

Le Cheval

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TITLE CARD . . . FRIDAY, APRIL 26TH

FADE IN:

EXT: A PASTURE - DAY

We hear nothing as a large black stallion runs carelessly across a green field. He is big, strong - magnificent.

EXT: A SIDEWALK IN MANHATTAN - DAY

An attractive, elegant woman, pulls a roller board briefcase and carries a bag of groceries along a line of expensive brownstone apartments.

This is DR. DEIDRE LAWRENCE (50) a veterinarian. She is distracted, distant. At the stairs to hers, she digs in her pocket for a set of keys, collapses the roller board, goes up the steps to the door, unlocks it, and enters.

INT: A MANHATTAN BROWNSTONE - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Foyer. Along the walls we see numerous horse and rider prints. A photograph of Deidre riding Dressage on the black stallion.

We see mail in a basket inside of the door. Deidre enters with grocery bag and roller board.

DEIDRE

Jeffrey, are you here?

(beat)

Jeffrey? We need to talk.

(beat)

I've been thinking this over.

She wheels the roller board beside a table, drops the keys and her mobile phone on it and exits with the groceries. Seconds later she returns to take the mail from the basket.

She files through the mail as she enters the living room where we see an English riding saddle on a stand along with other horse paraphernalia around the room. Deidre places the mail on a bar and pours a glass of wine.

RINGING: Deidre takes up the house phone.

DEIDRE
(into phone)
Jeffrey?

We hear Maryanne, Deidre's assistant.

MARYANNE (V.O.)
Hi, Doctor Lawrence.

DEIDRE
What is it Maryanne?

MARYANNE (V.O.)
The Moore's are here to pick
up Jinx.

DEIDRE
Which one is Jinx?

MARYANNE (V.O.)
The big Doberman you spayed today.

DEIDRE
No! Twenty-four hours.

MARYANNE (V.O.)
That's what I told them.

DEIDRE
Twenty-four hours just to make
sure there are no complications.

KNOCKING. Deidre walks from the living room just in time to see an envelope fall into the mail basket.

MARYANNE (V.O.)

I know, but they're
(whisper)
really pushy.

Deidre picks up the envelope, peers through the peephole. She opens the door. There's no one outside.

DEIDRE

Look, we don't need a lawsuit
from the Moore's because their
dog twisted it's bowels up after
this procedure.

She closes the door and walks back into the living room with the envelope.

MARYANNE (V.O.)

Yuk, yeah, I know.

DEIDRE

You want me to speak to them?

MARYANNE (V.O.)

No - I'll handle it. I just wanted
to hear it from you.

DEIDRE

That's fine.

MARYANNE (V.O.)

Enjoy your weekend in the country.

BEAT.

DEIDRE

Thanks, Maryanne.

MARYANNE (V.O.)

See ya. Bye.

DEIDRE

Stupid girl.

Deidre puts the phone down, takes up her wine glass, sits on the sofa, sips it, then begins opening the envelope.
DISTANT RINGING.

She drops the envelope and steps into the hallway where her mobile rings on the table. She answers.

DEIDRE

(into phone)

Jeffrey? Where are you? We need to talk.

(beat)

We've agreed to talk this through.

BROWNE

Mrs. Lawrence?

DEIDRE

Who is this?

BROWNE

My name is Ian Browne, Mrs. Lawrence -

(beat)

I'm Jeffrey's -

(beat)

lawyer.

DEIDRE

Lawyer?

BROWNE

Yes, Mrs. Lawrence.

BEAT.

BROWNE (Cont'd)

You haven't opened the envelope?

Deidre walks back to the living room. She picks up the envelope. On the label we see 'JAMISON & BROWNE'.

BROWNE (V.O.)

I'm sorry to have to be the one
to tell you.

(beat)

It's no surprise, I'm sure.

Deidre removes pages from the envelope. These are divorce papers from Jeffrey.

BROWNE (V.O.)

I spent most of today with Jeffrey.
We think the settlement he's offering
is quiet generous.

She drops the pages onto the coffee table and covers her eyes as she shuffles around the room.

DEIDRE

(emotional)

We've agreed to talk this through.
He doesn't want this. I don't want
this.

BROWNE (V.O.)

I'm sorry, Mrs. Lawrence, he does.

DEIDRE

How much do you know?

BEAT.

BROWNE (V.O.)

Everything.

(beat)

His string of affairs.

