

The Flickering Light

Based on a True Story

Original Screenplay by

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FADE IN:

ON A DROP OF WATER

-- hanging suspended from a wooden beam. Daylight refracts through it from all sides, brilliant and beautiful. It fills our vision, dazzling and bright. Then we find --

A PAIR OF EYES

-- looking up from below, a man's eyes, face turned toward the ceiling, eyes wide and unblinking as --

THE DROP OF WATER

-- elongates, surrendering to gravity, stretching downward until at last it --

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-- into the man's eye. He doesn't blink. The drop of water pools in his eye and runs out the corner. The dead eyes set in a pallid, emaciated face continue to stare blankly upward as we come around to the other side, looking past the dead man to --

-- a bunk on the other side of a narrow aisle, where ROMY MUSTON, early 30s, lay looking at the dead man in the bunk across from him.

Then a pair of hands ENTER FRAME and lift the body out of its bunk. As they carry it away, we WIDEN to REVEAL that we are in the --

INT. MAXGLAN CONCENTRATION CAMP - BARRACKS - MORNING

As the two prisoners carry the body out of the barracks, they pass rows of other prisoners, all of them dark-haired, with angular faces that have seen too little food and too much death. Gypsies. They watch the body pass with vague interest. It's a common event.

A moment later, a German SERGEANT enters. Blows a whistle.

SERGEANT
Roll call. Outside.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The prisoners rise from their bunks like ghosts rising from their graves. They form up into a single line and march silently out the door.

Romy takes one last look at the empty bunk where the body had lain moments earlier, then rises to join the procession outside.

EXT. CAMP - GROUNDS - MORNING

Tired, dirty, the prisoners stand in the cold air wearing thin clothes, wavering, exhausted, as German soldiers check the numbers sewn to their shirts against lists on clipboards. The process is slow, excruciating. One of the prisoners falls. He's taken away.

SUPERIMPOSE:

Gypsy Concentration Camp

Maxglan-Leopoldskron, Austria

1942

Across the yard, the dead prisoner is carried away in a wheelbarrow, passing --

-- another prisoner standing on tip-toe beside a tree. A wire-hanger noose from the tree has been wrapped around his neck, his hands tied behind his back, so that he will choke himself if he lets his heels touch the ground. Soldiers walk past, smoking cigarettes, barely paying attention.

At last the rtle call is over, and the prisoners move out in rows, heading toward the rear of the camp.

CUT TO:

EXT. QUARRY - DAY

Romy and the rest of the prisoners work in a quarry located behind the camp. Pick-axes scrape away at the hard and unforgiving earth.

In the distance, they hear two gunshots. They keep working.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMP - GROUNDS - AFTERNOON

The prisoners spoon thin soup from metal bowls, eating in silence as the soldiers look on with only passing interest, smoking and talking among themselves.

They look up only when another TRUCK bearing new arrivals rumbles down the road that leads to the camp. It passes the entrance to this part of the camp and continues on toward the women's side of the camp, separated from this one by barbed wire on both sides, and a thirty-foot gap between, patrolled by soldiers.

Romy watches as female prisoners, also gypsies, step down from the truck and are herded into waiting barracks. The soldiers nudge each other as some of the prettier ones are nudged along.

One of the attractive female prisoners is ANNA KURANOVA, late 20s or early 30s. She jumps down to the ground and pauses, looking out at this place. As she looks toward the men's section of the camp, her gaze meets Romy. But if there is any connection, there's no time to see it as another soldier shoves her toward the waiting barracks.

Romy goes back to his meal.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMP - GROUNDS - NIGHT

Exhausted, barely able to walk, Romy and other prisoners from his barracks are marched back at the end of the day. As they pass a German mess hall, they hear --

-- music, and the sound of a woman singing. Romy glances through a window to see a makeshift movie screen, on which a copy of The Blue Angel is playing, starring Marlene Dietrich. The beauty of the music hangs in the air in stark contrast to the surrounding camp.

Romy tries for a better look, only to be nudged forward by a guard. He continues away, the music lingering.

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Romy is back in his bunk. Music from The Blue Angel filters in from the mess hall. He closes his eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. AUSTRIA - MOVIE THEATER - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

A legitimate theater converted to a cinema. The marquee announces "Die Blaue Engel." A light rain showers moviegoers leaving the last show of the night. As they get into cars or start walking home, a truck full of German soldiers drives past. Some of them wave. Some don't.

As the lights of the theater go dark, we PULL BACK to reveal Romy looking on from an adjacent alley. He waits until the last movie-goer has headed away, then moves off quickly.

EXT. ALLEY - REAR OF CINEMA - MOMENTS LATER

Romy comes around the back of the theater to find an elderly couple standing at the rear entrance. The man struggles with the rear door.

ROMY

Let me.

He opens the door. In the light that spills out from inside the theater, Romy sees a Star of David on the man's shirt. The man nods a cautious, silent thanks and escorts his wife inside. Romy glances around to see a few stragglers hurry down the alley, then he enters the theater as MUSIC from The Blue Angel RISES.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Marlene is on-screen in all her glory, singing "Falling in Love Again." But our focus here isn't Marlene, it's the audience: enraptured, transported, moved. All of the members of the audience wear one kind of symbol or another, for Jew or gypsy.

Romy sits in the center of the theater, watching the screen with a beatific expression, eyes shining with joy. This is a man who loves movies. We HOLD on him for a BEAT, then we HEAR:

ROMY (V.O.)

Did you see it, Gustav? Did you see
her?

INT. MOVIE THEATER - LOBBY - LATER

The place has cleared out except for Romy and the theater owner/manager GUSTAV, who is trying to clear up the theater after the final showing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUSTAV

I saw, I saw.

ROMY

No, I don't think so, because if you had seen, you would be on your knees right now thanking God for sending such a creature to live among us.

GUSTAV

These are new pants, I don't want to wrinkle them.

ROMY

God. So beautiful.
(beat)

I want to see it again.

Romy pauses to look up at a poster of Marlene.

ROMY

Someday I am going to marry her.

GUSTAV

Romy --

ROMY

I will find out where she lives, walk up to her and say, Hello, my name is Romy Mustow, and I am in love with you. Marry me. And she --

GUSTAV

-- she will call the police and they will beat you to death. And I tell you as your friend, that is a show I would not want to miss.

Gustav continues to clean up the place as Romy wanders the lobby.

ROMY

You're a cynic. And you prove my point. You didn't watch her. You didn't see.

GUSTAV

I saw...what I could. Romy, I load the film, I sell the food, I clean, I watch to make sure the Nazis don't peek inside because I'm not supposed
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUSTAV (CONT'D)
to do business with certain people...
I don't have time to sit and watch.

ROMY
You've always had time before.

GUSTAV
I have to make sure this place is
spotless for tomorrow.

ROMY
What's tomorrow?

Gustav doesn't answer, busying himself with a broom. Romy follows.

ROMY
You know, ever since you got back
from Berlin you've been like a
squirrel that found the last acorn
of winter and is terrified someone
will take it away. You keep looking
over your shoulder.

GUSTAV
These days, who doesn't?
(beat)
I don't know how much longer I can
keep doing this, Romy. Sooner or
later the police will find out I'm
letting Jews and gypsies in here,
and then it will not be so good for
me, I think.

ROMY
Then why do it at all?

GUSTAV
Because a little rebellion is good
for the soul. On the other hand, a
lot of rebellion will get you killed.

He goes to the cash register and counts the day's receipts.

GUSTAV
My wife thinks I'm crazy. It's not
like I'm doing anything important,
she says, like selling bread to people
who can't buy it, or maps to people
trying to escape.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOSEF

I show movies to people I'm not supposed to do business with. Why risk it? she said. So you know what I told her?

Romy shakes his head, no.

GUSTAV

A man walking down a sidewalk sees an ant on his back, its feet up in the air, like this.

(he mimes it)

The man says, "What are you doing, little ant?" The ant says, "I heard the sky was falling, so I'm bracing to catch it."

(beat)

The man says, "You're so small, and so close to the ground, what do you think you can do?" The ant shrugs and says, "Eh, I do what I can."

He smiles thinly, the first time we've seen it.

GUSTAV

I'm not a baker, I'm not a map-maker or a smuggler, I show movies. I do what I can. For a few hours, I can free their spirits, if not their bodies. Help them escape this nightmare. In the end, perhaps that will count for something with God.

(beat)

My wife's right. I am crazy.

He goes back to work, turning off lights and closing up shop.

ROMY

I hear they've started sending the Jews off to work camps.

GUSTAV

It's true. So I suggest you stay low as much as you can.

ROMY

Why? I'm a Gypsy, not a Jew.

GUSTAV

To some people, that's a distinction with no difference.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROMY

I disagree. I don't wander like other gypsies, I don't steal, I have a home here, a trade. As long as they need carpenters, I have a place.

GUSTAV

Romy --

ROMY

Besides, if they get rid of us, who will they blame when someone steals their wallet, eh? This will pass. It always does.

GUSTAV

You're wrong. You don't understand these people. You don't know what you're dealing with.

ROMY

And you do?

Gustav studies him, coming to an inner decision.

GUSTAV

You know what I think? I think it's time you got a real look at what we're up against.

He shuts off the lights and walks to the rear exit. Romy follows, his curiosity piqued.

EXT. ALLEY - REAR OF CINEMA - MOMENTS LATER

Once they're outside, Gustav locks the door, glances around, then looks to Romy.

GUSTAV

The theater's been rented tomorrow night for a private event. Very exclusive, inner party members, society people...I need someone to run the projection booth while I take care of things downstairs.

ROMY

Gustav --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUSTAV

I'll load the film before you get there, all you have to do is hit start and stop and stay inside the booth until I get you.

(beat)

The movie starts at eight, cocktails are at seven, so you need to be here by six-thirty, no later.

ROMY

What am I going to learn from inside a projection booth that you think I'm not learning out here?

GUSTAV

Six-thirty. Then I'm locking the door.

Gustav heads away. Romy watches him go, then heads off in the opposite direction.

CUT TO:

INT. ROMY'S SHOP - AFTERNOON

The shades are drawn against the day outside, and only a few lights are on inside, just enough to work by. The shop is crammed with examples of fine carpentry.

As Romy sands the shell of a clock, he pauses as sirens pass in front of the shop. Holds his breath. Then the sound fades, the police going elsewhere. As he goes back to work, Romy glances up the clock. Five o'clock. He debates what to do for a silent BEAT, then stands, picks up his coat and a bag of food, and heads out.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Romy walks down a narrow side-street, eating the apple. He turns a corner to a larger street and slows, then stops.

German soldiers and local police stand in front of a shop that's been defaced, the front windows broken out, JUDEN painted across the door. People are looting the store, carrying out furniture, candle-sticks, boxes. The police do nothing.

One of the police makes eye contact with Romy, who looks away and keeps walking. All along the street, red-bannered swastikas hang from light-poles and office buildings.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Couples walk arm in arm, children play, people window-shop, smoking and talking, blind to what is happening a few feet away.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - EVENING

Well-dressed Austrians exit from expensive cars and head into the theater, joined by a number of other officials in German and Nazi uniforms.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - LOBBY - EVENING

The reception is in full swing. Trays bearing food and wine glide past civilians in tuxedos, high-ranking uniformed German soldiers and formally dressed members of the SS. Classical music plays through the lobby speakers. Gustav moves quickly through it all, making sure everything goes as it should.

He glances up at a clock. Six-fifteen. He glances around to be sure he isn't seen, then hurries off to --

EXT. ALLEY - REAR OF CINEMA - LATE

Gustav stands at the rear door, looking down the alley. No sign of Romy. He checks his watch and resignedly starts back inside when he sees Romy heading toward him at a trot. Gustav pulls him inside and shuts the door.

INT. PROJECTION BOOTH - EVENING

Romy sits on the floor, eating cheese and crackers wrapped in a cloth from his bag. Music and laughter drifts up from the lobby below. The projector has already been loaded, empty film canisters littering the floor.

As Romy eats, he gets curious about the film cans, and turns one of them over. On the metal can, above a German swastika the stenciled title appears: TRIUMPH DES WILLENS.

Just then, the booth lights FLICKER...a signal to get ready. Romy scrambles to his feet and goes to the projection window, looking out into --

INT. CINEMA - CONTINUOUS

-- INTERCUTTING between the crowd below, and Romy in the booth. As the last audience members take their seats, the lights dim and a neatly uniformed SS officer steps onto the stage in front of the curtained movie screen. The audience applauds. He smiles, then holds up a hand for silence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SS OFFICER

In the six months since Germany reunited with our brothers here in Austria, many previously banned works of German art and culture have been shown for the first time. Next week, an exhibition of classical sculpture by the Fuhrer's favorite artist, Franz Kleinholz, will make its first appearance outside Germany at the Austrian Museum of Fine Art.

There's applause at this. When it fades....

SS OFFICER

His sculptures are beautiful to behold. But I will confess...I love the movies. I love American movies, I even love French movies. English movies, not so much.

Laughter.

SS OFFICER

But above all things, I love German movies. German movies, about German values, German history and tradition. Movies that proclaim the strength and pride of the German people. For the last five years, it has been illegal in Austria to show one of our finest films, the epic movie that documents our party congress in 1934. Tonight, at last, that film makes its debut here in Salzburg.

(beat)

I am proud to introduce to you now a young and, may I say, beautiful woman, an actress, dancer and director who was already making quite a name for herself as a film-maker when she was chosen to create one of the finest German movies in our long and glorious history. A film so remarkable that the 1935 Venice Film Festival presented it with the award for Best Feature Film...beating all the competing American, French...and English motion pictures.

There's great applause and laughter at this. He holds out a hand to a figure standing in the wings of the theater.

(CONTINUED)



Leni Riefenstahl (alone, above) and with friends (below)



CONTINUED:

SS OFFICER

My friends, I give you the remarkable,
the amazing, the dazzling Leni
Riefenstahl.

From the shadows LENI RIEFENSTAHL emerges. Age 37, beautiful,
dressed in an stylish evening gown. She takes the stage
with practiced ease and elegance. She embraces the SS
officer, who moves aside as she turns to the audience.

LENI

It is an honor to be with you tonight.
An artist lives for one purpose: to
commit truth to the page, the canvas,
or the moving picture. In 1934 a
great truth was born in our country,
a truth that is now on the verge of
transforming the world. I was honored
to have the opportunity to record
the images, the words, and the music
of that moment of history. I give
back that moment, now, to you.

She bows to thunderous applause and moves back toward the
wings as --

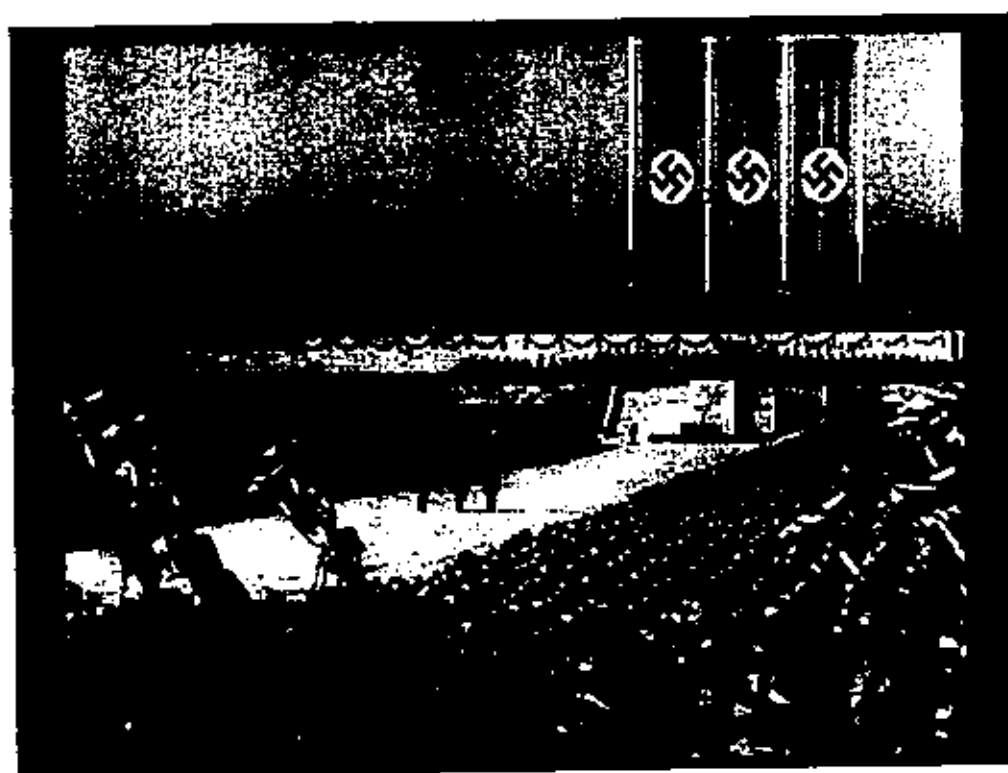
-- inside the projection booth, Romy brings down the house
lights and throws a switch. The curtains part to reveal the
movie screen. Then the projector springs to life, casting
light and shadows across the darkened space, illuminating
the screen with the stylized images of her film, Triumph of
the Will. (Note: this film has been designated in the public
domain and can be used freely.)

It is a love-poem to Nazi imagery, to their zeal and their
dreams...long panning shots of thousands of Nazis bearing
torches in the night, singing patriotic songs...swastikas on
banners hundreds of feet tall blowing in an open-air arena
as Hitler and his cadre walk down the long lines of soldiers,
preceded by the flare of torches and the beat of drums, the
bright notes of a hundred trumpets sounding.

It is a stunning piece of cinema...and a chilling insight
into the Nazi mind. Even in these early images there can be
no question that they will accept no compromise, no goal
short of total domination. It's a glimpse into the soul of
a Germany determined to stand astride the planet on legs of
steel and fire.

As Romy watches, he begins to perceive, in the language of
film, the face of the monster that has set its teeth into
the throat of the world.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

PUSH IN on his face through the window of the projection booth, the film reflecting on the glass, so the two images overlap, as he slowly, steps back into the shadows.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

The party-goers are leaving, their spirits high.

EXT. ALLEY - REAR OF THEATER - NIGHT

Romy sits on the back steps as Gustav emerges and sits on the step behind him. It's a solemn moment.

GUSTAV

Two days ago, when I was in Berlin,
they brought us all in to see it,
all the owners and managers of
theaters where this...thing...could
now be shown. It was like a festival.
There were balloons, and food, and....
(beat)

There were no words for me to explain
it to you, Romy. That's why you had
to see it for yourself. So you would
understand.

Romy lets the silence hang there for a moment, then:

ROMY

When I was a boy, we lived on a farm
in Poland. There was a machine they
used to harvest wheat. It terrified
me. I knew that if I tripped and
fell in front of it, the machine
would not care what was wheat...and
what was me. Once you start the
machine, it does what it does without
conscience. Without emotion.
Relentless. Inevitable.

(beat)

What I saw, in there, up on that
screen...was just such a machine.

Gustav nods silently, takes a BEAT, then:

GUSTAV

Do you know why people love the
movies, Romy? Because they show us
the big picture.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUSTAV (CONT'D)

On the street, we see little people
doing little things, some good, some
bad, but never the big picture.
Pull the camera back, and you see
the pattern, you see it all.

He lights a cigarette and stares off into the infinite horizon
of night.

GUSTAV

A movie shows you the soul of the
people who made it, on a screen so
big that the truth doesn't have to
be shouted, just whispered. We may
try to turn away from that truth,
try to pretend that we do not know
what we know...but the pictures do
not let that lie survive. Movies
speak in the voice of revealed truth,
and sometimes they reveal more than
those who made them intended.

(beat)

If God were to write the Bible
today...He would write it on film.

He looks to Romy, his eyes tired.

GUSTAV

The borders are closed, the trains
searched, guards everywhere, but I
tell you now: Whatever it takes, get
out of Austria while you still can.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Police sirens wail as Romy runs down a narrow alley, a bag
tossed over his shoulder. German soldiers pursue him on
foot through alleys and streets where others have also been
pulled out of houses and businesses and are being arrested.

Romy runs for all he's worth. He turns down one alley then
another. Cuts down a third when suddenly --

-- a night-stick SLAMS into his face from around the corner.
It sends him to the ground, his face bleeding. Soldiers and
police officers surround him, beating him. He throws an arm
over his face.

CUT TO:

INT. BARRACKS - PRESENT - NIGHT

In his bunk, in the Maxglan camp, Romy drapes an arm across his face, trying to go back to sleep. Elsewhere in the camp, someone is screaming. He closes his eyes, trying to shut it out. Rain pounds outside.

EXT. BARRACKS - MORNING

Just to re-establish.

INT. BARRACKS - MORNING

As before, a single drop of water hangs suspended from a beam across the barracks. Romy stares up at it, unblinking. The drop of water falls. He turns his face aside before it can hit him. Still alive.

EXT. "THE STORE" - DAY

Housed in an open garage, under the gaze of watchful guards, this is the only place where the prisoners are allowed to mingle and trade goods. Cigarettes for socks, socks for gloves, gloves for a hat, a hat for cigarettes.

Romy is off to one side, huddled with several other prisoners, KASIMIR, JOSEF and CINTI. They converse in quiet voices, trying to appear interested in what each of them has brought to sell.

KASIMIR

I heard two of the guards talking, they're worried. They say the Americans are going to invade France at any time.

ROMY

They've been saying that for two years.

(examining Kasimir's barter)

This has a hole in it.

He tosses it aside. Kasimir picks it up.

KASIMIR

It's only a small hole.

ROMY

Then you should keep it, it will go beautifully with your brain.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KASIMIR

All I'm saying is that sooner or later --

ROMY

Sooner has already passed, and later will be too late. Talk to me when you have real news.

(to cinti)

What about you? You haven't said much since you talked to the new man.

KASIMIR

Who is he, anyway?

CINTI

Says he escaped from a camp in Poland, in Auschwitz-Birkenau. He's only here until he can be shipped back, so they can question him about how he got out, and who helped him.

KASIMIR

So? What's that to us?

CINTI

He's a trained machinest, so they transfer him from one camp to another. He says Auschwitz is the worst of them all...a death camp. He says the furnaces work day and night to burn the dead.

(beat)

He also spoke of the Doctor.

ROMY

What doctor?

KASIMIR

They're just stories --

CINTI

Not from so many people.

KASIMIR

And you believe them?

CINTI

Why shouldn't I? The Jews have it even worse than we do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROMY

What doctor?

JOSEF

There's no name. They call him *die weisse engel*, the white angel. They say he goes through the lists of prisoners looking for certain types of people. Tall people, short people, one day he only wants people with red hair, next time only albinos.

CINTI

But always in the market for twins, I hear.

JOSEF

He takes them away and uses them for experiments.

ROMY

What kind of experiments?

JOSEF

Shock treatment, amputation, sterilization...they say he injects chemicals into the eyes of children to try and change the color of their eyes. And other things that are too horrible to talk about.

CINTI

He told me the doctor has started looking for gypsies to use in his work. He wants to prove that we're more susceptible to sicknesses like noma because of racial inferiority.

KASIMIR

So what are you saying, that he's coming here?

CINTI

I don't know. But if one day they start pulling us out of line and sending us off somewhere based on height, weight, eye color, twins....
(beat)

...then look for a way to kill yourself as fast as you can. Better to die than end up as one of *die weisse engel's* experiments.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Cinti looks up to see one of the guards patrolling in their direction. With a shared glance they take their possessions and move off into the rest of the crowd. Romy moves off to

EXT. "THE STORE" - DAY

-- as Cinti follows and stands beside him, looking out at the world beyond the barbed wire. A train passes in the distance.

CINTI
Sooner or later, you do think they'll
come, don't you?

ROMY
Who? The White Angel?

CINTI
The Americans. Don't you believe
they'll come?

ROMY
I don't believe in anything anymore.

He heads off toward the barracks. Alone, Cinti turns his gaze back to the horizon, and the passing train.

INT. TRAIN CAR - DAY

It's a luxury car, outfitted for a VIP. Tacked to the walls are sketches of a cafe, a bar, a hut. PAN past the sketches to REVEAL Leni Riefenstahl seated beside the window, sipping coffee. She makes notes in a small, leather journal as she flips through a script, then glances out the window in the direction of the camp without seeing it, her thoughts elsewhere. It's only when she sees several prisoners working near the fence that her attention is taken.

She looks absently out at their faces as they work, then makes another entry in her notebook, closing it as she gestures to a passing attendant for more coffee.

CUT TO:

EXT. UFA FILM STUDIOS - DAY

(Located on the site of what is now the Berlin-Babelsberg Film Studio.)

INT. UFA FILM STUDIOS - STAGE 1 - DAY

We are in a large 18th century grand ballroom as a formal dance is taking place. The dancers are dressed in long, colorful gowns and accoutered in white wigs circa 1750. Violin music plays.

PULL BACK to REVEAL a film crew looking on. This is a scene from the German film Munchausen, which is being filmed at the Ufa complex. Among the dancers are German superstars HANS ALBER and BRIGITTE HORNEY.

As the dancers finish and bow to one another, the director, JOSEF VON BAKY, emerges from the wings.

VON BAKY

Cut! Very nice.

The music stops and the actors break into small groups as Von Baky turns to his director of photography, WERNER KRIEN.

VON BAKY

We're covered now on the master?
(werner nods)

Good. I want to go in close now. I
want you to --

He stops as he sees JOSEPH GOEBBELS standing off to one side, near the set. The head Nazi nods in Von Baky's direction. Von Baky nods back, then continues to Krien.

VON BAKY

Close. Very close. Here.

He indicates just the head and face, then moves off toward Goebbels.

VON BAKY

So, Herr Goebbels, what did you think
of the dance?

GOEBBELS

Adequate.

VON BAKY

Adequate?

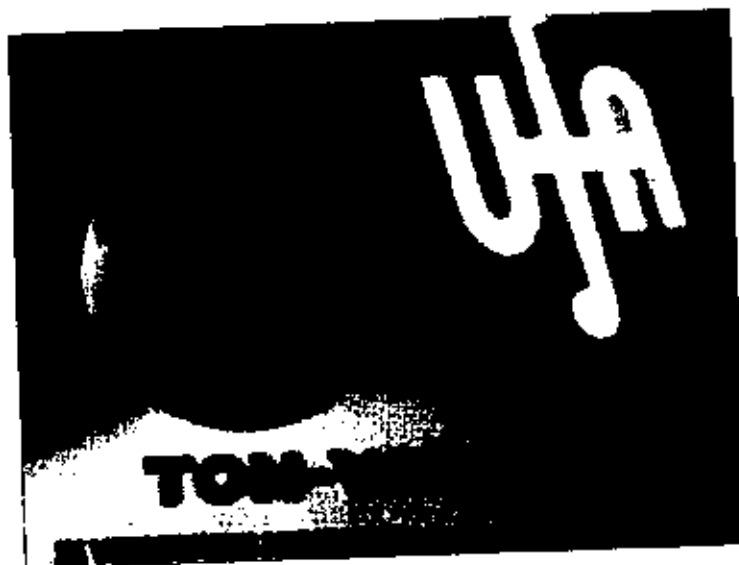
GOEBBELS

It needs more, Von Baky.

VON BAKY

More what, sir?

(CONTINUED)



The Official Ufa Film Studios logo



The formal dance from "Munchausen"

CONTINUED:

GOEBBELS

More. It is not big enough. I pushed for this movie personally because I wanted to show the world that Germany could produce a movie as big as "Gone With the Wind." The Fuhrer expects nothing less. Look here --

He touches the set.

GOEBBELS

The wood is poor quality. The paint is spotty. Here, and here.

VON BAKY

The camera will never see it.

GOEBBELS

I see it.

VON BAKY

The camera is much farther away, and not nearly as perceptive. I give you my word, Minister Goebbels, this will be a good movie.

GOEBBELS

Herr Baty, Ufa is paying over eight million marks for Munchausen. Ufa is owned and operated by the Party. And the Party decides what is a good movie. Which means I decide what is a good movie.

Just then, Goebbels looks off to see Leni enter at the far end of the stage: accompanied by her first assistant director, HARALD REINL and her director of photography ALBERT BENITZ. He turns back to Von Baky.

GOEBBELS

Bigger. And more paint. You will excuse me.

He moves toward Leni as Von Baky turns to one of the set painters.

VON BAKY

More paint.

The set painter hurries to comply as Von Baky goes back to his director of photography and --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-- Goebbels approaches Leni. Though their words are friendly, they come with a certain formality...these are two people who do not get along well but have to put on their best face in front of others.

GOEBBELS

Leni....

LENI

Joseph.

She smiles and they embrace, a bit stiffly.

GOEBBELS

How have you been?

LENI

Good. Minister Goebbels, I believe you know my assistant director Harald Reinl --

GOEBBELS

Of course.

LENI

And this is my camera man, Albert Benitz.

GOEBBELS

An honor.

(to Leni)

You look tired, Leni. You're not sleeping.

LENI

Three years on Tiefland, who wouldn't be tired?

GOEBBELS

Yes, I've heard. Production problems, over-budget...but I'm sure it will be magnificent, like all your work.

LENI

Such careful phrasing, Joseph. Would that be considered damming with faint praise or praising with faint damn?

GOEBBELS

I'm sure I don't know what you mean. I am ever your ardent admirer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LENI

Of course.

(beat)

Well, the good news is we've finished our location work so we'll be in studio until we're done.

GOEBBELS

So you'll be here, in Berlin?
Wonderful. I'll tell the Führer.
He will expect you for dinner.

LENI

As soon as we're done. You'll tell him?

GOEBBELS

Certainly.

He glances up as an aide appears in the door and nods to a waiting car.

GOEBBELS

I must go. Lovely seeing you again, Leni.

LENI

And you.

They embrace again, and he heads away. Her smile fades as she turns back to the others.

LENI

(under her breath)
Idiot.

She leads them across the stage to an adjoining door that leads to another stage.

INT. DEA FILM STUDIOS - STAGE 2 - DAY

Along with Harald and Albert, Leni is walking through the sets, which recreate a small Spanish village: a courtyard, a cafe, the facade of a large residence, a lavish dining room/ballroom, and other sets. A painted backdrop reveals a view of distant mountains. She's accompanied by her lead set designer ERICH GRAVE.

They move through an area created to look like the central palazzo of a small village, but clearly not yet finished. In the background, painters and carpenters continue to work.

(CONTINUED)

Tiefland

Bildgestaltung
Drehbuch
Regie
Leni Riefenstahl

Kamera
Albert Benitz

Künstlerischer
Mitarbeiter
Harald Reinl

CONTINUED:

LENI

Why isn't this set finished, Erich?
You've had plenty of time --

ERICH

Time but not people. By the time we
came back to Berlin, several of our
best carpenters had left to join the
war effort.

LENI

Are you saying they would rather be
shot at than work with me?

ERICH

I would never suggest such a thing,
Fraulein Riefenstahl.

LENI

I did not bear you disagree with it
either.

(beat)

We can't afford to fall further
behind, Erich. We're over-budget as
it is. I'd scheduled this for our
first day back on the stage. Now....

ALBERT

We can shoot the cafe and castle
interiors, that will buy some time.

(beat)

How much longer until we can move
into this set?

ERICH

Two, maybe two and a half days. To
speed things up a bit, I've cut back
on the scale of the sets while still
matching the original locations in
Spain. Smaller sets should also
give us some savings on construction.

LENI

Not too small, I hope...I still have
to swing a camera in there.

ERICH

All the walls are wild, you can put
the camera anywhere you want.

LENI

Albert?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALBERT

I think it'll be fine. Going a bit smaller will also help make it look like we have more extras than we have. They will fill the space well.

LENI

Speaking of which...Harald, how are we doing on extras?

HARALD

(delicately)

We're just having a fitting and... perhaps you should come see.

He starts out, Leni following.

INT. EXTRAS STAGING AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Ws PAN across the faces of extras dressed in turn of the century Spanish clothes: black vests and pants, black wide-brimmed hats and frilled shirts. Unfortunately they are almost all blonde, blue-eyed, and very Aryan in appearance.

Leni walks down the line of extras, inspecting them for a silent BEAT before turning to her extras casting director, JOHANN KURTZ.

LENI

Johann --

JOHANN

Madame?

She doesn't even know where to start...and finally decides to simply cut to the point.

LENI

No.

JOHANN

No to what, madame? If there is a problem --

LENI

Do these people look Spanish to you?

JOHANN

With the proper wigs, makeup --

LENI

No.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHANN

I give you my complete assurance --

LENI

I don't want your assurance. I want
people who look like they've been
living in a small eighteenth century
Spanish village! People whose faces
show years spent outside in sun and
rain, hard years spent tending land,
faces that have seen --

She runs out of words.

LENI

Get them out of here.

JOHANN

Madame --

LENI

Harald.

Harald moves in quickly, ushering the extras out.

HARALD

This way, please. The director wishes
a moment alone.

Leni moves through the costumes as they file quickly out,
touching fabrics. Johann fidgets nervously.

JOHANN

They may not be perfect, Madame, but
they do fit the wardrobe. I was
given sizes to work from, and well,
that can be very limiting and --

She casts him a withering look. He shuts up. When the door
is closed, she turns to him.

LENI

Johann, I was very specific in my
instructions, was I not?

JOHANN

Yes, you were.

LENI

So why would you even consider --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHANN

Madame asked for dark haired, dark eyed, ethnic appearing men, women and children.

LENI

Yes.

JOHANN

It is very...hard...to find those in Germany right now, Madame.

LENI

Perhaps you haven't looked in the right places.

JOHANN

I have looked everywhere, Madame.

LENI

Have you?

(beat)

Have you really?

CUT TO:

EXT. MAXGLAN CONCENTRATION CAMP - BARRACKS - NIGHT

The camp is silent, still. Searchlights play across the barracks.

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Romy and the others in the barracks are asleep. Pale white shadows from the searchlight wash over the bunks for a silent BEAT before --

-- the door suddenly bursts open, guards switching on lights and yelling orders.

SERGEANT

Outside! Everyone outside! Move!

The prisoners hurry out of their bunks, some pulling on blankets while others run outside in nothing more than bare shirts and pants.

EXT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Romy and the other prisoners form up into lines outside the barracks. He looks off to see all of the other barracks being emptied out into the cold night.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Across the way, on the other side of the camp, the women's barracks also being turned out by guards.

He exchanges a wary glance with Cinti, the prisoner nearest him. Something's up.

Then, suddenly, bright LIGHTS spear the line of prisoners. Romy squints against the sudden brilliance, holding a hand in front of his face to try and block the light.

SERGEANT

Hands down!

The guard smacks Romy's arm. He lowers it as --

-- he sees the figure of a man in a long coat silhouetted against the light. The man moves slowly down the line of prisoners, glancing down at a clipboard as though checking for certain kinds of prisoners.

As he picks out various types...old, young, tall, short...they are pulled out of line and shoved toward a waiting truck. The figure looks to one prisoner --

FIGURE

Too tall.

-- and moves to the next one. Nods. The prisoner is pulled out of line and sent with the rest to the truck.

Cinti leans in to Romy, his face a portrait in terror.

CINTI

(sotto)

Die weisse engel.

On hearing this, another nearby prisoner wets himself in fear. Just then, the figure stops in front of Romy. Studies him with eyes that glitter hard in the bright searchlight. Checks the list in front of him. Nods to a guard.

Romy is pulled out of line and shoved toward the waiting truck.

As he's marched across the yard, Romy glances to the other side of the camp to see the newest arrival, Anna, being loaded onto another truck along with other women and some children.

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Romy is pushed into the back of the truck along with other prisoners, almost thirty in all.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Soldiers stand guard inside and out. Then the rear of the truck is slammed shut and it begins to lurch forward.

EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Three trucks rumble out of camp and roar off down the road as --

-- the searchlights are turned off, and the remaining prisoners are shoved back toward their respective barracks. Cinti hesitates, looking out at the trucks as they disappear into the darkness...then continues into the barracks.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The truck rumbles on through the countryside.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Romy sits shoulder to shoulder with the other prisoners. They sit on benches, packed in tightly under the watchful gaze of the guard. From around him, he hears whispers from the other prisoners.

VOICES

...did you see?...where are they
taking us?...what do we do?...die
weisse engel...

Romy looks to one side and sees a rusty metal nail sticking out of a board used for one of the benches. Trying not to be noticed, he carefully works it back and forth until it's free. He puts it to one wrist.

ROMY

Better to die....

He hesitates, closes his eyes...but can't bring himself to do it. He drops the nail and looks off, his expression one of frustration and impending doom.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The truck continues off into the distance.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TRUCK - LATER

The truck has been driving for some time. Some of the other prisoners have surrendered to sleep, but Romy is still awake as the truck begins to slow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He looks through a narrow slit in the tarp covering the rear of the truck to see --

-- tall buildings passing on either side of the truck, lights everywhere. Guards can be seen climbing out of accompanying vehicles, getting into position as --

-- the truck shudders to a halt. An instant later, the rear door BANGS open and the prisoners are shoved out.

GUARD

Move! Move!

They jump down from the back of the truck to --

EXT. OPEN LOT - NIGHT

-- which is lit again by bright lights. Romy squints against the lights as he's shoved roughly against a wall and lined up with the rest of the prisoners.

Farther down the line, Romy again notices Anna jumping down off a truck. He tries to nod to her, but she doesn't see him, too terrified to notice much of anything.

When they're all in place, we see the same figure from the camp silhouetted against the lights. Then he's joined by another figure...that of a woman.

As she moves forward, inspecting the line of prisoners, we see that it's Leni. She walks in silence, looking carefully at each of them, then turns to the figure we saw earlier, who is revealed now as Johann. She nods.

LENI

Better. Find Jäger. Get them into wardrobe.

She moves off as the prisoners are shuffled toward a sign that reads EXTRAS WARDROBE AND MAKEUP. Romy glances to one of the other prisoners.

ROMY

Wardrobe...?

But there's no response as the nearest guard shoves them forward.

INT. UFA FILM STUDIUS - CONTINUOUS

Leni enters, accompanied by her staff and a German CAPTAIN, ROLF MUELLER.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MUELLER

Fraulein Riefenstahl, this is most irregular --

LENI

I've already spoken to your commandant and confirmed that I have permission from the Reich Minister for wartime prisoners. My films are financed by the Ministry of Information and I have full authority from the Fuhrer himself to proceed as necessary in the making of my films.

MUELLER

Nonetheless, I cannot simply leave them with you. The prisoners must be guarded at all times to prevent escapes.

LENI

Fine, just as long as your people stay out of camera range and eye-lines.

MUELLER

Further, the prisoners must be returned to camp whenever they are not needed here.

LENI

Captain Mueller, as you can see it's a five hour drive --

MUELLER

Nonetheless, I must insist. However, to be fair, I will propose that they be returned only when they are not needed for, let us say, ten hours or more.

LENI

Fifteen.

MUELLER

Twelve.

LENI

Done. I'll have my office complete the documents.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LENI (CONT'D)

(calling off)

Albert, I need to see you about this first shot.

She marches off as Albert folds in alongside. The captain watches them go then turns and continues back toward the trucks.

INT. UFA - HALLWAY - DAWN

The wardrobe master, GUSTAV JÄGER and his second, ELISABETH MASSARY, hurry down the hall, accompanied by Harald.

JÄGER

You're sure you matched the sizes?

HARALD

I'm sure.

JÄGER

If she wants to shoot in two hours it's too late to make changes.

HARALD

Johann had the sizes in hand when he went looking. They'll fit.

ELISABETH

You just went out looking for people?

HARALD

Something like that.

ELISABETH

And they've never worked as extras before?

HARALD

I highly doubt it.

JÄGER

Where did you find them?

HARALD

Doesn't matter.

JÄGER

It's just that if they've never done this before they're going to be unruly and we're going to have to corral them like cats and --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They stop in the middle of the hallway.

JÄGER

What is that smell?

Harald doesn't answer, except to open the door to --

INT. EXTRAS STAGING AREA - DAWN

-- where Romy and the other male prisoners stand in rows, as though on inspection at the camp. Still in their camp clothes. Eyes weary, wary. This is the first moment Jäger and Elisabeth realize where these people have come from.

JÄGER

Merciful god....

(to harald)

You can't seriously --

HARALD

Just get them ready. Paul should be here soon for makeup tests.

Harald exits. Jäger looks to the silent rows of male prisoners. Elisabeth leans into him.

ELISABETH

I don't think corralling them will be a problem, Gustav. Look at them. Their souls are already in little black boxes.

Jäger nods absently, then forces himself to get to work.

JÄGER

All right, first thing's first, everyone out of those clothes. Then come with me. We need to get you cleaned up before you get anywhere near my designs.

INT. UFA - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The prisoners, wearing only towels, their clothes bundled tightly, stand before a table where Jäger and a wardrobe assistant wait.

JÄGER

Just hand over your clothes and we'll give you a claim number to use in picking them up later.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A prisoner in his forties, HAMA, first in line, hands over his clothes.

HAMA

You may as well use this.

He extends his wrist so we can see the number tattooed onto his skin. (Production Note: unlike tattoos given to Jewish prisoners, gypsy tattoos began with the letter Z.) The assistant hesitates, then writes down the number. Hama is led off as the next prisoner takes his place.

INT. GROUP SHOWER AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Naked, the men enter the group shower area, still silent, still wary. Hama goes to the nearest open shower stall. Turns on the water, then puts his hand into the water, and looks with awe to the others.

HAMA

Hot water....

They go into the stalls, picking up fresh bars of soap with wonder in their eyes. They plunge into the water, the first hot shower many of them have had in years.

As months and years of dirt worked into faces and hands wash away in this most basic component of civilization, a light starts to come back into their eyes. To take a shower is a thing that free men do, not prisoners.

INT. EXTRAS STAGING AREA - LATER

Showsred and cleaned, still naked, they stand silently in line as Jäger moves through them, handing out shirts, vests, jackets and pants, all clean, pressed, new. They run their hands gently over the pristine fabric, examining it as Jäger speaks.

JÄGER

The film we've been shooting for the last three years -- first in Spain, until we were asked rather aggressively to leave, then in Bavaria, and now here -- is called "Tiefland." It is based on the opera by --

ROMY

Eugen d'Albert. I saw it once, in Salzburg.

(MORE)

(CONTINUEU)

CONTINUED:

ROMY (CONT'D)

(beat)

It...was a long time ago.

Jäger pauses, having assumed none of them would know it. It would be easier for him if none of them knew art. Then he continues, handing out clothes as he goes.

JÄGER

For those of you who did not see it in Salzburg, Tiefland is set in Spain during the 19th century. The story concerns a dancer who becomes involved with two men: a shepherd, and the Marques who controls the village with an iron fist. She becomes their benefactor and hero, in time inspiring them to triumph over their oppressor.

(beat)

You are here to play the villagers living in that small town. Any questions?

He looks around. Silence.

JÄGER

Good. Now get dressed.

He moves off as the prisoners begin to change into their Spanish wardrobe, putting on vests and hats and staring at themselves in mirrors. New men.

FEATURE Romy as he finishes buttoning his shirt and looks in the mirror. He looks almost as he did before being arrested. He touches his face with silent wonder.

INT. UFA FILM STUDIOS - STAGE 2 - LATER

Leni walks the cafe set with her assistant director and camera man as the stage fills with other crew members. Hammers pound and gaffers swing lights around, making last minute adjustments. Into this Jäger comes. He nods to Leni.

JÄGER

They're ready.

LENI

Good.

(to albert)

This should just take a moment.

She follows Jäger off-stage.

INT. EXTRAS STAGING AREA - MOMENTS LATER

We PAN the faces of the prisoner extras, now fully dressed and made up as villagers in a small town in Spain. Leni moves down their ranks, studying their faces as Jäger, Elisabeth, and makeup master PAUL LANGE look on. She pauses at the end, then shakes her head.

LENI

Too clean. These are men of the field and the earth, Paul. Dirty them up.

She heads back to set as Paul and his makeup assistants hurry to comply, layering in fake dirt where there was real dirt earlier. For some, the light that came into their eyes at the prospect of being clean begins to fade.

INT. DFA - GREEN ROOM - LATER

Under the watchful gaze of guards, the prisoner extras are led into the green room by Harald.

HARALD

This is where you will wait until you are called to set. I have been told to remind you that there are guards in the hall, and stationed outside the building. Any attempt to leave the facility will, I am told, result in the most dire of consequences.

(beat)

We should finish lighting in about another twenty, thirty minutes. Until then, sit, rest, have something to eat.

He heads out, closing the door behind him as the prisoner extras turn slowly to see --

-- the food table, essentially a craft services table, piled high with fruit, vegetables, sliced meats, bread, even soup in a nearby tureen.

ROMY

(a whisper)

God in heaven....

And they head for the table, but not rushing, barely able to believe what they're seeing. The nearest prisoner picks up a slice of bread as if afraid of being caught.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

But the shouts do not come, the guards stay outside...and he takes another.

INT. UFA FILM STUDIOS - STAGE 2 - MORNING

A MONTAGE of shots in the cafe set as a massive camera is wheeled into position on dolly tracks, lights swing around and arc into position, sets are dressed and props are put onto tables and chairs. A fan wafts smoke and atmosphere onto the set as --

-- in an adjoining room, a costume appropriate for a Spanish dancer is carefully laid out, with loops of necklaces and castanets spread out on a dressing table.

INT. UFA - GREEN ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The door opens and Harald appears in the doorway.

HARALD

All right everyone...you're needed
on set.

He steps aside as the prisoner extras file past. When the last of them has passed, just before closing the door, he glances back to see --

-- that every bit of food has been eaten. He turns to a passing ASSISTANT.

HARALD

I think we will need more food.

ASSISTANT

But I just --

The assistant stops dead at the sight of the empty table as Harald continues away UNDER:

HARALD (V.O.)

As extras, it is very important that
you understand the rules of filming,
and of stage etiquette.

INT. UFA FILM STUDIOS - STAGE 2 - MOMENTS LATER

The cafe set is now realized. Spare, white walls and a hard, dirt floor. Tables and hard wooden chairs are arranged around an open area at the center of the room. A fire blazes in a fireplace, but does little to warm the cold look of the room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Romy and the other male prisoner extras fill every chair. Harald stands in a cleared area at the center of the room.

HARALD

When you are called to set, and told you will be speaking to this extra or that extra, you will not actually be speaking. When the director says action, you only pretend to speak. Simply, casually. Just act naturally. Believe that it is real. Feel that it is real. Find truth in the silence. That is what film is for, to create the illusion of truth. But it must begin here, in your own head.

He looks to his audience. Some get it. Some don't. Romy seems to grasp the concept best.

HARALD

This will allow us to record the dialogue of our actors cleanly. Later, if we so choose, we can add in the sound of other voices.

(beat)

But for this scene, you will not even pretend to be talking. This scene is about silence, about awe in the presence of profound beauty.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Leni, wearing the dancer's dress, puts the finishing touches to her makeup, sliding bracelets over her wrists and layering on the necklace.

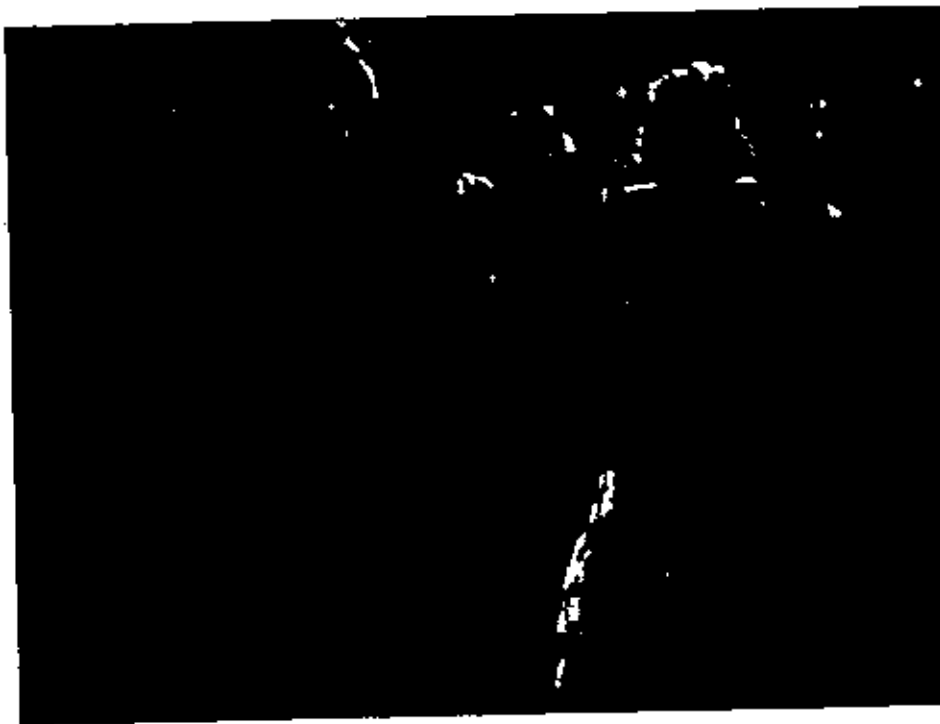
HARALD (V.O.)

You see, the director of our movie, Madame Riefenstahl, is also our star. She plays the role of Martha, an exotic dancer whose beauty captures the heart of this small village, a gentle and innocent spirit in the body of a woman who has seen and done things of a dark and questionable nature.

INT. UFA FILM STUDIOS - STAGE 2 - CONTINUOUS

As Harald continues.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

HARALD

She does these things to survive, as from time to time we all do terrible things to survive. We all....

He looks up to see the men in the room staring at him silently. They know what it is to do and endure terrible things to survive...and that he will never have to endure what they have. He clears his throat and continues as Elisabeth moves through the crowd of prisoner extras, giving their wardrobe last minute tweaks and adjustments.

HARALD

When she begins the dance, you do not talk to each other. You do not look at each other. You have eyes only for her. As far as you are concerned, she is the very center of the universe.

ELISABETH

(sotto)

Then they will have something in common with Fraulein Riefenstahl.

He shoots her a look as she moves off, then continues.

HARALD

As I was saying, this is a very important scene, it sets the tone for everything that follows, so it's vital that you give her your complete and total attention.

HAMA

Herr Reinl....

Harald looks to where Hama sits with the others.

HAMA

...it is four years since I have seen a woman dance, or smile, or wear a pretty dress. Attention... will not be an issue.

Harald looks around at the others, nods quietly to himself, and moves off.

MONTAGE

Leni, in full wardrobe, moves down a hall toward stage two.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Massive klieg lights are switched on, illuminating the set.

Albert swings the camera around, pointing into the cafe.

Leni sits behind the camera, peering through the lens.

HER POV through the lens of the prisoner extras, seated in the cafe. Dark. Silent. Waiting.

CLOSE on Leni as she settles back from the lens and nods, satisfied.

LENI

Let's shoot it.

CLOSE on Romy as we HEAR:

HARALD (O.S.)

Rolling. Roll sound.

LENI (O.S.)

Action!

INT. UFA FILM STUDIOS - STAGE 2 - MORNING

The camera ROLLS as Leni takes the center of the room, castanets in hand. She clicks them as, off-camera, MUSIC plays. She moves sensuously, slowly, gliding through the room.

INTERCUT with Romy as he watches, looking from Leni to the cameras, to the crew visible through the window of the cafe on the other side of the camera, working lights and microphones.

Then slowly PUSH IN on Romy as he closes his eyes UNDER:

HARALD (V.O.)

Believe that it is real. Feel that it is real. Find truth in the silence. That is what film is for, to create the illusion of truth. But it must begin here, in your own head.

Then he opens his eyes and --

-- the crew is no longer visible through the window. There is only sky. He looks around. The cafe is just a cafe. Leni dances, but she dances for them alone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

For one fragile moment, the illusion in Romy's mind is complete. For just this instant, the world has faded away, has disappeared into that illusion. Then the music swells and we hear --

LENI (O.S.)

Cut!

-- and in that instant we're back on the set, the illusion shattered.

As Leni heads toward the camera, Romy glances around at the other prisoner extras. They whisper quietly to one another, or sit silently, awaiting further instruction. A BEAT, then:

HARALD

All right, going again, everybody
back to one.

And they prepare to do it again.

INT. UFA - GREEN ROOM - MORNING

CLOSE on Anna, the female prisoner extra, as we PULL BACK to REVEAL her looking in a mirror at her period Spanish wardrobe fit for a formal dinner. Other female prisoner extras have been similarly made up, looking at themselves or each other in silence until --

-- there's a knock at the door, which opens as Jäger ENTERS.

JÄGER

Ah, there we are. So what do you
think, eh? Very nice, yes? Very
beautiful.

He smiles. Some of the women nod distantly, but most look at him in silence, scared and nervous.

JÄGER

Since the assistant director is busy
on set, I should explain that the
next scene we are shooting is a formal
dinner, very elegant, and --

ANNA

Help us.

He turns to Anna as she approaches.

JÄGER

I don't --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA

Help us. Now that we're outside the camp we have a chance to get away.

JÄGER

No, I --

Another prisoner, ELSIE, comes forward.

ELSIE

All you have to do is turn your back for two minutes.

JÄGER

There are guards everywhere..

ANNA

But you know this place better than they do. You could find a way --

JÄGER

No, I'm sorry, I feel for your position, but --

ANNA

Please! We'll do anything!

(with meaning)

Anything you want, just help us, just --

JÄGER

I can't!

(more softly)

I can't....

He paces away from them, torn but unable to do anything. Turns back. Smiles sadly. He speaks with meaning, making sure they understand the importance of what he is revealing.

JÄGER

There is a reason I am not affected by your feminine charms, madame. Because of that reason, I would be in a camp myself right now but for Fraulein Riefenstahl, who makes her needs known at the highest levels. The very highest.

(beat)

There's a rumor that she and Herr Hitler are...well, there are always rumors about powerful men and beautiful women, are there not?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He smiles again, sadly, then moves off.

JÄGER

Because of Fraulein Riefenstahl, the Reich has turned a blind eye to me. If I should try to interfere, I would draw the attention of their good eye, and I think that would not end so well for me.

(beat)

I'm sorry, but there's nothing I can do.

ELSIE

Then we won't cooperate. We won't be trained monkeys on a leash.

JÄGER

That is, of course, your choice. But if you will not do as they ask, they will find others who will. And you will be back in that place again.

ANNA

So what? Sooner or later, we're going back there anyway.

JÄGER

Yes. Yes, you are. But not right now.

He goes to Anna, puts his hands on her shoulders. Looks to the rest.

JÄGER

I know this is hard for you, for all of you. But at least for the time that you are here, you are not there. The life you have been forced to live...is the life you must live. But here, for a few hours a day, you can slip your bonds, and escape to something better.

(beat)

After all, that is what the movies are for, are they not?

(beat)

Now come, we must get you ready for camera.

He moves off with several of the other women as Anna and Elsie linger along with Elsie's sister, HANNAH.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELSIE

(quietly)

I don't care what he says...first
chance that comes along, my sister
and I are going to try to escape.
If you're smart, you'll come with
us.

They move off, leaving us to HOLD on Anna as she considers
this for a BEAT then heads away UNDER:

HARALD (V.O.)

The occasion is a formal dinner hosted
by the Marques, Sebastian Roccabruna,
at which it is expected he will
propose marriage to the Mayor's
daughter, Doña Amelia.

INT. UFA - STAGE 2 - SET - FORMAL DINING ROOM - DAY

The prisoner extras, male and female, are being shown to
their respective seats and paired up as Harald continues
instructing them in the coming scene. Many of the prisoners
are being primped and touched up, makeup assistants combing
back their hair and carefully applying makeup while others
smooth down their shirts and clothes.

In BG, we can see star BERNARD MINETTI as the Marques quietly
running lines with MARIA KOPPENHÖFER, dressed as Doña Amelia.

HARALD

However, just as the dance is called,
which is the appropriate moment for
such an announcement, the Marques --
bored out of his mind -- decides not
to ask her for her hand...or any
other part of her body.

He smiles, trying to loosen up the prisoner extras. It
doesn't work.

UNDER what follows, Romy is brought to one of the tables to
sit across from Elsie just as Anna is brought to sit at the
table next to his. He nudges the male prisoner extra beside
him and indicates for them to switch places. The other man
hesitates, then obliges.

HARALD

In a move that scandalizes Doña Amelia
and her father, the Marques leaves
the party in search of more

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARALD (CONT'D)
entertaining fare, which of course
brings him to our dancer, Martha.
(beat)
So your reactions are as follows:
look bored, look surprised, then
look away.

He looks off as Leni enters in BG to confer with the actors.

HARALD
If you'll excuse me....

He hurries off toward Leni as Romy looks to Anna, who is
glancing around, distracted. It's clear from his attitude
that he is attracted to her.

ROMY
Hello.

She glances up, almost startled to have someone speak to
her.

ANNA
Hello.

She looks away again, distracted, on edge. Romy glances to
Leni and the crew, knowing he only has a few moments to make
a connection before they start rolling.

ROMY
Did they explain to you about not
talking, about just pretending to
talk?

Anna nods brusquely, her irritation showing.

ANNA
It's ridiculous. I feel ridiculous.
What am I supposed to do, just go --

She mimes an outrageous expression, acting and gesturing in
an exaggerated fashion. Romy smiles.

ROMY
No. It's easy. Just say what you
would say anyway, but say it in your
head. You just start --
(leaving out)
-- a few words here and there --
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROMY (CONT'D)

(and then)
-- pretty soon --
(you're saying)
-- nothing at all.
(you see?)

She looks at him and, despite herself, allows a smile.

ANNA

And how am I to know what you're
saying when you're saying nothing at
all? How should I know how to
respond?

He reaches for his empty glass, holds it out to her.

ROMY

(may I have some water?)

She considers.

ROMY

(please?)

Again allowing a smile, she reaches for the carafe of water
on the table and pours a glass for him. He smiles.

ROMY

There, you see? Easy.

He looks to Leni, who is almost ready to shoot. The lead
actors have taken their seats at the main table. Romy glances
back to Anna, a growing urgency in his eyes.

ROMY

When they don't need us for a time,
we will go back, you know that, right?
(she nods)
So we can either sit here and think
about that, that we are going to go
back soon, or we can...we can lose
ourselves in this moment. Live this
moment. Believe this moment. At
least that way we will get something
out of it.

ANNA

So you like the idea of pretending
for them?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROMY

No. Not pretending for them.
Pretending for ourselves, pretending
for us. So I say if we are to be at
a formal dinner party, then by god
let's be at a formal dinner party.
(beat)

Unless you have other plans.

Anna starts to reply when --

HARALD

All right, here we go.

She looks to Romy, whose eyes are on her, hopeful, still
trying to connect with her.

LENI

And...action!

As musicians play period music appropriate for a formal dinner
party in the background, the other prisoner extras hesitate,
not sure what to do.

For a BEAT we're not sure if Anna has bought into Romy's
words. Then she picks up her glass with confidence and raises
it in a toast to him.

ANNA

(thank you)

He smiles, and raises his own glass.

ROMY

(you're welcome)

And as their glasses CLINK we go to a --

MONTAGE

-- of shots as the filming for this scene continues. As
promised, the Marques gets up and leave the festivities just
as the dance begins, but our main interest remains with --

-- Romy and Anna as they converse in silence, growing more
friendly. As filming continues, Anna slowly begins to let
down her guard. He even manages to get a laugh out of her.

It's evident that they've both reached the point where they're
going to take this one small moment of joy, real or otherwise,
for all it's worth.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

Then, just as we're CLOSE on Romy during another take, we SWING AROUND to REVEAL --

-- that he's again allowed the illusion to take hold. For just a moment, we're not in a set, not on a stage, we're in a dining room in a dinner party and the food on their plates is real and the sunlight is real and the beautiful woman sitting across him is most definitely real, smiling at him as he converses in silence for a BEAT longer...when suddenly we HEAR:

LENI (O.S.)

And...cut!

And in an instant, we're back where we were, on stage 2 of the Ufa Film Studio, the illusion shattered.

He looks to Anna, who may have allowed herself to buy into that illusion as well...and the light goes out of her eyes as she comes back to this real place, this real moment. She looks away, almost embarrassed at her reaction.

In the background, Harald and Leni confer, then she nods and Harald moves toward the group.

HARALD

All right, we're done with this scene.
Moving on.

The crew moves in to start pulling things apart. A wardrobe assistant comes to Anna and begins to move her away when Romy puts out a hand to her.

RDMY

I never heard your name.

She turns to him, a sad smile on her face.

ANNA

No? I said it a dozen times as we were speaking.

(takes his hand)

Anna. Anna Kuranova.

ROMY

Romy Mustow.

She nods and starts off. He doesn't let go.

ROMY

Perhaps we can have dinner again,
next time you're here in town.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA

Perhaps.

With that, she lets go and allows herself to be led away.

INT. UFA FILM STUDIO8 - STAGE 2 - LATER

Leni is going over the shooting schedule with Albert and Harald as they walk the big courtyard set.

HARALD

Since the courtyard's not ready, we can shoot Pedro and Martha in the hut tomorrow, and move the scenes with the Marques and Amelia up a day.

LENI

What time does Franz get in tomorrow?

HARALD

His train arrives at one, so figure...two, two-thirty.

LENI

So late...we'll never get through the scene in one day. There must be something else we can shoot.

ALBERT

Leni, you want my advice?

LENI

Do I have a choice?

ALBERT

You're exhausted. You've been running nonstop since you got here. If you don't get some rest you're going to get sick.

LENI

Albert --

ALBERT

The courtyard scenes are going to be huge. You know what crowd scenes are like, what they take out of you. If we shoot half a day tomorrow, then we shoot only half a day. So what?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALBERT (CONT'D)

Better that than you should get sick.
Don't forget, you have to be as
charming and beautiful in front of
the camera as you are behind it. We
can't have you looking tired.

(beat)

If you were directing someone else
in this role, and she was as tired
as you are, what would you say?

LENI

(reluctantly)

I'd tell her to get some rest before
we tackle the big scenes.

(beat)

All right, we'll shoot as much as we
can of these two, and pass out
whatever we don't cover to the next
day.

She starts heading away:

HAROLD

I'll go ahead and release the extras
until we need them.

LENI

Fine. Oh, and Albert?

ALBERT

Yes?

LENI

Never tell an actress she looks tired.
Tired is another way of saying old,
and no actress wants to hear that.

ALBERT

(with humor)

I wasn't talking to the actress, I
was talking to the director.

LENI

Yes, and she squealed on you to the
actress. Turns out they're sleeping
in the same bed.

(beat)

See you in the morning.

And she exits.

INT. UFA - GREEN ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The male prisoner extras are led into the green room, which where the table has been restocked with food. But before they can react to that, they see --

-- that their concentration camp clothes have been set out for them, each with their number carefully written on a slip of paper tied atop the bundle. Several GUARDS stand nearby, accompanied by Captain Mueller.

MUELLER

You're done for today. Put your clothes on and get back in the truck.

They hesitate, not wanting to return to the reality of that place.

HAMA

But they're not done shooting, they're --

Mueller slaps him. Hard. Then leans into him.

MUELLER

Put your clothes on and get back in the truck! All of you! Now!

One by one, reluctantly, they begin to comply. It feels as though their souls are being pulled inexorably back into the pit as they touch their clothes. One of the prisoners shakes his head, can't handle it.

PRISONER

No...no, I won't...I won't! You can't make me go back there! You can't make me go back there!

He tries to make a break for it, but in an instant the guards are on him, beating down at him.

In the confusion, the prisoner who sat beside Romy in the formal dining room scene reaches over and surreptitiously grabs some oranges from the food table as --

-- the guards drag the other prisoner out of the room, screaming. We can hear him being beaten outside.

Mueller throws a look to the rest of them, a challenge: anyone else? One by one, reluctantly and with growing agony, they remove their wardrobe and begin to put their concentration camp clothes back on.

EXT. UFA FILM STUDIOS - EVENING

The male prisoners are loaded back onto the trucks that brought them here. As Romy is about to climb inside, he looks off to see --

-- Anna about to climb into the women's truck further down. He nods to her. If she sees him, she gives no sign, disappearing into the truck.

A guard pushes Romy from behind, nudging him forward. Romy steps up and into the back of the truck as the guards slam the doors shut and the trucks rumble out of the facility.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MAXGLAN CONCENTRATION CAMP - NIGHT

Belching smoke, the trucks move through the front gates and into the camp.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Romy and several of the other prisoners look out through the tarp as the trucks drive in. Some are weeping openly, while others shake their heads in growing horror and disbelief at coming back here. Hama glances to Romy as they pass the barbed wire gate.

HAMA

Coming here, the first time, when I did not know what to expect, that was bad enough. Now....

He looks off, shakes his head. There are no words.

PRISONER

It's like a bad dream.

ROMY

Maybe it is.

(beat)

Maybe what we lived earlier today is what's real. And this...this is just a bad dream. A nightmare.

Just then the truck shudders to a stop as we HEAR the sounds of dogs barking.

The door BANGS open and guards appear, yanking prisoners out onto the grounds.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUARD

Out! Everybody out! Move!

They jump out of the back of the truck to --

EXT. MAXGLAN CONCENTRATION CAMP - NIGHT

-- where the sergeant seen earlier is waiting for them as they emerge.

SERGEANT

So, our "movie stars" are back.

(beat)

Welcome home. Move!

He shoves the first one in line back toward the barracks. The other guards join in, shoving and beating them with fists and rifle butte to remind them who's in charge. The sergeant is the most violent of all, beating as he yells at them.

SERGEANT

Did you have a good time? Did you
meet other movie stars, movie star?
Can I have your autograph?

The beatings continue all the way to the barracks, where the prisoners rush inside to get away from the violence.

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Romy is among the last inside as the door slams behind him. He looks out at the bunks, where the other prisoners stare back at him with eyes that are both wide but still asleep in their pain and distance from one another. Cinti sits up in his bunk, looking with wonder at Romy.

CINTI

I...we thought you were dead.

Romy looks around at the darkness and horror of this place for a BEAT, then:

ROMY

I was.

With that, he goes to his bunk. Stares at the depression made by his head in the thin pillow. A wet spot spreads on the pillow where the drips come from the ceiling. Another drop of water falls as he watches.

As Cinti looks on, Romy tears off a piece of blanket and climbs the end of the bunk until he can reach the ceiling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He shoves the piece of cloth into a gap in the beams where the water congeals and drips.

The cloth causes the water to flow down the side of the beam to the floor, rather than dripping.

Romy climbs back down the bunks to the floor and nods, satisfied at his handiwork.

ROMY

I was.

And with that, he finally climbs back into his bunk.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAXGLAN CONCENTRATION CAMP - QUARRY - MORNING

Romy works alongside the other gypsy prisoners in the quarry, scraping ore and rocks out of the unforgiving earth. One of the prisoners -- emaciated and weak -- stumbles and falls as he carries out a sack of stones. A guard kicks him.

GUARD

Move!

ANOTHER PRISONER

No, please....

GUARD

I said move!

ANOTHER PRISONER

I can't...I can't....

The guard grabs him and shoves him back. The prisoner takes a shovel and tries to hit the guard. But he's too weak and the guard grabs the shovel out of his hand and hits him, hard. He then glances to some of the other soldiers and they grab the prisoner, dragging him off around the corner of a building.

GUARD

Attempting to strike an officer while trying to escape.

ANOTHER PRISONER

No...please, no....

Romy watches until they're out of sight, then we hear the sound of a single GUNSHOT.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The guards return alone.

GUARD

Back to work!

They return to their work as --

-- Romy glances up as a truck similar to the one that carried them to Ufa enters at the far gate. For a moment, the light in Romy's eyes returns with the hope that it's come to take them back.

But then the truck opens to reveal only a fresh delivery of supplies. Other prisoners move quickly to unload it as --

-- Romy returns to scraping and hammering at the earth and stone.

CUT TO:

EXT. "THE STORE" - AFTERNOON

As before: prisoners bargain and trade for what little they have. The barter group we saw earlier -- Cinti, Josef and Kasimir -- are in their usual place. Romy is conspicuously absent. Josef is considering a watch as Kasimir looks on anxiously. The watch is without a crystal and the minute hand is missing.

JOSEF

You're sure you didn't steal this?

KASIMIR

No, one of the guards threw it away.

JOSEF

Of course he threw it away, it's broken.

KASIMIR

Just the minute hand and the glass, see? But it can still tell you the hours.

JOSEF

If I watch the hours go by, it will make the days pass even more slowly. No thank you.

He hands the watch back to Kasimir, who glances with some small hope at Cinti, who shakes his head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CINTI

Sorry.

PRISONER (O.S.)

What about this, then?

They turn to see the prisoner extra who managed to swipe a few oranges during the struggle at Ufa. He holds one of them out to the group. They look at it with awe and wonder.

JOSEF

Where did you get it?

PRISONER

Berlin.

Josef extends a hand, and takes the orange with something akin to reverence. He smells it.

JOSEF

I had forgotten that smell.

PRISONER

Be careful, don't let the guards see it.

KASIMIR

How many do you have?

PRISONER

Just the two, I'm saving the other for myself.

CINTI

What do you want for it?

PRISONER

What have you got?

JOSEF

If you put everything in this place together in one pile, it wouldn't be enough.

PRISONER

Well, give me your best offer. I'm making the rounds. I'll check back with you later.

He extends his hand. Josef reluctantly hands over the orange. As the prisoner moves off, we notice --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-- that one of the other prisoners, an informant we'll soon discover, has watched the exchange with unhealthy interest.

Cinti and the others don't see it, however, and again close ranks over what they've brought to trade. Josef sighs.

JOSEF

After that, I look at all this and I think, everything here is an even trade. Shit for shit.

KASIMIR

So where's Romy? I wanted to ask him about Berlin.

JOSEF

Off somewhere. Probably thinks he's too good for us now.

EXT. MAXGLAN CONCENTRATION CAMP. - DAY

Romy stands beside the first layer of barbed wire fencing, looking out across the thirty foot gap and four more layers of barbed wire to --

-- the other side of the camp, where the female prisoners are also congregating. Looking for Anna.

At first, he doesn't see her, then finally she comes out of one of the other barracks. Careful not to draw the attention of the guards, he waves as discreetly as he can until --

-- she catches sight of him. She considers him with a what the hell are you up to? expression on her face.

Romy looks around the area around the fence until he finds a box just tall enough to sit on. And he does. He sits on the box facing her in the distance.

He waves at her again, as if to say, your turn.

Perplexed, but intrigued, Anna looks around at her side of the camp, finding nothing. She then moves off, momentarily disappearing behind a barracks.

A BEAT later, she emerges with a bucket. He gestures to her again, and she puts the bucket down on her side of the fence.

He waves at her, sit down.

Oddly embarrassed but curious, enticed, she sits on the bucket.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And on his side of the fence, Romy begins to mime a conversation with her.

Anna laughs, looks away. Can't bring herself to do the same. He continues.

In the background, a guard standing with some other soldiers sees him, but instead of coming after Romy, the guard laughs and points him out to the other soldiers, his attitude one of Well, that one's lost his mind for sure.

Finally, reluctantly, Anna takes one last look at Romy, and responds, picking up her side of the silent conversation.

Romy lights up and responds in turn.

And there they sit, on either side of the barbed wire, thirty feet apart, having their silent conversation as though they were sitting at a cafe somewhere, having drinks and dinner.

And Anna...smiles.

EXT. "THE STORE" - DAY

The informant who was watching as the prisoner handed around the orange emerges, looks around to make sure he's not being seen, then hurries toward one of the guards. They move off into the shadows to confer.

CUT TO:

INT. UFA FILM STUDIOS - STAGE 2 - PEDRO'S HUT - DAY

Leni, dressed as Martha, lay with her eyes closed on a cot in the hut as the innocent but Teutonically handsome shepherd Pedro -- played by FRANZ EICHBERGER -- tends to a cut on Martha's forehead that has knocked her unconscious. He gazes at her with eyes full of wonder and love for a BEAT as the CAMERA PULLS BACK to REVEAL the rest of her crew filming this over Franz's shoulder.

ALBERT

And...that's good. Leni?

LENI

Cut.

ALBERT

End marker.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A camera assistant claps a clapboard and Leni sits up, smiling.

LENI
That was lovely, Franz, thank you.

FRANZ
How could you tell? Your eyes were closed.

LENI
I peeked. Women always peek.
(to albert)
We can come around to the other side now.

Albert nods and his crew pull back the camera and begin to re-light as, in the background, Harald approaches.

LENI
So your trip down was good?

FRANZ
Lovely. On the way from the north country I took a day for some fishing in the Alpine lakes. Trout, mainly. Have you ever been?

LENI
Not in some time.
(noting harald)
I know that look, Harald. What's wrong?

HARALD
The lab called. They're still processing the dailies but they say there was a focus problem with some of the footage from the dinner scene.

LENI
Shit. How much?

HARALD
They're still checking, but the good news is the master shot is fine, the problem was mainly in the coverage.
(beat)
The set's still up, so I can go in with Albert tonight and pre-light based on what we did yesterday.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARALD (CONT'D)

We can probably knock off the re-
shoot in just a couple of hours
tomorrow.

LENI

But we've got all the crowd scenes
tomorrow.

HARALD

Which means we're going to have the
extras here anyway, may as well make
the best of it.

LENI

I know, but still...shit.

FRANZ

I didn't know ladies cursed.

LENI

You didn't know we peeked, either.
(re: her makeup)
I think I need a bit of touching up.
Paul? Where's Paul...?

She heads off.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAXGLAN CONCENTRATION CAMP - NIGHT

To ESTABLISH. The camp is quiet, settled in for the night.
Searchlights play across the silent barracks.

INT. MAXGLAN CONCENTRATION CAMP - 2ND BARRACKS - NIGHT

Not Romy's barracks, but rather the barracks of the prisoner
who stole the oranges. The place is dark, silent. Then
suddenly the barracks sergeant THROWS open the door and GUARDS
with dogs storm inside.

They go to the bunk of the prisoner who took the oranges and
throw him to the floor. As he falls, the last orange tumbles
onto the floor from his bunk. The sergeant picks it up as
the guards drag the prisoner roughly out of the barracks.

EXT. MAXGLAN CONCENTRATION CAMP - MOMENTS LATER

The prisoner is thrown to the ground in front of Mueller,
the captain of the guards, then kicked, hard, by the soldiers.
The sergeant approaches Mueller and hands him the orange.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MUELLER

Thievery.

(beat)

The usual penalty. Take him.

PRISONER

No, please, no! Please!

The guards grab the prisoner and haul him toward a nearby tree.

CUT TO:

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Romy is awakened by the captain as he enters with a guard. He goes from one bunk to another, a list in hand, picking out those who had been taken previously to Ufa. He points to Romy.

MUELLER

You. Come.

Romy pulls himself out of the bunk and follows Mueller out.

EXT. MAXGLAN CONCENTRATION CAMP - MOMENTS LATER

Romy is shoved into the truck as Mueller goes over the list with his sergeant. He hands over the list and points to a name.

MUELLER

Tell them this one is not available for today's performance.

The sergeant nods and moves off. Mueller gestures to the drivers to move out. As they do Romy glances back and sees --

-- the prisoner who had taken the orange now subjected to the same torture as we saw inflicted upon another at the beginning. His hands bound behind him, the prisoner stands beside a tree on tip-toes, a wire hanger around his neck pulled tight. If he gets tired and stops standing on his toes, he will strangle himself.

As he struggles to stay alive, tears flowing, he watches the trucks begin to move out of the camp as we HEAR --

LENI (V.O.)

On whose authority was this done?!

INT. UFA - STAGE 2 - SET - FORMAL DINING ROOM - MORNING

Leni is in her dancer's wardrobe, pacing and massively pissed. Romy, Anna and everyone else is seated where they were two days before, except for the chair beside Romy, which is now empty because it's occupant is back at camp being tortured. Harald does his best to calm her.

HARALD

The captain of the guard.

LENI

He can't do this! He can't just pull out my people like this! I have formal permission to --

HARALD

To use the resources they make available in general. But they still retain control on a case by case basis. If their rules are broken they have the right to --

LENI

The shots won't match! Did you tell him?

HARALD

Leni --

LENI

The shots won't match!

She paces away, furious. The room is dead quiet, nobody meeting her gaze. Anna and Romy exchange a worried glance. Finally --

LENI

It's too late to bring him in even if we appealed. I can't afford to lose half a day in transit. We have to get into the crowd scene, that's all there is to it.

(beat)

Just...find me someone who looks enough like him to get by, and I'll shoot around him the best I can, that's all I can do at this point.

Harald nods and hurries off to comply.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LENI

God damn it.

As she moves off, Romy and Anna exchange a concerned look, and their hands touch on the table. They look to one another with a sense of growing attraction as we HEAR:

HARALD (V.O.)

All right everyone, can I have your attention please?

INT. UFA FILM STUDIOS - STAGE 2 - COURTYARD SET - DAY

The courtyard has been finished, revealing the center of a small Spanish town overlooked by the false-fronts of small, quaint structures. Prisoner extras, male and female, as well as a number of gypsy children, have been brought into the set in sufficient numbers to make it feel like a real town square.

Harald stands on a chair, addressing the prisoner extras who have crowded around or wait in the background, already having been put in position.

HARALD

Because we're running behind schedule, we're going to try to pick up some time by shooting both these scenes roughly the same way from almost the same angle.

He moves through the crowd and up a sloping path that leads to the upper row of false-front buildings and a faux bridge. Albert also walks the scene with him.

HARALD

In both scenes, we're going to have the camera at that end as Pedro enters from this side and moves down-stage toward the town square.

ALBERT

Long lens, one shot?

HARALD

Yes. We'll follow him all the way down where he'll turn to look at the crowd, then we're into coverage.

Harald turns his attention back to the prisoner extras.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARALD

In this first scene, Pedro is coming to town to sell a wolf's skin, so everybody is waving, saying hello, and you're all glad to see him. Martha is also coming to town in her wagon, passing him on the road right about here, but your main concern for now is Pedro, not Martha. All right?

Subdued nods and assents from the crowd. Harald continues moving back again through the extras.

HARALD

For the second scene, he's come back to marry Martha, not realizing that the marriage is just a cover so that the Marques can have an affair with her.. Everybody else in town knows the truth, so instead of laughing because you're glad to see him, you're laughing at him.

(beat)

I'll need groups of women over here, men over there, some mixed groups we'll spot in doorways and along the path.

He stoops down beside the gypsy children.

HARALD

Children, I want you to run alongside Pedro when he comes into the town and dance alongside him, very happy to see him, can you do that for me?

The kids nod, numbly. He pushes a bit more.

HARALD

If you do a good job, I'll make sure there's candy afterward.

Some of the kids brighten at this. He tousles the hair of one of them and continues to the adult prisoner extras.

HARALD

For the second scene, we'll need little clusters of men and women who we can see whispering about Pedro and laughing at him behind his back.

(CONTINUED)



The laughing women (above) Leni giving notes (below)



CONTINUED:

He looks to several of the women, including Anna, Elsie and Hannah, the sisters who told Anna their intention to escape.

HARALD

You three, can you stand right over there in scene two? It's a clean line of sight to where Pedro will be standing.

Anna and the two sisters nod.

HARALD

Good, then --

ANNA

What about the first scene?

It's the first time they've asked a question.

HARALD

The first scene?

ANNA

Yes. Do we all have to stand here together?

HARALD

No, it's a different day, so you can be anywhere you want. If you want, you can be in the mixed group, just for the contrast.

Anna nods, and glances to Romy. She wanted to be sure she could be available to be with him in the first scene.

HARALD

So if the rest of you could just spread out along the set, and remember where you are for later takes, we can get going as soon as Fraulein Riefenstahl's ready to shoot.

He moves off as the prisoner extras begin to spread out and --

-- Elsie and her sister move closer to Anna, their voices low.

ELSIE

We've decided we're going to try to slip out of here today.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA

It's too dangerous --

HANNAH

In a crowd like this we have our best chance of not being missed until it's too late.

ANNA

It's too soon. You should wait.

ELSIE

We can't. For all we know, today might be the last day they'll need us. We might not get another chance. Come with us.

ANNA

I don't know...if we're caught --

HANNAH

What can they do to us that they won't do sooner or later anyway? It's worth the risk. Come with us.

ANNA

I...I'll think about it.

But she's clearly torn. The sisters exchange a glance and move off as the crew prepares for the first scene.

INT. UFA FILM STUDIOS - COURTYARD SET - MOMENTS LATER

Everyone is in position, spread throughout the courtyard and town square. Anna and Romy sit at a small "outdoor" table. Franz, as Pedro, is in position just outside the entrance to the courtyard. Leni, in Martha wardrobe, stands beside a donkey and wagon carrying her character's belongings. She glances to Albert, who sits atop a high crane with the camera. He nods. She glances to Harald.

HARALD

Rolling. Roll sound.

LENI

And...action.

Looking remarkably happy, Pedro strolls down the cobblestone lane into the courtyard, carrying a wolf's skin. He nods and waves and smiles to those he passes...who nod back but their expressions are sober, somber.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The children walk in front of him, glancing for approval from him to Leni and back again.

Leni leads her donkey and wagon down the path to pass in front of Pedro. But when he's no more than halfway down the lane into the courtyard, Leni stops.

LENI

Cut...cut!

Everything stops. She turns to the prisoner extras.

LENI

What are you doing? What are you doing?

No one answers. Could be a trick question.

LENI

This is not a funeral. You are happy villagers on a happy day when your friend Pedro the shepherd has come to town. You dance, you laugh, you play...you wave to him and smile. Like this.

She does it. They watch her. She could be speaking to an oil painting.

LENI

Look...yes, the lives of your characters are hard, your days are spent working the fields under a hot sun, the Marques rules this place with an iron fist, and hope...hope itself seems to shrivel up and die on the hard ground. But for this day, you are alive, and each day you live is a victory to be celebrated. What happens tomorrow, none of us can say...but for now, despite your oppressors, you are alive. You have beaten those who would see you dead. Embrace that. Celebrate that. You're alive, and being alive is amazing.
(heat, softer)
Being alive...is amazing.

And though she's talking about the characters, about her movie, because she can't see past that, the words she speaks resonate for who these prisoners really are.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And as she looks around at them, she sees a faint light come into their eyes. Satisfied, she looks to Albert.

LENI

Let's do it again.

ALBERT

All right, everybody back to one.

And as everyone moves back into position --

-- and Romy looks to Anna --

ANNA

(a whisper)

The others are going to try and escape. They want me to go with them.

ROMY

(a whisper)

Are you?

ANNA

(a whisper)

I don't know.

(beat)

I'm cold.

-- and he puts his hand on hers, holding tight, and --

-- we HOLD on his eyes as they close for --

LENI (O.S.)

Action!

EXT. UFA FILM STUDIOS - COURTYARD SET - MOMENTS LATER

MONTAGE UNDER MUSIC

Villagers laughing, playing, as Pedro enters the courtyard, making his way down the lane as --

-- Martha leads her donkey and wagon further on, smiling to the children who follow her as --

-- Romy and Anna look to one another, speaking silently but from the heart, her hand still in his.

Villagers carry vases of water or bundles of bread, children play, old men sit and smoke, and for this one day, this

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

amazing day, everything is normal for as far as the eye can see. For this moment, they are free as --

-- Romy reaches out to touch Anna's face, and as his fingers gently trace the arc of her cheek we HEAR --

LENI (O.S.)

And...cut!

EXT. UFA FILM STUDIOS - COURTYARD SET - MOMENTS LATER

Cameras roll on a pickup of Martha and her wagon tucked into a corner at the near end of the set. The prisoner children cluster outside the wagon, watching with wide eyes as she practices with the castanets.

At the far end of the set, Elsie and her sister have pulled Anna to one side, conversing in desperate whispers.

ELSIE

You see what they do? They film the scene from one side, for all of us, then they turn the camera around and look the other way to film the stars.

HANNAH

They'll do the same for the next big scene, and when they turn the camera around, that'll be our chance to get away. No one will be looking at us.

ANNA

What about the guards?

ELSIE

Look around.

She looks past them to where the guards have congregated at one end of the set, watching the filming with the same attention anyone new to the film business would give. Intrigued and fascinated.

ELSIE

There are only a few soldiers outside, the rest stay over there out of camera range to watch. If we can get past the guards outside, no one will even notice we're gone until it's too late.

Anna considers this again, but before she can respond --

(CONTINUED)



Gypsy children used in Ticfland (above), Leni in wagon (below)



CONTINUED:

HARALD

And...that's a cut.

Leni climbs out of the wagon and goes toward the hair and makeup assistants as Harald approaches Anna and the two sisters.

HARALD

All right, as madame director prepares for the second scene let's get all of you in position.

(beat)

You three...if you could come over here.

As Romy watches, concerned, he pulls Anna and the two sisters into the center of the courtyard. Glances over his shoulder. Sets them a bit more to one side.

HARALD

Marks.

An assistant marks the ground where they are to stand as Harald turns his attention to the rest.

HARALD

All right, I'll need a small group of men here, and a mixed group further back. The rest of you can fill in wherever there's room. Remember, in this scene Pedro's the laughing stock of the town but he doesn't know that yet. You're mocking him because you know something he doesn't.

UNDER this, Anna raises her eyes to meet Elsie's eyes, and both of them know something Harald and the guards don't.

As we HOLD on them we HEAR the SOUND of LAUGHTER that carries us across to --

INT. UFA FILM STUDIOS - COURTYARD SET - MOMENTS LATER

The prisoner extras have congregated in the middle of the town square and are laughing at Pedro as he stands before them on the steps of a chapel. Albert works the camera on a high crane suspended above the crowd.

QUICK CUTS of the clutches of prisoner extras within the larger group, including Anna and the two sisters, as they laugh and mock until --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-- Leni, as Martha, is led through the crowd wearing a wedding veil. The laughter slows and stops as she steps up next to Pedro. She takes his hand. Together they enter the chapel as there's a BEAT then --

LENI

Cut!

She glances to Harald.

LENI

How did that look?

HARALD

It looked good from here. Albert?

He makes an Ok gesture.

LENI

Good.

HARALD

Moving on...turning around.

The crew begins to hurry to the task of re-lighting so they can shoot in the other direction.

As the large number of prisoner extras and crew wander through the set, the guards relax and smoke at the far end of the stage and --

-- Elsie looks to Anna, takes her hand.

ELSIE

Now. While they're distracted.

Anna hesitates, looks to Romy, whose concern is evident. He shakes his head, no. Mouths the word please. It's enough to help Anna make up her mind.

ANNA

No, I can't...it's too dangerous.

HANNAH

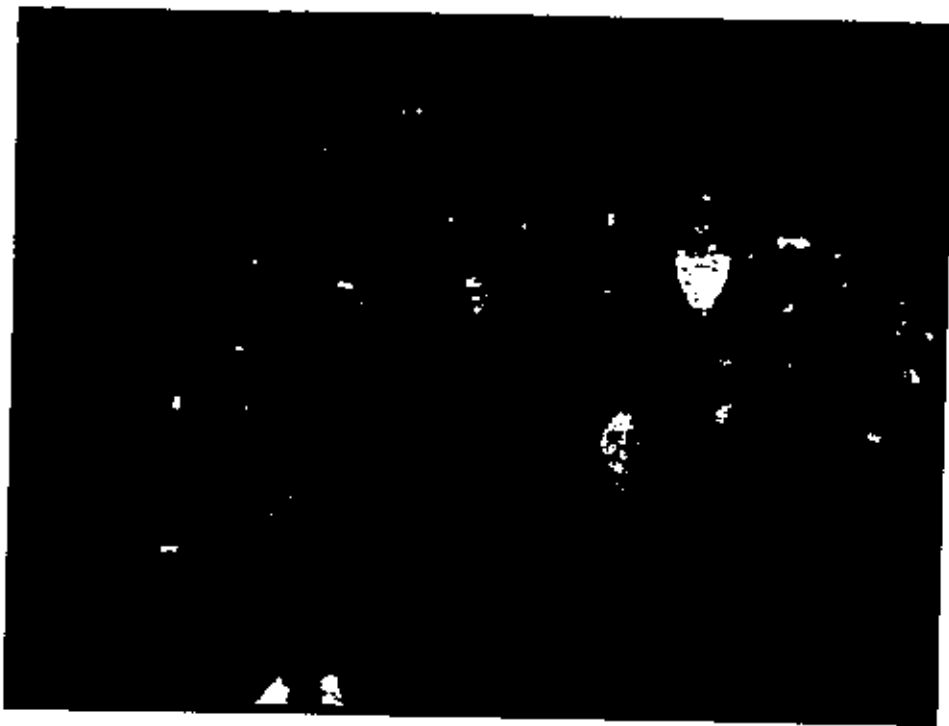
Suit yourself.

ANNA

Good luck.

With a cautious look around, they begin edging back and away, disappearing into the crowd, heading for the rear of the stage.

(CONTINUED)



Laughing at Pedro (above) before Leni arrives (below)



CONTINUED:

As Anna watches them go, she feels someone slide up alongside her. Romy appears at her side. He reaches down and subtly takes her hand.

ANNA
(softly)
God go with them.

EXT. UFA FILM STUDIOS - DAY

The rear door to a loading dock is open. The two sisters edge carefully up to the sliver of daylight and peer through to see --

-- a lone guard sitting off to one side, smoking. If he turns even a little, he'll see them.

They exchange a glance, and move quietly, carefully through the door. Once on the other side, they edge around the side of the building. It's a clear shot to the woods nearby.

They run.

INT. UFA FILM STUDIOS - COURTYARD SET - DAY

The camera has turned around now, with everyone's attention focused on Pedro (Franz) as he stands before the chapel, looking out at the crowd. Leni is beside him as Albert peers through the camera, adjusting the focus.

LENI
So as you're looking out at the crowd, you're not quite sure why they're laughing. You want to believe they're just happy for you, but after a while you start to wonder, are they laughing with me or at me? But then you see Martha coming toward you through the crowd, and every doubt disappears.

FRANZ
So you don't want me to get angry with any of them.

LENI
No, you're above that.

FRANZ
But can I challenge some of them? Just, you know, with a look...why are you laughing? What is there here to laugh at?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LENI

Sure.

FRANZ

Where should my eye-line be?

She points off to the groups indicated, waiting in place.

LENI

To the group of men over there at camera left, then if you want you can sweep your eyes camera right to the women....

She stops and looks to where Anna stands alone. The crowd is dead silent.

LENI

Where's my group of laughing women?

Anna looks down, shrugs, looks away. Leni stands higher, looking everywhere, her concern growing, the silence ominous.

LENI

Harald...?

Harald plunges into the crowd, looking desperately for the two sisters, his actions drawing the attention of --

-- the guards, who divide up, some moving into the crowd after Harald while others fan out in different directions as --

-- off to one side, Jäger shakes his head, already suspecting what's happened.

JÄGER

Christ....

EXT. WOODS - EVENING

Elsie and Hannah run for all they're worth. They risk a glance back to where --

-- German soldiers with dogs and flashlights race through the woods after them, crashing through the underbrush, the dogs barking and straining at their leashes.

Sobbing, terrified, the sisters run faster, plunging through branches that scratch at their faces and arms, desperate to get away, stumbling and falling and getting up again as --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-- the soldiers reach down and unleash the dogs. They take off at top speed, barking and howling.

The sisters scream at the sound of the approaching dogs, running and stumbling as --

-- the dogs LEAP.

INT. UFA FILM STUDIOS - STAGE 2 - EVENING

The prisoner extras are seated on the floor of the courtyard as guards walk around them. The room is silent. Pensive. Uncertain of what consequences may follow.

At the far end of the stage, Leni confers quietly and nervously with Harald and the captain of the guard. From time to time she glares back at the prisoner extras, then goes back to the other two. She smokes nonstop.

In the crowd of silent prisoner extras, Romy sits near Anna. She's shaking, scared, not knowing what's going to happen, or if her friends got away. Romy carefully extends a hand along the floor, hoping to take her hand and comfort her but --

-- a guard sees the move and hits him, hard. Romy pulls his hand back. She looks to him with concern, then their attention is drawn to the far end of the stage as --

-- a soldier enters on the quick-step and confers quietly with the captain of the guard, who nods, satisfied. He conveys the information to Leni, who looks visibly relieved. The implication is clear: the sisters have been caught.

Fighting tears of pent-up emotion, Leni leaves the stage.

CUT TO:

INT. UFA FILM STUDIOS - STAGE 2 - LATER

The two sisters have been brought to stand before the rest of the group as Leni prowls silently in front of them, working her way up to what she's going to say. Guards and other soldiers stand watch behind her. The crew sits silently off to one side, not wanting to draw her eye.

When Leni finally speaks, her voice is hard and sharp as a razor.

LENI

I want you to listen to me. I want
you all to listen to me.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LENI (CONT'D)

I have wanted to make this film for the last ten years. I fought for it. I worked for it. I've spent the last three years shooting it despite weather problems and budget problems and transportation problems and I may not have any control over most of those but when we're on a sound stage by God I will have control over what's happening on my set! You are not going to be allowed to destroy this film! I've worked too hard and too long! Do you understand me?

Silence is her answer. It's the only answer she'll accept.

LENI

Had this incident not been dealt with quickly, there would have been an investigation. We would have had to stop production just three weeks short of finishing. We were lucky. This time. And I'm telling you right now, there will not be a next time.
(beat)

Captain Mueller?

She heads away, exiting the stage as Mueller approaches the terrified sisters. He regards them silently for a BEAT, then:

MUELLER

So you wish to leave our company. Here you have people looking after you, taking care of you, feeding you, pampering you...but you wish to leave.

ELSIE

Herr Captain, please --

MUELLER

So I think, perhaps it is best to simply give you what you want. If you want to be somewhere else, then somewhere else you will go.

He nods to his guards, who begin to move toward the sisters.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MUELLER

Put them on the first eastbound train.

HANNAH

Eastbound...?

He takes a BEAT, making sure to drive the point home for those looking on. Then:

MUELLER

Auschwitz.

The sisters burst into tears as the guards pull them away, leading them out of the building. The other prisoner extras avert their eyes or weep openly at the sight. Mueller turns back toward the crowd.

MUELLER

Do any of the rest of you wish to be somewhere else?

They look away in silent surrender.

DISSOLVE TO:

A SERIES OF SHOTS

To show the passage of time.

1. Romy and the other male prisoners in Maxglan, working the quarry, dirty and desperate.

2. Inside stage two, as a line of female prisoner extras in wardrobe stand along the cobblestone lane that leads from a well, where water is being rationed out to the women of the village. Anna is among those standing in line, her expression distant.

3. Romy at Maxglan sitting at what has become his usual place on one side of the barbed wire. Anna sits on the other side of the barbed wire, thirty feet away. Looking away, not at him. Tired. Dispirited. He smiles at her, trying to get through. She walks away.

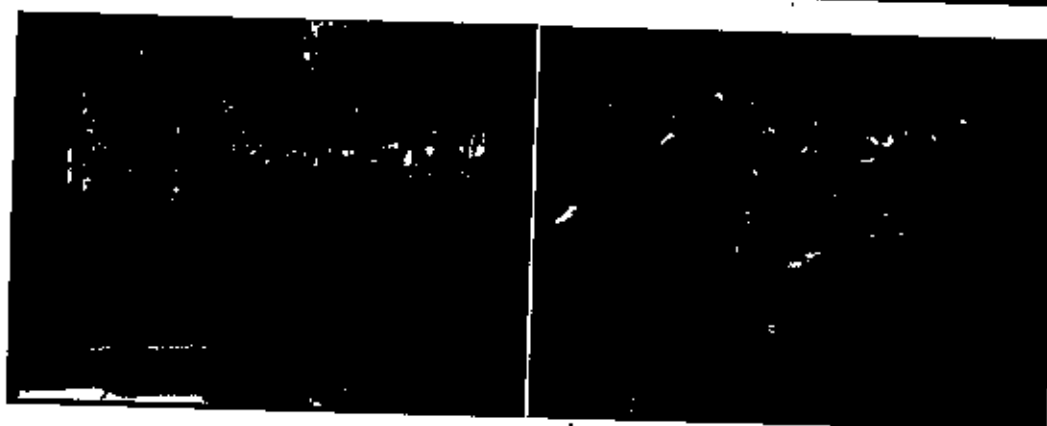
4. Romy in formal dress for a wedding, being touched-up and primed by makeup and wardrobe.

5. Romy in his bunk, unable to sleep. He looks across to another bunk, where another prisoner has died in his sleep, eyes staring vacantly back at Romy.

(CONTINUED)



More prisoner extras during filming on Tienland



CONTINUED:

6. Romy and Anna are back in the camp, seated again on either side of the barbed wire. This time she seems a bit happier. We're in CLOSE UPSHOTS on each of them, creating the sense that that they could indeed be sitting at the same table across from each other, having a silent conversation. Then we --

-- WIDEN OUT to REVEAL the gulf of barbed wire between them.

7. Anna dressed as a maid-servant to Doña Amelia, the mayor's daughter. She's helping to dress the impatient Doña Amelia, only to be slapped with a fan. Anna looks down subserviently as Doña Amelia struts off.

LENI (O.S.)

Cut.

As Anna looks back up again, we're in --

INT. UFA FILM STUDIOS - STAGE 2 - DAY

-- with Doña Amelia and the prostrate Anna as Leni looks to Albert for confirmation that they got the shot. He glances up from the camera and nods to her.

LENI

And...cut.

HARALD

That's lunch.

They begin to move off.

INT. UFA FILM STUDIOS - STAGE 2 - DAY

Off to one side, Romy and several of the other male prisoner extras, also in wardrobe, are eating a meager lunch of soup and sandwiches as guards look on casually.

Anna sits a few feet away from Romy, barely touching her food. Noticing this, Romy carefully inches closer to her until they're close enough to talk.

ROMY

You should eat.

ANNA

I'm not hungry.

ROMY

Still, you should eat.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROMY (CONT'D)

Don't you want to stay alive long enough to see yourself up there on the silver screen?

ANNA

We're not going to live that long.

ROMY

Who says?

ANNA

You saw what happened the other day. We're never getting out of here. This is never going to end.

ROMY

Why is it that when something good happens, we're always sure it's going to go away tomorrow, but when something bad happens, we're so sure that it will never go away?

(beat)

The wheel turns, Anna. It always does. You just have to stay alive long enough for it to happen.

She turns to him, manages a smile. Shakes her head.

ANNA

Where did you learn that? In the movies?

ROMY

Would it be so wrong if I did?

ANNA

They're not real.

ROMY

No? Look around. This is real. I'm real. You're real. This moment is real. That's what we have to hold on to. You have to remember who you are, and what you are, and what you believe, and what you can do. Every day we are outside, every day we are here, every day I see you, I wake up a little more.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA
If this is the shape of the waking
world, I'd rather stay asleep.

ROMY
This won't last.

ANNA
No? And how can you be so sure?

She meets his gaze, and more than challenging him, there's a longing in her eyes...she wants him to give her something that she can hold onto, despite herself. With a wary glance to the guards, Romy leans in.

ROMY
This won't last because it never
does. It never has.
(beat)
Look at history. Go back as far as
you want. No great tyranny has ever
really lasted. Name one. The
Pharaohs? Gone. The Romans? Gone.
Napoleon? Gone. The Tsars? Gone.
Each of them was powerful. Each of
them was unstoppable.
(beat)
And each of them...was destroyed.
As this will one day be destroyed.
And do you know why?

ANNA
Why?

ROMY
Because nothing can survive that is
not free.

She holds his gaze for a BEAT longer, then glances away.

ANNA
Maybe you're right. But that doesn't
mean we will live to see it.

ROMY
And that's where you're wrong. We've
already beaten them. We're on
film...and once you're on film, you
live forever.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROMY (CONT'D)

One day, when we are out of here, I will come to the theater, and I will see you...and there you will be, just as you are, right now.

(beat)

Just as you will always be, in my heart.

Anna, moved, starts to reply when --

HARALD (O.S.)

You....

Romy looks up to see Harald approaching.

HARALD

Come with me.

Romy hesitates, then rises.

ROMY

Is there a problem, or --

HARALD

Tomorrow's shipment of film stock has run into some problems, so we're going to buy some from the production on stage one. I someone to carry the film. Come on.

Romy starts to follow when Anna puts a hand on his arm.

ANNA

Tell me that we will see it together, and I will try to believe you.

He puts his hand on hers.

ROMY

We will.

With that, he follows Harald across the stage, passing through the stage doors to --

INT. UFA FILM STUDIOS - STAGE 1 - DAY

-- where the production of Munchausen is still going on. As they enter, the assistant director holds up a hand, calling for silence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The set where director Von Baky and the actors are rehearsing is a surreal one: a moonscape covered with trees from which bass fiddles and trumpets grow in green and orange translucent pods that hang heavily from the branches.

As Romy looks on, Hans Albers as Baron Munchausen kneels on the ground, leaning over the prone form of his loyal retainer Christian, played by HERMANN SPEELMANS. Christian's hair has turned gray, and his face is lined, having grown old before his time. Munchausen offers him some cherries.

MUNCHAUSEN

Would you like some cherries?

CHRISTIAN

Ripe cherries? Have I slept a full three months?

MUNCHAUSEN

No, two hours at the most.

Munchausen holds out his clock. Christian studies it.

CHRISTIAN

Either your watch is broken, or --

MUNCHAUSEN

-- or time itself.

CHRISTIAN

Time itself is broken.

UNDER this, Harald confers quietly with the assistant, who motions for Harald to follow. He does so, indicating for Romy to wait here. Romy nods, watching as the scene continues.

CHRISTIAN

Night is falling. You could even say autumn is falling. A year for us on earth is a day here. So in a year on the moon, one grows 356 years older.

MUNCHAUSEN

A year older, every day.

CHRISTIAN

Don't be angry, Baron, if I cause you some inconvenience.

(CONTINUED)



Ufa Film Studios circa 1942 (above), Munchausen (below)



"A year older, every day."

CONTINUED:

CHRISTIAN

Here I am, dying...just when I start
to feel at home.

At this point, Romy looks up to see Harald gesturing for him
to follow. Film canisters have been set onto a nearby table.
Romy nods and heads toward them.

HARALD (V.O.)

This is, perhaps, the most important
scene in the film.

INT. UFA FILM STUDIOS - STAGE 2 - PEDRO'S HUT - EVENING

Romy, Hama and several other male prisoner extras are on set
being dressed by Jäger and his crew in long, flowing cloaks
and wide-brimmed hats. On the other side of the open doorway,
Franz and Bernard Minetti (the Marques) rehearse their
climactic knife-fight.

As they're being dressed, Harald walks among them, explaining
what is about to happen.

HARALD

Determined to protect Martha and
free the town from the tyranny of
the Marques, Pedro challenges the
Marques to a fight to the death. In
the course of the fight, the Marques
is killed, and the village is freed.

HAMA

I don't understand what we are to
do, then.

HARALD

You followed the Marques here, and
you stand outside the hut, watching
as he is killed.

HAMA

We just watch and do nothing.

Hama still isn't sure he gets it. Harald puts a hand on his
shoulder.

HARALD

In a movie, sometimes it's not so
much what you do as what you
represent.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARALD (CONT'D)

The Marques represents cruelty, he represents those who would take from you everything that you have, everything that you are. And you --

(beat)

-- all of you, represent the silent voice of history, the voice that judges us all...the voice that no man can escape.

Hama nods...and with that sentence, Harald has said more than he ever intended to say. Harald starts to turn back toward the crew when --

ROMY

But why him?

Harald pauses, glances back, his patience starting to erode.

HARALD

What?

ROMY

Why Pedro? The whole village hates this man, they all have reason to rise up...why him and not them?

HARALD

(wearily)

Because that's what's in the script. All right?

With that, Harald heads back toward the crew as they get ready to film the sequence. We HOLD for a BEAT on Jäger, who has overheard the conversation but says nothing for now.

CUT TO:

INT. UFA FILM STUDIOS - PEDRO'S HUT - MOMENTS LATER

Pedro and the Marques stumble out of the hut, knives drawn, both bloodied, circling one another as the silent witnesses look on. A wind blows through the scene, whipping up dust and cloaks. The men in black lean into the wind like ghosts, faces lost in the darkness as --

-- Pedro begins to drive the knife into the Marques.

Romy watches in CLOSE and we --

(CONTINUED)



"...the silent voice of history..."



CONTINUED:

-- FLASHBACK TO his memories of Nazi soldiers beating Jews and gypsies, chasing down Romy, hanging prisoners from trees by wire hangers...throwing bodies onto piles...escorting away the two sisters --

-- and Romy straightens, the silent rage within him coming out at this symbol of his own oppressors. And as the knife sinks deep into the Marquee, we feel in Romy's eyes that he has seen a mirror and a measure of the justice his soul requires.

CUT TO:

INT. UFA - GREEN ROOM - EVENING

Romy is the last of the prisoner extras to change back into his concentration camp clothes. As the others finish and leave, he sets the black vest aside and pulls on his shirt. There is something almost calm about him. As though what he just experienced was somehow cathartic.

Then a voice startles him from behind.

JÄGER (O.S.)

Have you ever been to the circus, or the zoo, and seen the elephants?

He turns to find Jäger has entered the room behind him, and is starting to gather up the discarded wardrobe.

ROMY

Of course.

JÄGER

And have you noticed that they keep the elephant from running off with a slender rope around its ankle, tied to a tiny stake in the ground? A rope that it could easily break if it so desired? Have you ever wondered why it doesn't?

He continues sorting and folding clothes as he speaks.

JÄGER

When it is still a baby elephant, they put a heavy chain around its ankle, anchored to a big stake shoved so deep in the ground that it cannot escape.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JÄGER (CONT'D)

Over time, it accepts the proposition that as long as it can feel something around its ankle, it cannot escape, therefore it does not try, even when the chain is replaced with the thinnest of ropes.

He smiles at Romy, who clearly has no idea what the hell Jäger is on about.

JÄGER

You asked, why does Pedro rise up against the Marques when no one else will do so? It is because he perceives the truth of the rope, when the other elephants cannot.

ROMY

That still doesn't explain why.

JÄGER

The Marques is a tyrant, and like all tyrants, he holds onto power by making sure everyone around him can feel the chain around their ankles. They hammer down the world until there is nothing left but gray despair, no beauty, no joy, no music, no hope. Each day becomes like the day before, and the day before that, until at last we fall asleep in our own lives, because it is easier than seeing what our lives have become.

(beat)

Why Pedro? Because beauty entered his life...and woke him up out of his sleep. When that happened, the rope simply...slipped away.

He drops a load of clothes into a hamper and comes to sit beside Romy.

JÄGER

It only takes one thing -- a woman, a man, love, art -- to remind us that there is still beauty in the world, and to awaken us to the single great truth of our age --

(beat)

-- that it is better to die in hope than live in fear.

[CONTINUED]

CONTINUED:

With that, Jäger rises slowly, gathers his wardrobe, and heads out, leaving a quiet and thoughtful Romy behind.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - EVENING

Anna and the rest of the female prisoner extras are also finishing the process of changing back to their own clothes. Anna is lovingly touching a beautiful black silk ribbon that is part of her costume. Jäger sees her doing this and as she hands back the costume, he removes the black ribbon.

JÄGER

For you.

ANNA

I can't...they'll say I stole it --

JÄGER

I will tell them. Please. Take it.

She smiles faintly, accepts the ribbon with a nod, then moves off as the next woman turns in her wardrobe. Jäger watches her go with a measure of sadness that tells us there's something he isn't saying.

EXT. UFA FILM STUDIOS - EVENING

As the guards keep watch, Romy climbs up onto the truck to be driven back to the camp. He is the last to do so, the others already inside and waiting.

As he climbs in, he glances back toward a window, where he sees Leni, the cast, crew, and the captain of the guard having drinks and seeming to celebrate.

ROMY

Seems we missed a party.

The guard smiles. It's not pleasant.

GUARD

They didn't tell you, did they?

ROMY

Tell me what?

GUARD

They're done.

Halfway into the truck, Romy's blood freezes at the guard's words.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROMY

What?!

GUARD

This was the last day they needed
any of you.

ROMY

No....

(beat)

They might still need us, there has
to be something else for us to --

GUARD

It's over. Get in the truck.

Romy looks past the guard, to where Anna is getting into the
next truck.

ROMY

No...Anna...Anna!

GUARD

In the truck!

He hits Romy with the butt of his rifle, sending Romy tumbling
into the rear of the truck. Romy writhes on the floor of
the truck, the wind knocked out of him.

ROMY

...no...no, wait, please....

The guard closes the tarp and bangs on the side of the truck.

GUARD

(to the driver)

Go.

The driver complies. The trucks roar to life and rumble
down the narrow lane, passing by the window where --

-- Leni is drinking and talking with the other cast and crew.
She never glances over as the trucks pass her window and
slowly disappear into the night.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MAXGLAN CONCENTRATION CAMP - DAY

A cold, blustery, bone-white day. Romy stands with the rest
of his barracks at morning inspection and roll call. His
eyes look to a point somewhere deep in his thoughts.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nearby, a half-starved prisoner collapses to his knees in the cold wind. The soldiers yank him back up again. Romy barely notices. The counting of bodies continues.

INT. "THE STORE" - DAY

The usual group sits in their usual place: Cinti, Josef, Kasimir, and now Romy...who just sits silently. Josef looks over to him, tries to engage him.

JOSEF

Nothing to trade, Romy?

Romy doesn't respond. Josef leans in, taps him on the knee.

JOSEF

Nothing, Romy? Nothing at all?

Romy finally fixes on Josef's face. Shakes his head.

ROMY

No. Nothing.

And he looks away again as they go back to their bartering.

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Romy lay on his bunk, half in a fetal position, eyes closed, trying to sleep. Somewhere in the barracks, someone is crying. He fights to shut it out.

EXT. MAXGLAN CONCENTRATION CAMP - QUARRY - MORNING

Romy and the other prisoners work the quarry, a task made even harder by the fact that frost covers the ground, turning the hard ground even harder. Covered in dirt and dust, they chip and hammer at the ground as guards patrol nearby.

As he struggles to clear a section, Romy pauses and glances over to see --

-- Anna in the distance, on the other side of the fence, doing laundry for the soldiers. She glances up, but doesn't do anything that might attract attention. She meets Romy's gaze, then picks up the wet clothes and moves off.

Romy returns to his work.

EXT. MAXGLAN CONCENTRATION CAMP - EVENING

Romy stands alone beside the barbed wire on his side of the camp. His box is beside him. He rights it and sits.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Waiting for Anna.

For a long moment, she does not appear.

Then: slowly, cautiously, she appears in the distance. She glances around to make sure no guards are around, then she goes to the barbed wire fence at her side. Sets down a bucket so she can sit on it.

She looks at him in silence, exhausted.

He looks back at her in the same tired silence. Both too tired and, for the moment, hopeless to talk, even without words.

WIDEN to show them both sitting in silence, the gulf between them impassable, only thirty feet away, but as far apart as distant stars.

It begins to snow.

INT. BARRACKS - AFTERNOON

Romy is sitting on his bunk, drinking from a bowl of thin soup. There's a flurry of snow on the windows, not a lot yet, but enough to be noticed.

He looks over to where Cinti lay, shivering.. Fevered. Sick. Taking his bowl, Romy gets up and goes to Cinti, spooning some of the soup into his mouth. Cinti coughs it up. Romy tries again.

ROMY

Swallow.

CINTI

Can't....

ROMY

You have to eat. You have to stay alive to see my movie someday. I'm going to be a star, you know. .

CINTI

That so?

ROMY

Oh, sure. Now eat.

Cinti takes a little of the soup.

EXT. BARRACKS - MORNING

Another day, another roll call and inspection. The wind blows cold. The guards wear heavy coats. The prisoners don't.

EXT. MAXGLAN CONCENTRATION CAMP - AFTERNOON

Romy drags his box behind him as he approaches the barbed wire fence. Shivering, he puts it down on the hard ground. Sits.

Waits.

The bucket is still on the other side of the fence, but there's no Anna.

He continues to wait. Rubbing his arms against the cold.

The sky darkens.

No Anna.

Romy stands, begins slowly pacing back and forth on his side of the barbed wire. Concern is turning to worry.

Still no Anna. Other women pass by in the distance, none of them meeting his gaze.

ROMY

Anna...? Anna?!

They hear him, but don't look up. He's starting to get frantic.

ROMY

Anna?!

A guard approaches, drawn by his shouts.

GUARD

You! Away from the fence!

ROMY

There's a female prisoner, Anna, do you know where she --

GUARD

I said away from the fence!

ROMY

Anna!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The guard shoves Romy back. Romy shoves back. The guard clubs him with his night-stick. Romy goes down. The blows continue.

EXT. MAXGLAN CONCENTRATION CAMP - MORNING

Roll call, but Romy isn't standing in line. He's attached to the tree in the front of the assembly yard, a wire hanger around his neck, toes barely touching the ground. He gasps for air, refusing to die or choke.

Guards pass him by without paying much attention. Smoking and talking.

He continues to breathe.

EXT. MAXGLAN CONCENTRATION CAMP - AFTERNOON

A nasty welt from the hanger around his throat, Romy stands next to his box, which is battered but still intact. He rights it, and sits.

Looking to where Anna should be.

Where else does he have to go?

INT. "THE STORE" - DAY

Romy moves through the crowd to find Kasimir. Pulls him aside.

ROMY
Kasimir --

KASIMIR
It speaks.

ROMY
Some of the women from the other
side of camp...they're gone.

Kasimir nods, looks away.

ROMY
You always know the rumors of what's
going on around camp...where did
they go?

KASIMIR
Transferred. Apparently we are
getting too big and too cumbersome
for our own good.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROMY
Transferred where?

Kasimir doesn't want to answer. Won't meet Romy's eyes.

ROMY
Where?

Finally, resignedly, Kasimir says, in a low voice --

KASIMIR
Auschwitz.
(beat)
The word is --
(beat)
-- the word is, they'll be shipping
us all out sooner or later.

With that, he pulls himself away from Romy and lurches back across the store.

Romy slumps to the floor and sits hard, like a puppet whose strings have been cut, bleeding hope.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAXGLAN CONCENTRATION CAMP - NIGHT

The snow is piled high as Romy and the rest of his barracks are marched past the officer's quarters at the end of the day. Romy walks like a sleepwalker, just putting in time, waiting to die. SUPERIMPOSE: FEBRUARY, 1943

As he passes the mess hall, he hears voices...familiar voices. He pauses to look in the window.

Inside the officer's mess hall, a movie is being shown. Munchausen. The scene is the same one that Romy saw being filmed: Munchausen leaning over the prone body of his retainer Christian, who is aging rapidly.

CHRISTIAN
Either your watch is broken, or --

MUNCHADSEN
-- or time itself.

CHRISTIAN
Time itself is broken.
(beat)
Night is falling.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

You could even say autumn is falling.
A year for us on earth is a day here.
So in a year on the moon, one grows
356 years older.

RACK FOCUS so that we SEE Romy's reflection in the mirror
UNDER:

MUNCHAUSEN

A year older, every day.

We see in Romy's reflection that same revelation: he is aging
fast in this place, terribly fast.

Then a guard nudges him forward. Romy marches numbly toward
the barracks.

EXT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Winter has come with a vengeance. Snow drifts pile high
against the barracks. The wind howls and beats on the
windows.

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Romy pulls his thin blanket tighter around him, trying to
sleep as the wind pounds against the barracks.

He opens his eyes to see Cinti staring at him from the shadows
of his bunk.

ROMY

Cinti?

(beat)

Cinti, what is it?

No response. Just the staring.

Romy gets slowly out of his bunk, pulling his blanket closer,
and sits on the bed beside Cinti, who continues to stare out
into the night. Touches his arm. No response. The eyes
don't move. Dead.

Romy pulls the blanket over Cinti, too numb with exhaustion
and horror even to cry. He climbs back into his bunk as, in
the shadows, one of the other prisoners reaches out and slowly
pulls Cinti's blanket off his body. The dead do not need to
stay warm.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MAXGLAN CONCENTRATION CAMP - MORNING

It's May. The snows have receded, winter has passed, but the camp persists.

Romy stands near the barred wire, beside the weathered, broken husk of the box on which he used to sit. He stares at it with the eyes of someone trying hard to remember something. He nudges it with his toe. It shifts and splinters wetly, the wood rotted by snow and rain and sun.

He looks across to the women's side of the camp, his expression numb, lost...then turns and shuffles back toward the barracks.

CUT TO:

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Silence and darkness broken only by the ghost-white glow of searchlights that sweep across the windows. Romy and the other prisoners are asleep, exhausted, when suddenly --

-- the door BURSTS open, lights SNAP on and soldiers rush into the barracks, armed with guns and night sticks. They SHOUT at the prisoners and strike them, driving them out of bed and onto the floor.

SOLDIERS

Out! Everybody outside! Move! Go!

The soldiers are brutal, their tactics designed to terrify and intimidate the prisoners as they're beaten and driven out into --

EXT. MAXGLAN CONCENTRATION CAMP - NIGHT

-- where all the other barracks are being similarly emptied. Arms raised over their heads, the prisoners are fast-marched toward a line of waiting trucks, where their hands are bound and they're shoved inside.

Romy is similarly grabbed, bound, and thrown into the back of --

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

-- and shoved further down toward the front, where a soldier pulls him into position, sitting him down hard as other prisoners are shoved in afterward, lining both sides of the truck. Kasim is among the prisoners in this truck, his face pale, drawn, resigned.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KASIMIR
(quietly)
This is it...Auschwitz....

GUARD
Silence!

He strikes Kasimir as, behind them, the last of the prisoners in this truck are loaded in. A second guard takes position at the rear of the truck as --

-- the first guard hits the area behind the driver.

GUARD
Go!

The truck rumbles forward.

EXT. MAXGLAN CONCENTRATION CAMP - NIGHT

One by one, the convoy of trucks moves out, leaving the now-deserted concentration camp behind.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD - DAWN

The trucks continue down the road, carrying their human cargo.

INT. TRUCK - DAWN

Some of the exhausted prisoners have fallen back asleep, the only escape from their predicament. The rest, including Romy and Kasimir, are awake, though their eyes are turned silently inward. Then there's the squeal of brakes, and --

-- the truck rumbles to a stop. The guard at the front of the truck peers out through the tarp, then nods to the guard at the back, who climbs out to --

EXT. ROAD - DAWN

-- where a vegetable wagon has overturned, blocking the road. The guard joins other soldiers in moving to clear the road so the trucks can continue.

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

The guard glances out through the tarp to keep an eye on what's going on, barely paying attention to the passive and beaten group of prisoners as --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-- Romy turns his attention to the rope that binds his hands, his expression casual, only distantly interested. What he sees --

-- is a basic slip knot, passed over his hands and hurriedly tied. The knot is sloppy, nothing that can't be pulled apart easily. He stares with almost a vague curiosity at the loose-fitting knot as we HEAR --

JÄGER (V.O.)

Have you ever been to the circus, or
the zoo, and seen the elephants?

-- and we see Romy starting to wake up behind his eyes. The rope won't hold, only the fear holds him here. Romy glances at the guard, still distracted by what's going on outside, and sees that --

-- the sleeve on the guard's uniform is frayed, the threads hanging loose, dirt on his knees, his hat stained with sweat. Not a machine, just a man.

In an instant of decision, Romy begins to carefully work the knot. Kasimir sees what he's doing and fear comes into his eyes. He shakes his head, don't do it, don't make trouble. But Romy keeps at it as --

-- the knot slips, and he pulls at the rope just as --

-- the guard turns and sees this, but before he can react --

-- Romy DIVES for him, hands around his throat, strangling any cry he might make before it can leave his throat. He wrestles with the guard in almost the same way that Pedro wrestled with the Marques.

As the other prisoners look on, horrified, he pounds the guard into oblivion, then pulls at his gun, but it's stuck, wrapped around the guard's body.

Romy can hear the guards outside, the obstruction almost cleared. He starts for the rear of the truck.

ROMY

Come with me, hurry!

KASIMIR

No! Are you insane? We'll never
make it past the guards! They'll
kill us!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It's useless, they're too terrified to move and Romy's out of time. He pushes past them to the rear of the truck, takes one last breath and leaps out onto --

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

-- where he lands hard and gets up fast as --

-- the soldiers in the next truck see him. Whistles blow. The soldiers start to climb out as Romy plunges into the woods lining the road.

INT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS

He runs for everything he's worth as GUNSHOTS ring out behind him, slamming into the trees on either side.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The soldiers face a choice: if they go after him, they abandon the prisoners and risk more escapes. The captain of the guard looks to three soldiers in a supply truck.

MUELLER

You three...go after him! Catch up
when you have him!

(calling)

The rest of you, move out!

The trucks rumble forward as the three soldiers plunge into the woods after Romy.

INT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS

Romy keeps running as more gunshots splinter trees around him, feet pistoning through the underbrush as --

-- another bullet SLICES across his arm, spinning him around. Despite this, he keeps running, cutting down an incline and crashing through trees as --

-- the soldiers keep coming through the dense forest.

Romy comes to a hill where layers of dead leaves and branches have accumulated over years, thick brown piles of dead foliage thrown by the wind into a hollow beneath the hill.

He hesitates, then carefully digs at a corner of the leaf covered hollow, trying not to disturb the outer layers. He can hear the guards approaching as he crawls inside the gap he's dug behind the piles of dead leaves.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Romy presses himself deep into the soft earth and wet leaves as he HEARS the guards come up over the rise. There's a long, awful pause as they come within just a few feet of where he's concealed. Then --

-- they continue on their way, running in the direction they believe he went. Exhausted, spent, Romy closes his eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - EVENING

The shadows have lengthened as Romy cautiously pulls himself out from his cover. There's no sign of the soldiers. He hesitates, then starts off through the woods.

EXT. FARM - NIGHT

A small farm bordered by a low fence, set off by itself in a valley. Smoke comes from the chimney, and the lights are on inside. A barn stands off from the house a bit. Romy looks around then slips through the fence, making his way toward the barn.

INT. BARN - MOMENTS LATER

Romy is trying to pull together enough straw to make a bed with a horse blanket when suddenly --

-- the door opens, revealing the FARMER who lives here. His twelve-year-old SON is with him. He holds a lantern in one hand, a gun in the other.

FARMER

You! What are you doing here?

ROMY

Nothing! Just looking for a place to get out of the cold!

The farmer comes closer and raises the lantern to see Romy more clearly. From his clothes it's clear that Romy has escaped from a concentration camp. Romy falls to his knees, desperate.

ROMY

Help me. Please. Help me.

The farmer is clearly torn, and for a BEAT we don't know which way this is going to go.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FARMER
You can't stay here.

ROMY
I know.

The farmer considers one last time, then looks to his son.

FARMER
Go inside. Bring clothes. Bandages.
And soup.

The son goes off to comply as the farmer turns back to Romy.

FARMER
Tomorrow morning you move on.

ROMY
Yes. Thank you.

The farmer nods grudgingly, then moves to follow his son.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARM - MORNING

It's a clear, bright morning. Dressed in nondescript clothes, more anonymous now, Romy sets out from the farm, heading for a narrow dirt road visible further up the hill.

As he gradually makes his way up the side of the hill and onto the road, we slowly, slowly

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LANDING CRAFT - MORNING

One of more than a thousand landing craft bounces and lurches its way through the Atlantic sea toward the shores of Normandy beyond.

SUPERIMPOSE: June 6, 1944 D-Day

CLOSER to the landing craft, we FIND an army news PHOTOGRAPHER with a hand-wound movie camera checking to ensure it's working properly. He runs just a few feet of film through the camera then stops, nodding to himself as an ARMY SOLDIER looks on, shaking his head.

ARMY SOLDIER
How're you gonna run that thing and
fire your gun at the same time?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHOTOGRAPHER

I'm not sure, I haven't worked that part out yet.

ARMY SOLDIER

'Cause you know they're not gonna be standing around and posing for you over there.

The photographer risks a glimpse over the side of the landing craft.

In the distance, Normandy Beach is already an inferno of mortars, gunfire, machine-gun nests, exploding mines and barbed wire. Hell on earth.

The photographer sits back down beside the army soldier.

ARMY SOLDIER

How's it look?

PHOTOGRAPHER

Piece of cake.

ARMY SOLDIER

You want my advice? Forget about the camera.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Not a chance.

ARMY SOLDIER

Why not?

PHOTOGRAPHER

Whether we win this war or not, people are gonna be talking about what happened here today for years to come, about what we did right, and what we did wrong. Lots of people are going to say it was either their idea if it worked, and if it didn't, it wasn't their fault. But the camera never lies.

He holds up the camera to inspect it.

PHOTOGRAPHER

I saw the director, John Ford, back at the carrier. He's in charge of documenting all this on film.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)

You know what he said to me?

(beat)

"No matter what happens, no matter
what you see...never turn away."

(beat)

Never turn away.

The landing craft BUMPS against the sandy bottom. The company
CO calls back.

CO

Here we go!

The front of the landing craft drops and the soldiers rush
out as the photographer picks up his camera and looks through
it.

MONTAGE OF IMAGES

Real-life film footage from the war, hard-cutting from one
to the other, jarring, ragged. No music under it. No voices.
No sound effects of the battles.

It's right and appropriate that the footage be ragged, and
jumpy, and raw. Because this sequence is not about the
history of World War Two.

It's about film as revealed truth.

So we have just the SOUND of film running through a camera
as we SEB --

Allied soldiers taking the beaches on D-Day under heavy fire.

Battles with German soldiers in France, Italy and Germany.

German civilians fleeing Allied bombings.

American and Soviet tanks rolling into Berlin.

The liberation of Auschwitz, Dachau, Bergen-Belsen, others.

Celebrations in Times Square at the surrender of Germany.

-- and then there's the SOUND of a film roll-out as the screen
goes BLACK for a BEAT. Then we

FADE BACK IN ON:

EXT. AUSCHWITZ - DAY

The place is still being cleared out, with some victims still too sick to be moved. Barbed wire and debris fills the area where Allies broke in and liberated the place.

We FIND Romy, dressed in civilian clothes, as he enters the camp. His expression numb with shock as he sees what this place was. Everywhere he looks, there is only horror.

He sees a group of woman prisoners sitting near an allied medical tent, drinking soup from bowls, their hands shaking. He stoops down next to the nearest one.

ROMY

I'm sorry to bother you...I'm looking for someone...someone who might have been on the women's side of the camp. Her name was Anna Kuranova. Did you know her?

The woman shakes her head, barely hearing him. He looks to the next woman.

ROMY

Anna Kuranova, did you know her?
Did any of you know Anna Kuranova?
She would've come here about a year ago.

No response. Then his attention is drawn by the sound of a VOICE:

MAN (O.S.)

Rachel Androsky --

He looks off to see another MAN on a similar mission. He goes from woman to woman, an old photograph in his hand.

MAN

-- they said she came here six months ago. Rachel Androsky, did any of you know her?

PULL BACK to REVEAL more men on this side of the camp, going from woman to woman, group to group, looking for their sisters, wives, daughters, mothers, then --

-- CRANE UP to REVEAL that this is going on in both sides of the camp, and the number of people searching is huge. Romy is just one of many, and the odds are not good.

EXT. CABIN - BAVARIA - NIGHT

An expensive, lavish looking cabin beside a pristine lake.

SUPERIMPOSE: BAVARIA, 1945.

The lights are on inside as a US military jeep pulls up, stopping short of the cabin. The two American MILITARY OFFICERS inside peek out at the cabin. One of them is BUDD SCHULBERG, who wears the uniform of a Lieutenant in the Navy. (Yes, that Budd Schulberg, who would later write "On the Waterfront.")

OFFICER

Tell the truth, you volunteered to come all the way out here and arrest her because you want to show her some of those movie scripts you've been writing.

SCHULBERG

Up yours.

OFFICER

What'd you call her? The Nazi Pin-Up Girl? She's a looker, that's for sure.

SCHULBERG

Just be ready if I call you, okay?

Schulberg gets out of the car and goes up the steps to the cabin. Knocks. The door opens a moment later, and Leni Riefenstahl stands nervously in the door.

LENI

Yes?

SCHULBERG

Leni Riefenstahl?

LENI

Yee...?

SCHULBERG

Ma'am, my name is Budd Schulberg, I'm a lieutenant in the United States Navy assigned to the Nuremberg War Crimes Investigation Committee, and --
(beat)
Well, ma'am, I'm afraid you're under arrest.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LENI

But this is absurd --

SCHULBERG

I'm going to have to ask you to get your coat and come with me.

LENI

But I've never done anything, I'm not political, I'm a film-maker, that's all --

SCHULBERG

Ma'am, if you don't get your coat and come with me, I'm going to have to ask my associate to come and assist in the process of removing you.

Realizing she's not going to get out of it, she moves to get her coat.

CUT TO:

EXT. NUREMBERG - PALACE OF JUSTICE - DAY

Just to ESTABLISH.

INT. PALACE OF JUSTICE - DAY

Leni is seated at a table with her DEFENSE ATTORNEY facing a MILITARY JUDGE. The uniformed PROSECUTOR and his seconds are seated at another table.

JUDGE

Fraulein Riefenstahl, though it is true that you were not a member of the Nazi Party, your films did much to advance the cause of the Third Reich by creating wartime propaganda sympathetic to Nazi goals. There is also the matter of the concentration camps --

The DEFENSE ATTORNEY stands.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Your Honor, Madame Riefenstahl is an artist, a film-maker, not a member of the SS. She had nothing to do with the camps. She didn't even know of their existence until after the war.

(CONTINUED)



Leni Riefenstahl on the set of "Tiefenland" (above), on trial in Nuremberg (below)



CONTINUED:

JUDGE

I find that curious, given the stories reaching this court that nearly a hundred people were brought in a nearby concentration camp to work as extras in --

(checks paperwork)

-- Fraulein Riefenstahl's most recent film, Tiefland.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Your Honor --

JUDGE

Because if they were taken from a concentration camp, would that not imply that you knew about the camps, Fraulein Riefenstahl?

LENI

I never get involved in extras casting. I leave that to others. Yes, we used extras in Tiefland, as any movie does. Where they came from, I don't know.

The judge examines a sheet of paper.

JUDGE

Fraulein Riefenstahl, what is the name of your film company?

LENI

Leni Riefenstahl Films, your honor.
(a thin smile)

I admit it is not very creative, but --

He holds up the sheet of paper.

JUDGE

I hold in my hand a contract between Leni Riefenstahl Films and the commandant of the Gypsy Concentration Camp at Maxglan, Austria.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Your honor --

JUDGE

The contract covers the hiring of 91 adults and 15 children specified as gypsies.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

The German Army controlled the movements of gypsies and others through Germany and Austria. It would have been natural to make such arrangements. Also, the contract stipulates that the extras were to be paid seven marks per day.

JUDGE

Yes, I see that here. So?

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

It was not the practice for companies bringing in workers from concentration camps to pay them for their services, so --

JUDGE

Except that the contract indicates that payments were to be made not to the extras, but to the Gypsy General Fund in Salzburg...to be credited against the costs incurred by the camp at Maxglan.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Yes, but that doesn't prove that the extras themselves were --

JUDGE

It also specifies that the extras were to be kept in strict isolation under armed guard. That seems to me to imply that they were prisoners.

(beat)

I think your client needs to revisit her testimony on this issue, and to take some time to consider her perilous position with this court on the issue of whether or not she was a propagandist with the Nazis because it was her job, or her cause.

Leni and her attorneys share a concerned look.

EXT. PALACE OF JUSTICE - DAY

Leni is led out of the back of the Palace of Justice in handcuffs as press photographers snare pictures and we HEAR:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JUDGE (V.O.)

It is the judgment of this court that Madame Riefenstahl, while not directly engaged in the commission of war crimes, must be considered guilty of complicity with the architects of the Third Reich and sympathetic to their cause. For this, she is to be imprisoned for a period of no less than four years.

(beat)

This court also suggests that her use of extras drawn from the ranks of civilians held in the Maxglan Concentration Camp merits further review by additional hearings to be held at the discretion of the War Crimes Tribunal as part of the process of de-nazification.

He gets a little closer as Leni addresses the reporters. Speaking for the cameras.

LENI

The French and American judges have unlawfully confiscated my films, everything that I have been working on for the last several years; many of them works in progress. I intend to fight to clear my name, and to reclaim ownership of my films, even if I must do so from prison.

REPORTER

Works in progress...does that include Tiefland?

LENI

Yes, and I want to make it very clear that while prisoners from the Maxglan Work Camp were used in Tiefland, as far as I know, all of my gypsies -- that is how I always referred to them, as my gypsies -- survived the camps. I am quite confident that history will prove the truth of this.

She is led into a waiting car. It starts away and disappears into the distance as we slowly, slowly --

FADE TO BLACK:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AND

FADE BACK IN ON:

EXT. CARPENTRY SHOP - NEW YORK - DAY

A small but pleasant looking shop on the edge of the city.
SUPERIMPOSE: NEW YORK CITY, FEBRUARY 1, 1954.

INT. CARPENTRY SHOP - DAY

Romy is there with an apprentice, RICHARD EAMES, early 20s, African-American, as Albert assembles a beautiful wooden desk. Richard is giving Romy a hard time more out of a sense of messing with him than really protesting the methods.

ROMY

-- so when you glue the pieces together, the dove-tailed joints hold much better than if you just nail them.

EAMES

Nails are faster. I could hammer the heck out of this thing --

ROMY

Nails are fine, if you never intend to actually open the drawer. But you open, close, open, close, over years, and the nails come loose, they catch, and the drawer doesn't fit as well anymore. A dove-tailed joint like this will look no different a hundred years from now.

EAMES

But I'm not gonna be here a hundred years from now.

ROMY

No. But this will be. If you make it right.

Just then, the door OPENS and MARSHALL ROSE enters, also African-American, 40s.

ROMY

Ah, Mr. Rose, good, I was hoping you would come by today.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARSHALL
It's done?

ROMY
See for yourself.

He hands Marshall a very delicate wooden toy bird. Marshall smiles and shakes his head with admiration, turning it in her hands, examining the fine work, as Romy looks on with pride.

MARSHALL
It's beautiful. You would never know it was broken.

Romy smiles and leans in to point out the details.

ROMY
The part where the wing was broken was very fragile, there was no way to fix it in place, so the nails had to be removed --

EAMES
There he goes about nails again. I bet you think that whole iron age thing was just somebody's idea of a joke.

ROMY
(continuing over)
-- and the glue heated so the wing could be removed without breaking the rest. This is a completely new wing, stained to match.

MARSHALL
Lovely, as usual. It was my niece's favorite. She'll be so happy. Thank you.

ROMY
This time, not me. My apprentice.
Eames raises his hand, waves, smiles almost shyly.

MARSHALL
Who, this no-talent?

ROMY
He's going to be a fine carpenter one day.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EAMES

I'm gonna remind you later that you said that.

ROMY

I'll box it up and make up your bill.

Romy moves to do so as Marshall walks around the shop.

MARSHALL

I got to give it to you, Mr. Mustow. Not a lot of white folks would even take on a black man as an apprentice, let alone spend as much time as you do helping out this poor, half-blind son of Adam.

ROMY

A man walking down a sidewalk sees an ant on his back, its feet up in the air, like this.

He mimes it as Eames shakes his head.

EAMES

Here he goes again....

ROMY

The man says, "What are you doing, little ant?" The ant says, "I heard the sky was falling, so I'm bracing to catch it."

(beat)

The man says, "You're so small, and so close to the ground, what do you think you can do?" The ant shrugs and says, "Eh, I do what I can."

EAMES

Man, you have got to get some new material.

Romy hands Marshall the bill and the box.

ROMY

Here you go.

MARSHALL

Thanks.

He pulls out several bills and hands them to Romy, who rings up the bill as Marshall notices --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED;

-- a stack of telephone books from every major city in the country stacked up in the corner.

MARSHALL

You collect phone books?

ROMY

Something like that.

EAMES

Keeps looking for some woman he met in Germany. Guess the local talent isn't good enough for him.

ROMY

Shouldn't you be finishing that desk?

EAMES

Fine, and when I die of old age making it, you know what I'm gonna have holding my coffin together? Nails. Lots of 'em.

Eames moves to comply as Marshall reaches into his pocket.

MARSHALL

Speaking of that...I saw something in the paper this morning I thought you might find interesting.

ROMY

Oh...?

He hands the paper, folded over to reveal --

-- an article entitled RIEFENSTAHL'S TIEFLAND TO DEBUT IN STUTTGART.

MARSHALL

Isn't this that movie you said you were in?

Romy looks at the article, astonished, as Eames approaches.

EAMES

What, you're saying all that stuff he said about being in a movie was true?

MARSHALL

Looks like.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EAMES

Shit...I figured after ten years he
was just making this stuff up.

ROMY

Can I have this?

MARSHALL

Sure. I'm done with it.

(re: the toy)

Thanks again for this. See you
around.

He exits as Romy reads the article, Eames peering over his
shoulder.

ROMY

February eleventh...that's just ten
days from now.

(beat)

I have to go.

He starts gathering up his stuff.

ROMY

If I hurry, there's just time to get
on a boat --

EAMES

Whoa now, hold on --

ROMY

Take care of the shop while I'm gone.
I'll call when I can.

EAMES

You're not seriously thinking she's
gonna be there? After all this time?

ROMY

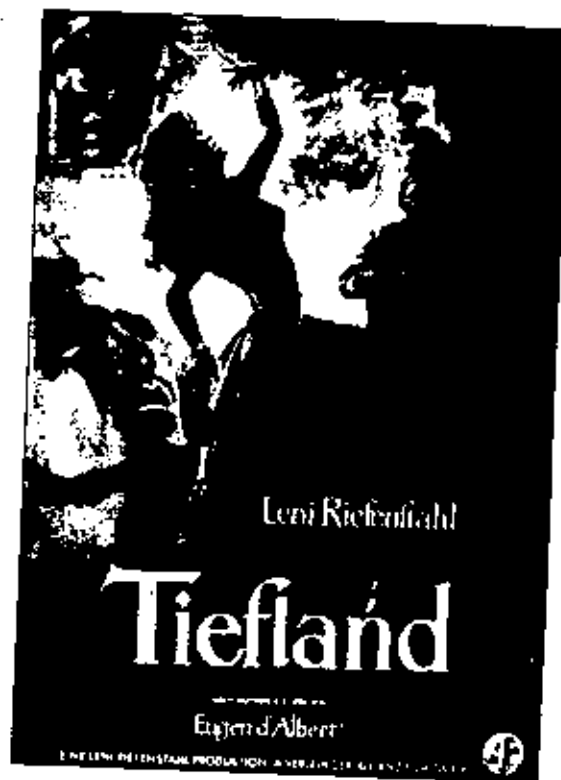
Don't lend the tools to anyone, lock
up by six, and remember --

EAMES

No nails.

Romy nods, smiles nervously, almost as though afraid to hope,
then hurries out of the shop. Eames shakes his head as he
watches Romy leave, and we HEAR:

(CONTINUED)



Movie Posters for Tiefland's 1954 Release



CONTINUED:

LENI (V.O.)
Today is a great day. An important
day. A day of victory.

FADE BACK IN ON:

EXT. EM THEATER - STUTTGART - DAY

Leni stands before the EM Theater in Stuttgart, an old style theater converted to a tinema. She is again addressing a clutth of reporters, but under very different cirtumstantes.

SUPERIMPOSE: FEBRUARY 11, 1954 STUTTGART, GERMANY

The banner above the theater annountes the premiere of Tiefland.

LENI
For the last ten years; I have been engaged in a daily struggle to tlear my name of the tharges made against me after the war. This struggle has involved four separate hearings by the Ameritan war tribunal, and four years of imprisonment and additional persecution by the Frenth War Crimes tribunal who, like the Ameritans, seized all of my footage from Tiefland. Now, after having finally won batk the right to my original footage, fourteen years since we first started produktion, Tiefland will at last be premiered here, today, in Stuttgart.

There's applause from some in the trowd. Some boos. Others just look on silently. An Ameritan REPORTER pushes his way to the front, shouting to be beard above the trowd.

REPORTER
Miss Riefenstahl, what do you say to persistent reports that many of the gypsy prisoners used as extras in this film died in the tontentration camps?

She looks past him, speaking to the crowd.

LENI
I hope you will all appretiate this film for what it is, a voite raised
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LENI (CONT'D)
against the kind of tyranny used by
the Nazis, and if you will hold your
questions until after the premiere,
I will be happy to answer them at
that time.

She waves, playing the diva, and heads inside. The crowd
follows her as we PAN OFF to REVEAL --

-- Romy, who holds in his hand a ticket purchased for
Tiefland.

He watches the crowd as they pass, scanning the faces for
anyone who might look like Anna. But the crowd is large and
he moves around, trying without success to get a look at
everyone.

Finally, as the last member of the crowd enters, Romy takes
one last look around, just in case anyone comes late, then
moves into the theater.

INT. EM THEATER - STUTTGART - LATER

As Tiefland plays on the screen, we PAN the audience until
we finally settle on Romy's face. Looking up at the screen.
At Tiefland. At himself.

And his breath catches in his throat as he sees --

-- Anna, on the screen, holding his hand. Smiling. As
beautiful as she ever was. Preserved on film alongside him.

And Romy...begins to weep.

The film continues. Image after image after image. Truth
after truth.

He weeps. But he cannot stop looking.

Because she is up there. .

CUT TO:

INT. EM THEATER - LATER

The credits roll, and the lights come up. As the audience
gets up to leave, Romy is again on his feet, looking
everywhere for any sign of Anna.

Then: he sees a woman in a back row moving toward the aisle.
From here, she looks familiar.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROMY
Anna...?
(calling)
Anna!

She doesn't respond. He climbs over seats in his hurry to get to her before she disappears up the aisle.

With one final jump he lands behind her, puts out a hand.

ROMY
Anna...?

She turns to him. It's not Anna. Close, but not her.

WOMAN
Excuse me...?

ROMY
I'm sorry, I thought you were --
(beat)
I'm sorry.

She accepts the apology and continues on her way. Romy takes one last look around, then resignedly exits.

EXT. KM THEATER - STUTTGART - EVENING

Leni moves through the crowd at some distance, most of her words and theirs lost to the sound of traffic, except for --

LENI
...and starting tomorrow, Tiefland
will open in fifty more theaters all
over Germany. From there, well,
we'll have to see.

Romy looks lost at the news. There's no way he can be in all those places. He stands alone, looking up at the marquee, where TIEFLAND is spelled out in large, brightly lit letters.

He looks around, as though not quite sure where he should go. A small crowd is forming for the next showing.

He hesitates, then walks back to the ticket booth. Pushes money through the window.

ROMY
One, please.

TICKET SELLER
I thought you just came out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROMY

Yes, I want....

Romy pauses silently for a moment, then looks off and says, softly --

ROMY

I want to see it again.

The ticket seller takes the money and hands over the ticket. As Romy accepts it, he hears, from behind --

ANNA (O.S.)

Romy...?

He turns, slowly, raising his eyes to see --

-- Anna standing behind him, aged by her experience in the camps but still Anna.

ANNA

It is you....

ROMY

Anna?

And they embrace, holding each other as if there were nothing else in the world, and for that moment, there is not. Weeping and laughing and weeping.

ANNA

The train was late, I couldn't be here for the first showing.
(beat)

I knew you would be here...I knew you would be here...I knew you would be here....

They finally pull apart, tears mixing with laughter.

ROMY

I have so much to tell you.

ANNA

And I have much to tell you. But first...first we will see the movie, together. Then we will have dinner. And then --

She fixes on his face, smiling and crying, her voice tinged with triumph.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA

-- and then we will talk.

And as they embrace again beside the theater, we --

-- CRANE UP and BACK as, off to the side, Leni continues to entertain the reporters, and we READ ON SCREEN:

For the next sixty years, Leni Riefenstahl insisted that none of "her gypsies" had died in concentration camps during World War II.

In 2002, she was sued by a group of Roma and Sinti families on behalf of the gypsy extras. She was charged with denying the Holocaust and using workers from concentration camps. In the course of the hearing, Riefenstahl finally admitted that many of "her gypsies" had indeed perished in Auschwitz and other Nazi camps.

Leni Riefenstahl died September 9, 2003 at the age of 101.

To date, none of the families of the gypsies used in Tiefland have ever received compensation for their work.

Though it is confirmed that over 100 Gypsy men, women and children were used as extras for Tiefland, due to the destruction of records, only fourteen of their names and concentration camp identification numbers have been verified: Robert Adler (Z-5792); Karl Dewus (Z-4145), Haini Ernst (Z-5696), Wilhelm Ritter (Z-4883), Albrecht Rose (Z-752), Charlotte Rosenberg (Z-5406), Werner Rosenberg (Z-4860), Otto Schmelzer (Z-5448); Karl Steinbach (Z-4875), Ludwig Weisenbach (Z-4857), Hermann Weiß (Z-644), Johann Weiß (Z-643), Willy Zander (Z-5933); and Hans Zens (Z-178).

Tiefland is now available on DVD.

FADE OUT:

End

