

COMPLICATIONS

"Patient Hernandez. Gunshot wound."

Written by

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TEASER

OPEN ON:

The face of DR. JOHN ELLIS (40). He's handsome, intelligent-looking, with black hair just beginning to gray at the temples. He wears a white doctor's coat.

He stands at a window. Thinking. As we pull back, we see we are in...

INT. DR. LASTER'S OFFICE - DAY

A small, comfortable office on the fifth floor of Pasadena's Arroyo Hospital. Medical degrees hang on the wall.

John looks down at a parking lot three stories below. Patients come and go. An old woman pushes a man in a wheelchair. A dad carries a young boy in an arm sling.

An ambulance pulls up to the ER, its siren muted through the glass. John watches the EMTs unload a PATIENT from the back. The man writhes in agony, but his cries are tiny, distant...

JOHN squints, watching with careful attention. Then:

JOHN

That man's going to die.

A CLOCK TICKS offscreen... finally, a woman's voice responds.

VOICE (O.S.)

Why do you say that?

JOHN

You see enough people die, you get... a sense.

(thinks, then:)

It's something about way he's moving... He's trying to scream, but he can't catch his breath. I'm not saying I can make a diagnosis from three stories up, but...

As John watches, the man falls back on the gurney, limp. The EMTs check his vitals, alarmed-

JOHN (CONT'D)

...there he goes.

John watches an EMT try to calm a sobbing, screaming woman.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN (CONT'D)

Know what always seemed strange to me? We act like people *die at the hospital*. Some do, of course. But for most of them? There was a point in time, a *last moment*, they could've been saved.

In the parking lot, the man is wheeled inside. John watches.

JOHN (CONT'D)

And that moment is long gone by the time they get here.

John turns. An attractive woman in her 30's, DR. LASTER, sits at the desk. She smiles.

DR. LASTER

Dr. Ellis? Why don't you have a seat? We should get started.

John gives her a wan smile as he sits.

JOHN

Were you on call? I hate to ruin your day off. I tried to convince Jay this wasn't necessary, but... he disagreed.

Dr. Laster flips through a file, notes the time...

DR. LASTER

That's not a bad place to start, actually. Why do **you** think you're here?

John exhales, looking up at the ceiling...

JOHN

It's been a while since my psych rotation, but off the top of my head? I'd say I had an inappropriate response to a clinical situation, possibly indicative of an affective disorder. How's that?

DR. LASTER

I don't think-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

Wait, don't tell me. I can get this. How about "possible psychosis due to post-traumatic stress?"

DR. LASTER

Let's leave clinical terminology out of this. Just try to forget your medical training.

JOHN

You think that's a good idea? My patients tend to be very attached to my medical training. It helps me identify those... squishy things in their bodies.

DR. LASTER

Dr. Ellis. I'm on your side, here.

JOHN

My side? Ah. Good. Glad to know we're all in this together.

DR. LASTER

I'm just saying, I'm familiar with your case. I know you've... been through a lot. My job here is just to understand what happened.

JOHN

And report back, so my fate can be decided.

DR. LASTER

Doctor, if you're not going to-

JOHN

Fine. Fine, I'll play ball.

The clock ticks offscreen. John thinks for a moment, remembering... Tick. Tick. Tick. SMASH TO:

INT. ARROYO HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM - EARLIER THAT NIGHT

John SLAMS through a door as he tears down a hallway in the Arroyo hospital ER.

He CRASHES into a cart filled with medication, sending it flying as he runs past. The action is quick and kinetic as he ducks around gurneys and equipment, heading for...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE DOOR that leads to the waiting room. He is almost running for the door when a heavyset security guard - LEWIS (28), steps in his way. John SLAMS into him.

LEWIS

Whoah, Doctor. You can't go in there, remember? It's locked down-

John tries to push past as the bigger man holds him back...

JOHN

Move.

LEWIS

Doctor, I don't think-

JOHN

I'm going out there.

LEWIS

I can't let you do that.

JOHN

Get out of my way, Lewis.

Lewis hesitates, but he does not move. John's face reddens as he ROARS, grabbing an IV stand...

JOHN (CONT'D)

I said GET OUT OF MY WAY!!

All eyes on John. He raises the IV stand... Lewis stumbles backward as John SMASHES the security glass in the door. As he runs through, Lewis keys his radio, yelling:

LEWIS

ALL UNITS TO ER RECEPTION! I repeat-

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - FRONT RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

John is now in a CHAOTIC EMERGENCY ROOM RECEPTION AREA. People are scrambling, backing away from the door. John ROARS at a group of YOUNG MEN IN GANG CLOTHING.

JOHN

Get out. All of you. Now.

One of the men, CRUZ (23) steps forward. He has a shaved head, and multiple tattoos. He stares hard at John.

CRUZ

What you think you're doing, doc?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

I'm telling you to get the hell out
of my Emergency Room.

John glares at Cruz, his eyes dark...

JOHN (CONT'D)

I know why you're here. You want to
hurt somebody? Hurt me.

The two men square off, as Cruz looks into John's eyes.

CRUZ

You should watch how you talk, man.
Might get what you're asking for-

Cruz steps forward, shoves John in the chest...

...and John EXPLODES. He charges Cruz, SWINGING THE IV STAND.
It connects, knocking him aside and smashing a magazine rack.

Instantly, the OTHER GANG MEMBERS join the fight. John swings
at them, outnumbered but making up for it with sheer fury.

After a moment, Lewis and four other SECURITY GUARDS rush
into the ER, trying to break up the fight. John takes
advantage of the distraction to lunge at Cruz again with the
IV stand; it hits a window, cracking it-

Two security guards rush John, who struggles... as several
more security guards muscle the gang members out the doors
and into the hospital parking lot.

John hits the floor with a hard THUD, the security guards on
top of him. John makes eye contact with Cruz through the open
doors of the ER, which slide shut as we CUT BACK TO:

INT. DR. LASTER'S OFFICE - DAY

John looks at Dr. Laster evenly.

JOHN

Why am I here, Dr. Laster? Well,
you could say I'm here because I
used an IV stand for a nonstandard
purpose. You could say I'm here
because I assaulted three people in
ER reception. Or you could say I'm
here because I went batshit crazy.
Take your pick.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE**INT. DR. LASTER'S OFFICE - DAY**

John sits across from Dr. Laster, watching her. She looks over some papers.

DR. LASTER

Let's start with a little background. You're... married?

JOHN

Yes. My wife is a lawyer with the city. Our son, Oliver, is 6.

DR. LASTER

And how long have you been in Emergency Medicine?

JOHN

Ten years. I did my residency at Harbor Medical Center, then came here in 2008.

DR. LASTER

So: how has work been going, lately? Has it been... stressful?

JOHN

Well, I work in an ER. The E stands for "Emergency," which implies a certain amount of stress.

DR. LASTER

Tell me more about that.

JOHN

I see fifty-odd patients per shift. Factor in a meal break, that's five and a half minutes per patient. Three hundred and thirty seconds to deal with whatever combination of bad luck, bad genes, and bad choices landed someone in the ER.

John leans in...

JOHN (CONT'D)

Listen, can we skip this? I know my behavior today was... unacceptable. I will make whatever apologies are necessary.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN (CONT'D)

But I need you to understand: *I have patients who need me.* I'm asking you, as a colleague-

Dr. Laster makes a note, then looks at John with a professional smile.

DR. LASTER

Dr. Ellis, I'm afraid you're here as a patient, not a colleague. As a doctor, though, I hope you can understand I have a job to do here.

JOHN

I do. But there are other factors-

DR. LASTER

Then I suggest you bring those other factors up with the hospital administration. Now, please. We have a lot to get through.

John starts to say something, then thinks better of it. He forces a smile.

JOHN

Of course.

DR. LASTER

Good.

(opens a notepad)

Let's start Thursday morning.

ON JOHN. A beat, and he closes his eyes... MATCH TO:

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

John stands in a hallway leaning against a wall, eyes closed.

It's almost 5 AM in the Arroyo Hospital ER. It's loud. Doctors give orders, nurses talk to techs. A family is in the middle of a heated argument; a patient screams somewhere. As we push in on John, we hear a voice offscreen.

DAN (O.S.)

John. Hey, John... You with us?

John opens his eyes and looks over at DR. DAN BRENNAN. He's 35, with a quick gallows wit honed in a decade of ER work.

JOHN

Yeah, I'm... yeah. Headache. Just resting my eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dan pours a cup of coffee from a cheap desktop coffee maker.

DAN

Good. I was about to defibrillate you. Here. Drink this.

He hands the coffee to John, who takes it gratefully.

JOHN

Thanks.

DAN

You okay, buddy? You need a provigil or something?

JOHN

No... coffee's good. I'm just tired. Had a patient code yesterday as I was leaving. She tried to die on me until almost eight...

DAN

Who was the code? The old lady with the PE?

JOHN

Yeah. I sent her up to cardiac-

DAN

Uh huh... and she crumped hard in cardiac. Ischemic stroke.

Dan mimes pulling a plug, makes a "game over" sound. John looks at him, clearly hit hard by this...

JOHN

You're kidding me. I worked on her for *three hours*... She was showing me pictures of her grandkids while I was admitting her-

DAN

Hey, John... I saw her. Her problem wasn't cerebral thrombosis. She had a bad case of too many birthdays.

John nods, but he's obviously bothered. Dan glances at the patient computer, where a patient record is flashing yellow.

DAN (CONT'D)

It's you. Bay 4. What time are you supposed to be out of here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

John glances at the clock. It's 4:59.

JOHN
About thirty seconds.

Dan shoots John a sympathetic look...

DAN
The computer, it is cruel. You want
me to cover for you?

JOHN
No, it's okay. I'll take it.

John sips his coffee as he goes... behind him, the clock
clicks over to 5:00 AM.

INT. ER HALLWAY - EARLY MORNING

John finds Nurse GRETCHEN POLK (27) sneaking a cigarette at
an open window in a back hallway. She's attractive, but her
wry half-smile and direct way of looking at people make her a
bit unsettling. Her nurse's uniform is carefully arranged to
cover the tattoos on her arms and neck.

Amused, John raises an eyebrow at a sign on the window, which
reads "Keep Closed."

JOHN
You read that?

Gretchen smiles, shrugs...

GRETCHEN
No... what's it say? They didn't
cover reading in nursing school.

JOHN
They cover smoking?

GRETCHEN
Oh, definitely. It's a killer.
(takes a deep drag)
What can I do for you?

JOHN
We're up. Bay four.

GRETCHEN
That's Henry, right?

JOHN
Yeah. How is he?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRETCHEN

Well, I guess they didn't cure
diabetes in the last couple days,
'cause he still has it.

She stubs out the cigarette and closes the window, taping the
"do not open" sign back over the latch, then turns to John.

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)

Shall we, Doctor?

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - LATER

A small exam room. John and Gretchen tend to HENRY (28), a
friendly-looking guy with the sallow complexion of the severe
diabetic. John examines Henry's foot, which is gray with
cellulitis. He prods the foot...

