"ONLY HUMAN"

Pilot Episode

by

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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. PERU - HUASCARAN SUR - DAY

The PERUVIAN ANDES shine in the sunlight, their beauty sculpted over hundreds of thousands of years. As we fly closer to one of the jagged peaks, two CLIMBERS can be seen, separated by thirty feet.

In the lead is GARY (29), in water proof pants, a down jacket, with a small BACK PACK. A climbing HARNESS is tightened around him with leg loops for a CLIMBING ROPE. He has two ICE AXES, one in each hand. He looks like a very cold Spider Man inching upwards.

Gary's face is pure concentration as he expertly traverses a treacherous section of the mountain face. He bangs an ICE SCREW into a crack in the frozen snow, sliding his ROPE through it for safety.

He wields his axe into the rock. As he pulls on it for leverage it comes loose, slipping out of Gary's hand. He steadies himself, turning to watch the axe disappear below.

The climber below him, a PERUVIAN GUIDE, watches the axe sail by as well, then checks the slack on the climbing rope that connects the two of them. He mutters to himself.

Gary looks up, ninety meters above him is the SUMMIT. He's so close now he can taste it. He swings his remaining axe into the ice, only to see it start to crack and splinter. The frozen crust starts to fall apart in front of him.

The Guide hugs the side of the mountain to avoid being hit by the falling ice and rock. But Gary has nothing to hug. He claws desperately at the ice. No luck. He falls. Sliding down the face... Twenty... Thirty feet... Ahead, a crevice drops down into god knows what.

Knowing what's coming, the Guide prepares to self-arrest, the rope between them uncoiling like a whirlpool.

Gary's feet desperately try to find purchase, the crampons skidding over the ice. He's twenty feet from the crevice when... The rope SNAPS taut.

Above him, the Guide is barely able to hold his ground, but he quickly fastens the rope around an ice stake.

No longer sliding, Gary is finally able to lodge his axe into the ridge and plant his feet. From above, the Guide calls...

GUIDE
(subtitled)
What happened? Are you okay?
Gary? Gary?

Wide-eyed and gasping, Gary's expression reflects the dawning awareness of his near death experience. And something else.

GARY
French fries with mint jelly.

GUIDE
(subtitled)
What? What did you say?

GARY
(a smile, yelling)
Mint jelly and french fries!

GUIDE
(English)
Are you okay?

GARY
I'm fine!
(to himself, simply)
I need to go home.

Safe now, we pull back, the two of them becoming mere dots in a stunning mountain vista.

INT. JORGE CHÁVEZ INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

Gary waits at the GATE as a TICKET AGENT looks at his PASSPORT. Out of climbing gear he's clearly very handsome. She hands back his passport along with his BOARDING PASS.

TICKET AGENT
Gary Lang. You're not one of those Lang kids from that reality show, are you?

GARY
That was a long time ago.

TICKET AGENT
Wow, you are. What were you doing in Peru?

GARY
Good question.

TICKET AGENT
I loved watching that. I had such a crush on you. And to be honest, on one of your brothers, too.

GARY
Jonathan.

We leave Gary with the ticket agent and CUT TO:

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - OPERATING ROOM - NIGHT

General Surgeon JONATHAN (29) is in mid surgery. He is being assisted by Resident Physician, MIKE ROBERTS (27). They are performing a LAPARASCOPIC CHOLECYSTECTOMY (gallbladder removal) on Jonathan's patient, VICTOR HALE (60), currently unconscious.

ON THE MONITOR: (Inside Victor's abdomen) We see Jonathan manipulating an ENDOSCOPIC GRASPER and SCISSORS. A SCRUB NURSE, an ANESTHESIOLOGIST, and TWO CIRCULATING NURSES are also present. Jonathan talks to the room.

JONATHAN
So Roberts is giving me a five foot cushion because I've been taking him to the hole all day.

ROBERTS
Listen to him. Trademark Jonathan Lang humility.

JONATHAN
I head fake like I'm driving, then I step back and float one from NBA three point land. Boom. Game.
(to Nurse)
Turn up the light.

ROBERTS
He's so proud of himself, first day playing on the Surgeon's team.

JONATHAN
You're just pissed because the Residents lost their best player: Me.
(to Scrub Nurse)
Endocatch bag.

Jonathan pulls out the endoscopic scissors and is handed a new tool by the scrub nurse. ON THE MONITOR: Jonathan pulls the gallbladder towards the abdominal wall.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Ladies and gentleman, Mr. Hale's gallbladder.

Jonathan pulls the gallbladder out through one of the abdominal wall openings and places it in a sterile bowl.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Make sure that gets to pathology. Let's check out his ducts.

Jonathan pushes a peddle on the floor. A SECOND MONITOR shows a fluoroscopic image of DIFFUSELY DILATED BILE DUCTS.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Hey, did you guys hear about the two cannibals who were eating a clown? One of 'em turns to the other and says, "Does he taste funny to you?"

The crowd laughs or groans.

ROBERTS
His CBD's at least a centimeter.

JONATHAN
Yeah, without gallstones. That's not good. Set me up for a common bile duct exploration.

The Scrub Nurse prepares the exploratory equipment. Just then ALARMS START TO BLARE.

ROBERTS
His pressure's plummeting. 70 systolic.

SCRUB NURSE
I don't see any bleeding.

JONATHAN
He's not. It's his rhythm.

So much for joking. Victor's heart monitor flashes red with a WIDE COMPLEX TACHYCARDIA. A CRASH CART is brought bedside.

ROBERTS
Looks like SVT with aberrancy.

JONATHAN
That's clearly Vtach, charge to 200.

ROBERTS
Should we try the adenosine first?

JONATHAN
No, he'll be in cardiac arrest by the time we realize I was right.

SCRUB NURSE
Pressure's down to 40. He's gonna code.

JONATHAN
I'm going. Everyone clear.

Jonathan peels back the sterile drape and places the paddles on Victors chest. WHAM! Victor jolts. An anxious beat... then Victor's monitor returns to normal and the alarms stop.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Okay folks, that's enough excitement. Forget the CBD exploration. Get him to the ICU on amiodarone and order a stat CT abdomen.

ROBERTS
That was scary.

JONATHAN
(staring at him)
You want to play for the surgeons one day? Don't talk like that.

OFF Jonathan, heading out.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - DAY

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER, DR. CAROLINE LANG (59) moves down the hallway. She's a part time clinician and runs the hospital with the authority of a woman with a distinguished career behind her. She has a penetrating intelligence and an inability to suffer fools.

Jonathan's leaving the scrub room and sees Dr. Lang coming at him. He stands his ground. Most people wouldn't.

CAROLINE
What were you thinking, taking his gallbladder out electively?

JONATHAN
If I didn't do something, he'd die.

CAROLINE
There was no evidence of cholecystitis.

JONATHAN
He's had right upper quadrant pains for months. Acute cholecystitis was right around the corner.

CAROLINE
Right around the corner is not an emergency. A head on collision is an emergency.

JONATHAN
He doesn't have insurance. He was seen at County Hospital twice for this. All they did was refer him to a clinic, where he was told to wait three months.

CAROLINE
You're a week out of your Residency. This is what you choose to do your first day on staff? Go after the health care system?

JONATHAN
I thought that was your life's work.

CAROLINE
It is, not a random patient I decided won the lottery. If I picked my battles the way you do, I'd lose the war overnight. Did I mention he was diabetic yet? His lawyers will. It predisposes him to a weakened heart.

JONATHAN
I got a cards consult. He was cleared for the OR.

CAROLINE
Save it for your deposition. Considering he almost arrested on the table, we're probably going to get sued.

JONATHAN
You know I found something, right? His biliary ducts are dilated and not from a stone.

CAROLINE
So what? You don't open someone up and win a prize if you find something.

JONATHAN
I saved his life! Forget it, I shouldn't even be working here. This whole thing was a mistake. I should just quit.

CAROLINE
The truth is I should fire you.

JONATHAN
Even better, I can collect unemployment. I knew it was going to be like this, Mom! I knew it! Honestly, how does Diana take it?

CAROLINE
Don't use your sister to win an argument.

JONATHAN
No wonder she's so crazy. She works for you.

Jonathan takes off, as we CUT TO:

INT. CLUB - DAY

CLOSE ON: DIANA (29) her lips gently kissing another's. We pull back to include her face, beautiful, and his, beautiful as well. The dull sound of techno music plays underneath.

