Losing It From Both Ends



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Draft with

Final Revisions

ACTION VERB FILMS

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A visually beautiful HIGH ANGLE SHOT -- an old beaten-up VW BEETLE travels along the road.

A SERIES OF LOW ANGLE TRACKING SHOTS: the road markings whizz by -- hedges flutter as the air from the VW rushes past -- a crowd of crows catapults from the tree tops.

The VW chugs along the typical never ending sycamore treelined road; the mighty tree tops flutter in the breeze throwing dappled shade onto the cars' bodywork.

These scenes should capture the beauty of the French countryside.

TITLES

EXT. FERRY DOCKS - CALAIS - DAY

2

The Dover to Calais ferry has just docked, eager for its return voyage.

SLAM! The HUGE METAL GANGWAY crashes onto the jetty.

A cacophony of car engines fire into action.

VANCE and JEFF, two handsome hipsters in their early twenties, keen to disembark, push through the swarm of foot passengers -- their heavy rucksacks hamper them as they head for the exit stairway.

Ferrymen herd the fleet of vehicles down the exit ramp.

VANCE and JEFF scuttle like greyhounds released from days of confinement.

They skid to a halt at the bottom of the car ramp -- throw off their kit -- sticking out their thumbs, smiling.

CARS ROLL BY...

VANCE whips out a cardboard sign from his rucksack, thrusts it at the passing vehicles. It reads: 'Paris please.'

TWO ATTRACTIVE YOUNG GIRLS in a left hooker wave at them as they pass by.

JEFF waves back excitedly.

JEFF French girls have certainly got something.

VANCE They have attitude. I'll give you that.

> (CONTINUED) 1

VANCE (CONT'D) They know they're beautiful, so they try and get away with murder. I've had experience. Watch out.

JEFF

I'm prepared, don't you worry.

They sling their kit -- tramp down the jetty -- heading for the exit.

DISSOLVE TO:

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EXT. CALAIS 6 - EXIT - DAY

3

JEFF and VANCE are on the ramp exit.

The last drove of CARS troupe their way. VANCE steps up to the plate, the warmest smile he can muster, thrusts the sign. Surely one of these Europeans must take pity and whisk them on their way. It seems not? Most don't even acknowledge him.

Here comes the last vehicle.

VANCE hands the sign to JEFF. In a bout of desperation he lunges at the CAR -- it swerves -- of course it doesn't stop.

The FEMALE DRIVER hangs out the window, blows them a kiss; it may as well have been a kick in the face.

JEFF (fuming) I thought you said this would be easy! You said we'd be in Paris in a day.

VANCE I didn't say that.

JEFF

You did!

VANCE

I didn't.

JEFF

You did.

VANCE I said that Monique could hitch from London to Paris in a day.

JEFF

I think there's a difference between a gorgeous twenty-threeyear old French sex-kitten and two hairy blokes.

VANCE

(slings his rucksack) Come on you big fairy! I bet you ten pounds we're cruising along in a nice car in the next half hour.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROAD - HOURS LATER

4

ROAD SIGN: 'A26 PARIS 229Km.'

The summer sun kisses the hill tops.

A scourge of mosquito.

JEFF, swiping, trails the sign. VANCE traipse in front, thumb in the air.

VEHICLES, all shapes and sizes motor by, some honk.

VANCE halts -- delves into his pocket, brings out a tourist map.

JEFF bends down, dusts his Chelsea boots.

JEFF

I'm not walking any further! I'm ruining my shoes. Do you know how much these cost?

VANCE I haven't the slightest! And at this particular moment, I - don't care!

Rummages in his rucksack, brings out a huge magnifying glass, checks their coordinates.

VANCE (CONT'D) Why didn't you bring sensible boots? (to himself) (turns the map around) This doesn't look right to me.

JEFF I've had a lot on my mind.

Grabs the map.

JEFF (CONT'D) Let me see. Why don't you get a pair of glasses. You bat.

VANCE I look a right nerd in them. It's a chick no-no. JEFF I thought your chances would improve. It covers your face up a bit.

VANCE pummels JEFF'S arm, JEFF winces.

VANCE

Hey! Don't taunt the afflicted.

He scoops his rucksack, makes like Forest Gump.

JEFF

Will you slow down!

Checks the map.

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER

JEFF and VANCE walking aimlessly. VANCE has lost his swagger.

VANCE

... besides, the only way you are going to achieve your goal now is to consolidate. Rein yourself in a bit. Put the past at the back of your mind, move on, up-sticks, new broom and all that jazz. Your major problem is your a "Cup half empty" man.

JEFF

No, I'm not.

VANCE

Take a leaf from my book; watch Al Jezeera news. Then you'll realise how lucky you are. You think your life's shitty, brother you don't know the half of it.

JEFF tuts.

VANCE (CONT'D) Well, you did ask my opinion.

JEFF

I did, but not for a total critique of my life. Okay, we're lost in the middle of France with no fucking food, no fucking water and no fucking tent. But, hey! I'll look on the bright side, I have your inane banter and wit to get me through. See "Cup half full."

> (CONTINUED) 4

VANCE That's more like it. Count ones blessings. I did suggest a tent, by the way. You pooh-poohed the idea. Remember?

JEFF No, I didn't

VANCE

You did.

JEFF

Didn't

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER

JEFF and VANCE sit on the grass verge having a well earned rest.

JEFF (CONT'D) ... so, what's so great about Paris? Tell me?

VANCE It has everything a man could want; most of which doesn't apply to you though: It's sophisticated, you are not, it has style, you have none; look at you. The women crave intellectuality. That definitely leaves you out. When we get there just let me do the talking.

JEFF jumps him, they start to play fight.

Engine noise -- A CAR, French plates -- approaches from behind -- Yes!

The lads <u>"hup two,"</u> straight backs, confident, warmest smiles. Pray.

The MALE DRIVER slows down, checks them out, flicks his wrist in their general direction, then accelerates into the distance.

JEFF and VANCE slump on their rucksacks.

JEFF (loses it) What the fuck is his problem?! What is it with the French? You would have thought they had got over Waterloo by now, surely. They have attitude running through their veins.

> (CONTINUED) 5

VANCE (jumps into action) Onwards and upwards.

JEFF

Let's ditch this and head back to the port. We can catch the train. Come on, I'm starving. I knew this was going to happen.

VANCE

You should be the size of a house with the amount you put away. We're not giving up that easy! You were the one that had a hanker for an adventure. I would have gladly had my feet on the coffee table, chillin' in my chair, G&T in hand, surfing the channels for re-runs of Top Gear... Two week better spent, so don't rub me up the wrong way.

JEFF Right at this moment... I wish you had.

He delves into his rucksack, brings out a French phrase book, flicks through it, mumbles; whatever it is, it sure ain't French.

JEFF (CONT'D)

(paces up the road) Vous parlez anglais? Puis je vous achète une boisson? Oh, I haven't done this since I was at school.

VANCE

(stifles a laugh) Oh, forget it. Unless your French is shit-hot, they won't answer you.

JEFF The funny thing is, when a French person speaks English, we don't take the piss out of their accent. Do we?

VANCE Especially if it's a chick.

JEFF

Tell me about it!

JEFF spins around.

VANCE is chomping on a sandwich.

JEFF (CONT'D) Hey! You've had that in your bag all day? I thought we had eaten them all.

VANCE produces a lunch box from his rucksack, flips it open, grabs a sandwich, holds it in the air.

VANCE Emergency rations... You can thank me if you want for showing great initiative. Catch!

JEFF

Don't!

He swipes the offering -- looks inside.

JEFF (CONT'D) Oh, man, it's got cucumber on it. You know I don't like cucumber.

VANCE I forgot. That's all there is.

JEFF It brings me out in a funny rash. Anything but cucumber.

VANCE Just take it off!

JEFF

Can't, it's mingled with the chicken, or what ever the fuck it is. You know it's one of my pet hates.

VANCE Will you stop griping.

JEFF

I can't stand olives either, capers and mayonnaise. Anchovies too, salty little buggers. Just for future reference. I'm not moaning, I'm voicing my opinion. There's a difference.

VANCE Well it sounds like moaning to me. If we had...

Hold on a minute -- A CAR is coming. The VW BEETLE from the title sequence motors towards them. The lads jump into action. The VW zips past -- wait a minute -- brake lights -- screech! -- it's waiting 30 yards up ahead.

Here's their adventure.

VANCE and JEFF grab their rucksacks, belt towards the VW -they're inches from the door handle -- the car lunges forward -- the lads advance once more -- again the VW bucks forward -it speeds off.

Boisterous laughter come from the two occupants.

The lads throw down their rucksacks, stand their ground.

The VW crashes into reverse, it speeds towards them.

JEFF and VANCE jump back to the kerb -- the VW rests a few yards short.

The passenger's door swings open, a head of blond hair pokes out. This is KURT BOOM (32) a wacky, slightly overweight German with a sympathetic smile.

> KURT Schnell! Schnell!

VANCE and JEFF look weary.

KURT wrenches his bulky body out the car -- pulls his seat forward to let them in.

KURT smiles as he gestures for them to advance.

VANCE scoops his rucksack, saunters towards the VW.

JEFF gives him a look. "You're are kidding."

VANCE Half an egg is better than an empty shell.

JEFF grabs his kit.

JEFF Ask them where they're heading?

VANCE

Who cares!

He follows on.

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INT. VW BEETLE - DRIVING - DAY

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VANCE and JEFF are squashed into the back seat, rucksacks on their laps. Happy to be on the move.

The driver is PHILIP (30), a strikingly handsome, well toned gigolo-type Frenchman.

KURT speaks broken English. PHILIP speaks good English, but chooses not to at first. JEFF and VANCE speak neither German, nor French, so communication is difficult.

It's obvious KURT and PHILIP have been hitting the bottle.

KURT

Woher sind Sie?

KURT turns, smiles in a friendly fashion, offers JEFF a bottle of brandy.

JEFF peers above his rucksack, grabs it.

JEFF Pardon? Thanks.

KURT

English?

VANCE interjects.

VANCE (loudly) We're from London.

JEFF has a big swig of brandy. VANCE looks at him disapprovingly. JEFF ignores him, has another swig, hands the bottle to him.

JEFF (directed at Vance) We're on holiday.

VANCE takes a swig.

JEFF (CONT'D) (to Kurt) Where did you say you guys are heading?

KURT Sorry, I have little English. I am ... Kurt. I'm a German. He is Philip, please forgive him, he is French.

PHILIP turns, grins.

JEFF How's it going, lads? I'm Jeff and this is Vance.

A sea of hands, as they ALL shake.

The VW sways across the road.

PHILIP switches to auto pilot, rights the vehicles' course.

(CONTINUED)

He grins, holds his right hand out for the bottle as if nothing happened. Jeff obliges.

VANCE Thanks for the lift. We've been waiting ages.

JEFF We've been travelling all day. We're cream crackered.

VANCE We really appreciate you stopping.

JEFF The amount of cars that passed us by.

VANCE We were beginning to get a complex.

KURT chuckles.

KURT Please, slowly.

PHILIP hands the bottle to KURT, and so it's constantly passed round.

VANCE Sorry, but neither of us speak German.

JEFF And our French is none too clever either.

KURT (smiles) Then English it must be, but slowly. I have not had much practice lately.

JEFF (slowly) Are you going to Paris?

PHILIP Vive Paris. Vive Paris.

JEFF and VANCE grin. They echo.

JEFF/VANCE Vive Paris. Vive Paris.

PHILIP stomps on the brake, keeping his foot on the gas. The VW bucks up the road.

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Howls of laughter.

PHILIP takes a huge gulp of brandy, sprays it out the window. More Laughter, it's infectious.

CUT TO:

6 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - LATER

ROAD SIGN: 'A26 Paris (straight on) - E40 Dunkerque 23Km' (left)

The VW whooshes past -- takes a left at the sign, heading West.

It meanders through the beautiful French countryside. As far as the eye can see: lush green fields, purple lavender and sunflowers jostle for space. A heat haze distorts our plane of vision.

CUT TO:

A FLATBED TRUCK travelling in the opposite direction -- its cargo, crates of live chickens, sways precariously from side to side.

7 INT. VW BEETLE - DRIVING - CONTINUOUS

JEFF and VANCE are fast asleep. JEFF snores.

KURT'S head droops.

PHILIP'S eyes are heavy -- the road is hypnotizing.

8 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The VW wanders into the path of the on-coming FLATBED TRUCK.

9 INT. VW BEETLE - DRIVING - DAY

JEFF lets out a loud snort.

PHILIP jolts -- terror in his eyes -- grips the wheel -- struggles to regain control.

10 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The TRUCK horn blares -- the vehicle swerves -- a near miss.

Two crates of chickens are propelled from the left side of the truck bed.

PHILIP veers the VW.

The crates crash onto the road --one splits open, the occupants squawk their way to freedom -- the others cheat death by inches.

The VW plows into the banking -- comes to a rest.

PHILIP curses -- jumps out the car, eyes fixed firmly on the FLATBED TRUCK accelerating into the distance.

The others get out. The shock has sobered them up.

JEFF Jesus, man. That was close!

KURT Nearly big accident.

PHILIP curses in French as he surveys the damage to his car.

KURT strolls over to the crate of remaining chickens. VANCE and JEFF follow.

KURT kneels down, checks the owner's label on the side of the crate.

VANCE It fell from that truck. Did you see?

KURT storms back to the VW.

JEFF You'd think they would have noticed. Why didn't they stop?

VANCE Probably drunk. I think it's the French national sport.

JEFF That car's a death trap. There's no way it's M.O.T'd.

VANCE reads JEFF'S mind. "Where the hell are they?" A thick FOG creeps from the woods, it's near dusk.

CUT TO:

11 INT. VW - DAY

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12

KURT rummages through the glove compartment, brings out a map and a torch.

12 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

JEFF and VANCE watch PHILIP curses the VW wing back into shape.

JEFF I don't know whether to laugh or cry. We're going to be in Paris in a week at this rate. KURT strolls back to them. KURT (shouts) Philip, he says about two hundred euros damage. The birds' owner can pay. (looks at the map) Fifty kilometers only. We will take the fowl. JEFF This is bollocks! I thought we were going to Paris? We're never going to get there... I knew this would happen! KURT charges forward. KURT Philip's motor means a lot to him. VANCE Jeff, calm down. JEFF It's crap! It's only worth a couple of hundred quid. It's a wreck. Look at it. It hasn't even got back doors. VANCE finds that amusing. JEFF (CONT'D) We are going to die in the car. It's a deathtrap! KURT (explodes) It was okay when you were sitting in the back sleeping like the little lambs. If you like you can walk. JEFF shrugs. VANCE (steps in) I'm sorry. That was out of order. (looks at Jeff) Wasn't it Jeff? JEFF sulks. VANCE (CONT'D) Jeff!! (to Kurt) It's a cool car. It was a joke. (MORE)

VANCE (CONT'D) (to Jeff) Wasn't it Jeff?

