

Kosher

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. CITY OUTSKIRTS - HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Against the bright glow of the cityscape a lone CAR drives out of town.

INT. JOHN'S CAR - NIGHT

Eyes on the road, hands at ten and two, JOSH (23) drives while his girlfriend, AMBER (22) fiddles with her phone.

AMBER

Nine hours.

JOSH

Amber, that can't be right. It only took us five hours to drive in and that was with rush hour traffic. Check it again babe.

AMBER

Checking... and, my battery just died.

She plugs the phone into the car charger.

JOSH

Fuck. Musta been a rollover.

AMBER

Or a fatality.

JOSH

Awesome. We're gonna be stuck in traffic all night.

AMBER

Just pull off and find a place to eat. It's better than staying in a car with glum Gus for nine hours.

JOSH

Are you kidding me? We just left.

EXT. CITY OUTSKIRTS - OFF RAMP - NIGHT

The turn signal flashes as the car pulls off the highway and towards a brightly lit KOSHER DELI sign ahead.

 AMBER (V.O)
 Besides, I have to pee.

EXT. KOSHER DELI - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Josh's car pulls up alongside a POLICE CRUISER.

INT. KOSHER DELI - NIGHT

Immaculately clean, the deli is empty of customers except for OFFICER LARRY (48) wedged into a booth. He grasps the last half of a monstrous pastrami sandwich and takes a glutenous mouthful. Sauerkraut, mustard and meat drip from his mouth as he savors the flavors with each chew.

Behind the counter, ETHEL (55) works meticulously to clean up for the night. A short little Jewish woman, her latex gloved hands fly through the prep without a wasted motion.

A BELL rings as JOHN and AMBER walk in through the front door.

 JOSH
 Quaint place.

OFFICER LARRY walks by Ethel at the counter on his way out.

 ETHEL
 How was everything?

 OFFICER LARRY
 Absolutely delicious as always
 Ethel. Thank you.

With a smile, he leans in, plants a big kiss on Ethel's rosy cheek. Uneasy, she wipes it off with a nearby towel.

 ETHEL
 Haha. Gotta stay sanitary. Keep
 away the FDA.

 OFFICER LARRY
 Just bribe them with one of your
 reuben's and they won't even care.

AMBER

The food's that good here?

OFFICER LARRY

Look at me. I'm a sandwich connoisseur and Mrs. Ethel has the best pastrami I've ever had!

AMBER

Really? That's high praise.

Larry pats and rubs his stomach.

OFFICER LARRY

Would this belly lie to you? It's worth dying for alright. OK, I need to get back on shift. A fatality just came across the scanner and has the highway jammed up for hours. It's gonna be a long night.

Larry waddles out the door as the BELL rings.

AMBER

Good thing we stopped then right?

JOSH

I guess. I've never liked pastrami though.

ETHEL

Ours is really fresh. Would you like a sample?

AMBER

Of course! Fire it up!

Ethel places a piece of rare pastrami on wax paper and hands it to Amber. She happily tears off a piece and eats it.

AMBER

Oh my god! It's sooooo good! John, you gotta try this. It's bitter, but in a good way.

She takes the other piece and shoves it in John's mouth.

JOSH

Eh, it's OK.

Amber licks the juice off her fingers.

AMBER
You're crazy. It's so flavorful.

ETHEL
Thank you.

JOSH
Well I guess she'll have the
pastrami and I'll just go with a, I
dunno, a ham sandwich. And two
sodas.

AMBER
A ham sandwich? You're so boring.

JOSH
Yup.

Ethel hands two cups to John.

ETHEL
I just put the ham away so I'll
have to make it in the back of the
house. It'll take a few minutes and
I'll bring it out to you sweeties.

AMBER
Thanks. Is there a restroom?

INT. KOSHER DELI - RESTROOM - NIGHT

An immaculate restroom, Josh locks the door with a CLICK.
Topless, Amber pushes against him, kisses him madly.

With a devilish grin she slides down and undoes his pants
while Josh pretends not to enjoy it.

JOHN
Babe, you're gonna kill me one of
these days with all these pit stops
you make.

AMBER
Shut up and put some real meat in
my mouth.

INT. KOSHER DELI - OFFICE - NIGHT

The soft glow of a COMPUTER MONITOR radiates over a perfectly organized desk.

