

WEEKENDS AT BELLEVUE

PILOT

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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. NYC PARTY CRUISE - NIGHT

ELLIE HARLOW (30s, attractive, slight edge) is on the deck of a huge yacht circling New York Harbor, a raucous record release party for a hip hop artist. It's a warm and breezy evening, a tattooed shoulder peeks out of Ellie's sleeveless top. Near the DJ booth, Ellie pours champagne from her glass over the railing of the ship. Her sexy, artsy, hipster friend, VANESSA (early 30s, ethnicity open, lavender streak in her hair) approaches, winded from dancing.

VANESSA

Hey. Why aren't you dancing? The DJ is amazing. And hot.

Ellie pours some more champagne over the side and watches the liquid drop two stories to the water below.

ELLIE

It's so weird. The drops hang in the air for a split second before they fall.

VANESSA

He keeps making eye contact with me on the dance floor.

Ellie pours the rest of her drink over side.

ELLIE

See? They just hang there.
(off her look)
You think that happens to people?

Ellie intentionally drops the empty champagne glass over the side, watches it fall.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

No. They probably just fall.
(then)
Guess I need another drink.

Vanessa can sense Ellie's a little off.

VANESSA

Ellie, are you alright?

ELLIE
(smiles)
More than alright.

Ellie looks out to the twinkling lights of the New York skyline.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Look at the lights, the city...
it's a perfect Friday night.

Ellie throws a look to the DJ, smiles.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
You should go talk to the hot DJ.

VANESSA
Are you sure?

ELLIE
Seize the moment, Vanessa. This is
why we live in New York.

VANESSA
(after a beat)
You're right.

Ellie smiles as Vanessa moves off. But once Vanessa is gone, Ellie's expression changes, turns serious. Ellie STEPS UP on to the railing and balances precariously. The wind whips her hair as she takes a long look at the lights of the city.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. CAR - NIGHT

A clean-cut MAN in his 30s in a corporate suit and tie is determined as he zooms his car down a highway. He passes a graffiti-covered semi and zooms into the mouth of the HOLLAND TUNNEL. A sign reads: WELCOME TO NEW YORK.

EXT. NYC PARTY CRUISE - NIGHT

Ellie takes a last look out at the city, takes a breath and then DIVES off the ship, INTO THE BLACK WATER BELOW!

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - NIGHT

The Man walks down a bustling street with a briefcase and confidently heads into an office building with a sign: CAPITAL PARTNERS.

INT. VENTURE CAPITAL FIRM - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

The Man opens his briefcase in the Conference Room of a big, corporate office. He takes out a sheaf of papers and walks over to a huge WHITE BOARD covering one wall. Meticulously, he begins to transcribe a set of numbers from the paper he's holding with a dry-erase marker.

EXT. EAST RIVER - NIGHT

Ellie is submerged under the dark, cold water of the East River, a half-mile away from shore. She opens her eyes in the blackness, looks up to the surface, sees the flicker of an oncoming headlight accompanied by a LOUD, OMINOUS HUM.

INT. VENTURE CAPITAL FIRM - NIGHT

The white board is filling up with orderly NUMERICAL STATEMENTS as the Man transcribes more of his document onto the board. A CORPORATE SECURITY GUARD appears at the door. The Man takes a sip of coffee from a communal kitchen mug.

GUARD

Sir, we're locking up.

MAN

Go ahead, I'm good here.

GUARD

Do you have a keycard?

The Man doesn't answer.

GUARD (CONT'D)

Because I can't let you stay after hours without a keycard.

MAN

I've got clearance.

GUARD

From who? What department?

(no response)

Sir?

The GUARD steps into the room and for the first time, he and we SEE that the Man's calculations have COVERED every inch of the white board, as well as the SURROUNDING walls. Off this chilling tableau--

EXT. EAST RIVER - NIGHT

Ellie surfaces to see a huge BARGE coming right towards her. She floats passively, RIGHT IN ITS PATH. As the massive barge BEARS DOWN on her we--

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT./INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL ER - DAY

It's morning as the Man is unloaded from a police car by two cops, BREEN and SOUTHERLAND, outside Bellevue Hospital's ER. The man is agitated, hands cuffed behind his back.

MAN

It's all the zeros and the ones and
the zeros.

MAN (CONT'D)

Technological singularity is
upon us. Evolution has been
leading us to this.

BREEN

Hang in there sir, we are
almost here.

MAN (CONT'D)

We can exist forever with the
zeros and the ones and the
zero zero ones.

SOUTHERLAND

Just a little detour and then
you'll be able to go beddie-
bye.

As they burst through the double doors, we EXPERIENCE the bustle of the ER from the POV of a man in the midst of a psychotic episode: colors are brighter, sounds are exaggerated. It's a woozy, distorted view of the blood and chaos in the ER. ER nurse DAHLIA takes one look and can immediately tell it's a psych case. She points down the hall.

DAHLIA

Psych ER is that way.

They round a corner, go through a set of doors into--

INT. PSYCHIATRIC EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

MAN

We can translate the genetic code
into synthetic neural nets.

ER nurse CHUCK FRANKLIN (40s, African American) steps up. Tall and hulking, he's been at Bellevue for 18 years, nothing phases him.

CHUCK

What'ya got for us?

BREEN

This gentleman refused to leave a corporate conference room last night, NYPD called to the scene.

CHUCK

Disgruntled employee?

SOUTHERLAND

No. He doesn't even work there.

SOUTHERLAND (CONT'D)

Held him at the station for eight hours but things started getting out of hand.

MAN

... Duplicated my consciousness. And yours and yours and yours...

CHUCK

Sir, this is Bellevue Psychiatric Hospital.

MAN

.... No no no no no, I've achieved the singularity.

SOUTHERLAND

Whatever the hell that is.

CHUCK

Singularity is the theoretical melding of consciousness with machines.

(to Man)

And my friend, if you think you have achieved it, you definitely need to be admitted.

Chuck also happens to be a Sci-Fi buff. He calls out to triage, where a woman does paperwork with her back to them.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

Got an incoming lithium deficiency, need a doc here.

MAN

I can free you of your body, turn you into pure electricity.

WOMAN

(without turning around)

God, that sounds good.

MAN

Eternal electricity, moving with
the zeros and the ones.

Doctor BEN JACOBS (mid 30s, Ivy-League) approaches. He's
harried, unshaven, having been on call overnight.

BEN

Sorry, Chuck, hung up with our OCD
guy.

WOMAN

That's okay, I got this.

The woman turns around-- It's Ellie! Funkily dressed but
professional. Ben looks shocked to see her.

BEN

Ellie?

Ellie gives him a quick smile and then heads to the patient.

ELLIE

(to Man)

Sir, my name is Doctor Harlow. I'm
a psychiatrist. Welcome to
Bellevue.

SMASH CUT TO:

TITLE CARD.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. PSYCHIATRIC EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT - HALLWAY - DAY

Ben is on the move, tailing Doctor DIANE WALLACE (40s), the Department Head of Psychiatry, through the halls of the psych ward. Warm, outgoing and wearing a prairie skirt from 1995, Diane's obviously not a native New Yorker. Ben is a junior attending, ruffled but nerdy-cute in his slept-in shirt and tie.

BEN

You weren't even going to tell me?

DIANE

Tell you what?

BEN

Ellie and I trained at Columbia together.

DIANE

Coffee. I need coffee.

Ben follows Diane into--

INT. PSYCHIATRIC ED - BREAK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ben follows Diane into a grimy break room with a wall of lockers and a ten-year-old Mr. Coffee maker. Diane chooses from a mismatched cluster of mugs, pours two cups.

BEN

You could have asked me about her.

Next to the coffee maker is an old copy of the New York Post.

DIANE

Three weeks, three days.

BEN

What?

DIANE

For three weeks and three days, this copy of the Post has been sitting on this table.

DIANE (CONT'D)

I threw it into the recycling bin and somebody actually fished it back out. Now I'm just fascinated to see how long it lasts in here.

