

"OPERATION UNTITLED"

by

JOSHUA DEMERS

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF FINE ARTS

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN FILM
YORK UNIVERSITY
TORONTO, CANADA

OCTOBER 2013

© JOSHUA DEMERS, 2013

ABSTRACT

Operation Untitled is a screenplay exploring the self-empowerment of the individual against the socio-political and religious forces that inform the hierarchy of a Catholic high school. The protagonist, Peter Charles who becomes known by the moniker "the Prophet," is a hard-working student from a lower class background who's infatuated by his school and society's promise that hard work = success. When he learns that he loses a life-changing scholarship simply because the recipient, "the Golden Boy" Richard Harding, has influence, his faith in this system is shattered. His subsequent journey of rebellion creates a school-wide revolution and with the power it brings him, the Prophet has a fateful decision: to replace Richard as "the Golden Boy" or to break the cycle of this broken system forever.

DEDICATION

To Mom and Dad.

Everything I am is because of you.

Everything I'm not is because of me.

I'm working on it.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my thesis supervisor, Amnon Buchbinder, who remains for me the best story editor in the world. His wisdom established concrete goals for each rewrite and his guidance ensured I was able to meet them, and more so, do so alive. Most of all, he believed in me when "I found myself within a dark woods where the straight way was lost."

A special thanks to my reader Marie Rickard, whose keen insight and honesty challenged me to the fullest extent of my faculties.

A hearty thank you to Kuowei Lee who manages to always keep us graduates on track even when we are off the rails.

Thank you to Nikki Saltz and Michael Thorn, who demonstrated by their very presence that there is life after one's thesis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----|
| Abstract | ii |
| Dedication | iii |
| Acknowledgments | iv |
| Table of Contents | v |
| 1. OPERATION UNTITLED: Screenplay | 1 |
| 2. CONTEXTUAL DOCUMENT | 117 |
| a. Introduction | 117 |
| b. The System | 119 |
| i. Education | 119 |
| ii. Class and Capitalism | 121 |
| iii. Religion | 125 |
| c. The Screenplay | 129 |
| i. Previous Films | 129 |
| ii. Music | 134 |
| iii. Divine Revelation | 136 |
| iv. World | 138 |
| v. Theme & Narrative Structure | 141 |
| vi. Characters & A Note on the Nicknames .. | 145 |
| vii. Process | 148 |
| d. Conclusion | 151 |
| e. Filmography | 152 |
| f. Bibliography | 154 |

BLACK.

MUSIC UP: WORKING CLASS LAMENT

Whispered CHANTING VOICES. Palm muted guitar chords...

WORKERS (O.S.)
Tick tock, tick tock...

INT. WAREHOUSE, STACK LEVEL 301 - NIGHT

A BLINKING LIGHT flashes at the end of a long, metallic corridor. The rhythmic click of metal. The hum of conveyor belts.

WORKERS (O.S.)
Tick tock, tick tock...

WASHROOM STALL - CONTINUOUS

PETER (18), a keen yet awkward teen, exchanges a Catholic school uniform - dull, grey pants, the crested white dress shirt - for dirty jeans, a t-shirt and steel-toed work boots.

He pulls an ENVELOPE addressed to the "FOREMAN" from his school bag and puts it in his back pocket.

STACKS - CONTINUOUS

A vast warehouse with high ceilings and three-story orange stacks. Peter lines up behind a bunch of grimy WORKERS (40s), who swipe cards from their belt clips at a scanner.

WORKERS
...tick tock, tick tock...

Peter swipes then jogs up a set of stairs to...

STACK LEVEL 301

Peter regards the blinking light while grabbing a PICK LIST.

PETER
*That light is blinking, what were
we thinking? Are we wasting away?
As we give our blood, sweat and
tears in the hopes we get paid. And
when we are toiling and none too
alert, we shall toast all the rich
'cause at least we've got work!*

Peter tapes up boxes and pushes a flatbed cart down the corridor. He drops METAL TUBING into a box, checking a line off his pick list.

PETER (CONT'D)

That light is blinking, what were we thinking? Are we all gonna die? As we give our labour and youth for the rest of our lives. But now that I taste it, and now that I've come, I'm gonna crawl my way up to be free of this dump.

Peter drops items in, checks them off. He labels a box with yellow stickers (STORE 1109-4, WAVE 14).

PETER (CONT'D)

Just eight more hours and then I can breathe. One step closer to being something. Work is just money and money is life. I just want to be something more, than a poor kid who dreams of the world.

He reaches the end of the corridor, dripping sweat. Peter sips his water bottle, eyeing the UPPER MANAGEMENT in the air-conditioned offices that overlook the factory floor.

WORKERS (O.S.)

Tick, tock, tick tock...

KRAMER (18), a young Mitt Romney in tie and dress shirt, climbs the stairs with a clipboard. He mops his brow.

KRAMER

It always this hot? Hey buddy, hate to do this...

PETER

School tomorrow.

KRAMER

(not paying attention)
...just need some O.T. from you.
Man, it's hot.

Peter takes out the "FOREMAN" ENVELOPE from his back pocket.

PETER

Can I, uh, just give this to you?

Kramer opens it. He chuckles.

KRAMER

Guess this is your last O.T.

Kramer saunters down the corridor. Peter smiles then notices TWO SWEATING WORKERS (50s) on another set of stacks.

PETER

*That light is blinking, and now
we're thinking that it's come to
the end. But they're praying and
waiting for their lives to begin.
And when they are dreaming and now
that they're dead, they have left
behind children who'll do it again.*

He loads his boxes onto a box-laden conveyor belt.

PETER (CONT'D)

*Eleven more hours and then I can be
one step closer to being something.
Sweat is salvation, it's making me
pure and I'm gonna be something
more, than a poor kid who dreams of
the world.*

WAREHOUSE CAFETERIA - LATER

A bland room, packed with more dirty-clothed WORKERS (20-60s) in steel-toed boots.

WORKERS

Tick tock, tick tock...

Peter bolts through calculus questions across from HOWIE (45), a beaten down man.

HOWIE

Do the O.T.
(leans in)
They're talking the L-word.

PETER

They always talk layoffs.

HOWIE

Shhhh!

Howie looks around, but no one has noticed.

PETER

Dad, besides. Tomorrow, I'm free.

He finishes his calculus and pulls out a PHYSICS TEXTBOOK.

INT. PETER'S BEDROOM - DAY

BEEP! BEEP! The alarm clock flashes 7:45AM. Peter (work clothes) rolls off his bed, in a room that looks more like a storage place than a teenager's oasis.

He throws on his Catholic uniform in front of his BULLETIN BOARD: images of success, wealth. On it is a LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE from Cambridge University.

PETER

*I've got to live before I die,
because this life has to be mine.
And when I burn and when I break,
I'll still try to change most
everything and when I've fallen
down, I'll pick myself right off
the ground, because I'm way too
young to be dying. I'm way too
young to be dying. I'm way too
young to be dying.*

Peter kisses his fingers, touches them to the acceptance letter.

Beside the board is a mini photo shrine of Peter with MICHELLE (18), someone who clearly knows how to pose for pictures. He repeats the finger kiss to her image.

END SONG

EXT. TRAILER PARK - DAY

Howie, Peter and JAMESON (14), a ball of testosterone in civies clothes, approach a beaten-down car. Howie unlocks it.

HOWIE

(to Peter)

Your lady friend coming?

Peter scans the next trailer - no one appears home - and shakes his head.

JAMESON

Ex-lady friend.

Peter hits him.

EXT. SMALL CITY INTERSECTION - DAY

Howie's car pulls up to the corner of a busy intersection.

INT. HOWIE'S CAR - DAY

Peter is napping against the window. Howie shoves him awake.

HOWIE

Sleep when you're dead.

Peter shoves him back, playfully.

HOWIE (CONT'D)

Still O.T. this weekend.

PETER

Dad, it covers everything. Tuition, living...

JAMESON

Bro, that scholarship gives like every woman the right to deny you sex.

HOWIE

People appreciate achievement.

JAMESON

People appreciate...

He rubs his fingers together - universal sign of money.

JAMESON (CONT'D)

The system's rigged. Toonie for civies?

Howie opens his wallet: one \$10 bill. Jameson puts out his hand, but Howie hesitates. Peter flicks a toonie at Jameson.

PETER

(to Howie, re: the \$10)
That's your coffee money.

Howie smiles. Peter and Jameson jump out of the car.

INT. GAS STATION, COFFEE STAND - DAY

Peter is in line with MICHAEL (18), a goody two-shoes sporting a baggy, black uniform SWEATER-VEST.

Peter's gaze however is on Michelle (Catholic kilt), standing by the gas pumps with Kramer (school uniform). She gives Peter a wave.

MICHAEL

Kramer has a ninety-two, V-Card,
like ninety-four point something.
This Niner prodigy has like ninety-
seven but she doesn't count.
Ah...Bitch-face...

Peter turns away from Michelle and her kilt.

PETER

Don't call her that.

MICHAEL

...ninety-four.

Near Michelle, pumping life into a brand new truck, is RICHARD (18), Greek god of the high school order. Even his uniform seems designer. Peter considers him.

PETER

Richard?

MICHAEL

Ninety five point something. *You got this, Ninety-six.* How about a scholarship coffee?
(counts his change)
...tomorrow.

Peter rolls his eyes and pulls out his own coins.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(to cashier)

Two medium regulars.

Peter counts his change. He's short.

PETER

I'm good.

MICHAEL

(to cashier)

Just one.

RICHARD (O.S.)

I got it.

He's behind them, casually flipping through a thick pad of bills in a clip.

MICHAEL
Ah...thanks.

RICHARD
No worries, neighbour.
(to cashier)
Plastic.

Richard puts away the bills for a credit card.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
And please add a small french
vanilla.

Peter looks between Michelle and Richard as Richard pays.

PETER
You must work a lot of O.T.

Richard's confused.

MICHAEL
Overtime.

Richard laughs and pats Peter on the shoulder.

RICHARD
(to Michael)
Nice sweater-vest.

Richard hands Peter his coffee, taking the french vanilla outside to Michelle. Peter watches the hand-off with horrified suspicion.

EXT. ST. PAUL HIGH SCHOOL, FRONT ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Peter pours the fresh coffee down a drain. Michael's aghast.

MICHAEL
Dude!

Peter sees Richard watching him through a CROWD OF STUDENTS.

INT. ST. PAUL HIGH SCHOOL, CAFETORIUM, PROJECTION BOOTH -
LATER

The booth juts out over the large cafetorium, a cross between a cafeteria and auditorium. LOCA (17), a tiny yet mighty Latin girl, tripods a camera with a pasted on Mexican flag. Peter and Michael play with the lighting/audio board.

LOCA
Move on. She has.

PETER
They're not together.

LOCA
There's a reason she's Bitch-face.

PETER
Don't call her that...*Linda*.

LOCA
Loca. I'll cut you.

CAFETORIUM FLOOR - LATER

About a thousand STUDENTS squeeze into narrow rows of flip-chairs, cramming the cafetorium. TEACHERS patrol the aisles.

PROJECTION BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Peter snaps awake from a nap, Loca and Michael still at work.

MICHAEL
There's a walkout today.

PETER
Foreskin will get wind.

Michael moves a cue. Lights flicker on the cafetorium stage.

MICHAEL
And on the first day...

CAFETORIUM BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Michelle practices non-popping 'p's behind her hand. Richard tenderly adjusts a GOLD TIFFANY BRACELET on her wrist.

RICHARD
The people will love you.

CAFETORIUM STAGE - CONTINUOUS

APPLAUSE at Richard and Michelle's entrance. Richard, stoned or solemn, takes the mic from the podium.

PROJECTION BOOTH - CONTINUOUS - INTERCUT

Michael cues a CD.

PETER

Stutter it.

Michael tenses up.

PETER (CONT'D)

Kidding. Make sure his mic is off.

LOCA

Pansy.

The musical tones of O CANADA swell. Richard lipsynchs to a beautiful MALE VOICE.

RICHARD/CD

*O Canada. Our home and native land.
True patriot love in all our son's
command. With glowing hearts...*

CAFETORIUM - LATER

On stage, Richard and Michelle perform the sign of the cross. The students follow suit in unison.

RICHARD

I believe in God, the Father
Almighty, creator of Heaven and
Earth. I believe in Jesus Christ,
His only Son, our Lord.

STUDENTS in the crowd whisper it like a mantra...

JACKED RUGBY PLAYER

...He suffered under Pontius
Pilate, was crucified...

KEEN GRADE NINE

...On the third day he rose
again...

FUNDAMENTALIST CHRISTIAN

...He will come again to judge the
living and the dead. I believe...

At the back of the crowd, DOMINO (17), a flighty, Red Bull-infused girl student, is in the midst of rolling a joint.

DOMINO
 (sings)
I believe that love is the answer!

VERONICA (17), the save it for Jesus type, pushes her.

VERONICA
 You're so disrespectful!

DOMINO
 Yeah, well Jesus hates you.

From the stage, Richard smiles at those assembled.

RICHARD
 Amen.

STUDENTS
 Amen.

Michelle approaches the podium. Hundreds of faces merge together in the BRIGHT LIGHTS.

PROJECTION BOOTH - CONTINUOUS - INTERCUT

Peter smiles at the distant figure of Michelle. Loca leans over Michael and raises an audio level. The microphone SPIKES. Michelle backs up from it flustered.

PETER
 Hey!

Loca raises her arms in surrender. Michelle tries again.

MICHELLE
 On the road to Damascus, Saul of Tarsus had a vision. Of heavenly light. And a deep voice.

Loca presses another button.

MICHELLE
 (auto-tune: deep, booming)
"Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?"

Peter tries to stop Loca's button mashing.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
 And he said...
 (auto-tune: chipmunk)
 (MORE)

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
"Who art thou Lord?". The voice
 replied.

STUDENTS laugh. Richard eyes the struggling silhouettes in
 the projection booth. Peter blocks Loca from the board.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
 (back to normal)
 Saul became our school's namesake
 Saint Paul. "It is by grace you
 have been saved, not by works."
 Christ is the Truth, the Way and
 the Life. Outside of him there is
 no salvation.

In the booth, Peter shakes his fist at Loca.

LOCA
 Life's a monkey knife fight, dude.
 Cut first.

Michelle backs away, embarrassed. Richard goes to the podium.

RICHARD
 Pardon the technical difficulties.
 And now to announce the recipients
 of this year's academic and
 community awards, our Beloved
 Leader, Principal For...

Domino coughs loudly.

DOMINO
 (over name)
 --SKIN!

MR. SIEMENS (64, striking white hair) looks over from his
 position by the back door, but Domino feigns prayer.

MR. FORRESTER (52), strolls onto the stage. His wrinkled
 dress shirt gives him the diminished spark of former glory.
 He shakes Richard's hand enthusiastically, Michelle's less so
 before going to the mic at the podium.

MR. FORRESTER
 Thank you Richard. Our student
 leadership...

Mr. Forrester leads fresh applause. Richard's wave is kingly,
 Michelle tries to match it but her hand is shaking.

MR. FORRESTER (CONT'D)

It has come to the attention of the Administration that several students are planning a...walk-out.

MAC (18), as Irish punk as a school uniform allows, jumps to his feet. He rips off his uniform shirt, brandishing it like a flag.

MAC

Child labour!

Several other REBEL STUDENTS repeat the gesture.

REBEL STUDENTS

Child labour!

They all throw their shirts at the stage.

Mr. Forrester motions. Mr. Siemens and a group of TEACHERS lead Mac and the rebels away. Some BOO at this. Mr. Forrester shakes his head in disgust.

MR. FORRESTER

Any student leaving class will be marked truant. Under the Safe Schools Act, skipped classes will severely damage your marks and post-secondary opportunities.

In the booth, Peter smirks at Michael, before replacing the "20" on the DAYS SINCE TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES sign to "0."

LOCA

Richard seems confident.

PETER

Confidence is easy when you get everything.

MICHAEL

He has designer dress shirts.

PETER

Thank you.

Mr. Forrester reviews a cue card.

MR. FORRESTER

The St. Paul Award for Christian Leadership...Richard Harding.

Richard, ever-smiling, shakes Mr. Forrester's arm.

Loca rolls her eyes. Michael turns to Peter.

MICHAEL
Aren't you gonna go down?

PETER
It would look like I know.

LOCA
Take your ninety-six average and
get the fuck down there.

Peter smirks and goes to the door.

LOCA (CONT'D)
Hey now. You deserve this.

PETER
Freedom.

He raises his hand in a fist and leaves.

MR. FORRESTER
The St. Agatha Community Service
Bursary...Veronica Reynolds.

Peter enters onto the cafetorium floor as Veronica rushes to the stage. Domino mimes blowing her own brains out.

MR. FORRESTER
And the Sir John A. MacDonald
Scholarship. Awarded to the student
with the highest overall average in
all four years...

Peter sits in the front row, eyes on Michelle. Her smile back is shy. He ruffles his hair.

Peter notices Richard staring at him. Richard gives him a smile, apologetic.

MR. FORRESTER
...Richard Harding.

THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE.

Mr. Forrester shakes Richard's hand again. Michelle kisses him on the cheek. They both wave to the crowd, a golden couple, their hands clasped together.

Peter's face drains of colour. He rushes out.

STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

Peter hides under the stairs, the cheering from the cafetorium a distant echo.

LOCA
(over walkie)
Peter...

Peter takes off his walkie headset. He takes out his cell phone and dials. After a few rings...

HOWIE (O.S.)
Hey...

PETER
Still O.T. this weekend?

Silence - it's clear Howie knows. Peter wipes a few tears.

HOWIE (O.S.)
I'll sign you up. You know I'm
still...

PETER
Got to go. Love you.

He hangs up. Peter hits his head on the back of the stairwell. Again. One final time. Softly, the SOUNDS OF AN ACOUSTIC GUITAR, finger-picking...

MUSIC UP: A PRAYER FOR MATURITY

PETER'S LOCKER HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Peter opens his locker and pulls out a binder. On the door is a photocopy of his CAMBRIDGE ACCEPTANCE LETTER. Beside it, a photo of Michelle - Peter picks it up.

PETER
*If you want to run away. And if you
need a little space. Just take your
time, it'll all be fine 'cause I
will wait for you tonight. Tomorrow
is another day. Where everything
can go our way. So just believe and
give it time. And I will love you
all the while.*

Peter crumples and tosses both letter and photo into the nearby garbage.

THE FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Peter wanders into the empty foyer. It opens up to the second floor, a grand ST. PAUL STATUE in its centre.

PETER

*If you love me, love me. Please
don't kill me and leave my heart
for dead. I beg, hold me, baby.
Make me believe it'll all be right
in the end.*

STUDENTS flood out from the cafetorium in SLOW MOTION. Peter stops in front of the student council office. Through the windows, he can see Richard playing guitar in a comfy chair.

STUDENT COUNCIL OFFICE/WASHROOM - INTERCUT

Michelle practices smiling in the mirror. Richard strums his guitar, making notes in a BLACK NOTEBOOK. His watch beeps.

MICHELLE

Breath mint.

Richard pops something in his mouth. Through the window...

PETER

*And if you need to stay awhile. And
taste some other people's smiles.
That's alright, it'll all be fine.
If you love me all the while.*

Inside, Michelle applies make-up.

MICHELLE

My skin is falling apart.

PETER

*So please love me, love me. Please
don't kill me and leave my heart
for dead. Hold me, baby. Make me
believe it'll all be right in the
end.*

Michelle presents herself in the light.

RICHARD

Hideous.

Michelle crosses her arms. Richard puts the guitar down.

MICHELLE
Don't, there's wrinkles.

Richard cups her head as he continues the examination.

RICHARD
Where?

Michelle points to under an eye. Richard kisses it. She points to the other eye. Another kiss.

In the foyer, a horrified Peter takes this all in.

Now intimately close, Michelle and Richard kiss on the lips.

The BELL RINGS. Startled, Peter rushes away.

OFFICE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Peter stops to analyse a bulletin board where photos of TEACHERS and STUDENT COUNCIL form two pyramids. Michelle's photo hangs with Richard's at the top (CO-PRESIDENTS). Peter's is farther down (HEAD OF TECH CREW).

Peter kisses his fingers, touching them to Michelle's photo.

HALLWAYS - CONTINUOUS

Peter walking in SLOW MOTION.

PETER
*He won't love you or hold you the
way that I do. And his words will
be hollow while mine remain true.
If you do your best to be kind,
I'll be brave. If you do your best
to be mine, I can change. La la la
la-la la-la la la la-la la la la la
la-la la-la whoa oh whoa oh.*

Peter sees Michelle walking ahead. In REAL TIME, he navigates the CROWD to catch up with her.

