

BLACK SCREEN

FADE IN:

EXT. CRIME SCENE - ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

Beyond the alley we see a CHURCH -- VICTORY BETHEL CHURCH. Much closer, in the ally, at "our feet," lies the body of a DEAD BLACK MAN, covered in BLOOD. Gunshot wounds? Beaten to death? We can't tell. But there is no mistaking his clothes -- this was a Christian minister.

The camera slowly examines the body it appears to be a priest.

He died carrying a BRIEFCASE. It lies open to the wind which ruffles some nondescript papers... and a blood-spattered, open BIBLE.

Between the mouth of the alley and the church beyond stands a CROWD of horrified gawkers

A unmarked COP CAR pulls to a stop behind the crowd. One young KID in the crowd and watches the car park.

KID  
Where the fuck all the police at?  
His body been out here way too  
fucking long!

Crowd agrees, grumbling discontent.

CUT TO:

INT. UNMARKED CAR

Start

DETECTIVE TIMOTHY MCDONALD, mid-fifties, stocky frame but with athletic bearing, turns down his police radio so he can hear the crowd. He zeroes in on the yelling kid whose words are muffled through the car's window. A WHITE MAN's hand taps McDonald's window. He lowers it.

The hand belongs to CHIEF EDDIE COTTER, mid-sixties with a lean frame. Cotter leans in the window.

COTTER  
Didn't I hear you say there is no God?

MCDONALD  
Yeah?

COTTER  
Times like this I think you may be on to something.

MCDONALD  
Never seen a murdered priest before?

COTTER  
"Pastor," detective. No, this is ain't my first. Back in ninety eight two young girls strangled a perv "Man of God" who couldn't keep his hands to himself.

MCDONALD  
Test your faith?

COTTER  
No. People are people, and perverts are perverts. You know that, Mac. This one seems more like usual shit. A disagreement -- shouting back forth. And I guess the "other party" lost patience with the "debate." The caller called in the dispute -- then shouting stopped.

MCDONALD  
A dispute?

McDonald exits the car and joins Cotter walking over to the body scene where uniformed police and EMTs converge on the scene.

MCDONALD (CONT'D)  
I'll get the call from dispatch.

McDonald looks at the crowd across from the crime scene.

COTTER  
Good luck with a witness. This is STILL Big Earl's turf. Either he's going take care of this for us or else he pushed the button.

MCDONALD  
I'm not so sure, Chief. Big Earl's been losing his grip around here for a few years, now. Can't control the pups like he used to. And he's one man who's big enough to avoid the shit show rubbing out a pastor means.

End