

THE ASYLUM INSIDE

by

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Most of what follows is true history. As
for the rest, maybe it happened and maybe
it didn't --- but it *could* have happened.

OVER BLACK:

A HIDEOUS METALLIC SCREECH.

Not loud, but you can feel it in your teeth.

FADE IN:

SHINY RINGLETS OF SHAVED STEEL UNWIND FROM A DRILL HOLE.

A TITANIUM DRILL BIT burrows into the steel door of an old-fashioned SAFE -- one of those freestanding boxes with the combination dial and the big bolt handle.

Across the safe's door, in fancy Gothic letters, it reads:

BECKMANN & SCHÖNHERR JEWELERS BERLIN

CUT TO:

EXT. KURFÜRSTENDAMM - MARCH 10, 1932 - NIGHT

Tomorrow this street will buzz with Berlin's ritziest fräuleins. Right now it's dark, empty and dead quiet.

Unless you put an ear to the window of BECKMANN & SCHÖNHERR.

CUT TO:

INT. BECKMANN & SCHÖNHERR JEWELERS - NIGHT

Compared to this place Tiffany's looks like a tool shed.

Under the white marble stairwell, inside the half-open coat closet, a white-whiskered WATCHMAN lies hog-tied and gagged on the white onyx floor.

A thick EXTENSION CORD snakes over him, past a DISABLED ALARM BELL, up the stairs, and disappears under a SECOND FLOOR office door.

CUT TO:

INT. HERR BECKMANN'S PRIVATE OFFICE - NIGHT

From the door the cord stretches across a couple of priceless PERSIAN RUGS and ends up at our safecracker.

Call him GEIST.

Can't make out his face, but his hands tell us plenty: strong, spidery and thickly calloused. Perfect for playing the Moonlight Sonata, only he didn't bring his piano.

The drilling stops.

Geist shoves the drill back in his RUCKSACK, fishes out TWO COILS OF INSULATED WIRE, a TIN OF LIP BALM, and a STICK OF JUICY FRUIT GUM.

Straightaway the gum goes into his mouth. Delicious, but it's the FOIL WRAPPER he wants. He flattens it, then smears a SMALL DAB OF LIP BALM (which probably isn't lip balm) onto its center.

The wrapper is rolled up and both insulated wires are pierced through the foil. This foil cigarette is fed into the drill hole, and sealed in with the freshly-chewed chewing gum. Only the wires stick out.

In the corner is a BRONZE BUST of REICHSPRÄSIDENT PAUL VON HINDENBURG. He's giving this whole operation the stink-eye. Geist hefts the bust from its MARBLE PEDESTAL, lugs it over.

POCKETKNIFE out, Geist cuts a length of PHONE CORD from the wall. He cinches one end of the cord around von Hindenburg's neck, the other end gets knotted to the bolthandle of the safe's door. The old Prussian now dangles precariously from the front of the safe.

As a final touch, one of those PRICEY RUGS gets draped over the top of everything.

Geist retreats to the safety of the BIG MAHOGANY DESK, stringing out the two insulated wires as he goes.

Hunkered down, he snatches the DESK LAMP, unscrews its BULB, and fishes the insulated wires into the empty socket.

He flicks the lamp switch on.

CUT TO:

EXT. KURFÜRSTENDAMM - NIGHT

A muffled BOOM, barely audible, echoes down the street.

CUT TO:

INT. HERR BECKMANN'S PRIVATE OFFICE - NIGHT

Hard to see through the SMOKE, but the safe's door hasn't budged.

All the same the blast has done its job -- momentarily displacing the locking mechanism. This allows the Hindenburg bust -- still tied to the door handle -- to drop, its anvil weight forcing the handle to turn.

The door glides open.

Geist coughs his way forward, peels back what's left of the Persian rug.

The safe's door front is savagely scarred, but the insides are untouched.

He slides open the first drawer.

It's like a dream:

500 CARATS WORTH OF EMERALDS STRUNG INTO A NECKLACE. They say the Empress Josephine wore this to her coronation. And now it belongs to Geist.

Or does it? He looks again.

The drawer is EMPTY.

Huh? He rubs his eyes.

It's empty alright. Definitely empty.

Nothing in any of the other drawers either.

The safe has been cleaned out.

Geist stumbles backwards and backwards till he collides with the desk. His right hand reaches back, finds the blasted-out chewing gum stuck to the desk front. Absentmindedly he stuffs it in his mouth. Tastes like a burnt spare tire but who cares.

 KNOTT (V.O.)

 Watch and listen. You're gunna see things you won't believe, hear things that sound crazy -- things that are crazy. But just because something's crazy doesn't mean it isn't real.

Geist's eyes stay fixed on the safe and all that empty emptiness.

INT. HERR BECKMANN'S PRIVATE OFFICE - LATER

HERR BECKMANN counts REICHSMARKS into Geist's palm.

Across the room A ROACH TRAP is placed under Beckmann's safe -
- right below its ID number plate: BÜRG A-543.

INT. GEIST'S ROOM - MARCH 10, 1932 - NIGHT

A DIAGRAM OF THE BÜRG A-543 SAFE is stretched out on the
kitchen table.

Beside it, RUBBER-GLOVED hands fill a tin with the gooey gray
"LIP BALM."

EXT. KURFÜRSTENDAMM ALLEY - LATER

Geist descends a MANHOLE LADDER.

INT. BECKMANN & SCHÖNHERR FURNACE ROOM - LATER

One by one the CHISELED-OUT BRICKS are pushed aside.

INT. BECKMANN & SCHÖNHERR JEWELERS - LATER

Silently Geist slips from the BASEMENT DOOR.

The Watchman is slumped in a chair, out cold, his hands
cradling an empty bottle of KIRSCHWASSER.

INT. HERR BECKMANN'S PRIVATE OFFICE - LATER

Precise measurings are CHALKED OUT on the safe door.

INT. HERR BECKMANN'S PRIVATE OFFICE - LATER

Geist keys the titanium bit into the DRILL, pulls the
trigger...

DING! DING! DING! DING! DING!

GEIST BLINKS BACK TO THE HERE AND NOW:

DING! DING! DING! DING! DING! DING!

Sounds like the ALARM BELL, but it can't be.

Geist covers and uncovers his ears. The BELL comes and goes so it must be for real.

He dashes out the door.

CUT TO:

INT. BECKMANN & SCHÖNHERR JEWELERS - NIGHT

Sure enough, somebody has reconnected the ALARM WIRES.

In three jumps Geist is down the stairs and headed to the closet. He pulls up short.

The floor is sticky with BLOOD.

He edges the closet door open.

The Watchman is still tied up. Only now his throat is slit from ear to ear.

Geist rubs his eyes; it doesn't make the Watchman any less dead.

He yanks out the alarm wires. Quieter, but there's ANOTHER BELL coming from outside:

(O.S.) A POLICE SIREN. TWO POLICE SIRENS.

Time to go.

CUT TO:

INT. BECKMANN & SCHÖNHERR BASEMENT STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Geist bulls into the furnace room door, fully expecting it to give way. It doesn't.

He tries again. And again. And again.

GEIST
Verdammt! Verflucht! Verfickt!

CUT TO:

INT. BECKMANN & SCHÖNHERR FURNACE ROOM - NIGHT

All the BANGING and CURSING is pointless. A STEEL BAR is wedged under the door knob.

Herr Beckmann is also down here, sprawled out beside the chiseled-out hole in the brick wall. Funny, but under his winter wool coat he's wearing his red silk pajamas -- like somebody dragged him out of bed.

Probably the same person who cut his throat.

CUT TO:

INT. BECKMANN & SCHÖNHERR JEWELERS - NIGHT

Geist is back up from the basement.

(O.S.) BRAKES SCREECH, CAR DOORS SLAM. The SCHÜTZPOLIZEI (SCHÜPO to Berliners) have arrived.

SCHÜTZPOLIZIST (O.S.)
You men cover the back... The rest
come with me...

FLASHLIGHT BEAMS slice through the cracks in the plush curtains.

Geist flies upstairs, locks himself in Beckmann's office.

CUT TO:

INT. HERR BECKMANN'S PRIVATE OFFICE - NIGHT

Quick as he can Geist piles the FURNITURE against the door.

(O.S.) LOUD THUMPS downstairs. The cops are breaking in.

The only way out is up. But how? The ceiling must be twelve feet high.

One chance.

Geist tests the LIGHT SWITCH: Off, on, and finally off.

He muscles HINDENBURG'S MARBLE PEDESTAL over to the desk, tips it onto the desktop.

He climbs up after it, resets the pedestal upright.

(O.S.) BANG! The front door must've given way. HEAVY BOOTS -- lots of them -- hustle into the jewelry store.

Geist hoists himself onto the pedestal. It's only about 8 inches wide, barely enough for both feet. Tricky to stand up on but he'll give it a try.

Halfway up he tips forward, grabs the LIGHT FIXTURE for balance. Instead his momentum pulls the fixture from the ceiling. PLASTER flies, the pedestal wobbles.

But there's no panic in this guy. He steadies himself.

The fixture hangs by two wires. Geist opens his pocketknife, cuts one of the wires, strips away its insulation.

SCHÜTZPOLIZIST (O.S.)
Upstairs! In here!

(O.S.) The police start battering down Beckmann's office door; it won't hold for long.

Out comes the lip balm. Geist untwists the tin top, mashes both ends of the cut wire into the "balm," then forces the top back on -- pinching the wires in place.

The door gives way; only the piled-up furniture is keeping the police out.

SCHÜTZPOLIZIST (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Come on, fellas, push!

Geist jumps down, lands hard.

The furniture scoots back far enough for a COP to fish his arm inside. His hand searches for the light switch.

Geist opens the safe, does his best to curl up inside.

The Cop's hand finds the switch, flicks it on.

CUT TO:

EXT. KURFÜRSTENDAMM - NIGHT

A sun-bright FLASH, an ear-rupturing BOOM.

The entire dog population of Berlin starts BARKING.

CUT TO:

INT. HERR BECKMANN'S PRIVATE OFFICE - NIGHT

No pedestal, no desk, no ceiling, and what's left is on FIRE.

Geist pries himself from the safe, starts climbing one of the COLLAPSED CEILING BEAMS.

PSSSST! A bullet whistles past his ear.

In nothing flat Geist is up the beam and into the attic.

CUT TO:

EXT. BECKMANN & SCHÖNHERR ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Squeezing between the SHATTERED SLATE TILES, Geist crawls onto the roof.

SMOKE pours through the hole.

It's fire-bright up here -- which makes Geist an easy target.

BANG! BANG! BANG-BANG-BANG!

Tiles EXPLODE around him. Geist scrambles upward.

A brawny SERGEANT pokes his head through the hole, takes aim.

Too smoky. He holsters his LUGER, takes off after Geist.

Meanwhile Geist has made it to the top. He checks out the opposite slope of the roof:

Almost straight down, but no cops.

Geist hops over, ass-slides down the tiles. The Sergeant is right behind him.

Off the edge, through mid-air, Geist lands feet first on the flat roof of the ADJOINING BUILDING. Nicely done, almost balletic.

Too bad the oncoming Sergeant isn't a ballerina.

IMPACT!

Blackout.

Little by little the Sergeant comes to. He wobbles to his knees, reaches for the Luger in his holster. Empty.

WHACK! The Luger smashes into his mouth. The Sergeant collapses into a pool of BLOOD and BROKEN TEETH.

Geist shoves the Luger into his own belt, staggers off.

More BELLS. More POLICE.

Geist jumps to the NEXT ROOF, and the NEXT.

Up ahead is a FIRE ESCAPE LADDER. He climbs on, shinnies down to the first landing.

Directly below, two schüpo(LAUREL and HARDY) have spotted him, start up the fire ladder.

Nothing to do except dive through the NEAREST WINDOW.

CRASH.

CUT TO:

INT. EVA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Geist is eye to eye with EVA; she's not happy about this.

Neither is MAX, her German shepherd.

CUT TO:

INT. EVA'S PENSION - NIGHT

Eva's door BLASTS open; our trio pours into the HALL. Eva is divoting Geist's skull with her BEDSIDE LAMP, Max is shredding Geist's trousers. Not doing his leg any favors either.

Somehow Geist manages to steal the DOOR KEY from the lock. He mule-kicks Eva back into the room, SLAMS the door on Max's head. Max YELPS, retreats far enough for Geist to get the door shut. He locks it.

Can't go down by the STAIRS: Three cops(MOE, LARRY, and CURLY) are on their way up.

(O.S.) SCREAMS and GROWLS from Eva's apartment. Laurel and Hardy must be getting the same reception Geist did.

Geist smashes the HALL LIGHT with the Luger.

GEIST
(yelling down the stairs)
He's up here. Number five. Hurry!

The Three Stooges draw their guns, quicken their pace.

Geist cocks the Luger, moves to the dark end of the hall.

The Stooges reach the top of the stairs, hear the ruckus inside Eva's Room, rush the door.

Geist FIRES a shot over their heads.

That does it. Laurel and Hardy start SHOOTING blindly into the hall. The Stooges take cover, pepper Eva's door with GUNFIRE.

Except for the MUZZLE FLASHES, it's black as pitch. Geist is able to sneak over the railing, jump for the STAIRWELL LANDING on the floor below.

He almost makes it.

His body careens off the banister, tumbles down two flights of stairs into the ENTRYWAY.

Three floors above, the GUN BATTLE carries on undisturbed.

Geist limps away.

CUT TO:

EXT. KURFÜRSTENDAMM ALLEY - NIGHT

FLASHLIGHT BEAMS search every crevice.

Nothing here except some ASH CANS and a fence lined with ELECTION POSTERS. We recognize the candidate:

ADOLF HITLER.

THE POLICEMEN flick their LIGHTS off and retreat, their hobnail boots CLANKING over a MANHOLE GRATING.

CUT TO:

INT. KURFÜRSTENDAMM SEWER - MARCH 10, 1932 - NIGHT

Geist listens from underneath.

All quiet.

No, wait. Geist can hear something:

The REGULAR RHYTHM of iron wheels on iron tracks.

Getting louder.

Odd, because there's no train station nearby. Geist checks the SEWER PASSAGE in both directions:

Nothing.

All the same, a train is headed his way -- and fast.

He plugs both ears. Doesn't help. The MONSTROUS RUMBLE, the CLANKING wheels -- it's like he's being run over.

Geist buries his face in his hands. Gradually the REVERBERATIONS fade into silence.

He lets out a long slow breath.

Exhausted, confused, crippled with pain, he leans back.

OUCH!

Behind him there's a LIVE STEAM PIPE. It runs to the end of the SEWER PASSAGE and then turns upward.

CUT TO:

EXT. BÜLOWSTRASSE - NIGHT

The steam pipe pushes through the sidewalk, elbows into a Moorish style building. Overhead, a bright NEON SIGN:

SULTAN OF PERSIA STEAM BATH -- ALWAYS OPEN

"Always" is right -- lots of comings and goings even at this late hour.

