

POPCORN

By

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EXT. STREET BY THE SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

In a big screen we see a small feet of a woman wearing black flat shoes.

One shoes is higher than other. We go up her body and see that she has put on a wool sweater.

We go closer on the hands of the woman that fills up a container with corn from an old linen bag and pours it on a popcorn machine of a vendor push on cart.

Lume, 52 sits down next the cart looking concerned. Her face shows sign of a hard life.

The popcorn starts puffing. Lume stands up again starts stirring it.

The sunny rays cut through the cloud and hit the wall nearby. Lume pushes the cart by the wall to catch the warmth of the sun rays.

People walk by indifferently. Lume stirring constantly corn on a popcorn machine.

A few meters away stands her husband, AZIS, about 55, who comes and covers her shoulders with a scarf and turns on the passing people to try her popcorn.

Two children stop by the cart.

Azis turns the volume of the portable radio up and the loud sound of a love tune fills the air. A cheerful Azis covers it with his masterful whistling.

Azis notices Lume supporting her self with her hand on the wall.

LUME
(moving her legs)
I am fine.

AZIS
(concerned)
Does it still hurt?

LUME
Don't worry! It fits fine!

AZIS
Maybe it needs to be a bit loser?

(CONTINUED)

LUME

It is fine. That always happen with
new shoes.

Azis moves from one corner to another looking straight at
her shoes.

AZIS

Walk! Let me see it for a second.

LUME

Never mind!

AZIS

Come on, walk! I have an idea.

LUME

You always do.

AZIS

A new one!

LUME

Come on, the "new-ones" are getting
old already.

Azis comes closer and is about to grab her. Lume smiles and
avoids him mischievously. She walks a few feet trying to
hold balance WADDLING on one side.

Blushing, she stops a few feet away and nervous she puts her
comb her finger through her grayish hair.

There is a silent moment between them.

Azis steps forward to her assistance. Trying to pass the odd
moment, he goes on whistling loud over the love tune. He
picks up her sliding scarf over her shoulders.

AZIS

(smoothly touching her
shoulder)

I know what I will do! Relax for
now. You sit for the rest of the
day.

(handing her a magazine)

Read something. I will take care of
the popcorn.

LUME

(pushing the magazine away)

I can handle! I have sat to much
today.

(CONTINUED)

Azis holds Lume tender by her arm. Holding onto each other they make a tender sweet adorable aging couple.

AZIS

Come on, let's take a little break.

Lume is starring her calendar. Now she's not smiling anymore)

LUME

Two days late, and she doesn't like that, rightly so.

AZIS

Two days is nothing. We pay the rent always in time.

LUME

Almost. Would you be happy if someone delayed payment a payment to you?

AZIS

I wouldn't mind two days.

LUME

You would.

AZIS

(murmuring)

We'll do something. I'll take care.

LUME

(doubting)

She has been nice but the electrical company put an hefty penalty on her. And they are already talking on adding a property tax.

AZIS

Bus tickets just went up!

LUME

I don't know how this people make ends meet noways. You think we are gonna be able to have half of rent by the days end?!

AZIS

(itching the head)

Sure we will! Maybe more. We have a back payment on the corn as well... But I think I'll manage.

(CONTINUED)

THE SCHOOL BELL RINGS

Kid's are out for the lunch break. The loud schools kids quickly pour on line by Lume's Popcorn Cart. Curious passers by come and check it out and get in line too and almost blocking the passage.

Both Lume and Azis are hard at work trying to rein over the chaos of the lunch break. They barely can keep with kids some of which fight over the priority of ordering.

A young and peaceful female police officer comes over and checks on the sudden gathering.

She cleans the kid from the street and stands by Lume.

THE POLICE OFFICER

(to Lume)

The license and permission, please.

Lume shakes her head approvingly and keeps spreading the buckets to kids. She gives a look to Azis and repeats.

LUME

The license and permission.

AZIS

The license? I gave it to you. I put it in the table and the permission was inside the folder. The green plastic folder.