(beat)
 Your on again, off again, estrangement.
 (beat)
 The names of your lovers.
 (beat)
 Of his lovers - male, lovers.
 Everything, Mrs. Lawrence.

DEIDRE
 Where's Jeffrey?

BEAT.

DEIDRE (Cont'd)
 I won't do it! I won't do it, unless
 and until he's sitting in front of
 me. I won't do this through you!

TITLE CARD . . . MAY 6TH - DENIAL

INT: A MANHATTAN BROWNSTONE - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Foyer. Mail sits on the floor below the basket which itself
 is filled to overflowing. RINGING.

Living room: The house phone is on a coffee table. An open
 laptop sits beside it. RINGING.

Kitchen: RINGING. Dishes mound in the sink. Deidre paces
 with her mobile to her ear. Her eyes betray her lack of
 sleep and tears. She wears little make-up and mismatched
 clothing.

She looks toward the living room where the other phone
 continues to ring. On the counter we see a pack of
 cigarettes and a lighter. Beside them, a full ashtray.

DEIDRE
 I just don't understand why you're
 so distant on this. God knows there

aren't any secrets between us at
this point.

Deidre takes a cigarette from the pack and lights it.

DEIDRE (Cont'd)

Look - I have forgiven you more
indiscretions than I can count.
I know men of your age and
position sometimes go through
these things.

VOICE MAIL (V.O.)

You have thirty seconds remaining.

Deidre drags hard on the cigarette. The other phone stops
ringing.

DEIDRE

We both have too much invested
in this to just let go.

(beat)

Just, just, call me back when
you get this.

She disconnects, finishes the cigarette and grinds it out.
RINGING. The living room phone.

Living room: Deidre enters and answers the phone. We hear
barking.

DEIDRE (Cont'd)

(terse)

Yes?

MARYANNE (V.O.)

Doctor Lawrence, oh thank God.
Are you coming in today?

DEIDRE

No, Maryanne, I'm not. I need to

be home when Jeffrey comes.

MARYANNE

Pam, Jennifer, and I have done all we can. Your surgeries have been cancelled and we can't prescribe medication for these animals.

DEIDRE

Just - just - just, refer them to Doctor Simmons over on 4th. Fax the charts ahead. He'll understand, I've known him a long time.

MARYANNE

But we -

DEIDRE

I need to go, Maryanne. I need to keep this line free.

RINGING. Deidre's mobile, in the kitchen.

MARYANNE

I need one more -

Deidre drops her and heads for the kitchen.

Kitchen: Deidre hurries in, takes up her phone and answers.

DEIDRE

Jeffrey!

BROWNE

It's Ian Browne, Mrs. Lawrence.

DEIDRE

I told you -

BROWNE

Jeffrey and I have discussed the

settlement again.

Deidre hesitates, then finally gives in.

DEIDRE

And?

BROWNE

He's willing to let you keep all
four horses.

DEIDRE

They're mine anyway.

BROWNE

Not according to their registration
papers.

DEIDRE

Have Jeffrey call me himself. We'll
work it out, without you!

She disconnects.

DEIDRE (Cont'd)

Arrogant prick. Who the fuck does
he think he is? He and Jeffrey
have discussed it- bah!

Living Room: Deidre enters with her mobile in hand. She
sits the mobile on the coffee table beside the house phone
and laptop. She leans into the sofa and stares at the
phones as if willing them to ring.

TITLE CARD . . . MAY 21ST - ANGER

EXT: A BROWNSTONE APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Garden: Deidre, dressed a bath robe and looking sleep
deprived, stands by a metal trash can in the garden. She

squirts lighter fluid onto a mound of men's clothing as she smokes.

Once the fluid is gone, she tosses the bottle onto the clothes, digs a matchbook from her pocket, strikes a match, lights the whole book, and tosses it onto the clothes. The can erupts in flame. She turns and marches into the house.

Home Office: Deidre marches in with a golf club in hand. She smashes a computer then turns to a building model on a table behind it and destroys it as well. RINGING, continuous. Deidre turns and very calmly walks out.

Living Room: Deidre shuffles in and takes up the house phone from the coffee table where the laptop and mobile still sit. She answers. KNOCKING, continuous.

DEIDRE

(into phone)

What?

BROWNE (V.O.)

I'm at the door, Deidre.

Deidre stomps to the foyer. She pulls the door open where we see Browne, (40) handsome, well groomed, well dressed. She glares at him as he holds a single yellow envelope. Browne is obviously shocked by her appearance.

