

Executive Producer: Eric Ledgin  
Executive Producer: Justin Spitzer  
Executive Producer: Simon Heuer

Episode #101  
Script #101



“Pilot”

Written by:

Eric Ledgin

&

Justin Spitzer

Network Draft, Revised

01/27/2023



© 2023 Universal Television LLC

**ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. NOT TO BE DUPLICATED WITHOUT PERMISSION.**

This material is the property of Universal Television LLC and is intended solely for use by its personnel. The sale, copying, reproduction or exploitation of this material, in any form is prohibited. Distribution or disclosure of this material to unauthorized persons is also prohibited.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

ALEX: 30s, Supervising Nurse in St. Denis's Emergency Department; married mother of two. Alex is dedicated to providing excellent care to her patients, often sacrificing her personal life to maintain her high standards.

DR. RON: 40s/50s, Emergency Department doctor and jaded divorcee who frequently finds himself on the opposite side of Alex's hopeful optimism.

JOYCE: 50s, Executive Director of St. Denis Medical, and former oncological surgeon. Joyce has big dreams for the future of St. Denis -- dreams not currently being realized.

DR. BRUCE: 40s, trauma surgeon working primarily in the Emergency Department. Bruce is very talented, and he knows it. And he wants everyone else to know it.

SERENA: 20s, Emergency Department nurse and Alex's "work wife." Serena is fun and inappropriate, but she does her job well -- even if it's not her life's passion.

MATT: 20s, Emergency Department nurse, who we meet on his first day as a Registered Nurse. It's not going well.

VAL: 60s, Nurse Administrator and longtime veteran of St. Denis. She's very judgmental, and does not suffer fools.

The cast is a mix of Oregon locals and transplants; they come from diverse racial and socio-economic backgrounds.

***NOTE: St. Denis Medical is shot in the style of an observational documentary series.***

COLD OPEN

INT. ST. DENIS MEDICAL - NURSES' STATION - DAY

ALEX (30s, competent, sharp-witted, slight martyr complex) is discharging MR. TAYLOR, an older patient. Alex is chyroned: *Supervising Nurse*. She hands Mr. Taylor items as mentioned.

ALEX MR. TAYLOR  
Here's a packed lunch... some Thank you...  
treats from the vending Thank you, ma'am.  
machine-- on me.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
And then here is the number for that drug  
treatment center...  
(off his look)  
The same one I gave you the last three  
times you OD'd?

MR. TAYLOR  
I know. I'll call them--

ALEX  
You gotta stop with the drugs-- you have  
a heart condition, it's really dangerous.

MR. TAYLOR  
I understand.

ALEX  
This is serious, Mr. Taylor. You could  
actually die.

MR. TAYLOR ALEX (CONT'D)  
Oh yeah, I-- And then who would come bug  
me and make me use my last  
quarters on them, right?

MR. TAYLOR (CONT'D)  
(laugh)  
No more. I promise. No drugs from now on.

ALEX  
Okay. Good.  
(looks around then covert)  
But if you do use again, FYI, as a nurse  
I have access to some really good stuff,  
and I'll give you a deal--

MR. TAYLOR  
(immediately)  
Yeah-- let's do that, let's--

ALEX

No no no! That was a test-- that's what you can't do!

As he reacts...

ALEX TALKING HEAD

In an empty exam room, Alex talks to camera.

ALEX

When I was a kid, I was constantly playing doctor.

(catches herself)

Not in a weird way-- well, once-- point is, that's what I wanted to be. Then in college, my nan got sick, so we spent a lot of time in the hospital. And I realized the nurses provide the "care" part of health care. So I became an RN. And I love it!

**As she continues, we see B-ROLL of her with various patients.**

--Alex gives a sponge bath to a large, pimply man who's cracking up at the TV.

ALEX (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I mean, it's not always glamorous.

--A FEMALE PATIENT in bed looks through her tray of food.

ALEX (O.S.) (CONT'D)

And sometimes the patients don't appreciate you.

FEMALE PATIENT

(yelling at Alex)

This is orange juice. I ordered mango juice! Mango!

The woman throws the juice at her.

--Alex tries to wrestle a cigarette and lighter from the hands of a man who's lighting up next to his oxygen tank.

ALEX (O.S.)

And the pay's not great, considering the amount of work and risks we take.

**Back to Alex in person.**

ALEX (CONT'D)

But... you never know when that moment's  
gonna come around, where you truly change  
someone's life. It's beautiful.

A MALE PATIENT opens the curtain, revealing he has his robe  
on backwards, exposing his (blurred) genitals.

ALEX (CONT'D)

...Mr. Chen, those are supposed to open  
in back.

MALE PATIENT

I don't want you to see my tushy.

Off Alex's look to camera...

CUT TO:

MAIN TITLES

ACT ONE

EXT. ST. DENIS MEDICAL - ENTRANCEWAY

A futuristic, sprawling, state-of-the-art facility.

JOYCE (PRE-LAP)

Welcome to St. Denis Medical Center: an international medical destination!

The camera ZOOMS OUT, revealing this was just a scale model, labeled "The Future of St. Denis." Beside it is JOYCE (50s, an upbeat "try-hard"), chyroned: *Executive Director*. Behind her: the actual St. Denis-- a plain, unremarkable building.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

That's what I hope to be saying in about five years time-- five to ten years' time. It's gonna take vision. And hard work. And a lot more donations-- hint!

(laughs, then)

But we are a non-profit 501(c)(3), so it would be tax-deductible.

