



Mercy
"Pilot"

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TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. FLANAGAN KITCHEN - DAY

Sun streams through the curtains of this kitchen badly in need of a remodel. VERONICA CALLAHAN, 32, fit, pretty, tough, walks in all groggy and sleepy, wearing an oversized ARMY T-shirt and her undies. She pours herself some cereal and begins to eat, eyes still half shut.

Suddenly, the sound of HELICOPTERS, AUTOMATIC GUNFIRE, BOMBS EXPLODING -- like a war outside. A BULLET COMES THROUGH the window, hits her in the chest. Veronica stares at the pool of blood on her chest then falls to the floor, DEAD. Silence.

After a second her mother, JEANNIE, 60, bleached blond hair, fake boobs, still riding the Juicy sweats wave, walks through and steps over her daughter's body... and proceeds to matter-of-factly make a fruit and vodka smoothie. She looks down at Veronica lying face down on the floor and makes a disappointed face.

JEANNIE

Honey, all your underwear is too small for you. You got like, three inches of back fat showing.

CUT TO:

INT. VERONICA'S BEDROOM AT HER PARENTS' - MORNING

...Veronica JERKS awake to see her mother standing over her with a package of Fruit of the Loom underwear, a lit cigarette and her morning vodka smoothie.

JEANNIE

I got you some new underwear. Oprah says that most women wear their underwear too small. When I saw that I thought of you right away.

Veronica struggles to take this in. She is sleeping in a twin bed with a pink comforter. This is her childhood room.

VERONICA

You bought me big-girl underwear.

JEANNIE

Well, you could lose five pounds
out the ass, sweetie.

Veronica gets out of bed, annoyed. Her mother looks in the
mirror, giving her body an approving look.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)

You got good genes from me, honey.
Don't flush it all down the toilet.
(examining her butt)
I still have the body of a thirty
year-old.

VERONICA

Yeah, but you got a sixty year-old
head.

JEANNIE

Mike called last night. Are going
to call him back?

VERONICA

No.

JEANNIE

Oh, Christ Ronnie. Grow up. He's
a man. You were gone. You know
how much your father and I spent on
that wedding?

VERONICA

Can you get out of my room please?

JEANNIE

It's not your room. It's my room.

Jeannie leaves. Veronica looks at herself in the mirror for
a second before throwing back the covers to start her day.

CUT TO:

INT. STARBUCKS - DAY

Veronica drinks her coffee, scarfing down a sweet roll and
looking at the paper when she hears a CRASH outside, followed
by people hollering and shouting.

MAN'S VOICE (O.C.)

Call 911! We need a doctor!

Veronica grabs her coffee and reluctantly walks out to...

EXT. STREET - DAY

The street is blocked off by construction. A crowd has gathered around a nasty car wreck. Veronica pushes her way up to the front. A brand new BMW is the worst off -- all mangled up, air bags deployed. A YUPPIE GUY and his hot, aggressive Jersey GIRLFRIEND sit in the front seat. The Girlfriend is bleeding from a wound on her scalp. Yuppie Guy is in a daze in the driver's seat.

GIRLFRIEND

Did somebody call 911? I'm
bleeding! I need a doctor now!

Veronica looks in the driver's side. A short guy, fifties, sticks his head in on the other side. This is DR. SIMS.

DR. SIMS

I'm a doctor.

GIRLFRIEND

Thank God. I'm bleeding. Help me!

Dr. Sims starts looking over her minor scalp lacerations. Veronica looks at the guy and notices some blood on his shirt. She opens his jacket to reveal a PERRIER BOTTLE STICKING OUT OF HIS CHEST.

VERONICA

Holy shit.

Dr. Sims looks over. His jaw drops as Yuppie Guy passes out.

GIRLFRIEND

What's the matter with him? DAVID!

VERONICA

It's a tension pneumothorax. His
trachea's moving to one side...

DR. SIMS

(panicking)

I'm... I'm out of my depth here.
I'm actually a dermatologist...

GIRLFRIEND

David! What's wrong with him?

VERONICA

We have to get a chest tube in him.

DR. SIMS

I don't... I've never done one...

GIRLFRIEND

David! Wake up, baby!

VERONICA

Lady. I need you to stay calm.

Veronica looks at Sims, who is now a deer in the headlights.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Hey! Dermatologist. I need a knife, a Bic pen and something to sterilize with. Now!

Sims pulls himself out of the car and hollers at the crowd.

DR. SIMS

Anybody got a knife? I need a Bic pen... and some alcohol...

Inside the car, Veronica struggles with Yuppie Guy's shirt. The Girlfriend is now completely hysterical and screaming.

GIRLFRIEND

David! What's happening? What are you doing to him? Who are you? Where's the ambulance?

The Girlfriend paws and swats at Veronica, who has had enough. Veronica reaches out and GRABS THE GIRLFRIEND'S NOSE. HARD.

GIRLFRIEND (CONT'D)

Oww.

VERONICA

Lady. Listen. Your boyfriend --

GIRLFRIEND

-- Fiancé.

VERONICA

Okay, fiancé -- has a tension pneumothorax. That means his chest is filling up with air but his lungs aren't getting any. It is rapidly fatal.

The Girlfriend makes a small, scared noise.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

He will die if we don't get a chest tube in in the next thirty seconds.

(MORE)

VERONICA (CONT'D)

I need you to calm down and help me
get his shirt off. Can you do
that?

The Girlfriend nods, cowed. Veronica lets go of her nose and
they go to work on getting the guy's shirt and tie loosened.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

DERMATOLOGIST! HOW WE COMING WITH
THAT KNIFE?

DERMATOLOGIST

(sticking his head in)

I got these.

He has a bread knife, a Swiss Army knife, a plastic knife, a
Bic pen and a bottle of vodka. Veronica gives him a look,
then selects the Swiss Army knife and pours vodka on it.

DERMATOLOGIST (CONT'D)

Okay, now what?

VERONICA

Now, I make a hole under his arm.
Take the ink thingy out of the pen.
That's our chest tube.

The Girlfriend starts to lose it again.

GIRLFRIEND

What? Make a hole?

Veronica pours vodka over the knife and prepares to cut, but
first she stares out the window like she sees something.

VERONICA

Hey, what's that?

The Girlfriend falls for it, looking out the window.
Veronica PLUNGES the knife into the guy. Blood splatters on
the Girlfriend's blouse. She turns, sees the wound and the
blood, and opens her mouth to yell, then decides to just
throw up.

Veronica sticks the Bic pen chest tube in the guy's chest.
We hear a small sucking sound and the guy starts to breathe.
Sims takes the guy's pulse and listens to his breathing.

DR. SIMS

You did it.

(a beat)

Where'd you learn how to do that?

VERONICA

Iraq.

Veronica looks up to see an ambulance finally arriving.

CUT TO:

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL ICU - TEN MINUTES LATER

A busy, rowdy, urban hospital. Veronica walks in, in front of the gurney that her patient rides on.

VERONICA

We need to get this guy up to X-ray
and he needs a real chest drain,
now. Call Dr. Berotli...

Everybody scurries to do what Veronica says. DR. HARRIS, chief resident of the ICU, walks in. Something about his expression and arrogance says "total prick".

HARRIS

What the hell is going on in here?
Who ordered all this?

VERONICA

Me.

HARRIS

On what authority? You're a nurse,
okay? A nurse.

He manages to make the word "nurse" sound like an insult. The Girlfriend STARES at her. All the action has come to a halt. Veronica switches gears, sheepish and girly now.

VERONICA

Well. Will you sign off on all
these orders please, Dr. Harris?

GIRLFRIEND

You're not a doctor? After all
that you're just some stupid nurse?
This is outrageous. I swear to
God. If he dies, if he even so
much as has a scar I swear to
Christ I will sue the shit out of
you, this hospital and the city...

Off Veronica -- no good deed goes unpunished...

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. MERCY HOSPITAL - MINUTES LATER

CHLOE PAYNE is a 25 year-old, fresh, dewy flower from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Wide-eyed, virginal, tragically un-hip but undeniably a very pretty girl -- even though her smock has bears and rainbows on it. She stares up at the hospital, eyes full of hope and anticipation: her first day. She ignores the homeless people, the litter, the angry-looking sick people.

HOMELESS GUY

Spare some change?

CHLOE

Oh.

(pulls a Luna bar from her
purse)

Here you go!

The guy is pissed. He wanted money. He CHUCKS it at her back -- misses. She walks into the building, oblivious.

