COUNTY

Pilot Episode

By Jason Katims
FADE IN:

INT. COUNTY HOSPITAL – DAY

Elevator doors open REVEALING JACK MALLOY (29), smart, compassionate, unexpectedly relentless. FOLLOW HIM handheld as he walks up the hallway. Right away we see this hospital is old school: industrial green, no art, a sense of mass.

Jack reaches the Nurses’ Station, where two NURSES are having a shouting match.

HISPANIC NURSE
Don’t you ever go around me again,-- watch yourself--
Lying bitch--

AFRICAN AMERICAN NURSE
I’m not going to take the blame for that patient coding when you give me the order--

HISPANIC NURSE
(to Jack)
What do you want?

Chyron Reads: DAY ONE

DR. MERCER (30s), brilliant, crazy, he’s a yeller -- approaches--

DR. MERCER
Ladies. Please. Take five minutes and get your shit together. Go. Dammit.

The Nurses both walk off in different directions.

DR. MERCER (CONT’D)
You’d think we were on the psych ward. Who are you?

JACK
I’m Jack Malloy. Your new intern. I just want to say I’m so excited to--

Mercer just starts walking away. Jack follows, though he’s not sure he’s supposed to...

DR. MERCER
--Where’d you train, Malloy?

JACK
Harvard.
DR. MERCER
Great. A helluva lot of good
that’ll do me. Ivy Leaguers
usually don’t last a week here.
Entitled, weak, the first ones to
run home to their mommies. Start
an I.V. on Mrs. Kyung in room
611...

JACK
Start an I.V.? Isn’t that the
nurse’s job?

DR. MERCER
Maybe you didn’t notice the nurses
are in a pissing match right now.
This is County, Jack. We wear many
hats.
(sees the look on Jack’s
face)
You don’t know how to do an I.V.?

JACK
We practiced in medical school. On
a mannequin.

DR. MERCER
Well, now you’re going to practice
on an actual person.

INT. E.R. - DAY

BANG! Sliding doors blow open for A TRAUMA PATIENT on a
gurney, THEN A SECOND, both moving fast, surrounded by
paramedics, cops, firemen. The place is instantly teeming
with activity! The parade passes TRAVIS (26), African-
American, from the neighborhood, he has put himself through
eight years of school with zero help but rarely lets that
show. His face shows he wants to follow, but he’s stuck...

...trying to calm OFFICER WADE -- a cop hooked up to heart
monitors, on a gurney in the hallway.

WADE
What the hell is going on? I’ve
been here for an hour. I’m going
to die on this table.

TRAVIS
Your troponin just came back. It’s
positive. The senior is calling
the cardiology team. You need to
stay.
WADE
Get me the hell out of County. *
Sign me out of here.

TRAVIS
Sir, if you’re having a heart attack--

WADE
Get me out of friggin’ County. *
Now!

OFF Travis...

INT. ROOM 611 - DAY

Jack gets an I.V. set up, trying not to look intimidated, as he smiles to the patient MRS. KYUNG (50s), Vietnamese, very ill. Jack stops to read the instructions, which produces an eyeroll from Mrs. Kyung’s daughter, ANGELINA (15), Vietnamese/American, cute and sassy with tons of attitude.

ANGELINA
Are you kidding? Do you know how to do this?

JACK
Yup, just-- It’s a new type of kit.

ANGELINA
Isn’t this the nurse’s job anyway?

JACK
I wear many hats. *

And Jack puts the needle into Kyung. It’s a miss. Didn’t get the vein.

ANGELINA
Seriously?

JACK
No problem. That happens. I’ll get it on the next try. I feel lucky. *

Jack tries again no luck. Again. Again. Cue brow sweat. He is about try again when Angelina reaches out and grabs Jack’s hand, fixing her gaze on him.

ANGELINA
That is my Mother. Do not miss again.
INT. MEDICINE WARD - DAY

Rounds. Mercer walks down the hallway with a group of about six young RESIDENTS and INTERNS including Jack, who clocks--ERICA KINSEY (26), too pretty for this place, she tends to let her emotions guide her, for better or worse.

MERCER
The patient went from a reasonably functional middle-aged man to nearly dying in the ER, altered and unable to breathe, in cardiac failure and extremis. Rather than run additional expensive tests that won’t change management, our first step should be to--

Erica chimes in, super eager to impress...

ERICA
What about a BNP...?

MERCER
A useless test. Expensive and non-specific.

ERICA
Doesn't elevated BNP correlate with cardiac stress?

MERCER
(growing more annoyed)
Wrong.

Jack tries not to cringe for her.

MERCER (CONT’D)
(squinting to read her I.D.)
Kinsey. Tests cost taxpayers dollars. Unnecessary testing puts patients AND our safety-net hospitals at risk, and therefore your NEW job.

This is going really bad. Mercer hands Erica the patient’s chart, flipping over one particular page.

MERCER (CONT’D)
On the reverse of the order sheet is the cost of every test here. Nothing is under 200 dollars. Perhaps you'd like to add a few? A D-Dimer? An SPL? Doctor Kinsey?
Erica looks unsure.

MERCER (CONT’D)
There is no such thing as an SPL.

This produces a chuckle from the group. Jack exchanges a look with Erica. Another intern, GRANGER (26), wire-rimmed glasses, bursting with unfounded confidence, chimes in...

GRANGER
Doctor Mercer, since transfer of care -- from ER to ICU to us now in step down is statistically the most dangerous time for patients, wouldn’t an old fashioned head to toe physical exam be most prudent?

MERCER
Precisely. Right call.

GRANGER
Thank you, doctor. That’s huge coming from you. I saw your lecture on risk management and Bayesian decision making at AMA Chicago last spring. Life changing.

Mercer just rolls his eyes at the obvious suck up and starts moving to the next patient. Granger looks at Erica.

GRANGER (CONT’D)
Next time, Rookie.

ERICA
Keep sucking.

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL WARD - DAY

The heavy metal door clicks open, revealing our next intern TALAIKHA, Indian, 95 pounds, stoic, and maddeningly unemotional under any circumstance. She is led by GYPSY, a tattooed, armed guard, past cells with Inmate-Patients.

GUARD GYPSY
Don’t ask them what they’re in for. Don’t talk to them about anything other than their medical condition. If you need me for any reason, I’ll be right outside.
Gypsy opens up the cell to Talaikha’s patient, a 250-POUND MURDERER, PRISONER WILSON. Talaikha enters, appearing undaunted, picks up his chart, starts reading.

TALAIKHA
Hello, Mr. Wilson, I’m Dr. Channarayapatra.

PRISONER WILSON
Channa...

TALAIKHA
...rayapatra.

PRISONER WILSON
You wanna go out with me?

TALAIKHA
I only date men that have a life expectancy greater than six months.

Puts down the chart, reaches for gloves.

TALAIKHA (CONT’D)
Looks like we’ll be starting with a rectal exam today.

OFF Talaikha going about this like it were any other day...

INT. ORTHO WARD - DAY

Our next Intern, BILLY (40), large and gregarious, is in a room with the patient MR. OLANREWAJU (60s), West African, whose WIFE, CHILDREN, and GRANDCHILDREN crowd in.

BILLY
Mr. Olanrewaju, I’m Doctor Krakower. How are you today?

MR. OLANREWAJU
Not good.

ONE OF HIS KIDS
He’s upset because you’re chopping off his leg.

BILLY
I get it. Granted that sucks. But I think the positive side here is that we are very optimistic about a full recovery.
MR. OLANREWAJU
I’m not going to grow my leg back.

BILLY
Yes, that’s true.

MRS. OLANREWAJU
We would like the leg.

BILLY
Oh, what did you...?

MRS. OLANREWAJU
After they amputate. May we have it?

ONE OF HIS KIDS
It belongs to him, anyway.

MRS. OLANREWAJU
We need to bury it. This is very important to us, Doctor.

There’s something they don’t teach you in med school.

CUT TO:

INT. ONCOLOGY WARD - DAY

Our last intern, ROSA (26), Hispanic, ball of fire, sharp-witted and shut down from her emotions, is examining MRS. RODRIGUEZ (50s), whose three adult children EMILIA, PHILIPPE, and CARLA surround her, eyeing Rosa doubtfully.

PHILIPPE
Another X-ray?

EMILIA
Nurse, they did one in the clinic.

ROSA
I’m actually not a nurse—

PHILIPPE
My mother needs an operation now! (holding up an iPad)
She needs a medianoscopy to assess for clearance and then a salvage partial pneumonectomy.
MRS. RODRIGUEZ  
(doubtful)  
Philippe, don’t yell at her, she’s just a nurse.

ROSA  
Once again, I’m a doctor. See the stethoscope?

A NURSE comes in. Wearing a stethoscope, as many do. Rosa makes the point:

ROSA (CONT’D)  
Nurse, I want to get her set up for a bone scan and an MRI of the brain.

NURSE  
(not going along)  
Maybe in six months, but today, let’s see what Doctor Ganz thinks.  

The Nurse walks out. Rosa thinks for a minute and goes after her...

ROSA  
Excuse me, Nurse?