JOHN

How's that feel? Any pain?

HENRY

Not really.

(hopeful)

Is it getting better?

JOHN

Unfortunately, no. Remember, we
talked about this last time you
came in? The lack of pain is the
problem. The nerves are damaged.
Have you been taking your insulin?

HENRY

I been trying. I ran out of what
they gave me last time.

JOHN

I know it's hard, Mr. Maxson, but
you have to keep up with your
insulin shots.

John frowns, manipulating the foot gingerly...

JOHN (CONT'D)

I'm concerned the cellulitis is
turning septic. It... may be time
to talk to a surgeon.

Henry looks at John, clearly terrified...

HENRY

Doc... don't take my foot, please.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

Mr. Maxson-

HENRY

There must be *something* you can do.

John sighs...

JOHN

We can try antibiotic therapy for a little while longer, see if it responds, but I don't think-

HENRY

Thank you. Thank you so much.

Henry clasps John's hand, almost pathetically grateful. John forces a smile as he and Gretchen step outside the exam bay.

JOHN

Excuse me a moment.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - HALLWAY

John talks to Gretchen and a TECH in the hallway.

JOHN

Let's get an insulin drip, with one gram of IV Vanco, 30 cc's of normal saline and potassium chloride supplementation-

As John talks, DR. BRIDGET O'NEILL (35) walks by. She's smart, ambitious, and pretty in a brittle sort of way...

BRIDGET

Seriously? Another insulin drip?

JOHN

You had something else in mind?

BRIDGET

Yeah. Like not wasting a bed on some guy who has no business being in here.

JOHN

"Some guy?" Bridget, it's *Henry*. He's in here every week-

BRIDGET

I'm well aware of his frequent flyer status.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

That's my *point*, actually. We're not set up to deal with chronic conditions.

JOHN

So we're going to send him away to make a point about the medical system? His foot needs treatment-

BRIDGET

Treatment? Come on, John. That foot was toast weeks ago.

Bridget heads off up the hall. Gretchen shoots a questioning look at John.

GRETCHEN

So? Our course of treatment is...?

JOHN

Give him the Vanco. I don't have it in me to ruin a guy's life tonight.

John heads up the hall as we CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAWN

An upper-middle class suburban street. A 2004 Lexus drives past upscale homes on a leafy, tree-lined sidewalks.

INT. JOHN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

John drives, bleary-eyed, toward home. He presses a fist to his eye, breathing through the pounding in his head as he pulls his into the driveway of a pretty two-story house.

He rubs his temple... then hauls himself out of the car.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Laughter fills a sunny kitchen as John tickles his son, OLIVER (6), at the breakfast table.

JOHN

I think I found something, here, in your tummy.

OLIVER

There's nothing in my tummy!!

JOHN

No, I'm a doctor. I think I feel something. I think it's an octopus.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OLIVER

I don't have a octopus!

JOHN

Are you sure? I can get it...

John tickles Oliver; the boy screams in delight. A Black Labrador, Zeke, barks at them, excited, trying to join in. John's wife, SAMANTHA (35) calls to them from the stove, where she is doing work on a legal pad as she cooks eggs.

SAMANTHA

Okay, guys. That's enough. If he pees in his pants, John, you're in trouble.

JOHN

I was checking him for octopuses. Octopi. He's clean.

John hugs Oliver for a long moment, holding him tight...

OLIVER

Daddy. You're squishing me.

JOHN

Right. Sorry. Go pee. Or daddy's going to get in trouble.

As Oliver runs off, followed by Zeke, Samantha looks over. John rubs his temple... the headache still isn't gone.

SAMANTHA

You okay?

JOHN

Yeah. Just... long night.

SAMANTHA

John... you've been getting those headaches a lot. Should you get it checked?

JOHN

It's okay. I don't need it checked. It'd be a very exotic brain tumor that managed to hurt only at work.

SAMANTHA

Maybe you should take some time off, then.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

Time off? You're the one working on
a legal brief at the stove, Sam.

SAMANTHA

Fair enough. You want breakfast?

JOHN

I don't think I can eat.

(off her look)

Later, okay? I'll get some sleep,
get rid of this headache, and then
I'll eat whatever you put in front
of me, I promise.

Samantha looks at him, sighs, then turns off the stove.

INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

John undresses as Samantha turns down the covers on the bed.
He rubs his neck as he takes off his shirt...

JOHN

Ah... It feels like I have a roll
of quarters in there.

SAMANTHA

Here. Let me do that.

Samantha takes over the rubbing, massaging his neck.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

How's that. Better?

JOHN

Yes. Aaah... ah... There. Right
there. Mmm...

John relaxes into his wife's body. Samantha kisses him. He
kisses her back...

SAMANTHA

You need me to relax you?
(runs a hand up his leg)
It's been a long time...

JOHN

I know. I just... I'm not sure I'm
up to it right now.

SAMANTHA

That's okay. It's nice trying...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

Oliver's going to hear-

SAMANTHA

He's fine. He's playing with his Legos.

She slips out of her dress, revealing silky lingerie. He warms to the attention, running his hands over her back and thighs...

And then, offscreen, A DOG BARKS.

Samantha ignores it, kissing John's neck...

MORE BARKING.

JOHN

Is that Zeke?

SAMANTHA

So what. Let him bark.

Samantha kisses John again. John frowns, distracted.

JOHN

Don't go anywhere. I'll be back.

He gets up, pulling on his shirt...

EXT. JOHN'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - MORNING

Zeke BARKS at a bush in the yard. He's a nice dog, but you can see the wild animal in him as he POUNCES on something.

There's growling and barking and tearing of leaves until a VOICE interrupts from offscreen.

JOHN (O.S.)

Zeke! OFF!

John hurries across the lawn and grabs Zeke by the collar.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Zeke! Leave it! Leave it!

Zeke backs off. John frowns, looking into the bushes. He searches around in the shrubbery, wincing as he sees a SQUIRREL, stunned and panting. Blood on its side.

John turns to Zeke.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN (CONT'D)

Seriously? Fifty-two bucks a bag
for the fancy food, and you've got
to eat the squirrels, too?

Zeke watches, a plaintive growl in his throat as John pulls
off his shirt and carefully wraps the squirrel in it.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

John has the squirrel on the kitchen table. His MEDICAL BAG
sits next to him; he is working on the squirrel, delicately
stitching up a gash in the animal's side.

Samantha hurries in with some ointment, a robe quickly thrown
on over her lingerie.

SAMANTHA

Will this work?

JOHN

I think so. I'm not really an
expert, here...

He takes the ointment, applying it to the now sedated animal.

SAMANTHA

Is he going to be okay?

JOHN

I hope so. I'm just cleaning the
wound...

SAMANTHA

I thought dog mouths were clean.

John frowns, wiping away dirt from the wound...

JOHN

Cleaner than human mouths, maybe.
But that doesn't mean Zeke-slobber
is good for him...

Samantha studies the little animal, worried...

SAMANTHA

Is he alive? He's not moving...

JOHN

He's asleep. I had anaesthetic in
my kit. Guessed on the dose...
There's an animal rescue in East
Pasadena I can take him to.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAMANTHA

He'll make it, right? He'll-

Samantha's voice cracks... John looks at her. She is crying.

JOHN

Hey. Hey... What's wrong?

SAMANTHA

It's... nothing. I'm sorry.

JOHN

Tell me.

Samantha looks over at a family picture on the kitchen counter. In it, John has Oliver on his shoulders and Samantha is holding a four year old girl, REBECCA. Despite a head bald from chemotherapy, she is still beautiful, smiling brightly.

SAMANTHA

I was just... remembering Becky.
Chasing the squirrels in the back.
Me running after her, trying to
keep her shoes tied...

She stops herself... John wraps her in a hug, holds her.

JOHN

Hey. Hey, babe. Breathe. It'll be
okay.

SAMANTHA

I'm sorry. I'm sorry, I've been
doing so well, and...

JOHN

And you're *still* doing well.

SAMANTHA

It's ridiculous. I just...
(looks at the squirrel)
Looking at that poor little thing
dying there, I just...

JOHN

He's not dying, Sam. He's coming
with me to the animal hospital.

John collects the squirrel.

SAMANTHA

John, you don't have to take him-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

I want to. I'll be back soon, all right?

INT. JOHN'S CAR - DAY

John drives down a street in a rough area of East Pasadena. The squirrel lies in the passenger seat, a bundle in a towel.

At a streetlight, John takes out his phone, searching for a number. As the light changes, he dials... A voice comes on over the speakerphone.

VET RECEPTIONIST

East Pasadena Animal hospital.

JOHN

Hi, ahh... Is there a vet on duty I can speak to?

VET RECEPTIONIST

One moment.

There is a click, and a voice picks up...

VETERINARIAN

This is Dr. Matern.

JOHN

Hi, I've got a squirrel here, my dog got to it... I'm bringing it in now. I'm an MD, and I gave him some lidocaine before stitching him up. Just wanted to give you guys the heads up in case he's going to need something to counteract the anaesthetic...

VETERINARIAN

That depends. How's his breathing?

John reaches over to the squirrel and pulls back the corner of the towel... He winces, then stares for a beat. Finally:

JOHN

Actually I... I won't be coming in.

John hangs up.

Carefully, he pulls the towel back over the squirrel.

He drives for a few moments...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

...then, abruptly, he SCREAMS.

He PUNCHES THE STEERING WHEEL, SLAMMING IT OVER AND OVER, as a roar of pure rage and frustration escapes his throat...

There is a HONK behind John as the car drifts across the road. He looks up, abruptly jerking the wheel and swerving back into his lane...

EXT. PASADENA STREET - DAY

John pulls over to the side of the road on a mixed-use street in East Pasadena. Liquor stores, a handful of pedestrians... not a great area.

The car sits there for a moment, just idling.

INT. JOHN'S CAR - DAY

John sits in the car, breathing...

He closes his eyes, trying to calm down.

Finally, he turns off the car and unwraps the squirrel.

The hopeless little lump of fur stares lifelessly up at him.

JOHN

Christ...

John takes a ragged breath, trying to collect himself.

Another beat, and John takes out his phone again. He scrolls through the numbers, finds Samantha's cell phone.

He looks at the phone, considering whether to call...

And then, from offscreen, he hears a LOUD BANG.

He looks up, momentarily confused...

Outside, up the street, there is a screech of tires, and more BANGS - it's the sound of GUNFIRE.

John looks over at the source of the noise and sees:

Fifty yards away, A BOY is lying in the road, screaming.

A souped-up HONDA drives off, rolling up its windows...

As John watches, a YOUNG MAN runs over and kneels by the screaming boy, yelling for help.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

John gapes, stunned. On the street, PEDESTRIANS scatter. John stares at the two men... It's clear that the one lying on the ground (MAURICIO, 11) has been shot.

