

“NEVER A TIME TO DIE”

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EXT DAY DOWNTOWN

Fade up from black. PAN across a downtown-looking business area. CRANE SHOT DOWN to 'rasta' type bar and up to front door. (Possible intro credits over buildings and objects in downtown.) MUSIC: Something neutral to slightly up. Possibly ska.

INT BAR - DAY. HIPPIE FUNERAL.

POV coming through front door of bar. CAMERA WANDER through crowd - not obvious at first it is a funeral. Show bongos. Show beer. Show hippies. Show picture of loved one on bar. CAMERA come up on LINDA and JOE – a couple – obviously not very happy. MUSIC: Something PHISH-like.

LINDA

“This is so irreverent...”

JOE

“Hey, it’s what he would have wanted.”

LINDA

“But bongos...”

JOE

“So?”

INT OFFICE BREAK ROOM – DAY.

Linda and FRIEND talking. MUSIC: Office/elevator Musak...

LINDA

“It was a bad fight. We were at a funeral. But, it wasn’t a real funeral.”

FRIEND

“Huh?”

LINDA

“A real funeral would’ve been fine. In fact, that’s why I got so upset. It was in a bar. This guy’s favorite hippie bar.”

FRIEND

“A bar?”

LINDA

“Yeah, I guess you could say that it’s honoring his personality, but Geez, in a bar? It was so irreverent. And the hippies, his friends, were, um, hippies. It was ridiculous, death in this setting. I didn’t want to drink the free beer.”

FRIEND

“Hmmm...”

LINDA

“Some guy was teaching someone’s kid to play the bongos. What is up with bongos? Those are reserved for people who can’t play an instrument, right?”

FRIEND

“I played the bongos...”

INT BAR - DAY. HIPPIE FUNERAL.

HIPPIE DUDE showing YOUNG GIRL how to play bongos. MUSIC: PHISH-like.

BONGO HIPPIE DUDE

“grab the bongos between your legs”

YOUNG GIRL

“Like this?”

BONGO HIPPIE DUDE

“cool...”

INT OFFICE BREAK ROOM – DAY.

Linda and Friend talking. MUSIC: Office/elevator Musak...

LINDA

“Well, at least that was what I was always going to play with my friends in high school if we ever formed a band. Or the clarinet. Anyway, this hippie guy, goatee, longhair, and studs piercing eyebrows, nostrils, and lips, was teaching this 11-year-old how to play bongos.”

FRIEND

“At the funeral?”

LINDA

“This was not my environment, but I was hanging in there.
Being nice.”

FRIEND

“Yeah?”

LINDA

“That’s when the ‘poetry’ started. It was “beat” style. I’m
a poet. I’m a naturalist. I’m against what most people
believe is beat poetry. This kind of beat poetry was
ranting. Crescendoing of words that have momentum, but
that’s all they have going for them. They need to call it
music or an act rather than a poem. Her poem was a
stringing of words, a necklace, cut, with words tumbling
onto the floor. Simple spillage. Now that’s poetry. Ha.”

INT BAR - DAY. HIPPIE FUNERAL.

SKINNY POETRY GIRL is a blonde in a sarong top, army surplus pants, heavy black sandals. She is starting to read a poem.

Linda is smiling, but obviously under duress.

JOE

“Hang, man. It’s fine. I know you hate it but it’s this guy’s
funeral.”

SKINNY POETRY GIRL

“I, uh, dedicate this, uh, to, um, Fred”

“Free

Free floating

feel a forgotten feeling

no curiosity

no path

no time

all wonderful on my way

is it time to leave

is it all behind

broken dreams in time...”

LINDA

“Gack, that’s dreadful. Who told her...”

JOE

“You know, you’re a snob. A snob. This is Fred’s funeral and you can’t accept it... I don’t get you sometimes. And, you know, I wonder why we’re together, why I’m with you...”

INT OFFICE BREAK ROOM – DAY.

Linda and Friend talking. MUSIC: Office/elevator Musak...

LINDA

“Snob...”

(pause)

“He told me I was a snob and why was he with me anyway? My heart dropped into my stomach. The hippies and the death and now the boyfriend. I looked through the haze of the room. I looked at the picture of the dead hippie. The long stemmed rose sitting in a beer mug by the picture. God, clichés everywhere. I knew everything before I saw it: pot smoke, his favorite band: Phish, the drug overdose that killed him, the bad poetry, the bad instruments, sandals, incense, dreds. I was fading...”

FRIEND

“Damn...”

LINDA

“I had to get out.”

FRIEND

“Yeah?”

INT BAR - DAY. HIPPIE FUNERAL.

Skinny poetry girl is continuing her poetry.

Joe walks away shaking head.

Linda looking stricken, looks around and sees the back door. She grabs her sweater off of a chair by messy table and leaves out the back door. DOLLY SHOT following Linda.

EXT DAY - BAD SIDE OF TOWN

A very bright day – very blue sky.

Linda walks, breath showing in cold air. She walks down bad/derelict streets.

Linda pauses and sniffs the air. She turns corner and sees a coffee shop and smiles.
DOLLY and STEADICAM shots.

INT DAY – COFFEE SHOP.

GIOVANNI and COFFEE SHOP CLERK. The clerk is a skinny, choppy blond 18 year old who is too tall for his clothes. Giovanni is a coffee shop barista. Obviously, higher class than the clerk. He is a tall Italian, with his brown hair in ponytail and glasses taped at hinge.

LINDA
“a cappuccino, please”

GIOVANNI
“Una cappuccino pour la donna.”
(subtitle: a cappuccino for the lady)

LINDA
(Linda reacting to fake Italian)
“avete saputo che la vostra
capra ha balzato una perdita?”
(subtitle: “did you know your goat has sprung a leak?”)

GIOVANNI (LAUGHING)
“Quella è perdita, quella è la sua orina.”
(subtitle: “that is no leak, that is his piss.”)

Linda warming to his not being a fake and walks to a table and sits down to slowly sip her coffee – with a whimsical smile.

INT DAY – COFFEE SHOP.

While Linda is still nursing her coffee, Giovanni walks over

GIOVANNI
“May I, uh, sit with you?”

LINDA
“please...”

GIOVANNI
“my name is Giovanni”

TIME TRANSITION

Linda and Giovanni sitting comfortably.

LINDA
“I was just at this terrible funeral”

GIOVANNI
“ah, that sounds like not a good time...”

TIME TRANSITION

LINDA
“...and then this girl started doing dreadful poetry...”

Giovanni laughing...

TIME TRANSITION

Linda and Giovanni sitting near...

GIOVANNI
“do you like art?”

LINDA
“very much, my favorite...”

TIME TRANSITION

Linda and Giovanni sitting closer...

INT OFFICE BREAK ROOM – DAY.

Linda and Friend talking. MUSIC: Office/elevator Musak...

LINDA
“I thought he was a showoff, but it turned out he *was*
Italian.”

FRIEND
“was he hot?”

LINDA

“uh, he was pretty cute”

FRIEND

“lucky...”

LINDA

“We talked about Italy and its beauty. It’s easy to speak about the Italian haze, the food, the language. It’s like being in an exclusive club of knowing that kind of beauty exists.”

FRIEND

“I’ve never been.”

LINDA

“It was such a great distraction after the funeral. We talked about it. I think he understood most of what I was saying. But I’m sure he just wanted to get into my pants.”

FRIEND

“and...”

LINDA (RAISING EYEBROWS)

We talked. About easy stuff. It was so nice after the funeral debacle. We talked about traveling, art, museums, favorite paintings, ... You know what happens next.”

FRIEND (RAISING EYEBROWS)

”what?”

LINDA

“I compare”

FRIEND

“what?”

LINDA

“I compare what Giovanni might have and what Joe was definitely lacking. I create a savior and pit him against my evil boyfriend.”

FRIEND

“Joe, evil?”

LINDA

“I know its unfair but look at what I just came from? I was shaking off the rose in the beer glass, the damn bongos, and the hippie merriment over death. The more we spoke, the more *me* I was.”

FRIEND

“huh?”

LINDA

“Stupid. Lust is stupid like that. If you come from a place of pain, anything looks great. It just so happened that someone *great* was there. Double whammy. So we exchanged the proper info and I slunk back to the hippie bar.”

INT BAR - DAY. HIPPIE FUNERAL.

The hippie funeral is almost over – most every one gone. Linda walks in the back door. On Linda’s entrance, have dark silhouette of Linda against bright outside alley. Linda looking around, troubled. DOLLY SHOT or STEADCAM. Linda sees the bongo hippie.

LINDA

“uh, hi”

BONGO HIPPIE DUDE

“hey”

LINDA

“is the funeral over?”

BONGO HIPPIE DUDE

“hey man, it was Fred’s party – not a funeral”

LINDA

“right. Uh, do you know Joe?”

BONGO HIPPIE DUDE

“uh, the dude in the corduroy jacket? He left...”

LINDA

“is there a phone I could use somewhere?”

BONGO HIPPIE DUDE

“sure...”

Bongo hippie dude hands her a cell phone and Linda dials the phone.

LINDA

“hey Joe”

(Linda listening emotions playing across face.)

LINDA

“could you come back and pick me up?”

(Linda listening emotions playing across face getting angry)

LINDA

“just come and get me...”

INT OFFICE BREAK ROOM – DAY.

Linda and Friend talking. MUSIC: Office/elevator Musak...

LINDA

“I knew God put me back in this bar to punish my snobbiness. I was supposed to be humbled somehow. If anything, I was more convinced I would never be in a situation like this again. Not with Joe. Not with hippies. Not ever again...”

FRIEND

“What was it that really got to you?”

LINDA

“What irked me? I guess it to me back to Sunday school, wearing a bad, hand-me-down, red dress that showed my fat legs. The teacher was dragging on about some prophet and spiritual laws to live by. Half of the class was skinny, pimply, boys who didn’t know how to be. Any ounce of sexuality was drained or beat from them, any manhood, stolen, any confidence, re-directed to the heavens. I had to mentally doodle while cliché metaphors were thrown around about God and holding fast to something, the rod, the staff of life, your morals.”

FRIEND

“Sunday school was what got to you?”

LINDA

“No...”

I think it was me injecting myself into that hippie frame by the rose, into that dead man's box. Ugh. NO! Don't let me die and have my service in a bar."

FRIEND

"It made you think about your own death?"

LINDA

"Since I was ten, I wanted the Albinoni Adagio played at my funeral. I picture poets and friends, scattering my ashes in Northern California and playing the Adagio so that it invades the tallest tree, invades the lone fisherman. I want the Adagio to float up to God before my spirit, to tell him of great things to come."

FRIEND

"I get it – you want your funeral to be a big deal."

LINDA

"People will cry, not party. Because it will be sad and tragic and all that death is supposed to be. I want sobbing, because I will be sobbing in my grave. I will be sad that I'm dead. Because it is sad."

FRIEND

"But everybody dies – it's their time."

LINDA

"What is with this, it was his or her time?
It's never time to die.
There's always more to do
and never enough time to do it in.
What the hell do people mean about time to die?
I will be screaming from my coffin...
I'm missing a whole lot by dying, so that's sad.
None of this party, cheer up,
because she would want it that way.
Nope.
Not for me.
I want people to be sad."

INT DAY – COFFEE SHOP.

The shop is busy with customers – all trying looking cool, or trying to...

GIOVANNI
“Bella Donna.”

LINDA
“That’s sweet, but really...”

GIOVANNI
“Ah, but you are so bella, so beautiful.”

LINDA
“Well, this bella donna wants an espresso...”

GIOVANNI
“una espresso por ma bella donna”

TIME TRANSITION

Giovanni is sitting with Linda at a table. She is slowly sipping coffee.

GIOVANNI
“You know, you should go on date with Giovanni”

LINDA (LAUGHING)
“Why should I do that?”

GIOVANNI (LAUGHING)
“Giovanni is Italiano, I know how make bella donna Linda
very happy...”

TIME TRANSITION

GIOVANNI
“I need for cigarettes to go to 7-11.
You want to come along?”

LINDA
“Sure...”

TRANSITION TO CAR

Giovanni steals a kiss in the car. Linda reacts oddly.

GIOVANNI
”You know, I want take you to Italy someday. Show you
my home...”

LINDA

“I would love to see that. Where do you live in Italy?”

GIOVANNI

“We live... my family has owned land there for hundreds of years. I want to run the farm...”

INT OFFICE BREAK ROOM – DAY.

Linda and Friend talking. MUSIC: Office/elevator Musak...

LINDA

“He stole a kiss from me in the car, on the way to pick something up. Oh yeah, cigarettes at the 7-eleven.”

FRIEND

“I wish someone would kiss me no matter where we were going...”

LINDA

“Well, I didn’t like this as a first kiss. Kissing should be confined to Roman columns in parks, holding hands on beaches and fountains by the Champs Elysee. But his mouth owned my lips.”

FRIEND

“Whoa, big expectations...”

LINDA

“Not really, well sort of... But it struck me, why is he so anxious to kiss me – on an everyday errand? Where does his desperation lie? Or does he really like me?”

FRIEND

“He might love you...”

LINDA

“Maybe, maybe not. But it was exciting to think of a different me, without my lame boyfriend who thought I was a snob. But why does he like me? I’m kinda geeky, gawky and grisly. I mean, I’m bitchy about stuff and have a definite opinion about everything”

FRIEND

“So what next?”

LINDA

“Giovanni had mentioned that he owned land and how he wanted to run a farm, some pastoral existence in Italy. As far as I was concerned, pastoral is the only option in Italy.”

FRIEND

”sounds lovely”

LINDA

“I got so far as to have an image of me, with our Italian baby and the goats running around our cottage. Ha.”

FRIEND

“Ha?”

LINDA

“It would last a day. I know myself better than that. I know I need my car and my computer and my privacy. Goats?”

INT LINDA’S APARTMENT – DAY.

Linda comes in the door and goes to answering machine and hits play.