CUT TO:

INT. SULTAN OF PERSIA CHANGING ROOM - NIGHT

It's a rabbit warren of cubby holes, maybe 300. Most of these numbered cubbies are filled with clothes, as for instance:

26. Grey pinstripe suit, regimental tie.

137. Frayed overalls, dented lunch pail.

207. Brown shirt, jodhpurs and brown cap with the Nazi Sturmabteilung (SA) insignia.

CUT TO:

EXT. FREIDRICHSTRASSE - NIGHT

POLICE OFFICERS have set up a ROADBLOCK. They're stopping PEDESTRIANS, checking ID's.

A DOZEN NAZI SA STORMTROOPERS approach. The cops wave them through.

SA CAPTAIN
Late night?

POLICE LIEUTNANT
Jewel robbery. Three men dead. Two
officers and a night watchman.

PATROL OFFICER
And Beckmann, the jeweler. That
makes four.

SA CAPTAIN
Three. Beckmann was a Jew.

POLICE LIEUTNANT
A rich Jew. They say he had half-a-
million in gems in that safe of
his. The robber got it all.

SA CAPTAIN
Half-a-million and a Jew.
Somebody's having a lucky night.

The SA men CHUCKLE.

POLICE LIEUTNANT
(calling after them)
We'll catch him. And when we do,
he'll have the unluckiest night of
his life.

CUT TO:

EXT. SULTAN OF PERSIA - NIGHT

Geist -- or rather, SOMEONE IN GEIST'S CLOTHES -- exits
through the revolving door.

Before he's even halfway out, COPS pour in from all
directions, dogpile on him.

His PROTESTS are drowned by a hailstorm of fists.

CUT TO:

EXT. FREIDRICHSTRASSE - NIGHT

Meanwhile the SA Stormtroopers carry on.

As they round a corner the LAST TROOPER sneaks out of line and hobbles down the ALLEY.

CUT TO:

INT. GIPS' FLAT - NIGHT

B-ZZZZZT. B-ZZZZZZZZZT. BZZT-BZZT-BZZT-BZZT-BZZT-BZZT.

Somebody downstairs wants in. Bad.

A DROWSY BLONDE in a fuzzy bathrobe crosses to the BUZZER, pushes it, then tries to yawn herself awake.

On her door, the tiniest TAP.

She opens up.

GEIST

Invite me in, Gips.

You say GIPS with a hard "G". It's Polish for plaster, which should tell you how much make-up this lady wears.

GIPS

What's with the uniform?

Geist staggers in not bothering to answer. Gips helps him to the bed.

GEIST

Wasn't sure you'd be here.

GIPS

No business tonight -- the bulls are on a rampage. When somebody said jewel robbery I knew it was you. Awful glad you came here.

GEIST

Help me outta this stupid get-up.

She tugs at the brown shirt. He winces.

GEIST (CONT'D)

Your hands are freezing.

GIPS

Sorry. Workin' the ice cream parlour tonight. Guess I haven't thawed out yet.

GEIST
The fellas don't complain?

GIPS
Some guys like cold lips.

His shirt slips off.

An audible GASP from Gips.

Geist's upper body is an ugly rainbow of blacks and blues.
His legs are worse -- covered with half-moon dog bites.

GIPS (CONT'D)
You need a doctor.

GEIST
(passing Gips some cash)
Go to the Chinaman, get me a change
of clothes. Don't tell him why. He
won't ask. Steer clear of my place
whatever you do.

GIPS
(pocketing the BILLS)
The newsstand will be open. I'll
pick you up some chewing gum.

She goes to the CLOSET, trades her robe for a shabby cloth
coat.

GEIST
I'm gunna clean up. Can I borrow
half the bed?

That makes her smile much bigger.

GIPS
Company's always welcome.

She scurries out the door.

Sweet kid, and probably quite a looker a few hundred men ago.

Geist goes to the WASHSTAND, wets a CLOTH, dabs the BLOOD
from his wounds.

KNOTT (V.O.)
This seems like an appropriate
moment to introduce myself...

Geist grabs both ears, WHISPERS through gritted teeth:

GEIST

It's been a bad night. For once,
would you please just shut up.

KNOTT (V.O.)

Calm down. I'm not talking to you.

Geist steadies himself, tries to regain his composure.

KNOTT (V.O.)

Let's start over. My name is KNOTT.
Herr Knott.

Seems like Geist can't hear Knott's voice any longer.

KNOTT (V.O.)

At least that's the name he gave
me, the day we met... in 1916.

CUT TO:

EXT. NO MAN'S LAND, FRANCE - 1916 - DAY

Corporal Geist of the Imperial German Army trudges through
the mud. Lost in thought. Alone.

KNOTT (V.O.)

Incoming!

Geist dives for cover. Too late.

A shell WHISTLES in. VA-BOOM!

The blast chucks Geist head-first into the mud.

He pries himself up, rubbing his skull. Already there's a big
lump. Plenty of BLOOD too. But he's alive.

KNOTT (V.O.)

Duck quicker next time or else
we'll both end up dead.

GEIST

Thanks.

Wait. What? Who said that?

Geist grabs the BODY to his left: Dead for a year at least.
The CORPSE to his right has no head.

KNOTT (V.O.)

In here, genius.

Finally it hits Geist where the voice is coming from. He reaches again for his skull...

BACK TO GIPS' FLAT

... Rubs the knot which is still there.

Geist is alone except for his reflection in the washstand mirror. He gives his other self the once-over; that guy needs a shave.

Luckily Gips has a SHAVING KIT. Geist wets the BRUSH, lathers up his jaw.

KNOTT (V.O.)

Sorry to disappoint you Freudians
but I am not the voice of his ego
or his id. I'm not his soul either.
He and I share brain space, nothing
more. My problem is that it's his
brain. Which means I have only his
eyes to see with, his dreams to
dream. I'm a prisoner to his senses
even if his senses don't make
sense. Which is why I'm as crazy as
he is. The tiny madman inside his
little gray asylum.

Geist flicks open the STRAIGHT RAZOR -- shiny and sharp.

KNOTT (V.O.)

And who is my keeper? Well, he's a
safecracker, but you already know
that. People call him Geist. No
first name, no last, just Geist.
Don't ask me where he got the name.
It wasn't his father's name, that's
for sure...

CUT TO:

INT. REGENSBURG CASTLE 1891 - DAY

BARON VON REGENSBURG straightens his silk Charvet necktie on his way out the pantry door. Behind him a WELL-BUILT YOUNG HOUSEMAID lowers her skirt.

The Baron pauses to clean a fleck of dirt from his otherwise flawless manicure; the young lady is already forgotten.

KNOTT (V.O.)
For sure it's not a name he ever
got booked under...

MUG SHOTS FLIP BY IN RAPID SUCCESSION.

Changes in clothes, haircuts, numbers, but all Geist.

 KNOTT (V.O.)
Could be he picked it up during the
war...

EXT. NO MAN'S LAND, FRANCE - 1915 - DAY

Geist loots a DEAD SOLDIER. The take so far: WRISTWATCH,
WEDDING RING, THREE GOLD TEETH, IDENTITY CARD.

The name on the card:

GEIST, HEINRICH ALBERT

BACK TO NOW:

 KNOTT (V.O.)
However it happened, Geist is the
name that stuck. It suits him.

Geist snaps the razor shut, mops the soap from his jaw.

CUT TO:

INT. GIPS' FLAT - NIGHT

Silent. Dark.

Geist is under the bed covers, eyelids sinking fast.

CUT TO:

INT. GIPS' FLAT - DAY

Sunlight. TRAFFIC NOISE.

Geist pats at the bed next to him. Empty.

No wonder. It's 12:30 in the afternoon according to Gips'
ALARM CLOCK. Under it there's a NOTE:

OUT SHOPPING. THOUGHT I'D COOK DINNER. COFFEE ON THE STOVE.

Neatly folded at the end of the bed is the NEW SET OF CLOTHES. On top of the clothes: A PACK OF JUICY FRUIT GUM.

Geist sits up -- no easy feat -- reaches for the trousers. Something slides out, drops to the floor.

CLINK.

Geist's tired eyes grow big and black.

KNOTT (V.O.)

He's thinking he's not seeing what he's seeing -- that it's just a mirage. There are wishful thinkers even in Hell.

On the floor:

500 CARATS WORTH OF EMERALDS STRUNG INTO A NECKLACE. Perfect for a coronation.

FADE TO BLACK/FADE IN:

INT. DOKTOR ASCHER'S OFFICE - DAY

Not an office really, more of a study. A shabby one.

DR. ASCHER isn't as old as he looks. If he was he'd be dead. His still strong arms are bandaging Geist's ribs.

As for Geist, he's focused on the chair where his jacket is hanging -- specifically on the necklace-sized bulge in his jacket pocket.

GEIST

I have a problem.

ASCHER

You don't say.

GEIST

Either I have a brain tumor or else I'm going crazy.

ASCHER

And how did you come to this diagnosis, herr doktor?

GEIST

I hear things that aren't there.

There's a sheepish KNOCK on the door.

ASCHER
Like knocking on doors for
instance?

GEIST
Maybe.

ASCHER
So we're both crazy.
(to the door)
It's open!

A TEENAGER pokes her head in. She's fifteen, at most, and
scared out of her mind.

ASCHER (CONT'D)
Come back in an hour. I don't
murder the unborn till after lunch.

The girl covers her mouth, rushes out.

ASCHER (CONT'D)
Mazel tov.

GEIST
A little harsh from a man who spent
twenty years in prison for shooting
his wife.

ASCHER
As a husband I'm a murdering
bastard, as a doctor I'm a
romantic. What noises do you hear?

GEIST
Trains.

ASCHER
Loud noises or trains?

GEIST
The 7:15 to Rostock.

ASCHER
Visual hallucinations?

GEIST
Plenty.

ASCHER
You've talked to other doctors?

QUICK GLIMPSES OF THREE DIGNIFIED PHYSICIANS: AN INTERNIST, A
NEUROLOGIST, AND A NEUROPSYCHIATRIST.

ASCHER (O.S.)
Any diagnoses?

THE THREE PHYSICIANS ANSWER:

INTERNIST
Nicotine poisoning.

NEUROLOGIST
Alcohol poisoning.

NEUROPSYCHIATRIST
Self-loathing.

BACK TO ASCHER:

ASCHER
I see. And what did they prescribe?

THE PHYSICIANS:

INTERNIST
Quit smoking.

NEUROLOGIST
Stop drinking.

NEUROPSYCHIATRIST
Forgive yourself.

TO ASCHER:

ASCHER
So let's look under the hood.

Ascher puts an OPHTHALMOSCOPE up to Geist's pupil.

ASCHER (CONT'D)
Breathe easy. Nothing to worry
about. You're just overtired.

THE SCENE FREEZES:

KNOTT (V.O.)

Of course this is what Geist is hoping to hear. It isn't remotely what the doctor actually says.

THE SCENE IS REPLAYED:

Ascher lets out a sharp WHISTLE.

ASCHER

My Aunt Minnie! Your eye is full of blood at the back, and the papilla's badly swollen. There are large spots emanating from....

... But Geist has stopped listening. For him, Ascher's shabby little study has transmuted into:

A SHABBY LITTLE MUNICIPAL COURTROOM

The presiding JUDGE reads out:

JUDGE

Having been found guilty, the judgment of the court is that you be taken hence to the place of execution, and there have your head severed from your body. And may God have mercy upon your soul.

CUT TO:

INT. DOKTOR ASCHER'S OFFICE - LATER

Geist has regained his composure. His jacket's on and he's ready to leave.

The Doctor is scratching out a LETTER.

ASCHER

His name is Walter Stern, a former student of mine. For my money the finest neurosurgeon in Berlin. As a favor I've asked him to see you.

GEIST

You keep in touch?

ASCHER

He sends me patients all the time.
Respectable people get into trouble
too.

The letter gets a sharp double-crease. Geist unfolds it,
gives it a read.

GEIST

So I'm not crazy.

That gets a sceptical eyebrow from Ascher.

GEIST (CONT'D)

What I mean is, what's going on in
my head is for real.

ASCHER

What makes you think crazy isn't
for real?

Ascher pulls the shade. It SNAPS into the roller.

ASCHER (CONT'D)

Come here, dear boy, and look down.
Even from this gutter some things
can be looked down on.

ON THE STREET BELOW, A NAZI RALLY -- COMPLETE WITH MARCHING
BAND. EVERY SPECTATOR, CHILDREN INCLUDED, WAVE A NAZI FLAG.

ASCHER (CONT'D)

Sometimes crazy things are the
realist things there are.

CUT TO:

EXT. NAMELESS WALKWAY - DAY

Geist steps from an inconspicuous side door.

The Teenager is out here, mustering her courage. Geist holds
the door.

Buoyed by his smile, she forges inside.

Geist pulls his collar up and his cap down. Rather than risk
the main STRAßE, he hops the BACK FENCE.

ASHCANS RATTLE.

Someone in a black leather MACKINTOSH comes out of hiding, follows Geist over the fence.

Geist has got himself a shadow.

CUT TO:

INT. GIPS' FLAT - NIGHT

Dinner time, but Geist is studying Gips a lot closer than his KNACKWURST.

GIPS
(pointing to Geist's food)
Not so good, huh?

GEIST
It's fine. How'd it go last night?

GIPS
Picking up your clothes? No
hitches. Why?

GEIST
What time did you come to bed?

GIPS
Oh, I didn't... I was out all
night.

GEIST
Girl's gotta make a living.

That stings. Gips scoots back. Something JANGLES under the table.

Geist has a peek; Gips is wearing a GOLD ANKLET.

GIPS
It ain't real.

Without asking, she grabs Geist's plate, moves to the sink, starts rinsing off.

Geist can't hear the RUNNING WATER, only the JANGLE of that anklet.

Suddenly it hits him:

INT. BECKMANN & SCHÖNHERR JEWELERS - DAY

Pest Controller Geist glimpses a FLABBY FRÄULEIN trying on a GOLD BRACELET.

Is it the same piece of jewelry? Sure looks like it.

BACK TO NOW:

GEIST

It's hard to tell real from fake
sometimes. Going out tonight?

GIPS

Girl's gotta make a living. What do
you want for dinner tomorrow?

GEIST

Not sure I can stay that long.
Somebody is bound to rat me out.

That sounds awfully close to an accusation. At least that's
how Gips takes it.

GIPS

You have a question for me?

GEIST

I haven't decided.

Geist stretches out on the bed.

The dishes done, Gips grabs her coat, makes for the door; she
can't breathe in here any longer.

GIPS

Have you decided yet?

No answer from Geist; his eyes are closed already.

One last look from Gips -- bitter, confused, tearful.

She switches off the lights and exits.

(O.S.) The stairwell echoes with the JANGLE of her anklet.
The building's front door CREAKS open, SLAMS shut.

KNOTT (V.O.)

Don't be stupid, stupid. She's
crazy-in-love with you, but she's
ratted you out. Who else could've
planted the necklace in your
clothes?