BEN

Diane-- Why didn't anyone ask me about her?

Diane hands a mug to Ben.

DIANE

Because junior faculty aren't consulted for new hires, that's why.

(off his look)

She comes out of an excellent residency, she knows New York, knows the patient population.

BEN

Okay, forget about me, did you talk to *anyone* at Columbia?

DIANE

No, Ben, I hired her because I liked her boots.

(off his look)

I know things got messy at Columbia but life is messy, that shouldn't be news to you. I had three meetings with Ellie, I talked to all her advisors. She was hired because I want her here. I think she'll fit right in.

(then)

Come on. We're late.

They exit from a different door than the one they came in, a door that leads directly into--

INT. PSYCHIATRIC EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT - FISHBOWL - DAY

The FISHBOWL is a glass enclosure that allows the staff to keep an eye on the patients and vice versa. The staff avoids eye contact with the patients, trying to pretend they're not being watched. Ellie, Chuck and others are gathered for the MORNING REPORT, a daily meeting where psychiatrists, nurses and social workers discuss the new admissions and strategize a plan for the day.

DIANE

Morning everyone. Somebody tell me about the overnight admissions.

BEN

We got a self-inflicted stab wound, a guy with a bullhorn and a loincloth in Washington Square Fountain, our favorite member of the royal family swallowed another pen and Mister Jennings bounced back after feeding his meds to pigeons in Central Park.

ELLIE

With the help of medication, the pigeons have made some serious breakthroughs.

Diane and others are amused-- Ben, not so much. The Manic Man from the Teaser bangs on the glass of the Fishbowl in a desperate attempt to get their attention.

DIANE

Most of you have met Ellie Harlow already, but if not, meet Ellie Harlow. Our new weekend attending.
(to Ellie)
Welcome.

ELLIE

Thanks. I've always wanted to work at Bellevue.

BEN

(pointedly)
You have?

Ellie looks around at everyone else.

ELLIE

It's weird he said that, right? Is he implying that he should know everything about me or that this hospital somehow sucks?

(shrugs)

Because I don't think it sucks. Hardcore, twisted... but awesome. There's nowhere else like it. It's my dream job, really.

CHUCK

Give us a couple weeks, we will drive that optimism right out.

DIANE

Chuck's been a psych nurse here since 1992. Crankier during the odd years than the evens, I find.

The Man from the Teaser BANGS on the glass again.

ELLIE

That one's mine. Came in this morning with the police, no ID, claims to have figured out how to turn our bodies into pure electron flow. Tempting, actually, but I digress.

DIANE

Interns-- what's the differential?

A fresh-faced psychiatry intern, CLAIRE COHEN (25) shoots her hand up. She's upbeat and outgoing, obsessed with the psychodynamic approach to psychiatry. She's read a ton on the subject and wants everyone to know. Her fellow intern MANEESH SARMA (26, Indian, dryly understated) rolls his eyes.

CLAIRE

According to Winnecott's theory, mania is a desperate defense of the ego against despair.

BEN

That's not what she asked.

(then)

What are the DSM criteria for a diagnosis of mania?

Maneesh opens his mouth to answer but Claire jumps in before he gets a word out.

CLAIRE

Pressured speech, delusions of grandeur, flight of ideas...

ELLIE

Don't tell me you are still making the interns memorize The DSM?

BEN

It's the basis for a common language they need to learn. You disagree?

ELLIE

Well...

BEN
Please. Go ahead.

ELLIE
(to the interns)
Fine. Learn the DSM but then
unlearn it. It's limiting.
Designed by committee. And totally
unnecessary.

Their manic patient passes by the window again with his suit jacket now tied around his head like a turban.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
(re: Manic Man)
Headdress equals mania until proven
otherwise.

Claire, Maneesh, Chuck and Diane are amused. Ellie looks at Ben, shrugs.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
You asked.

As the group disbands, Ben steps over to Ellie.

BEN
I had no idea you were even
applying here.

ELLIE
Better money at Penn and SUNY, but
how could I say no to the chance to
spend every weekend with the
deranged underbelly of New York?

DIANE
Guys, we've got a full triage area
and a consult waiting in the ER.
Ben, take the discharges, Ellie,
you cover consults with the
interns.

Ellie throws a look to the interns. Teaching is so much work.

ELLIE
Both of them?

DIANE
You're clearly interested in
resident education-- show us how
it's done.

Ellie heads out, Claire and Maneesh follow.

CLAIRE
Awesome. I love consults.

INT. MEDICAL ER - DAY

Ellie and her interns, Claire and Maneesh, move through the huge medical ER adjacent to the psych ED. Bloody patients are wheeled by on gurneys, trauma teams run past, it's all part of the chaotic, gory landscape of a busy ER.

CLAIRE
I love working weekends.

MANEESH
(dry)
There is just so much you love.

CLAIRE
Less competition for cases, more opportunity to learn.

Ellie is annoyed by Claire's upbeat manner and her perfect hair held back with a preppy headband.

ELLIE
Fewer residents, no teaching conferences, easier to get real work done.

CLAIRE
If you hate teaching, why are you working at a teaching hospital?

ELLIE
Why are you wearing that headband?
(to Maneesh)
And you. So quiet. What's your story? What led you to psychiatry?

MANEESH
I don't know.

ELLIE
Sure you do. Crazy family member? Abandonment issues? Didn't have the board scores for neurology?
(off his offended look)
Seriously. Everyone goes into psych for a reason.

MANEESH

Yeah? What was yours?

Ellie pauses for a beat as a bloody patient on a gurney whizzes by them.

ELLIE

Top three recession-proof businesses? Porn, candy and crazy. It's a power thing.

(off their looks)

You know the unspoken hierarchy in a hospital-- neurosurgeons at the top, pediatricians at the bottom. But mental illness is everywhere, in every specialty. When you're a psychiatrist, absolutely everyone needs you.

MANEESH

Speaking of which-- that's Knox.

Ellie sees a young, surfer-y attending charting at a desk. This is Doctor JARED KNOX. Knox is 32, scruffy and sexy, the kind of ER doc who works like a dog eight months a year so he can spend the other four surfing in Fiji and skiing in Vail.

CLAIRE

He calls psych for any patient who wants to talk for more than thirty seconds.

ELLIE

Doctor Knox?

He looks up, flashes a friendly, seductive smile. Ellie notes his huge eyes, puka shell necklace. Dangerously hot.

KNOX

How can I help?

ELLIE

I am here to help you.

(then)

Ellie Harlow from psych. You have a consult for us?

KNOX

Yes I do.

(checking her out)

You new here?

ELLIE

Yeah.

Knox decides he's going to be needing a lot of psych consults.

KNOX

Well, alright. Let me know any way I can help... orient you.

Ellie picks up on his vibe, smiles.

ELLIE

Wow. Impressive example of phallic-narcissism.

KNOX

(not at all offended)

Ouch.

(then)

Follow me. David Bellinger, 19, brought in by his NYU roommate after he wiggged-out in the gym.

ELLIE

Wiggged-out? That's your working diagnosis?

KNOX

The treadmill was talking to him, he started throwing free weights at an invisible threat.

ELLIE

Tox screen?

KNOX

Negative for drugs and alcohol. But there's a family history of schizophrenia.

ELLIE

He's the perfect age for a first psychotic break.

KNOX

My thought exactly. Let me know what you think.

Knox moves off as they stop in front of a skinny teenager, DAVID BELLINGER, sitting up on a gurney, eyes darting, terrified. Ellie's pager BEEPS. She ignores it as she, Claire and Maneesh approach.

ELLIE

David, I'm Doctor Harlow. Do you know where you are?

DAVID
Back off.

ELLIE
Okay.

Ellie takes a step back.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
How's this?

In a series of QUICK FLASHES, we SEE the world from DAVID'S POV. The machinery and monitors seem to be undulating, breathing, whispering. He looks over at the LED display on a nearby heart monitor. A numeric heart rate morphs into a message that only David can see: WE...ARE...HERE... David's eyes flash back to Ellie, terrified.

