

FADE IN:

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - THE HORSE LATITUDES - SHIP - DAY

SUPER: "SEVERAL HUNDRED YEARS AGO"

A tall, proud bow. An ominous dark cross in the middle. Aggressive eagle-winged sails to spread God's word. Dark cannons to tame the savages. Truly a ship of power.

With nowhere to go. Stranded in a windless inferno, the crew await death.

But not him, not the CAPTAIN.

On this ship, he is God, standing tall and proud, a shadow of black against the sun, looking through an eyeglass.

Not a cloud in the skies. Not a stir in the waters. Not a human soul to stop him.

CAPTAIN  
GET THE HORSES OUT!

The men jump to their feet, repeat the captain's orders in unison. They lower the canoes, leap inside them.

Others lead the horses onto a wooden plank and force them overboard. For a short moment, the horses disappear under the water. But they resurface, mouths frantically grabbing the dense hot air.

The crew tie the horses to the ship. Inch by inch, the horses pull the ship forward.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SHIP - LATER

Once more, the ship is immobile. Exhausted, the horses can no longer pull the ship.

CAPTAIN  
BRING IN FRESH HORSES!

The men cut the spent horses loose. Their high-pitched NEIGHING swallowed as they are left to drown in the dark placid water.

CUT TO BLACK.

A high-pitched NEIGH.

FADE IN:

INSERT HORSE'S FACE

A horse's head above water.

EXT. NORTHERN CALIFORNIA - CASTLEMAN PROPERTY - SPA AREA -  
DAY

SUPER: "PRESENT TIME"

A beautiful Arabian male horse, Fajer (Wicked One), swims in a large tub filled with foaming and bubbling water.

JOE MCBRIDE, an apprentice in his early twenties, holds the reins of the horse to guide him around the tub.

The other apprentice, RYAN PERRETTI, late teens, guides a brush that massages the horse's back and rump. The brush mounted on a swivel arm rotates as the horse swims.

Two other apprentices, twins, MIKE and DAN STEWART, both in their late teens, lead another pure Arabian horse, a female named Elham (Inspiration), onto a ramp.

JAMES PHOENIX, a body builder with a certain aristocratic elegance which could be engaging if it were not for his high-and-mighty pose, checks a digital display.

JAMES

Okay, boys. Bring Elham now. Got to make her look good for her beau.

Mike pulls on the reins while Dan encourages the horse to enter the water by slapping her rump. At once, Elham swims in rhythm with Fajer, opposite each other.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Very good, boys. Ten more minutes for Fajer and twenty for Elham. Call me when you're done.

JOE

Yes, Mr. Phoenix.

JAMES

Good boy.

He pinches Joe's cheek and trails his hand down his back to his buttocks.

Joe steps away from James without acknowledging the gesture. The other three boys have noticed but pretend not to see.

INT. HORSE SPERM STORAGE ROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

A constant HUMMING in the background.

A large room. One wall is covered with thick metal panels, several temperature gauges and two access keypads.

Opposite the hard, cold metal panels is a warm, pastel office area with a desk, a couch and an armchair, all accentuated by greenery and nature paintings.

GEORGIA CASEY, forties, staunch and sturdy, a don't-mess-with-me attitude, inputs several numbers on the keypad and presses an index finger inside the access box.

Behind her stand two MEN, dressed in dark suits, each holding a briefcase.

One of the panels slides open to reveal a large refrigeration unit. Georgia steps inside. Automatically the door slides close behind her.

The two men wait, staring at the door.

A few seconds later, the door slides back open and Georgia steps out holding a frozen package labeled:

"HANDLE WITH CARE  
FROZEN HORSE SPERMS  
KEEP FROZEN AT ALL TIMES"

GEORGIA  
Ten specimens for today, gentlemen.

DEALER #1  
Perfect.

He hands his briefcase over to Georgia. The other man opens his briefcase and places the sperm package inside.

Georgia places the briefcase on her desk and snaps it open. Inside are many dollar bills in several denominations.

DEALER #1 (CONT'D)  
Ten more like these. Every other day.

