

FADE IN:

1969 St. Agnes cathedral, South Side of Chicago.

INT. FATHER MARTIN'S QUARTERS -- NIGHT

FATHER MARTIN McDERMOTT is lying in his bed. The room is dim.

SISTER AMELIA sits next to him on a chair praying the Rosary.

Father Martin tries to get the sister's attention.

FATHER MARTIN
(softly)
Ahhh...

Sister Amelia leans over him to hear his wishes.

INT. ST. AGNES -- CORRIDOR LIVING QUARTERS -- MOMENTS LATER

Sister Amelia runs to Father Ian's door and knocks.

SISTER AMELIA
Father Ian. Are you awake.

INT. FATHER IAN'S QUARTERS -- CONTINUOUS

On his desk FATHER IAN snores on a thick ancient book.

KNOCKING

SISTER AMELIA (V.O.)
Father. Wake up.

Father Ian is ripped out of his sleep. He almost wipes the half-empty Irish whiskey bottle off the table.

FATHER IAN
Damn. Yes, yes. I'm coming.

He opens the door.

SISTER AMELIA
It's Father Martin. He called for you.

INT. FATHER MARTIN'S QUARTERS -- CONTINUOUS

Ian kneels down next to Father Martin's bed. Sister Amelia leaves and closes the door behind her.

The men whisper to each other. Father Martin grabs Ian's hand. Ian shakes his head and starts weeping.

Ian takes one of the pillows from the side of the bed and suffocates Father Martin with it. Father Martins hand tightens until it falls lifeless to the side.

EXT. CHURCH OF ST. AGNES -- MORNING

TITLE OVER: YEARS EARLIER

A beautiful summer day in 1946 on the South Side of Chicago.

After Sunday church, Father Martin mingles with members of his congregation on the church lawn. An ELDERLY WOMAN comes up to shake the Father's hand.

ELDERLY WOMAN

What a beautiful sermon, Father.
Every day, I thank the Lord for having
sent you here.

Other members mumble, confirming the sentiment.

FATHER MARTIN

Thank you, ma'am. I appreciate that
you all came. Enjoy the day.

JOHN McCANN and his wife SUE, the caretakers of the church, walk up to Father McDermott with their son, IAN.

FATHER MARTIN (CONT'D)

You guys had better leave if you want
to get out to the country.

JOHN MC CANN

Are you sure you don't want us to
close up everything?

FATHER MARTIN

I am fine. Get in the car. You
haven't had a vacation since the boy
was born. I don't want Ian to end up
like one of those city kids who've
never seen a real live animal.

The McCanns get into their packed car and slowly drive off. Little Ian waves out the back window.

INT. CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

JOHN MC CANN

I hope your brother doesn't forget to
lock the side entrances.

SUE

Don't worry, John. I made Martin a
list. Nothing is going to happen to
him.

She unfolds a street map on her lap. Frigidity bound to the back seat little Ian discovers a wooden box that is placed behind his father's seat. Ian opens it and unwraps one of the objects. It's a tarnished silver cross.

JOHN MC CANN

Sue, are you sure 105th Street gets us to the expressway?

SUE

Have I ever led you wrong?

JOHN MC CANN

Just checking.

IAN

Vrooom..., Vrooom...

Sue looks back at Ian.

SUE

Ian, put that away!

IAN

Okay, Mom. I'm just playing a little. Vrooom...

John turns around.

JOHN MC CANN

What are those things doing in here?

SUE

Relax, I thought we'd drop them off on the way at the polisher.

Ian keeps playing airplane with the cross.

IAN

Vrooom, vrooom....

John sees Ian his rear view mirror and turns around.

JOHN MC CANN

Put that away, boy. Now!

He looks at Sue.

SUE

Watch out, John!

John turns his eyes back to the road. A truck has backed out of a drive way into the McCann's path. Without breaking the car plows into the truck and catches on fire.

INT. CHURCH LIVING QUARTERS -- DAY

Father Martin is working in his study. KNOCKING.

FATHER MARTIN

Come in.

In walks the head SISTER AMELIA with a suitcase. Little Ian holds on to her other hand. The boy has his head and left elbow in bandages.

