

THE ADVENTURES OF NEGATIVE ERIC

Episode Three

"Negative Eric and the Man of the Cloth"

written by

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**EXT. FUNERAL HOME - NEW ORLEANS - DAY**

The middle of nowhere. An empty, barely paved street runs parallel to a funeral parlor on one side and a strip club ("Musé de Pussé") on the other.

NEGATIVE ERIC exits the funeral parlor, folding a piece of paper and putting it in his back pocket as he does. He reaches into his front pocket and retrieves a cigarillo and lighter. He puts the smoke in his mouth and raises the lighter.

FATHER PATRICK (V.O.)

Do you know how this works?

Suddenly, the SCREAMING ENGINE of a muscle car shatters the silence as a convertible full of DRUNK JOCKS bursts into frame left and speeds out frame right. Eric looks after the car.

NEGATIVE ERIC (V.O.)

Go ahead and start. I'll use context clues.

Eric bends his head to light the cigarillo but looks up again as the car returns from frame right, the drunk jocks inside hooting and hollering as they park the car directly outside the strip club. Eric tries in vain to light his smoke but his lighter is out of fluid.

As Eric flicks the lighter, the driver of the car across the street hops Dukes of Hazard style out of the drivers seat, his KEYS falling to the pavement as he does. Not noticing, he proceeds into the strip club with his friends. Eric stares at the keys on the ground.

FATHER PATRICK (V.O.)

Go ahead and tell me your sins.

NEGATIVE ERIC (V.O.)

Who says I sinned?

Church bells CHIME in the distance. Eric stares at the keys.

CUT TO:

**INT. CONVERTIBLE - DAY**

Eric drives the convertible down the highway as he lights his cigarillo with the car's inboard cigarette lighter.

**EXT. 711 - DAY**

Eric exits a 711 holding a Big Gulp and a AAA road map of the American Southwest.

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**INT. CONVERTIBLE - DAY**

Eric drives along the highway and passes a sign welcoming him to the state of Texas.

MATCH CUT TO:

**INT. CONVERTIBLE - NIGHT**

Eric continues driving along the highway, cigarillo smoke billowing into oblivion behind him.

**INT. CONVERTIBLE - DAY**

Eric looks at his gas needle and sees its straddling Empty.

FATHER PATRICK (V.O.)  
Then why did you come here?

**EXT. GAS STATION - DAY**

A MAN puts a gas nozzle into his car's tank before leaving it and going inside the station. As soon as he does, Eric emerges from a bush carrying a gas can. He takes the nozzle from the man's car and begins filling up the can. After a beat, the man and the STATION MANAGER come out from the station, yelling at Eric as he takes the nozzle from the can and scurries away.

NEGATIVE ERIC (V.O.)  
It's a hundred and ten degrees  
outside.

**INT. CONVERTIBLE - DAY**

Cruising down the highway yet again, Eric's field of vision is completely obscured as he consults the AAA map, holding it up to him while trying to steer at the same time. He doesn't notice as he passes a sign welcoming him to New Mexico, and the next rest stop as 50 miles away.

NEGATIVE ERIC (V.O.)  
Alright. I guess I once  
technically tried to off myself by  
fashioning a propane fueled  
portable rocket assisted by the  
carbonated force of forty ounce  
malt liquor to blast myself into  
the fucking stratosphere.

The map blows away and whips tremendously in the wind as the car continues to speed down the highway.

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**INSERT - MAP**

In the style of Indiana Jones, a red line tracking Eric's progress on the map pinballs North, South and East before it finds its Westward trajectory, Eric ostensibly having been lost without the map.

NEGATIVE ERIC (V.O)

And I watched my grandfather die.

**INT. CONVERTIBLE - DAY**

FATHER PATRICK (V.O)

Could you have saved him?

On the highway, Eric notices his gas needle again straddling Empty. At the last second, he jerks the car toward the off ramp and exits the highway, passing next to a sign leading him to the town of Truth or Consequences, New Mexico (a real place).

**EXT. TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES, NEW MEXICO - DAY**

The car makes a rattling noise as it groans down the road.

NEGATIVE ERIC (V.O.)

Not really.

Eric, soaked with sweat, turns the dead car toward the curb as it stops on its own directly in front of an ancient looking, gothic-lite stone CHURCH. Sticking out like a sore thumb amidst the more traditional Mission style architecture around it, it also features it a detached steeple tower behind the main church building, so that it appears as if the tower and the building are all one structure.

Eric glances at the church, then looks ahead of him to a large digital clock above a nearby bank. It announces the time as 4:00PM and the temperature 109 degrees.

NEGATIVE ERIC (V.O.)

So now what?

Eric hops out of the car. The faint sound of a hammer banging against stone can be heard. Eric searches for the sound and casts his glance to the very top of the detached steeple tower behind the church. A MAN, perched on a crude scaffolding, can be seen banging metal pegs into the steeple. This is a steeplejack, a near extinct profession that specializes in chimney and steeple repairs.

Eric spits on the pavement before ascending the stone stairs of the church. The spit sizzles on the road like a frying egg.

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**INT. CHURCH - DAY**

Eric enters, panting from the heat. It's deserted.

FATHER PATRICK (V.O.)  
Now I forgive you. Say two Our  
Fathers and three Hail Marys.

NEGATIVE ERIC (V.O.)  
Then what?

Eric looks to his left and right, examining his surroundings and adjusting his eyes to the light. He spots a dish of holy water mounted to a nearby wall, hastens toward it and without hesitation begins drinking from it greedily.

FATHER PATRICK (V.O.)  
Then what? Then be at peace.

PASTOR O'ROURKE (O.S.)  
Excuse me?

Eric stops drinking and slowly turns around to see a PRIEST clad in white robes walking toward him down the center isle from the altar up front. The priest holds a GOLDEN INCENSE MACE, which emits a smoky fragrance as he approaches Eric.

PASTOR O'ROURKE  
Have you come here to confess?

Eric swallows the water.

NEGATIVE ERIC  
That depends.

PASTOR O'ROURKE  
On what?

NEGATIVE ERIC  
Who's keeping score.

He nods to the mace.

NEGATIVE ERIC  
What's the matter, roach problem?

O'Rourke blinks. Then smiles. He goes to speak but a CRASH rings out behind him. He turns to the altar to see an ALTAR BOY scurrying up from the ground, a fallen candelabra beside him.

PASTOR O'ROURKE  
Ronny, where's Father Patrick?  
This young man needs to confess.

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RONNY

I thought he was in the  
confessional, Father.

O'Rourke stares him down.

RONNY

(sheepish, correcting)  
Pastor.

O'Rourke turns back to Eric.

FATHER PATRICK (V.O.)

Say a prayer for me too, kid.

PASTOR O'ROURKE

Come with me.

FATHER PATRICK (V.O.)

(to himself, lost in thought)  
I'm gonna off myself, too.

Eric follows the Pastor across the width of the church to the opposite side. The church is gothic, bordering Byzantine. Eric takes in the illustrations of the Stations of the Cross lining the walls as O'Rourke leads them to a confessional.

Without knocking, O'Rourke whisks open the door, revealing a disheveled priest in a clergy shirt sitting inside alone, his face stained with tears. This is FATHER PATRICK (30s), the man we've been hearing Eric speak to over VoiceOver. He looks up at the two, taken aback. He and Eric lock eyes.