DAVE, (23) pushes his body against hers. We see SUBWAY TILE behind them and a sink. Greater perspective shows we're in a public bathroom. A GIRL walks behind them to look in the mirror. As Diana and Dave continue to kiss, she reaches around to look at her watch.

DIANA
I've got to go.

DAVE
Wait, I'm coming, too. Diana!

Diana pushes open the bathroom door, entering a large DANCE FLOOR/BAR area. The music is loud now as she snakes her way through the CROWD. She escapes the throng into a HALLWAY... A DOUBLE DOOR with an EXIT SIGN overhead is at the far end. She rushes down the hall and bangs the metal doors open.

EXT. CLUB - DAY

Diana steps out into the morning SUN. CARS whiz by on their way to work. You've got to hand it to her, she looks lovely in the bright light of day. No trace of what was clearly a long night. She takes her CELL PHONE out and dials.

DIANA
Hi, it's me, anything up?... Add on a haptoglobin and a direct Coombs test. I'll be in soon.

She ends the call. Dave comes stumbling out, shielding his eyes from the sun. She looks at him with pity.

DIANA (CONT'D)
Lightweight, too bad my brother is taken. You two would be perfect for each other.

DAVE
I'm not gay, but you know, whatever.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Darkness. MICHAEL (29) opens the door to his apartment and flips on the light. He looks tired, but it's hard not to find his sleepy countenance attractive.

He puts his keys down and glances around. The place is RANSACKED, a LAMP is turned over, DRAWERS are open. Michael shakes his head, resigned to what happened. That's when he sees the envelope. His name is written on it: MICHAEL.

INT. INTERCARE FAMILY CLINIC - WAITING ROOM - DAY

The waiting room of a Free Clinic. MULTILINGUAL SIGNS hang on the wall. There's a desk where two CLERKS deal with the onslaught of PATIENTS, mostly working class poor or ethnic. A HOMELESS MAN reads a magazine. AN INFANT cries in her MOTHER'S arms. A YOUNG WOMAN, clearly schizophrenic talks to herself. Michael walks in and makes his way toward the back.

INT. INTERCARE FAMILY CLINIC - EXAMINING ROOMS - DAY

PATIENTS are being administered to in the overused exam/procedure rooms as well as out in the hallways. Michael's quickly handed a clip board by a NURSE.

NURSE
Dr. Lang, you've got a stomach flu, a dude with chronic back pain who wants a re-fill of his little blue pills, and that guy over there with a deep hand laceration.

Michael nods and heads over to ALBERTO, a burly Hispanic man to take a look at his hand.

MICHAEL
Hi, so what happened to you?

ALBERTO
I was stabbed.

MICHAEL
Right, of course. Stupid question.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Gary sits looking out his window, the fog outside reveals only his reflection. An announcement over the PA system interrupts his thoughts.

STEWARDESS(O.C.)
The Captain has turned on the fasten seat belt sign in preparation for landing. We should be on the ground in less than thirty minutes.

Off Gary, knowing he can't turn back now.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Gary walks through the concourse. Suddenly stumbles. He keeps walking, only to stumble again and then fall to the floor. He lies there unconscious as TRAVELERS stop to see what happened.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

A small, windowless locker room. Diana's taking a shower. The clothes she was wearing hang on a hook outside the stall door. Her DOP KIT with TOILETRIES sits on a window sill. She turns off the water and stands there a moment. SOMETHING IS BOTHERING HER... She can't quite figure out what it is.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - CAGE ROOM - DAY

Diana, wearing goggles, carefully uses a MICROPIPETTE to inject medication into a FOOD PELLET. There is a microscope and several flasks and test tubes nearby and an ELECTRONIC TABLET with a graph and lab data.

In the background are stacked cages with noisy MICE scurrying around. She moves over to one of the cages, where FOUR MICE are housed. They seem much more lethargic than the others. She's about to introduce the food pellets into the cage when GEOFFREY, (30) a good looking lab tech comes in.

GEOFFREY
(off the mice)
They don't look much better.

DIANA
You give up too easily.
(off some papers)
Take these CBC results to the lab.

Geoffrey has to move her dop kit to pick them up.

GEOFFREY
Were you working all night again?

DIANA
No. I went out for a drink.

It takes her a moment to realize he's clocked the dop kit.

DIANA (CONT'D)
The blood counts, Geoffrey.

Diana returns her attention to the mice.

INT. INTERCARE FAMILY CLINIC - EXAMINING ROOMS - DAY

Michael's irrigating on ALBERTO. An open shabby suture tray lies on a stand next to him. A crappy portable overhead LIGHT is aimed at the hand. Michael looks up to see Jonathan heading his way.

MICHAEL
Oh, no.

ALBERTO
Everything okay?

MICHAEL
With you? Yeah.

Alberto puts on some HEADPHONES and fiddles with his MP3 player. Jonathan's talking before he even gets there.

JONATHAN
Mom's impossible. You can't even have a conversation with her anymore, she threatened to fire me.

MICHAEL
What did you do?

JONATHAN
What did *I* do? Nothing. I saved a guy's life. *Twice,* when you think about it.

MICHAEL
Can you come back in like half an hour? I've got to close this.

JONATHAN
Half an hour? Are you crazy?

MICHAEL
It's deep. I need to do a two layered closure.

JONATHAN
A couple mattress sutures and his hand is good to go.

MICHAEL
You have to win at everything, don't you?

Jonathan opens cabinets looking for gloves and suture.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
You know you're not actually on staff here, right?

Jonathan finds the cabinet with suture and starts moving the boxes around, clearly not finding what he needs.

JONATHAN
Don't you have any chromic gut?

MICHAEL
Just nylon and vicryl.

Jonathan rolls his eyes. A fellow Doctor, MIRIAM BARTON, Hispanic (35) comes over and joins the conversation.

MIRIAM
What's he doing here, slumming it?

MICHAEL
Mom threatened to fire him.

MIRIAM
Why did you take a position at your mother's hospital anyway?

After putting on gloves, Jonathan places a sterile drape over the wound and starts to place sutures.

JONATHAN
Good question. Remember medical school? I was going to move to LA.

MIRIAM
You have an unnatural attachment to your family.

JONATHAN
This is why we never dated. She doesn't get us.

MIRIAM
(starting to go)
I'm glad we cleared that up.

JONATHAN
Don't you want to know what happened to me?

MIRIAM
No. Why don't you ask your brother how he's doing for a change?

JONATHAN
(to Michael)
How are you?

MIRIAM
Josh left and took everything he owned with him.
(MORE)

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
Michael came home after giving *flu* shots at a *homeless* shelter all night to find him gone.

Miriam gives Jonathan a “talk to him” look and takes off.

JONATHAN
I’m sorry.
(treading lightly)
Look, don’t get upset, I’m only *asking*, but... What were you doing at a homeless shelter all night?

MICHAEL
Giving flu --

JONATHAN
-- I know, I’m just suggesting maybe you should have been home. It’s hard to have a relationship with someone who’s not there.

MICHAEL
Oh my, God, if you’re taking his side --

JONATHAN
-- What happened to having kids? Last I heard you boys were dreaming of picket fences and --

MICHAEL
-- We’re too busy, that’s what happened! Why are gay men suddenly in such a rush to have children?

JONATHAN
You’re asking me? All I know is he wants a family, I get it.

MICHAEL
What are you *talking* about? You live alone. I really don’t think you’re in a position to lecture me about how or when I have a family.

ALBERTO
(taking off headphones)
Is everything okay, down there?

MICHAEL
We’re fine.

JONATHAN
Fine.

ALBERTO (CONT'D)
Good. Home boy ain't going to hear the end of this. And he got my right hand, too.

JONATHAN
Why don't you use your other one for a while? It'll feel like it's someone else doing it.

Michael looks at Jonathan: "Are you trying to get us killed?"

EXT. EASTON HOSPITAL - HELICOPTER PAD - DAY

LAWRENCE PETERSON, (50's) handsome and BRITISH, waits for a HELICOPTER to start up with Caroline.

CAROLINE
A three day maximal length of stay is mercenary, inhumane and I'm not doing it.

LAWRENCE
It's not your call to make. They're not suggesting this, Caroline, it's a mandate.

CAROLINE
You really expect me to throw out a double mastectomy, with the drains still in place, just because a damn insurance company wants them back home in three days?

LAWRENCE
They're our largest preferred provider. We simply can't afford to lose them.

CAROLINE
They're bluffing.

LAWRENCE
I can't take that chance.

The HELICOPTER starts to rev up.

CAROLINE
Was this how you got around in your previous job? What was your game again? Asset management?