MONITOR

With the view angled down from above, Amber braces against the sink just out of frame, as Josh pumps into her hard.

INT. KOSHER DELI - NIGHT

Phone in hand, Josh texts away, seated at a booth. The sandwiches and sodas sit on the table before him, untouched.

At the front, Ethel locks the door to close for the night. She tests them with a shake.

Amber comes to sit down by Josh.

AMBER

Sorry. I really did have to pee.
Who are you texting?

JOHN

My father, letting him know we
won't be home until early morning.

Amber smiles as she grabs tower of pastrami on bread before her and takes a huge bite.

JOHN

Easy there turbo. Don't forget to
swallow.

A pause, then a gag from Amber's pastrami filled mouth.

JOHN

I was kidding babe. Jeez, you OK?

Amber spits out the half chewed pastrami onto her plate. Within is a long black hair.

AMBER

Oh my god! There was a hair in my
mouth and sandwich!

JOHN

Well it's too long to be mine.

AMBER

Dork.

Filled with determination, Amber grabs her plate, stands up.

JOHN

Wait? Where you going?

INT. KOSHER DELI - COUNTER - NIGHT

Fully annoyed, Amber stands with arms crossed at the counter. The hairy pastrami on the counter.

AMBER

Excuse me? Ma'am!

ETHEL

Yes dear? Everything OK?

AMBER

Well, not really. See, I found this drain clogger in my sandwich.

ETHEL

A hair? A human hair?

AMBER

Maybe the FDA owes you an inspection after all?

ETHEL

I'm so sorry dear. Please can I make you a new one?

Amber's mood lightens.

AMBER

Well, yeah. I mean, it is seriously insane pastrami. Come on.

ETHEL

Oh, I can't do that, we're all out of pastrami for the night I'm afraid. But I can prep some in the back if you care to come with? Show you how I make it so rare.

INT. KOSHER DELI - BACK OF THE HOUSE - NIGHT

Shiny stainless steel counters, KNIVES hung on the walls and a CIRCULAR MEAT SLICER fill the small area. A small FREEZER is installed below a counter. Not a spot a dust on anything.

AMBER

Hard to imagine you find the time
to cook and clean all by yourself.

ETHEL

Oh, my son helps out from time to
time but he's unmotivated. My
generation knows the value of hard
work. Unlike his.

ETHEL snaps the latex gloves tight as she puts them on.

ETHEL

It is nice to have an able helper
though. Can you open up the small
freezer sweetie and grab the meat
for me?

Distracted, Amber opens the freezer and pulls out a hunk of
meat then hands it to Ethel who fires up the circular meat
slicer.

AMBER

Sure thing. I used to work in a
deli back in high school. Ever
thought of franchising?

With clockwork precision, Ethel begins to slice thin layers
of meat off the slicer

AMBER

We just came to visit my father and
he's always looking for new
business opportunities. I wonder if
he's ever been here...

At the other end of Ethel's meat is a human hand.

AMBER

... Oh my god! What are you doing?
Josh! Josh! I'm gonna be...

Doubled over, Amber spews vomit onto the floor

ETHEL

Oh no dear, what a mess.

JOSH (O.S.)
Babe! What?

AMBER
Call the police!

Josh turns the corner and recoils in shock at the scene before him.

JOSH
What? In the fuck?

ETHEL
Rrwaaaaaaa!

Like a banshee, Ethel lunges at Josh, knocks him out with the human arm across the head.

AMBER
Josh!

Now rabid, Ethel turns to Amber and charges like a linebacker, shoulder down, and trucks her into the wall by the WALK IN FREEZER. Ethel opens it and throws her inside.

INT. KOSHER DELI - WALK IN FREEZER - NIGHT

Terrified, Amber pounds on the heavy freezer door.

AMBER
Let me out you crazy Jewish bitch!

INT. KOSHER DELI - BACK OF THE HOUSE - NIGHT

Ethel locks the door.

INT. KOSHER DELI - WALK IN FREEZER - NIGHT

Amber continues to pound the door to no effect. Cold hyperventilating breaths escape from her mouth like smoke as she pauses, looks around. Human cadavers in various states of butchery surround her on hooks. The one closest to her wears a uniform with an FDA inspector's badge on it.

