ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. STABLES - DAY

Bud, Peter, Megan and Lacey with Will outside a STORAGE SHED.

WILL
This is where Ms. Walker kept her riding equipment. Do you have a warrant or something?

BUD
Bryn Walker's dead because someone sabotaged her saddle. Open it.

Will gives Bud a look, then unlocks the shed, opens the door. Bud gloves up and starts to enter as --

JAMES SAVAGE, 30's, a walking Ralph Lauren ad in his riding britches, tall boots and polo shirt, approaches. He has a beautiful BLACK HORSE in tow.

JAMES
Can I help you?

BUD
Police business, sir.

JAMES
Police? That's my girlfriend's shed. What the hell is going on?

JAMES
(to Lacey)
Honey, go wait in the car.

LACEY
But this is getting good.

MEGAN
Now, please.

EXT. STABLES - DAY

Megan and Peter talk to James outside his horse's stall.

JAMES
I can't believe this is happening.

(CONTINUED)
MEGAN
I'm so sorry, Mr. Savage. How long have you two been together?

JAMES
About a year. We met at a competition a few years ago. We just moved in together.

Peter and Megan trade a look. If that's the case...

PETER
Why didn't you call the police when Bryn didn't come home?

JAMES
I assumed she was here at the stable.

MEGAN
Overnight?

JAMES
She crashes at the stable office sometimes. It might seem strange, but when Bryn needed to work through something, she preferred the company of horses to people.

MEGAN
Doesn't seem strange at all. What was bothering her?

JAMES
She wanted to leave professional riding and focus on the therapy program. But horses aren't cheap, and riding was how she made money.

PETER
Did she ever mention getting in a fight with one of the prisoners?

JAMES
No, why?

MEGAN
Someone sabotaged her saddle. We think that might have had something to do with how she died.

James takes a moment. He looks like he's going to be sick.

(CONTINUED)
MEGAN (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

JAMES
No, no I'm not. You want to know who had it in for Bryn, it's that creep who runs the stables.

MEGAN
Will Paisley?

JAMES
He made a couple of passes at Bryn. Wouldn't let her alone.

INT. STABLES - SHED - DAY

Bud pokes through this organized space. Saddles, reins, buckets with brushes. As he scans a WALL of PICTURES: Bryn's riding career -- dressage, jumping, cross-country competitions -- he hears a NOISE and spins to see. Lacey.

BUD
You scared the living crap out of me. Didn't your mother tell you to wait in the car?

LACEY
Didn't she tell you to watch your language?

BUD
Do what she said.

LACEY
Do you even know what this stuff is?

BUD
I'll figure it out.

Bud finds a HORSE HOOF PICK. He looks at it --

BUD (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Now we're getting somewhere. This looks like a weapon --

LACEY
It's a horse pick, it cleans their feet. How will you know if it's messed up if you don't know how it's used?
ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY (DAY 3)

OPEN ON James Savage, Bryn's boyfriend. Bud across from him.

INT. POLICE STATION - OBSERVATION ROOM - INTERCUrT

Megan watches from the observation room. In interrogation --

JAMES

When I was disqualified, I wondered who buted my horse, but I had no idea it was Bryn.

BUD

You sure you didn't try to teach her a lesson? Sabotage her saddle and then slip her some kind of drug so she would fall off?

JAMES

What? Why would I do that?

BUD

You were rivals. Which you failed to tell us. See, horse "eventing" is the only sport where men and women compete equally. And I gotta be honest, it would really bother me if I found out my girlfriend kept winning because she was a cheater.

JAMES

I didn't kill Bryn.

Both men are distracted by a TAPPING coming from the observation room window. OFF Bud's look --

TIME CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Megan settles across from James. Megan studies James a beat -- then, she turns to Bud.

MEGAN

Do you know why you aren't allowed to bute a horse before competition, Detective?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

BUD

No, Doctor. Why?

MEGAN

Because if it needs bute then that means it's injured. Kind of like a football player using Ivy Hot for a muscle strain. It numbs his injury and enhances his performance. The problem is, horses don't have a choice as to whether or not they want to compete when they're injured.

Megan turns her attention back to James.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

You and I both know Bryn wasn't the kind of person who would bute a horse before a competition.

(off James)

You buted your own horse, didn't you?

JAMES

What?

MEGAN

You've probably done it before. Sometimes the judges check at these things, sometimes they don't.

JAMES

The only thing I use on my horse during competition is coat oil -- I make it myself and it's legal.

Megan removes a swab from her purse.

MEGAN

Good, then you won't mind if I test your fingernails for bute.

JAMES

Don't you need a warrant or something?

BUD

We do. But when we request it, we're also going to get one for your trailer, house, your car.

MEGAN

The riding world loves a scandal.

(CONTINUED)
JAMES
Okay, hold on. I did it. I buted my own horse. Happy?

INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - DAY
Bud and Megan.