The Nurse turns. Rosa starts talking to her in Spanish--

This following passage is subtitled. Rosa’s true kick ass, street comes out in her.

ROSA (CONT’D)  
I want an MRI and a bone scan and it wasn’t a suggestion it was an order. I know I look like your daughter or some chick from the neighborhood you could kick around, but I know what I want for my patient, I know what that patient needs and if I need to grab your hand put a pen in it and write it myself I will do so.  
(big bright smile)  
Thanks!

Rosa takes her leave. The nurse recovers for a second then shouts out in Spanish--

NURSE  
You picked on the wrong nurse.  
Crazy bitch.
INT. 6TH FLOOR MEDICINE WARD - DAY

A NURSE talks to Jack as they head toward the room.

NURSE
She’s profoundly anemic. Her crit is 18. She’s pale as a ghost. Her blood pressure is low, she’s short of breath and tachycardic.

JACK
What does Doctor Mercer say?

NURSE
That she’s your patient.

JACK
Oh. Right.

Jack tries not to look intimidated as he walks into Mrs. Kyung’s room. He takes a look at her, and smiles, even though she looks much worse.

JACK (CONT’D)
Mrs. Kyung, we’ve given four liters of I.V. fluid but you are very anemic. If we don’t get your blood counts up you could pass out or even have a heart attack, so I’m going to get you a couple units of packed RBCs right away.

MRS. KYUNG
“Packed RBCs” is blood? No blood.

JACK
I’m sorry?

MRS. KYUNG
I can’t have any blood transfusions. I’m a Jehovah’s Witness.

JACK
Mrs. Kyung, this is very serious. You need this.

MRS. KYUNG
I can’t be saved by any blood but the blood of Jesus Christ.

As Jack tries to process this his PAGER buzzes.
INT. HOSPITAL - STAIRCASE - DAY

Jack sprints down stairs.

INT. E.R. - DAY

Jack enters, takes it all in, standing in the middle of a stream of activity. A Patient is coding. Another is being sutured. Travis turns around and sees Jack standing there. *

JACK
I got a page? Medicine C team?
For an admission? Pancreatitis and alcohol withdrawal?

Before Travis can answer, the DOORS BLOW OPEN and PARAMEDICS MOVING FAST roll in with a patient, covered in blood -- they "J-turn" into the trauma bed. Clearly this guy is dying. Jack is drawn to look.

IN THE TRAUMA BAY

One, two, three, the team transfer-lifts the patient from gurney to bed, scissors flashing as they cut off bloody clothes -- nurses stick I.V.s as ER docs and surgeons move quickly in a coordinated team. Orange liquid pours onto the chest spread by a gloved hand as a scalpel lifts over the chest.

An N.D. INTERN, looking GREEN, steps back from the table, looking like he's going to hurl. He heads OUT THE DOOR, past Jack. The E.R. Surgeon sees Jack standing there.

E.R. SURGEON
(to Jack)
You. Get some gloves on.

Travis runs up.

E.R. SURGEON (CONT’D)
Go help out with the dog bite in 4.
(to Jack)

Jack enters. Travis looks at Jack, annoyed. ALARMS BLARE, a cacophony of commands.

E.R. DOC
Rib spreader ready.

TRAVIS
He’s the intern on medicine, down here admitting!

E.R. DOC
Well, he’s in the E.R. now. Gimme your hand.
Jack, who has fumbled on a pair of gloves, tries not to look shocked at the OPEN CHEST before his eyes. It’s a bloody mess. THE E.R. SURGEON looks at Jack.

JACK
He’s right, I’m medicine...

E.R. DOC
Shut up and hold your hand...

The E.R. Doc has Jack's hand deep in the bloody chest, positioning it just precisely... Jack is in up to his elbow, almost cheek to cheek with the ER Doc.

E.R. DOC (CONT’D)

Jack presses down. The E.R. Doc takes his hand out.

NURSE
(re: monitor)
Pressure coming up. 70 systolic.

E.R. DOC
Heart is filling. There it goes.

A PULSE. The monitor BEEPING FAST. Jack looks down at the face of the young officer. Another Doctor, part of the SURGERY team, is in Jack's face now.

SURGEON
Lets go! Pack him up, we're travelling. Right now. Let O.R. Two know we've got a hot red blanket.

As the team starts to move the bed...

SURGEON (CONT’D)
You don't let go until I give you the word. You let go, he dies. Do you understand that, son?

JACK
Yes.

Stay with JACK as he literally sits on top of the Gurney with this bloodied patient. They go through locked doors into...
INT. O.R. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The patient is wheeled down a long, thin, white hallway. It’s surreal and insane and we are seeing all of this through Jack’s eyes. They go into the...

INT. O.R. - CONTINUOUS

The patient is immediately prepped, and the surgical team immediately begins to contain the flow of blood in the patient. Jack stands there with his hand on the patient, until...

SURGEON
Take your hand off!

Jack takes his hand off. As the Surgeon begins to focus on his patient, Jack backs off.

ASSISTING DOCTOR
You need to get out of O.R. Now.

Jack walks out to...

INT. O.R. HALLWAY - SAME

Jack emerges. Make a bee line for the...

INT. MEN’S ROOM - SAME

Jack bolts for a stall. Throws the fuck up.

SMASH TO:

MAIN TITLE CARD reads: COUNTY.

END OF TEASER
ACT ONE

INT. RESIDENTIAL HOUSING - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Run-down apartment building meets college dorm. Jack, looking like he’s lived a lifetime over the last fourteen hours, makes his way toward his door. Opens it...

INT. JACK AND BILLY’S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

A bedraggled Jack walks in to find Billy, in his boxers and nothing else, sipping a martini.

   BILLY
   (re: Jack’s shirt)
   Ech. Is that blood?

   JACK
   Hi, I’m Jack Malloy. I guess we’re roommates. I never saw you last night.

   BILLY
   Admittedly, I was partying pretty late.

Jack notices now that Billy is chopping a pill. He then proceeds to lean over and snort it. Jack feels like he’s just walked into bizarro land.

   BILLY (CONT’D)
   So let me get into your mind. Right now, you’re thinking this guy’s too old to be an intern.

   JACK
   Not at all.

   BILLY

   JACK
   I actually came to this late too.

   BILLY
   Yeah? What are you, six?

   JACK
   Twenty-nine. I was in New York for a while--
Billy
(I’m more exciting, so let me talk)
I was a CPA. Came home early from work one night. There’s my wife in bed with her Gyno. Her Gyno. Sick perv. So I said frick it all, Jack. Decided to grant myself a do over. Did a post-postbaccalaureate degree. Didn’t know what hit me. I suck at science. Went to med school, which sucked. Can’t stand the sight of blood -- and here I am.

Jack
That sounds like a really brave choice.

Billy
Okay, you definitely need to loosen up.

INT. JACK’S ROOM - NIGHT

On Jack, sleeping, when suddenly we hear a DEATHLY LOUD BUZZ. Jack’s eyes open. What the hell is that? The sound doesn’t stop -- it’s unrelenting. Jack looks at his alarm: 3:34AM. Shit.

INT. RESIDENTIAL HOUSING - STAIRWAY - NIGHT

The ALARM continues as weary Residents and Interns in their P.J.s, robes, boxers make their way down the stairs. Billy and Jack make their way down. Jack looks groggy. Billy never skips a beat.

Billy
You know what I really want, Jack? Nurses. Tell me that wasn’t a big motivator for the doctor thing.

Jack
(looking around, I’m not with this guy)
Yeah, um....

Billy
The uniforms, Jack. The sponge baths. The providers of narcotics through a drip. Tell me something more alluring.
ROSA
Like my day didn’t already suck.

They turn around and see Rosa.

ROSA (CONT’D)
Fire drill on day one. Are these people trying to kill us?

ANOTHER VOICE
It’s not a fire drill.

They all turn to see Talaikha.

TALAIKHA
If it were a fire drill, the P.A. system would tell us that it was a fire drill, and the alarm would sound in a beeping pattern rather than one continuous tone.

ROSA
What did you, like, read the arriving intern booklet cover to cover?

TALAIKHA
(unapologetic)
Yeah, like a month ago.

The others exchange a look. Jack notices Travis on the other side of him.

JACK
Hey.

TRAVIS
(cool)
I was supposed to get on that trauma case.

JACK
I’m sorry. It’s my first day, I did what he said.

TRAVIS
You could have told him I was the E.R. before you put on gloves.

JACK
How was I...?

TRAVIS
Hey, fine, you got in. Nice job.
JACK
Are you really holding a grudge?

TRAVIS
Nope. Not me.

Jack looks a few steps down, sees Erica.

JACK
Hi.

ERICA
Hi.

JACK
Man, sorry about that before.

ERICA
No big deal.

JACK
It wasn’t?

ERICA
One quick cry in the bathroom and I was good to go.

He smiles.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL HOUSING - LATER THAT NIGHT

A couple hundred Interns and Residents wait outside. A group has formed with Billy, Erica, Rosa, and Talaikha. Jack and Erica are continuing their conversation.

JACK
So, why County?

ERICA
Rebelling against my Dad. He hates that I’m here.

