

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!