

SPOTLIGHT

Written by

Josh Singer & Tom McCarthy

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Based on a True Story

INT. HINGHAM POLICE STATION - NIGHT, 1974

A quiet, cold winter night. A YOUNG COP sits behind the front desk. Two bundled up COPS exit the precinct.

AN OLDER COP EMERGES from an INTERVIEW ROOM. He makes a face. Whatever's going on the interview room isn't pretty.

YOUNG COP
How's that going?

OLDER COP
The mother's bawling and the uncle's
pissed off.

YOUNG COP
She's not married?

OLDER COP
Divorced with four kids. I guess
Father Geoghan was helping out.

YOUNG COP
Helping out?

The Older Cop shrugs. The front door opens and BURKE, FRESH FACED, 32, walks in. He wears a dark overcoat.

OLDER COP
Hey, Mr. Burke. They're in there
talking to the Monsignor.

BURKE
And Father?

The Older Cop nods in the other direction.

OLDER COP
Holding.

BURKE
Any press?

OLDER COP
Just a guy from the Gazette, we sent
him away. None of the big papers.

BURKE
Let's keep it that way.

OLDER COP
You got it.

Burke walks toward holding. The Young Cop nods "Who's that?"

OLDER COP (CONT'D)
Assistant DA.

YOUNG COP
Gonna be hard to avoid press at the
arraignment.

OLDER COP
What arraignment?

He's matter of fact. Off the Young Cop, clocking it.

INT. POLICE STATION, HALLWAY - LATER

Burke arrives at holding and looks through the door. He sees FATHER GEOGHAN, 45, sitting quietly in the brightly lit room.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A MONSIGNOR, 50s, sits at a table with SHEILA, 33, and her brother FRANK, 38. TWO BOYS, 7 and 9, sit coloring. The Monsignor talks to Sheila and Frank in hushed tones.

Burke walks in, sits off to the side. He sees Sheila nervously fingering ROSARY BEADS.

MONSIGNOR
We'll just be another moment, Paul.

BURKE
Of course, Father.

The Monsignor takes a card from his pocket and hands it to Sheila. Her brother looks away, embarrassed and angry.

EXT. POLICE STATION - LATER

The Young Cop stands outside smoking. He watches as the Monsignor and the Priest exit the police station and get into a CAR. As they drive away, we HOLD ON the cop. PROCESSING.

INT. ROW HOUSE, STAIRWELL - DAY, 2001

A FIGURE walks up narrow stairs to a poorly lit top floor.

INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - DAY

A spare, empty studio apartment. More for a college kid than a 38 year old. A small desk, a futon without sheets.

A man walks in, carries a backpack and a LARGE DUFFEL BAG.
MIKE REZENDES, good looks, bad haircut, wears a wedding ring.

Mike sets down the duffel, looks around. He walks to the sink, turns on the tap. Rust colored water. He turns it off, assessing his new digs, maybe his new life...

His phone rings, he checks it. The screen reads MARGARET. He lets it ring, doesn't pick up. A beat, then we PRELAP --

DAN (O.C.)
I told you, I can't help you.

INT. LAUNDROMAT - NIGHT, 2001

CLOSE ON a glass dryer door. Whites SPINNING.

MIKE
Yeah, see I don't believe you, Dan.

A crappy laundromat, empty, bad light. Mike's with DAN, 50s, thin, tiny glasses. Dan, nervous, puts clothes in a dryer.

MIKE (CONT'D)
We talked to Mary Malina in D.C., we talked to our guy at the Bureau of Justice Statistics...

Mike picks up a sock Dan dropped, drops it into the dryer.

DAN
Who?

MIKE
Doesn't matter who. We know the numbers and we know the Boston PD should have a lot more people behind bars. I'm not asking if they're lying, we know they are. I'm asking who's behind it.

Dan loads in quarters, starts the wash.

DAN
And I'm telling you, this isn't regulated by the comptroller's office, I don't know anything about it, would you let me do my freakin' laundry and stop busting my balls?

MIKE
Busting your balls? We're trying to help you and you think we're... alright, fine, I'll stop busting your balls, Dan. You can do your laundry and then read about it in the paper. I'm done with this.

Mike storms off, slamming the door of an empty machine on his way out. Dan shakes his head.

DAN

What's the matter with that guy?

ROBBY

Mike? He's just enthusiastic.

REVEAL an OLDER MAN in a chair off to the side. Meet **WALTER 'ROBBY' ROBINSON**, 55, Boston Everyman. An easy smile.

DAN

I just freakin' lost my house, Robby. We're in a crappy apartment in Alston and if, if you're right about this, people are gonna be mad.

ROBBY

Look, I get where you're coming from. And this thing, well, we both know there's no easy way to fix it. This gets out, you're right, people are gonna be mad. But a story like this, Danny, it'll force the powers that be to give the Boston PD more resources. Money they need to do their job.

Dan considers, Robby's right.

ROBBY (CONT'D)

You've known me a long time, Danny, you know I'm gonna get an answer from someone. Probably better if that someone is you.

Dan remains stone-faced. Robby pats him on the back, exits.

INT. ROBBY'S CAR - LATER

Mike sits reading the sports section of the Globe. The driver's side door opens. Robby sits into the driver's seat.

MIKE

I overplay it?

ROBBY

Felt about right.

MIKE

Gotta say, even if he folds, I'm not sure this story's big enough for us.

ROBBY
That's a surprise.
(starts ignition)
'My dropping you at home?

MIKE
Just drop me in Kenmore.

ROBBY
You sure? Never mind seeing
Margaret.

MIKE
Nah, I'm gonna go see a buddy.

Robby clocks this, pulls out.

INT. BOSTON GLOBE, NEWSROOM - DAY, 2001

A large newsroom. REPORTERS and EDITORS gathered in the center. An older reporter, STEWART, 60s, sits by a cake.

ROBBY (O.C.)
Stewart's one of the few reporters
who's been here longer than me...

FIND Robby sending off Stewart.. who's not quite ready to go.

ROBBY (CONT'D)
Which I didn't think was possible.

A number of the reporters laugh. Mike stands among them.

ROBBY (CONT'D)
And sad as I am to see him depart, I
do find his choice of departure date
quite curious. The corner office
sits empty, we've got a new editor
coming on Monday... and Stewart's a
great reporter, so I gotta ask...
Stewart, what the hell do you know?

Stewart covers his mouth. Speak no evil. The room LAUGHS.

INT. GLOBE, SPOTLIGHT OFFICE - LATER

A CRAMPED OFFICE. Small windows, three desks, lots of paper.

Mike eats a slice of cake and stares at an old laptop amidst the UNHOLY MESS on his desk. A phone RINGS. He picks up.

MIKE (INTO PHONE)
Spotlight. No, he's not. Can I
take a message? OK, got it. Thanks.

Mike hangs up, jots a note as **SACHA PFEIFFER**, 28, wholesome, and **MATTY CAROLL**, mid 30s, thick accent, moustache, walk in.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Matty, you got a call from DC.

Mike hands Matty the note. Matty takes it, sits at his desk, peppered with FAMILY PHOTOS. Sacha sits at her tidy desk.

MATTY

Thanks. Sad to see Stewart take a buyout, huh?

MIKE

Yeah. Damn good reporter. Hard to imagine this place without him.

MATTY

You hear they let ten more go from classifieds?

SACHA

And I heard Lubin and Connor are going to the Times.

MATTY

(shaking his head)
First they buy us, now they're leaching us.

MIKE

It's gonna get worse, new boss made a lot of cuts when he was in Miami.

SACHA

My friend there had some good things to say about him actually.

MIKE

I still think he's coming here to clean house.

MATTY

You think he's gonna look at Spotlight?

MIKE

(shrugs)
He's having lunch with Robby tomorrow.

MATTY

Great. Another thing to worry about.

SACHA
(to Mike, all business)
How'd it go with the guy from the
comptroller's office?

MIKE
Okay. I just don't think there's
enough there for a story.

MATTY
Let me guess, not big enough?

MIKE
We need a story that's gonna make a
difference. We're not on a beat,
this is Spotlight.

Matty and Sacha trade a look.

MATTY
Mike Rezendes. True believer.

INT. FOUR SEASONS HOTEL, RESTAURANT LOBBY - DAY

Robby enters the restaurant and approaches the hostess.

ROBBY
Reservation is under Marty Baron.

HOSTESS
Yes. Mr. Baron is already here.
Follow me, please.

Robby follows, checks his watch, not used to being upstaged.

INT. FOUR SEASONS HOTEL, RESTAURANT - LATER

MARTY BARON, 46, bearded, intellectual, sits at a table
reading "The Curse of the Bambino," a NOTEPAD beside him.

ROBBY
Mr. Baron.

Marty looks up and rises to greet Robby.

MARTY
Uh, Walter?

ROBBY
Call me Robby.

MARTY
Thanks for taking time out of your
weekend.

ROBBY

I was flattered to be asked.

(sitting)

That's a good book, it was written
by one of our sports writers.

MARTY

It seems you can't properly consider
Boston without considering the Red
Sox.

ROBBY

(playfully)

I hope you're not a Marlins fan.

MARTY

Uh, no. I actually don't care much
for baseball.

ROBBY

Oh.

Awkward moment.

MARTY

So I, uh, asked a few senior editors
who I should sit down with and your
name was at the top of every list.

ROBBY

Well, I'm sure I'm on a few of those
lists for the wrong reasons.

MARTY

They were mostly positive.

Robby reacts. Mostly?

MARY

In fact, a few referred to you as an
elder statesman.

Elder? Robby doesn't like the sound of that either.

ROBBY

I'm very proud to work as a reporter
for this paper.

Marty eyes his notebook.

MARTY

You are an editor, though? For, uh,
the Spotlight team?

ROBBY

I prefer to think of myself as more of a player coach. But yes. You're familiar with Spotlight?

MARTY

Uh, not particularly.

Nothing is smooth with this guy.

ROBBY

It's a four person team, long term investigative. Mike Rezendes, real bulldog; Sacha Pfeiffer, she's young but knows the courts; Matty Carroll, computer-assisted-reporting. And of course, we report to Ben Bradlee. We just put out a piece on this negligent construction outfit, now we're trolling around for our next story.

MARTY

How long does that usually take?

ROBBY

Few weeks, we don't like to rush it. Once we focus on something we invest a lot of time and resources.

MARTY

Yes, I can imagine.

Marty jots down some notes. Is he judging?

MARTY (CONT'D)

So what are you considering now?

Robby, used to asking the questions, turns it around.

ROBBY

Well, to be honest, we've all been doing a little investigating into Marty Baron.

Marty puts down his pen.

ROBBY (CONT'D)

First Editor from the outside. Shaky economic times, I think some people are jittery.

MARTY

That's understandable. All indicators suggest that we are going to lose all of our classified revenue before the end of year.

ROBBY

That's a lot of money lost.

MARTY

Yes it is.

ROBBY

I'm curious, is that why you're asking about Spotlight?

MARTY

No. It was unrelated.

He jots down more notes. Off Robby, unsure.

INT. GLOBE, NEWSROOM - DAY

DEPUTY MANAGING EDITOR **BEN BRADLEE, JR.**, 50s, gruff, strides across the bullpen. Robby falls in.

ROBBY

Morning, Mr. Bradlee.

BEN

Where are we with the crime numbers?

ROBBY

I think there's something there.

BEN

Good.

(realizing)

Where you going?

ROBBY

To the ten-thirty.

BEN

You? Since when?

ROBBY

Technically, I am an editor.

BEN

Technically. Your sit down with Baron go that well?

ROBBY

No, actually, but it did make me curious.

BEN

He's just another boss.

ROBBY

Maybe.

Ben shoots Robby a look as they approach the CONFERENCE ROOM.

INT. GLOBE, LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Editors around a horseshoe table, side seats filled. It's QUIET, nervous eyes on Marty, who reads some notes. Robby stands in the back, WATCHING. A beat, Ben leans in to Marty.

BEN

You want to say something, Marty?

MARTY

Uh, sure.

(to the group)

Hello. My name is Marty Baron, if you can tell me your name as we go around, that would be helpful.

Marty looks back to his notes.

BEN

Is that it?

MARTY

Yes.

BEN

Okay. Tom?

METRO EDITOR TOM DROHAN, in the corner, jumps in.

DROHAN

Tom Drohan, Metro. We've got a major Big Dig closure that's just been scheduled for early August, we're expecting a verdict in the...

Marty makes notes. Off Robby, watching Marty.

INT. GLOBE, BULLPEN - LATER.

Mike walks over to **STEVE KURKJIAN's** desk. 60s, an old timer.

MIKE

Hey Steve. Crummy game last night.

KURKJIAN

A disgrace, they can't hit worth a nickle.

MIKE

How you think it's going in the ten-thirty?

KURKJIAN

Like it goes every morning.

Mike looks toward the conference room.

MIKE

What's Eileen doing in there? She's not an editor.

KURKJIAN

Do you need something, Mike?

MIKE

No. Just curious.

KURKJIAN

I'm on deadline. Go be curious somewhere else, will you?

INT. GLOBE, LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

The meeting is wrapping up.

SPORTS EDITOR

...and it looks like Pedro's gonna be out until September 1st.

A groan in the newsroom.

SPORTS EDITOR (CONT'D)

Jimmy says he'll be back this year, but the doc looked pretty grim.

BEN

When do the Pats open camp?

Laughter.

MARTY

Is that everybody?

BEN

Yeah, that's it.

MARTY

Great, thank you. Uh, did everyone read Eileen McNamara's column this weekend?

He holds up a column: Passing the Buck. The room reacts.
Huh? Editors look over at EILEEN MCNAMARA, 50s, battle axe.

BEN

This is the Geoghan case?

MARTY

Yeah, what's the folo on it?

BEN

It's a column, what kind of folo were you thinking?

MARTY

Well this priest molested kids in six different parishes over the last thirty years and the attorney for the victims, Mr...

EILEEN

Garabedian.

MARTY

Thank you. Mr. Garabedian says Cardinal Law found out about it fifteen years ago and did nothing.

DROHAN

The attorney's a bit of a crank. And the Cardinal said he didn't know, he wasn't actually aware --

EILEEN

He said, she said.

MARTY

Yes. And whether Mr. Garabedian is a crank or not, he claims to have documents that prove Law was negligent. Is that right, Eileen?

EILEEN

That's right.

MARTY

Okay. So is this lawyer shooting his mouth off or does he have something?

Silence. No one knows what to do. Robby watches.

*

MARTY (CONT'D)

Look, I know I'm just walking in here, but from what I could find, we've written all of...

(checking his notes)

...two stories on this in the last six months.

A few people stir. This is getting unpleasant.

MARTY (CONT'D)

Let me be clear about something. This is a very good paper, but the business is changing and if this paper is to survive, we will have to make ourselves essential to this community. Geoghan allegedly abused eighty kids, we've got a lawyer who says he has proof the Cardinal knew about it, why aren't we going after those documents?

No one says anything. Robby speaks up.

ROBBY

As I understand it, the documents are under seal.

MARTY

Okay, well I don't know what the laws are here, but in Florida we would go to court.

Robby raises an eyebrow. In fact, the whole room does.

BEN

You want to sue the church?

MARTY

Technically we wouldn't sue the Church. We would file a motion to lift the seal on those documents.

BEN

The church will read that as us suing them. So will everybody else.

MARTY

Good to know.

Off Robby, intrigued --

INT. GLOBE, BEN'S OFFICE - LATER.

Mike sits on the couch flipping through a Ted Williams book. He looks up as Ben and Robby enter, shut the door.

MIKE

Ted Williams, he was a player.

BEN

What do you want?

MIKE

How'd it go?

BEN

Certainly didn't tiptoe in.

Mike looks at Robby. What's up?

ROBBY

Baron wants to sue for the sealed docs in the Geoghan case.

MIKE

No shit. Really?

BEN

No way this plays down front.

ROBBY

With our numbers? Gilman's gonna shit a brick.

MIKE

You think the suit has a chance?

BEN

(no fucking way)
In Boston?

ROBBY

Oh boy.

Robby's looking through the window. Ben and Mike follow his gaze, see Marty walk into his office with Eileen.

BEN

Jesus. She's got her teeth in now.

MIKE

Kind of a gutsy move, going after the church.

BEN
That's one word for it...

The phone rings.

BEN (CONT'D)
...but somehow I doubt it's the best
way to make the paper essential to a
city full of Catholics...

Ben turns to the phone, eyes the extension. And picks up.

BEN (INTO THE PHONE) (CONT'D)
Bradlee. Yeah. Okay.
(hanging up, to Robby)
Baron wants to talk to us.

Off Robby, surprised --

INT. GLOBE, MARTY'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Marty talks to Eileen. Ben and Robby show up at the door.
Marty waves them in.

MARTY
Uh, and how far is the Residence?

EILEEN
Lake Street? It's in Brookline,
twenty minutes away, forty with
traffic.

BEN
You telling the Cardinal in person?

MARTY
We had a meeting on the books. His
idea.

EILEEN
Don't eat the sandwiches. They're
horrible.

MARTY
Uh, okay.
(then, checking his pad)
I'm going to sit down with...
Jon Albano from legal tomorrow.

BEN
Who's the Judge on this case?

EILEEN
Constance Sweeney.

ROBBY
Good Catholic girl.

BEN
At least she'll be polite when she
tells us to fuck off.

Marty lets it pass.

MARTY
So, uh, I understand we haven't done
any investigation on this?

Ben shoots Mac a look.

BEN
On Geoghan? Paulson ran it out.

EILEEN
Paulson's a beat reporter.

BEN
A good one and he covered it.

EILEEN
Agreed. Now it's time to
investigate it.

BEN
Come on, Eileen.

EILEEN
It's not a sin, Ben.

MARTY
Um, so, I just want to understand.
Have we committed any real
investigative resources to this
particular question?

BEN
No. We have not.

MARTY
And this is the kind of thing you
do?

He turns to Robby. Who blinks, surprised.

