

TELEVISION WRITING

Life

Chicago Hope

Television writing sample

Written by

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CHICAGO HOPE

"Life"

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPORTS ARENA - DAY

From way up high, we hover over this athletic compound, its parking lot a sea of cars, eager sports fans huddled outside the flood gates hoping and some even praying they'll get the rare opportunity to witness their hockey team, the Chicago Blackhawks, pull off the biggest upset in the history of this windy city. Down below, within the steel walls of this arena, we HEAR a ROAR, a CHANT that fills the heavens. It's a harmonious sound, similar to a gothic incantation to the Messiah.

Our interest peaks and we start to ZOOM IN on the source. Like a hawk zeroing in on its prey we fast approach this oval structure, past the crowds and into

INT. SPORTS ARENA - DAY

where we are confronted by an onslaught of die hard wall to wall Blackhawk fans. This place is alive - high octane energy - it's a surprise the ice isn't melted. Everyone is on their feet, the inner structure vibrates from the frenzy. As we listen carefully and take a closer look around, we understand why this place is a volcanic eruption - the CHANT "Tony! Tony!" is heard over and over again -

ON THE SCOREBOARD - the Blackhawks are tied and down below on the ice

CLOSE ON a red jersey draped over a towering frame - the number 23 screams out in big black letters. This is superstar ANTHONY BRIGHTON, who gracefully glides and darts past his opponents with complete control of the puck which eludes the oncoming defense. Anthony plays as if today could be his last day on Earth - not just for him and his team - but because this is the Stanley Cup.

The ROAR of "Tony! Tony!" fuels Anthony's drive toward the GOALIE. We hold our breath as Anthony sets his position and with lightning speed, a quick flick of the stick, the puck explodes off the ice and sails like a hovercraft toward

THE GOALIE who somehow manages to prevent this black projectile from entering his atmosphere.

We HEAR a collective sigh from the crowd but if we fine tune it to another frequency, we also pick up a more explicit gesture from

MCNEIL (OC)

Damn!

whose blood pressure rises and drops whenever the puck comes close to a net.

REVEAL

Dr. JACK MCNEIL who has plexi seats with physical therapist KAREN WILDER. Wilder notices McNeil's biting reaction and by the look she gives him we suspect she knows why McNeil is so uptight about this game when everyone else enjoys it.

MCNEIL

(shouts)

C'mon Tony. You could've made that blindfolded.

McNeil turns toward Wilder.

MCNEIL (CONT)

He should've made that one.

Wilder's suspicions are clarified by the dollar signs in McNeil's eyes - he's gambling on the game. She can only support her friend and pray the Blackhawks score another goal. She doesn't have to wait long before

The ROAR of the crowd signifies a sudden turn of events -

ON ANTHONY BRIGHTON who has regained control of the puck and brings it down the ice. This time Anthony will not miss because his sights are set on the opposing team's net and not the puck which zig zags between an onslaught of defenders.

ANGLE ON

McNeil whose eyes bulge out of his sockets. He mentally calculates the perfect time when Anthony should

MCNEIL

Now!

ON ANTHONY who takes the shot. The puck seems to fly through the air in slow motion. The goalie anticipates its arrival but there is a window open, it's a crack and it's open - The crowd explodes. Anthony has put his team up by one. His teammates congratulate him. Anthony raises his arm in the air with his finger pointed to the sky - signifies his team is number one. "Tony! Tony!" vibrates throughout. Anthony waves to his fans in appreciation of their support.

Anthony skates over to McNeil and through the plexi glass

ANTHONY

That was for you, my man.

And off he goes... McNeil beams from the recognition.

WILDER

That was nice.

MCNEIL

(proud)

I rebuilt both of his knees. He's never been quicker.

McNeil is an arrogant fellow - as Anthony's personal orthopaedist - he has every right to be. Wilder is not impressed - she's used to it.

WILDER

Oh.

MCNEIL

(shouts)

Okay guys, let's stay on top of this game.

BACK TO THE GAME where the Chicago Blackhawks are on the defense. Their opponent quickly brings the puck down the ice - threatens to score to tie the game. The puck is released but its transport is intercepted by the Blackhawks GOALIE. The crowd cheers.

The Blackhawks take control of the puck. Anthony skates down the ice ready to receive a pass from one of his teammates. The puck finds Anthony's stick but Anthony is quickly checked from behind and SLAMMED into the boards. Anthony's helmet flies off his head but it doesn't deter him from controlling the puck. He manages to successfully pass it to a teammate. His team gets close to the net but the opposing defense intercepts and makes their move toward Blackhawks turf.

Anthony has already anticipated this aggressive defensive move and has strategically placed himself in a position to prevent his opponent from scoring.

What wasn't anticipated was the the amateurish half court shot from Anthony's opponent. Maybe the intention was a pass to a fellow player but how can that be when no one has skated past the invincible Anthony Brighton. The puck travels at mach speed across the ice and

SMACK into the forehead of Anthony Brighton. The puck falls to the ice. Anthony is out cold and is immediately checked again, launched into the boards head first. This is the final blow as Anthony crumples to the ground. He doesn't move. Lights out. The white ice streaked with the color red.

ANGLE ON

McNeil who realizes what has just happened to his friend and the most likely outcome of this game.

OFF McNeil's concern we:

SMASH CUT TO:

MAIN TITLES

INT. E.R. - DAY

The doors burst open and we see a lifeless Anthony Brighton who lies supine on a gurney which moves at a harried pace. Anthony is hooked up to the essentials. McNeil and Wilder race alongside the gurney with Paramedics. A distressed McNeil barks commands all the while to the joining Tech, Nurse and intern Dr. UNDERHILL.

MCNEIL
(emotional)

His BP is one hundred sixty over one hundred. I need to start a nitro drip stat. Let's get a Chem-7, a CT and a Cross-Table C-Spine. Let's go people. (then) Where's Dr. Shutt?! I need Dr. Shutt! Someone page him immediately!

It's such a rapid fire approach the team hesitates for a split second to decipher McNeil's orders. McNeil looks impatiently to Underhill.

MCNEIL (CONT)
(derogatory tone)
What are you waiting for?

UNDERHILL
I was on my way doctor.

MCNEIL
Well let's go before the man dies.
Dr. KEITH WILKES approaches. McNeil intercepts.

MCNEIL (CONT)
(to Wilkes)
I know this kid. I'll handle it.

WILKES
Jack. I'm taking over. This isn't
your specialty.

MCNEIL
(resolute)
He's mine, Keith.

Wilkes backs off as...

Wilder reaches for and grabs McNeil's forearm.

WILDER
Jack, you're going to do him more
harm than good unless you tone it
down immediately or remove yourself
from his care.

McNeil strikes back without hesitation.

MCNEIL
The next time I need an opinion
from a physical therapist, I'll let
you know.

This was a stinging comment. Wilder handles it in a
professional manner.

WILDER
You're a sonofabitch, Jack.

And off she goes. McNeil is unphased and continues to drive
this train.

MCNEIL
Where the hell is Dr. Shutt?

ON ANTHONY BRIGHTON who suddenly awakes from his slumber state and screams out in terror. It's a violent reaction as he reaches out and grabs one of the Medics. His brute strength holds down the Medic - pummels the medic's head at a feverish pace.

McNeil attempts to release Anthony's hold as the team dives in to restrain him.

MCNEIL

Anthony, it's me. It's Jack. You have to stop or you're going to hurt yourself. You need to calm down. I'm here to help you.

Anthony continues to fight against his perceived attackers.