FATHER PATRICK

Hello.

NEGATIVE ERIC

Hello.

MUSIC kicks in over the soundtrack (Spirit in the Sky) as we launch into the OPENING TITLE SEQUENCE:

-SISTER CLAIRE (late 20s) prays on her knees at the side of her bed in her cell in a convent. We see the outstretched soles of her feet rhythmically tap the floor. She wears huge headphones that are connected to a RECORD PLAYER sitting on her bed. She crosses herself, removes her headphones and the needle from the spinning record and puts on her WHITE VEIL. She collects the record player and headphones and stashes them underneath a loose floorboard under her bed.

-PASTOR O'ROURKE gets ready for the day in an office that matches the austere rapacity of the church. He sips from a chalice of wine as he throws his ornate robes on.

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He downs the last of the wine and picks up the gold incense mace with "O'Rourke" chiseled across the ball.

-MOTHER SUPERIOR (60s) leads her convent in prayer as she walks up and down the aisle of a hall in the convent, appraising her sisters like a drill sergeant.

**EXT. CHURCH - GARDEN - LATER**

Patrick gently pushes Eric, lit cigarillo in his mouth, out a side door and into a sparse garden next to the church.

NEGATIVE ERIC

Talk about a double standard.  
Frankenstein's got a stink bomb  
and I can't toke a stoge?

Patrick brusquely takes the cigarillo out of Eric's mouth.

NEGATIVE ERIC

Sorry. Frankensteins' monster.

FATHER PATRICK

That's incense. It's fragrant.

NEGATIVE ERIC

(re: cigarillo)  
This is wine flavored.

FATHER PATRICK

Look. I'm sorry I said...I didn't  
mean...just never mind. I don't  
want you to get the wrong idea.

He unconsciously raises his hand to his face and takes a drag on Eric's cigarillo. He enters a coughing fit. Eric wordlessly takes the cigarillo back and takes a drag.

NEGATIVE ERIC

If the wrong idea is you wanting  
to give up your ghost what's the  
right idea?

Patrick regains his composure.

FATHER PATRICK

I don't. I was musing.

Patrick takes the cigarillo back and takes a drag. This time he doesn't cough but inhales smoothly, savoring the nicotine.

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FATHER PATRICK  
 Just don't go around telling  
 everyone there's a suicidal priest  
 in Truth or Consequences.

NEGATIVE ERIC  
 But it just rolls off the tongue.

Patrick goes to respond but before he can we hear the sounds of BELLS and a CHOIR begin a hymn from inside the church. Patrick looks at his watch.

FATHER PATRICK  
 Shit.

He shoves the cigarillo back in Eric's hands and rushes inside. Eric tries to take a drag but its gone out. He tucks it behind his ear and follows Patrick inside.

#### **INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS**

Eric sees Patrick RUN down a hallway adjacent to the main gathering area of the church as Eric heads toward a pew. The church is only half full as the few parishioners sit listening to Pastor O'Rourke. Eric takes a seat and settles in.

PASTOR O'ROURKE  
 And so before we begin mass I just  
 want to remind you of our annual  
 Halloween party for the children  
 in the adjoining events space  
 tomorrow evening. Now, the day  
 after--

The Pastor is interrupted by the faint *tap tap tap* sound of the steeplejack on the roof. Some parishioners look to the heavens in search of the noise. O'Rourke's lips curl into a grin. He points to the ceiling, and the noise.

PASTOR O'ROURKE  
 You may have been wondering about  
 the noise, or have seen our  
 steeplejack steeplejacking away up  
 top.

Some scattered chuckles.

PASTOR O'ROURKE  
 Unfortunately over the years we've  
 accumulated a fair bit of rot, and  
 it will have to come down.

## PASTOR O'ROURKE

But not to worry, a new and improved one will rise in its place as soon as possible. As a result, however, the church will be closed and cordoned off the day following the party. Lastly, I'd like you all to join me in congratulating our Sister Claire in the choir as she takes her final, perpetual vows this week.

He claps, and the parishioners follow suit. In the choir, the lone habit-clad nun, Sister Claire, stands and beams. O'Rourke leaves the pulpit and walks toward the sitting altar boys. The choir rises to their feet and at the motion of the director, launches into a brief, transitional hymnal. They finish. There's an awkward beat in the church as the choir continues to stand, silent, as O'Rourke and two altar boys sit unmoving on their side of the altar.

The director makes a motion with her hand and the choir sings the ending few bars of the song. Still nothing. Then, when some of the church goers begin to whisper to themselves and O'Rourke starts to get up, Father Patrick scurries, out of breath and dressed in his priestly robes, up to the lectern from the wings of the altar. A frowning O'Rourke sits back down as the congregation hushes to silence. Father Patrick opens his bible on the pulpit, wipes his sodden brow and looks up to his flock.

## FATHER PATRICK

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. What do those words mean? Well, the Lord guides us in life. He is the light. The path. Both the journey and the destination. If it weren't for the Lord, where would we go? Who would we be? A life in communion with the Lord is a life lacking in want, because a life in communion with the Lord is a life full of...the Lord. The Lord. Who...looks out for us. Provides for us. The Lord, who is the source of all our happiness.

Not exactly convincing, some of the church goers squirm in the seats in boredom. A baby starts to cry.

## FATHER PATRICK

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. What could I want if the Lord is my shepherd?

**EXT. CHURCH - LATER**

The mass having just ended, parishioners file out of the church in two columns. Father Patrick stands on one side of the stone steps leading down to an adjacent detached parking lot, shaking hands with people as they leave. O'Rourke stands at the opposite end doing the same. Eric approaches Patrick and removes his cigarillo from behind his ear.

NEGATIVE ERIC

You got a light? I'm out of fluid.

FATHER PATRICK

What are you still doing here?

NEGATIVE ERIC

I wanted to see the show.

Holding up the line, the parishioners behind Eric move around him and head to the parking lot.

FATHER PATRICK

(re: cigarillo)

These aren't great optics for me.

NEGATIVE ERIC

Neither is offing yourself, probably.

Eric moves next to Patrick and leans up against the railing. The line of hand shaking continues. During Eric and Patrick's conversation, Patrick keeps looking at and talking to Eric while absentmindedly continuing to shake the hands of leaving parishioners and intermittently AD LIBBING goodbyes to those whose hands he's shaking.

FATHER PATRICK

Don't you have somewhere else to go?

Eric looks to the curb in front of the church, where a TOW TRUCK drives away with his stolen convertible.

NEGATIVE ERIC

No.

FATHER PATRICK

What do you mean, no?

NEGATIVE ERIC

Car ran out of gas and I've got no money. Lucky me winding up in front of a religion center.

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NEGATIVE ERIC

Figure I'll slum it here a few days while I scrounge up some coin for a bus ticket.

FATHER PATRICK

You ran out of gas?

NEGATIVE ERIC

Something like that. This place got a shower?

FATHER PATRICK

You can't just stay here. That's not how it works.

NEGATIVE ERIC

You're a priest. Don't you frocks get off on charity?

An old, clammy hand grasps the clasped hands of Patrick and the parishioner whose hand he's shaking. O'Rourke has come to investigate.

PASTOR O'ROURKE

Father, why don't we let Mrs. Shanahan go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Patrick realizes he's still shaking the hand and lets go.

