

Billable Hours  
by  
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02/10/26

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SIGNATURE OPENING SHOT – BILLABLE HOURS

BLACK.

The low, distant HUM of machinery. Not medical. Not industrial.

Something infrastructural.

FADE IN:

EXT. ST. ANSELM MEDICAL CENTER – PRE-DAWN

A massive hospital complex dominates the frame.

Not dramatic.

Not stylized.

Just... present.

The camera is high above, drifting slowly downward – not a swoop, not a flourish – a measured descent, like an audit.

The building's lights are on even though the city around it still sleeps.

Every window illuminated.

Every floor alive.

The HUM grows clearer now – HVAC, servers, elevators cycling endlessly.

The hospital is awake before the people inside it.

CLOSE ON: THE BUILDING FACADE

Clean lines. Modern glass. Intentionally soothing architecture.

A sign glows softly near the entrance:

ST. ANSELM MEDICAL CENTER

YOU'RE IN GOOD HANDS

The words are comforting.

Practiced.

Designed.

THE CAMERA CONTINUES DOWNWARD

Past waiting rooms already occupied.

Past hallways where night-shift nurses move like ghosts.

Past patient rooms where people sleep – or don't.

We begin to notice something:

The higher we go...

The quieter it gets.

Less color.

Less movement.

Less humanity.

INT. HOSPITAL – ELEVATOR SHAFT – CONTINUOUS

The camera slips through the glass wall of an elevator shaft.

Cars glide up and down with flawless precision.

INT. ELEVATOR – MOVING

Inside one elevator: a SINGLE PATIENT, middle-aged, alone.

Still dressed in street clothes.

Clutching a hospital bracelet like it might disappear.

The digital floor indicator lights up:

The doors close.

The elevator rises.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

As the numbers climb, the lighting subtly changes.

Warmer on 1.

Neutral on 2.

Cooler on 3.

By 4, the hum deepens.

The patient swallows.

The indicator hesitates.

Then:

The elevator slows.

The doors begin to open—

SMASH CUT TO BLACK.

The HUM stops.

A single, sterile CHIME.

TITLE CARD:

BILLABLE HOURS

Cut to:

INT. ST. ANSELM MEDICAL CENTER - FIFTH FLOOR - NIGHT (COLD OPEN)

Dark. Too dark for a hospital.

A MAN (60s) lies strapped to a bed. Awake. Panicked.

His wrists are secured – gently padded restraints, almost polite.

A digital monitor above him:

CARE PHASE: COMPLETION

INSURANCE STATUS: EXHAUSTED

He tries to speak. A clear mask muffles him.

The room hums – not machines, but infrastructure.

A soft VOICE comes from a speaker.

SYSTEM (V.O.)  
You are safe.

You are being cared for.

The man's eyes dart to the door.

It has no handle on the inside.

A NURSE enters. Face calm. Eyes trained not to linger.

She checks a tablet.

SEDATION: PENDING  
The man shakes his head violently.

MAN  
(muffled)  
Please–

The nurse hesitates. Just a beat.

Then presses CONFIRM.

The IV line pulses.

The man's breathing slows.

As his eyes glaze, the monitor updates:

TIME-OF-DEATH: PREDICTIVE WINDOW GENERATED

His vision blurs-

HARD CUT TO:

INT. CORPORATE OFFICE - DAY

Bright. Glass. Orderly.

ANGELINA KLINE (40s), composed, sharp, efficient, sits at a workstation.

A compliance dashboard fills her screen.

A JUNIOR ANALYST (20s) hovers nearby, nervous.

JUNIOR ANALYST  
This escalation feels... aggressive.

On-screen:

PATIENT OUTCOME: TERMINAL WITHIN MODEL TOLERANCE

Angelina scrolls. Skims. Doesn't linger.

ANGELINA  
The utilization curve supports it.

JUNIOR ANALYST  
But the family appealed-

ANGELINA  
-and lost. Twice.

She clicks APPROVE.

A green banner flashes:

COMPLIANCE VERIFIED  
The analyst nods. Uneasy.

Angelina doesn't notice.

She checks her metrics.

They tick upward.

INT. ANGELINA'S OFFICE - LATER

Angelina types an email.

SUBJECT: St. Anselm Medical Center - Preliminary Audit

BODY:

"Operational efficiency exceeds regional benchmarks.

Escalation protocols appear compliant and well-governed."

She pauses. Rereads.

Hits SEND.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Angelina sits in her car, phone pressed to her ear.

ANGELINA

Dad, it's just an audit. Two days.

INTERCUT - FATHER (60s), at home, winded.

FATHER

You always say that.

ANGELINA

(smiles)

Because it's true.

He coughs. Harder than before.

ANGELINA (CONT'D)

You okay?

FATHER  
Just tired.

Angelina frowns – barely.

ANGELINA  
I'll call you tomorrow.

She hangs up. Starts the car.

INT. ST. ANSELM MEDICAL CENTER – FIRST FLOOR – MORNING

Warm. Inviting. Sunlight through glass.

A sign glows softly:

WELCOME TO ST. ANSELM

YOU'RE IN GOOD HANDS

Angelina enters with a visitor badge.

A RECEPTIONIST beams.

RECEPTIONIST  
Ms. Kline! We've been expecting  
you.

Angelina nods. Professional.

Her eyes flick to the elevator bank.

Five floors.

The 5 is dimmer than the others.

INT. ELEVATOR – DAY

Angelina rides alone.

Soft music. Neutral. Designed to soothe.

The digital floor indicator ascends.

1... 2...

At 3, the lights subtly dim.

Angelina notices – dismisses it.

The doors open.

INT. THIRD FLOOR - DAY

Cooler light. Muted colors.

Staff move efficiently. Quietly.

Angelina walks, scanning charts on her tablet.

A patient is wheeled past her – conscious, afraid.

PATIENT

(to no one)

They said I was getting better.

A NURSE avoids eye contact.

Angelina pauses.

Then continues walking.

INT. ST. ANSELM - ADMIN OFFICE - DAY

ANGELINA meets ADRIAN VALE (50s). Impeccable. Stillness masquerading as calm.

VALE

Ms. Kline.

Your report was... encouraging.

ANGELINA

Efficiency tends to be.

Vale smiles – faintly.

VALE

We design for it.

They shake hands.

Vale's grip lingers half a second too long.

INT. ELEVATOR - LATER

Angelina rides again.

This time, a faint vibration underfoot.

The floor indicator flickers.

Angelina studies the panel.

For a split second, 5 flashes - then disappears.

The doors open.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - DAY

Darker. Quieter.

A patient room door opens.

Angelina freezes.

Her FATHER is being wheeled out.

IV lines. Oxygen. Pale.

ANGELINA

Dad?

Orderlies stop.

FATHER

(confused)

Angie?

A DOCTOR steps forward.

DOCTOR

Your father presented with  
respiratory distress this morning.

