

AMERICAN FRUIT

"Top Banana"
(Pilot)

by

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COLD OPEN

EXT. COSTA RICA - 1904 - PROMONTORY ABOVE THE JUNGLE - DAY

BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPH

Against a sprawling jungle-scape, CHARLES KESTON, dressed in 1900s explorer suiting, peers nobly out into the panorama.

COLOR REALITY

Quivering while maintaining that pose is Keston (20's, thin and well-tailored, sharp part), very aware of his portrait.

KESTON

Make sure it's dignified. I want to look as though I am at home in the jungle, not born in it.

A PHOTOGRAPHER (20's, fresh-faced) ducks out of a CURTAIN-COVERED TRIPOD to give some direction.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Can you put your leg up on something?

KESTON

Like a *fauteuil*?

PHOTOGRAPHER

Like that rock.

KESTON

Ah, yes. More Antony, less Cleopatra. Of course.
(conquering that rock)
Thusly?

BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPH

Keston in a dynamic lunge, set against the stark cliffs and rolling jungle below him. He is king in this new world.

COLOR REALITY

Keston SLIPS AND FALLS BACKWARD WITH VERY LITTLE GRACE, landing as if he's never touched soil before.

KESTON (CONT'D)
 Let's stop there. *Harper's* will
 publish those. It'll look like the
 Botanical Gardens Gala, but with
 more verve.

Photographer starts packing up. Keston lights up a cigarette.

KESTON (CONT'D)
 One can either set the subject or
 be the subject.
 (conspicuously casual)
 That's what I always tell Emily...

PHOTOGRAPHER
 Is that your girl back in Boston?

KESTON
 Oh! Now, forget you've heard that.
 I don't want any rumors to start
 swirling so soon after my arrival.

Photographer has moved to the cliff edge, surveying.

PHOTOGRAPHER
 Shouldn't we see your railroad from
 here, Mr. Keston?

KESTON
 (re: art direction)
 Perhaps I'm not doing enough
 pointing. When people think
 "railroad" they think "pointing"...

ANGLE ON: BUNCH OF BANANAS ON TREE spied by Keston.

KESTON (CONT'D)
 Hold on a moment!

Keston saunter-jogs over to the line of trees. He picks a
 BUNCH OF GREEN BANANAS ...but fails to see that it shakes
 loose a BRIGHT RED SNAKE.

Excited to have a prop, a giddy Keston skips back by one
 path, and the snake takes another.

Keston triumphantly holds the bananas like a big scalp
 already claimed; Keston POINTS TO THE HORIZON in a pose.

KESTON (CONT'D)
 There! Take that Boston! Charles
 Keston makes his own destiny!

Suddenly, Keston spies the snake silently approaching the PHOTOGRAPHER'S LEG. Dumb with fear, he points emphatically.

BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPH

Terrified and effeminate, Keston URGENTLY POINTS to the ground. He is all scared elbows, twisted, flailing bananas.

COLOR REALITY

PHOTOGRAPHER
 (under the curtain)
 How's about a different pose?
 You're a Keston! You're invincible!
 You're here to conquer the--!

The snake BITES the photographer.

PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)
 --SWEET JESUS CHRIST!

Photographer falls, knocking over the camera. The snake slithers back to the jungle. Keston (now) rushes in.

KESTON
 Johnson? Are you quite all right?

Photographer's moans are quickly clouded by FOAM SPILLING FROM HIS MOUTH and the torturous convulsions of his body.

Keston slowly backs away...

Photographer stops thrashing, and his body deflates like a rancid tire. A URINE STAIN on his trousers pools to one side.

Keston is alone. All alone. HE DROPS THE BANANAS.

JUNGLE NOISES.

END OF COLD OPEN