

IN THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS

by

R. T. Bowersox

Draft 5
February 9, 2021

Copyright R. T Bowersox
PAu3-050-843
Registered WGA/E

R. T. Bowersox
229 Gaskill Street
Philadelphia, PA 19147
302-540-6102
RTBowersox@gmail.com

This script is copyrighted and registered with the WGA, and is therefore protected under all applicable copyright laws. All rights, including without limitation, professional/amateur stage rights, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all other forms of mechanical, electronic and digital reproduction, transmission and distribution, such as CD, DVD, the Internet, private and file-sharing networks, information storage and retrieval systems, photocopying, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved. Particular emphasis is placed upon the matter of readings, permission for which much be secured from the author or his representatives in writing.

OPTION, PURCHASE, PRODUCTION, OR PERFORMING RIGHTS:
Applications for the Option, Purchase, Production, or Performance of the work in excerpt or in full in a production in any medium or in any language throughout the world should be addressed to either:

R. T. Bowersox
229 Gaskill Street
Philadelphia, PA 19147
302-540-6102
RTBowersox@gmail.com

Or his representative:

M. Gray Coleman, Chair, Entertainment Transactions
Davis Wright Tremaine, LLP
1251 Avenue of the Americas, 21st Floor
New York, NY 10020
212-489-8230

FADE IN

INT. ILLICIT GAMBLING HALL - NIGHT - DREAM SEQUENCE

A dim, smoky space, punctuated with cones of light that halo gaming tables.

A crowd of GAMBLERS surrounds a craps table. They move in the slow motion of dreams, dropping chips on the felt, reaching for drinks, laughing.

A Croupier's stick slides several dice toward the end of the table.

CROUPIER

New shooter comin' out!

A pair of hands slowly shove several tall stacks of \$100 chips to the "Pass" line. One of the hands carefully selects two dice from the pack.

The hand rubs the dice on the table felt, lets them fly.

The dice tumble in slow motion over the length of the table, then land, bounce, bank off the back bumper, and take an agonizingly slow roll to a stop.

One pip up on each.

Above the groan of the Gamblers is heard...

CROUPIER

Snake-eyes! Craps! A loser!

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. ST. CAMILLUS CATHOLIC CHURCH - RECTORY BEDROOM - DAY

The eyes of FATHER NICHOLAS CROSS snap open, stare at the ceiling several moments as his breathing calms.

Cross, late 40's, handsome but creased enough to show that life hasn't been all easy road, wipes sweat from his face with a shaking hand. He glances to the clock as it clicks to 5:15 AM, then rises.

INT. SHOWER - DAY

Cross leans against the wall, head hanging, as the steaming water pummels his neck and shoulders.

INT. RECTORY BEDROOM DRESSING AREA - DAY

Cross stands before a mirror, snaps a priest's collar onto his black shirt, slides on a black jacket.

He picks up an old, tarnished silver picture frame from the dresser. It holds a picture of a young woman with a little girl about five years old on her lap.

Cross kisses his fingertips, then touches them to the faces in the photo.

CROSS
(almost whispered)
I'm sorry.

A heavy knock hits the door.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA (O.S.)
Father Nick! You up yet? You're
gonna be late!

Cross sets the frame down. More pounding.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA (O.S.)
You hear me, Father?

Cross opens the door. SISTER ANNA JULIANA, 50's and resembling a black and white pumpkin, stands before him.

CROSS
I'm sure the dead could hear you in
Paradise, AJ.

Sister Anna Juliana sniffs her disapproval, then turns and huffs down the hall.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
(over her shoulder)
I'll have breakfast ready for you
after Mass.

Cross smiles to himself, closes the door, and follows her.

INT. ST. CAMILLUS CHURCH - DAY

Cross, in priest's robes, stands at the altar conducting Mass. The church is nearly empty -- only about 10 WORSHIPPERS.

EXT. ST. CAMILLUS CHURCH - DAY

Cross greets the Worshippers as they leave.

A MAN about 45, clean cut, jacket and tie, stops and nods to Cross. A gust of wind blows open the flap of his jacket, revealing a gun on his hip and a badge on his belt. This is LT. JACK RIGGS.

CROSS

Jack.

RIGGS

Nick.

CROSS

How's the law enforcement business?

RIGGS

Same as the soul-saving business, I suppose. You win some, you lose some, right?

CROSS

Hopefully we're winning more than we're losing.

RIGGS

You always had higher expectations than me, Nick.

They smile at each other, then Riggs moves down the steps to the street.

INT. RECTORY KITCHEN - DAY

Cross sits at the table, reading the paper, eating bacon and eggs. Sister Anna Juliana futzes around the kitchen.

CROSS

You see this, AJ?

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

What's that?

Cross holds up the newspaper, points to a picture.

INSERT -- THE PICTURE

showing a line of people waiting at a lottery window.

BACK TO SCENE

Sister Anna Juliana peers over her glasses at the picture, snorts a disapproving huff, turns away.

CROSS

You buy any tickets to that Keyball lottery, AJ?

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

If I wanted to waste money, Father, I'd simply burn it.

CROSS

Too bad. You might've been the richest nun in Philadelphia. One of them won \$300 million yesterday.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

Who?

CROSS

Haven't come forward yet.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

If they were smart, they wouldn't.

CROSS

And why's that?

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

Money's not necessarily a blessing, Father.

CROSS

Depends on which poor parish God sends it to.

Sister Anna Juliana sits across from him, a datebook in her hand.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

We're doing all right.
(opening the datebook)
You ready?

CROSS

Shoot.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
 Morning confessions. Then a
 marriage counseling -- Bridgit
 Connor, Stephen Gaitz. Got your
 G.A. meeting in the Fellowship Hall
 at eleven, and a meeting at the
 Diocese at one. What's that about?

CROSS
 I have no idea. I'm just a priest.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
 Uh-huh. After that--

CROSS
 You have an entry in there that
 lets me just sit and be Holy?

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
 Don't start. You're the one who
 answered the Call.

CROSS
 (almost to himself)
 Yes. I did. Should probably have
 asked for clarification.

Sister Anna Juliana closes the datebook and stands.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
 And you have to talk with Little
 Michael today, Father.

Cross rises and moves to the back door, taking a piece of
 bacon with him.

CROSS
 What now?

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
 His tongue continues to wag. Seems
 he's now let the entire
 neighborhood know about that
 incident in the choir loft last
 week.

CROSS
 No.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
 Yes. Mrs. Aubrey was not pleased
 when her husband asked her why she
 was kissing the choir master after
 rehearsal Wednesday night.

(MORE)

SISTER ANNA JULIANA (CONT'D)
 (watching him closely)
 So you'll talk to him?

CROSS
 (opening the door)
 Yes, AJ. I will talk to him.

Cross bends to greet a small dog who scampers into the kitchen. Cross feeds him the piece of bacon.

CROSS
 Here you go, Judas.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
 I don't know why you encourage that mangy animal. And to call him after the man who betrayed our Lord...

CROSS
 (rubbing Judas' head)
 New thinking is Judas was only doing Christ's bidding. And remember Matthew 25:40, AJ:
 "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
 (not amused)
 That beast is not our Savior's brother!
 (flaps her apron)
 Out of my kitchen! Both of you!

Cross laughs as he goes through the door, the dog following.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
 (calling after him)
 And don't forget to go and see the children!

EXT. ST. CAMILLUS - OUTDOOR COLUMNED WALKWAY - DAY

Cross emerges from the Rectory, picks up a stick and throws it into the courtyard for Judas to chase. Cross's eyes are pulled to the line of trees at the edge of the St. Camillus property.

Towering into the sky are two large cranes, each swinging wrecking balls into the collapsing framework of an old abandoned factory that extends the length of the block.

CROSS
 (crossing himself)
 Please, Lord, preserve this home of
 Your servants, if it be Your will.

Cross turns and is startled to find LITTLE MICHAEL standing directly behind him, a broom in his hand. Little Michael is short and pudgy, maybe 20, a large smile breaking across the unmistakable face of a person with Down's Syndrome.

CROSS
 Whoa, Michael! I didn't see you
 there, buddy.

LITTLE MICHAEL
 (gleefully)
 Well, I was here, Father Nick.
 Here I am.

CROSS
 There you are. I see you've got
 your broom. Time for sweeping?

LITTLE MICHAEL
 Yup. Gonna sweep all over. Make
 St. Camillus shine. It's what I
 do, right, Father?

CROSS
 Absolutely. And it's very
 important to us. Say, Michael, sit
 with me a moment, will you?

Cross guides Little Michael to a stone bench along the walk. They sit.

CROSS
 I hear you've been talking to the
 neighbors again, Michael. Is that
 so?

LITTLE MICHAEL
 Yeah. Some of them, I guess. I
 like to talk.

CROSS
 I know you do. And we've spoken
 about this before, haven't we?
 About how sometimes things happen
 in God's house that maybe He
 doesn't want everyone to know?
 Remember? It's kind of like a
 secret, and we should--

LITTLE MICHAEL
 (enthusiastic)
 I know a secret, Father Nick!

CROSS
 You do?

LITTLE MICHAEL
 (points to his feet)
 Yeah! I got new sneakers. See?
 They're red.

Cross hesitates a moment, then smiles his capitulation.

CROSS
 Oh, yeah. They're very red,
 Michael. Best red sneakers I've
 ever seen. You're a lucky guy.

LITTLE MICHAEL
 Yup.
 (standing)
 I should go sweep now, right,
 Father Nick?

CROSS
 Yes, Michael. Sweep away.

Little Michael takes off happily, broom swinging before him.
 Cross watches him go.

EXT. ST.CAMILLUS COURTYARD - DAY

Cross approaches and enters an older, grey stone building at
 the back of the property, nestled into and partly obscured by
 a grove of willow trees.

INT. GREY STONE BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

Cross moves past several small bedrooms on both sides. He
 emerges into the Main Room.

INT. GREY STONE BUILDING - MAIN ROOM - DAY

Several CHILDREN eat a meager breakfast. Two nuns, SISTER
 ANGELA and SISTER THERESA, both about 60, watch over them.

CROSS
 Good morning, everyone!

Several of the children run to Cross, calling his name, hugging his legs, smiling up at him, grabbing his hands. Cross enjoys this immensely, greeting and touching each child individually.

CROSS

Ben. Amanda. Robert. Cilly.
Hello, Sha'Quita. Oh, so much
energy this morning! And
Frankie...lookin' good! Jesse, how
are you honey? Everybody okay?

SISTER THERESA

(herding them back)
All right, children. Let's finish
our breakfasts. Let Father
Nicholas be.
(to Cross)
Good Morning, Father.

CROSS

Morning, Theresa. They're full of
it this morning, eh?

SISTER THERESA

Always. Most of them anyway. A
few are still struggling.

CROSS

Sometimes it takes more than
finding shelter from the storm.
Especially when you're alone in the
world.

SISTER THERESA

You have a moment, Father?

Cross nods. Sister Theresa walks him to a window, away from the children.

SISTER THERESA

(quietly)
We've reached that point we spoke
of last week. Laundry soap.
Toilet paper. Diapers. Food.
We're simply running out of
everything.

Cross sighs, nods.

SISTER THERESA

And we could use some more adult
help. Sister Angela and I are
overwhelmed here.

CROSS

I know you are. Perhaps we can find someone in the parish who'll volunteer for us.

SISTER THERESA

It's a small parish these days, Father. Not many to pick from.

CROSS

I'll give it some thought.

SISTER THERESA

(after a moment)

And if I may bring it up again, Father...It might be time to think about going public with the shelter. We can get city funding, donations...

CROSS

I know, Sister, I know. But we can't operate if we're in the public eye. Some of these unfortunates, the abused especially, would be in danger if someone knew where they were. It's why we must remain hidden, even from the Diocese. We must trust that God will provide.

Cross touches her shoulder. She nods. Cross then moves toward the children, picks up a deck of cards from a table.

CROSS

Hey! Who wants to see some magic?

The kids erupt in a chorus of "I do", and surround Cross as he sits on the carpet and fans the cards in his hand like a professional dealer at a blackjack table.

INT. ST. CAMILLUS CHURCH - DAY

Cross walks around the pews near the back of the Church and enters his side of the Confessional Booth.

MONTAGE - CROSS HEARING CONFESSIONS

-- An ELDERLY ITALIAN WOMAN:

ITALIAN WOMAN

--and he curses incessantly,
Father, takes the Lord's name
constantly. And every hour of every
day, he smokes, he farts, he ogles
the hussy next door. He's goin' to
Hell, Father, if you don't give him
absolution.

CROSS

Yes, but he's not here. So let's
talk about you...

ITALIAN WOMAN

Why? I'm fine, Father. It's him
that needs savin'--

-- A YOUNG BOY, maybe 12:

CROSS

How often do you--?

YOUNG BOY

(nervous, embarrassed)

Ten, twelve times a day. Sometimes
more.

CROSS

(incredulous)

You're kidding--

-- A MIDDLE-AGED BUSINESSMAN:

BUSINESSMAN

--but I figure, hey, it's Caveat
Emptor, right? So I charge 'em a
little more than I should. So
what? That's forgivable, right?
Coupla' Hail Mary's?

CROSS

Leave now.

BUSINESSMAN

What?

CROSS

Leave this Confessional. Don't
come back until you're ready to
understand what we really do here.

-- A TEENAGE GIRL, 14:

TEENAGE GIRL

--and it seems like all the other girls are doing it, but--I'm afraid, Father, you know? I don't want to get pregnant. Which is the bigger sin? Lying to my friends or having sex with a boy before marriage? Can I confess confusion?

END MONTAGE

Cross pokes his head out of the Confessional, sees no one else waiting. He walks to the Narthex at the front of the church, kneels, crosses himself, looks up at the Crucifix hanging above the altar.

CROSS

You hear all that? With all due respect, Lord, water to wine was child's play.

INT. ST. CAMILLUS - FELLOWSHIP HALL - DAY

A group of TEN MEN sit in a circle on folding chairs, Cross among them. They're all looking intently at WALTER FAULKNER, a forty-something blue collar type, whose body language and tone betray his anger.

FAULKNER

--and despite my comin' here for what? Four, five weeks? I still wanta grab them dice and roll 'til I'm busted. Why ain't this workin'?

CROSS

Walter, the first thing you have to give up is the belief that one day you'll be without your compulsion to gamble. That's an illusion, as everyone in this room knows. Until you admit that, you're not--

FAULKNER

(interrupting)

No offense, Father, but what the hell you know about it?

Cross gazes at Faulkner a moment, then reaches into the pocket of his jacket. He extends his hand and opens it. In his palm sit two red dice.

CROSS

These are with me every second of every day. They remind me where Hell is. They were in my pocket the day I came home to an empty house, the only thing left me a silver frame with a picture of my wife and daughter in it. I still don't know where they are. And they were squeezed tight in my hand the night I came to my first meeting like this one. I carried them through seminary. I had them in my pocket the morning I took my vows. There isn't a second go by that I don't want to throw them on green felt, and I pray to God every night that I don't find a reason to do so, right before I thank Him for bringing me to St. Camillus and giving me sanctuary.

(beat)

Does that answer your question?

No one says a word.

INT. DIOCESAN OFFICE - DAY

Rich woods, velvet drapes, gold and crystal. Cross sits in an overstuffed leather chair set before the desk of ARCHBISHOP VINCENTE REGALI, 60s, an imposing figure with a demeanor as slick and cold as Antarctic ice.

In a nearby chair sits BISHOP JOHN CARDINALE, 60's, an odd mix of kind eyes in a stern face.

REGALI

The problem, Father Nicholas, is in extracting maximum value from all assets at our disposal. As leaders of the Diocese, it is our responsibility to successfully manage the business of Mother Church.

CROSS

(glancing at Cardinale)

The business--?

CARDINALE

Let him finish, Nick.

REGALI

The simple fact is that, as the smallest parish in the Diocese, St. Camillus is not covering it's own financial requirements. This puts a drain on Diocesan funds to make up the difference. Which in turn limits our ability to maximize the returns on investments we might otherwise have made with those funds.

CROSS

(looks around)

I don't see any signs of destitution around here.

CARDINALE

Nicholas!

Cardinale steeples his fingers, puts them to his lips, very pointedly catching Cross's attention with the gesture.