BROWNE

I'm sorry to do this. It was Jeffrey's idea.

Browne slowly raises the envelope. He sniffs the air.

BROWNE (Cont'd)

Is that smoke?

Deidre quivers with anger, unsure of what to do or how to respond. She snatches the envelope from his hand.

BROWNE (Cont'd)

Mrs. Lawrence, I think it best if-

Deidre slowly rips the envelope in two. Browne lets a heavy sigh but stands quietly. Deidre then flips one piece at a time toward him, hitting him in the face with each. When done, she slowly closes the door.

She turns, goes to the living room and searches for a phone book. She quickly flips through yellow pages and then stops on Private Detectives.

She runs her finger along the page, stops, then takes up her mobile from the coffee table. She checks the page and dials. We hear a rough PI's voice.

PI (V.O.)

Jonas Detective Agency.

TITLE CARD . . . JUNE 7TH - BARGAINING

EXT: A BROWNSTONE APARTMENT - DAY

Deidre stands on the steps, her mobile to her ear. Her roller board is beside her. She has been to work. We hear Browne's voice on the phone.

BROWNE (V.O.)

Jeffrey will be so pleased that
you've agreed. Shall we say seven?

DEIDRE

Seven is fine.

She disconnects, opens the door and goes inside.

EXT: A MANHATTAN BROWNSTONE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Deidre and Browne sit at the table, each with a glass of wine beside them. Browne's briefcase is at his feet.

Deidre has a legal pad with a list of demands sitting beside her as she studies a new settlement document. A black surgeon's bag sits on a table behind them. Browne notices the bag.

BROWNE

Not to distract you, but have you been making house calls?

Deidre doesn't look up.

DEIDRE

More like apology visits to my clients.

BROWNE

I see.

Deidre nods and then slides the settlement back to Browne.

BROWNE (Cont'd)

Well?

Deidre pulls the legal pad toward herself, then turns it toward Browne. Browne takes up his wine glass, takes a sip, then pulls the pad toward himself.

DEIDRE

Close, but not there yet.

Browne studies her list of demands. He lets a heavy sigh, reaches into his briefcase and removes a check. He places it on the table and slides it to Deidre.

DEIDRE (Cont'd)

What's this?

Browne is uncomfortable.

BROWNE

Half of the sale of the three
mares from the estate.

DEIDRE

He can't do that! He sold my horses?

BROWNE

Please, Mrs. Lawrence.

DEIDRE

What about my stallion, Midnight?
The breeding fee alone-

Browne is extremely uncomfortable now. He fidgets.

DEIDRE (Cont'd)

Well?

BROWNE

Um, he was, um,
(beat)
gelded.

Deidre's expression is of absolute shock and horror. She searches the room as if for answers. She is at a complete loss.

Finally, she spies her doctor's bag. Deidre contemplates angrily and then composes herself.

BROWNE (Cont'd)

(nervous)

He was overly aggressive. Jeffrey's
willing to let you have him outright
though -

(beat)

now.

TITLE CARD . . . JUNE 20TH - DEPRESSION

INT: A MANHATTAN BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Kitchen: Deidre, dressed in hospital scrubs, leans against the counter softly weeping. An open envelope sits on the counter. Pages are strewn across it. On it we see Jonas Detective Agency.

Across the pages we read highlighted words 'Jeffrey Lawrence', 'Ian Browne', 'Cohabitation', 'Lovers', 'Weekends together in Connecticut'. Jeffrey is leaving her for his lawyer, Browne.

She sinks to the floor pulling the pages and the envelope down with her as she goes. She sobs and then coils into the fetal position and whimpers.

INT: A MANHATTAN BROWNSTONE - BEDROOM - NIGHT.

We hear nothing but see Deidre, covered by a sheet, having sex with a dildo. Her eyes are tightly closed trying to imagine. She begins to gasp - then finally, she relaxes.

She opens her eyes. They fill with tears. She throws the tool across the room and begins to weep uncontrollably.

TITLE CARD . . . JUNE 22ND

INT: A MANHATTAN BROWNSTONE - NIGHT.

Foyer. KNOCKING. Deidre, dressed in her sexiest little black dress and heels answers the door where we see a handsome male and sexy female cop (early-30s), hookers.

MALE COP

We had a report of a disturbance from
this address.

DEIDRE

Cut the act.

Deidre turns and walks down the hall. The cops enter. They both begin unbuttoning his shirts.

MALE COP

Yes ma'am.