PETER
Happy three year.

MICHELLE
We didn't quite make that.

PETER
Better luck with the next guy.

Michelle stops.

MICHELLE

I just need time.

Peter goes in to kiss her, but she moves her head, deflecting the kiss to her forehead. Peter notices the GOLD TIFFANY BRACELET on her wrist. He backs away slowly.

Michelle rubs her forehead clean then shuffles ahead. Peter wanders behind her.

PETER

*If you need a little grace. Take
your time and I will wait. Just
promise that it'll all be fine. And
that you will come back home some
time.*

END SONG

INT. RELIGION CLASS - LATER

Peter takes his seat beside Michael, who treats him like a live grenade. MRS. DOUKAS (32), a sensual form of wholesome, takes attendance at the front. Richard and Michelle breeze in and take their seats on the other side of the class.

PETER

(to Michael, re: Richard)
Ninety-five point something?

Michael bows his head.

PETER (CONT'D)

(loudly to Richard)
Congratulations.

Richard smiles benignly, Michelle takes it as a threat.

RICHARD

Thanks, neighbour.

PETER

(to Michael)
Ever notice that asshole always
looks stoned.

Mrs. Doukas writes "WORKS" and "GRACE" on the board.

MRS. DOUKAS

Congratulations Richard.

APPLAUSE with Peter taking his clapping to sarcastic lengths.

MRS. DOUKAS (CONT'D)
 Just a reminder of what hard work
 and...and what His grace can do.
 What is Grace?

Peter puts his hand up.

PETER
 God's gift of salvation.

MRS. DOUKAS
 Works? Richard.

RICHARD
 Our actions. But it's not how hard
 we work, only through God can we be
 saved.

Peter glares at Richard. He seems GOLDEN from the sun streaming through the windows. The pressed shirt, perfectly shaved features.

Domino plays with her dominos on Peter's other side.

DOMINO
 But we're born this way. In sin, in
 debt to God.

RICHARD
 That's not a good way to look at
 it, Dom. We're sinners. We need
 God.

Domino sets up her dominos with each point she makes.

DOMINO
 Hell. Through original sin. But
 Salvation. Through God. God through
 Jesus. Jesus through Church.
 Church...

Domino finishes the domino set up.

DOMINO (CONT'D)
 ...through this place.

Peter flicks the dominos. They topple, which irks Domino.

DOMINO (CONT'D)
 Control their salvation, you
 control people.

MRS. DOUKAS
Prompt, Dominique.

She writes the name on the corner of the board.

DOMINO
Domino. I don't recognize my slave
name.

Several STUDENTS laugh.

PETER
I'm not a fan of grace. People
should get what they deserve.

RICHARD
And who decides what everyone
deserves?

Peter rubs his fingers together: money.

PETER
Guess Mommy and Daddy do.

More STUDENTS erupt in laughter.

MRS. DOUKAS
Office!

Peter grabs his bag.

PETER
(to Richard)
Enjoy my scholarship.

MAIN OFFICE - LATER

Eyed by a distrustful RECEPTIONIST (60s), Peter waits in a
stuffy chair. Mac (back in his shirt) is beside him.

MAC
You part of the Resistance?

Peter raises his arm in a fist.

MAC (CONT'D)
You know, the scholarship. It's cuz
Richard's 'rents own everything,
right? Our school board, our
uniforms.

Mac pulls at the crest of his dress shirt in disgust.

PETER
 (sarcastic)
 ...our thoughts, our...

MAC
 Fuck you mainstreamer.

RECEPTIONIST
 Hey!

MAC
*Mademoiselle, je m'excuse. Où est
 la bibliothèque?*

FORRESTER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

...is minimalist and monk-like. Mr. Forrester types something before turning his gaze onto an anxious Peter, seated in front of his desk.

MR. FORRESTER
 Richard's an exceptional student.
 You are both exceptional students.

PETER
 I worked hard.

MR. FORRESTER
 And Richard does not?

Peter hangs his head. Mr. Forrester rummages in a drawer and drops some pamphlets on the table (FINANCIAL AID, LOANS).

MR. FORRESTER
 (smiles)
 Most universities make sure no one
 is left behind.
 (reflects)
 The Award of Distinction. That's
 the one I didn't get. Had to try
 even harder - but it taught me
 perseverance.

Peter smiles and takes the pamphlets.

MR. FORRESTER (CONT'D)
 We're all equals in God's eyes.

Peter nods.

MR. FORRESTER (CONT'D)
Lunch detention. And please
apologize to Richard.

PETER
Yes, sir.

MR. FORRESTER
And make sure there are no
'technical difficulties' for Arts
Night.

PETER
No sir.

CAFETORIUM - LATER

Lunchtime. Peter stands with an empty tray in front of a
seated Michael and Loca. ROWDY STUDENTS deposit trash on it.

LOCA
You have to apologize to him?

PETER
He won.

LOCA
How do you know who your papa is?
Your mama told you. Monkey knife
fight.

Michael cleans poutine off his sweater-vest.

MICHAEL
What's a monkey knife fight?

Loca mimes her hands being tied.

LOCA
Tie two monkeys together. Give them
knives. Cut or be cut.

Loca pulls out a CD labelled "GOD IS GREAT." Peter looks over
at the far table where Michelle, Veronica and Kramer sit with
fellow CRONIES.

PETER
No. No technical difficulties.

LOCA
But it's war. S-S-St-Stutter.

DOMINO (O.S.)
Class is warfare.

They look at Domino, holding a detention tray like Peter. She smiles at Loca.

DOMINO (CONT'D)
You have a loving aura.

Domino drifts off. Peter takes a deep breath and beelines for Michelle's table.

MICHELLE
Got to apologize to Richard?

PETER
Yeah. Where is he?

MICHELLE
Congrats again. On Cambridge.

PETER
Thanks.

KRAMER
How much is it? Cambridge.

Peter looks at Kramer's SWISS WATCH, before shrugging.

MICHELLE
You deferring a year now?

PETER
Probably.

KRAMER
Why?

Peter bites his lip to avoid snapping.

MICHELLE
Richard's tuition is also unreal.
He was worried he'd have to sell
his truck.

PETER
Does he pick you up from the
trailer park?

Veronica chokes on her poutine. Michelle smiles and calmly deposits her garbage on Peter's tray.

PETER (CONT'D)
Where's your boyfriend?

MICHELLE
Errands. Or catwalk. Sometimes he
eats his lunch there.

Peter backs up and looks up at the cafetorium catwalk. He sees a FIGURE IN UNIFORM leaning over the edge.

Then...Richard breezes into the cafetorium.

Peter looks back to the catwalk. No one is there. Richard passes Mr. Siemens who is on guard by the stage.

MR. SIEMENS
Uniform, Richard.

Richard tucks in his shirt, flashing a grin.

RICHARD
Keeping me on my toes, Mr. S.

Mr. Siemens laughs. Peter looks up at the empty catwalk and shakes his head. He heads over to Richard, hiding the garbage tray behind his back.

PETER
Just saw your doppelgänger.

RICHARD
So I'm going to die?
(off Peter)
Isn't that what happens?

PETER
I think you would have to be the
one to see it. Um, sorry about
earlier. And congratulations.

RICHARD
Thanks man. Take by the technical
difficulties, you know 'bout me and
Michelle? Know it's tough. But for
us - these last three months...

PETER
We broke up a month ago.

RICHARD
Right.

His watch beeps.

RICHARD
Breath mint?

He pops something into this mouth.

PETER
Well, if she's happy...

RICHARD
Exactly.

He pats Peter on the shoulder and walks off.

The JACKED RUGBY PLAYER hits Peter's tray, knocking the garbage to the floor.

JACKED RUGBY PLAYER
Hardcore!

Peter kneels down to gather it up. In the distance, through the mesh of many STUDENT FEET, he notices Richard's shiny designer shoes. Peter looks down to his own dirty, steel toed boots. He ties his undone shoelace.

An ENVELOPE addressed to "FOREMAN" is held in front of his face. It's Kramer.

KRAMER
Just figured, you know.

Peter takes it. Kramer smirks and saunters off. Crumpling the envelope, Peter storms off with his tray. Passing Richard...

RICHARD
No more tech difficulties,
neighbour.

The CRONY table laughs. Peter nods politely, then stops in front of Loca and Michael.

MICHAEL
How'd it go?

PETER
Monkey knife fight.

INT. ST. PAUL HIGH SCHOOL, CAFETORIUM - NIGHT

Peter, now adorned in black tech garb, is a pariah amongst the mingling gathering of well-dressed PARENTS, STUDENTS and TEACHERS. He navigates the crowd.

A PARENT hands him empty plastic drink cups. Peter disdainfully tosses them in the garbage.

PROJECTION BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Michael is a ball of anxiety, fidgeting with his sweater-vest. Loca has the "GOD IS GREAT" CD in her hands. She drops it on the floor and starts stomping on it.

LOCA

Oops. Oh my. Oops. Dearie me.

Peter enters and replaces the "5" on the "TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES" board with a "0." Loca points down to the cafeteria floor at MR. HARDING (45), a fashionista.

PETER

That's his Dad? Where's Mommy?

LOCA

Probably carving the flesh from a baby.

Michael nervous-laughs. A cackle from Peter's walkie...

MICHELLE (O.S.)

Where's Richard?

PETER

(into walkie)
He just needs time.

BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Michelle peeks out from behind the curtain at the full crowd. She waves at Mr. Harding, who ignores her.

MICHELLE

(into walkie)
We go on in ten minutes!

MUSIC ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Peter enters the dark room. In the centre, Richard, back-turned, strums chords on a guitar, a latte at his feet.

PETER

You're on in five.

He crosses the room, moving chairs to get to music stands. Richard continues strumming.

PETER (CONT'D)
You're just pretending, dude.

RICHARD
(defensive)
I write my own stuff.

Richard plays a G-chord. Peter sighs.

PETER
Use your ring finger. B - third
fret. Easier to transition.

Peter takes Richard's guitar and puts on a clinic.

RICHARD
Didn't know you played.

PETER
All it is, just four chords. G, D,
C, E-minor. Or F, C, G, A-minor. Or
whatever.

RICHARD
Makes it lose its magic. Once you
know how it all works.

The door swings open. MRS. HARDING (47), a shark in Chanel, scans Peter and Richard.

MRS. HARDING
(to Peter)
Out.

Peter hands the guitar back to Richard before retreating to the door.

As he goes to cross the threshold, Mrs. Harding holds out her empty latte cup. Peter takes it.

HALLWAY OUTSIDE MUSIC ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Peter drops Mrs. Harding's empty cup into the garbage. He puts his ear against the music room door.

MRS. HARDING (O.S.)
You left them at home.

RICHARD (O.S.)
I'm good.

MRS. HARDING (O.S.)
No, you're not good. Take it.

Silence. A SLAP RINGS OUT.

RICHARD (O.S.)
(meek)
I'm good...

MRS. HARDING (O.S.)
You will not embarrass me.

Silence.

The door opens. Peter busies himself with the garbage bag.

Richard follows Mrs. Harding out with his guitar, taking a final sip from his latte.

MRS. HARDING
Give it to the boy.

Richard hands the empty latte cup to Peter. Their eyes meet - Richard's brim with an incredible sadness.

Richard follows Mrs. Harding down the hall. Peter opens the latte lid. Two pills are at the bottom of the cup, spat out.

PETER
(into walkie)
Loca. Ixnay tech difficulties.
Ixnay!

BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Michelle watches DRAMA STUDENTS on the stage put on a scene from TWELFTH NIGHT (the MALVOLIO really hams it up). Richard appears and Peter connects Richard's guitar to an amp.

MICHELLE
Can you leave us?

Peter nudges between them to check levels on Richard's guitar. Michelle turns.

RICHARD
(to Michelle)
Don't go.

Michelle ignores him and walks out.

MICHELLE (O.S.)
 What performances! Next, I am
 thrilled to present, singing "God
 is Great," Saint Paul's own,
 Richard Harding!

Peter grabs his walkie.

PETER
 Loca. Ixnay. Ixnay!

PROJECTION BOOTH - CONTINUOUS - INTERCUT

Loca and Michael are making out, their walkie headsets off.

MICHAEL
 Ah...we got cues.

Loca grabs one last kiss.

LOCA
 Lame-o.

Richard is centre-stage. Peter rushes towards him.

The curtains part revealing Peter with Richard - LAUGHTER
 from the audience. Peter shuffles to the backstage area.

PETER
 (into walkie)
 Ixnay monkey knife fight. Ixnay
 monkey knife fight!

Loca and Michael are putting back on their headsets.
 Michael's gets caught in his sweater-vest. Loca cues the "GOD
 IS GREAT" CD.

LOCA
 Fall Golden boy, fall.

She presses PLAY.

Richard strums muted strings. Backstage, Peter kicks the
 guitar amp (clearly off).

RICHARD/CD
*God is Great. God is King. God is
 Everything...*

Loca starts jabbing the PLAY/PAUSE button, creating a stutter effect.

CD

G...Go...God...is...Gr...eat...

Richard tries to maintain the illusion to no avail. In the audience, the Jacked Rugby Player jumps to her feet.

JACKED RUGBY PLAYER

You suck!

Mr. Siemens struggles to get at her as LAUGHTER rings out.

Peter signals desperately at the projection booth from the ground floor. He catches Mr. Forrester in the crowd looking for him and promptly takes a seat.

Richard stares at the crowd, then turns his defiant gaze onto Mrs. Harding. He flips the guitar amp on. He starts to strum - this time it's all him.

MUSIC UP: UNTITLED

RICHARD

To live is to die. To die is redemption, 'cause all of our lives are dictated from birth. And I don't know why, but I'll never love anything more.

Confused PARENTS look through their programs. Michelle is frozen, peeking out from behind the curtains.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

To dream is to fail. To fail is just part of the air we exhale and the moments we lose. If God does exist, then she left us a long time ago. And you tell us you know best, that you have our interests and everything is just as it seems. And you claim that there's Jesus who loves us and needs us, but only if we make believe. 'Cause all that we have is one shining moment. All that we have is one moment alive. 'Cause all that I have is one shining moment. And my moment is gone. My moment is gone.

Peter's walkie cackles.

MICHAEL
We let this go on?

PETER
(stunned)
...yeah.

RICHARD
To love is to lose, to lose is another way we can excuse all the pain that we've caused. And all I can do is offer my final goodbye. Just a little bit of love, just a little bit of grace, just a little bit of everything that you cannot erase. Just a little bit of lies, just a little bit of hate, just a little bit of smothering to make it go away. Just a little bit of pain, just a little bit of rage, just a little bit of truth and blasphemy.

Richard chucks his pill bottle into the crowd, they cascade like little specks into the audience.

RICHARD
'Cause all that we have is one shining moment. All that we have is one moment alive. 'Cause all that I have is one shining moment. And my moment is gone. My moment is gone. Even flowers wake up in the morning. Even flowers wake up in the morning. Even flowers wake up in the morning. Even flowers wake up...even if you do not. And I know I will not. And I know I will not ever wake up again.

END SONG

Heavy silence hangs in the cafetorium. Mrs and Mr. Harding look to be considering an honour killing.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Initiate Operation Untitled.

Richard drops the guitar onto the stage and storms off. Peter sees Michelle take a step to follow Richard. Instead, she goes to the podium.

MICHELLE
Pardon the technical difficulties.

EXT. DUMPSTERS - NIGHT

Peter throws a garbage bag into the dumpsters. On his way back to the school, he stops and turns around.

Domino is smoking a joint nearby, watching him.

DOMINO
Beware the Ides of March.

INT. ST. PAUL HIGH SCHOOL, CAFETORIUM, CATWALK - LATER

Richard stares out at the empty, dark cafetorium floor far below. He dials a number on his cell phone. It rings.

MICHELLE (O.S.)
Hey, you've reached...

Richard ends the call. Looks down to his BLACK NOTEBOOK, filled with frantic handwriting.

Peter comes in through the doorway. He looks over the edge and WHISTLES.

PETER
Hey man, sorry about...

RICHARD
Why don't you like me? Everyone likes me.

PETER
That's probably why. Hey man, I don't think we can be up here.

Richard kicks off one of his shoes. It falls - light THUD.

PETER (CONT'D)
Dude, those are pretty nice...

Richard kicks off the other one.

PETER (CONT'D)
...shoes.

RICHARD
From Europe.

PETER
Right. We should go.

RICHARD

Mom and Dad made a call. That's what happens. You just make a call. And you tell everyone, work hard, believe. Divine right of kings.

Peter's confused.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

What's your average?

PETER

Ninety-six.

RICHARD

Mine's ninety-five point seven.
(off Peter's shock)
My mom always said you could hire one half of the poor to kill...

Peter punches Richard, knocking him down.

PETER

Fucking rich kids. I work night shifts! In an hour, I go to work! So I'm sorry you're having a bad day, but the rest of us have real problems. So fuck yourself. Or jump. I don't care.

Peter storms off leaving Richard panting. The pants turn to sobs and Peter stops, guilty.

PETER

I....

Richard has begun to undress.

PETER (CONT'D)

Whoa, man...

RICHARD

(re: uniform)
Child labour. They claim they don't know but sometimes I read Mom's e-mail. I can't get clean. It's like everything they give you takes away something. Until you're...

Soon Richard is naked. He steps over the railing and leans out, holding the BLACK NOTEBOOK. Peter creeps forward.

PETER
Hey man...don't...

RICHARD
You don't think this is real do
you? That maybe it's all a dream.

He lets go and leans into the emptiness. Peter grabs him and pulls him back. Richard grips Peter and starts pulling him over with him.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
I am Jesus. I am immortal. I am a
God.

Peter breaks Richard's hold. Richard falls below.

A SICKENING THUD. Peter gags then bolts through the exit.

CAFETORIUM - MOMENTS LATER

Peter runs into the dark room, turning on the lights. CLICK. A distant hum, the lights come on in rows and Richard's bloody body is revealed. Peter runs to it and checks for a pulse. Nothing.

Peter looks at the blood on his hand. He backs up and trips over the BLACK NOTEBOOK.

He opens it. On the last page, there is a single scrawl:
"96."

PETER'S LOCKER HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Peter bolts down the hall.

He considers Richard's notebook in his hands then tosses it in a garbage can.

Peter stops and fishes it out. He looks around then throws the notebook in his locker.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Peter bursts out of the school and runs GASPING across the field. He trips and falls.

A nearby garbage can lights on fire. Peter stares into the flame. The Burning Can CACKLES. The flames spread to a bush.

Peter runs into the darkness away from the light.

DARKNESS. A CLICK.

INT. ST. PAUL HIGH SCHOOL, CAFETORIUM - NIGHT

Lights come on in rows with loud HUMS.

Peter (uniform) walks forward as the walls of darkness disappear with each new row of lights. Michelle is on stage at the podium.

MICHELLE

On the road to Damascus, Saul of
Tarsus had a vision.

Peter's foot hits A ROW OF DOMINOS. They tumble in a wave ending at Richard's sprawled, broken, bloody body. Peter bends down and closes Richard's eyes.

PETER

(sings)

*I will follow you. Will you follow
me? Because I'm scared that so much
is left undone.*

Peter breaks into sobs. He lies his head on Richard's chest.

PETER (CONT'D)

I didn't mean to let you die.

A HAND touches his shoulder. Peter jumps up to face ANOTHER RICHARD in full uniform.

This Richard runs two fingers through the blood and wipes it on the palm of Peter's hand. In Peter's other hand, he places his BLACK NOTEBOOK.

MICHELLE

Christ is the Truth, the Way and
the Life. Outside of him there is
no salvation.

Richard pulls Peter close. A whisper...

RICHARD

In the beginning there was the
Word.

When Peter leans back, it's Mrs. Harding holding him. Her hands close around his neck.

FORRESTER'S OFFICE - DAY

Peter jolts awake, excessively sweating.

He looks around the office, particularly a portrait of Richard over Mr. Forrester's desk. Draped in black, it has a news clipping stuck to it: "ALWAYS IN OUR HEARTS."

STUDENT COUNCIL WASHROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

Michelle sobs and hyperventilates. She composes herself and checks her cheeks for tear stains. She adjusts the GOLD TIFFANY BRACELET and looks into the mirror...

MICHELLE

The people will love you.

FORRESTER'S OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS

The SCRAPE of METAL ON CERAMIC. Mr. Forrester stands in the doorway, stirring his coffee cup.

MR. FORRESTER

She would like to see you.

Peter rubs his ears and wipes the sweat off his brow.