REGALI

(sternly)

Heed your friend, Father Nicholas, and remember your place. Like it or not, the Catholic Church is a business. Which means we must balance assets and liabilities, and make the most of the one while limiting the other. To do that, we must consider all options. And one of those options is St. Camillus.

CROSS

Where are you going with this?

REGALI

No doubt you've seen the construction crews working adjacent to the St. Camillus property.

CROSS

(warily)

Yes.

REGALI

The organization initiating that construction has approached the Diocese about the parish property. It figures into their plans. They have made a very attractive offer--

CROSS
 (jumps up)
 You're not seriously considering
 what I think you are?!

Cardinale stands, moves to Cross.

CARDINALE
 Perhaps we should step outside a
 moment, Nick.

CROSS
 (shrugging him off)
 You're going to sell St. Camillus?
 How dare you?

Regali stands, his anger flaring.

REGALI
 I am the Archbishop of this
 Diocese! And I will not be
 questioned by a priest barely out
 of Seminary!

CROSS
 Then tell me something, Your
 Eminence. Educate me. When does
 one reach the point where the
 "business" we're in becomes money
 and not souls? Where "assets" are
 ciphers in ledgers instead of the
 people who come through our doors
 seeking refuge and guidance? At
 what point do we conveniently
 forget why we came here in the
 first place?

Regali stiffens, sets his jaw.

REGALI
 We're finished here. The City has
 already rezoned the property. You
 will be notified as to the progress
 of the sale. My advice to you is
 to prepare yourself and your
 parishioners. Good day.

Regali sits, opens a file, and turns away. Cardinale takes
 Cross's arm.

CARDINALE
 Nicholas. Come. Please.

They move to the door.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE DIOCESAN OFFICE - DAY

Cardinale pulls the door closed behind them as they enter the hallway.

CROSS

You're in agreement with this?

CARDINALE

It's not my decision.

CROSS

You're responsible for my being at St. Camillus, John. For my being here at all. You know what this means to me, what's at stake for me personally. How can you allow it?

CARDINALE

I advised against it. But I am one voice among many, Nicholas. And there are other forces, considerations.

CROSS

Forces. Considerations. Right. Explain that to Little Michael, John.

Cross turns and moves down the hallway.

INT. DIOCESAN OFFICE - DAY

Regali sits at his desk. A door to an adjacent room is heard opening behind him, footsteps approaching.

Regali reaches into an ornate cigarette box, takes a cigarette and puts it to his lips. A hand in a rich suit and Rolex watch reaches in and lights the cigarette for him.

VOICE (O.S.)

Trouble?

Regali exhales a plume of smoke.

REGALI

No. No trouble.

INT. RECTORY STUDY - NIGHT

Cross walks to a leather couch and chair arranged around a glass coffee table, two glasses of port in his hands. He offers one to STANLEY MARCUS, 40s and bald, in shirt and tie.

CROSS

Can they just rezone property like that?

MARCUS

It's been known to happen. Look, it's an inside thing, Nick. The rezoning, permits. Even the gaming license was let without bids.

CROSS

You're the city attorney, Stan. Isn't that illegal?

Marcus shrugs, makes a "what'd you expect" face.

CROSS

It's a casino operation, you're sure?

MARCUS

Yeah. One of two licenses the city's granting. It was bound to come, Nick. People want to gamble, the city wants the revenue.

CROSS

You've seen the plans?

(Marcus nods)

St. Camillus?

(another nod)

I don't suppose there's anything we can do.

MARCUS

From what I hear--and keep in mind that I'm not privy to the inside moves--but what I hear is that deals have been made across certain, shall we say, lines?

CROSS

Meaning what?

MARCUS

Meaning that certain parties on one side of a legal line are using this deal to move across to the other side. Legitimization, I suppose you could call it. There's a lot of money involved, a lot of hands in the pie, a lot of promises made.

CROSS

By whom?

MARCUS

(after a moment)

I'm only telling you this because you're my priest and you can't tell anyone what we're talking about. Right?

CROSS

Consider this a Confessional. Who?

MARCUS

You ever hear the name Strazzi?

Cross's face reveals nothing, but his eyes don't blink.

INT. RECTORY - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Sister Anna Juliana stops at the door to the Rectory Study, listens to the hushed voices on the other side, then knocks.

CROSS (O.S.)

Yes. Come in.

Anna Juliana turns the doorknob.

INT. RECTORY STUDY - NIGHT

Sister Anna Juliana cracks the door, sticks her head in.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

I'm sorry, Father, but there's someone in the Foyer who needs to speak with you. Says it's urgent.

CROSS

Is it?

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

White knuckled hands wringing the life out of a hankie?

Cross nods. Sister Anna Juliana closes the door. Cross and Marcus stand.

MARCUS

I'll let myself out the back.

CROSS

God brought me to this parish and sent me those children out there to protect, Stan. With your help and guidance, I've been able to do it. But now--I just can't believe God will allow it to be taken away...from me *and* the children.

MARCUS

God may have no say in it, Nick.

INT. RECTORY FOYER - NIGHT

Cross enters from the office. Sister Anna Juliana stands in the Foyer with MARIE FAULKNER, wife of Walter. She's a middle-aged, slightly pudgy, blue-collar wife. And she's very distraught.

CROSS

What is it, Marie? What's wrong?

MARIE

It's Walter, Father. We had a another fight tonight about his gamblin'. He says you told him in the meetin' today that he'll never get over it. You tell him that, Father?

CROSS

(off a glance to AJ)

I suppose I did, but it was in the context of--well, that doesn't matter now. Where is he, Marie?

MARIE

Don't know. He got so pissed. He took the money jar, Father. It's all the money we got.

Cross puts his arm around Marie, guides her to the door.

CROSS

It'll be alright, Marie. I think I may know where he's gone.

(MORE)

CROSS (CONT'D)
 But it's best that you go home now.
 I'll send him there when I find
 him.

MARIE
 Thank you, Father. Bless you.

Marie leaves. Cross glances at Sister Anna Juliana.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
 (firmly)
 You can't go there, Nicholas.

CROSS
 I don't have a choice.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
 We all have choices. You made a
 promise. To yourself, and to God.

CROSS
 And I'll keep it, AJ. That I
 promise to you.
 (opening the door)
 Don't wait up.

Sister Anna Juliana closes the door after him, makes the sign
 of the cross on her chest.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
 (quietly)
 Stand next to him, Lord. Keep his
 hands in his pockets.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Cross stands across the street from the Illicit Gambling
 Hall. He looks around, catches sight of his reflection in a
 store window.

Cross reaches up to his priest's collar, as though to remove
 it, decides not to. But a second later, he reaches again,
 and this time he pulls the collar from his shirt. He stuffs
 it in his pocket as he crosses the street.

Cross raps a patterned knock. The door cracks open. FRANKIE
 MANCUSI, a burly goombah in his 40s, looks out at Cross, then
 smiles and opens the door wide.

MANCUSI
 Well, look what the wind blew down
 the street. I thought you was
 dead, Nicky.

CROSS
Depends on how you define dead.

MANCUSI
You don't want my definition. Come
on in.

Cross hesitates momentarily, then steps through the door.

INT. ILLICIT GAMBLING HALL - NIGHT

It's exactly as Cross's dream--a dim, smoky room, cones of light that halo gaming tables, large noisy crowd.

MANCUSI
Pick yer poison.

Cross nods, moves down an aisle of blackjack tables on his right, poker on his left. A BLACKJACK DEALER notices him.

BLACKJACK DEALER
Hey, Nick. Long time.

CROSS
Josh.

Cross's attention is caught by a raucous crowd of GAMBLERS around a craps table at the back of the room. Walter Faulkner stands at one end.

As Cross steps to the table, a CROUPIER sitting behind it sees him.

CROUPIER
Well, as I live and breathe--how
you doin', Nicky?

The Croupier pushes his stick between two GAMBLERS across from him.

CROUPIER
Make some room, folks. Got an old
friend here who needs some space.

The Gamblers shuffle, and Cross steps to the rail. He rests his hands on the polished mahogany, runs them slowly along it.

CROUPIER
Check-change, Nicky?

Cross lets his gaze flow down the green felt. His eyes come to rest on Walter Faulkner, who is watching him intently.

Cross slides his hand into his jacket pocket.

CROSS
(eyes still on Faulkner)
No.

CROUPIER
Okay, then. New shooter comin'
out!

Cross looks to Faulkner, who stands like a statue.

CROSS
Walter--

Cross nods toward the door, but a sudden tap on his shoulder pulls Cross's attention to the PIT BOSS standing behind him.

PIT BOSS
Somebody wants to talk to ya.

Cross's eyes follow the Pit Boss's finger pointing to a figure silhouetted in a second floor office window overlooking the gaming floor.

CROSS
(turning to the table)
I'm busy.

PIT BOSS
He wasn't askin'.

Cross looks at the Pit Boss, whose emotionless face underscores that any resistance is futile. He nods, then follows the Pit Boss, but as he passes Faulkner, he stops.

CROSS
Walk away, Walter. Walk away now.

FAULKNER
Leave me be.

CROSS
Listen to me. Don't do this. It's
the wrong road.

FAULKNER
There ain't no other road. You
know it and I know it. Not for us.
Now leave me be!

PIT BOSS
Hey. Don't be botherin' the
players.

Cross glances at the Pit Boss, then leans into Walter.

CROSS
 (quietly)
 Look at me.
 (he doesn't)
 Look at me, Walter.
 (Walter glances up)
 Marie is waiting for you at home,
 Walter. She's frightened and
 crying. That's where you need to
 be.

Faulkner stares at Cross, then his eyes drop. Cross leans over the rail, picks up the few bills in front of Faulkner and hands them to him.

Faulkner takes the bills.

FAULKNER
 I--

Cross turns Faulkner toward the door.

CROSS
 I know. I'll see you tomorrow at
 the meeting. Eleven o'clock. Now
 go home to Marie.

Cross watches Faulkner leave, then moves to the stairs.

INT. ILLICIT GAMBLING HALL - OFFICE - NIGHT

Cross enters. The small room reeks tasteless extravagance. Near the window stands JOE STRAZZI, 50s, sleek and steely in a \$3000 suit, a drink in one hand, a cigar in the other, his back to Cross.

STRAZZI
 I thought we had an arrangement.

CROSS
 We still do.

STRAZZI
 (turning to Cross)
 Yeah? Then you must be here to pay
 me the two hundred twenty grand you
 owe me, 'cause if you're not--

CROSS
 I'm helping a friend.

STRAZZI

You don't have any friends here, Nick. Only reason you're still standin' is you put on a white collar.

CROSS

The only reason I'm still standing is that the white collar I put on turned out to be an investment for you, didn't it? An investment that's about to pay off, I hear.

Strazzi lets that sink in, then smiles and moves to a little bar, refreshes his drink.

STRAZZI

Well, you ever know me not to take advantage of circumstances that present themselves? Time's right for me to come outta the shadows, Nick. You were just a caretaker while things worked out.

CROSS

I won't let you do this.

STRAZZI

(suddenly vicious)

You won't let me?! You got no say. Less you wanna pay me what you owe me. Or maybe take the chance that I'll find Jenny and Sophie before you do.

Cross blinks. Strazzi catches it.

STRAZZI

Right. Thought so. Now put your collar back on and go back to your little church. You got some packin' to do, if I'm not mistaken.

They stand eye to eye for a long moment, jaws set.

CROSS

This isn't over.

STRAZZI

It was over a long time ago.

Cross turns and goes out the door. Strazzi turns back to the window, smiling.

INT. RECTORY FOYER - NIGHT

Cross steps in and closes the door, leans back against it, looks to the ceiling. He pulls the dice from his jacket pocket, squeezes them, puts them back. Then he crosses himself and kisses his necklace Crucifix.

Cross moves toward the stairs, but stops when he notices a note taped to the ball of the banister.

INSERT: THE NOTE:

"Father. Come immediately. Stone house. AJ."

BACK TO SCENE

Cross glances at the grandfather clock behind him. 12:35 AM. He sighs, goes back out the door.

INT. GREY STONE BUILDING - NIGHT

Cross steps into the entryway, and is met by Sister Anna Juliana, in nightgown and robe.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
Did you find him?

CROSS
Yes.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
And?

CROSS
And I sent him home.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
And--?

CROSS
I kept my hands in my pockets.

Sister Anna Juliana looks up, crosses herself, mouths "Thank you."

Cross holds up the note.

CROSS
What's so important it couldn't wait?

Before she can answer, a child's anguished cry echoes from the hallway of bedrooms.

CHILD (O.S.)
 Mommy! I want my mommy...!

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
 That.

INT. GREY STONE BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Cross and Sister Anna Juliana move toward the end of the hall.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
 The doorbell rang about eleven. I thought it was you lost your key again. But it was a woman and-- this little girl she hands me.

CROSS
 Hands you?

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
 Her arms to mine.

CROSS
 What did she say?

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
 Not much. Just to please take care of her baby, she has everything she needs, she'll be back when she can.

CROSS
 That's it?

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
 Said she knew we took in kids, but wouldn't let me ask how. Just said the girl's name was Kylie and that was it. She was gone.

INT. GREY STONE BUILDING - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cross enters the room, AJ behind him. He watches as Sister Theresa tucks KYLIE, maybe 6, into a bed. She looks tiny and lost under the covers, whimpering, tears running down her cheeks.

KYLIE
 (a tiny, scared voice)
 I want my Mommy.

Cross moves to the bed, sits on the edge.

CROSS
Hi, there.

KYLIE
I want my Mommy.

CROSS
I know, Kylie, I know. That's your name, isn't it? Kylie?

Kylie nods, the tears still falling.

CROSS
I'm Nicholas. But you can call me Nick. This is kind of like my house. It's a magical house, did you know that?
(shakes her head)
Well, it is. All kinds of magical things happen here. Like--

Cross's hand moves from his jacket pocket to Kylie's ear. He pulls a red die up into the light.

CROSS
Wha--? Look what was in your ear. Is this yours?

Kylie looks at the die, shakes her head.

CROSS
No? Well--

Cross flips his hand, the die disappears.

CROSS
Whoops! Where did it go?

A slight smile on the corner of Kylie's mouth. The tears have stopped.

CROSS
I'll bet it's safe in my magic pocket. What do you think? You want to look?
(she nods)
Go ahead.

Kylie reaches into Cross's breast pocket with her right hand, but only with a thumb and forefinger, as the rest of her fingers are holding a wadded up piece of paper in her palm. She comes out with the die, a smile on her face.

CROSS
Pretty cool magic pocket, huh?

Kylie nods, holding the die between her thumb and finger.
Cross notices the wad.

CROSS
You want a new tissue?

KYLIE
It's not a tissue.

CROSS
Oh? What is it?

KYLIE
It's a present. My mommy gave it
to me. She told me to keep it safe
and not let anyone get it.

CROSS
Well, it will be safe here, because
you're safe here, okay?
(she nods)
You want me to stay 'til you go to
sleep?
(she nods again)
All right.

Kylie reaches out with the hand holding the wad and the die.

KYLIE
Can you keep these safe in your
magic pocket tonight?

Cross smiles and nods. Kylie tucks the wad and the die into
Cross's jacket pocket, then takes his hand. Cross slides to
the floor, his arm across the bed, holding Kylie's hand.

CROSS
They'll be there tomorrow.

Cross looks over to Sister Anna Juliana. She smiles, then
turns out the light, leaving the room lit only by moonlight
through the window.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
Goodnight, Father.

INT. GREY STONE BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Cross backs out of the bedroom, quietly pulls the door closed. He stands for a moment, his head bowed, then moves off.

INT. ST. CAMILLUS CHURCH - NARTHEX - NIGHT

Cross kneels at the railing, crosses himself, kisses the Crucifix around his neck, then looks to the larger Crucifix hanging above the altar.

CROSS

(quietly)

You heal me. You bring me here.
 You give me a place to feel safe.
 You give me people to care about
 again, and children with no one
 else to turn to--another one even
 tonight. And now you are going to
 let it all slip from my hands, let
 this sanctuary-- my sanctuary--be
 razed from the earth. For what? So
 people can lose themselves like I
 did? So a cruel moment can touch a
 child's soul and shrivel it because
 there's no refuge in which to heal?
 Give me a reason. Or better yet--
 help me save this sanctuary. For
 them. For me. I'm going to need a
 miracle, Lord, because I'm about to
 enter a fight I have no choice but
 to fight. And very little chance
 of winning. So think about that
 miracle, will you?