INT. ST. DENIS MEDICAL - EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

Joyce shows the camera around the hospital.

JOYCE

We are a safety net hospital, which means we provide care to everyone, regardless of insurance or financial status. Even if we wanted to turn someone away, we couldn't. Legally. I've checked.

(then)

But that just means we have to work extra hard, and always stay positive!

She engages a group of doctors and nurses.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Hey guys, what do I always say?! "The most infectious thing in a hospital is...?"

She points. The confused workers look at each other, then:

NURSE #1

C. diff?

DOCTOR #1

Antibiotic-resistant staph!

DOCTOR #2

I think it's pneumonia.

JOYCE

No, "a smile!" The most infectious thing  
in a hospital is a smile.

She smiles, trying to stick the landing for the camera...

INT. ST. DENIS MEDICAL - NURSING STATION - DAY

Alex works next to fellow nurse SERENA (late 20s, wild card).  
Serena is chyroned: *Registered Nurse*.

ALEX

New floor nurse starts today. Young guy,  
from Montana.

SERENA

Ooh, yum. Bring to me, please.

ALEX

See that's the type of unprofessional  
reaction I was gonna warn you about.

Serena starts rocking her hips subtly against the desk.

SERENA

Really excited to meet him.

ALEX

Stop.

SERENA

Stop what?

She ramps it up. Alex laughs.

DR. RON (40s/50s, divorced, "the thrill is gone and I accept  
that" energy) passes by, noticing Serena rocking.

RON

You okay?

SERENA

(laughs, stops)  
Yeah, I was just dry humping the desk and  
imagining it was a Montana nurse.

RON

(beat, moves on)  
So, apparently I ordered so much Postmates  
this month, they gave me a free gift card.

SERENA

Sweet.

ALEX

Sad. That's a sad thing.

RON

I lean towards sad too, but hey!  
Burgerville milkshakes tonight, on me.

SERENA

Can I get mine with oat milk?

RON

(jotting it down)  
I doubt it. You?

ALEX

I'm good-- my shift's done at four.

RON

Please, you always work past your shift.  
They'll be here by six-- how's hazelnut  
with whipped cream?

ALEX

No, I'm really leaving. My kids are doing  
*Mamma Mia* at school.

SERENA

They're in the chorus playing a couple at  
the wedding. It's cute-- and weird.

RON

Yeah, that sounds... not fun, but, you  
know, good. How 'bout a backup shake just  
in case? You'll like that hazelnut.

ALEX

No need-- out at four.

RON

Okay-- there's not gonna be any sharing  
though.

ALEX

Go help patients!

RON

(walks away, announcing)  
No one shares shakes with this woman!

Serena and Alex exchange a look as he walks away.



RON (PRE-LAP) (CONT'D)  
Do I "like" being a doctor?

RON TALKING HEAD

Ron, chyroned *Emergency Physician*, talks to camera:

RON  
I used to. But... After a while, the patients start to feel like old beat-up cars: ya fix 'em up, get 'em running, a year later another part conks out. And eventually they all end up in the junkyard. I'm really just a glorified mechanic.  
(then)  
Except mechanics get to work outside... nice breeze... listen to music all day, knock off at five and go have a beer...  
(then)  
I get to wear this fancy white coat though.

INT. ST. DENIS MEDICAL - ER - WAITING ROOM - DAY

MATT (fresh out of nursing school, earnest but fumbling) enters the waiting room, excited. He's apologetic as he passes patients waiting to be triaged.

MATT  
'Scuse me! Sorry! Just need to--

He makes it to the front and talks to VAL ("old guard" triage nurse) who's holding a clipboard, overseeing intakes. An annoyed OLDER WOMAN is arguing with her.

OLDER WOMAN	VAL
I've been here six hours	(trying to calm her)
already with leg pain and I'm	Ma'am... I hear you but... I
sick and tired of waiting...	understand, I do...

MATT  
Excuse me, can you tell me where to--

Val puts up a finger without looking, like, "Wait!"

OLDER WOMAN	VAL
...while you take all these	...I know it's frustrating...
people ahead of me! I demand	I hear... I-- Ma'am...
to be seen by a doctor or...	Ma'am... <u>LADY, PAUSE!</u>

This finally silences her.

VAL (CONT'D)

I am not a bouncer. I don't pick who gets in based on vibe-- it's a priority-based system. And "My leg hurts" does not get seen before "My spleen exploded."

OLDER WOMAN

Well... my spleen hurts too! I think it might be exploding.

VAL

Ma'am, where is your spleen?

Beat. The woman points around her abdomen, moving her finger as she reads Val's reaction. Matt whispers:

MATT

It's higher... left side...

VAL

Nice try, have a seat. Next in line!

The woman walks off, grumbling, and Matt steps up.

MATT

Hi, so I'm new today and I'm supposed to--

VAL

Next in line!

MATT

No, I'm not, like, injured--

VAL

Good, then you won't have any problem walking to the back of that long line of people who are following the rules!

Matt looks back at the long line, nods, and heads to the end, looking at his watch and then at the camera self-consciously.

MATT

Late on my first day. Not ideal...

MATT TALKING HEAD

MATT

I was raised in a religious community that doesn't believe in medicine. Whether it's cancer or a headache, the cure is always the same: prayer.

(MORE)

MATT (CONT'D)

When I told my parents I wanted to be a nurse, my Daddy threw a fit: "Why can't you be more like your cousin Wyatt? He listens!"

(then, sadly)

Poor Wyatt-- passed away last year from strep throat.

