

# **choking on staples**

a play by oliver nowak

ACT 1

SCENE 1

LIGHTS FADE IN:

INT. SPLEEN'S CLINIC - DAY

*The PATIENT, a haggard woman in her late forties, sits quietly on an Examination Table, coughing incessantly. She's in a state of shock, and seems to be ruminating something over. SPLEEN, a female Cancer Specialist in her early thirties, is trying to console her.*

*A MAN enters holding EDDIE MONOXIDE hostage with a pistol. The MAN is dressed in Adidas Sports Wear and looks extremely pale. His clothes have a ring of blood around his waist, and he appears to be in pain. EDDIE is a man in his late twenties, dressed in a pair of blue-jeans and T-shirt. Imprints of the MAN'S bloody hands are all over him. A look of recognition flashes over his face when he sees SPLEEN.*

MAN

I need help here!

THE PATIENT

Oh my god...

EDDIE

Hey, there...uh...friend...

SPLEEN

What the--

MAN

Shut the fuck up!

SPLEEN

Whatever it is that you need: cash, drugs--

MAN

--I don't want drugs. No. No drugs. I want... I want...

EDDIE

Hey, friend we're h--

MAN

(Hits EDDIE with pistol.)

SHUT UP. Just. I don't want drugs! I told you that already! Don't you listen to me? Fucking listen to me! I...I want a goddamned refund!

SPLEEN

A what?

MAN

Or I'm gonna blow yer brains out.

*THE MAN pushes the gun into EDDIE'S cheek.  
THE PATIENT screams.*

FREEZE.

SPLEEN

Life is a precious thing. You guard it vigilantly against the forces of evil, against becoming some kind of a machine, or part of a machine. But something happens.

UNFREEZE.

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

W-what's happening here? Eddie?

EDDIE

I don't--

*THE MAN hits EDDIE with the pistol again.*

MAN

You wanna watch MTV all day lobotomized, you fuck??!!!? Then shut the fuck up!!! SHUT UP!  
Now! Meat! I want meat! Good meat! The healthy stuff!

SPLEEN

I'm sorry...?

MAN

Shut up! Just shut the fuck up and lemme talk! Just lemme talk goddamnit! I want a refund!

*THE MAN whips out a ZIPLOCK BAG with something fleshy swimming in brownish-red fluid.*

MAN (CONT'D)

I want...TWO NEW KIDNEYS!

FREEZE.

SPLEEN (V.O.)

What? You think you can go from one moment to the next, oblivious,  
and that's it?

END SCENE

SLIDE: 'EARLIER.'

**SCENE 2**

INT. SPLEEN'S CLINIC - DAY

*SPLEEN is examining a patient. THE  
PATIENT coughs incessantly.*

SPLEEN

I'm afraid we caught it too late.

*SILENCE.*

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

The important thing is to remember to breathe.

THE PATIENT

This is...overwhelming.

SPLEEN

I'm sorry.

THE PATIENT

You're sorry?

(Pauses to reflect.)

What are my chances?

SPLEEN

I never tell my patients how long they have.

THE PATIENT

How long do I have?

SPLEEN

This isn't about death.

THE PATIENT

HOW LONG???

SPLEEN

This is about life. And the act of living.

*Activity is heard outside, in the  
Reception Area.*

THE PATIENT  
I could get a second opinion.

SPLEEN  
You could.

THE PATIENT  
I should.

SPLEEN  
But you won't. It's better if you don't know. Tell me: what's changed, really? Other than you know you have a high probability of dying from lung cancer.

BACK TO:

**SCENE 3**

INT. SPLEEN'S CLINIC - CONTINUOUS

*THE MAN pushes the ziplock bag into SPLEEN'S face.*

MAN  
Look! LOOK AT EM! They have...they have SPOTS!

*SPLEEN examines the fleshy substance through the ziplock bag.*

MAN (CONT'D)  
Well...?

SPLEEN  
They're necrotic.

MAN  
What does that mean? What does that mean?--I'm gonna blow his brains out!

EDDIE  
It means--

*THE MAN fires a shot past EDDIE'S face. Blood trickles from the sides of THE MAN'S body.*

MAN  
What do you know about my problems?! What do you know about my problems?

*HE starts to get woozy, his pistol becoming difficult to hold upright.*

MAN (CONT'D)

W-what's happening to me? I feel cold.

SPLEEN

Eddie, who is this guy?

EDDIE

I don't know. He was in--

MAN

Shut up! Just let me...I just...I'm sorry. Jesus Christ.  
I...just...want...a...refund...

*THE MAN drops the pistol and collapses. EDDIE jumps on it. SPLEEN snaps her fingers towards THE PATIENT, pointing at a drawer. SPLEEN takes his vitals. THE PATIENT finds some dressing. SPLEEN pulls up THE MAN's shirt to reveal incisions the size of which a kidney would fit if you wanted to pull one out and had the time. EDDIE hovers over them.*

EDDIE

Jesus Christ! Jesus fucking Christ!

THE PATIENT

Omygod. They're really his...

MAN

Wha's...she...sayin...?

SPLEEN

Get a grip Eddie. The man is dying.

EDDIE

He's already dead. I'm gonna fuckin-

*He lunges at THE MAN. SPLEEN pushes him away.*

SPLEEN

Eddie! Stay back! Calm down!

*THE PATIENT dresses THE MAN's wounds.*

MAN

AAAAAAAAAAHHH!!

THE PATIENT

Shhhhh.

EDDIE

I'm calm. I'm calm. I just...I'm calm.

SPLEEN

Can I trust you?

EDDIE

What's that supposed to mean?

SPLEEN

I dunno--Can I trust you?

EDDIE

What are you saying?

MAN

AAAAAHHHHH!

THE PATIENT

Um...help...he's bleeding pretty bad...

*SPLEEN returns to the care of THE MAN. THE MAN mutters to himself.*

SPLEEN

Clamps.

*PAUSE.*

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

Drop the gun and gimme some goddamn clamps!

*EDDIE sticks the gun into the small of his back and gives a cursory look around.*

EDDIE

They're not here.

SPLEEN

What?

EDDIE

I can't find them!

SPLEEN

FIND THEM!

*EDDIE quickly finds the clamps in a drawer.*

EDDIE

Found em.

*EDDIE hands SPLEEN her clamps.*

What did you mean? EDDIE (CONT'D)

*SPLEEN is busy saving THE MAN's life.*

When? SPLEEN

Back there. When-- EDDIE

I need something to wipe the blood. SPLEEN

*THE PATIENT gives EDDIE some more dressing from the drawer, who gives it to SPLEEN.*

What did you mean? EDDIE

This is messy. Messy, Eddie! SPLEEN

You don't trust me? EDDIE

When? SPLEEN

Now! EDDIE

I need more dressing! You can't be slackin off like this! SPLEEN

Sure. Dressing. EDDIE

I NEED MORE DRESSING he's gonna bleed all over the fuckin place here! Is this remedial or what? SPLEEN

*THE PATIENT feeds EDDIE more dressing.*

Do you trust me? EDDIE

Do I trust you? SPLEEN

Yes! EDDIE



More dressing please. SPLEEN

*EDDIE stops, refusing to do anything. SPLEEN and EDDIE stare at each other. Finally:*

Okay push here. SPLEEN (CONT'D)

*SPLEEN takes EDDIE's hand.*

Do not let go. Eddie look at me: do not let go. SPLEEN (CONT'D)

Of course not darling. Trust me. EDDIE

*SPLEEN lights a cigarette.*

Excuse me. SPLEEN

*THE PATIENT grabs a cigarette from SPLEEN'S pack, too.*

Oh God whatta fuckin mess. Who is this guy? You know him? EDDIE

Who would cut out their own...? THE PATIENT  
It's completely psychotic.

*SPLEEN examines the ziplock.*

No. But he knew us. What were you doing here anyway? SPLEEN

I came about 'later'. He musta followed me. EDDIE

--Followed you?? SPLEEN

*SPLEEN finds a business card swimming in the ziplock.*

What's this? SPLEEN (CONT'D)

What? EDDIE

SPLEEN

There's a...business card swimming in here...

THE PATIENT

I'm okay, if anybody cares.

EDDIE

Great. What's your name?

*SPLEEN slaps EDDIE across the face.*

EDDIE (CONT'D)

What are you--?

SPLEEN

Have you been doing jobs behind my back?

EDDIE

No!

SPLEEN

Have you been doing jobs behind my back?

EDDIE

NO!

(Pause.)

I'm not lying!

SPLEEN

What the fuck is this then?

*SPLEEN throws the ziplock bag at him.*

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

(to the audience.)

When faced with the obvious, we will second-guess ourselves in life--to make sure. This is our fatal flaw. Because we all make mistakes. We fritter our life away on the obvious, the banal, the shallow, which have become the cornerstones of comfort, security, and stability, like Maytag, Whirlpool, and Hoover. But when the obvious hits us in the face we usually take notice. By denying its very existence. And unless someone pushes a pistol in your eye, it works. Life will go on. With or without you.

END SCENE

#### SCENE 4

INT. TRAILER GROUNDZERO - LATER

*EDDIE rushes through the front door and into the kitchen. He opens the fridge and*

*pulls out some Orange Juice. He drinks about half of it in one swallow and then stands there in silence, trying to relax.*

*In the silence, the sound of ROSE puking her guts out in the bathroom can be heard. As EDDIE checks his pockets, ROSE enters, wiping her mouth. She doesn't notice EDDIE in the kitchen.*

ROSE

If I puke one more time...

*ROSE turns on an old TV with a pair of pliers.*

ROSE (CONT'D)

God, I really don't wanna fix Mrs. Lepinski's car today...  
(Striking the TV.)  
This fucking TV.

*ROSE finally notices EDDIE in the kitchen.*

ROSE (CONT'D)

Eddie. You're home. I thought you were supposed to be at work?

*EDDIE ignores her. He's hunched over the counter, concentrating on a nutrition label.*

ROSE (CONT'D)

Baby? Are you alright?

EDDIE

Yes? What? Oh. I dunno. I have to work late tonight.

ROSE

Their payin you overtime, right? We got bills and that lawyer-

EDDIE

Yes.

ROSE

Are you okay?

*EDDIE kisses ROSE on the forehead and then*

ROSE (CONT'D)

Not again...

*ROSE rushes to the bathroom and pukes. EDDIE takes this opportunity to pull out*

*THE ZIPLOCK BAG containing the kidneys,  
and hides it in the refrigerator  
vegetable bin, under a sack of carrots.*

*Wiping her mouth on a towel, ROSE opens  
the bathroom door just in time to see  
EDDIE closing the front door behind him.  
She quietly walks into the living room  
looking at a Pregnancy Test Stick.*

ROSE (CONT'D)

Shit.

*ROSE dumps out ten more tests from a  
plastic bag hidden under the sink. She  
proceeds to open each one.*

END SCENE

## SCENE 5

INT. SPLEEN'S CLINIC - AFTERNOON

SPLEEN

(To the audience.)

When you're faced with death, your life boils down to the essential: how badly do you want to live? That is the question. How much Life are you willing to purchase? A dialysis machine? A nurse? Drugs? An organ donor? A stranger's life at any cost? How much Life can you coerce into your own Continuity? Continuity is important to you. You need it. I can see it in the way you clench your teeth when somebody's parked in your favorite spot, or you can't find your keys. Now consider this scenario:

EXECUTIVE

It's spreading????? Jesus Christ! What about my life????!!! I'm not finished with it yet!

SLIDE: A VICTIM LIES IN A TUB OF ICE.

SPLEEN

Do you need to stay alive just a little bit longer so you can drink another liver or kidney to oblivion? Or you need a new heart because you smoked too many Marlboros? Or a pristine set of lungs? In the end, we all struggle with mortality...

EXECUTIVE

Look I'll do whatever it takes...no matter how expensive...

SPLEEN

...but those that fight the hardest, win. Sometimes that means playing a little dirty. A stranger passes into the soft velvet oblivion only Rohypnol can provide.

SLIDE: THE VICTIM HAS THE WORDS 'CALL 911' PAINTED ON HIS CHEST.

SPLEEN

And wakes up in a room in Motel 6 with a fairly descript wound running up his sides, a tube running out the lower lumbar region of his back, floating up to his neck in a tub of ice, the telephone sitting within arm's reach, with the words "Call 911" painted on his chest with lipstick.

ELENA

But do you remember what happened to Doctor Anderson?

END SCENE

## SCENE 6

INT. MOTEL 6 - NIGHT

*A naked WOMAN lays on the bed, lazily chewing gum, and watching Wheel of Fortune. A pistol lies near her.*

SPLEEN

Life. Reality. Continuity. Time. It's all the same.

*DR. ANDERSON holds a pair of lungs over a cooler, filled with ice. His VICTIM lies on the floor with his chest cracked. SUDDENLY a SWAT team breaks down the door.*

ELENA

The Feds busted him in the middle of a recovery. Holding a pair of lungs that he was about to drop into the cooler--the patient's chest was cracked, his naked girlfriend watching *Wheel of Fortune*...

SLIDES:

DR. ANDERSON SITTING IN AN INTERROGATION ROOM.

DR. ANDERSON SIGNING SOME PAPERS.

DR. ANDERSON BEING 'WIRED' BY FBI.

SPLEEN

Biochemistry has become the ultimate technology fix for the wet-ware elite. We're just parts now. Parts of a vast complex machine that is as interchangeable as two Ford Explorers, as it is adaptable as a Microsoft Operating System.

ELENA

He was one of the best surgeons we had, too. It's a shame, really.  
He made the best Chicken Alfredo...

EDDIE

(Holding the ziplock bag.)

What do you want me to do with this?

SPLEEN

Get rid of it.

SLIDE:

THE VICTIM (THE SAME VICTIM WHO FOUND HIMSELF IN THE TUB EARLIER)  
SPRAWLED OUT ON THE BED, FULLY CLOTHED AND UNCONSCIOUS. SURGICAL  
EQUIPMENT IS EVERYWHERE.

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

(To the audience.)

Look, we provide a service for a fee, which could be construed  
a little unethical or morally questionable.

SLIDES:

'ARE YOU DESPERATE TO LIVE?'

'HOW MUCH ARE YOU WORTH?'

'RENT A KIDNEY FOR HALF-OFF ALREADY DISCOUNTED PRICES'

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

But if you're desperate to live, and have the means...a  
stranger's kidney could soon be inside your body within the hour.

SLIDE:

TRIPTYCH OF:

A HAND PRESSING THE BUTTON FOR THE MORPHINE DRIP,

A SHOT OF THE I.V. DRIPPING,

AND A PATIENTS' FACE--EUPHORIC AND RELAXED.

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

In twenty-four, you'd be drinking from an I.V the best narcotics  
money can buy,

SLIDE:

PR PHOTO OF "THE HUXTABLES"

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

In a few weeks you'll be back on the couch, watching your favorite episode of *The Cosby Show* as if nothing had happened.

