

# CODE BLACK

Pilot by

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3rd Revised Network Draft

1/25/15

Michael Seitzman's Pictures

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**TEASER**

In B&W and SLO-MO, a MOP wags across the frame, as TEXT appears on screen:

A Code Black in an emergency room is an influx of patients so great that there aren't enough personnel or resources to treat them all.

The average urban ER is in Code Black 5 times per year.

LA County Hospital is in Code Black 300 times per year.

The B&W image of the mop dissolves to full, saturated color and we see the mop is cleaning up crimson blood. A pair of legs walks past the mop. The legs belong to...

JOSE (O.S.)  
Hello, residents...

1

**INT. ER - SAME**

1

JOSE SANTIAGO is a muscular, 50 year old, affable, no-shit, seen-it-all nurse and he's approaching a group of FOUR RESIDENTS waiting nervously and now jolting to attention.

JOSE  
Dr. Royer will be here shortly. For now, you've got me. I'm Jose Santiago and for the next three years I'm your mama. I'm the senior ER nurse and I can promise you that nothing goes on in this house that your mama don't know about.

Jose starts walking without looking back. They realize they're supposed to follow and all scramble to catch up.

JOSE (CONT'D)  
Try to hide something, your mama will find out. Think you're smarter than your mama cause you got an MD, well, you are not. Trust me on this, do not test me on this. Your mama knows when you're lying, crying, or dying and my job is to not only teach you right from wrong, but to make sure you don't leave this place in three years thinking that you can do no wrong.

One of the residents, MARIO SAVETTI (25), cocky, handsome Italian with tattooed biceps can't help but notice that one of the group is twice as old as the rest. She's CHRISTA HARDIN (52), soft spoken, soccer mom.

MARIO

Are you a resident or an attending?

CHRISTA

First year resident. Just like you.

They're interrupted by Jose...

JOSE

This is why you're all here...

2

**INT. C-BOOTH - CONTINUOUS**

2

They enter the severe trauma section of the ER, C-BOOTH...

JOSE

The most famous strip of hospital real estate in the nation, where emergency medicine was born, where the Secret Service reserves a trauma bed for the President of the United States when he's in Los Angeles. This is C-booth.

It's a row of six trauma beds, side by side. The area is open on three sides, with an 8' wall at the head of the beds that doesn't reach the 15' ceiling. This center area is surrounded by 40 other beds in stalls along the walls.

JOSE (CONT'D)

Center stage is for the patients trying to die on you right this second. If all six beds are taken and/or the patient can put off dying for a few more minutes, they go to any of the surrounding stalls, which we call "*The Sides*."

The residents hush, as if looking at hallowed ground. Jose takes a moment to smile at one of the residents, MALAYA PINEDA (27), a smart, enthusiastic and energetic Filipino. He knows her very well and he's proud of her.

JOSE (CONT'D)

Hello Doctor Pineda.

They all look at her. She shrugs sheepishly.

MALAYA

I've been here a while. Med school, internship. They're sick of me.

MARIO

So you know *her*.

MALAYA

Dr. Royer? Of course. Not sure she knows me.

ANGUS LEIGHTON (28), heavy set, the map of Ireland on his face, looks around C-Booth.

ANGUS

Quiet night.

MARIO

Get psyched, bro! This is just the calm before the storm.

MALAYA

(to Angus)

He'll be the first one to cry.

GUTHRIE (O.S.)

Calm before Armageddon!

The bellowing voice belongs to a 60 year old African-American doctor named RANDY GUTHRIE. He smiles at them.

JOSE

This is Dr. Guthrie, longest serving attending in this joint.

GUTHRIE

Been here since we were knocking patients out with bourbon.

The WALLS rumble. The residents assume earthquake.

JOSE

Inbound chopper.

GUTHRIE

This building is like my wife. Stately and elegant, 'til you put down on top of her.

(heads off, chuckling)

Friday night at County. Buckle-up.

After he leaves, Jose turns to them.

JOSE

Now listen close. In your mama's house there is a number one rule. In order to properly obey the number one rule, ask me all the questions you think are stupid. Why? Because you're gonna be afraid to ask daddy and better you ask me than violate the number one rule, which is that you are not, under any circumstances, allowed to kill a guest in my house.

ANGUS

If he's *mama*, who's *daddy*?

At that moment... A LOUD BUZZER SOUNDS. They all look at each other. Then, A FEMALE VOICE from behind them...

LEANNE (O.S.)

Homeboy Drop Off! Let's move!

MALAYA

That's daddy.

We meet DR. LEANNE ROYER, 35. Daddy. She moves swiftly and urgently, but she's calm, cool and confident. She grabs a pair of gloves from the box on the wall and tells the others,

LEANNE

Grab some gloves and follow me!  
Now!

She's already running across the ER, Jose running right beside her, and the disoriented residents running behind.

MARIO

What the hell is a homeboy dropoff?

MALAYA

Gangbangers leave their wounded on the sidewalk. Jose put up a doorbell for them.

CHRISTA

*Homeboy dropoff* sounds racist.

And Leanne bursts through the doors...

LEANNE

We didn't give it that name. They did.

She and the residents take in the scene before them.

A BLACK ESCALADE is up on the curb. The side of the car is riddled with bullet holes, the doors are open and in the front passenger seat is an 18 year old, 300lb African-American man, BLOOD SQUIRTING from his neck onto the windshield with every heartbeat.

3

**EXT. ER - SAME**

3

Jose straps a face shield on Leanne, which immediately gets sprayed with blood. She gets in close to see the wound.

LEANNE

GSW to the neck, obliterated  
carotid, he's down at least half  
his volume here.

She puts her finger inside the wound, squinting from the spraying blood and tries to find and pinch the vessel,

LEANNE (CONT'D)

Jose, we gotta get him out of here!  
(to Mario)  
You, get that gurney up underneath  
him!

Mario grabs the gurney and jams it up against the open door.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

(to Angus)  
Get in the driver's seat! Use your  
feet and push!

Angus, terrified, does as he's told, bracing against the inside of the car, using both legs to kick the patient out the door, as Jose, Leanne and Mario pull until the patient dumps right out onto the gurney. Leanne points to Christa.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

You ride on top!

Christa hesitates, confused.

MALAYA

I can do it.

LEANNE

(to Mario)  
Get up there!

Malaya is disappointed as Mario climbs aboard, straddling the giant patient. Leanne takes his hand.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

Put your finger inside next to mine. It'll stretch.

Mario does as he's told. He's psyched.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

Feel where my finger is. Feel that thing wiggling? Like a worm trying to get away! That's the carotid artery! Your finger is now the only thing keeping this man alive.

MARIO

I got this.

LEANNE

(to Christa, as they roll)  
Life is measured here in split seconds. Hesitate and people die.

They rush inside. Christa exhales, defeated and embarrassed. Angus is a deer in the headlights. Mario rides high on top. Malaya keeps up behind them, not willing to miss a thing.

4

**INT. C-BOOTH - NIGHT**

4

Leanne and Jose jam the gurney into one of the six center beds, as a pile of MEDICAL STUDENTS and interns PUSH CHAIRS up against the short wall so they can lean over the top to watch. Leanne shouts out orders to Jose and his NURSES.

LEANNE

Tell the blood bank we'll need six to eight units and notify the OR, call a TTA; I need some suction, hemostats and O-silk NOW!

MARIO

Am I getting down yet?

JOSE

Ever let go of a garden hose?

MARIO

Copy that.

ANGUS

Should I get the labs for transfusion type and cross match?

LEANNE

No, but you can give him CPR.

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ANGUS

But, the blood loss is...

LEANNE

Look at his pulse, Doctor. Let's give this man's heart some assistance and begin compressions.

Angus does as he's told, nervous as hell.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

Someone tell me why this patient can not be transfused with type and cross-matched blood?

(nothing)

Because it takes an hour. This patient doesn't have an hour. He needs O-neg, which is here... now.

At that moment, the BLOOD ARRIVES - SIX UNITS on a tray.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

Thank you, Jose.

ANGUS

Six units? Lotta blood.

MALAYA

By the time he gets sewn up, he will have lost that and more...

LEANNE

Hang on... she's right.

JOSE

Leanne?

LEANNE

It'll take a vascular surgeon an hour to repair that vessel. He doesn't have an hour. He doesn't have ten minutes. And all that blood ends up on the floor under a dead man. It's Friday night, mama. We'll need that blood.

JOSE

Yes, we will.

ANGUS

You're not going to transfuse him?

MARIO

You're just gonna kill him?! TV Calling - For educational purposes only



Approaching is DR. NEAL HUDSON, 40, handsome in a moppish way, his eyes shocked at what he's witnessing.

NEAL

What's going on?

LEANNE

I need a vas cath in his L  
subclavian and all the cold saline  
we can get.

NEAL

Leanne... a word?

LEANNE

(ignores him)

Who can tell me what I'm doing?

