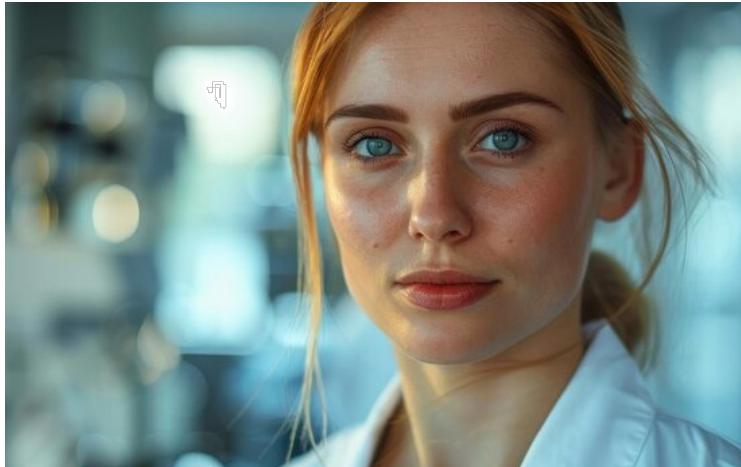


I'm Fine... and Other Lies

A Dramedy, Hour Pilot, Ongoing Series



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TEASER

OVER BLACK -

A fierce woman PUNCHES, KICKS & GRUNTS like a pro fighter:

FADE IN:

INT. BETH'S HOME - GREENHOUSE - SUNSET

A steel-frame & frosted-glass extension of the kitchen. Dying houseplants, empty clay pots, a desperate ficus.

DR. BETH KEENE, 36, talks to herself as she beats the crap out of "***Wilson***" a *Self Defense Dummy* with AUDIO SCORING:

WILSON

Brawler!

BETH

Dumped by video-voicemail. Thanks, you clingy, condescending, state-school shrink.

WILSON

Solid punch combination.

BETH

I'm not detached, pretentious or obsessive --

Beth accidentally WRENCHES-OFF Wilson's right arm but then uses it to PUMMEL him:

BETH

-- you boring, patriarchal, anus.

WILSON

Malfunction. Malfunc... tion.

SPRONG! Wilson's arm SNAPS-BACK gashes Beth's forearm.

Frustrated, she swings the arm like a bat, SMASHES through a row of pots which SHATTER-OUT a greenhouse window:

BETH

(annoyed by the broken window)

Fuck.

She drops the arm, grips her wound, then clinically observes a trickle of blood push through her fingers:

LITTLE GIRL'S VOICE
Are you okay?

Beth looks out through the broken window - **RACHEL**, 10, stands in the gap in the hedge dividing their yards:

RACHEL
You okay?

BETH
Rachel. Yeah, I'm fine. Thank you.

RACHEL
(cheerfully)
Okay. Bye.

Rachel happily returns to her yard.

Beth steps up into:

KITCHEN -

Modern. Minimal. Precisely half empty. Someone has moved out.

Not even the STING of icy tap-water on her wound, evokes tears. Beth's perplexed expression asks, "what's wrong with me?"

She wraps a dishtowel around her arm, ties it off with her teeth.

She methodically removes her sneakers, tucks-in the laces.

She selects the last bottle of wine from the wine-fridge.

The corkscrew isn't on the hook where it's supposed to be.

Beth's frustration spikes as she locates the back-up corkscrew, STABS it in, rips-out the cork, selects a wine glass, pours:

BEDROOM -

Nothing out of place.

Glass of wine in hand, Beth places her sneakers on the shoe-rack.

She opens the top dresser drawer, reaches to the back, retrieves a nearly empty prescription bottle of Oxycodone:

BATHROOM -

Beth avoids eye-contact with her reflection as she sips her wine, places the glass into a wall-mounted ceramic hand next to the shower curtain. She carefully sets out her toothbrush, floss, toothpaste, cellphone and pill bottle.

She opens the pill bottle, pops the last pill into her mouth, swallows it with a sip of wine.

Beth leans on the sink, faces the mirror, defies the emptiness welling-up inside her:

BETH
You'll probably die alone. So
there's that to look forward to.

She turns on the SHOWER, undresses & folds her clothes. A slashing scar across her ribs is revealed. It's recent.

EXT. POWELL MEDICAL CENTER - (PORTLAND, OREGON) - SUNSET

Bright exterior lights spotlight the "*Emergency Entrance*".

EMT's rush a FIREMAN on a gurney inside. A rebar spike sticks out of his chest.

INT. POWELL MEDICAL CENTER - ADMINISTRATION - SUNSET

Called to action, **SECURITY GUARD, ALICE**, enters the "*Stakeholder Relations Manager's*" office, (Martin Powell's office).

INT. MARTIN POWELL'S OFFICE - SUNSET

A prestigious space for schmoozing wealthy Board Members.

Two **EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS** quickly pack-up Martin's things.

Entitled elitist, **MARTIN POWELL**, 29, (son of hospital founder William Powell), sits at his desk, high & tipsy.

Martin's *Public Service Honors* includes photos with Portland's nobility. He even has a symbolic, "*Key to the City*":

SECURITY GUARD ALICE
Mister Powell, per your Father's --

Martin stops Alice mid-sentence with his index finger, as he finishes his sixth mini-bottle of vodka, then attempts to place it atop a pyramid of mini-bottles, but accidentally knocks the whole thing over:

SECURITY GUARD ALICE
Per your Father's direct order, you
were to vacate the premises by 3PM.
It's nearly 5PM. I'm here to escort
you to your Driver waiting downstairs.

Martin waggles his finger at Alice, makes a phone call:

SECURITY GUARD ALICE
Mister Powell!?

Alice unholsters her taser, but refrains from doing anything
which might get her fired:

CUT TO:

INT. POWELL MEDICAL CENTER - PSYCHIATRY OFFICES (5TH FLOOR) -

Front & center, the *Coordinator's Station*, managed by the
only visible person, Coordinator, **JENNIFER**, 24. (in glasses)

Behind Jennifer's station, a wall of windows opens up to the
balcony overlooking the city.

Phone RINGS. The Caller's I.D. tests Jennifer's patience as
she takes the call:

JENNIFER
Mister Powell, as you are well aware,
you're no longer Doctor Keene's client.

MARTIN (VOICE)
(slurred, demanding)
Listen to me, Glasses?

BACK TO:

INT. POWELL MEDICAL CENTER - MARTIN POWELL'S OFFICE - EVENING

MARTIN
She fucking in or not?

JENNIFER (VOICE)
The Hazelton substance abuse clinic
which Doctor Keen recommended --

MARTIN
Fuuuck.

Martin SLAMS down the receiver, misses the cradle:

SECURITY GUARD ALICE
Mister Powell, you've got 'til the
count of three before I take you
out of here by force. One...

MARTIN
Try it, rent-a-cop. I dare you.

Martin opens his top drawer, snatches the vile of cocaine,
finds a loose pill, pops it into his mouth:

SECURITY GUARD ALICE
Two...

MARTIN
Do it. Find out how much more worthless
my Father's lawyer could make your life.

Martin open the bottom drawer, lifts out a bottle of champagne:

SECURITY GUARD ALICE
Last chance...

Security Guard Alice readies her taser, heads for Martin.

Martin leaps up, childishly ready to evade her, then:

MARTIN
Well, I'm done here. I'll be leaving
now. Places to be.

Martin, champagne in hand, leads the way into the hallway:

INT. ADMINISTRATION HALLWAY - CONT.

Security Guard Alice walks close behind Martin. The Executive
Assistants are first to the elevator. Both anxiously press
the "Down" button.

DING-DING, elevator doors open. The Assistants step in. Alice
holds the doors for Martin. Martin hands her the champagne:

MARTIN
Hold this, would you please.

Alice accepts the bottle, MARTIN DASHES INTO THE STAIRWELL:

SECURITY GUARD ALICE
God damnit.

EXT. POWELL MEDICAL CENTER - ADMINISTRATION ENTRANCE - CONT.

Beth uses her Security Key-Card to enter:

INT. PRIVATE ADMINISTRATION ENTRANCE -

HOSPITAL STAFF, knowing Beth rejects all niceties, dodge her as she strides to the elevators.

HEAD NURSE RAYHAN catches Beth. Mutual respect:

NURSE RAYHAN

Doctor Keene, I have a distressed male, mid-twenties, claiming his depression is transforming him into a cockroach. Can you provide --

BETH

-- a consult? Be down soon as I can.

DING-DING. The elevator arrives. Martin Powell's Executive Assistants step out with the now open bottle of champagne, and Martin's boxes. They head for the Parking Garage:

NURSE RAYHAN

(word of warning)

Martin Powell was fired today from the Board of Directors, by his Father. He's looking for you.

Beth steps into the elevator, fakes a professional smile:

NURSE RAYHAN

Is he even still your patient?

BETH

No. But that won't stop him.

