

FATHER JOE

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IMPORTANT: THIS SCRIPT IS STILL VERY MUCH WORK IN PROGRESS. THERE SHALL BE SEVERAL PASSES UNTIL PRINCIPAL PHOTOGRAPHY STARTS, BUT THIS CURRENT VERSION SHALL GIVE YOU A GOOD IDEA OF WHAT WE ARE AIMING AT.

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01/12/2025

1990

SEQ. EXT. DAY - MANHATTAN

A time when cell phones didn't exist, when time wasn't measured in TikTok units, and money came in bills.

A blessed era when, in Little Italy (where our story takes place), pizzas were still thick and loaded with cheese, when one's word was still a sacred value, and faith... unquestionable.

LINO is driving his pale pink Cadillac. He's in his fifties and couldn't care less about people mocking his old-fashioned taste. This mafioso has cheated death so many times that he knows ridicule never killed anyone.

His Cadillac pulls into an old warehouse, tucked under the shadow of the Brooklyn Bridge. A few thugs immediately shut the heavy door.

Next to Lino, DAISY looks uneasy. She's 25, as beautiful as the day. She's nervously fidgeting with her fingers.

DAISY

Lino, I don't like coming here.

LINO

You know, I don't usually bring anyone here, sweetheart. You should feel flattered. It's a secret place. Plenty of people would kill to know it.

DAISY

(nervously)

Exactly, I don't want to die.

LINO

Nothing will happen to you. I'll take good care of you, you'll see. You won't need anything but me!

He grabs her hungrily. His large mafioso hands are everywhere.

LINO (CONT'D)

You drive me crazy, you know
that? I want you all the time.
I'm like Vesuvius! You know
it?

She gently pushes him away, as best she can.

DAISY
No, who's that?

LINO
(*amused*)
It's not a person, it's a
volcano, in Naples, my
homeland. I'll take you there,
you'll see, it's beautiful.

DAISY
Stop it, Lino, not here.
They're watching us.

Indeed, through the windshield, a few thugs are enjoying the
show.

LINO
I'll grab a few things and be
right back.
(*playfully*)
You'll wait for me, right?

DAISY
(*nervously*)
Where else would I go?!

LINO
(*smiling*)
Should I grab you some coke?
I've got some fresh stuff that
just came in.

DAISY
(*a bit lost*)
No, I... I'm trying to quit.
I've been doing too much.

LINO
(*surprised*)
Quit?

He laughs.

LINO (CONT'D)

Why?

DAISY

(uncomfortable)

I don't know. Put my shit together, maybe.

He laughs again.

LINO

Let me grab a big bag of coke, and I promise I'll make you forget all about that. All those bad thoughts! You're my queen now, and you'll live like one...

He kisses her passionately. She lets him, without enthusiasm.

Lino grabs the car keys and gets out.

He walks past his guards.

LINO (CONT'D)

Don't touch my car.

GUARD

(amused)

Okay, boss. And what's inside?

LINO

That too. Unless you want to die.

CUT TO:

Lino walks through a clandestine workshop. Drugs of all kinds are being prepared. It's like a supermarket.

Further on, are hundreds of still-boxed VCRs. Brand new TVs. Everything that just "fell off the truck," obviously.

CUT TO:

The armory is well-stocked too. Uzis, Russian Kalashnikovs, American M16 assault rifles, a few German weapons... the business of death knows no borders.

5.

CUT TO:

Lino passes a few guards, enters his office, and pulls out a small bag of coke, spreading it across the table.

SEQ. INT. GARAGE

Daisy is nervous. Through the windshield, she sees the guards moving closer. They're curious about what's in the "aquarium." But the atmosphere suddenly changes. Something in the air. Like a shadow. A bad omen. Daisy grabs the cross hanging from the rearview mirror and clutches it in her small hands. One of the guards, the most mischievous, makes very suggestive gestures at her. Obscene, even. It's crude but always amuses the guys.

CUT TO:

Lino snorts a big line of coke and seems pleased.

LINO

Damn! This stuff is good! How can you quit something like this?!

CUT TO:

Daisy clutches her little cross even tighter as the thugs inch closer.

Her heart beats faster and faster, panic setting in.

Not knowing what else to do, she decides to show them her little cross.

The thug is initially surprised, then bursts out laughing.

Not for long, because he ends up literally exploding —a bullet through his back shatters his chest, splattering him across the windshield.

Daisy screams.

The other guards draw their weapons but can't figure out where the shot came from.

It's already too late for them. One by one, the guards are taken down.

In less than a minute, six bodies lie lifeless on the ground.

6.

CUT TO:

Lino spins the heavy dials of his safe, which is overflowing with cash.

CUT TO:

In the warehouse, chaos reigns. One survivor bursts into the lab.

SURVIVOR

(panicked)

We're under attack! Everyone get out!

Defenses are quickly organized.

Near the armory, people grab weapons to defend themselves and strike back at the enemy. If only they knew where he was hiding. Some attempt to escape through the back door, but it's booby-trapped and explodes in their faces.

CUT TO:

Lino hears the explosion. He grabs his walkie-talkie.

LINO

What the hell is going on?

GUARD

(over the walkie)

We're under attack, boss!

LINO

By who? How many are there?

GUARD

(panicked)

I don't know, I don't know.

The guard steps back and triggers a bear trap with his foot. He screams in agony.

LINO

Hello?! What's happening to you?!

CUT TO:

7.

Daisy is huddled at the bottom of her seat, wetting herself in fear.

CUT TO:

Lino pulls out guns from his office and tries to shield himself as best he can.

CUT TO:

A guard tries to flee under a heavy metal door. He slips through as best he can, but suddenly, the door slams down on him, killing him instantly.

Other guards are shot down like rabbits. Some are slashed with machetes, others are strangled with steel wires.

Three more run towards another exit, but a steel wire trips them. They fall onto a field of three-pronged spikes.

A match strikes and ignites a trail of gasoline, setting the three guards ablaze on the spiked ground.

CUT TO:

Lino is short of breath. The screams of pain put him in a panic.

CUT TO:

Two gloved hands pour gasoline over the massive table where drugs are processed. The man strikes a match and sets the merchandise on fire. Thousands of dollars go up in flames.

CUT TO:

Lino is sweating bullets. The screams outside make his panic worse.

He holds his breath to listen closely to the approaching footsteps.

He sees a shadow under the door. He immediately empties two magazines, screaming.

Silence.

He breathes again.

Not for long—a silenced bullet hits him in the calf.

Lino collapses to his knees, screaming in pain.

A man enters the room, dressed entirely in black.

A small white square stands out on his black collar.

JOE, in his fifties, well-groomed hair, a light beard. Despite his appearance and the silencer in his hand, he radiates genuine kindness.

Father Joe is a man of God.

He approaches the safe and opens it with the tip of his gun. It overflows with cash.

LINO (CONT'D)

(panicked)

Take whatever you want, Father!

FATHER JOE

Do you believe in God, my son?

His voice is gentle. Almost comforting.

LINO

(struggling)

I'm Napolitan, I don't really have a choice. Who sent you? The Ranaldis?

FATHER JOE

No. I only answer to God. As we all should.

LINO

What do you want?

FATHER JOE

Just to help you.

LINO

Well you are off to a bad start.

FATHER JOE

To help you find repentance. As you know, God never turns away a lost sheep that returns to the flock. I'm here to guide you back onto the right

path.

LINO
(panicking)
Okay. I'll do whatever you
want, Father. But... don't kill
me.

Father Joe smiles, grabs a chair, and moves closer.

FATHER JOE
If you seek God's mercy and
forgiveness, it's important to
confess your sins.

He sits next to Lino, who is on his knees, like in a
confessional.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)
I'm listening, my son.

Lino is lost. He starts crying like a child.

LINO
I... I have sinned, Father.

FATHER JOE
Yes.

LINO
I've sold... drugs...
weapons... women.

FATHER JOE
Why?

LINO
For... money... and power.

FATHER JOE
Have these actions made you a
rich man?

LINO
Barely.

FATHER JOE
Have they made you a good man,
a good Christian?

LINO

No.

FATHER JOE

A good son?

LINO

... No.

FATHER JOE

A good father?

LINO

Not even.

Lino cries even harder.

FATHER JOE

Then repent, my son.

LINO

(sobbing)

I ask forgiveness... from
God... from my mother... my
children... And all those I've
wronged!

FATHER JOE

That's good.

The priest places his hand on Lino's head and absolves him.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)

May Almighty God forgive your
sins and help you fulfill your
penance. Amen!

LINO

Amen.

FATHER JOE

Now, here are the new rules.
You no longer sell drugs...

LINO

Okay.

FATHER JOE

To anyone under 21.

Lino looks surprised.

LINO

21? Does that mean... over
that age?

FATHER JOE

We can't save everyone.
I'm here to save the women and
children, you understand?

LINO

Yes, I understand. No women,
no kids.

FATHER JOE

Good. When was the last time
you went to church?

LINO

Last month... for a funeral.
The Paoli brothers.

FATHER JOE

And to mass?

LINO

(uneasy)

Uh... with my mother, a long
time ago. In my hometown
village.

The priest pulls a syringe from his pocket and injects Lino in
the neck.

FATHER JOE

From now on, I want to see you
at mass every Sunday. My
church is on 118th Street, the
Church of Felicity.

Lino worries about the substance entering his veins.

LINO

What is it?

FATHER JOE

A rather complex virus I
crafted myself. It takes a
week to act. Every Sunday, I'll

give you an antidote to block its effects. Without the antidote, you'll die in excruciating pain.

Lino swallows hard, more trapped than ever.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)
Can I count on you this Sunday?

LINO
Yes. I... I'll be there.

FATHER JOE
Good.

The priest raises his hand toward him and absolves him once more. In Latin.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)
Pax vobiscum. Amen.
(Go in the peace of Christ. Amen.)

SEQ. INT. GARAGE

Daisy hides her little face behind the wooden cross. She's gasping for air, for hope.

A blood-covered guard drags himself to the car.

Daisy, panicking, locks the car doors.

The guard tries to force the door open, in vain.

GUARD
Open up! You little bitch!

He smears blood all over the window. Daisy turns her head away.

A piercing noise. A silenced gunshot. The guard drops lifelessly to the ground.

Daisy cries harder, knowing she's going to die.

Unless a miracle happens.

At the back of the garage, Father Joe appears, carrying his large bag in one hand and his silencer in the other. Daisy doesn't know what to think anymore.

The priest gently taps the window with the tip of his gun, flashing a warm smile. Daisy, lost, finally lowers the window.

FATHER JOE
Hello, my child.

DAISY
(hesitant)
Hello... Father?

FATHER JOE
What's your name?

DAISY
Daisy.

FATHER JOE
I think it's time for you to go home, Daisy. To reflect on the meaning of your life. To recharge and, with God's help, set yourself back on the right path.

Daisy cries again but nods.