ANTHONY

(ballistic)

Stop hurting me. You're killing me. Get this stuff off of me. I hate you, Jack. I hate you. You're killing me.

ANGLE ON Underhill bewildered by this act of exorcism

UNDERHILL

Oh my god. What's happening?

ON TWO MONSTROUS ORDERLIES who approach and successfully restrain Anthony Brighton. Anthony slips back into unconsciousness.

ON MCNEIL who addresses Underhill.

MCNEIL

You should know that a patient with a massive head injury may exhibit violent, irrational behavior. (then) Now I need your focus, Dr. Underhill.

Underhill has no choice but to adhere to McNeil's request even though he is still disturbed by the current event.

Wilkes intercedes.

WILKES

Jack, I'm taking over. If you don't leave, I'm going to have you removed.

McNeil's hesitant, then relinquishes.

MCNEIL
I wouldn't expect you to
understand.

McNeil storms off as we:

CUT TO:

INT. DOCTOR LOUNGE - DAY

Dr. AARON SHUTT gazes upward at a television monitor where we see a TICKER TAPE scroll across the bottom of the screen. Shutt shakes his head in disgust. We realize his stocks are not performing well.

Dr. DIANE GRAD approaches and follows his gaze upward at the monitor. Seconds pass when she bursts out in cheer.

GRAD
Yes!

SHUTT
(beat)
You play the market?

GRAD
What do you think got me through
med school?

Shutt has a newfound respect for Grad.

SHUTT
I'm impressed.

GRAD
It's my aggressive side.

SHUTT
Oh really?

GRAD
You have to take the risk to reap
the rewards. How about you?

SHUTT
I like to play it safe. Maybe
that's not such a good thing.

GRAD

Well, they say if you invested \$20,000 in Microsoft back in 1982 and with it splitting seven times, your money would be worth about sixteen million today. Not bad in fourteen years.

SHUTT

I'd say so. You own Microsoft?

GRAD

No, it's too conservative for me. I like to gamble on the upstart companies.

ON SHUTT who doesn't know what to think. He would like to impress Grad with his holdings.

SHUTT

(proud)

My broker has me in steel.

GRAD

(the truth hurts)

That's boring. No wonder you're losing.

So much for an impression. BEEPER SOUNDS. Grad and Shutt fumble for their respective pagers.

SHUTT

It's me... I gotta go. (then) Maybe we can pick up this conversation later. It sounds like you know a hell of a lot more than my broker.

GRAD

I wouldn't say that, but I'm sure I'd be a lot cheaper.

Shutt hurriedly exits. Grad takes another look at the ticker tape.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Shutt launches out of the lounge and almost collides into a wheel chair bound HANK MCGRAW.

SHUTT

Pardon me.

And Shutt is gone.

HANK

(shouts)

Where the hell is a TV in a joint like this? Half the state of Florida is in a deep freeze and I'm losing my ass on orange juice contracts! (to his orderly) Get me back to the exchange!

Hank is livid.

A cell phone RINGS. Hank quickly retrieves his phone.

HANK (CONT)

(into phone)

McGraw here. What? Those damn rookie traders - get rid of them before they screw it all up. I told them to unload those bellies an hour ago. (then) How am I supposed to know? I was blacked out for an hour and there's not a monitor in sight. (hangs up)

The same moment, Grad walks right into Hank's chair and somehow manages to keep her balance.

HANK (CONT)

What is it with you people?

Grad regains her composure.

GRAD

I'm sorry. Are you alright?

HANK

No, I'm not alright. I've been wheeling myself around this hospital for the last hour and no one's even tried to help me.

GRAD

What's the problem? How can I help?

HANK

I need to get to a tv.

GRAD

(points to lounge)

There's one in there.

HANK
(to orderly)
Get me in there quick. (to Grad)
You're a life saver. (extends his
hand) Hank McGraw. My friends call
me 'Options.'

GRAD
Dr. Diane Grad. Options?

HANK
I'm a trader on the exchange.

And with that Hank almost barrels over Grad. Grad's interest peaks. She follows his lead.

CUT TO:

INT. MELISSA LANGLEY'S ROOM - DAY

With her back to us, MARYBETH LANGLEY comforts her eight year old daughter MELISSA who sits upright in bed. Melissa wears a hospital gown and as we take a closer look we are drawn to the bruises on Melissa's face and body. We take notice of Melissa's arm which is supported by a collar and cuff sling. Marybeth caresses Melissa's face which has a lifeless expression.

MARYBETH
Mommy's here baby. Mommy loves you
princess.

As we swing around to share in this intimate moment, it becomes clear to us the victim in this room is not only Melissa but Marybeth as well. If you think Melissa's bruises were bad, Marybeth's are worse.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE GARY LANGLEY'S ROOM - DAY

Dr. KATHRYN AUSTIN looks in on Marybeth's unconscious husband. Gary's head is wrapped and taped.

AUSTIN
(sotto)
You got off easy, you bastard.

OFF Austin's disdained look we:

CUT TO:

EXT. MCNEIL'S OFFICE - DAY

A frenzied McNeil grabs an envelope from the mail slot on his door and enters

INT. MCNEIL'S OFFICE - DAY

where he rips open the package and retrieves the enclosed radiographs. He slaps them on his light box and studies the skeletal images. After close examination, McNeil shakes his head in disgust.

MCNEIL

Sonofabitch tore her arm off.

McNeil turns off the lamps and we:

CUT TO:

INT. MELISSA LANGLEY'S ROOM - DAY

Melissa looks upward at Austin with red, teary eyes. Marybeth holds her daughter's hand.

AUSTIN

I know it hurts, Melissa. We're here to take care of you. You're a very brave girl. (then) You know, I have a little girl too. She's your age and she's strong just like you. (to Marybeth) May I speak with you in private.

MARYBETH

Sure. (then) We'll be right back, princess.

(kisses Melissa on forehead)

Mommy loves
you. I'll be right outside your
door.

Austin and Marybeth exit.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE MELISSA LANGLEY'S ROOM - DAY

Austin addresses a concerned Marybeth Langley.

AUSTIN

Mrs. Langley, I've been a physician for many years. I've seen many cases of domestic abuse. You should know that you can count on me and this hospital to protect you in any way that we can in keeping your husband from harming you and your daughter again.

Marybeth lets this sink in before

MARYBETH

Dr. Austin, I appreciate your concern and your offer, but you have nothing to worry about nor does Melissa - I'm taking care of everything.

Austin admires her strength but

AUSTIN

Mrs. Langley, with all due respect, this is often the response of an abused spouse and inevitably what happens is a return visit to the hospital or worse - somebody dies. (she doesn't get through) Are you going to wait for something like this to happen to you again?

MARYBETH

Dr. Austin, again I appreciate your concern, but right now my daughter needs me. If you'll excuse me.

Marybeth returns to Melissa's room. Austin stands defeated. McNeil approaches.

MCNEIL

Kate, how is she?

AUSTIN

She's scared.

Austin follows McNeil into

INT. MELISSA LANGLEY'S ROOM - DAY

Austin and McNeil approach Melissa. Marybeth shoots a look toward Austin as if to convey an invasion of their privacy.

AUSTIN
Melissa, this is Dr. McNeil. He's
going to help your arm get better.

MCNEIL
How are you feeling, Melissa?

MELISSA
It hurts.

MCNEIL
Can I take a look?

Melissa looks to Marybeth for approval.

MARYBETH
It's okay, princess.

