

THE CURE

Written By

Patrick Massett & John Zinman

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Weed Road Pictures
Brittany Lovett
Stephanie Koff
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TEASER

EXT. RAIN FOREST - BRAZIL - DAY

Green and alive. Towering trees push through a gauze of mist. A JEEP COMMANDER rips past, tearing through the forest, bouncing along a narrow road.

GRAYDON HILL (45) is in the passenger seat. Handsome, strongly built, but with a sense of intelligence that suggests this isn't exactly his day job. He steadies the long lens on his CAMERA snapping pictures -- talking over the road noise.

GRAYDON

You're looking at the planet's pharmacy. There are over three million plant species in this rain forest. We've discovered less than one percent of those plants.

Driving Graydon is DARREN ELLIOT (30). He's striking, sexy, an adrenaline junkie and a brilliant surgeon.

DARREN

How much time do we have to discover the other ninety-nine percent?

Darren locks up the wheels -- the Jeep skids to a stop.

The dust clears and they get out of the jeep.

We see their horrified expressions -- they're at the top of A RISE, looking out over a massive expanse --

THE GROUND COVER IS ON FIRE. CLEAR CUTTING has decimated the area. Thick black smoke rises into the sky like it's the end of the world. Graydon fires off more pictures.

GRAYDON

Less time than we know...

Both men grab their gear -- pulling nasty looking MACHETES from their sheaths.

GRAYDON (CONT'D)

Well, you said you needed a vacation.

As they start hacking their way into the foliage and we go...

EXT. CANTON, OHIO STREET - MORNING

A modest, working-class HOUSE on a modest, working-class street. The leaves are turning, the sun is shining.

INT. HOUSE/KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

LYNN CARTER (40) is at the stove scrambling eggs, FRANK CARTER (41) pours coffee into a worn Thermos, their only daughter, EMILY, a girl of sixteen, is at the fridge.

LYNN

Emily, remember - I'm picking you up after sixth period...

EMILY

I know, Mom. You told me like eight times already.

LYNN

...and Frank, today's already the tenth... They keep calling...

FRANK

(not sure how, but...)
I'll take care of it.

Everything about this scene is typical of an American family rushing through the chaos of their morning routine.

The only thing wrong with the picture is the NASAL CANULA snaking into Emily's nostrils connected to an oxygen canister that she wheels beside her.

Lynn plates up the eggs as Frank pulls the toast from the toaster. She turns to him.

LYNN

We might be a little late getting back, maybe stop and get some Chinese?

Before Frank can answer, a sudden CRASH spins them around --

A PITCHER OF ORANGE JUICE IS SHATTERED ON THE FLOOR. Emily stands at the fridge -- her face is pale, terrified eyes. Lynn screams, rushing across the room as Emily collapses.

SMASH TO:

EXT. RAINFOREST - DAY

A MACHETE cuts through the frame. Graydon is in the lead, cutting through the forest -- both men covered in dirt and sweat. Graydon points out...

GRAYDON

Be careful of those mangrove roots. If they even touch you -- your whole face will turn black and blue.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DARREN

Nice.

GRAYDON

Got a ton of them last time I was down here.

(then)

I'm extracting a hormone from them that might fight asthma.

Darren laughs...

DARREN

Of course you are.

One last hack and then they stop, seeing --

A CLUSTER OF FLOWERING PLANTS -- primordial, dark petals, thorned stalks -- everything about them screams, "back off."

GRAYDON

There they are...

Graydon uses his machete to dig one up. And as he holds up this plant and looks at it with pride...

INT. CANTON HOSPITAL/EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

Emily is in the bed, unconscious and hooked to an IV. Monitors tracking her compromised life functions.

Lynn sips a coffee. Frank sits next to her... his head buried in his hands. After a moment... he speaks...

FRANK

After she was born. You were asleep. They let me into the nursery. It was the first time I ever was alone with her. And she was in my arms. So little. So helpless. And I promised her, Lynn, that I would protect her... that I would defend her against whatever this world brought.

LYNN

Frank...

And he looks up to his wife.

FRANK

But it's a promise that's impossible to keep.

She opens her mouth to say something but just then Emily's Cardiologist, DR. MICHAEL HELDENS heads in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. HELDENS
The news isn't good.

Frank puts an arm around his wife...

DR. HELDENS (CONT'D)
Her EKG shows a marked decline in heart
function - the disease is progressing at
a much faster rate than we feared.
(then)
There's really nothing more we can do...

Lynn collapses into Frank's arms.

LYNN
Oh God...

DR. HELDENS
We're going to send her home. Try to
make her as comfortable as possible.

FRANK
What?! What are you saying -- take her
home so she can die?! Is that what
you're telling us?!

DR. HELDENS
I'm sorry. I really am...

There's nothing more Heldens can say.

As Frank squeezes his wife tightly, tears now flowing from
his eyes as well...

And the nurse walks over and whispers something into Frank's
ear... we don't hear it. But after she walks away... Frank
looks up, a little stunned.

EXT. RAINFOREST/CLEAR CUT AREA - DAY

Holding the plants, Graydon and Darren emerge from the forest
and head for their jeep when Graydon stops in his tracks.

AT THE BASE OF THE RISE another JEEP is parked. TWO GUARDS
move forward -- GUNS HOLSTERED at their sides.

DARREN
What do we do now?

GRAYDON
Just do what I say. Be ready.

Graydon speaks to them in PORTUGUESE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAYDON (CONT'D)
(in Portuguese; subtitled)
Hello. You guys look lost.

GUARD
We're American. We don't speak Spanish.

GRAYDON
(correcting)
Portuguese.

THE OTHER GUARD
What?

GRAYDON
They don't speak Spanish here... they
speak Portu-- it's not important.

GUARD
You're trespassing on private property.
Graydon starts back peddling, Darren joins him...

GRAYDON
Sorry. We got lost.

THE OTHER GUARD
What are you doing with that plant?
They turn and head toward the jeep.

GRAYDON
Just a souvenir...
(to Darren)
Okay, I think we need to run.

But they don't. They just deliberate in a tone they would
when deciding what restaurant to go to.

DARREN
Really?

GRAYDON
I think so, yeah.

GUARD
Hey!
(reaching for his gun)
Stop walking.

And the guard SHOOTS a warning shot in the air.

GRAYDON
Definitely.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And they SPRINT and dive into the jeep. The guard aims his gun, finding his bead, but... Graydon RELEASES THE HAND BREAK AND The jeep flies backward down the hill right at both guards who dive out of the way.

He throws it into a forward gear, tearing away when -- THE WINDSHIELD IS SHATTERED BY A BULLET, impacting just to the right of Graydon's head.

The jeep is careening out of control... they're being shot at... and we can see on Darren's face... a growing smile... he's getting off.

And as Graydon stamps the gas...

INT. A LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Frank and Lynn sit in front of DIANE, 70s. The room is dark. The room is silent, until...

LYNN

The nurse said you wanted to see us.
That you might know of some Doctor that
can help?

DIANE

Can I see a picture of Emily?

Frank hands her a recent picture of Emily... sitting in a restaurant... looking up from her desert with ice cream all over her face.

FRANK

This was taken earlier this year... her
fifteenth birthday.

Breaking into tears...

LYNN

They say there's nothing they can do for
her.

As he takes his wife's hand in his...

FRANK

I didn't want to come here. I told my
wife this was a scam. That you're some
sick person who preys on people without
options for quick money.

DIANE

I am a sick person, Mr. Carter.

As Diane looks up from the picture of Emily...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DIANE (CONT'D)
But nobody's asking you for money.

FRANK
What's this Doctor's name?

DIANE
I can't tell you that.

FRANK
What hospital does he work out of?

DIANE
Once, again... I can't tell you that yet.

Frank stands and looks to his wife.

FRANK
Let's get out of here, Lynn.

But Lynn won't move... holds strong. As Frank sits back down with a capitulatory sigh...

FRANK (CONT'D)
Well then do you mind telling me what the hell you can tell me about him?

A beat. Then...

DIANE
He saved my life.

EXT. RAINFOREST DIRT ROAD - DAY

Miles away from the guards, the jeep moves along.

GRAYDON (V.O.)
When my father was three years old he got sick. It was the 1919 flu pandemic that attacked the Midwest that winter and children were dying in every town.

And Graydon Hill... driving in silence... deep in thought... the wind whipping his hair around...

EXT. ELLISON UNIVERSITY/SAN FRANCISCO - ESTABLISHING

Across the bay, the SKYLINE OF SAN FRANCISCO shines in the light of a perfect day.

GRAYDON (V.O.)
My grandmother, God love her, traveled thirty miles through a blizzard to a tobacco shop in a tiny town called Sandusky Ohio.

INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY

Find Graydon now on the stage. Speaking at a podium. He looks like a different man -- nice suit, jacket off, sleeves up, glasses, handsome.

The hall is packed with STUDENTS, RESEARCHERS and PHARMA EXECUTIVES.

GRAYDON

She went there to see a man who was rumored to have a tonic that could save her son's life.

(then)

And he did. And here I am.

His slash and burn PHOTOS of the rain forest are projected on a screen. THE AMAZON PLANT rests on a table by the podium.

GRAYDON (CONT'D)

That man was an apothecary -- what would today be known as a pharmacist. And that tonic was a remedy -- what would today be known as a drug. We've made great strides since then...

And Graydon draws in some air, takes a long moment, looks the room over then finally confesses...

GRAYDON (CONT'D)

But I'm afraid we've also lost our way.

SMASH CUT TO BLACK:

TITLE: THE CURE

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE**INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY**

As Graydon continues his speech.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAYDON

Let me introduce myself for those who don't know who I am.

Laughter from the room. Everybody knows who he is...

GRAYDON (CONT'D)

I'm Dr. Graydon Hill... I'm the Founder and Head of Research at the Hill Institute here at the University and I used to be a pharmaceutical executive. I knew the system, I worked the system, I was the system.

Then...

GRAYDON (CONT'D)

This plant, Astragalus Cicer, produces a molecule that could be far more effective at controlling blood sugar levels in diabetics than insulin. So why hasn't this discovery been made widely available?

(then)

Well, this plant only grows in a very small area of rainforest that happens to be owned by a petroleum exploration company, that happens to be owned by a European investment firm -- which happens to be a major investor in the world's largest manufacturer of... Insulin.

The images on the screen accelerate, becoming more intense.

GRAYDON (CONT'D)

Actually big pharma and big oil are very similar when you think about it. They're both big businesses with important products. It's just that the result of big pharma's business sometimes happens to be noble.

And Graydon takes to a pace on the stage. Very Steve Jobs.

GRAYDON (CONT'D)

And the system is not just broken because of pharma. We have a FDA that's too strict for approval, not strict enough on monitoring the drugs after and, as a society, we treat over prevent.

Graydon looks out at his audience with satisfaction... And as the horrific images blaze behind him, we go...

INT. TRUDIE ERICSON'S OFFICE - DAY

A corner office with big Manhattan views. TRUDIE ERICKSON, Corporate lawyer (30s), aggressively attractive with the air of the carnivore about her. She checks a file then picks up a BLUE RAZOR CELL PHONE and makes a call.

INT. CARTER HOME - DAY

Emily has now been moved into home care. She's sedated but awake. Her father sits on the side of the bed, sadly looking down at her when his phone rings.

As he answers it...

FRANK

Hello...

INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY

Speech over, Graydon meets and greets his audience.

TRUDIE (V.O.)

Mr. Carter. We're ready to do our best in order to help Emily.

He stops when he sees... CONNOR NORQUIST (50).

CONNOR

Great speech, Graydon.

GRAYDON

Conner, what are you doing here?

CONNOR

You remember Carolyn, she was just starting out when you left the company.

Graydon nods to Connor's date, CAROLYN, 30 years old, attractive and athletic.

CONNOR (CONT'D)

She's now running the West Coast salesforce.

As Connor takes Graydon aside...

CONNOR (CONT'D)

I can't keep up with her but it's fun trying.

GRAYDON

What do you want?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

 CONNOR
Nothing. I came to hear you speak.

Breaking away...

 GRAYDON
Okay. Well, thanks.

 CONNOR
Graydon. We finally got approval on Zybitor.

 GRAYDON
I heard. It's a good drug.

 CONNOR
I thought you'd be happy, you spent two years of your life on it.
 (then)
Should add two billion in revenue over the next four years.

Graydon just nods. They hold a long look. Then...

 CONNOR (CONT'D)
Come back.

 GRAYDON
No.

 CONNOR
Create change from the inside, Graydon.

 GRAYDON
I'll pass.

Conner sighs. He tried. Then...

 CONNOR
How's Andie?

 GRAYDON
Still hates you.

Conner slowly nods.

 CONNOR
I just don't understand how you derive so much fulfillment from this institute.

A long moment. Then...

 GRAYDON
I know you don't.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And Graydon goes...

EXT. HILL INSTITUTE OF BIO-MEDICAL RESEARCH - ESTABLISHING

A grand lawn in front of a large white building with pillars.

INT. HILL INSTITUTE/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Graydon moves down the hall, a man in constant motion.

As ANDIE (30's) catches up. She's a top biotech scientist, uniquely beautiful, with a disarming tendency to speak the unvarnished truth.

ANDIE

Are you just looking for trouble, now?
You have to shove it in their face?

GRAYDON

Since when are you afraid of a little
risk?

He pushes through double doors and moves --

INT. HILL INSTITUTE/LABS - CONTINUOUS

As Graydon and Andie move through the labs, RESEARCHERS at their stations ad-lib greetings -- Graydon acknowledges them with a wave or a nod but keeps going...

ANDIE

There's risk -- and then there's stupid.

GRAYDON

Andie, you need to take a Desoxin.

ANDIE

You're just bringing attention to us.
What's Desoxin?

GRAYDON

It's a new pill for hyperactivity in
children.

Andie decides for a beat whether to be angry or not. And going with not...

ANDIE

That's cute.

GRAYDON

Thanks.

They stop at a lab station. Graydon begins gathering papers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAYDON (CONT'D)
Where's the father?

ANDIE
Airport. Darren's doing the pick up.

GRAYDON
I would've preferred you do it.

ANDIE
Why?

GRAYDON
Because Darren gets off on the James Bond
of it all while you actually understand
that these are real people with real
emotions.

As Graydon goes... Andie in tow...

GRAYDON (CONT'D)
And because the man's going through hell.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO AIRPORT/BAGGAGE AREA - DAY

Darren Elliot, looking sexy in frayed Jeans, vintage t-shirt
and his tatoos, stands holding a sign that reads: CARTER as
arriving passengers stream past.

FRANK CARTER moves up to Darren.

FRANK
I'm Frank Carter. Dr. Hill?

Darren shakes Frank's hand but doesn't answer the question.

DARREN
I'm gonna need to see a photo ID.

Frank pulls out his wallet and shows his license. Satisfied,
Darren now introduces himself.

DARREN (CONT'D)
I'm Dr. Darren Elliott. I work with Dr.
Hill.

FRANK
You're a Doctor?

Darren just smiles at the comment -- he gets that a lot.

DARREN
C'mon. I'll take you to the man.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Darren and Frank approach a Town Car. A DRIVER is waiting.

DARREN

If you have a cell phone, I'm gonna need to take it.

Frank, hesitates, but hands it over.

DARREN (CONT'D)

Any recording or photographic devices?

FRANK

What? No...

Darren gives a nod and the Driver opens the car door for Frank.

Immediately, Frank notices the BLACKED OUT WINDOWS and DIVIDER separating the back of the car from the front.

And Frank hesitates before getting in.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Why the cloak and dagger routine?

DARREN

We have to be careful. It's better that you don't know where I'm taking you. We need to protect ourselves.

Frank takes a beat, watching Darren's face, wary --

DARREN (CONT'D)

I know this is strange but you just have to accept it... for your little girl.

FRANK

I've been told to accept a lot of things lately.

DARREN

I understand. One of them you're not willing to. And Mr. Carter...

Darren turns... looks Frank dead-on...

DARREN (CONT'D)

... that's why we're here.

Frank slowly nods, then... gets in the car.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREETS/SOMA - DAY

The Town car moves through the streets South of Market (SOMA), a former industrial area turned artists'/retail haven, pulling into the loading bay of a turn-of-the century warehouse building.

As the steel LOADING DOOR rises...

INT. WAREHOUSE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

The car pulls into a cavernous, raw warehouse space. Darren guides Frank to a FREIGHT ELEVATOR, punches a button panel and, as the ancient elevator motor grinds to life we go...

INT. ANNEX LAB - CONTINUOUS

Darren leads Frank out of the elevator into the LAB --

A hard-core look, exposed DUCTS AND TUBES; SHELVES overflowing with parts and equipment; DEVICES, in various states of assembly -- a techie fantasy meets mad scientist's lair.

Graydon strides forward, his usual whirl of energy.

GRAYDON

Mr. Carter. I'm Graydon Hill.

And Frank regards Graydon.

FRANK

The mysterious savior.

And Graydon grows uncomfortable with this moniker and under this gaze.

GRAYDON

How's Emily?

A beat. Then...

FRANK

Dying.

INT. ANNEX LAB - LATER

Graydon and Frank are at a table going through Emily's files. Frank shows Graydon PHOTOS of Emily -- pictures from healthier times: smiling beautifully with her mother; in a soccer uniform; a Christmas portrait of the family.

GRAYDON

She has your sense of humor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

How'd you know?

GRAYDON

When they get one parent's physical traits, they tend to get the other's personality.

Frank smiles... looking at the picture...

FRANK

She does look a lot like her mother.

His voice trails off... He has to collect himself...

GRAYDON

She was diagnosed fifteen months ago? Idiopathic Congestive Cardiomyopathy.

FRANK

Our world's been coming apart ever since. They tried medications, she's had three surgeries. Nothing worked.

GRAYDON

I know. We've been tracking her case since she made the donor list.

FRANK

Tracking her?

GRAYDON

We monitor clinical trials, donor lists -- we find people. People like Emily.

FRANK

Like that woman Diane?

GRAYDON

Yes. But, Mr. Carter, understand -- not all of our endeavours have been as successful.

Frank slowly nods. Understands. Then...

FRANK

We called every heart specialist, every research hospital in the country. No one can help us -- there's just no research being done.

GRAYDON

It's a rare disease, there's no money in it. The big diseases get the dollars.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

That registers with Frank.

GRAYDON (CONT'D)

There are some things we have to go over so I know you understand exactly what we're getting into. Any approach we devise for Emily's care is going to be outside the sanction of any medical governing body - FDA, NIH, AMA...

FRANK

Okay...

GRAYDON

Basically, we'll be conducting an unauthorized stage 3 clinical trial... Human experimentation.

FRANK

You need me to sign something?

GRAYDON

Absolutely not. This lab doesn't exist. You were never here. We don't exist. Any treatment we give Emily never happened.

(beat)

If anything goes wrong, we disappear. Do you have any questions?

FRANK

Yes. Why?

GRAYDON

Why what?

FRANK

Why are you doing this for us? What do you get out of it?

Graydon thinks about it for a long moment, then...

GRAYDON

Sleep.

INT. 767 - NIGHT

A full flight. Graydon sleeps. He slowly wakes and turns on his light. He produces a folder from his bag and looks over some pictures.

They're black and white and taken from a distance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They're different shots of our team. Graydon heading into the warehouse. Darren leaving the Institute. Andie picking up a patient at the airport.

Graydon then turns over one of the pictures over to see that it reads... "I want to keep your secret -- pay me in Clavital"

Graydon places the pictures back in his bag... worried.

And he takes out another picture... one of Emily Carter... and as he holds on it...

EXT. CARTER HOME/CANTON, OH. - DAY

Graydon gets out of a cab, collect a couple of HALIBURTON CASES from the trunk and head up the front walk.

INT. CARTER HOME/EMILY'S ROOM - DAY

TIGHT ON: A LAPTOP SCREEN -- EKG rhythm lines crawl across the screen. Graydon and Darren watch the readout carefully.

Emily's parents stand by the door, trying to be unobtrusive, but their tension is palpable.

EMILY CARTER lies in her bed, pale and gaunt, trying to keep her breathing steady. The gentle hiss of her oxygen feed is the only sound.

GRAYDON

Okay, Emily. We got it.

As Graydon pulls a PRINTOUT from a portable printer, Emily begins removing the electrodes attached beneath her shirt.

GRAYDON (CONT'D)

I see you've done this before.

EMILY

Just a few thousand times.

Graydon sits next to her on the bed looking around Emily's room -- PICTURES of friends; he points to a picture in which she's sitting with a boy.

GRAYDON

What's his name?

EMILY

Elton.

As Graydon looks over the picture.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAYDON
You love him.

EMILY
Do not!

GRAYDON
You do. You totally love him.

EMILY
Gross!

GRAYDON
It's obvious by the way you look in the picture. Look at that smitten smile.
(then)
"Oh Elton -- I love you so much."

And she starts laughing a little...

GRAYDON (CONT'D)
"I wanna kiss you, Elton, just let me put on some lip gloss."

EMILY
Shut up.

And her laughter dies down... and Graydon retreats somewhere deep with-in his mind. Holding her gaze.

EMILY (CONT'D)
What's smitten mean?

GRAYDON
Being into someone... having a crush on them...

EMILY
Oh... okay... I definitely am not smitten with Elton.

And he gives in...

GRAYDON
So, here's what we're going to do. Do you know what stem cells are?

EMILY
Sort of.

GRAYDON
Okay. You ever play with Legos when you were a kid?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMILY

Uh, yeah... hasn't everyone?

GRAYDON

Stem cells are like Legos - you can make anything you want out of them. We're gonna use these stem cells and try to fix your heart.

(beat)

It's a little more complicated than that, but that's the general idea.

She accepts that. Regards him.

EMILY

So what are you -- like some kind of Robin Hood Doctor?

GRAYDON

No. Robin Hood stole from the rich and gave to the poor. I just break the rules.

EMILY

So you're a cowboy.

GRAYDON

Okay.

Silence. Tears well in her eyes.

EMILY

Am I going to die?

A long moment. Then...

GRAYDON

We're all going to die.

And Graydon can tell... she's terrified.... but she swallows it back... forces a smile... and says....

EMILY

Good answer, Cowboy.

INT. GRAYDON'S PRIVATE OFFICE - DAY

Old world industrial architecture tricked out with top of the line tech. Antique pieces of scientific PARAPHERNALIA decorate the room as sculptural art.

Andie heads in, closes the door behind her and heads over to Graydon's desk. Graydon hands her a prescription bottle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAYDON

Our friend is back. He sent this.

And she reads the bottle. Where the drug name should be is written "CLAVITAL." Where the Doctor's name should be is written "Dr. B. Goode."

ANDIE

They want you to send the pills to the same address.

GRAYDON

Yeah.

ANDIE

We have to stake out that PO Box.

GRAYDON

It's in Maine.

ANDIE

Then I'll go to Maine.

GRAYDON

You're not a private detective, Andie, and anyway I need you here.

ANDIE

Somebody is blackmailing you, Graydon. And they're making you send out a drug that's not been tested on humans yet.

(then)

They could be selling the Clavital on the black market.

GRAYDON

You didn't tell Darren or Trudie?

ANDIE

No, why?

GRAYDON

I have my reasons. For now this stays between you and me.

ANDIE

Graydon, who even knows you've been developing the drug?

GRAYDON

Anybody that wants to. I published all my work on Clavital when I was at Norquist up until it didn't pass the phase twos.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDIE

But who knows you've come back to it?

GRAYDON

I don't know. You.

Silence. Until...

ANDIE

Send the placebo again.

GRAYDON

Read the instructions on the bottle.

Andie looks down and reads aloud...

ANDIE

"If placebos are sent, side effects could include massive lawsuits, unending media blitzes and definite prison time."

(then)

Creative blackmailer.

And she looks up to meet Graydon's stone gaze.

GRAYDON

I'm sending the Clavital this time.

INT. ANNEX LAB - DAY

Graydon, Andie and Darren go over Emily's case, looking over MRIs, CAT SCANS and PET SCANS. Only when Graydon looks at the images, he doesn't see cold technical readouts, he sees --

EMILY'S ACTUAL HEART -- THE BEAUTIFUL CRIMSON OF HEALTHY TISSUE IN STARK CONTRAST TO THE DARK, BLACK SPLOTCHES OF DECAY COVERING HER DISEASED LEFT VENTRICLE.

GRAYDON

Advanced Cardiomyopathy localized to the left ventricle. It's degenerative and progressive - she's got three, four weeks at best. I am all ears.

DARREN

There's no indication of a microbial component here. It's gotta be in the genome.

GRAYDON

Gene therapy?

DARREN

If we can isolate the trigger.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDIE

Needle in a haystack.

GRAYDON

We don't have that kind of time. Andie, you got anything in bio-devices?

ANDIE

My team's been working on a synthetic tissue graft - it's designed for burn victims but maybe we can adapt the tech.

DARREN

We're talking functional heart muscle tissue. That's a long walk from dermis cells.

ANDIE

The girl needs a new heart -- let me build her one!

Darren regards her with...

DARREN

Bite off more than you can chew much?

And right back at him...

ANDIE

Use bad cliches much?

Graydon just looks both them down.

GRAYDON

Are you two done?

DARREN

I'm just trying to be realistic.

ANDIE

I can do it.

Graydon starts to pace... an idea forming.

GRAYDON

She doesn't need a new heart.

DARREN

Right. She just needs a new ventricle.

And Graydon looks to the windowsill where he sees that plant he risked his life for in South America...

GRAYDON

Let's grow her one.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A moment, then...

ANDIE
Stem cells.

GRAYDON
Bingo.

But Andie shakes her head...

ANDIE
Not possible. No one's achieved that
kind of differentiation. Not even close.

GRAYDON
I know someone who might be close.

DARREN
Who?

GRAYDON
An old friend.

Then...

GRAYDON (CONT'D)
Someone I ruined.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. ACAPULCO MEXICO - ESTABLISHING - DAY

A resort community rests on a delicious bay. It's hot here.

SUPER OVER: ACAPULCO, MEXICO

EXT. LAS BRISAS ESTATES - DAY

A hillside community of massive estates. GUARDS walk the roads toting machine guns.

A cab pulls out front of a massive gate, Graydon inside. A moment, then the huge iron gates open.

INT. CASA MARIPOSA - DAY

Homes here have no addresses, just names.

Graydon walks the grounds with JORGE ROBLES (30s), long hair, dark eyes, three days of beard. Life has taken it's toll on him and clearly he's not at all happy to see Graydon.

GRAYDON
(looking around)
It's a nice house.

JORGE
He's got six of these.

About ten CHILDREN run around... jumping in the pool... laughing... playing tag on the lawn.

GRAYDON
And what's he do for a living?

After a beat.

JORGE
Chemicals.

GRAYDON
I was surprised when your wife told me you took this gig. That you would work so far from your family.

Through out the scene, the giggling children periodically run by Jorge and Graydon. When they do, Jorge pats them on the head or jokes with them in Spanish.

JORGE
The money's good.

GRAYDON
You never cared about money.

And Jorge stops walking and faces Graydon with poison in his voice...

JORGE
Maybe I learned that caring about anything else doesn't pay like money.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAYDON
You're angry at me.

JORGE
Of course I am.

GRAYDON
I have no excuses.

JORGE
That research was seven years of my life!
It would've saved lives. You destroyed
that.

As they continue to walk...

GRAYDON
They told me to kill the study because it
wasn't going to prove profitable and I
did. I was a different person then.

And he looks around...

GRAYDON (CONT'D)
And so were you.
(then)
You used to believe in something. You
were the most honest person I knew.
Jesus, that's why you were doomed in the
business from the start.

After a moment...

GRAYDON (CONT'D)
Now you're the house doctor to a drug
lord, Jorge.

And Jorge nods, swallowing back the laceration. Then...

JORGE
Why did you come here?

GRAYDON
Because I've been testing the untested.
(a beat)
On people.

JORGE
Illegal human trials?

Graydon's look gives the answer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAYDON

I have a patient... a girl who's dying.
Right now. I believe your stem cell
approach can save her life.

JORGE

There are a lot of girls dying.

GRAYDON

Since you're so into money now, Jorge, I
have a proposition for you. I'll pay you
five years of your Norquist salary for
one week.

Without even flinching...

JORGE

I'm exclusive to Juan.

GRAYDON

Where is he now?

JORGE

Zihuatanejo with his mistress.

GRAYDON

One week. If he comes back you'll call
and tell him you had a family emergency.
He'll never know.

Jorge stops walking and ponders the incredible view...

JORGE

If he finds out, he'll kill us both.
That's what kind of man he is.
(then)
And he has ways of finding out
everything.

GRAYDON

It's enough money to quit this forever.

And as Jorge considers that...

TRUDIE (V.O.)

Five hundred thousand dollars!

INT. SAN FRANCISCO AIRPORT - DAY

Graydon walks the terminal on his cell phone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAYDON
 (into phone)
 This diabetes protocol I'm working on is
 going to rain money... pour, storm,
 torrents of cash...

INTER-CUT WITH --

INT. TRUDIE ERICSON'S OFFICE - SAME

Trudie sits behind her desk, taking in her view. She's on Bluetooth and she doesn't like what she's hearing.

TRUDIE
 You sound like your talking about a horse
 in the third race.

GRAYDON
 This isn't want, Trudie, this is need.

TRUDIE
 The Institute hasn't had a money maker in
 over three years. Graydon, you're
 talking about eating into the endowment
 principle.

And he's not going to be stopped...

GRAYDON
 Then get me a fork.

Trudie moves out from behind her desk, and now we see SHE IS IN A WHEELCHAIR. Paralysed from the waist down.

TRUDIE
 I'll talk to the accountants. You'll
 have it in the morning.

GRAYDON
 There's the woman I love.

And as she hangs up with a smile...

TRUDIE
 Please...

INT. ANNEX LAB/SAN FRANCISCO - DAY

A STEM CELL -- seen at 1000x magnification on a PLASMA DISPLAY. Graydon turns to Jorge, cleaned up, but just barely. His posture is withdrawn, defensive.

Andie eyes him warily...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAYDON

I'm not a particularly religious man, but every time I look at a stem cell, it's like I'm looking at proof of God.

Jorge looks like Graydon just read his mind.

JORGE

I wrote a paper in grad school that described stem cells as a metaphorical retelling of the creation story.

Graydon presses on.

GRAYDON

"Stem cells enter the world in a perfect state of innocence - they can become anything they're directed to be. They are Adam and Eve in the garden..."

Jorge is stunned.

JORGE

That's what I wrote!

GRAYDON

I know. I read it.

ANDIE

Graydon's very thorough. He likes to know everything about a person before he destroys them.

GRAYDON

Andie -- why don't you get us some coffee?

Andie ignores Gradon... deep in the business at hand.

ANDIE

How are we going to turn this clump of stem cells into a new ventricle for Emily Carter?

ON THE MONITOR, the STEM CELL begins A TIME LAPSE METAMORPHOSIS -- a single cell, to dozens, to thousands...

GRAYDON

Jorge discovered a novel process to control stem cell differentiation.

... until it is a section of intricate HEART MUSCLE TISSUE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAYDON (CONT'D)

You want heart muscle cells, there's an enzymatic recipe you have to follow to get you there.

JORGE

The problem is, it's an incredibly precise process. If any one element is off, by even a fraction, it can trigger a suicide response in the cells. They just self-destruct.

(beat)

The best fix, as far as I can see, is to isolate that "suicide gene" and turn it off.

GRAYDON

So, that's the job.

(to Andie)

We've got to find a treatment facility we can use for Emily.

JORGE

Why not bring her here?

GRAYDON

She's not strong enough. We have to keep her in Ohio.

ANDIE

We're gonna end up using a motel bathroom for an OR again, aren't we?

GRAYDON

If that's the best you can find.

And as he exits...

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO - DAY

Connor jogs in Golden Gate Park with Carolyn. He's in excellent shape. His cell phone rings and he takes the call while still jogging.

CONNOR

This is Connor.

INTER-CUT WITH:

INT. NORQUIST PHARMACEUTICALS/OFFICE - SAME

BRETT KALLER (30s), a young pharma executive, paces in his modern-design office.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRETT KALLER

Mr. Norquist, I'm sorry to bother you but I just got a call from one of our suppliers. Jorge Robles purchased a grey market stem cell line.

Connor stops running and motions to Carolyn to go ahead.

CONNOR

Jorge Robles? I thought he was in Mexico stitching up drug soldiers after gunfights.

BRETT KALLER

Well, I guess he's back in the research game.

CONNOR

Who paid for it?

BRETT KALLER

I'll find out.

CONNOR

We have seven hundred and fifty million dollars invested in our stem cell program. If Robles is back, I need to know exactly who he's working for.

BRETT KALLER

Yes, sir.

And Connor closes his phone and just looks at it... deep in concerned thought...

INT/EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - MONTAGE

THE MUSIC ROCKS OVER AS --

INT. ANNEX LAB - DAY

JORGE -- monitors a SPECTRAL CHRONOMETER calibrated to differentiate specific GENE MARKERS. He circles areas of the screen with a GREASE PENCIL.

Andie -- scrolls through a list on a screen, double clicking -
- BLUEPRINT SCHEMATICS LOAD ON SCREEN. Andie speed-dials...

ANDIE

I got a hit. A hospital just outside of Canton. They shut down their burn unit three years ago - it's empty.

INTER-CUT WITH GRAYDON

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Driving his Audi... Andie's on the bluetooth so she comes over the car's speakers...

GRAYDON

(wry)

I wasn't aware that kind of information was available for public consumption.

ANDIE

Ohio State Board of Health. Antiquated code -- I hacked the server.

Graydon laughs...

GRAYDON

You hacked?

ANDIE

I can hack.

Graydon's impressed. He didn't know that. But then... a little worried...

GRAYDON

You don't ever hack me -- do you?

ANDIE

(rolling her eyes)

Yeah Graydon -- I get off on rewriting your myspace blogs.

Confused, Graydon just looks at his phone. Having no idea what that means. Then...

GRAYDON

(back to business)

Do we have any local people at the hospital?

ANDIE

No, we're on our own.

A MICROPHAGE -- spins in a whirl of color. Jorge activates a ROBOTIC ARM which removes a TEST TUBE from the microphage. The arm rotates on its axis and inserts the test tube into another DEVICE which sterilely injects the test tube's liquid contents onto a PETRI DISH of nutrient medium.

INT. HOSPITAL/STORE ROOM - DAY

DARREN - dressed as a HOSPITAL AIDE, flirts with a cute, YOUNG FEMALE CLERK as he loads MEDICAL EQUIPMENT onto a cart.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DARREN

There's a lot of bad-ass unmarked trails through the trees there.

CLERK

Right on. It's my favorite mountain. Do you ever heli-ski out there?

DARREN

All the time. I need to blaze my own path -- you know?

Totally smitten...

CLERK

Totally.

He sets to go with the equipment, but...

CLERK (CONT'D)

Oh my god. We were talking so long, I almost forgot -- I need your employee number for that equipment.

Darren reaches for his pocket.

DARREN

Oh man... I left my ID in my locker. Look, I'm new here.

(flashing his killer smile)

If I don't get this equipment to Doctor Dolinderman, I'm might get fired before I get a chance to ask you out.

She gives a little smile, charmed.

CLERK

Okay, just take it. I'll forge a number.

EXT. CARTER HOME - DAY

GRAYDON and DARREN load Emily on a GURNEY into the back of AN UNMARKED VAN. Lynn and Frank look on, worried. Graydon gives them a reassuring look before getting into the van with Emily.

INT. ANNEX LAB -- DAY

THROUGH A MICROSCOPE we see a little miracle -- A SINGLE CELL begins to pull upon itself, dividing in half. As the two resulting cells shimmer in the field of light we go...

EXT. HOSPITAL/CANTON, OHIO - ESTABLISHING

INT. HOSPITAL/ER - AFTERNOON

The ER is packed. Ambulance lights flash in the background; Doctors and Nurses working with patients.

Graydon, dressed in a PROTECTIVE SUIT and FACE MASK, wheels in a GURNEY WHICH IS COVERED IN A PLASTIC BUBBLE -- we don't see who is on it.

He is met by hospital administrator, JANE WELLER (50's).

JANE WELLER

Where do you think you're taking that patient?

Graydon flashes credentials -- hands her his card.

GRAYDON

Mike Unger. Centers for Disease Control. I understand you have a vacant ward -- seventh floor? I'm gonna need it.

JANE WELLER

You can't just come in here and take over a ward of my hospital.

GRAYDON

Yes, I can - article 3, section seven of the Federal Emergency Management act. You can look it up -- or you can help me get this infectious patient out of your ER.

She looks to see...

DARREN

Laying on the gurney. His face all black and blue -- gratis of the mangrove root. He looks like a monster.

Jane makes a face.

JANE WELLER

My God! What's wrong with him?

GRAYDON

That's what we need to find out.

Completely freaked out...

JANE WELLER

Just go...

And as Graydon wheels the gurney off...

INT. HOSPITAL/SEVENTH FLOOR - LATER

Graydon wheels the gurney onto the ward. Darren immediately jumps off it and removes the tray he was laying on to reveal Emily laying on another slate inside the gurney...

EMILY

What happens if we get caught?

DARREN

We get grounded?

EMILY

(re: his face)

You look like a freak.

Darren winks at her...

DARREN

(re: his lifestyle)

Oh -- I am.

She smiles back at him. Darren and Graydon lift her slate up and click it into place so it's where Darren's just was. And they wheel her into...

A PRISTINE ROOM

a hospital bed with crisp sheets. Equipment set up. You'd never know this was part of the same closed ward.

INT. HOSPITAL/JANE WELLER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Jane Weller moves into her office. She looks at the business card Graydon gave her. Wrestling with something in her mind then deciding. She grabs the phone and dials...

VOICE (V.O.)

CDC, Atlanta. Bill Unger's office.

JANE WELLER

Hello. Mr. Unger, please.

INTERCUT:

INT. NEW YORK CITY COURTHOUSE - SAME

TRUDIE wheels her chair across the courthouse lobby -- talking on BLUETOOTH.

TRUDIE

I'm sorry Dr. Unger is on assignment.
Can I take a message?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE WELLER

No. No message. Thank you very much.

INT. HOSPITAL/EMILY'S ROOM - SAME

Graydon and Darren get Emily set up, starting an IV, hooking up her oxygen and attaching the electrodes feeding into the battery of DEVICES that will monitor her vital functions.

GRAYDON

... when we implant the stem cell tissue, your immune system won't recognize it and may try to fight it. We're giving you some medication to tell your immune system to take the day off.

EMILY

Isn't that the part of my body that keeps me from getting sick?

GRAYDON

Smart girl. Without your normal immune response, little everyday germs could become real problems real fast. It may even make your disease worse for awhile. It's gonna get rough.

Emily nods -- if she's scared, she's not showing it. Graydon gives her a reassuring look and we go...

INT. ANNEX LAB - NIGHT

Jorge is standing by the coffee machine, waiting for a fresh pot to brew. He loses patience and pulls the pot aside, putting his mug right under the drip...

Andie peers intently into a microscope, meticulously adjusting a series of electronic dials. She doesn't look up.

ANDIE

How long?

JORGE

The simulation's almost complete.

(beat)

What are you doing over there?

ANDIE

Nothing. Just messing around...

JORGE

With an electron microscope? Let me see.

Andie hesitates, then shrugs and moves aside. Jorge takes a look --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VIEW THROUGH THE MICROSCOPE -- a dazzling sight. A MOLECULAR CONSTRUCTION of vibrant color and symmetry. It's like nothing we've seen before.

ANDIE

It's just moving atoms around. Something to kill the time - like knitting.

Jorge is clearly impressed. He's finally letting his guard down a bit.

JORGE

It's art. You could sell that. You know, in a gallery.

ANDIE

(with pride)
Thanks.

A moment, then...

ANDIE (CONT'D)

So you worked with Graydon?

JORGE

Yeah.

ANDIE

Did you know Connor Norquist?

JORGE

Not well. He was kind of always up in his ivory tower. Why?

She just shrugs.

ANDIE

Just wondering.

Jorge doesn't push. A moment.

JORGE

Can I ask you something? How can you trust Graydon?

Andie takes a moment before answering.

ANDIE

I'm a scientist, Jorge. I trust what I can observe and verify.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jorge nods, *okay*, but it's going to be a long road to belief for him. He eases down in his chair, checking his monitor and we...

DISSOLVE TO:

TIGHT ON THE COMPUTER MONITOR -- A 3-D rendering of a HUMAN HEART, perfectly detailed, a stark, red wonder, floating in a black void, beating out the cadence of life -- beautiful.

Jorge is at the keyboard, Andie watching over his shoulder. He enters a command and the image begins PUSHING IN, MAGNIFYING THE VIEW -- tighter and tighter until we are within the fabric of the muscle tissue itself -- and with the first glimpse of the frenzy of cellular activity the image freezes.

Jorge physically slumps. Andie kicks a chair --

ANDIE (CONT'D)
God damn it!

INT. OHIO/EMILY'S MAKESHIFT HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Graydon and Darren watch a teen reality dating show with Emily. It's midnight. They're rapt.

Darren's face has cleared up.

DARREN
She's going to choose the kid with the braces.

EMILY
No way. She's going with the hot guy.

GRAYDON
No, he tried to kiss her friend, remember...

EMILY
Doesn't matter... she's smitten.

And Graydon looks at her. She's just a teenager watching a show... using a word she recently learned... like nothing's wrong.

DARREN
Braces did her homework for her.

EMILY
Yeah but -- hot guy's hot.

Darren shrugs... conceding that's a good point. Graydon's cell rings. He picks it up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

INTERCUT: ANDIE IN THE LAB --

ANDIE
You have to come back!

Graydon immediately takes the phone with him into the hall.

GRAYDON
Why?

ANDIE
We got a problem.

GRAYDON
How bad?

ANDIE
One to ten?

GRAYDON
Andie!

A moment, then...

ANDIE
Ten.

Severely concerned, Graydon closes his phone and heads back into the hospital room. And Emily looks over to him with...

EMILY
She went with the hot guy.

As Graydon forces out a smile...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACT THREE

INT. ANNEX LAB - DAY

Graydon, Andie and Jorge are gathered around the COMPUTER MODEL OF EMILY'S HEART -- it's a panic of cellular activity, cells replicating out of control.

But, what Graydon sees is...

EMILY'S FACE -- looking up, full of hope... His vision moves in tight, INSIDE HER BODY, right to HER BEATING HEART -- A MASS OF TUMOROUS LESIONS RUPTURE THE TISSUE, SPREADING ACROSS THE EXPANSE OF THE LEFT VENTRICLE LIKE A DEVOURING WAVE --

ANDIE

The up side is we've cracked the suicide gene problem. Now, all we have to do is figure out how to make the cells stop dividing because we're looking at cancer here.

JORGE

This should have worked...

GRAYDON

But it didn't.

(thinking)

Look, cells differentiate in nature all the time. We just have to make it happen in a petri dish.

JORGE

Wait...

Jorge grabs a legal pad and quickly scrawls something down.

GRAYDON

You got something?

Jorge looks around then moves to the COFFEE STATION. He grabs the SUGAR CONTAINER and dumps the contents on a table, sorting out the packets -- WHITE, PINK, BLUE AND BROWN.

Graydon and Andie look on as Jorge arranges the packets... each packet representing a different type of cell.

JORGE

It happens in nature all the time...
That's our problem...

Graydon and Andie look at him, not following.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JORGE (CONT'D)

In normal gestation, heart muscle cells would be developing right alongside vascular cells, neural cells, valves - they'd all be talking to each other - coordinating growth. A way more complex sequence of triggers than we could reproduce in the lab.

GRAYDON

Right... but what does that have to do with cancerous cell growth?

Jorge sweeps all the sweetener packets aside, leaving a single "Sugar in the Raw" packet all alone on the table.

JORGE

We have our stem cell growing all by itself. It's thinking, "where is everybody, nobody's talking to me"...

GRAYDON

... so it figures something's got to be wrong and it kills itself.

ANDIE

Which is why we shut off the suicide gene.

JORGE

Right. And that got us cancer. So, what if we didn't have to shut off the gene? What if we could fool the stem cell into thinking it's growing inside a body instead of a dish?

Jorge starts re-arranging the sweetener packets into a tight, overlapping circle, forming a neat little pile.

JORGE (CONT'D)

We take vascular cells, neurons, membrane, valve cells...

He takes the "Sugar in the Raw" packet and puts it in the center of the pile --

JORGE (CONT'D)

...and drop in our stem cell.

GRAYDON

So, now everybody's talking...

JORGE

Right.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There is a long silence, Graydon and Jorge thinking.

ANDIE

That is, without a doubt, the most
simplistic, reductionist idea I have ever
heard.

JORGE

(defeated)
She's right.

But then Andie steps forward.

ANDIE

And we have to try it.

Graydon gives Jorge a smile -- a glimmer of hope and we go...

INT. SEVENTH FLOOR WARD - NIGHT

Darren races down the hall. He's met outside Emily's room by
her panicked parents.

LYNN

Something's wrong. She's barely
conscious...

Darren doesn't wait to hear more. He rushes --

INT. EMILY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Darren approaches Emily -- she's bathed in sweat, shaking
uncontrollably. He looks up at her heart monitor -- her
rhythm is all over the map. A warning alarm is sounding!

Darren quickly preps a syringe and administers an injection.
He places an electronic thermometer under Emily's tongue and,
as he does, her eyes flutter open, coming to --

She looks up at him, terrified. Pushes the thermometer away.

EMILY

(barely audible)
What's happening to me?

He mops her brow, speaking with a calm confidence.

DARREN

Looks like we got a fever. I'm going to
treat you with antibiotics and then I'm
going to install an external pacemaker to
give your heart some help. But first,
we've got to break this fever.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The alarms subside, Emily's heart rhythm stabilizing -- the injection taking effect. He takes her hand.

DARREN (CONT'D)
You feeling a little better, now?

She nods. He smiles back at her.

INT. ANNEX LAB - NIGHT

Jorge is sitting in front of the amazingly rendered computer model of Emily's heart.

JORGE
I think we got it!

Graydon and Andie move to Jorge -- ON THE MONITOR -- The cells divide in a beautiful, ordered fashion, starkly different from the frenzy of cancerous growth we saw earlier.

ANDIE
Replication looks perfect, no sign of cancer.

GRAYDON
Okay, we have to differentiate about ten thousand cells and we're pushing the clock. We'll set up two stations. One of us can rest and rotate in. Who wants to sit out first?

Nobody volunteers --

GRAYDON (CONT'D)
Okay - three stations.

INT. SEVENTH FLOOR, WARD - NIGHT

As Darren races down the hall with a rolling bin of ice. He starts dumping the ice into a clear glass tub...

DISSOLVE TO:

PROCESS SEQUENCE -- FROM UNDERNEATH THE GLASS TUB -- packed with ice, water being poured over, slow motion, surreal --

ON EMILY -- lying in bed, depleted, gaunt. The lights down low. Darren and Frank ceremoniously wrap Emily in white sheets.

DARREN
Nice and easy now, Emily. I'm gonna pick you up...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Emily doesn't respond, she's semi-conscious. Darren picks her up in his arms and starts to carry her, it's like he's carrying a ghost.

They move through the low, blue light of the burn unit towards the ice filled glass tub.

DARREN (CONT'D)

This is going to be very cold. But it's going to help you...

Emily's body plunges into the ice -- it's lonely and terrifying and somehow reflective of going to the grave. She floats, motionless...

DARREN (CONT'D)

Emily? Can you hear me?

And we go TIGHT ON HER EYES -- no movement under the lids...

DARREN (CONT'D)

Emily!

A long, horrible moment. Lynn and Frank begin to panic.

LYNN

Emily! Oh God!

And finally... GASP!!! Emily grasps for life -- fighting with all her being. Eye's wide open. "AHHHHHH!"

Her parents start to sob as Darren stands sentry over Emily.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO - EARLY MORNING - ESTABLISHING

A layer of fog casts a foreboding glow over the city.

INT. ANNEX LAB/GROUND FLOOR - EARLY MORNING

Graydon, Andie and Jorge make their way to the elevator, the start of another day.

GRAYDON

Anyone get any sleep?

Andie and Jorge answer groggily -- "No. Are you kidding..."

They get to the elevator -- Graydon notices the STEEL GUARD GATE on the elevator has been left open...

GRAYDON (CONT'D)

One of you come back here last night?

Andie reaches for the elevator button, shaking her head, "No." And it dawns on Graydon -- something is wrong...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAYDON (CONT'D)
NO! STOP!

Too late -- Andie press's the UP button. CLICK! We hear it first. A horrible rumble --

GRAYDON (CONT'D)
MOVE!

They bolt away from the elevator -- they race outside the parking garage -- as A BALL OF FIRE roils down the shaft!!! Coming right for them --

EXT. ANNEX LAB - CONTINUOUS

BOOM!!! A POWERFUL EXPLOSION -- blows the windows and doors off the building. Graydon, Andie and Jorge are knocked off their feet. They stagger back up and stare in shock. Off the fire and conflagration we...

SMASH TO BLACK:

END OF ACT THREE

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACT FOUR**INT. ANNEX LAB - MORNING**

The place is a total loss. Firefighters are just mopping up. Andie talks with one of the firefighters across the way.

Graydon picks through the remains, barely containing his anger... Jorge finds his side.

JORGE

This was Juan. He knows. He wants me back.

GRAYDON

Jorge--

JORGE

I know him. This is how he talks. I have to go back to Mexico.

GRAYDON

No -- you need to see this through.
(beat)
Then you can go back.

Jorge holds Graydon's dire stare, then...

JORGE

We can create an embryonic clone of Emily and harvest her own stem cells from the resulting blastocyte.

GRAYDON

Cloned cells.

Confirming...

JORGE

We cut out the risk of rejection.
(then)
It'll take time. Maybe more time than she's got left.

EXT. ANNEX LAB/PARKING LOT - MORNING

Graydon stands outside of the building, gathering himself, deep in thought. He walks away from the craziness... to where he can be alone and suddenly... Graydon drops to the ground and starts doing push-ups. One after the other in quick succession.

Andie heads out of the building, looks for Graydon, finally sees him and makes her way over.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDIE
Pulling out the push-ups.

Not stopping...

GRAYDON
I need somewhere to put the rage.

ANDIE
I hear ya.

And she stands there.

ANDIE (CONT'D)
Think this was our friend... Dr. B.
Goode?

Out of breath... still going...

GRAYDON
I don't know, Andie. And it doesn't make
a difference in Emily Carter's life.

And he finally stops... just lies there... on the cement...
until...

GRAYDON (CONT'D)
I'm going back to Ohio.

INT. HOSPITAL/SEVENTH FLOOR HALL - NIGHT

Graydon speaks with Frank.

FRANK
... she's been poked and prodded and cut
up for so long now...

GRAYDON
Frank, I know this is tearing you up.
But we're so close.

FRANK
No! Enough of this! Can't you see what
we're doing?

And Frank's on his feet... snapping in fury...

FRANK (CONT'D)
We're kidding ourselves, we're selling
her false hope... we all know how this is
going to end! Our delusions are just
hurting her more.
(then)
She's in pain. She needs to sleep now...
in peace. We need to help her... sleep.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAYDON
(very calm)
Frank... I understand--

FRANK
You don't understand. Don't insult me by saying you do. They won't let you test your new drugs so you find sick people and claim you're being noble.

And Frank steps toward Graydon in anger.

FRANK (CONT'D)
But that doesn't mean you understand!

Graydon holds Frank's angry stare. But he doesn't back down. No. He simply takes a moment, then... soft and slow...

GRAYDON
Above everything... the pain... the injustice... the abandonment from God...

Then...

GRAYDON (CONT'D)
More than all of that hell... the one thing that rips out your heart... the one thing that will never be okay... is not being able to help them. Not being able to protect them. Not being able to say that Daddy's going to make it all better.
(a beat)
That's the hardest part.

LYNN (O.S.)
Boy or girl?

And Lynn stands across the way, having heard it all... holding the cup of coffee she just went to get...

Graydon turns and steps to her with...

GRAYDON
Boy.

LYNN
How old was he?

GRAYDON
Fourteen.

LYNN
What was his name?

And swallowing back his world... barely able to say it...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAYDON

Jordan.

Silence. Until... Lynn looks at her husband then back to Graydon with...

LYNN

If this doesn't work... we're done.

A SERIES OF SHOTS -- MUSIC PLAYS OVER:

TIME MOVES

ANDIE -- as she gets off the jetway in Ohio and greets Darren.

A LONG NEEDLE -- as it pierces the skin just above Emily's waist -- Emily fights tears as Graydon eases the needle in.

A HUMAN OVUM -- as it's sucked from it's center by a MICROSCOPIC FILAMENT... all in high magnification.

A SINGLE DROP OF BLOOD -- as it hits a slide and as the slide cover SMEARS IT FLAT. And we go...

INSIDE THE BLOOD -- the PULSING CELLS, inside the GLOWING NUCLEUS, TAKING AN ASCENDING SPIRAL SURVEY AROUND THE DOUBLE HELIX STRANDS OF DNA...

OHIO HOSPITAL MAKESHIFT LAB -- As Andie slides her hands into the sterile glove portals of an oversized INCUBATOR. She gingerly retrieves a petri dish glowing under the radiance of the heating element and maneuvers it onto the viewing platform of a MICROSCOPE mounted within the incubator.

She removes her hands from the gloves and peers through the microscope's eyepieces protruding from the incubator's wall.

THE VIEW THROUGH THE EYEPIECES -- as Andie pulls focus we go...

TIGHT ON: A LAPTOP SCREEN -- a microscopic view of a clump of eight cells -- A BLASTOCYTE.

Pull back to find Andie looking at the screen. Graydon finding her side.

GRAYDON

It's incredible.

ANDIE

Yeah...

And then...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDIE (CONT'D)
We're almost ready.

INT. HOSPITAL/SIDE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Frank and Lynn walk down the empty hall. Dr. Heldens (Emily's cardiologist from the opening) steps into the hall from an office door and sees them. He calls to them...

DR. HELDENS
Frank? Lynn?

Frank looks back, sees Heldens, but pretends not to. He guides Lynn along faster, turning the corner.

Dr. Heldens watches them go -- *that's odd*. He considers a beat and takes off after them.

INT. OHIO HOSPITAL/MAKESHIFT LAB - DAY

Andie and Graydon hard at work. Frank and Lynn enter, alarm written on their faces.

FRANK
We've been spotted. It's Emily's cardiologist. I don't know what he's doing here - this isn't his hospital. Do you think he knows what's going on?

GRAYDON
(to Andie)
Get rid of him.

INT. SEVENTH FLOOR / ELEVATOR LANDING - MOMENTS LATER

Andie puts on a mask and emerges from the double doors leading to the ward -- she see Dr. Heldens and is right on him --

ANDIE
Hey! What do you think you're doing up here?

Heldens sees the CDC seals on the doors.

DR. HELDENS
What's going on? I saw the parents of a patient of mine come up here...

ANDIE
No one came up here.

DR. HELDENS
I saw them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDIE

This ward is under quarantine. You're going to have to leave.

DR. HELDENS

Sorry, my mistake. They must have gotten off on another floor.

As Heldens turns, we hold on his face -- a look of confusion and lingering suspicion --

INT. SEVENTH FLOOR WARD/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Graydon and Darren wheel Emily on a gurney toward an operating room.

Her parents, wearing brave faces, walk her to the doors. Lynn leans down and kisses her.

LYNN

We'll be right here when you come out. I love you, baby.

Emily mouths I love you back under her oxygen mask. Her eyes filled with fear. Frank leans in and kisses her.

FRANK

I love you, girl of mine.

GRAYDON

We're gonna take good care of her.

They push the gurney into the OR and we go...

INT. HOSPITAL/JANE WELLER'S OFFICE - MORNING

Dr. Heldens knocks on the door before stepping inside. Jane Weller looks up from her desk.

DR. HELDENS

Ms. Weller? I'm Mike Heldens -- I'm covering rounds for a colleague on vacation and... What's with the quarantine on seven? I think a patient of mine might be up there...

Off Jane Weller's curious look we go...

INT. PRE-OP - CONTINUOUS

Graydon and Darren scrub up. Jorge and Andie enter with portable INCUBATOR emblazoned with a biological materials label. Jorge pulls out a vial of clear, viscous fluid and holds it up. Graydon smiles --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAYDON

Let's make a miracle.

INT. OPERATING ROOM - LATER

Darren manipulates a CARDIAC CATHETER snaked up through an artery in Emily's thigh, watching carefully on A MONITOR as the catheter tip probes around Emily's BEATING HEART.

Emily watches along, drowsy, but awake under local anesthesia.

GRAYDON

We're injecting the stem cells at several points around your ventricle. They'll embed and grow, replacing the diseased tissue.

(beat; to Darren)

Okay, you're at the injection point.

DARREN

I'm going 50 cc's.

Just then, Emily lets out a raspy exhalation.

GRAYDON

Emily?

The rasp turns into a breathy MOAN. Her eyes roll back --

ANDIE

BP's dropping...fast.

ON THE MONITOR -- the view suddenly obscured by a WAVE OF RED!

GRAYDON

We got a bleed.

ANDIE

Pulse is rapid and shallow... she's bottoming out.

DARREN

Put her under!

Andie is right on it, getting the anesthesia started.

DARREN (CONT'D)

I'm scoping her. Scalpel!

And as Darren makes a small incision -- a thin line of crimson blooming on alabaster skin, we go --

INT. SEVENTH FLOOR WARD - CONTINUOUS

Jane Weller pushes through the double doors onto the ward, marching down the hall.

INT. OPERATING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

We're TIGHT ON: AN ARTHROSCOPIC FIBER-OPTIC TUBE being inserted through the small incision in Emily's chest.

Just then, Jane Weller bursts into the OR, a mask held to her face.

JANE WELLER (O.S.)

What the hell is going on here?!

They all turn -- the collective cat with the canary.

JANE WELLER (CONT'D)

Security's on their way. I'm calling the police.

Darren doesn't even hesitate. He grabs something off the surgical tray -- A SYRINGE -- and, BAM, right in Jane Weller's thigh.

She stands stunned a moment and begins to wobble. Graydon is there to catch her and eases her to the floor. He throws an approving nod to Darren. He turns to Andie.

GRAYDON

I'll watch the vitals - you gotta buy us a little time.

ANDIE

I'm on it.

And as she heads from the room we go...

INT. HOSPITAL/LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

SEVERAL SECURITY OFFICERS assemble in the lobby. They push the "up" button on the elevator and we go...

INT. SEVENTH FLOOR WARD - CONTINUOUS

Andie moves quickly down the hall. She comes to a door marked DANGER. HIGH VOLTAGE.

INT. UTILITY CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

Andie finds a CONTROL PANEL on the wall. She opens the panel and finds a breaker marked NORTH ELEVATORS.

INT. OR - CONTINUOUS

Darren looks through the eye-piece on the fiber-optic tube. He doesn't like what he sees...

DARREN

We've got a wedge defect in the ventricle.

GRAYDON

Can you suture?

DARREN

The tissue's too degraded, it'll never hold.

GRAYDON

What about a balloon assist device?

DARREN

There's too much damage.

GRAYDON

Well, we've got to patch this thing up somehow...

A long pause. Wheels turning. An idea comes to Graydon...

GRAYDON (CONT'D)

Load a syringe - 200cc's Fibrin.

DARREN

You can't inject coagulant in the heart - she'll throw a clot. Stroke out.

GRAYDON

We're not going to inject it, we're just gonna bathe the rupture site, scab it over...

Darren doesn't look at all convinced.

GRAYDON (CONT'D)

Look, we're just trying to buy time to give the stem cells a chance to do their thing. You got any better ideas?

He doesn't.

GRAYDON (CONT'D)

Alright.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

The elevator bumps to a stop. The LIGHTS flicker and go off. Stuck. The Security Officers go to work. Flashlights come out. Calls are made.

INT. OR - CONTINUOUS

TIGHT ON: The Arthroscopic tube -- Graydon injects the coagulant.

GRAYDON
Okay... That's it.

He and Darren exchange looks. The moment of truth...

DARREN CHECKS THE EYEPiece -- THE RUPTURE SITE ON EMILY'S HEART -- In seconds a gnarled looking scab begins to form over the wound.

DARREN
(to Graydon)
It's holding.

GRAYDON
BP's coming back. Rhythm's steady.

Just then, Andie comes back into the OR.

ANDIE
I slowed them down, but we've gotta move.

GRAYDON
Let's hit her with the rest of the stem cells and get her out of here.

INT. STAIRWELL/SEVENTH FLOOR WARD - CONTINUOUS

The Security Officers rush up the stairs to the seventh floor -- THE DOOR IS LOCKED. Several KEYS are tried before the door is opened and they move onto the ward.

They move down the hall, coming to the doors of the OR and --

INT. OR - CONTINUOUS

They burst into the room, but EVERYONE IS GONE -- in a hurry. The place is mid-surgical disarray.

ON THE TABLE -- JANE WELLER is just starting to come to and we...

SMASH TO:

EXT. ER/AMBULANCE AREA.

Two EMT WORKERS wheel a patient from the back of an AMBULANCE.

As soon as they pass, Graydon, Darren and Andie load Emily, on a gurney, into the ambulance. Graydon and Darren get in with her, pulling the doors closed. Andie rushes around to the driver's side.

One of the EMT guys sees what's going on. He runs to stop Andie, but the front door slams.

He pounds on the window.

ANDIE
Cute paramedic.

Andie gives him a little smile...

ANDIE (CONT'D)
Maybe in another life, baby.

And with that, Andie hits the SIREN -- lights flash, siren wails and they are out of there!

SMASH TO BLACK:

END OF ACT FOUR

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACT FIVE

EXT. CARTER HOME/CANTON, OH. - DAY

Graydon moves up the walk. The front door opens before he reaches it. Lynn stands waiting for him. She's smiling.

GRAYDON

Hey, Lynn. How's she doing?

LYNN

She's doing great...today's been much better.

GRAYDON

Good. Let's go in. I've got news.

INT. CARTER HOME/EMILY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Emily sits up in bed. She looks better than we've ever seen her -- good color and, best of all, a smile on her face.

GRAYDON

These are the results of the tissue aspiration we performed. They look very good.

He hands out magnified images of tissue sections and we go to GRAYDON'S POV of the images -- what he sees --

EMILY'S HEART -- HER DISEASED VENTRICLE IS ABUZZ WITH CELLULAR ACTIVITY, UNDERGOING A TRANSFORMATION -- A CRIMSON GLOW SPREADS OVER THE GRAY TISSUE -- A REBIRTH.

GRAYDON (CONT'D)

The tests show normal cellular activity -- no red flags at all.

Emily looks up, almost too afraid to ask the question...

EMILY

Is this really gonna work? Am I going to be normal again?

GRAYDON

We're in uncharted waters, but we're gonna be with you every step of the way. I think we're looking great.

He bends down and kisses Emily on the forehead.

GRAYDON (CONT'D)

I'll see you in a few days.

And Graydon starts to leave, but...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMILY

Hey...

As he stops and turns...

EMILY (CONT'D)

I have a confession. I may be a little smitten by Elton.

Graydon smiles.

GRAYDON

I knew it.

They hold the long look, then...

EMILY

Thanks cowboy.

INT. CARTER KITCHEN - DAY

Graydon stands with Lynn and Frank.

LYNN

Thank you. Thank you for giving us our daughter back.

FRANK

If there's anything we can ever do...

GRAYDON

There is.

As Graydon looks them head on.

GRAYDON (CONT'D)

One day someone may come to you. The way you came to Diane.

(and then)

This person will be without options...
this person will be without hope...

Frank slowly nods. Understands.

GRAYDON (CONT'D)

... and you will send them to me.

INT. GRAYDON'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

A tasteful bachelor. Exhausted, Graydon heads in and throws his overnight bag on the floor. He goes to the fridge and opens a beer... moves to the living room and turns on the game... ready to finally decompress. But...

The doorbell rings.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Graydon lets out a frustrated sigh, moves to the door and opens it to find...

ANDIE
You've got mail!

PICTURES

Black and white, timestamped, taken from a distance, of a MAN we've never seen before, breaking into the annex lab.

Pull back to be with Andie and Graydon at the kitchen table.

GRAYDON
That's Arnold Ford. He runs security for Norquist.

Andie slowly nods.

ANDIE
So it wasn't Jorge's drug lord that blew up the lab?

GRAYDON
No. It was Conner.
(beat)
It was your father.

Graydon then turns around the picture to see written in black marker -- "I got your back. Now get mine. Send Clavital now! Dr. B. Goode."

GRAYDON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
What is the business of a pharmaceutical company?

INT. UNIVERSITY LECTURE HALL - DAY

Graydon stands at the front of the lecture hall... it's standing room only.

GRAYDON
"To discover new medicines"; that's what they do, not what their business is. "To sell medicines"; closer. "To cure disease." Now, we're really circling around it, so let me spell it out... The business of a drug company is to make a profit.

(a beat)
And when you take staggering R & D costs, narrowing patent windows, runaway litigation and an antiquated FDA regulatory process...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAYDON (CONT'D)
 you create an environment that rewards
 stasis and penalizes risk.

He lets that sink in.

GRAYDON (CONT'D)
 So, my challenge to you is this: Change
 it. Imagine a different way. A world
 without disease. Let's make a
 difference. Let's find the cures.

The place lights up in applause and we go...

EXT. ELLISON UNIVERSITY/CAMPUS - DAY

Graydon walks with Jorge across campus. Clearly Jorge is
 swimming in a world of apprehension, confusion.

GRAYDON
 Juan didn't fire-bomb our lab -- don't
 ask me how I know.

Jorge digests that. Then...

GRAYDON (CONT'D)
 I want you to stay.

JORGE
 You want me to work for you?

GRAYDON
 No. With me. Jorge, I came to you for
 two reasons: because you are the best;
 and I owed you the chance to prove it. I
 don't have a stem cell guy and I need
 one.

JORGE
 I don't know. With all the restrictions
 on stem cells here in the States...

GRAYDON
 Restrictions? Right.

Jorge slowly smiles...

But as they round a corner, Graydon stops short -- FOUR BLACK
 SUBURBANS are parked in front of the Institute. Graydon and
 Jorge exchange looks -- that can't be good.

INT. INSTITUTE - CONTINUOUS

Agents from the US CUSTOMS SERVICE and the DEPARTMENT OF
 AGRICULTURE are busy going through the labs. Graydon enters
 with Jorge and finds Andie and Darren.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAYDON

What's going on?

As if in answer, a LEAD AGENT produces a warrant.

LEAD AGENT

I'm Agent Vance with the Customs Service, DOA joint task force. We have a warrant to search the premises and confiscate any plant material that may have been brought into the country illegally, as well as any research pertaining to said plant material.

As he hands Graydon the warrant...

INT. GRAYDON'S HOUSE - EVENING

Graydon enters and closes the door behind him. He stands in the entry a moment, taking in his home, maybe noticing its emptiness. He tosses his keys on a stand and goes...

INT. GRAYDON'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Graydon moves to the fridge and pulls out a bottle of wine. He pours a glass and moves to the sink, taking a sip. A smile comes to his face as he looks at --

A CUTTING FROM THE AMAZON PLANT growing in a hydroponic solution on the window shelf above the sink.

And next to the plant is a picture... of a boy... holding a baseball bat... fourteen years old when the picture was taken... and his name was Jordan. As we...

FADE OUT.

THE END