GEORGIA  
I'll see what I can do.

DEALER #1  
Just do it, my dear.

DEALER #2  
Yeah, you know the drill.

Georgia places the briefcase under her desk.

The two men leave the office bumping into James at the door.

JAMES  
Gentlemen.

The two men hardly nod and rush past him.

James stands on the threshold.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
Rude. Who are they?

GEORGIA  
New clients. How are our lovebirds?

JAMES  
Both are being pampered as we speak. I can feel it, Georgia. This evening shall be the big moment.

GEORGIA  
Congratulations, James. Nathan will be happy to have his two stars make a little one.

INSERT HORSE LATITUDES REDEMPTION PAINTING

CLASSICAL PIANO MUSIC plays softly in the background.

Under a blistering hot sun, human figures clothed in white, pull the horses out of the dark placid waters, away from the ships from hell, toward the most idyllic green hills ever seen -- Paradise.

The title is: "HORSE LATITUDES REDEMPTION"

INT. SAN FRANCISCO - CASTLEMAN CHARITIES, INC. - NATHAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

NATHAN CASTLEMAN, forties, some wrinkles, all from happiness, stares at the Horse Latitudes Redemption painting.

There is no doubt this man has a certain magnetic power about him. Perhaps from the way he stands, so tall and poised. Or perhaps from his subtle, unassuming confidence.

There are several more paintings on the wall depicting the Horse Latitudes legend or fact.

Behind him, stands GERALD HADDEST. Also in his forties, he looks more like a bodyguard than a business man, despite his Italian-tailored suit and impeccable grooming.

GERALD

Can't understand why it's always been your favorite.

NATHAN

Because it is hope for the destitute, the weak and the abused.

GERALD

Um. You're forgetting one thing, Nathan. These horses get their Paradise only because the men come back to save them. We give it to them. They have no power. Only what we humans want to grant them.

NATHAN

Which is why it is my favorite painting. Humans have an innate to do good. Evil may be forced upon them. But they'll always strive for good.

GERALD

Ah. This is where you and I disagree. Humans create the illusion of good. So they can continue to control the destitute, the weak and the abused. The illusion of good is just another form of evil.

NATHAN

I still can't understand why you're in this business, Gerald... since it is but an illusion.

GERALD

What's left if there's no delusion... I mean... illusion?

Nathan steps away from Gerald, toward a large bay window.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SAN FRANCISCO - CONTINUOUS (AERIAL VIEW)

Not a cloud in the sky. Not a stir in the air.

The office seems to stand on top of the world, touching the vibrant blue sky, looking down a miniature world of people and vehicles moving fast toward some unknown purpose.

NATHAN (O.S.)

It is hardly an illusion for those who live outside the riches and privileges of this world.

BACK TO NATHAN'S OFFICE

Nathan turns around and stays standing by the window.

Gerald has already made himself comfortable on a love seat, feet resting on top of a rainbow-glass table, reading e-mails on his Blackberry.

GERALD

Yes! Well put! Mr. CEO, owner and president of Castleman Charities. But these people, Nathan, they're still the have-nots and will never be on the other side -- Because the haves, people like you and me, will not relinquish their power.

NATHAN

We're giving these people the power to live their lives with dignity.

GERALD

No. We're only given them the illusion of power. Just like these men with the horses. Because power cannot be given. It can only be taken.

NATHAN

If you were on the other side, you wouldn't be saying those words.

GERALD

Indeed, I wouldn't. 'Cause I'd do whatever it takes to seize all that you got.

NATHAN

You need a long holiday, Gerald.  
You've been too cynical and  
pessimistic these last few weeks.  
Go away for a while.

GERALD

Yeah, maybe.

NATHAN

Why don't you stay with us this  
holiday week-end? Diane would like  
to see you. Been a while since  
you've been to the house. You can  
ride any horses you wish. Swim to  
your heart's content. Go fishing.  
Boating. Watch the sunset. Eat  
good, wholesome food.

GERALD

If only you could also provide me  
with the woman of my illusions... a  
woman with unconditional love.

NATHAN

For that, my friend, you need to be  
your true self.

