

"THE MYSTERY OF CINECITTÁ"

Screenplay
by
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Based on the Novel
"Il Mistero di Cinecittà"
by
Augusto De Angelis

(11th Draft: April, 2010)

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INITIAL MONTAGE & NEWSREEL SEQUENCE: THE FASCIST HYMN *FACCETTA NERA* IS HEARD, SLOWLY MOUNTING IN VOLUME, AS FADE INTO A MONTAGE OF B&W NEWSREELS, PHOTOS, DRAWINGS, POSTERS AND MAPS DEPICTING THE RISE OF ITALIAN FASCISM (1921-1938) INCLUDING MUSSOLINI AND HIS "BLACK SHIRTS" MARCHING; MUSSOLINI'S SPEECHES FROM THE BALCONY OF PALAZZO VENEZIA IN ROME; ETC. OVER THE VISUALS, THE MATCHING CAPTIONS...

1921 November: The Italian Fascist Party is formed.

1922 October 27-29: With the "March on Rome", the Fascists seize the capital. The King cedes all power to Mussolini.

1923 January: The Black Shirts take over National Security. Italy is now a dictatorship. Opposition is suppressed.

1932 August: First Venice Film Festival.

1932 September: Josephine Baker tours Italy

1933 January: Adolf Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany.

1933 March: First German Concentration Camp opened at Oranienburg outside Berlin

1934 June: First Mussolini-Hitler meeting in Venice.

1936 April: Mussolini starts construction on the largest Motion Picture Complex in the world, one which should eclipse Hollywood: *CINECITTÀ: The City of Film*.

1936 August: Mussolini forms Axis with Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan.

1937 April: In an extravaganza worthy of Hollywood, Mussolini inaugurates Cinecittà.

1938 May: Hitler visits Rome.

THE SEQUENCE MOVES TO NEWSREELS OF HITLER AND MUSSOLINI AT THE ROMAN FORUM, ST. PETER'S, THE PANTHEON AND THEN...

DISSOLVE TO COLOR:

1 **EXT. CINECITTÀ. ROME - DAY**

An open Fiat limousine with Hitler and Mussolini (standing in the back) passes in front of Cinecittà. ZOOM IN TO their overlapping profiles. *FACCETTA NERA* FADES AS...

CHORUS (V.O.)

*Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
From Ancient grudge break to new mutiny.*

PUSH through the profiles of Hitler and Mussolini TO the entrance of Cinecittà. OVER THE MAIN GATE IS WRITTEN: "LA CINEMATOGRAFIA È L'ARMA PIÙ FORTE" (SUPERIMPOSE: "Cinema is our strongest weapon"). PUSH THROUGH INTERSECTING NAZI AND FASCIST FLAGS AS...

CHORUS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*Where civil blood makes civil hands
unclean. From forth the fatal loins of
these two foes -- a pair of star-cross'd
lovers take their life.*

...AND JIB UP AND OVER THE MAIN GATE...

BOLDVISKI (V.O.)
(with a heavy-handed Russian accent)
CUT! - Print!

FLAUTI (V.O.)
The Orchard Sequence is next. Quickly
everyone! The sooner we do this, the
sooner we're out of here.

2 **FLASH: INT. STAGE 5 - TIGHT: BOLDVISKI'S THICKSET LIPS
BREATHE FUMES OF VODKA ONTO FLAUTI'S PORCELAIN COMPLEXION.**

BOLDVISKI
This is Art form, Flauti. Not race!

FLAUTI
(subservient)
Yes, sir. Sorry, sir.

3 **END OF FLASH: FACETTA NERA SWELLS IN VOLUME AND QUICKLY
WIPE TO A BLACK & WHITE MODEL OF CINECITTÀ...**

4 **FLASH: INT. STAGE 5 - THE FILM CREW MOVES TO AN ELABORATE
SET DRESSED AS AN APPLE ORCHARD WALLED IN ON ONE SIDE.**

5 **END OF FLASH: THE MODEL BECOMES THE REAL CINECITTÀ COMPLEX
IN COLOR WITH ITS STYLISH ART DECO BUILDINGS SPACED BETWEEN
ROMAN PINES. FILMMAKERS AND WORKERS FLOW ACROSS THE COMPLEX
ON FOOT, BICYCLES, MOTORCYCLES, CARS. NAZI & FASCIST
OFFICERS ROAM THE PREMISES LIKE THE LORDS OF ALL THEY
SURVEY, SOME ACCOMPANIED BY THEIR GIRLFRIENDS. CAMERA STOPS
OVER A STAGE WITH THE NUMBER "5" ON ITS ROOF; NEARBY, A
GIANT FASCIST POSTER OF A BEAUTIFUL NUDE MAN AND WOMAN OF
PERFECT PHYSICAL PROPORTIONS. FACETTA NERA FADES AGAIN.**

FLAUTI (V.O.)
Picture's up. Everyone settle down.
This is picture! -- Lights! Boom in...

6 **FLASH: INT. STAGE 5 - A BOOM IS LOWERED OVER THE SETTING
OF THE APPLE ORCHARD, NOW BATHED IN THE MOON'S ARTIFICIAL
TWILIGHT.**

FLAUTI (O.S.)
Slate in.

A CLAPPER BOARD ENTERS FRAME WITH THE WRITING: **ACIDALIA
FILMS: "ROMEO & JULIET";** BELOW IT: **DIRECTOR: VASSILLI
BOLDVISKI,** BELOW THAT: **SCENE 8B/TAKE 1.**

FLAUTI (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Roll sound.

SOUND MIXER (O.S.)
Speed!

FLAUTI (O.S.)
Camera.

CAMERAMAN (O.S.)
Rolling.

FLAUTI
Mark it!

CLAPPERLOADER (O.S.)
Acidalia Films, "Romeo & Juliet", Scene
8b, Take 1..

A SHARP CLICK OF THE CLAPPER BOARD SILENCES *FACCETTA NERA*.

BOLDVISKI (O.S.)
And...ACTION!

**7 JIB DOWN TOWARDS SOUND STAGE "5". DAY TURNS TO NIGHT.
DISSOLVE THROUGH THE ROOF INTO THE SOUND STAGE...**

BENVOLGIO/GITA (O.S.)
Romeo. My Cousin Romeo?!

MERCUTIO/ASSIA (O.S.)
*He heareth not, he stirreth not, he
moveth not; The ape is dead, and I must
conjure him.*

8 INT. CINECITTÀ. STAGE 5. ROME - DAY

...DOWN PAST THE CATWALKS SUPPORTING THE MAMMOTH LIGHTS
AND REFLECTORS...INTO THE HUGE HANGAR-LIKE STRUCTURE...IN
THE STAGE, A KNOT OF NAZI OFFICERS and BLACKSHIRTS are
amused "tourists" watching the filmmakers' circus"...

**SUPERIMPOSE: CINECITTÀ, ROME: STAGE 5 - MAY 5, 1938: DAY
ONE - 3:18 AM**

...MOVE PAST THE FILM CREW...

...PAST THELMA LUDENDORF, 30s, "manly" in her black slack
suit with steely blue eyes offset by dark-rimmed glasses...

PAST SID RENIER, 70s, miserly, dressed in the garb of a
Shakespearean Apothecary.

PAST ARMANDO FLAUTI, the assistant director, 30s; he hides
his great ambition behind a subservient demeanor...

Seated near the huge MITCHELL TECHNICOLOR 3-STRIP CAMERA
is the film director, VASSILLI BOLDVISKI, late 50s, a
VIEWFINDER hanging from his neck, his once striking good
looks now brutish, debased by a life of debauchery...

ALL EYES ARE ON...

...the film set: a wooded area adjacent to a wall
surrounding the Capulet Orchard and Mansion.

On the wooded side of the wall are ASSIA PARIS and GITA GALENA. Though dressed as a late 16th Century upper class young men (MERCUTIO and BENVOLIO), both are beautiful young ladies: Assia being remote, a *femme fatale*, while Gita has a more outward demeanor, full of gaiety and verve.

BENVOLIO/GITA

Come, he hath hid himself among these trees. Blind is his love, and best befits the dark.

MERCUTIO/ASSIA

If love be blind, love cannot hit the mark. Romeo good night. I'll to my truckle-bed. This field is too cold for me to sleep.

BENVOLIO/GITA

Go, then. For 'tis in vain to seek him here that means not to be found.

Mercutio and Benvolio leave the orchard PROMPTING THE MITCHELL TO CRANE OVER THE WALL TO discover ROMEO (SETH NICHOLSON, 22, perfect good looks) waiting in the orchard. His expression lights up upon seeing...

...JULIET (BLANCA VERTUA, a magnificent creature of 18 with long flaxen hair. She appears at a balcony, the light of the full moon (an arc lamp shining down from above) causing her hair to shimmer (both Seth and Blanca represent the poster children of "Fascist Beauty").

Boldviski's quick eyes miss nothing of the action.

Romeo/Seth calls to Juliet from the shadows of the orchard.

ROMEO/SETH

But, soft! What light through yonder window breaks? See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand! O, that I were a glove upon that hand, that I might touch that cheek!

CLOSE ON Juliet/Blanca.

JULIET/BLANCA

O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?

One of the Nazis' GIRLFRIEND is teary-eyed.

JULIET/BLANCA (CONT'D)

Deny thy father and refuse thy name; Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love, and I'll no longer be a Capulet.

Sid is unfazed by the romantic magic of Shakespeare.

JULIET/BLANCA (CONT'D)

What's Montague? What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet...

ROMEO/SETH

*I take thee at thy word: Call me but
Love, and I'll be new baptized...*

Boldviski looks on: an obsessed, egomaniacal purest.

JULIET/BLANCA

*(startled to see him there)
How camest thou hither? The orchard
walls are high and hard to climb, and
the place death, considering who thou
art, if any of my kinsmen find thee
here.*

ROMEO/SETH

*But thou love me, let them find me here:
my life were better ended by their hate
than death delayed without thy love.*

Thelma is gazing not at the action but at Boldviski: a look of haunting devotion. She then steals a glance at...

...a Nazi officers, GRUPPENFÜHRER ANDREAS BERGER, 45, as SS Colonel. There flows a secret intention between them.

LADY CAPULET (COBINA HELSTEIN, 40's) appears on the balcony behind Juliet...

LADY CAPULET/COBINA

Juliet...

JULIET/BLANCA

*(to LADY CAPULET)
By and by, Mother, I come--
(calling to him)
Romeo...*

PAOLO VERGOLLI, 30's, lanky and diligent, consults a dog-eared screenplay, mouthing the actors' lines. He seems disappointed: the lines recited do not match his script.

ROMEO/SETH (O.S.)

My dear?

JULIET/BLANCA (O.S.)

*At what o'clock tomorrow shall I send
to thee?*

MICHELE VERNIERI, 60s, the consummate businessman-cum-hustler, instinctively checks his watch, discovers his mistake and tries to smile it off.

LADY CAPULET/COBINA

Juliet...

ROMEO/SETH

At the hour of nine.

LADY CAPULET curls a loving but firm arm around JULIET and escorts her inside the room. JULIET turns back to ROMEO.

JULIET/BLANCA

*Good night, good night. Parting is such
sweet sorry. That I shall say good night
till it be morrow.*

ROMEO watches LADY CAPULET and JULIET vanish. He then turns and moves away, suddenly stopping, gazing back up at the balcony with longing.

BOLDVISKI

(yelling into megaphone/thick
Russian accent)
CUT! - Print.

Boldviski struggles to get to his feet (his obesity and arthritis making the task arduous).

BOLDVISKI (CONT'D)

Enough tonight!

FLAUTI

(in megaphone)
That's a wrap everyone!

The cast and crew immediately unwind.

Thelma offers to help Boldviski, but he boorishly waves her away. Finally standing, he hobbles off.

FLAUTI (CONT'D)

Eight o'clock call?

Boldviski checks the wall clock.

It's 3:48.

BOLDVISKI

No! Six. We need time. Romeo's death:
it will be *something*...
(smiling strangely/eyes twinkling)
Extraordinary! Something my public
remember.

Turning, Flauti calls out on his megaphone...

FLAUTI

Cast and crew call for six p.m. We start
with the Apothecary Shop. Then the
Churchyard. Which means...
(consulting his clipboard)
Gita and Assia are up first; Sid, Seth
and Blanca, on standby.

Seth, Blanca, Gita and Assia acknowledge the "early" call as they head to their dressing rooms. Thelma rushes to keep up with Boldviski's determined stride, like a student vying for the praises of her professor.

THELMA

(eagerly/a slight German accent)
Did you get what you wanted tonight?

Barely acknowledging her, loving the sound of his own mind.

BOLDVISKI

(his accent punctuates his contempt)
Not possible. Camera never see what
artist see. Like reading a book never
create same emotion felt by author.
(tapping a finger on his chest)
You cannot enter heart of another. See--
feel his anger, his pain, his...desire.

Thelma notices that Boldviski is now looking at Blanca
with that "desire". At his bidding, Blanca draws nearer.

BOLDVISKI (CONT'D)

But yes, to answer question. You all
make decent job. I would be fool to
expect more than you can give.

He unlocks the door bearing his name and waves Blanca into
his rooms before shutting the door on Thelma's face. As it
closes, Thelma glimpses Blanca's distress.

FLASH: BLANCA IS BEYOND REPUGNANCE AS BOLDVISKI AVIDLY
KISSES HER NECK, HIS MASSIVE HANDS GROPING HER BREASTS.

Thelma stands at the closed door, subduing her humiliation.
Two LIGHTING TECHNICIANS pass her holding a huge BLACK
CLOTH. The CLOTH sweeps over Thelma and the CAMERA and...

WIPE TO BLACK:

9 INT. TAVERNA DI COSTANTINO. ROME - NIGHT

COMPLETE DARKNESS. SILENCE SAVE FOR A CATCHY RAGTIME PIANO
RENDITION of "PINEAPPLE RAG". SUDDENLY A SPOT LIGHT TUNNELS
THROUGH THE DARKNESS REVEALING A FACE WHICH SEEMS TO BE
SUSPENDED IN SPACE: the face of MARY LOVELL (25, with the
unfettered, "in your face" beauty of a Monroe). Mary is
playing the ragtime tune on the piano as...

A BLACK MAN IN A TUX enters from the wings and sits next
to her. She gets up as he takes over at the piano. She
starts to sing (with defiant allure and gusto) as THE HOUSE
LIGHTS ARE BROUGHT UP TO SHOW A SMALL STAGE ON WHICH SHOW
GIRLS and BOYS START DANCING TO MARY'S SONG.

VARIOUS SHOTS OF THE MANY PATRONS charmed by Mary's talent
and beauty. The Taverna is full of SS OFFICERS and
BLACKSHIRTS with willing and alluring female companionship.

As the music speeds up, the piano moves into the center of
the stage. The dancers in tuxedos lift Mary onto the piano
and she dances on its polished black surface.

Mary looks for someone in the audience and finds...

MARCELLO CAIENNI, elegantly 50, sitting alone. He returns
her smile, smoothing his moustache with pride of ownership.

10 EXT. TAVERNA DI COSTANTINO. ROME - CONTINUOUS

Four taxis pull up to the Taverna, a swanky club with a brightly lit Art Deco marquees announcing the main act, "MARY LOVELL", under the club's logo: the large, luminous face of the Emperor Constantine I.

SUPERIMPOSE: TAVERNA DI COSTANTINO, ROME - DAY ONE - 4:42 AM

The taxis' doors swing open spilling onto the sidewalk the main cast and crew of "Rome & Juliet".

11 INT. TAVERNA DI COSTANTINO. ROME - CONTINUOUS

Mary leaps off the piano onto the stage dancing in the midst of her chorus lines; the dancing becomes frenetic as the Piano Player's fingers fly over the keyboard.

The LAUGHING, CHATTERING group from "Rome & Juliet" enters the club: Cobina; Assia, with Paolo at her side; Boldviski, his arm around Blanca, the viewfinder still round his neck; Sid (granite-faced); Gita Garena; Thelma (clinging to Boldviski); Flauti, chatting with Vernieri. They all weave their way through the club to join Caienni at his table.

The Nazis and Blackshirts acknowledge with contempt that the filmmakers have taken over the club.

Boldviski motions to a WAITER and in an instant a fleet of BUSBOYS appear with buckets of Champagne.

Handing Blanca a glass, Boldviski squeezes her tightly, possessively, as she and Seth exchange a fleeting glance.

SETH (V.O.)
(bitterly)
How can you stand that pig!?

12 FLASHBACK: INT. BLANCA'S SUITE. HOTEL EXCELSIOR. ROME

Blanca is pacing the Suite's huge bedroom, nervously drinking a glass of whiskey while Seth sits on the sofa drinking directly from the bottle. Though they have just made love, the intensity of their anger is far from amorous.

BLANCA
He's Vassilli Boldviski! You know what
that means, Seth?! To star in a Boldviski
film!? For me! For you. For our careers!

SETH
Don't drag *me* into this!

BLANCA
Oh, come on! Don't tell me you think he
chose you for your talent!?

SETH
What's that supposed to mean?

BLANCA

It means you've got the flare, Seth.
The looks, the teeth, that ...*je ne
sais quoi*...

(her eyes alive with defiance)
But don't kid yourself! Without
Boldviski's directing your whole
performance would be: "*wherefore art
thou...Romeo*"?!

Seth slaps Blanca across the face. Immediately regretting
the move, he reaches out to her...

SETH

Blanca, I'm--

BLANCA

Get away from me! Boldviski may be a
brute, but he's never hit me.

SETH

(on the verge of tears)
I love you, Blanca, and I can't stand
by and watch you become his whore.

BLANCA

(with biting sarcasm)
Too late, sweet *prince*! We're both his
whores now! Only difference is, I
actually have to sleep with the bastard!
(to herself with sheer disgust)
His smell, his breath, his touch! I
just hope he doesn't drive me to--

SETH

(breaking in/dead serious)
No need! If it should ever come to that,
I'd kill him myself!

13 BACK TO PRESENT: INT. TAVERNA DI COSTANTINO. - NIGHT

THE RAGTIME SWELLS as Seth's dark, ravishing eyes move
from Blanca to Boldviski. He takes in Boldviski's effusion
as he kisses Blanca and when the two men's eyes meet, Seth
feels the intensity of the director's flashing gaze.

CLOSE ON SID: Gelidly disapproving of Boldviski.

CLOSE ON THELMA: Suppressing her jealousy, she produces a
GARCIA Y VEGA CIGARILLO and snips off the tip with a cigar
cutter as if she were taking a bite out of Boldviski.

Cobina also gives Boldviski a sidelong glance of utter
disdain. Instinctively she pulls Assia closer.

Paolo glares at Boldviski, his young face hardening with
anger. AGAIN THE RAGTIME EBBS AS...

PAOLO (V.O.)

Why must you keep changing my dialogue?

14 FLASHBACK: INT. BOLDVISKI'S SUITE. HOTEL EXCELSIOR. ROME

Boldviski has a throaty peal of laughter as he crosses his Suite to pour himself another drink. The viewfinder dangles from his neck. He and Paolo are correcting the script.

BOLDVISKI

Your dialogue!?

His laughter swells, annoyingly, as Paolo clenches his pencil, almost snapping it in two.

PAOLO

You know I've done considerable editing
...*adapting*. And I feel that my work
deserves...greater consideration.

BOLDVISKI

You do, do you?! Well, yes, as matter
of fact I give your work *great*
consideration and I decide this is last
film you do for me.

Paolo drops his gaze, cushioning the blow.

BOLDVISKI (CONT'D)

You are hack, Vergolli! Not even
Shakespeare make you look good! Now get
out.

Paolo is on his feet, taking a step towards Boldviski, as if to strike him. He then backs off. Furiously collecting his papers, he goes to the door but before leaving, he gives Boldviski a look filled with venom.

15 BACK TO PRESENT: INT. TAVERNA DI COSTANTINO. - NIGHT

Paolo is now looking at Boldviski with that same venom, and is surprised to see that his fist has tightened around a knife. Paolo's hand recoils from this aggression as..

...Boldviski laughs aloud in his carefree, boisterous mood squeezing Blanca in his meaty arm.

Caienni sidles up to Vernieri, his attention on Mary.

CAIENNI

She would've made a perfect Juliet,

VERNIERI

(eyeing the dancer)
Think so?! -- Look at Blanca.

Caienni glances at Blanca in Boldviski's suffocating grasp.

VERNIERI (CONT'D)

Bold's conditions for choosing Juliet
would always have been sexually oriented.
Now how would that have sat with you?

CAIENNI

I'm starting to regret having taken him
into our company. The last thing Italy
needs is another dictator.

VERNIERI

Boldviski's a genius, warts and all.
Without him we'd have no credibility.
Bold's the filmmaker, we're just
glorified accountants.

Caienni processes that thought as his eyes return to...

...Mary who now dances the One-Step at a frenetic rhythm.

Caienni is visibly irked by Boldviski's loud, provocative
conduct: vexing for a man of Caienni's emotional economy.

CAIENNI

You're sure we couldn't make due without
him? There are a lot of good directors
here in Rome. Mattoli, Verhoeven,
Camerini. Even Flauti has his merits.
(eyeing Flauti)

VERNIERI

What are you saying?

CAIENNI

Just thinking out loud. Two slices of
the Acidalia pie are bigger than three...
(their eyes meet again)

He holds Vernieri's gaze steadily with his own. Then, when
Vernieri looks back at the stage...

TIGHT:...Caienni furtively reaches behind his partner ...

INSERT:...and slips a key into the pocket of Sid's jacket.

TIGHT: Sid acknowledges this and his eyes touch Caienni's.

Boldviski glances at Cobina, reading the pain and defiance
in her eyes at seeing him lavishing over Blanca's youth.
Yet Cobina confronts him with a bold and direct gaze.
Infuriated by this, Boldviski leans over the table and
grabs hold of Cobina's arm, pulling her towards him,
spilling a bucket of Champagne. THE RAGTIME MUSIC SWELLS
MUTING Boldviski's anger as he yells at Cobina and Assia.

INSERT: Cobina squeezes Assia's hand under the table.

PATRONS AT NEARBY TABLES and...

...the waiters and...

...the "filmmakers" are unsettled by Boldviski's brutality.

AS THE RAGTIME AND MARY'S DANCING BECOME MORE FRENETIC...

...SLOWLY ZOOM IN TO BOLDVISKI'S FURY AND...

...TO COBINA'S EXPRESSION: one of sheer hatred.

Thelma regards Cobina with an enigmatic smile; the eyes behind her spectacles alive with thought.

Disgusted by Boldviski, Paolo again reaches for the knife on the table , clutching it tightly.

MATCH CUT TO:

16 INT. ELEVATOR. EXCELSIOR HOTEL. ROME - NIGHT

A WOMAN'S HAND is clutching the polished bronze rail of an elevator as it moves up the shaft.

SUPERIMPOSE: HOTEL EXCELSIOR, ROME - DAY ONE - 6:56 AM

Blanca tightly grips the rail fighting back the revulsion she feels for Boldviski who - drunk beyond reason - is passionately kissing her, oblivious to Thelma with whom they share the elevator. All three are still dressed as they were at the *Taverna*. With a jerk, the elevator stops at a floor. Outside, Sid opens the door and freezes upon seeing the drunken director.

SID

Going down?

Boldviski forces Blanca against the open door, kissing her with growing urgency, jamming the elevator door so it can't close. Outraged by Boldviski's behavior, Sid musters his courage and places a hand on Boldviski's shoulder. Feeling that hand, Boldviski turns to glare at Sid, taking his hand as if to snap it from the arm. But his rage is abated at the old man's terrified expression. Laughing raucously, he lets go of Sid's hand and checks the dial over the door.

The dial indicates they are on the 6th floor.

Giving Blanca another peck on the cheek and another feel of the breast, Boldviski steps out of the elevator.

BOLDVISKI

(his accent slurred by drunkenness)
Good night. You have few hours to get
fresh and sweet smelling like Juliet!

Again he laughs, filling the hotel with his odious mirth as he staggers away from the elevator, down the corridor.

Sid closes the elevator door with disgust.

SID

Floor?

Blanca looks to Thelma who supplies.

THELMA

Four.

Sid pushes the button and the elevator jerks into motion. As it sinks, Sid is aghast to see...

...the contempt with which Thelma is transfixing Blanca.

Struck by that contempt, Blanca closes her hand in a fist.

MATCH CUT TO:

17 INT. EXCELSIOR HOTEL. ROME - CONTINUOUS

Boldviski's hand tears at his shirt, unbuttoning it as he passes Seth going in the opposite direction.

SETH

'Night...

Without answering, Boldviski smiles at his "star", a smile which leaves Seth shaken.

TIGHT: Seth's hand closes into a fist.

MATCH CUT TO:

TIGHT: A closed fist knocks on the door to Suite #610. A pause, the door opens revealing Gita in a nightgown. She smiles as Seth who sweeps past her and into the room.

MATCH CUT TO:

TIGHT: Boldviski clutches the key to his Suite and tries to steady his hand to slip the key into the lock. Suddenly he realizes the key is unnecessary: the door to his Suite is ajar. Frowning, he cautiously pushes it open.

18 INT. BOLDVISKI'S SUITE. EXCELSIOR HOTEL. ROME - CONTINUOUS

Entering, Boldviski looks around. Finding nothing unusual, he shrugs and throws off his coat. That's when he spots a silver bucket containing a chilled bottle of MALAGA WINE. Smiling at the hotel's courtesy, he checks the label.

INSERT: It is a bottle of MALAGA LAGRIMA WINE. THE FLASHY, COLORFUL LABEL IS PARTIALLY TORN IN ONE CORNER.

Boldviski uncorks the bottle and is about to pour the wine when he sniffs the air. Something's wrong. He smells the wine in the bottle and laughs as he forces the cork back into the bottle and places it on the table near the door.

INSERT: Taking a hotel napkin, he drapes it over the bottle.

MATCH CUT TO:

19 INT. THELMA'S SUITE. EXCELSIOR HOTEL. ROME - CONTINUOUS

A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. Berger's HAND plucks up a napkin and wipes his mouth. Rising from his breakfast, in his SS uniform pants, polished black boots and suspenders over an undershirt, he strides to the door, opens it, admitting...

...Thelma into his Suite. Smiling, she wipes a food stain from his mouth before kissing it.

MATCH CUT TO:

20 INT. GITA'S SUITE. EXCELSIOR HOTEL. ROME - LATER THAT NIGHT

TIGHT: Another napkin is draped over another wine bottle. PAN TO the bedroom where Seth is making love to Gita.

CLOSE ON: Gita's hand, clutching the side of the bed in ecstasy, gripping the satin sheets in a tight fist.

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

21 INT. COBINA'S FLAT. HALLWAY/LIVING ROOM - THAT AFTERNOON

A GLOVED HAND tightly clutches a gleaming knife with a carved bone handle.

SUPERIMPOSE: HOME OF COBINA HELSTEIN, ROME - DAY ONE -
CIRCA NINE HOURS LATER - 4:14 PM

A hall mirror reflects the ominous shape of a FIGURE IN A HOODED BLACK RAINCOAT lurking in the shadows.

In the living room, Cobina is crying. Leaving her, Boldviski shuffles into the hallway. His face is flushed, as if he were emerging from a heated discussion. He is about to stuff his bald head into a panama hat as he turns to the door to leave; yet as he does so, what he sees makes him freeze.

*
*

TIGHT ON: Reflected in the mirror, the Hooded Figure in the shadows turns to face him. THE MUSIC SCORE SWELLS...

TIGHT ON/MUTED: Boldviski YELLS at the Hooded Figure.

TIGHT ON: Cobina looks up, her face a mask of fear.

TIGHT ON/MUTED: Boldviski INVEIGHS against the intruder, then dismisses him with a wave of the hand, opening the door to leave, turning his back on the Figure. Suddenly Boldviski has a expression of surprise, the breath escaping from his lips in a pitiful SIGH.

Cobina hears ANOTHER MUFFLED SOUND. THE SOUND OF SOMETHING FALLING to the ground. Too frightened to move, she glances towards the hallway. Her eyes then flit to...

...Assia who has also been crying, paralyzed with fear.

The Hooded Figure in the black raincoat SWEEPS OVER CAMERA, THE MUSIC BECOMES BEETHOVEN'S "FIDELIO" AS..

WIPE TO BLACK:

22 INT. DE VINCENZI'S FLAT. ROME. VARIOUS ROOMS - AFTERNOON

...DARKNESS. CAMERA IS INSIDE A CLOSED KITCHEN CUPBOARD. The door of the cupboard opens REVEALING INSPECTOR CARLO DE VINCENZI: attractive, in his 40s, with a pleasant,

cultured face, a serene playfulness about the mouth, and steady, well-opened blue eyes. De Vincenzi removes a container from the cupboard and closes the door.

WIPE TO BLACK:

The cover is removed from a large copper pot REVEALING, once again, the placid features of De Vincenzi humming along with Beethoven. He peers into the pot.

The water in the pot is boiling on an antique stove in a kitchen so filled with books it could be a library. De Vincenzi eases a fistful of spaghetti into the pot.

SUPERIMPOSE: HOME OF INSPECTOR CARLO DE VINCENZI, ROME - DAY ONE - 5:19 PM

Stirring the spaghetti like a chemist working with some volatile substance, De Vincenzi plucks up an open book, slips on a pair of glasses and resumes his reading of...

INSERT:...*"THE DEATH OF NAPOLEON: MURDER?"*

The book claims his full attention. Abruptly he looks up, taken by an idea, mumbling to himself...

DE VINCENZI
Allosteric inhibition. Allosteric inhibition...
(putting the book down)
Allo...steric...inhibition...

De Vincenzi distractedly covers the pot, and totally forgetting the spaghetti, shuffles through the kitchen...

...down a hallway (also lined with bookshelves)...

...into a full-scale library, all the while muttering...

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
Allosteric inhibition...

He steps up a ladder and plucks a few books from their shelves. He rummages through a huge tome until he's found:

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
Ah! Arsenic!
(reading out loud)
Acute minimal lethal dose in adults, 1 milligram per kilo per day.
(looking up)
Now where would he get *that* much poison?
In 1821? On St. Helena!? -- No, no...
(he scolds himself)
You're doing it all wrong: trace the effect back to the cause...

De Vincenzi quickly scans the tome.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
Symptoms...symptoms. Ah! Here!
(MORE)

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

(reading)
*The skin develops keratoses especially
at the feet with manifest boils...*
(looking up again)
Boils...?
(suddenly his eyes spring open)
Boil!

He quickly snatches up the books and hurries down the ladder back through the hallway...

...to the kitchen where the spaghetti has boiled over creating general havoc on the stove. De Vincenzi kills the flame and mumbles under his breath as he mops up the creamy white spill whilst salvaging his copy of "THE DEATH OF NAPOLEON". To make matters worse, the TELEPHONE RINGS, twice, three times, annoyingly.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

Yes, yes! I'm coming, I'm coming...
(disgruntled/to the phone)
Can't you see this mess?!

De Vincenzi picks up the phone, pressing the headset between shoulder and ear as he continues to clean the stove.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

De Vincenzi. -- What?! Hold on, I can't hear.

He slips the headset into the pocket of his apron and turns down Beethoven. Back on the phone...

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

Hello? Ah! Good afternoon, Commissioner.
Just having a late lunch...What's that?
Stabbed in the back? A film director?
Isn't that rather common in their
trade?... Oh! I see. Very well, I'll be
right there...

De Vincenzi fatalistically plops the cover back on what's left of his spaghetti.

WIPE TO BLACK:

23 EXT. PIAZZA VENEZIA. ROME - AFTERNOON

DARKNESS. A RANTING SPEECH OF MUSSOLINI IS SHOUTED (OVER LOUDSPEAKERS) OVER THE ROAR OF AN IMMENSE CHEERING CROWD. The Piazza is packed with BLACKSHIRTS and NAZIS, groups of ITALIAN CHILDREN in impressive (and incongruous) military gear, the citizens of Fascist Italy and a smattering of enthralled tourists. All eyes are lifted to a distant point from whence Mussolini is speaking. De Vincenzi IS SEEN slowly pushing his way through the throng, chewing on sunflower seeds which he plucks out of a newspaper cone.

He pauses, biting down on a seed as he glances up at...

...Mussolini and Hitler on the balcony of Palazzo Venezia (draped in Fascist and Swastika banners). *Il Duce* addresses the crowds with his grandiloquence as *Der Führer* looks on.

De Vincenzi spits out the seed's hull in the direction of the two dictators grumbling under his breath...

DE VINCENZI
Some marriages are made in Hell...

He then finds himself face to face with an SS OFFICER. De Vincenzi stares down the Officer who is finally forced to move out of the Inspector's way.

SS OFFICER
Verzeihen Sie bitte!

DE VINCENZI
(under his breath)
Wo soll Ich anfangen?

Reaching the other end of the square, De Vincenzi enters a massive building. The Fascist Emblem over the portals bears the wording: *QUESTURA DI ROMA*.

SUPERIMPOSE: **QUESTURA DI ROMA (POLICE HEADQUARTERS), ROME - DAY ONE - 5:46 PM**

24 INT. QUESTURA DI ROMA - AFTERNOON

De Vincenzi strides briskly up wide stairs, reluctantly passing knots of Fascist Officers alone or in the company of Nazis, muttering to himself...

DE VINCENZI
The locusts have arrived. And after the locusts...
(frowning to remember)
Ah, yes. The Plague of Darkness. I hope our "Pharaoh" isn't afraid of the dark.

MAGGIONI (O.S.)
What are you mumbling about today, De Vincenzi?

De Vincenzi turns to face the Police Chief, LORENZO MAGGIONI, who has fallen into step beside him. Maggioni has the rugged, unfinished look of a career cop.

MAGGIONI (CONT'D)
Y'know, a person who talks to himself as much as you do desperately needs a wife.

DE VINCENZI
I tried that. Amelia wasn't a very good listener, and I didn't know when to shut up. But that was a while ago...
(he smiles, transported back in time/ when he snaps back)
Tell me about this film director.

Finishing his seeds, De Vincenzi crumples up the newspaper cone. Finding no wastebasket, he stuffs it into his pocket.

MAGGIONI

Name's Boldviski. Vassilli Boldviski.

De Vincenzi follows the Commissioner into his office...

25 INT. POLICE COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE. QUESTURA - CONTINUOUS

A large art deco affair: stylish furniture, high windows affording shafts of light onto a collection of plants. A photo of Mussolini on the wall behind the huge desk. They continue talking as Maggioni waters his plants...

DE VINCENZI

Russian?

MAGGIONI

(nodding)
Some sort of new wave *wunderkind*. Stark realism. Pushing his actors hard. To the point of rebellion.

DE VINCENZI

Or murder. - What else do we know?

MAGGIONI

He left Russia in the 20's.
(grabbing hold of a plant)
Help me move this to the window.

Suddenly De Vincenzi and Maggioni are comically struggling under the weight of a huge pot bearing a bamboo palm.

MAGGIONI (CONT'D)

Worked in Germany, Hungary, then here in Italy before he went to Hollywood. Made quite a name for himself out there. At least that's what they say.

DE VINCENZI

So why'd he come back?

MAGGIONI

Homesick maybe. Or just greedy. - Over here.

Maggioni angles the plant so that the palm stalk partially covers the photo of Mussolini. They both regard the half-hidden semblance of *Il Duce* and his fierce, piercing eyes.

DE VINCENZI

You sure he won't mind?

MAGGIONI

He might. But it's better than having him glare down at me all day long.

DE VINCENZI

Greedy in what way?

MAGGIONI

Il Duce...?

DE VINCENZI

Boldviski. You said greed could be the reason for his returning to Europe.

MAGGIONI

Yes. Two businessmen...

(checks his notes)

Marcello Caienni and Michele Vernieri. They set up a company here called Acidalia Films.

DE VINCENZI

Deep pockets?

MAGGIONI

Deep enough to attract *Boldviski*. They offered him a partnership and he was on the next boat back. They were set to make four films at Cinecittá. *Romeo & Juliet*'s the first.

DE VINCENZI

Doesn't sound like they wanted him dead. Who else might've had a motive.

MAGGIONI

Could be anyone. He was both idolized and loathed by everyone who knew him. Producers. Actors. Especially his women.

DE VINCENZI

Any woman in particular?

MAGGIONI

I'd start with Cobina Helstein. *Boldviski*'s body was found in her hallway. She called it in to the police.

DE VINCENZI

(noticing a pamphlet on his desk)
Acidalia Films...?

Maggioni takes the pamphlet of ACIDALIA FILMS.

MAGGIONI

That's their prospectus. With the main players...

Maggioni opens the prospectus to a section entitled...

INSERT:...UPCOMING FILMS: ROMEO & JULIET, with photographs of the players. Maggioni identifies them for De Vincenzi...

MAGGIONI (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Caienni and Vernieri, the producers;
Boldviski, the director...

DE VINCENZI

A real bulldog!

MAGGIONI

Who turned up dead, meaning his bark
was definitely worse than his bite.

(indicating other photos)

Armando Flauti, the assistant director.
Paolo Vergolli, the screenwriter; Cobina
Helstein -- she plays Juliet's mother;

De Vincenzi is fascinated by the photo of Cobina Helstein.

MAGGIONI (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Blanca Vertua, Juliet; Seth Nicholson,
Romeo; Sid Renier who plays the
Apothecary; and Assia Paris and Gita
Garena who play Mercutio and Benvolio,
respectively.

This intrigues De Vincenzi as Maggioni continues...

MAGGIONI (O.S.) (CONT'D)

And Thelma Ludendorf, the production
secretary.

(handing him the prospectus)

All the addresses are in there.

DE VINCENZI

Do we have their prints?

MAGGIONI

They're on file with Cinecittá Security.

De Vincenzi takes the prospectus and starts off, mumbling...

DE VINCENZI

Rome & Juliet. Yet he was *stabbed*. That's
Hamlet! Why the Shakespearean overlap?

De Vincenzi is suddenly faced with the homely yet benevolent
features of POLICE LIEUTENANT TONINO D'ANGELO.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

Ah! D'Angelo. Just the man I'm looking
for.

26 INT. QUESTURA DI ROMA - CONTINUOUS

De Vincenzi strides briskly down the corridor with D'Angelo
(rather out of shape despite his 30 years) hurrying behind.

D'ANGELO

Where to, Inspector?

DE VINCENZI

Crime scene.

D'ANGELO

I'll have them bring your car up front.

DE VINCENZI

No use wasting gasoline. We'll need all
we can spare once we're at war?

D'ANGELO

I haven't read anything about a war.

DE VINCENZI

I have. It's on the faces of those two clowns on that balcony.

De Vincenzi has stopped at a window framing the madding crowds in the piazza and the two dictators on the balcony.

D'ANGELO

A question.

(when De Vincenzi eyes him)
Isn't talk like that dangerous? The walls have ears, you know.

DE VINCENZI

Don't worry. This country went deaf and dumb a long time ago.
(nodding towards Mussolini)
That's why he's *shouting*!

D'ANGELO

But "*clowns*", sir? I mean, *Il Duce*, his policies, - they're respected, aren't they!? Wasn't he on the cover of that American magazine, what's it called?!

DE VINCENZI

Time. October, 1935 issue.

D'ANGELO

There. You see!

De Vincenzi reaches the Questura's mezzanine and stops to look out at the piazza again through a huge arched window.

DE VINCENZI

Yes. He's fooled quite a few people.

TIGHT ON DE VINCENZI. HIS EYES REFLECT THE BALCONY WHERE HITLER AND MUSSOLINI STAND. He addresses that balcony in a soft whisper, talking primarily to himself again.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

Yet after their hands are drenched in blood, we'll know that the great future they offered us was merely "...a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

D'Angelo gazes at De Vincenzi, totally confused by his boss' intellectual detour. Snapping out of his reverie, De Vincenzi takes off down the wide stairway...

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

Come, D'Angelo. We have another MacBeth to investigate.

27 EXT. BUS IN TRAFFIC. ROME - AFTERNOON

A public bus makes its way through the hustle and bustle of Roman traffic. In recognition of the German dictator's visit, almost every building is blemished with Swastikas interwoven with Fascist banners. NAZI SOLDIERS are everywhere: it's a German Roman Holiday!

As the bus passes the Pantheon bearing a huge Imperial poster of Napoleon Bonaparte in his coronation robes...

DE VINCENZI (V.O.)

Do you think Napoleon was murdered,
D'Angelo?

28 INT. BUS IN TRAFFIC. ROME - CONTINUOUS

De Vincenzi and D'Angelo are standing in the crowded bus. De Vincenzi's question elicits the attention of the others in the bus (HUMBLE PASSENGERS: carrying bundles of clothes, sausages, cheese, rughetta, and other sundries).

D'ANGELO

Napoleon, sir?

DE VINCENZI

Bonaparte.

D'ANGELO

Murdered?

Suddenly drawn into the absurd conversation, the passengers on the bus are all ears, as if the "crime" were current.

DE VINCENZI

The autopsy conducted at St. Helena put
the cause of death as stomach cancer.
Yet that doesn't tally with the facts.
(at D'Angelo's inquiring glance)
He was fat when he died.

The passengers all look to D'Angelo in expectation.

D'ANGELO

Fat?

DE VINCENZI

Very! And obesity is hardly symptomatic
of the wasting away caused by stomach
cancer, wouldn't you say?

Realizing he's being observed, D'Angelo nods knowingly, brow furrowed in *academia*.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

It was the valet's idea actually. That
is was murder...

D'Angelo and the humble passengers struggle to keep up.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

Louis-Joseph Marchand, by name. He wrote
in his memoirs that Bonaparte's death
had all the signs of arsenic poisoning.

The bus stops. De Vincenzi proceeds D'Angelo to the door.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

This is us.

The bus' passengers watch the two men depart, saddened
that they will never know what happened to Bonaparte.

29 EXT. VIA BRESCIA. ROME - CONTINUOUS

D'Angelo hurries after De Vincenzi.

D'ANGELO

Arsenic?

DE VINCENZI

Slowly administered over weeks. Maybe
months.

Consulting the prospectus, he finds the house number.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

Here it is. 25.

De Vincenzi walks off (chewing on sunflower seeds). D'Angelo
follows him into the middle class apartment building.

SUPERIMPOSE: VIA BRESCIA, ROME - DAY ONE - 6:57 PM

30 INT. VIA BRESCIA 25. ROME - CONTINUOUS

The two men pass the LANDLADY, LUISA ZANINI (late 40's)
who sits in a chair in the PORTER'S LODGE near the front
entrance. She's immersed in the reading of a novel, and
barely looks at them as they nod to her and move on.

DE VINCENZI

(indicating the landlady)
Remind me to question her later.

D'Angelo assents but his mind is still elsewhere as they
start up the stairs.

D'ANGELO

Who do you think poisoned him? Bonaparte,
I mean?

DE VINCENZI

Good question, D'Angelo.

D'Angelo is pleased he's had a "good question", as they
reach the first floor and stop at an open door where
POLICEMEN are coming and going. They nod to De Vincenzi as
they pass him. The Inspector KNOCKS on the door.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

(as they wait)

My personal investigation has narrowed it down to one person: Napoleon's most trusted aide, the Count *Albine de Montholon*! He had means, motive and the opportunity to kill *l'Empereur*.

Cobina Helstein appears at the door; her beauty attenuated by recent events. She regards the two men and is smitten by De Vincenzi's charm and good looks; indeed, both he and Cobina have an immediate attraction for one another.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

Madam Helstein?

COBINA

Yes.

DE VINCENZI

(tipping his hat)

Inspector De Vincenzi. This is my assistant, Lieutenant D'Angelo. They tell me someone was murdered here.

COBINA

(somber/waving them in)

Please...

31 INT. COBINA'S FLAT. HALLWAY/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

De Vincenzi and D'Angelo enter the small but tastefully furnished apartment. The dead body of Vassilli Boldviski is on the hallway floor. The body is flat on its stomach, head facing the entrance door, a knife with a carved bone handle stuck in its back.

De Vincenzi moves past the body and peers into the elegant living room. He sees nothing noteworthy save for....

...a bouquet of YELLOW ROSES AND A BOX OF WHITE CHOCOLATES on a coffee table (the box open; a few chocolates missing).

D'Angelo, Cobina and the Policemen look on as De Vincenzi checks both the lock and the door jamb before concentrating on Boldviski. He bends down and inspects the body, its clothes and the area on the floor around the body. He notices that Boldviski is holding his hat. Leaning forward, he inspects the knife's beautiful carved bone handle.

DE VINCENZI

I assume the body's not been moved.

POLICEMAN

It's exactly as we found it.

DE VINCENZI

Time of death?

POLICEMAN

The medical examiner puts it at between four and five pm today.

DE VINCENZI

Thank you, for now.

Nodding, the policemen leave the apartment.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

You live here alone, Madam Helstein?

COBINA

For the most part. My 19-year-old daughter comes to stay now and again.
(to D'Angelo who is taking notes)
Assia. Assia Paris. That's her stage name.

She spots the prospectus in De Vincenzi's pocket.

COBINA (CONT'D)

May I?

He nods and she takes the prospectus, finding...

...a photo of Assia.

COBINA (CONT'D)

That's her. She's playing Mercutio.

DE VINCENZI

Where is she now?

COBINA

Cinecittà. They're filming tonight. Or at least we were scheduled to film before...

When her gaze automatically falls on the dead body at her feet, she feels weak and De Vincenzi helps her to a chair. Their eyes touch, briefly but meaningfully.

DE VINCENZI

That's an odd twist, wouldn't you say?
(at Cobina's inquiring glance)
Mercutio and Benvolio played by women.
The Shakespearean custom was quite the opposite: men playing women, not women men.
(inspecting the knife again)
Beautifully carved. A bit like these.

And picks up a BRUSH AND COMB under the hallway mirror.

DETAIL: Both brush and comb are made out of carved bone.

COBINA

Yes. The knife is part of a set. Been in my family for years.

DE VINCENZI

(once again his eyes touch Cobina's)
What was your relationship with Mr. Boldviski?

COBINA

He was my husband.

D'Angelo seems quite surprised. De Vincenzi, less.

DE VINCENZI

I see. My condolences, then.

COBINA

We were married in Budapest over 20 years ago. I was a chemist, by trade.

D'ANGELO

(writing it down)
A chemist.

COBINA

(nodding)
But I gave up that life for him. I loved him, you see. Hopelessly. He was that sort of man, Vassilli was: you either hated or loved him - hopelessly.

Cobina's confession has cost her dearly. Conscious of this, De Vincenzi, glances at the body in their midst...

DE VINCENZI

Perhaps we should move to the other room?

Cobina's eyes, wide and startled, are glued on Boldviski as if staring into the dark pit of her life.

COBINA

Yes. I'd like that. Though seeing Vassilli so...*vulnerable* is a rare event. One well worth savoring.

D'Angelo glimpses a smile stealing across her lips as she stands up to move into the living room. The men follow.
OVER THE SCENE IS HEARD A RIFLE SHOT AS...

FAST CUT TO:

32 EXT. CINECITTÁ. ROME. BEHIND STUDIO 5 - SAME TIME

TIGHT ON a WATERMELON stuck on a metal pole. A bullet sinks cleanly into the CENTER OF THE MELON. ANOTHER SHOT RINGS OUT, sinking another bullet into the melon: dead center.

Standing at the edge of a vast back lot recreation of the WWI Western Front at the Battle of Ypres (abandoned now save for a few distant workmen preparing for a night shoot), Thelma reloads her brand-new Mosin-Nagant rifle allowing...

...the spent cartridges to accumulate on the ground.

Resting the butt plate of the rifle against her shoulder, she peers through the scope and fires again.

And yet again, the bullet sinks into the melon. Dead center.

Thelma allows the semblance of a smile to grace her lips.

FAST CUT TO:

33 EXT. COBINA'S FLAT. TERRACE - SAME TIME

Cobina, De Vincenzi and D'Angelo stride out onto a vast terrace overlooking Rome. De Vincenzi glimpses...

...a MENORAH on a living room cabinet. And on a shelf beside it, a series of BOOKS ON POISONS AND ELIXIRS.

Cobina notices a motorcade somewhere in the distance, approaching, with grandiose renditions of the Marching Songs: *Die Fahne Hoch* and *Giovinezza* in honor of Hitler and Mussolini. The three walk across the terrace as they talk, the magnificent beauty of Rome stretched out beneath them.

DE VINCENZI

You gave up your life, you were saying...

COBINA

Yes. I abandoned my career and started acting. He wanted me to do that: act. It gave him more control over my emotions, I suppose. Anyway, I actually found that I was good at it. From Budapest we moved to Rome where Assia was born. But the pressure of a family was too much for Vassilli, and he took to drinking. Heavily. Which made him all the more intolerable. So when he received this offer to go to Hollywood, I told him to go; we would stay here, Assia and I.
(with a sad little laugh)
And you know what, Inspector?

De Vincenzi is completely engaged by her pathos.

COBINA (CONT'D)

He didn't seem to care. He said it would probably be best for us all: he certainly couldn't allow Assia and I to be...how did he put it?... an *obstacle* to his success.

(fighting back the tears)
We heard nothing more from him after he left for America. Not a letter, not a postcard. And as the years passed, he was diluted from our minds, despite his name appearing in the papers now and again, an award for one thing, a commendation for another, and then, unexpectedly...

DE VINCENZI

He returned to Rome. Riding the crest of his success.

She has a slight nod.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

How were you and your daughter cast in the film? Did you go to him?

COBINA

He robbed me of a great deal, Inspector, but I held on to my dignity. No. Amazingly he sought *us* out. I hadn't expected an apology, or even an explanation for his silence. And predictably none was forthcoming. He merely told me that he thought it would be appropriate - that's the word he used: *appropriate* - that Assia and I should be in his film. Since there was no role for Assia, Thelma thought it would be *original* to have her play a male role, Mercutio. With Gita playing Benyolio.

(looking at D'Angelo)
That's Gita Galena.

D'Angelo jots down the name.

DE VINCENZI

So it was her idea that Assia and Gita should play male roles?

COBINA

Yes. Thelma Ludendorf...

She points to Thelma's photo on the prospectus.

DE VINCENZI

And when he returned, your love affair was rekindled.

COBINA

(feeling suddenly exposed)
What makes you think that, Inspector?

DE VINCENZI

Your expression, Madam. Your melancholy bears a trace of sadness revisited.

COBINA

What a peculiar way of putting it.
(she offers him a smile)
You've felt it yourself, no doubt?

Their gazes meet, direct and candid. This is a private moment between them, and De Vincenzi shifts his gaze to the city. Lowering his voice so only Cobina can hear under the Marching Songs in the distance, songs which draw closer and closer, becoming louder and louder, more threatening...

DE VINCENZI

Helstein. Is that your maiden name?
(she nods)
Jewish?

*

Cobina scans his gentle features for any trace of condemnation, of bigotry. Not finding any, she nods again. Returning her attention to the motorcade, she adds...

COBINA

But we are safe here. In Italy.

Once again, she meets his steady gaze, and De Vincenzi cannot tell if hers was a question or a statement. He would answer, but thinks better of it and resumes the inquiry.

DE VINCENZI

Tell me what happened here? And omit nothing, please. It all looks very bad for you, you know.

Shifting gears, she concentrates and slowly starts...

COBINA

This morning after filming, we all went to our club. It must've been after four.

D'Angelo starts committing it all to his note pad.

FLASHBACK: AS COBINA SPEAKS, THE EVENTS ARE **SUPERIMPOSED**. THE FOUR TAXIS ARE SEEN PULLING UP TO THE CLUB AND THE CAST SPILLING OUT AND INTO THE TAVERNA.

COBINA (CONT'D)

Vassilli was with one of his woman.
That actress who plays Juliet...

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE: BLANCA LAUGHS WITH BOLDOVISKI.

DE VINCENZI

And you were jealous?

COBINA

I was hurt. Terribly hurt. But then I should've expected it. When we were intimate again, he told me that he had no intention of giving up his freedom. And foolishly I agreed.

DE VINCENZI

Love does that. Makes us so very foolish.

COBINA

(searching his eyes)
Yes...

DE VINCENZI

(softly/a priest in a confessional)
Go on. You were in the club.

COBINA

(her face tightens at the memory)
He shouted at me. In front of everyone.

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE: BOLDOVISKI'S FURY.

COBINA (CONT'D)

I had become intolerable, he said. I was suffocating his art. That was the reason he'd left me in the first place, he said...-- I'd never seen him so furious! He demanded that I meet him here, this afternoon. At four. To have it out. Once and for all.

D'ANGELO

And you met? At four?

She nods.

DE VINCENZI

You were *alone* with him?

Cobina hesitates, ever so slightly, but enough for De Vincenzi to draw his conclusions. She exhales...

COBINA

Yes.

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE: CONTINUE THE EVENTS SHE RELATES: BOLDVISKI'S FURY, COBINA'S DEFIANCE, ASSIA'S TERROR.

COBINA (CONT'D)

We had a terrible row. Now that he was back in Europe, he wanted a divorce. Assia and I were to leave Italy forever! He would give us money! Whatever it took, but he wanted us out of his life! He was in love with Blanca, he said. He couldn't have us spoiling that!

DE VINCENZI

And how did you react?

COBINA

I refused. Assia and I have roots here. Anyway, I told him, that girl he loved, that Blanca woman, she was obviously using him! But it was clear she was in love with someone else. He must've known that, I told him! Everyone else did?! They were all laughing behind his back.

D'ANGELO

Someone else?

COBINA

Seth Nicholson. The boy who plays Romeo. Blanca is wild about him!

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE: IN THE TAVERNA, SETH STUNNED BY BOLDVISKI'S FLASHING GAZE.

DE VINCENZI

How did Boldviski take that?

COBINA

He was struck dumb! With anger, outrage, humiliation... I was terrified. I thought he would kill me.

DE VINCENZI

What *did* he do?

COBINA

He fled into the hallway. I was too petrified to follow, but I heard him open the door to leave, and an instant later I heard a deep sigh and a weighty noise--

D'ANGELO

(looking up from his notes)
Weighty?

COBINA

Yes. You know, like a body falling to the floor. And when I ran out, I found him as you now see him.

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE: IN THE LIVING ROOM, COBINA HEARS THE SOUND AND RUNS OUT.

DE VINCENZI

And the assassin?

COBINA

Gone!

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE: COBINA SEES THAT THE HALLWAY IS EMPTY, THE DOOR LEFT OPEN.

DE VINCENZI

Any idea who it might have been?

COBINA

Vassilli had many enemies. Any number of whom might have wanted him dead.

DE VINCENZI

Yourself included.

COBINA

(there is affection in her smile)
Yes, Inspector. But I would not -- I *did* not kill my husband.

DE VINCENZI

You're also not telling me the whole truth. Are you, Madam? Good day. Come, D'Angelo.

To Cobina's amazement, De Vincenzi takes back the prospectus, tips his hat, and abruptly leaves the terrace...

34 INT. COBINA'S FLAT. HALLWAY/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

....crossing the living room, he stops short at the box of white chocolates causing D'Angelo to do an about-face.

DE VINCENZI

By the way. These chocolates....

COBINA

They came with the flowers.

DE VINCENZI

From Mr. Boldviski?

COBINA

Vassilli? No. That wasn't his style! I have no idea who sent them. A messenger brought them by early this afternoon.

DE VINCENZI

A secret admirer?

De Vincenzi and Cobina are sparring, an emotional duel.

COBINA

Why not?

DE VINCENZI

Indeed. -- This Messenger. What did he look like?

COBINA

I didn't get a good look. It was a young boy. Nondescript. Wearing a hooded raincoat...*Black*.

DE VINCENZI

And were they good? The chocolates, I mean? I notice a few are missing.

COBINA

I have no idea. I'm allergic to cocoa. As is my daughter. It's a rare condition, they tell me.

DE VINCENZI

Very rare. Only one in 10,000 is allergic to Phenyl-ethylamine.

*

COBINA

But Vassilli ate a few. He's always had a sweet tooth.

DE VINCENZI

Those often come back to bite us, don't they?

(picking up the box of chocolates)
Then you won't mind if I take them with me. Being that you're allergic...

Cobina smiles at the strange request but graciously nods as De Vincenzi enters the hallway and starts out.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
Again, Madam. Good day.

COBINA
Inspector...

As an afterthought, De Vincenzi turns again at the door.

DE VINCENZI
That club you mentioned...

COBINA
La Taverna di Costantino. Off Via Veneto.

D'Angelo takes note of it.

COBINA (CONT'D)
The producer, Caienni, Marcello
Caienni...

De Vincenzi finds Caienni's photo on the prospectus.

COBINA (CONT'D)
His girlfriend has an act there.

DE VINCENZI
Her name?

COBINA
(to D'Angelo)
Mary Lovell...She was meant to play
Juliet. Caienni was very adamant about
it, but Vassilli...
(her voice trails off)
They had a fight. Vassilli won, of
course.

DE VINCENZI
(gazing at Boldviski's body)
Did he?

Their eyes lock, a long look. Then, tipping his hat...

*

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
Thank you, Madam. Yet again, Good day.
(pausing yet again)
I must ask that you stay in your home.
I may need to speak with you later.

COBINA
Very well, Inspector.
(looking after him/intrigued)
Good day.

35 INT. VIA BRESCIA 25. ROME - CONTINUOUS

De Vincenzi instructs the policemen outside the apartment...

DE VINCENZI
Please alert the Coroner to collect the
body.
(MORE)

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

And have the lab check the knife for fingerprints. You probably won't find any, but - amuse me.

(handing him the box of chocolates)
And have the lab check these for anything...*unusual*.

POLICEMAN

Yes, Inspector.

De Vincenzi starts off and again doubles back.

DE VINCENZI

And I want guards posted at Boldviski's Suite at the Excelsior. His rooms are to be sealed until I've examined them.

POLICEMAN

Yes, sir.

De Vincenzi pauses, as if going back yet again. D'Angelo freezes in anticipation, but the Inspector moves on.

CUT TO:

De Vincenzi and D'Angelo are moving quickly down the stairs.

D'ANGELO

A question.

DE VINCENZI

Yes, D'Angelo?

D'ANGELO

Why do you think she's lying?

DE VINCENZI

The body, D'Angelo. Hat in hand, a knife in the back, and he fell facing the front door. He was obviously stabbed on his way out. Which means the murderer was *already* in the apartment. Since there was no indication of forced entry, the murderer must have either been admitted to the apartment by Mrs. Helstein, someone she knew, therefore, or--

D'ANGELO

--he snuck in with a duplicate key.

De Vincenzi is moving quickly and athletically down the stairs as the overweight D'Angelo chases after him.

D'ANGELO (CONT'D)

And the chocolates?

DE VINCENZI

All that blood on the floor...

*

D'ANGELO

There was no blood on the floor.

DE VINCENZI

Exactly. But you'd expect blood with a stab wound like that, wouldn't you?

(before D'Angelo can answer)

Ever hear of a man dying twice, D'Angelo?

Killed both times by the same assassin?

D'Angelo frowns at the cryptic remark as De Vincenzi finds the Landlady, Luisa Zanini, sitting in the porter's lodge still immersed in her novel. De Vincenzi and D'Angelo stand watching her for a good 15 seconds before she becomes aware of their presence and has a start.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

Good book?

(bending down to read the title)

Madame Bovary.

LUISA

(blushing)

A friend gave it to me. A close friend.

I-I promised her I'd read it. As a favor.

DE VINCENZI

No need to make excuses for Flaubert, Madam. He was a formidable writer. Always searching for *le mot juste*, you know.

D'Angelo and Luisa have no idea what he just said.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

Le mot juste: the right word. I'm sure he found it in describing adultery.

Luisa quickly hides the book under her apron.

LUISA

A widow's got to keep herself whole or she falls into...

(flipping to a page in Flaubert)

..."a gloomy melancholy..."

DE VINCENZI

Of course.

(smiling graciously)

We're from the police, madam. Inspector De Vincenzi and my colleague Lt.

D'Angelo.

De Vincenzi's gracious smile is contagious. She returns the smile, gets to her feet and shakes their hands.

LUISA

Luisa Zanini...

(suddenly frowning)

This is about that murder upstairs, isn't it?!

(MORE)

LUISA (CONT'D)

I may look in the clouds, but I know what's going on in these walls! Over thirty years, I've been here! And I see it all, those who come and those who go, and that man, the dead one, I didn't like the looks of him when he came in. Had the face of an animal, if you know what I mean. Beastly, carnal!

DE VINCENZI

Le mot juste, Madame. You're very observant.

LUISA

You bet I am. Been here since before the Great War. I've seen it all, and he looked more like a murderer than a victim, that one, the dead one.

DE VINCENZI

And what time was that? When he came in? The dead one?

Luisa takes on the onus of deep thought, as if mimicking one of Flaubert's characters.

LUISA

Let's see. The lady's daughter, that pretty girl, she came in at about 1 pm.

D'ANGELO

Assia Paris?

LUISA

That's the one.

D'Angelo scribbles down the information she provides.

LUISA (CONT'D)

At about 2:30 a delivery boy dropped by. Asked for Mrs. Helstein.

DE VINCENZI

Wearing a black hooded raincoat?

LUISA

He had yellow roses and a box of---
(suddenly frowning)
How did you know he was wear--?

DE VINCENZI

(cutting in)
No matter, madam. But didn't you find it peculiar, though? A raincoat on a cloudless day in May?

LUISA

Peculiar? Everything's peculiar nowadays! The fashion changes every time The Bald One gives a speech.

(MORE)

LUISA (CONT'D)

Black shirts, brown shirts, green shirts,
short pants, long, knee socks, low socks,
big ol' hats with shiny eagles, shoulder
straps and frills and tassels and
folderol and frou-frou! Marching up and
down like they own the world! Everyday's
a costume ball, 365 days a year!
(shaking her head)
Nothing special anymore 'bout a black
raincoat in May.

DE VINCENZI

(suppressing a smile/he likes her)
Go on, please. Who came after the
delivery boy?

LUISA

The dead one. He came about 3:45. I
remember that 'cause my clock chimed
three big ones and three little ones.
You know: dong, dong, dong, ding, ding--

DE VINCENZI

(cutting in again)
When did Miss Paris leave?

LUISA

Must've been an hour ago. Right before
the police came.

DE VINCENZI

(to D'Angelo)
So her daughter was there when Boldviski
was killed. Another lie.
(to Luisa)
And when did the delivery boy leave?

LUISA

(pausing to think)
Funny. I didn't see him leave. Must've
gone out the back way.
(her eyes grow wide)
Oh-my-God! You think he was the
murderer?! I told'em to lock that back
door! I can't have eyes everywhere, I
told'em. But would they listen? I--

DE VINCENZI

Madam.
(when she looks up)
Could you please show us this back door?

CUT TO:

De Vincenzi removes a torn piece of black cloth caught on
a nail near the back door. He inspects it...

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

Water resistant cloth. Such as that
used in raincoats.
(MORE)

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
(tucking the cloth into his pocket)
Madam, are you saying that anyone can
sneak in and out of this building just
by using this back door?

Luisa hesitates, not sure if the truth would incriminate
her. De Vincenzi smiles his reassurance.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
I know, Madam. You told them, and they
wouldn't listen.

LUISA
They never listen. I'm just the landlady!

DE VINCENZI
Is that a yes, then?

She finally supplies a disgruntled nod.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
Thank you, madam. Enjoy your novel.

36 EXT. VIA BRESCIA 25. ROME - A MOMENT LATER

De Vincenzi (again indulging in his sunflower seeds) and
D'Angelo head for the gate.

D'ANGELO
Where to next, Inspector?

DE VINCENZI
Cinecittá.

Suddenly De Vincenzi spots a piece of paper on the path
which the wind has blown onto a thorn bush. Picking it up
he realizes it is a page from the screenplay of Romeo &
Juliet, with handwritten notes on the margins. Some dialogue
is circled in red. He reads it to himself... *
*

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
Alas poor Romeo, he is already dead...
(talking to himself again)
Already dead...Strange. Someone must've
dropped this on the way to--

De Vincenzi suddenly stops, checking the prospectus...

..finding the photo of Paolo Vergolli.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
Paolo Vergolli. Screenwriter...

De Vincenzi's mind is racing. Then, eyes alight with renewed
purpose, he opens the gate and starts down the street.

MERCUTIO/ASSIA (V.O.)
Alas poor Romeo, he is already dead...

37 EXT. CINECITTÀ. ROME - EVENING/NIGHT

A police car stops in front of the main entrance of Cinecittà. De Vincenzi and D'Angelo step out and hurry through the "portals" of the *Film City*, past a knot of security GUARDS.

*
*

MERCUTIO/ASSIA (V.O.)
Shot through the ear with a love-song...

SUPERIMPOSE: CINECITTÀ, ROME - DAY ONE - 9:12 PM

As they walk through the film studio, illuminated by artificial lights, the two gaze at the wonders around them.

38 INT. CINECITTÀ. STAGE 5. ROME - CONTINUOUS

On the balcony of the Montague House in XVI Century Verona (reconstructed on one side of the stage), Mercutio and Benvolio wonder over the whereabouts of Romeo.

BENVOLIO/GITA
*O woe! O woeful day! Most lamentable
day, most woeful day, that ever, ever,
I did yet behold!*

39 EXT. CINECITTÀ. ROME - CONTINUOUS

De Vincenzi and D'Angelo start down one of the broad boulevards. There is action all around them: WORKERS carrying sets and props: Roman Empire columns and statues; parts of a Mayan Temple; a huge pair of wings (for Icarus?); the large sarcophagus of a Pharaoh...

40 INT. CINECITTÀ. STAGE 5. ROME - CONTINUOUS

Berger and the Nazi and Fascist Officers watch the balcony scene. Swastikas mingle with the signs of Fascism.

BENVOLIO/GITA
*O day! O day! O hateful day! Never was
seen so black a day as this!*

MERCUTIO/ASSIA
*All things that once brought joy, now
turn from their office to black death...*

41 EXT. CINECITTÀ. ROME - CONTINUOUS

De Vincenzi and D'Angelo pass near a back lot where they are rehearsing a scene from Cleopatra: lit by artificial lights and EGYPTIAN SERVANTS holding their torches high, CLEOPATRA is carried on the shoulders of her servants through a mammoth portal leading to the port of Alexandria. Two CAMELS and an ELEPHANT are part of the cortege.

While De Vincenzi takes it all in his stride, D'Angelo peers in marvel at the fascinating scene and at the stunning actress playing Cleopatra.

42 INT. CINECITTÀ. STAGE 5. ROME - CONTINUOUS

Flauti (who is directing) looks on as Mercutio continues his lament for his friend Romeo.

MERCUTIO/ASSIA

*Our harps turn to melancholy bells. Our
wedding cheer to a sad burial feast.
Our solemn hymns change to sullen dirges.*

FLAUTI

(through the megaphone)
CUT! - Print all three takes. - Lets
move to the Apothecary now.

As the cast and crew move to the next set, Flauti notices Assia is somewhat morose, and he looks after her in musing.

Caienni takes Vernieri by the arm nodding towards Flauti.

CAIENNI

I told you he's good!

VERNIERI

Stop pushing your man on me, Marcello.
We need Boldviski back, and we need him
back now! - Has someone called the hotel?

CAIENNI

He left at about 2 pm. Hasn't been seen
since.

VERNIERI

Over six hours! Where the hell is he?

Caienni casts a furtive sidelong glance towards...

...Sid (in his Apothecary costume). Sid nods to Caienni, his outfit making him look all the more conspiratorial.

Thelma has overheard them in passing and nods towards Blanca, raising her voice so she can hear.

THELMA

(sarcastically)
Why don't you ask Blanca!? She seems to
have cornered all his free time.

BLANCA

(matching her sarcasm)
Obviously not, considering that I'm
here and he's out "cornering" some other
bitch! Looks like we're *both* sharing
him with someone else, doesn't it Thelma.

Thelma takes a step towards her, as if to strike out, but thinks better of it and moves on, accosting Andreas Berger, who joins her in the shadows.

BERGER

Sind Sie bereit?

THELMA

(smiling)
Immer.

Berger smiles back as Thelma becomes serious again, snipping a cigarillo with her cigar cutter.

THELMA (CONT'D)

Wann?

Berger touches the flame of an SS lighter to her cigarillo.

BERGER

*Morgen. Sie fahren am Colosseum vorbei
am 15:00 Uhr.*

(staring her straight in the eye)
Nichts darf schief gehen. Verstanden?

THELMA

(with a confident smile)
Alles unter Kontrolle.

BERGER

(eying Assia)
Wie viel weiss sie schon?
(SUBTITLES)
How much does she know?

When Thelma hesitates...

BERGER (CONT'D)

Finde es heraus.
(SUBTITLES)
Find out.

43 EXT. CINECITTÁ. ROME - CONTINUOUS

Entering a world of GUNFIRE and EXPLODING BOMBS, the Inspector and D'Angelo move past another back lot where they are filming a reenactment of the Battle of Ypres on the WWI Western Front. Germans vs the French.

De Vincenzi and D'Angelo stop to watch the filming until a DIRECTOR in the unseen distance yells out:

WWI FILM DIRECTOR (O.S.)

CUT!

As the cast and crew prepare for the next scene, De Vincenzi's attention has been snared by...

DETAIL:...the remnants of a GARCIA Y VEGA CIGARILLO on the ground. Picking it up, he sniffs it.

DE VINCENZI

Garcia y Vega. Expensive taste.

Slipping the cigarillo butt into his pocket, he spots something else a few yards away and picks up...

DETAIL:...a few spent rifle cartridges.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
Cartridges...

D'ANGELO
Nothing unusual about that. This is a
World War I film.

DE VINCENZI
But these aren't blanks, D'Angelo.
They're 30 caliber shells from a bold-
action rifle. No reason to fire real
bullets of that caliber on a film set.
Unless...

His voice trails off as he slips the cartridges into his
pocket and walks towards a watermelon rotting on the ground.
De Vincenzi kneels down to inspect the melon with great
interest. THE VOICES OF THE ROMEO & JULIET FILM SET ARE
SUDDENLY INTERSPERSED OVER their dialogue...

FLAUTI (V.O.)
And...ACTION!

ROMEO/SETH (V.O.)
*I do remember an apothecary,--And
hereabouts he dwells,--*

D'ANGELO
A question.

DE VINCENZI
Yes, D'Angelo?

D'ANGELO
That French guy...

DE VINCENZI
Which French guy is that, D'Angelo?

D'ANGELO
That one you mentioned. *Albine* something.

ROMEO/SETH (V.O.)
*And if a man did need a poison now,
this tatter'd wretch would sell it him.
As I remember, this should be the house.*

DE VINCENZI
You mean Count *Albine de Montholon*.

D'ANGELO
That's the one! Why would he have
poisoned Napoleon?

ROMEO/SETH (V.O.)
What, ho! Apothecary!

APOTHECARY/SID (V.O.)
Who calls so loud?

DE VINCENZI
Well, if my theory's right, D'Angelo...

ROMEO/SETH (V.O.)

*Come hither, man. I see that thou art
poor. Here, I give you forty ducats:
let me have a dram of poison...*

DE VINCENZI

*...the good Count had the most insidious
motive of all. Jealousy. You see the
Countess de Montholon...*

D'ANGELO

His wife?

DE VINCENZI

*(he nods in assent)
She was in close contact with Napoleon
during her stay in St. Helena. Very
close. And when a daughter was born to
her in 1819, d'you know what she named
her? - Napoleana!*

44 INT. CINECITTÀ. STAGE 5. ROME - CONTINUOUS

In his Apothecary costume and in his "Shop", Sid hands Romeo/Seth a phial containing a thick colored liquid.

APOTHECARY/SID

*Put this in any liquid thing you will,
and drink it off; and, if you had the
strength of twenty men, it would dispatch
you straight.*

ROMEO/SETH

*(taking the phial/paying him)
There is thy gold, worse poison to men's
souls, Farewell: buy food, and get
thyself in flesh.*

45 EXT. CINECITTÀ. ROME - CONTINUOUS

They reach the door of Theater 5 where a FLASHING RED LIGHT indicates that they are "FILMING" within.

D'ANGELO

Napoleona!? A bit obvious, wasn't she?

DE VINCENZI

*If the Countess was anything, D'Angelo,
she was obvious.*

De Vincenzi glances at the flashing red light. The SECURITY GUARD at the door gives them both a stern look.

ROMEO/SETH (V.O.)

*Come, cordial and not poison, go with
me to Juliet's grave; for there must I
use thee.*

FLAUTI (V.O.)

CUT!

The RED LIGHT stops flashing, and De Vincenzi flashes his badge. Humbled, the security guard lets the men enter.

46 INT. CINECITTÀ. STAGE 5. ROME - CONTINUOUS

De Vincenzi and D'Angelo walk silently through the throng of Nazi and Fascist onlookers.

SUPERIMPOSE: CINECITTÀ, ROME: STAGE 5 - DAY ONE - 9:56 PM

De Vincenzi and D'Angelo reach the set (an elaborately dressed XVI Century Apothecary Shop) where Sid and Seth have just finished their scene. Checking the photos on the prospectus, De Vincenzi can identify Flauti who announces...

FLAUTI

We move to the Crypt sequence. That's next door, Stage 3.

PAN FROM THELMA'S PHOTO in the prospectus to Thelma herself as De Vincenzi nears her.

DE VINCENZI

Verzeihen Sie mir. Sind Sie Fraulein Ludendorf?

Both D'Angelo and Thelma are amazed by his German.

THELMA

Ja.

DE VINCENZI

(showing his badge)
Inspector De Vincenzi and Lieutenant D'Angelo. You are the production secretary, I believe?

THELMA

I am.

Thelma nervously plucks a cigarillo from her pocket, snips off the end with her cigar. De Vincenzi notices...

DETAIL:...a Swastika pin on her lapel.

De Vincenzi lights the cigarillo, smelling its sweet aroma.

DE VINCENZI

Garcia y Vega. Haven't seen those in a while.

He sneaks a smile to D'Angelo who stifles his own.

THELMA

Would you like one, Inspector?

DE VINCENZI

No, thank you. Smoking is a vice I have yet to acquire.

De Vincenzi notices that Assia is looking right at him, as if she wanted to tell him something.

But she drops her gaze and walks off to the next set.

THELMA
Sie sprechen Deutsch?

DE VINCENZI
We must keep up with the times.

THELMA
Or change them.

De Vincenzi is intrigued by her aggressive remark.

DE VINCENZI
Could you point out Mr. Boldviski to me? He's the director, isn't he?

D'Angelo frowns at the amazing question. Thelma also falters, studying the Inspector inquisitively.

THELMA
He--he hasn't arrived yet.

DE VINCENZI
Is he often late?

THELMA
On the contrary. Punctuality is one of his many virtues.

DE VINCENZI
Virtue. That's the first time today I've heard that word used in connection with Mr. Boldviski.

BLANCA (O.S.)
You know Vassilli?

De Vincenzi, D'Angelo and Thelma turn to the beautiful "Juliet" who nears them.

DE VINCENZI
Yes. I've....*met* him, Miss...Vertua?

Blanca nods with a smile.

CAIENNI (O.S.)
He's probably with some woman.

CAIENNI (CONT'D)
(joining them with Vernieri)
That's why Metro didn't renew his contract. Womanizing!

Thelma and Blanca exchange a meaningful glance.

DE VINCENZI
You worked with Mr. Boldviski in Hollywood, Mr. Caienni?

CAIENNI
(surprised he knows his name)
I'm sorry, do I know you?

DE VINCENZI
Inspector De Vincenzi.
(nodding to D'Angelo)
Lieutenant D'Angelo and I are
investigating Mr. Boldviski's...
disappearance.

Caienni's eyes flit to Sid who is seated in the shadows.
De Vincenzi's quick eyes catch the exchange.

CAIENNI
I had no idea someone called the police.

DE VINCENZI
Hotels usually do that. As a matter of
course. And you've obviously inquired
at the hotel, I would assume.
(turning back to Caienni)
You didn't answer my question, Mr.
Caienni. Did you know Mr. Boldviski in
Hollywood?

CAIENNI
Only by name. We had a bank there, Mr.
Vernieri and I. We funded some of
Boldviski's films.

DE VINCENZI
Is your US bank funding this movie?

CAIENNI
No. We closed the bank before we left.

DE VINCENZI
And why, may I ask?

Before Caienni can say anything else, Vernieri interjects.

VERNIERI
The stock market crash of '37. You
must've read about it, Inspector. It
was in all the papers.

De Vincenzi does not appreciate his mordant sarcasm.

VERNIERI (CONT'D)
And now, if there are no more questions,
Inspector, we're already behind schedule,
and with or without Bold, time is money.
(to Blanca)
I believe you're in the next shot.

On command, Blanca hurries off to the next set. The others
follow out the open doors of the stage and...

47 EXT. CINECITTÁ. ROME - CONTINUOUS

...along the back lot where The Battle of Ypres pierces the night with SOUNDS and FLASHES of war. The effect is comical: a handful of people idly conversing as they stroll past a WWI combat zone. Thelma sticks close to De Vincenzi.

DE VINCENZI

What are you filming next?

THELMA

The finale at the churchyard and the Capulet mausoleum.

PAOLO

When Romeo finds Juliet and thinks she's dead...

DE VINCENZI

...and vows to join her in the afterlife only to find himself there alone?

PAOLO

Interesting way of putting it.

DE VINCENZI

Shakespeare has such intrepid flights of fancy.

PAOLO

(defensively)

Actually, I've been *adapting* Shakespeare. Loosely. You'll find I've rerouted many of those "flights".

(forcing a smile)

My name is Vergolli. Paolo Vergolli.

DE VINCENZI

Ah, yes. You're the screenwriter. And like all writers you're very protective of your work.

(fending off Paolo's reaction)

And I find that commendable.

PAOLO

I wish Bold had felt that way. Would've made working with him easier.

DE VINCENZI

Meaning it wasn't?

Paolo glances at Thelma who shoots him a glare of disapproval. Again De Vincenzi catches it.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

Curiously you just used the past tense twice: "had felt", "would have made". Do you feel your director is already in the...past tense?

PAOLO

No it's---it's just that we had a fight,
Bold and I, a few days ago! So I suppose
I don't think of him with any likelihood
of a future.

DE VINCENZI

And this fight you had...?
(handing him the script page he
found at Via Brescia)
Was that before or after you made these
corrections?

Frowning, Paolo studies the page with a sardonic smile.

PAOLO

That's not my handwriting, Inspector.
(handing the page back)
I could never be that sloppy.

Paolo strides away, towards Stage 3 as De Vincenzi pauses,
carefully studying the expressions and body languages of
Thelma, Caienni, Vernieri, Sid, Blanca in the FLASHES OF
LIGHT from the nearby "battle". To D'Angelo he confesses...

DE VINCENZI

I've rarely met such an equivocal group
of characters. They're *all* suspects.
Mrs. Helstein was right: the man had
his share of enemies. It's a miracle he
lived as long as he did.

De Vincenzi and D'Angelo reach the stage when a RED SIGN
WITH THE WORD "FILMING" STARTS FLASHING over the door.
Paolo turns to De Vincenzi before entering:

PAOLO

Are you coming in, Inspector?

De Vincenzi hesitates, glancing at the flashing sign.

DE VINCENZI

I've intruded enough upon your inner
sanctum, Mr. Vergolli. I'll wait till
you've completed the scene.

Paolo nods and enters. The door to Stage 3 slams shut behind
him and is securely bolted from within, leaving De Vincenzi
and D'Angelo locked outside.

CUT TO:

48 INT. CINECITTÀ. ROME. STAGE 3 - SHORTLY AFTER

The stage is smaller than Stage 5. A huge MAUSOLEUM has
been built. In the interior of the mausoleum is a small
chapel facing a series of four marble sarcophagi. The cast
and crew are busily rehearsing for the next shot.

SUPERIMPOSE:CINECITTÀ, ROME: STAGE 3 - DAY ONE - 10:24 PM

Berger stands with other prominent German and Italian military onlookers. He glances at Thelma, and they exchange a meaningful smile.

FAST CUT TO:

49 **EXT. CINECITTÁ. ROME. STAGE 3 - CONTINUOUS**

Outside the stage door, De Vincenzi is focused on the script page where Boldviski had circled in red the line:...

DETAIL/ILLUMINATED BY THE FLASHING RED LIGHT:...*"Alas poor Romeo, he is already dead"*.

 DE VINCENZI
 (mumbling to himself and D'Angelo)
 Why did he highlight this line? *"Alas poor Romeo he is already dead..."*.
 "Already". But when? When is *"already"*.

50 **INT. CINECITTÁ. ROME. STAGE 3 - CONTINUOUS**

Flauti calls out on the megaphone.

 FLAUTI
 Alright everybody. Positions! This is a take!

Everyone prepares for filming.

FAST CUT TO:

51 **EXT. CINECITTÁ. ROME. STAGE 3 - CONTINUOUS**

De Vincenzi glances through the window of the locked door at...

HIS POV:...Thelma who uncorks the bottle of *Malaga Lagrima* wine (with the colorful label torn in a corner) and...

FAST CUT TO:

52 **INT. CINECITTÁ. ROME. STAGE 3 - CONTINUOUS**

...substitutes it for the liquid which had previously filled Seth's phial.

Gita gazes at the bottle, wide-eyed. She looks to...

...Sid who is beside himself with fright. Sid glances at...

...Caienni.

Seth closes the phial and slips it into his pouch as a MAKE-UP LADY checks his face, applying final touches as...

...Juliet/Blanca climbs onto the sarcophagus, laying flat, motionless as a veil is draped over her face.

Flauti hesitates, turning to Vernieri.

FLAUTI

This is Bold's key scene! You're sure
you want me to shoot it?

VERNIERI

(forcing a smile)
I have every confidence in you, Flauti.

Flauti holds his gaze for a moment before calling out...

FLAUTI

Slate in.

The CLAPPER BOARD appears with the writing: **ACIDALIA FILMS:**
"ROMEO & JULIET"; BELOW IT: **DIRECTOR: VASSILLI BOLDVISKI.**
BELOW THAT: **SCENE 106/TAKE 1.**

FLAUTI (CONT'D)

Roll sound.

The SOUND MIXER starts his recorder.

SOUND MIXER

Speed!

FLAUTI

Camera.

The CAMERAMAN rolls the film, peering into the eyepiece.

CAMERAMAN

Rolling.

FLAUTI

Mark it!

CLAPPERLOADER (O.S.)

Acidalia Films, "Romeo & Juliet", Scene
106, Take 1.

After the sharp snap of the clapper board...

FLAUTI

And...ACTION!

As all look on...

...Romeo enters the Capulet mausoleum, his torch aloft in
the darkness of the tomb. He sees Juliet/Blanca lying on
the sarcophagus, seemingly dead. Seth nears her with
trepidation, lifts the veil covering her face...

ROMEO/SETH

*O My Love! My Wife! Death that hath
suck'd the honey of thy breath, hath
had no power yet upon thy beauty. Ah,
dear Juliet, why art thou yet so fair?*

All are transported by the emotion of the scene.

ROMEO/SETH (CONT'D)

*Shall I believe that unsubstantial death
is amorous, and that the lean abhorred
monster keeps thee here in dark to be
his paramour?*

FAST CUT TO:

53 EXT. CINECITTÁ. ROME. STAGE 3 - CONTINUOUS

De Vincenzi remains perplexed, frowning at the script page, murmuring the highlighted line: "*Alas poor Romeo he is already dead...*" Next to him, D'Angelo gazes through the locked door's glass window at the scene evolving within. He spots...

...the phial in Romeo's hand.

D'ANGELO

A question. Unrelated.

DE VINCENZI

(forever patient with him)
Yes, D'Angelo?

FAST CUT TO:

54 INT. CINECITTÁ. ROME. STAGE 3 - CONTINUOUS

ROMEO/SETH

*Here, here will I remain and set up my
everlasting rest, and shake the yoke of
inauspicious stars from this world.*

FAST CUT TO:

55 EXT. CINECITTÁ. ROME. STAGE 3 - CONTINUOUS

D'ANGELO

That Albine guy. How did he slip Napoleon the poison?

56 INT. CINECITTÁ. ROME. STAGE 3 - CONTINUOUS

ROMEO/SETH

*Eyes, look your last! Arms, take your
last embrace!*
(he embraces Juliet)

FAST CUT TO:

57 EXT. CINECITTÁ. ROME. STAGE 3 - CONTINUOUS

DE VINCENZI

He used a sweet wine, most likely. Like that Malaga they're using---
(he nods towards the stage door)

Suddenly he freezes, a chill running down his spine.

FAST CUT TO:

58 INT. CINECITTÁ. ROME. STAGE 3 - CONTINUOUS

Romeo/Seth kisses the motionless body of Juliet. He then takes the phial from his pouch, and holds it high, addressing the colored liquid.

ROMEO/SETH
*Come, Bitter Conduct. Come, Unsavoury
guide! Here's to my love!*

Romeo uncorks the phial when suddenly...

...De Vincenzi bangs his fist against the glass window, yelling something, excitedly; yet his words cannot penetrate the well insulated sound stage despite the fact that the inspector is...

FAST CUT TO:

59 EXT. CINECITTÁ. ROME. STAGE 3 - CONTINUOUS

...shouting...

DE VINCENZI
Stop! Stop the filming!!

D'Angelo is alarmed by his behavior.

D'ANGELO
What is it, inspector?

DE VINCENZI
They must stop filming! Romeo's life
may be in danger!

D'ANGELO
Isn't that the point of the scene. *Romeo
dies.*

De Vincenzi casts D'Angelo a looks which could sink battleships.

DE VINCENZI
Don't patronize me, D'Angelo! I don't
mean *make-believe* die, I mean die die! I
have to get in there!

Not really grasping the situation, D'Angelo looks on as De Vincenzi angrily bangs on the door as the "FILMING" sign continues FLASHING its red lights.

60 INT. CINECITTÁ. ROME. STAGE 3 - CONTINUOUS

Continuing unabated, Romeo/Seth pauses for suspense before bringing the phial to his lips and drinking the potion.

ROMEO/SETH
*Thy Drugs Are Quick. Thus With A Kiss I
Die.*

All look on, absorbed as...

...suddenly, and very convincingly, Romeo/Seth's whole body stiffens, his muscles twitching spasmodically.

FAST CUT TO:

61 EXT. CINECITTÁ. ROME. STAGE 3 - CONTINUOUS

De Vincenzi pulls hard on the door's handle. It remains stubbornly unmoving.

D'ANGELO
I'll get a security guard.

Exasperated, De Vincenzi holds him back, sinking against the door.

DE VINCENZI
Too late, D'Angelo.

FAST CUT TO:

62 INT. CINECITTÁ. ROME. STAGE 3 - CONTINUOUS

All present silently gape in amazement at...

...Seth's masterful performance as he claws at his throat, gasping, his eyes wide, his mouth flung open, sucking in air. His convulsions then subside and he falls back, dead.

Sid looks to Caienni. Both men are truly horrified.

FLAUTI
CUT! PRINT! - WOW!

Everyone on the set breaks into a spontaneous APPLAUSE, amazed by Seth's acting feat (everyone but Sid and Caienni).

The Nazis and Fascists are especially charmed by this death: a true eyeful for the sadistically predisposed.

Flauti and Vernieri rush to Seth to congratulate him. Blanca is kneeling at his side.

BLANCA
Sweetheart! You were magnificent!
(caressing his face/kissing him)
I never knew you had such tal---
(she gasps)
Why doesn't he move?!
(she kisses his forehead again)
My God! He's so...cold...he's...

When realization sets in, she SCREAMS as...

...Gita drops into a chair, aghast.

Berger catches Thelma's eye. He nods. She nods back. Berger quickly goes to the back door of Stage 3 and slips out...

63 EXT. CINECITTÀ. ROME. STAGE 3 - CONTINUOUS

...making his way to a waiting car, driving off.

CUT TO:

When the RED LIGHT stop flashing and the door is automatically unlocked, De Vincenzi rushes into the building. D'Angelo follows.

*
*

64 INT. CINECITTÀ. ROME. STAGE 3 - CONTINUOUS

The filmmakers are huddled around Seth's body with Flauti performing an awkward CPR, and Paolo trying to calm Blanca.

DE VINCENZI

Excuse me...

De Vincenzi pushes his way to the body. Reaching Seth's side, gently nudging Blanca aside (who is SOBBING profusely), De Vincenzi and D'Angelo attempt to resuscitate him. D'Angelo rises with...

*

D'ANGELO

I'll call an ambulance.

DE VINCENZI

No need, D'Angelo.
(getting to his feet)
Send for the Coroner.

Blanca SCREAMS even louder, SOBBING inconsolably.

De Vincenzi notices that Gita is also crying. Oddly, she is almost as despondent as Blanca. He then turns to all present. Taking out his handkerchief, De Vincenzi picks up the lethal phial and holds it high.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

Who prepared this phial?

THELMA

I did. At the express orders of Boldviski. Ask him! He sent me to find an antique phial, authentic XV Century. Bold is meticulous like that!

DE VINCENZI

And who chose the wine?

Sid shoots Caienni a troubled glance.

THELMA

That's the strange part, Inspector.

Intrigued, De Vincenzi listens intently as he wraps the phial in his handkerchief and hands it to D'Angelo.

THELMA (CONT'D)

Vassilli had originally asked me to buy a crate of *Vernaccia di San Giminiano*.

(MORE)

THELMA (CONT'D)

His favorite vintage. I was to use a bottle for this scene. To give Seth something pleasant to drink.

DE VINCENZI

But he drank *Malaga* instead.

THELMA

Yes. Vassilli came to my Suite at the Hotel at about 10 am this morning. He woke me, but I was happy to see him.

CUT TO:

65 FLASHBACK/MUTED: INT. THELMA'S SUITE. EXCELSIOR HOTEL

BOLDVISKI KNOCKS ON THE DOOR TO THE SUITE. IN HER PYJAMAS, THELMA OPENS IT AND SMILES.

DE VINCENZI (V.O.)

Happy..?

CUT BACK TO:

66 INT. CINECITTÁ. ROME. STAGE 3 - CONTINUOUS

THELMA

I won't hide the fact that I've always been partial to his genius.

DE VINCENZI

And what was the purpose of his visit?

THELMA

He gave me a bottle of *Malaga Lagrima*.

CUT TO:

67 FLASHBACK/MUTED: INT. THELMA'S SUITE. EXCELSIOR HOTEL

BOLDVISKI HANDS THELMA THE BOTTLE WRAPPED IN A NAPKIN. THERE IS A MUTED EXCHANGE OF WORDS. PEERING INTO THE SUITE, BOLDVISKI GLIMPSES THE JACKET OF AN SS UNIFORM FLUNG HASTILY OVER A CHAIR. THELMA QUICKLY MOVES TO THE SIDE, BLOCKING HIS VIEW. BOLDVISKI IS NOW EVEN MORE INTERESTED IN THE UNIFORM AS THELMA PULLS THE NAPKIN ASIDE TO REVEAL...

...THE *MALAGA LAGRIMA* WITH THE LABEL TORN IN ONE CORNER.

CUT BACK TO:

68 INT. CINECITTÁ. ROME. STAGE 3 - CONTINUOUS

THELMA

He told me to use the *Malaga* instead of the *San Giminiano*.

DE VINCENZI

That bottle of *Malaga* expressly?

THELMA

Yes. The one he gave me.

SLOW ZOOM TO A CLOSE UP of Sid as realization sinks in.

DE VINCENZI

Had the bottle been opened?

THELMA

Yes. But it was still full. As if he had wanted to spare me the trouble of uncorking it.

Sid drops his gaze. Caienni looks at him quizzically.

DE VINCENZI

Go on.

THELMA

He told me to pour the Malaga into the phial right before the crypt scene was shot. No one was to have access to the wine before that, he told me. And I was never to let the bottle out of my sight.

DE VINCENZI

He said that. Never out of your sight.

Thelma nods.

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE/MUTED: BOLDVISKI'S FIERY EYES AS HE DRIVES HOME THAT POINT AND THELMA NODS IN AGREEMENT.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

And what did you do?

THELMA

Exactly as he told me. I brought the bottle from the hotel this afternoon and kept it in my bag until Seth needed it for his scene?

DE VINCENZI

Where is this bottle now?

THELMA

Back in my rooms. Under lock and key.

DE VINCENZI

And you're sure no one else drank from this bottle?

THELMA

Absolutely.

DE VINCENZI

Would you fetch it for me, please?

Nodding, Thelma rushes off to get it.

FAST CUT TO:

De Vincenzi takes the bottle of Malaga from Thelma. Folding back the napkin, he checks the label, noticing the tear in a corner. Handing the bottle to D'Angelo, he plucks the script page from his pocket.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

One more thing, Miss Ludendorf. This script page...

(he shows her the script page he had shown Paolo)
It was found outside Cobina Helstein's homes on via Brescia. Can you imagine why?

Paolo draws nearer. This obviously interests him.

THELMA

Vassilli visited her now and again. They'd been married once, you know. A love-hate relationship.

DE VINCENZI

I was told there was a great deal more hate than love at the *Taverna di Costantino* early this morning.

THELMA

Cobina has no idea what his needs are! A man like that deserves understanding. He deserves--

DE VINCENZI

(breaking in)
I'm afraid it's too late for that, Miss Ludendorf. Mr. Boldviski was murdered this afternoon. In Cobina Helstein's home.

De Vincenzi carefully observes the general reaction:

...Blanca has a thin smile, seemingly relieved...

...Paolo, unable to hide his elation...

...Flauti, sensing his "big chance" is now bigger...

THELMA

(finally finding her voice)
Vassilli? Murdered?!

Vernieri frowns at Caienni: did he take his veiled threat a step further?

THELMA (CONT'D)

In Helstein's house?!

Caienni eyes Sid as if asking himself: how is that possible?

THELMA (CONT'D)

That Jewish rat! She'll hang for this.

DE VINCENZI

(remaining strangely calm)
If you mean Mrs. Helstein, it's far too early for arrests let alone hangings. And I would ask that you never again refer to her in such derogatory terms or I'll have you arrested. This is still a country of Laws where slander is frowned upon.

*

THELMA

(fearlessly provocative)
Yes, Inspector. Enjoy it while you can.

De Vincenzi holds her gaze, just as fearlessly. Then...

DE VINCENZI

D'Angelo, have this Stage sealed off. No one gets in or out! And kill the phones.

VERNIERI

You can't do that!?

DE VINCENZI

Watch me!

Vernieri would rebut when De Vincenzi dismisses the group by turning his back on them. Draping an arm around D'Angelo, they walk back to the door.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

Have the lab check Romeo's phial and the Malaga bottle for traces of poison. Malaga is a sweet wine, so they should concentrate on bitter poisons which the sweetness would disguise. Strychnine for instance. Also have them dust the phial and bottle for prints. And I want an autopsy of Romeo's body as soon as possible.

D'Angelo is quickly taking it all down in his notebook.

D'ANGELO

Anything else?

DE VINCENZI

Do some checking on that US bank of theirs...
(nodding to Caienni and Vernieri)
Find out what really happened to it.

D'ANGELO

Yes, Inspector.

De Vincenzi is about to leave when he comes back to D'Angelo with an afterthought.

DE VINCENZI

We should also have a few men posted at Mrs. Helstein's house. Right away!
(MORE)

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
(starts off, comes back)
Front and back entrance. I'm sure the
landlady there will be more than helpful.
(starts off, comes back)
And have the door to Boldviski's Suite
dusted for prints and get me a cause of
death.

D'ANGELO
For whom?

DE VINCENZI
Boldviski.

He starts off again but a bewildered D'Angelo stops him.

D'ANGELO
Inspector...
(when he turns to him)
A question.

DE VINCENZI
Yes, D'Angelo?

D'ANGELO
Isn't the cause of Boldviski's death
obvious?

DE VINCENZI
Yes, it would be. If we were the sort
who jump to conclusions. But remember
what I said about the blood on the floor.
Or the lack of same.

D'ANGELO
Yes...

DE VINCENZI
Bodies stop bleeding only *after* they're
dead.
(moving off again/over his shoulder)
I'll be back in a couple of hours.

D'ANGELO
Where to?

DE VINCENZI
(shouting back)
The *Taverna di Costantino*.

Caienni overhears this and frowns.

COBINA (V.O.)
Pronto, Cinecittà? Please connect me
with Miss Assia Paris. This is her
mother.

69 INT. COBINA'S FLAT. TERRACE/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Cobina is sitting on her terrace gazing out at the
magnificence of Rome, the receiver pressed to her ear.

COBINA

Sealed off? The entire stage?

(suddenly alarmed)

Is something wrong?... You *must* tell me, my daughter's there!... The police?... I see...Is there an inspector there? A man named De Vincenzi?... I see...And how long ago did he leave?... Thank you...

Cobina clings to the receiver for a moment before cradling it. She then crosses into the living room heading for the hallway when the Menorah on the living room cabinet catches her eye. Glancing back at the city of Rome, she takes the Menorah and "hides it" in a drawer. Then, thinking better of it, she replaces it on the cabinet in plain view. Throwing back her shoulders with courage, she moves on...

70 EXT. VIA BRESCIA 25. ROME - CONTINUOUS

Cobina sneaks out the back door just as the Police are arriving at Via Brescia.

In the moonlight, Luisa catches sight of Cobina leaving furtively. She is about to alert the police when her eyes meet Cobina's pleading gaze. Smiling, Luisa urges her to hurry, before they see her. Cobina smiles back, thankfully.

71 INT. TAVERNA DI COSTANTINO. ROME - CONTINUOUS

De Vincenzi flashes his badge to the Maitre D' who lets him pass. Moving into the establishment (still relatively empty), he hears a soothing MINUET and his attention is drawn to Mary Lovell who sits at the piano on the stage playing a piece from Domenico Scarlatti.

SUPERIMPOSE: TAVERNA DI COSTANTINO - DAY TWO - 12:01 AM

Quietly moving onto the stage, De Vincenzi stands behind her, watching her play, enchanted by her bravura. Finally...

DE VINCENZI

Domenico Scarlatti...Sonata in G major.

MARY

(continuing to play/American accent)
You like the Minuet, Inspector De Vincenzi?

DE VINCENZI

How did you--?

(he smiles)

Of course, Mr. Caienni alerted you.

She smiles in assent. He listens to her play, enjoying it.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

You're very talented, Miss Lovell.

MARY

Thank you, Inspector. But a minuet like this plays itself.

DE VINCENZI
(glancing at the set on the stage)
Yet you perform Ragtime.

MARY
They're quite similar, actually...
Scarlatti's minuet and Ragtime. They
both have an harmonic audacity in their
use of discords, and an unconventional
modulation to remote keys.

Her fingers wander to those remote keys. De Vincenzi is
visibly impressed as she stops playing and turns to him.

MARY (CONT'D)
What can I do for you, inspector?

DE VINCENZI
Two murders were committed yesterday,
Miss Lovell.

MARY
I know. Caienni told me. I'm sorry. I
didn't know Boldviski and Seth that
well, but no one deserves to die like
that. It effects us all.

DE VINCENZI
Any man's death diminishes me...

MARY
*...for I am involved in mankind, etc.,
etc. etc...*

They both laugh in mutual attraction. Then...

DE VINCENZI
How did Caienni reach you? Stage 3 is
locked down.

MARY
(coy)
A stage hand slipped out before the
doors were locked.
(smiling at his annoyance)
Don't take it personally, Inspector.
Film people are accustomed to--

DE VINCENZI
--outwitting the police?

MARY
He actually sent word that I should
help you in any way I can.

With that she heads for the wings; and the conversation
continues as they weave through all the activity backstage
(dancers warming up; set dressers putting on finishing
touches; grips and gaffers working the lights, etc.).

DE VINCENZI

I hear there was a heated discussion here last night. Between Boldviski and his wife.

MARY

His "ex", you mean. Yes, I saw something going on, and you're right though, it was pretty intense.

DE VINCENZI

The deaths of Boldviski and Nicholson, -- do you see any link?

MARY

(grinning)
Ah, you want me to do your work for you, do you?! Alright.

She stops to think next to a group of SHOW GIRLS in tights who are doing warm-up stretching exercises.

MARY (CONT'D)

Word was they had something in common: Blanca.

DE VINCENZI

Blanca Vertua.

MARY

(nodding)
Seth loved her. *Really* loved her. And...
(meeting his eye)
This is just gossip you understand.

DE VINCENZI

Of course...

They exchange a smile as she starts off again....

MARY

Boldviski resented that! His women were *his* women, *his* property! So, to be honest...the only person who actually had a strong motive to kill Nicholson was Boldviski. But I hear Bold died before Seth.

DE VINCENZI

About six hours.

MARY

Maybe Blanca did it.

She reaches her dressing room, and he follows her inside...

72 INT. MARY'S DRESSING ROOM/TAVERNA DI COSTANTINO - CONTINUOUS

The dressing room is reminiscent of the "Blue Angel". Mary closes the door and chooses a outfit to wear.

MARY

You've heard of the praying mantis complex, Inspector: a woman killing her partners after having sex.

(De Vincenzi nods)

Well, maybe Blanca's a mantis! First Bold then Seth.

Amused by the thought, he watches her slip into her net stockings. She is indeed sexy and he considers aloud...

DE VINCENZI

And how many men have you killed, Miss Lovell?

MARY

I lost count after Vegas. But I've been a good girl since I hit Europe. As you see, Caienni's still alive. - For now.

They exchange another smile. He then becomes serious...

DE VINCENZI

What was their relationship: Caienni and Boldviski?

She moves behind a paravent to disrobe, tossing her undergarments over the top of the screen. A classic.

MARY

They were all equal partners in that company of theirs, Acidalia Films. Bold, Marcello and that Vernieri guy. He gives me the creeps.

DE VINCENZI

I've had the pleasure.

She emerges from behind the paravent.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

What about Thelma Ludendorf? Was she also one of Boldviski's women?

MARY

A fling perhaps. In the past.

DE VINCENZI

They had a past?

MARY

I heard something about Los Angeles. They'd made a film or two together before Thelma turned radical.

Mary finishes with her make-up and, after one last check, she's at the door with De Vincenzi following her out.

DE VINCENZI

Radical?

73 INT. TAVERNA DI COSTANTINO. ROME - CONTINUOUS

Mary leads the way back to the stage where a MASTER OF CEREMONIES CAN BE HEARD addressing the crowd.

MARY

Caienni told me she moved back to Germany when Hitler came to power in '33. Became a Nazi. Hard core. Militant, even.

DE VINCENZI

What would have lured her back to the film business? Romeo & Juliet is hardly a Nazi propaganda film.

MARY

Boldviski most likely. She adored the man. I'm sure when she heard he'd come back to Europe, she raced down to Rome to be in his movie.

DE VINCENZI

But she still supports the cause. There's a Swastika on her lapel.

MARY

(shrugging her shoulders)
Can't help you there...

She hears the Master of Ceremonies calling her name.

MARY (CONT'D)

That's my cue, Inspector.

(starting off)
I'm here every night but Wednesdays if you have any more questions...

DE VINCENZI

Just one more quick one...

MARY

Hurry.

DE VINCENZI

You also had reason to kill him, didn't you? Caienni wanted you to play Juliet. The role was all but yours when Boldviski objected and took Blanca.

MARY

That's a reason to kill *Blanca* not *Bold*.

DE VINCENZI

And where were you yesterday afternoon between four and five?

MARY

Right here! Ask anyone...This is my home away from--. Well, it's my home!

(cheerfully)
Sorry, Inspector. You're barking up the wrong dance hall girl.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)
(holding up her hands)
Could the hands that play Scarlatti
ever stab anyone?

DE VINCENZI
How did you know he was stabbed?

MARY
Caienni, remember?

And she rushes out onto the stage and sits at the piano,
starting to play a lively Scott Joplin tune.

DE VINCENZI
(walking off/to himself)
Except I never told Caienni. He had no
way of knowing Boldviski was stabbed.
(freezes in his step)
Unless...

DISSOLVE TO:

74 EXT. QUESTURA DI ROMA - MORNING

Piazza Venezia is relatively empty. A few PEDESTRIANS,
FASCISTS patrolling the streets on motorcycles, a car or
two, a horse-drawn cart, SANITATION WORKERS cleaning the
mess left by the crowds "maddened" by *Il Duce* and *Der Führer*.

De Vincenzi crosses the piazza, entering the *Questura*.

SUPERIMPOSE: **QUESTURA, ROME - DAY TWO - 2:22 AM**

75 INT. QUESTURA, ROME - CONTINUOUS

De Vincenzi makes his way up the stairs. Reaching the 2nd
floor, he moves to the only office where a light is burning.

76 INT. POLICE COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE. QUESTURA - CONTINUOUS

Maggioni is at his desk poring over stacks of documents
and an evidence bag. De Vincenzi steps into the room.

DE VINCENZI
Still here, Commissioner? It's almost
two-thirty.

*
*

MAGGIONI
(peering over his reading glasses)
You know what they say about captains
and sinking ships.

DE VINCENZI
Is this ship sinking?

Instinctively they both look up at the photo of Mussolini
half-hidden by the palm plant.

MAGGIONI
It's the Titanic.

DE VINCENZI

You've heard all the news?

MAGGIONI

(nodding)

I've given D'Angelo a handful of backups.

Maggioni pops the lid off a metal container and starts eating it's contents: *Spaghetti a la Bolognese*. Maggioni hands him a second fork.

DE VINCENZI

No, thanks. I'll grab something later.

MAGGIONI

No, you won't. You'll starve till you've solved the case.

Maggioni takes a folder and hands it to him.

MAGGIONI (CONT'D)

Here. They just came in from the lab.

De Vincenzi takes the folder and glances at it.

MAGGIONI (CONT'D)

Helstein's were the only fingerprints found on the knife.

DE VINCENZI

So the murderer wore gloves.

MAGGIONI

Isn't it more logical to think *she* was the murderer. The body was found in her house. The murder weapon had her prints on it. What more do you need?

De Vincenzi takes the knife out of the evidence bag and turns it over in his hands.

DE VINCENZI

She's a highly intelligent woman, Commissioner. If she were guilty, she would've disposed of the knife, not left it there with her prints on it! - Besides, this wasn't the murder weapon.

MAGGIONI

(perplexed)

It was sticking out of the man's back, wasn't it?

DE VINCENZI

Circumstantial.

Maggioni shoots him a suspicious look.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

For now lets just say I believe Helstein is innocent.

MAGGIONI

And you base this on what? One of your famous hunches? Those *feelings* of yours?

De Vincenzi stares at him long and hard. The Inspector is somewhat offended by the Commissioner's irony.

MAGGIONI (CONT'D)

Okay, okay! It's your case! I'm sure it'll all make sense one day.

(going back to his spaghetti)
By the way, I'd follow up on those white chocolates you found in Helstein's house. The lab says they were poisoned. Arsenic!

Interested, De Vincenzi looks through the reports.

DE VINCENZI

That's odd?

MAGGIONI

That they were poisoned?

DE VINCENZI

No, I expected that. But not arsenic.

(to himself)
Unless Nicholson's assassin defied Time and Space.

MAGGIONI

You mean he was in two places at once?

DE VINCENZI

I mean the past and the future acted independently.

(smiling at Maggioni's perplexity)
It'll all make sense. One day soon.

Maggioni has a fatalistic shrug and continues eating.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

Has D'Angelo sent over the new evidence for testing?

MAGGIONI

You mean the phial and that wine bottle? Yes. You'll have reports in the morning. Along with the autopsies on Nicholson and Boldviski. And FBI information on Caienni's US bank.

Nodding, De Vincenzi starts out of the room. He then stops and turns at the door, looking at the photo of Mussolini.

DE VINCENZI

What happens when the palm grows out and covers him completely?

MAGGIONI

(looking up at the photo)
Do you think it'll last that long?

DE VINCENZI

What? The palm?

MAGGIONI

No. Fascism.

77 **INT. QUESTURA, ROAM - CONTINUOUS**

Moving down the hall, De Vincenzi enters his office and...

78 **INT. DE VINCENZI'S OFFICE. QUESTURA, ROME - CONTINUOUS**

...distractedly turns on the light. Moving to a phonograph, he selects a record and, within seconds, the *Angus Dei* from Verdi's *Requiem* floods the room and...

79 **INT. QUESTURA, ROME - CONTINUOUS**

...snakes its way down the corridors of the Questura, to...

80 **INT. POLICE COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE. QUESTURA - CONTINUOUS**

...Maggioni, whose features relax at the soothing melody.

81 **INT. DE VINCENZI'S OFFICE. QUESTURA, ROME - CONTINUOUS**

De Vincenzi heats a pot of coffee on a gas stove when...

COBINA (O.S.)

I love Verdi...

Startled, he turns and is genuinely pleased to see Cobina sitting at the far end of his large office.

COBINA (CONT'D)

His music is so powerful, so honest.

(at his inquisitive glance)

I called Cinecittá to speak to my daughter. The switchboard told me the stage has been sealed off by the police.

DE VINCENZI

And did they tell you why?

COBINA

No. But I thought you might.

De Vincenzi prepares two cups of coffee.

DE VINCENZI

The knife we found in your ex-husband's back... It has your fingerprints on it.

COBINA

I told you, it's my knife.

He hands her a cup, along with some sugar. She nods a thanks as he stares at her, probing. After a couple of sips.

DE VINCENZI

Seth Nicholson was poisoned today.

(MORE)

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

While filming. Romeo's suicide was all too real. That's why I locked down Stage 3.

COBINA

(with obvious apprehension)
Assia--.

DE VINCENZI

Your daughter's fine, Madam. There are police there to protect her. Just as there was police to protect you, if you'd stay put as I asked.

COBINA

Protect? I thought I was under house arrest.

(the thought suddenly strikes her)
Why would I need protection?

DE VINCENZI

The white chocolates I took from your home...

(their eyes touch)
They, too, were poisoned.

Cobina's world is spinning.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

Do you know anyone who'd want you dead?

COBINA

(thinks/then has a wry smile)
Only Vassilli, I suppose.

DE VINCENZI

Yes. He might have sent the sweets ahead to "dispose of you" before the meeting yesterday. But he was your husband, after all. He must've known of your allergy to chocolate. Besides...

(their eyes meet)
If he knew they were poisoned, why would he have eaten them himself? No. It was obviously a mistake. He ate the poison that was meant for you both.

COBINA

You mean Vassilli was poisoned and stabbed?

DE VINCENZI

Criminology has its quirks.

He looks up at the sky through the window, grabs his umbrella, and moves to leave. He turns at the door.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

Shall we?

COBINA

Where to?

DE VINCENZI

Cinecittá. I shall personally take you
to your daughter.

His disarming manner coaxes a smile from her. They leave
the office together...

82 INT. QUESTURA, ROME. STAIRWAY - CONTINUOUS

De Vincenzi and Cobina walk down the shadowy stairway.

COBINA

But who else would have known that he
was coming to my house yesterday? He
only told me at--

She breaks off, a chill running down her spine.

DE VINCENZI

--the club. He actually *shouted* it,
didn't he? Loud enough for everyone at
your table to hear.

COBINA

But why me? Vassilli had all the enemies!
Not me?

DE VINCENZI

Granted. But you would've been a witness.
An uncomfortable witness. Besides,
inspired by Romeo and Juliet, knowing
nothing of your allergy, the murderer
could've planned to make it look like a
suicide pact between you and your ex.
Boldviski's penchant for romantic realism
lends itself to that!

COBINA

Then who *stabbed* him!?

De Vincenzi stops in the play of lights and shadows.

DE VINCENZI

I believe the murderer returned to make
sure you were both dead. Imagine his
amazement when he heard your ex alive
and well and shouting at the top of his
lungs. He had to finish the job he'd
started. So he gently opened the door...

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE: AS DE VINCENZI RECOUNTS WHAT
HAPPENED, THE SCENE APPEARS OVER THE PENUMBRA OF THE
STAIRWAY:-- THE FACELESS HOODED FIGURE IN THE BLACK RAINCOAT
LISTENS OUTSIDE COBINA'S DOOR AND HEARS BOLDVISKI YELLING.

COBINA

The key? How'd he get it?

DE VINCENZI
Your daughter has a duplicate?
(she nods)
Where does she keep it?

COBINA
In her purse?

DE VINCENZI
Did anyone at your table have access to
her purse?

COBINA
They all did.

DE VINCENZI
There's your answer then. Someone took
the key, made a copy and returned it to
her purse.

COBINA
Go on...?

DE VINCENZI
I think that person let himself into
your apartment and waited for his chance.

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE: THE FIGURE UNLOCKS THE DOOR WITH A
GLOVED HAND, EASES IT OPEN, PADDING INTO THE APARTMENT.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
Since the whole thing was unexpected,
he hadn't brought a weapon, so he was
lucky to find the knife...

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE: THE HALL MIRROR REFLECTS THE OMINOUS
SHAPE OF THE HOODED FIGURE LURKING IN THE SHADOWS. THE
FIGURE GRABS THE BONE HANDLED KNIFE UNDER THE MIRROR.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
Then your ex-husband entered the hallway.
As he walked to the door, he must've
seen a reflection in the hall mirror...

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE: BOLDOVISKI COMES INTO THE HALLWAY.
HIS COMPLEXION IS REDDENED WITH RAGE, AND HE SEEMS SOMEHOW
DISORIENTED. HE'S ABOUT TO STUFF HIS BALD HEAD INTO HIS
PANAMA HAT WHEN HE LOOKS UP AND FREEZES AT THE SIGHT OF
THE HOODED FIGURE IN THE SHADOWS.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
The rest is a blank.

THE SUPERIMPOSED IMAGE DISSIPATES...

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
Something else happened in that hallway.
I don't know what yet, but whatever it
was, I'm convinced Boldviski knew the
murderer and didn't fear him. That's
why he turned his back on him. And that's
when he was--

COBINA

--stabbed. But why didn't the murderer
kill me?

DE VINCENZI

He panicked most likely. Your ex-
husband's death had turned into a messy
affair. So he fled, thinking only of
getting away as fast as he could.

They move through the high portals...

83 EXT. PIAZZA VENEZIA. ROME - CONTINUOUS

...walking out onto the piazza.

DE VINCENZI

Do you mind if we walk for a while? A
bit of fresh air will do us both good.

COBINA

Lead the way, Inspector.

DE VINCENZI

Please. Call me Carlo.
(as a wistful afterthought)
No one else does.

COBINA

(smiling/charmed by him)
Cobina.

DE VINCENZI

Enchanté.

Though there is no physical contact, they both suddenly
feel closer as they walk across the Piazza. It has started
to rain. De Vincenzi opens his umbrella; she squeezes under
it, taking him by the arm. De Vincenzi has trouble hiding
the effect this beautiful woman is having on him. Finally...

COBINA

What's your gut feeling, Carlo? Who did
this?

DE VINCENZI

Could be any of a handful of people.
Thelma Ludendorf, for starters. She
adored your ex. I can see a woman like
that in a crime of jealousy.

COBINA

But the messenger with the chocolates
was a young boy. Not a woman.

DE VINCENZI

He *looked* like a young boy. If Ludendorf
had the idea of your daughter and Gita
playing Mercutio and Benvolio, she could
easily imagine herself disguised as a
delivery boy.

(MORE)

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

But I can't see her killing Seth. Only Boldviski had reason to kill him. They both wanted the same woman.

They pass Palazzo Venezia. He instinctively looks up at the balcony, dark, empty, momentarily rid of dictators.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

Which leads us to Blanca. Her sexual favors must've cost her dearly. With due respect, from what I've heard, Boldviski was no Romeo.

Cobina's thoughts wander back to years of marriage.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

But she never would've killed Seth. He was her Romeo. She loved him.

They walk down *Via Dei Fori Imperiali* towards the Colosseum (artificially illuminated against the night sky). Within the Colosseum

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

And then there's Romeo himself. Like Boldviski, he wanted Blanca and your Russian stood in his way. So Seth had motive, at least. Though I can't see him killing himself. Not on purpose. But by mistake...

De Vincenzi leaves the thought suspended as the two walk in the drizzling rain towards the majesty of the Colosseum.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

And there's Sid Renier. He's shift. Stalking the shadows like a hyena.

COBINA

What about Caienni and Vernieri?

DE VINCENZI

Your ex-husband's partners? Yes, greed could be a factor. With him dead they would've had his share of the company. - And then there's Mary Lovell.

COBINA

You suspect Mary?

DE VINCENZI

She's a resourceful young lady. Cultured. Street wise. When I referred to you as Boldviski's wife, she went out of her way to clarify that you were his "ex".

COBINA

What difference would that make to her?

DE VINCENZI

The inheritance. As his ex you'd have
no right to his estate. Which takes us
back to her boyfriend Caienni and greed.
If they wanted to rid themselves of
Boldviski for Acidalia's money, an heir
like you would've stood in their way. --
Then there's that writer, Paolo Vergolli.

COBINA

He looks so innocent.

DE VINCENZI

The jails are full of those.
(he pulls a smile, then...)
Paolo felt rejected by your ex.

COBINA

Which inevitably leads to me. I was The
Rejected One *par excellence*.

She suddenly stops and looks up at him. The two under one
umbrella -- standing within a column of rain.

COBINA (CONT'D)

Think about it. I had motive, means
and...what's that third thing..?

DE VINCENZI

(smiling benignly)
Opportunity.

COBINA

(emphatically)
I had a lot of *that*! He was in *my* house,
remember. Stabbed in *my* hallway! With
my knife that has only *my* prints on it!
What if I *did* murder my ex-husband?

DE VINCENZI

But you didn't.

COBINA

How can you be so sure?

De Vincenzi studies her, searching her eyes, her soul.

DE VINCENZI

Give me your hand.

She does, placing her hand in his, easily, naturally.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

You're not guilty, Cobina. We both know
that.

COBINA

(softly)
What else do we both know, Carlo?

De Vincenzi seems lost in the question when suddenly FOUR
FASCIST BLACKSHIRTS block their way, trying to stare them

down as bullies are apt to do. Though Cobina is afraid, De Vincenzi remains unscathed and stares at the four youths.

DE VINCENZI

There will be time enough for you to
show your *real* courage.

He shows them his badge; they back off, vanishing. De Vincenzi and Cobina move off again. To his delight, she tightens her hold on his arm. The notes of another Verdi opera reach them from the Colosseum where...

84 **FLASH: INT COLOSSEUM: AN ORCHESTRA IS ENGAGED IN A LATE NIGHT REHEARSAL DESPITE THE LIGHT DRIZZLE. A CHORUS REHEARSES "VA, PENSIERO, SU ALI DORATE", THE HYMN OF THE HEBREW SLAVES FROM "IL NABUCCO"...**

85 **EXT. SYNAGOGUE/PONTE FABRICIO. ROME - CONTINUOUS**

Stirred by VERDI'S ARIA, Cobina casts her gaze to the mosaic window bearing the Star Of David which scintillates in the moonlight. She murmurs...

COBINA

You never answered my question yesterday.
Are we safe here? In Italy? We Jews?

DE VINCENZI

No, Cobina. Hitler has already infected
Mussolini with the his anti-Semitic
rhetoric.

COBINA

Then we should leave? Assia and I...
(his silence is affirmative/she
he has a nervous, endearing laugh)
My husband bullied me to leave Italy. I
refused, and he's dead. And now we are
bullied again. But this time, if we
refuse, we will die.
(stopping to look up at him)
What about you, Carlo? Can a man with
your heart live in a State where innocent
people are killed merely because of
their bloodline?

They stop on the edge of the bridge (the Ponte Fabricio),
the golden waters of the Tiber flowing below them.

DE VINCENZI

I am the Police, Cobina. I have an
obligation to safeguard the citizens of
this country: those who, for lack of
funds or courage, cannot escape the
horrors that are to come. Someone has
to stay behind. For them. To paraphrase
an English poet: we cannot send to know
for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for
us all.

(MORE)

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
(their eyes touch again)
And when that bell tolls for you and
your people, it will also be my wake up
call. I will know that I must protect
my homeland from a monster. Even if it
means going underground. - I cannot
run, you see. I cannot abandon my
obligation. I am the Police.

She reaches out, gently caressing his face. They draw
nearer. And kiss. Passionately. He then breaks away, smiling
at her with a touch of sadness, considering tenderly...

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
Yes. It would've been wonderful. Another
time, another place...
(changing the mood)
But for now--- I promised to take you
to your daughter.

Turning, he hails a passing cab.

CLOSE UP: Cobina's beautiful features are set in the same
sadness. OVER THE SHOT: THE OUTLINE OF A SWASTIKA AS...

SS-OBERGRUPPENFÜHRER EICKE (V.O.)
Und wer wird für den Anschlag verant-
wortlich gemacht?

GESTAPO KRIMINALRAT REITER (V.O.)
*Wir verwenden das Reichstagsmodell:
eine jüdische Miliz unterstützt durch
die Kommunisten...*

SS-OBERGRUPPENFÜHRER EICKE (V.O.)
Exzellent. Fahren Sie fort...

GESTAPO KRIMINALRAT REITER (V.O.)
Dankeschön, Herr Obergruppenführer...

DISSOLVE TO:

86 INT. IMPERIAL SUITE. GRAND HOTEL - SAME TIME

A SWASTIKA ARM BAND on an SS uniform. PULL BACK TO REVEAL
Berger seated in the exquisite art deco suite. With him
are a knot of HIGH-RANKING SS, GERMAN ARMY AND GESTAPO
OFFICERS, their adjutants, and the GERMAN AMBASSADOR.

**SUPERIMPOSE: IMPERIAL SUITE. GRAND HOTEL, ROME - DAY TWO -
3:53 AM**

The officers are keenly listening to GESTAPO KRIMINALRAT
REITER who stands before A MAP OF ROME showing the Führer's
itinerary during his visit. Reiter holds a pointer.

GESTAPO KRIMINALRAT REITER
*Unser Zeitfenster für den Schlag ist
sehr klein...Ihre Wagenkolonne wird
hier um 15.00 Uhr vorbeifahren.*
(MORE)

GESTAPO KRIMINALRAT REITER (CONT'D)

(SUBTITLES)

Our window of opportunity is very small.
The motorcade will pass here at 3 pm.
Exactly.

DETAIL: He indicates an "X" on the map near the Colosseum.

GESTAPO KRIMINALRAT REITER (CONT'D)

(turning to the group)

*Meine wichtigste Frage ist: Kann man
ihr vertrauen?*

(SUBTITLES)

My primary question is: can she be
trusted?

DETAIL: He jabs the pointer at a photo of Thelma Ludendorf.

BERGER

*Sie ist die Beste! Das ist gar keine
Frage.*

(SUBTITLES)

She's the best! No question.

SS-OBERGRUPPENFÜHRER EICKE

(to the German Ambassador)

*Und Ciano ist mit uns? Wir haben seine
volle Kooperation?*

(SUBTITLES)

And Ciano is with us? We have his full
cooperation?

GERMAN AMBASSADOR

*Ganz und gar. Er hilft uns beim Übergang.
Wir brauchen einen Italienischen
Marionettenstaat, um bei der Assimilation
zu helfen.*

(SUBTITLES)

Completely. He'll assist with the
transition. We'll need an Italian puppet
state to help with the assimilation.

GENERALFELDMARSCHALL EBHARDT

Wie lange wird der Übergangszeit dauern?

(SUBTITLES)

How long will the transition take?

GERMAN AMBASSADOR

*Wir geben Cianos Regierung ungefähr
sechs Monate, um den Weg zu ebnen für
uns.*

(SUBTITLES)

We'll give Ciano's government about six
months to pave the way for us.

GENERALFELDMARSCHALL EBHARDT

(smiling to the others)

Gut.

Berger takes a bottle of Champagne, uncorks it and pours
the bubbly into glass flutes. Raising his glass, he toasts:

BERGER

Auf die Zukunft!

87 EXT. STREETS OF ROME - SAME TIME

THE GERMAN TOAST REVERBERATES as a taxi speeds through the rain; the streets empty at this time of night.

88 INT. DE VINCENZI AND COBINA'S TAXI - CONTINUOUS

De Vincenzi and Cobina sit in the back, cocooned in thought. Cobina finally breaks the ice.

COBINA

Yesterday you said I wasn't telling you the whole truth. What do you want to know?

DE VINCENZI

Who else was with you in your house when your ex-husband was killed?

COBINA

What makes you think someone else was there?

DE VINCENZI

Mary Lovell knew Boldviski had been stabbed. She said Caienni told her. Now Lovell has an alibi, which means either Caienni stabbed Boldviski himself or someone else on that set told him what happened. Since the set is sealed--

COBINA

Assia was with me when it happened. *She* must've told Caienni.

(looking down)

I was merely trying to--

DE VINCENZI

--protect her. I understand. But we already know about your daughter. Your landlady confirmed she was there.

(Cobina drops her gaze)

There's something else you're hiding, isn't there? You heard more than just the sound of his body falling.

(at her hesitation)

It's a simple deduction, really. We've established your ex saw his murderer. Which means he must've been surprised, to say the least. And it follows that he would've said something to him.

(in a whisper)

What did you hear...?

COBINA

It sounded like...

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE/MUTED: THE SCENE ON PAGE 14. BOLDVISKI HISSES AT THE HOODED FIGURE. COBINA SUPPLIES THE WORDS...

COBINA (CONT'D)

*"Your plan won't work?! I won't let
your Hitler take over! I'll stop you!"*
Then there was silence...

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE/MUTED: WITH A DISGUSTED WAVE OF THE HAND, BOLDVISKI TURNS HIS BACK ON THE HOODED FIGURE AND OPENS THE DOOR TO LEAVE. SUDDENLY BOLDVISKI LOSES HIS FOOTING, AS IF FAINTING, JUST BEFORE THE GLOVED HAND OF THE FIGURE RAISES THE KNIFE AND STABS HIM IN THE BACK.

COBINA (CONT'D)

...and then I heard Vassilli sigh and
fall to the floor. When I finally came
out of the living room, the murderer
was gone...

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE/MUTED: BOLDVISKI SIGHS AND FALLS TO THE FLOOR, AS THE HOODED FIGURE STEPS OVER THE BODY AND LEAVES THE APARTMENT, CLOSING THE DOOR BEHIND IT. AN INSTANT LATER, COBINA COMES OUT AND SEES THE BODY OF HER EX HUSBAND.

DE VINCENZI

I won't let your Hitler take over.
(turning to her)
What could he have meant by that?

COBINA

He's in town, isn't he? Hitler.

DE VINCENZI

(his mind racing)
So he is...

COBINA

(suddenly alarmed)
Carlo! Whoever sent the chocolates
probably knew Assia would be with me.
(squeezing his hand with urgency)
Which means they were trying to kill
all three of us.

Their eyes meet. De Vincenzi leans forward, raising his voice as he shows the driver his badge.

DE VINCENZI

Driver! Hurry!

Spotting the badge, the DRIVER...

...floors the accelerator and...

89 EXT. STREETS OF ROME - CONTINUOUS

...the taxi picks up speed, skidding over the wet cobblestones as it pulls off into the night.

FAST CUT TO:

90 INT. ASSIA'S DRESSING ROOM. CINECITTÀ. STAGE 3 - SAME TIME

There is a KNOCK on a dressing room door marked **ASSIA PARIS.**

SUPERIMPOSE: CINECITTÀ, ROME: STAGE 3 - DAY TWO - 4:45 AM

Assia opens the door excited to finally see her mother. Instead she is faced with Thelma Ludendorf and she admits her into her dressing room with a touch of suspicion.

THELMA

I though I'd stop by, see how you're doing.

ASSIA

How very considerate of you.

Ignoring her acrimony, she steps into the room, scanning its interior. Out of the corner of her eye, Thelma spots...

...a glass of wine on the make-up table. Assia's lipstick on the glass would indicate she is sipping from it.

THELMA

Witnessing a murder, the murder of your own father...that must be quite traumatic for an impressionable young girl...

ASSIA

How did you know I was there?

Thelma is momentarily thrown by the question which she quickly dismisses by lighting a cigarillo and casually blowing the smoke into the air...

THELMA

(sitting at the make-up mirror)
Didn't that Inspector drop a hint?

ASSIA

No. He only knows my mother was there.

THELMA

Then I must've heard it from someone else.

ASSIA

There was no one else there.

The two women face off, sizing up one another.

THELMA

(with a thin smile)
I wouldn't know.

DETAIL: Thelma furtively slips a PACKET CONTAINING A SILVER-GRAY POWDER out of her pocket.

FAST CUT TO:

91 EXT. CINECITTÀ. ROME. STAGE 3 - CONTINUOUS

The taxi stops in front of Stage 3 and De Vincenzi and Cobina rush out.

Recognizing De Vincenzi, the policemen let him and Cobina enter the building.

FAST CUT TO:

92 INT. CINECITTÁ. ROME. STAGE 3 - CONTINUOUS

Inside the stage, a few of the crew are slouched in various attitudes of late night daze.

De Vincenzi and Cobina find D'Angelo eating in a big plate of spaghetti. He is surprised to see his boss and Cobina arriving together. Instinctively he gets up for her.

D'ANGELO
Mrs. Helstein...

COBINA
Lieutenant...

D'ANGELO
(sitting/returning to his food)
I had them open the kitchen.
(with a mouthful of spaghetti)
Let me get you some, Inspector. There's plenty.

DE VINCENZI
(judging from his plate)
I can see that. Later perhaps. Where can we find Miss Paris?

FAST CUT TO:

93 INT. ASSIA'S DRESSING ROOM. CINECITTÁ. STAGE 3 - CONTINUOUS

Thelma leans forward, lowering her voice, eerily.

THELMA
I've admired Bold for so long that--
well, such a great man...
(a deliberate pause)
What were his last words?

DETAIL: Thelma secretly tears open the Packet.

FAST CUT TO:

94 INT. CINECITTÁ. ROME. STAGE 3 - CONTINUOUS

D'Angelo's mouth is full as he jabs his fork at the food.

D'ANGELO
You don't know what you're missing,
Inspector. You've got to eat *something*!
You don't sleep. You don't eat...

DE VINCENZI
(his patience running thin)
D'Angelo...Miss Paris..

D'ANGELO

Let me get you some.

(to Cobina)

You too, Mrs. Helstein? Plenty to go around, you know. No problem! I had'em open the kitchen so--

COBINA

(looking him straight in the eye)

Lieutenant...My daughter. Where is she?

Quickly wiping his mouth, D'Angelo leads the way. De Vincenzi instructs a couple of policemen to follow.

FAST CUT TO:

95 INT. ASSIA'S DRESSING ROOM. CINECITTÁ. STAGE 3 - CONTINUOUS

The chess game continues.

ASSIA

What do you want, Thelma?

Thelma turns to the make-up mirror. Looking at her own image she considers...

THELMA

You're a very beautiful young woman, Assia. But then you know that, sitting here, looking at your reflection. In light and in...darkness...

With that, her finger, which has found its way to the switch, turns off the lights around the mirror whilst...

...taking advantage of the darkness, Thelma spills the silver-gray powder into Assia's glass of wine.

Alarmed, Assia rises and takes a step towards the mirror. In that instant, Thelma turns the lights back on.

THELMA (CONT'D)

But more beautiful in light...

Thelma turns to Assia who is now standing over her.

THELMA (CONT'D)

Oblige me. Won't you, please? His last words. They have such meaning for me.

ASSIA

He was in the other room. I couldn't hear. -- Except...

THELMA

Yes...

ASSIA

Him mentioning the name -- Hitler.

Thelma's face irons out. She stands, looking directly into Assia's eyes. And that look chills Assia.

She would call out when there is a KNOCK at the door...

COBINA (O.S.)
Assia!

ASSIA
(rushing to open the door)
Mother!

De Vincenzi and D'Angelo follow Cobina into the room. The two women embrace.

COBINA
My darling, how are you?

ASSIA
Fine, mother. I'm fine...
(looking over her shoulder)
Now.

Cobina's eyes turn ice cold when they fall on Thelma who moves to the door.

DE VINCENZI
Miss Ludendorf...

THELMA
Inspector...
(turning at the door)
Thanks for the chat, Assia. We must do this again soon.

Exiting, Thelma casts a last glance at...

...the glass of wine.

De Vincenzi catches this.

COBINA
May we go back to the hotel?

DE VINCENZI
Of course. Leave by the side door.
(glancing at the policemen)
Go with them. Have someone keep a 24-hour surveillance.

SECOND POLICEMAN
Yes, Inspector.

They are about to leave when Cobina remembers to ask...

COBINA
Your key to my apartment. See if you still have it..

ASSIA
(producing it from her purse)
It's here. Why..?

COBINA

We think the murderer might've made a copy.

(to De Vincenzi)

It may still have his prints on it.

DE VINCENZI

(smiling at her intuition)

He wore gloves remember.

D'Angelo is puzzled by the exchange. Since when did Cobina Helstein join the investigation?

COBINA

Of course...

DE VINCENZI

One more thing, Miss Paris.. Did you tell Mr. Caienni about your father's stabbing?

She looks to Cobina who encourages her to answer.

ASSIA

Yes. He asked me right after you left last night.

DE VINCENZI

Think carefully. Exactly what did he ask you?

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSED/MUTED: CAIENNI DRILLING ASSIA FOR ANSWERS. SHAKING HIS HEAD. RAISING HIS VOICE. IMPATIENT.

ASSIA

He wanted to know how my father died, and I told him he'd been stabbed.

DE VINCENZI

When you said that he'd been stabbed... did Caienni look surprised?

ASSIA

Now that you mention it, yes, he did. He said: not poisoned? And I said, no, stabbed. - Why would he have asked that?

DE VINCENZI

(without answering, he points to the wine glass)

Is that your lipstick on that glass?

ASSIA

Yes. Wine helps me to relax.

DE VINCENZI

Did you take a sip while Miss Ludendorf was here?

Puzzled by the question Assia merely shakes her head.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
Thank you, Assia, you've been most helpful.
(to Cobina -- softly)
I'll come by later.

Cobina's eyes reflect her affection as they leave the room. D'Angelo has witnessed the exchange with curiosity, and he watches De Vincenzi narrowly as he picks up the wine glass with his handkerchief and sniffs its contents. With a knowing smile, he hands the glass to D'Angelo.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
Have the lab take a look at this. Check for traces of poison. Arsenic, I'd guess.

D'ANGELO
(taking the glass)
Arsenic? Are you thinking--?

DE VINCENZI
Too soon to speculate, D'Angelo.

He leaves the room.

96 INT. CINECITTÁ. ROME. STAGE 3 - CONTINUOUS

As De Vincenzi and D'Angelo make their way across the stage to the other dressing rooms...

D'ANGELO
A question.

DE VINCENZI
Yes, D'Angelo?

D'ANGELO
What's going on here?
(when De Vincenzi glances at him)
You and Mrs. Helstein?

DE VINCENZI
Be careful what you say, D'Angelo.

D'ANGELO
The Commissioner told me the lab found Helstein's prints on the knife. *Only* her prints.

DE VINCENZI
Of course they did. It was *her* knife.

D'ANGELO
And you don't think that makes her our prime suspect?

DE VINCENZI
No. I don't.

De Vincenzi glares at D'Angelo: irritation becoming anger.

D'ANGELO

I saw the way you looked at her. I know you, Inspector. Anyone else would be a suspect. But Mrs. Helstein...

DE VINCENZI

What are you saying!

D'ANGELO

That she's just the sort of woman you--

DE VINCENZI

I *what?*!

D'Angelo swallows hard. He regrets having started this.

D'ANGELO

I-I wouldn't want your personal feelings to interfere with--

DE VINCENZI

That's enough! You had your say and it's duly noted! Now...
(in a subdued growl)

Blanca Vertua! Where might we find her?

CUT TO:

97 INT. BLANCA'S DRESSING ROOM. CINECITTÁ. STAGE 3 - CONTINUOUS

When Blanca opens the door, she readily invites De Vincenzi and D'Angelo into her room.

BLANCA

Inspector...Lieutenant. Come in, please.

She looks distraught: Seth's death has affected her.

BLANCA (CONT'D)

Any luck in finding Seth's murderer?

Tying the sash of her silk robe, she waves them to seats.

DE VINCENZI

We're toying with a theory you might be able to help us with.

Again D'Angelo is surprised. What theory?

BLANCA

Anything for Seth.

DE VINCENZI

How long had you know Mr. Nicholson?

BLANCA

We met about a month ago. In Bold's Suite. A casting session. I took one look at Seth and immediately fell in love. And he with me. It's as if we'd both found a missing piece of our souls.

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE: ACIDALIA'S OFFICES. BLANCA ENTERS, MEETS CAIENNI AND VERNIERI, SEES SETH: INSTANT ATTRACTION.

BLANCA (CONT'D)

I don't know how else to describe it.

(she chokes back the tears)

He was the man of my life. We were made for each other.

De Vincenzi regards Blanca with deep scrutiny. Is she sincere or just acting, he wonders? Finally, simply...

DE VINCENZI

Yet you cheated on him with Boldviski.

She shoots him a keen glance: an animal whose hiding place has been discovered. She then quickly reverts to the "act".

BLANCA

I needed the role. A Boldviski film was a dream come true.

DE VINCENZI

Or a nightmare.

BLANCA

It was never supposed to be serious, my fling with Boldviski. It was purely...

DE VINCENZI

Professional?

BLANCA

You see, you *do* understand! I told Seth that, but he wouldn't listen. He said our relationship was at risk. Especially when Bold said he wanted to marry me!

DE VINCENZI

How did Mr. Nicholson take that?

BLANCA

(with a dry laugh)

Not well, as you can image!

Suddenly Blanca's eyes are alight with realization,

BLANCA (CONT'D)

You're not thinking--! Seth kill a man?! No, not Seth. He didn't have the moxie or the smarts for that!

DE VINCENZI

What about you, Miss Vertua?

BLANCA

me?! That's just crazy! Boldviski was my meal ticket! My chance to open in Hollywood! Why would I kill him!

Nervous now, she paces the room, her silk gown flowing behind her, exposing her shapely legs.

DE VINCENZI

What I meant was: how did you take his marriage proposal?

BLANCA

What could I do?! I was afraid that if I refused, he'd fire me on the spot! -- But he kept pushing me. Pushing me! He promised he'd stop seeing his wife. If she stood in the way of our life together, he'd take care of it! Make her...*disappear!*
(a sardonic smile)
Our life together! - That's a laugh!

DE VINCENZI

Do you think he intended to kill her?

BLANCA

No way of knowing what that son-of-a-bitch might do! Sure he'd kill her! He's the type! I've known types like him before.

A witness to her cruder side, De Vincenzi agrees...

DE VINCENZI

I'm sure you have, Miss Vertua.

DE VINCENZI (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Call headquarters. See if they've gotten word yet from the FBI...

98 INT. CINECITTÀ. STAGE 5. ROME - CONTINUOUS

De Vincenzi and D'Angelo are crossing the stage again, moving through the sets of Romeo & Juliet.

DE VINCENZI (V.O.)

...about Caienni & Vernieri's bank. And check with the lab again. They should have more results by now.

D'Angelo moves off to execute the orders. After a few steps, he turns back, sheepishly...

D'ANGELO

Inspector...I---

DE VINCENZI

(reading his mind/smiling)
No offense taken, D'Angelo. To be perfectly honest, I do have feelings for Mrs. Helstein. But my job comes first. It always has.
(as an afterthought/to himself)
That's why I live alone, I suppose.

D'Angelo watches him move off -- the great man, alone. As an appeasement he yells after him...

D'ANGELO

You sure you don't want any pasta? The kitchen's still open!

DE VINCENZI

(without turning)
Maybe later, D'Angelo.

CUT TO:

99 INT. THELMA'S ROOMS. CINECITTÁ. STAGE 3 - MOMENTS LATER

Thelma Ludendorf is reclining on a sofa, blowing smoke rings, as De Vincenzi enters her large art deco Suite.

THELMA

Greetings, Inspector. Any news on Seth's murderer?

DE VINCENZI

Das ist die Frage des Tages, Fraeulein. Aber es ist schon komisch, dass niemand nach Boldviski fragt.

(SUBTITLES)

That's the question of the day. It's funny no one asks about Boldviski.

THELMA

Vielleicht deshalb, weil wir alle wissen, dass diese jüdische Frau Schuld ist.

(SUBTITLES)

It may be because we all know that Jew woman is guilty.

DE VINCENZI

(cynically)

I'm sure you'll soon find Jews guilty of quite a number of things.

Before she can come to the defense of her *Führer*, she notices that he has spotted a rifle hidden in her wardrobe.

DETAIL: **MOSIN-NAGANT** is etched on the rifle casing.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

Mosin-Nagant. Russian made. Times like these, I would think Germans would buy German.

THELMA

But we'll soon be allies, won't we? Haven't you heard? Our Non Aggression Pact with Russia.

DE VINCENZI

You mean Molotov's brainchild?

THELMA

(patriotically)

Von Ribbentrop's actually. Besides...

Crossing to the wardrobe, she snatches up the rifle, takes it out of its case and peers through the sight, aiming it at De Vincenzi who doesn't budge.

THELMA (CONT'D)

Mosin-Nagant's the very best. And I buy only the very best. I use it for target practice.

DE VINCENZI

I know. I found these cartridges out back.

To her surprise, he produces the cartridges from his pocket.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

And I saw that watermelon you used as a target.

THELMA

(lowering the rifle)
How very enterprising of you, Inspector.

She feels his piercing gaze and tenses...

DE VINCENZI

Do you think Blanca or Seth might've killed Boldviski? They were in love, and he was a formidable obstacle.

THELMA

Rome & Juliet is fiction, Inspector. The only love Blanca and Seth shared is love of money and success.

DE VINCENZI

Yet they looked the part...

THELMA

Oh, yes! Seth was pretty to look at alright, but beneath the skin he had a lot in common with Vassilli.

DE VINCENZI

What could two such different men possible have in common?

THELMA

Like Vassilli, Seth's ego was too big for just one woman.

DE VINCENZI

And with whom else did he share his intimité, may I ask?

THELMA

Gita. Gita Galena.

Something seems to click in his mind at this revelation. He distractedly heads towards the door. She calls out...

THELMA (CONT'D)

May I leave the stage now, Inspector?

DE VINCENZI

Of course. But please remain available.
I'll be by the hotel later to inspect
Mr. Boldviski's Suite and I may need
more of your insight.

A humorless little smile lurks just around the edges of her mouth as she watches him open the door. Suddenly he stops short, his attention snared by something. As Thelma looks on, helpless, he wanders to the wardrobe and pulls out the sleeve of a raincoat: a black raincoat with a hood.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

Yes. These come in handy in May. When
the weather is so...*variable*.

De Vincenzi casts her a knowing glance before leaving the room. Shaken, Thelma sits smoking her cigarillo.

GITA (V.O.)

Yes, Inspector. Seth and I were having
an affair.

100 INT. CINECITTÁ. ROME. STAGE 3 - MOMENTS LATER

De Vincenzi and Gita stroll through the set of the Capulet Tomb. Though Seth's body has been removed, the set is still a crime scene and a few policemen are at work.

GITA

But it was just that: an affair. A few
hours of pleasure.

DE VINCENZI

In those "few hours" did he ever mention
Blanca.

GITA

Often. What she was doing with Bold --
it was disgusting. Seth thought he
deserved better! So did I.

DE VINCENZI

But he loved her nevertheless.

GITA

Is that what she told you?

DE VINCENZI

You think there's reason to doubt the
love of Montague?

GITA

What I think is that Blanca's no Juliet.
In fact we're all play-acting here. All
of us. Except--

DE VINCENZI

Except?

GITA

Sid. He's genuinely Shakespearean.

DE VINCENZI

Sid Renier? The Apothecary?

GITA

He's as seedy and devious in the flesh as he is in costume. If I ever wanted to buy poison - *in real life!* - Sid Renier's the man I'd go see. He's just so...cloak-and-dagger, you know! Just yesterday morning...

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE: DRESSED IN A SEE-THROUGH NEGLIGÉE, GITA IMPATIENTLY PACES THE SUITE, CHECKING HER WATCH.

GITA (CONT'D)

...after we got back from the *Taverna*. I was waiting for Seth to come to my room for...well, you know...

DE VINCENZI

Go on.

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE: GITA OPENS THE DOOR TO HER SUITE, JUST A CRACK, PEERING OUT AT THE CORRIDOR, SEARCHING...

GITA

I opened my door a few times, to see if he was anywhere in sight.
(grinning bashfully)
I really looked forward to our meetings. Seth was so exciting. He was--

DE VINCENZI

Go on...

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE: GITA SEES SID WALKING STEALTHILY DOWN THE HALL HOLDING SOMETHING TUCKED UNDER HIS JACKET.

GITA

I saw Sid walking by, looking over his shoulder, left and right, like, you know, someone who had something to hide.

DE VINCENZI

Cloak-and-dagger.

GITA

Exactly! And he was carrying something tucked under his jacket.

DE VINCENZI

Could you see what it was?

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE/MUTED: GITA NARROWS HER GAZE AND CATCHES SIGHT OF A BOTTLE OF MALAGA UNDER SID'S JACKET.

GITA

I caught a glimpse.
(MORE)

GITA (CONT'D)
 It looked like...like some sort of
 bottle. It was only when Thelma brought
 the bottle to work the next day that I
 recognized it.

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE/MUTED: ON STAGE 3, GITA GAZES WIDE-
 EYED AT THE BOTTLE OF MALAGA. SHE LOOKS TO SID WHO IS BESIDE
 HIMSELF WITH FRIGHT. SID GLANCES AT CAIENNI.

DE VINCENZI
 The bottle of Malaga wine?

GITA
 He was carrying it tucked under his
 jacket.

DE VINCENZI
 About what time was that?

GITA
 6:15, 6:30 am. Something like that.

DE VINCENZI
 The floor you're on at the hotel? Would
 that be the same as Boldviski's?

GITA
 Yeah. I'm in 610 and his Suite is 628.
 Why?

De Vincenzi has a thin smile as...

101 INT. THELMA'S ROOMS. CINECITTÁ. STAGE 3 - CONTINUOUS

Thelma operates the spring assembly of her MOSIN-NAGANT,
 dismantling the rifle. She removes the shouldered pin, the
 barrel, and the firing mechanism from the frame, and then
 carefully packs the individual parts of the rifle into a
 small attaché case.

D'ANGELO (V.O.)
 Inspector! I was looking all over for
 you.

102 INT. CINECITTÁ. ROME. STAGE 3 - MOMENTS LATER

SUPERIMPOSE: CINECITTÁ, ROME. STAGE 3 - DAY TWO - 6:10 AM

Clutching a few folders, D'Angelo hurries after De Vincenzi.

D'ANGELO
 (holding out the folders)
 Lab reports. They found strychnine in
 the Malaga bottle and the phial. A
 massive dose. And three sets of prints
 on the phial and four on the bottle.

DE VINCENZI
 Four?

He takes the reports D'Angelo hands him and scans them, his expression betraying his surprise.

D'ANGELO

And this just came in from Washington.
The FBI.

DE VINCENZI

The bank information?

D'ANGELO

Boy, those Americans are fast! Over here it would've taken at least two, maybe three--

DE VINCENZI

D'Angelo! - The report.

D'Angelo hands it to him. De Vincenzi checks the report and smiles with anticipation. Then...

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

I'll meet you at the Excelsior in about an hour.

D'Angelo nods, taking off, as De Vincenzi stops at a door labelled **ACIDALIA FILMS** and KNOCKS.

Vernieri opens the door. De Vincenzi can see Caienni behind him. The two men seem flustered, as if they'd been arguing.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

Am I interrupting something?

VERNIERI

Would you leave if you were?

Caienni hurries to make up for his partner's rudeness...

CAIENNI

Please, Inspector. Come in.

103 EXT. CINECITTÁ. ROME. STAGE 3 - CONTINUOUS

Thelma leaves Stage 3 carrying the attaché case concealing her *Mosin-Nagant* rifle. Passing a Back Shirt, she notices that he is gazing suspiciously at her attaché. Before he can voice any concern, Thelma proffers a Fascist Salute which he quickly reciprocates. Then, before he can further redact, she quickly ducks into a cab. Just as she is about to close the door, she spots a police car pulling up to the curb where Cobina and Assia are waiting. The two women get into the back of the car. Cobina glances out the window and notices Thelma glaring at her with eerie determination.

As Cobina's car pulls away Thelma lowers an imaginary rifle, aiming its imaginary barrel at the departing police car. Then, smiling maliciously, she snaps to taxi driver...

THELMA

The Excelsior. And hurry!

*
*
*
*
*
*

*
*

As the cab drives off...

VERNIERI (V.O.)
Kill him?! Why the hell would we have
killed him!?

104 INT. ACIDALIA FILMS. CINECITTÁ. ROME. STAGE 3 - CONTINUOUS

Unsettled by De Vincenzi, Vernieri quickly paces back and forth in front of a huge glass panel. Beyond the panel, the WWI Western Front at the Battle of Ypres explodes in all its cinematic glory punctuating the mood in the room.

VERNIERI
Our entire financial plan was based on
Bold being alive and well enough to
direct!

DE VINCENZI
It may have been a matter of the heart
and not finance.

VERNIERI
What the hell's that supposed to mean?

DE VINCENZI
Mary Lovell?

CAIENNI
Mary?!

DE VINCENZI
You wanted her to play Juliet, but
Boldviski refused. And that must've
made you mad.

Vernieri suddenly turns to Caienni: Could he have done this?

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
Here you were making all this money
available to him and he refused to show
you any gratitude.

Caienni's irritation mounts as De Vincenzi continues to provoke him. Vernieri studies his partner's reaction.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
It must've been a slap on the face for
you and your girlfriend. Three million
you gave him. And---

CAIENNI
(unable to contain himself)
That bastard treated my Mary like a
whore. He told her she could have the
role if she would *"be kind to him"*.

VERNIERI
Caienni! Stop talking until our lawyer--

CAIENNI

That son-of-a-bitch! After all we were doing for him!

DE VINCENZI

So you had him killed.

CAIENNI

What?

(snapping out of his fury)
No! Of course not! But I'll admit I wanted to...

VERNIERI

Caienni!

CAIENNI

Damn right I did! The bastard! But I would never do anything like that, have someone killed!

DE VINCENZI

Wouldn't you...?

De Vincenzi eyes both men who feel uncomfortable under his scrutiny. He then moves to leave, but turns at the door -- as an afterthought, waving the FBI file...

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

According to this FBI report, the crash that affected your bank was more *personal* than financial.

(consulting the report)
It says here that your bank was being investigated for fraud. And that your American partner, a Mr. Paul Wittiger...

Caienni and Vernieri exchange a fleeting look.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

...was preparing to testify against you. But his dead body was found a day before the congressional hearing. Suicide, they called it. From drinking a glass of poisoned wine! A coincidence?

He turns to leave again, but stops, facing them, his voice rising in vehemence, daunting...

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

And yesterday, did either of you have any reason to give someone the key to Mr. Boldviski's Suite?

CAIENNI

(in a disembodied voice)
A key..?

Vernieri glares at his partner as Caienni stands frozen.

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE: AT THE TAVERNA DI COSTANTINO. CAIENNI FURTIVELY SLIPS A KEY INTO SID'S JACKET.

CAIENNI (CONT'D)

Bold needed something from the hotel.
Sid was going back, so I gave him my
extra key.

DE VINCENZI

And what was it Mr. Boldviski needed
from his Suite?

CAIENNI

(his mind racing)
His...his viewfinder, if I remember
correctly. Bold had forgotten it.

DE VINCENZI

(looking at them long and hard)
Thank you, gentlemen. This has been
most enlightening. I would appreciate
it if you would both remain available
for further questioning.

When he's finally left, Vernieri hisses at Caienni...

VERNIERI

You damn fool!

DE VINCENZI (V.O.)

Excuse me, Mr. Renier...

105 INT. CINECITTÁ. ROME. STAGE 3 - CONTINUOUS

De Vincenzi finds Sid sitting on the set of his Apothecary
Shop. Sid sits up straight, like a frightened meerkat.

DE VINCENZI

The case is becoming more complicated
than I'd expected. Would you mind waiting
here a few more hours? I won't be long.

Sid realizes the question is rhetorical. He nods.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

Thank you so much...

And he wanders off, into the shadows of Stage 3, leaving
Sid with his fake bottles of poison neatly stacked in rows.

DE VINCENZI (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Mr. Vergolli! Good thing I ran into
you.

CUT TO:

De Vincenzi crosses Paolo who is sitting under a spotlight
going over his script. When Paolo looks up...

PAOLO

What can I do for you Inspector?

...De Vincenzi notices he's eating from a box of white
chocolates similar to the one found in Cobina's flat.

DE VINCENZI

Those chocolates. Where did you get them?

PAOLO

The studio commissary. The whole crew's been eating them. -- Want one?

DE VINCENZI

(eyeing them suspiciously)
No, thank you. I was wondering, though...

PAOLO

Yes...

DE VINCENZI

Do you know anything about Mr. Boldviski's viewfinder. I believe that's used to set up shots, isn't it?

PAOLO

Yes. A director's lost without it!

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE/MUTED: PAOLO WITH BOLDVISKI IN HIS SUITE THE NIGHT BEFORE, DURING THEIR ARGUMENT. THE VIEWFINDER IS CLEARLY HANGING FROM BOLDVISKI'S NECK.

PAOLO (CONT'D)

Bold *always* had it with him. I think he slept with it!

De Vincenzi reacts with a nod. His mind racing, he starts off, stops, turns back with...

DE VINCENZI

Thank you, Mr. Vergolli. Most helpful.

Vergolli cocks his head as he watches the eccentric Inspector hurry off, across the stage.

OVER THE SHOT: THE ROAR OF A MILITARY BAND PLAYING "FACCETTA NERA"; THE CHAOS OF CHEERING CROWDS AND DEAFENING CAR HORNS.

DE VINCENZI (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(shouting above the roar)
Could we try a side street?

POLICE DRIVER (V.O.)

(shouting back)
They're just as bad. We'll have to wait till they pass!

106 EXT. STREETS OF ROME - CONTINUOUS

A police car is mired in Roman traffic now completely blocked by a gala parade of marching Fascists and Nazis.

SUPERIMPOSE: STREETS OF ROME - DAY TWO - 6:57 AM

107 INT. POLICE CAR. STREETS OF ROME - CONTINUOUS

DE VINCENZI
Can't you just drive through?

POLICE DRIVER
You mean drive *into* them?

De Vincenzi meets the driver's deliberate gaze.

DE VINCENZI
No, huh?

The driver's gaze turns to disapproval. Relenting, with a deep sigh of resignation, he mumbles to himself...

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
It's been a long couple of days...

...and falls back into his seat. Casting his gaze out the window, he is horrified to see *Der Führer's* open car passing a few feet away. And he does a double take when he meets...

...Hitler looking down his nose at him.

108 EXT. EXCELSIOR HOTEL. ROME - CONTINUOUS

A taxi pulls up to the hotel. Thelma gets out (with her attaché), pays the driver and enters.

CUT TO:

109 INT. BERGER'S SUITE. EXCELSIOR HOTEL. ROME - CONTINUOUS

Opening the door, Berger smiles at Thelma, taking her into his arms. He kisses her passionately. She pushes him away...

THELMA
Nicht jetzt.

When Berger keeps trying to kiss her, she adds, irritated.

THELMA (CONT'D)
Er weiss, etwas.
(SUBTITLES)
He knows something!

BERGER
Wer?
(SUBTITLES)
Who?

THELMA
Dieser Verdammt Inspektor. De Vincenzi.

BERGER
Er weiß nicht! Er vermutet! Wenn er wüsste, Du würdest im Gefängnis!
(SUBTITLES)
He doesn't know! He suspects! If he knew, you'd be in jail!

THELMA

Ja, du hast Recht. - Ich habe versucht von Assia etwas zu erfahren aber dieser Inspektor kreuzte auf, bevor ich etwas in Erfahrung bringen konnte. Außer den namen...Hitlers.

(SUBTITLES)

Yes. You're right. I spoke to Assia but that Inspector came before I was able to learn anything. Except that she'd overheard him mentioning Hitler.

BERGER

(turning to her/stunned)
Der Führer?

THELMA

Ich hätte dafür sorgen sollen, dass Helstein und ihre Tochter tot sind.

(SUBTITLES)

I should've made sure Helstein and her daughter were dead!

BERGER

Ja. Aber dafür ist es jetzt zu spät. Du must einen Weg finden De Vincenzi auszutricksen. Bis nach 3 Uhr.

(SUBTITLES)

It's too late now. You have to find a way to stall the Inspector. Till after three pm.

THELMA

(her eyes light up)
Er hat eine Schwäche für diese Jüdin. Wenn er denken würde, dass sie in Gefahr ist...

(SUBTITLES)

He has a soft spot for that Jew. If he were to think she's in danger...

Berger smiles...Thelma returns the smile and now kisses him. Berger then glances at the attaché with the rifle...

BERGER

Lass das hier. Meine Manner werden es hinbringen. Es ist nicht so gefährlich.

(SUBTITLES)

Leave that here. I'll have my men take it for you. It's less dangerous.

110 EXT. EXCELSIOR HOTEL. ROME - CONTINUOUS

De Vincenzi's car finally makes it to the Excelsior.

111 INT. EXCELSIOR HOTEL. ROME - CONTINUOUS

The Inspector hurries through the revolving glass door, past the police in the lobby (whose greetings go unacknowledged), past the RECEPTIONIST (his greeting, unacknowledged) and starts up the stairs, two at a time.

SUPERIMPOSE: EXCELSIOR HOTEL, ROME - DAY TWO - 7:32 AM

FAST CUT TO:

De Vincenzi KNOCKS on the door to Suite 313. As he waits, he nods to a uniformed policeman (TOZZI, mid 20's) who sits in the hall guarding the Suite.

TOZZI
(nodding back)
Inspector...

De Vincenzi knocks again. As he waits, he glances at Tozzi out of the corner of his eye. Something about him bothers the Inspector, but he forgets his suspicions when Cobina opens the door, a joyous smile gracing her lovely features.

COBINA
Carlo! Come in!

DE VINCENZI
No time. I just wanted to check if you and Assia were alright.

COBINA
Yes. Much better now!

DE VINCENZI
Stay in your Suite. Keep the door locked.
Open it only when I knock. Like this...

He knocks on the door five times: two long, three short.

Cobina gets it...

...so does Tozzi.

COBINA
Should I expect visitors?

DE VINCENZI
Just don't open this door. Unless you hear my knock.
(at her apprehension)
Don't worry, I won't let anything happen to you two.

De Vincenzi smiles at her affectionately before turning away and, passing Tozzi, hurrying down the corridor.

112 INT. ASSIA'S SUITE. EXCELSIOR HOTEL. ROME - CONTINUOUS

Locking the door, Cobina faces Assia's inquisitive stare.

ASSIA
You trust him?
(at her nod)
But there's more, isn't there? The way you looked at him...

COBINA
(with a sad smile)
It's nothing, Assia. Unfortunately...
nothing.

113 INT. EXCELSIOR HOTEL. ROME - CONTINUOUS

Tozzi slips off his jacket. His wallet falls out of his pocket and flips open, revealing...

DETAIL:...an SS identity card...

114 INT. BOLDVISKI'S SUITE. EXCELSIOR HOTEL. ROME - CONTINUOUS

Passing another policemen at the door, De Vincenzi enters the Suite and looks around.

DE VINCENZI
(to one of the policemen)
This is exactly the way Mr. Boldviski
left his Suite.

DETECTIVE
We've touched nothing. As you ordered.

Nodding his approval, De Vincenzi takes stock of the situation. Compared to the others Suites, Boldviski's looks quite empty, with much of the furniture removed. Only the essential is left, as in the dwelling of an ex Bolshevik. In the parlor is a large desk cluttered with books and papers next to a couch, two open suitcases (serving as utilitarian closets) and a large and weathered trunk.

De Vincenzi checks the papers and books on the desk.

DETAIL: There are pages from the storyboard of the film, and scribbled notes which have little interest for the inspector. He checks with great interest one of the books entitled: *GIFI: THE HISTORY OF POISON* by Hugo Glaser.

He then turns back to the room, and notices the trunk. The latch is locked. This intrigues him. He breaks open the lock with a pen-knife and flings back the trunk's cover. Tucked away inside the trunk is a leather-bound notebook.

Sitting on the floor, he reviews the notebook's contents.

DETAIL: The annotations are in French, Russian and English. He flips through the pages. April 10th, 11th....May 1st...

DE VINCENZI
(reading an annotation)
*"Je me flatte d'être le plus désagréable
de tous les metteur en scène de cinéma..."*
(grinning/addressing the notebook)
You were a realist alright, Bold. I'm
sorry I never had a chance to meet you.
(reading on)
*"I insult my players. I treat them like
slaves. But then that's what actors
should be. Slaves of the camera."*
(MORE)

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
*They give up their freedom and identity
when they don the clothes of my
characters. They serve another -
physically, spiritually, emotionally...*

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE: BOLDVISKI ALSO SITTING ON THE FLOOR OF HIS SUITE, WRITING IN HIS NOTEBOOK, OCCASIONALLY LOOKING UP, HIS GAZE LOST IN MUSING, A SMILE TUGGING AT HIS LIPS.

DE VINCENZI (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*"...Seth...Seth n'est pas un grand
acteur. Certainement pas le meilleur,
je aurait pu trouver pour ce rôle..."*

Leaning against the wall, De Vincenzi ponders the last remark before continuing to read under his breath...

DISSOLVE TO:

115 INT. EXCELSIOR HOTEL. ROME - MOMENTS LATER

De Vincenzi now seems encouraged as he trips lightly down the stairs. On the fourth floor, he spots Thelma and Berger coming down the corridor towards him. At the sight of De Vincenzi, they whisper something to each other, and Berger hurries off, past De Vincenzi without acknowledging him.

DE VINCENZI
Miss Ludendorf, just the woman I needed to see.

THELMA
How may I help you, Inspector?

She continues to the stairs and down. He flanks her.

DE VINCENZI
Our crime lab's just informed me that the Malaga in both the bottle and the phial contained a heavy dose of strychnine.

THELMA
Then that would explain Seth's death, wouldn't it?

DE VINCENZI
But you said no one touched the bottle after Boldviski gave it to you.

THELMA
That's right.

DE VINCENZI
Then, help me here, Mis Ludendorf. Wouldn't it follow that either you or Boldviski put the poison in the bottle?

THELMA

It would, but I *did not* kill Seth, and Vassilli *could not* have killed him. He died before him, remember?

DE VINCENZI

Yes. But when he gave you the bottle of Malaga, he was still very much alive.

THELMA

Are you saying Vassilli used me to kill Seth? That's preposterous! Vassilli was an artist, a *great* artist. No murderer!

DE VINCENZI

But as an artist, wouldn't he have wanted the very best result for the camera...

Seeing that she doesn't follow, he produces the notebook.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

Boldviski's notebook. I found it in his suite.

(opening the notebook)

Listen to this... Do you speak French?

THELMA

(with patriotic disdain)

Of course not. I'm German.

DE VINCENZI

I'll translate. "*Seth is not a great actor. Certainly not the best I could've cast for this role...*"

THELMA

Are you insinuating he killed him because he was a bad actor? That's absurd!

DE VINCENZI

Bear with me, please.

(translating further)

"*But he looks perfect for the part and...*", here it is, "*...and there may be a way to artificially coax a performance out of him...*"

Thelma tenses, beginning to glimpse the truth.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

(translating as he reads on)

"*The performance of a lifetime. The death of Romeo must look real! The public demands only the truth!... Sid has providentially brought me the perfect tool for my trade, the bottle that was meant for me...*"

Closing the notebook, he looks at Thelma and notices how pale she's become.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
(holding her gaze)
Did Sid Renier have access to the bottle
of Malaga after you got it?

THELMA
Of course not! I told you I--

DE VINCENZI
His fingerprints were on it?

THELMA
Impossible.

DE VINCENZI
Our lab confirmed it!

Thelma's head is spinning now.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
There were four sets of prints on the
bottle: yours, Boldviski's, Caienni's
and Sid Renier's.

THELMA
Caienni and Sid? I don't understand!
That means they touched the bottle *before*
Vassilli gave it to me. But how? *Why?*

De Vincenzi sees that her shock is genuine.

DE VINCENZI
(reading from the notebook again)
*"Sid has providentially brought me the
perfect tool, the bottle that was meant
for me."*
(looking up with a childlike smile)
I've always marvelled at the nimble
mind of the artistic genius. So inspiring
to a simple man like me.

De Vincenzi strides lightly away leaving Thelma a frazzled.

116 EXT. VIA VENETO, ROME - MOMENTS LATER

De Vincenzi swings out of the revolving door of the
Excelsior just as D'Angelo is swinging in. They revolve
around one another and finally meet up on the street.

SUPERIMPOSE: VIA VENETO, ROME - DAY TWO - 8:57 AM

DE VINCENZI
(before D'Angelo can speak)
Go back to Cinecittá and take Sid Renier
and Marcello Caienni into custody. I
said *custody*, D'Angelo, not arrest.
Protective custody. There are now at
least two people who might want Renier
and Caienni out of the way.
(seeing the reports he's holding)
What's that in your hand?

D'ANGELO

The autopsies?

De Vincenzi avidly snatches them from him. Slipping on his glasses, he reads...

DE VINCENZI

Seth Nicholson: cause of death, a massive dose of strychnine. Vassilli Boldviski: cause of death: a massive dose of arsenic. Stab wound between third and fourth intercostal, *perimortem*.
(looking up)
Just as I thought. Two poisons, two different murderers.

D'ANGELO

Perimortem?! Which means he was stabbed while he was *already* dying from an overdose of arsenic?

DE VINCENZI

(as he crosses Via Veneto)
Which explains the lack of blood at the crime scene. And, D'Angelo...I need information on Sid Renier's bank account. Recent deposits. *Large*.

D'ANGELO

Where are you going?

DE VINCENZI

Fishing.

117 INT. CINECITTÁ. ROME. STAGE 3 - LATER

MUTED/MUSIC SCORE...D'Angelo and three policemen find Sid still in his Apothecary Shop. He looks terrified, confused, a deer in the headlights when D'Angelo tells him of the "custody" and the police escort him out of his "shop".

CUT TO:

The "removal" of Caienni is more agitated. The man resists the police who are forced to cuff him, and he yells to Vernieri (Call our lawyer!). But judging from Vernieri's indifference, no lawyer will be forthcoming.

118 EXT./INTO VARIOUS LOCKSMITHS IN ROME - SAME MORNING

MUTED/MUSIC SCORE/MONTAGE: De Vincenzi stops at various LOCKSMITHS. He goes into shop after shop, shows his badge and the photo of Thelma to the person/s behind the counter, asks questions and is rewarded with a shake of the head. He seems most despondent when, finally...

119 INT. MARTINI LOCKSMITHS. VIA DEL CORSO, ROME - SAME MORNING

*

MUTED/MUSIC SCORE: De Vincenzi shows the photo and receives a resounding "yes!", Thelma was there and made a duplicate key. Jubilant, he shakes the locksmith's hand and hugs his wife. Taking their business card, he leaves. **BACK TO SOUND:**

GERMAN EMBASSY ATTACHÉ (V.O.)
*Ja, Inspekteur. Fraulein Ludendorf ist
 mitglied der Hubertus Gesellschaft seit
 1930. Die Münchener Kapitel.*

*

*

CUT TO:

120 INT. GERMAN EMBASSY, ROME - SAME MORNING

De Vincenzi sits across from the Embassy Attaché in her luxurious office. Behind her is a photograph of Der Führer (partially covered by the fronds of a rubber plant).

SUPERIMPOSE: GERMAN EMBASSY, ROME - DAY TWO - 9:42 AM

DE VINCENZI
Um es deutlich zu sagen, Frau...

GERMAN EMBASSY ATTACHÉ
 (smiling coyly at the Inspector)
Fraulein...

DE VINCENZI
*Fraulein Fischer, stimmt es, dass die
 Hubertus Gesellschaft ist für Jäger und
 Sportschützen?*
 (SUBTITLES)
 Am I correct in saying that the Hubertus
 Society is for hunters and marksmen, or
 women in her case?

GERMAN EMBASSY ATTACHÉ
Ja, Inspekteur.
 (consulting a cablegram)
*Frau Ludendorf ist als einer der besten
 Scharfschützen in Deutschland. An
 ungewöhnliches Talent für eine dame.*
 (SUBTITLES)
 Yes, Inspector. Frau Ludendorf is one
 of the best sharpshooters in Germany.
 An unusual talent for a lady.

De Vincenzi nods in agreement, deep in thought.

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE/MUTED: THELMA IN THE BACK OF STAGE 5
 FIRING AT A WATERMELON WITH HER MOSIN-NAGANT RIFLE. AS THE
 SOUNDS OF THE RIFLE REVERBERATE...

121 EXT. CINECITTÁ. ROME - SAME MORNING

MUTED/MUSIC SCORE: De Vincenzi moves briskly past the various sets that make up the fantasy world of Cinecittá.

SUPERIMPOSE: CINECITTÁ, ROME - DAY TWO - 10:12 AM

Reaching the Commissary, he enters...

DE VINCENZI (V.O.)
 Those chocolates over there...

122 INT. COMMISSARY. CINECITTÁ, ROME - SAME MORNING

A SALESLADY turns to De Vincenzi who points to boxes identical to those containing the poisoned white chocolates.

DE VINCENZI
Have you sold any today?

CINECITTÁ SALESLADY
Yes. Less than an hour ago. To a lady.

DE VINCENZI
This lady..?

De Vincenzi shows her Thelma's photo in the belabored prospectus and the saleslady nods.

CINECITTÁ SALESLADY
It's the second box she's bought this week. She must really like them!

DE VINCENZI
Once you've eaten a few, it's hard to get them out of your system.
(she smiles, approvingly)
Tell me. This lady. Was she holding anything usual today?

CINECITTÁ SALESLADY
Unusual..?
(her eyes light up)
She was carrying a raincoat, a black raincoat. And I thought, why would anyone need that on a beautiful day like today?

When the saleslady looks up again, De Vincenzi is gone, leaving the door swinging behind him.

DE VINCENZI (V.O.)
(hurried/out of breath)
We haven't much time, D'Angelo.

123 EXT. VIA VENETO, ROME - LATE MORNING

De Vincenzi and D'Angelo are entering the Excelsior Hotel.

SUPERIMPOSE: VIA VENETO, ROME - DAY TWO - 11:18 AM

*

124 INT. LOBBY. EXCELSIOR HOTEL. ROME - CONTINUOUS

Swinging through the revolving door, they enter the lobby.

DE VINCENZI
Our fish should be here any minute! We need to bait the hook.

De Vincenzi goes into the lobby, nodding to some of the plainclothes policemen who are stationed there.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
(to D'Angelo)
This hotel has three entrances...
(MORE)

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
(indicating them)
A main entrance, a side door and a service entrance. Have two men posted at each of these.

D'ANGELO
Are we expecting company..?

DE VINCENZI
That "delivery boy" with the hooded raincoat. Should be here any minute.

D'ANGELO
You think he's going to--

DE VINCENZI
Not he, *she*, D'Angelo. And yes, she's coming to finish the job she started. A German obsession with tidiness?

D'ANGELO
Would that she be Thelma Ludendorf?
De Vincenzi is already going to the stairway.

DE VINCENZI
Get to work, D'Angelo.

D'Angelo starts off, then heads back. Producing a report from his pocket, he hands it to De Vincenzi.

D'ANGELO
Here's the report for Sid Renier's bank account. All the transactions over the past two months. As you predicted, the lab found arsenic in Miss Paris' wine glass from Cinecittá.

DE VINCENZI
So Ludendorf spiked it! Which means we got there just in time.

De Vincenzi stuffs the report in his pocket.

D'ANGELO
A question.

DE VINCENZI
(turning back to him, patiently)
Yes, D'Angelo?

D'ANGELO
Let me see if I understand this.
Ludendorf knows *you know* she may be the murderer?

DE VINCENZI
Not exactly. She knows I saw the raincoat in her room at Cinecittá. A raincoat just like the one we're told was used by the murderer.

D'ANGELO

Isn't that reckless of her? To risk coming here. In broad daylight. Dressed like that? She must think we're fools.

DE VINCENZI

Overconfidence is the undoing of most criminals. Besides, if I'm right there's a lot more at stake than her well-being.

D'ANGELO

So you think she'll just stroll right in here wearing that same raincoat, on a beautiful sunny day, holding a box of chocolates which she suspects *we suspect* are poisoned?

DE VINCENZI

(with a mischievous grin)
Isn't our work *fascinating*?

De Vincenzi steps lightly up the stairs as a mystified D'Angelo goes to speak with the policemen in the lobby.

CUT TO:

125 INT. THIRD FLOOR. EXCELSIOR HOTEL, ROME - CONTINUOUS

De Vincenzi quickly rounds the circular stairway and reaches Assia's floor. He strides to the door of her Suite (#313) where Tozzi is standing guard.

DE VINCENZI

(to Tozzi)
I'll take over now. Join Lt. D'Angelo downstairs.

As Tozzi takes off, De Vincenzi knocks on the door -- two long, three short. When the door opens, Cobina is again delighted to see him; the hours of tense waiting have etched her beautiful face with worry. Assia appears behind her.

COBINA

You're back! Finally! We--

DE VINCENZI

(pressing his fingers to her lips)
---haven't much time.

Looking in the hallway, she notices Tozzi has left.

COBINA

Where are the police?

DE VINCENZI

Gone. At my request.
(at her wonderment)
I've removed the police because I want them to think our guard is down. So they'll risk coming to you.

Cobina is about to voice her fresh concerns when De Vincenzi takes her hand...

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

I need to catch them red-handed, Cobina.

Cobina meets his deliberate gaze and finally nods, agreeing to cooperate.

CUT TO:

126 INT. LOBBY. EXCELSIOR HOTEL. ROME - CONTINUOUS

De Vincenzi agilely descends the stairs into the lobby where D'Angelo and the policemen are waiting for him.

D'ANGELO

When do you expect her?

DE VINCENZI

Soon...

De Vincenzi then takes his place on a couch, hiding behind a row of plants but with a clear view of the guest elevator.

D'Angelo tucks himself under the stairway, the service elevator easily in view.

De Vincenzi checks the large GRANDFATHER CLOCK. It is 11:40.

DISSOLVE TO:

It is now 11:50 on the grandfather clock.

DISSOLVE TO:

De Vincenzi leans forward, on the alert, when he spots the "Messenger Boy" in the hooded back raincoat nonchalantly entering the hotel carrying the box of chocolates.

SUPERIMPOSE: EXCELSIOR HOTEL, ROME - DAY TWO - 12:01 PM

The policemen at the door look to..

...De Vincenzi who raises a restraining hand motioning them to hold off for now. As he watches the Messenger cross the lobby he mumbles to himself...

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

She *is* reckless, isn't she? That can only mean she knows something we don't.

Spotting the Messenger, D'Angelo is immediately on his toes. His quick eyes flit to...

...De Vincenzi who again proffers a restraining hand, cautioning restraint. De Vincenzi and...

...D'Angelo watch the Messenger call the service elevator. When the doors hiss open, the Messenger disappears within.

De Vincenzi checks...

...the dial atop the service elevator. Instead of going up to Assia's floor, the elevator is going down...to the garage!

De Vincenzi is immediately on his feet, running to the stairs, hurrying down to the garage. D'Angelo follows.

CUT TO:

127 INT. GARAGE. EXCELSIOR HOTEL, ROME - CONTINUOUS

Reaching the garage (housing a few dozen late model cars), they scan the shadows for a sign of the Messenger.

D'ANGELO
We've lost her! Damn it!

DE VINCENZI
Temper, D'Angelo. Hot blood prevents a cool head.
(looking around)
There must be another way up.

And he races back up the stairs.

CUT TO:

128 INT. EXCELSIOR HOTEL. ROME - CONTINUOUS

De Vincenzi is already at the reception desk when D'Angelo catches up. The Receptionist faces him with a pat smile...

DE VINCENZI
Is there any other way of getting to the third floor besides these two elevators and the stairs?
(he points them out)

RECEPTIONIST
Yes, Inspector. We installed a freight elevator last summer, but it's hardly open to the general--

DE VINCENZI
(breaking in/with urgency)
Where is it?

RECEPTIONIST
In the back. Facing via Boncompagni.

The Receptionist peers disapprovingly as the two hurry (disruptively) across the lobby.

129 EXT. VIA BONCOMPAGNI/EXCELSIOR HOTEL, ROME - CONTINUOUS

De Vincenzi and D'Angelo race out of the Excelsior's main revolving door (almost running over an elderly woman with a Terrier), angling left into Via Boncompagni.

Reaching the back of the hotel, they find a BUSBOY waiting to load boxes of supplies into the freight elevator. The Busboy slams his hand on the call button impatiently waiting for the elevator to return.

De Vincenzi races to a stop beside him, flashing his badge, his hand on his holster.

DE VINCENZI
Is this the freight elevator?

Terrified by the badge and the gun, the Busboy nods.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
Is someone in there now?

The Busboy nods again pointing upwards as if to communicate the direction in which that someone is going.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
A black raincoat with a hood?

Again, unable to find his voice, the Busboy nods.

De Vincenzi checks the dial over the elevator.

DETAIL: It's approaching the first floor.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
Thank you. You've been most cooperative!

As De Vincenzi and D'Angelo take off again, the Busboy timidly peeks around the corner.

130 INT. EXCELSIOR HOTEL. ROME - CONTINUOUS

Pursued by D'Angelo, De Vincenzi hurries through the revolving door, creating havoc and winning the Receptionist's disfavor. Narrowly avoiding a luggage cart, De Vincenzi races up the stairs, two at a time. D'Angelo is close behind, along with a few policemen.

CUT TO:

FLASH/SUPERIMPOSE: BERGER CHECKS HIS WATCH: 12:15 PM.

CUT TO:

The dial on the freight elevator nears the second floor.

CUT TO:

De Vincenzi, D'Angelo and the police reach the mezzanine where they are blocked by a barrage of German tourists.

CUT TO:

The dial moves towards the number "3".

CUT TO:

FLASH/SUPERIMPOSE: THELMA CHECKS HER WATCH: 12:21 PM.

CUT TO:

The detectives and the police finally clear a path past the tourists and sprint to the next flight of stairs...

CUT TO:

The doors of the freight elevator slide open. The Messenger steps out and walks towards Assia's Suite.

DETAIL: The box of chocolates in the messenger's hand.

The Messenger passes Tozzi. He pauses briefly as Tozzi whispers something in his ear and moves on into the freight elevator. The doors HISS shut. Tozzi disappears.

CUT TO:

FLASH/SUPERIMPOSE: BERGER LIGHTS A GARCIA Y VEGA CIGARILLO AND TAKES A PUFF, DEEP IN THOUGHT, INSPIRED .

CUT TO:

De Vincenzi takes the stairs two at a time.

CUT TO:

The Hooded Messenger reaches Assia's Suite (#313).

DETAIL: The Messenger KNOCKS on the door: 2 long, 3 short.

CUT TO:

De Vincenzi, D'Angelo and the police rush down the landing of the first floor and up the stairs...

CUT TO:

Cobina opens the door expecting to see De Vincenzi. She's shocked to see the Messenger in the hooded raincoat -- a black raincoat! Alarmed, she tries to close the door in his face. But the Messenger is quicker and...

...slips his foot in the door, blocking her when...

DE VINCENZI (O.S.)
Police! Freeze or I'll shoot.

De Vincenzi advances, his gun trained on the Messenger.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
Turn around! Facing me!

To De Vincenzi's surprise, the Messenger turns to reveal the terrified features of a 19-YEAR-OLD BOY, CAMILLO.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
Who are you?

CAMILLO
(voice trembling with fear)
C-Camillo G-G-Giampietri.

DE VINCENZI

What are you doing here?

CAMILLO

A l-l-lady...

DE VINCENZI

Simmer down, Camillo. Nothing will happen to you if you just tell us the truth. Who sent you?

CAMILLO

A l-lady came by a little while ago. To my newsstand. She looked classy, you know...new shoes. She put this raincoat on me and told me to deliver these chocolates to Suite 313. She said to use the service elevator, go down a floor and switch to the freight. Someone would meet me on the third floor, she said. To give me more information.

DE VINCENZI

What information?

CAMILLO

Some guy. Looked like one of yours. Tall. Big. He told me how to knock on the door. Two long, three short.

FLASH: TOZZI GLANCES AT DE VINCENZI - SUSPICIOUSLY.

DE VINCENZI

We have spies in our own ranks!
(he shows him Thelma's photo)
This lady?

CAMILLO

(nodding repeatedly)
She paid me a lot of money! Said she'd pay more once the chocolates were delivered...
(taking the money from his pocket)
Look! - Can I keep it?

DE VINCENZI

We'll see. Hold onto it in the meantime.

Camillo happily slips the bills back into his dirty pants.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

Has she ever sent you on any other errands? Yesterday, for instance?

CAMILLO

(shaking his head vigorously)
I've never seen her before today, sir.

Despondent, De Vincenzi takes the box of chocolates from Cobina and hands them to D'Angelo.

DE VINCENZI

Take these to the lab. See if they're--

D'ANGELO

I know.

DE VINCENZI

And put Camillo here in a holding cell
till I know more.

CAMILLO

(excited)
Wow! A *holding cell*!

D'ANGELO

(hauling him off/to Camillo)
The initial thrill wears thin. Believe
me.

De Vincenzi holds Cobina's hands in his own.

DE VINCENZI

Thank you for trusting me. I'll be by
later...

COBINA

Carlo--?

DE VINCENZI

(interjecting as he moves off)
Later! Please. I'll be by later.

Cobina watches him disappear down the stairs. SLOWLY MOVE
IN TO A CLOSE UP of Cobina, tears have formed in her eyes,
her expression is one of deep regret.

DE VINCENZI (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(angry with himself)
The whole thing was a wild goose chase!
The delivery boy, a decoy! - But why?

131 EXT. QUESTURA, ROME - AFTERNOON

De Vincenzi enters police headquarters.

DE VINCENZI (V.O.)

Why the charade? Unless...

132 INT. QUESTURA, ROME. STAIRWAY - CONTINUOUS

The Inspector makes his way up the stairs, deep in thought.

SUPERIMPOSE: QUESTURA DI ROMA - DAY TWO - 1:02 PM

DE VINCENZI (V.O.)

Unless it's a diversion of some kind!
She may have wanted us to focus on her
little theatrics while she...

MAGGIONI (V.O.)

While she what?

133 INT. POLICE COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE. QUESTURA - CONTINUOUS

De Vincenzi paces the floor in front of Maggioni's desk.

DE VINCENZI

I'm beginning to think these murders --
Boldviski's, Nicholson's -- they may
have been just a smoke screen.

MAGGIONI

And the fire would be..?

DE VINCENZI

Huge! A forest fire!

MAGGIONI

(with umbrage)
You said this would make sense one day!
So lets start making sense. *Boldviski*,
Nicholson. What the hell do we know!?

DE VINCENZI

(dismissively)
Oh, we've solved those cases!

MAGGIONI

Have we now?! And just exactly when
were you going to fill me in? Before or
after the forest fire?
(shaking his head)
Talk about diversions!

DE VINCENZI

Okay. Lets start with Romeo.

MAGGIONI

*"What light through yonder window
breaks?"*

DE VINCENZI

We know that Sid Renier left a bottle
of Malaga in Boldviski's Suite yesterday
morning.

MAGGIONI

Evidence..?

As he speaks, De Vincenzi starts to take out all the
evidence that's accumulated in his pockets, depositing it
on Maggioni's desk: his notes, the spent cartridges,
Thelma's discarded cigarillos, the lab reports for
fingerprints and poisons, Boldviski's notebook...

DE VINCENZI

Gita Galena saw him carrying the bottle
at about 6:30 am. He was on the 6th
floor. Boldviski's Suite is 628.

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE: GITA PEERS OUT AT SID CARRYING THE
PARTIALLY CONCEALED BOTTLE DOWN THE HOTEL CORRIDOR.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

(slips on glasses/consults notes)
We found Renier's prints on the bottle
and on the door to Boldviski's Suite.
And Caienni confessed that he'd given
Renier the key to that Suite the day
before Nicholson's death.

MAGGIONI

For what reason?

DE VINCENZI

Caienni made up a story that he'd sent
Renier to get Boldviski's viewfinder,
but that's a lie. Paolo Vergolli told
me Boldviski was never without his
viewfinder.

MAGGIONI

And the poison?

DE VINCENZI

(finds the lab reports)
The lab found a massive dose of
strychnine in the bottle of Malaga. And
Nicholson's cause of death was strychnine
poisoning.

MAGGIONI

So we have Renier entering Boldviski's
Suite with a key he got from Caienni
and leaving a bottle of poisoned wine.

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE: REACHING BOLDVISKI'S SUITE, SID
SPOTS AN ICE BUCKET OUTSIDE HIS ROOM. USING THE KEY TO LET
HIMSELF INTO BOLDVISKI'S SUITE, SID CARRIES THE BUCKET TO
THE COFFEE TABLE, DEPOSITING HIS BOTTLE OF MALAGA IN IT.

MAGGIONI (CONT'D)

That's means and opportunity. - Motive?

DE VINCENZI

Money.
(producing the bank statement)
\$20,000 was paid into Renier's account
just two days. Wired from Acidalia.
Signed for by Caienni.

MAGGIONI

But Boldviski didn't die from drinking
that wine, did he?

DE VINCENZI

Exactly. Boldviski was an expert on
poisons. I found a copy of Hugo Glaser's
"The History Of Poisons" in his suite.

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE: DE VINCENZI FINDS THE BOOK ON POISONS
IN BOLDVISKI'S TRUNK IN HIS HOTEL SUITE.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

So when he uncorked the bottle, he immediately recognized the pungent smell of almonds and knew it was poisoned...

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE: BOLDVISKI UNCORKS the MALAGA, SMELLS THE CORK AND SMILES, STUFFING THE CORK BACK INTO THE BOTTLE.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

And he gave it to Thelma to use in the scene with Romeo...

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE: BOLDVISKI APPEARS AT THELMA'S DOOR AND GIVES HER THE BOTTLE OF WINE.

MAGGIONI

But why would Boldviski want to kill his own leading man?

DE VINCENZI

(showing him another document)
According to this production schedule, the Crypt Scene, Romeo's death, was Seth Nicholson's last day of work. So Boldviski actually didn't need him after that, dead or alive! Then there's this...
(he produces Boldviski notebook)
Boldviski's notebook. He wrote everything in here. His thoughts, experiences, ideas...a real page-turner! Listen to this, he wrote it just yesterday...Do you speak French?

MAGGIONI

Of course not! I'm Italian.

DE VINCENZI

(translating)
"Seth is not a great actor. But he looks the part, and there may be a way to artificially coax a performance out of him...Sid has providentially brought me the perfect tool for my trade...the bottle that was meant for me."

MAGGIONI

So you're saying Boldviski already had motive and opportunity and Renier supplied the means. The bottle of Malaga.

DE VINCENZI

Which he got from Caienni along with the \$20,000. Caienni's prints were also all over that bottle of Malaga.
(with a sardonic smile)
Can you imagine how Renier and Caienni must've felt when they had to stand there and watch Seth die knowing that sounding the alarm would've been their undoing!

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE: SID GLANCES AT CAIENNI AS SETH SITS NEXT TO THE BODY OF JULIET, DRINKS THE POTION AND *DIES*.

MAGGIONI

But why would Caienni have paid Sid to kill Boldviski? They were partners, weren't they.

DE VINCENZI

Boldviski had a third of Acidalia. Killing him would've increased Caienni's share. But Caienni had another motive. Revenge. His girlfriend, Mary Lovell...

MAGGIONI

That dancehall girl..?

DE VINCENZI

She was meant to play Juliet, but Boldviski treated her the way he treated *all* his women, and that rubbed Caienni the wrong way.

MAGGIONI

So what are the charges?

DE VINCENZI

Boldviski: the premeditated murder of Seth Nicholson. Postmortem. Then there's Renier and Caienni: the attempted premeditated murder of Boldviski, with Caienni as an accessory before the fact.

MAGGIONI

And since they both knew Romeo was drinking poison but did nothing to prevent it, they're also accessories to the death of Seth Nicholson.
(shaking his head)
What a case: everybody's killing everybody! Even *after* they're dead! -
What about Ludendorf?

Before De Vincenzi can answer, D'Angelo appears, sweaty and out of breath. He holds the new lab reports.

D'ANGELO

They rushed these through!
(hands De Vincenzi the report)
The Excelsior chocolates were clean.

DE VINCENZI

So we've come round full circle!

MAGGIONI

(becoming edgy)
What circle?! Who the hell killed Boldviski?!

DE VINCENZI

Thelma Ludendorf, of course.

D'Angelo and Maggioni are taken aback by his indictment, delivered so casually, and he reacts to their amazement.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
Surely nobody still doubts that! Not
with all the evidence we have!

MAGGIONI
Why don't you spell it out for us,
anyway?

DE VINCENZI (V.O.)
You see, Thelma Ludendorf loved
Boldviski. A morbid love...

CUT TO:

134 INT. QUESTURA, ROME - CONTINUOUS

De Vincenzi, D'Angelo and Maggioni walk down the vast halls of the *Questura*, past tall statues of famous statesmen, across the huge window overlooking Piazza Venezia where, once again, the motorcade of Fascists and Nazis (headed by Hitler and Mussolini) appear in the crowded square.

DE VINCENZI
She was jealous! Seeing him with Cobina
and Blanca and who knows how many others!
But there was much more to this crime
than the adolescent: "*if I can't have
him, no one else can*".

They three stop to look at the motorcade.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
I think that when Boldviski went to her
Suite early yesterday morning, to give
her the bottle of Malaga, much more
happened than what she let on.

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE/MUTED: THELMA OPENS THE DOOR TO BOLDVISKI WHO HANDS HER THE BOTTLE OF MALAGA. BEHIND HER, BOLDVISKI GLIMPSES THE SS UNIFORM FLUNG OVER A CHAIR. THE FLASHBACK ENDS THERE...ALMOST IN A PUFF OF SMOKE...

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
I don't know what it is yet. But I
believe it has something to do with
Hitler's visit to Rome. And she was
helped by the SS.

MAGGIONI
What do Hitler and the SS have to do
with Boldviski?!

DE VINCENZI
I don't know yet...

135 INT. POLICE COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE. QUESTURA - CONTINUOUS

De Vincenzi facing his pile of evidence on the desk...

DE VINCENZI

There's something missing...

Maggioni and D'Angelo gaze at De Vincenzi who studies the evidence spewed on the Commissioner's desk. So as not to disturb the Inspector, D'Angelo whispers...

D'ANGELO

He's always looking for the big picture, you know. Like with Napoleon.

MAGGIONI

Napoleon?!

D'ANGELO

He seems to believe that a Frenchman named Montelban...

DE VINCENZI

(eyes still on the evidence)
De Montholon! Albine de Montholon. And stop whispering, I'm right here!

MAGGIONI

(struggling to follow)
Montholon?

DE VINCENZI

His wife was sleeping with Napoleon, he was jealous, so he murdered him.

Maggioni is now really lost. De Vincenzi is still focused on the evidence as he offhandedly considers...

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

A shame Albine didn't kill him earlier. If he had, instead of being a complete unknown, de Montholon would've been as famous as Brutus was for killing Caesar. One dictator was one too many for both France and the Roman Empire!

Suddenly De Vincenzi looks up, eyes wide.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

One dictator, one too much. So two dictators... What a damn fool I've been! It's been right there under my nose!
(rummaging through his evidence)
What did Boldviski say before he died?
(reading from his notes)
"...Your plan won't work? I won't let your Hitler take over."

MAGGIONI

What plan? Take over what? What the hell are you talking about!

DE VINCENZI

(rising from his chair/to himself)
She has a rifle. Russian made. Mosin-Nagant.

(MORE)

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

And the German Embassy confirmed she's
a sharpshooter. The best. And Mary said
Ludendorf is a militant...

(overtaken by the emotion)
A militant Nazi!

MAGGIONI

Mosin-Nagant is no toy! That's a high-
precision rifle! Made for--

DE VINCENZI

Snipers. Ludendorf has a sniper's rifle.

Now it's D'Angelo's turn to be lost.

MAGGIONI

Why didn't she use *that* to kill
Boldviski?

DE VINCENZI

(in a disembodied voice)
She was saving it for someone else?

DE VINCENZI and MAGGIONI look at one another, and their
eyes gravitate to the photo of Mussolini.

FAST CUT TO:

136 INT. EXCELSIOR HOTEL. ROME - SAME DAY

Again the revolving glass door of the Excelsior admits
into the hotel the agitated figures of D'Angelo and De
Vincenzi. The two men race past the Receptionist (who rolls
his eyes to Heaven) and up the stairs, two at a time.

SUPERIMPOSE: **EXCELSIOR HOTEL, ROME - DAY TWO - 1:57 PM**

FAST CUT TO:

De Vincenzi KNOCKS repeatedly on the door to Suite 406.
Out of breath, D'Angelo soon appears beside him. As the
Inspector nervously waits for a response, the Lieutenant
merely pushes the door which easily swings open.

137 INT. THELMA'S SUITE. EXCELSIOR HOTEL, ROME - CONTINUOUS

Entering, they find Berger sitting in an easy chair, dressed
in a gala SS uniform, casually smoking a *García y Vega*.

BERGER

(perfect English/German accent)
Afternoon, De Vincenzi. I've been
expecting you.

DE VINCENZI

Where is she?! What was Boldviski trying
to stop?!

BERGER

That idiot!

(MORE)

BERGER (CONT'D)

He thought he could bully the whole world! When he came to see Thelma yesterday morning, he treated her like a dog! Do this, do that! What made that Russian pig think he could talk down to a pure-blooded German?!

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE/MUTED: THELMA OPENS THE DOOR TO BOLDVISKI WHO HANDS HER THE BOTTLE IN THE NAPKIN. BEHIND HER, BOLDVISKI GLIMPSES THE UNIFORM WITH THE SS INSIGNIA. THELMA QUICKLY PLACES HERSELF IN HIS EYE LINE. BOLDVISKI TELLS HER TO USE THE MALAGA IN THE SCENE WITH SETH.

BERGER (CONT'D)

Those Bolsheviks have infested our race for centuries! Weakening us! But she was infatuated with him! The appeal of the artist on the impressionable!

DE VINCENZI

That appeal must've worn off. She killed him, didn't she?

BERGER

Yes, it came to that. Fortuitously so.
(his face hardening)
When he came here, yesterday morning, he saw my clothes and asked her about me. As if her life were any of his business! *Diese unedel ratte.*

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE/MUTED: INTRIGUED BY THE SS UNIFORM, BOLDVISKI STEPS PAST HER INTO THE SUITE AND PICKS UP THE JACKET, TURNING TO HER, DEMANDING TO KNOW WHAT SHE IS DOING WITH THE SS. THELMA IS TOO INTIMIDATED BY HIM TO ANSWER.

BERGER (CONT'D)

I heard him yelling and came out to see what was wrong. It turned physical...

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE/MUTED: BERGER COMES OUT OF THE BEDROOM AND CONFRONTS THE RUSSIAN. BOLDVISKI SHOUTS AT BERGER, WHO SHOUTS BACK. BERGER GRABS THE MAN AND TRIES TO THROW HIM OUT OF THE SUITE. BOLDVISKI STUMBLES AND FALLS TO THE FLOOR.

BERGER (CONT'D)

Boldviski fell. That's when he saw it.

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE/MUTED: AS BOLDVISKI GETS UP TO CONFRONT HIS ASSAILANT, HE SEES THE MAP OF ROME AND NEXT TO IT, THE *MOSIN-NAGANT* RIFLE. HIS MIND RACING, HE GAZES AT THELMA AND DEMANDS TO KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING.

DE VINCENZI

Saw what?

BERGER

Against the wall. The Gestapo's map. With *Der Führer's* itinerary. And the rifle. He saw that, too. And he guessed it...

DE VINCENZI
Your plot to kill Mussolini.

Their eyes meet as...D'Angelo's mouth drops open.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
Tell me. Have you shared any of this
scheme with your Chancellor?

BERGER
(with haughty disdain)
Of course not. Why disturb *Der Führer*
with matters of strategy that can be
handled more...
(with a sardonic smile)
...privately.

DE VINCENZI
So this plot was your idea. The SS is
acting alone...

Berger's smile broadens in the affirmative.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)
And Boldviski was suddenly in the way...

BERGER
Two years' of planning were at risk.

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE/MUTED: THELMA FALTERS. BOLDVISKI
YELLS SOMETHING AND STORMS OUT, LEAVING THELMA WITH BERGER'S
DELIBERATE GAZE. AS THE SUPERIMPOSED IMAGE DISSIPATES.

BERGER (CONT'D)
So I decided: whatever the Russian
thought he knew, it was already too
much. *Er muss weg!* But that foolish
woman had fallen in love with him, *that*
Schwein! So she refused at first until
I reminded her that our mission is the
key to the future of Germany! And *die*
Zukunft des Deutschen Reiches is above
all personal needs.
(another crooked smile)
And I planned it. A work of art!

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE/INDISTINCT DIALOGUE: THELMA PURCHASES
THE WHITE CHOCOLATES AT THE CINECITTÁ COMMISSARY...

...BERGER GIVES HER THE ARSENIC WHICH SHE INJECTS INTO THE
CHOCOLATES WITH A SYRINGE...

...THELMA THEN "BORROWS" THE KEY FROM ASSIA'S PURSE AND...

...MAKES A COPY OF THE KEY AT MARTINI LOCKSMITHS...

...RETURNING THE KEY TO ASSIA'S PURSE UNNOTICED...

...THELMA THEN SNEAKS IN THE BACK ENTRANCE OF VIA BRESCIA
25 DRESSED AS THE HOODED DELIVERY BOY. SHE GOES TO COBINA'S
DOOR AND KNOCKS ON IT. COBINA OPENS. PLEASED, SHE TAKES
THE YELLOW FLOWERS AND THE BOX OF CHOCOLATES....

DE VINCENZI (V.O.)

But there was a flaw. Thelma went back.

END OF FLASHBACK.

BERGER

Her idea! Subordinates must never act independently!

DE VINCENZI

It's a good thing she did, or your work of art would've been as inadequate as your Führer's watercolors.

FLASHBACK/SUPERIMPOSE/INDISTINCT DIALOGUE/ BITS AND PIECES **IN STACCATO** OF THE SEQUENCES ALREADY SEEN...THELMA LETS HERSELF INTO COBINA'S HOUSE. --- SHE FINDS THE BONE-HANDLED KNIFE -- BOLDVISKI COMES INTO THE HALLWAY -- HE HISSES AT HER, ANGRILY -- THELMA RAISES THE KNIFE AND STABS HIM IN THE BACK -- HE SIGHS AND FALLS TO THE FLOOR...

BERGER (V.O.)

That's where you're wrong, De Vincenzi! There was no need for her to go back and stab the man. He would've died anyway. Just as I had planned it. A mere matter of time! The arsenic was more than enough!

De Vincenzi draws his pistol, fighting back the urge to shoot this hateful man.

DE VINCENZI

Where is Ludendorf?!

BERGER

There's another thing you missed, De Vincenzi. The obvious! I could've shot Boldviski then and there, in that hotel room. And quietly disposed of the body.

DE VINCENZI

Why didn't you?

BERGER

A famous Hollywood director like Boldviski murdered mysteriously! In his ex wife's apartment! Why, that's front page news! The Italian police would assign their very best man to such a case. A man like you. Leaving us free to do our work virtually unnoticed.

DE VINCENZI

So Boldviski's murder was a diversion! And Romeo & Juliet was Ludendorf's cover?

BERGE

Brilliant, isn't it? The murder of that actor just made it all the more perfect. While you were chasing down tremors, we were preparing the Earthquake.

DE VINCENZI

Where is she?

BERGER

It's too late, De Vincenzi!

DE VINCENZI

(aiming the barrel at his head)
Where!?

BERGER

You think I fear death? My martyrdom
would be well worth the cause!

D'Angelo draws his own pistol, jamming the barrel into
Berger's genitalia.

D'ANGELO

How about being part of a super race
without balls?

(he has Berger's full attention)
Would that be well worth the cause?

BERGER

You wouldn't?

D'ANGELO

Blow your balls off? Try me.
(cocking his pistol)
One...Two...

BERGER

Colosseum. 3 pm....

De Vincenzi checks his watch.

DE VINCENZI

2:18. That gives us 42 minutes to prevent
World War Two. Cuff him and follow me.

As De Vincenzi runs out, D'Angelo cuffs Berger to the
radiator. Berger spits in his face, and D'Angelo smiles.

D'ANGELO

I was hoping you'd do that.

And he throws a punch that sends Berger to a peaceful place.

FAST CUT TO:

138 INT. EXCELSIOR HOTEL. ROME - CONTINUOUS

Yet again, De Vincenzi and D'Angelo are running down the
stairs of the Excelsior.

D'ANGELO

I'll alert the Commissioner.

DE VINCENZI

No, D'Angelo. If we call Maggioni, he'll
have the whole police force on this...

D'ANGELO

(puzzled)
And we don't want that?

DE VINCENZI

Think about it! All that police. All
the commotion! What would happen when
the truth was known?! That some crazy
Nazis wants Mussolini dead?

D'Angelo thinks about it and finally nods, understanding.

D'ANGELO

So where does that leave us?

De Vincenzi grins at his Lieutenant as they reach the lobby
and race to the revolving door.

DE VINCENZI

It's just you and me, D'Angelo.

FAST CUT TO:

139 EXT. COLOSSEUM. ROME - MOMENTS LATER

Wearing a black jump suit, Thelma races into the Colosseum.
Passing under the arches, she makes her way into the central
arena. *

SUPERIMPOSE: COLOSSEUM, ROME - DAY TWO - 2:27 PM

The amphitheater is empty (SAVE FOR THE SETS BUILT FOR
VERDI'S OPERA, NABUCCO). It is empty because...

FAST CUT TO:

140 EXT. PIAZZA VENEZIA. ROME - CONTINUOUS

...most of the city has gathered to witness Hitler's final
motorcade. The open limousine carrying Hitler and Mussolini
winds its way through the masses.

FAST CUT TO:

141 INT. COLOSSEUM. ROME - CONTINUOUS

Reaching the West Wall, Thelma looks up at the very top of
the structure, 160 feet above the ground. She then searches
through the ruins and smiles when she sees her attaché
case hidden in an ancient niche. Opening the case, she
quickly reassembles the rifle, straps it to her back and
jumps agilely over the ruins of the Emperor's Loge, starting
her climb. *

FAST CUT TO:

142 EXT. VIA DIE FORI IMPERIALI. ROME - CONTINUOUS

The motorcade makes its way down the boulevard, heading
for the Colosseum less than a mile away.

The cheering crowds press forward to catch a glimpse of the open limousine where two dictators stand in obstinacy.

FAST CUT TO:

143 INT. COLOSSEUM. ROME - CONTINUOUS

Thelma has reached the tiers and arches that once made up the seating on the first floor. She checks her watch...

DETAIL: It is 2:38 pm.

FAST CUT TO:

144 EXT. PIAZZA VENEZIA. ROME - CONTINUOUS

De Vincenzi is once again stuck in traffic.

145 INT. POLICE CAR - CONTINUOUS

De Vincenzi and D'Angelo check their watches simultaneously.

D'ANGELO
2:40. We'll never make it!

DE VINCENZI
(turning a hard right)
We'll take *Teatro di Marcello*! That should be empty! Most of Rome is here!

146 EXT. PIAZZA VENEZIA. ROME - CONTINUOUS

And the police car swerves off down a side street.

FAST CUT TO:

147 INT. COLOSSEUM. ROME - CONTINUOUS

Thelma clears the second floor of tiers. She looks up at the top of the West Wall just a few yards away.

Suddenly Thelma loses her footing and slips on the brick-faced concrete. Catching herself with one hand, she hangs over 120 feet from the ground.

Regaining her composure, she swings her body so her other hand can grab hold of the concrete. She then pulls herself up onto the top of a narrow archway. She checks her watch.

DETAIL: It is 2:47 pm.

FAST CUT TO:

148 EXT. VIA DIE FORI IMPERIALI. ROME - CONTINUOUS

Embraced by a CHEERING throng, the motorcade nears the Colosseum.

FAST CUT TO:

149 EXT. VIA DEI CERCHI. ROME - CONTINUOUS

De Vincenzi's car swerves in and out of traffic and turns up Via San Gregorio heading for the Colosseum.

FAST CUT TO:

150 INT. COLOSSEUM. ROME - CONTINUOUS

Thelma has nimbly reached the very top of the West Wall. Smiling with satisfaction, she finds a spot to position herself. She then takes the Mosin-Nagant out of its casing and snaps on the sight. Resting the rifle in the crook of her arm, she leans against the wall, presses the butt plate against her shoulder, and takes aim through an archway.

HER POV/THROUGH THE SIGHT: The cross-hairs SWEEP ACROSS THE SHOT and line up with the approaching open limousine, less than a two hundred yards away.

FAST CUT TO:

151 EXT. VIA DIE FORI IMPERIALI. ROME - CONTINUOUS

The open limousine and the motorcade reach the Colosseum and start circling round it towards Via Claudia.

FAST CUT TO:

152 EXT. COLOSSEUM. ROME - CONTINUOUS

De Vincenzi's car skids to a stop at the top of Via San Gregorio. Abandoning the car, De Vincenzi and D'Angelo start down a slope leading to the entrance to the Colosseum.

FAST CUT TO:

153 INT. COLOSSEUM. ROME - CONTINUOUS

Thelma's eyes are alive with purpose as she comfortably cradles the mighty rifle and takes aim again.

HER POV/THROUGH THE SIGHT: The cross-hairs stop directly in line with Mussolini's forehead.

DETAIL: Thelma's finger caresses the trigger...

FAST CUT TO:

WHILE...De Vincenzi and D'Angelo race under the archways into the arena. They quickly scan the timeworn walls of the amphitheater searching for Thelma. Suddenly...

D'ANGELO
(pointing)
There!

De Vincenzi looks up and spots...

...Thelma's black figure, tiny against the huge West Wall.

FAST CUT TO:

Hearing D'Angelo, Thelma stiffens and looks down at D'Angelo and De Vincenzi dwarfed by the immensity of ancient Rome.

Drying the sweat from her eyes, Thelma takes a deep breath, steadying herself. Regaining her smile, she takes aim.

HER POV/THROUGH THE SIGHT: The cross-hairs are again in line with Mussolini's forehead, -- much closer now, and approaching. Easily within range.

DETAIL: And again, Thelma's finger caresses the trigger.

FAST CUT TO:

Now it is De Vincenzi's turn to be despondent. Drawing his pistol, he aims it at Thelma, but soon desists.

DE VINCENZI

She's too far away.
(checking his watch)
It's 2:55. We'll never make it.

D'ANGELO

(his face lighting up)
The elevator! The city just built one,
didn't it!?

DE VINCENZI

(starting off)
Of course! Two years the Nazis planned
this and they forgot all about the
elevator. So much for German precision.

D'ANGELO

Sometimes it helps to be Italian.

FAST CUT TO:

154 EXT. COLOSSEUM. ROME - CONTINUOUS

The motorcade is now circling the Colosseum.

FAST CUT TO:

155 INT. COLOSSEUM. ROME - CONTINUOUS

D'Angelo and De Vincenzi wait for the elevator. De Vincenzi nervously slams his open palm against the button.

D'ANGELO

Temper, sir. Hot blood prevents---

De Vincenzi casts him a sidelong glance which nips his phrase in the bud. The elevator suddenly arrives and both men hasten aboard.

FAST CUT TO:

THELMA'S POV/THROUGH THE SIGHT: The cross-hairs are on Mussolini's forehead.

Thelma rubs her eye and presses it back against the sight.

DETAIL: Her finger rests on the trigger. Ready to shoot.

FAST CUT TO:

156 EXT. COLOSSEUM. ROME - CONTINUOUS

OVERHEAD SHOT: The motorcade winds around the Colosseum.

FAST CUT TO:

157 INT. COLOSSEUM. ROME - CONTINUOUS

The elevator stops at the "third floor". De Vincenzi and D'Angelo rush out, racing around the narrow perimeter to the West Wall. D'Angelo slips. De Vincenzi catches him.

FAST CUT TO:

CLOSE ON: Thelma preparing to shoot.

THELMA'S POV/THROUGH THE SIGHT: The cross-hairs on Mussolini's forehead are perfectly positioned.

DETAIL: Thelma's finger teases the trigger.

CLOSE SHOT: A SHOE suddenly ENTERS THE FRAME, forcing the rifle upwards.

DETAIL: Thelma fires. A SHOT RINGS OUT, ECHOING WITH...

FAST CUT TO:

158 EXT. COLOSSEUM. ROME - CONTINUOUS

...21 RIFLES FIRING SIMULTANEOUSLY INTO THE SKY saluting the motorcade as it starts up Via Lubiana. Both dictators are alive and accounted for. *Smiling* in fact. WHILE...

FAST CUT TO:

159 INT. COLOSSEUM. ROME - CONTINUOUS

...Thelma witnesses De Vincenzi's charm.

DE VINCENZI
Good day, Miss Ludendorf. You are
obviously under arrest.

The woman grits her teeth and quickly tries to reload. De Vincenzi kicks the rifle out of her hands...

...down the archways of the Colosseum...

...bouncing from arch to arch and...

...falling into the pit where the lions where once housed.

DETAIL: The rifle smashes against the hard cobblestone, firing another SHOT WHICH RINGS OUT BECOMING...

DISSOLVE TO:

160 EXT. TAVERNA DI COSTANTINO. ROME - LATE NIGHT

...THE FRENZIED RAGTIME BEAT of Mary Lovell's dance routine. De Vincenzi and D'Angelo sit at a table near the stage. De Vincenzi is eating now, his first meal in two days.

SUPERIMPOSE: TAVERNA DI COSTANTINO, ROME - DAY THREE - 5:42 AM

The Inspector raises his glass of Champagne, toasting...

...Mary, who smiles at him from the stage.

161 EXT. TAVERNA DI COSTANTINO. ROME - MORNING

De Vincenzi and D'Angelo leave the Taverna as the first rays of dawning suffuse the gentle colors of Rome.

D'ANGELO

A shame we had to arrest her boyfriend.

DE VINCENZI

She didn't look upset about it. I think she knows we did her a favor.

D'ANGELO

Question...

DE VINCENZI

Yes, D'Angelo?

D'ANGELO

You disagree with him. Mussolini, I mean. Why did you save his life?

DE VINCENZI

Shakespeare again. Polonius says in Hamlet: "*This above all: to thine own self be true*". If we hadn't stopped Ludendorf, we would've become her accomplices. Pure and simple. What we may personally think of the victim is irrelevant. We are the Police. I mentioned that to Mrs. Helstein just a few days ago. We have an obligation.

D'ANGELO

So what do we do with dictators?

DE VINCENZI

Give them enough rope and they'll hang themselves. Like Napoleon. He was dead long before de Montholon poisoned him at St Helena. And the same will happen to them...

He points to a poster of Hitler and Mussolini. They then stand regarding one another, close friends in a world gone mad. As the STREET CLEANERS start to appear...

D'ANGELO

What now..?

DE VINCENZI

Case closed. Go home, D'Angelo. Your family hasn't seen you in two days.

They shake hands, then hug, and go their separate ways. De Vincenzi turns as an after-thought.

DE VINCENZI (CONT'D)

By the way, that kid, Camillo. Remember to have him released.

D'ANGELO

(nodding)
Where are you going?

DE VINCENZI

To visit a friend.

162 INT. HOLDING CELL. QUESTURA, ROME - SAME MORNING

Eyes widened in bewilderment, Camillo is set free and he wanders off, trying to digest what has happened to him.

163 INT. EXCELSIOR HOTEL. ROME - SAME MORNING

De Vincenzi KNOCKS on the door to Suite 313. No answer. He knocks again. Waits. Still no answer.

SUPERIMPOSE: EXCELSIOR HOTEL, ROME - DAY THREE - 8:15 AM

CUT TO:

De Vincenzi stops at the Receptionist (who truly hopes he will not disrupt his hotel again).

RECEPTIONIST

Inspector...

DE VINCENZI

I was looking for Miss Paris and Mrs. Helstein. They're not in their suite.

RECEPTIONIST

Miss Paris is no longer a guest here. Acidalia has canceled all the Suites.

DE VINCENZI

Thank you...

And the Receptionist watches him wander off, the slowest De Vincenzi has ever walked in this hotel.

DISSOLVE TO:

164 EXT. VIA BRESCIA 25. ROME - LATER

A bus pulls up to the curb not far from the house. De Vincenzi gets off and walks towards the gate...

SUPERIMPOSE: VIA BRESCIA 25, ROME - DAY THREE - 9:45 AM

165 INT. VIA BRESCIA 25. ROME - CONTINUOUS

The Inspector walks past the Porter's Lodge. He nods to Luisa who quickly races after him.

 LUISA
Inspector! Inspector...
 (when he turns to her)
Were you going up to Mrs. Helstein?
 (he nods)
She left. She and her daughter. That
pretty girl.

 DE VINCENZI
Left?

 LUISA
Moved out.

 DE VINCENZI
 (visibly shattered by the news)
Did they tell you where they were going?

 LUISA
Leaving the country, that's all.

As De Vincenzi nods pensively and starts off, Luisa quickly produces a letter from her apron.

 LUISA (CONT'D)
And she gave me this. For you, Inspector.

Enlivened by this, he takes it, as if it were a precious and ancient manuscript, and tucks it into his pocket.

 DE VINCENZI
Thank you. - A pleasure meeting you,
Mrs. Zanini. You've been most helpful.

She glances at a piece of paper folded in her copy of MADAME BOVARY. Trying to pronounce the French...

 LUISA
Mon devoir...

 DE VINCENZI
Et mon plaisir.

She's not sure what it means but she likes his warm smile. As he departs, she repeats, with a touch of swagger...

 LUISA
Mon devoir!

THE INTRODUCTION TO THE ARIA "VA PENSIERO SU ALI DORATE"
FROM VERDI'S "NABUCCO" IS HEARD OVER THE SHOT...

166 EXT. COLOSSEUM. ROME - EVENING

The Colosseum is packed for the opening night of NABUCCO.

De Vincenzi is alone, among the spectators, his eyes on the distant stage where the Opera is being performed.

SUPERIMPOSE: COLOSSEUM, ROME - DAY THREE - 9:22 PM

As "*Va Pensiero Su Ali Dorate*" swells, De Vincenzi's attention wanders to the Nazis and Fascists in the expensive loges nestled in the darkened recesses of the Colosseum, all leaning forward against the loges' railings like so many evil gargoyles peering down at *their...*

...HEBREW SLAVES chanting their melancholic aria.

De Vincenzi chances to spot Blanca Vertua seated in one of the first rows holding the arm of a dashing young man, a dark-haired version of Seth. Sensing the Inspector's presence, Blanca looks over her shoulder at him and smiles, offering an amiable wink of the eye: life goes on.

De Vincenzi smiles back at her. Yes, Life goes on. Getting to his feet, he moves off, in the midst of the crowd, a lone figure leaving the Colosseum...

...walking into the darkness.

DISSOLVE TO:

*

167 EXT. SYNAGOGUE. ROME - CONTINUOUS

De Vincenzi stops, lifting his gaze to the Star of David. A shadow in the night catches his attention, and he sees a YOUNG ORTHODOX RABBI leaving the house of God. The two men stop to regard one another, the Rabbi sizing up the other man: is he a threat? But when De Vincenzi smiles, the Rabbi smiles back and hurries off, anxious to avoid a group of LAUGHING NAZIS YOUTHS who pass the synagogue, gazing contemptuously at the Star of David above the portals...

FLASH: FOR AN INSTANT THAT STAR TURNS YELLOW, MADE OF CLOTH, WITH "*JUDE*" WRITTEN ACROSS IT.

168 INT. SYNAGOGUE. ROME - CONTINUOUS

De Vincenzi enters the darkened building. The Star on the mosaic window is reflected on the Ark (the *aron ha-kodesh*): the cabinet where the Torah scrolls are kept. A YOUNG CANTOR is rehearsing a beautiful Hebrew chant: the **ANA EL NA R'FANAH LA** ("*Please, God, forgive her; my God, forgive her...*"). De Vincenzi sits in a pew and, after a contemplative pause, as if remembering something, he produces from his pocket...

DETAIL:...the letter Luisa had given him, from Cobina...

He starts to read to himself. COBINA'S VOICE IS HEARD V.O.

COBINA (V.O.)

"My Dear Carlo, Assia and I have escaped to a friendlier nation in the West where my people may be spared the 'toll of death's bell'.

(MORE)

COBINA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
As for us, *'another time, another place'*, -
isn't that how you put it? It would
indeed have been wonderful."

De Vincenzi looks up: indeed wonderful, he thinks in musing as his eyes touch the gilded Tetragrammaton etched over the Tabernacle, the four Hebrew letters which signify God. He then looks at the Cantor, the two men alone, immersed in the majesty of God. De Vincenzi returns to reading...

COBINA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
"In that fleeting moment when I had
hoped that we could find a life together,
that events and men of power would allow
it, I thought of keeping this from you.
But now I owe you the truth, you above
all others, - the whole truth..."

De Vincenzi seems unaffected by the remark, reading on...

COBINA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
"When that messenger came, the one with
the black raincoat, I was delighted by
those gifts which were a sorely needed
boost to my ego."

169 **FLASHBACK/MUTED: VIA BRESCIA. COBINA OPENS THE DOOR TO HER APARTMENT AND SMILES SEEING THE FLOWERS AND CHOCOLATES AND TAKES THEM FROM THE "MESSENGER", TIPPING "HIM".**

COBINA (V.O.)
"A *secret admirer*, you said. Indeed!
But it turned out to be much, much more!"

COBINA MOVES INTO THE LIVING ROOM, HURRIEDLY PLACES THE FLOWERS IN A VASE AND OPENS THE BOX OF CHOCOLATES, GLANCING AT THEM. SHE AUTOMATICALLY PLACES THE OPEN BOX ON THE COFFEE TABLE. SHE THEN STOPS SHORT: SOMETHING'S WRONG. SHE SNIFFS THE CHOCOLATES. FROWNING, COBINA GOES TO A BOOKSHELF AND CONSULTS ONE OF MANY VOLUMES DEALING WITH POISONS AND THEIR DERIVATIVES, INCLUDING THE POISONS' BOOK BY HUGO GLASER WHICH DE VINCENZI HAD FOUND ON BOLDVISKI'S DESK.

COBINA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
"It was I who'd introduced Vassilli to the marvels of chemistry. That was my profession, if you remember. Chemistry. Especially the wonders of volatile potions, those extracts we call poisons. We both found them so...intriguing."

170 **INT. SYNAGOGUE. ROME - CONTINUOUS**

De Vincenzi's has a thin smile now as he reads on...

COBINA (V.O.)
"And I smelled it immediately, that
metalloid in allotropic form: arsenic.
Considering Vassilli's wealth of enemies,
I thought little of it at first.
(MORE)

COBINA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
An admirer...indeed! And I was about to
throw away *Snow White's poisoned apples*
when a thought struck me..."

171 **FLASHBACK/MUTED: VIA BRESCIA. SHE LOOKS UP FROM THE BOOK, HER EXPRESSION SOMBER. CLOSING THE BOX OF CHOCOLATES, SHE IS ABOUT TO TOSS IT INTO THE WASTEBASKET WHEN SHE THINKS BETTER OF IT, AN ODD, DISTANT SMILE GRACING HER LIPS...**

COBINA (V.O.)
"Why not reclaim my dignity at the hands
of a mysterious assassin? It all seemed
so natural. Fate had just dropped it in
my lap. Why not indeed!?"

REOPENING THE BOX OF CHOCOLATES, SHE PLACES THEM ON THE
COFFEE TABLE IN PLAIN VIEW AND ACCESSIBILITY...

COBINA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
"It was all so simple. He had a sweet
tooth, and Assia and I are both allergic.
He would never have dreamt that I..."
(she leaves the thought suspended)

LATER. COBINA AND ASSIA WATCH BOLDOVISKI COME INTO THE LIVING
ROOM (ON THE DAY OF HIS DEATH) AND SIT ON THE COUCH ACROSS
FROM THEM. SPOTTING THE WHITE CHOCOLATES ON THE COFFEE
TABLE, HE SCOOPS UP A HANDFUL, AVIDLY EATING THEM.

COBINA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
"Yes. So simple. And he had it coming,
that arrogant bully, meddling in people's
lives; all the pain he'd caused."

172 **EXT. SYNAGOGUE/PONTE FABRICIO. ROME - CONTINUOUS**

De Vincenzi leaves the synagogue, moving down the banks of
the Tiber, nearing Ponte Fabricio. His eyes are still on
Cobina's letter, illumined by the bright moonlight.

COBINA (V.O.)
"It was all so natural...."

Looking up, De Vincenzi suddenly has the illusion of seeing
himself on that same bridge, kissing Cobina as he had the
day before. A gentle, all-embracing kiss. He imagines seeing
Cobina look up from that kiss and add, in a soft whisper...

COBINA (CONT'D)
"So natural. But then you understand,
don't you, Carlo? Of course you do. I
sensed it in your kiss. You've known
all along, haven't you...?"

And as her image dissipates with...

COBINA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
"Love always, your Cobina."

...De Vincenzi starts to laugh, his laughter mounting as
he tears up the self-incriminating letter, tossing the
pieces to the wind, which gusts, carrying them down, down

till they are swallowed up by the swift brown currents of Rome's eternal river. A CLAP OF THUNDER announces the rain which abruptly envelopes him. Turning up his collar, he strolls off AS VERDI'S MUSIC RETURNS IN ITS FULLNESS: THE LAMENT OF THE HEBREW SLAVES IN *NABUCCO*. JIB UP OVER THE SYNAGOGUE TO THE STREETS OF THE GHETTO WHERE LIGHTS ARE BEING TURNED OFF, SHUTTERS CLOSED IN PREPARATION FOR THE NIGHT AND THE STORM. THE RAIN CONTINUES FALLING, HARDER NOW, *HISSING*, THE THUNDER COMPETING WITH THE CANTOR'S VOICE.

FOR A FLEETING INSTANT THAT RAIN BECOMES JETS OF ZYKLON-B GAS *HISSING* FROM A SHOWER HEAD...

FADE TO BLACK...