SLIDE:

GRAINY B/W PHOTO OF PATIENT SITTING IN A LAZY-BOY, HOLDING A REMOTE CONTROL IN ONE HAND, AND A BOTTLE IN THE OTHER.

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

Which was acute kidney failure, of course, brought on by years of passing Wild Turkey. You have escaped death. For now.

BACK TO:

**SCENE 7**

INT. MOTEL 6 - LATER

*THE VICTIM is on the floor, prepared for surgery. EDDIE enters from the bathroom, wiping his nose.*

EDDIE

We're ready, Helen.

SPLEEN

Of course we are, Eddie.  
(To the audience.)  
But at what expense?

*EDDIE kisses SPLEEN passionately.*

EDDIE

(Smiling.)  
Let's get to work.

*EDDIE helps SPLEEN with her surgical gown, gloves, etc.*

SPLEEN

(To the audience.)  
Even when the facts are staring you in the face, you hope that maybe you can keep a shred of humanity through all of this. That maybe you can still stomach the pixellated reflection of your face in a computer monitor at work. Maybe you can wake up and your life will be normal, painless, and full of good television programming.

END SCENE

**SCENE 8**

INT. SPLEEN'S CLINIC - DAY

*A man is waiving a ziplock containing two kidneys. His mouth says the words, "I want 2 new kidneys!!" (see previous scene for reference.)*

SPLEEN

At least, that's what I thought. Until the day I found out there are certain things you can't buy...

SLIDE:

THE EXECUTIVE (SEE PREVIOUS SCENE) CRIES IN A BATHROOM STALL.

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

...certain things you can't return...

SLIDE:

P.O.V. SHOT FROM THE GROUND, OF A FEW BLADES OF GRASS AND BEYOND THAT, THE FRONT DOOR OF A MODEST HOUSE. A BLOODY HAND IS STRETCHED OUT TOWARDS IT.

SPLEEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...and certain things you can't escape from...

FADE TO:

**SCENE 9**

INT. MOTEL 6 - EVENING

*THE VICTIM lays on the floor prepared for surgery. SPLEEN pulls out a surgical pack. EDDIE checks THE MAN'S vitals.*

EDDIE

You've been quiet...

SPLEEN

You took a job behind my back, Eddie.

EDDIE



So what? I don't apologize for being clandestine. I am a prophet against decay dealing in spare parts to keep the great faceless machine of life running smoothly.

SPLEEN

Great. You're a prophet against decay. Like Colgate toothpaste.

EDDIE

I create people where there are only parts. Nothing but fields and fields of spare parts, walking, talking, fucking, buying goods and services. Interchangeable.

SPLEEN

Trust is not interchangeable. Your indiscretion could bring down this whole operation.

EDDIE

Look, I'm not gonna end up like Henry in some bone bank, or Old Man Lee, who sees a digital reflection of his former self in the curvature of a cathode ray tube. I will not accept death.

SPLEEN

Don't do it again.

EDDIE

If some slum-lord wants to blow his wad on sub-standard tissue, then I'll help him out. Who knew he'd actually check for quality?

SPLEEN

The tissue was necrotic--you *knew* he would die.

EDDIE

I didn't know--well...I knew there was a high probability he would die of kidney failure, yes, but--

SPLEEN

Eddie, you knew he would die.

EDDIE

So I made a mistake! And now I have to live with it. So fuckin what. I'll just add it to the que, and when I get around to it I'll make sure and ask for forgiveness and my license to practice back. But know this: He was aware of the risks. He knew the quality of the merchandise was based on price. And he did not flinch when I told him that. I did not kill him. I may be a mercenary but I will not accept death!

SPLEEN

You're right. If we accept death, what are we?

EDDIE

Too afraid to live with the consequences.

END SCENE

SLIDE:

'TOO AFRAID TO LIVE WITH THE CONSEQUENCES'

**SCENE 10**

INT. MOTEL 6 - EVENING

*MR. LASCIVIOUS, dressed in nothing but his underwear, watches Porno from the bed. A few stacks of money sit in front of him and he appears to be halfheartedly counting them.*

SPLEEN

(to the audience.)

A business like this, a business of harvesting organs is an anonymous one. We're all strangers on the same money trip. Questions are usually answered in the following ways:

FADE TO:

**SCENE 11**

INT. MOTEL 6. BATHROOM

*An FBI AGENT slaps a nervous DR. ANDERSON on the back, as he buttons up his shirt. Behind him is a SURVEILLANCE GUY, wearing head-phones, hunched over Surveillance Gear, giving the thumbs up.*

SPLEEN

Doctor Anderson: working as a snitch for the FBI after he got busted, once asked...

BACK TO:

**SCENE 12**

INT. MOTEL 6 - EVENING

*MR. LASCIVIOUS fondles himself while watching Porno. DR ANDERSON drops the organ cooler on the carpet and asks him*

DR. ANDERSON

So, uh...any idea where this one's going?

SLIDES (LABELED IN HAND-WRITING):

DR. ANDERSON'S HOUSE 1642 HRS, 08/22/01.

SURGICAL SAW DROPPED ON FOYER FLOOR (SUSPECTED MURDER WEAPON),  
8/22/01.

DR. ANDERSON-- APPROXIMATE TIME OF DEATH: 0330 HOURS, 8/21/01

SPLEEN

He woke up one morning to find his limbs removed and a Texas catheter attached to what had once been a functioning penis.

SLIDE:

MUG-SHOT OF A HARMLESS LOOKING OLD MAN...

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

Or Old Man Lee: the notorious body chop specialist, could yank a man's kidney out in less than 3 hours, but always left them bleeding in an alley somewhere, don't ask about the logistics, because even I don't know how he did it.

SLIDE:

A VICTIM, DRESSED IN A HOSPITAL SMOCK, LIES IN THE TRASH OF A  
MAJOR SHOPPING MALL.

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

He's a legend in the biz. But now he's nothing but an expensive paperweight for my employers.

BACK TO:

### SCENE 13

INT. MOTEL 6 - LATER

*SPLEEN holds a kidney in her hand.*

SPLEEN

(To the audience.)

These people are serious. I don't wanna be the next human Commodore 64 if I can help it.

*EDDIE dumps ice into a cooler marked,  
"BIOHAZARD". SPLEEN drops the kidney into  
it and closes it.*

END SCENE

### SCENE 14

EXT. MOTEL 6 - MOMENTS LATER

*SPLEEN, carrying the cooler, knocks on a door in the same complex. Television is blaring inside-it's porno. She knocks again, impatiently. Finally the door opens. MR. LASCIVIOUS stands in the door wearing nothing but dirty briefs. One hand is fondling his crotch. The other hand holds a remote.*

SPLEEN

(To the audience.)

Fuck. I hate this guy. Porn addict.

*MR. LASCIVIOUS walks back to the bed. SPLEEN enters, unwittingly standing in front of the television.*

MR. LASCIVIOUS

Get outta the sun.

SPLEEN

(Over the TV, to the audience.)

I dunno why they send this guy!

MR. LASCIVIOUS

Get outta the sun!

SPLEEN

Money! Now!

*MR. LASCIVIOUS looks at her, then collects the bills strewn all over the bed, which he has been obviously laying on. Some bills appear to be sticky. THE MAN puts the bills in an envelope and throws it to SPLEEN.*

MR. LASCIVIOUS

Get outta the sun, goddamnit!

*SPLEEN measures the thickness of the envelope with her fingers.*

SPLEEN

It's short.

*MR. LASCIVIOUS ignores her.*

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

Hey, it's short!

*MR. LASCIVIOUS is still engrossed by the television. SPLEEN turns it off.*

MR. LASCIVIOUS  
(suddenly pointing a pistol at  
her.)  
What the fuck, bitch?!

SPLEEN  
It's short--the money.

MR. LASCIVIOUS  
Take it up with them.

*MR. LASCIVIOUS turns the television back on and lays on the bed, fondling his genitals.*

MR. LASCIVIOUS (CONT'D)  
Get outta the sun!

*SPLEEN drops the case violently on the floor and walks out the door.*

SPLEEN  
(To audience.)  
And this is how they fuck you: "Take it up with them". I'd be sticking my neck out for a few grand if I complain, but is it worth it?

END SCENE

## SCENE 15

INT. MOTEL 6 - EVENING

EDDIE  
Yes it's worth it! Fuck em. Fuck em all! I'm tired of their cloak and dagger bullshit, man. Tired of it. We don't need them. Henry went solo, he's clearing six figures-

SPLEEN  
--Six figures?

EDDIE  
--at least five. He doesn't need them. Fuck em. We don't need them. We just go solo, find our own clients, find our own contracts, etc etc--fuck em. Since when we ever needed them? We do all the work! We scope the donors, research their medical histories, lure them in, and risk the FBI blowing down the door while we do the extraction. Now what's wrong with that? What is wrong with that?

SPLEEN

It's not worth a few grand, Eddie.

EDDIE

Yes it's worth a few grand! And anyway, it's not the money. Fuck the money, fuck it all. We don't Hamlet the job like Mikey does every fuckin time! Why? Cuz we're careful. Why? Cuz we're professionals. Fuckin pro's.

SPLEEN

I shouldn't have told you--

EDDIE

We've got the skills. The demand is there. The donors are there. What do we need? The clients.

SPLEEN

The clients, of course. And what happens then? We don't have the hookups in the hospitals. There are doctors, nurses, administrators. The overhead, Eddie. The overhead will be more than the few grand they peel from our cut. It's not worth it.

FREEZE.

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

(to the audience.)

This is how it happens. The restlessness becomes talk. The talk gets dangerous, the next thing you know, *Space Invaders* will be played using my cerebral cortex soldered to some cheap Japanese biotech hardware. This is my nightmare. But we've had this conversation a million times before and it always, always ends the same.

UNFREEZE.

EDDIE

I think we should do it.

SPLEEN

What happened to Henry?

EDDIE

I don't wanna talk about Henry.

SPLEEN

What happened to Henry after he burned his bridges, Eddie?

EDDIE

I don't wanna talk about it, Helen.

SPLEEN

Henry ended up as spare parts for that bone bank in Missouri.

EDDIE

He retired. He retired. He wasn't--he's not--Nobody could prove it was him, okay? I saw the postcard he sent you from Greece.

SPLEEN

I don't wanna end up as spare parts for anybody. Do you?

EDDIE

...

SPLEEN

Do you?

EDDIE

I saw the postcard.

SPLEEN

And it was post-marked from Minneapolis, Missouri. It was faked, Eddie.

END SCENE

## SCENE 16

INT. TRAILER GROUNDZERO - EVENING

*The Home Shopping Network is on TV. A bag of carrots sits on ROSE'S lap. She munches on a carrot while looking at THE ZIPLOCK BAG. She is also on the phone and appears to be on hold. She examines THE ZIPLOCK BAG curiously.*

ROSE

Hello? Yes, I would like to order the *George Foreman Grill*...

END SCENE

## SCENE 17

INT. MOTEL 6. BATHROOM - LATER

*EDDIE has just snorted a line of crystal meth and gyrates in front of the mirror.*

EDDIE

I mean, what else was I supposed to do with it? I was in a hurry. I had to take a shower, and I know how much you hate it when I'm late.

END SCENE

**SCENE 18**

INT. TRAILER GROUNDZERO - CONTINUOUS

*Rose, still on the phone, grabs EDDIE'S tattered copy of Grey's Anatomy.*

ROSE

...and also, I would like to purchase *Dr. Laura's Guide to Marriages*. Order number...

END SCENE

**SCENE 19**

INT. MOTEL 6. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

EDDIE

I know! I know I know. Quit tellin me! I put it under some vegetables. She'll never see it. What did you want me to do? Throw it out with the trash?

END SCENE

**SCENE 20**

INT. SPLEEN'S CLINIC - AFTERNOON

*Her phone sits prominently on the desk.*

SPLEEN

(To the audience.)

Sometimes things happen to us, right? It's inexplicable. It's fate, or divine intervention, or some sort of super-string chaos theory in action, whatever. But something happens. A moment in time takes on the qualities of an acid and etches itself into the fabric of our experience.

BACK TO:

**SCENE 21**



INT. TRAILER GROUNDZERO - LATER

*The ziplock sits on her lap, along with  
a copy of Grey's Anatomy.*

ROSE

(On the phone.)

Hi, Eddie. I guess you're busy with some clients, so...gimme a call when you get this. Love you. Bye.

END SCENE

**SCENE 22**

INT. MOTEL 6 - CONTINUOUS

*EDDIE'S cell-phone is ringing.*

EDDIE

Look, if you want me to throw it away, I'll throw it away. But let it be known that I tried to handle the situation with some *discretion*.

SPLEEN

Don't you want to get the phone?

*EDDIE checks his cell-phone.*

EDDIE

It's Rose. She can wait. But anyway...

END SCENE

**SCENE 23**

INT. SPLEEN'S CLINIC - AFTERNOON

SPLEEN

(To the audience.)

Sometimes these events happen, with or without our consent, and all we're left with is the wreckage. So we make due. We survive. We adapt ourselves to a new condition. We have become as mutable as water and we don't even know we're doing it.

BACK TO:

**SCENE 24**

INT. MOTEL 6 - CONTINUOUS

EDDIE

Look, I'll just dump it in the junk-yard or something.

END SCENE

**SCENE 25**

INT. SPLEEN'S CLINIC - AFTERNOON

SPLEEN

(To the audience.)

It's the process of life, and we want to know 'why'. This is where the delusion can set in. Because we trick ourselves into an answer that is convenient, justified and above all: means nothing. And that answer is usually the catalyst of our destruction.

BACK TO:

**SCENE 26**

INT. MOTEL 6 - CONTINUOUS

EDDIE

She never cooks anyway.

END SCENE

**SCENE 27**

INT. SPLEEN'S CLINIC - AFTERNOON

*The phone rings.*

SPLEEN

(To the audience.)

Life is death. Life is decay. But most importantly, life is surviving the death and decay.

*SPLEEN goes for the phone, and notices she's shaking.*

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

At least that's the lie I tell my terminally ill patients anyway.

*SPLEEN picks up the phone.*

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

H-hello? Yes this is she.

THE SPECIALIST (V.O.)  
Your biopsy came back.

SPLEEN  
And?

THE SPECIALIST (V.O.)  
It came back positive.

SPLEEN  
Well, things like that--people can make mistakes. Labs can produce false positives--

THE SPECIALIST (V.O.)  
It came back positive, Helen.

SPLEEN  
It's a false positive, it has to be. Who did the test over at the lab? Was it Rhoemer? He always--

THE SPECIALIST (V.O.)  
I've tested the specimen twice. It's conclusive.

SPLEEN  
Conclusive? What's conclusive about it? Are you sure there wasn't a mistake made somewhere...?