LUME

No, you did not. Don't you say this. The folder was there, you are right, but not there was no License on top of it. that's why i asked you home.

AZIS

What do you mean "there was no license"! Of course it was. I put it there myself.

LUME

I don't know. I didn't see it there. Maybe you don't remember it well.

That back and forth goes on for a few minutes as they handle the remaining kids. The police officer steps in.

(CONTINUED)

THE POLICE OFFICER
(pulls her service radio)
Please. The license and permission.
(official tone)
Now!

As Lume keeps going on completing the orders of the remaining children, Azis moves aside and pulls out a big bag and pretends to look inside of it. Than he pulls another bag and exchanging looks with the police officer that's running impatient. There are no documents provided. The police officer, pulls aside and peacefully dials the police radio and waits for the response.

Azis produces a green folder.

AZIS
Officer! Officer! No need to call.
There you go. You have it all
inside.

Police puts the radio down and takes the green folder. She opens it and patiently goes through the documents. Azis stands by keeping eye contact with the officer.

THE POLICE OFFICER
(double checking back and
forth the paperwork)
You don't have the permission. I
don't see the license either.

AZIS
It should be all there.

The Police Officer, closes the file turns it back to Azis.

THE POLICE OFFICER
These are only application
fillings. Stand by there, please.

The Police Officer, walks straight to the Popcorn. Azis deeply concerned follows her.

AZIS
What to you mean? All officers that
check it never found problems with
documents. Maybe you don't know...

THE POLICE OFFICER
(abruptly interrupts it)
Please stop the sale, stand by the
wall.

(CONTINUED)

Azis makes a last effort to talk to officer out of taking action.

AZIS

Look...

The police officer, expands her hand and stops him on his track. He stand between the cart and the children and loses the cart down.

THE POLICE OFFICER

(to Lume)

Please you stand by the wall too.

Worried, Lume follows orders and for support puts her back on the wall. Azis assists her.

The unhappy children complain.

SCHOOL BOY #1

Come on you. They are not doing anything wrong.

SCHOOL BOY #2

We want popcorn, they sell popcorn.
Why are you bothering them? They are old.

The older people on line feel bad and they also try to talk the officer out of it.

MAN #1

Come on officer, let them be.
What's the crime? they just making a living there.

WOMAN #1

Great job! Keep bothering people on the street that make ends meet, while government ministers are deep in corruption stealing all way!
Great job!

The Police Officer go about her work communicating on the radio.

THE POLICE OFFICER

(Talks on the police radio)

Yes, in by the school entrance.
Popcorn vendor. No, no license. Yes a lot school children. All over.
Blocking the passage.

(to Azis)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

THE POLICE OFFICER (cont'd)
Identity Cards please. Both of you.
(to the pedestrians)
Please keep walking. Please.

The police van pulls over and a police squad of four comes out and take control of the ground.

In a minute a big red tow-truck pulls nearby. A officer directs the towing of the popcorn cart. Lume looses it. She goes after the female police officer cursing her.

LUME
Shame on you! Why would you do such a thing! Shame on you going after a poor elder couple.

THE POLICE OFFICER
Please lady. Hold it together.
Please. I am just doing my job. The new laws that take place forbid vendors...

LUME
What new law are you talking about?
Do you have parents?

Lume has a tantrum burst and Azis runs at Lume support.

AZIS
Please calm down hon. Please, calm down. It is not good for you. The doctor always says.

LUME
Shame on you, girl! What if someone did such a thing to your parents?! Shame on you! Couldn't you find someone else to go after? You brought here all the squad like we are criminals! Do we look like dangerous criminals to you?!

Two male police officer come and stand between Lume and the Female officer.

THE MALE POLICE OFFICER #1
Please lady, stop. Stop now.

AZIS
Hold it honey. Is not good for your heart.

A second police officer grabs her by her arms.

(CONTINUED)

THE MALE POLICE OFFICER #2
Lady, calm down. It is the law.

THE MALE POLICE OFFICER #1
We have to take you away if you
don't stop this. Now.

Lume tries to free her arms and shoves the police officer.
Azis jumps in between the officers and Lume.

