

DEADLY COMPANIONS

by

Pam Seckinpah

FADE IN:

INT. TAXI (MOVING) - DAY

CLOSE ON a compact mirror as LINDA DONAHUE fixes her face.

THE DRIVER nods at her designer valise.

DRIVER  
Going someplace nice?

LINDA  
That's none of your concern.

DRIVER  
Right.

Linda checks her watch. The city streets zip by.

LINDA  
This isn't the way.

DRIVER  
It's the way, trust me.

Linda looks at the driver, and the near empty street.

LINDA  
I've changed my mind. I want to get  
out.

DRIVER  
(vicious)  
You're in, you stay in.

She's shaken by that.

DRIVER (cont'd)  
You think this is coincidence?

He gestures. Linda scrutinizes the ID on the partition window.

LINDA  
Stephen Kane.

DRIVER  
You get it? We were in the same  
year at Sheraton High.

LINDA  
 Look, if this is about something  
 that happened in high school --

A bitter laugh cuts her off.

DRIVER  
 This is about you and me, now.

He swings to the curb, and cuts the motor.

DRIVER (cont'd)  
 So, hey, Linda, what are we gonna  
 do?

LINDA  
 (quickly)  
 I'm meeting my husband.

The driver looks at her, hard. Then he turns back, and fires  
 the starter.

DRIVER  
 Right.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

The taxi pulls to the curb. DAVID DONAHUE climbs in, well-  
 dressed and self-assured.

INT. TAXI - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

David greets Linda, and settles back.

DAVID  
 Hello, darling. Getting along with  
 Mr. Kane, I see.

LINDA  
 Do you know this man?

DAVID  
 In a way.  
 (to driver)  
 Okay, you have the address.

The taxi moves off. It is darker outside.

LINDA  
David, what is this?

David slips a phone from his coat pocket.

DAVID  
Six days ago, I received a text. It  
contained some interesting things.  
Revealing, you might say.

LINDA  
Six days ago? I was --

DAVID  
With your lover, Michel. I know,  
Mr. Kane has told me everything.

She looks at the driver, who gazes forward, impassive.

DAVID (cont'd)  
He sent me the text, it seems this  
fellow is - or should I say was - a  
friend. For you, obviously, more.

He shows her his phone with a photo on screen.

LINDA  
This is not what you think.

DAVID  
Please, spare us the dramatics. We  
can all see what it is.

He flicks idly through more photos.

DAVID (cont'd)  
I'm sorry to break it to you, but  
you won't be seeing him again.

LINDA  
What have you done?

DAVID  
(laughs)  
Oh, not that.

The driver looks in his rearview.

DAVID (cont'd)

I arranged a little incentive and he agreed to take off. It seems he never really wanted to be with you. Sorry to bruise your ego.

LINDA

You're contemptible.

DAVID

As are we both. Did you get the money?

She hands him the valise.

LINDA

Cash, like you said.

DAVID

I bought you this in Paris. I'm sorry you won't be coming with me, this time. But we can share part of the journey.

He unzips the case and nods satisfaction.

LINDA

Where are we going?

DAVID

Not far. There's something I want you to see. Driver, would you make a stop? I need to pick up some cigarettes.

LINDA

I thought you'd quit.

DAVID

They're not for me.

David jumps out and slams the taxi door. The driver watches him enter a store, then turns on Linda.

DRIVER

None of my concern? Goddamn, you dumb bitch.

LINDA

I'm sorry.

DRIVER

It's, "Going someplace nice?" and then you say, "I'm meeting my husband." You don't blow this.

LINDA

I didn't think --

The driver SMACKS the wheel.

DRIVER

Don't think. I do the thinking.

LINDA

This is hard, there's so much to remember.

DRIVER

You do it like we planned. He's coming. Don't screw up.

David jumps back in. He senses an atmosphere.

DAVID

Did I miss something?

LINDA

Alright, David, you think you're clever. Well, I have a surprise for you. The driver of this taxi and I went to the same school.

A look of astonishment. The driver turns with a grin.

DRIVER

Small world.

LINDA

We talked over old times. He won't be taking any orders from you.

DAVID

Now, let's be reasonable. I agreed payment with Mr. Kane, I think this business between us might be forgotten, don't you?

LINDA

No, David. I thought maybe I could teach you a lesson.

DAVID

You're sore because I found out.

LINDA

I wanted you to see those pictures, I wanted to hurt you. I see now, you don't care.

DAVID

Well, surely Mr. Kane here played a part.

LINDA

My idea. I engaged him and we made a plan, to bring you into the open. I've known for years you were robbing Daddy's company, and when you got into this cab, you fell into a trap.

DAVID

What trap?

LINDA

The money is embezzled. The police are informed, all I have to do is make the call. It's over.

David pales.

DAVID

You can't hope to make that stick.

The driver leans across the passenger seat.

DRIVER

It will, when you disappear.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

An empty pickup is parked at the side of a rough trail. The taxi is behind it with headlights on. The driver looms out of the dark to open the taxi's rear door.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The driver peers at Linda under the gloom of an interior light.

DRIVER  
Well, that's hubby.

LINDA  
We agreed twenty thousand.

DRIVER  
I was thinking a little more.

The driver leans in, and takes the valise. Linda looks around, nervous.

DRIVER (cont'd)  
You weren't thinking of keeping all this for yourself?

LINDA  
We have to take care of Stephen.

DRIVER  
I've done that.

LINDA  
Where is he? I thought he would be here. That's your car, isn't it?

DRIVER  
Yeah. And, this is his taxi.

Linda shoots a look at the ID on the taxi window.

DRIVER (cont'd)  
You didn't know he drove a cab? I told you, me and him went to the same school. When he started this thing with you, it got me thinking.

The driver takes David's phone from a pocket.

DRIVER (cont'd)  
While he played around with you, I played at being Stephen Kane. Took these photos, made some calls.

He slides a few screens with a thumb.

DRIVER (cont'd)  
So I could make the play on your  
husband.

A dull THUD as the phone drops to the floor.

DRIVER (cont'd)  
Now, who plays you?

LINDA  
I thought we did this to punish my  
husband.

DRIVER  
It wasn't your husband who fell  
into a trap. You needed us to get  
him, Stephen needed you to get the  
money, and I needed him to get you.  
The taxi brought it all together.

LINDA  
You won't get away with this.

DRIVER  
Why not? Your husband thought he  
was dealing with a man named  
Stephen Kane. He recorded his calls.

The driver reaches inside the cab.

DRIVER (cont'd)  
The police will find this taxi, and  
this phone. They'll find David, but  
the money will be gone.

The driver ID is peeled from the partition glass.

DRIVER (cont'd)  
And, they'll find Stephen Kane.

He replaces the ID with another, nearly the same. Only the  
photo is different. It's 'Michel' in David's photos.

DRIVER (cont'd)  
They'll see exactly why he did all  
this. Blackmail...

LINDA  
No...

DRIVER  
Kidnap.

LINDA  
No.

DRIVER  
Murder.

He looks at her with a leer.

DRIVER (cont'd)  
The rest.

The driver takes off his coat and folds it over the front seat.

DRIVER (cont'd)  
And then, at the end, they'll see  
him driven to suicide. By you.

Linda moans.

LINDA  
Don't do this.

The rear seat CREAKS as the driver slides in.

DRIVER  
It will be a terrible scene. Three  
people trapped in a taxi...

The door closes, and the light fades.

DRIVER (cont'd)  
...as it plunges from a bridge.

FADE OUT.

THE END