LAWRENCE
I'm being flown at the expense of an old friend to talk philanthropy. My job is to raise money.

CAROLINE
Well, my job is to save lives. Tell Stemlife to go screw themselves. Or tell me. See who's bluffing now.

Lawrence takes her in, obviously he's got a problem.

LAWRENCE
Was there some issue with your son this morning?

CAROLINE
You mean Dr. Lang?

LAWRENCE
I heard things got a tad heated.

CAROLINE
It's a hospital. Get used to it.

LAWRENCE
Just checking. You seem a little hot headed today, that's all.

CAROLINE
I'm a woman. I've been called hot-headed my whole life.

Caroline sees the SKIS AND SKI BOOTS leaning beside Lawrence.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
Have fun skiing.

Caroline takes off. Lawrence more impressed than anything.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - BOARD ROOM - DAY

A CLINICAL CHIEFS MEETING. Diana comes in and goes straight for the coffee. Her cell phone rings. She takes it.

DIANA
Hello?...

INT. GENERAL HOSPITAL - ER - INTERCUT

Gary is gathering his things and talking on his cell.

GARY
Hi.

DIANA
Gary? Hi, where are you?

GARY
In town. At the hospital.

DIANA
You're in the hospital? Oh, my God! Are you downstairs?

GARY
No, not yours. General. I passed out getting off the plane.

DIANA
What plane? You have to slow down.

GARY
It's okay. They're releasing me now. I was probably dehydrated.

DIANA
I knew there was something wrong. This morning in the shower.

GARY
What are you talking about?

DIANA
I don't know, Quadrulepathy.
(off Caroling entering)
Does Mom know you're here, cause she's about to chair this meeting I'm in?

GARY
No, and don't tell her.

DIANA
Where were you planning on staying?

GARY
Well, the key's still under your flower pot, right...? I wanted this whole thing to be a surprise.

DIANA
Too bad you ended up in a hospital. Take a cab, I'll meet you there.

CAROLINE
Diana, can you get off the phone?

GARY
I heard that.

DIANA
I hope you’re ready for this.

GARY
Me, too.

Gary hangs up. He’s definitely back home.

INT. GENERAL HOSPITAL - DAY

Gary leans on the counter of the nurses’ station signing a AMA (Against Medical Advice) form. The ER DOC approaches.

ER DOC
Hear you're signing out AMA. I wish you'd reconsider. I’m serious. I need to run some tests.

GARY
I feel fine, really.

ER DOC
Paramedics said your blood pressure was dangerously low.

GARY
I heard. 73 over palp. Also said I was mottled and diaphoretic.

The ER Doc is taken aback by Gary’s knowledge.

ER DOC
Are you a doctor?

GARY
No. But I've got four of 'em just like you waiting for me at home.

Gary shoots the Doc a smile and heads out.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. JONATHAN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Stylish, mid Century furniture. JENNIFER, (28) Asian, plays a violin... beautiful classical music. So is she, beautiful.

INT. JONATHAN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Jonathan lies in bed in boxers. Jennifer quietly comes in to get her VIOLIN CASE. As she gets close, Jonathan pulls her onto the bed with him. It's immediately playful and sexy.

JENNIFER
You were up all night. I thought you wanted to take a nap.

JONATHAN
I can't sleep.

Jonathan starts kissing her, running his hand down her leg.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Did you know the upper leg has the longest bone in the human body.

JENNIFER
Are you trying to talk dirty to me? I have to go home and change.

JONATHAN
It has a rounded head where it articulates with the pelvic acetabulum, forming the hip joint.

JENNIFER
The fact that you're turning me on right now scares me.

Jonathan's cell dings. He ignores it. It dings again.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
Maybe it's your mother apologizing.

JONATHAN
She doesn't text. Or apologize.

Multitasking, he reaches over, grabs his phone. Jonathan looks at the text, then at her.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
It's from Diana. Gary's home.

Jennifer takes a moment and measures her words carefully.

JENNIFER
A heads up would have been nice.

INT. DIANA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Gary's at the counter dicing vegetables like a professional chef, which he is. He senses someone behind him. He puts the knife down and turns. Diana stands there looking at him.

GARY
Don't I get a hug?

DIANA
Not until I find out what's going on. What are you doing here?

GARY
(keeping it uncomplicated)
Can't I come home for Mom's birthday?

DIANA
You didn't for the last two. What did they tell you at the hospital?

GARY
Not much, I left before they had a chance to. This is between us, okay, I don't want anyone to worry.

DIANA
We have to find out what happened.

GARY
Don't overreact. My blood pressure dropped.

DIANA
Must have dropped like a rock. Were you unconscious?

GARY
For a little while. I'm okay. It was just some weird thing.

DIANA
I still think we should run some tests.

GARY
Fine... Okay.

DIANA
Is that all you have to say?

GARY
No... I missed you the most.

Diana goes over and hugs him, warmly. She notices the food.

DIANA
Did you go shopping?

GARY
What was I going to make for lunch?
Stale cereal?

DIANA

No, you're right. Save that for dinner.
(off his smile)
You sure there's nothing more than Mom's birthday that got you home?

GARY
Okay... Don't tell Mom, but... I really just wanted to see you.

She shoves him playfully, which leads to another hug.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - RADIOLOGY SUITE - DAY

A RADIOLOGIST works in front of multiple monitors. Jonathan sits nearby. The radiologist types "Victor Hale" onto the screen. As the ABDOMINAL CT loads, A CT image pops up.

RADIOLOGIST
Pronounced intra and extra hepatic duct dilatation. CBD measures 1.4.

The radiologist hits a button and the image zooms in --

RADIOLOGIST (CONT'D)
...And a 3x2 centimeter spiculated pancreatic head mass.

JONATHAN
What I expected.

RADIOLOGIST
This is why I chose radiology. I don't have to tell him Pancreatic cancer only has a six percent five-year survival rate.

JONATHAN
That's if it's caught late. Make sure you CC your report to Dr. Lang, would you? She needs to see this right away.

INT. DIANA'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Michael has joined Diana and Gary for lunch.

GARY
What *is* the plan for Mom's birthday?

MICHAEL
I suggested a spa day.

DIANA
A spa day? Like she would ever do that. I told her we'd take her out to dinner. She wasn't interested.

GARY
I'm here, so we're doing something.

DIANA
(off Michael)
I don't know why you don't get fat, you eat like a pig.

MICHAEL
I'm gay. Anyway, I don't normally eat this much. This is grief masticating.

DIANA
He really just packed up and left? I hate men.

MICHAEL
That explains why you don't stay with one for more than five days.

GARY
I thought you and Josh were going to have kids by the time I got back.

MICHAEL
Can we change the subject? How's your restaurant going? The website makes it look very remote.

DIANA
It’s in the Peruvian jungle.

GARY
The town’s very nice.

MICHAEL
Why didn’t you let one of us pick you up at the airport?

DIANA
Someone else picked him up.

GARY
(with a look to Diana)
I took a cab.
(changing the subject)
Does Jonathan know I’m here?

A quick look crosses between Michael and Diana.

DIANA
I texted him.

MICHAEL
Oh, my God, I forgot to tell you guys, Mom threatened to fire him.

DIANA
What did he do?

MICHAEL
I don’t know, your guess is as good as mine.

GARY
(getting up)
Classic. Text him again. I want to see him. Another beer?

Michael and Diana shake their heads no. Once he’s gone they talk quickly and quietly.

MICHAEL
He doesn’t know, does he?

DIANA
No. I mean, I didn’t tell him. Did you?

MICHAEL
No, are you crazy? This is Jonathan's problem, not ours.

GARY
(coming back with a beer)
Tell me some more Jonathan stories.

MICHAEL
God, you know what, I've got to get back to work.

DIANA
Me, too.

GARY
Nothing's changed, though, right? I mean, he's the same dude, right?

Diana and Michael exchange another quick look.

MICHAEL
You know what... maybe you should talk to him about that.

INT. INTERCARE FAMILY CLINIC - FRONT DESK

Michael's signing paperwork, walking and talking with Miriam.

MIRIAM
I can't believe Jonathan hasn't told him. Your family's crazy.

MICHAEL
We were a reality show, remember?

They split off and Michael runs into NANCY HUGHES, African American (40's), anxiously waiting for him.

NANCY
I'm sorry I just came in. Ethan won't go to school. He's been off his meds for two weeks --

MICHAEL
-- Okay, calm down, he's done this before, and we got through it.