John stares for a moment, then, almost without thinking, opens his car door.

EXT. PASADENA STREET - CONTINUOUS

Several pedestrians RUN PAST JOHN, fleeing the scene, as he takes a step toward the injured boy.

John continues walking, his pace increasing... IN THE STREET the second young man, MONDO (20), starts CPR on the boy, still yelling for help.

John frowns, then breaks into a run. He reaches the boys...

MONDO

Don't close your eyes! Please,
please...

The scene is a mess. Mondo's hands and arms are slick with blood, which spurts from the BULLET WOUND in Mauricio's neck in time with the CPR compressions.

JOHN

Stop that!

MONDO

He's dying! That dude shot him--

JOHN

I said stop. You're pumping an
artery- You're making it worse!

MONDO

What?

John gets down and SHOVES Mondo aside. He leans over and examines the wound. Mauricio MOANS, in shock, trying to move--

MAURICIO

It hurts...

JOHN

You're going to be okay. Hold still-

As he works, John looks over at MONDO.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Call 911. Tell them we need an
ambulance--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mondo's not paying attention. He stares, alarmed, at something up the street. John turns, and FROM HIS POV we see that the car containing the shooters has STOPPED.

It turns, and then begins to accelerate toward them.

Mondo's eyes go wide.

MONDO

Shit, man...

Mondo REACHES INTO HIS POCKET for a gun, but his bloody hands are slippery - he drops it. Panicked, he starts to back away.

THE CAR GETS CLOSER...

And Mondo TAKES OFF RUNNING, leaving John kneeling over the injured boy in the street.

In SLOW-MOTION, John looks down at the bloody GUN sitting on the ground next to the injured boy.

Almost as if in a trance, he grabs the gun and turns toward the car, which is BARRELING STRAIGHT AT HIM--

John FIRES. It is a defensive reflex, but it hits the mark; the bullet spiderwebs the windshield. THE CAR KEEPS COMING.

HE FIRES AGAIN. And AGAIN. Two more bullet holes bloom in the windshield...

AND FINALLY THE CAR VEERS OFF COURSE, colliding with a lamppost and taking off down a side street.

JOHN LOOKS DOWN at the bloody gun in his hand, stunned...

OFF HIS LOOK, we SMASH TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO**EXT. PASADENA STREET - LATER**

The street is filled with police cars and emergency vehicles.

We move through the cops and emergency personnel to FIND John, flanked by a couple of beat cops. He is talking to DETECTIVE DORSEY of the Pasadena P.D., a middle-aged African American man in a blazer and slacks.

DETECTIVE DORSEY
...found it a couple of blocks
away, crashed into a fence. The
driver was dead.

JOHN
How did he... what caused it?

DETECTIVE DORSEY
We're still determining that, but
it appears he died of multiple
gunshot wounds to the torso.

John takes this in, stunned.

JOHN
And the victim? Is he...

DETECTIVE DORSEY
He's on the way to the hospital.

JOHN
Which hospital? Arroyo?

DETECTIVE DORSEY
Does it matter?

JOHN
I work there.

DETECTIVE DORSEY
Well, you may get to spend some
more time with him, then.

Detective Dorsey considers John for a moment, then...

DETECTIVE DORSEY (CONT'D)
You told the other officers you had
no connection to the victim or the
shooter, is that correct?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

No. I... I heard the shots, and I went to help.

DETECTIVE DORSEY

One of the patrol officers found something on the passenger seat of your car. The corpse of a small animal? Can you tell me what that was doing there?

JOHN

It's... a squirrel. My dog got to it. I was on my way to the animal rescue, on Foothill.

(a beat)

It... didn't make it.

DETECTIVE DORSEY

I see. Well, we'll need to take you in to write up a full report.

JOHN

Wait, am I being arrested?

DETECTIVE DORSEY

No, just need to ask some questions. We talked to the other witnesses. As long as everything lines up, you should be done in a few hours.

JOHN

All right.

DETECTIVE DORSEY

One more thing. According to the notes I got, the car was up by the market when you fired? That right?

JOHN

Yeah... About there.

Dorsey looks at John, curious...

DETECTIVE DORSEY

You have any firearms training?

JOHN

My dad was in the military. I shot cans at the dump with him a few times...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DETECTIVE DORSEY

You fired three rounds at 100 yards at a moving car. All three hit the driver, center mass. That's... remarkable. Any explanation?

JOHN

I just pulled the trigger. I guess I just got lucky.

DETECTIVE DORSEY

Lucky. If I were you, I'd consider investing in a few lottery tickets.

He leads John to a waiting police car. John gets in, dazed. As the door SLAMS shut, we CUT BACK TO:

INT. DR. LASTER'S OFFICE - DAY

John sits across from Dr. Laster.

DR. LASTER

I read the police report. What you did was very brave. I imagine it was also quite traumatic.

JOHN

As in, traumatic enough to explain what happened today in the ER?

DR. LASTER

Let's not worry about that for the moment. Just tell me what you remember feeling at the time.

JOHN

Honestly, I wasn't really thinking about my feelings.

DR. LASTER

No? I'm surprised. Between the incident with the squirrel, the loss of your daughter last year, your wife's reaction...

JOHN

Obviously... I had a lot on my mind. But at that moment I was more focused on the boy lying on the ground bleeding to death.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN (CONT'D)

I remember thinking that he probably only had a partial arterial rupture. That I could save him if I could get pressure on it.

DR. LASTER

And the young man who died, in the car? How did you feel about him?

John does not respond. He looks out the window...

DR. LASTER (CONT'D)

Dr. Ellis?

JOHN

Honestly? Angry. Angry he put me in a position where I had to do that.

Dr. Laster makes a note. John watches her...

JOHN (CONT'D)

Tell me: How am I supposed to feel in that situation? Guilty? Sad?

DR. LASTER

This isn't a test.

JOHN

But it *is* a test. You're evaluating me. Maybe there's no right answer, but there's certainly a *wrong* one, at least if I want to keep my job.

DR. LASTER

That's not-

JOHN

No. No, hear me out. I mean, say I had *no* reaction. I felt **absolutely nothing** when I shot a 19-year-old kid. Clearly unhealthy. And at the other end of the spectrum, say I was **completely overwhelmed** and stopped functioning. Unhealthy. But between the two there's a perfect mix of pain and dissociation. Juuust right. So where is that?

DR. LASTER

I'm afraid I can't answer that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

Why not? I can give patients an optimal O2 SAT number, or blood pressure range.

DR. LASTER

There's no objective standard. It's a question of how well you function-

JOHN

As in, how many reception rooms you bust up with an IV stand?

DR. LASTER

I suppose that could be one indication.

JOHN

Then this is already over.

Dr. Laster sighs... puts her pencil down.

DR. LASTER

It is if you don't answer my questions. Dr. Ellis, I don't know how else to put this. I need to know how you processed this trauma.

John looks at the ceiling, frustrated, then:

JOHN

Do you know what happens when you shoot someone? Like, what happens next? Specifically?

DR. LASTER

Not in detail, no.

JOHN

You spend about six hours in the police station. It's not a therapeutic environment where you "process your trauma." It's a small room with a window and a table, where you tell the same story over and over until they say you can go.

Dr. Laster nods, makes a couple of notes...

DR. LASTER

All right. Why don't you tell me what happened after you came home.

INT. JOHN'S FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

John sits in his family room, holding a glass of scotch. Sam is on the phone at the kitchen counter. She frowns, listening-

SAMANTHA (INTO PHONE)

There's nothing else? In the file,
or...

(listens, then)

Oh. Well, thank you so much. I'll
talk to you tomorrow.

Samantha hangs up. John looks over at her...

JOHN

Who was that?

SAMANTHA

A friend in the public defender's
office.

JOHN

And?

SAMANTHA

He told me what he could. The boy,
the one you saved? He's the son of
a prisoner in the federal system.
They haven't found the mother.

JOHN

I guess that explains why he was
walking around East Pasadena in the
middle of a school day.

Samantha nods as she walks over to John, sits next to him...

SAMANTHA

I found out about the boy who...
who got shot, too. His name was
Raul Mendoza. Police files list him
as a "known gang associate." San
Gabriel Kings, to be precise.

John nods as he sips his scotch, thinking.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

How are you doing, John?

JOHN

I... I think I'm all right.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAMANTHA

John, *you don't have to be okay.*
HR at the hospital called. They
said you can take all the time you
need. I said we'd call when you
were ready, maybe next week-

JOHN

What? No. I'm going in tomorrow.

Samantha looks at him, stunned.

SAMANTHA

Is that a joke?

JOHN

No. There's no reason I can't-

SAMANTHA

No reason? John, you shot someone.

JOHN

Believe me, I'm aware.
(collects himself, then:)
Sam, what happened today was awful,
but-

SAMANTHA

But what?

JOHN

I can't explain it, exactly. I just
feel... different. Like I can
breathe. My headache's gone.

John takes her hand. He smiles, tentatively... not quite able
to believe his own feelings.

JOHN (CONT'D)

For the first time in a very long
time, I *want* to go in to work. I'd
be there tonight if they hadn't
already covered my shift.

Samantha is about to argue, but something about the look on
John's face makes her reconsider. She sighs...

SAMANTHA

How long since you slept?

JOHN

I... don't remember. It was...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAMANTHA

I think the answer is "too long."

Samantha takes the glass of scotch from John's hand and helps him up from the couch. As she turns off the light, we CUT TO:

EXT. PASADENA STREET - DAY [DREAM SEQUENCE]

We are in the speeding car of the drive-by shooter. The driver, RAUL, is heading down the street, his foot to the floor; there is a GUN in his lap.

The scene is somewhat surreal, the colors off; the images JUMP FORWARD IN TIME a few frames at odd intervals, changing perspective abruptly in the way of dreams.

The engine whines loudly. We pan around to find JOHN sitting in the passenger seat...

He turns, terrified, and SCREAMS at Raul:

JOHN

STOP! STOP THE CAR!

Raul does not stop; he accelerates, staring out at the road ahead of him...

JOHN (CONT'D)

PLEASE! STOP!

Raul acts as if John is not there, focused on something in front of him.

EXT. ROAD - DAY - DREAM SEQUENCE

And we are OUT ON THE ROAD with John, as he is trying to save Mauricio. Mondo is looking at the car, fumbling with the gun, as before, only this time in SLOW-MOTION.

He looks up the street at the CAR APPROACHING, his eyes wide. He drops the gun and runs.

John picks up the gun, as before, and we are BACK IN THE CAR:

INT. SPEEDING CAR - DAY - DREAM SEQUENCE

John is sitting in the passenger seat across from Raul; he is CRYING NOW, wiping away tears as he yells at the boy:

JOHN

STOP THE GODDAMN CAR! PLEASE!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Raul keeps driving... John looks out the window and sees HIMSELF, taking aim with the gun...

OUTSIDE, with John in the street, as he FIRES at the windshield of the approaching car....