MAIN OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Peter passes Michelle as he follows Mr. Forrester. They eyeball each other suspiciously.

CHAPEL - CONTINUOUS

Peter and Mr. Forrester enter the small, dimly-lit chapel. At the far end, kneeling, is Mrs. Harding. She crosses herself and walks towards Peter.

PETER

I'm so sorry...

Mrs. Harding embraces him.

MRS. HARDING

It's good to know he wasn't alone.

She lays a maternal hand on Peter's cheek. Peter gulps. From her satchel, Mrs. Harding pulls out a sheet of paper.

MRS. HARDING
This will have to be notarized.

Peter nods, then swigs some ibuprofen.

MRS. HARDING (CONT'D)
And you're one hundred percent sure
Richard meant to fall?

PETER
Yes.

MRS. HARDING
You have no doubt.

Peter clues in.

MR. FORRESTER
It's just...

MRS. HARDING
We're requesting discretion.

PETER
Are you asking me to lie?

MRS. HARDING
Now lying on a notarized document
is quite serious.

MR. FORRESTER
It's a difficult time. We want to
accommodate.

He SLURPS his coffee. Peter winces. The AIR CONDITIONER is a throbbing, mind-stabbing hum.

PETER
Accommodate...

MR. FORRESTER
Exactly.

PETER
Like when he got the scholarship.

Mrs. Harding turns to Mr. Forrester.

MRS. HARDING
They are singing it again. In the
halls.

Mr. Forrester nods and leaves. Mrs. Harding takes a seat and pats the one next to her. Peter joins her.

MRS. HARDING (CONT'D)
 (off Peter's confusion)
 Richard's song. It made quite an impression.

She snuffles. Peter pulls out a wrinkled Kleenex and offers it. Mrs. Harding takes it, but doesn't use it.

MRS. HARDING (CONT'D)
 What do you remember best about him?

PETER
 He called everyone 'neighbour.'

MRS. HARDING
 My boy was very sick.

Mrs. Harding looks up at the large crucifix of a TORTURED JESUS by the altar. Peter looks too.

MRS. HARDING (CONT'D)
 How do we make sure people remember him for all he meant to Saint Paul's?

PETER
 I think you need to let people remember what they remember.

MRS. HARDING
 How do we make people remember what we want them to remember?

Peter balks.

MRS. HARDING (CONT'D)
 I will protect my son. And this school. He fell.

PETER
 (weak)
 He fell.

Mrs. Harding smiles.

MRS. HARDING
 And at the end of the year, we reissued his scholarships to a special student...

Peter perks up.

MRS. HARDING (CONT'D)
...just like our Richard.

Mrs. Harding gives him a warm smile and hands over the sheet of paper: it's Peter's STATEMENT marked up with red correction marks.

PETER
Change the song.

MRS. HARDING
Sorry?

PETER
Change the song. Get the students singing something else.

Mrs. Harding considers this and places a hand on Peter's.

MRS. HARDING
Mr. Harding and I would be very grateful.

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK. Michelle can be seen through the glass doors. Mrs. Harding grimaces but opens the door.

MICHELLE
Mrs. Harding...I...

MRS. HARDING
Thanks Michelle. But I think we're fine.

She looks to Peter. He nods. She hands him a business card.

MRS. HARDING (CONT'D)
My e-mail.

She walks out. Michelle looks at Peter then runs after Mrs. Harding. Peter considers his marked-up STATEMENT.

PETER'S LOCKER HALLWAY - DAYS LATER

Peter rummages for textbooks in his locker.

Richard's BLACK NOTEBOOK pokes out at the bottom. He puts other books on top, then pushes it farther to the back, hiding it from view.

Peter looks at the palm of his hand. There is a streak of BLOOD. He blinks. It is gone.

BOY'S WASHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Peter washes his hands compulsively in the sink, then brings them up to the light. They're clean. Peter washes them again.

Kramer saunters in and sees Peter distraught. He places a hand on Peter's shoulder.

KRAMER

I miss him too.

Peter offers a weak smile.

HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Peter steps out into the hallway. Michelle breezes up to him.

MICHELLE

I want in.

Annoyed, Peter walks away, Michelle following him into...

THE FOYER - CONTINUOUS

There's a small table set up with flowers and a picture of Richard. STUDENTS line up to write condolences in a giant book.

MICHELLE

I'm the sole student council president. I'm singing it.

Peter turns to face her.

PETER

I'm singing it you...B...

MICHELLE

Say it.

Peter falters.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

You never had any balls.

PETER

You never had any heart.

A SCUFFLE. Mac grabs Richard's photo and climbs onto the back of the Saint Paul statue.

MAC

The Truth will set you free!

He holds out the Richard photo and lets go. The GLASS SHATTERS.

STUDENTS clap. Mr. Siemens runs up with a SECURITY GUARD. Mac lets himself be led away while several of the students BOO.

MAC (CONT'D)

Viva la Resistance!

Michelle notices Mr. Forrester watching her by the main office entrance. She gulps.

CAFETORIUM, BACKSTAGE - THE NEXT DAY

Peter adjusts a microphone on Michelle's belt then shoves a wireless mic at her.

MICHELLE

Hey!

PETER

It's my song.

MICHELLE

Well, all your songs sound the same. Don't think I don't know what you get out of this.

They size each other up. Michelle brushes some lint off his shoulder.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

You like me feisty.

Peter shifts a piece of Michelle's hair back behind her ear. Tender.

STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The curtains pull back revealing them mid-moment to the assembled STUDENTS. Peter slinks off-stage.

Michelle stares into the BRIGHT SPOTLIGHTS. She puts a black ribbon on the breast of her uniform and walks forward.

CAFETORIUM FLOOR - CONTINUOUS - INTERCUT

Mr. Forrester and Mrs. Harding scrutinize her from the audience. A large photo of Richard appears behind Michelle on the projector.

MICHELLE

In the accident that took his life,
we can find peace in the knowledge
that Richard is finally with our
loving Creator.

MURMURS in the crowd. TEACHERS eye the MURMURING STUDENTS suspiciously. Michelle turns to Peter.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

In memory. A song by our very own,
Peter Charles.

Michelle nods at Peter. He takes a guitar and starts to pluck a melody.

MUSIC UP: GOD = LOVE

MICHELLE

*Growing up death was always just a
shadow. Something off, under the
bed. In times like these, it's hard
to see a plan for us.*

Michelle and Peter regard each other. The projector starts flashing a photo montage of Richard.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

(gaining strength)
*But God is good. God is kind. God
is love. God is light. And as the
day turns to night, God is there.
God is life.*

STUDENTS look to each other. Some are getting into it.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

*Sometimes all God needs is another
angel. We can find peace that
Richard's with Him, our loving
Creator, King of Kings, that light
in the darkness who'll save all
things. He is the only way.*

The SCHOOL CHOIR assembles in front of the stage, providing aural harmonies. APPLAUSE.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

(belting it)

*'Cause God is love. God is change.
God is joy. God is fate. And as the
night turns to day. God is there.
God is grace.*

Michelle takes a yellow, red-tinged flower and places it with other flowers around a tiny Richard shrine on stage.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

(leading crowd)

*Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna, hosanna!
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna!*

The choir CLAPS THE BEAT. STUDENTS join in, finally won over.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

*God is grace. God is life. God is
change. God is light. And as our
time fades away. God is there. God
is might. God is joy. God is
beauty. God is fate. God is every
little thing, inside us all,
always.*

The majority of STUDENTS give it a standing ovation. Mac spits on the ground. Michelle holds up her black ribbon.

MICHELLE

In memory of our Richard. The
proceeds go towards catwalk safety.

She turns to Peter. He raises his hand in a blessing.

PETER

Always in our hearts.

STUDENTS

Always in our hearts.

Michelle and Peter look to Mrs. Harding. She smiles.

STAGE - LATER

STUDENTS file out of the cafetorium. Peter wrangles a cable, eyeing Mrs. Harding who is talking with Kramer. Michael and Loca walk over, also wrangling cables.

LOCA

Three shots, book depository. You
drinking this Kool-Aid?

Peter looks around for any eavesdroppers.

PETER
 For two months, yeah.
 (off Loca's lip-biting)
 Use your words.

LOCA
 You're jumping through hoops so
 they give you something they took
 from you in the first place.

But Peter's too busy watching Mrs. Harding smiling at Kramer.

LOCA (CONT'D)
 Two students got suspended for
 singing Richard's song.

PETER
 Start a protest then.

MICHAEL
 Watch it, dude.

PETER
 Nice sweater-vest.

INT. WAREHOUSE, STACK LEVEL 301 - NIGHT

Peter, sweating profusely, loads items into his cart. He looks up.

Richard, naked, stands at the end of the corridor. Blood runs down the contours of his face and body *a la Christ crown of thorns*.

Peter looks away then looks back. Richard is gone. Peter is terrified.

INT. ST. PAUL HIGH SCHOOL, PETER'S LOCKER HALLWAY - DAY

The buzz of BUSY CLASSROOMS in the background. Peter scans the empty hallway and takes Richard's notebook from his locker.

EXT. DUMPSTERS - MOMENTS LATER

Peter checks his surroundings, then tosses the notebook into a large dumpster.

The notebook flies back out and hits Peter in the head. He backs away from it.

Domino pops her head up from the dumpster and takes a drag on her joint. Peter notices DOMINOS dangling from her bag.

DOMINO
That his?

PETER
No...whose?

Domino narrows her eyes. Peter grabs the notebook and rushes off.

INT. ST. PAUL HIGH SCHOOL, HALLWAYS - MOMENTS LATER

The halls are alive with STUDENTS en route to class. Peter navigates them with Richard's notebook clutched to his chest.

The sea of students part to reveal RICHARD, naked, at the far end of the hall. Peter freezes.

Domino appears beside Peter. She looks from him to the end of the hallway: no Richard.

PETER
I'm not crazy.

Domino clues in.

DOMINO
'course you are.

CHAPEL - MOMENTS LATER

Domino leads Peter in and locks the door. She drags him to the altar.

UNDERNEATH THE ALTAR - CONTINUOUS

Clearly this area is one of Domino's havens. Domino peruses Richard's book while Peter hyperventilates.

DOMINO
(reads)
"Making love to Michelle is..."

Peter grabs at the notebook, but Domino flips the pages.

DOMINO (CONT'D)

"In the beginning was the Word. Or at least a note. It came in a dream. Our temple, held up by pillars both uniform and punctual..."

(more flipping)

Guitar tabs. To do lists. Sketches of naked people. Tasteful.

Peter succeeds in grabbing the notebook from Domino. He peruses.

DOMINO (CONT'D)

Maybe this is a divine revelation. We could have ritual sex. Just as an offering.

Peter rubs his eyes.

PETER

I don't sleep much.

DOMINO

Maybe he wants you to do something.

PETER

Like what?

DOMINO

Fuck if I know. But he off-ed himself.

(off Peter)

The whole school knows. Or suspects. Though this little happy dance of yours is doing a nice job.

She shows him the black ribbon on her collar.

DOMINO (CONT'D)

Gotta blend in. They snipe those who don't. Where's yours?

Peter looks at his empty collar.

DOMINO (CONT'D)

Eyes are on you. People know you know something. Rich-dude had everything. If he couldn't handle it, what does it say for the rest of us?

PETER

I'm good.

DOMINO

Really? They give you the scholarship yet?

Peter considers, doubt sinking in.

PETER

What do you want?

DOMINO

To kill God and have abortions.
(serious)
You know this place has to burn.

Saved by the school BELL.

PETER

Well, thank you. Dominique, is it?

DOMINO

Domino.

PETER

What's the difference?

DOMINO

One's a slave name. One I chose for myself.

PETER

(mocking)
Cool. *Viva la Resistance!*

Peter tosses her the notebook and leaves.

THE FOYER - LATER

Peter buys a black ribbon from a table set up for the CATWALK FUND. He turns to find Mac blocking his way.

PETER

Aren't you expelled yet?

Peter passes by him, but Mac grabs his arm.

MAC

He mean to do it?

Peter sees Mr. Siemens in the distance.

PETER
It was an accident!

MR. SIEMENS
Get to class!

Peter wiggles free and makes sure his shirt is tucked in.

PETER
Thank you, sir.

Peter continues walking, Mac in pursuit.

MAC
(sings)
*To live is to die. To die is
redemption...*

PASSING STUDENTS start paying attention.

MR. SIEMENS
Hey!

Peter rushes down the hall as Mr. Siemens corners Mac.

LIBRARY - NIGHT

Tables have been set up in a large square. TEACHERS, SUAVE BOARD MEMBERS, Mr. Forrester, Mr. and Mrs. Harding all socialize with juice in plastic glasses.

BOY'S WASHROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

Peter uses water to straighten his hair, while Michael irons a swanky dress shirt on an impromptu ironing board. Michael and Loca sport black tech garb.

LOCA
They'll eat you alive.

PETER
(exasperated)
This is how you play the game.

LOCA
By crashing school board meetings?
Besides, it's not a game...

MICHAEL
...it's people's lives dude.

Loca is impressed.

LOCA
Word.

Jacked Rugby Player (uniform) enters, hitting up the stall.

JACKED RUGBY PLAYER
(to Loca)
Dude's washroom!

LOCA
Imma feminist.

JACKED RUGBY PLAYER
(bemused)
Oh. Respect.

Jacked Rugby Player and Loca exchange a fist-pump (with explosion). Michael helps Peter put on the dress shirt.

LOCA
You look like a poor kid trying to
look like Richard.

PETER
Good. They owe me.

LOCA
Or own you.

Peter ignores her and leaves.

LIBRARY - MOMENTS LATER

Michelle plays with her plastic cup of golden liquid. Peter appears at her side.

PETER
That booze?

MICHELLE
No.

She reveals a flask in her bag. Peter touches her GOLD BRACELET, but Michelle slaps his hand away. Peter looks around.

PETER
How does this work?

MICHELLE

Most important people in the
centre.

They look - Mr. and Mrs. Harding have their swarms of FANS.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

And you get them to like you...

Peter sees Kramer at the far end of the library with an ANCIENT LOOKING MAN. He chugs Michelle's non-alcoholic cup then grabs her hand, beelining.

PETER

(as way of 'hello')
William Kramer.

Peter shakes Kramer's hand. The ANCIENT LOOKING MAN is MR. RAYMOND (92); they named the *old boys' club* after him.

PETER (CONT'D)

Sir.

He shakes Mr. Raymond's hand.

MR. RAYMOND

(to Peter)
You look familiar.

PETER

I work night shifts at your
factory.

MR. RAYMOND

Howard's boy! When do you sleep?

PETER

Sleep when you're dead.

Bad choice of words, but Peter smiles earnestly. Mr. Raymond nods politely.

MR. RAYMOND

Right, right.

Mr. Raymond approaches Mrs. Harding. Peter grabs Michelle's arm and they move closer.

MR. RAYMOND (CONT'D)

Sandra.

He kisses Mrs. Harding on both cheeks then embraces her.

MR. RAYMOND (CONT'D)
Words fail.

MRS. HARDING
Thank you.

MR. RAYMOND
You remember my great grandson?

Kramer shakes Mrs. Harding's hand. Peter scrutinizes this.

MR. RAYMOND (CONT'D)
(to Michelle)
How much for the catwalk fund, my dear?

MICHELLE
Fifteen hundred.

Mrs. Harding sips her drink with disdain.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
The campaign's really ramping up.

MR. RAYMOND
Richard's spot as co-president is still vacant.

He puts a hand on Kramer's shoulder. Peter looks desperate.

PETER
It would give the students something positive to focus on.

Mrs. Harding is surprised to see him, but hides it well.

MRS. HARDING
Would you run?

PETER
I have some ideas.

Mrs. Harding smiles. She toasts Peter and Kramer and mingles along. Michelle pulls Peter aside.

MICHELLE
There's two months left. W-T-capital F?

PETER
It's my scholarship.

MICHELLE

And they'll give it to you if you win student council?

PETER

They're giving it to a student 'like her Richard.'

Peter taps his nose, knowingly.

MICHELLE

Well, you're not getting everything Richard had.

PETER

'Course. I don't have money.

MICHELLE

I didn't break up with you for that. I broke up with you because you became an asshole.

Mrs. Harding is nearby, looking around with an empty cup in her hand. Michelle pops over.

MRS. HARDING

The garbage...

MICHELLE

I got it.

She grabs the empty cup. Then passes it to an incredulous Peter. It's an awkward exchange, mitigated only when Peter leaves Mrs. Harding and Michelle in search of a garbage can.

MRS. HARDING

You're spamming my e-mail.

MICHELLE

I can help. I'm smart. And driven.

MRS. HARDING

And really nice. But if you want respect, Michelle, you have to be prepared to be a real...

(leans in, whispers)

...B-word.

MICHELLE

I am a Bitch.

MRS. HARDING

You at least have the face for it.

Mrs. Harding considers, then looks over at Kramer.

MRS. HARDING (CONT'D)
 You two would work well together.
 It would mean a lot to his family.

Michelle nods. Peter comes back.

MRS. HARDING (CONT'D)
 (to Peter)
 Thank you so much, Peter. For
 everything. If you need anything...

She hands him a business card.

PETER
 I got one...

But she's already patted Michelle on the shoulder and left.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Peter wanders in the darkness, exhaling the wispy-cool air.
 He sees a spark in the distance and wanders over to discover
 Domino smoking over a garbage can.

PETER
 Fire hazard.

DOMINO
 Blow me.

She shoves Richard's BLACK NOTEBOOK into his chest.

PETER
 Why you giving this to me?

DOMINO
 Either you or the Resistance.
 Besides, he gave it to you. He was
 a crystal child. He saw things.

PETER
 Cool.

He tosses the BLACK NOTEBOOK into the garbage can.

Domino picks it up and hands it back. Peter drops it again.
 Domino picks it up and hands it back. Then knees him in the
 groin. Peter drops to the ground.

DOMINO
(as she leaves)
Don't fuck with fate, bitch.

Peter lies in the turtle position staring up at the light-polluted sky.

Michelle appears and sits beside him, chugging from her flask. Peter takes it and sips, but coughs it out.

PETER
It's like they can smell it on us.
The trailer park.

Michelle nods.

MICHELLE
They think I'm nice. I'm not nice.

PETER
No, you're not.

MICHELLE
My mother's nice. Your father's
nice. Fuck nice.

PETER
Fuck nice.

Michelle takes the flask back and samples it.

MICHELLE
Don't run. They want Kramer
elected.

PETER
Thank you for your advice.

Michelle is clearly on the verge of saying something, then...

MICHELLE
Why Cambridge?

PETER
People have heard of it. And it's
not here.

MICHELLE
(joke)
Take me with you.

PETER
I would have. But you're...

MICHELLE

...Bitch-face.

PETER

...with him. Was with him. Have you...seen him. Richard?

MICHELLE

All the time.

Peter's turn to be on the verge of saying something. But he looks at his watch.

PETER

Work. Later you.

He walks off into the darkness leaving Michelle with her flask. A bass-heavy beat amps up.

MUSIC UP: BITCH COLLAR

MICHELLE

If you give a dog a bad name - it's gonna fucking bite. If you look at me the wrong way - I'm gonna eat you alive.

I/E. SMALL CITY STREETS, MICHELLE'S CAR - NIGHT

Michelle raps to a sick beat as she drives.

MICHELLE

*I had a soul but I sold it twice,
once for the money, two for the
life that I wanted, that I needed
just to survive this crazy ass
world. They pulverize all the nice
little boys who follow rules and
the cute lil' girls who go to
school with their skirts just a
finger above the knee - 'cause
that's the most important thing. If
they see the temple, they'll demand
admission and a girl's got only so
much resistance 'fore biology,
fucking dirty thing, renders us
lil' breeders just on the brink.
Popping them out like pills, screw
the cap on, but not too tight. I
ain't childproof, and this ain't
right. At any fucking moment, my
body could turn against me.*

(MORE)

MICHELLE (cont'd)

It ain't pro-life when you're just pro-birth and I love my mother, but I ain't her. So I'm not gonna to waste my days caring for another Bitch-face.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - CONTINUOUS

Michelle pulls up into the driveway of her tiny trailer. OLD MEN in wife-beaters swig beer on nearby porches, some KIDS play road hockey while Howie (work clothes) gets into his car next door.

HOWIE

Hey Michelle. Peter with you?

MICHELLE

Took the bus. Don't work too hard.

HOWIE

Never do.

Michelle walks to her door.

MICHELLE

If you give a dog a bad name - it's gonna fucking bite. If you look at me the wrong way - I'm gonna eat you alive, alive, alive, alive!