INT. CHIEF OF STAFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Chief of Staff, DR. ALFRED PARKS, sits behind a large desk in a his large office, staring at Veronica.

VERONICA

I guess I should have let the guy die? Is that what you want?

DR. PARKS

Yes, Veronica. That's what we want here at Mercy Hospital. To let the guy die. I believe that's what it says on our brochures. I am talking about when you got to the hospital. The case should have immediately been turned over to Dr. Harris.

VERONICA

Harris. Patient's got a Bic pen sticking out of his chest that's keeping him alive and all that ass crack wants to talk about is protocol? I thought we were here to save people.

DR. PARKS

You're making this personal.

VERONICA

None of this is personal.

DR. PARKS

What about the time you called him testicle head?

VERONICA

Scrotum head. I called him scrotum head. And I didn't know he was standing there.

DR. PARKS

He's an extremely talented doctor. And he cares as much about turning this place around as you and me.

Parks looks at her, changes his tone to one of concern.

DR. PARKS (CONT'D)

I was in a war too, you know. You ever thought about talking to somebody about it?

VERONICA

I don't need to talk to anybody. You know why? Because I'm on delicious Paxil. S'posed to really smooth out the rough edges.

DR. PARKS

Working like a charm, I see.

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL ICU - HALLWAY - DAY

NURSE GIANNA JIMENEZ, 30, walks down the hall, studying a chart. Gianna is staggeringly beautiful, but beyond that, she's sophisticated, even in her nursing scrubs -- Vogue's answer to nursing. She barely looks up as she turns every head in the hallway and the crowd of residents parts for her.

RESIDENT

Hey, Gianna. You get that mix CD I made for you?

Gianna doesn't respond. The guy hangs his head: "I am such a dork." This icy attitude is her own form of authority. We follow Gianna over to...

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL - NURSES' STATION

...where ANGEL LOPEZ, 34, sits filling out paperwork. Angel is a wonderful nurse with a dry sense of humor.

He wears a little eyeliner and some small hoop earrings, but he's big and ripped, okay? Fuck with him at your peril. Gianna's phone rings. She looks at it, lets it ring.

ANGEL

Investment banker?
(she nods)
But you're not gonna answer.

GIANNA

It's called discipline.

Veronica walks up, notes the ringing phone.

VERONICA

You're not answering the investment banker's call?

ANGEL

It's called discipline.

GIANNA

Hey, I heard you performed open heart surgery with a plastic fork at a Starbucks this morning.

ANGEL

I heard you made the guy a new liver with some coffee filters and a wad of gum.

DR. COREY TROVINGER, a resident, looks about 12, walks up, carrying a pink box.

TROVINGER

How's it going? I brought bagels.

ANGEL

Look at this nice boy.

TROVINGER

Just a little appreciation for the best nurses in the state.

VERONICA

Say it a little louder.
(looking up)
What in the holy hell...

The other three look up toward the elevators to see Chloe walking in, escorted by Harris, who looks smugly happy to be laying claim on the fresh meat.

ANGEL

Of all the smocks in all the world,
she had to walk in wearing that.

Harris and Chloe arrive at the desk.

HARRIS

Good morning, nurses. This is
Chloe Payne. She starts today. I
know you'll take good care of her.

(puffy)

I have to go lead rounds.

Harris leaves. Angel, Veronica and Gianna silently hate him.
Chloe smiles.

CHLOE

So. This is the ICU. I just want
to say that I'm so excited. I just
got my master's from the
University of Pennsylvania and I'm
so psyched...

A call button beeps on the message board.

ANGEL

Hold that thought, Felicity.
Veronica, it's Mrs. Dumke. You
might want to tag team.

GIANNA

I'll go with you.

CHLOE

Can I come?

Gianna and Veronica walk down the hall, Chloe tagging along.

GIANNA

You get your ass handed to you?

VERONICA

Kind of. He wants me to get
therapy. Can you believe that?

(a beat)

That's an awfully long pause, G.

CHLOE

Who's Mrs. Dumke?

GIANNA

Sixty year-old woman with stage
four liver cancer.

(MORE)

GIANNA (CONT'D)

Been circling the drain for months now, but her family won't give up.

CHLOE

Poor thing.

Veronica and Gianna exchange a wry look and prepare to enter Mrs. Dumke's room, not unlike a couple of police officers entering a drug bust. They open the door to...

INT. MRS. DUMKE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

WHAM! A tray of food gets thrown at them. Gianna and Veronica are both ready and they duck, but Chloe gets hit in the chest with some chocolate pudding.

GIANNA

Oh no. Your smock.

CHLOE

It's okay. I have more at home.

Mrs. ELAINE DUMKE sits up in bed. She's a formidable woman, a lady who lunches. Whip smart, sharp-tongued, college educated, well-read, a mother, a wife and a total bitch.

MRS. DUMKE

The food here is inedible. I'm in pain. I'm pretty sure I have a bed sore. You nurses. What are you good for?

VERONICA

Well, we do try to keep the doctors from killing you.

MRS. DUMKE

I have to go to the bathroom.

Chloe grabs a bedpan without hesitation and slides it under Mrs. Dumke. Veronica checks Mrs. Dumke's vitals.

The door FLIES open. MIKE CALLAHAN, 33, a very cute blue collar type who looks like trouble, bursts into the room holding a bouquet of carnations dripping wet from the stems in one hand, and a new bouquet in the other.

MIKE

What are these doing in some coma patient's room? I bought these for you.

Chloe, holding Mrs. Dumke's bedpan, screams, managing to spill Mrs. Dumke's urine all over herself.

VERONICA

I told you not to come to my work anymore!

MIKE

It's a hospital. Maybe I got the flu. Hey, G.

GIANNA

Hey, Mike.

MIKE

(to Mrs. Dumke)

Would you like some flowers?

MRS. DUMKE

Leave me out of this, please.

(re: Chloe)

Do I really have to lie here in the same room with this twelve year-old covered in my urine?

GIANNA

Yeah, you're gross. You should just take a shower.

Gianna and Chloe leave. Veronica finishes up with Mrs. Dumke while Mike badgers her. Definitely still a spark here.

MIKE

(to Mrs. Dumke)

You believe this woman?

MRS. DUMKE

I were you? I'd look for greener pastures.

MIKE

It's good advice. I've been barking up this tree since high school.

(flirting with Mrs. Dumke)

What are you doing later?

MRS. DUMKE

I think later they're putting a catheter in. Listen, seriously, you got a job?

MIKE

Yes ma'am. I'm a contractor. Got my own business. Does pretty well.

MRS. DUMKE

Here's a picture of my daughter.
She's younger than this ungrateful
jackass and she wants kids.

MIKE

Sounds good. She's a hottie too.

VERONICA

O-kay!

Veronica grabs Mike and starts shoving him out the door.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Mike! You can't come around here
anymore, alright? I don't know how
to be more clear. You need to
leave me alone.

MIKE

Okay. I'm sorry.

Mike stares at her, earnestly, as if he actually heard her.
Then he kisses her on the cheek, quickly and sweetly.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I'll call you.

VERONICA

Okay.

(catching herself)

No! Not okay! What did I just
say?

But he's already gone. Veronica rolls her eyes. He still
knows which buttons to push...

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL - PATIENT ROOM - DAY

Chloe showers, washing off Mrs. Dumke's pudding and pee...

INT. NURSES' STATION - DAY

Angel does his charting. NURSE KLOWDEN, fifties, a no-
nonsense woman whose cardigans and kooky glasses on a chain
hide an iron will, walks up.

NURSE KLOWDEN

Angel. Have you seen the new girl?

Before Angel can answer, Harris and a couple of orderlies
bring in a HOMELESS MAN with hypothermia.

HARRIS

I need someplace to put this guy.

NURSE KLOWDEN

217 is free.

Nurse Klowden hurries them down the hall to...

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL - PATIENT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

....Just as they wheel the guy into the room, Chloe emerges from the shower, naked. She SCREAMS when she sees Harris, the orderlies, Nurse Klowden and the Homeless Guy.

HOMELESS GUY

She come with the room?

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY

Nurse Klowden walks with Chloe, dressed now.

NURSE KLOWDEN

This hospital almost shut down two years ago. They brought in new management, made new hires -- Dr. Parks, myself, Dr. Harris -- and little by little we're righting the ship. The upside is you'll never work in a more challenging environment. You'll never be more vital to the process as you are here -- mint?

Klowden offers her a wrapped mint. Chloe takes the candy.