NANCY
He says he won't see you. I get so scared when he gets like this. I keep thinking there's more I can do. I love him so much.

MICHAEL
I'll talk to him. I'll come over to your place at four. Okay?

Nancy just nods, so grateful, she can't even talk.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - PATHOLOGY LAB - DIANA'S OFFICE - DAY

There's an old but comfortable SOFA. BOOKS are stacked up everywhere. She's on her COMPUTER, when Geoffrey walks in.

GEOFFREY
I think you should see this.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - CAGE ROOM - DAY

The four mice run around their cage like pre-school kids. Diana stands next to Geoffrey, staring at them excitedly.

DIANA
I told you to have faith. Get new blood samples and recheck a protein electrophoresis. We need to see if the genes are actually working.

We hold on her, this is clearly a huge moment for her.

EXT. PARK - BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Gary shoots hoops on the black top. He turns to see Jonathan pull up in his CAR and get out. Jonathan takes in the park.

JONATHAN
I haven't been here since you left.

GARY
I thought you might want to let off some steam. Heard your first day in the OR was a little rough.

Gary tosses him the ball. A game of one-on-one starts.

JONATHAN
Well, Mom's about to eat some crow. You positive you don't want to tell her you're here till tomorrow? I could use the pick.

GARY
It'll be a bigger surprise.

JONATHAN
No one likes surprises, you know.
(takes a shot, scores)
Be forewarned, I play point guard on the Surgeon's team now. It could have been you in the OR. You scored better than all of us on the MCAT's.

GARY
Tests are easy. I have a photographic memory.

JONATHAN
No, you don't. It's a myth.

GARY
I remember everything, let's put it that way.

Gary shoots and scores. Jonathan takes the ball, dribbles.

JONATHAN
So, how was life in the wild? Did you meet any Peruvian Princesses down there or what?

GARY
It was a little bit more monastic than that.

JONATHAN
I could never do monk.

GARY
That's your problem. You have impulse control issues.

JONATHAN
You sound like Michael.

GARY
You guys see Jennifer at all?

That caught Jonathan in the middle of a shot, which he MISSES. Gary takes the rebound and dribbles in place.

JONATHAN
How long are you here for?

GARY
I don't know. I'm feeling like it's time for a change.

Gary goes to the net. Jonathan doesn't even contest him.

GARY (CONT'D)
You're getting slow, old man.

JONATHAN
So, what's next? China?

GARY
Thinking of coming home. Seeing what's going on at my old restaurant, find an apartment...

JONATHAN
I've been seeing Jennifer.

There, it came out, it had to. Gary turns to pick up the ball: We can see how sucker punched he is. Hiding his reaction again, he turns back to Jonathan.

GARY
Really? For how long?

JONATHAN
For a while. It's pretty serious. You left, okay. You went off the grid. You didn't even have internet half the time, your phone didn't work. I'm not going to apologize for --

GARY
-- No one's asking you to. I'm happy for you guys. Seriously.
(tosses the ball back)
You want to play?

Jonathan's not sure how to take this, but he'd certainly rather play than talk about it.

EXT. NANCY HUGHES'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Public Housing. Michael heads toward the building when he sees a few PEOPLE looking up at the roof. He does as well.

Standing at the edge is ETHAN (17). It definitely looks like he's about to jump. Ethan looks down at Michael. As their eyes meet we...

FADE OUT.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. NANCY HUGHES'S APARTMENT BUILDING - ROOF - DAY

Michael pushes the metal door open and steps onto the roof. He stays a good distance from Ethan and talks very calmly.

MICHAEL
Where's your Mom?

Michael takes a small step forward - Ethan clocks it.

ETHAN
Don't! Neither of you have any idea what I feel like.

MICHAEL
We can always change up the meds. That was always part of the deal.

ETHAN
I hate pretending. This is who I am right now. Standing here.

MICHAEL
No, it's not. It's your disease.

ETHAN
STOP TALKING!! YOU'RE AN IDIOT!!

It's gotten much more dangerous. Ethan takes a step closer to the edge. There is no room for error now...

MICHAEL
I thought about ending it all myself once.

Ethan looks at him. A start...

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
They did this reality show on my family and I stupidly came out on TV. At fifteen. Everyone at school was horrible to me.

ETHAN
Why did they do a reality show?

MICHAEL
We were the first quadruplets born from IVF in America.

ETHAN
What's IVF?

MICHAEL
In vitro fertilization. My parents really wanted kids... You know how much she loves you, right?
(then)
Where is she?

ETHAN
She went to get a pizza. I told her I wanted to talk to you alone.

MICHAEL
She's probably going to stop on the way home and get you one of those frappuccinos, even though you drink way too many of those things.

Ethan doesn't answer. He just looks down from his ledge.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - CAROLINE'S OFFICE - DAY

Caroline and DR. JAMES POTTER, Easton's Chief of Surgery, are already seated as Jonathan enters the room.

DR. POTTER
Thanks for coming. As with any hospital based adverse event, there is a mandated debriefing to assess the risk to the medical center.

JONATHAN
The guy didn't code.

CAROLINE
The patient was in sustained unstable tachycardia with severe hypotension... that's close enough.

DR. POTTER
Was he warned of a possible cardiac event prior to surgery?

JONATHAN
Not specifically, but he did sign all of the appropriate preop consents. Plus, he was cleared by Dr. Kedan from cardiology.
(re: Caroline)
I already told her all this.

DR. POTTER
Dr. Kedan's report states "moderate surgical risk, preop stress test may be indicated." Did he get a stress test?

JONATHAN
The cardiac lab was booked for at least two days. He's not going to sue, I found cancer for God's sake.

CAROLINE
It was unrelated to the operation.

JONATHAN
It's still Pancreatic cancer and it still would've killed him.

CAROLINE
(beat)
Dr. Potter's taking over. The patient's going to need a Whipple procedure. Potter is the most experienced surgeon I have. You've never done a Whipple procedure, correct?

JONATHAN
I assisted with two in residency. I am perfectly capable of --

Dr. Potter is looking very uncomfortable.

DR. POTTER
If you'll excuse me, I'll go check the OR schedule.

Jonathan waits for Dr. Potter to leave...

JONATHAN
Let me do this operation. You've always been afraid I'm going to fail. I'm not.

CAROLINE
As a matter of fact, I've *never* seen you fail. You had to be first, since you were a boy. You were even first out of the womb. What I'm *afraid* of is how much you need to win. Potter's doing the operation.

Jonathan seems a bit taken off guard. Some of that hit home.

EXT. NANCY HUGHES'S APARTMENT BUILDING - ROOF - DAY

Ethan's sitting now, his legs dangling over the edge. Michael's where he was, sitting as well, cross legged.

MICHAEL
What about all the things you never did that you said you wanted to? Like go to Africa.

ETHAN
I don't give a crap about Africa.

MICHAEL
What about having sex?

That got his attention.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Remember last year, you ended up staying in bed all day, you didn't talk to anyone... We changed your meds and a couple of weeks later you were back at school playing soccer again. We just got to get the meds right.

ETHAN
You keep saying that.

MICHAEL
And I'll keep saying it till we do. There's always new stuff coming down the pike... You're too young, Ethan. This feeling right now, it's not forever. I swear. Please. Let me help you get better.

Ethan stands. Alarmed, Michael does too. But Ethan turns away from the edge and walks toward him.

ETHAN
Maybe Mom's back with the pizza. I'm hungry.

Ethan keeps going down the stairs, Michael lets out a breath.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - VICTOR'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jonathan comes in, Victor smiles when he sees him. Sitting in a chair next to his bed is his daughter, VALERIE (30's).

VICTOR
I was just raving to my daughter about you. She's having a big church wedding soon. I told her you're the reason I'll be walking her down the aisle.

JONATHAN
Nice to meet you. Congratulations.

VALERIE
Thank you for what you did.

JONATHAN
Sure. The thing is, Victor... I'm not going to be doing your second surgery. You're in good hands though. The hospital's leading GI surgeon is taking over your case.

VICTOR
How come?

JONATHAN
It's a complicated procedure. I only scrubbed into two and that was as a junior resident to assist.

VICTOR
You're the one who found my tumor. Anyone else would have sent me on my way. I want the guy who cares.

JONATHAN
I know but...

Jonathan takes a moment, before deciding to tell the truth.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
I didn't admit you to my service because I was concerned about your health. I operated because it was my first day on staff and I didn't want to go home without a win. I didn't do it for you. I did it for me. The truth is, a more prudent doctor wouldn't have rushed you to the OR. My mother's right, it was reckless.