INT. RECTORY BEDROOM - NIGHT - DREAM SEQUENCE

The long green felt of a craps table.

CROUPIER (O.S.)

Point is eight! Same shooter,
 lookin' for an eight!

A pair of dice tumble in slow motion through the air and land on the felt, bouncing through stacks of chips. They roll to the end of the table and stop.

CROUPIER (O.S.)

Seven! Out! A loser!

Nick Cross, a bit younger and disheveled, looks in disbelief at the dice on the table, then his gaze slowly looks to his left and into the eyes of Joe Strazzi, who smiles through an exhaled cloud of cigar smoke.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. RECTORY BEDROOM - DAY

Cross's eyes snap open. He pushes the heels of his hands into them and sits up in the bed.

INT. RECTORY BEDROOM DRESSING AREA - DAY

Cross stands before the mirror, dressed in his priest's shirt and jacket, holding the tarnished picture frame. He kisses his fingertips and touches them to the faces in the picture.

CROSS
(whispers)
I'm sorry.

Cross sets the frame down and adjusts his coat one last time, and as he does so, he feels something in the breast pocket. He pulls out the red die and the wadded piece of paper that Kylie had stuffed there the night before.

Cross puts the die in his side pocket, unfolds the wadded piece of paper, and looks down at it.

INT. RECTORY HALLWAY - DAY

Sister Anna Juliana walks to Cross's door, about to knock on it, when she notices that it's partially open. She peeks in. He's not in the room. She moves down the hall.

INT. RECTORY KITCHEN - DAY

Sister Anna Juliana finds Cross sitting at the table, looking over a newspaper, the crumpled piece of paper in his hand.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
This is a first--you beating me
here.

Cross looks up at her, his face slack with a look of disbelief.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

What?

Cross hands her the newspaper.

CROSS

Read the numbers.

(points to the page)

Here.

Sister Anna Juliana squints at the page.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

Three. Six. Twelve. Fourteen.
Twenty-one. Something called the
Keyball is eleven.

CROSS

My God.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

What?

Sister Anna Juliana points at the wadded paper in Cross's hand.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

What is that?

CROSS

I think it's three hundred million
dollars.

EXT. ST. CAMILLUS - OUTDOOR COLUMNED WALKWAY - DAY

Cross sits on the stone bench with Stanley Marcus, who is turning the winning lottery ticket over in his hands.

MARCUS

It's not signed, so technically, it
belongs to whoever signs it.
Morally, though, it belongs to the
girl, since she came in with it.
But there's a problem there.

CROSS

She's a minor?

MARCUS

She's a minor. A minor can't claim
a lottery win, be it one dollar or
three hundred million.

(MORE)

MARCUS (CONT'D)

A parent or guardian can claim the win, put it in trust for her. But not her. Gotta be eighteen or older.

CROSS

We don't know where her parents are. We don't even know her last name.

MARCUS

You asked for my advice. Here it is: Identify the girl. Find a next of kin. Get her and the ticket out of here as fast as you can. You don't need a public spotlight here right now.

Cross nods. Marcus and Cross rise and move toward the Rectory.

As they walk away, the business end of a broom appears from behind the columns nearest the stone bench, followed by a red sneaker.

INT. GREY STONE BUILDING - MAIN ROOM - DAY

Cross sits at a small table with Kylie. He magically pulls a penny from Kylie's ear, which makes her laugh, then starts to shuffle cards in a game of Three-Card Monty. His hands move expertly, setting the cards on the table.

CROSS

If you find the penny, you can keep it.

KYLIE

(pointing at a card)
This one.

Cross flips the card. No penny.

CROSS

Nope.

KYLIE

(sadly)
Oh-h-h-h.
(pointing at another)
This one?

Again, no penny.

CROSS

Nope.

(flips the last card)

Right here it is. Want to try again?

Kylie nods enthusiastically. Cross starts to toss the cards.

CROSS

So. Kylie's your first name. Do you have a last name?

KYLIE

Uh-huh. Lots of 'em.

CROSS

(sets up the cards)

Lots of them? What do you mean?

KYLIE

Kylie Wilson. Kylie Martin. Kylie Justice. Kylie Crawford. Lots of 'em.

CROSS

Are those family names? Maybe one is your daddy's name?

KYLIE

I just have a mommy. They're her names.

CROSS

I see. Well, how about where you live, then? You know that?

Kylie tries to peek under one of the cards.

CROSS

No cheating.

(beat)

Do you live in the city?

KYLIE

We move a lot.

CROSS

Do you?

KYLIE

Uh-huh. All the time.

(she points at a card)

This one.

Cross flips the card. Kylie squeals with delight, grabs the penny shining beneath it.

CROSS
Wow. Not bad, Kylie. Want to give me another chance?

Kylie holds the coin tight in her fist. She smiles broadly and shakes her head "no".

EXT. GREY STONE BUILDING - DAY

Cross has Kylie by the hand as they exit the building. Sister Anna Juliana approaches from the courtyard, where several other children are kicking a soccer ball with Sister Theresa.

CROSS
(to Kylie)
Why don't you go play with the other kids.

KYLIE
(grabbing his leg)
I want to stay with you.

CROSS
I'll be right here. You'll be able to see me. Looks like they're having a lot of fun, doesn't it?
(off her nod)
Go ahead. I'm sure they'll like you.

Kylie takes a few tentative steps and looks back. Cross smiles and nods. Kylie takes off into the courtyard area.

Sister Anna Juliana falls into step with Cross as he heads toward the Rectory.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
Any luck?

CROSS
(shakes his head)
If anything, it's gotten more confusing. Her mother said nothing else to you?

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
Just what I told you: "Take care of my baby. She has everything you'll need."

CROSS
Meaning the ticket.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
Mm-hmm. And I've been thinking
about that.

INT. RECTORY KITCHEN - DAY

Sister Anna Juliana picks up a tea kettle, moves to the
stove.

CROSS
So?

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
So...what?

Cross sits at the table, pulls the red dice from his pocket
and starts to roll them in his hand.

CROSS
The ticket?

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
Oh. Yes. Well...it frightens me,
Father.

CROSS
How can something like that
frighten you? Think of what that
money could do for St. Camillus.
For these children. For our
mission here.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
(sitting)
Since when was it *our* money? And
what does it have to do with why
we're here? That kind of money--
well, it's obscene to me. But more
than that, Father, you have to cash
that ticket to get that money, and
I fear for what might happen if you
have access to it.

CROSS
(incredulous)
You're worried about me?

Sister Anna Juliana rises. She points to the dice rolling in
the palm of Cross's hand.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
You haven't had those out of your
pocket since you came here,
Nicholas.

INT. RECTORY OFFICE - DAY

Cross watches the children play in the courtyard through a window. He's still absentmindedly rolling the dice around in his hand.

Cross turns at a knock on the doorjamb. Jack Riggs enters.

RIGGS
Got a minute?

CROSS
Need some absolution?

RIGGS
Probably. But this is about my
business, not yours.

CROSS
Okay.

Riggs drops into a chair.

RIGGS
Woman was shot last night. Over by
Broad Street Station. Assailant
unknown. Died on the table an hour
later.

CROSS
One of our parishioners?

RIGGS
Don't think so. But on the way in,
she said something to one of my
guys.

(beat)
She said, "Kyle." Or "Try Lee."
Something like that. Then she said,
"St. Camillus. Tell her I love
her." Then she went out, never
regained consciousness.

Riggs looks at Cross looking at him.

RIGGS
You got something I should know?

EXT. RECTORY PATIO - DAY

Cross stands with Riggs.

CROSS
On the left, just kicking the ball.
Her name's Kylie.

RIGGS
This her?

Cross looks down at a small wallet-sized picture of Kylie Riggs is holding out.

CROSS
Yes.

RIGGS
This was in the woman's purse. The
girl know anything?

CROSS
Just her name. Names. Seems she
has a lot of them. She doesn't
know anything beyond that as far as
I can tell. She was dropped off
just before midnight by a woman
claiming to be her mother.

Riggs pulls a sheet of paper from his pocket, unfolds it and hands it to Cross.

RIGGS
This the woman?

INSERT - THE PAPER

which shows photocopies of four drivers-license-like ID's, identical in all ways except the names -- Wilson, Martin, Justice, Crawford. The picture on all of them is of the same woman.

BACK TO SCENE

CROSS
I wouldn't know. I wasn't here
when she came.

RIGGS
Who was?

INT. RECTORY KITCHEN - DAY

Sister Anna Juliana looks at the paper of ID's.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

Yes. That's the woman who brought
Kylie to us.

RIGGS

She talk about anything other than
the girl?

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

We didn't chat.

RIGGS

Just dropped her off and left?
Said nothing, gave you nothing?

Sister Anna Juliana glances at Cross, who doesn't look up.
Then she looks back to Riggs, shakes her head.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

No. Nothing.

CROSS

(to Riggs)

She looks familiar to me somehow.
But I don't think she's connected
to St. Camillus. Maybe she just
looks like Kylie, I don't know.

RIGGS

The only things she had on her were
these ID's, some pretty expensive-
looking jewelry, two grand in cash,
and some kinda symbol ring on her
right ring finger. We're tryin' to
trace that. Fingerprints came up
zip.

CROSS

Four ID's. Different names,
different states. Maybe she was
into something illegal?

RIGGS

Maybe. She obviously didn't want
anybody to know who she really was.

CROSS

Or to find her.

Riggs moves to the door.

RIGGS
Well, somebody did.

EXT. OUTDOOR COLUMNED WALKWAY - NIGHT

Dusk. Cross and Riggs walk down the columned walkway toward the front of St. Camillus.

RIGGS
We better figure that the kid might be in danger too. Or maybe she's the reason the mother got popped. We don't know enough not to be careful. You alright with keeping her here?

CROSS
She's fine. As far as I know, we're the only ones who know she's here.

RIGGS
Keep it that way.

INT. ST. CAMILLUS CHURCH - DAY

Cross is laying out hymnals and scripture pamphlets in the pews.

The doors to the church open quietly. Walter Faulkner steps in, and moves up the center aisle toward Cross.

FAULKNER
Hello, Father.

CROSS
(surprised)
Walter.
(checks his watch)
Meeting's not 'til eleven. You're a little early.

FAULKNER
Yeah. Yeah, I know. But I, uh--I wanted to thank you for the other night, Father. Prob'ly saved my marriage.

Cross sets the hymnals down, sits in a pew with Faulkner.

CROSS

You've been going to Strazzi's this whole time?

FAULKNER

Yeah.

CROSS

I had a feeling.

FAULKNER

Yeah, well. I'm kinda behind the eight ball with them guys, Father. In kinda deep. You know how it is-- you gotta keep playin'. Only way you got a chance to pull even, you know?

CROSS

It'll never happen, Walter. Because if you ever do pull even, you'll lose it all back trying to pull ahead.

Walter fidgets in silence a moment.

FAULKNER

Listen, Father. I got to ask you something. And I only ask it 'cause I know you always wanta help. I was wonderin'--I heard about that ticket you got--the Keyball? Lotta money, that, and--
(shock on Cross's face)
And I was thinkin'--maybe I could borrow a little of it. I mean, just for a week or two, you know? Get those guys off my back? I could do some extra work around here, and--

CROSS

Where did you hear this, Walter?

FAULKNER

Neighborhood. It's goin' 'round.

CROSS

How many people have you talked to about it?

FAULKNER

Couple. Stony Benson over at Johnson's Pub told me. Why? Ain't it true?

Cross stands, takes Walter's arm, guides him toward the door.

CROSS

Walter, I want you to do something for me. It's very important, alright?

FAULKNER

Yeah, sure, Father. Somethin' wrong?

CROSS

I need you to keep this business about the lottery ticket to yourself. I don't want you to talk about it with anyone else.

FAULKNER

But you got the ticket, right? You can help me out?

Cross stops at the door, considers a moment.

CROSS

Walter, I'm sorry, but I don't own any ticket. There's been a misunderstanding.

Walter's face is a mix of fear and desolation.

FAULKNER

What am I gonna do, then, Father? Where am I gonna get what I owe 'em? I gotta pay 'em somethin' tomorrow, or--

CROSS

You just be at the meeting this morning, Walter. We'll see what can be done then. For now, go back to work. And do what I asked of you.

EXT. ST. CAMILLUS CHURCH - DAY

Walter heads down the steps to the street. He passes two older Italian ladies coming up toward the church, SADIE COFRANCESCO, 60's, and DONNA MANGHISI, 70's. They wave at Cross.

SADIE
Father! Father Nick!

Sadie and Donna corner Cross at the church doors, Sadie grabbing Cross's arm a moment while she catches her breath.

CROSS
Hello, Donna. Sadie. Time to change the vestments, is it?

DONNA
(ignoring his question)
It's a miracle, isn't it, Father?

CROSS
What's a miracle? What happened?

SADIE
Don't tease, Father. It's unbecoming a man of the cloth.
(a confidential tone)
Though it's kind of cute for such a good-looking young man.

CROSS
What are you two talking about?

SADIE
The lottery, Father! The lottery! God sent us all a miracle, didn't he?

INT. RECTORY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Cross, Sister Anna Juliana, and Sister Theresa sit at the table, eating dinner.

CROSS
She said Little Michael's been saying that everybody at St. Camillus is going to be rich, that God sent an angel with the winning lottery ticket.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

Oh, my sweet Jesus. Where would he have gotten that?

CROSS

Where does he get any of the information he broadcasts?

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

I'm sure Mrs. Aubrey would like to know that same thing.

SISTER THERESA

Did Sadie mention Kylie, Father?

CROSS

No. They didn't seem to know anything about her.

SISTER THERESA

Small blessing.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

We'd best pray that no one starts looking around for a lottery ticket and instead finds the little angel that brought it.

CROSS

Prayer is good. But we may have to be prepared to do a little more.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

Meaning what?

CROSS

Prevarication comes to mind.

INT. RECTORY OFFICE - NIGHT

Cross sits at his desk. He looks at the page of ID's of Kylie's mother. He sets the page aside, rubs his temples.

Cross picks up the newspaper, sits back in the chair to read. A moment or two later, he looks over at the photocopy page again, then back at the paper. Recognition hits his face.

Cross gets up and leaves the office.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND THE RECTORY - NIGHT

Cross goes through the stack of newspapers in the recycle bin. He finds the one he's looking for, goes back inside.

INT. RECTORY OFFICE - NIGHT

Cross spreads the paper on his desk, opens it to a specific page.

Cross pulls a magnifying glass from a drawer, leans over the paper and looks at the picture he pointed out to Anna Juliana the day before of lottery hopefuls lined up to buy tickets.

INSERT -- THE PICTURE IN THE CIRCLE OF THE MAGNIFYING GLASS

The name of the nearby neighborhood store is clearly visible. Also clearly seen, standing in the line, are Kylie and her mother.

BACK TO SCENE

Cross reaches for the phone, dials.

INT. JACK RIGG'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Riggs sits at a workshop table, amid the tools and materials of a woodworker. He wears magnifying glasses as he works on an intricately-detailed model of a four-masted schooner. A small radio plays cool jazz.

Riggs picks up his cell phone on the first ring.

RIGGS

Riggs.

INTERCUT -- TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

CROSS

Jack, it's Nick.

RIGGS

(continuing to work)

Not Father Cross, eh? Must not be God's business we're gonna talk about.

CROSS

Ultimately it's all God's business, isn't it?

Riggs smiles and waits.

CROSS

I think I know why Kylie's mother was running, Jack.

RIGGS

Yeah?

CROSS

Her picture was in the "Examiner" a couple of days ago...story about people lining up for lottery tickets. She was in Crossin's Grocery, about four blocks from here.

Riggs sets his tools down, flips up the magnifiers.

RIGGS

Do tell.

CROSS

Now if she was trying to hide from someone, and they happened to read the paper that day...

RIGGS

Uh-huh. What day was this?

CROSS

Tuesday.

RIGGS

I'll take a look at it. And since you called--You have any time you can drop by tomorrow afternoon? I have something else I want to ask you about.

CROSS

Sure. Noon okay?

