

What About The Devil

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First, over BLACK, we hear...

The SOUND of church bells echoing through a vast space, accompanied by the howling wind and the distant wail of police sirens.

CUT IN:

INT. CHURCH - BLUE HOUR

Entering a hazy church on a late autumn afternoon, our protagonist, JUDAH (22), a rough, sleep-deprived young man makes his way towards the front stand. Judah frequently attends church as he has for many years through a deeply rooted religious upbringing.

He grapples with his religious beliefs, particularly his Catholic guilt, as he has become entangled in the criminal underworld. Judah feels the weight of his actions and the guilt, but he has been seduced by this world.

He has come to church to confess, something he does frequently. Judah walks to the side of the front stand, walking past the pulpit as he makes his way to enter the confession booth with THE PRIEST (55).

Whilst we hear this confession, we barely visibly see it, only peering at the dimly lit mouth of the protagonist within the booth. We never physically see the Priest, though his words resonate a sense of comfort and purity that is lacking in all other corners of Judah's world.

As the two begin their dialogue, we see Judah embracing his surroundings, and the presence of the Lord as he slowly roams the church.

THE PRIEST (V.O.)

Lord, I'm not worthy to eat your
flesh, not worthy to drink your
blood.

JUDAH (V.O.)

Not worthy to drink your blood.

(pauses as he gestures the sign of the cross)

JUDAH (V.O.) (cont'd)

Bless me, Father, for I have sinned.

As Judah makes this statement, we hear the two settling into the confession booth, taking their seats.

THE PRIEST (V.O.)
One cannot make up for their sins in
the church.

Judah approaches a votive candle stand and begins to light the candles, but despite his best efforts, the candles remain unlit.

THE PRIEST (V.O.) (cont'd)
Only a call to the Lord, only a call
to the Father can suffice.

JUDAH (V.O.)
What if the Lord doesn't answer my
calls anymore? What if he doesn't
want to talk.

THE PRIEST (V.O.)
The Lord is not supposed to talk, nor
his angels that guard us.
(pauses)

THE PRIEST (V.O.) (cont'd)
(hopeful) But they watch over us, and
they listen.

JUDAH (V.O.)
(profoundly) And what about the
Devil?

Judah expresses his looming fear of the Devil. He worries that his stronger fear of Satan over God is only elevating the Devil as a greater object of worship.

As Judah expresses this fear in the form of this question, there is a pause and silence between the two.

MUSIC CUE: "Crystals" by Clams Casino

In the immediate moments following Judah's profound question, this musical cue starts playing non-diegetically.

Four seconds into the song, we smash cut away.

From this point forward, we follow a sequence of events in the form of a montage, accompanied by this music cue.

SMASH CUT

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Judah drives along a fast road, heading towards the nearby city.

Distant glows of green and cold blue lights spill onto the streets, but the alleyways remain untouched by their reach.
(Drone)

INT. JUDAH'S CAR - NIGHT

Whilst driving, he smokes a cigarette before grabbing a clear plastic bag from the passenger seat, checking its contents before placing it back down.

EXT. CITY - NIGHT

We see him driving through the streets of the city, close to his destination.

Judah's journey into the city will cover the first twenty seconds of the song.

EXT. APARTMENT DOOR, CITY - NIGHT

Judah is now standing on an ominous street corner, surrounded by a gritty, urban environment as smoke passes by. He is waiting outside the closed door of an apartment building, smoking a cigarette as he waits to be let inside.

Before long, RAY (21), an untidy drug addict, opens the door and lets him inside.

Judah has travelled into the city to collect owed money from Ray.

Ray is a reckless individual, defined by his impulsive behaviour, often engaging in dangerous and erratic actions that create tension and conflict. He is known for his disregard for authority and his tendency to live on the edge, which puts both himself and those around him at risk.

Ray has neglected his terms and is weeks behind on a payment, which has forced Judah to come to his home to collect it from him.

INT. RAY'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Judah follows behind Ray as the two enter the apartment, passing through a dark and dimly lit hallway.

INT. RAY'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Judah enters Ray's living room. His living room is dimly lit by cold LED lighting, with the the light of a static television screen illuminating cigarette smoke which fills the air.

Ray prompts Judah to take a seat and make himself at home, revealing to him that he has a pouch of cocaine for the two to use.

Judah, however, has no intention of staying any longer than he needs to. He expresses his frustration, pressuring Ray into grabbing the money.

Ray, aware his attempt to distract Judah and buy some time has failed, realises he'll have to take his chances. He walks past Judah, further into the room to collect the money for him.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - NIGHT

We see Judah stood on an empty train, travelling through the night. He stares ahead, filled with feelings of inner conflict and dread.

INT. JUDAH'S CAR - NIGHT

Judah sits in his parked car smoking a cigarette as an array of city lights reflects upon his face.

INT. RAY'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ray hands Judah a sum of cash and Judah immediately realizes that this is significantly short of the agreed payment.

Judah makes a split-second decision not to make Ray aware that he knows this.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

We see Judah from behind, walking down a dimly lit and uninviting city street, relatively slowly, lacking a concise and objective path.

INT. RAY'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ray snorts a line of cocaine, his head snapping up as the euphoria hits him.

Judah throws the money down on the glass table between the television and the couch. He then pulls out the plastic bag, emptying elastic bands from within its contents.

He throws the bands down alongside the cash, prompting Ray to wrap together the money for him.

INT. JUDAH'S CAR - NIGHT

Judah removes his cross chain from around his neck to give it a look, inspecting it. His eyes are filled with inner turmoil.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Judah stops along his walk along a city street as we feel his internal suffocation and feelings of claustrophobia.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Judah sits awake in his room, in the dead of the night, unable to sleep as he is victim to a guilty conscience.

His bedroom is small and claustrophobic. A street light serves as the primary source of light, peering in from outside of his window and a gap in his thin curtains.

A police siren flashes past, its light briefly sweeping across the edge of his window.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Judah stops his stumble, feeling a tightness in his chest and an overwhelming conflict. He peers at his reflection in a smashed mirror to his side, left resting along the exterior of a building.

INT. RAY'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Judah stands at a distance from Ray.

Ray sits down with his back turned to Judah, as he begins to fold the cash into bands.

Judah is premeditating murder. Ray's repeated failure to make payments has angered numerous powerful figures in their world - and now he has angered Judah.

Judah grabs the plastic bag from the side before slowly moving behind the couch, out of Ray's line of sight.

INT. CHURCH - BLUE HOUR

Sitting alongside one another in the church, Judah and the Priest continue their conversation. This is in the wake of Judah's heavy statement, expressing his fear of the Devil.

THE PRIEST (V.O.)

The Devil is cunning, Judah. He preys on our doubts, our weaknesses. But we must not give in to fear.

THE PRIEST (V.O.) (cont'd)

Those with a stronger fear of Satan are only sabotaging their own faith. They are elevating the Devil to a greater object of worship than the Lord himself. (Insistently) We must trust in the Lord's protection and guidance.

JUDAH (V.O.)

But what if I've strayed too far? What if I've committed sins too grave for redemption?

THE PRIEST (V.O.)

No sin is too great for God's mercy, Judah. His forgiveness knows no bounds. As long as there is repentance in your heart, there is hope for salvation.

JUDAH (V.O.)

I want to believe that, Father. I want to believe that I can be forgiven.

THE PRIEST (V.O.)

Then trust in the power of prayer, my son. Pour out your heart to God, confess your sins, and seek His forgiveness with sincerity. He is always ready to welcome back those who seek His grace.

JUDAH (V.O.)

I'll try, Father. I'll try to have faith.

INT. RAY'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

As they speak, we see the back of Ray's head as he methodically continues to fold the money. We move inwards.

THE PRIEST (V.O.)

That's all He asks of us, Judah. To have faith, even in the darkest of times. May the Lord's light guide you on your journey.

INT. RAY'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Taking Ray by complete surprise, Judah wraps the plastic bag around his head and holds it tight, suffocating him.

Ray, in shock, immediately exhales a large breath in reaction to this, as he begins kicking his legs and moving, making any attempt to escape Judah's grasp.

Judah remains incredibly tense and still, as he firmly holds him in place, waiting for him to draw his last breath.

After a struggle, Ray's movement finally ceases as the life leaves his eyes. Judah slowly loosens his grasp.

