checks the chamber by habit.

Ross clocks it.

DAVID SR.

Talk.

FATHER ROSS

He was taken.

He was drugged.

The man who did it came for me.

Silence.

LOIS

What man?

FATHER ROSS

A bad one.

Voices rise.

Questions overlap.

Fear.

Tears.

LATER

The room quieter now. David Jr. more alert.

DAVID

...it's my fault.

LOIS / DAVID SR. / FATHER ROSS

No.

They all look at each other.

Ross kneels in front of him.

FATHER ROSS

This is not your fault.

Not one inch of it.

DAVID

He said he was a bad man.

FATHER ROSS

He is.
Remember that.

DAVID

Father Ross...
are you a bad man?

Silence.

FATHER ROSS

I was.

A beat.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)

I'm trying not to be.

Lois studies him.

LOIS

If that man comes back...
can you be him again?

Ross meets her eyes.

David Sr slowly raises the gun.

DAVID SR.

Can you?

Ross steps closer.

Takes the barrel.

Pushes it down.

They lock eyes.

FATHER ROSS

If I have to—
you stay away from me.

INT. APARTMENT - BOCA RATON - NIGHT

Low light.

Rusty at a small table.

MARCO (42) the right hand, across from him.

A bottle between them.

MARCO
The kid can identify us.

RUSTY
He won't.

MARCO
Then what?

Rusty drinks.

RUSTY
Mark will surface.

A beat.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
He always does.

MARCO
I can erase the kid.
The family too.

Rusty looks up.

Still.

RUSTY
Not yet.

A beat.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
Understand?

Marco nods.

Rusty's phone BUZZES.

UNKNOWN NUMBER.

MARCO
Who has that number?

Rusty answers.

RUSTY
I'm not buying.

RAFAEL (O.S.)
Check your door.

Stands.

Opens the door.

A plain envelope.

He takes it.

Returns to the table.

Opens it.

Inside:

Photos.

His MOTHER.

His SISTER.

A flicker.

RAFAEL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(on the phone)
Family's everything, right?

Then—

MOTHER (O.S.)
Rusty?

SISTER (O.S.)
They're taking us—

Rusty's jaw locks.

RUSTY
Whoever this is...
you're already dead.

CLICK.

Silence.

Marco watches him.

Rusty smiles.

RUSTY
Now he sent somebody worth killing.

BLACK.

INT. MILLER HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

David Sr. packs a cooler.

Military neat.

 LOIS
What are you doing?

 DAVID SR.
We're leaving.

 LOIS
Where?

 DAVID SR.
Disney.

 Safety in numbers.

David Jr. enters.

 DAVID
We don't do that.

 DAVID SR.
We do now.

A beat.

 DAVID
When are we coming back?

Lois and David Sr. exchange a look.

 LOIS
Get dressed.

David leaves to get dressed.

 LOIS (CONT'D)
Dave, what is the plan?

 DAVID SR.
Protect my family.

Fade.

INT. CONFSSIONAL

Lorraine talking.

Ross hears none of it.

Foot tapping.

He stands.

FATHER ROSS
Not today, Lorraine.

He exits.

INT. MILLER HOUSE - KITCHEN

David Jr. enters.

Empty house.

Backpacks still there.

DAVID
Mom?

Silence.

A floorboard creaks.

He turns--

Rusty.

RUSTY
There you are.

INT. MILLER LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lois.

David Jr.

David Sr.

Mother and father, bound. Beaten.

David Jr. shoved beside them.

Rusty lifts a phone.

FLASH. PICTURE TAKEN.

INT. RECTORY KITCHEN - SAME

Ross.

Rafael.

Elaine.

Rafael and Ross's phones BUZZ at once. Text message with a picture.

They check.

The photo.

Elaine gasps.

ELAINE

Oh my God...

Rafael's phone buzzes for a call. Rafael answers.

Speaker on.