Father Joe, satisfied, leaves the garage as one would leave a cemetery.

Daisy rolls up her blood-smeared window.

SEQ. INT. TAXI

Father Joe sits in the back of a yellow taxi, his large bag on his lap.

The driver, a South American man in his sixties, listens discreetly to traditional music—nostalgic for his homeland, perhaps.

Father Joe smiles, then lets his gaze wander through the city, its dirty streets ravaged by misery and despair.

Five police officers beat up a young Black man.

Further on, a few prostitutes argue.

A child drums on cans, hoping to collect a few coins.

Even further, young dealers sell their goods to kids even younger than they are.

At an intersection, a homeless man lies on the ground, ignored by everyone.

Father Joe sighs. The fight against evil seems like a never-ending battle.

CUT TO:

The taxi stops in front of a stone church, wedged between two buildings.

DRIVER
Should I drop you here?

FATHER JOE
Yes, that'll be fine.

The driver pulls up right in front of the Church of Felicity.

DRIVER
Your church is beautiful.

FATHER JOE
Thank you.

DRIVER
(amused)
Where I come from, churches are so small you have to duck to get in.

FATHER JOE
If the church is small, then the faith must be all the greater.

DRIVER
You're absolutely right.

FATHER JOE
Where are you from?

DRIVER
Guatemala.

The priest smiles and hands him a \$100 bill.

FATHER JOE

Take this.

DRIVER

No, no, Father. For you, it's free.

FATHER JOE

I insist.

DRIVER

You know, people like me, those with crappy lives, we keep going thanks to people like you. People who remind us that God is also there for us.

FATHER JOE

(touched)

God is love, and he resides in every heart.

DRIVER

Damn right.

The priest adds a few more bills, now handing him \$500.

FATHER JOE

Take this, I insist. Use it to make a donation to the church of your choice.

The driver hesitates but eventually takes the money.

DRIVER

I'm going back home next month. We'll give our church a fresh coat of paint. It badly needs it.

FATHER JOE

That's an excellent idea.

CUT TO:

The priest exits the taxi and climbs the steps leading to his parish.

SEQ. INT. DAY - CHURCH OF FELICITY

The church interior is rather simple but in pristine condition.

An immense stained glass window of a rose garden indicates the East, where the daylight rises.

Candleholders are scattered along the aisles, illuminating four prayer areas: Saint John, the Crucified Jesus, Mary and Child, and Saint Magdalene, surrounded by lost children.

In the aisles, a few young clerics in white robes politely greet their father as he passes by.

FATHER JOE

Were you able to fix the plumbing issue?

CLERIC

Yes, the plumber came. It was massive roots invading the pipes running through the garden.

FATHER JOE

Again? We should really move that beautiful tree instead of regularly cutting its roots.

CLERIC

There's space near the back wall of the garden.

FATHER JOE

Great idea. We'll relocate it this winter so it thrives in the spring.

The cleric nods and leaves.

The father walks down the aisle, sets down his heavy bag, and kneels at a prayer bench facing Saint Magdalene, the saint who mourns lost children.

Father Joe clasps his hands and lets out a long sigh.

It's never easy to account for one's actions before God.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)

(after a long pause)

... Forgive me, Lord... And I
beg You to receive all these
lost souls.

Saint Magdalene remains silent and burdened with sorrow.

The father crosses himself and leaves, head bowed.

CUT TO:

Behind the altar, there's a small door the priest unlocks.

It leads to a staircase descending into the crypt.

There, three tombs from another century, likely imported from Europe.

Father Joe walks in, still carrying his heavy bag.

He enters a code and unlocks a metal door.

Now he's in a large, immaculately arranged white room.

Around a long table, a few clerics, barely 15 years old, meticulously clean a variety of weapons. All these orphans are of Asian descent.

CLERIC

Everything went well, Father?

The priest removes his coat, revealing an arsenal. About ten guns are strapped to a vest designed for this purpose.

He must have drawn inspiration from the movie "Léon." He unclips a gun, a Glock 54.

FATHER JOE

This one's a bit jammed and
tends to shoot to the left.

CLERIC

I'll take care of it.

The priest places the gun on the table and opens a massive safe.

Inside, stacks of cash pile up.

He opens his bag and adds bundles of bills to the existing stacks.

CLERIC (CONT'D)

Looks like the haul was good.

FATHER JOE

Yes, the man was moved by our cause. And I believe next Sunday we'll have a new devotee.

CLERIC

God willing.

Father Joe closes the heavy safe door.

BLACKOUT

SEQ. INT./EXT. DAY - CHURCH OF FELICITY

The bells ring loudly, as they do every Sunday, to announce mass.

The sun is shining, and the street is crowded with cars and dozens of worshippers.

Two police officers are even stationed to manage traffic.

A pink Cadillac parks at the corner.

The driver immediately helps Lino out of the car and hands him his crutches.

Despite his calf pain, Lino makes his way to the church, like a pilgrim heading to Lourdes.

CUT TO:

The mass is already underway.

Father Joe is at the pulpit, delivering his sermon to a full house.

Lino, flanked by two guards, finds a seat near the aisle.

The effort makes him sweat, and he pulls out a cotton handkerchief to wipe his forehead.

Then, he glances around the congregation.

To his surprise, many faces are familiar.

FREDO-the-butcher. MASSIMO, capo of South Brooklyn. MATEO, who

controls a hundred girls in Manhattan. TONY-the-jaw, who kills by biting his victims. MARCELLO, who never goes out without his axe.

Quick flashes reveal the past of each one.

But the list is long, and Lino is stunned.

Each one discreetly nods at Lino.

All these mafiosos keep their heads down, listening devoutly to Father Joe's sermon.

Some have even brought their mothers.

Have they all been blackmailed like him? Most likely.

FATHER JOE

Today I want to tell you about
Dominic Savio, born in 1842 in
Riva di Chieri, in Piedmont,
whom some of you might know
well, I believe.

In the crowd, a few rugged faces straight out of "The Godfather" nod.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)

Little Dominic came from a very
modest family. His father was a
blacksmith, and his mother a
seamstress. From a young age, he
learned to pray to God, love God,
and attended mass daily. Showing
extraordinary intellectual
ability, he was sent at the age of
twelve to Turin to study. His
classmates admired him, but young
Dominic continued to say that his
two best friends were Jesus and
Mary. One day, in the schoolyard,
a fight broke out between two boys
who started brawling. A dark story
of revenge, territories, gangs.
Issues that have no place in
children's minds. Young Dominic
stepped in, holding a cross
between the two boys. And, with
God's help, the grudges melted
away, and peace returned to the
school. Nearly a century later,
Pope Pius XII declared him... a

saint. Saint Dominic Savio, patron of children, protector of youth. Now more than ever, we need him. In this harsh and difficult society that excludes the most vulnerable, where Satan himself invents new temptations every day, yes, we need him. But also you, my dear faithful. A child is a flower that must be allowed to bloom. A child is a garden that must be shielded from the whims of bad weather. Later, the adult they become will have free will. It's up to them to choose the path God has laid out or take another, darker road. That is their choice. It's their right. We can only pray for those who have strayed to find their way back. But the child is sacred. They are too young to see. They are like a blind person whose steps can only be guided by God. So let us respect God's will and pray. Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancti.

The father starts the choir, which resonates through the church. Then, he signals the young cleric passing through the aisles with a collection basket.

As the cleric passes, each mafioso drops in a bundle of \$100 bills.

Lino hadn't prepared for this. He searches his pockets and looks apologetic.

His neighbor, Mateo, with a killer's face, places a bundle on Lino's behalf.

LINO

Thanks, Mateo. I owe you one.

Mateo gestures that it's no big deal.

Survivors understand each other.

But soon, the faithful line up to receive extreme unction.

Lino picks up his crutches and joins the line, standing between

Fredo-the-butcher and Tony- the-jaw.

At the altar, Father Joe absolves the faithful one by one.

But instead of the expected host, the priest places a blue capsule into their mouths—essential for their survival.

Never has the body of christ been so useful to them.

It's Lino's turn. Father Joe greets him with a warm smile.

FATHER JOE

I'm happy to see you, my son.

LINO

(tense)

Me too, Father.

FATHER JOE

This is my body, given for
you...

He opens his mouth and takes the salvific capsule.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)

See you next Sunday?

LINO

(defeated)

... See you Sunday.

CUT TO:

Lino leaves the church and walks toward his car, parked at the corner of the street.

Before getting in, he notices a long line of homeless people queuing in the adjacent street, toward the back of the church.

LINO (CONT'D)

What's with all these people?

GUARD

Every Sunday, they serve food
after mass.

Lino looks puzzled.

LINO

This guy is insane. He's God

and the devil incarnate in one
damn body!

CUT TO:

Behind the altar, Father Joe removes his mass vestments and dons his cassock.

FATHER JOE

Are there many people today?

CLERK

Yes, even more than last
Sunday. I'm afraid we won't be
able to serve everyone.

FATHER JOE

Tell the chef to prepare an
extra hundred meals. If
there's too much, we can send
it to Father Mathieu's parish.

CLERK

Understood.

Father Joe steps out toward the back garden. It's peaceful, with
blooming flowers and lush spring trees.

Farther away, there's even a vegetable garden. Father Joe takes
a quick glance as he passes by, then walks alongside a large
white tent.

He reaches the entrance, where the long queue waits. Father
Joe greets them with a wide smile.

FATHER JOE

Good morning, everyone.

HOMELESS (ALL)

Good morning, Father.

FATHER JOE

Please, go ahead. Don't forget
to sign the register and make
yourselves comfortable.

The first homeless people comply and enter the large tent.

On the right, an elaborate buffet stretches as far as the eye can
see, worthy of a five-star restaurant.

Each person takes a plate and delicately begins to serve themselves, admiring the spread. The guests gather around tables of eight. It resembles an upscale charity gala.

The clerks serve fine wines with care, pouring vintage bottles into glasses.

CUT TO:

A young clerk approaches the chef, who is busy in the kitchen.

CLERK

Father says we'll be short at
least a hundred meals.

CHEF

It's fine. I saw the line
outside. We'll serve everyone.

CUT TO:

In the large dining area, everyone eats reverently, savoring each bite.

The dishes are high-end: smoked salmon, chicken with morels, crab-stuffed asparagus—just to name a few.

CUT TO:

Father Joe remains at the entrance, continuing to welcome guests one by one.

An imam approaches. Father Joe opens his arms wide.

FATHER JOE

Salam Alikoum.

IMAM

Alikoum Salam.

FATHER JOE

Ibrahim! What a joy to see
you.

IBRAHIM

Likewise, Father Joe.

FATHER JOE

Are you joining us for lunch?

IBRAHIM

If you'll have me.

FATHER JOE

Of course! You're always welcome.

IBRAHIM

I brought a few followers with me. I hope I'm not taking advantage of your generosity?

