

WHEN GOD THROWS A CURVE

by

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Registered with WGAE

SMASH IN:

INT. ICU - ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL- LONG ISLAND - 2AM

Man in comatose state lies in bed, arm and leg in sling, IV dangles, banged up pretty bad. One balloon floats, it reads *Jesus Loves You*, flowers on end table. A nurse writes on clipboard, a male doctor speaks with man's wife SUZANNE (33), petite, attractive, angelic, sweeter than sweet, wouldn't say *fuck* even if a loaded and cocked 38 was pressed against her right temple, easily manipulated, more easily coerced, soft-spoken.

DOCTOR

I'm not optimistic. You should make plans.

SUZANNE

(shakes head in shock)
Plans?

DOCTOR

Did you sign a DNR?

SUZANNE

DNR?

DOCTOR

Do Not Resuscitate.

SUZANNE

(hand to mouth)
Oh my God, I never gave it much thought. He was supposed to live forever.

DOCTOR

Forever? He might not make it through the night.

SUZANNE

(hands to head, sorrow)
This is bizarre.

DOCTOR

Must've been going pretty fast.

SUZANNE

It wasn't him, it was the jerk who slammed into his patrol car, going over a hundred.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTOR

Seems to be the norm, some drunk
slams into an innocent victim,
ruins a family.

SUZANNE

It was our daughter's 4th birthday
party-

Doctor writes notes, puts clipboard in holder at foot of bed.

DOCTOR

If you need me, I'll be on the
floor.

Doctor walks away, turns back.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

(points at balloon)

I asked the chaplain to stop by, if
that's okay?

SUZANNE

Of course.

Doctor leaves, wife stands near bed.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

(somber)

Oh Walter, I'm so sorry to
see you like this.

(looks skyward)

God give me strength.

Suzanne buries face in hands, sobs. FATHER PAUL MICHAELS (34)
Richie Cunningham/Ron Howard look-a-like, rushes to patient,
makes Sign of Cross, whispers prayers, his back to Suzanne.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

Thank you for coming-

Suzanne turns to priest, is shocked when she sees him.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

(eyes a glow)

Paulie? Paulie Michaels?

Father Paul is Suzanne's fiance ten years earlier.

FATHER PAUL

(amazed)

Suzy?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Suzanne and Paul embrace, reluctantly.

SUZANNE
(excited)
I don't believe it!

FATHER PAUL
I guess God *does* work in strange
ways.

Suzanne moves away, stares Paul up and down.

SUZANNE
My God, you haven't changed a bit.

FATHER PAUL
I lead a boring life; no drugs, no
drink, no smoke, and of course, no
women.

SUZANNE
(turns away, sad)
I'm so sorry.

Paul quickly changes topics.

FATHER PAUL
Your husband?

SUZANNE
(in shock)
I can't believe what happened.

FATHER PAUL
(shakes head)
A policeman?

SUZANNE
He pulled over a drunk on the LIE
when another drunk slammed into
him.

FATHER PAUL
My prayers are with both of you.

Suzanne composes herself, smiles at Paul.

SUZANNE
I heard you became a priest, I
didn't believe it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FATHER PAUL
(tugs on priest collar)
No matter how hard I try, it won't
come off!

SUZANNE
(chuckles)
You always had a great attitude.

Paul backs up, looks Suzanne up and down.

FATHER PAUL
(huge smile)
As beautiful, as breathtaking as
ever-

SUZANNE
(blushes)
What's it been, nine years?

FATHER PAUL
Ten years, two months, three days,
but I might be off a day for leap
year.

Paul walks away from side of bed.

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)
Perhaps we should stand away, they
say hearing is the last thing to
go.

SUZANNE
I don't think it matters. Look at
his brain waves.

Shot of brain wave monitor, a flat line.

FATHER PAUL
Well-

Suzanne sits in chair.

SUZANNE
I never planned for us to break up.

They stare at each other, a quiet moment.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
(soft)
How's this priest thing working
out?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

FATHER PAUL

Pretty busy,
(beat)
communions, baptisms, weddings,
last rites!

SUZANNE

Oh.

Paul sits alongside Suzanne.

FATHER PAUL

I prayed to see you again, at least
one last time. Never imagined it
be under *these* circumstances.

Suzanne takes Paul's hand.

SUZANNE

(starts to cry)
I needed a future Paulie, a future.
(beat)
I couldn't live in a trailer while
you traveled all over Florida
playing on some minor league
baseball team.

FATHER PAUL

Some minor league baseball team? I
was playing for the New York
Yankees!

SUZANNE

But-

FATHER PAUL

Patience is a virtue Suzy, all I
asked of you was patience.

SUZANNE

The trailer park was dreadful. I
was so afraid every time you left.

FATHER PAUL

The whole team lived there.

SUZANNE

Those nights you were on the road
were miserable, I was so lonely, so
afraid-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

FATHER PAUL

But to leave me at the altar, the
pitching mound at Yankee Stadium?

SUZANNE

I know-

FATHER PAUL

The white runner ran all the way to
home plate. The flowers, the music-

SUZANNE

I couldn't-

FATHER PAUL

Everything was dream-like, but no
Suzy.

SUZANNE

(stands up, looks out
window)

I couldn't be a baseball-wife,
schmoozing behind home plate like I
was having a good time.

Paul stands up, points to Walter.

FATHER PAUL

And then you meet up with him?

Suzanne turns away, head bowed.

SUZANNE

(timid)

My father-

Paul turns her around with both hands on her shoulders.

FATHER PAUL

(very curious)

What *about* you father?

SUZANNE

(whispers)

He was gonna disown me if I didn't
marry him.

FATHER PAUL

He would disown his own daughter?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

SUZANNE

He wanted the best for me Paulie,
his daughter marrying a cop and not
a guy running around playing a
(makes quotations mark
with fingers)
"kid's game."

Paul sits in chair, buries face in hands.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

He worked at the same precinct as
my father; good pay, great benefits-

FATHER PAUL

Now I get it-

SUZANNE

(shakes head)
Mom was against it-

FATHER PAUL

I loved your mom.

SUZANNE

How was he to know you were gonna
sign a three million dollar deal?
No one saw that comin' in a million
years.

FATHER PAUL

You mean, **three** million.

SUZANNE

I guess.

Paul leans into Suzy.

FATHER PAUL

He should've had more faith.

SUZANNE

I'm sorry.

FATHER PAUL

I couldn't pitch after you left.

SUZANNE

You should've stuck with it.

FATHER PAUL

Those bus rides were brutal,
fourteen hours in a smelly hot bus.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

SUZANNE

If I knew-

FATHER PAUL

Depression, drugs, alcohol. I
dreaded the night.

Suzanne holds Paul's hands.

SUZANNE

Oh Paulie-

FATHER PAUL

(points upward)
Without Him, I would have ended it!

SUZANNE

Don't say that.

FATHER PAUL

I mean it.

SUZANNE

If I could take it back, I would.
You never should've turned your
back on baseball. You had a great
future.

Paul drops hands.

FATHER PAUL

(confused)
Why didn't you say that ten years
ago?

SUZANNE

I was young, afraid-

FATHER PAUL

I know-

Suzanne moves close to Paul.

SUZANNE

If Walter-

FATHER PAUL

(puts fingers to Suzy's
lips)
Do you see this?
(pulls on priest collar)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

SUZANNE

Didn't Jesus say "forgive is
divine"?

FATHER PAUL

He didn't know Suzanne Walsh.

SUZANNE

Please don't turn away from me,
especially now.

FATHER PAUL

I'll never turn away, I'll love you
forever.

SUZANNE

(cries onto his shoulder)
I'm so sorry.

FATHER PAUL

It was either a leap off a bridge
or a leap of faith,
(beat)
a leap of faith won.

SUZANNE

Any woman would've been lucky to be
your wife.

FATHER PAUL

I didn't want any woman, I wanted
you.
(holds Suzanne's hands)
I wish the best for you and your
husband.

Suzanne moves to kiss Paul's cheek, he turns away.

SUZANNE

Maybe-

FATHER PAUL

I have Mass on Sunday, you're more
than welcome to see me pitch on a
different kind of mound.

Paul walks out of room, Suzanne follows him to door.

SUZANNE

Bye Paulie.

WALTER raises hand on gurney, waves.

INT. OFFICE - NEXT MORNING

A single metal office desk sits with large map of the world behind. ANTHONY MICHAELS (45), clean cut, white shirt and rolled-up sleeves, stands nearby, talks to woman, she hands him an envelope. Anthony, a single father of two young girls, sits down at his desk, stares aimlessly, taps envelope to his lips, types on his laptop, writes down numbers, picks up phone.

INT. HOLY TRINITY CHURCH - LONG ISLAND, NY

Father Paul wears priest collar, kneels at side of bed in small, sparse room, prays to crucifix on wall. A photo of him in NY Yankee uniform sits on end table.

FATHER PAUL

(sincere)

Please tell me why you brought her back into my life? What is your purpose, your reason, your meaning?

Phone on end table rings, Paul ignores it, answering machine picks up.

ANSWERING MACHINE

This is Father Paul, please leave your message after the tone and I promise to return your call when I am able. May God bless you.

ANTHONY (V.O.)

Hey PJ, this is your brother! Pick up the freakin' phone!

Paul fumbles to pick up handset.

FATHER PAUL

Anthony?

ANTHONY (V.O.)

I hope you recognize my voice.

FATHER PAUL

You haven't called in ten years.

ANTHONY (V.O.)

Ripped me apart when you left the Bigs, couldn't accept it.

FATHER PAUL

How do you think I felt?

INT. ANTHONY' ROOM

ANTHONY
Let's put that behind us.

FATHER PAUL (V.O.)
I'm with you.

ANTHONY
Still follow baseball?

INT. PAUL'S ROOM

FATHER PAUL
(looks at photo on table)
I coach a team for the church,
keeps me connected.

INT. ANTHONY'S OFFICE

ANTHONY
Hold on to your collar, I have two
season box seat tickets at Shea.

FATHER PAUL (V.O.)
Always dreamt about was sitting in
those seats.

ANTHONY
Likewise.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM

FATHER PAUL
The days I spent at Shea with you
inspired me to be a Major League
pitcher.

ANTHONY (V.O.)
That's why I took you.

Paul takes out daybook, flips through pages.

FATHER PAUL
I'm so busy with church stuff, I
guess I could use a little "me
time."

INT. ANTHONY'S OFFICE

ANTHONY
You don't have to make all the
games, make as many as you can.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FATHER PAUL (V.O.)
It'll be so good to see you.

ANTHONY
Same here.
(beat)
Just one thing.

FATHER PAUL (V.O.)
What's that?