INT. JUDAH'S CAR - NIGHT

Judah drives his car, with an undivided focus on the journey ahead. His cold gaze blankly stares at the road ahead.

His eyes show the dread and the weight of his actions.

EXT. JUDAH'S CAR - NIGHT

High above the city streets, we see Judah's car driving quickly down a long road. He is making his way to a pivotal destination following this gruesome event.

Despite his earlier dread, a heightened thrill now takes over, starkly contrasting the moments before.

INT. RAY'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Judah quickly grabs the money, now wrapped in bands off of the floor.

Ray, once notoriously verbose, now sits before the television - void of life.

The television static hums on, an eerie reflection of his own purgatory.

Judah hurriedly rushes past Ray's body, stumbling out of his apartment. He feels the same overwhelming surge of thrill he has felt countless time before. His escape has begun.

EXT. RAY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Judah steps out of Ray's apartment, looking down and the money in his grasp. He quickly rushes across the road, towards his car.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Judah continues to blankly stare at the wall ahead, trapped in his mind.

INT. KAYLA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Deep in thought, we get closer to Judah as his face reflects his confliction as he remains in a heavy trance.

As we get closer to him, KAYLA (20), with shoulder-length blonde hair jumps up, hugging him from behind as she buries her head in his shoulder. He isn't alone in this bedroom, he isn't in his bedroom at all.

At this point in the song, a girl's laugh can be distinctly heard, which will match the laugh of Kayla as she suddenly embraces Judah.

Whilst this vice momentarily distracts him from the overwhelming weight of his sins, it is also a sin within itself in the form of lust. His escapism only adds to the weight of his Catholic guilt.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Judah steps out into the middle of the road. The long street is seemingly empty, though Judah feels a sudden paranoia and unease towards his surroundings.

Judah looks around him, still searching his surroundings as a tall, ominous, dark figure stands behind him, over his shoulder off in the distance. THE DEVIL.

Panic takes hold. Frozen in place, Judah trembles as his greatest fear manifests before him.

From here, the song will transition from the one-minute, twenty-three-second mark to the song's final thirty seconds.

INT. CHURCH - BLUE HOUR

Within the hazy embrace of the church, Judah stands near the front stand. He is removed from his surroundings.

INT. JUDAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

We see him in this sleepless trance, now in his bedroom which is noticeably different, though retains the compact feeling of Kayla's bedroom.

Judah begins a prayer to the Lord in the form of a voice over. This prayer comes in the form of a poem titled 'Prayer' by Langston Hughes.

He is not seen verbally speaking. Judah recites a poem to portray his distinct lack of honesty with himself. These words are not even his own.

JUDAH (V.O.)

I ask you this:
Which way to go?
I ask you this:
Which sin to bear?
Which crown to put
Upon my hair?
I do not know,
Lord God,
I do not know.

As Judah recites these words, we see him across several familiar locations - from the city's lower echelon to the solemn confines of the church.

INT. JUDAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sitting on his bed, Judah stands to make his way to his grimy mirror.

He stares at his reflection, as he grapples with his true identity and ponders his fate.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - NIGHT

He remains stood on an empty train. Judah remains in the same state of abstraction, deeply plunged in thought as he travels through the night.

INT. CHURCH - BLUE HOUR

Judah is now sitting alone in the church, with the Priest nowhere to be seen. Whilst he comes here to cleanse his soul, he knows he cannot seek penance for the extremity of his sins.

He believes his soul belongs to the Devil.

INT. JUDAH'S CAR - NIGHT

From above, we see Judah's car driving along a straight road, as he continues a path paved with sin. (Drone)

INT. CHURCH - BLUE HOUR

Judah remains sitting alone in the church, staring ahead as we continue to hear his prayer.

He knows this lifestyle and his Catholic guilt cannot go hand in hand. This is a paradoxical, self-destructive cycle that will only continue to cause him pain and conflict.

He does whatever he can to convince himself that he's making up for this guilt. He frequently calls to the Lord and confesses, but he knows this cannot atone for his sins.

He finishes reciting this poem, concluding his prayer.

As Judah blankly stares ahead, he remains the same, he feels unredeemed.

END MUSIC CUE

CUT TO BLACK

THE END