ROBBY
Spotlight?

MARTY
Yes. Spotlight.

ROBBY

Well, we're prospecting another story right now, we think Boston PD is inflating the number of violent crime cases they've cleared.

MARTY

But you haven't committed to it yet?

ROBBY

No.

BEN

Typically Spotlight picks their own projects.

MARTY

I see. Well, uh, would you consider picking this one?

INT. GLOBE, SPOTLIGHT OFFICE - LATER

Mike, Sacha and Matty all working. Mike is on the phone.

MIKE (INTO PHONE)

Can I talk to him? Uh huh. Okay.

Robby enters.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I have to call you back.
(He hangs up.)
Are we on this?

ROBBY

We're gonna look into it, yeah.

MATTY

We're going after Cardinal Law?

MIKE

Did Baron ask or did you offer?

ROBBY

How about I talk and then you ask questions?

The team quiets. Robby perches on a desk.

ROBBY (CONT'D)

Yeah, Baron's considering a lawsuit. Meantime, he asked us to fish around, see what we can find on Geoghan and the church.

MATTY

Geoghan's been in the papers for years, what's fresh here?

MIKE

Garabedian's alleging Cardinal Law knew about this and covered it up. We prove that, it's big.

SACHA

Is this guy Garabedian legit?

MIKE

Eileen thinks he is.

MATTY

Could be an ambulance chaser.

ROBBY

Drohan said he's a crank.

MIKE

I like cranks.

ROBBY

Fine. He's yours.

MATTY

What about the lawyer who was all over TV for the Porter case?

MIKE

Eric MacLeish.

SACHA

What was the Porter case?

MATTY

Father Porter, he was the Geoghan before Geoghan. Story broke in '92.

MIKE

Scumbag molested dozens of kids in Southern mass, MacLeish repped the victims. Should have some insight.

ROBBY

Yeah, let's set a meeting.

SACHA

So we're dropping crime stats?

MIKE

I vote yes.

ROBBY

We're just putting it aside until we get up to speed on this. And folks, let's be discreet.

MIKE

Aren't we always?

ROBBY

This is different, it's the church, people are gonna talk, even our people. I don't want Lake Street getting wind of this before we even know if there's a story here.

MATTY

Good luck with that.

They reach for phones and laptops. Robby leaves them to it.

INT. ROBBY'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Robby finishes up dinner with his wife, BARBARA, 50s.

BARBARA

Your sister's gonna flip.

ROBBY

I would imagine half the city's gonna flip.

BARBARA

We should just cancel dinner with the O'Neills now.

ROBBY

I'm not even sure there's a story there, Barbara.

BARBARA

"Globe sues Church?" There's gonna be a story, Robby. And another libel suit if you're not careful.

ROBBY

I've won all three of those.

BARBARA

They didn't feel like victories at the time. And I'm telling you this one is gonna hit close to home.

ROBBY

Not our home.

BARBARA

Robby.

Robby stands up, starts to clear the table.

ROBBY

I'm just saying...

BARBARA

You know the Apostles' creed by heart, don't you?

ROBBY

Everyone in town knows that by heart.

BARBARA

Exactly.

ROBBY

Look, if not me, than who?

BARBARA

Someone who doesn't care about ending their career with a black eye.

INT. MITCHELL GARABEDIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Mike steps off an elevator and into a DUMP of an office. He eyes a small reception desk covered with FILE BOXES. In fact, there are file boxes just about everywhere.

MIKE

Hello. Hello?

Mike peeks through an open door... a small office, crammed FLOOR TO CEILING with BOXES, each with GEOGHAN written on it.

FEMALE VOICE (O.C.)

Can I help you?

Mike turns. In a SIDE OFFICE, A YOUNG WOMAN sits at a desk.

MIKE

Oh. Hi. I'm Mike Rezendes from the Boston Globe. I'm here to see Mitchell Garabedian.

RECEPTIONIST

He's on a call. Please have a seat.

She exits. Mike grabs a seat, checks his watch. He hears YELLING coming from behind a closed door. Garabedian?

INT. LOBBY, ONE INTERNATIONAL PLACE - DAY

An enormous, marble and stone lobby, a STARK CONTRAST to Garabedian's digs. Robby and Sacha walk in --

INT. GREENBERG TRAUIG LOBBY, ONE INTERNATIONAL PLACE - DAY

A SLEEK, MODERN LOBBY. Robby and Sacha walk up to reception. As the receptionist stands, leads them down the hall, PRELAP--

SACHA (PRELAP)

You work on the Father Porter story?

ROBBY (PRELAP)

No, I was covering Iraq. That was Ben and Kurkjian and Linda Matchan.

INT. GREENBERG TRAUIG CONFERENCE ROOM, ONE INTL PLACE - DAY

Robby and Sacha stand by a grand conference table.

ROBBY

It pissed a lot of readers off, they thought we were church bashing. MacLeish said he had death threats.

SACHA

Didn't seem to hurt his practice.

Robby smiles, taking in the CRAZY VIEW of the harbor.

ROBBY

Beats our view, huh?

ERIC MACLEISH (O.C.)

The famous Walter Robinson in my conference room.

ERIC MACLEISH, broad-shouldered, good looking, black Irish, quick with a story and smile. Robby shakes his hand.

ROBBY

Great to see you again, Eric. Sacha Pfeiffer, Eric MacLeish.

ERIC MACLEISH

Nice to meet you. Do you golf?

SACHA

(caught off guard)
Golf? No.

ERIC MACLEISH

Good. Your colleague took some money off me at a charity event last year.

ROBBY

Lucky putt. I had my eyes shut.

ERIC MACLEISH

So, what can I do for you?

ROBBY

You been following the Geoghan case?

ERIC MACLEISH

Sure. Eighty plaintiffs. And they're all individual cases, Garabedian must be swimming.

ROBBY

And the allegations he's made about Law?

ERIC MACLEISH

He's playing the hand he's been dealt. Look, the thing you need to understand is that these are shitty cases.

SACHA

The Geoghan cases?

ERIC MACLEISH

The Geoghan cases, the Porter cases, all of them. See, the statute of limitations is only 3 years, most of the victims don't come forward until long after it happens.

SACHA

Why?

ERIC MACLEISH

Shame. Guilt. These kids come from tough neighborhoods, no one wants to admit this kind of thing. So you're screwed on the time limit and even if you argue your way around that, the charitable immunity statute caps damages at twenty grand.

ROBBY

That's it? Twenty grand for raping a kid?

ERIC MACLEISH

Your only chance is to try these cases in the press like I did on Porter. But most of the Geoghan victims are skittish about press. That's a huge handicap.

SACHA

How do you know they're skittish?

ERIC MACLEISH

I represented some of them.

Robby leans forward. This is getting interesting.

SACHA

These were other Geoghan victims?
And you tried their cases?

ERIC MACLEISH

No, we settled. Look, most of these folks just want some acknowledgement of what happened. We got them a sit down with the bishop and a little dough. It was the best they could hope for.

ROBBY

Mitch Garabedian seems to have a different approach.

ERIC MACLEISH

Yeah, he's taking a huge risk. He's investing a lot of resources and, frankly, I think the Church is just going to stall until he runs out of money. My guess? He doesn't have anything on Law, he's just trying to up the ante to cut a better deal.

ROBBY

Sounds a bit reckless.

ERIC MACLEISH

Have you met Mitch Garabedian?

INT. MITCHELL GARABEDIAN'S OFFICE - LATER

Mike, still waiting, checks his watch. He hears more YELLING behind the door. Suddenly the door opens. A SHORT MAN exits.

Mike looks at the receptionist, points: "*Is that him?*" She shakes her head. Mike, impatient, stands, walks into --

INT. GARABEDIAN'S OFFICE, CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A small converted boardroom. **MITCHELL GARABEDIAN**, wire thin, 50s, sits at an oval table buried in paperwork. Mitch is abrasive, to say the least.

GARABEDIAN

Who are you?

MIKE

Mike Rezendes, Boston Globe. I had an appointment about an hour ago.

GARABEDIAN

I'm sorry but I'm very busy...

Mike continues toward Garabedian's desk.

MIKE

I'm sure you are, I'm just following up on an article...

GARABEDIAN

The one in the Phoenix?

MIKE

No. In the Globe.

GARABEDIAN

Oh. Did you see the one in the Phoenix? I thought it was very good. I have a copy here somewhere.

He starts to dig through the heap of papers.

MIKE

That's okay. I'll track it down. I'm actually following up on a column that Eileen McNamara wrote for the Globe about your suit.

GARABEDIAN

Suits. There are 86 of them, you should get your facts straight.

True to word. Garabedian is a bit of crank.

MIKE

You're right. I should. I'm just trying to get some background information on the Geoghan case...

GARABEDIAN

(brusk)

I can't show you the church documents if that's what you're after, they're under seal.

MIKE

I know that.

GARABEDIAN

Do you? Do you also know the church has tried to bring me before the Massachusetts board of overseers three times? They'd like to get me disbarred, they are watching me very closely. I probably shouldn't even be speaking to you. You're not recording this are you?

MIKE

I wouldn't do that without asking. Look, Mr. Garabedian, I know there are things you can't tell me. But I also know that there's a story here. I think it's an important story.

GARABEDIAN

I already talked to the Phoenix.

MIKE

Yeah, and there's a reason I didn't read about it. No one reads the Phoenix anymore. They're broke, they don't have any power. But the Globe does. And if we cover this story, everybody will hear about it. The Catholic church is a very powerful institution. But so are we.

He finishes his pitch.

GARABEDIAN

Well, I can't tell you anything. You want to understand this story, you need to talk to the victims.

MIKE

Can I do that? Can I talk to some of your victims?

Garabedian eyes him.

GARABEDIAN

I don't know. Call me tomorrow. I need to think about this.

INT. GLOBE, GILMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

A large, plush office. **RICHARD GILMAN**, 50s, a surface calm to match his Brooks Brothers suit. He's on the phone.

GILMAN (INTO THE PHONE)

Yeah, tomorrow is fine. Great.
Thanks, Steve.

Gilman hangs up, joins Marty on a couch in the sitting area.

GILMAN (CONT'D)

So, how are you settling, Marty?

MARTY

Just fine, thanks. Uh, how are you?

GILMAN

Well, aside from the Q2 prelims which have us down 100 million year to year, not bad. But I'm sure you didn't come here to discuss that.

MARTY

No, I didn't. I'd like to challenge the protective order in the Geoghan case.

GILMAN

(not completely following)
The priest?

MARTY

Yes. Father Geoghan, the one who allegedly molested...

GILMAN

You want to sue the church?

MARTY

Technically, it's not suing the church, we're just filing a motion. But yes.

Gilman considers this for a long moment.

GILMAN

You know that our subscriber base is 53% Catholic.

MARTY

Uh, well, I'm sure they'll be very interested.

GILMAN

So will our advertisers. Did you speak with legal?

MARTY

John Albano. He gave us even odds.

GILMAN

Even odds?

Marty shrugs. Yep. Gilman looks unsettled.

GILMAN (CONT'D)

You think this is the right thing to do?

MARTY

I do.

Gilman eyes Marty.

GILMAN

Okay.

MARTY

Thanks, Dick.

Marty exits. Quickly. Off Gilman, concerned --

INT. GLOBE, SPOTLIGHT OFFICE - LATER

A desk covered with old newspaper clips, Matt and Sacha read. There's a knock, a YOUNG INTERN in the door. With a box.

YOUNG INTERN

I got more clips from the library.

The intern drops them by Matty's desk.

YOUNG INTERN (CONT'D)

So you guys looking into the church?

MATTY

We can't talk about that.

The intern reacts, sheepish. He goes.

SACHA

You find anything on this guy Phil Saviano?

MATTY
No. Who's that?

SACHA
He's part of a survivors'
organization. Kurkjian ran a story
on him just after the Porter case.

Robby's walked into the room. He grabs some coffee.

ROBBY
There's a survivors' organization?

SACHA
Yeah, it's called SNAP, Survivors
Network of those Abused by Priests.

MATTY
Clumsy acronym.

SACHA
Guy sounds a bit sketchy but he
might be helpful.

ROBBY
Let's track him down.

MATTY
Hey guys...

Robby and Sacha turn. Matt stares down at a clip.

MATTY (CONT'D)
There's a clip here from '98... I
think I got another priest.

SACHA
Porter?

Matty shows them the clip.

MATTY
No. Robert Burns. He molested some
kids in Ohio then was moved here to
Boston and he did the same thing.

ROBBY
This was one of our clips?

MATTY
Yeah. Byline's John Ellement. Back
when he was working religion.

Matty holds out the article. Robby's perplexed.

ROBBY

Was there any folo?

MATTY

Not much. One short piece.

(then)

Isn't Tim O'Neill a friend of yours?

ROBBY

Yeah, why?

MATTY

Looks like he was Burns' lawyer.

Robby looks at the article. Mike walks in.

SACHA

How'd it go with Garabedian?

MIKE

He's paranoid as hell but I'll get him. What's going on?

MATTY

We found another priest in the clips.

MIKE

Really? Under Law?

SACHA

Before Law. Cardinal Medeiros. But the suit alleges Medeiros knew.

Sacha hands Mike the clip. Mike reads.

MIKE

This is the same story as Geoghan.

SACHA

And Porter.

MIKE

That's three priests. Porter, Geoghan and now Burns, shuffled from parish to parish, it's like an M.O.

ROBBY

Priests are rotated all the time.

MIKE

Not this frequently, look at the clip.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

Parents complain about the guy, they ship him to another parish, couple years later parents complain again, they ship him somewhere else.

(then)

This is a pattern, Robby.

ROBBY

Maybe.

MIKE

Maybe what? A pattern's a pattern.

ROBBY

Maybe.

Robby walks into his office. Mike watches him go, confused.

INT. GLOBE, ROBBY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Robby reaches for his coat. Mike walks in, shuts the door.

MIKE

What's going on with you?

ROBBY

With me? Nothing. I'm just looking for something solid.

MIKE

This is solid, we got something here.

ROBBY

Eric MacLeish thinks Garabedian's bluffing.

MIKE

What about the three priests?

ROBBY

Three is not a pattern. It's vague, Mike.

Robby puts on his jacket on.

MIKE

All leads are vague, that's what a lead is. Come on, Robby, we had less on the crime stat story and we'd been working on that for weeks.

ROBBY

This is different.

MIKE

Why? Because it's the church?

ROBBY

Yeah, Mike. Because it's the church.

And he's out the door.

INT. MAMMA MARIA ITALIAN RESTAURANT, NORTH END - NIGHT

A lovely, candlelit room. Robby and Barbara have dinner with **TIM O'NEILL, 50s**, and his wife, KATHY. Robby is distracted.

TIM

So Robby's going on and on the whole game about what a jerk this guy is and then we get up to leave...he's sitting two seats behind us.

The group laughs. Robby makes an effort to join in the fun.

TIM (CONT'D)

BARBARA

"Hello Jim, good to see you!" Walter.

EXT. MAMMA MARIA, NORTH END - LATER

Tim and Robby walk to get the cars. In the distance, we see their wives waiting by the entrance to the restaurant.

TIM

How's the new Editor?

ROBBY

Well, he doesn't like baseball.

TIM

Come on. Domineering wife?

ROBBY

He's not married.

TIM

Divorced?

ROBBY

Don't think so.

Tim blinks.

TIM

So the new Editor of the Globe is an unmarried man of the Jewish faith who hates baseball?

Robby smiles. Tim shakes his head.

TIM (CONT'D)
Shoulda given it to Ben. Or you.

ROBBY
I'm a reporter. I don't need that.

They smile. A beat, then --

ROBBY (CONT'D)
By the way, I was reading about this priest the other day, Robert Burns. It said you represented him?

Tim looks up, surprised.

TIM
Yeah. I represented Burns. Bad egg.

ROBBY
Since when do you work with the Archdiocese?

TIM
They needed help, I was asked to step in.

ROBBY
The victims said Cardinal Medeiros knew about it.

TIM
You know I can't talk about the case, Robby.

ROBBY
Off the record?

Tim looks at his friend.

TIM
Off the record, I can't talk about it. Is this related to the lawsuit?

Now Robby hides his surprise.

ROBBY
You heard about that, huh?

TIM
It's a small town, Robby.
(then)
Just be careful with this one, pal.
(MORE)

TIM (CONT'D)
I don't know what your new editor's
agenda is and frankly I don't care,
I just don't want you taking a
bullet for him.
(a pat on the back)
See you at book club.

Tim walks away. Robby watches him, processing --

PRIEST (PRELAP)
'Scandalum.' It's Latin for scandal.

INT. ST. PETER'S CHURCH, SOUTH BOSTON - DAY

Sunday morning mass. The MIDDLE AGE PRIEST is mid homily.

PRIEST
Does anyone still speak Latin? Oh.
One there in the back.

The Church laughs.

PRIEST (CONT'D)
We all read the papers, watch the
television. Some of us even go on
the World Wide Web.

Polite laughter from the parish congregation. Sacha sits a
bit apart with her husband, HANS, 35 and her GRANDMOTHER, 77.

PRIEST (CONT'D)
And what do we see there? Scandal.
With our politicians. Our bankers.
Our athletes. And even our Church.

Hans checks his watch. Sacha looks over at her grandmother.

EXT. ANOTHER CHURCH - DAY

A different Priest stands out front greeting parishioners. In
line we find Matty with his wife, ELAINE, 30s. Matty holds a
2-year-old, three other small children clustered around them.

PRIEST (V.O.)
One scandal after another. Let's
face it, it's depressing. So how do
we not let these scandals overwhelm
us? Overwhelm our faith in each
other? And our faith in God?

INT. GLOBE, SPOTLIGHT OFFICE - DAY

Mike sits in the empty office in shorts and a T-shirt.

MIKE (INTO PHONE)
Hey Mitch. It's Mike Rezendes again.
Calling you on Sunday, August 12th,
can you give me a call? Thanks.

