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Obsession

By Brian De Palma

Ladies and gentlemen!
Ladies and gentlemen...
I would like to propose a toast...
to Michael and Elizabeth Courtland...
this world's last romantics.
Happy tenth anniversary!
Happy anniversary!
And if you'll allow me,
a special toast to this man...
a man of endless energy
and ambition...
the cream of the new South...
my dear friend
and new senior partner...
in what will soon be the finest real
estate development in New Orleans...
the new Pontchartrain Estates!
Thank you, Bob.
Bob has very generously
referred to me...
as part of the cream
of the new South.
I think that might be
a little bit genteel for me.
I would be more inclined
to consider myself more of...
oh, skim milk of the Middle West
or something.
Energy...
ambition.
I would hope...
that we could direct
those qualities...
to try and retain...
for the new South...
some of the graceful values
of the old South.
- Daddy.
- What?
- Will you dance with me?
- Will I dance with you?
What will you do
if I dance with you?
I'll dance with you.

Let's bring Mommy in, okay?

- Good night.

- Good night, John.

Bob, thanks again.

Thank you, Bob.

Good night, Debbie.

Good night.

Thank you.

It was nice having you.

Good night, Carl.

Mommy! Mommy!

Honey?

Turn it on.

Come on, kid. Talk, damn it!

Tell your daddy how much
you want him to bring that money!

Daddy, please bring the money,
please!

- That's real good.

- Please come get me and Mommy, please!

That's good. That's real good.

Yes?

I'm supposed to bring this
to Mr. Courtland.

Come in.

- What is it, son?

- Mr. Courtland?

The man said you'd give me a tip.

Five dollars! Gee, thanks.

- What did he look like?

- Who?

The man who gave you the bag.

Just a man.

Let's start at the beginning.

Slow down.

Come on, kid! Talk, damn it!

Tell your daddy how much
you want him to bring that money!

Daddy, please bring the money,
please!

Please come get me and Mommy,
please!

Call the police.

I guess I'll have to take my money

out of the Pontchartrain project.
I know, Court.
Just thinkin' about it
makes me sick.
You know, I'm not gonna
take advantage of this.
We're gonna develop the land
just as you planned.
We'll build your park.
Hell, I like trees.
If you pick up the option,
you're not obligated to do my plan.
You can do anything you want with it.
You know that.
I want to do this thing for you.
Thanks, Bob. I appreciate that.
Of course, there's still
a week on the option.
If the police can get your money back,
it'll be just like before.
Well, I guess somebody
oughta get to the bank.
I'll go there myself.
Inspector Brie is here.
He'd like to see you right now.
- Would you send him in?
- Okay.
Hello, Inspector.
Thank you for coming out. Sit down.
Thank you.
Would you like a cup of coffee?
No, thank you, Mr. Courtland.
It's an excruciating situation.
I guess I don't have to
tell you that.
Preparing for the worst
and hoping for the best.
I've seen many cases
very similar to this.
They all ended up with the successful
return of the hostages...
and the apprehension
of the kidnapers.
It's just a matter of intelligence

and calm nerves.
Just try to leave this as much
as possible to us, Mr. Courtland.
There's nothing you can really do.
I'm willing to pay the money.
The money isn't important.
That's the hell of it, Mr. Courtland.
These men are professionals.
If they're caught without the loot,
they give up.
If they got the money in hand,
we may have a very dangerous fight.
Are you sure?
Absolutely.
It is, of course,
finally your decision.
What would you do?
Something the lab has developed.
Something the lab has developed.
We go through the drop
as instructed.
False money
and a small radio transmitter...
in a locked briefcase.
We track the pickup man
by radio truck.
He leads us to the hostages.
Foolproof.
At no point will the lives
of your wife and daughter be in danger.
Just leave it to us.
Give me an estimation.
I got it, I got it!
You oughta be happy, little girl.
Your daddy come through with the money.
Everything's gonna be all right.
Mommy, Mommy!
Daddy brought the money!
What the hell is that?
Transmitter.
Son of a bitch!
Look at this. This is what
your old man thinks you're worth!
- Nothin'!