FATHER JOE

Not at all. This house is theirs as well. Tell them to come in. There's fish and lamb.

Ibrahim turns to a group of ten men in djellabas waiting politely at the entrance.

IBRAHIM

(in Arabic)

Come, sit down, my brothers.

The group enters the tent respectfully and sits wherever there are open spots.

Ibrahim and Father Joe sit at a table among the homeless.

FATHER JOE

(jokingly)

Should I offer you some communion wine?

IBRAHIM

(smiling)

No thanks, I'll stick to water.

FATHER JOE

There is nothing better, I do agree.

The imam takes a bite of the chicken with morels.

IBRAHIM

This is amazing!

FATHER JOE

Thank you. The chef is talented. You should give him one or two recipes from your country for him to prepare next time.

IBRAHIM

(amused)

Thank you. That's kind. I'll do that. Where did you find him?

FATHER JOE

He was living on the streets just a few months ago. The banks took his restaurant and drained him dry.

IBRAHIM

Yes. Society is becoming more inhumane by the day. God is just a word they've engraved on their banknotes.

FATHER JOE

That's true. But thankfully, we are here.

IBRAHIM

Bifal Allah.

FATHER JOE

(smiling)

"Thanks be to God." You're right.

CUT TO:

Four men in djellabas exit a van, carrying two large wooden crates. Friends of Ibrahim.

IBRAHIM

I finally received what you asked for. Where should we put them?

FATHER JOE

Ah! Excellent. Have them placed in the sacristy. I'll deal with them later.

Ibrahim signals to his men, who walk around the tent and place the two crates in the church, in front of the altar, as if offering them.

IBRAHIM

Your parish is getting more crowded every week. I might end up jealous. What's your secret?

FATHER JOE

(after some thought)

Forgiveness, I think, and dialogue. People are lost in this violent and inhumane society. They need a voice to guide them back to the right path. It doesn't matter whether that path leads to a church, a mosque, a synagogue, or a temple, as long as there's a home to welcome them.

IBRAHIM

(touched)

You're a wise man, Father Joe. And if you ever run for office, I'll vote for you.

FATHER JOE

(laughing)

Politics?! May God spare me from that!

The two men share a hearty, complicit laugh.

CUT TO:

A little later, the homeless leave the tent, each carrying a doggy bag.

HOMELESS

Thank you, Father, for everything you do for us.

FATHER JOE

Go in Christ's peace, my son, and see you next Sunday.

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CUT TO:

A little farther away, the chef is tidying up his kitchen while volunteers wash the dishes.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)

You outdid yourself today,
chef. Everyone's singing your
praises.

CHEF

Thank you, but it's summer—it's
easier than winter. The
vegetables are bursting with
sunshine and vitamins. I saw
Ibrahim; next week, I'll make
couscous.

FATHER JOE

Wonderful. See you next Sunday.

CHEF

See you Sunday, Father.

CUT TO:

Father Joe walks back into the church and heads toward the altar,
where the two crates left by Ibrahim are placed.

Several altar boys, still dressed in white, surround the Father.

FATHER JOE

Take the crates.

The altar boys carry the crates and follow the Father to the
back of the church, where there's a tomb under an arch, right
next to the statue of Saint Mary Magdalene.

The Father activates a mechanism, and the heavy tombstone slides
away, revealing a stone staircase leading down to the catacombs.

CUT TO:

Father Joe enters a digital code and steps into a large secret
room.

Neon lights on the ceiling, tiled floors. Everything is
pristine.

On the walls, dozens of racks filled with all kinds of weapons.

The two crates are placed on a large table. They contain grenades, assault rifles, and a rocket launcher with its ammunition.

Father Joe picks up the rocket launcher. He seems satisfied.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)

With gear like this, the Lord's
ways will no longer be
inscrutable.

(to the altar boys)

Go ahead, put everything away.

The boys get to work while Father Joe picks up the bag he had at Lino's.

He approaches a wall and enters a code to open the door to a massive vault—so massive you could walk inside.

The Father opens the bag and places bundles of cash on the shelves. An altar boy also adds the generous donations collected during mass.

There are thousands of dollars in the vault, but instead of feeling satisfied, Father Joe looks troubled. He picks up a bill and lets out a deep sigh.

He looks at God's name written on the bill.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)

Forgive them, Lord, for
putting your name on this
piece of paper that one day,
will lead to their downfall.
May your light bring them out
of the darkness.

Father Joe closes the heavy door, plunging the room into darkness.

BLACK SCREEN

SEQ. INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Music blares. A hundred decibels and as many teenagers shouting and flailing amidst wild lights. It's what they call "dancing."

Drugs are flowing freely.

We follow a young dealer weaving through the crowd like a clownfish among anemones.

A sweaty dancer approaches and shouts at him over the music.

DANCER

(laughing)

Hey! If I take ten, will you cut me a deal?!

DEALER

In your dreams. I barely have enough for everyone!

DANCER

Come on! For an old client!

DEALER

Are you kidding me?! I've never seen you before?!

DANCER

Okay, okay! I'll take twenty!

The dealer finally smiles.

DEALER

Twenty? Now you're talking... I don't have that on me. Meet me in the bathroom.

DANCER

Deal.

The young dealer cuts through the crowd and enters a hallway filled with teenagers making out.

CUT TO:

In the men's bathroom, he shifts a mirror aside and reaches into a stash.

But it's empty.

He insists, using his phone to light the hiding spot, but it's completely empty.

DANCER (CONT'D)

(impatient)

Well?

DEALER

(pale)

Shit! Someone screwed me! That son of a bitch!!

He turns and gets a silencer pressed to his cheek.

FATHER JOE

I suggest you don't speak of my mother that way.

DEALER

(shocked)

I'm sorry! I'm sorry!

FATHER JOE

(to the dancer)

Go back to having fun and stop using drugs if you don't want me to call your parents.

DANCER

(worried)

You... You know my parents?

FATHER JOE

I see them often in confession... Now go.

(to the dealer)

And you, come with me. We need some air.

CUT TO:

The young dealer exits through the back door, with the silencer pressed to his neck.

DEALER

Hey?! Father! Take it easy! I'm nobody! Just a low- life at the bottom of the chain!

FATHER JOE

I know, and the advantage of a chain is that you can follow the links to reach the source. So, tell me, where's your supplier?

DEALER

If I snitch, he'll kill me.

FATHER JOE

If you don't snitch, I'll kill you. But if you cooperate, you'll have the chance to turn your life around and get back on the right path. How old are you?

DEALER

Nineteen.

FATHER JOE

And when you were a kid, was it your dream to become a drug dealer?

DEALER

(lost)

Uh... no.

FATHER JOE

What was your dream as a child?

The young man looks confused. Tears well up in his eyes.

DEALER

I... I wanted to be a painter.

FATHER JOE

That's a noble profession.

DEALER

My dad said it was a job for sissies!

FATHER JOE

May God forgive him!

Father Joe hands him a wad of hundred-dollar bills.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)

Here. Buy yourself some supplies and paint. God will guide your hand, just as he's guiding mine.

He says this while still holding the silencer to the dealer's cheek. The young man hesitates but eventually takes the money.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)

Now, tell me where your
supplier is.

DEALER

Down the street. Two guys.
Black sedan.

CUT TO:

Two thugs, cigarettes dangling from their mouths, are joking around. One leans against a large black sedan while the other sits in the driver's seat.

The street is lit with neon signs, and women stroll along the sidewalks.

A typical Saturday night, where lost souls wander the streets of debauchery.

Father Joe walks toward the first thug, the one leaning against the car.

THUG

(amused)

Hey, Father! Looking for a
little fun? Whatever you want,
I've got it! Tell me! What can
I do for you?

Father Joe discreetly presses the silencer to the thug's stomach.

FATHER JOE

I'd like to know who your boss
is. I need to talk to him.

The thug tenses up but doesn't appear scared.

THUG

Whoa, whoa! Easy, Father!
You're in our territory here!
It's one thing to threaten
someone, but shooting them in
the street? That takes a
steady hand.

FATHER JOE
It's not my hand; it's
God's...

He shoots the driver in the car, a bullet straight to the head,
then swiftly points the gun at the surviving thug's throat.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)
...And God's hand never
trembles.

The thug is in shock.

THUG
You're insane!

FATHER JOE
Allow me to keep my personal
issues to myself. Your boss's
name, quickly.

THUG
(*terrified*)
You're just going to kill me
like this? In the middle of the
street?!

FATHER JOE
I assume you've destroyed all
the surveillance cameras to
operate here in peace, haven't
you?

The thug nods.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)
That reassures me. Now hurry
up. His name. And his address.

The thug starts sweating.

THUG
Lorenzo. The lingerie shop.
End of the street.

Father Joe confiscates the thug's phone.

FATHER JOE
Good. Now, you're going to sit

in the back of your car and
stay there until daylight. Are
we clear?!

THUG
(panicked)
Clear.

The thug complies, climbing into the back seat, trying to catch his breath. Through the windshield, he watches Father Joe walk away.

The thug struggles to contain his rising panic and avoids looking at his partner in the front seat, whose head is now shattered.

CUT TO:

Father Joe enters the lingerie shop.

Objects of desire gleam under shimmering lights. Cheap mannequins showcase colorful and revealing outfits.

The priest heads straight to the counter, where a bouncer-like man, tattooed from head to toe, stands smiling with diamond-studded teeth.

BOUNCER
Can I help you, Father?

FATHER JOE
I'd like to speak to Mr.
Lorenzo.

BOUNCER
(intrigued)
What for?

FATHER JOE
It's personal.

CUT TO:

In the car, the thug tries to retrieve the phone from his partner's lifeless body.

BACK TO THE SHOP:

BOUNCER
Hold on. I'll see if he can

see you.

FATHER JOE

(politely)

Don't trouble yourself; I'll
ask him myself.

The bouncer takes a silencer bullet to the knee and collapses to the ground.

In the back room, Lorenzo hears his employee's scream.

He stops counting money and freezes. His phone rings.

LORENZO

Yeah?

It's the thug in the car.

THUG

(panicked)

There's a guy coming your way—a
killer. He's dressed as a
priest!

LORENZO

Dressed as what?

Father Joe bursts into the back room, gun drawn, aiming directly at Lorenzo.

THUG

(freaking out)

A priest!! I swear, Lorenzo!
This isn't a joke! Believe me!

LORENZO

... I believe you.

He slowly hangs up and reaches for his gun.

FATHER JOE

Tsk tsk, I wouldn't do that.

LORENZO

(worried)

What do you want?

FATHER JOE

To know where the stuff on

your nose comes from.

Lorenzo wipes his coke-covered nose.

LORENZO

It's for personal use. I know,
I'm addicted—it's bad. But I
do it at home. No big deal.

FATHER JOE

I heard about a clandestine
lab?

LORENZO

(badly feigning innocence)
A... a what?