THE SPECIALIST (V.O.)  
No.

SPLEEN  
No? I want another test, then. I want another test just to be on the safe side. I want to know for sure.

THE SPECIALIST (V.O.)  
You want me to run the test again?

SPLEEN  
Yes!

THE SPECIALIST (V.O.)  
Helen, we should talk about our next step, our options, the procedures that might be involved--

SPLEEN  
Why? We haven't even run the test yet. Don't you think it's a little presumptuous on your part, Doctor?

THE SPECIALIST (V.O.)  
Helen--

SPLEEN  
Don't you owe me the courtesy of another test?????

THE SPECIALIST (V.O.)

--listen to me.

SPLEEN

--or that maybe we need to look into alternative methods of testing, that maybe the tests were inconclusive because of-

THE SPECIALIST (V.O.)

The tests were conclusive. Helen. The tests were conclusive. You have cancer. It's confined to your Uterus and we need to move immediately to the next step.

SPLEEN

(To the audience.)

It's like God somewhere needed to cut down on his overhead, started cutting corners, you know? Now he's making us with sub-standard quality parts, from inferior molds.

THE SPECIALIST (V.O.)

I'm advising surgery.

SPLEEN

Why?

THE SPECIALIST (V.O.)

Nobody knows why things happen the way they do. They just happen.

SPLEEN

Why?

THE SPECIALIST (V.O.)

I've scheduled you for another preliminary exam in three weeks. Based upon our indications of the results, we'll proceed to surgical status within two weeks after that.

SPLEEN

Five weeks?

THE SPECIALIST (V.O.)

This isn't an exit, Helen. You *will* live.

SPLEEN

Five weeks.

THE SPECIALIST (V.O.)

You'll still be a woman. Estrogen treatments will be readily available. You'll still have all the urges of a female in your age group. The bright side is that you won't have a menstrual cycle anymore. Birth control will be a thing of the past--and I do stress the importance of a healthy sexual life, it'll help you cope. Do you have...anyone?

SPLEEN

Wha?

THE SPECIALIST (V.O.)

A partner?

*SPLEEN slams the phone down. Silence. She picks up the phone and dials.*

SPLEEN

Come on Eddie, pick up the phone, I swear to god--

*SPLEEN slams the phone down again. Silence. She fidgets with her Zippo, lost in thought. She checks her watch.*

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

(To the audience.)

God, this place is boring, isn't it? Let's go to the food-court in the mall. I'm meeting someone there.

END SCENE

**SCENE 28**

INT. TRAILER GROUNDZERO - NIGHT

*EDDIE is frantically looking for something in the fridge. ROSE stands in the doorway of the bedroom.*

ROSE

How was work?

EDDIE

What? Did you say something?

ROSE

How was work?

EDDIE

Work was work. I thought you were asleep.

ROSE

Can't sleep.

*EDDIE stops, bewildered.*

ROSE (CONT'D)

What?

EDDIE

Nothing. Shit.

*EDDIE resumes his search.*

ROSE  
Looking for something?

EDDIE  
I dunno.

ROSE  
Hard day at work, huh?

EDDIE  
What?

ROSE  
Hard day at work?

EDDIE  
You could say that.

ROSE  
How is work these days?

EDDIE  
Same old shit, different day. I bought two tickets to Macbeth.

ROSE  
I don't like Shakespeare.

EDDIE  
Oh right. It's *Days Of Our Lives*...

ROSE  
Eddie...I have to ask you something...What's this?

*ROSE holds up the ziplock bag.*

EDDIE  
What is that?

ROSE  
That's what I'm askin you.

EDDIE  
I don't know what it is!

ROSE  
You don't know?

EDDIE  
No! Why? Where did you find it?

ROSE

I found it underneath the carrots in the fridge.

EDDIE

You..what?

ROSE

It was weird. I had this sudden craving for carrots and chocolate...

EDDIE

Let me see that.

*EDDIE takes the ziplock bag.*

EDDIE (CONT'D)

It looks like a kidney.

ROSE

It is a kidney. I checked in that big book of yours.

EDDIE

Weird.

ROSE

(Calmly.)

What is a kidney doing in my refrigerator?

EDDIE

I don't know! Why are you screaming at me?

*ROSE looks at him, unconvinced.*

EDDIE (CONT'D)

What?

ROSE

Well, it's not like I accidentally bought a human kidney at SafeWay. Who's kidney is it?

EDDIE

You're crazy.

ROSE

So it's not yours?

EDDIE

No.

ROSE

Who's is it then?

EDDIE

I dunno.

ROSE  
What's it doing in my fridge?

EDDIE  
I dunno.

ROSE  
So it's not yours?

EDDIE  
I just told you: 'no'. But if you want, I'll dispose of it for you...if you want.

ROSE  
What were you looking for in the fridge?

EDDIE  
A beer.

ROSE  
A beer.

EDDIE  
Yes. A beer.

ROSE  
Okay.

EDDIE  
WHAT? Tell me. What is it?

*Silence.*

EDDIE (CONT'D)  
Look, you're here more than I am! You figure it out! I got more important things to think about!

ROSE  
Some person, out there in the world, is missing a kidney AND IT WAS IN OUR FRIDGE!!! WHAT THE FUCK WAS IT DOING IN OUR FRIDGE????

EDDIE  
HEY! Lower your voice. People can hear you.

ROSE  
I DON'T CARE. I DON'T CARE IF THE WHOLE GODDAMN PARK KNOWS THAT MY HUSBAND--

*EDDIE violently swings the ziplock across ROSE's face.*

BLACKOUT.



**SCENE 29**

INT. THE FOOD-COURT IN THE MALL - AFTERNOON

*THOMAS CHERRINEAU, a genteel Southerner, sits at a table with a salad from a fast-food restaurant. SPLEEN sits across from him.*

SPLEEN  
I hate the office. It's too-

THOMAS  
--academic.

SPLEEN  
Yes. It's not very personal.

THOMAS  
Contrasted by the mass-produced fast-food element of the Lynwood food-court. Yes this is very personal. Almost too personal.

SPLEEN  
It serves its purpose.

THOMAS  
I gather. So. What is it? Why am I supporting the mecca of 20th century culture by buying a salad here, when I could have had your sumptuous coffee in your office?

SPLEEN  
How badly do you want to live, Mr. Cherrineau?

THOMAS  
As much as any person wants to live, doctor.

SPLEEN  
How badly do you want to live?

*THOMAS wipes his eyes with a cheap paper napkin.*

SPLEEN (CONT'D)  
It's a question of practicality. See, this is what's going to occur:

END SCENE

SLIDE:

'HLA TESTING, CRAPPY TELEVISION PROGRAMMING, AND YOU'

**SCENE 30**

*A NURSE ushers THOMAS into an examination room and begins a rudimentary exam. SPLEEN continues talking.*

SPLEEN

The HLA testing that you will be undergoing tomorrow will determine your place in the donor registry. Your chart, medical history, the results of the HLA test will create a composite that generates a score. The higher the score, the higher the chance of getting a transplant.

*THOMAS has an I.V attached to his wrist by the NURSE.*

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

But there's a catch: there's a two year waiting list because of seniority. And seniority is based on priority of need. This means you'll be on a dialysis machine for at least that long, even longer if your score isn't high enough.

SLIDE:

A TYPICAL CATALOG SHOT OF A DIALYSIS MACHINE, COMPLETE WITH DESCRIPTION AND PRICE TAG.

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

You'll have to dock with this machine at least twice a day to drain all of the toxins from your body. Eventually, well...eventually even that won't be sufficient.

END SCENE

### SCENE 31

INT. CHERRINEAU ESTATE - MORNING

*THOMAS is tucked into a four-poster bed by the NURSE.*

SPLEEN

You'll become weak, too weak to work, and you'll be resigned to your four-poster bed, waiting out the rest of your days tolerating crappy television programming.

This will be your life. That's the harsh truth of the matter. So I'm going to ask you again: how badly do you want to live?

THOMAS

If you're asking me permission for assisted suicide--

SPLEEN

This isn't about suicide.

THOMAS

Well, then I'm afraid I don't...

SPLEEN

Your survival is important to me. Your health is why I'm here. I want you to be well.

THOMAS

Of course you do.

SPLEEN

I'm not asking for assisted suicide.

THOMAS

What, then?

SPLEEN

Something a little more radical.

THOMAS

Radical?

SPLEEN

Something a little more intelligent.

THOMAS

That's a word choice I haven't heard uttered by a doctor in years.

SPLEEN

But it takes trust.

THOMAS

You have my complete trust.

SPLEEN

Trust, Tom, that can't be bought with cash. This is trust of one's life, not necessarily of your own.

THOMAS

You're my specialist, I trust you implicitly.

SPLEEN

Then I'll ask you again. How badly do you want to live?

THOMAS

I trust you, whatever radical, intelligent technique you want to experiment to get me healthy--

SPLEEN

Do you love your wife?

THOMAS

Of course I do.

SPLEEN

Have you ever beat your wife?

SLIDE:

THOMAS' WIFE IS TIED UP IN SOME BONDAGE GEAR. THOMAS WHIPS HER ASS WITH A CANE.

THOMAS

That's cutting it pretty personal, I--

SPLEEN

If one were to ask her how much you would be worth to her alive, healthy, and in good spirits, what would she say? How much would she quote?

THOMAS

Oh, I don't know, maybe... Ten million.

SPLEEN

Ten million?

THOMAS

Yes.

SPLEEN

What if she could get you for five?

THOMAS

Five million dollars? And I'm "alive, healthy, and in good spirits"?

SPLEEN

How badly do you want to live, Mr. Cherrineau?

THOMAS

Badly enough, I think.

SPLEEN

Yes, I would think so. Your wife would thank you for it.

THOMAS

I expect she would. She would be overjoyed at the prospect of...finding a donor so soon...

SPLEEN

Have you ever been to Las Vegas?

SLIDE:

THOMAS CHERRINEAU IS IN BONDAGE GEAR BEING WHIPPED BY A STRANGE WOMAN DRESSED IN FULL LATEX.

THOMAS

On occasion.

SPLEEN

Bring a lot of money with you?

THOMAS

On occasion. It's been a while. I was thinking about going again.

SLIDE:

A DRAG QUEEN DRESSED IN BONDAGE GEAR IS BEING WHIPPED BY THOMAS CHERRINEAU'S WIFE, WHILE THOMAS LUSTFULLY STROKES THE QUEEN'S BACK.

SPLEEN

I have a friend down there who'll cash your chips for you when you're ready to retire to your room for the night. All five million dollars of it.

THOMAS

At Caesar's Palace?

SPLEEN

That very same casino.

THOMAS

Great.

SPLEEN

I'm thinking I'll give you a call as to suggest a time when a vacation might be most convenient given the priority of the situation?

THOMAS

That would be wonderful.

SPLEEN

I'll see you soon, then.

END SCENE

SLIDE:

'HOPE IS A DRUG SOLD AT MEGA-MART FOR \$9.99'

SCENE 32

NO SETTING.

*THE NURSE helps SPLEEN put on a white lab-coat, covered with pharmaceutical brand-names.*

SLIDE:

X-RAYS OF SPLEEN'S UTERUS.

SPLEEN

(To the audience.)

Hope. It's a product you can't get enough of. As physicians, we have become the dealers of hope, manufacturing it on a biological level and selling it to you, the weak, the desperate.

We are your 24 hour Mega-mart superstore with an unlimited supply of Hope, given the right combination of drugs, cash, and your willingness to submit your body to the cold eye of science.

*THE NURSE is giving SPLEEN the same exam she gave THOMAS. SPLEEN is given an I.V, that has been filled with dollar bills.*

*SPLEEN reaches out and touches the x-ray.*

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

Hope. We all want it. It's a commodity that's in short supply. If only we had enough Hope. If only we could settle everything before we...

SLIDE:

P.O.V. SHOT FROM THE GROUND, OF A FEW BLADES OF GRASS AND BEYOND THAT, THE FRONT DOOR OF A MODEST HOUSE. THE BLOODY HAND OF AN OUTSTRETCHED ARM LONGS TO TOUCH THAT DOOR.

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

If only.

The problem with harvesting organs for transplant lie in the logistics of actually getting it inside the new host. We can't just refer the patient to surgery, forge some records, and hope the Medical Records Clerk is too sleepy to notice something suspicious. Not if we want to do this more than once. You have to cover your ass, as it were.

*SPLEEN looks at the Medical Chart of THOMAS CHERRINEAU, who watches*

television under the supervision of THE NURSE.

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

The far-reaching consequences on our health care infrastructure also depends on our honor and a strict attention to detail. A conspiracy in harvesting organs from live donors would be equal to a hydrogen bomb dropped on the SuperBowl.

END SCENE

### SCENE 33

INT. HOSPITAL, ADMINISTRATION FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

*SPLEEN walks towards an Office door...*

SPLEEN

But it happens anyway. And it reaches up to the farthest echelons of hospital administration--

*SPLEEN opens the door with a dramatic flourish, showing US inside. The Office is filled with Medical Reference books, a few Certificates hanging on the wall, a television, and smoke. Billowing from the cloud, WE can see ELENA HARTWELL sitting behind an Oak Desk, smoking a cigar while looking over some medical charts.*

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

--like my mentor, Elena Hartwell, Senior Hospital Administrator for Mercy Hospital.

END SCENE

### SCENE 34

INT. ELENA'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

*ELENA is still looking over some medical charts, regarding them with suspicion. SPLEEN sits across from her, lighting her own cigarette.*

ELENA

But is he willing?

SPLEEN

He's aware of the precariousness of the situation. The peril of litigation is something he wants to avoid.

ELENA  
How are you doing this?

SPLEEN  
Remember Eddie?

ELENA  
Eddie "Monoxide"?

SPLEEN  
Yes.

ELENA  
Jesus. Can he be trusted?

SPLEEN  
I'll manage him.

ELENA  
How's he doing? Is he healthy? I heard he's on amphetamines?

SPLEEN  
Rumors. They're unsubstantiated. Never seen it myself.

ELENA  
Could have been a good doctor.

SPLEEN  
He is a good doctor.

ELENA  
Yeah, well... Have you done HLA testing, transplant immun-

SPLEEN  
--It's done. I'm waiting for your approval.

*ELENA chews on her cigar.*

ELENA  
He's got the financial resources, but does he have the character to keep his mouth shut?

SPLEEN  
I know he does.

ELENA  
You said three million?

SPLEEN  
Yes.

ELENA  
Mm.



SPLEEN

He trusts me implicitly.

ELENA

So?

SPLEEN

I think he's a good candidate.

ELENA

Do you have a match? A possible donor, what?

SPLEEN

A woman in Fresno came up as the high scorer.

ELENA

Voluntary?

SPLEEN

What do you think?