DAVID
You can't have my feet.

CLAIRE
David, you're in a hospital, nobody wants your--

DAVID
Shhh! They're everywhere! You're part of it. THEY CAN HEAR YOU!

Ellie knows Claire's approach won't work. She leans in, whispers, playing along.

ELLIE
Who's everywhere? Who are they?

DAVID
Find another Joe, another Tom, another Dan. I'm not a jobber, I'm not going back.

ELLIE
You don't have to. I'm here to make sure of that.

David puts the pillow over his own head.

DAVID
Go away. Please.

Ellie's pager BEEPS again, she reads the message.

ELLIE
Another consult. ICU.
(then, to Claire)
(MORE)

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Two of ativan, see if he chills.
And listen to me, this is
important. Do not fight him on his
delusion, go with it. Telling an
acutely psychotic patient that he's
crazy will get your ear torn off.

CLAIRE

I never said he was--

ELLIE

-- Run labs and get me a set of
electrolytes. Make sure we've
ruled out organic causes before we
lock him up. Maneesh, get back to
Mister Ones and Zeroes, try and get
a name.

(as she goes)

Page if you need me, I'll be back
in an hour.

Ellie moves off.

INT. ICU - DAY

Ben is talking to LUCINDA WEBB (50s.) Lucinda is sweet,
maternal, putting lipstick on in a compact as Ben talks.

BEN

Ms. Webb, I'm not convinced you
understand the risks of your
decision.

LUCINDA

I hate to think what I must look
like right now.

BEN

I need your full attention.
Please.

Ellie appears at the doorway.

ELLIE

Lucinda Webb?

(sees Ben)

Oh. I thought I was on consults
today.

BEN

Neurosurge curbsided me in the
hall. I've got this if you want to-

He was going to suggest that she leave, but Ellie pulls up a chair, sits, before he finishes his sentence.

BEN (CONT'D)

-- pull up a chair.

ELLIE

Ms. Webb, I'm Ellie Harlow, I work with Doctor Jacobs. I've been reading your chart and I'm wondering why you are refusing surgery.

LUCINDA

Not refusing, just postponing.

BEN

You have a leaking brain aneurism which at any time could turn into a catastrophic bleed--

LUCINDA

(drowning him out)

-- BA BA BA. I don't want to hear it.

Ellie puts Lucinda's chart down, leans back in her chair.

ELLIE

Well, I'm not leaving until you do.

LUCINDA

My daughter Maggie's wedding is in a week. Surgery can wait.

ELLIE

I'm sure Maggie wouldn't mind moving the wedding.

LUCINDA

That would require telling her. And once I do that... everything stops. And I don't want it to stop.

(then)

I don't expect you to understand.

ELLIE

(frustrated)

So your family doesn't know you're here?

LUCINDA

They know I fainted at lunch. They think I'm being kept overnight for a few tests.

BEN

If your aneurism ruptures you could be left permanently impaired.

ELLIE

Or dead.

LUCINDA

Listen. I understand why you feel you have to change my mind. But you won't. God wants me at that wedding.

Ellie and Ben exchange a look.

ELLIE

Ms. Webb... religious faith can be helpful to people in times like this. But maybe the two of us, right here, right now, are a message from God. We are delivering unto you a neurosurgeon.

Lucinda forces a tight smile.

LUCINDA

Are you making fun of me?

ELLIE

No. I'm trying to save your life.

INT. ICU HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Ben follows Ellie out into the hallway, unimpressed.

BEN

"Delivering unto you"? What the hell was that?

ELLIE

Let's call her daughter, get her to postpone the wedding. Screw confidentiality.

BEN

Ellie, if you're going to be part of this department, you can't just ignore--

ELLIE

Okay. Okay.
(then, another idea)
We have a judge in house?

BEN

Most days. Courtroom's right off
the unit.

ELLIE

So we'll get a hearing, make the
decision for her.

BEN

Good luck with that.
(explaining)
Bernard Chavez is a fierce
libertarian. A patient has to be
speaking in tongues before he'll
rule them incompetent.

ELLIE

He'll at least hear the case--

BEN

No, he won't. No way.

Ellie's pager BEEPS again. She reads the text.

ELLIE

It's Diane.

INT. BELLEVUE INPATIENT PSYCH WARD - COMMUNITY ROOM - LATER

Ellie stands in the hallway, looking into the Community Room, an open, central room where psych patients are able to talk, mingle, watch movies, etc. Diane sits in a circle of chairs with 8 other inpatients conducting a "goals" meeting-- a type of small group therapy where patients lay out their plan for the day. LOUISE, a disheveled and childlike woman in her 40s, is speaking.

LOUISE

Today, I'm going to eat three
square meals because you are what
you eat.

VICTOR (30s), severe and sharp-tongued with a shaved head and chiseled features, is sitting next to Louise.

VICTOR

(sarcastic)
Ambitious plan, Louise.

DIANE

Let's try to be supportive here. I think that's a very productive goal.

VICTOR

Oh, I'm supportive, Doctor D. I don't want Louise turning into whatever the hell that was they served us for lunch.

The other patients laugh. Diane turns to STEVEN, a sad, quivering dock worker in his 30s sitting on the other side of Victor. There's a cast on his leg.

DIANE

Steven, let's hear from you. What are your goals for the day?

Steven mumbles something inaudibly.

DIANE (CONT'D)

Steven?

STEVEN

(barely audible)
I'm... I'm gonna call my wife.

VICTOR

Oh, man, here we go again. She's leaving, you idiot. She's done.

Ellie is listening intently from the doorway. Something changes on her face, she suddenly seems miles away.

EXT. EAST RIVER - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

It's a continuation of Ellie's night in the East River the night before. Ellie lies motionless as the GIANT BARGE passes by her, mere inches away. It's a chilling, scary tableau. Over this, we hear a female voice.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

Join us... come join us.

The voice is garbled, dreamlike. As if it's emanating from the watery depths.

INT. BELLEVUE INPATIENT PSYCH WARD - BACK TO PRESENT

The voice belongs to Diane, who's standing in front of Ellie at the door. Ellie snaps back into the moment.

DIANE

I thought it'd be good for you to sit in on the goals group today.

ELLIE

(sotto)

Group therapy isn't really my thing.

DIANE

Come on. You said you loved crazy. Here you've got a whole ward of lunatics, all in one place.

ELLIE

I'm all about neurotransmitters, the acute chemistry of it all. More of an ER girl. Talking, support groups... not my area.

DIANE

Part of the deal, chickadee.

ELLIE

Chickadee? Where are you from?

DIANE

Everyone, this is our newest attending, Doctor Ellie Harlow.

ELLIE

Hello.

Ellie follows Diane in, joins the circle.

DIANE

Steven's working through some issues with his wife.

ELLIE

I think I got that.

VICTOR

She told him she's leaving so he jumped out a second story window.

Ellie looks to Diane who invites her to jump in. Steven looks at Ellie, then everyone is looking at her.

ELLIE

(to Steven)

What did you think that was going to solve?

ELLIE

I know this is a support group and I'm supposed to be supportive. But your current plan will fail on every level.

(then)

All you are trying to do is make other people suffer. Do you get that?

ELLIE (CONT'D)

...So why don't you let us help you make another plan.

STEVEN

SHUT UP!

Emotional, Steven picks up a chair and throws it against the window. The other patients scream.

DIANE

Out! Now!
(to staff in hallway)
Code green in here!

STEVEN

(throws another chair)
Bitch!

ELLIE (CONT'D)

... A plan that has a chance of working, a chance of...

DIANE

Doctor Harlow, GO. NOW!

Two big SECURITY GUARDS and an ORDERLY run in with a syringe. Ellie doesn't leave, intent on getting her message through.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

...of turning things around for you!

STEVEN

Back off!

DIANE

Ellie! STOP!

STEVEN

Get your hands off me!

It's chaos as the guards tackle Steven, take him down. The orderly hands Diane the syringe.

DIANE

(to Ellie)

Group is over. Get out of here.
NOW.