NURSE KLOWDEN (CONT'D)

You'll see everything here. Critical illnesses and injuries, major surgeries, burn victims, transplants. You'll need vigilance, compassion and a thick skin. Normally, we like for new nurses to have more experience but you graduated at the top of your class.

CHLOE

I won't disappoint.

NURSE KLOWDEN

I know you won't. Now... here's a little job for you...

They walk into...

INT. MR. WEINTRAUB'S ROOM - DAY

Mr. Weintraub is a seventy-seven year-old man who is hooked up to many machines. He's unconscious. All we hear is the beeping and sucking sounds of the life support system.

NURSE KLOWDEN

Mr. Weintraub. Unplug him. Call the morgue and they'll pick him up.

CHLOE

(horrified)

But... he's still alive. Look. His heart is beating.

NURSE KLOWDEN

No. He's dead. He's got a son in...

(consults the chart)

Florida who granted permission to remove him from life support. Turn everything off and call the morgue.

Nurse Klowden leaves. Chloe looks stricken. She walks up to the head of the bed and peers down at Mr. Weintraub.

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL - ELEVATORS - DAY

Veronica and Gianna wait by the elevators, the calm before the storm. The elevator doors open and a MALE ER NURSE, OLIVER MENDES, gives them the rundown.

NURSE MENDES

Gang shooting. This guy shot that guy, then the cops shot this guy.

(points to younger kid)

Teddy Washington, 17, gunshot wound to the head. He's stable but critical. This guy...

VERONICA

Is coding! Somebody page Trovinger.

Veronica grabs a crash cart. Gianna bags the guy. A good-looking guy in his late thirties speaks up. This is DETECTIVE NICK VALENTINO.

DETECTIVE VALENTINO

He gonna be okay?

GIANNA

I don't know yet. How about you get out of the way?

VERONICA

You family?

GIANNA

He's a cop.

VALENTINO

No. I'm a cop. Hey. How'd
you know I was a cop?

GIANNA

Lucky guess. Where is Trovinger?

VALENTINO

I need this guy alive. He's a
witness in a big case.

GIANNA

Maybe you shouldn't have shot him.

TROVINGER

(running up)

What's up?

VERONICA

Multiple gunshot wounds. He's
coding.

Trovinger steps up to the patient, looking lost. Gianna and
Veronica wait. Gianna speaks patiently, as if to a child.

GIANNA

You want me to put the gel on his
chest?

Trovinger just stands there. Veronica finally takes over,
grabbing the crash cart, puts the gel on the guy's chest.

VERONICA

Okay, charge paddles to 200. Clear!
(shocks him -- nothing)
Changing to 300.

She shocks the patient again.

GIANNA

I got a rhythm.

The two nurses look at Trovinger. He seems to recover a bit.

TROVINGER

Good work everybody.

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - LATER

Veronica walks down the hall, falls into step with Gianna.

VERONICA

That Trovinger guy...

GIANNA

I know. It's too bad, too. Why
does the nice guy have to suck?
You want to tell Harris?

VERONICA

Harris isn't gonna listen to us.
Just let the other nurses know to
watch him. Let's get a drink now.

They walk past Mr. Weintraub's room and get a glimpse of
Chloe standing there. Veronica shakes her head.

GIANNA

(whispering)

We have to.

VERONICA

(whispering)

No. We don't have to. We can just
go. We can just start walking --

Gianna sticks her head in the door of Mr. Weintraub's room.

GIANNA

Hey. You want to go get a drink?

Chloe is still standing there, staring at Mr. Weintraub. She
looks like she's about to cry.

CHLOE

I'd love to but first I'm supposed
kill Mr. Weintraub...

Veronica grabs Mr. Weintraub's chart and reads.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

I can't do it!

VERONICA

Oh, for fuck's sake!

Veronica stoops and starts yanking plugs out of the wall.
The heart monitor goes dark. The respirator goes silent.

GIANNA

Time of death. 6:07 PM.

VERONICA

Cool. Can we go now?

CUT TO:

INT. BAR - NIGHT

A neighborhood bar around the hospital. Veronica, Gianna, Chloe and Angel sit at a table drinking beer. Veronica, Gianna and Angel are staring at the BARTENDER, a COMPLETELY GORGEOUS twenty-five year-old. He's underwear model cute.

VERONICA

What do you think he's thinking?

ANGEL

Who cares?

CHLOE

Why don't we just talk to him?

VERONICA

Because. He's a unicorn, okay?
He's a magical creature. He's for
looking at, not talking to.

A BEEP from Gianna's phone. She looks at it and ignores it.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

At what point do you guys actually
get to talk to each other?

CHLOE

Is he nice?

ANGEL

His seven figure income is nice.

CHLOE

No!

GIANNA

No, that's true. I'm done with
losers still making payments on
their 2001 Toyota Corollas. I'm
done going dutch. I'm done with
guys who think you owe them a blow
job for dinner at Bennigan's.

ANGEL

Well, you probably ordered an
appetizer.

GIANNA

I owe a guy a blow job if I order an appetizer?

ANGEL

I didn't make the rules.

CHLOE

I don't know how you guys do it. That was so sad today with Mr. Weintraub.

VERONICA

(harsh little laugh)
That's not sad.

CHLOE

It is too sad. He died alone.

Veronica turns on her, pointed.

VERONICA

He's a seventy-five year-old man who had cancer. You want to see sad you go down the pediatric burn unit. You tell a man his pregnant wife just got murdered. You treat a six year-old Iraqi kid who got his arms blown off because he thought a bomb was a toy. Or how about the soldier who had his legs and arms blown off and has to wear a colostomy bag? We fixed him up, alright. We sure saved him. Nobody knows how a guy with no arms is supposed to manage a colostomy bag but we did it. That's sad. A seventy-five year-old man with cancer? That's a trip to Club Med.
(downs the shot)
This park is closed, guys. Going home.

Veronica grabs her stuff and goes, leaving Chloe speechless.

GIANNA

Don't worry about her. Just a touch of PTSD left over from Iraq.

CHLOE

She was in Iraq? Wow.

CUT TO:

INT. FLANAGAN HOUSE - NIGHT

Veronica opens the door and tiptoes in like a teenager, trying not to wake her parents. She tiptoes past her dad, passed out in front of the TV, then RUNS INTO BOBBY FLANAGAN 33, her brother. Bobby's all cute and Irish and wearing a pair of his dad's pajamas.

VERONICA

AGGH! Jesus! You scared me!

BOBBY

Leanne kicked me out again.

VERONICA

Shhh. You're gonna wake Dad.

BOBBY

Yeah, right.

(raising his voice)

Hey Dad! House is on fire! Mom fell down the stairs! Veronica's got a new boyfriend and he's black!

(nothing)

See? Mom's passed out upstairs. Drank like a half gallon of wine.

VERONICA

Couple of sad alcoholics.

(after a beat)

Hey, you want a drink?

BOBBY

God, yes.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Veronica happily pulls out a bottle of Stolli from the freezer. Bobby grabs the bottle from her -- almost empty.

VERONICA

She keeps another one in the dryer.

CUT TO:

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - NIGHT

Veronica fishes a half empty pint of Smirnoff from behind the dryer and looks at it.

BOBBY

She's like a squirrel.

VERONICA

There's not much in here either.
Dad's always got a bottle of
Jameson's under his workbench.

CUT TO:

INT. GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Bobby has his head under their dad's workbench.

BOBBY

Okay. Now we're in business.

Bobby pulls out a nice, almost full bottle of Jameson's.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT STOOP - NIGHT

The vodka bottles are empty. Bobby and Veronica pass the
Jameson's back and forth.

BOBBY

How you doing?

Veronica takes a beat, then tries to open up a little.

VERONICA

I'm... I'm not so good, Bobby. I'm
all over the place...

(re: the whiskey)

And it's possible I have a drinking
problem.

BOBBY

So get back with Mike.

VERONICA

Oh my God. You too? He's a
cheater!

BOBBY

People in glass houses shouldn't
throw stones.

VERONICA

That's really deep, Bobby. What
the hell are you talking about?

BOBBY

You told me about that doctor guy
in Iraq, remember? At Mom's
birthday party.

Veronica's eyes widen. She slaps a hand over Bobby's mouth.

VERONICA

Shut up, okay? I only told you that because we were wasted. I didn't think you'd remember.

BOBBY

Well, I do remember!

VERONICA

Well, shut up about it! He cheated first. Besides, I was at war. I was fighting for my country. I could have died. Haven't you ever seen MASH? Why do you hate America?

BOBBY

You can play the victim all you want Veronica, but you're just as much to blame for this marriage going south as he is.