ELENA

I think that kidnapping is a Federal offense. Are we to understand that the percentage stays the same?

SPLEEN

Of course.

ELENA

Great.

SPLEEN

Yeah.

ELENA

So how was it? Your tests?

SPLEEN

I'm fine. Tests were negative.

ELENA

You're lying to me, Helen. I have my finger on the health of every one of my employees. I want to know how you're taking it.

SPLEEN

They're gonna castrate me!

ELENA

Helen, they're not going to castrate-

SPLEEN

And what am I then? A freak? A fucking eunuch?

ELENA

Don't let your emotions--

SPLEEN

--get in the way. I know that. But in the present circumstances it's kind of difficult, Lena. I don't know if I can live like that.

ELENA

How are your patients doing otherwise?

SPLEEN

They complain.

ELENA

Good, it means they're getting the proper care. Look, Helen, I want you to do something for me.

*ELENA pushes a file across the table.*

SPLEEN

What's this?

*SPLEEN peruses the contents which include charts, medical history, results of various tests, etc.*

ELENA

A client of ours needs a new heart.

SPLEEN

--A new heart??? Does he understand the risks involved? The mean rejection probability alone is enough--

ELENA

He knows it.

SPLEEN

And the ethical implications?

ELENA

Look, here's the deal: A certain Fortune 500 software company has approached me for an advisory position in exchange for certain services rendered.

SPLEEN

But we'd be terminating a life here.

ELENA

The prestige alone could bring all manner of funding into my hospital. They're willing to fund a state-of-the-art bio-genetics lab to be built in two years. With this lab we will be able to save countless lives through the Genome Project I

intend to institutionalize here. It's a great offer. I can't afford not to take it.

SPLEEN

Get somebody else. I can't do it. I won't do it.

ELENA

But I have to have the best, Helen. You're the right person for the job. In fact the *best* person for the job.

*SILENCE.*

SPLEEN

What's my compensation?

ELENA

You'll do this one for free. For me. Because if it wasn't for me you'd be sitting in a cinder-block room bitching to your ancestors about how hot it is and trying to avoid incarceration. But sometimes things happen, right? And all your left with is the wreckage. So I help you out--and clean up your little mess. Saving you about 10 to 20 years, as well as a major sexual re-education.

*THEY regard each other through the smoke.  
Finally*

SPLEEN

Who's the victim? The high-scorer?

ELENA

Eddie.

SPLEEN

Eddie who?

ELENA

"Eddie who?". Your Eddie. Eddie "Monoxide".

*SPLEEN pushes the file back to ELENA.*

ELENA (CONT'D)

That's disappointing. How long has our relationship lasted? Ten years? Are you willing to bear that responsibility?

SPLEEN

I can't do it.

*SILENCE.*

ELENA

Come here, Helen. I want to show you something. This is bleeding-edge research from a competitor; a prototype, if you

will, engineered from the original white papers. That competitor has now...retired. We never did recover all of him....

*ELENA reveals a huge jar containing part of a brain in vitamin-enriched solution. Wires and circuits violently rape the beautiful cerebral landscape. This is the remains of the eminent body chop specialist, OLD MAN LEE. His voice comes out of a small speaker box.*

ELENA (CONT'D)

You remember Old Man Lee.

Lee? I want you to introduce yourself to Helen here.

*LEE moans. It sounds like static.*

ELENA (CONT'D)

His sexual frustration has made him insane, as you can see. But I assure you he is completely lucid. His thought-patterns are translated directly from synaptic impulses into sound. Very impressive stuff. This *is* the New Flesh, Helen. Unfortunately, the market isn't ready.

Would you like a demonstration?

*The static trembles.*

ELENA (CONT'D)

Lee? I need to know the mean rejection probability based on the current HLA score of our client. I have a white male, late twenties, approximately 85 kilos, no history of genetic disorders or physical deformities. I am uploading the file now.

*ELENA types something on her keyboard. LEE hisses, and then spews out:*

LEE

Themeanprobabilityaccordingtodatainputfromuserwillbeaccordingtomycalcualtions15%

*ELENA PULLS A PRINTOUT from the printer and hands it to SPLEEN.*

ELENA

See? He works perfectly.

*SILENCE.*

ELENA (CONT'D)

So can I count on you? He did, after all, almost get you killed in your own office.

END SCENE, END ACT 1

**ACT 2**

**SCENE 1**

*In the black, we hear ROSE talking:*

ROSE

So I'm hit in the face with a fucking SIRLOIN!

SLIDE:

**'CAN SIRLOINS COMMIT SUICIDE?'**

ROSE (CONT'D)

I'm out like fluorescent light--just sorta seein a flicker of consciousness.

FADE TO:

INT. SPLEEN'S HOUSE. BEDROOM - NIGHT

*EDDIE sits on SPLEEN'S bed, snorting a line furtively, holding the phone. "KIDNEY-MAN'S" pistol (from Act 1, Sc.1) sits on the night-stand.*

**AND THEN**

EXT. TRAILER GROUNDZERO - EVENING

*ROSE holds an ice-pack on her head. Her face is slightly bruised. She talks to a COP.*

ROSE (CONT'D)

My husband Eddie's screamin about how the sirloin is tryin to commit SUICIDE as it hits me! I dunno what I should be thinkin about this. What should I be thinkin? Can a sirloin commit suicide? I could have been paralyzed! And then he drags me around the trailer some, yellin at me, "I got to get away or something". So he's dragging me around the trailer, I dunno what I'm sayin, I think I mumbled somethin like, "kill that sirloin" or somethin. I've got drool. I LOOK LIKE SHIT! He throws me in the toilet, while he tries to deal with this sirloin. I hear some commotion, like maybe he's fighting for his life, you know? Maybe he's one of the last great men who're--what's that word? With the knights? Chivalrous? Right? So Eddie's fightin with this sirloin in our trailer, and then I see like these, like, fists punch through

the door and I'm like screamin, cuz maybe it's the, uh, sirloin...

ROSE (CONT'D)

And then it was quiet. Like maybe the sirloin decided to submit and surrender. When I opened the door, he was gone.

*The phone rings inside.*

ROSE (CONT'D)

Hold on.

*ROSE picks up the phone.*

ROSE (CONT'D)

Hello?

EDDIE

Hi, baby!

ROSE

(To the cop.) )

It's him.  
My fucking head hurts you asshole!

EDDIE

I'm gonna be late.

ROSE

We have to talk, Eddie!

EDDIE

I've got a surprise for you.

ROSE

That's great but--

EDDIE

You'll like it.

ROSE

I'm sure I will.

EDDIE

It was expensive.

ROSE

Sweetheart, somebody would like to talk--

EDDIE

So I just called to say hello and that I'm bringin you somethin.

*SPLEEN enters from the bathroom, looking sexy and on the prowl. She takes a picture with a Polaroid. EDDIE waves her away. SPLEEN climbs on top of him and kisses him passionately.*

ROSE  
You there, Eddie?

EDDIE  
Yes.

ROSE  
We have to talk.

EDDIE  
Look I gotta go.  
(Pauses.)  
I'm sorry about what happened earlier.

ROSE  
I know.

*SILENCE.*

ROSE (CONT'D)  
Where are you?

EDDIE  
I'll be home soon bye.

*EDDIE quickly hangs up.*

END SCENE

## SCENE 2

INT. SPLEEN'S HOUSE. BEDROOM - NIGHT

*SPLEEN is pointing a pistol at him.*

SPLEEN  
Would you die for me?

EDDIE  
What?

SPLEEN  
If my liver was necrotic, and you were the only person who passed the HLA test--would you die for me?

EDDIE  
What kinda crazy question is that?

SPLEEN

Love me.

*EDDIE snorts another line. SPLEEN pushes the pistol into his cheek. EDDIE freezes. EDDIE smiles. SPLEEN smiles. THEY both laugh.*

EDDIE

(Laughing.)

Gimme the fuckin gun you crazy bitch. You're drunk. Where's my money?

SPLEEN

If only. Everybody's life-story, isn't it?--If only.

EDDIE

Is it in your purse? Can I see your purse?

SPLEEN

It's in there.

EDDIE

Give me the pistol Helen. It's time to go.

SPLEEN

Do you think she knows about me?

EDDIE

Who?

Jesus. You're drunk. Just gimme-

SPLEEN

I could send you to that meatless place where souls go to collect their retirement checks.

*EDDIE snatches the gun from her, placing it in the small of his back. HE looks in her purse.*

EDDIE

Where's the money?

SPLEEN

Am I paying you for services rendered? Or only promised?

EDDIE

Where's the money? My cut.

SPLEEN

I told you-

EDDIE



--I looked in there. It's not in there. Where is it?

SPLEEN  
Sometimes I think you're incapable of--

EDDIE  
I WANT MY MONEY!

*SILENCE.*

SPLEEN  
It's in the drawer.

*EDDIE looks. The money is there. He counts it.*

SPLEEN (CONT'D)  
I want you to leave her.

EDDIE  
The money's still short. Where's the rest?

*SPLEEN looks in her jacket and hands him a fatter envelope.*

SPLEEN  
Take what's missing.

*EDDIE takes what's missing.*

EDDIE  
Jesus.

SPLEEN  
Make sure it's all there.

EDDIE  
I am.

SPLEEN  
Wouldn't want you to be short.

EDDIE  
Fuck you.

SPLEEN  
Hitting the amphetamines a little harder than usual?

EDDIE  
Leave it alone.

SPLEEN  
What does your wife think about your habit?

EDDIE

I said leave it alone.

SPLEEN

There's an integrity to be had when-

EDDIE

OH JESUS FUCKING CHRIST!

SPLEEN

There's an integrity to be had when you're fucking! An integrity based on-

EDDIE

--BASED ON WHAT?!

SPLEEN

Based on performance.

EDDIE

Don't worry about what I do. I'll get by. I'll get by. I just gotta--

SPLEEN

--you gotta what?

EDDIE

Look, I'm not sneezing powder all over your goddamned tits--

*SPLEEN suddenly gets out of bed with a pained expression, and grabs her purse.*

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Okay. I'll stop. Whatever. I'm sorry. Won't happen again.

*EDDIE sets up another line.*

EDDIE (CONT'D)

After this one.

SPLEEN

I'm sorry if you take this relationship so lightly--both professionally and...personally.

*SPLEEN slams the bathroom door behind her.*

EDDIE

Hey, I'm sorry...Baby, you know I love you. Rose is just...

(Pauses.) )

If you want me to stop, I will. Just after this line, okay?

END SCENE

**SCENE 3**

INT. MOTEL 6. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

*SPLEEN barely closes the door when she collapses, clutching her abdomen in pain. EDDIE can be heard snorting his lines, making unintelligible joyous noises. She fumbles for some painkillers, swallowing them with water from the faucet. She does not use a cup. She lays on the floor, sweating, in pain, and out of breath. She snatches some toilet paper from a loose roll, and wipes her eyes. After a moment, she grabs some make-up from her purse and touches up her face.*

EDDIE

Helen, come on! It doesn't get much harder than this!

*SPLEEN does some last minute adjusting of her hair, stops, and then regards her pelvis coldly in the mirror. Her contorted face gradually hardens, and she walks into the bedroom...*

END SCENE

**SCENE 4**

INT. TRAILER GROUNDZERO - LATER

*There's a big RCA television box. ROSE looks incredulous. EDDIE is still in the midst of an amphetamine high.*

ROSE

You bought me a TV.

EDDIE

It's got DTS stereo, S-video, 3 comb filtering--

ROSE

You hit me with a kidney, Eddie!

EDDIE

--Picture in picture, automatic cable tuning--

ROSE

I DON'T CARE ABOUT THE FUCKING TV!

EDDIE

What do you mean 'you don't care about the fucking TV'?

ROSE

I wanna know why you treat me this way?

EDDIE

I dunno.

ROSE

You're smarter than that.

EDDIE

I know.

ROSE

You were almost a doctor.

EDDIE

I fucking know that, Rose.

ROSE

So then why?

EDDIE

(Examining her head.)

Are you hurt? No lacerations, or bruising. Any headaches?

ROSE

I'm not physically hurt. The cops came by though.

EDDIE

What????

ROSE

I told them you didn't take your lithium and had a psychotic episode. It was weird.

EDDIE

The cops, baby??? Jesus--

ROSE

Somebody must have heard the racket.

EDDIE

You didn't call them?

ROSE

No! Why would I--Eddie, I love you.

EDDIE

I'm sorry, baby. I dunno. I dunno what happened. I just need to sleep right now.

ROSE

We should see someone about this, don't you think?

EDDIE

For what?

ROSE

This isn't normal.

(Pauses.)

Also there's somethin else we should talk about. Something that also concerns us, and the future of us...

*EDDIE throws her a wad of cash.*

EDDIE

Why don't you go to Cartier's? Buy yourself something that sparkles. Nothing sparkles in this place.

ROSE

You made me sparkle. And--

EDDIE

This is temporary. I promise.

ROSE

I want us to start thinking about the future.

EDDIE

I'll try to be nicer.

ROSE

That's not what I'm talking about.

EDDIE

What are you talking about?

ROSE

So I'm gonna have to ask you...about the kidney...

*SILENCE.*

ROSE (CONT'D)

What was a human kidney doing--

EDDIE

--Look, the money's good! We can pay off some bills!

ROSE

Money? Bills? What are you telling me, baby?

EDDIE

I had a chance to save a life! And I think it's ethical. In the long run.

ROSE

But you're license was taken from you because of your ethical issues--

*EDDIE slaps ROSE.*

ROSE (CONT'D)

--Edward.

EDDIE

I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

*ROSE quickly exits, slamming the bedroom door.*

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Baby...I'm sorry. I'm just a little sensitive right now. A little weary of the whole thing. I can be nice. I'll be nice. And pleasant. Please just come out? Will you come out, Rosie? Look, I'll get help, is that it? Is that what you want? I'm just a little sensitive right now. The money is good, you know? And yes, maybe the ethical issues suffer a bit--but Jesus Christ come out! Come on! Fuck! Okay! You want the truth? You want the truth. Fine. The truth. You have to look at the big picture. You have to look at it in the right frame of reference, cuz...cuz if you don't, then it just looks mercenary. And I AM NOT A MERCENARY. Just remember that, honey!

This isn't about money or power, or anything like that. You have to remember that. I am not a mercenary. Look, we took one kidney from a healthy person and saved another man's life! That's what I was trained to do. What's wrong with that?

*SILENCE.*

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Rose? Did you hear me?

*SILENCE.*

EDDIE (CONT'D)

The exhilaration of saving a person's life, you can't understand what that's like.

ROSE

(Opening the door.)

"I don't understand what that's like??" What do you think I've been doing since you were kicked out of residency? You only had three months left, Eddie! But maybe you're right, and I don't 'understand'. I do understand love. I understand passion for one's work. I understand the sacrifices I've made.

EDDIE

Your--?

ROSE

--Yes my sacrifices! My sacrifices!!! What about me??!! What about us??? As a *family*! What if the FBI--

EDDIE

The FBI doesn't know who we are.

ROSE

'We'? That's great. 'We'. There's two of you. Wonderful. And how do you know the FBI--

EDDIE

Because we're careful.

ROSE

"Because we're careful?"--that's the extent of your explanation? And what about your 'partner'? How much do you know about him?

EDDIE

My partners' a 'she', Rose.

ROSE

A 'she'? A 'she'??? That's fucking fabulous! And what if 'she' has a criminal record? What then?

EDDIE

She doesn't have--

ROSE

How do you know? Maybe the FBI is watching 'her' right now.

EDDIE

This is all I have, Rose. I'm going to continue working with her.

ROSE

This is not all you have!! You can get a legitimate job--which is what I *thought* you had! A job where I don't have to worry about the fucking FBI! You could work anywhere, I don't care! I don't even care about the money!

EDDIE

--yes you do.

*SILENCE. ROSE slams the door.*

END SCENE

## SCENE 5

INT. SPLEEN'S HOUSE. BEDROOM - NIGHT

*SPLEEN and EDDIE undress each other.*

EDDIE

I can't go to Vegas.

SPLEEN

Sure you can. I'm paying you to go.

EDDIE

I can't. I just can't do it.

SPLEEN

It's all expenses. You can gamble a couple thousand, whatever, just do the job and maybe take a vacation. It's easy.

EDDIE

No.

SPLEEN

Eddie. Look at me. You want to go.

EDDIE

I can't.

SPLEEN

"I can't" is not the same as "I won't".

EDDIE

Well, I have a job. Already. A different job. So I can't.

SPLEEN

Doing what? Handing out fast food trays?

EDDIE

I work at Jiffy Lube.

SPLEEN

You work at Jiffy Lube.

EDDIE

Yes!

SPLEEN

Do you like working at Jiffy Lube?

EDDIE

Yes.

SPLEEN

And it pays well, right? And you can practice medicine, save lives, all that heroic bullshit they taught you in med school--you can do all that?



EDDIE

No, I just vacuum the interiors. I'm on the detail crew.

SPLEEN

Oh.

EDDIE

It's work.

SPLEEN

Yes. It is.

EDDIE

And Rosie's happy.

SPLEEN

She's happy because you work at Jiffy Lube or because your license to practice was revoked?

EDDIE

Yes.

SPLEEN

Eddie, look at her. Next time. Look into her eyes--she's unhappy.

EDDIE

Why do you need me? Why don't you go call somebody else? I thought you had other--

SPLEEN

Because we get off on the action, sweetheart. Nothing else feels like that. Well, almost nothing. In Motel 6 when we ripped out that guy's kidney in two hours--it was sexy, Eddie! Old Man Lee never did it in two hours, but we did! No rules, no malpractice committee looking over our shoulders. Just you, me, the patient, and our skills.

EDDIE

But Rose...

SPLEEN

Look, we can make this as profitable as we want. We provide them with their lives. We are their Jesus Christ, their Muhammad, their fucking Buddha in their wallet. What's simpler than that?

EDDIE

And what if we get caught? What happens then? We'll be in lockup. We'll be signing statements against each other. I'll be watching Texas Ranger in cell block H-4 with James Gamms wondering "why"! Rose doesn't want that for me. I have to look after my wife. I want to work at Jiffy Lube.

SPLEEN

Then what are you doing here with me?  
You're wasting yourself, Eddie. Don't waste yourself like  
this--even she sees it.

EDDIE

How do you know so much about what my wife thinks?

SPLEEN

Because I saw the hole you punched into the windshield of your  
car, Edward.  
You can still work, can't you? I hate working with damaged goods.

EDDIE

I can still work.

SPLEEN

Good. When I'm finished with you, you will find your ticket in  
my purse.

END SCENE

## SCENE 6

INT. TRAILER GROUNDZERO - THE NEXT DAY

*ROSE enters, clutching her abdomen in  
pain. She's trying hard not to reveal huge  
bulky pads in her abdominal region. She  
makes her way to the couch and sits.*

EDDIE (O.S.)

Hello?  
Hello?

ROSE

(Turning on the TV with pliers.)

It's me.

EDDIE

(Enters.)

Work called.

ROSE

Oh yeah?

EDDIE

They wondered how you were doing...

ROSE

I'm fine. Really.

EDDIE

What happened? They wouldn't tell me.

ROSE  
I felt sick. So I left. No big deal.

*EDDIE returns to the bathroom.*

EDDIE (O.S.)  
Baby, where's the razor?  
Baby?

ROSE  
What?

*EDDIE enters the living room.*

EDDIE  
The razor?

ROSE  
I dunno.

EDDIE  
Oh.

ROSE  
I dunno, okay!

EDDIE  
You dunno.

ROSE  
No!

EDDIE  
Oh.

ROSE  
You don't have to shave.

EDDIE  
I have to shave.

ROSE  
I DON'T KNOW WHERE THE FUCKING RAZOR IS!

EDDIE  
Okay.

ROSE  
I don't know. Stop screaming at me. I don't know where it is.

EDDIE  
Fine. I'll use your razor then.

*EDDIE exits.*

ROSE

Where are you going?

EDDIE (O.S.)

Out.

ROSE

You quit your job at Jiffy Lube, didn't you?

EDDIE (O.S.)

Oh Jesus let's not talk about that.

ROSE

You're going out with her, aren't you?

EDDIE (O.S.)

This razor sucks!

*EDDIE enters, wiping the shaving cream off his face with a wet towel.*

EDDIE

I want a razor--whenever you get around to going to the Safeway--I would like you to purchase a razor for my use, if that's no trouble for you--preferably the *Gillette Mach3*. Jesus, I'm gonna be late.

ROSE

Just tell me the truth.

EDDIE

It's a job, Rose. It's not a date.

ROSE

Then I'm coming.

EDDIE

You can't come.

ROSE

Why not?

EDDIE

Because if we get...  
It's not a viable option.

ROSE

I don't care if it's "viable" or not, I'm coming.

*ROSE gets her coat.*

EDDIE  
Why are you doing this?

ROSE  
What?

EDDIE  
This. This! You think I'm cheating on you?

ROSE  
Are you?

EDDIE  
You know, I do have some values. I do have some ethics that are important to me.

ROSE  
Oh really?

EDDIE  
You can't come.

*ROSE picks up the phone. She's serious.*

ROSE  
Then we don't have a marriage anymore, do we? And if we don't have a marriage, then it's my civic duty to call the authorities...

*SILENCE.*

EDDIE  
You wouldn't.

*ROSE stares at him, with the phone in her hand, waiting for a definite answer.*

EDDIE (CONT'D)  
Why?

ROSE  
Because I want my husband back.

EDDIE  
I'm right here.

ROSE  
There will be no more secrets, Edward. Or this is the end of the line. I'm serious.

EDDIE  
This isn't something you can just include yourself in. There are rules--

ROSE

--I don't care.

EDDIE

Jesus. Fine. Fuck. Fine. Just. FINE. Get your coat.

ROSE

I'm already wearing my coat.

EDDIE

You're gonna have to make yourself useful.

ROSE

I'm a fucking mechanic, I think I can handle it.

EDDIE

Great. Pack some clothes.

ROSE

Where we going?

EDDIE

Vegas. Then we're coming back later tonight on a red-eye.

ROSE

Vegas? You mean Las--

EDDIE

What is that?

*EDDIE points at her abdominal region.*

ROSE

Nothing.

EDDIE

No, what is that? What are you wearing? Is that a wire??!! What the fuck is that?

*EDDIE frantically pulls up her shirt.*

ROSE

Nothing. It's nothing.

EDDIE

What are you wearing?

ROSE

It's just a pad.

EDDIE

A pad?

ROSE  
Yes.

*ROSE pushes his hands away.*

EDDIE  
I'm just lookin. Don't get all antsy.

ROSE  
Let's go.

EDDIE  
What the fuck are you wearing that for?

ROSE  
Blood. I'm bleeding.

EDDIE  
You're bleeding? How bad? Who did you see?

ROSE  
My cycle is heavier than usual this month. Let's just go.

EDDIE  
Fine.

END SCENE

**SCENE 7**

INT. MOTEL 6 - AFTERNOON

*SPLEEN drops a tab into a water-bottle of Naya. She then pulls out a tazer and replaces the battery. She puts it into her pocket. She grabs the paper-bag that has been laying on the bed and dumps out a revolver with a few shells. After a moment, a knock on the door startles her.*

SPLEEN  
Who is it?

*She quickly loads the revolver.*

EDDIE (O.S.)  
It's me! Hurry up and open the door!

*SPLEEN looks through the peephole, pointing the pistol into the door.*

SPLEEN  
Oh Jesus Christ...

Who else?! I see somebody else!

EDDIE (O.S.)

If we were the cops you think we woulda knocked?

SPLEEN

No.

EDDIE (O.S.)

It's my wife.

*SPLEEN hides the pistol underneath one of the surgical packs.*

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

Open the door!

*SPLEEN opens the door. EDDIE and ROSE enter.*

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I'm late. I'm sorry.

SPLEEN

We don't have much time, Fresno Woman gets off work in an hour. What's this?

EDDIE

I'm sorry. Rose-

SPLEEN

--Rose?

ROSE

I came to help.

EDDIE

She came to help. I'll be right back.

*EDDIE races to the bathroom.*

SPLEEN

You came to help.

ROSE

Yes.

SPLEEN

Do you know how to suture an incision?

ROSE

No.



SPLEEN

No. She says no. Eddie what the fuck are you doing? I don't have time for this.

EDDIE (O.S.)

I'm takin a piss!

SPLEEN

Eddie she's useless.

ROSE

I'm not useless.

SPLEEN

Jesus Christ, Eddie.

ROSE

I wanna help.

SPLEEN

Eddie!

*EDDIE enters from the bathroom, wiping his nose guiltily.*

EDDIE

What? What? What the fuck? I'm here. So what?

SPLEEN

Eddie.

EDDIE

What?! Look, she wouldn't take no for an answer.

ROSE

I'm your wife, Edward.

EDDIE

She's my wife.

SPLEEN

We haven't met, have we? I don't think so. My name is Spleen.

ROSE

S-Spleen?

SPLEEN

Yes. I don't know you well enough to give you my real name.

ROSE

Rose.

*ROSE extends her hand. SPLEEN ignores it.*

SPLEEN

Of course it is. Eddie, show her how to use the autoclave.

ROSE

What's an autoclave...?

*EDDIE brings ROSE over to the portable autoclave.*

SPLEEN

This is great. Fucking A Olympic greatness.

EDDIE

I'm sorry.

SPLEEN

You're sorry.

ROSE

I'm not sorry.

SPLEEN

Well good for you.

ROSE

I think so.

SPLEEN

Really? Why is that?

ROSE

Eddie needs me.

EDDIE

Baby just listen, will you? I'm trying to show you something here.

SPLEEN

Where do you come from, Rose?

ROSE

Up north. Mason City.

SPLEEN

That's East.

ROSE

And north.

SPLEEN

Eddie, for the love of god--why did you bring her? I'm really curious as to your reasoning-

ROSE

I have a right to be here!

SPLEEN

You have no right to be here! He is an employee. I pay him for his work. What will you do?

ROSE

I'll make sure he gets paid.

EDDIE

Look, baby, you just stick them in this autoclave like this.

SPLEEN

Eddie, the complementary coffee sucks here. Be a dear and get me some coffee down the street. I want it black.

EDDIE

Rosie, would you like to-

SPLEEN

She'd like to stay, I think.

EDDIE

Ok. I'll be back.

*EDDIE exits.*

SPLEEN

Let's get something straight: you are not wanted here.

ROSE

You think I'm a liability.

SPLEEN

Yes.

ROSE

You think I'm going to distract him.

SPLEEN

You're a tapeworm, Rose.

ROSE

How dare you question my love for my husband? I love Edward.

SPLEEN

Of course you do.

ROSE

I love Edward.

SPLEEN

Eddie wants more out of life than a dumpy wife. Eddie wants God. Can you give him God? Can your love, however pathetic it is, give him God?

ROSE

And I suppose you will give it to him?

SPLEEN

Who says I haven't already?

ROSE

What's that make you? God's pimp?

SPLEEN

When you see him work tonight, look at him. You'll see it--it's the eyes that give him away. He's good at creating his own reality, but his eyes never lie.

ROSE

You stay away from husband.

SPLEEN

It'll never be up to you.

ROSE

Why are you so interested in him?

SPLEEN

Because he's good. He caught one in the chest with that cocaine induced carbon monoxide fiasco at Mercy, but sometimes people need second chances. I'm providing him with the opportunity to own up to his talent. To prove that sometimes, if you fight hard enough, you'll win.

ROSE

But at what expense?

*EDDIE enters empty-handed.*

EDDIE

There was no coffee-shop, only the Interstate.

SPLEEN

Get some ice then.

*SPLEEN throws him the ice-pail.*

*EDDIE leaves again. SPLEEN pours more Bourbon into her cup and drinks it all.*  
*SILENCE.*

*EDDIE comes back with ice.*

Ice is here.

EDDIE

*SPLEEN grabs some cubes and puts them into her cup. She pours herself another drink.*

I could use a drink.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

*SPLEEN ignores him.*

There was no coffee-shop.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Wha?

SPLEEN

Only Interstate.

EDDIE

Shut up Eddie.

SPLEEN

Spleen said she wants to give you God.

ROSE

W-what?

EDDIE

Spleen said she wants to give you God.

ROSE

What does that mean?

EDDIE

It means she's God's pimp.

ROSE

What do you mean by that?

EDDIE

Nothing. It was a figure of speech.

SPLEEN

She was quite serious. She couldn't stop talking about your talent.

ROSE

What is she talking about?

EDDIE

She was pretty adamant about it.

ROSE

SPLEEN

Nothing. Shut up!

EDDIE

Rose can you make me a drink?

ROSE

Of course I can, dear. Of course I can.

END SCENE

SLIDE:

'AN IDIOT'S GUIDE TO ORGAN HARVESTING'

SCENE 8

SLIDE:

WE SEE A GRAINY SURVEILLANCE PHOTO SHOWING FRESNO WOMAN GETTING OFF THE BUS AT A MAJOR "PARK AND RIDE".

SPLEEN

(to the audience.)

The question is: How do you retrieve a liver from a human being who has a life, has ties to the community, or would otherwise be missed from the lack of receipts this person accumulates in one day?

How do you convince them of the need for their cooperation, for their selflessness, without resorting to violence? There are a variety of options available to the cunning individual who is both resourceful and persistent.