INT: A MANHATTAN BROWNSTONE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

We hear huffing and moaning. We see three shapes in the darkness. Deidre is having sex with the male and female cop.

TITLE CARD . . . JUNE 25TH

INT: A MANHATTAN BROWNSTONE - LIVING ROOM - DAY.

Deidre lies on the sofa staring blankly at the ceiling. An ashtray full of cigarette butts sits on the coffee table. She and her life are a mess. She begins to weep.

TITLE CARD . . . JUNE 30TH

INT: A MANHATTAN BROWNSTONE - BATHROOM - NIGHT.

Deidre stands before the mirror, her medical bag beside her, an open bottle of pills is in her hand. A bottle of vodka sits on the counter. She stares mindlessly at the bottle - suicide on her mind.

She looks to the bag and then the bottle several times, puts the top back on the bottle, walks out switching the light off as she goes.

TITLE CARD . . . JULY 2ND - ACCEPTANCE

INT: A MANHATTAN BROWNSTONE - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Bedroom: Deidre stands in front of a full length mirror, humming as she dresses. She is stunning; in full control of herself once more. Her doctor's bag sits on the bed behind her. She finishes, takes up her bag and exits.

Dining Room: Soft Music plays. Deidre and Browne sit at the table with a settlement spread between them. An empty bottle of wine is on the table, each has a glass, and as before, Deidre's surgeon's bag in behind them on a table.

Browne takes up a pen and initials lines on the page as Deidre finishes off her wine. She lifts the wine bottle, realizes it's empty and stands to fetch another. Browne, finishes his wine as Deidre returns and tops off his glass.

She sits and pulls the pages close. She reads and then quickly begins to initial beside Browne's initials. Delighted by the cooperation, Browne all but chugs his wine.

BROWNE

I'm thrilled you've finally come
to terms with this, Deidre.
The whole thing has been tearing
at Jeffrey.

Deidre smiles as she signs the pages. Her demeanor is disarming and Browne suddenly becomes smitten with her.

BROWNE (Cont'd)

You really are a beautiful woman,
Deidre.

DEIDRE

Thank you so much.

BROWNE

No - really. I can see why Jeffrey
goes on and on about you.

Deidre stands and casually walks to a closet. She opens the
door and kicks off her heels.

DEIDRE

You two talk about me?

BROWNE

(slurring)
All - all - the time.

DEIDRE

When you're having sex together?

Browne is unsure of what he's heard. Deidre begins to pull
on a set of hospital scrubs she has taken from the closet.

DEIDRE

When you're sucking his cock,
does he say my name?

Browne is woozy now. He begins to rock in his chair.

BROWNE

What? But how-?

Deidre walks slowly toward Browne, kneels and holds him
upright. Browne whimpers as he begins to lose control.

DEIDRE

Shh, shh. It's Xylazine - a
horse tranquilizer.

Browne can stay upright no longer. He falls from the chair
as Deidre eases him to the floor gently.

DEIDRE.

Shh, shh. This won't take long.

INT: A BASEMENT - NIGHT

We hear heavy thuds, as if a body is being dragged down stairs. Then we hear heavy breathing followed by pleasant humming. Metal instruments clang and finally, we hear - snip, snip.

The view is as if we're lying on a table. The contents of the room are blurred, then darkness - blurred, then darkness. A bright light washes out the bit of the room we see.

We hear footsteps and slowly see the room come into view as Deidre walks toward us with a syringe in hand. She is dressed for traveling. We see the syringe disappear.

DEIDRE

That'll help you sleep for a couple
of days.

We see Deidre's hand with the syringe and follow it to a metal table where she places it beside a glass jar. The image is blurred and then slowly focuses.

We see two testicles floating in jar of alcohol sitting beside a gelding tool.

Then we see Browne on a metal table in a white smock. His legs are bare and the crotch area bloodied. He begins to scream uncontrollably. He's been gelded.

DEIDRE (Cont'd)

I took your hotel reservation in
Paris from your briefcase; hope you
don't mind.

Deidre picks up the gelding tool from the table and begins to walk away as Browne's screaming subsides.

DEIDRE (Cont'd)

I'll say hello to Jeffrey for you.

She snaps the gelding tool several times as she walks away.

EXT: A MANHATTAN BROWNSTONE - DAY

Deidre stands on the sidewalk. A suitcase is by her side. She holds plane tickets in one hand and hails a cab with the other.

DEIDRE

Taxi!

FADE TO: BLACK