

ANNO DOMINI

"We'll Send Him a Czech"

Written by

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TEASER

FADE IN:

QUICK SHOTS of a hushed marketplace. An array of shops and businesses still and tranquil in the night.

SUPERIMPOSE: ROME, ITALY

EXT. BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

The silence is broken by the sound of a MAN, 40s, CRASHING into a trash can. He stumbles, out of breath, struggling to get back to his feet.

He crawls backwards, blood seeping from a fresh wound near his eye. His cheek is bruised. TWO THUGGISH MEN round the corner, stopping in front of their prey. Just then, the alley behind the Man is illuminated by headlights.

The tires of a special edition Mercedes roll onto the cobblestone. The Man stands, shielding his eyes from the headlights. ENZO RIENZO, late 20s, olive-skinned and acutely brash, steps out of the car. They all speak in Italian.

ENZO

Carlo, Carlo, Carlo. Why do you make me chase you?

CARLO

(panting)

I'm sorry, Enzo. I promise I'll have it all by next week.

ENZO

Tsk, tsk.

Enzo takes a vial of cocaine from his coat pocket. He dabs some on his knuckle and takes a bump.

ENZO (CONT'D)

What good are deadlines if people can't meet them?

The Thuggish Men approach Carlo and GRAB his arms.

CARLO

I just need more time. I don't mean to insult you.

ENZO

You're the asshole who took the points against Milan.

A beat.

ENZO (CONT'D)

And I was insulted when you didn't pay up last week. Now I'm simply embarrassed. I hope you're not trying to embarrass me.

CARLO

Of course not-

Enzo steps towards the restrained Carlo and STRIKES him downwardly with his fist. Carlo crashes to his knees, blood SPLASHING onto Enzo's loafers.

ENZO

Ugh. Now you've got the nerve to bleed on my shoes?

Carlo grips his bloody mouth.

CARLO

I'm...sorry.

Enzo kneels down and takes off his shoe. He holds it up to Carlo's face.

ENZO

Do you know how much these loafers cost? Hmm?

A beat.

ENZO (CONT'D)

They cost more than that failing butcher shop of yours. More than the private school tuition for your teenage daughter.

Carlo gags on blood.

CARLO

Please...

ENZO

It's okay. We'll make this right.

Enzo gestures to the Thuggish Men. They step back.

ENZO (CONT'D)

You kiss this shoe and I'll forgive that much.

CARLO

What?

ENZO

You kiss this loafer, and I won't
add the cost to your tab.

Reluctant, Carlo purses his lips, leaning forward. Enzo presses the shoe against Carlo's forehead, brandishes a PISTOL and FIRES through the shoe. The back of Carlo's head BURSTS open, his body crumpling to the cobblestone.

ENZO (CONT'D)

Fucking deadbeat.

Enzo's thugs, VINNIE and GIULIO, approach him.

VINNIE

You want us to dump the body?

ENZO

No, leave it here. A message to
other deadbeats.

Giulio looks at the body. Enzo takes another bump of coke.

GIULIO

He only owed two thousand euro.
What's the boss gonna say?

ENZO

I'll worry what the fuck the boss's
gonna say. Get in the car.

Enzo tosses his shoe towards Carlo's body.

VINNIE

(re: the shoe)
What about that?

ENZO

What am I gonna do with that shoe?
It has a hole in it.

They get in the Mercedes and it pulls away.

CUT TO: BLACK

TITLE CARD: "ANNO DOMINI"

ACT ONE

INT. BROTHEL - NIGHT

In a dimly lit room, SAM DUGAN, 40s, with a perpetual five o'clock shadow, buries his face into the neck of a WOMAN. He relentlessly kisses her throat.

She arches her head back, moans and pulls his hair. This is more than the normal client-hooker relationship -- there might be feelings here. Or not. Their bodies finally come to rest as they catch their breath. Sam rolls off of her.

SAM

I refuse to believe you once
thought about becoming a nun.

She turns the desk lamp on, as the orange glow reveals her face. VERONICA FINI, 30s, slender, with a thick mane of curly hair, slaps Sam's arm playfully.

VERONICA

Shut up. I was seven. I didn't know
any better.

SAM

It's quite a different career from
this.

VERONICA

That was also before I got kicked
out of St. Helen's.

SAM

The all girls school?

VERONICA

Yeah.

Veronica lights a cigarette.

SAM

(smiling)

Well, I'm glad you got kicked out.

Veronica laughs.

VERONICA

You're bad.

A beat.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Do you know how much longer it's supposed to be?

SAM

You know I can't go into details.

(beat)

There's a vote. And then another vote, but I think they've got it narrowed down to two of the candidates. One from Germany and the other's a local guy.

Veronica stands up, the silk bedsheet falling from her naked body. She moves to the windowsill.

VERONICA

Do you have an opinion?

SAM

I just want someone who will keep the job easy. John was good, though he always looked at me as an outsider.

Sam grabs his pants from the floor.

VERONICA

Aren't you?

Sam puts places a wad of cash on her dresser.

SAM

Sort of. I work for my boss who reports directly to him.

SFX: Faint voices are heard outside.

VERONICA

Well it looks like your boss has a new boss.

Veronica gestures to the window. Sam looks up and sees it in the distance: WHITE SMOKE billowing from the chimney of the Sistine Chapel.

He rushes over to the window.

SAM

This wasn't supposed to happen for another two days.

INT. ST. PETER'S BASILICA HALLWAY - NIGHT

The hallway is dark and empty. Ornate statues are masked by shadows. The quiet is disturbed by the echo of Sam's footsteps.

CHRISTOPH (O.S.)

Sammy.

CHRISTOPH AMSLER, 40s, playful but composed, sports an impeccably tailored suit, and emerges from behind a pillar. He's the commandant of the Pontifical Swiss Guard, the pope's personal security force.

SAM

Why didn't you call me sooner?

CHRISTOPH

I found out right before you did.

SAM

How'd this happen?

CHRISTOPH

Not sure. Nobody was expecting this choice.

(laughs)

Maybe it's divine intervention.

A beat.

CHRISTOPH (CONT'D)

The winds of change breeze through this city now.

SAM

Oh, yeah? "Change" as in I should start updating my resume soon?

Christoph shakes his head.

CHRISTOPH

No. There will be some administrative alterations and we may be asked to adjust our procedures, but as long as I'm here, you'll always have a job.

SAM

Thanks. If Werner had the reins, he'd have me on the first flight back to the states. Or in a cell somewhere.

CHRISTOPH
You two should try to get along.

SAM
I don't get along with assholes.

CHRISTOPH
You didn't get here the way he did.
He'll always resent that.

Christoph lights a cigarette. Sam registers the anomaly of his friend smoking in a church, but his mind is too busy.

SAM
So who is it?

CHRISTOPH
Tito Almeida.

SAM
What? The Brazilian?

Christoph nods, exhaling smoke.

SAM (CONT'D)
I thought he was invited as a formality.

CHRISTOPH
So did I. He was chosen on the conclave's second ballot.

SAM
How'd you find out? The chapel doors are still sealed and they have wireless signal jammers.

Christoph slowly inhales his cigarette.

CHRISTOPH
A little bird told me.

SAM
You mean a cardinal.

CHRISTOPH
That's a bird.
(beat)
And get this -- Almeida's keeping his name.

SAM
You're fucking with me. Tito the First?

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)
 He sounds like he should be
 bottling tequila, not running the
 church.

Christoph grins.

CHRISTOPH
 He's going with Leo. Something
 about paying homage to the guy who
 convinced Attila the Hun to spare
 Rome.

Christoph puts his arm around Sam's shoulder.

CHRISTOPH (CONT'D)
 C'mon, tomorrow's a busy day.

EXT. ST. PETER'S SQUARE - DAY

Thousands of people have gathered in the square.

QUICK SHOTS of the square. Devout Catholics celebrating, some holding religious pictures and rosary beads. Images of TV reporters inaudibly covering the event, their voices swallowed by the din of the crowd.

INT. SWISS GUARD COMMS ROOM - DAY

In the Vatican City headquarters of the Swiss Guard, Sam bustles inexorably around the communications room, a brightly lit annex with clusters of computer screens and phones.

