

ANGELES

Written By

Alex Felix Bendaña &
Rob Hebert &
Z. LaPorte Airey

EXT. HUNTINGTON PARK - ESTABLISHING - DAWN

The Oasis Motel. Bottom dollar. Smack addicts, hookers, johns, and tweakers huddle under awnings to escape the --

BIBLICAL DOWNPOUR hammering a flimsy establishment that was barely designed for humidity, much less a monsoon.

INT. OASIS MOTEL - BATHROOM - SAME

Rain PING-PINGs the roof like automatic bb-gun-fire.

Meet LEONARD PERALTA (40s, Honduran-American), built like a bullet, hair in a militant high-and-tight buzz. He's butt-naked, staring out the window at the rain.

He abruptly hunches over a line of crushed, orange Adderall on the toilet tank lid. Rolled bill meets nose. He snorts hard. Whips his head back.

Shakes the morning fog loose. Walks to the sink and disinfects his crotch with Betadine.

JAQUELL (O.S.)
I gotta get going.

LEONARD
Come here, made you some coffee.

JAQUELL appears in the doorway. Yawns. Hasn't had a good night's sleep in weeks. Maybe ever. Leonard gestures to the remaining line on the toilet. He hands her the bill and she finishes it off.

LEONARD (cont'd)
Can you believe this? Hasn't rained in sixteen months. Gonna be a blood-bath out there.

JAQUELL
(sniffling)
I really gotta get going.

Leonard rummages through his medical bag on the toilet seat. A pair of ANGEL WINGS stenciled on the side. He fishes out a clear baggie containing little blue pills.

JAQUELL
You said you'd have cash this time.

LEONARD
No, I didn't.

JAQUELL

Just 'cause you don't remember
don't mean you didn't say it.

LEONARD

Didn't say what?

She sucks her teeth at him. He puts the pills in her hand.

LEONARD (cont'd)

That's twenty. You can get ten-a-
pop from your girlfriends. Maybe
fifteen from your tricks.

JAQUELL

Yeah, right. You're all cheap
bastards.

He grabs his medical bag and exits the bathroom.

LEONARD

Stay dry out there.

Leonard leaves. She clocks the dusty bill he forgot on the
toilet lid. Unrolls it. A fifty. She pockets it.

INT. ROBERTA'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY (DAWN)

ROBERTA GUTIERREZ, 30s, Mexican, in an EMS uniform with
angel wings stenciled on the back, dumps a bedpan into the
toilet, then kneels down to scrub it out in the bathtub.

She winces, drops the bedpan. Massages her right hand with
her left for a moment. Picks the bedpan back up, scrubs it
with her left this time.

IN THE ADJACENT BEDROOM, HECTOR GUTIERREZ, 60s, sits on the
edge of his bed. He's naked, except for a damp beach towel
on his shoulders and another beneath him. His eyes are
distant, lost.

Roberta enters and helps him stand from the bed. Kisses him
on his forehead. She dries his hair, and helps him into an
old bathrobe. She only occasionally glances at his face.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY (DAWN)

The house sits on street crammed with small single-family
homes and cheap cars in SOUTH GATE. GLORIA (60s), smokes a
cigarette in her house dress.

Roberta exits the house with her med bag and a trash bag filled with her father's shitty diapers. We notice she's wearing a compression wrap around her wrist now.

ROBERTA
(Spanish)
 Please make sure he eats.

GLORIA
 Did you bring home groceries? The milk and the sandwich meat? What am I going to feed him?

ROBERTA
 What happened to "you buy the wrong things, I'll go next time"?

GLORIA
 I didn't say that.
(Roberta starts to protest)
 Then, why didn't you remind me?

ROBERTA
 Because Dad's the one with Dementia, not you.

Gloria gasps. Roberta strides to the street.

ROBERTA (cont'd)
 Just order a pizza! And make sure he walks around!

ESTABLISHING - VERMONT HARBOR - DAWN

A slowly gentrifying Hispanic neighborhood on the fringes of the USC campus.

A Honda tries to pull off the curb, but BUMPS the small Neon parked too close to it. The Neon's alarm BLARES.

INT. CONVERTED FRAT HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

VICTOR (VIC) KIM'S eyes flutter open. 20s, Korean-American, hung-over. Shivering in boxers, with no blanket. He sees the blanket in a pile on top of the WOMAN asleep on the other edge of the full-sized mattress.

He finds his phone. Screen painfully bright - he moans and turns it off.

VIC
 Hey... you. You look really comfy,
 but I'm late for work.

He tries to poke her shoulder, but she's burrowed. He tugs the blanket and she rolls to him, not waking. He sees her face for the first time sober. She's young. *Too young.*

VIC (cont'd)
 (climbing out of bed)
 Shit... shit.

The floor is littered with empty beer bottles, food wrappers, crumpled clothes. The Girl stirs, rubs her eyes.

GIRL
 I think I'm still drunk.

He strains a chuckle, then briskly exits to an adjacent -

BATHROOM where he tries to piss. He hits the wall, readjusts. Leans, examines himself in the mirror. Pulls at the bags under his eyes with his free hand. Youthful good-looks making an early exit.

VIC
 (still pissing)
 You asshole...
 (then, loud)
 I gotta go. There's a Daily Donut right down the block. The signal is weird here, but you should be able to grab an Uber and a coffee or whatever.

IN THE BEDROOM the girl looks around, disgusted. Finds her purse and starts searching for her clothes.

GIRL
 Can you drop me off?

VIC (O.S.)
 It's right down the block.

GIRL
 It's raining!

VIC (O.S.)
 (over loud peeing)
 What?

She rolls her eyes. Finds her shirt and pulls it on. She yanks at some denim in a pile, looking for her jeans. Finds his instead.

GIRL
It's rain...

A small bottle of PINK PILLS falls from the pocket.

GIRL (cont'd)
...ing.

The prescription label is ripped off. She looks to the bathroom door, hesitates, then sticks them in her purse.

INT. AARON'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY (DAWN)

AARON DUPLASSE, early-20s, black, clean-cut and confident, or at least determined. He scoops pills from a few prescription bottles into a weekly planner pillbox. His EMS uniform is ironed crisp.

Off screen, a baby CRIES. Aaron sighs, hard. He bends down and hides the pill bottles under the sink.

IN THE BEDROOM, Aaron enters with the pillbox and a glass of iced tea. His girlfriend, CAMMY MANCUSO, is wrapped in a cocoon of bed sheets, facing away from him.

He sets her medication and tea on the night stand. The baby's cries grow shriller.

AARON
Nathan's up, babe.
(She doesn't respond)
I have to go. I can't be late.

She doesn't answer, or move.

He sighs, pulls an EMS jacket from a chair-back and dons it. "LOS ANGELES EMS", on the back, laureled by the same angel-wing insignia as Leonard's bag.

EXT. ALAMEDA NEIGHBORHOOD - DAWN

Aaron exits to the split porch of a modest duplex, cradling NATHAN on his shoulder.

AARON
Shh, shh, buddy, it's alright.
(Nathan begins to quiet)
Yeah, you hear that? That's "rain".

They gawk at the gray downpour for a moment.

A run-down car parks on the curb. Aaron's older cousin, BRITNEY, 30s, runs to them with her handbag over her head.

AARON (cont'd)
 You are a lifesaver. It's just, you know it's my first day and Cammy isn't doing so great --

BRITNEY
 What else is new. He been changed?
 (Aaron winces, apologetic)
 At least he's settled.

AARON
 Thank you. How's Mark doing with his insulin? He's taking it, right?

BRITNEY
 Yeah, but the insurance is still fucking around with us. The copay's too much. At the end of the month--

AARON
 I'll see what I can do. Promise.

Brit takes Nathan from his arms, grateful.

LIGHTS FLICKER on the gray street as an AMBULANCE approaches and double-parks. "ANGELES EMS" in big letters on the side. Angel wings prominently stenciled on the rear doors.

The HORN BLARES. Nathan wakes in Brit's arms, crying again. Brit glares at Aaron.

AARON (cont'd)
 I gotta go. I love you. I gotta go.

He drapes his jacket over his head and runs to the sidewalk. Yanks the ambulance passenger door to find LEONARD sitting in the driver's seat. Climbs in.

AARON (cont'd)
 (extending a hand)
 Aaron Duplasse, good to meet you.

Leonard looks him up and down.

LEONARD
 Alright.

EXT. I-10W ON-RAMP - DAY (DAWN)

Poor visibility. Cold water pooling on the freeway, reflecting like steel. A VW Golf putters up the on-ramp, merging with thin, timid traffic.

INT. VW GOLF - CONTINUOUS

Fishing poles clatter as a middle-aged HUSBAND white-knuckles it, squeezing the steering wheel as he pushes the little car down the freeway, his WIFE shaking her head.