Mike hangs up.

ROBBY
You bothering people on Sundays now?

Mike turns. Robby's in the door.

MIKE
Shouldn't you be golfing?

ROBBY
Couldn't get a tee time.

MIKE
Is that what they call it? A tee
time?

ROBBY
Yeah, they also call it a leisure
activity. You should try it.

MIKE
I run.

ROBBY
You run to work.

MIKE
Saves gas money.

Robby walks over the coffee machine, pours a cup of coffee.

ROBBY
Garabedian still dodging you?

MIKE
I'll get him.
(then)
So, really, what are you doing here?

Robby turns to Mike, pensive.

ROBBY
You ever know me to hesitate on a
story?

MIKE
Never.

ROBBY
Me neither.

Robby looks to Mike who shrugs.

MIKE
Maybe not the time to start.

ROBBY
Maybe not. So what do we have?

Robby sits down next to Mike.

MIKE
Burns clips are here. And you should
look at these clips on Phil Saviano,
Sacha reached out, he's coming in.

Mike hands Robby some clips. As they start to dig in...

EXT. LAKE STREET - DAY

An old Buick pulls up in a large parking lot. Marty gets out, looks up at the Cardinal's MASSIVE LAKE STREET MANSION.

Marty takes it in, walks towards the large porte-cochere.

CARDINAL LAW (PRELAP)
I've always been fascinated by the
newspaper business.

INT. LAKE STREET, PRIVATE STUDY - DAY

Mahogany bookshelves, impressive leather furniture. CARDINAL LAW, large, 50s, wears a collar and sits across from Marty. A servant places a tray of sandwiches in front of them.

CARDINAL LAW
I used to sit in on lectures at the
Nieman School when I was at Harvard.
(off the tray)
Care for a sandwich?

MARTY
No thank you. Not for me.

The servant exits. Law takes a sandwich.

CARDINAL LAW
And I was an editor myself once.
(off Marty's look)
The Mississippi Register.
(MORE)

CARDINAL LAW (CONT'D)

A small, diocesan newspaper in Vicksburg, but for a 30-year-old assistant pastor it was a lot of responsibility.

MARTY

In Vicksburg?

CARDINAL LAW

Yes, in the 60s. I was close with the Evers brothers, the paper took a strong stand on the civil rights movement. So did our readership.

MARTY

I can imagine.

CARDINAL LAW

Did you have any trouble in Miami?

MARTY

We were fairly critical of the Gonzalez family during Elian. That, uh, didn't go over well.

CARDINAL LAW

Hard sitting in that seat.

MARTY

And a privilege.

CARDINAL LAW

Indeed. Well, I look forward to working together, Mr. Baron. This city flourishes when all of its great institutions work together. And I certainly count the Globe as one of our great institutions.

MARTY

Yes, well, uh, thanks. Of course, I am of the belief that for the paper to best perform its function it needs to, uh, stand alone.

Law doesn't like that answer.

CARDINAL LAW

Of course.

(then)

The Register lost a lot of our subscribers when we threw our weight behind the civil rights movement. It hurt the paper.

(MORE)

CARDINAL LAW (CONT'D)
But I never lost any sleep over it
because I was certain our cause was
just.

Pointed. A beat, then there's a KNOCK on the door.

CARDINAL LAW (CONT'D)
Come in.

An older SECRETARY comes in with a SMALL WRAPPED GIFT.

CARDINAL LAW (CONT'D)
Ah. A little welcome gift. Think of
it as a Cardinal's guide to Boston.

Law hands the gift to Marty. Who looks at it. Bemused.

MARTY
Uh, thank you.

EXT. LAKE STREET/INT. MARTY'S CAR (PARKED) - LATER

Marty returns to his car. He gets in, unwraps the gift. A
thick book, THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. Off Marty--

INT. GLOBE, SPOTLIGHT OFFICE - DAY

The entire team sits at a table facing PHIL SAVIANO. PHIL is
mid-40's, thin and twitchy. He rifles through some papers.

SAVIANO
So am I the first survivor you've
talked to?

ROBBY
Yes, Phil. You are.

SAVIANO
Oh. Well, then this should be fun.

Mike and Matty share a look, fun?

SAVIANO (CONT'D)
Okay, so first of all, you gotta
know that this is a very big
problem. And my organization SNAP
is at your disposal.

ROBBY
How many members are there in your
organization, Phil?

SAVIANO

In my chapter. Seven. No six. One moved.

The team trades a look. Is this for real?

SAVIANO (CONT'D)

But you gotta remember, whenever I talk about getting molested, I'm not talking about Phil Saviano now. I'm talking about Phil Saviano then.

He reaches into a file, pulls a PHOTO of himself as a kid.

SAVIANO (CONT'D)

I was eleven. And I was preyed upon by Reverend David Holley in Worcester. And I don't mean prayed for. I mean preyed upon. Are any of you Catholic?

The whole team looks at each other. Good question.

MATTY

I was raised Catholic but now I go to my wife's Presbyterian church.

SACHA

I go to church with my grandmother sometimes, but that's about it.

ROBBY

Eh, I think we were all raised Catholic but now...

MIKE

Not so much.

SAVIANO

OK. Good to know. I was a cradle Catholic and you gotta remember back then when a parish priest pays attention to you it's a big deal. It's like God asking for help. So one day, when he asks you to jerk him off, you do it.

The group blinks.

SAVIANO (CONT'D)

You see, it's physical abuse but even worse, it's spiritual abuse. A priest does this to you, he robs you of your faith.

(MORE)

SAVIANO (CONT'D)

And you're so damn ashamed, you're not gonna talk about it. You think you're the only one. So you reach for the bottle or the needle and if those don't kill you, you jump off a freakin' bridge. That's why we call ourselves survivors.

The team stares, gobsmacked.

SAVIANO (CONT'D)

But you get the word out on this, let people know how big this is and they'll know they're not alone! You'll be saving lives. No shit.

(then)

You read Jason Berry's book?

ROBBY

Who?

SAVIANO

Jason Berry, he wrote a book about the Gauthier case in Louisiana?

ROBBY

We're not familiar.

SACHA

That's G-U...

SAVIANO (CONT'D)

G-A-U-T-H-E. It was the first big case, back in 1985, you should start there. And talk to Richard Sipe, he's been studying this for years.

MIKE

Who's that?

SAVIANO

Sipe? He was a priest, he used to work in one of the big 'treatment' centers in Baltimore, before he left the priesthood. He married a nun, it's pretty typical, actually.

SACHA

Uh, Phil, what's a treatment center?

SAVIANO

It's where they send priests when they get caught. For 'treatment.' It's all in the packet I have for you guys. By the way, I sent the Globe a lot of this before.

MIKE

You did?

Robby clocks this.

SAVIANO

Yeah, four, five years ago, but I never heard nothing. I was shocked I mean, like I said, this is big. It's not just Boston, it's the whole country. And it goes right up to the Vatican. How else could they have hidden it for so long? I mean, there's a ton of these guys.

MIKE

A ton of priests, Phil?

SAVIANO

Oh yeah. I know of eight right here in Boston.

Robby and Mike share a look. Is this guy nuts?

ROBBY

You know of eight priests who have molested children in Boston?

SAVIANO

Yes. It's in the packet, it's all in the packet... Let's see here...

Phil pulls a CLUTTER OF PAPERS out of a packet, starts fishing through them. The team watches him, uneasy. Is Phil a mad prophet or simply mad? Off the team, UNSURE --

INT. FENWAY PARK - NIGHT

Robby and Mike hurry down the stairs and make their way along the seats to join Ben and Steve Kurkjian.

KURKJIAN

'Bout time. It's the third inning for Christ sake.

BEN

Where the hell you been?

ROBBY

Interview. I think we finally got something solid.

BEN

What?

Robby looks at Kurkjian. Ben follows his gaze.

KURKJIAN
It stays here. Carry on.

ROBBY
A guy named Phil Saviano, he's a
part of some organization called...

Steve snorts.

KURKJIAN
Oh Lord...

MIKE
What? You know him?

BEN
Yeah, we know Phil.

KURKJIAN
He's pretty banged up. I think he's
got AIDS.

BEN
He's not a reliable source.

KURKJIAN
He must have sent me a hundred
letters after Porter. We ran a story
on him and he still wouldn't stop.

ROBBY
He said some pretty interesting
things today.

KURKJIAN
I'm sure he did. Phil wants jihad.
Boy, does that guy hate the church.

BEN
He's too emotional, he's not gonna
advance your story.

MIKE
He's got a list of priests.

BEN
What? A few priests in Worcester?

ROBBY
They're not just in Worcester.

BEN

So he says. We been down that road,
trust me, it's all dead ends with
that guy.

(then)

How's it going with Garabedian?

MIKE

I'm working on him.

BEN

So he's not talking yet?

MIKE

No, not yet.

KURKJIAN

Hey guys, can we not talk shop the
whole game?

BEN

Doesn't sound like we have much to
talk about anyway.

EXT. FENWAY PARK - LATER

Mike and Robby walk through the crowd, silent. They slip
down an alley, find a THICK GUY watching a couple of CARS.

THICK GUY

Night, Robby.

Robby slips him a ten. He and Mike get into --

INT. MIKE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

They get in. Mike sits behind the wheel for a beat, stews.

ROBBY

You gotta put the key in the
ignition, Mike.

MIKE

Saviano's our best lead.

ROBBY

Unless he's a nut job.

MIKE

Kurkjian seemed pretty sure about
that.

ROBBY

Maybe Kurkjian missed it.

MIKE
Kurkjian broke freakin'
Chappaquiddick, he doesn't miss
much.

ROBBY
Yeah.
(thinking)
You try following up with the ex-
priest Saviano mentioned?

MIKE
I did. Wrong number.

Robby looks at him. That's not good. Mike pounds the wheel.

MIKE (CONT'D)
If he's a nut job, I'm gonna kill
him.

ROBBY
Just keep working Garabedian, Sacha
and I will push on Saviano.

Mike starts the car, shaking his head.

MIKE
Garabedian's a pain in the ass.

ROBBY
You can be a pain in the ass,
Michael.

Off Mike's look --

EXT. STATE STREET, BOSTON - DAY

Garabedian walks down State Street. Mike falls in with him.

MIKE
Mitch, what a surprise. How are you?

GARABEDIAN
I'm fine, Mr. Rezendes.

The light changes and Garabedian walks. Mike tags along.

MIKE
I never heard back from you.

GARABEDIAN
I've been very busy.

MIKE

Jeez, I'm sure you are. Look, Mitch,
lemme talk to one of your victims...
You can sit there, if you're not
happy you can kill the interview.

GARABEDIAN

I spoke to my clients, they don't
want to be in the press.

Garabedian walks into --

INT. GARABEDIAN'S BUILDING, LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

A shitty lobby, Mike follows Mitch in, continues --

MIKE

I don't need names, Mitch.

GARABEDIAN

Whaddya mean, you don't need names?

Mitch walks to the elevator, presses the button.

MIKE

We're not writing a profile here.
We're working on something bigger.

The elevator opens. Mitch walks on. Mike follows him into --

INT. GARABEDIAN'S BUILDING, ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

The doors close. It's cramped, but Mike keeps going.

MIKE

Look Mitch, I'm not supposed to tell
you this, but we're considering it
for a Spotlight piece. That's a
four part series, front page of the
Globe.

(then)

I know a lot of people don't believe
in what you're doing. I'm gonna be
honest, Mitch, some of my own
colleagues think we're wasting our
time. But I think you're one of the
good guys. That's why I'm here,
that's why I'm talking to you.

Mitch studies him.

MITCH

Spotlight's on this?

MIKE

Yeah, Mitch. Between us, that's right. Just give me a shot here.

GARABEDIAN

(beat, then)

Come back on Thursday. 9:30am.

Doors open. Garabedian walks out. Mike smiles. Got him.

EXT. FANEUIL HALL - DAY

Robby and Sacha sit at an outdoor table with Saviano. Saviano tucks into a sandwich.

SAVIANO

You think I made this shit up?

ROBBY

That's not what I said, Phil.

SAVIANO

So why do you need to verify anything? Who talked to you?

ROBBY

No one talked to us.

SAVIANO

They got lots of people to drag my name through the mud. Whispers, smears, lies, that's how they do it.

SACHA

If we could just speak with someone else in your group.

SAVIANO

This stuff isn't exactly easy to talk about. Most of these guys have never told anyone, let alone a reporter from the Boston Globe.

ROBBY

Sacha's a pretty good listener.

SAVIANO

And nobody wants to go through that if it's just gonna be a big yank. I mean, I gave you all this before and no one did nothing.

ROBBY

You didn't give it to me before.
And we've got a new editor now, he's
never worked at the Globe, he's very
serious about this. We all are.

(then)

Phil, if there's a story here, I
promise you, I'm gonna tell it.

Off Phil, considering...

INT. CAFE FRANCESCA - DAY

A small, bohemian cafe, mostly men. JOE CROWLEY, 42, heavy,
boyish face, sits alone WATCHING the door. NERVOUS as shit.

The door opens. Sacha walks in, pauses, looking around...

JOE CROWLEY

Ms. Pfeiffer?

SACHA

Joe?

JOE CROWLEY

Yeah. That's me. Uh, hi.

He stands, almost knocking over his glass of soda.

JOE CROWLEY (CONT'D)

Shoot. Uh...Please sit. Is this
table okay?

SACHA

Sure. I hope I'm not late, Phil told
me two.

JOE CROWLEY

Yeah, I got here early. About an
hour. And a half.

He laughs nervously as Sacha sits.

PATRICK MCSORLEY (PRELAP)

You're not gonna use my name, right?

INT. GARABEDIAN'S OFFICE, CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME TIME

Mike and Garabedian sit with 25 year old PATRICK MCSORLEY.
McSorley is good looking but ragged. Not nervous like Joe.
Instead, he's got a high pitched voice and an ADDICT'S ITCH.

MIKE

Not if you don't want me to.

GARABEDIAN

And you can stop this interview any time you want, Patrick.

PATRICK MCSORLEY

Uh, okay. So where do you want me to start?

MIKE

Where did you live when it happened?

PATRICK MCSORLEY

In the projects, over in Hyde Park.

MIKE

Across from the Stop & Shop?

PATRICK MCSORLEY

Yeah, right, that's it. Anyways, I was twelve and, see, my dad, he committed suicide.

MIKE

Jeez.

PATRICK MCSORLEY

Yeah, right? I mean, my old man was a real asshole, but still. And my mom, you know, she wasn't exactly stable to begin with.

GARABEDIAN

She was schizophrenic.

Patrick nervously itches at his arm as we PRELAP --

JOE CROWLEY (PRELAP)

...my mother was a mess, my older sister's schizophrenic...

INT. CAFE FRANCESCA - DAY

Joe talks very fast. He takes a big gulp of water.

JOE CROWLEY

...and I was in elementary school at St. Ambrose...

SACHA

In Dorchester?

JOE CROWLEY

Yeah, and there was this nun, Sister Barbara, she had this group for kids from troubled families, she worked with this street priest, Paul Shanley. Sister Barbara knew about my family issues, she sent me to the group, to Shanley -- he was the one who raped me.

Joe stops as the WAITER arrives with lunch. Bad timing.

WAITER

Uhm... who had the roast beef?

JOE CROWLEY

Do you mind if we get it to go?

Off Sacha, nodding --

PATRICK MCSORLEY (PRELAP)

Priests, they were next to God...

INT. GARABEDIAN'S OFFICE, CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME TIME

Mike sits with McSorley and Garabedian.

PATRICK MCSORLEY

And my sister, when she saw Geoghan in the Dunkin' Donuts, she told him about my old man killing himself and, well, he rushed right over.

Patrick itches at his arm again.

PATRICK MCSORLEY (CONT'D)

He offered to take me to get ice cream. And he's a priest and I like ice cream, I mean, what kid doesn't?

Patrick is struggling a bit.

PATRICK MCSORLEY (CONT'D)

Then, you know, we're riding home... and then he starts patting my leg. He's driving and he's patting my leg and then... and then...his hand slides up towards my crotch. And he, uh, he...put his hand on my dick.

(He catches his breath)

I froze up. I didn't know what to think. I was fucking petrified.

McSorley stares down at his hands. Quiet. Trembling.

PATRICK MCSORLEY (CONT'D)
I never even touched my freakin' ice
cream, it melted down my arm.

He itches his arm. This time, Mike notes the HEROIN TRACKS.

JOE CROWLEY (PRELAP)
Shanley lived on Beacon Street.

EXT. RINGGOLD PARK - DAY

Crowley and Sacha sit on a secluded bench, sandwiches on
their laps. Crowley's a little less nervous.

JOE CROWLEY
I'd never seen an apartment in Back
Bay, I was from Dorchester. So I
get there and I'm nervous and
Shanley opens the door. And he says
"What's the matter, didn't you
expect me to be so handsome?"

Sacha takes this in.

JOE CROWLEY (CONT'D)
The weirdest thing was he had one of
these mobiles, like over a baby's
crib, but on it were different
words. Homosexual, transsexual, Bi-
sexual. He made it seem so normal.

Joe takes a breath.

SACHA
You hadn't had sex before?

JOE CROWLEY
No. And being gay just made it more
confusing. To be introduced to sex
like that and then to be attracted
to men...

He shrugs.

SACHA
Did you ever try to tell anyone?

JOE CROWLEY
I kept it to myself for a long time.
I thought I was the only one. But
it wouldn't have made a difference.
When I was fifteen my mother found
my journal.

(MORE)

JOE CROWLEY (CONT'D)
I'd written all about what happened
and, well, she called Cardinal
Medeiros.

(then)
He didn't move Shanley for another
five years.

SACHA
Your mother didn't try to hire a
lawyer?

JOE CROWLEY
Against the church? Oh my God,
never. I actually went to a lawyer a
few years ago. He told me he could
get me a small settlement but it
didn't seem worth it.

SACHA
Who was the lawyer?