Leanne sees that Christa, the 52 year old, might know. But she doesn't speak up. Nobody does.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

A cold infusion. I'm replacing all  
of the patient's blood with ice-  
cold saline. Why am I doing that?

NEAL

You're not doing that. Your  
resident is right. You'll kill him!

LEANNE

Not your patient, Doctor Hudson.  
(to Christa)  
You ready to talk yet?

CHRISTA

The theory of cold infusion is that  
it could create a temporary state  
of suspended animation through  
hypothermia. It could buy him, *in  
theory*, the hour it's going to take  
a surgeon to repair the artery.

LEANNE

(to Mario)

So, in fact, you were right. We are  
going to kill him. We're going to  
kill him to save him.

She looks over at a furious Neal.

**END TEASER**

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**ACT ONE**5           **INT. TECH ROOM, CT SCAN - NIGHT**

5

On the other side of the window, an OLD WOMAN is on her back, inside the CT SCANNER. Standing in the tech room alone are Neal and DR. BILL TAYLOR, 52, whose name tag reads "DIRECTOR, EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT." World-weary, yet somehow dashing, Bill's ironic sensibility is unshakable. Neal is genuinely agitated, a state that Bill finds mildly amusing.

NEAL

A cold infusion?! You're the director of the ER, Bill! Where's your outrage?

BILL TAYLOR

I left it at the bottom of a Xanax bottle. The patient survived, Neal.

NEAL

It's an experimental procedure. Doesn't even have IRB approval yet.

BILL TAYLOR

Did you know that or did you have to look it up? Look, here's where you're right, I am the director of the ER. You, on the other hand, are an attending, just like Leanne.

NEAL

Look, it was a horrible thing that happened to her, okay? We all felt it. But, in the three years since, she's had more dropouts than any residency director we've ever had, has become more dangerous and more reckless. She's been investigated four times by the state...

BILL TAYLOR

Exonerated four times. Neal, why are we talking about this? Why do you care what she does?

NEAL

I care about this place. We've always made good doctors. I'd like it to stay that way.

BILL TAYLOR

The truth is that, while the accident was deeply tragic, all that rage made her better, not worse. More dropouts, yes, but the ones that get through her go on to better positions at better hospitals. She does make good docs, Neal, and the board likes her, which means I love her.

Leanne walks in. She's not happy.

LEANNE

You wanted to see me?

BILL TAYLOR

You put a patient into suspended animation. How's he doing? Ready for hyperspace?

LEANNE

He's in the OR getting his carotid sewn up. All of his blood is safely back inside him.

Taylor looks at Neal - *See? All's well.* She glares at Neal.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

Don't ever question me in front of my residents again.

NEAL

You were performing an unapproved procedure on a...

BILL TAYLOR

Neal, your old lady in there is getting up.

Taylor points through the glass at the confused woman trying to shimmy out of the CT-scan. Taylor presses the MIC BUTTON.

BILL TAYLOR (INTO MIC) (CONT'D)

Miss? You can't do that...

LEANNE

The patient was in the grave and I brought him back! That's a win in any book. Even yours.

NEAL

When you were a resident, you were the one who used to say they're not scorecards, they're actual people.

LEANNE

Careful, Neal. I think I know a little better than you that that kid is an *actual person*. He also has an *actual family* praying that if their son comes in here *ESI-1*, he will be treated by a highly educated professional with the knowledge, the courage, and the will to do everything humanly possible to save his life! What they're praying he doesn't encounter is a reluctant, timid, or incompetent doctor, more concerned with his own ass than the life on the table in front of him!

NEAL

I see. They want you, not me.

LEANNE

No, you're the doctor they want. I'm the doctor they need.

That stops Neal cold. They glare bullets at each other.

BILL TAYLOR

Fun stuff. But, I have a text that says forty more people have checked in since we've been having this *ménage*. So, if nobody is taking their clothes off, I need you both back out on the floor. Now.

(points through the glass)

Neal? Your patient...

The woman is up again. Neal heads in to stop her.

BILL TAYLOR (CONT'D)

And don't make her tea, Neal. Treat her and get her out the door.

Indignant, Neal walks inside the scan room, leaving Taylor and Leanne alone for a moment.

BILL TAYLOR (CONT'D)

In sixth grade I got sent home for hitting Mary Lonnersteegan.

(MORE)

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BILL TAYLOR (CONT'D)  
Two weeks later, I got sent home  
again for kissing Mary  
Lonnersteegan.

LEANNE  
What are you trying to say, Bill?

BILL TAYLOR  
Just reminiscing.

She shakes her head and walks out. Taylor smiles to himself.

6 **INT. WAITING ROOM- NIGHT**

6

The waiting room, now filled with over 100 patients already,  
is disrupted by five SKATEBOARDERS rolling in. One, CAESAR,  
approaches the desk, looking high as a kite, holding his arm.

The nurse at reception, HANNAH, 28, greets him.

HANNAH  
Fell off your board?

CAESAR  
The rail was sketchy. Think it's  
broke. I can feel bones crunching  
around in there.

HANNAH  
Are you high right now?

CAESAR  
Why, you want some?

HANNAH  
Cute.

Pivot to Leanne walking through the waiting room with her 7  
residents, including our core four, Mario, Angus, Malaya, and  
Christa.

LEANNE  
We separate them into three  
categories - ESI-1, 2, and 3. One  
is critical - heart attack, bullet  
wound. A two is rough, but not  
death's door. Pneumonia, blood  
clot. ESI-3, migraines, flu, minor  
lacerations...

She leads them back inside. Angus finds himself next to  
Malaya. She looks at his NAME TAG - **ANGUS LEIGHTON.**

MALAYA

Oh my God, you're Mike Leighton's brother. He talked about you.

ANGUS

You know him?

MALAYA

I was just a med student when he was a resident, but everyone knew Mike. He's a superstar.

ANGUS

So I've been told. By him.

She laughs as they continue into...

7

**INT. ER - CONTINUOUS**

7

LEANNE

You are only as good as your wait time. You wanna love your patients, fine, but you better love the ones out there just as much, because they may need you more.

CHRISTA

Are we seeing our own patients today?

LEANNE

For now you'll be taking light cases and assisting the attendings. Unless that monitor up there says Code Black and then all bets are off.

They all turn as PARAMEDICS burst in. A 70 year old woman in a fur coat holds hands with the patient on the gurney. Guthrie catches the case. A Medic runs it down.

MEDIC

75 year old male, possible clot and stroke, started speaking gibberish at dinner...

Malaya whispers to Angus.

MALAYA

He's going to need TPA.

Leanne points to Angus, having not heard Malaya....

LEANNE  
Doctor Leighton...

ANGUS  
(blurts nervously)  
TPA! I think he needs TPA.

Malaya looks at him askance. He's immediately mortified.

LEANNE  
I didn't ask. But I'm sure Dr.  
Guthrie will be thrilled. Go with  
him. Try not to kill anyone.

Angus turns back to Malaya, who just stares at him  
incredulously. She turns to Leanne.

MALAYA  
Dr. Royer, I'd really like to  
observe that case, too.

LEANNE  
How nice for you.  
(to Angus)  
You waiting for a formal  
invitation? Go. Now.

ANGUS  
(to Malaya)  
Sorry.

He rushes to the gurney, looking back at Malaya only briefly  
as he disappears into C-Booth. Jose rushes up to Leanne.

JOSE  
Chopper inbound, three minutes, two  
on board. Dr. Hudson is already  
topside. They need another MD.

LEANNE  
(to Mario and Christa)  
You two, with me.  
(to Malaya)  
You're with Jose.

When they're gone, Malaya looks at Jose.

MALAYA  
Why is she ignoring me?

JOSE  
It's your first day as a resident.  
You need to relax.

MALAYA

I'm not here to relax. I want...  
you know, I want...

JOSE

Your big 'I'm a doctor now' moment?

MALAYA

Kinda. Yeah.

JOSE

Good. 'Cause I need a hero.  
(off her confused look)  
In fact, I'm holding out for a  
hero... 'til the end of the night.

She begins to realize what he's doing. He adds a MELODY...

JOSE (CONT'D)

*She's gotta be strong, she's gotta  
be fast, she's gotta be fresh from  
the fight!*  
(she rolls her eyes)  
*Don't be shy now... I need a hero!*

A few heads turn. She's mortified. He puts an arm around her.

JOSE (CONT'D)

Come on, let's go find you an  
attending to annoy. Someone who...  
(one last time)  
*Needs a hero!*

She punches him as he continues relentlessly.

8

**EXT. CHOPPER PAD - NIGHT**

8

On the roof of the hospital, a door opens and Leanne emerges with Mario and Christa, to find Neal up here waiting for the chopper, which can now be heard approaching. Leanne introduces them.

LEANNE

Dr. Hudson, say hello to...  
(reads tags)  
Doctors Savetti and Hardin.

He smiles genuinely and shakes their hands.

NEAL

Neal Hudson. Congratulations on  
matching to County. TV Calling - For educational purposes only



He turns to the arriving chopper, while talking to Leanne.

NEAL (CONT'D)

Let me ask you something. Had you ever even seen a cold infusion done before?

Leanne stares up at the chopper, too.

LEANNE

No.

Christa and Mario exchange surprised looks.

NEAL

You were very lucky.

Leanne answers loudly, over the beating of the chopper.

LEANNE

That's one way to look at it.

NEAL

What's the other way?

LEANNE

He was very lucky.

She heads out to the landing chopper, pulling her gurney with her team. Mario is excited by the whole scene. He yells to Christa.

MARIO

This is why I went emergency med!

The chopper door opens and the MEDIC inside yells out:

MEDIC

We've got two. Car accident, Father and daughter. Thirty-six year old male, Jeff Braeden. Airbag malfunctioned. Non-responsive, head injury, multiple lacs... Pulse 65... BP 120 over 90!

The 12 year old girl, ARIEL BRAEDEN, is crying and screaming for her daddy, JEFF BRAEDEN. Leanne doesn't want the kid.

LEANNE

I'll take the father.

Leanne is already moving the gurney away from the chopper. The medic turns to Neal, runs down the girl's situation:

MEDIC

Twelve year old female. Ariel.  
Multiple lacs on face, head and  
upper body with glass embedded just  
about everywhere. She's highly  
agitated.

Ariel sees her father's gurney move away from her toward the  
door of the hospital and she screams.

ARIEL

Daddy!

She jumps off her gurney and runs after him. Neal chases  
her. She grabs her father's motionless hand, while behind  
them the chopper's liftoff is deafening - FWAP FWAP FWAP.

NEAL

Honey, please...

Mario tries to lift the girl, but she lashes out at him.

ARIEL

Let go of me!

Leanne watches the girl, who is hysterical.

ARIEL (CONT'D)

Is he going to die!?

MARIO

No way.

LEANNE

You don't know that.

Christa turns sharply. Neal speaks softly.

NEAL

Leanne...

Leanne is laser focused on the girl.

LEANNE

You want it straight? Or do you  
want doctor talk?

ARIEL

I want it straight.

Ariel seems to calm down immediately. Christa watches,  
riveted, as Leanne squats down to Ariel's level and speaks  
compassionately, yet very directly.

LEANNE

Ariel, I'm Dr. Royer. The truth is we don't know why your father is unconscious and I can't learn much up here on this dark rooftop. With your permission I'd like to take him downstairs. I promise to tell you everything I know, soon as I know it.

Ariel thinks about it and then nods her okay. Christa finally exhales as Ariel lets go of her father's hand. Leanne nods to her team to start moving him.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

(to Mario)

Don't ever lie to a patient again. She may be young, but she's entitled to the truth.

Mario nods, admonished. Neal guides Ariel back to her gurney, but she never takes her eyes off her father. And Leanne.

9

**INT. WAITING ROOM - NIGHT**

9

Angus watches as Guthrie examines the patient, MR. CLEERY, who is disoriented, semi-paralyzed, and can't speak.

MRS. CLEERY

He was confused that I didn't understand him...

GUTHRIE

Called expressive aphasia. Word salad. Sounds right to him, but the words come out all tossed around.

Angus looks over and sees Malaya assisting an ATTENDING at the next bed.

GUTHRIE (CONT'D)

(softly, to nurse)

Activate the stroke team.

(to Angus)

Young squire, I heard you mention TPA. That what you're thinking?

Angus glances at Malaya, who's wondering how he's going to answer, clearly not expecting much. But, he's got this.

ANGUS

Yes. The symptom profile suggests MCA distribution.

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GUTHRIE

I think so, too. Fingers crossed.

Angus looks at Malaya again. She smiles, acknowledging his prowess. Guthrie turns to the patient and his wife.

GUTHRIE (CONT'D)

TPA is a kind of miracle drug that can potentially bust the clot up and reverse the stroke. But only if there's no actual bleeding yet in the brain. We'll need a scan to know for sure.

Bill Taylor walks by.

BILL TAYLOR

Doesn't take twelve people to run a scan, folks. It's Friday night, let's divide and conquer.

GUTHRIE

Young squire, check in at the nurse's station, see where you can be useful. Try not to kill anyone.

ANGUS

(as he leaves)

I wish everyone would stop saying that.

10

**INT. SUTURE ROOM - NIGHT**

10

Neal puts the last bandage on Ariel.

NEAL

Ariel, I think it's time you spoke to your Aunt. She can't get a flight until tomorrow.

ARIEL

I can't talk to her until I know my dad's okay. She didn't handle my mom dying very well.

NEAL

How did you handle it?

ARIEL

I was only eight, so...

Neal smiles slightly. She's still only twelve.

ARIEL (CONT'D)

That doctor coming in soon, the one taking care of my dad?

NEAL

I'll check. Meantime, here's my cell phone. Call your Aunt. She'll feel better hearing your voice.

She relents and takes the phone. He looks at her, pained.

11

**INT. C-BOOTH - NIGHT**

11

Leanne watches Mario stare at the monitors, taking notes. Christa stands by. Ariel's father is motionless on the bed.

JOSE

Pulse is thready, BP sixty over thirty.

LEANNE

What's your evaluation, doctors?

MARIO

Patient unconscious, low BP, warm extremities. He's in spinal shock.

LEANNE

No additional examination?

MARIO

Pretty textbook.

LEANNE

Textbook, huh?

(to Christa)

What about you? Textbook?

Christa doesn't think so. She begins to examine him. She feels his ankles, his wrists, then opens one of his eyes. She looks at Leanne, gravely.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

What's your diagnoses, doctor. If you know it, say it!

CHRISTA

He's 1-1-1.

Leanne's look tells her she's correct.

LEANNE

You think you're older than them, right? You don't belong here? I see it in your eyes, you know more than every one of them. Trepidation is a deadly quality in here.

She looks at Jose, a silent look that tells him she has to go talk to the daughter. When she walks away, he turns to Mario.

JOSE

Life lesson. When you're asked if you want to examine your patient some more, it's like being asked if you want a breath mint. The only answer is yes. If you took your head out of the monitor and out of your own ass and looked into this poor man's eyes, you might know what my girl here knows.

Jose walks over to the phone. Mario turns to Christa.

MARIO

Hell does 1-1-1 mean?

CHRISTA

The GCS scale. A 6-5-4 is normal brain function. 1-1-1 is the lowest. He's brain dead.

They both look at the patient.

CHRISTA (CONT'D)

That poor child.

12

**INT. NURSE'S STATION - NIGHT**

12

Malaya and Angus run into each other as they approach the nurse's station.

MALAYA

I want to be there for the TPA injection. Have you ever seen it?

ANGUS

No, only read about it. This is my first time in an ER.

MALAYA

Ever? You didn't do an EM internship?

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ANGUS

Psych.

MALAYA

Psych? How did you get in this program?

A nurse, SUSIE (50), interrupts them as Taylor passes.

SUSIE

Bedbugs in three. Who's up?

BILL TAYLOR

We have bedbugs? Since when?

SUSIE

Sorry, Doctor, we don't have bedbugs. Patient has bedbug bites. All over her thighs.

Bill looks at the chart. He shakes his head.

BILL TAYLOR

Malaya, you've been here long enough. What do I always say about bug bites?

MALAYA

It's never a bug bite.

SUSIE

Patient's in there with her husband. Sure you wanna send her into that?

BILL TAYLOR

Malaya can handle it. Right?

MALAYA

Yes, definitely.

BILL TAYLOR

Just don't forget to duck.

ANGUS

Duck?

SUSIE

(to Angus)  
You're with me, doctor.

Susie steers Angus in the other direction.

13 **INT. EXAM ROOM - SAME** 13

Malaya walks in to find a couple in their late 30s. SIENNA is impatient and angry, while RICK is relaying her commands to whomever he's on the phone with.

RICK (INTO PHONE)  
We want a refund.

SIENNA  
No refund! Damages! You're not the one with bites all over your legs!  
(notices Malaya)  
You're the doctor? How old are you?

MALAYA  
I'm a Resident. Dr. Pineda. I understand you have a rash.

The wife rolls her eyes and lifts her gown.

SIENNA  
Not a rash. We went to New York last week. Bedbugs! Believe that?!  
Five star hotel, my ass, Rick!

Malaya looks at her legs and reaches for LATEX GLOVES.

14 **INT. X-RAY - NIGHT** 14

Nurse Susie brings Angus into X-ray, where Caesar the skateboarder is getting his pictures taken.

SUSIE  
You know how to put on a cast?

ANGUS  
(relieved)  
That's it? A cast? No problem.

Susie walks out, leaving Angus very happy.

15 **INT. EXAM ROOM - SAME** 15

Malaya finishes her examination of Sienna's inner thighs, as Rick, the husband, continues with his call in the corner.

SIENNA  
Disgusting, right? And it hurts.