VICTOR
Your mother? Who's your mother?

JONATHAN
She runs the hospital.

VICTOR
You're kidding me?

JONATHAN
No.

VICTOR
Screw that. We're *all* in it for ourselves. Don't I get to pick which doctor I use?

JONATHAN
Pretty much. That's the protocol.

VALERIE
Wait, Dad --

VICTOR
-- You don't have any doubt you can do this, right?

JONATHAN
The operation?
(beat)
No.

VICTOR
Then you're doing it. For me. I want to stay alive, that's all I care about. I don't like changing horses in midstream.

Valerie looks on, not as excited as her father at this prospect.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Jonathan's walking away as Valerie catches up to him.

VALERIE
Why are you letting him take charge like this?

JONATHAN
Attitude can play a huge part. If it makes him feel better that I'm --

VALERIE
-- With all due respect, shouldn't he just have the better surgeon?

JONATHAN
I wouldn't do it unless I was one hundred percent sure I could.

VALERIE
My mother died. He's all I have. Don't use him to prove a point.

Valerie walks away as Jonathan takes this in.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - PATHOLOGY LAB - DIANA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Diana's at her computer, as Michael lies on the old sofa. A bottle of BOURBON'S out; they're drinking from DIXIE CUPS.

MICHAEL
Do you think I should call Josh?

DIANA
No, there are plenty of men out there.

MICHAEL
That would be your theory. How is it, after all is said and done, the only one of us who's not alone is Jonathan?

Jonathan's walking in, having heard that. He goes straight to the Bourbon and pours some for himself.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Speak of the devil.

JONATHAN
Gary's fine, by the way. I saw him. He didn't seem at all upset about it.
(off their looks)
Stop looking at me like that. I'm telling you, he's fine.

Jonathan downs his Dixie cup of Bourbon.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

A neighborhood dive. Gary's got a beer and is playing darts by himself when MOLLY, (20's) a very hot woman, notices him. She walks over, leaning provocatively against the wall.

MOLLY
Hey.

Gary turns... One look is all it takes. He's interested.

GARY
Hey. Gary.

MOLLY
Wow. You don't remember me.

GARY
You'd think I would.

MOLLY
Rome, a few years ago.

GARY
Rome was kind of a blur.

MOLLY
I bet. You were quite the ladies man.
(moving closer)
But you never found time for me, did you?

GARY
My bad.

She keeps looking at him with some very intense bedroom eyes.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - PATHOLOGY LAB - DIANA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

They're still hanging out, drinking.

DIANA
He didn't seem at all strange?

JONATHAN
He seemed like his old self.

MICHAEL
Who won the game?

JONATHAN
What do you care?
(beat)
He did.

DIANA
Really? That's good.

JONATHAN
Why is that good?

DIANA
I'm glad he's still in shape, that's all.

JONATHAN
(getting up)
I'm going home. I might have a big day tomorrow.

MICHAEL
Wait, how are you and Mom?

JONATHAN
I don't know. I could have her on a technicality.

DIANA
I thought she was the one with the rule book.

JONATHAN
We'll see.
(off Diana)
Get some sleep. You look tired.

As Jonathan leaves, Diana looks up from her computer.

MICHAEL
You kind of do, you know.

DIANA
Can I tell you something, if you promise not to get too excited?

MICHAEL
You've slept with a woman?

DIANA
Not yet. But the mice are doing better.

Michael looks up at her...

MICHAEL
How much better?

DIANA
They're very much alive.
(off his neutral look)
Come on, isn't that amazing?

MICHAEL
You told me not to get excited.

DIANA
Okay, but you can be impressed.

MICHAEL
I am... You have no idea.

They smile at each other....

INT. MOLLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Gary and Molly are going at it. She pulls his T-shirt off as he pulls her pants down. In only panties and a bra, she kisses his neck and chest, making her way down to his belt buckle. He moans with pleasure. She pulls his pants down and straddles him.

It gets more intense until suddenly she stops. She stands up, pulling her pants on. Gary is left lying there, totally confused and bewildered.

MOLLY
Now it's your turn.

GARY
For what?

MOLLY
To feel like an ass. You slept with me - *twice*. It meant a lot to me. You didn't even *remember*.

GARY
I'm sorry. If it means anything, I was kind of on the rebound.

MOLLY
Nothing you say means anything. Why are men so full of crap?

Gary pulls his pants on. He stops dressing to look at her.

GARY
I can't speak for all men but... My father died of a rare genetic condition: Oculopharyngeal Muscular Dystrophy. It's incurable. All of us could have it. Me, my sister, brothers. He was adopted, so it's not like he could have known but --

MOLLY
-- Are you high or something?

GARY
No, sober. For now. When I was in Rome, I had just left a woman I loved very much and was drunk half the time. I wasn't a very good bet for a relationship.
(finding his T-shirt)
We were like six when he died. I think it's made us all a little skittish in our own way. It attacks in your late forties or fifties, but still...

Molly just starts to laugh.

GARY (CONT'D)
I know... It seems like a long time from now, doesn't it?

Gary pulls his shirt on. He suddenly feels dizzy. He takes a moment to right himself and then sits on the bed again.

GARY (CONT'D)
I understand this isn't exactly part of your plan, but do you mind if I sit here a minute? I already fainted once today.

Molly's starting to believe him.

FADE OUT.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. JONATHAN'S HOUSE - GARAGE - DAY

Jonathan is doing a T'ai chi Ch'uan routine. His body moves through the positions with precision and grace.

INT. DIANA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Gary, in sweats and a T-shirt, is waking up on the sofa. He sits up and gets his bearings.

GARY
Diana? Diana?

INT. DIANA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Gary knocks lightly on the door and then pushes it open. The room is empty. Books are everywhere, Graphs and CHARTS hang on the wall. It's more like her office at work than a bedroom. He spots a PHOTOGRAPH tacked to the wall.

INSERT: A beautiful summer day. The four quads as teenagers in swimsuits stand in a quarry/swimming hole, smiling at the camera. One of them holds a clapboard used for making television shows. In the space for the title of the show, someone has written ONLY HUMAN.

Close on Gary looking at the photograph as we cut to:

EXT. ROCK QUARRY - REALITY SHOW - FLASHBACK

That same SUMMER DAY. Four teenagers are lined up at the edge of a cliff. A POOL of water lies thirty feet below.

YOUNG MICHAEL
No, I'm not.

YOUNG JONATHAN
Then you're a wuss.

YOUNG DIANA
We have to all do it together.

YOUNG GARY
Screw it, I'm just going.

Gary jumps, Jonathan and Diana next; not Michael, too scared.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Michael's awake in bed, looking around at a much more empty room. He hasn't woken up alone in a while.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - CAGE ROOM - DAY

Diana's watching her four mice running around their cage, seemingly perfectly healthy. She makes one more notation in a CHART and then picks up her dop kit and a towel and heads off to the locker room. It was another all-nighter.

INT. JONATHAN'S HOUSE - GARAGE - DAY

Jonathan's finishing his exercises. He holds his arms out, looking at his hands: Steady as ever.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - PSYCHIATRIC WARD - DAY

Michael comes in. Ethan's in bed with a video game.

MICHAEL
Who's winning?

ETHAN
Al-Qaeda. My drone just got shot down. How long am I here for?

MICHAEL
Seventy-two hours.

ETHAN
You're kidding? This is your idea of being a friend?

MICHAEL
You don't want me to be your friend. You want me to be your doctor. I'm much better at that, anyway. But you have to trust me.

ETHAN
I'm seventeen. I don't want to take meds for the rest of my life.

MICHAEL
It’s a lot, I know, but, Ethan, your disease is treatable. Not everyone is that lucky.

Ethan turns away because he’s starting to cry. Michael takes his hand and holds it.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - CAROLINE’S OFFICE - DAY

Caroline’s at her desk, when Jonathan walks in.

JONATHAN
Good morning.
(steels himself)
I’m doing the surgery. That’s what Victor wants. That’s his name, by the way, the patient, Victor Hale. And you know it’s hospital policy to honor the patient’s wishes whenever possible. I know you consider me relentlessly ambitious, but hell, that’s just what gets me out of bed in the morning. What I do the rest of the day is the best I can. And I believe in myself. I don’t consider it a crime. Neither do you. Look in the mirror.
(off her silence)
Don’t you have anything to say?

CAROLINE
There is little or no margin of error in this kind of surgery.