AZIS
Please officer, back away. She is
sick. I will take care of her.
Please, you took the cart. What
more do you want? Go way, just go
way.

Lume is not giving up. The bystanders have gathered and they
also call on the police to calm down. Two more police show
up and take Lume forcefully in the police car. Azis runs
after them making desperate efforts to convince them to
leave her alone.

They keep him away and drag Lume forcefully inside. The car
takes off leaving behind Lume'S SHOE.

INT. HOSPITAL ENTRANCE - NIGHT

A TV REPORTER comments live while pictures of Lume and Azis
are interchangeably filing the screen.

TV REPORTER
It's unprecedented. We don't know
where is Lume. Is in hospital? Is
in jail or in her home?! Is she
alive or dead?! We'll try to reach
her and we'll you updated every
minute on that brutal action of the
police!

A MONTAGE WITH PRINT ARTICLES AND TV REPORTING

ON TV are displayed one after other the different newspaper
TITLES about the incident between Municipality Police and
Lume.

"MUNICIPAL POLICY ABUSE AGAIN OVER AN ELDERLY COUPLE".

"POLICE USES UNJUSTIFIED FORCE OVER A ELDER WOMEN"

"MAYOR'S WAR ON POPCORN VENDORS"

"AN ELDERLY COUPLE TREATED LIKE TERRORISTS"

(CONTINUED)

"A POPCORN VENDOR DANGEROUS TO THE COUNTRY"

"MAKING ENDS MEET BUT THEY END IN JAIL"

THE MONTAGE ends up with a picture of Azis holding the Lume's shoe, left behind in raid.

"SEARCHING FOR HIS SNOWSUIT"

In a program television we see prominent people talking about the case.

A KNOWN INTELLECTUAL
Lume and Azis are NOT criminals.
Even if they operate without the
license. They are what you see an
elderly loving couple, trying to
make ends meet doing what they can
do best: selling popcorn. Since
when that become a crime in our
society?

ANOTHER GUEST IN STUDIO
They might be poor. They might be
nice and all. They might even be
working hard. We respect them for
that. but they are breaking the law
nonetheless.

Many of the guests jump in defense of Lume and Azis. it gets chaotic on the studio.

ON ANOTHER TV CHANNEL

A Government EXPERT comments on the unfolding of the events.

EXPERT
(Aloud)
Well, there are known cases of drug
traffickers that pretend to be just
that popcorn vendors. but we all
know what they do. They are not
popcorn sellers. They use that for
hiding their real job. And the
Justice system...

Reaction also from a young activist in the studio.

ACTIVIST
(interrupts)
Are you saying that police were
suspicious of dubious activity of
the Popcorn vendor Lume?

(CONTINUED)

EXPERT

I dint say that but.

ACTIVIST

Than what are you talking about.
how can you stand here and defend
such despitfull actions. We all
know about the police corruption
taht runs high and you trying here
to criminalize as popcorn vendor?
that the justice you are talking
about?

CUT TO:

BY THE HOSPITAL

The TV reporter surrounded by revolted citizens by the
hospital entrance. A noisy motion in the crowd. Everyone has
something to say.

The reporter finds Azis. He is holding the Lume's Shoe.

TV REPORTER

How it happens?! Were the police
officers violent with Lume?!

AZIS

They drugged her violently. She
cant walk because her feet... But
they dragged her to the police van
and I have not heard since. I don't
know if my wife is well? I don't
know if she is dead or alive.
That's all i am left with.

(puts Lume's black Shoe of
Lume)

close on camera)

The drugged her away from me.

Azis gets emotional and moves away from the frame. The
reporter stays silence for awhile looking at Azis. Than he
turns on camera ceremoniously

TV REPORTER

Nothing to add to what you just
saw. This man's speak a hole a lot.
Back to you.

CUT TO:

TV NEWS ROOM.

(CONTINUED)

TV SPEAKER

We have learned that Lume, the popcorn vendor has been doing that for years at the same spot. she was loved and cherished by the community especially from the little children of the school nearby. But all that was brutally interrupted in police raid earlier today. Let's go now to the school and talk to the children that know her the best.