VERONICA

Are you yelling at me now?

BOBBY

I guess I am. Yeah, he slept around while you were gone but he never fell in love. Can you say the same thing? I'm going inside.

Bobby takes a final swig of his bottle and walks back in the house, leaving Veronica alone on the stoop.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL - PATIENT ROOM - LATER

Teddy Washington lies in bed. This is the kid who got shot by the gangbanger. His mother, LISA WASHINGTON, 30s, sits by his bed. Veronica and Trovinger look the boy over.

TROVINGER

I'm scheduling another surgery for tomorrow to remove the bullet in his leg...

VERONICA

You think we should order some additional CT scans? He had that focal finding. I'm worried about...

TROVINGER

No. They got it.

VERONICA

...delayed traumatic intracerebral hematoma...

TROVINGER

Nurse, it's unnecessary. Relax.

Off Veronica, wary...

INT. ICU - LATER

Gianna and Chloe peer at a passed out SORORITY GIRL on a gurney. They hover over her.

GIANNA

She needs to be intubated. You ever done one?

(Chloe shakes her head)

Well, today's your lucky day.

Chloe starts to insert the tube into the girl's mouth. Gianna puts on a plastic face shield -- like a welder wears, only lighter weight. She hands one to Chloe, who makes a face like it's silly.

CHLOE

What's that for? You look ridi...

...A TIDAL WAVE OF PROJECTILE BARF lands on her.

CUT TO:

INT. PATIENT ROOM - DAY

Chloe takes another shower at work...

INT. PATIENT ROOM - DAY

Veronica, Chloe and a new PATIENT.

VERONICA

You need some help with that IV?

But Chloe has easily gotten the needle into the patient and starts the IV. Veronica's impressed.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Great. Start a morphine drip.

CHLOE

(on it)

Already done...

The Patient falls asleep. Veronica looks at him, concerned.

VERONICA

I don't have a pulse.

(looking at Chloe)

How much morphine did you give him?

CHLOE

187 milligrams per hour...

Veronica looks at the chart.

VERONICA

Did you convert from oral to intravenous?

CHLOE

I... no... I... forgot...

VERONICA

He's in cardiac arrest! Move.

Veronica SHOVES Chloe out of the way and loads a syringe. Veronica PLUNGES the needle into the guy's chest. He sits up, springing back to life.

PATIENT

What the hell just happened?

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Chloe and Veronica walk out. Chloe is mortified.

CHLOE

I'm sorry. I --

VERONICA

Sorry doesn't help if the guy's
dead. Think before you act.

Veronica walks off. Chloe looks like she's going to throw
up. She ducks into...

INT. EMPTY ROOM - SAME TIME

...and starts crying, all hiccup-y. After a second the
curtain around the bed opens and we see CHRISTINA LUCAS, 15,
a serious goth girl who you just kind of immediately love.

CHRISTINA (O.S.)

You uh, you need a Kleenex?

CHLOE

I thought I was alone!

CHRISTINA

I just got here. What's wrong?

CHLOE

I'm a terrible nurse. It's all I
ever wanted to be. And I'm
terrible at it.

CHRISTINA

Well. That sucks.

(beat)

Are you my nurse?

CHLOE

I don't know.

Chloe opens her chart, starts crying again as she nods yes.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

I'm Chloe.

(pulling herself together)

I'm sorry to blubber at you. What
are you in for, Christina?

CHRISTINA

Cystic Fibrosis. I was supposed to
get a lung transplant but the lungs
weren't viable.

CHLOE

Well. That's... worse than my
problem.

The two of them laugh.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Is there anything I can do for you?

CHRISTINA

Glass of water?

Chloe grabs a pitcher of water from the counter, pours a
glass and watches the girl drink it down.

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)

Thanks.

A small gesture but somehow it's the most helpful Chloe has
felt since she started...

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Gianna walks down the hallway past Detective Valentino, who
sits in a chair outside the gangbanger's room -- the one who
shot Teddy Washington.

DETECTIVE VALENTINO

Look who it is! Hello.

Gianna walks right past him into...

INT. GANGBANGER'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

...and begins to change his IV bag. The patient is
handcuffed to the bed. Valentino comes in.

VALENTINO

Why are you so mean? Many women
are into the cop fantasy.

GIANNA

I'm seeing somebody.

VALENTINO

Of course you are. What's he do?

GIANNA

He's an investment banker.

VALENTINO

Ah. Bedrock of society.

GIANNA

At least he doesn't carry a gun.
(gestures at the patient)
You think you're so different from
this guy. You're all just little
boys running around with guns. And
none of you make enough money.

VALENTINO

Oh, well, now we're getting
somewhere. You need a dude with
money I'm not your guy. 'Cause I
got credit card bills out the ass.

GIANNA

I bet you do.

VALENTINO

My car's probably getting repo-ed
right now.

GIANNA

I'm sure it is.

VALENTINO

I was just gonna ask you if I could
borrow five bucks.

Gianna LAUGHS, showing a smile.

VALENTINO (CONT'D)

What? I'm good for it.
Look at that smile.

Gianna gets a text on her phone. She looks down at it.
Whatever she reads there seems to shock her.

GIANNA

I gotta go. Excuse me.

Gianna runs out to...

INT. NURSES' STATION - DAY

...where Angel sits.

GIANNA

The investment banker just invited
me to the Costume Institute Ball
with him. That's a hot ticket.

Veronica, wearing her coat, returning from lunch, walks up.

VERONICA

That's great. When?

GIANNA

Saturday. That's soon. That's in like three days. Oh, man. What the hell am I gonna wear?

A BIG COMMOTION comes from down the hall. Veronica sees Lisa Washington, Teddy's mother, standing in the hallway, crying.

VERONICA

What happened?

ANGEL

The kid with the gunshot wound to the head. Cerebral hematoma they think. He's brain dead.

Veronica's eyes go wide she runs over to...

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL - TEDDY WASHINGTON'S ROOM - EVENING

Trovinger makes some notations on Teddy Washington's chart. Veronica goes over to look at the kid. She puts her hand tenderly on his forehead, his shoulder, his chest, as if he were alive. She looks heartbroken.

TROVINGER

Maybe you were right.

Veronica turns on him, furious.

VERONICA

That's all you're gonna say? That maybe I was right?

(losing it, raising her voice)

You don't get it. We have to be perfect. That's your job, stupid. You're dangerous.

TROVINGER

Veronica, I feel terrible. What do you want?

VERONICA

I want you to be better. I want you to care enough to be sure.

(beat)

This is all my fault! I knew you were dangerous and I let it slide. That boy is dead because of me.

Suddenly, Mrs. Washington, tears streaming down her face, walks up to Veronica and SLAPS HER HARD ACROSS THE FACE. She heard every word. Parks appears in the doorway, Harris at his side.

PARKS

Veronica. My office. Now.

INT. DR. PARKS' OFFICE - DAY

Veronica walks in. Parks and Harris walk in and shut the door. Veronica looks like a cornered animal.

PARKS

That woman is going to sue the hospital. I would if I were her.

VERONICA

He killed that kid.

HARRIS

You have no idea if that's true. He had been shot four times. We could have done everything right and he still would have died.

VERONICA

And where the hell were you anyway? Why was he unsupervised?

HARRIS

Who the hell do you think you are?

VERONICA

I'm a nurse who knows more than all your residents combined.

PARKS

Shut up! Both of you. Veronica, we're talking about you right now. You took a horrible situation and made it worse. Who did you help with your outburst? You happy? You feel righteous?

VERONICA

No.

PARKS

You say he's dangerous? You're dangerous. I'll fire you. Don't think I won't. I want you out of here for the day. Go home. Now.

Off Veronica, shamed.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

We watch THROUGH THE WINDOW as Veronica buys a pint of whiskey and puts the bottle in her purse...

INT. FLANAGAN HOUSE - NIGHT

Veronica walks into her house, trying to hold back her tears until she can lock herself in her room with her whiskey.

JEANNIE (O.S.)

There she is. VERONICA!

Veronica cringes and pokes her head into the living room, only to see Mike, Jeannie and her dad JIM -- sixties, pot belly, looks like a drinker -- enjoying a round of drinks.

MIKE

Come on in. We're having gin rickeys!

JIM

You should have one.

JEANNIE

Come on. Have a gin rickey.

VERONICA

I don't want a gin rickey.

JEANNIE

When did you turn into such a pill?

VERONICA

Mom!

JIM

It's just weird, saying no to a gin rickey.