Father Joe shoots him in the knee. Lorenzo screams in pain.

FATHER JOE

With proper rehab, you'll walk
again in six months—limping a
little, but walking. The next
bullet is for your other knee,
and then you won't walk at
all. Trust me, I know. So I'll
ask you again, for the second
and last time: where's the lab
entrance?

Lorenzo breaks under the pain.

LORENZO

... Behind the mannequin...

In a recess, a plastic mannequin displays a provocatively
playful outfit.

FATHER JOE

How does it open?

LORENZO

You... press... the left
breast.

FATHER JOE

(blank-faced)
Are you kidding?

LORENZO

I am not in the mood for
jokes.

CUT TO:

Father Joe, with great reluctance, presses the left breast of the mannequin, which pivots and reveals a hidden passage.

In a room resembling a makeshift parking lot, about a dozen workers wearing masks process, weigh, and package hundreds of kilos of drugs.

Father Joe glances at Lorenzo and places a grenade in his hand.

FATHER JOE
Hold this for me, please, and
don't let go.

Terrified, Lorenzo clenches the grenade while Father Joe pulls out the pin.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)
I will be back.

Father Joe enters the clandestine lab, dual silencers raised, catching the half-naked workers off guard. They are shirtless due to the heat (and to prevent theft).

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)
Gentlemen?! Unfortunately,
this workshop is permanently
closed. Please go home and
find more respectable jobs—or
I'll make sure your names end
up with the police!

The workers immediately raise their hands and run out, passing poor Lorenzo, who's holding his knee with one hand and the grenade with the other.

Father Joe grabs a drum of ethylene and pours it over the drug stash. Then, he returns to Lorenzo and presses a silencer to his forehead.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)
Do you believe in God, my son?

LORENZO
(panicked)
Yes! Yes! I believe in God, our

Almighty Lord!

FATHER JOE
Are you baptized?

LORENZO
Yes! I even had my first
communion at eleven, in our
beautiful cathedral, La
Cattedrale di Palermo in
Sicily!

Father Joe, momentarily thrown, pauses.

FATHER JOE
How did you fall so far, so
fast, my boy?

LORENZO
(tearful)
Pff! It's a long story, Father.

FATHER JOE
Well! You can tell me all about
it in confession.

Suddenly, he injects Lorenzo in the neck with a syringe.

LORENZO
(panicked)
What's this?!

FATHER JOE
A poison that will take effect
in a few days. Come to mass
and confession on Sunday, and
I'll give you the antidote.
I'm at the Church of Felicity
on 118th Street. Now give me
that.

Father Joe retrieves the grenade and tosses it into the
clandestine lab.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)
See you Sunday, my son.

As he exits the shop, it explodes behind him, shaking the entire
street.

In the car, the thug watches Father Joe, in slow motion, emerging from the flames of hell.

SEQ. INT. OFFICE - DAY

Close-up: A torch lighter ignites a thick cigar.

A quality Havana. A man inhales deeply, and smoke envelops his scarred face, twisted like an old vine. Judging by his scars, he didn't work at the post office.

GIUSEPPE is the capo. His inner circle calls him Giu. The rest call him "Padre." But there's nothing ecclesiastical about him—his office looks more like Corleone's than a church.

Giuseppe listens intently to MARCO, the organization's young accountant.

MARCO

After a 12% drop in revenue last month, it's down another 17% this month. Key areas impacted: road transport, mainly due to rising fuel costs, down 5%. But more significantly, narcotics sales have declined. In this sector, there's been a drop in consumption among women—down 9%—and especially among the very young, with eight consecutive months of decline, amounting to a 41% annual drop. That's a loss of approximately \$23.7 million.

Giuseppe coughs slightly. Maybe not because of the cigar.

Around him, ten family members sit with their heads bowed. Some are recognizable from Sunday mass.

GIUSEPPE

Thank you, Marco. Gentlemen, let me tell you a story. When I was thirteen, in my hometown in Calabria, my father ran a small shop. Business wasn't good because he bought his goods at too high a price. As

a result, his margins were too thin. It made him sick, and he was gone in a few years. The man who sold him the goods was Felipe Martone, a wholesaler for five generations. He sold to my father at twice the normal price. He bled him dry, down to his last drop. His last breath. Then, when my father died, he bought the shop for next to nothing. I killed Felipe Martone with my own hands. For next to nothing. Now imagine what I'm capable of doing... for \$23.7 million.

The room swallows hard. Sweat beads on their foreheads.

GIUSEPPE (CONT'D)

Now that you understand my mindset, I'd like someone to explain why these numbers have collapsed... especially among the young. Andrea?

Andrea has been seen at Sunday mass.

ANDREA

(uncomfortable)

Well, young people aren't good customers. They can't control themselves and overdose after just a few hits. A dead customer isn't a good customer, right?

His joke falls flat.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

Whereas adults are more reasonable, more regular. You can build loyalty, and when the product's good, they keep coming back.

GIUSEPPE

Ricardo, whose two kids are now in college, told me you

refused to sell to them when they wanted to buy in bulk for their classmates?

ANDREA

(getting more nervous)

Yes, that's true, but only because I read in a business book that "forbidden things sell better." By refusing to sell to minors, we tease them, and when they're adults, they become even more addicted.

Giuseppe pauses, staring at Andrea like a dog eyeing a bone.

Then, he pulls out his gun and empties the clip into poor Andrea, who collapses.

GIUSEPPE

That's the stupidest explanation I've ever heard.

Giuseppe loses his temper.

GIUSEPPE (CONT'D)

There are four million births in this country every year! That means four million new customers every damn year! So who cares about a hundred thousand annual overdoses? Youth is by far the most lucrative market, and if we're not the leaders, someone else will be!

Giuseppe lights his cigar again to calm down.

GIUSEPPE (CONT'D)

Now, can someone explain the problem more coherently?

LINO

Giu?

GIUSEPPE

Yes, Lino? I'm listening.

Lino sighs and begins.

LINO

There's a priest in town.
Father Joe. He's been shaking a
lot of us down.

GIUSEPPE

And how has he been 'Shaking
you down'?

LINO

He... He grabs us, then
injects us with poison, and if
we want the antidote, we have
to attend mass every Sunday.

Giuseppe can't believe what he's hearing. He laughs nervously.

GIUSEPPE

That's what you call
"coherent"?

LINO

No. But it's the truth.

GIUSEPPE

And what does he want? A cut of
the business?

LINO

No. He lets us work. He just
wants us to spare the
children. No sales under 21.

LORENZO

Lino's telling the truth. He
injected me, too.

Lorenzo's leg is casted up to the hip.

The other members nod in agreement.

Giuseppe is stunned.

GIUSEPPE

The world's gone mad, Lord!
(pausing)
It's time to pray.

Bells chime.

SEQ. EXT./INT. DAY. CHURCH OF FELICITY

As every Sunday morning, dozens of chauffeured cars gather in front of Father Joe's church.

A large black Cadillac double-parks, and Giuseppe, the "Padre," steps out.

The crowd seems both surprised and honored by his presence.

He walks toward the church, shaking a few hands along the way. Inside, he dips his fingers in the holy water and crosses himself.

The mass is already underway.

Giuseppe takes a seat in a pew reserved for him. His bodyguards spread out discreetly through the aisles. They're armed to the teeth, enough to make any metal detector scream.

At the altar, Father Joe continues his sermon.

FATHER JOE

... And so spoke Jesus, our Lord.
But a great Russian writer,
Dostoevsky, once asked this
question: "Why do children
suffer?" We can only raise our
eyes to the heavens and humbly ask
our Lord. But I doubt we'll ever
get an answer. So, it is up to us
to find one. A child, by
definition, lives in a world of
innocence. Their suffering comes
only from the adult world. We must
ask ourselves: "What can I do to
prevent a child's suffering?"
First, stay close to them, speak
to them, guide them. Protect their
wonderful world and allow them to
grow at their own pace. They have
plenty of time to enter the adult
world—a harsh place, full of our
inconsistencies, our lies, our
weaknesses. In every child, there
is the soul of God. A pure,
untouched soul, just as the
Creator intended. It is up to us—

all of us—to protect and love
them. Let us pray for them.

The altar boys begin a religious hymn.

Other children walk through the aisles with baskets to collect donations. As usual, the faithful are generous, and the baskets fill with cash.

One altar boy places the basket under Giuseppe's nose. He hesitates, unsure how to react.

ALTAR BOY
For the children.

Giuseppe fumbles in his pockets. He's clearly not used to carrying cash.

LINO
Allow me to contribute on your
behalf, Giu.

Giuseppe, uncomfortable, nods. Lino places a wad of hundred-dollar bills in the basket. The altar boy rewards him with a smile.

Father Joe has brought out his basket of communion wafers (and antidotes) and begins his service at the front of the line forming before the altar.

Giuseppe looks horrified by such a casual display of what he perceives as trafficking.

Gradually, the faithful leave the church.

Father Joe distributes his last wafer, then looks at Giuseppe, now standing alone in the middle of the aisle.

A dozen bodyguards spread out throughout the church, a fact not lost on Father Joe.

FATHER JOE
Is this for the Eucharist, my
son?

GIUSEPPE
No... I just want to talk.

FATHER JOE
A confession, then?

Giuseppe seems caught off guard.

GIUSEPPE
... Why not.

FATHER JOE
Follow me, then.

CUT TO:

Father Joe leads Giuseppe to the side and invites him into the confessional booth.

As the two men sit on opposite sides of the grille, Giuseppe's bodyguards secure the area.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)
I'm listening, my son.

GIUSEPPE
(*amused*)
I must admit, I'm quite impressed with how you run your business, Father.

FATHER JOE
My business? That's not the right word, my son.

GIUSEPPE
On the contrary, and I know what I'm talking about. I've been working since I was twelve, and I actually think you and I are in the same business.

FATHER JOE
Really?

GIUSEPPE
(*ironically*)
Of course. We both comfort lost souls, help fragile bodies scarred by life. You do it by selling hope, wafers, and candles. I do it with alcohol, sex, and drugs.

FATHER JOE

The method is different.

GIUSEPPE

But the result is the same.
Through your words and
prayers, they forget their
miserable lives for a moment.
With me, they forget
everything! So what does it
matter who the magician is if
the illusion is perfect?

FATHER JOE

I'm no magician, merely the
Lord's representative. Perhaps
I'm the hand, but He holds the
magic wand.

GIUSEPPE

(after a beat)

I did a bit of
investigating... You weren't
always a priest, were you?

FATHER JOE

That's correct.

GIUSEPPE

You joined the special forces
at seventeen?

FATHER JOE

Yes, but I left after seven
years of service.

GIUSEPPE

Where were you stationed?

FATHER JOE

Mostly Asia. Vietnam. Laos.
Burma.

GIUSEPPE

Asia's a great school. They
invented the art of war.

FATHER JOE

That's true.

