

CARDINAL SIN
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FADE IN:

INT. BARNETT'S FUNERAL HOME - MORNING

Subdued MOURNERS mill about the back of a tastefully decorated room -- greet old friends and relatives not seen in years.

Up front, bouquets of roses and carnations surround a closed bronze casket. A large easel holds a framed photo of an attractive woman, JANICE LAZZARO, 50s.

ADAM LAZZARO, well dressed; athletic; -- stands sentinel over his wife's casket. He appears to be in his thirties -- his eyes are much older.

An ANCIENT MAN, 70s, shuffles toward the casket with a walker: CLICK -- shuffle -- CLICK -- shuffle.

He reaches the casket -- crosses himself -- kisses his fingers -- presses them against the casket. He turns, faces Adam with disdain:

ANCIENT MAN
She was a good sister.

Adam nods agreement.

ANCIENT MAN
She aged well, my sister.

Adam looks away: embarrassed.

ANCIENT MAN
Twenty years of marriage and you...
you look the same as the day you
married her.

Adam's gaze rests on his wife's photo -- tears fill his eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT. ITALIAN COAST - TWO LANE HIGHWAY - EVENING

A red Maserati Spyder SCREAMS along the highway -- weaves in and out of heavy traffic. The driver, DONNA TEUFEL, 20s, an ageless beauty -- LAUGHS as wind whips her yellow hair:

DONNA
Whewwww! I feel so--

A HORN BLARES -- she swerves to avoid an oncoming SUV.

DONNA
-- alive! Whewwwwwwwwwwwwwww!

CUT TO:

EXT. SAINT MICHAEL'S CEMETERY

Row upon row of gleaming marble headstones and bronze markers pressed into a sea of green grass.

GRAVE SITE

FRIENDS, FAMILY WEEP and CONSOLE one another.

A PARISH PRIEST finishes a final PRAYER. Consecrates the bronze casket with holy water as it descends into eternity.

Across the chasm, Adam stands with his long-time friend THOMAS CARDINAL CARAMANY, 70s, a Vatican Archivist and Librarian. Behind them at a

RESPECTFUL DISTANCE

A pride of REPORTERS prowls -- waits for the right moment to pounce on Adam Lazzaro.

GRAVE SITE

Cardinal Caramany crosses himself -- kisses his crucifix:

CARDINAL CARAMANY
Amen.

Adam turns -- studies the group of reporters:

ADAM
Jackals!

Cardinal Caramany follows his friend's gaze -- shrugs:

CARDINAL CARAMANY
You are a public figure. People are curious.

ADAM
They're voyeurs.

CARDINAL CARAMANY
They must be dealt with...
diplomatically.

Adam lets a small smile creep across his lips:

ADAM
What I wouldn't give for the old
days.

Straightens his suit jacket -- tweaks his tie:

ADAM
Let's get this over with.

CUT TO:

TWO LANE HIGHWAY

Donna weaves in and out of traffic -- LAUGHS. She thrusts her
arms triumphantly over her head:

DONNA
Whewwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwww hooooooooooooo!

Grabs the steering wheel -- gives it a twist -- swerves
across the center line -- heads straight for an oncoming
Volvo tractor-trailer rig.

The Volvo's horn blares: HONK! HOONNK! HOOOONNNNK!

DONNA
Yeah!!

CUT TO:

CEMETERY

Jackals swarm. They overwhelm Adam's BODYGUARDS.

Adam puts on his diplomat's face -- smiles, raises his hands:

ADAM
I will make a brief statement, take
no questions, then be on my way.

Jackals push forward -- hang on every word.

ADAM
We are facing Armageddon.

Adam lets his words sink in. Camera flashes explode.

ADAM
The United States and Russia
struggle to prevent a third world
war.

Jackals thrust their microphones and recorders forward.
Adam stands his ground: defiant; disgusted. He continues:

ADAM
My counter part, Admiral Vasily
Maximov, thinks war is inevitable.
I disagree. However, unless this
crisis between Israel and Iran is
resolved soon--

His gaze sweeps across the crowd:

ADAM
--nothing... not even my wife's
death, can not... will not... stand
in the way of world peace.