JEFF I'm sorry. I'm tired. I didn't mean it. I get grumpy when I'm tired. It's a great car, lots of character.

VANCE makes no attempt to stifle a yawns.

KURT cracks a smile.

KURT I do also get grumpy when I'm tired. It's the driver who is crap. We go. We will spend the night at Philip's home and leave in the morning. We shall visit the cockerel man on route.

Heads back to Philip.

VANCE (shouts after Kurt) Are you sure that's okay? We don't want to trouble you. Just drop us off somewhere... We'll be fine. No, really.

KURT (turns) Philip's younger sister is an excellent cook. She loves to entertain. We will eat and have good wine. You will like Anna.

JEFF and VANCE ears prick up. They race each other back to the VW.

13 INT. VW BEETLE - EVENING

VANCE and JEFF in the back. The crate shares their space, the chickens peep at them. It's been an eventful day.

PHILIP fires up the engine.

14 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - EVENING

LOW ANGLE

The VW scoots off into the distance.

DISSOLVE TO:

15 EXT. RUN-DOWN SHACK - NIGHT Back of beyond.

> (CONTINUED) 14

13

The VW pulls into the driveway. The engine stops, the lights go out.

16 INT. VW BEETLE - NIGHT

KURT and PHILIP fold there arms, just sit there.

PHILIP whispers to KURT in French.

KURT whispers back.

JEFF (after a moment) Is there a problem?

KURT continues whispering.

JEFF taps him on the shoulder.

KURT (laughs) No problem. We are here. Philip's home.

KURT gives PHILIP a conspiratorial wink.

PHILIP staggers from the VW, heading for the shack.

KURT tumbles out the passenger's side, pulls the seat forward.

VANCE hands him the crate.

KURT smiles at them, makes for the shack.

KURT (O.S.) (CONT'D) (to the chickens) Come you winged beasts.

17 EXT.VW BEETLE - NIGHT

JEFF and VANCE exit the car. They watch KURT stagger towards the shack.

JEFF Tomorrow we are leaving this pair.

VANCE For sure. We'll get up early and leg it.

They haul their rucksacks from the back seat, follow KURT, who has now entered the shack.

JEFF looks around, not another light for miles.

VANCE grabs his arm.

VANCE (CONT'D) If they offer us drink, just say no.

Their jaws drop when they get a clear view of their eerie lodgings. Their minds are whirring.

18 EXT. RUN-DOWN SHACK - NIGHT

The porch is littered with stuffed animals.

TWO ENORMOUS BEARS stand guard at the entrance as if they have been frozen in time.

The trash can is riddled with bullet holes.

VANCE and JEFF apprehensively stumble in.

19 INT. RUN-DOWN SHACK - HALLWAY - NIGHT

19

18

VANCE and JEFF enter the dark, spooky hallway with slight trepidation.

Floorboards creek underfoot.

The walls are covered with stuffed carcasses.

KURT appears out of nowhere. VANCE and JEFF jump.

KURT Philip does stuffing. (mimics a sewing action) You say taxidermist?

VANCE concurs.

KURT (CONT'D) We say too in German. Look, look.

KURT picks up two of the exhibits from a table in front of him: a budgerigar and a little monkey.

KURT (CONT'D)

My favorites.

VANCE and JEFF check the array of skinning knifes, scissors and scalpels strewn across the table.

KURT gently replaces the creatures, gestures for them to follow.

KURT (CONT'D)

Come, come.

JEFF and VANCE grab their rucksacks and follow.

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20 INT. SHACK - FRONT ROOM - NIGHT

It resembles a large Gypsy caravan: an old leather couch, an armchair, a large wooden table with benches each side, no television, just an old gramophone on a low table.

The room may be sparse, but it has a feminine touch: drapes line the roof, lit scented candles illuminate the walls, freshly cut sunflowers stand proudly in their vases.

VANCE and JEFF enter.

PHILIP exits the adjoining bedroom, leaving the door ajar.

He strides into the kitchen.

JEFF and VANCE drop their effects, take in their surroundings.

JEFF preens himself in the wall mirror, sees a fleeting glimpse of a beautiful young woman in the bedroom opposite. This is ANNA (22), PHILIP'S mysterious sister. ANNA is typically French, dark silky hair, coffee-brown eyes. She kicks back the sheets, steps out of bed.

JEFF nudges VANCE. They watch ANNA grab her nightdress from the chair, cover her drop-dead gorgeous naked body.

KURT bursts through the kitchen door brandishing a dusty bottle of red wine, startling them.

KURT A special bottle from Philip's cellar.

JEFF and VANCE spin round as ANNA shuffles through the bedroom door.

She pouts, smiles, slinks past them on route to the kitchen. The lads grin.

ANNA slowly closes the kitchen door, watching VANCE and JEFF, then she's gone.

The lads look at KURT as if to say "Who the hell was that?"

KURT (CONT'D) That is Anna.

PHILIP enters from the kitchen with five wine glasses.

He flicks the switch on the gramophone. An romantic 40s French love song jerks into action.

ANNA appears with a tray of food, bread, cheese, and cold meat.

The lads are transfixed, seduced by her charm.

KURT takes the glasses from PHILIP, dusts them before pouring the wine.

They all gather around the table and sit.

The lads forget their resolution not to drink.

ANNA hands out the plates.

KURT (CONT'D) So, why are you going to Paris?

ANNA (sits) Please, help yourselves.

JEFF and VANCE pile food on their plates.

VANCE (answering Kurt) Just travelling.

JEFF

(smiles at Anna) I've always wanted to see Paris, so romantic. I love the French. I was just saying to Vance, it's my favourite country.

VANCE

I remember you saying something like that. My ex lives there. She doesn't know we're coming. It's a surprise.

JEFF

(to Vance) I thought you called her and let her know?

VANCE She likes surprises.

JEFF You're more of a shock than a surprise. What if she isn't there?

VANCE Don't worry. I'll call her when we get near.

KURT raises his glass.

KURT

Prost!

They ALL join in.

JEFF/VANCE Cheers! Bottoms up!

They clink glasses and drink.

PHILIP springs to his feet, grabs ANNA by the waist, hauls her to her feet.

They dance; more like lovers than brother and sister.

The others watch.

KURT So, what do you do for a job?

VANCE I work in computers. I'm an I.T guy.

KURT glances at JEFF as he tops up the glasses.

JEFF I've just been laid off. Unemployed.

VANCE Laid off my arse! Your employment was terminated. (to Kurt) He was sacked.

JEFF exhales, it's a touchy subject.

VANCE (CONT'D) I thought it was part of the therapy; telling the truth?

JEFF blanks him, he turns, faces KURT.

Anna breaks away from PHILIP momentarily, grabs her wine glass from the table. She brushes past JEFF, then rejoins her dancing partner.

JEFF

(eyes fixed on Anna) Don't listen to him, he's an idiot. I work for a record company. I'm an A&R man. My job is to check what's hot on the music scene, sign them up and guide them to stardom. The parties I could tell you about. (turns back to Kurt) The women!

KURT guffaws.

JEFF (CONT'D) I was planning to start my own record label, but things got a bit messed up. (forlorn) You know how it is. Things slip through your hands.

KURT nods, he certainly knows what he means.

VANCE

(to Kurt) So what do you do?

KURT

I am a museum custodian. I keep my eye on fine treasure. It's important stuff.

VANCE

In France?

KURT hesitates as he reaches for the bottle.

KURT

No, back in Berlin.

He gives PHILIP a sideways glance.

KURT (CONT'D) I too am on a little holiday.

VANCE

(looks over at Vance) That's nice. Your mate doesn't say much, does he?

KURT He has a voice. You know the French, they deal with their life in another ways.

JEFF (pipes up) I can't wait till we hit Paris.

PHILIP rushes over to the table, gestures a toast.

PHILIP

Vive Paris!

They ALL charge their glasses.

ALL TOGETHER Vive Paris!

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER

VANCE and JEFF are well and truly sozzled, heads slumped on the table.

KURT and PHILIP are playing cards. Six empty wine bottles clutter the table.

PHILIP whispers to KURT in French, glances over at the lads' rucksacks. They have a suspicious look about them.

21 INT. ANNA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

VANCE and JEFF share the double bed. JEFF, as always snores like a pig.

VANCE stirs. He wakes his friend.

They glance at each other trying to piece together last night's sequence of events.

22 INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

22

21

ANNA is cooking breakfast. She wipes her hands on her summer frock as she looks pensively out the window.

JEFF and VANCE barge through the door.

ANNA Comment allez-vous? Sit, please.

They sit. They stare.

ANNA dishes up their breakfast, slides it in front of them. Just what the doctor ordered.

ANNA (CONT'D) Coffee's in the pot.

JEFF Great. Thanks. Brilliant.

VANCE Yeah. Merci.

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

ANNA leaves the room.

JEFF She's lovely! I'm right in there. (to himself) Why, oh why did I drop French at school!

VANCE You've no chance!

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23 INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

ANNA, ear to the wall, eavesdrops.

24 INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

VANCE tucks into his breakfast.

JEFF is at the window, plate in hand.

JEFF The car's gone. Come on!

VANCE

Where?

JEFF We said we were going to split from these loonies.

VANCE

(moans)
I know, but my head hurts. Let's
just wait and see what happens.
We'll ask them for a definitive
answer. Clarify! Are we going to
Paris today? And if the answer's
no, then we'll make our excuses and
we're off.

He exhales, pushes his plate away.

VANCE (CONT'D) I think I'm going to heave.

JEFF sits, places his empty plate down.

JEFF You are such a lightweight.

Starts to eat VANCE'S food.

ANNA re-enters.

JEFF and VANCE sit up straight.

JEFF (CONT'D) Lovely breakfast.

VANCE

Merci.

JEFF

What a nice comfy bed you have. Thanks for giving it up.

VANCE Yeah, it's appreciated. We drank quite a bit last night. Can't really remember much about it.

ANNA parks herself at the table opposite them. She looks emotional.

ANNA Don't let them take you to Les Murailles.

JEFF

Where?

VANCE (to Jeff) Must be where the chicken man lives.

ANNA I advise you to leave and not get involved.

VANCE

In what?

ANNA stands, pours herself some coffee.

VANCE and JEFF look at her expectantly.

ANNA pours until her cup overflows.

ANNA (comes out with it) Ivan is a convict. (beat) He has escape from jail.

JEFF Who's Ivan?

ANNA Our German friend.

VANCE (shocked) He told us his name was Kurt.

ANNA His name is Ivan Boom. Philip trained at the same college in Berlin. He has been here for months.

(looks away) I don't want my brother to get into trouble. They are planning to do something. I'm scared. She peeks out the net curtains.

JEFF

What was Kurt, Ivan in jail for?

ANNA rushes out the room into the hallway without answering.

VANCE and JEFF look at each other, aghast.

They hear the VW pulling up outside.

The lads rise, bolt over to the window. They watch KURT and PHILIP get out the VW.

JEFF (CONT'D) What did Anna mean?

VANCE She's joking. She must be.

JEFF shrugs.

PHILIP bursts through the back door carrying a dead fox and a hunting rifle.

PHILIP (fluent) He was a tricky one. I think I need glasses.

JEFF I thought you couldn't speak English?

PHILIP Not to academic standards. I lived in Hackney for ten years.

JEFF That explains it.

PHILIP ignores his comment.

He tosses the fox and the rifle on the table. He stares at JEFF.

PHILIP I see Anna is looking after you.

He rushes off into the hallway.

VANCE

Yeah! She....

KURT bursts through the back door, slides a litre plastic bottle of wine up the table.

KURT

Help yourselves.

VANCE raises his hand to say "No thanks." His eyes dart to JEFF.

KURT (CONT'D) We leave in ten minutes.

From the hallway we hear ANNA and PHILIP having a heated discussion, in French.

KURT hovers at the door, bends an ear. He sighs, then shuffles out the back door into the yard.

JEFF and VANCE lower their voices.

VANCE It's a wind-up.

JEFF It must be.

VANCE What if it's true? What are we going to do about Anna?

JEFF

What are we going to do about Kurt, or whatever his name is? He might be a mass-murderer for all we know.

VANCE He doesn't strike me as a murderer.

JEFF Shoplifters don't break out of jail.

VANCE Soon as we see our chance, we're off.

25 EXT. SHACK - DRIVEWAY - MORNING

PHILIP opens the VW boot, throws in his hunting rifle and two small canvas bags.

KURT walks towards him carrying the crate of chickens.

They joke in French.

26 EXT. SHACK - FRONT DOOR - MORNING

VANCE and JEFF exit.

ANNA appears.

25

PHILIP struts back over to them.

VANCE (whispers to Anna) You didn't answer my question. What was...

PHILIP (shouts to the lads) We must hit the road.

They say their customary good-byes.

ANNA hugs her brother fiercely.

She turns to VANCE. He feels ANNA slipping something into his pocket. He resists the urge to look her in the eye.

CUT TO:

KURT at the VW.

KURT Come my friends. Schnell!

27 EXT. VW BEETLE - DRIVING - MORNING

The VW growls along the road.

28 INT. VW BEETLE - DRIVING - MORNING

The FOUR are in the car.

PHILIP turns on the radio, tunes into a local station.

KURT looks in the glove compartment, brings out a full bottle of brandy, takes the top off with his teeth.

PHILIP grabs it from him, has a huge slug.

PHILIP So, how about my Anna? She is a particularly nice girl. What do you think?

JEFF Yeah. She's very nice.

VANCE concurs.

PHILIP Impulsive, but she's a very good cook. She will make a good wife for someone.

29 EXT. ROAD - MORNING

A POLICE CAR heading towards them.

29

27

30 INT. VW BEETLE - DRIVING - MORNING

KURT ducks out of sight.

PHILIP switches off the radio.

The POLICE CAR drives by.

KURT comes back up, slowly. He thinks for a moment how to explain his action.

KURT Police are on the look out for drunk-drivers.

JEFF But, you're not driving.

KURT ignores his comment, looks out the window.

PHILIP offers the bottle to JEFF.