Knott's voice is like a cement mixer inside Geist's head. He bolts upright, glances through the curtains.

HIS POV:

Sure enough Gips is chatting with someone -- someone in a black leather Mackintosh.

After a brief exchange Gips hurries off. Herr Mackintosh (MACK for short) retreats into the shadows.

BACK TO GIPS' FLAT:

The bed is empty; Geist is already on his way down.

BACK TO THE WINDOW:

Here comes Geist down the front steps. He gives Mack the "follow me" wave, takes off up the sidewalk -- in the opposite direction from Gips.

Herr Mack follows.

CUT TO:

EXT. MASKE - NIGHT

Berlin's hottest hot spot.

THE BLACK-TIE SET climb out of their CHAUFFEURED MERCEDES, elbow their way into the rope line.

Geist joins them. So does Mack.

One at a time the doorman lets people in. Nothing surprising about that except the doorman is a DOOR-WOMAN.

CUT TO:

INT. MASKE - NIGHT

A pair of she-bulls (BUBIS to those in-the-know) frisk the customers; it's part of the entry ritual.

Geist is clean. No frisk for Mack.

At the cashier's slot, everybody gets a couple of DRINK CHITS and a BLACK MASQUERADE MASK.

Geist pulls his mask on, turns to Herr Mack.

GEIST

Boo!

He brushes past the MAITRE D' and drifts into the crowded main room.

All those masked eyes are on a LARGE VELVET CURTAIN which has different sized holes cut out. When the EMCEE commands, a body part (a leg, a butt, a saggy breast) is shoved through one of the holes.

THE AUDIENCE ROARS its approval.

None of this interests Geist. He beelines for the BEADED CURTAIN DOORWAY in the back. It leads to:

A SERIES OF CROWDED CORRIDORS

Lots of fetishism going on back here, lots of drug use. Women mostly. And no one bothers wearing a mask.

Geist navigates the passageways like a frequent visitor; Mack is right behind him.

They reach a door marked: PRIVAT

It's locked, but Geist has it open in seconds. He gestures "after you" to Mack and then follows.

CUT TO:

INT. VOO-DOO'S PRIVATE SUITE - NIGHT

Stinks of opium and last night's liquor.

Four people, more or less female, lounge on stained satin pillows.

Geist is here to see the cadaver in the gold lamé pajamas. Her name is VOO-DOO and the only person who thinks she's beautiful is her.

VOO-DOO

Geist, dahling...

Her voice has all the charm of an electric belt sander.

VOO-DOO (CONT'D)

You know I hate surprises. Well,
now that you're here get
comfortable and tell us how you
built the pyramids.

In front of Voo-Doo is a SILVER PUNCH BOWL full of ETHER AND
CHLOROFORM. Voo-Doo stirs it with a WHITE ROSE.

Her greasy pet Maltese, WOLFGANG, is sniffing at the bowl.
The dog is uglier than she is.

GEIST

(turning to Mack)

Nice night for a walk, eh Mack?

Herr Mack steps into the light, takes off her cap. Yes, Herr
is a her -- Marlene Deitrich with an Adam's apple.

VOO-DOO

Mack really is a treasure, isn't
she? But you don't know the half of
it.

(to Mack)

Mackie, my cabbage, do one of your
recitations. Can't you see Geist's
soul is thirsting for poetry. Do
Wordsworth's "Birth of Love."

Voo-Doo plucks off one of the drug-infused ROSE PETALS and
eats it.

VOO-DOO (CONT'D)

(to Geist)

That is why you're here, isn't it,
dahling? To quench your soul?

Without warning Geist throws an elbow in Mack's face.

CRACK goes her nose.

Before she can react, she's doubled over with three hard
punches to the gut. Geist could let her drop, but he'd rather
give her a knee in the face first.

Now he lets her drop. And does she ever -- like a sackful of
door knobs.

Geist pins her wrist, pats her down, finds what he's looking
for:

A STRAIGHT RAZOR.

He opens it, flashes the blade.

Nothing clears a room quite as fast as a straight razor. Even the dog leaves. Only Geist, Mack and Voo-Doo remain.

VOO-DOO (CONT'D)

And one of those ladies was double-jointed. This party is ruined, unless... Dahling, do you know any card tricks?

GEIST

How 'bout a bedtime story?

VOO-DOO

A good one?

GEIST

A doozy. It goes something like this: Once upon a time last night there were three naughty girls...

CUT TO:

INT. HERR BECKMANN'S PRIVATE OFFICE - NIGHT

Trembling fingers work the combination lock.

Beckmann, in overcoat and red pajamas, kneels before his office safe.

Flanking him are the two Bubis. One has a PISTOL to Beckmann's head. Mack is there too.

The safe door swings open.

Beckmann gets shoved aside so the three women can shovel the swag into their LEATHER SATCHELS.

THE EMERALD NECKLACE glitters in the beam of Mack's FLASHLIGHT.

CUT TO:

INT. BECKMANN & SCHÖNHERR JEWELERS - LATER

The Watchman has been tied up and Geist is busy disabling the alarm.

Once that's done, he threads the extension cord out of the closet, and into Beckmann's office.

The office door closes.

(O.S.) Geist's drill WHIRS to life.

That's the ladies' cue to come out from behind the JEWELRY COUNTER. Beckmann is with them.

Silently the two Bubis strong-arm the jeweler down the basement stairs.

Mack stays; she has work to do.

CUT TO:

INT. BECKMANN & SCHÖNHERR JEWELERS - LATER

(O.S.) BOOM!

A BRIGHT FLASH comes from under Beckmann's closed door. Geist must've just blasted the safe.

Down here, Mack just finished razoring the Watchman's throat.

She tiptoes out of the closet, carefully avoiding the widening POOL OF BLOOD.

It's a stretch, but the ALARM BELL is within reach. Mack reconnects the WIRES:

DING! DING! DING! DING! DING! DING!

Mack vanishes down the basement stairs an instant before Geist comes out of Beckmann's office.

CUT TO:

INT. BECKMANN & SCHÖNHERR FURNACE ROOM - LATER

Mack wipes Beckmann's blood from her razor, then licks it off her finger. Better than chocolate sauce.

BUBIS

Rasch! Schnell! Schnell!

The Bubis are calling to Mack from outside the brick wall.

(O.S.) THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!

Must be Geist pounding at the blocked door.

Mack steps over Beckmann's corpse, gets on her stomach, shinnies through the hole in the brick wall.

CUT TO:

INT. VOO-DOO'S PRIVATE SUITE - NIGHT

VOO-DOO
Do they live happily ever after?

GEIST
Depends on the answers I get.

VOO-DOO
Dahling, the only thing I won't
tell you is my real age.

Geist pulls the necklace from his pocket.

VOO-DOO (CONT'D)
Emerald green is not your color.

GEIST
You had nothing to do with this I
suppose?

VOO-DOO
You're the one with the razor.

The door behind Geist opens and closes.

Geist turns, too late to see anything but a shadow. Did Mack
leave? Geist checks the floor:

No Mack. Nothing but some BLOOD STAINS.

Geist blinks. Blinks again. Mack doesn't appear, but the
straight razor is in his fist -- that's for sure.

GEIST
Wait. Wait. You're trying to tell
me this is *my* razor?

VOO-DOO
I already shaved this morning.

Geist's mind flashes to...

INT. GIPS' FLAT - NIGHT

He's at the washstand mirror -- razor in hand.

BACK TO VOO-DOO'S ROOM:

Is it the same razor he's holding now? Could be.

Geist tries to make sense of this. But how can he think with all the NOISE.

Yes, the train is back -- THE 7:15 TO ROSTOCK. Straight through his brain.

The SCREECH of the metal wheels is unbearable.

Geist claws at his skull, grinds his teeth.

The train recedes.

GEIST
(to no one in particular)
What the hell is going on?

VOO-DOO
I'd say insanity is the most likely explanation.

That does it. Geist pushes Voo-Doo to the floor, presses the razor blade against her skinny throat.

VOO-DOO (CONT'D)
They wanted you followed. Just followed.

GEIST
Why?

VOO-DOO
Don't be dense, my safecracking angel. They need a safe opened.

GEIST
What safe? Who's "they?"

(O.S.) POLICE WHISTLES.

VOO-DOO
Dear Mackie must've called the gendarmes.

(O.S.) CHAOS. The cops must be on their way down.

GEIST
How about Gips? Is she in on this?

VOO-DOO
What a suspicious mind you have.

GEIST
Just tell me what's going on.

VOO-DOO
 Dahling, how do you explain madness
 to a madman?

Geist lets the razor drop. He gets to his feet, bolts out the door.

CUT TO:

INT. MASKE CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Herr Mack, swollen and bloody, is blocking the exit.

MACK
 He's down here! Hurry!

Two cops (SALZ and PFEFFER) round the corner, guns drawn.

SALZ
 Freeze.

Geist doesn't freeze. He turns to Mack, bulldozes full speed ahead.

SALZ (CONT'D)
 I said freeze. Hands up.

Mack gets splattered all over the hallway. Geist kicks open the exit door, disappears into the night.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUDAPESTER STRASSE - NIGHT

Salz and Pfeffer sweep the area with their FLASHLIGHTS; Geist has given them the slip.

One light finds a WROUGHT IRON GATE with LARGE GILDED LETTERS:

ZOOLOGISCHER GARTEN BERLIN

The light pans down, finds some FOOTPRINTS.

Back up to the gate's PADLOCK -- it's unlocked.

CUT TO:

EXT. ZOOLOGISCHER GARTEN BERLIN - NIGHT

Pfeffer is canvassing the grounds solo. Every CRACKING BRANCH draws his flashlight beam. So far it's been shined on:

AN ELEPHANT, A ZEBRA, TWO MATING GIRAFFES, and the BACK END OF A GRIZZLY.

Making his way to the next cage, he stops, hears something.

(O.S.) YELLING. Salz, maybe, on the other side of the park.

Pfeffer races off to investigate.

CUT TO:

EXT. ZOOLOGISCHER GARTEN AVIARY - NIGHT

A colossal high-domed birdcage.

Out-of-breath, Pfeffer arrives, points his flashlight through the bars:

Hard to see -- BIRDS are flapping everywhere -- but for sure Salz has Geist cornered. Or maybe Geist has Salz cornered. Either way there's a hell of a fight going on.

Pfeffer rushes through the gate, joins in.

CUT TO:

EXT. ZOOLOGISCHER GARTEN BERLIN AVIARY - NIGHT

Fists, elbows, knees, teeth. Every weapon in Geist's arsenal is getting used. Even so, the two cops are wearing him down.

And let's not forget the birds. Hundreds of them. Thousands maybe. So many birds that you can barely see the fight.

Swooping, swirling, SCREECHING in terror.

CUT TO:

EXT. ZOOLOGISCHER GARTEN BERLIN - NIGHT

The birds' panic is contagious.

ELEPHANTS ram their CAGE DOORS. LIONS claw and scratch. CHIMPANZEES bite the bars till their mouths bleed.

And they SCREAM. Like madmen in an asylum, they SCREAM.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHÜLZPOLIZEI HEADQUARTERS - DAWN

A CAGE DOOR is unlocked.

SCHÜPO

Come on, move your asses.

FOUR SUSPECTS are herded out the back of a PADDY WAGON.

Another HALF DOZEN SHADY CHARACTERS are prodded up the headquarters' front steps.

They pass under the TRI-COLOR FLAG of the German Republic which hangs limp above the entrance.

Salz and Pfeffer arrive with Geist.

Apparently every crook in Berlin knows who Geist is.

BURGLAR

Hiya, Geist.

PICKPOCKET

Hey Geist, got any gum?

PURSE SNATCHER

Do us a favor, Geist -- confess so the rest of us can go back to bed.

SCHÜPO

Shut up.

Geist is muscled inside.

CUT TO:

INT. INSPEKTOR KOHL'S OFFICE - DAY

CHIEF INSPEKTOR KOHL sifts through last night's grisly CRIME PHOTOS: Beckmann, the Watchman, two blown-up cops.

Geist is seated opposite, HANDCUFFED to the chair arm. You get the feeling he's been here before.

KOHL

Two officers killed, three more in the hospital, a couple of throats cut, and half a city block turned into a parking lot.

Kohl chucks the photos into Geist's lap. Geist isn't interested; he was there.

From his ashtray, Kohl selects from THREE HALF-SMOKED CIGARS. He lights one up.

KOHL (CONT'D)

We're still trying to decide who did it.

That gets Geist's attention.

KOHL (CONT'D)

All I know is, it wasn't you. I mean, *today* it wasn't you. Tomorrow, who knows.

GEIST

What now?

Kohl tosses Geist the HANDCUFF KEY.

Geist doesn't pick the key up. Instead, he pulls his hand free -- he's already unlocked the cuffs.

Kohl gives his cigar an indifferent puff.

KOHL

Somebody wants to meet you.

GEIST

He never heard of the phone book?

KOHL

The plan was to trap you in the building. Everybody knows you don't carry a gun. We figured you'd just give up. Killing wasn't part of the deal.

Even Kohl doesn't sound convinced.

KOHL (CONT'D)

You've only got yourself to blame.

Geist isn't buying that statement either.

KOHL (CONT'D)

You were offered this job. You turned it down. Last month. Don't you remember?

CUT TO:

INT. KARL LIEBKNECHT HAUS - JAN. 23, 1932 - NIGHT

Framed portraits of LENIN and MARX, SOVIET FLAGS, UGLY POSTERS of fat babushkas pushing plows.

If you haven't guessed, this is headquarters to the KPD -- the German Communist Party.

THREE PARTY MEMBERS sit behind a long steel table. The man in the middle is ERWALD BERGMANN. He's trying hard to look proletariat.

The guard at the door doesn't have to try, not with that punched-in face. His real name is Marinus van der Lubbe, but everyone calls him DEMPSEY, after the boxer.

Geist is here too.

BERGMANN

Do you believe in world wide revolution, Herr Geist?

GEIST

Sure. I also believe in the Easter Bunny.

BERGMANN

We need a safe opened.

GEIST

A fascist safe or a communist safe?

No one laughs.

GEIST (CONT'D)

So find yourself a safecracking revolutionary. I'm busy.

BERGMANN

We're prepared to offer you money.

GEIST

Capitalism? Don't compromise your principles on my account.

Geist stands up.

BERGMANN
We could force you.

Between Geist and the exit are Dempsey's anvil-sized fists.

Looks like Geist is being forced. He throws open his hands, flashes a toothy grin.

GEIST
When do I start?

Dempsey unclenches, puts out his open hand.

Geist reaches out to accept, but instead stomps his boot into Dempsey's knee.

SNAP! The knee buckles backwards. Like a broken puppet Dempsey collapses to the floor.

He's still SCREAMING when a single wicked uppercut crushes his lower jaw into the roof of his mouth.

Geist shakes away the pain in his knuckles as he steps out the door.

