

BLESSED SACRAMENTS

"PILOT"

Written by

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INT. REHAB FACILITY - PADDED CELL - NIGHT

Through the observation window the walls are covered with smears and droplets of blood. Small droplets of blood are spattered on the once white sheets and a hunched over body is tied down with thick straps to the mattress.

The body shakes, grunts, and finally a sweat covered disheveled man sits up. This is ANTONIO VASIO, our hero.

Antonio is having a shit day.

WAREHOUSE - DAY

A fine silt hangs in the air creating long cold beams of light through the opaque and broken windows.

Stools are overturned, long old tables on their sides.

The large drug operation is now vacant. Signs of a police raid moments earlier simmer. Guns are low, suspects are calmly being directed out the doors into awaiting trucks.

In the middle of the room a huge mountain of cocaine sits on a tonnage scale.

Antonio stares at the cocaine with a mix of anger, horror, and finally a sense of relief comes over his face.

The operation is done.

He steps towards the coke when a hand lands on his shoulder.

Startled...His eyes refocus!

BAM!

Blackout.

INT. REHAB FACILITY - PADDED CELL - NIGHT

Antonio bolts up in his bed in a cold sweat.

His eyes, once again defeated. His nose twitches.

He wipes his sweat with his bloody bandaged hand.

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - DAY

CHRYON: SIX MONTHS LATER

Cheap chair legs stand amongst a number of feet on the floor.

Moving back it's clear that the legs are all connected to a small group of eight sitting around in a circle.

Everyone but Antonio looks fairly moved by HENRY's talk.

ANTONIO

Hi, I'm Antonio.

GROUP

Hi Antonio.

ANTONIO

Well, today's a big day. Like any big day, the night before is the hardest. You sit in a room by yourself and try to control the voices. Those are tricky voices. Sometimes they come across like your best friend. That little angel who makes you feel that you are invincible. Then you realize it's that demon in disguise. My momma calls it the princess voice. We had these great fairy-tales where I grew up, in Colombia. This group of fairy princesses lived in the mountains and would come down in the middle of the night and find their mortal prince. They would dance on your nose, their footprints would leave freckles on the bridge, and when you turned twenty-one they would appear in human form. Drop the wings at the door. And you'd sniff them out of a crowd cause they left their scent on you all those years before.

(beat)

Somewhere along the way though, the freckles turned into coca and the sweet innocence in the stories turned ugly.

(turns to Gina)

Now, you try to forget the stories cause if you're seeing the fairies, you know it was laced with something.

The group takes that in. Few laugh under their breath.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)

It's hard to admit when you have a problem.

(surveys the room, hurt)

Easier when you know it's not just you.

DON

That's why I'm happy to give you this.

Don hands Antonio a 60-day chip. Antonio kisses it and puts it in his breast pocket.

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - DAY

GINA, (early 30's) a beautifully worn young woman, steps up to Antonio with a cup of Starbucks coffee.

GINA

The crud they're serving here could make you go back to using.

(then)

Great talk today. What's that story about the fairies called?

ANTONIO

"Una Gran Carga de Mierda"

GINA

A big load of bullshit?

ANTONIO

I still have the gift.

GINA

You're still clean?

He nods.

GINA (CONT'D)

You know I can make you hurt. Didn't get my black belt for showing off.

ANTONIO

José gave me the Cliff Notes.

GINA

Your baby brother, His Holiness, is an asshole.

ANTONIO

True. My baby brother lucked out by getting my smile. That's where his luck ends.

Gina looks to the floor, holding back something.

GINA

So...have you done what you wrote out?

ANTONIO

Leave me alone.

GINA

I can't.

ANTONIO

They won't let me in.

GINA

You don't know that.
(seeing she's losing him...)
Show up with flowers.

ANTONIO

You think that will throw open the door?

GINA

More than a gun will.

Antonio, pissed off, takes off towards the rest room.

GINA (CONT'D)

Check in tonight.

He walks out.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

A very old man, RICHARD, tied up to a mass of life supporting machines, mutters softly.

RICHARD

Bless me, Father.

PRIEST (O.S.)

The body of Christ.

RICHARD

Amen.

A wafer is placed on Richard's lips. With every fibre of his being he opens his mouth to accept the sacrament.

The youthful priest, JOSE, smiling the same smile as Antonio, blesses the man.

JOSE

Rest in peace and I'll see you next week, Richard.

RICHARD

Thank you, Father.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The N-line subway car rattles on the overpass. The local street kids and thugs hang out on the corners and in front of the variety stores. Down a few doors, the older men sit at the patios with espresso cups talking wildly with their hands as another round of South American League football plays on the screen.

Antonio steps out of a Deli with a wrapped bouquet of pansies. The STORE CLERK runs out after him.

STORE CLERK

Tony!

ANTONIO

(reaches for wallet)
What? Forget my card?

STORE CLERK

Naw. This.

He hands Antonio a small bag full of powder.

A couple older men sitting on the bench outside the deli look on.

ANTONIO

What...I don't...

STORE CLERK

...it's to keep the flowers fresh a few more days. I forgot to throw it in.

ANTONIO

Thanks.