VERONICA

Stop saying gin rickey!

MIKE

Hey, Ronnie. You want to take a drive?

VERONICA

No.

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S CAR - NIGHT

Veronica sits in the passenger seat. Mike gets in on the driver's side. He shuts the door. Looks at her and grins.

MIKE

Put this blindfold on. I want to surprise you. Here. Let me do it.

Veronica allows him to tie the blindfold around her head.

VERONICA

I don't think it's fair taking advantage of the fact that my parents like you better than me.

MIKE

They don't like me better than you.

VERONICA

Please. You're like the fourth son my mother never had.

MIKE

You and your mom. She's just pissed off because you never listen to her, so she picks at you some more and then you get pissed off and both of you get your feelings hurt and then the whole thing starts again.

VERONICA

You think?

Mike starts the car.

MIKE

Next time she wants you to do some stupid thing just do it. You'll see.

INT. A HOUSE UNDER CONSTRUCTION - NIGHT

Mike leads Veronica into this house. There's an entire wall missing. He unties the blindfold. She looks around, stunned.

VERONICA

Mike. What did you do? Our house.

MIKE

I bought the little lot next door.
Remember that nice old lady Mae?
Dead! I thought I'd fix it up to
sell but then I thought, you and
me. Add a couple more rooms.
Maybe we might need 'em.

VERONICA

Are you deaf? There is no 'us'.

Mike stares at her, throws up his arms.

MIKE

Okay. I give up. Forget it.

Mike digs in his pants pocket, removes something and TOSSES
it at Veronica, who makes no move to catch whatever it is.
It flies right past her head, out into the backyard.

VERONICA

What was that?

MIKE

Your wedding band. Nice reflexes.

Veronica's eyes widen. She looks outside.

VERONICA

Are you crazy? We're still paying
that thing off.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Veronica and Mike have flashlights out. They scan the ground
for the ring, not talking. Veronica breaks the silence.

VERONICA

Mike, it's not that I'm not
touched...

Mike cuts her off. He is earnest and vulnerable now.

MIKE

I know the Army paid for your
education and you didn't have any
choice but I took it personally,
like you couldn't wait to get away
from me --

VERONICA

You never told me that...

MIKE

-- I was stupid and insecure. But I love you. I want to be with you. And you know what else? I think you love me. Nobody knows you like I know you. I'm the guy, okay?

Veronica fights back tears.

VERONICA

Mike. I'm all messed up right now.

MIKE

No more than anybody else. I don't know, Ronnie, maybe this is what marriage is.

VERONICA

Two people torturing each other until they die?

MIKE

Yeah. That and friends and kids and going out to dinner and great sex. What is so bad about this?

Veronica is really crying now. Mike has found the ring. He takes her hand and puts it on her finger.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Let me ask you one more time. Will you come back to me, Ronnie?

Veronica looks down at the ring and surrenders.

VERONICA

Yes. Okay. Yeah.

Mike kisses her. After a second she starts to kiss back.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. STAFF LOUNGE - DAY

Gianna, Veronica, Angel and Chloe all put their stuff in lockers. Gianna has her iPhone out, showing them pictures of gowns. Angel looks over her shoulder.

ANGEL

The blue. For sure.

CHLOE

Oh, I like the red one.

ANGEL

Is that Dora the Explorer on your smock?

CHLOE

Yeah. Cute, huh?

Angel gives Gianna a look: *Who you gonna take advice from?*

GIANNA

I think the blue.

ANGEL

How are you affording this anyways?

GIANNA

Ebay.

LAINE, a night nurse, comes in to gather her things.

LAINE

Hey, guys. That new surgeon's here. Guy's a stone fox babe.

GIANNA

WHAT IS THAT?

Gianna has grabbed Veronica's hand and is looking at the wedding band on her finger. Veronica yanks her hand away.

VERONICA

Nothing. God.

Everyone stares. Veronica tries for casual.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Mike and I have decided to get back together.

(MORE)

VERONICA (CONT'D)

My parents are throwing us a party
at O'Brien's on Saturday and you
should all come. Should be fun.

Veronica shuts her locker and walks out to...

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY

...where she runs SMACK into DR. CHRIS SANDS, a good-looking
guy who looks tough and bookish at the same time. He's
talking to Harris. Veronica stares at him.

HARRIS

Veronica. Good. This is Dr.
Sands. He's joined our staff.
We're lucky to have him. Dr. Sands
was just going to see Mrs. Dumke.
Maybe you could tag along.

Sands walks off. Harris grabs Veronica by the arm.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

Veronica. Best foot forward here,
okay? This guy's a good get for
us. I want him to feel welcome.

Veronica nods, still in a daze. She follows Sands into...

INT. MRS. DUMKE'S ROOM - DAY

...where Mrs. Dumke and her kids, BELINDA and DOUG, both in
their thirties, are waiting. Sands smiles.

SANDS

Hello. I'm Doctor Sands. I hear
we're performing some surgery.
Now's the time to ask any questions
you might have.

Belinda shakes Sands' hand.

BELINDA

Hello, Dr. Sands. Thank you for
taking an interest in our case.

DOUG

Mom, this is the man who's going to
save your life. Don't you want to
say hello?

Veronica comes to her senses.

VERONICA

I have a question. What is the point of operating on her liver when the cancer has spread to her other organs?

BELINDA

Hope. You ever heard of hope?

SANDS

It's a good question. We're trying to buy her another few years.

VERONICA

And what about the recovery time?

BELINDA

Do you not approve of this surgery, nurse?

SANDS

Again, it's a good question. Recovery time can vary, depending on the patient, but it could be difficult and long. This is not something to be entered into lightly.

BELINDA

(a hard look at Veronica)

The important thing is for us all to have a positive attitude.

MRS. DUMKE

I want to try everything, Doctor.

SANDS

Okay. We'll schedule the surgery for early next week.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Sands and Veronica walk out of the room.

SANDS

You don't think she should have the surgery?

VERONICA

Hey. I'm just the nurse.

SANDS

She says she want to try all available treatment.

VERONICA

That's her kids talking.

SANDS

I have to take her at face value.
She wants to fight, I'll fight. I
treat the disease.

VERONICA

Well, I treat the patient. Maybe
she just needs permission to give
up --

Veronica is startled when Sands abruptly pulls her into...

INT. A SUPPLY CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

...and kisses her. It's super good. Veronica gives in for a
beat. Then another. Then tries to pull away and decides,
"not just yet". They pull apart and stare at each other.

SANDS

Hi.

VERONICA

Hi.

(stupidly)
How's it going?

SANDS

Pretty good I think.

Veronica can't take her hands off him, his face, his chest,
his shoulders -- she can't believe he's here.

VERONICA

What are you doing here?

SANDS

Looking for you. I just got out.

He takes her hand, pulls her close.

SANDS (CONT'D)

I know I should have called but...
I thought it'd be more romantic to
just, you know, swoop in, tell you
I love you and we live happily ever
after --

VERONICA

-- If you had called I would have
told you to stay away.

SANDS

-- Also I was afraid if I called you'd tell me to stay away. Why?

VERONICA

It's just... I'm married.

SANDS

You told me you were going to get a divorce.

VERONICA

We were but then I thought... maybe I should try it again.

(processing all this)

Are you crazy? We barely knew each other.

SANDS

That's not true.

Veronica pulls her hand away, getting mad now because... well, because anger comes so easily. Only, looking at Sands, who makes her a little melty, her anger comes out like a sputter.

VERONICA

It is true! And this is rude, you barging in here... telling a person that you love them... on a... Tuesday... when that person has just recommitted to their horrible marriage.

SANDS

Your horrible marriage? That sounds great.

VERONICA

It is. It's great. It's amazing. Thanks for asking.

Sands looks at her for a beat.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

What?

SANDS

I'm just remembering how much you rely on sarcasm.

VERONICA

Oooh, that hurt.

She walks out of the closet, slamming the door. After a beat she comes back.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

And you're selling snake oil to
Mrs. Dumke and we both know it.

She slams the door again, leaving Sands standing there. This wasn't quite how he pictured their reunion.

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL - TEDDY WASHINGTON'S ROOM - DAY

Angel checks the vitals on Teddy Washington -- he's on life support. Chloe sticks her head in, looking forlorn.

CHLOE

Poor kid.

ANGEL

Yeah. Life support. Mother's not
ready to pull the plug.

Chloe picks up his chart and reads, eyes widening...