JOE CROWLEY
Oh...I forget his name but he repped
the Porter victims. Very macho guy.

SACHA
Eric MacLeish?

JOE CROWLEY
Yeah, that's it. You know him?
He's very macho, right?

Sacha nods, her mind racing...

INT. GLOBE, SPOTLIGHT OFFICE - NIGHT

Mike and Sacha download Robby.

SACHA
I called Saviano after talking with
Joe, he said MacLeish settled cases
with a bunch of priests.

MIKE
MacLeish didn't mention that when
you guys talked to him.

ROBBY
No.

SACHA
I'm gonna check it out at the
courthouse tomorrow.

MIKE

If Crowley's story is real then
Shanley is our fourth priest.

ROBBY

Yeah. And Phil's lining up other
victims for Sacha to talk to.

This lands. Sacha and Mike are both floored and troubled.

SACHA

I gotta say, it's brutal listening
to them relive this. It's so raw
for Joe even now, he seemed so
fragile, lost.

MIKE

McSorley too. It's like Saviano
said, the church is such a big part
of their life. They got nowhere to
turn.

SACHA

It's gotta be devastating.

They sit there, a bit devastated themselves.

ROBBY

Okay. Everybody go home. We'll hit
it again tomorrow.

INT. CRAPPY DINER, EAST BOSTON - NIGHT

Mike sits alone in a crappy dinner, sips a beer. He stares
off, bleary-eyed, ragged. A beat, then --

WOMAN

Mike.

Mike looks up. Blinks up at MARGARET, pretty, 30s.

MIKE

Hey. Thanks for coming.

Mike stands, gives her a peck.

MARGARET

You could've come to the house.

MIKE

Yeah, I know. I just didn't want it
to be weird.

And now it is. They sit. An awkward beat.

MIKE (CONT'D)
You look good.

MARGARET
You look like shit. You sleeping?

MIKE
Not a lot.

MARGARET
How's the story coming?

MIKE
It's coming. Yeah... it's coming.
(changing the subject)
How about you?

MARGARET
I started working on this piece on
the Boston Parks commission.

MIKE
Oh yeah, what's going on?

MARGARET
They're being pressed by the city on
some zoning issues, the commissioner
is digging his heels in.

The conversation is easy, this is where these two connect.

MIKE
Sounds cool. I've got a guy in City
Hall who might be able to help.

Mike's phone lights up on the table. He checks the number.

MARGARET
That'd be good. Yeah, I've been
talking to someone but I...

She trails off. He's clearly stopped listening.

MIKE
I'm sorry. 858, is that California?

Margaret knows this drill, she doesn't like it.

MARGARET
Yeah, I think it is.

Mike stares at the phone. Shit.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Go ahead.

MIKE

Nah, it's okay.

It's obviously not okay.

MARGARET

Mike. Just answer it.

MIKE

It's just, I've been trying to reach...

(picking up)

Mike Rezendes.

SIPE (OVER THE PHONE)

Mr. Rezendes? This is Richard Sipe.
I hope I'm not calling too late?

Mike reacts. Fuck.

MIKE (INTO PHONE)

No, no... Can you hold on Richard?

(cups phone, to Margaret)

I'm sorry, hon, I gotta, can you
just give me two minutes?

Margaret looks at him. This is where these two don't connect.

MARGARET

Sure, Mike.

MIKE

Thanks. Thanks, Mags.

Mike pulls out his pad.

MIKE (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)

Yeah, sorry, Richard. Phil Saviano
gave me your name, I was wondering
if I could ask you a few questions.

SIPE (OVER THE PHONE)

Of course.

MIKE (INTO PHONE)

Great. You started studying the
issue of clergy sex abuse in
Baltimore when you worked at one of
the church's treatment centers...

(off the pad)

...the Seton Psychiatric Institute?

SIPE (OVER THE PHONE)
Yes, that's right. I was hired in 1967, just after my psychotherapy fellowship. Of course, it soon became clear that the problem wasn't just a few bad apples. This was a recognizable psychiatric phenomenon.

Mike starts scribbling, sucked back in, so engrossed that he doesn't even notice as Margaret GETS UP and LEAVES...

INT. GLOBE, HALLWAY - LATER

Robby and Mike walk down the hall. Mike debriefs him, a little manic, not unaffected by what he's picked up.

MIKE
They all target the same kinda kid. Low income family, absentee father, starved for attention. And get this, guys like Geoghan target boys because boys are more ashamed...

ROBBY
And less likely to talk.

MIKE
Exactly. These priests are predators, Robby. Sipe says he saw dozens of them at Seton in the 60s.

ROBBY
Why hasn't he gone public?

MIKE
He has. But the church made a huge effort to discredit him. Smear campaigns, public statements by prominent bishops, they've done everything but defrock him.

ROBBY
Sounds familiar.

MIKE
It's just like their stance on Garabedian.

ROBBY
And Saviano, if we believe him.

MIKE
Sipe backed up everything Saviano told us, he feels legit to me.

They push through the door and walk into --

INT. GLOBE, BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

A dank basement, low fluorescents and rows of old books on cheap tin bookshelves. Robby and Mike react to the smell.

MIKE

Jeez, what the hell is that smell?

MATTY

There's a dead rat in the corner.

Mike and Robby find Matty standing over a HUGE STACK OF BOOKS he's pulled from a shelf. He thumbs through one of them.

MATTY (CONT'D)

It's a glamorous job.

Mike shakes his head. Robby reaches for one of the books.

ROBBY

These are the Directories?

MATTY

Yeah.

(to Mike)

The Archdiocese puts them out every year. It's every priest in Boston.

ROBBY

Matty thought they'd help us track down the priests Saviano mentioned.

MIKE

These are official?

MATTY

Yeah.

Mike grabs a directory. Robby flips through, SQUINTING.

ROBBY

Can we turn on some more lights?

MATTY

I couldn't find the switch, you want my glasses?

MIKE

Is this what they mean when they say we're a dying breed?

ROBBY
Just you wait...

MIKE
(smiles, flips through)
1973, Geoghan... St. Paul's in
Hingham. So we can see where any
priest was in any given year.

MATTY
(flips through another)
Exactly. I got him here at... huh.

ROBBY
What?

MATTY
1980, the year he was pulled from
JP. It says he's on sick leave.

Mike looks over his shoulder.

MIKE
It actually says sick leave? They
kept a record of that?

MATTY
Guess so.

Robby starts rifling through the directories.

ROBBY
Where's '91?

Robby finds the 1991 Directory and opens it. He searches...

ROBBY (CONT'D)
Burns... Burns... Robert Burns..

Robby stops.

MIKE
Sick leave?

ROBBY
The year he was pulled out of
Charlestown.

He shows Mike. We see the designation. SICK LEAVE.

MATTY
It's an official designation.

They stare at each other, INCREDULOUS. Suddenly, ALL THE LIGHTS IN THE ROOM flash on. They react, a bit SPOOKED.

KURKJIAN

What's this, a poker game?

Kurkjian walks in. They stare at him, cat with the canary.

ROBBY

Hey, Steve. You need something?

Kurkjian gives the three of them a look. Gets it.

KURKJIAN

Nope. Carry on, gentlemen.

Steve heads down an aisle. Robby turns to Matty and Mike.

ROBBY

Let's get these upstairs.

INT. GLOBE, SPOTLIGHT OFFICE - LATER

Robby, Mike and Matty sit around with the directories.

ROBBY

How about Shanley?

MATTY

He's one of Saviano's?

MIKE

Yeah. The victim Sacha spoke to said he was moved in '79.

Matty grabs 1979, flips through. Pauses, reacts.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Sick leave?

MATTY

No. "Emergency response."

ROBBY

They got a name for everything, these guys.

MIKE

Except rape.

Robby's office phone rings, he moves for it.

ROBBY

Matty, I want you to track all the priests Saviano gave us. If it's like this for all of them...

MATTY

Yeah, I got it.

INT. GLOBE, ROBBY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Robby walks in, grabs the phone.

ROBBY (INTO THE PHONE)

It's Robby.

INT. SUFFOLK COUNTY COURTHOUSE, RECORDS ROOM - DAY

Sacha makes notes on a pad, a couple of files to one side.

SACHA (INTO THE PHONE)

Hey, I'm at the courthouse.

INTERCUT THE TWO SCENES

SACHA (CONT'D)

We gotta talk to MacLeish again.
Something doesn't sync. Hold on.

In the records room, a COURT CLERK comes over.

COURT CLERK

That's it, Sacha. Those are the only docket numbers for MacLeish.

ROBBY (INTO THE PHONE)

Sacha?

Sacha frowns, looks down at her pad. And repeats herself.

SACHA (INTO THE PHONE)

Yeah, we definitely gotta talk to MacLeish again.

INT. GLOBE, MARTY'S OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

Marty sits at his computer. Working. He hears a knock, turns and is somewhat surprised to find Gilman there.

GILMAN

Hey Marty, sorry to barge in, do you have a minute?

Marty looks put off, but he gestures to a chair.

MARTY

Certainly.

GILMAN

(sitting)

I heard Spotlight's officially on the church story?

MARTY

That's right.

GILMAN

Look, Marty, circulation is the one bright spot in our P&L. That lawsuit alone could alienate half our subscribers. We need to proceed with caution. And maybe make a bit of an effort on the PR front.

MARTY

Is that why I was invited to the Catholic Charities Gala?

GILMAN

It's a good cause. And yes, showing your face it might help send... the right message.

Marty eyes him, reaches for a piece of paper. He reads --

MARTY

"We should dwell on the virtues of men and institutions rather than upon their faults and limitations."

GILMAN

What the hell is that?

MARTY

A quote from Charles Taylor. It's on a plaque in the lobby. I wrote it down when I read it because I found it anathema to what this paper should stand for.

GILMAN

The Taylors don't own the paper anymore. The New York Times does.

MARTY

Good to know.

(then)

By the way, how did you hear Spotlight was on the Church story?

GILMAN

Actually, a board member mentioned it to me.

MARTY

And uh, how'd the board member know?

GILMAN

Welcome to Boston, Marty. Enjoy the gala.

INT. GREENBERG TRAUERIG CONF ROOM, ONE INTL PLACE - MORNING

Robby and Sacha have been waiting for a while. A beat and finally, MacLeish rolls in.

ERIC MACLEISH

Sorry, I got stuck in a deposition.

ROBBY

No problem. Thanks for seeing us again.

ERIC MACLEISH

Something else I can help you with?

SACHA

Mr. MacLeish, are you familiar with a priest named Paul Shanley?

MacLeish looks at her.

ERIC MACLEISH

Yeah. I am.

SACHA

You've settled cases against Father Shanley?

ERIC MACLEISH

I can't discuss that with you.

ROBBY

What about Father Ronald Paquin?
Father Daniel Mahan?

SACHA

We understand you've settled several cases against each of them.

ERIC MACLEISH

The settlements were confidential, I could be disbarred for even acknowledging their existence.

Robby just looks at him. That's a yes.

ERIC MACLEISH (CONT'D)
Look, I told you last time, this is
what was best for my clients.
(and then)
The church promised to take the
priests out of circulation.

SACHA
Why aren't there any records?

MacLeish blinks. Another moment of hesitation here...

SACHA (CONT'D)
I was just down at the courthouse,
why aren't there any records of
these settlements?

MacLeish pauses. Then --

ERIC MACLEISH
We dealt directly with the church.
We'd write up a demand letter and
we'd send it to the chancery.

SACHA
You never filed anything in court?

ERIC MACLEISH
It was a private mediation.

So that's a no. Jesus. Sacha and Robby react.

ROBBY
Church pay a premium for that
service?

ERIC MACLEISH
(unashamed)
They paid the going rate.

SACHA
And this is just you and the
archdiocese's lawyers in a room?

ERIC MACLEISH
Priest always had a lawyer, too.
There were one or two defense
attorneys the church liked.

ROBBY
You remember their names?

ERIC MACLEISH
(stonewalling him)
No. No I don't.

INT. GLOBE, MARTY'S OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

Marty and Ben sit with the whole gang.

MARTY
So uh, this was all under the table?

SACHA
There's no paper trail at all. The victim has to sign a confidentiality agreement to get the settlement.

MIKE
Lawyer takes his third, the church washes its hands and the victim gets screwed all over again. Shitbirds are running a freakin' racket.

BEN
MacLeish isn't wrong, they have a duty to their clients.

MIKE
Maybe at first but how many victims do you represent...

SACHA
And profit from.

MIKE
And profit from before you say "Something bigger and badder is happening here and I'm the only one who has all the information."

Robby frowns, chewing on something.

BEN
Well, ethically it is a bit more complicated...

MIKE
Not for Garabedian.

MATTY
So he's not a crank?

MIKE
Oh, I didn't say that.

BEN

But MacLeish confirmed all of
Saviano's priests.

ROBBY

Yeah. Between MacLeish and Sipe, we
think Saviano's solid, Ben.

(to Marty)

Which means we're looking at seven
or eight priests, maybe all of them
with some kind of cover up. If we
can nail even five of 'em...

MARTY

Sounds like you got something. Keep
me up to date. Thanks everybody.

They all start to get up and leave.

BEN

Do you know who the lawyer is that
represented the priests?

SACHA

No. MacLeish didn't give us a name.

Robby holds his tongue. Mike and Sacha trade a look.

INT. ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER MUSEUM - NIGHT

A swank Gala in full swing. Robby walks along the edge of
the party. Looking for someone. A beat, then he spots...

Tim O'Neill. Glad-handing some suits. Robby watches him,
pensive, considers approaching him when...

MARTY

Robby.

Robby turns. There's Marty. A little less ruffled. Holding
a glass of wine and hiding out beside a pillar.

ROBBY

Marty. Wouldn't think this would be
your thing.

MARTY

It's not, that's why I'm standing
over here.

(then)

Dick asked me to come.

ROBBY
(smiles)
Did he now?

MARTY
And you?

ROBBY
My friend Ray Flanagan sits on the
board. We went to BC High together.

MARTY
That's the school across the street
from the Globe?

ROBBY
My alma mater. Fancy crowd, huh?

Robby nods to Cardinal Law in the crowd. A PRETTY BLONDE,
29, and a GOOD LOOKING YOUNG MAN, 40s, trail behind.

ROBBY (CONT'D)
The woman is Donna Morrissey. New
spokeswoman for the Archdiocese. The
guy behind her is Jack Dunn, does PR
work for BC, Catholic Charities, the
Archdiocese...

Law makes a beeline for PETER CONLEY, a large, very wealthy
looking man. Law reaches out, warmly shakes Conley's hand.

ROBBY (CONT'D)
And the handshake is Pete Conley.
Self made Prince of the city, sits
on a dozen different boards, a real
Irish swell.

They watch for a moment. Then --

ROBBY (CONT'D)
How was your sit down, by the way?

MARTY
Uh, he gave me a copy of The
Catechism.

Robby raises an eyebrow.

ROBBY
If it makes you feel any better, he
called down the wrath of God on us
when we were investigating Porter.

MARTY

Uh, really? How did that play out?

ROBBY

A week later our editor broke his leg skiing.

Marty blinks.

MARTY

Good to know.

Robby smiles as a WAITER comes by with a tray.

WAITER

Shrimp toast?

The men inspect it... then each take one.

INT. ARMENIAN DINER - NIGHT

CLOSE ON a greasy TUNA MELT. HANDS reach for it... REVEAL Garabedian and Mike having dinner. Mike's going over notes.

MIKE

So Peter Canshun filed a criminal complaint before he came to you?

GARABEDIAN

Yeah, but Geoghan got probation and the judge sealed the case records after friends of the church stepped in. The Church has a lot of friends.

MIKE

Like Eric MacLeish?

Garabedian sees he understands. Garabedian's impressed.

GARABEDIAN

Exactly. He's a big part of the problem. Off the record.

MIKE

Of course.

Garabedian pops a french fry in his mouth.

GARABEDIAN

You work hard, Mr. Rezendes. I can see that. Do you have kids?

MIKE

No.

GARABEDIAN

And your wife doesn't mind you
working all the time?

Mike bristles at the personal questions, covers.

MIKE

Yeah, she does.

GARABEDIAN

See. That's why I never got
married. I'm too busy, what I do is
too important.

MIKE

Well, that's why I'm here.

Garabedian senses Mike is working him. He darkens.

GARABEDIAN

Where were you five years ago? How
about ten?

(then)

Your new Editor, he's a Jew right?

MIKE

Uh, that's right.

GARABEDIAN

He comes in, suddenly everybody is
interested in the Church. You know
why? Because it takes an outsider.
Like me. I'm Armenian. How many
Armenians do you know?

MIKE

Steve Kurkjian, works at the Globe.

GARABEDIAN

That's two! You should get a prize
or something. What are you, Italian?

MIKE

Portuguese.

GARABEDIAN

From where?

MIKE

East Boston.

GARABEDIAN

You don't sound like it.

Mike doesn't say anything. Garabedian shakes his head.

GARABEDIAN (CONT'D)

This city, Yankees, Irish, making
the rest of us feel like we don't
belong. They're no better than us.
Look how they treat their children.

(wiping his mouth)

Mark my words, Mr. Rezendes, if it
takes a village to raise a child, it
takes a village to abuse one.

Garabedian eats. Mike ponders. Oddly moved.

INT. ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER MUSEUM - NIGHT

Tim O'Neill stands by the bar. Talking to a YOUNG COUPLE.

TIM

Please tell your father that I said
hello and that I expect to see him
next weekend. No excuses.

The couple smiles, the man shaking Tim's hand. As they exit,
Robby sidles up next to Tim, calls to the Bartender.

ROBBY

Two Macallans. Neat.

TIM

Gotta score on the game?

ROBBY

Sox lost 4-1.

TIM

Why do I even ask?

The bartender sets down two glasses. Robby hands one to Tim.

TIM (CONT'D)

Slainte.

They clink and drink.

TIM (CONT'D)

You see Ray yet?