Angelina stares - stunned.

ANGELINA  
Why wasn't I called?

DOCTOR  
Your contact info was flagged as  
"professional conflict."

Angelina's stomach drops.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
We admitted him for observation.

The elevator DINGS behind them.

The doors open.

Inside: darkness.

A soft chime.

TRANSFER AUTHORIZATION PENDING

Angelina looks at the elevator.

Then at her father.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - PATIENT ROOM - DAY

Angelina's father lies in bed. Oxygen hissing softly.

Angelina stands beside him, tablet in hand, trying to stay professional.

FATHER  
You look like you're at work.

ANGELINA  
I am.

She catches herself. Softens.

ANGELINA (CONT'D)  
I mean—this is temporary.

A NURSE enters. MAYA (early 30s). Calm. Tired eyes. Avoids Angelina's gaze.

MAYA  
Vitals are stable. For now.

ANGELINA  
What triggered the escalation?

Maya checks the tablet.

MAYA  
Respiratory event.

Secondary flags followed.

ANGELINA  
Secondary to what?

Maya hesitates. Then—

MAYA  
Utilization thresholds.

Angelina stiffens. She knows that language.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - HALLWAY - DAY

Angelina walks briskly beside the DOCTOR.

ANGELINA  
He was independent yesterday.

DOCTOR  
Independence isn't predictive.

ANGELINA  
Neither is decline.

The doctor stops.

DOCTOR  
Ms. Kline, St. Anselm doesn't  
speculate.

We respond to models.

That phrase again.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Angelina rides down alone.

She pulls up her father's file.

CARE PHASE: ACUTE OBSERVATION

PROJECTED ESCALATION: 72 HOURS

Below it, in smaller text:

INSURANCE REVIEW: AUTOMATED

Angelina frowns.

She taps DETAILS.

Access denied.

The elevator LURCHES slightly as it passes 3.

She grips the rail.

INT. ADMINISTRATIVE FLOOR - DAY

Angelina sits at a workstation, logged into internal systems.

She overrides a permissions gate - muscle memory.

Her father's utilization curve appears.

It's steeper than expected.

ANGELINA  
(under breath)  
That's not right.

She cross-checks with regional averages.

St. Anselm's curve is... optimized.

Too optimized.

A POP-UP appears:

ACCESS LOGGED  
Angelina closes the window.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - NURSES' STATION - DAY

Maya charts.

Angelina approaches.

ANGELINA  
Has my father been moved since  
admission?

Maya shakes her head.

MAYA  
Not yet.

That "yet" hangs.

ANGELINA  
How often do patients move up?

Maya keeps typing.

MAYA  
As often as they need to.

ANGELINA  
And how often do they come back  
down?

Maya stops.

Looks at Angelina for the first time.

MAYA  
They don't.

A beat.

Maya looks away.

INT. THIRD FLOOR - DAY

Angelina walks unannounced.

Different tone. More color. Laughter from a room.

A PATIENT watches TV, joking with a VISITOR.

A sign on the wall:

RECOVERY WING  
Angelina checks the chart outside  
the room.

Patient was admitted after her father.

Projected discharge: Tomorrow.

Angelina's jaw tightens.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - PATIENT ROOM - NIGHT

Angelina sits with her father.

He coughs. Hard.

She instinctively reaches for the call button.

A beat later, Maya enters - already.

MAYA  
We're monitoring closely.

ANGELINA  
How closely?

Maya glances at the ceiling camera.

MAYA  
Continuously.

The word lands wrong.

INT. VALE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Vale reviews dashboards.

Angelina's name appears under AUDITOR ACTIVITY.

A spike.

Vale smiles faintly.

He taps a control.

AUDIT SCOPE: NARROWED

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - PATIENT ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Angelina's father sleeps.

Angelina checks her phone.

An email notification:

FROM: Adrian Vale

SUBJECT: Regarding Your Father

She opens it.

VALE (EMAIL)  
"Please don't worry.

St. Anselm is uniquely equipped for complex cases.

Your father is exactly where he needs to be."

Angelina looks up.

The lights dim slightly.

Not off. Just... reduced.

A soft chime from the wall panel.

TRANSFER REVIEW PENDING

Angelina stands.

ANGELINA

No.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Angelina steps out.

Sees a gurney at the far end.

Another patient being prepped.

The patient notices her.

PATIENT

(quiet, terrified)

What floor is this?

Angelina doesn't answer.

She watches as the gurney rolls toward the elevator.

The doors open.

Dark inside.

The indicator flashes:

4 ? 5

The doors close.

Angelina stares.

For the first time, she doesn't look away.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - OBSERVATION ROOM - MORNING

Glass walls. No privacy. No warmth.

Angelina stands with a HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATOR reviewing her father's chart.

ADMINISTRATOR  
Your father's condition qualifies  
him for enhanced monitoring.

ANGELINA  
Monitoring isn't treatment.

ADMINISTRATOR  
It's preparation.

Angelina looks at the word on the chart:

ESCALATION READY  
She knows that phrase.

She helped standardize it.

INT. ST. ANSELM - CAFETERIA - DAY

Angelina sits alone. Doesn't eat.

She watches staff badges pass.

Colors subtly change by floor level.

First floor: bright blues and greens.

Fourth floor: muted gray.

Fifth floor badges-

She hasn't seen one yet.

A TV plays silently.

A pharmaceutical ad mouths the words:

"COMFORT YOU CAN TRUST."

Angelina looks away.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - PATIENT ROOM - DAY

Angelina's father is awake. Weak but lucid.

FATHER

They keep asking the same questions.

ANGELINA

They're establishing baselines.

FATHER

Why?

Angelina opens her mouth.

Stops.

ANGELINA

Because they're thorough.

She hates herself a little for saying it.

INT. INSURANCE COORDINATION OFFICE - DAY

Angelina pushes past a RECEPTIONIST.

ANGELINA

I need to see the utilization liaison.

LIAISON (40s), polite and dead-eyed, gestures to a chair.

LIAISON

Your father's policy is performing as expected.

ANGELINA

He hasn't received treatment.

LIAISON  
Observation is billable.

Angelina exhales slowly.

ANGELINA  
What triggers denial?

The liaison slides a tablet forward.

A graph appears.

A red vertical line labeled:

ECONOMIC VIABILITY THRESHOLD

ANGELINA  
That's not medical.

LIAISON  
No.

But it's binding.

INT. ST. ANSELM - STAIRWELL - DAY

Angelina takes the stairs down. Needs air.

The concrete walls close in.

Between floors, she sees something etched into the paint:

FLOOR NUMBERS - scratched, rewritten, layered.

5 has been carved over and over again.

Angelina touches it.

Her phone BUZZES.

INT. STAIRWELL LANDING - CONTINUOUS

A TEXT from her junior analyst:

"Quick question - escalation override on the McRae case?"

You approved it last quarter.”

Angelina stares at the message.

FLASH – the cold open patient.

His face.

His restraints.

Her thumb hovers.

She types:

“Yes. It was compliant.”

Send.

She closes her eyes.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR – NURSES’ STATION – EVENING

Maya administers meds to another patient.

Angelina watches from a distance.

Maya’s hand trembles—just slightly—before pressing a syringe.

The patient notices.

PATIENT

Is this... necessary?

Maya doesn’t answer right away.

MAYA

It’s ordered.

Angelina flinches.

INT. VALE’S OFFICE – NIGHT

Vale watches a live heat map of patient movement.

Angelina’s father’s dot pulses on 4.

Vale taps the screen.

A note appears:

FAMILY RESISTANCE - MODERATE

He dictates calmly.

VALE  
Flag the case for anticipatory  
counseling.

ASSISTANT  
Meaning?

VALE  
So she feels heard.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - FAMILY CONSULT ROOM - NIGHT

Angelina sits across from a COUNSELOR.

COUNSELOR  
When families resist progression,  
outcomes worsen.

ANGELINA  
Progression to what?

COUNSELOR  
Acceptance.

Angelina laughs once. Sharp.

ANGELINA  
You're training grief.

COUNSELOR  
We're managing it.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - PATIENT ROOM - NIGHT

Angelina sits beside her father again.

He grips her hand.

FATHER  
If this gets bad..

Promise me you won't let them-

He trails off.

Angelina swallows.

ANGELINA  
I promise.

A soft chime interrupts.

The wall panel lights up.

CARE REVIEW COMPLETE

NEXT PHASE: PENDING

Angelina stares at the word.

Pending.

She knows what comes after.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Angelina rides up alone.

She presses 4.

The elevator doesn't move.

A pause.

Then the panel lights:

AUTHORIZED ROUTE OVERRIDE

The elevator ascends.

It doesn't stop.

The lights dim.  
The air pressure changes.  
Angelina grips the rail.  
The doors begin to open—

SMASH CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Angelina stands rigid as the elevator completes its ascent.  
A soft tone.  
The doors slide open.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - NIGHT

Silence.  
Not hospital silence — something deeper. Absorptive.  
The lighting is indirect, reflected, source-less.  
No shadows. No warmth.  
The hallway stretches longer than geometry allows.  
Angelina steps out.  
The doors CLOSE behind her.  
No button panel on this side.  
She turns.

A SIGN on the wall:

ADVANCED CARE WING  
(smaller, barely visible  
beneath it)

AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY

Angelina swallows.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

She walks.

Doors line the corridor. Frosted glass.

Behind one - movement.

A hand presses against the glass.

Angelina freezes.

The hand slides down slowly... disappears.

A soft HISS as a door further down opens.

A NURSE exits, face blank, eyes unfocused.

ANGELINA  
Excuse me-

The nurse keeps walking.

Angelina notices the nurse's badge.

No color.

Just gray.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - OBSERVATION ROOM

Angelina peers through glass.

Inside: a PATIENT, elderly woman, awake, restrained.

A TIMER floats holographically above the bed:

PROJECTED COMPLETION: 00:18:42

Angelina's breath catches.

ANGELINA  
What is this?

A VOICE behind her.

VALE  
Clarity.

Angelina spins.

Vale stands there, hands folded.

VALE (CONT'D)  
This is where ambiguity ends.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Angelina steps closer to the glass.

ANGELINA  
She's conscious.

VALE  
For now.

ANGELINA  
She doesn't look terminal.

VALE  
Terminal is retrospective.

Angelina turns to him, furious now.

ANGELINA  
You're timing deaths.

VALE  
We're removing surprise.

He gestures to the timer.

VALE (CONT'D)  
Families fear not knowing.

We give them certainty.

ANGELINA  
You give them expiration dates.

Vale considers this.

VALE  
Language matters.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The patient's TIMER ticks down.

The woman notices Angelina through the glass.

WOMAN  
(mouths)  
Help me.

Angelina moves toward the door.

VALE  
That door doesn't open from this  
side.

ANGELINA  
Open it.

VALE  
You can't un-know what you've seen.

Angelina slams her palm against the glass.

ANGELINA  
She's alive.

VALE  
So is your father.

That stops her.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - TRANSFER ALCOVE

Vale guides her—gently, deliberately.

A gurney slides into place automatically.

The room hums.

VALE  
Everything here is consensual.

ANGELINA  
She didn't consent.

VALE  
She signed when she could still  
read the font.

Angelina's voice cracks.

ANGELINA  
You buried this in paperwork.

VALE  
You approved the language.

A beat.

Angelina stares at him.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - MIRRORED CORRIDOR

They walk past mirrored panels.

Angelina glimpses her reflection.

For a split second—

She's wearing a gray badge.

She blinks.

It's gone.

Her heart races.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - EXIT VESTIBULE

Vale stops.

VALE  
You asked for efficiency.

ANGELINA  
I asked for compliance.

VALE  
And I delivered it at scale.

The elevator doors stand behind them.

VALE (CONT'D)  
You may go.

Angelina hesitates.

ANGELINA  
Why show me this?

Vale smiles faintly.

VALE  
Because you're already part of it.

The elevator doors OPEN.

Light spills in - harsher now.

INT. ELEVATOR - DESCENDING

Angelina grips the rail.

Her reflection stares back.

The floor indicator counts down.

5... 4...

At 4, the elevator shudders.

Angelina gasps.

The doors open.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - NIGHT

Sound rushes back.

Machines. Voices. Life.

Angelina stumbles out.

Maya stands at the nurses' station.

Their eyes meet.

Maya knows.

Doesn't ask.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - PATIENT ROOM - NIGHT

Angelina rushes to her father.

He sleeps.

Still breathing.

She collapses into the chair beside him.

Shaking.

Her phone BUZZES.

A notification:

INSURANCE REVIEW ADVANCED

TIME TO DECISION: 48 HOURS

Angelina looks at her father.

Then at her hands.

Hands that signed.

Hands that approved.

INT. ST. ANSELM - EXTERIOR - NIGHT

The hospital looms.

The Fifth Floor windows reflect nothing.

Above the entrance sign, a smaller plaque flickers:

CARE IS A PROCESS

The words briefly rearrange—

CARE IS A PRODUCT

Then reset.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - PATIENT ROOM - MORNING

Angelina wakes in the chair beside her father.

She's disoriented for half a second — then remembers everything.

The Fifth Floor.

The timer.

Vale's voice.

Her father coughs — wet, rattling.

ANGELINA  
Hey. Hey, I'm here.

He smiles weakly.

FATHER  
You look tired.

ANGELINA  
I didn't sleep much.

She checks the monitor.

Vitals stable.

But the ESCALATION BAR at the bottom has advanced.

She didn't notice it before.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - NURSES' STATION - MORNING

Angelina corners Maya.

ANGELINA  
I need access to my father's  
sedation schedule.

MAYA  
You don't want that.

ANGELINA  
I already saw Floor Five.

Maya stiffens.

Looks around. Lowers her voice.

MAYA  
Then you know this isn't about  
medicine.

ANGELINA  
Help me slow it.

Maya hesitates.

MAYA  
Every time someone interferes...

the system compensates.

ANGELINA

How?

Maya finally looks at her.

MAYA

By tightening everyone else's  
clock.

That lands hard.

INT. ADMINISTRATIVE FLOOR - DAY

Angelina sits at a terminal she should not be using.

She bypasses credentials - her own old compliance backdoors.

Her father's file opens.

She scrolls.

Finds the key line:

SEDATION AUTHORIZATION: AUTO-TRIGGERED BY BIOMETRIC DISTRESS

ANGELINA

(quiet)

So panic is lethal.

She modifies a parameter.

Just slightly.

Heart rate tolerance widened.

She saves.

A warning flashes:

SYSTEM REBALANCE IN PROGRESS

She ignores it.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - OBSERVATION ROOM - SAME TIME

A DIFFERENT PATIENT'S timer jumps.

00:12:04 ? 00:06:00

The patient wakes. Thrashes.

A nurse rushes in.

Sedation increases.

The timer stabilizes.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - PATIENT ROOM - DAY

Angelina's father breathes easier.

She exhales - relief.

For exactly ten seconds.

Her phone BUZZES.

A notification from the system:

ANOMALOUS DELAY DETECTED - CASES REBALANCED: 3

Angelina freezes.

INT. THIRD FLOOR - DAY

A man argues with a nurse.

PATIENT

You said I was improving!

NURSE

Please lower your voice.

His vitals spike.

Somewhere unseen, a threshold is crossed.

INT. VALE'S OFFICE - DAY

Vale watches dashboards shift.

He smiles - not pleased, not angry.

Interested.

ASSISTANT  
Someone adjusted tolerance windows.

VALE  
Yes.

ASSISTANT  
Do you want to lock the system?

VALE  
No.

He leans closer to the screen.

VALE (CONT'D)  
Let her keep pulling threads.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - FAMILY CONSULT ROOM - DAY

Angelina sits across from a SOCIAL WORKER.

SOCIAL WORKER  
Your father's trajectory is...  
complex.

ANGELINA  
He's stable.

SOCIAL WORKER  
Stability isn't the same as  
sustainability.

ANGELINA  
You're saying he's too expensive to  
recover.

The worker doesn't answer.

She slides paperwork forward.

ADVANCED CARE OPTIONS

Angelina recognizes the font.

The same one she approved in other cases.

Her hand trembles.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - HALLWAY - DAY

Angelina walks fast.

She sees a gurney roll past.

The patient is younger than her father.

Terrified.

He locks eyes with her.

YOUNG PATIENT

Please—what floor is this?

Angelina opens her mouth.

No sound comes out.

INT. STAIRWELL - DAY

Angelina leans against the wall, shaking.

Her phone BUZZES again.

A TEXT from her JUNIOR ANALYST:

"We're being audited.

All past escalations under your signature."

Angelina closes her eyes.

The system isn't just watching her.

It's reframing her.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - PATIENT ROOM - NIGHT

Angelina sits with her father again.

He's more tired now.

FATHER  
They keep talking like I'm already  
gone.

ANGELINA  
You're not.

She grips his hand - too tight.

FATHER  
Angelina...

If they ask you to sign something-

She shakes her head.

ANGELINA  
I won't.

FATHER  
You used to believe in those forms.

Angelina can't answer.

INT. VALE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Vale dictates calmly.

VALE  
Initiate anticipatory grief  
counseling.

Increase documentation density.

Flag Kline case for "family destabilization risk."

ASSISTANT  
That will accelerate-

VALE  
-acceptance.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - PATIENT ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Angelina watches the ESCALATION BAR inch forward again.

She didn't touch anything this time.

The system learned.

Her phone BUZZES.

A final notification:

INSURANCE REVIEW MOVED UP: 24 HOURS

Angelina looks at her father.

Then toward the ceiling.

Toward Floor Five.

For the first time, she whispers:

ANGELINA  
I did this.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - PATIENT ROOM - MORNING

Angelina's father stares at the ceiling.

Not asleep. Not awake. Hovering.

The monitor ticks softly.

Angelina notices something new on the screen:

PATIENT COOPERATION INDEX: DECLINING

ANGELINA  
What the hell is that?

Maya enters, carrying meds.

MAYA  
That's new.

ANGELINA  
New how?

Maya checks her tablet.

MAYA  
Rolled out last night.

Behavioral compliance metric.

Angelina laughs once – hollow.

ANGELINA  
They're grading him now.

MAYA  
They always were.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - HALLWAY - DAY

Angelina walks beside her father in a wheelchair – a  
"mobility assessment."

They pass other patients.

Some stare blankly.

Some watch her like she's already on the other side.

A WOMAN leans toward her.

WOMAN  
(low)  
Don't let them make you tired.

Angelina stops.

ANGELINA  
What?

But the woman is already being wheeled away.

INT. UTILIZATION CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Angelina slips into a glass-walled room she hasn't seen before.

No signage. No windows.

Just screens.

Dozens of patient profiles. Timers. Curves.

A TECH looks up - startled.

TECH  
You're not authorized-

ANGELINA  
I wrote the authorization language.

The tech hesitates.

ANGELINA (CONT'D)  
Five minutes.

She scans screens - sees her father's name.

His curve intersects with three others.

ANGELINA (CONT'D)  
Why are they linked?

TECH  
Because deviation clusters.

ANGELINA  
You mean... if one patient resists-

TECH  
-the model anticipates friction elsewhere.

Angelina steps back.

ANGELINA  
You're trading lives for smoothness.

TECH  
We're minimizing volatility.

INT. VALE'S OFFICE - DAY

Vale reviews the same room remotely.  
Sees Angelina's badge light up inside.  
He doesn't intervene.  
He sips tea.

VALE  
(to himself)  
Good.

She's seeing the spine now.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - FAMILY CONSULT ROOM - DAY

Angelina meets with the COUNSELOR again.

COUNSELOR  
Families who fight prolong  
suffering.

ANGELINA  
Whose?

COUNSELOR  
Everyone's.

Angelina leans forward.

ANGELINA  
If I agree to "comfort  
optimization,"

what happens?

The counselor slides a document forward.

Angelina reads.

Her breath catches.

FLOOR TRANSFER: IMMEDIATE

ANGELINA  
You're asking me to sign his death.

COUNSELOR  
I'm asking you to accept his  
trajectory.

ANGELINA  
You renamed it.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - NURSES' STATION - NIGHT

Maya watches as an ORDERLY prepares a gurney.

MAYA  
Where's he going?

ORDERLY  
Fifth Floor.

Maya looks at the patient.

The patient looks at her.

Maya hesitates.