INT. MICHELLE'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Tiny, yet cosy - a combo living room/kitchen. Michelle's mother MS. LEMAY (37) is buried in paperwork at the kitchen table.

MS. LEMAY

Your turn.

Michelle rolls her eyes; starts pulling out food, pots and pans.

MICHELLE

I hear the name. I'll wear it proud. If I'm a bitch, it gonna be my crown and there won't be any dainty Prince putting it on my head. No, dainty Princes all wind up dead. Sweet boys can't grow beards to make 'em men.

(MORE)

MICHELLE (cont'd)

*When they have to grow, they jump
instead, leaving behind empty
trinkets and sweet whispers on your
pillow.*

Michelle cooks up an efficient storm: washes and chops vegetables, boils rice, cuts fat off chicken and assembles a sweet little stir-fry.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

*I'll burn my pillow, rip it to
shreds. Nothing's good if it winds
up dead. Need life, Need blood,
something beating, need
invigoration to placate feeding.
Life is my whore - I'll bleed him
dry 'fore it's corrupted by just
another guy who promises to be my
rock. Before he can't grow a beard
and like a stone, just drops...*

Michelle puts the stir-fry onto two plates, then starts dishing the rest into several lunch containers.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

*If you give a dog a bad name - it's
gonna fucking bite. If you look at
me the wrong way - I'm gonna eat
you alive, alive, alive, alive.*

Michelle puts the lunch containers in the fridge then joins Ms. Lemay for dinner.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Lunch 'til Thursday.

She starts to scoff down the food.

MS. LEMAY

Hey!

Ms. Lemay folds her hands in prayer. Michelle stops eating and follows along. After grace, they start eating.

MS. LEMAY (CONT'D)

Found more butts in the garden.
Putting in a complaint about
Harold's boys.

MICHELLE

Good call.

MICHELLE'S ROOM - LATER

Tiny, vivid pink walls and a lot of stuffed animals. Michelle pours over homework.

MICHELLE

*So if tomorrow ever comes, know
that I warned you and the box you
opened is on you alone. And the
furies will be unleashed.*

EXT. TRAILER PARK - LATER

Michelle smokes a cigarette and swigs from her flask on the back porch, staring up at the light-polluted sky.

MICHELLE

*There will be no mercy, only a
smile as I watch the last one to
see my true self fade away leaving
me standing as a true Bitch...face.
If you give a dog a bad name - it's
gonna fucking bite. If you look at
me the wrong way - I'm gonna eat
you alive. If you call me the wrong
name - I'm gonna eat you alive,
alive, alive, alive. Alive, alive,
alive, alive. Alive, alive, alive,
alive!*

She exhales her last drag, exhilarated. Then flicks her cigarette butt into the back garden.

END SONG

INT. WAREHOUSE CAFETERIA - NIGHT

Peter is alone at the corner table, reading Richard's BLACK NOTEBOOK. The top of the page reads: "OPERATION UNTITLED."

INT. ST. PAUL HIGH SCHOOL, HALLWAYS - DAY

Peter marches down the busy corridor. A few SNICKERING STUDENTS chuckle, but when Peter faces them they scurry off.

On the wall are simple black and white flyers: VOTE - PETER CHARLES - STUDENT COUNCIL CO-PRESIDENT. Peter notices a few other flyers pasted over his - a sketch of him with: DEMAND THE TRUTH - VIVA LA RESISTANCE!

Peter rips the Resistance flyers down and continues walking.

His eyes glaze over. He appears to GLIDE, trance-like, drifting down the hall.

Something seems to SNAP. Peter stops, mouth frothing with vitriol, lashing out at a CROWD OF STUDENTS.

MUSIC UP: THE FIRST PROPHECY

A spoken word quality to it, infused with muted melodies.

PETER

*It came in a dream. Our temple,
held up by pillars both uniform and
punctual; an illusory practice,
where a piece of paper could as
easily procure a loaf of bread as
arbitrarily assigned numbers could
dictate a future. I placed my hands
on these pillars, naked, my uniform
sacrificed as all must be
sacrificed, and I prayed to what
divinity laid within my flesh and
pushed until the stones fell away.
The illusion fell. My head cracked
open, my bones now dust and ash.
For what must be freely won will be
paid in blood, and what's paid in
blood must be freely offered. My
blood will be freely offered. And
on that day, my flesh will expire,
but my name will remain -- no
longer unknown, no longer untitled.*

Peter's eyes unglaze. The students watch him with a mixture of fear, awe and *what the fuck?* Peter bolts.

END SONG

HALLWAYS - THE NEXT DAY

Peter pops some ibuprofen, followed by Michael and Loca.

LOCA

Maybe you just need an exorcism.

PETER

I'm not crazy!

Peter stops in front of a bulletin board loaded with flashy, colour posters of Kramer: A VOTE FOR CHRIST.

Loca looks around then rips the posters down. Peter and Michael rush away as a TEACHER looks over.

LOCA
Pansies.

CHAPEL - MOMENTS LATER

They enter the dark room, Peter flicks the light on.

DOMINO (O.S.)
Shit.

Her head pops up from under the altar. EDWARD (17), doused in eyeliner, pokes his head up too. It's clear he's putting on his pants.

Peter brandishes a Resistance poster. Domino adjusts her kilt, unfazed.

DOMINO (CONT'D)
Wasn't me.

Peter crumples it.

PETER
Stay away.

DOMINO
Thought you wanted to be like prime minister or something.

PETER
Yeah, but I need the scholarship.

DOMINO
Why?

PETER
So I can afford university.

DOMINO
Why?

PETER
So I can get a law degree.

DOMINO
Why?

PETER

Because all prime ministers get law degrees!

Domino ponders for an extended moment.

DOMINO

Why?

PETER

Leave me alone.

DOMINO

You're not gonna win. They'll steal it. They look after their own.

She takes a seat on top of a chair and lights up a pipe, taking a hit. Peter looks as if he's had an epiphany.

PETER

You just don't like working hard. That's why they're the big, bad guys. And you're pissed they just don't give you things. Well - Dominique - you have to earn it. They earned it. And I'll earn it.

DOMINO

Moving speech. Now I'm half moist. Read Operation Untitled yet?

MICHAEL

What's Operation Untitled?

Domino walks over to him and pulls out his wallet from his front pocket.

LOCA

Hey!

DOMINO

Love is not possession.

She takes out a blue five dollar bill, hands the wallet back.

DOMINO (CONT'D)

It's this...

She lights the bill on fire.

MICHAEL

Whoa!

DOMINO
*Our temple, held up by pillars both
uniform and punctual...*

She blows it out and hands it back to Michael.

MICHAEL
That's my coffee money.

DOMINO
(to Peter)
Domino. Maybe one day you'll earn
your name.

Domino rips off Peter's dress shirt pocket and heads out with Edward.

PETER'S LOCKER HALLWAY - LATER

Peter shuts his locker and finds Mr. Siemens marching by.

MR. SIEMENS
Uniform.

He points to the ripped pocket.

PETER
Another student...

MR. SIEMENS
Lunch detention.

Mr. Siemens keeps walking.

PETER
No.

Mr. Siemens stops and turns.

PETER (CONT'D)
You never gave Richard detention.
So no.

Peter walks away.

MR. FORRESTER'S OFFICE - LATER

Peter remains defiant.

MR. FORRESTER

You know why we have a uniform policy? Because we're all equal in God's eyes. Rules protect us from violating that integrity.

PETER

Thought it was 'cause Mr. and Mrs. Harding are silent partners in McKenzie's.

He points to the MCKENZIE UNIFORM LOGO on his ripped pocket. Mr. Forrester fumbles.

MR. FORRESTER

These are the rules. I'll waive the lunch detention.

Peter is shocked but nods along.

MR. FORRESTER (CONT'D)

Good luck with the debate.

STUDENT COUNCIL OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS

The lights are off. Michelle sits at the large council table going through a huge stack of ballots, marking Xs for WILLIAM KRAMER.

CAFETORIUM, BACKSTAGE - LATER

Peter looks out from behind the curtain at the STUDENTS eating lunch. Domino and Edward seem to be the only ones watching the stage.

Peter sees Michelle talking to Kramer at the other end of the stage where two podiums are set up. She flashes him a shy smile.

Michael scurries up to Peter with a Bible, followed by Loca.

MICHAEL

Out-Jesus him. Win the white, Catholic vote - they're the only ones who do vote.

He points to the BIBLE-THUMPER STUDENTS in the front, who all look like clean-cut Mormons.

LOCA
 (regarding Bible)
 Or just chuck it at him.

MICHELLE
 'Oy! Tech crew!

Michael and Loca rush off. Michelle disappears onto the stage. Peter walks up to Kramer and offers his hand.

PETER
 Good luck.

Kramer chuckles.

KRAMER
 Thanks for doing this.

Confused, Peter forces a laugh...which confuses Kramer.

KRAMER (CONT'D)
 I'll come after you a few times, so
 totally just sit back. It'll really
 help.

He pats Peter on the shoulder.

PETER
 I'm playing to win.

KRAMER
 Mrs. Harding didn't...She didn't
 talk with you?

Peter looks as if he has been slapped, but recovers.

PETER
 Just jokes...Mr. President.

Kramer laughs. Peter wanders back to his podium, taking out his cell phone and Mrs. Harding's business card. He starts to dial her number.

The curtains CREAK open. Peter stops and rushes into position.

CAFETORIUM STAGE - LATER

Peter and Kramer mid-debate, Michelle as moderator.

MICHELLE
 What are your qualifications?

PETER

Uh...I was Principal's high honour
roll all four years...

Kramer offers a SARCASTIC CLAP.

KRAMER

You studied for yourself. I worked
hard for the people of Saint Paul.
Grade Nine Council Rep. FLY Team.
Christ said, "whoever would be
great among you must be your
servant, and whoever would be first
among you shall make himself slave
of all."

APPLAUSE from the crowd's bible-thumpers. Peter goes to the
first Bible tab. Michael eggs him on from the front row.

PETER

Christ also said, "I come not to
bring peace, but to bring a sword."

No response from the crowd. Peter sees Michael shaking his
head. In the projection booth, Loca points to Kramer and
mimes throat-slicing.

KRAMER

I also always come prepared.

More LAUGHS from the front. Peter sees Jameson at the back,
ignoring the charades.

KRAMER (CONT'D)

The choice is simple. A student who
stands for something...
(motions to Peter)
...or a student who stands for
anything!

Bible-thumpers CLAP again. Peter opens his mouth, but
Michelle flips a cue card.

MICHELLE

Now Saint Paul, some of your
questions...

Michael finishes setting up a standing microphone. A BIBLE-
THUMPER is already up.

BIBLE-THUMPER

For both candidates. What is your
vision for Saint Paul?

KRAMER

Thank you, Jim. You see, Saint Paul
is not just a school. It's family.

POLITE APPLAUSE. Peter glares at Kramer.

KRAMER (CONT'D)

(re: Peter)

He's probably going to agree. Soon
he's going to endorse me.

LAUGHTER. Peter eyes the students at the back not paying
attention.

PETER

Kids in the back, we family?

Nothing. Some students start paying attention.

PETER (CONT'D)

We family? I think Willy Kramer is
gonna give us his trust fund.

More students look, chuckle. Kramer is caught off guard.

PETER (CONT'D)

Grace, not works. Just a fancy way
of saying lucky sperm club. Then
why does experience matter?

Tepid APPLAUSE. Peter sees Mr. Forrester appear in the
cafetorium doorway. The next student up to the mic is Mac.
He's eyeing Peter.

MAC

Recently, McKenzie's was caught
outsourcing to third world
countries with poor labour laws. Do
you think our school's uniform
policy should be abandoned?

A HUSH falls. Michelle looks to Mr. Forrester who folds his
arms. A strange calm comes over Peter.

KRAMER

Your name?

MAC

Folks call me Mac.

KRAMER

Well, Mac. Absolutely not. Uniforms show the collective unity and spirit of Saint Paul's. Besides...
(appealing to crowd)
...those allegations have been...

PETER

Yes.

Kramer stumbles. All eyes turn to Peter.

PETER (CONT'D)

To your question. Yes. Forcing students and parents...to...to financially support such a company is the very definition of immorality.

Silence. One student CLAPS. Another. Soon half the student body is APPLAUDING and WHOOP WHOOPing.

MICHELLE

Next question!

Peter looks at Mr. Forrester - he's pissed. But Peter is engulfed by the love from the crowd. Jacked Rugby Player stands up and fist pumps.

JACKED RUGBY PLAYER

Lucky sperm! Lucky sperm!

The crowd picks it up.

CROWD

Lucky sperm! Lucky sperm!

Mr. Siemens tries to lead Jacked Rugby Player away, but students seize on this and BOO. Kramer looks to Michelle for a clue. Her dramatic hand pantomimes are confusing.

KRAMER

Students! Would Richard...

The SOUND of a MUTED GUITAR CHORD. Peter turns to see Richard with a guitar centre-stage.

Peter looks to the lively crowd. TIME HAS SLOWED DOWN. Students, TEACHERS, Michelle, Kramer, Mr. Forrester...

Peter looks to Richard.

BOOM. BOOM. BOOM. Peter stomps out a beat.

MUSIC UP: THE FIRST SEAL

PETER

*In the beginning was the Word and I
hear it sing. How the dreams of
tomorrow are yet on the brink, and
we are too young to feel this damn
old, and our martyr's blood will be
paid ten fold...*

The STUDENTS hush up. Peter takes his mic and goes to the edge of the stage - it gets intense.

PETER (CONT'D)

*And I see her face, it's the face
of God. She says, "Richard's blood
has been paid for all." So rejoice,
rejoice, now WAKE UP, WAKE UP! This
is just a dream with a nightmare's
touch. But I see the light, it's a
shining shade. All this bullshit
sinks when these colours fade. When
the shadows rise, they'll become
our friends so when lights go dim,
it won't be the end.*

He jumps off the stage and rushes down the centre aisle.

PROJECTION BOOTH - CONTINUOUS - INTERCUT

Loca and Michael exchange glances.

MICHAEL

You tell him to do this?

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK. Loca holds a finger to her lips as the knocking persists. Down below...

PETER

*And we're slowly taking care of it.
Oh, we're slowly taking care of it,
and the weight of the world, the
illusions we hold will slowly break
and chip away and be replaced by
something great. The names that we
choose will define what we do.*

Mr. Siemens confronts Peter in the centre aisle. He tries to grab him, but Peter jumps onto a table.

PETER (CONT'D)

We are immortal. All of us are Gods. We are Jesus Christ, the Prophet, Buddha. And this whole charade's just to keep us in. With the chains of sin as our own prison.

Peter kicks Veronica's poutine into her lap.

HALLWAY OUTSIDE PROJECTION BOOTH - CONTINUOUS - INTERCUT

Michelle is slamming her shoulder into the door, Kramer is beside her like a lost puppy.

KRAMER

This is just too much.

MICHELLE

Grab me the fire extinguisher.

KRAMER

What?

Michelle rips an extinguisher off the wall.

MICHELLE

(under breath)

Fucking rich kids.

Below, Peter jumps from table to table. TEACHERS swarm around him, but STUDENTS block them.

PETER

So go on outside - and run away. Burn this fucker down for they all must pay for the lies they tell and their blasphemy, telling you that God isn't in your reach. And we're slowly taking care of it. Oh, we're slowly taking care of it, and the weight of the world, the illusions we hold will slowly break and chip away and be replaced by something great. The names that we choose will define what we do.

Peter rips off his black ribbon and starts undressing a la Richard catwalk. This gets the CROWD in a tizzy.

Michelle uses the extinguisher to break the doorknob on the projection booth. It swings open.

PETER

I will follow you. Will you follow me? Because I'm scared that this world will come undone. I will follow you. Will you follow me? To the end of everything I love.

Michelle pulls Michael off the lighting board and shuts off the mics. Loca tackles her to the wall.

Peter jumps back onto the stage.

PETER

And we're slowly taking care of it. Oh, we're slowly taking care of it, and the weight of the world, the illusions we hold will slowly break and chip away and be replaced by something great. The names that we choose will define what we do.

Peter stops, hands outstretched, basking in the love from the crowd.

PETER (CONT'D)

Operation Untitled has been initiated!

He seems to come to and looks down.

PETER (CONT'D)

Where are my clothes?

He's tackled to the ground by Mr. Siemens.

In the midst of the crowd, Domino scans the cheering students and furious TEACHERS. She looks back at Peter being led away.

DOMINO

It is accomplished.

EXT. WAREHOUSE, PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Peter drifts through the cramped parking lot. He takes out his cell and calls. After a few rings...

PETER

(leaving a message)
Sorry for the call, but it felt appropriate. Ten calls. Matches my ten-day suspension. I fail my midterms, you...

Peter kicks the wheel of a car in anger. The PANIC ALARM goes off. Peter runs away from it and tries to keep his cool.

PETER (CONT'D)
So call me back. Explain how this works. How I do everything...

The CALL WAITING RING. Peter checks. It's Mrs. Harding. He clicks over.

PETER (CONT'D)
Hello...

MRS. HARDING (O.S.)
...I'm a busy woman.

PETER
I know... I just...

MRS. HARDING (O.S.)
Kramer was the better choice. And after your little charade today...

PETER
...I was just doing this for the scholarship.

MRS. HARDING (O.S.)
Well, we've already reissued them.

PETER
I had the highest average!

He goes to kick another car but holds up.

INT. WAREHOUSE, LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Peter, still on the phone, navigates a few WORKERS and gets to his locker.

PETER
I'll tell everyone. The truth. Your son...

MRS. HARDING (O.S.)
I have a notarized affidavit from you. As it's a federal offense to lie...

PETER
You're not gonna win.

MRS. HARDING (O.S.)
Where are you?

PETER
I'm at work. Some of us have to
work, you know, and people like...

He opens his locker to find a PINK SLIP. He stops talking.

MRS. HARDING (O.S.)
.....Yes?

PETER
How...

MRS. HARDING (O.S.)
It's a tough economy. We are
Christians though - better you than
your father.

Peter flounders. WORKERS head through double doors, down a
long hallway.

MRS. HARDING (O.S., CONT'D)
I'm sorry. But this is how it
works.

PETER
How...

But she's hung up. Peter stands alone amongst the lockers.

WAREHOUSE CAFETERIA - LATER

Peter and Howie at their break table.

HOWIE
Why the clothes?

PETER
I'm going crazy.

Howie looks down to an OFFICIAL LOOKING FORM. He signs it and
passes it back to Peter. Then splits a chocolate chunk cookie
in half with a fork. Peter picks up the other portion.

PETER (CONT'D)
I fail my midterms. I had the
highest. Now I'll have like a...
(disgust)
...eighty.

HOWIE

You're looking at the problem. Look for solutions.

PETER

Dad, this is our life. They control our life.

HOWIE

You did strip and incite a riot.

Peter looks down at Richard's NOTEBOOK. He makes a few notes in the margins.

HOWIE (CONT'D)

Found cigarettes in your brother's room. It'd be great...

PETER

He still has three more years to mess up his life.

Mr. Raymond makes the rounds, greeting workers.

MR. RAYMOND

Howard. How are you doing?

HOWIE

Great, sir, how about you?

MR. RAYMOND

Ah, fighting the good fight. Thank you for all you do.

He notices Peter.

MR. RAYMOND (CONT'D)

Hopefully, this economy turns around so we can get your boy back to work.

Howie laughs. Mr. Raymond moves along.

HOWIE

(to Peter)

He's a very nice man.

PETER

You know you're not equals right?

HOWIE

I'm sorry you weren't born into a richer family.

APPLAUSE bursts out. Mr. Raymond stands with Kramer at the other end of the cafeteria.

MR. RAYMOND

Thank you, thank you. I am very proud to announce, that today my great-grandson has received the very distinguished Richard Harding Memorial Scholarship.

APPLAUSE.

PETER

(to Howie, weakly)
That's my scholarship.

MR. RAYMOND

To all you young folk. Let this be a lesson of what hard work and determination can achieve!

More APPLAUSE. The WORK BELL rings and workers begin to file out. Peter follows Howie, but stops. He jumps onto a table and points at Kramer.

PETER

Hard work my fucking ass. Air conditioned office. What, you make two-three rounds every shift, and get paid...wait...twenty-five an hour?

WORKERS stop and watch the scene.

PETER (CONT'D)

'cause that's "management." While yours truly, ten-twenty-five. For sweat. For cutting your fingers on stale boxes. For hurting your back, lifting actual shit. And I get laid off. And you, Prince Twat, royal liege, get a fucking raise. And they tell us, hard economic times. Have to cut corners. Fuck your corners. And fuck you. If there is a Hell, I'd say burn, but you've already made one.

(slaps chest)

And convinced us to work in it for you!

An OLD SECURITY GUARD saunters up. Everyone stares, while Mr. Raymond's face throbs red with rage.

Peter jumps off and lets the guard lead him off. Howie is dumbfounded.

HOWIE

Peter!

PETER

My name isn't Peter.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

Peter exhales clouds of smoke in the cool air. He strolls through the gravestones humming THE FIRST SEAL melody.

MUSIC UP: THE PROPHECY

PETER

Hey, it's cold outside tonight. I didn't mean to let you die, but hey we're so fucked up, we're famous. And I don't think that this world can quite contain us.

Peter heads towards a large MAUSOLEUM.

PETER (CONT'D)

What do you want from me? Is it the oxygen I bleed? Because you know that your blood won't be enough. We'll suffer for what the gods have given us.

INT. MAUSOLEUM - CONTINUOUS

Peter crawls in through a narrow window and leaps to the dark floor below. He shines a FLASHLIGHT on the graves, navigating towards the far back where a new sarcophagus lies.

RICHARD HARDING. There's a LATTE CUP at the foot of the tomb.

PETER

I will follow you. Will you follow me? Because I'm scared that this world will come undone. I will follow you. Will you follow me? To the end of everything I love.

He places Richard's NOTEBOOK on the sarcophagus. Then tries to push the lid off. He exerts to no avail.

Richard is behind Peter who senses this and turns.

Richard slaps Peter. Then reaches a hand under his shirt, pulling out his own bloodied BLEEDING HEART.

RICHARD
Operation Untitled...

PETER
...has been initiated.

Peter accepts Richard's heart.

INT. ST. PAUL HIGH SCHOOL, HALLWAYS - NIGHT

Empty corridors.

INSERT: Report Cards. A flurry of numbers flutter by.

GRADUATION HALLWAY - LATER

Large class graduation photos line the walls. Peter and Richard take chairs and smash them.

PETER/RICHARD
*And everything that's come to pass
is just beyond the looking glass.
This world will slowly fade away,
replaced by some other display of
irony and apathy and broken
thoughts and shattered dreams.*

ATTENDANCE OFFICE - LATER

Peter and Richard rip up PURPLE ATTENDANCE FOLDERS, while generally trashing the office.

PETER/RICHARD
*We'll break this fucking thing
down. We're gonna break this
fucking thing down. We're gonna
break this fucking thing down.
We're gonna break this fucking
thing now.*

CAFETORIUM - LATER

Two mannequins are set up, conservatively posed, modelling McKenzie uniforms. Peter and Richard mould them into meditation poses.

PETER/RICHARD

*'Cause all we need's a flame to
start, to amplify and be the spark.
To burn all of the pain away, to
self-immolate everything. We're
gonna break this fucking thing
down. We're gonna break this
fucking thing down.*

Peter pours gasoline over the mannequins. Richard flicks a match. FLAMES.

THE FOYER - LATER

The statue of St. Paul looms over Peter and Richard. They go to the statue's feet and pick up a stone.

PETER/RICHARD

*We're gonna break this fucking
thing down. We're gonna break this
fucking thing down.*

Richard tosses the stone at St. Paul.

Nothing. Peter looks at his own stone. To the melody of WORKING CLASS LAMENT.

PETER

*I'm tired of working so someone can
live...*

He glares at St. Paul, full of fury.

PETER (CONT'D)

*...so I'm gonna be something more
when I destroy your whole fucking
world.*

He chucks the stone at the feet of St. Paul.

It hits...

...the SOUND RINGS OUT...

...and then the STATUE CRUMBLES.

INT. MAUSOLEUM - NIGHT

Peter jolts away. He is lying at the foot of Richard's tomb. A stone lies by his head.

INT. ST. PAUL HIGH SCHOOL, CHAPEL, CONFESSIONAL - DAYS LATER

Domino sips a fountain pop and munches on a sandwich.

The sound of a DOOR OPENING and LOCKING.

CHAPEL - CONTINUOUS

Domino pokes her head out. There's nobody. She takes out a CARPET KNIFE and creeps forward.

A stone rolls towards her feet. She picks it up. Peter is seated behind her.

PETER

In middle school, they gave us these white cloths. And they were our souls. Every sin, black ink splotch. Sin, black ink. The goal was to keep yours as white as possible. And God would love you. I don't feel very loved.

DOMINO

I wiped my ass with mine.

Peter smiles. Notes the carpet knife.

PETER

Gonna stab me?

DOMINO

Only if you become the enemy. You the enemy?

PETER

I'm the Anti-Christ.

DOMINO

(muses)

No. You're the Prophet.

PETER

Why don't you be the Prophet?

DOMINO

Because you actually want to save people. I just want them to burn.

Peter takes Richard's NOTEBOOK from his bag then stares up at the TORTURED JESUS CRUCIFIX.

PETER

The Gospel According to Richard...

Domino takes out her laptop from her bag, setting it up on the altar. Peter scans Richard's notebook for a starting point.

DOMINO

When you're ready, precious.

Peter inhales and closes his eyes.

PETER

In the beginning was the word...

Domino types.

EXT. ST. PAUL HIGH SCHOOL, SMOKING PIT - DAY

Peter strolls up and lights Mac's cigarette. The rest of the SMOKERS back up.

PETER

I need mobs.

MAC

In exchange for what?

PETER

Free reign.

Mac takes a drag, considers.

MAC

How do I know you won't bitch out?

PETER

Give it three days.

As he leaves, he spots Jameson in the crowd.

PETER (CONT'D)

Hide your cigarettes better.

INT. ST. PAUL HIGH SCHOOL, CAFETORIUM - DAYS LATER

A uniform fair. TEACHERS, impressionable GRADE EIGHTS with their PARENTS circulate tables, club music playing lightly in the background. Mannequins model uniforms conservatively.

Mr. Forrester patrols, shaking the hands of random parents, patting Grade Eights on the head.

LAUGHTER breaks out. Mr. Forrester sees a crowd gathering at one end of the cafetorium.

He squeezes through the bystanders. A transfixed GRADE NINE (14) stands in front of two billboards she has just put up.

GRADE NINE

They told me to put 'em up.

The first billboard: a uniformed MALE and FEMALE STUDENT with dog collars, their heads cropped out: "OPPRESSION IS UNIFORM." The second: a Malaysian sweat-shop: "JESUS LOVES WHITE PEOPLE."

Mr. Forrester knocks down the billboards as Grade Eights guffaw. Some film with CAMERA PHONES.

MR. FORRESTER

Why did you...!

He freezes and picks up a white uniform top, unfolding it. Red, blood-like writing: MADE IN MALAYSIA.

He goes through the entire table, flipping through uniform tops. They all say the same thing.

WHITE BOOKLETS fall out from them, tucked into each top. Mr. Forrester picks one up: THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO RICHARD.

EXT. ROAD NEAR SCHOOL - DAY

Peter reads a GOSPEL OF RICHARD in the back of a crappy sedan. Edward idles at the wheel while Domino pecks away at her laptop.

ON THE SCREEN: an office database program. Names organized by class with columns for "late," "absent," "present."

Domino starts clicking on "absent" tabs.

INT. ST. PAUL HIGH SCHOOL, ATTENDANCE OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS

Two ATTENDANCE STAFF type away at their computers.

ON THEIR SCREEN: identical to Domino's.

ATTENDANCE STAFF UNO freezes as her computer's mouse moves on its own.

ATTENDANCE STAFF UNO
What the fritz?

The COMPUTER SYSTEM under the desk BUZZS. Sounds of
TELEPHONES DIALING.

FEMALE TELEPHONE VOICE (V.O.)
Good day. A student in your
household...

COMPUTERIZED VOICE (V.O.)
...JAMES RENNING...

FEMALE TELEPHONE VOICE (V.O.)
...was absent for periods...

COMPUTERIZED VOICE (V.O.)
...one, two, three, four...

FEMALE TELEPHONE VOICE (V.O.)
...please note, unexplained
absences will lead to supplementary
discipline and/or suspension.
Please provide a note on the next
business day.

More DIALING...

FEMALE TELEPHONE VOICE (V.O.)
Good day. A student in your
household...

COMPUTERIZED VOICE (V.O.)
...JESSICA CHAN...

MAIN OFFICE - THE NEXT DAY

The Receptionist is frantic as calls keep coming in, STUDENTS
mobbed around his desk.

RECEPTIONIST
(on the phone)
Yes. I know, we're looking...I
know, we're looking...technical
difficulties...

He looks up at a FRANTIC STUDENT who's bandying a note.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)
Bring that to your bloody class.
(on phone)
(MORE)

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)
 Oh sorry...that was for...yes, I
 know...

Mr. Siemens navigates through the students.

MR. FORRESTER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Siemens, Mr. Forrester, Kramer and Michelle all watch
 Loca setting up a television monitor.

MICHELLE
 How long does it take to set up a
 cable?

Loca "accidentally" knocks over the coffee mug on Mr.
 Forrester's desk. It cascades over a folder in the centre.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
 My valedictorian nomination!

She tries to save the folder.

LOCA
 I am sooooo sorry.

The television springs to life.

LOCA (CONT'D)
 There ya go!

TELEVISION MONITOR - CONTINUOUS - INTERCUT

A wide of a SCHOOL HALLWAY. Two FIGURES appear.

KRAMER
 Can we zoom in? Like in the movies.

Loca sports a look all techs sport when someone asks
 something stupid ("one does not simply drag and drop").

CUT.

The security footage is replaced by a HOME MOVIE. Three fit,
 ATTRACTIVE MEN (20s) on a couch.

MR. SIEMENS
 What happened?

LOCA
 Looks like someone hacked the feed.

SPANISH MAN
 (heavy accent)
 Always curious. But in my
 country...

WHITE MAN
 We're not in your country, dawg.

MR. SIEMENS
 I think I've seen this b...

The White Man kisses the Spanish Man. The Black Man joins in.
 Sounds of KISSING, MOANING. Kramer is transfixed.

BLACK MAN
 Hey man, go slow.

SPANISH MAN
 Oh Fredrico, it's so big!

Mr. Siemens retches. Loca shrugs.

LOCA
 It's just gay sex.

Mr. Forrester turns off the television.

KRAMER
 But there might have been clues...

Mr. Forrester shuts him up with a look. SCREAMS OF JOY ring
 out from the...

HALLWAYS/FOYER - CONTINUOUS

STUDENTS hang out, goofing around. Mr. Forrester arrives on
 the scene.

JACKED RUGBY PLAYER
 I'm going home, boys!

Michelle and Kramer struggle through the crowds.

MICHELLE
 The bell.

Mr. Forrester looks at his watch.

MR. FORRESTER
 Everyone! Get to class!

Students freeze then disperse. Mr. Forrester turns to Michelle.

MICHELLE
I can stop this.

HALLWAYS - LATER

Empty corridors. The P.A. cackles...

MICHELLE (O.S.)
Peter Charles to the office. Peter
Charles. The office.

SCIENCE CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

All of the STUDENTS stare at Peter. He gets to his feet and walks to the door.

Before he leaves, he stares at Mac at the back of the class.

HALLWAY OUTSIDE MAIN OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Michael (black tech clothes) heads Peter off.

MICHAEL
Dude...?

PETER
Yes...dude?

MICHAEL
We get our diplomas in two weeks.

PETER
Then go to class.

He leaves Michael speechless.

MR. FORRESTER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Mr. Forrester, Mrs. Doukas and Michelle sits across from Peter.

MR. FORRESTER
Your expulsion hearing is tomorrow.

PETER
Cool.

MRS. DOUKAS

Peter.

PETER

I don't recognize my slave name.
People call me the Prophet.

MRS. DOUKAS

That's blasphemy.

PETER

I am the saint of blasphemy.

Mrs. Doukas looks offended. Michelle comforts her.

MICHELLE

It's just from a movie.
(to Peter)
Think about your future.

PETER

I don't have one.
(to Mr. Forrester)
Do I?

MR. FORRESTER

What you're saying about Richard...
(pleading)
...you could be accused of perjury.

PETER

So I go to jail?

Peter considers.

PETER (CONT'D)

I don't mind going to jail.

Mr. Siemens bursts into the room.

MR. SIEMENS

Sir...

MAIN OFFICE HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Mac stands in front of a MOB OF STUDENTS just outside the main office. Mr. Forrester and Mr. Siemens face them.

MR. FORRESTER

Get to class.

The students hold.

MR. FORRESTER (CONT'D)

Now. Or...

Peter strolls out of the office. He CLAPS. All of the students CLAP in unison.

PETER

(to Mr. Forrester)

See you tomorrow.

Peter drifts down the hall. The students follow him.

LIBRARY - NIGHT

The board meeting is in full swing. Mr. Forrester leads Michelle and Kramer to the table. Michelle waves to Mrs. Harding, but it is not returned.

Mrs. Harding circulates a stack of white RICHARD GOSPELS.

MRS. HARDING

Anyone caught with a copy will be expelled. Say aye.

BOARD

Aye.

MRS. HARDING

Anyone have any other brilliant ideas?

MR. FORRESTER

(hating himself)

The Safe Schools Act. Second protocol.

Kramer writes on the corner of Michelle's notebook: *MARTIAL LAW*.

MRS. HARDING

Motion?

BOARD

Aye.

MRS. HARDING

And we should make an example.

Board members exchange looks.

MRS. HARDING (CONT'D)
They're children. They need to know
what happens when they step out of
line.

MR. FORRESTER
Once we expel him...

Mrs. Harding just looks at him.

MR. FORRESTER (CONT'D)
(broken)
How many?

Mrs. Harding muses.

MRS. HARDING
Five. No, ten.

MR. FORRESTER
Ten?!

MRS. HARDING
No one major, just the type of
people who ride the subway. Perhaps
your student leaders can round them
up.

All eyes are on Michelle - clearly a star making moment.

MICHELLE
I'm on it.

MRS. HARDING
Good. Tomorrow for the first time,
there will be real security at this
school. It will be within their
rights to use appropriate force to
maintain order. Peter Charles aka
"the Prophet" is now *persona non*
grata at St. Paul Catholic
Secondary. Say aye.

BOARD
Aye.

STUDENT COUNCIL OFFICE - LATER

Michelle and Kramer scan through a list of students on the
computer. Veronica's photo pops up.

KRAMER

Her mom's on the board. What about
that Niner on Council?

He pulls up a photo of the GRADE NINE from the uniform fair.

MICHELLE

...what would we say?

KRAMER

Messed up the uniform fair. Or we
make something up.

Michelle's internal debate rages.

MICHELLE

Do it.

Kramer jots her name down in his notebook. A photo of Jameson
flashes up.

KRAMER

His brother?

Michelle considers.

INT. MAUSOLEUM - NIGHT

Peter and Domino smoke a joint beside Richard's sarcophagus.

DOMINO

You do know if you stray, I kill
you.

PETER

Bit extreme.

DOMINO

Prophets are better as martyrs.
Otherwise they become CEOs.

FOOTSTEPS. Domino whips out a CARPET KNIFE.

It's Michelle with a latte. Domino HISSES like a cat.

PETER

Stop.

DOMINO

Can I stab her? Just once?

Peter steps in between them. Michelle holds up the GOSPEL OF RICHARD.

MICHELLE

There's shit about me in here.

DOMINO

Thought I cut that out.

PETER

*I never thought bodies could bind
like this, in a pact of sweat,
blood, quivers. And all in all,
it's the closest I've been to
God...*

Michelle smacks Peter upside the head.

PETER (CONT'D)

*And God looked back through her
eyes. And I was delivered...*

MICHELLE

People are going to get hurt.

PETER

You don't care about that.

MICHELLE

But you should. Don't come
tomorrow. Let me fix this.

Domino laughs.

PETER

And how is this going to get fixed?

MICHELLE

I'm sure they'll let you graduate.
You have options - your life
doesn't have to be over. It could
be nice...

PETER

Fuck nice.

Michelle bypasses Peter for Richard's sarcophagus and places the latte at the foot of his tomb. Peter and Domino are baffled. Michelle kisses the sarcophagus and WHISPERS SOMETHING.

Peter CLAPS sarcastically. Michelle walks up to him.

MICHELLE

I hope I'll be there. When you wake up at forty. Still in that fucking warehouse. Making just enough to breathe while I'm in my penthouse. Paying fourteen percent tax and gambling with your pension money.

She storms off.

PETER

(sings after her)

And if you try to run away and try to stop what all must change. Don't worry, it'll all be fine 'cause I WILL DESTROY YOU TONIGHT!

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

Michelle gets into her OLD CAR.

INT. MICHELLE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Michelle has a miniature freak out, lashing out at the steering wheel. She calms down, PANTING.

She adjusts her GOLD BRACELET. Wipes a few tears.

MICHELLE

The people will love you.

EXT. ST. PAUL HIGH SCHOOL, FRONT ENTRANCE - DAY

A solitary SECURITY GUARD paces.

INT. ST. PAUL HIGH SCHOOL, FOYER/HALLWAYS - CONTINUOUS

STUDENTS rush to class. The P.A. cackles...

MR. FORRESTER (O.S.)

For your safety, the second protocol of the Safe Schools Act is in effect. No students are to be left in the halls. Groups of over three students is prohibited. This is for your safety.

Michelle passes two SECURITY GUARDS standing by the St. Paul statue.

MR. FORRESTER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Michelle holds up a LIST OF NAMES to Mr. Forrester.

MICHELLE

We don't have to do this.

Mr. Forrester considers - he's stressed.

MR. FORRESTER

You have the morning.

MAIN OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Michelle is in front of the P.A. system. Kramer makes notes on her speech. She crosses out his corrections.

HALLWAYS - CONTINUOUS

Empty corridors. The P.A...

MICHELLE (O.S.)

"If a prophet appears among you and announces to you a miraculous sign or wonder, and if the sign or wonder of which he has spoken takes place, and he says, 'Let us follow other gods and let us worship them,' you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer...

RELIGION CLASS - CONTINUOUS

Mrs. Doukas assumes a noble stance as STUDENTS listen with rapt attention.

MICHELLE (O.S.)

...The Lord your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and all your soul. That prophet or dreamer must be put to death...

MATH CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Michael wipes sweat from his brow. Loca squeezes his hand.

MICHELLE (O.S.)

...if your very own brother, or your son or daughter, or the wife you love, or your closest friend secretly entices you, saying, 'Let us go and worship other gods,' do not yield to him or listen to him. Show him no pity. Do not spare him or shield him. You must certainly put him to death...

EXT. DUMPSTER - SIMULTANEOUS

Mr. Siemens supervises as Jacked Rugby Player tosses a stack of RICHARD GOSPELS into a garbage can.

MICHELLE (O.S.)

...your hand must be the first in putting him to death, and then the hands of all the people and no one among you will do such an evil thing again."

Mr. Siemens sets the can on fire. He watches the RICHARD GOSPELS burn.

INT. ST. PAUL HIGH SCHOOL, MAIN OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Michelle takes a deep breath, her eyes alight.

MICHELLE

Dear students of Saint Paul. People are using Richard's name. They are making up lies. Saying they knew him. I knew him. And so did you. Loving, kind, obedient, full of the Holy Spirit. I encourage you, if anyone is leading you astray - your friend, your classmate - report them to the Administration.

MR. FORRESTER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Forrester sits in the dark, hands folded under his chin.

MICHELLE (O.S.)

In other news, don't forget to vote for valedictorian.

HALLWAYS - CONTINUOUS

Empty as a tomb.

MATH CLASSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Michael and Loca exchange fearful glances at their fellow STUDENTS. A FUNDAMENTALIST CHRISTIAN (17) jumps up, pointing at her GOTH classmate (17).

FUNDAMENTALIST CHRISTIAN
She's agnostic!

GOTH
Bullshit.

Sweet MS. ABERNATHY (64) is at a loss.

MS. ABERNATHY
Ah...Office!

The Goth is incredulous.

MS. ABERNATHY (CONT'D)
Now!

HALLWAY OUTSIDE MAIN OFFICE - LATER

A line of STUDENTS extends down the hall, the Goth girl, Mac and Jameson amongst them.

MAIN OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A CRYING STUDENT runs out into the hallway as Mr. Forrester steps wearily out of his office.

MR. FORRESTER
Next.

CRASH!

GASPS emit from the hallway. Mr. Forrester storms out...

HALLWAY OUTSIDE MAIN OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

STUDENTS gawk as Mr. Forrester passes them. Jameson just points towards...

THE FOYER - CONTINUOUS

St. Paul's head lies on the ground. Mr. Forrester follows the debris of the statue to find...