ROBBY

I did. Divorce becomes him.

Tim smiles.

ROBBY (CONT'D)

I had an interesting conversation with Eric MacLeish yesterday. Turns out he's been settling abuse cases with the Archdiocese for years. No records, just Eric and the Archdiocese's lawyer, Wilson Rodgers, with cash and a handshake.

TIM

Okay.

ROBBY

But there was always another lawyer at the table. A defense lawyer for the priest. I know you said you repped Burns as a favor, I'm assuming that was a one off?

Tim doesn't say anything. Robby reads him... and if he had a hunch Tim was the guy, it's now confirmed. Robby DARKENS.

ROBBY (CONT'D)

How many priests have you represented, Timmy?

TIM

You know I can't answer that, Robby. It's unethical.

ROBBY

Is that all it is?

Tim stares Robby down. He drinks.

TIM

So this is the Robby Robinson I've always heard about but never met.

ROBBY

Listen to me, Timmy. You want to be on the right side of this.

TIM

Maybe I am.

BOSTON MUCK (O.C.)

Tim.

A thick BOSTON MUCK joins, reaches for Tim's hand.

TIM

John, good to see you.

Tim turns to the muck. Robby's left nursing his drink...

INT. ROBBY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Robby slips in the door, walks over to the bar. Pours himself another strong drink. Barbara walks in.

BARBARA
That good, huh?

Robby glances over. He looks haggard.

ROBBY
I hate those things.

BARBARA
Never bothered you before.

ROBBY
(sharp)
Well they do now.

Barbara watches Robby collapse into his chair.

BARBARA
You talk to Tim?

ROBBY
Yeah. I did.

BARBARA
And?

He just looks at her. A little lost. As he takes a big swallow of his drink, PRELAP --

SACHA (PRELAP)
"Sick leave, 'absent on leave,'
'unassigned,' 'emergency response.'

INT. GLOBE, ROBBY'S OFFICE - DAY

Matty and Sacha download Robby in his office. Through the glass, we see Mike working at his computer in Spotlight.

SACHA
The directories use those terms interchangeably.

ROBBY
For all of Saviano's priests?

MATTY

Yeah. And Mike was right, these guys switch parishes more frequently than other priests. I mean, when I was a kid, the church would move a priest after seven or eight years but these guys are never at a parish longer than two or three.

SACHA

It's the same for Geoghan, Burns and Saviano's priests. It's a pretty clear pattern.

As Robby considers this, Mike pops in --

MIKE

Guys, I've got Sipe.

They get up, walk into --

INT. GLOBE, SPOTLIGHT OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The team gathers round as Mike reaches for his phone.

MIKE (INTO PHONE)

Richard, I'm gonna put you on speaker so my colleagues can hear.

Mike hits a button and places the receiver in the cradle.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Richard. Go ahead.

SIPE (ON SPEAKERPHONE)

Hello, everyone. Nice to meet you.

ROBBY

Nice to meet you, Richard. This is Robby. I know you've talked with Mike but we're still trying to get our arms around all of this.

SIPE (ON SPEAKERPHONE)

Yes, I've been studying the issue for thirty years and I could say the same. But I think if you want to understand the crisis, you need to start with the celibacy requirement. After all, that was my first major finding -- only 50% of the clergy are actually practicing celibacy.

The team share a look. Can that be true?

SIPE (ON SPEAKERPHONE) (CONT'D)
Now, most of them are having sex
with other adults. But this creates
a culture of secrecy, a system that
tolerates, even protects pedophiles.

SACHA
So you believe the church is aware
of the extent of this 'crisis.'

SIPE (ON SPEAKERPHONE)
Absolutely. Tom Doyle, the
Secretary Canonist for the Papal
Nuncio penned a report in '85. He
warned pedophile priests were a
billion dollar liability.

ROBBY
Who saw this document? Anyone in
the Catholic hierarchy?

SIPE (ON SPEAKERPHONE)
Doyle tried to introduce the report
at the National Council of Catholic
Bishops. In fact, your Cardinal Law
was an early fan but he withdrew his
support at the last minute and they
shelved it.

MIKE
So Richard, how big is this problem?

SIPE (ON SPEAKERPHONE)
My estimates suggest six percent act
out sexually with minors.

ROBBY
Six percent? Six percent of what?

SIPE (ON SPEAKERPHONE)
Six percent of all priests.

Holy shit. Robby turns to the team.

ROBBY
How many priests are in Boston?

MATTY
About fifteen hundred.

ROBBY
What's six percent of fifteen...

Sacha already has her calculator out.

SACHA
Ninety.

ROBBY
Ninety?

MATTY
Is that possible?

SIPE (ON SPEAKERPHONE)
From a metric standpoint, that would
be in line with my findings.

Robby considers, his gaze falling on the directories.

ROBBY
Richard, could we call you back?

SIPE (ON SPEAKERPHONE)
No problem.

ROBBY
(hanging up)
Matty... the directories... could we
work backwards?

MATTY
Backwards? What do you mean?

ROBBY
You've been looking up questionable
priests, using the directories to
verify that they might have been bad
news. What if we do it the other
way around?

MIKE
(following)
Use patterns in the directories to
identify bad priests?

SACHA
Sure. We'd search for sick leave,
for priests that we're moved from
parish to parish frequently...

MATTY
It'd take a load of time.

ROBBY
How long?

MATTY
On my own? Three weeks.

ROBBY

Okay. We're all on this. I want it done in one, we start now.

The team immediately digs in and we **CUT TO** --

CLOSE ON a ruler across a directory. We see the name of a priest, his parish and a designation: Unassigned. **CUT TO** --

CLOSE ON an excel spreadsheet. The priest's name in one column, the designation in a second, a date in a third...

PULL BACK to find Matty hunched over the computer, Mike and Sacha on either side. It's dark. Sacha's phone rings.

SACHA (INTO PHONE)

Hello? Hi hon. God, what time is it?

She looks up. They all do. And notice day has become night.

MIKE

My head's gonna explode.

MATTY

Freakin' tedious, huh?

SACHA (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)

Yeah, I'm leaving now.

Sacha hangs up, starts packing her things.

ROBBY

Take one for the road.

SACHA

(grabs a directory, exits)

Thanks. Bye guys.

MIKE

This week is gonna suck.

ROBBY

Oh yeah.

As they get back to work, we **CUT TO** --

CLOSE ON a hand turning a page, a finger picking out a name... FATHER MAHAN... SICK LEAVE...

INT. SACHA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

REVEAL Sacha at HER KITCHEN TABLE entering a name in an excel sheet on her laptop. As Hans kisses her good night, **CUT TO** --

INT. GLOBE, SPOTLIGHT OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE ON the excel sheet, now longer. Another name, Paquin, is typed in and we...

REVEAL Mike inputting data. Matty and Sacha stand, hanging a list of problematic priests and parishes on the wall. CUT TO--

INT. ROBBY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON a directory, a scotch glass on the open page. **PULL BACK** to find Robby in his DEN, reaching for the scotch, LOST.

Barbara walks past, sees him staring off, considers going to him, thinks better of it. Off Barbara, worried, we CUT TO --

INT. GLOBE, SPOTLIGHT OFFICE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON the excel spreadsheet. Much bigger. But in the priest column we see an odd name... FFFFFFFFFFFFFaer.

REVEAL Mike, head on laptop. He snaps awake, grabs coffee.

INT. MATTY CARROLL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON a directory, a ruler paused and a finger pointing to an address. The finger taps the address and we --

REVEAL Matty, at his KITCHEN TABLE, staring at the it. He blinks, PALE, then scribbles on a pad and leaves the house.

EXT. MATTY CARROLL'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Matty heads across the lawn and down the sidewalk. He rounds the corner, picking up his pace, checking house numbers.

Finally he stops at A CLASSIC, TWO STORY VICTORIAN HOUSE.

MATTY

No way. No fucking way.

He looks around. As we wonder what he's discovered, we --

INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mike eats pizza from a Santarpio's box and drinks a beer in his shitty little studio. He talks to Sipe on speakerphone.

SIPE (ON SPEAKERPHONE)

...again, it's a sexually active system. Everyone has a double life, so when they find a pedophile in their midst, he's just another priest with a secret.

(MORE)

SIPE (ON SPEAKERPHONE) (CONT'D)
They all have an interest in
covering for one another.

MIKE
Jeez.

SIPE (ON SPEAKERPHONE)
Yeah. You spend too much time on
this, you'll start drinking.

MIKE
I'm ahead of you on that.

SIPE (ON SPEAKERPHONE)
(chuckles)
Good. Mike, I'm curious, do you
ever go to mass?

MIKE
I mean, I went as a kid, I kinda
liked it, actually. But I used to
fight with my old man all the time
about the church. He was a bit
rigid.

SIPE (ON SPEAKERPHONE)
I've heard that before.

MIKE
Our last big fight before I moved
out was about the infallibility of
the Pope. I was fifteen.

Mike goes to the fridge, pulls out another beer.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Probably why I became a reporter.

SIPE (ON SPEAKERPHONE)
If you can't prove it, it's not
true?

MIKE
Something like that.

SIPE (ON SPEAKERPHONE)
So not big on faith.

MIKE
Not big on my old man, that's for
sure.

We hear Sipe laugh over the phone.

MIKE (CONT'D)

What about you? Do you still go to mass?

SIPE (ON SPEAKERPHONE)

No. I still consider myself a Catholic, but I'm no longer a friend of the institution. There's a line you don't cross in the church.

MIKE

That's why they've gone after you?

SIPE (ON SPEAKERPHONE)

They will go to great lengths to maintain the system, to silence anyone trying to shine a light on the problem. I imagine that includes you and your colleagues at the...

Suddenly, he hears a KNOCK on the door. Mike jumps, not expecting a late night visitor.

MIKE

Um, Richard, can I call you back?

SIPE (ON SPEAKERPHONE)

Any time, Mike.

Mike gets up, approaches the door. A bit tense.

MIKE

Who is it?

ROBBY (O.C.)

The Archbishop of Canterbury.

Mike relaxes, opens the door. Robby walks in with a bottle.

ROBBY (CONT'D)

Am I interrupting?

MIKE

I was on the phone with Sipe. How'd you find me?

ROBBY

I know a guy. How about a breather?

Robby holds out the bottle. JAMESON'S.

MIKE

A breather sounds good.

Mike grabs two glasses, checks to make sure they're clean.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Want some pizza? Santarpio's.

ROBBY
You ever get tired of that place?

MIKE
You ever get tired of Fenway?

Robby smiles. Touché. He starts to open the JAMESON'S.

ROBBY
So this the new clubhouse?

MIKE
Something like that.

ROBBY
How's Margaret doing?

MIKE
I don't know, really. I've been
kinda tied up with this.

ROBBY
You know, a good dinner can save a
marriage.

MIKE
Yeah, tried that, didn't go so well.

Mike pours to drinks. Hands one to Robby.

ROBBY
Sometimes you gotta put your life
first, Mike.

MIKE
That why you're here drinking with
me?

ROBBY
Barbara said that if I kept talking
about this story she was gonna throw
me outta the house.

They clink and drink.

MIKE
So you want to call Sipe back now?

ROBBY

Yeah. You got a speaker phone on that thing?

MIKE

Sure do.

Mike dials. Robby reaches over and grabs a piece of pizza.

ROBBY

What the hell...

INT. MATTY CARROLL'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING

Matty's wife Elaine enters, drowsy. Matty is at the table with coffee. Elaine stops at the refrigerator. A note is taped to the door with XEROXED PHOTOS OF SIX PRIESTS.

"Kids. Stay away from the house at 193 Leonard Street. And stay away from these men."

MATTY

There's one of those treatment houses on Leonard Street.

ELAINE

There are kids all over this neighborhood. Should we say something to the neighbors?

Matty considers this. Good question.

INT. GLOBE, SPOTLIGHT OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE ON a LAPTOP SCREEN. We're scrolling through the EXCEL SPREADSHEET. Dozens of problematic priests.

SACHA

That's it.

REVEAL Mike, Sacha and Matty huddled around the laptop. Matty PRINTS the SPREADSHEET and Mike closes a directory.

MIKE

Robby?

Robby looks up from his desk. He walks over to join them.

ROBBY

How many?

MATTY

Eighty-seven.

MIKE

It's in line with what Sipe said.
Right in line.

Matty hands the PRINTOUT to Robby. A beat. He walks into --

INT. GLOBE, ROBBY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Robby shuts his door, picks up his phone and dials. We see the team watching through the glass.

ROBBY (INTO PHONE)

Walter Robinson for Tim O'Neill.
Tell him it's important.

A beat, then we hear --

TIM (OVER THE PHONE)

Hi Robby. Everything OK?

ROBBY (INTO PHONE)

Could it be ninety?

TIM (OVER THE PHONE)

What?

ROBBY (INTO PHONE)

Could it be ninety priests?

TIM (OVER THE PHONE)

Jesus, Robby.

ROBBY (INTO PHONE)

Just answer the question, Tim.

Silence.

TIM (OVER THE PHONE)

You gotta stop this, Robby.

Click. Robby DARKENS. A beat, then Matty pops in...

MATTY

Robby, you got a minute?

Robby beckons him in.

MATTY (CONT'D)

I, uh, got one of those treatment
centers a block from my house. I
mean...we got neighbors with kids.
I feel like we should tell 'em.

ROBBY
(beat)
We'll tell 'em soon.

Matty nods. Exits. Off Robby --

INT. PARKING GARAGE, ONE INTERNATIONAL PLACE - NIGHT

Eric MacLeish is talking on his cell.

ERIC MACLEISH (INTO PHONE)
No, I'll handle him in the morning.
It won't be a problem.

He hangs up and gets into his MERCEDES 500 SLK.

INT. MACLEISH'S MERCEDES (PARKED) - CONTINUOUS

MacLeish tosses his briefcase in back and starts to puts the key in the ignition... when the passenger door OPENS.

MacLeish, FRIGHTENED, turns... as Robby gets in the car.

MACLEISH
Jesus. Scared the hell out of me.

ROBBY
I've got 87 priests, I need to know which you've settled cases against.

MACLEISH
Get out of my car.

Robby doesn't move. He's angrier than we've seen.

ROBBY
How many priests did you settle?

MACLEISH
You know I can't tell you...

ROBBY
You're gonna give me their names.
And the names of their victims.

MACLEISH
No way.

A beat. Robby controls himself, turns calm. Professional.

ROBBY

There are two stories here, Eric. A story about clergy and a story about the lawyers who spent the last ten years quietly turning their sex scandals into a cottage industry. Ten years without telling a soul about the dozens of priests who were balling little boys.

(then)

Which story do you want us to write?

Off MacLeish, WAVERING...

INT. GLOBE, MARTY'S OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE ON the EXCEL PRINTOUT. The list of Priests. Many of them MARKED UP, with VICTIM'S NAMES written in the margins.

ROBBY

MacLeish settled cases with forty-six priests.

REVEAL Marty and Ben across the table from Robby and the rest of the Spotlight team. Marty pages through the printout.

ROBBY (CONT'D)

And we have corroboration on the eight we got from Saviano, Sacha's spoken to the victims, a lotta them are willing to go on the record.

BEN

Jesus. It's a fucking epidemic.

ROBBY

They all fit the pattern, frequent moves from parish to parish, in and out of treatment centers...

MARTY

Where are we on Law?

ROBBY

Mike's still trying to empty Garabedian's pockets.

Marty considers this. Then he turns to Robby.

MARTY

I keep thinking about our discussion on Porter the other night.

ROBBY

What about it?

MARTY

You said Law called down the wrath of God when we reported on that.

BEN

That's Law being Law.

MARTY

Okay, uh, but I looked at the clips, Porter wasn't even in the Boston Archdiocese. He was in Fall River. Why such an extreme reaction?

Robby realizes.

ROBBY

He knew there were others. The way he reacted, Law had to know.

MARTY

That's the bigger story.

BEN

Bigger than fifty priests?

MARTY

Yes, if it came from the top down.

ROBBY

The numbers clearly indicate --

MARTY

But that's all they are, indicators. They don't tell the full story.

MIKE

Due respect, we run a story about fifty pedophile priests in Boston --

MARTY

We'll get into the same cat fight you got into on Porter, which made a lot of noise and changed things not one bit.

(then)

The numbers are not enough. Show me the Church manipulated the system so these priests wouldn't face charges. Show me the Church put these priests back into parishes with children, time and time again.

(MORE)

MARTY (CONT'D)

Show me this was systemic, it was institutional and that it came from the top down.

INT. GLOBE, OUTSIDE MARTY'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Ben and Robby walk through the bullpen towards Ben's office, the team at their heels. Mike is pissed.

MIKE

Fifty priests is a great story.

BEN

In my office.

They roll into --

INT. GLOBE, BEN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Matty shuts the door behind them.

MIKE

He read the Porter clips and now he's nervous.

BEN

He should be fucking nervous. If Law attacked us for going after Porter, can you imagine how he'll use his bully pulpit now that we're coming after him?

MIKE

We're talking about fifty priests. Not one. Not eight. Fifty!

BEN

Yeah, and if we're not set up here, Law's gonna have a thousand priests telling their congregations not to buy the Globe. Right now, a story like this could tank the paper.

MIKE

Come on, we're playing scared.

BEN

Keep your dick in your pants, we're playing smart.

ROBBY

He's right, Mike.

Mike turns, surprised.

ROBBY (CONT'D)

We gotta nail the system, we gotta take Law down in such a way that he can't get back up again.

BEN

Agreed. So let's stop bitching about it and get to work.

EXT. DOUBLE-DECKER HOUSE, SOUTHIE - DAY

Robby and Sacha knock on the door of a DOUBLE-DECKER in Southie. A MIDDLE AGED MAN answers. He lets them inside.

OLDER WOMAN (PRELAP)

The Monsignor took us to the Bishop.

INT. RUNDOWN HOUSE, DORCHESTER - DAY

Matty sits with an OLDER WOMAN.