Sheer panic as she pounds the door again.

AMBER
Josh!

INT. KOSHER DELI - BACK OF THE HOUSE - NIGHT

Josh comes to in a heavy haze. He looks up to see Ethel's back to him, with a mop and bucket occupied by vomit. The freezer door continues to thump.

Slowly he gets up. Grabs a nearby knife from the wall. Approaches Ethel.

RING! RING!

Josh's cell phone rings and buzzes from his pocket on full volume. Ravenous, Ethel turns to face him.

JOSH
Dammit dad...

ETHEL
Rwarrrrrrr!

Ethel lunges at Josh, assaults him with the mop over and over as the knife is knocked from his hands.

He tries to grasp the mop but can't get a grip as the brutal blows continue to land damage.

INT. KOSHER DELI - WALK IN FREEZER - NIGHT

Desperate, Amber looks around between shivers. A body of a police officer hangs among the cadavers.

INT. DELI - BACK OF THE HOUSE - NIGHT

Stalemated, Josh and Ethel continue to struggle. A well placed crack across the head splinters the mop and knocks Josh onto the counter. Ethel grabs the dropped knife, expertly plunges it into Josh's spine, pins his body against the counter with hers.

JOSH
Arrggggh! Fuck you!

In front of Josh, the meat slicer continues to spin. Ethel grabs his hand with only weakened resistance.

JOSH
Don't do it. What are you doing?
What the fuck are you doing!

With a devil's grin, Ethel places Josh's hand on the slicer's loader. Grabs wax paper and places it in front of the machine neatly.

In even handed motions, Ethel slices Josh's hand into thin fleshy layers that fall evenly out the side of the machine.

JOSH

Fuck! Fuck! Jesus Christ fuuuuck!

INT. KOSHER DELI - WALK IN FREEZER - NIGHT

A quick pat down of the officer's body produces a holstered PISTOL. Amber grabs it.

INT. KOSHER DELI - BACK OF THE HOUSE - NIGHT

A large pile of hand sits on the wax paper by the slicer. Josh lays on the floor, his bloody stump in a pool of blood.

A slice of Josh in her mouth, knife in hand at the ready, Ethel unlocks the freezer door and throws it wide open. But no sign of Amber anywhere.

Perplexed, Ethel walks in slowly. Cautiously.

INT. KOSHER DELI - WALK IN FREEZER - NIGHT

Ethel looks. No sign of Amber. Deeper, she walks into the freezer.

The pistol protrudes from between the bodies.

Amber pulls the trigger but it won't budge. Frozen solid.

With a shove, Amber pushes a nearby body into Ethel then bolts out the door.

INT. KOSHER DELI - BACK OF THE HOUSE - NIGHT

Amber locks the freezer door shut.

She then runs to Josh on the floor, puts the gun in her back waist and tries to slap him awake.

AMBER

Oh my god Josh! Can you hear me?

A flutter of his eyelids is his only response. His phone buzzes again. Amber grabs it from his pocket.

Monstrous thuds emanate from the freezer. Amber runs away.

INT. KOSHER DELI - NIGHT

Through violent shakes, Amber can't open the locked front door. She tries again. And again. And again.

AMBER
Fuck this deli!

She dials 911.

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)
Nine one one. What's your
emergency?

AMBER
Help! I'm trapped in some
restaurant called Kosher Deli, just
outside of town. My boyfriend just
had his hand sliced off into
pastrami and there's a crazy
cannibal Jewish lady locked in the
freezer trying to kill me!

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)
(muffled laughter)

AMBER
Fuck you! I'm serious!

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)
Are you in danger? Can you get to a
safe location. I'm sorry, all the
nearby police are on the scene of a
fatality on the highway...

Amber turns to face the restroom.

INT. KOSHER DELI - RESTROOM - NIGHT

Amber locks the restroom door with a CLICK. Brings the phone to her ear.

AMBER
OK, I'm safe. Hello? Hello?

PHONE SCREEN

No signal. Call disconnected.

Frustrated, she pounds the door hard.

A BELL rings faintly from outside.

Eyes wide, she pauses briefly then bangs on the door.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

(faint)

Mom? Mom is that you? I'm back from
the store.

Amber's fist covers her mouth as she reels back in terror.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Why are you in the bathroom?

