

Scene #1

Frances (1982)

Directed by
Graeme Clifford

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET (SEATTLE) - DAY

Frances carries library books and a small grocery bag. Her hair and skin gleam in the sun. People in their yards stare at her as she passes. She walks on, coming to a group of CHILDREN slightly younger than herself who are playing in front of a union hall. A girl, EMMA, 13, glances up.

FRANCES

Hi Emma.

Emma looks away quickly, returns to her play.

FRANCES

Bye Emma.

Frances shakes her head as she walks on.

MAN'S VOICE

Hey!

Frances hesitates, then turns to look:

A man in his twenties whom we recognize as Harry York, Kaminski's compatriot, leaves a group of men in front of the union hall and walks toward her.

HARRY

(friendly)

C'mere. I wanna talk to you.

Frances keeps walking. Harry hurries after her.

HARRY

Momma told ya not to speak to strangers, huh?

(reaches her, grabs
her arm)

Hey!

FRANCES

Don't touch me.

HARRY

I'm not gonna hurt you. I just wanna talk.

She stares at him. He's got a newspaper wedged under one arm.

FRANCES

(waiting)

Okay then...

HARRY

Well... you're causin' trouble, you know that?

FRANCES

I'm causing trouble?! You're a pain in the butt! You newshounds've been after me and my folks ever since I won that dumb contest. I'm just sixteen, you know? Who the hell cares what I think?

HARRY

Not me. But other people seem to.

FRANCES

Yeah. Well if you didn't put it in the papers -- nobody'd even know about it.

HARRY

Now wait a minute, sweetie. Do I look like a newshound to you?

FRANCES

(examining him)

No... Actually, you look more like a cop.

Harry laughs.

HARRY

That's rich. Hey, if I was a cop, I'd be packing, right?

(holding coat open)

You see a gun? Go on, search me. Pat me down.

Frances hesitates, leans toward him as though about to frisk him. Their eyes meet, and she pulls away, suddenly embarrassed.

FRANCES

I'll... take your word for it. So
who are you, then?

HARRY

Harry York. I work for Martoni
Kaminski, he's running for Congress
here.

FRANCES

(smiles & points to
him)

Oh yeah! I saw you in the newsreel!

HARRY

(embarrassed)

Yeah, well --

FRANCES

You know, my Dad's done some work
for Kaminski...

HARRY

Now you're catchin' on. Don't wanna
get your Daddy in hot water, do you?

FRANCES

Whattaya mean?

HARRY

Well... see the papers've got us
pegged as pinkos, then you come along,
the friendly neighborhood atheist --

FRANCES

But I'm not. The newspapers're --

HARRY

Right again. You're no more an atheist
than my man's a Red, but what they're
doin', see, they're addin' up their
version of your ideas with their
version of ours. Could look bad for
your Daddy.

FRANCES

Yeah. Could look bad for you and
Kaminski too, I guess.

Beat.

HARRY

Sure don't talk like you're sixteen.

FRANCES

Well aren't you the smoothie. Now you're going to ask for my number, I suppose.

HARRY

I suppose not. Gotta ask you this, though: for all our sakes, you better keep your trap shut.

FRANCES

Well... I'll give it a try, Mr. York.

HARRY

Harry.

FRANCES

(hesitates, nods)

Harry.

They half-smile, awkwardly, as if neither really wants this encounter to end. Then Harry doffs his hat.

HARRY

Bye.

She nods shyly and starts up the path toward the house.

HARRY

(admiring her)

Sure don't walk like sixteen, neither.