

HEARTLAND
"Pilot Episode"
By
David Hollander

Warner Bros. Television

TNT DRAFT
23 March 2006

TEASER

The artificial *inhale, exhale, inhale* sound of a ventilator. The *beeping* of an Electrocardiography (EKG) machine joins in, followed by the *click-damnit-click* of the Arterial Line. Then, the sound of DR. NATHANIEL GRANT'S voice:

NATHANIEL (O.S.)

Your daughter is first on our region's transplant list.

FADE IN:

CLOSE ON a wall of life support equipment hard at work. The ventilator, the EKG machine, the arterial line. An IV, a Foley Catheter, a Nasogastric tube, a temperature probe.

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

I understand your fears, Mrs. Walker.

FOLLOW these machine's conduits to where the frail, small body of thirteen-year-old LESLEY WALKER lies asleep in her INTENSIVE CARE hospital room bed.

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

But we will have her into surgery the minute an appropriate heart comes available.

A HAND reaches into frame, lovingly touches Lesley's cheek. FOLLOW this hand to the body and face of CAROL WALKER (Lesley's mother, forties, exhausted from thirteen years of caring for her daughter). She stands with NATHANIEL GRANT (forties, intense, sleep deprived) and his surgical fellow DR. SIMON GRIFFITH (thirties, British, hair crew-cutted and died purple, and three earrings in his left ear).

CAROL

She's so weak. She's just so weak.

NATHANIEL

We will keep her strong. And we will transplant her successfully.

Carol shakes his head, not comforted, and takes a seat next to her daughter. Nathaniel takes another look at his patient and her mother.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

Hang in there, Mrs. Walker.

Nathaniel nods to his fellow and steps out of the room. Carol Walker gazes at her daughter Lesley and then looks to the wall of machinery that sustains her life. Focus on the PROPOFOL PUMP - the slow drip of the powerful sedative-hypnotic draws us closer and closer.

INT. ST. JUDE TRANSPLANT HOSPITAL - ICU HALLWAY -- SAME

Nathaniel and Simon walk down the ICU hallway.

SIMON

How much more time will the mechanical assist buy her?

NATHANIEL

Truth is there's no medical reason that little girl has held in there this long.

Nathaniel and Simon are interrupted by HEAD ICU NURSE MARY SINGLETARY (sturdy, pretty, African-American, thirties).

MARY

Dr. Grant. Your board interview is in thirty minutes.

NATHANIEL

Crap. I forgot.

MARY

You might want to change your shirt and wash up.

Nathaniel turns to go.

MARY (CONT'D)

Also. Some guy named Henry called. Said he had the NSV 10 Clemente. Said you had his number.

Nathaniel nods, looks to Simon.

NATHANIEL

I'm going to be out of contact for about an hour. You'll round with Mary.

Nathaniel departs. Mary and Simon remain. Behind them, yet another room full of life support machines sustains a *white male patient in his sixties* who awaits a double lung transplant.

SIMON

NSV 10 Clemente. Is that some kind of new machine?

MARY

It's a baseball card. He collects baseball cards.

SIMON

Baseball?

MARY

Baseball. Like your cricket, only interesting.

Before Simon can retort, Nathaniel re-emerges, startling both of them.

MARY (CONT'D)

What is it, Dr. Grant?

Nathaniel looks to Simon, tries to remember his name, then just goes with:

NATHANIEL

Liverpool.

SIMON

What?

NATHANIEL

You. Liverpool. Go find out what the hell is happening with that potential donor at Allegheny General.

Simon hurries away. Mary heads into another room. Nathaniel gazes back into Lesley Walker's ICU room with concern. The SOUND of her LIFE SUPPORT machines seeps into the hallway and we cut to --

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM CARE UNIT - ALLEGHENY GENERAL -- SAME

-- Where nineteen-year-old JOHN HENDERSON lies intubated and ventilated. The young African-American male's life is over; the gang tattoos on his arms and shoulders, the gunshot wound to his head evidence of a life lived quickly and dangerously. A NURSE and emergency room DOCTOR stand by his side.

NURSE

Can we discontinue care?

DOCTOR

That woman from organ recovery is still talking to the grandmother.

Through the window of the care unit, the young victim's grandmother DIANE HENDERSON (sixties, tired, heavysset) stands with seasoned organ recovery coordinator KATE ARMSTRONG (formerly Kate Grant, forty, very pretty, tough).

INT. HALLWAY - CARE UNIT -- SAME

Mid-conversation.

DIANE

-- Already told you. Don't want my grandson's body cut up.

KATE
He won't be disfigured in any way,
Mrs. Henderson. When you see him
next, you won't even notice that --

DIANE
-- Don't want you selling his organs.

KATE
Mrs. Henderson. I promise you. The
placement of the organs is carefully
regulated --

DIANE
-- I've read about it. Rich guys
from the middle east --

KATE
I understand your fears. But what
really happens is completely different
than what you are imagining.

Beat. Diane considers.

DIANE
Will you people pay for his funeral?

KATE
That's not the way it works, I'm
afraid.

DIANE
Don't want John cut up.

KATE
Mrs. Henderson. There are people in
desperate need, waiting.

Diane moves toward the care unit.

KATE (CONT'D)
Your grandson's death does not to
have to be --

Diane steps out, slams the door to the care unit behind her.

KATE (CONT'D)
-- Meaningless.

As Diane Henderson informs the doctors of her decision and
the nurses begin to SWITCH his life support machines OFF, we
push in on Kate's deeply frustrated features and watch her
turn and walk out of the room.

INT. LESLEY WALKER'S ICU ROOM -- SAME

The puff of the ventilator expanding and contracting Lesley Walker's lungs fills the room. Carol Walker sits next to her daughter, strokes her hair. REVERSE once again to Carol's POV: *blinding, relentless overhead lighting, the PROPOFOL DRIP, windowless walls, the PROPOFOL DRIP, total lack of privacy, THE PROPOFOL DRIP.* Carol stands, leans in toward her daughter, kisses her forehead.

CAROL

Forgive me, baby. I'm doing it for you.

Carol follows the line of the Propofol drip to her daughter's arm, gently removes the tape that holds it in place, then PULLS the NEEDLE from her daughter's vein and quickly pushes it into her own arm. As Carol begins her attempt to speed the drip from the drug dispenser, an ALARM SOUNDS. As Carol, Propofol drip still in her wrist, desperately attempts to silence the alarm, we HARD CUT OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. ST. JUDE'S TRANSPLANT HOSPITAL -- LATE AFTERNOON

The sound of the ALARM rings over the establishing shot of this large five story hospital structure. At the main entrance, someone has graffitti'd the word *USED* overtop the name Jude on the sign. St. Used.

INT. NURSES STATION - ST. JUDE'S ICU -- SAME

The INSISTENT RINGING OF THE PATIENT ALARM brings Nurse Mary to the computer read-out for the floor.

MARY
(to the other nurses)
Room 5077. Lesley Walker.

Mary and the other nurses RUN down the hall toward the alarm.

INT. LESLEY WALKER'S ROOM -- SAME

Carol Walker holds the needle in her arm as Mary and the other nurses burst into the room.

MARY
Mrs. Walker!

Mary moves to Carol's side, forces her to take her hand from the needle, and then deftly removes it from her arm. The other nurses rush around Lesley's body, check vital statistics and machinery. As the nurses work, we push in on Carol.

CAROL
I just want my daughter to live.

INT. NATHANIEL GRANT'S OFFICE -- SAME

Nathaniel, on his cell phone, steps into his darkened office, notices that a *bill* has been slipped under the door.

NATHANIEL
(on cell phone)
Is it really perfect, Henry?

Nathaniel picks up the bill, opens it. Inside, a notice for a FINAL MORTGAGE payment.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)
Not an 8.5 or a 9. It has to be a
10.

Nathaniel moves to his desk, revealing an office that looks more like a sports memorabilia store than a space dedicated to one of the world's finest transplant surgeons.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

You're sure?

Nathaniel drops the mortgage bill on his desk, amidst the ashtrays that overflow with cigarette butts, the stacks of patient files - young LESLEY WALKER'S file on the very top.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

Last time you said the card was a 9
and it was barely a 7.

Nathaniel sits down at his desk, and a plexiglass frame that contains a space for every Roberto Clemente baseball card made from 1955 to 1972. The only card missing is the 1955 rookie.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

Don't sell it. I'll be there by six.

The SECOND NURSE steps into Nathaniel's office.

SECOND NURSE

Dr. Grant.

NATHANIEL

(into phone)

I won't forget, Henry. I swear.

Nathaniel closes his phone. Looks to the second nurse.

SECOND NURSE

They need you in ICU.

INT. ICU WING - ST. JUDE'S TRANSPLANT -- LATER

Kate Armstrong hurries down the fifth floor ICU hallway of the wing dedicated solely to individuals either in dire need of or who have just received transplant surgery:

- A Caucasian WOMAN (her skin yellow) in her forties awaits a liver/ An African-American MAN in his fifties awaits a kidney/ The Caucasian MAN in his sixties (ANDREW KOSINSKI) awaits a double lung transplant lies in his bed, stares at passersby -

KOSINSKI

(spotting Kate)

You!

KATE

Mr. Kosinski, we are doing the best
we can --

KOSINSKI

-- You are letting me die!

Nathaniel Grant appears, Simon Griffith always just steps behind.

NATHANIEL
That's just the steroids talking,
Mr. Kosinski.

Nathaniel shuts the door to Kosinski's room, turns to Kate.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)
No luck at Allegheny General?

Kate shakes her head. Nathaniel makes the mistake of exhaling a bit too loudly.

KATE
I know I screwed up. Don't need
your passive-aggressive bullshit to
remind me.

NATHANIEL
I just exhaled.

KATE
Exactly.

Beat. As they walk.

NATHANIEL
I got your final mortgage payment.

KATE
At least it's the last one. So.
That's good news.

NATHANIEL
Right. We should go out, have a nice
dinner, pop a bottle of champagne...oh
I forgot - you divorced me.

KATE
Well. I'm sure you can find some
nice young nurse to celebrate with,
Nate.

Nathaniel shakes his head.

KATE (CONT'D)
Don't give me that look. It's what
you would have done when we were
married.

Nurse Mary steps out of Lesley Walker's room, interrupts.

MARY
Mrs. Walker missed the vein
completely.

KATE

Did you call their social worker?

NATHANIEL

No. No social worker. Kate and I can go in there alone, explain why we can't locate a heart.

Nathaniel opens the door for Kate. Simon lingers outside to listen. Kate shoots Nathaniel a withering look before she steps into --

INT. ICU ROOM -- SAME

-- Where Carol Walker sits despondent. Lesley sleeps, her machines functioning normally once again.

KATE

Mrs. Walker. The matching process is not easy, particularly for a girl Lesley's age and size.

Carol says nothing. Kate steps closer. Carol meets Nathaniel's eyes.

CAROL

I know you can't help me kill myself. But I still can do it, with a gun or pills.

Kate looks to Nathaniel to handle this delicate situation.

NATHANIEL

A well placed bullet, intentional overdose. It doesn't always work out they way you'd think. Then you're dead and we can't even use your organs.

CAROL

You cannot guarantee a heart will come in time.

NATHANIEL

No. I can't. But I can guarantee that I will not give a new heart to a young girl who has no one to care for her after the transplant.

Nathaniel steps out, leaves Kate with Carol and Lesley. The sound of the ventilators fills the room. Lesley Walker opens her eyes for a moment, looks deeply into Kate's. Kate doesn't look away.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL ICU -- CONTINUOUS

Nathaniel steps out to find Simon with a worker from PSYCHIATRIC.

NATHANIEL

What's psych doing here?

SIMON

Mrs. Walker attempted to kill herself --

NATHANIEL

-- The only reason I'd report Mrs. Walker to psych is if she *didn't* want to donate her organs to her daughter.

Nathaniel turns and continues down the hall. As Kate emerges from Lesley Walker's room, Nathaniel spins and calls back to her:

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

Any heart that comes available tonight. I will take it and I will make it work. Any heart that comes available!

Nathaniel disappears around the corner of the ICU hallway. Kate, who can't help but admire his never-flagging confidence and bravado, watches him go.

INT. ST. JUDE'S HOSPITAL BOARD ROOM -- AFTERNOON

Nathaniel sits before the St. Jude's Board (a row of important looking, pink skinned, male faces). Amongst them, dressed in his white lab jacket and hooked up to an oxygen canister sits DR. BARTHOLOMEW JACOBS, the current head of St. Jude's Transplant Hospital. Bart is in his seventies, a transplant pioneer, the founder of the hospital's transplant program. His health is failing.

BOARD PRESIDENT

Dr. Grant. How do you define your current role at St. Jude's?

NATHANIEL

I'm a guy with a knife and some string, really.

The board laughs.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

Seriously. I just finish the job that the immunologists, molecular biologists, geneticists, pathologists, cell physiologists, nurses, fellows and administrators start.

BOARD PRESIDENT

If we awarded you the position of
Clinical Director, how would you
change the course of our institution?

Nathaniel looks to Bart Jacobs. Bart nods to his protege.

NATHANIEL

The future of transplant surgery is
living donors and xenotransplantation.
Using the dead as our donor base is
our best option today, but years
from now, it's my hope that the living
and animals will serve the needs of
a greater number of patients and
create more successful long term
results.

BOARD PRESIDENT

The risks to the living involved
with this type of procedure, the
public outcry in defense of animals --

NATHANIEL

-- To make real gains, we have to be
unafraid to take great risks and
experience unpopular losses.

BOARD PRESIDENT

Responsible risks --

NATHANIEL

-- When Dr. Jacobs began here, he
had an underground office and lab
and was pulling kidneys out of pigs
and putting them into monkeys. When
he was finally allowed upstairs to
operate on people, at first everyone
died. And if we hadn't gone through
that --

BOARD PRESIDENT

-- You're not suggesting we return
to that kind of --

NATHANIEL

-- For me to do my job correctly,
I'll need your complete support. If
you feel you can't give it, then I'm
not the man for this position.

Off Bart.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY -- MOMENTS LATER

Nathaniel and Bart walk down the hallway. Nathaniel wheels
Bart's oxygen canister. Bart uses a cane, moves slowly.

BART

August Pena comes in tomorrow to interview. I promise you, he will not be so provocative.

NATHANIEL

Pena rejects all borderline candidates and dismisses any organ that has the slightest blemish.

PENA

Pena's clinic has the lowest death rate in the world.

NATHANIEL

That's what I just said.

Nathaniel checks an open exam room, flips on the lights.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

Come on. I'll make this fast.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Bart moves toward the table. Nathaniel washes his hands, moves to Bart's side, then glances at his mentor's hands.

BART

They're not swelling.

(Beat.)

Pena understands how to make the funding flow, which is something the board cherishes --

NATHANIEL

-- If you want happy government officials and inflated success rates, go ahead and hire August Pena.

(Beat.)

Any peripheral edema?

BART

I have IPF. We both know what's going to happen next.

NATHANIEL

Take off your shirt.

BART

When are you going back home to your family?

NATHANIEL

Bart. Please. Take off your shirt.

Bart shakes his head. Nathaniel understands this for what it is: his mentor needs help lifting his arms.

Nathaniel closes the door, walks to his side, pulls the shirt from Bart as one would help a two-year-old.

BART

You haven't answered my question --

NATHANIEL

-- I am at home in my apartment.

Nathaniel listens to his mentor's lungs, frowns.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

Your lungs sound like crap. We need to admit you to the ICU. Get you placed on the list.

BART

You might want to consider what your patient wants.

NATHANIEL

To live, I assume.

Pause. Nathaniel helps Bart with his shirt again, then moves toward the door.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

You taught me to innovate, Bart. To take risks. I don't know any other way to do this job. If I have to do that somewhere else, I will. But I believe I've earned my place here.

Bart nods; Nathaniel is preaching to the choir.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

Please consider allowing me to admit you.

Nathaniel steps out of the room.

EXT. HALLWAY -- SAME

Nathaniel approaches OR NURSE JESSICA KIVALA (twenties, very beautiful, very sexy, very athletic).

JESSICA

I was just reading about that French doctor who figured out how to join two blood vessels together.

NATHANIEL

Right. Dr. Carrel.

JESSICA

What did he call the process?

NATHANIEL

Anastomosis.

JESSICA

Anastamooosis.

Jessica steps into another empty room, motions for Nathaniel to follow.

INT. EMPTY MEETING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Jessica immediately starts to undress Nathaniel.

NATHANIEL

Anastomosis.

JESSICA

That's what I said. Anastomosis.
From the Greek.

NATHANIEL

Jessica, I have somewhere I have to
be --

JESSICA

-- It means to join mouth to mouth.

Jessica kisses Nathaniel.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

-- But I think I have a much better
idea than *that*.

As Jessica slides down Nathaniel's body, BILL BRYCE'S voice covers:

BILL (O.S.)

Alone at last.

EXT. ONE LIFE ORGAN RECOVERY CENTER -- EARLY EVENING

ONE LIFE, a rambling one story brick building located in the shadow of the St. Jude Transplant Hospital, sits, lights blazing. It's open twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year and exists solely to advocate and work with individuals in need of donated organs and the donor families themselves.

We PUSH IN on the large corner office, where the shadows of two people locked in an embrace plays against the blinds.

INT. BILL BRYCE'S OFFICE - ONE LIFE -- SAME

BILL BRYCE (One Life's director, late forties, good looking in a cardigan sweater wearing, normal kind of way) embraces Kate. Kate stands still, permitting his kiss but not responding.

BILL

You're not breathing, Kate.

KATE

I'm sorry, Bill. Bad day.

Kate breaks away from Bill, sits. We take in Bill's office - remnants from his former job as a city prosecutor. Lots of posters about organ donation. And an odd TREE that holds dozens of POLAROID photographs of individuals awaiting transplant.

BILL

What's wrong?

Kate studies the transplant tree, picks out, amongst the dozens of pictures, Lesley Walker's polaroid. Taken in happier times, Lesley smiles widely for the camera, her long hair almost to her eyes.

KATE

I failed with that black kid at Allegheny General and now - I don't think Lesley Walker is going to make it.

BILL

That black kid weighed almost a hundred and forty-pounds --

KATE

-- Nathaniel would have made his heart work for her.

BILL

Why don't I call Lynn in to cover the rest of your shift?

KATE

(in her own world)
And Nathaniel's going to blow his board interview. I'm so afraid they'll end up hiring that total turd Pena to come run --

BILL

-- We could go out, get some dinner --

KATE

-- I can finish my shift, Bill. I'm fine. Another donor will come available and I will go right back in there and get the consent.

BILL

That's the spirit.

Bill moves to her side, then moves to kiss her again. Before his lips can reach hers, Kate's cell phone rings.

KATE
It's my daughter.
(into phone)
What is it, sweetheart?

Kate listens, her features tense.

KATE (CONT'D)
I'll be right there.
(to Bill)
Thea's gotten into some trouble.

Kate grabs her car keys and her coat.

EXT. PHARMACY -- NIGHT

Kate pulls up to see her daughter THEA GRANT, Kate's fourteen-year-old daughter from her previous marriage to Nathaniel Grant, standing outside the drug store with a large SECURITY GUARD.

KATE
Oh, Thea.

Kate gets out of the car, approaches.

GUARD
Owner's not calling the police or anything.

KATE
We appreciate that so much.

GUARD
She's not allowed back in here.

KATE
Of course. Thank you.

Kate opens the door to her car.

KATE (CONT'D)
Young lady. Let's go.

Thea gets into the car.

INT. KATE'S CAR -- SAME

Kate slides in next to Thea. Thea reaches for Kate's cell phone.

KATE
What are you doing?

THEA

I want to talk to dad.

Kate takes the phone.

KATE

Your father's busy. Talk to me.

Thea looks down at her hands.

KATE (CONT'D)

What the hell is going on with you?

Before Thea can answer, Kate's pager goes off.

KATE (CONT'D)

There's a potential donor. We have to get to the hospital.

Kate throws the car into drive.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - ALLEGHENY GENERAL -- NIGHT

The swinging doors FLY OPEN and a gurney is pushed into the main area of the ER. On the gurney, twenty-four-year old SARAH EVANS is wheeled in. Sarah is not conscious, her head has been severely injured from a high impact car crash. Sarah's husband MARK (late twenties) runs behind her.

MARK

Where are you taking my wife?

The orderlies and EMT's push Sarah through another set of swinging doors. Mark Evans goes to follow, but is detained by an ER DOCTOR.

ER DOCTOR

We have to take her from here.

MARK

I need to go with my wife.

ER DOCTOR

We have to take her from here.

Mark stares through the doors where several doctors all converge on Sarah.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - ALLEGHENY GENERAL -- LATER

Kate arrives, drags Thea with her. Bill awaits.

BILL

Her name is Sarah Evans. Twenty-four, one hundred and five pounds. She appears to be a very good match for Lesley Walker.

KATE
Brain dead?
(Bill nods.)
Donor card?

BILL
No. Her widower - her husband - just
spoke with the ER doctors.

KATE
He understands it's hopeless?

Bill nods. Kate turns to Thea.

KATE (CONT'D)
Stay here.

THEA
Why can't I go home?

KATE
You just got caught stealing a box
of condoms from the drug store. I
don't think now's a great time for
you to be left to your own devices.

Kate moves toward the small waiting room.

KATE (CONT'D)
Stay put. I'll be back in an hour.

Kate exits. Thea stands with Bill.

BILL
Are you okay?

Thea doesn't look at Bill.

BILL (CONT'D)
You know. I deal with this kind of
thing with my own daughter. And I
understand, sometimes, there are
certain aspects to teenage life,
certain pressures --

THEA
-- Don't talk to me like your my dad
or something, Bill. Okay?

Thea moves away from Bill, slumps down into a chair. Bill
wisely decides to not press the issue further, turns away.

INT. WAITING AREA -- EMERGENCY ROOM -- NIGHT

Mark Evans sits, nearly catatonic in the same small waiting
room that was previously occupied by Diane Henderson. The
door opens and Kate Grant steps inside.

KATE

Hello Mr. Evans. My name is Kate Gra--Armstrong. I'm a coordinator from the Organ Recovery Center.

MARK

Are you a doctor?

KATE

No. I'm here to talk to you about organ donation.

MARK

But my wife is still alive. I mean, they said her heart was still beating.

KATE

I was told the social worker and the doctors talked to you about --

MARK

-- They said her brain isn't working, but that her heart was still beating.

Pause. Kate shifts in her seat; annoyed that the hospital staff didn't clarify the situation to Mark. She stifles her outrage, but can't help saying:

KATE

That's - that's just - that's not fair to you or to me. Or to the people who are waiting.

(Pause.)

Mr. Evans. Your wife is being kept alive by machines. So yes, her heart is beating and her lungs are receiving oxygen, but her brain is no longer functioning.

MARK

But if her heart is beating, she's still alive.

KATE

(carefully)

Life exists in the brain. The heart, the lungs - they're just servants to the mind. And when the mind goes, those servants can keep working, but their task is forever meaningless.

Mark lets this information settle.

KATE (CONT'D)

I know this is a terrible time.

(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)

And you don't have any obligation to respond. But if you choose to donate her organs, you have a great opportunity to help many people, to save their lives --

MARK

-- I can take her out of here if I want?

KATE

Of course.

MARK

I can take her home right now?

Kate nods. Mark thinks about his latest utterance, then;

MARK (CONT'D)

I can't take her home.

Mark lowers his head, starts to weep. Kate moves next to him, takes his hand in hers.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. ALLEGHENY GENERAL HOSPITAL -- ESTABLISHING

Late at night. The entrance to the emergency room for the main hospital blazes with light. In the building next door, St. Jude's rooms are all well lit.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - ALLEGHENY GENERAL -- SAME

We push through the frenetic energy of the ER, past where Kate Armstrong sits with the grieving Mark Evans, through the swinging automatic doors to find --

INT. ALLEGHENY GENERAL HOSPITAL HALLWAY -- SAME

-- Nathaniel and Simon as they walk toward us.

NATHANIEL

Let's synchronize, Liverpool.

SIMON

Please stop calling me that.

NATHANIEL

I've got 10:23. You?

SIMON

Same.

NATHANIEL

You ready to do this, Liverpool?

SIMON

Please. My name is Simon.

A NURSE pops her head out of the recovery operating room.

NURSE

Dr. Grant. Your patient is ready to go.

Nathaniel pushes the door of the recovery OR open for Simon. Inside, we can see Sarah Evans body on the operating table.

NATHANIEL

Okay Doc Marten. Bring me a perfect heart.

Simon walks into the recovery operating room. Nathaniel hurries down the long hallway, back toward St. Jude's.

INT. OPERATING ROOM - EMERGENCY ROOM HOSPITAL -- SAME

Simon steps inside. A second doctor checks Sarah Evans for pupillary reaction. Simon takes a quick glance at the electroencephalograph then reads the Brain Death Declaration.

SIMON

Everything's in order. Hope you don't mind loud music.

Simon pops a disc into the into the cd player, cranks it up. Jane's Addiction's "Caught Stealing" pours out of the speakers.

EXT. ST. JUDE'S TRANSPLANT HOSPITAL -- SAME

A half city block from the emergency room, connected by a well lit sky way. We push in through the fifth story windows and into --

INT. SURGICAL PREP -- SAME

Nathaniel scrubs in while HEAD OR NURSE Jessica Kivala (Nathaniel's girlfriend) talks on the phone.

JESSICA

He's here now.

Jessica hangs up.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

They're bringing Lesley Walker down.

Nathaniel nods, focused, continues to scrub.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY -- MIDNIGHT

Two orderlies wheel Lesley Walker down the hall. Nurse Mary and Carol run alongside. They pass Thea Grant, who has wandered out from Allegheny General to St. Jude's.

MARY

Thea. Out late on a school night, huh?

Thea shrugs, locks eyes with Lesley.

MARY (CONT'D)

(to Carol)
You'll have to wait here, Mrs. Walker.

Carol leans over, kisses her daughter. Mary pauses, then nods to the orderlies who push Lesley through the swinging doors. Carol remains. Pause. Thea moves to her side.

THEA

How old is your daughter?

CAROL
Thirteen. She's thirteen.

Carol begins to shake. Thea puts her hand on Carol's forearm.

THEA
My father's not so good with people,
but I promise you he's really good
at this.

INT. SURGERY -- SAME

Nathaniel outlines his incision on Lesley Walker's anesthetized body. Iodine is spread. The OR phone rings. Jessica reaches to answer.

INT. DONOR RECOVERY - ALLEGHENY GENERAL -- SAME

Jane's Addiction CRANKS. Simon, phone held to his ear by one of the nurses, looks at Sarah Evan's perfect young heart.

SIMON
(on phone)
Tell Dr. Grant the heart looks good.
We'll call you back when we cross
clamp.

INT. OPERATING ROOM - ST. JUDE'S -- SAME

Jessica hangs up.

JESSICA
Heart looks good.

NATHANIEL
Bovie.

Jessica hands Nathaniel the firestick that cuts and cauterizes at the same time. Nathaniel begins the incision into the notch above the Lesley's sternum.

INT. DONOR RECOVERY OPERATING ROOM - ALLEGHENY GENERAL --
SAME

Simon focuses on his work.