RIGGS

Fine. And Nick--just curious--Kylie's mother--she make any mention of the lottery to the Sister last night? Since she was in the picture and all, I was thinking maybe--

CROSS

We can talk about that tomorrow, Jack. See you then.

Cross hangs up.

BACK TO SCENE

Riggs flips his magnifying glasses back over his eyes, leans into his work.

RIGGS
 (to himself, quietly)
 What aren't you telling me, Father
 Cross?

INT. RECTORY OFFICE - NIGHT

Cross cradles the phone, sits down at the desk. He picks up his Bible and flips it open, pulls the lottery ticket from the pages. He turns it over and over, staring at it.

In a slow move, almost absentmindedly, his right hand slides down into his jacket pocket, comes out with the pair of red dice, rolling them around in his hand.

Cross's eyes move from the lottery ticket in his left hand to the dice in his right. Then he hesitantly lets the dice fall from his hand onto the desk. Nine.

He picks up the dice, rolls them again. Six.

He picks them up a little quicker this time, rolls them with a little more intention. Ten.

A quick pick up and roll. Three. Another. Ten. His hand now moving smoothly in an arc from pick up to roll--two, pick up and roll--eight, pick up and roll--eight--

CROSS
 (whispered)
 Come on, nine.

Pick up and roll--three, pick up and roll--

Seven.

Cross's hand freezes over the desk, his eyes locked on the dice. Then in one motion, his right hand sweeps the dice from the desk and into his pocket as he bolts from his chair and out of the office.

INT. ST. CAMILLUS CHURCH - NARTHEX - NIGHT

Cross kneels at the railing before the altar in the dim church, his forehead on his folded hands.

Cross hears a noise, looks up and sees Kylie standing next to him. He looks around, sees Sister Anna Juliana sitting in the back of the church.

KYLIE

Sister thought you might be lonely.
Are you lonely?

INT. ST. CAMILLUS CHURCH - FRONT PEW - NIGHT

Cross and Kylie sit beside one another, facing the candlelit altar.

CROSS

I had a little girl once. She was
a lot like you.

KYLIE

What was her name?

CROSS

Sophie.

KYLIE

That's a pretty name.

CROSS

Yes. It is. So is Kylie.

KYLIE

It means "shining crown."

CROSS

That's very special.

KYLIE

Where's Sophie now?

CROSS

Somewhere safe, I hope. Like
you're safe here.

KYLIE

Do you miss her?

CROSS

Oh, yes.

KYLIE

I miss my mom.

CROSS

I know. We all have people we miss when they're not with us. But if we love them, they're always with us in our hearts, right?

KYLIE

I guess.

CROSS

And I think that's why we're never really alone.

KYLIE

So we can't be lonely.

CROSS

Right. I'm certainly not lonely right now.

Kylie leans her head on Cross's arm.

KYLIE

Me neither.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA ROWHOUSE - DAY - DREAM SEQUENCE

A younger Cross, disheveled in a wrinkled shirt and ratty jacket, and looking like he's been up all night, walks up to the house. He searches his pockets, pulls out a key.

Cross goes to insert the key into the lock, but notices that the door is only pulled to, not closed. Warily, he pushes the door open and enters.

INT. PHILADELPHIA ROWHOUSE - FOYER - DAY - DREAM SEQUENCE

Cross notices the coat closet door is open. Only his one wool overcoat hangs inside. He moves into...

INT. PHILADELPHIA ROWHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY - DREAM SEQUENCE CONTINUED

Light square spaces on the wall indicate missing pictures. The mantelpiece is bare. Cross runs to the stairs, bounds up. He runs into...

INT. PHILADELPHIA ROWHOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY - DREAM
SEQUENCE CONTINUED

The closet holds only his clothes. The dresser drawers are empty. He runs out...

INT. PHILADELPHIA ROWHOUSE - SECOND BEDROOM - DAY - DREAM
SEQUENCE CONTINUED

Pink wallpaper with bunnies tells us this was where a child slept, but everything save the bed and dresser is gone.

Cross's devastated gaze falls to the top of the dresser, where sits the silver frame with the picture of the woman and child that he has on his Rectory bedroom dresser.

Cross picks up the frame as tears begin to trace down his face. He reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out two red dice. He stands a moment with the dice in one hand and the picture in the other.

Then Cross slowly sinks to his knees, sobbing.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. RECTORY BEDROOM - NIGHT

Father Nicholas Cross sits bolt upright in his bed, tears streaming down his face.

INT. RECTORY BEDROOM -- DAY

A phone is ringing in the distance. Cross sets down the silver picture frame, exits his bedroom, closes the door.

INT. RECTORY HALLWAY - DAY

The phone continues to ring as Cross moves to the stairs and down.

INT. RECTORY KITCHEN - DAY

Cross enters. The phone on the wall is ringing. Sister Anna Juliana sits at the table, buttering a slice of toast. She looks up at Cross, who nods at the phone.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
I hear it. Been hearing it since
five-thirty.

Cross moves toward the phone.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
I wouldn't, if I were you. Not
unless you want to practice that
prevarication you mentioned.

INT. ST. CAMILLUS CHURCH - DAY

Cross enters through the side door from the Rectory. He stops short when he sees about sixty MEN and WOMEN in the pews, several others near the Confessional. Some are praying, others just sitting.

A hundred and twenty eyes watch Cross as he makes his way in front of the Narthex. An occasional "Good Morning, Father" is heard.

MARTIN, 70's, bent and wrinkled, with a cane, stands and falls into step with Cross as he turns down the aisle toward the Confessional.

MARTIN
(confidentially)
You got a minute, Father Nicholas?

CROSS
Just about that, Martin.

MARTIN
You know my Dottie's had a rough
time of it lately.

CROSS
I heard. How is she?

MARTIN
Not good, Father, not good. Doctor
says she needs an operation.
Hospital, nurses, God knows what
else, and--and I been hearin'
'bout, you know, that St. Camillus
come into some money--

INT. CONFESSIONAL -- DAY

Cross sits listening to a MAN on the other side of the screen.

MAN

--so I was hopin' you might come by
and give the business a blessin',
get it started right, you know?

CROSS

We can certainly discuss that. But
why don't we focus on what we're
supposed to be doing in here?

MAN

(not even hearing him)
And if by chance you or St.
Camillus wants to think about a
small investment, I'm sure we can
come to an agreement--

Cross lets his head fall back against the booth wall, closes
his eyes.

MAN

--Like you could be a silent
partner, you know?

INT. ST. CAMILLUS CHURCH - DAY

Cross peeks his head out of the Confessional. No one else
waiting on the bench. He moves quickly to the front doors.

EXT. ST. CAMILLUS CHURCH - DAY

Cross emerges from the church and runs smack into a crowd of
REPORTERS and CAMERAMEN who shove microphones and television
cameras in his face.

REPORTERS

Father! Can you answer a few
questions for us, Father?

CROSS

(taken aback)
What--?

REPORTER #1

(pushing)
Is it true about the Keyball
ticket, Father? Has someone at St.
Camillus won three hundred million
dollars?

CROSS

This is neither the time nor the
place--

REPORTER #2

(pushing harder)

Do you have the ticket, Father? Are
you the winner?

CROSS

No, I'm not the winner.

REPORTER #2

Who is, then? Can we talk to them?

Cross looks for a way out, tries to move toward the columned
walkway toward the back of the church. As he does so, he
sees a television CREW on the courtyard, shooting video of
several children playing. One of them is Kylie.

Cross immediately pushes through the crowd of Reporters and
Cameramen, moving out onto the courtyard.

CROSS

Stop! This is private church
property, you can't tape here!

REPORTER #1

(calling after Cross)

Father, what about the lottery
ticket?

INT. DIOCESAN OFFICE - DAY

Regali sits in front of a television, watching the live news
broadcast of Cross in front of St. Camillus.

Regali clicks off the TV with a remote, turns to Bishop
Cardinale, sitting near him.

REGALI

This could complicate matters. We
don't need complications.

CARDINALE

Yes, Your Eminence.

INT. STRAZZI'S OFFICE - DAY

Strazzi sits at a poker table with several GOODFELLAS. He
tosses in a stack of chips.

STRAZZI

Call.
 (more chips)
 And raise two grand.

Strazzi glances at a TV in the corner. The live broadcast of Cross at St. Camillus is on.

STRAZZI

What the fuck?

Strazzi grabs the remote, turns up the volume. On the screen are the shots of the children playing in the courtyard.

GOODFELLA #1

(tossing in chips)
 See your two grand, raise you
 another two grand.

Strazzi rises and moves closer to the TV.

GOODFELLA #1 (O.S.)

Straz. I'm callin' you here.

Strazzi kneels in front of the TV.

GOODFELLA #2 (O.S.)

Come, on Straz. Whattaya doin'?
 We playin' poker or what?

Strazzi reaches out and touches the screen. His fingers trace the image of Kylie in the courtyard as Cross takes her hand and moves her away from the camera.

STRAZZI

Son of a bitch.

INT. POLICE CENTER - SQUADROOM - DAY

Cross is escorted through the room by a UNIFORMED OFFICER to a glassed office along the back wall.

The Uniformed Officer raps on the doorjamb.

UNIFORMED OFFICER

Someone to see you, Loot.

INT. POLICE CENTER - RIGGS' OFFICE - DAY

Riggs leans back in his chair.

RIGGS

I saw two things on TV a while ago
I didn't like seeing. One was a
little girl named Kylie. The other
was a priest squirmin', tryin' not
to lie.

CROSS

I was ambushed.

RIGGS

Vipers. Welcome to my world.
(sighs heavily)
Can't leave her there now, you
know.

CROSS

I know.

RIGGS

I got a friend in Child Welfare.
Could place her somewhere--

CROSS

The system's not for her, Jack.

RIGGS

What then? She could be in real
danger. We got no way a' knowin'.

CROSS

You've found nothing on her mother?
Nothing that could lead to a
relative?

Riggs sits forward, grabs a large manila envelope.

RIGGS

All those ID's she had were fakes.
Real good ones, but all dead ends.
Take a look at this, will you?

Riggs removes something from the envelope, tosses it to
Cross.

INSERT - THE OBJECT

A gold ring, with a flat top into which is etched the figure
of a man in robes with a staff. The flat top is surrounded
by small red stones.

BACK TO SCENE

RIGGS

What do you make of that?

CROSS

It's Saint Anthony of Padua.

RIGGS

Yeah? Why would someone wear a ring with him on it? What's the significance?

CROSS

He's the patron saint of travelers. Sailors keep him close, among others.

RIGGS

She didn't look like a sailor to me.

CROSS

I have someone who might know something about it. Can I keep this 'til tomorrow?

RIGGS

Don't see why not. You may lean toward bendin' the truth a little, but I doubt you're a thief.

Cross rises, moves to the door.

RIGGS

One more thing, Nick.
(off Cross's look)
That ticket the reporters were asking about. Anything to that?

CROSS

I'm surprised, Jack. You should know you can't always put your faith in what those vipers say on TV.

INT. RECTORY FOYER - DAY

Cross enters and is immediately met by Sister Anna Juliana coming down the hall.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

(hushed, perturbed)

Where have you been?

(before he can answer)

(MORE)

SISTER ANNA JULIANA (CONT'D)
 Never mind. Just get in there.
 He's been waiting 45 minutes.

CROSS
 Who?

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
 Bishop Cardinale, that's who.

Sister Anna Juliana trundles back up the hall. Cross goes into his office.

INT. RECTORY OFFICE - DAY

Bishop John Cardinale stands looking out the window into the courtyard. He looks to Cross as he enters, then back out the window.

CARDINALE
 Imagine my surprise this morning
 when I saw that courtyard full of
 children, Nicholas. And this
 business about a lottery ticket,
 what is this? Is it true?

CROSS
 (after a moment)
 Yes.

CARDINALE
 You have a three hundred million
 dollar lottery ticket here?

CROSS
 Yes.

CARDINALE
 My God.
 (then with concern)
 You're not gambling again, are you?

CROSS
 No. Nothing like that. The
 ticket's not mine.
 It's...complicated, John.

CARDINALE
 Simplify it for me. Start with the
 children.

CROSS
 A couple of them were here when I
 arrived. Abandoned, I'm told.
 (MORE)

CROSS (CONT'D)

The others...well, they just...came. One reason or another. We try to find Christian families for them. We couldn't turn them away.

CARDINALE

The city has agencies.

CROSS

Would you send a child into that, John? Have you forgotten? I haven't.

CARDINALE

We didn't turn out so bad, Nicholas. But that's beside the point. You've overstepped your bounds here. There are legal ramifications to running an unlicensed shelter. You may have compromised the Diocese.

CROSS

Oh, come on, John! We were helping innocents here--

CARDINALE

And now this public spotlight at a most delicate moment.

CROSS

That's what this is really all about, isn't it? It's not about an illegal shelter. It's about a real estate deal worth millions to Regali. Something you don't need anybody looking at.

CARDINALE

Remember who you're talking to, Nicholas.

Cardinale turns, looks out the window.

CROSS

(quietly)

Why did you send me here, John?

CARDINALE

(reflective)

Because St. Camillus was wounded too. I suppose I thought you might be able to heal one another.

CROSS

We are. And we're helping to heal others in the process.

CARDINALE

(suddenly firm again)

That may be true. But it can no longer happen here. You are to be at the Diocese in the morning, Father Nicholas. The appropriate city agencies are being notified about the children. And Nicholas-- give me that ticket. I will take it back to the Diocese, get it out of here, stop this nonsense with the press.

CROSS

I...I don't have it. I gave it to someone for safe keeping.

CARDINALE

Who?

CROSS

Someone trustworthy.

CARDINALE

Then get it back. Bring it with you tomorrow. His Eminence will decide its disposition.

(buttons his coat)

I'll show myself out.

(then quietly)

I'm sorry, Nick.

Cardinale leaves.

Cross moves to the desk, picks up his Bible. He opens it to the Book of St. Matthew, looks at the ticket sitting between the pages.

CROSS

You are trustworthy, aren't you, Matthew?

INT. GREY STONE BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Cross walks with Sister Anna Juliana toward Kylie's bedroom.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

Where will they go?

CROSS

Various foster homes. Dormitory facilities. Depends on what's available.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

The poor dears.

(then with spleen)

I'd like to give our Archbishop a piece of my mind.

CROSS

Maybe I should turn you loose on him, AJ. He wouldn't know what hit him.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

And what of Little Michael? What do we tell him? His whole life is wrapped up in St. Camillus.

Cross shakes his head.

When they reach Kylie's bedroom, Sister Anna Juliana takes Cross's arm, stops him.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

(hushed)

She's been asking about her mother. Are you going to tell her?

CROSS

I don't have a choice now, do I?

INT. GREY STONE BUILDING - KYLIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kylie sits on the floor, playing Jacks. As Cross sits down beside her, she sets the ball down, turns to him.

KYLIE

What's in your magic pocket today?

CROSS

Oh, I don't know. Want to look?

KYLIE

Yeah!

Kylie reaches into Cross's jacket breast pocket. Her eyes widen as she pulls her Jacks ball out. She looks down to the floor, where the ball just was.

KYLIE
How'd you do that?

CROSS
Same way I did this--

Cross reaches out and touches Kylie's ear, pulls his hand back with a Jack between his fingers. Kylie laughs.

CROSS
Want to play a game?

Kylie nods.

CROSS
You first.

Kylie rolls out the Jacks, starts to play.

CROSS
I want to talk to you about your Mom, Kylie. Can I do that?
(Kylie nods)
Did your Mom ever talk to you about Heaven?

KYLIE
(bouncing the ball)
Uh-huh.

CROSS
What did she tell you?

KYLIE
That's where we go when we don't live here anymore. That's where my Gramma is.

CROSS
(struggling)
Did she..ever talk about when she might..go there?

Kylie stops playing. She looks up at Cross, her demeanor suddenly different, somehow more mature.

KYLIE
Mommy's not coming back, is she?

CROSS
No. Did she tell you she might not?

Kylie nods, then gets up, sits on the bed, grabs her stuffed rabbit, hugs it tightly. Cross rises and sits next to her, puts his arm around her.

KYLIE

Can I stay with you and Sister AJ?

CROSS

I don't think--

Kylie suddenly throws her arms around Cross, tears falling from her eyes.