ANTHONY
Bring your glove.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM

Paul looks under bed, pulls out glove, hangs up phone, looks at crucifix.

FATHER PAUL
Thanks.

EXT. FLUSHING, QUEENS - OPENING DAY - 2008

Father Paul and Anthony walk streets under elevated train toward Shea Stadium. Paul wears priest collar, carries baseball glove, Anthony in open white dress shirt, pulled down tie. Anthony clutches tickets in one hand, a transistor-type radio in other hand, headphones in ears.

FATHER PAUL
I can't believe you parked so far away. I would've paid the ten bucks for parking.

Anthony fiddles with radio, ignores Paul.

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)
Can you hear me?

ANTHONY
(pulls off headphones)
I hear you. Gotta make sure I get good reception.

FATHER PAUL
Good reception? You're at the game!

ANTHONY
Don't you remember when I watched the games on TV I had the radio on for the play-by-play?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FATHER PAUL

Yeah-

Both enter stadium ticket booth, Anthony hands tickets to gate-keeper.

INT. SHEA STADIUM - DAY

Sounds and sights of a major league stadium, beer, popcorn, soda vendors, people rush to their seats, bang into each other.

FATHER PAUL

(in awe)

I haven't been here in twenty years.

ANTHONY

If you didn't walk away, this would've been your home.

Paul stops at kiosk, picks up Met yearbook.

FATHER PAUL

(excited)

Remember these?

ANTHONY

How could I forget? This one's on me.

Anthony pays for two yearbooks, he keeps one, hands Paul the other.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Enjoy.

FATHER PAUL

Thanks.

Paul eagerly flips through yearbook, stares at every page as Anthony walks determined, checks tickets for seat numbers.

ANTHONY

We're in Section 4.

FATHER PAUL

Isn't that near home plate?

ANTHONY

Only the best for my brother.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They walk through long corridor beneath seats, then field comes into view, **euphoric**.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
Feast your eyes on heaven.

FATHER PAUL
(in awe)
My God.

Paul stares at field, Anthony continues to seats.

ANTHONY
We're down here.

A beer vendor bangs into Paul.

BEER VENDOR/MAXIE
Sorry pal, I mean, Father.

FATHER PAUL
(rubs shoulder)
That's okay.

Anthony hands tickets to USHER/WALLY, he leads them to seats next to Mets' dugout on first base side.

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)
(amazed)
I can't believe we're **this close**.

WALLY wipes off seats with huge pink towel, sticks out hand for tip.

ANTHONY
(stuffs a twenty in hand)
Thanks.

Paul notices Anthony's tip.

FATHER PAUL
You gave him a twenty?

ANTHONY
We're gonna be here for eighty games, it'll be worth it.

Both sit one row off field. Paul is star struck.

FATHER PAUL
This is a dream come true.

Anthony adjusts headphones, ignores Paul.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)
You haven't heard a word I said,
have you?

Anthony peels off one headphone.

ANTHONY
Huh?

FATHER PAUL
I thought we're supposed to
interact, make up for ten lost
years.

ANTHONY
(peels back one headphone)
Oh, this thing?

FATHER PAUL
Yeah.

ANTHONY
I'm setting the levels for the
game.

Paul shakes head, pounds inside of glove with right hand.

FATHER PAUL
I'm so glad I found this. Maybe
I'll finally get use out of it.

ANTHONY
Huh?

Paul pulls off Anthony's headphone.

FATHER PAUL
I said,
(into Anthony's ear)
"I'm glad I found this glove."

ANTHONY
Oh.

FATHER PAUL
I don't get the radio.

ANTHONY
Radio announcers are more vivid
than TV guys. They tell you so much
more.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FATHER PAUL

Like what?

ANTHONY

Batting average, pitching stats,
how they hit against the same
pitcher last year.

FATHER PAUL

I'd rather watch the game-

ANTHONY

You should've been **playing** the
game.

Anthony opens yearbook, flips to scorebook section, writes
down players' names.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

(looks at scorebook)

Ever hear from that psycho?

FATHER PAUL

Funny you should ask.

ANTHONY

I had a feeling.

FATHER PAUL

What makes you say that?

ANTHONY

Did she reach out on Facebook?

FATHER PAUL

Well-

ANTHONY

(shake head)

Look how she messed you up.

FATHER PAUL

You call being a priest, "messed
up?"

ANTHONY

Well-

FATHER PAUL

I ran into her at the hospital.

ANTHONY

Was she in the psych ward?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

FATHER PAUL
Her husband-

Anthony closes yearbook, changes topics.

ANTHONY
How about we talk about something
else?

FATHER PAUL
Sure.

ANTHONY
How was the ride into Woodside?

FATHER PAUL
Wasn't bad, gonna be tough making
all these games.

ANTHONY
You can always crash at Mom's
place. There's an apartment in the
basement.

FATHER PAUL
Don't you mean **your** place? I can't
believe they left you the house
when they dropped dead.

ANTHONY
Should they have given it to a
lunatic like you after what Suzy
did? I don't think that would've
been smart.

FATHER PAUL
Maybe.

Paul notices two empty seats in front.

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)
(taps Anthony)
Check this out.

Paul climbs over, motions Anthony to join him.

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)
Like the old days.

Anthony climbs over, high-fives.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)
This is amazing, right next to the
field!

Paul points to upper deck.

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)
Remember we used to sit up there?

ANTHONY
We cut out coupons from mom's milk
cartons for free tickets.

FATHER PAUL
Poured out the milk, drove mom
nuts.

ANTHONY
Those were good times.

Anthony adjust headphones, Paul scans field.

FATHER PAUL
Hey Anthony,
(points to player)
there's the pitcher who just signed
for 270 mill.

ANTHONY
Could've been you.

FATHER PAUL
Nah-

ANTHONY
Not **nah, yah!** You had **it** my friend.
A gift from God.

FATHER PAUL
Perhaps.

ANTHONY
You were the next Seaver, Koufax,
Gibson.

FATHER PAUL
I couldn't go on without her,
couldn't stay focused.

ANTHONY
(pats Paul on head)
My poor baby brother.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

FATHER PAUL

I lost my girl, I lost my career,
thank God I found God.

ANTHONY

I'm glad you're at peace PJ.

FATHER PAUL

Being here with you makes me happy.
Brings back such great-

Yelling heard from behind.

CHICKY ROSE

Hey assholes, outta my seats!

Mobster CHICKY ROSE (64), an old school wise-guy, wobbles down aisle, wears fine Italian silk clothes, favors colorful silk scarves, even in warm weather. His rotund body makes his shirts and pants too tight, the gold necklaces and pinky rings sparkle, but the mood ring his mother gave him when he was finally Bar Mitzvahed at thirty-three is his most prized possession. His girlfriend NATELLA (28) petite and beautiful Puerto Rican, wears colorful tailored fitting cotton dress, large white tinted sunglasses, rarely speaks, a real looker, she slowly follows.

CHICKY ROSE (CONT'D)

I've had these seats since '69, get
your asses out before I personally
remove them.

FATHER PAUL

We're uh, so sorry sir.

Paul moves up, Anthony adjusts headphones, unaware of Chicky's presence.

CHICKY

(ballistic)

Hey jerk off with the Walkman, I
told you to move!

ANTHONY

Oh.

Anthony climbs back over seat. Wally the Usher runs down aisle, cleans Chicky and Natella's seats with pink glove. Natella smiles broadly to Paul and Anthony, Chicky stuffs a hundred dollar bill in Wally's hand.

WALLY

Nice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

CHICKY
(matter of factly)
You know me, I don't know you, but
I will know you, ya know?

Wally nods.

CHICKY (CONT'D)
I don't wanna see any dirt-bags in
our seats for the rest of the
season, kapish?

WALLY
Yes sir.

Wally salutes, leaves. Paul shakes head in agreement.

FATHER PAUL
(swallows)
Loud and clear.

Chicky and Natella settle in, he puts right arm around
Natella, points to field with left.

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Isn't that the mob guy I see on TV?
Ya know, Chicky Rose?

ANTHONY
(takes off headphone)
So it is.

FATHER PAUL
(shakes head)
He keeps getting off, like he's
bullet proof.

ANTHONY
Tons of cash buys you tons of good
lawyers.

FATHER PAUL
I guess.

Chicky turns around, notices priest collar on Paul.

CHICKY
You're a freakin' priest? I'm
sorry about my language.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

FATHER PAUL

Forget it,
(extends hand)
I'm Paul.

CHICKY

I'm Chicky, this is Natella.

Natella nods, smiles.

CHICKY (CONT'D)

She don't talk too much but she
looks awfully fine, I mean, if
you're into females.

FATHER PAUL

She *is* a sight to behold.

Paul ogles Natella.

CHICKY

Hey Father, you know what they say
about temptation-

FATHER PAUL

I usually have a curtain between me
and a beautiful woman, it's called
a confessional.

CHICKY

(hardy laugh)
That's funny, a *confessional*.

Chicky points to priest collar.

CHICKY (CONT'D)

I thought priests don't wear
those no more.

FATHER PAUL

It shows respect to the Big guy
upstairs.

CHICKY

Kinda like my pinky ring.
(holds up hand)
Shows respect to the big guy, down
on Mulberry.

FATHER PAUL

(laughs)
That's funny.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (9)

CHICKY
It's the truth.

FATHER PAUL
(rubs collar)
Everyday I put this collar on,
I thank God for the second chance
He's given me. I'll **never** take
this off. **Never!**

A ballplayer on field, MIKE SWENSON (24), walks to Chicky.

CHICKY
(to Paul)
Excuse me.

Chicky stands up, hugs Mike, whispers in his ear, takes small packet from his pocket, slyly hands packet to player, sits down, turns back to Paul like nothing happened.

CHICKY (CONT'D)
Who's your buddy with the
headphones?

FATHER PAUL
(amazed)
You know **Mike Swenson**?

CHICKY
Mikey?

FATHER PAUL
Uh, **yeah!**

CHICKY
With seats like these, you get to
know everyone. You can smell when
the first base coach farts!

FATHER PAUL
(laughs)
That's funny.

CHICKY
Not if the wind is blowin', it's
ugly.

Chicky raises hand for high-five, Paul obliges. Anthony is focused on his radio, ignores Paul and Chicky.

CHICKY (CONT'D)
What's with your friend?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (10)

FATHER PAUL

My brother Anthony, he prefers to listen to the game on the radio.

CHICKY

But he's here.

FATHER PAUL

He'd always played the radio while the game was on TV. My folks thought it was odd.

CHICKY

Kinda creepy.

(turns to Natella)

Hey Natella, we're sitting next to a priest, watch your language.

Natella smiles.

FATHER PAUL

(extends hand)

Pleasure to meet you Natella.

Chicky extends hand to Anthony, but ignores it.