VANCE (glances at Jeff) No thanks.

PHILIP The only thing is, she talks too much. Talk, talk, talk. What do you think?

VANCE We didn't have much time for conversation. She was busy washing up.

KURT Someone will be a lucky man one day. Ah, we are here.

31 EXT. SERVICE STATION - MORNING

The VW pulls up in the courtyard, passes the pumps, parks up next to the bar restaurant.

32 INT. VW BEETLE - MORNING

PHILIP gets out.

VANCE taps KURT on the shoulder.

VANCE

What now?

KURT (spins around) Our second breakfast, steady the nerves before the drive.

> (CONTINUED) 27

31

KURT gets out. VANCE (shouts) Whose nerves, his or yours? KURT pops his head back in, chuckles. KURT Come, come. Let's have a drinking race. He pulls the seat forward to let the lads out. JEFF (whispers to Vance) I don't believe this. (to Kurt) Listen mate we've decided to, to... Looks at Vance for support. VANCE ... go to Spain. So we don't need a lift. We'll just wait here for a bus and be on our way. If that's alright? Thanks for the... bed and everything. KURT grabs him by the arm. KURT (firm) We start the journey, we finish the journey. Same route. Regular bus does not come this way. We are in the middle of somewhere. VANCE (corrects him) Nowhere. KURT Exactly. JEFF We're sure we'll get a lift. KURT grabs both their arms, marches them to the bar. KURT (adamant) My friends, I insist. INT. SERVICE STATION BAR - MORNING PHILIP'S guzzling a pint of beer. The WAITER plonks a bottle

of red wine in front of him.

33

(CONTINUED) 28

KURT, JEFF and VANCE stroll into the bar.

VANCE points to the toilet, ducks in.

KURT and JEFF take a table at the far end of the room.

PHILIP appears, slams down the alcohol.

The WAITER brings over four glasses.

34 INT. TOILET - MORNING

VANCE rushes into the cubicle, shuts the door -- brings out the note ANNA slipped into his pocket. It reads: "I know it all must be unbelievable. All is true. Be careful. Be strong. Amour, Anna." -- he scratches his head, reads it again.

He stands on the toilet seat, looks out the window -- an empty car park, except for one haulage truck. No sign of life.

He exits the cubical, a TRUCKER barges through the door.

VANCE Excuse me. You don't happen to speak English, do you?

TRUCKER I am Dutch. I speak English well. All Dutch speak English well. Our second language. We like to talk.

VANCE That's great. I know this is a strange question, but do you know where we are?

The TRUCKER scans the room.

TRUCKER

Toilet.

VANCE No, I meant, where are we in France? What is the name of the town?

The TRUCKER opens his satchel, whips out a map.

TRUCKER (points to the map) We are here, one hundred kilometres north from Calais.

VANCE (to himself) Paris is south. Why are we going north!

(MORE)

VANCE (CONT'D) (to the trucker) Please, could you give my friend and I a lift? Anywhere. We're in a real fix.

TRUCKER

Sorry, I am off work now next days. I have a cute girlfriend near here, then back to wife in Holland then.

VANCE

Thanks anyway.

TRUCKER

No problem.

35 INT. SERVICE STATION BAR - MORNING

VANCE exits the toilet.

KURT and PHILIP are necking brandies, playing pinball.

KURT hits a high score.

KURT (shouts) Beat that, Frogman!

PHILIP With my eyes closed, Sauerkraut!

KURT slaps VANCE on the back on his way past.

KURT Ah, my friend. You are late for the race.

VANCE Don't worry I'll catch up.

PHILIP grabs JEFF'S arm.

PHILIP Why don't you have a go? Release some energy. I sense a bit of tension.

VANCE Me tense! No. No, thanks. It's not my sport.

VANCE heads back to JEFF.

PHILIP whispers to KURT. They both look over at the lads.

VANCE reaches the table as the WAITER slams down another two brandies.

VANCE takes the drinks, surreptitiously pours three-quarters into the pot plant behind the seat.

JEFF What did you do that for?

VANCE We have to keep on top of things.

You're not going to believe this; we're heading north. I asked a truck driver.

JEFF You are joking!

VANCE We have to get away from these guys.

KURT looks over, raises his glass. VANCE and JEFF down what's left of their drink, smile at him. KURT looks away.

JEFF This is a nightmare! We have to go to the police.

VANCE Let's not get involved. Kurt doesn't seem a bad guy. We'll just slip away and let things take their natural course. Our rucks-sacks, they're in the car.

They glance over at their companions.

KURT smacks the side of the machine, curses. PHILIP pushes him out the way, muscles in on the game.

VANCE (CONT'D) It's only ten o'clock and they're both pissed. We'll say we've decided to rent a car. I noticed a garage about five miles back; it must be open by now.

JEFF Brilliant idea. You've saved the day. You brought your licence with you?

VANCE No! Did you bring yours?

JEFF We're hitching. Why would I need my license?

VANCE Why would I need mine? (sighs) What the hell are we going to do? JEFF I told you we should have gone by Eurostar. VANCE Oh, don't start. You were the one that suggested hitching in the first place. JEFF No, I didn't. VANCE You did! JEFF I didn't VANCE Your memory! KURT heads their way. JEFF Shush! Act normal. KURT I beat him by a kilometre. He is rubbish. We go pay the cockerel man a visit, then continue our journey. Okay? KURT and PHILIP head for the exit. JEFF and VANCE look troubled. INT. VW BEETLE - DRIVING - MORNING The FOUR are in the car, it bombs along. Scenery whipping past. VANCE taps KURT on the shoulder. VANCE The town where we're headed, do buses pass through now and again? PHILIP

It's a very strange place. It has the highest suicide rate in the whole of France. They say that something in the water makes the locals mad. 36

*

38

JEFF Just like Milton Keynes.

KURT

Milton who?

JEFF and VANCE laugh.

KURT sticks his thumb up, pretending he got it, looks out the front window, sniggering to himself.

37 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - MORNING

A sign reads: Les Murailles (24Km)

Coming closer, the VW, a full head of steam, gurgles by and into the distance.

38 EXT. LES MURAILLES - MORNING

The VW pulls off the main road -- takes a left for the centre of Les Murailles, a sleepy one-horse town, way off the beaten track. This small community looks as if it was frozen in the fifties.

The VW motors up the main street, it attracts onlookers.

It takes a right -- parks up on a steep hill.

To the left is a row of shops and a bar. On the right is Pascal's Amusements, an ornate Funfair full of happy kids.

KURT, JEFF and VANCE get out the VW, make for the bar.

KURT carries the crate of fowl.

KURT

The journey has given me a thirst. How you say "I need to wet a whistle."

JEFF Tell me about it.

KURT

I just did!

VANCE

(correcting Kurt) "My whistle." Wait a minute! I thought we were here to return the chickens?

KURT whistles at the birds.

KURT Yes, but we need to ask directions. And we need food, also. VANCE turns, looks back at PHILIP sitting in the car.

JEFF What about Philip?

KURT Handbrake is broken. We take turns.

KURT tramps off.

JEFF and VANCE look back at PHILIP. PHILIP waves at them. They wave back, then follow KURT.

They catch KURT as he reaches the terrace to the bar.

39 EXT. TERRACE BAR - LES MURAILLES - DAY

39

The locals are a strange-looking bunch.

Customers at the patio tables glare and gaggle as they walk up to the entrance.

KURT nods politely. He plops the crate under the table, walks inside to order.

Two WOMEN brush past, tut, throw him a dagger of a look.

JEFF and VANCE take a table.

JEFF

I'm starving.

He gestures to the waiter for a menu.

VANCE takes out a French phrase book from his pocket, studies it.

He turns round, tries to spark up a conversation in French with the WOMAN sitting behind him.

VANCE Hi, excusi moi.

The WOMAN ignores him. VANCE reads from the phrase book.

VANCE (CONT'D) Est là-bas n'importe quels autobus? Do you speak English?

WOMAN

Yes.

VANCE Thank God for that. Er... are there any buses?

WOMAN

No.

41

JEFF and VANCE watch her go. JEFF (perturbed) See, that's what I mean about the French. CUT TO: INT. VW - DAY VW rear view mirror -- in the reflection -- a POLICE CAR cruises up the street. PHILIP slides down the seat out of view. INT. BAR - LES MURAILLES - DAY KURT strolls from the bar to the patio -- sees the POLICE

JEFF and VANCE see the POLICE CAR.

She snubs him, waltzes off.

KURT watches them.

CAR, fades away.

40

41

JEFF

We're saved. Come on!

They spring to their feet, about to scamper.

KURT appears from nowhere.

KURT

Pisst!!

JEFF and VANCE hesitate. They watch the POLICE CAR drive into the distance.

KURT (CONT'D) My friends. Please! I beg you! Let me explain.

JEFF Jesus! Listen man, no offence, but you and your mate are a pair of fucked-up, drunken loonies and we are saying bye-bye. All we want to do is go to Paris. Can we have our rucksacks?

VANCE We promise not to tell the police. That's right, eh, Jeff?

JEFF shrugs.

KURT My friends. It's not what you think. Please let me explain. Please!

His eyes speak volumes. He's a man in turmoil.

For some reason the lads go along with it.

KURT leads them to the back of the room.

The WAITER appears with a bottle of wine, glasses and a plate of sandwiches.

They sit in silence until the WAITER is out of ear shot.

KURT (CONT'D) Three months ago I was in Amsterdam at a stag party.

His eyes start to glaze over.

KURT (CONT'D) I've been accused of a crime I did not commit.

FLASHBACK TO:

42 EXT. ROAD - AMSTERDAM SUBURBS - NIGHT

A blue BMW hammers around the corner, drops a gear -- heads up the street.

CUT TO

CU of a cell phone. The hand holding it belongs to ARABELLA, (26) attractive, leggy.

She staggers along the dimly lit road, in mid conversation.

CRUNCH! -- the BMW rams her from behind -- she crashes onto the bonnet -- SPLAT! -- her face wallops the windscreen.

By the impact we can presume she is dead.

43 INT. BLUE BMW - NIGHT

HUGO HUNTER (45), arrogant, confident, self-made man, sits behind the wheel transfixed at the sight of ARABELLA'S motionless body.

After a moment he un-clips his seat belt, turns, looks at KURT, who is crumpled up in the back seat. KURT has a nasty cut above his right eye.

44 EXT. BLUE BMW - NIGHT

HUGO exits holding the back of his head.

(CONTINUED) 36

42

He opens the passenger's back door, somehow manages to drag KURT out. KURT mumbles in German. HUGO scans for any witnesses. With great difficulty he heaves KURT in the drivers' seat. INT. POLICE STATION - AMSTERDAM SUBURBS - NIGHT 45 45 Interview room. KURT sits at the desk, nursing his bandaged head. BACK TO: PRESENT EXT. TERRACE BAR - LES MURAILLES - DAY 46 46 JEFF looks skeptical. VANCE, struggling to make sense of it. JEFF (gorging on a sandwich) That's some story, Kurt, or what ever your name is. Why are you telling ..? VANCE (butts in) (genuinely excited) How did you escape? FLASHBACK 47 INT. POLICE TRANSFER VAN - AMSTERDAM SUBURBS - DAY 47 KURT (V.O.) I was being transferred to another prison when... KURT climbs into the back of the VAN with TWO TOUGH-LOOKING CONVICTS. A POLICE OFFICER shackles the prisoners, slams the door. The VAN drives off. KURT looks over at his fellow inmates, smiles. They ignore him. They don't look the nervous type, but they are, both grip the bench seats, brace themselves. WALLOP! EXT. POLICE TRANSFER VAN - AMSTERDAM CENTRAL - DAY 48 48 IMPACT -- Steel vs. steel -- A BREAKDOWN TRUCK rams the VAN

into a wall -- The engines' bodily fluids spew onto the road.

49 INT. BACK OF POLICE TRANSFER VAN - DAY

Chaos. KURT'S on the floor, dazed, confused, watching the other TWO PRISONERS sidle to the front of the VAN. He hauls himself to his feet, imitates their move.

Screams from the DRIVER in the cab, then silence.

WHAM! -- The VAN'S back doors are torn from their hinges.

TWO HOODED MEN jump in -- cut the chains.

KURT, disorientated, follows the other TWO CONVICTS as they make their escape.

SLAM! -- Out of nowhere a smack in the mouth, KURT falls back, thumps his head on the VAN side-panel.

BACK TO PRESENT:

50 EXT. TERRACE BAR - LES MURAILLES - DAY

KURT surveys their blank faces.

KURT

When I woke up in the police van, I thought, this should be lucky for me, everything became clear. I remembered all that happened the night of the accident. I did not commit this...

FLASHBACK TO:

51 INT. HUGO'S BLUE BMW - AMSTERDAM SUBURBS - NIGHT 51

Inertia. At the moment of impact.

KURT is propelled from the back seat, smacks his forehead on the back of HUGO'S head.

KURT keels against the window, blood trickles down his face.

BACK TO PRESENT:

52 EXT. TERRACE BAR - LES MURAILLES - DAY

52

KURT mumbles to himself in German.

JEFF and VANCE are completely bamboozled.

JEFF Why are you telling us this?

KURT I need your help. 49

VANCE Help you with what?

KURT stares into his empty glass.

KURT

I have to prove that the man called Hugo is to blame and not I.

Pours more Dutch courage.

KURT (CONT'D) (whispers) You don't know what it's like to be in a cell, night after night, and believe you have killed someone. Philip was kind to me and took me in. I'd been living like an animal, hiding in dark corners, biding my time.

VANCE What are you planning to do?

KURT I'm going to find Hugo, and if I have to, I will kill him.

JEFF/VANCE (flabbergasted) You're kidding? What!!

KURT A bullet would be too good for him.

KURT drains his glass, eyes lowered.

KURT (CONT'D) Sorry, my friends.

Crestfallen, he gets up, tramps towards the door.

KURT (CONT'D) Philip's turn to drink.

A seemingly endless pause as the lads speculate KURT'S story. They whisper.

VANCE We have to stop him.

JEFF

What?!

KURT hovers at the door for a second, then sullenly exits. The lads are moved, but not convinced. JEFF fills their glasses. They down more alcohol.

VANCE We'll go to the police and tell them they have the wrong man.

JEFF

Stop this. Are you crazy? If we go to the police it's to inform them that there's a nutcase on the loose.

VANCE

I feel so sorry for him. They'll put him back inside, then he'll never be able to prove his innocence.

JEFF Maybe he's guilty. He'll have to fight his own battles. We are on holiday; in case you have forgotten.

53 EXT. VW - DAY

53

PHILIP watches KURT exit the bar. He reads his body language, slumps down into the seat.

He winds down the window.

KURT shuffles towards him, keeping an eye out for the police car.

PHILIP

It was worth a try.

KURT (glum) I told them everything. Let them be on their way. They can't help us. I don't blame them. I am on my own.

PHILIP You know the Dutch police will be on the look-out for you.

KURT shrugs.

PHILIP gets out the VW, heads to bar.

KURT gets in the car, watches him go. He lays his head on the steering wheel.

54 INT. BAR - LES MURAILLES - DAY

PHILIP marches into the bar, and over to the lads -- grips JEFF'S shoulder, sits next to him.

(CONTINUED) 40

PHILIP Friends have to stick together. Yeah? We will find a way to make Hugo talk.

JEFF and VANCE wonder what the hell he's getting at.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

He's a Englishman living in Amsterdam. He owns sex shops and a girly club. Ivan didn't know him. He was very drunk on that night, but he didn't do it.

JEFF

Well, maybe he was so drunk he can't remember stealing the car.

VANCE And maybe he can't remember knocking the woman down.

> JEFF id he was going to

He said he was going to shoot this guy.

PHILIP He isn't serious. He's emotionally charged.

JEFF looks to VANCE.

PHILIP (CONT'D) This guy Hugo reported his car stolen from outside the Bierkeller minutes after the accident. Ivan can't drive. He didn't steal it. The police found Hugo's car keys in the ignition!

He jumps up as if he has won some sort of victory.

The lads still aren't convinced.

PHILIP (CONT'D) If he stole the car he wouldn't have the keys. At the trial the keys were never mentioned. They are fixing him up. Ivan was refused an appeal. This Hugo it seems is in the pay of the police. Don't you see? Come on man, think about it. Seriously!

He sits.

JEFF No! Maybe Kurt found the keys. All trying to score points.

PHILIP

How would he have known which car they belonged to? Anyway I told you he can't drive.

JEFF

Maybe he found them in the ignition. (a note of resignation) Oh, I don't know!

PHILIP

(flips out) He is a good man, married with two children. If we don't help him, then he will rot in prison for many years for a crime he did not commit. Would you like that on your conscience?

JEFF

Wait a minute. Kurt, I mean Ivan's your mate.

VANCE

(to Philip) Are you out of your mind? You're planning to drive to Amsterdam to shoot someone, that may, or may not be responsible for Kurt's stint in prison, and you're asking for our help?

JEFF

What have we got to do with it? We don't know anything about guns.

VANCE Or shooting people.

PHILIP

It was a joke. We wouldn't waste bullets on that scumbag. He'll get his just deserve. If you come with us, you could track this man down.

JEFF

(butts in) YOU track him down.

PHILIP

You're English. Less suspicion. You could find out about him. There would be no need for violence, I promise you. (MORE)

> (CONTINUED) 42

PHILIP (CONT'D) We all know that the only way to get our friend off the hook is to get a confession from Hugo. If we do this without you... (looks away, upset) They will put him back inside. (annoyed) Ivan is innocent. I'm telling you he's innocent.

PHILIP'S plea has fallen on deaf ears. Annoyed, he jumps up, strides over to the public phone.

JEFF grabs the bottle, pours two glasses. VANCE pushes his aside, eats a sandwich instead.

VANCE (whispers) What will we do?

JEFF

What do you mean!? It's not our fight. We've only known the man for twenty-four hours. He can't expect anything from us. We're on holiday, remember!

VANCE Yeah, but we just can't stand back and do nothing.

JEFF Are you seriously considering we go to Amsterdam with those nutters?

VANCE (whispers) No... I'm just saying... he seems a decent man. I think he's telling the truth. He sounds desperate.

JEFF jumps to his feet, exhales.

JEFF

Of course he's fucking desperate. All I know is we left London two days ago and so far we have managed to travel eighty miles, not even in the right feckin' direction. We're being dragged into some weird shit. Get a grip!

55 EXT. STREET - LES MURAILLES - DAY

55

LOW ANGLE

56

57

The VW drives off. The crate of chickens are left on the pavement.

56 INT. VW BEETLE – DRIVING – DAY

JEFF and VANCE sit in the back in silence.

KURT and PHILIP stare out the front window. Scenery goes by.

57 EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

The VW as it pulls up opposite the stop.

They all get out.

VANCE I'm really sorry we can't help you. We believe you're innocent, but...

KURT grabs their rucksacks, walks JEFF and VANCE across the road to the bus stop.

KURT I am the one who is sorry, my friends. It was a desperate measure to get you involved. I don't know what I was thinking.

The weight of the world on his shoulder, he sighs.

KURT (CONT'D) I miss my family so much I was ready to pull you into this terrible disorder. (raises his head) Can I ask you to please forgive me?

VANCE nods.

JEFF shrugs.

A MOTORBIKE screams towards them.

CUT TO:

MOTORCYCLE

MARCO, the hunky rider, has a female passenger on board, it's ANNA.

The MOTORCYCLE pulls up -- stops in front of the VW.

ANNA dismounts -- takes off her helmet -- hands it to MARCO.

JEFF and VANCE can't believe their eyes.

JEFF

(waves) Hi, Anna. VANCE makes his way over to her.

JEFF'S on his tail, steps in.

JEFF (CONT'D) It's good to see you.

They hold back.

ANNA is busy talking to MARCO, she drapes an arm on his shoulder. They joke in French.

JEFF and VANCE are clearly jealous.

JEFF (CONT'D) (to Vance) Who's he?

ANNA grabs her small bag from the bike-rack.

MARCO caresses her face, bids her farewell.

He fires up his machine, accelerates back the way he came.

PHILIP greets ANNA. They speak in French.

ANNA watches MARCO disappear over the brow of the hill.

She runs over to VANCE and JEFF, kisses them both on the cheek.

ANNA (smiles) Comment allez-vous? Nice bike, eh?

JEFF Who's the guy?

ANNA (shrugs) Marco, the postman from the village. He kindly gave me a ride.

PHILIP Anna is coming with us.

VANCE/JEFF What, to Amsterdam?/ You're joking!

ANNA leans into the VW, opens the glove compartment, grabs the obligatory bottle of brandy, unscrews the top.

KURT looks away.

PHILIP, hands out stretched, pleading silently, he knows it is pointless.

ANNA empties the contents of the bottle out on the verge.

ANNA Someone has to control this crazy situation.

VANCE But it could be dangerous.

ANNA shrugs. She hands PHILIP the empty bottle.

VANCE (CONT'D) Excuse us for a moment.

VANCE drags JEFF out of earshot.

JEFF

What?

VANCE We can't let Anna... I mean.

JEFF You are being led by your dick.

VANCE No, I'm not.

JEFF Get your eyes off her, I saw her first.

VANCE

Oh, shut up! Think about it. If Anna and Philip believe Kurt's story, then there's a good chance it's true.

JEFF

How do you work that one out?! He might be conning them as well. Remember that Richard Gere film where Edward Norton gets accused of killing a priest? Butter wouldn't have melted in his stuttering mouth. He did it though. Think about it.

VANCE

That was a film, you willie. And what if he's on the level? We'll be condemning an innocent man. Philip was right; I wouldn't like a thing like that on my conscience. Bad Karma.

JEFF You and your stupid fucking Karma! This is unbelievable! (MORE)

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JEFF (CONT'D) I've just come out of rehab and you want me to go to Amsterdam, the drugs capital of Europe. What is this, a test? You've got a warped sense of humour mate!

VANCE

(goes off on one) Stuff your addiction. This is not about you. There's a man's freedom at stake. Think about someone else, just for once, will you? Jesus!

JEFF I'm not looking for redemption!

VANCE You're capable of rescuing yourself; he isn't.

There is an uneasy silence.

JEFF This guy Hugo's bound to be a nasty piece of work?

VANCE I've no doubt he will be.

JEFF (sighs) Fuck!! Some holiday!

Resigned to the fact, he storms off back to the VW.

VANCE runs after him.

JEFF glares at ANNA, then KURT.

JEFF (CONT'D) Okay. We're coming with you.

KURT beams. The weight lifted. He rushes over, hugs JEFF and VANCE.

KURT (kisses them on the cheek) My friends. My boys!

VANCE One condition. If we do this, we do it well. No violence.

KURT and PHILIP, nod, enthusiastically.

PHILIP unsheathes a huge hunting knife from his belt, proceeds to sculpt an apple into a delicate shape.

KURT whips out a map of Amsterdam, spreads it out on the VW bonnet.

KURT To business. When we reach Amsterdam, you boys and Anna check in at the Valdo Hotel. It is in the Centre, near Dam Plaatz Square.

JEFF Who's going to pay for it? We have a bit of money, but not enough for flash hotels.

PHILIP I have money.

1

KURT

We will remain three kilometres in the suburbs. We will hire bicycles for our transportation.

PHILIP

Police don't stop cyclists, so it should be safe.

KURT No problem. We will blend in. We will meet every morning.

The name 'Red Lion Club' is circled on it. PHILIP points with precision.

KURT (CONT'D) Hugo's club. His sexy shops. Your hotel.

VANCE So, you've thought this through a bit?

KURT Much, but until you joined us we had no clue what to do.

PHILIP hands the peeled apple to ANNA, she pecks him on the cheek.

PHILIP (looks at the lads) Now we are going to kick ass!

JEFF and VANCE give a sideways glance. "What have they let themselves in for?"

58 INT. VW BEETLE - DAY - DRIVING

The car is crammed. JEFF and VANCE are in the back, ANNA'S wedged in the middle.

VANCE (animated) Well, it seems to me that the only way that we can get an upper hand on this guy Hugo is through his financial dealings. He must have some irregularities, some back door transactions we can use as bait. I need a computer.

ANNA

Check the big brain on Vance.

JEFF, in a sulk, gazes out the window. ANNA senses he is nervous about the situation.

She brushes his hair behind his ears, smiles. He is moved by ANNA'S affection, he cheers up.

KURT rubs his hands, clearly excited.

PHILIP starts the engine, pushes the tape in the car stereo player, Steppenwolf, 'Born to be wild' blasts out.

59 EXT. VW BEETLE - DAY

The over-burdened car groans off into the distance.

CUT TO:

60 EXT. AMSTERDAM CENTRAL - EVENING

The VW dodges CYCLISTS as it makes its way through the bustling historic city towards DAMS PLAATZ SQUARE.

61 INT. VALDO HOTEL - CORRIDOR - AMSTERDAM - DAY

A windmill-shaped key is inserted in to the lock. The door swings open.

JEFF, VANCE and ANNA scan room 20.

They step inside the poky room. One double, one single bed.

ANNA

Very cosy.

JEFF

Oh, great!

CUT TO:

58

59

60

62 INT. HOTEL BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

62

JEFF snores like a pig. VANCE is in the double bed next to him, awake.

Coloured light streams through the inadequate curtains.

VANCE looks over at ANNA, she has the pillow wrapped around her head.

VANCE sneaks out of bed and over to her.

He taps her on the shoulder, she looks out from below the pillow, smiles.

VANCE (whispers) Do you fancy a coffee?

Without a word, ANNA'S up and out of bed, pulling off her skimpy nightgown.

VANCE diverts his eyes as she jumps into her tight blue jeans.

JEFF stirs, silent for a moment -- he starts up again.

ANNA grabs her t-shirt, puts it on as they sneak out.

63 INT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

63

VANCE and ANNA crash through the door, laughing.

VANCE goes up to the bar.

ANNA finds a table.

She smiles at TWO YOUNG BOYS sitting in the corner.

VANCE looks at them, clearly jealous.

He pays the barman for his drinks.

Wanders back to ANNA.

Hands her a coffee.

ANNA

Thanks.

VANCE So how come you've ended up in the back of beyond, a beautiful girl like you, and not married?

ANNA I'm a lesbian. VANCE nearly falls off his seat.

ANNA (CONT'D) But, I like boys as well. I suppose that makes me bi. Does that shock you?

VANCE

Woow! No, of course not... I'm a man of the world.

ANNA

The real reason! My parents split when Philip and I were teenagers, we moved to London with our mother. She wouldn't allow us to see our father; the odd summer break, but most of the time she kept us from him. Father became ill a couple of years ago and Philip and I moved back to look after him. We had missed him most of our lives. He died last year. I promised him that I would bring up my children in that house.

VANCE So your life with women might be short lived, then?

ANNA

If I have a feeling for the right man, maybe.

VANCE So, I have a chance?

ANNA It isn't my time. You should take heart that I have drowned many a man's dreams. (holds out her hand) You may kiss my hand.

Vance gives it a gentle slap, she giggles.

ANNA (CONT'D) Change the subject.

VANCE (comes out with it) Why are you doing this?

She didn't expect that one.

VANCE (CONT'D)

Do you really think Kurt, I can't call him Ivan, well do you think he's telling the whole truth? I'm asking purely in the interests of self preservation.

ANNA I understand. He's been with us for nearly two months. I knew he was hiding from something, or someone. Some nights I would hear him cry, sobbing.

Philip eventually confided in me. (after a moment) Yes, I think his story is true.

He's a very genuine man... I overheard them talking the night you and Jeff arrived. I thought then it was a crazy idea; I still do. That's why I tried to warn you. I thought you would be sensible and walk away.

VANCE

We tried.

ANNA Jeff's a funny guy.

CUT TO:

64 INT. HOTEL BEDROOM - JEFF IN BED - NIGHT

JEFF, snoring, what a racket!

He rolls over, snuggles his pillow.

JEFF (moans) Suzie! Suzie!

65 EXT. RED-LIGHT DISTRICT - NIGHT

> Opposite 'The Moulin Rouge,' ten minutes from Central Station. Expensive real estate tinged blood red, pockets of darkness, women parade their wares, ogling tourists window shop, more than two hundred to choose from. Families live above; it seems to work.

ANNA and VANCE travel along the maze of cobbled passageways, taking in the vibe.

They turn into Oudezijds Voorburgwal Straat.

ANNA notices the street sign above, clocks the 'Red Lion Club, ' opposite.

> (CONTINUED) 52

65

66

ANNA (excited) Look! That's the club. Hugo's club. I remember the name. Let's go in.

VANCE (grabs her arm) No way. We should wait. The last thing we want to do is blow our cover.

ANNA

Come on!

She skulks off towards the door, gestures to him to follow. VANCE isn't so sure, but he complies.

