

CELIBATE SECRETS

by Don Meehan

Based on A true story

FADE IN

We are at the Holy Angels Seminary and College in Bloomington, Indiana, where young men are studying for the Catholic priesthood.

EXT. SEMINARY - OUTSIDE - DAY

We see a far and wide view of the seminary and a sign that reads: Holy Angels Seminary and College, Bloomington, Indiana. SEPTEMBER, 1983 appears in white letters over the scene.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SEMINARY - AUDITORIUM - MORNING

About 150 students, mostly in their early or middle twenties, are seated. The rector and president, FATHER ALAN MURRAY, tall, authoritative, and masculine, but a round, much overweight man, beer belly, gray and balding, bespectacled and peering over the rims, a stern and very authoritative and pompous man. He is dressed in the typical Roman Catholic garb and collar.

FR MURRAY

...But these days, the whole world seems to be just all concerned with sex. I must stress to all of you who will be becoming priests, that you must strive for perfection. You will be God's representatives.

HENRY TAYLOR is sitting next to BURT ADAMS, and nudges him hard as he dozes and starts to snore loudly. Burt awakes and looks around embarrassed, as some of the men laugh.

FR MURRAY continues

(annoyed but continues)

Celibacy and obedience are requirements that will become ever more difficult for some of you. How many of you are studying to be canon lawyers? Raise your hands.

Five men raise their hands.

FR MURRAY continues

Only five? I would hope there would be more.

(points to one student) Mr.?

Bobby Jackson, tall and lanky, cowboy hat in hand, stands, smiles proud and looks all around.

BOBBY
 (he speaks with a heavy Texas
 accent)
 Jackson. Bobby Jackson.

FR MURRAY
 Mr. Jackson, how far are you in
 your studies?

BOBBY
 Well, I hope to be ordained next
 summer in Abilene, Texas.

A few men clap and yell for Texas.

FR MURRAY
 Well, that's good. Now, can you
 tell us about canons 212 and 277?
 What is said in those canons as it
 pertains to you men?

BOBBY
 Well, 212 is about obedience. And
 we're to follow what the sacred
 pastors, as representatives of
 Christ, declare. And that to
 disobey your lawful superiors is to
 disobey God Himself, and hence such
 disobedience is always sinful. And
 277 states that clerics are obliged
 to observe celibacy for the rest of
 their lives.

FR MURRAY
 Excellent, Mr. Jackson. Now, do you
 men understand exactly what those
 canons mean?

HENRY rises and raises his hand.

FR MURRAY continues
 Sir? Your name?

HENRY
 (he stands)
 Taylor. HENRY. Father, I don't
 fully understand my obligation to
 canon 212.

FR MURRAY
 It is just as clear and simple as
 the daylight coming through those
 windows.

HENRY

Well, not really. Some people I have known have a priest make decisions for them. Like having babies when you shouldn't.

FR MURRAY

Well, maybe having babies is God's will.

HENRY

Maybe God's will? How do we know if something is just maybe God's will? And how can a celibate priest decide for a married woman on matters regarding sex and a marital couple making love?

FR MURRAY

(getting annoyed)

Young man. What do you know about God's will?

HENRY

What do you know about sex and marriage?

There is scattered laughter.

FR MURRAY

Young man, you are challenging my authority.

HENRY

No Sir. I asked you a simple question.

FR MURRAY

Mr... What was your name again?

HENRY

Well, it was and still is - Taylor, Henry Taylor.

There is some scattered laughter.

FR MURRAY

Mr. Taylor, don't get smart with me. You must understand that the Holy Catholic Church teaches the truth and cannot err. You are not to question the precepts.

HENRY

With all due respect, Father, too many things cloud my mind and the things I do not understand I am inclined to probe and ask questions.

FR MURRAY

And I repeat. You are not to question what you have been and will be taught about the Catholic Church by its delegated teachers.

HENRY

Maybe you're right. But I feel that it is only fair that I should be able to discuss, debate, and question certain things.

FR MURRAY

(becoming uncomfortable)

It doesn't give you a right to question your superiors. You are bound by the canons. Do you want to be a priest?

HENRY

Well, I think so. But I need some good meaningful answers. And I'm not getting them.

FR MURRAY

Young man, the occasions of sin are many and you must discern and learn them. And, in short, Mr. Taylor, you must obey your superiors.

HENRY gathers his things and starts to walk toward the door.

FR. MURRAY

Mr. Taylor! You come back here!

Henry stops, pauses and returns to his seat.

FR. MURRAY continues

(continues)

Mr. Taylor, or any of you, if you even think of walking out that door, don't even think about coming back.

FR MURRAY

Now, Mr. Jackson. Back to you. You will learn more on those subjects as you go.

(authoritative and stern)

I would advise all of you here not to challenge your superiors. Our bishops have been given the authority to teach us and you, and those teachings will always be the truth and nothing but the truth.

The group is quiet and dumbfounded. FR MURRAY appears shaken.

FR. MURRAY

Thank you gentlemen, the elements of Canons 212 and 277 have been stressed, obedience and celibacy, two most important canons for priests to follow.

A loud FART emerges from somewhere in the group and everyone bursts into loud laughter. Father Murray responds furiously.

FR. MURRAY continues

(shouts)

Who did that?

There is silence as no one answers.

FR. MURRAY continues

(shouts even louder)

I said who did that?

Again there is silence. Fr. Murray's face is turning red with anger.

FR. MURRAY continues

Alright, we'll just stay here until someone decides to admit to this most sacrilegious insane disrespect.

Henry rises to address Fr. Murray.

HENRY

Father Murray, be mindful that anger is one of the seven cardinal sins.

FR. MURRAY
(angrily, very loud)
I'm not angry.

There is silence as everyone sits in silence and no one responds. Minutes go by and the group becomes noisy. Finally, Joey Albert rises slowly to his feet.

JOEY
(smiling)
Father Murray.

FR. MURRAY
So you're the guilty party here
that dished out so much disrespect?

JOEY
No Father. I just wanted to respond
in defense of whoever that person
was. Is.

FR. MURRAY
What is your name

JOEY
Albert. Joey Albert.

FR MARSHALL
There is no defense Mr. Albert.

JOEY
Well, I believe there is.

FR. MURRAY
Alright Mr. Smart- Aa- Albert.

JOEY
As you know, God gave us the
miracle of our respiratory system,
to breathe and to often times
cough, if necessary.
(he coughs)
You see, it's OK to cough. So
therefore, when we cough, we pass
wind through our mouths. Society
says that is OK. We hear a thousand
coughs and sneezes during a Sunday
Mass.

FR. MURRAY
What does this have to do with the
noise that we heard?

JOEY

Well, God also gave us the miracle of digestion, the system through our bodies that takes food and nourishes us, keeps us healthy and strong. That miraculous system then passes off the waste, and our bowels moves that wa...

FR MURRAY

(interrupts him)

Mr. Albert.

JOEY

...and our bowels moves that waste and the gases out through to our rectum, another beautiful creation of God.

FR MURRAY

That's enough Mr. Albert

JOEY

Wait. I'm not finished. Sometimes those gases are uncontrollable, and unhealthy to hold in, and leave our bodies as a noise. And that which you call disrespectful is truly a miracle. Don't you ever fart?

The men erupt into a loud applause and laughter and Joey sits down.

FR MURRAY

(very abrupt)

Order. Let's have order here.

INT. SEMINARY - CAFETERIA - LATER - EVENING

The men are coming from a chow line with their trays of food and are sitting. There is ERNIE QUINN, kind of short, wide eyed and naive, sits with BOBBY JACKSON, Texas cowboy, who loves horses, obviously rich and sports expensive clothes, belt buckles, and jewelry. JOEY ALBERT, who is tall, blonde and blue eyed and very good looking, BURT ADAMS, laid back and into old cars and HENRY TAYLOR, with New York street smarts, and who always has his cell phone with him. They sit at the same table. Henry speaks as he sits.

HENRY

Hi guys. I'm Henry. Say hi to Burt. And this is Joey.

ERNIE

Hey, Henry. I think we already know you from today. I'm Ernie and this is Bobby.

HENRY

Yeah, I think we all know Bobby.

They all shake hands, and all together recite the blessing.

ALL

Bless us Oh Lord and these thy gifts, which we are about to receive from thy bounty, through Christ our Lord, Amen

They all start to eat. All is quiet for a few moments.

HENRY

Well, what did you guys think of that little performance today?

ERNIE

Kinda scared me.

BOBBY

Yeah, me too.

JOEY

I sure as hell thought you were leaving.

BURT

Sure looked that way.

HENRY

(laughs)

Been thinking about it. I've been on the verge. A lot of things bother me. But Joey, you take the trophy. Man that was incredible. And Bobby. You're too much. Did you sneak a cow in here with you?

BOBBY

I thought about it. But that wouldn't be very celibate now, would it?

HENRY

I Got reamed out by Murray later, for the 1000th time. He doesn't like me. He knows I question just about everything.

(to Ernie)
 What did you say your name was?

Ernie appears timid, naive, somewhat inhibited and backward.

ERNIE
 Ernie, Ernie Quinn.

HENRY
 Where you from?

ERNIE
 Sidney, Ohio.

HENRY
 This your first year?

ERNIE
 No. One more year and I'm outta here, I hope.

HENRY
 Well, take it from me. They got you by the balls. And once the bishop says those words, you gotta watch every move, or you'll be in Siberia. And there's one thing you won't have in here. A girl, I mean. But I gotta tell you. Watch your back.

ERNIE
 What do you mean?

HENRY
 Well, he told us all about celibacy, right?

They all shake their heads in agreement.

HENRY continues
 And also about obedience right?

Again, they all shake their heads in agreement.

HENRY continues
 First of all, a fair estimate is that about half or more of the priests around here are either gay or secretly have a woman on the outside. So it's about the most un-celibate place around.

BOBBY
You gotta be joking.

ERNIE
I don't believe that.

HENRY
You've been here, how many years?
And you don't know what's going on
with these guys?

ERNIE
What am I missing here?

HENRY
Alright. Here's the story. They
don't usually prey on us seminary
guys. The word is that some of them
go to some karaoke gay bars over in
Columbus, Indiana or Terre Haute.
And there's a bar over there where
the ladies of the night hang out on
the street. And there's a massage
parlor upstairs where some of them
go. Katy's Krib. Its really a
brothel, I heard. Forty to a
hundred bucks a clip.

JOEY
How do you know all this?

Henry just smiles at Joey and shakes his head.

ERNIE
You gotta be joking.

HENRY
Hey! I just know. So, leave it at
that.

JOEY
Read the papers. I read recently
that deaths from Aids among
Catholic priests is six times what
it is among the rest of the
population. So, what does that tell
you?

BOBBY
Hey, watch your mouth. You're a
semenarian.

HENRY

How are you spelling that?

BOBBY

S-e-m-e-n-a-r-i-a-n Semenarian.
Semen with an arian at the end. Get
it? Semenary.

ERNIE

Aw, I just don't believe any of
this.

HENRY

Believe it or you're gonna be just
about the dumbest and sorriest
person around. Its one of their
celibate secrets.

ERNIE

I think you are making all this up.

HENRY

(shakes his head)

Ernie, why would I make it up? I
just hope you never get caught in
the middle. And if you do, don't
ever rat on 'em. You'll be out of
here in a New York minute. Franky,
right now I am re-thinking
everything. Wait, let me get a
picture of you guys for posterity.
Love my pictures.

Henry takes his cell phone out of a pocket

HENRY

(continues)

Look, the whole thing about the
Church just bothers the hell out of
me.

Henry holds the phone up and snaps as they all pose and
smile.

ERNIE

What do you mean?

HENRY

I don't know. Been studying
history. My Dad told about some
times back when. The nuns were mean
and you had to know every word of
the 1917 Baltimore Catechism

continues

HENRY continues
backwards and forward. From what
I've read I think we all might be
brainwashed. I learned about the
Inquisition, and people tortured
and burned and things like why
Luther got so pissed off.
Indulgences. People paid to get
their relatives out of Purgatory.
And Galeleo? Took 'em over 300
years to pardon him? A lot of stuff
really bothers me. I'm even
thinking about whether I want to be
a Catholic anymore.

ERNIE
Are you serious?

HENRY
Couldn't be any more serious,
Ernie.

BOBBY
By the way, where is that brothel
you were talking about?

HENRY
You mean Katy's Krib?

BOBBY
Yeah.

HENRY
It's over in Terre Haute, near
Kinkey's Karaoke bar. Hey, I got an
idea.

BOBBY
What?

HENRY
Why don't we all go over there one
night and check it out.

BOBBY
I don't know.

HENRY
And we can see the bar and the
place where the hookers hang out.
Next door to it is a massage
parlor; Katy's Krib. Who knows who
we might run into?

ERNIE

That's dangerous, and scary. We don't have to go in do we? What if we run into one of them?

HENRY

They got more to lose than we do. Look, you guys. Welcome to the real world. Read the papers. Don't be so damn stupid as to not know what's going on around you.

ERNIE

What do you mean?

HENRY

Every thing swept under the rug. Denial, secrecy, and big bucks lawyers to bail them out. Did you all hear about that Mesa, Arizona priest who was arrested in a sting operation that targeted prostitution involving under-aged girls? Busted.

ERNIE

You're crazy.

HENRY

Am I? Where've you been Ernie? In a shell? And the report that priests have been exploiting their financial and spiritual authority to gain sexual favors from nuns? And the report that some priests had made nuns pregnant and then encouraged them to have abortions? Believe it, Ernie.

The men all sit in silence for a few seconds reflecting on Henry's words.

ERNIE

How do you know all of this?

Henry gives Ernie a stare and just smiles, slightly shaking his head.

HENRY

Ernie, grow up, man.

JOEY
 Celibate secrets for sure.

FADE TO

EXT. TERRE HAUTE STREET ACROSS FROM A BAR - NIGHT

BURT, ERNIE, BOBBY, JOEY and HENRY pull up across the street from a bar in Burt's souped up and restored 1939 Buick that looks like new. They don't get out of the car, but just sit and watch as men come and go from the bar and an entrance to Katy's Krib upstairs brothel next door to the bar. Several women are standing around on the sidewalk along the whole block dressed in sexy costumes like short dresses and hot pants, and talking to and propositioning every man coming and going from the bar.

ERNIE
 We're not going in there are we?

HENRY
 Why don't we just sit here for a while and just watch?

BOBBY
 Holy shit. I don't believe it.

HENRY
 What?

BOBBY
 Look who just walked out of the Krib.

ERNIE
 Father Murray, and another guy. I think he's one of the other priests.

HENRY
 Holy shit. Get down quick. Don't let them see us.

The men quickly duck down in their seats barely peeking over the window edges. But before they do, Henry quickly pulls out his cell phone and focuses on Father Murray and the other man. The two priests, both dressed very casually, look all around, are friendly with the women on the street and walk to his CAR. They get in and drive away.

HENRY continues
 Now, ain't that a coincidence? Boy that's a catch all corner.

ERNIE
Unbelievable!

HENRY
Whew! Hope they didn't see us. Got
a good shot of Murray. Lets get on
over to Kinkey's

They drive away.

EXT. KARAOKE BAR - PARKING LOT - MINUTES LATER

The men pull up in the karaoke bar parking lot. We see a big neon sign that says "Welcome to Korky's Kinky Karaoke - Bar and Grill." A music track is playing on loudspeakers outside, of an old standard song with a bad singer singing. They all get out and go toward the entrance.

INT. KARAOKE BAR - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

They enter the bar and look all around to see if they recognize anyone. A DJ is present with his equipment on a small stage and a middle aged man is seen singing badly to a karaoke track.

ERNIE
I'm a little scared of this.

HENRY
Not to worry. But just Be careful
and stay together, 'cause someone
might try to pick you up.

BURT
Yeah, Joey, pretty boy, be careful.

JOEY
Cut the crap.

ERNIE
Why don't we sit at a table way
back there in the back, just in
case someone knows who we are.

HENRY
Yeah, maybe you're right.

They walk cautiously to the back of the club and locate a table. A waiter comes over to take the order.

WAITER
(effeminate)
I've never seen you fellows here
before. Do you sing?

HENRY
No just like to listen over a few.

WAITER
So, what'll you have?

HENRY
Bring us all some beers.

BURT
I'll have a plain soda.

BOBBY
Ya'll didn't know I sing.

HENRY
That's nice, but not here. OK?

BOBBY
Yeah, I was gonna go to Austin and
make some demos but I wound up here
instead.

HENRY
Where you from, again?

BOBBY
Abilene.

HENRY
Hey, Joey, where are you from?

JOEY
Vegas.