47.
FLASH:

A bodyguard is grabbed by the collar and vanishes.

END OF FLASH

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)
I learned a lot there. I even
got married. To a wonderful
woman. And we opened an
orphanage.

GIUSEPPE
And, why did you leave the
army?

FATHER JOE
I dreamed of justice,
equality, and sharing.
I wasn't in the right place.
The military is just another
weapon in capitalism's
arsenal, and wars are fought
by people who don't know each
other for the benefit of those
who know each other very well.

FLASH:

Another bodyguard vanishes mysteriously.

END OF FLASH

GIUSEPPE
We agree on that point.
(pauses)
You also had a son who
tragically passed away?

Father Joe pauses, visibly affected. Old wounds resurface.

FATHER JOE
Yes, he was fifteen.

GIUSEPPE
"Overdose," I believe?

FATHER JOE
They sold him heroin instead
of cocaine.

48.

FLASH:

An altar boy knocks out a guard and drags him away.

END OF FLASH

GIUSEPPE

Unfortunately, it's a common mistake. The two substances look similar, especially in the dark or under the influence of alcohol.

(pauses)

So, you joined the clergy to eradicate this lucrative business?

Father Joe starts to tense up.

FLASH:

Another bodyguard is taken down by an altar boy.

END OF FLASH

FATHER JOE

No, not immediately. Only a few months later. After my wife passed away, heartbroken from losing her only son at fifteen.

GIUSEPPE

Believe me, Father, I sympathize—even though I have no children. But this business is a runaway machine that started long before you and me. Nothing and no one can stop it, not even the hand of God.

FATHER JOE

Don't underestimate his power.

FLASH:

A guard is knocked out in an instant.

GIUSEPPE

Today, I'd advise you not to underestimate mine. My men are everywhere in your church, and they're just waiting for my signal to tear it apart. So here are the terms of a new deal between you and me.

FATHER JOE

Let me guess: I let you kill children with your drugs, and I stick to selling candles and wafers?

GIUSEPPE

That's about right.

FATHER JOE

I'm afraid the Lord doesn't support you on this path, my son.

Giuseppe grows concerned. He peeks out of the confessional and sees that all his guards have disappeared.

A dozen altar boys, armed with lethal weapons, surround the confessional.

A bead of sweat forms on Giuseppe's forehead as Father Joe prepares a syringe.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)

Let me propose another deal.
Come closer!

Father Joe begins injecting the poison through the confessional grille.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)

You can continue your little business, but inform your teams that these substances are now prohibited for anyone under 21.

GIUSEPPE

(offended)

21?! But adulthood is 18!

FATHER JOE

21. And in exchange, you will
come to see me every Sunday,
and I will grant you
absolution.

He puts away the syringe. Giuseppe rubs his neck.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)

Now go, my son, and may the
peace of the Lord be with you.

SEQ. INT./EXT. DAY. HOSPITAL

A large black sedan screeches to a halt outside the hospital as
Giuseppe bursts into the emergency room.

GIUSEPPE

(on the phone)

Massimo, where are you? I
don't see you!

Down the hallway, Dr. Massimo, in a white coat, raises his hand.

MASSIMO

I'm here.

The two men meet, and Massimo leads his impatient guest to a
private office.

MASSIMO (CONT'D)

(worried)

What's going on, Giu?

GIUSEPPE

I was injected with a deadly
poison less than an hour ago,
and I need an antidote.

MASSIMO

Do you know what kind of
poison?

GIUSEPPE

No idea.

MASSIMO

Are you experiencing pain,
chills, fever?

GIUSEPPE

(angrily)

Nothing! Just a damn rage
building inside me!

MASSIMO

Calm down. I'll need to take a
blood sample. It's the only
way to identify the poison.
Sit down.

Giuseppe complies and starts rolling up his sleeve.

MASSIMO (CONT'D)

Are others infected?

GIUSEPPE

Yes.

(shouting)

Half my damn crew!!

MASSIMO

Stay calm, or the spread could
accelerate.

The doctor begins the blood draw.

GIUSEPPE

How long until you have
results?

MASSIMO

For a full analysis, it'll
take a few days. But it would
be best if you stayed here for
additional tests: scans, bone
density, stool samples... a
full workup.

GIUSEPPE

(annoyed)

I don't have time for that.
I've got a business to run.

MASSIMO

(serious)

If you end up six feet under,

you won't have a business to run.

Giuseppe lets out a deep sigh and seems to relent.

SEQ. EXT. DAY. CEMETERY

A field of small crosses and tombstones spreads across a meticulously maintained lawn. In the distance, a cluster of skyscrapers looms.

Father Joe weaves between the crosses and stops at a grave marked "Linh and Lucas Dermot." A mother and her son.

He lays a small bouquet of spring flowers on the headstone, likely from his parish garden.

FATHER JOE

(emotional)

Happy birthday, my love. I know I haven't visited in weeks, but... I've been busier than ever.

(pauses)

And it's getting harder. There's the satisfaction of saving lives every day... but at what cost? The stronger the breath of life, the more it seems to stoke the fires of hell. I can't wait for my mission to end so I can finally join you... because I miss you both more with each passing day.

Father Joe spends a moment in silence, then leaves the cemetery.

FLASH:

Father Joe on a lightning-fast mission.

Gunshots-knife slashes-punches-strangulations-blood splatters-screams of fear and pain.

A stray bullet hits Father Joe in the shoulder.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)

... Damn it...

The pace slows, returning to a more human rhythm. Father Joe sets down his gun and examines his wound.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)

That! That was really uncool
of you!

He speaks to a man lying in a pool of blood.

MAN

(weakly)

Sorry.

FATHER JOE

If you'd listened to me from
the start, instead of
triggering your stupid alarm,
neither of us would be here
right now. Do you have a first
aid kit somewhere?

The man weakly raises a bloody arm.

MAN

There... in the cabinet.

Father Joe finds the kit.

FATHER JOE

Ah! Perfect.

He quickly removes his cassock and sits to bandage his shoulder.

MAN

(weakly)

Are you really a priest?

FATHER JOE

(irritated)

Of course. What do you think?
That I dress like this just to
assassinate people more
efficiently?

MAN

Let's just say... priests don't
usually assassinate anyone.

FATHER JOE

True. Let's just say God's hands must stay clean, so I dirty mine for Him.

MAN

Seen that way... you're doing a hell of a job.

The man is losing blood rapidly. He doesn't have much time left, and Father Joe knows it.

FATHER JOE

Do you believe in God, my son?

MAN

(weakly)

... No... but now... I regret it.

FATHER JOE

I understand. But before you go, know this: the Lord has always believed in you. In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti...

The man exhales his last breath. Father Joe takes a moment to reflect.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)

... Amen.

He puts his cassock back on and approaches an open safe, stuffed to the brim with cash.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)

... Hallelujah..

A strange, unpleasant noise is heard.

SEQ. INT. DAY. HOSPITAL

... The sound is from a medical scanner.

Giuseppe, shirtless, slides into a medical tube, wearing a large headset over his ears.

Massimo is in the next room.

MASSIMO
(over the microphone)
Hold your breath now.

Giuseppe complies. He looks a bit ridiculous, with his Mickey Mouse ears, his blind-man glasses, and the hair on his chest as thick as a carpet.

MASSIMO (CONT'D)
And... breathe!

GIUSEPPE
(exhaling)
Damn priest!!

SEQ. INT./EXT. DAY. CHURCH

Father Joe enters his church through the back door. His briefcase is heavy, and his shoulder aches.

A young altar boy runs toward him.

ALTAR BOY
Father, there's...

FATHER JOE
Not now, my son, not now! Give
me five minutes. I need to
catch my breath.

CUT TO:

Father Joe enters his office, sets the briefcase on the table, and leans against a small sink.

In the mirror, he sees his tired face—and a few drops of blood on his cheek.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)
(to himself)
... Damn it...

He grabs a tissue to wipe his face. Then, in the mirror, he notices a silhouette sitting at the far end of the room.

He quickly turns around.

The man is draped in a large cape, concealing red robes. He's a cardinal.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)

(surprised)

Oh?! Forgive me, Your
Excellency. You startled me.

CARDINAL

I must apologize. I took the
liberty of waiting in your
office.

FATHER JOE

You did well.

Father Joe gestures for the cardinal to sit at the table.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)

May I offer you something to
drink?

CARDINAL

Is the communion wine good?

FATHER JOE

Excellent.

CARDINAL

Then I'll have a small glass.

Father Joe signals to one of his protégés, who quickly fetches
the wine. Meanwhile, Father Joe sits down, visibly in pain.

FATHER JOE

If you'll allow me, I'll take
a seat. I'm feeling a bit worn
out.

CARDINAL

Are you in pain?

FATHER JOE

(with humor)

Nothing compared to Christ's
suffering.

CARDINAL

Naturally!

An altar boy brings two glasses and pours the communion wine.

FATHER JOE

I was expecting you on Sunday?

CARDINAL

Yes, I know, but unfortunately, I won't be able to attend. The diocese has called me for a delicate matter. I deeply regret it, believe me. I was looking forward to attending one of your masses. I've heard great things.

FATHER JOE

I'm glad to hear that.

CARDINAL

And I understand you draw a full house every Sunday?

FATHER JOE

(humbly)

I can't complain.

CARDINAL

While all the other churches in the city are desperately empty.

Father Joe simply smiles.

CARDINAL (CONT'D)

(kindly)

I must insist that you share your secret with me!

FATHER JOE

(after a pause)

We focus on retention.

CARDINAL

That's good.

(pausing)

Faithful followers who are also... generous?

FATHER JOE

Their generosity benefits the church. I send 90% of the donations we collect to the

diocese.

CARDINAL

I know, I know. And we're delighted to receive them. That's partly why I'm here today: to thank you, but also to understand.

FATHER JOE

Understand what?

CARDINAL

Father Joe, don't feign ignorance. The diocesan churches send us an average of \$8,000 every six months. You send over \$250,000... every month!?

The moment hangs in silence.

FATHER JOE

And... is that a problem?

CARDINAL

No, no. In itself, we're thrilled to receive such sums. But... we'd like to be sure of the source of this money. To ensure, in a way, that it isn't... dirty money.

FATHER JOE

Isn't all money dirty by definition?

CARDINAL

Certainly, but it's important for me to know the origin of this money.

FATHER JOE

(uneasy)

Let's just say... some of my parishioners obtain their money through means that the church and morality disapprove of, and they hope that by giving it, they can atone for

their sins.

The cardinal studies him for a long moment, as if searching for truth in Father Joe's weary, fatigued eyes. Perhaps it's too much for one man to bear, even a priest.

The cardinal senses his despair.

CARDINAL

(kindly)

Would you like to confess, my son?

Father Joe is initially surprised, then visibly relieved.

FATHER JOE

... Why not...

CARDINAL

I'm listening, my son.

Father Joe's eyes well up with tears.

