

DIVORCE COLORADO STYLE

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FADE IN:

EXT. TOP OF A HILL - LOVELAND SKI AREA, COLORADO - DAY

The trails are not that crowded.

MASON (30s), handsome, fit, with a defeated look in his eyes, and IRENE (30s), attractive, slim, anxious, both clad in skiing gear, prepare for a match of their lifetime.

Both check their ammunition, the skis, the boots and the bindings. Straighten up, clutch their poles. Exchange a look. A tense look.

IRENE
Check the papers.

Mason reaches into his pocket and produces a stapled stack of papers.

INSERT THE FRONT PAGE TITLE: Coxon's Divorce File

IRENE
It's an important document. You should've kept it in a folder or something. But you never listen, do you?

MASON
Yeah, I kind of forgot. I'm a moron, that's true.

IRENE
The song? You didn't forget the song, did you?

MASON
Don't worry, I'll be listening to it.

He reaches under his ski helmet, equipped with a headset, and pulls out an earphone piece to show her. She nods content.

IRENE
Ok. First is Brandon. There's our first point.

She points downhill at a small red flag. A few of these flags are scattered downhill at regular intervals. Mason grimly nods.

IRENE

Don't forget about the song. One,
two, three, go...

Each reaches for his/her headset. Music on, they take off.

Both are proficient skiers, the fast and the furious in a sense.

Irene moves her lips to the music. A robust, incomplete version of the tune plays. Irene and Mason's singing.

LYRICS

Brandon, Shannon, Charlie and
Lassie,
Two china vases, bedroom and
dining,
Don't forget to sign after each
stop,
Last is the house. Make it a V-
shape. Jump.

Irene comes in first. Does a happy cheer, followed by a victorious jig, sends a silent prayer to god. Mason arrives within a quarter of a second after her.

He watches her sternly. Irene takes a note of him, pity and sorrow register on her face.

IRENE

Sorry, man... Relax, not like I'm
getting a full custody or
something. You'll have him for the
weekends.

MASON

I know.

IRENE

The papers, we've got to sign....

Mason retrieves the papers. Flips through to CUSTODY section. Both sign next to IRENE COXON - PRIMARY CUSTODIAN OF BRIAN COXON.

Mason shoves the papers back into his pocket.

MASON
Was Shannon next?

They peer down. At the very bottom of the hill, hardly visible, stand two kids, hugging two dogs and holding a grown-up by the hand. It's BRANDON (10), SHANNON (8), UNCLE PHIL (40) and their two husky dogs, Charlie and Lassie.

Irene and Mason sprint close to each other, hug one another by the shoulders and wave at them. The classic Kodak moment.

EXT. LOVELAND, COLORADO - DAY

The two perfect kids, Brandon and Shannon, with their two dogs, and their Uncle Phil, a long haired cynic, stand by the Loveland Visitor's Center, watching the race.

Brandon peers into his binoculars, passes the binoculars to Shannon, turns to his uncle.

BRANDON
They made up a super weird song
yesterday. I wonder why?

Uncle Phil smirks.

UNCLE PHIL
Take a guess, willya. Isn't it
obvious?

SHANNON
That's because mom likes it when dad
sings. She wanted to sing with him.

UNCLE PHIL
That's some stupid explanation. Even
at your age I'd know in no time.

SHANNON
So, you know?

UNCLE PHIL
And I wouldn't race for you two,
that's for sure. Who needs kids...

SHANNON
What does it mean 'I wouldn't race
for you two'? They are racing for us?

Brandon wrinkles his forehead, his face lit with sudden revelation.

BRANDON
That explains the song. Remember -
Charlie and Lassie, two china
vases - their favorites, the ones
that cost a fortune...

SHANNON
Wait, look! Mom's cheering again.

They peer up the hill - Irene picks up her second flag and does a crazy happy jig.

Brandon and Shannon exchange a tense look.

BRANDON
Uncle Phil... did mom get Shannon?