RUSTY (O.S.)

Now I have your attention.

Ross steps in.

FATHER ROSS

Let them go.

RUSTY (O.S.)

No.

A beat.

RUSTY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I'm not done with you yet.

RAFAEL

I have your mother.
Your sister.

Silence.

Then—

RUSTY (O.S.)

Do what you want.

The screen shifts to LIVE VIDEO.

The Miller family.

Terrified.

Ross leans in.

FATHER ROSS

David.
Stay with me.

David Jr. nods through tears.

Rusty steps into frame.

No smile.

No hurry.

Raises the gun.

BANG.

David Sr. jerks sideways.

Silence. Drops.

THUD.

Then Lois SCREAMS.

David Jr. breaks.

RUSTY

Time to come home, Mark.

CLICK.

Dead line.

Ross already moving.

He grabs the Glock.

Shoves it into his waistband.

RAFAEL

Where are you going?

FATHER ROSS

To finish confession.

He heads for the door.

Thunder CRACKS.

Rain pours outside.

ELAINE
Do something!

Rafael exhales.

Follows him out.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

No lights.

Only votives.

Ross enters alone.

Blood still on him.

He walks to the altar.

Stops.

Behind him-

Rafael slips in.

Unseen.

Watching.

Ross doesn't kneel.

Just stands there.

A long beat.

Then-

He pulls the Glock.

Sets it on the altar.

Beside the crucifix.

FATHER ROSS
You don't get both men.

A beat.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
So pick.

Silence.

No sign.

No sound.

No miracle.

Ross takes the gun.

Turns.

Walks past Rafael without surprise.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
You're not answering.

He exits.

Rafael remains.

Looks at the crucifix.

Then the door Ross used.

RAFAEL
Neither are you.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

Rain hammers the windshield.

Ross drives.

Visibility near zero.

Hands white on the wheel.

RAFAEL
Mark--
Pull over.

No response.

RAFAEL (CONT'D)
Stop the car.

A beat.

Ross pulls over.

Engine idling.

Rain swallowing everything.

FATHER ROSS
I did this.

A beat.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
He's dead because of me.

Rafael watches him.

RAFAEL
You don't have to be him in here.

A beat.

RAFAEL (CONT'D)
Not with me.

Ross breathes hard.

FATHER ROSS
What's the plan?

RAFAEL
We wait.

Ross almost laughs.

FATHER ROSS
He's not waiting.

Silence.

Rain.

RAFAEL
Then what do you want?

Ross turns.

Grabs Rafael by the jaw.

FATHER ROSS
Tell me who you see.
Not the file.
Not the priest.
Tell me my name.

RAFAEL
(quiet)
Marcus.

Ross holds there.

Then pulls off the collar.

Drops it.

Between them.

They meet hard.

Desperate.

Needing air.

CUT TO:

INT. SAFEHOUSE - LATER

Door slams.

Wet clothes hit the floor.

No words.

No roles.

Only urgency.

Rain streaks the window.

Breath rises.

Falls.

INT. SAFEHOUSE - MORNING

Rafael wakes.

Ross already dressing.

Gun on table.

FATHER ROSS
We're done waiting.

Rafael checks his phone.

Ross grabs the Glock.

RAFAEL
You are a criminal.
A fake priest.
Sexy as hell--
and not FBI.

FATHER ROSS
Three out of four.
Close enough.

Shirt on.

Collar on.

Moving.

RAFAEL
Jesus--wait.

FATHER ROSS (O.S.)
I need iced coffee.
You're buying.

Rafael watches the door.

RAFAEL
(to himself)
I hate it when you get dressed for
work.

HONK HONK outside.

Rafael closes his eyes.

RAFAEL (CONT'D)
Of course.

He heads out.

EXT. ST. MICHAEL'S RECTORY - DAY

Blinding Florida sun.

RAFAEL'S black SUV idles at the curb.