Diane SLAMS the syringe into Steven's arm. Off Ellie.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. UNDERWATER - FLASHBACK

In what appears to be a further continuation of the prior night in the East River, we see Ellie submerged in cold, blue water. We are in Ellie's POV as she looks up, the light on the surface collapsing to a pinpoint, then disappearing all together.

EXT. LAKE MICHIGAN - PATROL BOAT - DAY - 2002

22-year-old unconscious Ellie is abruptly YANKED from the water and PULLED up on to the deck of a coast guard boat. We realize we are not seeing NY Harbor the night before-- It's daytime, six years ago, Lake Michigan. The Mackinac Bridge is visible in the background. The wind whips the jacket of the weathered COAST GUARD who pulls her out. He checks her vitals, then turns to his partner.

COAST GUARD

She's breathing. Call it in.

The coast guard throws a thermal blanket on her as his partner radios:

COAST GUARD (CONT'D)

(into radio)

Send a rig to base, we've got another jumper.

Ellie's eyes flutter open. We PUSH IN on Ellie's face as we--

INT. PSYCHIATRIC EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT - BACK TO PRESENT - DAY

MATCH CUT to Ellie as she watches Nurse Chuck meticulously count pennies on the admit desk. The contents of a newly admitted patient's shopping cart are arranged around him: a mannequin head, a pile of change, a croquet mallet.

CHUCK

Thirty three, thirty four...

He senses Ellie watching.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

Heard you were a big hit in small group today.

(off her look)

(MORE)

CHUCK (CONT'D)

Act crazy in crazytown, people are going to talk.

Chuck slides a giant pile of pennies into a plastic bag.

ELLIE

Just trying to make a strong first impression. What are you doing?

CHUCK

Four dollars and thirty seven cents. We document and store every item the patients bring in with them.

Ellie notices the shopping cart in front of the desk.

ELLIE

And where are we going to keep the shopping cart?

CHUCK

The real question is...

He picks up a plastic animal crate from the cart and turns it so Ellie can see something is ALIVE inside. Ellie jumps back.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

What are we supposed to do with a live damn squirrel?

ELLIE

Better than a dead one.

CHUCK

Go help your intern. He's floundering over there.

Ellie looks over to see Maneesh trying to talk to the Manic Man from the teaser. The Man is gesticulating wildly, pacing, speaking a mile-a-minute, clearly running the show.

MANEESH

Let's try this again. Is there anyone you'd like us to call? Family? Friends? Maybe a co-worker?

MAN

I'm a one-one-one-zero-one. You are a zero-zero-zero-zero. All zeros.

MAN

The numbers know the truth and will guide the way. I've been chosen for the transition.

Ellie steps up. She has an affinity for these types of patients.

ELLIE

Why you?

MAN

Because I have the information, I have the codes. You are a zero-zero-one-one-one-one.

Something about what he's just said sparks her interest.

ELLIE

Huh.

(then)

We'll be right back.

MAN

Hurry, we're running out of time.

Ellie leads Maneesh away. She's on to something.

ELLIE

Okay. Why am I excited right now?

MANEESH

Um, computers are taking over the world?

ELLIE

Ah, no.

She eyes a cop, MIKE, posted in the Triage Area.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Day shift cop-- what's his name?

MANEESH

No idea.

ELLIE

Rule number one in the psych ER-- make friends with the cops.

She crosses up to Mike.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Officer, hi. I'm Ellie Harlow, a new psychiatrist here.

MIKE

Mike Andreas.

ELLIE

Nice to meet you, Mike. And thank you for what you do. Without you this place would be chaos.

MIKE

Thanks, doc.

ELLIE

Wondering if you might be able to help us out.

MIKE

I can try.

ELLIE

Can you get a list of cars with southern plates impounded within the last 24 hours?

(then, to Maneesh)

New York is a magnet for manics, they gravitate here from all over. And when you're king of the world, you don't bother reading parking signs.

MANEESH

You think our guy is from the south?

ELLIE

Did you hear how he said "infuhmation"? He dropped the R. Sometimes, when the meds start to kick in, you can detect hints of an accent you didn't hear before.

(to Mike)

So Mike, what do you say?

MIKE

That's not my department, Ma'am.

ELLIE

Come on. It's all on the computer.

Mike's attention drifts to Claire, who's approaching with a notebook in hand. Ellie notes his interest.

CLAIRE

ER boy is still sleeping-- can you sign off on him in my patient log?

ELLIE

Your what?

CLAIRE

I'm keeping a journal of every patient I see during intern year, and having every attending sign off on my treatment plan.

MANEESH

Why?

CLAIRE

Educational purposes. Medical-legal protection. Research for the book I'm going to write one day.

MANEESH

You're a freak.

Ellie sees Mike looking at Claire, has an idea. She turns to Mike as she takes the book and signs.

ELLIE

-- She is, you know. *Big time.*
(as she signs)
Can tie a suture into a slip knot using only her tongue.

CLAIRE

Excuse me?

ELLIE

Mike Claire, Claire, Mike.
(to Mike)
You get me the info, this intern will go out to dinner with you.
(off their looks)
Play along, kids. It's for the greater good.

Diane steps up, stern.

DIANE

Doctor Harlow, I need to talk to you. Now.

EXT. BELLEVUE - DAY

Ellie and Diane burst out onto the busy street in front of Bellevue, on the move. Diane is a combination of angry and perplexed.

DIANE

What the hell was that?

ELLIE

I told you, I have an issue with talk therapy, okay? The coddling, the unequivocal support. It doesn't do anyone any good.

DIANE

Oh, and provoking a psych patient into a violent outburst is effective?

ELLIE

Give me the guys hearing voices or barking like a dog, I can help them. But let someone else talk to them about their childhood. That's why I chose Bellevue instead of some cushy private practice--

They cross the street and head into...

INT. KJ'S CAFE - MOMENTS LATER

The cafe is crowded, bustling. Diane is a regular, knows all the people working behind the counter.

DIANE

Therapy is part of your job. You don't want to be here, let me know now before I waste any more time.

Ellie can sense Diane is serious.

ELLIE

Diane. I want to be here. I... I'll be more careful.

DIANE

Good. Because the first rule of ER psych is don't die.

They walk up to the counter where JUDGE BERNARD CHAVEZ (45, Hispanic, hipster glasses) orders a coffee from a gregarious 35-year-old Italian named NICO behind the counter.

CHAVEZ

Double latte, low foam.

NICO

You got it, Judge.

Ellie clocks the Judge. Chavez nods to Diane as he heads over near the condiment counter to wait for his drink.

CHAVEZ

Diane.

DIANE

Bernard.

Nico hands Diane a cup of black coffee.

NICO

Here you go, Doctor D. The usual.

DIANE

Thanks, Nico.

(turns to Ellie)

Anything for--

Ellie is gone, having followed Judge Chavez over to the condiment counter. Diane leaves two dollars on the counter and watches Ellie from a distance for a moment. Ellie is animated, on her game. Diane joins them, mid conversation.

CHAVEZ

She understands the risk of delaying surgery?

ELLIE

Yes, in a way, but--

CHAVEZ

But nothing. She's competent.

Nico holds up a cup behind the counter, his coffee is ready.

NICO

Judge Chavez!

CHAVEZ

Excuse me.

Chavez starts to claim his coffee, Ellie steps into his path.

ELLIE

No, no, no, here's the thing.

CHAVEZ

Excuse me. You're standing between me and my latte.

Ellie doesn't budge.

ELLIE

The aneurism could, theoretically, be impairing perfusion of her frontal lobe.

CHAVEZ

In English, please.

ELLIE

The frontal lobe controls personality. Which means her willingness to take risks might be falsely elevated by the aneurism itself. It's like asking a patient to make a life or death decision when they're drunk.

CHAVEZ

You're saying she's acting drunk?

ELLIE

No. I'm saying there's no way anyone in their right mind would refuse to reschedule a stupid wedding for something like this. I'm saying we'd all be committing malpractice if we didn't at least explore the possibility that--

CHAVEZ

Tomorrow morning. 9 AM sharp.