AT THE DOOR

'Waitresses Wanted - Must Have Experience.' ANNA glances at the sign on the way in.

66 INT. RED LION CLUB - NIGHT

Shabby Sheik -- scantily-clad women are everywhere.

The SHOWGIRLS are on stage, shaking their stuff.

ANNA and VANCE stroll through this palace of depravity-- they take a table in the darkest part of the room.

ANNA cases the joint.

VANCE'S glued to the stage. ANNA nudges him.

A WAITRESS serves them.

67 INT. RED LION CLUB - HUGO'S OFFICE - NIGHT 67

A hand spins the dial of a safe.

HUGO (O.S.) All quiet on the western front?

DERK(O.S.) Pretty quiet.

The safe is pulled opened, the hand grabs a bundle of cash.

HUGO (O.S.) That's what I like to hear.

DERK and VAN OUSTEN, two snappily dress men in their mid thirties, sit with their backs to us.

HUGO shuts the safe, turns, hands the cash to DERK.

HUGO (CONT'D) Second installment. Business concluded. No hard feelings?

DERK flicks through the cash, counts it.

VAN OUSTEN As you say, business concluded. Don't expect any more help from us.

HUGO (chuckles) Never say never.

DERK and VAN OUSTEN show no emotion.

They stand, leave the room.

HUGO follows them.

68 INT. RED LION CLUB - MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

68

DERK and VAN OUSTEN'S POV as they follow HUGO through the club.

The gyrating POLE DANCERS are distracting.

HUGO continues walking.

He slaps a couple of MALE REGULARS on the back, shakes their hands, continues towards the VIP area.

CUT TO:

The VIP area table, where TWO ATTRACTIVE YOUNG GIRLS are feasting on champagne.

CUT TO:

ANNA and VANCE.

ANNA (stands) Be back in a minute.

VANCE Where are you going?

ANNA heads over to the bar, leaving VANCE to sweat it out.

CUT TO:

The VIP AREA.

HUGO pulls the TWO YOUNG GIRLS to their feet, sits in their place. Pours himself a glass of champagne, nods to the GIRLS, they know exactly what he means; it's their job after all.

(CONTINUED) 54 DERK and VAN OUSTEN approach HUGO'S table-- the TWO YOUNG GIRLS block them.

HUGO (to Derk and Van Ousten) As I said, no hard feelings... Complements of the house. A bit of harmless fun. We all deserve a bit now and again.

The TWO YOUNG GIRLS inch forward. They lure DERK and VAN OUSTEN.

HUGO (CONT'D) You can slip out the back way when you're finished. Go on, enjoy.

DERK and VAN OUSTEN glance at each other. They are enticed, and led away.

CUT TO:

THE BAR

The BARMAN points HUGO out to her to ANNA.

BARMAN The man in the grey suit. We call him Mr. Mac. Mr. Hunter to you.

ANNA

Thanks.

CUT TO:

VANCE flapping, he watches ANNA head over to the VIP AREA.

He ducks back down out of HUGO'S view.

WITH ANNA -- as she pushes through the sea of men, they part as she approaches HUGO'S table.

ANNA leans on the table, sticks out her breasts.

ANNA (CONT'D) (confidently)) Excuse me, Mr. Mac? Could I have a word with you?

HUGO Well, who might you be, angel?

ANNA I'm Chantilly. I need a job.

ANNA spins around, she's underdressed for the occasion, but she's still looks incredibly sexy.

(CONTINUED) 55 HUGO You're a bit of a femme fatale, aren't you? I like French girls.

ANNA smiles coyly, holding HUGO'S gaze.

HUGO pats the seat, gestures her to sit. She parks herself next to him.

HUGO (CONT'D)

So the job you're after, Miss Chantilly, bar work? Or are you the exotic type? One of the good old girls?

ANNA I can do both, but for now I'd prefer waitressing. I'll work my way up, if you know what I mean.

HUGO Oh, yes, certainly. Working your way up's good.

He stares at her for a moment, then stands.

HUGO (CONT'D) I'm leaving now, call by tomorrow and I'll put you through your paces.

ANNA stands. HUGO kisses the back of her hand.

HUGO (CONT'D) A personal touch is important in this kind of business.

ANNA wipes her hand on the back of her jeans.

ANNA

Au revoir.

ANNA walks off to the bar, ignores VANCE.

HUGO watches her go.

JOHNSTON(50) - HUGO'S beefcake minder appears, hands his boss his coat and briefcase.

HUGO and JOHNSTON head towards the back exit.

VANCE ducks from HUGO'S view.

ANNA runs over to VANCE, grabs his arm.

ANNA (CONT'D) Follow him. He's leaving through the back door. VANCE Follow him where?

ANNA Just follow him. He hasn't seen you. Track his movements. Go! I'll meet you back at the hotel.

She shoos him off.

VANCE reluctantly heads for the door.

69 EXT. RED LION CLUB - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT
 69 VANCE exits -- runs round to the back of the building.

70 EXT. RED LION CLUB - BACK DOOR - NIGHT 70
VANCE belts round the corner -- stops in his tracks -- clocks HUGO getting into the back of his CAR. JOHNSTON gets behind the wheel -- hits the gas.
VANCE flags down a TAXI.
71 INT. TAXI - DRIVING - NIGHT 71

VANCE, on the edge of his seat, eyes trained on HUGO'S tail lights -- mustn't lose him.

72 EXT. NARROW ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

LEIDSEPLIEN -- the snazzier end of town. HUGO'S CAR pulls up outside a serviced block of flats.

JOHNSTON gets out, opens the back door, HUGO emerges.

73 INT. TAXI - DRIVING - NIGHT

Turns into the narrow alleyway.

VANCE sees HUGO up ahead.

VANCE Stop here. Stop!

The TAXI DRIVER ignores him, pulls up alongside HUGO.

VANCE ducks.

VANCE (CONT'D) No! Keep going!

The TAXI DRIVER winds down the window, shouts over to HUGO.

TAXI DRIVER

Mr. Mac.

HUGO recognizes the voice, turns.

72

74

HUGO

Hi, Henry.

TAXI DRIVER This one in the back wants a word. He got in at the club and told me to follow you.

74 EXT. NARROW ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

HUGO (walks to the taxi) Oh, did he now?

HUGO taps the back window. VANCE reluctantly winds it down.

HUGO looks in, smiles.

VANCE nervously smiles back.

HUGO (CONT'D) Are you one of Meegeren's boys? Has he sent you on a little spying mission? What an arse he is!

VANCE (intimidated) I'm sorry, mate. We must have followed the wrong car. My friends were in a car like yours and I was following on. It's a mistake.

HUGO It's not a mistake you can afford to make twice. Get out.

VANCE stays put.

JOHNSTON sticks his head in the window.

JOHNSTON Son, are you fucking deaf, or what?!

75 INT. TAXI - NIGHT

75

The TAXI DRIVER leans round, holds out his hand.

TAXI DRIVER

Ten euros.

VANCE, incredulous, dives into his pocket, gives the DRIVER twenty-euros, doesn't wait for his change.

He gets out expecting the worst.

76

76 EXT. NARROW ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

JOHNSTON hands the TAXI DRIVER a twenty-euro note.

HUGO Buy the wife some flowers.

The TAXI DRIVER nods appreciatively.

VANCE watches the TAXI pull off. This is serious -- should he run -- or tough it out?

HUGO and JOHNSTON come close.

VANCE As I said, I'm sorry for the mixup. It's just been one of those nights. I'll be off then.

JOHNSTON swings his mighty fist.

WALLOP! -- VANCE hits the dirt.

He winces.

After a moment he gets onto his knees, checks to see if he's lost any teeth.

HUGO steps forward, places his foot on VANCE'S back, pushes him to the ground.

HUGO I ever see your face again... You tell Meegeren to get off my case, or someone's going to get hurt, badly.

VANCE I don't know what you're on about.

HUGO bends down, looks Vance in the eye.

HUGO Oh, I think you do.

VANCE recoils.

HUGO (CONT'D) Now, fuck off!

VANCE stumbles to his feet -- he's out of there.

HUGO follows JOHNSTON towards the apartments, laughing as they go.

77 INT. VALDO HOTEL - BREAKFAST AREA - NEXT MORNING

77

ANNA, VANCE and JEFF are huddled round the table in mid conversation.

VANCE nurses his swollen jaw.

VANCE ... he was a big fella. His neck was the same size as his head.

JEFF

(furious)

So, now Hugo's clocked you, you're out. You've blown it. What made you do such an irresponsible thing?

VANCE Oh, don't rub it in. At least I know where he lives. I think.

JEFF

(agitated)
We'll probably find a horse's head
in our bed tonight.

VANCE Don't be so melodramatic.

JEFF

And you made me promise not to get into any fights. You need to practice what you preach. At least when I get into a fight I can handle myself...

ANNA (butts in) Sorry, it was my fault.

VANCE (to Anna) Tell him the rest.

ANNA I have a job interview.

JEFF

What? Where?

ANNA Hugo's club, waitressing. It's a good idea. I'll get close to him.

JEFF You are fucking joking! Excuse my French. (MORE)

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JEFF (CONT'D)

Vance has been close enough to find out he's a crazy son of a bitch. We haven't even started and already we're losing it from both ends. We may as well take Polaroids of us all and post them through Hugo's letter-box.

VANCE

Anna's made a good contact. She'll be able to get things out of him. We're on the way.

JEFF Where to, hospital?

JEFF stands up, storms off.

VANCE looks at ANNA, then runs after him.

INT. VALDO HOTEL - RECEPTION - DAY

VANCE catches JEFF up.

VANCE (shouts after him) Jeff. Wait!

Grips his shoulder.

VANCE (CONT'D) Easy. What's wrong?

JEFF You and her. That's what's wrong.

VANCE What do you mean?

JEFF

Sneaking off in the middle of the night. What do you think you're playing at? I saw Anna first.

VANCE

You're starting to sound like a broken record. We couldn't sleep. There was a pig in the room.

JEFF

What? (adamant) I don't snore.

VANCE shakes his head. No use arguing the point.

VANCE

Nothing happened. Honest. She's a very forceful girl. It was her idea to follow Hugo. I didn't want to look weak. It's the truth.

VANCE heads for the stairs.

JEFF

Yeah, whatever. Just remember the job in hand. You can't take a chance of being seen with Anna now, you bump into Hugo and it would blow the whole thing. So, we'll see you at the cafe.

VANCE watches JEFF go back into the breakfast area.

INT. VALDO HOTEL - BREAKFAST AREA - MORNING

79

JEFF enters, sits next to ANNA.

ANNA

Well?

79

JEFF

Anna.

ANNA Everything cool? Want some more coffee?

She waltzes over to the machine. JEFF nods.

ANNA (CONT'D) Looks like it's you and me, partner.

JEFF You're enjoying this aren't you?

ANNA A little bit. So my plan is, I'll go see Mr. Mac tomorrow.

JEFF

Who?

ANNA That's what they call Hugo. He's a right dick. I'll wrap him round my fingers if I get the chance.

JEFF (sniggers) Not literally I hope.

80 EXT. CANAL STREET - DAY

LONG SHOT

ANNA and JEFF stroll past the flower market, glancing behind them now and then.

ANNA is wearing a head scarf and sunglasses.

JEFF looks in a cafe window, it's full of young people drinking and smoking joints. It's tempting, he thinks about it, turns, sees ANNA disappearing into the crowd.

He picks a pink carnation from a window box, runs after her.

ANNA (spins around) What about Suzie?

JEFF discards the carnation.

JEFF

(quick fire) Vance told you about Suzie? The sneaky snitch. I knew he had an ulterior motive last night. He's just trying to put me in a bad light. I suppose he told you I was in rehab for a month and I lost my job because of it. I can't believe he told you. That's right out of order.

ANNA

He didn't tell me anything of the sort. You shouted her name out a couple times in your sleep, in between snores.

JEFF

(beat) She's my ex. The whole rehab thing I suppose was inevitable.

ANNA

Because of your job?

JEFF

I guess. I went into a spiral and couldn't get out of it. Suzie was the only person that tried to keep me on the straight and narrow. I let her down badly.

ANNA What happened to her?

JEFF She said if I didn't give up the habit she'd walk. I convinced her I had, then I got bust. I was in the clinic for a month. That's why I came on holiday with Vance, to forget her, and calm my nerves.

JEFF looks troubled. He sighs.

ANNA

Do you think you'll ever get back with her?

JEFF

No, it's water under the bridge. She said she'd never trust me again. Said I was weak, reckons I always will be.

ANNA You could try and prove her wrong.

JEFF

As Vance says. "I'm a cup half full" type of guy. There's a wanting inside of me. I'll never change.

ANNA

I don't understand.

JEFF strolls off. ANNA runs after him.

81 INT. CAFE - MORNING

ANNA and JEFF enter.

VANCE burst in behind them, wearing a hat and shades.

They scan the room for the rest of their gang.

KURT

Pissst!

KURT and PHILIP sit in the corner, both are wearing long false grey beards and shades. They look like ageing rock stars.

JEFF (sniggers) It's ZZ Top.

VANCE (whispers) I thought you we're going to blend in? PHILIP We are in disguise.

JEFF You could have fooled me.

KURT looks at PHILIP.

KURT (to Philip) (pleased) I told you. (to the others) What news?

VANCE, JEFF and ANNA sit.

JEFF (to Vance) Tell them.

CUT TO:

82 EXT. CAFE - LATER

82

The gang exit into the beautiful morning sunshine, shades on, heads down, conspicuous.

KURT Close one. Be brave, not foolish.

VANCE

A name that was mentioned was Meegeren. I don't know if it's a first or last name, but I'm sure whoever it is, hasn't Hugo's best interests at heart.

PHILIP Leave that to us. (takes Anna's hand) Anna. Be careful.

ANNA winks at him.

They all walk off their separate ways.

83 INT. RED LION CLUB - HUGO'S OFFICE - DAY

83

HUGO'S at the drinks cabinet.

ANNA is perched on the chair in front of his desk. She looks hot in her tight black number and high heels.

HUGO

Chantilly?

ANNA crosses her legs, slowly.

ANNA A Scotch on the rocks would be lovely.

HUGO So where do you originally hail from?

HUGO turns his back, pours the drinks.

ANNA swipes one of his business cards from the desk -- slips it into her bag.

ANNA In the south, Montpellier.

HUGO (turns quickly) Charming place. I know it well. Why so far from home?

ANNA

Oh, just fancied a change of scenery. I want to make lots of money and retire soon, and there sure is plenty around here.