INT. ST. DENIS MEDICAL - HALLWAY - DAY

Joyce leads the cameras through the Emergency Department.

JOYCE

This is the "beating heart" of St. Denis, our world class Emergency Department. It might not look fancy, but it's filled with the best doctors in the country. Well, in Oregon. Carving out Portland, but that's a city, so they have more...

She realizes she's spinning off topic. She spots Ron typing at a computer and seizes the opportunity to segue.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Doctor Ron Lindsay! Our elder statesman-- he's worked here, what, decades probably.

RON

Centuries.

JOYCE

Show them a bit about what you're doing!

RON

Sure. I just examined a patient with a heart murmur, took about two minutes. And now I'm filling out his EHC-- Electronic Health Records. Then I'll submit an FL94 to Social Security and a 629-3-C to the State Medical Board.

JOYCE

Okay, I think--

RON (CONT'D)

But then comes the exciting part: liability paperwork, which I can usually get through in forty minutes if I've had my coffee...

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Dr. Ron is a great doctor, but he's a touch grumpy-- kind of like *House*!

DR. BRUCE (30s, trauma surgeon, cocky but talented) hears this as he's walking by.

BRUCE

Please, he wishes he was *House*.

JOYCE

This is Dr. Bruce Patel: our star trauma surgeon. We are so lucky to have him.

Bruce gives faux-humble prayer hands in thanks.

BRUCE

Please, I do what I can and if it's helpful to people...

Ron looks to camera-- he's clearly not a fan.

RON

Well I have paperwork to do and patients to make wait, so I should probably--

Meanwhile, Bruce is reading his phone and GROANS loudly.

JOYCE

Everything okay?

BRUCE

Yeah... this national surgical society wants to give me some big award, but it's like, "I have lives to save, guys!"

RON

Which society exactly?

BRUCE

...One of the big ones.

JOYCE

That's our St. Denis doctors, always getting fancy awards!

BRUCE

No they're not.

RON

Yeah, every surgeon gets one, they're like participation trophies--

BRUCE (CONT'D)

That is not true and you know it.

JOYCE

That's-- I just meant--

BRUCE

We have very few award-winners. Very few.

Off the awkwardness...

INT. ST. DENIS MEDICAL - HALLWAY - DAY

Alex walks with Serena, giving her some final instructions before leaving. Alex is holding a few POST-ITS.

ALEX

You'll be ranking nurse on the floor. But if anything comes up you can't handle, call me.

SERENA

I'll be fine.

ALEX

(hands her post-its)  
If I don't answer, this is the number for the school. If they don't pick up, this is the number for the bar next to the school.

Serena nods, taking the post-its and immediately discretely dropping them in a medical waste bin as they pass by.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Also keep checking on Mrs. Thune in 239--

SERENA

Constructive criticism?

ALEX

(knows this bit)  
Nope, no thank you--

SERENA (CONT'D)

You're being a controlling bitch, don't make me divorce you as my work wife.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I said no thank you!

SERENA

I got this. Go watch your kids murder some Abba songs. Go!

Alex is now distracted, looking at a YOUNG NURSE putting an arterial line into a patient for monitoring. She calls out:

ALEX

Hey! You're gonna twist that line! ...No, flip the cap-- you're gonna-- I'll do it. I'll just do it.

She goes to intervene as Serena looks at the camera.

ALEX TALKING HEAD

ALEX

"Controlling?" No. I mean, this isn't one of those jobs where you mess up and it's like, "Oh no, we lost a big account." It's more like, "Oh no, we took out the wrong organ." So, you don't have to do it my way-- just the right way. Which is how I do it.

INT. ST. DENIS MEDICAL - ER - WAITING ROOM - DAY

Matt waits impatiently as Val finishes scribbling something.

VAL

Next!

MATT

(sigh of relief)  
Thank you so much. I'm a new nurse, today is my first day and I'm--

VAL

Wrong entrance, walk through the east doors and go to three. Next!

Matt gets jammed up, then heads out, breaking into a run...

INT. ST. DENIS - EMPTY EXAM ROOM

Joyce shows the empty exam room to a couple TECHNICIANS with LARGE HEAVY BOXES OF EQUIPMENT.

JOYCE

If we set it up against the south wall, we'll get that nice afternoon light. But *feng shui*-wise, putting it over here might give us better flow.

TECHNICIAN

(deadpan)  
How bout in the corner by the outlet?

As she reacts...

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A brightly smiling Joyce talks to camera outside the room. In back of her, the technicians are putting a machine together.

JOYCE

"Joyce, why does a small regional hospital need a \$300,000 Bravo-Genesis 3D mammography machine?" Well... to become a destination medical center, you need an area where you outshine your competitors. And for us, that area is going to be the breast area. Women from as far as Idaho will come to St. Denis because they know that we have the best breast test. In the west.

(laughs, turns to Techs)

What do you guys think: "St. Denis: The Best Breast Test in the West."

TECHNICIAN

(doesn't care)

Sure.

JOYCE

(back to camera)

I handle most of our PR.

INT. ST. DENIS MEDICAL - NURSING STATION - DAY

Alex inputs patient data on a computer with the Young Nurse.

ALEX

Charting sucks-- we all hate it. But it's important to get every detail, or--

YOUNG NURSE

Yeah, I-- I know.

Alex goes back to typing as Dr. Ron walks up, noticing her.

RON

Wow, are you new? 'Cause you look exactly like one of our nurses who left at four.

ALEX

Ha-ha. Leaving now, just hitting Save...

INT. ST. DENIS - EMPTY EXAM ROOM

The technician, holding a laptop, talks to Joyce.