SHANNON
Are they... diborcing?

UNCLE PHIL
It's divorcing. And that you
didn't get from me, you hear me.
Boy, me of all people to baby-sit...

BRANDON
The song goes 'Charlie and
Lassie'... Next is Charlie...

He kneels down to Charlie and hugs him dearly. Shannon does the same.

EXT. UPHILL - DAY

Irene and Mason finish up signing the papers, Irene - happy and proud, Mason - grim.

MASON
Which one is next, Charlie or Lassie?

IRENE
Why, haven't you been listening to the song?

MASON
I just lost the kids, I can't think straight. The song was not a good idea, Irene.

IRENE
Why? That's how you value my ideas, huh? I asked you to start singing again long time ago, did you even listen... You never listen, you don't want to listen... to me... Well, divorce might be just the solution.

She turns away, staring downhill, preparing for a take-off. Frowns at her binding - it looks a little loose. Bends to fasten it, a look of concern on her face.

Mason waits for Irene.

MASON
What's wrong? We can call it off.

IRENE
No, let's have it done today.

They stream down. Irene skis with caution, distressed over the binding. Grunts as she approaches the target point. Checks Mason. He is ahead of her.

EXT. LOVELAND VISITOR'S CENTER - DAY

Kneeled next to Lassie, the kids anxiously watch the race.

SHANNON

I'm guessing Lassie gets to stay
with Charlie... Hope mom and dad don't
go through with it, they're so good
together.

Tears in her eyes, she watches.

Half down the hill, the two figures are quite discernable now. Mason picks up another flag; they don't sign the papers but stream right down. He slows down at times, turning to Irene who signals him to move forward.

The kids and Uncle Phil watch Mason pick up another flag and another... until the last one is left.

EXT. HALF DOWN THE HILL - DAY

Irene and Mason stare at the last flag.

MASON

The house is left.

She nods. He bends to check her binding but she pulls away.

MASON

What got into you lately, Irene?

IRENE

Don't you get why I insisted on
the song? Even the kids know -
that's because I want you to sing
again... to play the guitar again.
Instead you came up with the lousy
music... and the lousy lyrics... the
ones you can't even remember... What
are you listening to? I bet it's
not our song, is it?

Mason stares, silent. Angered, she signals him to get ready for the race. Mason quietly obeys.

IRENE
It's a V-shape jump in case you
don't have a song on you.

They take off. For the last red flag. Reach a long ramp,
perfect to jump off.

MASON
(shouting on the way)
You won't make it with that binding,
Irene. Not a v-shape. Let's stop the
madness. We're grown people, come on.
Irene, Irene...

Irene disregards, hurtles down the ramp, leans forward and
dives off. Mason takes off after her.

Landing all wrong, she tumbles down to the bottom of the
hill. Mason lands on his two feet and hurries to her.

IRENE
Get the papers out. The house is
yours. Congrats.

MASON
Wanna try to get up? Come on,
you're hurting?

IRENE
Let's sign the papers, Mason. Please.

He kneels down to her; she reaches for his pocket, swoops
up the papers, flips through to the necessary page, signs.
Tosses the document away. It plumps on the snow.

She shrieks with pain, holding on to her hip.

MASON
Is it the hip? You think you broke
it? You're being childish. Who cares
about a house at a time like this.

Irene jerks to stand up, but plumps right down,
panting.

IRENE
Hmm... Mason... I think, I cannot walk.

LATER

Two male nurses, NURSE 1 and NURSE 2, appear with a stretcher. The kids and Uncle Phil trail behind.

MASON
(to the kids)
It's gonna be allright, I'm here
with mommy. Go have lunch with
your uncle, okay. Go.

Uncle Phil and the kids turn toward the visitor's center.

The nurses help Irene on the stretcher.

IRENE
I don't get it. You kept asking
'who's next'. Haven't you been
listening to the song?
(to Nurse 1)
Would you not follow a fifteen
second song if you listen to it
repetitively?