HENRY
Oh, wow, I want to go there. So why
would anyone want to leave Vegas?

BOBBY
Yeah, I hear they got more churches
there than casinos.

JOEY
Yeah and I'm not sure about some of
the priests.

They all laugh as the waiter brings the drinks and sets them
down. Bobby gives him a credit card. A fortyish man comes
over to the table.

MAN

Well, hello fellows. Is this your first time here?

HENRY

Keep walking.

MAN

You don't have to be so snotty. After all, we know why you are here.

HENRY

None of your damn business. Kiss mine.

The man inches over closer to Henry.

MAN

OK.

HENRY

Get the hell away from here.

The man walks away and gives Henry the finger. Several men are coming into the front door and Henry reacts when he recognizes Fr. Gallett in civies, and no priest collar.

HENRY continues

Oh, shit. Look who's here.

ERNIE

Who?

HENRY

Father Gallett.

BOBBY

Damn! Our theology professor.

Bobby shrinks in his seat. They look over and see Father Gary coming in, also in civies. He walks over and greets Fr. Gallett. They embrace in a hug. They talk as they walk toward the back. The two priests are startled to see Burt, Ernie, Joey, Bobby, and Henry, and vice versa, but they walk on by and they are seated at a table away from the five. The waiter returns with Bobby's credit card and he signs the check.

ERNIE

What do we do now?

HENRY
Relax. Just be cool.

BOBBY
What do you mean relax? They saw us
and we saw them.

HENRY
We keep our mouths shut and go on
about our business. Obviously they
are gay, or they wouldn't be here.

BURT
Yeah but they'll think we're gay.

ERNIE
I knew we shouldn't have come here.

HENRY
Calm down. Nothing is going to
happen.

ERNIE
Maybe we should tell somebody?

Henry gives Ernie a stare.

HENRY
Who? Who are you going to tell?
What are you going to tell?

BURT
The only thing you can do is keep
your mouth shut and so will they.

HENRY
Look, these stories have been going
around as long as I can remember.

They watch as two men leave the club, one with his arm
around the other being affectionate.

ERNIE
Scary.

HENRY
Some ex-priest, an expert on the
subject, wrote a book on it. He
estimates that fifty to sixty
percent of all priests, including
bishops and cardinals are gay. And
a lot are attracted to women, and
some make it with the nuns and some
with themselves.

The man who approached them before goes over and sits at the table with the two priests. Henry secretly reaches in his pocket and pulls out his cell phone. Unseen by anyone, he quickly takes a picture of the three men.

BOBBY

Look at them. They know each other!

Fr. Gallett gets up and starts to leave with the man. Henry snaps another photo of the two men, arm in arm and smiling at each other affectionately. He quickly puts the phone away.

ERNIE

I've seen enough. We better get out of here.

HENRY

Yeah, maybe you're right. It's getting late.

BOBBY

Yeah, and it's a long ride back.

They all get up and walk toward the front door.

FR. GARY

(shouts)

Goodnight boys. Have a good one

They turn, surprised and embarrassed, halfheartedly wave, and leave the club.

INT. SEMINARY - CLASSROOM - MORNING

About twenty men are in their seats as Father Gallett in clerical garb with white priest collar, writes on the white board, "JUDGING OTHERS."

FR. GALLETT

Alright men, you all see what I have written here.

(points to the writing)

What are some of the occasions we put ourselves into that cause others to form opinions of us?

(pauses)

There is no response. But Bobby is becoming noticeably uneasy and nervous.

FR. GALLETT continues
 Don't be afraid to speak out in my
 class, gentlemen. I invite you to
 speak your mind.

(pauses)

Alright here's some examples. If
 you saw someone you knew to be from
 one college, say, sitting on the
 other side and rooting for the
 other team, you might form a
 judgment that he is not loyal to
 the home team. If you saw your
 married next door neighbor in a bar
 with another woman, you might form
 a judgment that he was cheating on
 his wife. And if you saw your
 trusted friend or acquaintance go
 into a gay bar, you might form a
 judgment that your friend is gay.

The priest and Bobby trade glances.

Now, in the eyes of the Church, is
 it proper to form such judgments
 based solely on what you have seen?
 I want to know some of your
 thoughts. Mr. Quinn?

ERNIE

I don't know.

FR. GALLETT

Mr. Taylor?

HENRY

Well, I think you have a legitimate
 reason to trust your judgment based
 on circumstantial evidence.

FR. GALLETT

Mr. Albert?

MR. JOHNSON

I don't know.

FR GALLETT

Mr. Jackson?

BOBBY

Well, uh,uh,

(he's at a loss for words)

If you base your thoughts on what
 you've seen and the surroundings,
 what else can you possibly think?

continues

BOBBY continues
 But, I guess the best thing to do
 is to mind your own business and
 keep your mouth shut.

FR. GALLETT
 Excellent! Very good, Mr. Jackson.
 All of you, take heed to Mr.
 Jackson's reasoning. Don't gossip
 and spread rumors about anything or
 anyone unless you know all the
 facts.

(gives a stern look at Bobby)
 Alright, we're going to discuss
 some of the writings of modern day
 theologians...

The bell rings and the men all get up and leave the room.

FR. GALLETT continues
 (shouts)
 Mr. Jackson, would you please stay
 a minute?

Bobby goes over to where Fr. Gallett is standing and erasing
 the white board. When all are out of the room he closes the
 door.

FR. GALLETT continues
 I hear that you're a cowboy and
 love horses, and cows.

BOBBY
 Yeah. Been ridin' horses all my
 life, and ropin' calves.

FR. GALLETT
 How would you like to go to a
 rodeo?

BOBBY
 Hey, I love rodeos. Used to go
 every weekend practically, back in
 Abilene.

FR. GALLETT
 Well, they're having one in Indy in
 a couple weeks. Would you like to
 go?

(pauses)
 With me?

BOBBY
I'll go to a rodeo any day.

FR. GALLETT
Well, we'd go on a Saturday and
come back on the Sunday before
Mass.

BOBBY
Overnight?

FR. GALLETT
Yeah. Overnight.

BOBBY
I don't think so.

FR. GALLETT
I saw you and your friends in that
bar and we know that you were there
for only one reason. But I didn't
realize that HENRY was gay too.

BOBBY
He's not and none of us are.

FR GALLETT
Then what the hell were you doing
in that bar?

BOBBY
We were just checkin' out the
rumors for ourselves and what to
believe.

FR GALLETT
(getting irritated)
Checking out what? And what do you
believe?

There is silence as Bobby doesn't quite know how to answer
him.

BOBBY
Nothin', I guess.

FR GALLETT
Nothing you guess? Well, let me
tell you this. If any one of you go
and rat on me, or Father Gary, you
can kiss your aspirations to be a
priest goodbye, forever. And you
can pass this along to all of your
friends.

BOBBY

Yes, Father.

FR GALLETT

Now, get out of here and the other night never happened. Got it?

BOBBY

OK Father.

Bobby, visibly shaken, goes out as Father Gallett composes himself. Another group of men enter the room.

INT. SEMINARY/CAFETERIA - LATER

It is lunchtime and the five friends, Ernie, Bobby, Henry, Joey and Burt are coming to a table with their meals. They all sit.

BOBBY

I gotta tell you guys something.

ERNIE

What?

BOBBY

Keep it down. I got my head handed to me. Father Gallett threatened me big-time.

HENRY

What happened?

BOBBY

I'll tell you more later, but he warned us to never, and I mean never say a word to anyone about the other night. Not a soul. And he warned me that I had better get it across to you guys.

ERNIE

I don't follow. They teach us all about truth and sin and perfection.

BOBBY

Keep it down. I don't know. But the way Father Gallett was talking sounded like he meant business.

HENRY

So guys, just try to go on acting like it never happened. But don't
continues

HENRY continues
worry. We've got the goods and then
some. Trust me.

JOEY
What do you mean.

HENRY
You'll see.

There is a moment of silence as they are thinking about it.

ERNIE
I don't agree with this, but I
guess I'll have to go along. OK. It
never happened. This time.

INT. SEMINARY - HALLWAY WITH OFFICES ALL AROUND - AFTERNOON

Ernie goes over to the door that reads Fr. ARMOND Raymond.
Ernie KNOCKS on the door.

FR ARMOND (O.S.)
Come in.

Ernie opens the door and walks in and closes the door behind
him.

INT. SEMINARY - OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

FR ARMOND
Well, hello Ernie. What can I do
for you?

ERNIE
Harm, can I talk to you for a
minute? I don't quite know how to
handle this.

FR ARMOND
Handle what?

ERNIE
Well, me and some of my friends saw
something we shouldn't have seen
and it's driving me batty.

FR ARMOND
You want to tell me?

ERNIE
I don't know. You've been a great
counselor and spiritual director
continues

ERNIE continues
during my time here, and I know I
can trust you. And I value our
friendship, but...

FR ARMOND
So, why don't you just tell me
what's on your mind. In all of our
sessions you've never been afraid
to tell me anything. And it stays
here.

ERNIE
This is different.

FR ARMOND
Why is it different?

Ernie doesn't answer

ERNIE
We were threatened.

FR ARMOND
By whom?

There is no answer.

FR ARMOND continues
Well, there's not much I can do if
you don't talk to me.

ERNIE
This priest. He's a homosexual, and
two others are obviously Johns
hanging out with whores.

Ernie doesn't take his eyes off of the priest, but now
notices that he can't get any eye contact from him.

FR ARMOND
What do you mean? Who are we
talking about?

ERNIE
I just can't say.

FR ARMOND
How do you know?

ERNIE
I can't say.

There is a moment of silence as both sit in deep thought.

FR ARMOND

I think I know what you are referring to but we'll just leave it at that. Deal?

ERNIE

Alright, deal. I guess I gotta go to class.

Ernie gets up from his chair and walks to the door. He turns around before walking out.

ERNIE continues

(continues)

Thanks, Father. You've been a real friend. I really appreciate it.

Ernie walks out, shaking his head.

ERNIE

(mumbling to himself)

Guess he's just like the rest of them.

INT. OFFICE - FATHER MURRAY - DAY

The rector and president, FATHER ALAN MURRAY, is pacing behind his desk as Ernie, Joey, Henry, Burt and Bobby enter the room and are seated. Father Murray holds up a newspaper front page that shows two photographs of Father Gallett and Father Gary and an un-named man in Korkey's Kinkey Karaoke Corner in Terre Haute, Indiana.

FR. MURRAY

I guess you all know why I called you here. Do you men know anything about these photographs?

They all look closely and all shake their heads, no.

FR. MURRAY continues

Well, the headline here says that it was taken at Kinky's, or Kerkeys
(stumbles)

Korkey's Kinky Karaoke Corner in Terre Haute, and names the two priests, Father Gallett and Father Gary and a known homosexual man. We've learned that you five men were there on the night in question, and we need to know how they got these pictures, and why you were there.

HENRY

Well, it seems pretty obvious that the newspaper must have had a reporter there.

FR. MURRAY

That seems logical but we do know that you five men were in that bar on that night.

BOBBY

How do you know that? And so what if we were? Is that any of your business?

BURT

It's a free country. Is it not?

FR. MURRAY

Kinky's, or Kerkeys
(stumbles)
Korkey's Kinky Karaoke Corner is no place for seminarians.

ERNIE

Nor for Catholic priests, either.

FR. MURRAY

Uh, Well we've been told that you were there that night.

JOEY

What night? By whom? And so what?

FR. MURRAY

That's confidential.

ERNIE

Well, if we are being accused then by all rights we should know our accusers.

FR. MURRAY

You will in time, probably at a trial at the diocese. Now, I ask you once more. Do any of you know about these photos?

Again the men all shake their heads.

HENRY

Right, a secret trial according to Canon Law, with no right of appeal,
continues

HENRY continues
 etc., etc., obedience. And da
 bishop da judge? And according to
 Canon Law we are guilty until
 proven innocent? So, what crime did
 we commit?

FR. MURRAY
 That's enough, Mr. Taylor.

Again the men all shake their heads.

HENRY
 No, there's more.

FR MURRAY
 Mr. Taylor. Are you sure you want
 to be a priest?

HENRY
 Well, let me tell you about canon
 277. Explain that one for me.

FR MURRAY
 I don't recall it exactly.

HENRY
 Good. Well, let me explain it,
 since I know it by heart. It goes
 like this: Number one states that
 you, Father, are obliged to observe
 celibacy. And numbers two and three
 spell it out even more.

FR MURRAY
 And your point?

HENRY
 You don't get it do you?

The priest is at a loss for words, and shakes his head.

FR MURRAY
 I'm sorry, I don't.

HENRY
 Well, you're supposed to know the
 Code aren't you? And live by it. It
 means that us dummies out here can
 believe that the bishop can absolve
 Father Gallett and Father Gary and
 dispense with their celibacy issue.
 And them and whoever else wants to,
 continues

HENRY continues
 can, with the blessing of the
 bishop, dispense with ANY
 obligation to be celibate. Deep
 dark Celibate Secrets.

BOBBY
 Well, if we were questioned by cops
 in this country, we would have a
 right to remain silent. And there
 would be a public jury trial and
 we'd be judged by our peers.

FR. MURRAY
 We're not the cops. And you are
 bound by Canon Law. You must
 respect all authority.

HENRY
 Right, and the secrecy that goes
 along with it. And so are you
 bound. Long live obedience. And why
 don't we drink to celibacy? Another
 big joke in this place. Yes,
 Father, Yes Bishop. Yes, sir.
 (he salutes)

FR. MURRAY
 Mr. Taylor, stop it. So, if one of
 you did this, we expect that the
 rest of you will come forward and
 identify him.

The men on hearing this, laugh

FR. MURRAY
 That is all. You're dismissed.

HENRY
 Hold it, wait. Before we go, I just
 wondered what you were doing over
 in Terre Haute the other night.

FR. MURRAY
 What do you mean?

The priest appears very shaken and looks into the eyes of
 each of the men, who stare him down intensely.

HENRY
 Well, we all saw you and your
 friend coming out of Katy's Place.
 Heard they do more than just
 continues

HENRY continues
 massage there. Who knows? maybe
 they got a picture of you and
 Father what's his face walking out
 of Katy's place. And what about
 your tab there? Sunday collection
 money?

The priest is speechless, and plops in his chair.

HENRY continues
 See ya later.

The five men get up and EXIT the room.

INT. SEMINARY/HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The men are in a huddle discussing the event.

HENRY
 It's fire with fire.

ERNIE
 What do you mean?

HENRY
 Some of these bastards, so called
 good priests, would do anything,
 and I repeat, anything to save
 their asses and protect themselves.
 Celibacy! My ass!

JOEY
 So, how can you fight it?

HENRY
 Like I said, fire with fire. Saving
 his Katy's Krib picture.
 (Pats his pocket)

JOEY
 Hey, ya'll know what a papal nuncio
 is?

ERNIE
 Isn't he like the pope's head
 honcho here in the U.S.?

JOEY
 Yeah, in Washington. I got a gag
 I'm going to pull on Murray.

BOBBY

What's up?

JOEY

Tell you later.

HENRY

We oughtta wear some secret recording devices in those meetings like the one we just came from. Well I guess you and I know how they got those pictures. But, you know what? They'll transfer them out to somewhere in the boondocks in secret, and nobody knows and life goes on. So, hang loose, but look over your shoulder, especially now with Murray.

INT. OFFICE - FATHER MURRAY - DAY

Father Murray enters his office with a stack of mail and sits down at his desk to go through it. He spots one with a return address of LAGRA - P.O. Box 55515, Washington, D.C. He quickly opens it.

FR MURRAY

(reads it out loud)

Dear Al: We have received your membership dues for \$25 and would like to sincerely welcome you to the International LAGRA (Lesbian and Gay Rights Association.) We appreciate your support and encourage our members to participate in all of our meetings and events. Now that gay marriages are becoming legal everywhere we'd also like your support. If you have any questions, please call our national headquarters office at 202-555-5555. Welcome to LAGRA. Sincerely Payton Nunzio, President

Fr. Murray becomes furious and reaches for the phone and dials. A secretary answers with a foreign accent.

SECRETARY #1 (V.O)

Papal Nuncio's Office. Can I help you?

Fr. Murray was distracted when the secretary answered.

FR MURRAY
 (in phone)
 Yes, Could I please speak to
 Payton?

SECRETARY #1 (V.O)
 Who is that again?

FR MURRAY
 (in phone)
 Payton
 (looks at letter) Payton
 Nunzio.

SECRETARY #1 (V.O)
 Just a minute please.

SECRETARY #2 (V.O)
 Hello. Whom did you wish to speak
 to?