FATHER PATRICK

(to parishioner)

Sorry.

Shanahan smiles sheepishly and exits down the stairs. Just then, the members of the choir exit the church. The plainclothes volunteers chat idly and make their way down the stairs. Bringing up the rear is Sister Claire. Dressed in a habit and white veil, she walks next to her old, austere Mother Superior (in a black veil) as they stride toward Patrick, O'Rourke and Eric. The Mother Superior hikes up her skirt and trots excitedly to O'Rourke, curtsying when she reaches him.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Buongiorno, mio caro padre! (Hello my dear father).

O'Rourke smiles and bows.

PASTOR O'ROURKE

Ah, Mi sei mancato, Madre Superiore. (I've missed you, Mother Superior).

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MOTHER SUPERIOR

I want to hear all about Rome just as soon as I can.

(then, to Patrick)

Father. An interesting sermon. I'd say you're certainly getting...better. Not many can so successfully appeal to the common denominator like you.

FATHER PATRICK

Thank you.

SISTER CLAIRE

I thought it was a good, too.

Everyone looks to Claire. Patrick beams. Erick clocks this.

FATHER PATRICK

I liked your songs.

SISTER CLAIRE

I--

FATHER PATRICK

I--

They both blush and fall silent.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Well, no more time to dawdle. This is a big week for you, Claire. Ciao, Pastor, we'll catch up soon.

She whisks Claire away and heads toward the parking lot. O'Rourke, Patrick and Eric look after them before O'Rourke heads back up toward the church.

PASTOR O'ROURKE

(to Patrick)

See me before you leave when you're done...

(he nods to Eric)

Forgiving.

He enters the church.

NEGATIVE ERIC

I see where that dude gets it. His mom is a USDA Prime bitch.

Patrick doesn't respond. He stares at the ground with a smile frozen on his face.

FATHER PATRICK

(sotto)

She liked my homily.

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NEGATIVE ERIC  
So that's it, huh?

Patrick snaps out of it.

FATHER PATRICK  
What?

NEGATIVE ERIC  
Want me to talk to her for you?

Patrick stares at Eric for a beat, incredulous.

FATHER PATRICK  
First of all, that wasn't the  
Pastor's mother. She's the Mother  
Superior of the Sister's of the  
Holy Cross and shepherd of her  
flock just as Pastor  
O'Rourke...oh, fuck it.

NEGATIVE ERIC  
Look. I know you're a man of the  
cloth and all that. Some kind of  
pious prude. I get you can't just  
trot up to her and take the  
temperature. Bad optics, like you  
said. Look, when you guys clock  
out here, where do you go?

FATHER PATRICK  
What? Home.

NEGATIVE ERIC  
Good, so you've got one. Okay,  
tell you what. I'll talk to the  
penguin for you, get the lay of  
the land, see what's what. In the  
meantime let me crash at your  
place until I'm ready to split.

FATHER PATRICK  
I can't agree to that, it's a quid  
pro quo.

NEGATIVE ERIC  
You're a priest. As long as it's  
latin who gives a shit?

Patrick chuckles in spite of himself, then looks up to the top floor window of the church. Pastor O'Rourke quickly withdraws himself from the window, having been spotted snooping. Patrick sighs, takes out his wallet and retrieves two twenties.

FATHER PATRICK

If you promise not to do exactly what you just said, you can have this for the bus. But in case you haven't noticed, this isn't exactly a bustling metropolis. The bus doesn't come for a couple of days. You can stay with me until then.

Eric takes the money.

NEGATIVE ERIC

That's a pretty square deal, padre.

FATHER PATRICK

So long as you leave her alone. Wait here. It's time for my daily dread.

**INT. O'ROURKE'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER**

O'Rourke sits behind an ornate desk pouring over blue prints of a CHURCH STEEPLE while sipping from a chalice of wine. There's a KNOCK at the door. He doesn't look up.

O'ROURKE

Come in.

Patrick enters wearing a clergy shirt.

FATHER PATRICK

You wanted to see me?

O'Rourke still doesn't look up from the schematics.

PASTOR O'ROURKE

I did.

Without looking up, he gestures Patrick come further into the office and take the seat in front of him. Patrick sits. After a pregnant beat, O'Rourke looks up to Patrick.

PASTOR O'ROURKE

Do you know why I attended the Ad Limina in Rome?

FATHER PATRICK

You had to?

PASTOR O'ROURKE

I didn't.

PASTOR O'ROURKE

They're typically for bishops. I went because I care. Because I'm interested. What are you interested in? Because from what I can tell it can't be anything to do with the church. What would your father think? What would your grandfather think? How can you call yourself...

He trails off, thinking better of it.

PASTOR O'ROURKE

Do you have any idea what a privilege it is to be who you are? What kind of legacy you represent?

O'Rourke takes another sip of wine.

PASTOR O'ROURKE

Say ten Our Fathers and ten Hail Marys.

He returns his attention to the blueprints in front of him. Patrick sits for a beat, knowing he's been dismissed, but his contempt for the man gets the better of him.

FATHER PATRICK

Then what?

O'Rourke slowly returns his gaze to Patrick.

PASTOR O'ROURKE

Then say ten for me. For bearing your burden.

He begins to roll up the schematics.

**EXT. CHURCH - LATER**

In a wide long shot, Patrick and Eric walk down a sidewalk away from the church.

NEGATIVE ERIC

A deal's a deal, but at least throw me a bone. So, a priest and a nun walk into a bar...then what happens?

FATHER PATRICK

I'd really rather not get into it.

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NEGATIVE ERIC

Come on, there's got to be some story.

**INT. O'ROURKE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

O'Rourke, wine chalice in hand, walks up to a giant stained glass window depicting the crucifixion of Christ. He leans forward slightly and extends a hand toward the nail wounds on Jesus' feet. A closeup of the feet reveals a PEEPHOLE COVER camouflaged against the nail wounds. O'Rourke pushes the thin metal desk aside, leans forward and gazes through the hole as one would a hotel room door peephole.

PEEPHOLE POV

A panorama view of the street below. Patrick and Eric can be seen walking down the sidewalk.

FATHER PATRICK (V.O.)

What does it matter? There's nothing I can do about it.

**INT. PRIEST HOUSE - AFTERNOON**

Patrick and Eric emerge into the house to find themselves in front of a staircase leading up, with a living room to the left, separated by an open doorway that leads to a kitchen.

A portly priest (FATHER JUAN) sits on a couch in a t-shirt and underwear watching TV, a massive mound of Halloween candy on a coffee table in front of him. Dozens of empty wrappers accompany him on the couch.

FATHER JUAN

Hey, Patty's home.

FATHER PATRICK

(re: candy)  
What's all this?

Juan contentedly pats his stomach.

FATHER JUAN

I'm working on my building! Want a milk dud?

FATHER PATRICK

Where'd all this come from?

FATHER JUAN

The pastor told me to hang onto  
all the candy for the Halloween  
party so he wasn't tempted to eat  
it all. Who's the chimney?

Patrick turns to see Eric puffing on a freshly lit cigarillo.  
Patrick snatches it out of his hands and snuffs it out.

FATHER PATRICK

I thought you were out of fluid?

NEGATIVE ERIC

I found a match.