BUD
What I don't get is if that Bozo in there buted his own horse, why did Bryn have it on her hands?

MEGAN
Maybe Bryn was using it for another reason. Did you find any in Bryn's shed?

BUD
No. Then again, you might want to check with your daughter.

MEGAN
I'm sorry about that, she should have waited in the car.

BUD
She's too much like you. By the way, I think she misses you.

MEGAN
Excuse me?

BUD
I got a sense she wants to spend more time with you. I don't know.

As Megan processes that, her cell BUZZES. She checks a text. Off her look of concern --

BUD (CONT'D)
What is it?

MEGAN
Results from the chromatography test. Bryn was shot up with a lethal dose of succinylcholine. It's a paralytic vets use to put horses down.

BUD
And we've come full circle.
(off Megan)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
MEGAN
They look like flecks of glitter.

Peter looks over the autopsy history notes.

PETER
You found a similar substance on Bryn’s face during the initial autopsy. You attributed it to...

Megan studies Bryn’s face. She dabs Bryn’s left eye with a gloved finger -- REVEAL a spec of glitter. Next, Megan inserts a long swab up Bryn’s nose. She does the same down Bryn’s throat. More glitter.

PETER (CONT’D)
So this other horse eats glitter, and then licks the victim’s face?

MEGAN
This didn’t come from the horse. It came from the killer’s hands.

Megan places her hand over Bryn’s face -- like she is suffocating Bryn with her hand.

MEGAN (CONT’D)
She inhaled it. That’s why she stopped breathing. The killer suffocated her.

CURTIS
Why would a horseback rider have glitter on his hands?

MEGAN
To cheat.

EXT. STABLES - RIDING RING - DAY

OPEN ON James and his BLACK HORSE riding "patterns" in the ring. Megan blocks his path. Bud and Peter just beyond her.

MEGAN
Hi there.

JAMES
Doctor Hunt?

James looks around -- a beat to survey an escape route.

(CONTINUED)
As James climbs down, Megan approaches the horse. As she swipes her gloved hand over the horse's coat --

MEGAN
You gave your horse every advantage, didn't you James? You used bute to numb its pain and --

Megan shows James the little flecks of glitter on her finger.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Get coat to make him look... prettier.

PETER
Glitter, almond oil and silicon. It's a proprietary blend. You told us you made it yourself.

JAMES
That's not illegal.

MEGAN
It is when you kill someone. We found it in Bryn's esophagus and nasal cavity. You forgot it was on your glove when you suffocated her.

JAMES
You're crazy. Why would I ever do that?

MEGAN
You were jealous. You thought she was having an affair with Will Paisley.

PETER
She spent two nights in a row in Will's barn. "Will the scumbag's" barn.

-BUD-
You couldn't believe Bryn would fall for that guy, so you decided to teach her a lesson. You sabotaged her saddle and shot her up with succinylcholine.
MEGAN

But you didn't give her enough of
the drug to kill her. That's why
you drove out to the ravine, to make
sure she was dead.

EXT. WOODS - RAVINE - DUSK - FLASHBACK

Bryn's body in the ravine. Her eyes blink. FOOTSTEPS
approach. REVERSE to see James over Bryn -- Bryn's lips
barely form the words, "Help me."

MEGAN (V.O.)

You found her lying there
paralyzed. And then you simply
stepped up and suffocated her.

BRYN'S POV -- James leans over her. He places his gloved
hand over her face. BLACKOUT.

EXT. STABLES - RIDING RING - DAY

Megan steps up to James.

MEGAN

It's over James. Bryn won.

James gives Megan a defiant look.

JAMES

That bitch made me think she loved
me. She even said she wanted me to
be a part of that stupid therapy
program. "Do something good for
the world." I actually fell for
that b.s. And then I see her at
the stable with that scumbag?

MEGAN

She wasn't having an affair, James.
She was in Will's barn because she
was trying to save a horse's life.

JAMES

That's not true.

MEGAN

I'm afraid it is. She was very
much this person you fell in love
with. You were just too jealous
and competitive to see that.
CONTINUED:

JAMES
But... it looked -- What did I do?

Bud moves in to cuff James --

BUD
You're under arrest for the murder of Bryn Walker. You have the right...

Megan's cell phone RINGS. She checks the caller ID, moves off to answer. OFF Peter, hmm --

TIME CUT TO:

EXT. STABLES - PADDOCK - DAY

Megan at the rail watching Bryn's horses. As Peter walks up -

MEGAN
Bryn did a good thing here.

PETER
Yeah, she did. Who called?

MEGAN
Todd. He's agreed to let Lacey stay with me every other weekend. We're going to tell her tonight.

PETER
That's great.

Megan nods, careful what you wish for.

MEGAN
Did I ever tell you I operated on a Buddhist nun?

PETER
I would have remembered that.

MEGAN
She was preparing to give a talk on Buddha and during pre-op used me as a "test audience."

PETER
What was it about?

(CONTINUED)