Peter standing calmly where it stood, hands behind his back. Domino's off to the side carrying a guitar.

Peter removes one hand from behind his back. He's holding a stone. He tosses it to Mr. Forrester.

Michelle and two SECURITY GUARDS arrive on scene, panting. Her and Peter exchange a look: *et tu, Brute?*

Peter reveals his other hand...holding a mic.

He taps it. BOOM. BOOM. It's live over the whole school.

PETER
(into the mic)
Allow me to retort.

The STUDENTS outside the Main Office CHEER.

MUSIC UP: THE SEVENTH SEAL

Domino palm mutes a simple chord progression. Peter's rant is spoken word poetry with occasional distortion.

PETER
Today, for the first time, you will have a choice. A choice to wear your uniform, go to class and hope that by following the rules, you will find fulfillment in a future that at any second can be stolen from you. Or to say fuck it. To understand that every second you sit in class like a good little boy, girl or transgendered you are empowering your teachers, your Administration, your parents, your government, your Church - that what they tell you is true - that what they tell you is just. That order is more important than your dissent.

The guards are blocked from Peter by a CROWD OF STUDENTS led by Mac.

PETER (CONT'D)

You, like us all, enable your own oppression. The choice we offer you today is freedom. All you have to do is get up and ignore the teachers who command you to sit. To cut out an Administration that tells you to wait. To get up and walk out and say my education is a right, one that, if there is a God, is given to us by her, him or it. My education does not require me to sit, jump or dance on command. My education will not be held hostage by my failure to defer to an arbitrarily imposed hierarchy that places us as sinners and students, as the disenfranchised separated by race, creed, sexual orientation and socio-economic class. By a system that covets resources, one that controls our salvation.

STUDENTS gather in the foyer amidst the protests of TEACHERS. Mr. Forrester looks around - he's surrounded.

PETER (CONT'D)

For the way to salvation is not through Christ, but through being Christ. We are immortals. We are Gods. And together, we will bring this fucking place down. Join us. And by doing so you will clearly state that your future will not be compromised. That your future is yours. That your moment is now. Operation Untitled has been initiated. Vive le Canada libre! ¡Viva la libertad! ¡Viva la Resistance!

Peter jumps onto the ground. The THRONG around him starts marching.

PETER

*I say Yay-e-yay-e-yay-e-yay-e-oh!
And you say...*

STUDENTS

Yay-e-yay-e-yay-e-yay-e-oh!

PETER

*I say yay-e-yay-e-yay-e-yay-e-oh!
You say...*

STUDENTS

Yay-e-yay-e-yay-e-yay-e-oh!

GRADUATION HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

They march...

PETER/THRONG

*To live is to die. To die is
redemption, 'cause all of our lives
are dictated from birth. And I
don't know why, but I'll never love
anything more.*

Students knock graduation class photos to the ground. The glass SHATTERS. Domino changes chords as students clap along.

More STUDENTS join - not quite the whole school, but a start.

PETER/THRONG

*'Cause all that we have is one
shining moment, all that we have is
one moment alive. All that we have
is one shining moment and our
moment is now. Our moment is now.*

END SONG

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Peter leads his THRONG to the field, a growing cacophony of teen angst.

JACKED RUGBY PLAYER

Now what?

Peter looks back at the school where there's A ROW OF TEACHERS and ADMINISTRATION STUDENTS including Michelle. The sides form two gang lines.

JACKED RUGBY PLAYER (CONT'D)

Gangs of New York!

Mr. Forrester steps forward with a MEGAPHONE.

MR. FORRESTER
If you all come back, it will only
be a two day suspension.

A FEW STUDENTS shuffle back. BOOS from the rebels.

MR. FORRESTER (CONT'D)
One day.

A FEW MORE STUDENTS. The rebels look to Peter.

PETER
(whisper, to Domino)
What do we do?

Domino grabs the mic and appeals to the rebels.

DOMINO
You can't cross the border! The
borders cross us! You can't cross
the border! The borders cross us!

The rebels pick up the chant. Domino shrugs to Peter. Peter
looks around - he sees the nearby portables.

PETER
Anyone know a thing about cow
tipping?

INT. PORTABLE - CONTINUOUS

Peter storms in with some REBELS, startling Mr. Siemens
teaching a group of GRADE NINES.

PETER
Sorry to interrupt. Kindly get the
fuck out.

EXT. PORTABLES - MOMENTS LATER

The Grade Nines run out to the Administration's gang line.
Mr. Siemens (tied with curtain cord) is pushed out.

Michelle's phone rings. The screen shows a photo of Mrs.
Harding. She answers.

MICHELLE
Michelle speaking...

Peter and the REBELS gather round the portable and begin
pushing. GRUNTING.

The portable shifts. A bit more.

It tips and crashes to the ground. The rebels WOOT WOOT!

Michelle walks up to Mr. Forrester.

BITCH-FACE
They're on their way.

Mr. Forrester, shaken, nods.

Peter is hoisted on top of the portable. He takes off his uniform top and waves it like a flag. The REBELS remove their uniforms too.

PETER
We've come to negotiate.

MR. FORRESTER
We don't negotiate with terrorists.

PETER
Then we burn it down.

Domino holds up a lighter. Michelle grabs Jameson from the crowd and drags him to Mr. Forrester.

MICHELLE
This is his brother. He has pot in his locker.

Jameson is baffled.

JAMESON
But you buy from me.

Michelle ignores him and hands Mr. Forrester a clipboard. Peter jumps down.

PETER
He didn't do anything!

Domino pulls out her carpet knife. Mr. Forrester takes a deep breath.

MICHELLE
Sir...?

He signs.

MR. FORRESTER
Expelled. Give me another one.

Jameson collapses in a tearful puddle. Michelle points out Michael and Loca in the crowd. SECURITY GUARDS push them forward.

MICHAEL

For what?!

MICHELLE

Technical difficulties.

Mr. Forrester signs with his pen.

MR. FORRESTER

Expelled.

Peter grabs Mr. Siemens. Domino holds out the carpet knife, but Peter ignores it.

PETER

For what must be freely won will be paid in blood, and what's paid in blood must be freely offered. My blood will be freely offered. And on that day, my flesh will expire, but my name will remain -- no longer unknown, no longer un...

A very EXPENSIVE CAR pulls up. Mrs. Harding gets out and grabs the megaphone from Mr. Forrester.

MRS. HARDING

Everyone who is not in proper uniform, on the ground now!

No one moves.

MRS. HARDING (CONT'D)

You have thirty seconds.

A few rebels hastily put back on their uniforms. Mrs. Harding glares at Peter who glares back.

PETER

No longer untitled...And I will burn those who covet, those who engulf the resources of the world and hold them from their siblings.

(MORE)

PETER (cont'd)

*Who then retort with bold-faced
lies that this is what God wants -
that they themselves are the chosen
benefactors of a benevolent
dictator who exalts one percent of
her children as designer-wearing
motherfuckers and the other ninety-
nine percent as shit-eating
peasants. The road to hell is paved
with silver spoons and the road to
heaven with...*

Peter grabs the carpet knife from Domino and wields it over Mr. Siemens.

A TEAR GAS CAN flies and lands at Peter's feet.

Everyone stares at it. GAS erupts enveloping the rebels in a dark cloud.

MUSIC UP: CANON IN W.T.F. (to the tune of Bachabel's Canon)

EVERYTHING SLOWS DOWN. Peter sees the SHAPES of POLICE IN RIOT GEAR moving through the FOG.

PETER (V.O.)

*Real uncertainty over false
certainty. Give me a Messiah who
can tell me what I mean. If you're
gonna kill me, then just pull the
trigger fast. Light the sidewalk
red so I can give you all I have.
And when the blood is spilled onto
the perfect gravel floor. Show me
all the images I should have seen
before. Illustrate so clearly how I
fumbled all the way, that the path
to God never existed in the first
place.*

STUDENTS SCREAM. Many try to put on their uniforms. Others are tackled down. Mr. Forrester stands lost in the fog.

Michelle is hustled and trips, her GOLD BRACELET falling a few feet away. She reaches for it. A foot steps on it, snapping it in half.

Peter navigates through the smoke in a haze.

PETER (V.O.)

*Forgive me my illusions and forgive
this sense of time. I'll never be a
person who can ever fall in line.*

(MORE)

PETER (V.O.) (cont'd)
*I'm cursed to never have the
strength to stand on my two feet.
But also cursed with dreams 'cause
I can't live just on my knees. And
when the fog of war has lifted to
show us all the way. That the
people we were killing all carried
our own face. So if you're gonna
take it, then just do it in a
flash. End the suffering so I can
give you all I have.*

He runs into Richard.

PETER (V.O.)
*When I reach to touch you, you will
slap my hand away. Tell me I'm
imperfect, that my dreams led me
astray. And at the end of apathy
and at the end of time. Let me burn
in Hell as your final sacrifice.*

Richard stabs him in the side with a carpet knife. Peter falls to his knees in shock.

DOMINO
(through Richard)
Prophets are better as martyrs.

Richard disappears leaving nothing but fog.

PETER (V.O.)
*And maybe if you loved me, all
these things would never change.
Every single bullet is a bullet to
my brain, and every single bullet
will just help me realize that the
dreams that we are saving are the
ones we've left behind. And maybe
if you kill me, you can just leave
me for dead. And find another way
to kill the voices in my head. And
when I'm dead and gone you can save
the prophecy for just another time
where there will never be a need.*

He BLACKS OUT.

END SONG

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Everything is BLURRY. A female face starts to come into view, backlit by bright light.

PETER
God?

Everything sharpens. It's Mrs. Harding.

PETER (CONT'D)
...shit...

It's a soulless hospital room complete with a SNORING ELDERLY MAN in the next bed. Mrs. Harding sanitizes her hands.

PETER (CONT'D)
Is this Hell?

MRS. HARDING
Scarborough.

PETER
In my experience...same difference.

Peter laughs, an ugly sound.

MRS. HARDING
Seems you're not as loved as you thought you were.

PETER
Sorry I didn't die.

MRS. HARDING
Apology accepted. As a member of the board, I am proud to announce you are formerly expelled.

PETER
Yay...

MRS. HARDING (CONT'D)
We will be pressing charges. Your brother is also expelled. And sadly, there's been some more layoffs...

PETER
So why are you here?

The old man SNORES. Mrs. Harding closes the curtain and puts a hand on the IV. Then drops an envelope onto Peter's chest. He opens it, revealing a cheque for \$100,000.

MRS. HARDING

Or...no one expelled. Your father gets his job back. Instead of jail, you can go to university.

PETER

Why you helping me?

MRS. HARDING

What do you think happens when they find out you - YOU - could be bought?

(it's a promise)

And they will find out.

PETER

Things need to change.

MRS. HARDING

Well, we don't want them changed.

Peter feels the FIBRE of the cheque.

PETER

It's double what my dad makes in a year.

MRS. HARDING

That's my coffee money.

She squeezes the IV bag for fun then grabs her bag.

MRS. HARDING (CONT'D)

You know what your problem is. You're eighteen and you say in my experience.

She leaves Peter alone. He stares at the cheque.

PETER

Fuck...

INT. ST. PAUL HIGH SCHOOL, FOYER/HALLWAYS - DAYS LATER

STUDENTS stare as Peter shuffles around the repaired, yet now caged, statue of Saint Paul and down the hallways. Jacked Rugby Player shoulders him as she passes.

JACKED RUGBY PLAYER
 (to Peter)
 Fucking rich kids.

Peter hangs his head and keeps walking, past Mr. Siemens who is ripping down a fresh set of posters of Peter, with red text: "ANTICHRIST = \$100k. BETRAYAL = PRICELESS."

CAFETORIUM - LATER

Peter is a pariah with his tray of poutine. He goes to Loca and Michael's table. They simply get up and move away.

PETER
 Guys.

Loca comes back and flips Peter's poutine on his head. He turns around and finds Mac.

PETER (CONT'D)
 Hey.

Mac kicks him in the nuts. Peter turtles in the fetal position. The cafetorium erupts in laughter. Two SECURITY GUARDS grab Mac and drag him off.

MUSIC ROOM - LATER

Peter is alone in the dark. He pulls out a guitar and strums four simple chords over and over.

MICHELLE (O.S.)
 Shut the fuck up!

She bolts up from a nap behind a row of chairs.

PETER
 Thought you had an office for that.

Michelle kicks a chair at him. Then nurses her foot. The P.A. cackles.

VERONICA (O.S.)
 Hello students. New student council president Veronica Sawyer here. Just a pleasant reminder to be on your best behaviour for the final assembly tomorrow!

Michelle knocks over another chair (for good measure).

PETER
 Didn't get valedictorian?

Michelle scoffs and goes to the door.

MICHELLE
 I can't be mad. 'Cause you did exactly what I would do. But at least I'm honest.

PETER
 Yep. "Honest."

They stare at each other. Peter continues to play the four chords.

MICHELLE
 Richard played that.

Peter nods. Michelle listens.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
 He always defended you. Whenever I opened up. How distant you were. How self-centered. Said we should stick together.

PETER
 Because you can always hire one half of the poor to kill the other.

MICHELLE
 Yeah.

Peter continues to play. Michelle gets emotional.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
 I didn't pick up the phone. I told him. If you ever feel, like, if you're ever gonna do something bad, call me. Just call me. And I didn't pick up the phone.

Michelle grabs a cello from a nearby case and plays an accompaniment. She knows the words.

MUSIC UP: THESE FOUR CHORDS

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
These four chords, they are my life. They are everything I hide.
 (MORE)

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

*And it hurts when you turn away,
And all those words you'll never
say. Hold me tight so I can
breathe, all of life's a tragedy
and you know it will never change.*

Peter changes the progression when needed.

MICHELLE/PETER

*I'm not crazy, not me baby. I'm not
crazy, not me baby.*

MICHELLE

*These four chords, they bring me
down. But they're all I've got
somehow. The beginning of the end.
But we shall sing these words
again. Hold me close so when I die,
There's some meaning to this life.
There's some meaning to my life.
E-yay-ay.*

MICHELLE/PETER

*I'm not crazy, not me baby. I'm not
crazy, not me baby.*

MICHELLE

*Oh, my love. Oh, my love.
Oh, my love. Oh, my love.*

PETER

*Hey-yay, e-yay-ay-ay-e-yay-
ay.
Hey-yay, e-yay-ay-ay-e-yay-
ay.*

Michelle starts playing with a bow. A musical interlude.

MICHELLE

*These four chords, they are my
life. They are everything inside.
And it hurts when you walk away,
Leaving me to face the day. Alone.*

They sit in silence.

END SONG

INT. WAREHOUSE, CAFETERIA - NIGHT

Peter and Howie in their usual spots.

PETER

Work Saturday?

Howie nods.

PETER (CONT'D)

Sucks.

HOWIE

It's a job.

Peter fiddles with his employee swipe card.

HOWIE (CONT'D)

I'm never going to be a millionaire, Peter. That doesn't mean I'm not happy with my life.

PETER

What should I do?

HOWIE

You're looking at the problem. Look for solutions.

PETER

Dad...

HOWIE

That's the problem. Look for solutions.

Peter doesn't quite get it.

EXT. MAUSOLEUM - DUSK

Peter sits at the foot of RICHARD HARDING's sarcophagus reading the BLACK NOTEBOOK.

At the last page, he catches something in the margins: "ERDINGTON."

A FLASHLIGHT BEAM appears on his face. He jumps to face Domino who keeps the beam aimed at him.

DOMINO

Joint?

PETER

No thanks.

Peter takes out his keys as brass knuckles. Domino raises her hands.

DOMINO

No carpet knife.

She lights a joint and puts it on Richard's headstone then sparks one for herself. They have a moment of silence.

PETER
What the fuck?

DOMINO
It gave you a way out. System's rigged.

She lies down beside Richard's sarcophagus.

DOMINO (CONT'D)
If this is ever gonna happen.
Someone's going to have to have
everything then give it up.
(takes a drag)
How much?

PETER
One hundred K.

DOMINO
I'd sell you out for that. That's
how they get you.

Peter offers Domino Richard's notebook. Domino doesn't take it.

DOMINO
No. The Gospel's not in there.

She points to her head, then her heart.

DOMINO (CONT'D)
It is what you want it to be.

PETER
What are you going to do?

DOMINO
As your Judas-ass prevented my
expulsion, I'm gonna get my little
paper that says I can do things.
Then go my own way until I die.
Which I suspect will be before I'm
thirty.

She gets to her feet and strolls into the dark.

DOMINO (CONT'D)
Richard picked the wrong prophet.

She disappears. Peter looks at Richard's sarcophagus. He kicks the latte cups at the foot of the tomb and storms towards the exit.

EXT. CEMETERY - DUSK (MAGIC HOUR)

Peter rushes through the headstones. He trips and falls.

Lying there, he stares up at the light-polluted sky then gets to his knees.

There's feet in front of him. He looks up to see Richard (civilian clothes) looking down. Peter gets to his feet.

PETER
How do I die?

RICHARD
It's not how you die...

Peter breaks into tears. Richard cradles him in his arms.

RICHARD
I have to go.

PETER
Don't.

RICHARD
I have to go.

He kisses the Prophet on the forehead then walks off towards a bright horizon. Peter watches. Soft ACOUSTIC GUITAR...

MUSIC UP: HAPPY ENDINGS

RICHARD (V.O.)
*So you're going home, and no matter
what they tell you, you can't help
but feel alone. No matter what you
do, you know you'll always lose,
and you're tired of this game. What
are you holding onto? The
possibilities of your life have
long faded away. There's nothing
left to say, so let's say it
anyway. Some times these things
won't change.*

Richard disappears into the distant light, leaving Peter alone.

INT. MRS. HARDING'S CAR - DAY

Peter and Mrs. Harding sit in the back.

RICHARD (V.O.)

But I need to believe in happy endings. I need to believe. I don't want to face the darkness alone, though I know in my heart, it's the only way to go.

Mrs. Harding hands Peter a FOLDED PAPER.

MRS. HARDING

One misstep. I take it all back.

She types on her phone.

MRS. HARDING (CONT'D)

(under breath)

Bloody e-mail.

INT. ST. PAUL HIGH SCHOOL, CAFETORIUM - LATER

STUDENTS funnel into the cafetorium, including Michelle, now just one of the masses.

RICHARD (V.O.)

What is there left to fix? We are all broken people struggling to reminisce, about a time when we were clean, I still forget what that means, drop the curtain on this scene.

MUSIC ROOM - LATER

Peter watches Loca hook up a lav microphone to FATHER CHARLIE (57, white robes). She gives him a look of ice.

RICHARD (V.O.)

I need to believe in happy endings. I need to believe. I don't want to face the darkness alone, though I know in my heart, it's the only way I can go.

THE FOYER/HALLWAYS - MOMENTS LATER

Peter carries a large crucifix in the midst of a PROGRESSION led by Veronica, who holds a big-ass Bible over her head.

RICHARD (V.O.)

I will pray for you. I will pray for you. In the darkest of nights, there's a beacon of light, if we hold onto something, we might make it out alright. If you just learn to stay and to have a little faith, who knows how things could change?

Peter eyes the half-repaired Saint Paul statue.

CAFETORIUM - CONTINUOUS

The progression enters. STUDENTS mutter to one another as Peter passes.

RICHARD (V.O.)

I need to believe. I need to believe. I don't want to face the darkness alone, though I know in my heart it's the only way I can go. I need to believe in happy endings. I need to believe.

Peter places the large crucifix in a stand and takes his seat beside Mrs. Harding on the stage.

END SONG

Father Charlie stands up.

FATHER CHARLIE

Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Outside of him there is no salvation.

STUDENTS

Amen.

CAFETORIUM STAGE - LATER

Veronica is at the podium.

VERONICA

It is such an honour to be your valedictorian and student council co-president. Now a few words from our very own, Peter Charles.

PROJECTION BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Michael and Loca at their posts.

MICHAEL

Technical difficulties?

Loca shakes her head.

LOCA

Let's just get this over with.

CAFETORIUM - CONTINUOUS

Peter approaches the podium. The crowd stares in utter silence.

PETER

A reading from Paul's Letter to the Ephesians. "You were made alive when you were dead in transgressions and sins. But God, being rich in mercy, for his great love with which he loved us made us alive together with Christ. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourself; it is the gift of God, not of works, that no one would boast."

Peter unfolds Mrs. Harding's FOLDED PAPER and reads.

PETER (CONT'D)

I am a sinner. I've made so many mistakes. I apologize to the Administration, I apologize to God, I apologize to all of you for leading you astray. There is only one God, he has only one Son and he has only one Church. Outside of it there is no salvation.

He takes his seat. Mrs. Harding smirks: victory.