INT. CHRISTINA LUCAS'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chloe bursts into Christina Lucas's room. Her mother, JULIA, is there. Christina looks worse than yesterday; she's having trouble breathing. Chloe leans in and strokes her hair.

CHLOE

Good news. There's another set of
lungs. It's going to be okay, I
promise. Hang in there, okay,
sweetie?

Julia and Christina look at Chloe, hope filling the room...

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL - PATIENT ROOM - DAY

Veronica and Gianna prepare VINNIE MILLS, a forty-one year-old, four hundred pound man for surgery. SANDS walks in and gaggle of residents follow him. They all look at him like he's a god, especially the women.

SANDS

Good afternoon Mr. Mills. You're
about to undergo gastric bypass
surgery.

VINNIE MILLS

Unless I lose my nerve.

SANDS

Nothing to be afraid of. He needs
a central line. Who wants to do
it?

SABRINA, a hot resident, raises her hand. Sands nods.
Sabrina steps up and prepares the tubing. Sabrina takes a
stab with the needle.

VINNIE MILLS

Ow! Have you ever done this
before?

Sabrina is starting to sweat a little now, unable to even get
the needle in.

SABRINA

It's because he's so... overweight.
I can't even find the clavicle...

VINNIE MILLS

Thanks.

Awkward. Mr. Mills is starting to get nervous.

SANDS

Veronica, you want to try?

Everybody is surprised, including Veronica.

VERONICA

Sure.

Veronica steps up, takes the tubing from Sabrina, looks down
at Vinnie Mills and smiles.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Hey, how you doing today?

VINNIE MILLS

Been better.

Veronica expertly finds the spot she's looking for and
inserts the needle while she keeps up the patter. Sands
stands close to her, watching.

VERONICA

You nervous? You shouldn't be
nervous. You're gonna be like,
svelte in six months. Beating the
ladies off with a stick.

VINNIE MILLS

You think? I don't know.

SANDS

You want to tell everybody what
you're doing?

Veronica locks eyes with Sands.

VERONICA

I'm going in a steep angle, right
under the clavicle... I'm looking
for maroon blood. If it's bright
red you've hit an artery...

Sure enough, the blood is maroon. Sands gets even closer to
her, watching. It's very intimate. They both lower their
voices. It's like they're the only two people in the room.

SANDS

...Fit the catheter, get the
guidewire in place. Thread the
tube...

VERONICA

...Remove the wire.

SANDS

Done. Excellent work.

Sands pulls his eyes away from her, back to his residents.

SANDS (CONT'D)

Use your nurses guys. Most of them
know more than you do. Never be
afraid to ask. Okay, Mr. Mills,
I'll see you in surgery.

Sands leaves. Veronica watches him go, a little weak-kneed
as some scrub nurses come in to wheel Vinnie Mills away. She
turns to see Gianna staring at her, arms crossed.

GIANNA

You want to tell me what the hell
is going on with the soft core porn
central line?

Veronica grabs her hand and pulls her out of the room...

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL - COMA PATIENT'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

There's a guy in a coma lying in the bed. FIND Veronica and
Gianna sitting on the floor as Veronica spills her guts.

GIANNA

So... you were sleeping with this
guy for six months.

Veronica, head in her hand, ashamed, nods. Gianna's head is spinning, trying to figure this out.

GIANNA (CONT'D)

But... I mean... where?

VERONICA

What?

GIANNA

You were in the desert. Did you just do it outside in the sand?

VERONICA

I feel like you're focusing on the wrong thing.

GIANNA

I'm just trying to visualize.

VERONICA

Why do you need to visualize -- a hospital, okay? We stayed in a hospital.

GIANNA

What are you gonna do?

VERONICA

I... I don't know. Mike and I have been together for so long he's like part of me, you know? And it's not like it's not fun either. It's not nothing, what we have. And I feel like I owe it to us to try one more time. Assuming I can trust him.

GIANNA

And this Sands guy?

Veronica buries her face in her hands, then looks at Gianna.

GIANNA (CONT'D)

Oh, man. You're in love with him.

VERONICA

No! I mean, we had this intense connection but I don't really know him. I mean, I know he's funny and quiet and he made me feel safe. I know that he comes from this weird well-adjusted family in California where no one yells...

GIANNA

Introduce him to your family.
That'll scare him off.

VERONICA

I'm the worst person in the world.

GIANNA

Oh, honey. Guilt's not gonna help.
(getting up)
Anyway, if you need to blame
somebody blame the terrorists.

INT. NURSES' STATION - DAY

Chloe and Angel do paperwork. Nurse Klowden walks up and sighs.

NURSE KLOWDEN

Mrs. Washington's refusing to let
her son be an organ donor. I can't
say I blame her.

CHLOE

But I promised the Lucas family.

Nurse Klowden stares at her, angry.

NURSE KLOWDEN

Why would you do that?

CHLOE

She's at the top of the wait list.
The lungs are viable.

NURSE KLOWDEN

Mrs. Washington never said she
would donate her son's organs.
Nurse Payne, you are here to help,
not to build up false hope. I'm
very disappointed. I hope we're
not going to have a problem here,
Nurse Payne.

Nurse Klowden walks off in a huff. Angel reaches out to pat
Chloe on the shoulder.

INT. FLANAGAN HOUSE - NIGHT

Veronica pulls out a pair of jeans and a cute shirt. Jeannie
walks in, dressed way too young, holding a cocktail dress on
a hanger and a little package from MACY'S.

JEANNIE

No. No jeans! I had this cleaned.
But you need the right underwear.
I got you some Spanx.

VERONICA

Mom!

JEANNIE

Trust me. You don't know what you
look like when you're walking away.

VERONICA

I wish I was back in Iraq.

Perhaps remembering what Mike said, Veronica goes in the closet to put on the heavy duty sausage-casing underwear. We hear GRUNTING and JUMPING UP AND DOWN. Jeannie sits down on the bed, something on her mind.

JEANNIE

You know, I'm real happy for you
and Mike. I think you made the
right decision.

VERONICA (O.C.)

How do you get... these... on?

JEANNIE

Just pull. I'm telling you. Takes
ten pounds off. The first time you
brought Mike home, I said to your
father, there's the guy.

Veronica huffs and puffs. Every once in a while we see one of her legs do a KARATE KICK out of the closet.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)

Marriage isn't always easy. And
there's times when you hate each
other. Nobody tells you that.
They tell you it's gonna be some
Julia Roberts movie. Marriage is
work. It's humiliating and boring
and sometimes you have to eat a
plate of shit. But it's worth it
in the end.

Veronica walks out in her under armor that goes from her thighs to her bra. She falls on the bed, out of breath.

VERONICA

I feel like I just roped a cow.

JEANNIE

Well...

VERONICA

You shut up.

Veronica shimmies into her dress.

JEANNIE

You're doing the right thing,
honey. And I'm proud of you.
You're a good girl.

Veronica basks in the glow of her mother's approval. She looks up at Jeannie, vulnerable all of the sudden.

VERONICA

Momma... I... Sometimes I feel like
maybe something's wrong with me,
you know? Like, I'm losing it.

JEANNIE

Oh, honey. You know what I do when
I feel like that? Spinning class.

Veronica looks disappointed but quickly covers.

VERONICA

Yeah. It's a good idea.

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL - STAFF LOUNGE - NIGHT

Gianna wears the Stella McCartney gown she bought off eBay as she finishes her makeup. She looks beautiful. She grabs a pretty little clutch, shuts the locker and walks out to...

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

...down the hallway toward the elevator. She hears a male patient's voice.

MALE PATIENT

Nurse? Hello? Help.

Gianna looks around. Does anybody else work here or what? She sighs, sticks her head in...

INT. THE GANGBABNGER'S ROOM

He's awake and moaning. She steps in to take a closer look. Suddenly, he GRIPS HER WRIST and pulls her toward him. She struggles. He PUNCHES her in the face, HARD. Gianna screams, but fights back, harder than the guy expects.

GIANNA

HELP!

Detective Valentino rushes into the room, followed by a couple of ORDERLIES. Valentino clocks the guy. The orderly subdues him. Valentino immediately turns his attention to Gianna, who is freaked out and shaking.

VALENTINO

Hey. You okay? You alright?

INT. LADIES' ROOM - LATER

CLOSE ON: Gianna's face: a big ugly black eye that's gonna get worse in the next couple of hours.

REVEAL: Detective Valentino staring at her. They are in the handicapped stall of the ladies' room.

VALENTINO

Well, you'll have a story to tell.

Gianna pulls some makeup out of her little bag. Her hands are shaking. Valentino takes the make-up from her hands.