A boy, DANNY, 10, sits in the back seat reading a comic book: *Superman catching the front of a getaway car, its chassis crumpling around him in a tide of shrapnel.*

WIFE

Honey, this is ridiculous!

HUSBAND

It'll clear up by ten. Trout will be scrambling, practically leaping into the boat. Right Danny?

Danny looks up, unconvinced.

HUSBAND (cont'd)

(singing)

Oh, Danny-boy, oh Danny-boy; the trout, yes the trout are calling!

Danny sticks his tongue out. Dad smiles in the rear view.

Through the rear window, we watch as a black, lifted Ford pickup materializes from the rain, SPEEDING through the mist like a phantom closing in-- way too fast.

Just before it SLAMS into the hatchback, SILENCE.

.

INT. LEONARD'S AMBULANCE - DAY (DAWN)

Leonard's ambulance trundles through the downpour. Lights flash, but no sirens. Other cars on the road struggle to stay in their lanes as the ambo glides confidently past.

AARON (O.S.)

Those windshield wipers go any faster?

LEONARD (O.S.)

Nope.

Leonard drives while Aaron rides shotgun. Leonard doesn't seem to mind the low-visibility, cruising at 40 MPH. Aaron clenches his fists whenever they overtake a car. His eyes keep drifting to...

A dusty bobble-toy, mounted between them on the dash. A cartoon COWBOY RIDING A BULL, bucking with each pothole.

AARON (O.S.)

You been riding East LA for a long time? Must have seen some serious shit.

(long silence)

I was working up in Fresno. Grew up there, actually. It's not LA, but it gets pretty messy. On the weekends, at least.

LEONARD

Don't you got an all-star softball team up there?

AARON

What?

LEONARD

Yeah. The Rounders. Those are some tough broads.

Silence for a moment. Aaron unsure what to do with that.

AARON

It's got a decent 'medic program, too.

LEONARD

Jules mentioned. So, what the hell are you doing down here?

AARON

Well, location, I guess, and...

LEONARD

Oh, no. No, no. Please tell me Jules didn't stick me with a wagon-renter. I could tell as soon as I saw you. What is it, UCLA? USC?

AARON

Western. The PA program. I haven't started yet.

LEONARD

...waste of my goddamned time.

AARON

I'm here to help. And learn. I passed the same tests you did.

LEONARD

No, you haven't.

The dispatch radio CRACKLES: LAYLA on the line. A soothing, velvet-lined voice with a Southern twang.

We'll only hear Layla for now, but we get the sense that her kind attitude and genuine concern go a long way in holding this dysfunctional family of 'medics together.

LAYLA (V.O.)

Units 104 and 107, we have a multi-car on the 10 East, a half-mile before Centinela Avenue.

(then)

How we feelin' today, Len?

LEONARD

Like a blimp full of unicorn farts.

Maniacal laughter over the radio, a snort, then more laughter. Aaron stares at Leonard, quizzical.

LEONARD (cont'd)

I blurt out whatever the fuck comes to mind and she squeals like a pig in shit. Don't ask me why.

(then, dead serious)

You want to learn and help? Let's see what you've got.

(into dash radio)

Ten minutes out, Layla.

Leonard flicks the SIREN switch on the dash. No sirens. He punches the roof. A single WHOOP!, then silence. He punches once more. Just dents the roof now. Aaron continues staring.

LEONARD (cont'd)

Fuck it.

Leonard LEANS on the horn as they blow through an intersection. HONNNNNKKKK!

INT. ROBERTA AND VIC'S AMBULANCE - SAME

Roberta flies, pushing 70mph in the rain, lights and sirens going apeshit as she puts her dash walkie back. Vic sits on the gurney in the rear cab, prepping an IV bag of saline.

VIC

Didn't see you leave Ronaldo's last night. Get into any trouble?

ROBERTA

You don't want to know. You definitely want to know. I let that loser intern take me home.

VIC

Ooh...

ROBERTA

Got all the way back to his place in Eagle Rock, and he blew in his pants while we were making out.

Vic hangs the bag on a hook and Roberta hits a pothole as he stabs himself in the forearm, completely missing veins.

VIC

C'mon!

Roberta glances in the rear view and laughs as Vic painfully extracts the needle. He refocuses and glides it into the crook of his elbow. Tapes it down.

VIC (cont'd)

That's what happens when you hook up with doctors. They're all premature-ejaculators. It's sad, but true.

ROBERTA

He didn't even offer to pay for my Uber home, and this morning he finds the nerve to text me, all "*You gonna come back and let me screw your brains out?*" What? No, you fucking dweeb! Should I text that back?

VIC

Definitely. See, what you need is a fireman. A real sexual dynamo.

ROBERTA

I think I'm going to take a week off. Vodka, coke, fucking - the whole thing. I'll start meditating.

(Vic chuckles)

I'm serious. Let's do it together.

VIC

I don't meditate. Don't need to. Stillness flows through me.

ROBERTA

Just the cleanse part, then. Just a couple of days! *One* day. Twenty-four hours. Don't you think we can stay sober for one day?

VIC

I *know* we can. That's why I don't feel the need to prove it. Besides... I was thinking that instead of Ronaldo's, *again*, you roll through with a few of those Oxy's you got, we watch cartoons and ride the H-train to la-la-land.

ROBERTA

Your place is revolting, so no, and didn't I give the Oxy to you so I wouldn't do them all? Did you do them all? You said you wouldn't!

VIC

Shit, did I? No, they must be in my room somewhere. Shit.

ROBERTA

If you lost them...

VIC

They're there. Somewhere.

ROBERTA

They better be. And we can do them tomorrow. 24 hours clean, what do you say?

Vic lays back on the gurney, smiling as his hangover clears.

VIC

Namaste.

Roberta HONKS-HOOOONKKS as sirens continue to wail.

ROBERTA

You people drive like old people
fuck!

EXT. 10 EAST FREEWAY - MORNING

An Angeles EMS ambo - lights flashing, horn HONKING - flies up the shoulder.

60 MPH feels like 80. To the left is STALLED TRAFFIC pointed toward Downtown, and two feet to the right is a CONCRETE WALL. HONK, HONK!

An obnoxious-colored Fiat is nosed onto the shoulder ahead. HONK! HONNNNNNNK!

The tiny car swings back into the lane as the wagon BLURS past and finally escapes the gauntlet.

It SCREECHES TO A STOP beside another Angeles EMS ambulance - and a horror-show of metal, glass and bodies:

A station-wagon T-boned by a mini-van in the middle of the highway, surrounded by circular skid marks.

Two sedans, crunched into each other on the shoulder. A fifth -- the black pickup from the opening scene -- is almost over the central divider, and sheared down to the engine-block.

30-yards up, the Golf with Danny is completely flipped over.

Aaron and Leonard jump out, grab reflective vests, knee pads and med-kits, and run toward the devastation.

They find Roberta shouting to a stunned man climbing from his car. A few other stunned drivers wander towards her.

ROBERTA

(over rain, cupped hands)
If you can hear me, and you can walk, follow my voice and get back behind the ambulances! -- Shit, Leonard, glad you're here. You want to D-O this mess? You're senior.

She offers him the Director Of Operations lanyard.

LEONARD

(waving her off)
Don't remind me. How bad?

ROBERTA

Just arrived, and alone in the world. F.D. and another wagon ten-out. Victor's working the accordion over there. I suggest you two start at the flipped VW, and the pickup up ahead.

LEONARD

Got it.

(to Aaron as he moves)

Stay on me. LET'S MOVE!

Aaron nods, trots after him, but it's clearly his first time seeing devastation like this. His eyes begin to glaze.

LEONARD (cont'd)

Primary assessment checklist?

AARON

(snapping out of it)

What?

LEONARD

Your assessment checklist! Three, two, one --

AARON

Um... General impression! LOC, chief complaint-

They reach the overturned Golf. Aaron trails off when he sees blood mixing with glass and rain water on the asphalt.

They crouch in front of the vehicle. The father is crumpled in a heap on the roof. The mother and son are buckled in, awkwardly hanging from their seats.

Leonard hangs his head for a moment, then looks at the mother. Removes his glove, feels for a pulse he knows won't come.

LEONARD

(then, to Aaron)

No one told you to stop reciting.

AARON

--chief complaint, consider spinal immobilization, assess airway, breathing...

CUT TO:

INT/EXT. CRASHED NISSAN - SAME

A Nissan is crumpled against a divider, the entire hood crushed like a tin can. The windshield is shattered.

Vic slides a neck-brace onto the unconscious man in the driver's seat. The man's eyes flutter open.

VIC
Sir, my name is Victor, I'm a
paramedic --

MAN
(Spanish, weak)
Where am I?