MALAYA  
Ma'am...

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SIENNA

Rick, tell him I'm a lawyer!

Malaya looks at Susie. Susie mouths, "Just tell her." But, Malaya doesn't feel right. She writes something on the chart.

SIENNA (CONT'D)

While you're prescribing, I prefer Percoset. For pain.

Malaya makes sure Rick isn't looking and shows Sienna what she's written. In large words: "HERPES." Sienna's eyes bulge.

SIENNA (CONT'D)

Get me a real doctor. Now, please.

RICK

What's the problem?

SIENNA

This infant doesn't seem to realize you can't get herpes on your legs!

MALAYA

You can't *catch* herpes on your legs. But it can *present* there.

SIENNA

We've been married for ten years and I don't cheat, so...

RICK

Sienna.

SIENNA

...before you find yourself in the middle of a lawsuit, I would...

RICK

Sienna!

Sienna turns and looks at him and his face says it all.

SIENNA

You're not serious...

Malaya takes the opportunity to slip out the door.

16

**INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT**

16

Leanne stands in the hallway with Neal. She just told him.

NEAL

My God. And she's alone until tomorrow.

LEANNE

Did someone call Children and Family Services to come get her?

NEAL

Yes, but you know how that goes. Could be hours.

LEANNE

It gets worse. He's an organ donor. Transplant team is on their way.

NEAL

Then we can't wait for CFS. We have to tell her.

LEANNE

I have to tell her. I gave her my word.

NEAL

You don't have to.

LEANNE

Why?

NEAL

She lost both parents. It's not going to be pretty.

LEANNE

It's the job.

Leanne walks into the room. Neal follows.

17

**INT. SUTURE ROOM - NIGHT**

17

Ariel stands up as they walk in.

ARIEL

Is he awake?

LEANNE

Ariel, your father came in with terrible injuries, most of which we couldn't see at first...

ARIEL

What are you... what are you... TV Calling - For educational purposes only

LEANNE

There is no good way to say this.

Ariel begins to back away. Leanne glances at Neal. She wishes she didn't, but this is clearly harder than she expected.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry.

ARIEL

(terrified)

For what.

LEANNE

We couldn't save him.

ARIEL

I don't understand.

NEAL

Your father died, Ariel.

Leanne turns. The words had to be spoken out loud and she clearly couldn't. She looks back at Ariel, whose world is spinning.

LEANNE

Technically... well, technically it's a brain death, which means...

ARIEL

Wait, what? So, he's not dead?

LEANNE

No, that's not what I... Machines are keeping his body in a state...

ARIEL

What are you saying?

LEANNE

I'm trying to explain.

ARIEL

No, you're not! What happened to giving it to me straight?!

Neal sees this is about to get out of control.

LEANNE

I am giving it to you straight.

ARIEL

Right. He's dead. *But, technically, not really, right?* I want to see him! I want to see him right now!

NEAL

Ariel, your father chose to be an organ donor. That's why we have machines keeping his organs functioning. But, it's important that you understand, he will never wake up. He's gone, sweetheart. I'm terribly sorry.

Ariel calms down, looks right at them and says, calmly,

ARIEL

No.

LEANNE

No? No, what?

ARIEL

No, you can't have his organs. I'm his daughter and I'm saying no.

LEANNE

Unfortunately, it's not your decision to make. It's your father's and he made it a long time ago.

ARIEL

Shut up! Just shut up!!

Ariel explodes, knocks some bedpans on the floor.

NEAL

Ariel, please...

ARIEL

You don't care about my father! You don't care about me! You just want to cut him up!

LEANNE

That's not...

ARIEL

Shut up! Shut up! Shut up!!

She gets right in Leanne's face, screaming the same words over and over again - Shut up! Shut up! Shut up!

Then, just as quickly, she crumbles into sobs and tears, falling into Leanne, her arms draping helplessly around Leanne's body.

Leanne awkwardly holds this poor kid, overcome by the extreme emotion. In fact, she's almost unable to cope with it. Neal sees what it's doing to her, but is helpless to do anything.

LEANNE

I'm sorry...

Leanne awkwardly passes Ariel's slumped body to Neal and stands. Neal holds Ariel, glancing at Leanne as she backs out into the hall.

18

**INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

18

Leanne swallows hard. Something is happening to her right now, something deep, an experience we're unaware of, but can read clearly on her face.

**END ACT ONE**

**ACT TWO**19 **INT. WAITING ROOM - NIGHT**

19

Friday night at County and it's starting to show. The waiting room is full now. It's loud and it's becoming more chaotic. The desk nurse, Hannah, yells out a name...

HANNAH

Angela Dinozio! Angela Dinozio!

Slumped in a corner chair, half-asleep is a very sick looking, very pregnant, woman named ANGELA DINOZIO. She stirs, raises a hand and pulls herself to her feet.

20 **INT. THE SIDES - NIGHT**

20

C-Booth is busier than we've seen up until now. Every bed is taken around the sides and in center-stage. (NOTE: *This will get progressively more chaotic as this act progresses.*)

In the midst of the bustle, in an open stall in The Sides, Ariel sits next to the body of her father, the machines sucking and wheezing as they breathe for him and keep his heart beating. Neal walks in and hands Ariel a glass of water. She doesn't want it. He puts it down on the tray. He turns and sees...

Leanne on the other side of C-Booth, watching them. Jose walks up behind her.

JOSE

Transplant team en route.

He follows her gaze to Ariel. Jose knows Leanne better than probably anyone.

JOSE (CONT'D)

I want to tell you how fabulous you look right now.

LEANNE

I do?

JOSE

No. I want to tell you that, but it would be a lie.

She turns to him slowly. He considers her face for a moment.

JOSE (CONT'D)

You look like you've been strapped  
to the bow of a ship.

LEANNE

Is that so?

He nods vigorously. She begins to crack a smile.

JOSE

No, don't do that. You don't need  
any more laugh lines. Believe me.

When Jose smiles the room lights up. He wraps his massive  
arms around her and squeezes her the way only he can.

JOSE (CONT'D)

I love you so much I want to break  
you in half.

LEANNE

I love you so much I want to punch  
your face in.

They both laugh, a welcome sound. He lets her go.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

Get back to work. We could hit Code  
Black tonight.

JOSE

You got it, boss.

He watches as she heads back into the fray.

21

**INT. SIDES - NIGHT**

21

Behind a curtain in one of The Sides, Guthrie talks to the  
Cleery's - the stroke victim and his wife.

GUTHRIE

Well, you qualify for TPA and we're  
still inside the window for it to  
be effective.

MRS. CLEERY

And this will work?

GUTHRIE

It could. Barring complications,  
the results would be immediate. The  
symptoms of the stroke would  
vanish. Like magic.

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MRS. CLEERY

I don't believe in magic, Doctor.  
What are the complications?

GUTHRIE

Only 7% experience the miracle.  
However, the same number experience  
catastrophic bleeding somewhere  
else in the body. We wouldn't know  
where until it was happening, and  
we might not be able to stop it.

She looks at her husband, squeezing his hand. He's scared,  
unable to speak.

MRS. CLEERY

And if we do nothing?

GUTHRIE

What you see now. Partial  
paralysis, expressive aphasia,  
inability to speak altogether, and  
possibly worse.

(beat)

Unfortunately, you don't have much  
more time to decide. TPA has a very  
short window before it becomes  
useless.

The Cleery's look at each other. She's trying hard to be  
strong for him, but it's clearly not easy.

22

**INT. NURSE'S STATION - NIGHT**

22

Leanne walks with Christa up to the nurse's station.

LEANNE

Ella, who's next?

ELLA ROSEN, 22, an ER NURSE, hands her a chart.

ELLA

Room seven, pregnant, URI, fever.

Leanne hands the chart to Christa.

LEANNE

Sounds like the flu. Evaluate and  
then come find me.

CHRISTA

Should I...

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LEANNE  
Evaluate and find me.

Leanne turns back to Ella.

LEANNE (CONT'D)  
Next?

We stay with Christa as she walks away, reading the chart.  
She's approached by Mario.

MARIO  
How do you know so much?

CHRISTA  
Believe me, I don't.

MARIO  
We both went to medical school,  
both did an internship. Are you  
pulling a second residency?

CHRISTA  
What do you mean?

MARIO  
I mean, were you already an MD and  
went back to try a different  
specialty or something?

CHRISTA  
Ha. No. Just a wife and mom.

He's completely perplexed. And a little irritated.

MARIO  
Wife and mom? Is this some kind of  
Oprah thing?

CHRISTA  
An Oprah thing?

MARIO  
You know, 'Live Your Best Life' and  
all that?

CHRISTA  
I see. You think I'm a lowly  
housewife looking for a new start?

She baffles him. *What's her game?!*

MARIO

I think there's no tougher place to work in all of ER medicine than C-booth at LA County. I think this place is hard enough for the young, let alone...