FATHER OMAR (O.S.)

Fucking shit sonofabitch!

A second priest, FATHER OMAR, enters from the kitchen, wiping  
his hands on a dish towel.

FATHER OMAR

Gonna have to order some fucking  
pizza cause I fucked up the  
shitass casserole again.

Omar crosses himself in repentance after every swear word. A  
third, bible-toting priest enters, in the middle of removing  
his glasses. This is LUCKY.

FATHER LUCKY

What's wrong? I just heard Omar  
express himself.

Lucky TRIPS on a rug, sending the Bible flying. It SMASHES  
through an opposite window next to another window that's been  
boarded up with cardboard. Everyone looks to the broken window.

FATHER JUAN

At least we're getting pizza.

FATHER PATRICK

Everyone, this is Eric. He's in  
town waiting on the bus and I said  
he could stay in the meantime.  
Eric, meet Juan, Omar and Lucky.

NEGATIVE ERIC

Hello.

Omar, Juan and Lucky all speak at the same time:

FATHER OMAR

How the fuck are ya?

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FATHER LUCKY

Sorry about the bad first  
impression.

FATHER JUAN

What do you want on your pizza?

**INT. PATRICK'S ROOM - LATER**

Patrick enters and flips the light on. The room is spartan with a twin bed and dresser with a large rimmed mirror above it. Wedged into the rim around the circumference of the mirror are black and white photographs and vintage newspaper clippings. Patrick goes to the dresser and starts digging in the drawers for linens that he periodically tosses onto the bed. Eric takes in the room and nods to the decorated mirror.

NEGATIVE ERIC

Nice place. All I've got on my dresser are bottle rings and mouse traps. So, a glutton, a sailor mouth and a left footed wobble-jockey. You guys take your hypocritical oath pretty seriously.

FATHER PATRICK

You're thinking of doctors. And they're not hypocrites, that's just how they blow off steam. Omar preaches a beautiful sermon, Juan runs an incredible youth program and Lucky is a financial wizard.

NEGATIVE ERIC

Yeah, I guess being a klutz isn't his fault.

FATHER PATRICK

He's actually pretty heavy into online poker. But they all still believe in what they're doing, and they do it well.

NEGATIVE ERIC

So what's your vice? Aside from bumming the odd stogie.

Patrick stops rummaging in the drawers and gazes at the news clippings and photos surrounding his mirror. Eric goes up next to him for a better look.

ERIC POV

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The photos affixed to the mirror depict a 1940s Army chaplain in various stages of life: as a child, with his wife, in a clergy shirt, in his army uniform, his arms around three fellow priests at Harvard. The clippings range from local papers praising a favorite son to international staples detailing the 1943 destruction by U-Boat of the *S.S Dorchester*.

FATHER PATRICK  
I'm a hypocrite.

EXIT POV

Patrick and Eric continue looking at the clippings.

FATHER PATRICK  
(re: clippings)  
Army chaplain John Patrick  
Washington. My uncle. He *lived* to be a priest. Believed in himself and what he was doing. It's why he enlisted right after Pearl Harbor. Not to carry a gun, but to offer what he had. To lend his comfort, his prayer...his faith against all the horror unraveling so viciously in the world.

Patrick turns and goes to sit on the end of his bed. Eric keeps looking at the menagerie in the mirror.

FATHER PATRICK  
When the torpedo hit the troop transport he knew he couldn't save everyone. So long as he could save someone. He died onboard the *Dorchester* at it sank beneath the sea. His life vest bobbing around the chest of another. He died so that someone might live. That's a man of God. That's a priest.

Eric turns to Patrick, who has noiselessly began to shed tears.

NEGATIVE ERIC  
You sound guilty you've never sacrificed yourself before.

FATHER PATRICK  
All his brothers except my dad were priests. Then mom died, and he couldn't give his life to her anymore, so he gave it to his brothers' memory and became one, too. And just like that...

He lets out a heavy sigh.

FATHER PATRICK

It's the family business. What was I supposed to do? I thought I'd grow into it. Thought I'd feel a calling. The harder I tried the more outside myself I became. The more lonely. The more...how can I believe in something bigger than me if I don't believe in me? I don't need to sacrifice myself. I just wish I gave a shit.

He crosses himself, then nods to the mirror.

FATHER PATRICK

I have this here to remind me I ought to.

He sits on the bed. Eric joins him.

NEGATIVE ERIC

I get it. Believing in something bigger is sort of the meat and potatoes of the gig, huh?

Patrick smiles despite himself. He gets up and goes back to the mirror, reaches up toward the top of the rim and pulls out a hidden newspaper photo of Claire with several other novitiates.

FATHER PATRICK

But I do now.

He turns to Eric.

FATHER PATRICK

I never felt for any sort of God the way I feel for her. And I wish I knew what that meant.

NEGATIVE ERIC

How'd it happen?

Patrick hesitates, then sits back down next to Eric.

FATHER PATRICK

The pastor went to Rome. He gave me the responsibility of administering Last Rites at the hospital while he was gone. She was there. She was already there. Preparing for her final vows. Caring for the sick.

## FATHER PATRICK

We fell in love over the last breaths of three people as their souls escaped their body. When my time was up...when the pastor was coming back...she met me in confession. Do you have any idea what it's like? Day after day..." bless me Father, I lost my temper...bless me, Father, I cheated my friend...bless me Father, I hit my wife..." She met me in confession..."bless me, Father, I love you." She's a nun about to take her final vows. She thought it was a sin. I'm a priest. So I forgave her.

He puts the clipping of Claire on the bed between him and Eric.

**INT. PRIEST HOUSE - NIGHT**

Eric lies on the couch staring up at the ceiling, lost in thought. His hand reaches off screen and comes back with a piece of Halloween candy, which he unwraps and eats. He moves his body into a sitting position and reaches forward again. This time his hand comes back with the news clipping of Claire.

INSERT - News clipping

Eric examines the clipping. Underneath the photo is a caption with the address of Claire's convent.

## NEGATIVE ERIC

Sisters of the Holy Cross...

**INT. CONVENT - NIGHT**

The Mother Superior slowly walks down the length of a hallway, rooms with closed doors lining both sides of her. She squints, straining to hear a peep as she continues, hands folded behind her back, to the room at the end of the hallway. She takes out a key from a pocket, lets herself in, and turns once more to the hallway before her. Not a sound. Satisfied, she enters her quarters, closing the door behind her.

INSERT:

Claire's hands remove a record from its sleeve.

She places the record on a record player.

She slaps on a pair of large, Princess Leia-esque headphones.  
She places the needle on the spinning record.

**INT. CONVENT - CLAIRE'S ROOM - NIGHT**

"JOSHUA FIT THE BATTLE" by Elvis Presley erupts over the soundtrack in full volume. Claire begins dancing. Carefree. Enraptured. She's wearing her tunic, belt and scapular. Her veil and wimple sit haphazardly discarded on the floor. She is barefoot and in the middle of removing her belt and rosary. She throws the rosary up in the air and catches it behind her back. She removes her belt and incorporates it into her dancing.

**EXT. CONVENT - CONTINUOUS**

Negative Eric approaches the side of the convent. Most windows are dark but a few are illuminated with their blinds drawn. Eric scans the building and eventually sees Claire dancing past a window on the third floor.