JACK
I got into a really bad car accident a few years ago.

ERICA
Oh, wow. I’m sorry.

JACK
Two months in the hospital. And when I went back to work I started to feel like I didn’t belong there.

(MORE)
Like I was outside of life looking in. Then one day I just found myself online Googling “how does an English major get into med school...?”

ERICA
And how did he?

JACK
He went back to undergrad and started all over.

ERICA
Wow. Good for you, Jack.

Her cellphone rings.

ERICA (CONT’D)
Oh, I’m sorry. I have to... It’s my fiancé.

JACK
Oh. Yeah. Well, you should definitely get that.

Erica answers her cell and steps away to talk to her fiancé. Jack watches, dying a little bit. Billy comes up from behind.

BILLY
Did you get her digits?

JACK
Shut up.

INT. PATIENT ROOM - DAY

Erica is talking to MANUEL SANTOS (70s), sweet and fragile.

Chyron Reads: DAY TWO

Erica has a gentle way with him, and you can see how she’s able to bring people out -- it’s her gift.

ERICA
Mr. Santos. It’s so good to see your eyes open. You have really nice eyes.

Manuel manages a smile.
MANUEL
Yours aren’t bad, either.

Erica laughs.

ERICA
Wow, this is great. The nurse told me you haven’t been talking that much.

MANUEL
I’ll never get of here, will I?

Erica looks at him -- this is such an intense moment.

ERICA
I honestly don’t know, Mr. Santos.

He pauses for a second, then smiles wistfully, remembering.

MANUEL
I used to take my family to the pier every weekend. We’d go fishing. We’d get the kids salt water taffy. I was hoping to get there one more time...

He takes a breath, taking in the calm.

MANUEL (CONT’D)
I’m a lucky man. I’ve had a good life. Beautiful wife and children. I’m ready.

ERICA
That’s really brave.

Manuel then takes a moment, and...

MANUEL
My family, they don’t want to let go. But this is just putting them through hell. I don’t want that. I don’t want anything like that. I want them to stop.

ERICA
Mr. Santos, if you are certain that that’s how you feel, I can get an advanced directive for you to sign. This way, we can make sure that your wishes are carried out.
MANUEL
Bring it to me.

An intense intimate moment -- a breakthrough -- Manuel motions her closer.

MANUEL (CONT’D)
You’re my doctor. You want to know a secret? * (she leans in close)
I hate salt water taffy. I ate it * because I loved them so much.

INT. MRI ADMITTING - DAY

Jack and MR. FOSTER, a homeless gentleman who appears way older than his fifty-odd years, stand across from a DISPIRITED INTAKE NURSE.

DISPIRITED NURSE
Well, this is an expensive set of tests, Doctor. And usually the neurologist or E.R. doc orders these and Mr...

FOSTER
Foster...

DISPIRITED NURSE
...thank you, dear. Mr. Foster here looks pretty good to me.

JACK
Nurse, I wrote an order for an MRI. I mean, I appreciate your input, but I’m the doctor here.

Wrong thing to say.

DISPIRITED NURSE
Well, I will definitely put him on the queue. As soon as we have a spot for him, I will let you know.

Which means never. Foster looks at Jack, “Nice job, Bozo.”

JACK
Look I didn’t mean to... I'm just saying that I think this guy has some transient ischemia or cerebral edema.
DISPIRITED NURSE
Sorry, I don’t understand what you’re saying. I’m just a nurse.

INT. ONCOLOGY WARD - DAY
Rosa walks in and meets LUCY (26), pretty but emaciated.

ROSA
Hi, I’m Doctor Cruz, and I...

Rosa sees that Lucy is emotional, crying.

ROSA (CONT’D)
Oh, listen, Lucy, don’t be upset. We don’t know anything yet. I know there was something weird on your X-ray, but we’re going to get a CT scan and--

LUCY
I’m not upset over the X-ray.

Lucy shows Rosa an email on her iPhone.

LUCY (CONT’D)
My idiot boyfriend just broke up with me. Jackass.

ROSA
By email.

Rosa reads the email, trying to contain her building ire.

LUCY
He stuck with me the first time. But as soon as he got the sense that the cancer might have come back, I could feel him pulling away.

ROSA
Lucy, let me tell you something. This guy is a dirtbag.

LUCY
He’s just been through so much.

ROSA
Do not apologize for him. He is a coward. He is a loser. Listen to me, Lucy. I am gonna get you better. (MORE)
And then you and I are going to go out and get you some killer clothes for your killer body, and we’re going to go out and find you a man who deserves you. Is that a deal?

LUCY
(smiling)
That’s a deal.

INT. STAFF ROOM - DAY
Several interns are there. Dr. Mercer enters.

DR. MERCER
Which idiot called OB?

JACK
This one.

Mercer just looks at him...

JACK (CONT’D)
Mrs. Kyung’s anemia is from severe uterine fibroids. I think she needs a hysterectomy.

DR. MERCER
Malloy, I don’t care if her uterus looks like a sack of potatoes. The woman isn’t getting a hysterectomy. She’s a Jehovah’s Witness.

JACK
I know, but I’m hoping I can convince her to change her mind.

A NURSE comes in...

DR. MERCER
You haven’t even been in to see your last two hits yet.

JACK
I’m getting there right after I finish putting in the order for Mr. Foster--

DR. MERCER
Foster? Why is he still--?

JACK
He needs a--
DR. MERCER
--We are Code Black in this hospital. Do you know what Code Black means?

JACK
That there aren’t--

DR. MERCER
--There are no beds. Discharge Foster. Do not waste time and resources on frequent flyers who should be discharged or patients who refuse treatment because of their religious beliefs. You need to get through your list. If I have to turn over some of your patients to other interns or residents, they will not like you, Malloy. Do you understand?

JACK
Yes. But Mr. Foster needs another day of Ox and Vanc and I still haven’t gotten him the scan of his--

DR. MERCER
This isn’t a shelter. Give him Bactrim, Kelfex, and two weeks of Percocet. Follow up in clinic. Send him.

Mercer leaves. OFF Jack...

INT. ORTHO - DAY
Billy talks to a Nurse.

BILLY
They want the leg.

NURSE
What?

BILLY
They want to bury it. Religious thing. Family thing. I don’t know. They want to bury the leg. After we cut it off. They want it back.
NURSE
They can’t have it back. It’s against the rules.

BILLY
Who makes the rules?

The Nurse just sighs...

BILLY (CONT’D)
Hey, listen, a few of us are hanging out after shift tonight if you’re into partying.

Nurse just gives him a look of disdain and lifts up her finger to display her wedding ring.

BILLY (CONT’D)
Oh, right, loyalty. Awesome. Congrats.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - LATER

Rosa and Jack walk and talk.

ROSA
Did you give her lupron?

JACK
She’s had all that, not helping.

ROSA
Well, if she won’t take blood, what can you do?

JACK
And Mr. Foster’s got terrible cellulitis, skin breakdown, probably MRSA. If we put him out on the street it will never heal.

ROSA
You’re not going to make it, Jack.

JACK
What?

ROSA
You’re here two days and you’re already a mess. You’re gonna explode or something, dude. You, like, feel too much. You need to be more like me.

(MORE)
ROSA (CONT'D)
I grew up in this neighborhood.
GED’d my way into college --
scratched and clawed into med
school. You can’t worry about
everyone. If that lady doesn’t
want blood transfusions, good-bye.
That homeless guy? Bam, good-bye.
Discharge. Sayonara.

JACK
Are you made of stone?

They’re now in the--

EMERGENCY WAITING ROOM

--over a hundred people waiting to be seen. Daunting.

ROSA
Look at this, Jack. This is
County. Every person you keep in a
bed because you’re too much of a
pussy to move on, there’s someone
else who’s sitting here waiting for
help. If you’re looking to
practice perfect medicine, you’re
not going to do it here. You can’t
save everyone, Jack.

Suddenly, a fight breaks out between the DADS of two CHILD PATIENTS waiting to be seen. They are yelling over their order in line. It’s messy and crazy and Jack ends up in the fray trying to help break it up. He exchanges a look with Rosa just as BAM -- one of the Dads lands a punch on Jack’s face. As Jack hits the floor!

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE
ACT TWO

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Jack, holding an ice pack to his face, is talking to Mr. Foster.

FOSTER
You're telling me I'm cured? This is cured?

Foster indicates his legs -- his foot still red and swollen.

JACK
(as honest as he can be)
You can take pills for that. We need to discharge you, Mr. Foster. Here, take these with you.

Jack takes a few cafeteria sandwiches and puts them in one of Foster’s many bags, scattered around the room. His worldly possessions.

Suddenly, a very upset Angelina runs up to the door.

ANGELINA
Doctor! It’s my Mom.

Seeing her expression, Jack heads out of the room and fast walks, then runs, into...

INT. KYUNG’S ROOM - DAY

A NURSE rolls in a crash cart, nearly knocking Jack over as she squeezes through the door, fast.

JACK
(shaking her)
Mrs. Kyung. Mrs. Kyung!

Mrs. Kyung doesn’t move.

ANGELINA
Oh no...

JACK
We need a doctor.