McNeil examines Melissa's arm. We can see the area of
swelling. His gentle touch is too unbearable for Melissa.

MELISSA
(screams;cries)
It hurts!

MCNEIL
I'll stop. (then;to Marybeth)
Melissa has a fractured upper
hemural epiphysis with extensive
tissue, muscle and nerve damage.
Because her epiphysis is displaced
by more than 50%, I'm going to have
to recommend surgery.

MARYBETH
(alarmed)
Surgery! Why does she need
surgery!? I didn't even understand
what you said! A fractured what?
What was that again?

Melissa becomes frightened by her mother's tone.

MCNEIL

Mrs. Langley, the break in your daughter's arm is in the area where the bone meets the socket. I have to insert a pin where the break is so that Melissa can have the chance to regain full motion of her arm. Right now the damage is so severe that without surgery there's a good chance your daughter could lose feeling, have a limited amount of motion and possible deformity as she grows.

The news hits Marybeth like a shock wave. She's stunned.

AUSTIN

Mrs. Langley, Melissa is in the best hands possible with Dr. McNeil. (then;to Melissa) When my daughter Sara broke her arm in gymnastics, Dr. McNeil fixed her up. (to Marybeth) He wouldn't recommend surgery unless he felt it was absolutely necessary.

MARYBETH

I know. I know. I'm just so worried. (then;to McNeil) Are there any other options?

MCNEIL

(biting)

No.

MARYBETH

Are you sure?

MCNEIL

(loses patience;biting)

Mrs. Langley, the sooner we get this done, the better. Now if you'll excuse me, I have another patient to attend to.

McNeil abruptly walks out of the room. Austin follows his lead.

OFF Marybeth's troubled look we:

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE MELISSA LANGLEY'S ROOM - DAY

Austin confronts McNeil.

AUSTIN

Jack!

McNeil turns around - seems bothered by the sudden intrusion.

MCNEIL

What Kate!

AUSTIN

You have a petrified mother and daughter in that room. Don't you think you could have showed a little more compassion?

MCNEIL

What did you have in mind? The girl needs surgery. If Mrs. Langley kept her little girl away from her husband, she wouldn't be here in the first place.

AUSTIN

You're right but she had no control of that. You're Melissa's doctor and you suggested a very delicate procedure. When you suggest surgery, you need to offer reassurance. You didn't. In their time of need you just walked away.

MCNEIL

Kate, if you're finished, I have a close friend who at this moment is fighting for his life.

McNeil walks away - too quickly for him to hear

AUSTIN

(sotto)

I'm sorry.

OFF her concerned look, we:

CUT TO:

EXT. WATTERS' OFFICE - DAY

A group of Nurses gather outside Watters' door. They listen intently to the SOUNDS of a classical guitar from within. They are hypnotized by the performance.

Dr. PHILLIP WATTERS approaches from behind - interrupts their private recital. The Nurses are surprised. They thought Watters was the guitarist.

As he makes his way through

WATTERS

Ladies.

Watters opens his door. The Nurses swarm toward the opening - hoping to get a glimpse of the person inside. Watters douses their chance - closes the door behind him.

INT. WATTERS' OFFICE - DAY

Watters stands and listens to the beautiful melody that flows from his guitar. The admiration Watters feels for his dear friend Dr. GREGORY RIDGEWAY emanates from the content look on his face.

Greg plays his last chord. He looks up to Watters. This is one handsome doctor whose bronze complexion tells you he spends his winters in the Cayman Islands.

WATTERS

I didn't expect you until Thursday.

GREGORY

(cheerful)

That's right - but now we have two extra days to hit the town.

(then;re guitar) You don't play this much do you.

WATTERS

Never have the time. I'm trying to save a hospital.

GREGORY

That's you, Phillip. Always on the side of the underdog. You never take the time to enjoy the good life. Now that I'm here, that's all going to change. (rises) Get your coat. We have reservations at the Palm.

This is all too fast for Watters.

WATTERS

Hold on, Greg. I can't just leave. I still have another few hours.

GREGORY

Phillip, it's eight o'clock. You've probably been here since five. Now get your coat and let's get out of here.

WATTERS

How many days did you say you were going to be in town?

GREGORY

Let's go Phillip.

Greg rushes Watters out of the office. Watters has no choice but to adhere to Greg's request.

CUT TO:

INT. E.R. CORRIDOR - DAY

Grad and Dr. BILLY KRONK motor in mid conversation through the emergency room lobby.

GRAD

Billy, it's a barbaric sport. I just can't understand what you see in it -

KRONK

Diane, we're talking about ice hockey here not cock fighting - now that's barbaric.

GRAD

Let's just forget it.

KRONK

No, no, no, no - you're not getting off that easy.

Underhill approaches - interrupts our couple.

UNDERHILL

I'm sorry but I was wondering if I can run something by you.

KRONK

Sure. What's up?

UNDERHILL

Well, it seems like Dr. McNeil and I bump heads everytime we're around each other. I don't know if it's me - I don't know if I'm doing something wrong - I don't know but it makes me feel really uncomfortable.

KRONK

You have to understand that McNeil is a perfectionist. He expects nothing less than perfection from you. It's a tough spot to be in, but all you can do is your best.

Underhill soaks in this information but from the look on his face, he's still dazed and confused. Grad picks up on his look -

GRAD

Just be patient with him and you'll be fine.

And with this final piece of advice we HEAR a blood curdling SCREAM.

WOMAN (OC)

Help! My baby isn't breathing!
Somebody help me!

Kronk, Grad and Underhill rush to

INT. E.R. - DAY

where a crying, hysterical WOMAN tightly clenches her fourteen month old BABY DAUGHTER. We CLOSE IN on the infant whose skin tone is blue.

WOMAN

My god! Help me! Please! She's not breathing!

Kronk quickly takes control. He reaches for the baby but the mother pulls back - she's defiant.

KRONK

Ma'm, I'm a doctor. I'm here to help you. Now I need to see your daughter to find out what's wrong.

The woman doesn't comprehend.

WOMAN

She's not breathing! Please somebody help!

KRONK

That's what I'm trying to do, but I need to see her. Now please let go of her.

The woman gently hands her over to Kronk.

WOMAN

Please take care of my baby.

GRAD

We promise we will.

Kronk urgently barks out commands.

KRONK

Somebody page respiratory therapy and let's get an ambu bag stat.

OFF Kronk and Grad as they rush the infant down the hall.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

A bright red Ferrari - top down - travels at mach speed through a busy city street.

DRIVER'S POV

A canvas of brake lights in front - immediately swerves to the far right lane to maintain this Grand Prix pace.

INT. CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

We focus in on Greg Ridgeway who is behind the wheel - ecstatic - one who breathes the air of a Formula One driver in total control. He is quite impressed with himself. Next to him sits a frigid Watters who checks the tension on his seatbelt. Greg turns to Watters - his eyes off the road.

GREG

This is what it's all about.

Watters is not in the celebrative mood. Greg keeps his eyes trained on Watters.

GREG (CONT)

Nothing like a cool breeze hitting you at a hundred miles an hour.

Watters' eyes go wide at

WATTERS

(shouts)

Watch out!

the back end of a fast approaching car. Greg coolly flicks the steering wheel and avoids a near catastrophe. Watters almost goes into respiratory arrest.

GREG

(calmly)

That was close.

OFF our boys as they speed down a street and out of sight we:

CUT TO:

INT. PRE-OP - NIGHT

An unconscious Anthony Brighton is oblivious to a Nurse who lathers his head with shaving cream - about to apply the finishing touch to a once full head of hair. Brain surgery is eminent.