VALENTINO (CONT'D)

Hey. Let me. I know what I'm doing. I was a theater major.

GIANNA

You made that up.

VALENTINO

I was gonna be an actor. You don't believe me? I did Streetcar.

GIANNA

I'm never gonna get out of this neighborhood.

VALENTINO

You from around here?

GIANNA

Yeah. My brother's a gang member. You probably arrested him before.

VALENTINO

Ah. That's why you hate cops.

GIANNA

It's like God sees me happy for a second...

VALENTINO

Hey. You're gonna be the best looking, most interesting girl in the room. Black eye or no black eye. And I say that as a person who wants you to have a crappy time. Come on. You'll be late.

EXT. MERCY HOSPITAL - DUSK

Gianna emerges, looking absolutely stunning as she runs past the EMTs, homeless people, roach coaches -- Cinderella with a shiner. She climbs into the back of a waiting town car...

INT. FLANAGAN HOUSE - NIGHT

Veronica brushes her hair and finishes her makeup. Tries a smile in the mirror...

INT. NEIGHBORHOOD IRISH PUB - NIGHT

Veronica walks in the door, looking pretty and sexy. The bar is empty except for her brothers. There's Bobby, who we met, and her two older brothers, RYAN, a cop, and TIM, a fireman. They are both cute and strapping and have the devil in them.

RYAN

Ronnie! Thanks for inviting us to your not-getting-a-divorce-party.

Tim grabs her and messes up her hair, roughhousing with her.

VERONICA

Stop it. Jesus, what are you, nine?

Mike walks in.

MIKE

Hey!

The guys all shake hands. Mike puts his arm around Veronica. His hand slides down to her butt. He makes a face.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Babe, your ass feels like a bouncy house.

Veronica PUNCHES him, but she thinks it's kind of funny. He kisses her and for a moment this feels right.

RYAN

Who is that?

TIM

Oh, my God.

Veronica looks up to see Chloe walking in looking cute.

VERONICA

Stay off her, you guys. She's from Lancaster. She's almost Amish.

TIM

Don't tell her I'm married, okay?

INT. THE COSTUME INSTITUTE BALL - NIGHT

The beautiful people mill around, drinking champagne and talking. Gianna walks in and scans the room for the investment banker. She sees him -- WILL HAMILTON, Waspy, nice guy, not a quirky bone in his body, talking to a blond Ivanka Trump type. Gianna walks up. Normally, she doesn't want for confidence, but this black eye's got her tripped up. Will kisses her on the cheek.

WILL

Hey, you. This is Winter. She's an old...

WINTER

Ex-girlfriend. What happened to your eye?

GIANNA

Just a little accident at work.

WILL

Gianna's a nurse.

WINTER

Really? That so great. I don't think I've ever met a nurse.

WILL

You want a drink?

GIANNA

I'd love one.

WINTER

I'll come with you.

They leave Gianna standing there. A WOMAN comes up.

WOMAN

That's a beautiful dress.

GIANNA

Ebay. Three hundred bucks.

Wrong thing to say. The look on the Woman's face changes to amused pity -- at least that's what Gianna sees.

WOMAN

That's great. Oh, could you excuse me for a minute?

Gianna is left alone again. She watches Will and Winter chat by the bar. She suddenly feels like the only non-white person in the place. She backs up a little toward the coat check. A COUPLE walks in and hands her their coats.

GIANNA

I... I don't work here.

MAN

Whoops. Sorry about that.

Gianna backs away. But he steps on the hem of her beautiful dress. We hear a riiiiip sound.

GIANNA

Never mind. It's fine. I was just leaving anyway.

Gianna turns and walks out...

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. NEIGHBORHOOD IRISH PUB - NIGHT

The party is in full swing. Everybody's having a good time, all rowdy and loud. The Flanagans know how to party. Veronica sits at the bar with Chloe and Bobby. Chloe gets drunk on white wine while Veronica and Bobby have one of their stupid drunk fights.

BOBBY

Barack Obama could kick Putin's ass.

VERONICA

Are you high? Putin was KGB. He could kill you with bare hands...

Veronica looks up to see Gianna walk in. She's dressed down now, in jeans and a sweater.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Uh-oh. This can't be good. What's she doing here? We have to go see what happened.

Veronica grabs a bottle of Jameson's off the bar.

CHLOE

Can I come too?

VERONICA

Yes. Who do you think I meant when I said "we"?

They make their way over to Gianna.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Hey, G. What are you doing here? Did somebody hit in you the face?

Gianna looks like she's going to start crying.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Wait. Hold that thought. Come on.

Veronica pulls Gianna and Chloe toward the back of the bar.

EXT. THE ROOF - LATER

The girls pass around the whiskey bottle.

VERONICA

You don't know what any of those people were thinking.

GIANNA

Yes, I do. They were thinking "Who let the Puerto Rican girl in?"

VERONICA

Bullshit.

GIANNA

Look, it wasn't my night.
(looking at Chloe)
I'm not gonna cry over it, okay?

CHLOE

Okay.

Silence. Then Chloe starts to sob...

VERONICA

What? What's the matter? I should have never let you have any whiskey...

CHLOE

Oh, stop it. I'm a crier! I cry like every other day and I'm not ashamed of it. I know you think I'm an idiot, but we can't all be tough, perfect bullies like you.

That's as close as Chloe Payne ever comes to losing her temper. Silence as Veronica takes that in.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry I said that.

VERONICA

No. You're right. I'm sorry. What... what are you crying about? I mean, this time?

CHLOE

It's just... that girl Christina Lucas. She's not gonna get her lung transplant and I promised her Teddy Washington's lungs and I know that was stupid, okay? But his mother's mad at the hospital and now she doesn't want to donate any of her son's organs.

Veronica listens to this, head in hand, knowing this is her fault. From the street, we hear the sound of GUYS FIGHTING.

MIKE (O.C.)

I'm not starting anything. You're the one starting something.

He is answered by another MAN.

MAN (O.C.)

We're just walking down the street, you stupid Mick.

MIKE (O.C.)

Well, move your Dominican asses along, alright?

Gianna turns back to her friends.

GIANNA

Uh, Veronica? It looks like Mike's about to get his ass kicked.

(looking)

Yeah. Somebody just punched him...

Veronica jumps up.

VERONICA

That ass hat...

CUT TO:

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL - ER - NIGHT

Veronica stitches up Mike in a curtained-off waiting area of the hospital.

VERONICA

You're too old to be getting into fights, idiot.

MIKE

They were talking smack.

VERONICA

You were talking smack.

The curtain opens. Sands. Veronica looks surprised to see him for a second, then covers.

SANDS

You didn't want to wait for a doctor?

VERONICA

I didn't like anybody on duty.

MIKE

My wife thinks she's smarter than everybody.

SANDS

She's smarter than most.

VERONICA

Um, Mike, this is Dr. Sands. Dr. Sands, this is my uh, husband Mike. I want him to have a CAT scan.

MIKE

Oh, Jesus, Ronnie. It barely even hurts.

VERONICA

That's because you're drunk. You hit the cement with your head, dummy. You're getting a CAT scan.

MIKE

Tell her I don't need a CAT scan.

SANDS

The lady says you need a scan, you need a scan. We'll take you upstairs. You're a lucky man, Mike.

MIKE

Yeah. I know. Look at this girl. Total pain in the ass ball buster, but I love her. You should have seen her in high school when she was in her Gwen Stefani phase...

VERONICA

O-kay. Let's get you upstairs..

INT. NEIGHBORHOOD IRISH PUB - NIGHT

The party is winding down. Gianna sees Valentino talking to Ryan. They make eye contact across the room and walk toward one another, about to speak, when the LIGHTS COME ON.

BARTENDER

Last call!

VALENTINO

Hey you, what are you doing here?
I got invited to this party but it
looks like I missed the whole
thing...

GIANNA

You want to get out of here?

Valentino downs his drink, puts it on the bar, grabs her and
and pulls her out of the place.

VALENTINO

Yes.

INT. DETECTIVE VALENTINO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The door opens. Gianna and Valentino stumble in, making out
ferociously, fumbling with buttons and zippers -- it's giddy
and fun and in the moment.

VALENTINO

You want a drink or some...
(what is he an idiot?)
Never mind.

They knock over a lamp on the way to the bedroom...

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Veronica looks through the nursing station for a snack. She
looks up to see Harris.

VERONICA

Hey. What are you doing here so
late?

HARRIS

I'm short staffed. I let Trovinger
go.

VERONICA

You're kidding.

HARRIS

Why are you surprised? The guy was
incompetent. He had to go. I'm an
equal opportunity asshole.

VERONICA

Oh. Good to know.

Harris leaves. Veronica watches him go, then looks over at
Mrs. Dumke's room.

INT. MRS. DUMKE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mrs. Dumke is sleeping, fitfully. Veronica checks her vitals, smooths back her hair and looks down at her tenderly.

SANDS

Hey.

Veronica is startled. Sands walks in and places a hand on her arm.

SANDS (CONT'D)

Hey. I've got your husband's scans here. Wanna come look?

CUT TO:

INT. X-RAY VIEWING ROOM - NIGHT

It's dark in here, and the light from the X-ray viewers is almost romantic. Veronica and Sands look over the results of Mike's CAT scan.

SANDS

Looks fine. No swelling.

VERONICA

He's got a hard head.

Sands reaches out and takes her hand. Neither one of them takes their eyes off the CAT scan. Silence.

SANDS

You have dreams?

VERONICA

Yeah. When I can sleep.

SANDS

Me too. It's weird being back.

VERONICA

Yeah. It's like there's this wall between me and everybody else. There's all this stuff I can't get out of my head. Stuff that didn't even affect me at the time. It's all playing back in my head in slow motion.

(her eyes well up)

All those kids. I wasn't prepared for that. And I feel like I'm about to blow up all the time.

(MORE)

VERONICA (CONT'D)

I don't even know if I'm a good nurse anymore, you know?

SANDS

Veronica, you're a great nurse.

VERONICA

Maybe. I don't know anymore.

Veronica turns to him and allows her head to rest against his chest for a second.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

And then there's you. I think I would have gone completely crazy if it hadn't been for you. And I'd be lying if I said I didn't think about you...

(pulling away)

...but I just feel like I have to do the responsible thing.

SANDS

I guess it was pretty stupid of me to come running out here for you. I just thought... you were the one thing that made sense.

Sands looks heartbroken for a second, then recovers.

SANDS (CONT'D)

He seems like an alright guy. Seems like he loves you.

VERONICA

He has his moments.

(a beat)

So what are you gonna do now?

SANDS

There's nothing to do. I signed a two year contract. I'm staying. You can take you husband home anytime you like.

Sands pulls down the scans and walks out. Veronica stares after him: two years?

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. VALENTINO'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Gianna wakes up, remembering where she is. She looks over at Detective Valentino. *Oh, yeah. Him.* Gianna's "fuck and run" impulse kicks in. She doesn't even stop to ask herself what she's afraid of here as she slides out of bed, trying not to wake him as she gathers her clothes.

VALENTINO

I guess we're not having breakfast.

GIANNA

Oh. I... um, have to work. But...
I'll call you.

So she says but she couldn't be scrambling out of there faster.

GIANNA (CONT'D)

See you around.

And she's gone. Valentino is left alone in his bed.

VALENTINO

See you later.

INT. CHLOE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Chloe is getting ready when there's a knock at her door. She opens it: Veronica.

CHLOE

Oh. Hi.

VERONICA

Hey. I was thinking about running
an errand. You want to grab your
coat and come with?

Chloe looks puzzled but obeys.

EXT. AN APARTMENT - DAY

Chloe and Veronica walk up to this run-down apartment and knock on the door. Lisa Washington, the mother of the poor dead boy, the one who slapped Veronica -- opens the door and immediately looks wary.

VERONICA

Mrs. Washington, please don't shut
the door. I'm Veronica Callahan and
this is my colleague Chloe Payne.

(MORE)

VERONICA (CONT'D)

I want to talk to you about your son.

MRS. WASHINGTON

Are you forgetting that I heard every word you said?

VERONICA

Look, I was wrong. I'm not saying you shouldn't hire a lawyer. You should. I would. But they're going to look at the probable outcome and the probable outcome is that your boy still would have died. Dr. Trovinger did the best he could. I was upset. I take these things too personally. I get mad, I want somebody to blame.

Mrs. Washington listens to this, holding her head in her hand.

MRS. WASHINGTON

At least somebody gets mad. At least somebody cares.

CHLOE

Mrs. Washington, we all do.

Mrs. Washington looks at Chloe and believes her. This is meaningful to her.

VERONICA

But Teddy would have died anyway. And there's another child you can save. Teddy's death doesn't have to be a waste. Christina Lucas can live with Teddy's lungs. Can you think about that? Can you please just think about that?

Off Mrs. Washington, moved...

EXT. MRS. WASHINGTON'S BUILDING - LATER

Veronica and Chloe walk out. Chloe looks at Veronica like she's a saint.

CHLOE

That was amazing. You're amazing.

VERONICA

That's just our job. Hey.

Chloe stops.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Everybody makes mistakes at first.
If you don't know something, ask.
And slow down. Don't let anybody
rush you. You're gonna be great.
Don't worry about it, okay?

CHLOE

Okay.

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL - DAY

Mrs. Dumke lies in bed. Veronica taps on the door.

VERONICA

Time for you medicine.

Veronica comes in and gives Mrs. Dumke her pills.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

You okay? You haven't called me a
bitch in a while.

MRS. DUMKE

What's with you and the sexy
surgeon? The one who squeezed your
arm last night.

VERONICA

You looked like you were asleep.

MRS. DUMKE

I can't believe this. My
daughter's online dating and you
with two men after you.

VERONICA

Believe me, this is a first.

MRS. DUMKE

Well, whatever you do, you'll wish
you had done the other thing. I
was married for thirty-nine years.
I know.

VERONICA

You know, you old married people
don't sell it too well, I notice.

Mrs. Dumke shrugs, rearranges herself against the pillows in
a manner almost regal.

MRS. DUMKE

The solution is not a man, I'll tell you that right now. They're nice and all but they'll disappoint you. You better have something else. Something you're passionate about. But I guess you do.

VERONICA

Yeah. I guess that's right.

MRS. DUMKE

You think I should have this surgery?

Veronica sighs, then opens the door by her table, pulls out a nail file and starts giving Mrs. Dumke a little manicure.

VERONICA

If you were my mother...

MRS. DUMKE

You'd have a better haircut.

VERONICA

If you were my mother I'd say no. It's too risky and it won't work.

MRS. DUMKE

I'm dying.

VERONICA

(tenderly, voice breaking)

Yeah. You are.

(a beat)

A lot of things scare me about the surgery. You could die on the operating table. At least that would be painless. Or you could die in recovery, in pain, on a ventilator. That scares me. And it probably won't work. I think you have to decide about the quality of the time you have left.

Mrs. Dumke is quiet -- hard to tell how she is reacting to this. Veronica keeps working on her hands in silence.

MRS. DUMKE

Thank you.

Veronica looks up and meets the woman's eyes and squeezes her hand. After a beat.

VERONICA

How about a little polish?

Mrs. Dumke nods. Veronica grabs a bottle of red polish...

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Same bar they went to in Act One. Veronica, Gianna and Chloe sit in a booth. Chloe toasts.

CHLOE

To the first day that I didn't want to kill myself.

GIANNA

Oh, yeah?

CHLOE

Christina Lucas got her lungs.

VERONICA

I gotta make this quick. Mike's picking me up in a half an hour.

GIANNA

Full speed ahead with the plan huh?

VERONICA

Yep.

Across the room, at the bar, they hear a commotion. Some drunk guys are fighting. There's a CRASH as a bottle goes flying into the back bar mirror, SHATTERING it. Someone YELPS in pain. Gianna and Veronica are both annoyed.

BAR PATRON

He cut his arm pretty bad.

CHLOE

Maybe we should go see.

VERONICA

We're a half a block away from the emergency room.

GIANNA

And I'm not giving up this booth.

Chloe is standing on her chair to get a better look.

CHLOE

It's the bartender. His arm's bleeding. I'm gonna go see.

Chloe gets off her chair and starts making her way to the bar. Veronica and Gianna look at each other.

VERONICA

The unicorn?

GIANNA

Oh, hell no. She doesn't get to...

They scramble to follow Chloe. Before the cute bartender knows what hit him, there's three hot nurses surrounding him.

VERONICA

Oh, you poor thing...

CUTE BARTENDER

I don't think it's a big deal...

CHLOE

Your arm!

VERONICA

Chloe, go find a clean bar rag.

CHLOE

You go find a clean bar rag.

GIANNA

Maybe you should take your shirt off.

VERONICA

Just to be safe.

CHLOE

Don't worry. We're nurses.

BLACK OUT:

END OF SHOW