JONATHAN
I’m going to take that as a “yes, go do the operation, good luck and have a nice day.”
(remembering)
Oh, and happy birthday.

CAROLINE
Thank you.

Jonathan looks at her for a moment and then turns to leave.

EXT. CONCERT HALL - DAY

Gary’s standing across the street watching, as Jennifer leaves the theater with two other MUSICIANS.

When she sees him, she stops in her tracks. They look at each other from this distance for a moment before she says goodbye to her friends and crosses the street.

JENNIFER
Do you ever think of calling first?

GARY
You changed your cell phone number.

JENNIFER
I switched providers.

GARY
So? You can still keep your number even if you --

JENNIFER
-- I really don't think my phone number is the problem, do you?

GARY
No.

They can't help but smile at each other. You get the sense they want to hug, but don't. He looks at her violin case.

GARY (CONT'D)
You got the gig. Congratulations.

JENNIFER
Second violinist. Third chair. Your Mom thinks I should be first violinist, of course.

GARY
That goes without saying... I miss listening to you practice. Two years is a long time not to hear you play.

JENNIFER
You're the one who left.

GARY
I asked you to come.

JENNIFER
To a rain forest? In what world was that going to happen?

GARY
We did some crazy things together.

JENNIFER
Not that crazy.
(then)
You saw Jonathan. You must think I'm like Meredith -- What was her name again?

GARY
Meredith Banks?

JENNIFER
Yeah, the girl who was obsessed with you guys in high school. That's not me. I changed, that's all. I grew up... Which is something you and I were never going to do as long as we were together.

GARY
I just came to say it's okay. I'm glad to see you're doing so well.

Much like Jonathan she's not sure if she believes him.

JENNIFER
Are you going to stay?

GARY
When's your next concert?

JENNIFER
Saturday.

GARY
I'll stay till then.

JENNIFER
I'll leave you a ticket.

GARY
I hope it's not Mozart. You and Mozart are kind of hard to resist.
(starting to leave, then)
Do you remember that weekend we went to your friend's cabin and we got snowed in?
(off her blank look)
The only thing to eat was a frozen bag of french fries and that awful mint jelly? That's all we lived on for two days.

JENNIFER
I'm not sure where this is going.

GARY
The thing is, I almost died in Peru. I was climbing, on the ice, and I fell. I was sliding out of control, I couldn't stop myself for like fifty feet. And the whole time, the only thing I could think of was mint jelly and those soggy french fries. That was gonna be my last thought ever. That's why I came home.

She takes it in, having no idea what to say. Except...

JENNIFER
Gary, we had fun. But that's over. We can't go back. I don't want to go back. I'm sorry if I don't remember that mint jelly. It's good to see you. I've got to go.

She turns and leaves again. We hold on Gary watching her go.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - CAFETERIA - DAY

Diana is having coffee with Dave, the young man she was making out with in the club. There are MEDICAL TEXT BOOKS open in front of them. Diana's reading from one of them.

DIANA
"Fewer in number than their eccrine counterparts, apocrine sweat glands, a) secrete fluid when you're nervous, b) are only found in professional athletes, c) produce body odor.
(off his blank look)
God, this is unbearable. I feel like I'm robbing the cradle.

DAVE
I'm in medical school, okay, not twelfth grade! A) secrete fluid when nervous.

DIANA
No. C) produce body odor.

She sees Jonathan headed her way. He notices Dave, giving her a "you've got to be kidding me" look.

JONATHAN
You guys studying?

DIANA
Not now, Jonathan, okay?

JONATHAN
I just wanted you to know she caved. I'm doing the Whipple procedure at four.

DAVE
A Whipple procedure is hard.

JONATHAN
It is.
(reaching out his hand)
Nice to meet you, I'm Doctor Lang.

DAVE
Dave Ridgeway.

Diana's phone rings. She checks the caller ID

JONATHAN
You taking your step three's?

DAVE
Oh, no. I'm not a resident. I'm still in medical school.

JONATHAN
(thoroughly amused)
See you two love birds later.

Jonathan takes off.

DIANA
(into the phone)
Hi. Where have you been?

EXT. CONCERT HALL - INTERCUT

Gary's still in front of the Concert Hall, on his cell.

GARY
I knew she wasn't going to come with me. That was the whole point.

DIANA
Are you okay?

GARY
I had everything I wanted. I left because I was so afraid it would be taken away from me one day, I thought I'd just get it over with myself.

DIANA
Where are you, I'll come meet you?

GARY
Can I see you at the lab?

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - PATHOLOGY LAB - DIANA'S OFFICE - DAY

Gary stands talking to Diana.

GARY
Why didn't anyone tell me?

DIANA
They've only been together for the last six months. I never thought it was going to last. I didn't want to bother you if it was just some *thing*. I didn't know if you were even coming back.

GARY
I need to stop running. Face my life. That's why I came, not so much Mom's birthday. I can't be so afraid of dying that I don't ever live.
(then)
Even without Jennifer, I still need to find this out.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - CAGE ROOM - DAY

Four mice scamper around the cage. Gary and Diana watch.

DIANA
I named them. Of course. Scrumbles, Sweetpam, Chubby, and KC, like the Sunshine Band. I'm here all night sometimes. It's somatic gene therapy. I've been using DNA that encodes a therapeutic protein drug, packaging it within a "vector," to get the DNA inside cells within the body.

GARY
Does Mom know what you're doing?

DIANA
What do you think? She's gotten me a Matrix-Assisted Laser Mass Spectrometer, a Capillary Electrophoresis Machine.

GARY
Go, Mom.

DIANA
The only rule is she can't come down here and correct my homework. When there's something to show her, I'll show her.

GARY
How did it feel to find out you didn't have it?

DIANA
I hope you don't think just because you fainted, I'm worried you --

GARY
-- Of course you are. I was taken to the hospital in an ambulance.

DIANA
It would be an extremely early presentation.

GARY
Nonetheless, one day --

DIANA
-- One day --

GARY
-- I have a fifty percent chance of getting sick.

DIANA
Yes.

GARY
So... What's the test like?

Off the two of them, knowing what's about to happen.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - OPERATING ROOM - DAY

TIGHT ON: Victor, lying on an OR gurney wearing a surgical cap. A monitor beeps in the background. He looks anxious.

JONATHAN
You don't feel anything, do you?

VICTOR
No, just didn't think I'd be awake for it, that's all.

PULL BACK to find Jonathan working inside Victor's OPEN ABDOMEN. Victor's head is isolated from the sterile surgical field by an anesthesia drape.

JONATHAN
An epidural is much safer than trying to put you back on the vent.
(to Scrub Nurse)
Bovie.

The Scrub Nurse hands Jonathan the BOVIE device which he uses inside the abdomen. Victor talks nervously.

VICTOR
If this goes well, I promise I'll exercise and never eat donuts again. You probably hear that a lot, what people are willing to give up for a second chance.

JONATHAN
If it worked we'd all live forever.

Jonathan is handed a retractor. He retracts the stomach and starts palpating the vessels behind the pancreas.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - PATHOLOGY LAB - DIANA'S OFFICE - DAY

Diana gets a needle ready for Gary, who's suddenly nervous.

GARY
How long does it take?

DIANA
To find out? A day. It's a simple blood draw with genetic testing for the PABPN1 gene.

GARY
With you and Michael, we're two for two. Of course, that doesn't change my odds either way. It's always fifty-fifty no matter how many times you flip a coin. Has Jonathan changed his mind?

DIANA
He doesn't want to know.

She wraps a tie around his arm, gives him a ball to squeeze.

DIANA (CONT'D)
Why are you two so competitive?

GARY
He is. I just fight back.

Diana's about to stick him with the needle.

DIANA
Are you sure you want to do this?

GARY
Yeah. I'm sure.

Gary looks down, as the blood that will tell his fate starts to rise into the tube.

FADE OUT.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - OPERATING ROOM - DAY

Victor is still nervously talking...

VICTOR
My daughter met her man at a church picnic. She's more religious than I am. Her mother was devout, too. Do you have any kids? Doc?

Jonathan is distracted. He has found something concerning. He leans over to Dr. Roberts.

JONATHAN
The tumor's encasing a large vein behind the pancreas.

VICTOR
Excuse me? Is there a problem?

JONATHAN
No, this is just little more complicated than I expected.

VICTOR
Why?

An alarm sounds as Victor's blood pressure and heart rate climb. Victor starts to panic, hyperventilates.

ANESTHESIOLOGIST
He's getting hypertensive. His heart can't handle this stress.