FR MURRAY
 (in phone)
 Payton Nunzio Dammit, Payton
 Nunzio.

Father Murray is starting to get extremely upset and angry.

FR MURRAY
 (in phone)
 Look, I got this letter from you
 people about a membership and I am
 calling to cancel any such
 membership. I'd like to speak to
 your head guy, Payton Nunzio.

SECRETARY #2 (V.O)
 I'm having a little difficulty
 understanding you. What is your
 name?

FR MURRAY
 (in phone)
 Father Murray. Father Alan Murray.
 I am rector and President of the
 Holy Angels Seminary in
 Bloomington, Indiana, and I need to
 speak to the head person there,
 Payton Nunzio.

SECRETARY #2 (V.O)
 Yes, Father Murray. Just a minute.

ARCHBISHOP SAMBRINO (V.O)
This is the Papal Nuncio. Is this
Father Murray?

FR MURRAY
(in phone)
Yes, this is Father Alan Murray.
And I have your letter here. There
must be some mistake. I never
joined your organization. Is this
Payton Nunzio?

ARCHBISHOP SAMBRINO (V.O)
Yes, this is the Papal Nuncio. Who
is this?

FR MURRAY
(in phone)
Uh, uh, Father Murray. Father Alan
Murray.

ARCHBISHOP SAMBRINO (V.O)
Well, hello Father Murray. This is
Archbishop Sambrino. It's so good
to hear from you. What can I do for
you?

FR MURRAY
(realizes he's been had -
in phone)
Uh- Uh. Good morning Archbishop
Sambrino. I - I just wanted to call
you and, and say -- that it is so
good to know that the pope is going
to visit us, uh, next August, and
that he might be coming here to
Holy Angels Seminary.

ARCHBISHOP SAMBRINO (V.O)
Ah, yes, Father Murray. His
Holiness looks forward to his
visit.

FR MURRAY
(in phone)
That's all I wanted to say,
Archbishop. Looking forward to
seeing you again soon. Goodbye.

Fr. Murray is seething as he gently hangs up the phone.

FR MURRAY continues
 Dammit! Those...

INT. INT. OFFICE - FATHER MURRAY - LATER

Father Murray is pacing behind his desk as Ernie, Joey, Henry, Burt and Bobby are filing into his office and seat themselves. He is trying to be calm, but he is brimming over with anger. He finally sits and eyes each of the five men.

FR MURRAY
 Alright, who did it?

BOBBY
 Did what?

FR MURRAY
 You know what.

They all look at each other in dumbfounded looks and shake their heads. Joey cracks a slight smile picked up by the priest.

FR MURRAY continues
 What are you smiling about? Mr. Albert, was that you that did that?

JOEY
 (composes himself)
 Did what?

FR MURRAY
 You know what.

JOEY
 I'm afraid I don't know what.

FR MURRAY
 So what were you smiling about?

JOEY
 About the last time we were in here. What? I, need your permission to smile?

FR MURRAY
 You all know the Commandments about the truth. Honesty above all.

ERNIE
 How about the capital sin of anger?

HENRY
 And sex out of marriage. And
 Celibacy for priests.

Fr. Murray is silent and fuming.

FR MURRAY
 (trying to hide his obvious
 fury)
 I'm not angry.

He gets up and paces some more and finally addresses the men angrily.

FR MURRAY
 And you men want to be priests? Get
 out of here!

HENRY
 Not so sure these days after seeing
 you come out of Katy's.

Henry pulls out the photo of Fr. Murray and friend leaving Katy's Krib and dangles it to the priest as he leaves.

INT. SEMINARY - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The men are walking down the hallway and Joey can't hold back any longer and bursts out laughing so hard that he goes down on the floor laughing hysterically.

HENRY
 What?

JOEY
 Got him! I'll tell you Later.
 (he sing songs)
 Lagra lagra, lagra, lagra!

INT. SEMINARY - MONTAGE - DAY

Another classroom with a different teacher with 20 to 35 students.

A calendar of each of the months from September to June roll down over the montage of events.

DISSOLVE TO:

Another classroom with a different teacher with 20 to 35 students.

DISSOLVE TO:

Another classroom with a different professor with 20 to 30 students.

DISSOLVE TO:

Panning of Korkey's Kinkey Karaoke Bar.

DISOLVE TO:

A library with students studying

DISSOLVE TO:

Chapel with priest at altar and about 120 men seated.

DISSOLVE TO:

Panning of Katy's Place in Terre Haut.

DISSOLVE TO:

Swimming pool with four or five men swimming.

END MONTAGE

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SEMINARY - FRONT - MORNING

Men are leaving the living quarters carrying and pulling suitcases to the parking lot.

EXT. SEMINARY - PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

Ernie gets to his car and opens the trunk and throws in his two big suitcases and his guitar. Henry, Burt, Joey and Bobby are also starting to leave and all walk over to where Ernie is standing and they talk.

BOBBY

Hey Ernie, guess what? The folks in Texas are planning a big party for my ordination in a few weeks. Looks like I might be going to a parish in California.

ERNIE.

California? They couldn't put you closer?

BOBBY

Guess not. I never been out there.

ERNIE

And I guess I'll see the rest of you guys back in September?

BURT

So where do you go?

ERNIE

Right outside of Dayton. It's near my home. The bishop assigned me to a parish in Cedarville for the Summer. It's in the Dayton Diocese. But I'm going home first.

HENRY

Where's home?

ERNIE

Sidney, about 50 miles from Cedarville. Bobby, I hope to see you somewhere down the line. Keep in touch. OK? The best of luck to you. And watch out for all the Father Galletts and Murrays.

BOBBY

Hey, you too. Good luck.

JOEY

And I'll be back in Vegas.

ERNIE

Ok, see you guys in September.

HENRY

I might not be back. Not sure this is for me. Oh, just one other thing. I gotta say I learned a lot. They seem to forget that we're human, that we're people too. And that said, could I get a picture of all you guys? promise I won't blackmail you.

The men line up together as Henry pulls out his cell phone and shoots their picture. He holds the phone up and waves it.

HENRY continues

Remember the newspaper photos?

They all laugh hard as they start to walk to their cars.

JOEY

Wait a minute. Remember that last time Murray called us in and was so pissed off?

The men stop as Joey reaches into his pocket and pulls out a sheet of paper and shows it to them.

WE SEE A CLOSE UP OF THE PAPER THAT IS A COPY OF THE PHONY LETTER TO FR. MURRAY FROM THE INTERNATIONAL LAGRA (LESBIAN AND GAY RIGHTS ASSOCIATION).

The four men continue to their cars, laughing hysterically.

BURT

(shouts with Italian accent)
'ey Nunzio, Nuncio. I fartzio,
loudzio.

Burt lifts a leg, strains and FARTS loud.

BURT continues

(continues)
Have funzio. Remember! Fire with
firezio!

EXT. ST. ANNE'S PARISH PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

We see a sign for St. Anne's Church. Ernie drives in and parks his car. He gets out and is looking all around at unfamiliar surroundings and walks over to the rectory door and rings the bell. After a few moments, FR. DANIEL HOLMES answers the door.

FR DANIEL

You must be Ernie Quinn.

ERNIE

Are you Fr. Daniel?

FR DANIEL

Indeed I am. Welcome to St. Anne's,
Son. You got bags?

ERNIE

Yes, Father. They're in the car.
I'll get them later.

FR DANIEL

Well, come on in and make yourself
at home.

INT. RECTORY - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The living room is nicely furnished and there is a grand piano in the middle. They walk around it toward the kitchen.

FR DANIEL
You play piano?

ERNIE
No, just a little guitar.

FR DANIEL
You sing?

ERNIE
Yeah, a little. We have a little band at the seminary that I lead. And I also sing in the big choir.

FR DANIEL
Well, we can sure use another singer and player in our band. Most of them are a little weak. You work out?

ERNIE
A little.

FR DANIEL
Come on. I'll show you around. There's a library with anything and everything.

They pass through a hallway.

INT. RECTORY - REC ROOM - CONTINUOUS

FR DANIEL
This is our rec room. Billiards, weights, treadmill, bar. You play pool?

ERNIE
Yeah, I love pool.

FR DANIEL
Like to swim?

ERNIE
Yeah, love that too.

FR DANIEL

We have an agreement with the university over there across the way that we can use their pool anytime we want to.

ERNIE

That's really great.

FR DANIEL

How old are you Ernie?

ERNIE

Twenty-eight.

FR DANIEL

Twenty-eight? You look much younger. Well, anyway, in exchange I let some of the boys over there come over and play pool and use the weights and the treadmill. Also a couple from the Boy Scout Troop. Here's my bar. You're welcome to it. One of the nuns usually comes for dinner on Thursdays. Drink a lot?

ERNIE

No, hardly ever.

FR DANIEL

Good boy. I love my Scotch. OK, your bedroom is upstairs on the right. Do you need any help with your bags?

ERNIE

No, I can handle it.

FR DANIEL

OK. You get settled.

(looks at his watch)

Have something to eat. There's a bunch of TV dinners in the fridge. I'm going to hear confessions now. I'll see you later.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Father Daniel is at the altar and Ernie is leading a group of five singers and musicians and coming to the end of a song. There are about 100 people present and Father Daniel walks over to the podium and begins to speak.

FR DANIEL

Good morning to you all. We'd like to welcome seminarian Ernie Quinn, over there with the band. Ernie, take a bow.

Ernie, holding his guitar, steps forward and meekly bows. The group applauds.

FR DANIEL continues

Ernie is completing his studies for the priesthood and will be with us for the entire Summer.

The group applauds even louder.

FR DANIEL continues

(continues)

He'll be helping me out with our many chores. He's only a few months away from being ordained. I am always happy to see a man on the way to being a priest.

There is loud applause as Ernie smiles and meekly bows.

INT. RECTORY - DINING ROOM - MORNING

Fr. Daniel Holmes and Ernie are seated at the table having breakfast and drinking coffee. Fr. Daniel is reading a paper and Ernie is writing in a notebook. A BOTTLE OF SCOTCH WHISKEY sits on the table next to Fr. Daniel. He is also drinking Scotch with his breakfast. He takes a PILL BOTTLE out of his robe pocket, removes a PILL and swallows it followed by a sip of whiskey.

FR DANIEL

I swear, all you read about these days are break-ins, bank robberies and rapes. Getting to where I don't even want to read a paper.

ERNIE

Yeah, I know what you mean.

FR DANIEL

Here's one about a priest in Boston, charged with abusing a young boy.

ERNIE

That's too bad.

FR DANIEL

Says here it happened twenty years ago.

ERNIE

How old was he?

FR DANIEL

It says it happened when he was an altar boy. Were you ever an altar boy?

ERNIE

Yes, I was for about four years.

FR DANIEL

Did any priests ever try to do anything to you.

ERNIE

No, never.

FR DANIEL

Well, you can't just condemn those good men.

ERNIE

Which good men.

FR DANIEL

The ones like they are talking about here.

ERNIE

I'm not condemning them, I'm just saying it isn't right.

FR DANIEL

What's not right.

ERNIE

Well, they are obviously homosexuals and perverts, and supposed to be celibate, and they pick on little boys.

FR DANIEL

There's a difference. Homosexuals and - and those who prey on little boys.

ERNIE

It's all the same isn't it? And like I said. Aren't priests supposed to be celibate?

FR DANIEL

Well, what do you have against homosexuals?

ERNIE

Nothing. But do we have to talk about it?

FR DANIEL

I just wanted to get your views. For instance, what would you say if I asked you to go to bed with me?

ERNIE

You're joking right?

FR DANIEL

And if I'm not?

ERNIE

I don't know what to say. Are you propositioning me?

FR DANIEL

Say yes or no.

ERNIE

No.

FR DANIEL

What would you say if I told you that I want you to leave the rectory tonight and be gone until Sunday?

Ernie is in total shock and is speechless.

ERNIE

I won't even ask you why. Well, where am I supposed to go?

FR DANIEL
Doesn't matter, I just want you
out.

ERNIE
This is crazy. This is my home too,
at least for the summer.

FR DANIEL
(getting annoyed)
Mr. Quinn. I am your superior and I
am ordering you to leave this house
tonight and not return until
Sunday.

ERNIE
Father Daniel. I never in a million
years would have suspected that
you...

FR DANIEL
That's the way I was born. And so
help me you'd better keep this
little conversation to yourself if
you know what's good for you.

Ernie is speechless and just sits there shaking his head.

FR DANIEL
So, you will leave this evening and
be back early for Sunday Mass.

ERNIE
OK.

EXT. RECTORY - DRIVEWAY - EVENING

Ernie walks to his car with a small bag and throws it in the
back. He gets in the car and drives away.

EXT. FAST FOOD PLACE - MOMENTS LATER

Ernie is holding his address book and dialing a number on
his cell phone.

ERNIE
(talks into phone)
Hey Paul. It's me Ernie. Can you do
me a favor?

PAUL (V.O)
Hi, man. When did you get back?

ERNIE

(talks into phone)

Been back a couple weeks now. They shipped me to a place not too far from home, and had me real busy. Listen, could I maybe stay at your house tonight and tomorrow?

PAUL (V.O)

What's the matter?

ERNIE

(talks into phone)

It's a long story. I didn't expect this. I'm kind of embarrassed, and I don't know how to tell my parents.

PAUL (V.O)

So, come on over. No problem.

ERNIE

(talks into phone)

Thanks. man. I'll see you in a bit. Ernie switches the phone off and goes to his car.

INT. PAUL'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - LATER

Ernie and Paul are sitting at the table finishing up a sandwich.

ERNIE

He already threatened me. And I have to live with this. Maybe I'll just go ahead and report it to the monsignor, and let the chips fall.

PAUL

Guess you don't have a choice.

INT. CHURCH - BEHIND THE ALTAR - MORNING

Ernie is preparing the wine and the hosts for Mass. Father Daniel is putting on his robes. He is acting reverent and holy.

ERNIE

Good morning Father.

FR DANIEL

Good morning Ernie.

FR DANIEL continues
Are you fasting?

ERNIE
No, I went to the burger joint.

FR DANIEL
OK.

Ernie walks out to the front of the Church carrying the wine. Two little boys about ten years old bring the hosts followed by Ernie bringing the wine. Ernie walks over to the musician area and starts a song.

INT. RECTORY - KITCHEN - MORNING

Both men are drinking coffee. Fr. Daniel has a bathrobe on. There is a bottle of Scotch next to him. He pours a little Scotch into a glass and drinks it straight.

FR DANIEL
Well, you've been here almost two months Ernie. What do you think? You've done a fine job and I am certainly going to put in a good word to the bishop.

ERNIE
Thank you Father.

FR DANIEL
So, you want to be a priest?

ERNIE
Absolutely. It's my lifelong ambition to serve God. And I'm just a few months away.

Fr. Daniel grabs his chest. Pauses to catch his breath. Searches his robe pockets looking for something, but can't find it.

FR DANIEL
(frantic)
Ernie would you please get my nitro from my bedroom? Look in my medicine cabinet. If it's not there look on the top of my dresser.

Ernie runs to the stairs and hurries to Fr. Daniel's bedroom.

INT. RECTORY - BEDROOM OF FR. DANIEL - CONTINUOUS

Ernie quickly runs to the bathroom.

INT. RECTORY - BATHROOM OF FR. DANIEL - CONTINUOUS

He opens the medicine cabinet and sees pill bottles and a pill bottle filled with appears to be marijuana, but no nitro. He runs into the bedroom.

INT. RECTORY - BEDROOM OF FR. DANIEL - CONTINUOUS

Ernie runs to the dresser and checks and there is no nitro. He runs to the closet and finds Fr. Daniel's pants hanging by a belt loop. He dumps the pocket contents onto the bed. Along with some change, car keys and a little BOTTLE OF NITRO, a PACKAGED CONDOM tumbles out. He grabs the bottle, leaving the other items there. He walks by the television and VCR setup and notices a video that he inspects quickly, that reads "Boys Will Be Boys." He runs downstairs.

INT. RECTORY - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Ernie runs into the kitchen and hands Fr. Daniel the little bottle. Fr. Daniel quickly takes one out and places it under his tongue.

ERNIE

I didn't know you had a heart problem.

FR DANIEL

Oh, it's just a little angina.

ERNIE

How long does it usually last?

FR DANIEL

A few minutes.

ERNIE

(runs to the phone)

It's been almost fifteen minutes.

I'm calling 911.

(he dials)

FR DANIEL

Don't do that.

(he is getting angry)

I'm sure it will go away in a minute.

(he is getting into a rage)

Hang up that damn phone.

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)
911 operator, What is your
emergency?