STORE CLERK

Give my best to your mother.

ANTONIO

Will do.

Antonio pops it into the paper wrapping.

The old men go back to their radio.

He looks up and notices a dark Crown Victoria with two men sitting in it. Both look too official to be mob.

He looks hard at them and suddenly the car pulls a U-turn and drives off.

He takes a look at the plate, "NY 55513". Government plates.

EXT. HOSPITAL - PARKING LOT

Wearing dark designer sunglasses, Jose stands at the back of the sporty black Cadillac. He throws the robe into a purple suit-bag and places the golden offering cup into a little wooden box. Then hits the remote to close the trunk.

He steps into the driver's seat and pops off the Roman collar, throwing it on the passenger's seat and undoes the top button on the shirt.

The Cadillac roars to life and takes off in the parking lot.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Antonio stands outside 319 Ditmars Avenue. A simple row house with flower baskets in the windows.

He stands there frozen.

Across the street, a man in his late 60's, wife-beater undershirt and beige slacks, stands outside his front door.

OLD MAN

You get hit in the head or something?

ANTONIO

Huh?

OLD MAN

You lose your marbles, get locked up in the loonie bin until you got your memory back?

ANTONIO

What?

(recognizes the voice)

Hey Gerry. No, just...

GERRY

Just nothin'. Your mom's been worried sick about ya.

ANTONIO

I've been...

GERRY

From the looks of it, I'd say doing the steps.

ANTONIO

Yeah.

GERRY

Step up and giver the flowers, ya jackass.

ANTONIO

Missed you too.

(beat)

How's Connie?

GERRY

Never mind about her. Step up or I'll drag you to the door myself.

Gerry grabs the hose and starts watering his flowers.

Antonio sighs, realizing some parts of the neighborhood will never change.

He steps up and the first KNOCK morphs into...

EXT. ATLANTIC CITY POLICE STATION - DAY

SUPER: 6 months earlier.

Antonio smacking the large wooden door open as he walks out of the security lock-down with NATALIA, a stylish D.C. type.

NATALIA

I don't want to hear another word until you're in an office where I can beat you senseless without a witness.

ANTONIO

You're the one who pushed it.

NATALIA

I pushed nothing.

ANTONIO

Who said, "Debrief in Atlantic City"?

NATALIA

You two were in too deep.

(scans the area)

I couldn't risk it.

ANTONIO

We were at the end. Warrants issued, SWAT swept the compound, we had the entire cartel in a...

NATALIA

She screwed you over.

ANTONIO

You really think she did this?

NATALIA

Fine. I won't pin it on her but she is the first one I went to vet. I thought you would have the same set of investigation skills.

ANTONIO

Nine years in the Bureau and you really think I would be so dumb as to take a bribe?

NATALIA

It's not the bribe. It's you. You're a hit away from blowing out your heart.

Antonio stops walking, realizing he's not going home.

ANTONIO

What are you saying?

NATALIA

Only way I could get you on the out with neither Tanner or Nyuen putting you in a black ops hole was to prepare your case with the help of the brass, unofficially of course, was to get you into rehab.

ANTONIO
I'm not a junkie.

NATALIA
No, you're deep cover.

ANTONIO
Exactly.

Phone rings.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
Hello.
(beat)
Hey Soph, I...

Natalia grabs the phone from him and closes it.

NATALIA
Arizona. Some inter-agency
compound. Four months.

ANTONIO
Hey, I can do the steps. I've done
the steps. I know that I screwed up
a little but...

NATALIA
When you get back you'll join a
support group. This isn't a choice.
(beat)
You're going dark.

INT. VASTIO HOUSE - DAY

The door opens and Antonio stands with the flowers extended.

ANTONIO
Hola mama.

MANUELLA VASTIO, early 60's, a strong fashionable woman.

She takes him in for a moment. Her baby. Broken but on the mend. Relief and frustration swirl in her stare.

MANUELLA
That's it. I don't see you forever
and all I get is "Hola Mama"? You
have me worried every time I don't
hear from you for a month. No call,
no nothing. Half a year, nothing.
I'm getting the hearsay from
your...

ANTONIO
Happy Mother's Day.

MANUELLA
I didn't want flowers.

ANTONIO
What then?

She looks at his shirt.

MANUELLA
What's that?

He pulls out the 60-day chip.

MANUELLA (CONT'D)
When did you get it?

ANTONIO
Today.

She opens the door a fraction more.

MANUELLA
Christina's here. Go wash your
hands.

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - DAY

Silk robes are placed in an old oak closet. Garments are moved around and three towels are taken out of the wardrobe. The hands come back into the closet and put a small oak box into the top shelf.

INT. VASTIO HOUSE - DAY

Antonio looks down at the pile of mixed shoes at the door. A lot of worn kicks, some nicked pleather heels, and one nicely set pair of Louboutin heels set slightly aside from the rest of the group. His eyes linger on the pair as a heavy breath escapes him.

MANUELLA
Christina, get the boys to clean
up. I don't want them in bed for a
week again.

CHRISTINA (O.S.)
Maaaw, I know how to take care of
my kids! Gawd!
(beat)
(MORE)