Jonathan peeks his head around the drape so he can talk to Victor face to face.

JONATHAN
You don't need the play by play. I can handle this. Let's sedate you. We'll talk in a couple of hours.

VICTOR
You promise?

JONATHAN
I promise.

Jonathan nods at the anesthesiologist who injects a sedative into the IV. Victor's eyes shut as Jonathan focuses back on the surgery.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - PATHOLOGY LAB - DIANA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Diana's gathering her stuff to leave when Michael comes in.

MICHAEL
Are we still trying to go over to Mom's for her birthday? Because Jonathan's still in the OR.

DIANA
How long has he been there?

MICHAEL
Five hours. He was scheduled for two.

They look at each other, a bit concerned.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Did you ever find Gary?

DIANA
He's at Mom's already. Baking a cake.

Dave comes in...

DAVE
Hi. Oh, sorry. Am I disturbing you? Um... I'm Dave.

MICHAEL
Hi. Michael.
(then)
You guys friends?

DIANA
Kind of.

DAVE
Yes.

DIANA
(getting up)
Who wants a drink?

MICHAEL
Really?

DIANA
I keep some under the centrifuges.

Diana heads out for the booze.

DAVE
You’re her brother, too, right?

MICHAEL
Yeah.

DAVE
Do I stand a chance?

MICHAEL
Honestly? No. Not a chance.

DAVE
I guess you’re right. She works eighteen hour days, she can drink me under the table, somehow never gets tired, and all the while mocks my knowledge of medicine.

MICHAEL
She’s great, though, right?

DAVE
Yeah, she’s great.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - OPERATING ROOM - NIGHT

We watch in QUICK CUTS as Jonathan does the painstakingly slow and complicated tumor resection: The anesthesiologist places a mask on Victor.

Jonathan uses PICKS UPS and METZENBAUM SCISSORS to carefully cut away the tumor.

Jonathan is handed TWO VASCULAR CLAMPS that he places in the abdomen. A NURSE carries TWO BAGS OF BLOOD to the anesthesiologist which he hangs. We see empty SALINE BAGS hanging.

Jonathan’s brow is drenched with sweat. He steps back from the table as a nurse dabs the perspiration. Jonathan clearly tired and frustrated, stretches his neck before he steps back to the table. He takes a deep breath before he begins again.

Jonathan is handed a suture by the Scrub Nurse. He ties knots in the abdomen.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - CAROLINE’S OFFICE - NIGHT

Caroline is gathering her things when Dr. Potter comes in.

DR. POTTER
Can I talk to you for a minute?

CAROLINE
What is it?

DR. POTTER
Dr. Lang's pancreatic tumor involves the Superior Mesenteric Vein.

CAROLINE
Is that what's taking so long?

DR. POTTER
I think I should scrub in.

CAROLINE
He'll be fine.

DR. POTTER
I think you're making a mistake.
(off her look)
You wouldn't be doing this if he weren't your son.

CAROLINE
If you were a parent, or even had a cursory understanding of what that felt like, you would know *nothing* would comfort me more than to let you in there. But I can't be a parent right now. I am the Chief Medical Officer of this hospital and we do not second guess an Attending Surgeon. That is standard operation procedure. If he needs help, it is his call and *only* his call to ask for it. He's not a resident anymore. Good or bad, it's on him. Good night, Doctor.

Caroline leaves Dr. Potter standing there.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - OPERATING ROOM - NIGHT

The anesthesiologist looks at his watch, concerned about how long this is taking, then looks at Victor. ON THE MONITOR: Runs of PVCs (Premature Ventricular Contractions). A nurse dabs sweat off of Jonathan's brow as he stretches his neck, clearly exhausted.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - PATHOLOGY LAB - DIANA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

It's more tense now. The bottle of Bourbon is open. Diana, Michael and Dave are drinking from DIXIE CUPS.

DIANA
Maybe he bit off more than he can chew.

Caroline walks in. They look at her waiting for an update.

DIANA (CONT'D)
Is everything all right?

CAROLINE
With what?

MICHAEL
God! Mom, it's okay, if you're worried! He's been in there for five hours. Stop being so indomitable!

DIANA
You want a drink?

CAROLINE
You do not keep a *bottle* of --

DIANA
-- Just answer the question, Mom.

CAROLINE
Fine. Just a little one.
(off Dave)
Who are you?

DAVE
Dave. Nice to meet you, Dr. Lang.

CAROLINE
Sure.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - OPERATING ROOM - NIGHT

The Anesthesiologist clocks the beeping monitor.

ANESTHESIOLOGIST
He's throwing recurrent PVCs. How much longer do you think?

JONATHAN
I can’t dislodge his damn SMV from the tumor.

ANESTHESIOLOGIST
We shouldn’t keep him under much longer. Remove what you can and let’s cut our losses.

JONATHAN
If I don’t get it all he’ll be dead in six months.

ANESTHESIOLOGIST
Better than dying today.

JONATHAN
(deep in thought)
Cut our losses... I’ll cut out the involved vessel and replace it with a vein graft.
(to Scrub Nurse)
Two vessel clamps and prep the thigh for harvest.

SCRUB NURSE
I hope his heart holds out.

JONATHAN
It will.

Off Jonathan, not giving up.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - PATHOLOGY LAB - DIANA’S OFFICE - NIGHT

They all have Bourbon in Dixie Cups. Michael raises his cup.

MICHAEL
Cheers. Happy birthday by the way.

DIANA
Right, happy birthday.

DAVE
Happy birthday.

CAROLINE
Okay, enough, I get it.

Caroline looks at the clock.

DIANA
Stop looking at the clock, Mom.

CAROLINE
I shouldn’t have let him do it.

Suddenly Caroline's phones pings. She looks at the text. As we try to figure out what she's reading...

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - CAFETERIA - NIGHT

Jonathan's sitting alone with a cup of coffee. Caroline comes over and stands over him.

JONATHAN
Don't say anything.

CAROLINE
That took a long time.

JONATHAN
I told you not to say anything.

CAROLINE
I'll look over the OR report in the morning.

JONATHAN
There were some complications and I handled them. I did my job, that's what you'll learn.

CAROLINE
You're tired. Let's talk in the morning.

JONATHAN
Thanks for the pat on the back. Is this the way you treat all your surgeons?

CAROLINE
As a matter of fact, it is.

Jonathan watches as she walks away, exhausted by both the day and his mother.

INT. LANG HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

A BIRTHDAY CAKE sits on the counter. Diana is wrapping a PRESENT, as Jonathan gets a beer for Michael.

JONATHAN
"That took a long time?" I swear, she was a Russian judge in a previous life.

MICHAEL
You're her favorite. That's why she's so hard on you.

JONATHAN
I hate counter intuitive parenting logic.

DIANA
I can't believe she's not here yet.

MICHAEL
Don't get mad at her, she doesn't even know we're doing it.

JONATHAN
What did you get her?

DIANA
A biography of Eleanor Roosevelt.

JONATHAN
Wow. What about you?

MICHAEL
A spa day with me.

DIANA
She doesn't want that! You do.

JONATHAN
Well, I didn't get her anything.

They turn to see Gary standing there.

GARY
I found those tapes from the first show. The unedited ones.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - CAROLINE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Caroline's at her desk working, when Lawrence walks in.

LAWRENCE
You're here late.

CAROLINE
So are you.

LAWRENCE
I don't have a family.

CAROLINE
My kids are all grown up.

LAWRENCE
It’s not my birthday, either.

CAROLINE
(looking up)
What did you want to talk to me about?

LAWRENCE
You called every hospital in the area and convinced them all to stand by a four day minimum?

CAROLINE
Anything else would be unethical.

LAWRENCE
Maybe. The insurance company blinked. For now.
(then)
Do you want to get a drink? You and I need to get along better.

CAROLINE
No, we don’t. You just have to listen to me when it comes to medicine.

Lawrence starts to leave, then turns around.

LAWRENCE
It’s twelve-thirty. You can go home now. It’s not your birthday anymore.

Caroline actually seems caught off guard. Lawrence can sense it. A small victory. He smiles, turns and leaves.

INT. LANG HOUSE - DEN - NIGHT

Jonathan, Diana, and Gary sit around watching much younger versions of themselves on the TV.

INSERT: *YOUNGEST JONATHAN (5) has a sword and is swinging it wildly. YOUNGEST GARY (5) has a ball. The camera pans over to KARL LANG, 44. He’s wrapping a present on a table in front of him. YOUNGEST DIANA (5) sits on his lap.*

KARL
Tell Mommy how much we love her.