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)

(pokes Anthony)

Anthony-

ANTHONY

(takes off one headphone.)

Nice to meet you.

Chicky extends hand again, Anthony ignores it.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

I enjoy the game listening to it on the radio. I get better play-by-play.

Anthony lets Chicky hear earpiece.

ANNOUNCER ON RADIO (V.O.)

And that was our New York Met starting line-up for Opening Day 2008!

ANTHONY

See?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (11)

CHICKY

Weird.

(notices scorebook in
Anthony's lap)

You like keeping score?

ANTHONY

My daughters are big fans, I
promised I'd keep score. Makes
them feel like they were here.

Beer vendor MAXIE (42) overweight, unshaven, runs down aisle,
case of twenty four beers on shoulder.

BEER VENDOR/MAXIE

(yells)

Beer here! Beer here!

CHICKY

(raises right hand)

Yo beer guy! Over here!

(to Paul and Anthony)

How 'bout a beer? On me.

Anthony waves off offer.

FATHER PAUL

Well-

CHICKY

Come on Father. We'll pretend it's
Holy Beer.

Beer vendor hands two plastic cups to Chicky and Paul.

CHICKY (CONT'D)

(raises cup)

Here's to a great season with a
great box seat partner. Salute!

Both clink cups, Paul chugs beer with one swallow.

FATHER PAUL

(enjoying)

That's awesome!

CHICKY

I'll have you plastered by the end
of the game Father.

FATHER PAUL

(licking lips)

Call me PJ.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (12)

CHICKY

PJ it is.

FATHER PAUL

Would your girlfriend like a drink?

CHICKY

Don't worry about her. Haven't gotten to first base.

FATHER PAUL

Oh-

Chicky finishes beer, wipes mouth with sleeve.

CHICKY

How 'bout another JP?

FATHER PAUL

It's PJ.

CHICKY

That's what I said.

Chicky signals to beer vendor.

CHICKY (CONT'D)

Yo beer guy. Two more over here.

Beer guy rushes down with two beers, Chicky stuffs a fifty dollar bill in his hand.

FATHER PAUL

That beer cost eight bucks?

CHICKY

Who cares? You can't put a price on a good time.

FATHER PAUL

(slurs words, drunk)
You're sooo right Chicky.

Chicky sips beer.

CHICKY

What brings you guys to the game?

FATHER PAUL

(He got season tickets,
asked me to tag along.)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (13)

CHICKY

These are bad ass seats. What's your brother, a hit man for the mob?

(hardy laugh)

FATHER PAUL

Does he look like a hitman?

Chicky turns around, stares at Anthony engrossed in headphones, keeping score in scorebook.

CHICKY

Looks like a freakin' accountant. Is that what he is?

FATHER PAUL

I think he runs a business.

CHICKY

You don't know what you brother does for a living?

FATHER PAUL

Haven't spoken in ten years, ever since I left the pros.

CHICKY

You played in the pros?

FATHER PAUL

Triple A, almost the pros.

CHICKY

You must've been pretty good.

FATHER PAUL

Called me up to the Show, three million dollar deal.

(chugs beer)

Walked away.

CHICKY

You walked away from a three million dollar deal pitching in the Big Leagues?

(takes slug of beer)

What team?

FATHER PAUL

The Yanks.

Chicky nearly chokes on his beer, spits it out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (14)

CHICKY
 (amazed)
 The Yankees?

FATHER PAUL
 (stares out to field)
 I can't blame him for cutting me
 off.

CHICKY
 Must've had a good reason.

FATHER PAUL
 (stares at field,
 mesmerized)
 Had it all planned, on the mound at
 Yankee Stadium, everyone was there,
 (takes a slug)
 but her.

CHICKY
 I woulda killed her.

FATHER PAUL
 Seventh Commandment, Thou shalt not
 kill.

CHICKY
 Chicky's Commandment, Thou shalt
 not screw me or you die!

Paul pats Chicky's shoulder.

FATHER PAUL
 That's not His way.

CHICKY
 But it's my way-

Paul leans back in chair, stretches arms out.

FATHER PAUL
 Went downhill, did the whole drug
 thing, put a loaded thirty-eight to
 my right temple,
 (points finger to head)
 but then a show blasted on TV about
 being saved, some minster screaming
 how Jesus loves you, I could swear
 he was screaming to me. Went to his
 church the next day, had a chat,
 joined a seminary, and that's that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (15)

CHICKY

Some story.

Chicky chugs beer, one long swallow.

CHICKY (CONT'D)

You're gonna love it here man. The sights, the sounds, the smell, the people, the women! This place is like a house of worship.

FATHER PAUL

Every time I stood on the mound, I'd look across the field, pick up some grass, hold it close to my nose, smell it, kick the rubber, stare down at it. I could swear I saw the face of God-

CHICKY

You give me chills.

FATHER PAUL

Anthony took me here all the time from Bayside-

CHICKY

(interrupts)

Bayside? I'm from Flushing.

FATHER PAUL

Small world.

CHICKY

Right down the block, 147th and Northern.

FATHER PAUL

233rd and Northern, almost neighbors.

CHICKY

Hey man, we're gonna have a blast this season.

Both laugh, give high-fives.

FATHER PAUL

What kind of name is Chicky?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (16)

CHICKY

(solemn)

My folks sent me to my uncle
Frankie's chicken farm in Jersey, I
hated it. One day I was bored, I
pulled the head off a chicken,
stuffed it in my shirt pocket for a
week, the name kinda stuck.

FATHER PAUL

(shakes head)

Interesting-

CHICKY

(smells shirt)

I think I still smell of dead
chicken.

FATHER PAUL

(pretends to smell him)

Nah, that's your cologne.

CHICKY

Hahahaha.

Both high-five.

CHICKY (CONT'D)

You ever sit this close?

FATHER PAUL

We used to cut-out coupons from the
back of milk cartons for free
tickets up in heaven.

(points to Upper Deck)

I always dreamt of sitting in box
seats, could never afford it.

CHICKY

That's weird. I used to cut out
coupons too. Bring twenty coupons,
get a free ticket.

FATHER PAUL

I'd pour out the milk in the toilet
just to empty the carton.

CHICKY

Me too man.

Both high-five.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (17)

CHICKY (CONT'D)

Who'd think I'd have something in
common with a priest?

FATHER PAUL

All in God's plan.

CHICKY

(waves him off)

That's a lot of crap, I don't
believe it. My life hasn't turned
out the way I hoped.

FATHER PAUL

What did you wanna do?

CHICKY

Wanted to be an architect, build
places like this-

Chicky extends arms to stadium.

FATHER PAUL

Never too late to reach for your
dreams.

CHICKY

I'm fifty eight, overweight, don't
have the patience to commute on the
Number 6 train going to night
school.

FATHER PAUL

If you really want it, it's never
too late.

CHICKY

And how 'bout you?

FATHER PAUL

What do you mean?

CHICKY

Climb the hill, return to the game.

FATHER PAUL

If it's in His plan, He'll let me
know-

INT. HOLY TRINITY CHURCH - LONG ISLAND, NY - A WEEK LATER

A wedding ceremony at altar, Father Paul officiates, blesses couple, they walk down center aisle, exit rear, he tidies altar.

SUZANNE, Paul's ex-girlfriend, head covered in shawl, slowly approaches with ELIZABETH (4) her daughter. Paul doesn't notice.

SUZANNE
(whispers)
A beautiful ceremony.

Paul turns, **frozen** in his tracks.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
(sullen, head bowed)
Walter passed.

FATHER PAUL
I'm so sorry.

Suzanne leans in to Paul, he hugs her, silence, they walk off altar, Paul's arm around her.

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)
All in God's plan.

SUZANNE
I wonder-

Paul leans to Elizabeth.

FATHER PAUL
Is this your daughter? My goodness
Suzy, she's as beautiful as you.

ELIZABETH
Hi Father Paul.

SUZANNE
Elizabeth, Paulie's a friend from
High School.

ELIZABETH
It's a pleasure to meet you Father
Paul.

FATHER PAUL
I'm sorry to hear about your
father.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)

I'll say a **very** special prayer at Sunday Mass, if that's okay with you Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH

That's fine Father. Maybe we can come?

FATHER PAUL

It's up to your mom.

Suzanne nods.

ELIZABETH

My mom talks about you all the time.

FATHER PAUL

Really?

ELIZABETH

She whispers your name in her sleep. Keeps my dad awake.

FATHER PAUL

(smile at Suzanne)
Cool.

ELIZABETH

Yup.

FATHER PAUL

Can you help me with something?

ELIZABETH

Surer.

Paul opens small side closet, takes out broom.

FATHER PAUL

Can you sweep up the rose petals?
(points to center aisle)
Don't want anyone slipping.

ELIZABETH

Sure Father Paul.

Elizabeth takes broom, starts sweeping, Paul walks to outside door.

FATHER PAUL

(to Suzanne)
Wanna see our Serenity Garden?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SUZANNE

Of course.

EXT. OUTSIDE GARDEN

Garden is covered with unique attractive plants, trees, shrubs, Virgin Mary sculpture. A rock garden waterfall empties into a coy fish pond. Paul picks up fish food container, throws food into pond, big fish swallows food.

SUZANNE

This is so, serene.

FATHER PAUL

I come here when I can use a little peace.

SUZANNE

A perfect spot.

Paul sits on cement bench, Suzanne joins him, she cries on his shoulder, puts arm around her.

FATHER PAUL

I'm so sorry Suzy.

SUZANNE

No, I'm so sorry.

FATHER PAUL

Part of God's plan.

SUZANNE

Why did He do this?

FATHER PAUL

He throws every pitch.

SUZANNE

You always find a way to squeeze baseball into life.

FATHER PAUL

Long before my first car, there was baseball, long before I met you, there was baseball. She's never failed me, never abandoned me, always by my side. I'll never let go of her, like I'll never let go of you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE
 (takes Paul's hand)
 I never meant for that to happen.

FATHER PAUL
 A minute doesn't go by that I don't
 think of that day.

SUZANNE
 It was so unexpected, so unplanned.

FATHER PAUL
 All I ask is **why?**

SUZANNE
 Dad introduced us at a Christmas
 party at his precinct.

FATHER PAUL
 After all we had-

SUZANNE
 He pushed himself on me. He
 should've been a salesman instead
 of a cop.

Paul gets up, walks around garden, Suzanne follows.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
 Baseball was always your dream, you
 should've stuck with it.

FATHER PAUL
 (surprised)
 Without you?

SUZANNE
 Could've been a Hall of Famer.

FATHER PAUL
 (shakes head)
 I don't know-

SUZANNE
 You were throwing ninety-nine in
 high school.

FATHER PAUL
 But I didn't have you.