FATHER JOE

I have sinned, Father. Every day. For seven years now.

CARDINAL

Yes... go on?

FATHER JOE

God's word is no longer enough to eradicate evil, so I eradicate it in his place.

CARDINAL

...How?

Father Joe takes his time. What he's about to say is not easy to admit.

FATHER JOE

I... I hurt, torture, and kill those who harm children. I rob them of everything they have, down to their last cent, then I poison them and force them to attend mass every Sunday so I can take what's left. I do all of this without remorse,

without emotion, without
desire. With a coldness that
sometimes frightens me. I know
I'll end up in hell, but I ask
God for forgiveness every day.
I only hope that, through my
actions, I save the lives of
some children. As for the
rest, I leave it to you to
decide what to do with this
money.

Father Joe opens the briefcase he had placed on the table.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)

Here.

The cardinal is speechless. His state of shock makes it hard to predict his reaction.

He looks at the money, then at Father Joe, then back at the money. There's at least \$500,000 inside.

Suddenly, the cardinal closes the briefcase.

CARDINAL

May the Lord be with you, my
son.

The cardinal takes the heavy briefcase and leaves as abruptly as he arrived.

Father Joe remains seated for a moment, perplexed, torn between amusement and despair, before finally smiling—without quite knowing why.

SEQ. INT. DAY. HOSPITAL

Giuseppe, covered in patches, sits on an exercise bike with a tube in his mouth and sweat on his face.

Massimo pushes him hard.

MASSIMO

(encouraging)

Come on! Thirty more seconds!
You can do it! Push yourself!

Giuseppe, fueled by rage, summons his last bit of energy.

MASSIMO (CONT'D)
That's it! Campione del mondo!
And... relax!

Massimo checks the monitors, satisfied.

Giuseppe, out of breath, slows down and pulls the tube from his mouth.

MASSIMO (CONT'D)
Excellent, Giuseppe. For your
age, that's outstanding.

GIUSEPPE
(glaring)
... Damn priest...

SEQ. INT. DAY. SYNAGOGUE

A beautiful synagogue stands squeezed between two buildings, much like the city's churches. A few congregants chat outside, scarves around their necks, side locks peeking out from under tall hats.

Though the setting has changed, Father Joe ascends the steps to the entrance.

He's greeted by a young rabbi, JACOB.

JACOB
Good morning, Father.

FATHER JOE
Good morning, Jacob.

JACOB
Rabbi Samuel is expecting you.

FATHER JOE
Thank you.

Jacob leads him through the synagogue's hallways to an old wooden office that smells of polish.

RABBI SAMUEL, in his sixties, dressed in traditional attire, blends perfectly with the wooden decor.

The two men are visibly delighted to see each other and share a

warm embrace.

RABBI SAMUEL

Thank you for coming, my friend. My legs are bothering me more and more.

(with humor)

And I sometimes wonder why on earth our Lord invented rheumatism!

FATHER JOE

He also invented the Dead Sea. I've heard its waters are soothing?

RABBI SAMUEL

Due to their high salt content, that's correct.

(confiding)

I'm heading there in September for two weeks. My nephew built a house right by the water.

FATHER JOE

I hope it eases your pain.

RABBI SAMUEL

God willing. Please, sit down. And try this—it's divine.

Rabbi Samuel pushes a small tray of Middle Eastern pastries toward Father Joe.

FATHER JOE

That's kind, but I'm trying to watch my waistline.

RABBI SAMUEL

I understand. It's true you have rather... "physical" activities. You need to stay in shape.

Rabbi Samuel seems to know a great deal about Father Joe.

FATHER JOE

That's preferable, yes.

(pauses)

What can I do for you, Samuel?

The rabbi sets down the pastry he was about to eat, his expression growing serious.

RABBI SAMUEL

I mentioned a few months ago the troubling disappearances within our community. Mostly children—thirty so far this year.

FATHER JOE

I've heard of other cases unrelated to your community.

RABBI SAMUEL

I know. We investigated and found that it isn't antisemitic acts but a vile business. Children are being abducted... for their organs.

FATHER JOE

(shocked)

... Lord...

RABBI SAMUEL

Some wealthy parents are willing to do anything to save their child, even if it costs another child's life. It's the harsh reality of supply and demand. These people pay up to half a million dollars for a kidney, a liver, even a lung.

FATHER JOE

Humanity is truly capable of the worst.

RABBI SAMUEL

And the best. We now know who's behind this heinous trafficking and where their clandestine hospital is located.

FATHER JOE

Who are they?

RABBI SAMUEL

Mostly Russians. We reached out to our friends in the Orthodox Church, but they are as powerless as we are.

(pauses)

We need help.

FATHER JOE

Your community has a strong presence within the police, doesn't it?

RABBI SAMUEL

Yes, and it's thanks to them that we've gathered all this information.

Rabbi Samuel slides a dossier across the table to Father Joe.

FATHER JOE

And they can't intervene?

RABBI SAMUEL

Organizing such an operation would take them a month of administrative procedures, and these criminals move to a new location every week. The information in these documents is only valid for 48 hours.

Father Joe ponders for a long moment before sighing and picking up the dossier.

FATHER JOE

I'll see what I can do.

RABBI SAMUEL

Thank you, my brother. May God be with you.

FATHER JOE

I'll need it.

SEQ. EXT./INT. WAREHOUSE

An abandoned industrial zone, a relic of a bygone era.

In front of a brick-and-metal building, a handful of guards in black suits stand watch, armed. They look like ex-Spetsnaz operatives, now civilian, bulked up on steroids.

VOICE OVER

Thank you for coming...

CUT TO:

A man in his forties, wearing a pristine white lab coat and with perfectly combed hair, stands with a few pens neatly arranged in his pocket.

DOCTOR

... But before we proceed further, I'd like to know how you obtained our address.

Opposite him, Father Joe sits with two altar boys, dressed as proper students for the occasion. One of them rests crutches on his knees.

Behind them, two burly guards in black suits stand by the door.

FATHER JOE

I heard it in confession from Mr. Dickinson, the media magnate. He told me about his son's suffering—his liver, I believe. He came seeking help from our Lord who, I must admit in this case, could do little. But you—he said you sometimes performed "miracles"?

DOCTOR

(skeptical)

But Mr. Dickinson signed a confidentiality agreement prohibiting him from sharing any information about us.

FATHER JOE

The seal of confession is far more binding. It was I who erred in using this information to help these two young orphans I care for. They both suffer from a condition that prevents their kidneys

from functioning properly.
Glomerulonephritis, I believe.

The doctor takes a few notes.

DOCTOR
Indeed, at an advanced stage,
it requires a kidney
transplant.

FATHER JOE
We've been on the hospital
waiting list for nearly a year.
Then your name appeared, like
a sign from heaven.

DOCTOR
(*skeptical*)
It's a delicate and expensive
procedure.

Father Joe takes a large envelope and pulls out stacks of cash,
placing them on the table.

FATHER JOE
Thanks to the generosity of my
parishioners, I was able to
gather the sum. Two hundred
thousand, I believe? I must
say, Mr. Dickinson was the
most generous contributor.

The doctor eyes the growing pile of money.

CUT TO:

A group of schoolchildren, walking in pairs, marches
quietly past the warehouse.

They're all Asian. Their teacher is barely older than they
are.

The burly guards smirk as they watch the children pass.

GUARD 1
(*joking*)
Hey, who ordered Deliveroo?

The guards laugh boorishly as the column of children disappears
around the building.

CUT TO:

The doctor gently pushes the stacks of cash back toward Father Joe.

DOCTOR

Listen, Father, for now, take your money back and leave me the medical files for these two children. We'll get back to you soon.

Father Joe is visibly disappointed.

Discreetly, one of the children removes the cap from his crutch, while his brother retrieves a black stick hidden inside.

FATHER JOE

I must stress the urgency of the situation. They both suffered an acute crisis just yesterday.

DOCTOR

I promise to act as quickly as possible. Please leave your contact information.

The black stick continues to slowly emerge from the crutch. It's connected to another black stick by a chain. It's a nunchaku, a formidable Chinese weapon when handled with skill.

FATHER JOE

(annoyed)

My contact information? I'm talking about the lives of these children, and all you can say is, "Leave your contact information"?

DOCTOR

I don't let emotions affect my work.

Father Joe signals to his two partners, who spring to their feet in a flash and unleash a flurry of blows on the two guards with their nunchakus.

They definitely know how to use them, and the two guards, despite

their imposing size, collapse to the ground.

The doctor, stunned, reaches for his drawer, but Father Joe pulls a blade hidden in the wooden cross around his neck.

With a swift and precise move, he slashes the doctor's throat.

FATHER JOE

Neither do I.

The doctor instinctively clamps his hand over his neck to staunch the bleeding. Father Joe grabs his other hand and pins it to the table with the blade.
The doctor screams in agony.

One of the boys opens his small backpack, pulls out a rope, ties it to the window frame, and throws it outside.

CUT TO:

Below, the line of schoolchildren had been waiting for the signal and begin scaling the building's façade.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)

(calmly, to the doctor)

The throat wound isn't deep,
but if you remove your hand—or
try to pull out the blade—
you'll bleed out quickly. As
for your other hand, I placed
the blade between your radius
and scaphoid, carefully
avoiding the dorsal venous
arch. It's painful, but it
will heal quickly with minimal
scarring.

He points to everything with his finger, explaining it like mechanics.

The doctor listens, grimacing in pain.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)

The purpose of this little
maneuver is to ensure you
don't do anything foolish
while I'm gone for the next
ten minutes. Afterward, I'll
come back and release you. You
have my word. Clear?

The doctor nods weakly.

The students burst through the window like ninjas, while Father Joe dons a white lab coat.

The students open their backpacks, revealing an arsenal of lethal weapons: nunchakus, shurikens, ping chis, butterfly knives, tiger hooks—a real "Made in Asia" catalog.

Father Joe picks up his signature silencer.

CUT TO:

Father Joe, now in his lab coat, walks down the corridor with his group of children playing the role of frightened orphans.

At the end of the hallway, two guards notice something odd—two kids entered the doctor's office, but a dozen are now exiting.

But Shurikens already fly through the air, hitting the guards squarely in their faces. Other kids leap onto them, taking them down.

Father Joe opens a heavy door and enters another freshly painted corridor. It's clearly a makeshift hospital.

The group passes by a brute sitting on a chair.

GUARD

(to Father Joe)

Hey! Where are you headed?

FATHER JOE

New arrivals. I'm taking them to join the other kids.

GUARD

They're not there anymore. We move them every two hours. They're downstairs, at the far end, on the next level.

FATHER JOE

My mistake.

Father Joe and the children change direction.

CUT TO:

On the lower level, the setting shifts to industrial-looking basements. Further ahead, three guards stand in front of a heavy metal door—it looks like a vault.

The guards eye the approaching group suspiciously.