VIC
(switches to Spanish)
Sir, I need you to stay still.

MAN
*I need to drop my daughter off and
get to work. I can't be late again.*

VIC
*You've been in an accident, please
stay still.*

MAN
Where is my daughter? Patricia!

He begins struggling in his seat, but SHRIEKS in pain - the engine block has shoved his shins up through his kneecaps.

VIC
Please, sir! You've been in an--

Vic looks around and goes cold when he sees a body crumpled against the concrete divider, 20-yards ahead.

CUT TO:

INT/EXT. VW GOLF - SAME

Aaron crawls to the rear of the cab, to find the young boy dangling upside down by his seat belt. Checks his pulse.

AARON
I've got a pulse! Slow and
bounding. BP's probably high and
wide. Cushing's triad. How's yours?

Leonard scrambles to Aaron's side, shaking his head.

LEONARD

Let's get the boy out of here.

AARON

I don't have a collar on him yet.

LEONARD

He's got pressure building up in his brain-- he won't last another thirty seconds upside-down like this.

AARON

But we could cripple him.

LEONARD

His legs won't work if he's dead, either. Catch him for me.

Leonard undoes the seat belt, and the kid slumps into Aaron's arms. Aaron does his best to lay the kid out while keeping his head in alignment.

Leonard takes quick hand-measurements and fits a lightweight cervical collar around his neck. He barely registers the BLOOD-SMEARED SUPERMAN COMIC beside him.

Then, he pulls his Mac blade (a curved tool used to guide the insertion of a breathing tube) from his kit.

LEONARD (cont'd)

Can you intubate?

(Aaron nods, shaky)

I need to check on the pickup. *Can you intubate?*

AARON

Yes, sir!

LEONARD

Do it. Then spike him with 1 mil of Versed. Call for Roberta if you need help.

AARON

But... but what if he's...?

LEONARD

Then I'll take the heat. Get to work!

He shoves the Mac blade and light into Aaron's hands, then runs up the block toward the Ford pickup.

AARON
Oh shit, oh shit.

Aaron steadies his hands and uses his snake light and Mac blade to guide a tube down Danny's throat, into his lungs.

Leonard hustles through the rain to find the pickup's smoking hood lunged up over the divider and oozing radiator fluid. FRANTIC ROCK MUSIC BLASTS FROM THE SPEAKERS.

He tries to open the driver's door, but it's dented and wedged to the frame.

He unlocks the passenger door, climbs **INSIDE THE PICKUP**, and braces himself against the B-pillar to get level with the man. Finds him folded over the steering wheel and deflated airbag. Eyes just barely open.

Leonard **TURNS** the volume down on the stereo console. Then he sees a **SHATTERED BOURBON BOTTLE**, shards embedded in the man's throat from the force of the airbag. **BLOOD** pours from his wound in slow pulses.

MAN
(weak)
Help...

LEONARD
Just had to get behind the wheel,
didn't you.

MAN
...me...

Leonard pulls a stethoscope from his bag and presses it to the man's back. Listens. Checks his pulse at his wrist.

LEONARD
There's glass lodged in your
jugular. Looks like... Jim Beam?
I'm more of a Jack guy, but I get
it, you drink what you got. Problem
is you did it and got behind the
wheel, and now there are at least
three people dead. A little boy
with no parents. People wondering
where their families are right now.

MAN
I'm... sorry...

LEONARD
If you survive, you'll rot in jail
for the rest of your life.

(MORE)

LEONARD (cont'd)

If there's anyone left in this world who loves you, they'll visit you for a while, but eventually they'll realize you aren't worth it, and stop. Then you'll be alone. Maybe that's better than dying here. If we leave the glass in, you might have a chance in the hospital. Ten percent, I'd say. Or we could always just remove it now. End things quick while you've still got a decent buzz going. Your call.

Off of the dying man's unbelieving eyes...

EXT. FREEWAY - LATER

HONKING HORNS from hundreds of angry drivers fill the air. Police cordon off the scene. LAFD and EMS carry the living on gurneys to ambos while CORONERS carry the dead to vans.

Roberta finds Leonard watching FIREFIGHTERS pry the door from the pickup with a hydraulic jaws-of-life. Rainwater and blood run from his uniform, pooling around his feet.

ROBERTA

Caught a bad one today.

LEONARD

They're all bad ones.

ROBERTA

You alright?

LEONARD

Wish it would stop raining.

ROBERTA

But, things are alright?

LEONARD

You know me, Ro.

ROBERTA

So, what happened?

LEONARD

Some guy had half a bottle of Jim lodged in his neck. Idiot pulled it out.

ROBERTA
 (barely-credulous nod)
 That was stupid.

AARON (O.S.)
 Anyone want to give me a hand?

Aaron wheels the unconscious BOY, Daniel, past them. Leonard helps guide him toward the ambulances.

Daniel's BLOOD-SMEARED SUPERMAN COMIC falls from the gurney. Leonard catches it, folds and pockets it.

Roberta helps Vic push his patient, the heavily-sedated father.

VIC
 (on the walk)
 Hey, Leonard. We find the guy who did all this?

LEONARD
 He bled out on me.

AARON
 Asshole got it easy.

ROBERTA
 Nobody gets it easy.

VIC
 I need a drink.

They reach their respective ambos, open the back doors and prepare to hoist their patients inside.

EXT. HAWTHORNE HOSPITAL LOADING BAY - DAY

The rain has stopped. Everything is gray and wet. Leonard leans against the loading dock, looking at the bloody Superman comic. Aaron stares at the sunshine just barely peeking through bloated clouds. Then he blinks, remembering where he is.

AARON
 If he survives, he'll be an orphan.
 If he survives. Christ.

LEONARD
 You can't worry about what happens to them after. We just keep them alive long enough to die in the hospital.

AARON

That's pretty callous.

LEONARD

I like to think of it as stoic. Was that your first multi-car?

AARON

As a para. Had one my first year as an EMT, but we were last on scene... our patient didn't make it to the hospital.

LEONARD

Then I'd call this an improvement.

Aaron glares. Shakes his head. Returns to the ambulance and climbs in the passenger side. Slams the door.

INT. HAWTHORNE HOSPITAL - CAFETERIA - MORNING

Roberta eyes a pastry case, absentmindedly snapping a rubber band around her wrist.

A clean, expensive food-court in a clean, expensive hospital. Vic and Roberta stand out in their grubby blues. He buys two coffees from a cashier at a "Sacred Grounds" kiosk and hands her one.

VIC

So, what's up with *Leonardo*?

ROBERTA

I wouldn't know.

VIC

Just thought I might have seen some old sparks flying at the blood-bath.

ROBERTA

Why, did it make you jealous?

VIC

I'm not even emotionally capable of comprehending jealousy. Or shame. Or regret, for that matter... You think I might have a problem?

(Roberta shrugs)

But no, I'm just making conversation.

ROBERTA

What about you and that, uh, *young woman* you were hitting on last night?

VIC

I don't know who you mean.

ROBERTA

She didn't look old enough to drink.

VIC

I don't know who you're talking about, but Ronaldo runs a tight ship, and does not serve alcohol to people under legal drinking age.

He notices a couple of white-coat clad INTERNS nearby, scowling at him. He starts walking toward the exit. Roberta follows.

ROBERTA

Please tell me you didn't take her home. That would be so gross.

VIC

I didn't! You know depressed single-mothers are my strike zone. In fact, I went home with a very generous insurance agent who's name isn't coming to me right now. She had these huge nipples, like saucer plates I swear --

ROBERTA

Alright, alright!

VIC

Alright?

ROBERTA

Alright.

Vic notices ANOTHER group of doctors side-eyeing them.

VIC

Let's get out of here.
Can't stand these white-coat assholes.

EXT. BEVERLY BOULEVARD / INT. LEONARD'S AMBULANCE - MORNING

Leonard pulls off of the main road and parks behind a strip of stores.

LEONARD
I'll be right back.

AARON
What if we get a call?

LEONARD
You have my cell.

He shoves open the door and climbs out. Exits the alley and disappears around the front of the shopping strip. Aaron eyes the back doors, trying to intuit what his partner might be doing.

He sighs and sits back. Tries to not pick his cuticles. He watches two homeless men at the far end of the lot - one appears to be teaching the other basic martial-arts strikes.

A blessedly quiet, spacious moment.

Then, his PHONE RINGS and he JOLTS.

Incoming call: "<3 Cammy <3" He answers, and immediately hears Nathan wailing in the background.

AARON
Hey, babe, how are --

CAMMY
Nathan won't feed and I tried the bottle and he won't even look at me, he just keeps crying!

AARON
It's okay, honey, you warmed the bottle, right?

CAMMY
Of course I warmed the fucking bottle, Aaron!

AARON
Did Britney come by? I called her--

CAMMY
Oh, shit! Someone's knocking on the door! Nathan's been crying all morning-- the neighbors must think I'm doing something horrible!

(MORE)

CAMMY (cont'd)
 Oh my god, do you think they called
 the police? What if it's the
 police?

AARON
 Just answer the door and explain
 the situation. Babies cry it's --

The DISPATCH RADIO SQUAWKS --

LAYLA
 Unit 104, I need someone to take a
 stabbing at 443 Hillcrest, Boyle
 Heights, police en route. You in
 the area?

AARON
 Fuck!

CAMMY
 What? What is it, Aaron?

AARON
 Nothing, I just, I'm going to put
 you on hold--

CAMMY
 You're putting me on hold?

AARON
 Just a sec, babe!

He pulls up a contact and calls -- one ring --

LEONARD
 On my way.

••

EXT. BOYLE HEIGHTS - DAY

Leonard's ambulance HONK-HONKS through a rain-slicked
 intersection.

INSIDE Aaron is in back digging around for equipment --
 snapping tourniquets, counting quick-clot packets, while
 switching his phone between hands and ears constantly. His
 son continues to SOB on the other end of the line.

AARON
 Just breathe, honey, you're fine.

CAMMY

I'm not fine! And I think Ms. Song
is at the door!

AARON

There's a bottle in the dresser in
the kitchen, the third one from the
'fridge. Do you see it?

CAMMY

Yes.

AARON

There should be a couple Valium in
there, take one and chew it up.
Just one, alright?

LEONARD

We good on O-negative?

AARON

Checking!

He opens a refrigerated cabinet and rummages through,
keeping the phone to his ear.

AARON (cont'd)

Now take Nathan, take a breath, and
answer the door. You've got this.

(then, a horrible
realization)

No. No!

CAMMY (O.S.)

WHAT?

LEONARD

WHAT?

AARON

No, not you, honey! - The fucking
'fridge is dead!

LEONARD

What the fuck does that
mean?

AARON

It means your piece of shit
ambulance has a broken
refrigerator, and this blood
is useless!

CAMMY (O.S.)

Hi, Ms. Song, I'm so sorry
about all the noise.
Nathan's been sick.

MS. SONG (O.S.)

This is becoming a regular
thing. Maybe your husband
shouldn't be leaving you
alone for so long, if you
aren't able to --

AARON
Put her on the phone! Give
her the phone, Cam!

LEONARD
We're already here. Fuck the
blood, grab two sewing kits
and extra gauze!

Aaron runs out of hands, puts it on speaker and on his knee.

MS. SONG (O.S.)
Hello?

AARON
Ms. Song, I heard you're concerned
about Nathan - thank you so much,
and sorry about the noise. He's
been under the weather for a few
days and--

MS. SONG (O.S.)
A few days? This has been going on
for most of the month. And the
neighbor's aren't happy. If people
start leaving, I don't know what I
will do!

AARON
Probably put in a new bathroom sink
and double the rent...

The ambulance SLIDES to a splashing stop outside of a Boyle Heights duplex. Leonard readies to jump out, but waits -

AARON (cont'd)
I'm sorry. We've just - Cammy's
been under a lot of pressure. Our
pediatrician has assured us
everything is fine. Just a case of
colic. I'm half-way to being a
physician's assistant myself - I do
know a thing or two, and we're
doing everything we can. Now, if
you could please return the phone
to my wife.

A silent moment. Aaron sees Leonard watching him in the rear-view, eyebrow raised. Cammy back on the line:

CAMMY (O.S.)
She's leaving.

AARON
I have to go.

CAMMY
I'm sorry, this is my fault.

AARON
No, baby, this is not--

Leonard SNATCHES the phone from him and hangs it up.

EXT. DUPLEX LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

They roll a gurney towards a cracked door. Aaron slows...

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Stay away!

And Leonard rushes **INSIDE**, Aaron following. A WOMAN tries to position the couch between herself and her BOYFRIEND. She's holding a large kitchen knife. There are fist-sized holes punched in the wall.

BOYFRIEND
Is this what you want?!

The boyfriend slams his head into a picture frame.

Leonard drops his end of the gurney and slowly steps toward him, hands outstretched.

LEONARD
We're responding to a stabbing. Is there anyone who's been injured?

BOYFRIEND
Me, man! This puta cut me!

AARON
Leonard, we need to wait for the cops!

LEONARD
What do you think the cops are gonna to do when they get here? I need to tell you that?
(Aaron, tripped by this)
Just follow my lead.

WOMAN
He thinks I'm cheating on him!

LEONARD
Has he hurt you?

BOYFRIEND
The fuck did I say, bro? She attacked me!

He holds up his arm, which has a shallow slash.

WOMAN

It was self defense!

BOYFRIEND

(punching another hole)
How could you do this to me?

WOMAN

It was an accident!

BOYFRIEND

I meant fucking my cousin!

WOMAN

I told you nothing happened! That
ice shit got you acting crazy!

LEONARD

(sotto, to Aaron)
He's tweaked-out. Get the gurney
ready.

Leonard moves closer, only a couple of steps away. While the boyfriend's attention is focused on his girlfriend, Leonard glances back at Aaron, who shakes his head-- "No way, man." Leonard lunges for the boyfriend and bear hugs him.

The boyfriend roars in anger and tries to throw Leonard off, but Leonard pulls him to the ground.

LEONARD (cont'd)

(to Aaron)
Help me, dipshit!

Aaron snatches the backboard off the gurney and rushes over. He grabs one of the velcro "spider straps" and wraps it around the boyfriend's right wrist.

The boyfriend breaks his arm free and sends the backboard whipping around the room, smashing through a lamp. The woman screams.

LEONARD (cont'd)

Jesus Christ!

Aaron catches part of the board and maneuvers it on top of the boyfriend. He bears down on it, crushing both the boyfriend and Leonard, and uses another spider strap to pin the boyfriend's left hand.

Leonard slides out from underneath the whole mess and, together, they are able to use the other spider straps to immobilize the boyfriend's arms and legs. It's not pretty, but it's effective.

Someone starts CLAPPING.

Leonard looks over to see two LAPD OFFICERS in raincoats in the doorway.

OFFICER 1

I don't think that's a regulation use of that backboard, Leonard.

LEONARD

Didn't want anybody accidentally opening fire. Can't have you up all night writing reports.

The nervous, younger Officer 2 self-consciously takes his hand off of his holstered pistol.

OFFICER 1

Mind collecting 'scripts while we figure out what to do with this asshole? Unless you want him.

LEONARD

Gotta take a piss anyway. All this excitement.

(re: Aaron)

Let him sign the handover. He's good at paperwork.

IN THE BATHROOM Leonard searches the medicine cabinet and drawers, lining prescription bottles up on the sink.

His eyes go wide when he finds a bottle of *Roxycodone 30mg*. Glances around (a habit) and pops two in his mouth. Puts a few more in a small baggie. Goes down the line. Takes three pills from a bottle, two from another, three from another -- not enough for anyone to be sure they are missing.

Shoves those in his pocket. Jots the remaining meds on a plastic collection bag and drops the bottles in.

EXT. BOYLE HEIGHTS - DAY

Aaron signs a form with a trembling hand, and gives the clipboard to the younger Second Officer, who smirks and shoves the seething Boyfriend into a squad car.

INT. LEONARD'S AMBULANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Aaron sits alone, WINCES, massages his bruised shoulder. Tries to take deep, yogic breaths.

He looks out at the clouds, breaking to a HOT SUN. Rainwater starts to evaporate off asphalt. It's almost quiet.

His eyes land on the mysterious BLACK PLASTIC BAG that Leonard left between the seats.

He reaches for it --

SLAM! A house door - Leonard exits the duplex. Aaron sits back, watching Leonard pass the collection-bag to the senior officer. They talk conspiratorially for a moment before Leonard approaches the idling wagon.

He enters, settling into the driver's seat. He puts the wagon in gear, and they lurch off of the curb.

AARON

You take more time pissing than anyone I know.

LEONARD

Just 'cause my dick's so long. Speaking of, how's the wife?

AARON

Girlfriend. She's better.

LEONARD

Sounds clingy.

AARON

She's got post-partum.

LEONARD

Just had a kid?

AARON

Nathan... it's a lot for her.

LEONARD

He yours?

AARON

Fuck you. Yeah, he's mine.

LEONARD

Never put a baby in crazy. Some people just aren't cut out for parenthood.

AARON
You don't know shit about Cammy.

LEONARD
(snorts a chuckle)
Yeah, sure.

EXT. BELL GARDENS PARK - DAY

The sky is clear and the city is humid. Roberta and Vic lean against their ambulance, shirts untucked, squinting against the mid-day sun.

The radio CRACKLES in the cab.

LAYLA (V.O.)
Unit 107 -- uh, Roberta?

ROBERTA
... What's up?

LAYLA (V.O.)
Hey, I don't want to alarm, but you said to call you first if --

ROBERTA
Is she...?

LAYLA
I don't think so. It's a fall.

ROBERTA
Unbelievable.

LAYLA
I'll route it to another wagon, I just wanted to --

ROBERTA
No, I'm ten blocks away. I'm going.

She disconnects. Vic says nothing - just looks at her.

EXT. SOUTH GATE - DAY

The ambulance jerks to a stop *outside of Roberta's home*. She and Vic open their doors.

ROBERTA
Just -- I'll call you if I need you, okay?

She unlocks the front door and barges **INSIDE**, carrying her medical bag.

ROBERTA (cont'd)
Mom? Goddammit, mom, where are you?

She circles to the KITCHEN, then to the BATHROOM. Nothing. Roberta bounds up the stairs and through a door and finds her father sitting on the edge of the bed in the exact same position she left him that morning, wearing the same robe.

He does not seem to hear the BLARING TELEVISION.

ROBERTA (cont'd)
Have you moved today? Where's mom?

Hector does not respond. Roberta turns to the bathroom door.

Roberta pushes it in to find Gloria unconscious between the bathtub and toilet, with a cordless phone in her hand.

ROBERTA (cont'd)
Mom? No, no, no...!

She runs to her, pressing fingers to her neck. Feels a pulse, but Gloria doesn't wake and Roberta starts feeling her scalp for swelling from the fall. Doesn't feel any.

Takes out a penlight, opens her mother's eyelid. The eye moves as Gloria STARTLES awake.

Roberta SHRIEKS and leaps back. Profound relief flickers across her face - and is almost immediately snuffed out.

ROBERTA (cont'd)
Are you fucking kidding me?

GLORIA
What are you doing here?

ROBERTA
You know this is my district! Are you actually hurt?

GLORIA
Well, I'm on the floor -- who's going to help me up, Hector? I had to call somebody!

ROBERTA
Jesus Christ! What did you have? A bottle of wine? Any pills? You promised, no mixing that shit, at least, right? Just tell me.

GLORIA

A bottle of wine. And one of those pills, the round white one. It was four hours ago! I just slipped, and I had to call somebody! I'm all alone here, and--

ROBERTA

OKAY!

(panting beat)

I'm just going to look at you, then I have to get back to work.

GLORIA

This is your work.

INT. ROBERTA AND VIC'S AMBULANCE - MINUTES LATER

Roberta climbs into the driver's seat, flushed from crying, but trying to hold it together. After a quiet moment:

VIC

Are you okay? Is that a stupid question? That's a stupid question.

ROBERTA

I woke up this morning and emptied my dad's shitty bed-pan. And my fucking tendonitis is flaring, so I had to wipe his ass with one good hand. Then there was the accordion-party, with a woman missing half her head and that poor kid. Then I drank four cups of coffee, then my psycho mother throws herself on the bathroom floor for attention, and the worst part is, I actually show up, so somehow I'm still home even when I'm at work. AND I'm sober.

VIC

That wasn't my idea.

ROBERTA

We drive around - all day it's crushed bones, ODs, slashed throats, factory accidents, people ejected from vehicles, fucking insane nonstop code black shit. We're scraping the worst life has to offer off the pavement, and we're supposed to just process it? Compartmentalize?

(MORE)

ROBERTA (cont'd)

They stick us on the front lines in a box-of-drugs-on-wheels, and say "good luck". The whole system - it's as broken as the people we try to save. Who can judge us for getting fucked up all the time?

VIC

That's what I'm saying.

ROBERTA

I can't be here.

(embarrassed beat)

Want to do Oxys and play Terminator pinball at Ronaldo's?

VIC

You serious? Absolutely! Shit! I think they're in my room. You sure you didn't do 'em?

(Roberta groans)

Okay! I'll drop you at the station, you can pluck your eyebrows or whatever chicks do, I'll find the horse pills, pick you up, and we'll rail them all in Ronaldo's parking lot. I'll even get Taco Bell on the way. Cool?

ROBERTA

My hero.

INT. LEONARD'S AMBULANCE - DAY

Leonard drives. The humidity has mostly dried up and hot air blows in through open windows. The air-conditioner seems to be on the fritz. Aaron massages his bruised shoulder, winces as he watches the bull-rider bobble on the dash.

LEONARD

You're still mad about the domestic? That's why you're moping? I made a play, it's your job to back me up.

AARON

I'm not impressed by your renegade EMT bullshit. I'm not a trainee, and I'm not your sidekick.

LEONARD

Clearly not, but there are going to be tough calls, and you better get comfortable making them, or you won't last out here. But maybe that's okay with you. Slum it with us for a year on your way to a white coat and a cushy job in the towers.

AARON

Forgive me if I don't see driving an ambulance with a broken refrigerator as a long-term plan.

LEONARD

Maybe there's a reason you're here.
(Aaron scowls)
I've seen a lot of people hop in that saddle, and most of them don't go on to illustrious medical careers. If it doesn't throw you off, and you don't jump off, then...

AARON

What?

LEONARD

This job shows you who you really are. You might not like the person you find.

AARON

Are you married? Got kids?
(Leonard doesn't answer)
I do. I got people who rely on me. Who care about me. And they need diapers, and medications, and fucking organic milk. So maybe I got a little more to think about when it comes time to wrestle some methed-out lunatic.

LEONARD

Believe me, I got plenty to think about - but that doesn't keep me from doing my job.

AARON

So, an ex-wife?

LEONARD

She got a house and a daughter out of the deal.

AARON

And a daughter. That's tough.

(Leonard nods)

Having such a prick for a dad. I guess some people just aren't cut out for parenthood.

Leonard opens his mouth to say something, but --

The dispatch radio SQUAWKS.

LAYLA (V.O.)

Len, I got three wagons gridlocked and need coverage on an unknown illness call in Commerce. It's a bit of a hike, but could be a bad one... can you catch it?

LEONARD

(to Aaron)

You good to go, or do you want me to put a band-aid on your boo-boo?

Aaron snatches the radio.

AARON

Unit 104 responding, we're on it.

He slams the radio back on the dash, bull rider bucking.

...

EXT. HALLOWEEN SUPPLY FACTORY - DAY

Leonard and Aaron stalk across the lot toward an anonymous warehouse entrance. Leonard limps a little.

AARON

You got a busted knee, too?

LEONARD

Just after four.

(bangs on a metal door)

Angeles Paramedics!

The door opens just enough for a nervous Latino banger, EMIL, 18, to eye Aaron and Leonard's uniforms. He swings it open and motions them through.

EMIL
He's in the back.

Leonard walks right past. Aaron hesitates, but follows.

INSIDE, the warehouse is filled with an odd mix of Halloween and Dia de los Muertos decorations. PAINED MOANS come from behind a tall shelf stacked with plastic skeletons.

Leonard and Aaron follow the moaning to a BLOOD-DRENCHED WORK AREA, where SANTONIO (20) lays, half-conscious atop a dirty towel on the floor.

CHRISTIAN, 22, obviously the leader of things, hovers over him. He pales when he sees --

CHRISTIAN
Leonard? W-what are you doing here?

LEONARD
You motherfucker!

Leonard forgets about the victim and throttles Christian, like he might pop the kid's head off with his thumbs.

Christian goes for SOMETHING in his pocket, but Leonard is on him, and they GRAPPLE.

Aaron and Emil gawk, too shocked to react until BANG!

Christian BLOWS a shelf of brightly painted SUGAR SKULLS to dust. He sees Leonard's expression. Now he's pissed.

Leonard throttles the kid against a pile of wooden pallets, is about to gut-punch him --

AARON
STOP!
(Leonard STOPS, seething)
What is going on?

Leonard digs into Christian's pocket and takes the PISTOL.

LEONARD
Looks like this dipshit's homie got shot, and they can't go to the hospital because they're illegal, so they decided to hold a couple paramedics hostage. Thing is, last month I told this fuckhead that the next time I saw his face, I'd kick it in. My lucky day.

EMIL

Who is this pocho motherfucker?

CHRISTIAN

He's Lotty's fake-dad.

Leonard moves to Santonio - FAKE-OUT JUMPS at Emil, who recoils - then crouches by the barely-conscious kid. He takes a pair of scissors out and cuts up his pant-leg and boxers, revealing a BULLET WOUND IN HIS THIGH.

LEONARD

Just the thigh?

CHRISTIAN

Think so. Pinche mayates can't aim for shit.

(then, to Aaron)

No offense.

LEONARD

What do you think?

Aaron hesitates, then he crouches by the young banger. They roll him over, inspecting the exit wound. Santonio groans, barely responsive.

AARON

It missed the femoral, or he'd be dead right now. May have clipped bone, though. Either way, he needs more than we can give him here.

LEONARD

He needs to survive the next ten minutes. Start there. What's first?

AARON

Airway is unobstructed, breathing shallow and pulse is... not great. Elevate legs, apply pressure and oxygen.

LEONARD

(to Christian)

Grab that chair, dipshit.

Christian grabs a folding chair and drags it over. They hoist Santonio's legs onto it. Aaron pulls a small oxygen tank from his bag, attaches it to a ventilator mask. Puts the mask on Santonio and twists the valve.

CHRISTIAN

Yo, you're not gonna - please don't tell Lotty about this.

LEONARD

(ignoring him, to Aaron)
What next?

AARON

Three units of O-neg from the wagon - wait, shit!

CHRISTIAN

What?

AARON

(glaring at Leonard)
We don't have any blood.

A dire beat.

EMIL

Can't we give him some of ours?

AARON

A person-to-person transfusion? You serious? Do you know his blood type? Or your own even?

Blank stares.

LEONARD

I'm O-negative.

AARON

No, absolutely not.

LEONARD

If you're gonna bail, don't waste his time.

Aaron freezes, stares at the bleeding-out boy. Leonard rolls up his sleeve, starts prepping needles for the transfusion.

Aaron seethes, but realizes that he isn't going anywhere. He goes into his own bag and starts pulling out packets of QUIK-CLOT, a bottle of IODINE, TWEEZERS and a SUTURE KIT.

Leonard swabs the inside crook of his elbow and prepares to stab an IV needle in. He stops, his hands *trembling*.

Aaron watches, nearly stands, but Leonard grits his teeth and drops it in. Tapes it down.

He loops the line around his hand, halting the blood, and turns Santonio's arm over. Now Aaron stands.

AARON

Jesus Christ, give me that.

QUICK CUTS as Aaron snaps on a pair of nitrile gloves - Spikes Santonio with the other end of Leonard's IV line - Sterilizes the bullet wound in Santonio's thigh with a squeeze bottle - Shoves kaolin gauze into the wound until it's packed - Bandages the leg tightly.

LATER, Leonard slumps on a table above Santonio, beside *calacas skeletons* in plastic bags. Loopy. The transfusion line snakes down, running red into Santonio.

Aaron notices Leonard start to shiver. He checks Santonio's pulse. Pulls his lips back to check his gums. They're better colored than they were twenty minutes ago.

AARON (cont'd)

We should pull that line.

LEONARD

Not yet. He's lost two pints.

AARON

Yeah, but you're old, and probably have a bum liver, and need all the blood you can hold onto. Doubt you'll make it through fifteen more minutes of this.

LEONARD

A fluid line will buy twenty.

Aaron hesitates.

LEONARD (cont'd)

Just do it... dipshit...

Aaron swears to himself and finds another needle and line.

AARON

I'm still not impressed.

He attaches the electrolyte bag to the second line, and swabs the crook of Leonard's other arm. Leonard goes limp and passes out.

AARON (cont'd)

Hey, asshole! Alright, that's it, I'm pulling it.

CHRISTIAN
He said leave it in.

AARON
He could go into shock.

CHRISTIAN
He said he could last a little longer, right? Leonard's a pocho fuck, but he does what he says.

AARON
He didn't kick your face in.

A beat. Christian goes into his pocket. Aaron recoils, but the kid takes out a wad of HUNDREDS. He holds out the cash. Aaron eyes him for a moment, then takes it. Gets to work.

He hangs a bag from a hook in the wall, feeding fluid into Leonard's left arm while blood runs from his right. He places the oxygen mask on Leonard's face, then presses a stethoscope to his back. Leonard's heart PUMPS, shallow.

AARON (cont'd)
(to Christian)
So, how do you know this dickhead?

CHRISTIAN
He's kinda like family. Kinda. He adopted my cousin like eight years ago, I think? He and her dad were close, I guess. But I didn't know her like that back then. She's the homegirl, but he don't like me much. Which I get, but at least I'm not an asshole.

AARON
Leonard is definitely not easy to like. The good news is it looks like your friend is gonna make it. Can he stay here for the night?

(Christian nods)
I'm going to give him Augmentin to hold off infection, two a day. And about a week's worth of Tylenol 4 for the pain.

CHRISTIAN
Those ones get you fucked up...
They got lean in them right?

AARON

Codeine, yes. But he's going to need them, so don't be an asshole. One every six hours until they're gone.

(Christian nods)

Okay. Help me get this big motherfucker out of here.

INT. LEONARD'S AMBULANCE - NIGHT

The Los Angeles night is bone-dry, hot, and clear.

Aaron pulls up to Angeles EMS HQ and drives the wagon into the lot. Leonard's slumped in the passenger seat, still a bit dopey, but lucid and washing down a box Nilla wafers with orange juice from a straw. The bullrider bobbles in the shadows now.

LEONARD

Park at the end.

Aaron parks at the furthest spot from the HQ entrance. They sit in silence for a moment.

AARON

That was stupid. And a felony.

LEONARD

That was a misdemeanor.

AARON

I am trying to start a career. To keep my head above water. I am not going to have my future tanked by an irresponsible, wannabe cowboy with a martyr complex.

LEONARD

Well, I wasn't planning on riding with a wagon-renting, uppity, wannabe physician's assistant with a victim complex, but here I am.

(then)

Please tell me you at least took whatever money they offered you to keep quiet.

He eyes Aaron, whose face betrays nothing.

AARON

I think I should talk to Jules about a transfer.

LEONARD

Because why? Because you can't handle that you'd give anything to be a white-coat sitting in some fancy office? Your problem isn't me. Your problem is you.

AARON

Because of a hostile work environment. Don't be dramatic.

Aaron exits the driver's seat and slams the door.

••••

INT. ANGELES AMBULANCE HQ - NIGHT

Leonard limps through the headquarters (a former economy motel that's been converted into a medical office) still drinking orange juice. Weak, but keeping it together. A few EMTs and Paras loiter - some going home, some clocking in.

Leonard stops outside of an office with closed blinds. Hears stern, indistinct voices inside.

A few moments, then the door opens and Aaron exits. He JOLTS when he sees Leonard, sidesteps, and strides to the exit.

JULES FEDERER, 50s, glares at Leonard from behind a desk.

Leonard enters **JULES' OFFICE** and shuts the flimsy door.

JULES

Am I having deja vu? Because I can swear your last partner said the exact same thing to me after his first shift.

LEONARD

You mean Brian? The fainter?

JULES

Don't tell me this one fainted too.

LEONARD

No, but he's green. And arrogant.

JULES

That's about as good as it gets in this... menagerie of assholes.

LEONARD

He's a wagon-renter. A fake para.
He's taking courses at Western!

JULES

Great, maybe he can teach you some
real medicine.

(then)

He agreed to give it one more day
while I "rearrange the schedule". I
didn't mention that nobody else
will work with you. I'm running out
of reasons not to fire you,
Leonard, so why don't you try not
being a two-ton-hard-on for one
day? Give love a chance.

LEONARD

(beat)

Your tie looks like a dog's dick.

Jules glances down at his tan colored, red-tipped tie.

JULES

Your mother bought me this tie.

Leonard stalks out of the office and slams the door.

INT. VIC'S BEDROOM

Vic digs through clothes on his floor. He turns some jean
pockets inside out, shakes them, finds nothing, tosses them
on a growing pile in the corner.

Tries another pair - finds a condom, unrolled, and a broken
cigarette. He cringes and drops the condom in an empty beer
box. Looks around at the unholy mess with a defeated groan.

Lights the cigarette. Takes out his phone. Texts Roberta:

"not lookin good. You sure you didn't do them?"

INT. ANGELES AMBULANCE HQ LOCKER ROOMS - SAME

Roberta, in bar-casual civvies, brushes her teeth and towel
dries her hair. Her phone BUZZES. She reads it.

ROBERTA

Seriously?

Texts back: *"I don't think so. Shit, I might have some K"*

The locker room door opens and Leonard freezes in the threshold.

ROBERTA (cont'd)
Hey, again.

He shuffles to his locker, a few down from hers. Opens it.

LEONARD
You're still here?

ROBERTA
Oh, you know. When you love your job so much, it's hard to go home. How's it going with whatshisname?

LEONARD
He just put in a transfer request.

ROBERTA
He made the whole shift? Not bad. What'd Jules say?

LEONARD
He gave me a day to turn things around. Apparently, I'm running out of partners.

ROBERTA
He didn't buy the "it's not me, it's you" bit, huh? What about Harlan?
(Leonard shrugs)
If you really get in a tough spot, I guess I could take one for the team. Temporarily.

LEONARD
(casual, but firm)
I don't think Jules would go for that, either.