GERALD

Working on it, Nathan, working on  
it. And yes, I gladly accept your  
invitation.

EXT/INT. FREEWAY/NATHAN'S CAR - LATER

Aggressive and impatient drivers. Heavy holiday traffic.

Nathan, in his blue topaz Corvette, an older model restored  
to perfection, is distracted. He keeps looking at papers  
scattered on the passenger's seat.

His car phone GOES OFF.

He glances at the display, smiles. Slides the tiny earphone  
into his right ear.

NATHAN

Hi, hon'.

DIANE (V.O.)

You didn't forget?

NATHAN

To invite Gerald? No, of course not.

DIANE (V.O.)

We'll treat him like a king.

NATHAN

Sure needs it. What's going on?

DIANE (V.O.)

You've received a confidential package. By special messenger.

NATHAN

Who is it from?

DIANE (V.O.)

Doesn't say.

NATHAN

Put it in my office, will you?

DIANE (V.O.)

Already there. When do you think you'll be home?

NATHAN

Less than one hour.

DIANE (V.O.)

Traffic's moving?

NATHAN

Yes, it is. Finally.

DIANE (V.O.)

Call me if it jams up again.

NATHAN

I will. Love you.

DIANE (V.O.)

Love you too.

Nathan dials another preset number. It RINGS twice.

CONRAD (V.O.)

Conrad Hammond.

NATHAN

Nathan here.



CONRAD (V.O.)  
Still at the office?

NATHAN  
Driving home. Conrad. I've meant to  
talk to you for a few days.

CONRAD (V.O.)  
What about?

NATHAN  
Monies are missing from four of our  
charity funds.

Silence.

NATHAN (CONT'D)  
Did you hear what I said?

CONRAD (V.O.)  
I know about the missing funds.

NATHAN  
And Gerald? Does he know?

Another silence.

NATHAN (CONT'D)  
Shall I assume it is a yes?

CONRAD (V.O.)  
We didn't want to alarm you.

NATHAN  
I want to see you in my home  
office. Today. At eight O'clock  
sharp.

CONRAD (V.O.)  
With Gerald?

NATHAN  
Gerald will already be there.

Nathan removes his earphone.

He grabs a couple of pages and places them on the wheel.  
Flips through them. Casts the pages back on the seat.

Nathan stares blankly at the traffic in front of him. It is  
now moving very fast.

He steps on the accelerator.

Glances back at the papers.

All becomes blurry... except for...

INSERT NEWSPAPER HEADLINES

"THE MOST VICIOUS KILLING SPREE  
OF ALL TIMES -- SEVEN MURDERED  
OVER LABOR DAY WEEK-END"

JEREMIAH (V.O.)  
Dad... don't get involved. Please.  
Ignore it all.

BACK TO NATHAN'S CAR

The vision fades away. Nathan lets go of the wheel, wipes his eyes hard and fast.

JEREMIAH (V.O.)  
Or you'll lose it all.

NATHAN  
Who... what... Jeremiah?

Nathan turns his head, left, right. Glances behind him. There is no one in the car.

JEREMIAH (V.O.)  
You're almost saved, Dad. Forever.  
Leave them to their evil. Whatever  
you see, hear, please, Dad... don't  
get involved. Or you shall go on  
and on in this evil world...

Nathan keeps looking behind him, no longer paying attention to the fast-moving traffic. But there is no one in the car.

NATHAN  
Jeremiah? Is that you? Where are  
you?

A curve in the freeway... the traffic is stopped.

He doesn't react on time.

Neither does the double-trailer behind him.

In his rearview mirror, Nathan sees it... he YELLS... steers the wheel to the right... but his car is already airborne.

It soars into the tanker in front of him.

He knows it is over... but he fights it.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

No. I will not die. No. No. Diane.  
I love you. No. Not me. No.

He lets go of the steering wheel. Slides down on the floor.  
Covers his head with his arms... his body is lifted... pushed  
through the windshield... through the tanker... through the  
liquid content...

Down below him, his car EXPLODES.

The double-trailer catches on fire.