OLDER WOMAN

He told us nothing like this had ever happened before. He asked us not to press charges.

MIDDLE AGED MAN (PRELAP)

The Bishop came over the house.

INT. APARTMENT, JAMAICA PLAIN - DAY

Robby and Sacha sit with a middle aged man.

MIDDLE AGED MAN

He brought the local assemblyman.

SACHA

What did your mother do?

MIDDLE AGED MAN

Are you kidding me? She made tea and put out cookies.

Sacha blinks. We PRELAP --

MIKE (PRELAP)

...and Richard when exactly did you treat Geoghan in Baltimore?

INT. GLOBE, SPOTLIGHT OFFICE - EARLY EVENING

Mike leans over his phone, reviewing his notes.

SIPE (ON SPEAKERPHONE)
I didn't treat him personally, I
thought I mentioned that in our
first conversation, Mike.

MIKE
(writing)
Yeah, yeah, that's right, sorry. Do
you know who did treat him?

SIPE
Not off hand, I think that was the
summer of 1967, I'll have to check
my records. Of course, everyone
knew he had a problem.

As Mike writes this down, we hear --

SACHA
We've got stories on Saviano's eight
and ten of MacLeish's priests.

Find Robby and Sacha adding to a list on the wall, 18 PRIESTS
with 3x5 cards, details of victim's stories. PRELAP --

DROUSSARD (PRELAP)
It wasn't just the church.

INT. DROUSSARD HOUSE, JAMAICA PLAIN - DAY

Matty sits with MARYETTA DROUSSARD, 57. A mess.

DROUSSARD
My friends, the other parishioners,
they said it would cause a scandal.

She starts to cry. Matty waits, pained as we PRELAP --

YOUNG COP (PRELAP)
Sure, the chief knew, we all did.
Geoghan was a bad guy...

INT. COFFEE SHOP, HINGHAM - NIGHT

Robby sits with the YOUNG COP from the opener. Now 40s.

YOUNG COP
But no one wanted to cuff a priest.
And I was just a rookie so...

SACHA
What about the prosecutor?

YOUNG COP
Burke? He'd recommend that they
leave it in God's hands.
(then)
I still remember those two priests
driving away that night, but Cap
told me to forget it so I forgot it.

As that LANDS on Robby and Sacha --

INT. GLOBE, SPOTLIGHT OFFICE - DAY

Matty's at his desk. He gets up, checks a box on the wall.
We see NOW 30 PRIESTS with 3x5 cards next. Matty looks at it.

MATTY
This is sick.

He stands there staring as Robby and Sacha enter.

MATTY (CONT'D)
How's it going guys?

ROBBY
Depends how you look at it. Where's
Mike?

MATTY
Springfield. For the hearing. He
called in, said nobody was there.

ROBBY
The Herald didn't show up?

MATTY
Nope. Nobody.

Sacha sits at her desk, Robby turns towards his office when --

MATTY (CONT'D)
Hey, Robby, you ever hear of a
Father Talbot?

Robby turns. Matty shows him an excel priest printout.

ROBBY
There was a Father Talbot at BC High
when I was there.

MATTY
That's the one.

Matty hands him the printout. Robby reads it and reacts.
It's like a kick in the stomach.

ROBBY
Jesus. This his victim?

MATTY
Yeah, he just passed, the address is
for the wife.

ROBBY
I'll take this.

INT. COURTROOM, HAMDEN SUPERIOR COURT, SPRINGFIELD, MA - DAY

Mike watching the Globe's lawyer, JON ALBANO, 50s, white beard and moustache, present to JUDGE CONSTANCE SWEENEY, 40s.

ALBANO (O.C.)
Your honor, the Globe believes this
is a matter of public interest.

Mike FIGHTS TEDIUM. The courtroom's empty, Garabedian at one desk, WILSON ROGERS, 60s, the Church's lawyer, at another.

ALBANO (CONT'D)
There's nothing personal in these
documents, they concern how the
Cardinal is handling --

JUDGE SWEENEY
Say the Archdiocese.

ALBANO
Er, excuse me?

JUDGE SWEENEY
You don't get to tag the Cardinal
with everything, Mr. Albano. Say
the Archdiocese.

He looks down at his brief, flustered.

WILSON ROGERS
Your honor, the Globe is not a party
to this case. They simply want to
sell papers. If Mr. Garabedian had
not been trying his case in the
press and smearing the Cardinal's
good name, we wouldn't even be here.

Garabedian shakes his head, angrily muttering under his
breath. Mike sits up, catching it.

ALBANO

I represent the Globe, your honor,
not Mr. Garabedian, and regardless
of his tactics, the Archdiocese...

Off Mike, watching Garabedian...

EXT. HAMDEN SUPERIOR COURT, SPRINGFIELD, MA - LATER

Garabedian stands on the courthouse steps. Simmering.

MIKE

Nice guy, that Wilson Rogers.

Mike walks up with two cups of coffee. He holds one out.

GARABEDIAN

He's an idiot. A smug idiot. And
they're terrible lawyers.

MIKE

(pushing him)

He seems pretty competent.

GARABEDIAN

What, cause he dresses nice? I'm
telling you, he's an awful lawyer.

MIKE

Oh yeah?

GARABEDIAN

You don't know the half of it. If
you did you wouldn't be impressed.

MIKE

So what's the half of it?

Garabedian looks at him, wrestling with something.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Mitch? Tell me the half of it.

GARABEDIAN

Off the record.

MIKE

Okay. Off the record.

GARABEDIAN

About three years ago, I get a call.
This ex-Priest. Arthur Benzevich.

(MORE)

GARABEDIAN (CONT'D)

He tells me when he was at Blessed Sacrement back in '62 he saw Geoghan taking little boys up to the Rectory bedroom. Benzevich says he told the Bishop, but the Bishop told him to shut it. Threatened to reassign him to South America.

MIKE

Jeez.

GARABEDIAN

Yeah, anyway, fast forward 30 years, Benzevich reads that Geoghan's been charged with molesting hundreds of boys. Benzevich feels guilty.

MIKE

So Benzevich calls you.

GARABEDIAN

I got a priest telling his superiors about Geoghan in 1962? That's a witness. So I ask him to come by the office to sit for a deposition and he agrees. But the day of the depo, when he shows up... he's with a lawyer.

MIKE

Wilson Rogers.

GARABEDIAN

That's the one. Suddenly, my friend Benzevich has a foggy memory. He isn't so sure Geoghan took boys up to his bedroom. And he sure as heck didn't tell his superiors.

MIKE

So what'd you do?

GARABEDIAN

Nothing. There was nothing to do. I go back to work, I forget about it until, a year ago, one of my former assistants, terrible employee, she finds an old article in the paper. *"Former priest says he warned church officials about Geoghan."*

MIKE

(stunned)

Benzevich went to the press.

GARABEDIAN

Local paper, Patriot Ledger, nobody saw it. But now --

MIKE

You got Benzevich on record.

GARABEDIAN

And I got a good reason to talk to him again. But when I file a motion to depose Benzevich a second time, Wilson Rogers, that smug asshole, he files a motion opposing my motion. And that's when I have him!

MIKE

Have him, how?

GARABEDIAN

Rogers opposed my motion. So I gotta make an argument as to why I should be allowed to depose Mr. Benzevich again. And now I'm allowed to attach exhibits. So I go through the famous sealed documents that I've gotten in discovery and I pull out all the most damning ones.

MIKE

And you attach them to your motion?

GARABEDIAN

14 documents that prove everything. About the church, about the bishops, about Cardinal Law...

MIKE

And it's all public.

GARABEDIAN

Now you're paying attention, Mr. Rezendes. This motion to oppose Rogers' motion that opposed my motion to depose Benzevich is, in fact, public.

MIKE

(head spinning)

So I can just walk into the courthouse and get them?

GARABEDIAN

No. You can't. Because the documents are not there.

Mike is measured.

MIKE

You just told me they were public,
Mitch.

GARABEDIAN

(leans in, whispering)

They are, but this is Boston. And
the Church doesn't want them to be
found, so they are not there.

Holy shit. Mike pales.

ALBANO (O.C.)

Mitch, Sweeney's ready to start.

MIKE

You think the Church had them
removed?

Mitch collects his things, turns to Mike. With clarity.

GARABEDIAN

Yes, Mr. Rezendes. I am not crazy
and I am not paranoid, I am
experienced. Check the docket,
you'll see. They control everything.

Mitch exits. Mike watches him go, UNNERVED. Is Mitch right?
And was that just the mother of all tips?

INT. SUFFOLK COUNTY COURTHOUSE, RECORDS ROOM - DAY

A mousy looking clerk carries a BINDER up to a small window.
He places the binder in the window in front of... Mike.

Who's been standing there. Waiting. Mike takes the binder.

CLERK

We're closing in like ten minutes...

MIKE

Yeah. Thanks.

Mike sits on the bench. He opens the binder, finds a file.

CLOSE ON THE FILE: Motion 9817.5 to depose Arthur Benzevich.
Filed by Mitchell Garabedian. And a list of 14 exhibits.

Mike, excited, opens the file, finds the motion and a FOLDER,
EXHIBITS A - N. Mike opens it. It's empty. HOLY SHIT.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Shouldn't there be documents here?

The Clerk inspects the file. He reads the description.

CLERK
Yeah. There should be.

Mike reacts. Garabedian was right. Jesus.

EXT. BROOKLINE HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

A lovely, suburban home. Robby is in his car across the street, reading through some documents. Suddenly a CAR pulls into the driveway. A WOMAN and her THREE CHILDREN get out.

Robby starts to get out of his car when.... his cell RINGS.

ROBBY (INTO PHONE)
Robby.

EXT. SUFFOLK COUNTY COURTHOUSE - SAME TIME

Mike is walking down the stairs of the courthouse.

MIKE (INTO PHONE)
Garabedian gave me a tip, some of the sealed documents are public. They're part of a motion he filed.

INTERCUT THE TWO SCENES

ROBBY (INTO PHONE)
So we can get them?

MIKE (INTO PHONE)
I tried. They're not in the docket, someone pulled them. Garabedian thinks it was the church, but either way, if Albano files a motion, Sweeney will order Mitch to refile.

ROBBY (INTO PHONE)
And you think these documents...

MIKE (INTO PHONE)
He said they were huge, Robby.

This LANDS. Robby checks his watch.

ROBBY (INTO PHONE)
I'll call Albano now.

Robby hangs up. He watches the house for a beat, considering his options. Then he starts the car and pulls out.

EXT. GLOBE, PARKING LOT - MORNING

Marty gets out of his car and walks toward the building. It's a beautiful September morning.

INT. GLOBE, NEWSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Marty walks into the building and heads toward his office. Most of the newsroom is empty. He slows his stride when SOMETHING on one of the televisions catches his attention.

He walks to a TV, joins a A YOUNG REPORTER already watching.

YOUNG REPORTER

Mr. Baron.

MARTY

Morning. What happened?

YOUNG REPORTER

They're saying it's a prop plane but that's not the tail of a prop plane.

We glimpse the TV. The World Trade Center. On fire. Marty hurries to the front desk. LINDA at reception greets him.

LINDA

Morning, Marty.

MARTY

Get every reporter we have in. Now.

LINDA

Everyone?

But Marty's turned. He beelines for the corner office.

EXT. STATE STREET T-STOP, BOSTON - DAY

Mike walks out of the STATE STREET T STOP. He cell rings.

MIKE (INTO PHONE)

Hey Robby. What's up? I'm heading the courthouse to meet Albano.

Mike slows to a stop.

MIKE (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)

When? Out of Logan?

He turns around, heads back toward the T. As he descends into the T, we DRIFT BACK UP to the BEAUTIFUL SEPTEMBER SKY.

INT. GLOBE, NEWSROOM - SAME

CLOSE ON a TV. Cardinal Law addressing a large group of reporters, citizens in front of the Cathedral.

CARDINAL LAW
*You pray for the injured, and those
who survived. You pray, too, for
the nation, that our response might
reflect our best ideals...*

REVEAL a group watching TV in the corner of the bullpen. Ben is front and center. Robby, Matty and Sacha off to the side.

CARDINAL LAW (ON TV) (CONT'D)
*...and God's teaching as it is found
in Christianity and Islam as well.*

BEN
Not bad. Who's there?

FEMALE EDITOR
Paulson.

Ben starts to move, an editor at his side.

BEN
I want to talk to him when he's
back. Where's Raphael on the
Massport piece?

FEMALE EDITOR
He's calling it in, they're opening
the airport tomorrow. 5am.

BEN
(to Robby)
Rezendes make it to Miami?

ROBBY
They just opened Providence, he's
gonna catch a flight there.

BEN
Drohan needs help, we're all hands
on deck, I need to pull in the rest
of your team, everything else stops.
Everything, Robby.

ROBBY
Understood.

Ben heads off. Robby looks to Matty and Sacha, then back up at Cardinal Law on the TV.

MATTY

This has gotta be the one story that could take us off our story.

ROBBY

Yeah, how 'bout that.

Off Robby, FRUSTRATED...

INT. GARABEDIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Garabedian works at his desk. The phone rings, he picks up.

GARABEDIAN

Law offices of Mitchell Garabedian.

INT. PROVIDENCE AIRPORT, PROVIDENCE, RI - DAY

Mike walks quickly through the concourse with his duffle bag.

MIKE

Mitch, it's Mike, I've been trying to reach you...

INTERCUT THE SCENES

GARABEDIAN

I'm the only one here, Mr. Rezendes. I don't have time to talk to you.

MIKE

Just tell me, did you refile those documents yet?

GARABEDIAN

No, I did not. I just got Sweeney's order, these things take time.

MIKE

Great, that's great, Mitch, if you could hold off on refiling...

MITCH

Hold off?

MIKE

I have to head down to Florida and look into the flight school where Atta and his team --

GARABEDIAN

What does that have to do with me?

MIKE

Look, once you refile there's gonna be a record, a public record --

GARABEDIAN

I received a judicial order. The church is watching me very closely.

MIKE

Right, but Mitch --

GARABEDIAN (CONT'D)

One misstep and they will go right to the bar association.

MIKE

Mitch, listen, everything's upside down, I just need a few weeks.

GARABEDIAN

I can't make you any promises. Call me when you are back from Florida.

Garabedian hangs up.

MIKE

Mitch! Shit.

Mike notices they are closing the gate.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Hey, hold it. Hold it.

INT. DOYLE'S PUB, JAMAICA PLAIN - NIGHT

A relatively empty bar. ON A TV, we see CNN coverage of the THIRD DAY OF US BOMBING IN AFGHANISTAN. Phil Saviano sits in a booth across from Robby and Sacha. Phil's on the edge.

SAVIANO

I get it, no one wants to read about kids getting molested by priests, especially now. People need the church, they need to know there's order in the world. Terrorists and dirty bombs and anthrax, it's scary shit. Well, guess what? I needed the church too. I still do.

ROBBY

Phil, listen to me. We were taken off this story by our editors for reasons that are pretty evident. It's just gonna be a few more...

SAVIANO

You asked a lot of people to open up their hearts to you and to relive some very painful experiences...

ROBBY

And very soon we're going to...

Saviano SLAMS the table.

SAVIANO

It's October! You're doing the same thing you guys did last time, you're dropping us!

ROBBY

Phil, listen to me --

SAVIANO

I'm tired of listening, I'm tired of waiting, if you don't print this I'm gonna tell everybody how the Globe set us up again. I'm sure the Herald would like to hear that story.

SACHA

Phil, can I say something?
(off Phil's look)
We're not going away.

Robby looks over, a little surprised. Sacha is emotional.

SACHA (CONT'D)

I have talked to dozens of survivors, I've sat with them, in their homes, met their families. I could never forget them. We are going to tell this story and we're going to tell it right. We just need a few more weeks, that's all we're asking. Please.

Sacha connects with him. Phil's emotions overcome him and he breaks down crying. As Sacha takes his hand...

INT. HOLIDAY INN, LOBBY, MIAMI, FL - DAY

A beautiful Florida morning, palm trees through glass doors... of the RUNDOWN LOBBY. With a puny breakfast spread.

Mike loads danish onto a plate.

INT. HOLIDAY INN, HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Mike pads down the hall. A phone RINGS. He recognizes it, starts hustling for his door, reaching for his key when--

MIKE

Shit.

His plate of danish falls on the floor. Mike doesn't have time, he pushes into --

INT. HOLIDAY INN, HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Duffel open, clothes everywhere. He reaches for his cell.

MIKE (INTO PHONE)

Mike Rezendes.

INT. ROBBY'S CAR (MOVING) - SAME TIME

Robby drives.

ROBBY (INTO PHONE)

Enjoying your vacation?

MIKE (INTO PHONE)

Not at all. What's up?

INTERCUT THE SCENES

ROBBY (INTO PHONE)

Mitch Garabedian just called me.

MIKE (INTO PHONE)

Mitch? Why'd he call you?

ROBBY (INTO PHONE)

Probably because he knew you'd yell at him. He refiled the docs.

MIKE (INTO PHONE)

(panicking)

What? That little chicken shit, those docs are public, Robby, we gotta get them before anybody...

ROBBY (INTO PHONE)

I know, I just talked to Marty.

MIKE (INTO PHONE)

We're back?

ROBBY (INTO PHONE)

Courthouse doors open at ten.

Mike starts throwing clothes into his suitcase.

MIKE (INTO PHONE)
Got it, I'll get on the first-- Can
somebody book me a--

ROBBY (INTO PHONE)
You've got a flight at noon.

MIKE (INTO PHONE)
Ah, that's freakin' great, that's,
man that's freakin' great. Wanna
meet me at the courthouse?

ROBBY (INTO PHONE)
No, I've got something I have to
take care of.

Robby snaps his phone shut as he parks the car in front of --

EXT. BROOKLINE HOUSE - DAY

The SUBURBAN HOUSE we saw Robby at before 9/11. Robby gets out of the car, walks past the AUTUMN LEAVES, knocks on the door. The WOMAN we saw earlier with three children answers.

ROBBY
Mrs. Lyons.

MRS. LYONS
Yes?

ROBBY
I'm Walter Robinson from the Boston
Globe. I was a few years ahead of
your husband at BC High, we're doing
a story about one of his teachers.
Do you have a minute?

Off Mrs. Lyons, her expression darkening --

EXT. BC HIGH, DORCHESTER - DAY

The BC HIGH SIGN. Teenagers play football in the foreground.

JACK DUNN (V.O.)
We understand the nature of the
allegations, Robby...

INT. BC HIGH, PRINCIPAL KEMEZA'S OFFICE - DAY

Robby and Sacha sit with PRINCIPAL BILL KEMEZA, 50s, and the mucks we saw at the Gala, Jack Dunn and Peter Conley.

JACK DUNN

I'm just not sure what you want from Principal Kemeza.

ROBBY

Well, Talbot taught history and economics from 1972 to 1980. He coached soccer and hockey.

JACK DUNN

That was long before Principal Kemeza took over.

ROBBY

He knows how this place works. We want to know how it's possible that the faculty, the Principal, the President... how no one knew what was going on at the time.

JACK DUNN

I graduated in 1979 and I had no idea about any of this, so if you're suggesting that Brother Gibbons and Brother Callahan --

ROBBY

Gibbons and Callahan ran this place like the goddamn navy, you really don't think they knew?

PETER CONLEY

It's a big school, Robby, you know that. You're talking about seven alleged victims over eight years.

ROBBY

Seven we know about, Pete.

JACK DUNN

This is ridiculous.

PRESIDENT KAMEZA

Jack --

JACK DUNN

It's a witch hunt.

PRESIDENT KAMEZA

Jack. If I had been President back then, I would have known.

Conley looks at him, sharp.

PETER CONLEY

Bill, I don't think you should --

PRESIDENT KAMEZA

Come on, why do you think they sent him up to Cheverus? You know they wanted to get him out of town.

JACK DUNN

(to Robby, direct)

This is off the record. This conversation never happened.

ROBBY

Of course not.

Robby shakes his head and rises. A beat, then he turns back.

ROBBY (CONT'D)

I went to see one of Talbot's victims in Brookline yesterday. The guy was one of the better ones, he had a wife, kids, good job. Never told anyone. His wife learned about it in his suicide note.

(beat, to Jack)

He graduated in '79 too, Jack. For the record.

Robby slams out. Off Sacha, watching him.

INT. BC HIGH, HALLWAY - DAY

Robby and Sacha walk down the hall. We hear kids in the classrooms. Robby looks UPSET.

SACHA

Why was Pete Conley there?

ROBBY

Good question.

Sacha glances over at Robby, reads him.

SACHA

You alright?

ROBBY

Not really.

As he pushes out the high school doors, we --

EXT. SUFFOLK COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY

Mike walks down the COURTHOUSE STEPS, starting to look through Garabedian's refiled EXHIBITS.

He gets about halfway down and PAUSES. READING. In the middle of the steps, engrossed.

Suddenly he slams the binder shut and runs down the steps, screaming at a cab, which screeches to a halt. Mike jumps in.

MIKE (V.O.)

Robby, I got the docs, it's incredible, you're never gonna believe what's in here.

The cab pulls out and into traffic.

MIKE (V.O.)

There's a letter to Law from this woman Margaret Gallant, she lived in JP in the early 80's when Geoghan was there... listen to this...

(Reading)

"Our family is rooted in the Church, our desire is to protect the holy orders even in the midst of our agony over the seven boys in our family who have been violated."
Seven, Robby. There's more...

EXT. BOSTON - DAY

The cab winds its way through Boston... past TRINITY CHURCH in COPLEY SQUARE... past ragged TRIPLE-DECKERS in ROXBURY...

MIKE (V.O.)

"It was suggested we keep silent, but Father Geoghan's actions... We did not question the Authority of the Church two years ago, but since he is still in his parish..." She sent it to Law and Law did shit! You gotta see the handwriting, pure Palmer method, money down she went to Catholic school...

Margaret Gallant's words hang over the city...

EXT. DORCHESTER - DAY

The cab is stuck in a TRAFFIC CIRCLE. We can see the Globe building down the road about a mile...

MIKE (V.O.)

Here's another one to Law, same year, from an auxiliary bishop.

EXT. BOSTON GLOBE - LATER

The cab pulls up. Mike jumps out, throws cash at the driver.

MIKE (V.O.)

"A word on the recent assignment of Father John Geoghan as an associate at Saint Julia's in Weston. Father Geoghan has a history of homosexual involvement with young boys."

INT. GLOBE, LOBBY - DAY

The GUARD we saw earlier. Mike races in, HOPS the turnstile and heads up the stairs.

MIKE (V.O.)

"I understand his recent departure from Saint Brendan's may be related to this problem." This is from the inside! They knew. They all knew.

INT. GLOBE, BULLPEN - DAY

Mike races down the hall, jostling a couple of reporters on the way. Kurkjian, at his desk, clocks this.

MIKE (V.O.)

"I am concerned about further scandal, I wonder if Father Geoghan should not be reduced to weekend work while receiving therapy."

INT. GLOBE, SPOTLIGHT OFFICE - DAY

The whole team sits around as Mike finishes reading.

MIKE

"Sincerely yours in our Lord, Most Reverend John M. D'Arcy, Auxiliary Bishop of Boston. December 7, 1984."

MATTY

An auxiliary bishop wrote that? Are you kidding me?

We see the letters and two envelopes, both addressed to Cardinal Law. The team is reeling.

SACHA

It's incredible. He broke ranks. When did Mrs. Gallant write her letter?

MIKE

She first wrote to Medeiros in 1982
and then she wrote to Law in '84.

MATTY

And he freakin' ignored her. How do
you ignore that letter?!

Mike nods, turns to Robby.

MIKE

We've got him. You can't read those
letters and think anything else.

ROBBY

Yeah. This is good work.

MIKE

I'm good to write it up?

ROBBY

No, not yet.

MIKE

Why not? We got it.

ROBBY

This is Law covering for one priest.
There's another 90 out there.

MIKE

Sure and we can print that story
when we get it. These documents are
public, Robby. Anyone one can get
them now.

ROBBY

I know that, Mike.

MIKE

If we don't run to press, the
Herald or somebody else is
gonna find these letters and
butcher the story.

ROBBY

So we write a cover piece, we
keep our eye on the Herald.

MIKE

A cover piece? What's that
gonna do?

ROBBY

If they run a story, we're ready.

MIKE

(anger building)
You're gonna lose this fucking
story, we can not hesitate again --

ROBBY

I'm not hesitating, but I am not gonna rush to press when there's a bigger story to --

MIKE

Dammit, Robby, I've been trailing this guy for two months and he finally...

ROBBY

This isn't about you, Mike! This is about the story.

MIKE

(losing it)

I know exactly what this is about and I'm telling you, Robby, I'm not gonna let somebody else come in and fuck this up! I am going to nail these scumbags, that's what they deserve, we need to print this and show people that no one can get away with it! Not a priest or a Bishop or the fricking Pope! No one! No one!

Robby, Sacha, and Matty are still. Mike looks around the room, out of breath, adrenaline draining. Robby is pissed.

ROBBY

Are you finished?

MIKE

Yeah. I am.

Mike storms out.

INT. SACHA'S HOUSEE - NIGHT

Sacha and Hans are eating. Sacha is lost in thought.

HANS

Anybody home?

SACHA

Oh. Sorry. I was just...

HANS

Yeah, I know.

The doorbell RINGS. Hans gives her a look. Expecting someone? Sacha's not. Hans gets up, checks the peephole...

He opens the door. It's Mike. With a brown paper bag.

MIKE

I found some good Belgian beer.

EXT. SACHA'S HOUSE, BACK PORCH - LATER

Sacha walks onto the porch with two beers, hands one to Mike.

MIKE

Thanks for letting me crash dinner.

SACHA

I wasn't the best date anyway.

Mike gets it, the case.

MIKE

Kinda lost my shit today.

SACHA

It's a tough story, Mike.

MIKE

Yeah.

(beat)

You ever think of going back?

SACHA

To the church? No. I go for my grandmother, but it's not for me. How about you?

Mike considers this.

MIKE

You grow up with something, it's hard to completely shut the door. I guess there was a part of me that thought, one day, maybe...

(then)

But when I read those letters today, it was like something cracked. Something I didn't know was there.

Mike stares out. Emotional.

SACHA

It's a shitty feeling.

MIKE

Yeah. Gonna be a shitty feeling for a lot of people. Pisses me off.

(then)

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

I get what Robby's trying to do, I just... this is our job. We need to make this right.

SACHA

We will.

Off Mike, we --

INT. FAIRMONT HOTEL, OAK ROOM - NIGHT

The posh bar of one of Boston's oldest hotels. Robby is at the bar, a scotch in front of him.

PETER CONLEY

Looks like a long day.

Peter Conley walks up. Nods to the barman.

PETER CONLEY (CONT'D)

Sorry to make it longer.

(to the barkeep)

Same.

ROBBY

Anyone ever say no to a drink with you, Pete?

PETER CONLEY

Sure. Trick is to keep asking.

The drink arrives.

PETER CONLEY (CONT'D)

Health.

They drink.

ROBBY

You here for the Cardinal?

PETER CONLEY

I wouldn't pretend to speak for the Cardinal. I leave that to Donna Morrissey.

Robby smiles. Pete is smooth.

PETER CONLEY (CONT'D)

This guy Baron, you like him?

ROBBY

He's growing on me.

PETER CONLEY

I'm not sure he's so good for the paper.

ROBBY

No?

PETER CONLEY

Globe's not what it used to be. You run a story like this, you will lose subscribers. You remember the calls after Porter?

ROBBY

That's what the switchboard's for.

PETER CONLEY

You've had a good career, Robby. Hell, a great one. You want to end it as the guy who brought down the Globe?

(then)

We take care of our own. It's what we do. Baron's not one of us.

Robby looks at Conley. A long beat. He shakes his head.

ROBBY

This is how it happens, a guy leans on a guy and suddenly the whole fucking town looks the other way.

PETER CONLEY

Goodnight, Robby.

Conley leaves. Yeah, that's exactly how it happens. Off Robby, BROODING --

INT. GLOBE, SPOTLIGHT OFFICE - DAY

The whole team sits working. Robby's phone RINGS, he answers.

ROBBY

Robby. What? No shit.

The team looks towards Robby's office.

ROBBY (CONT'D)

When? Okay. Thanks.

Robby hangs up.

MIKE

What's up?

ROBBY

Sweeney ruled for us. She ruled to
unseal the documents.

MIKE

No shit.

The group sits stunned. PRELAP --

ALBANO (PRELAP)

The church already filed an appeal.

INT. GLOBE, CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Marty, Ben, Albano, and Drohan (the Metro Editor we met
earlier) sit with Robby and the rest of the Spotlight team.

ALBANO

But the trial court's ruling is
generally upheld in these matters.

MARTY

So, uh, when would we get the docs?

ALBANO

Probably takes Cohn two weeks to
rule, then there'll be a redaction
process... I'd say you're looking at
mid-January? Right around the start
of the Geoghan trial.

MARTY

Okay. Thanks, John and nice work.

Albano exits.

BEN

Marty, this is a major first
amendment victory. Metro should run
something --

DROHAN

Something? A Catholic judge rules
against the church, that should be
on the front page.

ROBBY

We run this big, the Herald's gonna
be on it.

DROHAN

They should be, this is big news.

ROBBY

We gotta bury this.

DROHAN

I disagree. We'll find a way to get the docs a few days before everyone else, who cares if they're on the story?

ROBBY

I do.

DROHAN

Why? Enlighten me.

ROBBY

I'd rather not.

BEN

Alright, alright. Marty?

Marty considers, reads Robby.

MARTY

Tom, get the story ready. I'll get back to you on placement.

Marching orders. Drohan exits, not happy.

BEN

What's going on?

Mike just looks at Robby. Robby comes clean.

ROBBY

Some of the sealed documents are already public.

MARTY

Uh, excuse me?

Robby looks to Mike. Go ahead.

MIKE

Garabedian slipped them into a public motion, a parishioner and a Bishop writing Law about Geoghan in the eighties.

MARTY

And these letters prove that Law...?

Mike doesn't say anything. Marty looks to Robby.

ROBBY

Yeah. They nail him.

BEN

So you had hard proof that Cardinal Law was negligent and you didn't bother to tell us? That's the goddamn story, Robby.

Mike glances over at Sacha, keeps his mouth shut.

ROBBY

Law isn't the whole story.

MARTY

Uh, he isn't?

ROBBY

This predates Law, it's been going on for decades, priest after bad priest kept in circulation. We've talked to dozens of victims, they were all steered away from the courts, told to keep the quiet by the church, by the laity, by lawyers and teachers and cops. It's what you asked us for, it's the whole story. And we're close, Marty. Real close.

Marty considers. He looks to Ben who shrugs.

MARTY

You've got multiple sources on these stories?

ROBBY

On some of them. And we might be able to get someone from the other side of the aisle.

MARTY

You have someone inside the church?

ROBBY

A lawyer on that side.

Marty considers.

MARTY

There's a lot riding on this. If the Herald finds those letters...

ROBBY

I know. We've got a cover story
ready to go.

Marty doesn't like his answer. It's tense. Ben turns to Mike.

BEN

How long to write up the letters?

MIKE

If I'm pushing? Two weeks.

Mike glances over at Robby, makes an effort.

MIKE (CONT'D)

But with everything this city went
through in September, I assume we're
not gonna publish this at Christmas.

Mike looks to Ben. Ben hesitates, deciding whether to pick
up the baton. Then...

BEN

We could give Robby six weeks. Try
to run the whole thing just after
New Years. Make it a curtain raiser
for the Geoghan Trial.

Marty considers. A beat, then turns to Ben --

MARTY

Tell Drohan to bury the verdict
inside metro.

(then, to Robby)

You've got six weeks. Uh, and for
future reference, if there's a major
development in a story, I'd like to
be informed.

ROBBY

Understood.

Marty exits. Ben turns to Robby.

BEN

Since when don't you tell me about a
break?

ROBBY

I wasn't sure you'd back me on this,
Ben.

Ben looks at him, refrains.

BEN

I got you six weeks. Use it.

Ben pushes out. Robby turns to Mike.

ROBBY

Thanks.

MIKE

Let's just get this.

INVESTIGATION/WRITING MONTAGE

We hear a lone voice, not off key but not pretty, starting into SILENT NIGHT. We see a SERIES OF SHOTS...

Mike in SPOTLIGHT, pecking out the story on his laptop.

A SHITTY FOYER IN SOUTHIE. A woman opens her front door. We see Sacha in the door. The woman lets her in.

Late fall, trees bare outside a TRIPLE-DECKER IN ROXBURY. A door opens, Robby shakes a middle aged man's hand, walks out.

Matty stands on CRAPPY CORNER IN DORCHESTER, writing something on a pad. It starts to rain. Matty keeps writing.

Robby in SPOTLIGHT, reading Mike's story, giving him notes. As we hear more voices join in Silent Night...

Matty in a RUNDOWN LIVING ROOM IN HINGHAM, talking to an older couple.

Robby in a MUCH NICER LIVING ROOM IN NEWTON, also talking to an older couple.

A man with his kids, putting up Christmas lights on a NICE HOUSE IN BROOKLINE. Sacha walks up, gets his attention.

In BEN'S OFFICE, Robby and Mike watch Ben read over the story. More voices, a ragged chorus now sing Silent Night.

Sacha sitting with Phil, Joe and another guy at a DINER, some Christmas decor. Sacha takes a bite, writes on a pad.

ANOTHER DINER. Robby sitting across from a priest. It starts snowing outside...

JUDGE'S CHAMBERS. Matty sitting with a judge in robes.

Mike in SPOTLIGHT. Rewriting the story, the snow coming down outside as the chorus to Silent Night swells and...

Sacha KNOCKS on a door of a ROW HOUSE IN ROXBURY.

Matty KNOCKS on a door of a DOUBLE-DECKER IN CAMBRIDGE.

Robby KNOCKS on a door of an OLD HOUSE BY THE CATHEDRAL. The music takes us into --

EXT. GLOBE, NEWSROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

A HOLIDAY GATHERING in full swing. Christmas decor, eggnog, beer, fruitcake. Reporters finish the chorus to Silent Night.

The glass offices are dark... save for Ben's. PUSH IN on Ben's office, a few editors huddled, reading.

DROHAN (PRELAP)
Jesus. This is gonna be... Jesus.

INT. GLOBE, BEN'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Ben, Robby and Mike look on as Drohan and a SENIOR FEMALE EDITOR read through the story.

SENIOR FEMALE EDITOR
We get a response from Law?

ROBBY
Lake Street is stonewalling.

DROHAN
Yeah, we need something from Law but I think it's ready.

BEN
Get a quote from Lake Street.

MIKE
Will do.

BEN
(to Robby)
Where are we on your end?

ROBBY
I got stories on seventy priests,
two sources on most of 'em.

BEN
You get confirmation from anyone on
the other side?

ROBBY
No. Not yet.

BEN

You want to run that story it needs
to be bulletproof. You got a card
to play, now's the time to play it.

A beat. Off Robby --

INT. TIM O'NEILL'S OFFICE, RECEPTION - LATE AFTERNOON

Traditional law firm, dark wood, red leather. A receptionist
sits typing. Robby rolls in.

RECEPTIONIST

Can I help you?

He blows right past her. She follows, alarmed.

INT. TIM O'NEILL'S OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

Tim sits reading over a file. He looks up, sees Robby,
walking into his office. He closes the file and sits back.

TIM

Didn't see you on the books.

The receptionist appears in the door, concerned.

ROBBY

I'm out of time, Tim.

Tim waves off the receptionist. He motions for Robby to sit.
But Robby pulls out a list. Puts it on the desk.