GIOVANNI

(on answering machine)

“Il mia Linda bella. Siete la luce di mattina.
Siete l'aumento della luna. I lungamente per toccarlo.
Per baciarli. Per tenerli in miei bracci - per caress.
Per rendervi miniera. Prego diami la gioia di amarli.
Vedali mercoledì prossimo. Arrivederci il mia amore.”
*(subtitle: “My beautiful Linda. You are the morning light.
You are the moon rise. I long to touch you. To kiss you.
To hold you in my arms - to caress you. To make you mine.
Please give me the joy of loving you. See you next
Wednesday. Goodbye my love”)*

Linda looking enthralled.

INT MUSIC STORE – DAY.

The store is busy with customers. MUSIC: Mixed cacophony

Linda and Joe are shopping, separately. Linda is picking out CDs and goes to the counter to buy.

JOE

“Hey, you didn’t wait for me...”

LINDA

“I found the CD’s I wanted...”

JOE

“But you didn’t wait for me so we could buy them together.
What if we had duplicates?”

LINDA

“What if we did?”

JOE

“You know, I don’t think you think of us as a couple.”

LINDA

“Just because I buy CDs on my own...”

INT DAY – COFFEE SHOP.

The shop is busy with customers. Linda is drinking coffee. Giovanni comes up to kiss Linda. They briefly kiss. Linda looks around a little nervously - guilty.

TRANSITION

Linda leaves coffee shop. Linda’s picture insert from her wallet/purse is on the table. SLOW ZOOM in on table and Giovanni picking up insert. Giovanni comes over and looks through it.

INT DAY – COFFEE SHOP.

Busy with customers.

GIOVANNI

“Belladonna...”

Giovanni comes up to kiss Linda. Linda pulls away.

LINDA

“What happened to my pictures?”

Giovanni shrugs his shoulders. Linda reacts.

GIOVANNI

“Okay. Okay. We talk.”

Giovanni brings a coffee.

TRANSITION

GIOVANNI

“I cut it hup. I cut Joe. You no need im.”

TRANSITION

GIOVANNI

“I was jealous. I know that you and ‘im are good not. You are more best with me. My ex-wife was like that one with me. She was malvagità, mean. She does not have wish for she and I to have children. This breaks my heart.”

Linda listens. Giovanni tries to kiss Linda. Linda pushes him away again

LINDA

“I’m sorry, I’ve got to go.”

Linda leaves coffee shop and Giovanni follows.

GIOVANNI

“What did I do?”

LINDA

“You cut Joe’s picture.”

Linda starts to walk away. Giovanni turns and pins her to the brick wall.

GIOVANNI

“You can’t leave me.

You too, you too can cut the picture of my wife,
if you have it.”

Giovanni’s fingernails dug into Linda’s wrists.

LINDA

“unghh”

Giovanni tries to kiss Linda.

LINDA
“I’m sorry Giovanni,”

Giovanni lets go of Linda’s wrist. Linda screams.

Giovanni is frightened and steps back. Linda runs to her car.

INT OFFICE BREAK ROOM – DAY.

Linda and Friend talking. MUSIC: Office/elevator Musak...

LINDA
“I went to Java King for the last time.”

FRIEND
“What happened?”

LINDA
“I left the insert to my wallet with all my photos in it at the coffee shop. When I came back to pick them up, I noticed the one of Joe was missing.”

FRIEND
“Missing?”

LINDA
“He had taken it and cut it up. That was the only picture of Joe I had in the orange shirt. I loved that picture. I loved that shirt.”

FRIEND
“and what about Joe?”

LINDA
“When I started to get nostalgic over that orange shirt, is when I realized that I could trust Joe. Do I think Joe is the perfect guy? No. But he’s hung with me for three years and that’s something.”

FRIEND
“That’s a big deal.”

LINDA

“I can’t run around reacting all my life. It’s too easy to marry an image, a perception of a person. Stick around long enough with anyone, and you’ll see the real, the ugly. You’ll get all kinds of real and ugly.”

LINDA

“Giovanni told me about his ex-wife, how mean she was to him, how she didn’t want children. Of course, ex-anyone does evil to everyone. This is the realm of black and white; this is the realm of perfect memory, re-inventing history. He didn’t want to let me go, but I left, and I’m not going back.”

EXT DAY IN DOWNTOWN AREA

MUSIC: Something mostly up. Possibly ska.

DOLLY SHOT OR STEADICAM of Linda. Linda passes the funeral bar.

Linda passes coffee shop. DOLLY SHOT of Linda. She averts her eyes and walks on. As Linda goes out of frame and the camera zooms in to the window on Giovanni.

LINDA VOICEOVER

“I think about love, death, life.
I think about the irreverence of it all.
The irreverence of love, of death, of life.
If I had it my way, people would be how they seem.
I wouldn’t be called a snob,
because I would always be right.
And we’d never have to sit through
a funeral we didn’t agree with.
And people would never say,
‘It was her time to die.’”