GUARD
What's this?

FATHER JOE
A new shipment.

GUARD
There's already too many in there. It won't hold!

FATHER JOE
We'll make room.

One guard takes a bullet to the knee as the kids launch their assault. Despite their size and weight, the guards are quickly overpowered.

Father Joe opens the thick door. The room inside is grim and pitch dark, with a dirt floor.

Soon, around thirty dazed children appear from the back of the room, like rabbits caught in headlights.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)
It's okay, kids. It's over now.
We're taking you home. Stay together and follow us closely.

CUT TO:

The group moves through a sterile corridor lined with operating rooms. Father Joe glances into each room as they pass—most are empty, except one.

He enters and takes down the surgical team in green scrubs, readying themselves for an operation.

Father Joe unties a child strapped to the operating table, moments away from losing an organ.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)
Join the others. We're leaving.

Outside, a yellow school bus pulls up in front of the building, much to the guards' surprise.

GUARD

Don't tell me they actually
hijacked a school bus full of
kids?!

The guards laugh. Their leader approaches the bus, which appears empty except for the driver—Jacob, Rabbi Samuel's right-hand man.

GUARD LEADER

I think you've got the wrong
address, Father.

Jacob looks at a piece of paper.

JACOB

15 Delaware Alley? Building 3,
at 2 PM sharp. And, it's...?

The guard checks his watch.

GUARD LEADER

... 2 PM.

JACOB

Be'sha'a tova!

GUARD LEADER

What does that mean?

JACOB

(smiling)

Right on time.

Father Joe suddenly throws open the main entrance door. Before the guards can react, he shoots them in the knees.

The guards collapse, and the ninjas swiftly subdue them.

The children quickly board the school bus.

FATHER JOE

Take everyone to the
synagogue. It's the safest
place.

JACOB
(worried)
Aren't you coming with us?!

FATHER JOE
I've got something to
finish... I'll catch up.

Father Joe heads back into the warehouse as the school bus, now full of children, drives off quickly.

CUT TO:

In the hangar doubling as a garage, Father Joe shoots a hole into a gas canister, causing fuel to spill out.

CUT TO:

Father Joe, holding the leaking gas canister in one hand and his silencer in the other, walks down the corridor, taking out anyone in his path.

It's like a carnival shooting game.

Surgeons scatter in all directions but fail to escape the sharpshooter's precise, scalpel-like aim.

He injures them badly but avoids killing unless met with significant resistance.

CUT TO:

Father Joe returns to the doctor's office. The doctor still has one hand pinned to the desk and the other clutching his wounded throat.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)
(setting the gas canister down)
See? I kept my word.

Father Joe removes the blade from the doctor's hand, cleans it with a handkerchief, and places it back into the wooden cross he wears around his neck.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)
I'll give you five minutes to
collect yourself, but after
that, you'll need to leave—
because hell is coming, and
the apocalypse is now.

DOCTOR
(weakly)
...Thank you.

FATHER JOE
You're welcome. May God help
you, my son.

Father Joe exits the room, closing the door behind him.

The doctor struggles to his feet and leaves through another door.

CUT TO:

In the parking lot, the doctor, bleeding from his throat, drags himself to his car.

Once inside, he tries to catch his breath and dials a number with his injured hand.

CUT TO:

Somewhere in a chic restaurant, with soothing music playing in the background, a cellphone rings.

IGOR, 35, sharp-featured with piercing blue eyes, excuses himself from his guests and answers the call.

IGOR
Yes?

The doctor, short of breath and rasping from his throat wound, sounds like an old man who's been drinking.

DOCTOR
It's... Vlad... We were...
attacked... He took the
children.

Igor's face darkens, matching his black tuxedo.

IGOR
Do you know who did this?

DOCTOR
... A... A priest... He... He
killed everyone.

FLASHBACK:

Father Joe strikes a match and tosses it onto the trail of gasoline. In seconds, the building ignites and then explodes.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
... And then he set the place
on fire. There's... nothing
left.

Igor remains calm, careful not to alarm his guests.

IGOR
Nothing... at all?

DOCTOR
Nothing! And he promised...
the apocalypse!

IGOR
I see. I'll call you back.

Igor politely wipes his mouth.

IGOR (CONT'D)
(to his guests)
Please excuse me, I have an
emergency at the clinic that I
must handle personally.
Senator, my apologies.

SENATOR
(with humor)
So the arduous task of
entertaining these lovely
ladies falls on me? Truly, I
couldn't ask for more!

The two young women smile politely.

IGOR
(to the women)
Pozabot'tes'o nem (take good
care of him).

The two women nod dutifully.

SEQ. EXT. INT. LIMOUSINE

Igor hurriedly gets into his limousine.

IGOR
(*to the driver*)
To the office. Quickly.

He taps nervously on his phone.

IGOR (CONT'D)
(*agitated*)
Why the hell do I have no
signal?!

The driver would like to respond, but it is not really his area of expertise.

SEQ. EXT. INT. OFFICE BUILDING

Igor exits the limousine and enters a sleek, modern building.

The glowing sign reads: "Rochenko Laboratories."

It reeks of corporate wealth and shady dealings.

Surprised guards straighten their uniforms as Igor passes.

He takes the elevator to the top floor and heads to his office.

CUT TO:

ASSISTANT
(*running up*)
Sorry, sir! I just heard about
your arrival. Is there a
problem?

IGOR
Prepare the jet. Now. For
Moscow.

ASSISTANT
Right away, sir.

The assistant hurries off. Igor enters his office and locks the door.

CUT TO:

Igor moves quickly to a painting concealing a safe.

He enters the code and retrieves bundles of cash, stacking them on the desk.

VOICE OFFSCREEN

I thought I had plumbed the
darkest depths of the human
soul...

The voice startles Igor.

Father Joe is seated in a large armchair, his silencer trained on Igor.

FATHER JOE

...But I must admit, you've
shattered every boundary of
comprehension. You don't just
sell children—you sell pieces
of children. There are no
words to describe an act so
cruel, so barbaric!

IGOR

(tensed)

I take from one to save
another. It's not so bad.

FATHER JOE

(shouting)

Who are you to decide the life
or death of a child?! Are you
God?!

Igor is taken aback by the sheer force of Father Joe's voice, as if it came from heaven itself.

IGOR

(trying to defuse the situation)

And you, Father? Do you have
the right to take lives like
this? Are you God?

FATHER JOE

(calmly)

No... I'm merely his armed
hand.

Igor tries to buy time.

IGOR

And rather well-armed, I see? I didn't know you could mount a silencer on a Glock 45.

FATHER JOE

Custom-made.

IGOR

Ah... Impressive.

(pause)

How did you find me?

FATHER JOE

A mutual acquaintance.

FLASHBACK:

The doctor, bleeding in his car, finishes his call with Igor and sighs deeply.

Suddenly, Father Joe smashes the car window with the butt of his gun. The doctor lets out a scream.

DOCTOR

(screaming)

Aaaahh!

FATHER JOE

(smiling)

Your phone, please.

BACK TO SCENE:

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)

And then I have some very skilled friends in telecommunications.

FLASHBACK:

Three young rabbis sit at a bank of computers.

RABBI

Rochenko Laboratories.
Downtown. I'm sending you the building's plans.

FATHER JOE

(on the phone)
Thank you.

BACK TO SCENE:

IGOR
You're pretty clever for a priest.

FATHER JOE
I had a few odd jobs before joining the clergy.
(pause)
Are you a believer?

IGOR
No. I believe in the dollar.
Maybe the yen. Not even in the ruble. Name your price, and it's yours.

Father Joe pauses for a moment.

FATHER JOE
Is organ trafficking really such a lucrative business that it justifies such horror?

IGOR
You have no idea, Father. The demand grows every day.

Father Joe nods, the cynicism of this man almost too much to bear.

FATHER JOE
Then I'd like you to donate your body to science.
(pause)
Except your brain.

Father Joe fires a single shot, hitting Igor in the head. The man collapses instantly.

The room falls silent.

Father Joe slowly stands, clearly injured.

He looks at the pile of money on the desk for a moment, then walks out without touching it.

79.

CUT TO:

Father Joe walks down a corridor, taking out anyone who dares to stand in his way.

He presses the button for the ground floor.

The lifeless elevator music echoes in the background, giving the scene an almost grotesque tone.

CUT TO:

Father Joe immediately takes down the first guard on the ground floor and addresses the three others.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)

Put down your weapons and go home. That's better.

The three guards comply, dropping their weapons and fleeing.

CUT TO:

The priest exits the building, which gleams in the night, and walks toward an old Volvo station wagon parked nearby.

Father Joe opens the trunk and retrieves the rocket launcher Ibrahim had recently delivered.

He positions himself in front of the Rochenko Labs building, hoists the heavy weapon onto his shoulder, and pulls the trigger.

The building's entrance erupts in a deafening explosion.

Satisfied, Father Joe stows the launcher back in the trunk and gets behind the wheel.

Then, he drives away, leaving the laboratory in flames.

SEQ. EXT. INT. CHURCH OF FELICITY - DAWN

The dawn light breaks through the clouds, painting the city in deep blue hues.

Father Joe enters the church through the garden.

A group of altar boys awaits him, their faces lighting up at his

arrival.

CUT TO:

Father Joe, utterly exhausted, is supported by the altar boys as they lead him to the secret chamber in the basement.

They help him remove his cassock, followed by his Kevlar vest and a series of concealed weapons strapped to his body.

The boys fetch a medical kit and begin tending to the priest's battered and bloodied body.

Father Joe submits to their care, like a wounded old lion.

FATHER JOE

... I think it's time to lay
low... for a while...

SEQ. INT. HOSPITAL ROOSEVELT - DAY

The brand-new Roosevelt Hospital stands proudly in the city center.

Dr. Massimo is in front of his screen.

Giu is facing him, his expression stern.

MASSIMO

(reading)

So... the scans look fine,
apart from the early signs of
phlebitis in your left leg,
which we'll need to monitor.
X-rays show some old
fractures, but they've healed
well. Bone marrow tests reveal
no abnormalities. And your
bloodwork... just a bit of
cholesterol to watch out for. I
compared it with the numbers
from your check-up last year
and... It's better. Across the
board.

Giuseppe is dumbfounded.

GIUSEPPE

Then... what the hell did he

inject me with?!

MASSIMO

No idea, but... I'd like some
of it too!

Giuseppe realizes he's been played, like a rookie.

GIUSEPPE

... That damn priest!

SEQ. EXT. INT. CHURCH OF FELICITY - DAY

A convoy of black sedans screech to a halt outside the church,
parking haphazardly in their haste.

CUT TO:

Inside the church, Father Joe lights the candles adorning the
altar. An altar boy rushes in, out of breath.

ALTAR BOY

There are lots of cars pulling
up outside.

FATHER JOE

Already? But Mass isn't for
another hour.