That just came out. ALARM from the monitor.

NURSE
She’s bradying down.
JACK
What?

NURSE
(re: monitor, genius...)
Her pulse is 38.

Jack is a deer in the headlights. The Nurse is breaking out drugs from brightly color-coded boxes onto the bed.

ANGELINA
Do something!

NURSE
("duh")
You need to call a code.

JACK
Call a code. Now.

A "what the fuck?" moment -- the Nurse and Angelina look at each other. Another thing Jack’s never done before.

JACK (CONT’D)
How?

NURSE
Jesus Christ. Pull the cord.

She cocks her head toward the bright RED CODE “TASSEL” hanging out of the wall under a “CODE BLUE” label.

Eureka! Jack reaches for it but Angelina is faster and pulls the ripcord for him. ALARMS SOUND. Jack takes a look at Angelina.

JACK
Thank you. Wait outside.

Angelina can’t move--

JACK (CONT’D)
Nurse?

NURSE
(to Angelina, steely and direct)
Honey, go on, like the Doctor said.
Don’t make me leave him here alone.

Angelina exits, wide-eyed, as the Nurse gives Jack a look. *

JACK
Need some help in here! *
Jack starts CPR. He’s nervous, this is scary shit. The door * blows open. It’s Erica. She sees Jack doing compressions on Mrs. Kyung.

ERICA
Jesus, what are you doing?

JACK
I don’t know. She bradyed down and now she’s not responsive.

ERICA
Okay, okay. A for airway. We’ve got to intubate her.

ALARM. Erica looks up at the monitor.

JACK
Is that V fib?

ERICA
Yeah, I think so.

JACK
Okay, then we need to shock her. Right?

ERICA
We need to shock her.

They’re still babes in the woods here. The Nurse isn’t.

NURSE
Two votes wins.

JACK
Three hundred sixty joules.

NURSE
Go big. Charging.

JACK
Help me with this, Erica.

Erica takes over CPR as Jack takes the paddles from the nurse.

JACK (CONT’D)
I’m clear. You’re clear. Everybody’s clear.

They both look at him.
NURSE
Very complete.

JACK
Clear.

Bam! He shocks Mrs. Kyung.

INT. STAFF ROOM - DAY

Rosa, on a computer terminal, opens a file of a CT scan. She looks at it. Her face drops. We hold on her a long time...

ROSA
Dammit.

INT. LUCY’S ROOM - DAY

Rosa is with Lucy.

ROSA
Your CT scan does show that there’s something there. But we don’t know if it’s cancer.

Lucy takes this in. She tries not to look down.

LUCY
What do you think it is?

Rosa is thoughtful.

ROSA
We don’t know yet. We need to do a broncoscopy. We go in through your airway with a tube with a camera on it that will give us more information.

Lucy is silent, clocking Rosa’s tone, which is much more serious than the last visit.

ROSA (CONT’D)
Stay strong. Try not to worry. We still don’t know.

LUCY
Okay.

OFF this, we...
INT. MEDICINE WARD - DAY

Jack, on his way, sees Angelina staring out the window, looking sad. He approaches her.

JACK
You okay?

ANGELINA
How close did she come to dying?

JACK
Maybe kinda close.

Angelina is silent.

ANGELINA
I can’t believe this is happening.

JACK
Are you a Jehovah’s Witness too?

ANGELINA
Are you kidding? No. I love my mom, but we’re completely different. She met my dad in Vietnam when she was fifteen. She was giving blow jobs to soldiers for five bucks. Sorry, no polite way to say that. She met my Dad... got pregnant. He took her back here. One day a Jehovah’s Witness knocked on her door and it sort of made her life make sense.

JACK
And your dad...?

ANGELINA
He died two years ago.

JACK
I’m sorry. Any other siblings?

ANGELINA
My brother. But he only shows up every few years when he needs money. It’s just the two of us.

This lands on Jack -- how much this girl needs her mom to be around. OFF this...
INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Travis is seated alone, wolfing down a sandwich, when he stops cold seeing a SIX-YEAR-OLD GIRL whom he recognizes.

TRAVIS
Sheila?

SHEILA
Hi, Travis.

TRAVIS
What are you doing here, girl?

And even as he asks the question, he knows the answer. His heart sinks.

TRAVIS (CONT’D)
It’s your Mom.

SHEILA
Yeah.

At this moment Jack passes.

TRAVIS
Malloy, you have five minutes?

JACK
I have three pages to return and I have get to Admin...
   (re: his half of sandwich)
...Are you gonna eat that?

TRAVIS
Take it. Jack, this is Sheila. Sheila, this is Jack. I need you to watch her for five minutes.

JACK
What are you talking about? Who is this?

TRAVIS
Thanks. I’ll be back as soon as I can.

JACK
Hey, hold on!

But Travis just goes. Jack hides all of his confusion, and smiles.
JACK (CONT'D)
Hey, how are you?
(re: her stuffy)
That’s awesome. Is that a platypus?

INT. E.R. - DAY

Travis walks through the E.R., angry and scared, looking from bed to bed. Then he stops -- seeing what he’s looking for. What he was afraid of. A YOUNG WOMAN (20s), writhing and fighting an E.R. DOCTOR as a NURSE attempts to STICK her for an I.V.

E.R. DOC
(to Travis)
Get in here!

Travis looks like a deer in a headlights.

TRAVIS
E.R. DOC
I--
Now! We need to restrain her.

Travis has to go in. He starts fighting to bring the woman down. He is getting emotional doing this.

E.R. DOC (CONT’D)
Steady now. Stay down.
(an aside)
Goddamn junkies. Too stupid to know we’re trying to help them.

The E.R. Doc pushes her down a little more roughly than Travis thinks is appropriate and instinctively Travis grabs the doctor’s arm!

E.R. DOC (CONT’D)
What the hell is wrong with you?

TRAVIS
(letting go of him, out of breath)
I’m sorry. I’m sorry. She’s my sister.

OFF this shock, we...

INT. I.C.U. - DAY

Erica heads toward Mr. Santos’s room and stops short. Inside, Santos is in an unconscious state.
Manuel’s CHILDREN (40s) and GRANDCHILDREN (20s) are very angry and emotional as Mercer attempts to calm them down.

MARCELINO
My father never said a word to us about any of this.

MERCER
Look, I understand.

One of the Grandaughters, VICKY, sees Erica.

VICKY
Is that her?

MARCELINO
That’s her.

They yell at Erica. Marcelino waves the Advanced Directive. *

MARCELINO (CONT’D)
When did this happen?

ERICA
I talked to Mr. Santos yesterday--

VICKY
Oh, you talked to him--

ANOTHER ONE
My father hasn’t had a conversation in months--

ERICA
He talked to me.

MARCELINO
We will not stand for this. I know you just want to get people out of here. Empty beds. Dead or alive.

ERICA
That is not at all what happened.

VICKY
I am having a baby, and my grandfather is going to be alive to hold my baby. Do you understand that?

ERICA
I know this is hard.
MARCELINO
He needs dialysis. He is going to get it.

MERCER
Guys, hold on. We understand your feelings. Your father was not in a lucid state when he signed this. You will maintain stewardship over his medical decisions.

Mercer rips up the advance directive.

MERCER (CONT’D)
I’ll put in the order to start dialysis.

Mercer exits, Erica follows him out to--

INT. HALLWAY - SAME

Erica stops Mercer...

MERCER
(impatient)
What.

ERICA
Yesterday he was completely cognizant.

Mercer, pulls Erica into an empty room, closes the door. They are very close.

ERICA (CONT’D)
He was lucid, and completely clear about what he wanted.

MERCER
Kinsey, this isn’t some second-year medical school ethics class.
Isn’t our job to represent the patient’s--

ERICA
He’s in her face now. It’s weirdly sexual, at least from where he’s standing.

MERCER
--the family has durable power of attorney. You are an intern for two days? I am not going to risk a lawsuit over this. They want dialysis. It’s done.
And then Mercer just kisses Erica on the lips. Holy shit!

ERICA
What are you doing?

MERCER
I thought I sensed a thing.
(then)
Alright, fine, collect yourself.

ERICA
I’m going to file a complaint to Admin.

Mercer just laughs as he leaves. OFF Erica...

INT. MEDICINE WARD - DAY

Talaikha stands outside of a room with MRS. PEARSE. Her husband lays in the room, out of earshot.

TALAIKHA
Mrs. Pearse, your husband is ready to go home.

MRS. PEARSE
Oh my God. Thank you -- you cured him.

TALAIKHA
Cured? No. Your husband has a congestive heart condition. There is no cure for that.

MRS. PEARSE
I don’t understand. Doctor Bell told me he was going to be better.

TALAIKHA
Doctor Bell is correct -- better, but not cured. It is simple pathophysiology -- the heart becomes enlarged. It works harder and harder to pump blood through the system. The harder it works, the more stress it puts on the heart muscle and the weaker it gets. Our treatment helps, but the cycle continues until the heart fails and the patient dies due to arrest or pulmonary edema and hypoxia.
MRS. PEARSE
Speak English.