Then... steps aside.

Angelina watches from the hallway.

This time, she sees it.

Maya's guilt.

Her own reflection in it.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Angelina retreats into the stairwell again.

She slides down the wall.

Her phone BUZZES.

A voicemail notification.

FROM: ADRIAN VALE

She plays it.

VALE (V.O.)  
I know this feels personal now.

That's normal.

A beat.

VALE (V.O.)  
But you should understand  
something:

your father is not being punished.

Angelina clenches her jaw.

VALE (V.O.)  
He's being processed.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - PATIENT ROOM - NIGHT

Angelina sits beside her father.

He's agitated now.

FATHER  
They keep moving the questions.

ANGELINA  
I know.

FATHER  
Like they're waiting for me to get  
tired.

Angelina swallows.

ANGELINA  
You don't have to answer anything  
you don't want to.

FATHER  
They say that makes it worse.

The monitor BEEPS.

COOPERATION INDEX: CRITICAL

A soft chime follows.

ESCALATION REVIEW: IMMINENT

Angelina stands.

ANGELINA  
I'm not letting this happen.

She reaches for the call button.

It doesn't respond.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - OBSERVATION ROOM - SAME TIME

Another patient's timer hits zero.

No alarm.

No rush.

A nurse marks:

COMPLETION CONFIRMED  
The system hums - satisfied.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - PATIENT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Angelina pounds the call button.

Nothing.

She looks up.

A camera lens adjusts - focusing on her.

Her father grips her hand.

FATHER  
Angelina...

If you fight this too hard—

ANGELINA  
I already did.

She looks at the ceiling.

At the invisible machinery.

ANGELINA (CONT'D)  
And it learned.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - PATIENT ROOM - MORNING

Angelina hasn't left.

Her father sleeps in short, shallow bursts.

The monitor displays a new banner:

CARE TRAJECTORY: NON-REVERSIBLE

Angelina stares at it like it's a lie she used to tell for a living.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - HALLWAY - DAY

Two SECURITY OFFICERS walk with purpose.

Angelina clocks them immediately.

They stop outside her father's room.

SECURITY  
Ms. Kline. We need to speak with  
you.

ANGELINA  
About what?

SECURITY  
Your access behavior.

Angelina nods slowly.

ANGELINA  
Let me guess.

Concern.

The officers exchange a look.

SECURITY  
Something like that.

INT. ADMINISTRATIVE INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Windowless. Neutral. Designed not to escalate.

Angelina sits across from a COMPLIANCE OFFICER she's never  
met.

COMPLIANCE OFFICER  
Your recent activity triggered  
system protections.

ANGELINA  
I helped design them.

COMPLIANCE OFFICER  
Exactly.

He slides a tablet forward.

A list of timestamps. Overrides. Deviations.

COMPLIANCE OFFICER (CONT'D)  
You're introducing volatility.

ANGELINA  
I'm introducing humanity.

The officer doesn't react.

COMPLIANCE OFFICER  
Those are not interchangeable.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - PATIENT ROOM - DAY

Angelina returns.

Her father is awake - frightened now.

FATHER  
They asked me about you.

Angelina freezes.

ANGELINA  
What did they say?

FATHER  
That you were... confused.

She forces a smile.

ANGELINA  
I'm not confused.

FATHER  
You look like you are.

INT. NURSES' STATION - DAY

Maya avoids Angelina's eyes.

Angelina steps closer.

ANGELINA  
They're watching me now.

MAYA  
They always were.

ANGELINA  
Then why help me at all?

Maya finally looks up.

MAYA  
Because if I don't,  
I have to believe my mother deserved it.  
That hits.

ANGELINA  
What happened?

MAYA  
Fifth Floor.  
Two years ago.  
I hung the bag myself.  
Angelina absorbs this.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
I thought staying would make it  
mean something.

INT. ST. ANSELM - SUBLEVEL ARCHIVE - NIGHT

Maya leads Angelina into a forgotten part of the hospital.  
Old servers. Dust. Legacy hardware.

MAYA  
They never delete anything.  
They just bury it.  
She plugs in a drive.  
Files populate.  
Old transfer protocols. Early models.  
One folder stands out:

PROJECT: COMPLETION (BETA)  
Angelina opens it.

Sees her own name – years earlier.

ANGELINA  
No...

MAYA  
You helped legitimize it.

Angelina feels sick.

INT. SUBLEVEL ARCHIVE – CONTINUOUS

Angelina scrolls.

Finds a familiar case.

The man from the cold open.

Her approval signature.

Timestamped.

ANGELINA  
I never knew.

MAYA  
You weren't supposed to.

Angelina closes her eyes.

The system didn't corrupt her.

It used her.

INT. VALE'S OFFICE – NIGHT

Vale watches a security feed of the sublevel.

Does nothing.

ASSISTANT  
Should we intervene?

VALE

No.

ASSISTANT

They're accessing foundational files.

VALE

Good.

He smiles faintly.

VALE (CONT'D)

Guilt accelerates compliance.

Even rebellion.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - PATIENT ROOM - NIGHT

Angelina rushes back.

Her father is agitated. Nurses surround him.

Maya steps in.

MAYA

He's panicking.

ANGELINA

Stop touching him.

A nurse checks the tablet.

NURSE

Biometrics are spiking.

A warning flashes:

SEDATION AUTO-TRIGGER IN 60 SECONDS

Angelina's heart races.

ANGELINA

Turn it off.

NURSE  
We can't.

ANGELINA  
I can.

She lunges for the monitor.

Security appears instantly.

SECURITY  
Step away.

Angelina looks at her father.

At the countdown.

00:30

FATHER  
Angelina...

don't.

She freezes.

Her hands drop.

The countdown stops.

SEDATION: DELAYED  
But another alert replaces it:

TRANSFER AUTHORIZATION: IMMEDIATE

The elevator DINGS in the hallway.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - HALLWAY - NIGHT

The gurney rolls toward them.

Angelina stands in its path.

SECURITY  
Ms. Kline-

ANGELINA  
This is my fault.

The words spill out.

ANGELINA (CONT'D)  
I helped build this.

I signed the language.

I said yes.

The security officers hesitate – human, for half a second.

Then the system speaks.

SYSTEM (V.O.)  
Please stand clear.

The gurney advances.

Angelina steps aside.

INT. ELEVATOR – NIGHT

Her father is wheeled inside.

The doors close.

Angelina watches through the narrowing gap.

The panel lights up:

4 ? 5

She screams – silent.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR – NIGHT

Angelina collapses against the wall.

Maya stands beside her.

MAYA  
I'm sorry.

Angelina shakes her head.

ANGELINA

No.

She looks up.

ANGELINA (CONT'D)

I'm done apologizing.

She wipes her face.

Stands.

ANGELINA (CONT'D)

Now we burn it down.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. ST. ANSELM - FIFTH FLOOR - NIGHT

Angelina steps out of the elevator.

This time, she doesn't hesitate.

The air is colder here now. Sharper.

The hallway lighting subtly shifts as she moves - tracking.

A wall panel flickers:

VISITOR STATUS: NON-COMPLIANT

Angelina keeps walking.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - PATIENT ROOM

Her father lies restrained.

Awake. Terrified.

A TIMER hovers above him:

PROJECTED COMPLETION: 02:14:33

ANGELINA  
Dad. I'm here.

FATHER  
(hoarse)  
They said you'd calm down.

Angelina grips the bed rail.

ANGELINA  
I'm not going anywhere.

A NURSE enters – gray badge.

NURSE  
Family presence increases distress.

ANGELINA  
So does dying alone.

The nurse pauses – a crack.

Then checks the tablet.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR – OBSERVATION HALLWAY

Maya works a terminal covertly.

She overrides a subroutine.

TIMER PAUSED  
She exhales – relief.

Instantly, alarms DO NOT sound.

Instead, a message appears:

COMPENSATION EVENT TRIGGERED

Maya's face drains.

INT. THIRD FLOOR - SAME TIME

A patient's vitals spike.

Sedation auto-engages.

The patient's family screams.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - PATIENT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Angelina feels the shift - not physically, but intuitively.

ANGELINA

What did you do?

MAYA (V.O.)

I bought you minutes.

Angelina looks at the timer.

Frozen.

02:14:33

Her phone BUZZES.

A system notification:

DEVIATION LOGGED - 2 CASES REBALANCED

Angelina's jaw tightens.

INT. VALE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Vale watches cascading adjustments.

He nods once.

VALE

She's learning leverage.

ASSISTANT

Do we stop them?

VALE

No.

We educate.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - MIRRORED CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Angelina moves fast now.

She pulls open a panel.

Finds an old manual override - red, dusty.

She slams it.

Nothing happens.

A line of text scrolls above it:

MANUAL CONTROL DEPRECATED

ANGELINA

Of course it is.

She laughs - bitter.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - CONFERENCE NOOK - NIGHT

Angelina confronts Vale.

He waits for her.

VALE

You've destabilized seven  
trajectories.

ANGELINA

Good.

VALE

Two of them were children.

That stops her.

ANGELINA  
You're lying.

VALE  
I'm informing you.

Angelina breathes, shaking.

ANGELINA  
Then shut it down.

VALE  
You can't turn off gravity because  
someone fell.

ANGELINA  
You built the floor.

Vale steps closer.

VALE  
And you signed the zoning permit.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - PATIENT ROOM - NIGHT

Angelina sits beside her father again.

The TIMER resumes.

02:13:58

Her father watches it.

FATHER  
That's new.

Angelina nods.

ANGELINA  
I know.

FATHER  
You always hated countdowns.

She swallows.

ANGELINA

I know.

INT. ST. ANSELM - SECURITY HUB - NIGHT

Maya slips in.

She plugs in the drive from the sublevel.

A warning appears:

FAILSAFE PROTOCOL: PUBLIC EXPOSURE MODE

Maya clicks it.

A branching flowchart appears.

If EXPOSED, then:

\* Blame shifts to providers

\* Insurance indemnified

\* Ownership shielded

Maya whispers.

MAYA

Oh my god...

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - OBSERVATION ROOM - NIGHT

Maya rushes in.

MAYA

Angelina.

If this goes public-

ANGELINA

Good.

MAYA

-doctors go to prison.

Vale walks.

Angelina absorbs this.

Looks at her father.

At the timer.

ANGELINA  
Then we don't let it go public.

MAYA  
What?

ANGELINA  
Not yet.

She stands.

ANGELINA (CONT'D)  
We aim higher.

INT. VALE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Vale receives an alert.

FAILSAFE VIEWED - UNAUTHORIZED

He smiles.

VALE  
Now she understands the game.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Security approaches.

Angelina steps into their path.

ANGELINA  
I want to talk.

SECURITY  
About what?

ANGELINA  
Ownership.

They hesitate – uncertain.

The system doesn't answer for them this time.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR – PATIENT ROOM – NIGHT

The TIMER ticks.

02:10:00

Angelina holds her father's hand.

ANGELINA  
I won't let them turn you into a  
metric.

FATHER  
You already did.

She nods – tears falling now.

ANGELINA  
I know.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. FIFTH FLOOR – PATIENT ROOM – NIGHT

The TIMER above Angelina's father ticks.

02:08:41

Angelina grips his hand. He winces.

FATHER  
It feels... quiet up here.

ANGELINA  
They designed it that way.

A NURSE enters with a tablet.

NURSE  
Family presence is increasing  
distress.

ANGELINA  
Then remove the clock.

The nurse taps the screen.

Nothing happens.

The clock keeps counting.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - SECURITY HUB - NIGHT

Maya scrolls through fail-safes faster now.

She finds a buried switch:

CARE CONTINUITY OVERRIDE - EXEC LEVEL

MAYA  
Angelina... if we trigger this-

ANGELINA (V.O.)  
-it'll lock every floor?

MAYA  
For twenty minutes.

ANGELINA (V.O.)  
Do it.

Maya hesitates.

MAYA  
People will panic.

ANGELINA (V.O.)  
They already are.

Maya flips the switch.

INT. ST. ANSELM - ALL FLOORS - SAME TIME

Doors LOCK.

Elevators HALT between floors.

Monitors FREEZE.

Patients stir. Voices rise.

For the first time, the system stops smoothing.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - PATIENT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The TIMER freezes.

02:07:59

Angelina exhales - a sob of relief.

Her father smiles weakly.

FATHER  
You finally broke it.

Angelina shakes her head.

ANGELINA  
I paused it.

INT. VALE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Red alerts flood Vale's screens.

He doesn't move.

ASSISTANT  
We've lost containment.

VALE  
No.

He stands.

VALE (CONT'D)  
We've revealed it.

INT. ST. ANSELM - STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Patients and families gather, confused, frightened.

A MAN shouts.

MAN  
What floor am I on?

No one answers.

The question spreads.

INT. SECURITY HUB - NIGHT

Maya's screen flashes:

OVERRIDE TIME REMAINING: 03:12

Maya swallows.

MAYA  
We can't keep this locked.

ANGELINA (V.O.)  
Then don't.

MAYA  
What?

ANGELINA (V.O.)  
Let them see.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - OBSERVATION CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Angelina steps into the hall.

She opens a panel.

Pulls back frosted glass.

Families on the Fourth Floor can now see up.

They see the restraints.

The timers.

The calm violence.

Gasps. Screams.

Phones come out.

INT. VALE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Vale watches the feeds go live.

His smile fades - just a fraction.

ASSISTANT  
Public exposure in progress.

VALE  
(quiet)  
Then it's time.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR - PATIENT ROOM - NIGHT

The override timer hits zero.

**VERRIDE ENDED**

The TIMER resumes.