CUT TO:

INT. INSPEKTOR KOHL'S OFFICE - DAY

Geist is more confused than ever.

GEIST
Since when did the police start working for the Communist Party?

KOHL
They're not the only ones who want this safe opened.

GEIST
Okay, don't tell me who it is. I love surprises.

KOHL
You'll meet him soon enough. I have a driver waiting.

Geist gets up.

KOHL (CONT'D)
Don't forget your property.

Onto his desk Kohl empties a MANILA ENVELOPE. Its contents:

TWO STICKS OF JUICY FRUIT and AN EMERALD NECKLACE.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOTZENMUHLE - MORNING

Sunshine and blue sky.

A '32 BLACK OPEL REGENT motors through the countryside.

CUT TO:

INT. OPEL REGENT - MORNING

A SCHÜPO OFFICER is behind the wheel. Must be running late because he keeps checking his NOMECA WRISTWATCH:

11:35 AM exactly.

Kind of early for a nap, but Geist is in the back seat giving it a try.

A shadow wakes him. The car is passing under a RUSTIC WOODEN SIGN:

FREISONNLAND

CUT TO:

EXT. FREISONNLAND LODGE - DAY

A modest rough-timbered bungalow crowned with a massive CARVED EAGLE CLUTCHING A SWASTIKA.

Adorning the front porch are RED AND BLACK NAZI BANNERS bearing the SA Sturm-Abteilung insignia.

BROWNSHIRTED SA GUARDS flank the entrance.

The Opel pulls up.

CUT TO:

EXT. FREISONNLAND PARK - DAY

Nazism meets nudism.

Only don't picture armies of Aryan übermensch. For every blond bodybuilder jumping a pommel horse there are three gray beards watching from comfy wicker chairs.

To say Geist doesn't fit in -- with his tweed cap and corduroy trousers -- is a major understatement.

By contrast, his NUDIST escort is right at home.

CUT TO:

EXT. FREISONNLAND ARCHERY FIELD - DAY

On a large open pitch TEN NUDE ARCHERS test their skills.

Among them is ERNST RÖHM. Can't miss Röhm -- he's the chubby middle-aged guy who's greased-up like a seal.

His playmates are all fair and frail and couldn't get a drink at a bar.

Röhm interrupts his target practice long enough to exchange a Nazi salute with Herr Nudist.

Having delivered Geist, Herr Nudist quickly exits.

RÖHM

So glad you could join us, Herr Geist. This is your first visit to Freisonnland?

GEIST

Hard to believe, isn't it.

RÖHM

You've got a nice body under that sweater. You should take better care of it. How about a glass of fresh milk?

GEIST

All this oil is making me hungry for a salad.

RÖHM

Good thing you're an asshole; it'll make this conversation easier.

GEIST

Let's get started then. You're Ernst Röhm, head of the Sturmabteilung and you're Adolf Hitler's favorite bridge partner and you need a safe opened.

This amuses Herr Röhm. He loads an arrow into his bow.

RÖHM

There *is* a safe -- and yes, it needs to be opened. It needs to be opened without anyone knowing it's been opened. Simple, yes?

GEIST

Simple, maybe. Where is this safe?

RÖHM

It's in an office. In the Reichstag.

GEIST

Oh sure. That big gray building downtown with all the armed guards around it. Whose office?

RÖHM

Reichsminister Hermann Göring.

GEIST

I thought you two were playing for the same team?

The only reply is a smile.

GEIST (CONT'D)

And what am I stealing from Herr Hermann that he won't miss?

RÖHM

Nothing. Just taking a few snapshots of the contents.

GEIST

Keepsakes, huh.

RÖHM

There is a list of names. I need to know who's on that list. I need to know whether I'm on that list.

GEIST

If it's Ten Best Dressed, don't bother -- you're a shoo-in.

RÖHM

It's a death list.

GEIST

Göring has a death list?

RÖHM
Göring is a lapdog. He's keeping
the list for someone else.

RÖHM (CONT'D)
Okay, who then? I mean, you seem
like a nice guy. Who would want to
see you dead?

CUT TO:

INT. ADOLF HITLER'S DESK TOP - DAY

THREE PAGES, single column, neatly typed. The heading:

LIST OF UNWANTED PERSONS

The list is folded into an envelope, and sealed with RED WAX.
The wax is stamped with a NAZI EAGLE SIGNET RING.

Across the front of the envelope, one word is scribbled:

KOLIBRI

CUT TO:

EXT. WILHELMSTRAßE - DAY

A MESSENGER, blond and apple-fresh, wheels over his BICYCLE,
salutes.

A hand passes the boy the letter.

A.H. (O.S.)
For Herr Göring.

A.H. (can't see his face, but it's him alright) stretches out
his other hand, fist closed. He opens it.

Inside, a PIECE OF HARD CANDY and a 5 REICHSMARK COIN.

MESSENGER
Danke! Danke sehr!

As a final reward the boy gets a pinch on the cheek. Creepy.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNTER DEN LINDEN - DAY

The Messenger pedals his way through the brisk Berlin traffic.

CUT TO:

EXT. KÖNIGSPLATZ - DAY

There stands the REICHSTAG -- dusty and dignified, but still with a faint dash of the Danube. A monument to an era gone by.

The Messenger parks his bike at the base of its granite steps, scampers inside.

CUT TO:

INT. REICHSTAG - DAY

Up the stairs, to the left, then down the crowded corridor to the door marked: H GÖRING.

CUT TO:

INT. GÖRING'S PRIVATE OFFICE - DAY

The letter is pressed into Göring's fat palm.

Göring flips it back to front, perplexed by the wax seal and the curious title on the envelope.

GÖRING

Kolibri? Kolibri? Who gave you
this?

The Messenger flashes what's left of the candy between his teeth.

That puts a few wrinkles in Göring's forehead.

Hurriedly he signs the boy's RECEIPT BOOK, shoos him out.

Alone, Göring turns to the window, holds the letter up to the light. Can't see a damn thing.

Best to forget it.

He rolls his office chair to the CREDENZA, opens the front.

Inside is a SAFE -- built-in, but otherwise similar to the one in the jewelry store.

Göring's fat fingers manipulate the combination dial: left, right, left.

CLICK.

He opens the thick steel door, sets the letter on the top shelf, shuts it and spins the dial.

CUT TO:

EXT. FREISONNLAND ARCHERY FIELD - DAY

An arrow strikes the bull's eye.

GEIST

Supposing I say yes, what do I get out of this deal?

RÖHM

You've already received a rather valuable trinket.

GEIST

The necklace? I'll sell it to you right now. It'll look better on you anyway. What are you offering?

RÖHM

Your life, how's that?

GEIST

Not overly generous.

Röhm reloads, raises his bow, takes aim.

RÖHM

You should start today.

GEIST

I haven't said yes.

RÖHM

Well, do let us know when you've decided.

Röhm fires another arrow. Bull's eye again.

Not comforting.

Geist reaches for the door handle, reconsiders:

Those PHONE POLES outside are swishing by awfully fast.

He eyeballs the OPEL'S SPEEDOMETER:

Bouncing on 90.

Geist checks out Herr Imposter in the REAR VIEW MIRROR:

What with the rain, Herr Imposter is focused on his driving.

Geist spits his gum on the floor, clenches his fists.

SHOULD HE OR SHOULDN'T HE?

Geist lunges for the shotgun. Too late. Herr Imposter swings the gun toward Geist's head. Geist throws a block, knocks the gun barrel away.

BANG! BUCKSHOT disintegrates the front windshield.

WIND, RAIN, and BROKEN GLASS flood into the car.

With both hands Geist pins the gun to the steering wheel.

Herr Imposter throws his head back, catches Geist in the mouth -- splits his lip wide open.

Geist bites down on the Imposter's ear.

YEE-OOWWWW!

The pain is unbearable. It gives Geist just enough leverage to twist the shotgun inward.

BANG! The blast not only takes out the Imposter's chest, it blows right through the car seat. Geist jerks backwards. His whole left side is shredded; blood pours out of him.

Herr Imposter collapses onto the steering wheel; his dead foot jams the gas pedal.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOTZENMUHLE - AFTERNOON

The car swerves up the embankment, careens off a tree, flips over -- shearing off the passenger door.

Geist is ejected onto the roadway.

The Opel plunges down the embankment, gets rammed by an ONCOMING SEDAN.

Both cars EXPLODE, cartwheel, and crash down onto Geist, crushing him into the tarmac.

BACK INSIDE THE OPEL:

Of course none of this has actually happened.

Geist is still coiled up and ready to strike.

KNOTT (V.O.)

Look, genius, if they wanted you dead, you'd already be dead. They need you.

His fists unclench. He falls back into the seat.

KNOTT (V.O.)

Stop thinking crazy thoughts. Just relax and enjoy the rain.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOTZENMUHLE - AFTERNOON

The Opel splashes off the main road and turns onto a LINDEN-LINED DRIVEWAY.

CUT TO:

INT. OPEL REGENT - AFTERNOON

Geist mops his sleeve against the fogged-up window:

Coming the other way is a BIG BLACK CHAUFFEURED MERCEDES with a pair of LITTLE GERMAN FLAGS planted in the front fenders.

As it passes Geist has a peek at its passenger:

This face has sneered at him before -- only last time it was from the corner of Beckmann's office. VON HINDENBURG doesn't look any happier in the flesh than he did in bronze.

CUT TO:

EXT. VON PAPEN'S ESTATE - AFTERNOON

The Opel approaches a COUNTRY HOME. There are bigger private residences. Buckingham Palace for instance.

Draped over the front balcony is the FLAG OF THE GERMAN REPUBLIC. A name is incised on the stone plinth below:

VON PAPEN

Up ahead the drive forks left to the front of the house where MORE MERCEDES LIMOS are parked.

The Opel forks right.

CUT TO:

EXT. VON PAPEN'S ESTATE - SERVICE ENTRANCE - AFTERNOON

Herr Imposter parks the Opel beside a LARGE GARDENER'S SHED. He jumps out, goes to the back of the car.

Geist stays put.

CUT TO:

INT. OPEL REGENT - AFTERNOON

Using the rear view mirror, Geist follows the goings-on outside:

Herr Imposter has unlocked the trunk and is lifting something out. Must be heavy, the Opel's suspension rises half a foot.

The something is wrapped in a TARP but the arm hanging out kind of gives it away. So does the Nomeca wristwatch.

Herr Imposter carries him to the shed. TWO GROUNDSKEEPERS armed with MATTOCK and SHOVEL are standing by.

KNOTT (V.O.)

This is being staged for your benefit. They want you to know what will happen if you don't play ball.

A knuckle RAPS on the window.

It's a SECRETARY with an UMBRELLA, ready to escort Geist in.

CUT TO:

INT. VON PAPEN'S STUDY - AFTERNOON

Über-Catholic decor (CROSSES, BLESSED VIRGINS, AUTOGRAPHED PORTRAITS OF POPE PIUS XI), but with a heavy coat of German varnish. Which also pretty much describes FRANZ VON PAPEN.

His tired gray eyes study one of the MANY DISPATCHES piled on his desk.

The Secretary escorts Geist in, offers him a chair, turns for the door.

Wow. She may be all-business in front, but from the rear she's very sporty.

Geist approves; he rocks back in his chair.

SQUEAK.

Funny sound, at least Geist thinks so.

SQUEAK, SQUEAK, SQUEAK, SQUEEEEEEEEEEEAK.

Von Papen keeps reading.

VON PAPEN

That chair is nearly four hundred years old.

GEIST

No wonder it's so uncomfortable.

Von Papen peers over the top of his PINCE-NEZ GLASSES.

VON PAPEN

My secretary has a spectacular buttocks, wouldn't you agree?

Not exactly the question Geist was expecting.

GEIST

Who am I to disagree with the Chancellor of Germany.

VON PAPEN

Only for another fourteen hours. Tomorrow's newspaper shall announce that Franz von Papen, Chancellor of Germany...

(pausing for emphasis)

... has stepped down. In his place he has appointed his good friend, Herr Adolf Hitler.

No reaction.

VON PAPEN (CONT'D)
And this means nothing to you?

Geist shrugs. Von Papen is exasperated.

VON PAPEN (CONT'D)
Germany is losing its identity,
becoming a monster. A monster with
an insatiable appetite for human
blood.

GEIST
And you'd like to know who's on the
menu.

VON PAPEN
You're referring to the death list.

GEIST
That's why I'm here, right? To
steal this list from Fatso Göring's
safe and to make you some 8x10s.

Von Papen blinks yes.

GEIST (CONT'D)
So far I've been propositioned by
communists, police officers, nude
Nazi archers, angry lesbians and
the soon-to-be Ex-Chancellor of
Germany. Aside from Göring and
maybe Hitler's mother, who in
Berlin is not in on this caper? And
while we're at it, what exactly is
so special about this list?

VON PAPEN
However numerous, those of us who
oppose Herr Hitler are fragmented --
distrustful of each others'
motives. As such, we are no threat
to him. That list could change
everything. It could bind us
together -- communists,
capitalists, Catholics, Jews -- and
together we could defeat him.

That last thought rouses the Chancellor out of his chair. He
moves to the cathedral-arched picture window with its views
of his EDEN-GREEN ESTATE.

VON PAPEN (CONT'D)

My beloved Germany under the thumb of that public clown with his fat-ankled mistress and his bad taste in music -- it's unthinkable.

Von Papen needs a few deep breaths to bring down his blood pressure.

VON PAPEN (CONT'D)

Herr Röhm is the key. He's Hitler's most trusted ally -- but Röhm now suspects he's been marked for assassination.

GEIST

So make up a list. Put his name first.

VON PAPEN

Herr Röhm would never believe a list that came from me. No, it must come from an unimpeachable source.

Geist points to himself in mock humility.

VON PAPEN (CONT'D)

You hate everyone and everyone hates you. Also, I hear, you are quite insane. That makes you the only trustworthy man in Berlin.

GEIST

Right now your gardeners are burying a body under the hydrangeas. What makes your Germany less bloodthirsty than Hitler's?

VON PAPEN

One can't afford to be less ruthless than one's opponents.

GEIST

You have an answer for everything.

VON PAPEN

I'm a politician.

GEIST

And if I don't get the list?

VON PAPEN

In politics you deal with The Devil every day.

(MORE)

VON PAPEN (CONT'D)
 One can always come to a neat
 little arrangement with Herr
 Hitler.

Von Papen sits down again.

VON PAPEN (CONT'D)
 What do you need to begin?

GEIST
 You wouldn't happen to have a stick
 of chewing gum?

CUT TO:

EXT. BAUER'S NEWSSTAND - NIGHT

The RAIN isn't letting up.

Geist scrambles out of the Opel, runs to the corner KIOSK.

It stocks the usual fare -- NEWSPAPERS, SNACKS, CIGARETTES --
 but Geist is only interested in one item.

GEIST
 No Juicy Fruit? What gives?

BAUER, the blind newsie, is adjusting the CANVAS AWNING.

BAUER
 Relax. I sold the last pack to Gips
 an hour ago.