ROBBY (CONT'D)

We've got cover up stories on
seventy-five priests. We think
we're good on about thirty of them,
we've got a plaintiff's attorney and
victim interviews. But the boss
isn't gonna run this unless I've got
solid confirmation from your side.

Tim looks at Robby.

TIM

My side?

ROBBY

Time to choose, Tim.

TIM

You're out of line, Robby.

ROBBY

Come on, Timmy. This whole city is out of line. Lawyers, prosecutors, politicians, cops. The whole damn city looked the other way. Our city, Timmy. And we need to put an end to it. You and me. We can put an end to it.

Tim considers, torn. He looks through the list.

TIM

I gotta think about this, Robby.

ROBBY

I need an answer now. You need to do this, Tim.

TIM

Don't tell me what I need to do! Yeah, I defended these scumbags, but that's my job. You're the one who's supposed to keep us honest, where the fuck were you?

Robby is silent.

TIM (CONT'D)

Ninety priests, hundreds of victims and no one at the Globe ever had a clue? Years and years and no one in that newsroom ever thought to go after this story? You guys looked the other way along with the rest of us.

Robby reacts. Then takes the list and walks out.

INT. HALLWAY, OUTSIDE TIM O'NEILL'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Robby walks to the elevator, shaken and angry. He hits the button. A beat, then --

TIM (O.C.)

Gimme the list.

Robby turns, finds O'Neill. Robby hands it to him. Tim takes out a pen. He carefully looks over the first page...

He flips to the second page, checks the names, pen poised. He gets the bottom without circling a single name.

Then he flips back to the first page. He looks at Robby. And he circles THE ENTIRE first page. And then the second.

He holds out the list. Robby takes it, nothing more to say. Tim just turns and walks away.

INT. GLOBE, SPOTLIGHT OFFICE - NIGHT

Mike works the phones. Sacha and Matty work alongside him.

MIKE

Yes.. ah huh. And...

(Mike fists pumps)

Great, Jack, thanks. I owe you.

(hangs up, to Matty)

Jack Dunn just left residence, he made some headway, Law wants to comment. Donna Morrissey's calling.

SACHA

What'd you offer them?

MIKE

Full page, unedited.

MATTY

Jesus. No wonder they went for it.

SACHA

We ever offer that before?

MIKE

Not that I know about, I think we--

The phone rings. Mike grabs it.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Mike Rezendez?

(playing for Matty, Sacha)

Hi Donna, thanks for calling. So how do you want to handle this?

(then)

What? Are you kidding me? I just hung up with Jack and...

He listens, then he grabs a pad and starts writing furiously.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Okay. If that's how you feel about it. Uh huh. OK. Bye Donna.

Mike hangs up.

MATTY

You get a quote?

MIKE
Nope, but I might've gotten
something better.

Mike runs out.

INT. GLOBE, MARTY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON a RED PEN. Running through copy. REVEAL Ben and Robby standing over Marty. They trade a look.

MARTY
No adjectives.

Mike rolls in. He looks to Robby who shrugs. After a moment, Marty finishes the article.

MARTY (CONT'D)
Good work.
(to Mike)
Did we get a quote from Lake Street?

MIKE
Law turned down the interview.

BEN
When?

MIKE
Ten minutes ago. Donna Morrissey
told me they didn't even want to
know what the questions were.

ROBBY
Is that what she said?

MIKE
Yup.

Mike gives a slight smile. Robby looks to Marty.

ROBBY
There you go.

MARTY
(writing)
"The church had no interest in
knowing what the Globe's questions
would be."
(hands it to Mike)
Work it in somewhere above the fold.
Good work, Mike.

Mike nods.

BEN

Those letters are gold, Mike.

(then, to Marty)

We need to talk about the phones.

ROBBY

Matty and Sacha will be in Sunday morning finishing Monday's folo, they'll be able to cover our phones.

Marty looks confused. Robby explains.

ROBBY (CONT'D)

We run the Spotlight tip line with the article in case people want to reach out with more information.

BEN

I'm more concerned about the phones upstairs.

MARTY

At reception?

BEN

We're gonna want extra staff to handle blow back.

MARTY

Uh, how bad do you think it'll be?

BEN

Switchboard had a helluva time when we ran Porter.

MIKE

It was tied up for weeks, we had folks calling in who couldn't get through, it was a problem.

ROBBY

Not to mention the letters and the picketers.

BEN

This is gonna be worse.

MARTY

Let's talk to security. And let's add people at the front desk.

(to Robby)

How's it coming on your end?

Robby pulls out O'Neill's list, puts it on Marty's desk.

MARTY (CONT'D)

Uh, this is...

ROBBY

Tim O'Neill. Repped the priests.

BEN

You got confirmation? On how many?

ROBBY

All of them.

BEN

Really?

MIKE

That's gonna be the nail.

Mike is impressed. But Robby shrugs.

MARTY

Something the matter?

ROBBY

When I was with Tim he asked me why we didn't catch it sooner. Why it took us so long.

BEN

So?

ROBBY

I didn't have an answer.

Mike watches Ben, who reacts.

BEN

The story needed Spotlight. No one reporter could have broken this...

ROBBY

Spotlight's been around since '72.

(then)

We all saw Law react to Porter. We had a lot of the pieces. We had Burns, we had Geoghan, Saviano --

BEN

Ah, cut the crap, Robby. We got dozens of reporters going at a hundred miles an hour, shit falls through the cracks. We got it now, that's what counts, we did our job.

ROBBY

Sure, once Marty showed up. But what if he hadn't?

It's a gut punch. Mike reels a bit, taking it in.

MARTY

Uh, can I say something?

Robby shrugs.

MARTY (CONT'D)

Sometimes it's easy to forget that we spend most of our time stumbling around in the dark. Suddenly the light's turned on, and there's fair share of blame to go around.

(then)

I can't speak to what happened before I arrived but your team has done some very good work. The kind of reporting that makes a paper like ours essential. But my guess? Tomorrow's story is just the beginning. Law's going to come at us with everything he has. And as hard as you've worked over the last six months, you'll have to work harder. So if you need to take a minute and contemplate your sins, fine. But I need everyone ready to go Monday morning.

Off Mike, processing, troubled.

INT. GLOBE, SPOTLIGHT OFFICE - NIGHT

Mike's on the phone. Sacha and Matty pack up, download Robby, who's still chewing on O'Neill's question.

MATTY

I put the last of the Shanley interviews on your desk.

SACHA

We'll have the Monday piece to you by noon. And I'll be in at nine tomorrow in case we get any calls.

MATTY

Me too. You need a ride?

SACHA

No. I'm having dinner with my grandmother, I wanna let her know.

ROBBY

Good idea.

Robby sees Mike hanging up the phone.

ROBBY (CONT'D)

Mike?

MIKE

Copy shipped. It's on the presses.

They all look at Mike, the moment upon them.

MATTY

I guess that's that. You know tomorrow is Epiphany Sunday?

SACHA

Seems appropriate.
(exiting)
I gotta go. Night guys.

MATTY

Night, Sacha. Good work, Mike.
See you Monday.

Matty leaves. Mike puts on his coat, eyes still on the wall.

MIKE

There'd be a lot fewer names on this wall if we got this back in '92 when we were working Porter.

ROBBY

Or '82. Or '72.

Mike considers. Or rather doesn't want to.

MIKE

This story is gonna make a difference, Robby. It's gonna mean a lot to a lot of people. That's gotta count for something, right?

ROBBY

(restrained)
Yeah.

Off Robby, still STRUGGLING --

INT. GARABEDIAN'S OFFICE = NIGHT

Mitch sits, working late. A knock on the door. He looks up. It's Mike.

GARABEDIAN
You have an appointment?

MIKE
No, Mitch. I wanted you to see this.

Mike hands the paper to Mitch, he starts to read.

GARABEDIAN
Hmm.

Mitch keeps reading.

GARABEDIAN (CONT'D)
I see you used the letters.

MIKE
Yeah, we did. They make the story.

Garabedian sets it down.

GARABEDIAN
Thank you for bringing it by.

MIKE
That's it?

GARABEDIAN
I have work to do, Mr. Rezendes. I hope your story helps.

Mitch goes back to work. Same old Mitch.

MIKE
It will, Mitch.

Mike turns to leave, walks out into --

INT. GARABEDIAN OFFICE, HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS.

Mike walks back towards the elevator, something catches his eye. He pauses, peers into --

INT. GARABEDIAN OFFICE, SMALL WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A MOTHER sits with TWO YOUNG CHILDREN, ten and eight, playing innocently. The mother, distraught, fingers ROSARY BEADS.

It's reminiscent of our open in Hingham.

GARABEDIAN
Both boys were abused.

In the HALLWAY, Garabedian's standing behind Mike.

GARABEDIAN (CONT'D)
In Jamaica Plain. Two weeks ago.

Mike reacts.

GARABEDIAN (CONT'D)
Keep doing your work, Mr. Rezendes.

Garabedian goes in. He sits, talks softly to the mother.

Mike just stands there. STARING into the room. His eyes drift to the two kids. He watches them. Gutted.

SIPE (PRELAP, OVER THE PHONE)
Richard Sipe.

INT. MIKE'S CAR (PARKED) - NIGHT

Mike sits in his car. Holding his phone. LOST.

MIKE
Hey, it's Mike.

SIPE (OVER THE PHONE)
Did you finish?

MIKE (INTO PHONE)
Yeah.

SIPE (OVER THE PHONE)
I look forward to reading it.

Mike doesn't respond.

SIPE (CONT'D)
Mike? You there?

MIKE
You know, I tried to get the Globe to hire me for years. When I got the job, everything else just fell away. Paper was all I cared about. Cause I knew it was important work, work that could change things.

SIPE
It sounds like a calling.

Beat.

MIKE

How do you do it? How do you
continue to believe in something,
anything, when you...

Mike trails off.

SIPE (OVER THE PHONE)

Faith. That's why I'm still
Catholic, Mike. I need my faith.

MIKE

You never lost it? Knowing what you
know.

SIPE

I haven't been able to walk into a
church in years. That was my
calling, Mike. That was my home. And
I can't walk into one.

(then)

But the church is an institution of
men, Mike. And even well meaning
men will fail. Are you familiar
with the passing?

MIKE (INTO PHONE)

The passing? No.

SIPE (OVER THE PHONE)

I'd like to think the failings of
the Church are passing. And my
faith, well, my faith is in the
eternal.

(then)

I try to separate the eternal from
the passing.

MIKE (INTO PHONE)

Is that easy?

SIPE (OVER THE PHONE)

No. It's damn hard.

Mike smiles.

SIPE (OVER THE PHONE) (CONT'D)

There's a poem that I like. R.S.
Thomas. He was an Anglican priest.
I think he got it.

MIKE (INTO PHONE)

Try me.

SIPE (OVER THE PHONE)
"I emerge from the mind's cave into
the worse darkness outside..."

BOSTON MONTAGE

Sipe's voice takes us through a SERIES OF SHOTS...

ROBBY'S CAR parked across the bay. Robby sits behind the wheel, stares through the windshield at the sparkling Boston skyline, a worse darkness surrounding him.

SIPE (V.O.)
"...where things pass and the Lord
is in none of them."

Stacks of GLOBE NEWSPAPERS coming off THE PRESSES. Men tying them up, tossing them into GREEN AND GOLD GLOBE TRUCKS.

SIPE (V.O.)
"Ah, what balance is needed..."

Sacha with her Grandmother in her GRANDMOTHER'S LIVING ROOM, tomorrow's Globe on the coffee table.

SIPE (V.O.)
"...at the edges of such an abyss."

The GREEN AND GOLD GLOBE TRUCKS rolling out from the Globe.

SIPE (V.O.)
"I am alone on the surface of a
turning planet."

Matty with his wife and kids at the DINNER TABLE. The family eats. Matty just stares off. His wife looks at him, WORRIED.

SIPE (V.O.)
"What to do but, like Michelangelo's
Adam, put my hand out..."

Men dropping stacks of papers at NEWSSTANDS. A kiosk owner reads the headline. **Church Allowed Abuse by Priest for Years.**

SIPE (V.O.)
"...into unknown space..."

Robby's wife Barbara sits in THE STUDY. She checks her watch then her phone. CONCERNED, she walks to the front door.

SIPE (V.O.)
"...hoping for the reciprocating
touch?"

She opens the door, looks outside. Surprised, she walks out --

EXT. ROBBY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Robby's car is parked in the driveway. As Barbara walks to it, we see Robby behind the wheel, staring into space.

BARBARA

Robby?

Robby, red eyed, doesn't move. Barbara approaches, opens the door, he gets out. She hugs him.

INT. GLOBE, GILMAN'S OFFICE - MORNING

Marty walks in. Finds Gilman at the window. A copy of the Globe on the coffee table.

MARTY

Dick.

GILMAN

Morning, Marty.

Gilman doesn't turn around. Marty joins him at the window.

GILMAN (CONT'D)

It's a good article, Marty.

MARTY

Uh, thanks.

A beat. Gilman nods towards the front of the building. FROM HIS POV we see a few security guys. No protestors.

GILMAN

No protestors.

MARTY

Maybe they're still at church.

Dick just looks at Marty.

INT. MIKE'S CAR (PARKED)/EXT. GLOBE, PARKING LOT - MORNING

Mike sits in his car, the lone car in the empty Globe lot. He stares at the building. Emotional. Still a bit lost.

Suddenly, someone raps on the window. It's Robby. Mike lowers his window.

ROBBY

It's your day off.

MIKE

Yours too.

(then)

No tee time?

Robby smiles.

ROBBY

You wanna go in?

MIKE

I've been thinking about that.

ROBBY

Come on, phones should be ringing
off the hook about now.

Mike gets out of his car. The two men are spent.

MIKE

Helluva story, huh?

ROBBY

Yeah.

The two men turn and approach the Globe.

INT. GLOBE, NEWSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Robby and Mike walk in. It's QUIET. Confused, Robby and Mike approach the front desk. LINDA, the receptionist, and four others sit by the phones. BORED.

MIKE

Morning, Linda. No calls?

LINDA

Easiest overtime I ever made. I
sent two of mine down to Spotlight
to help out Matty and Sacha.

Mike and Robby share a look. Help?

INT. GLOBE, HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Robby and Mike enter from the stairwell. They walk down the corridor with a sense of purpose. As they do, we hear...

A MURMUR. Buzzing. And RINGING PHONES. Mike and Robby trade a look, pick up the pace. As they approach Spotlight, the murmur GROWS. We hear more phones... and VOICES...

Mike and Robby get to the door. We HOLD ON them for a second as they stand in the doorway, looking into --

INT. GLOBE, SPOTLIGHT OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Chaos. Sacha and Matty and a few INTERNS answering phones. Overwhelmed. An intern cups a phone, turns to Matty --

INTERN

I got another Shanley victim.

SACHA

I'll take it.

Sacha takes the call. Matty talks into a phone as he marks up the board... it has tons of new names and phone numbers.

MATT (INTO THE PHONE)

Uh huh, yeah. I know it's tough to talk about. Thanks for calling, OK. Bye.

SACHA (INTO THE PHONE)

This is Sacha Pfeiffer. Yes, thank you for calling. Who am I talking with?

Robby and Mike walk in as Matty hangs up, jots down a note.

MATTY

Hey, the phones have been ringing all morning. We've got a dozen new victims, all different priests.

MIKE

Holy shit.

MATTY

Holy shit is right.

(picks up a phone)

This is Matty Carroll. Yes, yes.

Thanks very much for calling.

(cups phone, to the guys)

Are you guys gonna just stand there?

Robby looks at Mike. A phone rings. Mike grabs it.

MIKE (INTO THE PHONE)

This is Spotlight.

Robby reaches for a pad, a hand on Mike's shoulder. Mike looks up about to say something... but Robby heads to his office. Mike gets back to work, ringing phones take us to--

NEWSPAPER MONTAGE

A GLOBE TRUCK. A man throws a stack of papers off the truck.

Jan 10, 2002. A 'Grieving' Law Apologizes.

CUT TO ANOTHER GLOBE TRUCK, another stack of papers.

Feb 25, 2002. MacLeish Files 550 Lawsuits by Alleged Victims.

CUT TO SPOTLIGHT. The team keeps working. Time passes.

CUT TO A NEW YORK TIMES TRUCK. A man tosses a stack of Times.

Mar 14, 2002. *Bishop Accused of Ignoring Abuse in NYC.*

CUT TO AN ARIZONA REPUBLIC NEWS TRUCK. A man tosses a stack.

Aug 20, 2002. *Arizona Abuse Case Names Bishop, Monsignor.*

CUT TO A GLOBE TRUCK. A stack of papers.

Dec 14, 2002. *Pope Accepts Law's resignation in Rome.*

CUT TO SPOTLIGHT. The team keeps working amidst BOXES OF FILES. Kurkjian and another reporter join in. Time passes.

CUT TO WARSAW, POLAND. A stack of papers, The Warsaw Voice.

Mar 3, 2004. *Clergy sex abuse scandal overwhelms POLAND.*

CUT TO DUBLIN, IRELAND. A stack of papers, The Irish Times.

Nov 9, 2006. *Priest sex abuse scandal hits Ireland.*

CUT TO SPOTLIGHT. The team keeps working. Now with FOUR MORE REPORTERS, the room filled with boxes. Time passes.

CUT TO AN AIRPORT. A stack of Business Insider Magazines.

Jul 4, 2009. *105 Newspapers shuttered, 15,000 Jobs Lost.*

CUT TO ROME, ITALY. A stack of papers, La Repubblica.

Feb 21, 2013. *Sex, Blackmail Behind Benedict XVI Resignation.*

CUT TO A NEW YORK TIMES TRUCK. A man tosses a stack of Times.

May 20, 2013. *Church Whistle-Blowers Join Forces on Abuse.*

CUT TO SPOTLIGHT. The team keeps working. And we --

FADE OUT.