ROBERTA
I meant trading the noob for Vic. He thinks you're alright. And whatshisname doesn't seem so bad. He's got that noble, sincere thing going on. It's cute.

LEONARD
It gets old fast.

He leaves it at that, and Roberta puts the last of her work clothes in a plastic bag, toiletries back in her locker. A last look in the mirror before she heads for the door.

ROBERTA

Well, let me know. Night, Len.

INT. VIC'S BEDROOM

Vic has his mattress leaned up against the pile of clothes and the wall, searching between the planks of his Ikea bedframe. His CELLPHONE RINGS.

He grabs it, answers immediately -

VIC

Look, so maybe I did do 'em.

GIRL (O.S.)

(panicked)

Is this Vic? Something's wrong with Cher! She said you can help her, since she didn't want to get in trouble with her parents, but now she's passed-out and she's not moving!

Vic freezes, hit by a wave of horror as the source of his current predicament clarifies.

VIC

Do you know what she took? How much and how long ago?

GIRL (O.S.)

She had some pills. She didn't know what they were, but I think she took three because they weren't doing anything, but she started acting really weird and passed out!

VIC

Has she been drinking?

GIRL

We did a few shots like twenty minutes ago. Should I call 911? I can't believe I made her do shots, and now she's going to die!

VIC

First, I need you to check her pulse for me, on her neck, just count it out. One, two, three, okay? You feel it?

GIRL

I feel it! (Slow) One... two... three... four...

VIC

(nodding along)

Okay, I can work with that. Where are you? I'm on my way!

INT. VIC'S COROLLA - NIGHT

Vic drives through Monterey Park, phone to his ear.

VIC

Are you still at the station?... I fucked up bad, Ro! I need you to sneak out a wagon, prep it with extra Narcan, and meet me in Alhambra!... I just texted you the address. You can kill me later!

EXT. UPSCALE ALHAMBRA NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Vic books it down a long suburban street with big houses, set far apart and surrounded by trees.

He SKIDS to a stop outside of a house with a few people vaping and drinking beer on the unlit porch.

He runs up the lawn, hears TRAP MUSIC from inside, sees a strobe light through a window. Notices that the loiterers are HIGH SCHOOL BROS.

BRO

What's the password?

VIC

I'm a paramedic, get out of my way.

BRO

No, you're not. If you don't know the password, it's five bucks.

VIC

Get the fuck out of my way, *dude*. It's an emergency!

A second BRO stands from his chair - towering over Vic. Vic grimaces, weighing his options until...

Blessed SIRENS pierce the soundscape, and an Angeles EMS ambo BLAZES toward them and SKIDS to a smoking stop. Roberta leaps out of the driver's side, still in her club-clothes.

VIC (cont'd)
She's with me.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - MOMENTS LATER

The front door swings open, and Roberta and Vic run in, dressed civilian, carrying a portable stretcher with a med bag on it, through a thin crowd of KIDS loitering in groups or dancing awkwardly.

They all turn to gawk as the two run up the staircase.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALL/ UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

They crest the stairs to an unlit hall, nearly plowing into a canoodling couple.

A BEDROOM DOOR CRACKS and a GIRL pokes her head out, desperately waving them in.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

They enter to find Cheryl lying on the floor, pale and fighting for her life. Her BFF (GILLIAN) and a GUY hover.

GUY
She can't die here! My parents are
out of town! I am so fucked!

GILLIAN
You asshole!

Roberta crouches by Cheryl. Vic freezes-up when Roberta cuts a furious glare at him. She turns her attention back to the girl, whose head rolls, eyelids fluttering dully.

ROBERTA
What did she have to drink?

GILLIAN
A few shots of rum.

ROBERTA
Shit, okay. Please hover over
there... PLEASE back up!

Gillian and the Guy back off.

VIC
This isn't really what it...

ROBERTA
Breath shallow, pulse low and wide.

She opens Cheryl's eyelids. Her eyes mostly-white - rolled
back in her head. She's beginning to foam at the mouth.

VIC
I don't even know her.

ROBERTA
Wow, really? Crazy coincidence,
good thing we were in the
neighborhood. Narcan, let's go!

Victor digs through the bag - for a distressingly long time.

ROBERTA (cont'd)
Dude--!

VIC
Got it!

He finds the prescription box, fumbles out a small INHALER.
Crouches beside Roberta, who holds Cheryl's neck and head.
He inserts the inhaler in a nostril and presses the plunger.

GILLIAN
What's that? Is it going to help?
Is she going to be okay?

ROBERTA
It's naloxone - it will counteract
an overdose, but we still need to
get her to the E.R.

INT. ROBERTA AND VIC'S AMBULANCE - MINUTES LATER

Roberta drives, jaw clenched and silent. She massages her
right hand with her left, looks even more pissed off.

Vic and Gillian sit on either side of Cheryl, who's passed
out between them, on a gurney, in a collar, and wearing an
O2 respirator. Gillian's glare burns a hole through Vic.

VIC
 (clears throat)
 Do you still have the pills she
 took? I should collect them.

Gillian reaches into her purse and takes out the bottle of a half-dozen pink tablets, and a bejeweled CELLPHONE. She unlocks the phone and scrolls through texts.

GILLIAN
 So you're Vic, huh?

VIC
 I didn't... she stole those from
 me. They're for medical use only.

GILLIAN
 Uh-huh. Why was she *with* you in the
 first place?

VIC
 I was out at a bar... I drank too
 much, I don't really remember...

Gillian is unimpressed. She considers the bottle.

GILLIAN
 You never asked me what she took.

VIC
 Yeah... I did.

GILLIAN
 (an incredulous beat)
 Cheryl's my best friend. And she'd
 better be okay. Creep.

Vic says nothing, but glances to the front of the ambulance, and sees Roberta glaring in the rear-view mirror. He averts his gaze.

.....

INT. LEONARD'S LINCOLN TOWN CAR - NIGHT

Leonard pulls his black, '80s Lincoln to the curb of a busy street in Echo park. He's still a little loose from the transfusion, and shakes his head to "sober up".

EXT. ECHO PARK - NIGHT

Leonard exits his car and hobbles up the walk to a small house. The lawn is recovering from years of neglect, slowly. He knocks on the door. It's answered by his daughter, ALEXIS, 15. She's as coolly intense as Leonard, but still too young to fully mask her pain.

LEONARD
Lexi! Hey, Goober!

ALEXIS
Mom! Leonard's here!

LEONARD
Can you cut the suspense and just tell me how long you're going to keep this "Leonard" thing up?

Alexis shrugs. Her mother, NELLIE, appears behind her.

NELLIE
You're supposed to call before you come over.

LEONARD
You don't answer when I call.

NELLIE
What do you want?

LEONARD
Are you going to invite me in?

NELLIE
(to Alexis)
Could you give us a minute?

Alexis sighs, then turns and disappears inside.

LEONARD
I have to beg to come inside my own home? In front of my daughter?

NELLIE
This isn't your *home*. And this is getting inappropriate.

He digs into his pocket, pulls out a handful of wrinkled, flattened fifties.

NELLIE (cont'd)
I don't want your money.

LEONARD
Well, you need it.

She starts to close the door and he blocks it with a hand.

LEONARD (cont'd)
What, you don't need it?

NELLIE
I don't need you showing up like
this. Do you see how this is unfair
and... a little threatening?

LEONARD
Threaten- seriously?

A beat. He takes his hand out of the door frame.

NELLIE
Have you been drinking?

LEONARD
No. No! ... Real--

NELLIE
You need to go! ... Understand?

Leonard gawks, speechless and ashamed. She closes the door.

He turns and shuffles to the dark street. Freezes when he
sees SOMEONE leaning against a truck, watching.

MARTHA, 40, similar to Leonard in her speech and mannerisms.

LEONARD
Christ, Martha. One of us is going
to have to get a different
haircut... I was just just saying
hello to my daughter.

MARTHA
I heard it from down the block.
Didn't want to interrupt.
(then)
She's doing well. Her grades are
picking back up, and her friends
aren't total jerk-offs. But
Nellie's struggling. And you
showing up like this isn't helping
with her anxiety.

LEONARD
If anybody answered their goddamned
phones, so I knew they were *alive*--

MARTHA

Take my number.

LEONARD

Oh, fuck you.

MARTHA

I'll answer. And I'll pass the word along, and they can call you back when they want. I think it would help. And it's better than nothing.

Leonard can't believe it, but shrugs, hopeless. Martha writes her number on the back of a receipt and hands it to him. He offers her the wad of crumpled bills.

LEONARD

It's five. Enough there for Lexi's field trip, plus some of what I owe Nell.

She accepts the money and watches him limp toward his car.

LEONARD (cont'd)

(over his shoulder)

And I haven't been drinking.

EXT. ECHO PARK EAST - NIGHT

Leonard hefts two bags of groceries up the wooden staircase to a second-story apartment. He grunts with each step, trying to keep weight off his knee.

He finally sets the bags down and knocks on an a door.

LATONYA MARQUEZ (20), opens it, wearing headphones and a waitress' uniform. She removes her headphones.

LATONYA

Leonard.

LEONARD

Hey Lotty. Brought groceries.

INSIDE THE APARTMENT, Latonya opens the mostly-empty refrigerator while Leonard starts putting groceries in the mostly-empty cupboards.

LATONYA

Want anything to drink? I've got... water.

LEONARD

You replace your Brita?

She makes an apologetic face. Leonard takes a fresh filter from the shopping bag and hands it to her.

LEONARD (cont'd)

What's with the outfit?

LATONYA

I got a job. It's barely part-time.

LEONARD

Why? Do you need money?

Latonya checks her buzzing phone, her expression souring a bit. Leonard keeps shelving groceries.

LATONYA

I just felt like I should be working.

LEONARD

You are working. It's schoolwork.

LATONYA

There are only so many hours in a day that you can spend studying biology.

LEONARD

Yeah, 16, with 8 hours for sleeping, eating, and piss breaks.

LATONYA

(reading a text)
Don't be gross.

LEONARD

Who are you texting?

LATONYA

Not your business.

Leonard considers pressing the issue, but Latonya postures up, crossing her arms.

LEONARD

So, how are classes?

LATONYA

We have mid-terms coming up.

LEONARD

Good. We could use some nurses who know their shit. You can always call me if you have any questions - I still know a thing or two.

(her PHONE BUZZES again)

Okay, seriously. Who keeps texting you?

LATONYA

What do you care?

LEONARD

Name. Now.

LATONYA

It's Christian. So what?

LEONARD

You know I don't want you hanging out with that piece of shit.

LATONYA

That's why I didn't tell you. And he's not a piece of shit.

LEONARD

I don't want you screwing up all the good stuff you have going on because of that... jerk. Just because someone's family doesn't mean that you're obligated to them.

LATONYA

You really believe that?

She reads a new text, and her expression goes dark. She looks at Leonard, disbelieving.

LATONYA (cont'd)

Did you say something to him?

LEONARD

No... Yes, I ran into him.

LATONYA

Again? Did you "kick his face in" this time?

(Leonard starts to protest)

Yeah, he told me about that. Why do you have to be such an asshole?

LEONARD

I'm trying to protect you from
assholes!

LATONYA

I know Christian's a little
"street", and you're all uptight
about that, but it's not like he's
some hardcore MS psycho going
around shooting people! What did
you say to him?

Leonard can't think of a lie, and can't bring himself to
tell the truth, so says nothing. Just scratches his neck.

LATONYA (cont'd)

You don't want to answer? Just go.
I should be studying anyways.

LEONARD

Why do people keep kicking me out
of houses I pay for? And I try to
keep him away because--

LATONYA

He's my cousin! He's the only
family I have left! You can't tell
me to give that up!

LEONARD

What the hell am I, then?

Leonard tosses the loaf of bread he's holding back into the
grocery bag and turns to leave. He stops by the front door.
Hangs his head.

Reaches for his wallet. Pulls out a few more crinkled
fifties, sets them down gently next to his keys, which he
takes. Latonya SOBS softly from the kitchen.

INT. AARON'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The wall clock reads 10:17. Aaron enters the quiet
apartment. Opens the fridge and pulls out a beer. Chugs half
of it. Then opens the freezer and pulls out a bag of ice. He
unbuttons his dark blue shirt and painfully strips it off.
Presses the ice against his bruised shoulder.

AARON

I'm sorry I'm late, Cam.

No response. He sees a bright pink document with California State Seals sitting on the kitchen island. Child Protective Services.

AARON (cont'd)
Cammy....

His voice trails off as he reads the document. A look of dread washes over him.

AARON (cont'd)
The fuck is this?
(then, louder)
The fuck is this? Cammy!

He storms to the BEDROOM - empty.

AARON (cont'd)
Cammy! Cammy!

He peers inside the crib. Nathan is gone. He bolts straight for the MASTER BATHROOM.

It's locked.

AARON (cont'd)
Open up! Cammy! Where's Nathan! Say something! Fuck!

He yanks on the door violently, then takes a step back and sledges his boot into the lock. It FLIES open.

Inside, Cammy lies in the bathtub, steam and bubbles sloshing about. She looks up at Aaron, eyes glazed over.

AARON (cont'd)
Where's Nathan, Cammy!? Why didn't you respond when I called for you?

Aaron moves closer, waves the papers in front of her.

AARON (cont'd)
What did you do?

Cammy speaks in a slight slur without looking at him.

CAMMY
I told you, he wouldn't stop crying. I knew they'd take him.

AARON
You let them take him! And you didn't call me? And you're taking a bubble bath?

Cammy stares at the wall as he storms out. He grabs his keys and SLAMS the front door. She sinks deeper in the tub, up to her deeply-exhausted eyes.

INT. HAWTHORNE HOSPITAL ICU - NIGHT

Daniel, the boy from the opening crash, is asleep in his hospital bed. Tubes, cables, and wires run from his body to the beeping machines that surround him. His head is wrapped in gauze and immobilized in a neck brace.

Leonard stands over him. He gives the monitors a cursory glance and then produces the black plastic bag he bought on his earlier errand.

He pulls out two COMIC BOOKS - one is Danny's old Superman comic, with Superman triumphantly hefting the globe of the Daily planet on its marred, crumpled cover.

The other is a new Batman comic - the masked vigilante stalking through a rainy alley in Gotham, bruised and bloodied, his uniform torn to shreds.

He places them on Danny's night stand. The boy looks peaceful in his dreamscape. Leonard lingers for a painful moment, saddened by the tragic news that awaits. He exits.

After a long moment, Leonard returns. He snatches the Superman comic, shoves it in the plastic bag, stomps out of the room and down a hall, and spikes the bag into the trash.

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL EMERGENCY WING - NIGHT

Vic stands in a hallway holding his breath. Gillian paces behind him, exhausted from crying. Roberta stands behind them both, gaze leveled over their shoulders. They're all staring through a window at:

Cheryl, unconscious on a hospital bed. A ventilator tube runs into one nostril and a larger tube empties the contents of her stomach. IV lines feed fluid into her arm.

Roberta turns abruptly, striding down the hall and through the front doors. Vic almost calls out to her, but doesn't.

EXT. SOUTH GATE SHOPPING PLAZA - NIGHT

Roberta exits a doughnut shop with a boxed dozen and a two-liter of Fanta.

She climbs in her car and puts the bag on the passenger seat. Opens the box and shoves an entire glazed in her mouth. Chews most of it, then gets to work on another while she unscrews the cap on the giant soda bottle.

INT. ROBERTA'S HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS BATHROOM

Roberta enters, pulls off her heeled boots, ties her hair back in a ponytail and washes her hands. Then she squats in front of the toilet and sticks two fingers down her throat until she begins to vomit donuts and Fanta. Practiced, but unceremonious. Getting it over with.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

The liquor store CASHIER bags a 12-pack of Abita and a handle of Jack as Leonard plops a fifty on the counter.

CASHIER

Do you like, only carry fifties?

LEONARD

Ulysses S. Grant was the finest
President our country ever had.

(then)

Read a history book.

The cashier just stares, blinking. The city sounds of traffic and distant sirens grate Leonard's ears.

LEONARD (cont'd)

Just gimme my change.

EXT. FREEWAY

The clear night slowly turns murky as dark clouds return, rolling in from the valley.

Leonard pushes the Lincoln. The old, big block V8 rumbles, but doesn't drown out the SOUNDS. It's like he's in the middle of gridlocked rush-hour. Horns, tires screeching, people shouting unintelligibly. He stomps on the gas.

PRE-LAP: A BEERCAN SNAPS open, cutting the cacophony silent.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

Leonard lies in the grass beside a flat, bronze headstone.

He barely lifts his head and tips a beer into his mouth, chugging most of it. The relief doesn't last long. Pretty soon, he can hear the SIRENS and COLLISIONS and SCREAMS.

He lays back on the grass, closing his eyes. Beside his head, the flat tombstone reads:

"MANNY PERALTA, FATHER, HUSBAND, BROTHER, BULLRIDER. 1979-2009"

A RAINDROP hits Leonard's face, and he opens his eyes, stares at the milky, bloated clouds. Another raindrop, then an army of them, and it's POURING again.

The steady beat of rain softens the harsh noises of the city, if only a little. Leonard closes his eyes. He doesn't notice his transfusion puncture wound open back up, as blood flows down his arm, soaking into the wet earth below.

- END PILOT -