TECHNICIAN

Before I upload the software, are you sure you have the bandwidth? We usually install these at bigger hospitals.

JOYCE

Well, we're just as good as any other hospital, so... full speed ahead!

TECHNICIAN

So you're running over a thousand megs?

JOYCE

(no idea)

Mhmm.

He nods as he turns on the machine, causing...

INT. ST. DENIS MEDICAL - NURSING STATION - CONTINUOUS

...the "rainbow wheel of death" to appear on Alex's screen.

ALEX

Oh come on... Come on...

She hits the keys. Ron looks on, shaking his head knowingly. Dr. Bruce comes over.

BRUCE

Crap out on ya?

ALEX

It just needs a sec.

She hits the keys again. Suddenly, her screen, along with all the computers around them, blip to blue with white text, including, in large font: "Fatal System Error". Doctors and nurses up and down the floor react. Serena hurries over.

SERENA

I think the whole system just went down.

ALEX

What?! What about all the patient records? Treatment plans, meds...

BRUCE

Hang on-- we can still save it!



Bruce mimes giving the computer CPR, then laughs.

BRUCE (CONT'D)  
Kidding-- it's dead, it's gone.

Serena and Ron look at Alex meaningfully.

SERENA  
Go now. Seriously.

ALEX  
But-- it's all--

RON  
This doesn't have to be your  
problem. And if you walk out  
right now, it won't be.

Alex considers it, but hesitates. Then Joyce urgently jog-walks down the hall, not even stopping as she passes them:

JOYCE  
Big problem, big big problem! All hands  
meeting now-- I need everyone!

She walks on. Ron sighs and shakes his head.

RON  
And... you missed it.

Off Alex's look...

**END OF ACT ONE**

ACT TWO

INT. ST. DENIS MEDICAL - STAFF ROOM - DAY

Joyce speaks over a group of frustrated doctors and nurses:

JOYCE

Nobody knows why the computers went down.  
But our I.T. people are working on  
getting our systems up and running.

ALEX

What are the nurses supposed to do in the  
meantime? All our patient info is on the--

JOYCE

Just-- practice medicine the way people  
did before computers. Ron, you used to do  
that, right?

RON

Oh yeah. We also used to drill holes in  
patients' skulls to release evil spirits,  
but that's the '80s for you.

Matt, sitting inconspicuously in the back of the room, laughs  
loudly. Everyone looks at him.

BRUCE

Who's this schmuck?

Matt, who's wearing very tight scrubs, stands up meekly.

MATT

Oh, sorry. I'm Matthew, the new...

(confused)

Is a "schmuck" a floor nurse? Well, I'm  
the new "schmuck."

(then, covers scrubs)

They didn't have my size.

SERENA

I thought the new nurse was from Montana.

MATT

Yep: Billings! Well, the wider Billings  
metro-area.

SERENA

(disappointed and skeptical)

If you say so.

ALEX

Joyce, our computer system is too old--  
we have to replace it, not fix it.

JOYCE

Just because something's old doesn't mean  
it has no value. I mean, what about the  
elderly? Should we stop fixing them just  
because they're old?

BRUCE

Well, 80% of health care dollars go to  
geriatric end-of-life care, and most of  
them do just want to die, so...

He motions, like, "weighing the options."

JOYCE

(nervously, to camera)  
That is not the hospital's position.  
(then, back to staff)  
We can't afford a whole new computer  
system right now.

RON

But we have money for your fancy 3D  
mammography machine? We're underpaid and  
understaffed, but the sky's the limit  
when it comes to seeing tits in IMAX.

People grumble and look at Joyce, upset.

JOYCE TALKING HEAD

JOYCE

I was an oncologist for twenty years. But  
as an administrator I face different  
kinds of cancer: Cynicism. Pessimism.  
People getting mad at you because you're  
spending money on stuff they think you  
don't need. Those attitudes are the real  
cancers. I mean regular cancer is also  
real, but-- they're both bad.

**Back in the STAFF ROOM,** Joyce shouts over the rumblings:

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Okay, great meeting! Now let's get out  
there and give 'em that St. Denis...  
(can't think of anything)  
Let's go!

She leaves, as people look around in disbelief.

ALEX TALKING HEAD

Alex is frustrated and bummed.

ALEX

It just... it sucks. This always happens--  
I'll probably be late now, if I even...  
(telling herself)  
But it's an emergency. In the emergency  
room. So... double emergency.

INT. ST. DENIS MEDICAL - EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT - DAY

Alex is with several NURSES, including Serena and Matt.

ALEX

Listen up: we need to rebuild our entire  
record system by hand--

SERENA

And we have to go fast-- she's missing  
her kids' childhoods for this.

ALEX

(self-conscious)  
I'm-- they're just in the chorus--  
(then)  
Carla, retake vitals and start a paper  
trail. Janice: get written scripts from  
all the MDs.

MATT

I checked in with the patients like you  
asked. Mr. Falkin wants ice water, Mrs.  
King blankets, and Mr. Lasky wants  
morphine, Oxy and Vicodin. He asked if we  
had a menu but I said I didn't think so.

Alex and Serena glance at each other.

ALEX

Thanks, I'll... check in with Lasky.

MATT

Okay, great! I'm around.

Matt cheerfully walks off, leaving Alex and Serena alone.

SERENA

Wow: he dumb.

ALEX

For months, I've been asking for more  
nurses, and that's who they hire?  
(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

And of course he starts today. It's like  
I'm drowning and somebody tosses me a...  
a...