He buries a hand into his pocket and retrieves a few coins. He rears back and throws one at Claire's window. It hits but she doesn't notice. He throws another coin, then another. He digs back into his pocket for more change but he's run out.

Suddenly, a side door opens a few yards next to Eric and a janitor steps out, a bag of trash slung over his shoulder. He leans down and puts a wedge in the door, propping it open. He heads around the side of the building and out of sight. Eric heads for the door.

**INT. CONVENT - CLAIRE'S ROOM**

Claire continues dancing, the loud music softly emanating from her headphones. Just then, an aggressive KNOCK on the door. Claire quickly removes the headphones.

MOTHER SUPERIOR (O.S)  
Claire! Time for lights out!

CLAIRE  
Yes, Mother! I was just finishing  
a second rosary.

MOTHER SUPERIOR (O.S)  
Finish up and go to bed.

Her footsteps retreat down the hallway. After a beat, Claire puts the headphones back on.

CUT TO:

A diorama-like cross section of the three-floor convent so we see the inside of every room. "JOSHUA FIT THE BATTLE" slams back on the cut and continues through the following sequence:

Most Sisters are asleep, but about a half dozen are reading, playing solitaire, praying, stretching, etc. We see CLAIRE dancing in her room on the middle of the top floor, ERIC enter the door the janitor left open on the middle of the first floor, and the MOTHER SUPERIOR as she walks down the third floor hallway, intermittently stopping outside doors with lights on to reprimand the Sister inside.

Eric easily makes it to the staircase leading to the second floor, but just as he does, PASTOR O'ROURKE enters the convent from the main entrance on the bottom left of the first floor. Eric must make his way up to Claire's room while dodging the odd janitor, nun going to the bathroom, the Mother Superior, and the Pastor as he, too, sneaks his way upstairs.

When Eric reaches the third floor unnoticed (the Pastor close behind) he stops in his tracks when he comes face-to-back with the Mother Superior. He quickly hides behind a large potted plant just as the Mother turns and O'Rourke reaches the third floor. They lock eyes. The MS looks at her watch, then grabs the Pastor's hand and, both smiling, leads him back to her room and closes the door.

Eric removes himself from the plant and heads toward Claire's room, hers having the only light under the door besides the Mother Superior's. As he approaches the door, he whips his head to the Mother's door to see the knob turning and the door beginning to open. In a flash, Eric throws Claire's door open and in one motion bursts inside and closes the door behind him, barreling into Claire and knocking them both down. The MS peeks her head out from her room, making sure no one saw her and the Pastor. Satisfied, she closes it again. The song ends.

**INT. CONVENT - CLAIRE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Claire, headphones knocked off, sits momentarily stunned on the floor with Eric in her lap, himself dazed by the fall. Their position is reminiscent of Michaelangelo's *Pieta*.

NEGATIVE ERIC

You owe me 38 cents.

Claire lets out a SQUEAL and forcefully shoves Eric off her. She scurries to a far corner of the room just as the Mother Superior's muffled voice rings out from behind the cell door.

MOTHER SUPERIOR (O.S)

Claire!!

Made in Highland

Claire opens her mouth to respond as Eric collects himself.

NEGATIVE ERIC  
Wait, I'm here cause of Patrick.

SISTER CLAIRE  
You're...what?

A door opens and closes out in the hall. Claire stares at Eric.

NEGATIVE ERIC  
You know, the priest. About yay  
high. Robes. Bit of a sad sack.

A pounding at the door.

MOTHER SUPERIOR (O.S.)  
Claire! What's happening?!

Claire snaps out of it.

CLAIRE  
(to Eric)  
Under the bed!

She springs up and goes to the door. Eric crawls under the bed.

UNDER THE BED

Eric is face to face with a missing floorboard, which he sees contains two or three record albums stuffed within. He hears the sound of a door open a crack.

CLAIRE (O.S.)  
I'm so sorry. I...started a third  
rosary and lost track of time.

MOTHER SUPERIOR (O.S.)  
I heard yelling.

OUT WITH CLAIRE

CLAIRE  
I yelled in...rapture.

Claire speaks to the MS through her door which she's opened only ajar. The MS glares daggers into her.

MOTHER SUPERIOR  
To bed. Now. If I have to come  
back It'll be with my yard stick.

She whisks herself away. Claire gently closes the door. Eric removes himself from the bed.

NEGATIVE ERIC

Nice place. All I've got under my bed is black mold and slipper socks.

CLAIRE

Who are you? Wait...you're the one from earlier. With the long cigar at the church. Father Patrick sent you here?

NEGATIVE ERIC

You kidding? If he knew I was here he'd probably lose his lunch.

CLAIRE

I don't--

NEGATIVE ERIC

I'm surfing his couch till I can take the bus out of here, so I figured I'd throw the frock a bone and help him out. He scratched my back I scratch yada yada, you get it.

He goes to the window and examines it.

NEGATIVE ERIC

You think a fall from this height would break our legs?

Claire stares at him, stunned.

CLAIRE

Could you start over from the beginning?

NEGATIVE ERIC

(matter of fact)

He loves you. He said you said you love him. Seems kind of cut and dry. I know it's against the grain for you religious types to get all hot and heavy but...I don't know, fuck it.

She gasps at the swear.

NEGATIVE ERIC

Sorry. But...isn't being in love sort of the end-all-be-all for most people? I'm busting you out of here.

Made in Highland

NEGATIVE ERIC

Fortunately I sort of know what you're both going through. I used to have a girlfriend who wouldn't let me enter the 72oz honey ham eating challenge at Big Bert's Paunch Palace cause she was a vegan, so I know what it's like to be shackled to some ideology you don't believe in. Ergo, let's go.

He turns back to the window and attempts to open it. He stops when he hears Claire softly laughing. Eric turns back.

NEGATIVE ERIC

What's so funny? I'm doing you a favor.

CLAIRE

It's true. I did fall in love with him. And I was moved to think that maybe...I imagined what a life with him could be. But then I remembered that God is love. And I knew that what feeling I had for the Father was this incredible manifestation of God in me. And I knew I was doing exactly what I was meant to do. If God is love, then I want to spend the rest of my life dedicated to Him. Patrick and I...I like to think it was a test before my vows. Before I give myself to God.

NEGATIVE ERIC

But Patrick...he's...real.

SISTER CLAIRE

You don't believe in God?

NEGATIVE ERIC

I don't really go for any religion. I guess I was curious when I was seven and tried asking after Judaism, but the local rabbi told me to go fuck myself and that was that.

Claire approaches him and takes his hands in hers.

CLAIRE

Faith is real. Love is *real*.

Made in Highland

CLAIRE

And I believe love by another name  
is God.

Eric lets her hands fall out of his.

NEGATIVE ERIC

Look, I've seen a lot of people  
hurt in a lot of different ways  
but I've never seen anyone as bent  
out of shape as this Patrick guy.  
All just because he's in love. I  
can't really square that circle,  
but it's got to mean something.  
You're in love with him. Shouldn't  
that mean something, too?

CLAIRE

It means I'm exactly where I'm  
supposed to be.

NEGATIVE ERIC

If there is a God, don't you think  
he'd prefer if two of his own in  
good standing went for each other?

