



# INTO TEMPTATION

A FILM BY QUINN DA MATTA



A TOUCH CURSED ONE WITH SIN ...

A man with a beard and dark hair is shown in profile, looking down at a lit candle on a table. The scene is dimly lit, with the candle providing the primary light source. A lamp is visible in the background, and a small object, possibly a phone, lies on the table next to the candle. The overall mood is contemplative and intimate.

AND SCARRED THE OTHER ONE WITH LOVE.



TONIGHT  
THEY WILL BOTH  
FACE THE CONSEQUENCES.

A close-up, low-angle shot of a young boy's face. He has dark hair and is looking slightly downwards and to the right with a somber, intense expression. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows on the left side of his face and highlights on the right. He is wearing a light-colored, possibly white, collared shirt.

LOGLINE / SYNOPSIS

Twenty years after being abused by his priest, a fateful reunion reverses roles and reveals love can be just as twisted and destructive as abuse.

INTO  
TEMPTATION

The lingering effects of abuse and trauma are scattered throughout my projects and explored using different themes and stories. For me, art became a way to express my most profound feelings toward a specific subject matter. It provided an outlet for my fears and mistakes; therefore, each short film encapsulates a piece of my psyche derived from a particular moment throughout my life.

Now, after eleven short films and decades of psychological excavation, I am embarking on my most personal film yet: Into Temptation.

I was raised Roman Catholic by two loving parents on the opposite sides of the religious spectrum: A father raised by a highly devout family and taught to accept the holy word, and a mother who ran away from hers and learned to question everything. They agreed--for the sake of peace in the family--to raise the children Catholic. However, when we turned sixteen, got Confirmed, and were then seen as adults in the Church, we were free to decide if we wanted to continue practicing the faith.

I chose not to.

But, at sixteen, the choice was based more on laziness rather than a conscious decision. My moral frustration and outrage developed over time and ultimately confirmed that I had made the right decision for myself.

Into Temptation is the culmination of some of these personal experiences. Although the abuse in this short film is isolated, the impact and trauma of abuse are universal. Therefore, we are enabled to discuss the traumatic implications of abuse and sympathize, if not empathize, with the experiences and words shared by survivors.

Healing comes from expressing. Understanding comes from sharing. And, in the middle lies my intention for this short film.

Being raised Roman Catholic and continually inundated with all the horrid news reports of the abuse and denial within the Church, I wanted to explore the trauma of celibacy, the concept of forbidden love, and the ramifications of the abuse--but in a different way.

From that seedling of a desire grew the story of an abused boy who falls in love with his molester--the story of a young man who kidnaps and confronts the Priest who abused him as a child.

As I developed the story and researched sexual abuse narratives in the Catholic Church, it became critical for me to tell this particular story: a film that begins as a revenge thriller but descends into a twisted and dangerous love story that explores the consequences of sexual abuse on a minor and the lingering psychosexual effect it has on them.

"The line between love and abuse is very thin." And "love makes us do crazy things."

To Michael, it is love. But, it's a twisted, dangerous, and warped sense of love that he can't genuinely comprehend due to his manipulation and abuse by the Priest at such a young age. The Priest was the first person outside his family who told him he loved him, and that declaration had a profound impact on young Michael. Why would someone lie about that? So, he took that word--and emotion--literally.

Is it Stockholm Syndrome, or could it be real love? Who is the real victim?

I want the audience to grapple with these questions as the roles of the abuser and abused are continuously reversed throughout the story.

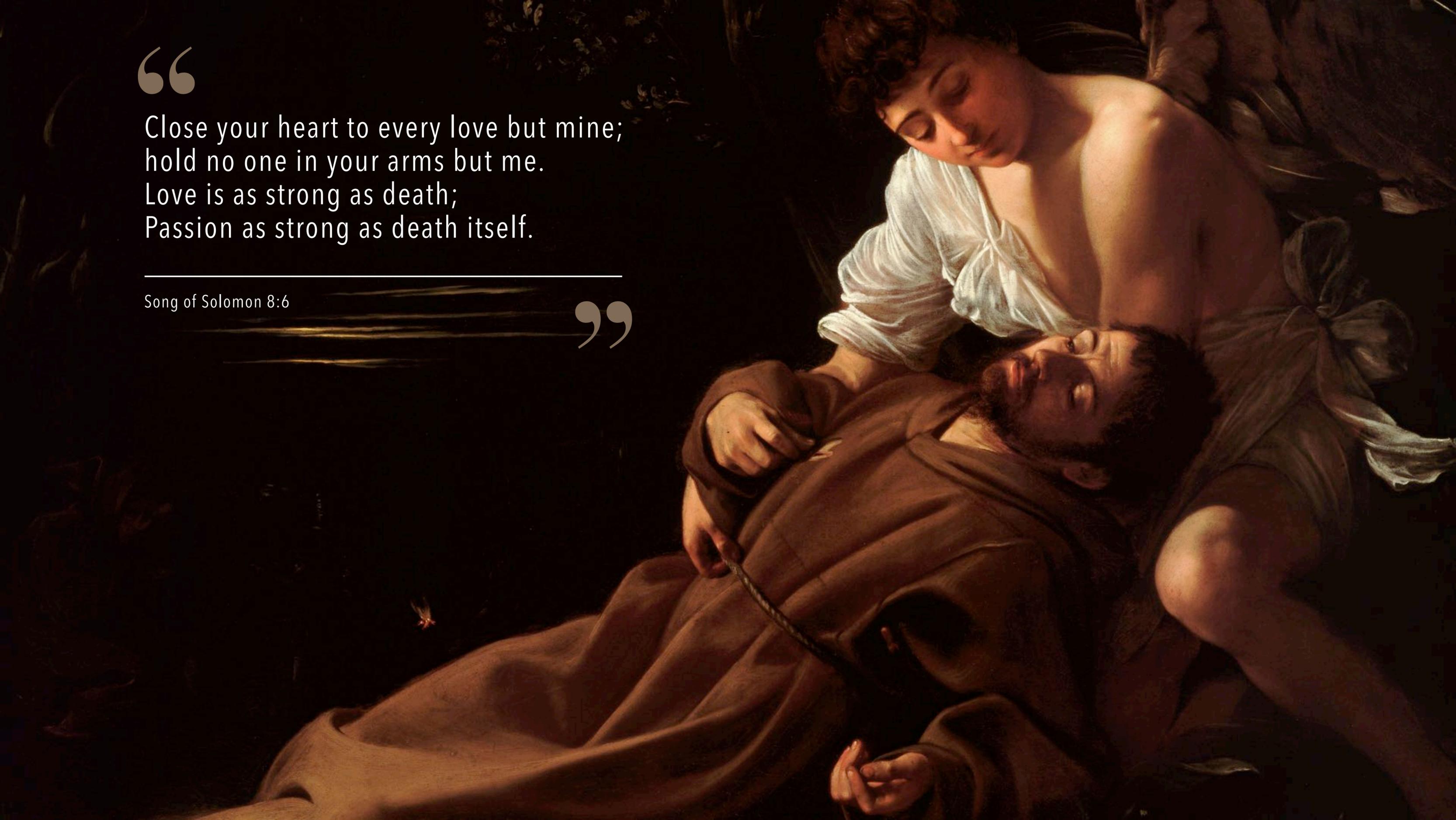
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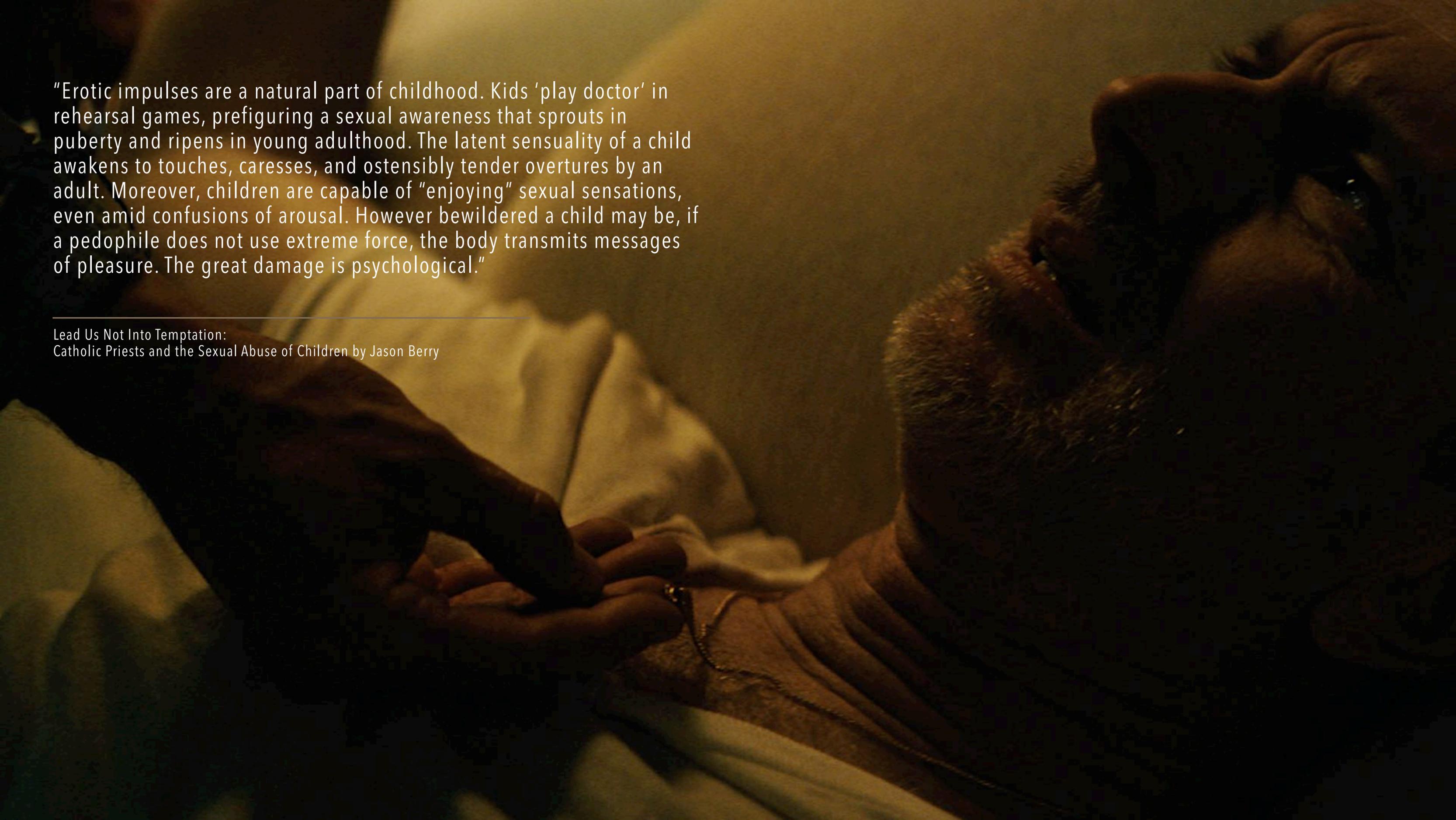
Close your heart to every love but mine;  
hold no one in your arms but me.  
Love is as strong as death;  
Passion as strong as death itself.

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Song of Solomon 8:6

”





"Erotic impulses are a natural part of childhood. Kids 'play doctor' in rehearsal games, prefiguring a sexual awareness that sprouts in puberty and ripens in young adulthood. The latent sensuality of a child awakens to touches, caresses, and ostensibly tender overtures by an adult. Moreover, children are capable of "enjoying" sexual sensations, even amid confusions of arousal. However bewildered a child may be, if a pedophile does not use extreme force, the body transmits messages of pleasure. The great damage is psychological."

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Lead Us Not Into Temptation:  
Catholic Priests and the Sexual Abuse of Children by Jason Berry



A sex abuse researcher for the U.S. Senate Permanent Committee on Investigations in Washington, Bruce Selcraig, told The Times:

*"Many victimized kids are walking around with a terrible time bomb ticking inside them, feeling incredible guilt."*

"The involvement with the kids was much more emotional. I really felt a sense of attachment, of protection, of being with them, of really genuine love."

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Father Gilbert Gauthé



A young boy with dark hair, wearing a white short-sleeved shirt, is sitting on a bed. He is looking towards the camera with a neutral expression. The room is dimly lit, with a warm, yellowish light from a lamp behind him. The background shows a window with curtains. The overall mood is somber and intimate.

THE  
ROOT  
FACTOR  
IS  
VICTIMIZATION

"An adult who molests a youngster abuses the trust on which the young rely in forming their values and ethics."

# C R E D I T S

**WRITER, DIRECTOR, EDITOR:**

Quinn da Matta

**EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS:**

Lara Wickes  
Joseph Seeman  
Quinn da Matta

**PRODUCER:**

Adam Dlugolecki

**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY:**

Matt Plaxco

**MAKEUP & HAIR:**

Jessica Vergon

**PRODUCTION DESIGNER:**

Brooke Ashe

**ORIGINAL SCORE:**

Paul Spaeth

# INTO TEMPTATION

## T E C H N I C A L   I N F O

**RUNNING TIME:** 20 Minutes

**GENRE:** Drama

**YEAR OF PRODUCTION:** 2021

**ASPECT RATIO:** Anamorphic (2:1)

**SOUND:** 5.1 Surround Sound

**OTHER:** Color, English





## JUAN MIGUEL SALCITO

## MICHAEL

Juan Manuel Salcito is an Argentine-born American actor and visual artist. Juan played Michael in 'Into Temptation' where he artfully demonstrated unrequited love as he navigated the aftermath of his past. Juan has experience in film, television, commercials, print, theater, and ballet. Most recently, Juan can be seen in the Netflix American comedy-drama streaming television series, 'Gentefied'. Juan received his Bachelors of Fine Arts from The New School - College of Performing Arts in New York, where he was awarded the Distinguished Artist yearly grant for exceptional performance. Juan currently lives in Los Angeles, California, with his sidekick, Chief, a beautiful Silver Lab.

## TOM MCLAREN

## FATHER GRAHAM

An accomplished actor and published author, Tom McLaren started his adult life as a corporate finance executive at Warner Bros. and Twentieth Century Fox. In 2012 he made a mid-life career change and began acting in film, television, and commercials. Major credits include the Netflix TV series 'Lost in Space' and the feature films 'Expelled' (a #1 best-selling movie on iTunes), 'Exorcism of Molly Hartley' (Fox) and 'Santa's Little Helper' (Fox/WWE). He has starred in 30 feature films, including the indie movies 'All American Bikini Car Wash,' 'Death Pool,' 'As I Am,' and 'S'ids Lake.' He co-authored the award-winning book 'Styling the Stars: Lost Treasures from the Twentieth Century Fox Archive' with actress Angela Cartwright. Currently, Tom is Co-Head of Next Chapter Entertainment's Production and Publishing divisions. His second book 'Thornsby by Fred McLaren: The Complete Comic Collection,' co-authored with former Fox COO Mary McLaren, was published in 2020.





JAXON BALLENGER

**YOUNG MICHAEL**

Jaxon started acting at six years of age and hasn't looked back. He enjoys the process of reading a script and putting his own characteristics into his character. As well as acting, Jaxon enjoys reading, drawing, and playing with his friends.



## QUINN DA MATTA

### Writer, Director, Editor & Executive Producer

Quinn is a diverse international award-winning writer, director, and editor with over 20 years of experience in the motion picture industry. As a proud gay man, Quinn highlights the power and the struggles of the LGBTQ+ community in many of his creative works. Quinn's most recent film, 'Into Temptation,' highlights his skills as a storyteller and collaborator through his writing, directing, and editing.

Quinn received his Bachelors of Arts in writing, editing, and directing from The South African School of Motion Picture Medium and Live Performance. He then worked for a non-profit, directing and producing public service announcements for health care organizations in areas most affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Quinn later worked as head writer and director at a content marketing agency where he created over 250 promotional spots for international brands like 'Grey's Anatomy,' 'Desperate Housewives,' 'Pushing Daisies,' 'The Tudors,' 'Ugly Betty,' and 'Prison Break.'

Many of Quinn's creative works have been internationally recognized. In 2007, Quinn won the 'PromaxBDA Rocket Award' which recognizes exceptional achievements in young creatives.

Originally from a remote farm in South Africa, Quinn immigrated to the United States in 2010, where he now lives in Hollywood, California, with his partner. Quinn works as a Senior Producer at the Aspire Artists Agency while also creatively collaborating on various projects with clients like Sony, NatGeo, History Channel, Nickelodeon, Disney, Freeform, OWN, Lifetime, and ABC.



## JOSEPH SEEMAN

### Executive Producer

Joseph's creative road began in the 4th grade when he asked his mom if he could start taking piano lessons so he could play like his grandmother. His mother quickly bought an affordable piano, and Joseph's life changed. Upon graduation, he received a scholarship to Webster University and began his life as a dancer. He spent years exploring how movement could express music as well as his emotions. This was his introduction to storytelling and choreography, culminating in numerous national awards.

After graduating, he moved to Chicago and found residence in two professional dance companies, and danced as the guest artist in many others. Over the years, he was lucky enough to tour the world and loved the opportunity to explore different cultures, discovering the power of diversity. As he continues to inspire through fitness, Joseph has reconnected with his storytelling, this time through writing.

He quickly signed up at UCLA to explore writing classes, take acting classes, and work with various writing coaches. He has completed a spec script and multiple treatments for TV shows, which all explore various aspects of his love for dance and music.



**LARA WICKES**  
**Executive Producer**

Emmy nominated and award-winning producer Lara Wickes, daughter of Eleanor Calbes, renowned Canadian Opera Company Soprano, and best-selling author, David A.B. Wickes, was raised in Toronto, Canada, and has resided in Los Angeles since 1999.

After beginning her career in front of the camera, Lara diligently moved her way up to production: from award-winning theater productions to webisodes, short films to features, and producing hundreds of promo shoots in the television marketing space. Lara has led and mentored many in her journey and continues to do so as the Executive Director of Production at ABC Television Entertainment Marketing.



**ADAM DLUGOLECKI**  
**Producer**

Adam has an innate talent for taking the elusive parts of a concept and assembling them into comprehensive substance. Adam has a degree in Theater from Loyola Marymount University and has studied abroad in both Germany and Russia. He is currently a member of Ghost Road Company and a founding member/creator of Scherzo Theatre Company, where he still performs.



**GABRIELLE GEIGER**  
**Prod. Coordinator**

Gabrielle transitioned from acting into production in 2019 and has never looked back. Her passion is people, taking care of everyone on set, and putting in that extra attention to detail. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre from Loyola Marymount University and has studied and performed in both Germany and Russia. Gabrielle is also co-producer of Queenfest, a bi-annual variety show that empowers female artists to perform and raise money for a local LA women's shelter.



**MATT PLAXO**  
**Director of Photography**

Matthew is a father, a gifted Cinematographer, and part of the director duo MOM. Plaxco attended Art Center College of Design, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts. He is currently represented by Zero Gravity Management. He was born in Seattle, Washington, and lives in Los Angeles, working on commercials, shorts, feature-length films, and music videos. Plaxco has collaborated with clients including National Geographic, Lifetime, BET, MSNBC, History Channel, Microsoft, Google, Rolex, Tag Heuer, and more. He believes in an honest approach to storytelling while retaining an elevated aesthetic.



**BROOKE ASHE**  
**Production Designer**

Mexican x Irish + LA-Based + Award Winning + Fierce Female Production Designer = Brooke Ashe. A graduate of UC Berkeley (2001), Brooke has been a force in the world of Art, Marketing, and Production Design. A wildly passionate creative with an exceptional work ethic, Brooke has cultivated lifelong relationships during her 15+ years working in the Art Department. She champions building sets from scratch, seamless collaborations, and harnessing the most cost-effective solutions while still honoring the creative vision. She leads an extraordinary crew of artists who are aligned with her sensibilities and her just-get-it-done attitude.



**JESSICA VERNON**  
**Makeup Artist & Hair Stylist**

Jessica studied makeup artistry at Cinema Makeup School in Hollywood. She was trained in character makeup development directly under Leonard Engelman - President of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and Michael Spatola, a two-time Emmy nominated artist known for his work in *Tales From the Crypt* and *Return of the Night of the Living Dead*. Her experience is in media and production makeup.



**PAUL SPAETH**  
**Composer**

Paul rides the line between silver screen, digital technology, and concert hall with resounding success. Spaeth's work in cinema has premiered at such prestigious film festivals as Toronto, Monaco, Naples, and Montreal. With a love for poignant storytelling and transmitting the ineffable through sound, Spaeth's work elevates a production while never overpowering it. His career has spanned a wide variety of media: from film to television, video games, and virtual reality installations, as well as producing electronic artist Luminous and his own piano-based albums. He attributes his success to his philosophy of the numinous experience in music: a clarity and directness that draws individuals to an intensely personal experience. As said by one listener, *"The subtleties strike us honestly, driving to the core of who and what we are."*



**CHRISTOPHER WINTRODE**  
**Line Producer**

Chris served as the Line Producer for 'Into Temptation' where he was responsible for managing the budget and overseeing the film operations and logistics. Chris is an impact-driven business operations leader with a strong background in corporate law and significant experience leading commercial transactions and negotiations for billion-dollar companies. Chris obtained his Juris Doctor from Saint Louis University and his Bachelor of Arts from Beloit College, where he studied Economics & Management and Political Science.



## MUSIC

The relationship between composer and director has been one of the most storied relationships in film history. Composer Paul Spaeth and Director Quinn Da Matta solidified their friendship and working relationship on previous close collaborations, setting the stage for an intuitively created and inspired score for *Into Temptation*.

The process of creating the score started alongside the first written script, years before production. Spaeth offered feedback on the film and ideas on score instrumentation, tone, and structure.

Ultimately, all previous ideas converged upon seeing the initial dailies and rough cut, and the magic began. Spaeth took inspiration from the color and tone of the visuals and the immediacy of the actors' performances. To Spaeth, visual texture and color directly correlate to musical textures and instrumentation.

The instrumentation was immediately birthed: flute was chosen to represent Michael's innocent inner child, cello represented their love theme, and uneasy, out-of-tune synth bends signified the sickness inherent in their validation-love.

The first sequence that was scored, entirely in one inspired moment, was the end sequence – the point where Michael reveals the scars of a previous suicide attempt. The inevitable, tragic convergence of these two individuals was represented by a steady "heartbeat" rhythm, the innocence that birthed this "love affair" within Michael was introduced by eerie echoes of flute fragments, while their cello-love-theme plays over an uneasy synth bed, where the dark seed of validation and manipulation was planted decades ago.

Working backward, Spaeth then wove together these elements in a slow-reveal unfoldment throughout the film, almost as though the film discovers itself.

The final product culminated in a beautiful and haunting soundtrack that never leads the film's emotions but, instead, elevates it all.

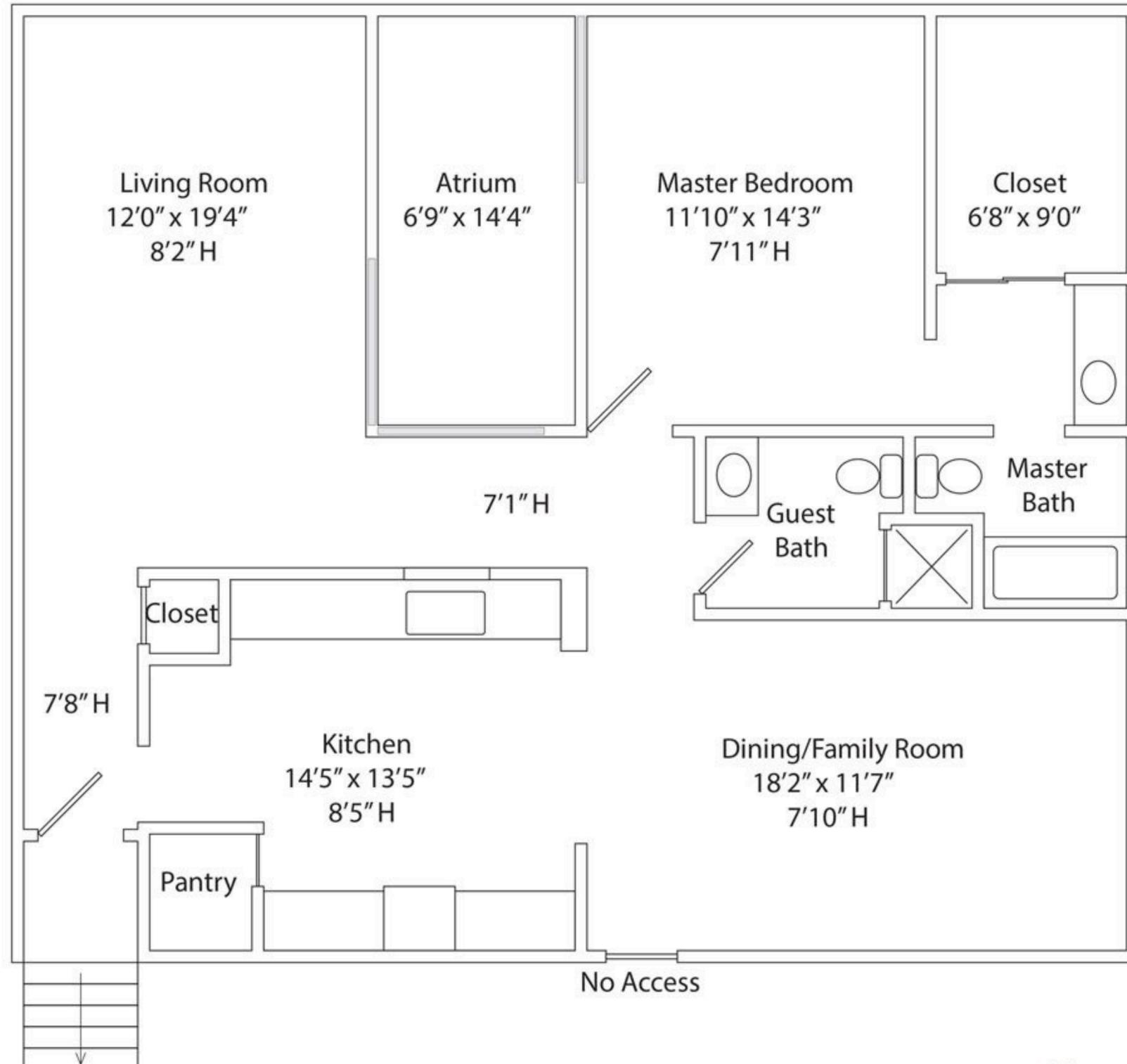
The soundtrack will be released on Apple Music and Spotify in November 2021.



Michael's apartment, his home, is his "purgatory." His life is unfilled and empty, and all that bleeds into his environment--sparse, limited furniture, no art... just the bare minimum of what is needed: bed, an old couch, coffee table, etc. It is neglected and a little damaged, just like Michael: "broken."

A P A R T M E N T

Martinsound Vintage Apartment



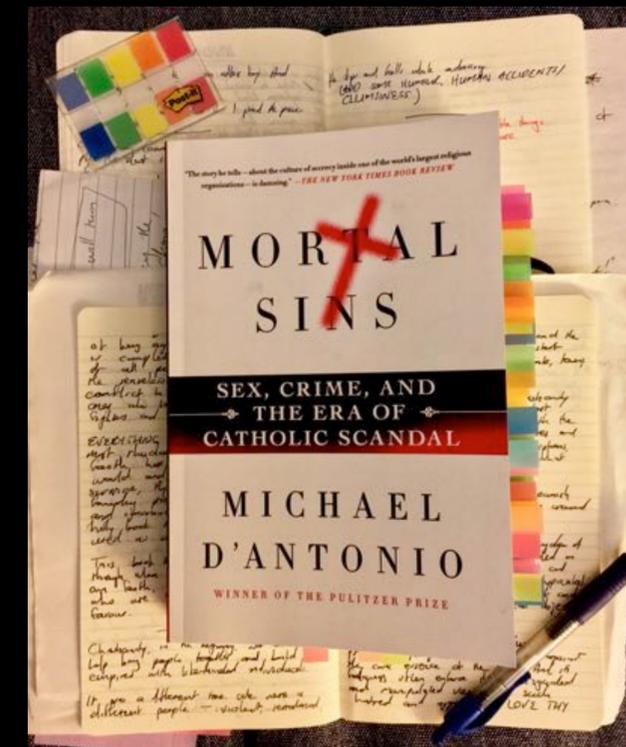
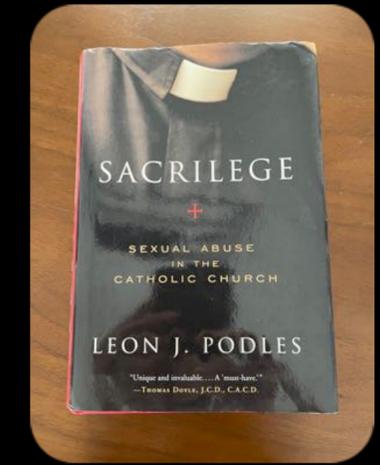
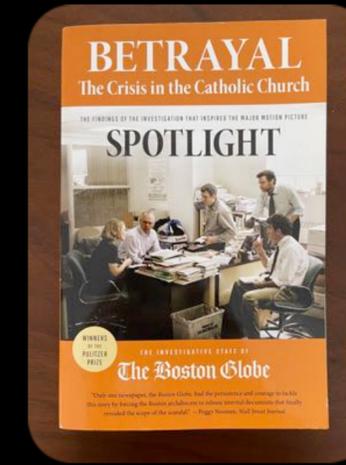
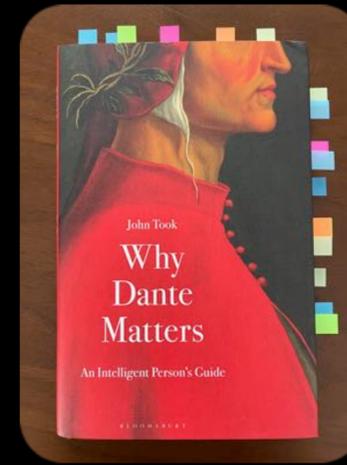
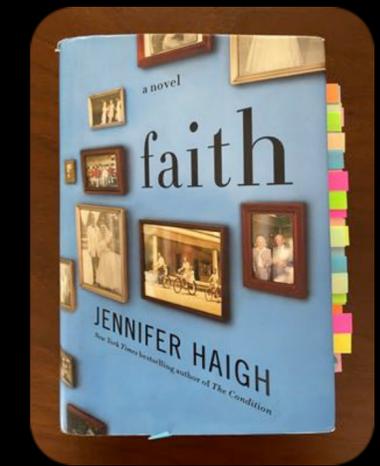
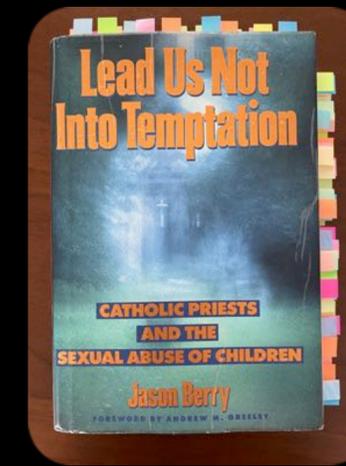
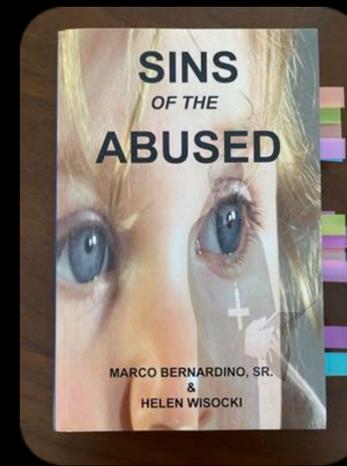
MICHAEL'S  
APARTMENT

# RESEARCH

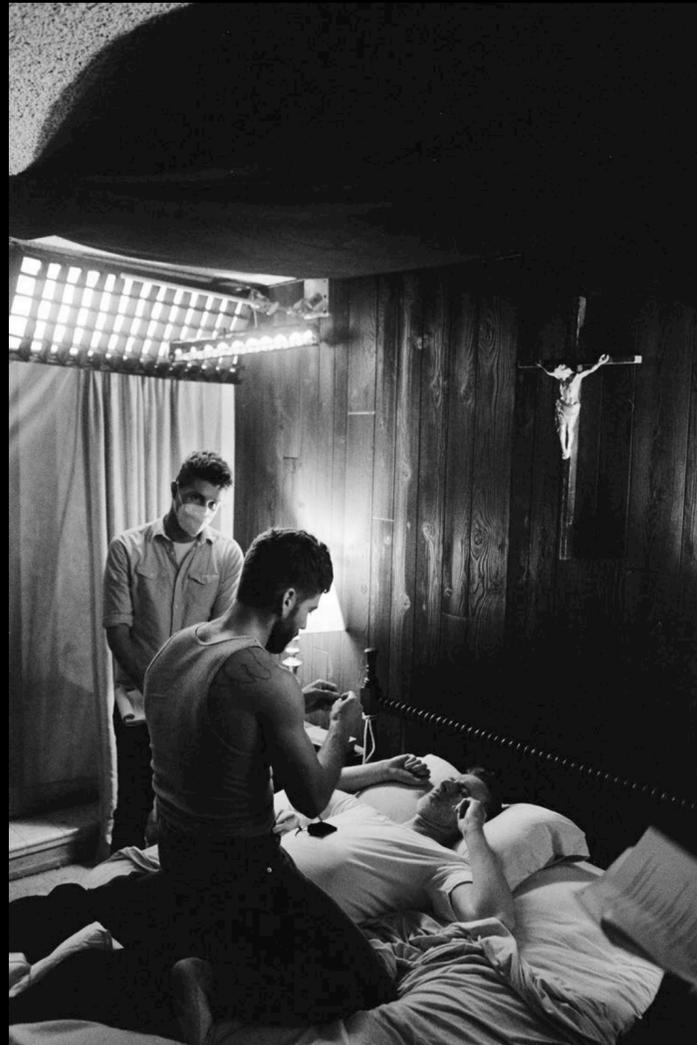
"The Sexual Disorders Clinic was under the direction of Dr. Fred Berlin, a psychiatrist who also had a Ph.D. in psychology. "People do not decide voluntarily what will arouse them sexually," Berlin had written. "Biology, too, can play a role in the development of sexual interests." In a study of forty-one men suffering from sexual disorders—the majority were either pedophiles or exhibitionists—Berlin found that twenty-nine of them had biochemical abnormalities. At the Sexual Disorders Clinic, he wrote, it was unusual to see a man who experiences recurrent pedophilic cravings in the absence of (a) a significant biological abnormality, (b) a past history of sexual involvements with an adult, or (c) both...

Diagnosing a person as a pedophile says something about the nature of his sexual desires and orientation. It says nothing whatsoever, however, about his temperament, or about traits of character (such as kindness versus cruelty, caring versus uncaring, sensitive versus insensitive, and so on). Thus, a diagnosis of pedophilia does not necessarily mean that a person is lacking in conscience, diminished in intellectual capabilities, or somehow "characterologically flawed." In evaluating a person who has become sexually involved with a child, one needs to try to determine whether the behavior in question was a reflection of (a) psychosis, (b) poor judgement and psychological immaturity, (c) lack of conscience, (d) diminished intellect, (e) intoxication, (f) a pedophilic sexual orientation, or (g) a combination of these plus other factors. One needs to evaluate independently the nature of an individual's sexual drives and interests, as opposed to what the person is like in terms of character, intellect, temperament, and other mental capacities.

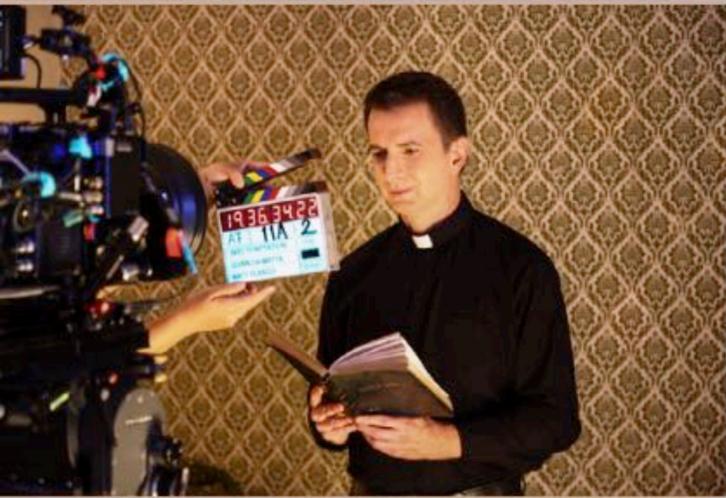
Of men treated in the Sexual Disorders Clinic's outpatient program, said Dr. Berlin's assistant, Maggie Ryder, "most either come from extremely deprived beginnings –poverty, trauma, sexual activity imprinted too early—or you find biological problems, like brain damage."

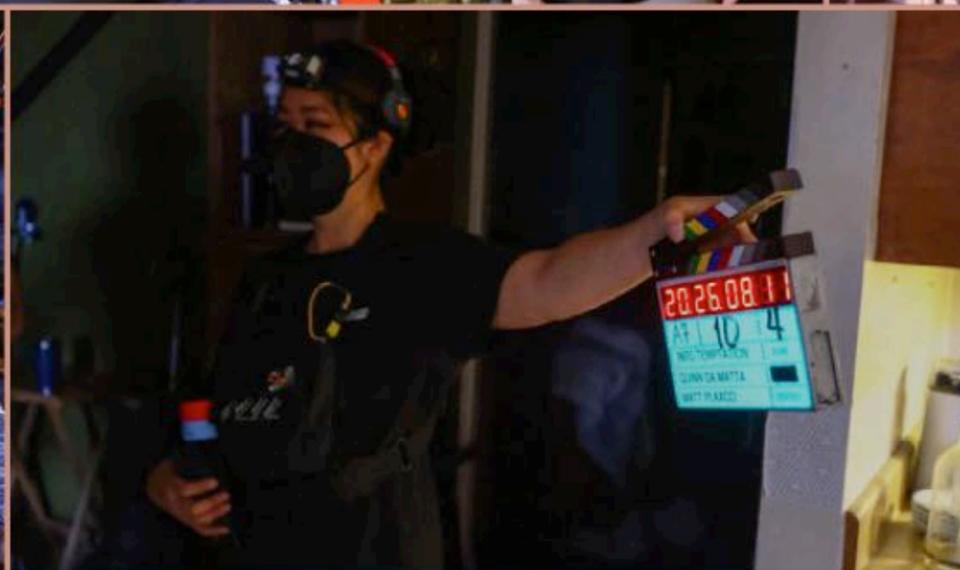


# PRODUCTION STILLS



# INTO TEMPTATION







Healing comes from expressing.  
Understanding comes from sharing.  
*And, in the middle lies my intention for this short film.*

JUAN MANUEL  
SALCITO

TOM  
MCLAREN

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PRODUCED BY LARA WICKES | DIRECTED BY JOSEPH SEEMAN & QUINN DA MATTA | COSTUME DESIGNER DANIELLE ESKINAZI | MUSIC BY JESSICA VERGON  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS BROOKE ASHE & PAUL SPAETH | PRODUCED BY MATT PLAXCO | EDITOR ADAM DLUGOLECKI  
SCREENPLAY BY QUINN DA MATTA

## F I L M P O S T E R S

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## C O N T A C T   I N F O R M A T I O N

QUINN DA MATTA | *Writer, Director, Editor, and Executive Producer*

[quinn.damatta@gmail.com](mailto:quinn.damatta@gmail.com)

(310) 498-4489

JOSEPH SEEMAN | *Executive Producer*

[josephseeman@me.com](mailto:josephseeman@me.com)

(323) 428-2251