CUT TO:

INT. RADIOLOGY ROOM - NIGHT

Shutt takes one last look at Anthony Brighton's radiograph before he reaches to switch off the lamp. A frazzled McNeil enters.

MCNEIL

Aaron, what do we have?

SHUTT

Well, Anthony has an extradural haematoma with a clot located in the frontal lobe. I have to drill a burrhole to relieve the pressure and get to the clot.

MCNEIL

Post op prognosis?

SHUTT

In my experience with a clot of this size recovery could range anywhere from three to ten days. The first twenty four hours are crucial. My first objective is to get him out of his coma. (off McNeil's look) In most cases, Jack, the quicker a patient regains consciousness, the more likelihood there will be limited brain damage or maybe even full recovery.

MCNEIL

What if he doesn't pull out of the coma?

SHUTT

I'm optimistic that he will.

MCNEIL

Why?

SHUTT

For one thing he's a healthy
sonofabitch and I get the feeling
he's also one hell of a fighter.

McNeil appreciates the compliment paid to his close friend.

SHUTT (CONT)

I'll take care of him.

MCNEIL

Thanks.

OFF this, we:

CUT TO:

INT. ANNA WHITE'S ROOM - NIGHT

The infant we saw rushed into the ER sleeps peacefully -
hooked up to an IV - her skin restored to normal color.
Kronk looks over baby ANNA before we

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE ANNA WHITE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Where an anxious PAMELA WHITE waits to hear news on her
daughter, Anna. Kronk takes a moment before he

KRONK

Mrs. White -

Pamela doesn't let him finish

PAMELA

How is she? How is my Anna?

KRONK

Mrs. White, I want you to know your
daughter is doing fine. She's
breathing on her own without the
aid of a respirator. We're going to
keep her overnight for observation
and try to determine what caused
her to stop breathing.

PAMELA

Thank you, doctor. Thank you. I
don't know what I would've done
without my baby.

KRONK

Mrs. White, is Anna's father aware she's in the hospital?

PAMELA

We're divorced. I'm her sole guardian.

(then) Why? What's the matter?

KRONK

Well, I'm curious about the red marks on Anna's neck.

Kronk waits for an explanation and it's delivered without a beat.

PAMELA

Oh that - poor Anna was so cold I wrapped a scarf around her neck to keep her warm. It was wool so she probably had an allergic reaction. It's probably just a rash.

Seems logical, but Kronk is disbelieving -

KRONK

I was just a little concerned.

PAMELA

I would like to spend the night if it's alright with you.

KRONK

I don't see a problem with it.

PAMELA

Thank you, doctor. Thank you again for saving my little girl.

Pamela enters Anna's room. Kronk stands - still not sure of the 'rash' on Anna's neck. Nurse MARISELA approaches.

MARISELA

How's the baby doing?

KRONK

She's doing fine.

MARISELA

I've been talking to her mother for the longest time and the only thing we talked about was her daughter, Anna. She absolutely adores that baby. She's really a great mother.

KRONK

That's nice.

Marisela exits. OFF Kronk who is not impressed, we:

CUT TO:

INT. HANK MCGRAW'S ROOM - NIGHT

Hank sits upright in bed. He checks his stock quotes on a hand-held, high-tech pager. Overhead, the television monitor plays a muted CNN.

Grad enters -holds a chart. Hank is oblivious to her presence.

GRAD

Mr. McGraw.

Hank is too engrossed in the market.

HANK

Not right now, doctor. Now's not a good time.

GRAD

Mr. McGraw, your tests came back and we need to talk.

HANK

Just gimme a second. I need to figure out how much money I lost today.

Grad waits a moment before

GRAD

Well, now I see where your health problems stem from.

HANK

(looks up)

Health problems? All I did was choke on a piece of pork.

Grad reads from the chart.

GRAD

Oh really? Your cholesterol level is over four hundred. Your blood pressure is off the charts and your triglycerides are through the roof. (looks at Hank) I'd say you're a ticking time bomb Mr. McGraw.

HANK

I don't believe it. I thought I was in pretty good shape. When you're on the floor all day you always move around. Who has time to eat? (then) Haven't taken a vacation in ten years. Ten years.

GRAD

When's the last time you had a physical?

HANK

It's gotta be about the same time.

GRAD

Mr. McGraw I'm only going to say this once - if you don't dramatically alter your lifestyle in the way you eat and in the way you work I can guarantee you a fatty piece of pork will not be the reason the next time you're admitted into a hospital.

This is an eye opener and it gets Hank's full attention.

HANK

What am I supposed to do? I can't take time off from work. The second you look away is all it takes for you to lose a lot of money - your clients money.

GRAD

Mr. McGraw, it's your choice.

Hank digests this ultimatum.

HANK

I have to think about it.

GRAD
You do that, Mr. McGraw.

HANK
Do me a favor and call me Hank.

GRAD
Okay, Hank.

Grad exits.

OFF Hank's distressed look, we:

CUT TO:

INT. O.R. - NIGHT

Shutt and his team hover over Anthony Brighton, they work vigorously to remove a life threatening clot. Shutt is in the process of drilling a hole in Anthony's head.

SHUTT
(to his team)
Almost there... just a little
more... and we're in.

Shutt hands off the drill - takes a moment - then looks up to

ON MCNEIL who stands in the Observatory - watches the surgery below on his close friend.

OFF McNeil's intense look, we:

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

This is an upscale eatery in a fancy part of town. Dr. Gregory Ridgeway and Watters are seated at a booth. Both men smoke fat cigars. Gregory lifts a martini glass to his parched lips.

WATTERS
Tell me your secret, Greg. How do
you do it?

GREGORY
I don't know what you're talking
about Phillip.

WATTERS

Renowned plastic surgeon and captain of an international rugby team.

GREGORY

Oh that. (then) Well, it's quite simple really. Not even a secret. I'll spell it out for you. It's a three letter word. Ready? (off Phillip's nod) F-U-N. Fun. It's what you're lacking. You need to start enjoying yourself. You're not getting younger.

Gregory fishes for any remaining liquid in his empty glass. He sees a passing WAITER.

GREGORY (CONT)

I need a drink. (calls out) Waiter.

The waiter approaches.

GREGORY (CONT)

My dear friend and I need a refill.

WATTERS

Not for me. I have to get up early.

GREGORY

You see Phillip?! That's what I'm talking about. (to waiter) Please bring him another martini. (to Phillip) Trust me on this one.

The waiter exits. Gregory slips further into the booth.

WATTERS

Are you alright?

GREGORY

I'm fine.

Gregory starts to laugh to himself.

WATTERS

What's so funny?

GREGORY

Do you remember our third year in med school - the winter ball dance? Remember Bobby Johnson? Bobby spiked the punch with a hundred proof and he slipped a human liver at the bottom of the bowl. And here comes pristine Nancy Williams all thirsty from dancing up a storm. The look on her face when that liver plopped right into her drink. (laughs) I laughed so hard I thought I was having a heart attack.

WATTERS

Those were the days. (then) I don't know if you know this or not but Bobby and Nancy married, had three children and currently run a successful practice in Hollywood. Psychiatrists to the stars.

GREGORY

You gotta be kidding me. (then) Maybe I should've pulled a stunt like that. I wouldn't be the carefree wealthy bachelor I am today. Instead, I'd be a responsible - married man.

(then) That's a scary thought.

WATTERS

Yeah and the word 'fun' would have a whole new meaning.

The waiter approaches with their drinks.