SERENA

Water?

ALEX

No-- like something that  
would make you sink even more--

SERENA (CONT'D)

The Titanic!

ALEX (CONT'D)

...Sure

They watch Matt, at a distance, oafishly trip over a cart.

SERENA

Montana, huh?

ALEX

I know. It's disappointing.

INT. ST. DENIS MEDICAL - ER - WAITING ROOM - EVENING

The waiting room is even busier and more packed than earlier.  
The Older Woman with leg pain is once again yelling at Val.

OLDER WOMAN

Your computers are not my problem!

VAL

M'am, please-- the staff can  
only handle so many--

OLDER WOMAN (CONT'D)

My leg is my problem-- and  
now you're my problem. You  
don't listen--

VAL (CONT'D)

Okay! Okay! I hear you-- I will give you  
a number for the person that can help  
you. Alright?

Val jots down a number and hands it to the woman, who looks  
pleased.

VAL (CONT'D)

That's the White House -- ask for Joe.

(as she reacts)

Tell him there's a nursing shortage and  
we need him to use his authority under  
Medicare to require adequate staffing.

INT. ST. DENIS MEDICAL - HALLWAY - EVENING

Ron is with an OLDER MALE PATIENT (MR. SCHROEDER), along with a YOUNGER DOCTOR and a NURSE.

RON

We don't have time to redo a whole intake: chills, aches-- it's probably flu. Give him some fluids and a PCR.

Bruce, who's been watching from nearby and is conscious of the camera, steps up, "teaching" the Young Doctor.

BRUCE

Unless... Mr. Schroeder, have you visited the Congo in the last 48-72 hours?

RON

Oh geez.

MR. SCHROEDER

The Congo? No.

RON

It's fine-- you can ignore him--

BRUCE

Any African countries that border the Congo?

MR. SCHROEDER

I don't think so. No.

BRUCE

And have you had sex with any men in the last week?

RON

Bruce, what are you--

MR. SCHROEDER

Absolutely not, I am married.  
To a woman!

BRUCE

Got it. Any chance she's had sex with any men in the Congo?

BRUCE TALKING HEAD

BRUCE

Surgeons-- the good ones at least-- we're not just doctors. We're... detectives. Sherlock Holmes-es. The body's been attacked: whodunnit? Or, you know, what dunnit?

(MORE)

BRUCE (CONT'D)

(then)

I almost went into medical research: solving puzzles, curing diseases.... But then I thought about all the lives I'm uniquely able to save, and I realized I would literally be committing murder by not practicing in the field. I could go to prison.

INT. ST. DENIS MEDICAL - NURSING STATION - EVENING

Alex is hurriedly copying patient information from forms into a notebook, while talking on a LANDLINE SPEAKERPHONE with her husband TIM. He's with their kids, LUKE (12) and ELLA (10).

TIM (ON PHONE)

We're at the school now, babe, how much longer do you think you'll be?

ALEX

I'm so sorry, I don't even know if I'll make it. It's a disaster here, I'm just--

TIM (ON PHONE)

Hang on, Ella's running over--

ELLA (ON PHONE)

Oh my God, Melissa Valenti puked all over the hallway.

ALEX

Ew! Tell her stay away, she might have--

ELLA (ON PHONE)

She was Donna and I'm the understudy: I'm Donna!

TIM (ON PHONE)

You're Donna?!

ALEX

Oh my God she's freaking Donna!

ELLA (ON PHONE)

Is Mom coming?

ALEX

(excited)

Tell her I'm coming! I'm leaving in... two minutes!

TIM (ON PHONE)

It's okay, hon-- I can videotape it.

ALEX

Don't videotape it! I mean-- videotape it  
so we have it but-- I'm coming.

ALEX TALKING HEAD

Alex is high-energy, looking at her phone.

ALEX

No traffic! And I drive fast-- it's kinda  
bad actually but-- I'll finish, and get  
there on time. Maybe miss the overture--  
(realizing)  
Why am I talking to you? I have to...

She gets up and hurries out of the room...

INT. ST. DENIS MEDICAL - HALLWAY

Staff members rush around, dealing with fallout from the  
system failure. Joyce talks to Ron-- she alternates between  
their hushed conversation, and cheering on "the troops."

JOYCE

No, Ron, I'm saying that in the future--  
Great job, everyone! That I'd appreciate--  
Keep it up! You not disrespecting me in  
front of the whole staff.

She smiles and gives a "thumbs up" to a passing nurse.

RON

Dis-- you wanna talk "disrespect?" How  
about everyone working their asses off to  
fix this, while you spend what, two  
hundred grand on a scanner we don't even--  
(off her look)  
Is it more? It's more.

JOYCE

It's not an either-or. We are going to  
upgrade the computer system-- okay?

RON

(taken aback)  
Oh. Well good, that's--

JOYCE

As soon as we raise the money.

She holds up a BOX labeled "COMPUTER FUND" and puts it on a  
desk. Joyce announces to the nearby staff:



JOYCE (CONT'D)

Our "system upgrade fundraiser" starts today! And uh oh...

(pulls money out of pocket)

We just got our first donation of one hundred dollars, you're welcome!

(to the crowd)

Who else wants to throw in? Huh?!

Ron sighs and walks away. Joyce looks around at the chaos...

INT. ST. DENIS MEDICAL - PATIENT ROOM - EVENING

Serena is with a SWOLLEN PATIENT.

SWOLLEN PATIENT

I never knew I was allergic to avocados.

SERENA

They're silent killers.

Matt runs in.