INT. MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES LEVEL (5TH FLOOR) - NIGHT

Beth steps off the elevator:

INT. PSYCHIATRY OFFICES -

Beth enters, heads directly to Jennifer's station, subconsciously straightens items on her desk:

JENNIFER

Your six-o'clock is already in your office.

(MORE)

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
I locked-up all your "easily
insertable" office supplies, including
your R.B. Ginsburg bobble-head.

BETH
You are indispensable.

JENNIFER
I know. Our new Public Relations
Director wants to discuss his
Community Outreach initiative with
you --

BETH
Pass.

JENNIFER
Martin Powell was "let go" today.

BETH
I heard.

JENNIFER
He's called nine times in the last
hour demanding an emergency session.
Sounds high as fuck, I mean, impaired.

BETH
Did you remind him I fired him as my
client?

JENNIFER
Nine times. Hangs-up when I try to
refer him to one of the substance
abuse clinics you recommended.

BETH
Notify Security to intercept him.

JENNIFER
I did... they lost him.

Beth takes a step toward her office, stops, returns:

BETH
Jennifer? When was the last time
you cried?

JENNIFER
In the elevator. On the way up.

Martin Powell SWAGGERS IN:

MARTIN

Well, look who's available.
(re Jennifer)
"Glasses" tried to brush me off.
Like a nobody. You're fired. Hear
me, Glasses, you, are, finito.

Jennifer fights back TEARS. Beth gestures, *"you're not fired"*:

BETH

Martin, you're no longer my patient.
I have an actual patient waiting. I'm
referring you to --

MARTIN

Wait, let me start over. Glasses, I
apologize.

JENNIFER

My name is, Jennifer.

MARTIN

Whatever. Doctor Keene, my Father
respects you. I'm begging you, talk to
him, help me get my life back.

BETH

Accept responsibility for your
addictions and I'll do what I can.

MARTIN

"Addictions?" Plural? You sound just
like him, the great William Powell.
Incapable of empathy. Incapable of
seeing how fucking amazing I am at
living up to his *relentless*
expectations.

JENNIFER

Peh.

Beth shoots a *"don't antagonize the asshole"* glance at Jennifer:

BETH

Martin, take back control. Choose
who you're going to be from this
moment forward. Check yourself into
one of the programs I --

MARTIN

No.

BETH
(to Jennifer)
Call Mister Powell's Driver.

Jennifer picks up the phone. Martin grabs the receiver,
Jennifer refuses to let go.

Beth gestures for Security Guard Alice to stay back.

It's a subtle, comical tug-of-war for control of the receiver:

MARTIN
(vulnerable to Beth)
What if I choose... what if what I
really want is to not be me anymore?

BETH
Self-reinvention is a healthy place --

MARTIN
You're not listening, doctor.

Martin lets Jennifer win the receiver:

MARTIN
What if I'm telling you I could be
suicidal?

BETH
You're too narcissistic --

JENNIFER
-- too entitled, and an arrogant,
trust-fund prick.

Beth doesn't disagree:

MARTIN
(hurt)
That's how you all see me?

BETH
Martin, as of this moment, you're
free. Free to make your future
whatever you want it to be.

MARTIN
Peh, my Father said exactly the same
thing. Thanks.

As Martin strolls out to the balcony, Beth prevents Security
Guard Alice from following him:

BETH

Let him catch his breath. Maybe you
can get the Powell's Driver up here.

Beth, Jennifer & Alice notice Martin climb-up on the railing:

JENNIFER

What the actual...?

Martin turns to see who's watching, he STUMBLES AND FALLS.

Jennifer and Alice SCRAMBLE to the balcony:

BETH

Fuck.

Beth follows them out:

EXT. BALCONY - NIGHT

Beth, Jennifer and Alice stop short of looking over the railing
until a WRITHING GROANING sound compels their attention.

BETH'S, JENNIFER'S AND ALICE'S POV -

Thirty feet below, on the flat roof, Martin WRITHES & GROANS
with an obvious broken leg:

MARTIN

This is all YOUR fault, Keene!

BETH

If I'd known you were going to fall,
I'd have recommended a higher balcony.

END TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. POWELL MEDICAL CENTER - ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES - DAY

NEWS REPORTERS fire questions at Beth about the incident with Martin Powell, and her involvement:

BETH

No comment.

Beth pushes past them into:

INT. HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE - DAY

ADMINISTRATOR BYRON, 63, dad-bod, kind-face, tragic fashion sense, is nervously prepared for a confrontation with --

Beth enters, shuts out the Reporters:

BETH

What the fuck, Byron.

ADMINISTRATOR BYRON

Martin Powell's family attorney is spinning the narrative of last night's incident toward negligence. Better have a seat.

Beth boils inside, remains standing:

BETH

Martin Powell should be in a 48-hour substance abuse, psych-eval, lock-down. He hasn't been my patient for months. Security was notified to detain him, but he waltzed into my office, high as fuck, whined about how hard it is to be Daddy's symbol of perfection, then, fell off my balcony.

ADMINISTRATOR BYRON

Beth, with the deepest admiration and discretion, are you alright?

Beth stares daggers:

ADMINISTRATOR BYRON

Just know, I'm here.

Beth nods suspiciously:

ADMINISTRATOR BYRON
Officially, the Hospital Board has
suspended you from all duties pending
the determination of the State
Medical Review Board. You are barred
from making a public statement about
this incident.

BETH
Will I still have a job, after?

ADMINISTRATOR BYRON
I'm sure this will all be resolved
very quickly. Try not to worry.

Beth is stunned. Needs to cry. She walks out. Head held high.

INT. MEDICAL REVIEW BOARD MEETING ROOM - DAY

Beth stoically faces the **MEDICAL REVIEW BOARD CHAIRPERSON:**

DOCTOR LINDA CLARK
Doctor Keene, it is the determination
of this review board you were not
negligent in providing mandated
professional care to Mr. Powell.

Beth's expression brightens with relief:

DOCTOR LINDA CLARK
However, this investigation raised
concerns about your worrisome level
of professional detachment in dealing
with Mr. Powell prior to, and after,
his self-injury.

BETH
ACCIDENTAL injury.

DOCTOR LINDA CLARK
Therefore it is the decision of this
board to suspend your Psychiatry
License for a period of six months --

BETH
You can't do that. I'll lose my job,
and my house.

DOCTOR LINDA CLARK
-- with the added condition that
during this time you will work for
Oregon's Hope-Line Call Center as an
Operator.

(MORE)

DOCTOR LINDA CLARK (CONT'D)
Under the supervision of, Board
Therapist and Hope-Line Call Center
Director, Doctor Gary Santos. Use this
time to work on your Empathy Fatigue.

BETH
I do not have, "Empathy Fatigue."

Beth seethes with disdain for the attack on her integrity:

DOCTOR LINDA CLARK
Doctor Keene, use this time to regain
appreciation for your oath to provide
compassionate care to all those in need.
Upon successful completion of your six
months, and with Doctor Santos'
evaluative clearance, your Psychiatric
license will be fully reinstated.

Beth's determination is palpable. Nothing is going to stop
her from earning her license back:

DOCTOR LINDA CLARK
This review board is adjourned.

EXT. BETH'S HOME - FRONT YARD - DAY

"Portland Real Estate", "For Sale" sign.

Beth stands on the path to her front door. A strained
expression of self-control, determination & contempt for her
situation as **MOVERS** file past with pieces of her life, then
CRAM them into their Moving Van:

An **ART DEALER** reclaims a tall, amorphously-female sculpture
reaching to the sky for her missing heart:

Beth reluctantly holds out the key to her Mercedes Coupe for
the **LEASING AGENT**. He has to pry it out of her grip.

EXT. PORTLAND STORAGE FACILITY, STORAGE UNIT - DAY

The *"Moving Van"* rattles away. Beth closes the storage unit door
on Wilson and all her things, walks away, lugging her suitcase
on wheels.

EXT. BETH'S CHILDHOOD HOME (EASTMORELAND, PORTLAND) - DAY

Sunflower Yellow. Completely charming. Landscaped with
precision & love.

Beth, with her suitcase, faces the screen door of the three-season porch. The porch is half-prepped to be repainted:

BETH
(to herself)
This is temporary. You got this.
You. Are. Totally. Fucked.

The screen door WAGGLES and SQUEAKS as Beth's Mom, **WENDY**, 56, pushes it open, stands in impatient judgement:

WENDY
Let's hear it.

BETH
I apologize for not accepting your
Facebook Friend Request, or calling, or
visiting, and for missing your birthday.

Beth holds up a cake box, Wendy accepts it, blocks the door:

WENDY
And?

BETH
Mom, it's only for six-months. I
have no where else to go. Please.

WENDY
Hmn. Well, Don't just stand there.

INT. BETH'S CHILDHOOD HOME -

Polished. Controlled. Neatly arranged bookshelves everywhere.

Beth wheels her suitcase inside:

WENDY
Wanted to turn your old room into
my home office, but your Father
wouldn't hear of it.

Wendy strides officiously away toward the Kitchen.

Conflicting with the precise housekeeping are several, half-started, repair projects.