CHRISTA

The old.  
(smiles)  
Don't be threatened by me, Mario.

MARIO

That what you think? I'm threatened?

CHRISTA

Let's examine this patient together. Maybe we can both learn something.

He's not sure how to respond to her friendliness. He looks around. Hell with it.

MARIO

Why not.

23

**INT. EXAM ROOM - NIGHT**

23

Christa and Mario sit with the patient, the pregnant woman we saw earlier, Angela Dinozio.

CHRISTA

Runny nose, coughing, watery eyes... all the symptoms of an upper respiratory infection. A bad cold or maybe a flu.

Mario watches quietly, as Christa examines her.

ANGELA

Worst part is the headache. I live above the boiler room in my building and the noise is cracking my head open. Is there anything you can give me for that?

MARIO

You're nine months pregnant. There's not a lot we can do, other than give you Tylenol.

ANGELA  
I've tried. It's not helping.

MARIO  
Are you *using* again?

ANGELA  
Excuse me?

Christa turns, shocked.

CHRISTA  
Mario?

MARIO  
Those scars on the inside of your  
arm. They're old track marks,  
right?

ANGELA  
None of your goddamn business! Who  
the hell do you think you are?

MARIO  
Just a doctor trying to figure out  
what's wrong with a patient.

ANGELA  
You're an asshole! I don't have to  
listen to this!

Angela starts coughing and can't stop. Christa helps her,  
tries to soothe her.

CHRISTA  
Take it easy, it's okay. He's  
leaving.  
(to Mario)  
Can we talk outside?

Angela is coughing her lungs out. Mario finally relents and  
walks out into the hallway, while Christa fills a cup of  
water for Angela.

24 **INT. HALLWAY - SAME**

24

Christa walks out, to find Mario waiting for her.

CHRISTA  
What was that about?

MARIO

She's a *seeker*. Heroin withdrawal often mimics flu symptoms.

CHRISTA

But you don't know for a fact...

MARIO

Where's the fever? If it's the flu, it would have hit her like a freight train.

That one takes Christa by surprise.

MARIO (CONT'D)

You have a lot of experience with drug withdrawals?

CHRISTA

Actually, I do. My son.  
(off his surprise)  
With him it was morphine. For pain. I'm sorry, but I just don't think this woman is using.

MARIO

Sorry about your son, but I know a bit more about this than you do.  
(off her look)  
It was a long time ago and I'm not ashamed. I pulled myself out and I'm fine now.

Leanne walks up.

LEANNE

You two want to tell me what's going on?

CHRISTA

We're in disagreement about a patient.

LEANNE

Which one?

CHRISTA

Pregnant URI.

MARIO

I think we should do a tox screen. Rule out heroin withdrawal.

LEANNE  
(to Christa)  
And you?

CHRISTA  
I don't know, but something's not right. I don't think it's the flu and I don't think it's heroin. If I had a little more time...

LEANNE  
You don't have time.  
(to Mario)  
And a positive tox screen still doesn't change the management of the case. Even if she has an addiction problem, there's nothing we can do in the ER for it. Recommend a social worker to her and ship her out.

Leanne walks away, leaving both Christa and Mario frustrated.

CHRISTA  
You make a good point about the fever. It's not the flu.

MARIO  
It doesn't matter. You heard what she said. Doesn't change the management of the case.

Christa is deep in thought. Then...

CHRISTA  
I think we need to know. We should run the tox screen.

MARIO  
There's no we here. You heard what Royer said.

CHRISTA  
She also said *trepidation is a deadly quality*.

MARIO  
I'm already on her bad side. There's nothing in this for me.

CHRISTA  
Except maybe helping a patient.

Mario raises his hands in surrender and backs away. He's out.

25        **INT. NURSE'S STATION - NIGHT**

25

Malaya is at the computer typing into an endless form.

JOSE

Whatever you're doing, log out and follow me. You're gonna love this.

MALAYA

Sounds exciting!

JOSE

Clearly you don't speak the native tongue of my people... sarcasm.

Her face drops. He winks.

26        **INT. EXAM ROOM - NIGHT**

26

Caesar, the skateboarder, is nodding off as Angus applies a cast on his arm. Jose walks in with Malaya.

JOSE

Angus, Guthrie needs you in The Sides. The stroke patient. Malaya can finish the cast.

MALAYA

You can't be serious. A cast? That's what nurses do.

JOSE

Is that right?

MALAYA

I didn't mean...

JOSE

Wanna be part of a team? No job too big, no job too small.  
(to Angus)  
Dr. Leighton, go now, please.

Jose leaves. Angus is about to leave, too.

MALAYA

(to Angus)  
Wait, what's with *skaterboy*?

ANGUS

Sleeping it off, I think.

MALAYA

Great. Go. TPA has a short window.

Angus takes off. Malaya looks at Caesar, passed out.

27

**INT. THE SIDES - NIGHT**

27

Angus runs up to Guthrie, who is prepping the syringes.

GUTHRIE

I was about to start without you.

Guthrie hands the syringe to Angus.

MRS. CLEERY

How soon will we know if it worked?

GUTHRIE

Only takes a few seconds. When it works.

Mrs. Cleery squeezes her husband's hand. Guthrie nods to Angus, who pokes the needle into the IV, squeezes the medicine into the tube.

The Cleerys stare into each other's eyes. Guthrie alternates his look from the monitors to the Cleerys.

GUTHRIE (CONT'D)

Come on, baby, show us the magic.

(beat)

Okay, Mr. Cleery, try and speak.

Mr. Cleery looks at his wife.

MR. CLEERY

L...o...ve....you.

GUTHRIE

Abracadabra.

She cries and kisses her husband. Guthrie winks at Angus.

GUTHRIE (CONT'D)

That's why we're here, young squire. Don't ever forget it.

Angus definitely won't.

28           **INT. EXAM ROOM - NIGHT**

28

Caesar wakes up, his arm in a wet cast. He's disoriented. Nobody else here but him. He stands up, woozy, trying to hold his balance. He walks - more like stumbles - out the door.

A moment later, Angus walks in. He looks around, no patient. Angus yells to a nurse walking by.

ANGUS

Where's my patient? The broken arm?

The nurse shrugs and keeps walking.

29           **INT. FRONT DOORS - NIGHT**

29

Angus finds Malaya.

ANGUS

What happened to my patient?

MALAYA

*Skaterboy?* I left him in there.  
Cast has to dry anyway.

ANGUS

He's gone!

MALAYA

What are you talking about?

ANGUS

You lost our patient, Malaya!

MALAYA

Oh, now he's *our* patient.

Leanne walks quickly past them, grabbing both of them.

LEANNE

Let's go. Incoming...

Boom! Doors burst open and MEDICS rush in with a gurney. Leanne takes one side, Angus and Malaya get the other side.

MEDIC

10 year old male, breathing  
labored. Possible allergic  
reaction.

The two parents of the boy are rushing alongside them. The father speaks in a NORWEGIAN ACCENT.



FATHER

He didn't eat or drink anything out  
of the ordinary.

LEANNE

Your accent... are you from Norway?

FATHER

Yes.

LEANNE

Your son has a collapsed lung.  
We're going to help him.

ANGUS

How could you know...

LEANNE

If a Norwegian kid can't breathe  
it's a pneumothorax. It's a genetic  
predisposition.

They move the gurney into...

30

**INT. C-BOOTH - CONTINUOUS**

30

Parking the gurney in the center-stage of C-Booth, interns  
and med students jump up on the wall to watch.

LEANNE

I need someone to run another IV!  
Where are nurses?

Jose yells over from the gurney in the next stall.

JOSE

I'm all out of nurses.

MALAYA

I got it.

She grabs a TOURINQUET and SALINE BAG. Jose smiles.

JOSE

My girl.

LEANNE

What's the boy's name?

FATHER

Basti. Short for Sebastian.

LEANNE

Basti, look at me. You're going to be okay. We just need to let some air out of your chest and you'll feel better right away.

Neal approaches.

NEAL

Leanne, transplant team just took Ariel's father upstairs.

LEANNE

Understood.

(to the parents)

We're going to be putting a tube into Basti's chest to relieve the pressure. This is very routine and we can do it right here.

NEAL

She asked to talk to you.

LEANNE

Me? Why?

NEAL

She connected with you.

LEANNE

No, she didn't. Angus, you'll do the chest tube.

Malaya can't believe her ears. Neither can Angus.

ANGUS

Me?

Angus looks at Malaya, as she pulls a tray off a cart.

ANGUS (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

MALAYA

Looking for my diploma to make sure it's really my name on it. I'm prepping a tray for you. You're going to be making an incision.

Angus goes ashen. Meanwhile, Neal is still on Leanne.

NEAL

Leanne, I can take this case. Go talk to her for a minute.

LEANNE

Look around you! We're about to be in Code Black. If you want me to be a social worker, then pick the patient who should die waiting for me to get back to my actual job!

Taylor walks over as their voices raise.

NEAL

Don't lecture me, I'm not one of your residents!

BILL TAYLOR

I have eczema. Itches like crazy.

NEAL

What?!

BILL TAYLOR

You don't care? Funny, because the two hundred patients in here having the worst day of their lives don't care about your problems either.

LEANNE

Basti, I need you to slow your breathing for me. Can you do that?

Taylor starts to turn back to Leanne, and runs right into Caesar (the skateboarder), who is clearly disoriented.

BILL TAYLOR

Are you okay? Whose patient is this?!

ANGUS

Mine...

Leanne looks at Angus as Caesar suddenly lurches forward, right into her. She catches him, the back of his HEAD sliding down her arm, leaving a trail of BLOOD on her sleeve.

LEANNE

This kid has a head injury. I need a gurney over here!

JOSE

We're out of gurneys.

CAMERA spins, taking in the chaos, patients on every possible swatch of linoleum. The doors swing open and give us a terrifying glimpse into the roaring waiting room with a FEW HUNDRED more in dire need.

Patients and machines wail in a cacophony of alarms in 360 degrees, until the camera finally lands back on... Bill Taylor. He stares up at a MONITOR.

BILL TAYLOR

God help us. It's not even midnight  
and we're in Code Black.

HIS POV, THE MONITOR - WORDS FLASH: CODE BLACK. And we...

**END ACT TWO**

**ACT THREE****31 INT. NURSE'S STATION - NIGHT 31**

The nurse's station has become the center of a very chaotic world: DOCTORS elbow to get to computer terminals to enter and retrieve data, charts fly in and out, phones ring incessantly, NURSES shout information over each other.

PATIENTS line the walls and every time the doors swing open to the waiting room, there's a resulting roar that blows in.

**32 INT. C-BOOTH - NIGHT 32**

C-Booth is now unlike anything we've seen before. An open room of chaos. 60 staffers in various color scrubs, machines buzzing and beeping from every direction, critical patients on all sides. Guthrie catches up with a gurney that rushes past, a METH HEAD strapped to it, screaming. Blood drips on Neal's shoe as he calls out to a nurse for MORE SUTURES. Taylor listens to the heartbeat of an ELDERLY MAN. Christa kneels in front of a woman with a bandage on her head.

TEXT: FRIDAY, 12:04 AM - CODE BLACK

**33 INT. C-BOOTH - NIGHT 33**

Jose stands on the other side of Basti, as Malaya takes the sterile cloth off the surgical tray for Angus. Basti breathes with increased difficulty, his parents more and more worried.

Angus keeps looking over at the next bed, where Caesar is unconscious and Leanne is examining him, while trying to talk on her cell phone.

LEANNE (PHONE)

Of course we're getting a CT scan,  
Natalie, soon as the room frees.  
But I need a neurosurgeon now...

Finally she puts the phone on speaker and puts it on Caesar's chest, while she looks closely at the wound.

NATALIE (O.S. PHONE)

Ground level fall, minor  
laceration? Leanne, we don't come  
down there for a concussion.

LEANNE

I think it's an internal bleed.

NATALIE

I'll need the CT scan first. We're slammed up here. Hold a sec.

LEANNE

Natalie!

She hangs up, turns just as Ella the nurse runs up.

ELLA

CT scan is ready.

LEANNE

Let's move him.

Ella throws the EKG onto the bed next to Caesar's legs, hangs his IV bag to the hook attached to the gurney.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

(to Jose)

Jose? Simple chest tube, right?

JOSE

He's about to make the incision.

ANGUS

(to Leanne)

Wait, you're leaving?

As she's moving out with Ella and Caesar.

LEANNE

This patient needs an MD with him and we're in Code Black. Jose?

JOSE

Go. Mama's in the kitchen.

And they're gone. Malaya notices Angus' hand holding the scalpel is trembling.

MALAYA

(whispering)

Focus. You can do this.

Angus looks at her, then to the boy and the boy's parents, as he cuts a hole for the chest tube.

Behind them, another ROAR takes us to...

34        **INT. SIDES - NIGHT**

34

The ROAR is from the Meth Head, strapped to the gurney. Guthrie prepares a syringe, calling out to a NURSE.

GUTHRIE

Bethany, I might need more Haldol  
for this one.

NURSE

I have no one to send to pharmacy.

Guthrie sticks the needle in his arm.

METH HEAD

I'm gonna kill you, you rat!!

GUTHRIE

Rat?

METH HEAD

You rat motherfu...

His head drops. Silence. Guthrie looks at his syringe.

GUTHRIE

Rat... Tat... touille.

35        **INT. HALLWAY, OUTSIDE OF RADIOLOGY - SAME**

35

Leanne, Ella, and an ORDERLY turn the gurney to enter the door to radiology. As the gurney moves inside, Leanne stops for a second in the hallway, staring at something. Someone.

Way down the hall, she spots Neal, the CFS REP, and Ariel coming out of a room. Leanne watches, not wanting to be seen.

Neal puts a hand on Ariel's shoulder. She hugs him. Leanne watches all of this. She watches as Neal waves goodbye and this scared, lonely, and grief stricken 12-year-old walks out with a complete stranger. It's obvious that this all strikes Leanne very deeply, on a very painful level.

36        **INT. NURSE'S STATION - NIGHT**

36

Nurse Susie is buried under a pile of charts, passes Christa.

SUSIE

Royer's looking for you. She  
cancelled the tox screen on your  
pregger.

(MORE)

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SUSIE (CONT'D)  
(off Christa's horror)  
Patient left anyway. Sorry!

Susie keeps walking, leaving Christa very concerned.

37 **INT. C-BOOTH - NIGHT**

37

Angus has the tube inside Basti's chest, but something isn't right.

JOSE  
Vitals are rising. That doesn't  
make sense.

MOTHER  
Why isn't it working?

FATHER  
What is happening, please?

JOSE  
Dr. Leighton, pull back on the tube  
a little bit.

ANGUS  
Pull back?

Angus is terrified. The sound of the machines buzzing and beeping are all he can hear.

MALAYA  
Hey, are you okay?

He doesn't respond.

ANGUS  
He's turning grey...

Jose looks. Shit, he is turning grey!

JOSE  
Doctor, listen to me. You need to  
pull back on the tube. It's stuck  
in the fascia of his back.

MALAYA  
Angus...

FATHER  
Please! Do something! He's not  
breathing!



JOSE

Malaya! Move him out of the way,  
right now!

Monitor alarms are wailing. The parents are terrified and Angus is frozen. Instead of knocking him aside, though, Malaya gets very calm and puts her hand on Angus' hand, the one holding the chest tube. He's startled, but she speaks calmly...

MALAYA

Feel it? It's stuck in the fatty  
tissue. So we just pull gently...

She gently guides his hand, pulling BACK SLIGHTLY.

Basti takes a big, wheezing breath. The blaring of the machines stop, the vitals return to normal. It worked. Malaya takes a deep breath and looks at Jose. He smiles at her.

JOSE

Nice job... Doctor Pineda.

She smiles back and breathes a sigh of relief, then turns to find Angus, but he's gone.

38

**INT. SIDES - NIGHT**

38

Guthrie is writing in a chart, when the WRIST STRAPS suddenly break behind him and the Meth Head is up. He swipes at the table next to him, METAL PANS clanging to the floor.

Guthrie and an orderly grab the meth head, but he's too powerful. Guthrie spots Angus walking by and yells...

GUTHRIE

Angus!

Angus turns and sees the mayhem. He runs full-bore and tackles the meth head, knocking him down to the floor... and KNOCKING HIM OUT.

Angus doesn't know how to react. The last five minutes have been the worst of his life. Guthrie slaps him on the back.

GUTHRIE (CONT'D)

Nick of time, Young Squire. Nick of  
time.

39           **INT. RADIOLOGY - NIGHT**

39

Christa enters to find Leanne looking at the scan of Caesar's head, on the phone,

                  LEANNE (PHONE)

I'm staring at Caesar Lopez's scan, which is showing a hyper dense, increased attenuation in an elliptical pattern consistent with an epidural hematoma! No, don't put me on hold again! Dammit!

                  CHRISTA

Dr. Royer, I know you're angry...

                  LEANNE

I specifically told you no tox screen, right?

                  CHRISTA

Yes. But...

                  LEANNE

You ignored direct instructions from your supervising physician.

                  CHRISTA

You said *trepidation is a deadly...* I thought I was acting in the best interest of my patient.

                  LEANNE

You don't have patients. You're a first year resident... a first day resident. That means every patient you see is my patient. And if I can't trust you here, then I can't have you here. Goodbye, Christa.

                  CHRISTA

Wait, are you...

                  LEANNE

Go home. It's over.

Leanne goes back to her call.

                  LEANNE (PHONE) (CONT'D)

Yes, Natalie, I'm right here...

                  CHRISTA

Dr. Royer, please... I'm sorry.

Leanne ignores her. Christa wanders out in a daze.

