

FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

A well-appointed bedroom, with a neatly made, unoccupied bed.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Yes! There! Just like that! Don't
stop! Oh, god, yes. Yessssss!

Nearby, ILSA HOLTZ, 40s and pampered, lies naked, face down
on a low, folding cot.

PETER MUELLER, 30s, ruggedly handsome, sits in a custom
sports wheelchair, finishes giving her a professional
massage. He wears a tight t-shirt that shows off the well-
developed muscles of his arms and chest.

PETER

Will that be all for today, Mrs.
Holtz?

ILSA

There's one spot you missed.

She rises from the cot, "almost" covers herself with a towel.
Peter sighs dramatically, begins to remove his clothes.

As he does so, an empty Viagra blister-pack falls out of his
pocket. He maneuvers himself onto the cot, lies on his back.
Ilsa climbs on top of him, and they're quickly having sex.

ILSA

Yes, that was the spot.

ULRICH HOLTZ, 40s, a large, tough-looking man, rushes in.

ULRICH

(to Peter)

I'm going to kill you!

Ilsa leaps to her feet, "almost" covers herself with the
towel.

ILSA

Ulrich! This isn't what it looks
like.

He gives her a dirty look.

ILSA

Alright, it is, but --

Ulrich walks to the fireplace, picks up a poker.

ILSA
-- What are you going to do?!

ULRICH
I'm going to rip him a new asshole.

Peter watches warily, but doesn't move from the cot.

PETER
Good. The one I have doesn't work
that well.

ULRICH
You're a wise bastard, aren't you?
Stand up.

PETER
I'd like to oblige, but...

He looks at the wheelchair; Ulrich follows his eyes.

ULRICH
(in disbelief)
Ilsa?

She shrugs her shoulders. Ulrich moves toward Peter.

ILSA
Don't hurt him!

PETER
You know, this isn't going to be
fair.

ULRICH
You should have thought of that
before you decided to screw my
wife.

PETER
Actually, it was her decision. But
it's okay, she's paying.

ILSA
Go ahead, hurt him.

Ulrich swings the poker at Peter's head. Peter expertly
parries the blow, and in a flash takes the poker from Ulrich
and has him face down in a choke hold.

PETER
I warned you it wasn't going to be
fair.

He aims the point of the poker at Ulrich's anus.

PETER

Is this what you had in mind?

Ulrich's face registers his "discomfort." Peter tightens the choke hold, and Ulrich is quickly unconscious.

The sound of Ilsa's SCREAM morphs into a police siren.

INT. ROLF'S CAR - DAY

ROLF LEHMANN, late 20s, is parked in view of the door of Ilsa's apartment building. He watches as two Policeman put Peter in the back and his backpack, folded massage cot and wheelchair in the trunk, and pull away.

Rolf smiles maliciously, dials his cell phone.

INT. COLOGNE CONSTRUCTION OFFICE - DAY

The private office of the head of a prosperous land development company.

NORBERT ALBRECHT, 55, a tough, self-made man, studies an aerial map of a seedy area of the city. One house has a big, red circle around it. In a corner of the map is a drawing of an upmarket condo building.

The phone RINGS. Norbert looks at the display, pushes the speaker button.

NORBERT

Yeah, Rolf.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

Rolf speaks with a strong Swiss accent, his voice higher than you'd expect.

ROLF

I called up the husband and asked him if he knew who was screwing his wife. The police just took the cripple away.

NORBERT

And the blind girl?

ROLF

She's next. This is almost too easy.

Norbert caresses the circle on the map.

NORBERT
 Serves them right for ignoring our -
 -
 (sarcastically)
 -- generous offers.

ROLF
 I'm going to --

Norbert disconnects.

END INTERCUT

INT. ROLF'S CAR - DAY

Rolf hears the DIAL TONE, is annoyed. He dials another number.

INT. CALL CENTER - DAY

A busy call center. JULIA RICHTER, an attractive young woman of 30, wears a headphone/microphone. She has on dark glasses, and next to her is a blind-person's cane.