That pleases Geist. He grabs a NEWSPAPER and presses some
 MONEY into Bauer's hand.

Rather than wait for his change Geist plucks the RED
 CARNATION from Bauer's lapel.

BAUER (CONT'D)
 (calling after him)
 Good luck.

CUT TO:

EXT. LINIENSTRAÙE - NIGHT

Geist is holding the newspaper as a rain hat. With his other
 hand he puts the carnation to his nose, inhales. Delightful.

KNOTT (V.O.)

Okay, so maybe Gips didn't rat you out. Maybe someone else planted the necklace. I'm just the voice inside your head, not the Delphic Oracle.

Trouble ahead. Despite the weather, a CROWD has gathered in front of Gips' Apartmenthaus.

Up above, through Gips' open window: a COUPLE OF POLICEMEN are sniffing around her flat.

Geist pushes through the onlookers:

A WOMAN'S BODY is crushed into the sidewalk. No matter that she's face down, there's no mistaking that gold anklet.

The carnation drops to the wet pavement.

OFFICER GRÜN

Hey Sarge, look what the rain washed in.

SERGEANT BLAU

We was wondering if you'd show, loverboy. Here. Gips left ya somethin'.

SERGEANT BLAU passes Geist A FOLDED SHEET OF PAPER. "GEIST" is written on the outside.

SERGEANT BLAU (CONT'D)

This was with it.

He tosses over A PACK OF JUICY FRUIT GUM.

Geist unfolds the note. As he reads, Gips' voice reads along. It's a trembling voice.

GIPS (V.O.)

This should help you decide.

GEIST'S MIND REPLAYS AN EARLIER MOMENT:

Gips is at the door -- the last time he saw her alive.

GIPS

Have you decided yet?

BACK TO NOW:

SERGEANT BLAU
Mean anything to you?

Geist mumbles "yes."

SERGEANT BLAU (CONT'D)
Never figured you for the kind of
guy a dame kills herself over.

GEIST ISN'T LISTENING. HE'S IMAGINING GIPS' FINAL MOMENTS:

Gips slides the note under her alarm clock, sets the pack of gum on top.

Her hand lingers briefly.

The window is stuck. Gips smacks the frame until it gives way. The RAIN rushes inside.

She shivers, but not from the cold. It's like the whole world is crying.

The window is three floors up -- plenty high when there's a concrete sidewalk waiting at the bottom.

Slowly she leans forward.

Geist can't bear to watch her fall; his mind stays fixed on the window.

(O.S.) A dull THUD, followed by a CHORUS OF SCREAMS.

A BREATH OF WIND catches the note, flutters it gently.

BACK TO NOW:

Geist fishes out a crumpled-up sheet of paper, uncrumples it:

OUT SHOPPING. THOUGHT I'D COOK DINNER. COFFEE ON THE STOVE.

He compares it to the suicide note. Completely different handwriting. Completely.

HIS MIND SCURRIES BACK UPSTAIRS:

This time Gips isn't alone.

The two Bubis (from Club Maske) have Gips in an arm-lock.

At the kitchen table Mack is penning the note to Geist. As she creases the paper, Gips is flung out the window.

Before Gips can impact the ground...

A NEW SCENE BURSTS INTO GEIST'S MIND:

Now it's Ernst Röhm at the kitchen table. Instead of the Bubi, Röhm is aided by TWO NAZI BROWNSHIRTS.

THE SCENE CHANGES AGAIN:

Inspector Kohl has replaced Herr Röhm and TWO POLICEMEN are dragging Gips to the window.

ANOTHER FLASH:

It's the Communists' turn: Erwald Bergmann does the writing; the anvil-fisted Dempsey does the dirty work.

ANOTHER FLASH, AND ANOTHER, AND ANOTHER:

Scenarios scramble together, making and remaking themselves in fantastic combinations: Communists with cops, Brownshirts with she-males.

No matter who's involved, it always ends with Gips embedded in the pavement -- her right leg twitching, the anklet making an awful tinny JANGLE.

GEIST CRUSHES THE NOTE IN HIS HANDS.

FADE TO BLACK/FADE IN:

INT. GIPS' FLAT - LATER

The RAIN has stopped.

Geist sits upright on Gips' bed. He hasn't bothered to turn the lights on.

KNOTT (V.O.)

Is this what you're going to do?
Watch it get dark and ask yourself
a lot of meaningless questions: Did
Gips kill herself? Was she
murdered? Did she love you?

(O.S.) In the distance, A TRAIN.

Without getting up, Geist pushes the curtains back:

Outside, at the far end of the street, there really is a TRAIN moving along an ELEVATED TRESTLE.

KNOTT (V.O.)

That proves exactly nothing.

Geist gets up, goes to the washstand.

The straight razor is right where he left it. Thank goodness.

KNOTT (V.O.)

So Mack really did have a razor. So maybe they really did steal the jewels.

(O.S.) FOOTSTEPS. High-heeled shoes climbing the front stoop.

Much as he wants to, Geist can't look out the window.

KNOTT (V.O.)

Sounds like Gips. Are you hoping it's her? Or are you terrified it's her?

(O.S.) The front door unlatches. High-heels CLICK-CLACK up the stairs: One flight, two flights.

Geist arms himself with the straight razor.

Shadows shift under Gips' door; she's just outside, whoever she is.

The knob turns, the door glides open.

Razor is at the ready.

Too dark to make out anything except a silhouette, but she's a she -- that's for certain.

The moment she's all the way inside, Geist SLAMS the door behind her, flips on the light.

She turns.

For a blink -- just a blink -- she looks like Gips.

But it can't be. Gips is dead. Even Geist isn't that crazy. All the same there's something familiar about her.

Her name, Geist will soon learn, is ELLI GRAIL.

GEIST
Talk fast.

GRAIL
Umm... I... Herr Geist?

GEIST
I already know who I am.

GRAIL
Grail. Elli Grail. We met...
today... Remember?

Obviously he doesn't. Or does he?

GRAIL (CONT'D)
This afternoon... In Chancellor von
Papen's office... I escorted you.

Geist wants to be sure.

GEIST
Turn around.

Now it's Grail who's baffled.

GEIST (CONT'D)
(twirling his finger)
Just do me a favor.

Not knowing why, she spins around, gives Geist her rear view.

Unforgettable.

GEIST (CONT'D)
Why did von Papen send you?

GRAIL
He couldn't send a man, you might
cut his throat or something.

Self-consciously Geist folds up the razor blade, sneaks it
into his pants' pocket.

GRAIL (CONT'D)
He wanted you to have this.

She passes him a GLOSSY PHOTOGRAPH OF HERR GÖRING. He's in
his office, playing with a LION CUB.

GEIST
What the hell?

Grail taps a spot on the photo behind Göring where the safe is.

GEIST (CONT'D)

Who cares about the safe. What's with the lion?

GRAIL

That's Cäsar, his pet lion. Takes him everywhere. Didn't you know?

Apparently Geist didn't.

GRAIL (CONT'D)

Crazy, huh?

GEIST

Yeah, crazy. What else?

She passes him AN ENVELOPE. Inside it, a THICK WAD OF CASH.

GRAIL

Herr von Papen thought this might help you decide.

GEIST

Say that again.

GRAIL

He thought this might help you decide.

GIPS' SUICIDE NOTE JUMPS INTO GEIST'S BRAIN:

THIS SHOULD HELP YOU DECIDE.

Did Grail write the note? Geist's eyes give her the up and down.

GEIST

Who told you I'd be here? How did you get in downstairs?

GRAIL

It wasn't locked. I heard about your friend. Horrible. I'm sorry.

Sympathy isn't what Geist is in the market for.

GEIST

Do me another favor, write down
your name and phone number. In case
I need to get in touch.

Sounds more like a threat than a request.

GEIST (CONT'D)

It might help me decide.

Better do what he asks.

PAPER AND PENCIL are still on Gips' table. Hurriedly Grail
scribbles out the information, then scurries to the door.

GEIST (CONT'D)

Wait.

Geist pulls out the suicide note, compares the handwriting.

No similarity.

He rubs his eyes; all this paranoia is giving him a headache.

GEIST (CONT'D)

Tell von Papen I need more money.

GRAIL

To get started?

GEIST

The money is for other things.

CUT TO:

EXT. ST. HEDWIG'S CEMETERY - DAY

In shaded grounds, A SIMPLE MARKER:

GITA GIPINSKI

1907-1933

Resting on top, a single RED CARNATION.

FADE TO BLACK.

(O.S.) Weird BUZZING, like a swarm of angry mechanical bees.

FADE IN:

EXT. TEUTONENSTRASSE - DAY

Geist comes out of Dr. Stern's office, treats himself to a STICK OF JUICY FRUIT, lets his eyes roam.

Down the street, A COUPLE OF BLACK LEATHER OVERCOAT TYPES are pretending to window-shop.

Geist has picked himself up some new shadows.

CUT TO:

EXT. ZOOLOGISCHER GARTEN BERLIN - DAY

Geist flops onto a PARK BENCH.

He's in rough shape. Those angry bees are still BUZZING between his ears; his eyes can't focus. As a test, he tries to read the EXIT SIGN:

XIET, TEXI, IEXT -- every combination except the right one.

To hell with it. Better to relax and people-watch.

Nearby a CUTE LITTLE MOPPET can't get her ROLLER SKATE KEY to work.

Geist to the rescue. He pulls out his NAIL FILE, uses it to adjust the skate.

Moppet gives the new skate a test drive. Perfect. Hard to tell who is happier about this.

DADDY (O.S.)

Marta!

DADDY has come to collect his daughter. He is a tall square-jawed SS Sturmführer.

Geist hands the girl over but quick.

KNOTT (V.O.)

Enough with the eye test and the eagle scout routine. Get to work.

Back on the bench, Geist frisks his coat for PAPER and PENCIL.

He starts a list:

HOW DO I GET IN?

Already his concentration is flagging.

Herr Sink, completely unaware, exits.

Geist shakes Legless awake -- shows him the empty plate, points to the door which is just swinging shut.

In an instant Legless is out the door, galloping on his knuckles like an insane gorilla.

Geist won't have much time. He opens the window, squishes his CHEWING GUM into the latch, gives it a quick test: It works -- the window won't lock.

(O.S.) THWACK! THWACK! THUMP! Somebody out in the hallway is getting his balls punched flat.

Legless hops back in, fists bulging with coins.

BEHIND HIM, THROUGH THE MEN'S ROOM DOOR:

Herr Sink writhes in agony on the hallway linoleum.

CUT TO:

GEIST'S LIST - DAY

JAM THE WINDOW -- AND DON'T FUCK WITH THE WASHROOM ATTENDANT.

CUT TO:

INT. REICHSTAG MEN'S ROOM - THE DAY BEFORE

(O.S.) The toilet FLUSHES.

Herr Stall has to turn sideways to squeeze through the stall door. Yes, it's Fatso Göring himself.

He trades a look with Geist in the mirror. Something's fishy. Does Göring recognize him?

CUT TO:

EXT. ZOOLOGISCHER GARTEN BERLIN - DAY

Geist scribbles:

IS GÖRING ON TO ME?

KNOTT (V.O.)
Damn right Göring is on to you.
That's why this caper has to get
done -- and fast.

(O.S.) DING-DING, DING-DING

An ICE CREAM VENDOR rolls by. Maybe some sugar and fat will
make Geist feel better.

 GEIST
Die vanille, bitte.

The Vendor serves up a CONE, takes Geist's MONEY.

In between licks, Geist keeps writing:

WHEN? NEXT WEEK.

CUT TO:

EXT. REICHSTAG - NIGHT

A FULL MOON tucks behind a cloud.

Geist creeps out from behind a hedge, quickly squirrels up
the side of the building.

He yanks on the bathroom window. It doesn't budge -- the
chewing gum is acting like glue.

Overhead, the cloud moves on; it's MOON-BRIGHT again.

The window latch finally gives, Geist swings a leg inside.

Too late. SEARCHLIGHTS sweep in from all directions.

 UNIFORMED GUARDS
 HALT! HALT!

GUNFIRE. Lots of it.

Geist's knee and ankle shatter, his left ear evaporates.
Blinding pain, but still he tries to hoist himself in.

Two more bullets hit him -- the second one severs his spine.
A third shot drills through both cheeks.

Geist's limp body drops onto the moonlit lawn below.

CUT TO:

EXT. ZOOLOGISCHER GARTEN BERLIN - DAY

Geist crosses out NEXT WEEK.

On his WRISTWATCH, he winds the dial with the LITTLE MOON SHAPES till it reaches new moon, then writes:

IN 19 DAYS.

CUT TO:

EXT. REICHSTAG - NIGHT

A moonless black sky.

This time Geist makes it up the wall and into the bathroom without a hitch.

CUT TO:

INT. GÖRING'S PRIVATE OFFICE - NIGHT

The door lock doesn't keep Geist out for more than two seconds.

He makes straight for the credenza.

CUT TO:

GEIST'S LIST - DAY

HOW DO I OPEN THE SAFE?

CUT TO:

INT. GÖRING'S PRIVATE OFFICE - NIGHT

Starting at 0 the COMBINATION DIAL turns slowly.

At 29, there is a CLICK.

Geist stops, rolls back to 26, rolls to 29 again.

CLICK.

INSIDE THE COMBINATION DIAL MECHANISM:

As the DRIVE CAM rotates, a LEVER drops into its notch. That's the CLICK Geist is hearing.

BACK TO THE OFFICE:

Stretched out on Göring's desk: A LONG SHEET of GRAPH PAPER.
Geist marks 29 on the graph.

He resets the combination dial to 99, slowly twists.

CLICK at 42.

42 is marked on the graph.

He resets, this time to 98, and turns.

CLICK at 58...

CUT TO:

INT. GÖRING'S PRIVATE OFFICE - NIGHT

The graph line is completed. It bounces like a stock chart,
but spikes at three distinct points: 04-37-61.

Geist spins the dial: R04 L37 R61.

INSIDE THE COMBINATION DIAL MECHANISM:

The drive cam rotates, engages the DRIVE PIN on each WHEEL.
The FENCE drops.

Voilà.

Geist turns the bolt, pulls the door open.

As expected, the Kolibri Letter is on the top shelf.

CUT TO:

EXT. ZOOLOGISCHER GARTEN BERLIN - DAY

WHAT IF THE LETTER IS SEALED?

(O.S.) DING-DING, DING-DING

THE ICE CREAM BELL SPARKS A MEMORY:

As the Vendor opens the lid, there's a waft of DRY ICE VAPOR.

CUT TO:

INT. GÖRING'S PRIVATE OFFICE - NIGHT

Geist opens a SMALL CARDBOARD BOX labeled:

KÜHLANLAGEN REFRIGERATION.

In goes the envelope. It comes out frozen solid.

With his nail file, Geist pops loose the frozen wax seal, removes the three pages, flattens them on the desk.

CLICK. CLICK. CLICK. Each page is carefully photographed.