END SCENE

SCENE 9

INT. MOTEL 6 - DAY

*EDDIE nervously peers through the curtains. ROSE, bored by the waiting, is looking at all of the neat tools.*

SPLEEN

The first is, of course, violence. This is the choice of the incompetent and inelegant. What has once been a compact between two strangers has now been reduced to an ugly power dynamic.

*ROSE peeks under the sterile covering of one of the trays, uncovering a pistol.*

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

Some people can stomach this kind of work more than others--I, personally, hold people in the highest regard, and see it as a noble sacrifice--albeit, an unwilling one.

SLIDE:

GRAINY SURVEILLANCE FOOTAGE OF SPLEEN CLOSING THE DISTANCE TO FRESNO WOMAN. FRESNO WOMAN IS ABOUT TO OPEN HER CAR DOOR.

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

The thing to remember is that life is precious, and we all want it.

SLIDE:

CLOSE-UP OF SPLEEN TAZERING FRESNO WOMAN.

*ROSE touches the pistol, gently stroking it.*

SPEEN

Badly.  
Nobody wants to die before they're ready.

*EDDIE is still looking through the curtains. ROSE covers the pistol up before she gets in trouble.*

ROSE

Won't that look suspicious?

EDDIE

What?

ROSE

The curtains. You're looking through the curtains. Don't you think that looks suspicious?

EDDIE

I need to focus here. Let me focus. You're not letting me focus.

ROSE

Somebody could look in here, or what if-

EDDIE

I'm trying to focus, Rose.

ROSE

But you're looking out the curtains.

EDDIE

So what?

ROSE

But that's suspicious.

EDDIE

Fine. See? Fine. I'm not looking out the curtains--is this satisfactory?

ROSE

How am I supposed to learn if I can't ask questions?

EDDIE

Just watch. Look. Listen. Do what we tell you.

END SCENE

**SCENE 10**

FRESNO TRAFFIC. IN THE CAR - AFTERNOON

*SPLEEN drives, with the FRESNO WOMAN  
sprawled out in the passenger seat.  
FRESNO WOMAN is a bit dazed.*

SPLEEN

(To the audience.)

So we have this woman from Fresno.

SLIDE:

A TIME-CODED SURVEILLANCE SHOT OF THE HUSBAND ENTERING THE GAS STATION.

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

She has a husband...

SLIDE:

A TIME-CODED SURVEILLANCE SHOT OF HER TWO SONS LEAVING SCHOOL.

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

...two kids...

SLIDE:

A TIME-CODED SURVEILLANCE SHOT OF FRESNO WOMAN WORKING LATE AT NIGHT ON SOME PAPERWORK.



SPLEEN (CONT'D)

...works tirelessly as Corporate Sales Manager...

SLIDE:

A TIME-CODED SURVEILLANCE SHOT OF HER ATTENDING MASS.

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

...goes to Mass on Sundays...

SLIDE:

A TIME-CODED SURVEILLANCE SHOT OF HER LADLING SOME GRAVY ON SOME MASHED POTATOES TO A DRIFTER.

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

...feeds the homeless on Mondays and Wednesdays at the Salvation Army...

SLIDE:

A TIME-CODED SHOT SURVEILLANCE SHOT OF HER BEING THROWN OUT OF HER SON'S SOCCER GAME BY THE COACH.

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

...active with her son's private school...

*SPLEEN walks into the audience area.*

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

So how do we steal her kidney, and live with ourselves? Her sacrifice will save a life. Mr. Cherrineau's to be exact. We'll be like the Jiffy Lube team. Coordinated, precise--we will fucking own physiology. And then she'll wake up...

SLIDE:

A SHOT OF FRESNO WOMAN IN A TUB FILLED WITH ICE, ET AL.

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

...as dozens of other people have, in a tub, neck deep in ice water, a phone within arm's reach, and the requisite note.

FRESNO WOMAN

(Waking up.)

Where am I? What happened?

END SCENE

**SCENE 11**

FRESNO TRAFFIC. IN THE CAR - CONTINUOUS

SPLEEN

You had a bit of a spill on the side-walk. Nothin to worry about, honey.

FRESNO WOMAN

A spill?

SPLEEN

You fell down. You got off the bus and you fell down. You had a seizure.

FRESNO WOMAN

A seizure?

SPLEEN

Yes.

FRESNO WOMAN

Who are you?

SPLEEN

Just a stranger helping another stranger in their time of need.

FRESNO WOMAN

My whole body hurts.

SPLEEN

Are you thirsty?

FRESNO WOMAN

Yes.

SPLEEN

(To the audience.)

Of course she's thirsty! She's just had 50,000 volts from my tazer burn the fat off her central nervous system!

END SCENE

## SCENE 12

INT. MOTEL 6 - CONTINUOUS

ROSE

Do you trust her, Eddie?

EDDIE

Yes.

ROSE

Why?

EDDIE

Because.

ROSE

What's gonna happen if she doesn't come back? What if she sends the FBI? What if she does the whole thing on her own, and cuts us out of the deal?

EDDIE

Jesus Christ, will you shut the fuck up?

ROSE

These are all viable scenarios.

EDDIE

"Viable scenarios"? It's bullshit. Your mind isn't capable of understanding what it is that is going on here. You only see the surface of it. There's a whole gamut of-

ROSE

What does "gamut" mean?

EDDIE

It means variety.

ROSE

Do you want to know another viable scenario?

EDDIE

What, for the love of God?

ROSE

I'm pregnant.

EDDIE

(Laughs.)

That's almost funny.

Isn't it?

Rose?

END SCENE

### SCENE 13

FRESNO TRAFFIC. IN THE CAR - MOMENTS LATER

*FRESNO WOMAN is drinking water from the NAYA bottle.*

SPLEEN

(To audience.)

Now she's primed. Ready for the Big Bummer. The water she's drinking has been poisoned with Rohypnol. A powerful sedative

that erases all memory of events after ingestion, for approximately twelve hours.

FRESNO WOMAN

Why are you so nice?

SPLEEN

What do you mean?

FRESNO WOMAN

I mean, why are you so nice? Helpin out a complete stranger. And for what? Nothin.

SPLEEN

I don't know about that. I guess sometimes it's nice to know we aren't alone in this world, huh?

FRESNO WOMAN

See? There ya go. And yet you helped me.

SPLEEN

You're not making much sense there.

FRESNO WOMAN

Oh...I'm feelin...woozy...

SPLEEN

I'm right here. Don't you worry.

FRESNO WOMAN

I've never had a seizure before.

SPLEEN

Sometimes things happen, ma'am.

FRESNO WOMAN

My daughter did once.

SPLEEN

--Daughter?? I thought you had two sons--I mean, you look like the kind of mother who'd have to put up with boys.

FRESNO WOMAN

No. I have a daughter.

SPLEEN

You sure?

FRESNO WOMAN

Boys don't bleed...down there.

SPLEEN

Shit...

FRESNO WOMAN  
You have children?

SPLEEN  
No.

FRESNO WOMAN  
Why not?

SPLEEN  
Because there's a tumor the size of a baseball growing out of  
my uterus.

FRESNO WOMAN  
I'm sorry. You must be... I'm so sorry.

END SCENE

**SCENE 14**

INT. MOTEL 6 - CONTINUOUS.

ROSE  
I'm pregnant, Eddie. I'm serious. I tried to tell you earlier  
but...and...

EDDIE  
You're pregnant?

ROSE  
I'm thinking about having an abortion.

END SCENE

**SCENE 15**

MOTEL 6 PARKING LOT. IN THE CAR - MOMENTS LATER

*SPLEEN is investigating the contents of  
FRESNO WOMAN'S purse.*

FRESNO WOMAN  
Oh God...

SPLEEN  
We're almost there.

FRESNO WOMAN  
What is this? We're in a parking lot.

SPLEEN  
I just need to check something.

FRESNO WOMAN  
What are you doing in my purse?

SPLEEN  
Looking for identification, hon. To give to the doctor. But I  
can't seem to find it.

FRESNO WOMAN  
It's....

SPLEEN  
What?

FRESNO WOMAN  
I mean...

SPLEEN  
It's where?

*FRESNO WOMAN passes out.*

SPLEEN (CONT'D)  
Shit.

*SPLEEN continues her search for FRESNO  
WOMAN'S identification.*

END SCENE

**SCENE 16**

INT. MOTEL 6 - CONTINUOUS

EDDIE  
Why would you want an abortion?

ROSE  
I wouldn't.

EDDIE  
Well then, why would you say such a thing?

ROSE  
I dunno. To see if you cared maybe...

EDDIE  
When did you find out?

ROSE  
When I miscarried.

*Unexpectedly the lock of the door is jimmed, and the door opens. SPLEEN enters, carrying FRESNO WOMAN.*

EDDIE

You...what?

ROSE

I'm sorry! I'm sorry, baby! Don't hit me-

EDDIE

--I'm not hitting you.

SPLEEN

Jesus Christ, what the hell is going on here?!

*SPLEEN drops FRESNO WOMAN on the floor.*

EDDIE

Nothing.

SPLEEN

Get it together, Eddie!

EDDIE

I wasn't hitting her. I wasn't-

SPLEEN

I don't care! Get it together!

FRESNO WOMAN

Wha? Whaz goin on?? Why am I...?

SPLEEN

Eddie I need your help ASAP.

EDDIE

I didn't hit her. I wasn't hitting you, Rose.

ROSE

GET AWAY FROM ME!

EDDIE

Rosie...

SPLEEN

Goddamnit!

*SPLEEN starts to undress the FRESNO WOMAN.*

FRESNO WOMAN

Hey what are you...? My clothes...

SPLEEN

I'd like some help here.

EDDIE

Rose...

*ROSE frantically grabs a scalpel.*

ROSE

Stay away from me! Or I'll use this knife!

EDDIE

It's a scalpel, Rose, a fucking-

*ROSE stabs him in the stomach. EDDIE crumples. ROSE pounces on top of him, but SPLEEN wrestles her off of him, holding her down. ROSE struggles violently, knocking over the surgical pack containing the pistol. The FRESNO WOMAN desperately tries to drag herself towards the door. EDDIE looks at his hands, which are covered in his blood.*

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I'm...bleeding.

Rose? Rose?! Rose. I'm a fucking mess here. Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ ohmyfuckinggod.

SPLEEN

Calm down. Calm down. I need everybody to be fucking CIVILIZED! Eddie, what are you-

*EDDIE grabs the pistol.*

EDDIE

I'm gonna.

I'm gonna.

I'm gonna.

SPLEEN

Put the pistol down.

EDDIE

Nothing is happening.

ROSE

Fuck you Eddie.

SPLEEN

Eddie!

EDDIE



Nothing is happening. Really.

SPLEEN

What are you going to do with that, Edward?

EDDIE

What the fuck are you talking about?

SPLEEN

There's a lot of confusion right now, a lot of Absolute Fucking Chaos, and I wouldn't want--Jesus, get her before she-

*The FRESNO WOMAN is hanging onto the door handle trying to unlock the door. EDDIE pulls her away from the door. The FRESNO WOMAN tries to scream; EDDIE sits on her stomach and cups her mouth. She tries to struggle, and scream through his hand.*

EDDIE

Somebody get a needle in her!  
(To the woman.) Shut the fuck up! Or I'll...

*The pistol discharges into her face.  
SILENCE.*

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Where's the needle?

SPLEEN

Eddie...

EDDIE

Somebody put a needle in her!

SPLEEN

She's...

EDDIE

DON'T YOU SAY IT DAMN YOU DON'T YOU SAY IT  
Put the goddamn needle-

*EDDIE snatches the needle from SPLEEN and jams it into the FRESNO WOMAN's side.*

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Okay, she's under. Spleen? Spleen?

SPLEEN

What?

EDDIE

She's under.

*FRESNO WOMAN sits up, smoke coming out of her mouth, the back of her head bleeding from an exit wound where a tuft of hair and skin hang lifeless. She speaks to SPLEEN, who is horrified.*

FRESNO WOMAN

DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT--MY DAUGHTER LOOKS AT ME LIKE THAT AND I HATE THAT!

It's not confined to the uterus anymore, Helen. Beware.

*THE FRESNO WOMAN returns to her position as a dead body.*

EDDIE

Scalpel.

*Nobody moves.*

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Scalpel!

SPLEEN

This isn't right.

EDDIE

So?

SPLEEN

You...

EDDIE

-- So what? You're shell-shocked. Get it together. Let's get this baby where it needs to go. Rose?

ROSE

What?

EDDIE

Fill the cooler with ice.

*ROSE grabs the pail of ice and fills a cooler. EDDIE works feverishly on the FRESNO WOMAN. ROSE takes one look at her wound and quickly runs to the bathroom, throwing up.*

END SCENE

SLIDE:

'CHOKING ON STAPLES'

**SCENE 17**

EXT. OLD MAN LEE'S HOUSE - MORNING

GRAINY CAMCORDER FOOTAGE SHOWS

*THREE MEN in suits, hastily exiting from the back of a van. THEY walk across the street, towards a house.*

SPLEEN

Myth has it that Old Man Lee upon hearing he was to be a prime-candidate of chemotherapy for a tumor in his brain, considered leaving a record of the whole harvesting operation after his suicide.

*WE follow the MEN inside the house, where WE see scrawled in blood the haiku, 'a submission or/a confession, either way/choking on staples/'. ONE OF THE MEN becomes visibly upset. THEY spread out and search the house, while WE zoom in on the bloody wall.*

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

Those words were found scrawled in his own blood on a wall in his home.

*WE hear someone summon US and THE OTHER TWO MEN into the bedroom, where we find*

*OLD MAN LEE'S feet stick out from behind the bed. THE MEN crowd in front of US, and WE can only see their reaction to what has to be a horrific sight. ONE OF THE MEN uses an old sock to pick up a bone saw--showing it to US.*

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

My employers found him unconscious, a bone saw in his hand, and most of the top portion of his skull cut away. I think he wishes he would have blown his brains out now rather than trying to remove the tumor himself. Rumor has it the tumor had crowded out a sizable portion of his brain already, and what we see here is the last act of an insane man.

THE FOOTAGE PAUSES.

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

After they soldered the last neural interface and flipped the switch to become the world's first human Web address, he realized just how serious my employers were about privacy issues.

END SCENE

**SCENE 18**

INT. MOTEL 6 - CONTINUOUS

*EDDIE pulls out an organ from the lifeless body of FRESNO WOMAN. ROSE asks him a question about it. EDDIE answers in good humor.*

*SPLEEN, smoking a cigarette, is talking to US.*

SPLEEN

Things happen, you know. With or without us. And all we're left with is the wreckage.

FADE TO BLACK.

SLIDE:

'THE WRECKAGE'

*SOUND: EDDIE moans in pain.*

**SCENE 19**

LIGHTS FADE IN:

INT. TRAILER GROUNDZERO - NIGHT

*ROSE is making herself a strong drink. SPLEEN smokes.*

EDDIE (O.S.)