ERNIE
(into phone)
We need an ambulance at St. Anne's
Rectory. We're at 1200 North Fourth
Street. Please hurry.

(pause)
The pastor is having severe chest
pains. Looks like it could be a
heart attack. My name is Ernie
Quinn. I'm a seminarian here.

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)
They're on the way. We'll stay om
the line.

By now the priest is a raving maniac.

FR DANIEL
(screaming)
I'm not going to no damn hospital.
Now, I'm ordering you to hang up
that phone. Now!

Ernie sits down next to the priest.

ERNIE
Calm down. They want me to stay om
the line. This is not going to help
you if you're having a heart
attack.

FR DANIEL
I'm not having no damn heart
attack.

Fr. Daniel reacts to a sharp and severe pain in his chest.
He stops talking and settles back in his chair, holding his
chest as he is now in severe pain.

FR DANIEL continues
Would you go over to the church -
(pauses for a deep breath) and
explain to them that there won't be
a morning Mass?

ERNIE
Yeah, OK. But we've got to get you
to a hospital fast.

FR DANIEL

Oh, I'm sure it's nothing.

ERNIE

Don't you know that if it lasts
more than fifteen minutes that it
could be a heart attack?

The priest doesn't answer. He just shakes his head in the affirmative, as he places another pill under his tongue.

EXT. RECTORY - FRONT - MOMENTS LATER

Two paramedics hurriedly place the priest into the back of the ambulance with Ernie watching. They close the doors and the ambulance pulls away with the SIREN blasting, and Ernie following.

INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM - LATER

Fr. Daniel is laying on a bed and hooked up to equipment. Ernie is standing near the door. A DOCTOR ENTERS.

DOCTOR

You're Fr. Daniel Holmes, over at
St. Anne's?

FR DANIEL

Afraid so.

DOCTOR

Well, it looks like you had a heart
attack. We don't know how severe
just yet. But you'll be in here a
little while.

FR DANIEL

Oh, it had to happen now, with so
many things to do. Ernie, you're
going to have to take over.

ERNIE

I can only do so much.

FR DANIEL

Right. We've got to get a priest to
help us out.

ERNIE

I'll call the diocese.

FR DANIEL

Great. By the way, can you handle the Boy Scout meeting tonight, and the Rosary tomorrow?

ERNIE

I'll handle it.

FR DANIEL

Thank you Ernie. You're a fine young man. You probably saved my life. You're going to make a great priest one day.

ERNIE

In a few months, if all goes well.

FR DANIEL

That's wonderful. I'll certainly put in a good word to the bishop, for what you have been doing here. And I'll pray for you. The parishioners love you, Ernie. Now, do me a favor. Could you bring me my blood pressure and cholesterol medicine?

ERNIE

Sure. Anything else?

FR DANIEL

Maybe some clothes.

ERNIE

OK, I'll be back in a little while. Feel better.

The priest gives an affirmative nod as Ernie EXITS.

INT. RECTORY - BATHROOM OF FR. DANIEL - LATER

Ernie opens the medicine cabinet and locates the right medicine bottles. He takes the bottle that appears to be marijuana and smells it. He puts it back and looks at the other medicine bottles. He finds one that arouses curiosity. He pulls out his datebook and copies what's on the bottle. He walks out into the bedroom.

INT. RECTORY - BEDROOM OF FR. DANIEL - CONTINUOUS

Ernie puts the items from the priest's pocket back as he found them. He walks over to the television and VCR and picks up the VIDEO, marked "Boys Will Be boys." He glances over under the bed and sees a couple MAGAZINES about boys and several PHOTOS of young naked boys.

INT. RECTORY - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Ernie goes to the refrigerator, takes out a soft drink and sits down at the table and pops the top. He sits as in deep thought, and looking at the pill bottles momentarily. He picks up the phone and dials and waits for an answer.

PAUL (V.O)

Hello.

ERNIE

(talks into the phone)

Hey Paul. Ernie here.

PAUL (V.O)

Hi, what's up.

ERNIE

(talks into the phone)

Could you come over here? I'm at the St. Ann's rectory. I need you to see some stuff.

PAUL (V.O)

Sure, I'll be there in a few.

ERNIE

(talks into the phone)

OK. Try to hurry. Fr Daniel had a heart attack and I'm loaded down here. But I need a witness.

PAUL (V.O)

OK, see ya in a bit.

Ernie dials another number.

SECRETARY #3 (V.O)

Diocese of Dayton. How may I direct your call?

ERNIE

(talks into the phone)

Hello. May I please speak to Monsignor Buchwald?

SECRETARY #3 (V.O)
Whom shall I say is calling?

ERNIE
(talks into the phone)
This is Ernie Quinn, the
seminarian.

SECRETARY #3 (V.O)
Oh, hi, Ernie. Just a minute.

Ernie is in a very nervous state and he taps on the table as he waits.

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD (V.O)
This is Monsignor Buchwald. Is this
Ernie?

ERNIE
(talks into the phone)
Yes, Monsignor. How are you?

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD (O.S.)
I'm good. How are you doing over
there?

ERNIE
(talks into the phone)
Not so good right now. We just took
Fr. Daniel to the hospital.

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD (V.O)
To the hospital? What happened?

ERNIE
(talks into the phone)
Looks like he had a heart attack.

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD (V.O)
Well, I know he had some liver
problems but I didn't know about
the heart.

ERNIE
(talks into the phone)
Well, he asked me to call you to
get a priest over to St. Ann's for
Saturday and Sunday. I'm getting
his medicines and some clothes now
and I'm heading back to the
hospital in a bit.

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD (V.O)
 Alright. Tell him we'll take care
 of things. I'll locate a priest.

ERNIE
 OK. Monsignor. Thank you. Nice
 talking to you.

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD
 And you too, son.

INT. RECTORY - FR DANIEL'S BATHROOM - LATER

Paul is standing next to Ernie as he is taking the medicine
 bottles out of the medicine cabinet and laying them down. He
 locates the one in question and hands it to Paul.

ERNIE
 What is this?

PAUL
 Vicodin. It's a pain killer.

ERNIE
 I always see him take one or more
 of these after drinking some booze.

PAUL
 Probably to enhance the high.

Ernie takes the little bottle with the green stuff and shows
 it to Paul, who opens it and sniffs it and tastes it.

PAUL continues
 Definitely pot.

ERNIE
 (shows him the wrapped condom)
 Is this what I think it is?

PAUL
 It's a condom. You've never seen
 one of these before?

Ernie just gives Paul a stern look and doesn't answer.

PAUL continues
 (continues)
 Sorry, man. I forgot.

ERNIE
 Well, they told us about them in
 seminary but that's the closest we
 continues

ERNIE continues
 ever got to them. The word sex was
 like a dirty word.

They walk out into the bedroom.

INT. RECTORY - BEDROOM OF FR. DANIEL - CONTINUOUS

Ernie goes over to the television and VCR and turns them both on. He picks up the video and shows Paul the cover, "Boys Will Be Boys," and places it into the machine and it starts to play. It opens showing a big swimming pool with a bunch of naked boys running around.

PAUL
 That's enough. I got the message.

ERNIE
 Wait. There's more. Ernie walks over to the bed and looks under and pulls out the magazines and photos and shows Paul.

PAUL
 Come on. Let's get the hell out of here. Looks like you might be living with a pure pervert.

ERNIE
 To say the least. I just needed a witness.

He goes to the closet and pulls out a small suitcase and starts to pack some clothes.

INT. HOSPITAL - PATIENT ROOM - LATER

Ernie enters the room to see Fr. Daniel all wired up and in bed. He puts the suitcase in the closet.

ERNIE
 I brought your things. And here's the two medicines.

FATHER DANIEL
 Just put them there. Ernie, I want to thank you. If it wasn't for you I might be dead now. It was a heart attack and I got here just in time. Thanks to you.

ERNIE

Well, I can't stay. I got a full plate. Monsignor said he would come over tomorrow and he'll get a priest over for Saturday and Sunday. Let me know if there is anything you need.

FATHER DANIEL

Ok, you take care, son.

INT. DIOCESE OFFICES - MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD'S OFFICE

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD

Well, hello Ernie. It's so good to see you. I've heard so many good things about you from Bloomington. Looks like you're going to make a great priest. I am so happy for you. So, what's on your mind?

ERNIE

Well, first of all, looks like they don't know how long Fr. Daniel will be out.

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD

I'm so sorry to hear about this.

ERNIE

I have some things I have to tell you. I believe Fr. Daniel is a pedophile.

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD

Be careful Son, you are making some very serious charges here.

ERNIE

I wouldn't make them if I didn't know they were true.

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD

Ok?

ERNIE

Well, first of all he ordered me out of the rectory several weekends and said he was having some of the boys from the university over for the weekend. And he ordered me out of there on Friday and not to come back 'till Sunday morning. And some continues

ERNIE continues
of the boy scouts are always at the
rectory. And I'm worried about the
altar boys, that are always at the
rectory.

Monsignor Buchwald has begun to write on a legal pad.

ERNIE continues
(continues)
And he wanted me to go to bed with
him saying that it is OK to be
homosexual. Look, I could care less
about Fr. Daniel's sex life, as
long as he doesn't seduce boys, and
I guess I'm really afraid he'll try
to seduce me.

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD
This is hard to believe but go on.

ERNIE
When I went to his medicine chest I
found marijuana and Vicodin. I've
noticed that he would always take
Vicodin when he was drinking his
Scotch.

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD
That's a dangerous mix. what else?

ERNIE
When I couldn't find the nitro, I
checked his dresser, where he
empties his pockets and it wasn't
there. Finally found it in his
pants pocket along with a condom.
At that point I felt I should have
a witness so I called my friend,
Paul, over to show him. And then we
found some pornographic video tapes
and magazines and photos of naked
little boys.

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD
I want you to put this all in
writing and I will take it up with
the bishop. This is shocking, to
say the least.

ERNIE
How do you think I feel? I don't
know how to handle it. And I'm sure
he will deny everything.

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD
Well, son, you know that it is your
word against his.

ERNIE
That's why I felt I needed a
witness.

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD
Who's your witness?

ERNIE
I'd rather not say now.

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD
Alright. I want you to put this all
in writing and sign it. You go now.
We'll sort it out.

ERNIE
Ok, thank you Monsignor.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - AFTERNOON

Father Daniel is propped up in the bed with heart monitors
and introvenious apparatus attached. Monsignor Buchwald
ENTERS.

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD
Danny, what the heck are you doing
here?

FATHER DANIEL
Oh, I just had a little run in with
bad luck I guess.

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD
Yeah, Ernie Quinn told me all about
it. Close call huh?

FR DANIEL
Yeah, I guess if it wasn't for him
you'd be holding a funeral. He's
going to make a good priest.

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD
You're not going to like this.

FATHER DANIEL
What?

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD

He's filing some charges against you. Very heavy charges. I told him to put them in writing.

FATHER DANIEL

(he leans forward in anticipation)

What did he say?

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD

He says that he thinks you are a pedophile and that you have also made passes at him. And he is afraid you are going to seduce him.

FATHER DANIEL

Why that lying little son-of-a-bitch.

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD

He also said that you ordered him out of the rectory and have boys from the university over on weekends.

FATHER DANIEL

I can't believe this.

He rings for the nurse.

FATHER DANIEL continues

(continues)

What else did he say?

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD

That's not enough?

FATHER DANIEL

Oh, I'm sure there's more.

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD

There is. He said he found magazines and video tapes in your bedroom about little naked boys, and a condom in your pants pocket.

FATHER DANIEL

What the hell was he doing in my bedroom and in my pocket?

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD

Well, I believe he said you sent him to get your nitro tablets and after looking everywhere, he finally found them in your pants pocket.

FATHER DANIEL

That lying little bastard. You've known me a long time. Have you ever had any complaints about me?

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD

Well, no.

The NURSE ENTERS

FATHER DANIEL

Would you please bring me some writing paper and a pen?

NURSE

Sure. But first you lay back down and try to relax. I'll be right back.

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD

What are you going to do?

FATHER DANIEL

You'll see. That lying little son-of-a-bitch also disobeyed a direct order.

The nurse ENTERS with the paper and pen and hands it to the priest. He starts to write frantically.

NURSE

Father Daniel, is anything wrong? Your heart rate has risen significantly. You must settle down or you'll have another attack.

FATHER DANIEL

I'm just very upset about something.

He continues to write.

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD

Danny, take it easy. If I'd known this was going to happen I wouldn't have said anything.

FATHER DANIEL

So if I have another attack it will be his fault.

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD

Ok, I'm going to leave and let you get some rest. I'm sorry I upset you so.

FATHER DANIEL

Hold on. Don't go yet.

He finishes up his writing and signs it. He folds it and writes "confidential" on the outside, and hands it to the monsignor.

FATHER DANIEL continues

Here. I want you to put this in an envelope and give it to the bishop. Under no circumstances is anyone else to read it. This ought to fix him.

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD

What are you doing?

FATHER DANIEL

You'll see.

INT. RECTORY -KITCHEN - MORNING

Ernie is sitting at the table drinking coffee and reading the paper and the PHONE RINGS.

ERNIE

(Talks on phone)

Hello.

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD (V.0.)

Is this Ernie?

ERNIE

(Talks on phone)

Yes it is.

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD (V.0.)

This is Monsignor Buchwald. Something has come up and I need you to come over to my office right away.

ERNIE

(Talks on phone)

Well, I was just about to go over
and lead the Rosary.

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD (V.O.)

Someone else can do it. I need you
here. Right away.

ERNIE

(Talks on phone)

Alright, Monsignor. I'm on my way.

INT. DIOCESE OFFICE - LATER

The monsignor is standing facing his window and Ernie ENTERS
bewildered.

ERNIE

Is there anything wrong?

The monsignor continues to face the window while talking to
Ernie.

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD

Sit down.

Ernie sits.

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD continues

About Father Daniel. He complained
to the bishop about you. We don't
believe you.

ERNIE

You don't believe me? I have a
witness.

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD

Doesn't matter. We don't believe
you. You're lying.

He turns around and walks over and sits at his desk.

ERNIE

Why would I lie? Monsignor,
everything I have told you is the
truth and nothing but the truth. I
don't lie.

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD

I'm sorry Ernie, but the bishop has
ordered that you be dropped from
seminary studies immediately.

ERNIE

What?

MONSIGNOR BUCHWALD

That's right. You will report back to Holy Angel's Seminary in Bloomington and vacate your room there, and disassociate yourself from the seminary. And you have been ordered by the bishop to leave this diocese. You are not to tell anyone of these circumstances. It is all in this letter from the bishop.

Ernie has broken down and is crying hysterically.

ERNIE

I don't lie. My commitment to God and the Church needs no further contemplation. I have known my calling from God for a number of years now.

INT. SEMINARY - ERNIE'S ROOM - DAY

Ernie is packing the rest of his belongings into boxes. He loads them onto a cart and heads out to his car. Fr. Armond happens to see Ernie and comes over to him.

FR ARMAND

What are you doing?

ERNIE

Moving out

FR ARMOND

Moving out? What happened?

ERNIE

Bishop Barnes suspended me from the seminary and ordered me to leave the diocese.

FR ARMAND

Why?

ERNIE

The parish in Ohio that Bishop Barnes placed me in for the summer internship? That priest there is a pervert. Likes little boys. He wanted me to go to bed with him and
continues

ERNIE continues
he had boys over from the college
on weekends and threw me out. I
couldn't take any more so I
reported it to the vocations
director. I thought he believed me
but the next day he called me in to
say I had been dropped.

Ernie starts to cry.

FR ARMAND
And he suspended you for blowing
the whistle?

ERNIE
I guess you could say that. The
bishop wrote that I should
contemplate my commitment to God
and the Church. And he ordered me
to leave the diocese. I found out
later that when Father Holmes there
was told about my complaint, he
wrote a devastating lying report on
me. And this was after I saved his
life.

FR ARMAND
What do you mean?

ERNIE
He was mixing pills and Scotch and
had a heart attack. If it wasn't
for me he'd be dead.

Aw, Ernie, I'm so sorry. You are
such a good person. If you want
I'll try to talk to them.

ERNIE
Be my guest, for what good it will
do. The priest is really whacko.
Can't believe that the bishop
believes his crap. I'm just a
nobody.

FR ARMAND
I'll call Bishop Barnes and talk to
him.

ERNIE
Excuse my French, Father, but I
think he's just a no good bastard.
continues

ERNIE continues
 And I could think of a few other
 choice words for good Father Daniel
 Holmes. He can rot in hell.

FR ARMAND
 Now, Ernie. You have to forgive him
 and pray for him.

ERNIE
 I'm determined to finish my studies
 anyway. I'll get a student loan or
 something. Just got a few months to
 go. I'll have my Masters and my
 Bachelors, and finish Theology.

FR ARMAND
 That's the spirit.

ERNIE
 I still want to be a priest.

FR ARMAND
 And there is no reason why you
 shouldn't. Look, I'm going to
 introduce you to Father Smith. He
 is pastor of a parish not too far
 from here. He could use someone
 like you over there and maybe you
 can work out something to complete
 your studies.

ERNIE
 Aw, Harm, that would be great. I'd
 sure appreciate it.

INT. TOWNHOUSE - OFFICE ROOM - DAY

Ernie is sitting at his desk with his laptop computer and going through some of his mail and sorting it. He writes information from some of the letters into an address book. He reads one letter in particular with great interest. He picks up his phone, dials and waits for an answer.

ERNIE
 (talks into phone)
 Bobby, is this you?

BOBBY (V.O)
 Ernie?

ERNIE

(talks into phone)

Yeah, it's me. Congratulations you bum. You made it huh? So, you're in Bakersfield?

BOBBY (V.O)

Yeah, finally. What's up with you?

ERNIE

(talks into phone)

Well, I got dropped by the bishop because I blew the whistle on a priest.

BOBBY (V.O)

Oh, man. That's too bad.

ERNIE

(talks into phone)

So, I finished all my studies on my own.

BOBBY (V.O)

You finished up everything?

ERNIE

(talks into phone)

Yup. But I'm not a priest yet

BOBBY (V.O)

Well, look. Maybe I can get you set up out here in Bakersfield. I know the vocations director and I can get you in touch with him.

ERNIE

(talks into phone)

Aw, Bobby that would be fantastic.

BOBBY (V.O)

Yeah, ok. Look, I have to warn you. This Father Howard, the vocations director is gay. So, just be careful. OK?

ERNIE

(talks into phone)

I guess I know that story pretty well.

BOBBY

Alright, call him. Here's his name
and number. It's Father Barry
Howard. 555 -987 - 6543

INT. AIRPORT - BAKERSFIELD - ARRIVAL AREA - DAY

FATHER HOWARD and MONSIGNOR CHARLES O'FLYNN are standing at the luggage arrival area. Fr. Howard is holding a little sign with letters HOWARD. Ernie spots him and walks over to where he is standing.

ERNIE

Father Howard?

FR HOWARD

Welcome to Bakersfield, Ernie.
After all this time with the
applications, and phone calls back
and forth and all, its good to see
you. Say hello to Fr. Charles
O'Flynn. He's our Administrator of
Priests in Barstow and he's going
to take you back there.

The three men shake hands.

ERNIE

Glad to know you Father. Well, I'm
really glad to be here.

The two men get Ernie's bags and guitar and start to walk away from the area.

MSGR O'FLYNN

Barstow's only a couple hours away.
Father Richard Sharpe is the pastor
there. There's two other priests
there, and one is leaving, and
you'll be anointed a deacon. You
speak Spanish?

ERNIE

Yeah.

MSGR O'FLYNN

That will be a great asset for the
parish, since there are a lot of
Latinos there.

ERNIE

Well, I'm at your service Father. I
came a little early to get the lay
continues

ERNIE continues
of the land, so I'll have time to
fly back and pack some of my stuff
when I drive back out here.

INT. RECTORY - ST JOAN OF ARC PARISH ENTRYWAY - LATER

FR. MARSHALL opens the front door and greets Ernie and Msgr.
O'Flynn.

FR MARSHALL
Hi Chuck. How are you? And you must
be Ernie. It's good to meet you.
Come on in.

They shake hands.

ERNIE
Good to meet you too.

INT. RECTORY - ST JOAN OF ARC PARISH - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

They walk through the hall to a family room. Ernie notices
paintings and photographs on the wall of ST. JOAN and
various popes. Ernie stops at BISHOP LESTER'S PAINTING and
studies the picture.

ERNIE
So this is the boss?

FR MARSHALL
That's our man.

ERNIE
Good man, I hope.

MSGR. O'FLYNN
Ok, Ernie. I see you are in good
hands. Call me when you get settled
and we'll talk some more. I'm going
back to Bakersfield. I'll see you
later, Marshall.

FR MARSHALL
Alright, keep in touch.

ERNIE
Thanks, so much for the ride and it
was good to meet you, Father.

MSGR. O'FLYNN
You too, Ernie, and good luck.

Ernie shakes Msgr. O'Flynn's hand as he EXITS.

FR MARSHALL

Ernie, I know you must be hungry.
Why don't we run over to the burger
place and grab something.

ERNIE

Good idea. All I've had was
peanuts.

INT. FAST FOOD PLACE - LATER

Ernie and Fr. Marshall are sitting at a booth talking.

ERNIE

And I didn't know that this gay and
really sick pastor had written a
devastating evaluation of me with
nothing but lies because I wouldn't
submit. I just couldn't believe it.

FR MARSHALL

Well, I've got to warn you that
things aren't much better here.
These guys here are weird. The
pastor, Fr Richard Sharpe, is
bisexual. He may not bother you,
but he has this guy, Barney Allison
living here. He's in and out. He
spends a lot of time in Sharpe's
room. Sharpey, we call him. He
tells everyone he likes to be
called "Dick." And his forty year
old nun girlfriend sleeps over at
least twice a month.

ERNIE

Oh, man. What did I get myself
into?

FR MARSHALL

From Holy Mass to a holy mess. And
to top it off? Dickey boy Sharpey,
or Sharpey Dick, I like to call
him, is an alkie and mixes it with
pills.

ERNIE

Oh, no not again.

FR MARSHALL

Again?

ERNIE

Yeah, the bum in Indiana. Not much different. Does the bishop know about any of this?

FR MARSHALL

I'm sure he does. But he's just as bad as the rest of them, I hear. Covers up and transfers them around, and hides perverts here.

ERNIE

Holy crap.

FR MARSHALL

Yeah, literally. And I almost forgot. Watch out for Howard. He's a known homo and as vocations director he has your life in his hands.

INT. RECTORY - DINING ROOM - EVENING

A table is set for seven. Fathers KEN ATKINS, NEIL BREWER and MARSHALL STARNES are standing and talking. Ernie and FR. SHARPE enter the room talking.

FR SHARPE

Gentlemen, let me introduce our deacon to be, Ernie Quinn, this is Fr. Atkins and Fr. Brewer.

FR SHARPE continues

Where's John?

FR MARSHALL

He's getting a haircut.

FR SHARPE

Yeah, he should go bald. People are complaining that he thinks he's Jesus.

They all sit and direct their attention to Fr. Sharpe.

FR SHARPE continues

(continues)

Sophie, our housekeeper, stayed and opened some soup and made spaghetti and meat balls for us all. And it's a special time for Ernie.

Barney comes into the room and sits

BARNEY

I'll drink to that.

They all raise a glass

GROUP

Cheers, Ernie.

FR SHARPE

Ernie, want to lead the blessing?

Ernie leads the blessing.

GROUP

Bless us, oh Lord and these thy
gifts which we are about to receive
from thy bounty through Christ Our
Lord. Amen.

They all bless themselves with the sign of the Cross. The men are mostly silent for a few moments as they start eating their soup.

FR SHARPE

Wonder where grandpa is.

FR KEN

He was planting some flowers
before.

FR NEIL

I guess he does pretty well for his
age.

ERNIE

How old is Father anyway?

FR SHARPE

He's going on eighty. The only
reason I keep him here is because
he speaks Spanish. He's really a
burden. Well, Junior. Tell us about
yourself. How old are you?

ERNIE

(he is rather backward and
timid)

Well, not much to tell. I'm going
on 30. I did an internship near my
home, and then went back and
finished up all my studies, and
here I am.

FR SHARPE

Well, you keep your nose clean and do what you are supposed to do and pretty soon you'll be one of us. Tow the line and just remember who the boss is here.

There is silence as the men continue to finish their meal.

INT. RECTORY - JOAN OF ARC PARISH - BEDROOM - MORNING

Ernie is adjusting his white clerical collar and looking into the mirror. A KNOCK is heard on the door.

ERNIE

Come in.

Father Marshall ENTERS.

ERNIE continues

Hey, Marsh.

FR MARSHALL

Well, good morning Deacon Quinn.

ERNIE

Feels good.

FR MARSHALL

Congratulations. Won't be long now.

ERNIE

Hope not. I guess it's up to Father Sharpe's recommendation.

FR MARSHALL

Good luck Ernie. Look, you and I have had some differences about things here and I sure hope we can work them out.

ERNIE

We'll talk. Takes two.

FR MARSHALL

I have to warn you. Sharpey, Dickie boy, had a guest over last night and I think they are still in his room.

ERNIE

Male or female?

FR MARSHALL

Does it matter?

ERNIE

Guess not. Some day I'm goin' to write a book, called the Celibate Secrets. And I'll also include all the things that some priests tell about the things they hear in confession. Did you hear about the one he told the other day?

FR MARSHALL

No, not yet. But I'm sure I will.

ERNIE

He said this kid comes in and confesses that he was with his girlfriend and when he had his thing half way in he pulled it out and put his clothes on and he wanted to know if it was just a half sin.

Both men laugh.

ERNIE continues

And then he joked about a dozen more he had heard.

INT. RECTORY - JOAN OF ARC PARISH -KITCHEN - MORNING

Ernie is sitting and having coffee and Father Sharpe ENTERS with a bathrobe around him.

FR SHARPE

You're up early today.

ERNIE

No earlier than usual.

FR SHARPE

Think you could make some eggs?

ERNIE

Sure, how would you like them?

Sister Helen comes into the kitchen, dressed in her habit and adjusting her clothes. Ernie looks at her in amazement and is in total shock.

FR SHARPE
 Ever hear that expression "What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas?"

ERNIE
 Yeah, I guess so.
 (to sister Helen)
 Good morning, Sister.

FR SHARPE
 You guessed right. I'd like you to make Sister Helen and me some eggs?

Ernie is still standing speechless with his mouth open. And after a few moments, he suddenly realizes the reality of the situation.

ERNIE
 Coming up. Scrambled eggs for two.

He gets a pan out of the cabinet and goes to the refrigerator and gets eggs and butter out. Puts the butter in the pan and heats it.

ERNIE continues
 Toast?

FR SHARPE
 No thanks.

SISTER HELEN
 Yes, I'd like some.

He gets two slices of bread from a loaf and puts them into the toaster.

ERNIE
 (under his breath)
 Two slices of shit!

FR SHARPE
 What was that, son?

ERNIE
 Two slices of Bacon?

ED FR SHARPE
 No that's not necessary. Listen, Ernie. I just want you to know that I wrote a very positive letter of recommendation about you to the bishop. Very positive, and it will insure your ordination.

ERNIE

Well, gee, thank you Father.

FR SHARPE

Call me Dick.
(he smiles wide)

INT. CHURCH - AFTERNOON

Ernie and Fr. Marshall are decorating the church for Christmas. A florist and assistant are bringing in and arranging poinsettias. Fr. Marshall is setting up artificial trees and Ernie is finishing placing the FIGURES in the MANGER.

ERNIE

I always love doing this.

FR MARSHALL

Yeah, I guess I do too. Have you seen Sharpey Dick?

ERNIE

Yeah, I saw him earlier. Already had a few and Christmas is still a week away.

FR MARSHALL

Well, I'm worried about when he starts taking those pills with the booze.

ERNIE

What pills?

FR MARSHALL

I don't know. Vitacam? Vitamore?
Vicodin? Something.

ERNIE continues

Oh, no. Vicodin? Not another one.

INT. RECTORY - JOAN OF ARC PARISH - KITCHEN - MORNING

Ernie and Fr. Marshall are sitting and having coffee. Suddenly, there is a loud NOISE from upstairs, as if someone has banged a door. They hear it again and they both run out and up the stairs.

INT. RECTORY - JOAN OF ARC PARISH - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY -
CONTINUOUS

Fr. Sharpe is standing by the door to his room. He is obviously very much drunk. He steps back and kicks the door very hard once more.

FR SHARPE

(slurs his words)

There. That ought to show you bastards who's boss around here. And it's a reminder that I can kick your asses the same way.

Fr. Sharpe staggers toward the steps and collapses. Fr. Marshall runs to his side. Ernie goes into Fr. Sharpe's room and into his bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ernie opens the medicine cabinet and checks the pill bottles. He finds one marked Vicodin. He takes it and hurries back to the hallway.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Ernie holds the pill bottle up as he walks toward Fr. Marshall.

ERNIE

These pills enhance the booze high. We've gotta get him to the hospital, like now. I never dreamed anything like this could happen to me again.

Father Sharpe has begun to sing.

FR SHARPE

(he sings and slurs the words and notes to the tune of "Oh Little town of Bethlehem")

Oh little town of Bakersfield and the nuns that go down on me

(he speaks)

And then I wrote:

(he sings the tune of "Irish Eyes are Smiling")

"When Italian eyes are smiling 'bout Bishop Lester's whores in Rome."

((he speaks))

And then I wrote: (he sings to the tune of "Oh, Tannenbaum") "Let's continues

FR SHARPE continues
 celebrate being celibate, But it's
 more fun to masturbate."
 (he yells loud)
 Merry Syphilis and a Clappy New
 Year everyone.

FR MARSHALL
 Now I've seen everything.

ERNIE
 No you haven't.

FR MARSHALL
 Well, almost.

ERNIE
 Come on. Let's get him to the
 hospital.

They struggle to get him to his feet and they drag him down
 the stairs.

INT. HOSPITAL -EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

Ernie and Father Marshall bring Father Sharpe in to the
 intake part and meet two NURSES and a DOCTOR. They put him
 in a wheelchair. He is obviously very stoned and close to
 unconsciousness.

ERNIE
 Hi.
 (to the nurses and nods at Fr.
 Sharpe)
 This is Father Sharpe from St Joan
 of Arc. Looks like he mixed a lot
 of alcohol with these pills.

Ernie hands the nurse the pill bottle. They quickly wheel
 Fr. Sharpe into the emergency room.

ERNIE continues
 (continues)
 Here's his ID and insurance. Sorry
 we can't stay, but we have to get
 back over there and prepare for
 Midnight Mass. We don't want you to
 think that we don't care about him,
 but we really must get back.

INT. RECTORY - DINING ROOM - LATER

Ernie and Fr. Marshall are sitting facing each other at the table having coffee, and words are not coming easy. Each are just staring away from the other.

ERNIE

You and I have been through a lot here and we've had a few disagreements along the way. And he hasn't been much help.

FR MARSHALL

I know.

ERNIE

Well, we have to work through our personal problems with each other, 'cause we have to go over there soon and do Midnight Mass.

FR MARSHALL

Yeah, and with this animosity between us it can't help but rub off on the Mass.

ERNIE

Look, Marsh, I may not be a priest, but I've been through all my studies and counting this incident, and the other one - same crap - I have been through holy hell trying to get to my ordination.

FR MARSHALL

Yes, I know that too.

ERNIE

Well, I guess you also should know about Sharpey Dick's dividing and conquering with you and me. That's his management style.

MR MARSHALL

I never looked at it that way. I guess you're right.

ERNIE

I know I'm right. He is always in command.

FR MARSHALL

Boy, you hit the nail on the head. I don't know why I never saw it. And when I think back of some of the times he has instigated and manipulated both of us. And he also plays the Vicar General. What's his name?

ERNIE

O'Flynn. Msgr. Chuck. I'll withhold my thoughts here. And we've got to get to him. He has to know about this little episode.

FR MARSHALL

He knows all about Sharpey and his bisexual events. He might even be gay too, for all we know.

ERNIE

Does he know about Sister Helen spending the night with Sharpey Dickey boy?

FR MARSHALL

Probably. But him and Sharpey have been in constant competition with each other. Any title, any power advancement, they fought with each other to get it. O'Flynn made it to be Monsignor. Sharpey didn't. Sharpey was really pissed off.

(Marsh settles back in his seat - looks at Ernie thoughtfully)

I'm glad we've settled this. And Ernie, you are going to make a great priest. I'm going to write a letter of recommendation for you and get it to the bishop.

ERNIE

You'd do that for me?

FR MARSHALL

You bet. Now, we got work to do.

INT. CHURCH OF ST. JOAN OF ARC - NIGHT

The church is filled and Fr. Marshall is saying the Mass. Ernie is standing in front of the choir and leading everyone singing the ending of O Little Town of Bethlehem. Fr. Marshall is at the altar saying Mass. At the mention of Bethlehem, (as in Bakersfield) they exchange glances and both smile and hide their chuckling.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

CHRISTMAS MUSIC is playing softly and Fr. Sharpe is laying in bed half asleep. Ernie enters the room and walks over to the bed. There are several VASES OF FLOWERS spread around.