Jackals fall silent -- mesmerized by Adam's words: his
demeanor; serenity; calmness.

ADAM
Now, if you will excuse me, I have
work to do.

Jackals SCREAM out questions.

Bodyguards hustle Adam and Cardinal Caramany to their limo.

CUT TO:

TWO LANE HIGHWAY

Blue smoke billows from the Volvo's SCREECHING tires -- the
trailer fishtails -- blocks both lanes.

Something Donna hadn't planned on:

DONNA
SHIT!

She swerves -- over compensates.

The Maserati rolls over and over and over.
Tumbles end, over end, over end.

Car parts EXPLODE off the vehicle.
Metal and plastic and glass rain down.

Surrounding TRAFFIC brakes to a halt -- DRIVERS watch in horror as the red convertible disintegrates -- SLAMS broadside into an ancient oak: BAAA-LAM!

CUT TO:

CEMETERY - INSIDE LIMO

Adam stares out the tinted window.

CARDINAL CARAMANY
Your wife was a good woman.

Adam nods agreement.

CARDINAL CARAMANY
It was God's wish to take her.

ADAM
God had nothing to do with it. My car was tampered with. I was suppose to die. Not Janice.

CARDINAL CARAMANY
Perhaps. But I sense your tears are not for her alone.

Adam faces his friend -- takes a deep breath--

ADAM
I'm... tired--

--exhales.

ADAM
--tired of watching the people I love, die.

CARDINAL CARAMANY
What is it you wish for?

ADAM
Death.

Concern clouds the cardinal's face:

CARDINAL CARAMANY
I see.

He closes his eyes. Contemplation? Silent prayer? Finally:

CARDINAL CARAMANY
Christ himself has given you a
special gift.

ADAM
Are you sure?

CARDINAL CARAMANY
I think I might give anything to
have such a gift for myself.

ADAM
No, you wouldn't. No sane person
would.

CARDINAL CARAMANY
But God has a plan for you... you
alone.

Adam balls his right hand into a fist--

ADAM
Alone! That's the problem isn't it?

--pounds his fist into the padded door: THUNK!

ADAM
I'm a victim. Of unintended
consequences.

CUT TO:

TWO LANE HIGHWAY - WRECK SCENE

Steam and smoke drift from a heap of sheet metal.

BYSTANDERS creep forward -- gawk with a mixture of wonder and
horror. Several have cell phones out to record the carnage.

ADAM (V.O.)
I want to throw up my hands and
shout to the world, 'Wipe
yourselves out, you stupid
bastards. See if I care'. Instead I
fight for humanity... out of
selfishness.

The wreck CREEKS; GROANS; settles into its final resting
place -- the driver side door moves.

A Bystander races forward -- yanks on the crumpled door.

It yields. SQUEALS. Metal on metal.

Bystander staggers backwards -- stifles a GASP.

Donna emerges: dusty; dirty; disheveled but unscathed.

CARDINAL CARAMANY (V.O.)
Christ means for you to do good in
the world. It--

Donna looks back at the remnants of her car.

CARDINAL CARAMANY (V.O.)
--it was a gift.

ADAM (V.O.)
It was a curse.

Donna takes a few steps away from the wreck -- stares into
Bystander's cell phone:

DONNA
Now that... was cool!

CUT TO:

INT. THE VATICAN - CARDINAL SACCHETTI'S APARTMENT - DAY

The residence of Nicollo Cardinal Sacchetti, Secretary of
State for the Vatican. A suite of rooms. Tasteful. Reeks of
history.

CARDINAL SACCHETTI, 80s, wears Armani slacks; handmade silk
shirt; Italian loafers. He stands taller than his 5' 8" frame
and his presence oozes charm. Power. And ruthlessness.

Across the room in an off-the-rack ruffled suit sits the
Cardinal's cousin. BERNARDO PISANU, 50s. Short, stocky,
unassuming. A mafia boss known as 'The Truck'.

SACCHETTI
Most unfortunate about Missus
Lazzaro.

Bernardo studies the tops of his scuffed, unpolished shoes:

THE TRUCK
Most unfortunate.

SACCHETTI

We are in terrible times, Bernardo.
This is no time for unfortunate
accidents.