HUGO I see where you're coming from.

He hands her the drink.

ANNA

Merci.

HUGO

Do you have a boyfriend? It's just that this kind of work, as you're probably aware, takes up a good bit of your precious time. The last thing we need is jealousy creeping into the equation. Do we?

ANNA

No, I'm a free agent.

ANNA knocks back her drink.

HUGO

I'll take it for granted you're capable of doing the job. I run a very tight ship here. I'm very hands on. If I catch you with your little fingers in the till, all hell will break loose. Another? ANNA No thanks. I'm not much of a drinker. HUGO A girl with a level head. I don't meet many. You'll go far. I'm sure you won't let me down. (stands) You can start tomorrow evening, five sharp. I can't abide unpunctuality. (grabs her hand) You know the dress code.

ANNA Thanks. You won't regret it.

ANNA smiles, stands. HUGO grabs her hand, kisses it.

HUGO A' coeur vaillant rein d'impossible.

ANNA pouts. He eventually lets her hand drop.

84 EXT. CANAL - DAY

VAN OUSTEN and DERK slouch on the railing, gazing down at the water.

HUGO, clutching a briefcase, strides towards them, stops a few feet away, looks down at the canal.

DERK What do you want?

HUGO I have another little job for you.

VAN OUSTEN We told you, it was a one-off.

DERK We did your dirty work the last time, it nearly cost us our jobs.

HUGO You were paid well; I have the cheque stub to prove it.

Opens his briefcase, produces a large brown envelope, places it on the wall in front of him.

HUGO (CONT'D) There's a lot of cash in there. All I want you to do is slow Meegeren's legislation process.

VAN OUSTEN We can't do that, and you know it.

HUGO You'll find a way. I only need a few more weeks, then I'll have sold up, and some other stupid bugger will have to deal with the MPS and their daft new social order. (snarls) If my club gets shut down before the sale I will not be a happy man. Do you hear?

Taps the envelope.

HUGO (CONT'D) (lightens up) So, gentlemen. What do you say?

VAN OUSTEN (shakes his head) Your reign is coming to an end.

HUGO (smiles) Is it now?

Brings out a bundle of photographs from his briefcase, hands them to DERK.

DERK studies them, his face turns to stone.

HUGO(O.S.) (CONT'D) Video cameras have really improved over the last few years. Don't you think? So cheap. The stills are amazing.

DERK You perverted bastard. You set us up.

He goes for HUGO, checks himself, too many bystanders milling around to cause a scene.

DERK shows the snaps to VAN OUSTEN -- pictures of them, caught in various sexual positions with the TWO YOUNG GIRLS from HUGO'S club.

VAN OUSTEN Bribes, then blackmail. You are a very brave man. HUGO Oh, I didn't know at the time, but the girls were under-age. Genuine mistake... Pity that.

DERK We could drag you away right now.

HUGO

I don't think so. You see gentleman, that tape will be in my possession until the day my club is sold, then I'll hand it over. If you think anything for your significant others, you'll do as I say.

DERK You won't get away with this.

HUGO

Getting away with things is my forte. As they say, "Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely." Why don't you pop by the club and watch the video in its entirety. Very amusing. Don't give up the day jobs.

DERK and VAN OUSTEN are furious. HUGO has them over a barrel.

HUGO (CONT'D) Never say never.

HUGO snaps shut his briefcase, smiles, strides off across the canal bridge.

DERK and VAN OUSTEN watch him go. They argue in Dutch, as they head in the other direction.

85 INT. RED LION CLUB - NIGHT

ANNA, dressed in her skimpy work clothes, serves a couple of drunken lads, then skips off towards the staff door.

86 INT. HUGO'S OFFICE - NIGHT

ANNA sneaks in the door, over to the filing cabinet, flicks through the folders, not really sure what she's looking for.

She tries the desk, the drawers are locked.

She sifts through a pile of letters. One is from an Estate Agent stating HUGO'S intention to sell his club. She reads it, then notices bank statements, grabs a pen, scrawls down the account number.

85

88 A clatter from upstairs, she hides behind the door -- All 88 clear.

ANNA exits HUGO'S office, pressing herself against the wall. The door directly across from her is slightly ajar -- she sneaks over, peeks in.

A YOUNG MAN is watching six video screens, cameras secretly filming clients and girls in their rooms having sex.

The YOUNG MAN inserts a DVD into one of the recorders. HUGO obviously has everything recorded for posterity.

The back door buzzer goes -- ANNA jumps.

She runs back into HUGO'S office, no other place for her to go.

87 INT. HUGO'S OFFICE - NIGHT

ANNA crouches down, watches through the office door window.

The back door is flung open -- JOHNSTON drags TWO TEENAGE GIRLS, both wired, through the door, along the hallway. He manhandles them into a room at the end of the corridor.

JOHNSTON (O.S.) Make sure these two are kept under lock and key for the first few days. Don't want them scuttling off back to Serbia, or wherever the fuck you call it these days.

MEN'S laughter.

ANNA nervously slips out the office door -- makes her way down the hallway -- past the open door where the two girls were pushed into -- then through the staff door to the club.

88

87

VANCE is at a terminal, hacking into HUGO'S personal computer. He looks over his shoulder, smiles to himself. Next to him are the details ANNA found in HUGO'S office.

JEFF appears with two coffees. He takes out a hip flask of whisky, pours some in his beverage.

VANCE look at his drink with disdain.

JEFF Oh, don't start. I'm trying, alright! You don't know how hard it is for me at the moment. Every where I look there's people smoking and snorting and popping. The drink will help me get through it. Okay! Want some?

> (CONTINUED) 70

VANCE smiles, shakes his head. He gets back to squinting at the screen -- HUGO'S finances are displayed in front of them.

JEFF (CONT'D) (whispers) Is that his computer? You are wicked.

VANCE

That's nothing. If I wanted to I could hack into the Dutch police mainframe. It's easy, anybody could do it. I lifted the software from my server. Most idiots don't upgrade their firewall. As long as you don't use your own computer there's no trace. I could even grab a screen shot of Hugo; he wouldn't even know. (his expression changes) Oh shit!

89 INT. HUGO'S OFFICE - DAY

CU HUGO'S LAPTOP -- 'WARNING SCAN ATTACK' alerting him that his hard drive is being hacked into. He traces the I.P address, cuts the Internet connection.

90 INT. INTERNET CAFE - DAY

VANCE

Bollocks!! He spiked it. It won't let me download the information.

JEFF

Oh, great! What do we do now?

VANCE shrugs.

91 INT. CAFE - AMSTERDAM CENTRAL - NEXT MORNING 91

KURT and PHILIP, both in disguise, sit at the table conversing with VANCE and JEFF.

KURT We asked around about this guy Meegeren. He is known in this town.

PHILIP He is a Dutch MP. It seems he's on a mission to clean up Amsterdam.

KURT Trying to restrict clubs like Hugo's.

VANCE Well, do you think we should get in touch with this guy?

PHILIP (to Kurt) He'll hand you over to the police. Why should he believe us?

JEFF If we could just put a little doubt in this MP'S mind, then I think he'll listen. He could get the case re-investigated.

KURT jumps to his feet, goes off on one.

KURT

I have already appealed twice. No chance. I'm not going back to jail, I can't. I want to see my family again. I am innocent...

A POLICEMEN enters the cafe.

The gang freeze. KURT turns his back, shields his face and sits. The others try and look inconspicuous.

The POLICEMAN buys a chocolate bar, has a quick look around the cafe, thinks nothing of the strange bunch in the corner.

He pays the cafe assistant, exits.

They ALL sigh and glance at each other.

KURT (CONT'D) (whispers) I say we find this Hugo and torture him. Just let me go. I will receive the confession from him.

JEFF grabs his arm, sits him back down.

VANCE Don't be daft. Putting lit matches between his toes isn't going to achieve anything.

KURT He deserves more.

VANCE Maybe so, but I think we should contact this MP. It's our best shot. I have to be back at work at the end of next week. JEFF I agree with Vance, we have to try a different approach. We are running out of time.

VANCE (to Kurt) At the trial, were there any witnesses, did anyone see the accident? Think hard.

KURT looks at PHILIP, shrugs.

KURT

(after a moment) There is one strange thing: the dead woman's sister knew of Hugo. I had the feeling of this connection, but it was never raised in court.

VANCE What was Arabella's second name?

KURT (racks his brain) Zalf. Arabella Zalf.

92 EXT. CAFE PUBLIC TELEPHONE - DAY

A note pad, five addresses, all with the name Zalf scored out -- two to go. ANNA, phone book opened in front of her, phone under her chin -- she dials the next number.

A WOMAN answers.

WOMAN'S VOICE (on the phone) (in Dutch) Hello. Kartien Zalf.

93 EXT. CANAL BOAT APARTMENTS – AMSTERDAM CENTRAL – DAY 93

ANNA wanders down the gangway.

ARABELLA'S sister is busy watering her plants at the far end of the boat. She clocks ANNA, turns away.

ANNA reaches the gangway gate.

ANNA Excuse me. Are you Katrien, Katrien Zalf.

KATRIEN continues her flower arranging.

ANNA (CONT'D) I'm Anna. We spoke on the phone. 92

KATRIEN I told you I had nothing to say.

ANNA

Please, I need to talk to you. I know you must have been through a lot of heartache already, but the truth is, the man convicted of your sister's death is innocent. Katrien, I really need to talk to you.

ANNA'S voice strikes a chord. KATRIEN walks towards her.

94 EXT. PARLIAMENT BUILDING - AMSTERDAM CENTRAL - DAY 94

JEFF and VANCE march across the square towards the Parliament building.

JEFF stops VANCE in his tracks, runs off towards TWO YOUNG MPS who are standing chatting at the chamber door.

VANCE stays put.

LONG SHOT.

JEFF speaks to the TWO YOUNG MPS. After a moment he clatters back to VANCE.

JEFF (gasping) He's speaking at Vrije University today at five o'clock.

VANCE

Where's that?

JEFF (looking at his watch) Come on. The number five tram takes us right there.

They shoot off.

95 INT. CANAL BOAT - DAY

KATRIEN shows ANNA into the living area.

Various pictures of Arabella and Katrien's six year old daughter jostle for position.

KATRIEN

Please sit.

ANNA sits.

KATRIEN delves into the pile of photographs, brings out a recent picture of her dead sister.

KATRIEN (CONT'D) She was such a beautiful girl.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK

EXT. BIERKELLER CAR PARK - AMSTERDAM SUBURBS - NIGHT

96

ARABELLA there, hurling abuse at HUGO.

ARABELLA

(swaying) You wanker. You just try and deny it. If you don't support me you'll find business in Amsterdam a lot harder. You forget, I know all your little scams.

HUGO You know nothing.

ARABELLA Your English taxman would love to know exactly how much you are making over here.

HUGO (erupts) No one threatens me. (shoves her) Even if it was mine, what on earth made you think I would shack up with a bint like you for? I'm at the top of my game, luv. I have enough baggage. Know what I mean? No one threatens me. Now fuck off!

She cries.

96

HUGO struts off towards his BMW, parked at the side of the Bierkeller.

ARABELLA gets mad, picks up a stone, chips it at him, catches him on the shoulder.

HUGO stops briefly, then continues walking.

WITH ARABELLA -- stagging out the car park, into the road -- rummaging around her handbag, finds her mobile.

ARABELLA (shouts) Maybe your wife will believe me.

HUGO (shouts back) I'll kill you, bitch!

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HUGO continues towards his BMW.

ABABELLA grapples with her phone as she makes her way along the dark street.

CUT TO:

HUGO at his BMW watching ARABELLA.

KURT, paralytic, sprawls out of the Bierkeller door. He staggers around the car park talking to himself in German. HUGO clocks him. He gets into his BMW, fires the engine. KURT mistakes HUGO'S BMW for a taxi.

> KURT Taxi! Taxi!

HUGO sees a way out of his situation.

HUGO drives alongside KURT.

He opens the back door.

KURT waffles in German, collapses into the back seat.

HUGO checks for witnesses, slams the door.

The BMW speeds out the car park, into the side street.

BACK TO:

PRESENT

97

INT. CANAL BOAT - AMSTERDAM CENTRAL - DAY

97

KATRIEN, still fixed on Arabella's photograph.

ARABELLA

I was so distraught that I couldn't get my act together and collect all the clues. Days later I did. My fears were confirmed when two men paid me a visit, they said if I didn't keep my mouth shut, my little girl would suffer. I couldn't have that. I had no one to turn to.

She opens the bureau drawer, brings out her mobile phone, navigates to the voice-mail.

ARABELLA (CONT'D) It's hers. I keep it charged and I save the message every week, but I haven't had the will to listen to it lately.

> (CONTINUED) 76

She hits play.

ARABELLA'S distressed voice screams form the hand set, mostly in Dutch, but with a few English words thrown in.

KATRIEN, passes it to ANNA.

When the message finishes ANNA has trouble holding back the tears.

ANNA The last bit was in Dutch. What did it say?

KATRIEN 'I'll kill you, bitch.' That was the last words he said to her.

ANNA gives her a comforting look.

KATRIEN (CONT'D) He killed her.

98

EXT. VRIJE UNIVERSITY - AMSTERDAM CENTRAL - DAY

98

JEFF and VANCE jump from the TRAM, sprint towards the University chamber door.

Students spill out onto the campus grounds.

A tall-distinguished gentleman appears from the crowd. This is MR MEEGEREN (55). A bunch of students gather round heckling him.

He waves them off, laughing to himself.

JEFF and VANCE speak to a STUDENT, who points MEEGEREN out.

JEFF and VANCE rush over to MEEGEREN.

VANCE (shouts) Excuse me. Mr. Meegeren? Could we have a quick word with you?

MEEGEREN side-steps him.

MEEGEREN Come on! Don't you think I've been grilled enough for one day?

JEFF (runs after him) We're not students. My name's Jeff and this is Vance.

VANCE nods, catches up.

VANCE

We're visitors to your country and seem to be involved in, well it's hard to explain, but it's a matter of life and death. Do you have a minute?

MEEGEREN I am on my way to a Gala opening, excuse me, I'm late already.

Races off.

VANCE (shouts) It has to do with Hugo Hunter.

MEEGEREN skids to a halt.

CUT TO:

99 EXT. CAFE - DAY

99

JEFF, VANCE and MEEGEREN, sitting at the table, drinking coffee.

MEEGEREN I have encountered Mr. Hunter before. Stay well clear. He breeds trouble.

JEFF We think he was responsible for someone's death.

MEEGEREN listens intently.

MEEGEREN And he pinned it on a German friend of ours.

VANCE

It's a long story. We were hitchhiking to Paris and we met Kurt, I mean Ivan Boom. He's the chap Hugo framed.

JEFF We spent two days trying to get rid of them.

MEEGEREN

Them?

VANCE He has a friend, a French guy call Philip. JEFF

Ivan has been hiding out at his place in northern France since he broke out of prison.

VANCE

(interjects) He didn't break out, he was set free. It's hard to explain...

JEFF

He eventually convinced us of his innocence, and we've come to Amsterdam to try and clear his name.

MEEGEREN

Just like that?

VANCE

I know it sounds unbelievable, but there are a number of factors that make for a strong case. We spoke to...

MEEGEREN

(butts in)

Now, one moment. It is hard to ascertain the truth without proper background reports, court readings and official police gatherings. In Holland, Members of Parliament don't usually get involved in such matters, that is why we have the police and Magistrates Court. Much like your own country.

JEFF

But Kurt, I mean Ivan is sure Mr. Hunter has bribed the Dutch police.

MEEGEREN

Now, that is a tall accusation. Do you realize what you are saying?

VANCE

There's a list of things that weren't brought up at his trial. Basic stuff, like...

MEEGEREN

Listen. (thinks for a moment) All I can say is, if there's been any impropriety, I will get to the bottom of it, but it must be through the right channels. (MORE) MEEGEREN (CONT'D) Amsterdam is starting to turn into the Wild West. I am not sure if you are aware, but I am at the forefront of the clean up legislation. Leave it with me. I will see what I can do.

JEFF and VANCE look relieved.

MEEGEREN (CONT'D) Where are you staying?

JEFF We're at the Valdo, Dam Plaatz.

MEEGEREN

I know it.

JEFF

Room twenty.

MEEGEREN I will be in touch.

They all rise.

VANCE Thanks. We were scared you'd think we were cranks and turn us over to the police.

They shake. MEEGEREN marches off across the square.

VANCE and JEFF are beaming with relief.

VANCE (CONT'D) I think that went well.

JEFF I knew he'd believe us. We'll have this wrapped up in no time.

VANCE Then we can get back to being on holiday.

JEFF Amsterdam isn't bad. If it wasn't for old Kurt we might never have seen it.

They laugh.

JEFF (CONT'D) Do you really think he believed us?

VANCE

Yeah! It will probably take a few days for him to get the wheels in motion. Wait until we tell the others. We better lay low until things sort itself out.

JEFF

What a relief. I can't believe this nightmare's almost over.

VANCE

Wait a minute! Surely Mr. Meegeren would be familiar with Kurt's case; he seems to know a lot about Hugo's affairs.

VANCE (CONT'D)

Maybe he...

They rise to find TWO POLICEMEN towering over them.

100 INT. POLICE STATION - AMSTERDAM CENTRAL - DAY

100

INTERVIEW ROOM

JEFF and VANCE sit on the bench, guts churning.

A POLICE WOMAN'S at the door.

MEEGEREN and DS JANSEN enter.

MEEGEREN greets them with a friendly raised eyebrow.

MEEGEREN Hello boys. I had you brought here for your own safety. This is DS Jansen.

DS JANSEN nods, steps forward.

DS JANSEN

Hugo Hunter is a very dangerous man. If he thinks you, or anyone else is meddling in his affairs, he will put a stop to it. Where is Ivan Boom and his companion?

JEFF and VANCE keep stum.

MEEGEREN steeps forward.

MEEGEREN Lads, we really need your help.

JEFF

They're...

VANCE kicks his shin.

VANCE

(butts in) Somewhere in the suburbs.

DS JANSEN

Where?

VANCE They didn't tell us the address.

DS JANSEN He is still an escapee, and until this story of yours has been corroborated he will be treated as such. You can get into serious trouble for harbouring a criminal.

JEFF He isn't a criminal. He's innocent.

MEEGEREN

I know you are trying to help your friend, but there are certain rules that have to be followed. If he is innocent, then he has nothing to fear.

The lads think about it.

DS JANSEN

By which means do you keep in touch? You must have a telephone number? Which area of Amsterdam are they? If you do not impart this information freely, then I'm afraid you may be marked as an accessory before the fact.

JEFF comes to his senses. He brings out the address card of KURT'S hotel, reluctantly hands it to DS JANSEN.

DS JANSEN checks it, takes MEEGEREN to one side, whispers in his ear in Dutch.

They leave the room.

JEFF (shouts) Excuse me. We need to warn Anna.

VANCE I think we've just put our foot in it.

VANCE and JEFF look down-trodden.

101

101 EXT. CAFE - AMSTERDAM SUBURBS - DAY

KURT and PHILIP, still in disguise, are in a cafe directly across the street from their hotel. Both have a watchful eye.

KURT

My nerves. I feel we should be doing more. I'm worried about Anna and our boys. I fear I have put them in too much danger.

PHILIP

There is nothing we can do. It wouldn't be safe for you to be in the centre of town.

KURT puts his hand on PHILIP'S shoulder.

KURT I haven't expressed my gratitude to you. I know it is a lot to ask.

PHILIP Friends have to stick together.

KURT What have I ever done for you?

PHILIP (thinks) Wait a minute, there must be something. (smiles) If it hadn't been for you I would have given up college and become a bum.

KURT

But you are.

They laugh. KURT stops, the gravity of his situation hits him.

KURT (CONT'D) I am praying this works. I have been missing my children, my wife also; but not hearing my angels' voices. I have felt empty as a well. I want to go home.

PHILIP It will all be over soon.

How wrong can he be.

Sirens blare -- THREE POLICE VEHICLES speed towards them. KURT and PHILIP put on their shades, dip their heads. The POLICE VEHICLES screech to a halt outside their hotel opposite -- SIX ARMED OFFICERS jump out, DS JANSEN leads the team.

102 EXT. HOTEL - DAY

PHILIP'S VW is parked out front.

The POLICE OFFICERS rush past it on their way to the hotel main door.

OFFICERS #1 stops -- checks the VW registration plate, peers through the back window.

103 EXT. CAFE - AMSTERDAM SUBURBS - DAY 103

KURT and PHILIP are off up the street scuttling towards their bicycles.

104 EXT. VW BOOT - DAY

DS JANSEN cautiously pops the lid -- sees PHILIP'S hunting rifle. He unzips a blood soaked canvas bag, finds PHILIP'S working tools: skinning knifes, scalpels, ect.

105 EXT. RED LION CLUB - EVENING

KURT and PHILIP arrive, tuckered -- they dump their bicycles - catch their breath -- make their way to the front door.

Shit! TWO POLICEMEN on the street corner. Have they blown it? -- it's okay they're just helping a tourist -- a moment -now they're gone.

The duo see their chance, casually surf up to the entrance -- duck inside.

106 INT. RED LION CLUB - EVENING

KURT and PHILIP, flustered, enter into the dim light.

They mingle.

PHILIP whips off his shades. KURT leaves his on. PHILIP nudges him, KURT realises. Now he can see the POLE DANCERS writhing around. PHILIP grips his arm.

CUT TO:

A PUNTER waving a big wad of cash at one of the DANCERS.

The DANCER writhes her way towards the over-weight businessman -- now she's on his lap, cooing at him.

CUT TO:

104

102

105

106

107 INT. CCTV CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

JOHNSTON'S glued to the security monitors. The PUNTER and DANCER are on the screen, he's zooming in for a better look.

JOHNSTON (to himself) You lucky bastard!

Turns from the monitors, picks up a porn magazine from the desk, fingers it -- just misses KURT and PHILIP sliding into the booth directly in front of his hot-head camera.

BACK TO:

MAIN CLUB AREA

KURT and PHILIP scan the room for ANNA.

PHILIP (anxious) Where is she? I'm worried.

A WAITRESS appears.

KURT Two large brandies, please.

PHILIP Excuse me. We are looking for Anna. The French girl? She started a few nights ago. Long black hair...

WAITRESS I know who you are talking about.

PHILIP We have something belonging to her. It is very important.

WAITRESS I'm not sure if she is here yet. I'll find out.

PHILIP

Thanks.

The WAITRESS exits.

108INT. RED LION CLUB - STAFF ROOM - EVENING108

ANNA wiggles her bum into her skimpy outfit.

The WAITRESS enters.

109

110

WAITRESS Beware Anna, there's a couple of strange dudes outside. They say they have something of yours.

ANNA trots over to the door, peeks out.

WAITRESS (O.S.) (CONT'D) Table eight. The weirdo beardos.

109 INT. RED LION CLUB - EVENING.

ANNA places the drinks down on table eight.

PHILIP (whispers) Anna. The merde has hit the fan.

ANNA Phillip! It's dangerous for you to be here. Hugo's in his office.

KURT The police came to our hotel. We are on the run.

ANNA No! What will we do?

CUT TO:

110 CCTV CONTROL ROOM

JOHNSTON'S eagle eye is on the monitor.

BACK TO:

MAIN CLUB AREA

ANNA clears up glasses as she speaks.

ANNA ...I don't know where the boys are, I haven't seen them today. They didn't come back to the hotel. They were trying to get in touch with that MP.

Philip grabs her hand briefly, then lets go.

PHILIP Don't worry. Get your things, meet us at the back door in five.

ANNA nods, sashes off.

CUT TO:

CCTV CONTROL ROOM

JOHNSTON picks up KURT and PHILIP on the main door camera.

He grins -- buzzes the intercom.

111 EXT. RED LION CLUB – BACK ENTRANCE – EVENING 111

KURT and PHILIP sneak around the back. ANNA bursts out the door. She hugs PHILIP.

PHILIP Are you okay? Have you got your things?

ANNA

Yes.

TWO HUGE BOUNCERS appear from nowhere -- flank her -- both brandishing clubs.

KURT and PHILIP stiffen.

The TWO HUGE BOUNCERS part -- HUGO steps forward.

HUGO (looks up a the sky) Isn't it a lovely night? (to Anna) So, Chantilly. Who are your friends?

ANNA (quick thinking) Oh, this is Urgin and... Peter, two old friends passing through.

PHILIP grins politely, grips KURT'S arm, holds him back in case he does something stupid.

HUGO invades their space.

HUGO (smiles) How nice. There's no need to chat out here. (gesturing) Come back inside. You can have an hour off work to catch up.

ANNA No, it's okay. They were just on their way. Weren't you guys.

KURT and PHILIP nod, wave as they turn to walk away.

JOHNSTON appears from behind brandishing a gun.

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112 INT. UNMARKED POLICE CAR - EVENING

A hand turns on the Interceptors' radio -- it belongs to DS DERK -- DS VAN OUSTEN, lounges in the drivers' seat. Now we know their true identity.

A call -- the "Red Lion Club" is mentioned.

DS DERK turns the radio up.

113 INT. RED LION CLUB - BACK ROOM - EVENING 113

JOHNSTON ushers KURT, PHILIP and ANNA in.

The TWO HUGE BOUNCERS guard outside.

HUGO enters, slams the door, strides over to ANNA. He plays with her hair, provoking PHILIP.

PHILIP (fire in his eyes) Leave her alone or I'll beat the shit out of you.

JOHNSTON shoves him back.

HUGO

(stares at Anna) It has been bugging me what the hell you were up too. Silly girl. I have cameras all over this joint. I've had my eye on you. I do like a good puzzle. I'm intrigued. What's your scam? Enlighten me.

Leans forward, yanks off PHILIP'S false beard.

PHILIP lunges at him -- JOHNSTON cracks him in the ribs -- PHILIP crumples.

HUGO points at ANNA. "Stay there."

HUGO (CONT'D) Do you really think you'll get past those meatheads out side. (to Anna) Your boyfriend?

PHILIP (sneers) I'm her brother, so you know who you're dealing with.

HUGO <u>It's a family affair</u>. I still don't get it.

Glares at KURT.

HUGO (CONT'D) So, who is this, Grandad?

KURT peels off his false beard, eyes burning into HUGO'S soul.

FLASHBACK TO THE ACCIDENT

114 EXT. BLUE BMW – STREET – AMSTERDAM SUBURBS – NIGHT 114

HUGO pokes his head in the open drivers' window, grabs KURT by the hair, looks at his brandy raddled face, presses his head on the horn.

HUGO leaves the scene.

CLOSE UP of ARABELLA'S mobile on the ground.

BACK TO: PRESENT

115 INT. RED LION CLUB - BACK ROOM - EVENING 115

HUGO whips out his gun from his jacket, holds it at his side.

HUGO (looks at Kurt) Well now, it seems that my past may have come to haunt me. Aren't you supposed to be in jail? You naughty absconder. I was warned that you had escaped, but I thought, surely you wouldn't be that thick... well it seems you are.

KURT You will pay for what you have done. You pig! I will spit on your grave.

HUGO (smiles) It's a very dirty habit.

ANNA You knew Arabella was pregnant, why did you do it?

HUGO'S jaw drops. Where did she get this information? He tries not to let it faze him.

KURT and PHILIP listen intently.

HUGO (to Anna) At least let me address you by your proper name. You don't look like a Chantilly to me. I know women. ANNA (out of character) Fuck off! Guess.

HUGO Wow! Where did that come from? I wouldn't believe it possible. You really have it in for me, don't you?

ANNA grimaces.

HUGO (CONT'D) Well, "girl known as Chantilly;" there was a slim chance it was mine. But don't you think for a minute that I wouldn't do it again? I have worked my bollocks off to get to where I am. Neither a twobit whore or a bunch of pathetic amateurs like yourselves are going to bring me down. (grabs Anna's arm) Do you hear me?

KURT and PHILIP rush forward.

JOHNSTON cocks his pistol, swings around, aims at ANNA.

PHILIP Leave her alone, you coward. You only pick on women.

KURT

Yeah, you are in a courageous position behind the large boy there, but I bet if I met you on the street alone I would wipe your ass.

HUGO walks over to him.

HUGO I know for a fact that day will never come.

WALLOP! HUGO punches KURT hard in the guts, KURT crumples.

JOHNSTON prods PHILIP in the chest with his gun.

ANNA runs over to KURT, helps him to his feet.

HUGO (CONT'D) You've crashed the wrong party. (to Johnston) Fill their boots and drop them in the canal.

> (CONTINUED) 90

HUGO goes to leave the room.

HUGO (CONT'D)

Fools!

ANNA (quick thinking) (quoting Hugo) "I'll kill you bitch."

HUGO'S exposed, he is visibly shaken. ANNA has him.

ANNA (CONT'D) You're the fool. Arabella was leaving a message on her sister's voice-mail when you ran her over. A man without a spine. You killed her because she threatened to tell your wife. You stooped so low, even threatening to hurt her sister's child. What a man you are.

HUGO (glares at Anna) I've gone right off you.

PHILIP It's over. Turn yourself in.

HUGO (raging) What fucking planet do you guys come from? Don't you know that "Great men are almost always bad men?" Wise up; there is one

standing before you. You haven't a
leg to stand on.
 (laughs)
 (to himself)
Turn myself in.

116 INT. POLICE STATION - INTERVIEW ROOM - NIGHT

116

VANCE and JEFF, on the bench, heads in their hands.

DS JANSEN barges in.

VANCE and JEFF spring to their feet in trepidation.

DS JANSEN Your friends have given us the slip. Did you ever hear Mr. Boom talk of threatening behaviour towards Mr. Hunter?

VANCE No! He's not that kind of guy. We have told you everything we know.

> (CONTINUED) 91

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DS JANSEN gets down to it.

DS JANSEN If you want to save your friends you will have to cooperate. They found a gun in their car. That means they are dangerous.

JEFF and VANCE give a sideways glance.

JEFF It's Philip's hunting rifle. He's a taxidermist.

DS JANSEN That is of little consequence.

JEFF This is bullshit!

VANCE looks at him, "Calm down!"

JEFF (CONT'D) He's been set up. He's innocent!

DS JENSEN Listen to me! When firearms are involved it means my police officers are authorized to shoot. You know them. Where would they go?

VANCE A guess, to save Anna.

DS JANSEN Who is Anna?

JEFF Philip's sister. She's working at Hugo's club.

DS JANSEN Why didn't you say sooner?

JEFF We tried to...

DS JANSEN We have a description of Mr. Boom, but not his friend. What does Philip look like?

117 INT. TRANSIT VAN - NIGHT

Engine running.

CLOSE UP on PHILIP, gagged and trussed up in the back of the VAN, along with ANNA and KURT.

119

121

122

The TWO HUGE BOUNCERS throw heavy metal weights and chains into the back of the VAN.

JOHNSTON grins as he slams the door.

118 EXT. RED LION CLUB – BACK ENTRANCE – NIGHT 118

The TRANSIT is parked out the back.

HUGO bounds out the club, speaks to JOHNSTON, and the TWO HUGE BOUNCERS.

HUGO (to bouncer #1) Bring my car round. (to bouncer #2) Lock the back door. Hurry!

BOUNCER #1 runs off towards HUGO'S car.

BOUNCER #2 rushes back into the club.

119 EXT. RED-LIGHT DISTRICT - NIGHT

Sirens blaring, lights flashing, A POLICE CAR, accompanied by BACK-UP VEHICLES, pull into the canal road leading to 'The Red Lion Club.'

120 EXT. RED LION CLUB - BACK ENTRANCE - NIGHT 120

HUGO panics -- it's a rumbled. He jumps behind the wheel of the TRANSIT -- floors it.

JOHNSTON tries to get in the passenger's side, HUGO ain't stopping.

121 EXT. CANAL STREET - NIGHT

The POLICE VEHICLES batter down the street giving chase.

HUGO hauls the TRANSIT VAN straight through a give way junction.

CROSS-TRAFFIC brake -- just in time -- holding up the POLICE VEHICLES now.

122 INT. TRANSIT VAN - NIGHT

Accelerates -- CANALSIDE -- clips a few wing mirrors on the way -- pedestrians take cover.

HUGO'S prisoners thrash about.

PHILIP locates his knife, tucked in his belt -- he extracts it from its sheath -- grips the handle -- spins it round, starts to cut the ropes that bind them.

HUGO is driving for his life.

(CONTINUED) 93

PHILIP continues his cutting -- success. PHILIP twist his head towards KURT -- KURT knows the plan. They stay in their positions while freeing the ropes -- now they're ready -- PHILIP and ANNA creep to the back door. KURT pounces -- snares HUGO around the neck -- smacks him broadside -- no possibility of retaliation -- the blows keep coming. HUGO takes his foot off the gas. The TRANSIT sprays against the wall -- KURT jolts back. The hunk of metal grinds to a halt. PHILIP kicks the back door open -- ANNA jumps first, then PHILIP -- they clatter onto the street. HUGO pull a gun. KURT scrambles for the open door -- makes it. BANG! HUGO shoots him in the back -- KURT grips the door frame -- it's got him bad -- his grip weakens -- and he tumbles. EXT. TRANSIT - NIGHT 123 HUGO flees -- scuttling along -- CANALSIDE. ANNA tends to KURT. PHILIP, enraged, giving chase. ANNA turns KURT over, looks at the bloody hole, he's in a bad way. EXT. CANAL STREET - NIGHT 124 Police sirens in the distance. HUGO -- adrenaline kicking him -- belts along the street --PHILIP'S in hot pursuit -- HUGO takes a sharp left -- dives up an alleyway -- a crowd hold him up. PHILIP steps on it. EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT 125 PHILIP races into the alleyway -- "Where did HUGO go?" PHILIP cautiously walks along the dark path aware that HUGO is armed. A NEON SIGN sparks into action.

HUGO'S shadow is thrown on to the wall.

123

124

125

127

PHILIP lurches -- takes him by surprise -- BLAM !! -- socks him on the chin.

They clash. HUGO, reeling from the sucker-punch drops the gun -- skittles across the cobble stones.

PHILIP'S muscle soon has HUGO pinned against the wall -hands gripping his throat -- squeezing the life from him.

Police sirens.

PHILIP knows the right thing to do; let the authorities sort him out. He relaxes his grip, HUGO slides down the wall, gasping for air, nauseated.

126 INT. POLICE CAR - DRIVING - NIGHT 126

It speeds towards the 'Red Lion Club.'

VANCE and JEFF sliding around in the back.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT 127

PHILIP kneels to pick up the gun -- off guard.

HUGO clocks a large stone next to him -- musters his last bit of energy -- jumps up -- smacks PHILIP over the head.

PHILIP crumples. HUGO kicks him onto his side.

HUGO holds his maimed throat, enraged -- picks up the gun, takes out a silencer, screws it to the barrel, points the deadly snout at PHILIP.

A YOUNG COUPLE -- heading his way -- freeze when they see the gun.

HUGO glares at them -- thinks about it for a second, then staggers off into the distance, holding his throat.

WITH HUGO -- as he pads aimlessly towards the labyrinth of alleyways -- panic -- which way to run?

Spins around, sees an UNMARKED POLICE CAR racing towards him.

128 EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

> PHILIP, dazed, tries to focus, clings to the wall, makes it to his feet, just.

129 EXT. COURTYARD - NIGHT

> HUGO catches his breath, drags himself through the arch into the courtyard.

The UNMARKED POLICE CAR follows.

HUGO stops in his tracks -- trapped -- it's a dead end.

128

129

DS DERK and DS VAN OUSTEN -- out of the UNMARKED POLICE CAR -- both armed, wearing vests -- flashlights -- blinding HUGO.

DS DERK (screams out) Drop the gun, put your hands on your head. Do it! Do it, now!

HUGO complies.

DS DERK and DS VAN OUSTEN edge towards him, weapons trained.

A break in the harsh light -- HUGO recognizes them.

HUGO (drops his hands) (relieved) Boys! You scared the shit out of me. Thank God!

DS DERK and DS Van Ousten ain't playing.

HUGO (CONT'D) What is this?

DS VAN OUSTEN You are going down, and we aren't coming with you.

DS DERK slips on a glove -- sidles up to HUGO. -- picks up HUGO'S gun -- aims it at the POLICE CAR -- fires until the chamber is empty, the silenced bullets riddle the vehicle.

For a moment HUGO honestly believed he was safe, he now knows otherwise.

DS DERK Shooting at police officers is a very serious offence.

HUGO, aghast, wondering what comes next.

DS DERK hands HUGO'S gun back to him.

HUGO gets the ploy.

HUGO (smiles) Are you fixing me up?

DS VAN OUSTEN We're following by example.

DS DERK and DS VAN OUSTEN stalk backwards towards the UNMARKED POLICE CAR.

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HUGO (pleads) Come on! Let's help each other out here. I would have never used the tape or the pictures against you. You can have them. How about another twenty grand each? Thirty? A call comes over the Interceptors' radio. It's ignored. DS VAN OUSTEN Don't play us for fools. DS DERK The tape can be explained. With you gone, it was just a bit of harmless fun. HUGO You can have ... BLAM! HUGO is propelled against the wall. DS DERK there with a smoking gun. LONG SHOT. PHILIP hears the shot, hoists himself up on top of the courtyard wall, crouches. PHILIP'S POV HUGO pulls his hand from his blood stained jacket, he falters for a few steps. CUT TO: DS DERK'S finger is on the trigger preparing to fire again. All hell breaks loose -- DS JANSEN and THREE ARMED OFFICERS sprint into the courtyard -- surround DS DERK and DS VAN OUSTEN. The legitimate OFFICERS scream at them in Dutch to drop their guns, they obey.

HUGO collapses.

PHILIP'S witnessed enough, he must get back to his friend.

130 EXT. CANAL STREET - NIGHT

130

A flurry of activity.

KURT is on a stretcher next to an ambulance. TWO DOCTORS and a PARAMEDIC administer aid.

ANNA, JEFF and VANCE are there consoling each other.

PHILIP arrives.

(CONTINUED) 97 He hugs ANNA, drops down to KURT, who is motionless, eyes closed.

TWO POLICE OFFICERS jump PHILIP from behind, restrain him. He doesn't resist the handcuffs.

The DOCTORS lift the stretcher, place KURT into the back of the AMBULANCE.

PHILIP'S led away.

ANNA, JEFF and VANCE watch him go. They take in the enormity of the situation.

A POLICE VAN pulls up behind the, FOUR POLICE OFFICERS jump out.

HIGH ANGLE SHOT.

ANNA, JEFF and VANCE are led to the POLICE VAN.

FADE TO BLACK.

THREE MONTHS LATER

131 EXT. AMSTERDAM COURT BUILDING - DAY

131

CAMERA CRANES DOWN.

Side exit door burst open...

KURT, wheelchair bound, is pushed by PHILIP. KURT'S WIFE is beside him holding his hand.

CUT TO:

ANNA, JEFF and VANCE out front chatting on the steps.

VANCE There he is.

LONG SHOT

KURT, jubilant, poses for a handful of PRESS PHOTOGRAPHERS.

JEFF I can't believe it's all over.

ANNA (to Jeff and Vance) When are you going back to London?

VANCE We're on the five o'clock flight. ANNA (to Jeff) What about Suzie?

JEFF I'm still working on it.

KURT thanks the PRESS. PHILIP pushes him over to the rest of the gang.

KURT My friends. I'm sorry for what I put you through. I can never repay you for all you have done.

KURT'S WIFE
 (tear in her eye)
I would like to say thanks, also.
I have my husband back...
 (smiles)
... and he has stopped drinking.

She affectionately squeezes her husband shoulder, forgetting about his wound.

KURT winces, but says nothing.

KURT

It's true. I realized that on that terrible night alcohol led me to the situation. I feel a new man for it. Give it a try.

VANCE Jeff too. He hasn't touched a drop for ages.

JEFF nods proudly.

MEEGEREN, smiling, walks out of the court main door and heads towards them.

VANCE bends down, gives KURT a gentle hug, JEFF does the same.

MEEGEREN appears.

MEEGEREN (to Kurt) A full pardon from all infamy. I am

pleased for you. With Hunter gone, Amsterdam will be a safer place. As you have just heard, he was in to all sorts of unpleasant dealings. He ruined many a life.

KURT Thanks a thousand times. MEEGEREN I did nothing. It was all down to your friends.

JEFF How did you know that Derk and whatever his name is...

MEEGEREN Van Ousten...

JEFF ... were Hugo's sidekicks?

MEEGEREN

DS Jansen had a tip off about the two officers. They'd been splashing money about. He dug out Mr. Boom's file and realized they were the arresting officers on the night of the accident. He called them on the radio, which located their position. There was no need for them to be in the area. Police work. I've always wanted to be a policeman.

He shakes KURT'S hand, turns to VANCE and JEFF, bows, walks off.

PHILIP goes over to KURT.

PHILIP We did it!

KURT We did! My friend.

They hug.

KURT (CONT'D) You'll always be welcome in Berlin.

PHILIP smiles and nods.

KURT (CONT'D) (looks at the others) You all are. I mean it. Any time.

PHILIP (to Anna) We'd better get going.

They say their farewells, ANNA, JEFF, VANCE and PHILIP head down the stairs, to where PHILIP'S VW is parked.

JEFF and VANCE wave as they go.

CUT TO:

KURT and his WIFE.

KURT (smiles) My boys.

132 EXT. VW - DAY

132

PHILIP, ANNA, JEFF and VANCE reach the VW.

PHILIP slides behind the wheel, winds down the window, sticks his head out.

PHILIP I'm sorry you never made it to Paris.

VANCE C'est la vie...

JEFF

We'll get there one day.

ANNA strolls over to VANCE, hugs him, gives him a kiss on the lips.

ANNA Bye, Vance.

VANCE Bye, Anna. If you're ever in London, you have my address.

JEFF takes ANNA'S hand, pulls her towards him.

JEFF You have mine as well.

ANNA

(smiles) I have both your addresses, one day you'll have the pleasure of me. Bye, Jeff.

ANNA smiles, kisses him on the lips.

ANNA walks to the VW passenger's side, gets in.

PHILIP fires the engine. He sticks his hand out the window. JEFF and VANCE step forward, shake it.

PHILIP (smiles) Our friend will always remember what you have done for him, and so will we.

The lads grin and nod.

PHILIP hits the gas.

PHILIP (CONT'D) (shouts) Au revior

He slams on the brakes five yards along the street -- sticks his head out the window, shouts.

PHILIP (CONT'D) Do you need a lift.

JEFF and VANCE glance at each other. "Why not." They sprint towards the VW -- they're inches from the door handle --PHILIP hits the gas, leaving them behind.

PHILIP roars with laughter.

ANNA digs him in the ribs.

JEFF and VANCE can't help but laugh.

PHILIP exits the car to let them into the back.

HIGH ANGLE SHOT.

JEFF and VANCE get in the VW. It drives off.

CREDITS OVER

AERIAL SHOT.

The VW drives through the Amsterdam streets.

END CREDITS