They are refolded, slipped back in the envelope. A few dabs of FRESH GLUE and the wax seal is good as new.

All that's left is to replace the envelope on the top shelf, relock the safe and spin the dial.

CUT TO:

GEIST'S LIST - DAY

DELIVER THE FILM TO VON PAPEN.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNTER DEN LINDEN - NIGHT

As Geist walks, he rewinds the FILM ROLL, pops it from the back of the camera, seals it in a pre-addressed envelope.

He pauses at the MAIL BOX, checks in every direction:

Except for a SLEEPING BEGGAR, all clear.

The envelope drops into the mail slot.

CUT TO:

GEIST'S LIST - DAY

AFTER?

CUT TO:

EXT. UNTER DEN LINDEN - NIGHT

Geist lifts the camera from around his neck, sets it in the Beggar's lap.

The Beggar jerks to life, swipes up at Geist's windpipe.

That beggar is no beggar -- it's Mack and she's armed with a STRAIGHT RAZOR.

Geist clutches his throat. No use. BLOOD gushes through his fingers. He turns away.

Behind him is Dempsey, the Communist.

CRACK! THUMP!

He snaps Geist's knee with a stomp of his boot and buries his anvil fist in Geist's stomach. Payback.

Geist tumbles lifelessly onto the pavement.

CUT TO:

GEIST'S LIST - DAY

AFTER??????????

Geist keeps adding question marks. Can't worry about that now. He folds the paper.

There's something written on the back:

ELLI GRAIL

15E UNTER DEN LINDEN

PHONE: GE-04785

CUT TO:

INT. ELLI GRAIL'S FLAT - DAY

The telephone RINGS.

It's a very posh-looking telephone.

Grail steps in, lifts the receiver.

GRAIL

Hallo... Ja, of course... Where?...
Say twenty minutes...

CUT TO:

EXT. ZOOLOGISCHER GARTEN BERLIN AVIARY - DAY

Elli rattles through the turnstile.

Geist is where he said he'd be. Elli takes a seat beside him, a bit unnerved by all these SWIRLING BIRDS.

GRAIL

Interesting spot for a meeting.

GEIST

It's the easiest place to keep track of my twin bodyguard.

Geist points out:

Dempsey, who is feeding the MONKEYS. And Mack who is watching the PUNCH 'N JUDY PUPPET SHOW.

GRAIL

At least they keep their distance.

GEIST

Bird shit ruins black leather.

CUT TO:

EXT. ZOOLOGISCHER GARTEN LADIES' ROOM - THE DAY BEFORE

Mack scrubs futilely at a WHITE STAIN on her black leather trench coat.

CUT TO:

EXT. ZOOLOGISCHER GARTEN BERLIN AVIARY - DAY

Grail slips her EXPENSIVE LEATHER HANDBAG under her butt.

GRAIL

They don't make you nervous?

GEIST

Pretty girls make me nervous.

GRAIL

That wouldn't be a compliment?

Better find a safer topic.

GEIST

I'll need new identity papers, travel documents.

GRAIL
You can't get your own fake ID's?

GEIST
I want the real thing. Von Papen
can arrange it.

GRAIL
Anything else?

GEIST
More money.

GRAIL
Anything else?

GEIST
Your eyes are emerald green.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. STERN'S CONSULTING ROOM - DAY

X-RAYS, maybe THREE DOZEN, are clipped to a long LIGHT BOX.

Every possible view of Geist's skull. In each image, just
behind the left eye socket, A SPIDERY GRAY BLOTCH.

Dr. Stern studies them carefully. He lights a cigarette,
motions Geist to step closer.

DR. STERN
Bet this is the first time you've
looked inside your own head.

GEIST'S MIND FLASHES TO:

EXT. NO MAN'S LAND - VERDUN, FRANCE - 1916

Corporal Geist is face to face with a PAPIER MACHÉ MODEL OF
HIS OWN HEAD. The resemblance is disturbing.

The dummy head is attached to a STEEL PIPE. Geist loans the
dummy his HELMET, then slides the pipe up till the head is
just above the top of the trench.

A moment later:

BANG! The helmet flies off.

Geist slides the dummy head back down.

There's a bullet hole through the forehead, and an exit wound straight out the back of the papier maché skull.

Geist puts his eye to the back hole, sights through to the hole in the front.

Up to the front hole he holds A SMALL PERISCOPE. Its upper lens is just high enough to peek over the top of the trench.

By aligning the periscope with the bullet holes, Geist can sight along the path of the enemy bullet:

Sure enough, he's zeroed in on a FRENCH SNIPER.

Geist moves to a firing slot. He chambers a round in his MAUSER, aims through its TELESCOPIC SIGHT:

The crosshairs align on the French Sniper's left eye.

BANG!

CUT TO:

INT. DR. STERN'S CONSULTING ROOM - DAY

With his pen, Stern circles the identical spot on Geist's x-ray.

DR. STERN

If the tumour isn't destroyed within a year you will go permanently blind. Paralysis will follow, then idiocy and finally death.

GEIST

So now you think I'm dying?

DR. STERN

Your next stop should be Stockholm -
- Dr. Tenevall.

GEIST

And what is your next stop?

Stern puts out his cigarette, lights a fresh one.

DR. STERN

My wife doesn't want to leave. She feels I'm exaggerating the danger.

Is Geist hearing this correctly?

DR. STERN (CONT'D)
I mean, there are a half million
Jews in Germany. They can't kill
all of us.

CUT TO:

INT. ELLI GRAIL'S FLAT - DAY

The phone RINGS.

CUT TO:

EXT. ZOOLOGISCHER GARTEN BERLIN AVIARY - DAY

Geist has a LEICA III F round his neck. As Elli approaches,
he lifts the camera to his eye.

GEIST
Smile, wave.

Elli is not a smiler or a waver.

GEIST (CONT'D)
Okay, pretend.

She does her uncomfortable best.

CLICK.

She sits down, passes Geist a THICK ENVELOPE. He gives the
DOCUMENTS inside a thorough going-over.

GEIST (CONT'D)
Jan Schmidt. How original.

GRAIL
Didn't you want to be someone else?

Geist looks into those emerald green eyes -- really looks.

GEIST
Walk with me.

CUT TO:

EXT. ZOOLOGISCHER GARTEN BERLIN - NIGHT

With his bodyguard in tow, Geist escorts Grail across the
grounds. They stop in front of the GORILLA CAGE.

GEIST

See that poor hairy slob? The zookeepers taught him to draw. They say the first thing he ever sketched was the bars of his own cage.

GRAIL

Is that how you feel?

GEIST

I was talking about you.

That's a conversation stopper.

GEIST (CONT'D)

The address is what tipped me off. Too swank for a secretary's pay. You're not just von Papen's secretary are you?

CUT TO:

INT. VON PAPEN'S STUDY - DAY

Von Papen straightens his silk Charvet necktie on his way out the door. Behind him Elli lowers her skirt.

The Chancellor pauses to clean a fleck of dirt from his otherwise flawless manicure.

BACK TO NOW:

GEIST

Hard to imagine von Papen with a Jewish mistress.

GRAIL

All of a sudden you know a whole lot about me.

CUT TO:

INT. GRAIL'S APARTMENTHAUS HALLWAY - THREE DAYS AGO

Geist is at Elli's front door, notes the MEZUZAH on the jamb. With his nail file he jimmy's the lock, lets himself in.

CUT TO:

INT. GRAIL'S FLAT - DAY

This is some apartment: bright, spacious, impeccably decorated.

The antique chair is just like the one in von Papen's study. SQUEAKS like it too.

There's A MENORAH on the mantle and beside it a PHOTO OF VON PAPEN -- probably taken before Elli was born.

CUT TO:

INT. ELLI'S BEDROOM - DAY

Geist is hypnotized by the items on Elli's vanity.

He traces his finger along the contours of her HAND MIRROR, across her POWDER JAR to the top of her PERFUME BOTTLE. He holds the bottle's crystal stopper to his nose. Ecstasy.

From the soft bristles of her HAIR BRUSH, he untwines a single hair.

Long and fine and slightly auburn in the sunlight.

On her bed, there's a WHITE SILK NÉGLIGÉE folded on top of her pillow.

Ever so gently he slips his big hairy paw under the neckline. Absolutely sheer.

(O.S.) FOOTSTEPS.

The spell is broken.

CUT TO:

EXT. ZOOLOGISCHER GARTEN BERLIN - DAY

GRAIL

I suppose you know everything?

CUT TO:

INT. ELLI'S FLAT - DAY

Back out to the living room.

(O.S.) SOMEONE IS UNLOCKING THE FRONT DOOR.

Must be Elli. Geist ditches into:

THE OTHER BEDROOM.

Immediately he's surrounded by BLUE TIGERS, GREEN ELEPHANTS, and PINK GIRAFFES -- a painted carousel of fantastic zoo animals.

At the foot of the TINY BED, there's a TOY CHEST with a name carved on the lid: BENJAMIN.

No time to think about this. The bedroom door is opening.

Geist ducks behind it, hugs the wall.

It's A WOMAN alright, but not Elli, much older -- and she's cradling A TWO-YEAR OLD BOY.

She sets the boy in the middle of the carpet beside some ALPHABET BLOCKS and a WOODEN TRAIN.

She starts to leave, pulls the door halfway shut. This exposes Geist -- but only to Benjamin.

It makes the little one GIGGLE.

BENJAMIN

Papa. Papa.

MRS. KRUGMAN

I'm not your papa, you silly little knuddelmaus. Now keep quiet while I have a nosh and a lie-down.

She closes the door, locks it.

Alone together. Benjamin stares, Geist stares. Benjamin cocks his head, Geist cocks his.

BENJAMIN

Papa. Papa.

GEIST

Not a chance, kid.

That draws another CHUCKLE.

The little boy offers Geist a wooden block. Why not? It's the best offer he's had.

Geist sits down Indian-style on the carpet.

Benjamin offers Geist another block, and another. All this generosity is making Geist suspicious.

GEIST (CONT'D)

You don't need a safe opened, do you?

BENJAMIN

Papa. Papa.

GEIST

Sure, kid, if it makes you happy. Papa, papa.

They both have a LAUGH over that one.

It brings out the sparkle in Benjamin's emerald green eyes.

BACK AT THE ZOOLOGISCHER GARTEN:

No sparkle in Elli's eyes. Geist offers her a stick of gum.

GEIST

What if you had a chance to get out of your cage -- you and your little boy?

GRAIL

Von Papen will never let Benjamin leave his beloved Germany.

GEIST

A year from now his beloved Germany won't exist. Will he claim a Jewish child as his own? Will he protect you?

GRAIL

But you will?

Geist shrugs, "Why not me?"

GRAIL (CONT'D)

I don't believe I can be saved by a dead man. It's against my religion.

GEIST

You may be figuring it wrong.

GRAIL

As soon as you've handed over the list, this bodyguard of yours will become a firing squad.

GEIST

Not if you help.

GRAIL

As for instance?

GEIST

Kiss me.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRAIL'S APARTMENTHAUS - NIGHT

Arm in arm Geist and Grail climb the front stoop. They single-file through the entry door, rejoin hands and head upstairs.

Is this for real? That's what Dempsey and Mack are wondering.

CUT TO:

INT. GRAIL'S FLAT - NIGHT

The two are inseparable until the door closes. And then, instant separation.

Geist rushes to the window, has a snoop through the curtains.

OUTSIDE:

Mack on one corner, Dempsey on the other -- and both are more interested in staying warm than in window-peeping.

GRAIL (V.O.)

How's it look?

GEIST (V.O.)

I think they're sold.

BACK INSIDE:

Geist pulls a BROWN BAG from his coat pocket, passes it to Elli. From his other pocket he pulls a pair of SOFT-SOLED SHOES, slips them on.

In the bag there's a WINE BOTTLE.

GRAIL
Blue Nun. How romantic.

GEIST
Goes great with chewing gum. Get
some glasses.

Geist grabs the bottle back, drives the blade of his
pocketknife into the cork, starts twisting it out.

Elli retreats to the kitchen, comes back with two elegant
LONG STEM FLUTES.

Geist pours.

GEIST (CONT'D)
Prost.

CLINK. Geist downs his glass in a single gulp.

As for Elli, if she wasn't such a lady she'd spit this swill
onto the rug.

Geist busts out LAUGHING -- which makes Elli LAUGH, which of
course makes her spit wine all over the rug.

For the first time Elli is genuinely happy. Her eyes are
filled with warmth, her smile is radiant.

And Geist, he is speechless.

GRAIL
So what now?

CUT TO:

EXT. GRAIL'S APARTMENTHAUS - NIGHT

Elli seats herself in front of the lit window, sips her
drink, keeps chatting.

Neither Dempsey nor Mack seem to care much.

Good thing, because otherwise they'd notice Geist sneaking
across the rooftops.

CUT TO:

EXT. REICHSTAG - NIGHT

Dark and dead quiet.

A GUARD passes without stopping -- his FLASHLIGHT focused towards the street, not the building.

Geist emerges from the shadows, shinnies up the stone wall. In nothing flat he's through the bathroom window.

Doesn't leave a trace.

CUT TO:

INT. GORING'S PRIVATE OFFICE - NIGHT

The cabinet door slides open. Göring's safe is exactly where it ought to be.

Geist puts his fingers to the dial but doesn't start turning. Instead, he goes to the inner office door, puts an ear to it.

(O.S.) FOOTSTEPS, VOICES. MALE and FEMALE -- very drunk, very GIGGLY -- coming up the main stairwell, heading this way.

Geist grabs the heaviest thing he can find: A SMALL BUST OF HITLER.

(O.S.) The GIGGLERS have entered Göring's outer office. Is that a THIRD SET OF FOOTSTEPS?

Geist crawls under Göring's desk. Good thing the back of the desk is solid.

Of course there's no view of the inner office door from under here, but Geist can hear it OPEN and CLOSE.

GÖRING (O.S.)
Enter the love nest, mein kätzchen.

KÄTZCHEN (O.S.)
I thought you had to get something important.

GÖRING (O.S.)
You've got something important.

(O.S.) Panic time. That THIRD SET OF FOOTSTEPS is coming straight toward the desk.

Geist raises the bust, ready to strike.

CÄSAR, Herr Göring's pet lion cub, rounds the back side of the desk, finds Geist.

Geist puts a finger to his lips: SHHHHH.

Cäsar obeys, plops down. Frankly he isn't much interested in Geist. What's happening on the office couch is a lot more entertaining.

{O.S.) SQUEAKING LEATHER. Our love kittens are going at it.

KÄTZCHEN (O.S.)

Here? Where you screw your secretary?

GÖRING (O.S.)

Don't be vulgar. I'm a happily married man.

{O.S.) Göring peppers her with NOISY KISSES.

KÄTZCHEN (O.S.)

Why can't we go to your flat?

GÖRING (O.S.)

Because, mein apfelstrudel, Frau Göring is in town.

KÄTZCHEN (O.S.)

I can't feel romantic with that slobbering cat watching me.