I'm a fucking mess! Jesus...

ROSE

Can't you, I dunno, give him something?

SPLEEN

We gave him all the morphine we have. Unfortunately he's built a high--

ROSE

Honey, are you okay?

EDDIE (O.S.)

No!

*EDDIE screams in pain.*

ROSE

Get some more.

SPLEEN

There is no more.

ROSE

What about your supplier? Can't you call your supplier?

SPLEEN

No, I can't call my supplier.

ROSE

Why not?

SPLEEN

Because it's not done.

ROSE

What do you mean, "It's not done"?

SPLEEN

It's not done. It's considered rude.

ROSE

Rude? My husband is DYING and you won't call your fucking drug dealer because it's RUDE?! It's fucking rude?!

SPLEEN

Yes. It's rude.

ROSE

But he needs help!

SPLEEN

He has help. He's got a needle and some suture thread, that's all he needs. Thanks to you.

ROSE

Are you saying it was my fault?

SPLEEN

I'm saying it wasn't mine.

*EDDIE stands at the door, holding the needle in one hand and the empty bottle of disinfecting alcohol in the other. His shirt is open, revealing the bloody stitch-work. He looks kinda sexy.*

EDDIE

It was my fault.

ROSE

Eddie...are you-

EDDIE

I feel like shit. I wanna drink.

ROSE

But the morphine, I don't think-

EDDIE

I want a drink.

SPLEEN

Get him a drink.

*ROSE goes to make him a drink.*

EDDIE

Fucking bitch. Stained my fucking... Where's my...? Did you see her face explode? That bitch's face opened up like a firecracker. Helen, did you see it?

SPLEEN

Yes. But what did I tell you about using my name?

ROSE

I don't wanna talk about this Eddie. Can we please-

EDDIE

Her face was a goddamned WINDTUNNEL! Who knew? A fucking...Where's my-oh.

*EDDIE takes the drink from ROSE.*

EDDIE (CONT'D)

And we STILL made the take, right Helen? I mean, we are professionals, fucking Pro's, right Rose? I mean her face is a goddamned wind-tunnel.

*FRESNO WOMAN quietly hovers from the bathroom. EDDIE looks at his stomach wound, desperately trying to ignore her.*

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Does my stomach look infected to you?

ROSE

No.

SPLEEN

I think you should lay down.

EDDIE

Lay down?

SPLEEN

You're a little-

EDDIE

--What? I'm what?

SPLEEN

--Shell-shocked.

EDDIE

Shell-shocked? You don't know what I am. See this?

*EDDIE shows off his wound.*

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I survived. I fucking prevailed over the forces of evil and took that bitch out. Her face was a goddamn wind-tunnel.

SPLEEN

Go to bed.

EDDIE

Where is... Where is that bitch's-

ROSE

Honey, you're weak, will you lay down with me.

EDDIE

--kidney?! Helen?

SPLEEN

What?

EDDIE

Where is it?

SPLEEN

Why?

EDDIE

I wanna see it. I want to see her reduced to a-

SPLEEN

It's gone. Right, Rose?

EDDIE

Gone? Gone?! Gone.

ROSE

Baby-

EDDIE  
--Shut up. Where's my cut?

SPLEEN  
I gave it to your wife.

EDDIE  
Oh you did?

SPLEEN  
Yes.

ROSE  
She gave it to me baby.

EDDIE  
Did you count it?

ROSE  
No.

EDDIE  
Count it.

*ROSE looks at him funny.*

EDDIE (CONT'D)  
COUNT IT!

ROSE  
Alright, okay. I'll count it.

*ROSE starts to count the money.*

EDDIE  
Gimme a smoke.

*SPLEEN gives him a cigarette.*

EDDIE (CONT'D)  
Her face was a wind-tunnel.

SPLEEN  
I know.

ROSE  
What's our cut? How much?

SPLEEN  
Fifty thousand.

EDDIE



Her face was a wind-tunnel. It...it just rearranged itself. A fucking wind-tunnel.

*THE FRESNO WOMAN opens her mouth wide and hisses.*

ROSE

Eddie? Eddie, baby?

EDDIE

GET AWAY FROM ME!

(and then, apologizing to the  
FRESNO WOMAN)

I'm sorry. I'm sorry I'm sorry I'm sorry I'm sorry I'm sorry.

SPLEEN

You should be.

EDDIE

It's not my fault. It wasn't my fault. I'm sorry I'm sorry I'm sorry

SPLEEN

Go to bed. Get some rest.

ROSE

It's all here. The money is all here.

EDDIE

I mean...how? How? I don't understand. I was looking this way, then it happened, then the blood, the anger--I don't know. I'm so sorry. Please forgive me. Please forgive me.

SPLEEN

You did what you had to do. We all did.

ROSE

Why did you have a gun?

SPLEEN

What?

ROSE

You had a gun. Why did you have a gun?

SPLEEN

Because sometimes it's necessary.

ROSE

When?

EDDIE

Leave it alone, Rose. I'm sick of your questions.

ROSE  
Well, I want my own gun next time...

EDDIE  
LEAVE IT ALONE!!!!

*SILENCE.*

ROSE  
Let's go to bed, huh?

EDDIE  
Her face. She had a life. She had a life. And we just...

SPLEEN  
It's done, Eddie.

EDDIE  
But her face. See this? She did this to me.

*EDDIE points to his stomach wound.*

EDDIE  
This is what's left of her existence.

SPLEEN  
It's a question of economics, Eddie. Human life has always been a question of economics.

EDDIE  
She had a beautiful face, didn't she? Didn't she Rose?

ROSE  
I don't remember.

EDDIE  
You don't remember how her lips...?

ROSE  
No Eddie, I don't remember--let's go to bed.

EDDIE  
How did we ever get this way?

ROSE  
I'm tired Eddie.

SPLEEN  
It's not "how", it's "how much".

EDDIE  
I bet she had kids. Did she have kids, do you think?

SPLEEN

I think she might have had a daughter.

ROSE

A daughter? I thought the file said she had two sons?

SPLEEN

Oh right...  
When did you read the file?

EDDIE

That's terrible.

ROSE

I think what happened today was terrible.

EDDIE

Baby can I have another drink?

ROSE

No.

EDDIE

Get me another drink or I swear to god I'll fucking--  
(Tries to control himself.)  
Just get me a drink! A little courtesy, a little consideration,  
whatever it is that passes for civilization around here--I would  
like to have some, if you please?

ROSE

Whatever you say, honey.

EDDIE

That fucking cunt.

*EDDIE is obsessed with his stomach wound.*

EDDIE (CONT'D)

That fucking COOZ carved herself a steak dinner! Her face was  
a goddamned wind-tunnel. It was so funny, the look on her face,  
the look on your face, I mean, I never...it was too funny. Almost  
absurd. I'm glad she's dead. Do you think she's dead?

ROSE

Equilibrium has been changed, Eddie.

EDDIE

Things got messy. Things got out of control.

ROSE

It just happens.

EDDIE

DON'T YOU SAY THAT BULLSHIT AROUND ME! I KNOW WHAT HAPPENED!  
Murder is not an option! Death is not an option!

*EDDIE looks towards SPLEEN for an answer.*

SPLEEN  
Some things are better left unsaid.

EDDIE  
Fuck you all.

SPLEEN  
Look. I have to go.

EDDIE  
Where you going? Why are you leaving?

SPLEEN  
I need to leave, Eddie. It's time.

EDDIE  
What about the body? What about her?

SPLEEN  
We left her in the motel room.

EDDIE  
I mean--shouldn't we show the proper respect? Shouldn't we bury  
it. I mean: shouldn't we bury it???

SPLEEN  
No.

ROSE  
It's too late, honey. Anyway we got the money. Let's just--

EDDIE  
--And that's it?

ROSE  
Honey?--

SPLEEN  
Yes. That's it. What would you have us do? Go back and take the  
body and throw it in a hole somewhere?

ROSE  
Honey, let's think about this--

EDDIE  
Yes! Hell yes! Or what about the warehouse??

SPLEEN

You're insane. Look, I'm leaving.

EDDIE

But where are you gonna go?

SPLEEN

Home, Eddie. Home.

EDDIE

How do I know you're going home?

ROSE

Come lay down with me, baby. Let the bitch go home.

SPLEEN

Because I'm tired. And I have things to do tomorrow.

EDDIE

So this is it? We just 'accept' what happened tonight--and that's it??

SPLEEN

Yes. That's it.

*SILENCE. FRESNO WOMAN oozes off the stage.*

ROSE

Honey, come to bed.

EDDIE

I can't believe that.

SPLEEN

Believe it.

ROSE

Let her go.

SPLEEN

I'm sorry.

ROSE

Edward...

EDDIE

I'm not going to bed yet.

ROSE

Fine. Goodnight.

*ROSE exits to the bedroom.*

Why? EDDIE

I'll see you later. SPLEEN

Why, Helen? EDDIE

Things happen. SPLEEN

And you just accept that. EDDIE

I've got my reasons. SPLEEN

Things happen, huh? EDDIE

Eddie, in fifteen hours I'm scheduled to be in an operating room for a growth in my uterus. In eighteen hours they'll have relieved me of my gender. I'm scared. I'm lonely. And I don't even know if I'm even gonna show up. I kinda like bein a woman. Even if it'll kill me.

(Pauses.)

With all that's expected of me, I might even do the surgery myself.

*SILENCE.*

So. If you'll excuse me, I have to go home now. SPLEEN (CONT'D)

Why didn't you tell me? EDDIE

Because I'm not your wife. Nor your girlfriend. Nor your mistress. I'm just something you have to escape responsibility for yourself. But it's time to take control of your life. Otherwise you're just a machine waiting to break down. Goodnight, Edward. And goodbye. SPLEEN

*SPLEEN leaves. EDDIE sits in shock at the news he just heard. ROSE enters, wearing her pajamas.*

Is she gone? ROSE

*SILENCE.*

ROSE (CONT'D)

God, what a night.

*ROSE grabs the money and counts it again joyfully.*

ROSE (CONT'D)

I've never seen this much money before.

EDDIE

(Mumbling.)

I'm retiring.

ROSE

What, honey?

EDDIE

I said...I'm thinking about retiring.

ROSE

(In a cooing, placating voice.)

We had a rough night, baby. Come to bed and I'll make it all better.

EDDIE

No, I mean it. I'm done.

ROSE

Edward. You're all drugged up. We've had a rough night. But it's over. Tomorrow is another day.

EDDIE

No. It's not just another day...

ROSE

How about next month? Or even next year? I mean, this is a lot of money.

*SILENCE.*

EDDIE

I don't love you, Rose.

ROSE

What?

EDDIE

I don't love you. And...I've had an affair.

ROSE

That's enough. Baby, let's go to bed.

EDDIE

I mean it.

ROSE

We'll talk about our retirement options tomorrow.

EDDIE

Helen and I had sexual relations, Rose.

ROSE

Jesus Christ, STOP! Please. Let's go to bed.

EDDIE

LOOK AT ME!!!! Rose, I don't love you any more.

ROSE

You wouldn't dare--you wouldn't because you love me. And because we're married.

EDDIE

Is that why you have a hemorrhage across half your face?

ROSE

What hemorrhage? Nothing happened.  
What are you talking about? I don't get it. I mean, I dunno what you're talking about.

*EDDIE pulls out a Polaroid from his doctor's bag and throws it at her.*

ROSE (CONT'D)

What is that?

*SILENCE.*

ROSE (CONT'D)

What is that, Eddie?

*SILENCE.*

ROSE (CONT'D)

EDDIE?????????

*EDDIE picks up the Polaroid and shows it to her. He then pulls out another. And another. Throwing them in her face. ROSE stands there, in shock. EDDIE sits on the couch, waiting for her to say something. ROSE retreats to the kitchen, unable to speak, her whole world is crashing around her. EDDIE'S back is to her. What can she do?*



*ROSE hits EDDIE with a skillet in the back of the head.*

BLACKOUT.

**SCENE 20**

*STILL BLACKOUT.*

INT. TRAILER GROUND ZERO - MOMENTS LATER

EDDIE

R-Rose? Rose? What just happened?

ROSE

A skillet just tried to commit suicide, Eddie.

*LIGHTS FADE IN:*

*EDDIE is on the floor, blood pouring out of his head.*

*ROSE is hefting the skillet.*

EDDIE

A what?

ROSE

Yeah, it was weird.

EDDIE

Oh Jesus...my head.

ROSE

It's bleeding pretty heavily.

EDDIE

What the fuck did you do to me???

ROSE

I told you what happened.

EDDIE

WHAT THE FUCK DID YOU DO TO ME?????  
Oh my god. I'm bleeding.

ROSE

Why?

EDDIE

What do you mean "why"?

ROSE

Why do you think you're bleeding?

EDDIE

You hit me in the head with a skillet, you cunt!

ROSE

No, Edward, a skillet just tried to commit suicide. There are certain forces, certain events that have to take place for that to happen, sweetheart.

EDDIE

Help me! I'm bleeding!

*SILENCE.*

EDDIE (CONT'D)

HELP ME GODDAMNIT!!!

ROSE

We're gonna get counseling, sweetie.

EDDIE

Please, just call an ambulance. Please please please!

ROSE

You are going to be a man again. My man.

EDDIE

I'm begging you CALL THE FUCKING AMBULANCE!

ROSE

(Towers over EDDIE with the skillet.)

I don't want you to think anymore. I don't want you to wonder what you should be doing, I'm going to take care of that, Eddie. The way it should be. As a marriage. Which was slowly being ripped apart by forces beyond my control. I don't want you to think about anything other than bringing the paychecks home. Eddie? Are you listening? And I want to see results. I want to wear results. I want to eat results. I want to live in results. I want you to behave like I've been behaving. Nicely. I don't want to believe that my Eddie is having affairs, or murdering innocent people for their bodies. I don't want to think those bad thoughts. It's become a chore. We will be good people. People, Edward, not machines. Not spare parts. Not wide-eyed infidels. But nice, naive people!

EDDIE

(Trying to get up.)

Sweetie?

*ROSE hits him again with the skillet.  
EDDIE falls to the floor.*

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Rosie. I'm begging you. I love you I love you so much please call an ambulance CALL THE FUCKING AMBULANCE GODDAMNIT!!! Rosie? Rosie?!!!

ROSE

What?

EDDIE

I'm hurt. Badly, I think.

ROSE

No.

EDDIE

No, what?

ROSE

No, I am not calling an ambulance for you.

EDDIE

Please! I'll do anything, but you have to-

ROSE

We're getting counseling.

EDDIE

Great. That's great.

ROSE

You're going to be a nice husband.

EDDIE

Yes, I will be a nice husband.

ROSE

You are not going to retire.

EDDIE

Baby, I can't do that--

*ROSE threatens to hit him again, but EDDIE flinches and cowers on the floor.*

EDDIE (CONT'D)

...don't hit me...