INSIDE, with John in the car as the bullet SLAMS through the window and into Raul's chest.

OUTSIDE with John as he continues firing...

INSIDE, with John as more bullets pierce the windshield and he screams:

JOHN (CONT'D)

Stop! Stop! STOP!

Another BULLET hits the glass...

OUTSIDE, John is now up, running toward the car, firing. Man and car move toward each other, faster and faster... as they are about to collide we SMASH TO:

INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

John starts awake in bed. Samantha is looking at him, her hand on his chest - she has clearly been trying to wake him.

SAMANTHA

John. John! You were thrashing.

JOHN

I'm sorry, I... just had a dream.
Go back to sleep.

She gives him a kiss, runs a worried hand over his hair.

SAMANTHA

You're sure?

JOHN

Yes. I'm fine.

Samantha lies down and closes her eyes.

And John lies there, staring at the ceiling, his eyes shining in the darkness.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE**EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - MORNING**

A leafy suburban street lined with attractive, upscale houses. It's early. The sun is still low over the mountains; the day is clear and bright and beautiful.

We FIND John's car, moving through the light traffic...

INT. JOHN'S CAR - DAY

John drives. Oliver sits in the back, lunchbox on his lap.

JOHN

How are you back there? Need music?

OLIVER

No thanks.

(then)

Why are you driving me to school?
Usually mommy drives me.

JOHN

I thought I could drive you today.
You know how Dad sleeps in the
morning most of the time? I didn't
today. I slept at night, like you
and mommy.

OLIVER

Because of the thing that happened.

John frowns, looks at Oliver in the rear view mirror.

JOHN

Ollie... what do you know about the
thing that happened?

OLIVER

I heard Mommy on the phone with the
police. She said I wasn't supposed
to be listening. That it was
privacy for our family.

JOHN

Well, I'm part of our family. You
can talk to me. What do you know?

OLIVER

I heard what... What you did.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

John takes a deep breath, then:

JOHN
How do you feel about that?

Oliver does not respond. He watches his father in the mirror.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Do you have any questions you want
to ask me?

OLIVER
No.

JOHN
You're sure?

OLIVER
No. I understand.

JOHN
Really? What do you understand?

OLIVER
You told me, when I got my shots.

JOHN
What did I tell you?

OLIVER
When you're a doctor, to help
someone, sometimes you have to do
something that hurts.

John looks at his son, who is looking out the window;
apparently, the matter is settled.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
Dad, stop. This is the school.

John does as he's told, brought back to his drive by his
son's words. As he pulls over, Oliver gets out. He runs to
the driver's side window and kisses his father.

JOHN
I love you.

OLIVER
I love you too.

John watches Oliver run off to the orange-vested pickup
ladies stationed in front of the school. One waves...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

After a moment, John pulls into the street. He signals left, to go back the way he came...

Then stops himself, thinking. After a beat, he turns right.

INT. SAN GABRIEL GUN CLUB - DAY

An indoor shooting range catering to suburban handgun owners. Various handguns are displayed in cases; an American flag dominates the back wall along with some safety signs.

John talks to a clerk as he finishes filling out a form...

JOHN

So how does this work?

GUN CLERK

You want the membership, or you just want to go by the hour?

JOHN

An hour should do it.

GUN CLERK

That's \$40 for the range time... you just select the weapon. These here are the rentals.

John looks over the handguns in the case... and settles on one. It's a different color, but otherwise very similar to the pistol he used in the street.

JOHN

That one.

INT. GUN RANGE - DAY

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! John, now in ear protection, FIRES the gun.

Finished, he considers the target for a moment.

He frowns, then sets the safety and pulls up the target - a silhouette torso on heavy paper. Three misses. Two are high and to the right, through the printed scoring and range information. The third is through the shoulder of the figure, outside the scoring ovals.

John fingers the holes... Then reloads, methodically putting bullets into the clip. He slides the clip into the gun. His motions are not clumsy, but they're not expert, either.

He slides the target back and fires again. BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! Three times in quick succession.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He checks the target. Another miss; two shots in an arm of the target and a third in the lower left corner. He frowns, slides the target back...

And he is interrupted by his phone vibrating. He checks it; it's Samantha. He sets the pistol down, removes his ear protection, and answers..

JOHN

Hello?

SAMANTHA (O.S.)

It's me. Where are you?

JOHN

I'm... running an errand.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)

The hospital called again, about your time off-

JOHN

Did you tell them I'm coming in?

SAMANTHA (O.S.)

Yes, but-

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! Someone on another lane empties a clip at a target. John flinches.

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

What was that?

JOHN

It's... I'm at the auto shop, the car was making a noise. It's the, you know, the rivet thing.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)

Well, get home as soon as you can. Your family's on their way over. Rob called.

(a beat)

He's bringing your father.

JOHN

Seriously?

SAMANTHA

That's what he said.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

We haven't even spoken since he got drunk at Rebecca's memorial service. Now he's just *coming over-*

SAMANTHA

What do you want me to say, John?

JOHN

Nothing, I... I'll be home in a minute.

John hangs up. Pissed, he picks up the gun, and empties it at the target. BLAM, BLAM, BLAM!! The slide locks back.

John pulls up the target... it's not even halfway there when we see: THREE SHOTS, CENTER MASS.

INT. JOHN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Samantha sits with John's brother ROB (38). He's a clean-cut, good-natured guy in a golf shirt and jeans, a building contractor. His wife, Angela, is a well-put together blonde. She's holding a covered dish...

ANGELA

I just figured with everything going on, you probably wouldn't want to cook...

SAMANTHA

Thank you. I really appreciate it.

ROB

So, ah... does John need to go back and talk to the cops again? How does it work, exactly?

SAMANTHA

They say they're done for now. We're still figuring all this out.

Rob looks up as John walks in.

ROB

Hey! There he is.

JOHN

Hi. Sorry... I had to drop Ollie, and then I had an errand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROB

You're doing errands? Now? Good for you.

John says nothing. Rob clears his throat to break the silence.

ROB (CONT'D)

So... Angela made you guys something.

ANGELA

It's a lasagna.

ROB

I guess the idea is when something bad happens, you gotta eat food covered in cheese.

Samantha and John exchange a look.

SAMANTHA

Why don't Angela and I put this away and make some coffee...

The women get up and go off to the kitchen, leaving John and Rob together. An awkward beat, then:

ROB

Crazy, what happened.

JOHN

Yes. Yes, it was.

ROB

We told Sam, if you need us to take Ollie for a while, we're happy-

JOHN

It's okay. I appreciate the offer.

ROB

So, ah... Sam probably told you, Dad came with us.

JOHN

Yeah. She mentioned it.

ROB

Listen, I know you're mad at the guy. But he insisted on coming, and under the circumstances...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

Where is he?

Rob looks over at the sliding glass door leading to the back yard. Outside, a white-haired figure sits in the yard.

EXT. JOHN'S HOUSE - BACK YARD - MID-DAY

John's father Gary sits in a lawn chair, watching a sprinkler click across the yard. Gary's a craggy guy in his 70's - he's had a hard life, and it shows. John walks over.

JOHN

Hey, Dad.

GARY

You're getting dandelions.

JOHN

Good to know.

GARY

You should have your boy pull 'em. Remember how you and your ma used to do that? Even after she got sick, you two did it... Remember?

JOHN

I remember. Thanks for coming over.

GARY

You don't have to pretend to be happy to see me. I'm your father. I get to worry about you even when you don't want me to.

JOHN

I guess that's fair.

GARY

Samantha filled me in on the situation. How are you holding up?

JOHN

Okay.

GARY

You going back to work?

JOHN

Tonight. Sam doesn't want me to, but I have a patient-- patients I want to follow up with.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GARY

You talk to a lawyer at all?

JOHN

No... The police seem satisfied.

GARY

Well, that can change. People that weren't there, second-guessing you. Happened all the time in Vietnam.

John and Gary watch the sprinkler tick for a moment:

JOHN

I have a question about that...
Were you good at it?

GARY

Good at what? Good at Vietnam?

JOHN

I don't know. Good... at war.

GARY

Yes. Yes, I guess I was.

The sprinkler ticks back to its starting position...

JOHN

Did you know you would be? Before you went?

GARY

Nah. I was just another scared little shit in a uniform. I got there, just kind of did what I had to. Turns out that's pretty much the bar for being a good soldier.

JOHN

Did it... bother you? After?

GARY

Why? It bothering you?

JOHN

Some.

GARY

In my first firefight, I got stuck behind this dead tree thing, just trying stay down and not crap my pants.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GARY (CONT'D)

Heard a sound, thought it was the L-T come to tell us to fall back. It was two NVA's coming out of the jungle thirty feet off. Shot 'em before I could think about it.

JOHN

You never told me that.

ROB

Didn't much like thinking about it. It was all I *could* think about for a long time.

JOHN

When did you stop? Thinking about it, I mean.

GARY

You want the truth? Next firefight.
(off John's look)
Give it time. You did good.

Gary gets up. He pats his son on the shoulder, then...

GARY (CONT'D)

One more thing. I want you to have this.

Gary pulls a gun from his waistband, a small snub-nosed .38 revolver. John looks at it, nonplussed.

JOHN

Put that away. I don't want that.

GARY

John, you got your wife and my grandson to protect.

JOHN

Protect them from what? I don't-

GARY

Just saying. Those guys you tangled with may have friends.

He hands the gun to John, closes his fingers around it. Gary goes... Leaving John staring at the gun in his hand.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR**EXT. ARROYO HOSPITAL - LATE AFTERNOON**

John parks in the Arroyo Hospital employee lot. As he grabs his stuff, he talks on the phone with Samantha.

JOHN

Yeah, I'm just getting in now...

SAMANTHA (O.S.)

It's not too late to change your mind.

JOHN

I'm not going to change my mind.
It's work, Sam. Same as every other day for the last eight years.

INT. SAMANTHA'S OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

Sam's office is nice but not lavish, a government lawyer's office. Legal briefs and papers are stacked on the desk. Sam talks on the phone...

SAMANTHA

"The same as every other day." Do you have any idea how absurd that sounds?

JOHN (O.S.)

I'm just saying you don't need to worry.

SAMANTHA

(smiles, despite herself)
Also absurd. You're on a roll, John Ellis.

BACK WITH JOHN, who heads toward the hospital.

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

Just call me later, okay?

JOHN

I'll wake you up. You don't want me to wake you up in the middle of the night.

SAMANTHA

I do. That's exactly what I want.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As Samantha talks, John glances over at the front of the hospital. Lit in the sodium lights he sees two TRICKED-OUT CARS idling at the curb...

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

Wake me up in the middle of the night and tell me how you're doing.

John frowns as he watches the CARS. Just sitting there.

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

John?

JOHN

Yeah?

SAMANTHA (O.S.)

Did you hear what I said?

JOHN

Yes. I... I love you, okay? Kiss Ollie for me.

John hangs up as he goes to the hospital's employee entrance.

INT. ARROYO HOSPITAL - LATE AFTERNOON

As John opens the employee door and puts away his access card he's greeted by the entire ER STAFF, lined up and APPLAUDING. He half-smiles, surprised, as DAN claps him on the back.

DAN

There he is! Dirty Harry, MD!

JOHN

Guys, this... This really isn't necessary.

DAN

What do you mean? We got a hero in our midst! The nursing staff made you a cake. Sherry, show him...

SHERRY (40's), the chief nurse, steps forward with a sheet cake. There's a drawing, in icing, of John with a gun and a stethoscope - like something out of a marvel comic.

JOHN

Wow. That's... seriously, everyone. Thank you. That cake is amazing.

SHERRY

Six months of art school.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

You gave me fourteen inch biceps.

DAN

Hey, action man... the way you're going, we're all wondering what else you got that's fourteen inches-

This earns a laugh from the assembled techs and nurses...

SHERRY

Why'd you have to go and say that? Now everyone's gonna fight over the same piece of cake.

More laughs...

There are a few chimes from the patient computer. Sherry checks them, frowning, then looks up...

SHERRY (CONT'D)

All right, everybody. Eat before people start dying on us. And keep it clean - I don't want drug resistant staph in the frosting.

INT. MD OFFICE - LATER

John and Dan wolf down some slices of cake in the small cubicle-filled office where the doctors have their desks. John looks over some paperwork...

DAN

Hey, man. How you doing?

JOHN

I'm... Still getting my head around the whole thing.

(smiles)

The cake helps. Thanks for that.

DAN

Yeah, well, least we could do... Nobody could believe you were coming in today.

JOHN

Good to keep busy. You know...

DAN

Actually, I don't know. Not so into the "keeping busy" thing. I'm more into the "paid time off" thing.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAN (CONT'D)

(a beat, then:)

Seriously, man. I can't even imagine what you're going through. I got into a shoving match with a meth-head in April and it screwed me up for weeks.

JOHN

I think I'm all right.

DAN

Listen, the rest of us can take stuff off your plate if it's too much... even Bridget is gonna cut you some slack.

JOHN

Thanks. I'll let you know.

DAN

Oh, and hey... I checked out the post-surgery reports on the kid you saved. Nice work, there.

There is a soft chime behind Dan... on the computer, a patient record flashes. Dan glances at it.

DAN (CONT'D)

That's me.

(claps Dan on the shoulder)

Hang in there, buddy.

Dan goes, leaving John alone in the office. John stands there for a moment, as if getting his bearings...

Finally, he turns to the computer. He taps a few keys, checking some patient information, then picks up a phone...

JOHN

This is Dr. Ellis. I'm stepping out for a minute. If anyone needs me, I'll be in surgical recovery two.

INT. ARROYO HOSPITAL - LATE AFTERNOON

John stands in a surgical recovery room talking to DR. BELL (50's), a good looking African-American surgeon.

Mauricio Hernandez, the boy John rescued in the street, lies in a bed nearby. He is bandaged, with an oxygen tube in his nose. John watches him as they talk.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. BELL

The bullet behaved itself pretty well, for a bullet. Aside from the tear, there was a pseudoaneurism on the subclavian artery.

JOHN

How was the lung? He was aspirating pretty badly by the time the ambulance got there.

DR. BELL

Trauma to the right apical segment. I excised half the superior lobe. Bullet came within a centimeter of the aorta though, so I figure that's a small price to pay.

JOHN

How much blood did he lose? How many units did he need?

DR. BELL

At least four during surgery. If you're asking whether what you did at the scene saved the kid, John... Yeah. It did.

Dr. Bell checks a text on his phone...

DR. BELL (CONT'D)

I should run. I'll add you to the patient update list, all right?

JOHN

Thanks.

Dr. Bell heads out. John stands there, watching Mauricio. He looks tiny and pale in the bed...

John steps toward him. Lays a hand gently on the sleeping boy's arm. Listening to the soft whir of the machines, the boy's breathing, until...

GRETCHEN (O.S.)

Doctor?

JOHN

Yes?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRETCHEN

They said I could find you up here.
Um... the computer wants us in Bay
9. You need a minute?

JOHN

No. No, I'm coming.

John takes a last look at Mauricio's chart, then walks out
with Gretchen...

JOHN (CONT'D)

What awaits us in Bay 9?

GRETCHEN

Female, 25. CC's a broken
collarbone.

JOHN

Sounds straightforward.

GRETCHEN

Does it?

John catches a dark look from Gretchen. He frowns...

JOHN

What?

GRETCHEN

You'll see.

As they get into the elevator we CUT TO:

INT. ER EXAMINATION ROOM - NIGHT

John examines HILLARY MARKS (22), a blonde with mascara
smeared from crying. She has several bruises on her face. Her
boyfriend, SETH (28) is with her, hovering by the bed. He's a
muscular guy with a scruff of beard...

John examines an X-RAY on a computer screen. Gretchen is with
him; she is preparing a sling. John squints at the x-ray.

JOHN

So. Tell me again what happened?

HILLARY

I was just in the back yard...

SETH

She fell off the porch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

Let's let her answer, please.

John keeps looking at the X-ray, his tone casual...

JOHN (CONT'D)

Okay. So the bruises... that's where they came from, too?

Hillary glances at Seth, then back at John...

HILLARY

Yeah.

JOHN

And you're sure you only fell once? You have bruises on *both* sides of your body. It's just... unusual to see that happen from a single fall.

SETH

Yeah, she *told* you-

JOHN

And I'm confirming what she said, sir. Please.

Seth looks at Hillary, who hesitates, then turns to John.

HILLARY

I kind of rolled, I think. It, uh... it got the other side.

JOHN

Ah. That explains it.

Gretchen catches John's eye, an eyebrow raised. John frowns, then turns to Seth with a smile.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Okay, just one more thing to take care of. We'll need a pelvic exam.

HILLARY

Wait... why-

John smiles blandly.

JOHN

We just need to check. In rare cases, a fall can cause reproductive harm.

(to Seth)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN (CONT'D)

Just a precaution, but... she'll
need some privacy.

Gretchen leads Seth to the door.

GRETCHEN

You can wait in the lobby.

With a backward look at Hillary, Seth goes...

After the door shuts, John turns to the patient, who is
already starting to get undressed... He puts up a hand.

JOHN

You don't need to get undressed. I
just needed a moment alone, to ask
you a few questions.

Hillary looks at him, wary...

HILLARY

What kind of questions?

John lowers his voice, gentle...

JOHN

If... *someone* is hurting you, I
want you to be able to talk about
it freely. And confidentially.

HILLARY

I don't... I said I fell.

JOHN

I know. That's what your boyfriend
told me. I'd like to hear from you.
Maybe about *how* you fell.

HILLARY

I slipped off the porch. Like he
said.

A harsh laugh escapes Gretchen.

GRETCHEN

You *slipped*?

Hillary turns on Gretchen, her eyes flashing...

HILLARY

You got a problem?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

John looks at Gretchen, alarmed. Gretchen catches his look, stops herself.

GRETCHEN

No... Just... forget it.

JOHN

Sorry, we should get on with-

HILLARY

No, I want to hear what she has to say. What?

Now unable to stop herself, Gretchen turns on her:

GRETCHEN

The only way you get bruises like that from slipping off a porch is if you fell into a pile of fists. He's going to kill you, eventually. You know that, right?

JOHN

Gretchen-

Hillary is up from the exam table...

HILLARY

How's this your business, bitch?

GRETCHEN

If you expect us to put you back together when he busts you up, I'd say that makes it our business-

John takes Gretchen's arm...

JOHN

We need to talk outside.
(to Hillary)
Excuse us.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - HALLWAY - NIGHT

John walks out into the hallway. Gretchen follows him out, steaming...

JOHN

What was that?

Gretchen fixes her eyes at the wall, her jaw set.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRETCHEN

Sorry, doctor.

JOHN

I didn't ask if you were sorry, I asked what that was.

A beat, and Gretchen looks at him...

GRETCHEN

Look at her chart. She's been in here six times in a year. Concussion, broken nose, ruptured spleen. She's going to *die*. We're just watching it happen.

JOHN

Believe me, I would like to help her. The guy is a son of a bitch, no question. But there are procedures for dealing with this kind of-

GRETCHEN

Yeah? Like what?

John hesitates. It's all the answer she needs. She laughs sharply, shaking her head...

GRETCHEN (CONT'D)

I got a procedure. You still have that gun from yesterday?

JOHN

Excuse me? What is that supposed to mean?

GRETCHEN

Nothing.

JOHN

You're proposing I shoot the man?

GRETCHEN

Why, are you offering?

JOHN

No. I am not offering.

GRETCHEN

Then I guess I was joking.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

Listen, I understand your concern-

Gretchen fixes him with a dark stare.

GRETCHEN

Do you, doctor? Do you really?

John starts to respond, but something in Gretchen's eyes makes him stop. He collects himself, then:

JOHN

Gretchen, you've been disciplined for conduct violations four times. You've already got a target on your back with Sherry and the administration. What do you think happens if you keep this up?

Gretchen just looks at him... Finally, John just shakes his head, giving up.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Just... get her up to X-ray.

John watches Gretchen as she turns and goes back inside. He heads up the hall...

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

At the far end of the hallway, John joins Dan, who is looking over a chart outside the office. Bridget is there as well, pouring herself a cup of coffee. Dan gives John a look - clearly, he and Bridget saw some of that interaction.

DAN

What was that about?

JOHN

Nothing.

DAN

Are we having another "Gretchen incident?"

JOHN

It's nothing. It's fine.

BRIDGET

You know they've been trying to fire her for over a year. Don't feel you have to cover for her.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

Especially after what you went through...

JOHN

We had a discussion, and she's taking a patient up to X-ray. End of story.

BRIDGET

If you say so.

Bridget looks at him doubtfully as she heads off to see a patient... Dan looks over at John.

DAN

Hey, would you check me on something, here?

John comes over, looks at the image on Dan's computer. It's an X-ray of a face. It's a mess, with multiple fractures across the nose and cheekbone.

DAN (CONT'D)

I got a kid in earlier, said he was in a fight. Multiple fractures, tissue damage, a concussion... I'm just trying to figure out whether to deal with the sinus first-

JOHN

(squints at the X-ray)
What happened? He get hit with a board, maybe? Or a bat?

DAN

He just said it was a fight. He's not a talker. I can't even get his clothes off for a full examination. Mean little son of a bitch.

John looks at Dan, struck by this...

JOHN

He won't take off his clothes? Why?

DAN

Probably just a bad case of Recent Criminal Activity Syndrome. Judging from the tissue damage, the break is at least a day old.

JOHN

A day old.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAN

Yeah. Maybe two.

John looks at the x-ray again. From his POV we see the age and race of the patient - 19, Hispanic - John frowns.

JOHN

Where is he?