Identically framed photos of **KEENE FAMILY** road-trips. Beth is the middle child trying to squeeze in with her big brother **SEAN** and little brother, **RYAN**. In most photos Beth stands defiantly in front.

Beth lugs her suitcase upstairs.

INT. BETH'S TEENAGE BEDROOM - DAY

Beth stands in the doorway with a doomed expression.

Her Old room is cozy. Imaginative. Hunger Games & Harry Potter books & posters. A bunk-bed over an antique roll-top desk.

Beth wheels-in her suitcase.

Bookshelves lined with Best Effort awards: "*Runner-Up*", "*Most Improved*", "*2nd Place*", "*Honorable Mention*".

Wendy stops at the door:

WENDY

Your Father hopes this'll be our
grandkids' room someday.

(deadly serious)

Do not make me a grandmother.

BETH

I'll help you turn it into your office.

WENDY

Nah. Light's all wrong anyway.

Wendy hands Beth a "*Project List*" (typed & printed):

WENDY

Here, made you your own Project List.

BETH

Course you did.

Wendy heads off down the hall:

WENDY

(over her shoulder)

Front porch isn't going to finish
repainting itself. Door's broken too.

BETH

Where is Dad?

WENDY (O.C. END OF THE HALL)

Garage. Pretending to fix the leaf-
blower. That man...

EXT. KEENE FAMILY DOUBLE-GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Beth crosses the backyard to the barn-like double-garage
which is also her father's workshop, club-house sanctuary:

BETH

Dad?

A wisp of smoke escapes the big open door. Beth recognizes an unmistakable scent, grins coyly as she goes in:

INT. KEENE FAMILY DOUBLE-GARAGE -

Beth smirks at the disassembled leaf-blower on a workbench:

BETH

Dad?

A WRENCH DROPS, a MAN EXHALES HARD like he's been busted.

Beth joins her Dad, **JACK**, 58, under the hood of his Chevelle. One hand behind his back. Smoke rises up behind him into a larger cloud lingering in the rafters:

BETH

(teases)

Hey, Dad. What'cha doin'?

Jack looks at her with sad eyes full of love:

JACK

Once knew a rebel-girl who looked kinda like you. Haven't heard from her in so long, I'm not sure.

BETH

Responsibilities.

JACK

You are your Mother's daughter.

BETH

Ouch.

The joint Jack's hiding behind his back singes his fingers:

JACK

Ow, fuck, shit.

He throws it to the floor. Shakes his singed fingertips:

JACK

It's medicinal. You missed her birthday.

BETH

Yeah. Brought her a cake.

Jack returns to wrenching-out an old sparkplug. Beth opens a small wooden drawer in his main workbench, takes out a joint:

JACK
Hey, my secret drawer? How long
have you known?

BETH
Since always.

Jack is dumbfounded. Beth tucks the joint in her pocket:

BETH
For medicinal purposes.

Jack plunks the greasy sparkplug into Beth's hand:

JACK
Heard you dropped one of your
privileged asshole patients off
your balcony.

BETH
He had it comin'.

Jack, GUFFAWS. Beth hands him a new sparkplug:

BETH
What was I like as a kid?

Jack replies as he finishes installing the new sparkplug:

JACK
Compassionate. Smart. I mean whew-
smart. Bullheaded. Daring. Even
more daring than Sean or Ryan.
Honestly, it's a miracle you three
are still alive. And you were
always tackling some new challenge.

BETH
Think I was trying to stand out.
Earn your attention.

JACK
Aw, angel, you had it. Then you
went into your lone wolf teenager
phase. Figure you got that from me.
And my temper. You didn't need me,
at all.

Jack SIGHS. He's got regrets:

JACK

That's the thing about being a parent, at the end of the day, you hope you got it a little right, but then your kids are all grown up and you have to live with knowing you could'a done so much more.

Jack puts down his wrench, steps around to Beth, holds out his arms, Beth awkwardly welcomes a long-needed Dad-hug:

JACK

You're astounding. Always have been.

BETH

Right back at'cha.

INT. BETH'S TEENAGE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Beth, in pajamas, dismantles her old room, tossing everything into garbage-bags.

Exhausted, she lifts a bottle of wine out of her suitcase, pours some into a ceramic cup she made in grade school.

She opens a full prescription bottle of Oxycodone, takes one.

She explores the compartments of her roll-top desk beneath her bunk bed. Finds her "*Gryffindor Wand*", pretends to cast a bit of magic.

She rediscovers a Crazy-Straw, uses it to sip her wine.

Next, she finds a small, stone heart, which fits perfectly in the palm of her hand:

BETH

Thought I'd lost you.

With her phone & stone heart in hand, she climbs up onto her old bunk bed, CONKS HER HEAD, just as her Mom opens the door:

BETH

Muther-fucker.

WENDY

Elizabeth Katherine Keene. If you'd please stop banging-around in there, other people would like to sleep.

Wendy closes the door:

BETH
Night, Mom.

Beth lights the joint she stole, takes a deep toke.

Holds it. Exhales slowly.

She sets-up her phone's Calendar for a: "**180 Day Countdown**":

BETH
(to herself)
This is temporary. I got this. It's
only six months. Eazy-peezy.

WENDY (O.C. FROM DOWN THE HALL)
Elizabeth Katherine Keene? You
better not be smoking in there.

BETH
'Course not, Mom.

INT. LLOYD'S FAMILY MARKET - BAKERY - DAY

"Baker's Dozen Donut Sale."

Beth, dressed to impress, faces the double-door "**DONUTS**"
display Case. An empty self-serve donut box in her hand.

She opens the right door, uses tongs to select the most
conservative donuts.

ANNA, 28, scuffed leather jacket with, "*Rihanna #BBHMM*"
(*Bitch Better Have My Money*), painted on back. She picks-up a
box, opens the left door, uses her fingers to select brightly
creative donuts:

ANNA
(re: Beth's intensity)
So serious. I could show you some
relaxation breathing exercises.

BETH
No. Thank you.

Beth reaches in with the tongs for the last Double-Chocolate
but Anna snatches it first. Smiles, "that's mine."

Oh, it's on. Quickly now...

Beth goes in for the Cinnamon Powdered, Anna reaches across
her, snaps-up four Sprinkled-Iced.

They both GIGGLE as Beth gets Classic-Dunkers and Anna snags a Raspberry-Filled.

They both go in for the last Chocolate Cream-Filled. Beth wins, places it triumphantly in her box.

Anna grabs it out of Beth's box, chomps a huge bite, grins a silly, victorious, Chocolate Cream-Filled grin.

Beth is shocked yet in complete awe. She GIGGLES:

ANNA
(mouth full of donut)
Why be serious about donuts?

Anna strolls off to the front.

EXT. MORRELLI'S DEPARTMENT STORE - DOWNTOWN PORTLAND - DAY

The grand heart of downtown Portland, seventy years ago.

Beth carries her box of donuts past huge display windows which now contain small businesses: "*Dunn's Bicycle Shop*", "*Wilcox Books*", "*Bailey's Coffee*", "*Veronique's Yoga Studio*".

Beth enters the old department store on the corner.

INT. MORRELLI'S DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

This space has been repurposed into Artists' lofts, with a Gallery and Theater Performance stage.

Beth steps onto the elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR -

Artistic graffiti mural: "*BE LOVE*".

Beth presses the, "*Shipping/Receiving*", button. The elevator JOLTS, DROPS AN INCH, continues downward, STOPS WITH A CLUNK.

The doors part.

Beth accesses her phone, activates: "*180 Day Countdown*".

She takes a resigned, breath, steps out:

INT. SHIPPING & RECEIVING / HOPE-LINE CALL CENTER -

Beth steps into the drama of DAY-SHIFT OPERATOR voices, simultaneously GUIDING & ENCOURAGING HOPE-LINE CALLERS.

The call center is a hodgepodge of used office furniture, rigged together into seven primary cubicles plus three volunteer cubicles.

There's a ransacked coffee & snack table up against the brick wall outside of the executive office: "*Dr. Gary Santos, M.D.*".

The door is slightly ajar.

Beth sets her donuts next to a familiar box of bright donuts, then confidently KNOCKS as she pushes into Gary's office:

BETH
Doctor Santos, I'm Doctor --

INT. GARY'S OFFICE -

Beth interrupts a warm, flirtatious moment between GARY, 57, and volunteer operator, ANDRE, 46:

GARY
Gahd-damned broken door-lock.

BETH
I'm Doctor Beth Keene.

GARY
Of course you are.

Gary smiles, clinging to the last of his optimism.

Andre makes a coy, beamingly happy escape:

ANDRE
I'm Andre. You look fabulous.

BETH
Thank you.

Awards and photos reveal Gary is a proud Berkeley Alumni, an active Civil Rights defender and unapologetically gay.

Gary adds a splash of Whiskey to his coffee:

GARY
Close the door, would you? Not that it'll do any good.

Gary sips his coffee. Beth closes the door. It cracks open:

GARY

Welcome to Hope-Line Call Center.
Apologies for the accommodations. Non-
profits never get the penthouse.

Gary fiddles with his office-printer trying to make it print:

BETH

Just so we're clear, I'm here for
one reason: to earn my life back.
Six months and I'm out.

GARY

Six months, plus my stellar evaluation.

The printer pushes Gary's patience to the edge:

GARY

Nuts. Been trying to print your
orientation paperwork all morning.

Gary takes a deep, tantrum-calming breath:

GARY

Read the Martin Powell incident
report; your academic bio and a
selection of patient files.
Impressive stuff. Yet your patient
load has been steadily dropping over
the past two years.

BETH

By choice. Personal reasons.

GARY

Really? What do you get out of being
a Psychiatrist.

BETH

All I ever wanted to do was help
people learn to live their best
possible lives. It's my whole life.

GARY

When professional detachment hardens
into apathy --

BETH

Congratulations, you read the Review
Board's report. It's a manipulation.

GARY

Actually, I went deeper than that. Detachment Disorder is, as you know, hardest on those closest to us. Apathy, is far more dangerous because it spirals inward, manifesting as self-destructive behavior, and potentially self-harm.

Beth stares, boiling:

BETH

Don't shrink me. You're not up to the challenge.

GARY

Maybe. Unfortunately, as your Review Board assigned supervisor, I have a job to do. All I'm saying is, use your time here to take a step back. Reassess.

GARY

Tonight, when you're on the lines --

Anna (the donut rebel) walks in:

GARY

Gahd-damned broken door lock.

ANNA

(recognizes Beth)

Oh, hey, serious donut sister.

(to Gary)

Crew's gathered & waiting, boss-man.

GARY

Don't call me that. Anna, meet Doctor Beth Keene our new second-shift operator. Anna's my Assistant Administrator. She's a licensed social worker, with a jones for international mental health initiatives within minority communities, having been on assignment with Ameri-Corps for, jeeze, nearly a decade.

ANNA

Plus I once made a grilled cheese sandwich for Dalai Lama Thandup. Then I gave it all up for love, a roof, and a bathtub. Welcome to our little family of unhinged heroes.

Gary enthusiastically leads the way out of his office:

GARY
We're walking.

INT. HOPE-LINE CALL CENTER -

As Gary leads them past the Operators' cubicles:

GARY
Heart of the Hope-Line Call Center.

ANNA
AKA The Misery Mosh-Pit.

GARY
(deeply felt)
Every caller feels like their world
has collapsed into an inescapable
tragedy. Guiding them to a positive
plan of action is what will save a
derailed life.

ANNA
And that's why we call him,
Cheerleader Gary

GARY
Don't call me that.

Gary stops at the Men's Room door, clutching his stomach:

GARY
I'll catch-up.

Beth and Anna are joined by, **IVY, (aka MISTRESS IVETTE)**, a
buttoned-down rule-follower with a Dominatrix vibe, handcuffs
earrings:

IVY
Doctor Keene. Ivy Beyer.

BETH
Hello, Ivy. Looking forward to
working with you.

IVY
Are you? We know why you're here.

INT. MORELLI'S LOADING DOCK / ESCAPE ROOM LOUNGE - SUNSET

The "*Escape Room Lounge*" is graffiti painted in florescent colors on a brick wall, and lit by blacklight.

This is where the Operators blow-off emotional stress. There's a trampoline, a Grand Theft Auto arcade game, a pool table. A big old couch, dry bar and a Karaoke Stage.

Mannequin leftovers haunt the shadows.

Beth, Anna and Ivy enter. Ivy can't peel away fast enough.

SILENCE as six, unwelcoming, 2nd Shift **OPERATORS**, put-off by Beth's air of superiority, stop what they're doing and stare at her, waiting for Beth to make the first move.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. MORELLI'S LOADING DOCK / ESCAPE ROOM LOUNGE - CONT.

The stare-down ends with **JAKE**, a sweet Black Lab, who drops his rope-toy on Beth's shoe.

Tense anticipation, until Beth ruffles Jake's fur:

BETH
Hey, Boy. Thank you.

Beth gives Jake's toy back to him:

ANNA
(declares)
She's a dog person, folks.

Mild acceptance, except for, IVY, who's clearly a cat-person:

WHEELER
His name's Jake.

WHEELER, is a haunted-soul whose past will never let him rest:

WHEELER
I'm Wheeler. We're retired Portland P.D.
Detectives. Jake's the handsome one.

ELENA
And a lot more charming.

Sitting on the pool table, fierce Swedish loner, **ELENA**:

ANNA

Holy shit, Elena cracked a joke.

APPLAUSE and giggles.

Elena scratches her nose with her middle finger which has a tattoo: "*FEEDBACK*".

Scruffy academic, **KYLE**, has a big, shattered heart. He nods hello as he chomps a donut like he's starving. (He is.)

MIRIAM, offers Beth a Gardenia plant. Miriam's warm-hearted manor is borrowed from a wholesome, idealistic, past which never actually existed. She's Hitchcock's Miss Lonelyhearts:

MIRIAM

Miriam Woodbridge. Welcome Doctor Keene. So lovely to have you.

BETH

Thank you, Miriam.

MIRIAM

(explains the Gardenia)

Oh, we share cubicles with the day shift. So we each personalize our spaces. Gardenias, according to my gentleman friend, Frank, are like women: resilient, yet our hearts are fragile as a flower.

Gary rushes in, hoping everything is going well:

GARY

Sorry I'm late, everyone. We are all very lucky, for the next six months, to be working with, and learning from, Doctor Beth Keene.

KYLE

(carefully chosen words)

Doctor Keene. Kyle Roberts. Former Community College Philosophy Professor. Each of our lives was once flattened by tragedy. Doubt any of us would've survived if we hadn't been guided out of a very dark place by the caring voice of a Hope-Line Operator --

IVY

A voice which reassured us that
when the sun comes up, everything
will feel less, out of control --

ELENA

Tragedy like that becomes part of
you. You can read it in our eyes,
our manner. Hear it in our voices --

WHEELER

That's how we empathize with the
Callers. We were each a caller who
felt like we had no place left to
turn. No plan forward. That our
lives weren't worth living --

IVY

But you. Doctor Keene. You waltz in
here, finger-flicked out of your ivory
tower as a punishment --

KYLE

Like you've been given detention. Our
callers deserve better.

GARY

Hey, enough of that, you guys.

BETH

You're right. I didn't choose to be
here. I'm dealing with it. I will
respond to every caller
professionally. If any of you aren't
okay with that, you can politely kiss
my ivory tower ass.

Elena smirks, nods approval:

GARY

Moving on. I want to squash the rumor
that the Call Center has been de-
funded. No decisions have been made.

WHEELER

If we get de-funded I'm screwed. We
all are.

Everyone nods, worried:

GARY

I have every confidence there's no
reason to worry.

(MORE)

GARY (CONT'D)

The state is simply re-allocating its Emergency Services budget and has asked the Portland City Council to assume responsibility for our operation.

Beth appears even less hopeful than she did walking in here:

GARY

Okay, kids, people need savin'. Be the light of hope for every caller.

IVY

Except for the ones who're abusive, insane, and repeatedly threaten to murder us.

KYLE

If I had'a nickel for every "crackers" caller who swore to kill me...

GARY

Long as there's hope in this bullied world. There's a chance to save a broken life. Except for Kyle's. He's obviously got a target on his back.

Operators CHUCKLE. Kyle is unamused.

As they head for their cubicles, Beth notices Wheeler briefly holds Ivy's hand until she swats his hand away.

INT. HOPE-LINE CALL CENTER - OPERATOR CUBICLES - SUNSET

There's seven Primary Operator cubicles plus three Volunteer Operator desks.

As the first shift Operators de-personalize, sanitize, and step-out, the 2nd shift steps-in.

ANDRE'S VOLUNTEER OPERATOR DESK -

Andre, (whom we met with Gary), is already working at his desk. Headset on.

Andre winks & smiles to Gary as Gary passes by. Gary nods, tries to conceal his attraction.

MIRIAM'S CUBICLE -

Miriam sets out a tiny Eiffel Tower and a few travel magazine pictures of romantic restaurants she's never been to.

She puts on her headset, searches her computer screen, and selects a "*Senior Caller*" to help:

MIRIAM

You've reached the Hope-Line. I'm
Miriam. May I get your name and
number in case we're disconnected?

BETH'S CUBICLE -

Anna introduces Beth to her cubicle:

ANNA

This will be your station. For your
first few callers you'll be training
with me, then you'll sit in with each
of the other Operators to listen to
how they manage callers.

Beth leaves behind the Gardenia plant and the stone heart.

ANNA'S CUBICLE -

Anna hangs her, *Rihanna #BBHMM*, jacket on her chair:

BETH

BBHMM? Oh! --

ANNA

Bitch Better Have My Money.

BETH

Bitch Better Have My Money.

ANNA

Found it in an LA thrift shop.
Belonged to one of Rihanna's dancers.
If this jacket could tell stories.

Beth sanitizes & organizes Anna's workstation.

Anna opens her satchel, sets out a family picture:

ANNA

(re: family picture)
Nerdy Dentist husband, Erik. Our
three feral tweenagers.

BETH
(impressed)
You have a family.

Kyle pops-up, leans overtop of Anna's cubicle wall:

KYLE
Oh, hey, Doctor Beth. Anna, full moon
tonight. Marvelous Mike's gonna call.

ANNA
If he does, he's all yours.

Kyle pops-away:

KYLE (O.C.)
Ut-uh, I got him last time.

ANNA
(quietly)
Kyle grows on you. He's got the
biggest heart. Big, broken, heart.
If he ever asks you to one of his
poetry slam events. Run.

BETH
Noted. The callers? Who are they,
typically?

ANNA
The forgotten. The lost. Lonely.
Dying. The one's everyone else has
given up on.

Kyle pops back up:

KYLE
Here, in the Misery Mosh-Pit, you don't
change crazy, crazy changes you.

Anna swats at Kyle as he pops-away.

WHEELER'S CUBICLE -

Jake settles onto his dog-bed with his rope-toy.

Wheeler sets-out a small photo of his WIFE, who passed away,
cuddling Jake as a puppy.

Wheeler checks his watch, makes an announcement:

WHEELER

Official sunset, in three, two,
one. Night has fallen, folks.

PHONES RING:

ANNA'S CUBICLE -

Anna explains the Operator computer system:

ANNA

It's a basic Caller-Registry program.
Oh, we each use our own headsets. The
call center's headsets are gross. Buy
your own, keep it with you. Here,
today, use my back-up.

Beth and Anna put on their headsets:

ANNA

Most important button on the
keyboard: the "Mute" button. Use it
so the caller won't hear you. The
home-screen displays a list of all
"Incoming Callers", active
"Operators" and the "Callers"
they're currently assisting. The
names callers provide are rarely
their actual names. We're lucky if
we get a first name. Phone numbers
are often blocked. Click on the
caller's name to see if they have a
"Case History", and if there're any
medical or behavior alerts.

BETH

Callers are basically anonymous.

ANNA

If we request emergency services we
don't have much to go on. Miriam
takes most of the Senior Callers.
Elena takes Domestic Abuse callers.
When you're ready to take a caller,
just click the "Accept Call" icon
next to the caller's name. You'll
either be taken to their existing
Case History screen or to a New
Case screen. Calls aren't recorded
so you need to take notes. Ready?
Let's start you off with a Senior
Caller: "Victoria Finkle". She's a
regular. A lonely angel.

Anna clicks on the "Accept Call" icon. "Victoria Finkle's" long "Case History" pops-up on the computer screen:

BETH

You've reached the Hope-Line. I'm Beth. May I get your name and number in case we're disconnected?

VICTORIA (VOICE)

Hello, Beth. Haven't spoken with you before, sweetheart.

BETH

First day. You're my first caller.

VICTORIA (VOICE)

Good for you, dear. I'm Mrs. Victoria Finkel. Vickie. You won't be needing my number.

BETH

Okay, Vickie. How may I help?

CUT TO:

INT. VICTORIA FINKEL'S SUBURBAN KITCHEN - SUNSET

A devoted homemaker's kitchen. Decades of loving use. Everything neatly tucked away. A vase of Honey Suckle stems on the center countertop.

VICTORIA FINKLE, 83, the image of strength, integrity & love, feels unneeded, unwanted. She stands in the final rays of sunlight looking out of the window at her empty rotary clothesline:

VICTORIA

Somedays just never seem like a good day to start something new. Better for tidying up.

BETH (VOICE)

Tidiness alleviates anxiety.

VICTORIA

Filled a vase with Honey Suckle stems from the garden. Took a bubble-bath. Braided my hair.

BETH (VOICE)

Self care is vital too.

BACK TO:

INT. HOPE-LINE CALL CENTER - ANNA'S CUBICLE - NIGHT

Beth taps "Mute":

BETH

Just a winsome senior who needs to share her day.

ANNA

Wait for it.

VICTORIA (VOICE)

Washed all the towels. Dried them in the dryer, though I should've dried them on the line. Nothing like the scent of towels dried in fresh air. I've set-out the bottle. I'm ready.

BETH

Would this be a special bottle? Are you celebrating?

VICTORIA (VOICE)

Heavens no, dear, I'm going to drink bleach tonight.

Beth hits "Mute", looks to Anna in surprise:

ANNA

Last time it was rat poison. Before that, she'd ordered arsenic through Amazon because it sounded nostalgic. Keep her talking.

Anna, reaches over Beth, grabs a phone list:

ANNA

I'll call Cooper County non-emergency to get over there.

Beth *un-mutes* the call:

BETH

(sputters)

Oh, hey, Vickie, please help me understand why you're thinking about ending your life today?

KYLE'S CUBICLE -

A weathered snapshot of a happy Kyle & **Sarah**, sitting on the floor of the animal shelter, mobbed by loving dogs.

Kyle listens to a caller:

CALLER THOMAS (VOICE)
Can't get any sleep. My dreams are
nightmares of what my eternity in
hell is going to be like.

KYLE
Describe one of your nightmares?

CUT TO:

INT. SUBWAY CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Rush-hour. Spindly, anxious, sleep-deprived, **THOMAS**, 28,
wrestles a tall narrow box from IKEA to an open space:

CALLER THOMAS
There I am, my whole life, past &
future, in pieces on the ground,
and I'm holding one of those little
L-shaped wrenches. In my other hand
are IKEA instructions written in
Norwegian. Norwegian!

BACK TO:

INT. HOPE-LINE CALL CENTER - IVY'S CUBICLE - NIGHT

Ivy has hung emerald green fabric, set-out a calming amber
light and a picture of her black cat, *Angel*.

She responds to caller, Wanda:

IVY
Wanda, take a deep breath and
repeat after me, I'm on my path,
they're on their path.

CUT TO:

INT. WANDA'S MINI-VAN - NIGHT

Tangled in rush-hour traffic on the highway, **WANDA**, 56, is
exasperated with every single detail of her life.

Wanda SCREAMS at the car that just cut in front of her:

CALLER WANDA
Not today, asshole.

Wanda floors-it SMASHES INTO THE CAR ahead of her:

WANDA

That's for cutting me off, muther-fucker.

SHE SWERVES INTO ANOTHER CAR:

CALLER WANDA (VOICE)

Oh, I'm sorry, did I forget to use
my blinker.

BACK TO:

IVY'S CUBICLE -

Ivy taps "Mute", calls, "Police: Emergency Services":

EMERGENCY SERVICES OPERATOR (VOICE)

You've reached Emergency Services.

ELENA'S CUBICLE -

Elena's pet rat, *Blomkvist*, occupies a wire birdcage with a multitiered cardboard habitat.

Elena listens intently to a caller:

CALLER DAVID (VOICE)

Hit the bottom of Rock Bottom today.
I botched the making of a peanut-
butter & jelly sandwich. How's that
even possible?

CUT TO:

INT. EFFICIENCY APARTMENT - NIGHT

Unemployed, **DAVID**, 28, feels threatened by his cat, *Trevor*:

CALLER DAVID

My life is nothing but bad to worse.
Accidents keep happening all around
me. Elena, I think my cat, *Trevor*,
is trying to kill me.

BACK TO:

INT. HOPE-LINE CALL CENTER - MIRIAM'S CUBICLE - NIGHT

Miriam gently & compassionately responds to a caller:

MIRIAM

Alfred, you can't win every game,
and, not every spoonful of Raisin
Bran contains a raisin.

CALLER ALFRED (VOICE)

Raisins ain't nuthin' but shriveled
grapes. I'm a blueberry man.

WHEELER'S CUBICLE -

Jake is happily asleep in his dog bed. Wheeler, with his
trademark clear & pragmatic voice, responds to a caller:

WHEELER

I'm here for you, Mary. I've stood
where you're standing. If you jump
off that bridge you're going to
miss out on a beautiful, brand new
day, perfect for second chances.

CUT TO:

EXT. VISTA BRIDGE (PORTLAND) - NIGHT

MARY, 39, an exasperated, broken-hearted mother, steps back
from the railing:

CALLER MARY

Supposed to rain.

BACK TO:

WHEELER'S CUBICLE -

WHEELER

Even better. What's your secret skill?
Other than being a Mom. Everybody's
got some odd skill they're great at.

ANNA'S CUBICLE -

A call comes in. Anna recognizes the name: "*Mike Whitmore*":

ANNA

Oh hell no. Kyle was right. It's
Mike Whitmore. Aka Marvelous Mike.
Aka, Meltdown Mike.

BETH

Let's take the call.

ANNA

No. You're not ready for Mike.

BETH

One way to find out.

ANNA

First: Mike's a schizophrenic. He hasn't had medical insurance in years. He calls whenever his medication runs out. When he's not threatening to kill himself, he's threatening to kill us. Every now and then he actually tries self-harm. Police and Emergency Medical won't check on him anymore. Every local hospital, including Powell Medical center, has taken Mike in for a 72-hour lock-down just so he can get new medication.

Beth clicks on the "Accept Call" icon. Anna is furious. She hates feeling dismissed.

"Michael Whitmore's Case History" scrolls-up on the computer:

BETH

You've reached the Hope-Line. I'm Beth. May I have your name and number in case we're disconnected?

Anna joins the call:

MARVELOUS MIKE (VOICE)

Not fuckin' stupid, Beth. You're already lookin' at my name & number.

ANNA

Mike, this is Anna. Beth is new. Let's go easy on her, okay?

MARVELOUS MIKE (VOICE)

Sure, or you'll ban me. I get it.

BETH

Mike, how may we help you tonight?

CUT TO:

INT. HOMELESS SHELTER COMMUNITY ROOM - NIGHT

MARVELOUS MIKE, 36, a brilliant man scarred by his roller-coaster life battling Schizophrenia:

MARVELOUS MIKE

I'm bouncing off the walls. Having conversations with people who've been dead thirty years. Everyone I meet is really pissing me off. I need my medications: Risperidone and Carbamazepine. I'm dyin'. You gotta get me in for a 72-hour lockdown somewhere.

ANNA (VOICE)

Mike, there isn't a hospital or treatment center left in Portland that will take you.

BETH (VOICE)

You've got to leave the state, apply for medical assistance elsewhere.

MARVELOUS MIKE

You blonde? Sound blonde. I was born here. Gonna die here.

BETH (VOICE)

Mike, have you eaten today? I can have Uber Eats deliver something.

MARVELOUS MIKE

Don't need nuthin' to eat. I need my meds you fuckin' useless fuckers.

BACK TO:

ANNA'S CUBICLE -

ANNA

Mike, we're trying to help.

MARVELOUS MIKE (VOICE)

Maybe I should just come down there with my fuckin' machine gun to murder the shit out of every last one of you.

Anna ends Mike's call, EXHALES frustration. Beth is stunned.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. ANNA'S CUBICLE - CONT.

Beth remains stunned that Anna hung-up on Mike:

ANNA

Look, you're not in a posh, secure high-rise office consulting with neurotic narcissists. You're street-level, the stakes are life & death.

BETH

He needs help. What're we going to do about it?

ANNA

Sometimes we're out of options.

BETH

We should at least notify the police. Lock-down the call center.

ANNA

There's no machine gun. He doesn't know where we are. Police said Mike lives in a shelter. All his worldly possessions fit in a shoebox.

BETH

I hear you. Lesson learned.

BETH'S CUBICLE -

As Beth enters, her CELLPHONE RINGS. It's "*Jennifer*":

BETH

Jennifer?

JENNIFER (VOICE)

I just got fired.

BETH

That's ridiculous. I'll call Byron.

JENNIFER (VOICE)

No. They're replacing you too. And NOT temporarily. Thought you should know. I gotta go.

Jennifer ends the call. Beth makes a new call:

OPERATOR (VOICE)
Powell Medical Center. How may I
direct your call?

BETH
Nurse Rayhan. This is Doctor Keene.

OPERATOR (VOICE)
Please hold.

NURSE RAYHAN (VOICE)
Doctor Keene?

BETH
Nurse Rayhan, Barbara, I'm calling
about a 72-Hour Lock-Down patient you
had. Hard-luck case: Michael Whitmore.
Fifties. Schizophrenic Disorder.
Abusive.

NURSE RAYHAN (VOICE)
Oh yeah, Doctor Phillips admitted
him a while back. Had to restrain
him after he stabbed my Orderly
with a syringe.

BETH
I would consider it a favor if you
would re-issue the medications
Doctor Phillips prescribed. I can
pick them up tonight.

NURSE RAYHAN (VOICE)
I could lose my job. Good luck.

Nurse Rayhan ends the call. Beth slumps back in her chair.

NEW ANGLE - INCLUDING GARY'S OFFICE & THE OPERATOR CUBICLES -

Gary steps out of his office, makes an announcement:

GARY
Everyone. I have difficult news.

All the Operators stand, face Gary:

GARY
As you know, the Call Center has been
officially de-funded by the State.
Portland City Council has just voted
against including us in their budget.
There's enough money to keep the Call
Center afloat for 30 days.

GASPS and GROANS of alarm & disappointment from the Cubicles:

GARY

Wait, wait, this isn't over. I'll be reaching out to every potential Angel Funder in this state.

BETH'S CUBICLE - COMPUTER SCREEN -

"Mike Whitmore", aka Marvelous Mike, calls back. Beth stands, looks around for Anna but she's no where in sight.

Beth takes the call.

Anna pops up out of Elena's cubicle. Rushes around into Beth's cubicle, plugs-in her headset, joins the call:

BETH

Mike, this is Beth. I have an --

MARVELOUS MIKE (VOICE)

You shouldn't have hung-up on me.

BETH

I have a friend at the Mayo Clinic. I know he'll help you. We just have to get you to Minneapolis.

MARVELOUS MIKE (VOICE)

I'm done. Really done.

BETH

I know you're frustrated, but I can't help you if you don't let me.

MARVELOUS MIKE (VOICE)

(eerily calm)

I know where you are, Beth. Basement of the old Morelli's Department Store. My hell ends tonight.

Mike hangs-up.

Beth is rattled. Anna looks concerned too, but:

ANNA

In my five years with the Call Center, Mike's never actually come here.

Anna returns to her own cubicle.

ANNA'S CUBICLE -

Anna takes a call:

ANNA

This is Anna. You've reached the
Hope-Line. May I have your name and
number in case we're disconnected?

CALLER STEVE (VOICE)

You got thirty seconds to save my life.

ANNA

What could I possibly say in thirty
seconds to turn your life around?

BETH'S CUBICLE -

Beth takes a new call:

BETH

You've reached the Hope-Line. I'm
Beth. May I have your name and
phone number in case we're
disconnected?

LEWIS BARNES (VOICE)

(gentle, exhausted)

You have a strong, reassuring
voice, Beth.

BETH

Thank you.

LEWIS BARNES (VOICE)

Lewis Barnes. Marine Corps. Staff
Sergeant. Retired. And, for the
past fifteen years I been a U.S.
Postal Service Mail Carrier. Never
missed a single day.

BETH

Impressive, Lewis. Thank you for
your service. What's on your mind?

CUT TO:

EXT. BACKYARD - LEWIS BARNES' TINY HOME - NIGHT

Lewis, three-piece suit, sits on a bench in the middle of his
backyard, facing his empty home. A funeral card in his hand:

LEWIS BARNES

Military does a good job of building up naïve kids like I was. Duty & service and all that. But when your service is complete, ya gotta figure out how to fit back into the life you left behind on your own. My wife & daughter helped.

BETH (VOICE)

Glad they were there for you.

LEWIS BARNES

Wife passed in three years ago. Stroke. This morning I buried my daughter, little Eleanor. Lymphoma. Everyone's gone. Just me now.

BETH (VOICE)

Lewis, I'm sorry. May I recommend a Veteran Grief group?

LEWIS BARNES

Naw, not much point in a used-up Marine stickin' around, taking up room. I'm checkin' out.

BACK TO:

BETH'S CUBICLE -

Beth pops-up waves Anna in. Anna joins the call:

BETH

Lewis, the world needs good people like you. Give yourself time to mourn, then find a new mission. You could help other veterans in need.

LEWIS BARNES (VOICE)

That's a good idea, Beth. But I'm so tired. Thank you for being someone I could say goodbye too.

BETH

Lewis, don't go. Come-on.

The call ends.

Beth calls back. No answer.

Feeling powerless is Beth's trigger. She let's out a SCREAM.

Anna uses Beth's phone, calls, "*Police: Emergency Services*":

EMERGENCY SERVICES OPERATOR (VOICE)
You've reached Emergency Services.

Anna nods to Beth to respond:

BETH
This is Doctor Beth Keene, Hope-
Line Call Center, requesting an
urgent Welfare Check.

IVY'S CUBICLE -

CALLER JOAN (VOICE)
Oh my gahd, I broke his cock. Is
that even possible?

IVY
Yes, it's possible to break a penis.
Are you in danger? How did this happen?

CUT TO:

EXT. PRIVATE RESIDENCE IN-GROUND SWIMMING POOL - NIGHT

CALLER JOAN, 40, carefully places a bag of ice on her
HUSBAND'S broken penis. He's in agony:

CALLER JOAN
We were doing it on the diving board,
we fell into the pool and we both
felt it snap. His cock snapped. He's
really in pain.

IVY (VOICE)
Take him to the Emergency Room.

CALLER JOAN
It's not like they can put it in a
little cast, can they?

BACK TO:

INT. HOPE-LINE CALL CENTER - ELENA'S CUBICLE - NIGHT

Elena talks with a little boy, CALLER GEOFF, 9:

CALLER GEOFF (VOICE)
My Mom and Dad won't stop yelling
at each other. It's my birthday.
(MORE)

CALLER GEOFF (VOICE) (CONT'D)
They always have a big fight on my
birthday because they're sad I was
born on the day they got married.

ELENA
Geoff, where are you now?

CUT TO:

INT. GEOFF'S HOME - TINY KITCHEN - NIGHT

CALLER GEOFF and his dog Erika clean-up his birthday cake
smashed on the floor:

CALLER GEOFF
Kitchen. Mom made me a cake, but it
got smooshed. Erika & me are cleaning
it up. She's a good dog.

ELENA (VOICE)
Where's your Mom and Dad now?

CALLER GEOFF
My Dad's laying on the front yard.
Mom's yelling at him to come inside.

ELENA (VOICE)
Geoff, I'm sending someone to ask
your parents to stop fighting.

CALLER GEOFF
Okay.

BACK TO:

ELENA'S CUBICLE -

ELENA
Geoff, I'm sorry your parents are
sad, but I promise you, they're not
sad because you were born.

CALLER GEOFF
Okay.

Elena pulls-up the "*Family Services*" number:

ELENA
I'm glad you were born. I have to
go now. Call me any time.

KYLE'S CUBICLE -

Beth steps in, gestures to Kyle for permission to listen-in on his call. Kyle nods. Beth plugs-in her headset.

Kyle is mid-call:

KYLE

When a personal trauma begins to
bully our dreams, it's our mind's
way of forcing us to process the
fact we've been forever changed.

CALLER SARAH (VOICE)

Just tell me how to stop my dreams
from "processing" catching my Maid
of Honor blowing my Fiancé on our
wedding day?

KYLE

Uhm, well, when we forgive people,
it's not for their sake, but so we
can let go and move on. Also, you're
lucky you didn't marry that asshole.

CALLER SARAH (VOICE)

But I love that asshole with all
my heart.

CLICK, Caller Sarah ends the call:

KYLE

Hello?

(to Beth)

Welp, that's a wrap for me, I've
got to get to my overnight gig at
the animal shelter. Good Luck,
Doctor Keene.

WHEELER'S CUBICLE -

Wheeler stands, mid-call, his expression is deadly serious:

WHEELER

Where are you, James?

CUT TO:

EXT. 7-ELEVEN (POOR WEST-PORTLAND SUBURB) - NIGHT

CALLER JAMES
Standing outside the 7-Eleven.
Don't worry, my gun's not loaded.

WHEELER (VOICE)
James, turn around and walk home.

CALLER JAMES
Don't have a home. Don't fit in,
anywhere. No one's takin' a chance
on a felon.

WHEELER (VOICE)
Give life on the outside more time.
Find your purpose. You have options.
Your Parole Officer --

BACK TO:

WHEELER'S CUBICLE -

Jake, alert to Wheeler's stress, nudges his leg. Wheeler uses his cellphone to send a text alert to Police:

CALLER JAMES (VOICE)
Thanks for talkin' this through.

WHEELER
Tryin' to talk you out of it, kid.

James ends the call.

Wheeler let's out an exasperated SIGH as he drops back into his chair, and lovingly ruffles Jake's ears.

MIRIAM'S CUBICLE -

SENIOR CALLER CARL (VOICE)
(mid rant)
I gotta tell ya, this getting old
crapola is getting old. That
bastard stole my ice-cream desert,
again. Today he stole my girl.
That's crossin' the line.

MIRIAM
Love never gets easier. Carl, tell
your girl how you feel about her?

SENIOR CALLER CARL (VOICE)
Naw. I fixed him, I swapped his heart
medication for my stool softener pills.
He's gonna shit himself to death.

Ivy sends an urgent email to: "*Sunset Senior Care*" facility:

BETH'S CUBICLE -

BETH'S POV -

MARVELOUS MIKE STEPS OUT OF THE ELEVATOR WITH A BASEBALL BAT.

BETH
Claude, I've got to go.

Beth throws down her headset:

MARVELOUS MIKE
All I asked for was a little help.

Anna spots him too, stands:

ANNA
(professional calm)
Hey Mike? Everyone! Mike is here.

MARVELOUS MIKE
My broken brain has cost me everything.
I'm going to make you help me.

Marvelous Mike swings at a mannequin, SMASH!

Anna, calls 911.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

Another CRUSHING swing of Mike's bat TAGS the mannequin:

MIKE

So sick of begging for common decency.

Wheeler holds Jake back to protect him.

Gary rushes out of his office. Andre sprints to Gary.

Elena walks straight at Mike, but Beth gets to him first.

Mike takes a full swing of the bat at Beth, she ducks under the swing, comes straight up under Mike's arms and wrenches the bat out of his grip.

Mike shoves Beth against a cubicle wall.

Together, Beth & Elena take Mike to the floor, hold him there while Wheeler handcuffs him:

WHEELER

Sorry, Michael. You brought this on yourself.

Beth & Elena gently lift Mike into a chair:

BETH

Mike you're gonna be okay. Would you like some water?

Beth's simple kindness makes Mike cry:

MIKE

Yes, please.

Beth opens a bottled water, gives Mike a sip:

IVY

Well, that cost five of my nine lives.

KYLE

Elena, Beth, that was, straight-up, BALLSY.

ELENA

Guys need to stop associating having balls with being tough & courageous. It's sexist & creepy.

TIME CUT:

Gary escorts **POLICE OFFICERS, TAYLOR & GARCIA** to where Michael is seated.

Officer Taylor, 32, is like a bad-boy Hemsworth brother.

Officer Garcia, 45, is a kind-faced family man.

Taylor and Garcia acknowledge & respect Wheeler and Jake:

ANNA

Hey, Officer Taylor. Officer Garcia. Thank you for coming so quickly. Glad it's you guys.

OFFICER TAYLOR

Hey, Anna. Happy to help. Everyone good?

BETH

He's a schizophrenic without medical resources. He's alone, frustrated and urgently needs to consult with a medical doctor who can prescribe his meds.

OFFICER TAYLOR

I assume you're Doctor Keene?

BETH

That's right?

OFFICER TAYLOR

We need to talk, after.

Officer Taylor kneels down next to Mike:

OFFICER TAYLOR

Hey Mike. Garcia and I are gonna escort you to county, we need to arrest you so we can get you cleaned-up & get your meds. Okay?

MARVELOUS MIKE

Thanks, brother. I'm sorry. I just got so angry at the world.

Taylor and Garcia help Mike up.

Operators return to their cubicles:

GARY

Mike, the call center's Public Defender will meet you at the station.

As Garcia escorts Mike out, Taylor turns to Beth:

BETH

How did you know my name?

OFFICER TAYLOR

It's about that welfare visit you requested, for Lewis Barnes. By the time we arrived on scene he'd, already passed away. Evidence indicates a combination of alcohol and his daughter's opioid prescription.

BETH

Thank you.

Officer Taylor offers Beth his card. She wonders why:

OFFICER TAYLOR

If ever you need anything. Or if you need nuthin' at all.

Officer Taylor nods once:

OFFICER TAYLOR

Ma'am. Uh, Doctor Keene.

INT. ESCAPE ROOM LOUNGE - NIGHT

Anna and Elena, emotionally drained, slump into the couch in the near dark, each gulp a shot of Swedish Vodka.

Beth stops in the doorway, unsure if she's welcome, deep down worried she'll never be accepted. As she turns to leave:

ANNA

Hey! Get in here.

As Beth walks over to them:

BETH

(swallowing her pride)

I accept I need more training. Ugh, I really hate admitting that. Also, you two are incredible.

ANNA

(teases)

Thank you, ma'am. Officer Taylor, never offered me his card.

ELENA

You and Officer Hunk-of-Man have the chemistry.

BETH
He's too "aw-shucks" for me.

ELENA
What is this, "aw-shucks?"

ANNA
Outdoorsy cowboy charm. Damn, if I
weren't married, I'd ride that
white-water river.
(to Beth)
Sit. You've earned couch privileges.

As Beth sits, Elena pours three shots, hands one to her:

ANNA
(toasts)
To Officer Hunk-of-Man.

Three shots down.

Anna lights-up an impressively large joint:

ANNA
Pharmaceutical. Way beyond medicinal.

They each share a toke.

Wheeler & Ivy, (in Mistress Ivette mode), covertly meet-up,
unaware that Beth, Anna & Elena are on the couch.

Wheeler steals a kiss, Ivy slaps him then orders him to kiss
her again correctly.

Beth, Anna & Elena simultaneously sink deeper into the couch
to remain unseen.

Labrador, Jake, hops up onto Beth's lap:

BETH
(whispers)
Ugh, hey boy.

Wheeler gets down on one knee, Mistress Ivette sits on his
knee then nibbles is ear:

BETH
(whisper-laughs)
Oh, my, gahd.

ELENA
(whispers)
Makes sense.

ANNA
(whispers, holds in a toke)
They've been sneakin' around for months.
It's true love.

Anna takes a toke, COUGHS. The three women GIGGLE.

BUSTED, Wheeler & Mistress Ivette scurry out. Jake follows:

BETH
I moved back in with my parents.
Into my old room from high school.

ELENA
Yikes.

BETH
I'm worried the one thing I have in
common with my Mother is that we
both may be sociopaths. Plus, I've
lost the ability to cry.

Anna and Elena GIGGLE:

ANNA
You can't cry?

BETH
(embarrassed)
Don't laugh. This is serious.

Anna and Elena GIGGLE HARDER:

ELENA
You're too serious. And it's easy
to see, too hard on yourself.

ANNA
Yeah. It's okay to be both a badass
and a work-in-progress.

BETH
I like that.

INT. HOPE-LINE CALL CENTER - NIGHT

Most of the lights have been turned off. Ambient light from
computer monitors.

BETH'S CUBICLE - NIGHT

Beth collects her stone heart and Gardenia plant.

INT. BETH'S CHILDHOOD HOME - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Beth lays in a bubble bath drinking Trader Joe's wine out of the bottle through her Crazy-Straw.

She has an epiphany of an idea.

She grabs her pants off the floor, searches the pockets, finds Officer Taylor's card and her phone, calls him:

BETH
Officer Taylor. Hi. It's Beth Keene
from Hope-Line. Need your help
pinpointing a cellphone location.

EXT. CLUB SANCTUM - NIGHT

A members-only nightclub secured by two tough-guy **DOORMEN**.

Beth, straight from work, shows Doorman One her Medical I.D.:

BETH
I'm Doctor Keene. I received an
urgent call from my patient, Martin
Powell, asking me to meet him here.

INT. CLUB SANCTUM -

Inspired by an Ibiza club. Anything goes.

Doorman One leads Beth to Martin's private booth. Martin, (his leg in a cast), sits with his **ELITIST ENTOURAGE**:

MARTIN
Keene? My attorney ordered a
restraining order against you.

Doorman One grips Beth's shoulder:

BETH
We need to talk.

Beth grabs the Doorman's right wrist, twists out of his grip, takes him down to his knees, keeps him there with a very painful hyper-extended-elbow hold:

MARTIN
Who are you?

Beth releases Doorman One. Ruffles his hair. His ego's dented:

BETH

I'm here to pitch an opportunity
for you to stand on your own, earn
your Father's respect, and bonus,
do good in the world.

MARTIN

Peh. I'm listening.

BETH

The Hope-Line Call Center where I'm
working has been de-funded. If they
don't find an Angel-Funder within the
next 30 days they'll have to close.

MARTIN

And I care, why?

BETH

Become their Angel Funder. You'll
help an incredible group of people
keep their jobs. You'll be
responsible for ensuring the
139,000 people who rely on Hope-
Line every year will have someone
to call for help when they need it.

MARTIN

Now that it serves you, you want to
help me. Get out. Fuck off.

BETH

Martin, you need this, as much as I do.

Doorman One gently, cautiously, escorts Beth out.

EXT. CLUB SANCTUM - NIGHT

Beth steps outside, feeling defeated, pissed-off.

Officer Taylor, in civilian clothes, waits for her, leaning
on the fender of his restored 1950's pick-up truck:

OFFICER TAYLOR

I put two & two together. You and
Martin Powell. Judging by your
expression, it didn't go well.

BETH

(what a cliché)
So you came to rescue me, in your
pick-up truck?

OFFICER TAYLOR
Gotta feeling you're not the
rescuing type. Figured you might
need back-up.

Beth lets her anger go:

OFFICER TAYLOR
Ya know, the best cure for a tough
day is a long drive and a cold beer.
(confidently)
Come on.

Beth climbs into Officer Taylor's truck. They pull away.

EXT. MULTNOMAH FALLS SCENIC VIEW - NIGHT

Under the full moon, Beth and Taylor sit in the back of the
truck parked at the cliff's edge, where Multnomah creek
plunges 600 feet into the Columbia River Valley.

Taylor opens a bottle of beer for Beth, then one for himself:

OFFICER TAYLOR
To letting go of a tough day.

BETH
To lost souls & Lewis Barnes.

Beth CLINKS her bottle against his, they drink:

BETH
Breathtaking view.

OFFICER TAYLOR
My Grandfather was an Oregon Park
Ranger. He'd bring me and my
brothers to this exact spot.

Beth leans on Taylor's shoulder, gives him a light kiss.

Taylor grins:

BETH
Shud-up.

Beth straddles Taylor's lap, kisses him with desire:

BETH
I'm going to take advantage of
you now, "Officer Hunk-of-Man."

OFFICER TAYLOR
(smirks)
What?

BETH
This is a one-time thing.
Nothing more. Nothing implied.

OFFICER TAYLOR
Yes, ma'am.

Beth yanks off Taylor's shirt, discovers his tattoo:

BETH
(she reads)
"Property of: Courtney?" That's
adorable.

OFFICER TAYLOR
Uhm, ha, yeah. College. She married a
Podiatrist. Kept it as a reminder, to
always go slow with romance.

Beth lifts-off her own shirt, Taylor reacts to the scar on
her side, across her ribs:

OFFICER TAYLOR
Whoa, ouch.

BETH
Shud-up.

She kisses him.

INT. BETH'S CHILDHOOD HOME - KITCHEN - MORNING

Beth's Dad messily, artistically, creates two omelettes.

Beth's Mom has set out three perfect place-settings. Three
glasses of cranberry juice. Cuts a grapefruit for herself.

Beth enters, dressed for a run, anxious to escape. She's
caught off guard by the sight of her parents collaborating:

JACK
There she is. Spanish Omelettes,
commin'-up.

WENDY
He hasn't cooked in years.

Beth takes a sip of juice:

WENDY
Invited Sean and Ryan for dinner,
Saturday.

Beth tenses up, not eager to re-live her middle-child days:

BETH
Dad, save my omelette for me.

She heads toward the front door, Wendy calls after her:

WENDY
They can't wait to see you.

The porch door WAGGLE-SMACKS SHUT.

INT. ESCAPE ROOM LOUNGE - SUNSET

Beth walks in as a **CATERER** and **ASSISTANTS** set-up a buffet table. Kyle, and Volunteer Operator, Andre, are both gleefully excited about free food.

Jake greets Beth as she joins Anna, Elena and the rest of the 2nd Shift Operators, plus two more **VOLUNTEER OPERATORS**.

Kyle bounces over to Beth from the buffet table:

KYLE
Gary found an Angel-Funder. He's
beside himself.

BETH
Who is it?

Kyle shrugs his shoulders, returns to the buffet table:

ANNA
Don't look at me.

KYLE
(announces)
Meatballs! They brought meatballs.

Gary enthusiastically enters:

GARY
Ladies and Gentlemen, it's official.
We've got our Angel-Funder.

MARTIN POWELL, on crutches, enters with his Publicist, **GALE**, who captures this moment on iPhone video.

All eyes turn to Beth to gauge her reaction. She's speechless:

GARY

A warm welcome for, Martin Powell.

APPLAUSE, except for Beth, Ivy, and Jake who're unimpressed.

IVY AS MISTRESS IVETTE

(whispers to Wheeler)

I was looking forward to collecting unemployment.

MARTIN

I'm as surprised as all of you to be here today, but when I heard the Hope-Line Call Center needed my help, I couldn't say no.

Martin winks at Beth. She gags:

MARTIN

It's my honor to protect the jobs of this incredible group of people. And to personally accept responsibility for ensuring the Hope-Lines stay open for anyone with no place left to turn who may need to call for help.

APPLAUSE. Martin shakes Wheeler's hand, then Miriam's. Ivy doesn't shake hands:

MARTIN

Now, who's hungry?

Kyle is first to the table. Andre is second. Jake is third.

ANNA

(to Beth & Elena)

That's the kind of guy who's got a shark aquarium.

Martin calls Beth aside:

MARTIN

The look on your face when I walked in - priceless. Not only is this pathetic non-profit a total tax write-off, it's the perfect way for me to earn some overdue respect.

BETH

Even if it's for the wrong reasons, you're doing a good thing.

Martin's Publicist, Gale, steps between Martin and Beth:

GALE
Martin, this is amazing. You're
saving the world.

MARTIN
(faux excitement)
Just trying to do my part.

END ACT FOUR

TAG

EXT. BETH'S CHILDHOOD HOME - FRONT PORCH - DAY

Beth preps the porch to be re-painted by scrubbing-off
peeling paint with a wire brush.

Beth's Mom, carries out a big glass of iced-tea through the
WAGGLY-SQUEAKY screen door:

BETH
You made me iced-tea?

WENDY
This one's mine. You know where the
kitchen is.

Wendy sets her tea on the flower garden bench, turns-on the
hose, then begins watering her rose bushes.

Beth picks-up the tea, ignores Wendy's threatening glare, and
takes a drink.

Oh, it's on.

GIGGLE-SCREAMS as Beth is squirted with ICE COLD water.

END OF EPISODE