KYLIE

I want to stay with you! I want to stay here!

Cross picks Kylie up, holds her tight as she throws her arms around his neck and holds on for dear life.

CROSS

I know, little one, I know.

INT. RECTORY FOYER - DAY

Cross hands Sister Anna Juliana his coffee cup, then slips on his jacket.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

Where will you be?

CROSS

I can't let Kylie into the system. I need to find someone who knows her. Stay with the children, don't answer the phones.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

Yes, Father.

Cross is out the door.

EXT. PADUA SCHOOL - MAIN BUILDING - WILMINGTON, DE -- DAY

Cross walks up to the entrance, pulls open the doors and goes in.

INT. ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA SCHOOL - OFFICE - DAY

Cross sits with FATHER FRANK TERRANOVA, late 40s, trim and angular, in a pair of plush leather chairs.

Terranova is looking at the ring Cross got from Riggs.

TERRANOVA

I remember this design because we changed it the year after I became Headmaster here. That was in '05. I think they used this one for only a couple of years before that, so the window would be 2003 to 2005.

CROSS

Could anyone get these?

TERRANOVA

Only graduates. They received it with their diplomas.

Cross unfolds the photocopy of ID's of the Woman.

CROSS

Does she look familiar?

Terranova shakes his head.

TERRANOVA

No. But if she graduated before I came--

CROSS

Right. I assume you have yearbooks from those years?

TERRANOVA

In the library.

INT. PADUA SCHOOL - LIBRARY - DAY

Cross and Terranova sit at the corner of a long table, each flipping pages in a yearbook. The photocopy ID sheet lies on the table between them.

FRANCES, a 60's-something, picture-perfect Librarian right down to the pencil in the hair bun, places another book on the table.

FRANCES

And here's 2005.

TERRANOVA

Thank you, Frances.

Terranova picks up the 2005 book, opens it to the senior class section, begins looking at the pictures. About the third page in, he stops.

TERRANOVA

I think this might be her.

Cross looks at the picture.

INSERT -- THE PICTURE IN THE YEARBOOK

A young woman in cap and gown, her hair longer than in the photocopy ID's, but the facial features are the same. The name beneath the photo is "Stephanie Hess".

BACK TO SCENE

CROSS

Stephanie Hess. You know her?

TERRANOVA

No. Before my time.

FRANCES

(walking back to table)

Did you say Stephanie Hess?

CROSS

Yes. Do you know her?

FRANCES

I knew her, yes. Nice girl. Played field hockey. Kind of a wild one, though. Ran with a fast crowd.

CROSS

Would you by any chance know where her family might be now?

FRANCES

Her parents were killed in a car accident not too long after she graduated. The last time I saw her was at her wedding.

TERRANOVA

When was that, Frances?

FRANCES

The year my Henry died. The only reason I know is that it was at my church, you see.

(MORE)

FRANCES (CONT'D)
I was on the Narthex committee.
Such a big wedding. So many
flowers.

CROSS
What church was this?

FRANCES
St. Mary Magdelene's here in town.

CROSS
(somewhat surprised)
St. Mary's?

TERRANOVA
You know it?

Cross nods.

CROSS
I know the priest who was at St.
Mary's about that time. He
arranged for my entrance to
Seminary.

INT. ST. MARY MAGDELENE'S - HALLWAY - DAY

Cross walks with FATHER THOMAS QUINN, 30's, redheaded and portly.

QUINN
St. Mary's is a big church, Father.
Over two thousand parishioners. I
took over in 2002, when the
previous priest was elevated. All
the records are here, though.

Quinn opens a door, he and Cross enter a small room.

INT. ST. MARY MAGDELENE'S - STUDY/RECORDS ROOM - DAY

Quinn walks to a long row of record books, checking the spines.

QUINN
We have them by category and year.
(finds a book)
Yes...here it is. 2008.

Quinn plops the book on a table, thumbs through the pages.

QUINN

Hess, Hess, Hess--Ah, yes.
Stephanie Hess. June 4, 2008.
Married one John Joseph Strazzi.

CROSS

(stunned)
Strazzi? Joe Strazzi?

QUINN

John Joseph, yes. And there's a
notation here--
(flips some pages)
Yes. They had a daughter baptized
here on April 2, 2013. Kyle
Deborah Strazzi.

Cross sits in a nearby chair.

CROSS

And the priest?

Quinn looks in the book.

QUINN

In both cases, Father John
Cardinale. Now Bishop John
Cardinale, of course.

EXT. ST. CAMILLUS - DAY

Cross pulls his car into the small church lot, gets out and
walks toward the entrance of the church.

As he does so, the door of a black stretch limousine at the
curb opens, and C. ARTHUR RETTSON, 50s, impeccably-dressed in
pinstripe suit and power tie, emerges.

RETTSON

Father Cross. May I have a moment?

Cross turns as Rettson approaches him.

CROSS

I'm sorry, do I know you?

RETTSON

No. But we share a mutual
acquaintance. I'm legal counsel
for Gaming Entertainment Partners.

CROSS

Who?

Rettson points toward the partially demolished factory beyond the St. Camillus courtyard trees.

CROSS
(realizing)
Strazzi.

RETTSON
Mr. Strazzi is a shareholder, yes.

CROSS
I don't have any business with Joe Strazzi.

Cross turns toward the church entrance. Rettson falls into step with him.

RETTSON
That's not exactly true, is it, Father? There's the small matter of a quarter million dollars--

Cross stops.

CROSS
What do you want, Mr. Rettson?

RETTSON
My client wishes to speak with you about certain specific items that have recently come into your possession. Items that Mr. Strazzi feels he has a proprietary--

CROSS
What items would those be?

RETTSON
A lottery ticket and one Kyle Deborah Strazzi.

CROSS
An "item". Figures that's how he'd see her.

RETTSON
Nevertheless. Now, Mr. Strazzi would prefer this to be a simple transaction. No need to make a public spectacle of it.

CROSS
I bet he would.

RETTSON

Now if you would--

CROSS

Look, Mr. Rettson. Tell Joe Strazzi that any business we have is history and between us and us alone. Beyond that, we have nothing to talk about. Now if you'll excuse me.

Cross climbs the steps to St. Camillus and enters the church.

INT. RECTORY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sister Anna Juliana pours boiling water over a teabag in a cup, then sets it on a tray. She carries it from the room.

INT. RECTORY HALLWAY - NIGHT

Sister Anna Juliana comes down the hall to the Rectory office door. She stops, leans into the door a moment, listening.

INT. ST. CAMILLUS - RECTORY OFFICE - NIGHT

Cross sits at his desk, looking out at the darkening courtyard, lost in thought. His right hand absentmindedly rolls the red dice on the blotter. The move is automatic--roll, sweep, roll, sweep, roll.

Cross looks up as the office door opens, his hand sweeping up the dice and holding them.

Sister Anna Juliana carries the cup of tea to the desk, the teabag string and tag flapping as she walks.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

Awfully quiet in here.

CROSS

Sanctuaries tend to be on the quiet side.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

That what this is?

CROSS

Used to be.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

Mm-hmm.

(moves to the door)

I'm ready to man the parapets if
you are, Father.

CROSS

Just what the world needs. Another
pair of Christian martyrs.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

What if that's what it takes?

Cross doesn't answer. Sister Anna Juliana gives him a slight smile, then leaves and closes the door.

Cross sits at the desk another moment or two, then opens his hand, looks at the dice. He puts them into his jacket pocket as he rises.

Cross walks to a bookshelf, picks out a large album. He carries it to a leather chair and sits, turns on a lamp nearby.

Cross opens the book. It's a photo album. He turns the pages slowly, studying the photos.

INSERT -- THE BOOK

A traditional family portrait, with silver ink on the page margin, reading "Nick, Jenny, and Sophie, June 2012."

A page turn. More family shots: A younger-looking Cross, in sweatshirt and jeans, tackled on a lawn by Jenny and Sophie; another of them sitting on a front stoop; another with Sophie held up between Cross and Jenny, all of them laughing.

The page turns again: Christmas shots, of trees and presents; Sophie on a mall Santa's lap; Cross with reindeer antlers on his head, Sophie hysterical next to him.

The page turns. No photos here. Just a single folded sheet of paper. Cross's fingers partially open it. The first line is readable: "I can't let you do this to us anymore...". Cross's fingers gently close the paper, turn the page.

Two photographs: The larger shows Cross in priest's robes, outside of St. Mary Magdelene's, shaking hands with John Cardinale with one hand, accepting a Bible with the other.

The second is Cross with Cardinale and Sister Anna Juliana at the front door of St. Camillus. In the background corner of the photo stands Little Michael with his broom.

BACK TO SCENE

Cross closes the photo album, lets his head fall back on the chair. Then he reaches for the phone, dials.

CARDINALE (FILTERED)
 (answering machine)
 This is Bishop John Cardinale.
 Please leave a message. I'll get
 back to you.

At the beep, Cross appears ready to say something, but doesn't. Instead, he quietly clicks off the phone, sets it down, and leaves the room.

INT. RECTORY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Cross sits at the table, a cup of tea before him.

Sister Anna Juliana passes the kitchen door in her nightgown, catches sight of Cross, comes back and enters.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
 You all right, Father?

Cross nods. Sister Anna Juliana sits at the table.

CROSS
 (after a moment)
 May I ask you a personal question,
 AJ?

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
 Certainly.

CROSS
 What brought you to the Order?

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
 (without hesitation)
 Emptiness.

CROSS
 Emptiness?

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
 Not necessarily a physical
 emptiness, mind you.

(MORE)

SISTER ANNA JULIANA (CONT'D)
Or a spiritual one either, for that matter. But more than both. A complete vacuum. A total sense of disconnection, of being without power.

CROSS
You were conscious of this within yourself?

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
I wasn't aware of it at all. Not until the moment I stepped into St. Alban's in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania twenty some-odd years ago. I was going to a friend's wedding--happy, directionless, frivolous about life's serious matters. Oblivious.

CROSS
And in that moment?

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
In that moment, in that church--why, I'll never know--I was filled with something that made me aware of what emptiness was. Or more directly to the point, what it wasn't.

CROSS
What did you do?

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
I couldn't leave. I stayed for hours. Missed the reception, everything. When I finally did step out of the church, I was acutely aware that the world was no longer the same. Being oblivious had been taken from me. I went back the next morning, prayed for hours--something I'd not done since I was a little girl. The feeling rose more strongly within me-- a sense of connection, fullness, belonging, responsibility. And a clarity. I knew without a shadow of a doubt that this was where I was to be. Here was where my power lay, my ability to make a difference. I went to the convent that night.

CROSS

I could use such clarity.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

You have it, Nicholas. We all do.
Perhaps you're just not trusting
it. It's when you trust it that the
power comes.

INT. RECTORY BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cross tosses in bed, unable to sleep. He looks at the clock--
a neon 4:12 glows on it's face.

Cross sits up, turns on the nightstand light. He picks up
his Bible, opens it to St. Matthew. He picks out the lottery
ticket, turns it over and over in his hand, then puts it back
in the Bible.

CROSS

Today, Matthew. Maybe today I'll
relieve you of this burden.

Cross sets the Bible down and leaves the bed.

INT. REGALI'S DIOCESAN OFFICES -- DAY

Cross stands before Archbishop Regali, who sits behind his
desk. Cardinale sits behind Cross and to his left. Regali's
just lit a cigarette, exhales a blue cloud of smoke.

REGALI

Sit, Father.

CROSS

I'd rather stand, Your Eminence.

REGALI

Suit yourself. You know why you're
here, Father Nicholas, so let's not--

-

CROSS

I know why you called me here. Why
I'm here is another matter.

Regali casts a glance at Cardinale, who almost imperceptibly
shakes his head.

REGALI

And that would be?

CROSS
I'm here to buy St. Camillus.

REGALI
What?!

CARDINALE
(standing, jolted)
You're not serious, Nicholas.

CROSS
(he stares at Regali)
I've never been more serious about anything in my life.

REGALI
Don't be ludicrous. You can't buy a church.

CROSS
Why not? You can obviously sell one. I just want you to sell it to me.

REGALI
How do you propose to pay for it?

CROSS
Let's just say I've come into some money.

REGALI
(dismissive)
You are already a liability and an embarrassment to this Diocese, now you've become an embarrassment to yourself.

CROSS
I'm an embarrassment? Who's hiding in the shadow of the cross, dealing with men our Lord Himself would not speak with were He here today?

Regali leaps to his feet.

REGALI
How dare you!

CARDINALE
You go too far, Nicholas.

CROSS

(turning to Cardinale)

I haven't gone far enough. I've been to St. Mary's, John. I've seen the records. You knew who Stephanie Hess was. You knew who Kylie is. Yet you stood in my office and said nothing. And you were the only person I told that I did, indeed, have the lottery ticket. No one else knew for sure but AJ, and she wouldn't have told anyone.

CARDINALE

Nicholas--

CROSS

Was it you or His Eminence here that called Strazzi?

Cardinale is silent.

CROSS

Well, it doesn't matter.

(turns to Regali)

I do have the ticket. And I'm ready to cash it. What's Strazzi offering? I'll beat it.

REGALI

No. You can't. Nor will you try. You still work for this Diocese, Father Cross, and that means me. Let this go. Move on. We will find you another church. A bigger, finer church. One where you can--

CROSS

(quietly, determined)

St. Camillus is my church.

REGALI

Not anymore. It's over. Finished. Child Welfare will be at St. Camillus tomorrow afternoon for the children you have been harboring there. You will give them to the Welfare Agents.

CROSS

No, I will not.

REGALI

You will if you don't want them harmed. You see, demolition of St. Camillus has been set to begin the next morning. That's what you were called here to be told.

CROSS

Tomorrow...?!

REGALI

Yes. People will be there to remove anything the Diocese wants to keep. The rest, well...

CROSS

I--

REGALI

You! You will be reassigned a new parish.

CROSS

I don't want--

REGALI

Until that time, you will stay in Diocese housing. Now, leave us. There is no more to say.

Regali turns and goes out the door at the back of the room.

Cardinale looks to Cross, who moves to the door.

CARDINALE

Where are you going, Nicholas?

CROSS

To the only other place I can go.

CARDINALE

Is there anything I can do or say?

CROSS

(stops, turns)

I have a dog at St. Camillus, John. He'll need a home. You two should suit each other. Especially in name.

EXT. ILLICIT GAMBLING HALL - DAY

Cross walks directly to the door, raps the signal. Joey Mancusi opens the door, smiles.

MANCUSI
Nicky. How's things?
(notices the collar)
What's with the bib? Ain't
Halloween.

CROSS
I need to see him.

MAN
Well, we ain't open right now,
Nicky. You know that. Come back
'round 10 tonight.

CROSS
I need to see him now. Tell him
I'm here. He'll see me.

Mancusi studies Cross a second.

MANCUSI
Hold on.

Mancusi props the door open with his foot as he reaches for a phone, dials an extension.

MANCUSI
Yeah. It's me. I got Nicky Cross
down here. Says he wants to see
ya. You won't believe what he's
wearin'.
(the smile fades)
How'd you know?
(beat)
Okay, yeah. Sure.

MANCUSI
(opening the door)
Go on up.
(smiles)
Father.

INT. STRAZZI'S OFFICE - DAY

Cross enters. Strazzi sits at the poker table, counting a stack of money.

STRAZZI

Wasn't nice a' you to blow off my mouthpiece, Nick. I was tryin' to be decent about things.

CROSS

Anything you want to say to me, you can say to my face.

STRAZZI

Okay. Try this: this is the second time this week you're breakin' our arrangement. You ain't s'posed to be comin' here, remember?

Cross sits down across the poker table from Strazzi.

STRAZZI

But I'm gonna let it slide, Nicky. 'Cause you found my little girl for me. She's comin' home tomorrow.

CROSS

This is no place for a child.

STRAZZI

Hey, so I'll get an apartment or somethin'. Or better yet--I'll build some condos over by the new casino. Maybe where your church is now. How 'bout that? She'll feel right at home.

CROSS

You don't want her. You want the money.

STRAZZI

(suddenly steel)

Don't tell me what I want. You're in no position to tell me shit.

Strazzi gets up, moves to the safe behind his desk, puts the stack of money into it.