Paul walks to wooden bench under mimosa tree, Suzanne sits.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SUZANNE

Of all the things, why a priest?

FATHER PAUL

Are you familiar with the Serenity Prayer?

SUZANNE

It sounds familiar.

FATHER PAUL

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to accept things I can change, and the wisdom to know the difference. I live by those words every day.

SUZANNE

Such special words, but what do they mean?

FATHER PAUL

I realized ten years, six months, twenty one days ago there was nothing I could do to bring you back, I struggled with that until I found God. He saved me.

SUZANNE

That hurts-

FATHER PAUL

You'll never know in a million years what you did to me.

SUZANNE

Don't you mean, three million?

Both laugh, Paul changes subject, makes a funny.

FATHER PAUL

You should've seen Steinbrenner's face when the music started and you didn't walk down the aisle.

(laughs)

SUZANNE

I was crying my eyes out at my mom's place.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FATHER PAUL

Seeing the expressions on all their faces was surreal, come to think of it, it was kinda funny.

Both giggle.

SUZANNE

(stares out)

Do you think He has a plan for you to go back to the game, or maybe, (squeezes Paul's hand) back to me?

FATHER PAUL

If God wants me to play baseball, He'll let me know, if He wants me back with you, He'll let me know.

Paul walks back into church, Suzanne follows.

SUZANNE

How's your brother? I haven't seen him in years.

FATHER PAUL

He called me out of the blue, offered me box seats at Shea. It feels good to be close to the game, even if it's sitting in the seats and not on the field.

SUZANNE

You belong on the field Paulie, *on the field*. Everyone knew you were gonna make it to the pros.

FATHER PAUL

Everyone except you.

SUZANNE

I always believed in you.

FATHER PAUL

That was some way to show it.

Paul slides in front row, Suzanne joins him.

SUZANNE

Is there a special prayer you keep in your back pocket for times like these?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

FATHER PAUL

Do you have a Bible?

SUZANNE

Walter was never a church-goer. If he had the choice of going to church or picking up a rifle to shoot an innocent deer, he'd choose the hunt, not the family.

Paul picks up Bible from seat.

FATHER PAUL

Take this one. Read Verse 13, Letter to the Corinthians, *Love is patient, love is kind.*

SUZANNE

I'll read it tonight, I promise.

Paul strokes Suzanne's hair, she leans on his shoulder. Elizabeth appears, broom in hand.

ELIZABETH

I'm finished Father Paul. I even swept up the rice in front.

FATHER PAUL

Great job Elizabeth.

Paul and Suzanne stand, walk down center aisle, very slow.

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)

So, where're you living?

SUZANNE

Dad passed away two years ago, pancreatic cancer, we moved in with mom, she needs the company and it gives Elizabeth a chance to spend time with her Grandma. Walter never liked my family, unlike you.

FATHER PAUL

I worshiped your family.

SUZANNE

They loved you so much. Mom thinks we got married, she calls your name all the time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

FATHER PAUL

I'll say a prayer at Sunday Mass, a very special prayer. Okay?

SUZANNE

I'll bring Elizabeth, she'd love to come.

FATHER PAUL

I never argued with you Suzy. You're always welcome here.

Paul stops in middle of aisle, looks around.

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)

This is odd-

SUZANNE

What's that?

FATHER PAUL

Walking down the aisle together, something we should've done ten years ago.

SUZANNE

He controls every pitch, right?

FATHER PAUL

Yeah-

Suzanne kisses Paul on cheek.

SUZANNE

(whispers in Paul's ear)
I'll be in the bullpen.

Suzanne and Elizabeth exit church, Elizabeth turns, waves to Paul, he waves back.

EXT. CHURCH FRONT

Suzanne and Elizabeth slowly walk away, hold hands.

ELIZABETH

Mommy?

SUZANNE

Yes darling?

ELIZABETH

Why do you call Father Paul, *Paulie*?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE

Only God knows my dear, only God knows.

INT. SHEA STADIUM - FOOD COURT BEHIND HOME PLATE - DAY

Food court behind home plate sells fries, hot dogs, souvenirs. People mingle, Paul and Anthony walk slow, tickets in hand.

ANTHONY

I can't believe she showed up at your church. Must've blew your mind.

FATHER PAUL

Walked right up to the altar, surprised I didn't pass out.

ANTHONY

And?

FATHER PAUL

She pulled the plug on her husband.

ANTHONY

Like she pulled the plug on you.

FATHER PAUL

Regardless of what happened between us, it's sad to see her hurt.

ANTHONY

That wasn't right what she did to you PJ.

FATHER PAUL

God has His plan.

ANTHONY

I remember her hanging on your back in our pool. Never took her baby blues off you.

FATHER PAUL

Well-

Anthony stops at kiosk, orders four hot dogs, two large Cokes, hands two to Paul.

ANTHONY

I'm sure she would've ran away with you at fourteen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FATHER PAUL
 (shakes head)
 Why do you think she did what he
 did?

ANTHONY
 Sometimes people do things that
 don't seem logical.

FATHER PAUL
 She brought back some great
 memories, couldn't sleep all night.

ANTHONY
 Listen to your older brother, *let
 it go, let it go.*

Natella and Chicky appear, she wears colorful summer dress,
 heels, white sun hat, large white sunglasses. Chicky tags on
 Natella's arm.

CHICKY
 I gotta take a pee. Want something
 to eat?

Natella shakes head "no."

CHICKY (CONT'D)
 (points finger)
 Stay right here! We go in as a
 couple, understand?

Natella nods in agreement.

CHICKY (CONT'D)
 Don't wanna see you talking to
 nobody.

Chicky walks away. Anthony buys a scorebook, Paul sips on
 Coke.

FATHER PAUL
 (excited)
 Hey Anthony, there's Natella.

ANTHONY
 (uninterested)
 Cool.

FATHER PAUL
 She's kinda pretty.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANTHONY
So is that priest collar.

FATHER PAUL
Brings me right back to high-
school, *muy bonita*.

ANTHONY
(points to collar)
That priest collar is *muy bonita*
too.

FATHER PAUL
I'm going over.

ANTHONY
Bad idea.

Paul walks to Natella, Anthony reluctantly follows.

FATHER PAUL
(extends hand)
Hi.

Natella giggles, limply shakes hand.

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)
Met fan?

Natella shrugs.

ANTHONY
(whispers to Paul)
Let's go.

FATHER PAUL
(whispers back)
Hang for a sec.

ANTHONY
See ya later.

Anthony heads to seats.

FATHER PAUL
I think it's more to notice one's
surroundings than the game, don't
you agree?

She shrugs again.

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)
Dose anyone really *watch* the game?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

She giggles, Chicky rushes over, **angry**, arms filled with beer, snacks, he drops it all.

CHICKY
(lunges into Paul's face)
First you take my seats, now you
take my girl.

FATHER PAUL
Huh?

CHICKY
You heard me loser! **Get lost!**

A crowd gathers, a Good Samaritan walks over.

GOOD SAMARITAN
Need help Father?

FATHER PAUL
No thanks. I got this.

Good Samaritan stares down Chicky, he walks away.

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)
I was just making conversation
Chicky.

CHICKY
Making conversation, or making a
move?

FATHER PAUL
Look at this collar,
(pulls on collar)
I'm a priest.

CHICKY
I heard about you and your freaky
priest ways: altar boys, other
priest, nuns-

FATHER PAUL
Chicky-

CHICKY
(in his face)
I like you PJ, but you make a move
on my goods, I don't care if you're
a priest, Rabbi, cop, one to the
head and you're dead.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

CHICKY (CONT'D)
 (pushes index finger to
 Paul's head)

Chicky grabs Natella's hand, they bolt away. Paul stands dumbfounded, slurps on Coke.

EXT. BOX SEATS

Anthony adjusts headphones, writes line-up in scorebook. Chicky pulls Natella to seats.

CHICKY
 (to Anthony)
 Your brother is some jerk-off.

Anthony can't hear, Chicky plops in seat, Natella gently sits. Paul strolls down aisle, slurps Coke, sits.

ANTHONY
 (to Paul)
 Want something?

FATHER PAUL
 Bag of peanuts.

ANTHONY
 Gonna try and feed those pigeons?

FATHER PAUL
 What do you mean?

ANTHONY
 You've been trying to hand feed those birds since dad took us to Central Park for your fifth birthday, ain't happenin' pal.

FATHER PAUL
 You remember?

ANTHONY
 You drove dad nuts with those bags, "*here little pigees, here little pigees*" you mumbled all day.

FATHER PAUL
 They're God's creatures like you and I.

ANTHONY
 The day you hand feed a pigeon, is the day I see a miracle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Anthony and Paul turn to watch game, Chicky stuffs food in mouth, Natella applies lipstick.

EXT. BOX SEATS - A WEEK LATER

Anthony adjusts headphones, Natella stares in compact mirror, Chicky and Paul share a laugh.

CHICKY

I'm sorry how I spoke to you the last week.

FATHER PAUL

That was odd.

CHICKY

(points to at Natella)

I don't wanna lose her.

(extends hand to Paul)

We cool?

FATHER PAUL

We cool.

Two ballplayers walk over to Chicky, quiet chatter, Chicky slips one a small white packet.

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)

Hey Anthony, did you see that?

ANTHONY

Huh?

FATHER PAUL

Looked like Chicky slipped that guy something.

ANTHONY

I missed it.

FATHER PAUL

(excited)

Clear as day! How could you **not** see it?

ANTHONY

Maybe he wants an autograph.

FATHER PAUL

I think it was dope.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANTHONY

How would you know what dope looks like?

FATHER PAUL

I needed something to keep me awake on those road trips.

ANTHONY

Forget it,
(points to field)
watch the game.

FATHER PAUL

I'm gonna ask-

ANTHONY

(grabs him by shirt sleeve)
Don't you dare! Watch the game and forget you saw anything. He's bad news.

FATHER PAUL

He treats us good. He buys us beer all the time.

ANTHONY

He buys **you** beer all the time, not me.

FATHER PAUL

Seems harmless.

ANTHONY

Advice from your older brother,
back off.

Paul shrugs, two ballplayers walk away.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

I'm gonna hit the head. You want something?

FATHER PAUL

A Flying Saucer, vanilla.

Anthony gets up, walks away.

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)

Looks like you know the players pretty good.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CHICKY

What do ya mean?

FATHER PAUL

You were pretty friendly with those guys.

CHICKY

You saw that?

FATHER PAUL

All of Shea saw it.

CHICKY

No fucking way!

FATHER PAUL

Maybe not-

CHICKY

With seats like these, it's hard **not** to know the players.

FATHER PAUL

You gave him something?

CHICKY

(excited)

What?

FATHER PAUL

Looked like you handed him something, that's all.