The Truck nods his agreement.

SACCHETTI

Please deal with those responsible.

THE TRUCK

As we speak my... friends... are
doing just that, cousin.

SACCHETTI

Excellent.

EXT. THE VATICAN - CLEMENTINE HALL

Seventeenth-century architecture stands sentinel over an all
too common Twenty-first-century spectacle.

At the entrance, orange concrete barricades create a No Man's
Land of cobble stone -- a select group of JOURNALISTS face
off against the SWISS GUARD -- cameras and tape recorders
versus swords and Sig P225s.

Long, sleek Mercedes S600s line the street. Each displays the
diplomatic flag of their respective countries: Russia; Iran;
Israel; Pakistan; Saudi Arabia; China and others.

A black BMW X6 50i pulls up. The Stars and Stripes flies from
the front fenders.

Journalists flip into Paparazzi mode -- Swiss Guards react,
hold them back.

Two Bodyguards exit the BMW. Their expert gaze sweeps the
area. A nod -- Adam emerges.

Journalists lean across barricades -- YELL questions. Adam
raises his hands for quiet:

ADAM

Please! Please!

A calm blankets No Man's Land.

ADAM

I will take you questions at the
press conference after the morning
session. I...

The ROAR of a powerful engine interrupts Adam's speech.

All heads turn -- watch a green Ferrari 575M races toward them along Borgo Pio.

Tires SQUEAL.

Bodyguards cover Adam -- hustle him closer to the entrance.

A SWISS GUARD dashes into the street -- draws his weapon.

Ferrari SCREECHES--
fishtails--
rotates one-hundred-eighty degrees--
stops short of Swiss Guard--

Sends him to the cobbled pavement.

The Ferrari PUUURRRRRS.

Swiss Guard scrambles -- regains his composure -- raises his SIG -- approaches the driver's side.

He peers into the sports car -- opens the door -- steps back.

Long, gorgeous legs pivot into view.

Swiss Guard lowers his weapon -- gawks.

Donna exits. Opens her designer clutch -- Swiss Guards react.

Donna displays her press credentials:

DONNA
Easy, boys.

She winks -- gives them a high-wattage smile. Swiss Guards relax -- holster their sidearms.

She approaches Adam.

ADAM
Quite an entrance.

DONNA
I wanted to get your attention.

Adam's bemused expression dissolves:

ADAM
Of course. Now if you'll excuse me,
I have important work to do.

Donna touches his arm -- brings him face to face with her.

DONNA
I'd like an exclusive... after you
finish your important work.

Adam glances at his arm -- her face. She releases him.

ADAM
No exclusives. No matter how
creative your entrance.

She reaches in her clutch -- removes a business card -- tucks
it in his breast pocket:

DONNA
You'll change your mind.

The doors to Clementine Hall open -- Sacchetti glides forward
-- takes in the scene with an impatient expression.

SACCHETTI
I am afraid we are running quite
late. Is there a problem?

He glares at Donna:

SACCHETTI
Special Envoy Lazzaro?

ADAM
Your Eminence?

Sacchetti drifts toward Adam.

Donna turns away -- strides to her Ferrari -- gets in.
Swiss Guard closes her door.
Donna blows him a kiss -- she smiles at Adam. ROARS off.

SACCHETTI
Who was that fetching creature?

Adam pulls the card from his pocket -- hands it over:

ADAM
Paparazzi.

INT. ADAM'S HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

A small suite of rooms -- Old Europe.

IN THE BEDROOM

Adam sits at an ancient writing desk -- clears e-mails from his in-box: BLONG. BLING. BLONG. An e-mail arrives.

He reads the header:

ADAM
Check this out. From Jarius.

Opens the email.

DONNA (V.O.)
Some of us live life as if we will
live forever. Some of us are lucky.
Which are you? Which am I? Watch
the video. Decide.

Adam moves the cursor over the DELETE button: CLICK.

Closes the laptop -- stands.

He faces a large, empty bed -- his shoulders slump.

LATER

Adam clicks PLAY.

ADAM'S POV

Grainy video. Donna exits the mangled Maserati -- marches toward the camera -- stops:

DONNA
Now that... was cool!