GREGORY

Finally. (takes his drink) I'd like to make a toast.

Both men raise their glasses.

GREGORY (CONT)

To us, Phillip. To our success - to all of the long hours that got us here - to all of the women who are missing out on the chance in having incredible men like us in their lives - and most important to the new Phillip Watters who's going to walk out of here tonight with a whole new perspective on life.

WATTERS

I guess I'll drink to that.

Watters takes a sip from his glass. Gregory swallows his like a shot.

GREGORY

Now I have to use the boy's room.
I'll be back in a sec.

Gregory slowly gets out of the booth. He struggles to maintain his balance. Watters is concerned.

WATTERS

You need help?

GREGORY

Phillip, I can handle it. I'm a big boy.

He is but when he takes his first step, Gregory crashes to the floor head first. Watters jumps from the booth and quickly comes to his friend's aid. Luckily for Greg the alcohol numbs the pain.

WATTERS

Greg, are you okay? Talk to me.

GREGORY

I'm okay. Just a little dizzy.

WATTERS

Are you sure?

GREGORY

Yes, I'll be fine. Just lost my balance.

OFF Watters' concerned look, we:

CUT TO:

INT. I.C.U. - NIGHT

Anthony Brighton lies unconscious with his head fully wrapped in bandages. Shutt and McNeil enter. Shutt checks Anthony's charts as McNeil stands to his side.

MCNEIL

(sotto; to Anthony)

You've made it through the hard part.

Shutt chimes in.

SHUTT

Wait until he gets to rehab. That's where the real battle begins.

MCNEIL

He's been there before.

Shutt notices McNeil's concern. He walks over to McNeil.

SHUTT

He's going to be fine, Jack.

McNeil appreciates the gesture.

Kronk enters - walks over to Anthony. As a fellow hockey player, he admires the great Tony Brighton.

KRONK

I've been following this guy since I was a kid. He's the reason I started to play. Tony's a legend. (to McNeil) I can't believe how long you've kept him on the ice.

MCNEIL

Aaron's the one who deserves the credit. He just saved his life.

KRONK

I know, but as his orthopaedist you patched him up.

MCNEIL

Yeah. A lot of good it did.

McNeil exits. Kronk has obviously touched a soft spot.

KRONK
(to Shutt)
What did I say?

SHUTT
Nothing. Jack just needs some time
to himself.

OFF Shutt and Kronk as they watch over Anthony Brighton.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. MELISSA LANGLEY'S ROOM - DAY

Marybeth cuddles her daughter Melissa in bed - a few hours before surgery. Melissa holds a teddy bear with her good arm. We catch them in mid conversation.

MARYBETH
... you won't feel a thing,
princess. You'll be asleep and
dreaming of all of the fun things
you like to do.

MELISSA
Am I going to see daddy before they
operate?

Marybeth cringes at the mention of her husband.

MARYBETH
I don't know, Melissa.

Beat.

MELISSA
I hope not.

Marybeth doesn't respond - a dead silence in the room.

Austin enters.

AUSTIN
How are you feeling today, Melissa?

MELISSA
I'm bored.

It's not the response Austin expects, but it does make her smile.

AUSTIN
That's something my daughter would say if she was cooped up in a place like this.

MARYBETH
Thank you for the teddy bear. That was really nice of you.

AUSTIN
I thought Melissa would enjoy the company.

MELISSA
Thank you, doctor Kate.

AUSTIN
You're welcome. (then) I just spoke to Dr. McNeil. He doesn't see any chance of complications. The operation shouldn't take more than an hour. After you wake up, you'll be here a few more days, to rest and to get better.

MELISSA
Can I have ice cream?

AUSTIN
Melissa, you can have all of the ice cream you want.

Two Orderlies enter with a gurney - ready to transport Melissa to the O.R.

ORDERLY#1
Is she ready, Dr. Austin?

AUSTIN
(to Melissa)
Are you ready?

Melissa looks to her mother then

MELISSA
I'm scared.

Austin holds Melissa's hand.

AUSTIN
I know, Melissa, but you know what
I think? I think you're a very
brave girl, and I know you're going
to do just fine.

MARYBETH
You'll be fine, princess.

The two Orderlies carefully lift Melissa onto a gurney and roll her out of the room. Austin and Marybeth follow close behind.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE MELISSA LANGLEY'S ROOM - DAY

Let's move with Austin and Marybeth as they follow Melissa down the hall. Austin takes a moment before

AUSTIN
(to Marybeth)
Your husband came out of his coma
this morning. He asked for Melissa.

Marybeth doesn't respond, but her expression tells us she is terrified for her daughter.

OFF Austin's concerned look, we:

CUT TO:

INT. ANNA WHITE'S ROOM - DAY

Kronk places a stethoscope on baby Anna's chest. He listens patiently for any irregular activity. He then moves downward where he gently kneads her abdominal region. He appears to be satisfied with his examination. Kronk crosses to the foot of the bed where he grabs Anna's chart.

Pamela White enters. The look on her face tells us she is disturbed by Kronk's presence. As Kronk makes notes on the chart

PAMELA
What are you doing?

KRONK
(without looking up)
Just making sure your daughter is
well enough to go home today.

PAMELA
(disappointed)
So soon? She doesn't need surgery?

KRONK
Surgery. Why would you think she needs surgery? My only
concern is that she's underweight. (then) Is she eating
normally?

PAMELA
To be honest she has trouble keeping her food down - like
last night she vomited during her feeding.

KRONK
(alarmed)
Did you inform the nurse?

PAMELA
No. I didn't think it was important.

KRONK
Why?

PAMELA
I don't know - because it's happened before.

KRONK
How long has this been going on?

PAMELA
I guess since she was born.

KRONK
(alarmed)
Mrs. White, you guess? (off her blank look) Haven't you
consulted with your pediatrician?

PAMELA

Yes and she said it's because Anna was born prematurely and as a result, her development has been a little slow.

KRONK

Is she on any special diet?

PAMELA

No. Just regular baby food.

KRONK

Well starting today she's going to be on a high protein diet. I'm also going to give her a prescription for some strong vitamins. Just make sure you don't exceed the recommended dosage because it will make her very sick.

PAMELA

I can't tell you how much I appreciate your keeping such a close eye on her.

KRONK

If there's any change in her condition, call me immediately.

PAMELA

I will.

Kronk looks over at Anna before he exits - the look on his face tells us he is disturbed by Pamela's carefree demeanor. As soon as he leaves, Pamela studies Anna as if Kronk has done something wrong to her. Pamela fixes her blanket and strokes her hair neatly back into place.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Gregory Ridgeway wears a rugby sweatshirt, jeans and cowboy boots. An unlit cigar protrudes from his mouth. Gregory walks proud and tall and he looks damn good for having such a rough night. He acknowledges the SMILING Nurses as he approaches

INT. WATTERS' OFFICE - DAY

where he immediately goes to the liquor cabinet and pours himself a drink. He finds a lighter on Watters' desk and lights up. He sits in Watters' chair, props his feet on his desk and skillfully blows smoke rings. Let's hold on this shot before

Watters enters. He takes in the sight and isn't pleased with Greg's antics.

WATTERS

Don't you ever give it a rest?

GREGORY

Never. This morning I cracked some heads at practice and now I'm ready to take it to the next level.

WATTERS

Are you insane? Have you gone completely nuts?

GREGORY

Philip, relax. (hands to Phillip)
Here's two tickets for tomorrow's game. I want you to witness the destruction of the British team.