ERNIE

Merry Christmas Father. Or should I say, Dick? Here is a little treat for you. Ernie gives him a box of chocolates.

FR SHARPE

(fully awake)

Thank you Ernie. That will sweeten up my Christmas. I can't even get out of bed.

ERNIE

Why not?

FR SHARPE

Oh, they want me to just stay in bed and rest. I can't even get up to go to the bathroom. Have to use the bedpan and that other thing there. I have to call the nurse every time I have to go. It's embarrassing. Since you are here, could you help me with this urinal thing?

ERNIE

What do you want me to do?

FR SHARPE

Just help me turn over and get into position and hold this so I can pee in it.

ERNIE

I really don't want to do that.

FR SHARPE

But I have to go. I have to go.

ERNIE

Well, I'll hold it but make it fast. Ernie helps Dick to turn over. He reluctantly holds the urinal and Fr. Sharpe relieves himself.

FR SHARPE

Wait don't go away. Would you shake it a little and stroke me so I could have an orgasm?

ERNIE

Do what?

FR SHARPE

Stroke me.

ERNIE

No way Jose. Shake it yourself. Or, maybe get your Barney friend down here, or maybe your nun, Sister Helen. I'm out of here. Merry Christmas -
(he stresses) Dick.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Barney Allison enters Father Sharpe's room with a large bouquet of flowers. He walks over to his bedside and gives him a big hug.

FR SHARPE

Oh, Barney, I'm so glad to see you. You're like a breath of fresh air. Merry Christmas.

BARNEY

Merry Christmas to you also Dick. I've missed you.

FR SHARPE

Yeah, me too.

BARNEY

So, fill me in.

FR SHARPE

Not much to fill except I'll be here awhile. Do you think you could
continues

FR SHARPE continues
bring me some of that Vicodin? It's
bad enough that I can't have some
booze, but I've got to have the
Vicodin.

BARNEY
I'll see what I can do.

FR SHARPE
Look in my medicine cabinet. And by
the way, this Ernie?

BARNEY
What about him?

FR SHARPE
I don't trust him.

BARNEY
Why? What happened?

FR SHARPE
He knows too much. He knows about
you and me and might just dream up
some other stuff.

FR SHARPE continues
Like what?

FR SHARPE continues
Oh, I don't know. Anything, I
guess. Might even say I'm sleeping
with a woman or something.

BARNEY
Well, are you?

FR SHARPE
Hell no. You know that there's no
one but you.

Barney just looks at him with a searching and questionable
eye, as if he does not believe what he is hearing.

FR SHARPE continues
You do believe me don't you?

BARNEY
Yes.

FR SHARPE

Well, I'm afraid the little bastard is going to go and rat on all of us. And if they believe him they could throw my ass out, send me to Siberia and take away everything I have worked for.

BARNEY

They could do that?

FR SHARPE

You bet your ass. I could be out there with nothing. No job, no money, no roof over my head and then later, no pension.

BARNEY

That's bad.

There is a moment of silence while both men are thinking long and hard about the situation.

BARNEY continues

I've got it. I know just what to do.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Ernie is sitting in the office of Msgr O'Flynn in the middle of telling him about the goings on in the parish and the diocese. O'Flynn is writing it all down.

ERNIE

And that's just about the whole story.

MSGR O'FLYNN

To tell you the truth though, I know all about Dick Sharpe, so this really is nothing new. Well, Ernie this is a terrible burden on your shoulders. You've been through a lot.

ERNIE

You can say that again.

MSGR O'FLYNN

I will write this up for Bishop Lester. You can rest assured that I will protect you and Fr. Marshall.

ERNIE

Marsh? Right. He did everything he could to come between Marsh and me. Look, I already had one priest back in my home diocese screw up my ordination.

MSGR O'FLYNN

Well, I assure you it won't happen again. So, let me write this up and I'll get back to you.

Ernie gets up to leave and they shake hands.

EXT. AIRPORT RUNWAY - BAKERSFIELD - DAY

A big jet plane lands.

EXT. AIRPORT - PARKING LOT - MINUTES LATER

Father Barry Howard is helping Ernie put his luggage into Howard's SUV and they get into the car and drive.

EXT./INT.- HOWARDS CAR - CONTINUOUS

FR HOWARD

Well, how did it go?

ERNIE

Well, my Mom and Dad were estatic. Saw a bunch of old friends. We made all the plans for my first Mass, and a party afterwards. It's really working out.

FR HOWARD

That's nice.

Ernie looks out at the street signs.

ERNIE

Isn't that the way to your rectory?

FR HOWARD

Well, sometimes I get lost.

ERNIE

So, how long have you lived here?

FR HOWARD

Too long.

ERNIE

You got a map?

FR HOWARD

Don't need a map. We got your complaint about Fr. Sharpe.

ERNIE

Yeah?

FR HOWARD

And he put in one about you. So, it's not in the hands of the bishop just yet, but it will be soon.

ERNIE

Well, what did he write?

FR HOWARD

He said that he caught you in bed with his friend, Barney Allison.

ERNIE

Well, that dirty low down..

FR HOWARD

Take it easy, calm down. It's OK. It hasn't gone any further than me.
(pauses)

Yet! Ernie, what do you have against homosexuals?

ERNIE

Not anything, I guess, as long as they keep it to themselves. I just really don't approve of it among those who make vows to be celibate. And I'm not one of them.

FR HOWARD

Ernie, it's OK to be homosexual. Howard puts his hand on Ernie's left leg near his groin as he steers the car. He holds his leg tight.

FR HOWARD continues

(continues)

You hear me? It's OK.

Frantic and fearful, Ernie hugs the door and grabs the handle.

ERNIE

What are you doing? Cut it out!

Howard speeds up the car even faster. Ernie looks out and notices the speed and pushes Howard's hand away from him.

FR HOWARD

So, you want to be a priest huh?

They pull up to a neighboring rectory.

FR HOWARD

OK. Father Arnold said you can stay here tonight. I'll pick you up here at noon tomorrow. I need you to help me with something.

ERNIE

OK.

EXT. ANOTHER RECTORY - CONTINUOUS

Ernie removes his bags and walks toward the front door as Fr. Howard pulls away.

INT. RECTORY OF FR. HOWARD/HALLWAY - MORNING

Fr. Howard and Ernie are walking toward Fr. Howard's bedroom.

FR HOWARD

I need you to help me move my dresser and a couple other things.

INT. RECTORY OF FR. HOWARD/BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

As they enter, Ernie notices pictures on the walls of young men and boys.

FR HOWARD

Like my collection?

There is no response from Ernie. He just continues to observe. They move the dresser.

FR HOWARD continues

(continues)

OK, the dresser is good right here. Oh, one other thing. This damn water bed is so big and bulky that it's a pain to put on sheets. Give me a hand.

Fr Howard gets a set of sheets from the dresser and pulls the other set off the bed.

FR HOWARD continues
Here, take this end.

When Ernie takes the other end, Howard moves over behind Ernie and pushes him onto the bed, face down. While removing his belt from his pants he also tries to pull Ernie's pants down. Ernie struggles to get away, but not before the priest reaches around to place his hand on Ernie's scrotum.

FR HOWARD continues
Ernie, it's alright.

Ernie struggles to free himself, but Howard's weight has restrained him, and by now Howard has completely removed his own pants and has pulled Ernie's down. This is an obvious and blatant attempt to rape or sodomize Ernie. Ernie finally succeeds in pushing him away and rushes to his feet. He adjusts his clothing and runs out of the bedroom and out of the house.

EXT. BURGER JOINT - MOMENTS LATER

Ernie is on his cell phone and waiting for an answer.

ERNIE
(talks on the phone) Marsh.
It's me, Ernie.

FR MARSHALL
Hey, where are you?

ERNIE
In in Bakersfield. Think you could
come over and get me?

FR MARSHALL
I thought Barry was bringing you.

ERNIE
Not on your life. The
son-of-a-bitch tried to rape me.

FR MARSHALL
What?

ERNIE
That's right.
(spells)
R-A-P-E rape!

FR MARSHALL
I don't believe it.

ERNIE
Believe it. They're all crazy.

FR MARSHALL
Yeah, and they got you by the balls. Report it and they'll can you.

ERNIE
Well, I've got to get to the bishop with this and let the chips fall. I've really had it. I can't see him siding with any of them. Look, I'm at the burger joint.

FR MARSHALL
OK, hang in there. It'll take me a while.

INT. DIOCESE OFFICES/SECRETARY'S DESK - DAY

Ernie approaches the secretary's desk and sees none other than Sister Helen. Both look at each other quite embarrassed.

ERNIE
Hello Sister Helen. Fancy meeting you here.

SISTER HELEN
Likewise, I'm sure. He's expecting you. Go ahead in.

INT. BISHOP'S OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

Bishop Lester is sitting at his desk with Ernie sitting across from him. He is looking down at a pen in his hand as he is tapping the desk.

BISHOP LESTER
Well, Deacon Quinn. That is quite a story you've told me and I don't quite know what to make of it.

The bishop gets up and walks over to his window and gazes out and is silent for a moment.

BISHOP LESTER continues
Son, do you really want to be a priest?

ERNIE

All my life I have wanted to be a priest and I won't stop now. I've completed all my studies.

BISHOP LESTER

Well, I can't understand why you would concoct such wild stories as you have told me.

ERNIE

Why would I lie?

BISHOP LESTER

I don't know. Why don't you tell me?

ERNIE

I never lie. I have studied and worked hard for almost eight years. Eight years to answer what I felt and knew in my heart was to spend the rest of my life serving my God and his people.

BISHOP LESTER

Well, what you don't know son, is that I have a letter of complaint here from your pastor, Fr. Richard Sharpe, telling in detail of how he caught his friend and you in bed together. What do you have to say about that?

ERNIE

Nothing, I guess, except to say that it's a lie, and this all runs a lot deeper than you might want to admit.

BISHOP LESTER

Young man, I am your bishop, and you won't talk to me like that. And there's another complaint here from the administrator of Priests for the Church in Barstow, Msgr O'Flynn, and another from my vocations director, Father Howard.

ERNIE

Your Excellency, I am only trying to get across to you what is the truth.

BISHOP LESTER

The truth. What do you know about truth? Am I supposed to believe you over my trusted and obedient priests?

Ernie just sits and stares at the floor and is almost in tears. He just shakes his head in disbelief.

BISHOP LESTER continues

Well, answer me.

ERNIE

I don't know what else to say.

BISHOP LESTER

Well, I do, and I am withdrawing my approval of your ordination. You've said it all. I am ordering you to be silent forever more about what you say have observed regarding these good men, lest you ruin any remaining opportunity whatsoever you might have to be ordained, and lest you cause damage to the Roman Catholic Church. You are to leave this diocese at once and erase any and all memories of anything, I repeat anything you may have, or think you have witnessed from your mind forever. You are to cease having any thoughts whatsoever about those incidents. And I order you to treat it as if anything like what you have mentioned to me never happened. Do I make myself clear?

ERNIE

Yes, Bishop.

BISHOP LESTER

Then go and contemplate your errors, and may God bless you and be with you.

Ernie just stares at the bishop, almost in tears and shaking his head.

ERNIE

How could you?

Ernie then bursts into uncontrollable tears.

INT. CHURCH - LATER

Ernie is sitting in a pew, thinking and alternately, kneeling and praying. He looks up at large cross in a desperate glance and breaks into tears.

ERNIE

Why?

EXT. BURGER JOINT - LATER

Ernie is talking on his phone with his friend and counselor, Father Armond Raymond, who is now back in Huntsville, Alabama.

ERNIE

(talks into the phone)

Harm? Its me Ernie.

FR ARMAND (V.O.)

Hi Ernie how are you?

ERNIE

(talks into the phone)

Not good at all. I guess I have learned the hard way just what happens to whistle blowers. We had made plans for my first Mass back in Ohio and Bishop Lester cut me off. Ordered me out of the diocese. I just don't know what to do with myself anymore. Why is God putting me through this pain and suffering? I thought he wanted me to be a priest.

There is no answer from the priest. He just listens.

ERNIE continues

(talks into the phone)

Are you there?

FR ARMAND (V.O.)

I'm here.

ERNIE

(talks into the phone)

What should I do? Sometimes I have thoughts of suicide. That I'm just unworthy in the eyes of God. It's really bad. I just can't believe this is happening.

FR ARMOND (V.O.)

Ernie, sometimes we just don't know what God has in store for us. My suggestion is that you get some counseling.

ERNIE

(talks into the phone)

Well, one thing for sure, it's not going to be with a priest.

FR ARMOND (V.O.)

Right. I agree. Why don't you just go back to your home and go to a clinic there and talk to someone

ERNIE

(talks into the phone)

I'm at my wits end. Maybe I'll stay here a little while before I go back home.

FR ARMOND (V.O.)

Well, I would suggest that you leave right away if you want to stay in the good graces of the bishop there.

ERNIE

(talks into the phone)

Yeah, I guess you're right.

FR ARMOND (V.O.)

Right. Get yourself together so you can think straight. You're a good man Ernie, and I know that someday you're going to make a great priest.

ERNIE

(talks into the phone)

That'll be the day.

BLACK SCREEN WITH THE LETTERS "14 YEARS LATER BAKERSFIELD CALIFORNIA"

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

A large moving van is there and men are bringing furniture and items into the house,

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN AREA - DAY

Ernie is on the phone.

ERNIE

(talks on the phone)

Yes, I'm doing well bishop. Could I meet with you?

BISHOP LESTER (V.O.)

That would be fine. How about next Wednesday. You can also meet our new bishop. How's two o'clock?

ERNIE

(talks on the phone)

OK, I'll be there. It'll be good to see you again.

INT. DIOCESE OFFICES BAKERSFIELD - DAY

A nun is seated at the secretary's desk.

ERNIE

So what happened to Sister Helen?

NUN

She left the order and got married.

ERNIE

Oh. OK. I have an appointment with the bishop.

NUN

Yes, he's expecting you. Go right in.

INT. BISHOP'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Bishop Lester is seated and Bishop Newman is seated next to him.

BISHOP LESTER

Ernie Quinn. You haven't changed much. How have you been?

ERNIE

Not so good.

BISHOP LESTER

This is Bishop Newman.

ERNIE
Your Excellency.

BISHOP LESTER
He's going to be taking over soon,
and I'm showing him the lay of the
land. So, you moved here?

ERNIE
Yes, after my Dad died, my Mom and
I decided to buy a house here. The
climate is better than the Midwest.
Her health is not so good and she's
getting older.

BISHOP LESTER
Well, what can I do for you?

ERNIE
Well, I wanted to ask you to
consider me again for the
priesthood.

BISHOP LESTER
What about all those tales you told
about Fathers Sharpe and Howard and
Atkins?

ERNIE
What tales?

BISHOP LESTER
You don't remember?

ERNIE
I guess I don't. You ordered me to
forget about Barstow and I guess I
did.

BISHOP LESTER
Are you meddling with my mind?

ERNIE
No, Bishop, I erased most
everything about Barstow from my
mind.

BISHOP LESTER
And Sister Helen?

ERNIE
Yeah, I remember her from out
there. (points to the door)

BISHOP LESTER

So, what do you remember?

ERNIE

Not much, but enough, I guess

BISHOP LESTER

Well, Bishop Newman and I have gone over everything and have decided that you are not fit to be a priest.

ERNIE

I'm not fit to be a priest?

BISHOP LESTER

That's right.

ERNIE

Because I did what I thought was right and reported the shameful acts going on in your diocese? Two of your so-called celibate homosexual priests have violated me? And one tried to rape me and I'm not fit to be a priest? And all you do is cover it all up and hide priests and shuffle them around. I hear you now have about twenty-seven cases against the diocese. Yeah, that's right. It's all starting to come back now. Well, now that you mention it, I do remember the day I made breakfast for Sister Helen and Fr. Sharpe after their night of shacking up. Barstow. Quite a place for so-called celibate priests. All perverts, and homos and you don't want to know about it.

BISHOP LESTER

Young man, who do you think you're talking to?

ERNIE

Well, I would guess that would be to a deaf, dumb and blind catholic bishop.

(he stands)

Goodbye Bishop Lester, and goodbye also to you Bishop Newman. I'll see you both in court.

Ernie stomps out.

INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE - DAY

Ernie is sitting in JEFFREY ADAMS' office and telling him of all the happenings. There are papers everywhere. Adams is writing frantically as Ernie relates all the events of the past and present. Fr. Marshall Starnes is also there guiding and feeding information and helping with names.

ERNIE

And that about wraps it up, I guess. It's enough for a book.

JEFFREY

I would say. Now I've got to put this all together. It'll probably take a week to write it up. We'll file it in Federal Court, Eastern District, of California, of course. And the chips will have to fall. It's going to be heavy and naming everyone from the pope on down. Looks like you've got at least sixty names here, and evidence enough to file for at least, I don't know. A few million dollars with what they put you through. Here's the wording at the end. It will read - - -

EXT. NEWSSTAND - DAY

A man approaches and picks up and pays for a paper. He holds it up to look at the headline

INSERT - NEWSPAPER HEADLINE "MAN SUES CATHOLIC CHURCH FOR \$50 MILLION

BACK TO SCENE

The man walks away reading the article.

INT. ERNIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ernie is sitting and watching the news on TV

ANNOUNCER

And this just in. On top of the news of the bankruptcy filing of the Bakersfield, California Diocese, a Bakersfield man has filed a 50 million dollar lawsuit continues

ANNOUNCER continues
 against the Catholic Church. Ernie
 Quinn, 45, has named bishops and
 cardinals all the way up to the
 pope and alleges that he was
 propositioned and almost raped by a
 fellow priest. The suit also
 alleges wrongdoing on the part of
 priests he has come in contact
 with.

ERNIE
 (to himself
 Right, 45, and look what I have to
 show for it.

INT. ERNIE'S HOUSE - MORNING

The words, "A YEAR LATER" are written across the screen.

Ernie is sitting at his kitchen table reading a newspaper
 when the PHONE RINGS. He picks it up and answers it.

ERNIE
 (talks on the phone)
 Hello.

JEFFREY (V.O.)
 Hi, Ernie, it's me, Jeffery.

ERNIE
 (talks on the phone)
 Oh, hi Jeff. I was just going to
 call you. Did you read about those
 other dioceses?

JEFFREY (V.O.)
 You mean about the bankruptcies?

ERNIE
 (talks on the phone)
 I guess after a year, my case
 doesn't have a chance.

JEFFREY (V.O.)
 That's what I'm calling about. I
 need you to come over here.

INT. JEFFERY'S OFFICE - DAY

Ernie walks into Jeffery's office.

ERNIE

OK. What's the bad news?

JEFFREY

They offered a settlement.

ERNIE

Yeah?

JEFFREY

That crumb-bun attorney of theirs threatened me today.

ERNIE

Threatened you? How?

JEFFREY

He promised to bankrupt both of us if we don't settle.

ERNIE

How can they do that?

JEFFREY

By stalling, dragging out, having me answer papers constantly. You name it. They got all the money they need, and the bankruptcy doesn't help matters.

ERNIE

Well, I'm almost broke.

JEFFREY

So am I. And I can't go on much longer with this.

ERNIE

Neither can I. So, what did they offer?

JEFFREY

You're not going to like this.

ERNIE

Yeah?

JEFFREY

\$18,000

ERNIE

You gotta be joking.

JEFFREY

No, that's it.

ERNIE

And your fee has to come out of that?

JEFFREY

That's right.

ERNIE

I give up. Screwed again. Those dirty bastards.

JEFFREY

I have until midnight tonight to give them an answer.

ERNIE

Or what?

JEFFREY

Who knows? They pay those bastard lawyers big bucks to fight us and they will. Meanwhile, I heard they settled eleven more cases.

ERNIE

Not much different from Boston, Tucson, Spokane, Los Angeles, and where else? Over \$2 Billion total? What a disgrace. I guess we have no choice.

JEFFREY

You're right, I'll call him.

Jefferey reaches for his phone and dials.

EXT. ERNIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Ernie is in his backyard playing with his two dogs.

ERNIE

Sure glad I've got you guys. You're all I have.

INT. ERNIE'S HOUSE - DAY

The phone rings and Ernie answers.

ERNIE

(talks on the phone)

Hello.

FR ARMAND (V.O.)

Hi Ernie, it 's me, Harm.

ERNIE

(talks on the phone)

Harm! Hi, so good to hear from you.

FR ARMAND (V.O.)

How are you holding up?

ERNIE

(talks on the phone)

Not so good. The diocese settled for peanuts and meanwhile they are up to their necks with lawsuits. And I'm broke.

FR ARMAND (V.O.)

I guess I know how it works. Why don't you take a break and... You're in Bakersfield, right?

ERNIE

(talks on the phone)

Right, sorry to say. Wish I'd stayed in Ohio.

FR ARMAND (V.O.)

Take a break from it all. Run up to Frisco, or over to L.A. Better yet, go to Vegas for a couple days. It's not that far. Just hang out and rest your mind. Just get away from it.

ERNIE

(talks on the phone)

Yeah, maybe I will. Sounds like a good idea. Maybe I'll go to Vegas.

FR ARMAND (V.O.)

Well, if you get to Vegas look up your old seminary friends, Joey and HENRY. Joey is pastor at a parish just off the strip and Henry got

continues

FR ARMAND (V.O.) continues
out and became a big lawyer there.
I'll email you their contact info.

EXT. LAS VEGAS STRIP - NIGHT

Ernie is walking along and taking in all the sights and enjoying the excitement. He walks toward a casino.

INT. LAS VEGAS CASINO - LATER

Ernie is observing all the action at the tables and stops at a slot machine. He reaches in his pocket and pulls out a quarter and puts it in. He reads how to start the machine and does so. He loses.

He continues to walk, and observing everything as if he has never seen anything like it. A scantily dressed cocktail server approaches him with drinks on her tray and offers him one. He takes a glass and sips a drink. He lays the unfinished drink down and continues to walk toward the exit.

INT. LAS VEGAS CHURCH - EVENING

It is in the middle of a Mass and Ernie enters and blesses himself and goes and stands in the back of the church as the officiating priest is at the podium speaking to a half filled church. Suddenly, Ernie recognizes the priest is Fr. Joey. He listens and watches him with great interest.

FR JOEY

(preaching)

A couple years ago, my aunt was dying and I was at her deathbed. I sat next to her and she started to cry. She looked at me and said, "I'm so afraid I'm going to hell." And I asked her, Why? And she told me that she was a lesbian.)

(The priest takes the big bible and holds it up over his head.)

This good news is for everybody or it is for nobody. And I told her that the Gospel is for her too and for all lesbians and gays, just like it is for all of us straight people. God loves us all. Well, you know what? This will be my last sermon. My plans are in order to marry Joanne.

The priest removes his priestly collar and walks from the podium and out to the entrance. People approach him and offer encouragement

Ernie watches with great interest as half of the parishioners have left the church. Ernie stares in space as if he is in deep thought. He finally leaves the church, as the priest continues to speak to individuals.

EXT. LAS VEGAS CHURCH - FRONT STEPS - CONTINUOUS

Ernie sits on the steps. He is quiet and thoughtful, watching the movement of cars and people along the nearby Vegas strip. He gets up and walks back inside.

INT. LAS VEGAS CHURCH - INSIDE ENTRYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Ernie stands and observes the priest finishing up talking to the last person to leave. He approaches the priest.

ERNIE

Joey, for God sakes its you.

FR JOEY

Ernie Quinn. Of all people. How are you? And what brings you to Vegas?

ERNIE

It's a very long story and you really don't want to know. I saw and heard your performance up there. Well, I shouldn't say performance, but, at least I saw what happened.

FR JOEY

I have been waiting a lot of years to say those words.

ERNIE

Actually, ever since I saw you last, perverted priests and bishops have covered up and kept me from my true calling to be a priest. I just knew a little too much.

(holds up his finger and thumb as a measure)

I was this far away from being ordained.

FR JOEY

Sorry to hear that. Where's home these days?

ERNIE

Actually Bakersfield. Well, long story short, two priests tried to rape me, a couple propositioned me. Two almost died mixing drugs and alcohol, and one of them ordered me to cook breakfast for him and his overnight girlfriend, a nun. Back in Indiana one pastor ordered me out of the rectory so he could have sex with his boyfriends. To top it off three bishops condoned it all. I blew the whistle on them in two different dioceses and was banished about a month before my scheduled ordination. Problem is, the bishops and the rest of them, all cover up for each other.

FR JOEY

I'm so sorry to hear that. Well, I was coming down the stairs for Mass this evening, and I felt this real deep ache and pain in the pit of my stomach. Who am I kidding? I don't belong here. Celibacy sucks. I belong with Joanne for the rest of my life. It was the first time I was recognizing the ache within, that my activity and work and ministry was covering up, and avoiding something. After a painful, prayerful and mostly lonely journey, tonight I said what I said. There are a lot of us, but too many openly flaunt their promise of celibacy. I don't. I'm out of here.

ERNIE

Yeah, I guess I agree with you about the Celibacy thing.

FR JOEY

Right. And its their celibate secrets that get to me. But its really no secret. I could give you a list of heterosexuals and homosexuals who flaunt their promise of celibacy, and who also prey on little children, boys and girls. But frankly? Most of the bishops seem to look the other way.

ERNIE

You're right. Remember Terre Haute?
Our good priest, Father Murray?
Katy's Krib?

FR JOEY

(laughs)

That was really the start of all my
doubting.

ERNIE

Yeah, me too I guess. Well, it was
really good to see you again. After
what? Twenty years?

FR JOEY

Or more. Yeah, me too.

ERNIE

So, I guess I'll be seeing you.

FR JOEY

Well, let's keep in touch. Hope
you'll come to my wedding. God
bless you, Ernie.

ERNIE

You too. So, bye for now.

Ernie waves and leaves the church.

EXT. LAS VEGAS HOTEL - BUFFET AREA - NIGHT

Ernie is seated having dinner with HENRY and DON WRIGHT, an
assistant.

HENRY

Sure glad we could meet here.
Ernie.

ERNIE

Me too. So what made you give up
wanting being a priest?

HENRY

Are you kidding? I decided the law
profession needed me more,
especially to go after those bums.

ERNIE

You mean the priests?

HENRY

Who else? I got a guy now I'm representing that got raped over and over for years by his good parish priest. And you? What a friggin' story. I kept up with your lawsuit and was so sorry to hear of the settlement. Dirty bastards. I just couldn't wait to get out and away from their bullshit.

ERNIE

Yeah, they almost bankrupted me.

HENRY

Don here is my right hand man, jack of all trades I might say, and does a lot of legal papers for me. And that is on top of all his other interests. He's also a recording engineer, a musician, a singer and writes songs, books, and screenplays.

DON

Thanks for your kudos, Henry. Hey, I just like to keep busy. Your story, Ernie, just blows me away. I kept up with your suit and I just couldn't believe all the stuff in your affidavit. Actually, your case has opened my eyes to a lot of questionable things about the church. Really glad to touch base with you.

ERNIE (V.O.)

Yeah?

DON WRIGHT

Well, I've just wanted to sorta extend some kind words your way and let you know you're not alone, and give you a little support.

ERNIE

Well, thanks. I can use it.

DON WRIGHT

Well, I've been screwed by at least three bishops, and I've been raped psychologically, spiritually and intellectually by one priest and
continues

DON WRIGHT continues his bishop. Right here in good old Vegas. Couple years later I found out that the guy was given probation after he pleaded guilty to molesting three boys.

ERNIE

Sounds like par for the course.

DON WRIGHT

Well, I read your Affidavit on the Internet, and I am blown away how you have named all those priests and bishops and a cardinal yet, and everyone up to the pope.

ERNIE

Yeah, but a lot of good it did me. Don't get me started.

DON WRIGHT

Why do you say that?

ERNIE

Because they reward the perpetrators and punish us whistle blowers. One website called Lester one of the nine worst bishops in the country. And get this. In a deposition made public, the bastard said, "Well, I wish they had been the holy priests they're supposed to be." Under this asshole, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Bakersfield was shaken to its core by a sex abuse scandal. It makes me sick. And the guy that replaced him? He's no better.

DON WRIGHT

Newman?

ERNIE

Yeah, Bishop Newman. The both of them screwed me.

DON WRIGHT

And you still want to be a priest?

ERNIE

I don't know. But that's all I'm trained for.

DON WRIGHT

OK, I just wanted to extend my good wishes and say that I am rooting for you.

ERNIE

OK. Well, thanks.

DON WRIGHT

And if you want to blow some more steam call me anytime.

Don hands Ernie his CARD.

ERNIE

Thanks, Don. Hey, you never know.

HENRY

Well, on that note I think we better get out of here. Looks like they want to close. Ernie, lets keep in touch.

ERNIE

Will do. So long.

The men prepare to leave.

INT. ERNIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Ernie sits down at his kitchen table and looks through his mail. He spots a large envelope and quickly opens it. He reads to see that it is an invitation to Father Armand's ordination to be a bishop.

ERNIE

(to himself)

Holy crap.

Ernie paces in circles as he reads the invitation over and over. He sits at his table and just stares at the crucifix hanging over a door.

INT. CATHEDRAL - HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA - DAY

The cathedral is filled to overflowing, and there are 30 bishops on the altar, more than 250 priests and deacons present and the Archbishop. Bishop Raymond stands tall and regal in the prescribed robes and miter. There is an orchestra and a large choir of 60 voices. Ernie Quinn sits on the first row. The Bishop is led up to the Throne and placed in it by the Archbishop. At that, the choir bursts into a rendition of Joseph Noyan's "Christus Vincit, Christ has Conquered."

INT. HUNTSVILLE AIRPORT - DEPARTING AREA - EVENING

Bishop Raymond's car is parked and Ernie and Bishop Raymond are getting Ernie's suitcase out of the trunk.

BISHOP RAYMOND

Well, Ernie, I'm so glad you could come, and glad that we could spend some time together, considering your ordination. We'll continue to explore this thing.

ERNIE

Well, you've heard it all. I wanted you to know everything that's happened, from Ohio to Indiana to California and in between. And also about the court case. I haven't held anything back.

BISHOP RAYMOND

Well, I'd like to change all that. You've had all your training, so, I guess the rest is up to me. We'll continue this when you go back. You have my cell phone number. So call me anytime. And I'd like you to come back and spend two or three days and renew our old friendship. Goodbye now.

ERNIE

Goodbye. Can I still call you harm?

The Bishop smiles in an affirmative way. The two men shake hands and Ernie, with suitcase in hand walks into the ticket area.

EXT. ERNIE'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Ernie parks his car in his driveway. He gets out and gets mail from his mailbox. Looks at the mail and enters his house. He spots one letter in particular from Bishop Raymond and quickly opens it.

ERNIE

(He reads out loud to himself.)

I have a parish for you in my diocese. Call me right away. Ernie runs into the house and to the phone and dials.

BISHOP RAYMOND (V.O.)

Hello.

ERNIE

(into phone)

Harm. This is Ernie. I got your letter, and I am briming over with excitement.

BISHOP RAYMOND (V.O.)

Well, Ernie, all your paperwork is in order and you're finally going to be a priest. Like I promised, I found a parish where you can have a whole house almost to yourself, with a fenced in yard for your two dogs. All your paperwork went through and you'll be on our insurance plan and receive a seminarian's stipend. I'll have plenty of work for you to help me with. We'll work out the details, but I would like for you to be here by October first. And you will...

EX. FRONT OF ERNIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Ernie and Ben are closing the door on the rental MOVING VAN seen in front of the house. a FOR RENT SIGN can be seen. Ernie throws a kiss at the house, enters the van and drives away with Ben following in Ernie's CAR.

EXT. RENTAL MOVING VAN - DAY

Ernie is driving the moving truck with his two dogs in the seat beside him with Nephew Ben and friend following in Ernie's car.

EXT. ST JUDE CHURCH RECTORY - LATER

Ernie drives the van up to the rectory and parks on the street. Ben parks behind him. Ernie goes to the front door and RINGS the DOORBELL. After a short wait, FATHER ALAN GORSKY answers the door.

ERNIE

Are you Father Gorsky?

FATHER ALAN GORSKEY

Yes. And who are you?

ERNIE

I'm Ernie Quinn. Bishop Raymond told me he was contacting you to let you know I was coming and that that house would be all set up for me. And he also said he was going to be here when I got here. I have been calling his cell phone all day and got no answer.

FATHER GORSKY

Well, that house is being renovated for offices.

ERNIE

For offices? This is crazy. He said it would be all set up for me. And he said nothing about going to Rome.

FATHER ALAN GORSKEY

I'm sorry, but he said nothing about you coming here.

ERNIE

This is incredible.

Ernie walks over to where Ben is standing beside the car.

ERNIE continues

Unbelievable.

BEN

What?

ERNIE

He said he didn't even know anything about me coming.

BEN

That's crazy.

ERNIE

Worse than that. Harm was going to meet me here. Do you see him? No, he's in Rome. He couldn't call me or anything, and we've got nowhere to go.