MATT

Okay, I got the Epipen.

He offers it to her. She gestures to the patient.

SERENA

Great-- give it to her, I have like a hundred other things to do.

She leaves, and Matt nervously kneels down, holding the Epipen and shaking a little.

MATT

Okay... don't worry, I've done a lot of these. Usually with someone... supervising-- but that's fine.

Matt lines the Epipen up to inject it, clearly nervous. He's nervously fidgeting with it, and drops it to the floor.

MATT (CONT'D)

Whoops, take two.

He picks it up, and we might notice that it's upside down, with the needle end pointing at his thumb.

MATT (CONT'D)

Here we go: "One, two, three, stick."

He brings the Epipen down onto the patient's thigh, then immediately flinches as he injects his thumb:

MATT (CONT'D)  
Oops! Wrong side, got myself.  
(shakes hand as it enters his  
bloodstream)  
Woo! Wowzer, that is... intense.

He's suddenly taking deep inhales, short of breath.

SWOLLEN PATIENT  
You okay?

MATT  
I think I need to go to the hospital.

INT. ST. DENIS MEDICAL - EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT - HALLWAY

Alex gives orders to a bunch of nurses, like a general at war. Ron approaches, a bag of potato chips in hand.

ALEX  
I'm headed out but I want records copied  
and distributed to every station. Folders  
on every door-- go!

The nurses disperse as Alex gathers her things. Ron pointedly looks at his watch, then at her. She reacts, defensive.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
I'm leaving.

RON  
"I'm leaving, I'm leaving." You keep  
saying that, but you're still here.

ALEX  
Well this time--

RON (CONT'D)  
And you're just gonna get  
sucked back in.

RON (CONT'D)  
(off her look, puts hands up)  
Hey-- your life, your choice.

ALEX  
Choice? I would've made it on time if it  
wasn't for the computers. I had to stay.

RON  
Sure. Okay.

ALEX

What-- what are you...?

RON

Just like all the other times you "had to stay."

ALEX

(conceding a little)

Okay-- Fair enough, I don't just bail the second my shift's over. I can't tell a patient's family: "Sorry Mr. Abrams got bad care and died, but it was Taco Tuesday over at Miguel's!"

The camera pans to catch a man walking slowly with his I.V.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Don't worry Mr. Abrams, you're not dying.

RON

Huh. Yeah, I don't think that's it.

He eats a chip. Alex puts her hands up, like "What, then?"

RON (CONT'D)

I think you're a workaholic control-freak, and you're afraid that if you don't leave, nothing bad'll happen, and that'll prove that you're not as important as you think you are.

He eats another chip. We see this really land on Alex, then:

ALEX

I-- that-- I'm only still here because you're giving me crap about not leaving!

RON

Then go!

ALEX

I'm going!

RON

(suddenly nice)

Alright great, have a good time.

Alex sighs, exasperated but a little amused, and hurries off.

RON TALKING HEAD

RON

This place is a black hole. You gotta pace yourself or it'll just keep taking, and taking-- and then one day you find yourself divorced. Alone-- living in a condo in the middle of Oregon, and the only joy in your day is a free milkshake.

(then remembering, gets phone)

Speaking of which, where's that Postmates?

(then, showing phone to camera)

Mile away. Randall has four-and-a-half stars, we should be good. C'mon Randall!

INT. ST. DENIS MEDICAL - EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT - HALLWAY

Matt, still manic from his Epipen mishap, talks to Serena.

MATT

My heart's beating so fast. Can a person's heart beat too fast?

SERENA

I mean, yeah.

Alex, who has now changed into a NICE DRESS, walks quickly past them on her way out.

MATT

Hey Alex, I accidentally--

ALEX

Don't wanna know, leaving!

SERENA

No, Alex, you have to hear--

ALEX (CONT'D)

Not my problem!

EXT. ST. DENIS - BUILDING ENTRANCE/PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Alex hurries to her car, looking up at camera, excited.

ALEX

She's Donna. Like, how could I miss this?  
She's gonna be...

She passes the Older Woman with leg pain, who is limping to her car, seeming worse for wear. Alex doesn't want to stop.

ALEX (CONT'D)

She's gonna be so freaking...

(pauses, then)

Are you okay?

OLDER WOMAN

No. I've been waiting seven hours with terrible pain, they won't even see me, I'm going home.

ALEX

Oh...kay. Well--  
(won't get sucked in)  
That's your choice.

She starts to continue on to her car, but can't help adding:

ALEX (CONT'D)

You really shouldn't leave if you're in pain, but that's all I'm gonna say. But I, personally, I can't help you.

She continues on, talking to camera as she gets into her car.

ALEX (CONT'D)

She'll be fine! See? I can walk away, and everything will be fine.

As she starts her car and starts to pull out, we see - behind her - the Older Woman SLOWLY LOSING HER BALANCE.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I'm not that important. My kids have a play, that's important. And the world isn't gonna fall apart just because...

She stops when she sees, IN HER REARVIEW MIRROR, the woman struggling to stay up. Alex talks herself down.

ALEX (CONT'D)

It's fine, because those EMT's? They're gonna see her, and save her, and...

We see the EMT's, far away on their phones, oblivious. Alex calls out the window.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Ma'am? Can you make it to those doors?!  
(off silence)  
It's right there, like fifty feet--  
please?!

The woman drops. Alex jumps out of her still-running car, rushing to the woman.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Let's go, we're going inside--

**END OF ACT TWO**

**ACT THREE**

INT. ST. DENIS - EMPTY EXAM ROOM

Joyce is at the doorway. The Medical Technician hands her paperwork, but she's distracted by workers nearby, who race around, working hard. She looks conflicted.