WATTERS

I can't wait. (then) Can you please get your feet off of my desk?

Gregory complies.

GREGORY

Wait until you see the shape we're in. We're going to annihilate those damn Brits.

WATTERS

Your cigar is stinking up my office.

Gregory gets the message. He crosses to the balcony.

GREGORY

Care to join me?

WATTERS

Do I have a choice?

Watters follows his lead but not before he checks his desk for ashes. He brushes away at a clean desk.

EXT. WATTERS' BALCONY - DAY

Gregory enjoys the view. Watters shows concern for his friend.

WATTERS
Don't you think it's a little early
to be hitting the hard stuff?

GREGORY
I like to reward myself after a
good practice.

WATTERS
You're not going to be able to keep
this pace forever.

GREGORY
I know - but right now it's worth
every second.

Gregory takes a sip of his drink. It goes down the wrong pipe - causes Gregory to cough. The cough persists - enough where Gregory can't catch his breath. The glass shatters on the ground as he grabs his chest.

WATTERS
Are you alright?

Gregory motions he's okay. Gregory pulls out a handkerchief and finally hacks up the remaining fluid. Gregory is flustered from this attack. He checks his hanky and discovers BLOOD. Gregory tries to conceal it, but Watters already noticed.

WATTERS (CONT)
I need to check that out.

GREGORY
It's nothing. Just took a bad hit
today.

OFF Watters whose concern has heightened, we:

CUT TO:

INT. I.C.U. - DAY

A conscious Anthony Brighton gazes at the ceiling - absorbs his surroundings like an infant at first sight. He opens his mouth and finds he is severely parched. He does manage to

ANTHONY
(barely audible)
Jack.

He closes his eyes and just when we think he's slipping back into a coma

MCNEIL (OC)
How's my boy doing today?

Anthony opens his eyes and welcomes the reassuring sound of McNeil's voice.

ANTHONY'S POV - MCNEIL who stands directly above him.
Anthony breaks a smile.

ANTHONY
I have to get back on the ice.

MCNEIL
Not so fast, Tony. You just woke up.

ANTHONY
What happened?

MCNEIL
The puck hit you in the head.
You've been in a coma.

ANTHONY
I don't remember anything.

MCNEIL
It was serious, Tony. You had surgery. They had to remove a clot from your brain.

Anthony takes a moment to absorb this news.

ANTHONY
Will I play again?

MCNEIL
It's too early to tell. You need time.

ANTHONY
How much time?

MCNEIL
You need time.

The conversation takes its toll on Anthony both physically and mentally - the latter the direct result of the possibility he might never play hockey again. His eyes become watery.

ANTHONY
All of my life I dreamed of playing
for the Stanley Cup. When I close
my eyes I see myself holding it.
Tell me Jack, is it going to
happen?

MCNEIL
Close your eyes and it will.

Anthony closes his eyes and we:

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

McNeil crosses toward the Nurse's station where he

MCNEIL
(to nurse)
Who's assisting me on the Langley
girl?

The Nurse reaches for the schedule.

NURSE#1
(reads)
Dr. Underhill.

McNeil smirks.

Underhill approaches. His awkwardness is a clear sign how nervous he is around McNeil. McNeil stands at the counter - reads a chart. Underhill is not sure whether to interrupt him but he

UNDERHILL

Dr. McNeil. I wanted to let you know I made sure the OR is prepped and ready to go. Everything is in order. Is there anything else I should do?

Without turning his back

MCNEIL

No. Just be focused.

Underhill expected more, but he has learned to take whatever he gets when it comes to McNeil.

UNDERHILL

Okay. I'll see you up there.

MCNEIL

Yeah.

As soon as Underhill walks away, Austin approaches.

AUSTIN

Melissa's in good spirits.

MCNEIL

Considering what she's been through. (then) How's the mother holding up?

AUSTIN

She's scared, Jack. I'm worried about her.

MCNEIL

I feel the same way, but what can you do?

AUSTIN

I can report it - have Melissa placed with the proper authorities.

MCNEIL

Yeah - and those same authorities will have the parents attend a few counseling sessions and when mommy and daddy seem fit, they'll go home and Melissa will be subject to the same abuse. Is that what you want, Kate?

AUSTIN
(firm)
I'm not letting this go, Jack.

MCNEIL
I know, but the reality is the
system is not going to save
her, Kate.

McNeil exits. Austin is determined to follow through with
her convictions. She looks off - lost in thought.

KRONK (OC)
Kate, do you have a minute?

Kronk snaps her out of it.

AUSTIN
Sure, Billy. What's up?

KRONK
When Sara was a baby, how
conscientious were you as a mother?
I'm assuming you never left her
side.

AUSTIN
Not for a second. Why?

KRONK
Okay. If Sara had a high fever or
let's say she had a hard time
keeping her food down, you would
remember something like that right?

AUSTIN
I remember like it was yesterday.

KRONK
That's what I thought. Thanks.

Kronk exits. Austin isn't sure of Kronk's intentions.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE GARY LANGLEY'S ROOM - DAY

Marybeth Langley stands - gazes upon her comatose husband.
As we draw nearer to Marybeth, we see the look of a woman
who is not only fearful but burns with anger.

MARYBETH POV - GARY lies still - his eyelids flutter.

OFF Marybeth's daggered look, we:

CUT TO:

INT. E.R. CORRIDOR - DAY

We track with Marisela as she moves at a brisk pace. She spots Kronk who walks in the opposite direction. Marisela rushes toward him.

MARISELA
(shouts)
Billy! Billy!

ON KRONK who turns and one look from Marisela registers the urgency in her voice. Marisela closes the gap.

MARISELA (CONT)
It's Anna! It's Anna!

KRONK
What happened?

MARISELA
She's in seizure.

OFF Kronk's alarmed and somewhat guilty look, we:

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. TRAUMA ROOM - DAY

A trauma team led by Austin huddles over the frail tiny body of Anna White. A panic stricken Pamela White stands in b.g with Marisela. As we move closer into the huddle, we see a Nurse cut away clothing and another attach electrodes to her bare chest. An IV is about to be set up. Austin barks orders.

AUSTIN
I want the airway secured. I want to see that ambu bag now. I want an IV push with 1mg of epi, 1mg of lidocaine, and she may need an ET. How's her BP?

NURSE#1
Two hundred over one hundred ten and getting faster by the second.

AUSTIN
(sotto)
Hold on, Anna. I know you can do
it.

KRONK (OC)
How's she doing?

AUSTIN
She's hypoxic.

Kronk is stunned. He takes a quick glance at Pamela - their
eyes meet for a split second.

KRONK
(to Kate)
I just released her this morning.
She was fine. (beat; to himself) Did
I miss something?

AUSTIN
Let's wait until the tests come
back.

NURSE#1
(shouts)
BP's coming down.

One of the Nurses releases the ambu bag.

NURSE#2
Looks like she's starting to
breathe on her own.

A sigh of relief from the team. Anna starts to recover.

AUSTIN
Let's get her up to ICU.

Kronk looks defeated. Austin is encouraging.

AUSTIN (CONT)
She'll be fine, Billy.

It's not good enough for Kronk as he crosses toward Pamela
and Marisela.

KRONK
Mrs. White you want to tell me what
happened when you left this
morning?

PAMELA

(upset)

I don't know. We were driving home and she started to seizure. I don't think she was getting enough air. I stopped the car and performed CPR. I did my best to clear her airway. Once I felt she was breathing on her own, I drove back as fast as I could.

KRONK

Has she ever seized before?