Veronica goes back to the podium.

VERONICA

And now, to talk about the catwalk fund...your ex-student council co-president. Michelle LeMay.

There is some SNICKERING in the crowd as Michelle walks to the podium from her spot in the audience.

She and Peter share a look.

MICHELLE

(bored)

The catwalk fund has been a huge success. Over four hundred of you gave your spare change to ensure that what happened to our Beloved Richard Harding, never happens again.

Polite applause.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

While all donations were cherished, we would like to acknowledge the following generosity. Veronica Reynolds. Five hundred dollars.

Polite applause again. Veronica jumps forward and waves.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

William Kramer. Five hundred dollars.

William Kramer's turn to stand.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Mrs. Sandra Harding. One thousand dollars. Mr. Damian Forrester. Two hundred dollars.

Mrs. Harding and Mr. Forrester wave kindly.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Peter Charles. One hundred thousand dollars.

The polite applause evaporates. The silence hangs heavy. A shocked Mrs. Harding turns to Peter.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

As we have exceeded our target of ten thousand dollars, the remaining funds have been donated to Action Now, a not-for-profit fighting against child workshops in developing countries. Such as Malaysia.

She leaves the podium and flashes Mrs. Harding a "fuck you" smile.

The silence hangs.

Jacked Rugby Player stands up.

JACKED RUGBY PLAYER

Lucky sperm!

Some other STUDENTS stand up.

STUDENTS

Lucky sperm! Lucky sperm! Lucky sperm!

Mr. Siemens tries to get at Jacked Rugby Player, but the crowd picks up the chant.

Peter stands up. Then rips off his uniform top.

WILD APPLAUSE.

MUSIC UP: EXODUS/WE WILL RISE

To the tune of UNTITLED.

PETER

To live is to die, to die is just part of this thing we call life and the moments we choose. As this is my time, I will spend it the way that I choose.

He walks towards the door.

PETER (CONT'D)

To dream is to smile, to smile is resistance, because life is strife and these days can be cruel. But I really don't mind, I will fight to the end of my time. 'Cause all that we have is one shining moment, all that we have is one moment alive.

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

All that I have is this fucking moment and our moment is now. Our moment is NNNNNOOOOOOOOWWWWWW!

And he leaves. Right through the door.

PROJECTION BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Loca and Michael are baffled.

MICHAEL

We should stay.

Loca shakes her head.

LOCA

We should go.

GRADUATION HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Peter marches towards the doors at the end.

PETER

It never will change. It never will change. I've got love in my heart and that's all I can say. No more moments of weakness, no more moments of struggle, only moments of truth, only moments of life. I've had my moments of weakness, my moments of struggle, but my moment is now. My moment is NOW!

MRS. HARDING (O.S.)

You're done.

She stands at the other end, some TEACHERS and STUDENTS off to one side, watching the showdown.

MRS. HARDING (CONT'D)

And your brother. Your father. I will bury you.

Peter marches back.

PETER

E-R-D-ONE-N-G-T-O-N.

Mrs. Harding's face betrays recognition.

PETER (CONT'D)

Your Golden Boy gave me the password. So I exported all your e-mails to a couple harddrives. Just in case. Because if you ever lay a single finger on any one of my people.

He nods his head to the watching students. Then gets real close so only Mrs. Harding hears.

PETER (CONT'D)

I will eat your fucking heart.

Mrs. Harding actually seems impressed.

MRS. HARDING

Well played.

He kisses her on both cheeks then walks off. To the tune of WORKING CLASS LAMENT...

PETER

That light is blinking and now I'm thinking how it's come to the end. No more hours until I can breathe. I'm finally starting to be something. We are salvation, we make ourselves pure. And we're gonna be something more. We're the children of the new world.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

In the middle of the field is Domino, smoking a joint. Peter walks up to her.

DOMINO

What took you so long?

Peter shrugs.

PETER

You should have been the Prophet then.

DOMINO

I'm not the Prophet. I'm God.

Peter laughs.

PETER

So what now?

DOMINO

Fuck if I know.

They share a moment of warmth. Then Peter stares straight ahead and marches off school property.

Domino looks back to the school. The whole STUDENT BODY follows in exodus.

END CREDITS.

Operatic in scope...

VOICES (V.O.)

*I feel the light burn brighter as
the flames rise higher. We will
live forever as we rise together.
When the Gods won't kill us, but
sacrifice our children. We will
stand united, we will stand
enlightened. As the days grow
longer, as our dreams may languish.
As our doubts envelop, we still
rise together. These times are
meant for yearning, desires sating
burning. As our words may falter,
let us rise together. We will rise
together. We will rise together. We
will rise together.*

END SONG

INTRODUCTION

"In the beginning was the Word..."
- RICHARD (or the Bible)

In Grade 12, I attempted a feature script, a clunky thing, whose aim was getting high school *right*. I had a desperate need for filmic representation, to explore the pressures and angst-filled daily trials of high school students without a storybook ending. It felt that any actualized film or television show had a disingenuous yet vested interest in soothing us: "don't worry, everything will all be fine."

The pacifier becomes an insult. Things won't be fine. Life is not fair, and adults do not have all the answers. Growing up is a struggle between self-doubt and self-actualization and we do not always win. *Operation Untitled* thus evolved to reflect harsher realities where the very institutions of Education, Capitalistic individual initiative and Religion, hallowed concepts of our youth, become sirens that lead children to spiritual atrophy and emotional destruction. We feel betrayed and ill equipped to deal with the dragons of our day, though our worst crime may be the fact that we listened, as children do, without

the fortitude and confidence to question the sacred words of those who "knew better."

My aim is to frame *Operation Untitled* as a war between two forces, the individual against the socio-political and religious winds hell-bent on shaping her or him, with a Catholic high school as the arena where these two armies clash and meet. The interior battle follows in this vein with the well-intentioned dogma of teachers, employers and parents feeding the self-doubt that lies in direct opposition to the personal discoveries my characters are destined to make.

This preamble and the script itself are not intended as appetizers for a rancor pity party: personal accountability does come into play, both in life and story. At some point, we have to give up our querulous nature and get on with it, choosing to live for the future, rather than be shackled to the past. Choice in this vein is our most potent and individualistic declaration and thus *Operation Untitled* ends with an exodus: one student gets up and leaves the old behind. Others may certainly follow, but a simple truth remains. We must all walk this path alone.

THE SYSTEM

My swath through the vast topical fields of Education, Capitalism and Religion will be narrowed to the experiences of a teenager, a Canadian and Catholic, as it would take far greater minds and pages to fully envelop the complexities of these behemoth systems in their entirety.

While "the system" as an identifier has become somewhat overcooked, it still remains the simplest way to identify and label the amalgamation of forces that serve as the main antagonism in *Operation Untitled*¹. They are thus: Education, Capitalistic individual initiative and Religion, and they actively work in unison to shape the world of our story.

EDUCATION

"The only thing that interferes with my learning is my education." - Albert Einstein

"In the first place, God made idiots. That was for practice. Then he made school boards."
- Mark Twain

I would like to make a distinction between Education and education, the latter being the dictionary defined "act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge" (1). Education however is not learning. Education is an

¹ Far better than "The Man!"

institution that *manufactures* learning, and due to this, it holds an ideological struggle in its very nature by presupposing qualitative forms of knowing. In his now famous TED talk "Do schools kill creativity?" Sir Ken Robinson notes that all education systems across the world hold "the same hierarchy of subjects" with mathematics and languages at the pinnacle followed by the humanities, with the lowly arts clinging to the bottom rung of relevance:

There were no public systems of education really before the 19th century. They all came into being to meet the needs of industrialism.... So you were probably steered benignly away from things at school when you were a kid, things you liked, on the grounds you would never get a job doing that (Robinson "Schools").

Robinson continues this line of inquiry in *Out of Our Minds*, where he illuminates the Western education system's development as a means to create literate factory workers, with British legislation, such as the 1944 Education Act, as "social engineering that was designed to meet the needs of the post-war industrial economy" (Robinson "Minds" 101). In this context, the origin of Education was pragmatic, not idealistic, with an aim to crafting individuals able to

perform basic tasks as opposed to well-rounded people operating at the peak of their potential. The emphasis, thus, is on churning out followers, not leaders.

This is not an indictment of teachers or those who have given their lives to spark the flame of learning in charges they clearly love. Robinson fully acknowledges the good intentions permeating Education, noting how the US's 'No Child Left Behind Act' "was composed by serious people with the best interests of the country in mind" (61). Good intentions are not on trial here, the charges are instead being laid at the feet of an institution that proclaims to know what's best for us, instead of teaching us the tools to sort that out for ourselves. This Education is the Saint Paul Catholic Secondary of *Operation Untitled* and it is one of the dominos our protagonist Peter will seek to topple. Though there is a funny thing about good intentions - I'm sure they've paved a road somewhere.

CLASS AND CAPITALISM

"Class is warfare." - DOMINO

In his TED talk, Frans de Waal showcases an experiment where two Capuchin monkeys are paid unequally for equal work. Upon the performance of a basic task, one monkey is rewarded with a cucumber, the other with a delicious grape.

After several repetitions, the lower-paid monkey tosses his cucumber and rattles the bars of his cage, actions De Waal equates to "the [2011 Occupy] Wall Street Protest." The experiment's aim is to explore primal reactions with regard to the concept of "Fairness," and it becomes clear, at least in the cages of these Capuchin monkeys, that inequality spawns aggression and hurt feelings.

In *The Epic of America*, James Truslow Adams defines the American Dream as a vision:

of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable...regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position (214-215).

Despite its roots, it is an ethos I feel most Canadians identify with, a creed promulgated in our schools and by our parents, that we can be anything we want to be as long as we just work hard and believe. Graduates however are uncovering the lugubrious and inexorable truth: this beguiling dream of hard work=success has become at best, incomplete, and at worst, a nightmare. To truly succeed, you need more far more than dreams.

In Malcolm Gladwell's *Outliers: The Story of Success*, he extrapolates:

...success arises out of the steady accumulation of advantages: when and where you are born, what your parents did for a living, and what the circumstances of your upbringing were...(175-176).

He cites the research of Annette Lareau, who upon conducting a study of third graders over vast race and class distinctions, notes the sense of "entitlement" that middle class children learn through concerted cultivation: "they knew the rules" (105). When a middle class child fails to qualify for a gifted program, her mother has her daughter retested then petitions the school until she is eventually admitted, a stark contrast to the poor parents who "are intimidated by authority" (104).

These distinctions turn frighteningly clear in the adult world. Alexandra Kimball relates her struggles to support herself as a journalist: "this is about more than money; it's about class" (3). As careers in creative industries require a portentous amount of time developing said creative skill sets and the fact that the current job market is severely limited with all entry-level positions being unpaid, those who can afford to work for free - or have networking contacts that lead to greener pastures - are the ones who rise to the top. Success requires:

...a concept of 'work' that is most easily gained from privilege...a sense of entitlement, the ability to network and self-promote without seeing yourself as an arrogant, schmoozing blowhard. And it requires you to think of working for free...as an opportunity rather than an insult or a scam (Kimball 6).

J. Maureen Henderson builds on Kimball's observations, noting editors can often tell which interns "had night jobs based on their work performance compared to those who didn't have to worry about paying bills after-hours" with this division "always based on socioeconomic class" (4). According to Ross Eisenbrey:

Unpaid internships...exclude students from poorer families who can't afford to work for nothing for a summer or a semester, especially after they graduate from college with tens of thousands of dollars of student loan debt. The children of affluent families, on the other hand, can afford to live in the most expensive cities in the U.S., such as New York and Washington, making contacts, building their resumes, and sometimes even learning skills, while their parents pay for their room and board, travel and entertainment (5).

This is not to condemn children from middle class or upper class families. Personal privilege and work ethic are not mutually exclusive. It does however set the bar at different levels for different people while at the same time our children are being inculcated with the ideal that we are all equal.

With great shame I must confess that it took me considerable time to escape this spell of Capitalistic individual initiative, hard work always being a pinnacle of virtue in my family. I always felt implicit in this promise of sweat and blood was that it was the sole requirement for success and happiness, wealthy people simply being those who have already paid the piper. This realization and dissolution of innocence is another domino that will topple for Peter in *Operation Untitled*.

RELIGION

*"So go on outside. And run away
Burn this fucker down for they all must pay
For the lies they tell and their blasphemy
Telling you that God isn't in your reach."*

- THE PROPHET

In his memoir *Hitch-22*, Christopher Hitchens refers to his English boarding school days as his introduction to totalitarianism, a model based on "quintessential servility" and:

...drawn from monotheistic religion, where love is compulsory and must be offered to a higher being whom one must necessarily also fear. The fact that the headmaster held the prayerbook and the Bible during the services also drove home...that religion is an excellent reinforcement of shaky temporal authority (54).

Anthropologist Clifford Geertz defines religion as:

...a set of symbols which...establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations...by...formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and...clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality...[that] the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic (qtd. in Lyden 42).

As with Education, Religion as a force presupposes forms of knowing, then makes claims that: 1) what it says is true; and 2) what it says is just. Christianity believes Jesus Christ was a real person, both Man and God, whose death was a public sacrifice for the sins of the world. They believe this actually happened. And they believe it is good this happened as a means to connect God and humanity (no firm

reason has ever been given to me why an all-powerful God was incapable of doing this beforehand).

There is dangerous implicit knowledge in this. Christianity makes assumptions about the nature of human beings as fallible sinners in **need** of redemption, who are born into Original Sin. This is atonement theology:

because of the original sin of Adam...human beings were separated from God [who]...sent his son to...die as payment for the sins of the world. Only the sacrifice of a pure, sinless, divine being would be sufficient to pay this enormous debt (Grace 14).

Life thus evolves to a guilt-filled, masochistic struggle of getting back into the black with our all-powerful and "loving" Creator. Jesus is our one-way ticket and Christians believe that only by accepting him as your Saviour, will you be saved.

These assumptions are cloaked in a power structure (or is it the other way around?) According to belief and practice, Jesus started a Church through Peter. For Catholics, Peter remains the first Pope and the current Francis becomes the most recent incarnation in a long line of God's representation on earth. This invocation of authority is heard by Catholics worldwide, and access to

God and Jesus, like all roads, leads to Rome. Salvation thus becomes a resource that is controlled and accessible only through Catholicism.

Regardless of Christianity's truth claims, teaching children they **need** a Saviour, and by extension a Church to interpret Him, is utterly disempowering. The focus becomes on what we lack rather than on what we are and I posit this contributes to an inferiority complex when it is imposed upon those who are already disadvantaged by their socio-economic class and taught to follow by the Education of their youth. These people are reinforced as second-class citizens, who like Annette Lareau's poor parents are intimidated by an authority that conditions its charges to remember that the way to salvation lies only through their gates. Together these forces of Education, Capitalism and Religion create a capricious climate, which promulgates an equal, fair and utopian order of existence in theory, while contradicting it at every turn in practice. Peter's journey in *Operation Untitled* will be to discover this discrepancy before rallying others in his fight to bring chaos to this "order."

THE SCREENPLAY

PREVIOUS FILMS

Due to the plethora of material that cover the adolescent years, I've narrowed my film and television references to works that contain at least some of the following factors:

- a) High school: *Glee* (2009-2013), *The Breakfast Club* (1985), *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (1986), *Election* (1999), *Heathers* (1988), *Pump up the Volume* (1990);
- b) Protest, rebellion and revolution: *The Breakfast Club* (1985), *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (1986), *Pump up the Volume* (1990);
- c) Satire: *Election* (1999), *Heathers* (1988);
- d) Musicals: *Glee* (2009-2013), *Moulin Rouge!* (2001), *Cabaret* (1972); and
- e) Divine revelation: *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988).

One aspect of life that film and television illustrate quite well is the systematic and all-encompassing nature of the high school world. It becomes your life. Christopher Hitchens perfectly encapsulates:

The conventional word that is employed to describe tyranny is 'systematic.' The true essence of a

dictatorship is in fact not its regularity but its unpredictability and *caprice*; those who live under it must never be able to relax, must never be quite sure if they have followed the rules correctly or not (51, *emphasis his*).

In *The Breakfast Club*, the self-labeled "criminal" John Bender (Judd Nelson) commits a small act of rebellion by removing a key screw in the library door, preventing it from remaining open and allowing Vice Principal Richard Vernon (Paul Gleason) a vantage point on his detention charges. When Vernon's misguided attempt to use a magazine stand to hinge the door fails, he assuages his embarrassment by laying the blame at "athlete" Andrew Clark's (Emilio Estevez) feet (who had been instructed to help him): "I expected a little more from a varsity letterman". There are many of these moments where the detained teens are utterly confused as Vernon barks commands ("don't move, don't talk"). As Clark tries to assist Vernon, Bender, in trademark fashion, points out the contradiction: "if he gets up, we'll all get up. It will be anarchy!"

In *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, Edward Rooney (Jeffrey Jones) claims Ferris Bueller's (Matthew Broderick) nine

absences stand as a dangerous disease that will cause "good students" to go tardy. Rooney must at all costs, including breaking and entering Ferris' home, expose and punish him; and what better way than holding him back from emancipation aka graduation? These examples exhibit a key cog in the systematic wheel, for in order for any institution to maintain its authority the small rules or details such as attendance are paramount. High school becomes a case study of broken window theory, the notion that "if you crack...down on small crimes, bigger crimes [will] drop as well" (Drum 2). For *Operation Untitled* to embody this concept, the school Administration (and subsequent adult realm) must appear to control the entire world, an authoritarian landscape where Catholic uniform regulations, attendance and protocols will be administered severely, frequently and with great prejudice.

There is however a caveat to the referenced films. With a surreptitious and beguiling nature, they excite us with protests and rebellions, while betraying their promise of revolutionary change by conceding this teenage resistance is nothing more than a phase, a rite of passage we all must go through. Rather than confront the inherent problems of their day, they capitulate to the high school

system and by palpable association, the entire adult world. In *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, the eponymous "day off" is nothing more than a temporal reprieve from graduation, college and a "good" job. The concept of "college" first pops up when Ferris feigns a desire to go to school, so he can earn the good marks that will promise him college and a good future. While this is an elaborate part of the "I'm sick" performance for his parents, the marks-college-job declension is never questioned. These teenagers are lost, but sadly harbour no better ideas for their future:

Cameron: "I don't know what I'm gonna do."

Sloane: "College."

Cameron: "Yeah, but to do what?"

Sloan: "What are you interested in?"

Cameron: "Nothing." (*Ferris Bueller's Day Off*)

In *Pump up the Volume*, Mark Hunter aka "Hard Harry" (Christian Slater) successfully enthralls and inspires the students through his pirate radio station, albeit his rebellion's grand moral victory is simply to spawn more radio stations that serve as outlets of teen angst, as opposed to actual solutions to their malaise. Even *The Breakfast Club*, which has several searing indictments of parents and teachers, ends with a compromise. They write

their group essay, there is the hope of friendship and romance amongst the five subalterns in the face of this systematic pressure, but in the end, they remain high school students bent on graduation and growing up. The incandescent reality of these films is the insouciant feeling that by the end of it all, despite the valid protestations, high school is a normative phase of adolescent development. It all works out in the end. In my film, if you remain in the system, it won't.

Election and *Heathers*, as satires, offer a key lesson in the extremes of tone. In the dark, campy world of *Heathers*, you are kept at a certain distance from the characters - the one exception being a moving sequence of Heather Chandler's (Kim Walker) shame after she is coerced into performing fellatio on a college freshman. In *Election*, while the fallibility and flaws of each character are on full display there is still a riveting entry point for the audience. The success of the insufferable Tracy Flick (Reese Witherspoon) and the subsequent infuriation it causes Jim McAllister (Matthew Broderick) highlights our visceral distaste for those who step on others in the name of success. I place *Operation Untitled* closer to *Election* in this sense: while there are satirical elements, my hope

is for the characters to be vivid and real enough that the injustice of the world is unveiled through dramatic, character action as opposed to pedantic didacticism.

MUSIC

Music is a powerful force, speaking to primal parts of our psyche, inspiring sorrow, love and joy individually or in equal measures. Plus, it feels epic, all encompassing, enveloping you in its embrace or as channel for your rage, betrayal and hurt. Its multifarious capabilities were enticing and the musical as a genre felt like a fitting bedfellow to the grandiose themes (individual versus society) I wished to explore in *Operation Untitled*. The songs could elevate the narrative, serving as samples of a character's personal expression or as a revolutionary paean against the status quo. The inclusion of music furthermore shapes the tone of the story, the performance aspect enhancing the allegorical undertones by requiring the audience to suspend their disbelief in a more complete way than a more reality-driven film story would require. The simplest reason, though, that *Operation Untitled* is a musical? I want it to be one.