CROSS

What happened to Stephanie Hess, Joe?

STRAZZI

(light again)

Ah, you know--we drifted apart. She started questionin' how I made the money she was livin' off of.

(MORE)

STRAZZI (CONT'D)

Got all moral on me. Catholic girls. Whattaya gonna do? Guess she thought life would be sweeter somewheres else.

CROSS

But you found her.

STRAZZI

Got herself in the newspaper. Not too swift. But I didn't marry her for her brains.

CROSS

She was terrified when she came to St. Camillus.

STRAZZI

Go figure.

CROSS

Tell me, Joe. Just between you and me. Did you kill her?

STRAZZI

Kill her? Me? Nah. I don't kill nobody. Let's just say I let it be known I wasn't too happy with 'er. And the thing is--I can't always control what my friends might do, you know? But, hell, she shoulda known better. What'd she think I'd do? Go "Oh, sure, go 'head. Take my kid, don't share the \$300 mill. No skin off my ass."

(the steel returns)

You, above all people, know I don't forget, and I don't forgive, neither.

Strazzi moves to the bar, picks up a glass.

STRAZZI

You wanta drink? Scotch? Bourbon?

Cross shakes his head. Strazzi makes a drink, sits down at the poker table again.

STRAZZI

Look, Nick. Let's cut the shit. You got two things I consider mine. Kylie, and a \$300 million dollar lottery ticket my wife bought. Tomorrow the city gives me the one.

(MORE)

STRAZZI (CONT'D)
You're gonna bring me the other.
And that's it. Got it?

Cross sits quietly for a moment, staring at Strazzi, who stares back, unblinking.

CROSS
I'll make you a deal. I'll give
you the lottery ticket for St.
Camillus.

STRAZZI
Now why would I do that? Way I see
it, half the ticket's already mine--
spousal property and all. Other
half was Steph's, now Kylie's. But
the kid can't own it. And my wife--
well, she's dead, ain't she? What
was hers is now mine. Hunnerd
percent. I don't have to trade you
for nothin'.

CROSS
What will it take?

STRAZZI
Nothin' you got. So forget it.
(suddenly animated)
Hey, let's play a little cards,
whattaya say? I feel like gamblin'
a little. Wanna play a little
stud? I'll spot ya some cash.

Cross rises from the table, moves to the door.

STRAZZI
Ah, come on. Don't be that way.
Play some cards. You might win--

Cross closes the door behind him, leaving Strazzi alone.

STRAZZI
(to himself)
--but I doubt it. Fuckin' loser.

EXT. ILLICIT GAMBLING HALL - DAY

Cross emerges, pulls out his cell phone, and dials.

RIGGS (FILTERED)
(through phone)
Riggs.

CROSS
You at your office?

RIGGS (FILTERED)
No. Downtown.

CROSS
Where? We need to talk.

RIGGS (FILTERED)
South Street. Vandever's Hobby.

CROSS
See you in ten minutes.

INT. VANDEVER'S HOBBY SHOP - DAY

Cross enters the store. It's packed floor to ceiling with anything and everything to do with woodworking.

Cross moves to the rear of the store, where he finds Riggs sitting at a bench with CHARLIE VANDEVER, 70s, who looks remarkably like Pinocchio's father, Geppetto. They're working on Riggs's four-masted schooner model.

Neither Riggs nor Vandever look up or stop what they're doing.

RIGGS
Nick. You know Charlie?

CROSS
Nice to meet you.

VANDEVER
Pleasure.

RIGGS
(to Vandever)
Gimme a sec, will you, Charlie?

Charlie nods, moves out to the front of the store.

CROSS
(points to the model)
Pretty impressive.

RIGGS
Therapy. Makes me think about the interconnectivity of everything. Good exercise for a homicide cop. What's up?

CROSS
Her name was Stephanie Hess.

RIGGS
Yeah?

CROSS
Married to Joe Strazzi.

RIGGS
You're kidding.

CROSS
Left him ten months ago. He as
much as told me he had her killed.

RIGGS
Yeah, well, sayin' it and provin'
it-- two different things. Strazzi
doesn't make mistakes.

CROSS
There's more.

RIGGS
I had a feeling.

CROSS
Strazzi's behind the deal that's
closing St. Camillus. He's buying
it from the Diocese for his casino.

RIGGS
Uh-huh. And?

CROSS
And they're coming for the children
tomorrow.

RIGGS
That's not good.

CROSS
I'm wondering if there's any way
you can stop it.

RIGGS
Not my area, Nick.

CROSS
You don't have any friends over
there?

RIGGS

Plenty. But you gotta remember--
St. Camillus has been operating
under the radar. We knew it could
blow open if it got on the screens.
I'll make some calls, but--

CROSS

Thanks. I had to ask.

RIGGS

Sure you did.

CROSS

(nods at the ship)
Problems?

RIGGS

Nothing a lot of time and
rebuilding won't fix. But I look
forward to it.

CROSS

Yeah. Wish I could say the same.

INT. GREY STONE BUILDING - DAY

Sisters Anna Juliana and Theresa settle the children into
their dinners.

Cross enters and there's a chorus of "Hi, Father Nick"s.
Kylie jumps up and runs to Cross, practically jumping into
his arms.

KYLIE

Hi, Father! I missed you! Where
have you been?

CROSS

Oh, here and there. Looking for
some magic.

Kylie sticks her hand into Cross's jacket pocket.

KYLIE

Did you find any?

CROSS

Not yet. But I'll let you know
when I do.

(sets her down)

Go finish your dinner, honey.
We'll play later.

Kylie runs off to the dinner table.

CROSS
 (to the Sisters)
 I need to see you both a moment.

Sisters Anna Juliana and Theresa join Cross in the corner of the room.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
 Time for the parapets?

CROSS
 In a manner of speaking. Child Welfare will be here tomorrow. They're to take the children. St. Camillus is to be demolished the next day.

SISTER THERESA
 (crossing herself)
 Oh, my Lord, no. These poor children.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
 What can we do? We can't let them have these children.

CROSS
 No, we can't. So we're going to move them.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
 Move them? Where?

CROSS
 Just get them ready to leave as soon as it gets darker. Bring whatever they have, whatever they'll need.

Cross moves into the hall and leaves. Sister Anna Juliana looks at Theresa. They both raise their eyebrows at the same moment.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
 (to the children)
 Eat up children. We have a surprise for you. We're all going on a trip!

EXT. FAULKNER HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - DAY

Marie Faulkner opens the door. Standing before her are Cross, Sisters Anna Juliana and Theresa, Kylie, and seven other children.

MARIE

Father Cross. What--?

CROSS

I have a favor to ask of you,
Marie.

INT. FAULKNER HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sister Anna Juliana tucks a blanket around Kylie and three other kids in a queen size bed.

Cross sits on the edge of the bed near Kylie, gently pushes her hair from her face.

CROSS

You okay?

KYLIE

Uh, huh. Is this where I'm gonna
stay now?

CROSS

For a little while.

KYLIE

(whispers)
Is there magic here?

CROSS

Oh, yes. Lots of it. Want to see?

Kylie nods, reaches up and into Cross's jacket breast pocket. When she pulls her hand out, she has a small silver cross on a chain.

KYLIE

(eyes bright)
Wow!

CROSS

That's a special cross, Kylie. It
stands for all those who love you,
especially me.

KYLIE

'Cause it's your name.

CROSS

Right.

(puts it on her neck)

If you ever get scared, just hold
it tight, and you'll feel me with
you. Okay?

Kylie nods. Cross bends and kisses her forehead, then
stands.

CROSS

Goodnight, children.

CHILDREN

Goodnight, Father Cross.

Cross smiles at Sister Anna Juliana, then joins Marie, who
stands in the hallway.

INT. FAULKNER HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Cross and Marie move down the hall. They pass another
bedroom where Sister Theresa is getting the rest of the kids
into a pair of beds.

INT. FAULKNER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Cross and Marie emerge from the hallway, move toward the
front door.

CROSS

Bless you, Marie. I know this is a
lot to ask.

MARIE

This house hasn't heard these
sounds in almost twenty years,
Father. It's nice to hear them
again.

CROSS

I don't know how long they'll need
to stay. Will it be hard
explaining eight kids?

MARIE

Not that it's anybody's business,
Father, but if they ask, I'll just
tell 'em they're the grandkids.
It'll make 'em jealous.

CROSS

All right, then.
 (opens the door)
 How's Walter, by the way?

MARIE

S'pose he's okay. He ain't home
 much to know. Workin' a lot of
 overtime, so he says.

Cross and Marie hold each other's eyes a moment,
 understanding one another clearly. Cross smiles, moves into
 the night.

Marie closes the door, bows her head a moment in thought,
 perhaps prayer, then hears a childish giggle from the
 hallway. She turns, smiling, and moves toward the bedrooms.

EXT. ST. CAMILLUS - RECTORY - DAY

Jack Riggs approaches the Rectory entrance. As he's about to
 knock, the door opens.

JACQUELINE REYNARD, 30's, petite and proper, OLIVIA BROWN, as
 tall as Jacqueline but twice as wide, emerge. Riggs steps
 aside to let them pass. Nick Cross follows them out.

REYNARD

(not pleased, to Cross)
 --and I'm sure you understand this
 is totally unacceptable, Father
 Cross.

CROSS

No, actually, I don't understand.

REYNARD

Those children should not have been
 moved. Period. They were to be
 processed by our agency this
 morning.

CROSS

Those children have been through
 enough already, Miss Reynard. I
 assure you they're safe and well
 taken care of.

BROWN

That is for us to decide, sir. Not
 you.

CROSS
I've been in you system. Who
better to decide?

REYNARD
This may well have personal legal
consequences for you, Father Cross.
I highly recommend you reconsider
your actions. Our next step is the
courts.

Reynard and Brown move briskly toward a van parked in the St.
Camillus lot.

RIGGS
Jacqueline Reynard?

CROSS
(nodding)
You know her?

RIGGS
Know of her. Not a good person to
be tangling with, I hear.

CROSS
You want a cup of coffee?

RIGGS
Desperately.

INT. RECTORY KITCHEN - DAY

Cross and Riggs sit at the kitchen table, coffees before
them.

RIGGS
A case could be made for
Obstruction. Depends on the judge.
If somebody's really got a bug up,
they could even think about
kidnapping.

CROSS
Oh, come on.

RIGGS
(shrugging)
It's why I told you to be careful,
Nick.

CROSS
I really didn't have a choice,
Jack.

RIGGS
Experience can define action. I
understand.

CROSS
That's part of it.
(sips his coffee)
Three years ago I took my family
for granted. I put myself before
them. St. Camillus and it's people
are my family now. I won't make
the same mistake twice.

RIGGS
I won't be able to help you if it
gets sticky.

CROSS
I know.

EXT. ST. CAMILLUS - DAY

Cross watches Riggs pull out of the lot and up the street.

Cross moves around the side of the church into the columned
walkway.

EXT. COLUMNED WALKWAY -- DAY

As Cross comes around the corner into the walkway, he notices
Little Michael sitting alone on the concrete bench. As Cross
gets closer, he realizes Little Michael is crying.

Cross sits next to Little Michael.

CROSS
What is it, Michael? What's the
matter?

LITTLE MICHAEL
(sobbing)
I ruined it, Father Nick. I'm
sorry...I ruined it for
everybody...

CROSS
Ruined what, Michael?

LITTLE MICHAEL
 (sobbing)
 St. Camillus.

CROSS
 Where did you hear that, Michael?

LITTLE MICHAEL
 (sobbing)
 I hear people talking. St.
 Camillus is closing. It's because
 of me.

CROSS
 No, Michael, believe me, it's not.

LITTLE MICHAEL
 I didn't do what you said. I
 shouldn't have said anything. And
 now St. Camillus won't be here
 anymore, and there's no place for
 Anna Juliana and Theresa and the
 kids and you and me and--

Cross puts his arm around Little Michael.

CROSS
 Michael, listen. Do you remember
 the story of Noah and the Ark?

LITTLE MICHAEL
 (sniffling)
 Yes--

CROSS
 When God sent the rain to cleanse
 the Earth?
 (off Michael's nod)
 But he told Noah to build the ark,
 and because of that, all of God's
 precious creatures were saved for a
 better world, right?
 (another nod)
 You see, Michael, God sometimes
 disguises blessings as things that
 frighten us at first, that we don't
 understand. But in the end,
 something better comes of it.
 Maybe you just did what God needed
 someone to do. Maybe you were Noah.

LITTLE MICHAEL
 You think?

CROSS

Maybe. We'll have to wait and see,
won't we?

Little Michael wipes his nose on his sleeve.

LITTLE MICHAEL

Okay, Father Nick. I'd like being
Noah.

A banging out front of the church draws their attention.
Cross rises and moves up the walkway. Michael follows him.

EXT. ST. CAMILLUS - DAY

Cross, followed by Little Michael, comes upon a CONSTRUCTION
FOREMAN hammering a sign into the ground in front of the
church. A large construction trailer has been parked in the
small lot.

The sign is from a demolition company. On it hangs a notice
that demolition of the property is to begin.

CROSS

Excuse me.

FOREMAN

Yeah.

CROSS

You can't be doing this. This
property hasn't been sold yet.

FOREMAN

Papers were signed this mornin', as
I understand it.

CROSS

What?

FOREMAN

Got a call about noon, told me to
come on out here. We're takin' her
down tomorrow.

LITTLE MICHAEL

(losing it completely)

NO! No, you can't!

(turns to Cross)

You said I was Noah! You said!

CROSS

Michael--

But Michael is already running down the street, crying.

CROSS
Michael! Michael, come back!

FOREMAN
Jesus. I'm sorry, Father.

Cross watches Michael turn the corner at the end of the block. He hangs his head, then turns back toward the church.

FOREMAN
If it was somethin' I said--

CROSS
No. You didn't do anything.
(looks up the block)
And neither have I.

INT. STRAZZI'S OFFICE - DAY

Rettson stands near the poker table where Strazzi plays poker with his Goodfellas.

STRAZZI
He did what!?

RETTSON
Moved the kids somewhere. Wouldn't tell Child Welfare where they are.

STRAZZI
Kylie too?

RETTSON
Yes.

Strazzi slams his cards on the table.

STRAZZI
Damn it! Who the hell does he think he's screwin' with?
(stands, goes to bar)
What are you doin' about it?

RETTSON
Child Welfare's got some legal options, but that'll take some time. We could file a Habeas Corpus--
-

STRAZZI
Speak English.

RETTSON

Get a judge to force him to produce
the child.

STRAZZI

Don't mean he will.

RETTSON

No, it doesn't.

Strazzi reaches into his jacket pocket, pulls out an
envelope, holds it up.

STRAZZI

Yeah, well--somethin' I just got
might change his mind.

EXT. STANLEY MARCUS'S HOME - NIGHT

The front door opens. Stanley Marcus is surprised to see
Cross.

MARCUS

Nick.

CROSS

Got a minute, Stan?

MARCUS

Yeah, sure. Come on in.

INT. STANLEY MARCUS'S HOME - NIGHT

A comfortable family room. Marcus and Cross sit adjacent to
one another on a couch and chair.

MARCUS

Jack is correct. As far as the
children are concerned, in the eyes
of the law, you're culpable. Maybe
criminally so. If I were you--

CROSS

And the church? Can you stop that?

MARCUS

Short of proving there's been some
impropriety, no.

CROSS

What about an injunction? Imply
some impropriety, stall things?

MARCUS

No grounds. Look, Nick--I went through the records. Strazzi planned this well. Meticulously, in fact. Four years of work is about to pay off for him. He lined things up perfectly.

CROSS

Six years?

MARCUS

Uh-huh. Strazzi quietly filed plans for this casino operation four years ago. Before I started work with the city.

CROSS

(realization)

Did the plans include St. Camillus even then?

MARCUS

Yes.

CROSS

(resignation now)

So they knew what they were going to do with the church four years ago.

MARCUS

Absolutely.

CROSS

Right before I got here.

MARCUS

I guess so, yeah.

Cross weighs this a moment, then slams his fist on the chair arm, rises and moves toward the door.

MARCUS

Where are you going?

Cross pauses at the door, looks to Marcus.

CROSS

Gethsemane. I'm going back to my Gethsemane.

EXT. BISHOP JOHN CARDINALE'S HOME - NIGHT

Cross walks onto the porch, rings the doorbell. No answer.

Cross moves to his right, looks into the front room window.

THROUGH THE WINDOW

Cardinale can be seen sitting at a table, a bottle in front of him. His head is in his hands.

BACK TO SCENE

Cross goes back to the door, tries the knob. It turns. Cross goes into the house.

INT. BISHOP JOHN CARDINALE'S HOME - NIGHT

Cardinale looks up as Cross sits down across from him. Cardinale's difficulty focusing his eyes betrays his condition.

CARDINALE

Hello, Nicholas. I figured you would come. Sooner or later.

Cardinale picks up the bottle, pours into a glass in front of him, offers it to Cross

CARDINALE

Little sacrament?

Cross says nothing.

CARDINALE

No? Well, I'll have a little. More.

(slurps a sip)

So what can I--?

CROSS

I was part of the plan from the beginning, wasn't I?

Cardinale's face wrinkles, as if in pain. He reaches for the bottle. But Cross takes it from his hand.

CROSS

Wasn't I?

Cardinale nods almost imperceptibly. He can't look up at Cross.

CROSS
 (disbelieving)
 Why would you do this?

Cardinale stares at the floor several moments.

CARDINALE
 I believed I could save his soul,
 Nicholas. I was his parish priest
 when he was a young man.

CROSS
 Mary Magdelene's.

CARDINALE
 (nods)
 I watched him developing into--
 (a touch of disgust)
 --what he is today. I thought I
 could make a difference. And I
 thought I was. I really thought I
 was. But I was blinded by my own
 hubris. He was manipulative even
 then, you see. Always at Mass.
 Generous to the causes. The mask
 was beguiling. When he married
 Stephanie--so sweet and devout, so
 unaware--I was sure that I'd
 brought him back to the better
 life. But instead, he was pulling
 me in, little by little. And then--

CROSS
 Your elevation.

CARDINALE
 (looks to Cross, nods)
 Bishop. Arranged by Strazzi. By
 the time I realized that he and
 Regali were in bed--well--it was
 too late.

CROSS
 Why didn't you just leave, John?

CARDINALE
 Being a Bishop--a good possibility
 for Archbishop someday--you know
 what that can mean. So I convinced
 myself that God would look the
 other way if I could garner
 something for His church.

(MORE)

CARDINALE (CONT'D)

I told myself I could influence how the Archdiocese would use the income from Strazzi's operation. I was naive, Nicholas.

CROSS

And me? Why me?

Cardinale's face wrinkles again. His eyes become moist.

CARDINALE

I think I saw you as a tool God sent me to do what I thought was necessary. Strazzi needed somebody at St. Camillus who wouldn't cause trouble, who could just watch over it until the time came, and then just move on. And that day you came to the Outreach seeking refuge and help--

CROSS

They needed a patsy. You gave them me. You manipulated me--steered me to the Seminary.

CARDINALE

You steered yourself. I only planted the seed. And the financial mess you'd gotten yourself in with Strazzi only made the fit more perfect in his eyes.

CROSS

I was a pawn all the way. To you. Regali. Strazzi. A piece of the game, that's all.

A tear traces down Cardinale's cheek.

CARDINALE

I'm so sorry. Try to find it in your heart to forgive a foolish man.

CROSS

(stands)

It's not my forgiveness you're going to need, John.

Cross turns and moves to the door. As he goes out and closes the door, Cardinale looks up, yells after him.

CARDINALE

You can't win this game, Nicholas!
It's rigged! And Strazzi owns all
the pieces!

EXT. ST. CAMILLUS - NIGHT

The St. Camillus bell tower chimes one a.m.

Cross parks his car near the construction trailer in the small lot, and walks around the corner into the columned walkway leading to the Rectory.

EXT. COLUMNED WALKWAY - NIGHT

Cross turns the corner into the walkway.

Cross is grabbed suddenly from behind, thrown up against the wall, a hand tight on his throat. Cross struggles with his ASSAILANT, who is large and strong, with a black ski mask over his face.

ASSAILANT

Give me the ticket!

CROSS

I don't--

ASSAILANT

Give me the damn ticket! I don't
want to hurt you!

Cross continues to struggle, and manages to get a hand on the ski mask and pull it from the Assailant's head.

CROSS

(incredulous)

Walter!?

Faulkner staggers back, fear on his face.

FAULKNER

You gotta give me that ticket,
Father. They're gonna kill me.

CROSS

Walter--

FAULKNER

No! Just give me the ticket! I'll donate whatever I don't need to wherever you want--but Strazzi said I pay tonight--with either the money or my life.

CROSS

I can't give you the ticket, Walter. It's not mine to give.

FAULKNER

They're gonna kill me!

CROSS

We'll go to the police. I have a friend--

FAULKNER

You think that's going to make any difference?! I'm a dead man, Father! You're talkin' to a dead man!

Faulkner turns and runs. Cross runs a few steps after him.

CROSS

Walter! Walter!

But Faulkner's gone into the night.

Cross looks to the sky, raises his arms.

CROSS

What are You doing!?! How can this be Your will!?! Why have You led me here!?!

INT. RECTORY KITCHEN -- DAY

Sister Anna Juliana is packing a box and a cooler with foodstuffs from the cabinets and refrigerator.

Cross enters. He looks like he hasn't slept.

Sister Anna Juliana turns from the cabinet with cans in her hands.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA

Peas and carrots. I hope Marie has better luck getting the children to eat them than I have.

CROSS
Weren't my favorite, either.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
How much should we leave here?

CROSS
Let's just take it all. No sense
leaving anything here.

Cross and Sister Anna Juliana look at each other, the expression on their faces a clear picture of the sadness they feel.

EXT. ST. CAMILLUS - DAY

Cross loads the box of food into the trunk of the car next to the cooler already there. He closes the trunk lid, walks to Sister Anna Juliana, who waits by the driver's door.

A black limo pulls to the curb nearby. Frankie Mancusi climbs out of the limo, points to Cross, then points to the open door.

MANCUSI
Get in.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
(touching Cross's arm)
No, Father--

MAN
(louder)
This ain't a choice thing, Nicky.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
Nicholas--

CROSS
(to Sister Anna Juliana)
I'll be all right, AJ.
(hands her the keys)
Take care of things here. I'll
meet you for dinner. You
understand?

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
(nodding)
God be with you.

CROSS
You too.

Cross walks to the limo, gets in. Mancusi climbs in after him, closes the door, and the limo pulls from the curb.

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

Cross sits with Mancusi beside him. Across the limo compartment sit Joe Strazzi and C. Arthur Rettson.

Rettson hands Cross a folded document in legal blue cover.

RETTSON

Consider yourself served. That states you're to deliver Kyle Deborah Strazzi and a lottery ticket to me by 8 a.m. tomorrow morning or be in contempt of court.

Cross unfolds the document and looks at it. Then he tears it in half and tosses it back to Rettson.

Strazzi almost laughs.

STRAZZI

I didn't think that'd work. Somewhere, somehow, you came up with some balls, Nicky. Well, see how you feel about this.

Strazzi holds out the envelope he had earlier. Cross slowly reaches out and takes it, looks inside. Two photographs.

INSERT -- THE PHOTOGRAPHS

Each is a slightly grainy telephoto shot of Jenny and Sophie playing on a swingset in what looks like a backyard.

BACK TO SCENE

Cross looks up at Strazzi, stricken.

STRAZZI

Thought that might get your attention.

Strazzi pulls a cigar from his pocket, lips it.

STRAZZI

Took me a while, but I found 'em, Nicky. Not far from here, actually - outside a' Chicago. Nice little setup. Kid's in school. Jenny's teachin'. Real happy, looks like.

CROSS
You bastard.

STRAZZI
Yeah, well--

Strazzi bites the tip off the cigar, spits it on the floor.

STRAZZI
We are what we are.
(steel in his voice)
I'm not screwin' with you anymore.
You're startin' to get in my way.
Hear this and hear it good. You
got until tonight to deliver
everything. Kylie, the ticket, that
damn church. All of it.

CROSS
And if I don't?

STRAZZI
(points at the photos)
Take a good look at 'em, Cross!
It'll be the last you'll ever get.
'Cause if I make 'em disappear,
nobody--and I mean nobody-- is ever
gonna find 'em again. You catchin'
my drift here?
(yells at the driver)
Stop the goddamn car!

The limo swerves to the curb, stops abruptly. Mancusi reaches over Cross and opens the door next to him.

STRAZZI
Get out. And one more thing-- you
tell anybody anything about this, I
can't guarantee those friends of
mine that ran into Stephanie won't
do somethin' on their own again,
you hear what I'm sayin'?

EXT. STREET - DAY

Cross stumbles from the limo. Mancusi pulls the door closed. The limousine guns it from the curb.

Cross watches it go, then realizes he's still got the photos in his hand. He looks down at them for a long moment, then his free hand covers his eyes and his shoulders begin to shake.

INT. FAULKNER HOME - DAY

Cross enters.

CROSS

Marie?
 (no answer)
 AJ?

SISTER THERESA (O.S.)

Back here!

Cross walks to the kitchen.

INT. FAULKNER HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Kylie and the other children are sitting at the table with Sister Theresa, doing artwork, making kid conversation.

Kylie looks up.

KYLIE

Look, Father Nick. I put you in my picture.

Cross leans over, looks at the picture Kylie has drawn.

INSERT -- THE PICTURE

Stick figures. A small figure in red next to a tall figure in black. Another tall yellow figure stands near a green tree, with a small blue figure nearby.

Kylie's finger points to the red figure.

KYLIE (O.S.)

That's me.
 (points to the black
 figure)
 That's you.

BACK TO SCENE

CROSS

Who are these others?

KYLIE

That's my Mom. And that's my sister.

CROSS
 (caught off guard)
 You have a sister?

KYLIE
 Well--not yet. But I will.
 Someday.

SISTER THERESA
 Father--

Sister Theresa nods to the hallway, stands and moves toward it.

INT. FAULKNER HOME - HALLWAY - DAY

Cross joins Sister Theresa.

THERESA
 Marie got a call about an hour ago.
 She and Anna Juliana have gone to
 the hospital.

CROSS
 The hospital?

SISTER THERESA
 It's Walter, Father.

INT. HOSPITAL INTENSIVE CARE ROOM - DAY

Cross enters, winces at what he sees.

Walter Faulkner lies in the bed. Wires snake from his chest, an IV runs to an arm. What little skin shows beneath the head bandages is purple.

Marie sits at Walter's side, holding his hand and weeping. Sister Anna Juliana stands next to Marie, her hand on Marie's shoulder. Jack Riggs leans against the windowsill.

CROSS
 (to Riggs)
 What happened?

RIGGS
 Two kids found him beneath the
 Platt Bridge about one, one-thirty.
 Thought he was dead.

CROSS
 How bad?

RIGGS
 Somebody beat him 'til they got
 bored, then shot him. Left him for
 dead.

CROSS
 What do the doctors say?

RIGGS
 Deep coma, but he's got a chance.

Marie looks up at Cross, tears streaking her face.

MARIE
 Why, Father? Why would they do
 this? Why does God let animals like
 them walk the earth?

Marie's head falls back weeping on the bed, Walter's hand
 held tightly to the side of her face.

RIGGS
 (quietly, to Cross)
 Who's "they", Nick?

Cross stares at Walter and Marie, says nothing.

RIGGS
 Nick?

Cross finally looks up at Riggs, slowly shakes his head. Then
 Cross turns and leaves the room.

EXT. ST. CAMILLUS - NIGHT

Cross walks toward the church entrance. Something catches
 his eye. He takes a few steps toward the courtyard.

Just visible in the darkness are a bulldozer and a large
 wrecking crane parked on the courtyard grass.

Cross stares at them a moment, then moves to the church doors
 and enters.

INT. ST. CAMILLUS CHURCH - NIGHT

Cross sits in a pew, head bowed.

The church door opens. Sister Anna Juliana makes her way up
 the center aisle, stoops and crosses herself, then slides
 into the pew with Cross.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
I figured I'd find you here.

CROSS
How's Walter?

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
Same. But he's strong. He's got Marie. They'll pull through it together.

CROSS
(after a moment)
Sometimes I think God is hiding from us, AJ.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
He isn't hiding, Nicholas. But neither is He without expectations. Perhaps He's just waiting.

CROSS
For what?

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
For Man to first show that he's willing to work at saving himself before God will pay attention.

INT. ST. CAMILLUS - NARTHEX RAILING - NIGHT

Cross stands before the altar. He removes his jacket, drapes it over the railing, kneels, begins to pray silently.

After a few moments, Cross looks up at the Crucifix.

CROSS
I know I've been weak, and allowed others to use my weakness. I know I've failed You here. But that is my sin, not Anna Juliana's, or Theresa's, Little Michael's, or Kylie's. They shouldn't suffer for it. Please, I beg of You, if AJ is right, then just show me where to stand, give me something to fight with. I'll get your attention.

Cross stares at the Crucifix behind the altar for several moments longer. The silence in the church is deafening. Cross then drops his head, unfolds his hands. His shoulders slump.

Cross slowly pushes himself up from the railing, reaches down for his jacket but grabs it from the bottom instead of the top. Something falls from the pocket.

Cross looks to the sound, and sees his pair of red dice scittering across the marble tile of the Narthex. They bounce against the railing, tumble to a stop.

Seven.

Cross bends and picks up the dice, then slowly looks to the altar and the Crucifix above it. One corner of his mouth turns up ever so slightly.

EXT. STANLEY MARCUS'S HOME - NIGHT

Cross knocks on the door. Impatiently knocks again.

Stanley Marcus opens the door.

MARCUS

Father Nick. What...?

CROSS

I need you to do something for me,
Stan.

Cross hands Marcus his Bible, steps past him into the house.

INT. ILLICIT GAMBLING HALL - BAR - NIGHT

Joe Strazzi holds court at one end of the bar, surrounded by a few GOOMBAHS, and several STRIKING YOUNG WOMEN, one of them hanging on his arm.

STRAZZI

So I says to 'im, "You're tapped,
and this ain't a bank. Come back
when you got somethin' to bet
with."

GOOMBAH #1

(laughing)

So the guy says to Joey, "Take my
wife as my marker."

YOUNG WOMAN #1

(on Strazzi's arm)

He said what?!

GOOMBAH #1

No shit. "Take my wife as my marker," he says. "Give me ten grand against her."

They all laugh loudly at the absurdity.

YOUNG WOMAN #1

You didn't take him up on it, right?

STRAZZI

I'm a gamblin' man, sweetheart. This's a gamblin' establishment.

YOUNG WOMAN #1

You gave it to him?

Strazzi points across the gaming floor to the Coat Check room, where a MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN is taking a CUSTOMER's coat and handing him a check stub.

STRAZZI

She's got another coupla years to go on the marker.

YOUNG WOMAN #2

You won his wife?!

STRAZZI

Never met a bet I didn't think I could win, baby. Especially from losers like her old man.

CROSS (O.S.)

I've got a bet for you.

Strazzi and his group turn to see Cross. Strazzi smirks.

STRAZZI

Well, well. You surprise me, Nick. Frankly, I didn't expect to see you tonight. Boys, you remember--

CROSS

You interested in a some action or not?

STRAZZI

I thought you was over makin' bets. Besides, whatta you got to lay on the table I'd be interested in?

CROSS

Three hundred million dollars.

A hush falls over the immediate vicinity. Everyone heard that. And Strazzi sees that they did.

STRAZZI

The ticket.

(off Cross's nod)

You got it with you?

Cross shakes his head.

STRAZZI

That's my ticket, Cross. We talked about this--

CROSS

It's not yours if you don't sign it. And if I don't make a call by midnight, somebody else's signature will be on it. We playing or not?

Strazzi feels the eyes of the crowd on him. He stares at Cross.

CROSS

Thought you never met a bet you didn't think you could win, Joe. Especially from losers like me.

Strazzi leans in close to Cross, whispers in his ear.

STRAZZI

Screw you.
(then with disdain)
Father.

Strazzi shrugs off the Young Woman on his arm, pushes through the crowd toward the corner of the casino.

INT. ILLICIT GAMBLING HALL - CRAPS TABLE - NIGHT

Strazzi moves the Croupier out of the way, takes his stick.

STRAZZI

Table's closed. Everybody back off.

Strazzi pulls all the chips from the felt, leaving the entire table empty.

STRAZZI
 (to Cross)
 What's the game?

CROSS
 Three bets. Three rolls. Straight
 craps.

STRAZZI
 What're we playin' for?

CROSS
 First bet--the quarter million I
 owe you. Double or nothing.

STRAZZI
 (thinks about it)
 All right. Good a place as any to
 start.

Cross reaches into his pocket, pulls out his red dice, puts
 them on the felt.

STRAZZI
 Uh-uh, Cross. You shoot with my
 dice.

CROSS
 These are your dice. I lost the
 quarter million to you with them
 four years ago.

Cross tosses the dice to Strazzi.

CROSS
 Check them if you want.

Strazzi looks at the dice, hands them to his Croupier.

STRAZZI
 (to Croupier)
 They legit?

The Croupier looks them over carefully, hands them back to
 Strazzi, nods.

Strazzi tosses the dice on the felt in front of Cross.

STRAZZI
 Okay, Nicky. I'll wager a quarter
 mill to win three hundred.
 (smiles confidently)
 Roll away, loser.

Cross stands at the end of the craps table, looks down it's length. He rests his hands on the mahogany rail, feels the polish on the wood.

As Cross reaches down for the dice, his hand stops midway, his fingers nervously rubbing against the palm of his hand. He withdraws his hand to the railing.

Strazzi smirks, taps a Goombah near him.

STRAZZI

(to Cross)

Little hard climbin' back in the saddle, eh?

Several Goombahs around Strazzi laugh with him.

Cross stares down at the dice. He's having a little trouble breathing. He closes his eyes. Then he reaches out, takes the dice, quickly rubs them on the felt, lets them fly.

The dice tumble through the air the length of the table, bounce once, hit the back rail, and roll to a stop.

A four-three seven.

A whoop goes up from the crowd. Cross, leaning on the railing, stares at the dice, then looks at Strazzi, whose eyes drift from the dice on the table to Cross.

STRAZZI

Okay, Nicky. Okay. Lucky tumble, that's all. Small change next to what I'm gonna take from you. What's the second bet?

CROSS

St. Camillus. And not just the church. The whole block. You lose, you're gone.

Strazzi grunts a laugh.

STRAZZI

Against what?

CROSS

How about the quarter million I just won? Plus, I work for you until it's paid off.

Strazzi thinks a moment.

STRAZZI

Not enough. Double it and you got a bet.

CROSS

(no hesitation)
Double it is.

Strazzi's put off by Cross's seeming certainty. His jaw sets.

STRAZZI

Fine. Roll.

Cross, his eyes never leaving Strazzi's, reaches down, grabs the two red dice, rubs them on the felt, throws them.

The dice hit the back rail and tumble halfway back the length of the table before stopping.

A five and a two.

The crowd roars. Strazzi stares at the dice in disbelief, then looks angrily to Cross, who stands coolly at the end of the table, staring directly back at him.

CROSS

Last bet, Joe. The ticket. (beat)
And Kylie.

STRAZZI

What?! I ain't puttin' up my daughter on a bet!

CROSS

Why not, Joe?

Cross nods toward the Woman in the coat room.

CROSS

You were just bragging about betting with her. What's the difference? You win, Kylie stays with you. You lose, you stay out of her life. Forever.

Strazzi doesn't move, his eyes drilling Cross's.

CROSS

We have a bet?

Strazzi squirms a little, notices all the eyes in the room on him, especially those of the Goombah who was telling the story about the woman in the coat room with him earlier. He realizes he's been cornered.

STRAZZI

What the hell. But this is borin' me. Put it all on the line, Nicky -- everything. The quarter mill you just won back, the church, the kid, the three hundred mill ticket. All of it. One roll.

Cross stares at Strazzi. His raising the stakes and putting it all on one roll wasn't the kind of pressure he'd expected. He swallows. Strazzi notices.

STRAZZI

Too rich for you, loser?

Dead silence in the room.

STRAZZI

All I got against all you got. You got the balls for that?

Cross looks down at the two red dice sitting on the green felt. His hand involuntarily balls into a fist. Strazzi notices.

STRAZZI

Not so sure are ya? You know there ain't no way you're rollin' three sevens in a row, Cross. Never seen a loser like you get that lucky.
(then with a snarl and a smile)
Roll the damn dice.

Cross draws a hand across his mouth, then slowly reaches down for his dice, but the croupier's stick blocks him.

STRAZZI

But you're usin' my dice on this one.

Strazzi pulls a pair of dice from the box at the Croupier's area. He tosses them on the table.

All eyes in the room shift to Cross. He lets his eyes drift from Strazzi to the dice, then down the length of the table.

He reaches down, takes the dice, rubs them once on the felt, tosses them.

The dice fly over the table, bounce, roll into the corner, and stop.

Ten.

A hush moves through the crowd. A smile explodes on Strazzi's face as he looks to Cross, who appears shaken.

STRAZZI

Ten. Toughest odds on the table,
Nicky.
(shoves the dice back)
Roll.

Cross slowly takes the dice, holds them a moment, then rubs them on the felt and throws.

It's a low throw. The dice bounce the length of the table, hit the rail and come back. One die turns up a five. The other rolls a bit further, a two showing up, but at the last moment, it rolls over. One.

The crowd exhales in relief. Strazzi smiles.

STRAZZI

Six ain't a ten. Last legs, Nicky.
This next one ain't gonna roll
over. A seven's comin'. I can feel
it, can't you? That loser shiver
movin' up your spine?

Cross stands stock still a moment, then rubs his hands together as he looks upward.

STRAZZI

(laughs)
Prayin' ain't gonna help you on
this one, Nick. God don't listen
to gamblers.

Cross's eyes fall back onto Strazzi.

CROSS

You sure about that? You never
wondered who suggested I come here
tonight?

The smile disappears from Strazzi's face.

CROSS

You're feeling so good, Joe, why
don't we make it a bit more
interesting? Throw in whatever
Walter Faulkner owes you.

STRAZZI
Faulkner? Who's that?

Cross just stares at Strazzi. Each second that passes seems to weigh on Strazzi exponentially. Cross stands too coolly for him.

STRAZZI
(agitated)
All right, all right. Faulkner too.
(pushes the dice to Cross)
The point is ten. Not that it's gonna matter.

Dead silence in the room. No one dares even breathe.

Cross closes his eyes, touches the cross around his neck. Then he leans down and touches the dice. He holds them a moment, then rubs them on the felt and lets them go.

The dice fly in slow motion above the table. All eyes in the room seem tied to them with invisible strings. The numbers roll as they arc--two's, six's, four's, one's, threes, five's.

The dice hit the felt and bounce, arc another foot and bounce again. They hit the back rail, and roll apart, coming back up the table. One die stops--a five up.

The other die continues it's agonizing tumble. A two rolls into sight, the die hangs on it's edge--then tumbles one more turn--

A five! Ten the hard way sits directly in front of Strazzi.

The crowd explodes. Chaotic motion around all four sides of the table accentuate two statuesque figures, both of whom stare at the two fives sitting on the felt.

Cross moves first. He looks up at the ceiling.

CROSS
(whispered, to himself)
Guess I got your attention.

Cross drops his eyes, looks at Strazzi. Their eyes lock. Their jaws set.

CROSS
We square?

Strazzi feels every set of eyes in the room. Finally...

STRAZZI
 (a steely glare)
 Yeah. We're square.

Cross turns from the table.

STRAZZI
 Hey, Nicky.
 (Cross looks back)
 I wouldn't be comin' back here if I
 was you.

Cross shakes his head.

The two men turn from one another, Strazzi to the bar, Cross to the door.

Mancusi opens the door for Cross.

MANCUSI
 Nice rollin', Nick. See ya next
 time.

CROSS
 I don't think so, Frankie.

INT. RECTORY OFFICE - DAY

Cross stands at the window, watching Kylie and the children playing on the courtyard with Sister Theresa and Little Michael.

SUPER -- FOUR WEEKS LATER

MARCUS (O.S.)
 I set up the one trust in Kylie's
 name, the other in the school's
 Foundation name, like you wanted.

Cross turns, moves to the desk, looks at the papers Marcus hands him.

CROSS
 Good. Thanks.

MARCUS
 Never seen a kid that poised, Nick.
 Told the judge exactly what she
 wanted to do. Convinced him
 completely. She'll make a great
 lawyer someday.

Cross laughs, walks around the desk, joins Marcus in front of a large easel with an architect's rendering of a complex of buildings covering the block next to St. Camillus.

Across the top of the easel reads "The Stephanie M. Hess Home and School at St. Camillus."

CROSS

Yeah, she was very clear on this.
Said it was her way of making
magic.

MARCUS

Magic?

CROSS

(smiling to himself)
Yeah.

Cross takes Marcus's arm, leads him out the door.

EXT. COLUMNED WALKWAY - DAY

Cross and Marcus walk along the courtyard toward the front of the church.

MARCUS

The bank will serve as investment
advisors for both trusts. Neither
Kylie nor the school will ever have
to worry about anything.

CROSS

Child Welfare accept the Trustee
and Guardianship arrangement for
Kylie?

MARCUS

Temporarily.

Marcus hands Cross two thick files of papers.

MARCUS

These are marked where they need to
be signed. And they need to be
back at Child Welfare by the end of
the week.

(Cross nods)

You're sure she's going to go for
it?

CROSS
I have no idea. We'll find out
tomorrow.

Marcus stops, shakes Cross's hand.

MARCUS
Well, good luck. Call me when you
get back.

CROSS
Thank you, Stan. For everything.

MARCUS
How could I say no to my priest?

They smile at each other, Marcus moves off toward his car in
the lot.

Cross moves back toward the courtyard.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

Cross walks to the children and Sister Theresa.

CROSS
Okay, Kylie. Time for us to get
ready to go.

Kylie runs over to Cross and Theresa. Theresa picks her up
and hugs her tightly.

THERESA
Oh, I'm going to miss you, Kylie.
You come back and visit, you hear?

KYLIE
I will, Sister T.

Kylie hops down, takes Cross's hand.

CROSS
You ready?

Kylie nods her head vigorously.

CROSS
Okay. Let's go.

They move off toward the Rectory.

INT. RECTORY FOYER - DAY

Sister Anna Juliana wrestles two suitcases down the stairs, sets them by the door.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
 Father Nicholas! You're going to
 be late!
 (to herself)
 That man will be late to his own
 funeral.

A knock on the door interrupts her huff. She opens the door. Jack Riggs smiles at her.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
 Hello, Lieutenant.

RIGGS
 Sister. Father Nick around?

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
 You're a detective. Maybe you can
 find him.
 (walks down the hall)
 Father Nick! For the Lord's sake!

Riggs stands in the doorway for a moment or two before Cross comes down the stairs, a jacket over his arm.

CROSS
 Jack.

RIGGS
 Nick. Got a minute?

CROSS
 Just about that. Walk me out.

EXT. COLUMNED WALKWAY - DAY

Cross and Riggs walk toward the front of the church.

RIGGS
 Ran into an acquaintance of yours
 last night.

CROSS
 Oh?

RIGGS
 Yeah. One John Joseph Strazzi.

CROSS
Really? Where?

RIGGS
We found him in a building over on Fairmount in the warehouse district. Quite a place he had over there. Ever been there?

CROSS
(smiles)
What took you over that way?

RIGGS
Walter Faulkner came out of his coma couple days ago.

CROSS
Yes. I was over to see him. We were very happy he pulled through.

RIGGS
Uh-huh. Turns out he remembered quite a bit about the night he was assaulted. Fingered Strazzi and a guy named Mancusi, couple others. Told us about the warehouse.

Cross and Riggs toss the bags in the trunk of Cross's car.

RIGGS
Strazzi bent over backwards tryin' to make a deal. He'll do some time. Had a lot to say about some guys up in the Archdiocese, though. Regali, Cardinale. Know 'em?
(Cross smiles)
Yeah, figured you did. Well, just thought you should know we're gonna be talkin' to 'em. Some financial improprieties they're gonna have to try to explain. Might need you to stop by.

Cross closes the trunk.

CROSS
Sure. I'll be out of town for a couple of days.

RIGGS
No problem.

Kylie and Sister Anna Juliana come around the corner from the columned walkway. Kylie runs to Cross.

KYLIE
Come on, Father Nick! Let's go!

CROSS
(to Riggs)
See you when I get back.

Cross puts Kylie in the back seat of the car, buckles her in. Sister Anna Juliana hands Cross two airline tickets.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
The Lord keep you both safe.

Cross smiles, gives her a hug, climbs in the car, backs out. Kylie waves from the window as the car pulls up the street.

INT. AIRPLANE - IN FLIGHT - DAY

Cross puts down a magazine, looks up as a STEWARDESS comes by. She smiles down at Kylie, curled up asleep in the seat next to Cross, her head on a pillow in his lap.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE - DAY

Cross pulls the rental car into the driveway. He and Kylie get out, move up the walkway to the front porch.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - DAY

Cross stands with Kylie's hand in his. He rings the doorbell.

A moment later, the door opens. JENNY CROSS stands stock still a few seconds, then smiles.

JENNY
Hello, Nick.

CROSS
(fighting back emotion)
Jenny.

Jenny bends down, smiles at Kylie.

JENNY
And you must be Kylie.

KYLIE

Yes, Ma'am.
(extends her hand)
Kylie Hess.

JENNY

(to Cross)
Why don't we go out back. I have
some lemonade, and Sophie can't
wait to show Kylie her swingset.

Cross nods. They move into the house.

EXT. BACK DECK - DAY

Jenny, Cross, and Kylie come out from the house.

The moment she sees him, SOPHIE is running.

SOPHIE

Daddy! Daddy!

Sophie leaps into Cross's arms, her arms wrapped around his neck tight enough to choke him.

CROSS

Hey, Smidgeon! How's my girl?

Cross drops to his knees, his face buried into Sophie's neck, hiding the tear tracing down his cheek.

EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

Kylie and Sophie swing and laugh together on the swingset.

In the background, sitting at a picnic table under a tree, Cross and Jenny sit leaning into one another, talking, a laugh now and again. The files of papers sit between them on the table.

Jenny reaches out and takes Cross's hand a moment, then smiles and nods. She begins to sign the papers in the files.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - DAY

Cross sits with Kylie on the porch steps. Jenny and Sophie stand nearby.

KYLIE

You'll come back and visit me,
right?

CROSS
 (glancing at Jenny)
 I'll be back a lot.
 (Jenny smiles)
 And maybe you and Sophie can come
 see me when the new school opens at
 St. Camillus. Would you like that?

Kylie nods, gives Cross a hug.

CROSS
 Oh--I almost forgot.
 (points to his pocket)
 You left a little magic in here.

KYLIE
 I did?

CROSS
 Uh-huh.

Kylie reaches up and dips into Cross's jacket breast pocket.
 She pulls out a folded piece of paper.

Kylie opens the paper. It's her drawing of stick figures.

KYLIE
 It's my picture. This isn't magic.

CROSS
 You sure about that?

Cross points to the yellow and blue stick figures that Kylie
 had drawn and called her "Mom" and her "Sister". Then he
 points to Jenny and Sophie.

Kylie looks from the page to Jenny and Sophie, then up to
 Cross. A big smile appears on her face.

KYLIE
 I did magic!

CROSS
 (smiles at her)
 More than you know, Kylie. More
 than you know.

INT. RECTORY HALLWAY - DAY

Cross enters, drops his suitcase by the door.

CROSS
 AJ?

SISTER ANNA JULIANA (O.S.)
In the kitchen, Father!

INT. RECTORY KITCHEN - DAY

Sister Anna Juliana sets a plate of bacon and eggs on the table, pours a cup of coffee.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
I was about to give up on you.

CROSS
Lot of traffic from the airport.
Sorry.

Cross sits, takes a sip of coffee, puts a napkin in his lap. He hands a piece of bacon to Judas, who sits patiently by the table, tail wagging.

Sister Anna Juliana frowns at this, but says nothing. She sits across from Cross, plops the schedule book on the table.

SISTER ANNA JULIANA
You ready?

CROSS
(smiling)
Absolutely. How are we going to get God's attention today, AJ?

FADE OUT:

THE END