Video freezes. Donna's face fills the screen.

BACK TO SCENE

Adam pulls out his cell phone -- dials:

ADAM
Cliff? Adam.
(beat)
Nothing's wrong.
(beat)
I know it's late. I'm sorry. I need
some information on a reporter.

He references his email.

ADAM
Donna Teufel. Check her
credentials.

Flips his phone shut -- closes the laptop.

INT. THE VATICAN - CLEMENTINE HALL - DAY

Seventeenth century frescoes line walls; ceilings; mirrored
in polished marble floors.

Under the frescoes Swiss Guards in simple blue uniforms and
black berets provide security.

Around an ornate mahogany conference table name placards
identify each delegate. Most well known to one another.

In the corners, DELEGATES gather in small groups -- WHISPER.

Adam and Sacchetti enter.

ADMIRAL VASILY MAXIMOV, 60s, barrel-chested and weary, looks
up -- lets out a loud HARRUMPH. He faces his colleague, AHMAD
SALEHI, 50s, Iran's representative:

MAXIMOV
I tell you, my friend, the Vatican
and the Americans are working
against us. Beware.

Salehi shrugs:

SALEHI
You take me for a fool?

MAXIMOV
Merely thinking out loud.

The Commission's President, JUN TAI WEI, 70s, Beijing's
representative -- stands, POUNDS his gavel:

JUN TAI WEI
Order, please.

CHATTER ceases. All eyes focus on the small, wrinkled man.

JUN TAI WEI
Please. There is much work to be
done.

Delegates return to their seats.

Jun surveys the room -- his gaze lingers on Adam:

JUN TAI WEI
Special Envoy Lazzaro, please
accept our condolences.

Adam nods.

JUN TAI WEI
If you require more time--

Adam stands -- straightens his suit jacket -- gathers his thoughts.

ADAM
Mister president, I thank you for
your kind words and consideration,
however, the world waits for the
successful completion of our work.
(in Mandarin)
Thank you.

An almost imperceptible bow from Adam -- Jun nods:

JUN TAI WEI
Then we shall proceed. Would you
care to begin, Mister Lazzaro?

ADAM
Yes, of course. A minute please,
Mister President?

Adam consults his notes. Covers his microphone -- confers with his second in command: CLIFF WILLIAMS, 40s, head to toe Ivy League. Adam nods once, twice -- uncovers the mic:

ADAM
It might be useful for the United
States to reiterate its position.

He glances across the table -- his gaze settles on Salehi:

ADAM
In light of Iran's refusal to
comply with United Nations Security
Council Resolutions sixteen-ninety-
six and seventeen-thirty-seven,
Israel had every right as a
sovereign nation to protect itself
from the threat of Iran's nuclear
weapons.

Salehi jumps to his feet -- shakes his fist:

SALEHI

The Jews bombed a nuclear facility
dedicated to peaceful uses!
Hundreds of my people were
murdered! We demand--

Jun POUNDS his gavel: BAM! BAM! BAM!

Salehi ceases his tirade -- Jun glares at the Iranian:

JUN TAI WEI

Enough!

Salehi takes his seat. Scowls at Adam.

JUN TAI WEI

Mister Lazzaro, please continue.

ADAM

Thank you, Mister President. I have
stated the facts, however
unpleasant to some. And our
position remains... Israel had the
right to defend herself against the
threat of a nuclear armed Iran.
That said, it is also our position
that this situation can be resolved
through negotiations and not by
additional violence.

Admiral Maximov raises his hand -- Jun acknowledges.

MAXIMOV

My esteemed colleague spouts the
party line, but the truth remains
Israel took it upon itself to
attack a sovereign nation without
prevarication.

UNITED STATES ARMY GENERAL marches up to Adam -- hands him a
sheet of paper. Adam reads.

MAXIMOV (O.S.)

In light of this act of lawlessness
my government will take steps to
have the United Nations Security
Council condemn Israel--

RUSSIAN AIR FORCE GENERAL interrupts Maximov -- hands him a
similar sheet of paper.

Adam reacts first:

ADAM
Mister President?

Jun nods.