She gives a low, frustrated scream, takes off her headset. The CALL AGENT in the next cubicle sympathizes.

CALL AGENT
 That sort of day?

JULIA
 I swear, if I get one more --

There's a BEEP. She shakes her head, puts the headphone back on, pushes a button on her console.

JULIA
 This is Julia, how may I help you?

IRATE CUSTOMER (V.O.)
 Jesus Christ, do you have any idea how long I've been on hold?!

JULIA
 I'm sorry for the delay, sir. How may I help you?

IRATE CUSTOMER (V.O.)
 I asked you a question. Do you know how long I've been on hold?

Julia visibly controls herself.

JULIA

No sir. What can I do to help you?

IRATE CUSTOMER (V.O.)

Is it some kind of rule you guys have?

JULIA

I beg your pardon?

IRATE CUSTOMER (V.O.)

Make everybody hold for at least an hour?

JULIA

Please, sir, don't tell anybody.

IRATE CUSTOMER (V.O.)

What?

JULIA

That I answered in less than an hour. Last week, Sofia picked up a call in 55 minutes, and they fired her on the spot.

Call Agent, who is listening, giggles.

IRATE CUSTOMER (V.O.)

Don't get smart with me, Missy. My order is three weeks late, and I want to know what you're going to do about it.

JULIA

(back to business)

May I have your name and account number, please?

IRATE CUSTOMER (V.O.)

Would you take your nose out of the damn script for one second?!

JULIA

Sir --

IRATE CUSTOMER (V.O.)

-- I know my rights. I'm a lawyer.

JULIA

And are you personal friends with the president of the company?

IRATE CUSTOMER (V.O.)

What?

JULIA

According to our statistics, 67% of people who call the help desk to complain are lawyers, and 55% are personal friends of the president.

IRATE CUSTOMER (V.O.)

Let me --

JULIA

-- It totals more than 100%, but that's because some of his friends are also lawyers. We have one script if you're a lawyer, and another if you're a friend of the president, but a third if you're a lawyer who's also a friend of the president. You do realize I'm talking about the president of the company and not the President of Germany? If you're friends with the President of Germany, that's another set of scripts entirely.

Other Agents are now listening, giggling.

IRATE CUSTOMER (V.O.)

Let me talk to your supervisor!

JULIA

Certainly, sir. I'll just put you on hold.

IRATE CUSTOMER (V.O.)

Nooo --

Julia taps the mic several times, sings the first notes of Flower Duet from "Lakmé" at double speed.

JULIA

"Dôme épais -- le jasmin -- á la rose s'assamble..."

Her voice is excellent. The other agents cheer.

Julia disguises her voice and makes it sound like a recording of a man.

JULIA

We'll be with you in a moment.
Please continue to hold, your call
is important to us.

Meanwhile, CALL CENTER MANAGER comes in. The other Agents stop laughing and try to signal Julia, but she can't see them. Besides, she's on a roll.

She sings the chorus of "May the Bird of Paradise Fly Up Your Nose." (© Neal Merrit, 1993)

JULIA

"May the bird of paradise fly up
your nose.
May an elephant caress you with his
toes.
May your --"

Call Center Manager reaches out and pushes a button on the console. Julia sniffs, smells his scent.

JULIA

Uh, oh.

INT. CALL CENTER MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Call Center Manager has a heart-to-heart talk with Julia.

CALL CENTER MANAGER

You don't like working with us, do
you Julia?

JULIA

I'll never do it again.

CALL CENTER MANAGER

This isn't the first time.

JULIA

What?

CALL CENTER MANAGER

Someone just called to complain
about you. A Swiss -- I could
barely understand him. A normal
complaint, and we might be able to
give you another chance. But this
man was a lawyer.

JULIA

And a personal friend of the
president of the company?

CALL CENTER MANAGER
So you remember him. Anyway, we
can't just ignore this. So, I'm
afraid...

Call Center Manager takes Julia's elbow, leads her to the
door.

EXT. JULIA AND PETER'S HOUSE - DAY

Julia, depressed, taps her way through a run-down
neighborhood.

MRS. APPEL, 30s, sits on the bottom step of her front porch,
rocks a baby in an old carriage, watches 12 year old OLIVER
in a beat-up go-kart roar up and down the street.

Oliver slows to drive next to Julia.

JULIA
Hello, Oliver.

OLIVER
Hi, Julia.

MRS. APPEL
You're home early.

JULIA
I decided to take some time off
from the call center industry. Like
forever.

MRS. APPEL
Uh, oh! What are you going to do?

JULIA
I've always wanted to be a race car
driver.

OLIVER
Awesome!

JULIA
Would you teach me?

OLIVER
(to Mrs. Appel)
Can I, Mom?

MRS. APPEL
Not just now, Dear.

OLIVER

Aww.

JULIA

Another time, Oliver.

Julia continues on to

EXT./INT. JULIA AND PETER'S HOUSE - DAY

a beat-up two-story house with a handicapped access ramp. The interior of the house is also in disrepair.

She walks over mail which has been dumped through the mail slot. She gathers it, which is a feat since it's mixed with a mess of wires from the television, cable box and DVR.

BRUNO, a stoner in his 20s, BANGS a suitcase along the upstairs hall to the top of the stairs. He sees Julia, stops, mouths an inaudible "Oh, shit!"

He tiptoes down the stairs, but they CREAK with every step and the suitcase continues to BANG.

JULIA

Going somewhere, Bruno?

BRUNO

Julia! What are you doing home?

JULIA

You weren't thinking of leaving without paying, were you?

BRUNO

I'm just going to the shops. I'll be back in a few minutes.

JULIA

Come on, Bruno! I'm blind, not deaf.

Bruno continues to the door, but stops when he sees what's happening outside.

EXT. JULIA AND PETER'S HOUSE - DAY

A police car driven by Policewoman SIGI, 30s, attractive, pulls up. Peter is in the front passenger seat.

PETER

Four thousand euros!

SIGI

A thousand for each time you beat
up a husband.

PETER

Two of them were boyfriends.

She swings to slap him across the face, but he catches her
hand distractedly and continues talking.

PETER

I don't suppose it matters. I
couldn't pay it if it was four
hundred.

SIGI

Let me go.

He lets her hand go.

PETER

Forty, maybe.

She tries to slap him again and, again, he catches her hand.

PETER

Look Sigi, it's just part of the
job. If it'll make you feel any
better, I promise not to make love
to any other police officers.

She looks around to make sure no one is watching, kisses him
passionately. When they come up for air...

PETER

While they're on duty.

In spite of herself, Sigi is amused.

She gets Peter's wheelchair and backpack from the trunk. The
folded massage cot's legs protrude from the backpack.

Peter gets in the wheelchair, puts on the backpack, wheels up
the ramp as Sigi drives off.

INT. JULIA AND PETER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Peter sees Bruno, the suitcase, and the expression on Julia's
face. He blocks the door with his wheelchair, folds his arms
menacingly.

PETER

Hello, Julia. Bruno. What's new?

Bruno looks for another exit.

PETER

Julia, call the station and have them tell Sigi to come back. If I'm going to break Bruno's legs, she'll have to come arrest me again, so we may as well save her the trip.

BRUNO

Look, some company called and offered me a room for half what I'm paying you. I couldn't turn it down.

PETER

You're not a prisoner. Just pay us what you owe.

BRUNO

I don't have it! I swear! I'll send it to you. Twenty Euros a week.

Peter glares at him.

BRUNO

Thirty!

Peter starts to roll toward him.

BRUNO

Fifty!

Peter continues. Bruno cowers.

BRUNO

Don't hurt me!

PETER

Julia?

Julia shrugs her shoulders unhappily.

PETER

(to Bruno)

Alright. But you miss one week, and I'll come after you, even if I have to wheel this thing up and down every street in the city.

Peter moves aside, and Bruno flees with his suitcase.

Peter gazes at Julia with concern.