Heavy FOOTSTEPS grow louder until they are right outside the
restroom. The door handle shakes lightly. Then violently.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Hello? Is somebody in there?

Quiet as a mouse, Amber turns on the phone's camera, kneels
and slides it carefully under the crack of the door. She
takes a picture then slides it back in to look at.

PHONE SCREEN

A photo looking up at a heavy set, large, and imposing man.

More heavy FOOTSTEPS that begin to fade as the man leaves.

Inspired, Amber looks at the sink.

INT. KOSHER DELI - BACK OF THE HOUSE - NIGHT

Ethel's dopey son EDSEL (38) opens the freezer door.

EDSEL

What are you doing in there mom?

ETHEL

The girl. You idiot. Where's the
girl?

Edsel points to Josh's lifeless body.

EDSEL

You mean him?

ETHEL

Does he have two tits and long
hair? What took you so long?

EDSEL
 There was a bad accident on the
 freeway.

Edsel grabs a handful of meat from the slicer to eat.

ETHEL
 Did you see a girl?

EDESL
 Nope, no girl. Just somebody
 banging on the bathroom door. But
 the door was locked.

ETHEL
 Wait. Somebody is in the bathroom?

EDSEL
 No. You were in the freezer. Why
 were you in the freezer mom?

INT. KOSHER DELI - OFFICE - NIGHT

MONITOR

In the corner frame, Amber washes something furiously in the
 sink, just out of view.

ETHEL (O.S.)
 Why is she washing her hands?

EDSEL (O.S.)
 They're dirty.

ETHEL (O.S.)
 Here's the key, go get her out of
 there while I get the meat grinder
 ready. We got a large catering
 order to deliver tomorrow.

INT. KOSHER DELI - RESTROOM - NIGHT

Hot water from the sink pours out onto the pistol as Amber
 carefully bathes the gun.

With great care, she shakes it dry. Reaches for towels but
 the dispenser is empty. She grabs a handful from the trash
 and dries it further.

The water obscures the sound of heavy FOOTSTEPS until they
 are just outside the door. The handle shakes then a CLICK.

INT. KOSHER DELI - OFFICE - NIGHT

MONITOR

Her back against the wall, Amber opens fire multiple times as the restroom door opens.

INT. KOSHER DELI - RESTROOM - NIGHT

Gun in hand, Amber steps over Edsel's body on her way out.

INT. KOSHER DELI - BACK OF THE HOUSE - NIGHT

Amber pivots to sweep and clear the corridor. Josh's body is gone and Ethel is nowhere to be seen. Guarded, she follows a bloody smear along the floor that leads out to an open back door.

EXT. KOSHER DELI - BACK LOT - NIGHT

The lot empty, Amber gives a thousand yard stare out into the street.

In the distance, cars stop and go at a traffic light.

Amber sits on a nearby curb exhausted. In the distance POLICE SIRENS grow loud.

INT. CITY HALL - FRONT DESK - DAY

Busy with her nails, MARY (45) round and plump, sits at the front desk as numerous PEOPLE go about their business.

Through the crowd, Officer Larry walks up to her. He leans in and gives a kiss.

MARY

Oh honey! I missed you this morning. How was your night shift?

OFFICER LARRY

It was a helluva night. Real bad accident on the freeway. Two fatalities. Grisly stuff.

MARY

How terrible. I don't know how you stomach your job sometimes.

OFFICER LARRY

That wasn't the worst of it.
Remember that deli with the huge
sandwiches?

MARY

The one you took me to on our date
night last month?

OFFICER LARRY

That's the one. Call came out over
the radio there was a homicide
there not ten minutes after I left.

MARY

Oh no! What happened?

OFFICER LARRY

I'm not sure. I'll check it out
tonight when my shift starts.

MARY

That reminds me, I have a surprise
for you.

OFFICER LARRY

Oh really? I love surprises.

Mary brings out a plate of potato salad, latkes, and
pastrami sandwich.

MARY

Somebody donated lunch today. It
happens all the time around here.
Businesses looking for favors and
all. So I made you a plate before
it was all gone.

OFFICER LARRY

Nice. Pastrami.

MARY

Your favorite.

Sandwich in hand, Larry takes a big bite and talks with his
mouth full.

OFFICER LARRY

Mmmm. It's so good.

FADE OUT: