

SEDUCTION OF THE WILL

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FADE IN:

On glistening, sinuous strips of motion picture film.
Hundreds of strips, thousands, hang high from metal hooks.

OLD WOMAN (OFF CAMERA)

(German dialect)

Fade in: on an ancient cavern in the
Dolomites. Reveal a vast treasure of
brilliant crystals..

MOVE THROUGH the film strips to reveal the source of the
voice: an OLD WOMAN. She sits hunched over a film editing
bench. She turns the hand rewinds which projects a
FLICKERING BLUE LIGHT, and shadows of marionette climbers
appear scaling a dark precipice. The effect is surreal.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)

So alluring is their light, men try to
climb the sheer mountain-side to
possess it -- only to fall to their
death on the rocks below.

All eerie shadow climbers fall away except one.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)

Yet there is one who knows the secret
of the crystals: a girl! Guided by
their mysterious light she alone can
reach even the highest peak. Until one
midnight, the young girl meets on her
path a dark man.

The shadow girl struggles as the mountain quakes. It
envelops her tiny form as it becomes a colossal DARK MAN.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)

Soon, he would seduce her will. Use
her to fulfill his own destiny. Then
leave her, in the frozen mountains,
alone; with no light to guide her.

The black giant blots out the light with a lumbering Nazi
salute.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)

But how could this young girl -- how could anyone? -- know where the dark man, and the power of the blue light, would lead her?

The shadows transform into CONCENTRATION CAMP IMAGES.

EXT. CONCENTRATION CAMP ENTRANCE - LATE AFTERNOON

CLOSE on the CAPTAIN. He's an American Army officer, 30s, seeing the horror of Dachau for the first time. He walks through the unthinkable and fends off thankful, skeletal prisoners. He finds a middle-aged Army CAMERAMAN bent over a JEEP hood, retching.

THE CAPTAIN

When you're done, Private, I want you back in there. Shoot every foot of film you've got.

CAMERAMAN

Then what, sir?

THE CAPTAIN

Then get more.

CAMERAMAN

Why? You seen what they done in there --?

THE CAPTAIN

And I want the whole world to see. They'd have to, to believe it, and even then... well, what the hell are you waiting for, soldier: Christmas?

CAMERAMAN

They ain't going anywhere, sir.

The Cameraman snatches up his Bolex and leaves. The Captain turns to a young angry LIEUTENANT in the JEEP.

THE CAPTAIN

You OK, Lieutenant?

THE LIEUTENANT

No, sir, but I will be -- soon as we prove the Major wrong about the Nazis.

THE CAPTAIN

How's that?

THE LIEUTENANT

He's been bragging he'll hang more of the bastards than us.

THE CAPTAIN

(climbs into the Jeep)

Don't worry, we'll send our share to Nuremberg --

THE LIEUTENANT

(starts the Jeep)

But he got Goering, sir -- and Ubermann.

THE CAPTAIN

But we'll be able to say we got the truth out of "Hitler's honey".

They drive on, beginning a SERIES OF SHOTS: Their JEEP rolls through smoke past GERMAN CIVILIANS herded into the camp. They pass bombed-out buildings, dead cattle, the bloated corpse of a German soldier, toward the green hills beyond. The Jeep pulls up to a large chalet. TEXT:

"The following took place in May, 1945."

INT. RIEFENSTAHL'S HOME - DUSK

A SILHOUETTE stares at the fire. KNOCKING startles her.

INT. RIEFENSTHAL'S HOME, FRONT DOOR

A heavy door opens. It reveals the CAPTAIN and LIEUTENANT.

RIEFENSTAHL (O.C.)

Ja?

THE LIEUTENANT

Wir suchen Leni Riefenstahl.

RIEFENSTAHL (O.C.)
Amerikaner? Welcome! I am Leni
 Riefenstahl.

They compare her to their file PHOTO. The war years have not
 been kind to the once proud, beautiful RIEFENSTAHL, 43.

RIEFENSTAHL (CONT'D)
 I've not been well.

THE CAPTAIN
 Sorry to hear that, ma'am. I'm Captain
 Dietz, this is Lieutenant Seligman. We're
 with the Seventh Army Interrogation Center.

THE LIEUTENANT
 We've got questions.

RIEFENSTAHL
 Certainly. Won't you come in?

INT. RIEFENSTAHL'S HOME

They enter a great fire-lit room untouched by war. The
 CAPTAIN is solid, good looking, with an open manner. His
 young LIEUTENANT is curt, angular, all business. He slaps
 down a thick case file.

RIEFENSTAHL
 Please, sit. Would you like coffee?

THE LIEUTENANT
 Coffee? You know why we're here?

RIEFENSTAHL
 No. Should I?

THE LIEUTENANT
 She's kidding, right?

THE CAPTAIN
 This is a preliminary interview --

RIEFENSTAHL
 Interview: for the newspapers?

THE CAPTAIN

No, we're here to talk about your political activities.

RIEFENSTAHL

Politics? I've never been interested in such things.

THE CAPTAIN

True enough. Your record does show you were not a member of the Party --

THE LIEUTENANT

But you sure as hell worked for them.

RIEFENSTAHL

I worked for myself, always --

THE LIEUTENANT

Producing propaganda films.

RIEFENSTAHL

Propaganda! I never make such films. I am an artist who made some documentaries.

THE LIEUTENANT

Don't be so modest. You're famous the world over -- for glorifying the Nazis.

RIEFENSTAHL

(a beat)

I only filmed what happened. What I saw, what I heard, what I felt: what everyone in Germany felt --

THE LIEUTENANT

Not everyone.

RIEFENSTAHL

What is this about?

THE CAPTAIN

Lots of accusations are being made these days in Germany. Some true, and some may as well be --

RIEFENSTAHL

Of what could I be accused?

THE LIEUTENANT

You deny you had a "special relationship" with Hitler?

RIEFENSTAHL

He liked my work --

THE LIEUTENANT

And that you worked hand-in-hand with Hess, Ubermann, Goebbels --?

RIEFENSTAHL

With the Mouse Doctor? Ha!

THE CAPTAIN

We have photos of you with these men.

THE LIEUTENANT

(holds up photos)

At parties, official functions; you even had Nazis over for tea.

RIEFENSTAHL

It was for my work --

THE LIEUTENANT

And what kind of work was this?

(tosses out a photo)

That is you, isn't it: in military uniform?

INSERT an image of Leni in *Wermacht* uniform, staring.

THE LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)

Taken first week of the war, September 1939, while you were in Konski, little town in Poland. Same day dozens of civilians were lined up and butchered by the SS.

She stares at the picture on the table; then pushes it away.

RIEFENSTAHL

Like I said, it was for my work.

THE LIEUTENANT

And work makes you free: *Arbeit Macht
Frei*. Like at Dachau.

RIEFENSTAHL

I don't understand.

THE LIEUTENANT

Another German who's never heard of
concentration camps --

THE CAPTAIN

Lieutenant...

RIEFENSTAHL

Camps? Yes, I've heard talk, but never
seen one --

THE LIEUTENANT

Of course not: no German's ever seen
one. But that smell --

THE CAPTAIN

Lieutenant --

THE LIEUTENANT

(overlapping)

It'd be enough to make any decent
person wretch her Goddamned --

THE CAPTAIN

(overlapping)

Lieutenant!

A beat. He gets up and walks away.

THE CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Sorry. My young colleague has seen
some nasty things --

RIEFENSTAHL

Who hasn't? Now I demand to know why
you are here!

THE CAPTAIN

To learn the truth. You see, we're not really soldiers. The guns and such are just for show.

RIEFENSTAHL

What are you then?

THE CAPTAIN

Lawyers.

RIEFENSTAHL

O Gott.

THE CAPTAIN

I know. But Lieutenant Seligman is fresh out of law school --

RIEFENSTAHL

And you are a judge?

THE CAPTAIN

No, but I do have my own practice --

RIEFENSTAHL

Of course.

THE CAPTAIN

Over Burkheimer's feed store back in Evansville, Indiana. So there's no call to be intimidated. All I want is to get the facts and make sure innocent Germans aren't hurt along with the guilty. *Gut, ja?* But I can't do that, Leni, without your help.

RIEFENSTAHL

(a beat)

All right, Captain Dietz: for you.

THE CAPTAIN

Take it from the top, Lieutenant.

The pissed young man sits and flips open the file.

THE LIEUTENANT

Helene Berta Amalie Riefenstahl. Born
in Berlin, 1898 --

RIEFENSTAHL

1902 --

THE LIEUTENANT

To a well-off family; expensive schooling;
you were on Easy Street. All you had to
do was snag a rich husband and pop out
some brats --

THE CAPTAIN

But you didn't. Why not?

RIEFENSTAHL

Because I had my own dreams, Captain.

INSERT: OLD HOME MOVIES feature LITTLE LENI, dancing for
her MOTHER and FATHER in their manse in old Berlin.

RIEFENSTAHL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Right from the start, everyone thought
I lived in a dream world. And they
were right. Mother was understanding.
Father was Prussian. He insisted I
learn to be pragmatic. So I did: and
took dance lessons behind his back --
until he found out. His reaction
surprised me:

In his study, Father lectures a silhouetted YOUNG LENI.

RIEFENSTAHL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

"If you want to dance so much, you will
take lessons openly! At the best dance
school in Berlin -- where you will
learn you have no talent whatsoever!"
Then I surprised him.

Silhouetted Young Leni dances in the spotlight and
receives an ovation.

RIEFENSTAHL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And became the most celebrated dancer
in all Europe -- AHH!

Riefenstahl, in an identical dancer's pose, grabs her side and grows faint. The Captain helps her sit back down.

RIEFENSTAHL (CONT'D)

Thank you, Captain. My condition, it has puzzled even the finest doctors in the Reich -- in Germany.

THE LIEUTENANT

Mean old Daddy a member of the Party, too?

RIEFENSTAHL

Don't be foolish. He liked their ideas, but the people: "Too low to clean my riding boots!"

THE CAPTAIN

But he endorsed their philosophy?

RIEFENSTAHL

Like many others.

THE LIEUTENANT

Maybe we should go see him next?

RIEFENSTAHL

I hope you do.

THE LIEUTENANT

Where is he?

RIEFENSTAHL

Dead.

THE CAPTAIN

(a beat)

I understand you were recently married?

RIEFENSTAHL

Yes.

THE CAPTAIN

Good for you; and the lucky gentleman.

THE LIEUTENANT

A Major in the *Wermacht*: Where's your new hubby now?

RIEFENSTAHL

POW camp, detention center maybe, I wish I knew.

(to the Captain)

Perhaps you can help me find him?

THE CAPTAIN

Certainly: the minute we're done.

THE LIEUTENANT

He also bought in to the Third Reich?

RIEFENSTAHL

He believed in his country. Like you?

THE CAPTAIN

And what about you: An intelligent, well-bred young woman; what did you believe in?

RIEFENSTAHL

My work, my films --

THE CAPTAIN

Now that I don't believe.

RIEFENSTAHL

Why not? I am an artist!

THE CAPTAIN

Exactly! And how does a cultured, upper crust dancer like yourself wind up in the *schmutzig* movie business?

RIEFENSTAHL

Why, Captain, you sound just like my friends...

TRANSITION: from the ravaged Riefenstahl by the fire to a young vibrant LENI, 24. She sashays through a bustling pre-war Berlin flower market.

NOTE: While the scenes with RIEFENSTAHL feel gritty and real, the flashbacks featuring LENI are romanticized in a way to indicate that they are her recollections. Or lies.

INT. CAFE - AFTERNOON

LENI bounds into a busy, smoky cafe, and joins a pair of young Bohemian-types at a table: BELA and MANNY.

MANNY

Well if it isn't Leni Riefenstahl:
soon-to-be movie actress --?

BELA

"Movie actress": Isn't that a contradiction?

LENI

You two are terrible!

BELA

Get used to it, Leni --

MANNY

You are crossing the line.

LENI

Never knew you were such snobs!
Going to eat that?
(snatches from Manny's plate)

BELA

What will you tell the Old Man?

LENI

That I need a rest from dancing.

MANNY

Think it'll work?

LENI

Like a charm. You men are all pushovers.
Besides, it happens to be true --

MANNY

Here we go --

LENI

I'm wrecked! My feet are killing me, my
ankles. You should see my knees --

BELA

You name the place --

LENI

But you writers: clickety-clack --!

BELA

I'll have you know I broke a nail the other day --

LENI

So you have no idea how hard it is --

MANNY

Being a famous dancer, making money hand over fist --

BELA

Doing what you love. It's a horrible life!

LENI

Of course not: It's just that I want something -- bigger than life! Bigger than a rehearsal room, anyway --

MANNY

You'd change careers -- like that? And give up everything --

BELA

For bourgeois commercial crap: I need a drink!

(exits)

MANNY

Just remember: It's an industry. It's not about art.

LENI

Not yet.

MANNY

You're going to change the movie business? Even you can't be that naive.

LENI

Can't blame a girl for dreaming.

MANNY

Having a dream's fine; living in one's
another story --

LENI

Why are you so upset?

MANNY

Because I -- guess I'm worried about you.

LENI

Ah, Manny, I'll be fine! "Life falls
into place when one does what's right."

MANNY

Lord, I hate Nietzsche!

LENI

Actually, that's me.

She dazzles with a smile. Bela pops a champagne cork.

LENI

Bela, that's so sweet.

BELA

Don't mention it: I put it on your tab.

MANNY

The price of movie stardom!

LENI

Don't be silly. I'm not the star!

(checks Manny's watch)

Oh! Got to run!

BELA

Not the --?

LENI

At least I don't think so. Haven't met
the director yet! But I imagine he'll
be starting a new movie soon, somewhere
in the mountains, and he will need me.
I know it!

She glides through the café and disappears into the dazzling sunshine.

DR. FANCK (V.O.)

No: no woman had what she had.

The sunshine fades to reveal...

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

A dark, brooding man in a harsh pool of light: DR. FANCK.

DR. FANCK (CONT'D)

Balls, for one: To show up on the mountain out of nowhere, thinking I'd need her.

THE CAPTAIN (O.C.)

And was she right?

DR. FANCK

Yes. She was a natural on-camera -- and off -- for all the good it did her in the long run.

A HOWLING WIND builds.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - MORNING

High on a windy, snowy precipice, DR. FANCK checks his black notebook and its meticulous storyboards. LENI looks out over the spectacular vista. Both are in mountain climbing gear.

DR. FANCK

So: acclimating, are we?

LENI

I feel right at home up here.

DR. FANCK

Concerned about the ice wall scene?

LENI

No: "anything for the shot"!

DR. FANCK
You learn quickly.

LENI
I have a great teacher.

She smiles. Dr. Fanck nearly melts.

SCHUENEBERG (V.O.)
That tease had Fanck wrapped up tight.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

A light fades up on a coarse and sullen man: SCHUENEBERG.

THE CAPTAIN
And you didn't like it?

SCHUENEBERG
Damn right: a broad up there?
Somebody was bound to get hurt.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - MORNING

LENI jumps a deep ice crevasse. She lands and teeters on the edge. HANS pulls her to safety. He is tall, handsome, and there's a definite spark between them when he flips up his sun goggles and gives her a look

HANS
What did I tell you?

LENI
"Beware avalanche, crevasse, and Dr. Fanck --"

HANS
And not in that order: Director's with a crush can be very --

LENI
Dangerous: Any more advice I don't need?

HANS
Catch the next train back to Berlin.

LENI

But if I left now, how would I learn
your secret: that thing you do on
film, making the sky look so dark and
dreamlike!

He takes out a pair of glass filters and holds them up.

HANS

Oh that. It's all about fooling
people: you do it by batting your
eyes; I use colored glass.

Leni looks through the filters, her face next to his.

LENI

I'm afraid I have so much to learn.

HANS

I don't believe you... are afraid of
anything.

A beat. They kiss in the snowfall. Dr. Fanck glares from
across the chasm. SCHUENEBERG sidles up.

SCHUENEBERG

Told you she was trouble. Mind you, I
wouldn't touch her with a ten foot boom
-- unless she was taunting me;
undermining me with the men. Then I'd
sure as hell show her who was boss.

Leni giggles as Hans ties a rope around her waist. Dr.
Fanck nears.

DR. FANCK

We're losing the light! Man your camera!

HANS

Remember: I warned you.

Hans leaves. Dr. Fanck re-ties the rope around her
waist his way.

LENI

About this scene, I was thinking --

DR. FANCK
Just do as you're told.

LENI
But, well, yesterday we did it twenty
times and --

DR. FANCK
And we'll do it twenty more, if I say so!

Dr. Fanck yanks the rope tight around her waist.

DR. FANCK (CONT'D)
You're a quick learner, so learn this:
on any great endeavor, there can only
be one director, one vision, one will...

He goes to kiss her. She turns away. A beat. He steps
back and walks away.

DR. FANCK (CONT'D)
Action!

MONTAGE: Leni is hauled up a five storey ice wall. Hans
films as Dr. Fanck demands take after take. Leni is beat
but not beaten. So he calls for a final take and she is
hauled up yet again.

As she nears the top, Dr. Fanck signals Schueneberg. He
pushes in a plunger. It sets off an EXPLOSION. This
triggers an avalanche above Leni. It crashes down. She
struggles as the huge wave of ice and snow inundates her.
Hans stops filming.

FANCK
I didn't say "cut"!

Schueneberg grins as he pulls the rope, hand over hand. He
drags Leni face first over the icy ledge. She lies limp as
a doll at his feet. He leans in close.

SCHUENEBERG
What'd you say: Anything for the shot?

He laughs, drops the rope and walks away. CLOSE on Leni's
raw, wet face.

RIEFENSTAHL (V.O.)
 I made a vow that day: Never again
 would I let this happen to me.

INT. RIEFENSTAHL'S HOME - EVENING

RIEFENSTAHL stares into the fire.

RIEFENSTAHL
 Never would I be under the thumb of some
 man; any man. From then on, no matter
 what, I would be the one in control.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

DR. FANCK sits beneath the harsh light.

DR. FANCK (CONT'D)
 That was her scheme all along! She was
 a born opportunist. Her ambition
 always came first.

HANS.

HANS
 She was an artist. Her art came first.

SCHUENEBERG.

SCHUENEBERG
 Shit, she was an actress. She always
 came first.

INT. RIEFENSTAHL'S HOME - EVENING

The CAPTAIN studies RIEFENSTAHL as the LIEUTENANT holds up
 a document.

THE LIEUTENANT
 With friends like these, who needs enemies?

RIEFENSTAHL
 For once, we agree.

THE CAPTAIN

And every one has implicated you in Nazi activities.

RIEFENSTAHL

None of it is true.

THE LIEUTENANT

You're saying they're all lying?

RIEFENSTAHL

I am saying they are all jealous. Because I dared to have ambitions equal to theirs, they came to resent me. Because I pursue my dreams with the same zeal, they lie to hurt me. Because I have to use my skills as a woman to succeed, they envy me. So be it. I am guilty -- of being hated by petty and vindictive men.

THE CAPTAIN

You really think they'd go that far -- just to hurt you?

HENRY (V.O.)

I wouldn't be surprised.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

HENRY, a haggard young man, sits in the harsh light.

HENRY (CONT'D)

She was breaking all the rules and most men in the business hated her for it.

THE CAPTAIN

But not you?

HENRY

I was still in school.

EXT. DOLOMITES VILLAGE - MORNING

HENRY marches with his backpack up a dusty mountain road past goats and stone huts.

HENRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

To film students like me, Leni Riefenstahl was a hero: ringing in a bright new era of equality! What can I say? I was young.

A PEASANT nears. He wears a big hat and a tattered cloak caked with dust, and carries a heavy satchel.

HENRY

Morning! Wonder if you can help me?
I'm looking for a film company up here?
They're shooting a movie? You know...
(mimes cranking)
movies?

A SECOND PEASANT nears, just as dirty, carrying crates.

HENRY (CONT'D)

I read all about them. It's a different kind of movie, an art film, like nothing ever... you folks French or something?

LOCAL PEASANT

Clothes like rags? Live in shacks?
Carry big loads on their backs like jackasses?

HENRY

Sounds like them all right!

The LOCAL PEASANT takes off his hat. It's HANS.

HANS

And you came all this way on the off chance we might need you? Remind you of anybody?

Hans lifts the brim of the SECOND PEASANT: LENI.

LENI

Shut up. What's your name, kid?

HENRY

Henry.

LENI

Film experience?

HENRY

I've seen all your movies a dozen times!

A beat. They toss him their heavy satchels.

HENRY

Thank you! You won't be sorry.

HANS

But you will. The days are long and the money's short --

HENRY

I'll work for nothing!

HANS

How'd you guess?

LENI

But it's worth it.
(looks through filters)
We'll wait here.

HENRY

Right, wait.
(a couple of beats)
For what?

LENI

The right clouds, perfect light:
whatever it takes to get the shot.

HANS

I told you, you won't get any shot if
you put both of those filters in --

LENI

It'll work.

HANS

You're going to command the laws of physics like you do the crew --?

LENI

It'll work.
(hands him both filters)

HANS

You're the director.

LENI

Like I said, kid; whatever it takes.

HENRY (V.O.)

Sure, she could be hard. Like most directors.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

HENRY sits in the harsh light.

HENRY (CONT'D)

She knew what she wanted and wouldn't quit until she got it. But she could also be generous. Taught me my trade, helped me during the war; she was a loyal friend.

The CAPTAIN and LIETENANT sit opposite the young man.

THE LIEUTENANT

And how loyal was she to her Nazi friends -- like Ernst Ubermann?

The Lieutenant holds up a photo of a handsome, fair-haired man in a *Luftwaffe* uniform.

HENRY

Ubermann? I-I know they worked together once or twice --

THE LIEUTENANT

Come on. She was like *that* with the guy who planned the blitz on London.

HENRY
I wouldn't know.

THE CAPTAIN
But as her loyal friend, you'd tell us if
you did, right?

UBERMANN (V.O.)
Must say I'm honored by your interest.

INT. DOLOMITES CABIN - EVENING

UBERMANN sits on the plank floor in the light of a rustic
fireplace. HENRY does dishes in a copper boiler.

HENRY
The honor's ours, sir! Only von
Richthofen shot down more planes than
you, Major Ubermann!

UBERMANN
He was my boss. Didn't want to be a
show-off.

HANS
Then what are you doing here?

HANS sets up a movie projector on a wooden bench.

UBERMANN
All Leni's idea, old boy: Come stay at
our luxury chalet in the mountains
complete with gourmet meals!

LENI sits by the fire with a bottle and a pair of tin cups.

LENI
Sorry. First time I've cooked!

UBERMANN
Hard getting used to a new kitchen --

HANS
She means in her life.

She flips open a black notebook to a detailed storyboard.

LENI

Anything for the shot! And this one just has to have the world's greatest pilot; filmed by the world's greatest cameraman!

UBERMANN

See how persuasive?

HANS

Tell me about it.

UBERMANN

To Leni's dream world!

Ubermann picks up a cup, drinks and spits it out.

LENI

Sorry. Poor artists drink poor wine.

He reaches into his loden jacket and produces a flask.

UBERMANN

Easily remedied.

LENI

Not by a woman doing her first film.

HANS

Even Leni couldn't convince more backers.

UBERMANN

Because she hasn't met the right people; but I have. Men with money, influence; they could let you make films the way you should be making them.

(offers the flask)

LENI

No, thanks: I like doing things my way.

UBERMANN

Naturally, my dear, but don't you see: you can have it both ways? But it will take something more than mere talent.

LENI

And that is?

UBERMANN

Pragmatism.

LENI

O Lord -- now you sound like my father!

UBERMANN

How do you think I've gotten to where I am: skill alone? Mark my words: being pragmatic will prove useful in tomorrow's Germany. And I sense, deep down, you are quite the pragmatist.

HANS

Amen to that, comrade.

(finishes with the projector)

So here's all your footage with the two filters. Just remember I warned you.

He flicks a switch. A surreal mountain scene appears on the rustic wall; clouds and peaks and Leni's tiny form climbing to the top against a supernatural sky.

HENRY

Boy, Hans, I knew you were good but...

UBERMANN

It is a vision! How in the world did you achieve such an effect?

HANS

By doing what the director told me to.

Leni hugs her black notebook to her breast, transfixed.

THE CAPTAIN (V.O.)

And that was the film that started it all?
About the girl, the mountain, the crystals?

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

DR. FANCK sits in the harsh light.

DR. FANCK

DAS BLAU LICHT: THE BLUE LIGHT. It
couldn't compare to my films, of course.

MONTAGE: As THE BLUE LIGHT's lead character, Leni climbs,
leaps, and overacts high up in the moonlit Dolomites.

DR. FANCK (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But the mystics out there, those who
believed nature had secret powers, and
that certain people, certain races, shared
those powers -- they would swallow it
whole: along with the girl who made it.

INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT

MOVE DOWN from a glittering chandelier to LENI, in a
sparkling ball gown. She acknowledges APPLAUSE from a
hundred GUESTS as she waltzes in the arms of UBERMANN.

UBERMANN

He's on the front page of every paper
and you've never heard of him? Good
Lord, Leni!

LENI

I've been busy working!

UBERMANN

Him, too: for the people; peace and
prosperity; to make Germany great again.
See, like you, he's a dreamer. And a huge
fan: loves your new film! So I thought,
just maybe, you'd like to meet him?

LENI

The savior of our country: I might be
able to squeeze him in.

They laugh and dance, oblivious to a SMALL TWISTED MAN
silhouetted in the shadows. He turns and limps away.

THE LIEUTENANT (V.O.)

So you were ready to jump right into
bed with him -- along with everybody
else here.

INT. RIEFENSTAHL'S HOME - EVENING

RIEFENSTAHL sits across from the LIEUTENANT and CAPTAIN.

RIEFENSTAHL

Have you any idea how much things had changed while I was away? All around me I saw people in misery: men in bread lines, children begging. The German people needed a hero -- as you can well imagine, Captain.

THE CAPTAIN

And so you too were drawn in by his image?

DISTANT CHEERING BUILDS.

RIEFENSTAHL

With a face like that? I just couldn't see the appeal. But I could hear it...

INT. BALLROOM/RALLY - NIGHT

Like in a dream, LENI and UBERMANN are swept up by the MUSIC and a CHEERING THRONG and find themselves in the midst of a wild-eyed political rally. The music turns from a waltz to adamant martial drumming.

Myriad faces surround Leni, focused on a single point: a DARK MAN on a distant stage. Flanked by banners and torches, he makes grand, violent gestures. The music peaks. The crowd salutes and chants HEIL! HEIL! Leni is enthralled.

THE LIEUTENANT (V.O.)

"I must confess that I was so impressed by you and the enthusiasm of the spectators that I would like to meet you personally."

INT. RIEFENSTAHL'S HOME - EVENING

The LIEUTENANT waves a copy of a telegram in front of RIEFENSTAHL while the CAPTAIN observes.

THE LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)
 "Cordially, Leni Riefenstahl." Didn't
 waste any time, did you? And his
 racism: you liked that, too --?

RIEFENSTAHL
 Of course not!

THE CAPTAIN
 But you knew about it, of course. I mean
 he spoke openly enough about "the Jewish
 problem".

RIEFENSTAHL
 As did all the politicians. But there
 was so much good in what he was saying
 that even my Jewish friends weren't
 sure what to think.

BELA (V.O.)
 Never thought we'd live to see the day.

INT. CAFÉ - NIGHT

Around a table, HANS and HENRY page through LENI's careful
 storyboards. MANNY tucks a silk square into his jacket's
 breast pocket. BELA fills his wine glass to the brim.

BELA (CONT'D)
 Our little girl is growing up.

LENI
 I can't go to a political rally?

MANNY
 Actresses have bigger concerns!

BELA
 Hair, makeup, leading men --

LENI
 It's hard work! Tell them!

HENRY
 Leni is always wrecked --

HANS

From all the "persuading".

LENI

Put "Fire Hans" on the checklist.

BELA

So you going out with him?

He puts a finger under his nose and salutes.

LENI

Only if Clark Gable's busy: Come on, it was an invitation to meet -- not a marriage proposal.

MANNY

You're considering going?

LENI

Why not? He sounds different.

HANS

Got to admit he gives a good speech.

MANNY

He's clever, all right -- and dangerous. You've heard his message.

BELA

(eats off Manny's plate)

Jews are monsters. The usual campaign rhetoric. It'll be forgotten the minute he's Chancellor.

MANNY

(grabs Bela's wrist)

And what if you're wrong?

(to Hans)

At least we know where you stand, comrade.

HANS

You kidding: his thugs hit Communist headquarters again last night. And yet the average worker loves him --

HENRY

Because he wants to help poor people --

MANNY

You mean "pure" people.

BELA

And how will we know what he means if Leni doesn't go? Come on: who always says "Things fall into place" or whatever? See what he's really like.

MOVE IN on Leni. GULLS CRY.

EXT. BALTIC BEACH - NIGHT

WAVES CRASH. A beam of BLUE LIGHT searches the thick fog.

HITLER (O.C.)

I found THE BLUE LIGHT magical.
Spiritual. A totally original work.

HITLER emerges from the mist. He is average, in a typical business suit while LENI looks every inch a movie star.

LENI

Thank you. Hard to believe you have time for movies.

HITLER

I've made time for yours.

LENI

Really? Which ones?

HITLER

All of them: such lyricism. Believe me I could go on and on.

LENI

Please do.

HITLER

Well, then... your acting is, ah, fresh as an Alpine forest.

LENI

Go on.

HITLER

Up on the screen you represent beauty --

LENI

Yes?

HITLER

Feminine vigor, which I find rare and desirable: and the primal power of nature.

LENI

I do tend toward the romantic.

HITLER

As do I: such a Germanic sensibility. I myself am an artist: a painter --

LENI

Really?

HITLER

But I had to give it up: for the Cause. Still, I wanted so much to be as you are. I sense in your work a kindred spirit. Strange, and beautiful, how art connects human souls...

He stops and looks into her eyes. He pulls her close. She hesitates; an awkward moment. He turns away.

HITLER (CONT'D)

Sorry -- it's my work. Destiny is a jealous mistress. And I must subjugate my will to her for the greater good. But perhaps one day you'll do something else for me; for our movement?

LENI

But I don't know anything about politics and the people are all so boring --

He rounds on her. A beat.

HITLER

There, you see? That's why the people love you. Why, after years of deceit and filth, they are finally turning back to those things that are uniquely German; qualities that you embody and that I and my party embrace; and that will soon become the lifeblood of a new nation: destined to shine like a beacon of strength and purity for a hundred generations!

LENI

You... you really believe that can happen?

HITLER

We will make it happen.

GULLS CRY. They walk on.

RIEFENSTAHL (V.O.)

And it was from then on that he would not leave me alone.

THE LIEUTENANT (V.O.)

Hitler.

Another figure limps out of the fog: the small twisted man from the ball -- JOSEPH GOEBBELS.

RIEFENSTAHL

No, no -- Goebbels: his loyal little Mouse Doctor.

INT. RIEFENSTHAL'S HOME - EVENING

RIEFENSTAHL pokes the fire logs with an iron.

RIEFENSTAHL

Calling constantly, then just showing up at work, at my apartment, trying to "help my career" -- like I needed help from a pompous little cripple.

KNOCKING on a door.

INT. LENI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The door opens to reveal GOEBBELS. The little man bears a small book. LENI draws her robe closed.

LENI

Doctor, to what do I owe this surprise?

GOEBBELS

I thought you might appreciate this.

LENI

MEIN KAMPF? Oh how nice, you signed it: it's a perfect complement to my first edition inscribed by the author.

GOEBBELS

I see. So you love him?

LENI

Doctor!

GOEBBELS

It's all right: I'm not ashamed to say I love him -- and you.

LENI

Me? Dr. Goebbels, really --

GOEBBELS

I waited outside many a premiere, in the cold, the rain, year after year, just to glimpse you in the flesh --

He reaches for her. She blocks this. He kneels.

GOEBBELS (CONT'D)

Please, I have to have you. And I'll do whatever it takes --

LENI

You have a wife --!

GOEBBELS

And power, influence! I can help you realize your dream: if only you'll let me realize mine.

A beat. She bursts into laughter.

LENI

Sorry, I -- well, just pictured you
and me together and... some dreams
just aren't meant to be.

She hands him the book and shuts the door in his face.

INT. RIEFENSTAHL'S HOME - EVENING

The LIEUTENANT and the CAPTAIN sit with RIEFENSTAHL.

THE LIEUTENANT

Ever meet a guy who didn't come on to you?

RIEFENSTAHL

Just two, Lieutenant, but the night is
still young, yes?

(a beat; laughs)

Better tell the boy it's a joke, Captain.

The Lieutenant bridles.

THE CAPTAIN

I could go for some coffee -- if that
offer still stands?

RIEFENSTAHL

Certainly.

THE CAPTAIN

Please: allow my Lieutenant.

THE LIEUTENANT

(a beat)

Yes, sir.

(leaves)

RIEFENSTAHL

Cookies are in the cupboard on the left!

THE CAPTAIN

You paint a very different picture of
Hitler.

RIEFENSTAHL

He was average at best. And in many ways, he wasn't half the man you...

(shy smile)

But then there were those times when he became bigger than life.

THE CAPTAIN

Like you: in the movies.

RIEFENSTAHL

You've seen my work?

THE CAPTAIN

Every Saturday night at the public library, Mrs. Cannstatter would show a German movie -
- and yours always caught my eye.

RIEFENSTAHL

Which is your favorite?

THE CAPTAIN

How could I choose?

RIEFENSTAHL

I know! But I enjoyed making SOS ICEBERG because it had a Hollywood crew. They were so friendly; I thought all Americans were -- until I met your Lieutenant.

THE CAPTAIN

The war has had its effect.

RIEFENSTAHL

Don't I know it! Finding film stock has been like pulling teeth! Still, you have maintained your dignity, Captain. It must be the German in you. I imagine you have fine-looking children.

THE CAPTAIN

As a matter of fact...

He pulls a snapshot from his shirt pocket and hands it to her.

RIEFENSTAHL

Two daughters: how beautiful. I was this age when I first danced in Berlin.

THE CAPTAIN

And you: no children?

RIEFENSTAHL

I couldn't: because of my work.

(flips the snapshot)

Ah, and this is your wife? She'd fit right in here, *ja*? You must miss her so.

THE CAPTAIN

I do. She died two years ago.

RIEFENSTAHL

No. Captain, *Ich bin so traurig...*

She touches his hand. The LIEUTENANT sees this as he returns with a tray of coffee and cookies.

THE LIEUTENANT

We've been through whole towns with less sugar.

RIEFENSTAHL

I like my coffee sweet.

Riefenstahl hands the snapshot back to the Captain.

THE LIEUTENANT

Can we continue: I mean if it's not too big an interruption?

THE CAPTAIN

So what'd you do? About Goebbels, I mean.

RIEFENSTAHL

What else? Went back to work.

THE CAPTAIN

And while you were away, the German people elected Hitler their Chancellor.

RIEFENSTAHL

Yes. And he made the Mouse Doctor his Minister of Propaganda and Enlightenment.

A NAZI ANTHEM BLARES.

INT. MINISTRY OF PROPAGANDA SCREENING ROOM - NIGHT

Yellow projector light reveals GOEBBELS. He watches a newsreel entitled "Our Fuhrer, Rebuilding Germany!"

NEWSREEL NARRATOR

True to his promise, the Fuhrer puts
the Fatherland back to work!

A MONTAGE: Nazi propaganda images INTER-CUT with
Brownshirts harassing Jews at the Berlin flower market.

NEWSREEL NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Building the autobahn and rebuilding
our national pride! From chiseled
construction workers to fresh faced
Labor Maids, everyone in Germany is
playing their part: making the
Fuhrer's dream a reality!

Jews are carted off. LENI looks away.

INT. CAFE - AFTERNOON

LENI enters, preoccupied with her bouquet as she crosses to
the usual table. She discovers there a pair of BROWNSHIRTS.

BROWNSHIRT

You don't need to bribe us!

They laugh. Leni scans the smoky cafe. MANNY sits at a
little table in a dark corner. She joins him.

LENI

I don't understand. Where's Bela?

MANNY

He's left, of course. Everybody's left.

LENI

For where --?

MANNY

Here: He asked me to give this to you.

He slips her an envelope. She reads as the drunken
Brownshirts sing her the HORST WESSEL SONG.

LENI

Gone to Warsaw? Why?

He touches the graffiti by the table: *töten Sie die Juden.*

MANNY

He joked he could read the handwriting
on the wall.

LENI

Well, when's he coming back?

MANNY

Back? Wake up, Leni! The old life is
over. It's their turn now.

LENI

I don't understand.

MANNY

Maybe your new friend at the chancellery
can explain?

THE NAZI SONG BUILDS, it becomes symphonic.

INT. THE CHANCELLERY

HEELS CLICK on marble as LENI follows a prim secretary,
JOHANNA, down a long corridor. She opens heavy doors.

INT. CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

HITLER stands in uniform at a large window; silhouetted
against a painful blue sky.

HITLER

Strange, isn't it? I've been dreaming
for so long. Now suddenly, I'm awake, an
overnight success. Like you!

He turns and crosses to LENI as he dismisses JOHANNA.

HITLER (CONT'D)

Your film work must have been fascinating to keep you away so long!