CUT TO:

Another TV reporter surrounded by school children. some of them have hold children designed colorful placards. One waves an empty popcorn bucket.

TV REPORTER

What more can one say? Look at this kids gathered here? Popcorn bucket empty. Expressing their feeling about someone that does not have a voice tonight. Some one that is taken away from them. They coming her unified and waiting for news about a person they love, a person that delights their day. A motherly figure in front of the school who is suppose to be here for them from morning to night...

His speech is interrupted from children that come in front of the camera, stick their faces, wave their hand. One brings full frame the drawing of Lume's Shoes.

would you say for the police officers and for the people who are follow us?

AZIS

Lume could be your mother! You have to see things with heart. Lume could be everyone. We need each other and need to help ourselves.

INT. HOSPITAL HALL - DAY

Dead silence. Mostly whitish color walls end everything. Azis, holding a bouquet of colorful flowers and other packages pushes the glass doors and flows in the hospital hallway.

(CONTINUED)

He walks and walks looking at the door signs getting lost in the hospital labyrinth.

Finally, by the end of an hallway he pushes the last door and there she is...

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Eyes closed in bed stands Lume fixed up with life support medical tubes. She looks white and almost like is dead.

Azis takes a good look, than he opens the window. The sun enters on the room and distant voices and chirping birds pour in.

He puts the flowers by Lume's side. He fixes her pillow and takes a seat close to her. He takes Lume's hand in between his palms and starts whispering to her.

AZIS

Do you hear me? Give me a sing if you hear me.

He waits. there is no signs of life.

AZIS (CONT'D)

I know you hear me. I am positive you do. Here I go? You know, it has been a roller coaster. There is no problems with the rent. Done like that boom. People came and helped. there are nice people out there and they love you. they do. Oh and the other thing.

(whispers discreetly, smiling)
... you have been in TV! A lot. Every one knows who we are. well almost everyone in Albania knows your story and they came and helped us. Even that girl.... the police officers came and apologized. she is actual a nice girl. She has calling daily and has been asking everyday how you have been recovering.

Azis takes a breath checking on Lume's breath and pulse. No sign of life. Azis tenderly squeezes her hand as he wants to bring Lume to life.

(CONTINUED)

AZIS (CONT'T)

OK you GOT TO listen to this. The store will be ready. You are gone have your own store. Got this? Your own store? Promise! You will back at work. You'll do your own things. We'll fight here and there. You know back to the usual...

(eyes watering)

but will mange. We'll do just fine. You and me... We'll make it. I know we'll make it.

He check on Lume's breath again, fices her hospital sheets and needlessly fixes the flowers by her bed.

AZIS (CONT'D)

Give me a sing. Just a tinny little sign. I know you will walk. You will walk again. A sign. Just give me a sign.

(unwraps his package)

There you go. New shoes. regular fit. I know you like them!

Hew puts the new shoes on e chair by the flowers and smiles desperate. Eyes water his gaze flows to flowers and fades to the blue, blue sky outside. Azis is hopeless. He caresses her hand.

Suddenly Lume's eyes move slightly. Azis in disbelieve tenderly squeezes her hand again. A light smile sails across Lume's face.

Azis kisses Lume in the forehead. puts his arm around her and hold her smiling face tight.

CUT TO BLACK

CREDITS

BACK TO PICTURE:

INT. CANDY STORE - DAY

Cheerful children running with bubble-gun streaming bubbles all over a candy store. Popcorn is popping up on front the popcorn machine. Hands fill many buckets of popcorn in line.

(CONTINUED)

Azis is putting the crutches on a far corner of the store. He looks at the kids in line and than at Lume serving the kids, on her feet and new shoes on. She seems busy and full of life.

OPEN WIDE

EXT. FRONT OF THE CANDY STORE - DAY

Azis content walks out of the candy store inviting mre children in.

We see a big colorful sign "Lume'S POPCORN". Scores of delighted kids pour in and out the store.

THE END