

DESPERATION

an original screenplay by

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FADE IN:

INT. HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

JARED (30s, wears a police uniform) stands at the front door with his wife BROOKE (20s, attractive, dressed in jeans, pretty blouse but looks exhausted). He kisses her good-bye.

JARED

Have a good day, sweetie. I'll miss you. I'll call you before lunch.

BROOKE

All right. If I don't answer the phone I might be napping, so don't worry.

JARED

You will answer the phone. Keep it near you.

Brooke looks down.

JARED (CONT'D)

Are you feeling all right? Are you sick again?

BROOKE

I'm OK. Just a little morning sickness.

JARED

Tough it out.

She nods.

Brooke locks the door after he leaves and goes into the bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

She rummages in the closet and pulls out a small suitcase hidden behind some cardboard boxes. She puts it on the bed, opens the latch and tosses in a few clothes.

We hear the SOUND of a car pulling into the driveway. Brooke peeks out the bedroom window.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

It's Jared. He starts up the walkway, WHISTLING.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Brooke quickly closes and shoves the suitcase beneath the bed, but the handle still peeks out from the bed ruffle. She doesn't notice.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

She locks the door, and runs the water for a shower. She winces as she turns the faucet on. There's a fresh bruise on her right arm.

While the water gets hot, she sits on the side of the tub and hears him calling bye. She waits.

INT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

JARED

Hey sweetheart, it's just me. Can you believe I forgot my wallet?

Brooke doesn't answer. Jared HEARS the running water from the bathroom and knows she is taking her morning shower.

CUT TO:

EXT. BATHROOM DOOR - DAY

JARED

Hey sweetie, I'll see you soon. Be safe.

BROOKE

See you tonight. Bye.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Jared goes to the dresser where the his wallet lays next to Brooke's GED study book. He puts the wallet in his pocket. As he walks past the mirrored closet doors he stops a moment, smiling at himself. He frowns when he notices that his belt is crooked, ruining his impeccable look. He unbuckles, reloops and fastens the belt again.

As he starts to leave the bedroom, he notices that the comforter is crooked and stops to straighten it. His foot hits something hard. It's the suitcase handle. He bends down to pull it out.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Brooke walks into the bedroom as she towel dries her hair.

JARED

Hi, honey.

Startled, she drops the towel.

The clothes from the suitcase are strewn across the bed and floor. He holds up the extra set of car keys and dangles them.

JARED (CONT'D)

Where were you planning on going?

BROOKE

(Whispers)

Nowhere.

JARED

Liar.

He throws the keys against the wall. Brooke flinches.

JARED (CONT'D)

Why do you cause me so much grief?

BROOKE

I don't try to cause you grief. I just need some time --

JARED

Time away from me? Why?

BROOKE

I want to visit family.

JARED

You have no family, remember? What's the matter with you?

BROOKE

Nothing.

JARED

Oh, really?

He stands up, jerks her by the arm, and pushes her in front of the mirrored closet doors.

JARED (CONT'D)

Look at yourself. You're on the verge on losing your mind. It's not good for the baby.

Brooke stares back at her pale reflection. The mirror reminds her of the bruise on her neck and and she starts to cry.

BROOKE

I can't stay with you, Jared. It hurts.

JARED

It hurts to be with me, huh?

He pushes her so hard that she loses her balance, stumbles, and hits the side of her face on the end table.

JARED (CONT'D)

You aren't leaving me.

He paces and runs his hands through his hair. Then he stands still for a moment.

JARED (CONT'D)

I'm not going to work today.

BROOKE

But you shouldn't miss work --

JARED

But nothing. I'm the Deputy Chief of Police. I call the shots.

Brooke flinches as he walks past the bed.

JARED (CONT'D)

Aw, you really know how to break a guy's heart. Since you can't seem to stand me, I'll sleep on the couch.

Jared takes a pillow off the bed and leaves for a few moments.

He returns with a plastic bag of ice cubes and throws it on the bed.

JARED (CONT'D)

Put some ice on your face.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Brooke searches for the cell phone and keys near the couch while Jared sleeps soundly. She doesn't find the keys but does find the cell phone tucked into the couch cushion. She carefully takes it.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Brooke dials 911.

911 OPERATOR (O.S.)
911. What's your emergency?

BROOKE
I need help.

911 OPERATOR (O.S.)
I can hardly hear you ma'am. Can you speak up?

BROOKE
Please send someone. My husband --

Suddenly the phone is ripped out of her hand by Jared. He puts the phone to his ear.

JARED
Hello?

911 OPERATOR (O.S.)
A car is on its way.

*

JARED
No need for that, but thanks. This is Officer Knight. My wife is upset with me again. It's just the usual misunderstanding.

911 OPERATOR (O.S.)
Oh, hello again, Mr. Knight. I'm sorry, but the car has already been sent.

JARED
That's fine. I'll handle the situation. Thanks, Marlene.

911 OPERATOR (O.S.)
Of course, sir. Good-bye.

JARED.
Good-bye.

Jared clicks the button and puts the cell phone in his back pocket.

BROOKE
I'm sorry, Jared. I was just scared. Your temper --

JARED
I know you were scared, sweetie.

BROOKE

I'm sorry.

JARED

I know.

He slaps her hard.

Brook backs away from him.

BROOKE

Stop it! You're supposed to help people, not hurt them. You haven't taken your meds lately, have you Jared?

JARED

I flushed the pills down the toilet. I'm not a druggie. I'm a good cop and good cops catch the druggies and their dealers.

He whispers in her ear.

JARED (CONT'D)

Tell me I'm a good guy.

Brooke trembles and doesn't answer.

JARED (CONT'D)

Why are you so terrified of me?

BROOKE

I'm not.

JARED

Oh yeah?

He shoves her back onto the bed and takes out the GUN from his uniform. He holds the gun to her head. He's so close she can smell the mint from his toothpaste.

JARED (CONT'D)

You're scared.

BROOKE

The gun isn't loaded.

JARED

Do you know that for sure?

Brooke is silent.

JARED (CONT'D)

I could stop your heart right now, if I wanted to. But the thing is, I think I love you Brooke.

Loud KNOCKING is heard at the front door.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Two uniformed policemen stand at the front door.

Caruso (20s), but looks younger. The older policeman, SILVA, (40s), mutters under his breath.

SILVA

I can't believe we're back here again.

CARUSO

Open the door!

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Jared puts the gun on the bed.

The police continue to knock and Jared yells that everything is fine.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

SILVA

You know the rules. We have to follow procedure. Let's get this overwith so I can go on break. You and Brooke both come to the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. BATHROOM - DAY

Jared shoves Brooke into the bathroom.

JARED

Star taking a bath. And don't get me in trouble this time. Do it.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jared opens the front door and lets the two policemen inside.

CARUSO

Why was a 911 call made from your house?

JARED
Same reason as usual.

SILVA
Brooke acting up again?

JARED
You know it!

SILVA
Women.

Silva and Jared laugh.

JARED
So I called in. You guys can go.

CARUSO
Not until you walk us through the house and show us that everything's OK.

JARED
Brooke's fine. She's taking a bath.

Jared leads them down the hallway.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

SILVA
All I'm saying is that you better not have smacked her around too hard this time. C'mon Knight. You know how to keep your work and private life separated. So do it.

JARED
I don't need your advice.

As the men pass the bedroom on the way to the bathroom, Caruso notices the gun on the bed. He doesn't say anything. They reach the bathroom door.

JARED (CONT'D)
Brooke, honey.
(knocks on the door)
Can I come in?

No reply. Silva and Caruso look at each other.

JARED (CONT'D)
(laughs)
She's giving me the silent treatment.

Caruso stands in front of the door and knocks.

CARUSO
Mrs. Knight, it's Officer Caruso.
You okay in there?

BROOKE (O.S.)
Yes, I'm fine. Sorry you had to
come out.

CARUSO
It's no problem. Take care.

The men turn around and start back down the hallway.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

SILVA
By the way, you still haven't paid
me.

JARED
I was hoping you had forgotten.
Four hundred dollars was the bet,
right?

SILVA
Yeah.

JARED
I'll pay it now. More privacy here
than at the station.

Jared and Silva look at Caruso.

CARUSO
Don't stare at me. I'm no snitch.
But uh, what kind of bet was it?

JARED
We have a running bet on whose wife
is controlled more. I usually win.

SILVA
You want in, Caruso?

CARUSO
No, thanks.

Taking out his wallet, Jared pulls four one hundred dollar
bills and hands them to Silva. As he's folding up his wallet,
a photo drops to the floor.

Caruso is closest to the dropped photo and as picks it up,
he looks at it closer.

CARUSO (CONT'D)

What is this?

He hands Silva the photo.

CARUSO (CONT'D)

Look at this, Silva.

Silva peers at the photo.

SILVA

It's roleplay.

CLOSE-UP OF THE PHOTO.

Jared holds a gun, the same gun he uses for work, against Brooke's head. He wears a grin. There's blood on Brooke's negligee from a deep gash on her cheek. Her hands are tied in front of her with a scarf. There's also blood on Jared's hand. Brooke looks terrified as she looks up at another man holding a camera. It's Silva.

CARUSO

Doesn't look like roleplay to me...and you're involved, Silva. Oh my God.

SILVA

It's not your business, Caruso.

Silva reaches for his radio but Jared hits him and Caruso falls to the ground. Jared takes his radio and gun.

JARED

Don't think about telling anyone. If you do, we'll ruin your career, not to mention your life.

Silva helps up a dazed Caruso.

SILVA

Caruso's a good cop. He does what he's told.

CARUSO

Can I get a drink of water, please?

SILVA

I told you he's a smart kid, Jared. He's not a rat.

When Jared leaves to get the water, Caruso hits Silva and knocks him out. He runs down the hallway and into the bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Caruso gets the gun and bangs on the bathroom door.

CUT TO:

EXT. BATHROOM - DAY

CARUSO
Let's go, Mrs. Knight! I'm getting
you out of here.

Brooke opens the door and screams as she looks past Caruso.

BROOKE
Behind you!

Caruso turns around and aims the gun at Jared.

JARED
Damn, kid, you've never shot anyone.
Put the gun down.

He aims Caruso's gun at him.

CARUSO
Mr. Knight, step aside. Please.

JARED
You're not leaving with my wife, you
moron.

CARUSO
I can't leave her here with you.

Jared moves closer, still aiming the gun at Caruso.

JARED
Get out of my house, now. That's an
order.

CARUSO
No!

Jared cocks the trigger on his gun.

Caruso shoots first, and hits Jared in the leg. Jared yelps in pain and drops the gun. Caruso picks it up and grabs Brooke by the hand, leaving Jared on the floor unable to stand.

As Brooke and Caruso reach the front door, they pass Silva who is still unconscious on the floor.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Caruso helps Brooke into the police car and the tires SQUEAL as he backs out of the driveway.

BROOKE

Thank you.

CARUSO

No problem, Mrs. Knight.

FADE OUT