PAMELA

She has stopped breathing, if that's what you mean.

KRONK

(incredulous)

No, that's not what I asked. Has she seized before?

PAMELA

I wouldn't call it a seizure.

Kronk is confused. Marisela intercedes - feels Pamela is under enough pressure.

MARISELA

Billy!

KRONK

Marisela, I'm the doctor. I'm trying to find out what happened to her baby. (firm) Stay out of it.

Marisela storms off. Kronk cools down.

KRONK (CONT)

Mrs. White, Anna will be moved upstairs to intensive care. We'll find out what's wrong with her. I guarantee you.

The trauma team transports Anna in the b.g. Pamela looks on with grave concern.

CUT TO:

INT. MEN'S ROOM - DAY

Gregory Ridgeway hovers over a running faucet - looks at himself in the mirror. He doesn't look well - his tannish color has faded to a ghostly white. Greg bends down and splashes a handful of water onto his sweaty face. Another splash of water. He loosens his collar then suddenly grabs the left side of his arm. The pain increases and spreads. Greg grabs his chest and crashes to the floor. The impact cracks his nose which causes him to bleed.

As we pull back we hold on this shot of Greg flipping like a dead fish in a pool of blood.

We slowly dissolve to black.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE**ACT FOUR**

FADE IN:

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Few patients and staff linger in this otherwise barren hallway. Our attention is

ON AN ORDERLY who walks toward camera. We track with this Orderly until he reaches a door marked "MEN" - men's bathroom. As he pushes inward ORDERLY POV - GREGORY RIDGEWAY who lies motionless on the floor - his body soaked with his own blood.

ORDERLY

(shouts)

Oh my god! Somebody help! I need a doctor in here right away!

As we pull back we HEAR further cries for help as we:

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

The tension mounts and the atmosphere has come to life as a trauma team races Gregory Ridgeway on a gurney. A Nurse performs CPR in transit while another

NURSE#1
(shouts)
We're losing him!

And still another

NURSE#2
He's arrested! He's in V-fib!

The pace quickens when the team suddenly stops and crashes

INT. O.R. - DAY

where the team converges upon a lifeless Gregory Ridgeway. This is a CODE 3 - highest priority. CPR resumes as the clean up process begins. Clothes are ripped away - the nose is packed with gauze and the blood is wiped with a cloth.

ON AUSTIN who has entered ready to take charge. The Nurse who performs CPR looks up at Austin.

NURSE#1
He's not responding.

Austin immediately advances toward the patient and without hesitation WHACKS Gregory on the chest with her fist - a precordial thump to jumpstart the heart. She looks upward

AUSTIN POV - CARDIAC MONITOR where the unmistakable random activity of the EKG is consistent with V-fib.

Austin WHACKS him again but to no avail. Austin is frustrated.

AUSTIN
Damn! (then) Okay! Let's defib him!
Charge the paddles!

One of the Nurses emerges with a defibrillator and hands the paddles to Austin. Austin rubs the paddles together.

AUSTIN (CONT)
Give me two hundred joules!

NURSE#2
Charged!

AUSTIN

Clear!

Austin shocks Gregory - his body THUMPS. Austin looks to the monitor - still no change.

AUSTIN (CONT)

Okay! Give me three hundred!

NURSE#2

Charged!

AUSTIN

Clear!

Another shock. Again, nothing. Austin is determined.

AUSTIN (CONT)

Give me three hundred and sixty!

NURSE#2

Charged!

AUSTIN

Clear!

All eyes are on the monitor. The rhythm remains V-fib.

ON WATTERS who bursts into the room and crosses to Austin's side. He gazes at his vulnerable friend.

WATTERS

Where are we, Kate?

AUSTIN

He's in V-fib. No reaction to three hundred and sixty. I'm going to tube'm.

Watters takes it all in.

WATTERS

(to Austin)

You have to save him, Kate.

Austin looks to Watters.

AUSTIN

I'm doing everything I can,
Phillip.

OFF Watters who casts a reassuring look to Gregory and the staff as well - they know how close he is to this patient.

CUT TO:

INT. MELISSA LANGLEY'S ROOM - DAY

Melissa is asleep - post surgery. Her arm rests on a large orthopaedic pillow which is wrapped around her upper torso.

ON MARYBETH who gazes at her helpless child.

MCNEIL (OC)
She still sleeping?

MARYBETH
Yes.

McNeil checks the apparatus - studies Melissa for a moment.

MCNEIL
She's doing fine. The surgery went well.

MARYBETH
Thank you, Dr. McNeil.

MCNEIL
You're welcome.

Marybeth fights to hold back tears. There is an understanding between McNeil and Marybeth - the reason why Melissa is here in the first place.

MCNEIL (CONT)
Mrs. Langley - you can't let this continue.

MARYBETH
... I know.

OFF Marybeth as the tears begin to flow.

CUT TO:

INT. NURSE'S STATION - DAY

Pamela White stands at the counter. She's in mid conversation with a Nurse.

PAMELA
... he seems kind of young to be a doctor.

NURSE#1

Dr. Kronk's been practicing for years.

PAMELA

Really? I'm surprised. He has such poor bedside manner.

NURSE#1

(surprised)

What do you mean?

PAMELA

Well, I feel like he rushed us - like we were in and out of here before we even knew what happened. He was insensitive to me as a mother and now my baby's fighting for her life.

The Nurse takes a moment before

NURSE#1

Dr. Kronk is a fine doctor and from what I understand, your daughter's condition has stabilized.

PAMELA

(sardonic)

Well, it didn't have to be like this.

Good point. The Nurse doesn't want a confrontation.

MARISELA (OC)

Is everything alright?

Marisela enters frame. Her concern stems from the look on Pamela's face.

PAMELA

No.

MARISELA

What's wrong?

PAMELA

Dr. Kronk's incompetent.

MARISELA

Pam, I know he's doing everything he can. Anna's health is his main concern.

Pamela is not convinced.

PAMELA

I don't trust him.

Marisela studies her. Pamela avoids her gaze. She then looks over Marisela's shoulder. Marisela turns around to

KRONK

(firm)

Mrs. White, I need to speak with you in private.

Pamela looks to Marisela and the Nurse as if to convey her suspicions that Dr. Billy Kronk is the true culprit in this hospital. Pamela eyes the women - looks for their approval before she joins Kronk. Marisela and the Nurse keep their eyes trained on Pamela.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE I.C.U. - DAY

Kronk and Pamela face the obvious.

KRONK

Why didn't you tell me Anna was admitted into County two months ago?

Pamela is speechless.

KRONK (CONT)

Mrs. White, it's very hard for me to do my job when I don't have all of the facts. (off her blank look) Now is there anything else I should know?

PAMELA

I love my baby. I would never do anything to jeopardize her. I told you everything.

Kronk is baffled but his suspicions run deep. He stares at Pamela.

PAMELA (CONT)

I don't know what you want from me,
doctor.

KRONK

The truth.

One last look before Kronk heads into I.C.U. Off Pamela's
dubious look.

INT. ANTHONY BRIGHTON'S ROOM - DAY

Anthony lies supine as a Nurse gently wraps a blood pressure
monitor on his arm. The Nurse pumps - takes his blood
pressure. She looks at her watch - looks at the gauge - back
to the watch - then the gauge. Her look is disbelieving
because at this moment the numbers tell all and what they
reveal is

the STEADY HUMMING SOUND of FLATLINE. As we WHIP to the
screaming cardiac monitor, the Nurse rushes out of the room
and

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE ANTHONY BRIGHTON'S ROOM - DAY

where she

NURSE#1

(shouts)

I have a Code 3! I need some help!