ROSE

Play nice, baby.

EDDIE

I'm sorry...I'm...just don't...

ROSE

Let me see your head.

*ROSE examines EDDIE'S head.*

ROSE (CONT'D)

You're right. It is bleeding. It doesn't look that bad. Nothing a couple of staples couldn't handle. We've got those, don't we Eddie? Surgical staples? For your head?

EDDIE

...No...

ROSE

Fabulous. Where would they be? I bet they're in your doctor's bag, right? No? Well, I guess we'll have to use regular staples won't we?

EDDIE

I'm bleeding.

ROSE

Yes. You are.

EDDIE

...might have concussion...head traumas are notoriously-

ROSE

You can talk. Your lips move. Your tongue flaps. I think that's all that's necessary.

*ROSE exits with the skillet, looking for the stapler, sterile gauze, disinfectant. EDDIE struggles to crawl towards the door. ROSE enters and hits EDDIE in the head again.*

ROSE (CONT'D)

Baby, I already told you. That is not a viable thing. Sit still now. This is gonna burn.

*ROSE drops the skillet and pours the contents of the bottle on EDDIE's head.*

EDDIE

AAHHHHH!

ROSE

Baby...

EDDIE

It hurts!

ROSE  
If you don't sit still...

EDDIE  
AHHHHHH!!!

ROSE  
Baby...I just don't want anything to happen to you again. Like a skillet committing suicide. Again.

EDDIE  
AHHHHHH!!!

ROSE  
Eddie--listen to me--Eddie, I'm gonna staple your head together. And if you squirm, or cry out, I dunno what's gonna happen. Edward. SHUT THE FUCK UP!!!!!!!

*ROSE slaps him.*

ROSE (CONT'D)  
You are such an asshole, Edward!

*ROSE staples his head violently.*

ROSE (CONT'D)  
Scorn is what I feel right now. Pure scorn for that woman.

*ROSE staples his head violently.*

ROSE (CONT'D)  
I can't help it. I don't feel loved. Why shouldn't I be able to feel it? I buy things. I watch TV like everybody else. Why can't I have it, too?

*ROSE staples his head violently and begins dressing his head wound. It's, of course, the worst job in the history of first-aid.*

ROSE (CONT'D)  
Can I ask you something?

EDDIE  
What?

ROSE  
Did you like it? I mean, are you really in love with her, or what?

EDDIE  
Yes.

*ROSE slaps EDDIE.*

No! ROSE

No. EDDIE

That's better. I need a drink. ROSE

*ROSE goes to the fridge and gets a beer.*

*EDDIE crawls to his jacket and weakly grabs the pistol from the inside pocket.*

*ROSE takes a long pull from her beer and turns around to face him.*

*They stare at each other--ROSE, cool and confident, EDDIE, weak and desperate. Then:*

ROSE (CONT'D)  
What do you think you're gonna do with that?

EDDIE  
I'm going to the emergency room, and if you try to stop me...

ROSE  
Eddie...I wouldn't do that.

EDDIE  
I SWEAR TO FUCKING GOD ALMIGHTY--

ROSE  
Don't you leave me. We haven't settled this.

EDDIE  
I'M BLEEDING! There are skull fragments embedded in my brain!  
I'm going to the emergency room!

ROSE  
I don't want you to go. I forbid it.

EDDIE  
You what?

ROSE  
I forbid it. Certain things, certain events could happen, and...

EDDIE  
Like what? Are you gonna hit me with the fucking skillet again?

ROSE

--certain phone calls could be made.

EDDIE

What are you talking about?

ROSE

You know what I'm talking about.

EDDIE

No. I don't. What are you saying? Phone calls? To whom?

ROSE

If you wanna throw it all away, if you wanna cut me loose--IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANNA DO--

EDDIE

Who are you going to call, Roselyn?

ROSE

I AM NOT A TAPEWORM! I AM NOT A TAPEWORM!

EDDIE

Are you gonna call...I mean--you're not serious--the FBI? Is this what--?

ROSE

YES THE FBI! There. I said it. It's done. Edward: you walk out that door, and I will call the FBI.

*ROSE grabs the phone book, and looks up a number.*

EDDIE

Why are you saying this?

ROSE

Because you're my husband.

EDDIE

Baby, I can't let you call the FBI.

ROSE

Then don't leave.

EDDIE

Look. I fucked up.

ROSE

Well? Is that it?

EDDIE

You're forcing me to make a choice here.

ROSE

What is it that she has over you, Eddie? Why are you so attracted to her, when I love you so much?

EDDIE

I'm leaving.

ROSE

I'll call them! I really will! I'll call the FBI on this whole goddamned scheme!

EDDIE

You're lying.

ROSE

Oh really? Let's find out!

EDDIE

You wouldn't. You couldn't call the FBI. You love me too much. And besides that, you're implicated too!

*ROSE picks up the phone.*

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Don't pick up that phone. I beg you.

ROSE

Why can't I have a little happiness? Why does my life have to be hell?

EDDIE

Baby, please...

ROSE

Why can't I buy things I want, and have a husband who's successful and good-looking? I want those things, goddamnit! I married a doctor! And you will save lives, or sit in a cell watching *General Hospital*! It's your choice!

EDDIE

Rose...

ROSE

319.339.4458. Remember that number.

EDDIE

Drop the phone.

ROSE

Or what?

EDDIE

I love you, Rosie.



ROSE  
(Dialing the phone.)  
I was supposed to be Cinderella.

EDDIE  
BUT DROP THE PHONE!

ROSE  
I was supposed to be swept off my feet!

EDDIE  
Rose, I'm begging you...

ROSE  
Where's my refund????!!!!

EDDIE  
Put the phone down.

ROSE  
Why can't Life have a Customer Service department? Why do I have to be stuck with you?

EDDIE  
Rosie...?

ROSE  
I'm not forcing you to make a choice. I'm forcing you to stick with the choice you already made.  
H-hhello?

EDDIE  
(Under great duress.)  
Hang up the phone. Please.

ROSE  
Yes, I would like to speak to--

*EDDIE shoots ROSE. She collapses; the phone drops. EDDIE stands for a moment over the hyperventilating body, and then picks up the phone and says...*

EDDIE  
Hello?

*SILENCE.*

EDDIE (CONT'D)  
No, I don't want to be transferred to the customer service department, thank you.

*EDDIE drops the phone and collapses.*

END SCENE

SCENE 21

INT. SPLEEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

*A dinner plate lies on the floor in pieces. Food is strewn everywhere. SPLEEN writhes in agony on the floor. Moments later, a KNOCK. SPLEEN ignores it. But the KNOCKING becomes frantic. EDDIE'S muffled cries can be heard through the door. The FRANTIC KNOCKING continues. Suddenly, EDDIE barges through:*

*He's A Complete Mess.*

EDDIE

Where's your bathroom?

SPLEEN

Holy shit!

*EDDIE runs into the bathroom.*

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

What happened to you?

EDDIE

It's all fucked up! Everything! I'm in a world of shit! Jesus!

*SPLEEN tries to get up, but finds the prospect difficult at best.*

SPLEEN

What happened to you?

EDDIE

Nothing happened. Nothing at all. I was hit by a car.

SPLEEN

Is everything alright--?

EDDIE

No, everything is not alright. It's fucked. Completely and utterly. Just leave me alone for a second. I need to breathe.

SPLEEN

Would you like a drink, then? I'll make you a drink. Just take your time in there. I'm sure everything--

EDDIE

Do you have anything stronger?

SPLEEN

No.

EDDIE

Jesus. That bitch. That fuckin bitch couldn't staple her head on straight if she broke it. GODDAMN!

SPLEEN

What happened?

EDDIE

Nothing happened. Do you have any gauze?

SPLEEN

Yes.

EDDIE

Get it.

*SPLEEN struggles to find some dressing, but she can't get farther than a few feet before she collapses again.*

EDDIE (CONT'D)

My head has been cracked, Helen! It's cracked! I can see my fucking brain! Oh Jesus Christ! You shoulda seen her face!

SPLEEN

Who's face, Eddie?

EDDIE

I'll never forget it. I'll never forget the look on her face. She shoulda known I would do it! She shoulda fucking known!

SPLEEN

Have a drink, Eddie. Or what's left of it...

EDDIE

I don't wanna drink. I just wanna sit.

SPLEEN

Okay, sit.

EDDIE

Goddamn, there's blood all over me.

*SPLEEN pulls herself up with a chair and sits next to EDDIE. She grabs a glass of water and pours it on a cloth napkin.*

SPLEEN

Sit.

EDDIE  
Jesus Christ, the luck I'm having...

SPLEEN  
Let me see your face.

*SPLEEN starts to wipe the blood off of  
EDDIE's face.*

EDDIE  
She's gone.

SPLEEN  
Who?

EDDIE  
Rose.

SPLEEN  
Rose left?

EDDIE  
Not exactly.

*EDDIE drinks straight from an open wine  
bottle sitting on the table.*

SPLEEN  
Your face looks better now. Clean. I should look at your skull,  
though.

*EDDIE kisses SPLEEN.*

SPLEEN (CONT'D)  
(She pushes him away.)  
Eddie! This isn't...I'm not...

*SPLEEN gets up.*

EDDIE  
What's wrong?

SPLEEN  
Nothing.

EDDIE  
What?

SPLEEN  
I don't wanna talk about it.

EDDIE  
I just thought there was a moment there.

Maybe there was. SPLEEN

I don't understand. EDDIE  
I love you.

*SILENCE. EDDIE puts his head in his hands.*

You have any coke? EDDIE (CONT'D)

No. SPLEEN

That helps. Oh well. EDDIE

Oh well. SPLEEN

She's dead, you know. Rose. I mean, it's all fucked up, you know? EDDIE

It's always 'all fucked up'. SPLEEN

I mean it, Helen. I think she's dead. EDDIE

I would apologize if I could feel anything. SPLEEN

She said she loved me. EDDIE

Isn't that sweet. SPLEEN

And I killed her. EDDIE

Sometimes things happen, Eddie. SPLEEN

I FUCKING KILLED HER!!! She was gonna...call the FBI. And I said-- EDDIE

Please. Spare me the details. SPLEEN

EDDIE

(Ignoring her.)  
--don't do it. But she said she had to. And so I...

SPLEEN  
Well, she was a dumb bitch anyway.

EDDIE  
I can't do it anymore.

SPLEEN  
I know.

EDDIE  
I need to figure out what it all means.

SPLEEN  
I know. Me too.

EDDIE  
I WILL NOT ACCEPT DEATH!!!!

SPLEEN  
Neither will I, baby. Neither will I.

EDDIE  
I WILL NOT ACCEPT DEATH!!!!!!

*SPLEEN suddenly tazers EDDIE.*

SPLEEN  
Forgive me.

*SPLEEN pushes EDDIE to the floor. She takes out a hidden sterilized surgical tray. She grabs a cooler from the fridge bearing the words, "BIOHAZARD" plainly marked on the side. She puts on surgical gloves.*

END SCENE

## SCENE 22

SPLEEN'S DRIVEWAY. ELENA'S CAR - LATER

*SPLEEN looks like she's in great pain. She smokes a cigarette with a jittery hand. ELENA smokes her cigar. The COOLER sits between them. ELENA is talking...*

ELENA  
There was nothing I could do. It happened so fast. The doctors on duty...it wouldn't have mattered. It happened too fast. You

wouldn't answer your phone. You wouldn't answer your pager. I got worried. Seems I'm a little bit late on the uptake tonight. They yanked the deal as soon as we pronounced him dead. No advisory position. No biogenetics. You probably don't care at this point, do you? Understandable. And so I drove up here because we had an arrangement...but you made good on your promise anyway. Loyalty, Helen, is something we all could use more of... What a waste of human life. Jesus, why do we just accept it?

SPLEEN

Because we're too afraid to live with the consequences.

ELENA

If you had any intention of betraying our friendship, you know what the consequences would have been. This...

(indicating the cooler.)

...is a remarkable token of your loyalty.

*SILENCE. SPLEEN puts her cigarette out on the dashboard of ELENA'S car.*

SPLEEN

Yeah.

*SPLEEN gets out of the car.*

ELENA

Let me know if there's anything I can do. Good luck on the surgery tomorrow. Or today, I guess, huh?

*ELENA drives off. SPLEEN starts to walk towards the front door. A pool of blood slowly starts to form around SPLEEN'S abdomen and she collapses on the lawn.*

SPLEEN (V.O.)

Life is a precious thing. You guard it vigilantly against the forces of evil, against becoming some kind of machine, or part of a machine. But something happens.

*SPLEEN desperately tries to make it to the door, leaving a trail of blood behind her.*

SPLEEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Cancer eats away at your precious tissue, or maybe your love of someone is your cancer, or even worse, you cash in on your humanity and become the cancer. How are you gonna protect yourself? How are you gonna survive?

LIGHTS FADE UP ON

INT. SPLEEN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

*In the corner lies EDDIE, unconscious,  
with a first-rate head dressing.*

SLIDE:

EDDIE, IN HIS CAR, MOMENTS AFTER HE HAS SHOT ROSE.

SPLEEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

In the end, we all struggle with mortality. And those that fight  
the hardest, win. Sometimes that means playing a little dirty.

LIGHTS FADE UP ON

INT. ELENA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

*ELENA sits at her desk, smoking a cigar,  
with the book, Gray's Anatomy. The cooler  
sits in front of her, open. She is looking  
at a diagram of a female reproductive  
system, specifically labeled 'Uterus'.  
As she pages through the book, the slides  
change, too.*

SLIDE(S):

VARIOUS PAGES OF GREY'S ANATOMY

DIAGRAM OF THE FEMALE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM

*SPLEEN is still struggling to make it to  
the door.*

SPLEEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But there are certain things you can't return, certain things  
you can't buy...

SLIDE:

ROSE'S LIFELESS FACE FILLS THE FRAME. A FLY IS TRAPPED IN A POOL  
OF BLOOD CONGEALING OUT OF HER MOUTH.

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

...and certain things you can't escape from.

*SPLEEN has almost made it to the door, her  
fingers, barely touching...*



SPLEEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And so you're left with the wreckage that has become your reality. And you try to survive.

SLIDE:

SPLEEN, NAKED, DISINFECTING HER PELVIC REGION WITH POVIODINE. EDDIE, HANDCUFFED TO A RADIATOR, LAYS UNCONSCIOUS AND UNHARMED NEAR HER.

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

But at what expense?

SLIDE:

MOTION-BLURRY SHOT: SPLEEN LOOKS TOWARDS THE CAMERA. HER EYES HOLD THE UNIVERSE IN SUSPENSE.

SPLEEN (CONT'D)

How badly do you want to live?

SPOTLIGHT ON SPLEEN GRADUALLY  
FADES OUT...

END