BEN

Well, it's getting late. We better get a motel or something kinda quick like. And I gotta get that flight back.

ERNIE

Yeah. And we better find a storage place fast. That son of a bitch.

They walk toward the vehicles.

EXT. MONTE STATE PARK - CABINS - MORNING

There is a crowd of about 25 priests in various activities, mostly standing in small groups and talking. Bishop Raymond is standing and talking to several priests. All are dressed in casual civilian garb. Ernie walks over to Bishop Raymond.

ERNIE

Hello Harm.

BISHOP RAYMOND

Ernie. So good to see you. They shake hands.

The bishop addresses the priests around him.

BISHOP RAYMOND continues

Gentlemen, would you please excuse us? The priests walk away leaving Ernie and the bishop face to face.

ERNIE

Why did you do this to me?

BISHOP RAYMOND

Do what? Ernie, I can't talk to you now. We'll have to talk later.

ERNIE

I wasn't allowed in at the parish. And what's to talk? I gave away and sold stuff, rented my house and I just drove 2000 miles at your invitation to become a priest. I had to go to a motel, and now luckily I'm staying with some parishioners. Strangers. And I don't even have any of my winter stuff to keep warm. It's all in storage. And your Father Gorskey couldn't even invite me to stay in the rectory?

BISHOP RAYMOND

Ernie, please don't worry, we'll get it straightened out. Call me. You have my cell phone. Look, we'll
continues

BISHOP RAYMOND continues
have a meeting there, the three of
us.

Ernie doesn't say anything. He just looks at the bishop
suspiciously and shakes his head.

INT. ST JUDE CHURCH RECTORY - DINING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Ernie, Father Gorskey and Bishop Armond are seated at the
dining room table. They are just about finished with their
sandwiches.

BISHOP RAYMOND
I don't understand the mix up about
the house, Ernie. It was my
understanding that it would be all
yours.

ERNIE
Well, that's what you said.

FR GORSKEY
But it was my understanding that we
were turning the house into
additional offices, and we would
re-zone it and even rent some rooms
out.

BISHOP RAYMOND
I wasn't aware of that. But there's
something else Ernie. I didn't know
all about the Bakersfield
situation.

ERNIE
What do you mean you didn't know? I
told you everything, and all about
the RICO lawsuit and how they
screwed me. I'd be a fool not to.
Let me just say this: You knew
beyond a shadow of a doubt that I
wanted to be a priest in
Huntsville. We talked via phone for
two and a half years. You saw me
through my Mother's final illness
and death. You invited me to visit
with you at your house last year
for 2 nights and 3 days, and I did
at my expense. Additionally, you
invited me to attend the Retreat,
as well as to attend the
Thanksgiving Dinner with you and
your family. And now, this?

BISHOP RAYMOND

I don't know whether I can keep my promise to ordain you or not. I'm betwixt and between.

ERNIE

You're betwixt and between after all your promises? I trusted your word. I trusted you. I gave it my all

BISHOP RAYMOND

Yes, I know.

ERNIE

You told me that you were going to "hand-pick" a good pastor for me.

BISHOP RAYMOND

And I did.

ERNIE

And he turned me away. So, what's the problem?

BISHOP RAYMOND

I'm just uncomfortable.

ERNIE

Uncomfortable? With what? I told you everything.

BISHOP RAYMOND

I just have to think about all of this some more.

ERNIE

What's to think about? So, they called you to Rome to tell you to turn me away. I'm not stupid.

Ernie gets up from the table and exits.

EXT. DRIVEWAY AT A SMALL HOUSE -DAY

We see Ernie driving into a driveway and parking his car and white letters that reads: BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA -THREE MONTHS LATER.

ERNIE

(to his two dogs)

Ok you guys. We got this place for a year now, with a big back yard
continues

ERNIE continues
 where you can romp and play till
 your heart's content. No more
 traveling.

Ernie ENTERS the house with the dogs and carrying a blowup mattress and two packages of sheets. It is sparse with little or no furniture. He sets up the mattress and starts to fill it with air.

ERNIE continues
 (to the dogs)
 OK, you'll just have to wait for
 the moving van to get here. But at
 least we got a place to sleep.

Ernie's cell phone rings and he answers it.

ERNIE continues
 (talks on the phone)
 Hello.

DON (V.O.)
 Hey, it's me. So you're back, huh?

ERNIE
 (talks on the phone)
 Yeah, what else could I do? That
 son-of-a bitch just threw me away
 like garbage.

DON (V.O.)
 He was probably ordered to.

ERNIE
 (talks on the phone)
 Him and that New Hope, no hope
 lying bastard. I hope they rot in
 hell.

DON (V.O.)
 Easy now.

ERNIE
 (talks on the phone)
 Says a lot for Catholic
 credibility. I'm so depressed that
 I don't know what to do with
 myself. Had to come back here.
 Nowhere else to go. I got my
 application for a job in a few
 places and hoping to hear something
 tomorrow. Right now I'm living on
 savings.

DON (V.O.)
Shit. I'm sorry. man.

ERNIE
(talks on the phone)
Well, at least I got the bastard to pay for my moving expenses back here, with his own personal check by the way. He also paid for the storage. Even tried to cover that up. And I got a couple good phone conversations with him on tape, and I bugged a meeting.

DON (V.O.)
A lot of good it will do. Catholic corruption to high heaven.

ERNIE
(talks on the phone)
At this point I couldn't give a shit. He'll go to confession to his dear Father what's his name and say he's sorry and all is forgiven. All OK. Isn't that the way it works? But he'll have to report upstairs eventually.

DON (V.O.)
I really think the pope had a hand in it.

ERNIE
(talks on the phone)
I'm sure of it.

DON (V.O.)
Have you thought about another lawsuit? You've got a lot of evidence.

ERNIE
(talks on the phone)
Forget it. I couldn't go through that again. Those other bastards almost bankrupted me.

DON (V.O.)
Maybe we can get one of them high profile guys we read about. Or what about Henry?

ERNIE

(talks on the phone)
Never happen.

DON (V.O.)

What about the guy you had?

ERNIE

(talks on the phone)
He hung it up. Mine was his last case. They beat him down and he couldn't take any more.

DON (V.O.)

I'm sure the bishop's guy got plenty.

ERNIE

(talks on the phone)
Count on it. Millions.

DON (V.O.)

Ok, I just want to tell you that I wrote the pope, with copies going to Bishop Newman, Cardinal Barnes and your fair haired friend, himself.

ERNIE

(talks on the phone)
You didn't?

DON (V.O.)

Oh, yes I did. And I gave him some evidence with news reports going back to your pedophile, Fr. Holmes incident, and all about Dayton and Bloomfield and all about the lawsuit and the kitchen sink. Your guy, Holmes, finally got canned by the new bishop there. One of those boy scouts ratted, I think. A huge settlement. It was all over the news. And your bishop friend that canned you is now a cardinal.

ERNIE

(talks on the phone)
When did you send it?

DON (V.O.)

Going on eleven months now and not a word. I asked the pope to
continues

DON (V.O.) continues
personally give you back your good
name.

ERNIE
(talks on the phone)
Lots of luck. You won't hear
anything.

DON (V.O.)
Whether I do or I don't, there will
be an ending to your story, and I
hope it's a happy one. I will
broadcast it from one end of the
world to the other of how the true
Holy Roman Catholic Church and
their anointed ones lied and threw
away a wannabe almost priest who
blew the whistle.

ERNIE
(talks on the phone)
Yeah, right. Those dirty bastards.
I don't even want to go to church
anymore.

DON (V.O.)
Ernie, I haven't been in months.
And you know what? I feel a lot
better mentally and spiritually. Go
figure it. But bet your ass that
your RICO suit will be on the
Internet forever.

ERNIE
(talks on the phone)
Lots of luck, but thanks. You sure
your middle name isn't Luther, as
in Martin?

DON (V.O.)
(laughs)
Not quite, but almost. And like
what's his name said: "It ain't
over until it's over."

ERNIE
(talks on the phone)
For me, it's over.

DON (V.O.)
Aw, come on, Ernie. You mean you
wouldn't accept an offer of
ordination.

ERNIE

(talks on the phone)

I lay awake at night thinking about it. I just want to have a little peace. But it's getting late. I just met Doris, my neighbor. Nice lady. Might ask her for a date.

EXT. ERNIE'S BACK YARD - DAY

We see written on the screen: NINE MONTHS LATER. Ernie's dogs are running and playing and Ernie is talking over the fence to next door neighbor, DORIS. They are having a nice conversation. Ernie finally reaches over and kisses Doris on the cheek and then hugs her. He walks back to the middle his yard smiling big.

INT. ERNIE'S DINING ROOM - EVENING

Doris and Ernie are seated at his dining room table and lovingly toasting with a glass of wine. His two dogs are nearby.

ERNIE

And here's to us.

(They toast each other)

Ernie pulls out a ring box and takes out an engagement ring and is about to place the ring on her finger, when his phone rings. He stops. He looks at Doris lovingly.

DORIS

So answer it love.

Ernie slowly picks up the phone continuing to look lovingly at Doris. Ring is in one hand and the phone is in the other.

ERNIE

(talks on the phone)

Hello.

DON (V.O.)

Hey. It's Don here. Guess what?

ERNIE

(talks on the phone)

What?

DON (V.O.)

I got a letter.

ERNIE

(talks on the phone)

OK?

DON (V.O.)

You won't believe this.

ERNIE

(talks on the phone)

Try me.

Ernie sets the phone to speakerphone and puts it down on the table. He continues to hold the ring.

DON (V.O.)

The Secretariat, Cardinal Harry Houdini? Pope's right hand man? From Hungary? Gave it to his Assessor, his assistant. Monsignor Long, Peter Long, wrote it. After almost a year.

ERNIE

Yeah? The Sexitariat's assessor, his ass-istant? Took 'em long enough. What kind of tricks is Hungary Harry pulling out these days?

DON (V.O.)

Ernie, you're too bitter. And cussin' more than ever.

ERNIE

Bet your ass. His timing sucks. Peter Long, huh? Reminds me of the one in Barstow. What was his name? Father Richard Sharpe. Dick. Ol' Sharpy Dick, we called him. Now, we got Monsignor Peter Long, Assessor Ass-essor. So I guess they might call him the Dick Monsignor or Monsignor Long Dick.

(he laughs loud)

DORIS

Ernie, stop it.

ERNIE

You had to be there. That's all some of them ever think about. And a few of them, only a few, don't even know what a vagina is. But some do. I do.

(He raises and lowers his
eyebrows to Doris)
Especially ol' Sharpy Dick did. I
had to make him and his stay over
nun girlfriend breakfast one time.
But he was also big and bysexual
with his boyfriend Barney. Stories?
Do I got stories. So go ahead, Don.

Don begins to read as Ernie sits holding the engagement
ring.

DON (V.O.)

(He reads)

Dear Mr. Wright, he says. His
Holiness has asked me to extend his
warmest greetings. In regard to
former Seminarian Ernest Quinn, he
has asked me to impart his
Apostolic Blessing on you and he,
and to extend his deepest apologies
for the apparent wrongs committed
by certain individuals of the
hierarchy. He admires Mr. Quinn's
sincere determination to become a
priest, but...

ERNIE

(talks on the phone)

Uh Oh, here comes the but.

DON (V.O.)

He wants a complete investigation,
which Cardinal Houdini will head
and which I will assist and which
may take several years to complete.

ERNIE

(talks on the phone)

Yeah, well why doesn't his boss
just wave his wand and the
monsignor just wave and shake his
Long thing and say three or maybe
five Hail Marys and be done with
it? And God bless us all. So, go
ahead, Don.

DORIS

Ernie, you sound so bitter.

ERNIE

Gee, I wonder why?

DON (V.O.)

(continues to read)

During that time Bishop Zorskey of the Diocese of Saint Petersburg would be honored to have your presence there to be finally ordained for the priesthood when the investigation ends.

ERNIE

(talks on the phone)

Oh, Florida, great! And after how many years investigating? By the way, how far is Saint Petersburg from Miami?

DON

Oh, as a wild guess I would say
(beat) About 11,000 miles.

ERNIE

(talks on the phone and is getting visibly upset)

Not Florida? Those bastards. So, finally they want me in Siberia?

DON (V.O.)

(continues to read)

There's more. You must pay your own way. Bishop Zorskey wants you to come as soon as possible, since you are fluent with the Russian language. Please have Mr. Quinn contact me. And His Holiness has extended a personal invitation for Mr. Quinn to come to the Vatican to receive his personal apology and blessing. And it's signed, Monsignor Peter Long for Cardinal Harry Houdini. So, Ernie, what do you think? Wanna go to Siberia?

ERNIE

(talks to Don)

What do I think? What do I think? Dirty bastards got it all figured out. The final screw of Ernie Quinn. So, I pay my way first to Rome and on to St. Petersburg, somewhere deep in Siberia, sit and wait there for years and get the Huntsville, Alabama treatment. I think that's really so damn nice of

continues

ERNIE continues
 all of them. But it sucks just
 about as much as all the other crap
 they've handed me. I always knew
 they would love for me to be in
 Siberia.

DON (V.O.)
 So, what do you think?

Ernie just looks at the phone on the table.

ERNIE
 (talks to Don)
 Those fucks. Yeah, I'm here. The
 moment of truth. But, you know
 what? I have thought about all of
 this long and hard and what I would
 do if this moment ever came about.
 Tell them that I need a few years
 to think about it.

DON (V.O.)
 OK.

Tears are rolling down Ernie's face as he looks at Doris lovingly. He stares at the ring box. By now he is crying. He gazes at the crucifix over the door. He wipes the tears with his napkin and regains his composure as Doris looks on in anticipation and sympathy. She puts a hand on his shoulder.

ERNIE
 (talks to Don)
 Don, are you there?

DON (V.O.)
 Yeah, I'm here.

ERNIE
 (talks to Don)
 So am I. I know you have worked
 long and hard on this and was a
 true friend from afar when I didn't
 have any friends. And I thank you
 with all my heart. And now it's
 time for closure. It's the moment
 of truth. God has spoken loud and
 clear. And here is my answer.

Still clutching the ring, he looks at it long and hard. There's a big smile on his face as he turns slowly to Doris. He tries to hold back the tears but they continue to fall.

ERNIE continues
I finally know what God was calling
me for. (BEAT) Doris, (BEAT) will
you marry me?

DORIS
(she bursts into tears)
Oh, yes, yes, yes.

Ernie places the ring on Doris' finger as they both are
weeping uncontrollably.

ERNIE
(talks to Don)
Don, tell that ass-istant assessor
that they can stick it as far as it
will go. And tell them Ee-dee nah
hooy!

DON (V.O.)
What the hell is that?

ERNIE
(talks to Don)
Ee-dee nah hooy! Look it up.
Russian dictionary. That's Russian
for fuck off. I think I said it
right. And, you wanna be my best
man?

DON
Bet your ass. But there's more.

Ernie and Doris regain their composure and stand and embrace
and hug and kiss.

ERNIE
(talks to Don)
Tell 'em they can shove it. Now,
that son-of-a-bitch no good,
thought he was a friend, Bishop
Raymond can rot in hell with the
rest of them. I don't know whatever
made me think I wanted to be a
priest. All those years. Celibacy
sucks. Right Doris? Doris smiles
and gives an affirmative nod.

DON (V.O.)
You're right. Celibacy sucks.
Welcome to the real world Ernie.
Now, I gotta tell you. This letter
idea was a gag. Henry and Joey's
idea.

ERNIE
(talks to Don)
I should have known

DON (V.O.)
All the guys are here; Henry, Joey,
Bobby and Burt. And after you told
me about you and Doris a little
while ago, we knew damn well that
your calling was with her so we
just had to pull the Siberia gag.
That's probably where they would
have wanted you. Don't hate us.

ERNIE
(talks to Don)
Awe, you guys. I love ya.

INT. HENRY'S LAVISH OFFICE IN LAS VEGAS-CONTINUOUS

Don, Henry, Bert, Joey and Bobby are all gathered around
Henry's desk and his phone.

DON
(talks on the phone)
Let me know when and we're gonna
throw you the biggest and greatest
wedding and reception ever right
here in Vegas, and it'll all be on
us.

INT. ERNIE'S DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ernie and Doris hug and kiss.

FADE OUT.

THE END

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Although the characters and locations are all fictitious,
they are based on real life events, happenings and public
figures in the persons of Roman Catholic priests and
bishops, with added nuances to sustain interest in the
movement of the plot and with the intended message to the
public regarding the inner workings and truths of the Roman
Catholic hierarchy.