She smiles and heads toward her bed, picking up her fallen headphones from the floor as she does. She sits on the bed, bends over and retrieves a record from under the floorboard and beckons Eric to join her. He goes and sits down. She places the record on the player and plugs in her headphones.

CLAIRE

I'm not supposed to have this. But  
I can't help it. It stirs me too  
much. It's why I wanted to join  
the choir. The Mother finally let  
me as a gift for taking my vows.

She offers him one ear of the comically large headphones. He takes it.

NEGATIVE ERIC

How big of her.

The sarcasm is lost on Claire as she scoots a little closer to Eric so she can listen out of one ear and Eric out the other, cheek to cheek. Eric blushes ever so slightly.

CLAIRE

Listen.

She places the needle on the record as the song begins.

Made in Highland

It is Howard Seratt's slow country hymn, "I Must Be Saved," with lyrics that include *"Then came the thought, 'what if God called my soul, and, deep in sin, I'm not ready?"*

Claire closes her eyes and sinks into the music. Eric glances at her and watches her listen. The song carries us through a montage leading into the next morning.

#### SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1.) Eric walking down the street in the middle of the night, the New Mexico moon illuminating his path.
- 2.) Patrick in bed, his back to us. He stirs and turns on his opposite side, revealing a face stained with tears.
- 3.) Claire lying awake in bed, hands behind her head. Pensive.
- 4.) Pastor O'Rourke, in his office at the church, sitting down behind his desk with a steaming cup of coffee. He pours over the steeple blue prints on his desk, the first purple light of morning creeping in through the stained glass.
- 5.) The steeplejack working on the scaffold around the steeple amongst the emerging dawn. The song comes to an end.

#### INT. PRIEST HOUSE - MORNING

Eric, having walked the night away, enters through the one of the now two cardboard windows, pushing it aside and climbing in to the sound of bacon frying in the adjoining kitchen.

SISTER CLAIRE (V.O.)  
Will I see you tomorrow?

NEGATIVE ERIC (V.O.)  
Tomorrow?

SISTER CLAIRE (V.O.)  
At the party. We can find some time to pray together.

NEGATIVE ERIC (V.O.)  
Okay.

Eric stretches, yawns, and heads for the kitchen.

#### INT. PRIEST HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Lucky makes bacon. An adjacent toaster POPS up two pieces of toast. He grabs a plate and places one piece of toast on it. Eric enters from behind, an unlit cigarillo in his mouth.

Made in Highland

NEGATIVE ERIC

Knock, knock.

Lucky jumps in surprise, sending the toast flying as he spins around. Eric catches the toast midair with one hand as he tries in vain to conjure a spark from his lighter in the other.

NEGATIVE ERIC

You cooking with gas?

LUCKY

(re: stove)

It's electric.

NEGATIVE ERIC

Oh well.

He pockets the lighter, tucks the cigarillo behind his ear, and takes a bite of toast. Juan enters in his boxers and clergy shirt, carrying a bulging trash bag over one shoulder, which he places down in a corner next to another full trash bag.

FATHER JUAN

Happy Halloween, compadres. You think this'll be enough candy for the kids tonight?

FATHER LUCKY

How many bags did you start with?

FATHER JUAN

I'll tell you in confession.

Omar enters, rubbing the sleep out of his eyes.

FATHER OMAR

Fuck Mondays.

NEGATIVE ERIC

So what time is this shindig later? Bus rolls in tomorrow so I can give you guys a hand tonight.

Lucky hands Omar a cup of coffee. Omar shuffles away and exits.

FATHER LUCKY

That's very Christian of you. Do you have a costume?

NEGATIVE ERIC

I can rustle something up.

Lucky smiles, claps Eric on the back and heads toward the living room with his breakfast, leaving Juan and Eric alone.

Made in Highland

NEGATIVE ERIC

So, Juan in a million. I've got sort of a favor to ask you.

FATHER JUAN

I'm not so good at hearing confession if that's what it is. Sometimes I...chuckle.

NEGATIVE ERIC

It's nothing like that. Here's the skinny...

### INT. CHURCH EVENT SPACE - NIGHT

A large, run down banquet hall/gym type space with several kid friendly Halloween stations lining the walls, ranging from bobbing for apples, caricature drawing, spooky story readings, etc. Teenage volunteers help facilitate the fun.

Juan, dressed in a form fitting Batman costume and Lucky, dressed as Mr. Monopoly, finish setting up a water color painting station as some kids and their parents start to trickle in. Omar, dressed as Rough Rider Teddy Roosevelt, enters frame and places an unlit jack-o-lantern and pack of matches on the table behind Juan and Lucky.

FATHER OMAR

Nice choices this year. Fatman and Robber Baron.

FATHER JUAN

Yeah, who are you? Crocodile Dundee?

Omar reaches up to his lip.

FATHER OMAR

Do I not have my mustache?

Lucky notices something off screen.

FATHER JUAN

Hey look, it's the chimney.

Reveal Patrick, dressed simply in his priest robes, and Eric, dressed as a chimney (essentially a box on his head with a hole cut out for his face with an adjoining box sticking out the side attached to another box vertically and all painted to resemble bricks), as they approach.

FATHER LUCKY

Hey, Patty. Where's your costume?

Made in Highland

FATHER PATRICK  
Can't you tell? I'm a priest.

Pastor O'Rourke, the Mother Superior and Claire approach. None in costume, the Pastor wears his priestly garb and the MS and Claire wear their typical nun habits (the MS in a black veil and Claire in a white one). Claire and Patrick make a weak attempt not to catch each other's glance.

MOTHER SUPERIOR  
Hello, Fathers. You all  
look...what a charming party .

FATHER JUAN  
Here to bob for apples?

MOTHER SUPERIOR  
We're not staying long. Claire has  
a big day tomorrow. The Pastor and  
I are just up to his office so he  
can finally tell me all about  
Rome.  
(then, to Claire)  
I'll be back soon. I want you in  
bed early tonight.

She and the Pastor begin to walk away.

PASTOR O'ROURKE  
(to his priests)  
Try to dole out the sugar  
responsibly.

He and the MS cross off. Lucky turns, takes the pack of matches off the table and lights the jack-o-lantern.

NEGATIVE ERIC  
Anyone else get a "join the army,  
see the navy" vibe from those two?

CLAIRE  
(to Eric)  
Give me about fifteen minutes? I'm  
going to read the kids a story and  
then I'll come meet you.

Claire crosses off, averting her eyes to the ground.

FATHER PATRICK  
What was that about?

NEGATIVE ERIC  
She's got eyes on saving my soul  
or something. This place got a  
john?

Juan motions toward the back of the hall.

FATHER JUAN

Out and down the hall to the left.

Eric nods, reaches over to the table, and grabs the pack of matches before walking in the direction Juan pointed. Patrick turns and looks at Claire, sitting on the ground a few yards away, reading a picture book to a gaggle of children.

FATHER LUCKY

You going to go see them snap the steeple tomorrow?

FATHER PATRICK

No. I don't know.

FATHER LUCKY

Come on, it'll be fun. We can stand outside the caution tape with a thermos of hot toddy.

FATHER PATRICK

We'll see. Depends how I feel.

The kids laugh as Claire pantomimes a part of the story.

**INT. CHURCH - NIGHT**

The church is completely empty, everyone being in the event space adjoining the building. We pan over the empty interior until we finds Eric, lying on his back where the choir sings with a flashlight in his mouth, adjusting the sound system.