Chavez moves off. Diane smiles to herself as she squeezes honey into her coffee. This is exactly why she hired Ellie.

DIANE

Convincing the judge to hold a competency hearing on a Sunday is no small feat.

Diane licks her stirrer and chucks it into the trash as she starts for the door. Ellie follows. On the move:

DIANE (CONT'D)

Question for you. Have you ever tried ecstasy?

ELLIE

Tablet or powder?

Diane smiles, the answer implied.

DIANE

Then I'll assume you know all about its therapeutic potential for patients with PTSD. Of course, the establishment will never fund studies using MDMA so we have to be creative.

ELLIE

We?

Diane and Ellie exit the cafe, emerge on to--

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

They continue walking down the street.

DIANE

When you interviewed here you said you were interested in research. I need a partner on this project. It's part of why I wanted you here.

ELLIE

Sounds like professional napalm.

DIANE

Clearly you're not afraid of rustling a few feathers. And I need a partner who's brave enough to take a chance.

(then)

New York Psychiatric Society has a cocktail, hors d'oeuvre-*ie* thing tonight. You want to make up for your reckless conduct today? Come.

ELLIE

Why?

DIANE

There will be a myriad of potential donors, policy makers there who can get us funding, push legislation... We can help a lot of people with no other options.

Ellie's PAGER goes off.

ELLIE

911 from the ER. I have to go.

DIANE

(as she goes)

See you at NYPS. 7 pm. Cocktail attire. It'll be fun.

Ellie hurries off.

INT. MEDICAL ER - DAY

Claire and Maneesh help Knox take care of David Bellinger, the hallucinating boy, who is SEIZING violently. ALARMS BLARE, it's a full-on ER trauma scene. Maneesh is on a nearby phone.

CLAIRE
Sats down to 89!

KNOX
Load with dilantin and crank
up the blow-by.

MANEESH
(into phone)
He won't need sedation, he'll
be post ictal.

MANEESH
(hangs up)
Scanner will be ready in five.

Ellie steps up, alarmed.

ELLIE
What happened?

CLAIRE
We paged you three times.

ELLIE
What the hell is going on?

MANEESH
Nurse just found him seizing.

ELLIE
What was the sodium?

MANEESH
We never got it.

The seizing stops.

KNOX
Alright, atta boy.

ELLIE
What do you mean, you never got it?

MANEESH
Knox cancelled the order, said it
was overkill.

ELLIE
And you let him?

CLAIRE

What were we supposed to do? He's the attending.

ELLIE

(re: David)

He's your patient. He is who matters.

Ellie walks over to Knox who is charting at the bedside. She grabs the chart out of his hands to get his attention.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Why the hell did you cancel the labs I ordered?

KNOX

It's the standard psych move-- you guys order a bunch of unnecessary diagnostic tests and refuse to take the patient until the results are back and the patient is "medically cleared."

ELLIE

I wasn't trying to block the admission. The kid was talking about being "a jobber"-- it's a wrestling term. It got me thinking that maybe he'd been dieting and over-exercising which led to his electrolytes being seriously out of whack.

KNOX

Reasonable theory.

ELLIE

Which is why I ordered the sodium!

Knox smiles, flirtatious.

KNOX

You know, I like you.

ELLIE

SHUT UP!

Maneesh wheels David's gurney toward them.

MANEESH

CTs ready for him.

Ellie takes the gurney over from Maneesh and starts to roll down the hall, passing Knox as she goes.

ELLIE

I know your type. The ER shifts
fund the surfing in Fiji and the
rafting and the heli-skiing but you
don't care about the work.

(off his look)

If you ever cancel a lab on one my
patients again I will report you to
the Chief of Staff and strangle you
with that ridiculous puka shell
necklace, got it?

Claire and Maneesh look on, impressed. She turns to Claire and Maneesh.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Let's go.

We STAY WITH Ellie as she wheels the gurney down the hall.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. SWANKY HOTEL BALLROOM - NIGHT

The New York Psychiatric Society cocktail party is in full swing. Ben is there, looking good in an expensive suit. He works on a whiskey at the bar alongside a distinguished couple in their 60's, HENRY and GENEVIEVE, who sip Cabernet.

BEN

She just got here and already she's managed to alienate half the staff.

HENRY

Are you in the alienated half or the unalienated half?

BEN

I heard she completely lost it in the small group session today.

GENEVIEVE

But you weren't actually there.

BEN

No. But it's clear Ellie Harlow's got impulse control issues.

HENRY

You've mentioned her name five times and you haven't even finished one drink.

BEN

Stop.

GENEVIEVE

Sorry, honey. I can smell sublimated attraction from across a room and you're standing right next to me.

BEN

I'm *NOT*--
(stops himself)
God, I hate seeing you two at these things. Have you thought about retiring?

He downs the rest of his drink and turns to put his glass on the bar. As he does, he sees--

ELLIE. Dressed up in a clingy, vintage-y black cocktail dress. Beautiful and sexy without trying too hard. She sees Ben and smiles, beelines in his direction, to the delight of Henry and Genevieve.

GENEVIEVE

Ah. I wonder who this could be.

BEN

Behave.

ELLIE

Ben, hi, guess what? Judge Chavez agreed to a hearing on Lucinda Webb tomorrow.

BEN

You're kidding. On a Sunday?

ELLIE

Yup.

BEN

Wow. I'm...

ELLIE

Impressed? Grateful? Sorry you ever doubted me?

Ellie senses Henry and Genevieve watching.

BEN

Ellie, meet Henry and Genevieve Jacobs. My parents.

ELLIE

Oh.

(offering hand)

Ellie Harlow. Are you visiting from out of town?

HENRY

(amused)

No. We're members.

GENEVIEVE

Freudian analysts.

HENRY

Since 1976.

ELLIE

(to Ben)

Well... that explains a lot.

The conversation is interrupted when Diane approaches.

DIANE

Hello, everyone, have you tried the sliders? Amazing. Vegetarian for 15 years and then I up and ate a burger. What do you think that's about?

HENRY

Ambition manifesting as bloodlust.

DIANE

Nah.

GENEVIEVE

Sexual depravation?

BEN

Mom!

DIANE

(amused)

You obviously haven't met my girlfriend.

ELLIE

Iron deficiency?

DIANE

Huh. Good thought.

(then, to others)

Can I borrow Ellie a minute? Thank you.

INT. SWANKY HOTEL BALLROOM - BAR - CONTINUOUS

We STAY WITH Diane and Ellie as they move off to another part of the bar.

ELLIE

So where's the ecstasy crowd I'm supposed to schmooze with?

DIANE

Let's get a drink first.

(to a bartender)

Two tequilas please. No ice.

(to Ellie)

(MORE)

DIANE (CONT'D)

I'm a believer in the power of substances to make people more receptive to certain types of personal work. Sometimes it's prozac, sometimes it's ecstasy...

The bartender pours, Diane hands one to Ellie.

DIANE (CONT'D)

Sometimes it's Blue Agave. Cheers.

Diane knocks back her shot. Ellie doesn't know where Diane is going with this but downs her drink too. Diane smiles, a little tipsy.

DIANE (CONT'D)

So tell me. What makes someone turn down a schizophrenia fellowship at Harvard to spend weekends in a stinky psych ER?

ELLIE

How did you... I didn't tell anyone about the fellowship.

DIANE

We only get to hire new faculty every few years so I did my homework. And I chose you. But the real question is... why did you choose us?

ELLIE

Like I said this morning, Bellevue is hardcore--

DIANE

And what is it about you that needs things to be hard?

ELLIE

I didn't say hard, I said--

DIANE

Maybe the patients here make you feel sane in comparison. Maybe you have a hero complex. Maybe you like puzzles that can break your nose.

ELLIE

What, exactly, is your point?

DIANE

Every patient interaction is a window into yourself and you might not always like what you see. Embrace that. Use it to make yourself better.

Diane rummages through her purse, pulls out a pen.

ELLIE

Look, I'm--

Diane writes something down on a cocktail napkin.