Off Dan's look, we cut to:

INT. ER EXAMINATION ROOM - EVENING

John looks through the Exam Room window. Inside is a short Hispanic man with a shaved head, wearing jeans and a flannel shirt. His face is bruised, an eye swollen shut.

DAN

That's him. Came in with a couple of guys who said they found him on the street. Reception said they were knife-and-gun club types.

JOHN

You're sure about that? Did they say anything else-

DAN

What is it?

JOHN

I don't know. Maybe nothing. Maybe-

As John talks, the patient looks over at the window and sees him standing there. For a moment, they lock eyes. There is a flicker of recognition, of fury, in the man's eyes...

John stares for a moment, then turns and walks to the door of the examination room. Dan looks at him, alarmed.

DAN

John what are you-

John isn't listening, in his own world. He opens the door and goes inside. Dan hurries after him...

DAN (CONT'D)

John!

As the door SHUTS BEHIND JOHN...

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE**INT. ER EXAMINATION ROOM - NIGHT**

John walks into the examination room. The patient, TICO (20) looks at him, wary. John looks right back... He's professional, but there's something dark in his eyes.

JOHN

Good evening, Mr...
(checks the chart)
Rodriguez.

Tico stares at John for a long moment, then:

TICO

'Sup.

JOHN

I hear you don't want to take off
your clothes for the examination.

Dan walks in behind John. He's about to speak, but John catches his eye with a look - "stay out of this."

JOHN (CONT'D)

My colleague Dr. Brennan, here,
showed me your x-rays. You're in
bad shape. Without a full exam...

Tico speaks with some effort; he's clearly in agony. He keeps his eyes on John, though...

TICO

I got hurt... on my face. You can
see that... fine.

JOHN

That's the injury we know about.
There may be more-

TICO

There's not more.

DAN

John, seriously, we should-

John puts up a hand to Dan as he moves toward Tico...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

How about this. Why don't you start by telling me exactly how you hurt yourself, and then we'll see about the clothes.

Tico looks at Dan... back at John.

TICO

I thought *he* was my doctor.

JOHN

We both are. So? How did you hurt your face?

TICO

I don't got to talk to you.

JOHN

Dr. Brennan... would you get a couple of techs in here, please?

DAN

What are you-

JOHN

Now. Please.

Alarmed, Dan goes to the door and waves to a couple of techs. As they hurry in, John continues, locking eyes with Tico.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Mr Rodriguez, I'm concerned your head injury may be causing confusion. If that's the case, I'm going to have to compel treatment.

John looks at Dan and the techs, waves them closer.

TICO

What are you talking about?

JOHN

I'm saying do as I ask, now... or I'll have to make you do as I ask.

TICO

Not gonna happen.

JOHN

Yes, it-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Before John can finish his sentence, Tico is UP AND MOVING TOWARD THE DOOR. He pushes one of the techs aside, elbowing Dan in the face. The second tech dives for him, knocking him to the ground...

TICO

GET OFF ME!

One of the techs, JUSTIN (30's) tries to wrestle Tico's legs down and gets a kick to the jaw...

Everyone is on the ground, scrambling to get control of the thrashing, flailing man. He's strong, despite his injuries, and he sends Dan falling into an EKG machine as he moves toward the door.

As Tico scrambles for the door, something shiny falls out of his pocket... It is a large KNIFE.

JUSTIN

KNIFE!

Justin grabs for the knife but Tico gets there first and SLASHES at John, opening a long, shallow gash on his arm...

JOHN

Get it!! GET IT AWAY FROM HIM!

Dan and the other tech hold Tico down as Justin grabs his arm and starts SMASHING it against the wheels of an exam table. TICO thrashes, trying to break free...

TICO

Get off me! Get the fu-

Tico SCREAMS as the knife falls to the ground. He brings up his other fist and catches one of the techs in the face as John dives for a crash cart, prepping a syringe...

Tico is struggling, kicking at the techs and digging for something in his pants pocket...

John finishes filling the syringe, then goes for Tico's arm. Tico fends him off, knocking him back...

John hits the floor, recovering... then lunges in and JAMS THE NEEDLE INTO TICO'S CROTCH.

He HOWLS as John pushes the plunger down on the syringe.

A moment, and Tico's body relaxes... still, he does not lose consciousness, glaring up at John as Justin searches his pockets...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And comes up with a tape-wrapped PISTOL. He holds it up.

JUSTIN

Doctor?

JOHN

Did nobody search this guy when he came in?

John grips his arm, bleeding through his fingers...

DAN

John, let me take a look at that.

JOHN

In a second.

John takes the gun, holds it up in front of Tico's face.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Was this for my patient? Was this for Mauricio Hernandez?

Tico just glares at him, glassy-eyed and malevolent. John YELLS at him; it's the first time we've seen him really angry since the flash at the beginning...

JOHN (CONT'D)

You came into this hospital to KILL MY PATIENT? IS THAT WHAT THIS IS?

John is brandishing the gun as Dan pulls him away...

DAN

John! John, just... cool off.

JOHN

(glares at Tico)

Answer me.

Tico gathers his strength and SPITS at John... Then lies back and closes his eyes.

INT. DR. LASTER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

John sits across from Dr. Laster. She makes a few notes...

DR. LASTER

So do you think it's fair to say that at this point your medical judgment was... clouded?

John considers this, looking out the window.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

No. No, I wouldn't say it was.

DR. LASTER

You got into a confrontation with a patient who wasn't yours-

JOHN

On behalf of a patient who was.

Dr. Laster frowns, trying not to be frustrated.

DR. LASTER

We're talking about *medical judgment* here, Dr. Ellis. I'm not sure that what you just described qualifies.

John looks at her, raises an eyebrow.

JOHN

Tell me something, Dr. Laster: when I shot Raul Mendoza, was *that* a medical decision?

DR. LASTER

I'd have to say no.

JOHN

It kept my patient alive.

DR. LASTER

You killed someone.

JOHN

So if I'd run away and left Mauricio Hernandez to die... would *that* have been a medical decision?

(off Dr. Laster's look)

Result's the same. One kid dies, one kid lives. The only difference is that it's *my patient* that dies. That's a better outcome?

DR. LASTER

It doesn't make firing a gun a *medical* decision.

JOHN

So the gun is the issue? What if I'd stayed in the street and focused on clamping the axillary artery? Medical decision?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. LASTER

Yes. I would say it is.

JOHN

In which case I'd have been killed with my patient. Two deaths, versus one in either previous scenario. A real victory for medicine.

DR. LASTER

Touche, Dr. Ellis.

(a beat)

Let's get back to Mauricio Hernandez, since he seems to be at the center of all this.

JOHN

I think that's unnecessary. You're here to evaluate *me*, not-

DR. LASTER

Patient Hernandez is part of that evaluation.

JOHN

Dr. Laster... *it is better for all concerned* to leave him out of this.

DR. LASTER

Unfortunately, I can't do that. Now, I can either do my own investigation, interview your colleagues, etc., or you can talk to me about this now.

John considers this, weighing how to proceed...

JOHN

There are patient confidentiality issues-

DR. LASTER

As there are in any evaluation of this kind. It's my job to understand those boundaries and respect them. Now please, doctor.

John looks at her for a beat. Finally:

JOHN

All right, then. If you insist.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

INT. ER EXAMINATION ROOM - LATER

John talks on the phone as Dan bandages the wound on his arm.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I'm saying I believe this patient was involved in Thursday's shooting of Mauricio Hernandez, yes.

John winces as Dan sutures the gash... INTERCUT as he talks.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

A weary-looking Detective Dorsey sits in the police station bullpen in the middle of the night.

DETECTIVE DORSEY

Why do you think that, exactly?

JOHN

He came in with a facial fracture - his zygomatic bone, his ethmoid bone and his supraorbital foramen, all fractured at the same time.

DETECTIVE DORSEY

And that means...

JOHN

Usually? An MVA. A face full of dashboard. He was probably the passenger in the car, the one pulling the trigger.

DETECTIVE DORSEY

I thought you said you couldn't see-

JOHN

I couldn't. All I know is he knew me, he was armed, and he seemed very intent on staying that way.

DETECTIVE DORSEY

All right. We'll have forensics out in the morning, check him against what we found in the car. We have your statement?

JOHN

I gave it to the arresting officer, yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DETECTIVE DORSEY

Good. I may call you if I have more questions.

(a beat, then:)

You be careful, doctor.

INT. ER EXAMINATION ROOM - NIGHT

As John hangs up, Dan finishes. He puts a clean dressing on the wound...

DAN

How's that feel?

JOHN

It's fine. Thanks.

Dan sits heavily, his brow furrowed. He leans closer to John.

DAN

(voice low)

Hey, man... we need to talk. What the hell was that back there?

JOHN

I'm sorry. I just went in there to talk to him and... things got out of hand.

DAN

Yeah. I'd say they did.

(a beat, then:)

I understand you're under a lot of pressure, John, but Jesus... that's was *my patient*, there. You're talking about compelling treatment? You had no grounds for that. What if he complained?

JOHN

I think if you bring a gun into the hospital, you lose your right to complain.

Dan starts to say more, but he sees John's expression... clearly, this conversation isn't going much further.

DAN

All right. You just go home, we'll talk about this later-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

I'm not going home.
 (off Dan's look)
 I can't.

DAN

Uh... yeah, actually, you can.
 That's what people do when they get
 stabbed at work.

JOHN

I didn't get stabbed. I got cut.

DAN

My mistake. Except here's the
 thing: you know what people do when
 they get *cut* at work? They go home.

JOHN

I'm not going home, Dan.

DAN

Listen... maybe it's not my place
 to say, but you're taking this
 whole thing a little personally.
 John... For a sec, I was worried
 you were gonna shoot that guy.

Before John can respond Nurse Sherry hurries in, looking
 worried. Dan and John look over.

SHERRY

We got a situation at reception.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - FRONT RECEPTION - NIGHT

John stands near the reception desk, watching the waiting
 room through a security window; Sherry and Dan stand behind
 him. From his POV we see a group of GANG MEMBERS conferring -
 including the man he fought in the opening, Cruz.

VOICE (O.S.)

Um... Doctor?

JOHN

Yes?

John turns to MIA (20's), the pretty receptionist. She's
 staring at him, as are a couple of Triage nurses.

MIA

Are you all right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She nods at his lab coat; blood from his knife wound has soaked through the bandage and is dripping on the reception counter. John grabs a tissue and wipes it up.

JOHN

Sorry. Just... need a new bandage.

John nods at the gang members...

JOHN (CONT'D)

Have they done anything besides sit there?

MIA

They text. A guy brought them Burger King a while ago.

JOHN

Did we talk to the police?

MIA

Yeah. They sent a car by. It had to leave, though. I guess there's some kind of big thing going on across town.

DAN

What kind of thing? John just got attacked-

MIA

Some kind of shooting. All I know is just about every unit the cops have is over there... they said they could probably be to us in a few hours.

SHERRY

We sent all the bumps and bruises along to Huntington.

JOHN

And security?

SHERRY

They got the front area locked down, but... they ain't the cops, I'll say that.

John looks over at a couple of OVERWEIGHT SECURITY GUARDS standing in the front entry. Lewis, the security guard from the opening, stands by the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The computer dings softly... A patient record flashes.

DAN

And... meanwhile, people still get sick.

John turns to Mia.

JOHN

All right. I guess... Tell us if anything changes.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

John returns to the ER, re-bandaging his wound. Bridget is there, going over a patient record. She watches him...

BRIDGET

How's the arm?

JOHN

I'm not going to bleed to death anytime soon.

BRIDGET

Good. Listen, I wanted to talk to you about a patient.

JOHN

A patient? Okay... Who?

BRIDGET

Henry. Your pet diabetic with the dry-gangrenous left foot.

JOHN

Henry? Is he back in already?

BRIDGET

Yeah. He came in an hour ago, while you were...

(looks at the bandage)

Dealing with that. He's in bad shape.

JOHN

What do you mean, bad shape? Worse than usual?

BRIDGET

He tore open the foot. Some kind of work accident, although how he was even standing on it I have no idea.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

He's... I think he has some kind of warehouse job.

BRIDGET

Well, in any case, the cellulitis is progressing, it's septic... it has to come off. I need you to talk to him.

JOHN

Okay... why?

BRIDGET

He didn't take the news well. We don't have the beds, the surgeons, or the nurses here so I set up a transfer to the Rosemead surgical center. He says he doesn't want to go. I said he had to. We kind of left it there.

John nods.

JOHN

Right. I'll... see what I can do.

John shoots a glance back at the reception area, then heads off down the hall.

INT. CRITICAL CARE UNIT - NIGHT

Henry is asleep in a shared room, hooked up to monitors. Another patient, an elderly man, sleeps in the next bed. John lets himself in, goes over to talk to Henry...

JOHN

Henry?

Henry says nothing.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Henry, it's Dr. Ellis. I know this is very hard, but... Dr. O'Neill is right.

Still nothing from Henry.

JOHN (CONT'D)

It may help to talk about it. There are options... prosthetics, all sorts of...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

John frowns, as he sees that Henry is not moving AT ALL.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Henry?

Alarmed, he checks the monitors on the machines, and sees that leads have been disconnected... he turns Henry over.

Henry's LIPS ARE BLUE, his EYES ARE ROLLED BACK IN HIS HEAD.

JOHN (CONT'D)

NURSE! I NEED A NURSE IN HERE!!

John reattaches the leads from the monitor, checking Henry's pulse. The monitor alarm sounds as Nurse Sherry and a tech run in...

JOHN (CONT'D)

CODE BLUE!! Get Dr. O'Neill in here, now!

The tech bolts off to fetch Bridget, as John turns to Sherry.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Get him 2mg atropine. When was the last time you were in here?

SHERRY

Few minutes. Maybe five-

JOHN

Did you give him any medications?

SHERRY

Nothing. He just wanted some water.

John sees an empty water cup on Henry's bed... then sees the BAG OF MEDS on the elderly roommate's chair. Several caps are missing, and some stray pills have rolled onto the floor...

JOHN

Check those! See what he took-

The tech reads the names off the medication bottles...

TECH

Digoxin, Metoprolol... Ativan, Lisinopril, Norco, Dilaudid...

JOHN

Jesus...

Bridget runs in, trailing the tech...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRIDGET

What happened?

John starts intubating Henry as he looks over...

JOHN

Your patient OD'ed on his roomie's
meds, is what happened! He's
hypotensive, bradycardic, apneic-

BRIDGET

He was fine! I looked in on him-

JOHN

You told a guy you were cutting off
his foot and left him alone!

(to Sherry)

Two large bore IVs in the bilateral
antecubitals, and a liter of normal
saline into each arm. Tell pharmacy
to get some dopamine hanging...

(to Bridget)

Let's start pacing him...

Bridget goes into action, placing the pads and dialing up the
voltage as she checks the monitors...

JOHN (CONT'D)

We getting anything?

BRIDGET

Nothing. You give him the atropine?

JOHN

Yes! 2mg-

BRIDGET

Well, it's not working!

Bridget dials the voltage up more; Henry's body is now
jerking back and forth. Bridget yells to John...

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

Still nothing!!

Bridget and John exchange a look as she kills the power on
the pacer pads and the doctors start CPR. It's hopeless, and
they both know it. We pull back as they work... CUT TO:

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - LATER

John stands in the hallway by Henry's door. A cup of coffee
sits in his hand, ignored. Fluorescent lights buzz overhead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

John looks back in at the room... a tech does paperwork next to Henry, who lies dead, covered in a sheet.

John closes his eyes. Rubs them. His headache is back.

As he massages his temple, trying to alleviate the pain, he is interrupted by a voice from offscreen. It's Mia, the clerk from the front desk.

MIA
Doctor?

JOHN
Yes?

MIA
Is something...

JOHN
Yeah. Yeah, just... lost a patient.
I just need a minute.

Mia hesitates, nervous, then:

MIA
Right, um... the thing is, there's
a phone call for you.

JOHN
(impatient)
Can you please tell them it's not a
good-

MIA
It's someone calling from the
Federal Prison in Lompoc. He didn't
give his name, but... I think you
should take it.

John looks at her, not sure what to make of this.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

John answers the phone at his desk. Behind him, through a window, we see the moon low in the sky.

JOHN
This is Doctor Ellis. Who am I
speaking with?

On the other end of the line, there is only breathing...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN (CONT'D)

I said who-

Finally, a voice speaks. Gravelly, with a Mexican accent.

VOICE (O.S.)

The boy you saved... I am his father.

John takes this in...

JOHN

All right. What can I do for you?

VOICE (O.S.)

Tonight... A man came in to the hospital. He cut you, yes?

JOHN

(alarmed)

Yes. How did you-

VOICE (O.S.)

You know why he was there?

JOHN

I... I think he was here to... to kill your son.

VOICE (O.S.)

Yes. The others, the ones outside? They will come in, soon. To do what he didn't do.

John takes this in... finally:

JOHN

He's safe here. There's security-

VOICE (O.S.)

Listen to me, doctor: That will not stop these men. They will find a way in. Soon.

JOHN

What do you want from me?

VOICE (O.S.)

I want you to save him.

JOHN

I... I'll try.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The voice breathes on the other end of the line.

VOICE (O.S.)

I have to go.

JOHN

Wait... I don't understand this.
Mauricio's a child. What could he
possibly have done-

VOICE (O.S.)

He didn't do nothing.

(a beat)

I did.

There is a click, and the line goes dead. Off John's look:

END OF ACT SIX

ACT SEVEN**INT. ARROYO HOSPITAL - OFFICE - NIGHT**

John stands at his desk, his mind racing. Outside, in the hallway, the ER buzzes with activity. He walks to the door and stands there, looking out, trying to figure out what to do. He looks over at the security guard standing in front of the reception area door...

And then his eyes settle on something past that: GRETCHEN, doing paperwork at the nurse's station.

John thinks a moment, turning something over in his mind... goes over to Gretchen.

JOHN

Nurse? Can I talk to you for a moment?

Gretchen looks up at him. Looks down at the computer.

GRETCHEN

Now?

JOHN

Yes.

She logs out of the computer, and John leads her over to a small alcove by a vending machine. He looks around... then, his voice low:

JOHN (CONT'D)

You know the patient, from earlier?
The one with the broken collarbone?

GRETCHEN

You mean the one who "slipped?"
Yeah, I remember that one.

JOHN

Is she still here?

GRETCHEN

Yeah. She's up in radiology.

JOHN

I got the sense that the patient,
ah... meant something to you.

Gretchen looks at him, waiting. John takes a breath, then:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN (CONT'D)

What if we could help her?

GRETCHEN

(arches an eyebrow)

Help her? How would we do that?

JOHN

If her bloodwork came back positive for signs of meningitis, we could get her in quarantine, away from the husband. Get a social worker in there... Maybe save her life.

GRETCHEN

Okay. And why would her bloodwork come back positive for meningitis?

John looks at her evenly.

JOHN

Because her doctor said it did.

Gretchen smiles a little at this. She steps forward... it's a curiously intimate moment.

GRETCHEN

Interesting. And why would her doctor do this?

JOHN

I need your help. I need to get Mauricio Hernandez out of the hospital. Someplace safe. Now.

GRETCHEN

So file a transfer request.

JOHN

I can't do that. It needs to happen without anyone knowing.

GRETCHEN

Okay... He's a sick kid. Where do you propose to put him?

JOHN

I have an idea. Henry Maxson was scheduled to go to the Rosemead surgical center...

GRETCHEN

And he's dead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

The hospital doesn't know that. I ran the code, called it, but he's not in the computer yet. If we switch Mauricio's records with Henry's, you can get him down to transport. They can take him over to Rosemead under Henry's name.

GRETCHEN

And when he lands at Rosemead?

JOHN

They see he's not a 22 year old diabetic and he becomes a John Doe with a gunshot wound. He's out of the system.

GRETCHEN

Until Rosemead cross-references the records and puts it together five minutes later.

John's face falls...

JOHN

Gretchen, *the boy is going to die.*
There has to be a way-

GRETCHEN

I didn't say there wasn't a way. I said your way won't work. You'd need death certificates on the kid. In both systems.

John looks at her, not sure what to think about this.

JOHN

Can you... do that?

GRETCHEN

I've been disciplined for conduct violations four times and I'm still here. Let's just say I know my way around a hospital.

(a beat, then:)

One thing: what about the security in surgical recovery? I can't just wheel him away in front of them.

JOHN

Well, ah... They'd come down to ER reception if there's a problem.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gretchen smiles a little, her eyes dark...

GRETCHEN

So. Is there going to be a problem?

Off John's look, we SMASH TO:

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

John works on his computer, going over lab results for Hillary Marks. The screen displays a series of lab results... he clicks through a few overrides, then changes several of the numbers. He picks up the phone, leaving a message...

JOHN (INTO PHONE)

Hey, it's Dr. Ellis. Just wanted to let you know I got some lab results on Patient Marks... it looks like a viral meningitis. You'll need to talk to infectious diseases about getting her admitted ASAP.

A text comes in - **READY**. He looks at it, then...

JOHN (CONT'D)

Ah... follow up with me if you need to, but labs are in the computer.

John hangs up. He checks his phone again... then turns and walks to the door. He closes his eyes, takes a deep breath.

He looks over at Lewis the security guard, standing by the entrance to the ER.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

We are back in the teaser scene. John steps out and **BEGINS TO RUN** down the hall toward the reception area. He gathers speed, **CRASHING** into a cart filled with medication... Then **SLAMS** into Lewis at the door to the ER reception.

LEWIS

Whoah, Doctor. You can't go in there, remember? It's locked down-

John tries to push past.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

Doctor, I don't think-

JOHN

I'm going out there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEWIS
I can't let you do that.

JOHN
Get out of the way, Lewis.

Lewis hesitates, but he does not move. John's face reddens as he ROARS, grabbing an IV stand...

JOHN (CONT'D)
I said GET OUT OF MY WAY!!

All eyes on John. He raises the IV stand... Lewis stumbles backward, and John SMASHES the security glass in the door. As he runs through, Lewis keys his radio, yelling:

LEWIS
ALL UNITS TO ER RECEPTION! I repeat-

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Gretchen watches as the Surgical Recovery SECURITY GUARD gets the radio call. He races off to a staircase, leaving the hallway empty. She slips into the recovery room...

INT. SURGICAL RECOVERY - NIGHT

In the dimly lit surgical recovery room, Gretchen switches out Mauricio's records, replacing his patient wristband. She goes to a computer monitor, typing quickly... then, satisfied, goes back to the bed and wheels it out of the room. CUT BACK TO:

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

Back in the Emergency Reception area, John roars at Cruz...

JOHN
I'm telling you to get the hell out
of my Emergency Room.
(glaring, his eyes dark)
I know why you're here. You want to
hurt somebody? Hurt me.

CRUZ
You should watch how you talk, man.
Might get what you're asking for-

Cruz steps forward, shoves John in the chest...

...and John EXPLODES.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He charges Cruz, SWINGING THE IV STAND. It connects, knocking him aside before smashing a rack of magazines.

Instantly, the OTHER GANG MEMBERS join the fight. John swings at them, outnumbered but making up for it with sheer fury.

After a moment, Lewis and four other SECURITY GUARDS rush into the ER, trying to break up the fight...

John takes advantage of the distraction to lunge at Cruz again with the IV stand; it hits a window, cracking it-

Two security guards rush John, who struggles... as several more security guards muscle the gang members out the doors and into the hospital parking lot.

John hits the floor with a hard THUD, the security guards on top of him. John makes eye contact with Cruz through the open doors of the ER, which slide shut.

INT. PATIENT TRANSPORT DOOR - NIGHT

Gretchen wheels Mauricio out of a service elevator and over to a pair of doors marked PATIENT TRANSPORT.

She hands some paperwork to a TECH.

GRETCHEN

Henry Maxson. Going to Rosemead
Surgical center.

The tech nods, scans the paperwork, then hands the gurney off to a couple of EMTs. They wheel Mauricio over to an ambulance and begin loading him in...

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM HALLWAY - NIGHT

There is pandemonium in the ER reception as the four security guards drag John back into the ER; nurses and techs gawk at him as he they pass.

John is still yelling, struggling to get free...

LEWIS

Dr. Ellis, you gotta calm down.

JOHN

I am calm! You should be out there
dealing with *them*!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEWIS

We gotta take you to
administration, okay? Now stop
resisting, or we have to cuff you-

The guards grab John tighter... as they turn a corner, John
sees GRETCHEN up the hall...

He catches her eyes, shoots her a look - is it done? Gretchen
looks back with a tiny nod - it's done.

As they continue up the hallway, John turns and looks out a
window... Outside, IT IS DAWN. The sun creeps over the
horizon, turning the skyline a radiant orange.

John looks at it, his face calm again.

JOHN

Fine. Fine, I'm done.

INT. DR. LASTER'S OFFICE - DAY

John sits across from Dr. Laster. She looks at him, stunned.
Not sure what to make of what she just heard.

DR. LASTER

This... this is the truth? This
happened?

JOHN

Yes. It happened. All right? You
wanted it all? You have it all.

DR. LASTER

So Mauricio Hernandez...

JOHN

Is not dead, no.

DR. LASTER

And your breakdown-

JOHN

Was either less severe than you
thought... or a lot more severe.
Let me know if you figure that out.

Dr. Laster stares at her notes. Finally:

DR. LASTER

You realize, I have to report this.

John grits his teeth, barely holding back his anger.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

Do you know what that will mean? Do you?

DR. LASTER

Dr. Ellis, I realize you're upset, but your mental state-

JOHN

THIS IS NOT ABOUT ME! This is about you understanding what your decision today means for patient Hernandez, currently recovering at the Rosemead Surgical Center-

DR. LASTER

That's not relevant.

JOHN

It is the *only* thing that's relevant. He's a patient in my care-

DR. LASTER

This is criminal behavior, Dr. Ellis. Under the circumstances, I can't recommend that you return to work, much less see patients. I'm sorry if that's not an acceptable outcome to you, but-

John continues, his voice gathering intensity, a barely controlled fury pushing the words out.

JOHN

Let me finish. You took an oath to do no harm, just like I did, Doctor. So let's talk about harm. If you report everything you've heard here, this is what's going to happen. I will lose my job. There will be an investigation that uncovers what happened to Mauricio Hernandez. The men looking for him will find him. *And he will die.*

(a beat, then:)

Is that an "acceptable outcome?"

Dr. Laster looks at him, as this sinks in. Finally, she speaks, her voice a near whisper.

DR. LASTER

No.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

John nods, satisfied... then gets up and walks to the door. As he turns the doorknob to leave, Dr. Laster calls to him.

DR. LASTER (CONT'D)

Dr. Ellis?

(John turns)

I know you don't think much of me, or my profession... but allow me an observation. In my practice, I see a lot of doctors. I often counsel those doctors to accept that they have to take risks to help people, that some amount of "playing God" is necessary to do the job.

She turns, looks out the window at the people below.

DR. LASTER (CONT'D)

But there's a reason we confine that to the hospital. It protects you, and it protects *them*. There's a reason so many revolutionaries were once doctors. Not to mention terrorists. Try to cure the sickness in the world... and there are always complications.

She turns back to him... smiles, a little sad.

DR. LASTER (CONT'D)

Good luck, Doctor.

Off her look...

INT. ARROYO HOSPITAL - DAY

John walks through the hospital, crowded with the mid-day rush. Some people pause in their work, staring at him.

He ignores them, making his way through the crowd to the sliding glass doors of the hospital. They open, then slide closed behind him as we SMASH TO BLACK.

END OF ACT SEVEN

BUTTON**INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

John sits in his home office, drinking a glass of scotch and looking at something on his computer.

It is an email from the hospital... unopened. The subject line reads "*Psychological Evaluation.*" It's from Dr. Laster.

John stares at it, then clicks it. From his POV we see pieces of the email - "*No indication of major mental instability,*" followed by "*...extreme stress response but there is no reason to believe it is of a chronic or recurring nature...*" ending with "*...while a leave of absence is recommended, no revocation of hospital privileges is necessary at this time.*"

John looks at the last line. Finishes his drink.

After a moment, Samantha walks in. She stands in the doorway, looking at her husband.

SAMANTHA

So? What did the psychiatrist say?

JOHN

(smiles)

It looks like I get to keep my job.

SAMANTHA

That's good. I'm glad.

(a beat)

Did she say anything else?

JOHN

What do you mean?

SAMANTHA

I mean, did she say anything about you. About... why this happened. John, this wasn't just some little hiccup at work that we can forget about. *You attacked-*

JOHN

Sam, no one was hurt-

SAMANTHA

If you want to sweep this under the rug at work, call it a little misunderstanding, so be it. That's your prerogative.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

But you don't get to do that with me. I'm your wife. I need to know.

JOHN

Sam... what do you want from me?

SAMANTHA

Something happened in that street the other day. Something changed. And I need to know what it is.

John looks at Samantha, really seeing her for the first time in a while. She's barely keeping it together, hugging her arms at her sides. She blinks back tears...

John gets up from the desk and goes to her. He holds her, looking into her eyes... and smiles.

JOHN

Sam, you can read the psych report if you want. It says I'm okay. It says I went through something hard, but I came out the other side of it... and I'm okay.

SAMANTHA

That's all?

JOHN

That's all.

She leans against his chest, wanting to believe him, wiping away her tears. He holds her, then kisses her, lightly at first, then deeper... She reaches for him, almost desperately wrapping herself around him.

He presses her against the wall, kissing her hungrily they peel each other's clothes off. She whispers in his ear...

SAMANTHA

I've missed you.

INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

John lies in bed, awake; Samantha sleeps beside him. He listens to Samantha's breathing, smells her hair.

Thinking.

After a moment, John hears a distant barking in the back yard. He sighs...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

Damnit... Come on, Zeke...

John gets up, puts on a pair of pants...

EXT. JOHN'S UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

He walks through the hallway, pulling on a shirt...

As he starts toward the stairs, however, he HEARS A NOISE.

He stops... listens. There is MORE BARKING, outside, and then a distinct sound DOWNSTAIRS. Footsteps... Whispered voices.

John turns and walks back into the bedroom.

INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

John crouches by the bed next to Samantha. He puts a hand over her mouth as he wakes her up...

Samantha opens her eyes, alarmed. John puts a finger to his lips, then carefully removes his hand. He listens again, then, in a barely audible whisper:

JOHN

Go to Oliver's room. Lock the door.
Don't come out. Don't make any
noise. Do you understand?

SAMANTHA

Why-

JOHN

There is someone in the house. Go.

Samantha slips out of bed with a sheet, terrified. John waits until she is gone, then grabs his MEDICAL BAG from the dresser.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

As John walks down the stairs he digs down past the medical equipment to reveal the PISTOL that his father gave him. He takes the gun out, raising it...

He emerges into the living room to find MONDO, the boy who ran away during the drive-by, standing there with a couple of other young men in gang clothes. They look at him, faces impassive, seemingly unafraid of the gun in John's hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

What are you doing here? Why are you in my house?

MONDO

We need to know how the little man is doing.

JOHN

Mauricio? He's fine.

MONDO

Yeah? What's that mean?

JOHN

He's... he's at a surgical facility under a new name. I'll need to deal with his paperwork soon, but for now... he's fine.

MONDO

Good. That's good.

There is a beat.

JOHN

Is that all?

MONDO

Not quite. My friends, they wanted to say thank you.

Mondo exchanges a look with the other gang-bangers.

MONDO (CONT'D)

You know those vatos at the hospital? The ones you messed with? You don't gotta worry about them no more.

Mondo digs in his pocket, pulls out a SMARTPHONE. He turns the phone on, tosses it to John. John catches it... on the phone is a PICTURE OF CRUZ, lying dead on a sidewalk, a bullet in his chest.

John stares at it, horrified, as he scrolls through more pictures. The other men from the hospital, also dead. One in a car, one in an alley, lying against a chain link fence...

MONDO (CONT'D)

There's a number on there. You need something? Anything... You call it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

I don't need anything from you.

Mondo gives John a little smile...

MONDO

Maybe you don't... maybe you do.
You have a good night, doc.

Mondo and the other men turn to go, walking out the door...

EXT. JOHN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

It's a beautiful night; the moon lights up the neighborhood and wind rustles the trees. John watches Mondo and the others walk to their car and drive away. He stands there, silhouetted in the doorway, gun in one hand, medical bag in the other... as we SMASH TO BLACK.

END OF SHOW