Stationed at a computer terminal is Sam's only company, ISSABELLE MERLINO, 20s, a homely linguistics specialist. Issabelle answers calls and monitors Swiss Guard radio chatter.

Sam leans over a terminal examining dossiers and photos. He has a pen in his mouth and another in his hand, circling, highlighting and making notes.

He points to a print-out near Issabelle.

SAM
 That one. I need that one.

She hands Sam the forms without looking, speaking to someone in her headset.

ISSABELLE
 (in Italian)
 No movement expected today.
 (MORE)

ISSABELLE (CONT'D)
Units will be notified about status updates.

Sam's cell phone rings as he picks up.

SAM
(into phone)
Yeah, I'll be right there.

EXT. PALACE OF THE HOLY OFFICE - DAY

Christoph lingers in an external hallway. He paces between colossal stone columns, gazing at the plants above them. Sam approaches from behind him.

SAM
Hey, I'm still running background on this guy. If you're gonna pull me for something else --

CHRISTOPH
Look.

Christoph nods towards the entrance of the Holy Office, where two priests, FATHER ALBANO and FATHER SILVESTRI, both 50s, are escorted out by armed guards. Sam recognizes them.

SAM
What's up with the bean counters?

CHRISTOPH
This is the first change.

SAM
Look, I asked if we should be concerned for our --

CHRISTOPH
They took bribes.

Sam lets out a groan of disappointment.

CHRISTOPH (CONT'D)
They took bribes and we didn't.
We'll be fine.

Sam and Christoph watch as the two priests are loaded into a waiting Mercedes van.

SAM
(uneasy)
Bribes from whom?

Christoph stares back for a beat.

CHRISTOPH
Polletta.

SAM
Shit.

FEMALE TV REPORTER (PRE-LAP)
(in Italian)
Pope Leo's first act since taking
office is steeped in controversy
and is already sending a ripple
effect through Vatican ranks.

ROME. EXT. CITY - DAY

The TV Reporter's voice carries to a shot of the Roman skyline.

CLOSE ON: A TV screen displaying the FEMALE TV REPORTER, 30s, standing in St. Peter's Square.

FEMALE TV REPORTER (CONT'D)
Two priests who served as
accountants for the Vatican Bank
have been removed from their
positions and are under
investigation for their ties to
organized crime.

We PULL BACK from the TV to reveal we're...

INT. ANTHONY POLLETTA'S OFFICE - DAY

We slowly pull away from the wall-mounted TV as the reporter speaks.

FEMALE TV REPORTER
In what can be interpreted as an
overhaul, the Church is finally
addressing the long-held suspicion
that the Vatican Bank has laundered
money for the local mafia. Vatican
officials made no comment on the
investigation, but Pope Leo
expressed that he vows to purge the
bank of all corrupt ties--

A rocks glass SMASHES against the TV, spraying liquor and causing the TV to flicker.

ANTHONY

Fuck!

PULL BACK to reveal ANTHONY POLLETTA, late 50s, the boss of the Polletta crime family. Blustery and rotund, he leans on the antique wooden desk in his palatial office. Velvet drapes adorn the windows. A crimson Persian rug on the floor.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Do you know how much money we have in there?! Does anyone?

DOMINIC CERRONE, 40s, Anthony Polletta's underboss, sits quietly in a leather chair. Calm and methodical, he rotates a cigarette between his fingers.

DOMINIC

The bookkeeper's on the way.

ROMAN TALUCCI, 30s, a Polletta family capo, kneels in the corner gathering up the broken glass. Dim-witted, he antagonizes the reporter on TV.

ROMAN

Dumb bitch. You have no idea what you're talking about.

ANTHONY

This shit comes out of nowhere. How the fuck didn't we know about this? And where's the fucking bookkeep--

DOMINIC

On the way.

Just then, Anthony's office door flies open. Enzo (from the teaser), a soldier for the mob and part of Dominic's crew, barges in. He ushers in the BOOKKEEPER, 40s, who's holding a bankers box.

ENZO

I got 'em, Ant.

Enzo shoves the Bookkeeper towards Anthony.

ANTHONY

About fucking time.

BOOKKEEPER

I'm sorry, Mr. Polletta. I gathered up everything I could, anticipating a raid by the authorities.

Anthony gestures to the TV.

ANTHONY

What can you tell me about that?

BOOKKEEPER

(anxious)

It's tough to say. I brought ledgers that track the deposits and revenue records for your concrete business.

Roman crosses to the Bookkeeper.

ROMAN

I'll take those.

Roman grabs notebooks and hard drives from the box.

ANTHONY

All I want is a straight answer.
How much do I have in there?

Enzo slaps the Bookkeeper on the back of the head

ENZO

Answer the man!

BOOKKEEPER

They froze all of the assets from your shell corporations. Without studying further, a conservative estimate is...

(beat)

Thirty-two million euro.

Dominic closes his eyes.

ROMAN

Mother. Fucker.

ANTHONY

Thirty-two?

Anthony takes the crystal decanter from his desk and throws it at the TV, shattering the screen.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Dom, what about those two priests?

DOMINIC

I sent for them this morning. Still in custody.

ANTHONY
 (to Bookkeeper)
 What happens if they talk?

BOOKKEEPER
 Mr. Polletta, I'm not a lawyer.

ANTHONY
 Fine. Get the fuck outta here. And
 confirm those goddamn numbers.

Enzo escorts the Bookkeeper out. Anthony crosses to Dominic,
 who's still sitting.

DOMINIC
 What now?

ANTHONY
 Those two priests? Handle it.

Dominic nods and exits.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - DAY

In the same alley from the opening, DETECTIVE GINA CASSANO,
 30s, an idealist, squats over the lifeless corpse of Carlo.

Sporting a deep tan and sunglasses, she uses a pen to poke
 around his clothes for clues. Her auburn ponytail bobs behind
 her head.

GINA
 I can't get much. Well, aside from
 the gunshot to his head.

Her state police partner, DESI SISCO, 30s, leans on the hood
 of their powder blue Alfa Romeo. He plays on his SMART PHONE.

SISCO
 I told you to wait until forensics
 gets here.

GINA
 But that would undermine our
 position on the murder squad, not
 investigating murders.

A crowd of Onlookers gathers behind the police tape blocking
 off the scene. Their audible conjecture fills the air.

GINA (CONT'D)
 I'm going to move him.

SISCO
Go ahead. It's your party.

Gina shifts Carlo's torso and uses her latex gloved-hand to remove a wallet from his pants.

GINA
I've got ID.

The noise from the Onlookers rises.

GINA (CONT'D)
Could you at least keep the gawkers
at bay?

SISCO
(re: his smart phone game)
Hang on. I'm on a new level.

GINA
(annoyed)
Sisco.

He stuffs his phone in his pocket and turns toward the crowd.

SISCO
Hey, get out of here! Can't you see
there are murderers running around?

He points to them.

SISCO (CONT'D)
You could be next!

They begin to disperse. He turns back to Gina, grinning.

SISCO (CONT'D)
Happy?

She's busy studying the ID.

GINA
Carlo Fonte. This says he lived a
few blocks from here.

SISCO
Good. You can tell his family. That
part always makes me uneasy.

Gina stands and removes the latex gloves.

GINA

Yeah, I can tell them that their husband, father or brother was most likely the victim of a mob hit. And for some reason, we're never able to solve mob hits in this town.

SISCO

(playing on phone again)
They'll understand. If they want to live in a city not run by a mafia boss, they can move to Paris.

GINA

Does it ever bother you?

SISCO

What?

GINA

That we can't make mob murders stick.

SISCO

You've been a detective two months. You'll learn to live with disappointment.

Gina sighs, removing her sunglasses to rub her eyes, squinting in the midday sun. She steps towards their squad car, but then notices the LOAFER with a hole in it nearby.

GINA

Wait, I've got something else.

INT. PALACE OF THE HOLY OFFICE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Christoph waits by the door, as Sam walks up.

SAM

Should I have packed my things?

CHRISTOPH

He's doing a review of all staff members, top to bottom. He seemed to like me, so you two should get along just fine.

SAM

Great.

They approach the door to the papal quarters.

CHRISTOPH

There's a woman in there with him.
Head of PR or something. I told you
about those winds of change.

They open the door and enter...