ALTAR BOY

(nervously)

I don't think they're here for
Mass.

Father Joe catches the warning immediately.

FATHER JOE

Alert everyone.

CUT TO:

Giuseppe steps out of his sedan and addresses twenty of his
henchmen gathered nearby.

GIUSEPPE

This is a church, so keep it
quiet. Put your silencers on
and bring him to me alive!

The men disperse swiftly.

CUT TO:

Father Joe grabs his two silencers and slides a few extra magazines under his cassock.

The altar boys shed their white robes, revealing ninja outfits underneath.

CUT TO:

The Italians swarm in from all directions, baseball bats in hand, and the fight breaks out...

Chaos erupts everywhere—fists flying behind every column, scuffles breaking out around each candelabrum. But the ninjas are more agile, and their shurikens are too fast.

What's worse, the church is rigged with traps at every turn. Portcullises crash down from the ceiling, isolating attackers, spikes emerge from the walls, chains are launched, jets of gasoline spray out, and heaven help anyone who bumps into a candelabrum.

There are even bear traps... worse than Home Alone.

And yet, bullets keep whizzing through the air. Silently.

Father Joe is in the thick of it. He takes out knees and shoulders with ruthless precision.

The church quickly transforms into a bloody arena.

The Italians drop like flies, but a few ninjas are injured as well.

Under the relentless fire of the attackers, Father Joe decides it's time to retreat.

He picks up his phone.

CUT TO:

At his mosque, Ibrahim is mid-prayer when his phone vibrates.

Worshippers around him cast disapproving glances.

IBRAHIM
... My apologies.
(stepping aside)

Hello?

FATHER JOE

It's me. We're under attack at the church. Badly. I need help.

IBRAHIM

I'm on my way.

He hangs up and leaves the mosque immediately.

CUT TO:

Several battered guards stumble out of the church, barely able to stand.

GUARD

Boss? We can't handle this. It's insane in there! The place is booby-trapped, and those kids are climbing the walls!

GIUSEPPE

What about the priest?

GUARD

He's in the back, but we can't dislodge him.

Giuseppe thinks for a moment.

GIUSEPPE

Alright... Bring out the big guns.

SUV trunks pop open, revealing an arsenal of heavy weaponry.

CUT TO:

A second wave of Italian soldiers storms the church, armed to the teeth.

The battle escalates dramatically, going beyond hand-to-hand fights, this is now full-on warfare.

It looks like a remake of "D-Day."

The altar is obliterated. The confessional lies in splinters.

Columns explode into dust. Several ninjas are hit.

In retaliation, the altar boys raid the armory hidden in the basement.

The war resumes with renewed ferocity, but as with every war, there are no winners.

CUT TO:

On the church steps, Giuseppe grows anxious as he sees only the wounded coming out.

GIUSEPPE (CONT'D)

(angrily)

If you want a job done
right... do it yourself.

Giuseppe opens the trunk of a nearby SUV and pulls out a heavy MG-42 machine gun—a weapon capable of firing 1,200 rounds per minute, a German invention ordered by Hitler himself.

CUT TO:

The remaining guards rally around Giuseppe as he shoulders the massive weapon.

GIUSEPPE (CONT'D)

(shouting)

Hey, priest?! I'm also the word
of God! The word of the Old
Testament! An eye for an
eye...

He takes aim at the altar.

GIUSEPPE (CONT'D)

...A tooth for a tooth!!

Giuseppe opens fire, shredding the altar and surrounding area.

Father Joe barely has time to dive for cover.

Within seconds, the back of the church resembles Swiss cheese.

A strange silence follows, broken only by the settling of dust and glowing debris.

Father Joe, buried under rubble, begins to regain his senses but is quickly grabbed by two Italians who haul him to his feet roughly.

Father Joe is thrown to the ground.

Giuseppe grabs a chair, dusts it off, and sits in front of the priest who is injured all over.

The kingpin savors his victory.

GIUSEPPE (CONT'D)

You're one hell of a priest,
you know that? If you were on
our side, you'd be unstoppable!
Interested?

FATHER JOE

(weakly)

Lead me not into temptation,
Lord.

Giuseppe studies the broken priest for a moment, a man clearly fighting against both his pain and himself.

GIUSEPPE

I know what you injected me
with wasn't poison. What was
it? Tell me now.

FATHER JOE

Vitamins. You needed them.

Giuseppe chuckles at the priest's audacity and pulls a syringe from his pocket.

GIUSEPPE

It's been a long time since
I've read the Bible, but I
think at some point it talks
about evil and says something
like: "You shall perish by the
way you have sinned," doesn't
it?

Father Joe nods.

FATHER JOE

The Book of Wisdom, Chapter 11.

GIUSEPPE

Glad you remember.

Giuseppe slowly brings the syringe toward Father Joe's neck, but a voice suddenly echoes through the church.

OFF-SCREEN VOICE
(*shouting*)
Allahu Akbar!!!

High above, Arabs armed with traditional rifles begin firing at the guards below.

Others charge into the church wielding sabers.

Taking advantage of the chaos, Father Joe grabs Giuseppe's wrist and forces the syringe into his neck, injecting its contents violently.

Giuseppe freezes, his face twisting in shock as he senses death creeping in.

FATHER JOE
Your sentence is not correct.
The real phrase is punimur,
ubi peccavimus. Now repent, my
son, because only you know how
much time you have left.

Giuseppe's eyes swell, foam dribbles from his mouth, and his body convulses.

Within seconds, his heart stops.

This syringe was certainly not vitamins!

Around them, the battle intensifies. The Arabs quickly gain the upper hand.

CUT TO:

The Italians waiting by the cars grow uneasy as more wounded guards emerge from the church.

They barely notice the dozens of Jews in traditional attire strolling casually between the cars.

Then, without warning, the assault begins.

The Jews pull weapons from everywhere, pointing them at every Italian, including the drivers.

87.

In seconds, all the Italians are subdued, forced to the ground, and handcuffed.

CUT TO:

The same scene unfolds inside.

The Italians are incapacitated. Those still standing are herded toward the entrance, thrown to the ground, and handcuffed.

CUT TO:

Ibrahim picks his way through the wreckage and finds Father Joe's body lying among the rubble.

Gently, he lifts the priest, who is still alive. Praise be to God.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)

Thank you, my brother.

IBRAHIM

Everything is under control.
Stay still. We'll get you to a hospital.

FATHER JOE

No, no. I want to stay here.

IBRAHIM

That's not reasonable.

FATHER JOE

(with a weak chuckle)

Reason left me a long time ago. Go! Leave while you still can!

CUT TO:

Police sirens wail as cars flood the adjacent streets.

The Jews immediately remove the magazines from their guns and toss them to the ground.

JEW

(acting panicked)

Here!! Officer!!

The police quickly round up the handcuffed Italian thugs lying

on the ground.

JEW (CONT'D)

They attacked the church!!

An armed police team moves cautiously toward the sacred building.

CUT TO:

At the church entrance, a dozen Italian thugs lie handcuffed on the ground.

The Arabs have disappeared.

The officers survey the destruction in stunned silence.

OFFICER

What the fuck?

They proceed carefully through the debris and bodies.

One officer finds Father Joe lying amidst the remains of the altar, covered in blood and dust.

The priest looks up at them, a faint smile on his lips.

FATHER JOE

How may I help you, my son?

The officer is speechless.

SEQ. INT. EXT. CENTRAL POLICE STATION

The city has calmed somewhat. The imposing central police station gleams under the morning sun.

Detective PETER, 40s, sits at his desk, his belly pressing against it. The remnants of junk food are scattered across his workspace. He's reading a report with visible confusion.

PETER

So, you're saying this
Giuseppe Falconi character has
been threatening you for years
and using your church to stash
his weapons and cash?

Father Joe sits across from him, his arm in a sling, his face

covered in bandages.

FATHER JOE

That's correct. He threatened to kill the orphans I care for if I ever went to the police.

PETER

And these children? Where are they now? We didn't find a single one.

FATHER JOE

Only God knows.

PETER

(dubious)

And you're saying the Italians are responsible for the state of your church? We found over a thousand bullet impacts of various calibers.

FATHER JOE

A rival gang broke in, I believe.

PETER

What kind of gang?

FATHER JOE

I didn't see anything. My face was in my hands, praying to God for the nightmare to end.

PETER

But your file says you were in the army? Surely, you know how to fight? Maybe you didn't just pray?

FATHER JOE

Only prayer works, for violence begets violence. Verse 26 of the Bible.

PETER

(unconvinced)

... Mmh...

There's a knock at the door, and COMMISSIONER JOSEPH enters, wearing a kippah.

PETER

Good morning, Commissioner.

JOSEPH

Good morning, Peter. I'll be taking over this case.

PETER

(disappointed)

Really? But I—

JOSEPH

(cutting him off)

It's a request from higher up. Sensitive matter. Thank you, Peter.

Peter reluctantly leaves the room, muttering under his breath.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Can you walk, Father?

FATHER JOE

Not very fast, but yes, I can walk.

JOSEPH

Good. Your one-million-dollar bail has been paid. You're free to go. We'll escort you to the exit.

Father Joe looks moved, surprised by the news.

FATHER JOE

Thank you.

JOSEPH

(knowingly)

It's us who should thank you. Thanks to you, my cousin found his son.

They exchange a meaningful glance, no words necessary.

CUT TO:

Father Joe, arm in a sling, exits the central station

slowly and unsteadily.

Across the street, a black limousine waits.

The driver steps out and opens the door for him.

Father Joe hesitates for a moment but eventually climbs in.

Inside, the cardinal, dressed in red, waits.

Father Joe is only half-surprised.

The car pulls into traffic and merges seamlessly.

CUT TO:

FATHER JOE

Thank you for paying my bail.

CARDINAL

We owed you that much.

FATHER JOE

(after a pause)

Where are we going?

CARDINAL

To the airport.

FATHER JOE

And... may I ask the destination?

CARDINAL

Rome. Someone important wants to meet you.

FATHER JOE

Am I being revoked?

CARDINAL

I think they want to make you an offer.

(a beat)

CARDINAL (CONT'D)

The kind of offer you can't refuse.

The two men meet eyes and finish by exchanging knowing smiles.

CUT TO:

Two orderlies push a gurney down a dimly lit, grimy hallway.

On the gurney lies a corpse covered by a white sheet.

A single foot sticks out, tagged with an ID label.

The tag reads: "Giuseppe Falconi."

The gurney reaches its destination, a large, refrigerated morgue chamber.

ORDERLY 1

Which fridge do we put him in?

ORDERLY 2

Forget it, they're all full.

Leave him here for now.

The two orderlies leave the gurney against the wall and exit the room, leaving it bathed in eerie fluorescent light.

The camera pans upward, revealing dozens and dozens of white-draped corpses.

As the haunting strains of Nirvana's "SOMETHING IN THE WAY" begin to play.

THE END