- Mommy!
This is Detective Brie.
This is Detective Brie
of the New Orleans police force.
The house is surrounded.
Come out with your hands raised
and you will not be harmed.
- What do we do?
- Be calm. Get the knife.
Don't panic.
Cut those ropes
and let's get outta here.
Break that window open.
Mommy! Mommy!
Don't shoot unless you
want the kid to get it!
Hold your fire. Hold your fire.
Peterson, this is Brie.
We're on the Broussard Road
approaching the bridge.
Are your roadblocks in place?
All set on your side, Inspector.
I'm helping an oil truck
off the road over here.
Get it out of there!
We're on the bridge now!
The wife and daughter of New Orleans
businessman Michael Courtland...
were killed yesterday...
when a kidnap-rescue effort
sadly backfired.
Over here is Inspector August Brie,
who's in charge of this case.
Inspector, can you tell us
exactly what happened here?
I'm sorry.
I can't divulge any information
at this time.
It's just been too tragic,
that's all.
The police did all they could.
The search for the bodies
remains fruitless...
hampered by the explosion

of the automobile...
and the currents of the Mississippi.
Here are your tickets.
Now, remember, you leave

at 12:

You arrive in Rome at 9:10
and you take the Rapido to Florence.
- Do you have your passport?
- Yeah.
I'll put these in your briefcase.
You about ready, Michael?
I won't be a second.
What's that Italian's name,
D'Annunzio?
He's a bit of a bore,
I'm afraid.
A rich one, though.
I hope his English
is better than my Italian.
You let me take care of him.
He's very susceptible to flattery.
He's gonna love it when I tell him
he's as wise as Caesar...
and as honest as the pope.
You know, I'm gonna like
this trip, Bob.
Really, I'm lookin' forward to it.
I can find out what you were doing on
the Florentine junkets all these years.
Food, money...
and above all art, my man.
I'm a lover of fine art.
- It's my only vice.
- You're just a Renaissance man, Robert.

He said 8:

Oh, thanks, Bob.
You know, I think you're right.
I should have come back
to Italy years ago.
I told you, old boy.
It's the birthplace of western art.
One thing that puzzles me.

How do these old guys
get such young wives?
- I'll ask them.
- Don't.
I think so too. Would you like
to see a picture of my wife?
Picture of your wife?
Go ahead, show him a picture.
As Americans say, "Such a jewel."
Wonderful woman.
And cook... such a cook.
She's lovely.
This is Maria.
Such a wonderful woman.
- And I have six children.
- She's lovely.
Lovely lady.
Aren't you glad you asked?
A fantastico woman.
That's why I have to make
so much money.
She loves money,
and she deserves it.
- Everybody likes money.
- And women.
Oh, not everybody likes money, signor.
You take my partner here,
Michael.
He and I own, in New Orleans...
one of the biggest, best plots of land
in the suburban city.
For 15, 16 years...
he has refused to build anything
on that land.
Nothing but a tomb.
If you gentlemen will excuse me,
it's a little late.
Late? He thinks it's late.
Hell, I haven't even danced yet.
You should have stayed with us
last night, Court.
We aren't getting any younger.
Found that out, did you?
You're not upset

about last night, are you?
So what are we gonna do today?
I don't know. I thought we might
just do a little sightseeing...
absorb a little culture
and a little less wine.
That sounds great.
Isn't this the church
where you and Elizabeth met?
I'll be right back.
Well, how was it, Court?
The same.
Well, you about ready to go back
to the old U.S. Of A., Court?
I thought I'd like to stay around
a few more days.
Oh?
I'd like to go back
to that church again.
Why do you wanna do that?
Will you come with me?
Well, okay, if it'd
make you feel better.
Oh, my God.
- You sure you're gonna be all right?
- Yeah, I'll be fine.
- I just need a few days.
- All right.
You take real good care
of yourself now.
Thanks, Bob.
Oh, that's all right.
I speak English.
You are American?
You like the Madonna?
It was painted in 1328...
by Bernardo Daddi.
That's early Renaissance.
- You a student?
- No.
I used to be...
what do you call it?
Bilingual secretary.
Then one day I read

about the restoration project...
and I said, "Sandra,
the Madonna needs you."
So I quit my dull job,
and here I am...
an art historian.
I can't think of anything
more important.
Well, at least they don't
holler and scream at you...
when you talk to strange men.
What do you do?
I'm in land development,
real estate.
Ah. Well, that sounds important.
It's not.
My name is Courtland.
Michael Courtland.
Happy to meet you.
I'm Sandra.
Sandra Portinari.
You've been doing this work
a long time?
Oh, I'm not doing the restoration.
I'm just a workman.
But I prepare everything
for the specialist.
You see, several years ago...
long after the floods...
moisture seeped into a portion
of the altarpiece...
and it began to peel...
revealing an older painting
underneath.
Then the art scholars
had to decide what to do.
Should they remove and destroy
a great painting by Daddi...
to uncover what appears to be
a crude first draft underneath it?
Or should they restore
the original...
but never know for sure
what lies beneath it?

What would you do?
Hold on to it.
Beauty should be protected.
Good. That is what
the scholars decided to do.
Now you have a free lecture,
and you don't have to read the brochure.
I wondered if I might...
repay you for your lecture...
and ask you to dinner somewhere.
You don't understand.
Dinner can be
a pretty serious affair here.
Lunch. I know a place nearby.
Signor, I thought it was the Italian men
who picked up the American women.
All right. Lunch.
But I have to work another
hour and a half before I go.
I'll wait.
So you were in Florence before?
A long time ago.
I was stationed near here
after the war.
I wasn't even born,
but my mother often told me...
how hard times were then.
You live with your mother?
Not anymore. I have an apartment
near Ponte Vecchio.
But I was raised by my mother.
My father deserted us
a long time ago.
That's sad.
What was Florence like
during the Occupation?
Confused.
I'm really not an expert
on the Occupation.
My mind is elsewhere.
I met my wife there.
Oh, the plot thickens.
Let us sit and tell sad tales...
about deserted daughters

and lonely husbands.
I thought you had a familiar
melancholy look...
when you came into the church.
That wasn't...
She died a long time ago.
I'm sorry. I didn't mean that.
It's just that a single girl...
meets a lot of men,
mostly Americans...
who want to tell her
about their wives.
It's not very flattering.
What was she like?
Elizabeth...
She was very much like you.
Like me?
She was Italian?
No, she looked very much like you.
Do you have a picture of her?
I really have to go now.
May I see you again sometime?
Sure.
We could have
a nonserious dinner.
- Seriously.
- When?
- Tonight.
- Tonight?
Is that all right?
That's only five hours from now.
Plenty of time to change.
All right, but I have to go see
my mother at the hospital after work.
I'll meet you there.
Oh, it's the San Giovanni.
I know.
All right.
See you. Ciao.
Ciao.
You're very fond
of that restaurant, aren't you?
Yeah.
That's where you met Elizabeth.

No, we met in the church
where you're working.

We used to eat
in the restaurant though.
Tell me about her.

- Elizabeth?

- Yes.

Well, as I said before,
she's very much like you.

I mean,
she looked very much like you.

She had brown hair...

and wore it longer,
kind of different, you know.

And she wore pink lipstick.

And she never wore rouge.

Oh, her walk...

Her walk was 180 degrees
different than yours.

- Different?

- Yeah.

- She had a very Bryn Mawr walk.

- Bryn Mawr?

Yeah, very Bryn Mawr.

What do you mean, "Bryn Mawr"?

Bryn Mawr?

That's kind of a walk.

It's... Well, it's...

It's... I don't...

Just walk, and I'll...

Just go ahead and walk upstairs.

No, that's an Italian walk.

What do you expect?

It's a good walk, but it's
just not a Bryn Mawr walk.

A Bryn Mawr walk

is a kind of a glide, you know?

Those girls used to wear long polo coats
in those old days, long raincoats.

They kind of glide,
like they're late for class.

They move fast

and just kinda glide.

This time now, just glide.

I'll talk you through it, okay?
- All right.
- Don't sashay so much. Just glide.
- All right.
- Go ahead.
Just glide.
No, not like a model.
Just glide.
That's it. That's it.
She called me Mike.
Mike?
Listen, I am a good Catholic girl.
I obey everything the pope says.
You know?
What would the pope say
if I saw you tomorrow?
You forget I have a job to do.
Tomorrow night.
Let's wait a couple of days,
all right?
Saturday.
I'm free all day Saturday.
- What time?

- Oh, 11:

I'll be here.
All right.
Good night.
Move to your right.
All right, come closer now.
Come closer.
A little closer.
What is that, a love sonnet
from an Italian boyfriend?
No, it isn't. Jealous.
That's Dante.
"While life endures...
you should not ever
be inconstant to your lady...
who in death doth lie.
So speaks my heart
and afterwards doth sigh."
You know, as a child...
I used to go to the church...

where Dante came
to watch Beatrice.
Beatrice, la bella donna,
would sit here...
with her father...
and there...
Come here.
- Over there.
- I'm her father.
The young Dante, 23 years old...
would stand and watch Beatrice.
And here...
in between...
sat the Lady of the Screen...
a lady Dante pretended to love...
so that Beatrice
would not be embarrassed...
by his continual gaze.
You still love Elizabeth,
don't you?
That's why you want me.
How did she die?
I killed her.
I'm sorry, but I must go
to the hospital right away.
- My mother's very ill.
- I'll go with you.
- It's not your problem. I go alone.
- Please.
All right.
Well, let's hurry then.
Mama.
Come closer.
I can't see you.
You love my Sandra?
Oh, Mama.
I must know now.
Good.
You love him?
I don't know.
He marry you.
You'll have to forgive my mother.
She's always been a matchmaker.
You rich?

You gangster?
You marry him.
Mama, we hardly know each other.
You get to know him...
after you're married.
No matter how many times I read it,
it still says the same thing.
Look at that.
"Hold St. Louis Cathedral for May 2.
Break out the champagne.
I'm returning Tuesday the 19th
for a church weddin'.
Love, Michael."
Poor Court.
He's a goner now.
I tell you, Jane.
If I hadn't seen it with my own eyes,
I wouldn't have believed it.
It was like Elizabeth
had stepped out of her tomb.
Yeah, well, you'll see
soon enough for yourself.
- Do you think she's a gold digger?
- I don't know what to think.
Maybe we should call Dr. Ellman.
- What good would he do?
- He's been treating Court for years.
But Ellman lives in 1975.
Michael lives in 1959.
- Mr. Michael!
- Judy.
Good to see you too.
I want you to meet Sandra.
Sandra, this is Judy,
a lifelong member of this house.
Hello, Miss Sandra.
Mr. Michael wrote me about you.
- Let me help you with this.
- Thank you.
It's beautiful here.
Now, this D'Annunzio-Florence deal
is lookin' awful good, Court.
Looks like the old goat is finally
gonna invest some big money with us.

Now, I've got a preliminary
breakdown here...
of the basic estimated
development cost and cash flow...
for the joint venture proposal.
I'd like you to look those over
if you would.
You wouldn't file
an in personam suit against me...
if I asked you to table all this
for a while, would ya?
I mean, with the wedding plans
and everything, I'm just not up to it.
- Would you mind, for a while?
- Can do, Court.
Can do. That's what
a partner's for, I guess.
Well, our friends are certainly
looking forward to meetin' Sandra.
They'll all meet her
on the big day.
Big day of the big wedding.
Big day of my new life.
How do you say in Italian?
"La vita nuova."
Look, Court...
I know this is
none of my business...
but don't you think maybe
this is all a little hasty?
A little premature?
You're right.
It's none of your business.
Yes, Miss Sandra?
There's a locked room upstairs.
What is it?
It was the master bedroom.
Why is it locked?
I don't know, Miss Sandra.
I don't clean it anymore.
I want to see it.
Can you open it for me?
I don't have the key.
Mr. Michael keeps it.

Where?

Well, I guess it's all right.

He keeps it in his desk.

"February 14, 1952.

I think the days in Florence...

will be the happiest

I will ever have.

New Orleans is a nice town...

and Mike is very good to me...

but it is all so different now.

He is busy at work all day...

and sometimes I wonder if Mike loves me
as much as his business."

There it is, darling.

Isn't it beautiful?

And on the 19th...

it'll be all ours.

It's so big.

And Mike, 200 guests.

That's a lot of people.

Just a small ceremony

would be fine.

No, it's more than a ceremony.

It's a celebration...

and there should be thousands...

and everything's got to be...

very special.

Yes. If you say so.

Good morning, Robert.

- Good morning, Michael.

- Good morning, Jane, Shirley.

What are you doing here, Doc?

This was the only way I had

to get in touch with you.

You're a hard man to get a hold of.

What can I do for you?

I thought we might just sit down

for a while and have a personal talk.

Purely a social visit.

Why is it psychiatrists

are such lousy liars?

Would you come in here, please?

Did you all ask Dr. Ellman up here?

He called to find out how you were.

We thought you might wanna
be talkin' to somebody.
That's fine. Thank you.
Michael, why don't you
talk to Charlie?
- That's fine.
- It's for your own good.
I went by and saw Sandra yesterday.
I didn't think you'd mind.
You didn't think I'd mind?
You invade my privacy
and you ask if I'd mind?
Will you listen to yourself?
Stop and listen to what you're saying.
- Can't you see what you're doing?
- I know exactly what I'm doing.
I don't want anybody
interfering with my private life.
You're talking with somebody
who already knows you...
knows you better probably
than anybody else.
Sandra and I talked about
a lot of things yesterday.
I don't think
you're being fair with her.
You shouldn't marry out
of a sense of guilt...
or out of some morbid preoccupation
with Elizabeth.
And now Sandra is obsessed
with the idea of Elizabeth.
That's all she wanted
to know about yesterday.
She's caught up in your fantasy.
You must know what's happening.
Give yourself some time.
Let your relationship
with Sandra grow first.
And I want you back in therapy.
If not with me, with some other doctor.
But give yourself some time.
Right.
Except you got it wrong.

We'll talk about it...

after lunch.

Good.

We'll work everything out.

Just come on down to my office and...

I just don't want you to do anything impulsively that you'll regret.

Bye-bye.

What's happening?

- Why are you home?

- Because you're here.

Because my heart's here.

Because I never want to leave.

Where are you?

We've been so worried.

Look, we're both

really sorry about that.

We didn't mean it.

We only thought you...

Okay, he's here.

Just a minute.

It's Michael.

Michael, old boy, where are ya?

Well, now, don't you think it's...

Now, don't be hasty.

Okay, if that's what you want.

He wants us to put his share of the company into a trust fund.

- He's already sent the papers.

- Where is he?

Who knows?

- Tomorrow.

- What?

Let's get married tomorrow.

We can have the justice of the peace perform the ceremony right here.

- Why tomorrow?

- I don't wanna wait.

What about St. Louis Cathedral and all your friends?

We can have it cancelled.

Besides, I don't have any friends.

I found that out today.

Would you be disappointed?

Well, no, not at all.
And now, in accordance with
the powers invested in me...
by the state of Louisiana...
I now pronounce you man and wife.
I've waited so long.
Now...
I am your wife.
I am Elizabeth.
I came back for one reason, Mike.
I came...
to give you a second chance
to prove your love.
I've always loved you.
Never leave me alone.
I want to be with you always.
Always.
I am happy now.
Now I am your wife.
I am Elizabeth.
I came to give you a second chance.
I'm sorry to call you so early.
Something's come up.
You've gotta go to the bank with me now.
We've gotta get \$500,000.
- Don't ask me...
- What are you talking about?
- I'll tell you part in the car.
- What's this money gonna be used for?
What's your collateral? Am I loaning,
investing or just giving it to you?
It's a second chance for me.
You don't understand, but...
- You wanna come inside?
- No, I don't!
- You're under incredible strain.
- I know I am!
- You should talk to Dr. Ellman.
- The hell with Dr. Ellman! Please hurry.
- Why do you want to go to the bank?
- I wanna get \$500,000.
- You don't have that kind of cash.
- I've got some money.
- Have you seen our books lately?

- We've got land.
We've got the Pontchartrain property.
We've got other property.
- And you wanna give me half?
- I'll give you anything!
It's only for a short while.
Please come.
If that's what you want, I'll do it.
We'll get the papers, and you sign.
- You can act crazy, I don't have to.
- Anything!
I'll take that land to protect it from
you. I gotta look after the company.
- All right! I'll wait in the car.
- I'll just get dressed.
You're gonna have to sign
these papers.
Right there.
Old Court.
Just can't come up
with the money...
not for Elizabeth
and not for you.
Mommy.
Look at this. This is what
your old man thinks you're worth.
Nothing! Nothing! Nothing!
Mommy! Mommy!
Cut those ropes and let's leave.
Break that window open!
Don't shoot unless
you want the kid to get it!
It looks like your daddy
doesn't think you're worth a dime.
I'm sure your Uncle Bob will.
I don't want this.
I don't want any part of it.
I don't want this.
I don't want any part of it.
\$50,000 is a lot of money
to turn down, darling.
- You keep it. You earned it.
- It wasn't supposed to be like this.
It was a dirty business from the start

and you knew it.
I told you Court would either
give up the land...
or be declared mentally incompetent
to manage it.
And you agreed. So don't start getting
an attack of conscience now.
At least you kept him out of bed.
Look at it that way.
Do you realize what I've done?
I wanna go back to him.
I wanna confess everything.
I wanna beg him to forgive me.
Look. You hold on.
Just keep your head a minute.
We just swindled a man
out of millions.
Now, the law isn't exactly gonna
look lightly on that...
if you go back to Michael
and confess.
You made a dirty deal with me
and you executed it flawlessly.
You're the best investment
I ever made.
Old Court fell for your Elizabeth act
hook, line and sinker.
So now I think you're entitled
to the due wages of sin.
You don't understand!
What am I gonna do now?
It's a little late for
existential questions, darling.
You just take the money. Believe you me,
it'll help you to forget.
What am I gonna do?
- I can't take it.
- Come on!
Look! Move!
Hurry up!
Have you got the money?
- This isn't enough.
- It's all for you.
What about the others?

- They're all dead.

- Christ!

Smart business deal

this turned out to be.

Courtland surprised all of us!

So just take the money

and get out of here!

Uncle Bob.

Where's Mommy?

She's dead, honey.

Your daddy didn't pay the men...

and they killed her.

You see. I gave the man the money.

I'm taking care of you now.

Now, you're gonna go with him...

on the plane to a faraway place where

I've got friends you can live with.

Now, I'll be there in about a week

to see if everything's okay.

But where's Daddy?

He don't want you anymore, honey.

Now you go with the man.

- Go on!

- No!

- Go with him!

- Uncle Bob, no!

Go with the man!

Uncle Bob!

Father, I do not ask forgiveness.

I know there can be none.

I was never killed with Mother.

I was ransomed by La Salle

and brought to Florence...

where I lived with Mrs. Portinari.

I was raised believing

you killed Mother.

I hated you. I lived for the day

when I could revenge her.

Then La Salle came to me with his plan

to swindle the land from you...

and I got my chance.

But you were not like he said.

I never thought I would...

I love you.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are sorry
to disturb you at this time...
but we have just encountered
some unexpected turbulence.
Would you please return to your seats
immediately and...
Excuse me.
It wasn't there.
The money wasn't there.
It wasn't there.
You got me out of bed...
forced me to give you \$500,000.
You were actin' crazy.
Of course the money wasn't there.
I had to protect it from you.
I have the real money.
I was only lookin' after
your own good.
It's all yours now.
And this will surely keep you
from throwin' it away.
I killed her.
She came back a second time...
to let me prove I loved her...
and I killed her.
Now she's gone.
You just can't seem
to keep a woman, can you?
You self-righteous son of a bitch!
What did you think
you were anyway?
Steppin' on anybody you wanted to...
tellin' people what to do
and when to do it.
Sittin' on your ass...
while a fortune slipped
through our fingers!
Do you know how rich
we could have been?
But you don't care
about money, do ya?
You never did.
You just threw away millions this
mornin' for that lyin' little bitch.

Go ahead and kill me!
You gonna kill her too?
She was in it with me, you fool!
She was in it from the start.
She's goin' to Rome...
with \$50,000 of yours.
You didn't just throw away
a fortune.
You just threw away
your whole life.
TWA flight 702 to London...
scheduled for departure at 10:30.
Passengers now boarding at gate 16.
When's the next flight to Rome?
Rome... Tomorrow evening, 8:00 p.m.
You wanna make a reservation?
Would that be first class
or coach, sir?
First class.
Excuse me a minute.
All right.
Sir, you are in luck.

Our 8:

has just returned...
to check out an engine malfunction.
Now, the problem appears
to be cleared up...
and the flight is rescheduled
to take off at 11:00 p.m. From gate 36.
If you want me to fix this for you...
Daddy!
You came with the money!
Daddy!
Amy?
Daddy.