Uncomfortable, Nurse 1 gives her a 'what a nut' look.

IRENE
Oh, never mind... Tell me though,
would you listen to your wife if
she asks you to start playing
guitar again?

NURSE 1
Umm... Huh? I... Paramedics should
arrive soon.

IRENE
Oh, you're no use.

MASON
Calm down, Irene.

They enter Loveland Emergency Room.

INT. LOVELAND EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

The nurses bustle about their chores.

Irene rests on a hospital bunk. Mason takes off his helmet and the earphones, shoves them into the helmet, throws it on a chair. Heads toward the door.

MASON

I'll go ask about paramedics and check on the kids. You behave.

Irene growls. Mason leaves.

Irene turns to Nurse 1.

IRENE

Hand me that helmet, willya. Please.

The nurse rolls his eyes, gets her the helmet. She pulls out the earphones.

IRENE

Let's see what you've been listening to, funny man.

She sticks the earphones into her ears, listens. The soft music plays. It's Mason, singing to the original tune, the much fuller, fleshed out version of the music they've written together. And, the lyrics are different too...

LYRICS

Morning, coffee, your pretty face
Sweet old nagging, caring gaze
Hold your hand and tell you 'I'm
sorry'
This is what I'd wake up to each
morning.

This is not the way you see the end
Don't say 'no', baby, no
This is not the way I see the end
We sank low, way low
This is not the way we're gonna part
Don't say 'no', darling, no
Got each other for decades ahead
Don't say 'no', baby, no.

LYRICS (CONT'D)
Memory fresh of you in that pink
dress
When I picked you up for our first
date
And the way you looked when we
first kissed
Words you said when delivered our
kids...
(beginning of the tune)
This is not the way you see the end
Don't say 'no', baby, no
This is not the way I see the end
We sank low, way too low

EXT. VISITOR'S CENTER/EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

Skis on, Mason exits the visitor's center. Plows toward the emergency room.

Brandon and Shannon emerge out of the visitor's center, spying on their dad. They run toward the emergency room door as soon as it closes behind Mason. Cautiously twist the door handle, attempting to sneak inside.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

Mason hurries in. Glances at Irene, his eyes slide down the helmet in her hands.

IRENE
I've heard your song... The music is
much better. The lyrics... If anyone
calls these lyrics "lousy" I'll
poke him in the eye with a fork.

She stares at him intensely, they're lost in each others eyes.

IRENE
You forgot to take off your skis.

Only now Mason notices the skis, smiles.

MASON

I have a couple of other songs for
you. Been playing that guitar for
a month now, meant to surprise you.

Irene smiles. Turns to the nurses, her eyes plead for a
moment alone with Mason. The nurses leave.

Mason sits beside her. Reaches for her hand.

IRENE

We don't need those papers, right?

MASON

I don't have them anyway. You
threw them away, remember.

IRENE

I did not...

MASON

You so did...

IRENE

I love you, Mason. You are... so
kind. So very kind.

Irene pulls herself up without a grunt and rises lightly on
her feet. Mason stares, bewildered.

MASON

Whoa... Huh?

IRENE

Oh, well... The show is over. My hip
is fine. I guess I couldn't go
ahead with the divorce after all.
Thought if you see me fall...

She sits down next to him. He reaches for her, wraps her in
his arms. Their lips meet.

At the doorway the kids listen silently. Seeing their
parents make up, they quietly shuffle out.

EXT. EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

The kids high-five each other, run up to Uncle Phil who's been waiting for them outside the door, and hug him dearly.

UNCLE PHIL

Just what I thought. How typical. Who bailed out?

BRANDON AND SHANNON

(at the same time)

Mom... Dad... Mom... Both!

EXT. LOVELAND, COLORADO - DAY

The long forgotten, half covered in snow, divorce file slowly disappears as the layer of snow thickens on top of it.

FADE OUT.