LENI

Yes, and so much has changed --

HITLER

I know --!

LENI

And many of my friends have been affected --

HITLER

Yes! The whole country is energized by our victory -- which brings me to our project. How is it coming?

LENI

Project?

HITLER

The Party Rally film: getting everything you need?

LENI

Film? What film?

HITLER

Our film! Didn't Dr. Goebbels inform you? I told him months ago!

LENI

I -- I --

HITLER

Johanna! Obviously, there's been a little -- JOHANNA!

Johanna rushes in.

JOHANNA

Yes, my Fuhrer!

HITLER

Did you somehow not understand I wanted Fraulein Riefenstahl to do the Rally film?

JOHANNA

Yes, I mean no, I mean --

HITLER

Then why didn't you inform Dr. Goebbels?

JOHANNA

I did, my Fuhrer: just as you said!

A beat. Hitler dismisses her with a gesture.

LENI

Just as well. I mean me? Doing a political film? It's all such a male thing, isn't it? SA, SS; you boys and your clubs --

He rounds on her. A beat.

HITLER

There you go again. See, that's why I want you to make films for me. Typical propaganda films, they're worthless! But your perspective is unique --

LENI

But I'm just an actress --

HITLER

Who knows the way to the hearts of the people. You can show them the essence of what we are. Only you!

LENI

I --

HITLER

But to put your mind at ease, I will personally order Dr. Goebbels to be there for you every step of the way.

CLOSE on Leni's face.

INT. RIEFENSTAHL'S HOME - LATE EVENING

RIEFENSTAHL faces the LIEUTENANT and the CAPTAIN.

THE LIEUTENANT
You could've said no?

THE CAPTAIN
Refuse the leader of your country?

RIEFENSTAHL
Were we ever that juvenile?

She smiles and the Captain smiles back.

THE LIEUTENANT
Had you ever even done a documentary?

RIEFENSTAHL
Certainly not.

THE CAPTAIN
Were you to be paid?

RIEFENSTAHL
Of course! It was a commission. No more, no less. And that money would help me get on with my work.

MONTAGE: Leni, in a stunning dress, makes small talk, flirts, and laughs with RICH MEN.

THE LIEUTENANT (V.O.)
You mean hobnobbing with bigwigs at fancy parties: you call that work?

RIEFENSTAHL (V.O.)
Of course: I am in the movie business.

INT. GOEBBELS RESIDENCE

HITLER stands alone at a glitzy soiree. LENI walks up with champagne and slips her arm into his. GOEBBELS glares at them. MAGDA GOEBBELS arrives. She is 34, a hard beauty, taller than her husband.

MAGDA GOEBBELS

They're chatting again, I see.

GOEBBELS

She's relentlessly bending his ear.

MAGDA GOEBBELS

He doesn't seem to mind, it being bent.

GOEBBELS

You would think she was the one who had
cleansed the film industry of the
filthy Jew!

MAGDA GOEBBELS

Well, Joseph, imagine that: an eager
young starlet you *don't* like.

She leaves. UBERMANN arrives in an impeccable tuxedo.

UBERMANN

Crafty devil, you; and generous: I had
assumed you kept all the tasty ones for
yourself?

GOEBBELS

Anything for the Fuhrer.

INT. BATHROOM AT GOEBBELS RESIDENCE

MAGDA GOEBBELS applies lipstick at the gilt mirror of a
spacious bath. LENI enters.

LENI

Oops, sorry --

MAGDA GOEBBELS

No, please. I'm nearly done.

Leni moves next to her and primps in the glass.

LENI

You have a lovely home --

MAGDA GOEBBELS

Don't think I'm jealous.

LENI

Sorry?

MAGDA GOEBBELS

Don't be coy. I can't blame you for wanting him.

LENI

Frau Goebbels, I can assure you, I have no interest in your husband!

MAGDA GOEBBELS

Of course not: I meant the Fuhrer. Not that you're likely to catch him. God knows, I've tried everything I could dream of. But it's hard to compete with the Fatherland. So just being near him will have to be enough; for both of us. Unless you can give him something I can't?

She leaves Leni alone in the mirror.

THE LIEUTENANT (V.O.)

So you wanted to make the film: to please him?

INT. RIEFENSTAHL'S HOME - LATE EVENING

RIEFENSTAHL shows the wear of the interrogation.

RIEFENSTAHL

No.

The LIEUTENANT is on his feet. The CAPTAIN watches.

THE LIEUTENANT

C'mon. Every dame in the country dreamed of sleeping with *die Fuhrer*; but you were hell bent on becoming "Hitler's Honey".

RIEFENSTAHL

Ridiculous! I admired his speaking, his spirit; but physically?

THE CAPTAIN

There were rumors, of course -- as there often are about strong women.

RIEFENSTAHL

Yes, Captain, but I have never cared what other people think.

MANNY (V.O.)

But Leni, what happens if you do a good job for Hitler?

INT. LENI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

INSERT storyboard images of soldiers in massed formations.

LENI (O.C.)

What do you mean "if"?

LENI and HANS draw. MANNY paces by his luggage.

MANNY

The time has come to take a stand. You're either with or you're against: there is no in-between!

LENI

(erases a drawing)

No, no, I want a high angle shot here.

MANNY

God! She's one thing, Hans, but you? You're a communist!

HANS

Who's run out of options.

LENI

And what should he do? Run off to New York, like you? What about the rest of my crew, their families? People who could care less about politics should leave, wreck their lives --?

MANNY

But you have options.

LENI

What? Be a Hollywood actress -- with my English?

HANS

You could direct?

LENI

Just show up there and hope that somebody needs me? Come on: Who there would let a woman direct? No: to live, I must stay.

MANNY

And I must leave.

LENI

And throw away everything you've ever worked for?

MANNY

"Life falls into place when one does what's right."

KNOCKING. Leni crosses.

LENI

Where'd you hear that one? Who is it?

GOEBBELS (O.C.)

It's me. Open up!

LENI

We've played this scene, Doctor. Go away.

She goes back to work. MORE KNOCKING. They whisper.

HANS

What the hell's he doing here --?

MANNY

(looks out the window)

O God: he's got the Gestapo with him.

Hans arms himself with a fireplace tool.

LENI

Relax. It's not you he wants.

(opens the door a crack)

Look, I told you before --

GOEBBELS looks panicked.

GOEBBELS

I know. And believe me, I wouldn't be here -- except now that we'll be working together, there's something you must know: something serious.

LENI

What?

GOEBBELS

It's too dangerous. I must come in.

A beat. She signals them to hide and opens the door.

LENI

This better be good.

GOEBBELS

You have an enemy.

LENI

What else is new?

GOEBBELS

This one's high up in the Party, has been with the Fuhrer from the beginning, and would kill to have the respect you enjoy from him --

LENI

Jealousy: that's it?

GOEBBELS

And resentment, spite, oh, and hatred: definitely hatred --

LENI

Yes, well, Hitler will --

GOEBBELS

Not be able to help you! Even the
Führer can't shield you from someone as
motivated as this man. Not forever.

LENI

And why are you telling me this?

He takes her by the hand.

GOEBBELS

So that you'll understand how I feel
about you.

LENI

Doctor, please, we both know you don't
love me --

He squeezes her hand hard and moves in closer.

GOEBBELS

Of course not: I hate you. Weren't
you listening?

LENI

That hurts --

GOEBBELS

But I haven't given up on my dream --
now that I can practically taste it --

He opens his mouth to kiss her. She slaps him full force
with her free hand. He grabs her wrist and forces her
back against the wall. He grins as he leans in, blood
trickling from his nostril --

HENRY (O.C.)

Sorry I'm late but I couldn't find the
flowers you...

HENRY appears at the door with a large bouquet.

GOEBBELS

Two men in one night?

Goebbels kisses her hand and leaves his blood on the back of it. He walks away.

GOEBBELS (CONT'D)

See you in Nuremberg, partner.

THE LIEUTENANT (V.O.)

So the number two goon in the Third Reich was your arch enemy?

INT. RIEFENSTAHL'S HOME - LATE EVENING

The LIEUTENANT and the CAPTAIN sit opposite RIEFENSTAHL.

RIEFENSTAHL

Yes.

THE CAPTAIN

Which would further support your anti-Nazi stance --

THE LIEUTENANT

If it was true.

RIEFENSTAHL

What do you mean? We hated each other!

THE LIEUTENANT

Says you.

THE CAPTAIN

We've read his correspondence, his diaries --

THE LIEUTENANT

And none of this is in there --

THE CAPTAIN

Which doesn't disprove her assertions --

THE LIEUTENANT

Or back them up --!

RIEFENSTAHL

You mean there's no mention of me?

THE LIEUTENANT

Oh, you're all over: How you two chatted at this party or that; how your company and his ministry work so well together --

RIEFENSTAHL

Nothing about our conflict?

THE CAPTAIN

Afraid there's nothing to indicate you two were anything less than typical business associates.

RIEFENSTAHL

Leave it to the little *Scheisser* to cause me grief even after he's dead.

THE CAPTAIN

But let's say Goebbels was your enemy: Working on Hitler's film would put you right in his sights. How could you protect yourself?

RIEFENSTAHL

Pragmatically: I had to produce Hitler's film, yes, but who said I had to direct it?

INT. LENI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

LENI carries wine glasses and glides in next to HANS.

HANS

I don't know --

LENI

But it will be a good experience for you.
(touches his leg)
Besides, I'm afraid it's too big for me...

She laughs and pulls him down before the fire.

RIEFENSTAHL (V.O.)

This way I could return to the mountains and my own work.

INT. RIEFENSTAHL'S HOME - LATE EVENING

RIEFENSTAHL, the CAPTAIN, the LIEUTENANT, by the fire.

THE CAPTAIN

And you weren't worried about going
behind Hitler's back?

RIEFENSTAHL

Why should I be? He wanted a good film
with my name over the title, and he'd
get one. What difference did it make
who actually directed it?

KNOCKING, like the Mouse Doctor's.

INT. LENI'S MOUNTAIN PLACE - DAY

LENI storyboards next to HENRY in front of a window with a
grand mountain vista. MORE KNOCKING.

LENI

I can't believe him. Put "mousetrap" on
that checklist.

(calls out as she crosses)

All right, Doctor, this time --

She flings open the door. It's UBERMANN in flying gear.

UBERMANN

Wasn't aware doctors made house calls
this high up?

LENI

What are you doing here?

UBERMANN

Business: regarding your project for
our mutual friend.

LENI

You flew all this way for that?

UBERMANN

Your proletarian friend who's been
doing the film --?

LENI

Right, Hans --

UBERMANN

He's left the country.

LENI

What?

UBERMANN

Yes, a lot of that going around these days. So you will direct the project personally now -- including all of the filming in Nuremberg. Shall we?

LENI

But that's impossible! The Party Congress starts in less than a week!

UBERMANN

And the Fuhrer's depending on you: a singular honor. But along with the privilege comes a commensurate degree of accountability. I'm surprised the Mouse Doctor didn't tell you. Or am I?

CLOSE on Leni. MILITARY DRUMS RUMBLE.

INT. NUREMBERG STADIUM, THE FIELD - LATE AFTERNOON

LENI hurries into the bustling stadium. THOUSANDS OF WORKERS prepare for the ostentatious party rally. Many look her over as she walks through. She queries an SS OFFICER. He points up at the highest point of the stadium: a dark man is silhouetted against the clouds.

THE SPEAKER'S PLATFORM

Leni approaches, holding onto her hat in the breeze. Hitler stares into the brooding sky, hands clasped behind his back. He speaks without turning.

HITLER

Your work must have been fascinating to keep you away so long.

LENI

Hardly: I was so sick: and do you know what my assistant did in my absence?

HITLER

Bland, mundane propaganda.

LENI

Yes, he --

HITLER

Exactly what I said I did not want! If I wanted tripe, cooked up by some hack, I could have it in an instant! But I wanted something special. To capture these historic times for all time! So I turned to you --

He turns, red and seething.

HITLER (CONT'D)

And you said YES! And then you go on "holiday"! And give my project to a subordinate. A member of the Communist party, no less! Even you must know this is -- is -- and this act is no secret. Do you realize the position you have put me in -- and yourself?

LENI

(head bowed)

I do now. And I feel that, under the circumstances, it would be best if I...

(a beat; looks up)

if my production company is given complete control of the film.

HITLER

What?

LENI

No offense to the Propaganda Ministry. But time is short. I must have total control over the project.

HITLER

You're not serious?

LENI

I can't do superior work with bureaucrats
looking over my shoulder, can I?

HITLER

Does that include me?

LENI

I could never think of you as a bureaucrat.
But no one sees the film before it's
finished; one director, one vision --

Hitler rails to the heavens.

HITLER

After all this -- she makes demands!

LENI

It's just what I need --

HITLER

You disobeyed me! Publicly!

LENI

It was a misunderstanding that I sincerely
regret but you must remember that I am an
artist, an actress --

He explodes, arm flailing!

HITLER

And you must remember who I am!

LENI

(a beat)

Of course: and you want your message to
reach the people; to touch every heart
and soul in this nation; to show the
world what you and the Party mean to the
people of Germany! And all I want is the
power to give you what you want.

HITLER

You will do the film!

(a beat)

With whatever you need to do it correctly.

LENI

Thank you.

She turns to leave. A RUMBLE OF THUNDER.

HITLER

May I at least suggest a title?

LENI

Of course.

HITLER

"Triumph of the Will".

LENI

That's fine.

(continues on)

HITLER

And Leni: You won't disappoint me again.

LENI

No... my Fuhrer.

She looks out over the stadium, defeated. A beat. She sees something and frames it with her hands and smiles.

THE LIEUTENANT (V.O.)

For being so damned reluctant you sure did a bang-up job.

RIEFENSTAHL (V.O.)

I was a professional. I made the best of my situation.

INT. RIEFENSTAHL'S HOME - NIGHT

RIEFENSTAHL sits opposite the CAPTAIN and LIEUTENANT.

THE CAPTAIN

It had to more than that. With the best filmmakers in Europe to chose from, all those experienced men -- Hitler asked you. Surely, you felt proud; grateful even? I would have.

RIEFENSTAHL

Yes, it was a unique opportunity. But no filmmaker -- whatever his experience -- had ever faced such a challenge!

MONTAGE: GERMANS on the march, singing, cheering, waving little Nazi flags; like a plague of black and red.

RIEFENSTAHL (V.O.)

From dawn until midnight, we would have to shoot upwards of a million marching, cheering people, and the party leaders and the new *Wermacht*; and capturing their fervor, their *zeitgeist* on film would take a monumental effort!

INT. FILM STUDIO - DAY

REVEAL THE MONTAGE projected on a studio wall. HENRY works the projector. LENI sidles up next to him with her black notebook.

LENI

I'm afraid it's all too big for one woman. Which is why I need you, Henry: as my First Cameraman.

HENRY

Now that Hans is gone?

LENI

(hands him her notebook)
Exactly.

HENRY

You've lots of cameramen to choose from --

LENI

But you understand me --

HENRY

What about the censorship laws?

LENI

Rules for bureaucrats by bureaucrats --

HENRY

And the racial guidelines? Look,
there's something you should... what I
mean is: there's a member of my...
O Jesus, Leni: my grandmother's Jewish.

LENI

So?

HENRY

So? To them, I'm a Jew; and I don't
want to work for them --

LENI

You'd be working for me -- as always.

HENRY

Far away in the mountains is one thing;
but a Jewish cameraman, right under
their noses? I can only imagine what
Goebbels would do --

LENI

I can handle him.

HENRY

And Hitler? No, I can't put you in
that position --

LENI

That's my choice. This is yours: a
once in a lifetime opportunity - the
reason we both went up the mountain --

HENRY

But the Nazis --

LENI

Will soon be gone! But this film will
live forever. So believe me: you make
the wrong choice here and you will regret
it for the rest of your life.

HENRY

(a beat)

You're right. Thank you.

He gives her back the book and walks away.

LENI

Henry? Please don't. If you leave, and they find out why, I won't be able to protect you.

He pauses. She walks up and hands him back the book and continues on through tall stage curtains.

INT. FILM STUDIO B

LENI steps out before a crowd of two hundred TECHNICIANS, all men, surrounded by tons of film gear.

LENI

Gentlemen. So why have I asked the best film men in the country, with all the latest equipment, to come to Nuremberg? Simple: I'm going to make the greatest documentary of all time.

A MURMUR. Eyes roll.

LENI (CONT'D)

The topic: This year's Nazi Party Rally; a colossal, cinematic event which we'll milk for all it's worth. Our central character is Hitler. So check out his book:

She holds up a copy of MEIN KAMPF.

LENI (CONT'D)

Kind of dry but --

TECHNICIAN (O.C.)

What if you're not a National Socialist?

MURMURED AGREEMENT.

LENI

Think I care? Just get me my shots. Remember: We're filmmakers first. Here to tell a story --

TECHNICIAN (O.C.)
Why not just call it what it is?

The Technician steps out: it's HENRY.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Propaganda.

LENI
No. We're going to show what happens in Nuremberg, the way it happens. The only sure thing is we're going to do it ten times better than one of those God-awful newsreels.

TECHNICIAN (O.C.)
Well if this is such a big damn deal how come they put a woman in charge?

Technicians part to reveal SCHUENEBERG.

LENI
Surprised to see you, Schueneberg; I requested only the best.

SCHUENEBERG
Still a riot. Think how tough this would be for a real director; now picture working for a broad who's done all of one film?

LENI
I wouldn't trust you to run for my coffee, but if I say do it, you'll do it.

SCHUENEBERG
Like hell. I won't work under a woman.

LENI
So they say.

The Technicians laugh.

SCHUENEBERG
You want to be ordered around by a no-nothing bitch, be my guest.

Schueneberg walks away. Leni steps up.

LENI

I didn't say you could leave.

SCHUENEBERG

I didn't ask.

The Technicians MURMUR. He reaches the exit and a Klieg light SMASHES into the floor. Leni stands behind it amid a thousand glittering shards.

LENI

Listen to me, all of you! I have been given this responsibility by the Fuhrer himself! Disobey me, dare to doubt my abilities, and you doubt the judgment of Adolf Hitler!

Schueneberg looks around. He rejoins the others. Leni smiles.

INT. RIEFENSTAHL'S HOME - NIGHT

RIEFENSTAHL is face to face with the LIEUTENANT. The CAPTAIN tends the fire, his back to both of them.

THE LIEUTENANT

So you hated politics so much you dropped the Fuhrer's name whenever it suited you?

RIEFENSTAHL

I was a woman in charge of men --

THE CAPTAIN

She'd have to use every trick in the book.

THE LIEUTENANT

(shows her letters)

Like ratting to the Propaganda Ministry about this guy?

THE CAPTAIN

He was walking off the film --

THE LIEUTENANT

I was talking to her: Unless you're now the defense attorney?

The Captain just keeps tending the fire.

RIEFENSTAHL

Your Captain is correct. It would have undermined my authority with the crew.

THE LIEUTENANT

But you could've landed this guy in jail -- or worse -- and you knew it.

RIEFENSTAHL

Schueneberg?
(laughs)

THE LIEUTENANT

Oh I get it. You think sending people to concentration camps is funny.

RIEFENSTAHL

Don't be a fool. He was one of them! A card-carrying member of the party! But he didn't tell you that, did he? No, because he's a coward: like the rest. Haven't you noticed? Spring comes and all the Nazis melt away.

THE LIEUTENANT

Leaving you to defend Hitler.

CHEERING BUILDS, like in a dream. The Captain does not look around.

RIEFENSTAHL

Understand: it was only nineteen thirty-five. The war was still years away.

MONTAGE: Germans young and old cheer along an endless parade route. Leni directs Henry. They film from a camera car that leads Hitler's limo.

RIEFENSTAHL (CONT'D) (V.O.)

There was work for everyone. We had regained a sense of purpose, our national dignity; it felt good to be German again! This is what we celebrated, what I tried to capture on film. And yes, it was all because of this one man.

UBERMANN (V.O.)

My Fuhrer!

INT. RALLY HALL - NIGHT

Huge Nazi banners festoon a hall lit by lurid torches. UBERMANN speaks at a lectern. LENI and HENRY rush to set up a camera by the stage. GOEBBELS watches from the dais.

UBERMANN (CONT'D)

You are Germany! And we will stand beside you, through good days and bad, come what may! Heil Hitler! *Sieg heil!*

ROARING SIEG HEILS. HITLER appears. Leni orders Henry to roll. BROWNSHIRTS descend on them and block the camera. She argues to no avail. Goebbels smirks.

Hitler looks out over the sea of Nazis and smiles at Leni. The BROWNSHIRTS step away. She barks an order. Henry films. She and Goebbels exchange murderous looks.

INT. RESTAURANT - NOON

HITLER sits at a posh table with GOEBBELS. Like a school boy with a crush, he studies his Fuhrer as he minces his vegetables. Hitler looks up and smiles. The Mouse Doctor is in bliss -- until he realizes his Fuhrer is looking past him: at LENI. Hitler rises and holds her chair.

LENI

Yours was a stunning performance: perfect cinematically. The sound, the visual, one hundred percent! Your speech was nice, too, Doctor. Of course, we almost missed them: We had so much trouble with those khaki boys.

HITLER

You mean Brownshirts?

LENI

Right: blocking shots; taking my cameras.

GOEBBELS

Of course, Fraulein, these men take the task of protecting the Fuhrer seriously.

LENI

And nearly ruined our film in the process! How can I create something extraordinary for you if I have to put up with this kind of interference?

HITLER

These are trying times for the SA. But Dr. Goebbels will not fail to make sure they are less enthusiastic in the future.

GOEBBELS

Yes, my Fuhrer.

LENI

Doctor, where would I be without you?

LENI flashes an insincere movie star smile.

THE CAPTAIN (V.O.)

And so you were able to film the party rally without any further interference?

RIEFENSTAHL (V.O.)

Yes.

INT. EDIT ROOM - NIGHT

LENI sits at an edit bench. She places a new film viewer. She takes one of several black notebooks and opens it to the first page of thorough storyboards. PULL BACK.

THE LIEUTENANT (V.O.)

Then all you had to do was slap it together and you were home free.

PULL BACK (CONT'D) to reveal tens of thousands of hanging strips of motion picture film.

RIEFENSTAHL

Yes, that was all I had to do: eighteen hours a day, 7 days a week, for a year.

INT. RIEFENSTAHL'S HOME - NIGHT

The LIEUTENANT stares at RIEFENSTAHL. The CAPTAIN peruses the bookshelves.

THE LIEUTENANT

You must've made a killing.

THE CAPTAIN

No: She said it was a commission --

THE LIEUTENANT

Then why do it? Why work so hard?

RIEFENSTAHL

Because at the beginning it would say: "A film by Leni Riefenstahl".

THE LIEUTENANT

But before you were ready to put your name on a subordinate's work?

RIEFENSTAHL

Artists are capricious. What can I say?

THE LIEUTENANT

Oh, come on --

THE CAPTAIN

She's right. My Aunt Ida painted, and was about as easy to pin down as --

THE LIEUTENANT

A greased pig in a homespun metaphor?

THE CAPTAIN

My point, Lieutenant, is that she never gave a whit how people reacted to her art. And I bet you felt the same way?

RIEFENSTAHL

Naturally: The only audience I've ever
cared about is me.

MONTAGE: Curtains close on the last grandiloquent image
of TRIUMPH OF THE WILL. THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE. Blue
searchlights slice the dark stage and find LENI.

HITLER walks on and presents her with a huge bouquet of
lilacs. She faints. He catches her. The CROWD GOES MAD.
HENRY watches from the wings; and UBERMANN; and GOEBBELS.

THE LIEUTENANT (V.O.)

And the same guy who handed you the
flowers handed down the Racial Laws.

INT. RIEFFENSTAHL'S HOME

RIEFFENSTAHL grows pale before the CAPTAIN and LIEUTENANT.

RIEFENSTAHL

I didn't know them, not the details --

THE LIEUTENANT

Everybody in Europe knew by then --

THE CAPTAIN

She already said: she was busy editing --

THE LIEUTENANT

Making psychotics look like frigging
folk heroes --

RIEFENSTAHL

You know nothing about my film! It was
only a record: a document of the time --

THE LIEUTENANT

Come on, colleagues are kicked out of the
business -- or can't stomach what's going
on and leave -- while you're splicing
together a movie for their persecutors?

RIEFENSTAHL

I was hired to do a job --!

THE LIEUTENANT

And you were so busy you didn't see people
being dragged out of their homes in the
middle of the night?

RIEFENSTAHL

(up and in his face)

Did you live here in those times? No!
So who are you to judge?

THE LIEUTENANT

Oh, didn't you hear? We won the war.
Or were you editing then, too?

RIEFENSTAHL

As a matter of fact, I -- ACH!

She grabs her side and swoons; the Captain catches her. She
implores him with her eyes.

RIEFENSTAHL (CONT'D)

Können Sie mich entschuldigen, bitte?

THE CAPTAIN

Certainly.

She holds her side and limps from the room. The Lieutenant
leaps to his feet and curses under his breath.

THE CAPTAIN

What was that all about, Lieutenant?

THE LIEUTENANT

You tell me, sir? You're treating her
like royalty or something.

THE CAPTAIN

Case like this takes patience.

THE LIEUTENANT

(under his breath)

Yeah and coffee and cookies --

THE CAPTAIN

You've permission to speak, Lieutenant,
spit it out --

THE LIEUTENANT

This should be quick and easy! Christ, Captain, with other Nazis, you're a hard ass. But with her: it's kid gloves and a folksy bumpkin act? I don't get it --!

THE CAPTAIN

Keep your voice down --

THE LIEUTENANT

Why were you so hot to take her case if you weren't going to run her in?

THE CAPTAIN

Squeeze too hard, too soon, we'd never get the facts --

THE LIEUTENANT

Facts? You're not buying this?

From the next room, Riefenstahl listens.

THE CAPTAIN (O.C.)

Take it you're not?

THE LIEUTENANT (O.C.)

Hell no. She's trying to play us, to split us --

The Lieutenant paces. The Captain sits and watches.

THE CAPTAIN

You've made up your mind then?

THE LIEUTENANT

Long ago, and she hasn't come close to proving to me that she's not guilty.

THE CAPTAIN

What law school did you go to, Lieutenant? We've got to do the proving, remember?

THE LIEUTENANT

What -- with them?

THE CAPTAIN

Due process --

THE LIEUTENANT

With cold blooded killers? Our system's not meant for people like this.

THE CAPTAIN

Oh, so everybody here's guilty?

THE LIEUTENANT

No. To hear them tell it, nobody is. Nobody did anything wrong. Just like her. It's all been a big hoax or something. I mean Ubermann's a Nazi prick but at least he's got the guts to admit what he did. But her: she's lying and she's guilty like the rest of them.

THE CAPTAIN

Every single German, even if they're not a Nazi --?

THE LIEUTENANT

Yes. Because they knew, they had to; and you know it. So I don't see why we don't just wall in the whole stinking country? Of course there's no way you'd agree since...

THE CAPTAIN

Since I was born here, you mean: a *deutscher Amerikaner*?

THE LIEUTENANT

Well it would explain a lot.

The Captain stands and moves in.

THE CAPTAIN

I meant what I said, Lieutenant: no one deserves to suffer any more than they already have if they're innocent.

THE LIEUTENANT

Her: Innocent?

The Lieutenant holds up pictures of Riefenstahl with Hitler and with the *Wermacht* in Poland.

THE LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)

Did you forget this? Huh? And this?
And what we saw today?

THE CAPTAIN

No, and I haven't forgotten why we're here:
to serve justice and do it fairly because
we're Americans; and if we don't do it
right, we're no different from the Nazis --

THE LIEUTENANT

She fucked Hitler. And you're letting her
do the same to us. The Major'd take her
in, give her the Goddamned Works -- but
you? Guess I'm not the only one who's
already made up his mind, huh?

A beat. Riefenstahl clears her throat and enters the room.
The Lieutenant turns his back on them both and sits down.
The Captain waits for Riefenstahl before he sits.

RIEFENSTAHL

Thank you, Captain. Is there much more?

THE CAPTAIN

Just one last thing: The average person
going along, I understand. But you: you
were famous, people looked up to you; you
didn't feel any extra responsibility?

RIEFENSTAHL

Of course: to my art.

THE CAPTAIN

And that's it?

RIEFENSTAHL

Party rally films had always been
newsreels; I was hired to do better.
That was my responsibility --

THE CAPTAIN

But how do you feel now? Knowing how
your work's been used?

RIEFENSTAHL

Politics come and go. Art is for eternity.

THE CAPTAIN

You don't care that it helped the Nazis?

RIEFENSTAHL

If an artist dedicates himself totally to his work, he cannot think politically --

THE LIEUTENANT

Don't hide behind this bullshit!

RIEFENSTAHL

You were picking your nose on the playground during this time! What do you know?

(to the Captain)

My work -- if it were used for bad, what fault is it of mine?

THE CAPTAIN

Let me understand this: You don't find any reason to regret doing the film for Hitler?

RIEFENSTAHL

Why should I? Am I a Nazi, an anti-Semite? Did I denounce anyone? No. What else could I do? What would you do --?

THE CAPTAIN

But how it was used --

RIEFENSTAHL

Is not my concern!

THE CAPTAIN

(a beat)

You regret nothing.

RIEFENSTAHL

Why should I? I did my work, as best I could. What have I to regret?

THE CAPTAIN

We'll see.

(stands)

We're taking you in.

Surprised, the Lieutenant gathers his papers and photos. Riefenstahl stares up in shock at the Captain.

TRANSITION TO:

Rusted barbed wire loops against the sky.

RIEFENSTAHL (V.O.)

Fade in: on wire, dark and curled,
like movie film spilling from a reel --

A DOOR SLAMS SHUT.

INT. CAMP OFFICE, DACHAU - AFTERNOON

RIEFENSTAHL turns from a window. The LIEUTENANT walks into the converted SS barracks and reads from a clipboard.

THE LIEUTENANT

"This is the US 7th Army's Interrogation Center. You are about to be processed, in accordance with the internment protocol for denazification." Like some coffee?

RIEFENSTAHL

Why, yes, that would be...

The Lieutenant smirks and exits. Riefenstahl looks outside. Glassy-eyed CIVILIANS roam the former concentration camp. Some shovel dirt, others put emaciated bodies in graves.

RIEFENSTAHL (CONT'D)

Track along the glistening loops, each the size of a second of film, forming the equivalent of a feature length movie, encompassing... *ein lebender Albtraum* --

JOHANNA (O.C.)

Fraulein Riefenstahl?

RIEFENSTAHL

Johanna?

Gaunt, dirty, Hitler's secretary JOHANNA nears the window.

JOHANNA

O Lord! It looks like they're bringing us all here; those of us left. Still, I'm surprised to see you --

RIEFENSTAHL

And you: When I heard he was dead, I...

JOHANNA

Assumed I was dead? I was by his side all those years. But the Fuhrer, at the end he sent me away. To save some documents, he said. Have they brought up the camps?

RIEFENSTAHL

A little. Johanna, what --

JOHANNA

He had no idea! You understand? How could he know? Or approve? Tell them it was the others; their doing, they --

She freezes. UBERMANN appears in his dirty uniform.

UBERMANN

You don't look well, Johanna.

JOHANNA

Yes, Air Marshal!
(leaves)

UBERMANN

Hello, darling. I hear there's another big party in Nuremberg and we're invited. Not to worry. They may have to hang a few Germans to assuage the hypocrites. But with the Red Army right down the road, they need us -- and they know it. After all, we're not the only pragmatists --

THE DOOR SLAMS.

INT. CAMP OFFICE, DACHAU

The LIEUTENANT enters with BERTA. The skinny woman wears combat boots and an Army raincoat over her Concentration Camp rags. RIEFENSTAHL stands.

RIEFENSTAHL

Where is the Captain?

THE LIEUTENANT

Busy: getting reamed by the Major for not "squeezing too hard, too soon". But he had his chance; now it's my turn.

He nods. Berta takes Riefenstahl behind a hanging sheet. They are silhouetted.

THE LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)

Good thing he brought you in when he did; otherwise he'd be in front of a Court Martial.

BERTA

Well? Take it off.

RIEFENSTAHL

What?

BERTA

The dress, you fool! *Schnell!*

Riefenstahl removes her dress. Berta grabs a bucket and flings powder on Riefenstahl.

RIEFENSTAHL

What's that for?

BERTA

Lice.

RIEFENSTAHL

I don't need that!

BERTA

No, but you will.

(motions to a chair)

Now put a foot up, princess.

RIEFENSTAHL

Why?

BERTA

Security.

RIEFENSTAHL

I will do no such thing!

Berta SLAPS her hard and grabs her by the hair.

THE LIEUTENANT

I'd cooperate, Fraulein. Berta has a bone to pick with Germans.

Riefenstahl puts her foot up. Berta examines her.

RIEFENSTAHL

This treatment is intolerable!

BERTA

You haven't a clue what intolerable is.

Berta comes out, nods to the Lieutenant, and leaves. He pulls away the sheet before Riefenstahl is dressed.

THE LIEUTENANT

Now I see what *die Fuhrer* saw in you.

RIEFENSTAHL

What do you want from me?

THE LIEUTENANT

Nothing yet: "but the night's still young".

RIEFENSTAHL

If the Captain were here --!

THE LIEUTENANT

What's the matter: afraid you won't be able to play me?

RIEFENSTAHL

He was a gentleman.

THE LIEUTENANT

You like nice guys? Should've seen me when I first got here: I was brave, clean, courteous, kind... then I saw Normandy, the Ardennes, Dachau: and no more Boy Scout. But enough about me; a gentleman focuses on the lady.

He takes out a pencil and checks his clipboard.

THE LIEUTENANT

Describe in detail Hitler's genitalia.

RIEFENSTAHL

What?

THE LIEUTENANT

You know, his *Hahn und Kugeln*? Specify length, width, coloring. Oh and everybody wants to know:

(touches her lips)

What did *die Fuhrer* taste like?

She bites down on his fingers. He rears back to punch her.

THE CAPTAIN (O.C.)

Lieutenant!

The CAPTAIN watches from the doorway.

THE CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Have that looked at -- now.

A beat. He storms out. She crosses to the Captain.

RIEFENSTAHL

I was afraid you would never come back.

THE CAPTAIN

We have one more day. Then the Major takes over. And he is no fan of your work.

RIEFENSTAHL

I understand. What must I do?

THE CAPTAIN

Trust me -- completely. And I will see to it that you're treated the way you deserve. *Verstehen Sie?* Now I have to go. Get some rest. Tomorrow is a big day.

RIEFENSTAHL

Danke, mein lieber Freund.

He looks at her from the door. He nods and leaves.

INT. CAMP OFFICE, DACHAU - NIGHT

Barbed wire curls around the moon. RIEFENSTAHL lies awake on a cot in the blue light. A shadow looms, a hand covers her mouth. She struggles. It's UBERMANN. They whisper.

RIEFENSTAHL

What --? How did you get in?

UBERMANN

I know the right people.

RIEFENSTAHL

If the Americans catch you here --

UBERMANN

What could they possibly do that they're not going to do anyway? Seems I over-estimated their intelligence. The fools would rather fight the Russians for the next 50 years than accept our help.

RIEFENSTAHL

So what are you going to do?

UBERMANN

Get out of here. Like to come?

RIEFENSTAHL

I have one of their officers helping me.

UBERMANN

Really: me, too.

He holds up a small white pill.

RIEFENSTAHL

What is that?

UBERMANN

The way out.

RIEFENSTAHL

Are you mad?

UBERMANN

No, dear: just pragmatic.

INT. CAMP OFFICE, DACHAU - MORNING

The CAPTAIN and LIEUTENANT sit down at a table.

THE CAPTAIN

So I trust you heard about Ubermann?

RIEFENSTHAL sits across from them. She looks like hell.

THE LIEUTENANT

Seems your pal would rather kill himself than face what he had done under the Nazis.

A beat. She laughs.

THE LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)

What, you think that's funny?

She can't stop. It's infectious. The Captain starts.

THE LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)

Oh I'm a big joke to you, too, am I?

(to Riefenstahl)

You won't find it so damn amusing when you take Ubermann's spot in Nuremberg.

RIEFENSTAHL

(leaps up)

What more do you want from me? To say I should have left? Should have fought? I was only one person; a woman, no less! What else could I do but work and make the best of my situation?

She looks at the Captain. TRIUMPHANT MUSIC BUILDS.

THE LIEUTENANT

I can see you're damn good at that.

INT. MINISTRY OF PROPAGANDA - DAY

A NEWSREEL is projected: "1936 Olympic Flame to Burn Bright on Film!" GOEBBELS watches, teeth clenched.

ANNOUNCER

To capture the essence of the Nordic-Olympic spirit, the art of athletics will be filmed by the athlete of the arts!

A MONTAGE: Leni directs Henry and her camera crew in the center of the Olympic stadium. A few yards away, Jesse Owens runs out of the blocks.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Because the International Olympic Committee has commissioned a feature-length documentary from the Fuhrer's favorite filmmaker, Leni Riefenstahl!

MONTAGE (CONT'D): Owens runs. The crowd CHEERS. Leni beams as Owens wins. HITLER broods in the dignitary stands alongside GOEBBELS.

THE CAPTAIN (V.O.)

What in blue blazes made you think you could get away with showing a Negro defeating Aryans in a German film?

Leni sits in the dark at her edit bench.

RIEFENSTAHL (V.O.)

It wasn't a "German" film: It was my film.

MONTAGE (CONT'D): She opens her black notebook to her storyboards. PULL BACK to reveal myriad hanging strips of movie film, more numerous than ever. She views and cuts and splices, over and over and over...

RIEFENSTAHL (V.O.)

To be the best, I had to feature the best -- and that was Jesse Owens.

INT. CAMP OFFICE, DACHAU

RIEFENSTAHL sit across from the LIEUTENANT and CAPTAIN.

THE LIEUTENANT

And you never once considered the embarrassment to Hitler --?

RIEFENSTAHL

Mein Gott! First you persecute me
because I promoted the Nazis; now,
because I didn't? Make up your mind!
(to the Captain)

As always, I only wanted to show what I
saw, what I heard, what I felt -- what
everyone in that stadium felt when they
saw Owens run.

THE CAPTAIN

Not everyone.

INT. EDIT ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Leni splices in the gloom, drawn, haggard -- and startled
by GOEBBELS as he steps from the shadows.

GOEBBELS

Working late, I see, in your little
cave: with only your dreams, and the
blue light to guide you? So far
removed from the real world no one
would hear your cries for help.

LENI

(slams down the splicer)
I won't be needing any help.

GOEBBELS

True. I mean, working night and day?
(sniffs her)
Wouldn't lay a finger on you now --

LENI

Get to the point. I have work to do.

He pulls a letter from his trench coat pocket.

GOEBBELS

Yes, read your letter: "I now expect my
project to take 18 months to complete"?

LENI

Barring further interruptions.

GOEBBELS

The thirty-six Olympics: in thirty-eight? How timely. "I now intend to make two films. A half million marks should cover the additional expense." And you expect my Ministry to guarantee your loan?

LENI

Yes.

GOEBBELS

Why stop there? How about another million for your Negro fetish?

LENI

My film is about the human form -- not color: Nature's art.

GOEBBELS

Droll. But even Nature makes mistakes.

He limps behind her and takes out another letter.

GOEBBELS (CONT'D)

So as Minister, I'm sorry to inform you your approach will take too long, be too expensive, and turn out far too dark. And I'm certain the Fuhrer will applaud your humble decision to turn control of the film over to me.

He places the document in front of her.

LENI

This work with starlets?

GOEBBELS

Like a charm. You're all such pushovers: especially when I throw this into the mix.

(produces another envelope)

Written proof that you are racially impure: One quarter, to be exact; which makes you a filthy Jew --

LENI

This is absurd --!

GOEBBELS

And totally unfounded, should be suppressed!
But messy things like this tend to leak --

He holds the paper with his thumb and index finger.
She snaps it away and crumples it.

GOEBBELS (CONT'D)

You may keep that copy for your files.

LENI

He's seen things like this before.
He'll brush it right off his desk --

He spins her chair around.

GOEBBELS

Except you have had relations with Jews,
hidden them on your libertine film crews.
You have broken the law, his law:
openly, brazenly. And while we may not
choose our blood, we most certainly
choose our friends.

LENI

Well, when I see my friend, we'll talk
about it.

GOEBBELS

You seriously think you can convince
the supreme leader of the Third Reich
to overlook all this?

She turns on her sexual charm.

LENI

Well, Doctor... I mean... Joseph...

Her mouth begs to be kissed. He moves in. She turns away.

LENI (CONT'D)

What do you think?

GOEBBELS

God I hate actresses.

Goebbels folds up his documents.

LENI

You really thought you could beat me?

GOEBBELS

No, not until this nigger business.

He looks over her shoulder at Owens in her viewer.

GOEBBELS (CONT'D)

You see, having him in your movie flies in the face of everything Adolf Hitler stands for.

LENI

And so you expect me to take him out of my film?

GOEBBELS

Oh no. The beauty is: I don't.

She stares at the viewer as he limps away.

AN OLYMPIC FANFARE.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - EVENING

Swastika banners and Olympic flags unfurl in a theater. JESSE OWENS receives a gold medal on film. The AUDIENCE CHEERS. OLYMPIA, in large letters on the backdrop, dwarfs GOEBBELS at a lectern.

GOEBBELS

We are here tonight to pay tribute to... "Nature's art", and this year's most remarkable film --

He looks to the wings. LENI gloats in her evening gown.

GOEBBELS (CONT'D)

Rather, films. So you cannot imagine how it makes me feel to present the nation's top film prize to Leni Riefenstahl.

Leni walks on to great APPLAUSE. HITLER enters from the other wing to GREATER APPLAUSE. He takes the award from Goebbels and presents to Leni with a kiss on the cheek. ROARS OF APPROVAL. He steps up to the microphone.

HITLER

I want the world to see not only what films our nation can produce: but also the living, breathing embodiment of all that the Third Reich represents! So I make a personal request here tonight:

(looks to Leni)

That our extraordinary filmmaker present, in person, her masterpiece to the people of the United States of America!

THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER PLAYS. Leni leans in to Hitler.

LENI

Thank you so much!

HITLER

Oh, don't thank me. Thank the Doctor. It was his idea.

She looks at Goebbels. FLASH BULBS POP LIKE GUN FIRE.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREETS - MORNING

CAR HORNS BLARE and NYC COPS look on as LENI and her HANDLERS struggle through a throng of REPORTERS in cheap suits and fedoras. They jostle and jot notes and chatter.

REPORTER #1

Just came over the wires --

REPORTER #3

Beatings, looting --

REPORTER #4

Fires all over Germany --!

LENI

I do not believe it!

REPORTER #2
Brownshirts targeting Jews --?

REPORTER #4
What's not to believe?

LENI
But I came here to talk of my work, my
films --

REPORTER #3
Fine, Leni: what's your next Nazi flick?

REPORTER #4
Hitler gonna be your co-star --?

REPORTER #2
And how big's that swastika on his
hoozy-what?

The REPORTERS laugh. Her Handlers struggle to push through screaming PROTESTERS with signs: "Nazi Pin-Up Girl Go Home"; "To Hell with Hitler's Honey"; "Accomplice to Murder". She escapes into a hotel.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY

LENI hurries through the crowded lobby to the elevators and onto an empty car. She jams at the button over and over and the doors finally close. A hand stops them. A man in a business suit gets in. Leni keeps her head down. The elevator goes up.

MANNY (O.C.)
What did you expect, Leni: lilacs?

She looks up. It's MANNY.

LENI
Manny? Oh I'm so happy to see you! It cannot be true, what they're saying --

MANNY
Of course it is. But lucky for you, you're here. You can make a new life.

LENI

But what kind of life would that be --

MANNY

Don't worry. You'll find a new dream.
That's what this country's all about --

LENI

No. Every artist pays a price for his
work. This will be mine. But you're
sweet to worry about me.

MANNY

It's the people who see your movies I'm
worried about. Goodbye, Leni.

The doors open and Manny walks away.

HITLER (V.O.)

Ignore them!

INT. CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

HITLER rails at the storming sky outside his window.

HITLER (CONT'D)

They're jealous: spewing anything that
denigrates Germany! I should have known.
Their "democracies" are built on lies!
I'm sorry. You of all people should
not have had to go through this.

LENI looks like she came straight from traveling.

LENI

But the attack on the Jews, this
"Kristallnacht", it did happen --?

HITLER

Yes: regrettable but understandable.

LENI

But many great German artists, some
friends, some Jews -- have left the
country. Von Sternberg, Fritz Lang,
Marlene Dietrich --

He cuts this short with a sharp gesture. A beat.

HITLER

I respect you as an artist of rare talent.
Now I ask you to respect me and not bring
up the Jewish question ever again --

LENI

But why --?

HITLER

There are dark forces at work here!
Trying to destroy us; drag us back into
the trenches; into the mud and the blood
-- but not this time, I swear it! This
time, it will be like lightning! And
we'll be done with it! And be free and
pure -- or perish, by my word!

(a beat)

Tell me the truth: Are you a pure German?

LENI

Well, I... I'd like to think so.

NEWSREEL MUSIC BUILDS. He turns to face the maelstrom.
Shadows from the teeming window streak his face.

HITLER

We'll see, all of us, soon enough: when
we face the only true test of blood. And
will.

INT. PROPAGANDA MINISTRY SCREENING ROOM - DAY

INSERT NEWSREEL TITLE: "Repelling the Aggressors!"

ANNOUNCER

The German armed forces face down the
Slavic hordes!

MONTAGE: PROPAGANDA FOOTAGE of happy civilians welcoming
the German Army INTER-CUT with SS SOLDIERS breaking into
homes, shooting out windows, dragging people off.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Though outnumbered, the brave men of the Fatherland are never outfought, and make the Poles pay a heavy price for their aggression! Now ethnic Germans, prisoners here since the end of the 1914 War, will soon be free! To join their fellow Germans on their march to peace!

EXT. KONSKI - MORNING

SS SOLDIERS toss torches into a barn and move on. A German truck pulls up. LENI stands in the open back and reviews her black book. HENRY steadies his movie camera on a tripod. Both wear dark German Weermacht uniforms.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

And now, the art of war will be seen in a fresh new light...

INT. PROPAGANDA MINISTRY SCREENING ROOM - DAY

REVEAL GOEBBELS. He watches.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

For our very own "film royalty", Leni Riefenstahl, will be sending back films from the front -- for the Ministry of Propaganda and Enlightenment!

The MUSIC PEAKS. Goebbels laughs till he cries.

EXT. KONSKI - NOON

LENI frames a shot amidst REFUGEES, SOLDIERS, and burning ruins. HENRY talks to himself as he sets up his tripod.

HENRY

"Looking for a film company shooting a different kind of movie --"

LENI

What's that, Henry?

UBERMANN (O.C.)

Well hello, my dear...

A motorcycle nears. It carries UBERMANN in its sidecar. He's in full Luftwaffe air marshal uniform.

UBERMANN (CONT'D)

What brings you so far down from the mountains?

LENI

What else?

UBERMANN

Ah yes. Pragmatism will go a long way here. Seems the Polish partisans have done nasty to some of our boys: mutilation; that sort of -- wait, you men there!

Beyond Leni: SS SOLDIERS beat PRISONERS.

UBERMANN (CONT'D)

Go easy on those prisoners. We all know what's happened at the hands of the Slavs. But remember, you are German soldiers. Conduct yourselves accordingly! At least in front of the camera...

(back to Leni)

Where were we? Ah, yes: I have someone I'd like you to meet tonight.

LENI

Not a bureaucrat --

UBERMANN

With a very acceptable wine cellar!

As he rolls on, he calls out.

UBERMANN (CONT'D)

Oh and wear that costume!

A beat. Leni frames a scene with her hands.

HENRY

Jesus, Leni, what are we doing here?

LENI

Same as always: Whatever it takes.
Let's just get the shot and get the...
hey. You there!

The SS SOLDIERS again beat prisoners with their rifles.

HENRY

Leni? Stop!

She crosses to the SS Soldiers and the Prisoners.

LENI (CONT'D)

No, no, no! You men heard the Air
Marshal! Treat these men properly!

SS SOLDIER 1

Who the hell are you?

LENI

I am Leni Riefenstahl.

SS SOLDIER 3

The movie star?

SS SOLDIER 2

Want to make a movie with me?
(lascivious gesture)

LENI

How dare you?

SS SOLDIER 2

It ain't hard. But it's getting there!

LENI

You're a disgrace: all of you. You are
Germans! Fighting for the Fatherland --!

SS SOLDIER 1

Piss off.

The SS Soldiers turn their backs on her.

LENI

Listen to me, all of you! I have been given this responsibility by the Fuhrer himself! Disobey me, doubt my authority, and I will personally report you to Adolf Hitler!

A beat. The SS Soldiers turn back to her.

SS SOLDIER 1

Well, in that case..

They level their rifles at her.

LENI (CONT'D)

I'm warning you... for the last time..

They cock the bolts on their 98Ks. She backs away.

LENI (CONT'D)

No. Please... DON'T!

RIFLE FIRE. Leni falls.

MORE GUNFIRE: all from SOLDIERS down the road. The SS Soldiers laugh at Leni sprawled on the rubble. The lascivious one looks up her skirt.

SS SOLDIER 2

Never saw a movie star's before.

An SS Soldier kicks her black notebook her way, another snaps her picture as she stares. Henry crouches.

HENRY

Leni?

LENI

Just... get the shot.

She picks her notebook out of the dirt. She rifles through her storyboards and struggles not to cry. SHOUTS.