YOUNGEST DIANA
We love you! We love you!

YOUNGEST MICHAEL (5) wears a cape and waves a sparkled wand.

YOUNGEST MICHAEL
You're my fairy! And you, and you!

JONATHAN
God, you were gay even then.

YOUNGEST JONATHAN
Is the present for me?

MICHAEL
And you were already a narcissist.

KARL
It's for Mommy for our anniversary. Nine years we've been together and they've been the best of my life.

YOUNGEST GARY
(throwing the ball)
Here! Catch!

DIANA
I don't remember any of this. It's like it happened to somebody else.

KARL
Diana, tell Mommy what we call her.

YOUNGEST DIANA
Lioness! Because she guards us. And keeps us safe.

A Younger Caroline, comes into the room. All four of her children hug her or jump up on her. She handles the whole brood with the deftness of a mother who's raising quads.

The older quads stare at the TV, riveted.

Karl looks up from where he's sitting. His anniversary present clearly visible to Caroline.

KARL
Busted. Happy Anniversary.

Karl goes over and gives her a kiss and a loving hug. It's really a family hug, as the kids have not yet let go of their mother. Caroline wipes a tear away, obviously moved.

The four grown quads watch, spell bound.

DIANA
She can't ever let anyone know.

MICHAEL
What?

GARY
How much she cares.

INT. LANG HOUSE - FOYER/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Caroline comes in, putting her bag down.

CAROLINE
I saw your cars out there, so I know you're all here. Whatever you do, don't rush out yelling surprise.

She turns the corner into the living room. She literally freezes in her tracks. Jonathan, Michael, Diana, and of course, Gary stand there looking at her.

GARY
Surprise.

She can barely believe her eyes. Caroline goes over and holds him tenderly.

CAROLINE
God, I'm so glad to see you.

Jonathan is watching, a little annoyed by their closeness.

DIANA
We almost left, Mom. It's like one in the morning.

CAROLINE
Things got backed up at the hospital.

JONATHAN
What's that supposed to mean?

CAROLINE
I wasn't referring to you, specifically.

MICHAEL
Why don't you guys hug it out.

JONATHAN
Stay out of this.

CAROLINE
We don't need a shrink.

GARY
Can you just calm down?

CAROLINE
Do you know what he did?

JONATHAN
She wanted to fire me!

CAROLINE
Well, maybe you shouldn't be there.
(to Gary)
He always takes things too far.

MICHAEL
He's only doing it to impress you.

JONATHAN
I don't care what she thinks.

MICHAEL
Oh, my God. Get real.

DIANA
(leaving)
I'm bringing in the cake. This is ridiculous.

GARY
Look, the guy's dating my ex, I'm not that interested in defending --

JONATHAN
-- I thought you didn't care about that.

CAROLINE
(to Gary)
You know, she's only second violin, third chair.

JONATHAN
See, this is what we're up against!

GARY
Okay, stop it! Both of you! Just tell him you want him to stay at the hospital. You value him. That's all he needs to hear.

CAROLINE
Of course I want you to stay! I want you to stop taking chances, that's all! I can't bear it.
(MORE)

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
With any of you. Life is dangerous enough as it is without...

Caroline stops. It’s clear what she was about to say though.

MICHAEL
Mom. We’re all in this together. Since dad died. You can’t worry about us like that... You can’t.

Gary gives Michael a look.

GARY
Michael’s right. We have each other. It’s always been enough.

CAROLINE
For God’s sake, will you please come home? We need you.

Diana comes back carrying the cake with the candles lit. Caroline looks up, wipes away a tear.

CAROLINE (CONT’D)
Just don’t start singing that damn song.

GARY
At least make a wish.

Caroline breathes in deeply and makes the one she has always made since they were born: Their safety. She starts to blow. She keeps going determined to get every candle...

DIANA
Come on, we’re going to have to order you a pulmonary functioning test.

One candle still burns, but with the last breath in her, she blows it out, too. Everyone applauds. She looks around at her family... Reunited.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - PATHOLOGY LAB - DAY

Diana’s working on her computer when her phone dings. She looks at her text: 7UU8 RESULTS IN. She immediately changes screens on her computer, finds the E-mail and opens it.

She pulls up a three dimensional interactive GENE MAP that spins on the screen. She searches through the GRID for the PABPN1 gene. She doesn’t find it.

She pulls up a separate screen of a different GENE MAP and overlays it on the first one. Off her studying the differences.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - DAY

Jonathan is leaving Victor's room when he runs into Valerie. She looks up at him.

VALERIE
Thank you.

Valerie hugs him with gratitude. Turning the corner is Caroline, who stops to witness the moment. She smiles, but keeps going before Jonathan sees that she was there.

INT. JONATHAN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

Jennifer goes to the refrigerator, grabs a SODA, and takes off, only to stop. She turns, opening the refrigerator door again. She looks inside. There on the shelf is a small jar of MINT JELLY... Clearly she remembers more than she let on.

She takes it out and holds it for a moment, deciding what to do. Then she moves to the garbage and tosses it in.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - PSYCHIATRIC WARD - DAY

Michael's heading down the hall, clip board in hand, when he hears laughter from the common room. He turns the corner to find Ethan playing ping-pong, thoroughly enjoying himself.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - ELEVATOR - DAY

Michael gets in the elevator on the EIGHTH floor and presses LOBBY. The door opens on the SEVENTH. No one comes in. Michael shakes his head and groans. It opens again on the SIXTH.

Dr. JOSH COHEN (30's) gets in. He wears a yarmulke. It's silent. The door opens on the FIFTH floor. No one comes in.

MICHAEL
Does it have to stop at *every* floor?

DOCTOR COHEN
It's the sabbath elevator. It's rigged that way. We're not supposed to use electricity today.

MICHAEL
Then take the stairs.

The door opens on the FOURTH floor, no one comes in.

DOCTOR COHEN
I'm sorry.

MICHAEL
Sorry? I thought I was robbed.

DOCTOR COHEN
We're stuck. This isn't about kids. It's about you. You need to figure out how to deal with it.

Michael looks at him, not wanting to admit it, but knowing he's right.

INT. EASTON HOSPITAL - LOBBY - DAY

The elevator opens. Michael and Josh are gently kissing. Michael nestles his head in Josh's shoulder. Josh takes him closer into his arms and holds him.

EXT. DIANA'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Gary's sitting alone as crickets make a racket. Diana pulls into the driveway, jumps out of her car, rushes up the steps.

DIANA
I heard. I heard.

GARY
I guess you wouldn't be in a hurry to tell me bad news.

She jumps on him and ends up curled up next to him.

DIANA
You probably stepped off that plane and had an anxiety attack. *I* had an anxiety attack, or I wouldn't have even considered it.

GARY
Three for three, right?

DIANA
Three for three.

GARY
Really?
(off her look)
He's lying, isn't he?

DIANA
No. Gary...

GARY
If I was home, he would never have gotten away with it.

DIANA
You think he's *lying*?

GARY
I know it.

DIANA
How?

GARY
Because I know Michael, and so do you. Suddenly he doesn't want to have kids? He always wanted kids. Did you hear what he said to Mom? "You can't worry about *us* like that." *Us*. You're in a lab twenty-four seven, come on, it doesn't --

DIANA
-- I'd be in a lab anyway. And if Michael wanted children, he could adopt. There's no risk in that.

GARY
Unless he's worried he won't make it to his kid's college graduation.

Suddenly, they see Jonathan's car pull up.

GARY (CONT'D)
Just tell me, am I right? Tell me.

Jonathan and Michael start to get out.

DIANA
It doesn't matter. I'm not going to let it take him.

GARY
Does Mom know?

DIANA
Just me. And now you.

MICHAEL
We wanted to make sure you didn't change your mind and leave.

GARY
I'm not leaving. How many times do I have to tell you people that?

They plop down on the porch furniture. Gary watches Michael.

MICHAEL
What are you looking at?

GARY
You.

EXT. ROCK QUARRY - PRESENT DAY

Jonathan, Gary, Diana and Michael sit, their legs dangling over the edge, just as they did when they were kids.

JONATHAN
We ready?

DIANA
I'm ready.

MICHAEL
I'm doing it this time.

JONATHAN
Sure you are.

They stand there. Gary turns to Michael.

GARY
Do it. You have to.

MICHAEL
Yeah, I think I kind of do.

GARY
One, two, three...

They all jump this time, and with a splash, disappear into the water. They all come bobbing up: One, two, three, four.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END