In my review of a fairly diverse collection of musicals (on top of those referenced), I feel there are two

vital "t"s to cross, being: a) establishing music as part of the world, and b) once established, maintaining the rules set forth from its introduction. The crux to part A is beginning the story with a musical number. Once song and any form of visual choreography are introduced at puck drop², the audience will accept its presence as part of the fabric of the narrative. Part B comes from repetition. Very quickly, you learn that David Bowie and Nirvana tracks were around for French bohemians to belt out in *Moulin Rouge!* *Cabaret* instructs you that their raunchy, yet politically ripe numbers are **only** performed within the vivacious hole of the Kit Kat Klub, though the film will always check in to see how the Master of Ceremonies (Joel Grey) is fluffing the sybaritic audience.

In *Glee*, the performance-centric hub of the glee club, creates more than enough incentive for characters to bust a tune, a dance or an imaginary music video. You buy into this dream of spontaneity because you want to hear pretend teenagers emit beautiful renditions of pop music with perfectly rendered dance moves. In all three of these examples, the music is diegetic, part of the story's world

² A far more Canadian "right off the bat."

and *Operation Untitled* will be no different. With the exception of singing as a form of conscious thought or voice-over, anytime a character belts it out, others will be able to hear him or her. We all sing to ourselves and often people kindly do not listen. Most of the time people just ignore me.

DIVINE REVELATION

"...audiences will only accept one piece of magic per movie" (Synder 126, *emphasis his*)

When the visions of Richard strike Peter, several rules are thus maintained. Only Peter can see him. Richard furthermore does not physically intervene but his presence only inspires Peter into action. These basics allow key wiggle room. It could all be in his head. It could be a dream. He could be crazy. All common assumptions when anyone claims any form of out of body inspiration. Richard as a source of divine revelation thus is my one piece of magic that I'm imploring the audience to swallow. In *The Last Temptation of Christ*, the visions of Jesus (Willem Dafoe) are simplistic, heavily symbolic and arrive from an unknown source, prompting anxiety and internal conflict on interpreting the true desires of God. For Peter, Richard begins as a curse, Banquo's ghost, who seems to speak

through him at the inopportune moment of his collusion with the high school administration and Richard's mother, Mrs. Harding. Once the damage is done, and Peter is ousted from the small amount of favour he held, Richard evolves into a beacon of liberation.

In *The Case for God*, Karen Armstrong notes that in early religion; "Faith...was a matter of practical insight and active commitment; it had little to do with abstract belief or theological conjecture" (102). Dogmatic interpretation of stories and scriptures were secondary to a repurposed use of their symbols and narratives to bring meaning and understanding to one's present experience. Armstrong highlights: "In the early fourth century, however, Christianity had begun to move in a slightly different direction and developed a preoccupation with doctrinal correctness that would become its Achilles' heel" (102).

In this light, the religious overtones of prophecy, divine revelation, atonement and human sacrifice are key components of the revolution within the world of *Operation Untitled*. To Catholics, the way I tackle these subjects is blasphemy as I reappropriate sacred symbols in ways unorthodox to believers. They would surely find a wealthy

student committing suicide and inspiring a religious following as a mockery of the life and death of Jesus Christ. Lowly sinners proclaiming themselves Gods would not fare any better. Blood sacrifice and redemption are ingrained in my psyche from years of Catholic indoctrination. In high school, I utilized one-sided negotiations with God regarding my masturbation privileges, hoping that some restraint in my sexual exploration would diminish this sinful gesture in His ubiquitous eyes. It's a punchline in a humorous anecdote now, though at the time, orgasms only served to compound my guilt. In this way, *Operation Untitled* serves as my retort to the religion of my youth - my empowerment and liberation will be cloaked in the symbols of my chains.

WORLD

It reeks of narcissism to admit that the first moment I felt my life was truly unhinged was summer 2005 upon my receipt of York University's AWARD OF ACHIEVEMENT (\$16,000 + \$2,000) entrance scholarship. This meant I was just shortlisted for the *crème de la crème*, the AWARD OF DISTINCTION (\$32,000), which I'm sure was awarded to some superior blend of brain, brawn and influence. I was good, but I wasn't the best, presumably because my community

service (a key DISTINCTION component) was subpar as I had spent the extra time I was not studying brewing Tim Hortons coffee for a paltry \$6.85-8.10 an hour. The immense sense of inferiority at the top of the academic pyramid became far more pungent at York's Scholarship brunch where a standard mode of introduction was "Hello, I'm [insert douche name], what was your average?"³ I quickly learnt that while a 96-percentile was enough to win top honours at my meek little high school, it was a second-class mark for a second-class citizen in the big boy and girl world. To my chagrin, I was not the 1%.

The epitome of this feeling is a key component to the life-changing scholarship in *Operation Untitled*, where second place is a far more vivid and greater failure than any other. As a device, the John A. MacDonald scholarship covers much ground. First of all, its loss provides a lovely morsel of undeserved misfortune for our protagonist, who had expected to win it on merit. Second, it sets in motion the crucial disillusionment. To Peter, the scholarship is his future, a world without paying blood, sweat and tears at a minimum wage warehouse. It's the world

³ I remember Andrew, in business, with his 98%. Fucker.

of a prestigious university as opposed to the insipid local post-secondary offering. It's a chance to start his life right after Grade 12 instead of deferring for a year or two until he can hoard enough coin for a one-way ticket to the future⁴.

For the latent systematic tyranny eloquently captured by Hitchens to become life, it is essential to irrevocably entwine the high school world with the landscape of adulthood that lies in its succession. Peter needs to feel the forces against him are all encompassing and through the function of the school board, *it is accomplished*. Amongst its members is none other than lead antagonist Mrs. Harding as well as Mr. Raymond, the genial yet business-saavy factory owner for whom Peter and his father Howie toil. Mr. Raymond's great-grandson, in the form of Kramer - who also toils, albeit in the air-conditioned offices of upper management - offers another tether between the work-school paradigm, all the while offering a heavy dose of contrast, because at least at the warehouse, no one pretends Peter and Kramer are equals.

⁴ If I swung Señor DISTINCTION, my student debt would have shrunk from a formidable 25k to a timid 9k.

THEME & NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

"Extra Ecclesiam Nulla Salus."

-Saint Cyprian of Carthage

and common Catholic affirmation

Outside the Church there is no Salvation. The thematic soul of *Operation Untitled* is a simple rejection of this. In a more positive fashion, it is *salvation comes from within*, and after establishing a system that claims to know that the only way to fulfillment is within its walls, the true theme is realized through the eventual exodus. The school's claim of salvation lies in the marks-university-job declension. Thereby the cruelty of the system is truly on display, for in order to achieve these marks for a better future, one must maintain attendance, which would be compromised by falling on the wayward side of the Administration or uniform policy. The forces of emancipation triumph over conformity only when Peter is willing to leave everything behind on the premise that he must find something new. Better to pull a John Milton and reign in the unknown, than serve in High School indeed.

For this to come full circle, Act I is the exploration of the system as it sees itself. Students gather en masse for an assembly with only mild discernible dissent. The student council co-presidents "Golden Boy" Richard and

"Bitch-face" Michelle lead the story in *O CANADA*, the Apostle's Creed and in the tepid introduction of the school principal Mr. Forrester, indelicately dubbed "Foreskin." While Peter is inoculated by the system, he can tell something is off, compounded by the tragic scholarship loss. The Act I turning point only comes when, upon hearing that his scholarship loss was a theft and thus seeing Richard's great leap into the undiscovered country, it becomes clear to Peter that something is truly rotten in the state of Denmark.

Act IIA is a clash between two forces within Peter, that of political collusion with the powers that be - as Peter as witness actually holds a commodity they want - and the guilt-inspired divine visions of a bloody Richard. In lieu of the former, Peter tries to game the system: as playing by the rules didn't quite pan out, he will now make back-alley political deals to achieve his ends, jumping eagerly through the hoops he senses Mrs. Harding have set up for him to prove his merit. This outer need is riposted and sabotaged by an inner one, anthropomorphized by visions of a Saviour-like Richard whose influence possesses Peter at inopportune moments. The forces of Richard win when Peter is truly humbled as a political amateur, upon the

realization that with the rigged student council by-election, he is merely a Terry Malloy ready to dive for the glory of another fucking rich kid.

The Prophet's subsequent Richard-inspired revolutionary paean at the election debate hits the midpoint with a strong right hook. For the first time, students pay attention to him as a potential leader, whilst the powers that be ensure he's punished with a timely suspension culminating with the degradation of his academic marks and a layoff at his after-school job. Having "lost everything," the Prophet turns to Richard, and using the angsty musings of the "Golden Boy," he crafts an alternative Gospel with the help of Domino, a new-age anarchist who is more than content to watch the world burn. The eponymous Operation Untitled is their scheme - to break enough windows of authority so the entire student body rises up in solidarity to throw off the mantle of systemic oppression. Peter, now "the Prophet" almost succeeds by the culmination of Act IIB, after having demonstrated he's a powder keg no longer fettered by threats of his own expulsion, when he manages to bring a significant portion of the student body to his picket line.

Act III launches once Peter's rebel forces are decimated by Mrs. Harding's timely police intervention. With Peter wounded (by a distrustful Domino), expelled with his brother and friends and with his father laid off from the warehouse, Mrs. Harding coordinates a true offer from the devil. Despite her and the school's technical victory in maintaining order, she needs to slay the moral one won by the students. "The Prophet" must die. And the pen is mightier for the job especially when it crafts a cheque for \$100,000. It's enough money for Peter to realize all of his dreams of post-secondary glory (plus no one he cares about is expelled or laid off)! Peter knows though, as does Mrs. Harding, that accepting it will betray everything he has won. Despite this, he succumbs and is ostracized by his followers and friends, having won the world but lost his soul in return. In the end, with Michelle's aid, he donates the complete proceeds of the \$100,000 to the catwalk fund, a laughable charity set up to cover Richard's suicide as an accident, as well as the anti-child labour protest group that has been campaigning against the school uniforms of St. Paul Catholic Secondary. With the blood money cleansed, the Prophet starts a one person exodus, not sure whether he'll be expelled, not caring what lies behind, only sure

that he needs to head out and uncover something greater ahead.

CHARACTERS & A NOTE ON THE NICKNAMES

In past versions of the script, there has been some discernable opposition to referring to this myriad cast of characters by, sometimes unbecoming, nicknames. I've sensed this throughout the process and have made attempts to mitigate and assuage any prose-like or archetypal symptoms from the script. At first, my simplest retort was that these nicknames **are** their names. High school students rarely communicate in such a full breadth when it comes to names as everything is shortened for succinctness. I was referred to as BAH-DARNIT in portions of my high school days, namely from the costive grunts emanating from me during bench press workouts. JD was a kinder shorthand though I had to wait until university to be blessed with this and other non-constipated identifiers.

I also hoped to actualize Blake Synder's "Limp and Eye Patch" axiom where "every character has to have...something memorable that will stick him [or her] in the reader's mind" (157). Another consideration was the thematic link to the title, where everyone was "untitled", with the underlying implicit potential that we can all earn a new

name that is truly ours in due time - our names like our paths set by individual action not systematic convention. In light of these aims, it still became clear that with these unusual monikers, I was alienating a good portion of my audience.

As a solution for my final polish, I've now referred to the majority of my characters by their real names in the script, while having them referenced as their nicknames within the world of the story. I hope this is not a compromise but a mutually beneficial enhancement. The nicknames still add a little colour, as well as strong first impressions: Michael is that guy in a sweater-vest who always demonstrates perfect uniform policy. An exception to these changes are Loca and Domino, both of whom eschew their real names for self-created identities. Loca is intelligent, confident, mordant when required as well as tech-saavy, though to the ADHD world of high school, Mexican is the flavour that rises above the rest. For Domino, her name serves as a constant reminder that she is a ticking time bomb always on the cusp of setting everything (and everyone) off.

Some of the nickname resistance had been towards the character of Michelle ("Bitch-face"), with one of my

university professors equating her identifier to the act of calling someone of African descent the "n-word" or "spear chucker." I always felt that overly harsh, as many characters in *Operation Untitled* hold unsavoury shorthands, such as the principal Mr. Forrester ("Foreskin") and his right hand Mr. Siemens ("Semen") (cruelly labeled such due to a surname beginning in "Fore" in the case of the former and snow-white hair with respect to the latter). Plus, Michelle LeMay's nickname "Bitch-face" is part of a character arc, tracing her from an ambitious girl of humble means to a mature woman who contributes to the fall of the system that killed her love, Richard. I hope now with Michelle as her primary identifier, her nickname can now be seen in this thematic light rather than as an unpleasant distraction of what some considered latent patriarchy.

It's the goal of every writer to create vivid, memorable and real characters, and I've always experienced stress over crafting people that share parts of me though not my sex. The most honest solution I can come up with is doing my utmost to ensure each character maintains their autonomy. In his spectacular article "5 Ways Modern Men Are Trained to Hate Women," David Wong ridicules the standard, male-driven story convention of female characters being

nothing more than trophies to award male protagonists upon the completion of their quests (11). There really is no happy romantic resolution for Peter in *Operation Untitled*, not out of spite, but simply because I didn't feel any female characters would want him by the story's end. While Michelle loved Richard, her journey, like Peter's, is hers alone and, despite sharing a previous relationship and final moment of solidarity with him, they must travel their separate paths.

PROCESS

During my brief though fruitful experience as a Tutorial Assistant, I intuited two different types of writers. The simple ones, who are able to craft story from the ground up, taking characters and pitting them in dynamic situations rife with conflict; and the complex ones, who juggled ambitious emotions and themes into a convoluted, didactic mess. The simple ones are the better writers as they write stories where **stuff happens**. The complex ones have to learn this language of action - show, don't tell! - and most of my journey has been diluting my abstract and grandiose ramblings into something concise and hopefully credible and fresh.

With each draft, I've aimed to simplify the plot to give more breath to characters. The life-changing scholarship that launches the story began as a convoluted set-up piece where the Prophet uncovers the school's betrayal through several drawn out sequences involving the high school averages of several students. It was thus trimmed to become concentrated on a one-sided battle waged by Peter against Richard, one that reveals the high school world in which they operate. Richard's Operation Untitled also had expansive and redundant versions, where it became a long line of pranks with little greater dramatic purpose. To solve this, the main offensive was simplified to a single, major dramatic point (the uniform and attendance assault), which is countered by Peter's pending expulsion. This in turns escalates to students flocking to the main office, forcing the Administration to realize how this resistance has become a movement.

Further work has been given to character, especially in ironing out a clear, active journey for Peter. One of the key changes was to ensure that his collusion with the Administration and Mrs. Harding in Act IIA was also his idea, while his guilt and inner morality **actively** acts to sabotage his political aspirations. I always knew Peter

would be decisive once the revolution began, but a lot of work was needed in keeping him bustling yet inefficacious in the first half of the screenplay. His dramatic purpose in Act I thus became his internal debate on Richard, shown through his contradictory desires to on one hand, be a good sport and congratulate a boy who (he thinks) honestly beat him, while at the same time, seeking his vengeance on someone who has stolen everything from him.

CONCLUSION

Operation Untitled, tritely enough, has been a long journey, and a tough one. While I am conscious of this script and conceptual document being an academic work, it is also an offering, a personal one and it would seem dishonest, at least to me, to deny that in the following where I've written "I feel I have," a part of me really means "I hope." I feel I have created believable characters that, like all of us, simply want to be happy. I feel I have created a high school that feels all encompassing, a place where the fear, confusion and credulity of Education feels real, a place the audience can believe these characters are truly trapped, unaware, until the end, that the key to their chains lies within. I feel there is a tinge of inspiration when the theme is fulfilled, the moment Peter ("the Prophet") walks out, not sure what is ahead of him, but sure it's a hell of a lot better than any school or church. But most of all, I feel this script, which in all its ambition, mild melodrama and sincerity - the closest thing I've written that feels like me - is at the very least good. We all walk this path alone, but it's a sure lot better with company. Thank you for reading.

FILMOGRAPHY

The Breakfast Club. Dir. John Hughes. Perf. Emilio Estevez, Judd Nelson, Molly Ringwald, Anthony Michael Hall and Paul Gleason. Universal Pictures, 1985.

Cabaret. Dir. Bob Fosse. Perf. Liza Minnelli, Michael York, Joel Grey, Helmut Griem and Fritz Wepper. Allied Artists Pictures, 1972.

Election. Dir. Alexander Payne. Perf. Matthew Broderick, Reese Witherspoon, Chris Klein, Jessica Campbell and Mark Harelik. Paramount Pictures, 1999.

Ferris Bueller's Day Off. Dir. John Hughes. Perf. Matthew Broderick, Alan Ruck, Mia Sara, Jeffrey Jones and Jennifer Grey. Paramount Pictures, 1986.

Glee. Creators Ian Brennan, Brad Falchuk, Ryan Murphy. Perf. Matthew Morrison, Jane Lynch, Lea Michele, Cory Monteith and Chris Colfer. Fox, 2009-2013.

Heathers. Dir. Michael Lehmann. Perf. Winona Ryder, Christian Slater, Shannen Doherty, Lisanne Falk and Kim Walker. New World Pictures, 1988.

The Last Temptation of Christ. Dir. Martin Scorsese. Perf. Willem Dafoe, Harvey Keitel, Barbara Hershey, Harry Dean Stanton and Davie Bowie. Universal Pictures, 1988.

Moulin Rouge! Dir. Baz Luhrmann. Perf. Nicole Kidman, Ewan
McGregor, John Leguizamo, Jim Broadbent and Richard
Roxburgh. Twentieth Century Fox, 2001.

Pump Up the Volume. Dir. Allan Moyle. Perf. Christian
Slater, Samantha Mathis, Annie Ross, Andy Romano and
Scott Paulin. New Line Cinema, 1990.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adams, James Truslow. *The Epic of America*. New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 2012.
- Armstrong, Karen. *The Case for God*. Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2010.
- Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. 3rd ed. Novato: New World Library, 2008.
- De Waal, Frans. "Two Monkeys Were Paid Unequally: Excerpt from Frans de Waal's TED Talk." *Youtube.com*. 4 April 2013. *TEDBlogVideo*. 18 June 2013. <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Go8tnl21MU>>.
- Drum, Kevin. "America's Real Criminal Element: Lead." *Motherjones.com*. January/February 2013. *Mother Jones*. 19 June 2013. <<http://www.motherjones.com/environment/2013/01/lead-crime-link-gasoline>>.
- "Education." *Dictionary.com*. 17 June 2013. <<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/education?s=t>>.
- Eisenbrey, Ross. "Unpaid internships hurt mobility." *EPI.org*. 5 January 2012. *The Economic Policy Institute*. 17 June 2013. <<http://www.epi.org/blog/unpaid-internships-economic-mobility/>>.
- Gladwell, Malcolm. *Outliers: The Story of Success*. New

York: Little, Brown and Company, 2008.

Grace, Pamela. "Sacred Savagery: *The Passion of the Christ*." *Cineaste: America's Leading Magazine*. Summer 2004: 13-17.

Henderson, J. Maureen. "Are Creative Careers Now Reserved Exclusively For The Privileged?" *Forbes.com*. 31 Aug 2012. *Forbes*. 17 June 2013.

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/jmaureenhenderson/2012/08/31/are-creative-careers-now-reserved-exclusively-for-the-privileged/>.

Hitchens, Christopher. *Hitch-22*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 2010.

Kimball, Alexandra. "How to Succeed in Journalism when You Can't Afford an Internship." *Randomhouse.ca*. 23 August 2012. *Random House of Canada*. 17 June 2013.

<http://www.randomhouse.ca/hazlitt/feature/how-succeed-journalism-when-you-cant-afford-internship>.

Lyden, John C. *Film as Religion*. New York: New York University Press, 2003.

Robinson, Ken. *Out of Our Minds*. Westford: Capstone Publishing Ltd, 2011.

Robinson, Ken. "Sir Ken Robinson: Do schools kill

creativity?" *Youtube.com*. 6 Jan 2007.

TEDtalksDirector. 17 June 2013.

<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iG9CE55wbtY>>.

Synder, Blake. *Save the Cat!* Chelsea: Michael Wiese Productions, 2005.

Wong, David. "5 Ways Modern Men Are Trained to Hate Women."

Cracked.com. 27 March 2012. *Cracked*. 21 June 2013.

<http://www.cracked.com/article_19785_5-ways-modern-men-are-trained-to-hate-women.html>.