

Under-Covered

By

Nicholas Halsey (LettuceBacon&Tomato)

"Chasing Seconds" Episode 3

(c) 2013

INT. A NEWSROOM - DAY

TIFFANY HARRIS, an attractive news anchor.

TIFFANY

And now with more news on the new
Einstein-Rosen portal system, we go
to Wayne Largis in the field,
Wayne?

WAYNE is in a station that looks very similar to the London subway system. However instead of train tracks, large portals open in chambers and travelers pile into each one before it closes. Locations flash above the chambers showing the locations the bridge is traveling to.

WAYNE

Thanks Tiffany, the people I've
talked to have been extremely happy
with the bridge system. I'm signed
up to pass through to Cairo in less
than a minute, so we're thinking of
showing you a live trip through the
bridge.

TIFFANY

Have you been through a bridge
before?

WAYNE

This is my first time! I admit to
feeling a bit nervous. This is
also, I think, the first time a
rolling camera will be taken
through a bridge, so anyone's guess
what happens. Here we go!

Behind Wayne a bridge to Egypt flares to life. Wayne and his cameraman step through and the camera immediately cuts to
"Please Stand By."

TIFFANY

...Wayne?

Suddenly the feed is back and Wayne is in an Egyptian bridge station.

WAYNE

Wow! Um, it turns out the bridge
doesn't like cameras, but it was
incredible! I felt like I was
floating through a black void. It
was completely silent. Then BAM!
I'm here!

(CONTINUED)

He seemed really pleased with himself. The CAMERAMAN is also muttering in awe.

PAULA

Well, Wayne, thank you for that display!

WAYNE

Pleasure was all mine! From Cairo, Egypt, I'm Wayne Largis. Back to you Paula!

The image of Wayne is replaced with a picture of policemen at the Smithsonian.

PAULA

Next story for tonight, three individuals broke into the Smithsonian two days ago and stole the ROSS artificial intelligence system. Built by its namesake, Rudyard Oscar Shelton, it was freely available to visit at the Smithsonian wing dedicated to the Einstein-Rosen bridge and its inventors.

The image changes to ROSS' old display case.

PAULA

The suspects erased all security footage, but were described as a Cassowary, brown dog, and black cat, all in their early twenties. If anyone has any news on their whereabouts, there is a \$1,000 reward for any information that leads to their capture. A representative from the CIA guessed that the suspects are somewhere near Washington DC.

EXT. THE OUTSKIRTS OF TENANT'S WAY

JAMES, MALTE, and FLORENCE stand outside an extremely poor city.

MALTE

I wish we'd stayed in Washington DC...

TITLE CARD

EXT. A FILTHY STREET - DAY

The three wander through streets covered in trash and homeless. Each hobo shakes a cup at them as they walk by. James and Malte are observing the sites, Florence is keeping her eyes on her feet.

JAMES

So...this is Tenant's Way.

MALTE

Glad to be here.

FLORENCE

You guys need to talk quieter...

JAMES

Why?

FLORENCE

We're outsiders. Nobody here will like getting bothered by outsiders.

James takes out a small map.

JAMES

Well, we won't be here long. Just gotta scan these specific coordinates, see that they're wrong, and leave.

MALTE

They're gonna be wrong. No way Dr. Zanasiu would ever come here.

JAMES

We don't know what this city was like ten years ago.

FLORENCE

I do. This place has always been a penniless mess. My mom warned me never to come here...

James leads them to a weed-choked lot outside an unmarked building with its windows tarped over. Borrowing Malte's switchblade, he cuts them a hole under a barbed wire fence.

JAMES

It's up ahead. Should be in this alleyway.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY

The building casts a dark shadow over most of the alleyway. James pulls out the radio-flashlight and starts fiddling with it.

FLORENCE
So, what exactly happens when you scan an area?

JAMES
The flashlight beeps and flashes red. That means no.

FLORENCE
And if it beeps yes? Does a bridge open up or something?

JAMES
No, the time will still be in the unknown future. Nothing very cool happens even if--

Suddenly a bridge flares to life in the shadowy part of the alleyway. All three jump as an Einstein-Rosen bridge is revealed in the cool blue light of the portal's event horizon.

Some crates tumble out and the bridge closes.

MALTE
Uhhhh...

FLORENCE
Junior?

The three advance cautiously and walk over to boxes. Malte pops one open with his switchblade.

Dozens of syringes of drugs are inside. Florence and James trade a glance. Malte fingers a silver chip sitting on top of the syringes.

STRIPPER
Halt!

A voice shouts behind them. They turn and see several scantily-clad STRIPPERS wielding heavy rifles.

STRIPPER
What the hell are you doing here?

Even James is struck dumb.

(CONTINUED)

JAMES

I...we didn't know anything was happening here. This is a misunderstanding.

STRIPPER

Then you're coming with us!

The strippers advance, but suddenly Florence grabs one of the large drug crates and holds it in front of her.

FLORENCE

Get behind me!

STRIPPER

Hey! Stop!

Malte springs behind Florence but James lags due to confusion. One of the strippers whacks him with the butt of her rifle and he falls to the ground.

Florence and Malte retreat to the hole in the fence and slip through, leaving the crate behind her. The strippers wave their guns threateningly.

STRIPPER

You better come back if you want your friend!

EXT. THE STREETS - DAY

Florence and Malte dash away as far as they can.

MALTE

My god! What the hell was--?

FLORENCE

I'm not exactly sure what that was.

MALTE

How are we going to rescue James?

FLORENCE

I'm...not sure.

INT. A DARK ROOM

James, is tied up, bound, and gagged in a room with extremely little light coming from a tinted window. He wears only his boxers. He stirs awake.

He tries to mumble but the gag makes it impossible to do more than grunt. He tries to grunt loudly, but nobody replies.

INT. OUTSIDE THE DARK ROOM - DAY

Three strippers are peering at him through a tinted window. One of them, a large-breasted BUNNY named Asusana, is clearly in charge.

STRIPPER

Are we gonna go talk to him?

ASUSANA

Not yet. You always let them stew a bit first...

EXT. TENANT'S WAY STREETS - DAY

Malte and Florence walk down the dirt-streaked streets.

MALTE

We should find somewhere to eat.
Any idea where a restaurant is from here?

FLORENCE

How should I know?

Malte attempts to ask an unpleasant MAN walking in the opposite direction.

MALTE

Excuse me, do you--hey!

Florence grabs him and pulls him away.

FLORENCE

Are you mental?

MALTE

No. I'm hungry?

FLORENCE

People around here are going to shank you before giving you the time of day! Did you ever leave your house when growing up? (She softens up when he can't find a response.) Look, just stay silent. I'll find a restaurant.

INT - BAR - DAY

Florence and Malte sit in an impossibly seedy bar. Raucous MEN are laughing and drinking and a radio on the bar is playing staticky football announcers. Florence is on edge, closely aware of the dangers of the situation. Malte is obliviously enjoying some greasy spoon soup.

MALTE

This is quite good soup! (Florence looks incredulously at him) Do we have a plan for James?

FLORENCE

No, but we're not giving up. A bridge opened back there, we can't let that go.

When she said that, a shadowy female HYENA at a nearby table perks up and glances over out of her peripherals.

MALTE

They had guns, Florence. Big guns.

FLORENCE

They're strippers. Maybe they're not very good with them...I wish I'd gotten away with that crate, we could use it as a bargaining chip.

MALTE

Well...actually I got this.

He holds out the silver chip he had inspected from the crate. Florence's eyes go wide.

FLORENCE

What is it?

MALTE

I can't remember...but I recall seeing it in my books. I know it has something to do with the bridge. So they probably want it.

FLORENCE

Hm. I can work with that. But negotiating in this form can get ugly fast. Leave the talking to me.

MALTE

What is it with you and James and not letting me talk?

(CONTINUED)

FLORENCE

We usually hope to make a good first impression. If we ever don't, we'll lead with you. (She gets up) Just put the money on the table, you don't have to flag a waitress or anything.

Malte removes some bills and places them on the table. The hyena notes the pocket he used and gets up after they leave.

INT. A DARK ROOM

James is fidgeting. He still can't budge the chair. Suddenly the door opens and Asusana walks in wearing a leather bikini and fishnet stockings.

ASUSANA

I hope you're enjoying your...accommodations. They're reserved for extra-special visitors like yourself.

She begins sumptuously pacing around him, not even removing his gag.

ASUSANA

You know...most visitors come in through the front door. Whatever were you doing in the back?

Asusana stops in front of him as he silently stares back. His eyes widen and he starts trying to speak through the gag as she draws a long black folded whip from the back of her panty strap.

ASUSANA

Don't be shy. Speak up, I'm curious.

He of course can't speak, and her grin suggests she knows this. She cracks the whip across his chest and he cries out.

ASUSANA

You're not being a very gracious guest. I ask one simple question...

She cracks him across the inner thigh, then the arm. Both times he cries out and struggles, but he can do nothing. She leans in very close and he draw silent, tears streaming down his face.

(CONTINUED)

ASUSANA

That was three times. One for you,
one for each of your friends. Next
time we chat, I'd like to know more
about them!

She strides out of the room, leaving him in darkness.

EXT. THE STREETS - DAY

Florence and Malte are returning to the place they'd lost
James.

MALTE

We're doing this now?

FLORENCE

It's not going to get easier.

As they walk, Florence quickly becomes aware that TWO MEN
are following them.

FLORENCE

Oh, crap.

She grabs Malte and moves faster but two other men are in
front of them. Realizing she's surrounded, she has no choice
but to approach the ones ahead and nervously speak.

FLORENCE

What seems to be the
problem...officer?

The man reveals a police badge under his plainclothes.

POLICE OFFICER

Are you the woman in this picture?

He holds up a Wanted FBI photo of the trio.

FLORENCE

Err...no?

MALTE

Holy crap we're wanted?

A pause as everyone looks at him. Then gunshots ring out
from an alleyway. The police duck for cover, Florence grabs
Malte and forces him to move. Ducking behind a car, she
notices just in time another POLICE OFFICER open fire on
them from across the street. She dives into the nearby
alleyway, then waves at Malte. But Malte is too scared to
move.

(CONTINUED)

Then the hyena from the bar slinks out of the shadows behind the officer, slides his kosh out of his belt, and beans him with it. Darting across the street, she grabs Malte and drags him into Florence's alleyway.

The police scatter. The hyena straightens her cloak as Malte scrambles away from her. Florence rushes to Malte.

FLORENCE

Malte! Were you hit? (Regards their helper) Er...thank you.

CIMARRON

I don't expect thanks. That would imply you owe me. (Glances outside the alleyway) The coast is clear. The coppers always give up if it isn't an easy pick.

MALTE

Why'd we trip their attention in the first place?

CIMARRON

Why, you broke this town's most important law.

FLORENCE

Which is?

CIMARRON

It's unwritten, but everybody breaks it. You got on Asusana's bad side.

FLORENCE

She's one of the strippers?

Cimarron nods.

CIMARRON

She's one of the mafia.

MALTE

That was a mafia?

CIMARRON

The most powerful in town. (extends a hand) Name's Cimarron.

MALTE

I'm Malte--

Florence silences him with a glance.

(CONTINUED)

FLORENCE

Nice to meet you, Cimarron.

Cimarron chuckles.

CIMARRON

You need to keep a tighter leash on your bird.

FLORENCE

Could we...learn more about Asusana?

CIMARRON

Why don't you visit? I live above the club across the street.

She points to an obvious brothel.

FLORENCE

Er...we're good. Thanks.

Cimarron shrugs.

CIMARRON

Take care of yourself. You'll do well enough on your own, you don't need much to live here. If you visit, just say Cimarron sent you.

She glides across the street.

MALTE

Why aren't we going with her?

FLORENCE

I don't trust her. Also, the only people like *that* who live above clubs are--

Malte cries out as he checks his pocket.

MALTE

My money! She stole all my money! She must have pick-pocketed me while she was rescuing me!

Cimarron has reached the door to the brothel, but turns and smiles at the pair instead of entering. Florence growls under her breath.

(CONTINUED)

FLORENCE

Guess we have an appointment with a
skid row therapist after all...

EXT. BROTHEL BAR - DAY

In general this bar is a less violent one than the last, but
its still unsafe and seedy. Cimarron leads the pair past a
jowly BARTENDER who has a collection of standing dolls in
little cubicles behind the bar.

CIMARRON

These two are with me, Brown Sugar.

Bartender nods and flips the doll looking like Cimarron on
its back.

INT. CIMARRON'S BEDROOM - DAY

Suspicious noises are coming from the walls. Cimarron slides
onto her bed. Malte finally can't repress his rage.

MALTE

Give me my money back! Now!

CIMARRON

You'll get your money, but I'm
holding it for collateral.

FLORENCE

Until what?

CIMARRON

Shouldn't be hard. I suspect you
may have some unfinished business
with Asusana as well.

FLORENCE

She has a friend of ours captive,
but it was a mistake, we didn't
mean to be in the area of her
bridge.

CIMARRON

Won't matter to her. But now we can
help each other.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

A darkened station. The police from the attempted capture stumble in, disgruntled. The light flicks on without them clicking it.

Pomson sits in the chief's chair, smiling authoritatively.

OFFICER

They got away.

Pomson doesn't break her smile, but stands up and walks toward the officer.

INT. A DARK ROOM

Asusana walks into James room, wearing only a scanty bra and panties. James observes her nervously.

Asusana looks sorry for him. She sensuously kneels beside him and holds his chin up, saying comforting words.

CIMARRON (V.O.)

I won't lie to you, your friend is in danger. She seems nice and understanding, and always gives an easy way out.

Asusana slips a single strap of her bra, and also begins fondling him expertly through his boxers. She asks him something softly, whispering in his ear.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Pomson walks up to the officer who spoke, looking understanding.

CIMARRON (V.O.)

But if anyone doesn't give her absolutely everything she wants, her act can grow cold in a split second.

INT. A DARK ROOM

When James shakes his head, wide-eyed and helpless, Asusana glares and suddenly clenches her fist around his genitals. He chokes and cries out.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Pomson slaps the officer incredibly hard, sending his face flying into the desk. The others get out of her way as she strides from the room.

INT. CIMARRON'S BEDROOM - DAY

MALTE

How do you know her so well?

CIMARRON

She used to be second-in-command of the Stripper Mafia. My second-in-command. I ran everything, until I negotiated the under-the-table purchase of a discontinued model of the Einstein-Rosen bridge. The purchase almost bankrupted us, and she used the excuse to run me out of town. (Her eyes glint angrily.) Her first shipment was today. It contained an activation key, which will allow continued operation of the bridge. Without that key, the network won't accept her bridge.

MALTE

Hey! I--

Florence shushes him quickly.

CIMARRON

I already know you have it. Which is great. An even better ace in the hole than what I stole when I left.

She crosses to her desk and pulls out a manila envelope. Florence opens her mouth to ask but Cimarron silently pockets the envelope within the folds of her cloak.

FLORENCE

Well, we're not just giving you the key.

CIMARRON

Oh, I guessed. I understand how to play the game. I offer to help you rescue your friend in return for the key.

(CONTINUED)

MALTE

And all of my money back!

CIMARRON

Half.

Florence and Malte look at each other. They know they don't really have a choice.

FLORENCE

Fine. You get the key only when Junior is safe with us again.

CIMARRON

Deal. Unfortunately that forces me to expedite my time frame somewhat, as he'll probably be dead by tonight. But I've always been a risk-taker!

FLORENCE

Time frame for what?

CIMARRON

Never you mind. First thing's first: to get you dressed.

FLORENCE AND MALTE

...Dressed?

INT. THE STRIPPER MAFIA HEADQUARTERS - TWILIGHT

A knock on the door, and a LIZARD lady opens the door for Florence and Malte. Florence is in a stripper outfit and her fur is dyed white, and Malte is in a bouncer black suit and disguised as a Sussex Chicken.

The RECEPTIONIST, a skunk, looks up.

RECEPTIONIST

Who are you?

FLORENCE

My name is Krystal. I'm applying to get a stripping license from the...guild.

RECEPTIONIST

Who is your friend?

(CONTINUED)

FLORENCE
My personal bodyguard Bruno.

RECEPTIONIST
How much experience do you have?

FLORENCE
Two years.

The receptionist looks suspiciously at her, then motions to take a seat. They do. She hands Florence a form and stub of pencil.

RECEPTIONIST
Completely fill this out.

She disappears into the back. Florence writes quickly.

MALTE
How did we get talked into this?

FLORENCE
Well, Cim...our friend was right,
it's our fault she's moving early.
We just have to find her contact
and deliver the message. Then we
can get out of here until
everything settles down.

The skunk sticks her head in.

RECEPTIONIST
Miss Krystal? They'll take you in
Office 10. Bruno can stay here.

FLORENCE
(to Malte)
Come on.

MALTE
But she said--

FLORENCE
Empty request. You're a personal
bodyguard, remember?

They head into the depths of the headquarters.

INT. THE STRIPPER MAFIA HQ HALLWAYS - TWILIGHT

The hallways resemble a vaguely office setting, except with more dirt, risque posters on the walls, and a general air of delinquency. After walking past a few doors, the pair dart the wrong way.

After a few minutes running down hallways, Malte get frustrated.

MALTE

The plan was to *pretend* to get lost, not *actually*--

FLORENCE

Oh my god, Malte, look!

She points at a tinted window, spotting James nude, blindfolded, covered in whip marks, and still tied to the chair. They open the door and rush through.

INT. A DARK ROOM

James starts and begins struggling when he hears someone enter.

JAMES

I promise you, I don't know anything! Please!

FLORENCE

Quiet!

JAMES

Florence?

FLORENCE

Just hold on, all right? We've got a plan, and--

She cuts off when Asusana and two gun-toting strippers enter the room.

ASUSANA

Who are you?

FLORENCE

Oh, this *is* Office 10! I told you we went the right way, Bruno!

(CONTINUED)

ASUSANA

What?

FLORENCE

No offense, I just thought my
licensing would take place
somewhere with more...lights.

ASUSANA

What? *Who are you*, I said?

FLORENCE

I'm the one applying for a
stripping license! (extends hand)
Krystal?

ASUSANA

And you came right here?

FLORENCE

We were told to come to Office 10.

ASUSANA

Does this look like an office?

FLORENCE

To be honest, nothing has looked
like an office.

Asusana looks incredibly suspicious.

ASUSANA

You picked *this* room at random?

FLORENCE

I thought it was...

Asusana holds her hand up for silence.

ASUSANA

Kick that man.

FLORENCE

Why?

ASUSANA

In the balls. Now.

Florence gingerly takes her stiletto off, then kicks James
in the genitals without hesitating. He screams.

Asusana hasn't taken her eyes off of Florence's.

(CONTINUED)

ASUSANA
Again, harder! Again!

Florence repeats twice, harder each time, until James is shaking and moaning raggedly. Malte looks ready to puke, even the strippers look surprised. Florence seems indifferent, even smiles.

FLORENCE
Is this really a part of stripping
in Tenant's Way? I'm going to like
it here.

ASUSANA
Your bodyguard looks a bit queasy.

FLORENCE
It's a bit of a sensitive topic for
him.

ASUSANA
Yes...come with me.

She leads them out of the room. Malte hesitates, glancing at James attempting to close his legs.

MALTE
I...she's--

JAMES
Shut...up! Go!

Malte leaves quickly.

INT. A STAGE - TWILIGHT

A grimy stage, currently unused, with a pole. STRIPPERS sit languidly in various places, smoking, doing drugs, or chatting. One, a HUMAN with long auburn hair, is sitting innocently in the lap of a hulking SECURITY GUARD, who looks increasingly smitten.

Asusana leads Florence to the stage, then motions for spotlights.

ASUSANA
Everybody, this is Krystal! She
fancies herself a stripper! Let's
see what she can do!

She ushers her guards and Malte off the stage. Florence stands blinking in the spotlight.

(CONTINUED)

ASUSANA

Well? If you're a stripper, you
should be familiar with the concept
of *showtime*!

Stripping music begins playing. Florence uncertainly begins dancing. She's not doing a very great job. Everyone notices.

Suddenly, Florence locks eyes with Malte and smiles at him. Suddenly her stripping gets better. Before long she is giving an absolutely stellar performance.

When the song finishes, she stands triumphantly next to the pole, her clothes scattered around her, and the other strippers look very impressed. When the human leaps to her feet and starts clapping, the others join in and give Florence a standing ovation.

Once everyone is done cheering, all eyes focus on Asusana, who seems similarly surprised.

ASUSANA

Humph. Guess you are a stripper.
Get cleaned up and meet me in my
office in ten minutes. I'll sign
your license myself.

The auburn-haired human raises her hand happily.

KAMAILE

Ooh! I'll show her to the dressing
room!

Followed by the human, Malte rushes up as Florence gathers her clothes and heads backstage.

INT. BACKSTAGE TO DRESSING ROOMS - TWILIGHT

MALTE

Where did you learn to strip like
that?

FLORENCE

Maybe one day I'll tell you. But
for now--(she addresses the
auburn-haired human) Can you tell
me who Kamaile Melodie is?

KAMAILE

That's me! I volunteered to be with
you alone because...

She trails off. Florence keeps her voice at a whisper.

(CONTINUED)

FLORENCE

We're with Cimarron. The plan is moving forward tonight.

KAMAILE

Tonight?! How soon?

FLORENCE

Well, we got a bit delayed, so like...right now.

KAMAILE

I need to get Axel out of the picture! Excuse me!

INT. A STAGE - TWILIGHT

Kamaile rushes back to the burly security guard, assuming her ultra-perky personality.

KAMAILE

That was quite a performance! Wasn't she great?

AXEL

Yup...Welp, better go tell the night shift to go replace the day guards. They never go do it themselves--

He tries to sit up, but Kamaile coyly pushes him back into the chair.

KAMAILE

Actually, that dance got me rather... excited. I was thinking you and me could go somewhere private, and I could try to dance even better...just for you...

Axel smiles obligingly and Kamaile leads him into the backrooms.

INT. DRESSING ROOMS - NIGHT

Florence has just had time to slip her panties back on in the dressing room and Malte is staying out of her way. Then they both hear shrieks outside.

INT. BACKSTAGE TO DRESSING ROOMS - NIGHT

Florence peeks out and sees strippers fleeing as Cimarron leads armed MERCENARIES down the hallway.

FLORENCE
Looks to be going well.

CIMARRON
You and Kamaile both did your jobs.
Come on.

INT. A STAGE - NIGHT

The strippers too late to flee the stage hold their hands up in panicked surrender as Cimarron's men storm the floor.

MERCENARY
Hands where we can see them!

CIMARRON
There's been a change of leadership
in this mafia!

STRIPPER
Cimarron?

CIMARRON
I've some choice words for you lot
in a moment. Now where is that
backstabbing bunny?

ASUSANA
Right here, bitch!

She appears on the second-floor balcony, holding James hostage with a knife to his throat.

ASUSANA
This dog mean something to you?

CIMARRON
We have you outnumbered and
outgunned! Put him down and I
promise to let you live!

ASUSANA
I should have known those newcomers
were spies! So obvious!

Suddenly Kamaile staggers onto the stage, looking beaten.

(CONTINUED)

KAMAILE

Cimarron!

Cimarron cries out as a bullet passes through Kamaile's heart. She falls off the stage as Axel appears from backstage, holding a smoking pistol and followed by a contingency of GUARDS, even larger than Cimarron's force.

ASUSANA

You think I wouldn't know who your spies were? I've driven you out once, whore, and I'll do it again!

A tense standoff begins.

CIMARRON

If you had suspected anything of Kamaile, you would not have let her live to see today!

ASUSANA

Well, you can give her congratulations for getting this far when you see her tonight! I should have killed you the first time...

Her guards aim their sights. Cimarron's men are getting antsy.

Suddenly Pomson and a contingency of POLICE OFFICERS come rappelling from the rafters. Asusana's men change their target.

ASUSANA

Fire!

Gunfire cuts down several officers. Pomson aims her pistol and fires, hitting Asusana in the forehead as she screams.

Cimarron's men open fire, some at the police, some at Asusana's guards, both of whom waste no time returning fire. In the threeway, Pomson's rappel breaks, and Axel approaches her crumpled form angrily. She surprises him by rolling through his legs, snatching the knife from his belt and slashing one of his Achilles' tendons with it. After a brutal fight where she uses his weight against him repeatedly, she slices his throat with his own knife.

James, recently freed from a similar fate, grabs a random police rappel and slides down to the stage floor. Malte catches him.

(CONTINUED)

MALTE

This is our chance! Go!

Florence attempts to catch up with them, but two police block her, guns drawn. She tackles one and brutally punches his neck as the other misses his shot. Rolling the first on top of her, she retrieves his kosh as the second fires, hitting his partner in the back. Florence throws the dead officer at the standing one, then uses the distraction to knock him out with a strike to the face.

Suddenly she sees Pomson heading right for her. She quickly sprints after Malte and James. Pomson pursues doggedly, cutting several attackers out of her way.

INT. HALLWAY TO OUTSIDE - NIGHT

Cimarron appears by their side as the three flee the melee.

CIMARRON

The key! Give it to me!

Malte hesitates, then tosses it to her. She catches it and motions for them to follow.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

Pomson bursts into the alleyway where the drug crates still sit. The whirling vortex of the Einstein-Rosen bridge greets her. Cimarron stands at the controls.

POMSON

Where are they? They didn't--?

CIMARRON

I promised them a trip for their help in overthrowing the mafia. Did you need them for something?

Pomson races at the portal but it shuts down.

POMSON

Where are they now?

CIMARRON

Peoria.

Pomson angrily draws her CIA badge.

(CONTINUED)

POMSON

As a federal agent of the Central Intelligence Agency, you are under--

Cimarron pulls out her own badge.

CIMARRON

Officer Kendra Grillion, Tenant's Way Bureau of Investigations. You'll find I wasn't on the roster for the mafia you're arresting right now.

Pomson looks shocked, but quickly recovers.

POMSON

In that case, officer, allow me to confiscate this illegal bridge--

Cimarron pulls out the manila envelope and shows Pomson the papers.

CIMARRON

Certifications for this bridge to be an official cargo transport for this fair city. Controlled by the Tenant's Way PD, specifically myself.

Pomson grabs the papers.

POMSON

How the hell did you get these?

Cimarron smiles.

CIMARRON

The Tenant's Way PD is prepared to assist you in arresting the strippers of this establishment. Except of course for the ones with licenses. They already have such experience patrolling these parts, I have plans to form a Stripper Police Force.

Pomson is at a loss for words. Angrily, she stomps back into the building. Cimarron glances at the stacked crates, behind which the trio is hiding.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY

The same place the next morning. Strippers and mercenaries are in attendance, now dressed as police officers, and Cimarron is addressing James, Malte, and Florence, who has washed the dye out of her fur.

CIMARRON

For my first act as Chief of the Stripper City Watch, I'm granting you three off-the-book amnesty from all preexisting federal crimes within the city. Whatever that woman wants you for, we won't be arresting you for it in Tenant's Way.

The three smile.

CIMARRON

Furthermore, since you supplied the key that makes this bridge operational, you get one free journey through it. Anywhere on the planet you like. In case you had plans other than staying in Tenant's Way.

James excitedly checks his map.

JAMES

That'd be perfect! I was wondering how we were going to reach the next place! It's an island in the middle of the Atlantic--

Malte cuts him off.

MALTE

Actually, er, is there some way we could not use the bridge?

The other two look at him.

MALTE

Just...find another way of transport. The Atlantic is right off the coast after all.

CIMARRON

Let me see. (borrows James' map)
Hm, I believe one of our shipments to Cuba could make a stopoff. It's

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CIMARRON (cont'd)
quite out of the way, but we can
manage. It's the old ship's last
voyage before the bridge replaces
it, anyway.

MALTE
Thank you...

EXT. THE UPPER DECK OF A CARGO BOAT - DAY

The cargo boat *Desnuda* is puffing through the sea. The trio
are sitting on deck.

FLORENCE
So...Junior? Sorry for...kicking
you...

JAMES
Had you done anything else we'd all
have been found out immediately. I
should be thanking you.

Some moments of silence, then...

MALTE
Hey! Cimarron never gave me my
money back!

He leaps up, James motions to sit back down.

JAMES
It's okay. She supplied us for our
coming hike. Money's no good on an
uninhabited island after all.
Besides, we have each other. That's
more important than any amount of
money.

FLORENCE
Yeah...

She looks troubled.

JAMES
Flo? You all right?

FLORENCE
I...think the boat rocking is
getting to me. Just gonna rest
indoors for a bit.

She leaves them and heads below to the bottom decks.

EXT. LOWER DECK OF CARGO BOAT- DAY

Lugging a lifeboat off its rail, she teeters it over the edge and flings the tarp partially off. Pomson sticks her head out, surprised.

POMSON

Hey! What's going on?

FLORENCE

The deal's off. I'm not helping you any more.

POMSON

What? You can't--!

She tries to leave the lifeboat, but notices that Florence is literally the only thing stopping the lifeboat from falling off the side.

FLORENCE

I won't let you capture Junior and Malte. If you catch them, you better lock me up too.

POMSON

Are you daft, girl? I'm offering you a fortune!

Florence begins pushing the boat off the deck.

POMSON

Don't you dare--ahhh!!!

The lifeboat plummets off the edge and hits the water with a hard splash. Florence wordlessly walks away.

EXT. LIFEBOAT - DAY

Pomson helplessly watches the cargo boat steam away. Beside her in the boat, a timer counts down in milliseconds, a few hours away from zero.