Cäsar is vaguely offended.

GÖRING (O.S.)

You'd feel more romantic with Frau Göring watching you?

KÄTZCHEN (O.S.)

What about your suite at the Regent?

GÖRING (O.S.)

They don't accept lions at the Regent.

KÄTZCHEN (O.S.)

Are you sure? Call them.

GÖRING (O.S.)

I don't know the number.

KÄTZCHEN (O.S.)

You don't expect me to believe that?

GÖRING (O.S.)

The only number I can ever remember is Hitler's birthday.

Geist stares at the Hitler bust, impressed.

KÄTZCHEN (O.S.)
Is that why you never get me a
birthday present?

GÖRING (O.S.)
I won't be shot for forgetting your
birthday.

KÄTZCHEN (O.S.)
Okay, okay, then let's leave Cäsar
here.

GÖRING (O.S.)
Alone? In the dark?

KÄTZCHEN (O.S.)
Which do you want: Me or that cat?

A long silence.

KÄTZCHEN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
This evening is over.

(O.S.) HIGH HEELS stomp toward the door.

GÖRING (O.S.)
Wait, wait. All right my kitten,
we'll go to the Regent. Just the
two of us.

KÄTZCHEN (O.S.)
I'm not in the mood.

GÖRING (O.S.)
I'll make you a deal. Come with me
to the Regent, and your iron
dumpling will buy you a brand new
fur coat just like Cäsar's.

(O.S.) The girl lets out a kittenish MEOW. Göring responds
with a MEOW of his own. The two KISS and GIGGLE and make
ANIMAL NOISES.

Nauseating, even for Cäsar.

(O.S.) FOOTSTEPS go to the outer office, water TRICKLES from
the water cooler. The FOOTSTEPS approach the desk.

Geist gets ready for action.

Thank God Göring is too fat to bend down all the way. He
drops an ASHTRAY FULL OF WATER beside Cäsar, gives him a pet.

GÖRING (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Be a good boy.

(O.S.) Göring and Kätzchen MEOW their way out the door.

Geist unpretzels himself from under the desk.

He re-opens the credenza, stares at the dial, stares at Hitler, stares at Cäsar.

An inspiration.

From Göring's bookshelf comes an ENCYCLOPEDIA -- VOLUME H-J.

Geist leafs to the page marked: HIT TO HIV.

Wait. What was he looking up?

He massages his forehead, tries to re-focus.

Does he hear something? Guess not.

His finger slides down the page till it lands on:

HITLER, ADOLF

BORN: 20 April, 1889

Why not give it a try? Cäsar agrees.

Back at the safe, Geist manipulates the dial:

Left 20, right 04, left 89.

CLICK. It worked.

Geist stops again.

(O.S.) A DISTANT RUMBLE. STEEL WHEELS ON STEEL TRACK.

Don't listen, concentrate.

He turns the bolt handle down, the locking bars retreat:

CLUNK.

(O.S.) A train whistle CRIES.

The room begins to vibrate.

GEIST
Christ. Not now.

He grits his teeth.

The door to Göring's safe swings open...

FADE TO BLACK:

(O.S.) BRRRING-BRRRING BRRRING-BRRRING BRRRING-BRRRING...

FADE IN:

INT. GRAIL'S PARLOR - NIGHT

A light comes on in the next room.

... BRRRING-BRRRING BRRRING-BRRRING BRRRING-BRRRING...

Now in her nightgown, Grail shuffles to the phone.

GRAIL

Ja...

(O.S.) The PHONE VOICE is frantic.

GRAIL (CONT'D)

What? Are you sure? ... Okay, I'll
be there quick as I can.

She hangs up, rushes to the bedroom, peeling off her
nightgown as she goes.

CUT TO:

EXT. KÖNIGSPLATZ - NIGHT

A TAXICAB pulls up, Elli scrambles out.

No need to pay the CABBIE, he's not going anywhere. Neither
are any of the other THOUSAND SPECTATORS.

They're all watching the Reichstag burn to the ground.

Already there are a DOZEN FIRE TRUCKS, maybe 100 FIREMEN, and
more arriving every second.

OCEANS OF WATER are being hosed onto the building to no
purpose.

BRIGHT FLASHES everywhere, but not from the fire. PRESS
PHOTOGRAPHERS are snapping pictures -- mostly of the crowd.
Who's who of Berlin has come to watch.

Among them is Herr Röhm, surrounded by BROWNSHIRTED BOY TOYS.

In contrast Erwald Bergmann is here on his own.

So is Fatso Göring. He is pacing anxiously.

A FIREFIGHTER carries a BLANKETED BUNDLE to Göring. Inside the blanket is Cäsar. Göring showers the cat with sloppy kisses.

Watching this tender scene is Franz von Papen. Better stop looking before he throws up.

Elli spots von Papen, chases over.

VON PAPEN

Please tell me this insanity is all part of some grand plan.

GRAIL

I don't think so.

Von Papen casts an eye towards Röhm. Röhm shrugs.

Both men then look towards Inspektor Kohl who is dispersing his MEN.

Kohl shakes his head. Everyone is baffled.

THREE OFFICERS are coming Kohl's way. They have a man in custody.

OFFICER FEUER

We caught this joker trying to sneak out of the building.

It's Dempsey -- burned, scratched, barely able to stand.

KOHL

Get him to the hospital.

They exchange salutes, drag Dempsey to the nearest AMBULANCE.

At last, the spectator everyone has been waiting for.

A BLACK MERCEDES LIMO, Nazi flags waving from its front fenders, pulls up in the center of the Platz.

Half the crowd snaps to attention.

Göring passes Cäsar back to the fireman, waddles over.

The limo window rolls down far enough for Göring to poke his head in. There's a brief chat before the window goes back up.

A.H. will observe from the privacy of his back seat.

CUT TO:

EXT. REICHSTAG - SUNRISE

Thin RIBBONS OF BLACK SMOKE filter the morning light.

The crowd has all gone home. The show is over.

CUT TO:

EXT. REICHSTAG - DAWN

EXHAUSTED POLICE and FIREMEN sift through the rubble.

Inspektor Kohl has split off from the other search parties.
He finds Göring's office -- what's left of it -- and enters.

CUT TO:

INT. HERR GÖRING'S PRIVATE OFFICE - DAWN

A FLASHLIGHT BEAM inspects the safe. Like Dempsey it's black
and blistered, but otherwise intact.

As Kohl turns to leave, his light GLINTS off something shiny:

It's Geist's Leica. Undamaged, except for a cracked lens.

Kohl unloads the ROLL OF FILM, slips it in his pocket.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT DARKROOM - MORNING

A LAB TECHNICIAN clips up A SHORT STRIP OF FRESHLY DEVELOPED
NEGATIVE, squeegees it with his fingers.

Kohl examines it with a MAGNIFYING GLASS:

Blank, except for one photo of Elli.

TECHNICIAN
Pretty girl.

KOHL
Yeah, beautiful.

CUT TO:

INT. VON PAPEN'S STUDY - MORNING

An INTERCOM BUZZES. Von Papen flips the key.

GRAIL (O.S.)
Inspektor Kohl is on the line.

VON PAPEN
Put him through. And join me in the office.

The phone RINGS.

VON PAPEN (CONT'D)
Hallo, von Papen... Ja... Did you find anything on the film? ...

Elli enters, quietly takes a seat. She's still in last night's clothes.

VON PAPEN (CONT'D)
Have you spoken to Herr Röhm? ...
Okay, keep me informed... Danke.

Von Papen hangs up, slips off his glasses, kneads the bridge of his nose.

GRAIL
Well?

VON PAPEN
The lab technician thinks you're very pretty.

GRAIL
Nothing else?

VON PAPEN
The rest of the roll was blank.
Unexposed.

GRAIL
What does it mean?

VON PAPEN
It means we are blind. And as long as we are blind, we are paralysed. It means the Nazi clown has won.

Elli slumps lower in her chair.

VON PAPEN (CONT'D)
Go home and sleep.

CUT TO:

INT. GRAIL'S APARTMENTHAUS - MORNING

Elli's tired eyes scan her purse for the LATCH KEY. Found it.
Wait. Is that SOOT on her door knob? She tests the door -- it isn't locked.

CUT TO:

INT. GRAIL'S FLAT - MORNING

Good thing Elli is too tired to scream.

Splayed across her couch is Geist. He's disguised in a FIREMAN'S COAT, his face so black it's unrecognizable.

GEIST
Help me out of this get-up.

He starts to peel away the coat. Excruciating, and no wonder. Underneath, most of his clothing -- and his skin -- is burned off.

The sight turns Elli's stomach.

GRAIL
Let me call a doctor.

GEIST
No time. I'm not staying.

Elli goes to the phone.

GEIST (CONT'D)
No doctor, I said. Get some hot water.

Jacket off, Geist falls back on the couch.

Elli runs to the bathroom, comes back with BANDAGES and HOT WATER.

Gingerly she begins the clean-up and repair process.

GRAIL
We found your camera.

GEIST
That must've been disappointing.

GRAIL
Couldn't you get the safe opened?

That draws an indignant stare.

GRAIL (CONT'D)
Sorry. What exactly did you find
inside?

FADE TO BLACK:

(O.S.) A train whistle SCREAMS.

FADE IN:

INT. GÖRING'S PRIVATE OFFICE - NIGHT

The safe door swings open.

Empty. No letter, no nothing. Or is there?

Geist is too disoriented to see much of anything. Those train wheels are grinding his brain into hamburger.

He throws his hands over his ears. It makes the noise louder.

KNOTT (V.O.)
Incoming!

Geist ducks.

Too late. A fist catches him right on the jaw.

He falls backwards into the safe's door, slams it shut. A boot hammers his sternum. Another boot to the face. And another. Something just went CRACK -- his cheekbone.

His eyes are clouding up with BLOOD, but Geist can make out Dempsey squaring up for the kill.

WHAM! Something knocks Dempsey on his ass.

Cäsar hops off the big man's chest, skitters out the door. That leaves Dempsey stunned and bleeding. And utterly confused.

It's the opening Geist needs. He grabs his camera, swings it like a mace, whacks Dempsey right in the crotch.

YEE-OWW!

Geist scrambles on top of him, fists pounding. Seven, eight, nine, ten hard shots to Dempsey's head. Over and out.

Time to go. Geist stumbles to the door, throws it open.

The hallway is filled with SMOKE -- lots and lots of smoke -- and his feet are getting hotter. Must be a fire on the floor below. A big one.

COUGHING, eyes watering, Geist shuts the door.

Can't stay here -- already Dempsey is stirring.

Better get some protection. Geist douses himself with the WATER from the WATER COOLER.

Dripping wet, he sprints into the hallway, turns left, stops. Too smoky. No way he's getting back to the Men's Room.

His only chance is the main stairwell.

Flames are licking up between the risers, but it looks solid enough.

Geist charges down, fours stairs at a time.

Made it.

Trouble is, downstairs is an inferno. Can't get to the front doors. Not a chance.

He retreats into the corridor.

EMPTY GAS CANS stashed back here, and PILES OF RAGS. For sure, this fire didn't just happen.

And there's something else -- A DEAD BODY. Poor Mack. Her throat's been cut, probably with her own razor.

Can't think about it now, a guy can't breathe back here.

Geist retreats down the corridor till it leads him into the MAIN ASSEMBLY HALL -- the massive glass-domed auditorium where the German Parliament meets.

What a sight. FLAMES fifty feet high, EMBERS swirling in the air like a million fireflies.

The GLASS CEILING shatters.

Geist takes cover under a desk. Glass shards rain down, briefly dampening the blaze. It doesn't last.

The rush of incoming air turns the room into a blast furnace.
A CYCLONE OF FLAME jets up through the open ceiling.

Its ROAR is louder than a thousand passing trains.

Geist stands, overwhelmed by its grandeur -- and its madness.

This isn't the Reichstag any longer. It's The Hall of the
Gods and this is Götterdämmerung.

The only sound filling Geist's ears now is music. Music
hammering into his skull like a thousand crooked nails.

The final curtain is about to ring down.

AN EXPLOSION.

The hall doors burst off their hinges. WATER gushes in.

The world goes white.

FADE IN:

BACK TO GRAIL'S FLAT:

GRAIL

How did you get out of there?

GEIST

Maybe I didn't.

GRAIL

But the list, the list. You're sure
there was no list?

GEIST

Oh, the list is there. It's for
real. It's everything else that's
imaginary.

GRAIL

You're not making any sense.

GEIST

No kidding.

GRAIL

What now?

GEIST

Let the world move on. The end is
coming soon enough.

(MORE)

GEIST (CONT'D)

On that day everybody will be too
scared to care what happens to me.

GRAIL

I'll care.

By her voice, she means it.

GEIST

I once asked whether you'd escape
if you could.

GRAIL

But I can't.

GEIST

You talk like you're already dead.

GRAIL

What exactly are you offering?
Freedom? Salvation? Love?

GEIST

I'm offering you whatever I've got.

Silence. Elli is thinking -- hard -- but about *what*? Geist
can't get a read on her.

Tears well up. Genuine tears. Whatever is going on behind
those emerald eyes is about to boil over.

GRAIL

I need to get my son.

Before Geist can react she's out the door.

CUT TO:

INT. GRAIL'S APARTMENTHAUS - MORNING

One floor down.

Elli blots her mascara, then KNOCKS at Apartment 2E.

That older woman, MRS. KRUGMAN, answers. She's holding
BENJAMIN. Elli's face gets 1000 Watts brighter.

MRS. KRUGMAN

Thanks to God it's you. You ran out
last night in such a hurry, I've
been worried out of my mind.

The little boy stretches into Elli's waiting arms; she snuggles him tight.

GRAIL

I'm fine, Mrs. Krugman. Do you suppose I could borrow your phone?

CUT TO:

INT. GRAIL'S FLAT - MORNING

Elli re-enters, Benjamin in her arms.

GRAIL

Don't be angry. I've phoned for a doctor...

Empty couch, open window, no Geist.

FADE TO BLACK:

KNOTT (V.O.)

The world moved on, just like Geist figured. First, someone needed to be punished for the Reichstag fire.

FADE IN:

INT. LEIPZIG CRIMINAL COURT - DAY

Dempsey stands in the dock. The PRESIDING JUDGE reads out.

PRESIDING JUDGE

Having been found guilty, the judgment of the court is that you be taken hence to the place of execution, and there have your head severed from your body. And may God have mercy upon your soul.

CUT TO:

EXT. LEIPZIG PRISON COURTYARD - DAY

Execution day.

No ceremony, not even a reading of the charge.

PRISON GUARDS strap Dempsey to the table of THE GUILLOTINE, position his neck under the blade, and pull the lever.

WHACK!

Over and done in 10 seconds.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAUER'S NEWSSTAND - MORNING

JUSTICE!

So reads the front page of DER ANGRIFF.

Bauer cuts the string binding the fresh STACK OF NEWSPAPERS, starts handing out copies. There are lots of takers.