ADAM
We have learned the Russian
Mediterranean Fleet... including
the aircraft carrier Admiral
Kuznetsov and the flagship Moskva
have taken up a position off the
Israeli coast.

CHAOS erupts. Journalist scamper for the door.

Admiral Maximov stands -- the paper crumpled in his beefy
fist. Anger clouds his face:

MAXIMOV
Mister President? I can confirm
that the American report is true.

Delegates face their neighbors with expressions of disbelief.

ADAM
I believe, Mister President, we
should adjourn so we may get
further instructions from our
governments.

Maximov nods his approval.

JUN TAI WEI
Agreed!

Diplomats flee helter-skelter -- Jun POUNDS his gavel: BAM!

INT. ADAM'S HOTEL SUITE - OUTER ROOM - DAY

The room PULSATES. Controlled chaos.

SUITS and UNIFORMS race in and out -- simultaneous phone
CONVERSATIONS merge into a cloud of WHITE NOISE.

Cliff monitors the chatter -- scribbles notes.

Across the room, Adam stares at his laptop.

ADAM'S POV

Donna crawls from the mangled Maserati. She marches toward the camera. Stops.

DONNA
Now that... was cool!

CLIFF (O.S.)
That her?

BACK TO SCENE

Adam closes the laptop.

CLIFF
The world prepares to destroy
itself and you spend what little
time you have obsessing over some
crazy--

Adam gives Cliff a sharp look:

ADAM
Who is she?

CLIFF
Who...!?

He balls his fist in frustration:

CLIFF
Adam! The United States and Russia
are poised to wipe out the world
and all you can say is 'Who is
she?!'

CHATTER ceases -- all eyes focus on the two men.

Adam's angry appearance morphs into a diplomatic-smile:

ADAM
You're right, of course.

Cliff relaxes.

A STAFFER approaches -- hands Cliff a sheet of paper.

ADAM
What is it?

CLIFF

The Syrians have allowed the Russians access to Tartus. They now have a base of operations in the Mediterranean.

Hands Adam the dispatch.

ADAM

Shit!

He looks over Cliff's shoulder -- locates ADMIRAL GRISSOM, 50s, slight, tough as nails. Adam brings him over with a nod.

GRISSOM

Sir?

Adam offers the communiqué to the admiral:

ADAM

How will the Navy respond to this?

Grissom ignore the paper.

GRISSOM

We already have forty ships... one-hundred-seventy-five aircraft in the area.

CLIFF

Subs?

GRISSOM

One.

Off Adam's look.

GRISSOM

Virginia Class. State of the art. And all we will need.

ADAM

Let's hope we don't. Thank you, Admiral.

Grissom stands erect, retreats.

CLIFF

What do you think?

ADAM

Just so much posturing. No one wants war.

His gaze drifts off--

ADAM
In all my years--

--snaps back.

ADAM
It'll work out.
(beat)
What about the girl?

CLIFF
You're kidding!?

Adam waits. Silent. Cold. Cliff references his notes:

CLIFF
Donna Teufel. Age, twenty-eight.
Born, London, England. September
seventeenth, nineteen-eighty-one.
Never went to college. Freelance
journalist. Lives off of some sort
of trust fund.

ADAM
Current address?

CLIFF
Porto Rufina.
(beat)
Look, Adam. As your friend. It's
only been two weeks since-- stay
away from this woman. Something
ain't right. It feels all wrong.

ADAM
She's beautiful. Rich. A free
spirit. What's not to like?

CLIFF
I don't like the fact that an
amateur reporter somehow manages to
get credentials to the most
important peace conference in
decades.

Cliff hands over a slip of paper.

INT. VATICAN LIBRARY - DAY

A vault lined with bookshelves bowed under the weight of ancient manuscripts. Two tables sit nearby piled high with millennia of knowledge; wisdom; superstition.

Cardinal Caramany hunches over a table -- turns a delicate page with his white-gloved hand. Retrieves a magnifying glass. Reads.

MONSIGNOR ALBERT O'BRIAN, 30s, medium height, no neck, waits in the doorway.

Caramany looks up -- studies Albert's baby face.

CARDINAL CARAMANY
Come, young Albert. Don't be
bashful.

Young Albert blushes -- steps forward.

YOUNG ALBERT
I wish you wouldn't call me that...
with all due respect, Your
Eminence.

CARDINAL CARAMANY
Nonsense. I practically raised you.
To me you will always be--

Young Albert cuts him off with a look.

CARDINAL CARAMANY
Yes, of course. Any news?

YOUNG ALBERT
She lives in Porto Rufina.

CARDINAL CARAMANY
Rufina!?

YOUNG ALBERT
While making my inquiries about
this girl I located an old woman...
in her eighties... who remembered
the girl.

CARDINAL CARAMANY
Really? And what did she remember?

YOUNG ALBERT
She... please remember this was a
very, very old woman.

CARDINAL CARAMANY
Albert--

YOUNG ALBERT
The old woman said she was once
best of friends with the girl you
seek--

Caramany waves his hand -- urges Young Albert on.

YOUNG ALBERT
--sixty years ago.

Caramany looks relieved -- not surprised.

YOUNG ALBERT
She's very old, Your Eminence.
Very, very old.

CARDINAL CARAMANY
I wish to meet this very, very old
woman.

INT. CAFE ROMA - NIGHT

Dimly lit. Cozy. Violins PURR in the background.

Adam and Donna sip wine at a table in a far corner.

ADAM
(Mandarin)
Do you come here often?

Donna LAUGHS.

DONNA
(Mandarin)
That line is corny in any language.

ADAM
(Russian)
Your Mandarin is excellent.

DONNA
(Portuguese)
I am fluent in... everything.

ADAM
(English)
In all my years I've never met
anyone quite like you.

DONNA
(English)
I would hope not.

ADAM
Well traveled. Rich. Beautiful. And
confident to the point of
arrogance.

DONNA
What's not to like? You do like?

ADAM
Very much.

She reaches across the table, takes his hand:

DONNA
You are... okay.

ADAM
I'm overwhelmed.

They lock eyes for a BEAT. Adam takes her free hand -- rubs
her fingers:

ADAM
If it wasn't for this damn peace
conference--

DONNA
What?

ADAM
My days are full. Negotiations.
Meetings. Phone calls. There's no
time to... to get to know you
better.

DONNA
Does your government own your
nights also?

ADAM
Sometimes.

DONNA
And tonight?

Adam peels off a number of Euros -- tosses them on the table.
He assists Donna from her chair.

She moves in real close -- gives Adam a kiss. Nothing
passionate. Short. Sweet.

DONNA

Let's take you for a test drive.

INT. THE VATICAN - CLEMENTINE HALL - DAY

Total silence. Delegates focus on Adam's empty chair.

Cliff fidgets -- wilts under the pressure. Addresses Jun:

CLIFF

Mister President?

Jun acknowledges him.

CLIFF

As I am sure everyone is well aware
Special Envoy Lazzaro has been
under extreme... stress.

His gaze sweeps annoyed delegates: no Happy Campers here.

CLIFF

I ask for your patience. I am
certain Mister Lazzaro will be well
enough to continue this afternoon.

Jun frowns -- zeroes in on Admiral Maximov:

JUN TAI WEI

Admiral Maximov? Any objections to
a short recess?

Maximov shakes his head.

JUN TAI WEI

Good. And if you have the time,
please see me after we adjourn.

Jun picks up the gavel: BAM!

JUN TAI WEI

We are adjourned until two this
afternoon.

Cliff turns to an AIDE:

CLIFF
Find him. Now!

CUT TO:

EXT. SMALL AIRSTRIP OUTSIDE ROME

Small aircraft: Piper; Cessna; Beech pepper the tarmac like colored confetti -- glisten in the Mediterranean sun.

Adam emerges from a hanger -- strides toward a 2009 Piper Meridian. He wears an Orange jump suit -- a parachute over his shoulder.

Donna follows -- chute already strapped to her back.

DONNA
Hey, wait up!

Adam slows -- she catches up.

DONNA
Jesus, Adam. You ashamed to be seen with me?

ADAM
Nervous.

DONNA
I do have that affect on men.

ADAM
And... I really shouldn't be here.

DONNA
One day, Adam. One day for yourself. You deserve it.

ADAM
There's something else.

DONNA
What?

ADAM
I don't like heights.

She links arms with him:

DONNA

You'll love it. Such a thrill. The ground racing toward you at eighty miles-per-hour. Nothing better except, maybe--

ADAM

Don't you worry your chute might not open?

She LAUGHS.

DONNA

Jesus H. Christ! You are afraid!

ADAM

Of dying?

Adam LAUGHS.

DONNA

Doesn't matter. If your chute doesn't open... enjoy the ride. You'll never feel a thing.

CUT TO:

EXT. PORTO RUFINA NEIGHBORHOOD

A canyon of Mediterranean architecture overlooks a river of cobblestone. In the bright Italian sun OLD WOMEN hang out second-story windows and exchange gossip.

A Vatican limo pulls to a stop. Cardinal Caramany and Young Albert emerge.

The Old Women spot the clerics -- stop their chatter -- cross themselves -- retreat into their homes.

Young Albert marches to an ancient, weathered door: KNOCKS.

OPEN COURTYARD - LATER

The two clerics relax around a weathered table. Young Albert reaches for an iced pitcher of lemonade, pours.

Cardinal Caramany DRUMS his fingers.

OLD WOMAN, 80s, traditional dress, glides down two steps. Excitement in her eyes -- a spring in her ancient legs.

She waves something in her gnarled hand, reaches Cardinal Caramany -- hands it over. A photograph:

INSERT PHOTO

Tattered. Black and white. TWO YOUNG WOMEN: one wears a SCHOOL UNIFORM; the other the uniform of a fascist youth group called Giovani Fasciste. This girl is the spitting image of Donna.

BACK TO SCENE

CARDINAL CARAMANY
(in Italian)
When was this taken?

OLD WOMEN
(in Italian)
Nineteen-forty-two. On my
eighteenth birthday.

CARDINAL CARAMANY
(in Italian)
You were beautiful.

Old Woman blushes -- dismisses his remark with a wave:

OLD WOMEN
(in Italian)
It was a long time ago. No?

CARDINAL CARAMANY
(in Italian)
And the girl with you?

OLD WOMEN
(in Italian)
My best friend. Maria. Maria Lucia
Giovenucci.

CARDINAL CARAMANY
(in Italian)
May I borrow this?

Off Old Woman's look.

CARDINAL CARAMANY
(in Italian)
Only for a day or two.

CUT TO:

INT. PIPER MERIDIAN AT TEN THOUSAND FEET

At the opened hatch Adam and Donna brace themselves against hurricane-force winds.

DONNA
(yells)
Ready?

Adam nods. She pulls down her goggles, gives a 'thumbs-up' and leaps.

Adam peers out and watches her plunge Earthward. He pulls down his goggles -- jumps. Enters:

FREE FALL

Rockets straight down. A human bullet.

He reaches Donna, spreads his arms and legs -- slows. Matches her speed.

Together they glide; tumble; roll. The ground approaches faster. And faster. And faster.

In a field below: a bulls-eye painted on the grass grows larger and larger.

Adam points to the target -- Donna nods.

She reaches out -- grabs Adam's ripcord -- pulls. His chute unfurls: SNAPS OPEN. He appears to rocket straight up.

Adam finds himself at the mercy of the wind and his own limited skill and watches in horror as

SEVERAL THOUSAND FEET BELOW

Donna plunges ever faster toward the target: a human meteor.

DONNA
WOOOOOOOOOO HOOOOOOOOOO!

She pulls her cord -- chute releases--
--never catches air.

She SLAMS into the ground with an ugly THUNK!
Bounces once.
Rolls twice.
Comes to a rest.

Adam lands nearby -- releases his chute. Races to Donna.
Kneels next to her still body:

ADAM

Damn you, Donna! Damn you!

Her eyes flicker; flutter; open. She smiles:

DONNA

What... a... RUSH! Makes me feel--

Adam pulls back. Relieved. Confused. Both at once.

ADAM

You're-- how?

DONNA

Mmmmmmmmm. Kiss me. Make love to me.

She pulls him to her -- kisses him with more passion than Adam has ever experienced. He pulls her chute over their intertwined bodies.