INT. PALACE OF THE HOLY OFFICE - PAPAL QUARTERS - NIGHT

Sitting in the dimly lit room behind a modest desk is the newly-elected POPE LEO II, 70s. The native Brazilian is diminutive and bespectacled. He waves to them.

POPE LEO

Come in, come in.

The two men stand before his desk. Pope Leo closes a folder he was reading and gestures to his right where we see DIANA ARMENTI, 40s, tall and confident, standing off his shoulder.

POPE LEO (CONT'D)

This is Diana Armenti, the
Vatican's new senior communications
director. She's here to usher in a
new era of...transparency.

Sam nods to Diana. She remains motionless.

POPE LEO (CONT'D)

Her credentials are impeccable.
She's to see and hear everything.
(then)
Now then, you are?

SAM

Sam Dugan, Your Holiness.

POPE LEO

Yes, you're an old colleague of
Christoph's, correct? Tell me, why
should you remain here?

CHRISTOPH

Your holiness, Sam is a security
consultant for the Swiss Guard. His
counsel and experience have proven
invaluable in safeguarding against
any potential threats.

Pope Leo re-opens the file on his desk.

POPE LEO
Experience. You worked for the
American Central Intelligence
Agency.

Sam shoots Christoph a "what the fuck?" look. Christoph shrugs.

POPE LEO (CONT'D)
This is correct?

SAM
I was a case officer stationed in
various hotspots in the Middle East
and Eastern Europe.

POPE LEO
It seems I have a standing army of
men to protect me. Why you?

SAM
I have a different skillset.
Specialized training. I was taught
to know what will happen before it
happens. Plus, my efforts can also
be used to be...proactive.

Pope Leo lets out a mocking laugh.

POPE LEO
So you're a hammer for me to wield?

SAM
If you want to look at it that way.
You just picked the pockets of
Anthony Polletta. You're gonna need
my help.

POPE LEO
Corruption demands a light to be
shined upon it.

SAM
You might as well have pissed on a
hornets' nest.

CHRISTOPH
Gentlemen, I think we're getting--

SAM
(desperate)
And I really need to work. I need
to keep my mind busy.

Diana hands Pope Leo another folder. He opens it.

POPE LEO

Yes, I understand you experienced a great personal tragedy. I don't want anyone in my employ to possess a certain volatility. Tell me about this tragedy.

Sam's face is now visibly pained.

SAM

Eight years ago, I was tasked with organizing a resistance army in Serbia to overthrow the ruling socialist party. My wife was nine months pregnant in a hospital in Zurich at the time. The coup failed, as coups often do, and some of the more zealous resistance leaders thought I betrayed them.

Sam clears his throat.

SAM (CONT'D)

While I was being debriefed, they captured and tortured an asset of mine. He didn't know where I was, but he gave them the location of my wife.

Christoph lowers his head, having heard this story before.

SAM (CONT'D)

The Serbian rebels activated a local cell in Zurich. As I understand it, they got to the hospital just as Denise gave birth. She couldn't tell them where I was, so they threw her out the window. Then gunned down half of the hospital staff.

Pope Leo nods somberly.

POPE LEO

And the child?

SAM

Killed before he ever opened his eyes.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. PALACE OF THE HOLY OFFICE - HALLWAY - LATER

Christoph and Sam leave the papal quarters together.

CHRISTOPH

Well, he's different, eh?

Sam shakes out of a daze.

SAM

Yeah.

(then)

There's no doubt we have to consider the mob a threat.

CHRISTOPH

Probably. Start working some sources to see if there have been any whispers yet. But, Sammy, don't go crazy. We don't know anything yet.

Sam nods.

SAM

I'll check on the accountants.

Sam exits.

EXT. ROMAN HOUSE - NIGHT

A house with a rose-colored facade sits along a quaint pathway in the city. Through the front gate is an abundance of plants and flowers. Light beams through one of the shutters.

INT. ROMAN HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

FATHER SILVESTRI, one of the accountants from earlier, places a grocery bag on his kitchen counter. He takes off his coat with a sigh, then drapes it over a chair.

He removes bread and celery from the bag, then pauses in thought. His trance is broken when his CAT enters from the adjacent room, pawing at an empty food dish.

FATHER SILVESTRI

There, there.

He removes a bag of dried cat food from his groceries and leans down to fill the dish. When he rises, a pair of GLOVED HANDS holding FIBER WIRE emerge from the darkness of the adjacent living room and close around his neck.

Father Silvestri is LIFTED OFF OF THE FLOOR, as he desperately grabs for his throat. He flails his legs, knocking over a nearby end table and lamp.

The cat watches his master's mortal struggle. Father Silvestri lets out a final gasp before his body goes motionless. The gloved hands let his body come CRASHING TO THE FLOOR. The cat gazes at his lifeless master, then returns to his kibble.

INT. UPSCALE HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The interior of Dominic Cerrone's dining room features a high ceiling and plenty of light stemming from an ornate chandelier. He places silverware on the table, then tugs on the green tablecloth, evening it out.

SFX: Classical music plays from a wall-mounted stereo.

His Wife, 30s, enters from the kitchen and places a salad bowl in the center. He kisses the back of her neck.

DOMINIC

This summer -- we'll take a vacation.

(beat)

Without the kids.

She returns a devilish smile before heading back to the kitchen. His Daughter, 7, enters to drop off glasses and a basket of bread.

Dominic breaks a bread loaf in half and places it in front of his nose like a beak. He mimics a bird. His Daughter GIGGLES.

DOMINIC'S DAUGHTER

Daddy, you're silly.

She returns to the kitchen. A baby COOING is heard from the next room, as Dominic enters...

INT. DOMINIC'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

He hovers over his infant son who plays with a toy train set. Dominic leans down and mouths "choo-choo" while his boy grasps the locomotive, smiling.

His's cell phone VIBRATES on a nearby coffee table. He picks up the phone and reads a text from one of his soldiers: "X X". Cerrone puts the phone down and returns to his son.

INT. MILITARY-STYLE TENT - MORNING

On the outskirts of town, Christoph stands alone inside a large, canvas tent. CRATES are stacked on the dirt floor and on two adjacent tables. The tent's door flap blows in the wind.

He stamps out a cigarette and impatiently checks his watch. Just then, we hear the SOUND OF TIRES PULLING UP outside. In walk Two Tough Men wearing dark blazers and sunglasses. They scan the tent interior, then hold the tent flap open for THE MOROCCAN, 40s, slender with a neat goatee.

THE MOROCCAN
Sorry for the delay.

CHRISTOPH
Damn right, you're sorry. Do you have any idea the risk I take waiting out here?

Ignoring this, The Moroccan looks over the crates.

THE MOROCCAN
Uh-huh.

Christoph watches him browse the inventory.

CHRISTOPH
It's all here. Everything on your shopping list.

The Moroccan stops in front of a pair of crates that read "RPG" on the labels. He opens one of the crates and smiles.

THE MOROCCAN
Very good.

He gestures to one of the Tough Men who hands Christoph a BRIEFCASE. The Moroccan crosses to Christoph to shake his hand, when Christoph jabs him in the chest with his finger.

CHRISTOPH
Keep the rebellion in your own country.

The Moroccan nods. Christoph exits with the briefcase.

EXT. FATHER SILVESTRI'S HOUSE - DAY

Sam stands outside the gate of Father Silvestri's house, gazing at the red facade. He presses the INTERCOM on the gate.

SAM

Father Silvestri? Father Silvestri,
this is Sam Dugan. I work...

(beat)

I also work for the Office of the
Holy See. I need to speak with you.

Sam waits for a response, then presses the intercom again.

SAM (CONT'D)

Think of it kind of like an exit
interview.

After no reply, Sam walks to the edge of the gate and down a side alley that borders the house. He spots a WINDOW slightly ajar.

Sam looks around, sees no one, then hops onto a trash can and pulls himself to the windowsill. He opens the window and climbs in to...

INT. FATHER SILVESTRI'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sam steps onto the floor and looks around the room.

SAM

Father Silvestri?

Sam gazes at the mantle above a fireplace. It holds a number of pictures in expensive looking frames, mostly of religious occasions.

He moves towards the kitchen, but clocks a fallen end table and broken lamp. Sam draws a GUN from beneath his shirt.