02:06:21

Angelina looks at her father.

ANGELINA  
I'm sorry.

FATHER  
You tried.

He squeezes her hand.

FATHER (CONT'D)  
Make it count.

INT. ST. ANSELM - EXTERIOR - NIGHT

Police lights gather.

Reporters. Protesters. Sirens.

The building glows - unchanged.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT II (PAGE 90)

ACT III - PAGES 91-95 (BEGINNING)

Truth vs. Erasure

FADE IN:

INT. NEWSROOM - MORNING

Screens everywhere.

Footage from inside St. Anselm plays on loop:

Timers. Restraints. Families screaming.

A PRODUCER points.

PRODUCER  
Freeze that.

The image stops on a clock:

PROJECTED COMPLETION

PRODUCER  
That's the headline.

INT. ST. ANSELM - FIRST FLOOR - DAY

Patients refuse intake.

A WOMAN signs a consent tablet - then stops.

WOMAN

What floor does this put me on?

The RECEPTIONIST doesn't answer.

INT. VALE'S OFFICE - DAY

Vale faces a wall of cameras via live feed.

VALE

We regret the distress caused by a  
misinterpretation of advanced care-

REPORTER

Why are there countdown clocks?

Vale pauses.

Just long enough.

VALE

Because uncertainty terrifies  
people.

INT. COMMUNITY CLINIC - DAY

Angelina sits beside her father.

Oxygen tank. Folding chair. Thin walls.

He's weaker now.

But present.

ANGELINA

They're calling it a  
misunderstanding.

FATHER

That's what they call the truth...

when it's inconvenient.

INT. ST. ANSELM - FOURTH FLOOR - DAY

Maya packs her locker.

A DOCTOR stops her.

DOCTOR  
They're blaming staff.

MAYA  
I know.

She hands him a drive.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
Then don't let them.

INT. VALE'S OFFICE - DAY

Vale receives a secure message.

INSURANCE PARTNERSHIP: SUSPENDED

Another:

REGULATORY HEARING: IMMINENT

Vale exhales.

Not afraid.

Annoyed.

EXT. ST. ANSELM - DAY

A lone PROTESTER stands with a sign:

"WHAT FLOOR ARE YOU ON?"

Others join.

INT. ANGELINA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Angelina opens her laptop.

Two folders:

EVIDENCE - FULL SYSTEM

EVIDENCE - OWNERSHIP ONLY

She hovers.

Her phone BUZZES.

A text from an UNKNOWN NUMBER:

"Choose carefully.

Truth has casualties."

Angelina looks at her father asleep on the couch.

Looks back at the screen.

Her finger trembles over the trackpad.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. ANGELINA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The laptop glows in the dark.

Two folders.

Two futures.

Angelina's father sleeps on the couch, oxygen hissing softly.

Angelina opens EVIDENCE - FULL SYSTEM.

Files cascade:

- \* Architectural schematics
- \* Insurance coordination emails
- \* Predictive mortality algorithms
- \* Her own early approvals

She closes it.

Opens EVIDENCE – OWNERSHIP ONLY.

Cleaner. Narrower. Safer.

Her phone BUZZES again.

UNKNOWN NUMBER (TEXT)  
You don't get to save everyone.

Pick who you lose.

Angelina types back, then deletes it.

She looks at her father.

At the clock on the wall.

No countdown here.

Just time.

INT. ST. ANSELM – BOARDROOM – DAY

Vale sits alone now.

No lawyers. No PR.

Just a call on speaker.

INSURANCE EXEC (V.O.)  
We're terminating shared risk  
exposure.

VALE  
Of course you are.

INSURANCE EXEC (V.O.)  
You assured us deniability.

VALE  
I assured you efficiency.

A beat.

INSURANCE EXEC (V.O.)  
This isn't over.

The line goes dead.

Vale stares at the empty chairs.

For the first time, he looks... tired.

INT. NEWSROOM - DAY

Jonah stands before a wall of screens.

EDITOR  
We're ready to publish the follow-up.

JONAH  
Which one?

EDITOR  
The one that ends careers.

Jonah hesitates.

JONAH  
Or the one that ends lives.

The editor doesn't answer.

INT. COMMUNITY CLINIC - DAY

Angelina's father coughs violently.

A DOCTOR rushes in.

DOCTOR  
His oxygen saturation is dropping.

ANGELINA  
What do you need?

DOCTOR  
ICU support.

Specialized respiratory care.

Angelina already knows the answer.

ANGELINA  
Insurance won't cover it.

The doctor nods.

DOCTOR  
I'm sorry.

Angelina grips the bed rail.

This is the price.

INT. ST. ANSELM - FOURTH FLOOR - DAY

Doctors crowd around terminals.

A memo flashes hospital-wide:

STAFF ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEW INITIATED

A DOCTOR reads his name.

Another DOCTOR reads hers.

Fear spreads.

The system is shedding weight.

INT. MAYA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Maya watches the news.

Doctors in handcuffs.

Administrators suspended.

Ownership unnamed.

Her phone BUZZES.

ANGELINA (TEXT)  
They're sacrificing you.

MAYA (TEXT)  
I know.

A pause.

MAYA (TEXT) (CONT'D)  
Do it anyway.

INT. ANGELINA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Angelina sits back at the laptop.

She drags files.

Hesitates.

Her father opens his eyes.

FATHER  
You're making the face.

ANGELINA  
What face?

FATHER  
The one you made when you told  
yourself

you were doing the right thing.

She breaks.

ANGELINA  
I don't know what that is anymore.

He reaches for her hand.

FATHER  
Then do the thing you can live  
with.

ANGELINA  
I don't think I get to.

FATHER  
We never do.

INT. ST. ANSELM - VALE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Vale watches breaking news.

Doctors blamed.

Hospital practices questioned.

Ownership still untouched.

He receives a notification.

INCOMING DATA DROP - PENDING

He smiles faintly.

VALE  
There you are.

INT. ANGELINA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Angelina selects EVIDENCE - FULL SYSTEM.

Drags it toward the SEND icon.

Her finger trembles.

She glances at her father.

At the oxygen gauge.

Low.

She closes her eyes.

Then-

She splits the drop.

Two sends.

One to Jonah.

One to an anonymous regulatory server.

She exhales – shaking.

ANGELINA  
I'm sorry.

INT. NEWSROOM – NIGHT

Jonah's screen fills with data.

His eyes widen.

JONAH  
Holy shit...

EDITOR  
What is it?

JONAH  
Everything.

INT. ST. ANSELM – BOARDROOM – NIGHT

Vale's phone lights up.

Alert after alert.

OWNERSHIP NAMED

ARCHITECTURAL INTENT VERIFIED

INSURANCE COLLUSION DOCUMENTED

Vale's smile disappears.

He stands slowly.

VALE

So.

INT. COMMUNITY CLINIC - NIGHT

Angelina's father gasps.

Machines beep urgently.

The DOCTOR looks at Angelina.

DOCTOR

We're losing him.

Angelina holds her father's hand.

ANGELINA

I'm here.

FATHER

(smiling weakly)

I know.

His grip loosens.

Flatline.

Angelina doesn't scream.

She leans forward.

Resting her forehead against his hand.

EXT. ST. ANSELM - NIGHT

Police cars. Federal vehicles.

Agents swarm.

Cameras flash.

Vale is led out in cuffs.

He looks straight ahead.

Not at the cameras.

Not at the protesters.

At the building.

INT. ANGELINA'S APARTMENT - DAWN

Sunlight creeps in.

Angelina sits alone.

Medical bills on the table.

Her phone BUZZES.

A headline notification:

HOSPITAL OWNER ARRESTED IN HEALTHCARE SCANDAL

Another:

INSURANCE INDUSTRY FACES FEDERAL PROBE

She turns the phone face down.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY (MONTHS LATER)

A new medical complex rises.

Different city.

Different branding.

Angelina stands across the street.

Watching.

A banner unfurls:

"CARE, REIMAGINED."

She exhales.

Not hopeful. Not defeated.



No theatrics. Just process.

SENATOR  
Ms. Kline, you helped design these  
compliance frameworks.

ANGELINA  
Yes.

SENATOR  
And later you exposed them.

ANGELINA  
Yes.

SENATOR  
Why should this committee trust  
you?

Angelina doesn't dodge it.

ANGELINA  
You shouldn't.

You should trust the documents.

She slides a binder forward.

Silence.

INT. HEARING ROOM - LATER

A screen displays diagrams of FLOOR-BASED ESCALATION MODELS.

A STAFF ATTORNEY speaks.

STAFF ATTORNEY  
The architecture itself  
incentivized death acceleration.

A SENATOR squints.

SENATOR  
So the building was the weapon.

ANGELINA  
The building was the excuse.

The incentives were the weapon.

EXT. ST. ANSELM - DAY

The hospital stands empty now.  
Boarded windows. Covered signage.  
A CITY WORKER removes the plaque:

YOU'RE IN GOOD HANDS

Underneath, the wall is scarred.  
Old adhesive. Ghost letters.

INT. MAYA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Maya watches the hearing on TV.  
Her phone BUZZES.  
A notification:

LICENSE REINSTATED - PENDING REVIEW

She exhales.  
Not relief. Something heavier.  
She opens a drawer.  
Inside: her mother's old hospital bracelet.  
She closes it.

INT. NEWSROOM - DAY

Jonah records a voiceover.

JONAH (V.O.)  
-documents show not just  
malpractice,

but a philosophy: that care must justify its cost,  
even if cost becomes the cause of death.

He stops recording.

Looks at the PRODUCER.

JONAH  
They'll forget.

PRODUCER  
They always do.

INT. ANGELINA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Angelina boxes up her belongings.

Compliance manuals. Awards. Old ID badges.

She pauses over one plaque:

EXCELLENCE IN OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

She drops it in the trash.

Her phone BUZZES.

An EMAIL.

SUBJECT: Employment Inquiry

FROM: Health Systems Oversight Group

She reads.

Doesn't respond.

EXT. COMMUNITY CLINIC - DAY

Angelina exits the clinic carrying groceries.

A WOMAN approaches—late 40s, nervous.

WOMAN

Excuse me...

Are you the one from the hearings?

Angelina nods cautiously.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

My husband was on the fourth floor.

He walked out.

A beat.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Thank you.

Angelina doesn't know what to say.

The woman walks away.

Angelina stands there—absorbing it.

INT. CORPORATE OFFICE - DAY

A DIFFERENT CITY. A DIFFERENT BOARDROOM.

Executives watch a presentation.

SLIDE TITLE:

PATIENT FLOW OPTIMIZATION - ETHICAL REDESIGN

A CONSULTANT speaks.

CONSULTANT

We've removed explicit countdowns.

Rebranded escalation language.

An EXECUTIVE raises a hand.

EXECUTIVE

And outcomes?

CONSULTANT  
Comparable.

The executives nod.

Satisfied.

EXT. ANGELINA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Angelina sits on the stoop.

City sounds. Life.

Her phone BUZZES.

UNKNOWN NUMBER (TEXT)  
You didn't fix it.

You slowed it.

Angelina types back.

ANGELINA (TEXT)  
That's how systems change.

She sends it.

Deletes the contact.

INT. NEW MEDICAL COMPLEX - DAY

The same building from before.

We see more detail now.

Wayfinding signage.

Floor numbers.

They go up to 4.

No Fifth Floor.

A FAMILY enters.

Nervous. Hopeful.

A RECEPTIONIST smiles.

RECEPTIONIST  
How can we help?

The family hesitates—then finalizes intake.

FINAL IMAGE (REVISED)

INT. ELEVATOR - SAME BUILDING - DAY

Angelina stands alone inside the elevator.

She's not a patient. Not staff.

Just a person.

The doors close.

The panel lights:

The elevator begins to rise.

It reaches 4.

Stops.

No higher.

The doors OPEN.

A normal hallway.

Light. Noise. Imperfect care.

Angelina steps out.

She looks back once.

At the closed doors.

No buttons above 4.

She exhales.

Not victory.



Angelina hesitates.

ANGELINA  
Not anymore.

The young man nods, not understanding – but respectful.

INT. CLINIC ROOM – CONTINUOUS

The young man gathers his jacket, preparing to leave.

He pauses, uneasy.

YOUNG MAN  
Can I ask you something?

Angelina looks up.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)  
They sent me here after the  
hospital.

Said I wasn't... "eligible" anymore.

Angelina feels it – the word.

ANGELINA  
I'm sorry.

YOUNG MAN  
I thought that meant I was dying.

A beat.

ANGELINA  
It doesn't.

He exhales. Relief floods him.

YOUNG MAN  
They never explained that.

ANGELINA  
They don't explain exits very well.

He smiles, embarrassed.

YOUNG MAN  
Do you think I'll be okay?

Angelina thinks carefully before answering.

ANGELINA  
I think you'll be alive.

That lands.

EXT. COMMUNITY CLINIC - NIGHT

Angelina steps outside.

The city hums. Traffic. Life. Indifferent and ongoing.

The young man exits behind her.

They stand there awkwardly.

YOUNG MAN  
Thank you.

For... whatever that was.

Angelina nods.

ANGELINA  
Don't thank me.

He heads off down the street.

Angelina watches him disappear into the crowd.

One person.

Uncounted.

Unoptimized.

EXT. CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS

Angelina turns the opposite direction.

She walks.

No music.

Just footsteps.

                                FINAL IMAGE  
                    Angelina stops at a crosswalk.

The signal flashes:

                                WAIT  
            Then:

                                WALK  
            She steps forward with the others.

Not alone.

Not saved.

But moving.

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD:

BILLABLE HOURS