SISTER AMELIA

Are you ready, Father?

FATHER MARTIN

Yes.

Father Martin gets up. He takes a lollipop out of a glass jar and hands it to Ian.

FATHER MARTIN (CONT'D)

Howdy, cowboy!

IAN

(softly)

Hi, Uncle Martin.

FATHER MARTIN

Look, I got you grape flavor. That's your favorite, right?

Ian takes the lolly and almost starts crying.

Father Martin pulls a St. Christopher's medallion on a necklace from his pocket.

FATHER MARTIN (CONT'D)

Come here. Hold still, son.

He puts it around Ian's neck.

FATHER MARTIN (CONT'D)

I've engraved the name and address of St. Agnes on the back. It's going to protect you. Promise me, to never take it off.

IAN

Okay.

INT. CORRIDOR LIVING QUARTERS -- CONTINUOUS

The three walk down a long corridor to the nuns' quarters.

FATHER MARTIN

Are you sure you can help me take care of him?

SISTER AMELIA

I've got forty helpers. If I can't, who could?

FATHER MARTIN

And I know, that not everyone is okay with it.

SISTER AMELIA

Some think he is not our responsibility but his Dad and your sister gave everything to this church. That's why most of us insist for him to stay.

FATHER MARTIN

If it does not work you let me know immediately.

SISTER AMELIA

Okay. Let's show Ian his new room.

EXT. CHURCH LIVING QUARTERS -- NIGHT

Nine years later on a hot summer night, fourteen-year old Ian sneaks out the window. He carries a duffel bag. His best friend, MICKEY, watches Ian from the other side of the street.

MICKEY

Ian. I'm here!

IAN

Be quiet!

MICKEY

Let's go. Chicago is waiting.

IAN

Boy, am I happy to get out of here.

EXT. JUVENILE HALL -- AFTERNOON

A GUARD opens the large steel door for Ian and Mickey. Ian carries his duffel bag in one hand and a football in the other.

GUARD

You better watch yourselves, Boys. Next time, they're not gonna let you get away with two.

DOOR SLAMS LOUDLY

MICKEY

How about, the next time we won't get caught.

Ian looks back listening to the prisoner's noises behind the wall.

IAN

Wait up!

He drops his bag, goes into position and like a pro throws his football over the prison wall.

MICKEY

Man, it's your ball. Why did you do that?

IAN

It helps them pass the time.

Mickey shakes his head.

MICKEY

Come on. The girls are waiting.

EXT. BROTHEL -- NIGHT

Mickey and Ian are drunk. Mickey already picked up a girl, SUSIE, who is all over him.

SUSIE

Is this going to be his first time?

MICKEY

Go ahead Ian, ask for Lola. She did me the honors.

Ian takes a deep breath and walks into the brothel.

INT. BROTHEL -- NIGHT

Ian plays it cool and walks up to FIFI, one of the prostitutes.

IAN

I'm looking for Lola. Do you know where I can find her?

FIFI

There is no Lola. Wait, I remember her. She was a boozer. They threw her out a year ago.

IAN

Thanks.

Ian looks around curiously. He is intoxicated by all the girls parading around in their revealing outfits.

FIFI
Your first time?

Ian tries to play it cool.

IAN
No, of course not.

FIFI
Don't you like me?

Ian smiles and looks at her cleavage.

IAN
No, no, I like you all right.

Fifi steps closer and puts her arm around Ian's hips.

FIFI
Come on boy, why don't you show me
what you got?

IAN
I guess I could.

FIFI
Come, let's go upstairs.

IAN
Okay.

FIFI
Do you have cash?

Ian shows her a wad of bills. Fifi smiles and takes his hand.

As they walk up the stairs Ian has a hard time concealing his excitement.

INT. BROTHEL BEDROOM -- LATER

Fifi and Ian are in bed. He looks pleasantly exhausted. Fifi takes a box from her night stand and opens it. It contains different sizes of cigars, cigarettes and condoms.

FIFI
Do you smoke?

IAN
Oh yes, thanks.

Gentlemanly, he lights Fifi's cigarette. Ian takes the biggest cigar and lights it. Fifi takes a deep inhale.

FIFI

Boy, you were good! I guess it wasn't your first time.

Ian smiles as he is putting on his clothes.

FIFI (CONT'D)

Put the money on the dresser, hon.

Ian pulls out his wad of ones wrapped in a twenty. He only has nine **ones**.

FIFI (CONT'D)

Come here, let me look you over.

IAN

Thanks ma'am, but I'd better go.

Ian quickly puts five dollars on the dresser and runs out the door. Aware of Ian's deed, Fifi pushes a hidden button on the side of her bed.

INT. BROTHEL -- CONTINUOUS

Ian runs down the corridor. A door opens and A GREEN WALKING CANE WITH AN OVERSIZED SERPENT HEAD GRIP appears in front of Ian's legs.

IAN

Damn!

Ian falls flat on his face. Fifi's PIMP, is over six feet tall, wears silk clothing and a diamond ring on each finger. He grabs Ian by the neck and drags him out.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND BROTHEL -- MOMENTS LATER

Ian is pushed into a corner.

PIMP

Where is the rest of my money?

IAN

What money? I gave her all my cash.

The pimp searches Ian's pockets and finds his last dollars. Without delay, the pimp's knee hits Ian in the stomach.

PIMP

Don't ever lie to me, son.

He takes the money. Ian is hunched over and out of breath.

IAN

You son of a bitch!

Like a wild animal, Ian pummels the tall man with all his power.

PIMP

Boy, you don't know what you got yourself into.

With some quick moves of his cane, the pimp hits Ian all over the body. Ian's bones crack and he collapses onto a pile of trash bags. The pimp walks to Ian's lifeless body.

PIMP (CONT'D)

You little punk.

He takes the boy's shirt and wipes the blood off his cane.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND BROTHEL -- MORNING

A garbage truck turns into the alley. DRIVER BOB, and his HELPER stop behind the brothel. The helper takes two bags revealing Ian's bloody and lifeless body.

HELPER

Hey Bob! I think this guy's dead.

DRIVER BOB

Let me see.

Bob leans over Ian's face to detect a sign of life.

DRIVER BOB (CONT'D)

I think the guy's breathing. Go get help.

The helper runs on to the main street and calls for a policeman.

INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY EMERGENCY ROOM -- DAY

Father Martin and Sister Amelia walk along the corridor that leads to the emergency room. A NURSE comes up and hands Father Martin Ian's St.Christopher necklace.

NURSE

This is the only thing we found on the boy.

SISTER AMELIA

Do you really think this guy is our Ian?

Father Martin inspects the back of the St. Christopher.

FATHER MARTIN

I know it's Ian. I gave him this necklace.

The DOCTOR comes out of the emergency room. His surgical gown is heavily blood stained. Sister Amelia and Father Martin look up with frightful anticipation.

DOCTOR
Are you the boy's family?

FATHER MARTIN
Yes, he's my nephew. His parents died when he was five.

DOCTOR
The boy has stamina. We almost lost him twice.

SISTER AMELIA
Is he going to be okay?

DOCTOR
He's strong and healthy but his hip bone was completely shattered. I don't know if he'll ever walk again.

INT. CHURCH LIVING QUARTERS -- DAY

Ian limps in on his cane. His face has healed pretty well.

IAN
Uncle Martin. Any decision yet?

MARTIN
Look at me Ian. Are you absolutely sure you want this life?

IAN
I am.

Father Martin hugs his nephew.

MARTIN
Congratulations. I've talked to the bishop. You're invited to join the seminary. You know this is a big honor and it's not going to be easy. But God be with you.

INT. BISHOP'S OFFICE -- DAY

Five years later.

Visibly aged and painstricken, Father Martin walks slowly into BISHOP WEDEKIND's office.

BISHOP WEDEKIND
Hello, Father Martin.

FATHER MARTIN

Thank you for giving me the time.

Father Martin kisses the bishop's ring.

BISHOP WEDEKIND

Take a seat.

Father Martin slowly sits down.

BISHOP WEDEKIND (CONT'D)

How's your health?