He sees a bag of groceries still on the kitchen counter. Sam goes room-to-room, finding no one. He walks up the stairs to the second floor. From the second floor landing, he notices a pile of clothes on the floor of the bathroom.

INT. FATHER SILVESTRI'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sam enters the bathroom with his gun drawn to find the NAKED CORPSE of Father Silvestri in the bathtub. Various POLAROIDs and DOCUMENTS cover his torso.

Sam surveys the photos and documents and lets out a sigh.

INT. HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

In a spacious room with religious paintings adorning the walls, Christoph leans against a long conference table.

Sam stands before him, with Pope Leo and Diana Armenti present. Beside the pope stands WERNER FREY, 30s, the Swiss Guard lieutenant colonel. He's a boy scout-type and not Sam's best friend.

CHRISTOPH

Go ahead, Sammy.

Sam addresses the group.

SAM

I couldn't find Father Albano, but I have calls out to his friends and family. If he's smart, he left town. Because here's how I found Father Silvestri.

Sam shows them his PHONE, displaying pictures of the deceased Silvestri. Pope Leo reacts in horror. Diana's face is stone.

WERNER

Oh, my God.

SAM

Based on the neck marks, I'd say strangulation was the cause of death. His body was covered by several photos of him with nude boys.

Pope Leo backs away. Diana glares at the images on the phone.

SAM (CONT'D)

The documents you see there are most likely sealed police reports. Those and the photos may have been used to blackmail him into laundering Polletta's money.

DIANA

We have to get ahead of this story.

SAM

Right. No doubt this will be reported when the police pick up the body.

WERNER

What? You just left him there?

Sam's eyes narrow on Werner.

SAM

I did. I only clean up the messes I make.

POPE LEO

What do you think is meant by this?

WERNER

I think it's a warning.

SAM

I think you should shut up.

Christoph steps between them.

CHRISTOPH

Settle down.

SAM

It's Polletta tying up loose ends.

Pope Leo thinks for a beat.

POPE LEO

Father Silvestri's sins shouldn't be concealed from the public. The church will deal with the fallout.

DIANA

Then this should be something we add to your public address.

SAM

Wait, what?

DIANA

(ignoring him)

Especially if you're going to greet worshipers in the square.

SAM

Hold on.

A VATICAN AID knocks and opens the conference door.

VATICAN AID

Holy Father, the Italian Prime Minister has arrived.

Pope Leo acknowledges this, then faces the group again.

POPE LEO

I must attend this meeting. But,
please, let's discuss this later.

Pope Leo exits. Diana turns to follow him.

SAM

Hey, wait a sec.

Sam grabs her wrist. Diana whips around.

DIANA

What is it?

SAM

You're gonna have him walk St.
Peter's Square? Are you nuts? It
normally takes us a week to prep
for that. And now with the mob
knocking off priests?

DIANA

This is my directive and the Holy
Father approves. And I understand
the popemobile is perfectly secure.

SAM

Without our help it's a coffin on
wheels.

(then)

Do you know what a belly charge is?
No? It's one of the things that
keeps the Secret Service up at
night.

Diana looks down at Sam. In heels, she's taller than him.

DIANA

You've lived a tough life.

SAM

(baffled)

What does that have to do with any--

DIANA

You've lived a tough life, but I
won't feel sorry for you. You work
in security. Make sure it's secure.

She nods to Werner.

DIANA (CONT'D)

Plus, I was told you don't need to be informed about every public address.

Diana exits. Sam turns to Werner.

SAM

You dumb motherfucker.

Sam LUNGES towards Werner and he reacts in kind. Christoph steps in to separate them.

CHRISTOPH

Stop it! We've got enough going on without you two at odds.

WERNER

I'm the vice-commandant. I don't answer to him.

SAM

I was in places on no map evacuating people who weren't there when you were playing Nintendo.

CHRISTOPH

Enough. They're planning an open air address. We've got work to do.

SAM

Or we need to convince them to push it. We could have a credible threat on our hands.

The three men exit through an opposite door to...

EXT. SIDE ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Christoph, Sam and Werner walk down steps to a cobblestone street. Two cars are parked there.

SAM

What do you know about this Diana Armenti?

CHRISTOPH

She's tall. Beyond that, not much. She was a surprise hire.

SAM

Hmm. I wonder if she has the stomach for it.

WERNER

For what?

SAM

A job that can put her in the crosshairs.

CHRISTOPH

Maybe. In the meantime, you two should oversee the police retrieval of Father Silvestri's body.

SAM

It's the first Saturday of the month.

Christoph is reminded of...something.

CHRISTOPH

Oh, right. Werner, you go alone. We should have a representative there.

WERNER

Where's he going? I'm left to--

Christoph responds with an authoritative stare.

WERNER (CONT'D)

Yes, commandant!

Werner hustles up the steps to the Press Office and exits. Sam and Christoph reach their cars at the base of the steps.

CHRISTOPH

Find me some intel, Sammy.

Sam nods, then does a double-take, noticing Christoph is getting into a sleek Audi.

SAM

New car?

CHRISTOPH

What can I say? My wife likes when I drive her around in nice cars.

Sam gazes back. They both know it's a purchase beyond his pay grade.

EXT. ITALIAN COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Sam's Mercedes winds down a dusty, rural road. He passes olive orchards and golden fields.

EXT. ST. MARY'S ORPHANAGE - DAY

Sam pulls up to a QUAIN HOME in Italy's sun-drenched countryside. He exits the car and stretches. He pauses as the SOUND OF CHILDREN playing out back fills the air.

He approaches the rustic wooden door and enters...

INT. ST. MARY'S ORPHANAGE - ENTRYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Sam's eyes adjust to the darker interior. He observes a cork board lined with children's drawings of animals.

Just then, SISTER ANA BARBIERI, 70s, enters from the kitchen. Petite, she wears a nun's habit. She's energetic for her age.

SISTER ANA

Oh, you're early!

She steps up to Sam. He leans over and she kisses both of his cheeks. She gestures to the living room.

SISTER ANA (CONT'D)

Come, come. I baked cookies.

INT. ST. MARY'S ORPHANAGE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Sam sits in a worn recliner. Sister Ana in an adjacent sofa. A plate of untouched cookies rests on a coffee table between them.

Sister Ana holds a plump ENVELOPE. Sam has an almost nervous demeanor, avoiding eye contact as he speaks.

SAM

There should be enough there for new clothes and new toys. Last time, I saw a lot of them didn't have the same toys. More toys, less fighting, maybe.

Sister Ana puts the envelope aside.

SAM (CONT'D)

And I remember the netting on the soccer goal was coming apart. A new net will keep the ball from rolling through the fence.

Sister Ana leans forward.

SAM (CONT'D)

And I know you wished they had more books. That should cover the cost--

SISTER ANA

Why do you come here?

SAM

What?

SISTER ANA

Why do you come here? You know we appreciate your generosity. Truly. But is that the only reason why you visit? To give money?

Sam shifts uncomfortably.

SAM

Well, I...

SISTER ANA

I know you lost your wife. You never provided details and I never pried. But you still have pain in your eyes. I see it every time.

SAM

Coming here, it's too much of a reminder sometimes.

SISTER ANA

It takes time, but faith can help you cope. There's strength in God.

SAM

Sorry, but I've seen enough things in my line of work to disavow any existence of God.

Sister Ana grunts.

SISTER ANA

I'm not impressed by latent machismo and I have even less patience for those with self pity.

Her voice softens.

SISTER ANA (CONT'D)

You walk around as if you have no...

SAM

Purpose.

SISTER ANA

But you know that's not true. You have an important role right now and you neglect it.

SAM

I'm trying.

(beat)

You asked me last time why I still do my job, even if it can be dangerous. I didn't have an answer then. Redemption, I suppose.

Sister Ana relents, leaning back in the sofa.

SISTER ANA

Come. You're so generous to the children. They like to see you.

EXT. ST. MARY'S ORPHANAGE - REAR LAWN - CONTINUOUS

An expansive field populated with dried grass and dirt rests behind the orphanage. A split rail fence gives it shape. On one end lies a soccer goal with a tattered net.

A group of Young Children haphazardly chase a soccer ball in the center. Sam and Sister Ana approach the fence. As some of the Young Children notice Sam, they begin to shout "uomo triste."

SISTER ANA

They call you uomo triste. It means-

SAM

Sad man. I know.

Sam rests his arms on the fence. Just then, the SOCCER BALL rolls towards him. A YOUNG BOY picks it up and waves to Sam.

YOUNG BOY

Ciao, uomo triste.

The Young Boy scurries back to the group. Sister Ana turns to observe Sam.

SAM

He has his mother's eyes.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

Rome. EXT. CITY - EVENING

The skyline is alive with lights and activity.

QUICK SHOTS of the city streets. Restaurant patrons dine at outdoor tables. Parents push infants in strollers.

INT. ENZO'S CAR - EVENING

Enzo navigates the Roman streets with one hand on the wheel, the other adjusting his stereo. Hip-hop BLARES from his car speakers.

He turns down a one-way street with shops and a cafe. He ogles Teen Girls shopping.

Enzo removes a vial of cocaine from his pocket, but drops it, SPILLING it onto his pants.

ENZO

Fuck.

He looks down to clean up the mess as he SLAMS into a Moped Rider. The moped SPINS out of control and the Rider is THROWN into a fruit stand.

Enzo's car HOPS the curb and CRASHES into a parking meter.

INT/EXT. ROMAN CAFE/STREET - CONTINUOUS

Detective Gina Cassano witnesses the crash through the window of a cafe. Cafe Customers gasp.

GINA

You're kidding me.

Gina grabs her coffee and rushes outside. She gets on her radio.

GINA (CONT'D)

Send an ambulance unit to Viale
Europa 22.

EXT. ST. MARY'S ORPHANAGE - NIGHT

Sam walks down the pathway to his car, as Sister Ana watches from the doorway. Sam opens his car door and nods to her, just as his cell phone vibrates.

He answers and listens for a beat.

SAM
(into phone)
Yeah? Hold him. I'll be there in an
hour. Thanks, Vito.

INT. RESTAURANT - PRIVATE BACK ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON a lengthy table featuring an assortment of PASTA DISHES. Pesto fettuccine with chicken. Penne and pork sausage dripping in red sauce.

A heaping waterfall of spaghetti is FORKED onto a plate next to boulder-sized meatballs, all to satiate the appetites of Anthony Polletta and his most senior mafiosos.

They take bites between jokes. Their fingers greasy from the loaves of garlic bread. A salad bowl lays untouched.

ROMAN
I told her she should've gotten the
moullignon to fix it.

Laughter all around. Cheap jokes are Roman's lone forte.

ROMAN (CONT'D)
How much could he charge for stolen
parts anyway?

More guffaws. Dominic hides a smirk behind his napkin. An Elderly Waiter fills Anthony's glass with wine. Anthony places his hand on the waiter's wrist.

ANTHONY
Thank you, Arturo. That'll be all.

The Elderly Waiter exits, closing the sliding doors behind him.

Laughing, Anthony stands, wiping the sweat from his brow.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
Roman, you're gonna get your ass
kicked someday.

A beat.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
Gentlemen, we've got a problem.

A FAT MAFIOSO chimes in.

FAT MAFIOSO

What's that? Are we letting Roman calculate the tip again?

Laughter.

ROMAN

Easy, blimpie.

ANTHONY

(ignoring them)

I've got a small fortune--

(catching himself)

We. We've got a small fortune sitting in a bank. It's under investigation. Can't be touched.

Anthony throws his napkin over his shoulder and begins to circle the table.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

I've gathered you here to figure out what we should do about our friend in the big hat.

MURMURS and LOOKS are exchanged. Some mafiosos incredulous that this conversation is happening. An OLDER MAFIOSO interjects.

OLDER MAFIOSO

Just to be clear, you're talking about the pope?

ANTHONY

Yeah. Him.

(beat)

Is he so special? That's just a title they gave him. He was a nobody a few weeks ago. And now he's interfered with business.

Uneasy WHISPERS permeate the room. The Older Mafioso shifts uncomfortably.

DOMINIC

Look, Ant. I think I speak for everybody when I say we should consider an alternative. The pope, he seems like too big of a target. We can figure this out another way.

ANTHONY

Another way. Hmm. A guy comes out of nowhere and freezes thirty-two million euro of our money. Money that we earned, and you're willing to let him walk?

DOMINIC

I didn't say that. I'm saying there's got to be other options. This just happened. We can give it time. Let it play out. Talk to bank officials.

Anthony strolls towards Dominic's chair, gesturing to him.

ANTHONY

Gentlemen, this is my second-in-command. Look at him. A sheep in wolf's clothes.

Dominic rolls his eyes at the theatrics.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

He wants me to interpret this as a strategy, but it's really just veiled pacifism.

Anthony aggressively rests his hand on Dominic's shoulder.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

When soldiers in Dominic's crew screw up, he gives them a slap on the wrist. Like it's no big deal. Pacifism.

(beat)

All I gotta say is, you're lucky to have me around. Because I still demand discipline. And I'll still punish an enemy, no matter how many prayer cards he's on.

Dominic eyes the table. His hand CLENCHES his fork.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Other families would walk all over us if it were any other way.

Anthony cracks a slight smile and taps Dominic on the cheek.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Relax. I'm just breaking your balls.

GIGGLES from a few men cut the tension.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

So, what, maybe we do this, maybe we don't. Thinking out loud, if we did want to make him go away, how would we do it?

FAT MAFIOSO

The Vatican's like a fucking fortress. Even the bodyguards got bodyguards.

ROMAN

Maybe something happens when he's outside. That news bitch was talking about some speech he's doing.

DOMINIC

If we did this, we'd want to distance ourselves as much as possible. Outsource the job.

OLDER MAFIOSO

Right, hire someone with no ties to us.

FAT MAFIOSO

(while chewing)

The Czech. He's old-school. That guy does good work.

ANTHONY

(smiling)

That's it! To get rid of this problem, we'll send him a Czech.

Anthony laughs at his own joke. The others follow suit.

EXT. ROME STATE POLICE HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

Outside the concrete facade of the police station, off-duty officers talk beneath the glow of lamp posts.

Sam approaches from the cobblestone street and bounds up the front steps.

INT. ROME STATE POLICE HEADQUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

The interior of the police station hums with little activity, almost none of it work-related. Two officers watch highlights of a SOCCER MATCH on a TV screen.

A Young Officer flirts with a Female Cadet who's covering the front desk.

We get a glimpse of a fatigued Gina in her cubicle, filling out PAPERWORK.

Sam walks past the front desk and is flagged down by VITO, 40s, the watch commander. Tall and sporting a thin mustache, Vito's got ethics outweighed only by his appreciation for bribes.

VITO

Over here.

Vito walks Sam down the hallway to an interrogation room.

VITO (CONT'D)

Glad you made it. The overachiever who brought him in was about to charge him. I think she's also trying to connect him to a murder case. Something about a shoe. Ambitious little cunt.

Sam surreptitiously hands Vito a wad of CASH.

SAM

Can I have ten minutes?

VITO

Hell, this will buy you twenty.

Vito stuffs the money in his shirt pocket and gives Sam a MANILA ENVELOPE.

INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sam enters the interrogation room, a sterile space with colorless walls. Enzo sits in the center, HANDCUFFED to a table.

ENZO

Are you my lawyer?

SAM

A word of advice, don't assume the first person who walks into this room is your lawyer.

Enzo scoffs.

ENZO

Another fucking cop.

Sam picks up a CHAIR from the corner of the room and sits across from Enzo. He opens the manila envelope and reads Enzo's ARREST REPORT.

SAM

Let's see. Enzo Rienzo. Jesus Christ. What was wrong with your parents?

Sam skims over the report.

SAM (CONT'D)

Reckless driving, driving under the influence. The motorist you hit has a broken collarbone and a head wound. Oh, and that's in addition to the two keys of coke they found in your trunk.

ENZO

Can we stop pretending this is serious? My lawyer's gonna walk in here, he'll talk to these cops, and then he'll walk me right out of here. Just like every other time. I'll be fucking two university girls with tits the size of volleyballs by midnight.

SAM

Maybe. Or maybe there's some go-getter detective out there who thinks she's got enough evidence to tie you to a murder.

ENZO

Fuck that bitch.

Sam leans back in his chair.

SAM

Look, I won't bullshit you. None of this matters to me.

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

I know you work for the Polletta family. I need something from you.

ENZO

What?

SAM

Information.

ENZO

I'd rather die than be a rat. Fuck you, pig.

SAM

I'm not a cop.

(beat)

Are your people going after the pope? That's all I need to know.

ENZO

(laughing)

The fuck do you care?

SAM

That's my business. Your business is telling me what I need to know.

Enzo leans back and ponders for a beat.

ENZO

Whatever. This fucking Brazilian pope comes in and freezes millions of euros in that church bank. That caused a problem for Anthony Polletta. And Ant is the type of guy who solves his problems.

Sam takes this in.

ENZO (CONT'D)

There. Are you happy? Are we done?

SAM

No. Now you're gonna work for me. You'll be my asset inside.

ENZO

The fuck I am.

Sam leans in, serious. He hones in on Enzo's eyes.

SAM

It will. Your life is in my hands right now.

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

I could do you a favor and have them only pin the traffic violations on you. That's if you play ball.

A beat.

SAM (CONT'D)

If you don't, I'm gonna let you walk out of here. But then I'll put the word out to every crooked cop, snitch and smack dealer that the state police had Enzo Fucking Rienzo dead to rights on coke possession and a murder charge, but he was allowed to walk.

ENZO

Uhhh, that sounds fine to me.

SAM

Yeah? What's your boss gonna think when he gets word? Can he trust that you didn't talk?

Uncertainty comes over Enzo's face as this settles in.

ENZO

Wait...

SAM

Your life means nothing to me. You're just a conduit for information.

(beat)

Like I said, I'm no cop.

Sam stands up, pulls out a BUSINESS CARD and scribbles on it.

SAM (CONT'D)

In case you change your mind.

Sam exits to...

INT. ROME STATE POLICE HEADQUARTERS - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Sam shuts the interrogation room door behind him. Vito is thumbing through the euros in his shirt pocket.

SAM

Can you cut him loose for me?

VITO
Sure. Less paperwork.

SAM
The detective who brought him in,
will she be any trouble?

Vito glances down the hallway in the direction of Gina's desk.

VITO
Eh, she'll get over it.

Sam shakes Vito's hand.

SAM
Thanks again, Vito.

Sam turns to walk away. Vito pats the cash wad in his pocket.

VITO
(smiling)
Hey, I always look out for my
friends.

EXT. ROME STATE POLICE HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

As Sam exits the police station, his pace slows to a halt.

SAM
(to himself)
Hmm. Friends.

He pulls out his phone and makes a call.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. SWISS GUARD COMMS ROOM - NIGHT

Issabelle, from earlier, sits in front of her computer terminal. Alone, pop music plays from the speakers. As a call comes in, she lowers the volume and puts on her headset.

ISSABELLE
(in Italian)
Operations.

SAM
It's Sam.

ISSABELLE

Glad I'm not the only one who works late.

SAM

I'm doing additional background checks on some of the new faces we've got around here.

ISSABELLE

Yeah?

SAM

Which of our new house guests is good friends with the pope?

ISSABELLE

Cardinal Moreno. The Argentinian guy. They go back, twenty, thirty years, I think.

SAM

Moreno. Got it.

Sam hangs up, then strolls down the police station steps. He nears his car, as he hears FOOTSTEPS behind him.

GINA (O.S.)

Hey.

Sam ignores her and continues to his car.

GINA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Hey, asshole.

At this, he turns around.

SAM

Can I help you?

GINA

Yeah. Do you have anything you want to tell me?

SAM

Not really.

GINA

No? Because I'm curious why I saw you walk out of an interrogation room with my suspect, and now my watch commander is releasing him.

SAM

Trust me, whatever charges or penalty you hoped he'd face, he's now looking at worse.

GINA

Who the hell are you?

SAM

No one of consequence.

GINA

Yeah? Well consequently, I don't have a murder case because of you.

SAM

Look, you seem well-intentioned. Do yourself a favor and put in for a transfer. Every cop in your department is on the take.

GINA

That doesn't mean I should quit. I joined the police to...

(beat)

None of these criminals ever face justice.

SAM

Then do yourself a favor. From now on, when you run into criminals, start shooting them.

Sam gets into his car. Gina glares back.

INT. PALACE OF THE HOLY OFFICE - PAPAL QUARTERS - NIGHT

Pope Leo sits behind his desk, head down, scribbling notes on the pages before him. Diana Armenti paces tirelessly.

DIANA

The *Urbi et Orbi* has always been a blessing bestowed upon the city of Rome. It's fitting that this is your first address. You begin with the prayer, then touch on your own journey here.

POPE LEO

No. This message is about the church. The people. I won't indulge in any personal glorification.

DIANA

But the people want to know about you.

POPE LEO

That's what you're here for. Talk to the press. Tell them what biscuits I eat. My role is to lead the faithful.

DIANA

Certainly.

(beat)

After the blessing, you could shift to your call for all nations and cultures to promote peace.

POPE LEO

Yes, we'll include the call for peace, but the second point should concern our reforms.

DIANA

On transparency? Are you going to go into details about Father Silvestri?

POPE LEO

Not details. The proper authorities can manage that. We cannot focus on the sins of others without recognizing our own. For too long, this organization violated the trust of its members, especially the young, our most vulnerable. And our leaders went to great lengths to cover up such crimes. I need to make clear that era is over.

DIANA

I understand. Would you like me to prepare some language?

Pope Leo rubs his eyes.

POPE LEO

No, I'll compose it myself and have you review. But I would like to break for a moment.

DIANA

Of course.

Diana motions to leave, but turns around.

DIANA (CONT'D)

Your Holiness, I wanted to ask you about the security consultant, Sam Dugan.

POPE LEO

What about him?

DIANA

With Christoph as the head of your security detail, Mr. Dugan's presence seems like a redundancy.

Pope Leo's eyes wander as he considers this.

POPE LEO

He may have a purpose here, though I can't help but detect in him a...turbulence.

DIANA

With your permission, Holy Father, after you deliver the *Urbi et Orbi*, I'd like to relieve him of his duty.

A distressed look comes over Pope Leo's face, as if he's been asked to put down a stray dog. But his gaze soon softens.

POPE LEO

I approve.

EXT. VATICAN - RESIDENCE OF THE ARCHPRIEST - NIGHT

The courtyards that make up the interior of the Vatican walls are serene. The hustle and commotion from Rome seem like a million miles away.

Sam approaches from beyond a fountain, carrying a DUFFLE BAG over his shoulder. He walks the cobblestone path, nodding to Two Swiss Halberdiers as they pass. Even at night, their bright blue and yellow gala uniforms stand out.

Sam nears the doorway to the Residence of the Archpriest, then looks over his shoulder, watching the Swiss Guardsmen continue their patrol around a corner, out of sight.

Nearby is a parked SILVER SEDAN. Sam takes another look around, then places his duffle bag beside the car. He unzips the bag and reaches behind the car's wheel well.

EXT. VATICAN - RESIDENCE OF THE ARCHPRIEST - MORNING

Emerging from the elegantly designed door of the residence is Cardinal Moreno. Dressed in a black robe, a red sash, with a crimson velvet cap atop his head, he greets the day with a beaming smile, as the sunshine meets his face.

He talks for a moment with a Gardener, then pats him on the back. He waves to a pair of patrolling Guardsmen. He smiles at a pigeon. This might be the nicest man in the world.

Cardinal Moreno enters the SILVER SEDAN parked outside for him. As he turns the ignition, SPARKS fly from the dashboard. The dashboard instruments MELT, while smoke ERUPTS from the car's hood.

He struggles to undo his SEATBELT, but wriggles free and LEAPS out of the parked car. A Guardsman comes to his aid. A LARGE FIRE engulfs the steering column.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. SMALL APARTMENT - BARRACKS OF THE SWISS GUARD - DAY

Sam sits at a desk typing on a laptop. His humble residence boasts nothing remarkable. A plain calendar tacked to a wall. Beneath it, a modest bookcase. His bed is a glorified cot.

He hears FOOTSTEPS outside his door, then a KNOCK. Sam turns.

SAM

Who is it?

CHRISTOPH (O.S.)

A man under a lot of stress. Open up.

Sam crosses to the door and opens it. Christoph stands there, holding a SHOEBOX.

CHRISTOPH (CONT'D)

May I?

Sam waves him in, then returns to his typing. Christoph looks around, taking inventory of the lack of decorating.

CHRISTOPH (CONT'D)

I love what you've done with the place. You know, you *can* live off the premises.

SAM

Yeah, but this place is free.

CHRISTOPH

Spoken like a true socialist.

SAM

What's in the box?

CHRISTOPH

Oh, I was hoping you might know.

Christoph opens the shoebox and throws a CHARRED MECHANISM on Sam's bed. A burnt circuit board with frayed wire filaments.

CHRISTOPH (CONT'D)

Cardinal Moreno had some car trouble this morning.

SAM

Oh yeah?

CHRISTOPH

This little devil was connected to the ignition switch.

SAM

Is he okay?

CHRISTOPH

Save for a few scrapes, yes.

(beat)

It's very peculiar for a would-be assassin to use low order explosives on a job like this.

SAM

Maybe he was an amateur.

CHRISTOPH

And even stranger to have the charge aimed up, instead of at the driver.

SAM

Maybe this was just a message.

CHRISTOPH

(annoyed)

Cut the crap, Sam. Do you have any idea how reckless this was?

SAM

Reckless? Maybe. But was it effective?

Sam grins at his question. A beat.

CHRISTOPH

The pope and Diana have agreed to delay his public address out of safety concerns.

SAM

Then it worked.

CHRISTOPH

Yes, it worked. Now His Holiness wants a complete threat assessment.

Sam gestures to his laptop.

SAM

What do you think I'm drafting now?

Beat.

CHRISTOPH

You know, when we first met and I worked for Swiss Intelligence, I thought we should never be liaising with someone so brash. You warned us about PKK extremists entering the border near Vinadi. When we ignored you, you leaked their photos to the press. Then that truck driver spotted them at a rest stop.

SAM

I guess I got lucky.

CHRISTOPH

You did, then and now. Maybe it's your Irish heritage.

Beat.

CHRISTOPH (CONT'D)

You can't keep tempting fate.

SAM

(ignoring this)

I talked to one of Polletta's soldiers. They're looking for retribution.

CHRISTOPH

Is he credible?

SAM

Yeah.

CHRISTOPH

Good. Put that in the report and have it ready for me by tomorrow.

SAM

Do you see any way to avoid a conflict? Things are about to get dangerous for everyone.

Christoph thinks for a beat.

CHRISTOPH

Polletta has an underboss, Dominic-something. I believe he's more reasonable.

SAM

I'll see if he's willing to meet.

CHRISTOPH

Fine, but don't get cute with him. Backchanneling could be our only recourse and we don't want to burn our only bridge.

Christoph turns to leave, then hesitates.

CHRISTOPH (CONT'D)

Do you still see your boy?

SAM

Every month. You know this.

CHRISTOPH

When you first asked me to take him, I understood. You were grieving. My wife and daughter liked having a baby around. You drank yourself silly for two years, then called out of nowhere with a request.

Sam clears his throat.

CHRISTOPH (CONT'D)

We've done some unforgivable things in our line of work. But the toughest thing I ever did was leave that child off at an orphanage. My family could've raised him.

SAM

It's for his safety.

CHRISTOPH

Sure, keep telling yourself that.

Christoph exits.

INT. POLLETTA CEMENT INC. BUILDING - CERRONE'S OFFICE - DAY

In the headquarters of Anthony Polletta's concrete empire, Dominic sits alone in his office. He rotates an unlit cigarette between his fingers.

On one wall hangs a picture of a younger Dominic and Polletta on an enormous job site. On the opposite wall is a Giorgio de Chirico replica. There's a knock on the door. Enzo enters.

ENZO

You wanted to see me?

DOMINIC

Come in.

Enzo crosses and takes the seat in front of Dominic's desk. Dominic waits to speak. It's an uncomfortable pause.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

I heard you got into a jam the other night.

ENZO

About that, I meant to tell you.

DOMINIC

But you didn't. I talked to one of the cops on our payroll. Said you were up against some serious shit.

Enzo nervously scratches his brow.

ENZO

They caught me with blow in my car. It was stupid, I know. I'm sorry, Dom.

DOMINIC

I heard you were connected to a dead body. And yet, you're here.

Enzo's face goes white.

ENZO

They had the wrong guy. They made a mistake with the evidence or something.

DOMINIC

You weren't feeling particularly chatty that day, were you?

ENZO

Me? What-- no. You know I'd never do something like that.

Dominic considers for a moment.

DOMINIC

You're right. You're a good kid. You make some dumb fucking decisions sometimes, but you're loyal.

Dominic stands and hones in on the cigarette in his hand.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

And I understand the coke thing. We all have our vices.

He holds up the cigarette.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

I quit five years ago, but I still keep a pack on me. Never smoke 'em. It's something about temptation versus control.

Dominic eyes the cigarette, allured by it.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

The closer the temptation, the more steadfast the control. I'm in control.

Enzo lets out an awkward laugh.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

Ant thinks I'm too lenient with my crew. But I say, why rule with an iron fist when being rational can get you just as far.

ENZO

Yeah, I think the same way, Dom.

DOMINIC

In fact, to prove there's no hard feelings--

Dominic opens his desk drawer and tosses a BRICK OF COKE in front of Enzo.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

Here.

ENZO

Really?

DOMINIC

Sure, to celebrate. You had a close call, but it all worked out.

Enzo is taken aback.

ENZO

This-- I don't know what to--

Dominic gestures to the coke.

DOMINIC

Go ahead.

Enzo grabs a LETTER OPENER from Dominic's desk and cuts open the cellophane. He shapes a line on the desk and snorts. Enzo's EYES go wide as he rubs his nostril.

ENZO

Fuck me, that's pure.

DOMINIC

Only the best.

Enzo does another line. His eyes start blinking profusely.

ENZO

Jesus, that's good shit. It'll be tough to go back to anything else.

(then)

Well, unless there was anything else you wanted.

Enzo starts to get up.

DOMINIC

Wait. You're not done.

ENZO

What?

Dominic nods at the coke.

ENZO (CONT'D)

(jittery)

Dom, I think I'm good for now.

Dominic opens his desk drawer and ominously places a REVOLVER down. He nods at the coke once more. Enzo sits back down.

ENZO (CONT'D)

Okay...

Dominic's steely eyes are trained on Enzo.

INT. SWISS GUARD COMMS ROOM - DAY

Sam sits at a computer terminal. He leans in toward the screen.

CLOSE ON a computer monitor displaying an old MUG SHOT of Dominic Cerrone with his arrest history and personal details. Sam jots down some notes, then gets up.

He eyes his desk phone for a moment, then dials. We INTERCUT with CERRONE'S OFFICE.

Dominic pulls out his vibrating phone. In the background, a Mafia Soldier drags Enzo's LIFELESS BODY away.

Dominic answers the call. Silence for a beat.

DOMINIC
Who is this?

EXT. CITY STREET - AFTERNOON

On a street in the quiet Aventino neighborhood of Rome, Sam marches up a sidewalk. He wears a sport coat and dark jeans.

POV of a passing car. From the inside of a moving car, someone watches Sam walk into a quaint restaurant. He's being followed.

INT. QUAIN RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

As Sam enters, a shopkeep bell above the door RINGS to announce his presence.

The restaurant is empty, save for Dominic Cerrone and Giulio, one of the goons from the opening. Sam walks to Cerrone's table, but is stopped as Giulio pats him down for weapons.

Once cleared, he takes a seat.

SAM
Thank you for agreeing to meet.

DOMINIC
I'm always willing to meet, if it's in the best interest of business. It seems we can help each other out.

SAM
I agree. I think--

DOMINIC
How much?

SAM
What?

DOMINIC
How much? This doesn't need to be complicated.

(MORE)

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

How much will it cost for you to leave town? Look the other way. What's your price, bodyguard?

SAM

I'm not someone you buy off.

DOMINIC

Everyone has a price.

SAM

Let me rephrase that. I don't sacrifice the innocent.

DOMINIC

(smirking)

Please. No one is innocent here.

SAM

Fine, I've heard you out. Now let me propose a counter offer. I heard you could be reasoned with. Your boss, he's not so reasonable.

DOMINIC

I could say the same about yours.

SAM

I'm not naive enough to think the mob is going away, but your boss is erratic. Dangerous. I'm offering the chance to remove Anthony Polletta from the equation. Put you in charge.

Dominic's face is emotionless. Maybe he's considering this?

SAM (CONT'D)

I make Polletta go away and you run the family however you want. Free reign. You'll never see me again, so long as we agree your people never endanger the pope or the Vatican.

Dominic remains silent.

SAM (CONT'D)

And I can do this without violence. Coat his bedroom lightbulb with a toxin that atomizes with heat. Or an injection of adenosine in the eyelid membrane while he's asleep.

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

With a half-millimeter needle, a coroner would never find it. You'd never be implicated.

Apprehensive about this talk, Giulio shuffles on his feet. His eyes darting from Sam to Cerrone. Sam leans in.

SAM (CONT'D)

Polletta dies for the greater good.

Dominic stares back for a beat.

DOMINIC

Those are some very detailed plans. Sure, Ant and I don't always agree, but betrayal is an irreversible path. There's no turning back from it. If I become boss that way, who's to stop some young upstart with a gun and a dream from doing the same to me.

SAM

Look, I came here to negotiate.

DOMINIC

Right. Giulio, let him know we're done negotiating.

Giulio puts Sam in CHOKEHOLD from behind, lifting him from the chair. A STEAK KNIFE slides from Sam's jacket sleeve that he snatched while Dominic spoke.

Sam JAMS the knife into Giulio's thigh, causing him to let out a grunt. Giulio falters, but maintains his hold on Sam. Impatient, Dominic pulls out a GUN, just as we hear...

SFX: SHOPKEEP BELL RINGS

They all turn their attention to the entrance, where Detective Gina Cassano strolls in, her BADGE clearly displayed on her hip.

GINA

Is this what happens when men argue over the check?

Relief flickers over Sam's face. Giulio releases him, hobbling on one leg.

DOMINIC

Just a disagreement, officer.

GINA

Detective. Then I suppose you're all done here.

(gesturing to Sam)

Troublemaker, you're with me.

Sam strides away from the table, but not before he and Dominic share a hostile gaze -- they just started something that won't end well.

EXT. QUAIN T RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER

Sam and Gina stand beside her squad car in the street. Sam rubs his neck.

SAM

I guess I owe you a thank you.

GINA

You're lucky I decided to tail you. What possessed you to interfere in a police investigation and then insult a few mafia goons?! You should have your head checked. You really should -- we have free healthcare here.

SAM

It's a long story.

(then)

You said you wanted to make a difference, right?

GINA

I do police work. I do make a difference.

Sam raises an eyebrow. Gina capitulates.

GINA (CONT'D)

There are some barriers that prevent me from being completely effective, but that doesn't stop me from trying.

SAM

Good. I could use your help.

GINA

What? I don't even know what it is that you do?

SAM

I protect people. And sometimes
that calls for me to be a
little...proactive.

GINA

Why do you need my help?

SAM

Because you can go places I can't
go and have access to certain
things I don't. Look, what happened
in there is the beginning of
something very grim. The Polletta
family is after their Vatican bank
funds any which way.

GINA

Great. And I take it your solution
is just to kill them all? That's
not a solution, that's murder.

SAM

For me, it's preventive measures.
For you, it could be vengeance.
Think about it.

Sam walks towards his car. He opens the door, then pauses.

SAM (CONT'D)

You know what's the dangerous thing
about vengeance? It's satisfying.

Angle on Gina's face, conflicted as she processes this.

EXT. DESERT PLAIN - DAY

Blue sky and beige rocks and dirt share the horizon. Dried
grasses and dust blow in the wind. BLACK SMOKE rises into the
frame.

FEMALE TV REPORTER (O.S.)

Rebels in Morocco have attacked a
passenger train just outside the
coastal city of Temara. Twenty-four
people were killed, along with two
military officials, who authorities
believe were the intended targets.

INT. ELEGANT HOUSE - BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

CLOSE ON: The bedroom TV, displaying the twisted metal of the train wreckage.

PULL BACK to reveal Christoph standing in his nicely decorated bedroom, paralyzed by the events on screen.

FEMALE TV REPORTER (O.S.)

Investigators have one of the attackers in custody, and there are reports coming out that the rebels obtained their weapons from an arms merchant operating from the outskirts of Rome.

QUICK SHOT of police cars converging on Christoph's house.

QUICK SHOT of officers' feet racing up the staircase in Christoph's home.

BACK TO Christoph. He saunters over to his nightstand, takes something from the drawer, then sits on the edge of the king-size bed.

He closes his eyes, then puts a GUN to his temple.

EXT. CHRISTOPH'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

In the dreary afternoon rain, the bedroom window is illuminated by a MUZZLE FLASH.

INT. CHRISTOPH'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATER

Police Investigators survey the scene, taking photos and placing evidence markers. There's a palpable somberness.

Sam stands in the bedroom doorway, despondent. His hair and clothes damp from the rain. The LEAD INVESTIGATOR kneels near Christoph's body.

SAM

His wife and daughter?

LEAD INVESTIGATOR

They were out shopping when it happened.

Sam blinks, wanting to make sense of this.

SAM

It doesn't matter what happened. He was a good man.

No one hears him.

Chris Cornell's "AVE MARIA" plays over the following scenes.

INT. ANTHONY POLLETTA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Anthony and The Bookkeeper go over ledgers. Dominic enters.

DOMINIC

We've got another problem.

Anthony leans back in his chair, nonplussed.

INT. HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Werner faces away from the door, leaning on the conference table with his hands. Sam enters. A LAMINATED FOLDER in his hands.

SAM

I--

Werner turns around, his eyes red from crying.

SAM (CONT'D)

Do you want a moment?

WERNER

No, come in.

SAM

Sorry. I didn't know you and Christoph were close.

WERNER

He was my mentor.

SAM

He was my only friend.

This is the one decent moment these two have ever shared.

SAM (CONT'D)

I heard you assumed command. I thought I'd take my leave, so you don't have to go through the formality of firing me.

WERNER

I always wanted to. I always wanted Christoph to fire you. When I pictured the day I became commandant, I imagined you would've already left for some other place where you don't belong.

Werner nods at that the folder in Sam's hand.

WERNER (CONT'D)

What's that?

SAM

Threat assessment. It was the last task Christoph gave me.

Sam offers it to Werner.

WERNER

Keep it. You'll be presenting it to the Holy Father. I've never trusted you and I think you have a tenuous understanding of duty, but I'm smart enough to know I need you. At least for now.

A beat.

WERNER (CONT'D)

So, allies?

Werner extends his hand. They shake.

SAM

Yeah...for now.

WERNER

Good. This way.

Werner leads Sam through the door to...

INT. HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE - MAIN ATRIUM - CONTINUOUS

As they enter the octagonal main room, Pope Leo and Diana enter from a press conference. Vatican Personnel keep reporters at bay.

A distraught Diana clocks Sam's folder, hoping for good news.

DIANA

Are we safe?

The music rises. Sam scans each of their faces: Diana.
Werner. Pope Leo.

SAM
No...but I can help.

EXT. OUTDOOR MARKETPLACE - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: Prague, Czech Republic

A Young Boy walks among the fruit and clothing vendors. He stops at a fruit stand, where the Vendor gives him some plums and an ENVELOPE. The Vendor nods to the Young Boy, who races off.

INT. SIMPLE APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Inside a tiny apartment with few furnishings sits THE CZECH, 50s, bald with a thin, muscular frame. He sits on the couch, carving wooden chess pieces with an X-Acto knife.

CNN plays on his muted TV. Just then, an ENVELOPE slides under his apartment door. He crosses to pick it up.

He tears the envelope open. A THUMB DRIVE. He walks to his desk and inserts it into his laptop. He starts printing.

ANGLE ON his wall CORK BOARD. He thumbtacks a PICTURE OF POPE LEO onto it, jotting down notes at the bottom.

Moments later, he tacks a PICTURE OF SAM on the board.

END OF SHOW