TECHNICIAN

So we just need your autograph right at the bottom, and we can process payment.

JOYCE

(looks it over)

Mhm... right.

(looks up)

And this is the most cutting edge technology? I'd hate to wake up tomorrow and hear someone came out with a better machine that makes this obsolete. Like my iPhone-- oh now there's a Max Pro, okay.

TECHNICIAN

This is the best there is.

JOYCE

Well that's all I want. The best.

She smiles to camera and again starts to sign. But then she pretends to notice something on the machine. She walks over.

JOYCE (CONT'D (CONT'D)

Wait, is that scuffed? For \$284,000, I shouldn't get a scuffed machine.

TECHNICIAN

I don't see a scuff.

JOYCE

Well now that makes me nervous. How do I trust this to detect cancer if you can't even detect a simple scuff mark?

INT. ST. DENIS - EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT - HALLWAY/TRIAGE ROOM

Alex and Serena sprint down the hall and into a Triage Room, pushing the Older Woman on a gurney, with Matt in tow. The women go to work, taking vitals and setting up an oxygen tank. Matt stands uselessly by the door, unsure what to do.

SERENA

Oxygen at 86.

ALEX  
She's barely breathing-- ma'am?!  
(to Matt)  
Call a Code Blue, respiratory!

MATT  
Okay, um, how do I...?

But they don't hear him as they attend to the woman.

ALEX  
Starting compressions!

SERENA  
Pads and I.V. coming!

Matt leans out into the hallway, calling:

MATT  
Um, Code Blue?! Someone? There's a code  
blue in here!

ALEX  
Use the intercom!

She indicates the phone on the wall.

MATT  
Got it!

As Alex and Serena continue working on the patient, Matt  
grabs the phone off the receiver, looks at the buttons.

MATT (CONT'D)  
Is there a...

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

As people go about their business, they look up when Matt's  
voice suddenly comes on - he doesn't realize that the  
intercom is already active.

MATT (OVER INTERCOM)  
...button I'm supposed to push or-- I've  
never...

INT. TRIAGE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MATT  
...used one of these.

But Alex, who is now administering oxygen, is too busy to deal with this. She talks to Serena and Matt, back and forth.

ALEX

Oxygen 84 -- figure-it-out!...Rising back now -- hurry-up!

MATT

Okay, I think I just...

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

MATT (ON INTERCOM)

...press this bu--

His voice suddenly silences, as he's just pressed the receiver/mute button. People return to their business.

INT. TRIAGE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MATT

...a Code Blue! I repeat, Code Blue! Report immediately to--

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

No one's hearing anything.

INT. TRIAGE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MATT

...need a doctor, urgently!

He hangs up the phone, proudly announcing:

MATT (CONT'D)

Cavalry's on the way, guys.

INT. EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Joyce walks through the hall with the Technician.

TECHNICIAN

Ma'am I really need you to sign--

JOYCE

Yes! I know, I'm just... thinking. Weighing options...



She hears frantic noise coming from the triage room and pokes her head in...

INT. TRIAGE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

...seeing the chaos as Alex and Serena are attempting to resuscitate the patient.

SERENA  
To you on 3-- 1-2-3.

ALEX  
Holding compressions!

JOYCE  
What's going on?!

ALEX  
Where are the goddamn doctors?!!

Joyce immediately picks up the phone.

MATT  
I already...

JOYCE  
Code Blue! We have...

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

People, including Ron and Bruce, look up at the intercom.

JOYCE (ON INTERCOM)  
...a Code Blue in Triage 1A! Doctors  
report immediately!

Ron and Bruce look at each other, then take off running.

MATT (ON INTERCOM)  
I think you need to press the button  
first...

INT. TRIAGE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MATT  
...or they can't hear you.

Ron and Bruce burst into the room.

RON  
What's happening?

ALEX  
Collapsed outside. Shallow breath,  
hypoxic-- 86 percent.

MATT

She was in the waiting room, she said she--  
- her leg hurt!

RON

Sounds like DVT turned pulmonary-- let's  
get some Heparin.

Bruce is listening to her chest with a stethoscope.

BRUCE

I don't like that sound--  
(looks in her pocket)  
Smoker-- could be pneumothorax.

RON

It's an embolism, Bruce.

BRUCE

I think it's both.

Ron considers for a second, then:

RON

Let's get her stabilized and... we'll do  
an ultrasound.

Ron and Bruce jump in to help. As they work to insert a chest  
tube on the patient, they speak in rapid-fire medical jargon.

RON (CONT'D)

I want epi, one milligram!

SERENA

Right here, going in.

ALEX

I have tPa ready.

BRUCE

Eminase, too, thank you.

Matt looks on in awe as they go to work and we...

TIME CUT TO:

LATER

Things are calmer and the beeps have slowed down. The patient  
is stabilized with a CHEST TUBE inserted. Ron checks a  
connection, then looks at Alex.

RON

Couldn't get away, huh?

ALEX

What can I say, your charm is magnetic.

BRUCE

(clocking Alex's dress)

I like this new look for the nurses-- it brings a whole level of--

Suddenly, the Older Woman bolts upright. She's scared and thrashing, pulling at the tube coming out of her chest -- which dislodges, spraying blood. As our people react, the life monitor starts beeping; we see Alex's dress is now covered in blood and iodine. Ron kicks into gear:

RON

Sedate her now! Propofol, 25 milligrams.

JOYCE

(to camera)

This happens sometimes, she won't remember it.

BRUCE

Breath is falling--

(points to Matt)

Get a BVM and pump some air in.

MATT

BVM-- that's a...

(thinks, then)

Breathing bag. Breathing Valve Bag!

ALEX

Gold star now get it and use it!

Matt snaps out of his stupor and does as he's told, approaching the patient's mouth and inserting the bag.

MATT

I know this. I just...

He pumps air into the woman's lungs. Matt watches her chest move up and down in rhythm -- he's amazed.

MATT (CONT'D)

I'm doing it! It's working!

RON

Re-stabilizing!

They all take a breath, crisis averted. Bruce looks over at Matt, standing there in his far-too-tight scrubs.

BRUCE

You know we can see your junk in those, right?

BRUCE AND RON TALKING HEAD

BRUCE

A blood clot in her leg triggered a pulmonary embolism, which in turn caused her lung to collapse.

RON

Which is-- it's pretty rare.  
(admits)  
But it happens.

BRUCE

I saw a couple during Covid.

He and Ron share a somber look, clearly on the same team.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

We were at war. Colleagues became brothers--

RON

(getting up)  
Okay, we're good for now.

EXT. ST. DENIS MEDICAL - NIGHT

To establish nighttime.

INT. ST. DENIS - EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

CLOSE ON the clock: 8:47pm. We TILT DOWN to find Ron, Bruce, Alex, and Serena coming out of surgery, exhausted.

Matt is already seated in the hall by himself, in shock at what just went down. As the others pass him by, Serena stops.

SERENA

Hey, you okay?  
(off his silent nod)  
You did great in there. You stepped up when we needed you. Good work.

She touches his arm, gives it a squeeze, and Matt reacts, suddenly very attuned to her. He tries to act cool:

MATT

Oh yeah. Thanks. It was nothing. I mean nurses... gotta nurse, right?

MATT TALKING HEAD

Matt, feeling renewed and excited, talks to camera:

MATT

Gotta admit, I got my butt handed to me today. Heck, I started to feel like maybe nursing wasn't for me after all! But then I realized: we're like The Avengers: everyone's got their thing. Bruce is Iron Man, the cocky brilliant scientist. Alex is Captain America, the hero who never leaves a man behind. And then there's me: (very proud)  
The guy who knows how to work a breathing bag. I saved a life today.  
(shakes head, then)  
Also might have met the girl of my dreams, so...  
(sings from *Annie*)  
"I think I'm gonna like it here..."

SERENA TALKING HEAD

Serena speaks matter-of-factly to camera:

SERENA

He's definitely getting fired-- he's terrible at this.

EXT. ST. DENIS HOSPITAL - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

It's dark, and Alex is back in her car, trying to start it. But since she left it on to help the patient, it's now dead.

ALEX

No...

She hangs her head. "*Nail it on the First Try*" by the Felice Brothers plays. She gets out of the car, at a complete low, when she hears an OLDER MAN'S VOICE.

OLDER MAN (O.S.)

Hey.

Alex turns, startled by a CREEPY OLDER MAN. She's annoyed:

ALEX

Look, I'm really not in the mood to get attacked by a stranger right now, so... could you just...

OLDER MAN

They told me you're the one that saved my  
Laurie?

She realizes what this means and softens.

OLDER MAN (CONT'D)

She's... she's um...

He's overwhelmed, and steps forward, hugging her quickly  
(it's sweet and vulnerable, not creepy at all), then he lets  
go abruptly and walks away, leaving Alex to take this in.  
After a beat she hears:

RON (O.S.)

That's gotta feel good.

Reveal Ron, who's come out with her milkshake.

RON (CONT'D)

Hazelnut. Whipped cream. Fridge was full  
so I kept it in a cooler with a kidney,  
but so what, right?

Alex laughs, wiping away the tears that were forming.

ALEX

You called it!

RON

Come on, I'll grab some jumper cables.

As the two of them walk back in, sharing a moment of  
connection... the Technicians exits, bringing the boxes that  
contain the Mammography Machine back to their van.

JOYCE (PRE-LAP)

What makes a hospital "great"?

JOYCE TALKING HEAD

Joyce stands next to her DONATION BOX, which now reads, "3D  
MAMMOGRAPHY FUND."

JOYCE

Is it the quality of the staff? The  
number of lives saved? Is it that they  
have the best breast test in the west?  
Sure-- absolutely, it's all of those.

We cut to B-ROLL OF OUR PEOPLE AT WORK:

--Serena "pranks" Ron by talking loudly into his stethoscope. He recoils in pain.

--The gang hands a birthday balloon arrangement to Alex, knocking over a bunch of stuff off her nursing station.

--Bruce dancing the running man in the hallway while an orderly beatboxes.

JOYCE (V.O.)

But running St. Denis is... a great balancing act. We have so much potential-- so much untapped greatness. And my job is to tap it-- tap it til it's dry.

EXT. ST. DENIS HOSPITAL - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

As Ron jumps her car, Alex FaceTimes with her kids, hearing about the play and laughing with them.

JOYCE (V.O.)

But we also have... needs. That I can't just ignore. Even if I want to.

JOYCE TALKING HEAD

JOYCE

They're like a vacuum, the needs. They're loud, and-- they suck, and they suck. And suck. And I have to try to tap, faster than they suck. Or else...

Her phone DINGS, and she checks it, her face falling:

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Ten percent restocking fee for that boob scanner.

(then)

Fuck.

BLACK.

END OF SHOW