One customer seems familiar. Can't see his face, but he's also buying JUICY FRUIT GUM.

CUT TO:

EXT. LINIENSTRAßE - MORNING

Herr Juicy Fruit ambles down the street, reading and chewing.

KNOTT (V.O.)

After the fire, nobody trusted anybody. Resistance melted away. And Germany grew ill. Blindness first, then paralysis, and then idiocy.

He passes BOARDED-UP STOREFRONTS, most of which have the MAGEN DAVID crudely painted on the door.

SWASTIKAS and HITLER PORTRAITS are plastered everywhere.

Half the men are dressed in some sort of Nazi uniform.

KNOTT (V.O.)

One man's madness became every man's reality.

Herr Juicy Fruit rounds the corner, disappears.

Coming the other way is the Blond Messenger Boy. He parks his bike at 55 LINIENSTRAßE, a GREYSTONE ROW HOUSE which is flanked by RED NAZI FLAGS and a pair of SS GUARDS.

CUT TO:

INT. GÖRING'S NEW PRIVATE OFFICE - DAY

GÖRING

What do you have for me today?

The Boy hands Göring a NOTECARD. One word written on it:

KOLIBRI

GÖRING (CONT'D)

Who gave you this?

The boy flashes a piece of HARD CANDY between his teeth.

Göring quickly signs the boy's receipt book, shoos him out.

He swivels his chair.

The safe, still wearing its fire scars, has been moved to the new address.

Göring spins the dial, opens the door.

Sitting on the top shelf, where it's always been, is the KOLIBRI LETTER.

He compares it with the note. The word "Kolibri" is in the same handwriting.

KNOTT (V.O.)

Göring knew what the note meant.
Time to open the letter -- and put
Kolibri into operation.

He breaks the letter's wax seal.

Inside, three typed pages with the heading:

LIST OF UNWANTED PERSONS

CUT TO:

INT. STADELHEIM PRISON, MUNICH - NIGHT

An SS STURMBANNFÜHRER cocks his WALTHER 9MM PISTOL, then unlocks CELL 326.

Its occupant is Ernst Röhm.

RÖHM

Is Adolf too frightened to do this
himself?

OUTSIDE A HOTEL:

THE DOORMAN is slumped against a wall, a dozen stab wounds in his chest.

IN A CHURCH RECTORY:

A CATHOLIC PRIEST has been split apart with a PICK-AXE.

KNOTT (V.O.)
 What did von Papen call it, "An
 insatiable appetite for human
 blood." Guess he was right about
 that.

CUT TO:

INT. INSPEKTOR KOHL'S OFFICE - DAY

TWO GESTAPO TRIGGER MEN boot down the door, LUGERS drawn.

Kohl holds up the "just one second" finger. With his other hand he lights his WELL-CHEWED CIGAR.

One deep drag followed by a perfect smoke ring. Heavenly.

Then the phone RINGS.

KOHL
 Should I answer it?

The Trigger Men start BLASTING.

KOHL'S BRAINS splatter onto the receiver.

CUT TO:

INT. VON PAPEN'S STUDY - DAY

Von Papen is on the other end of that phone line.

After about twenty unanswered RINGS he gives up.

(O.S.) GUNFIRE. Automatic gunfire.

Von Papen steps to the cathedral-arched window, the one with the Eden view:

MEMBERS OF HIS OFFICE STAFF ARE BEING EXECUTED ON THE LAWN.

Elli streaks in, tries to lock the door -- not so easy when your whole body is trembling.

(O.S.) MORE GUNFIRE. SCREAMS.

She plugs her ears.

VON PAPEN

Scared, my darling? You shouldn't be. This was all quite inevitable.

Not a hint of emotion in von Papen's voice.

Elli steadies herself against the door.

GRAIL

Those are your friends out there.

VON PAPEN

Yes, friends are important.

Von Papen strides to his desk, picks up the phone, starts dialing.

VON PAPEN (CONT'D)

Time for me to have a chat with my very good friend Adolf Hitler.

His calmness would be impressive if it wasn't so chilling.

GRAIL

And what should I do?

CUT TO:

INT. ELLI GRAIL'S FLAT - LATER

Elli doesn't bother to close her front door, beelines straight for the nursery.

INT. BENJAMIN'S ROOM - LATER

A SUITCASE is flung open, filled with LITTLE BOY'S CLOTHES.

IN THE LIVING ROOM AGAIN:

Elli sprints back out the front door -- still doesn't close it -- disappears down the stairs.

(O.S.) FRANTIC DOOR KNOCKS, FEMALE VOICES.

Back upstairs with Benjamin in her arms. Elli freezes.

Draped over her phone receiver:

A 500 CARAT EMERALD NECKLACE. Coronation quality.

Was she too panicked to notice? Must've been. Anyhow, thinking about it has brought her heart rate down. She sets Benjamin on the rug, takes a few deep breaths.

There's A NOTE underneath the phone:

THIS MIGHT HELP YOU DECIDE.

PLATFORM 27 7:15 PM TONIGHT

She fondles the necklace, rereads the note, looks at Benjamin, looks again at all those emeralds.

Looks at that expensive telephone.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAHNHOF BERLIN: "THE ZOO STATION" - NIGHT

Berlin's main train yard, nicknamed for its nearness to the zoo. On a quiet night you can hear the animals.

Moving through the anxious crowd is Elli -- no bags, no Benjamin.

She stops at PLATFORM 27. Next departure is at 7:15. Destination: ROSTOCK.

She checks her watch, passes through the turnstile.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLATFORM 27 - NIGHT

It's choked with TRAVELLERS.

Elli pushes her way in.

Jostling, YELLING. Some kind of SCUFFLE nearby. A stray elbow knocks Elli to her knees.

TWO NAZI GOONS are hustling A PASSENGER off the platform.

Is it Geist? Elli gets to her feet, tries for a better view.

KNOTT (O.S.)
Where is Benjamin?

Elli spins.

Behind her, another man -- doesn't sound like Geist... but wait, it *is* Geist.

 GEIST
I said, where is your son? Your luggage?

 GRAIL
I can explain.

 GEIST
If you're not leaving, what are you doing here?

Elli reaches into her purse, pulls out the emerald necklace.

 GRAIL
Here. You'll need it. It's worth a fortune. Let's get you on that train.

GEIST'S BRAIN FLASHES TO:

EXT. GRAIL'S APARTMENTHAUS - NIGHT

Geist makes his escape across the rooftops -- exactly as remembered.

This time we linger, witness Elli TAP on her window glass, signal to Dempsey and Mack on the street below.

BACK TO PLATFORM 27:

 GEIST
The night of the robbery, was I supposed to die? Or am I supposed to die now?

It's beginning -- the low RUMBLE of steel wheels on steel tracks -- filling Geist's head, fogging his thoughts.

 GRAIL
You're very ill. You're imagining things.

(O.S.) A distant WHISTLE. The 7:15 to Rostock is on schedule.

GEIST

You mean one of us is hearing a train that isn't coming.

(O.S.) The whistle CRIES again.

GRAIL

You're sick. You need help. We must get you to Stockholm.

The concrete platform vibrates through Geist's shoes and up his spine -- a frozen finger tracing its way into his brain.

Geist's vision blurs.

GEIST

How can I get to Stockholm on a train that isn't coming?

The world distorts. Elli's features twist into something different, less pretty, more like Gips.

GEIST (CONT'D)

Who are you working for? Is this a set-up?

GRAIL

Don't talk crazy...

Movement in Geist's peripheral vision. Elli's too. It's another pair of Nazi ASSASSINS and they're headed this way.

Elli takes Geist's arm, leads him to the platform's edge.

The Assassins are closing in fast. So is the train.

Elli (or is it Gips?) says something -- yells it. Geist can't hear a word. The train is so loud his ears want to burst.

Everything's pushing in from all sides: Elli, the train, those two Nazis. No, not Nazis. Dempsey and Mack. But it can't be, they're dead.

Dizziness.

The platform vomits itself inside-out. BIRDS circling overhead explode into a MILLION BURNING EMBERS.

The SCREECH OF THE TRAIN WHEELS is deafening, but nothing compared to the ANIMAL SCREAMS coming from the zoo.

Pressure.

Geist can sense a pair of hands on his back. Ready to push.

If only Geist could think. But he can't, not with a thousand crooked nails being hammered into his skull.

And then, sharp and clear, A VOICE:

KNOTT (V.O.)
Incoming!

Geist jumps sideways.

Someone stumbles past him, almost topples off the platform.

Geist reaches out his hand, snags something:

The emerald necklace.

Holding the other end of it: Elli.

In fact, the necklace is the only thing keeping Elli on the platform. Her heels are off the ledge, and she's leaned back, way back over the track -- her free arm flailing for balance.

Her eyes meet Geist's.

The necklace clasp snaps; Elli tips backwards.

The train SCREAMS by.

BLACKNESS.

CRIES OF HORROR.

Geist opens his eyes, shuts them, opens them, shuts them. He can't make Elli appear.

There's RED GORE splashed on his sleeve and across his chest. On his lips, the iron taste of blood.

In his hand:

500 carats worth of emeralds.

Air brakes HISS. Railcars CLANG to a stop.

ONLOOKERS surge forward. Every face is a study in shock, except our two Nazi Assassins.

Calmly they surround Geist, lock his arms.

ASSASSIN
Come along, Herr Schmidt. You'll
miss your train.

They drag Geist back from the edge of the platform; he doesn't resist.

His eyes are blank, his jaw slack, the emerald necklace is still tight in his grip.

CUT TO:

EXT. BERLIN ZOO STATION - NIGHT

SIGNAL LIGHTS go green.

CUT TO:

EXT. GERMAN COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

The 7:15 snakes towards Rostock.

Of the TWENTY CARS that pass, only one compartment is unlit.

KNOTT (V.O.)

So once again Geist watched it get dark and asked himself a lot of meaningless questions: Was Elli murdered? Or was Elli trying to murder him? Or did she love him? Or did she love him *and* try to murder him? And what about her son? What's become of Benjamin?

FADE TO BLACK/FADE IN:

INT. KAROLINSKA HOSPITAL - STOCKHOLM - DAY

CEILING LIGHTS strobe by.

Geist is face-up on a gurney and the gurney is wheeling down a HALLWAY.

KNOTT (V.O.)

Well, we made it to Stockholm.
Barely.

CUT TO:

INT. SWEDISH IMMIGRATION STATION - A WEEK EARLIER

The PASSPORT CONTROLLER is giving Geist a thorough going-over. As well he should -- the name on Geist's passport is JAN SCHMIDT.

KNOTT (V.O.)
 Couldn't blame the Swedes for
 making a fuss. That name just
 didn't suit Geist.

ANOTHER OFFICIAL nips in, whispers in the Controller's ear.
 The Controller picks up the TELEPHONE:

CONTROLLER
 Ja... ja...

His voice quavers; whoever's on the line must be pretty
 intimidating. He listens for a moment, then hangs up.

CUT TO:

INT. ADOLF HITLER'S DESK TOP - DAY

A.H. sets his phone back in its cradle.

CUT TO:

INT. PASSPORT CONTROL, STOCKHOLM - DAY

The empty page in GEIST'S PASSPORT is stamped.

CONTROLLER
 Välkommen to Sweden, Herr Schmidt.

BACK TO THE HOSPITAL:

TWO ORDERLIES roll Geist onto his stomach.

KNOTT (V.O.)
 In about five minutes they'll open
 up Geist's skull.

Geist's head is secured in a CIRCULAR STEEL BRACE.

KNOTT (V.O.)
 What will they find inside? Me, or
 only a tumor, or am I only a tumor?
 One thing they won't find: the
 emerald necklace.

CUT TO:

DR. TENEVALL'S STOCKHOLM FLAT - EVENING

A DAZZLING SWEDISH FRAU tries on those dazzling emeralds.
DR. TENEVALL helps with the clasp.

KNOTT (V.O.)

The imminent Dr. Tenevall wanted those emeralds for a very special someone. Let's hope his wife never hears about it.

BACK TO THE HOSPITAL:

Measurements are ink-marked on Geist's shaved skull.

KNOTT (V.O.)

No matter what they find, this will be the end of me. No tears, please. It's what I want -- my pardon from the asylum.

Disinfectant is swabbed over the whole area.

KNOTT (V.O.)

As for Geist? He's going to make a full recovery. How can I be so sure? Because I saw it last night in one of Geist's dreams.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DREAM CIRCUS - SUNSET

BLUE TIGERS, GREEN ELEPHANTS, and PINK GIRAFFES twirl about.

KNOTT (V.O.)

It was set a dozen years in the future: 1946. Don't ask me how I know, I just know. Dreams are like that. Anyhow, Geist was at a circus -- no, a carnival -- and he was with a teenaged boy. And the boy's eyes were emerald green, same as Elli's. Don't remember much else except the boy had a number tattooed on his forearm. Can't imagine why because that ugly little tattoo was the only flaw in the picture. Everything else was poster perfect. Waving flags and blinking lights and animals -- animals everywhere.

(MORE)

KNOTT (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 And they were laughing. Geist and
 the boy, I mean, although maybe the
 animals were laughing too.

It's all here: White-haired Geist, GROWN-UP BENJAMIN, the
 SPINNING CAROUSEL OF ANIMALS, even the LAUGHTER.

KNOTT (V.O.)
 With all that happy happiness, the
 most happy part was the boy's
 voice, calling to Geist: "Papa," he
 said. "Papa."

Benjamin's voice isn't audible (not to us, at least) but his
 lips are mouthing the words.

KNOTT (V.O.)
 Hard to imagine anyone calling
 Geist Papa, but I hope the name
 sticks. It suits him.

The two meander down the MIDWAY, bathed in dream-light.

KNOTT (V.O.)
 Improbable ending, isn't it. Far-
 fetched, hopelessly romantic. Even
 crazy. But sometimes crazy things
 are the realest things there are.

The radiant sunshine grows bright...

FADE TO WHITE/FADE IN:

INT. KAROLINSKA HOSPITAL, STOCKHOLM - DAY

The glare recedes, revealing: A CROWDED OPERATING THEATRE.

DR. TENEVALL is armed with a SMALL ELECTRIC DRILL. Into the
 drill chuck he sets:

A TITANIUM DRILL BIT

He pulls the trigger; the drill motor winds to 7,000 RPM.

Dr. Tenevall applies forward pressure...

FADE TO BLACK:

(O.S.) A HIDEOUS SCREECH.

Not loud, but you can feel it in your skull...

TITLES OVER BLACK:

The circumstances of the Reichstag Fire remain a mystery.

Although there is no official tally from Operation Kolibri, the number of victims has been placed as high as 1,000.

Franz von Papen was not among them. In the final days of World War II Hitler personally awarded him the Knight's Cross. After the war, von Papen was tried at Nuremberg. He was acquitted.

At the same trial Herman Göring was convicted of crimes against humanity. The night before his scheduled execution he poisoned himself.

The fate of his beloved Cäsar is not known.

THE END.