40           **INT. NURSE'S STATION - NIGHT**

40

Christa emerges from the doctor's locker room with her coat in her hand. The place is so crazy, that nobody seems to notice. Except Mario. He walks over to her.

                  CHRISTA  
She fired me.

                  MARIO  
Did you tell her I knew?

                  CHRISTA  
No, Mario. Thanks for the concern.

                  MARIO  
Sorry, but I paid my way through medical school working in a rest stop on I95, surviving on corn dogs and choking on diesel fumes...

                  CHRISTA  
Wait, diesel fumes... that's it!

                  MARIO  
What?

                  CHRISTA  
Carbon monoxide. She said she lives above a boiler room, right? Carbon monoxide poisoning also mimics flu symptoms! Mario, thank you!

She takes off, leaving him completely flummoxed.

41           **EXT. ANGELA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

41

Christa parks her car in front of the building and gets out. She checks the address on her post-it. This little apartment building is the right place.

She finds the apartment, takes a deep breath, and rings the bell. No answer. She moves over to the window and looks inside. From there she can see all the way to the other side of the apartment, into the kitchen, and her eyes open wide. There on the kitchen floor is Angela, unconscious.

**END ACT THREE**

**ACT FOUR**42           **INT. C-BOOTH - DAWN**

42

Code Black - PATIENTS and STAFF in every direction.

In center-stage of C-Booth, Jose preps a DRILL, the kind you use to put a hole in concrete. He turns and hands it to Leanne, standing over the still unconscious Caesar. She squeezes the trigger causing a loud VZOOM, causing various staffers with other patients to turn to look.

Neal comes rushing into C-Booth with a new patient, a UTILITY WORKER groaning in pain, parking the gurney right next to Leanne. The Medics are in mid-rundown:

MEDIC

Truck ran right over his leg.  
Broken in at least four places. Big  
mid-femur deformity from the crush.

NEAL

What's your name, sir?

UTILITY WORKER

Wayne. I can't feel my leg, doc.

NEAL

The bones are pinching a nerve.  
We're going to help you.  
          (to Ella, his nurse)  
IV, fluids and 20mg morphine stat.

Neal looks over and sees the drill in Leanne's hand.

NEAL (CONT'D)

What's that for?

LEANNE

Renovating the suture room.

NEAL

You're drilling a burr hole?  
          (feels his patient's foot)  
Foot cold, no pulse down here. We  
gotta get this leg straight.  
          (to Leanne)  
You can't put a hole in that kid's  
skull in the ER. You need a  
neurosurgeon.

LEANNE

There's nobody available.  
He's out cold because of all the  
pressure from the epidural bleed.  
It needs to drain. Sometimes you  
just have to be a cowboy, Neal.  
(re his patient)  
You're gonna need some help if  
you're planning on yanking that.  
(spots Mario)  
Mario! Over here!

NEAL

(to Ella)  
Get ortho ready to go. Our friend  
Wayne will need an OR right after.

WAYNE

After *what*?

Taylor walks up to them, interrupting.

BILL TAYLOR

Dr. Royer, this may not be  
surprising to you, but it certainly  
was to me. One of your residents is  
calling you from the back of an  
ambulance on the 101 freeway.

LEANNE

What?! Who?

BILL TAYLOR

Soccer mom.

LEANNE

Christa? What happened to her?!

Mario turns sharply when he hears Christa's name.

BILL TAYLOR

She's not the patient.

Leanne, Neal, and Mario are all shocked. What the hell...

43

**INT. AMBULANCE - DAWN**

43

Christa is panicked, on the phone with Leanne, as a MEDIC  
gives an unconscious Angela pure oxygen.

CHRISTA (PHONE)  
 It's definitely carbon monoxide,  
 they had to break all the windows,  
 she's still unconscious, we're  
 giving her oxygen...

LEANNE (O.S. PHONE)  
 Christa, deep breath. Gimme vitals.

INTERCUT WITH:

44 **INT. C-BOOTH - SAME** 44

Leanne on the phone, drill still in hand. Neal injects a  
 syringe into the utility worker's IV.

NEAL  
 This will help with the pain.

CHRISTA (PHONE)  
 Pulse faint at 120, BP 60 over  
 palp.

Leanne looks at Neal and shakes her head.

LEANNE  
 Her patient's crashing.

NEAL  
 You have to get her back here. She  
 needs a hyperbaric chamber.

MARIO  
 She's pregnant.

Neal turns sharply at that - *Pregnant? Jesus.*

LEANNE (PHONE)  
 Christa, what's your ETA?

CUT TO:

45 **EXT. FREEWAY - SUNRISE** 45

Overhead view of freeway. The AMBULANCE is stuck in BUMPER-TO-  
 BUMPER traffic. Siren is on, but a stalled vehicle on the  
 shoulder is making it impossible for cars to move.

46 **INT. C-BOOTH - MORNING** 46

Leanne looks at Neal.

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LEANNE

You're not going to like this, but...

NEAL

She needs to perform a C-section on the rig.

(off her surprise)

Sometimes you gotta be a cowboy.

MARIO

Christa's going to do a C-section?

NEAL

Mario, focus. I need you up by his shoulders to give me leverage.

We're gonna try and save this leg.

Leanne puts the phone on speaker and puts it on a tray.

LEANNE (PHONE)

Christa, tell the medic to prep an emergency surgical kit.

INTERCUT WITH:

47

**INT. AMBULANCE - SAME**

47

CHRISTA

Wait, wait, wait, I can't do this.

LEANNE

Yes, you can. You've done an OB rotation, you've witnessed plenty of these.

NEAL

(calls out to phone)

Make sure the patient stays unconscious.

CHRISTA

No danger there.

NEAL

Wayne, how we doing, pal? Morphine should have kicked in.

Wayne doesn't look so sure.

NEAL (CONT'D)

Ella, you're gonna hold his pelvis so he doesn't slide. Jose, I need you for a sec down here.

A BEEPING from Caesar's BP MONITOR.

LEANNE

BP rising. Dammit. I'm going to need Jose back.

Neal nods and picks up Wayne's foot, causing him to SCREAM.

NEAL

Everybody ready?

MARIO

Ready for what?

JOSE

Hold him!

NEAL

Now!

Neal and Jose pull hard on the leg as Mario holds his chest down and Ella grips his pelvis. We hear a sickening sound of bones crackling as the leg straightens out. Wayne SCREAMS.

48 **EXT. FREEWAY - MORNING**

48

The ambulance is still stuck. Honking horns all around them. If only the other drivers knew what was going on inside.

49 **INT. AMBULANCE - SAME**

49

The medic tears open a packet, inside of which is a sterile SCALPEL. He hands it to Christa. Her phone now rests on a shelf beside her, from which the voices of Leanne and Neal can be heard.

CHRISTA (PHONE)

Her pulse is dropping.

LEANNE (O.S. PHONE)

Then let's move fast. There's still a chance to save both of them.

INTERCUTTING with:

50 **INT. C-BOOTH - SAME**

50

Leanne wears safety goggles, bringing the drill close to Ceasar's head. Next to her, Neal splints Wayne's leg.



LEANNE (TO PHONE)

You're going to start with a midline abdominal incision, from the level of the uterine fundus to the pubic symphysis.

NEAL (TO PHONE)

You need to get through all three layers of the abdominal wall, including the peritoneum.

Mario assists Neal, but is fixated on the phone, as is a growing number of people - Malaya, Angus, and others - who keep craning their necks to see and hear. This is the show to see. Leanne lights up the DRILL.

CHRISTA (PHONE)

What's that noise?

LEANNE (PHONE)

Ignore it. Vitals?

Christa looks at the machines.

CHRISTA

Pulse 30... oh god.

LEANNE

It's okay. Stay focused.

NEAL

Start your incision now.

Christa does exactly what they've told her, cutting straight across Angela's abdomen. The medic, now in the role of surgical nurse, soaks up the blood with gauze.

Leanne brings the drill right up against the side of Caesar's head and begins to burr.

NEAL (PHONE) (CONT'D)

Christa, right under the abdominal wall, you're going to see something shiny. That's not the uterus.

CHRISTA (PHONE)

It's the bladder.

NEAL (PHONE)

Very good. Careful not to nick it. You are going to want to reflect it *distally*, get it out of your way.

Leanne continues drilling, while Jose monitors Caesar's airway and blood pressure monitors.

JOSE  
Vitals dropping.

NEAL  
Leanne?

LEANNE  
Almost there...

JOSE  
Pulse dropping...

NEAL  
Leanne, he's herniating!

LEANNE  
I know. Almost...

Back inside the ambulance, Christa moves the bladder, revealing the large purple ball that is the uterus.

CHRISTA (PHONE)  
Okay! Uterus is exposed!

LEANNE  
Hang on...

CHRISTA  
Hang on?!

Caesar's BP monitor is WAILING, various other alarms are going off. Jose and Neal exchange looks. This isn't good.