**INT. O'ROURKE'S OFFICE - NIGHT**

O'Rourke and the Mother Superior stand behind O'Rourke's desk as they pour over the new steeple blue prints together.

PASTOR O'ROURKE

I'll have a pure granite spire, stained glass around the perimeter of the lantern and a finished oak belfry. It'll be here for a hundred years.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

It's absolutely beautiful. And you designed...?

O'Rourke nods, turns and goes to a tabernacle perched on a column adjacent his desk.

MOTHER SUPERIOR  
It's beautiful.

O'Rourke opens the tabernacle, takes out a decanter of wine, and pours into two chalices.

PASTOR O'ROURKE  
It's a legacy.

He turns and gives wine to the MS. They raise them in toast.

PASTOR O'ROURKE  
The blood of Christ.

MOTHER SUPERIOR  
Amen.

They drink, then slowly lower the pewter from their lips and gaze at each other in palpable lust.

#### **INT. CHURCH EVENT SPACE - NIGHT**

Patrick walks through the party, making himself available. He stops in his tracks when he sees Claire leave in the direction of the church. The sounds of a couple crying children can be heard in the background behind him. He thinks for a beat, then starts after her just when Juan approaches from behind.

FATHER JUAN  
Hey, Pat, you have to do me a favor. We're running out of candy and these kids are about to lose it. I stashed a bag under the alter back in the church, can you go and get it for me? I've got faces to paint.

FATHER PATRICK  
You stashed a bag of candy under the altar?

FATHER JUAN  
Is that really so hard to believe?

FATHER PATRICK  
No, I guess not.

FATHER JUAN  
Good. Hurry man, it's like we got two dozen diabetic Beelzebubs in here.

Patrick sighs and exits. Juan smirks to himself.

**INT. CHURCH - NIGHT**

Patrick enters the church from the left just as Claire enters from the right. They both stop in their tracks when they see each other. They laugh awkwardly and proceed further in until they're standing in front of each before the altar. The slight *tap tap tap* of the steeplejack outside can be heard above.

SISTER CLAIRE

I came to meet your friend.

FATHER PATRICK

I came to...actually, now I'm not so sure.

SISTER CLAIRE

I--

FATHER PATRICK

I--

Awkward chuckles. Then silence.

**UP IN THE BALCONY**

In the viewing balcony above the main entrance that offers a view of the whole church, Eric sits with his back against the wall, facing away from the church proper so he's facing the balcony seats. He leans up and cranes his neck to the church behind him and sees Patrick and Claire standing together.

He returns to his sitting position, takes out a remote control, and presses a PLAY button. Nothing. He furrows his brow and presses it again. Still nothing. He presses again and again and again until finally...

**IN THE CHURCH**

Patrick and Claire struggle with what to say to each other when suddenly the opening drum beats of The Rolling Stones' **UNDER MY THUMB** ring out in surround sound, filling up and bouncing off the entire church. It will continue to play through the following sequence until otherwise noted. Patrick and Claire look around in bewilderment.

SISTER CLAIRE

What's...?

FATHER PATRICK

I don't know.

Their confused gazes return to each other. They smile, incredulous. After a beat, Patrick outstretches his hand.

FATHER PATRICK

Cut a rug with a man of the cloth?

Made in Highland

Claire smiles and considers. Should she? She slowly reaches out and takes his hand, and the priest and the nun begin dancing together to The Rolling Stones in the church in front of the altar with a giant Jesus on the cross on the wall behind it.

The BEEP of a hospital heart monitor can be heard over the soundtrack. Patrick and Claire continue to dance. BEEP.

IN THE BALCONY

Eric, facing away still, smiles to himself as he takes out the book of matches he swiped from the party, strikes one and lights up a cigarillo. He blows the smoke out the side of his mouth so it enters the hole cut out for his face. The smoke escapes through his attached cardboard chimney.

BEEP

IN THE CHURCH

Patrick and Claire continue to dance, both having a great time.

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - PATIENT 1 - FLASHBACK**

BEEP

As the song continues to play over the soundtrack, we see Father Patrick as he stands on one side of a dying patient, saying a prayer, as Claire stands on the other side, a heart monitor above the patients' head between them. As Patrick says the prayer, he steals a look at Claire, head bowed. BEEP.

BACK IN CHURCH

Claire and Patrick dance.

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - PATIENT 3 - FLASHBACK**

BEEP. Claire and Patrick, the beeping heart monitor between them, slowly lean toward each other as they stare into each others eyes. BEEP.

BACK IN CHURCH

Claire and Patrick continue dancing.

**INT. O'ROURKE'S OFFICE - NIGHT**

Pastor O'Rourke fucks the Mother Superior from behind as she's bent over his desk.

BACK IN CHURCH

Claire and Patrick dance, a carefree couple completely giving themselves to the love they feel for each other. BEEP.

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - PATIENT 2 - FLASHBACK**

BEEP. Standing on either side of a different patient, Claire speaks to the patient softly as Patrick watches her from the opposite side. Claire looks up at him and smiles.

BACK IN CHURCH

As the song enters its slow, soft guitar solo interlude at the 1:59 mark, Patrick and Claire slowly stop dancing and come together, holding each other and gazing into each others' eyes.

SISTER CLAIRE

I don't want to be a...bad habit.

BEEP.

FATHER PATRICK

I love you, Claire.

They slowly begin to lean in closer to each other.

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - PATIENT 3 - FLASHBACK**

BEEP. BEEP. BEEP.

Patrick and Claire slowly lean in closer to each other over this final patient. As soon as their lips find each others, the heart monitor between their heads FLATLINES. BEEEEEEEEEEEP.

MATCH CUT TO:

In the church, Patrick and Claire kiss in front of the altar, just as they did the very first time in the hospital. The song comes to an end. The kiss stops. Patrick beams as a tear leaks down his face. Claire tears up as well, but tears her gaze away, conflicted.

FATHER PATRICK

Claire...?

SISTER CLAIRE

I'm sorry. I...tomorrow I swear my vows. And I want to mean them. I have to mean them.

Made in Highland

She gently breaks the embrace, looks up into his face, then scurries toward the main entrance and out the door. Patrick looks after her, frozen, the wind knocked out of him. He looks around in helplessness before noticing Eric's chimney sticking up above the wall in the balcony, smoke pillowing out of it. The clap of THUNDER shudders the church from outside.

**INT. PRIEST HOUSE - PATRICK'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Eric, still in his chimney costume, sits on the bed next to Patrick, who has changed into a baggy sweatshirt featuring the logo of a mini-golf course in Passaic, New Jersey. Rain patters down on the house from outside. Both men sit in silence.

NEGATIVE ERIC

I thought music, I thought dancing  
in front of...I thought it could  
make you honest with each other.

FATHER PATRICK

It did.

He gets up and goes to the mirror with the clippings of his grandfather. Eric looks out the window at the falling rain.

NEGATIVE ERIC

Was it raining when the ship went  
down?

FATHER PATRICK

How should I know?

NEGATIVE ERIC

What are you going to do now?

Patrick turns back to Eric and takes him in for a beat.

FATHER PATRICK

Don't go around telling everyone  
there was a suicidal priest in  
Truth or Consequences.

He turns back to the mirror.