TALAIKHA
There is no cure for a congestive heart condition. He will get sicker each time through the hospital, and will eventually be unable for us to recover.

MRS. PEARSE
Are you saying he’s going to die?

TALAIKHA
Not today. But yes. Eventually. The ten-year mortality rate for CHF is fifty percent -- the evidence shows...

Mrs. Pearse grows deeply thoughtful, then turns all of her pent-up rage directly on Talaikha.

MRS. PEARSE
What is wrong with you?! How can you just tell me that my husband is going to die, without a care in the world?

TALAIKHA
I do care.

MRS. PEARSE
We have been married for forty-three years! This is how you tell me I’m going to lose him?

TALAIKHA
I was just trying to explain the facts--

MRS. PEARSE
The facts. Yeah. I am going to contact hospital administration--

TALAIKHA
They will agree with my assessment, Mrs. Pearse--

MRS PEARSE
I am going to tell them that I never want to talk to you again.

Mrs. Pearse goes into her husband’s room, then turns back and looks right at Talaikha...
MRS. PEARSE
Heartless.

She slams the door.

INT. KYUNG’S ROOM - DAY

Jack is sitting across from Kyung.

JACK
I need you to tell me that you will accept a blood transfusion.

KYUNG
I can’t accept--

JACK
OB won’t even set a meeting with you if you won’t take blood. So... Say that you’ll do it. Let’s get OB in here. Get you ready for pre-op, and then if you decide not to, that’s your decision. This way, at least you’re giving yourself a fighting chance.

KYUNG
But I won’t change my mind.

JACK
Mrs. Kyung, you almost died today. Do you understand that?

KYUNG
Only the blood of Jesus shall--

JACK
(losing it a little, passionate)
Yeah, you told me that the other day. But we can’t get any of Jesus’s blood. Okay? Mrs. Kyung, you have to do this for your daughter. She needs you. She’s too young to be alone.

Kyung hears this. It’s painful. Tears well.

KYUNG
I can’t take blood.

OFF Jack...
INT. PROCEDURE ROOM - DAY

Lucy waits for a test. A few other people wait too, but Lucy is all alone. It’s dark and sucky. Lucy looks up to find Rosa’s there.

LUCY
You found me.

ROSA
I found you.

LUCY
I’m scared.

ROSA
Yeah. Me too.

Rosa sits down next to Lucy. Just to wait with her.

END OF ACT TWO
ACT THREE

INT. CHESTNUT LOUNGE - NIGHT

The place is packed. A lot of second-year Residents and Interns, some still in their scrubs. Old songs play on the jukebox. These guys party hard. We catch snippets of conversations...

N.D. INTERN
Dude, this patient was so tripping from the ketamine that he freaked and asked me for a hug while I was “I&D”ing his butt pus. Reeked big time.

ANOTHER INTERN
So the hospital in Mexico literally hands the guy Mapquest instructions to County hospital. He shows up, no green card, doesn’t speak a word of English, and hands me his MRI.

Find our six interns all raising a glass of beer to Jack.

BILLY
First one of us to have a patient code!

They all toast and drink up.

BILLY (CONT’D)
May it never happen to me!

They all toast again.

BILLY (CONT’D)
Congrats, dude. You saved a life today.

Jack raises his glass to Erica, they share a secret look and he mouths, “Thank you.” Granger walks up.

GRANGER
Hey, Kinsey.

ERICA
Seriously, we’re friends now?

GRANGER
What? Before? Really? This is the way it works. It’s dog eat dog.

(MORE)
Peter Granger. Here’s the thing. We’re all here because County gets the most patients and the sickest patients. We’re here because we want to be in the shit. So I am going to suck up to as many Seniors as I have to, to get to be first on everyone’s list when it comes to cutting people open and playing around in their insides. Cheers.

Granger starts to walk away.

BILLY (a bit under)
Cheers, asshole.

Granger turns back.

GRANGER
What?

BILLY
Nothing.

CUT TO:

INT. CHESTNUT LOUNGE - LATER

The crowd has thinned out a bit. Jack and Talaikha are at the bar. The others have gone.

TALAIKHA
Do I look heartless to you, Jack?

JACK
Who said you were heartless?

TALAIKHA
Patients.

JACK
More than one?

TALAIKHA
A couple.

JACK
What did you say to them?
TALAIKHA
The truth. They were both dying.
What am I supposed to do, lie?
Jeez. Kill the messenger.

JACK
Maybe you need to just work a
little bit on your delivery.

TALAIKHA
If I were dying I wouldn’t want a
song and dance. I’d want a doctor
who could man up and tell me. And
that’s the doctor that I’m going to
be. Like for instance with you.
You keep whining about your
Jehovah’s Witness. Why don’t you
do a bloodless surgery? It’s
ballsy. It’s today. It’ll save
her life.
(off Jack’s blank look)
You have heard of bloodless
surgery, haven’t you? You, like,
went to med school?

JACK
Yeah, I’ve heard of it, it just
never occurred to me... So you
think anyone here could do that?

TALAIKHA
Doctor Andrews in OB did his
fellowship at Johns Hopkins, under
Doctor Pratt who’s, like, written a
thousand articles on it.

JACK
You’re kidding.

TALAIKHA
Not actually a thousand.

JACK
No, I get that. Talaikha, you’re a
genius.

TALAIKHA
Jack, don’t look, and I don’t want
to shock you but there’s a guy on
the other side of the bar that I’m
going to sleep with tonight.
(Jack immediately looks)
Did I just say don’t look?
JACK
What are you talking about? Are you serious?

TALAIKHA
Yes.

JACK
How do you know?

TALAIKHA
Because I’m going to go up to him and offer him sex. And in my experience that usually results in sex.

Jack looks at her, shocked.

TALAIKHA (CONT’D)
I know. Shocking. My parents are forcing me into an arranged marriage with a guy that I despise. I have a first right of refusal but they’re jamming this thing down my throat -- and this I just control. Anyway, can I trust you not to share this with anyone?...

(Jack nods, like a shocked idiot)
Do I have chicken fingers in my teeth?

JACK
No.

TALAIKHA
See you tomorrow, Jack.

Talaikha makes her way over to the other side of the bar. As she says something and the guy smiles, surprised, we hold on a shocked Jack...

INT. STAFF ROOM – DAY
Jack is walking with Doctor Mercer.

Chyron Reads: DAY THREE

DOCTOR MERCER
This is County, Jack. We’re meat and potatoes. We don’t do bloodless surgery.
JACK
There was a very similar case that
I just Googled. I can send you the
link--

DOCTOR MERCER
Please don’t tell me you just asked
your Senior Resident to Google
something.

JACK
She’s going to die.

DOCTOR MERCER
People don’t die of fibroids.

JACK
We’ll be the first.

DOCTOR MERCER
Get another set of cultures on Mrs.
Archer, set up for your
paracentesis on the liver bomb in
615, and for God’s sake, get in to
see the rest of your patients.

JACK
What about Mrs. Kyung?

DOCTOR MERCER
Call University. See if they’ll
take her.

INT. 6TH FLOOR MEDICINE - DAY

Travis walks the room where ANGELA, the woman Travis saw
yesterday, is now in a room on the regular ward. She is
conscious now, and sees him -- so much history here. Travis
is a mix of emotions. Sad. Angry...

ANGELA
* I need more Demerol. Methadone. *
Anything. *

TRAVIS
* Those are your first words to me. *
Really? *

ANGELA
* What do you want me to say? *
TRAVIS
Maybe you’re wondering how your
daughter is who you took with you
to score whatever bad shit you
bought.

ANGELA
Listen, little brother, I know
you’re a big doctor now--

TRAVIS
Angela, you need to want to change.
I can’t want it for you.

ANGELA
You don’t know what it’s like.

TRAVIS
What are you going to do. Who are
you blaming now? Your boyfriend?
Your old boss? Mom? Who are you
going to blame now, Angela? You’re
going to lose that girl. You’re
going to lose her. She’s the one
thing you got and you’re going to
lose her!

ANGELA
(crying now)
Damnit, Travis, what do you think?
Don’t you think I know that? I
love her. I’m weak. I’m weaker
than you. Okay? Is that what you
want me to say? I just need to get
fixed. Get me fixed.

Travis looks up and sees Jack standing at the door. How much
has he witnessed? Still not sure what’s going on here, Jack
chooses to stay on the side of professionalism.

JACK
She needs her Ativan or she could
seize.

TRAVIS
I’ll give it to her.

Jack hands Travis the syringe. OFF Jack...

INT. ONCOLOGY – DAY

Rosa walks into Lucy’s room.
LUCY
Hi...!

ROSA
Hi.

LUCY
Everything okay?

Rosa looks at Lucy. This is the hardest thing she’s ever had to do in her life.

ROSA
We got the results from the bronch.

Lucy notices just how dire Rosa looks. Rosa’s hands are shaking. Rosa can’t look her in the eye. Rosa doesn’t know what to do, how to say this.

ROSA (CONT’D)
Your cancer is back.

Lucy takes this in.

LUCY
Okay. Well, how bad is it? Is it bad?

ROSA
Well, it is not what we were hoping for.

LUCY
What are you saying? What is it?