OFF her urgent look, we:

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. O.R. - DAY

The overhead lights cast its blinding rays onto Anthony
Brighton, Shutt and members of the trauma team. This is a
life or death crisis, and Shutt tries everything he can to
keep this kid alive.

ON SHUTT who rubs the paddles together and SHOCKS Anthony.
He looks to the monitor - FLATLINE. Shutt is frustrated -
this is not his first attempt with the joules.

NURSE#2

No response.

SHUTT
(sotto)
Anthony, you have to help me out
here. I need you to fight.

C.U. ANTHONY who's begun to bleed from the ears and mouth.

SHUTT (OC)
He's hemorrhaging!

This is a hopeless situation and Shutt knows it - but he's not about to give up. Shutt barks an order and a menacing looking needle is handed to him from a Nurse. As Shutt sinks this needle into Anthony's head we

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. O.R. - DAY

We're close on a monitor - FLATLINE - but this one's for Gregory Ridgeway whose condition is as grave as Anthony's.

Watters looks on as Austin finishes an incision to Gregory's chest.

AUSTIN
Spreaders.

A Nurse hands her the tools to spread the ribs. Austin breaks the ribs wide open. We HEAR CRACKING SOUNDS from within.

Watters doesn't waste time as he reaches into Gregory's cavity and physically massages his heart. All eyes are on the monitor.

WATTERS
C'mon, Greg. Hold on.

Watters massages more aggressively. The end result is the same - FLATLINE. Watters has code and Austin wants him to call it.

AUSTIN
Phillip.

Watters is determined even though his efforts are futile. Exhaustion starts to set in. The pace slows.

AUSTIN (CONT)
(pleads)
Phillip.

Watters stops. His scrubs are soaked with his best friend's blood and all he can do is stare at his own hands - unable to save Gregory's life.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE O.R. - DAY

An emotionally strained Shutt emerges. He rips off his mask - leans against a wall - fatigued from his efforts. McNeil enters frame - crosses toward him.

McNeil already has his answer by the look on Shutt's face.

SHUTT

I did everthing I could. The
haematoma reoccurred, and I
couldn't relieve the pressure in
time. (beat) I'm sorry, Jack.

McNeil is at a loss for words - devastated by the news.

CUT TO:

INT. NURSE'S STATION - DAY

Grad flips through a chart when Kronk intercepts.

KRONK

Do you have a second? This is
important.

GRAD

What's wrong.

KRONK

You remember Anna. The baby
admitted for apnia? (off her look)
Well she appears to be perfectly
healthy even though the mother
claims she's sick. I put her
through all of the tests and
nothing.

GRAD

Have you checked her history?

KRONK

Oh yeah. She has a track record
across town. Admitted for the same
symptoms seven times in the last
year. And every time she was
discharged without incident.

GRAD

How old is she again?

KRONK

Fourteen months.

Grad is clued in.

GRAD

Tell me a little about the mother.

KRONK

She seems to be very concerned
about her child's health but every
time she's around Anna, something
goes wrong.

Grad absorbs what she hears - formulates her own opinion.

GRAD

Blood in diaper. Seizures. Apnia.
Rashes. Fevers. Abnormal urine.

Kronk is impressed.

KRONK

How'd you know?

GRAD

Have you thought of Munchausen By
Proxy Syndrome?

KRONK

No but (then;realizing) I think
you're onto something.

Kronk kisses her then exits.

CUT TO:

INT. MELISSA LANGLEY'S ROOM - DAY

Marybeth watches as Melissa awakes from her slumber state. Melissa is out of it and even though she is pumped with drugs, the pain starts to take effect. The tears begin to flow. It's too unbearable to watch. Marybeth comforts and reassures her daughter before she slowly stands and

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE MELISSA LANGLEY'S ROOM - DAY

where Marybeth walks down the hall with her arms crossed in front of her chest. She's on a mission.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

We move with Kronk as he makes his way toward Anna's room. Marisela intercepts.

MARISELA
Hey, Billy.

Kronk ignores her - fixed on his destination.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Another part of the hospital. Marybeth Langley is rigid - continues with her methodical pace - in a world of her own - oblivious to the Nurses, Patients and Orderlies who almost collide with her.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE I.C.U. - DAY

Kronk opens the door and enters

INT. I.C.U. - DAY

where Pamela White stands in front of the IV with a syringe in her hand. She swiftly closes off the IV valve - about to inject RUBBING ALCOHOL from the syringe when

KRONK (OC)
What the hell...

Pamela turns - the syringe faces outward - a possible weapon. Kronk coaxes her to

KRONK (CONT)

Please drop it, Mrs. White. I'm not going to hurt you.

Pamela starts to shake. The room becomes a whirlwind. She doesn't seem to hear Kronk's request.

KRONK (CONT)

You need help, Mrs. White. We're going to get you help.

The shaking becomes uncontrollable, and she suddenly drops to her knees. The syringe hits the floor.

PAMELA

I never meant to hurt my Anna.

As Kronk approaches

KRONK

I know, Mrs. White. I know.

Kronk quickly inspects the IV and baby Anna. He glances downward at a fragile Pamela White.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE GARY LANGLEY'S ROOM - DAY

Marybeth peers through the glass. Her husband Gary is awake. Marybeth enters

INT. GARY LANGLEY'S ROOM - DAY

where she slowly approaches the foot of the bed.

ANGLE ON Gary Langley who is pleased to see his wife. He cracks an apologetic smile - his eyes plead for forgiveness. Suddenly his expression changes - he's terror stricken. We

WHIP back to Marybeth Langley who points a gun at her husband. Marybeth seeks vengeance and without hesitation pulls the trigger.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Somewhere in the hospital another GUNSHOT SOUND is heard from Marybeth's second bullet. It echoes loudly throughout. Staff and visitors are startled by the apparent noise. Some fear the worst.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CHICAGO HOPE - NIGHT

Kronk and Grad look on as Pamela White is assisted by an officer into the back seat of a squad car. Pamela White turns and shoots a look toward Kronk through the car window. The car lurches forward, and she disappears.

KRONK

Munchausen By Proxy Syndrome. Just the sound of it gives me the chills.

GRAD

I know what you mean. Munchausen is one of those rare medical mysteries we still don't have all of the answers to.

KRONK

How could a mother inflict pain onto her own child just to create a bond with doctors and nurses so that she can satisfy her own sick need for affection and understanding?

GRAD

I don't know but let's be thankful Anna's one of the lucky ones who survived.

Kronk couldn't agreemore.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE E.R. - NIGHT

Two police officers escort a handcuffed Marybeth Langley toward the exit doors. Marybeth shows no remorse as we

CUT TO:

EXT. WATTERS' BALCONY- NIGHT

Watters looks out at the skyline. It's been a hellish day. Austin approaches from behind. She takes a moment before

AUSTIN

I am so sorry, Phillip.

WATTERS
 (beat;sotto)
 He had a ten year old son. I'm the
 godfather.

Austin stands next to him.

Another beat.

WATTERS (CONT)
 Life. Such a simple word but yet...
 it encompasses so much.

Austin listens intently.

WATTERS (CONT)
 We're doctors. We save lives.
 Sometimes we do everything we can
 and when we face death, we're
 forced to accept and understand
 that death is a part of life.
 (beat;faces her) That is sometimes
 hard to do, Kate.

OFF Austin's understanding look, we:

FADE OUT:

THE END