NEAL  
Is he draining yet?!

She doesn't respond, totally focused on the drill. Her eyes narrow as she is about to break through, and then...

BLOOD. It pours out of the burr hole.

LEANNE  
Got it!

The machines start to quiet.

JOSE  
Heart rate normalizing.

Neal pries open Caesar's eye. TV Calling - For educational purposes only

NEAL  
Pupils reactive...

Leanne doesn't miss a beat, turning to the phone.

LEANNE  
Christa, time to make your vertical  
incision on the uterus.

NEAL  
Watch the lateral vessels.

LEANNE  
Now, this is going to happen very  
quickly. You're going to reach your  
hand in there, fast as you can, but  
carefully, and feel for the baby.

CHRISTA  
When?

LEANNE  
Have you cut yet?

CHRISTA  
Yes!

LEANNE AND NEAL  
Now!

Christa reaches her hand in and feels for it.

CHRISTA  
I think I... yes, I have the baby.  
Pulling it out... HER! I have her!

Leanne and Neal look at each other. Did this really work?

Christa stares down at the baby in her hands. And then the  
sound of CRYING! The baby, then Christa...

CHRISTA (CONT'D)  
She's beautiful. My god, she's  
beautiful....

Leanne and Neal stare at each other for a moment. He looks  
like he might hug her or something, causing Jose to raise an  
eyebrow and Leanne to instinctively back away. Then,

BILL TAYLOR  
Kids, the OR can take one now.

JOSE  
Awkward.

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NEAL  
(ignores him, to Leanne)  
Yours should go up. Mine is stable.

She pulls up the side rails. Neal watches Leanne moving her patient out. He keeps watching as she crosses C-booth.

51 **EXT. AMBULANCE BAY - DAY**

51

Malaya walks out to find Angus, sitting on the curb. She sits down next to him and lets out a grunt. Been a long shift.

ANGUS  
You think Dr. Royer ignores you because she doesn't trust you. It's the opposite. She knows you're good. She's testing the rest of us. And I'm not passing the test.

MALAYA  
What are you talking about? You know your stuff, dude. You just need... confidence. That's all.

ANGUS  
You asked how I got in. Our father's on the hospital board. My brother never told anyone. Thought people wouldn't take him seriously. Wouldn't have made a difference. He's born for this. I'm not like him, though.

MALAYA  
Then what are you doing here?

ANGUS  
I hated psych. Hated it. I wanted something more exciting. I wanted what Mike had. So when dad said he could get me in here, I jumped at it. Big mistake.

She doesn't know how to respond. The moment is interrupted by Guthrie, whose booming voice turns their heads.

GUTHRIE  
Helluva night for you two. Started out saving a life and ending it by almost killing someone.

ANGUS

Two people, actually. I missed an epidural hematoma.

MALAYA

I missed it, too.

GUTHRIE

Know what that sounds like to me? A typical night in this joint.

He grins and leaves. Malaya smiles. Angus almost does, too.

52

**INT. NICU - DAY**

52

Christa stares through the glass window at A BABY in a bassinet, sleeping soundly. Leanne steps up behind her.

LEANNE

You did good.

CHRISTA

So did you.

LEANNE

We got her mom in the hyperbaric chamber, oxygenated her. She's gonna make it.

CHRISTA

Thank God.

LEANNE

Can I ask you something personal?  
(off her look)  
Why are you here?

CHRISTA

Pardon?

LEANNE

At your age, why would you want to put yourself through the rigors of medical school, an internship, and now the most punishing ER residency in the country?

CHRISTA

My son died.

Leanne wasn't prepared for that.

CHRISTA (CONT'D)

He was fifteen years old when he was diagnosed with a Stage 4 Glio. They gave him six months, but I squeezed out two years. When he was gone, I didn't know what to do. I figured I had this education I'd given myself trying to save Ian's life, maybe I should make it official. I couldn't save my own child, but maybe I could save someone else's. He would have wanted that.

Leanne takes a deep breath. That just hit her deeply.

CHRISTA (CONT'D)

In my experience, tragedy either softens you or hardens you. For me it was the former. For you I suspect it was the latter.

(off Leanne's look)

I've been in enough group therapy sessions to recognize it when I see it. Who did you lose?

Leanne doesn't know how to answer. So, she just does.

LEANNE

Everyone. My husband and my daughter.

Christa is speechless. Leanne continues, as if on autopilot.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

We'd rented a place in the Outerbanks for a couple weeks. After Labor Day to save money. You don't want to flip your car in a resort town in the off-season. I had a concussion, six broken bones, fading in and out, forced to watch helplessly as some twenty-six year old idiot doctor let my family die. They never had a chance.

CHRISTA

My God...

They sit silently for a moment. Then,

CHRISTA (CONT'D)

Is that when you decided to teach?  
After the accident?

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LEANNE

I'm not a teacher. I'm a filter.

(beat)

People come here praying for a hero to save them. You were that hero tonight, which is why I want you to stay. You were right.

Christa is surprised and grateful.

LEANNE (CONT'D)

No one gets through me who doesn't have that in them. That's the promise I made to my husband and my little girl.

Christa gets to stay. Leanne starts to leave. Then,

CHRISTA

Dr. Royer? Thank you. You asked why I'm here.

She points through the glass. The nurse is now holding the beautiful baby in her arms for them to see.

CHRISTA (CONT'D)

That's why I'm here. And if you don't mind me saying, I think it's why you're here, too.

Leanne stares at the tiny, beautiful face in the window. She takes a deep breath. Then, something seems to change in her face... perhaps an idea.

LEANNE

Thank you, Dr. Hardin.

53      **EXT. LA COUNTY HOSPITAL - TIMELAPSE**

53

The majestic civic cathedral that is LA County Hospital as the day passes into night and then back into day again.

54      **INT. LA COUNTY HOSPITAL - AFTERNOON**

54

Leanne walks down a long hallway. At the end of it she turns and walks up a grand flight of stairs, sunlight beaming in from the windows.

When she reaches the top of the stairs she finds the person she's looking for. Ariel stands up when she sees Leanne. She's joined by a woman, her AUNT.

LEANNE  
Hello, Ariel.

ARIEL  
Hi.

LEANNE  
And you must be Aunt Linda.

Aunt Linda smiles and they shake hands.

LEANNE (CONT'D)  
(to Ariel)  
You ready?

Ariel nods. Linda puts a hand on her shoulder.

LINDA  
I'll wait for you right here.

55      **INT. ICU - AFTERNOON**

55

The elevator doors open and Leanne and Ariel step out.

They walk down a quiet corridor. A middle-aged WOMAN stands outside a room. She smiles warmly, as we watch Leanne introduce her to Ariel. The woman indicates the open door and nods to Ariel that she can go inside.

56      **INT. ICU, VANESSA'S ROOM - AFTERNOON**

56

Ariel enters the room, the late afternoon sun glowing in the windows. In the bed is a GIRL, around the same age as Ariel. The girl looks at Ariel and smiles.

VANESSA  
Hi, I'm Vanessa...

ARIEL  
I'm Ariel.

The moment is quiet, slightly awkward. Ariel looks around.

ARIEL (CONT'D)  
I like your room.

VANESSA  
Thanks.  
(beat)  
You can come closer if you want.



Ariel trembles slightly as she nods her head. Vanessa gestures for her to walk closer.

When Ariel gets right up to the bed she leans down, tentative. Vanessa puts a hand on her shoulder and guides her all the way down until Ariel's head is on her chest. Only then do we see, poking out of the pajama top, the bandages on Vanessa's chest, right under Ariel's ear.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Can you hear it?

ARIEL

Yes... Yes! I hear it.

A tear falls from Ariel's eye as she whispers,

ARIEL (CONT'D)

I hear you, daddy.

Leanne watches from the doorway as Ariel listens to her father's heart beating in the chest of this sweet, young girl. She closes her eyes and steps back out into the hallway, leaving them together.

57        **INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

57

As Leanne catches her breath, her PHONE BUZZES. She looks at it. It says, "TRAUMA ACTIVATION."

LEANNE

Are you kidding me?

58        **INT. ER - EVENING**

58

Chaos as another night explodes in the ER. Taylor tells the staff, including an arriving Leanne and all of the residents,

BILL TAYLOR

Apartment fire. So far there are twenty-two on their way in. Burns, smoke inhalation, one heart attack, and a fireman with multiple broken bones. Let's get to work!

Everyone splits up and goes about their work. Leanne catches a gurney on its way in. She glances over and sees Christa, just arriving. They nod to each other. Then she sees Neal, still pulling his scrub shirt on as he rushes out of the men's locker room. They make eye contact for a moment. She seems like she might say something. Then he continues on.

59

**EXT. HOSPITAL - EVENING**

59

From the roof of the hospital we watch the sun beginning to set again over the city of Los Angeles. We look down at the city grid below us and the lights of the approaching ambulances, one by one, sirens blaring, racing toward us.

END PILOT