ROSA
It’s...

Rosa finds herself reading the printout from pathology. *

ROSA (CONT’D)
You had limited stage small-cell lung cancer. It has metastasized and now it is in your other lung, and in the fluid we collected. There is a chemotherapy, but it’s not likely to be very effective. I’ll have to discuss with the attending whether that’s something we would recommend.

Rosa has delivered this stoically. It’s horrible. Lucy looks at Rosa, feeling somehow betrayed, weirdly angry.
LUCY
So I guess we’re not going to be able to get that drink.

ROSA
I’m so sorry.

Rosa leaves. We walk with her to...

INT. HALLWAY - SAME

Rosa walks out and keeps walking, trying not to be seen as the tears well up in her. She goes into an empty room. Cries.

INT. PRIVATE MEDICAL CENTER - ATRIUM - DAY

As we hear piano music... Jack walks in through the atrium of a fancy medical center. Huge ceilings, modern glass structure. Jack’s eyes linger on an elderly volunteer playing a grand piano. We are no longer in County.

INT. DOCTOR SPENCE OFFICE - DAY

Big, impressive office. Jack sits across from DR. SPENCE (50s), African American, quietly intimidating.

DOCTOR SPENCE
You drove all the way here from County for this?

JACK
Actually, I took the bus. I got tired of leaving messages for you, Doctor.

DOCTOR SPENCE
I’m sorry, but we don’t have any room right now to transfer this case in. Our slate is full.

JACK
But you have to take her.

DOCTOR SPENCE
Why on earth would we have to take her?

JACK
The law. This is a “higher level of care” situation.

(MORE)
If a procedure can’t be done at one hospital, a hospital that does the procedure is obligated to--

DOCTOR SPENCE
--Oh, come on. That’s horseshit.

JACK
Why?

DOCTOR SPENCE
You know why.

JACK
Because she doesn’t have insurance?

DOCTOR SPENCE
You’ve been around long enough to know the drill, Malloy.

OFF Jack’s look...

DOCTOR SPENCE (CONT’D)
How long have you been around?

JACK
(unapologetic)
Four days.

DOCTOR SPENCE
You’re an intern. I’m surprised my office even let you in here.

JACK
They didn’t. I waited for your secretary to leave her desk and I snuck in.

Spence looks at Jack, can’t help but crack a smile. He likes this kid’s pluck.

JACK (CONT’D)
She coded yesterday. She won’t take a blood transfusion. She’s going to die.

SPENCE
Look, Malloy. We don’t take dumps from County. We dump to County. That’s the way it is. You’re not going to change the entire system because you got on a bus to the Westside. But let me tell you something, son. I trained at County. (MORE)
I know what you’re up against. Things can get done there -- you just have to keep fighting for every patient. Just like you’re doing.

Jack nods. He rises, and starts to leave.

SPENCE (CONT’D)
If you ever want to come to a place where you won’t have to fight so hard to get your patients the care they need, give me a call.

Jack considers a beat. What a different world this would be.

INT. ADMINISTRATION OFFICES – DAY
Billy talks to a hospital administrator.

ADMINISTRATOR
Is this really what you want to waste my time with, Doctor?

BILLY
It seemed like a pretty big deal to them.

ADMINISTRATOR
What are we supposed to do, wrap the leg in a doggy bag? This is human tissue we’re talking about. There are disposal laws. Federal laws.

BILLY
The poor guy’s losing his damn leg. What’s the harm in letting him bury the stupid thing if he wants to bury it?

ADMINISTRATOR
What kind of religion is this?

BILLY
How the hell would I know?

ADMINISTRATOR
Talk to pathology.

BILLY
Pathology sent me to you.
Then go to Ethics.

Ethics? What does this have to do with Ethics? They just want to bury a damn leg.

Intern -- get the hell out of here.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Jack, Travis, Talaikha, Billy, and Rosa stand among a crowd of Interns and Residents. Someone from ADMIN stands at a shut door, trying to talk to someone inside. Erica arrives.

What’s going on?

An intern locked himself in there and won’t come out.

No way.

He’s been in there for hours.

One down. Couple hundred to go. Okay, time to hit the bar.

(to Erica)

Oh right -- you’re on call tonight.

You’re mean. Okay, give me your signouts -- and they better be tucked.

You’ll be fine.

(hands her his sheet)

Just keep an eye on Mrs. Kyung, and 614 is going to ask for pain meds every ten minutes.

Rosa hands over her sheet.
If Mrs. Ortega has problems breathing, give her the usual 5 of albuterol ‘que’ 30 mins times 2, and then an Ambien to take the edge off.

Erica is handed another list. Ugh.

This urosepsis needs his antibiotics at twenty hundred hours. And this rhabdo just came in this afternoon -- he seems stable but I’m worried about CK and creatinine bumping. Keep him hydrated, okay?

This guy is constipated. This one’s a pain in the ass. This lady is constipated and a pain in the ass. Good luck. I hear the place is haunted.

Erica stands there holding the papers of about sixty patients, most of whom she doesn’t even know.

Okay. Well, we’ll see you tomorrow.

See you guys.

They all walk off leaving Erica on her own. OFF ERICA...

END OF ACT THREE
INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Erica writes an order at a chart rack.

ERICAA
Here’s Johansann’s order for ten of Ambien. At least he’s going to get some sleep tonight.

The Nurse comes up with news...

NURSE
Your transfer’s here.

ERICAA
What transfer?

NURSE
You didn’t hear about a transfer? You’re going to love this.

ERICAA
Where are the transfer papers from the other hospital?

The nurse just shrugs. Erica follows her and sees in a room a large, bear-like snoring Native American figure on the bed.

ERICAA (CONT’D)
What’s that smell?

NURSE
That’s Wild Turkey, honey. Meet Running Bear.

ERICAA
Okay, that’s racist.

NURSE
No. His name is Running Bear.

She hands Erica the chart. It is.

INT. CHESTNUT LOUNGE - NIGHT

Billy, Talaikha, Rosa, Travis, and Jack sit at a table.
BILLY
It’s not just a leg anymore. It’s more than that. It’s me against the machine. I’m fighting the man.

Another INTERN walks by.

INTERN
It was Granger.

ROSA
What?

INTERN
The intern in the bathroom. It was Granger.

JACK
No way. “Dog eat dog,” Granger?

ROSA
Good for him. Conceited ass. What happened to him?

INTERN
Someone said they saw him crying in the stairwell a couple of hours ago, and then he just locked himself in.

The Intern walks away.

TALAIKHA
The truth is, it could be any of us? Sleep deprivation. Enormous stress. Poor diet. We’re all walking time bombs.

ROSA
And this place. No mentorship. No guidance. And the patients are animals.

BILLY
Drug seeking, leg burying, crazy-ass animals.

They all crack up. Travis, irked by this, gets up.

TRAVIS
If you didn’t want to be here, maybe you should have gone to some big private medical center.
BILLY
I tried. They didn’t accept me.

Everyone cracks up. Travis just walks out. Everyone looks at each other -- what’s his problem?

CUT TO:

EXT. CHESTNUT LOUNGE - NIGHT
Jack comes out and finds Travis standing there.

JACK
Everything alright?

There’s a pregnant pause, then...

TRAVIS
She’s my sister. The O.D.

Jack nods, taking this in.

TRAVIS (CONT’D)
She’s my sister and she’s a lost cause. That little girl you were watching is my niece. So those animals you guys were talking about? I guess I’m one of them.

OFF Jack...

CUT TO:

INT. RUNNING BEAR’S ROOM - NIGHT
Erica is struggling to examine the still fully-clothed patient. He is incoherent, writhing around the bed, pushing her away.

ERICA
We’re going to have to restrain him.

The Nurse starts putting the restraints on his wrists.

NURSE
I don’t feel a good pulse here. I’m going to put him on the monitor.
ERICA
I don’t understand it. He’s just a drunk. This doesn’t make any sense. He should be perking up by now.

NURSE
Doctor?

Erica looks at his leg. She starts to roll up his pantleg -- the limb is purple, blue, swollen, and looks horrible.

ERICA
I need to get him undressed. This could be necrotizing fascitis or meningitis. This isn’t just a drunk guy.

An alarm sounds.

NURSE
He’s hypotensive. 70 systolic.

Shit. That’s even worse.

ERICA
This guy’s really sick.

CUT TO:

INT. CHESTNUT LOUNGE - NIGHT

Billy is practicing with Talaikha.

TALAIKHA
Mr. Krakower, you’re going to die.

BILLY
Okay, I feel nothing from you right now. Give it a little more feeling. Dredge up a tear. Something.

TALAIKHA
Patients don’t want fake tears.

BILLY
Well, they certainly don’t want Spock.

TALAIKHA
I hate you.
ANGLE ON: Jack and Rosa.

JACK
So how’d it go? Did you drop the bomb?

ROSA
It was fine.

JACK
Yeah?

ROSA
Yeah. What are you gonna do? Drop the bomb, grab a coffee, go to a lecture. This is our life now, right?

JACK
Yup.

Jack doesn’t quite believe her, but his cellphone rings. He picks up.

JACK (CONT’D)
Hello?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. HOSPITAL - SAME

It’s Erica, on her cellphone in the corner of the room. Running Bear is now totally restrained, completely out of it. The Nurse is hanging a bag of I.V. fluid on a pump. The alarm is screaming. The Nurse shakes her head.

ERICA
Jack, I’ve got a patient dying.

JACK
Okay, hold on--

ERICA
He came in drunk, it looked like DTs but now he’s hypotensive. He’s got a huge swollen leg, and he’s altered.

JACK
He needs a CT.
ERICA
Did it. It’s negative. So is the ultrasound of the leg.

JACK
Did you call the attending?

ERICA
Last time I talked to him, he thought it was just a drunk, and now he’s not calling me back. I’m so fucked. I don’t know what to do. I’m out of ideas.

JACK
Just go back to the basics. ABCs. Repeat the exam. Review the labs. Make a differential diagnosis.

ERICA
Okay. Got it.

But she’s not so convinced. She hangs up and just says, to no one in particular...

ERICA (CONT’D)
Help.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - LATER

The alarm’s still beeping. Erica is over Running Bear’s head with a pen light, checking his pupils -- doing the exam, like Jack told her. The Nurse is at the pump.

NURSE
What do you want to start the levophed at.

ERICA
Um...

JACK
Ten “mikes” per minute.

Erica looks over -- it’s Jack! She smiles a little through her fear.

JACK (CONT’D)
What’s that smell?
ERICA/NURSE
Wild Turkey.

Erica struggles, listening to his chest.

JACK
(to the Nurse)
Why does he still have clothes on?
(to Erica)
We’ve gotta get this guy completely
undressed. We can’t miss anything.

ERICA
(to the Nurse)
Can you hand me trauma shears?

They start cutting off Running Bear’s clothes as Erica completes the exam.

ERICA (CONT’D)
Bilateral breath sounds. Doesn’t
sound like pneumonia -- he’s not in
failure...

JACK
This could be meningitis. Look for
a rash. It’s supposed to start
distally.

ERICA
Maybe that’s what’s up with the
foot.

JACK
What foot?

Jack cuts up the pant leg. The foot, knee, leg -- it all looks horrible.

JACK (CONT’D)
This is too big for petechiae.
This has to be nec fash.

ERICA
His belly’s soft. We’ll need to
roll him.

JACK
And do a rectal.

ERICA
Lovely.

They finish cutting the clothes.
JACK
(to the Nurse)
Help us with this.

The Nurse unties the restraints on one side and holds the head.

ERICA
On my count. One, two, three...

And they roll Running Bear up on his side. Erica runs her hands down his spinal column.

ERICA (CONT’D)
No signs of trauma, no step offs.
Give me some lube.

Jack hands her the lube. As he reaches down to pull the clothing away from Running Bear’s butt, a RATTLESNAKE falls onto the bed.

JACK
Jesus!

ERICA
(jumping back)
Fuck!

NURSE
Shit! That’s a snake.

They let go. Running Bear rolls back onto the snake and they step back. Looking at each other in disbelief.

ERICA
I think he have a diagnosis. We’re going to need ten vials of anti-venom--

JACK
And a hatchet.

TIME CUT:

INT. SAME ROOM – LATER

Monitor beeping. The chaos has been replaced by a calm, orderly feeling. They’ve got it under control. Jack’s rolling the anti-venom vials between his hands like a pencil. The snake is now contained within some medical container appropriated for this unusual purpose.
JACK
Vial 7, mixed.

Erica looks at the monitor.

ERICA
Blood pressure’s coming up. Heart rate’s going down. We’re looking good.

RUNNING BEAR
But not feeling good.

ERICA
Welcome back, Running Bear.

RUNNING BEAR
My friends call me Steve.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Erica and Jack stand outside the front entrance of the behemoth hospital. Jack is on his way back.

JACK
Well, you’ve got some story for your first night on call.

ERICA
Oh my God...

JACK
Well, good-night.

ERICA
Good-night.

Erica feels herself getting extremely emotional. The shock of what just happened hits her.

JACK
Are you okay?

ERICA
Yeah, I’m sorry, I get so...
(re: her emotions)
I’m going to be a terrible doctor.

JACK
It’s okay.
Erica gets it together and looks at Jack, so appreciative for what he did. Feeling close to him.

ERICA
So I lied to you before.

JACK
I knew it. You’re not engaged.

ERICA
When you asked why I became a doctor. My little sister got diagnosed with leukemia when I was fourteen. The only way I could deal with it was to learn everything about that disease. Every single thing. Every time a doctor or a nurse came around I would ask a million questions. I went home and read about it online. I read all these medical books. I stopped thinking about it as whether they were going to save her. It was whether I was going to save her.

JACK
That’s a lot to take on at fourteen.

ERICA
Anyway, I didn’t. Save her.

JACK
But you’re here.

There’s a look between them. Things are getting ever more dangerous. Erica stops the closeness a bit.

ERICA
Thanks, Jack. Thanks for being here tonight. I don’t know what I would have...

Erica’s emotions get the better of her again and Jack reaches out to comfort her. Overwhelmed and suddenly so drawn to Jack, she kisses him. And then immediately pulls back.

ERICA (CONT’D)
Oh, I’m sorry.

JACK
No. That’s--
ERICA
A mistake. I don’t know, why I...
I’m just sleep deprived and I am
so, so sorry...

JACK
It’s really okay.

Erica’s beeper goes off. She looks at the page. Her face
goes pale. She’s exhausted.

JACK (CONT’D)
I’ll take it.

ERICA
What?

JACK
Go rest for an hour.

Jack looks at her pager and then heads inside. OFF Erica,
watching her knight in shining armor disappear...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR
ACT FIVE

INT. CHIEF OF STAFF OFFICE - DAY

Jack sits across from HENDRICKS (40s), chief of staff.

Chyron Reads: DAY FOUR

HENDRICKS
Bloodless surgery?

JACK
Yes.

HENDRICKS
Call University--

JACK
They won’t take her.

HENDRICKS
We have a hundred people sitting in the ED. Have you seen the waiting room? Another hundred.

JACK
I have.

HENDRICKS
Does she have private insurance?

JACK
No.

Hendricks takes a sigh, then looks at Jack.

HENDRICKS
This isn’t a little boutique shop. This is a big-ass Walmart, Malloy. We get ‘em, we glue ‘em back together, and we send them on their way. This is County.

JACK
Yes, sir.

Jack gets up and starts to leave, but stops.

JACK (CONT’D)
I know it’s County. I know that. But doesn’t the patient deserve the best we can do for her?

(MORE)
JACK (CONT’D)
Shouldn’t we be pushing ourselves.
Striving for that, sir?

Hendricks is half annoyed by Jack’s naivete. But he’s also half intrigued.

HENDRICKS
What’s with the Joan of Arc thing?
Who is this patient? You schtupping the daughter or something?

Jack thinks for a moment and then he’s incredibly candid.

JACK
I don’t think I can handle losing a patient in my first week here.
That’s the truth. That’s the selfish truth.

Hendricks looks at Jack, finally meeting his eye. Moved by Jack’s passion here.

HENDRICKS
You get one favor from me in your internship here. Are you sure you want to use it up your first week?

JACK
Yes, sir.

HENDRICKS
Who would do it?

JACK
Andrews in OB trained at Johns Hopkins under Dr. Pratt, who basically wrote the book on bloodless surgery.

Hendricks considers for a beat, then...

HENDRICKS
Talk to Andrews. If he’s comfortable, we’ll do it.

JACK
Yes, sir.

OFF Jack, a victory...
INT. EMPTY ROOM - DAY

Erica stands across from Marcelino, Vicky, and the others.

ERICA
I would never want to do anything but the best for your father. Your grandfather.

MARCELINO
You don’t even know my father.

ERICA
He told me very clearly that he didn’t want this.

VICKY
My grandfather hasn’t talked to anyone in weeks.

ERICA
He talked to me. He told me about how much he loved you all. About going fishing on the pier together. The salt water taffy you used to get for the kids. He didn’t even like that taffy. He ate it because of how much he loves you all.

The family looks at her -- this is different. They get that she really spoke to him, and also they can feel that she actually cares about their father/grandfather.

ERICA (CONT’D)
I understand wanting to keep him alive. He’s your father. Your grandfather. But I am telling you, I spoke to him. He looked right at me with his stunning eyes, and that great smile. He was lucid. He was right there. There was no doubt in his mind what he wanted.

There’s a long pause. The family all look at each other, quiet now...

MARCELINO
How come he never said this to us?

ERICA
Maybe it was easier to tell someone he didn’t know. I know how hard it is to lose someone that you can’t lose.
We can see the family turning around, and in this moment actually starting to mourn this man’s loss right in the room.

ERICA (CONT’D)
You need to do what you feel is right. It’s my job to tell you what he wanted.

MERCELINO
We need to speak alone, as a family.

ERICA
Of course.

MARCELINO
He’s my father.

ERICA
I know.

MARCELINO
What will happen? If we don’t...

ERICA
We’ll make sure he’s comfortable. We’ll make sure he’s not in pain. I’ll give you some time.