DIANE

You terminated your relationship with three different therapists during your time at Columbia.

ELLIE

I told you, talk therapy isn't my thing.

DIANE

I can see that you are attracted to conflict. And that can be a great thing. It can make you an amazing psychiatrist. But you have to manage it. You're like Luke Skywalker in Empire Strikes Back. Powerful but out of control.

ELLIE

How many tequilas have you had?

DIANE

I can help you but I can't do it alone.

Diane hands her the napkin. Ellie looks-- it's a name, Cate Drayton, MD, and a phone number.

DIANE (CONT'D)

Cate Drayton. I think she'd be a good fit for you.

ELLIE

What?

DIANE

We all have our hotspots, Ellie, and believe me, your patients will find them.

(MORE)

DIANE (CONT'D)

Get there first and do the work,
or, I assure you, you will drown
here.

Ellie takes the napkin with a tense, disingenuous smile.

ELLIE

(with an edge)

Thanks, Diane. Appreciate it.

Miffed, Ellie moves off. We STAY WITH her as she looks at the napkin again before chucking it into the trash and heading for the door. Ben watches her go, realizing he's a little too aware of her position in the room. He shoots a look to his parents. Dammit, they were right.

EXT. SWANKY HOTEL - NIGHT

Ben comes outside to find Ellie sitting on a bench by a fountain.

BEN

Everything alright?

ELLIE

Yeah.

BEN

You look upset.

ELLIE

Thank you, Doctor Jacobs. Between you and Diane I'll be cured in a week.

BEN

Cured?

ELLIE

She went at me pretty hard. Seems to think I'm some kind of ticking time bomb.

BEN

Are you?

ELLIE

Am I what?

BEN

Ellie, can I be totally, completely honest here? You at Bellevue... it worries me.

ELLIE

Why?

BEN

You know why.

ELLIE

Is this about Columbia? Ivan?
(off his look)
We had a thing, it didn't work out.

BEN

Ellie, you seduced the department
head. The *married* department head.

ELLIE

I *seduced* him? Like he was just
some helpless bystander?

Now that Ben has unlocked this door, there's no turning back.

BEN

And when he finally left his wife
and became available to you for
real, you broke it off.

Ellie's anger percolates to the surface.

ELLIE

I never asked him to do that.

BEN

Do you have any idea how
destructive all that was? How
reckless? For all of us?

ELLIE

All of who?

BEN

The whole residency, Ellie. Ivan
was a mentor. A friend. Six
months after you arrive he's
hospitalized for an overdose.

ELLIE

It was an accident.

BEN

What, you destroying the guy?

ELLIE

(furious)
The *klonopin*.

BEN

A psychiatrist does not
accidentally overdose.

ELLIE

What do you want me to say?

BEN

That you're different now. That
you'll be careful. That you've
grown up.

ELLIE

(furious)

What about you, Ben? Are you
different now? The whole time we
were at Columbia you were just
running to get somewhere else.
Somewhere better. Did you make it
there? Or are you just pissed that
all that work, that all that...
"being careful", didn't get you any
further than the slut who almost
killed your poor, completely
innocent mentor.

She starts back inside.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Now excuse me, I need to go back in
and hustle up some drug money.

We PUSH IN on Ellie's face as she walks into the night,
turbulent, lost in thought--

INT. AMBULANCE - LAKE MICHIGAN ROAD - DAY - 2002

*Ellie opens her eyes to find herself in the back of a moving
ambulance. She takes in her surroundings, sees a PARAMEDIC
riding alongside her.*

PARAMEDIC

Hey there. You're awake.

*Ellie tries to sit up but strains against the surgical tape
holding her head to the gurney.*

ELLIE

I don't need a hospital.

PARAMEDIC

*Sit tight, Ma'am. We'll be there
soon.*

In the front seat, the DRIVER is listening to a baseball game on the radio. He calls back to the Paramedic.

*DRIVER (V.O.)
Tigers lost, six-three.*

The Paramedic scoots up towards the front so he can talk to the driver through the partition.

*PARAMEDIC
You owe me ten bucks, man.*

Ellie peels off the surgical tape holding her head and sits up. She glances over her shoulder at the Paramedic who's still wrapped up in sports talk with the Driver.

*PARAMEDIC (CONT'D)
When the hell are they going to
dump Randy Smith?*

As the rig slows for a red light, Ellie sees an opportunity.

*PARAMEDIC (CONT'D)
59 games? I mean, come on!*

She rips the wires out of the monitor and in a fluid move, THROWS OPEN the back door of the ambulance and LEAPS OUT, SMASHING the side of her head into the asphalt as she lands.

INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL - ICU - NIGHT - BACK TO PRESENT

Ellie, a fitted coat over her cocktail dress, walks briskly through the ICU. Ellie seems a bit adrift as she stops at Lucinda Webb's room. Lucinda is awake, a notebook in hand.

*ELLIE
Hey there. You're awake.*

*LUCINDA
Yeah. A million things to do the
week before a wedding. Don't you
ever go home?*

*ELLIE
I came back to give you one last
chance to change your mind.*

*LUCINDA
Doctor. I thought I was clear.*

ELLIE

Ms. Webb, tomorrow morning I am going to go before a judge and argue that you are incompetent to make this decision for yourself.

LUCINDA

You can do that?

ELLIE

I'm going to say that your aneurism is affecting your judgement. And since this is impossible to actually prove or disprove, there is a very good chance the judge is going to agree with me and force you to have the surgery.

LUCINDA

What? Why?

ELLIE

Because your daughter's wedding is not worth dying for. She wouldn't want you to take this chance.

LUCINDA

You don't understand.

ELLIE

That's where you're wrong. I do. I do understand. You die, a part of her dies too.

In one swift move, Lucinda YANKS her IV out of her arm, causing blood to leak out onto the floor.

LUCINDA

I'm leaving.

ELLIE

No, you're not. I've placed you on a hold until after the hearing.

Lucinda sees a security guard at the door, starts crying.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

This seems extreme because it is. But that's how important I think--

LUCINDA

-- How can you possibly be a psychiatrist when you have no sympathy, no understanding of other people?

ELLIE

Lucinda--

LUCINDA

Get out. GET OUT OF HERE!

EXT. HOSPITAL STREET - NIGHT

Visibly shaken, Ellie heads out into the NY night, just as Doctor Jared Knox is heading back to the ER with a coffee.

KNOX

I was hoping I'd run into you.
About earlier--

Ellie avoids eye contact, tries to hurry past him.

ELLIE

It's fine. Forget it.

KNOX

Seizing kid turned out to be hyponatremic. I'm sorry. You were totally right about everything.

(then)

Everything.

Ellie stops, emotional.

ELLIE

Maybe being right isn't enough.

KNOX

Whoa. What's going on?

ELLIE

It's nothing... long day.

ON Ellie as she wipes her eyes and moves off.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. PSYCHIATRIC EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT - FISHBOWL - DAY

It's Sunday morning in the Fishbowl. Ellie is in charge, running through cases with Claire as Chuck feeds chunks of a day old donut to the squirrel in it's cage. As she talks, Ellie cleans up coffee cups, candy bar wrappers and other detritus from the night shift.

ELLIE

It's like after midnight, the garbage cans turn invisible.

(then)

And somebody get a clonidine patch on the obsessive subway guy, his dyskinesias are worse.

CLAIRE

Freudian theory says obsessions are sexual urges that the mind can only partially repress.

ELLIE

Claire, this is Bellevue, not some microsuede couch on Park Avenue. The why of it all doesn't matter.

(then)

Listen. Improvise. Deal with the problem in front of you. That's what we do.

Ellie's about to chuck a few old tortilla chips but Chuck stops her.

CHUCK

Uh-uh. Florence likes those.

ELLIE

Florence? I thought it was a boy for some reason.

(off Chuck's look)

It seems boyish.

Maneesh steps up, energetic.

MANEESH

NYPD impounded two cars in the last 24 hours in Manhattan with Southern plates.

(MORE)

MANEESH (CONT'D)

One of them was parked right in front of the Capital Partners Building. Registered to a James Kennerly of Charlottesville.

Ellie high fives him.

ELLIE

Strong work, Sherlock.

Ellie turns her attention to Claire.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

So where are you taking Officer Mike to dinner?

CLAIRE

You don't *really* expect me to--

ELLIE

Of course I do. Maneesh, get a number for James Kennerly of Charlottesville and call his house.
(then, to Claire)
You. Come on. Let's round.

INT. MEDICAL ER - DAY

Ellie and Claire approach David Bellinger, the seizing boy from earlier. He's sitting up in bed, lucid and texting.

ELLIE

David?
(off his blank look)
I'm Doctor Harlow, this is Doctor Cohen. We met you yesterday.

DAVID

Dude. Yesterday is a big blur.

ELLIE

Totally normal. Did anyone explain what happened?

DAVID

Not really.

ELLIE

The sodium level in your blood was dangerously low.

DAVID

That's cool.

CLAIRE

Cool?

DAVID

Can I go now?

David's not the sharpest knife in the drawer.

ELLIE

Soon. But listen... last night you mentioned "jobbing". Are you a wrestler?

DAVID

Yeah.

ELLIE

My brother was a wrestler. Sometimes he did some pretty crazy things to get his weight down. Rubber sweatsuits. Diuretics.

David's eyes widen at the mention of diuretics.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

You see, there just aren't that many ways for a healthy guy like you to throw his electrolytes so out of whack. Diuretic abuse is kinda my leading theory here.

DAVID

You're not going to tell my coach, are you?

ELLIE

No. You're an adult, you can do whatever you want.

DAVID

Really?

ELLIE

Really.

DAVID

Because what I'd really like to do is bend you over the sink.

ELLIE

What?

DAVID

Sorry, but you guys are the hottest doctors I've ever seen.

Claire and Ellie react. The guy is a misogynist prick.

CLAIRE

Dude, we are way out of your league. And you know what? My boyfriend's a cop and he's right down the hall. One word from me and he'll come here and beat your ass blue. Understand?

David is shocked into submission.

DAVID

Um, yeah...

Ellie turns to Claire approvingly as they walk out.

ELLIE

Now that's what I'm talking about. Listen. Improvise. Deal with the problem in front of you.

INT. HOSPITAL COURTROOM - DAY

Ben and Lucinda sit at different tables across from a bench. Lucinda is back in street clothes but still has an IV in her hand. A young but already haggard public defender, CRAIG TRAVERS (late 20s) is at her side. Lucinda notes the guard at the door as Ellie takes a seat next to Ben.

ELLIE

Morning.

BEN

(avoiding eye contact)
Morning.

ELLIE

Look... I hope that we can--

BEN

I... there were things I just needed to say. I said them, we can move on.

ELLIE

Good.

Judge Chavez enters and approaches his bench.

CHAVEZ

Ms. Webb. This is a competency hearing. Do you understand what that is?

LUCINDA

Yes.

CRAIG

Your honor, these doctors are trying to make a case that Lucinda Webb lacks decision making capacity but it's a ridiculous claim.

BEN

Sir, Ms. Webb needs emergent surgery to repair a leaking brain aneurism.

ELLIE

If she waits, the risk of a catastrophic head-bleed could be as high as twenty percent.

CHAVEZ

Ms. Webb, anything you want to say?

LUCINDA

I don't understand any of this. I mean, I've made my decision. I don't know why none of you can respect that.

Lucinda is emotional. Ellie seizes an opportunity.

ELLIE

Your honor, her lesion may be causing emotional lability.

LUCINDA

My husband... he left me two years ago... It wasn't just that there was another woman. He actually went to a dating site to find another woman. He went looking for someone younger. Someone much younger who likes football and snowboarding.

CHAVEZ

Get to the point, Mrs. Webb.

LUCINDA

For the past two years, I've felt like a carton of milk sitting in the fridge past it's expiration date. And it wasn't just that I was old... older. It was that there was nothing left. My husband was gone. My daughter was gone, working at her crazy law firm, eating Chinese food at her desk every night.

CHAVEZ

What is your understanding of the risk? That is the question here.

LUCINDA

My understanding is that risks are part of living.

ELLIE

Your honor, the aneurism may also be creating a distorted sense of invincibility.

Lucinda glares at Ellie.

LUCINDA

I know I'm not invincible.

Close on Ellie, Lucinda's words resonating.

EXT. LAKE MICHIGAN HOUSE - 2002 - FLASHBACK

Ellie is sitting alone on a dock in front of her childhood home, a blanket wrapped around her. She holds an ice pack to a bloody gash on her head, incurred in the ambulance jump. A 25-year-old man, TOM, approaches the front steps.

TOM

Are you crazy? You could have died.

ELLIE

But I didn't.

TOM

The cops are looking for you.

ELLIE

I didn't jump, Tom. I fell.

TOM

What's the difference? You were climbing suspension cables. For fun.

INT. HOSPITAL COURTROOM - BACK TO PRESENT

LUCINDA

For those years after he left, I barely went out of the house. But then, slowly, I started doing things. A book club. Playing scrabble online with strangers. Nothing big. But these were things I never would have done before.

ELLIE

Judge, I don't see how this--

Lucinda refuses to be shut down.

LUCINDA

-- And then, over time, I got bolder. A trip to Italy. A singles mixer. Dance lessons for Maggie's wedding.

Off Ellie we--

EXT. LAKE MICHIGAN HOUSE - 2002 - FLASHBACK - CONTINUED

TOM

The hang gliding, the drinking, screwing that coke dealer... Tell, me, Ellie. What the hell are you doing?

INT. HOSPITAL COURTROOM - BACK TO PRESENT

LUCINDA

I am going to dance the tango with my hot gay dance instructor at my daughter's wedding this weekend because for the first time in two years, I feel awake. I understand the risks and I've decided. I've decided I'm not going to die before I'm actually dead.

PUSH IN on Ellie, taking in Lucinda's words as we--

EXT. LAKE MICHIGAN HOUSE - 2002 - FLASHBACK - CONTINUED

PUSH IN on Ellie, eyes welling with emotion, trying to answer Tom's question as we--

INT. HOSPITAL COURTROOM - BACK TO PRESENT

Back in the courtroom, something clicks for Ellie.

ELLIE

Your honor?

(then)

I'm withdrawing the petition.

CHAVEZ

Excuse me?

BEN

What?

ELLIE (CONT'D)

She's not incompetent.

Ben is totally blindsided. What the fuck is going on?

ELLIE (CONT'D)

She knows what she's doing. And she needs to be there.

BEN

Doctor Harlow can't unilaterally make this decision.

CHAVEZ

(packing up)

If you guys don't have consensus about her lacking capacity then we're done.

LUCINDA

We're done?

CRAIG

Lets go.

Chavez, Craig and Lucinda file out, Ben and Ellie are alone.

BEN

Unbelievable.

ELLIE

I'm sorry. But all of a sudden it made sense. This court order would have made us feel better but it would have done absolutely nothing for her.

BEN

Except possibly save her life.

(then)

Seriously, you belong in private practice, writing adderall scrips for investment bankers, not at Bellevue where people can actually get hurt.

ELLIE

Look, I'm not perfect, alright? But you clearly have some conflicted feelings about me that you're going to have to work out--

BEN

Don't-- just don't. I am sick of psychiatrists trying to out psych each other. I grew up with that my whole life. No. The problem is not some kind of psycho-trigger. The problem is you.

Furious, Ben goes. Off Ellie we--

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

INT. ICU - DAY

Ellie appears at the door of Lucinda's room. Lucinda is dressed, ready to go. Daughter MAGGIE (20s) and future son-in-law LEO (20s) are there to pick her up.

ELLIE
Knock, knock.

Lucinda isn't sure what to make of Ellie at the door.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
I just wanted to say goodbye.

Ellie steps in, Lucinda looks nervous. Leo and Maggie don't know the whole story about why she was here.