FATHER PATRICK

You know why this town is called  
that?

NEGATIVE ERIC

I figured it was some cheap  
metaphor.

FATHER PATRICK

It won a game show.

**INT. CONVENT - CLAIRE'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Claire stands in front of her bed, arms folded and lost in thought. On the bed sits her white novitiate veil next to a brand new black veil. Just then, the sound of a coin hitting her window snaps her out of her reverie.

**EXT. CONVENT - CONTINUOUS**

Claire opens her window and looks down to see Eric, his costume finally off and soaking wet.

NEGATIVE ERIC  
43 cents.

SISTER CLAIRE  
You're all wet.

NEGATIVE ERIC  
It was raining.

SISTER CLAIRE  
I know.

They stand looking at each other for a beat.

NEGATIVE ERIC  
I'm leaving tomorrow. The bus is coming. But I've been trying to think. I thought the rain might help. But I don't get it. So I came back here.

SISTER CLAIRE  
Please...don't try to convince me. I'm being tested. I need to have faith.

Her voice cracks ever so slightly.

NEGATIVE ERIC  
I'm not a teacher. It's not the SATs. I didn't come to convince you. I just... want to know what it's like.

SISTER CLAIRE  
To give yourself to God?

NEGATIVE ERIC  
No. To love somebody.

Claire is taken aback. She begins to answer but closes her mouth and bows her head in thought. Eric looks up at her. A tear rolls down Claire's cheek.

FADE TO:

**EXT. CHURCH - MORNING**

Sunlight glistens off the stained glass of the church steeple as an industrial crane enters frame and parks itself next to the steeple, which is no longer surrounded by scaffolding. The steeplejack is nowhere to be seen. A POLICE OFFICER enters frame extending caution tape around the perimeter of the parking lot. A crowd has gathered outside the tape. Eric approaches Lucky, who sips from a thermos.

FATHER LUCKY  
Morning. Toddy?

He offers Eric the thermos. Eric shakes his head.

NEGATIVE ERIC  
Where's Patrick?

FATHER LUCKY  
I figured he was coming with you.

Eric looks around at the crowd but doesn't spot the priest. The crane begins to rise up and extend, the hook affixed to the end wobbling in the breeze as the driver attempts to fix it to a circular ring at the top of the crucifix atop the steeple.

FATHER LUCKY  
Shouldn't be too long now. You sure you don't want any?

He looks next to him but Eric is gone.

**INT. CONVENT - DAY**

The largest room in the convent has been set up to serve as a church. Dozens of Sisters, some in white novitiate veils, some in black permanent ones, as well as some family members, stand in mass. Leading the congregation is Pastor O'Rourke as the Mother Superior and two elderly Sisters stand to the side. O'Rourke leads the congregation in prayer as he and the audience speak in unison.

PASTOR O'ROURKE/CONGREGATION  
...that I have greatly sinned in  
my thought and my words, what I  
have done and what I have failed  
to do.

Made in Highland

## PASTOR O'ROURKE/CONGREGATION

Through my fault, through my  
 fault, through my most grievous  
 fault...

He continues as we find Claire standing amongst other nuns in a row holding bibles, reading along. The Pastor and the congregants finish reading. O'Rourke steps aside as one of the elderly Sisters approaches the pulpit just as the sound of the DOOR in the back is heard opening. Claire turns toward it and sees Eric enter, craning his head around, searching.

## ELDERLY SISTER

A reading from the Holy Gospel.

**INT. STEEPLE - DAY**

Father Patrick ascends a narrow spiral staircase inside the soon-to-be-demolished steeple, his priest robes on.

## ELDERLY SISTER (V.O.)

It was not you who chose me, but I  
 who chose you, and appointed you  
 to go and bear fruit that will  
 remain.

Patrick reaches the top of the steeple landing, stained glass windows surrounding him. The shadow of the crane engulfs him as it rises up high enough to attach to the cross above. Patrick doesn't move.

**INT. CONVENT - CONTINUOUS**

## ELDERLY SISTER

This I command you: love one  
 another.

She finishes. Claire looks up. Everyone rises to their feet. Two Sisters to Claire's left exit their row. Claire follows as the three of them approach the altar and form a line with Claire at the end. The Mother Superior approaches them. It's time. Eric continues standing in the back as he watches. The Mother Superior nods to the three before her.

## FIRST SISTER

I, Sister Mary.

## SECOND SISTER

I, Sister Sarah.

The MS looks to Claire expectantly. A beat. The MS frowns. Claire turns her head and catches Eric's eye in the back.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Claire?

Claire turns on her heel and RUNS down the middle of the congregation toward the door as everyone in the church GASPS. Claire throws open the doors and exits. Eric runs after her.

**EXT. CONVENT - CONTINUOUS**

Eric bursts out into the open to see Claire way ahead of him. He stops and looks after her as Pastor O'Rourke and the Mother Superior hasten up behind him, the audience in tow.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Claire!!

Eric's lips curl into a smile.

**EXT. CHURCH - DAY**

The crowd Oos and Ahs as they watch the hook of the crane come closer and closer to attaching to the top of the steeple cross. Finally, it hooks on and the crowd cheers. Just then, Claire tears into the scene and hops over the caution tape.

**INT. STEEPLE - DAY**

Claire enters at the foot of the spiral staircase.

SISTER CLAIRE

Patrick?!

Up above, Patrick peeks his head over the railing.

FATHER PATRICK

Claire?! Wha...how did you...?

SISTER CLAIRE

I'm coming up!

FATHER PATRICK

No, Claire!

Too late. Claire excitedly scurries up and, out of breath, falls into Patrick's arms at the top of the landing.

FATHER PATRICK

What are you doing? Claire we should--

SISTER CLAIRE

I love you.

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Patrick's breath leaves his body. They gaze upon each other for a beat before embracing and kissing for the third time. Just then, as they're kissing each other, the wood around them GROANS, stained glass begins to SHATTER, and suddenly the entire steeple around them SNAPS at one side and tears off as ripples of colorful glass fly amongst the air, glistening off the sun as the light invades the space. Patrick and Claire kiss deeply, oblivious to the destruction. Lost in their love.

**EXT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS**

The crowd GASPS in shock as all gawkers see the crane rip apart the steeple and completely remove half of it from the structure it stands on. Patrick and Claire, still kissing, are miraculously unscathed as they stand safely at the top of the staircase like a toy bride and groom on a wedding cake.

UP WITH PATRICK AND CLAIRE

The couple remove themselves from the kiss, touch their heads together and laugh as they look into each others eyes, tears rolling down their faces.

BACK WITH THE CROWD

Lucky, Juan and Omar, along with the crowd, stare, mouth agape, at Patrick and Claire in the distance.

FATHER OMAR

I'll be a goddamn sonofabitch.

**EXT. BUS SHELTER - DAY**

Eric sits alone on a bench. After a beat, he takes a lighter from his pocket (the same one he couldn't get to work through the entire script).

Eric puts a cigarillo to his mouth as the CRASH of the steeple coming apart thuds in the distance. Eric flicks the lighter. Nothing. He keeps flicking and flicking and flicking until finally, at long last, the fire erupts and the light catches.

THE END

NEGATIVE ERIC WILL RETURN IN

NEGATIVE ERIC AND THE FLAT EARTH SOCIETY

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