INT. RAFAEL'S SUV - CONTINUOUS

Cold air.

Engine humming.

Ross in full collar.

Already choking in it.

RAFAEL

Rusty pinged a tower near the
Glades. I'm heading to the
substation to scrub traffic cams.

A beat.

RAFAEL (CONT'D)

You have three hours to be Father
Ross. Then we move on Rusty.

Ross doesn't respond.

Ross looks at his hands, "the "bent nails" he spoke of in the
sermon. He looks at Rafael.

FATHER ROSS

I'm not "being" him, Rafael. I am
him. Scrub the cams. Find Rusty. Do
your job so I can do mine.

Ross exits. He walks toward the Rectory with a new,
terrifyingly righteous gait.

RAFAEL

Hey.

Ross turns. He looks. They both know it. Lock eyes.

FATHER ROSS

One step at a time.

Rafael watches him go.

He touches the passenger seat where Ross sat. It's still
warm.

RAFAEL

(To himself)

We are so fucked. God help whoever
gets there first.

Rafael pulls away.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

QUICK MASS.

Ross stands at the altar.

The room feels off.

FATHER ROSS
Today's word is silence.

Then one parishioner coughs.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
Job lost everything and sat in ash.

A beat.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
Sometimes God doesn't speak because
there's nothing left to say.

A beat.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
Amen.

In the back-

BISHOP KELLY watches.

Still. Measuring.

INT. SACRISTY - MOMENTS LATER

Ross rips off vestments.

Down to an undershirt.

The door swings open.

BISHOP KELLY enters.

BISHOP KELLY
That was barely a Mass.

Ross keeps moving.

BISHOP KELLY (CONT'D)
People are already talking about
what happened outside your gates.

Ross grabs his shirt.

FATHER ROSS
I have a family in crisis.

The Bishop steps in front of him. Blocks the exit.

BISHOP KELLY
And a parish.

A beat.

BISHOP KELLY (CONT'D)

Sit.

Ross steps closer.

Quiet. Dangerous.

FATHER ROSS

Not today.

A beat.

Ross brushes past him.

The Bishop stands there.

Watching him go.

Ross's phone BUZZES.

TEXT: HE'S ON THE MOVE. NORTH ON 27. MOVE.

Ross doesn't stop.

EXT. RECTORY - MOMENTS LATER

GEORGE approaches, sweating.

GEORGE

Father Ross—

Ross keeps moving.

FATHER ROSS

George, not now.

George grabs his arm.

Instinct—

Ross pins him to the car.

A beat.

They both freeze.

Ross releases him.

GEORGE

I just... I need—

Ross exhales.

Looks at him.

A decision.

FATHER ROSS

Come on.

INT. RECTORY KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Elaine pours coffee.

George sits. Shaking.

Ross stands. Tension coiled.

FATHER ROSS

What happened?

George doesn't answer.

Ross snaps his fingers.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)

George.

George breaks.

GEORGE

They found out.

FATHER ROSS

Who knows what?

A beat.

GEORGE

I took money.

Ross doesn't react.

FATHER ROSS

From the fund?

George shakes his head.

GEORGE

The casino.

A beat.

FATHER ROSS

How much?

George whispers.

Ross freezes.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)

Two hundred and fifty thousand?

George nods.

GEORGE

They're going to kill me.

Ross runs a hand over his face.

FATHER ROSS

Where is it?

GEORGE

St. Lucia.

Ross looks up.

FATHER ROSS

Who's in St. Lucia?

A beat.

GEORGE

Desiree.

Ross clocks it.

FATHER ROSS

Marion know?

GEORGE

No.

A beat.

Ross exhales.

FATHER ROSS

You're done.

George looks up.

GEORGE

What do I do?

Ross looks at him.

Direct.

FATHER ROSS
You tell the truth.

A beat.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
Lawyer first. Then your wife. Then
the police.

George shakes.

GEORGE
What about Desiree?

Ross almost smiles.

FATHER ROSS
Give her two weeks.

Elaine exhales—half laugh, half disbelief.

Ross's phone BUZZES again.

He answers.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
I'm coming.

He hangs up.

Ross sits.

Takes George's hand.

Elaine joins.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
Heavenly Father, you see all.
Lead him in truth.
Give Marion strength.
Give Desiree two weeks.
Amen.

Elaine almost cracks.

Ross stands.

Already moving.

He's out the door.

Elaine and George sit in silence.

FADE OUT.

EXT. RECTORY - MOMENTS LATER

Ross steps outside.

The Florida heat hits him.

Rafael's sedan pulls up.

Ross catches his reflection in the darkened window.

He buttons his shirt.

Slow.

Precise.

Then—

He lifts the collar.

Snaps it into place.

In the glass—

Halo.

Then horns.

Then both.

Rafael lowers the window.

The reflection disappears.

RAFAEL

So which one are you? Devil or
Saint?

Ross opens the door.

Gets in.

No answer.

The car pulls off.

INT. RAFAEL'S SEDAN - MOVING - NIGHT

AC blasting.

Still not enough.

Ross stares at his knuckles.

Pale. Steady.

RAFAEL

The Glades. Old citrus plant off
27.

A beat.

RAFAEL (CONT'D)

He wants an audience.

FATHER ROSS

Lois. David?

RAFAEL

Alive. For now.

A beat.

FATHER ROSS

(low)

He wants Mark.

RAFAEL

And who's he getting?

FATHER ROSS

Someone he remembers.

EXT. CITRUS PACKING PLANT - NIGHT

A rusted skeleton swallowed by swamp and rot.

Floodwater churns beneath the processing floor --

black Everglades runoff trapped beneath rusted grates and
conveyor belts.

Above it all:

catwalks crisscross the plant twenty feet overhead.

At the center sits the elevated FOREMAN'S SHACK --

glass windows overlooking the decay like a watchtower.

INT. FOREMAN'S SHACK - CONTINUOUS

Lois tied to a chair.

Blood on her lip.

David crouched under a desk.

Rusty peels an orange with a knife.

Slow.

Controlled.

RUSTY
How's my messenger?

No answer.

Rusty drags David out.

Brings him close.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
You scared?

DAVID
Yes.

A beat.

DAVID (CONT'D)
For you.

Rusty studies him.

RUSTY
Kid, I could help you.
(a beat)
But then I'd have to keep helping.
And that's how men like me
disappear.
(then, softer)
Just like him..
you don't understand that yet.

Then—

drops him.

David scrambles to Lois.

Rusty sits.

An orange in his hand.

A knife in the other.

He starts the peel.

Slow.

Precise.

A thin spiral forms.

Unbroken.

Then—

FATHER ROSS (O.S.)

Rusty.

The blade stops.

Mid-peel.

A beat.

Rusty looks up.

The spiral dangles.

Incomplete.

EXT. PLANT - CONTINUOUS

Silence.

Wind through metal.

RUSTY (O.S.)

Marco.

Up top—

Marco freezes.

Peers into the darkness.

Hand tight on the shotgun.

MARCO

I got movement.

EXT. PACKING PLANT - CONTINUOUS

High grass sways.

Rafael moves through it—

silent, precise.

A suppressor clicks into place.

Ross walks straight down the dirt road.

No cover.

No hesitation.

The collar bright against the dark.

Up above—

TRAVIS on the catwalk.

Shotgun up.

MARCO

That's far enough, Father.

Ross keeps walking.

Not fast.

Not slow.

Deliberate.

FATHER ROSS

Though I walk through the valley...

A beat.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)

I will fear no evil.

Marco tightens his grip.

MARCO

Stop—

THWIP.

A suppressed shot from the grass.

Marco's body jerks.

He drops through rusted slats.

Metal screaming with him.

Ross keeps walking.

Rusty hears it.

Doesn't flinch.

But the orange peel slips.

INT. PACKING PLANT - CONTINUOUS

Rusty yanks Lois up. Knife at her throat.

RUSTY

Now we get the party started.

Ross steps inside.

Sweat. Blood. Stillness.

FATHER ROSS

Lois... close your eyes.

A beat.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)

David, eyes on me.

Rusty studies him.

RUSTY

You came back.

FATHER ROSS

You came farther.

RUSTY

Say it.

A beat.

RUSTY (CONT'D)

Say who you are.

Silence.

Lois bleeding. David shaking.

Everything waiting.

Ross looks at them.

Then back to Rusty.

FATHER ROSS

I'm the man who's going to end you.

Rusty smiles.

RUSTY

I was starting to think you'd
stayed buried.

A flicker—

Rusty drives the knife into Lois's side.

She collapses.

David screams—rushes to her.

Rusty pins him with his boot.

Then—

He moves.

Fast.

The blade catches Ross's shoulder.

Ross absorbs it—

Rusty grabs David.

Locks him in a chokehold.

David thrashes.

Air gone.

RUSTY (CONT'D)

Easy...

(to Ross)

He goes first.

Ross freezes.

For the first time— he doesn't move.

Calculating.

Rusty tightens the hold. David's eyes start to fade.

FATHER ROSS
David—look at me.

David tries.

Barely there.

Ross looks at Rusty.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
Take me.

A beat.

Rusty studies him.

Something new.

Something real.

He loosens his grip—

just enough.

A test.

A mistake.

David gasps—

Ross explodes.

Drives into him. David in the crossfire.

CRACK.

The rusted wall buckles above the black floodwater below.

EXT. BENEATH THE PLANT - CONTINUOUS

They crash into black water. Ross, David and Rusty.

David pops up, coughing.

FATHER ROSS
David. Out. Now.

David slips through the broken machinery toward the loading bay exit.

No form. No style.

Just survival.

Rusty slashes.

Ross eats it.

Closes distance.

Hands on Rusty's throat.

Forcing him under.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
(quiet, steady)
O my God...

Rusty thrashes.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
I am heartily sorry...

Water churns.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
I detest all my sins...

Rusty weakens.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
because they offend Thee...

The water begins to still.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
who art all good...

Rusty stops.

One last bubble.

Silence.

An orange drifts into frame.

Half-peeled.

The spiral trailing behind it.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
(barely)
Amen.

Ross holds him there.

EXT. PACKING PLANT - LATER

Paramedics are attending to Lois.

Rafael is sitting on the bumper of the sedan. He's using a wet rag to wipe the blood off Ross's knuckles. Ross is staring at the sky, his shirt shredded, his skin a map of bruises and cuts.

RAFAEL
You look like hell.

FATHER ROSS
I think I'm just visiting.

Rafael hands him a fresh, white Roman collar.

RAFAEL
The FBI is waiting at the field office. Jennifer wants the file closed.

Ross looks at the collar. David looks back. He sees Ross. He doesn't see a federal witness. He sees the man who saved them.

The sun blazes behind Ross's head to create a halo. Ross's eye glow and pierce the daylight.

FATHER ROSS
The file isn't closed, Rafael. It's just being rewritten

INT. FBI OFFICE - SOUTH FLORIDA - DAY

Jennifer. Rafael. Ross.

Ross carries the bruises of the final fight.

Not just the black eye -- all of it.

Jennifer closes the file.

JENNIFER
With Jordan gone, witness protection is terminated. You're free to resume your life, Mark.

A beat.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
Rafael will walk you through reentry.

She rises. Heads for the door.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
For whatever it's worth... I liked
what I saw in Father Ross.

She reaches the door.

FATHER ROSS
I'm not going.

Jennifer stops.

Turns.

RAFAEL
Fuck no.

Rafael already knows where this is headed.

Hates it.

JENNIFER
That's not how this works.

FATHER ROSS
Maybe not. But it's how *this* works.

A beat.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
Mark Devon was good at surviving.
Father Ross is good at something
else.

No one speaks.

FATHER ROSS (CONT'D)
They need a priest. I'm staying.

RAFAEL
I knew the minute you put that
collar back on.

JENNIFER
You are not a priest.

FATHER ROSS
I know.
But I buried their dead.
I blessed their children.
I listened when nobody else would.
And whether you like it or not,
they know my voice.

RAFAEL
Jennifer, he means it.

FATHER ROSS
How will you tell an entire parish
of the faithful that the government
lied to them?

Jennifer studies him.

JENNIFER
I need approval.

A beat.

FATHER ROSS
I heard you have connections in
Rome.

Silence.

Jennifer looks to Rafael.

Ross gives the smallest nod.

WHITE.

A wash of white slowly resolves into a PRIEST'S COLLAR.

SUPER: THREE MONTHS LATER

INT. SACRISTY - ST. MICHAEL'S - DAY

Quiet. Vestments laid out.

The low murmur of the congregation beyond the wall.

FATHER Ross adjusts his collar in the mirror.

The door opens.

BISHOP KELLY. Measured. Observant. Not easily impressed.

He closes the door behind him.

A beat.

He studies Ross.

BISHOP KELLY
You've caused quite a stir, Father.

Ross doesn't turn.

FATHER ROSS
Wasn't my intention.

BISHOP KELLY
No? The headlines. The restaurant
photos.

A beat.

BISHOP KELLY (CONT'D)
I received a note.

A beat.

BISHOP KELLY (CONT'D)
From Rome.

Ross says nothing.

BISHOP KELLY (CONT'D)
Do you know how rarely that
happens? That my boss, His
Holiness, contacts me about a
priest?

FATHER ROSS
I imagine it depends on the
circumstances.

A flicker of something in the Bishop.

Not quite approval.

BISHOP KELLY
The Church is... aware of you.

A beat.

BISHOP KELLY (CONT'D)
And for reasons I won't pretend to
fully understand—

He looks dead on at Father Ross.

BISHOP KELLY (CONT'D)
—you are to remain here.

Ross absorbs that.

FATHER ROSS
At St. Michael's.

BISHOP KELLY

For now.

A beat.

BISHOP KELLY (CONT'D)

(leaning in, quieter)

Just remember what you are.

FATHER ROSS

I do.

A long beat. Ross looks in the mirror.

BISHOP KELLY

Curious thing.

When a liar tells the truth in
public,
people listen harder than when a
saint does.

A beat.

BISHOP KELLY (CONT'D)

Mass is about to begin.

Try not to make Rome regret it.

He exits.

Ross stands alone.

A beat.

He looks at himself in the mirror.

Collar.

Face.

Something behind the eyes.

He turns.

And heads out to the altar.

INT. ST. MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY

A full congregation.

At the altar: FATHER Ross WHITE.

Warmer now. Seasoned.

Lois in the front pew. A small smile.

Elaine mid-center. Nods.

Rafael in the back. Watching.

Ross glances right—

David, altar boy. A wink. A nod.

The congregation rises.

Soft chatter. Life returning.

Ross turns to reset the altar.

His hand stops.

There—

An orange.

Whole.

Uncut.

No one reacts.

No one notices.

Ross freezes.

A beat.

He looks out—

The congregation.

David.

Rafael.

Normal.

He looks back at the orange.

A long beat.

Ross picks it up.

He turns it in his hand.

A beat.

FATHER ROSS
(under his breath)
Blessed are the peacemakers.

His thumb hovers—

Then presses.

It gives.

A faint release.

Rafael watches Ross. He sees the thumb press. (Beat) He understands.

The beginning of a peel.

Ross looks up— hold.

CUT TO WHITE.