LUCINDA
Doctor Harlow. This my daughter,
Maggie, and her fiance Leo.

ELLIE
Hello. And congratulations.

MAGGIE
Thanks. And thanks for taking care
of my mom.

Lucinda tries to act casual.

LUCINDA
We should get going, honey.

MAGGIE
I'm glad it's nothing serious but
how come nobody has any idea why
she passed out?

Ellie hesitates. Either she betrays Lucinda's confidence or corroborate with this dangerous gamble. Ellie takes a breath.

ELLIE
Sometimes tests don't tell the
whole story. But the one thing we
do know is that your mom is a very
strong woman.
(then)
Enjoy your big day. All of you.

Lucinda is hugely relieved not to be outed.

LUCINDA

Thank you, Doctor Harlow. For everything.

LEO

I'll go get the car.

Lucinda gives Ellie a hug as Leo and Maggie file out. Ellie returns the embrace--

ELLIE

If you're not back here five minutes after that bouquet is thrown I'm hunting your ass down, understood?

LUCINDA

Understood.

With a grateful smile, Lucinda goes to join her family.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT - FISHBOWL - DAY

Maneesh and Claire watch as Chuck holds out an almond to Florence the squirrel who's now out of the cage.

CHUCK

Watch this.
(to Florence)
Pray.

Florence puts her head down, paws together.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

Amazing, right?

CLAIRE

Not really. Animal training is cognitive-behavioral therapy in it's most basic form.

Maneesh sees some patients outside the Fishbowl watching.

MANEESH

Does anyone else think that a praying squirrel in a ward full of hallucinating psychotics is a bad idea? Or is that just me?

Ellie steps in with an unassuming 33-year-old, MIRA KENNERLY.

ELLIE
Maneesh-- This is Mira Kennerly.

MANEESH
Oh. Hi. That was fast.

MIRA
Got on the first plane out of
Charlottesville when you called.
(then)
Can I see him now?

INT. PSYCHIATRIC ER - DAY

Ellie, Maneesh take Mira to a gurney where her husband,
Charles Kennerly, AKA Manic Man, sleeps.

ELLIE
He's gonna be out for a while.
Combination of meds and the fact
that he probably didn't get much
sleep the last few days.

MIRA
Thank you so much for finding me so
fast. Last year he was missing for
over a week.

MANEESH
How long have you been married?

Ellie gets a chair for Mira. She sits, takes Charles' hand.

MIRA
Nine years. We met when we were
both getting our PhDs in
engineering. He was so amazing--
he could memorize an entire
chemistry text in a day. We didn't
realize that it was the onset of...
this.

(collecting herself)
You know, when he's on his meds, he
wins teaching awards. Makes great
cappuccino. Reads Tolkien to me in
bed. All the rest... I just try to
accept it as part of the deal.

ELLIE
That's incredibly hard to do.

MIRA

(emotional)

The key is to let go of an illusion of perfection, you know? Your life is your life. There is no normal.

(then)

Can I wait here until he wakes up?

ELLIE

Of course.

Ellie and Maneesh move off. Ellie has clearly been affected by Mira's words. Maneesh notices.

MANEESH

(smiles)

This is all just a power trip for you, huh?

Ellie gives him a playful shove.

ELLIE

Tell anyone and you're dead.

(then)

Check it out.

They see Claire LEAVING the ward with Mike the Cop.

MANEESH

No way.

Diane steps up.

DIANE

Ready to sign out?

ELLIE

Hell, yeah.

DIANE

Congratulations, Ellie. First weekend at Bellevue. You survived.

EXT. BELLEVUE ROOF - DUSK

Ellie stands on the roof of the hospital, looking out to an expansive view of the East River.

MALE VOICE

What the hell are you doing up here?

Ellie looks back and sees Knox.

KNOX

I saw you in the hallway, you went into a utility closet. When you didn't come out, I got curious. Thought you might be Wonder Woman or something.

ELLIE

... I came up to see the view. A janitor told me about the hatch to the roof.

KNOX

I can think of easier ways to see the river, psycho. Have a drink at the Onyx Cafe. Go running on York Avenue. Hell, get right out there on a kayak.

ELLIE

I don't know...

Ellie looks out at the water, seems pensive as the wind blows her hair.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

... Sometimes I have a weird need to do things the hard way.

EXT. LAKE MICHIGAN DOCK - DAY - 2002

A continuation of the earlier flashback. Tom is angry.

TOM

You want to be like her? Go buy a pack of razor blades, it would be easier. Because I'm sick of the cops calling about my suicidal sister.

Ellie looks at him, adrift. Tom instantly regrets his words.

TOM (CONT'D)

Sorry, El. I'm sorry. I know it's been hard. But you know what? We're all hurting.

ELLIE

I'm not. I'm not hurting.

TOM

Then what the hell is this about?

ELLIE

It's about just that-- I'm not hurting. Something changed. Something's wrong with me.

TOM

Nothing's wrong with you. You're in shock.

ELLIE

It's been over a year. And all I know is... numbness... nothingness... it's so much worse than grief.

TOM

So, what? You want to give up? You want to die?

ELLIE

No. I don't. Bridges, cliffs, drugs, sex-- it's all the same. All about one thing...

EXT. EAST RIVER - BACK TO PRESENT

Ellie seems inexplicably emotional, shaken, as she turns back to look Knox in the eye.

ELLIE

... I want to feel like I'm alive.

Ellie collects herself, smiles.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

So where does one rent a kayak?

INT. MIDTOWN BOATHOUSE - NIGHT

MUSIC STARTS as Ellie and Knox knock over a row of kayaks and have sex among the boats and paddles of a boathouse. It's fun and hot and... very much alive.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - MORNING

The next morning. Ellie walks down a busy NYC street. Her phone buzzes, it's Vanessa. INTERCUT WITH:

INT. VANESSA'S LOFT - MORNING

Vanessa sits up in bed, sexy in a sea of white.

VANESSA

Hey. Sorry about Friday, I got wrapped up with the DJ and sorta lost track of you.

From Vanessa's POV we see the HOT DJ from the Teaser is lounging at the other end of the bed, painting Vanessa's toenails black.

ELLIE

That's okay, I went home early.

VANESSA

Lunch at Tartine? We need to catch up.

ELLIE

Perfect. Meet you there at one.

VANESSA

Isn't it great to be free on a Monday instead of locked to a desk like normal people?

ELLIE

You know, Vanessa... there is no normal.

Ellie hangs up as she approaches a beautiful prewar building. She takes a breath and walks in through the doors... MATCH CUT WITH:

INT. MIDTOWN ROWING CLUB - DUSK

Ellie comes into an office-- we see from a sign it's the MIDTOWN ROWING CLUB. She's joining, getting her own kayak. A CLERK hands her a form and a pen. MATCH CUT WITH:

INT. FANCY PREWAR BUILDING - MORNING

Ellie signs in at the desk and heads into an elevator as-

EXT. EAST RIVER DOCK - DUSK

Ellie emerges from the rowing club building, heads down a dock, surveying the kayaks.

INT. HALLWAY - FANCY PREWAR BUILDING - MORNING

Ellie walks down a long hallway. She stops at a door marked Cate Drayton, MD, Psychotherapy.

It's the therapist from the napkin that Diane gave her. Ellie knocks. Dr. CATE DRAYTON (late 40s, expensive pantsuit) opens the door.

ELLIE

Doctor Drayton? I'm Ellie Harlow.

DRAYTON

Come in.

Ellie steps into the gorgeous minimalist office.

ELLIE

I'm afraid I'm not very good at this.

DRAYTON

That's okay. I am.

Ellie looks out to sweeping views of the Hudson, emotional--

ELLIE

A few nights ago... I dove off a party cruise into the East River.

Doctor Drayton takes this in.

DRAYTON

That sounds like a good place to start.

EXT. EAST RIVER - DUSK

Music continues. Ellie rows out on the river, taking in the expansive views of the city. She picks up speed as her oars slice cleanly into the water, embarking on a new chapter of her life.

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE