

US THREE

2.1.22

FADE IN.

STREETS OF FLORENCE, ITALY - NIGHT

Stone walkways narrowed by the crowd of warm-colored buildings and hanging pots of plants.

The Italian flag, brandishing a SHIELD and CROWN on the white stripe, restrictedly gliding over the heads of -

THREE FRENCHMEN: LOUIS GARNIER (29), CLAUDE LAVIGNE (32), and YVES DUPONT (31).

Apart from his friends, Yves is NOTICEABLY SKINNY, with slightly stained YELLOW skin, and SCRATCH MARKS over his arms and neck.

They walk through the streets, approaching an INCREASINGLY LOUDER SOUND of CHATTER, MUSIC, and the CLINKING OF GLASSES.

YVES

I don't know if we should go through with this.

LOUIS

What? Why?

YVES

It's wrong, we could be in trouble.

LOUIS

(to Claude)

Look at him - with a moral compass.

(to Yves)

You're not thinking about this in the right way.

YVES

How should I think about it, then?

LOUIS

You get a diagnosis that cuts your life to a couple of months and now you want to count your sins?

CLAUDE

We're hundreds of kilometers from home, no one's going to find out, and we're going to have a wonderful time.

LOUIS

Right. Calm your nerves, Yves. God will forgive you.

INT. BAR, DISTRICT 1 - MINUTES LATER

ENTERING, Yves spots THREE ITALIAN WOMEN (early 20's) on the other side of the bar: GIANA ESPOSITO, PAULA RICCI, and ANGELA MANCINI.

YVES

(re: the women)

What about them?

LOUIS

*That's my man! I'll take care of the drinks, you and Claude go and introduce yourselves.*

MINUTES LATER

MARCO BIANCHI (51), a WAITER, watches from a distance as Louis places THREE TABLETS of ROHYPNOL into three different glasses of RED wine.

He carries the glasses to the women, joining his friends. The women accept the drinks and begin to sip from their glasses.

GIANA

(jokingly)

Aw, I wish you brought white wine instead.

LOUIS

If only I knew!

PAULA

It's okay! We'll drink whatever's free!

CLAUDE

So what brings you ladies here tonight?

GIANA

We're trying to get Angela over her breakup.

LOUIS

Oh, I'm sorry!

ANGELA

It's fine - French asshole, you know? What about you guys? You don't sound Italian.

LOUIS

We're - uh - from France! We're trying to help our friend get over some bad news, too.

(to Yves)

Right, Jacques?

Yves CATCHES Marco's stare and HOLDS it, before breaking off and rejoining the conversation.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - A SHORT TIME LATER

The three Frenchmen, each CARRYING one of the UNCONSCIOUS women on their BACKS towards their rooms. Yves is struggling SIGNIFICANTLY more than the rest to carry ANGELA.

EXT. HOTEL - TANDEM

Marco, STEAK KNIFE in his BACK POCKET, APPROACHING the hotel. He opens the door and ENTERS.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Yves gets to his room, UNLOCKS the door, and OPENS IT -

DISSOLVE TO.

*- A quiet fishing town in Southeast France, close to the Italian borders, by the Ligurian sea. -*

EXT. / INT. KNOX'S HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

KNOX DOONE (32), donning office attire with a briefcase, OPENS the front door to his house and enters.

He places the briefcase by the door and enters his bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

He passes by a portrait of himself and HIS WIFE, CORALIE MOULIN (33), and undoes his black belt and untucks his shirt.

He NOTICES something near the side of his bed. He picks up -

A BROWN BELT. He observes it PAINFULLY, like the belt had PIERCED his HEART.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Knox places the brown belt in a kitchen drawer and sits at the kitchen table. He HIDES his face in his hands and EXHALES SHAKILY.

AN HOUR LATER

Coralie enters through the front door and sees her husband sitting at the kitchen table.

CORALIE  
What're you doing at the table?

KNOX  
What do you mean?

CORALIE  
I thought you were going to be checking on your ship today.

KNOX  
I can do that tomorrow.

CORALIE  
Alright - how was work?

KNOX  
Fine - why are you late?

CORALIE  
One of our clerks left early so I closed alone.

KNOX  
She leaves early a lot, doesn't she?

CORALIE  
Don't be cryptic.

Knox stands up and approaches her.

KNOX  
How am I being cryptic?

CORALIE  
I don't know. I don't think like you do.

KNOX

Thank God you don't.

CORALIE

Yeah, thank God I don't think  
paying those teenage prostitutes  
for sex is a smart decision for  
someone in marriage.

KNOX

They're maids! They've cleaned our  
house! You know them!

CORALIE

Know who? Sophie? "Oh, Mr. Doone,  
you're such a great man! You're so  
handsome! Can I" -

Knox SLAPS her.

An unnerving SILENCE drowns the room, only being interrupted  
by Coralie's SNIFFLES and GASPS.

CORALIE (CONT'D)

I'm going to bed.

Coralie walks past him and into the BEDROOM, SHUTTING THE  
DOOR behind her.

Knox LOOKS at the drawer where the belt is. He opens it,  
GRABS the belt, closes the drawer, and sits back down at the  
table.

He runs his fingers along the leather. He looks at the  
kitchen light hanging over the table.

He wraps the belt around HIS NECK, before UNWRAPPING it and  
placing it in his lap. He rests his head on the table,  
closing his eyes and trying to hold back TEARS.

#### EARLY MORNING

THE BIRDS SERENADE to the rise of a breaking sun shooting  
light through the kitchen windows.

Knox is slouched in the same chair, the brown belt still in  
his lap.

SOBBING through his hands, shoulders quivering, legs  
bouncing, the prong of the belt buckle JINGLING, DROWNING OUT  
THE BIRDS.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Knox enters and looks in the mirror. He parts his hair so it covers his RECEDING HAIRLINE. Hairs fall into the sink.

INT. BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Now dressed in work clothes, Knox walks to his side of the room, choosing a belt from his pile of ONLY BLACK BELTS.

Coralie, reddened eyes opened tiredly, stares at the ceiling. Knox looks at her for a couple of seconds, as if HOPING for something, and then leaves the room.

INT. DOORWAY - CONTINUOUS

He opens the front door with his briefcase, getting ready to -

CORALIE (O.S.)  
Are you still going fishing today?

She's standing in the doorway. He doesn't turn to her.

KNOX  
Yes.

CORALIE  
Okay. Straight from work?

KNOX  
Yes.

CORALIE  
Okay. I'm going back to bed.

He leaves, closing the door softly behind him.

EXT. PRETZEL STAND - SECONDS LATER

A WOMAN in line in front of him gives THE VENDOR a franc banknote. The vendor gives her a pretzel and she leaves.

A CO-WORKER (30's) of Knox enters and CUTS in front of him.

CO-WORKER #1  
One original.

The vendor looks at Knox, who darts his glance to his feet.

VENDOR  
One franc.

..

The exchange takes place and the co-worker leaves.

KNOX  
Good morning. Five originals,  
please.

VENDOR  
Ten francs.

KNOX  
I thought it was one per pretzel.

VENDOR  
For you, it's two.

KNOX  
Why is it two for me?

VENDOR  
You want the pretzels or no?

Knox, CHEEKS REDDENING, gives the vendor ten francs.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

SOPHIE BASSETT (17) AND HER THREE SIBLINGS (19F, 22F, 24M),  
dressed in RAGGED and DIRTY black cleaner uniforms.

Knox enters with his pretzels.

SOPHIE  
Mr. Doone!

KNOX  
Hope you all aren't too hungry!

Her siblings turn and look at him excitedly. He gives a  
pretzel to each of them.

THE OLDEST  
Thank you, sir! God bless your  
soul!

KNOX  
(to all)  
It's supposed to rain tonight; will  
you need a roof to stay under?

THE OLDEST  
That would be delightful, but you'd  
still have to pay for -

KNOX

No, no, I don't want to be involved  
with that anymore.

THE OLDEST

Are you getting bored with Zoe?

KNOX

No - I just - don't want to be  
unfaithful anymore.

THE OLDEST

Ah, well then, providing shelter  
for us tonight *and* feeding us - you  
are a saint!

CHEVY (O.S.)

A saint, yes?

CHEVALIER (CHEVY) ROUSSEAU (22), curly haired and dressed in silk, approaches the five with a brandy bottle - half emptied and gripped at the neck.

Sophie PALES. Knox takes a couple steps away from the four.

CHEVY (CONT'D)

(to the oldest, re: Knox)

This Irish-looking bastard? Handing  
out pretzels to prostitutes in a  
salesman's suit - a real "Dom  
Pérignon"!

Chevy BOOMS in laughter.

THE OLDEST

I'd rather live a humble and honest  
life than be a drunk nepotism baby.

Chevy SNATCHES Knox's pretzel and takes a bite. Sophie LOOKS at Knox, who moves his gaze to the GROUND.

CHEVY

"Nepotism baby", yes? You're more  
pathetic than this potato-headed  
paddy wagon - treating your bodies  
like soup kitchens, making a  
mockery of the French people.

Chevy takes out 100 francs and reaches it out to Sophie.

THE OLDEST

What are you doing?

CHEVY

Paying for your lunch, dinner, and a hotel for tonight. It's supposed to rain.

(to Sophie)

All I need is 20 minutes, darling.

THE OLDEST

Sophie's off limits. You know that.

CHEVY

I've had enough of the other two. Give me her or you get nothing.

KNOX

(to Chevy)

You should go away.

Chevy GLARES at Knox and SCOFFS.

CHEVY

Shove off, you red-haired goblin.

Knox steps back and looks at Sophie, who stares at him back, DESPERATELY.

CHEVY (CONT'D)

(to Knox)

Now, Mick.

Knox backs away and LEAVES, stomach rumbling.

INT. LAURENT INSURANCE CENTER - MINUTES LATER

Knox enters and looks around surprisingly.

Polyester banners of "CONGRATULATIONS" stapled to the walls, colored pennants and confetti painting the desks and floors.

EXCITED CHATTER, a CLUTTER of ADULTS in business clothes, surrounding the co-worker that cut in front of Knox.

Knox pulls YVES DUPONT from the bunch aside.

*Their voices are raised over the chatter of their colleagues.*

KNOX

Well, I'm here.

YVES

What? Arthur caught his fugitives!