Erica leaves. But she turns back to see the family members embracing. Mourning.

INT. NURSES’ STATION - DAY

Jack is on the phone.

JACK
That’s great, Doctor. I will let Mrs. Kyung know we have a time for the surgery. Thank you.

Jack hangs up, feeling good, when he notices a small pharmacy bag sitting on her desk with a post-it that reads “FOSTER.” NURSE RIVERA, the same nurse he saw when he first walked into the hospital, is there.

JACK (CONT’D)
What is that?

NURSE RIVERA
It’s Mr. Foster’s antibiotic.
JACK
What’s it doing here?

NURSE RIVERA
It must have fallen out of his things when he was discharged.

JACK
He hasn’t gotten his meds since he left? (off the Nurse’s shrug) Great.

Rosa walks by.

ROSA
Hey, ready to sign out?

JACK
Yeah. (holding up meds)
So my homeless guy that I discharged to the street? I just found out he hasn’t had his medicine in five days. But I guess I need to get more like you -- just move on, right?

Rosa reaches out and grabs the bag of medicine.

ROSA
Let’s go.

INT. ROSA’S BEAT-UP CAR - NIGHT

Rosa drives and Jack rides shotgun, holding a bucket of take-out chicken and the meds. They spot a few HOMELESS.

JACK
Not here. We’ll never find him.

ROSA
Yeah, we will. I know all the spots.

INT. ROSA’S BEAT-UP CAR - LATER

Jack and Rosa have pulled over. They’re talking now, and eating the take-out chicken they bought for Mr. Foster.
ROSA
I just started reading her
diagnosis off the paper. It was
awful. I just froze up.

JACK
I’m sure it wasn’t that bad.

ROSA
I just pictured it different.

JACK
What?

ROSA
This. Being a doctor. I pictured
heroic mentors guiding me through
it. And patients that I could fix.
This sucks. I’m gonna totally go*
Granger on you guys.
(suddenly turning really
vulnerable)
I blew it, Jack.

JACK
Listen. You did the hardest thing
any of us had to do this week. It
was the hardest. She’ll be there
tomorrow, right? And the day after
that? Go back to her. Just keep
going back.

Rosa looks at him, touched. Jack notices a MAN turning a
corner. It’s Foster.

JACK (CONT’D)
That’s him!

ROSA
Oh my God!

Jack quickly wipes his chicken hands on some napkins, grabs
the chicken bucket and the medicine, and opens the door.

JACK
Mr. Foster! Mr. Foster!

STAY IN THE CAR -- we watch from Rosa’s POV as Jack goes
outside. Foster, seeing a young white guy running after him,
instantly starts walking in the other direction. Jack
catches up with him. Rosa watches, smiling.
JACK (CONT'D)
Mr. Foster, it’s me. It’s Doctor Malloy, from King County.

FOSTER
What the hell are you doing?

JACK
I came here for you. You left your medicine. And I brought you some chicken.

FOSTER
Chicken.

JACK
Yeah. Fried chicken.

FOSTER
This is crap.

JACK
It’s good. I ate some.

FOSTER
You ate some of my chicken?

JACK
No, I just... Mr. Foster, how are you doing? How’s your leg?

FOSTER
It’s crap. You never should have thrown me out, doc.

JACK
Can I clean that up for you, Mr. Foster.

FOSTER
Here?

JACK
Yeah, here.

Jack takes out some stuff from his day pack and starts to clean Foster’s wound. OFF ROSA, charmed, falling for Jack a bit...

INT. O.R. - PRE-OP - DAY

Jack walks with Angelina as they wheel Mrs. Kyung on a gurney into pre-op.
Chyron Reads: DAY FIVE

JACK
Doctor Andrews is the best surgeon we have. They're going to take great care of you.

As Jack passes, he sees Billy there. Billy is wheeling something covered on a rack. About the size of a leg.

JACK (CONT’D)
No.

BILLY
Yes.

JACK
Are you serious.

BILLY
Yes, sir. Screw the man.

INT. ANGELA’S ROOM - DAY

Angela turns her head and sees Travis standing there, looking at her. He walks in. He hands her a vial of pills.

TRAVIS
This is it. Make it last.

ANGELA
Thank you Travis. You’re a good brother.

TRAVIS
No, I’m not.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Mercer comes up to Erica.

MERCER
Get in here.

He indicates an empty room. Erica doesn’t.

ERICA
So you can yell at me then try to kiss me again?

Mercer takes her aside, and angrily whispers--
MERCER
Kinsey, I told you to let it go.
This is a lawsuit waiting to happen.

ERICA
We are responsible first and foremost to respect the wishes of the patient.

MERCER
I can make every day of your next four years a living hell. Do not undermine me again, Kinsey. You know nothing yet. Nothing.

ERICA
You know so much more about medicine than me, Doctor Mercer. But only I know what that patient said to me. I know what he wanted and I had to speak up.

Mercer just walks away.

INT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY
Travis walks up to a very humble dwelling on a poverty stricken street. He knocks on a door. Sheila answers.

TRAVIS
You want to get some ice cream, grab a movie?

SHEILA
Yeah!

TRAVIS
Come on then.

Sheila comes out and they start walking down the block.

SHEILA
Is my mom coming home today?

TRAVIS
Not today. Soon.

Travis takes her hand. They walk along hand in hand. OFF Travis, beginning to take on parental duties...
INT. LUCY’S ROOM - DAY

Rosa walks in. Lucy looks at her.

ROSA
Can I take you for a walk?

EXT. HOSPITAL - COURTYARD - LATER THAT DAY

Rosa sits on the steps next to Lucy, seated in a wheelchair.

ROSA
Yesterday when I told you your diagnosis, it came out wrong.

LUCY
(joking)
You mean, I’m totally healthy?

ROSA
I never had to say anything like that before. I’m new and I’m learning. I’m sorry. But if I had to say it over again, this is what I would add. I would add that we are going to fight this.

(fighting emotion)
That we are going to do everything there is to do to make you healthy.
That I’m not giving up on you. And that I’m by your side. No matter what comes, I’m by your side.

OFF Lucy, tears welling... She reaches her hand out silently. Rosa takes her hand. They sit there in silence.

INT. OPERATING ROOM/OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

Mrs. Kyung is being operated on by the team assembled to do bloodless surgery. In the observation room, among numerous med students and residents, is Jack, watching from the back. The surgeon turns to the observation room and looks right at Jack. Gives him a thumbs up. Jack smiles a little, relieved. He steps out to...

INT. O.R. WAITING ROOM - DAY

Jack comes out and sees Angelina waiting, looking vulnerable.
JACK
It’s going great. They’ll be done soon. She’s going to be fine.

Angelina, hearing this, cannot fight her emotions. She starts to cry and falls into Jack’s arms. ON Jack, feeling like he just saved a life...

INT. CHESTNUT LOUNGE - NIGHT

Jack, Rosa, Billy, Talaikha, and Travis celebrate the end of the week.

JACK
We made it. One week!

Everyone toasts! Jack sees Erica enter, incongruously dressed in a gown -- she looks drop dead gorgeous. As she makes her way across the crowded bar, they all make comments. All but Jack, who is totally taken by her, and just watches her...

ROSA
(re: her dress, under to Talaikha)
Okay, I so hate her right now.

TALAIKHA
God, what I wouldn’t give for a rack like that.

BILLY
Strap a bib on me.

ROSA
Shut up.

Erica arrives.

ERICA
Hi!

ROSA
Hi!

ERICA
I have this fundraiser I have to go to. But I had to come here and have one toast with you guys.

ROSA
Too bad you look like such hell.
BILLY
Somebody get this lady a drink!

Everyone keeps talking as Erica and Jack split off a little. Rosa can’t help but notice this.

JACK
You look amazing.

ERICA
Thanks. So how’s your Jehovah’s Witness?

JACK
She’s great.

ERICA
That’s great, Jack. Listen, about the other night.

JACK
Yeah. It was a mistake.

ERICA
Yeah.

There’s a beat then...

ERICA (CONT’D)
Some week huh?

JACK
Some week.

Out of this intimate moment we hear...

JIM
Hi.

They turn, and there’s JIM, Erica’s fiancé, wearing a tuxedo. This guy is gorgeous.

ERICA
Everyone, this is Jim. My fiancé.

All improvise hellos.

JIM
It’s great to meet you all. Sorry I have to steal her tonight.

All improvise: “No problem,” etc.
ERICA
So, see you all on Monday. Have a
great weekend.

And Erica and Jim walk off, arm in arm. Jack watches,
somehow devastated.

ROSA
That guy is a stud.

Everyone cracks up. Including Jack -- you can only stay
depressed so long.

JACK

TRAVIS
Hey, we all made it through the
week without locking ourselves in
the bathroom.

ROSA
Nobody Grangered.

BILLY
All week and no Grangering!

They all toast. And continue to toast: to their enormous
student loans; to their indentured servitude; to other random
complaints... Jack turns away from the celebration and
steals a look outside through the window, toward Erica and
her fiance walking up the street. Around him, the
celebration continues...

FADE OUT:

END OF PILOT