CHICKY

Uh, she wanted an autograph, yeah, that's it, she wanted an autograph.

FATHER PAUL

Looked more like a small packet.

CHICKY

Would I lie to a fucking priest?

FATHER PAUL

I hope not.

CHICKY

What the should I say, *I passed the guy dope?*

FATHER PAUL

It sure looked like that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CHICKY
(finger in Paul's face)
You ain't see nuthin', got it?

FATHER PAUL
(reluctant)
Uh-

Loud obnoxious chatter heard from behind. DENNIS (30) and MARK (32), successful stock broker guys, cuff-link open Armani shirts, silk ties, walk down aisle, beer in each hand.

DENNIS
(screams toward field)
Get out of your slump you loser!

MARK
That guys sucks, right Denny?

DENNIS
Yo Mark,
(sees empty seats)
lookie lookie lookie.

Marc and Dennis clumsily sit in seats behind Paul and Anthony, beer spills on Paul.

DENNIS (CONT'D)
Sorry pal,
(notices priest collar)
uh, Father.

Paul waves him off.

FATHER PAUL
No problem.

Mark and Dennis continue obnoxious chatter.

MARK
(loud)
These are some fuckin' seats.

DENNIS
Hundred bucks a pop, they better be!

MARK
(slugs beer)
Meeting that guy in the parking lot was a home run.

Mark and Dennis give high-five.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

DENIS

Meeting him was fucking divine
intervention.

Another high-five.

MARK

Never in my life have I sat this
close.

Mark and Dennis clink beer cups, more spills on Paul.

DENIS

Sorry Father, I guess I'll do three
Hail Marys.

Mark and Dennis laugh hysterically, drop popcorn on Paul.
Chicky turns around.

CHICKY

Hey guys, cool it.

Mark and Dennis look at each other.

DENNIS

And who might you be, Don Corleone?

Marc and Denis laugh loudly, Chicky gets up, walks up aisle,
pulls Dennis by tie.

CHICKY

Hey asshole, that's my friend. I
don't like nuthin' about you guys.

DENNIS

(shocked)

Uh-

CHICKY

(pulls Dennis close)

Take a peak inside my jacket jerk-
off.

Chicky opens jacket, Dennis peaks inside.

DENIS

(stutters)

A, a, a gun?

MARK

A really **big** gun.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

CHICKY

I suggest you keep your mouths shut
for the rest of the game, kapish?

MARK

We didn't mean any disrepect-

DENNIS

(interrupts)

I went to Catholic school.

MARK

Really mister, it was just a joke,
right Marky, a joke.

DENNIS

That's right, a joke, ha, ha, ha.

Chicky releases tie, walks back to seat. Usher Wally runs
down aisle, stands next to Mark and Dennis.

WALLY

Let me see your tickets.

Denis hands over tickets.

WALLY (CONT'D)

Counterfeit!

MARK

(shocked)

Are you fuckin' kiddin'?

WALLY

Where'd you get these?

DENNIS

Guy in the parking lot said his kid
was sick-

WALLY

And you bought that line of shit?

Wally motions to SECURITY GUARD.

WALLY (CONT'D)

You guys gotta go.

DENNIS

No fucking way! I paid a hundred
bucks for these seats.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

WALLY
Yes way. *Leave!*

Security guard walks down aisle.

WALLY (CONT'D)
Show these guys the front gate.

SECURITY GUARD
Come on-

MARK
What about our hundred bucks?

WALLY
Should we press charges?

Security guard escorts Mark and Dennis up aisle, they argue as they go, Chicky stands up.

CHICKY
Who's laughing now ass-hole?

Chicky sits, Paul taps Chicky on shoulder.

FATHER PAUL
Thanks.

CHICKY
That's what friends are for.

INT. SOCIAL CLUB, LOWER MANHATTAN - TWO WEEKS LATER - NIGHT

Large dimly lit room, dark wood paneling, old-style venetian blinds cover windows, cigar smoke filled room, stand up light in corner. DON NINO (68), sits at white linen covered round table, back to camera, slowly drags on small cigar. A single vase with flowers on table, Italian music plays low on radio. NANDO (43) muscular well-built figure stands near door, lets Chicky enter room, pats him down. Chicky, very nervous, greets Don Nino, a kiss on each cheek, puts down white pastry box on table, Don Nino takes note of box.

DON NINO
Everybody thinks it's a fuckin'
movie who comes here,
(pus apart white string)
Cannolis?

CHICKY
Eclairs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DON NINO

Better.

Don Nino takes one from box, slowly chews on it.

CHICKY

How's things Don Nino?

DON NINO

(deliberate)

Don't be funny.

Chicky fumbles with tie, moves in chair.

DON NINO (CONT'D)

We got problems.

CHICKY

How do you mean?

DON NINO

Economy's hitting close to home.

CHICKY

Gas is near three bucks a gallon.

DON NINO

I said, *don't be funny!*

CHICKY

Sorry.

DON NINO

I put you in a primo spot at Shea to bring in the *big* bucks, and I don't see no *big* bucks.

CHICKY

Well-

DON NINO

I hear you're movin' your *mouth* more than movin' my *stuff*.

CHICKY

Huh?

DON NINO

I hears you're talkin' with a priest *behind* you, instead of the guys in *front* of you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CHICKY

Well-

DON NINO

Times are getting' tough, people
are cuttin' back.

Chicky nods.

DON NINO (CONT'D)

Today's a far cry from the roarin'
eighties when cash was everywheres,
money all over. I could easily get
two large for a key(kilo) back
then, now I'm lucky to get half.
Competition is everywheres.

CHICKY

Well-

DON NINO

I gotta worry 'bout the Colombians,
the Mexicans, the Russians. I hear
clients are getting stuff on-line,
delivered by FedEx.

CHICKY

No way.

DON NINO

That's why I called you here.

CHICKY

Wanna ship UPS?

DON NINO

Be serious for once in your life. I
hears things at Shea are a little
slow.

CHICKY

(shrugs)

Well-

DON NINO

I put you in a blessed spot-

CHICKY

You can say that again.

DON NINO

How you mean?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CHICKY

I'm sittin' in front of a priest.

Don Nino shakes head, continues.

DON NINO

A lot of guys, including my own
sons, want those seats, but I gave
them to

(points index finger)

you.

CHICKY

Gold bless you Don Nino.

Chicky grabs Don Nino's index finger, kisses it. Don Nino
takes napkin, wipes finger.

DON NINO

I'm getting' a lot of heat that I
favor you, especially since you
ain't one of us.

CHICKY

I know.

DON NINO

Your mother, God rest her soul, was
a saint. She took me in when dad
passed and mom went to the joint. I
owe her big time. I promised her on
her death bed I'd watch over you.

Don Nino looks upward, clasps hands in prayer.

CHICKY

God bless you-

DON NINO

But I hears you're *schmoozin'* more
then *movin'*.

CHICKY

You do?

DON NINO

I hears you're conversin' too much
with a priest behind you then with
the guys on the field.

CHICKY

I sit with a couple of funny yo-
yos, ya know?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

DON NINO

Yo-yos?

CHICKY

One guy's a priest and the other's a mute.

DON NINO

He's deaf?

CHICKY

A weird fucking bird, always wears these headphones, listens to the game on the radio.

DON NINO

No way.

CHICKY

Fucking weird, right?

DON NINO

I did that.

CHICKY

(surprised)
No fuckin' way.

DON NINO

I shit you not, only way to enjoy the game.

Chicky nods, Don Nino strokes chin.

DON NINO (CONT'D)

I put you there for one thing, increase sales, not run for fuckin' mayor.

Chicky shrugs.

DON NINO (CONT'D)

Maybe you can ask your priest friend to move stuff at his church. I make tons of donations, one hand washes the other.

Chicky nods.

DON NINO (CONT'D)

You were my biggest producer Chicky, but your numbers are down, way down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

CHICKY

It'll pick up once the Mets start
to win-

DON NINO

That ain't happenin' no time soon.

CHICKY

I don't know-

DON NINO

(points finger)
Don't argue with me.

CHICKY

Sorry Don Nino.

DON NINO

If you can't move more stuff, I
gotta yank you, bring in new meat.

CHICKY

But-

DON NINO

Maybe a little younger, maybe one
of those Ecuadorians, Cubans-

Chicky places hand over heart.

CHICKY

It'll pick up, I swear on my
mother's soul.

Don Nino struggles from chair, Chicky quickly helps, Nando
runs over, helps Don Nino.

DON NINO

Thanks Nando.

Nando nods, walks back to window, peaks through venetian
blinds.

DON NINO (CONT'D)

I wanna see results Chicky,
(points finger)
results!

Chicky grabs finger, kisses it. Don Nino wipes off on pants.

CHICKY

Thank you Don Nino, thank you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

DON NINO
I hears you're dating a Spanish
girl.

CHICKY
She's beautiful.

DON NINO
Maybe I'll be invited to a wedding?

CHICKY
Maybe.

Don Nino pats Chicky on shoulder, he starts to leave, turns
around, hand on knob.

CHICKY (CONT'D)
Gonna eat those?

Don Nino calls to Nando.

DON NINO
Want one?

Nando shakes head "no."

DON NINO (CONT'D)
Take 'em.

Don Nino pushes white box on table, Chicky picks it up, exits
door. Don Nino calls to Nando, he sits at table.

DON NINO (CONT'D)
He's gone, last game of season.

Nando nods.

DON NINO (CONT'D)
Make it a doubleheader.

NANDO
How do you mean?

DON NINO
Who knows what our big mouth friend
confessed to his priest buddy,
whack our Father too.

Nando nods.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM - HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, LONG ISLAND

Paul sits on edge of bed, dials phone.

INT. POLICE STATION - FRONT DESK

NYPD Police Station, Midtown Manhattan, busy, hectic, nuts.

FEMALE OPERATOR
(pushes headphone)
Seventh Precinct.

FATHER PAUL (V.O.)
Officer Delaney please.

FEMALE OPERATOR
Officer? You mean Detective
Delaney, one sec.

Operator pushes button, transfers call to DETECTIVE DANNY DELANEY (41), full head of white hair, an athlete years ago, stays fit and trim, family of Irish cops, sits in his worn brown leather swivel chair, placards on walls, huge baseball trophy behind his cluttered desk.

DETECTIVE DELANEY
(picks up phone)
Detective Delaney.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM

FATHER PAUL
(surprised)
*Detective Delaney? Hey Danny, how
the heck are ya?*

INT. POLICE STATION

DETECTIVE DELANEY
Paulie? Paulie Michaels?

FATHER PAUL (V.O.)
The one and only.

DETECTIVE DELANEY
Me and the guys were just talking
(looks at trophy)
about you. What a fucking surprise!

INT. PAUL'S ROOM

FATHER PAUL
You made Detective. Congrats my
brother.

INT. DETECTIVE DELANEY'S OFFICE

DETECTIVE DELANEY

Took a few nine millimeter slugs to pull this shit off, but it paid off in fucking spades.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM

FATHER PAUL

Gotta be five years, right?

INT. DETECTIVE DELANEY'S OFFICE

DETECTIVE DELANEY

If not more. How's the priesthood, still doin' that shit?

INT. PAUL'S ROOM

FATHER PAUL

It's a different world this side of the confessional Danny.

DETECTIVE DELANEY (V.O.)

I'm sure.

FATHER PAUL

I hear things before you see things.

DETECTIVE DELANEY (V.O.)

Ain't too rosy on this side of the fence neither.

FATHER PAUL

I bet.

INT. DETECTIVE DELANEY'S OFFICE

DETECTIVE DELANEY

So sorry about you and Suzy. Still can't get over it.

FATHER PAUL (V.O.)

It's in God's plan.

DETECTIVE DELANEY

(leans back in chair,
hands behind head)

What gives me the pleasure to speak with the best pitcher to ever grace a New York City field?

INT. PAUL'S ROOM

FATHER PAUL
Ever hear of Chicky Rose?

INT. DETECTIVE DELANEY' OFFICE

DETECTIVE DELANEY
Everyday I come across that dirt-
bag's name. Did he confess to a
murder?

FATHER PAUL (V.O.)
If he did, I couldn't tell you.

DETECTIVE DELANEY
I know.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM

FATHER PAUL
I got box seat tickets from my
brother-

DETECTIVE DELANEY (V.O.)
How the fuck is Anthony these days?

FATHER PAUL
Trying to get a handle on that
myself. Haven't spoke since I left
the Bigs, called me out of the blue
to join him at Shea for the season.

DETECTIVE DELANEY (V.O.)
Kinda weird.

FATHER PAUL
Chicky sits in front of me with his
girlfriend, I wonder if you can
tell me anything I should be aware
of?

DETECTIVE DELANEY (V.O.)
Like?

FATHER PAUL
It looked like I saw him pass
players those coke packets back in
the day.

INT. DETECTIVE DELANEY'S OFFICE

Danny stands up, closes his door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DETECTIVE DELANEY
Good fucking times, wasn't it?

FATHER PAUL (V.O.)
You know it.

DETECTIVE DELANEY
Wanna set up a sting?

FATHER PAUL (V.O.)
Maybe-

DETECTIVE DELANEY
You help me get this dirt-bag off
the street, I'll hand out communion
for the next twenty fucking years.

INT. PAUL'S ROOM

FATHER PAUL
Can you sweep up rice?

DETECTIVE DELANEY (V.O.)
Looking forward to it.

Both hang up.

EXT. SHEA STADIUM - METS VS YANKEES - DAY - JULY

Father Paul and Detective Delaney, both dressed as priests, walk through food court. Delaney chugs beer, another in his hand, he struggles with popcorn, scorebook, large styrofoam blue finger. Paul cradles baseball glove, holds tickets, points to gate.

FATHER PAUL
Over there.

DETECTIVE DELANEY
(excited, very loud)
I can't fucking believe we're on
field level! I'd *blow* your brother
for season tickets.

Two elderly women pass, aghast at Danny's unpriest language.

FATHER PAUL
(whispers)
Cool it. You're supposed to be
Father Delaney, remember?

DETECTIVE DELANEY
Shit!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Wally escorts Paul and Delaney, wipes seats with fluffy pink glove, extends hand for tip. Delaney bestows on him sign-of-the-cross, he walks away, shakes head. Delaney is awed by seat location.

DETECTIVE DELANEY (CONT'D)
Can't believe your brother got
these seats.

FATHER PAUL
Haven't seen each other in years.

DETECTIVE DELANEY
What a jerk, his own flesh and
blood.

FATHER PAUL
To forgive is divine, I forgave.

Delaney opens scorebook, notices *Yankees vs. Mets*.

DETECTIVE DELANEY
(perks up)
Didn't you play for the Yanks?

FATHER PAUL
(downplays it)
Uh, yeah.

DETECTIVE DELANEY
You were the talk of Bayside.

FATHER PAUL
Well-

DETECTIVE DELANEY
You gotta know some of these guys,
right?

FATHER PAUL
No one's gonna see me, 'specially
dressed like this.

Paul pulls on priest collar.

DETECTIVE DELANEY
Probably right.

Delaney notices two empty seats, puts leg over.

DETECTIVE DELANEY (CONT'D)
Hey Paulie-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Delaney climbs over, settles in seat, motions Paul to join him.

FATHER PAUL
These are Chicky's seats.

DETECTIVE DELANEY
I'll take care of it.

FATHER PAUL
If you say so-

DETECTIVE DELANEY
I've been around jerk-offs like him
my entire career.

Beer vendor, loaded with beers, walks down aisle, catches Delaney's eye.

DETECTIVE DELANEY (CONT'D)
Yo beer guy. Two of those bad boys
my way.

FATHER PAUL
Can't wait for you to meet this
guy.

DETECTIVE DELANEY
I can't wait for this beer.

Vendor hands over two beers, Delaney slams one down, hands one to Paul.

DETECTIVE DELANEY (CONT'D)
Insiders tell me his days are
numbered.

FATHER PAUL
No kidding?

DETECTIVE DELANEY
If he doesn't bring in big bucks,
he'll be floating in Flushing Bay
by the first pitch of the World
Series.

FATHER PAUL
(chokes on beer)
Wow.

DETECTIVE DELANEY
I hear they're gonna whack him here
at Shea, last game of the season.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FATHER PAUL

No way!

DETECTIVE DELANEY

Gotta send a message to low-life producers, either pick up your numbers or you're dead.

FATHER PAUL

Seems innocent enough.

DETECTIVE DELANEY

Don't turn your back, or he'll cut your balls off.

Chicky screams from behind, Natella follows.

CHICKY

Hey assholes! Outta my seats!

Chicky stands next to Delaney and Paul.

CHICKY (CONT'D)

What did I tell you, *stay outta my seats!*

Chicky sees Delaney's priest collar.

CHICKY (CONT'D)

The pope's in town and I didn't get a fucking invite?

Chicky extends hand, drops beer on Delaney.

FATHER PAUL

This is my pal, uh, Father Danny O'Rourke.

DETECTIVE DELANEY

(brushes off beer)

We met.

CHICKY

Nice to meet you Father.

Chicky stares at Delaney, certain he knows him.

CHICKY (CONT'D)

You look familiar.

Detective Delaney shrugs, Chicky stares.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

DETECTIVE DELANEY
People say I look like that actor
Brian Dennehy.

CHICKY
Not even close.

DETECTIVE DELANEY
Irish Day Parade?

CHICKY
Haven't been there in years.

DETECTIVE DELANEY
Christmas Mass?

CHICKY
Don't do church.

DETECTIVE DELANEY
Funeral?

CHICKY
(snaps fingers)
That's it, a funeral. Been to a lot
of those.

Paul and Delaney move back to their seats, roll eyes, Chicky
and Natella settle in.

FATHER PAUL
(whispers)
That was close.

DETECTIVE DELANEY
Too close.

CHICKY
What was that?

FATHER PAUL
Father Danny mentioned how close we
are to the field, that's all.

CHICKY
Yeah-

Two players approach Chicky, he greets them with a hug,
inaudible chatter.

CHICKY (CONT'D)
How we doing boys?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Chicky reaches in pants pocket, hands player small white packet, they smile.

FATHER PAUL
(to Delaney)
See that?

DETECTIVE DELANEY
The whole fucking stadium saw it.

FATHER PAUL
Told you he was movin' dope.

DETECTIVE DELANEY
(rubs chin)
If I could only grab a shot of
this.

Delaney looks at his cell phone, calls to Chicky.

DETECTIVE DELANEY (CONT'D)
Hey Chicky, mind if I get a shot
with the players?

CHICKY
I don't like no pictures.

Delaney hands cell phone to Paul, walks besides Chicky,
shakes hands with one player.

DETECTIVE DELANEY
For the kids back at the orphanage,
they'd love a shot of me with the
players. Just one.

CHICKY
The orphanage?

DETECTIVE DELANEY
Back in Mineola, they'd love it.

CHICKY
For the orphans?

DETECTIVE DELANEY
(to Paul)
Take a good shot Paulie.

Paul snaps picture with Delaney's cell phone.

DETECTIVE DELANEY (CONT'D)
One more for good luck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

Paul takes another shot, Delaney thanks players, moves back to seat, takes cell from Paul.

DETECTIVE DELANEY (CONT'D)
(holds phone)
The kids back at the orphanage will love this, thanks Chicky.

Chicky nods, players walk away, he returns to seat.

CHICKY
Which church in Mineola?

DETECTIVE DELANEY
Uh, the big one.

CHICKY
Anywhere near Police Headquarters?

FATHER PAUL
(interrupts)
Very nice, Chicky. St. Chaminade, down the block from Police Headquarters.

CHICKY
I was asking Father Danny.

DETECTIVE DELANEY
I transferred from a church in Queens, Our Lady of Lourdes.

CHICKY
(surprised)
The church on Northern?

DETECTIVE DELANEY
That's the one.

CHICKY
How's Father Nolan these day?

DETECTIVE DELANEY
You know Father Nolan? He's packing it in, headed to Florida.

CHICKY
He knows me, give him my best wishes.

DETECTIVE DELANEY
I will Chicky, I will.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

Chicky turns to field, Delaney and Paul stare at each other, wipe brows, Chicky stands up.

CHICKY

I gotta take a wicked pee. You guys want something?

FATHER PAUL

How 'bout another brew?

CHICKY

You got it PJ, and you Father Danny?

DETECTIVE DELANEY

(waves him off)

I'm good.

Chicky leaves.

DETECTIVE DELANEY (CONT'D)

I'm takin' the fuck off.

(stands up)

Can't wait to show the guys the shots we got.

Paul stands up, both hug.

FATHER PAUL

It's been a blast seeing you Danny.

DETECTIVE DELANEY

(points at him)

I know where you live.

Delaney bestows the sign-of-the-cross on Paul in front of onlookers, some make the sign-of-the-cross themselves. Chicky comes back with two beers in hand, sits in seat.

CHICKY

Where's your friend?

FATHER PAUL

He felt like crap-

CHICKY

I swear I know him.

FATHER PAUL

He has one of those faces.

CHICKY

But I know-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

FATHER PAUL
Where's my brew?

Chicky hands beer to Paul, they tap cups.

CHICKY
Salute!

FATHER PAUL
Cheers.

Sound of baseball on bat, falls close to Paul and Chicky.

CHICKY
You played in the Minors, right?

FATHER PAUL
I was clocked at 99 back in high school.

CHICKY
I thought priests **pray**, not **play**.
Haha.

FATHER PAUL
Not this priest, I *played*
(whispers)
and got *laid!*

CHICKY
(shocked)
You're pulling my dick.

FATHER PAUL
Not my style.

CHICKY
What would make a guy leave
baseball and become a priest? Seems
like quite the opposite.

FATHER PAUL
She broke my heart, tore me apart.
It was either a leap of faith or a
leap off the GWB. I chose the leap
of faith.

CHICKY
What a story.

Sound of ball on bat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (9)

FATHER PAUL
 (Paul pushes Chicky down)
 Get down.

Paul snags a line drive with glove, hands ball to Chicky.

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)
 See?

CHICKY
 Damn you're good!

FATHER PAUL
 Baseball comes easy, keeping women
 comes hard.

Chicky shrugs.

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)
 Speaking of women, where's yours?

CHICKY
 Probably fucking around in some
 mall-

EXT. ICE CREAM SHOPPE - QUEENS, NY

Anthony paces in front of ice cream shoppe, looks at watch. Natella approaches, pretty summer dress, heels, both kiss, embrace, hold hands, walk along Queens Boulevard, inaudible small talk. A portly man, late 50s, follows behind, takes photos with cell phone. Two blocks later, Anthony and Natella duck in STEINWAY MOTOR INN. Man takes photo.

EXT. BOX SEATS

Chicky shares a laugh with Paul, his cell phone rings, Chicky looks at number, excuses himself.

CHICKY
 (raises cell)
 Gotta take this.

FATHER PAUL
 Sure.

Chicky walks up aisle, strolls in food court.

CHICKY
 (on cell)
 What do ya got?

Inaudible words on cell.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHICKY (CONT'D)

(nods)
I thought so.

More inaudible words.

CHICKY (CONT'D)

You know what you gotta do.

Chicky hangs up phone, returns to seat, Paul puts hand on Chicky's shoulder.

FATHER PAUL

Everything okay?

CHICKY

Yeah.

FATHER PAUL

You didn't miss much.

CHICKY

Don't worry, I got it all.

Crack of bat, foul ball headed their way, a catcher runs over, extends mitt over rail.

FATHER PAUL

(extends bare hand)
I got this one.

Paul makes catch with bare hand, fires ball back to pitcher, crowd erupts in wild applause.

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)

On it all the way.

CHICKY

Nice.

Chicky lightly applauds, catcher stares at Paul.

YANKEE CATCHER

Chiclets?

FATHER PAUL

Jorge?

YANKEE CATCHER

I thought it was you, but the outfit threw me for a loop.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FATHER PAUL
I went a different direction.

YANKEE CATCHER
I see.

Chicky interrupts.

CHICKY
You called him *Chiclets*?

YANKEE CATCHER
He used to stuff a box of Chiclets
gum in his mouth before each game.
Name kinda stuck.

CHICKY
Oh-

YANKEE CATCHER
(shakes head)
I can't believe you walk away.

FATHER PAUL
You know my story, you were my
catcher.

YANKEE CATCHER
Your problems are nothing compared
to the shit I see every day.

FATHER PAUL
Maybe-

YANKEE CATCHER
If you want another shot, the gang
would take you back in a second.

FATHER PAUL
If He gives me the word,
(points upward)
I'm all over it.

YANKEE CATCHER
Stay well Chicklets.

JORGE leans over rail, hugs Paul.

FATHER PAUL
God bless.

Yankee catcher runs back to field, Chicky sits in awe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CHICKY

A baseball playing priest, *God damn!*

FATHER PAUL

(sad)

A long time ago Chicky-

CHICKY

Too bad.

FATHER PAUL

There is something I wanna say.

CHICKY

What's that?

FATHER PAUL

(screams)

How 'bout another brew?

Chicky signals to beer vender, Wally runs over.

EXT. QUEENS MALL, QUEENS, NY - NIGHT

Natella walks with overstuffed shopping bags in each arm along desolate side street of mall, turns into dark parking garage. Shadow of a portly man slowly follows, she fumbles keys, bags drop to floor.

MAN

Natella?

Natella turns.

NATELLA

Yes?

Man hustles over, fires one shot to her head, she falls, he shoots again, takes one bag, leaves.

INT. HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, LONG ISLAND, NY - SATURDAY

A handful of people line the walls of church for Confession in front of wood sign *Father Paul*. Inside booth, Father Paul listens to an older woman's sins.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OLDER WOMAN

(embarrassed)

I was surfin' the net, well, I stumbled across this website, maybe I shouldn't have stayed on so long, ya know Harold passed away six years ago, and well, I couldn't help myself, I kept staring at these photos-

FATHER PAUL

(bored)

Okay Carol, say three Hail Mary's, that should do it.

OLDER WOMAN

Thank you Father.

FATHER PAUL

I'll see you tomorrow at the Silver Tea.

OLDER WOMAN

Ten thirty, don't be late.

Carol leaves, Chicky enters Confessional, silence.

CHICKY

Bless me Father, I made a big fucking sin.

FATHER PAUL

Chicky?

Paul pulls back curtain, stares at Chicky.

CHICKY

Yeah PJ, it's me.

FATHER PAUL

I thought you were-

CHICKY

I seen me enough movies to know the lingo. I need to confess somethin'.

FATHER PAUL

Well-

CHICKY

Close the curtain.

Paul closes curtain.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CHICKY (CONT'D)
It ain't pretty.

FATHER PAUL
Go ahead.

CHICKY
I found out my girl was screwin'
around, so I uh-

FATHER PAUL
Continue.

CHICKY
I uh, it wasn't me, but I uh, had
her whacked.

FATHER PAUL
(perks up)
Whacked, like in, killed?

CHICKY
I guess that's a good comparison.

FATHER PAUL
Natella?

CHICKY
That cheatin' bitch got what she
deserved.

FATHER PAUL
Please tell me you're joking.

CHICKY
I can't, I'd be lying, that's a
sin, then I'd have to do another
confession and the line's down the
block.

FATHER PAUL
I'm gonna come out-

Father Paul exits confessional.

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)
Let's take a walk.

Chicky and Paul exit church.

EXT. POOR COMMUNITY OF LONG ISLAND - DAY

Paul and Chicky slowly walk along sidewalk, burnt out homes, homeless people pass by.

CHICKY

Of all the places you could go, why here?

FATHER PAUL

Didn't make much sense going to a well-to-do community. People need me here.

A fourteen year-old boy on broken bike stops in front of Paul.

BOY

Hey Father Paul.

Boy walks besides Paul.

FATHER PAUL

Hi Jerome, don't forget practice tomorrow. Got you a new glove.

BOY

(excited)
A new glove?

FATHER PAUL

Playing the Reds Saturday. Expect a lot of strikeouts.

BOY

I'll try Father.

FATHER PAUL

Practicing your slider?

BOY

Yup.

Jerome stops, Paul calls him close.

FATHER PAUL

Here,
(holds Steve's arm)
snap your wrist like *this*.

Paul slowly twists Jerome's wrist.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOY
Thanks Father Paul.

Jerome rides away.

FATHER PAUL
That's the reason I'm here.

Paul and Chicky continue.

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)
So, what happened?

CHICKY
I caught her sneakin' around.

FATHER PAUL
And you killed her?

CHICKY
It was either her or him, I chose her.

FATHER PAUL
Who's him?

Chicky stops, turns to Paul.

CHICKY
You don't wanna know.

FATHER PAUL
Who?

Chicky turns away, hesitates.

CHICKY
Your brother.

Chicky continues his walk, Paul stands frozen.

EXT. BOX SEATS - NIGHT

Chicky and VITO (60) sit side-by-side, quiet talk. Vito uses hand gestures, Anthony and Paul enter, Wally wipes off seats with pink glove, Anthony and Paul sit. Anthony adjusts headphones, writes in scorebook.

FATHER PAUL
Hi Chicky.

Chicky doesn't answer, waves with hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)
New friend?

CHICKY
(whispers)
Business associate.

FATHER PAUL
Nice to meet you.

VITO
How ya doin'?

CHICKY
(to Vito)
Continue your story-

VITO
This is it-

Vito looks at Anthony, turns to Chicky.

VITO (CONT'D)
They okay?

CHICKY
He's a freak. Hasn't said a word
all fucking season. All he does is
listen to the game on the radio
with those headphones. Some weird
shit-

VITO
He's right.

CHICKY
What was that?

VITO
You heard me.

CHICKY
I heard you but I didn't hear you.

VITO
I says, "I listen to the games on
the radio too." It's the only way
to appreciate the nuances of the
game.

CHICKY
Did you say, "nuances?"

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

VITO
You got a problem with that?

CHICKY
I never heard of such shit in my
life!

Vito reaches inside sport jacket, presumably for gun.

VITO
I don't like your tone too much.

Chicky sees Vito's seriousness, backs down.

CHICKY
Sorry about losin' my cool-

VITO
That's what I thought.

CHICKY
Continue with your story about
you-know-who.

VITO
So she starts heading to the
parking lot next to White Castle-

CHICKY
(holds up hand)
Stop! Did you say White Castle?

VITO
So what? She starts-

CHICKY
Is that the White Castle on Queens
Boulevard?

VITO
Maybe, I think so. So she's walkin'-

CHICKY
I wish I had those belly bombers
right now.

VITO
Me too Chicky.

Both stare off, rub stomachs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CHICKY

Hey wait a minute! Get back to the story about you-know-who.

VITO

Oh yeah. She's walking with these bags, so I call out, "Hey Natella," and when she turns around, I blast her once in the forehead, then in the mouth. The blood sparkled in the moonlight, it was beautiful.

CHICKY

You ended it quick, right Vito?

VITO

Didn't know what hit her.

CHICKY

Good. Didn't want her to suffer. Couldn't live with myself if I knew she suffered.

VITO

My nine,
(pats jacket pocket)
never failed me.

CHICKY

Once a cheat, always a cheat.

VITO

You know it.

Vito bends over, hands shopping bag to Chicky.

VITO (CONT'D)

Here's a, maybe you can give it to your next honey.

Chicky looks inside, pulls out a pair of pink lace thongs.

CHICKY

I wonder if she was getting these for *me* or *him*?

VITO

Why don't you ask her, she's laid out on Queens Boulevard.

Both laugh.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

CHICKY
This beer's on me.

Chicky calls to beer vendor.

CHICKY (CONT'D)
Yo beer guy, two over here.

Maxie rushes over, pours two beers in red cups.

BEER VENDOR/MAXIE
(pours beers)
You guys celebrating something?

CHICKY
My buddy took care of a real pain
in the ass.

Both laugh, clink cups.

EXT. SHEA STADIUM PARKING LOT - LAST GAME OF SEASON - 2008

Father Paul parks car, runs through lot. Suzanne waits with daughter Elizabeth at Gate 7, he stops frozen when he sees them.

FATHER PAUL
(surprised)
Oh my God Suzy, what are you doing
here?

SUZANNE
(overly excited)
I read your Bible,
(grabs Paul by shirt)
Verse 13, *love is patient, love is
kind*. I get it Paulie, I finally
get it!

FATHER PAUL
You do?

SUZANNE
God gave me you when I was young,
I wasn't patient. Now He's giving
me you again, a second chance. It's
all part of His plan.

FATHER PAUL
(looks at watch, in a
hurry)
I gotta go and save a friend.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)
They're gonna whack Chicky, right here.

SUZANNE
Oh no!

FATHER PAUL
Game should be over in three hours, come back then, *please*.

SUZANNE
We'll be waiting, right here. I won't leave you again Paulie, I promise.

Suzanne hugs, kisses Paul on cheek, he dashes into ticket gate. Detective Delaney, dressed in casual clothes, runs to Paul.

DETECTIVE DELANEY
(anxious)
You're twenty minutes late!

FATHER PAUL
I met a friend.

Delaney and Paul rush through food court.

DETECTIVE DELANEY
That wasn't Suzy, was it?

FATHER PAUL
Maybe-

DETECTIVE DELANEY
(shakes head)
Of all the times to reconnect.

Paul and Delaney walk down aisle to seats.

DETECTIVE DELANEY (CONT'D)
Listen PJ, I got a bunch of guys all around the stadium, don't get in the middle of a fire-fight.

FATHER PAUL
Fire-fight?

DETECTIVE DELANEY
If we start shootin', stay down!

FATHER PAUL
You can't shoot in here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DETECTIVE DELANEY
We're gonna wait for the last out.

Paul looks up, puts hands in prayer, makes Sign of Cross.

DETECTIVE DELANEY (CONT'D)
If shit happens, **don't get up**, stay
in your seat.

FATHER PAUL
Amen.

Delaney turns to Paul, hugs him.

DETECTIVE DELANEY
It was great seeing you again. Stay
in touch.

FATHER PAUL
May God Bless you forever.

Paul returns to seat, Anthony sits alone, headphones on.

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)
(to Anthony)
Was a blast spending time with you,
too bad we didn't speak too much.

ANTHONY
(takes of headphones)
Huh?

FATHER PAUL
Great seeing you again. Maybe we
can do it again.

ANTHONY
I'm sure we will PJ.

Chicky loudly enters from behind, arms filled with beers,
popcorn, hotdogs.

CHICKY
(screams)
We're going out in a fucking bang!

Chicky hands beer to Paul.

CHICKY (CONT'D)
Grab one.

FATHER PAUL
With pleasure.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Two ballplayers walk over to Chicky.

CHICKY
Excuse me PJ.

Chicky shakes hands with player, sneaks white packets to each.

CHICKY (CONT'D)
See you guys in the Spring, down in
Lauderdale.

Players leave, Chicky returns to seat.

FATHER PAUL
You know a lot of players.

CHICKY
I told you a hundred times, when
you got seats like these, you know
everybody, *on, and off*, the field.

FATHER PAUL
(picks up beer cup)
Here's to a great box seat
companion. Cheers.

CHICKY
Cheers.

Dissolve after dissolve to show elapsed time of eight
innings, Paul and Chicky get drunk, more drunk to the 9th
inning.

FATHER PAUL
(drunk/slurs)
I haven't had so much fun since I
got laid in tenth graded.

CHICKY
(slurs)
Hahahaha. I'll drink to that.

FATHER PAUL
(slurs)
You've been handing players stuff
all season. What's up with that?

CHICKY
(slurs)
You saw that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

FATHER PAUL

(slurs)

The whole fucking stadium saw that.

CHICKY

(remorseful)

I got a lifestyle I gotta uphold,
do whatever it takes. Got a
daughter in college, an ex-wife who
gets more than she should, and a
kid with Special Needs.

FATHER PAUL

I never knew.

CHICKY

How could you?, I keep it all
inside.

FATHER PAUL

Hmmm-

Chicky stands up, looks to rear.

CHICKY

I gotta take a pee.

Chicky stumbles up aisle, sees Don Nino and two wiseguys in
last row.

CHICKY (CONT'D)

(slurs)

Don Nino? What brings you here?

DON NINO

Gonna be fireworks after the game.

CHICKY

I didn't hear nuthin' about
fireworks.

DON NINO

Wouldn't miss it for the world.

CHICKY

Yeah?

DON NINO

Gonna be in the parking lot after
the game, don't leave early.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

CHICKY ROSE
 (slurs)
 If you're there,
 (pats Don on back)
 I'm there.

DON NINO
 You better not.

CHICKY
 Uh?

Don Nino kisses Chicky on both cheeks, he stumbles away.

EXT. - BOX SEATS

Anthony takes off headphones, pulls Paul close.

ANTHONY
 PJ, listen up

FATHER PAUL
 That's the most you've said to me
 all season.

ANTHONY
 We haven't seen each other in ten
 years, there's a reason.

FATHER PAUL
Duh! Cause I dropped out of
 baseball.

ANTHONY
 That's not why I didn't call.

FATHER PAUL
 (slurs)
 Are you some kind of mobster?

ANTHONY
 Far from it.

FATHER PAUL
 You're a business guy raising two
 girls, right?

ANTHONY
 People go different directions-

FATHER PAUL
 Sounds deep.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANTHONY

If you ever get the chance to play ball or find love again, don't think twice. Jump on it.

Paul hugs Anthony.

FATHER PAUL

Thanks.

ANTHONY

Some bad shit's goin' down in a few minutes, I don't want anything to happen to you.

FATHER PAUL

Huh?

ANTHONY

(points finger)

When the game ends, stay in your seat, don't move an inch.

FATHER PAUL

You sound like my friend.

ANTHONY

Your friend?

FATHER PAUL

My friend Danny-

Paul points over to Danny, Anthony looks.

Crowd erupts in applause, last play, game over. "Who Let the Dogs Out" plays on stadium speakers.

STADIUM ANNOUNCER V.O.

And that was the last play of the 2008 season. Thank you for forty amazing years!

All at once, Detective Delaney, Wally the beer vendor, Maxie the usher, Anthony, and a few others pull guns, point at Chicky, then each other.

EVERYONE WITH GUNS

Don't freaking move ass-hole!

Paul is frozen in his seat. Guys with guns point at each other, not knowing the others' intentions, scream **drop your gun**.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WALLY THE USHER
(gun drawn)
Drop your gun!

MAXIE THE BEER GUY
(gun drawn)
Drop **your** gun!

DETECTIVE DELANEY
(gun drawn)
NYPD, drop your gun!

ANTHONY
(gun drawn)
I got you all beat,
(pulls out badge)
FBI.

FATHER PAUL
(turns to Anthony,
shocked)
You work for the FBI?

ANTHONY
I was trying to tell you. I'm a
Special Agent. I needed your help
in getting this dirt bag dealer off
the street.

FATHER PAUL
You used me to get to him?

ANTHONY
Who's more believable than a
priest?

CHICKY
What the fuck is going on?

ANTHONY
(turns to Chicky)
When I took this case, it was about
dope, but instead, a murder in the
first degree.

CHICKY
You ain't got nuthin' on me.

ANTHONY
Take a listen to this.

Anthony takes off headphones, plays radio which is really a
tape recorder.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

VITO V.O.

***And then the kiss of death, I shot
her in the mouth. Her blood
sparkled in the moonlight.***

ANTHONY

I recorded your conversations all season with this recorder. Not only for moving dope, but for the murder of Special Agent Rosaria Romero, my partner, my lover.

CHICKY

No way!

ANTHONY

(pats recorder)
Everything's right here.

Anthony displays headphone/tape recorder.

CHICKY

(turns to Paul)
You set me up PJ!

FATHER PAUL

I didn't know Chicky, I swear!

CHICKY

You're full of crap.

Anthony pulls Chicky to stand up, slips cuffs on hands behind him.

ANTHONY

You'll be watching behind bars next season.

CHICKY

I got me a ton of lawyers. I'll be out before the first pitch of the World Series.

ANTHONY

All these guys, the beer guy, the usher, the peanut guy, are all with me. There's no way I was gonna let you walk.

Chicky starts to walk up aisle, Paul stops him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

FATHER PAUL

My brother saved your life. Don Nino was gonna whack you after the game in the parking lot.

CHICKY

Are you shittin' me?

FATHER PAUL

Do I lie?

Chicky turns to Don Nino in back seats, he and his two wise-guys get up and leave.

CHICKY

So that's why I saw him before the game.

FATHER PAUL

They were gonna whack you in the parking lot.

CHICKY

Thanks PJ.

ANTHONY

You're going away for a long time.

FATHER PAUL

I'll stay in touch.

CHICKY

If you go back to baseball, I'm in your corner, wherever I am.

FATHER PAUL

Thanks Chicky. May God Bless you.

Chicky exits in handcuffs. Paul returns to his seat, stunned, confronts Anthony.

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)

I don't believe what happened.

ANTHONY

I had no way of getting close to this guy without your help. You really came through.

Anthony hugs Paul.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Let's stay connected, okay?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

FATHER PAUL

These months made me appreciate
life, my brother, my true passion,
baseball. Perhaps God brought us
together for a reason.

Anthony and Paul hug, Anthony and others exit. Paul sits
alone, stares out at field, bewildered, shakes head, his cell
rings.

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)

Hello?

EXT. PARKING LOT

Suzanne on her phone to Paul.

SUZANNE

(sweetly)

How was the game Paulie?

FATHER PAUL

We all won.

SUZANNE

Great.

FATHER PAUL

Where are you?

SUZANNE

In front of gate 7, me and
Elizabeth.

FATHER PAUL

You waited?

SUZANNE

Love is patient, love is kind.

FATHER PAUL

I'll be right there.

SUZANNE

Paulie?

FATHER PAUL

Yes?

SUZANNE

I love you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suzanne hangs up phone, Paul stuffs cell in shirt pocket. A pigeon lands on rail in front of him, Paul picks up peanut from floor, extends hand, pigeon takes it from hand, eats it right there.

FATHER PAUL
(whispers)
Oh my God.

Paul stands up, grabs baseball glove from under seat, unclips priest collar, puts it in pocket, calls to players on field.

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)
(shouts)
Hey guys!
(jumps over rail onto
field)
Need a pitcher?

FATHER PAUL (CONT'D)
(looks skyward)
Thanks.

Paul runs to players in dugout, they all embrace him.

THE END