SIMON
Turn off the bloody music!
(Beat.)
Cross clamp.

Simon clamps the aorta - the donor's heart stops beating.
The room goes silent for this true time of death.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Official time of death. 11:13.

The room goes silent, sadly respectful. Then;

SIMON (CONT'D)
Okay. Turn it back on.

"Caught Stealing" cues up again. Simon gets down to work.

INT. OPERATING ROOM - ST. JUDE'S -- SAME

Lesley Walker's sternum is now split down the center providing access to the mediastinum (the chest cavity in which the heart sits).

NATHANIEL
Retractor.

Jessica hands Nathaniel the surgical device composed of two curved steel blades parallel to one another, which fit on either side of the rib cage. Nathaniel puts it in place, cranks the the handle-operated retractor. Lesley Walker's sternum begins to separate.

INT. DONOR RECOVERY OPERATING ROOM - ALLEGHENY GENERAL -- SAME

Simon looks up from his work, checks several gauges, then STOPS.

SIMON
The pressure on the damn perfusion solution is too low!

The room pauses; this is a huge fuck up.

SIMON (CONT'D)
How long have we been at this temperature?

The PERFUSIONIST, pale in the face, stammers:

PERFUSIONIST
No more than - no more than three or four minutes.

SIMON
How could you let this happen?

The perfusionist works quickly, getting the solution temperature adjusted.

PERFUSIONIST
I was - I didn't -

SIMON
-- Don't talk to me. Just get it back to normal range.

Simon continues to the recovery while the perfusionist and nurses work frantically around him.

INT. OPERATING ROOM - ST. JUDE'S -- SAME

Nathaniel moves the lungs aside with the back of his hands, gathers the pericardium (the sac that surrounds and lubricates the heart). Jessica places scissors into his left hand. Nathaniel severs the pink pericardial membrane.

INT. RECOVERY OPERATING ROOM -- SAME

Simon continues to work.

PERFUSIONIST
Temperature's back in range.

SIMON
It's a little ischemic.

PERFUSIONIST
How bad is it?

Simon shrugs, quickly removes the heart, flushes the organ, places it into a first sterile bag, then into a second, then into a third. An igloo cooler full of ice is lifted up. Simon places the heart into the cooler, hands it to the strongest looking guy in the room.

SIMON
Run like hell.

The young intern takes the heart and BOLTS.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY -- NIGHT

The intern SPRINTS down the hallway, passes Kate Grant, who remains with Mark Evans, holds his arm, keeps him upright.

INT. OPERATING ROOM - TRANSPLANT HOSPITAL -- SAME

Nathaniel drops the scissors back onto Jessica's table to his right and folds back the corners of the pericardium. He tacks them down with looping strokes with a needle and thread.

The heart is revealed: it pulsates in the chest cavity.

NATHANIEL
She's moving a little. Give her more relaxant.

The anesthesiologist adjusts his knobs.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)
Heparin.

Jessica takes a large hypodermic, passes it to Nathaniel. Nathaniel injects the amber fluid DIRECTLY INTO the heart. The heart responds by beating wildly, irregularly.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

Cut that out.

Nathaniel flicks the heart with his thumb and forefinger. The heart returns to rhythm.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

Switch her over.

A heart-lung bypass machine is wheeled into position. Suction devices are attached from Lesley to the machine. Nathaniel examines the connections.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

Okay. Let's do it.

Nathaniel examines the connections.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

Bypass.

The perfusionist turns the machine on. Nathaniel delays and then un-clamps, allowing the girl's blood to rush from the body and into the pump, which at that point automatically assumes responsibility for the job that her heart was doing just seconds before.

INT. HOSPITAL SKYWAY -- NIGHT

The intern, carrying the donor heart in the igloo cooler, BOLTS across the connecting skyway that links the emergency hospital to the transplant hospital. He sprints past CAROL WALKER who sits helplessly, waiting. Thea Grant sits close by, asleep in her chair. The intern pushes through the doors that separate this area from the surgical theater hallways.

INTERN

Which room?

A nurse points to the theater, the intern BURSTS through the door and into --

INT. TRANSPLANT OPERATING ROOM -- SAME

-- Nathaniel examines the heart. Simon Griffith arrives.

NATHANIEL

It looks a little ischemic. How well did it perfuse in the OR?

SIMON

We had a little problem.

NATHANIEL

I can see that.

SIMON

Is it badly damaged?

Nathaniel considers this - the implications to an organ this fragile losing it's perfusion are great.

NATHANIEL

Okay. Let's go anyway.

SIMON

Need me?

NATHANIEL

Take second position.

Nathaniel turns to the rest of the group.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

Let's commit.

With a series of snips, Nathaniel cuts Lesley Walker's defective heart away, lifts it up and out of the chest cavity and places it in a stainless steel basin where it continues to beat.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

We're ready.

The box with the Sarah Evans' heart is lifted out and lowered into another stainless steel basin filled with saline and ice. The heart stops beating. Pause. Nathaniel picks up the new heart, places it into Lesley Walker's chest cavity, and begins to deftly sew the organ into her body.

JESSICA

Anastomosis.

INT. THEATER ABOVE SURGERY -- SAME

Kate stands alone, looks down on the surgery in awe and wonder, still, even after seeing so many transplants through so many years, then walks OUT of the theater.

Nathaniel continues to sew the heart into place, Simon across the table, Jessica in the scrub nurse position, all of them working in perfect concert. The room is genial now, and the old personalities of the doctors and nurses are coming back.

SIMON

What's black and red and white and has a hard time getting through revolving doors?

NATHANIEL

(not looking up)

A nun with a spear through her head.

SIMON

I already did that one? Damn. Okay.
What's do you call a nun doing push-
ups in a cucumber field?

The nurses moan. Once Simon gets going, he never stops.

INT. WAITING ROOM -- NIGHT

Thea sleeps on a couch. Carol Walker sleeps on a chair.
Kate steps in, quietly, shakes her daughter awake.

INT. HALLWAY -- MOMENTS LATER

As Kate and Thea make their way toward the hospital exit.

KATE

We need to talk about what happened.

THEA

It's three in the morning, mom.

KATE

Still --

THEA

-- I stole some condoms, okay? So,
I mean, I'm in trouble because I
stole and because I was going to
have sex. I get it.

Thea walks out. Kate follows.

INT. SURGICAL THEATER -- THREE IN THE MORNING

The heart is in. Vitals are strong. Nathaniel steps back,
satisfied.

NATHANIEL

She looks good.

Nathaniel has his gown removed. Takes a long look at Lesley
Walker. From Nathaniel's POV - *Lesley Walker merges into*
SARAH EVANS. We get our first look at what she looked like
when she was alive. Pretty, radiant, excited by her life.

Nathaniel stares at her.

SIMON (O.S.)

You want me to finish up? Dr. Grant?

Sarah Evans returns Nathaniel's gaze. Reaches for his hand.
Nathaniel takes her hand in his.

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

Dr. Grant?

Nathaniel blinks and Sarah Evans merges back into Lesley Walker, anesthetized before him. Nathaniel looks down at his hand; it's wrapped around the hand of his young patient.

NATHANIEL

Yeah. Liverpool. Finish her up.

Nathaniel takes his hand away, turns, walks out of the OR.

EXT. HENRY'S SPORTS SHOP -- DAWN

Day two. A ratty looking store front in the heart of downtown Pittsburgh. It's locked, gated. Nathaniel walks up the store, knocks on the window. No one's there. He pulls out a card from the Transplant Institute, scribbles a note and pushes it into the grate.

ON NOTE: It reads "Don't sell that Clemente card."

EXT. ARMSTRONG/GRANT HOUSE -- MORNING

Nathaniel stands before his old house. He habitually picks up the morning newspaper, clears some crap off the driveway, then walks up the porch steps. As he approaches the door, Kate emerges.

KATE

You must need coffee.

INT. KITCHEN -- MOMENTS LATER

Nathaniel sits.

KATE

She was caught stealing condoms from the mall drug store.

Kate hands him a cup of coffee.

KATE (CONT'D)

She's disobeying me, she's doing badly in school and now she's breaking the law.

NATHANIEL

You talk to her?

KATE

I'm not so sure talk is what she needs, Nate.

NATHANIEL

What do you have in mind?

KATE

It's time to consider finding a professional to --

NATHANIEL

-- Come on. A shrink? Can't we all just sit down, fix this without --

KATE

-- Thea is falling apart. And while I would love to imagine that the things you do for your patients actually extend to your daughter as well, I know that is simply not the case.

Before Nathaniel can respond to that, Thea enters the kitchen, exhausted, pours herself a cup of coffee.

THEA

Mom. Dad.

Thea grabs a yogurt from the fridge, looks to Nathaniel. Nathaniel still stares at Kate, angered by her comment.

THEA (CONT'D)

I don't want to be late.

Thea walks out of the house. Nathaniel stands to follow, pulls a check from his pocket.

NATHANIEL

Here's the last payment.

Kate takes it. Nathaniel walks out.

EXT. ARMSTRONG/GRANT HOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

Thea and Nathaniel walk toward his car.

THEA

That girl from last night. Lesley. Her mom seemed so nice --

NATHANIEL

-- Thea. What the hell were you thinking --

THEA

-- My mom, on the other hand, is being such a bitch.

NATHANIEL

Don't talk like that about her.

THEA

You do.

Nathaniel opens the car door for his daughter. Thea slides into the car.

EXT. DRIVING -- MOMENTS LATER

Thea drinks her coffee.

NATHANIEL

You stole condoms?

Nathaniel rolls down his window, lights a cigarette.

THEA

(re:cigarettes)

You treat lung patients every day.

NATHANIEL

You're not answering my question.

THEA

Mom told me she'd be home in time to take me to the mall. I had to walk all the way over and --

NATHANIEL

-- That explains why you were stealing? Because you had to walk to the mall?

Thea looks away. Nathaniel studies his daughter, throws his cigarette out the window.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

Sex is a serious thing. And you are far too young and far too removed from authentic relationships to even begin to --

THEA

-- What's the real reason you and mom split up?

NATHANIEL

Don't manipulate the conversation into --

THEA

-- It was because of that nurse from the hospital. Jessica. Right?

Nathaniel quiets.

THEA (CONT'D)

Are you in love with her?

Nathaniel pauses, then shakes his head no.

THEA (CONT'D)

See. You sleep with her but you don't love her --

NATHANIEL

-- Whatever you do in relationships, Thea, don't compare yourself to me.

THEA

Just saying that's not exactly an *authentic* relationship --

NATHANIEL

(to it)

-- Who is this boy you think so much of that you'd steal condoms from a drug store?

Pause.

THEA

Dave Torris. He's a senior and the captain of the soccer team.

NATHANIEL

Okay.

THEA

And he told me he'd take me to the semi-formal if I hooked up with him.

NATHANIEL

Go with someone else.

THEA

You don't understand, dad. No one else is going to ask me.

While Nathaniel takes this in, the sound of an angry male patient's voice covers:

KOSINSKI (O.S.)

I can't breath. I've got death hanging over me. Every day you make me wait.

INT. ANDREW KOSINSKI'S ICU ROOM -- DAY

Nathaniel Grant examines Andrew Kosinski while Simon Griffith looks on. Kosinski sits hunched in his chair, exhausted from his emphysema.

KOSINSKI

Am I up next?

NATHANIEL

We'll see what this next rounds of tests indicate --

KOSINSKI

-- That's the best you can do?

NATHANIEL

It's out of my control, Mr. Kosinski.

KOSINSKI

I was first up for transplant seven months ago. My wife and kids were prepared --

NATHANIEL

-- I understand your situation.

KOSINSKI

Dr. Jacobs wouldn't have screwed me like this. He certainly wouldn't have done this to me me.

Kosinski indicates two long scars across his back.

NATHANIEL

The lung reduction was intended to give you better quality of life --

KOSINSKI

-- Eight hour surgery. Ten week recovery. And now I'm worse than ever.

Dr. Bart Jacobs, dressed for work, steps into the room.

BART

We never said it would cure you, Mr. Kosinski.

Nathaniel looks up, shocked to see Bart in the hospital. Bart walks over, listens to Kosinski's chest.

BART (CONT'D)

Although none of us love his bedside manner, Dr. Grant has treated you exactly as I would have.

Bart begins to COUGH badly. Nathaniel moves to Bart's side, takes his arm.

NATHANIEL

Dr. Jacobs. Let's speak in the hall.

Nathaniel moves Bart to the hallway. Simon follows.

INT. ICU HALLWAY -- SAME

Bart coughs for a moment, then the attack subsides. Nathaniel notices his fingers are badly swollen.

NATHANIEL
Your fingers are clubbing.

BART
I'm having a hard time catching my
breath.

NATHANIEL
(to Simon.)
Get him on oxygen right now.
(to Bart.)
You have to be admitted.

BART
I have the Pena interview.

NATHANIEL
Bart.

Nurse Mary turns the corner, sees Bart, screams;

MARY
Dr. Jacobs! Oh my God! It's so good
to see you.

Mary embraces Bart. The other nurses come over. Bart smiles
at them.

BART
I'm fine. I'll finish with Pena and
then we can talk.

NATHANIEL
Mary. When Dr. Griffith comes with
the oxygen, please take Bart to his
office and hook him up.

Mary nods, Nathaniel walks away.

INT. ICU - LESLEY WALKER'S ROOM -- AFTERNOON

Nathaniel checks Lesley's blood pressure, listens to her
heart. Carol Walker looks up at him hopefully.

NATHANIEL
Blood pressure looks good. No
arrhythmia. We'll keep up with the
immunosuppression and the
hemodynamics, see how she does.

Carol has no idea what that means.

CAROL
So she's fine. She's going to be --

NATHANIEL
-- She looks good, Mrs. Walker.

Carol moves to Nathaniel and throws her arms around him.

CAROL

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Nathaniel squirms out of Carol's embrace, hurries out of the room. Carol looks to her daughter, kisses her forehead.

INT. OFFICE HALLWAYS -- LATER

Nathaniel returns from his rounds, approaches Bart's office. DR. AUGUST PENA (late forties, South American, very handsome) sits close to Bart's receptionist RACHEL.

RACHEL

He's taking a little rest.

Nathaniel turns to Pena.

NATHANIEL

August. How was your flight?

PENA

(heavy accent)

I've heard some of your comments about my work, Nathaniel. I'm afraid you misunderstand my approach to this job --

NATHANIEL

-- I've taken most every organ you've rejected over the last five years. Flown them an extra five hours from Los Angeles and used them on patients you would never accept. So, no, I don't think I *misunderstand* your approach.

Nathaniel continues down the hall to Bart's office. The door is closed. Nathaniel knocks.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

Bart?

(No answer.)

Bart. You okay?

Nothing. Nathaniel opens the door, looks inside to see Bart Jacobs on the floor of his office, unconscious. Nathaniel hurries to her mentor's side, calls out -

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

-- Need some help in here. Now! I need some help!

As Nathaniel attends to Bart, we FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. ONE LIFE ORGAN RECOVERY CENTER -- AFTERNOON

Kate Armstrong steps into the main room. A switchboard operator pushes some papers to Kate while concurrently talking on the phone ("*No, ma'am, organs are not for sale here.*") Kate steps away with her mail and nearly collides with MARK EVANS.

EVANS

Do you remember me?

KATE

Of course I do, Mr. Evans.

EVANS

You told me I could call or come talk to you --

KATE

-- Of course. Please. Come to my office.

INT. KATE'S OFFICE - ONE LIFE -- MOMENTS LATER

Kate sits down behind her desk. Mark Evans loses himself, takes in Kate's photographs (all of Thea).

EVANS

Sarah hated my suits. Been wearing the same four I bought the day after I graduated college.

KATE

Would you like some coffee?

EVANS

We were supposed to be going to a wedding this weekend. A friend of mine in DC. That's why we were shopping. To get a new suit for the wedding.

KATE

Mr. Evans. Is there anything I can do for you?

EVANS

I got a call from the clothing store this morning. Told me my suit was ready. I mean, what the hell am I supposed to do about that?

KATE

I'm sure they'll understand if you no longer want it. I'd be happy to call them personally --

EVANS

-- Who received my wife's heart?

Pause.

KATE

I'm sorry, but I can't give you that name.

EVANS

Can you give the family my name?

KATE

Mr. Evans. The decision to make contact is legally up to the recipient. And even if they do wish to meet you, that process can take well over a year --

EVANS

-- I can't sleep. I can't eat. I can't - I just need to know something good has come out of this. Please. Did something good come out of this?

Pause. Kate studies Mark, then relents.

KATE

The recipient is a teen-aged girl.

EVANS

Here in the city?

KATE

I can only tell you that it was local. She received it last night.

Evans looks very moved, but also agitated.

EVANS

When can I see her?

KATE

Mr. Evans. Again, that's up to the recipient.

(Changing the topic.)

I can also tell you that Sarah's lungs went to a man in Florida, her kidneys to a woman in Harrisburg, her corneas to a man in Connecticut and tissues to over a hundred people.

But Mark's mind is focused completely on his wife's heart; he stares into space. Kate looks to him for a response, then allows him to just sit.

EXT. PITTSBURGH -- DUSK

Night falls over the city.

INT. ICU HALLWAY - ST. JUDE'S -- EVENING

Mary jams through paperwork. Simon loiters next to her, attempts to make small talk.

SIMON

St. Jude. Patron Saint of desperate situations, forgotten causes and hospital workers.

MARY

I'm not Catholic.

SIMON

He was clubbed to death and then beheaded.

MARY

(humming while she works)

Naa-naa-naa-nananana. Nananana. Hey --

SIMON

-- Please. I hate The Beatles.

MARY

But you're from Liverpool.

SIMON

You're from Pittsburgh. Does that mean you love Donnie Iris?

Nathaniel turns the corner. Mary looks up at him.

MARY

Who the hell is Donnie Iris?

NATHANIEL

Pittsburgh born rock musician. Had a hit called 'Ah Leah' in 1979. Never heard from again.

(to Simon.)

How did Bart's diagnostics go?

SIMON

CAT scan looks pretty bad, pulmonary function tests and arterial breathing

(MORE)

SIMON (CONT'D)
tests indicate he's within range for
the transplant.

NATHANIEL
Blood tests?

SIMON
(ignoring that)
The six minute walk test has him in
range as well.

NATHANIEL
Liverpool. The blood tests.

SIMON
Bart tested positive for Hep C.

Pause. Nathaniel takes this in; this is very bad news.

SIMON (CONT'D)
I guess we shouldn't be surprised.
So many surgeries. We all probably
have it.

Nathaniel, without another word, continues down the hallway.
Jessica sees him, approaches.

JESSICA
You want me to come over tonight?

NATHANIEL
(no)
Absolutely.

Nathaniel turns to Simon.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)
Liverpool. Meet me in Lesley Walker's
room.

Simon continues on. Nathaniel and Jessica stop in front of a
man who appears to be lurking in the hallway.

JESSICA
Thought we might actually have a
real date or something. Dinner, a
movie, some normal time.

NATHANIEL
Jessica. I'm not so great with *normal*
time.

Nathaniel and Jessica part. The lurking man remains, moving
from room to room, looking inside at each patient. After a
third room the man turns to cross the hall and we recognize
Mark Evans.

INT. ICU - LESLEY WALKER'S ROOM -- EVENING

Nathaniel steps into Lesley's room. Simon stands by the young girl, Carol sits in the corner.

SIMON

Blood pressure dropped, arrhythmia.

Nathaniel looks at Lesley, at her charts.

NATHANIEL

Get an ECMO in here.

Simon hurries out of the room.

CAROL

What's wrong?

NATHANIEL

We're going to bring in a mechanical support for Lesley's heart.

CAROL

But you said the surgery went well. You said she was --

NATHANIEL

-- Lesley's immune system thinks the new organ is a foreign invader.

CAROL

Her body's attacking her new heart?

NATHANIEL

We'll treat her with anti-rejection drugs. Rest her heart. For now.

CAROL

For now?

NATHANIEL

We'll give it some time. Hopefully we can reverse this and give the heart a chance to take.

Simon steps into the room.

SIMON

The ECMO's on its way.

Nathaniel nods, follows Simon out.

INT. ICU HALLWAY -- SAME

Simon and Nathaniel watch as a the ECMO (extracorporeal membrane oxygenation machine - a huge mechanical heart) is wheeled quickly down the hall.

SIMON

Was it the damage from my recovery?

Nathaniel considers this, then notices Bart Jacobs in his room.

NATHANIEL

Doesn't matter now.

Bart, very tired, motions for them both to come in.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

Stay here. I need a minute alone with Bart.

INT. BART'S ICU ROOM -- SAME

Nathaniel steps into Bart's room, closes the door.

BART

Is my ass hanging out of this damn thing?

NATHANIEL

Just a little. Yeah.

Bart forces a laugh.

BART

You've got me on too much Corticosteroid -

NATHANIEL

-- You airway is severely blocked. You need the lung relaxants --

BART

-- My oxygen is all screwed up --

NATHANIEL

-- Bart. You also have Hepatitis.

Bart takes this in, shrugs.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

You're not surprised?

BART

I've been elbow deep in other people's blood for fifty years, Nate.

NATHANIEL

We can still proceed with the transplant --

BART

-- Much more complicated down the road.

NATHANIEL

Don't let this change your course.

BART

If I were another patient --

NATHANIEL

-- I would tell you the same thing. We'll transplant the lungs now, if we need to do the liver later, we'll cross that bridge then.

Before Bart can answer, Nathaniel moves for the door. Before he can exit:

BART

I heard how our young fellow screwed up the perfusion.

Nathaniel nods.

BART (CONT'D)

I wouldn't rush to re-transplant her.

NATHANIEL

She'll die if I don't.

BART

I'd watch and wait with that girl. You, I know, want to be god damn heroic all the god damn time.

NATHANIEL

I'm not being heroic.

BART

Watch and wait. If you want to be in my position, you can't just cut every time there's a problem, Nate. You have to watch and wait.

Nathaniel nods, steps out of the room.

INT. ICU - LESLEY WALKER'S ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Nathaniel steps into the room. Lesley is now hooked up to the huge ECMO machine. Carol Walker sleeps beside her daughter.

From Nathaniel's POV - Lesley Walker's face merges into that of SARAH EVANS. She sits up, looks at Nathaniel. Nathaniel moves closer to her.

*Sarah reaches out her arms, folds herself into Nathaniel.
Holds on to him tight.*

Nathaniel blinks again, the image of Sarah Evans folds back into the sleeping form of Lesley Walker. Nathaniel turns, walks out of the room.

INT. HALLWAY - ICU -- CONTINUOUS

Nathaniel closes the door to Lesley Walker's ICU room, turns to Simon.

NATHANIEL

Classify Lesley Walker 1A. Alert the staff that we plan to re-transplant.

Nathaniel walks away, Simon turns to Mary.

SIMON

We're going to need another heart for Lesley Walker.

Mary nods. Simon walks in away, revealing Mark Evans who's overheard the entire conversation. We PUSH IN ON the young widower as he takes in the fact that his wife's heart may be failing once again.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. BART JACOB'S ICU ROOM -- DAWN

Day three. Close on the oxygen monitor, the cardiac catheter and the several lines that lead from the wall of machines to Bart Jacob's body. We follow the lines across the sleeping features of the famous surgeon and land on the chair across the room that now occupies Nathaniel Grant, who sits slumped, and keeps a watchful eye on his mentor.

INT. ANDREW KOSINSKI'S ICU ROOM -- MORNING

Nathaniel passes Andrew Kosinski's room. Kosinski, attended by the second nurse, is in the middle of an incredible coughing fit. Nathaniel steps into the room.

NATHANIEL

Stand him up a bit.

Nathaniel listens to Kosinski's lungs.

KOSINSKI

(through his fit)
I came to you for help. End up being
passed over for the weak.

NATHANIEL

Mr. Kosinski --

KOSINSKI

-- For the blacks and the poor and
the drunks and the drug addicts.
Because, you tell me, I'm too strong --

NATHANIEL

-- I understand how frustrating this
is --

KOSINSKI

-- You...understand...nothing.

Kosinski's attack abates. His tear filled eyes stare at Nathaniel with nothing but hatred.

KOSINSKI (CONT'D)

I deserve to live. More than most
people. I deserve more time.

Kosinski is wracked again by coughs. The second nurse helps him into bed.

NATHANIEL

We're going to have to put you on a ventilator, Mr. Koskinski. I'll come back to check on you soon.

Nathaniel steps out into the hall.

INT. ICU HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Simon approaches Mary, CD jewel box in his hand.

SIMON

Donnie Iris's greatest hits.

Simon pops the disc into the nursing station's CD player. 'Ah, Leah' begins to play. Nathaniel emerges from out of nowhere, hits the stop button.

NATHANIEL

Liverpool. You must have something better to do than torture my nurses with bad syntho-pop from the late seventies.

Nathaniel steps into another patient's room. Simon seethes.

MARY

(explaining)

As long as you're a fellow, you're just a region to him. We've had Hong Kong, Melbourne, Tel Aviv --

SIMON

-- Right. I get it.

MARY

Least you're not from Ho Chi Minh City like that last guy.

Nathaniel emerges.

NATHANIEL

Liverpool. I'm rounding here, if you didn't notice. So stop flirting with my head ICU nurse and start making yourself useful.

Nathaniel continues, nearly collides with a confused looking Mark Evans.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

Excuse me.

MARK

You're Lesley Walker's surgeon, right?

NATHANIEL

Yes.

MARK

I was wondering how the heart she received is doing?

Nathaniel pauses to consider the strange wording of this question.

NATHANIEL

May I ask who you are?

MARK

Lesley Walker is a part of my family.

Carol Walker steps out of the room, looks at Mark. Mark hurries away.

CAROL

Excuse me. But I don't even know that man.

Nathaniel nods, continues down the hall, whispers something to a security guard. The guard motions to another guard. The phone in the nurses' station rings as the two uniformed men walk toward Mark Evans.

MARY

ICU.

(Pause.)

Okay. Okay. I'll tell him.

The uniformed men are now upon Mark Evans who begins his story with them.

MARY (CONT'D)

That was Bill Bryce. There's a potential lung donor in West Virginia. Male. Two hundred pounds.

Nathaniel grabs his coat, hurries toward his office, while, in the background, Mark Evans is escorted out of the ICU.

EXT. PRIVATE AIRSTRIP -- DAY

Nathaniel pulls onto the tarmac in his car. Across the runway, a small Cessna jet sits, ready. Kate, Bill Bryce and Jessica Kivala stand outside the door. Nathaniel hurries to join them. Kate hands him a list.

NATHANIEL

Kosinski?

KATE

That's what UNOS said.

NATHANIEL

No. These lungs are going to Bart.

KATE

We can't just arbitrarily move him to the top of the waiting list.

NATHANIEL

I'm their doctor. And I say bump Kosinski to second position --

KATE

-- That's unethical, not to mention illegal --

NATHANIEL

-- This is Bart we're talking about.

KATE

Exactly. And Bart understands the system better than any of us.

The door to the plane swings open and a PILOT emerges.

PILOT

We've got our window for take-off.

The four regard each other and then look inside the small cabin they will be entering. Pause.

BILL

Anyone else coming?

Kate shakes her head.

BILL (CONT'D)

Anyone want to stay back?

(Hopeful pause. No takers.)

Okay then. Let's do this.

INT. PLANE -- DAY

This group of ex-spouses, lovers and co-workers sit knee to knee, butt to butt in the cramped cabin. Nathaniel glares at Kate. Pause. Kate averts Nathaniel's stare, turns to Jessica.

KATE

You know. We've never really talked. Gotten to know one another.

JESSICA

I know.

KATE

We should go out. Sometime.

JESSICA

You think?

KATE

Let bygones be bygones.

JESSICA

Okay. I'd like that.

Kate can no longer stand Nathaniel's stare.

KATE

Kosinski's hypertension is out of control. Blood count's sky high. Right side of his heart is enlarged.

NATHANIEL

Bart's in worse shape than that --

KATE

-- All I can do is give the data to UNOS and let them decide.

NATHANIEL

That's crap.

KATE

Don't make me responsible for this. I love Bart as much as anyone else --

NATHANIEL

-- This is our call, Kate. Not a computer's.

BILL

Actually, Nate, it is a computer's call.

NATHANIEL

Shut up, Bill. We're not talking to you.

BILL

Just saying, this is exactly why a system's been put in place.

KATE

Bill. Please.

Pause. The sound of the engine overtakes the small space.

JESSICA

(to Kate)

I really like your shoes.

KATE

Thank you.

Pause. Normalcy attempted until:

NATHANIEL

You know it's just like you. All about rules, regulations.

KATE

What are you saying?

NATHANIEL

I'm saying you've always been a stickler for little things that make little sense --

KATE

-- I hope you're not talking about our marriage --

NATHANIEL

-- I'm talking about you --

KATE

-- Because I didn't tolerate your infidelities? Is that the little rule I was being a stickler about?

Pause. Jessica shrinks in her seat. Bill looks out the window.

NATHANIEL

Fine. I broke some promises. But you broke them too --

KATE

-- What did I do?

NATHANIEL

-- You promised to stop working. You promised to stay home with Thea --

KATE

-- I tried --

NATHANIEL

-- We needed a normal life.

BILL

Can you two discuss this another time?

KATE

You're right. I'm sorry, Bill. Jessica. This isn't appropriate at all.

Nathaniel looks out the window. Jessica to the floor. Bill attempts to take Kate's hand, but she doesn't want that.

She attempts to look away from Nathaniel, then;

KATE (CONT'D)

Even if I had stopped working. What part of normal is being married to a workaholic, insomniac, egomaniac that screws every nurse who works within five miles of St. Jude's?

Jessica tries to make herself even smaller. Nathaniel takes this hit, goes silent. The plane grows quiet once again.

INT. RURAL WEST VIRGINIA HOSPITAL -- EVENING

The group enters the hospital. Kate notices the donor family.

KATE

There. In the waiting area.

Nathaniel looks around the space; it's a poor, rural hospital with one room that used for examinations and surgeries. In the center of the room, a brain dead white male in his twenties lies intubated.

JESSICA

(facetious)

Which operating room do you want to use?

Nathaniel shakes his head, takes a seat, watches while, through the window, Kate and Bill introduce themselves to the potential donor's family.

INT. RURAL HOSPITAL HALLWAY -- LATER

Kate paces, her cell phone to her ear.

KATE

You're sure, Derek? Okay. Thanks.

Kate approaches the recovery room, steps inside where Nathaniel and Jessica assisted by local nurses and doctors, work to recover the organs from the donor.

KATE (CONT'D)

UNOS just sent word. The size of the organ reversed the order. So Bart's first up for the lungs.

Nathaniel nods, hugely relieved.

KATE (CONT'D)

I'll call University, tell them to start prepping him.

NATHANIEL

Thank you.

KATE

It was just a size issue, Nate.

INT. RURAL WEST VIRGINIA HOSPITAL - WAITING AREA -- SAME

Kate steps back into the hallway, dials.

KATE

Simon. It's Kate. UNOS placed Bart first on the list.

Kate listens to Simon's response. Her features fall.

KATE (CONT'D)

Okay. Simon. I'll tell Nate.

Kate closes her phone. Bill approaches.

BILL

What is it?

KATE

Bart Jacobs. Removed himself from the recipient list.

Pause. Kate looks in at her ex-husband who works with great care. She knows this is going to break his heart.

INT. PRIVATE PLANE -- NIGHT

The foursome enroute back to Pittsburgh, organs packed in their travel cases all around them.

NATHANIEL

They're synched up, right?

Kate nods.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

They've got Bart ready?

KATE

Nathaniel.

NATHANIEL

What?

KATE

Bart. Doesn't want the operation.

(Pause.)

The organ is going to Mr. Kosinski. Bart took himself off the list.

Nathaniel takes a moment to let that sink in, then fights his devastation by picking up the phone.

NATHANIEL

Simon. It's Nate. Yeah. Is Mr. Kosinski prepped and ready to go?
(beat.)

Good. The organs look perfect. We should be there in forty-five minutes.

Off Kate.

INT. OPERATING ROOM -- NIGHT

Nathaniel steps inside with the donated lungs - Andrew Kosinski is already prepped, open, ready.

SIMON

I can do this one, if you'd rather --

NATHANIEL

-- No. He's my patient.

While Kate watches from through the operating room's glass door, Nathaniel grabs a suture, gets down to work sewing the recovered lungs into his patient's body.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - OFFICES -- MORNING

Day four. Nathaniel walks down the hallway, exhausted after a long night's surgery. He notices the door to Bart Jacob's office is open, approaches. Looks inside to see Bart, at his desk, a wheelchair beside him, going through papers as his wife Sandra packs up. Bart looks up at his protegee, nods to his wife. Sandra steps out of the room.

BART

You know, the board is calling for my recommendation.

NATHANIEL

Why would you pass up perfectly good organs?

BART

Truth be told. It's a difficult choice between you and Pena.

NATHANIEL

You could have a few more good years --

BART

-- Multiple transplant surgeries, anti-rejection drugs and a life in the ICU is not what I consider good years.

NATHANIEL

You are being ridiculous.

BART

No, Nate, I am being the patient.

NATHANIEL

We've made a world where the condemned get second chances. Where we can actually raise life from death.

BART

We give people a choice.

NATHANIEL

A second chance.

BART

A choice. Do you understand the difference?

NATHANIEL

(quietly)

I'm not ready for you to go.

BART

When are you going to understand that none of this is about what you want?

Sandra steps back into the office with another box.

BART (CONT'D)

Give us one more minute, sweetheart.

Sandra steps back out.

BART (CONT'D)

You are, by far, the best surgeon I've ever trained. But the board doesn't believe great surgeons make great administrators.

Bart puts his hand out.

BART (CONT'D)

Help me up.

Nathaniel helps him to his feet. In the brief moment Bart is face to face with Nathaniel:

BART (CONT'D)

I don't give a shit about what the board believes. I'm choosing you to take my place here.

NATHANIEL

Thank you.

BART
 (no room for sentiment)
 Help me sit.

Nathaniel gently moves Bart to his wheelchair. Bart calls to his wife.

BART (CONT'D)
 Okay. I'm ready to go home.

Sandra steps in. As she wheels Bart out of the room -

BART (CONT'D)
 Watch and wait with that young girl,
 Nate. Watch and wait.

Nathaniel watches them walk away, stands alone inside Bart's now empty office; Nathaniel's new, waiting office. Nathaniel gazes at the large room he's to fill.

INT. HENRY'S SPORTS SHOP -- DAY

HENRY PIETRYSK (50's, bald, heavy), the owner of Henry's Sports Shop, sits behind the counter looking over receipts as Nathaniel walks in.

NATHANIEL
 You get my note?

HENRY
 Got your note, didn't get your check.

NATHANIEL
 Don't tell me --

HENRY
 -- Sold it to a collector from New York an hour ago. Paid cash. Offered more than I was asking.

NATHANIEL
 Was it really a ten?

HENRY
 (yes)
 I tried to call you, but you're hard man to find.

Off Nathaniel.

INT. NATHANIEL'S APARTMENT -- DAY

Nathaniel steps into messy, one bedroom divorcee apartment. He looks around the depressing space, sits. Stares into space, exhausted, overcome. There's a knock on the door. Nathaniel, expecting Jessica, answers to find Kate standing outside.

KATE
Hey. Just wanted to see how --

NATHANIEL
-- Fine, Kate, I'm fine.
(Pause.)
Please. Come on in.

Kate steps inside, looks around at the mess.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)
I know. I know.

Pause.

KATE
(small talk)
That man you had removed from ICU.
His wife donated Lesley Walker's new
heart. He came to me yesterday and
I, stupidly, gave him a hint about --

NATHANIEL
-- Bart gave me the chairmanship.

KATE
Oh.

NATHANIEL
So. I'm - I'm the new head of the --

KATE
-- You don't seem too happy.

Beat.

NATHANIEL
There was this Clemente Rookie card
over at Henry's. He said it was
perfect. And I couldn't get there, I
didn't get there in time.

Nathaniel begins to crack.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)
I can fucking never be anywhere.

He buries his face in his hands, embarrassed. Kate moves to
his side.

KATE
You just need a break --

NATHANIEL
-- I can't be away from the hospital.
(MORE)

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

I try to do other things, try to be a father or a husband or collect a damn baseball card...

Kate embraces Nathaniel, holds him to her chest.

KATE

It's not easy to be you, Nate. I know how much pressure you're under. So many people's lives in your hands.

NATHANIEL

I'm sorry, Katie. I'm so sorry.

Kate kisses the top of his head. Nathaniel looks up at her. They kiss. They stand. They quietly begin to undress, then step into Nathaniel's bedroom.

INT. NATHANIEL'S BEDROOM -- LATER

Nathaniel and Kate lie quietly in bed. Silence.

NATHANIEL

You okay?

KATE

Yeah. You?

NATHANIEL

Yeah.

Pause. Kate absently takes Nathaniel's hand.

KATE

I made an appointment for Thea with a psychologist.

NATHANIEL

Kate. She doesn't need that --

KATE

-- No. What she really needs is a reliable parent.

Nathaniel looks away. He can't argue that point.

KATE (CONT'D)

I'm going to take a couple of weeks away to be home with her. Maybe longer.

NATHANIEL

Thank you.

Nathaniel's eyes have grown very heavy. Kate leans over him, kisses his cheek.

KATE

Go to sleep.

Nathaniel allows his eyes to close. Kate watches him for a moment, then remembers herself, pulls on her clothes. She pulls the comforter over her ex-husband's body, then steps out of the room.

INT. MAIN ROOM - NATHANIEL'S APARTMENT -- SAME

Kate tidies up a bit, moves into the kitchen and starts to clean. The sound of the sink running drowns out the sound of the front door OPENING. Jessica Kivala steps inside, calls out:

JESSICA

Nathaniel! I found someone to take over my apartment...

Jessica trails off when she sees Kate in the kitchen. Nathaniel steps out of his room, dressed only in his underwear.

Jessica takes in this situation, then, without a word, turns and hurries out of the room. Kate looks to Nathaniel. Nathaniel shakes his head.

KATE

You better go talk to her.

Nathaniel nods. Pulls on his clothes. Kate finishes up the kitchen, grabs her jacket. They both exit the apartment.

INT. CORE - BILL BRYCE'S OFFICE -- LATE AFTERNOON

Bill's at his desk, working late. Kate walks in, closes the door.

BILL

Hey.

KATE

Bill. This is too complicated.

BILL

Oh?

KATE

You're my boss and the hours we keep and the work at hand and --
 (Pause, the truth)
 --And I'm still in love with my ex-husband.

Pause.

BILL
I know.

KATE
I'm sorry.

BILL
Me too.

EXT. ST. JUDE'S TRANSPLANT HOSPITAL -- NIGHT

Nathaniel approaches the hospital entrance, notices the widower Mark Evans staring into the hospital from the street. Nathaniel and the widower gaze at one another for a brief moment, then Nathaniel continues into the hospital.

INT. ICU HALLWAY -- SAME

Nathaniel passes Andrew Kosinski's room. Simon consults Kosinski's charts, speaks with Kosinski's pretty wife. Simon notices Nathaniel, steps out to consult with him.

SIMON
Mr. Kosinski is doing remarkably well.

Nathaniel nods, looks in on the loving scene between wife and husband. From Nathaniel's POV, Andrew Kosinski merges from himself into the body and face of the last night's donor from Charleston.

SIMON (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Dr. Grant?

The donor looks clearly at Nathaniel, calm, alive.

SIMON (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Dr. Grant.

Nathaniel shrugs off the image, the donor's image melds back into Kosinski's body.

INT. LESLEY WALKER'S ICU ROOM -- NIGHT

Nathaniel checks Lesley Walker's progress. Her mother Carol looks on, nervous.

NATHANIEL
Heart rate looks steady. Fever's down.

CAROL
Is she better?

NATHANIEL
She seems to be improving.

CAROL

But --

NATHANIEL

-- She's improving, but I don't know if she's improving fast enough.

Kate steps into the room.

KATE

Hello, Mrs. Walker. Dr. Grant, I need a word.

Nathaniel nods, follows Kate out of the room.

INT. HOSPITAL CONFERENCE ROOM -- NIGHT

Nathaniel and Kate step into the room, close the door.

KATE

A heart is available for Lesley.
Good match - five out of six antigens.
Donor's fifteen years old --

NATHANIEL

-- I'm going to pass on it.

Beat.

KATE

You are?

NATHANIEL

I'm going to give the first heart a chance to take.

KATE

Wow. Okay.

Kate grabs her cell phone, dials:

KATE (CONT'D)

Roy. Tell UNOS University Transplant is passing.

Kate hangs up. Looks at Nathaniel. Pause.

NATHANIEL

What?

KATE

I broke it off. With Bill.

Pause. Nathaniel swallows.

KATE (CONT'D)

Don't read too much into that, Nate.

NATHANIEL

What do you want to do now?

KATE

What I want and what is - two very different things.

Nathaniel quiets.

KATE (CONT'D)

If you came back home, you'd still always live here. No matter where you try to sleep. You'd lie awake nights, blame me for your problems, and leave again.

(Pause, then hopeful,
recidivist)

Wouldn't you?

NATHANIEL

I don't know, Kate. Maybe I --

KATE

-- What did you tell Jessica?

NATHANIEL

I told her, I told her that...

KATE

...You told her that it was a slip, an old habit, a fall back during a sad time. Right?

Pause. Nathaniel nods. Kate, pissed for letting herself even imagine a reconciliation, returns to the business at hand.

KATE (CONT'D)

(back to business)

So. You're sure I should make the new heart available?

NATHANIEL

Yes.

KATE

Okay. I'll take my heart elsewhere.

Kate steps into the hall. Pause. Before Nathaniel can move to go after her, Mary Singletary steps into the room.

MARY

(unaware of the
situation)

You need to come take a look at Lesley Walker.

Thea disappears out of the ICU. Nathaniel pauses, then turns back down the hallway.

INT. LESLEY WALKER'S ICU ROOM -- NIGHT

Lesley's awake. Simon is there with Carol. Lesley smiles at Nathaniel when he walks into the room.

LESLEY

Hi Dr. Grant.

NATHANIEL

Lesley. How are you feeling?

LESLEY

It hurts.

Nathaniel looks at her charts, checks the monitors.

SIMON

It looks like she's past the rejection.

Carol hugs Nathaniel close.

CAROL

Thank you.

NATHANIEL

Just another miracle of modern science.

CAROL

No. You're the miracle, Dr. Grant. You're our miracle.

Carol holds tightly to Nathaniel, gives him the love that only a patient and family can give - love from his work, but not love from home.

EXT. ST. JUDE'S TRANSPLANT HOSPITAL -- NIGHT

Nathaniel walks out. Mark Evans continues to stand sentinel outside the hospital. Nathaniel approaches the widower.

NATHANIEL

Mr. Evans. My name is Nathaniel --

MARK

-- I know who you are.

Beat.

NATHANIEL

Your wife's heart - it's working again. It's going to be fine.

MARK
 (a whisper)
 Thank you.

NATHANIEL
 You're the one to be thanked.
 (Pause.)
 I'm going back up.
 (Beat.)
 Want to come?

Mark nods. Follows Nathaniel inside.

INT. ICU -- MOMENTS LATER

Nathaniel allows Evans the vision of looking in as Carol Walker sits by her daughter's side, strokes her hair, talks.
 Pause.

NATHANIEL
 What was your wife's name?

EVANS
 Sarah.

NATHANIEL
 Sarah.

Nathaniel gazes at Lesley Walker - for an instant he sees Sarah Evans in Lesley Walker's place.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)
 I know how this sounds - but sometimes
 I can see the donors in my patients.

EVANS
 You can see Sarah?

NATHANIEL
 I know how that sounds.

EVANS
 No. Thank you. For telling me that.
 (Pause)
 Do you have a wife?

NATHANIEL
 I did.

EVANS
 You lost her?

NATHANIEL
 I let her lose me. If that makes
 any sense. I let her lose me.

Nathaniel stands. Evans remains, watching Carol and Lesley together, talking, touching.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

You can stay.

Nathaniel walks away.

INT. HALLWAY - ST. JUDE'S -- MOMENTS LATER

Nathaniel walks past the doctors' lounge, stops, looks through the small window in the door. Inside, Jessica lies napping on the couch. Nathaniel watches her sleep, studies her beauty, her youth, her peacefulness.

Next to Jessica, Mary and Simon huddle close together, drinking coffee, share a quiet laugh. Simon takes Mary's hand for a moment, examines it. Mary leaves her hand in Simon's. Nathaniel, unseen, looks away from that small gesture of intimacy, stands alone in the limbo of the hallway.

EXT. ARMSTRONG/GRANT HOUSE -- NIGHT

Nathaniel idles in his car outside his old house. He sees Thea through the window, at her desk, studying. He sees Kate in the kitchen, old pajamas, robe, a hot cup of tea. He studies them; glad that they're home safe. Nathaniel looks to the front door, turns off the ignition, tries to gather the strength to get out and go inside to face Kate.

As he reaches for the door handle, his pager goes off. Nathaniel pulls it from his pocket, reads the message, turns it off. Takes another long look at his former home, puts his car back into drive, and pulls away. We linger over the big old house and then FADE OUT.

THE END.