A PRISONER makes a break for it. He runs toward Leni. She sees the boy's face. SHOTS RING OUT. Blood spurts from his chest. He falls in front of her, a bloody hole

in his back. An SS OFFICER walks up and draws his Luger. He looks at Leni.

SS OFFICER
Leni Riefenstahl, right?

He shoots the Prisoner twice in the head.

SS OFFICER (CONT'D)
Love your work.

He holsters his Luger and moves on. Henry backs away and trips over his camera tripod. Leni feels her cheek and finds red tears. She looks down at her meticulous storyboard, splattered with gore.

INT. CHANCELLERY, OUTSIDE THE CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Dirty, disheveled, LENI storms past JOHANNA at her desk.

JOHANNA
Fraulein Riefenstahl -- wait!

INT. CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

LENI rushes in, toward the SILHOUETTE at the window.

LENI
Thank God you're here! What I have
seen will shock --

The silhouette turns: It's GOEBBELS in uniform.

GOEBBELS
Oh? Hack work not as easy as you thought?
(dismisses Johanna)

LENI
Where is he?

GOEBBELS
Busy. With matters far more important
than a group of dead Polish Jews --

LENI

He must be told --!

GOEBBELS

He already knows. And he'll take care of the men responsible. Believe me.

LENI

I demand to see him!

GOEBBELS

Your demanding days are over. We don't need your kind of "art" now. And since you can't even handle a lowly newsreel, you're worthless to us. Still, you'll probably be remembered for your small, early contribution to the Reich. But I'm not going to let a little injustice like that spoil an otherwise perfect end to our story.

He limps past her and stops.

GOEBBELS (CONT'D)

Oh, and "Goddess": your film work? I have postponed it -- indefinitely. We'll need those resources for the war effort. "Guess some dreams just aren't meant to be". Heil Hitler.

He leaves her alone in Hitler's office.

THE CAPTAIN (V.O.)

And what did you do then?

RIEFENSTAHL (V.O.)

Tried to work as best I could.

MONTAGE: Leni looks out the window at streams of marching soldiers. Her train snakes on to the distant mountains.

RIEFENSTAHL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But it was nearly impossible: because of the stupid war.

INT. CAMP OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

The LIEUTENANT and the CAPTAIN sit opposite RIEFENSTAHL.

THE LIEUTENANT
Any more pet projects for Hitler?

RIEFENSTAHL
No.

THE CAPTAIN
Did you ever see him again?

RIEFENSTAHL
Once...

INT. CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

MOVE IN on HITLER. He stands before the shuttered window, shrunken and bent. He mutters a speech in his dank office.

RIEFENSTAHL (V.O.)
It was near the end and little remained of his aura.

HITLER
"1945 will be the year of our greatest victories..."

RIEFENSTAHL (V.O.)
Now he was like most men -- only less so.

He turns and looks up. LENI smiles. She is well-dressed but her youthful vigor is gone.

HITLER
Ah, my fellow artist.

He crosses to her, sallow, red-eyed, bewildered. He takes her by the hands.

HITLER (CONT'D)
Your work must have been fascinating to keep you away... whereas mine...

He stares through her and crosses to a large map table.

HITLER (CONT'D)

Leading the Fatherland; creating a bulwark against tyranny; protecting the world -- now and forever -- from Communism and of course, I was that close! But then the Fascists, I had to save their worthless hides in North Africa and in the Balkans, and then the Russians --!

(slams the table hard)

But we must let history judge us: on our single-minded devotion to our work. That will be our legacy. And did I tell you I've ordered copies of our work to be safely stored away, along with photos of every artwork, every church and museum and historic building in all Germany!

(with the old mania)

So that they can one day be precisely reconstructed! And this will create jobs, prosperity, a renewed Teutonic spirit -- and Germany will be great! Again!

(a beat)

See? I told you I was a romantic.

INT. CAMP OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

RIEFENSTAHL stares down at the table top. The CAPTAIN hands the LIEUTENANT his clipboard.

THE CAPTAIN

Thanks, Lieutenant. I won't be needing you anymore.

THE LIEUTENANT

What? But the Major said --

THE CAPTAIN

That is all.

He stands and walks out.

THE CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Lieutenant?

A beat. The Lieutenant turns at the door and snaps a salute with his bandaged hand. The Captain returns the salute. The young man exits. Riefenstahl laughs.

RIEFENSTAHL

Sorry, but he had it coming.

She refers to her own hand and bites it in a comical way. They have a cathartic laugh.

RIEFENSTAHL (CONT'D)

So, Captain?

THE CAPTAIN

I think we're pretty much done.

The middle-aged CAMERAMAN from the beginning enters. He salutes and sets up a movie projector.

RIEFENSTAHL

You have what is needed then -- so I can get, you know...

THE CAPTAIN

Was ich verdiene? Just about.

RIEFENSTAHL

Danken Sie Gott! And you.

THE CAPTAIN

Yes, there's just one thing. You say you didn't see what was coming. You didn't see it as it happened. And now, like so many, you don't really acknowledge what went on. Or that you might have some responsibility, in any way, for any of it.

RIEFENSTAHL

But we have been over this. I don't see why --

THE CAPTAIN

Because I need to know!

The Captain nods. The Cameraman salutes and exits.

RIEFENSTAHL

Captain Dietz, I don't understand --

THE CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

You can drop the act. This is just you and me now, off the record. Nothing you say can hurt you -- as long as it's true. *Verstehen Sie?*

(closer)

How could you not know where Hitler would lead you? You were an adult, intelligent --

RIEFENSTAHL

Did you know? You saw newsreels, read newspapers. If Germans knew, so did the British, French, the Americans. We were supposed to see what you didn't? If we did, we were supposed to stop it? People on your side also thought highly of Hitler. Churchill, not that long before the war, said he envied Germany its Fuhrer.

THE CAPTAIN

He changed his mind. Have you?

RIEFENSTAHL

Of course. By Christmas, Hitler was sending children off to fight the Russians. I hated him for that -- and for the damned War! It ruined everything. Six years wasted where I could've been working! And my films, lost...

He looks ready to strangle her. Instead, he flips on the projector. MARTIAL MUSIC. BLUE LIGHT beams. Riefenstahl's eyes brighten.

RIEFENSTAHL (CONT'D)

TRIUMPH DES WILLENS? Where did you find it?

THE CAPTAIN

Nuremberg.

ON THE WALL: masses of men march, blond boys drum.

RIEFENSTAHL (O.C.)
Wundervoll. The light; the rhythm:
 Watch how well this next cut works.

Riefenstahl snaps her fingers.

RIEFENSTAHL (CONT'D)
 See? Perfect, yes? Now the next one:
 (snaps her fingers)
Vollkommen! See how together the
 picture and the sound, they transcend
 everything. Now watch this next cut --
 it is my favorite!

ON THE WALL: a little girl waves a Nazi flag. CUT. A SILENT
 skeletal child stands in a concentration camp. Riefenstahl
 leaps up into the projector beam.

RIEFENSTAHL (CONT'D)
 No. That's not right! This is not my
 work!

THE CAPTAIN
 No?

On the wall and on her: gruesome concentration camp images.

RIEFENSTAHL
Was ist dieser?

THE CAPTAIN
 The logical conclusion of your Fuhrer's
 ideals: If you subscribe to the belief
 that there are superior human beings then
 there must be inferior ones. And here is
 where they ended up --

RIEFENSTAHL
 No. Turn it off --!

THE CAPTAIN
 Romanticized notions don't always make
 pretty pictures --

RIEFENSTAHL
 But who --?

THE CAPTAIN

Who else: Poles, Russians, Gypsies;
and Jews -- some of whom were kin to my
Lieutenant.

RIEFENSTAHL

But how...?

THE CAPTAIN

Your "patron of the arts": he sponsored
this work, too.

RIEFENSTAHL

The man I knew could not have done this!

THE CAPTAIN

No, not alone. And his cronies will
swing for it; but they won't be the only
ones, believe me. It took a national
effort to run the camps -- like this one,
right down the road from your house.

RIEFENSTAHL

You -- you don't think I knew about
this? Not this -- ACH!

She grabs her side and reaches out for him. He grabs hold.

THE CAPTAIN

Oh you knew --

RIEFENSTAHL

You're hurting me --

THE CAPTAIN

Because you were knee deep with these
bastards --!

RIEFENSTAHL

I didn't --!

THE CAPTAIN

Right from the beginning --!

RIEFENSTAHL

Working -- doing what I had to --!

THE CAPTAIN
Lying! *Sie liegen --!*

RIEFENSTAHL
For my art --!

THE CAPTAIN
Gerade wie eine Dirne! Like a whore.

A beat. She slaps him and berates him.

RIEFENSTAHL
Seien Sie nicht ein Kind! Why can't
you understand? The boy is one thing:
But you are German: one of us!

His eyes flash. He draws his .45 and jams it to her head.
She screams and cries.

THE CAPTAIN
Before I blow your talented brains out, one
last chance: *Sagen Sie mir die Wahrheit!*

RIEFENSTAHL
I told you the truth! How I am, how I
have always been --!

THE CAPTAIN
"A person in a dream world" built the
death camps --!

RIEFENSTAHL
Ich hatte nichts --!

THE CAPTAIN
And you helped make his dream come true!
(cocks the .45)

RIEFENSTAHL
No... NO! It cannot be true... *Gott, bitte...*
for if it were... how could I ever live
with it?

Her tears stream. His hand quavers. The film ends and
the tail leader flaps. He takes his thumb and un-cocks
the .45 and walks out. She slides to the floor, and cries
for real.

EXT. CAMP OFFICE

THE CAPTAIN walks in the bright sun. He notices the .45 still in his hand. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out the clip and loads it back into his pistol. He meets up with THE LIEUTENANT and the two walk down a dirty path.

THE LIEUTENANT
You OK, sir?

THE CAPTAIN
(holsters the .45)
No. But I will be.

THE LIEUTENANT
Did it work as planned?

THE CAPTAIN
Not exactly.

They climb into a Jeep.

THE LIEUTENANT
Got some good news: the Major gave us a new case; a full-blown, died-in-the-wool Nazi this time.
(starts the Jeep)
And it's your turn to be the bad cop.

The Jeep drives on through the camp: Nazis on one side, their victims on the other, the Captain in the middle.

THE CAPTAIN (V.O.)
Riefenstahl's is a case unlike any other we've had.

EXT. CAMP OFFICE

Riefenstahl huddles in the surrealistic glare of the blue projector light. TYPING ECHOES.

THE CAPTAIN (V.O.)
She, more than any other person, had the opportunity to get to the truth.

MONTAGE: The CAPTAIN types a late night report. LENI works and receives accolades amid the swastikas.

THE CAPTAIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Yet, if her statements are sincere, she has never grasped, and still does not grasp the fact that, by dedicating her life to art, she has given expression to a gruesome regime and contributed to its glorification...

WORDS TYPE OUT: ...moral corruption.

THE CAPTAIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Hitler's protecting hand ensured her artistic activities -- and built a dream-world for her in which she could live with her art.

MONTAGE (CONT'D): Hitler turns and greets her warmly. His hand turns to bones. RIEFENTAHL wakes on her Army cot in a cold sweat. The moon disappears behind a cloud. The Captain stares at the report in his typewriter.

THE CAPTAIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 But what work made by human hands could possibly be worth what her art has cost the world?

INT. CAMP OFFICE - MORNING

The CAPTAIN and LIEUTENANT sit at the table across from RIEFENSTAHL. The Captain hands her a document.

THE CAPTAIN
 This certifies your denazification.

RIEFENSTAHL
 I don't understand.

THE CAPTAIN
 You're free to go.

The Captain and the Lieutenant stand to leave.

RIEFENSTAHL

You realize, don't you, I was famous before the Nazis came. My work will survive long after they're gone.

THE LIEUTENANT

Hope so. I know the French can't wait to talk to you about your work. *Arbeit macht frei?*

He walks out. The Captain buttons up his valise.

RIEFENSTAHL

The boy still thinks I am guilty.

THE CAPTAIN

You are guilty. The question is: of what?

The Captain walks out. Riefenstahl sits alone. TEXT appears.

"Riefenstahl was arrested by the French and convicted of collaborating with the Nazis. She was in and out of detention for the next 3 years."

She becomes the OLD WOMAN seen at the beginning. She sits alone in a cold BLUE LIGHT. TEXT:

"She died at the age of 101. She never admitted any wrongdoing. She never apologized. And her dream of producing another great film never came true."

The BLUE LIGHT FADES AWAY and so does Riefenstahl.

FADE OUT.